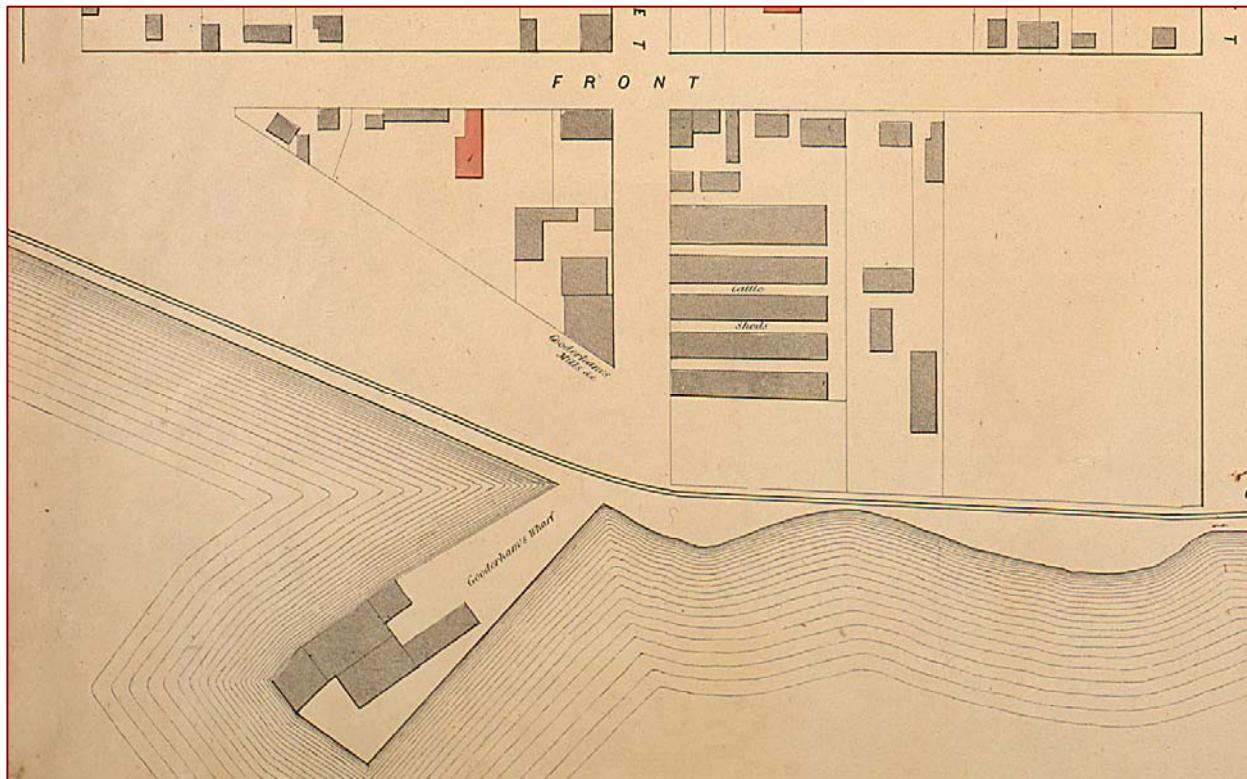


Distillery Cows: From Trinity Street to Riverdale Farm



1858 map showing “Cattle Sheds” east of Trinity Street TPL

Cows and whisky go together, although not always in the culinary way modern urbanites might think.

Just as nineteenth-century grist mills were often associated with distilleries (both using grain), distilleries were often associated with livestock operations, because pigs and cattle could be fed on otherwise useless by-products of the distilling process. Gooderham & Worts offers a prime example of this Victorian form of recycling-for-profit.

Within a week of starting to sell raw whisky in 1837, William Gooderham – then sole proprietor of the business – purchased 25 pigs to help mop up the grain-rich liquid – or “slop” -- left in the bottom of the still. He also sold slop to local farmers and nourished his own family’s milk cows.

In 1843, he extended this sideline from pigs to dairy cows and beef, by buying 22 cows and several steers. The following year, however, he leased out the dairy and cattle side of the business, restricting his involvement to selling the slop and renting the stables – an approach the company followed from then on.

By 1858, as shown in the Boulton map, five “cattle sheds,” accommodating about 500 animals, were located along the east side of Trinity Street. (The “Front Street” indicated on the map was later renamed “Mill Street.”) Slop was piped from the distillery enveloping the old windmill, under Trinity Street, over to the cattle operation.

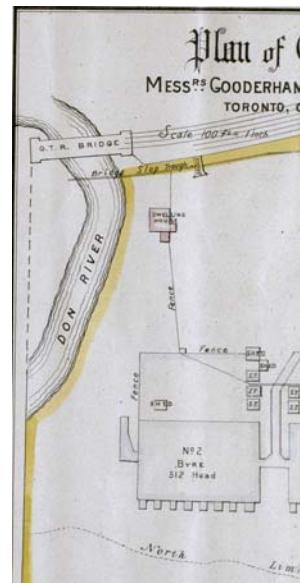
The 1860s brought major expansion to both the distilling and the livestock businesses. The Stone Distillery, designed by David Roberts, Sr., opened in 1860, increasing alcohol production capacity to over two million gallons per year. The Malt House and Kiln Building, also designed by Roberts, opened in 1863-'64. And thought was probably already being given to converting the area east of Trinity Street from a cattle business into an extension of the distillery.

In 1866, therefore, G&W relocated the stables from the distillery site, across the Don River, to leased land located just south the Grand Trunk bridge and east of the bend in the river (see illustrations). David Roberts, Sr. was probably the architect for at least part of this operation.

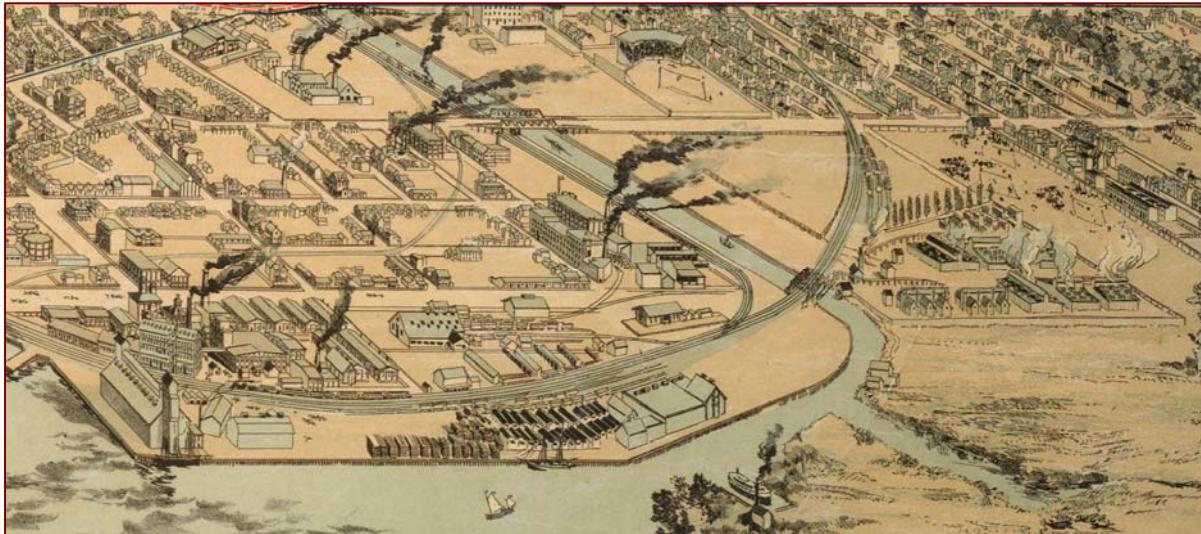
Distillery “slop” was steam-pumped through a 6-inch, copper pipe from the Stone Distillery to the new Riverdale operation via the Grand Trunk Bridge. According to an 1877 article, the distillery produced 100,000 gallons of “refuse” – or slop – per day. About half of this was fed to the livestock: first to the 2,500 head of cattle and then, what they left behind, to the pigs. The rest was sold directly to farmers from elsewhere in the city and suburbs, who brought their carts to the farm – up to 650 teams appearing on a busy Saturday. As for the manure, market gardeners made good use of this by-product of a by-product operation.

The cattle business was not universally praised. In fact, some local residents objected to supposed pollution and the fact that (wealthy, well-connected) Gooderham & Worts could keep hundreds of cattle near the Don River “while a poor man with one or a few cows is hauled up for making a nuisance.” To such objections, a pro-business reporter from *The Mail* emphasized that “none of [the slop] goes into the Don,” and the operation was a virtual “model farm” of about sixty acres where the barn-yard and everything else about the place is kept in the very best order.”

By 1877, when the Gooderham & Worts distillery was said to be the largest in the world, its cattle operation apparently “fed more cattle, directly and indirectly, than were fed by any other establishment outside Texas.”



1889 fragment of
G&W Riverdale Farm



Gooderham & Worts' Distillery (left) & Riverdale Farm (right), 1892

TPL

Sources include: E. B. Shuttleworth, *The Windmill* (1924); "Cattle Fattening in Toronto," *The Globe*, October 3, 1867; "Canadian Manufactures," *The Mail*, April 23, 1872; J. Timperlake, *Illustrated Toronto: Past & Present* (1877); "William Gooderham & J. G. Worts," *Canadian Biographical Dictionary* (1880), online. In 1882, there was room for 3651 head of cattle in the G&W cattle sheds.

Please send your comments or questions to Manager of Heritage Services, Sally Gibson,
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