

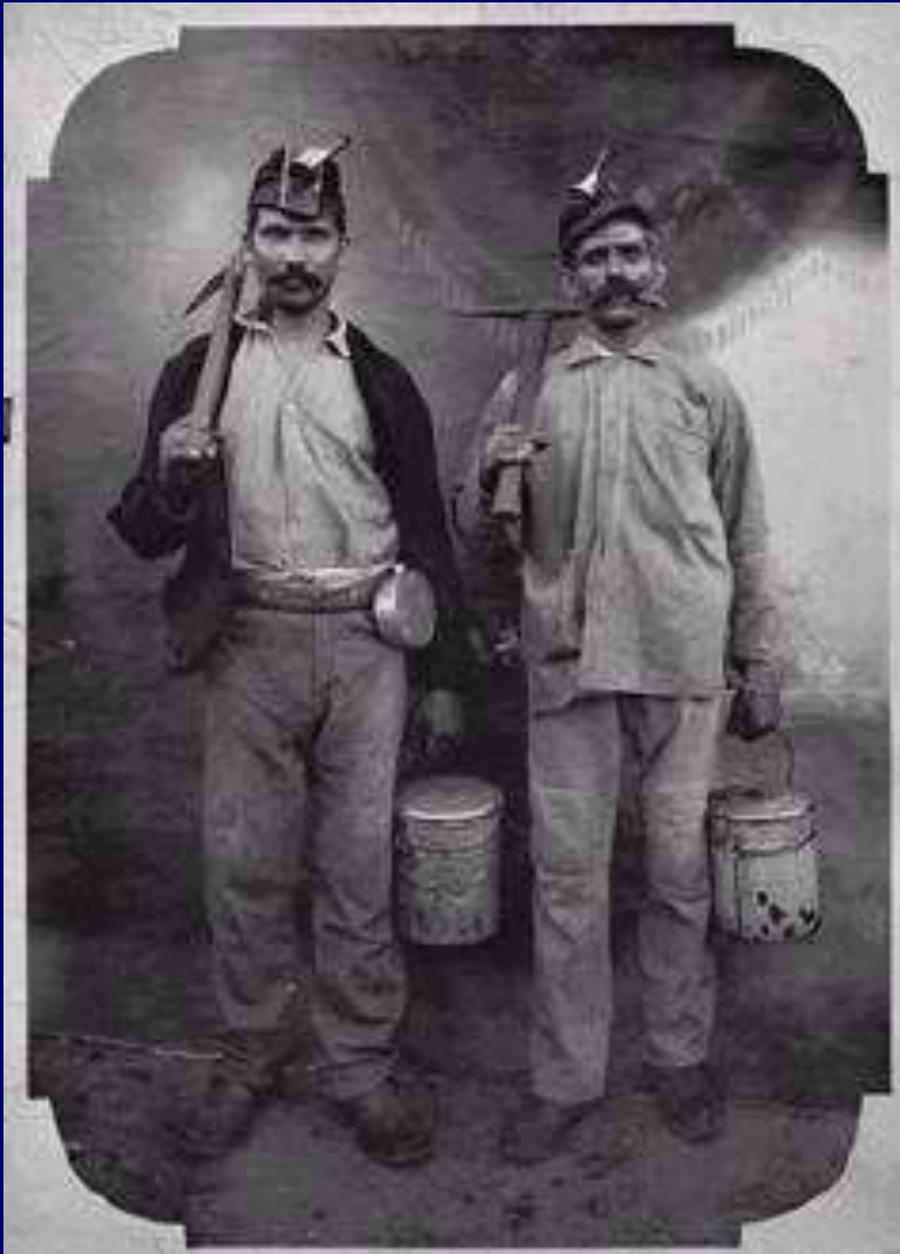
WORKING THE Early COAL



of Appalachia



Coal and coal mining
have long provided an image
of Appalachia to the world -
a rich mixture of mineral and
human resources,
economic benefits,
pollution and reclamation.

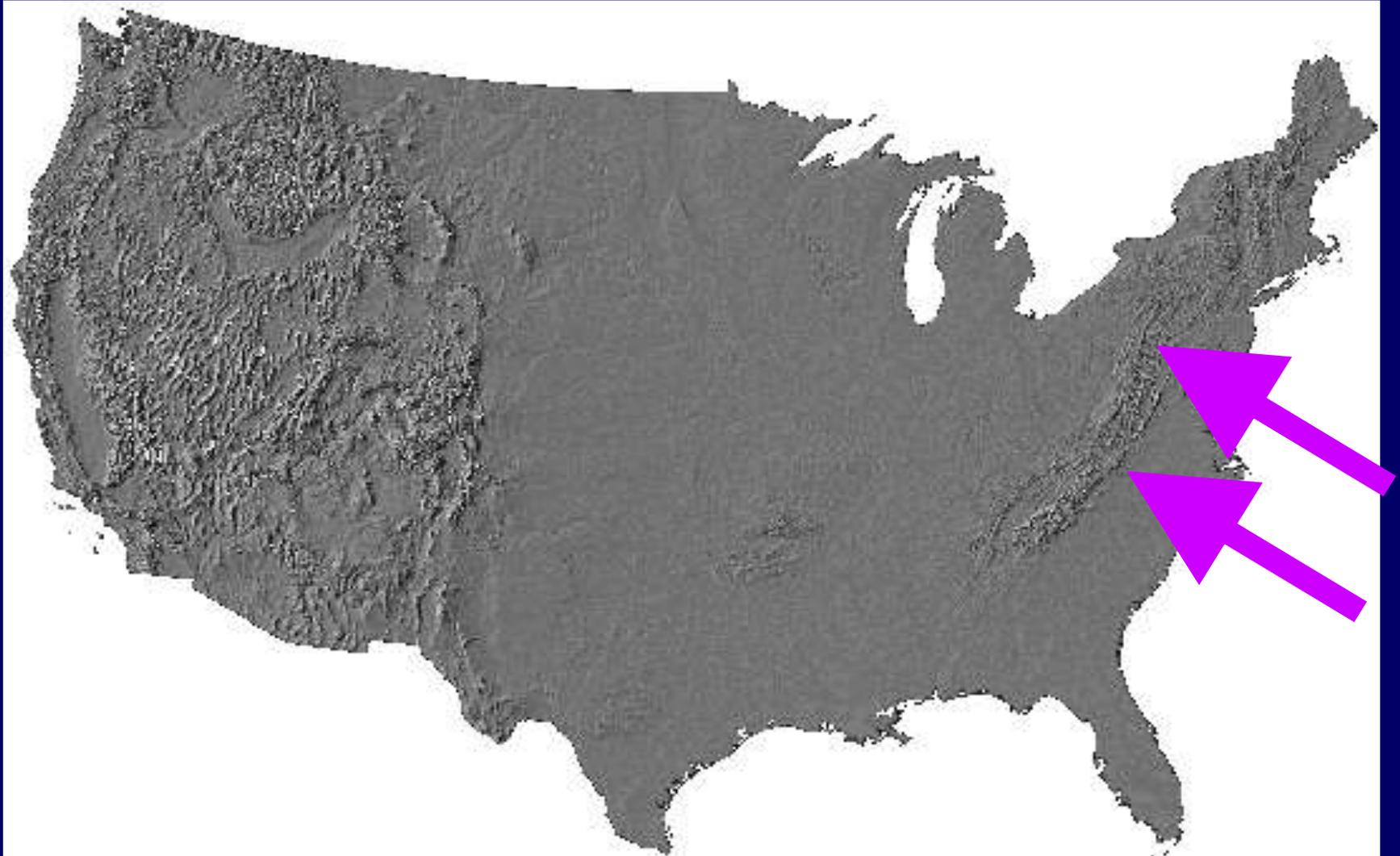


The Coal
Region owes its
heritage to the
varied cultures
of the people
who settled
there.

Central Appalachian culture is rich with mining stories, songs, heroes and tragedies.



The Western Allegheny and Central Appalachian Plateaus are major coal-producing regions.

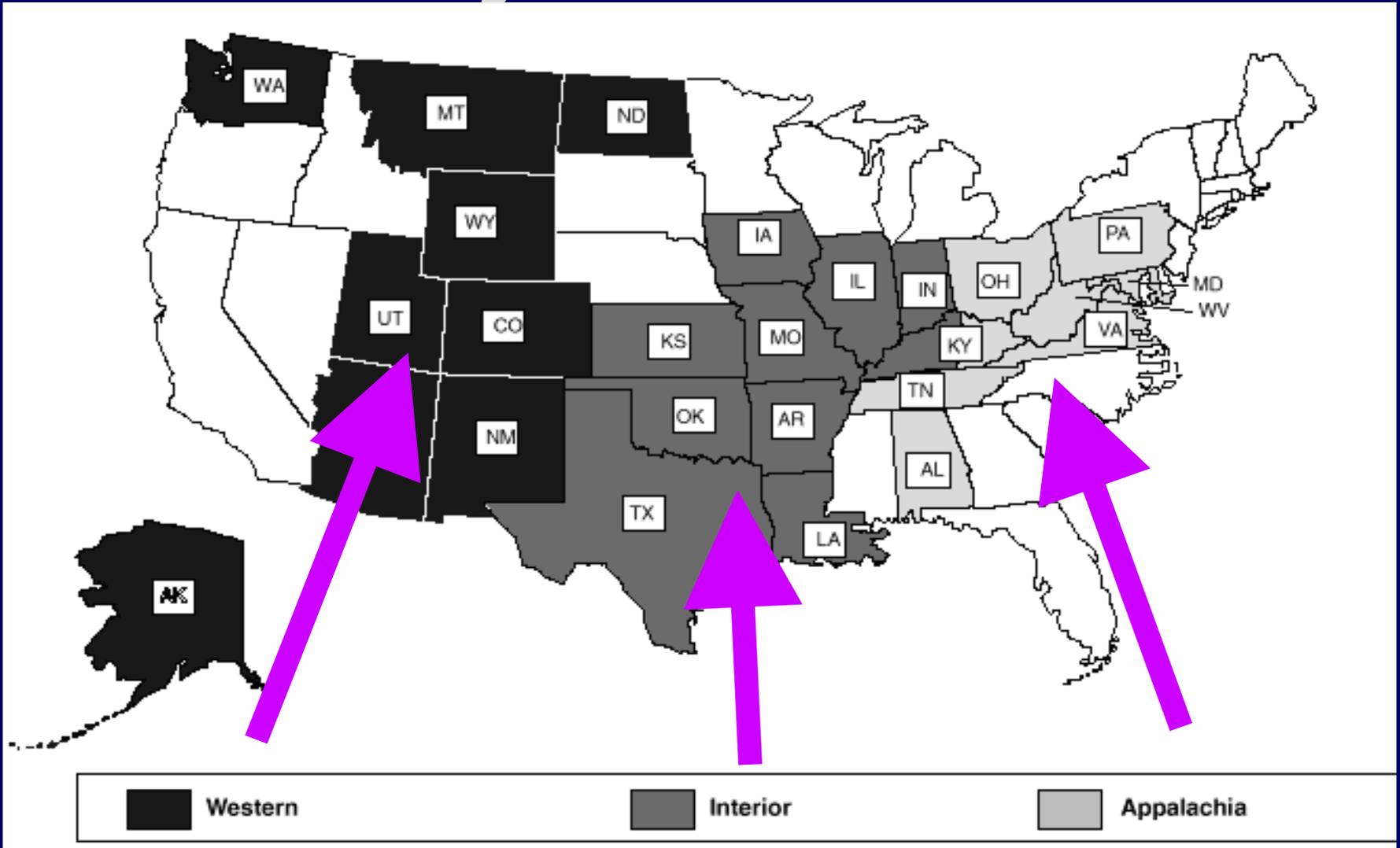


How valuable and extensive is America's coal supply?

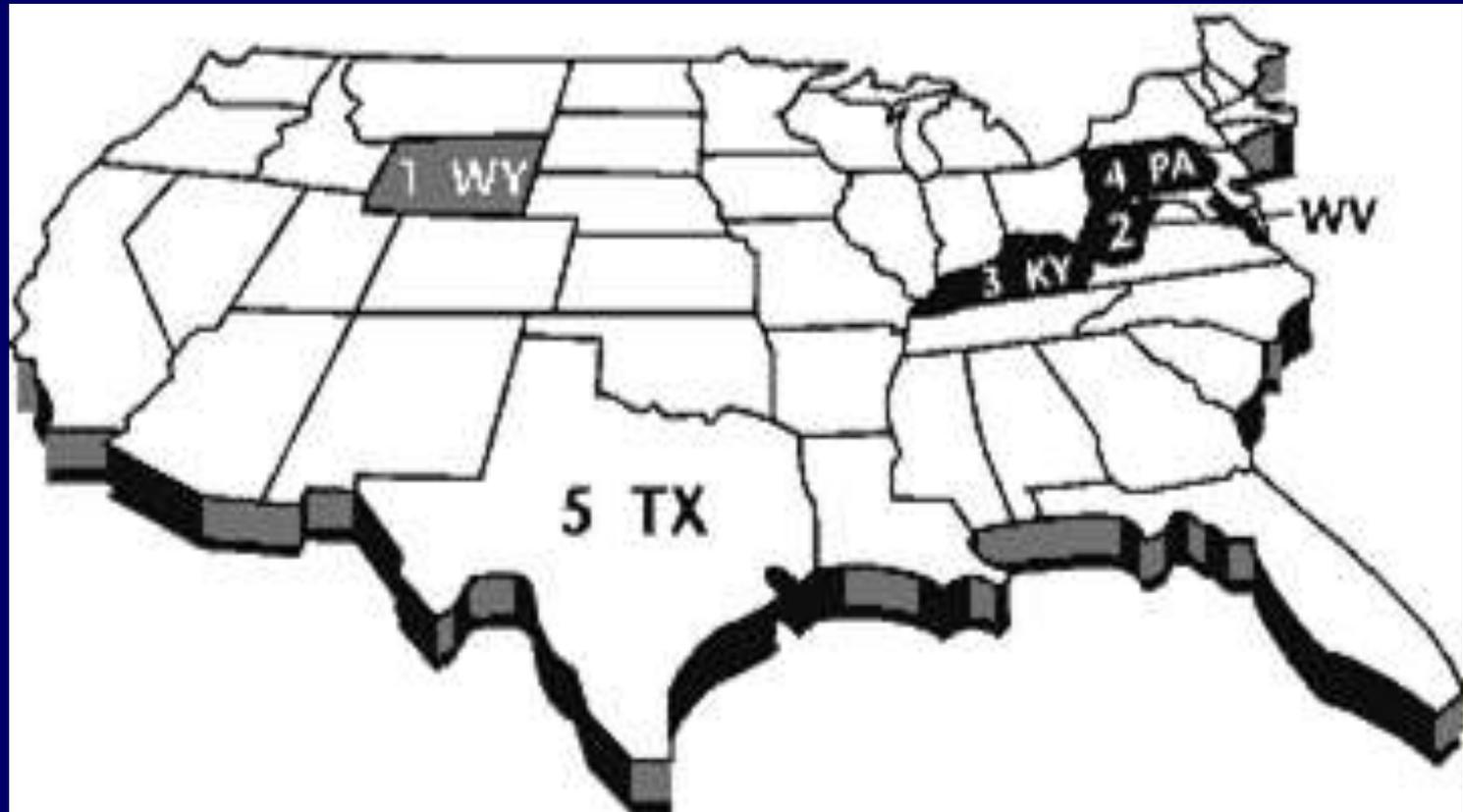


Experts claim there is enough coal in the United States to last for over two hundred years at today's level of use.

These are the three major coal-producing regions in our nation.



Appalachian Coal Region:
Annually produces approximately 40% of total
U.S. production.
(States by rank for coal production)

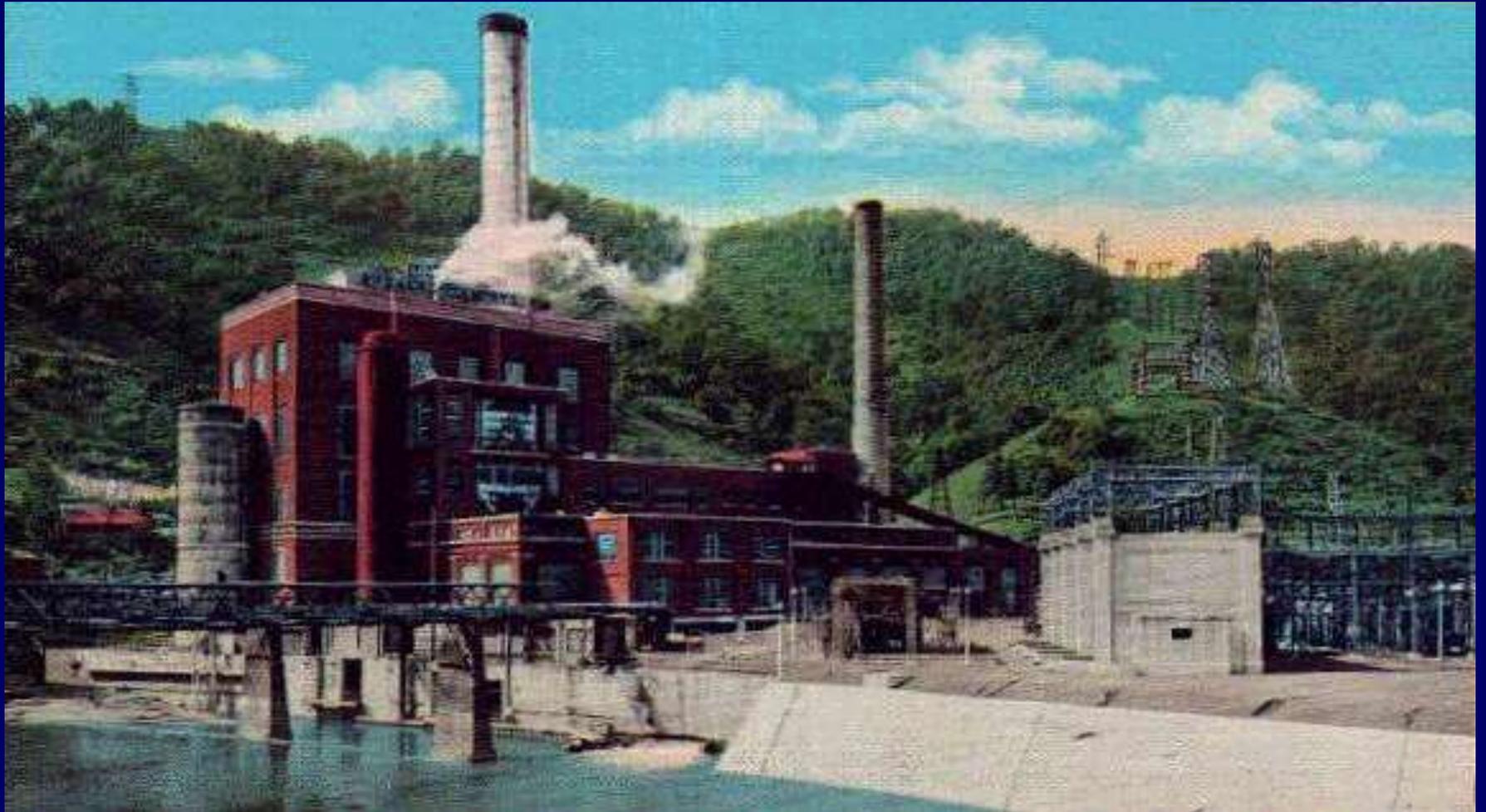




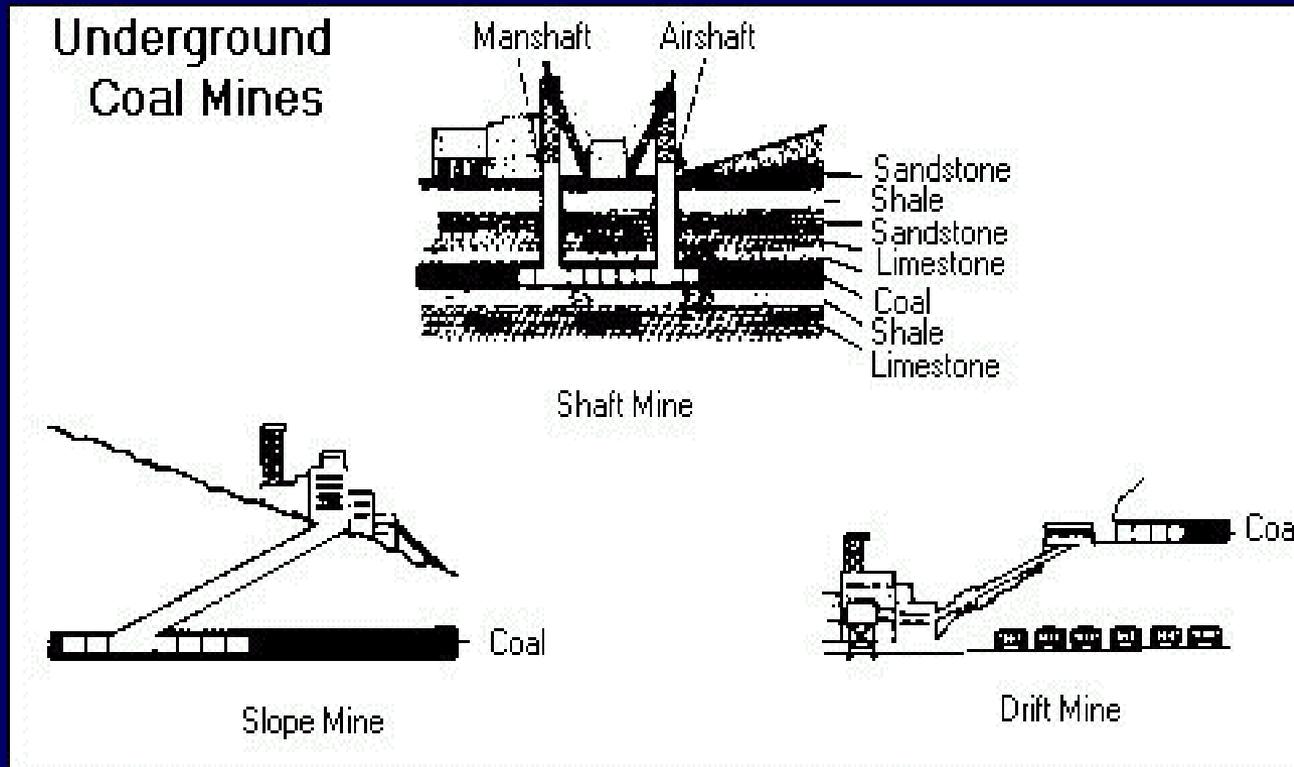
Today, almost 90 percent of the coal used in the United States is used to generate electricity.

The amount of electricity generated from coal is about 50% of the total amount of electricity generated in the United States.

(A older coal burning electricity plant)



This drawing shows the three types of underground mines- *shaft mines, slope mines and drift mines.* The type of mine depends on the depth of the coal seam and the terrain.



WORKING AT THE COAL MINE:



History

By the 1860s some coal mines in Appalachia had reached as much as 1,500 feet into the earth.

Miners reached these depths with technologies that were old and dangerous.



The top of the opening to the mine only reached slightly above the miner's waist. The size of the underground mines reflected the thickness of the coal seam being mined.





There were two big engineering problems in mining coal underground:



1. A system to drain water from the mine
 2. A system to ventilate the mine and to provide fresh air to the miners.
- (The methane gas found near veins of coal, could catch fire and explode, too.)

Canary Cage:

The first way used to detect methane gas in a mine was to take a live canary into the mines in cages such as these.

If dangerous gas existed, the canary would die before the gas would become too dangerous for miners.



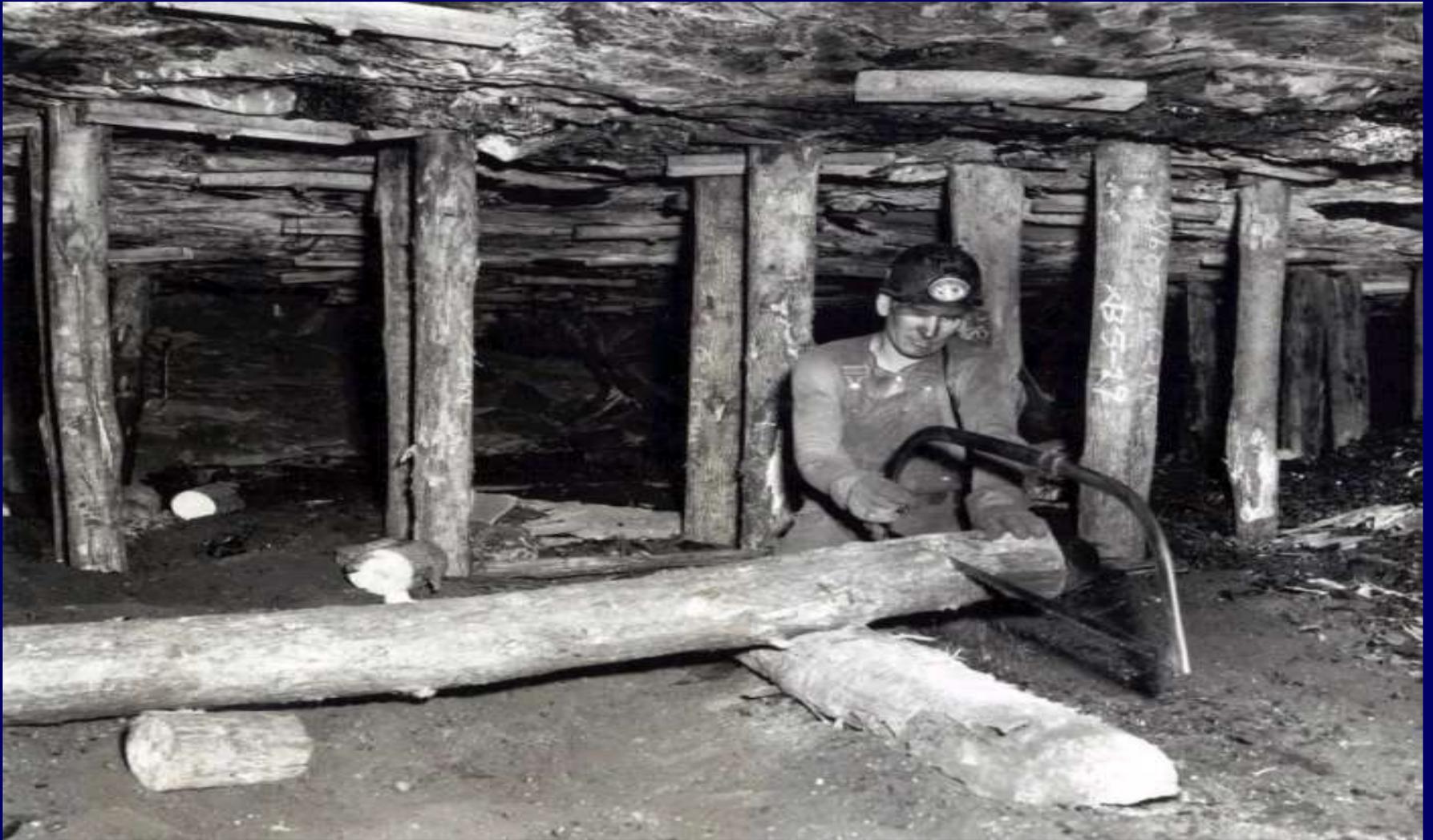
Although sad for the canaries, this method of measuring methane gases saved many coal miners' lives.



Cave-ins and ceiling collapses created other dangers to coal miners' lives.



Many veins were mined in shafts no taller than 3-4 feet, whose ceilings were braced every few feet.

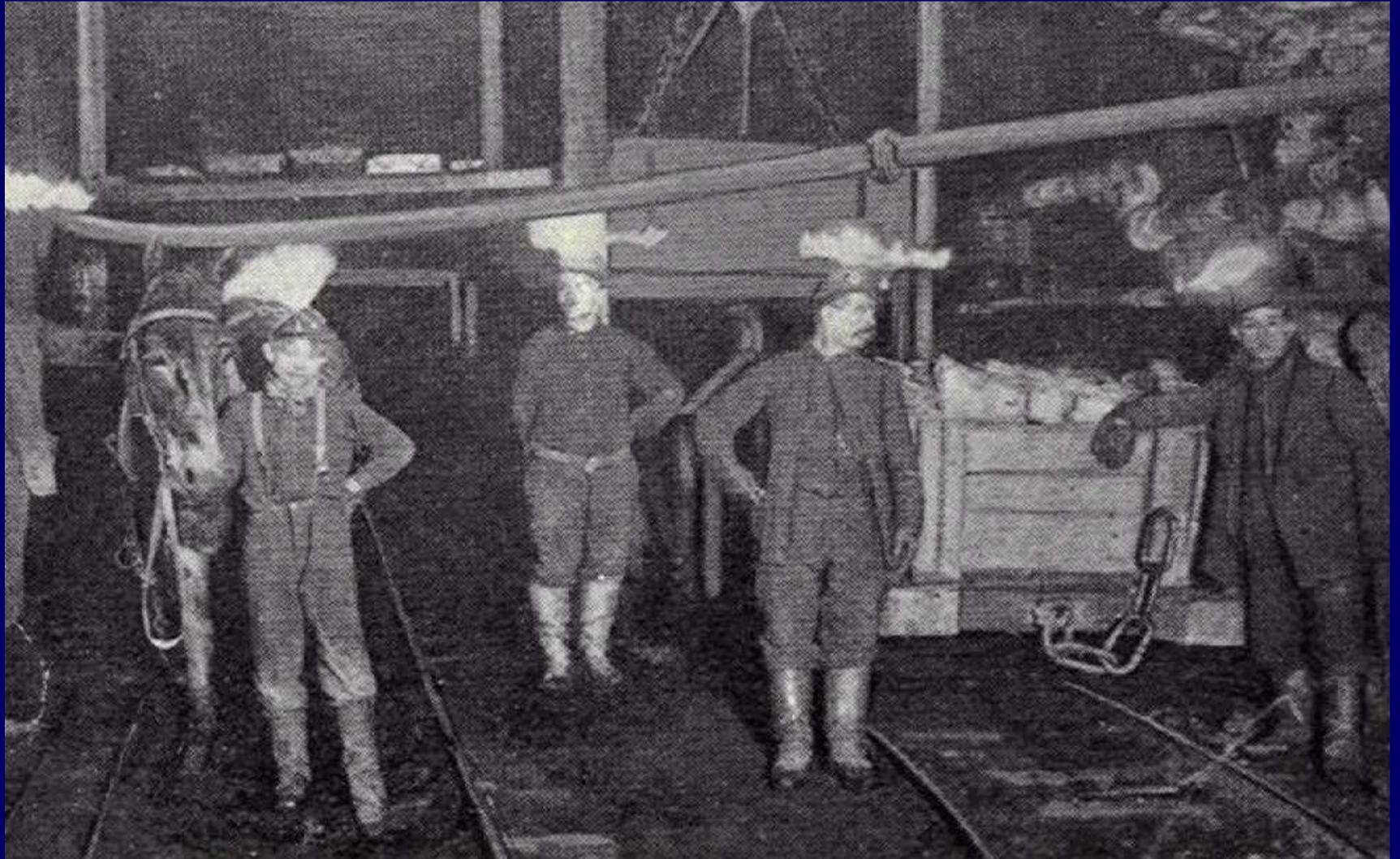


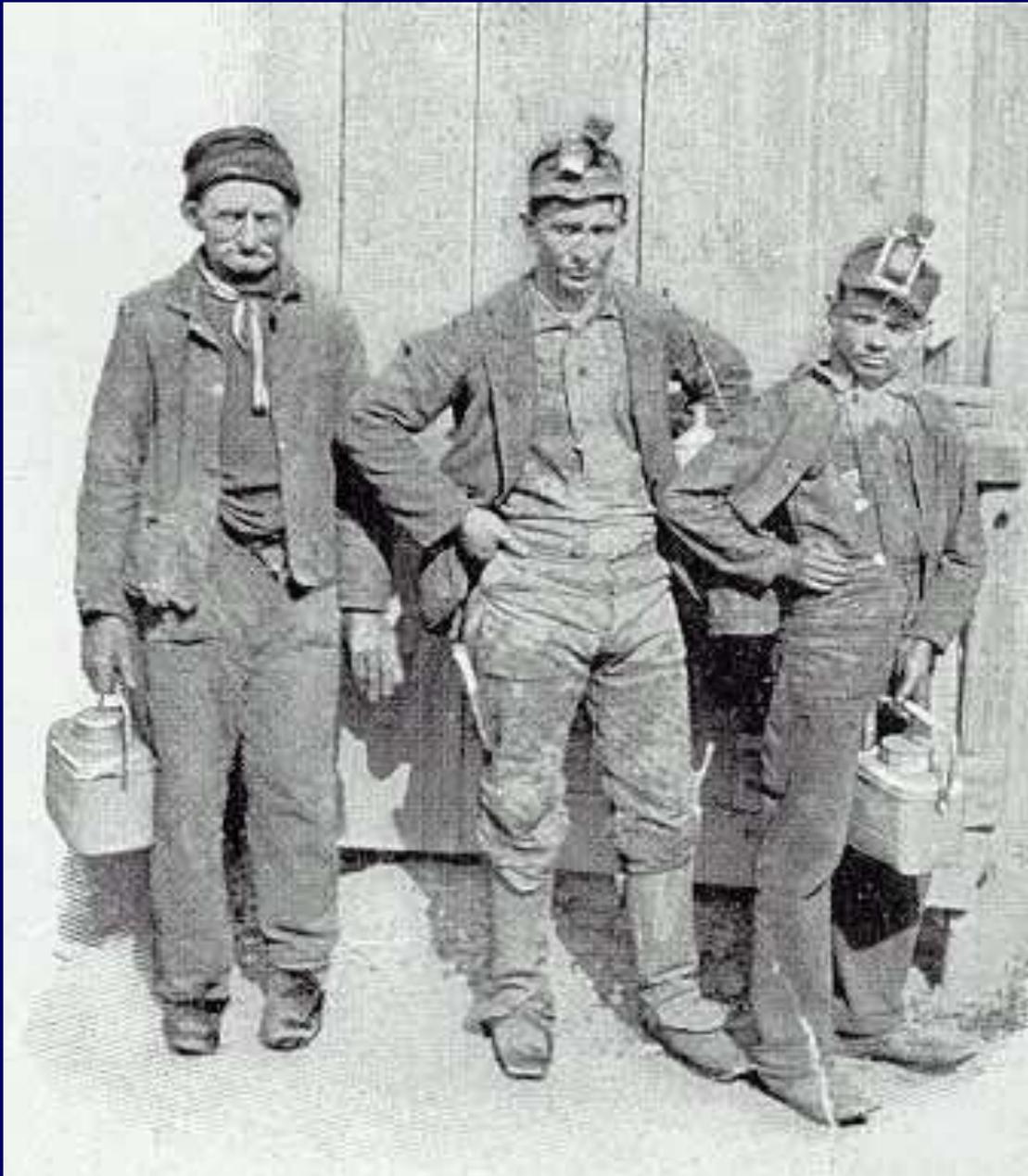
Coal was picked off the walls of the mine and hauled out by horse and mule power.





Light was provided by candles and kerosene lamps on miner's hats.

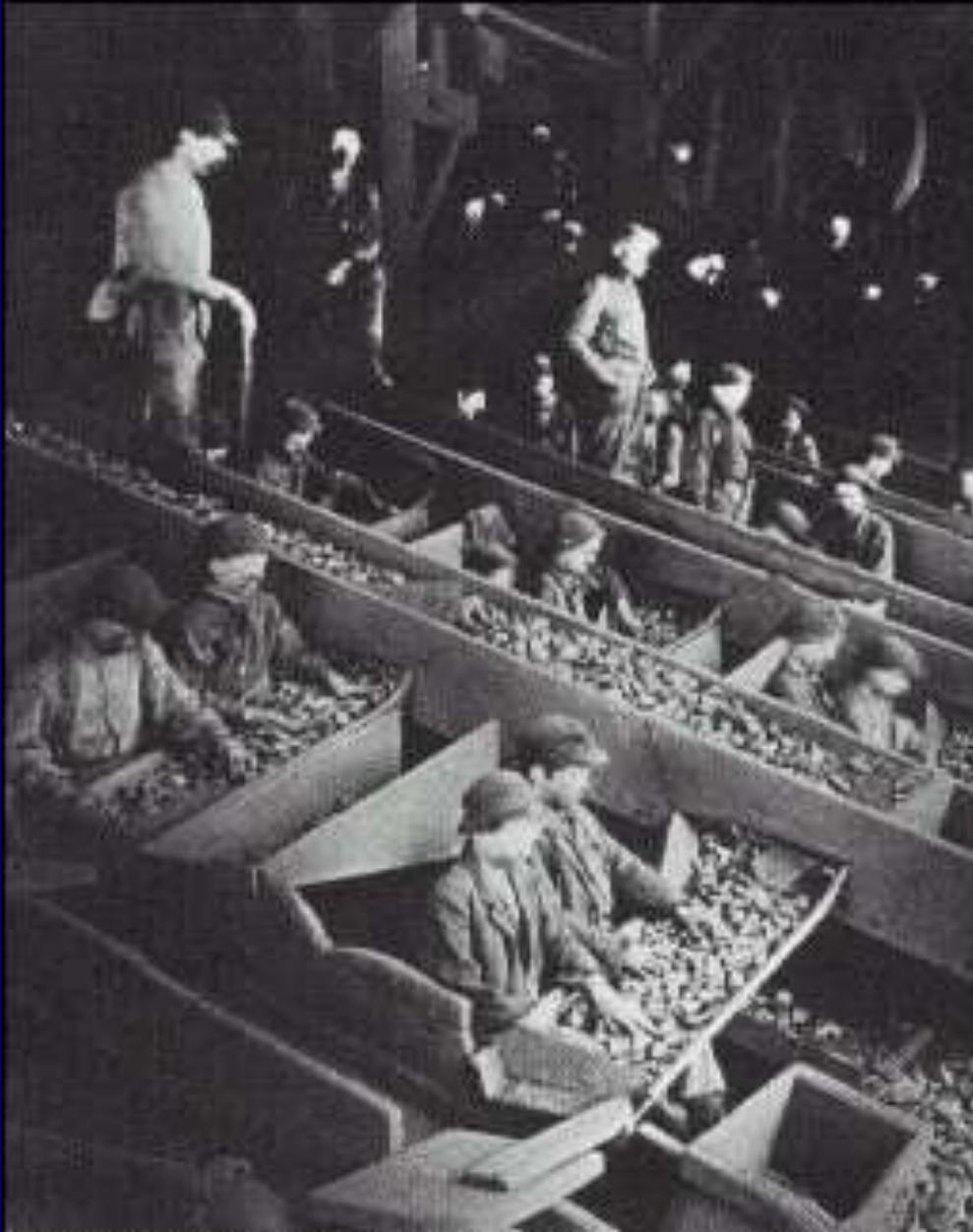




Generations of a families worked side by side. Young boys often joined their fathers and grandfathers in the mines at the age of 12 or 13.

Hundreds and hundreds of boys work in the mines from early morning until evening, instead of going to school.





Both boys and girls separated the coal from the slate in the "breaker house" before the coal was shipped out by railroad.

The coal was delivered onto belts into the tall bins of the "break house" where the various types and qualities of coal was separated.





The car loaded with coal is called a railroad gondola, or called a "gon" by the miners.

A folk song was written about
early life in the coal mines
of Appalachia...



*"I worked sixteen tons, what do I get?
Another year older and deeper in debt.
St. Peter don't you call me,
cause I can't go.
I owe my soul to the company store."*

To listen to folksinger "Tennessee" Ernie Ford
sing this song about the life of coal miners,
click on the website below...

<http://www.ernieford.com>



Coal mining companies built coal camps and towns scattered throughout the coal fields of the Appalachian Mountains. They were thriving until the early 1950s.

Colmar Coal Camp: This camp was active from about 1910 until about 1952. The large structure on the hill was the camp school house. It only had two rooms for classes.



Life in the coal camps was a very structured one. Those workers in manager positions lived in the better housing, often referred to as "Silk Stocking Row."



In 1917 the U.S. Coal & Coke Company built the community of Lynch, Kentucky- the world's largest coal camp. The camp's population was 10,000 persons.



One thousand company-owned buildings provided housing for people of many nationalities- including Italian, Spanish, Czech, Polish, English, Welsh, Irish and Scottish.





While considered one of Appalachia's model coal camps due to its' free health care, education, churches, housing, and other benefits, the company carefully controlled everything in the town.

The company had their own police force
and it was used to keep
labor union organizers out.



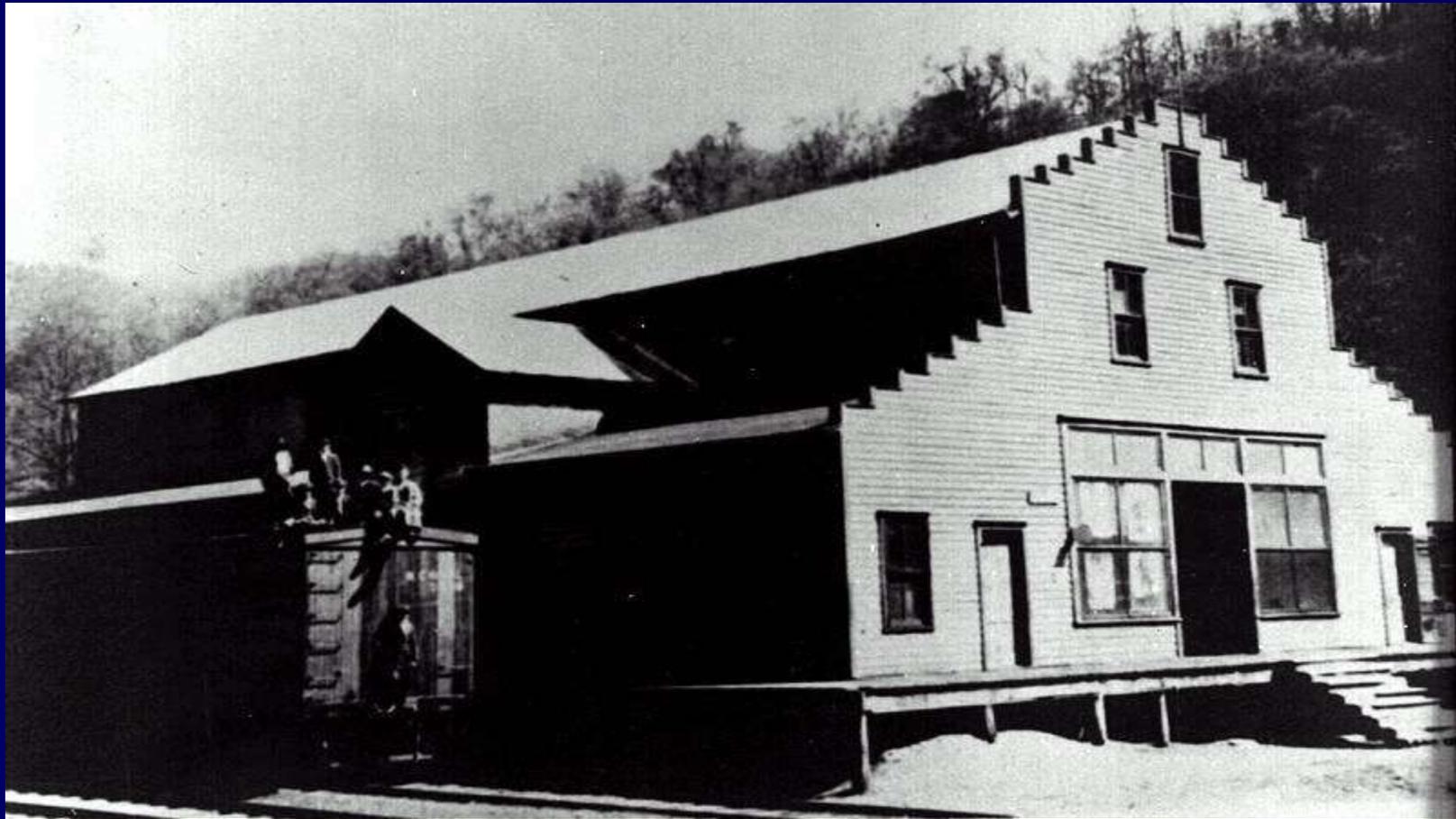


"I owe my soul to the company store."

The coal company deducted rent, maintenance, the cost of a weekly doctor visit and other items directly from the miner's pay - make miners completely dependent upon the company.

The company-owned store was called a commissary.

Almost any goods needed by the miner and his family could be found at the commissary.



The mining companies issued their own money, called script, that could only be spent here. Of course, the prices in the commissary were high because the camps were far from other towns.

\$2.00 *Thereby assign to THE UNITED SUPPLY CO., Incorporated*

TWO DOLLARS

out of wages owing to me, or that may become due to me by THE UNITED STATES COAL & COKE CO., Incorporated.

Issued to *John Adams* Check No. *1906*

By *[Signature]* No. **6378B**

Power of Attorney

Witness *[Signature]* At Lynch, Ky., *6-19-19*

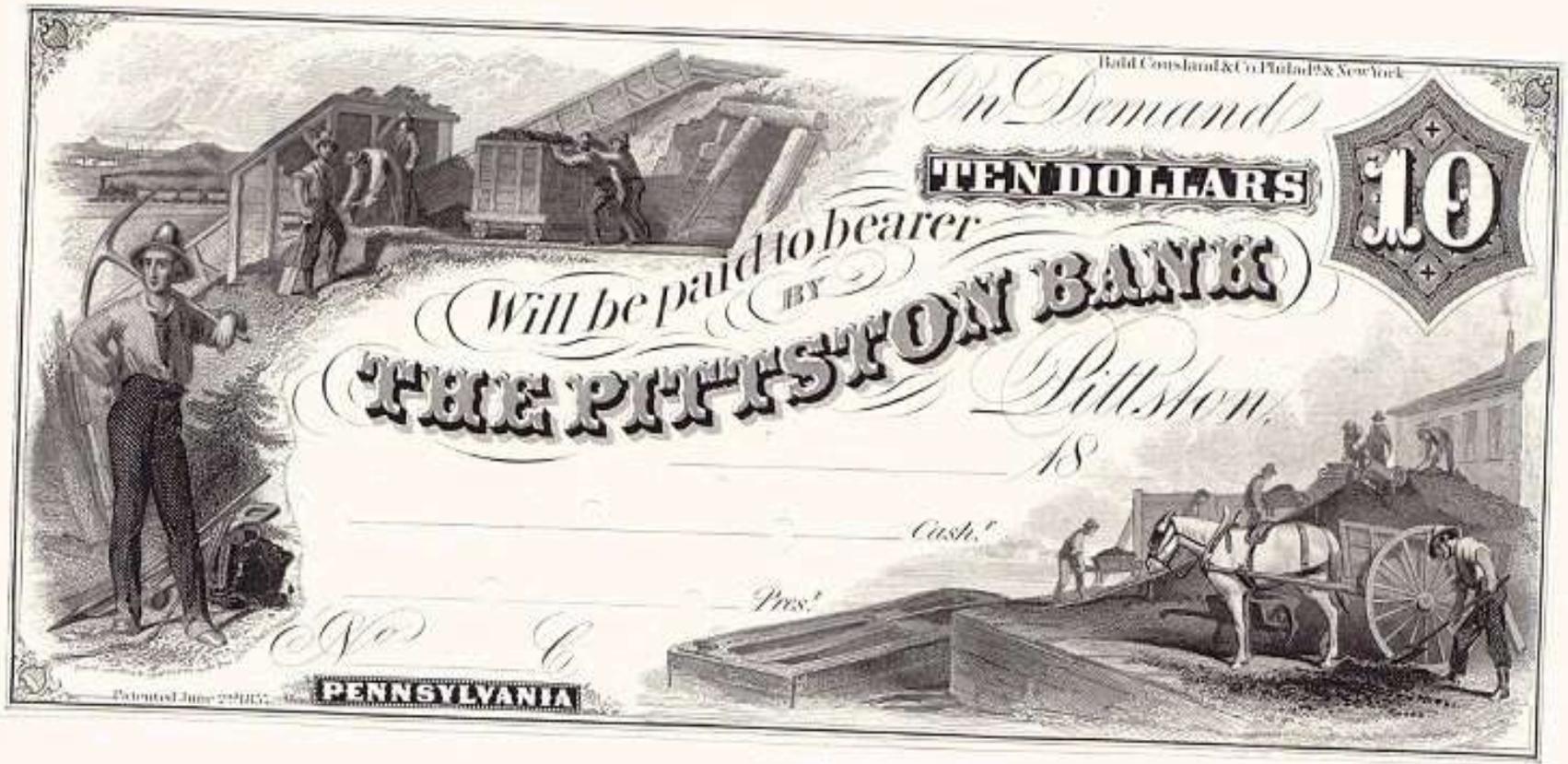
UNITED STATES COAL AND COKE COMPANY
LYNCH MINES

GOOD ONLY IN EXCHANGE FOR POWDER OR CAPS

NOT GOOD IF DETACHED No. **17863W**

GOOD FOR **1** CENT

This is a coal miner's paycheck in the form of a company "bank note".



Often at the end of a pay period, after the company deducted rent, heat, health care, tool rental, etc., the miner might actually owe the company money!



Those miners who challenged their pay or working conditions or threatened to go on strike were evicted from their homes.



WORKING THE Early COAL



of Appalachia