

FLINT, Billa (cont)

Flint puts out

fire of Demon Rum

The firebrand known as Demon Rum clashed with Billa Flint.

Flint, one of Belleville's pioneers, didn't hold truck with alcohol and his payroll likely was the reason. He employed a lot of people and Flint likely felt booze kept men away from work and that cost him money.

The result — Flint triumphed, at least for the most part, over the Demon.

Flint opened a lumber mill in town after moving here in the late 1820s. The business eventually sustained 90 people and he later opened mills north of Belleville that spurred the settlement of several communities.

Flint was a wealthy businessman and politician in the 19th century. He played an integral part in the development of the city with his boundless energy and unflagging interest in the community. In 1836 Belleville was incorporated as a police village and Flint served as the president of the community's first police board. In 1866 he became mayor of Belleville. It was one step towards the seat he eventually held in the Senate.

In the morally strict days in which Flint lived, he was considered a model citizen. He

was an abstainer and a religious man. The Bridge Street United Church stands on land deeded to it by Flint.

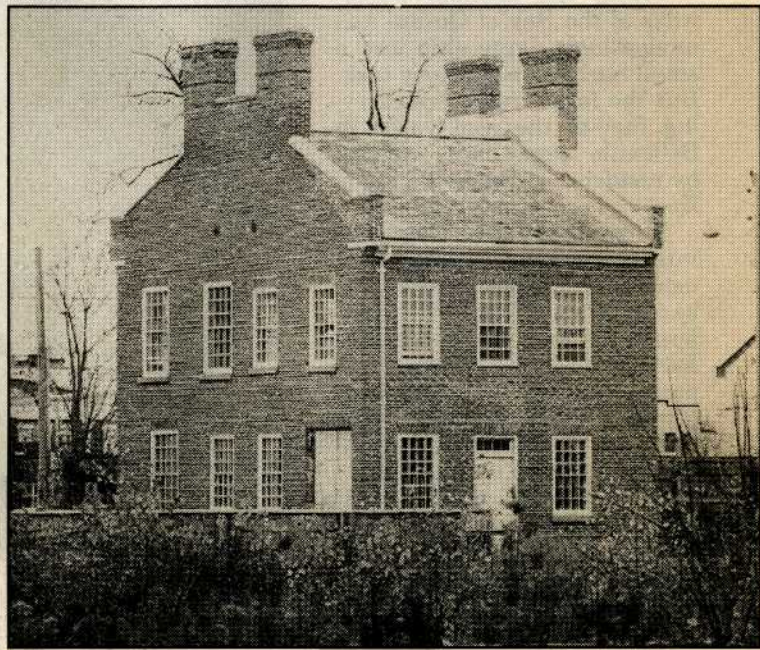
In order to export his produce, Flint had a wharf built on the shores of the Bay of Quinte. For his own quarters, he built a sturdy brick house on Coleman Street in 1835 where he lived until the early 1860s when he moved to the Tuscan villa on the corner of Bridge and Ann Streets.

Flint died in 1894 but his legacy remains. The house he built was purchased by the Corbin Lock Co. and later be-

came the Emhart Co.'s property.

It is currently vacant but owner Brian Magee of Teddington Ltd. in Toronto, plans to incorporate it into his proposed Riverfront Complex containing shops, restaurants and entertainment facilities. "It is adaptable to a number of uses. It could be a small store. . . it could be a bistro," says Magee.

For now it sits empty but Magee's company intends to renovate the building to look much like it did when Billa Flint took possession of it in 1835.



Looking east onto the former house of Billa Flint.

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Nov 24 / 91