

## Lesser Known Industries

### A. C. Spark Plug Company

According to an article in the newspaper, the A. C. Spark Plug Company, a subsidiary of the General Motors Corporation, was going to build a factory within sixty days on 16 acres of land obtained from the Waterworks (**Brantford Expositor**, May 4, 1920, p. 1). The factory would employ 100 people when it opened in three to four months and had plans for rapid expansion. The A. C. Spark Plug Company was listed in the 1921 city directory but by 1922 the Kanadda Biscuit Company of Canada Ltd. had taken over the building (**Brantford Expositor**, October 25, 1922, p. 10) and the spark plug company had disappeared.

### American Radiator and Boiler Company

The American Radiator Company of Chicago bought the old Cockshutt factory at the corner of South Market and Greenwich Streets in 1905 with plans for extensive renovations (**Brantford Weekly Expositor**, May 18, 1905, p. 12). In 1913 it was incorporated in Canada under the name of the American Radiator Company of Canada Limited at which time a new foundry was built and the plant was reorganized so that they could manufacture radiator equipment as well as boilers. In 1923 the company acquired the Dominion Radiator Company in Toronto resulting in the formation of a new company, the Dominion Radiator and Boiler Company, Limited. About 1929 the Brantford plant was converted in order to specialize in making boilers together with "Vento" radiation for hot blast heating and ventilating. The company manufactured all sizes of heaters, from the very smallest for domestic water supply to the largest required for heating any type of building. The business relocated to Toronto circa 1939. Other companies used the building before it was eventually torn down.



Dominion Radiator, Market Street

### Bailey Cutlery Company

Eli Bailey, a native of Sheffield, England, was one of the earliest cutlery makers in Canada. He established the Bailey Cutlery Company on the corner of Queen and Dalhousie Streets where the post office was later built. By 1901 Frank Leeming was listed in the city directory as the president of the Bailey Cutlery Company. The company purchased the old Wincey mills and relocated to the West Mill Street location in Holmedale (**Brantford Weekly Expositor**, December 19, 1901, p. 8). By 1904 the Brantford Felt and Rubber Company had obtained an option on the buildings on West Mill Street with plans to start making felt and rubber footwear (**Brantford Weekly Expositor**, October 6, 1904, p. 11). Eli Bailey died in Toronto in February 1927 (**Brantford Expositor**, February 25, 1927, p. 13).

## Blacker Brothers' Brantford Steam Brickyard

Edward Blacker started the brickyard on Colborne Street circa 1836. A few years later he moved to Newport Road before finally relocating the business to Mount Pleasant Road near Tutela Heights in 1879. His sons, R. R. and William Blacker, took over the business when Edward retired in 1881. The company made both red and yellow brick. William Blacker died suddenly of heart failure in Toronto in September 1912 (**Brantford Weekly Expositor**, September 5, 1912, p. 4)

For more information:

- [History of the County of Brant Warner, Beers, and Co. \(p. 145-146 of PDF\)](#)

## Brantford Computing Scales Limited

Brantford Computing Scales was established in 1910 by Joseph L. Howard at 22 Dalhousie Street. Mr. Howard, president and general manager of the company until 1917, died in July 1929 (**Brantford Expositor**, July 17, 1929, p. 7). The company manufactured automatic computing scales and meat slicers and was the first company to manufacture an all-Canadian made scale. By 1916 they had moved to a new factory at 14-16 Grey Street. This factory later became Blue Bird Limited and then the Brantford Washing Machine Company. When this plant was no longer big enough to handle all of their orders Brantford Computing Scales purchased the plant and five acres of adjoining property from the Ker and Goodwin Company in West Brantford for \$80,000 (**Brantford Expositor**, April 7, 1922, p. 1). According to the city directory, the Brantford Computing Scale Company was located at 135 Brant Street from 1923 until 1925.

## Brantford Felt and Rubber Company

In 1904 the Brantford Felt and Rubber Company obtained an option on the Bailey Cutlery Company buildings on West Mill Street with plans to start making felt and rubber footwear (**Brantford Weekly Expositor**, October 6, 1904, p. 11). The Brantford Felt and Rubber Company, with Joseph Ham as president, was listed in the city directory until 1908.

## Brantford Willow Works

Charles Fairfax Sr. established the Brantford Willow Works in 1901 at 251 Colborne Street. This company manufactured all types of willow goods including willow furniture and it became the largest business of its kind in Canada. They moved to 63 Colborne Street in 1907 and when they needed additional space a few years later they took over the adjoining building at 61 Colborne Street. They had 35 acres of willows on the edge of the city and also imported willows from England and France. Charles' son, William, who had joined the business in 1909, died in 1939. Charles Fairfax died in 1953. This company was last listed in the city directory in 1955.

For more information:

- [Expositor October 1909 \(p. 60 of PDF\)](#)
- [Expositor Semi-Centennial 1877-1927 \(p. 108 of PDF\)](#)

## Canada Valve & Hydrant Company

This company was started by H. K. Jordan and E. F. Roberts in 1924 in order to manufacture the "Darling" patented line of fire hydrants, valves, and other waterworks equipment previously made in Canada by the Dominion Steel Products Company. The factory was located on the first floor of the former Brantford Scale Company building on Grey Street before moving to larger quarters in part of the Robbins and Myers building at 42 1/2 Morrell Street. By 1935 they had relocated to 44 Holme Street. The company was last listed in the 1966 city directory.

For more information:

- [Expositor Semi-Centennial 1877-1927 \(p. 131 of PDF\)](#)

## Dominion Cotton Company

Clayton Slater moved to Brantford in 1880 and established the Craven Cotton Mills in Holmedale. In 1883 he built the wincey mill which he ran with his sons until his death in February 1891 (**Brantford Weekly Expositor**, February 13, 1891, p. 8). A couple of months after his death the Dominion Cotton Company of Montreal purchased the mill for \$45,000 (**Brantford Weekly Expositor**, May 22, 1891, p. 3). The company made extensive renovations and modernized the machinery before reopening. These buildings were purchased by the Penman Manufacturing Company in 1909. The cotton mill was eventually closed and the wincey mill was moved to Paris, Ontario.

For more information:

- [History of the County of Brant Warner, Beers, and Co. \(p. 146 of PDF\)](#)



Dominion Cotton Mills

## Dominion Dress Company

The Dominion Dress Company was established in 1915 by Peter S. Cairns. The company manufactured ladies' and children's wear, including aprons, dresses, rompers, and underwear. They originally occupied part of the Hurley Printing Company's building before moving to temporary quarters in the factory formerly owned by the Brantford Computing Scale Company. In the early 1920s they built the Cairns building on South Street. Mohawk Garments, Limited, an offshoot of the Dominion Dress Company, made men's work shirts and children's play clothes which were distributed in this area mostly by Cairns' Limited, their retail store. Peter Cairns opened the first of the Cairns' chain of stores in 1923 at 119 Colborne Street. Another part of the company was Economic Distributors whose main business was to distribute the garments made by the other two companies to retail outlets across Canada. Peter S. Cairns died in Guelph in May 1961. The Dominion Dress Company was last listed in the city directory in 1964.

For more information:

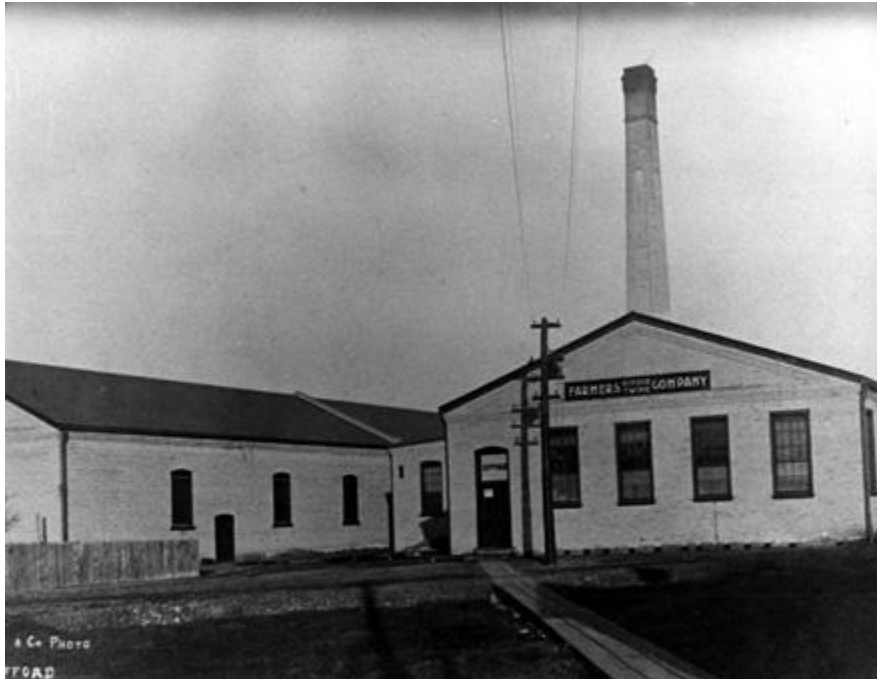
- [Expositor Semi-Centennial 1877-1927 \(p. 20 of PDF\)](#)

## Farmers' Binder Twine Company

This company was established in 1893 (**Brantford Weekly Expositor**, January 20, 1893, p. 8) and was located on Sydenham Street. Joseph Stratford was the general manager and the organization was made up of thousands of farmers and small stockholders from across Canada. Farmers wanted the company to produce enough binder twine for their own use. The plant was destroyed by fire in May 1912 (**Brantford Weekly Expositor**, May 23, 1912, p. 4) with the loss estimated at \$75,000 and a fireman severely injured. It was unknown at the time of the fire if the plant would be rebuilt. According to the newspaper, the United Rubber Manufacturing and Reclaiming Company bought the former Farmers' Binder Twine factory in December 1913 (**Brantford Expositor**, December 13, 1913, p. 1).

For more information:

- [Expositor October 1909 \(p. 53 of PDF\)](#)



Farmers Binder Twine Company, circa 1880

## John H. Hall and Sons

John H. Hall and his four sons, Ernest L., Leslie S., E. Winton, and A. Reginald, started a general repair business in 1903 in a single room of a building at 84 Dalhousie Street. A few years later they moved to a new 3-storey building at 32 Bridge Street when they needed more space. They made small machinery, pipe and bolt threading machines as well as the mechanical repairs. The company became the largest manufacturer of pipe machines in Canada. John H. Hall died in April 1919. In 1920 John H. Hall and Sons merged with the Williams Tool Corporation of Erie, Pennsylvania and the company's name was changed to the Williams Tool Corporation of Canada, Limited (**Brantford Expositor**, May 5, 1920, p. 10). Leslie Hall spent some time in Erie as general manager of the company before returning to Brantford as president of the Williams Tool Corporation of Canada. He died in March 1934 (**Brantford Expositor**, March 12, 1934, p. 6). By 1954, the company's location was listed as No. 2 Highway (East). This company was last listed in the city directory in 1956. A. Reginald Hall, who had also been president and general manager of the company, died in March 1975 (**Brantford Expositor**, March 19, 1975, p. 46)

For more information:

- [Expositor Semi-Centennial 1877-1927 \(p. 128 of PDF\)](#)
- [Expositor October 1909 \(p. 20 of PDF\)](#)
- [Brantford Heritage Inventory Website](#)

## John McHutchion Limited

Forced to leave his previous job as a moulder at Waterous Engine Works because of poor health, John McHutchion opened his first bakery in 1887 at the corner of King and Wellington Streets. The following year he obtained a five-year lease on a building on Colborne Street. He later relocated the business to an adjoining building at 363 Colborne Street. His sister Euphemia became a partner in the bakery. Not only did they deliver their bread throughout the city, they also shipped their bread and cakes within a 100 mile radius of Brantford. The company was the first one in this area to use Baker Automatic machinery which eliminated the handling of dough. John McHutchion died in December 1916 (**Brantford Weekly Expositor**, December 14, 1916, p. 10). This bakery was last listed in the 1976 city directory.

For more information:

- [Expositor Semi-Centennial 1877-1927 \(p. 136 of PDF\)](#)

## Kanadda Biscuit Company of Canada

In 1922 the Kanadda Biscuit Company of Canada Ltd. had plans to take over the factory on Morrell Street previously used by the A. C. Spark Plug Company (**Brantford Expositor**, October 25, 1922, p. 10). The newspaper reported on a meeting of various company officials and local politicians which extolled the virtues of the new company (**Brantford Expositor**, March 6, 1923, p. 8). This company was listed in the city directory from 1923 until 1925.

## Ker & Goodwin Machinery Company, Limited

The Canada Machinery and Supply Company, located at 193 Colborne Street, was taken over by the A R. Williams Machine Company of Toronto. In 1897 John Ker and Abraham Goodwin became the owners of this company. Needing more room they moved to the corner of Colborne and Charlotte Streets in 1905. Their products included lathe chucks, face plate jaws, and all-steel chucks. In 1915 an addition was built so that they could manufacture 4.5 explosive shells. John Ker died in October 1918 (**Brantford Expositor**, October 18, 1918, p. 3). After World War I the company began making oil engines under the "Hvid" Patent ranging in horsepowers from 3  $\diamond$  to 18. In October 1924 they built all of the cordage equipment for the new Brantford Cordage Company mill. The company began making oil burners for domestic heating equipment in 1925. Abraham Goodwin died in January 1946 (**Brantford Expositor**, January 17, 1946, p. 6). The Goodwin Chuck Company Limited began operations in 1951 at the Colborne Street location with Russel Goodwin, Abraham's son, in charge. In 1959 they acquired the J. A. Fellows Company property at 27 Jarvis Street and moved the business to this address. This company was last listed in the city directory in 1973. Russel Goodwin, the owner and manager of the Goodwin Chuck Company for thirty-five years, died in December 1993 (**Brantford Expositor**, December 21, 1993, p. B8)

For more information:

- [Expositor Semi-Centennial 1877-1927 \(p. 66 of PDF\)](#)
- [Expositor October 1909 \(p. 54-55 of PDF\)](#)

## Mickle, Dyment & Sons

The local branch of this company, located on the northwest corner of Colborne and Clarence Streets, was established in 1900. They manufactured finished builders' materials such as shingles, sashes, doors, blinds, and verandah posts. The head office was in Barrie, Ontario and they supplied lumber to plants in several cities besides Brantford. The manager of the local branch, Ross A. Rastall, was the mayor of Brantford in 1911. Starting in 1916 they also manufactured an educational wooden toy, the "Manual Constructor", which could be used to make bridges and houses (**Brantford Expositor**, March 12, 1917, p. 7). A fire on August 7, 1923 badly damaged the west wing of the plant, especially the second floor, causing about \$50,000 damage. The machinery had recently been moved to the east wing in preparation for removal to Toronto since the local factory had ceased operations about three weeks earlier (**Brantford Expositor**, August 7, 1923, p. 1).

For more information:



- [Expositor October 1909 \(p. 24 of PDF\)](#)
- [Reville's History of the County of Brant Volume 2 \(p. 155 of PDF\)](#)

## Niagara Silk Company

John T. Shanahan, the president of the Niagara Silk Company in Tonawanda, New York, established a subsidiary of this company in Brantford in 1914. A new factory was built on Park Avenue East. A few years later it became an independent company. Their products included: gloves, hosiery, underwear, and later ladies' dress goods. In 1928 they expanded the business with the purchase of \$20,000 worth of new machinery and started producing several new lines of the highest quality silks (**Brantford Expositor**, February 4, 1928, p. 7). The silk was bought in skeins in the raw state from Japan and put through various processes, including winding, warping, and weaving, in the Brantford plant before being sent to Drummondville, Quebec for finishing and dyeing. The company bought the Trufit Globe and Hosiery Company of Toronto and used the Toronto office to handle the sales of all of the Niagara Silk products. The company was last listed in the city directory in 1931.

For more information:

- [Brantford Heritage Inventory Website](#)

## Park and Company

Seth Park moved to Brantford from the Niagara area in 1853 and opened a store selling artist's supplies. He operated a photography business with his wife for more than twenty years. His son Edward was young when his father died so his mother continued to run the business until Edward had completed high school and taken a photography course in Chicago. Edward and his mother reorganized the business as Park and Company in 1876 and he had a studio on the second floor of 134 Colborne Street. In 1882 he rented the store below his studio and started selling pictures and frames. He moved to 124-126 Colborne Street in 1893 and began selling fancy goods, books, and stationery. In 1903 he bought the building at 70-72 Colborne Street for a large photo studio and stopped selling the other items. Edward Park won three bronze medals for his photographs: in London, England in 1886, in Boston in 1889, and at the Chicago's World Fair in 1893. He also received a silver medal from the Photographic Association of Canada in 1891. The Ontario government often commissioned Park and Company for photographic projects and he took portraits of numerous famous people, including Alexander Graham Bell and Arthur S. Hardy. Edward Park died in 1947.

## Sheepskin Tannery of Franklin and John Ott

Franklin Ott opened a tannery on Oxford Street near the west end of the Lorne Bridge in the 1850s. He was eventually joined in the business by his brother John. In 1879 the frame building burned down and was replaced by a brick building later that same year. The following year they took over a building on Greenwich Street which had previously been used as a vinegar factory. A fire on the evening of January 1, 1884 destroyed the tannery and the leather stored there with the loss reaching approximately \$2,500 (**Brantford Weekly Expositor**, January 4, 1884, p. 8). Franklin Ott died in May 1893 (**Brantford Weekly Expositor**, May 26, 1893, p. 12). The tannery, except for the office building, was again destroyed by fire in October 1898 (**Brantford Weekly Expositor**, October 11, 1898, p. 7). John Ott continued to operate the tannery until about 1900 when he started selling hides and wool at 23-27 Colborne Street. He died in March 1905 (**Brantford Weekly Expositor**, March 16, 1905, p. 11).

For more information:

- [History of the County of Brant Warner, Beers, and Co. \(p. 151 of PDF\)](#)

## Sterling Actions and Keys Limited

This company, which was originally located in Toronto, moved to Brantford in 1932 (**Brantford Expositor**, December 10, 1931, p. 1). Located on Alice Street in the former Huron Cordage Company factory, they made piano actions, keyboard assemblies, organ keys, and piano tuners' parts. Sterling Piano Products Ltd., a separate division of Sterling Actions and Keys Limited located in the same building, manufactured the hammers, wound brass strings, cut

and punched piano cloth and felts that made up each piano action. It was the oldest manufacturer of piano actions in Canada and the last company of its kind in this country. Aeolian Corporation of New York closed the plant at the end of March 1971 because of increased Japanese competition and a drop in sales.

For more information:

- [Brantford Heritage Inventory Website](#)