active operation of the iron mines the better grades of ocher were frequently taken out separately, washed, and marketed for paint. This was the beginning of the present paint industry of the region. Some years ago paint mills that used local ores almost entirely were operated just west of Pine Top and also near Bingen. The plant of Reichard-Coulston, Inc., first known as the Blue Mountain Paint Mills and later as Henry Erwin & Sons, began operations at the present site along Monocacy Creek just north of Bethlehem in 1868.

In most places no attention was paid to the ocher while the limonite iron mines were in operation, and everything brought to the surface—iron ore, ocher, and different kinds of white, red, and black clays—was put into the log washers. The coarse ore was saved, and the water carrying all the finer materials in suspension was carried through troughs to large ponds made by earthen dams. These ponds for the collection of sediments were necessary in order to avoid the obstruction of the streams into which the waste water flowed. While the iron mines were being worked these deposits of mud were regarded as worthless, but in recent years some of them have been found to contain some fairly good washed ocher. At certain times all the material washed from the ore was highly colored, and these layers when thick enough can be readily separated from the beds that are more sandy or less highly colored with limonite. The sediment deposited near the place where the water entered the pond invariably contains too many coarse particles to be of value for paint, but at the sides of the pond farthest away from the mine, only the finest sediments were deposited, and washed ocher of fine quality can be obtained there in some deposits.

Within the county at the present time no ocher or limonite iron ore is being mined nor is any ocher being obtained from mud-dam deposits. In other counties, however, ocher of both kinds is being worked, the occurrences being similar to those prevailing within the county. It is probable that some of the iron ore deposits which, when formerly worked, yielded considerable marketable ocher, might be found to contain equally as good material as that now obtained in nearby regions. The demand for this material, however, is not great enough to justify the necessary investigations. The amount of mud-dam material that can be marketed is also small, and consequently there is no necessity for examining these deposits, even though this work could be done rather easily by shallow excavations. Many mud-dam deposits are present in the region, for a settling pond was built near almost every limonite mine. A few years ago, C. K. Williams & Co., Easton, reopened one of the old iron mines in the north slope of Morgan Hill and worked it for a short time for ocher.