Lenticular Lamps

by Manfred Stutzer

Lenticular- (or tunnel-, Sicilian-, rooster-) lamps were used in mines and railroad tunnel constructions predominantely in South-European countries (Spain, Italy, Greece, South-France) and in the alpin countries (Austria, Switzerland, South-Germany) as well in parts of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. The first lenticular lamps were introduced pre 1850 and after ~1920 they were substituted through other lights (carbide cap- and hand lamps, safety lamps and electric lights).

Lenticular lamps were made in iron and much rarer also in brass. We know simple made lenticular lamps and more fancy lamps (fitted with a fancy hook). In addition there are rarer eight-sided (octagonal) and even sixteen-sided lamps. Either the lamps were fitted with a rooster or a heart to fix the oil chamber plate, which can be oval or arrow shaped.

The diameter of the lenticular oil chamber can vary from ~ 8 cm to 20 cm. Mostly the lamps burned vegetable oil. Often the name of the manufacturer is stamped on the lamp.

(Illustration right) Turkish mining stock share. "Mines de Balia-Karaidin", 1913.

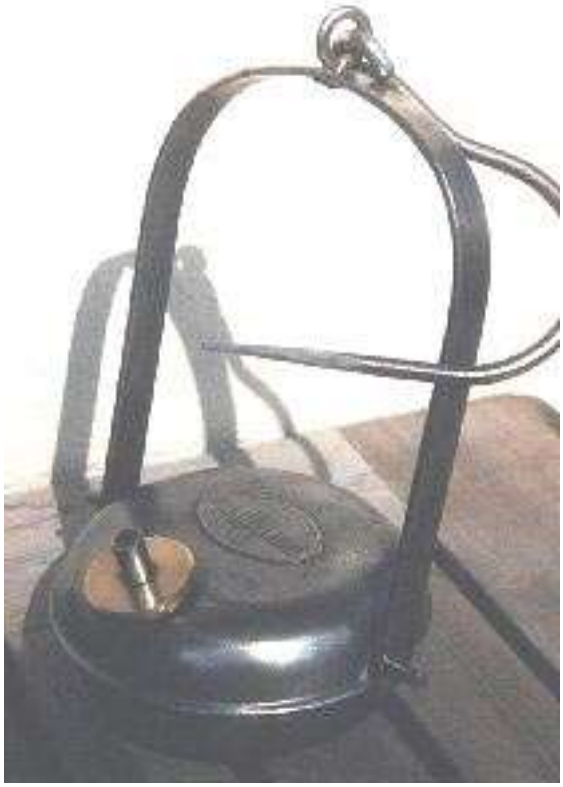
France: The name for the lenticular lamp in France is "Rave" or "Crezieux Stephanois". The lamps were used often in the Soane-et-Loire mining area around St. Etienne. Most of the French makers were located in St. Etienne. Names of makers are:

A. Clozet
P. Varenne
V. de Verrier
Tezenat
Canonier
Dervieux
Ollagno
Goutelle
G. Rossi/Paris
Appareils d'Eclairage H. Luchaire/Paris

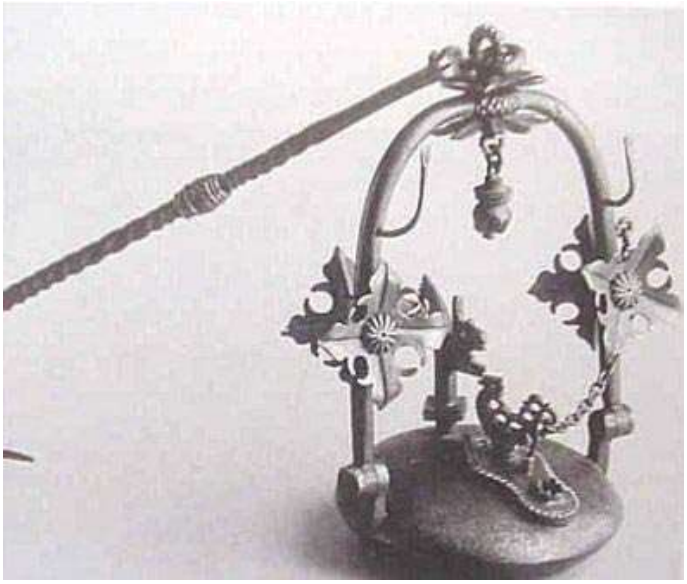
Germany: Names of makers or dealers are: Gebr. Rötelmann in Werdohl, Westfalia and Wilhelm Seippel in Bochum, Westfalia. Lenticular lamps are pictured in sales catalogues (~1905) of the two mentioned German lamp makers, but it is more likely that the lamps were imported (France?) and only re-sold.

Austria: Name of maker: P. Pirringer in Graz

Bohemia: "Joachimthaler Lamps", maker: unknown



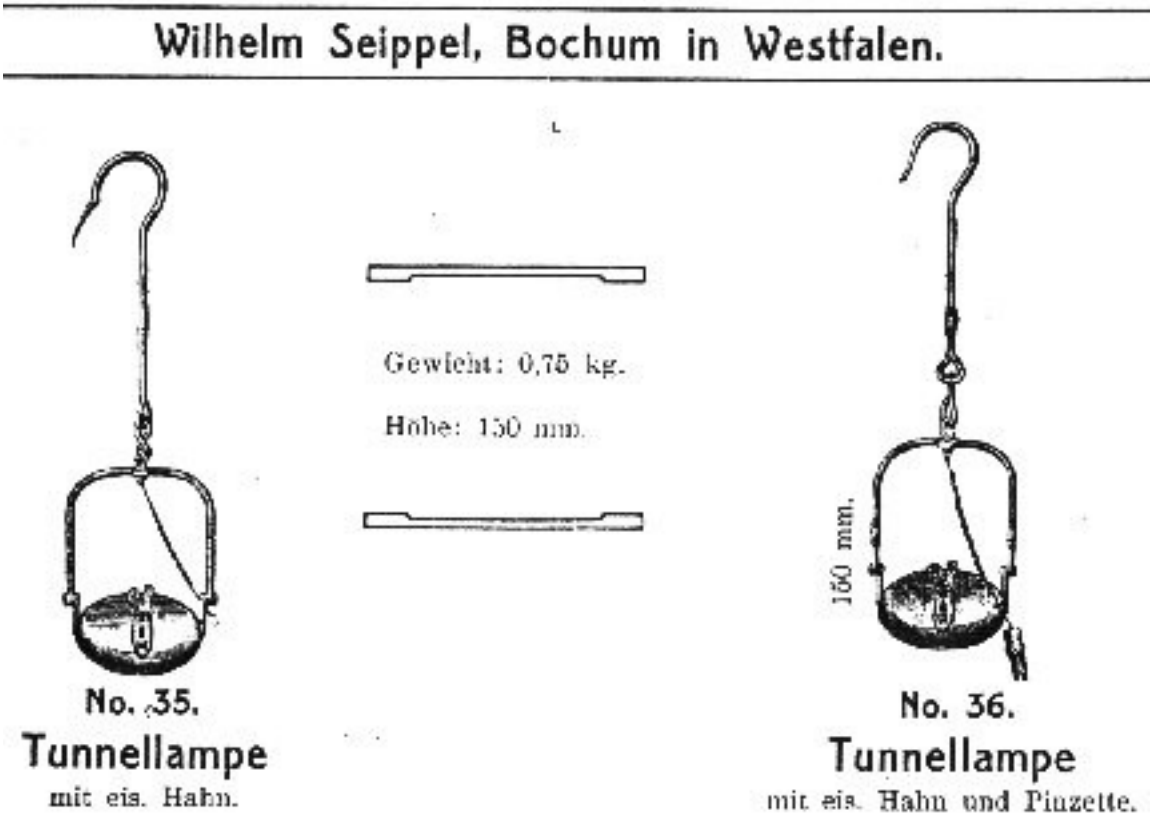
(left) French tunnel similar lamp made by G. Rossi, Paris. (right) French tunnel lamp made by "Appareils d'Eclairage H. Luchaire, 27 Rue Erard, Paris, ~1900.



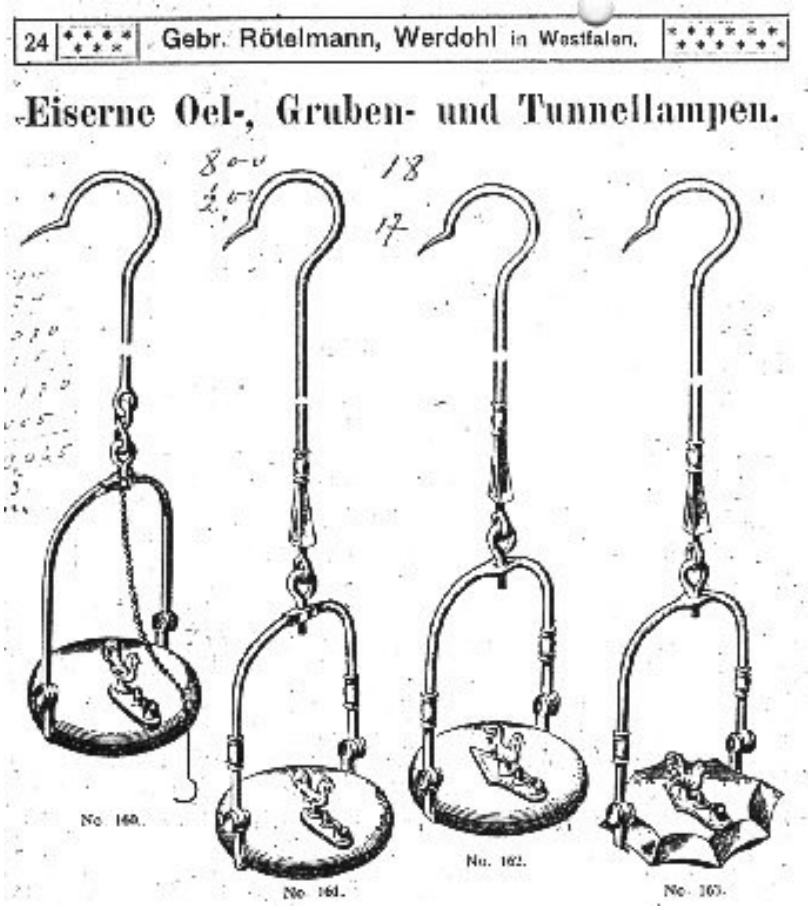
(left) Very oranamental lenticular lamp, France. (right) Lenticular lamp with fancy hook and rare bail.

(left) Lenticular lamp with brass rooster in center of the lamp, France. (upper right) Lenticular lamp with fancy hook, Bohemia. (lower right) Lenticular lamp with a fancy hook.

(left) Lenticular lamp with stamped brass plate ("Glueck-Auf" and name of the owner). (right) Lenticular lamp with fancy bail (Austrian-Hungarian). (below) Lenticular lamp made by P. Pirringer in Graz/Austria.



Advertisement by "Wilhelm Seippel in Bochum, Westfalia, Germany, 1905



Advertisement by "Gebr. Roetelmann in Werdohl, Westfalia, Germany, 1908.

(left) Eigtht-sided lenticular lamp with brass rooster. (right) Eight-sided brass lamp.

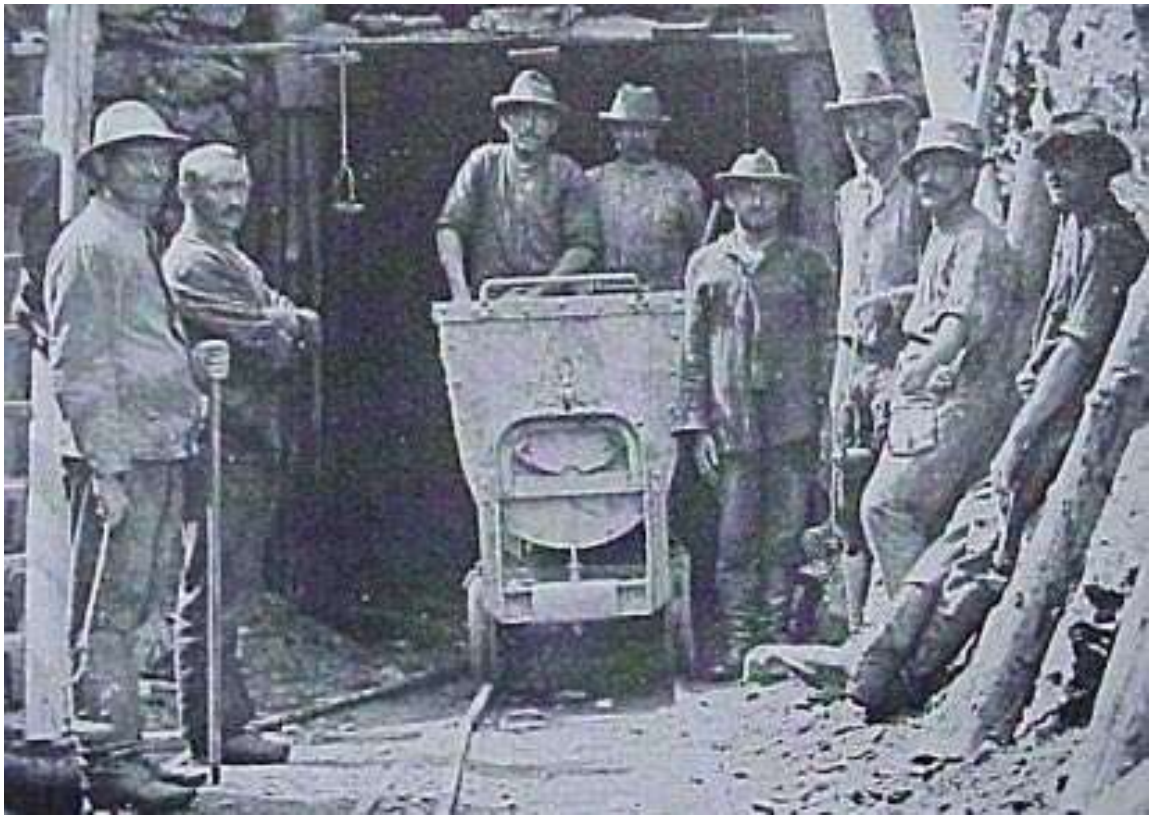
Eight Sided Lamps

"Joachimsthaler" eight-sided lenticular lamp, Bohemia.

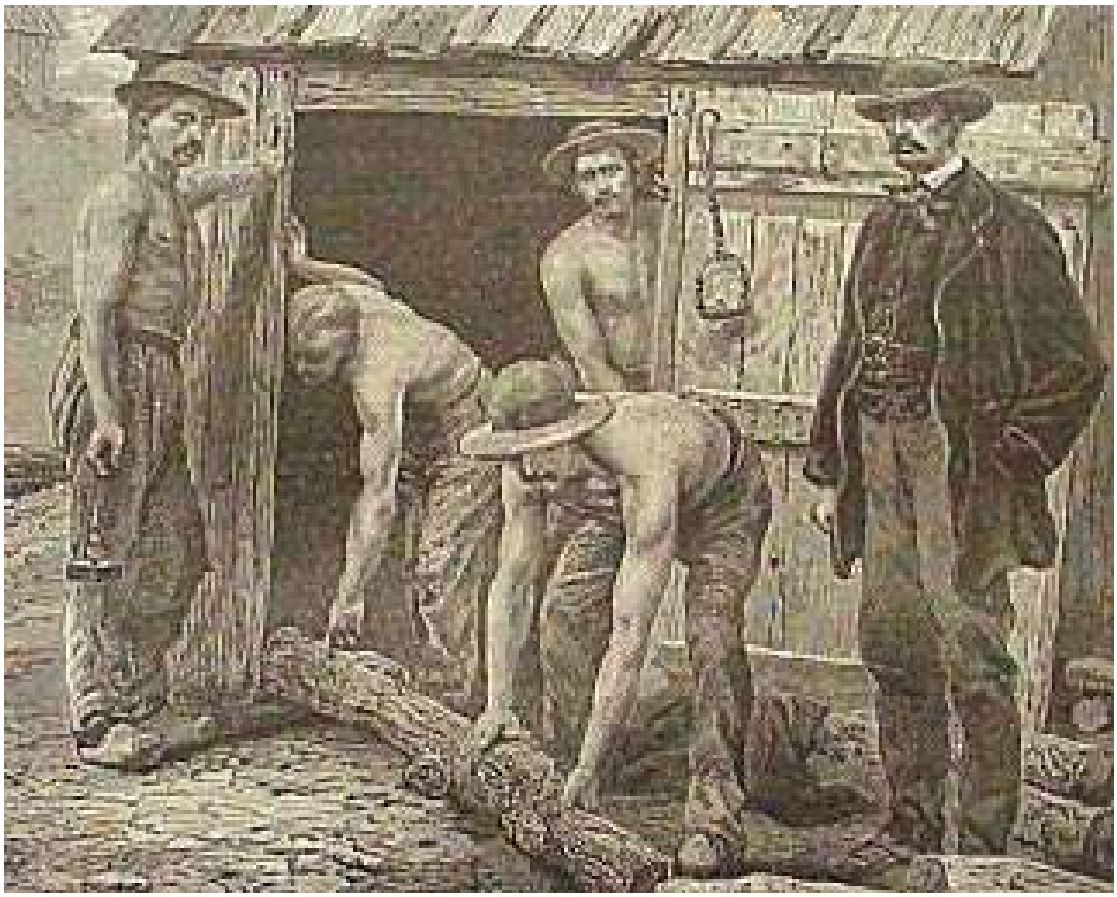
Sixteen Sided Lenticular Lamps

(left) Sixteen-sided lenticular lamp.

(below) Sixteen-sided lenticular lamp, very fancy.



Miners with tunnel lamps, 1903, Lengefeld/Erzgebirge, Germany.



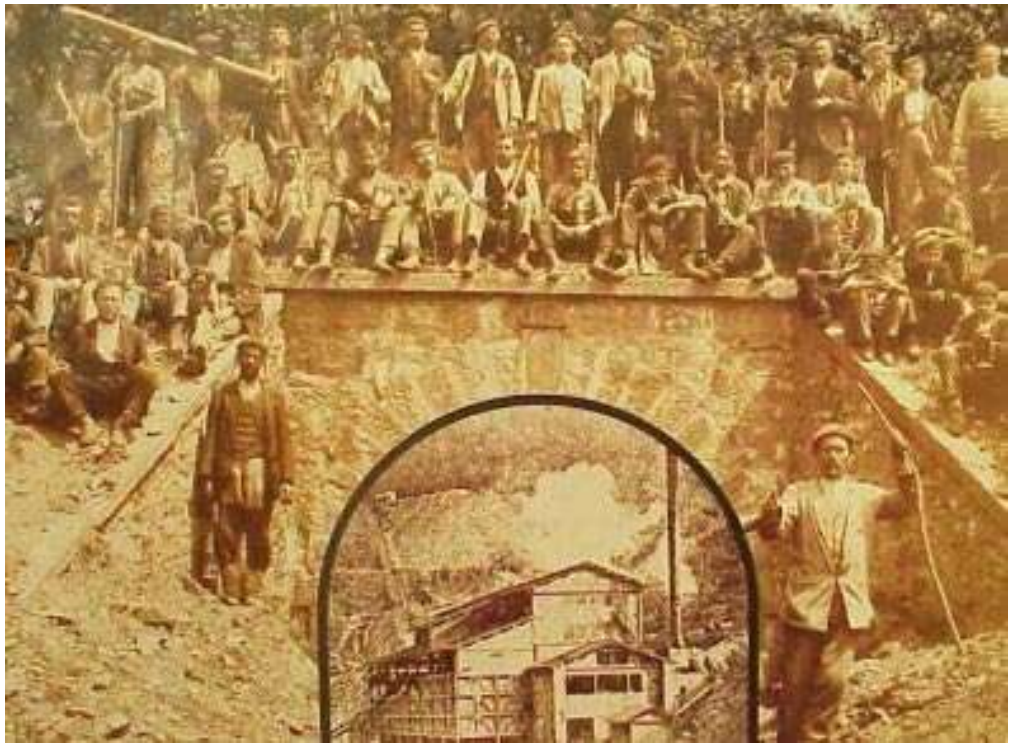
«Mine de Montchanin ', print by Simonin " Le Tour de Monde", 1865.

Greek silver ore miners with tunnel lamps, Laurion, ~1900

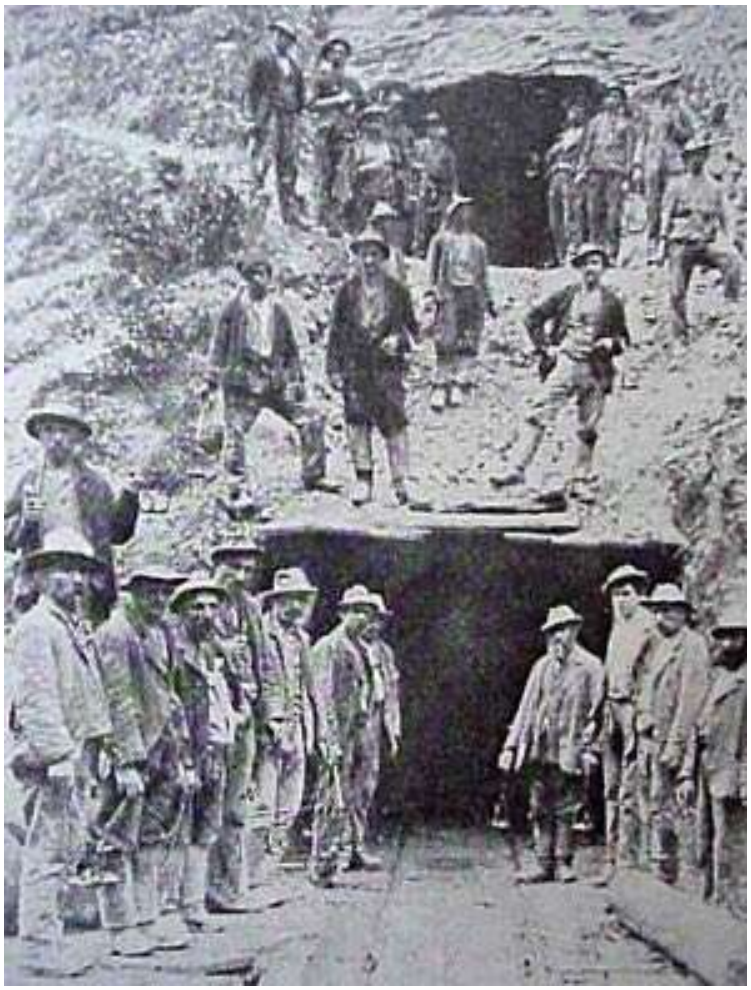
Italian miner with tunnel lamp, 1906, preparing a blasting.

French miners, print by Simonin,"Le Tour du Monde, 1865.

Miners with tunnellamps, Simplon tunnel, 1903, Switzerland.

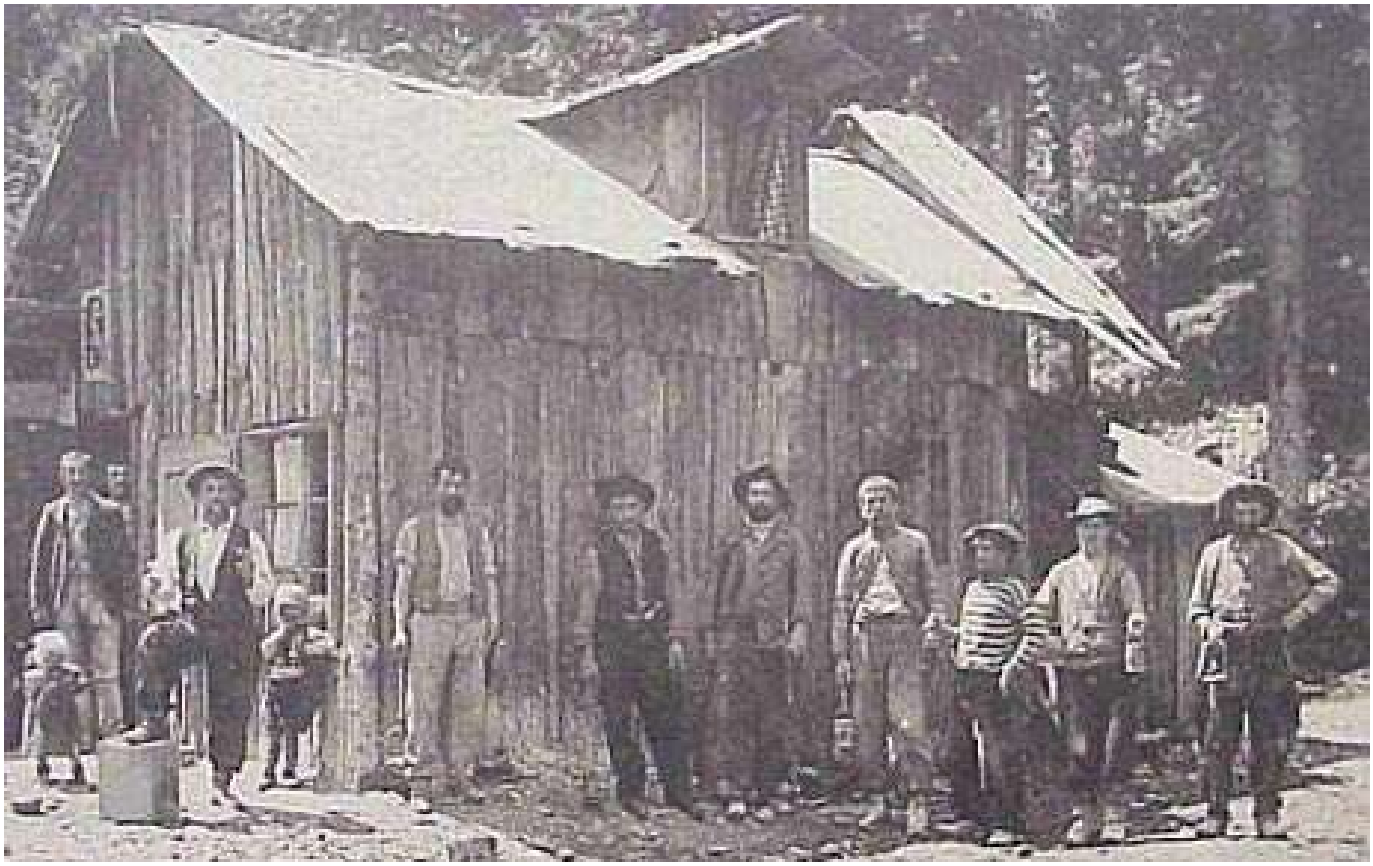


Spanish coal miners with tunnel- and safety lamps, 1916, Mina Baltasara, Asturia.



(left) Austrian coal miners, ~1905, "Wolfsegg-Traunthaler Braunkohlenwerke". (right) Austrian miner "Hans Lackner", ~ 1900, Gold mining Salzburg area.

Miners with tunnel lamps, ~1905, Freudenberg, Germany.



French miners with tunnel- and carbide lamps, 1910.

Austrian bronze medal, 1905, issued on the occasion of tunnel "Karawanken" breakthrough.

Small Austrian bronze figurine, 1904, issued on the occasion of tunnel "Wochein" breakthrough.

(above) Austrian bronze medal, 1906, issued on the occasion of tunnel « Wildalpen-Goestling » breakthrough

(right) French silver medal, "Société Anonyme des Mines et Usines de Peyrebrune", ~1900..