

Corby Distilleries

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consumption as a sideline to his milling operation. By 1859 — the official opening date of the distillery — the whiskey was as important as the grain.

In the days before mechanization, a work force of about 400 distilled and shipped whiskey as fast as it could be made. Production peaked at about 1.5 million to 2 million cases of spirits a year for the Canadian market, according to Chris Chan, vice president of strategic planning at Corby in Toronto. How times change.

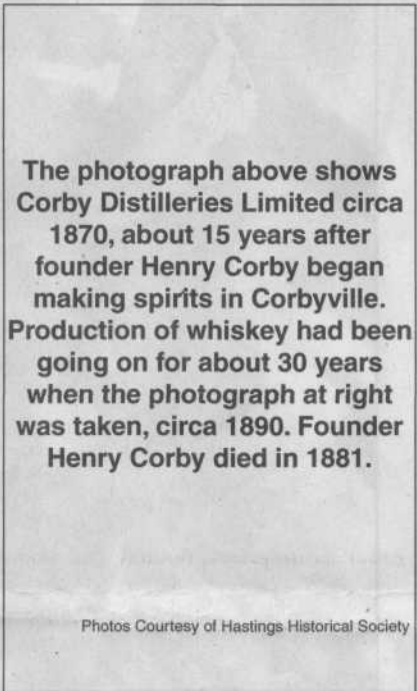
"When we closed it (in 1991) we had 170 (employees)," he said.

Leading up to the closure, Chan said some famous brands were still being distilled at the facility in nine litre cases: Lamb's Rum, half a million cases a year; Wiser's Canadian and Deluxe Special Blend, 450,000 cases; Royal Reserve, 250,000 cases.

But the Belleville facility was a casualty of corporate restructuring.

Just how pervasive was Corby's to the area?

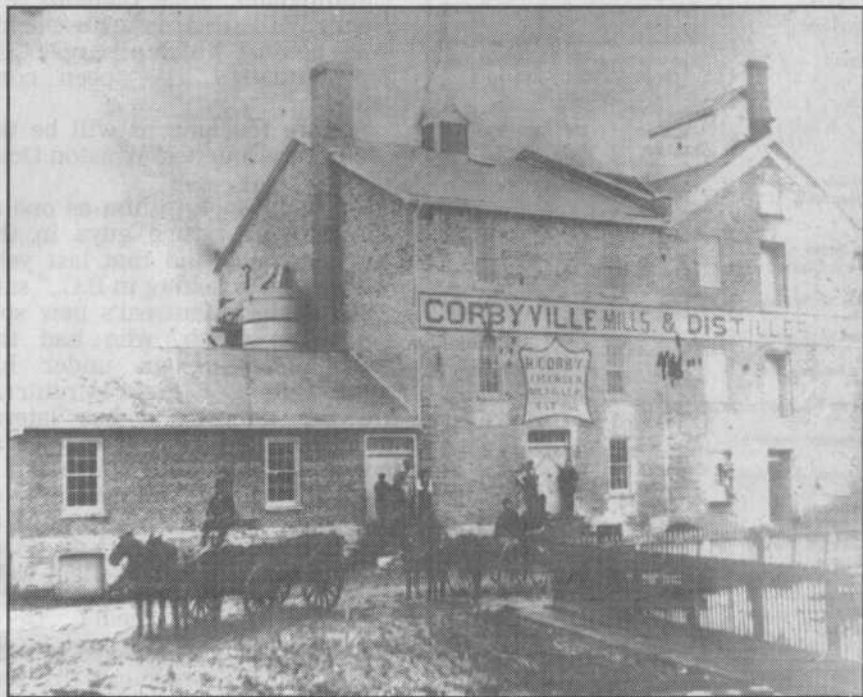
"I think everybody in Belleville had someone, either a relative or a



**The photograph above shows Corby Distilleries Limited circa 1870, about 15 years after founder Henry Corby began making spirits in Corbyville. Production of whiskey had been going on for about 30 years when the photograph at right was taken, circa 1890. Founder Henry Corby died in 1881.**

Photos Courtesy of Hastings Historical Society

person they knew, work in this plant at one time or another," long-time Corby employee Mo Hawkins told The Intelligencer's Jeremy Ashley in a story that appeared in



the March 19, 2000 edition.

"Corby has been a great name for the City of Belleville," agreed city Mayor Ross McDougall when asked Tuesday about the historical

passing of Corby through the sale. Corby Rose Garden. Corby Library. Corbyville.

"Times change," McDougall said. "It's a new era."