



THE FAMILY GATHERED for this pose in front of the Brain family homestead. It is said the grounds surrounding the house and brewery were similar to a beautiful park.



WORKMEN POSE with members of the Brain family at the turn of the century in front of the main building at the brewery complex. The ice house of the brewery still stands on the farm and is now used as a stable.

4-H agricultural clubs organize

By Henry J. Stanley
Agricultural Representative
A new year will be commencing for Halton 4-H Agricultural Clubs with the organization meetings on Thursday, March 27 at 1:30 p.m. at the Boyne Community Centre and at 8 p.m. at the Acton Community Centre. 4-H is open to boys and girls who have reached their 12th birthday by January 1, 1975 and will not have reached their 21st birthday by December 31, 1975. However in Halton, 10 and 11-year-olds are very welcome to join and take part in activities. Because they are below the Ontario age requirements, the 10 and 11-year-olds in Halton 4-H clubs are not able to receive the provincial awards but are able to be full members in all of the year's activities.

The clubs offered at the meeting at the Boyne Community Centre are: Halton 4-H Holstein Calf Club, Halton 4-H Beef Calf Club, Halton 4-H All Breeds Dairy Calf Club (Jersey, Guernsey, Dual-

Purpose Shorthorn, etc.), Halton 4-H Horse Club, Halton 4-H Livestock Judging Club, Halton 4-H Electric Club, Halton 4-H Conservation Club and Halton 4-H Field Crop Club. At the Acton Community Centre in the evening, the Acton 4-H Calf Club will be organized.

Plenty of fun
In each of these projects, the club member is to look after his animal, plant a plot

of grain, a row of trees, or complete some other activity. He or she is expected to come to the monthly meetings. A judging competition is held, a social evening with demonstrations and skits, a 4-H bus trip and an awards night at the end of the 4-H year.

It is important that 4-H members come to the organization meeting to get a full understanding of what will be going on during the year. 4-H is exciting. If you are between the ages of 10 and 20, we hope you will join. For further information contact the agricultural office, Milton, 878-2314.

Beer brewed at Hornby's Brain Brewery popular drink in Halton for century

Beer is an ancient beverage, believed to be the oldest drink made by man. Some argument has developed by scholars as to whether our prehistoric ancestors discovered bread first or beer.

This question becomes very relevant to the history of the Halton area when one considers all the hotels, taverns and "half-way" houses which existed in and around the villages at one time. It is said that along the 23 miles of Trafalgar Road between Oakville and Ballinafad, 21 hotels existed!!!

Few records remain of any breweries which served such a large number of thriving businesses. A brewery operated under the name Brinkershoff was located near the "White bridge" on the Main Street of Georgetown, but apparently had a short life.

The most celebrated brewery in the county was located one mile east of Hornby on Steeles Avenue and was known as Brain's Brewery.

John Brain was the son of an English farmer and part-time brewer. He left England in 1823 and went to Pennsylvania for three years. It was in the city of Philadelphia he met and married Kathryn Hand Foster and eventually moved to and settled on Lot 2, Concession 9, Esqueping Township. Here he and his family cleared the land for farming and for a short time operated a shingle business.

The Brain Brewery was established as a result of several requests from neighbors who knew of John Brain's brewing skills which he had brought over from the "old country". The demand grew and by 1832 Brain built a brewery on the farm site.

The first building was made of logs and could handle 300 bushels of grain per year. By 1834 he built a new brewery of bricks which would handle over 10,000 bushels of grain per year and would make 5,000 barrels of beer a year.

The pond, which was located near the brewery buildings, was the source of ice for cooling the beer during the warm months of the year. Stories have been handed down about winter days when ice-cutting was underway on the pond and several pails of beer accompanied the workers. More than once someone would fall through an opening in the ice and would be taken back to the boiler room and left to dry out.

The Brain Brewery had its own cooper who made barrels and kegs which would be hauled by a team of horses to hotels situated in Acton, Georgetown, Milton, Norval, Glen Williams, Oakville and several other villages both within and outside the county.

In 1877 there were 10 men and 40 horses employed at the Brain Brewery. Hops grown locally were especially abundant near Glen Williams, Georgetown and Hornby due to the favorable soil conditions.

The beer available at Brain's Brewery was unlike the beer sold today. John Brain originally made the beer with 80 per cent alcohol content but reluctantly reduced this to 30 per cent when the clientele complained. "Anything under 30 per cent content wouldn't be fit to drink," was the Brain philosophy. The beer in those

Halton Sketches
by
John McDonald

days could be kept in an open pail in the cellar for weeks and wouldn't go "flat". Beer could be purchased directly from the brewery site. There were no Brewers' Retail stores in those days. It was not uncommon for a group of the fellows to put their money together for a keg or barrel and send someone down with a team to Brain's Brewery. One such team was returning from the brewery and coming up the "Hungry Hollow" hill when the tail gate on the wagon fell open and the full barrels of beer rolled down into the valley.

In 1916 when the entire province went under prohibition the brewery closed down but reopened after the 1927 repeal. It never did regain the success it had enjoyed previously, partially due to the fewer hotels in existence and stiffer competition from large centres.

The brewery was eventually sold to Messrs. Kemp and Chisholm who ran the business under the Brain name.

Throughout its existence the brewery was always a favorite target for local Temperance groups. However, the activities of these abstainers had little to

do with the closing of the business.

The Brain family was very active in the building of St. Stephen's Anglican Church near Hornby. Even though John Brain was a Congregationalist of deep religious convictions he joined with his neighbors in heaving down trees and sawing logs to form the framework of the church.

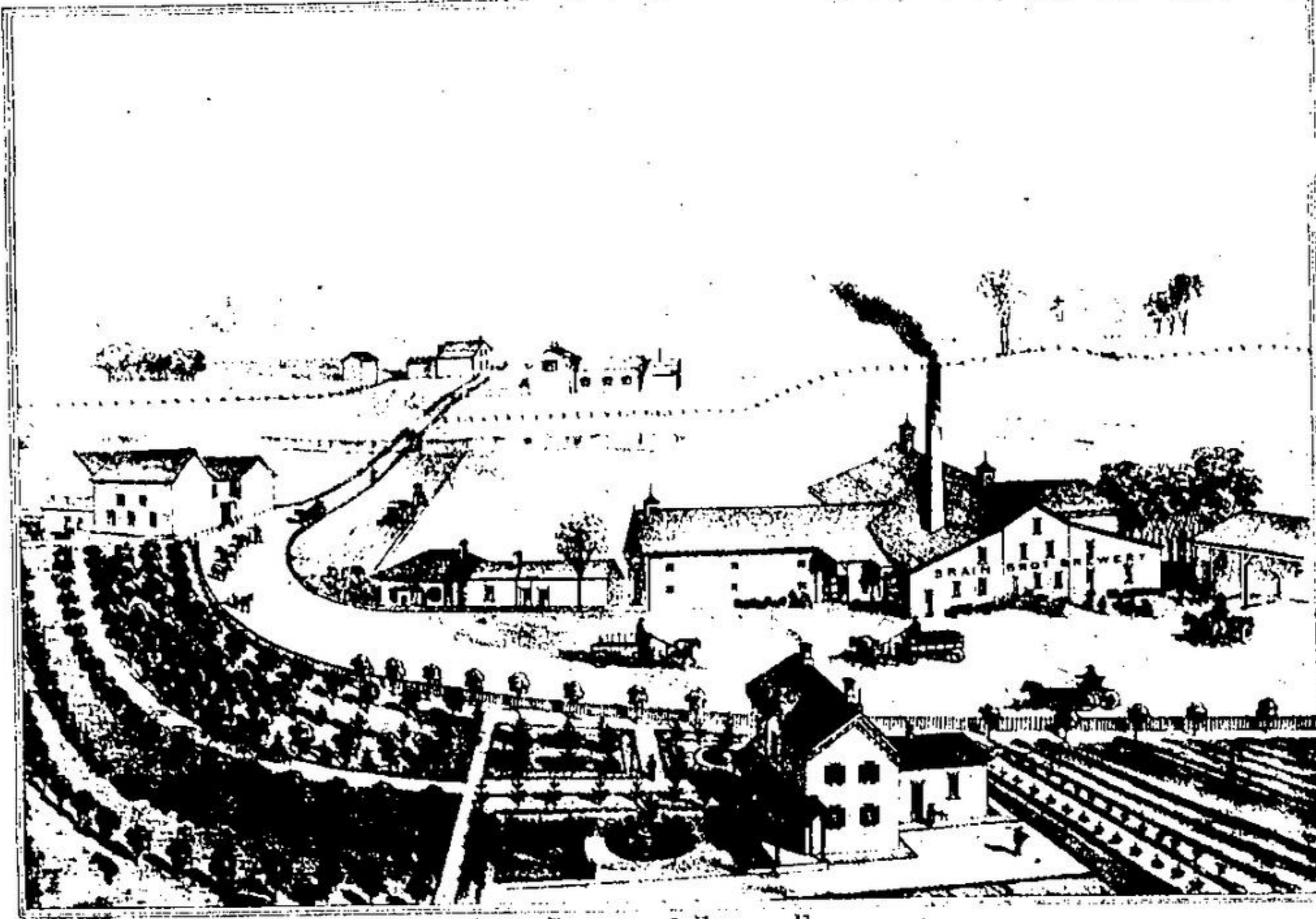
All of John Brain's ten children were baptized and confirmed in St. Stephen's and attended services faithfully all of their lives. It is of interest to note Reverend Canon William J. Brain, a descendant of John Brain, was the founder and first rector of St. Michael and All Angels Anglican Church on St. Clair Avenue in Toronto. He labored there from 1907 till his death in 1931. A window over the altar of that church was dedicated to his memory

at a service in 1945.

Bill Brain, a great-grandson of the original settler and brewer John Brain, was the last of the family to make his home in the Hornby area when he moved to a farm near Rockwood in 1968.

Although the kegs of beer from the Brain Brewery which served the hotels of the area for many years are only a memory to some, the lovely St. Stephen's Anglican Church still stands as a monument to the John Brain family and their pioneer neighbors.

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