

# The New-York Times.

NEW-YORK TIMES, THURSDAY, AUGUST 24, 1865

## NORTH JERSEY IRON TRADE Part Two

*On Thursday, August 24, 1865, our New-York Times reporter continued his trek through the North Jersey iron district. He travels north from Rockaway and gives us a detailed account of life in the mining towns of Hibernia and Beach Glen. The miners who lived and worked in these communities would probably find some of our writer's social commentary a bit naive and amusing.*

**W.W. - Correspondent for the New-York Times**

### ROCKAWAY

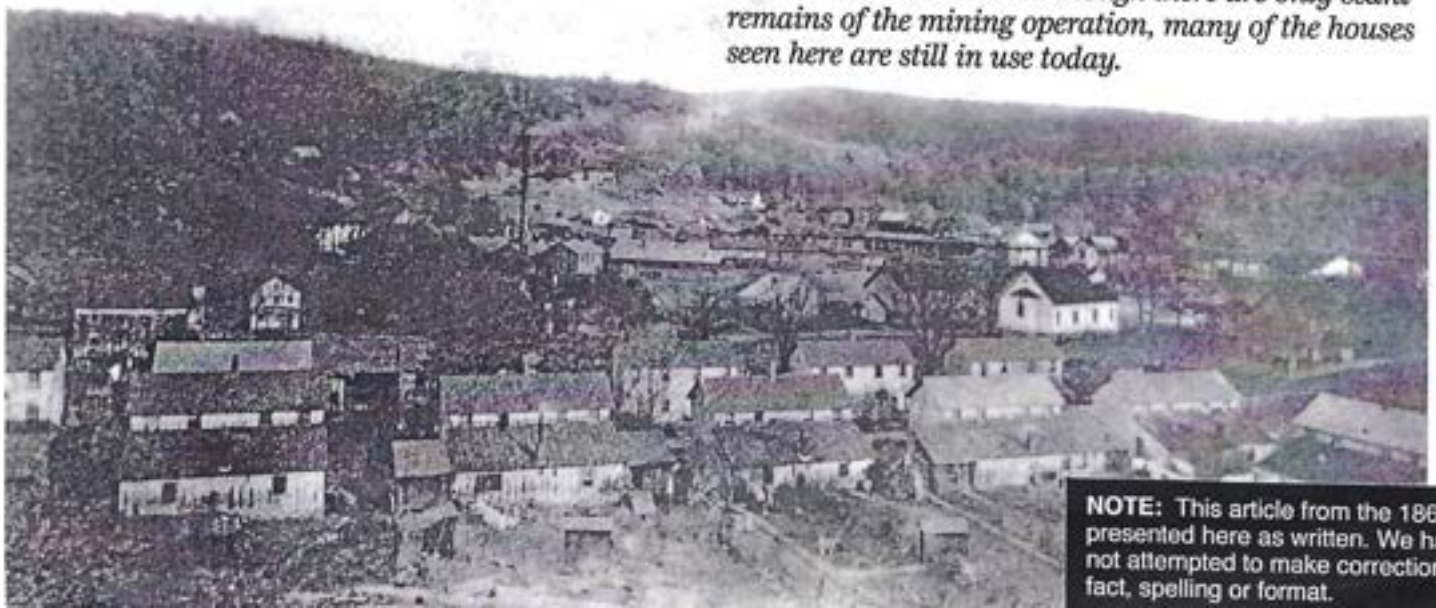
Thursday, August 24 1865

Yesterday began my explorations of the mining regions proper, taking in the Hibernia and Beach Glen iron mines. These are situated on the face of a mountain, about four miles to the northward, and connected with the Morris Canal by a railroad, which is operated by horse-power. The road is substantially constructed, as if the design had been to use steam-power on it. At the canal are the necessary turn-outs, shutes, &c., for loading ore into the boats, and shipping coal to the mines. Four trains of eight cars each, and conveying in all from 160 to 180 tons of ore, are run daily during the Summer months. In Winter, while the canal is closed, none can be forwarded, but the men are kept steadily at work taking it out. If the railroad were in operation to Easton and Boonton, carrying ore at about one cent per ton per mile, a large business would await it from the first day after its completion.

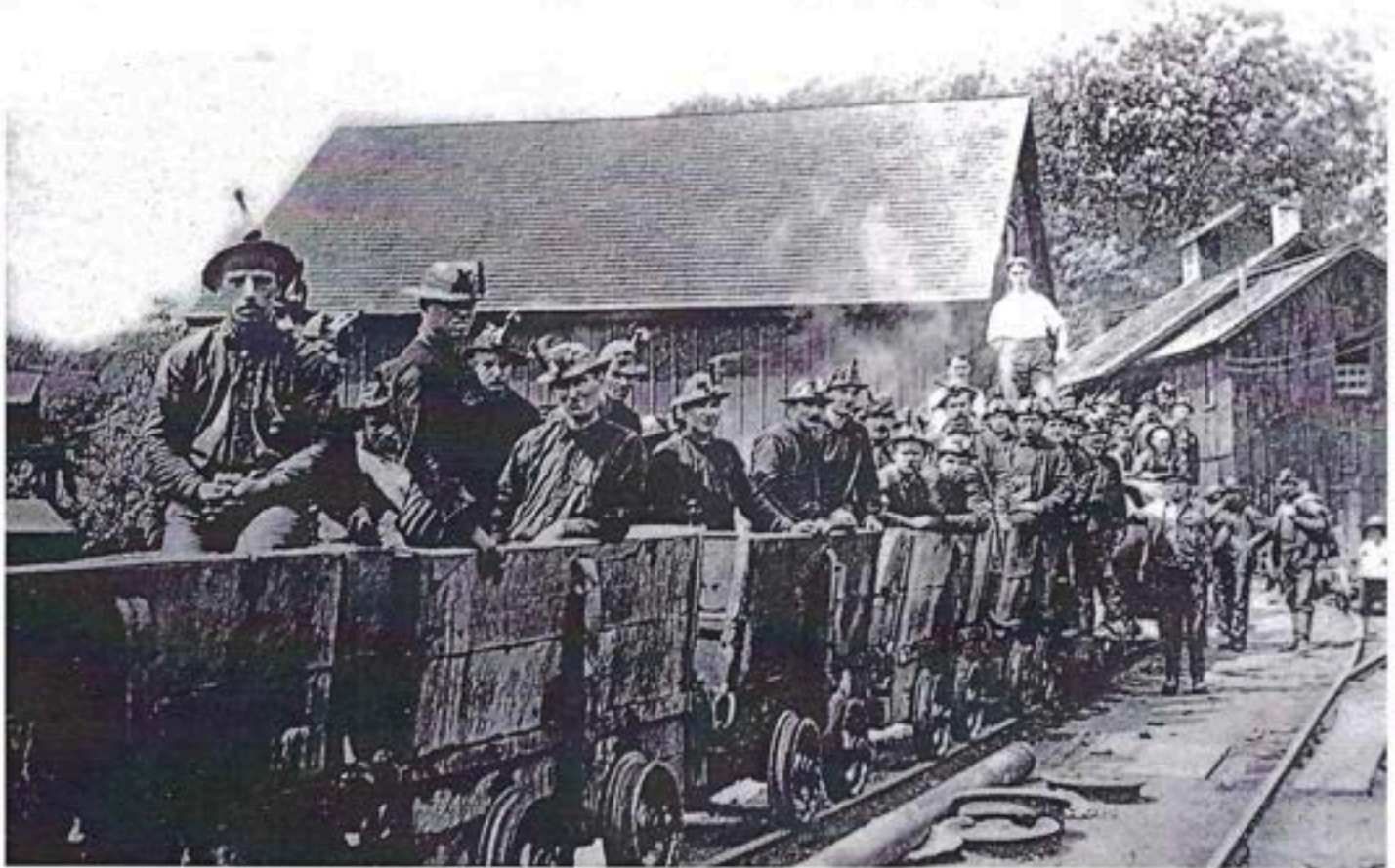
The line passes up a narrow but pretty valley, with fertile bottoms, covered with tall corn or rich grass. On one farm I counted a drove of twenty-nine cows, all browsing contentedly as they were distilling their good liquor for the benefit of New-Yorkers -- that is to say, if New-Yorkers could only get it "in the original packages," and not largely adulterated with Croton, &c.

The first mine reached is about three miles from this place, and known as the Beach Glen Mine. It belongs to the Boonton Company, and produces between 500 and 600 tons of ore per month. The number of men employed is about 15, under Mr. JOSEPH TOMPKINS as manager. One section of it is worked by means of a tunnel and railway driven into the hill, the other by a shaft and whim. It has not been very many years in operation, and hence the excavations made are not

*The town of Hibernia sprawled across the head of a narrow valley with high hills on either side. In this picture a street of double block worker houses is seen in the foreground with the mine workings seen against the hill in the distance. Although there are only scant remains of the mining operation, many of the houses seen here are still in use today.*



**NOTE:** This article from the 1860s is presented here as written. We have not attempted to make corrections in fact, spelling or format.



*Miners ride cars of the Hibernia Underground Railroad back to the surface, the oil lamp on their hard hats still smoking after a twelve hour shift in the mines below. In the distance, behind the building on the right, the tracks curve into the adit tunnel that leads to the mine workings deep underground. Today, you can follow the walking path along the railroad right-of-way, past the foundation of the building seen in this picture to the mouth of the tunnel, now barred with a grating so you can look but not enter.*

so extensive as elsewhere. The length of the adit is about 60 yards; depth of the shaft, about half as many feet. The ore is considered inferior in richness to some others, yielding not over 40 per cent. of metal on the average. There are two veins on this tract, running in different directions; but the peculiarities of these I did not find time to examine minutely.

The mountain chain is here intersected by a deep and wide gap, through which flows a mill-stream. Passing through the opening about a mile, we come to the celebrated Hibernia Mine, which, "Yawns like a gash on warrior's breast."

Climbing the hill about 100 feet, we come to the mouth of the adit or tunnel, along which a railroad has been laid for 175 yards, to the point where operations are now going forward. Mr. WM. GEORGE is the managing contractor of this work, employing about 40 men at present — a somewhat smaller force than was at work last year. The quantity of ore raised in 1864 was about 15,000 tons; that of the present year will come well up to the same figures, according to appearances. This mine belongs to residents of the county, who lease it out to the Trenton Iron Company for a royalty of 50 cents per ton of ore raised.

Mr. RICHARD GEORGE is the company's superintendent in this county; and Mr. PHILIP R. GEORGE, of Ringwood, Passaic County, is their General Superintendent of Mines. To all these gentlemen I desire to return my thanks for their courtesy in imparting information.

The length of the vein on the Trenton Iron Company's premises at Hibernia is fully a quarter of a mile, the highest point being fully 200 feet above the valley. Northward, the vein enters another piece of private property, leased to the Glendon Iron Company, whose works are a short distance above Easton, Pennsylvania. The number of men employed here is about 125; last year, about 150, when the quantity of ore raised amounted to nearly 20,000 tons. Portions of this vein will give seventy per cent. of metal and the average will probably amount to sixty per cent. — a very satisfactory yield. The quality of iron made from this ore is also excellent. Mr. GEORGE RICHARDS is Superintendent of this mine, and also of the Ogden, Ford and Hurd Mines, all belonging, directly or indirectly, to the same interest. The length of the vein on this property is three-eighths of a mile, and the depth to which shafts have been sunk and oper-

ations carried on is nearly 150 feet. The water has to be pumped out by a powerful steam-engine; on the Trenton Iron Company's lease it discharges through the tunnel.

The vein extends some distance beyond this property toward the northeast, but becomes thinner and poorer at the surface, on which account mining operations have never been carried on to any great extent. Two or three years ago, however, small quantities of ore were taken out and sent to market.

Like the veins at Ringwood, Sterling, Succunna, and others in this section of New-Jersey, the Hibernia was discovered and worked previous to the Revolution. A furnace and forge, which have ceased to exist, once stood at the foot of the hill containing the mine, and the metal there made was transported by wagon to New-York or Philadelphia. Farmers did their own mining in most cases, raising a few tons of ore when they had nothing else to do, and sending it from five to ten miles (sometimes on horseback!) to the nearest forge or furnace. This primitive mode of scratching the surface has, since the advent of the canal and the railroad, been replaced by operations carried on under scientific men, in the service of large companies, with abundant capital and skilled labor at command.

I have already described the processes carried on at Boonton. In the cases of such companies as the Trenton and the Glendon, the ore is shipped by canal westward, to the Delaware, where it meets the coal coming down the Lehigh from Pennsylvania, together with the softer iron ores got in that State. At Philipsburgh, opposite Easton, are the blast-furnaces of the Trenton Company, where the ore, duly mixed, is converted into pig-iron. It is thence shipped by railroad or canal to Trenton, where it is puddled and rolled into rails or common bars, ready for the New-York, Philadelphia or any other market. At the Glendon Works there is substantially the same combination of New-Jersey and Pennsylvania ores; but they do not roll the iron into rails there.

It becomes a question of much importance to the people of this section, whether, instead of transporting the ore westward to meet the coal, and afterward bringing the metal eastward to find its principal market, it would not be equally profitable to carry the coal all the way to Morris and Passaic Counties, locating the iron manufacture near the mines, instead of on the Delaware. So far, the Morris Canal Company, by its tariff on transportation, has thrown obstacles in the way; but it is hoped that with the opening of rival lines, a healthy competition may

spring up, to the ultimate benefit of those interests themselves, as well as to this section of New-Jersey. The difference between the transportation of anthracite one way and coal another is so inconsiderable, in cost, that it would seem only necessary to make a beginning, in order to insure success.

The New-Jersey ores are mostly known as the "specular" or "magnetic" variety, being often so fully charged with magnetism that the steel tools with which the men are working stick fast to the rock. The Pennsylvania ores do not possess this quality; and usually yield a smaller per centage of metals -- say from 30 to 40 per cent. They are, however, more easily worked than those in this State.

The veins hereabouts follow the general trend of the mountains, running from northeast to southwest. At the surface they are apt to be poorer than lower down, being mixed largely with isinglass, which forms into large, dark crystals, often mistaken by the uninitiated for the genuine article itself; but this can be traced only in thin veins or layers through the blocks. It is believed that the time will come when it will be found profitable to work up these masses for the ore contained in them, but at present veins so much richer are easily accessible that they lie neglected.

The Hibernia vein is from two to ten feet in thickness, with a "dip" of from forty to fifty degrees to the southeast. It is probably the largest uninterrupted bed in this part of the State, as most of them are disturbed by "hitches" in the strata every few rods. In such a case the miners come to a smooth wall of common rock, where they turn a few yards to one side or the other, and are apt to discover the old vein that had been broken off thus suddenly.

The walls on both sides of the vein are apt to be quite

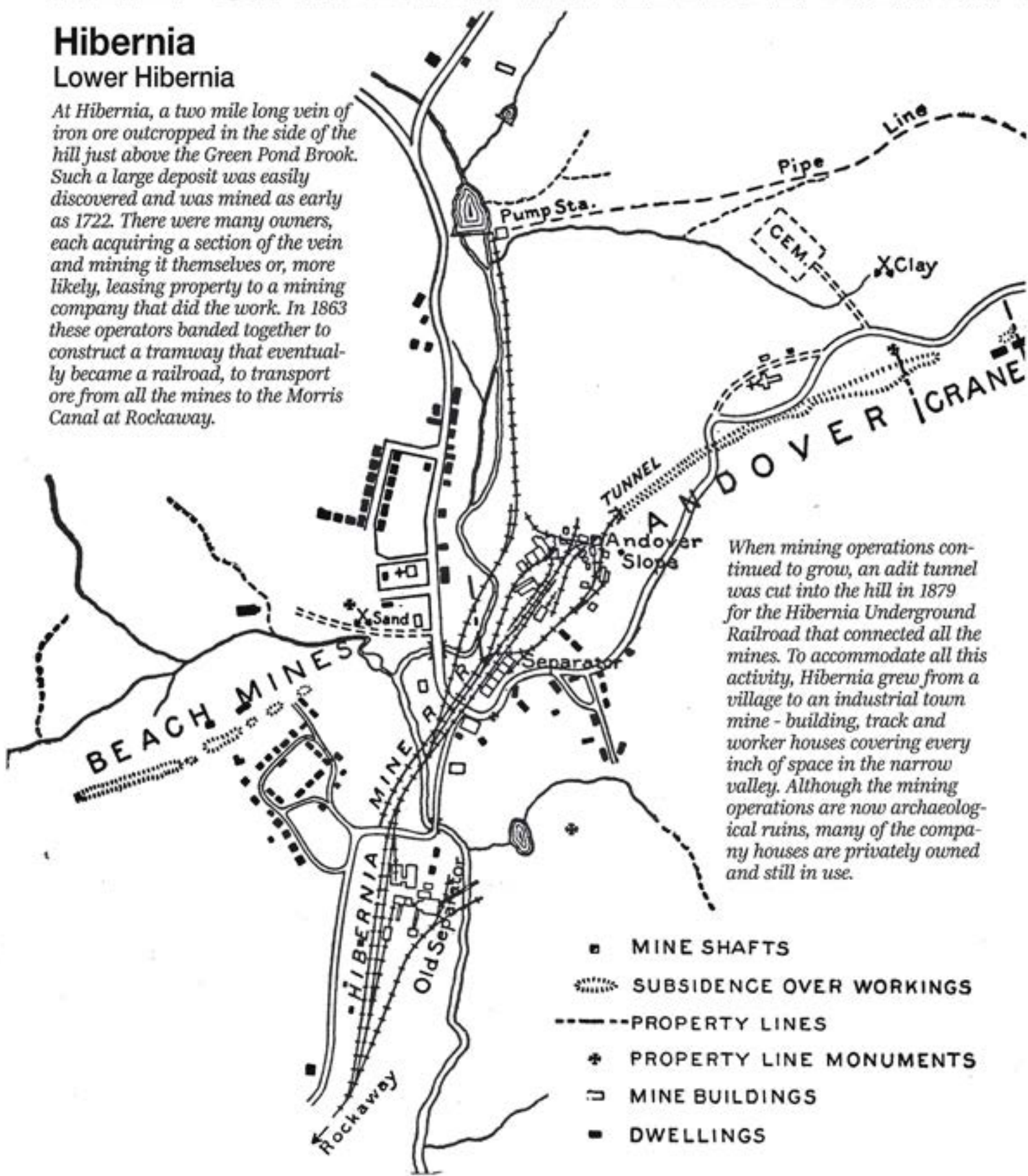
*The Hibernia General Store, seen here in the early 1900s, operated as a gas station and convenience store into the 1960s. The small structure attached to the right side on the building was the Hibernia Post Office.*



# MAP OF MINES AT HIBERNIA NE

## Hibernia Lower Hibernia

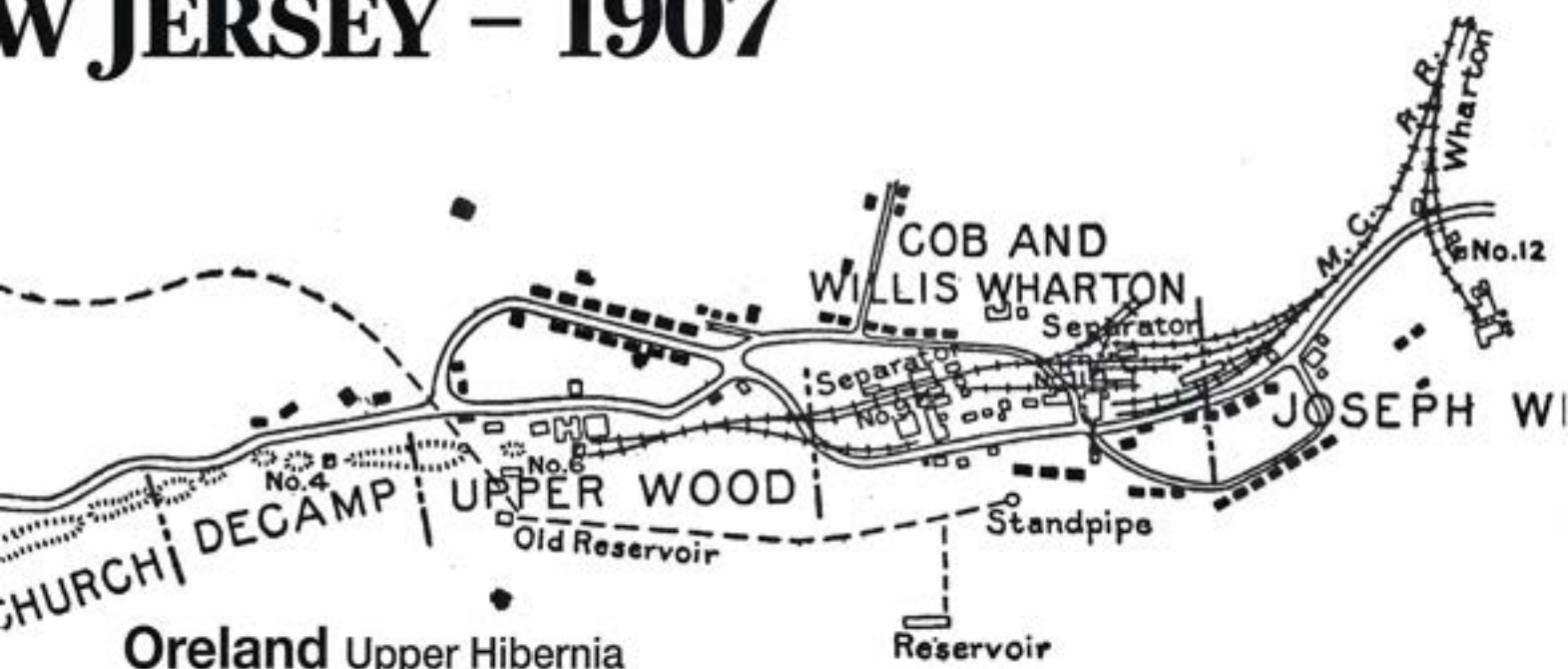
At Hibernia, a two mile long vein of iron ore outcropped in the side of the hill just above the Green Pond Brook. Such a large deposit was easily discovered and was mined as early as 1722. There were many owners, each acquiring a section of the vein and mining it themselves or, more likely, leasing property to a mining company that did the work. In 1863 these operators banded together to construct a tramway that eventually became a railroad, to transport ore from all the mines to the Morris Canal at Rockaway.



When mining operations continued to grow, an adit tunnel was cut into the hill in 1879 for the Hibernia Underground Railroad that connected all the mines. To accommodate all this activity, Hibernia grew from a village to an industrial town - building, track and worker houses covering every inch of space in the narrow valley. Although the mining operations are now archaeological ruins, many of the company houses are privately owned and still in use.

- MINE SHAFTS
- ⋯ SUBSIDENCE OVER WORKINGS
- - - PROPERTY LINES
- ⊕ PROPERTY LINE MONUMENTS
- ▭ MINE BUILDINGS
- DWELLINGS

# NEW JERSEY - 1907



## Oreland Upper Hibernia

High on the hill above the town of Hibernia, at the far end of the vein of iron ore, a separate village grew up to support mining activities located too far from the lower town for easy access. It was originally called Upper Hibernia. However, when Joseph Wharton acquired the property, it became Oreland with its own neighborhoods and its own connection to the Wharton & Northern Railroad. Today, this property is part of the state-owned Wildcat Ridge Wildlife Management Area. Although the mine shafts have been sealed, remnants of the places the miners lived and worked can still be found buried in the landscape.

smooth, "the foot-wall" (that on the west side) particularly so. In places it looks as if it had been planed ready for the iron, or as if nature had prepared it as a great floor on which to pour out an enormous casting. The "hanging wall," or that leaning over from the east side, is not apt to be so uniformly regular. Occasionally a spurt of the iron has been discharged into it for some yards, either to come to a sudden stop, or to rejoin the main vein at some distance. Frequently the vein parts into two, which are separated by thin partitions of rock, (from one to six feet,) termed "horsers." Those middle walls are found to run many rods in length, and occasion no small trouble to those engaged, as either vein becomes too small to afford sufficient passage-way. Occasionally, too, along the foot-wall occurs a thin stratum of soft rock, or clay, (termed "slab,") which dissolves under the action of the atmosphere and water. This rock is unlike any other to be found in these mountains, being sandstone and clay-shale. It has evidently been formed by the earth and sand from above washing in to fill a vacuum, which had been created between the vein and the face of the rock. The walls are supported by pillars of ore or timber.

The surrounding rocks are all of the primary class, principally gneiss, with a species of granite, veins of mica, quartz, &c. Sandstones proper are not to be met

with, either as rocks or as surface-builders -- a circumstance which I propose to notice at length by and by.

The work is mostly let out by contract to one or more responsible individuals, who are paid so much per ton of ore raised. These men employ their blacksmith to dress the tools, and miners or laborers to assist, paying usually from \$1 25 to \$1 50 per day, of ten hours. The men underground work by day and night shifts alternately, it being "all day" with them in the nether regions. The air is fresh and decidedly pleasant in Summer, while in Winter it feels warmer than in the upper world. Of course, there is an abundant supply of pure water at all times.

Besides the wages, which are about one-third lower than during last year, many married men have free houses from the companies, with patches of ground for raising vegetables, and perhaps keeping one or more cows, pigs, poultry, &c. The houses are neither large nor elegant; they are far from being what most persons term comfortable in Winter; but I have seen the tables of the miners almost groaning beneath the loads of good things furnished on their own premises -- fowls, eggs, milk, butter, vegetables, and the like, of which they had a supply to last the whole year. With reasonable care, human life will probably spin out as long under as above ground; certainly, the number of casualties happening in these mines,

except from carelessness, is inconsiderable. Miners of steady habits, and earning \$1 50 per day, with perquisites, can do quite as well as mechanics in our large cities. Assuredly, if they look less intelligent, their physique is greatly superior.

The men are mostly emigrants from England, Wales and Ireland, the last-named having furnished the largest quota. On the whole, though some of them occasionally "go on the spree," or "kick up a shindy," there is less trouble among them than might be expected. A great deal, however, depends on the tact, kindness and firmness of the managers. At some of the mines rioting is reported to be in the ascendant.

With a single suggestion I shall bring this letter to a close. It is this: Employers should not only provide for the bodily well-being of their employes, but mental pabulum as well. A few hundred dollars judiciously expended every year upon good books, magazines and newspapers, and occasionally some

encouragement held out to innocent amusements, would contribute to the health, the happiness, the cheerfulness and comfort, as well as the steadiness of the men shut out in a measure from the bustle and excitements of the outside world. Deprived of nearly all proper stimulants in the shape of healthy amusements, the miner is sorely tempted either to abandon the hills altogether, or to plunge into excesses whenever he approaches the nearest country-tavern or village liquor-shop. How much better to minister to the disposition for excitement and amusement by encouraging harmless games, reading-rooms and the like, with which enjoyments added to his present advantages, the miner's life might be as happy as the day (or the night) is long. Such appliances, too, might, and undoubtedly would, have the effect of preventing the outbreak of discontents, heart-burnings and strikes, often to the great loss of both employer and employed. Will not the well-to-do owners of these works give this matter their serious attention? ■

## Oreland Neighborhoods

- Black Row
- Chinatown
- Gabbletown
- Jordon Row
- Kelly's Row
- Kuckletown
- York State

*The residents of Oreland lived in company houses built in groups near the mine workings. Although there was no indoor plumbing there was space for gardens that helped keep families fed when the mines weren't working. Each group of houses became a neighborhood with a name chosen for reasons now long forgotten.*

*This postcard view of "Gabbletown" shows a line of double block (two-family) worker houses lining both sides of the dirt lane. By the time this picture was taken, the mines had closed and many families had moved away. Although these buildings are gone and the area overgrown, you can still walk down this street with lines of cellar holes on each side marking the places so many people lived.*

