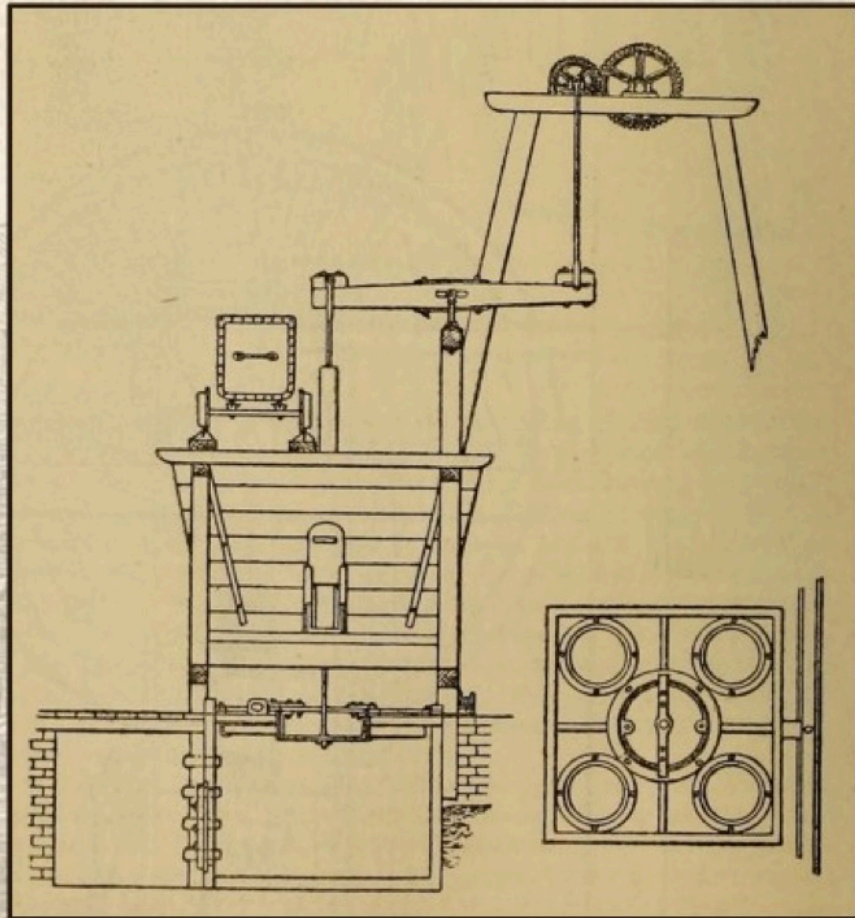


Thomas Mitchell Petherick (1794-1880) was born in Gwennap, Cornwall, England. His two younger brothers, William and John were both mining engineers.



In 1828, Captain Thomas Petherick of the Fowey Consols Mine, the largest, deepest, most important, copper mine in Cornwall; developed a mechanized hydraulic jig.

'Petherick's Separator' kept the sieve stationary but moved the water up and down in the hutch by means of a plunger operated by a rod activated by a rocking beam run by a crank on a flywheel that was easily driven by a waterwheel. Petherick patented his Separator in 1830. The jig became widely used to separate various minerals at the base metal mines in the U.K.





Photo courtesy of Reading Anthracite Co. Historical Library

Thomas and his family immigrated to the United States in 1843 and settled in Pottsville.

In 1844 Thomas Petherick took charge of the Forestville colliery as agent for the Forest Improvement Company. He shipped the coal as it came from the mine until 1848, when he built a breaker with a capacity of 100 tons daily. In 1852 Richard Heckscher & Co. began to work the colliery, and in 1857 they erected a larger breaker, and later the New York and Schuylkill Coal Company operated the colliery. During this time Moses Taylor lent funds to Forest Improvement, the Heckschers, and New York & Schuylkill. Petherick started working for him.



As early as 1849, records report him as “an employee of the Taylor - Heckscher interests, and he also worked for the anthracite Parrish family: Charles, George, and Frederick. For a time, he had charge of the Lehigh Zinc Works, and he was issued several patents for coal breaker equipment. Petherick was well known as a prospector, usually rumored to be working for Taylor, and traveled widely. Among investigations he made were the Dauphin & Susquehanna Coal Company, the Pequa Railroad & Improvement, the Silver Hill Mine in NC, Coal Hill on ‘the Canadian border,’ and Nova Scotia Coal Iron & Oil.

