

James Worts (ca.1792- February 1834)

James Worts, a mill-owner and operator in Suffolk, England from about 1813 to 1831, decided to emigrate to Upper Canada, probably to better his family's economic prospects during a severe depression in Britain. Married in 1818 to William Gooderham's sister Elizabeth, Worts preceded his brother-in-law and business partner to North America to prepare the way for the rest of the family.

Leaving Great Yarmouth in May, accompanied by his 14-year-old son James Gooderham Worts, the elder Worts arrived in York during the summer of 1831. He soon selected a site on the shore of Toronto Bay just west of the Don River, and began constructing a large windmill like those familiar to both partners in their native Norfolk and Suffolk. In March 1832, Worts purchased a house and 3 ¼ acres on the north side of the Kingston Road near the Don Bridge from the parish priest at St. Paul's Church, Rev. O'Grady. Here Worts established a domestic base for the families and cultivated a large garden.

On July 25, 1832, William Gooderham arrived at the head of a large party of immigrants, including Worts' wife Elizabeth. On July 27th, Worts and Gooderham opened an account at the Bank of Upper Canada and became founding partners of a milling business called Worts & Gooderham. In the fall of 1832, Worts & Gooderham sold their first flour.

In February 1834, tragedy struck Worts' domestic life when his wife died in childbirth. Two weeks later, James Worts committed suicide by throwing himself in a well near the windmill. William Gooderham became the head of both families and eventually brought Worts' son, James G., into the business as a partner.

Sources: Edith Firth, *Town of York, 1815-1834*, 1966, p. 81; Dianne Newell, "Worts, James Gooderham," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*; and E. B. Shuttleworth, *The Windmill and Its Times*, 1924, *passim*.