

Most bottle collectors who are familiar with the history of James Eves know that he was a bottler of soda water in Toronto during the 1860s. This is indeed true - at least, it was true by the second half of 1862 when Mr. Eves set up his business at 7 Ontario Street (near King) in Toronto C.W. It is from this location that Mr. Eves undoubtedly ordered his first batch of bottles that are now known as the "1862 Eves" squat soda. The front of this style of bottle is embossed: J. EVES / SODA WATER / MANR and the back is embossed: THIS BOTTLE / IS NEVER SOLD / 1862. While there are a number of variations of this bottle, it is fairly undisputed that they can all be considered "Toronto bottles". From that point onward, Mr. Eves remained in Toronto and he was last listed as a confectioner on Yonge Street in 1881. This is the story most people know and although accurate, it leaves untold the exploits of Mr. Eves before he arrived in Toronto.

Upon digging deeper, it was discovered that James Eves heralded from Brighton, England and, if his own advertising can be believed, he originally established his soda water business in 1845. What is certain, however, is that James is listed as a grocer in Belleville C.W. in the 1857 Canada Directory. By December of that year, he was advertising soda water for "wholesale and retail at his factory in Belleville". Then in July of 1859, James decided to move to Kingston C.W. where he set up business on Princess Street. From his notice placed in a Kingston newspaper, we learn that he was not only providing soda water to the surrounding area but that his wares were also sent by steamboats and railways in boxes containing 10 dozen bottles each. In early 1862, James again gets wanderlust; this time leaving Kingston for London C.W. where his name appears in an April advertisement for "J. Eves & E. Bilton". Nothing is known of this brief partnership, but it can be assumed that it failed to meet the expectations of at least one of the partners. James then moved to Toronto in time to be included in the 1861-62 Business Directory of the Great Western Railway Gazetteer.



In addition to getting to know James a little better, this history also suggests that the iron pontilled versions of James's bottles (the ones without the date embossed on the back) were not made for his Toronto operations. This is not to say that James did not bring examples of these bottles with him to use in his Toronto operations - instead it seems likely that these bottles were originally made for his business when it was located in Kingston or Belleville.

The information contained in this article is an excerpt from the upcoming book on Kingston Sodas & Ginger Beers by John Goodyer and David Dobing. The book will provide a

historical account of the bottlers as well as photographs and descriptions of the known Kingston bottles from 1850 to 1920.