

# Appendix 3

## Cultural History Features Inventory



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HAVE Plan for Rouge Park 

## Introduction

This appendix reviews some of the information available about cultural history features in the park and in some cases background information that underlies them.

Time and budget did not allow for an exhaustive review. Instead this appendix is intended as a start on which HAVE staff will continue to add information and details throughout the life of this plan. The information that the expanded appendix will contain can be used by Rouge Park HAVE staff and partners as a one-stop source of information about the Park's history.

This, appendix, along with Chapter 4: Features Analysis, can be the first step in developing accurate, effective Heritage Appreciation services, projects and products.

### A Young Park Still Growing

At the time of writing, Rouge Park is in acquisition phase. Since its creation in 1995, the park has grown significantly and may continue to grow as the park manager and Rouge Park Alliance members strive to meet the Park's mandate of protecting cultural history, rivers, wetlands and lands from Lake Ontario to the Oak Ridges Moraine and to work toward the protection of more of the greater park ecosystem.

### A Growing Core Area

The first park lands were the valley and table lands of the lower Rouge River system between Lake Ontario and Steeles Avenue. Key studies of the geology, natural history, and cultural history of these lands were commissioned in 1991 to support the development of the park. In 1994, the Rouge Park Management Plan was published to guide the development and management of the park.

Since then, additional lands along Little Rouge Creek and elsewhere have been added to the park by the Provincial and Federal Government. These additions have been supported by several management plans:

#### Satellite Properties

Recently, outlier properties, conservation lands that are located in the upper Rouge watershed, have been added to Rouge Park. A number of public use areas operated by municipalities or the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority are considered part of the Park. These include:

- Bruce's Mill Conservation Area
- Phyllis Rawlinson Park
- Milne Park
- Toogood Pond

Bruce's Mill Conservation Area has a particularly strong core of cultural history with its restored mill building and Superintendent's Residence.

#### More to Come?

Substantial amounts of public land lie east of the Park, in Durham Region. There may be opportunities for cooperation with the governments which own these lands to increase the benefits to Rouge Park of additional greenspace.

## Cultural Heritage

*There are three valuable sources of information about the cultural history of the people who have and continue to live in and around Rouge Park.*

- Richardson, A.H. and Barnes, A.S.L. *Rouge Duffins, Highland, Petticoat Conservation Report* (1956)

This is a well-written, extremely detailed review of all the information about these watersheds in 1956. It contains very detailed accounts of the history of land use and settlement. *This is a must read for all Rouge Park HAVE staff.*

- Varga, S., Jalava, J. and Riley, J.L. *Ecological Survey of the Rouge Valley Park* (1991)

This report also contains detailed information of the historic uses of the landscape and a detailed European settlement history.

- Dana Poulton, Poulton and Associates (519) 434-0319

[drpoulton@rogers.com](mailto:drpoulton@rogers.com)

Mr. Poulton is a professional archeologist who has conducted several studies of the archeology of Rouge Park and the surrounding area.

### A Definition of Cultural Heritage

For the purpose of this plan, cultural heritage includes archaeological resources, built heritage, cultural landscapes and scenic landscapes as well as the stories associated with them. It also includes living culture pursuits, such as art, performing arts and gardening, that are a means of expressing present relationships with our environment.

Draft Rouge Watershed Plan (2006)

### A New Approach is Required

The park's location in one of Canada's most ethnically-diverse areas will require an exploration of multicultural approaches to heritage appreciation.



## People and the Environment: an Overview

An understanding of our cultural heritage helps to define our sense of place and provides insights into today's landscapes and environment.

In the Rouge watershed, people and landscape have been interacting for thousands of years—ever since people first came to southern Ontario.

In the early periods of human occupation, the land shaped the people who were roaming hunter-gatherers. People moved into the watershed to harvest wild plants and hunt large animals. It may have been as early as the time of the paleoindians that a travel route from Lake Ontario to Lake Simcoe and Lake Huron was established through the Rouge Watershed. The numbers of people were relatively small and their effects on the environment were small.

Much later, with the invention of agriculture, First Nations people cleared forest to plant crops of corn and squash and establish villages. They also continued to harvest wild plants and animals from the forest and wetlands. It appears that most of the activity occurred in the lower Rouge Valley. One reason for this was to control the important trade trail that became known as the Carrying Place Trail. The number of people was larger, but their effect on the environment was small as the villages were abandoned in the late 1500s.

In the 1600s the fur trade became an important economic engine in Upper Canada. The Carrying Place Trail became more important and more heavily used. For a time the Seneca Nation expanded its territory to include the north shore of Lake Ontario. A large village was established on the lower Rouge to control trade on the Carrying Place Trail. Nearby land was cleared for farming. By the mid-1600s the Seneca withdrew to the south and their village on the Rouge was abandoned. The fur trade increased the amount of human activity in the Rouge area but the effects on the landscape were still small.

European Settlement in the Rouge watershed began in the 1790s. Removal of forest and the establishment of farms was the main activity. In the beginning, the pace was slow but the rate of forest clearing picked up in the 1800s. Land close to the river was often chosen because it provided easily accessible drinking water for farm families and their live stock. The river also provided transportation, at least in the lower sections. The Rouge River and Little Rouge Creek were dammed in many places and the river's power ran numerous grist and saw mills and even a woolen mill. Farmers retained small chunks of forest as wood lots to supply the family with fire wood and building materials.

During this time lumbering became important white pine

and oak were high graded to supply masts and timber for the British navy.

This was a time of great change to the landscape as most of the forest in the lower Rouge watershed disappeared. This included the now-forested land that makes up Rouge Park south of Steeles Avenue.

The numbers of people increased significantly and the forest and wetland landscape changed radically.

Throughout the 1800s and 1900s farm land was expanded and "improved" – some wetlands were drained and the fields were graded and flattened.

In the 1950s the City of Toronto began its rapid growth that continues today, and much of the farmland in the Rouge watershed has been converted to urban use.

### Archeological Sites

- 170 archeological sites identified in 1999 (Rouge River Watershed: Cultural Heritage Inventory Report (Vol: 1))
- past archaeological investigations have documented over 60 archaeological sites within the Little Rouge Corridor alone
  - almost 1/3 of known sites are or have potential, significant cultural resources
  - range from:
    - a possible early Paleoindian sites (ca. 9500-8000 BCE)
    - campsites of the Archaic period (ca. 8000-1000 BCE)
    - Iroquoian villages of the Late Woodland period (ca. 1300-1550 CE)
    - Euro-Canadian homesteads of the mid 19th century

### Cultural Heritage Key Points

#### Pre-History

- humans have been living in the area of the Rouge Watershed on at least an intermittent basis for some 11,500 years
  - since about 9500 BCE
- Paleoindians of the Archaic and Initial Woodland periods were mostly hunters

#### Pre-Contact and Fur Trade

- around CE 700, maize farming was introduced into Southern Ontario
  - dependable food sources gave rise to permanent villages and a large population increase during the Late Woodland period
- first year-round occupation of the area was by Iroquoian peoples during the Late Woodland period
  - about 1300-1550 CE

Figure A2.29  
Map  
modified from  
Richardson  
and Barnes  
(1956)  
showing a  
trail (red) a  
trail known  
in 1817 that  
may have  
been the  
remains of  
the Carrying  
Place Trail.

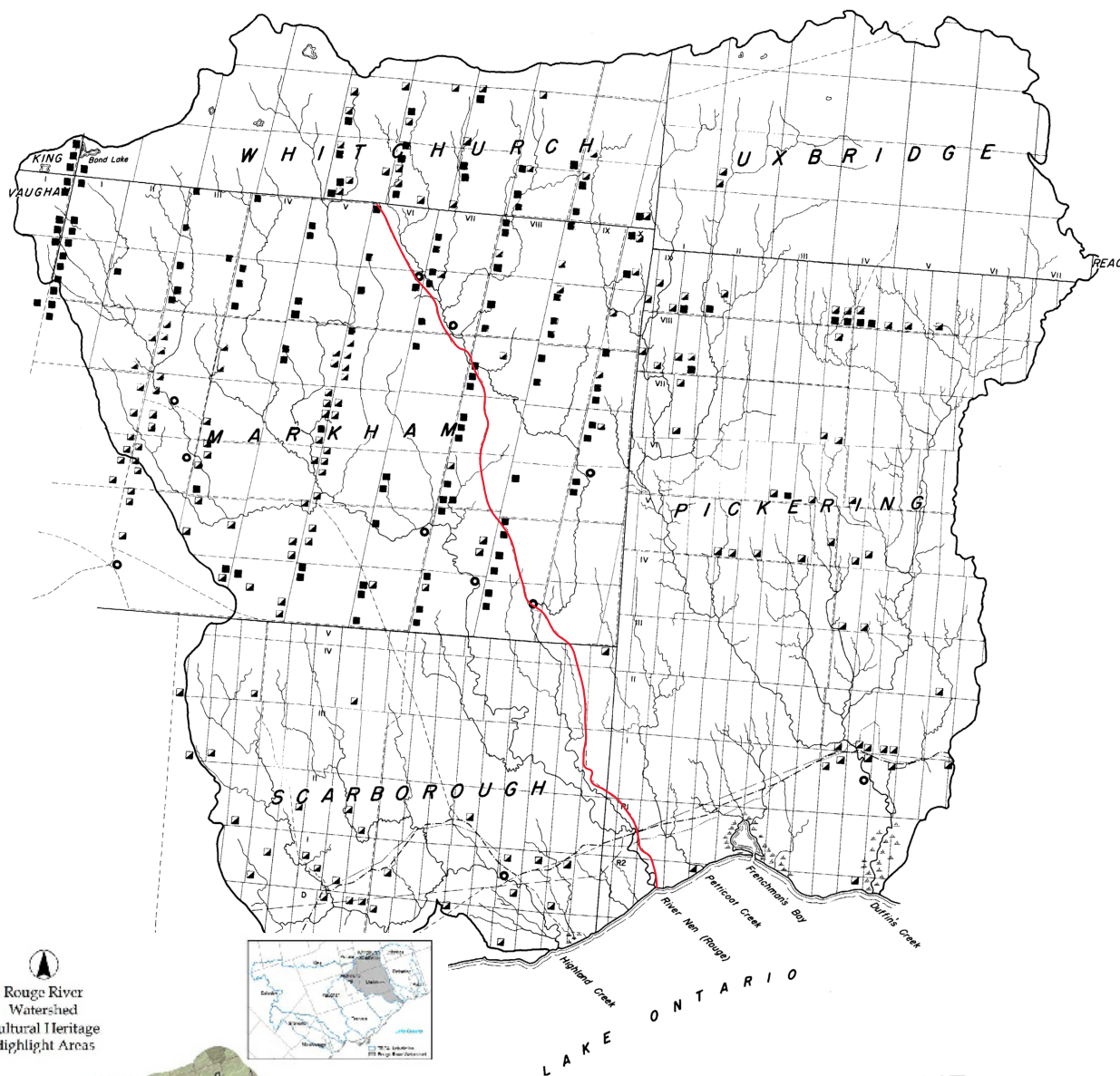
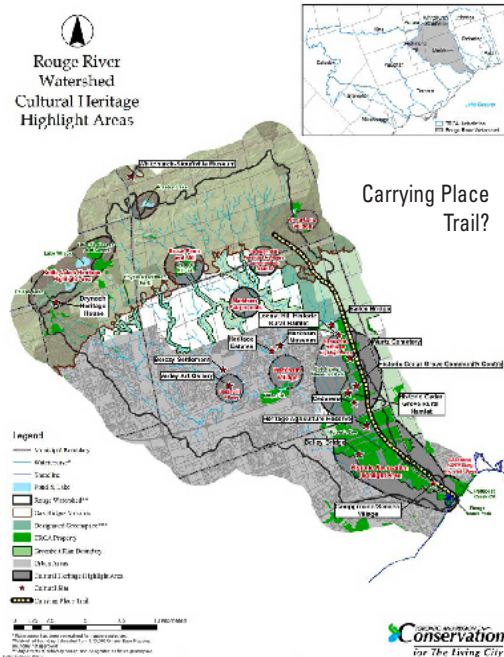


Figure A2.30  
Map from  
Little Rouge  
Corridor  
Management  
Plan showing  
a trail  
corridor may  
represent to  
location of  
the Carrying  
Place Trail  
with respect  
to existing  
Rouge Park  
lands (green).



- there are two national historic resources in the park:
  - Bead Hill National Historic Site
    - an important Seneca Village protected in Rouge Park
  - Toronto Carrying Place Trail National Historic Event
    - the east branch of the fur trading route connecting Lake Ontario to Lake Simcoe and Georgian Bay, via the Holland River

### Early European Settlement

- began in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century
  - William von Moll Berczy
    - led a group of German-speaking farmers
- by 1861,
  - 17 recognized villages
  - 54 mills (sawmills, grist mills and woollen mills) on the Rouge River and Little Rouge Creek

Mennonite farming communities settled in the eastern and northern parts of the watershed. Many local roads were named after prominent families.

From: Draft Rouge River Watershed Plan Report of the Rouge Watershed Task Force. November 2, 2006

## Carrying Place Trail

Parts of this historically documented trail cut through Rouge Park. It was also known as the *Toronto Carrying Place*—the French called it *Le Passage de Toronto*. Interestingly, the name didn't refer to what is now Toronto, but to Lake Simcoe, which the French called Lac Toronto.

This was the eastern arm of the Toronto Carrying Place. It led from the Lower Rouge across the Oak Ridges Moraine to Lake Simcoe and the Upper Great Lakes.

- in winter the northern terminus was probably at Roches Point on Lake Simcoe
- in summer it was probably on the East Branch of the Holland River at Holland Landing

The western arm of the Toronto Carrying Place was the Humber Trail. It connected the Lower Humber River to the Holland River. These two routes were vital links in the historic fur trade.

Richardson and Barnes (1956) include a map of early 19<sup>th</sup> century settlement showing a trail in use as of 1817 extending diagonally through Markham Township, crossing Little Rouge Creek where Cedar Grove now stands, then continuing south along the east side of Little Rouge Creek and the Lower Rouge River to the forks of the Rouge River and Lake Ontario. The authors of the Little Rouge Corridor Management Plan speculate that this trail may have followed the same route as the historic Rouge Carrying Place Trail.

From: *Little Rouge Corridor Management Plan*

## Heritage Sites—an Overview

- more than 1400 known archaeological and heritage sites
- numerous historical accounts
- 991 built heritage structures in the Watershed
  - 42 designated for protection under the Ontario Heritage Act

There is a substantial confidential database of archaeological resources in the Rouge watershed available to Rouge Park staff only. Many more may be found through continued field investigations. There is currently no central, accessible repository for archaeological artifacts; instead they are stored by licensed archaeologists at various locations.

## Pre-Contact First Nations Use

Richardson and Barnes (1956) provide some information on early use of the landscape. Dana Poulton (personal communication) suggested that the Rouge Watershed was used sporadically by wandering bands of hunter-gatherers in the Paleoindian and Early Woodland period. There may be some evidence of old campsites along the river system.

Iroquoian people likely occupied the area from an early time –since before 1300 CE.

### Paleoindian Period

#### *The First People 10,000 BCE to 7,000 BCE*

- northward retreat of glacial ice 12,000 years ago allowed a spruce and pine forest environment to become established in southern Ontario
- Paleoindian people hunted caribou, fish, birds, and small mammals
  - nomadic hunters travelled great distances
    - to search for food
    - to quarry stone for tools
- the area may have been a seasonal stop-over location
  - small bands moved annually along the north shore of Lake Ontario
  - or back and forth from Georgian Bay to Lake Ontario

## European Settlement 1794–1837

*Details of the power structure and process of land grants in Upper Canada around the time of settlement of the Rouge Watershed can be found in John Clarke (2003) Land, Power and Economics on the Frontier of Upper Canada. McGill-Queen's University Press.*

- settlement in the vicinity was relatively early in the Euro-Canadian settlement of Ontario
  - from the 1790s
- land grants in the area were managed by the Land Board of the District of Nassau
  - a land patent is evidence of right, title, and/or interest to a tract of land, usually granted by a government to an individual or private company
  - individuals or companies ask for land (petition)
  - Land Board makes decision to accept the petition, how much land to be granted and where
  - maximum land grants for individuals were classified as:
    - ordinary—200 acres
    - additional—1,000 acres
- 1793–1795—much of the land granted in area around Rouge Park was of the “additional classification”, granted to Loyalist families that already had ordinary land grants elsewhere in the Toronto area
  - most of this land remained uncleared for many years
  - settlers entered the upper section of the Rouge Watershed 2 years before anyone settled near Lake Ontario

### The Berczy Settlement in Markham Township

*A very detailed account of Berczy's efforts to settle the area can be found in Richardson and Barns (1956) Chapter 2, pp 15-24.*

#### William Berczy

- July, 1792 sailed from Hamburg, Germany
  - 60 Heads of Families, 229 persons
  - destined to settle in north-western New York State
  - disputes arose about money and land tenure
    - Berczy put in jail for short period
- 1794 Berczy sees Lord Simcoe's Proclamation of 1792 inviting settlers to Upper Canada
  - forms a company and asks for 2,000,000

acres for his group

- later reduces request to 1,000,000 acres
- granted 64,000 acres with options for more once land is developed

- Lord Simcoe (governor of Upper Canada) suggests lands near Young Street
- settlers choose Markham Township Concessions II and IV
- there were many difficulties and disputes with the government of Upper Canada, but by 1804 there were between 40 and 50 of Berczy's settlers in Markham who stayed on the land for seven years and were eligible to apply for letters patent (proof of land ownership)

### Settlement in Scarborough

- 1809—not much action
  - 140 families
- very slow growth till 1817
- settlement that did occur was mostly along Kingston Road
- 1824 — 529 families
- reason for slow growth was that much of the land was held as absentee holdings

#### Sidebar: Evidence of Changes in River Flow

- French explorers wrote that the Rouge River was navigable for two leagues—about eight kilometres (five miles)
  - probably for bateaux as well as canoes
- Berczy says he took his “bateau” four miles up the river before he was stopped by logs and other obstructions
- canoes could probably be taken far beyond this point without too much trouble
  - First Nations people and fur traders usually preferred to carry from free water on one river to free water on the other
  - they would rather not be continually carrying over beaver dams and small rapids
  - by 1820s the canal route was more closely examined
  - rejected because of expense and lack of water

#### Important Insight

Although one cannot verify Berczy's claims of navigation up the Rouge River, it is clear from his original claim of being able to boat upstream for 4 miles, backed by early French accounts of up to 5 miles and other accounts such as large timber being floated down the Rouge River from the terminus of the Mast Trail, that in the past both the Rouge River and Little Rouge Creek were deeper than present day. This is likely because the channels were deeper and that perhaps there was more water in the system. In those days of early settlement, the watershed's natural infrastructure (forests and wetland) was intact. This would ensure less flooding (which results in wider shallower river beds) and a more steady release of water into the river system via wetlands and seepage through forest soils and underground springs and seeps.



## European Settlement Vegetation 1800-1914

*Note that the information below was gathered from documents focussing mostly on Rouge Park south of Steeles Avenue. However, much of the information is likely applicable for lands in the Little Rouge Corridor*

- 1799—first European settlers arrived in the lower Rouge River valley
  - with the opening of Dundas Street
  - initially farms consisted only of a hectare or so of cleared land in otherwise continuous tracts of forest
- 1851— 73% of Scarborough Township was still forested
- 1863— about 33% of forests remain intact in Scarborough and Pickering Townships
  - settlers that had land usually cleared about two-thirds of his/her holdings
- 1890s — 8% forest cover in Scarborough and Pickering Townships
  - thirty years of low crop prices created economic downturn
  - forced farmers to sell woodlots for cordwood and sawlogs
    - majority of farmers fully cleared their land

## Lower Rouge

- rich bottomlands cleared for pasture or cultivation

## Industry in the Rouge Watershed

Water power was a major engine of industry in the early and mid 1800s. The Rouge River system was an important local source of water power. The dams and mills along the waterways have a long legacy of economic prosperity and environmental impact, that in some cases, exist to this day.

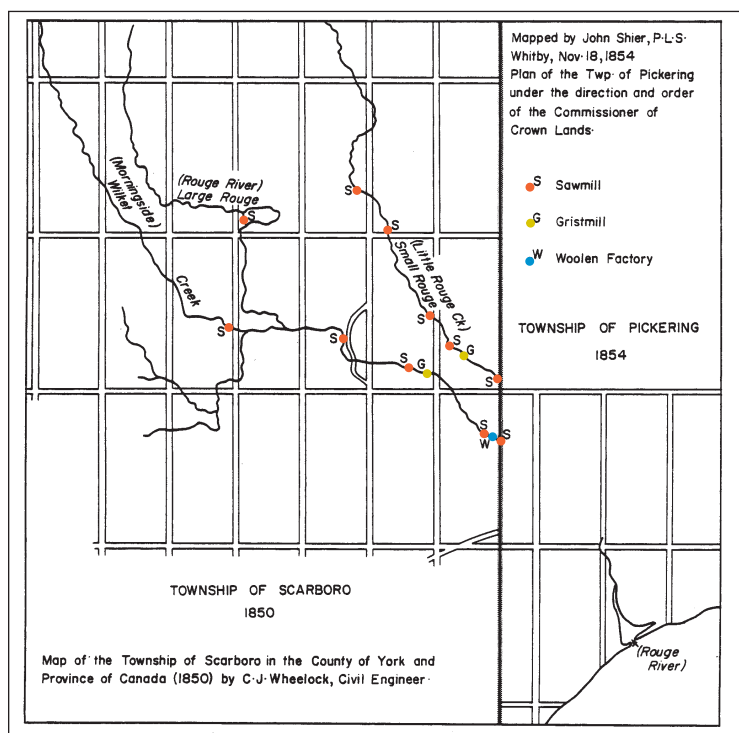


Figure A2.32. Map showing locations of mills on the lower Rouge system in 1854. Modified from Varga et al 1991.



Figure A2.33. Mill building at Bruce's Mill Conservation Area.



## Sawmills and Grist Mills

- many dams built to create ponds to power grist and sawmills
  - in some cases, water was diverted from the river
  - e.g. the Rouge River, south of Twyn Rivers Drive, had a channel that diverted water for 1 km into two dammed ponds
  - e.g., Rouge River water was diverted across a narrow area above and below the Finch meanders to a mill pond that powered a sawmill near Sewells Road and Old Finch Avenue
- 1840s—mills began to appear in the River's bottom lands

- 1850—14 mills in Lower Rouge system
  - 7 on Rouge River
  - 6 on Little Rouge Creek
  - 1 on Morningside Creek
 See Wheelock's map of Scarborough Township (Figure A2.9)
- 1860—7 mills
  - 4 on Rouge River
  - 2 on Little Rouge Creek
  - 1 on Morningside Creek
- 1878—3 mills
  - 2 on Rouge River
  - 1 on Little Rouge Creek
- 1930—2 mills shown on topographic maps from this time
- 1940s—Mill Pond for mill on at Finch Avenue and Sewells Road remained

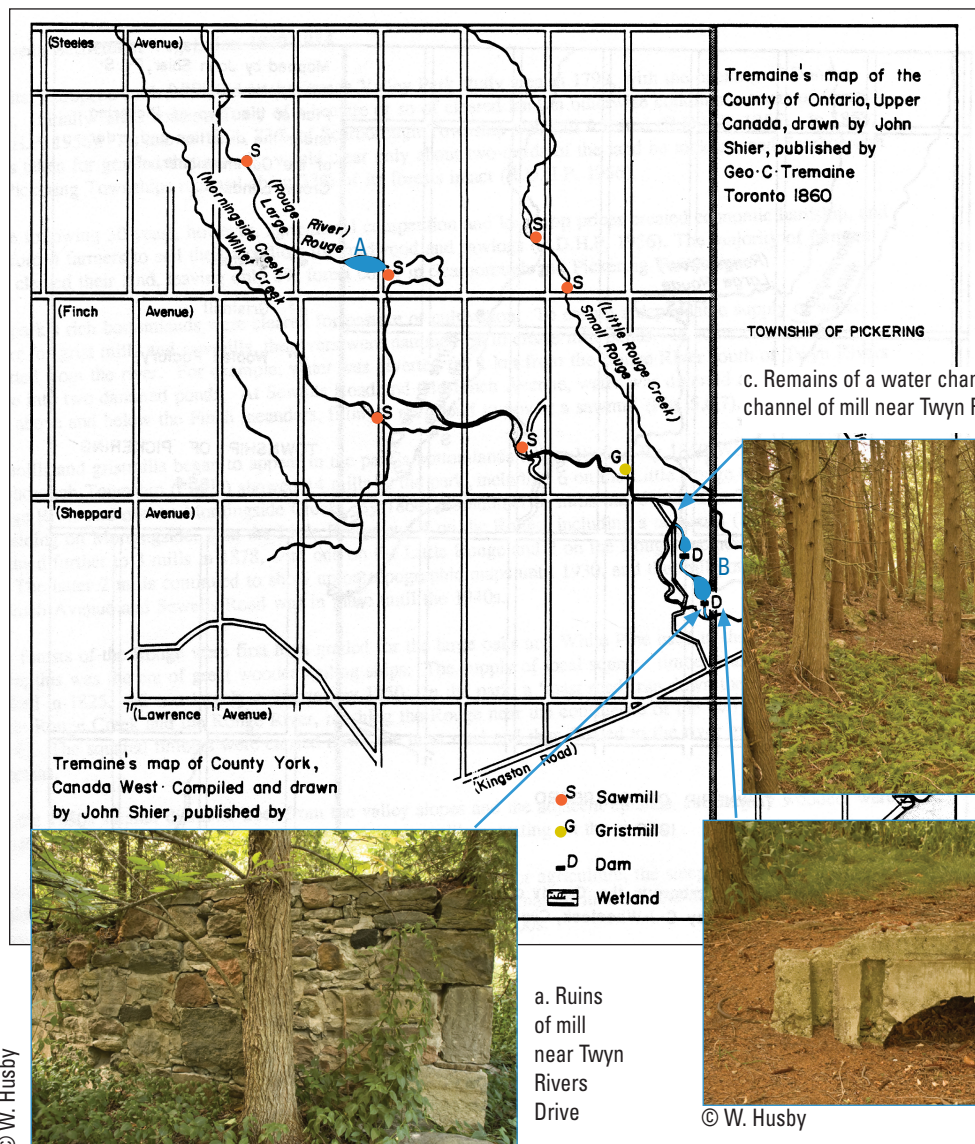


Figure A2.34 Map showing locations of mills on the lower Rouge system in 1860. Note the two River diversions (A and B). Also a, b and c show remnants of one of the mills. Modified from Varga et al 1991.

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## Recent History

### Farmland

Almost all of Rouge Park is or at one time was farmland—with the exception of some of the larger wetlands like Rouge Marsh and a small part of the table land between Rouge River and Little Rouge Creek south of Steeles Avenue. Farming has shaped the land through constant plowing and levelling of the table lands and clearing of the riparian vegetation in the valley bottoms. After the extensive flooding brought on by Hurricane Hazel in 1954, housing was removed and some farming areas were left to regenerate in the valley bottoms.

Figure A2.37  
Farmland  
and old field  
dominate  
the northern  
section  
of Rouge  
Park south  
of Steeles  
Avenue.

