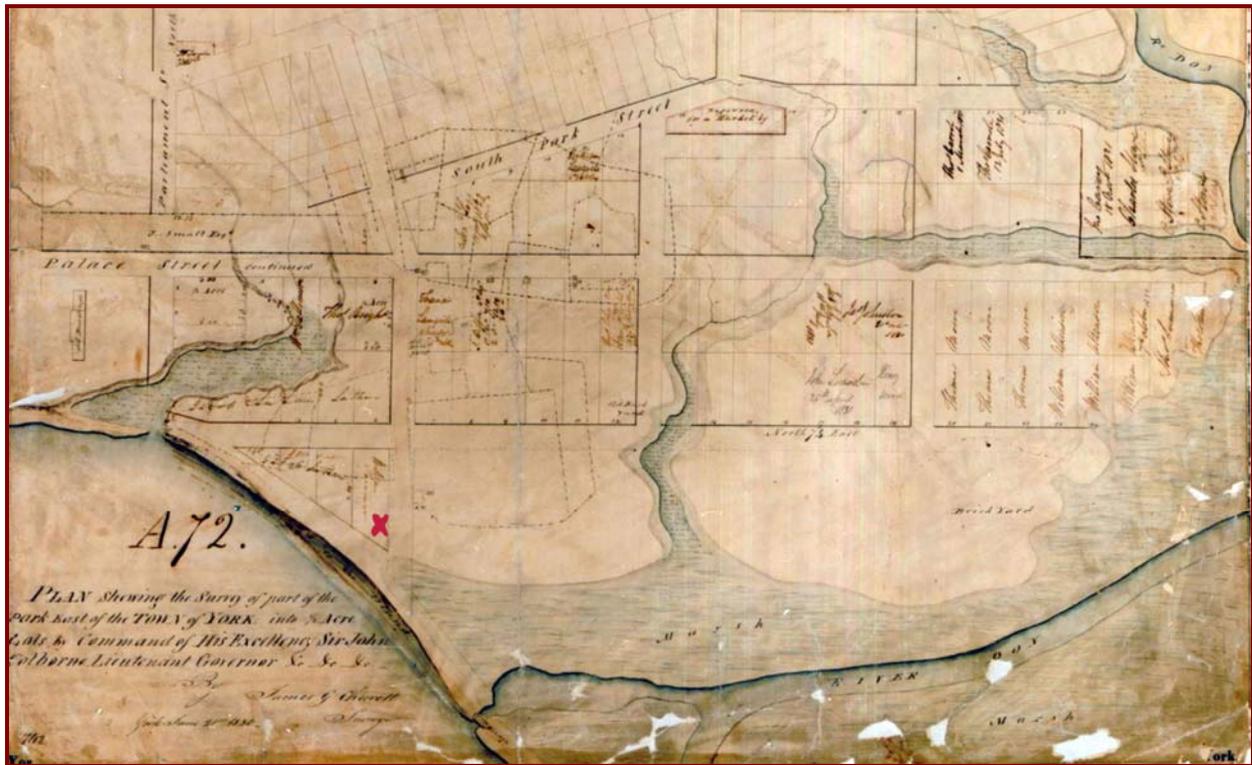


for May 13, 2007

## A Creek (or two) Run Through It



Windmill Site indicated on detail of 1830 Plan of the area

OMNR

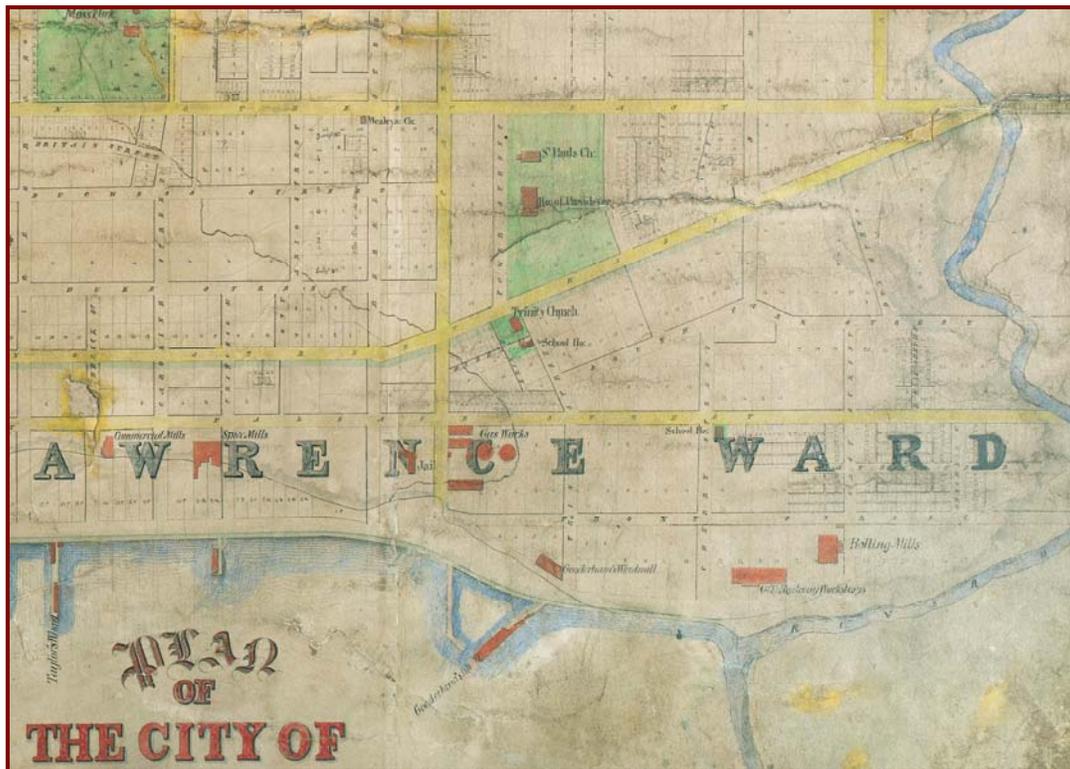
One might spin endless yarns about the old creeks of the city, most of which are now [1924] doing ignominious duty in dark and noisome sewers instead of dancing in the merry sunlight, bringing more joy to the joyous and flashing rays of hope and encouragement to the weary passers by.

E. B. Shuttleworth, *The Windmill and Its Times*

When the Worts and Gooderham families settled in Upper Canada in the 1830s, the area near the future Distillery District was known as "Vale Pleasant," because of its tranquil beauty. According to Gooderham & Worts historian, E. B. Shuttleworth, this little vale was created by "Goodwin's Creek," which meandered in a southerly direction from near King and Parliament streets, across Palace (Front) street to empty in the bay just west of Gooderham & Worts new windmill. Meanwhile, early maps indicate, other unnamed creeks flowed more-or-less around the site of the windmill, to empty into the marshy areas to the east.

“Goodwin’s Creek” is, of course, the southern portion of Taddle Creek, which rises in Wychwood Park and flows southeasterly across the Annex, the University of Toronto, and downtown Toronto, to enter the Bay near Parliament Street. In the early days, the mouth of Taddle Creek was apparently quite substantial. In fact, in 1793, a Lieutenant Givens mistook the creek for a legendary river that conveyed fur traders from Lake Ontario to the great North West. It was only after paddling up several of the meanderings of Goodwin’s Creek that he realized his mistake ... leaving Lt. Gov. John Graves Simcoe to be the one to explore the “real” Don River some time later.

These two early maps of the Distillery District illustrate the profusion of creeks in the area where James Worts chose to locate the windmill in 1831 (top) and the partial burying of those same creeks by 1862 when the stone distillery took its place on the Toronto waterfront (bottom). Intriguingly, the creeks may be buried but they are not forgotten, either by Toronto’s “lost river” enthusiasts or current residents experiencing puzzling dampness in their buildings.



**Distillery site, detail from Browne map of 1862**

**CTA**

Thanks to Steve Otto for discovering and sharing the 1830 map.

Please send your comments or questions to Manager of Heritage Services, Sally Gibson, [sg@thedistillerydistrict.com](mailto:sg@thedistillerydistrict.com).