

Christopher Huether

A few years after Christopher Huether added an elaborate Victorian façade to his hotel on the corner of King and Princess Streets, it was written that for \$1 a night a traveller could there avail themselves of cuisine “unsurpassed by that of any other chef in this section of the county.”



Huether’s renovations to the brewery and hotel in the 1880s were complete with stone-capped arches, an Etruscan tower, and balconies overlooking the street. The Lion Brewery located behind the ornate hotel, was by that time producing 10,000 barrels of Lion Lager popular in Waterloo and Perth counties. Huether, under the tutelage of his father Adam, was described as “a gentleman of much business executive ability.”

The origins of what is today called the Huether Hotel actually date back to 1842 when Wilhelm Rebscher established a brewery and inn on the site, calling it the British Crown. By 1856, a brewer named Adam Huether, who had arrived in Waterloo from Baden, Germany, rented the premises and took over the operations. When Rebscher died later that year, Huether named it the Lion Brewery.

By 1860, Adam’s son Christopher took over. It was a formative time for the business with the brewery making just over 700 barrels of beer a year, valued at \$3,600. Even at this early stage Lion Lager was known as the “best beer in the county.”

An advertisement for Huether’s Hotel from 1867 boasts a “First-class Hotel fitted Up in Best Style to Accommodate the Travelling Public and Guests.” In small print at the bottom it reads “All orders for Beer, in wood and bottles, promptly attended to on short notice.”

Under the regulations for inns and taverns during the last half of 19th century Waterloo, Huether would have had to have been of “good moral character” and be “of good fame and conversation.” The Huether Hotel would have had “stabling for no less than eight horses” and “a sufficient supply of hay, oats, water, halter and blankets for horses.” There would also be “no playing of cards, throwing of dice, or other games whatever; tippling or dram drinking. . .”

In 1867 Canada became a country, and the Huethers had a son named Christopher Nicholas, who would go on to join the business when he was twenty-three years old. Huether and his wife Martha had five daughters before Christopher Jr. was born, and went on to have two more daughters and another son Jacob.

In 1898, Christopher Huether Sr. died leaving a large mortgage on the property. His will stipulated that Christopher Nicholas Jr. could not buy the business for at least one year after his death, and that he could not miss any payments. While Christopher Jr. had a

busy year expanding operations, tragedy struck when part of the malt house floor collapsed, killing a worker. Nine days before the one-year anniversary of his father's death, Christopher Jr. missed a mortgage payment and the business was sold by auction to Teresa Kuntz.

The brewery and inn have had a long history and multiple proprietors, but under the ownership of Bernard and Sonia Adlys, brewery operations have been restored, along with the original Lion Brewery and Huether Hotel names. The landmark building at 59 King Street North has been designated as historically and architecturally significant.

Photo courtesy of the Waterloo Public Library.