

## CHAPTER I.

### An Old Landmark Restored

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The circumstances which gave rise to the notes here presented originated in the fact that in the first volume of Robertson's *Landmarks of Toronto*, page 277, and also in subsequent volumes, there is prominently pictured the Old Windmill, said to have been erected in 1832, and which has since been the starting point of all Harbour surveys. So far well, but unfortunately, in a later and prominent illustration, (Vol. VI., p. 499) there appears another windmill, of an entirely different type. An adaptation of it is also shown in the Historical Collection in the Public Library, and in a 5 by 10 feet painting by Owen Staples in one of the corridors of the City **Hall**.

**This** material substitution is accounted for by the discovery by Mr. Robertson of a water color drawing, said to have been executed by a former resident of Toronto who lived on Palace Street within sight of the windmill who might thus be accepted as an authority. There was also found a copy of a very cleverly executed pencil sketch, said to have been made by an **English** lady who visited Toronto in the summer of 1837. In point of perspective, outline, and minute detail, this drawing is, as far as the Windmill and buildings are concerned, an exact

counterpart, and probably the original of the right hand part of the alleged water color.

The object of this enquiry is to ascertain whether, prior to 1832, there existed, at or near the mouth of the Don, any windmill other than that associated with the name of Messrs. Worts & Gooderham.

At this stage it is impossible to appeal to a living eye-witness who, in 1832, was capable of receiving and retaining until now a correct impression of what he then saw, more especially with respect to any particular date. Proof must therefore be sought from such records as accredited maps or plans, drawings, or descriptions, and such evidence requires careful sifting and confirmation.

It fortunately happens that a windmill is one of the favorite landmarks of the surveyor and map-maker. That this is correct may be learned by consulting the maps or **plans** of Toronto, or its harbour, since 1832, the date of the completion of the Gooderham **structure**.

Only two years after this time the Windmill was marked on the plan (Vol. V., p. 562) made by Deputy-Surveyor-General Chewett, and the windmill line showing the limit of wharf extension is also produced. In 1835 the Lieutenant-Governor of the Province gave to the Corporation what may be considered the best map of Toronto harbour which has ever appeared. It was based on Bayfield's chart, from the survey of Capt. Owens, and is complete

to date, **differing**, however, from the map owned by the city, which has been revised up to 1883. The Windmill is so marked on the map of the Lieutenant-Governor, and the street leading thereto—now Trinity—is styled Windmill Street. The location is even more definitely delineated on the hitherto unexcelled map of 1842, drawn by James Cane, (Vol. V., p. 61). City Surveyor J. G. Howard, in his plan of 1846, (Vol. V., p. 67) even goes a little further by sketching on the location an outline windmill which shows roughly what the structure **was** like.

Steam was substituted for wind power about this time, and, a little later on, the sails blew away, and the windmill, as such, ceased to be, though the name has since been in constant use as indicating the basal point for harbour measurements.

It will thus be seen that the erection of the tower on the bay shore was at once recognized by the surveyor, and that its location has continuously held its place in city maps from 1834 till the last official issue of 1907.

If such has proved true, since the former date, it may be legitimately assumed that if a windmill existed prior to that time it would have been noted on the earlier maps, but a careful search from that of **Gother Mann**, in 1788, to **Bayfield** in 1828—of all the numerous and valuable reproductions with which Mr. Robertson's volumes are enriched, fails to furnish the slightest sign of anything of this kind.

The absence of such evidence is almost conclusive as to the non-existence of any previous landmark of this character.

What has been said in regard to maps holds to a certain extent true in regard to sketches, more especially when they are designed as records rather than for their artistic value. An object so picturesque as a windmill is sure to appeal to the artist, but no such temptation seems to have been presented to any of those who pictured the water front of York.

The earliest reproduction in the *Landmark* is that of Irving's oil painting, done in 1818 or 1820. (Vol. V., p. 367) showing the old lighthouse in the immediate foreground, and, in the distance, the buildings along the front of the town, but, in the original painting, there is no object at all resembling a windmill. The same can be said of the **Heward** oil painting of 1824 (Vol. III., p. 94) showing the shore as seen from the Island, but without any buildings east of Parliament Street. The value of this picture, in this respect, is enhanced by the key supplied by Mrs. **Heward's** son, to whom all the buildings were to some extent familiar, and who would certainly have indicated the presence of a windmill had such been in existence at the time. Gray's aquatint of York, from **Gibraltar** Point, dated 1828, (Vol. I., p. 308) exhibits **much** recognizable detail along the front of the town, but nothing like a windmill, though the Roman Catholic Chapel, on what is now Power Street, is clearly de-

finer. The conclusion from such data is that there was not any windmill to delineate.

No sooner, however, is a windmill erected than artists hasten to take advantage of the opportunity. This is shown by the lithograph of Timperlake (Vol. I., p. 277) probably composed from the original sketch made in 1834, (Vol. V., p. 584) in which the mill is the chief object. It may be incidentally said that, in the opinion of the writer, the details of construction are more fully and correctly rendered in this than in any other picture. The key to it, referred to in Vol. V., p. 584, shows the windmill in a similar position, as does also that painted by Lieut. Lumley, in 1837. (Vol. V., p. 533). Of a similar character is **Grainger's** sketch of about 1852. Mr. Howard's water color, and the many Toronto pictures up to the time of the demolition of the brick tower—about **1859**—show the conical cap which replaced the roof and sails blown away in the storm which occurred in the forties. This conical top had been depicted by Mr. J. C. Forbes in the oil painting now hanging in the office of the **Messrs. Gooderham**.

Such positive evidence confirms that of a negative character previously adduced and goes to prove the existence of a windmill as early as 1834, and with an elevation that in no way resembled that in the water color or pencil sketch.

Compilers of Directories could not afford to ignore the existence of a **firm** wealthy enough to own

a windmill, nor to neglect a reference to its location. None of the available work of this kind, lists, or street keys, make any reference to such ownership until October, 1833, when in the York U.C. Commercial Directory, compiled a year after the mill was completed, is the following reference to a part of the Kingston Road, which then commenced at Berkeley Street.

"Opposite here is Windmill Street leading to Worts & **Gooderham's** Windmill," showing the prompt recognition not only of the structure in question and its proprietors, but also of the new street leading to it.

Of course there are many persons now in Toronto who conversed with those of a previous generation to whom the Windmill and its surroundings were very familiar. None of these have ever been reported to have spoken of any older structure of this kind.

In 1796, Dr. Scadding's father acquired a large farm, running north along the east side of the Don. Here, the future historiographer of Toronto was born and about 1830 became the head boy in Upper Canada College a year before the tower was commenced. As a youth brought up in the vicinity he was certain to have been familiar with all the objects along the river from his father's house down to the Bay, and probably watched with interest the felling of the trees and the preparations made for the erection of a new and model structure, and, above

all, of its glorious completion. Had any other windmill existed he certainly would have recorded it, nor would he have told the story about Mr. James Beatty, afterwards editor of the *Leader and Patriot*, meeting Mr. James Worts in 1831, "in the bush," where the latter was "**hunting**" for a site for the future building. Had there been a previous mill, young Scadding, or Messrs. Beatty or Worts, or some of the older generations of the **Gooderham** family would undoubtedly have know all about it.

The only scraps of evidence in favor of an earlier mill are the pencil sketch said to have been made in 1837, and the water color ascribed to a Toronto gentleman who, however, by the way, only arrived in Canada in 1843. It will be sufficient to say that it would have been difficult for either of these artists to have seen much of the town of York in 1832. This does not necessarily imply any want of faith in the makers of the sketch or its copy. There is no assertion on their part that this peculiar wooden mill was in Toronto. Very likely these old pictures were put aside and lost sight of for years when their discovery would give rise to speculation as to origin and a decision in favor of what seemed most likely or desirable. This has happened thousands of times, in similar cases, and is **notably** one of the most frequent pitfalls of the antiquarian.

It is probable that enough has been said to establish the position that there was not any "windmill" in York prior to that of **1832**, and also that

the water color and the English pencil sketch', did not at all resemble that structure as otherwise described and delineated. If, however, there remains any shadow of doubt in regard to the latter it cannot fail to be entirely dispelled by the discovery of new evidence of the most direct character.

In a room over the present office of the Messrs. Gooderham there is a numbered series of boxes containing the account books of the old *firm* and in the first of these were found several partly used vellum covered volumes, brought from England by Mr. Worts, and pressed into service here. One of these, evidently the first, was missing, and *likely* contained items relating to the voyage, the arrival in Canada and the selection of York. The second furnished accounts of payments made day by day in the construction of the windmill. Under date of Nov. 26th, 1831, there appears in good old fashioned round hand that would have done credit to any head boy's copy book, "Finished the tower."

This absolutely settles the question of design while the next line is equally conclusive as to material, and to some extent in regard to dimensions:

"It took 105,000 bricks to build the mill, 216 bushels of lime and 100 loads of sand."

Such items are plentiful enough afterward, but sufficient has been reproduced to prove the position and set right, once and for all, the character and appearance of the old landmark.

A copy of the above paper was handed to the author of "Landmarks," who took as much interest in the subject as did the writer. Further enquiry in regard to the authenticity of the pictures, which led him to replace his *first* well chosen illustration did not reassure him but led to an opposite conclusion, in consequence of which he arranged with the artist who painted the City Hall canvas to alter it in conformity with the description given in the text, and delineated in many other drawings, so that this most prominent landmark and harbour datum is now represented as nearly as possible as it should be.