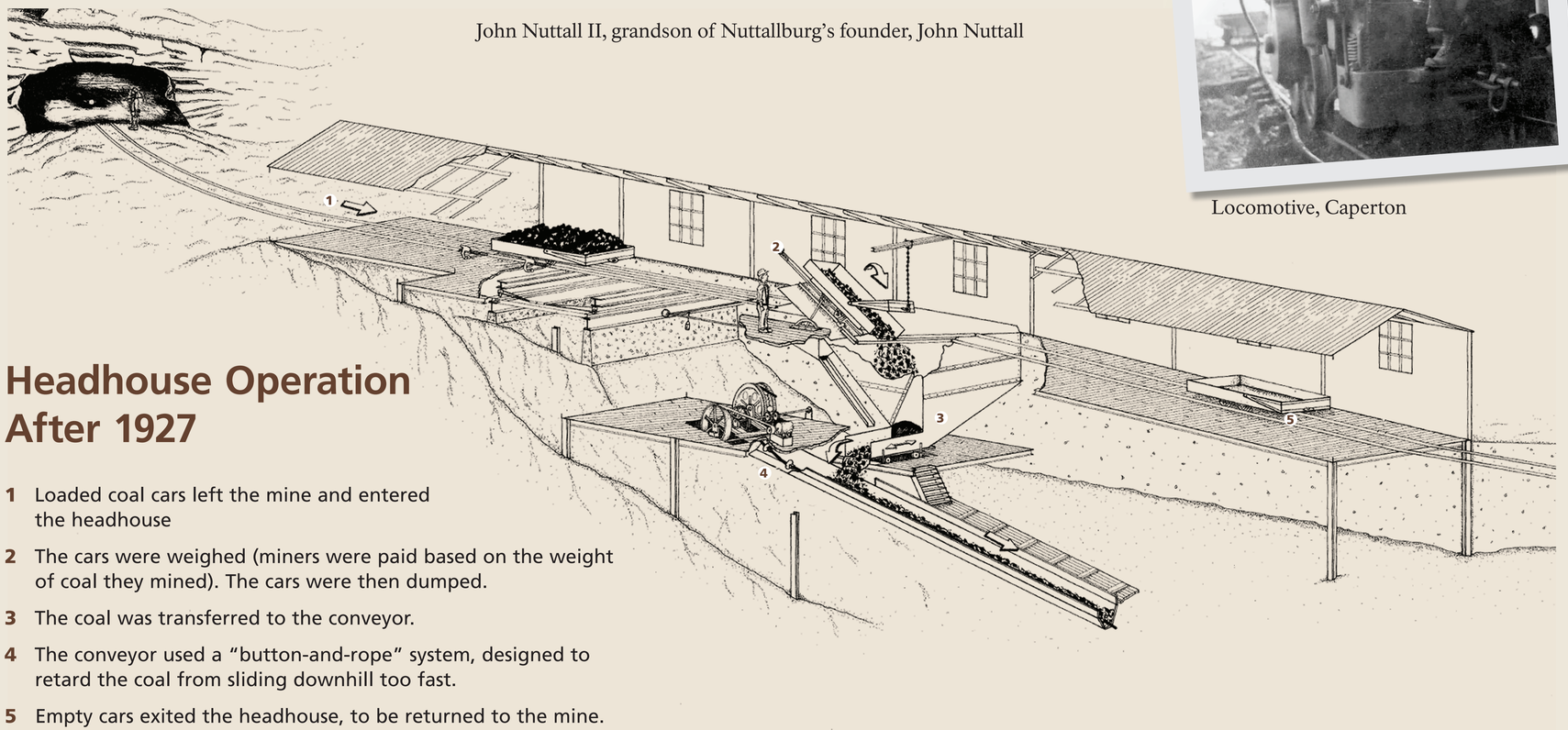
Modern Technology

The structure in front of you was the Nuttallburg Mine's headhouse and conveyor. Here coal was received from the mine and was transferred to the bottom of the gorge for sorting and shipping. When they were built in the 1920s, the headhouse and conveyor were 20th-century cutting-edge technology.

New River Gorge presented a special engineering challenge, how to transfer coal from the mine halfway up the gorge slope to the bottom with minimal breakage. Coal here was high quality, but friable, or breakable. The less breakage, the better. This conveyor moved coal to the bottom as gently as possible.

The drumhouse [headhouse] was a busy, noisy nerve center when the mine got going full tilt.

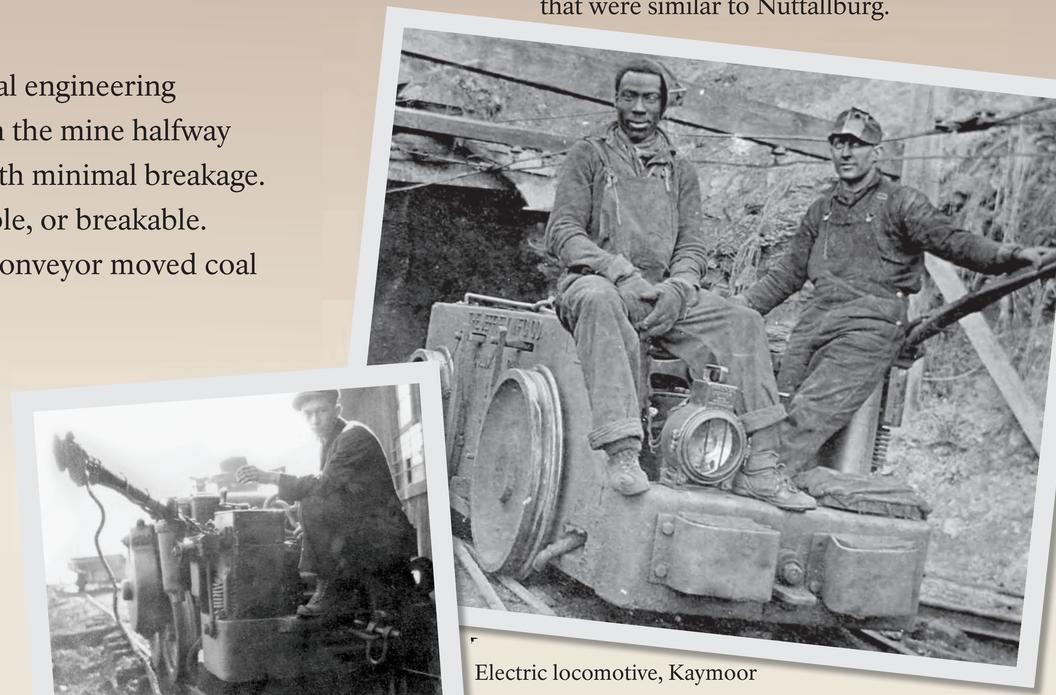
John Nuttall II, grandson of Nuttallburg's founder, John Nuttall



Headhouse Operation After 1927

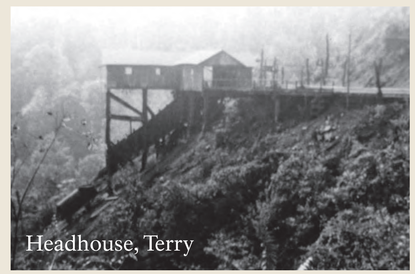
1. Loaded coal cars left the mine and entered the headhouse
2. The cars were weighed (miners were paid based on the weight of coal they mined). The cars were then dumped.
3. The coal was transferred to the conveyor.
4. The conveyor used a "button-and-rope" system, designed to retard the coal from sliding downhill too fast.
5. Empty cars exited the headhouse, to be returned to the mine.

The photos below were not taken at Nuttallburg, but they show mine features in New River Gorge that were similar to Nuttallburg.



Locomotive, Caperton

Electric locomotive, Kaymoor



Headhouse, Terry

Headhouse, Elverton