

# Gooderham Building recalls a Canadian philanthropist

**T**HERE are many stories about Toronto's famous Gooderham Building and one of the best is the story of Albert Gooderham.

In the 1830s, his grandfather, William Gooderham, built a windmill on Toronto harbor and founded the Gooderham and Worts distillery.

William's son, George Gooderham, became the richest man in the history of 19th-century Toronto and in 1892 he built the "flat-iron" building on Wellington St. as a head office for the family business.

George's son, Albert Gooderham, never became president of the company and was never as famous as his father or grandfather, but George V made him a Knight Commander of the Order of St. Michael and St. George for what he did with some of the family money.

In 1914, to help fulfil the dream of a young university professor, he bought a farm near Toronto and built a series of laboratories on the site and gave them to the University of Toronto.

When a name was needed for the project, he chose Connaught Laboratories after the man who was then governor-general of Canada — Prince Arthur, the third son of Queen Victoria and Duke of Connaught.

Today, the laboratories are one of the largest research centres on this continent and world-famous for the quality of their products. They are the only producers of insulin in Canada and are currently processing all the material that is being imported to supply Canada with swine flu vaccine.

In 1972, when the federal government created the Canada Development Corporation to invest in Canada's resources, the first company it bought was the Connaught Laboratories.

## National asset

Recently, when charges were made that the efficiency of its operations had suffered since it was taken over by the government, one commentator said it was like hearing that the Vatican was becoming lax in its liturgy.

For the story of the Connaught Laboratories is the story of one of Canada's most illustrious national assets. When its history was written, Dr. Robert Defries, director emeritus of Connaught Laboratories, said it might never have happened had it not been for Albert Edward Gooderham.

Albert was born in 1861 in Toronto and at the age of 18 he entered the family's distillery business as a junior clerk.

He was a keen yachtsman and



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it was his money, more than that of any other man, that developed an interest in yachting on Lake Ontario.

He was also one of the most colorful military figures in Toronto's history. In 1885, he joined the 10th Royal Grenadiers. In 1907, he became its commanding officer and was known as "the colonel" for as long as he lived.

In 1912, he gave the biggest military dinner ever held in Canada and invited more than 1,700 officers and men to the armories on University Ave. to celebrate the regiment's 50th anniversary.

Two years later, when war broke out, he asked to be introduced to John Gerald Fitzgerald and the meeting changed both their lives.

At that time, thousands of

Canadians were dying every year from diphtheria. Even though a cure had been found, the cost of the serum was high and only the rich were being treated.

It was Fitzgerald who dreamed of establishing a laboratory in Canada that would produce drugs everyone would be able to afford.

He had been born in Drayton, Ont., in 1882, had studied at the Pasteur Institute in Paris and had become the first full-time member of the University of Toronto's hygiene department.

In 1913, with his own money, he built a small stable and laboratory on Barton St. near Bloor and Bathurst Sts. where he could immunize the horses that were required in order to produce a diphtheria anti-toxin.

## Bought farm

In 1914, Col. Gooderham was chairman of the Ontario Red Cross Society and soon became aware of the urgent need for vast quantities of an anti-toxin to prevent wounded soldiers from dying of tetanus.

He learned of Fitzgerald's work and bought a farm near Steeles and Dufferin St., where Fitzgerald could stable all the livestock he would need, and built the first of the laboratories that now cover the site.

It was here that Fitzgerald and his staff produced tetanus anti-toxin during the war. In 1921 when Banting and Best discovered insulin, the two men turned their royalties over to the University of Toronto and the Connaught Laboratories became the sole insulin manufacturer in Canada.

More recently, they have become one of North America's main producers of penicillin and Salk polio vaccine.

Throughout his life, Col. Gooderham continued to be the laboratories' chief patron and benefactor. He also built a soldiers' hospital in England and a hospital for children in North Toronto.

When Ontario introduced prohibition in 1916, the Gooderham family decided to discontinue its association with a distillery and Albert turned many of the plants over to war work.

In the King's New Year's Honors List in 1935, Col. Gooderham became Sir Albert. Four months later he was dead from a streptococcus infection that no doctor at the time could cure.

In the funeral service at St. James Cathedral, it was said that the great thing about Albert Gooderham was himself — his desire to spend and be spent in the service of others.