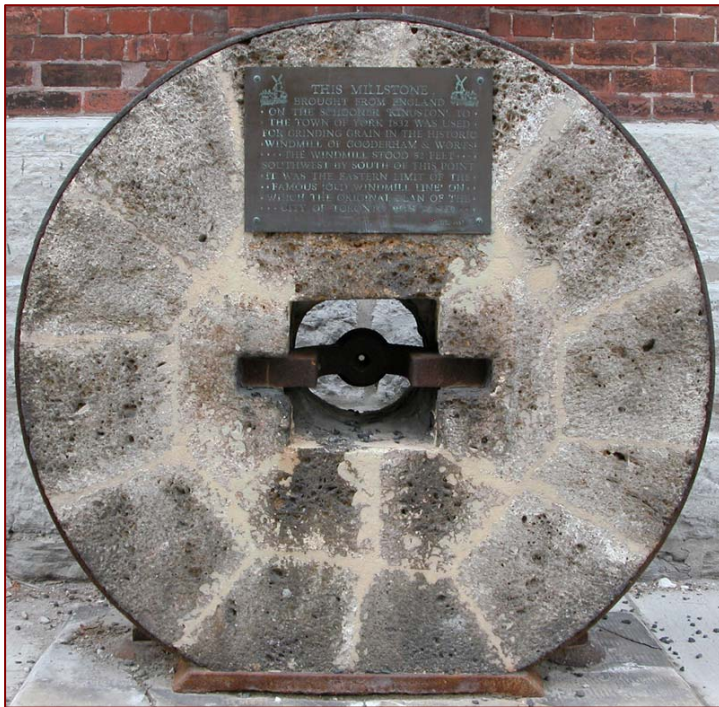
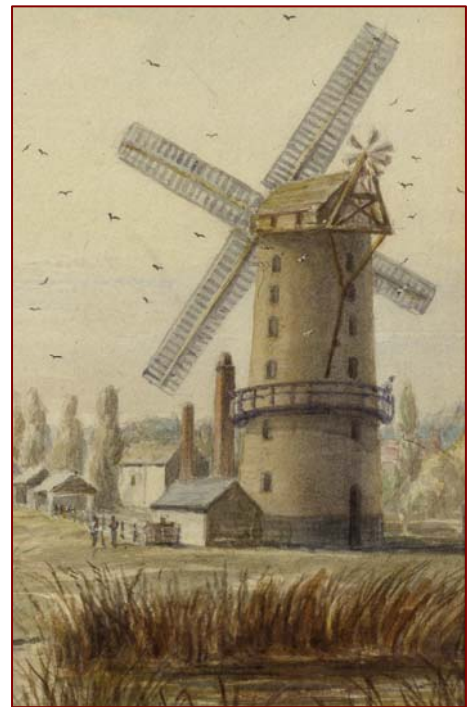


for October 7, 2007

First Flouring of the Mill



1830s Millstone



1830s Mill

On Friday, October 5th, 1832, James Worts and William Gooderham's new windmill set to work, grinding its first "run" of flour, which continued until December 13th and produced nearly 240 barrels of flour, as well lesser-grade "pollard."

The first recorded sale of flour was on October 27th, when five barrels were sold, at 25-shillings each, to Robert Ferrier, a baker on King Street East near the commercial heart of the town. Ferrier's competitors, such as William Jackes, Thomas Riddell, and Alexander Rennie - all bakers on King Street - also proved to be good customers, purchasing about five barrels per week to make their bread, rolls, and other baked goods.

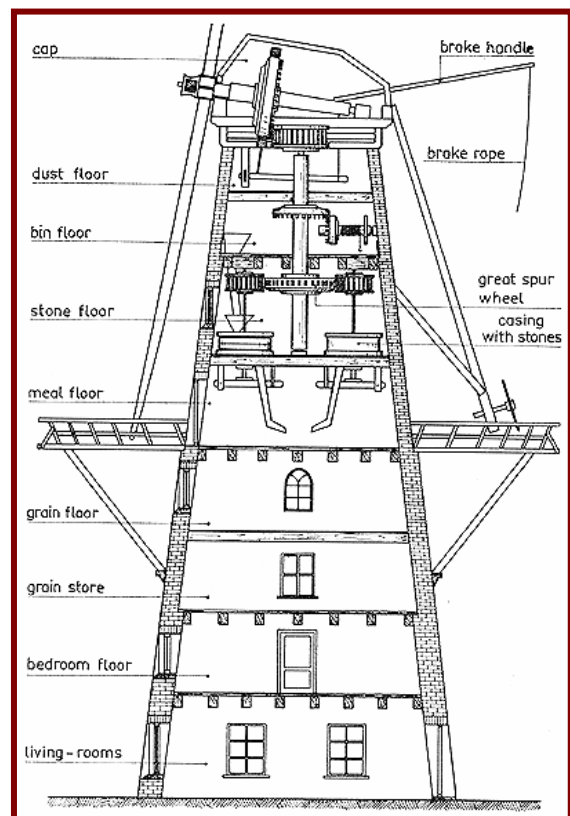
The new mill was used mostly to grind grain that Gooderham & Worts had purchased from local farmers, rather than gristing grain brought in by farmers for their own use. Gooderham & Worts then sold their flour in barrels (probably purchased from local coopers rather than made on the site), directly to customers. These included commercial customers (like bakers, store-keepers, and inns) and individuals (including many of York's most prominent citizens, such as Lt. Governor John Colborne, Chief Justice John Beverley Robinson, and future Bishop John Strachan). Intriguingly, deliveries were also made to a "Soup Kitchen," at a "much reduced price," according to E. B.

Shuttleworth's history of the windmill. Just where the Soup Kitchen was located or exactly whom it served remains a mystery.

Sadly, no plans or diagrams for the interior of the windmill exist. This is particularly unfortunate, because the solid brick tower windmill was unique in Ontario, perhaps in Canada. Early prints and paintings do indicate that the windmill was six storeys tall (plus rotating windmill cap), with neatly aligned windows at each level, and a balcony encircling the tower between the second and third story, providing access to the brake handle. Since the owners lived elsewhere, there was no need for living quarters at the windmill itself. The diagram of a windmill with living quarters topped by six floors for milling purposes, therefore, gives a pretty good idea of how the G&W might have been arranged. While this shows the possible functions for each floor, it does not show how the grain was raised to the bin floor, whether by carrying, manual hoisting or automatic elevator.

According to Shuttleworth, Gooderham & Worts started out with two pairs (or runs) of millstones, and received a third set of "burr stones" the following spring from a Mrs. Crickmore of Hamilton. Whether these new stones were added to the mill or used as replacements is unknown. But the fact that some were definitely burr stones is significant. The only artifact surviving from the windmill era is a single, burr stone that has been located outside Building 35 on Trinity Street for many years.

The most valued millstones from the period – or indeed any period – were composites, created from pieces of French burr stone imported from a quarry outside Paris. The stone fragments were carefully matched, stuck together with plaster of Paris, bound by iron hoops, and backed by cement. The upper stone (like ours) was called the "runner stone," which rotated, face down, over a fixed "bed stone" that was set in the floor of the mill, face up, and surrounded by a wooden skirt. Each stone was incised – or "dressed" – with a pattern to ensure fine grinding. Although the Distillery District millstone is worn down, it still has its original iron bands, central iron "eye," and easily inspected burr stone fragments.



6-storey, 2-run mill above living area

Although we can't know precisely how the Gooderham & Worts windmill was designed and operated, we do know that it had six floors, providing space for grain to be taken from the ground up to a "bin floor" near the top. There the

grain would have been dumped into one of the bins positioned immediately above each set of stones on the floor below. The grain would then have been gravity-fed into hoppers attached to the stones.

The millstones would have been located on the lower “stone floor.” From the hopper, the grain was directed by a “shoe” into the hole at the centre of the top, runner stone. After the grain had been ground between the stones, the meal would have spilt out from the edges and brushed round until it fell by gravity into a spout on the “meal floor” below. Other functions, such as barreling, storing, and record-keeping would have been accommodated in other parts of the mill.

By the end of 1832, about 2990 bushels of wheat had been ground, to produce about 355 barrels of flour, worth about five dollars per barrel. The business was well and truly under way. The large Gooderham and Worts families must have given hearty thanks for the first flouring of their windmill exactly 175 years ago this month.

E. B. Shuttleworth’s 1924 *The Windmill and its Times* provides details about Worts & Gooderham’s 1832 milling business. Shuttleworth uses both British pounds and North American dollars, which is presumably what James Worts used in his account books. Shuttleworth’s rare book can now be read on our heritage website, at <http://www.distilleryheritage.com/PDFs/Shuttleworthcomplete.pdf>

Many thanks to Robert Miller of the **S**ociety for the **P**reservation **O**f **O**ld **M**ills (SPOOM) Canada for sharing information about milling and mills, including Ontario windmills. For additional information on Canadian mills and milling, visit <http://www.hips.com/spoomcanada/>. For a description and diagram of the four-storey, 1817 English windmill at Polegate, Sussex, see www.steali.co.uk/polegate-windmill.

Please send your comments or questions to Manager of Heritage Services, Sally Gibson, sg@thedistillerydistrict.com.

For more about the history of the Distillery District, please visit our new website at www.distilleryheritage.com.