



# Big Muskie

Big Muskie was a Bucyrus-Erie walking dragline, owned by the Central Ohio Coal Company and built by the Bucyrus-Erie Company. She was the world's largest moving land machine and was considered one of the seven engineering wonders of the modern world. Big Muskie weighed 27-million-pounds. That is more than the weight of 13,000 cars!



**Big Muskie**

Courtesy of David Cater Photographs.

The machine had a bucket and boom to lift away mounds of land. Her boom, which is a pole used like an arm, was 310-feet-long. With the boom stretched out, her length was 487-feet, 6-inches. The width of this giant was 151-feet, which is equal to the width of an eight-lane highway.

It took 13,800 volts of electricity to run Big Muskie – almost enough electricity to run a small town. When Big Muskie was working, it took several days to travel a mile. The machine walked on

four hydraulic-driven “shoes.” The “shoes” measured 20-feet-by-65-feet.

She was built on site at her home in Muskingum County. That is how she got her name “Big Muskie.” It took three years and \$25-million to build Big Muskie so the machine could begin working in 1969.

The bucket could grab 325 tons of earth in one scoop. That's equal to the weight of a two-story house! Big Muskie was designed to remove overburden, or excess land, to get to the coal formations below ground. The bucket was large enough to hold twelve cars. It removed over 608-million-cubic-yards of dirt, shale, clay and sandstone during its lifetime. That's the same as 122,800,210,240 gallons of water!

In 1991, more efficient mining methods, new environmental regulations, and a reduced demand for coal forced Big Muskie into retirement.

For several years she served as a popular tourist attraction until the Surface Mining Reclamation Act threatened her existence. The Byesville Development Corporation led efforts to save the Big Muskie by helping to raise over \$200,000. Those efforts failed and in May 1999 Big Muskie was destroyed.

In honor of the people who worked the mines in southeastern Ohio, the enormous bucket of big Muskie has been preserved. The bucket now sits at a roadside park near McConnellsville, Ohio.

