

A caravan of camels crosses the desert in China's Gansu Province. The hardy camel was the backbone of Silk Road trade for centuries.



The Silk Road

EAST MEETS WEST

How untold wonders, knowledge, and even death traveled the ancient world

by Bryan Brown

“The only signs of a road are the skeletons of the dead. Wherever they lie, there lies the road to India.”

So wrote the 4th-century Buddhist monk Fa Xian (*shee-ahn*). But the words could have been echoed by any number of travelers who braved the dangers of the great ancient route known as the Silk Road.

Words to Know

- **caravan:** a group of people traveling together, often for protection.
- **epidemic:** outbreak of a rapidly spreading disease.
- **imperial:** having to do with an empire.
- **nomadic:** wandering or traveling.

For about 1,500 years, the Silk Road was the key link between Asia and Europe. This 4,000-mile-long network of trade routes spread goods, cultures, and religions throughout the vast Eurasian landmass.

Untold wonders suddenly appeared in local marketplaces. They might have been cinnamon and pearls from India, wine and olives from the Mediterranean—or that great mystery, silk from China. Long before globalization, the Silk Road bound the known world together.

In Search of Warriors

The Silk Road developed in the second century B.C., starting from **Imperial** China. At the time,

Emperor Wu-ti (*woo-DEE*) was fighting with the Xiongnu (*hung-NOH*), a **nomadic** tribe to the north. The Emperor needed allies. He also needed bigger horses, strong enough to carry men in armor into battle.

In 138 B.C., Wu-ti sent one of his most trusted men, Zhang Qian (*chen*), on a crucial mission. Zhang’s goal was to make an alliance with some enemies of the Xiongnu, in valleys far to the west. Zhang’s 13-year trip over the Pamir Mountains into Central Asia was one of the greatest journeys of exploration in history.

The explorer did not return with an alliance. What Zhang did bring back was priceless information about people and trade routes to the west. In

A young girl weaves silk at a modern Chinese silk factory.



places such as Bactria, part of modern-day Afghanistan (see map, p. 15), Zhang was surprised to find Chinese goods for sale. Those items had come long distances, through India.

Wu-ti smelled opportunity. He, too, could establish a more direct trade with distant peoples. This trade, the Emperor reasoned, would make his empire mighty indeed.

Dangerous Roads

It was not long before traders were traveling west from Changan, capital of the Chinese Empire. Passing the westernmost end of the Great Wall, the Silk Road made its way by various paths through Central Asia. Over time, it came to include

already-established trade routes to India. Eventually, it reached Mediterranean seaports such as Tyre and Antioch. There, boats took wares to Rome and other Italian cities.

Very few traders went the entire distance. Instead, they traded what items they had for others, then returned home. Goods that made the journey from east to west, or vice versa, changed hands many times—each time becoming more expensive.

Each stage of the journey had its own dangers. Blinding sandstorms in the Taklimakan Desert could strike at a moment's notice. In places in the Tien Shan Mountains, **caravans** passed over narrow rock ledges. Some traders fell to their deaths. Others

Fun Facts

● **UNTIL THE 6TH CENTURY**, the Chinese kept silk production a secret. That changed when two Persian monks smuggled silkworms out of China in the hollows of their bamboo canes.

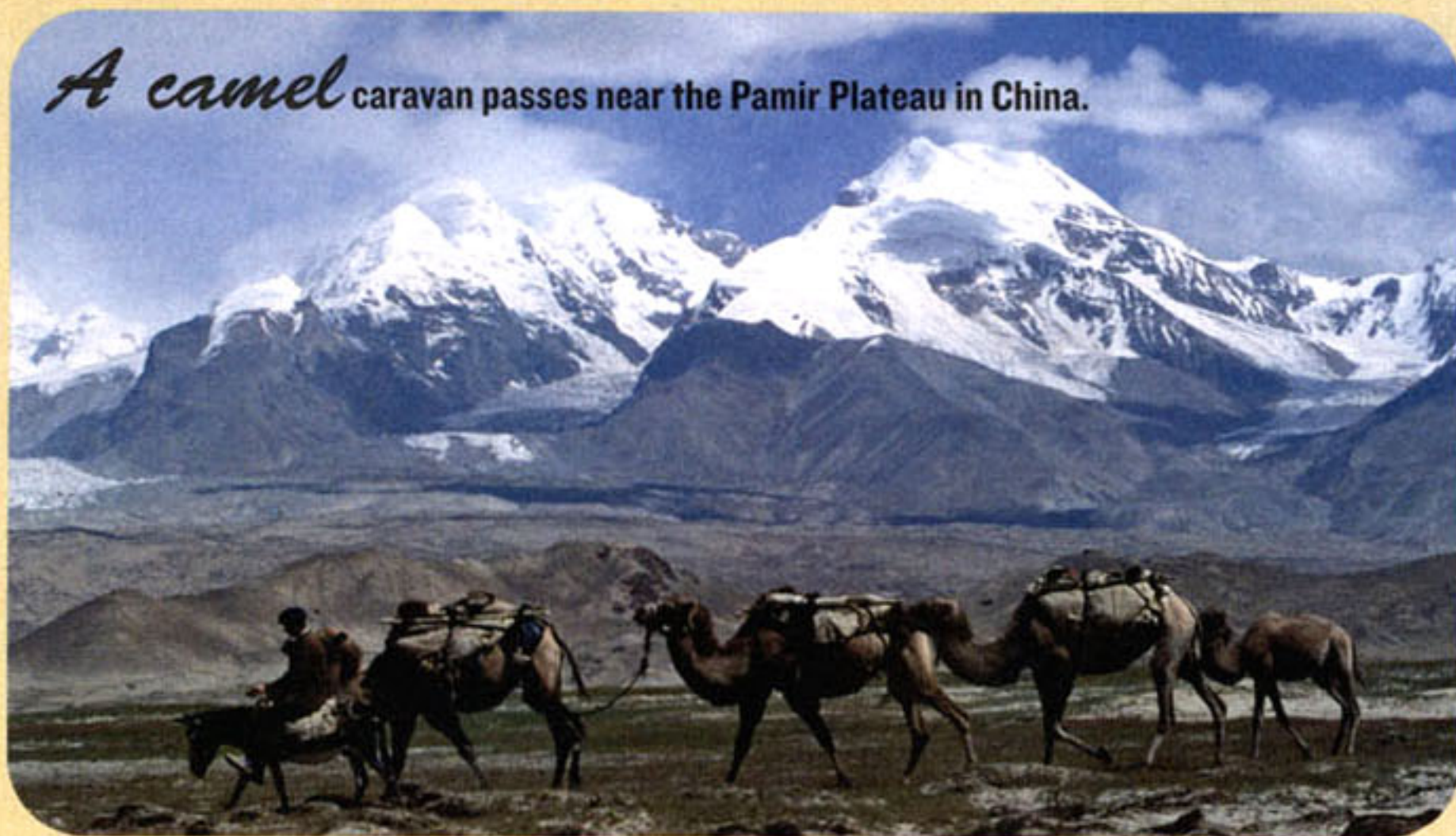
● **APPLES** originated in Kazakhstan and were carried east by Silk Road traders.

● **FOUR OF CHINA'S GREATEST INVENTIONS**—paper, printing, gunpowder, and the compass—reached the West through the Silk Road.

● **MANY PEOPLE THINK THAT THE SWIMMING POOL** game Marco Polo came from an imagined incident in the adventurer's life. Asleep on his camel in the desert, Polo is said to have dreamed that someone was calling his name.

● **IN THE 19TH CENTURY**, the name *Silk Road* was given to the trails by a German geographer, Ferdinand von Richthofen.

A camel caravan passes near the Pamir Plateau in China.



Ruins of ancient Palmyra, an important Silk Road city, in present-day Syria.



were buried by avalanches.

Threats from bandits were just as likely. Traders also often had to pay taxes or bribes to local officials to pass through a region. The Parthians, who controlled Persia (modern-day Iran) from about 247 B.C. to 224 A.D., demanded especially high taxes. Rome fought numerous wars with Parthia, partly over control of the Silk Road.

The Romans were crazy for silk. At first, all they knew was that it came from a faraway eastern land they called Serica—"the land of silk." For centuries, the Chinese guarded the secret that silk was made by silkworms. The Romans thought it grew on trees.

Marco Polo

Goods were not the only things traveling the Silk Road. From India, Buddhism spread to China, and became the official religion there in the 6th century A.D. Christianity and

Islam also moved along the routes.

The most famous Silk Road traveler was a **merchant** (trader) named Marco Polo. Leaving the Italian city of Venice in 1271 A.D., when he was 17 years old, Polo traveled for years through the Asian empire of the Mongols. When he finally returned, Venetians found his descriptions of the East and its riches awe-inspiring, or simply unbelievable.

Diseases also traveled along the Silk Road. Like the avian flu today, they sometimes started in the farming areas of China and were carried west. Millions of Romans died from an **epidemic** of smallpox that began in Asia in 165 A.D. The Black Plague, which killed millions of Europeans in the 1300s, also spread in part through travelers on the Silk Road.

September, China and India agreed to open a section of the road between their countries that had been closed since 1962. Now, trucks carry watches, shoes, canned food, and tea over that road. Elsewhere in Central Asia, oil and gas move over terrain where camels once bore cinnamon and ginger. Many of the products for sale have changed. But the legacy of the Silk Road lives on. **JS**

Your Turn

WORD MATCH

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| 1. merchant | A. group of travelers |
| 2. nomadic | B. of an empire |
| 3. caravan | C. trader |
| 4. epidemic | D. wandering or traveling |
| 5. imperial | E. outbreak of a rapidly spreading disease |

THINK ABOUT IT

1. How was the Silk Road a form of globalization?
2. Name some popular dishes that originated in other countries. Why are so many different types of food available in the U.S. today?



SILK ROAD FESTIVAL
silkroadproject.org
[/smithsonian](http://smithsonian)



Women sell silk coats in a marketplace in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan's capital.

The Silk Road Today

Time and wars eventually took their toll on the Silk Road. By the 15th century, more and more traders were taking to the seas, which proved to be much less dangerous.

But the Silk Road has never completely disappeared. Today, parts of the route are being rediscovered. Last

WORLD HISTORY

The Silk Road: East Meets West, pp. 12-14

OBJECTIVE

Students should understand

- The Silk Road was a system of crucial trade routes by which goods such as silk, precious stones, and spices were spread, along with knowledge about distant peoples, throughout ancient Asia and Europe.

BACKGROUND

According to one legend, the first Romans to see silk were the general Marcus Crassus and his army in 53 B.C. While fighting the Parthians, they were both terrorized and amazed to see the opposing soldiers carrying banners of a strange material that shimmered in the brilliant sun and heat of the desert. Silk became such an obsession for the Romans that the Emperor Tiberius complained about it in the first century A.D. "In exchange for trifles," said Tiberius, "our money is sent to foreign lands and even to our enemies."

CRITICAL THINKING

COMPREHENSION: *On which continent was the western end of the Silk Road? On which continent was the eastern end?* (western: Europe; eastern: Asia)

MAKING CONNECTIONS: *Why did Wu-ti of China see direct trade with distant peoples as an opportunity to make his empire mightier?* (Trading highly desired goods would bring in wealth, which could be used to gain land, power, and more riches. Other answers are acceptable.)

ACTIVITY

SEEKING THE SOURCE: Have students make a survey of the foods and spices they normally eat. This should include such basic items as salt and sugar. Then have them research where those products originally came from. How difficult were those items to get, at first? Can they imagine life without those things?

STANDARDS

SOCIAL STUDIES, GRADES 5-8

- **Global connections:** How desire for goods from faraway lands connected the peoples of ancient Europe and Asia.
- **Production, distribution, and consumption:** How and why great distances increased the value of goods traded along the Silk Road.

RESOURCES

PRINT

- Burgan, Michael, *Marco Polo and the Silk Road to China* (Compass Point Books, 2002). Grades 5-8.
- Levy, Janey, *The Silk Road: Using a Map Scale to Measure Distances* (PowerKids Press, 2005). Grades 5-8.

WEB SITES

- **Silk Road Encounters**
askasia.org
(Enter "silk road encounters" in search panel.)
- **The Silk Road Index**
silkroadproject.org/silkroad

AMERICAN HISTORY PLAY

Pennies and a Crust of Bread, pp. 18-21

OBJECTIVE

Students should understand

- what life was and is like for children forced to work long hours under harsh conditions.

WORDS TO KNOW

child labor: full-time employment of children younger than a minimum legal age, often in unsafe or unsanitary conditions • **document:** to provide facts and/or physical evidence supporting a statement or claim.

BACKGROUND

The Industrial Revolution began in England in the late 18th century and spread to the U.S. and beyond. Inventions such as James Watt's steam engine radically changed how people lived and worked—not always for the better.

CRITICAL THINKING

MAKING CONNECTIONS: *What was and is at the root of most child labor? Cite exam-*

ples from the play. (Extreme poverty, often caused by a lack of education. Examples include people willing to work for pennies a day; all children and both parents having to work; Charlie Vasiersky going hungry; Roselie Randazzo working despite grave illness; Camella Teoli's father agreeing to falsify her age so that she could work.)

SUPPORTING AN OPINION: *Might child-labor conditions described in the play have improved without the force of law? Why or why not?* (Answers will vary. *Yes* answers may include greater awareness leading to voluntary changes. *No* answers may include employers having no incentive to make changes.)

ACTIVITY

A DAY'S WORK: Have each student choose a Hine photo (copied from a library book or printed from the Internet). Then, pretending to be the child in the photo, have them write a diary entry describing a typical workday.

STANDARDS

SOCIAL STUDIES, GRADES 5-8

- **Time, continuity, and change:** How the Industrial Revolution changed the way people lived and worked.
- **Production, distribution, and consumption:** That having more workers than jobs keeps wages low; why young children do dangerous jobs.

RESOURCES

PRINT

- Freedman, Russell, *Kids at Work: Lewis Hine and the Crusade Against Child Labor* (Houghton Mifflin, 1998). Grades 5-9.
- Meltzer, Milton, *Bread and Roses: The Struggle of American Labor, 1865-1915* (Replica Books, 1999). Grades 7-12.

WEB SITES

- **Child labor brochures and videos**
ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipecc/wdacl/2005/index.htm
- **Triangle Factory Fire**
www.ilr.cornell.edu/trianglefire

Iraq Map, p. 11

1. Baghdad
2. Shia
3. southeastern
4. Kurd
5. Basra
6. Tigris and Euphrates
7. oil
8. Persian Gulf
9. Iran
10. Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait

Silk Road Word Match, p. 14

1. C; 2. D; 3. A; 4. E; 5. B

GeoSkills, p. 15

1. China
2. Changan (Xi'an)
3. Genoa, Venice, and Rome
4. Italy
5. Gobi Desert
6. Taklimakan Desert
7. Tien Shan
8. Baghdad (Iraq)
9. Istanbul
10. ship or boat

Child Labor Word Match, p. 21

1. C; 2. D; 3. E; 4. A; 5. B

Word Scramble, p. 23

1. training; 2. freestyle;
3. snowboarder; 4. competition;
5. figure

Bonus word: Turin

Crossword, p. 23



What Do You Know?, p. 24

News IQ

1. D; 2. C; 3. B; 4. C; 5. D

Political Cartoon

1. They are the Statue of Liberty and Uncle Sam, symbols of the United States and/or the American people.
2. the voters of Iraq (The purple ink on their fingers shows that they cast their votes.)
3. Iraq; *clues:* the Americans' newspaper headline, the paper held by an Iraqi woman; other answers are acceptable
4. a system of government in which, ideally, all citizens take part, including taking the time to vote for officials who will represent their needs and interests
5. the Iraqi voters; answers will vary, but may include the idleness of the Americans in contrast to the activity of the Iraqis, or the difference in the expression on the faces of each side

True or False

1. F. Breaker boys sorted coal from slate and other rocks.
2. F. Lewis Hine was a photographer who helped bring about child-labor reforms.
3. T
4. F. Helen Herron Taft was the wife of President William Howard Taft. She was the First Lady.
5. T

Word Wise

1. Khan; 2. merchant;
3. epidemic; 4. caravan;
5. nomadic

Quick Quiz, p. T-5

1. false
2. true
3. opinion
4. opinion
5. false
6. Shia
7. Parliament
8. John Murtha
9. Donald Rumsfeld
10. northern
11. B

12. C
13. E
14. A
15. D
16. B
17. C
18. A
19. C
20. B

Skills Master 1, p. T-6

1. 14%
2. 17%
3. 48% (100 minus 52)
4. "Once in a while, but not every week"
5. "They think it will make them popular."
6. "They are not doing well in school"
7. 18%
8. 55% (35 "say or do" plus 20 "tell someone")
9. Answers will vary (may include that kids wouldn't like to admit to being afraid or reluctant to help or would like to believe themselves to be brave).
10. Answers will vary.

Skills Master 2, p. T-7

1. Clara Lemlich
2. women and girls working in a sweatshop
3. how the workers are treated and what the conditions are like
4. a sweatshop
5. during an average workday (also acceptable: 1909)
6. 12-and-a-half hours (7 a.m. to 8 p.m., with a half-hour break)
7. about \$6 a week
8. disliked it; opposed it
9. to let people know how difficult sweatshop workers' lives were
10. Answers will vary, but should mention which of the points made were the most and/or least effective in conveying the main idea.

LAST CHANCE

TO GET 2005-2006 LOW PRICES!

Renew *Junior Scholastic*® now for just \$8.25* per student—and avoid any price increases next year. There's no risk or obligation, so reserve your magazines today!

FREE GIFT!

Renew 20 or more subscriptions by March 24 and get this portable, high-quality Mini Boom Box™!



Reserve your magazines now—RISK FREE!

Call 1-800-SCHOLASTIC

(1-800-724-6527)

Please mention code 1573 when ordering.

8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time

691-REN-S063

*Price is for orders of 10 or more.
Price valid through 3/24/06.

POSTAL INFORMATION: The Teacher's Edition of JUNIOR SCHOLASTIC (ISSN 0022-6688; in Canada, 2-c no. 9229) is published biweekly: Sept, Oct, Nov, Jan, Feb, Mar, and Apr, and monthly: Dec and May, 18 issues total, by Scholastic Inc., 2931 E. McCarty St., Jefferson City, MO 65102-3710. Periodical postage paid at Jefferson City, MO 65102 and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTERS: Send notice of address changes to JUNIOR SCHOLASTIC, 2931 East McCarty St., Jefferson City, MO 65102-3710.

PUBLISHING INFORMATION: U.S. prices: \$8.25 each per year, \$5.40 per semester for 10 or more subscriptions to the same address. 1-9 subscriptions, each: \$19.95 student, \$24.95 Teacher's Edition, per school year. Single copy: \$5.45 student, \$9.35 Teacher's. Communications relating to subscriptions should be addressed to Junior Scholastic, Scholastic Inc., 2931 East McCarty St., Jefferson City, MO 65102-3710. Communications relating to editorial matters should be addressed to Editor, *Junior Scholastic*, 557 Broadway, New York, NY 10012. Canadian address: Scholastic Canada Ltd., 175 Hillmount Rd., Markham, Ontario L6C 1Z7. Toll-free Canadian number: 1-888-752-4690. Indexed in Children's Magazine Guide. Available on microfilm through Xerox University Microfilms, Inc., 300 N. Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Also available on microfiche through Bell & Howell Photo Division, Old Mansfield Rd., Wooster, OH 44691. Printed in U.S.A. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Copyright © 2006 by Scholastic Inc. Scholastic, *Junior Scholastic*, and associated designs are trademarks/registered trademarks of Scholastic Inc. All Rights Reserved. Materials in this issue may not be reproduced in whole or in part in any form or format without special permission from the publisher. PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

NAME _____

NEWS SPECIAL: 2006 WINTER OLYMPIC GAMES, PAGES 6-7

■ Decide whether each sentence is true, false, or an opinion. Write your answer on the blank line provided.

- _____ 1. Lindsey Jacobellis has never been injured in training or competition.
- _____ 2. The 2006 Winter Games will be Apolo Anton Ohno's second Olympics.
- _____ 3. Julie Chu's team should have won the gold medal at the 2002 Winter Games.
- _____ 4. Ryan St. Onge would be a better freestyle skier if he spent more time on the slopes and less in swimming pools.
- _____ 5. Kimmie Meissner is the tallest Olympic female figure skater ever.

WORLD: IRAQ, PAGES 8-10

■ Use a word from this list to correctly complete each sentence.

Baath Party, Baghdad, George W. Bush, eastern, Saddam Hussein, Independent Electoral Commission, insurgents, John Murtha, northern, Parliament, Donald Rumsfeld, security forces, Shia, southern, Sunni, western

6. The majority of the Iraqi people belong to the _____ branch of Islam.
7. In last December's national election, Iraqis chose 275 candidates who would fill the seats in their country's _____.
8. U.S. Representative _____ has called for the immediate pullout of U.S. troops from Iraq.
9. The U.S. Defense Secretary, _____, has said that an immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq would be bad for the U.S. and the safety of its people.
10. The Kurds are non-Arab Sunni who live mainly in _____ Iraq.

WORLD HISTORY: THE SILK ROAD, PAGES 12-14

■ Match each place or person's name in the left column with the correct description in the right column.

- ___ 11. Marco Polo A. an Emperor of Imperial China
- ___ 12. Serica B. explorer of lands far east of his homeland

- ___ 13. Tien Shan C. ancient Romans' name for China
- ___ 14. Wu-ti D. explorer of lands far west of his homeland
- ___ 15. Zhang Qian E. mountains through which many Silk Road trader caravans traveled

AMERICAN HISTORY: CHILD LABOR IN AMERICA, PAGES 18-21

■ On the line provided, write the letter of the phrase that correctly completes each statement.

- ___ 16. A sweatshop is a . . .
- A. gym where employees exercise after work.
- B. factory where employees work under unhealthful conditions for little pay.
- C. mill that processes cotton for sweatpants and sweatshirts.
- ___ 17. A breaker boy was a young worker who . . .
- A. opened and closed doors deep inside mine shafts.
- B. plowed the soil to prepare it for planting seeds.
- C. sorted rock dug from mines to collect coal.
- ___ 18. The Industrial Revolution was a . . .
- A. period in which new machines and technology changed the way people lived and worked.
- B. strike by kids working in mills, mines, and factories.
- C. windmill that turned a large stone used to grind wheat.
- ___ 19. Tuberculosis is . . .
- A. the constant breathing in of coal dust.
- B. a downward-angled channel used to move objects to a lower level.
- C. a serious, highly contagious lung disease.
- ___ 20. A hearing is . . .
- A. an official order from a foreman to a mine worker.
- B. an official session at which witnesses are questioned.
- C. a speech by a member of Congress.