

THE CORBY PROJECT

*The Evolution of a Local Dynasty
And The Legacy Left Behind*

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The Corbyville Mill circa 1870.

For 159 years the Corby family has been making an impact on the Belleville and Quinte Area, contributing to the economic and cultural stability of the region.

In 1832 Henry Corby and his wife Alma arrived in Belleville from England. They opened a tiny food shop which was later expanded into a bakery. Within a few years of their arrival Henry Corby was one of Belleville's leading bakers.

The family business' progression was stunted by the Rebellion of 1837. Corby volunteered for service with the First Hastings Rifle company and was required to report to Toronto. Corby returned to Belleville, seeking the calmness of home. The disruption of the Corby family life, however, was increased by a tragic accident which occurred on

December 27, 1838: Henry Corby's wife and three children drowned while crossing the icy bay with a horse and cutter.

Corby sold his bakery and bought a steamer called the "Queen" which he operated for four years between Belleville and Kingston. This change in his life was accompanied by another—Mr. Corby married his wife's sister Matilda and began to build a family. While running the steamer, Henry

became involved in the business of buying and selling grain. This involvement led to the opening of the Corby grist mill.

The mill offered grain cracking service to local farmers. The grain was ground into meal which was taken back to the farmer's cattle for feed. The farmers often left some extra grain at the mill to be processed into whisky in a small distillery Corby had constructed. At first this distillery was merely a sideline industry to the primary mill, but eventually enough people from the region were supporting the distillery that it forced the mill to take a place of secondary importance. "And an increasing number of people from

Belleville were making the horse-and-buggy trip out to Corbyville, to sample and to buy the Corby whisky which was becoming more widely known. Township by township, province by province, its fame spread. It became a vital part of Belleville social life, and of the farm life thereabouts." (Excerpt from "The Corby Story": Canadian Beverage Review.)



Working in the hop fields around the 1890's.



Henry Corby, Founder

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