



Willstead Manor in Olde Walkerville

Hiram Walker

The Hiram Walker name is so deeply entrenched in Windsor that it touches facets of architecture, history, Windsor neighbourhoods, and pop culture.

American born, Hiram Walker moved to the then small town of Detroit in the 1830s. Always an entrepreneur, he started to distill vinegar from his early grocery business.

Soon after he ventured into grain wholesaling; this guided him to look for expansion opportunities across the river into Windsor where land, supplies and labour were cheaper.

As a true early industrialist, Walker

not only built his eponymous distillery on the Windsor banks of the Detroit River, he also built and controlled the surrounding neighbourhood, what would become known as Walkerville.

Walker commissioned leading architects to construct impressive public and private buildings still visible today.

Though Hiram Walker died in 1899, his family controlled the empire until 1926.

During this period, prohibition in America meant the sale of alcohol was illegal. The prime waterfront location and a series of islands dotting the river provided a perfect opportunity

to transport contraband liquor across the border. However, bootlegging was not the Walker family's claim to fame. Notorious characters like Al Capone were frequent visitors.

Locally, Harry Low – a larger than life personality - used a World War I minesweeper warship to haul the precious cargo across the river. Low and others built and lost vast fortunes during the prohibition era and left their mark on the city by constructing East Windsor's most notable estates.

It should be no surprise that a legacy as big as Hiram Walker is preserved and celebrated through full day rum running themed tours and re-enactments, the Canadian Club Brand Centre, as well as Speakeasy nightlife and music throughout the city.



Actors in The Rum Runners Tour re-enacting the era



Canadian Club Brand Centre



Barrels at Canadian Club Brand Centre