

for April 2, 2007

Millstones & High Rollers



1918 Mill floor with millstones & high rollers

CTA

Milling was Gooderham and Worts' first business, which continued on as part of the distilling business until 1957 when production of alcohol from grain ceased. Over time, of course, technology changed and the company adopted the most up-to-date nineteenth-century machinery as it became available.

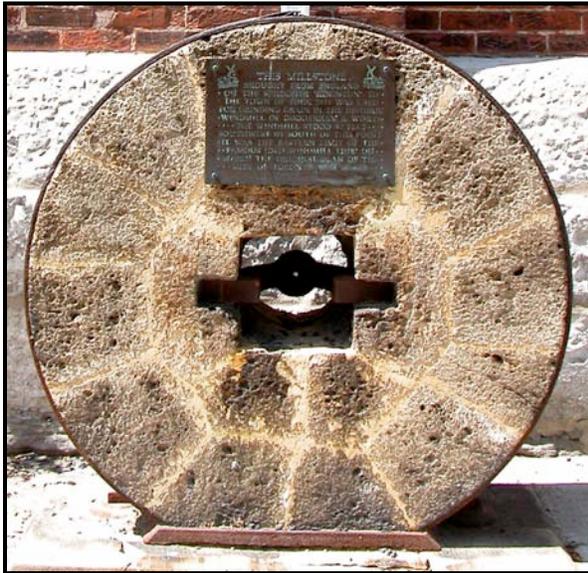
In 1832, when the immigrant millers built their wind-propelled mill on the edge of the bay, the most up-to-date technology involved the traditional millstone. By the 1830s, this was not a single stone, but a group of hard "buhr" stones shaped and bound together by plaster and iron. It's not entirely clear where the millstones used at the G&W gristmill came from, but they were not local, having been shipped in aboard the schooner *Kingston*. Intriguingly, another "run of buhr stones" was obtained from a Mrs. Crickmore of Hamilton in June 1833, bringing the working power of the mill up to three runs, or pairs, of millstones.

The Stone Distillery represented a major advance in milling. When it opened in 1860, the new mill contained a "hurting mill" of eight "runs" or pairs of 54-inch French buhr stones. Generally, only five runs (or 10 stones) were used at one time, with the others being hand "dressed" or prepared as necessary (see 1918 photo).

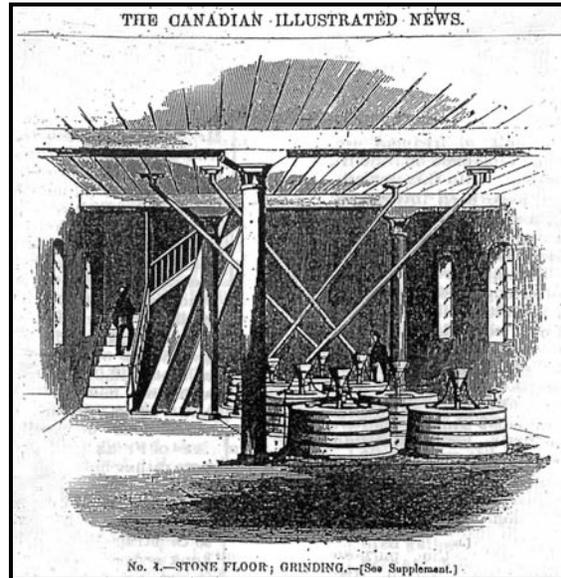
In the 1880s, stone milling was augmented by the installation of "high roller mills" designed and manufactured by Nordyke & Marmon of Indianapolis. The roller mills consisted of ten steel rolls, nine inches in diameter and 30 inches long, provided greater control over milling, and were

less labour intensive. It was only after the Great War that the millstones were removed and replaced by another new technology, the hammer mill.

So when you pass by one of the old G&W millstones on display outside Building 32 on Trinity Street, pause for a moment and reflect on the mills, the millstones, and the men who operated them.



*An original 1830s millstone now on
Trinity Street*



Stone Distillery mill floor 1863

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