

FROM THE PAGES OF
HISTORY
Cornell Iron Works



John Black Cornell, 1821-1887.



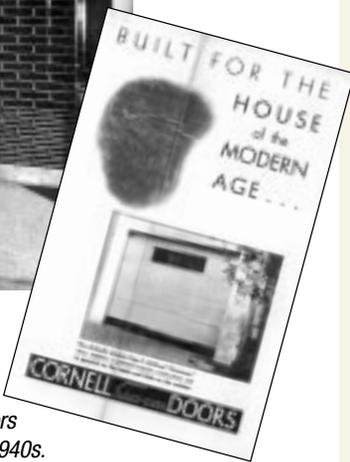
New York City, ca. 1840s.



J.B. Cornell, the grandson of John Black Cornell, demonstrates the operation of a wooden rolling grille, 1929.



Cornell's mall grille, 1931.



Cornell produced wood sectional doors in the 1930s and 1940s.



Keen and Jack Cornell, 1969.

The Mountaintop, Pa., plant, 1965.



The new facility in Mountaintop, 2001.

Milestones

- 1828** ▶ George Cornell and Samuel Althause purchase the business of Benjamin Birdsall to become Cornell & Althause, manufacturers of plain and ornamental ironwork.
- 1854** ▶ John Black (J.B.) Cornell, George's brother, patents a method of joining metal slats for revolving shutters for store windows.
- 1870** ▶ After the death of George's other brother, W.W., a new partnership forms between J.B. and his son, J.M.
- 1880** ▶ J.B. & J.M. Cornell's firm is one of the largest manufacturing operations in New York City, employing 1,200 at its peak. In the 1880s, the firm provides circular stairs and ironwork for the Brooklyn Bridge and the iron base and stairways for the Statue of Liberty.
- Early 1900s** ▶ The firm begins to reduce its production of heavy iron for structural uses and focuses on the rolling door business.
- 1911** ▶ J.M. forms a new company with his sons, Milton and John. Called Cornell Iron Works, it focuses on the production of rolling door products.
- 1931** ▶ Cornell introduces the metal security grille or mall grille to the U.S. market.
- 1952** ▶ Through the 1930s and 1940s, Cornell produces wood sectional doors because steel is hard to afford during the depression and unavailable during the war. Wood doors are discontinued in 1952.
- 1965** ▶ Cornell moves all production from its Long Island City plant to a new facility in Mountaintop, Pa.
- 1969** ▶ Keen Cornell becomes president, succeeding Jack Cornell, the great-grandson of John Black Cornell.
- 1978** ▶ Needing additional space, the company acquires the Oceana plant adjacent to the Mountaintop facility.
- 1985** ▶ A new plant is opened in Nashville, Tenn.
- 1987** ▶ A seven-month union strike hits the Mountaintop plant. Customers are served by the Nashville plant and by office workers producing in Mountaintop. Non-union workers cross the picket line, and the union workers are replaced.
- 1991** ▶ During the economic recession of 1991, the Nashville plant closes. Though it was not a long-term success, it provided a vital link to making Cornell a union-free company.
- 1997** ▶ Keen Cornell retires and is succeeded by his son, Andrew Cornell.
- 2001** ▶ In Mountaintop, Cornell opens a new 188,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art production facility, dedicated to Keen Cornell. Cornell now manufactures rolling service doors, counter doors, fire doors, rolling grilles, and side folding grilles.

Source: Andrew Cornell and Cornell historical files