

CULTURAL MOMENT FOR MARCH 23, 2026 CELEBRATES BRANDY CREEK AND THE FOLKLORE BEHIND ITS NAME

Just south of Arthur, where Highway 6 hums with passing traffic, a narrow ribbon of water slips quietly beneath the road. To most today, Brandy Creek is little more than a name on a map or a brief shimmer glimpsed from a car window. You may even blink and miss it if you aren't paying attention. But long before engines replaced horses, the creek carried a reputation far stronger than its modest current would suggest.



Local folklore tells of a bootlegger who was known to frequent the banks of the creek during the dry years of Prohibition. Perhaps he

was a cautious man, or perhaps he was just a man with a plan – nobody knows. By day, the creek looked harmless enough – clear water curling around stones, reeds whispering in the breeze. On certain nights, however, it became an accomplice.

When the threat of a raid loomed or word travelled too quickly through town, the story goes that the bootlegger would carry his unsold spirits down to the water's edge. One by one, bottles were tipped and shattered, their contents pouring into the stream. The sharp scent of alcohol would briefly hang in the air before vanishing into the dark, swept away toward places unknown. Evidence dissolved, quite literally, in the running water.

It could be said that on certain mornings, the creek ran differently - clear but lively, as though it carried a hidden fire beneath its surface. While no evidence exists, one wonders what the wildlife who used the creek as a water source thought of the bootlegger's product, or how much they felt the effects of his spirits.

Though the bootlegger himself faded into obscurity, his losses became the creek's legend. Today, Brandy Creek holds no such potency, but its name endures as a wink to the past – a reminder that even the quietest places can carry spirited stories, if you know where to listen.

Submitted by the Wellington North Cultural Roundtable