One Hundred and Twenty-five Years

of

Pig Iron Manufacture

at

Robesonia, Pennsylvania

The Robesonia Iron Company
Limited
21 South Twelfth Street
Philadelphia

Foreword

THE purpose of this booklet is to show our friends through the medium of photographs the nature of our operations in manufacturing Low Phosphorus Pig Iron at Robesonia.

However, since this small publication also marks the anniversary of the one hundred and twenty-fifth year of Pig Iron manufacture at Robesonia, it seems appropriate to briefly mention the history of The Robesonia Iron Company, Limited, and its predecessors.

The first Pig Iron was made at Robesonia by George Ege in October, 1793. He was a large land holder and the furnace was built on his property and was owned and operated by him until the time of his death. The town of Robesonia did not then exist; nor was it named until many years later. The furnace at that time was known as Reading Furnace. It was, of course, of small dimensions and used as a fuel charcoal obtained from the timber cut from Mr. Ege's land. Then, as now, and during the entire intervening period, ore from the famous Cornwall

deposit twenty-five miles distant was used. The Iron then made seems to have enjoyed a high reputation for quality, which we trust is still the case. It was employed for foundry and forging purposes, largely the latter, at Charming Forge in the near vicinity, a property in which Mr. Ege was also interested.

During the time between Mr. Ege's death in 1835 and the year 1844, the property passed through various hands, among the owners being Messrs. Klein, Seilzinger, McCrea, Porter and others. In 1845, Robeson, Brooke & Company purchased the property. The present name of the plant and the town nearby is derived from that of Mr. Robeson.

Robeson, Brooke & Company immediately erected a new furnace of enlarged dimensions, using anthracite coal as fuel. Hot blast stoves were first added at this time. This stack was operated until the year 1854, when it was torn down and another stack erected, again of increased capacity, but still intended to use anthracite coal.

In our records it is stated that the first stack of Robeson, Brooke & Company was capable of producing forty to fifty tons a week, and the one erected in 1854 was capable of producing two hundred and fifty tons a week.

Robeson, Brooke & Company continued to operate the furnace, now known as Robesonia, until 1858, when upon the death of Mr. Brooke the firm became Robeson & White—Mr. White being the son-in-law of Mr. Brooke.

This firm was in existence for only one year. In 1860, following the death of Mr. Robeson, the firm of White, Ferguson & Company was formed, Mr. White being the principal owner of the property, and Mr. Ferguson a practical iron manufacturer. This firm, with a change of name to White & Ferguson in 1863, and subsequently to Ferguson, White & Company, upon the death of the elder Mr. White, continued to operate the property until 1885, when William R. White, the son of the elder White and his sister, Mrs. Henry P. Borie, purchased Mr. Ferguson's interest in the property, and with Messrs. William C. Freeman and Edward C. Freeman, and their sisters, Miss Isabel C. Freeman and Mrs. B. H. Buckingham, formed The Robesonia Iron Company, Limited, on April 1st of that year. The name of the company and the ownership of the same, vested in the White and Freeman families, remains unchanged, except that through death the younger generation has partially succeeded the older. This is evidenced by the fact that William C. Freeman, now Chairman of the Company, is the son of the William C. Freeman who joined in its formation and was its first chairman until the time of his death in 1902, when he

was succeeded by William R. White, who held the office until his death in 1914.

Upon taking possession of the property in 1885, The Robesonia Iron Company, Limited, immediately erected a new and greatly improved furnace, adding four fire brick stoves, new blowing engines and other improvements. This stack remained in service until 1914, when it was torn down and the new one built, which is shown in the accompanying photographs. Further improvements are projected and it is the intention of the present management of the Company to thoroughly modernize the plant in every respect.

The present Managers of the Company are:

MR. THOMAS S. GATES, of Drexel & Company, Philadelphia.
MR. ALLEN BUTLER, of Charles D. Barney & Co., Philadelphia.
HON. WILLIAM C. FREEMAN, Cornwall, Pa.
MR. ROBERT C. LEA, Philadelphia.

The Managers of a joint stock association perform the same functions as directors of a corporation.

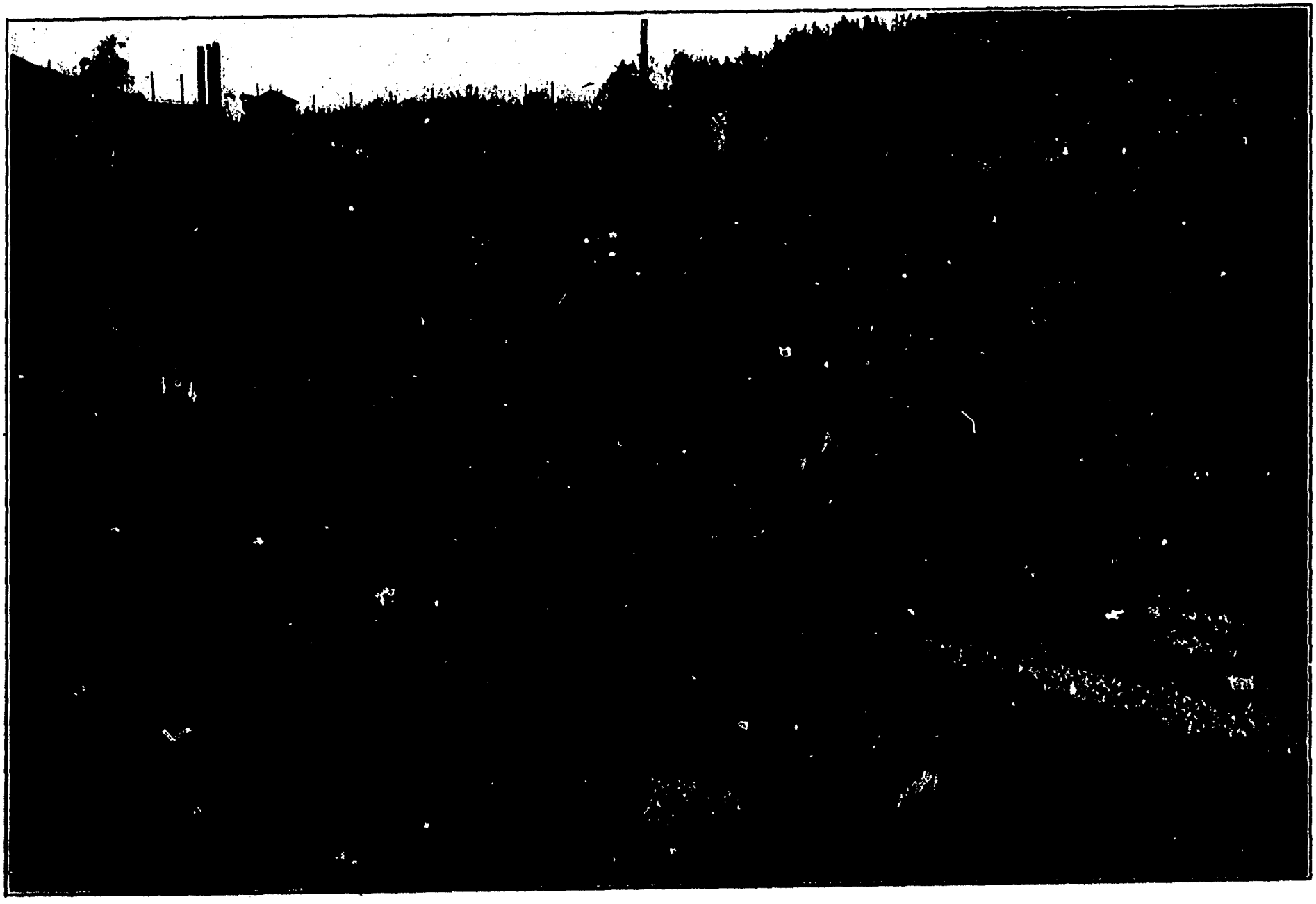
The Officers of the Company are Hon. William C. Freeman, Chairman, and Robert C. Lea, Secretary and Treasurer.

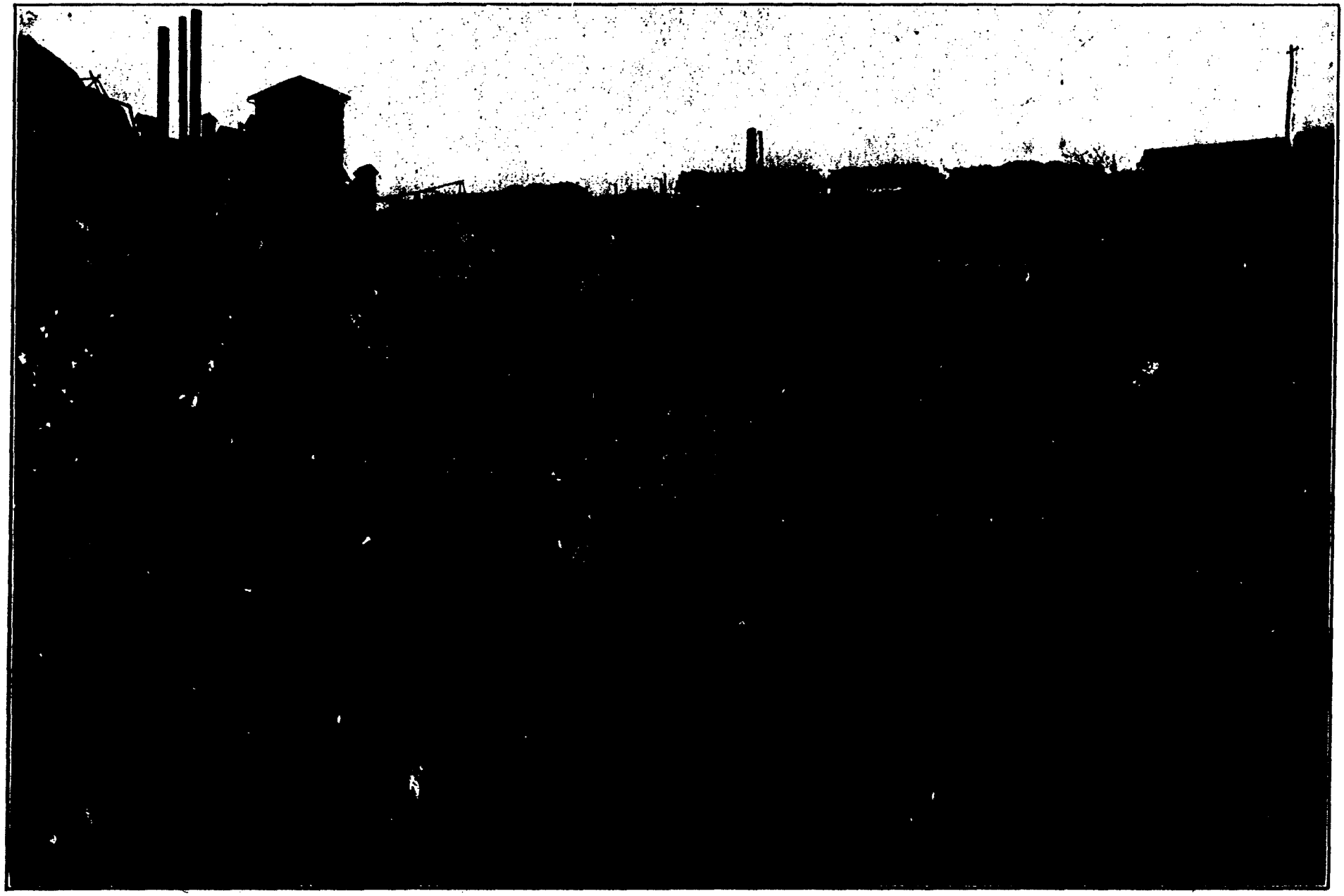
The Company's Sales Agents are Messrs. Robert C. Lea and Company, Philadelphia.

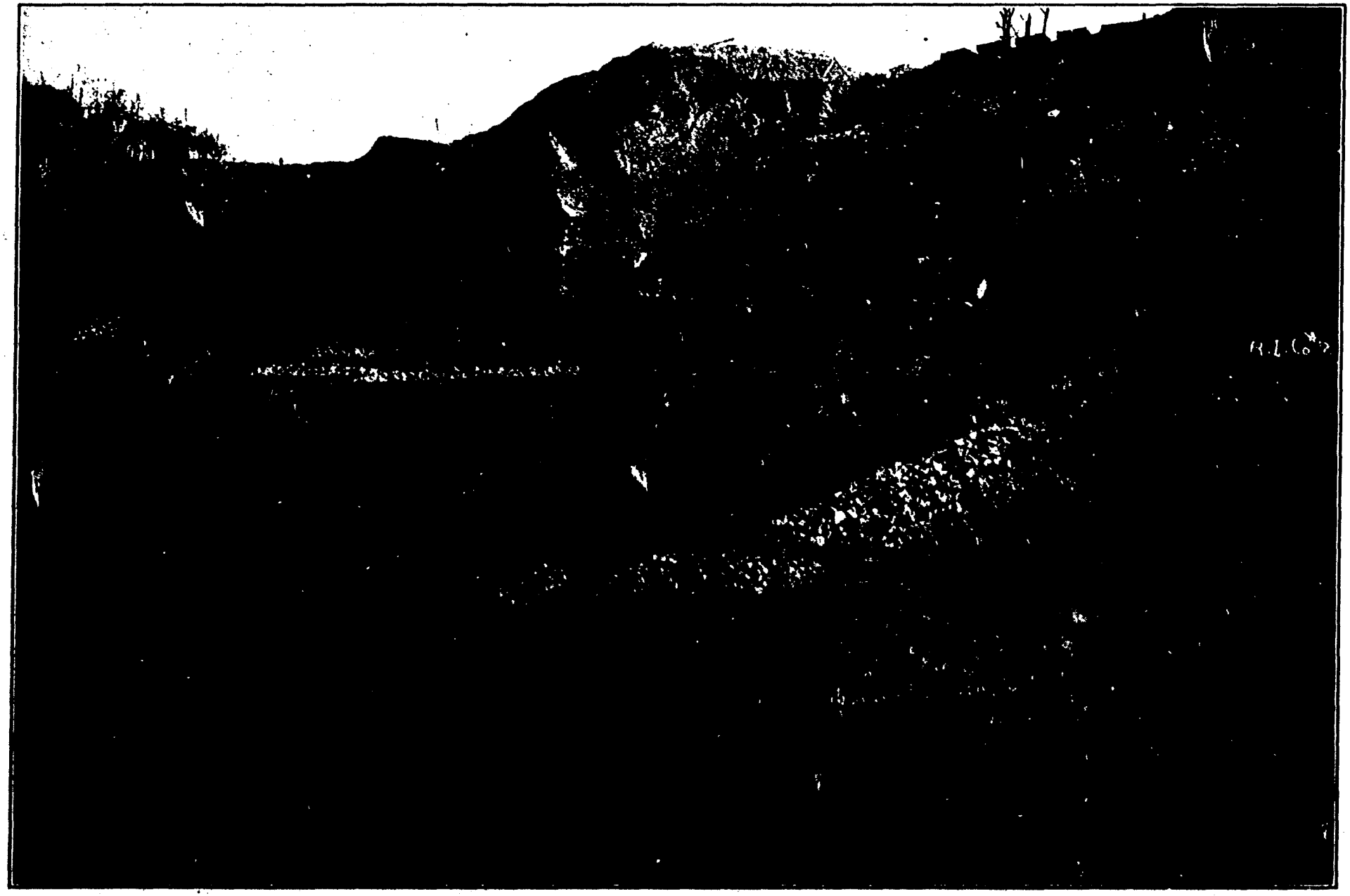
Robesonia Pig Iron is certainly one of the oldest brands in the country, and we try to make it one of the best by employing careful methods of manufacture, grading and analysis. Always used as a steel making Iron, Robesonia Iron now finds its particular field of usefulness in the steel foundry trade. Long known to a few, it is now becoming recognized by all that the percentage of copper contained in our Iron is of material benefit in improving the physical quality of both steel and gray iron products made therefrom.

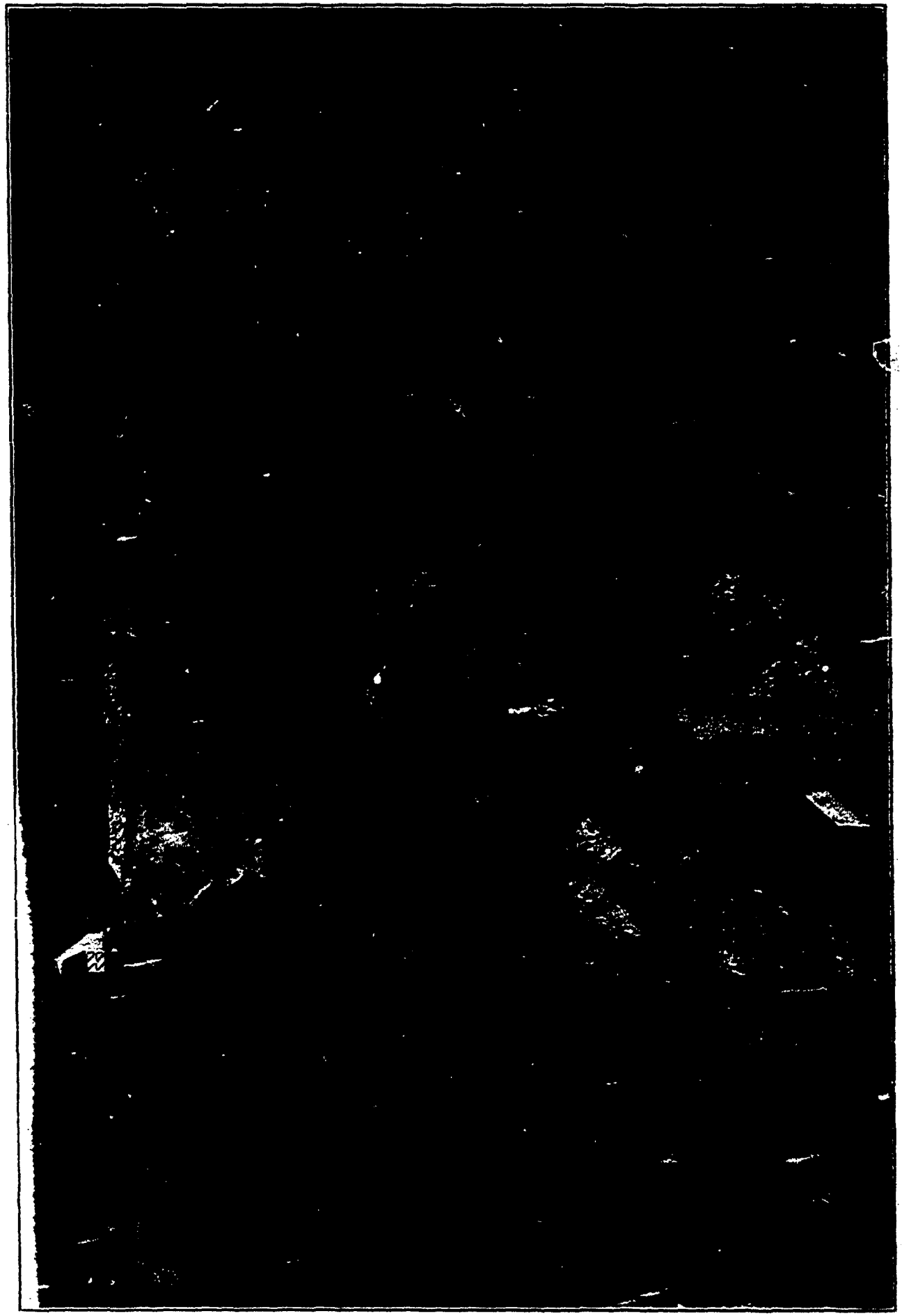
In conclusion, we express the hope that our customers and fellow Iron-makers to whom this booklet is sent, and whose friendship and patronage in the one case, and friendship and rivalry in the other, are equally esteemed, will so reciprocate our cordial feeling towards them that we may be enabled to continue the honorable and useful career of our Company for as many or more years in the future as it has extended into the past.

THIS photograph, and the three following, are views of the Company's Ore mining operations at Cornwall, about twenty miles distant from Robesonia.

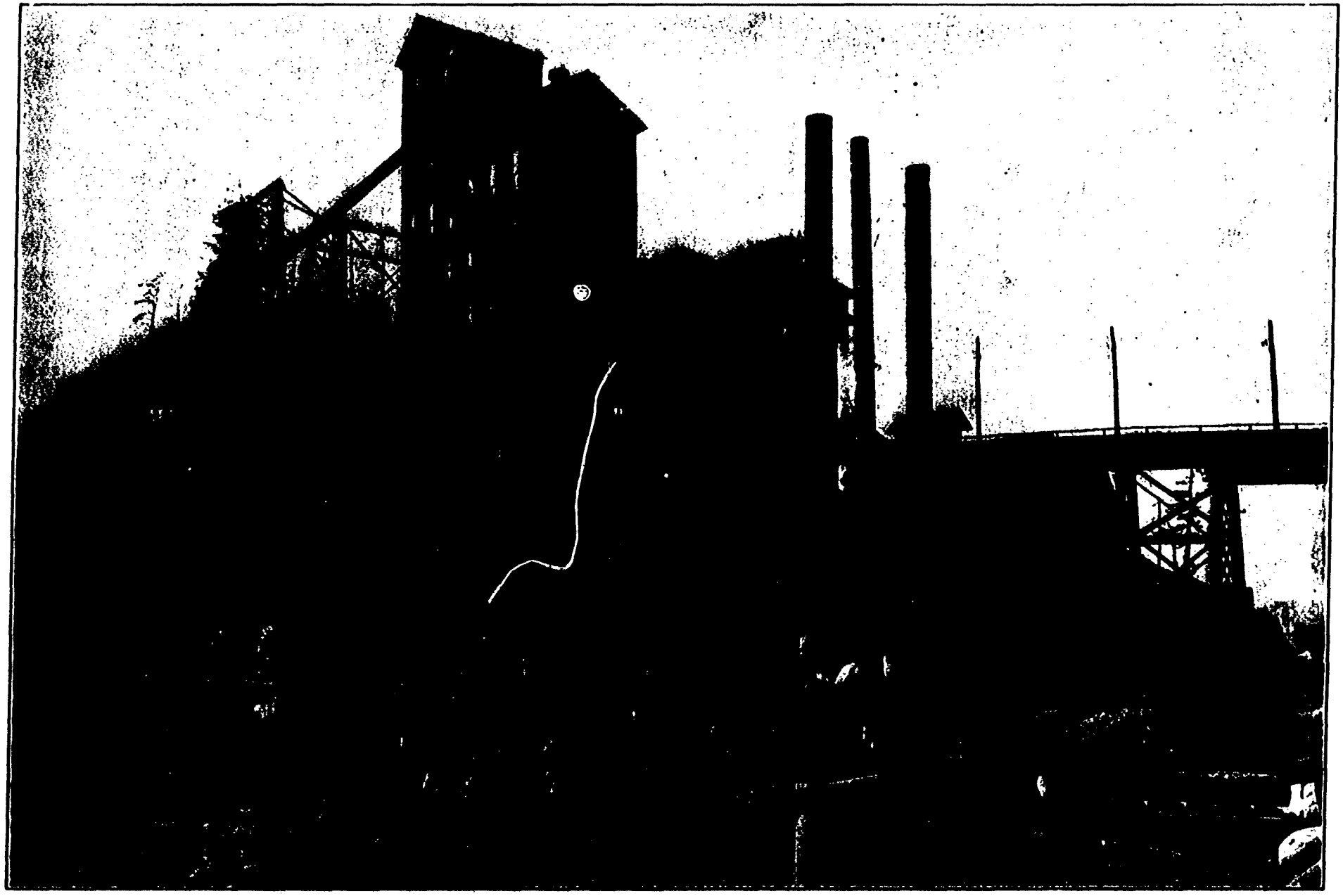




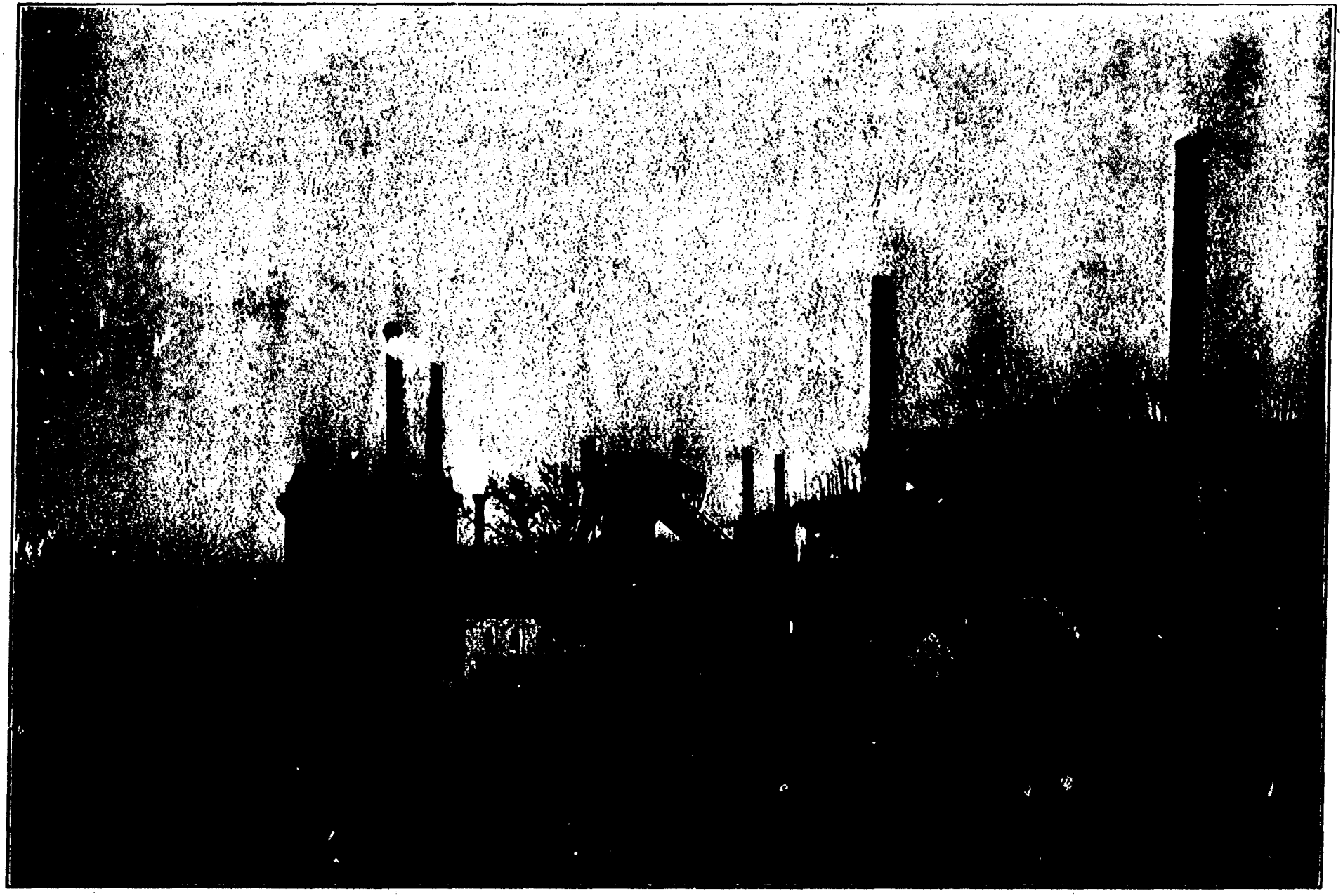




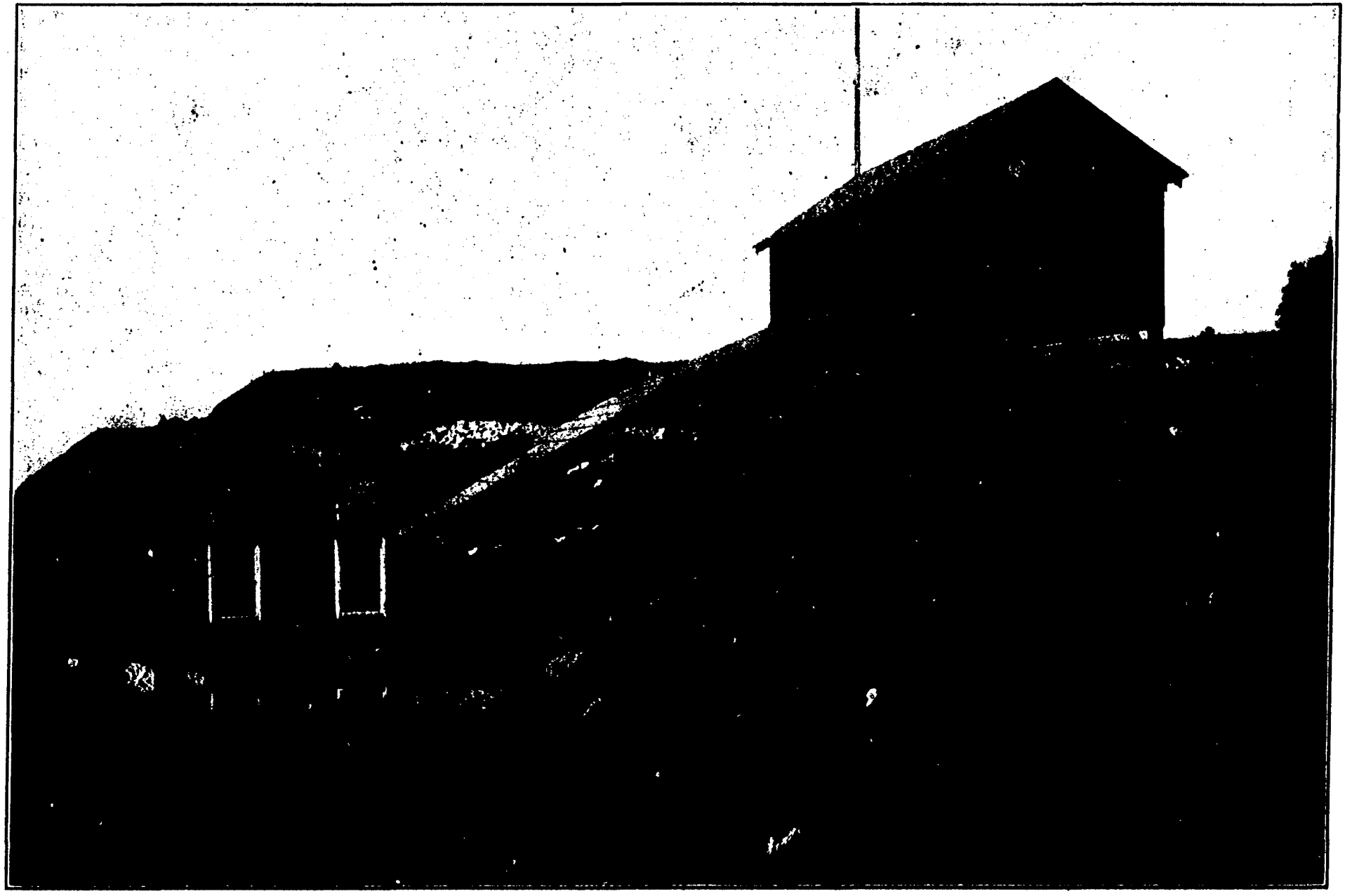
LOADING Ore at Cornwall. The building in the background is part of the Cornwall Ore Bank Company's loading plant.



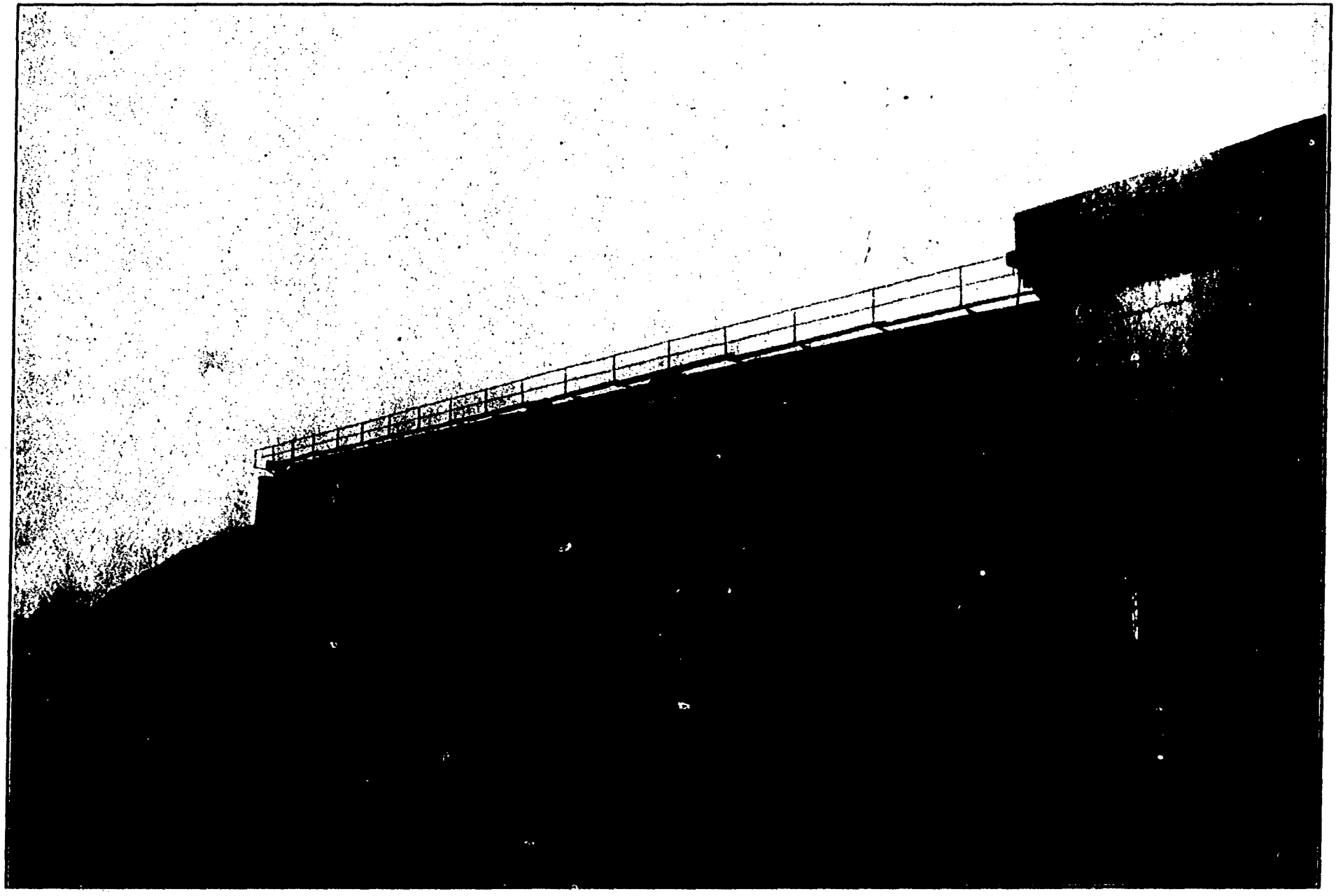
GENERAL view of Furnace Plant. From left to right the major objects shown are four stoves for heating the blast, the cast-house, the furnace proper, boiler chimneys, part of the stock-house, and ore roaster chimney. The boilers occupy the site of the original furnace built in 1793.



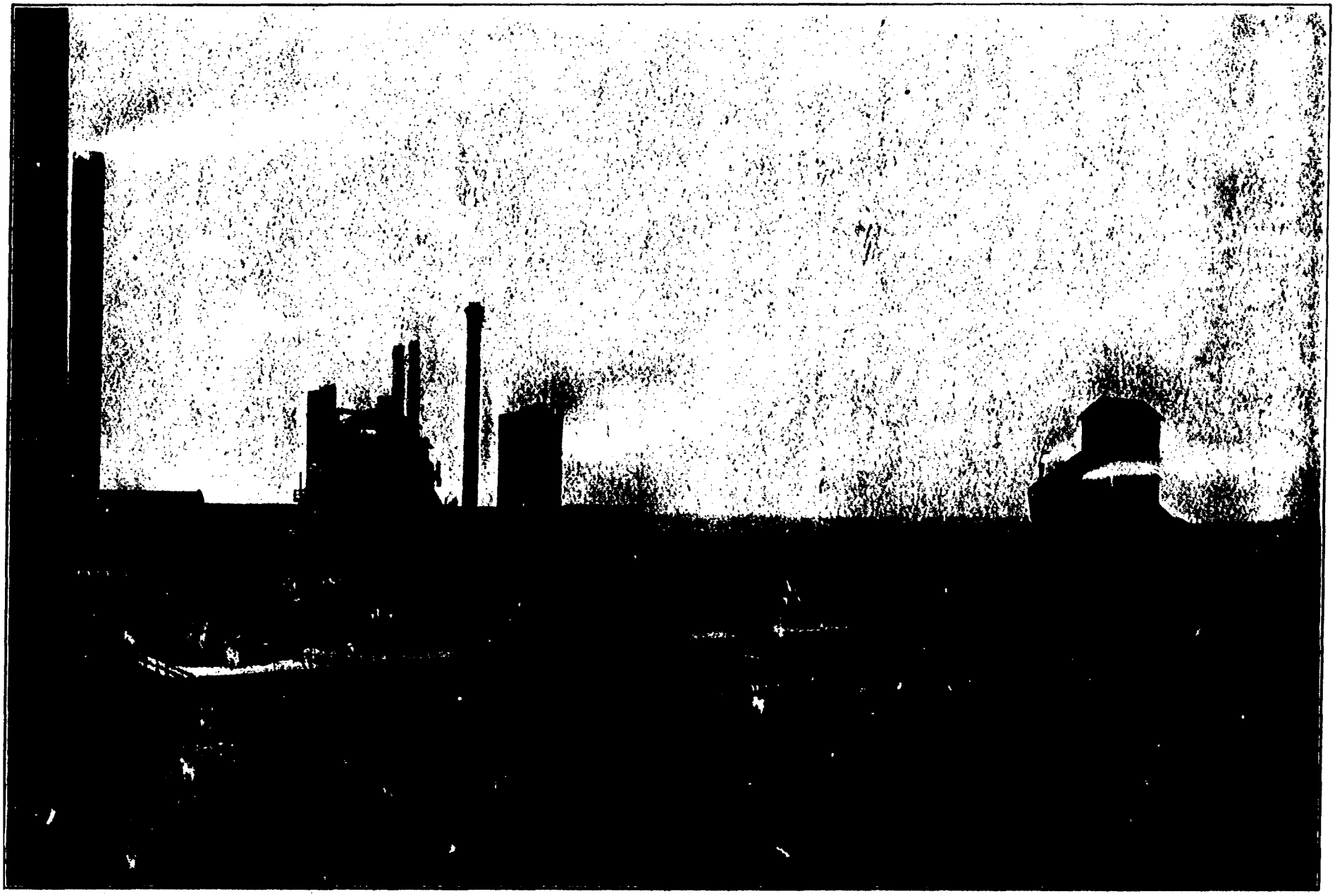
ORE Crushing Plant. A belt conveyor carries the crushed ore to the roasters and sintering plant, where its high percentage of sulphur is reduced before it is charged into the furnace.



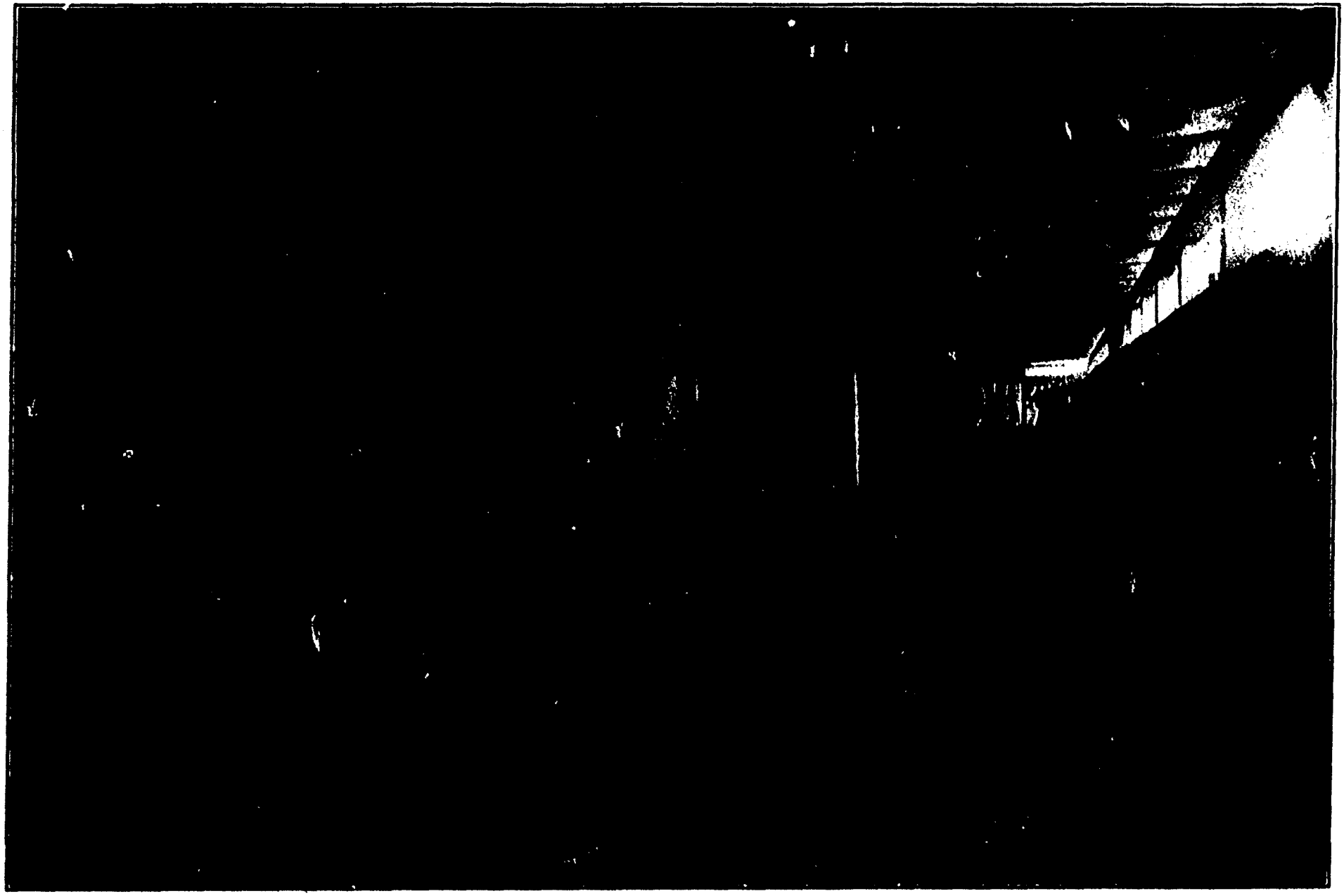
RESERVE Coke Pile. Worth $17.00 per ton when this photograph was taken, in all probability an historic "high point" in Coke prices.



REAR view of Furnace Plant. In the foreground are shown the Ore Roasters known as Gjers Kilns. In the background the top of the furnace can be seen. The building on the right contains a Greenawalt Sintering plant which roasts and agglomerates fine ore.

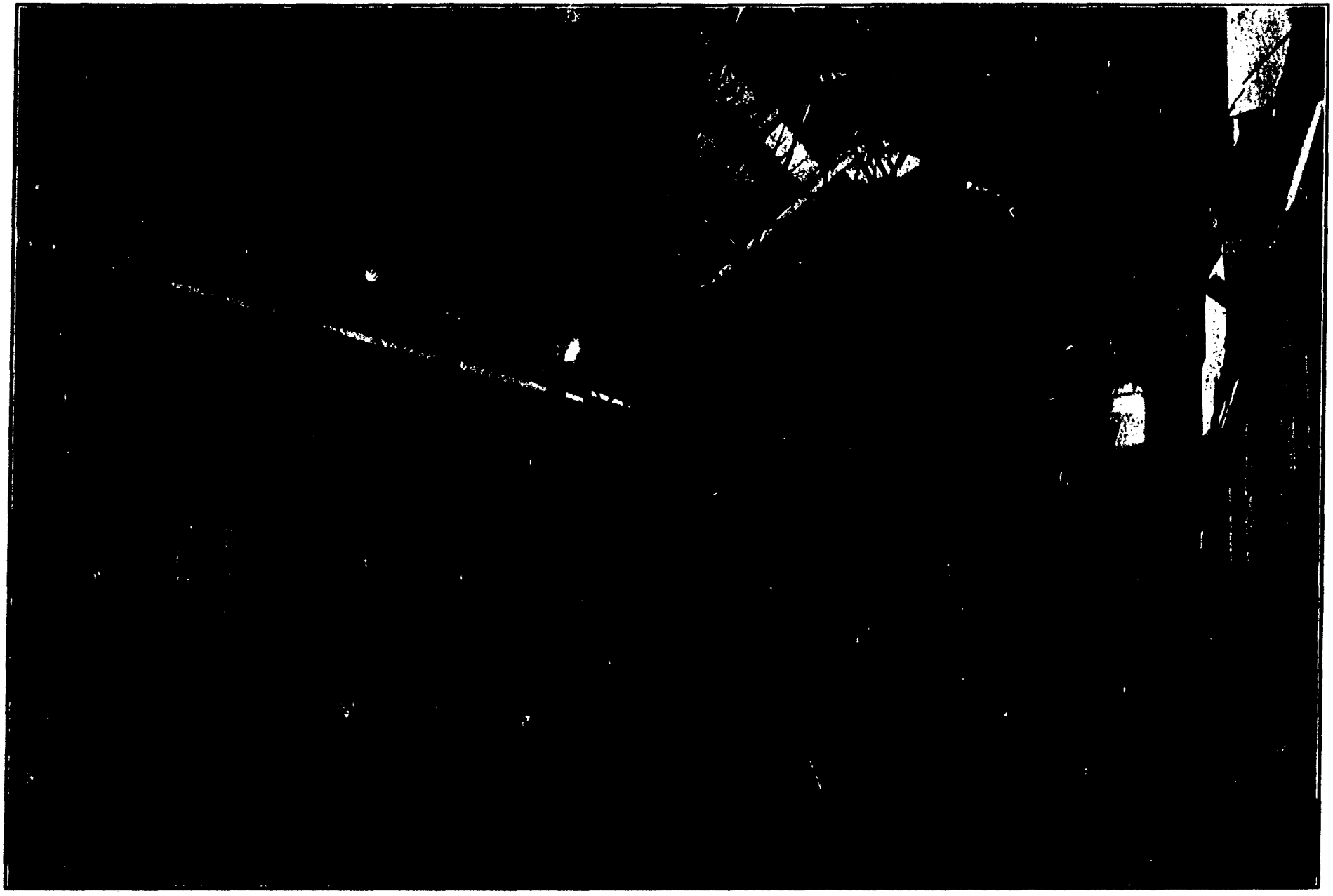


LOWER part of Ore Roasters. Showing Ore after sulphur has been removed and ready for charging into the furnace.



INTERIOR view of Stock House. Showing charging buggies at foot of inclined hoist to top of furnace.

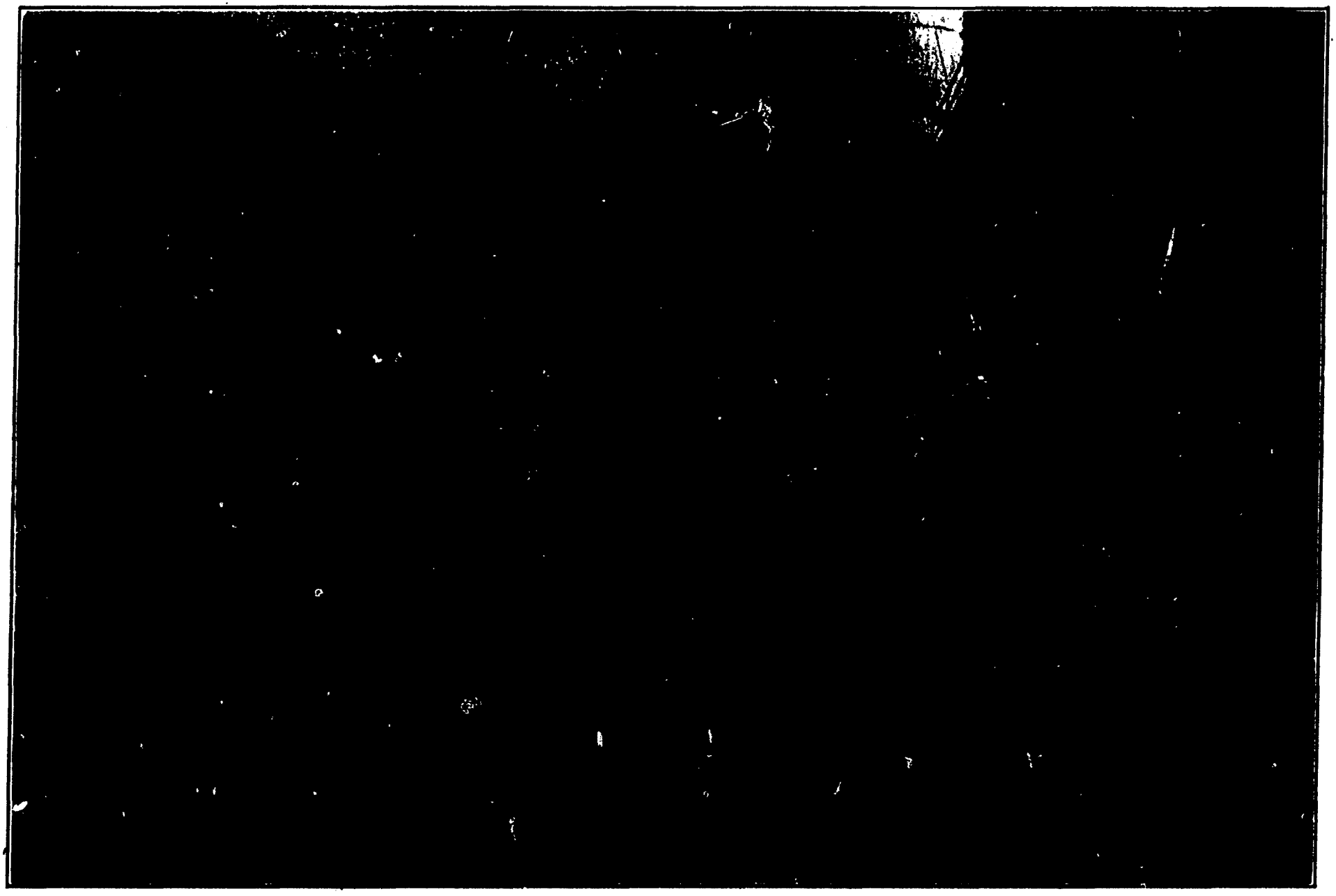
INTERIOR view of Cast House. On the left a "bed" of Pig Iron has been broken up and is ready for loading. On the right the bed for the next cast is ready. The lower part of the furnace is shown at the rear.



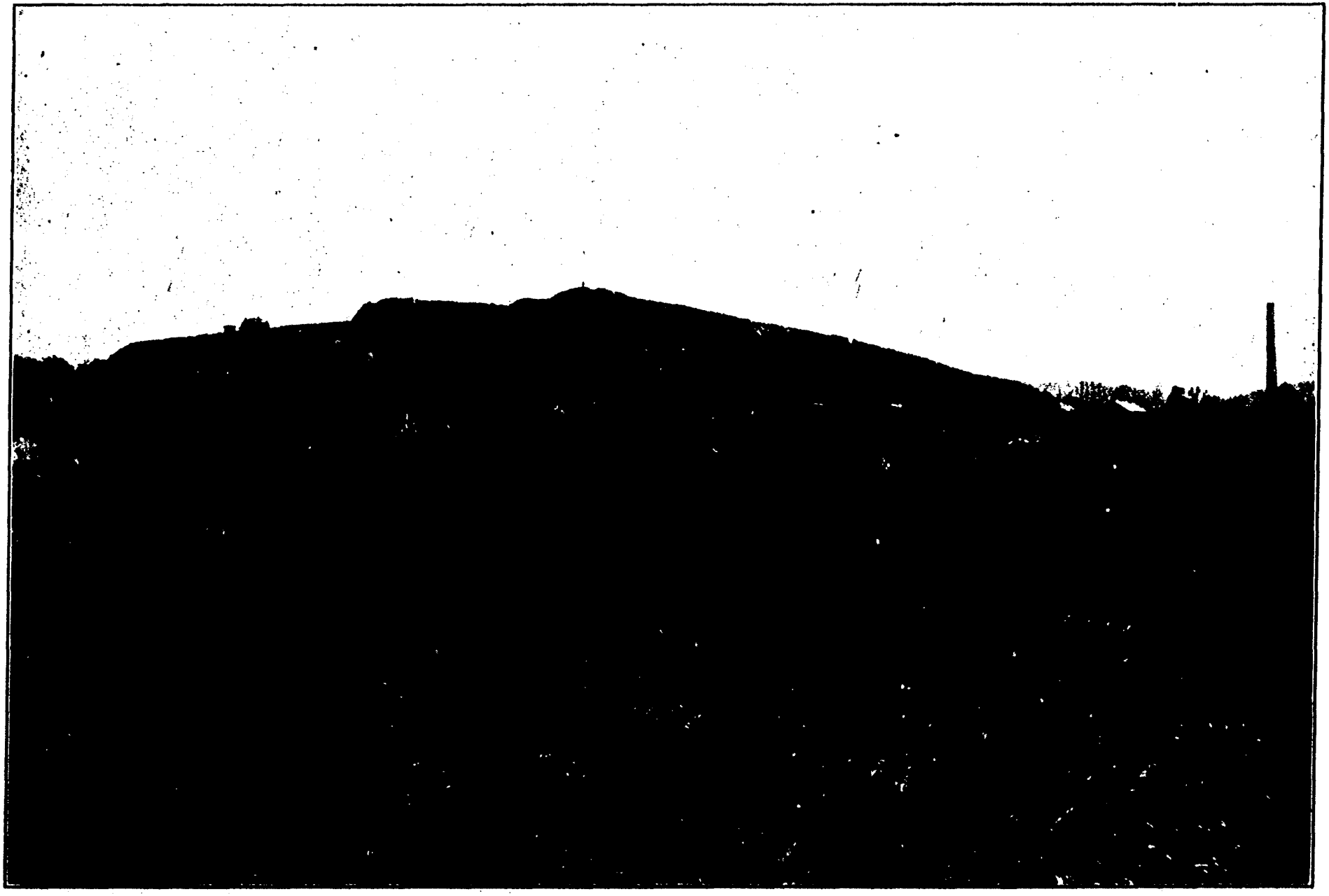
LOADING Iron from the Cast House.

Pig Iron Wharf and Loading Shed.

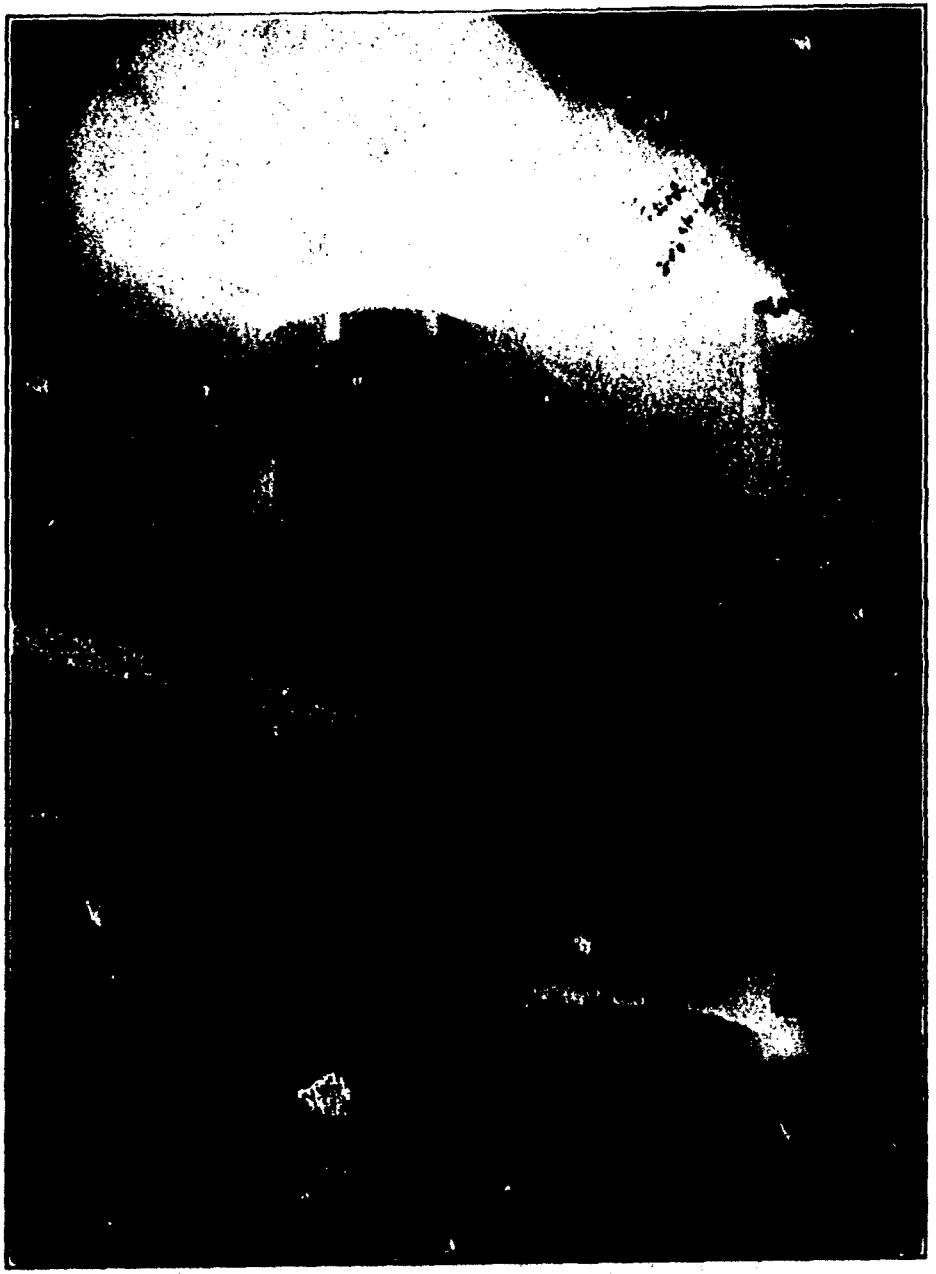
SLAG Ladles. The molten slag from the furnace is run into these ladles and hauled to the cinder dump by locomotive.



ONE hundred and twenty-five years accumulation of slag. This immense Cinder Dump has remained practically untouched throughout the history of Iron making at Robesonia. Eventually it will be usefully employed for the manufacture of crushed slag or cement.



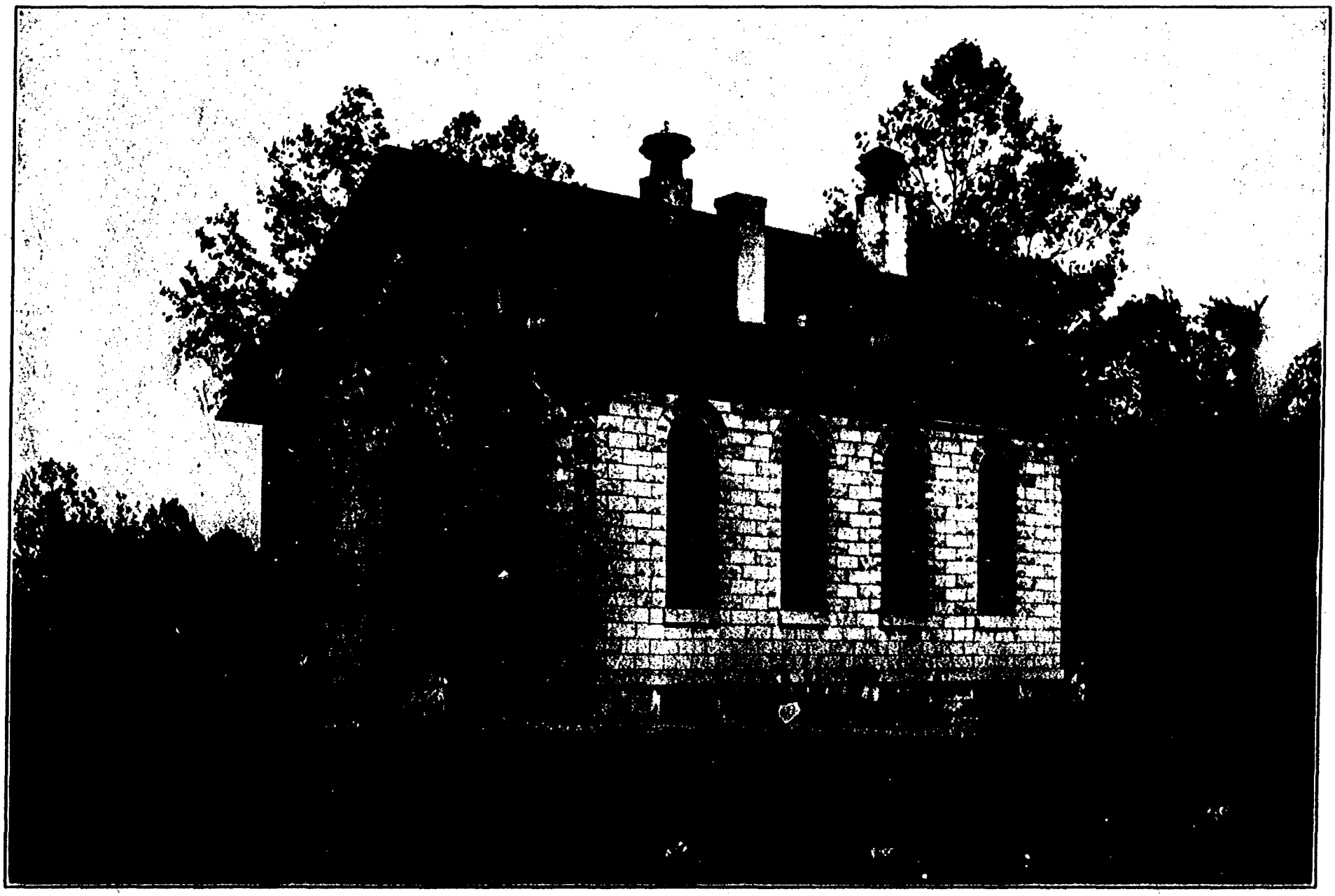
NIGHT photographs taken during the process of "blowing out." These mark the last days of the old stack built in 1885, which was torn down and replaced in 1915.



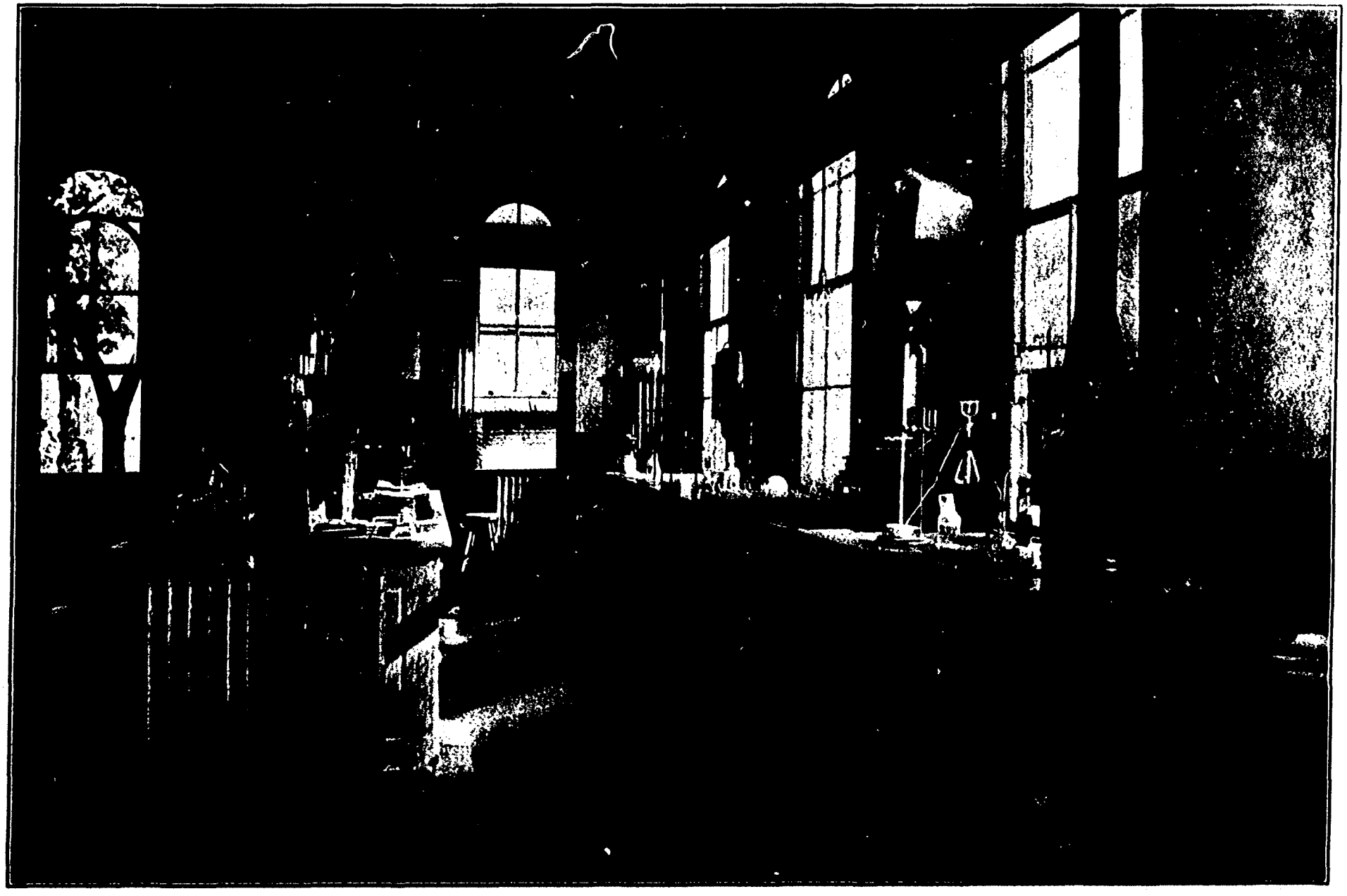
UPPER Storage Dam. Used as a swimming pool in summer and as an ice pond in winter.

LOWER Storage Pond. This picture with the foregoing will illustrate the beauty of the natural surroundings at Robesonia. The furnace can be dimly seen in the background.

EXTERIOR of Laboratory.

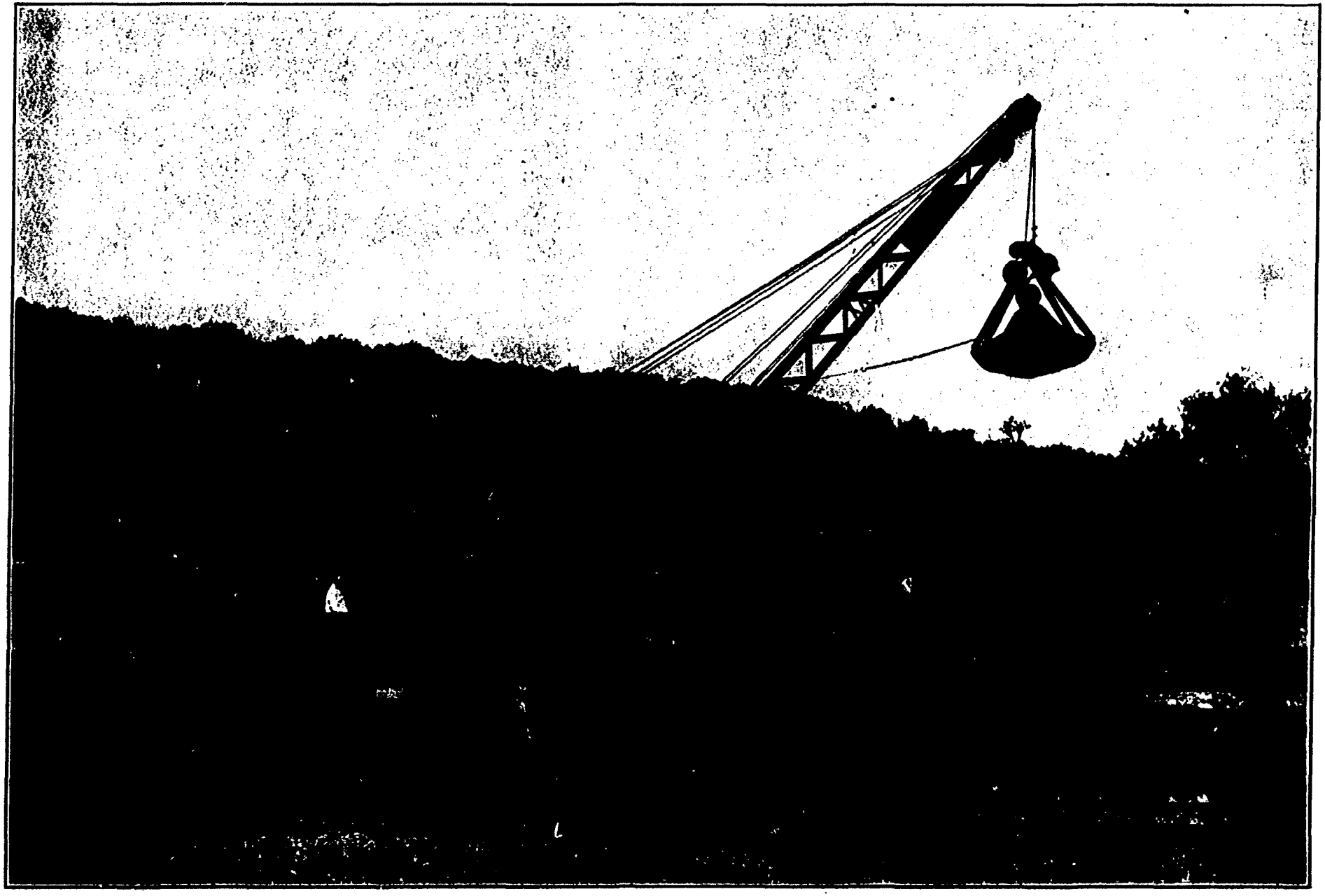


INTERIOR of Laboratory.



COMPANY locomotive and cars.

Locomotive Crane.

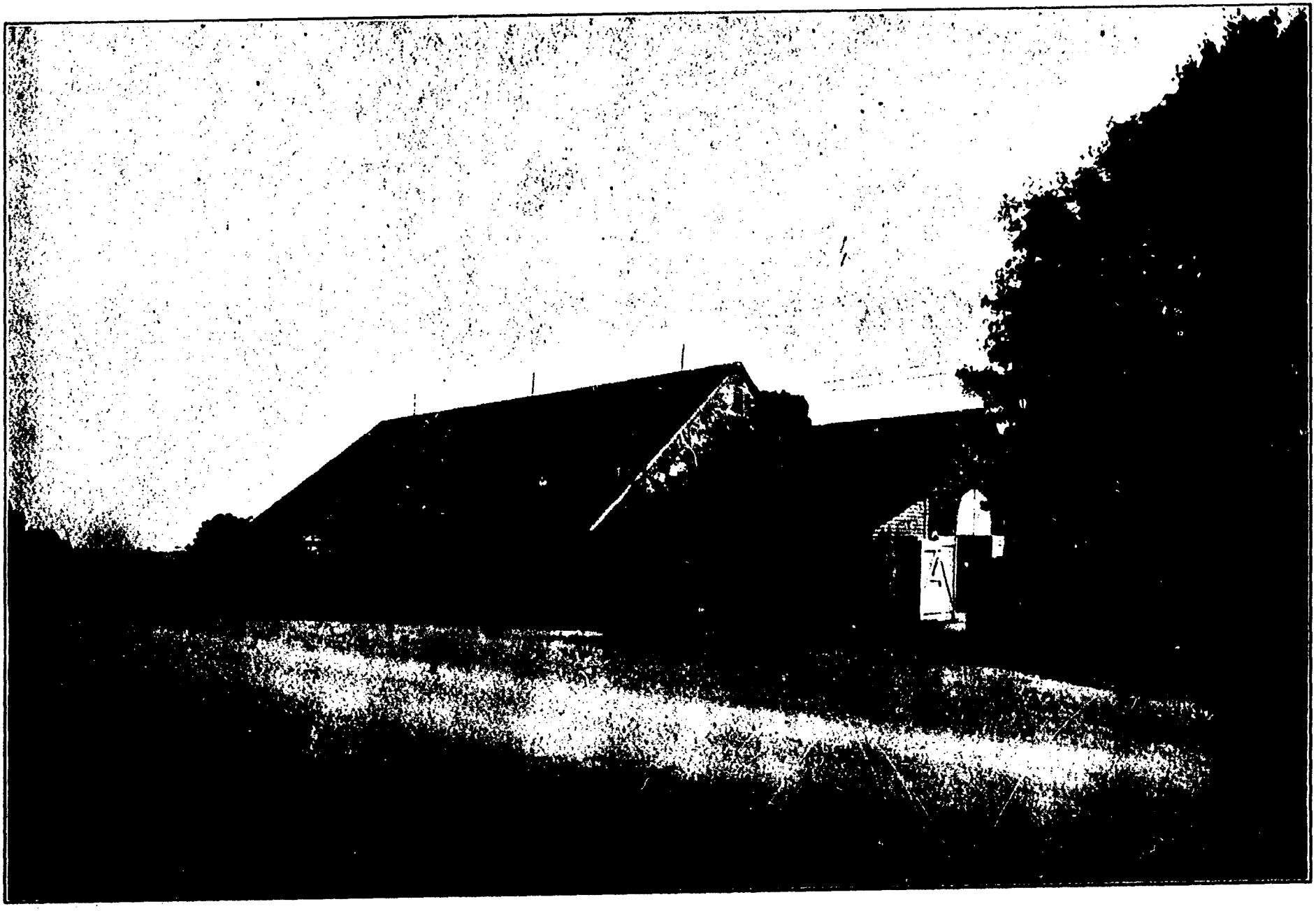


Furnace Office Building.

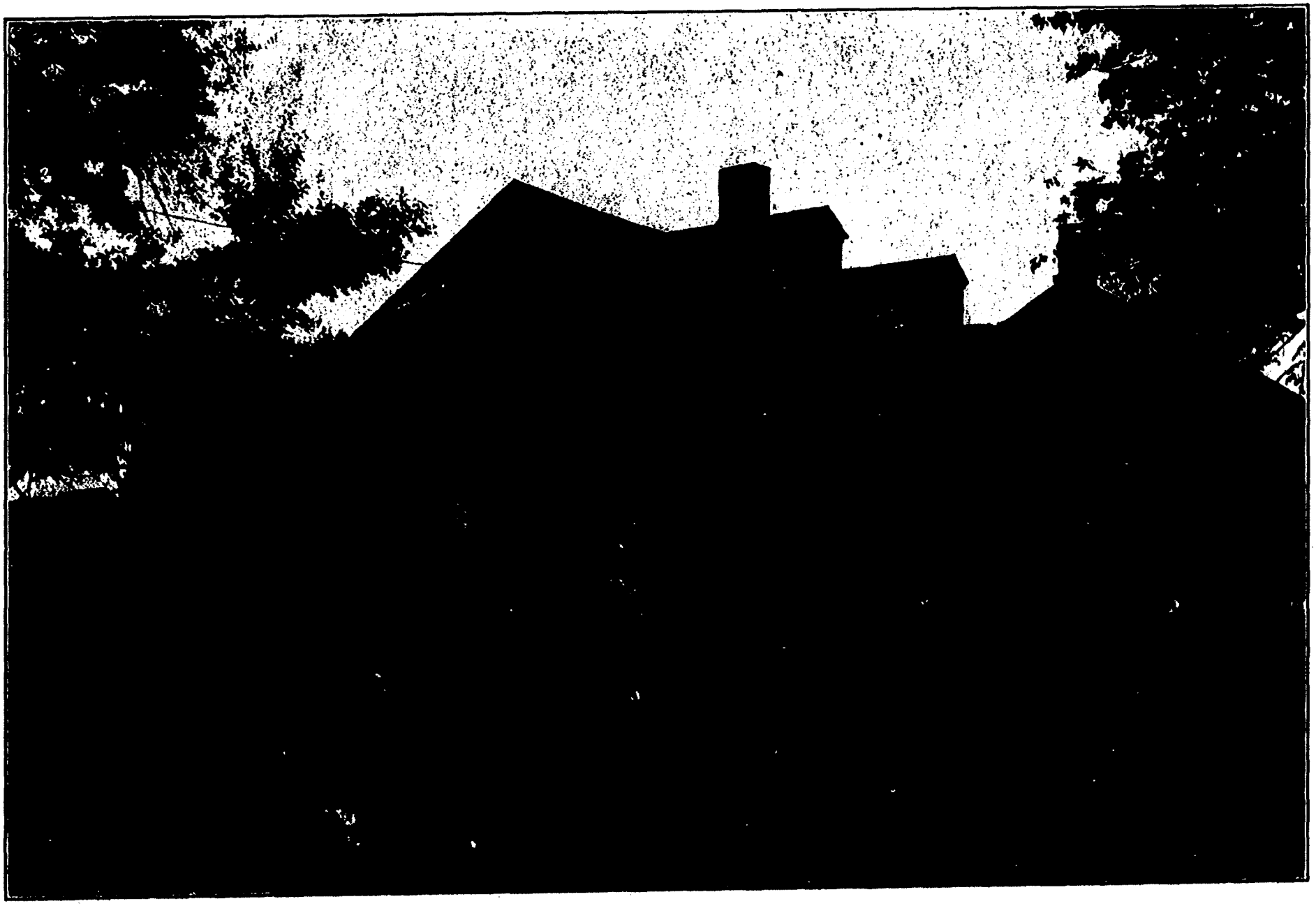
SUPERINTENDENT'S House,—front view. Known locally as the "Mansion House," and built in 1805, this is a fine example of the architecture of the early days of the district.

SUPERINTENDENT'S House. Rear view, showing flower garden which is kept up by the Company and is noted as one of the finest in the district.

MANSION House stable and garage.



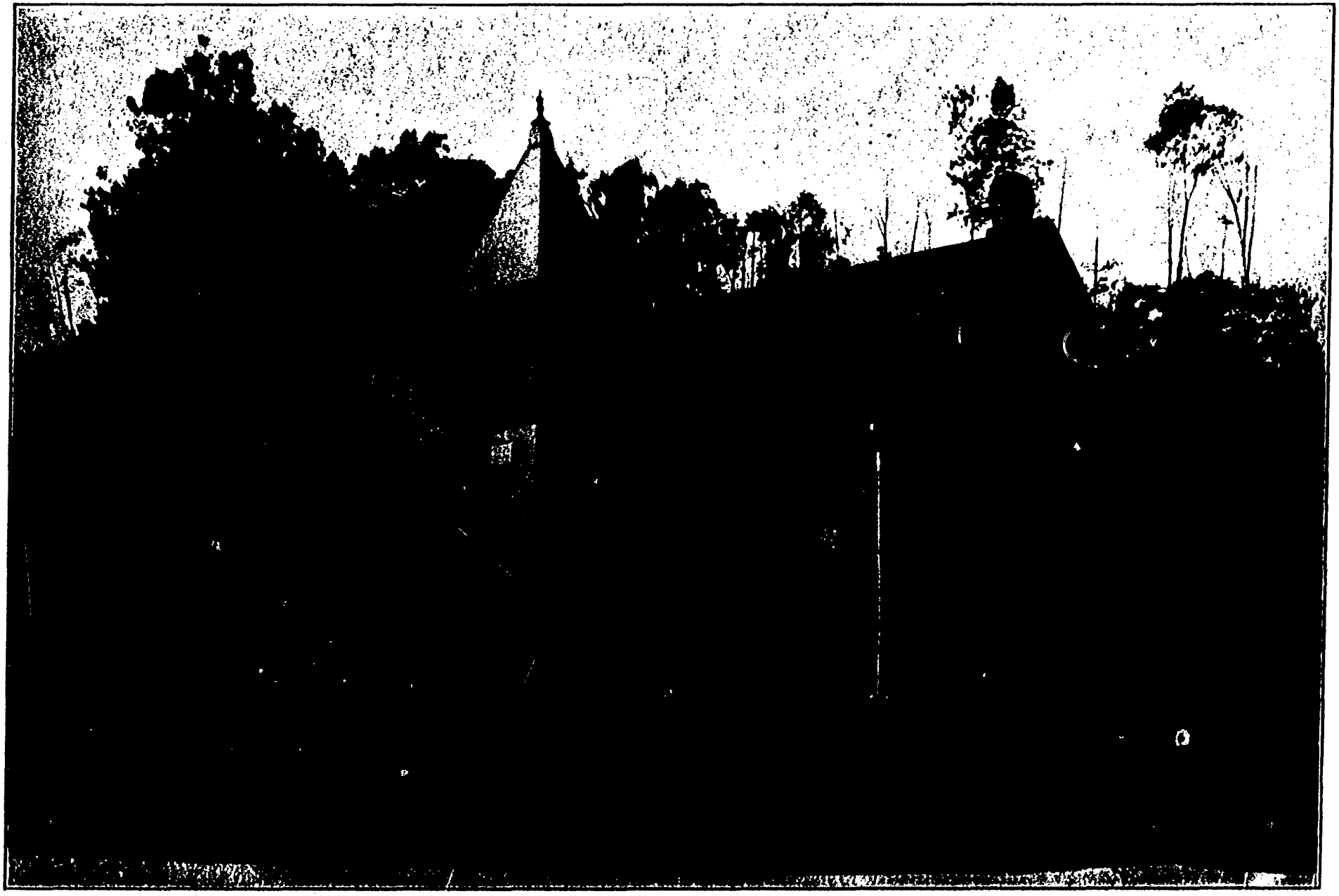
THIS photograph and the two following show the character and surroundings of some of the older type of employes' houses. Many of these are over one hundred years old, but all are equipped with running water and other modern conveniences.



TYPE of Frame Tenant House

NEWER type of Employes' houses. Built of concrete blocks made on the premises from furnace slag.

SCHOOL House. Erected by the Borough of Robesonia on land donated by the Company. It is in the midst of the Company's houses and provides convenient and excellent facilities for the education of employes' children.



MAIN Street, Borough of Robesonia. The town is about one-half mile from the Furnace. It contains about twelve hundred inhabitants. It is well kept, and is one of the most prosperous communities in the Lebanon Valley district.

ROBESON Street, Borough of Robesonia. The residence in the foreground is typical of the newer houses in the borough. The Church formerly belonged to the Company, but was recently sold to the congregation which has occupied it for many years.

FIRE Engine House. The hose carriage carries 1500 feet of hose for use in connection with a high pressure pipe system. The hand pump dates from 1854, but is still surprisingly efficient.