

- Woodruff

The scene is a historical reconstruction of the properties around the 'Sydenham Dam' circa 1890. The buildings are the grist mill and the owner's (~~Anglin~~) home to its left. Wilma Kenny, the present owner of the latter, and her father Otto Gossage - a former millright at the site - helped me with the historical research necessary to authenticate the scene. The steam launch was used to transport mica-filled barrels from Eel Bay, and their contents were then cleaned, sorted and graded at sheds located on the west side of Wheatley St. In the painting, the emptied barrels are being returned to the mines for refilling. Apparently, the barges were unloaded both at the location shown in the painting, and also from a shallow dug channel which was situated just to the south of the present IHA hardware store, in what is now an overgrown area.

In a modern updating of the area, the bridge was shifted to the left, or Southward, as defined by its present watercourse. The mill, which was earlier destroyed by fire, sat astride that area. The fate of the nifty boat is unknown, but it is typical of a large number of steam launches - both commercial and private - in use at that time.