

From near to distant shores



**View from Boiler House chimney toward Gooderham & Worts (now RCYC) wharf
Cars park in 1830s bay; GO trains cross 1920s viaduct; trucks zoom along 1960s Gardiner**

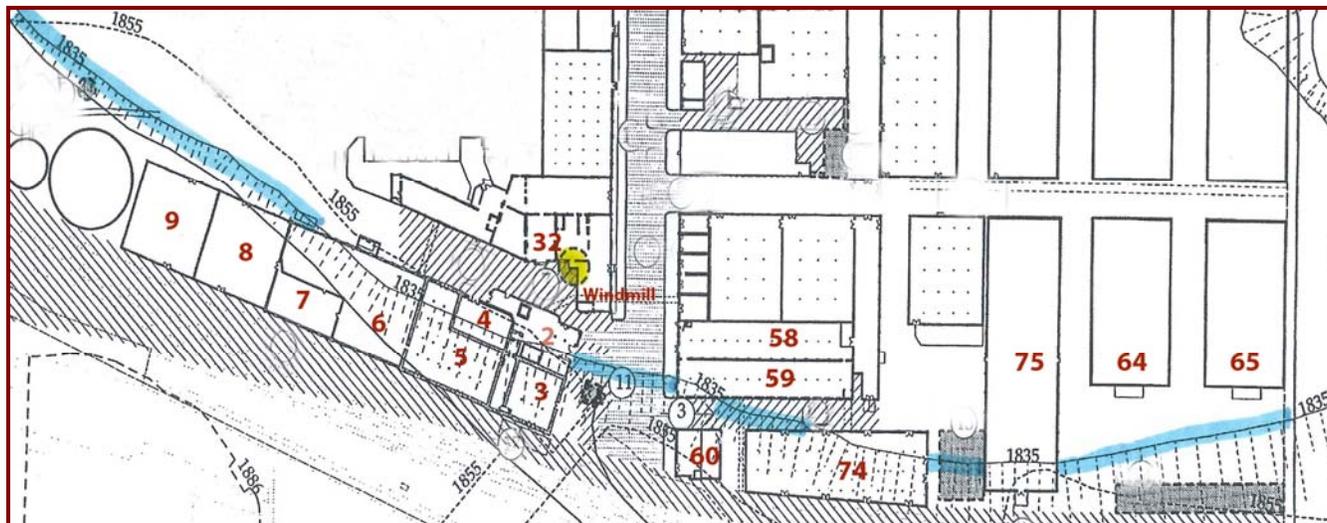
*B*etween the 1830s and the 1950s, the Gooderham and Worts' shoreline moved about 500 metres south.** This migration occurred incrementally, as when the company added a new wharf in the 1840s or filled in around its grain elevator in the 1880s and '90s, and in great leaps, as when the Toronto Terminals Railway Company built its waterfront viaduct in the 1920s and the Toronto Harbour Commission implemented its 1913 waterfront plan after the Great War and on into the 1930s. The THC plan, at the G&W end of the Toronto waterfront, involved extending the then existing shoreline southward and filling-in Ashbridge's Bay to create the Port Industrial District that is, once again, the subject of extensive planning efforts to naturalize and revitalize the area.

The extent of shoreline migration is evident in a photograph taken from the top of the Boiler House chimney that is currently undergoing repair. The original shoreline ran through Trinity Plaza, the red-brick area to the left of the grey Stone Distillery. The TTRC viaduct ran, and still runs, where the GO train is passing; and the post-World War II waterfront can be identified by the Victory Soya Mill silos south of the Gardiner (a 1950s-'60s addition) and the former Gooderham & Worts (now Royal Canadian Yacht Club) wharf to its right. The little white building in the centre middle distance is today's RCYC "city station."

To get a direct impression of where the 1830s shoreline ran, stand about 10 paces south of the clock in Trinity Plaza. The shore ran on a SE-NW diagonal from your left, just in front of you, past the windmill over your right shoulder, and onward toward Parliament and Mill Streets. Remember, in the 1830s the Don River meandered quite near to the G&W site and today's Toronto Island was still a peninsula linked by a narrow neck of sand from near the windmill, curving between

Ashbridge's Bay (and marshes) on the left (east) and the crystal waters of Toronto Bay on the right (west).

A plan adapted from the 1994 *Landscape History, Inventory and Guidelines* report by Du Toit Allsopp Hillier, shows that this shoreline would have passed through various buildings (75, 74, 59, 2, 4, 5 and 6), and through various still-open spaces (sections of the parking lot, Case Goods Lane, Trinity Plaza, and Distillery Lane).



1835 shoreline outlined in blue where it crosses open spaces in today's Distillery District

A series of historic maps illustrates the evolution of the G&W shoreline. Remember that the scale and orientation of the maps vary, but the general progression is clear.



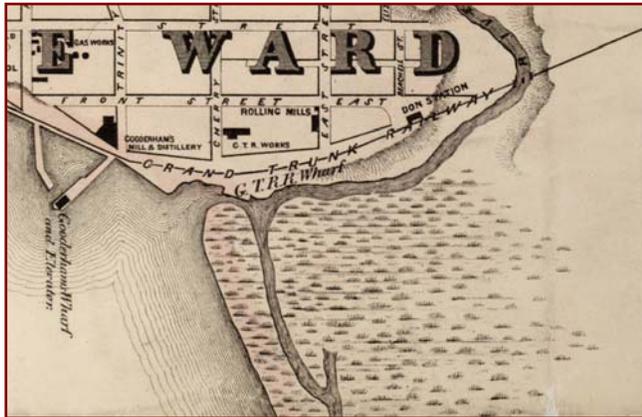
1842 Cane Map, Parliament to Don River CTA

The 1842 Cane map, created just five years after the distillery was opened, indicates that the land around the windmill site had been subdivided but was not heavily occupied; that the windmill-distillery had no wharf; and that the shoreline still swept in a south-easterly arc toward the meandering Don River and the Peninsula.

By the time the Boulton Atlas appeared in 1858, Gooderham & Worts (here labeled "Gooderham's mills") was on the west side of Trinity Street; cattle sheds occupied the east side; Grand Trunk Railway tracks hugged the extended shoreline immediately south of where David Roberts, Sr.'s 1859-61 Stone Distillery would soon be built, and north of the G&W's wharf that now projected out into the nearby lake.

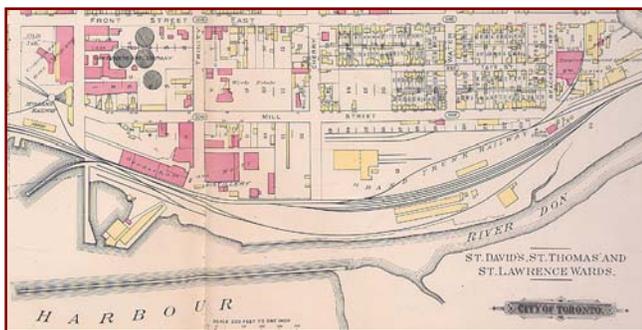


1858 Boulton Atlas, Parliament eastward TPL



Chewett's 1866 map shows both the longer wharf and new grain elevator associated with the 1860s Stone Distillery, here named "Gooderham's Mill & Distillery." A jetty now extends from the foot of Parliament Street to create a protected harbour for ships unloading grain and other materials at G&W. The Don River still meanders and the edge of marshy Ashbridge's Bay remains relatively unchanged.

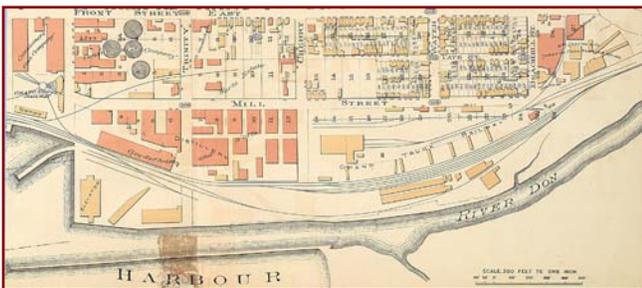
1866 Chewett Map, Parliament to Don River TPL



The 1884 Goad map shows a number of changes. The area east of the wharf and grain elevator has started to be filled-in. More railway tracks cross the site. A jetty for a spur line between the wharf and the Stone Distillery has been added. And a long jetty now projects from the mouth of a Don River that had been dredged and would soon be straightened.

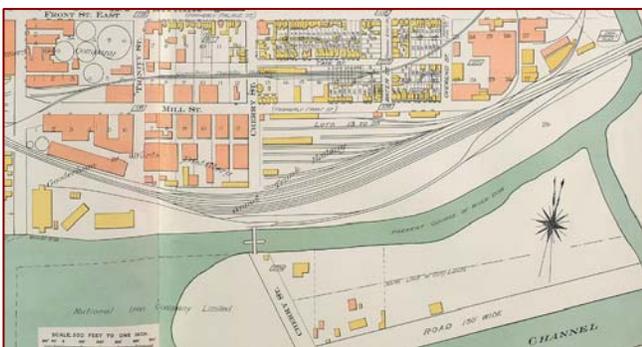
1884 Goad Pl. 29, Berkeley toward Don River TPL

The 1890 Goad map shows major changes, most notably the replacement of the 1860s grain elevator by a much larger elevator. Just to the east, more land has been created and a large coal shed built to store the massive amounts of coal consumed by the operation. By this time, the Don River had been partly straightened and "channelized," but this is not evident on Plate 29.



1890 Goad Pl. 29, Berkeley toward Don River TPL

The pre-Great War Goad map of 1910 shows more significant changes. The bay south of Parliament Street has been filled in and the street extended along the western side of the grain elevator. More GTR tracks have been laid south of the distillery and points east. Part of Ashbridge's Bay (marsh) has been filled in to create a temporary island between "present course of Don River" and the new Keating Channel created to divert the Don River that had been straightened from Winchester Street to its mouth.



1910 Goad Pl. 29, Parliament to Don River TPL



The 1923 Goad map depicts Gooderham & Worts immediately before the major changes of the 1920s. By this time, the old bed of the Don River has been filled in. Industry is beginning to colonize the new land between the railway tracks and the Keating Channel. G&W retains a slight hold on the waterfront, with “wharf 48” at the tip of the grain elevator. But this would vanish within three years.

1923 Goad Pl. 29, Parliament to Don River TPL

Two related projects transformed the entire Toronto waterfront – including the area south of the Distillery District – between about 1925 and 1930: the implementation of the Toronto Harbour Commission’s 1913 plan (delayed by the First World War) and the construction of an 18-foot high “waterfront viaduct” to separate railway traffic from pedestrian and vehicular traffic and to serve the new station.

On June 17, 1925, the railways (Toronto Terminals Railway Company), City of Toronto, and Toronto Harbour Commission finally started constructing the “viaduct” needed to serve the just-completed, but not yet opened Beaux-Arts Union Station. The three parties had been squabbling for years over issues related to replacing the grand but decaying 1870s Union Station. Finally, the station itself was constructed between 1915 and 1924, but it still had no tracks. It was only in January 1930 that both station and tracks were officially opened. (American cowboy comedian Will Rogers once commented that Toronto was the only city he knew where the railway tracks couldn’t find the station.)

The Viaduct project was unequivocally enormous. Perhaps not as spectacular as the pyramids (“except laid out flat instead of being sky-pointed”), as an exuberant *Toronto Star Weekly* suggested. But quite astonishing nonetheless. Statistics shared by railway historian Derek Boles underline the grandeur and challenges associated with the Grade Separation project, as the Viaduct project came to be known:

2.6 million cubic yards of excavated fill were used to build a sand and gravel embankment seventeen feet high that extended about three miles from Logan Avenue in the east to Bathurst Street in the west. The Harbour Commission used another four million cubic yards of excavation to fill in the water lots between Church and Cherry Streets. While all this was going on, the railways were expected to maintain regular service with over 200 passenger trains that called at the old Union Station every day.

Most of the fill came from Leaside and Scarborough Junction. Boles has also painted a vivid picture of the actual construction process – one that may have been familiar to railway engineers of the twenties, but is probably astounding to modern urbanites and construction experts alike:

The work required to create the viaduct was plodding and tedious but used a tried and true technique that had served the railways well for

many years. The fill was loaded onto work trains made up of open-topped gondolas called air-dump cars. Tracks were built on top of an 17-foot high wooden trestle and air pressure was used to tilt the cars and dump the fill until it flowed around the base of the trestle. This process was repeated until the fill rose as high as the tracks. The trestle was left in place as a skeleton buried in the embankment, which was given some time to settle before the new track bed was built on top, eighteen feet higher than the old elevation. Countless thousands of work trains repeated this process day and night for five years along the new three-mile railway corridor.

The project also included four new bridges and nine new underpasses – known as “subways” – including one at Parliament Street just south of the Gooderham & Worts distillery. Another had been planned for the bottom of Trinity Street, but was abandoned to cut costs.



Waterfront viaduct “filling trestle” passing by Gooderham & Worts, April 28, 1927
CTA 372-79-209

Two photographs taken by City photographer Arthur Goss to document the building of the viaduct vividly portray the scene near Gooderham & Worts as the great wooden trestle inched past the Stone Distillery, the Pump House, and the newly built Case Goods Warehouse en route to Cherry Street and beyond. After the trestle was in place, the “air-dump cars” moved into position and buried the trestle under tons of sand and gravel, where remnants of the structure likely remain to this day.

Meanwhile, at the foot of Parliament Street, the new “subway” was taking shape. Goss’s photograph shows both the construction of the subway and the vast expanse

of new land being created by the Toronto Harbour Commission to the south. In the foreground stands a boiler to provide steam power for the pile-driver in the centre; piles of piles await their turn to be pounded into the sand; and workers (including men and horses) attend to their tasks. In the distance an array of dredges and other equipment transforms water lots into prime waterfront real estate.



**Looking south across the Parliament Street “subway” under construction, May 17, 1927
CTA 372-79-220**

Gooderham & Worts grew up by the lake, a condition all-but-obliterated by the parking lot, grassy embankment, elevated expressway, and sheer distance. Armed with maps, photographs, and imagination, however, today’s visitor *can* reconnect with those near and distant shores. Sometime when you are parking your car, locking your bicycle, or sipping coffee on a nearby patio, take a long look at the scene. Imagine tall ships and small skiffs tacking toward the parking lot. Think of the men and machines, materials and ingenuity required to create the railway embankment. And conjure up the great lakers and ocean-going vessels that once docked at Gooderham & Worts’ final wharf south of Lakeshore Avenue.

******The extension of the shoreline south of Gooderham & Worts was about 500 metres to the new G&W (now RCYC) wharf south of Lake Shore Blvd. and about 2.2 km from the distillery to Cherry Beach.

Many thanks to railway historian, heritage advocate, and engaging lecturer Derek Boles for opening my eyes to the wonders of the waterfront viaduct during an illustrated talk sponsored by Heritage Toronto and the Toronto Public Library on June 23, 2008. Thanks also for permission to quote from

his article, "Toronto Terminals Railway Company: 1906-2007," *Canadian Rail*, no. 520 (September-October 200), published by the Canadian Railroad Historical Association.

the lecture, including American cowboy comedian Will Roger's wry comment on the length of time required to complete Union Station.

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, visit www.distilleryheritage.com

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