

# The Hard Coal Navy

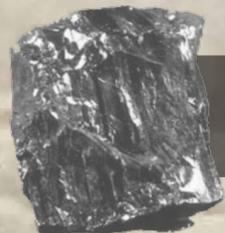
The process of dredging coal on the Susquehanna between Danville and Sunbury started as early as the 1890's and continued to the 1950's.

A fleet of battered steamboats and barges known as the Hard Coal Navy worked the waters of the North Branch. These boats and their industrious captains dredged up coal from the river bottom, waste that had washed down from the anthracite coal fields of the Wyoming Valley.

This was a seasonal industry, and at the height of the season there would be as many as 200 barges dredging the river from Nanticoke to Harrisburg. The coal was sold to utilities, industries and schools.

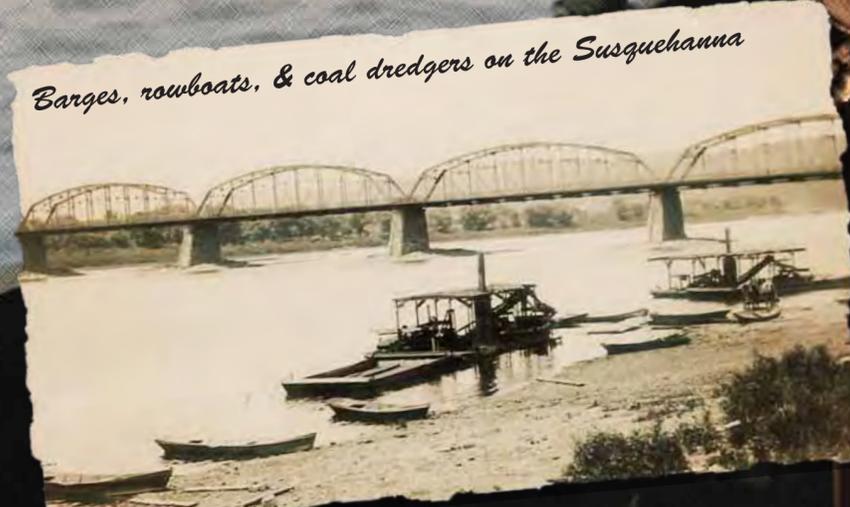


*Prentiss Coal Dredger on the Susquehanna River*



In 1919 and 1920 over 2,000,000 tons of river coal was harvested each year.

*Captain Bill Prentiss*



*Barges, rowboats, & coal dredgers on the Susquehanna*



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