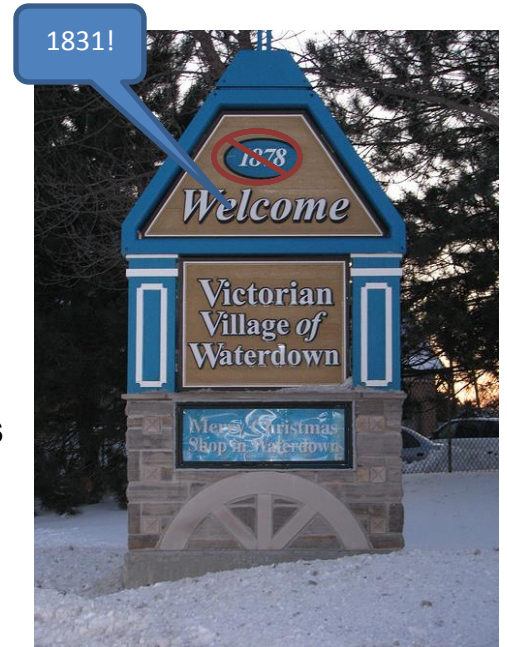


# The Founding of the Industrial Village of Waterdown<sup>1</sup>

- The Waterdown area has been home to Indigenous Peoples for the past nine millennia. Formal European settlement started happening after the “Between the Lakes Purchase” between the Mississaugas (Anishinaabe) and the Crown (represented by Lieutenant Colonel Butler) on May 22, 1784 and later confirmed by the 1792 “Treaty No.3.”
- The original European owner of the land where Waterdown is located was named Colonel Alexander McDonnell of the Butler’s Rangers. McDonnell had no interest in the area so he sold his deed to Alexander Brown (of the Northwest Fur Trading Company) who settled at the top of the Great Falls in 1805. Merren Greirson married Brown in 1806, moving to his cabin at the top of the falls.
- During the War of 1812 Alexander Brown joined other settlers and enlisted with the local militia, serving at Burlington Heights and the Battle of Lundy’s Lane. The Queen’s Tree of Memorial Park (planted July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012) commemorates this service.



<sup>1</sup> Learn more details by reading *The Extraordinary History of Flamborough: East Flamborough, West Flamborough and Waterdown* pages 40-82.

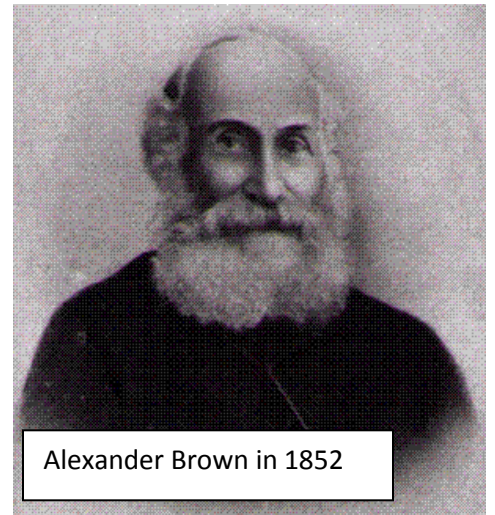
- On the location where the *American House* now stands, Alexander Brown built a log cabin that served as a school for the local children. The area's first teacher was Miss Mary Hopkins. The school was eventually moved across the street and the *British North American House* was built in 1824 (the region's first stone building).
- In 1821 young entrepreneur Ebenezer Culver Griffin (from Smithville, Ontario) purchased over half of Alexander Brown's property (everything west of Grindstone Creek). Griffin arrived in the region two years later with plans to develop a milling village with his brother Absalom.
- The village received its own Christian preacher in 1828 (Rev. Samuel Belton of the Methodist Church). The first church was built in 1838 and still stands beside the old library on Mill Street.
- In 1831 Ebenezer Griffin had his property surveyed into village lots – these surveys mark the first time the name "Waterdown" is used to formally identify the settlement. If this is taken as the founding of Waterdown, it was during the reign of King William IV.
  - Griffin soon moved to Cooksville, but kept his interests in the area.
  - The same year of Waterdown's founding the first Total Temperance Society (anti-alcohol) in this part of the country was organized (Ebenezer Griffin served as secretary). Alexander Brown did not share Griffin's views on alcohol – he was not alone (twelve taverns operated in the area at this time).



King William IV (1830-1837)

- Alexander Brown and Merren Grierson's son, Alexander Brown Jr., built "Brown's Wharf" or "Port Flamborough" in Aldershot (at the base of Waterdown Road) in 1833. Resources milled in Flamborough/Waterdown were exported to Montreal and the world from this wharf (where Lasalle Park is now located).

- Settlers flocked into the area as mills were built along the Grindstone Creek. So many industrial complexes were built in the hollow next to the village that it acquired the name “Smokey Hollow” – the name it still has today.
- Stone was quarried from the area (including where Memorial Park is now located) for building projects across the province – including King’s College in Toronto.
- Within five years of its founding, Waterdown had a stagecoach link to Ancaster and York (Toronto).
- Alexander Brown died in 1852. Merren Grierson died in 1863.
- In 1853 Waterdown Public School was founded where Sealey Park is located (the first floor of the original stone building is still used as the Scout Hall). The first high school entrance exams in Ontario were held at Waterdown Public School in 1873.



Alexander Brown in 1852



The original home of Waterdown District High School (then called "Waterdown Public School"). Located at Sealey Park, the school would have overlooked the mills of Smokey Hollow.