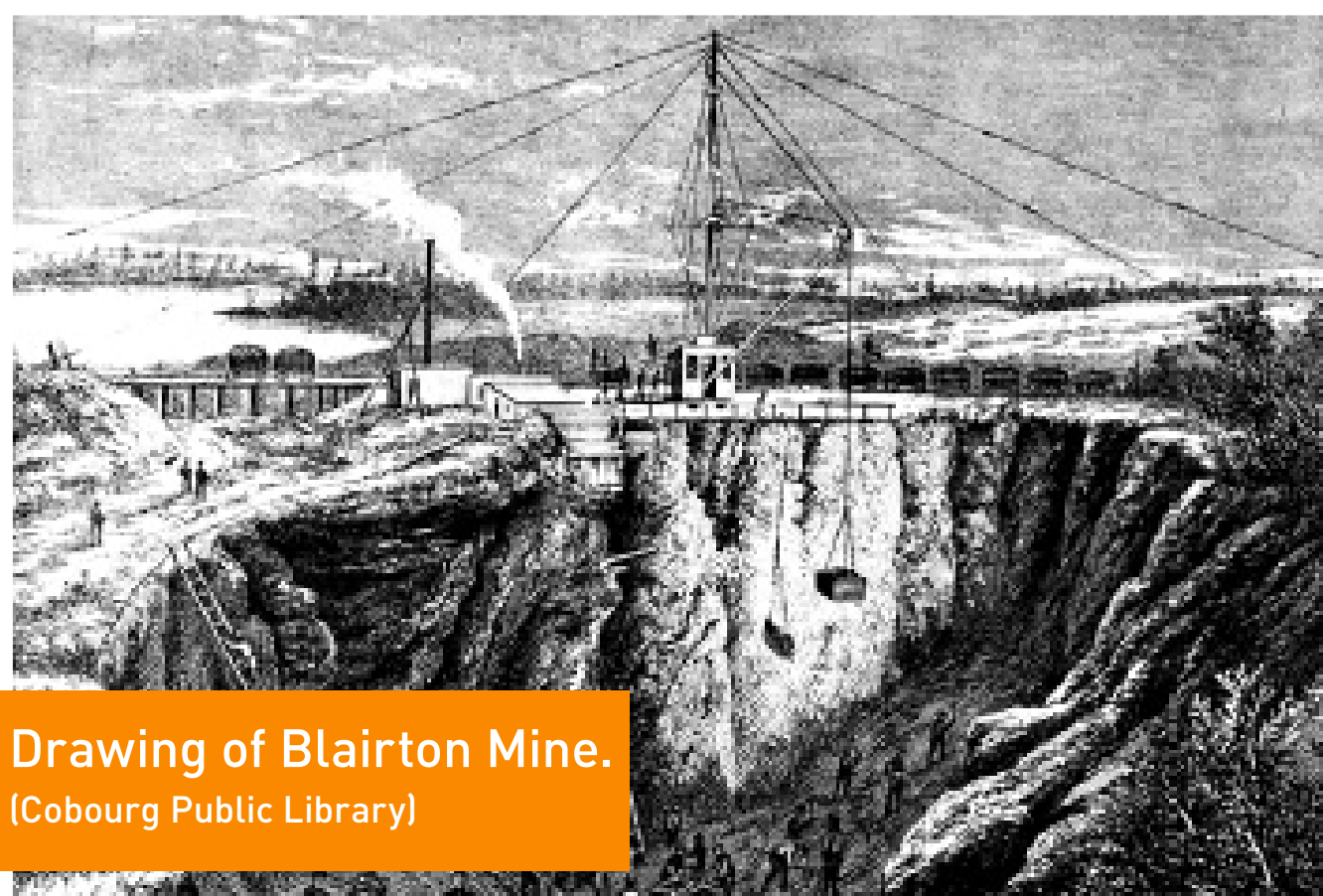


COBOURG'S CROSSSEN RAILWAY CAR COMPANIES

In 1842 James Crossen immigrated with his family to the United States at the age of 16. Within a year he was in Cobourg, possibly visiting relatives, when he accepted a job as an iron finisher with the local Helm Foundry. Iron finishing was an unskilled task requiring much grinding and filing of the forged iron castings.

But James was a quick learner and by observation and hard work he gained the creative and business skills which led to his **accepting a partnership in the foundry** which was renamed the Ontario Foundry shortly after. By 1865, at 39 years of age, James Crossen had become sole proprietor of the company, soon to be president of one of the area's most successful industrial enterprises.

FROM FOUNDRY OWNER TO MAJOR RAILWAY CAR BUILDER

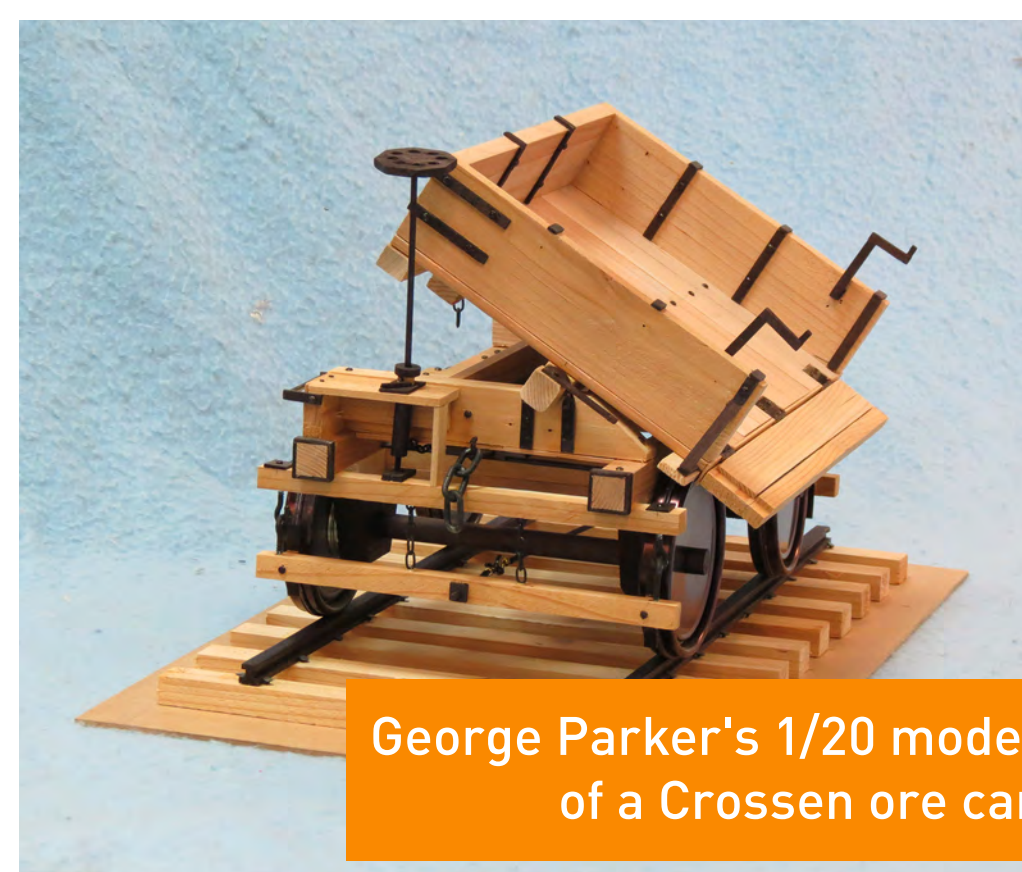


Drawing of Blairton Mine.
(Cobourg Public Library)

In the mid 1860s the dormant Cobourg & Peterborough Railway was revived as the Cobourg, Peterborough & Marmora Railway and Mining Company. It was created to mine iron ore at the Blairton mine near Marmora for transshipment through Cobourg, across Lake Ontario and eventually to Pittsburgh.

Crossen was approached to construct a hundred wooden dumping ore cars for the new company. Although he had never attempted such a task, he accepted and production began in February 1867.

The necessary castings were forged at his Ontario Foundry, located just north of King Street near St. Peter's Church of England. They were then taken to a woodworking facility adjacent to the old C&PR railway line at the harbour. The large wheels, meanwhile, arrived from a subcontractor in Montreal. During the first half of 1867 one hundred four-wheeled wooden ore cars were rolled out.



George Parker's 1/20 model of a Crossen ore car



Small foundries still exist. This one is in New York City.

While the Ontario Foundry continued to be successful in providing agricultural implements, the next order for rolling stock is recorded in 1870 when a contract to produce two hundred box cars for the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada was announced.

