

A seventy-year walk through the Fletcher company album



Today's tales of pre-mechanized coal mines hardly seem real in the face of current technologies. But just a few decades ago, crews of 2-4 miners had the dangerous, back-breaking task of carrying timbers from underground rail cars into the work area, cutting them to size and lifting them into place while two more workers pounded beams under each end. These were the days when flames from gas lamps might be used to burn off pockets of methane, and the lives of canaries were laid on the line as a test of air quality. More than half a million miners produced about the same tonnage in 1937 that 100,000 produce today.

In 1937, J. H. Fletcher opened for business. Its founder, James H. Fletcher, was fascinated with what he saw as the potential of rubber-tired haulage trailers and other non-track vehicles to improve mine productivity. In 1938, the company showed its first products at the Cincinnati Coal Show — a rubber-tired tractor and a drop-bottom trailer. The next year, the company introduced the first shuttle car with four-wheel steer and elevating conveyor.



In the mid-1940's, the company set its sights on underground roof control, one of the most hazardous areas in coal mines of the day. The list of Fletcher firsts reads like the evolution of roof control itself.

Mid-1940's — First Fletcher timbering machine

Early-1950's — First self-propelled roof bolter, and patented an internal dust collection system

Late-1950's — First dual-head roof bolter

Mid-1960's — First protective operator's canopy, and first four-head roof bolter

Late-1960's — Temporary Roof Support patented

Late-1970's — Introduced Man-Up Model HDDR

Mid-1980's — Introduced Mobile Roof Support (MRS) system

Mid-1980's — First bolters with walk-thru chassis

Late-1980's — Introduced remote-controlled bolting units

Mid-1990's — First on-board microprocessor-controlled feedback system

Late-1990's — First bolter with tiered material handling system



Today, 70 years later, J. H. Fletcher & Co. is the world's leading custom designer and manufacturer of underground mobile drilling, scaling and roof support equipment. Modern Fletcher products increase operator productivity while minimizing exposure to many of the risks of underground mining.

What started as a small family operation has now grown to a company more than 220 employees strong. The 11-acre J.

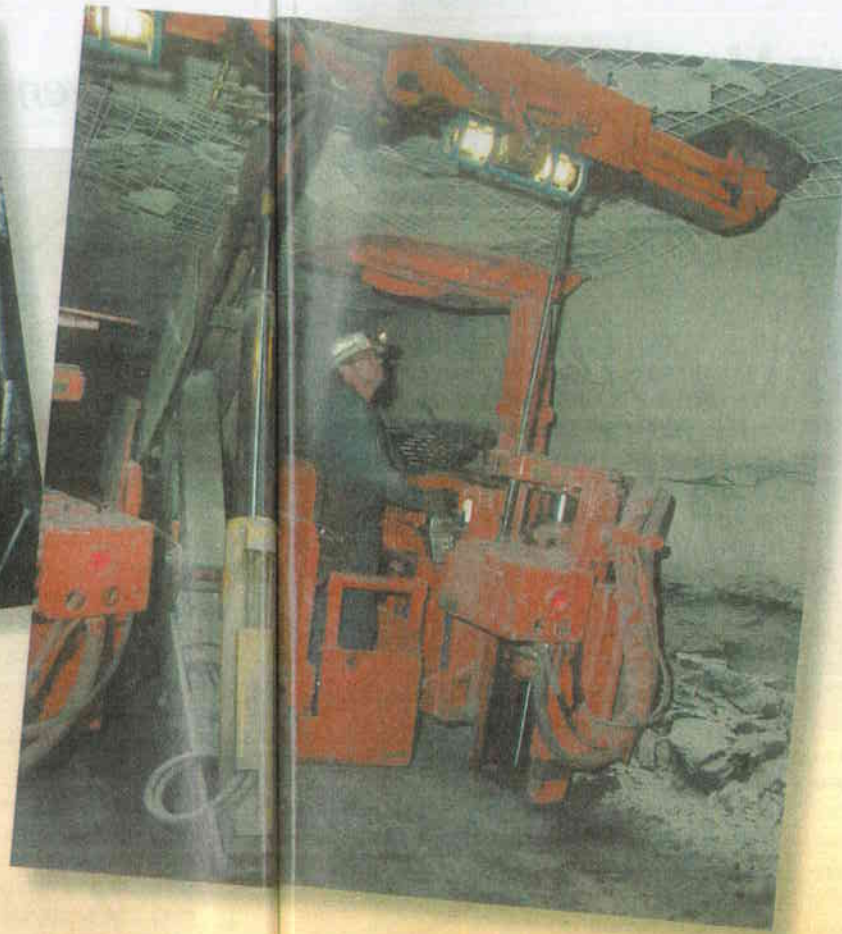
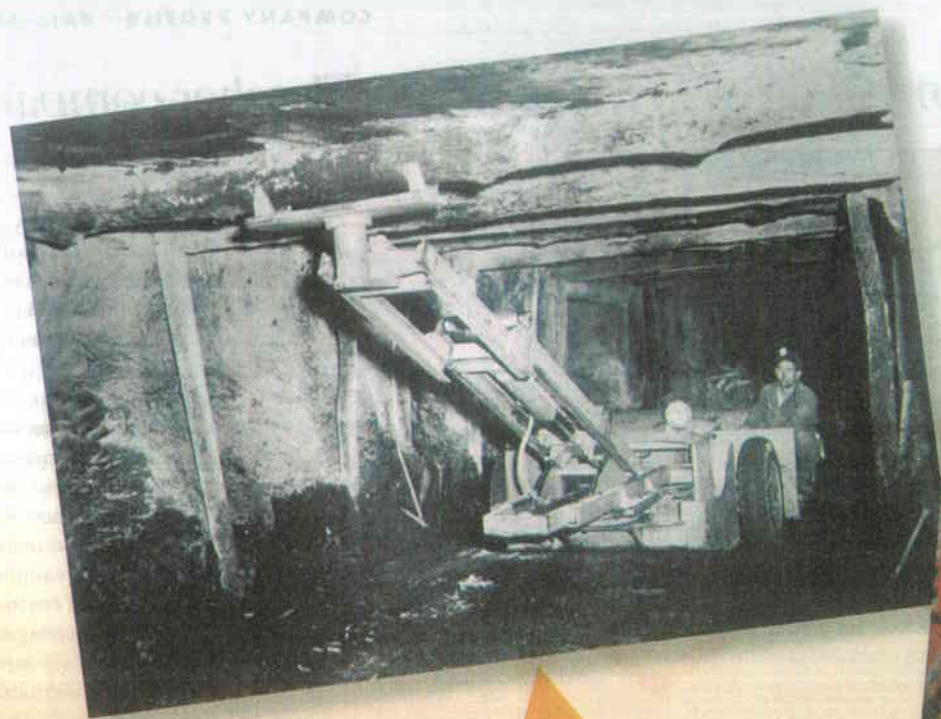
Robert Fletcher headquarters is located in Huntington, WV just minutes away from the Kentucky and Ohio borders. The 5-building complex consists of 109,000 sq. ft. of manufacturing space, a 50,400 sq. ft. warehouse and a 14,000 sq. ft. sales and engineering office.

J. H. Fletcher & Co.'s success doesn't rest only on modern facilities and warehouse space with readily available parts ready to go out to customers. No, the real progress comes from the people who are committed to designing and manufacturing quality, reliable mining equipment. Sales and service personnel are located all across the United States, serving the needs of each customer. One unique aspect of Fletcher is that each machine produced has been designed by our engineers with input from the customer, and often times the operators and mechanics, to produce the right equipment for the job. Then after the sale, factory trained technicians and engineers are constantly available for assistance in the field.



Fletcher employees take pride in the equipment they are turning out. You won't find an assembly line putting machines together, but what you will find are production teams of skilled workers who follow each machine through from the time the parts hit the floor to the final inspection.

The time line of innovations and firsts is going to continue for years to come. Fletcher sales and engineering as well as a talented research and development division are constantly getting feedback from customers. They understand what is required to design and build safe, reliable, productive machines. The history is there. We believe the best is yet to come. For more information, call 304.525.7811, email sales@jhletcher.com or visit our web site at www.jhletcher.com.



Timeline



1937 Roof supported by timbers prepared on-site, placed by hand. Fletcher opens for business.



1938 First Fletcher products demonstrated at Cincinnati coal show: a rubber tired tractor.

1939 First shuttle car with 4-wheel steer and elevating conveyor.



Mid-40's First Fletcher timbering machine.

1947 Opened Huntington, WV office.



Early-50's First self-propelled roof bolters. Patented internal dust collection system.



Late- 50's First dual head roof bolter.

1957 First Fletcher Jumbo Drill.

Early-60's First Fletcher track tampers.

Mid-60's First protective operator's canopy. First four-head roof bolters.



Late-60's First Temporary Roof Support patented.

Mid-70's First Longhole Degasification Drill.



Mid-80's First Mobile Roof Support System (MRS).

First Remote Controlled and Operator-Up Roof Bolters.



Mid-80's First bolters with walk-thru chasses.

Mid-90's First on-board microprocessor controlled Feedback system.



Late-90's First bolter with Material Handling.



Early-2000's Established Industrial Minerals & Rock division, and expanded line of scaling machines, roof bolters, jumbo drills and ANFO loaders.

2002 First automated roof mapping system in Industrial Minerals mines.



2006 First Fletcher diesel-powered Prime Mover.

70 years of innovation

Take a quick trip through the Fletcher company album. The progress in underground roof control over seven decades is astonishing. In 1937, roof control crews hauled, sawed, and lifted massive timbers into place by hand. Today, Fletcher bolter operators are protected with ergonomically-designed tram compartments, sturdy drill canopies, powerful ATRS systems, work-saving material handling and microprocessor feedback systems. We think the best is yet to come.



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