III. What was the mining boom of the late 1800s?
A. In 1859 miner Henry Comstock discovered a huge deposit of gold and silver in Nevada that became known as the Comstock Lode. Over the next 20 years, the Comstock Lode produced more than $500 million worth of gold and silver.
Comstock Lode
B. Expensive equipment was needed to remove the silver and gold. Large companies bought land from miners who could not afford this machinery. As a result mining became a big business in the West.
C. As companies dug bigger and deeper mines, the work became more dangerous.

1. Miners had to use unsafe equipment such as *elevator platforms* without protective walls.

2. They worked in *dark tunnels* and breathed *hot, stuffy air*.

3. They suffered *lung disease* caused by dusty air.

4. Miners were often injured or killed by poorly planned *explosions* or *cave-ins*.

5. *Fire* was also a great danger.
Western Mines
Western Mines
Western Mines
D. Settlers came from all over the world to work in western mines.
E. Mining booms also produced *boomtowns*, communities that grew up suddenly when a mine opened, then quickly disappeared and became “*ghost towns*” when the mine closed.
Boomtown