

BOTTLING WORKS AND BREWERIES

Russell's Brewery

William Russell was a contractor and stone mason who settled in Drummondville in 1833. He built a two-storey brick home on Ferry Street, just east of the Portage Road. Russell built his brewery in 1844, adjacent to his home on Ferry Street, and just across the street from the Stamford Township Hall (now the Lundy's Lane Historical Museum). A spring at the rear of Russell's property supplied plentiful spring water which Russell used to brew 20,000 gallons of beer per year.

In the mid-1850's, Samuel Zimmerman started a water works which piped water from the Niagara River to Clifton and Elgin. After his death in 1857, the pipes were extended to Drummondville to provide additional water for Russell's Brewery. The brewery was purchased by E. J. Fischer in December of 1877, who operated it until 1885, when it was purchased by W.H. Ferguson, a brewer from Niagara Falls, New York. When Ferguson acquired the brewery, its annual brewing capacity was 20,000 barrels. In 1886, Russell's Brewery was destroyed in a spectacular fire and was not rebuilt, thus bringing to an end one of Drummondville's oldest and largest industries.

Stamford Spring Brewery

The Stamford Spring Brewery and Distillery was established in 1836 by John Sleeman, and was located on Four Mile Creek in St. David's. Sleeman sold this property to I. A. Hatt in 1847, and then moved to Guelph. Hatt operated the brewery for a number of years before selling it to James Oswald sometime in the 1850's. Oswald was responsible for enlarging the brewery considerably, and expanding its distribution area.

In the early 1860's, William Henry, a grandson of Oswald's wife, came to St. David's, and became increasingly involved in the operation of the brewery, eventually assuming control. Henry lived in a spacious home near the junction of Mountain Road and Ravine Road, which was built on the exact location of Sir Peregrine Maitland's summer cottage. Around the turn of the century, Henry sold out his interests in the brewery and moved to Niagara Falls. He settled on Bridge Street, and his son later purchased the Arlington Hotel.

After Henry sold the brewery, the structure was converted into a recreation and dance hall. The hall was about 200 feet long and was heated by two large stoves, one at each end of the building. Prior to World War One, there was an attempt to revive the brewery. It operated for a few years but ultimately failed, most likely due to the institution of Prohibition in 1916.

After the war, the Stamford Spring Brewery was sold to Mrs. E. Homer Dixon, who made the brewery profitable once again by bottling spring water from Four Mile Creek. This water was exclusively distributed through the Spring Water Bottling Works in Niagara Falls South, who made it widely available in "fancy" grocery stores in the area. Stamford Spring Brewery expanded its business and began to ship spring water all over Southern Ontario. However, with the decline of spring water consumption, the brewery was abandoned and soon fell into ruins, ending over ninety years of commercial enterprise at this site. The site was purchased by W. Thomas, a coal dealer from Niagara Falls, but the ruins remained at the location for a number of years.

Spring Water Bottling Works

The Spring Water Bottling Works was built in 1921 by Mr. S. A. Hoag. It was located at 5730 Ferry Street, just east of the Stamford Township Hall. The Bottling Works was primarily a

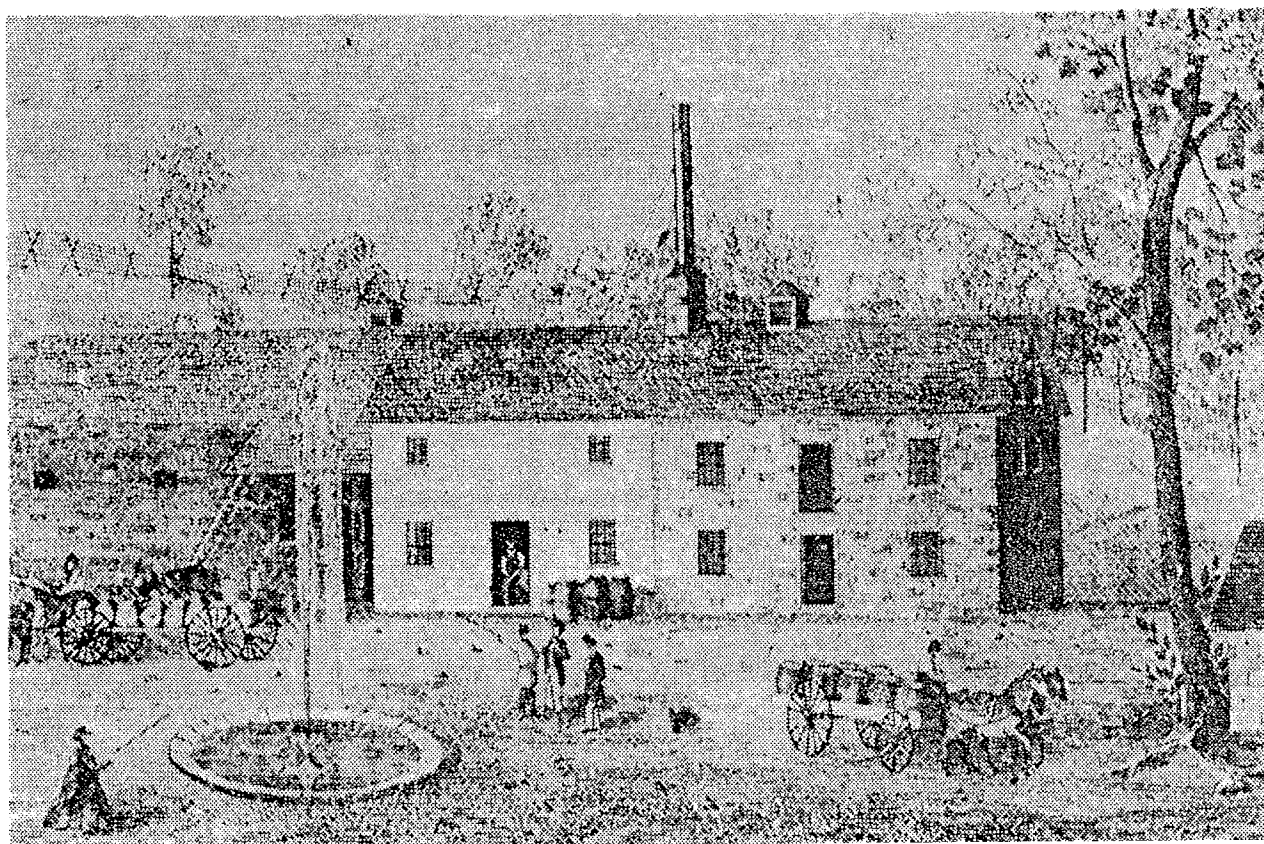
soda manufacturing plant, and used pure spring water which was pumped up several hundred feet from a well on the property. From here, it was piped directly into the syrup department and then bottled. The entire bottling process at the Spring Water Bottling Works was very modern and done by automatic machinery.

In 1929, the bottling operation was taken over by Clark Bradley and William Woon, two local entrepreneurs who expanded the facilities to a bottling capacity of over 300,000 cases per year. Among its seventeen marketed brands, the Bottling Works distributed such labels as Gold Seal and Niagara Dry Ginger Ale. It were also the exclusive agent for St. David's Spring Water, which came from Stamford Spring Brewery in St. David's.

Mr. Bradley had been involved in a number of business ventures before purchasing the Spring Water Bottling Works. He had managed Bradley & Sons grocery store from 1905 to 1912, and in 1912, he established his own grocery store which prospered accordingly. In 1929, he sold his store and went into partnership with Mr. Woon; together, they purchased the bottling works.

Mr. Woon, the other partner, also had a background as a grocer. After holding a variety of jobs in Orillia, Toronto, and Peterborough, Woon came to Niagara Falls, where he worked as a salesman for the National Grocers Company until 1929.

The name of the Spring Water Bottling Works was later changed to Niagara Dry Beverage Limited, and under that name, it continued to operate as a soda manufacturing plant. Operations at the plant ceased in 1970, after nearly 50 years of bottling.



Drawing of Stamford Spring Brewery and Distillery, c. 1862