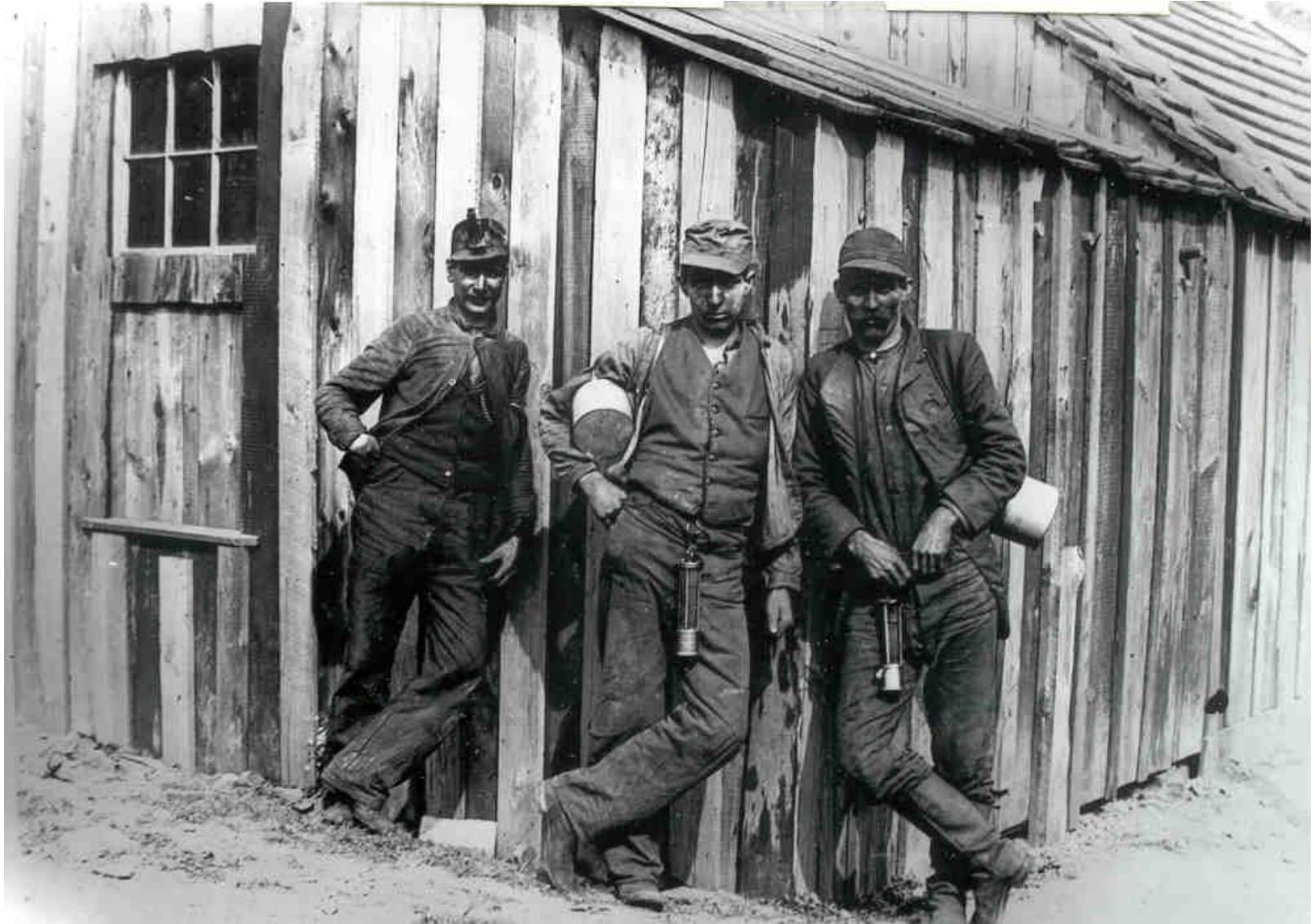


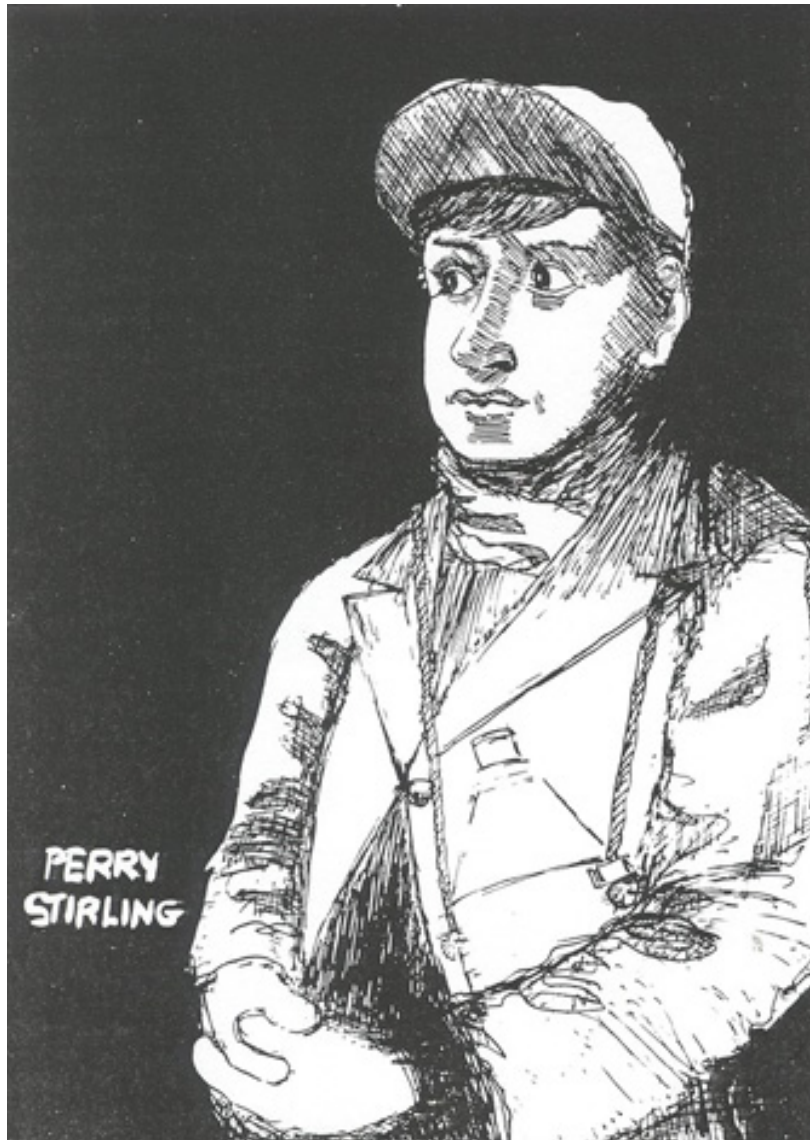
The Coal Miner



York Farm Colliery

**Lorraine Stanton, researcher
Deborah Stanton Janov, layout**

Many young boys had to work at the breakers and collieries to help provide for their families. Perry Stirling depicts this sketch of a young breaker boy and here is a song telling his story.



A WHITE SLAVE OF THE MINE

I'm a little collier lad,
Hardworking all the day,
From early morn till late at night
No time have I to play.
Down in the bowels of the earth
Where no bright sun rays shine,
You'll find me busy at my work,
A white slave of the mine.

CHORUS (sung twice)
Our lot in life is full of strife;
But we make no murmur or sign,
For daily we toil down deep in the soil-
The white slaves of the mine.

When daylight comes I go to work,
When dark I go to bed,
The money that my labor earns,
Keeps us in meat and bread.
Poor father he was killed one day,
Yet mother for him pines,
And that is why you see me here
A white slave of the mine.

But after all when life is done,
And God has called the roll,
I hope to find He's not forgot
The little collier soul;
Hard work and toil has dwarfed him so,
And ground him down so fine-
That is why you see me here
A white slave of the mine.

Minstrels of the Mine Patch - George Korson

Miner's Vocabulary

Search and Find

I S B L R S H I F T T P W T O R K
 I N L U E E T H E A I U M N I K Y
 N E S A R U N W H E M M E E R R E
 S L O O T N F I T H B P H D E O E
 S L E D G E H A M M E R B I S W U
 N A C H C N U L N F R L L C N C R
 E E V U D B E R U S A L S C H O E
 T I S R N S R R N C O L E A A U G
 E E I U T D N E K C I C N T N R N
 P L K O O A E L A A P O I O T A A
 L R V C C H U R R K S A M N H G D
 X E O E U N H X G S E L Y Y R E S
 X O X P G B O S S R T R G E A N M
 K X X Y A W G N A G O R L X C O O
 D Y N A M I T E H W E U I X I I K
 S H O V E L X S X N M X N K T N E
 S P M A L F A N E T S U D D E U X

Hidden Message — When you've solved the puzzle by finding all the words, the remaining letters will reveal a hidden message.

ACCIDENT	DYNAMITE	RAILS
ANTHRACITE	ENERGY	SHIFT
ASH	FAN	SHOVEL
BLACK LUNG	FUEL	SLATE
BOSS	FURNACE	SLEDGE HAMMER
BREAKER	GANGWAY	SMOKE
BUCKET	HEAT	STOVE
BURN	LAMPS	STRIKE
COAL	LUNCH CAN	TIMBER
COLLIERY	MINER	TON
COOK	MINES	TOOLS
COURAGE	MULE	UNDERGROUND
DANGER	PAY	UNION
DRILL	PROP	WASHHOUSE
DUST	PUMP	WORK

This picture depicts "When boys had to be men." Note the lunch pails they carried. Often called a growler, the can was also used to buy beer at the local tavern. The boys needed a hearty lunch and often had an apple or orange for dessert, but many did not know of other fruits as told in this song.



When my ma was the queen in the kitchen,
 and manys the time she did say,
 That having good health was much
 better than wealth
 So we'd eat miners strawberries
 three times a day. **CHORUS . . .**
 You can bake 'em or boil 'em or
 ground 'em
 & cook 'em for hours in a pot.,
 & serve 'em up cold a week or two old
 But if you're hungry enough man
 they sure hit the spot. **CHORUS . . .**

CHORUS

Them good old miners strawberries,
 The best that you ever did see,
 I was 20 years old before I was told
 That miners strawberries ain't
 nothin but beans.

At the age of 13, a slate picker was advanced to "door boy." The door was put there to circulate air to the face of all workings and there was air pressure against the door at all times. This huge wooden door was in the main gangway and the door boy had to be on the alert for men coming and drivers with cars of coal. There was no signal to warn him and he had to watch through a peep hole in the door. If the door wasn't opened in time, a "trip" would crash through the door and he could be killed. His job was a very active and dangerous one and this ballad was sung by the mining minstrels of years ago. This sketch by Leo J. Ploppert depicts a door boy at the Wm. Penn colliery, circa 1911.

THE DOOR BOY'S LAST GOOD-BYE

In the mine depths' gloom and silence,
Void of sunlight though 'tis mid-day,
There a fearless little door boy sat alone;
Unseen dangers hover round him
At his post upon the gangway,
While he works, and thinks of mother sick at home;
Without warning there's a cave-in,
Rock and timber downward crashing
Hurl the lad moaning to the rocky floor;
But his pale lips framed this message
As his breath was quick and gasping,
"Good-bye mother, Heav'n protect you evermore."

CHORUS . . .

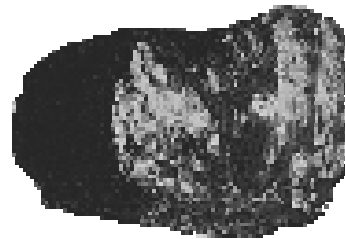
In her dreams the mother fancies
She can hear him softly calling,
She can hear him beck'ning from the starry sky;
Soon her lips will close forever,
And the bitter tears cease falling,
She will meet him where they never say good-bye.
Just a door boy in a coal mine,
A brave-hearted manly fellow,
Who lays dying 'neath the wreckage where he fell;
Deathly gases are his mantle,
Splintered roof rock is his pillow,
Just a door boy, but a hero, fare thee well.

CHORUS . . .

Minstrels of the Mine Patch - George Korson

CHORUS

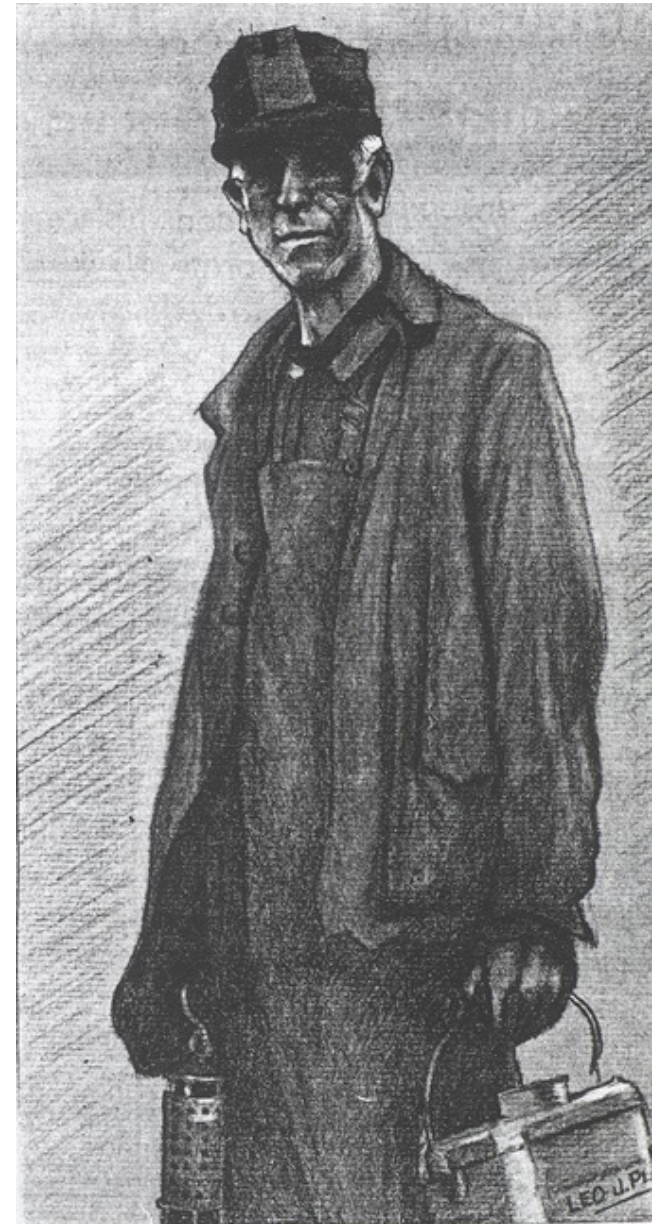
All his thoughts were of his mother,
All for her his broken pleading
As he lay there, dying, at his shattered door:
Bright-winged angels caught this message
As his life was quickly fleeting,
"Good-bye mother, Heav'n protect you evermore."



This Inside Boss at Knickerbocker depicted by Leo J. Ploppert was not always liked by the miners. Here is their song.

Up in the morning,
Down in the mines,
Work like a mule for my pay;
And that damn old boss
has nothin' to do
But hang around and bug me all day.
Dust all around me
 Fillin' my lungs
 Takin' my good breath away;
 And when I'm too old to work
 The union gives me 30
 bucks a month for my pay.
Dear Lord above how I wish there was some way
To kiss this hell hole goodbye;
I curse the day that I ever came down here
I'll be minin' coal 'til I die.
 Robbin' those pillars
 Knowin' my fate
 If one of them should ever give way;
 And that damn old boss
 Won't get off my back
 Yellin for coal every day.
Look at that coal dirt
Deep in my pores,
I just can't scrub it away;
And the sweat rolls down
Burnin' my eyes
As I drag timber up the gangway.
 Swingin' that shovel
 Muckin' that coal
 'til my fingers are calloused and sore;
 20 car loads are filled
 and I wanna go home
 But that damn old boss yells for more.

Oh Lord above how my bones are achin'
from 30 years down in this hole;
Diggin and drillin' 'till my back is breakin'
There's just no relief for my soul.
 Up to the washhouse
 Scrub off the grime
 One more shift put away.
 But there's no glad tomorrow,
 on my weary way home,
 For the dawn means another damn day.



INSIDE BOSS - KNICKERBOCKER

This sketch by Perry Stirling shows a Fire boss who checked the mine before workers entered. This song tells his story.

JENKIN JENKINS

My name is Jenkin Jenkins,
I'm a fireboss of renown,
At three each morning
I make my usual round.
I walk through open cross cuts
To get up to the face,
To find how much gas there is
In every miner's place.

At my headquarters at the foot
When I return from my round,
The miners all depend on me
For everything safe and sound.
For I am the only person
That dare go in the mines,
To investigate all dangers
Before commencing time.

In your place Patsy Patsy,
I'm sure the roof will drop;
Don't let your laborer load any coal
Until you stand a prop.
In your place, Evan Evans,
I find a very bad joint,
You're not arranging your chamber right
According to the point.

Say, Davis, Smith, and Dougherty-
Where were you yesterday?
I hear you three have been drinking
Every since you got your pay.
You three cannot deny it;
I see it in your faces.
You three can now take out your tools-
I've got men in your places.

Minstrels of the Mine Patch - George Korson

CHORUS

My name is Jenkin Jenkins,
I'm a fireboss of renown
I'm known by all the men and boys
That work down underground

I travel over rock and coal
That fall down in the night.
I grope my way the best I can
With my small safety light.



FIRE BOSS

“After the Shift” is the title of this sketch by Perry Stirling. The miners stopped at the local tavern to get a shot to “wash the dust down.” Here is a song telling their story.

THE HARD WORKING MINER

I'm a hard working man, you can see by my hands,
 Although I am friendly and free.
 A dollar a day is a very small pay
 For a man with a large family.
 I didn't come here, boys, to boast or to brag,
 But just for to tell you my troubles,
 I work day and night and the world I must fight
 And load coal with my pick and my shovel.

Just think of the poor man who works in the mines
 With the mules and the rats underground;
 Where the smoke is so thick you can cut it with a stick,
 And can weigh it on scales by the pound.
 My face it is black from the dust of the coal,
 Though my heart it is open and free;
 I would share my last loaf with the man that's in want,
 Though I earn it hard you can see.

Now, my kind friends, I will bid you good-bye;
 I cannot stay here any longer,
 I'll pick up my pack, throw it o'er my back,
 And I think I will make my road shorter,
 I have a wife and small family at home in the house,
 And to meet me I'm sure they'll be glad,
 They will stand at the door when I'm on my way home,
 And they'll say to their mama, "Here's Dad."

CHORUS

I work in the mines where the sun never shines
 Nor daylight does ever appear;
 With my lamp blazing red on the top of my head,
 And in danger I never know fear.



AFTER THE SHIFT

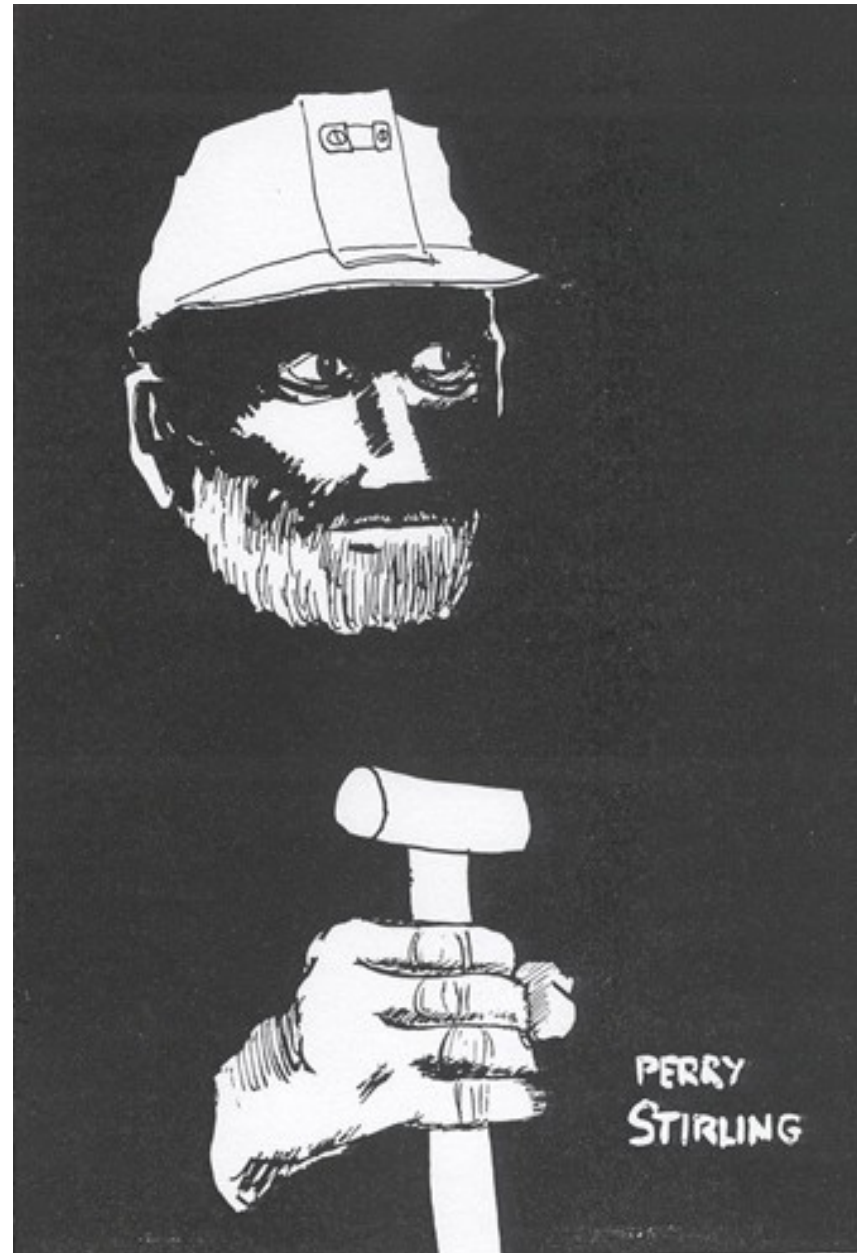
Unscramble the Words

uelm	_____	kmose	_____	contract	pillar
sosb	_____	lirdl	_____	work	pick
ayp	_____	tikers	_____	washhouse	pay
braerb	_____	mebrit	_____	union	mule
cikp	_____	trhae	_____	trip	miner
tuhce	_____	crakt	_____	track	gangway
fitsh	_____	gwnaya	_____	timber	earth
aloc	_____	prit	_____	strike	drill
vhosel	_____	reinm	_____	smoke	colliery
lierlocy	_____	korw	_____	slate	coal
etasl	_____	raillp	_____	shovel	chute
secure	_____	niuon	_____	shift	breaker
nottcarc	_____	seouhshwa	_____	rescue	boss

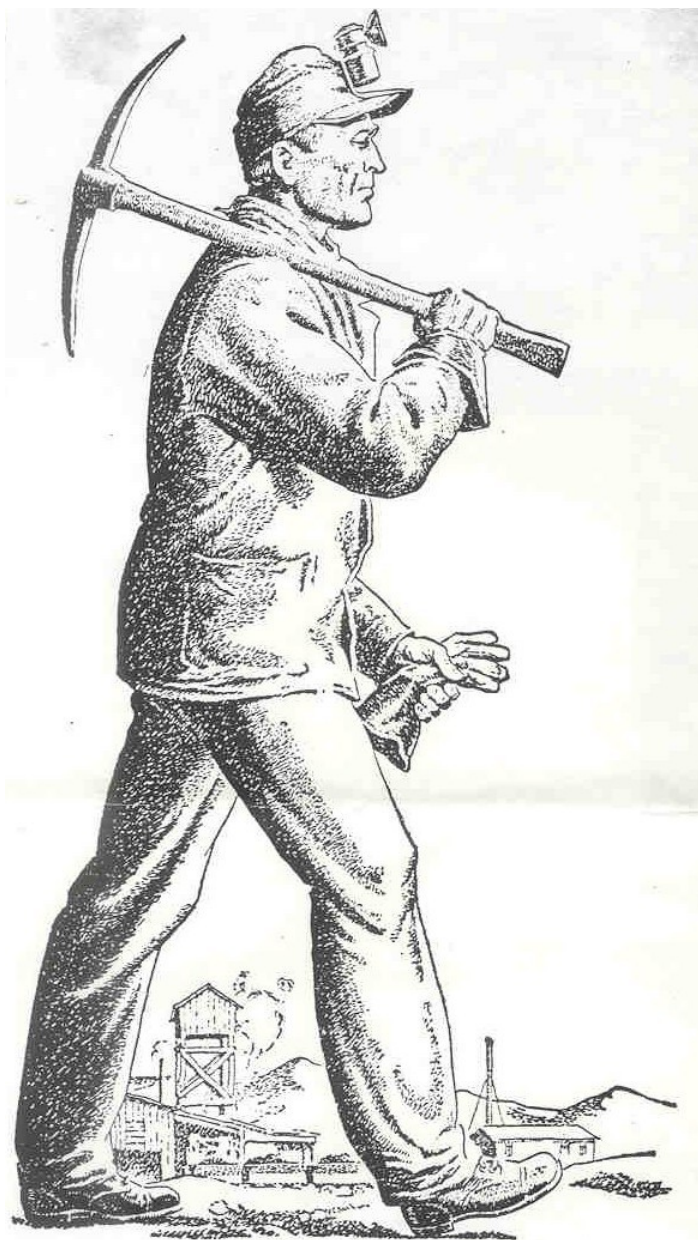
This sketch by Perry Stirling is entitled, "The Old Miner" and here is a poem that was written by William Labenburg, Frackville, in 1926.

THE OLD MINER

God bless the old miner who's gasping for breath
As he lives on in agony waiting for death.
His lungs are all filled with lamp smoke and dust
As he spends day and night in total disgust.
When his mind wanders back to his boyhood days.
How healthy he was, how smooth were his ways,
His limbs were like steel, his muscles were strong
And he never complained of anything wrong.
But his days have passed as time speeds in flight,
Now he yearns for the day and dreads the long night.
He joyfully went to the breaker when nine
And when in his teens, he started to mine.
How proudly he felt when they raised him in pay,
Even though it was but a few dollars a day.
How he worked in foul air from morn until night
Yet always was happy, cheerful and bright.
But also what a pity, how sad is his case
As he gasps for his breath til he's blue in the face.
Some days when it's sunny he takes a short walk
But when you undress him he hardly can talk.
He coughs and he coughs while trying to speak
And returns to his arm chair all tired and weak.
There he sits, the old miner, and thinks of the time
When he could run up a mountain, still in his prime.
Eager, industrious, anxious to make
A neat sum of money for his family's sake.
But now he feels lonesome, heartbroken and pale
And sees younger miners still hearty and hale.
His pleasures have vanished to return nevermore
And he longs for the day when his troubles are o'er.
God bless the old miner, may his pain soon cease.
He'll soon be in a place where all are at peace
But while he is living and dwells with us here
Let us greet him at all times with a smile and good cheer.



THE OLD MINER



Collieries

Search and Find

E Y W L O U L O A M D S I X T E E N T S T A N T O N O
 N G R E E N W O O D A S M E N A H G I H E L N D U O W
 K H D D S N A U T D F H R I A O Y U O U P G H R E S T
 L R A I S T N I C H O L A S N G O I T I L H E E E D R
 O D I S R T W U A Y R L F N C O L N N L L N C G D R E
 F W R K H N A O T N R E K C O B R E K C I N K D D A D
 F A N O W E A E O E E N R P L Y F A H M H E S I R H I
 U D P O N E D I B D S U O E O O C H G I E A C R B C T
 S E S R T A N M D I T R Y I R N N I T P L E H R T I E
 R S N B D S A O L N V N N E A O B L T E P L E A T R C
 A V O R L H E V L O I O S M D T E L M Y A C R E A E U
 D I T E C N E R W A L T S E O S I C A N M T V B G P O
 R L S E I R O W P K L S H E N A N D O A H C I T Y A E
 A L E N T M Y S O H E O U H A M M O N D L T L S O R T
 R E W O D N E L G I L B E R T O N K E N I P L A H D E
 I C N I O M P A A L O B M U C H D O O W H C E E B N Y
 G S T P O R E X X L X X H A R T F O R D U N C A N X X

BEECHWOOD
 BIG MINE RUN
 BOSTON RUN
 BROOKSIDE
 CHAMBERLAIN
 COLORADO
 CUMBOLA
 DRAPER
 DUNCAN
 EAGLE HILL
 EAST BEAR RIDGE
 FORRESTVILLE
 GILBERTON
 GIRARD
 GLENDOWER
 GREENWOOD

GUINEA HILL
 HARTFORD
 HAMMOND
 HECKSCHERVILLE
 INDIAN RIDGE
 KNICKERBOCKER
 LAWRENCE
 LEHIGH
 MAHANOEY CITY
 MAPLE HILL
 MOUNT HOPE
 OAK HILL
 NEWKIRK
 PINE FOREST
 PINE KNOT

PIONEER
 PRESTON
 RICHARDSON
 ST. NICHOLAS
 SALEM
 SHENANDOAH CITY
 SILVERTON
 STANTON
 SUFFOLK
 THOMASTON
 TUNNEL
 WADESVILLE
 WESTON
 WESTWOOD
 YORK FARM

Hidden Message – When you’ve solved the puzzle by finding all the words, the remaining letters will reveal a hidden message.

The mine patch minstrels sang of the tragedy, joy, grief, and humor of life in and about the mines. This song was for the retired miner as depicted by Leo J. Ploppert.

THE OLD MINER'S REFRAIN

I'm getting old and feeble and I can work no more:
I have laid the rusty mining tools away.
For forty years and over I have toiled about the mines,
But now I'm getting feeble, old and gray.
I started in the breaker and went back to it again,
But now my work is finished for all time;
The only place that's left me is the almshouse for a home,
That's where I'll lay this weary head of mine.

In the chutes I graduated instead of going to school-
Remember, friends, my parents they were poor;
When a boy left the cradle it was always made the rule
To try to keep starvation from the door.
At eight years of age to the breaker first I went,
To learn the occupation of a slave;
I was certainly delighted, and on picking slate was bent-
My ambition it was noble, strong and brave.

At eleven years of age I bought myself a lamp-
The boss he sent me down the mine to trap;
I stood in there in water, in powder smoke and damp;
My leisure hours I spent in killing rats.
One day I got promoted to what they called a patcher,
Or a lackey for the man that drives the team:
I carried sprags and spreaders and had to fix the latch-
I was going through my exercise, it seems.

I next became a driver, and thought myself a man;
The boss he raised my pay as I advanced:
In going through the gangway with the mules at my command,
I was prouder than the President of France.
But now my pride is weakened and I am weakened too;
I tremble till I'm scarcely fit to stand:
If I were taught book learning instead of driving teams,
Today, kind friends, I'd be a richer man.

I next became a miner and
laborer combined,
For to earn my daily
bread beneath the
ground.

I performed the acts of
labor which came in a
miner's line --

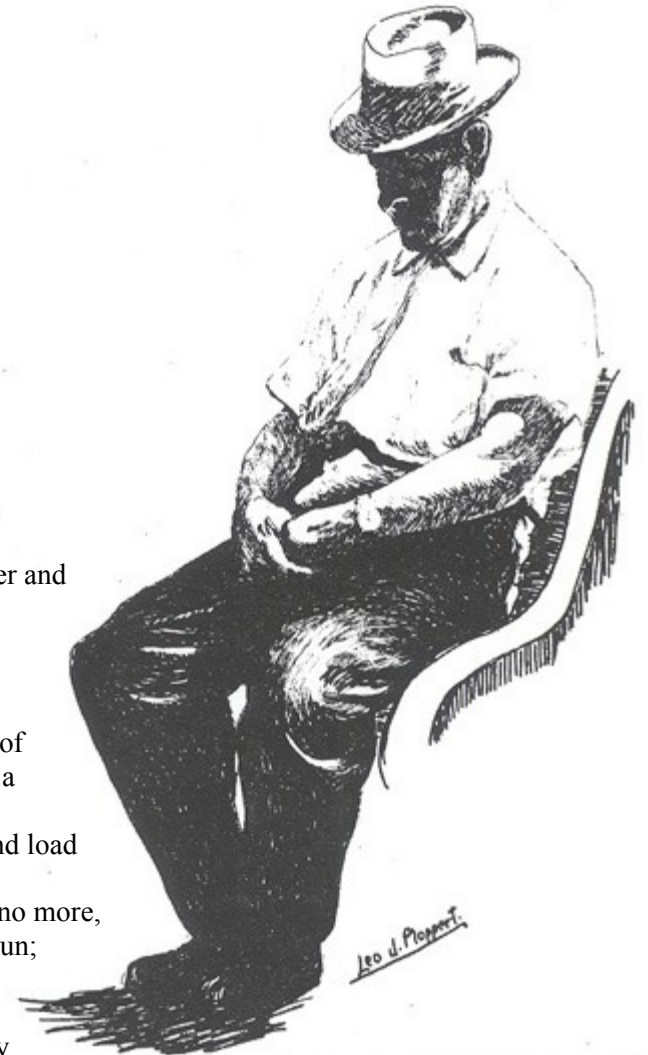
For to get my cars and load
them I was bound.

But now I can work no more,
my cares of life are run;

I am waiting for the
signal at the door;

When the angels they
will whisper, "Dear old miner, you must come

And we'll row you to the bright celestial shore."

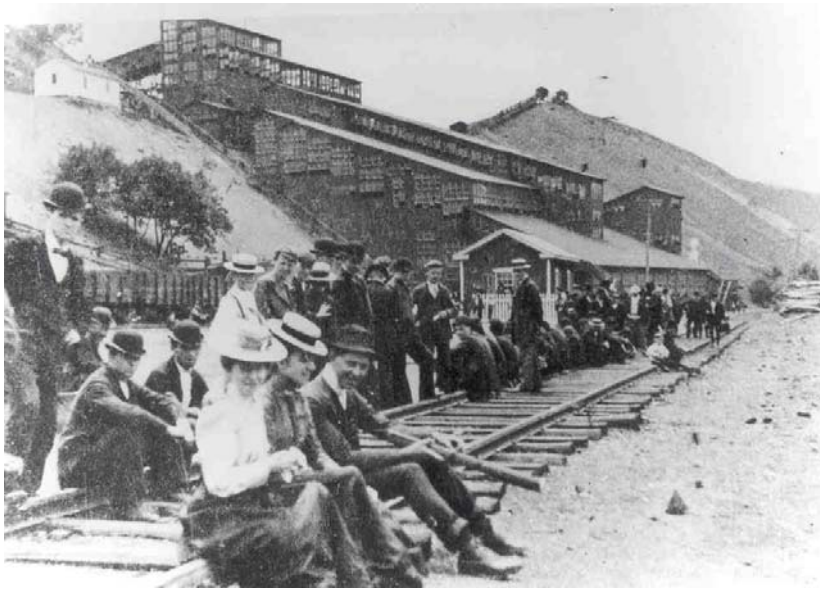


Minstrels of the Mine Patch - George Korson

MINER'S ALBUM



Workers dressed up in their mining clothes to go to the Wild Cat Colliery on May 10, 1921. Peter Kowker is on the far right.



Pay day at Tunnel Ridge Colliery 1913.



All dressed in their Sunday best, these three miners immigrated from Poland to earn a better living in the United States. They lived in Frackville and worked in the mines – the only work they could get. Left is Joseph Michalsky. Standing is George Nielubowicz, 35, who was killed at the Gilberton Colliery in 1929. He and Joseph Gibowicz, right, were partners and contract miners when the accident occurred. Joseph Gibowicz contracted the miners Black Lung and died December 13, 1934, at the age of 42.

Pennsylvania Profiles cartoons, by Patrick M. Reynolds, are available as a set of **eight books** for **\$45.69** from the Red Rose Studio, 358 Flintlock Dr., Willow Street, PA 17584; call **toll-free** 1-888-839-5673. Website: www.redrosetudio.com.

There existed a unique breed of men who brought joy and levity into the dour, drab, depressing mine villages, or patches, of the anthracite coal region during the last half of the 19th century. These care-free, funny mine patch minstrels, as colorful as those in merrie olde England, roamed up and down the region, from Cressona to Carbondale, composing and singing ballads about hard-coal mining.

Whenever one of the “fiddle-playin’ fools” strolled into a patch someone would borrow a sheet of iron from the nearby colliery and lay it on the rocky ground. The troubadour would step on this “stage” and perform a one-man show of jigs, reels, ditties and improvised songs – in exchange for a night’s lodging, a meal, or loose change to buy liquor.

Shown here is Ed Foley of Black Heath, a great improvisator who did his best work at Irish wakes and christenings.

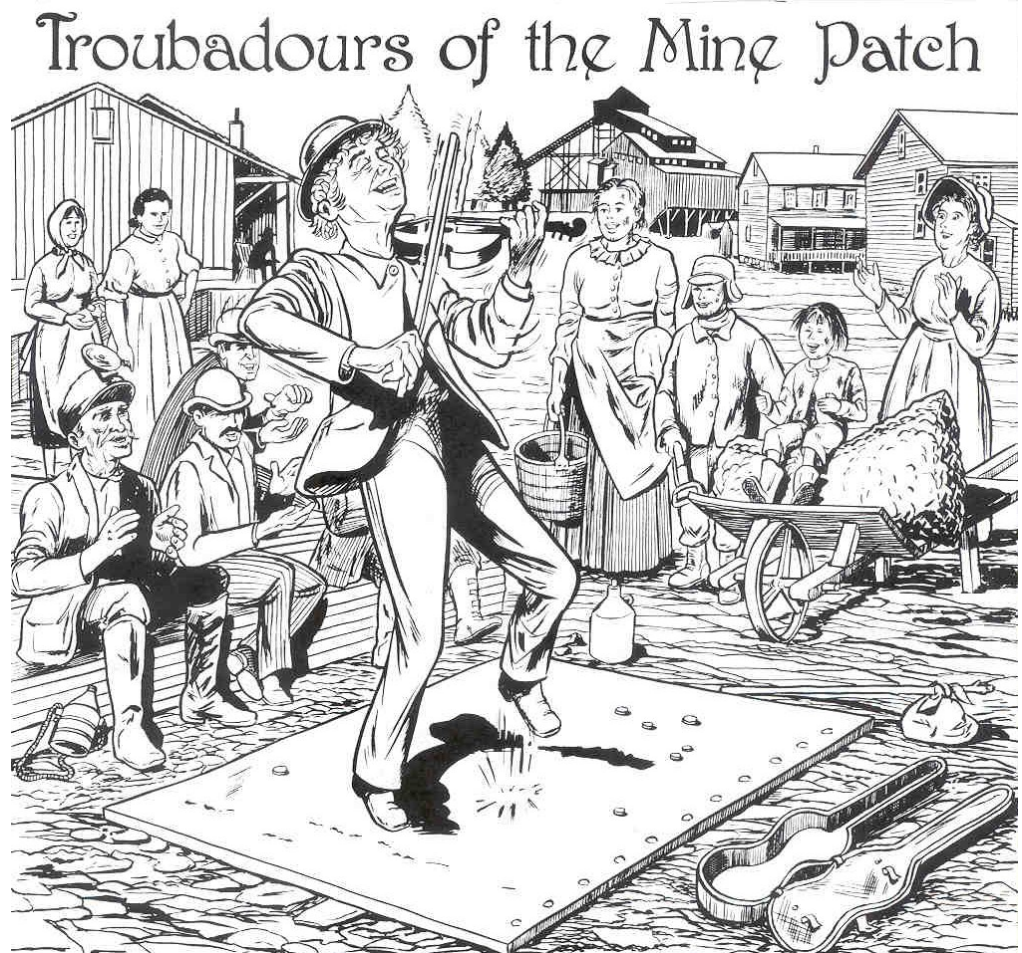
The best known bard was Con Carbon from Hazleton. He broke from the Irish influence of most anthracite ballads and glorified the Slavic immigrants with songs like “The Hungarian Ball” and “A Greenhorn Makes Good.”

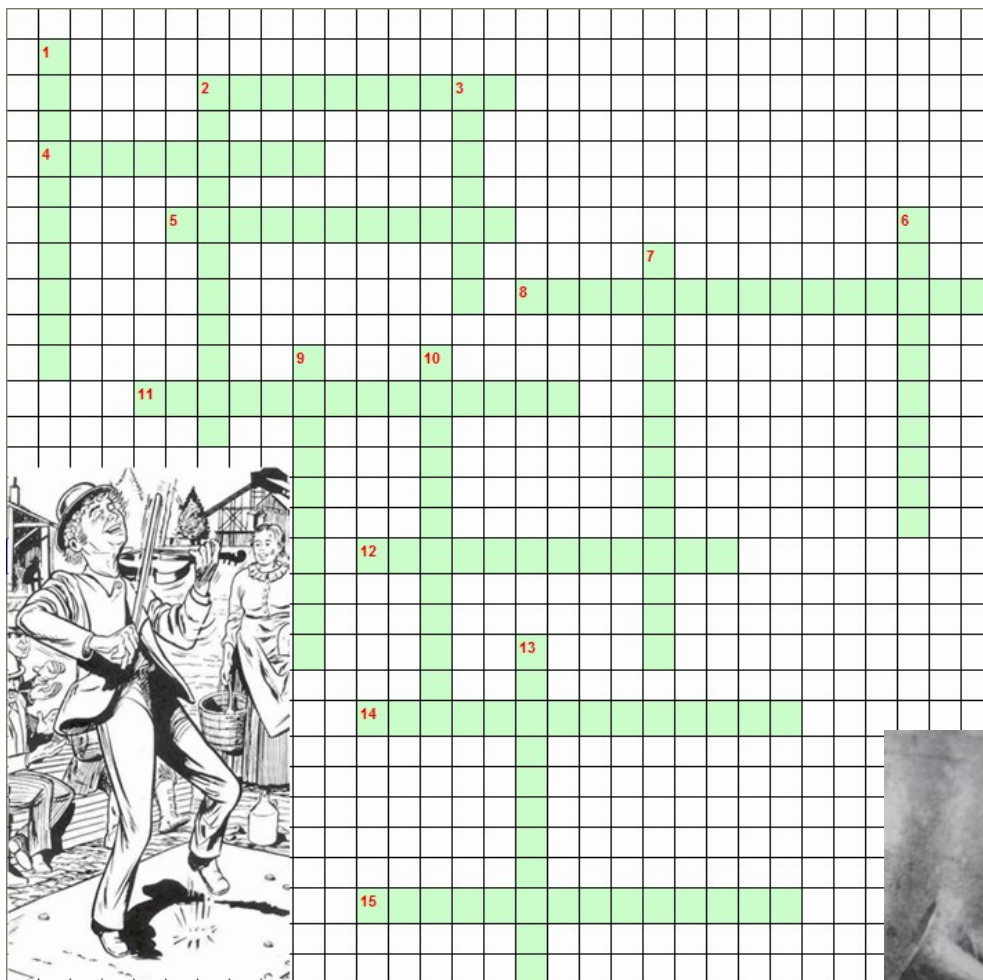
Martin ‘Poet’ Mulhall of Shenandoah was the poet laureate of the Molly Maguires. For each of the sixteen men who were convicted and hanged for being Mollies, he created a song such as “Muff Lawler the Squealer.”

William Keating of Pottsville composed songs before he learned how to read and write, such as “October on Mount Laffee’s Hills,” “The Driver Boys of Wadesville Shaft,” and “Down, Down, Down,” a barroom ballad relating the feelings of a miner reporting to work at the Oak Hill shaft in Duncott with a roaring hangover.

Other great troubadours of the mine patch are the Johnson Brothers Patrick and Jack from Summit Hill; Barney Kelly of Ashland; Dennis Coyle and Michael McAndrew both of Wilkes-Barre; Harry Tempest of St. Clair; Bob Quigley of Carbondale; Jerry Byrne of Buck Run; Lansford’s Joe Gallagher; Thomas Rowlands of Edwardsville; Danny Walsh & Jim Connors of Centralia.

Anthracite ballads have earned a niche in American folklore, thanks to Ukrainian-born George Korson of Wilkes-Barre who collected & preserved them in his book “Minstrels of the Mine Patch.”





Troubadours of the Mine Patch crossword puzzle

Times were hard for union miners during the long strike in 1902. For five months, from May 15 to October 22, the collieries were idle and the men had to look elsewhere for income to keep their families. In Mahanoy Plane, a group of musically-minded mineworkers decided to try their luck as a traveling band. Dressed in their mining togs, felt hats, wick-lamps and proudly displaying their "No. 2" union buttons, they hit the road for Philadelphia and other cities, where they were well-received. In front are, from left: William Miller who later organized and directed the renowned Coaldale victory Band, Peter Miller and Fred Miller. In the rear are: John Coonan, Harry Cook, Freddie Brennan, who later became superintendent of Locust Mountain Hospital, George Metzger and John Norton.



Match the troubadour's name with the town where he lived.

ACROSS

- 2 CARBONDALE
- 4 HAZLETON
- 5 WILKES-BARRE
- 8 WILKES-BARRE
- 11 POTTSVILLE
- 12 LANSFORD
- 14 SUMMIT HILL
- 15 EDWARDSVILLE

DOWN

- 1 CENTRALIA
- 2 ASHLAND
- 3 BLACK HEATH
- 6 BUCK RUN
- 7 SHENANDOAH
- 9 CENTRALIA
- 10 ST. CLAIR
- 13 SUMMIT HILL

MUSICAL MINERS