

Distilleries Were Busy

A certain aspect of respectability was conceded to the distiller in early years. The grain out of which the liquor was manufactured was probably ground at the nearest grist mill. Whiskey was on every side board, and the custom of dram-drinking was universal. It was no uncommon thing for women to indulge in this luxury, and many children may be said to have been raised on the whiskey bottle.

A distillery was built in Brandywine Township about 1815. It was put there by George Wallace, and was located on his farm back some distance from the grist mill. It disposed of some 12 bushels of grain daily, and turned out at the same time between 30 and 40 gallons of excellent whiskey. The old account books of Mr. Wallace are yet in existence (1881) and reveal the fact that not only was whiskey used by everyone, (including abstainers and ministers), but was used extensively as an article of exchange, serving the purpose almost as well as bank notes. Almost every entry involves the word "whiskey". Even the ministers were paid in Brandywine currency—whiskey. This distillery was in operation until about 1830, when it was abandoned.

Distilleries had a large custom trade, though it is not remembered whether their products were shipped away or not. They started up about the time the canal was built, (1825), as it was

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seen that an enormous demand for liquor would be made by the canal laborers. There is no neighborhood through which the canal extended that did not have it's drunken brawls and fights. The expression "Can drink as much as a boatman", became familiar to settlers living along the canal. The old settlers speak in high terms of the quality of the whiskey. Almost every early settler had a peach orchard. The prevalence of heavy timber modified the climate, rendering peach orchards possible. The distilleries made an excellent quality of peach brandy, that was rapidly consumed by the population.

In 1826 a strong impulse was given to the temperance cause in Summit County. Societies for the suppression of liquor—traffic and liquor drinking were organized in every township, not only in this county, but in every part of the Reserve. Great enthusiasm prevailed among the workers, and scores of persons ceased to manufacture and sell ardent spirits.

It was about the time of the organization of these societies that the first effort was made to secure the raising of log buildings without whiskey, but the movement met with violent opposition from those who thought liquor one of the necessities of life. These men refused to appear at such raisings, but when their temperate neighbors refused to assist them, unless whiskey was omitted from the program they finally dropped the use of liquor on such occasions, or sought associations more congenial to their intemperate habits. A spirit of hostility was thus created between parties, which terminated only when the temperance cause prevailed.

A percentage of all the Advertising in this sesquicentennial section is to be given to the Historical Society of Old Northfield.

Twenty-one is the worst age among male drivers for fatal accidents, according to life insurance statistics.