Nelles Family Collection, 1780-1927, n.d. [non-inclusive]

RG 174

Brock University Archives

Creator: Nelles Family

Extent: 30 cm textual records
1 photograph: b & w
3 diaries

Abstract: The textual materials of the Nelles Family include account books, clippings, correspondence, diaries, militia records, and various other materials that document the activities of this family. The bulk of the collection consists of photocopies acquired through donation and from other repositories.

Materials: Account books, clippings, correspondence, diaries, militia records,

Repository: Brock University Archives

Processed by: Edie Williams

Finding Aid: Edie Williams

Last Updated: November 2009; accrual June 2010

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Preferred Citation: RG 174, Nelles Family Collection, 1780-1927, n.d. [non-inclusive], Brock University Archives.

Acquisition Info.: The materials were donated by Mrs. Marjorie Evelyln Harris Rutherford in 1968 and Miss Mary Burnham in 1976.
Photocopies of the William Nelles account books and militia documents were acquired from the Toronto Public Library at an unknown date.

In 1967 Mrs. Rutherford of Grimsby donated the Robert Nelles papers to Public Archives of Canada, now Library and Archives Canada (LAC). At the time of transfer to LAC copies from the originals were made for Brock University Archives. Mrs. Rutherford was a descendent through marriage of Robert Nelles and his second wife Maria Jane Waddell.

The Cyrus Sumner and James W.G. Nelles diaries were loaned to Brock University Archives in 1976 by Mary Burnham, Grimsby. At that time a copy was made from the original and an existing transcript. Miss Burnham also donated many original records of the Nelles family, chiefly the records of John Adolphus Nelles and his descendents. Miss Burnham was the great-granddaughter of John Adolphus Nelles and Helen Marr Sumner.

**Administrative History:**

The Nelles Family collection comprises the records of many Nelles family members as well as individuals who were associated with them through marriage. Most of the Nelles and allied families were born, raised and/or lived most of their lives in the Grimsby area. At the time of settlement, this area was often referred to as the Forty, as the settlement was along the Forty Mile creek. The collection represents many generations of Nelles family members.

Robert Nelles (1761-1842) son of Johann Hendrick (1735-1791) and Margaretha Nelles was first married to Elizabeth Moore and after her death, to Maria Jane Waddell. Robert was active in his community of Grimsby, Ontario. He was involved with the militia, serving in the Indian Department with his father Johann Hendrick Nelles. After the revolutionary war, he and his brothers successfully established themselves in the community.

Robert & Elizabeth’s children mentioned in this archive are: Margaret Dinah Nelles, (1793-1848) married to Edward Pilkington; Elizabeth (Betsy) Nelles (1803-1880) married to Brook Bridges Stevens; and (Rev.) Abraham Nelles (1805-1884).
William Nelles (1769-1850) Lt. Col. 4th Lincoln Regiment, War of 1812-1814, was married to Margaret Sophia Ball (1771-1853) in 1799. She was the daughter of Jacob and Maria Elizabeth Mann Ball. William and Margaret’s children mentioned in this material are Peter Ball Nelles (1806-1881) and John Adolphus Nelles (1811-1877).

Abraham Nelles (1805-1884), was the son of Robert Nelles and Elizabeth Moore. He was also referred to, or used himself the short form of his name, Abram. He was a Church of England missionary to the Six Nations at Grand River, Ontario, for the years 1829-1838.

John Adolphus Nelles (1811-1877), most commonly referred to as Adolphus Nelles, was the son of William and Margaret Sophia Ball Nelles. He was married first to Catharine Morilla Pettit, (1812-1843) and later to Helen Marr Sumner, daughter of Dr. Cyrus Sumner and Mary Bell. John Adolphus Nelles was active in his church, St. Andrews Presbyterian as well as establishing and participating in the activities of the Township of Grimsby Agricultural Society.

Cyrus Sumner (1808-1850), was the son of Dr. Cyrus Sumner and Mary Bell. He was born 1808 and died in 1850 in Sacramento City, California. He travelled to California in 1849 at the height of the gold rush. His diary, transcribed by his sister, Jane Sumner McMaster, and letters to his brother are extent.

James W. (Willison) G. (Grout) Nelles (1835-1918), was the son of John Adolphus Nelles and his first wife, Catharine Morilla Pettit (1812-1843). The bulk of his archive consists of a diary of his visit to Cariboo Mines, written for his nephew William Ball Nelles.

Cyrus Sumner Nelles (1835-1924), was the son of Peter Ball and Mary Sumner Nelles and the grandson of William Nelles. Mary Sumner was the daughter of Dr. Cyrus Sumner and Mary Bell. Cyrus Sumner Nelles was in the Lincoln Militia and served during the Fenian Raid of 1866. He was married to Emily Isabelle Millard, 1835-1922, daughter of Thomas Millard.

Thomas and Elizabeth Stallard Millard emigrated to Canada ca. 1860 from Somerset England. Thomas and Elizabeth Millard’s
daughters, Elizabeth and Emily were married to members of the Nelles family. Elizabeth (1822-1887) married Charles Lenox Nelles, son of Robert Nelles and Maria Jane Wardell; and Emily (1835-1922) married to Cyrus Sumner Nelles.

Manson family members are related to the Nelles family through the marriage of Florence Louisa Nelles to William Manson. Florence Louisa was the daughter of John Adolphus Nelles and his second wife, Helen Marr Sumner. Miss Mary Burnham the donor of many of the records was the granddaughter of William and Florence Louisa Nelles Manson. William Charles Balfour Manson was Mary Burnham’s uncle, he died in Grimsby in 1947.

Scope and Content:

The bulk of the materials consist of photocopies of originals held at other repositories. A donation in 1976 of many original documents related to the John Adolphus Nelles families significantly increased the size of the collection. All series titles are formed by the name of the significant Nelles family member or the surname of an allied family. Within each series, the documents are in chronological order, except in Series I, Robert Nelles. The original order of the Robert Nelles papers were retained as they corresponded with an accompanying inventory which included pagination.

The Robert Nelles papers, donated by Mrs. Rutherford, form most of Series I. A detailed inventory list accompanied the photocopied papers at the time of their donation. The pages were numbered likely at that time when the originals were microfilmed. These papers likely make up the bulk of the Robert Nelles Papers, available on microfilm from Library and Archives Canada, which Brock University, Special Collections and Archives also has a copy.

The William Nelles papers in Series II. Consist of originals and photocopies provided by the Toronto Public Library. The copies were made at an unknown date. The originals reside with the Toronto Public Library. Series III. Abraham Nelles papers consist of a diary outlining the missionary activities of Rev. Abraham (Abram) Nelles. He was a Church of England missionary to the Six Nations at Grand River, Ontario from 1829-1838. The John Adolphus Nelles documents in Series IV. form likely the largest collection of original documents in this archive. The documents are the daily activities of both John.
Adolphus and his second wife, Helen Marr Sumner. It includes accounts, notes, correspondence and activities of the Grimsby Township Agricultural Society. The photocopy and transcription of a diary form Series V. James W.G. Sumner papers. James W.G. Sumner travelled to Cariboo Mines, British Columbia in 1862. Series VI. contains the individual documents of numerous other Nelles family members. Series VII. contains the records of Sumner, Millard and Manson family members. Sub-Series A. Sumner family, includes the diary and letters written by Cyrus Sumner on his travels to California and while mining for gold during the heyday of the California Gold Rush. This sub-series also includes a diary that may be attributed to a daughter of Dr. Cyrus and Mary Bell Sumner. More in depth research required. Series VIII. Unattributed items, contains many documents where the origins and/or purpose could not be attributed to any specific member of the Nelles family or any of the allied families.

**Organization:**

The records are arranged alphabetically into eight series.


Sub-Series B: Original items donated by Mary Burnham, 1819

Series II. William Nelles, 1792-1846

Series III. Abram (Abraham) Nelles, 1829-1838, 1884


Series V. James W.(Willison) G.(Grout) Nelles, 1862, 1865

Series VI. Various other Nelles documents, 1817, 1824, 1826-
1828, 1831, 1845, 1847-1848, 1911


Sub-Series A: Sumner family, 1825, 1834, 1841, 1846-1847, 1849-1850, n.d.

Sub-Series B: Manson family, 1916, 1921, 1923, 1927

Sub-Series C: Millard family, 1814, 1833, 1841, 1845-1875, n.d.

Series VIII. Unattributed documents 1799, 1815, 1830, 1834-1837, 1844, 1883-1884, 1850, 1922, n.d.

Inventory:


Sub-Series A. Documents donated by Mrs. (Marjorie Evelyn Harris) Rutherford, 1780-1782, 1784, 1787-1788, 1790-1792, 1794-1795, 1798-1808, 1810, 1812-1818, 1820-1824, 1826-1834, 1836-1838, 1840-1841, 1848, n.d. All items are photocopies.

1.1 Family Letters, 1814, 1816, 1821, 1840, 1848; includes ten items numbered 1-31. Included is correspondence from daughter Elizabeth (Betsy) Nelles (later Stevens), H. Nelles, son in law Brooks Stevens, to and from Warner Nelles. Also includes copy of a letter to John Fenton.

1.2 Two letters from Elizabeth Moore Nelles, n.d.; includes three items numbered 32-37, including a 1784 letter from Daniel Servos

1.3 Letters to and from son, Rev. Abram (Abraham) Nelles 1830-1831, 1833, 1841, n.d.; includes 16 items numbered 38-83
1.4 Letters and account from Joseph Brant, 1798, 1800, 1802-1803, n.d.; includes seven items numbered 84-93. Also includes correspondence from Robert Kerr about Brant’s house construction.

1.5 Letters between William and James Crooks and Robert Nelles, 1800, 1802-1804, 1806-1807, 1818, 1832-1833; includes 16 items numbered 94-120

1.6 Edward and Margaret Nelles Pilkington Letters, 1814-1818, 1837, n.d.; includes 14 items numbered 121-165

1.7 Letters from Samuel and Thomas G. Ridout and Bank of Upper Canada, 1804, 1807, 1822, 1827, 1828, 1837; includes seven items numbered 166-180


1.9 Various letters, 1815, 1818, 1820-1822, 1824, 1828, 1832-1834, 1836-1838, 1840-1841; includes 36 items numbered 238-313 with correspondence from William Thorn, Edward McMahon, Gideon Frisbee, John Fenton, James Fitzgibbon, Nathanial Griffin, W. Chisholm, Daniel Campbell, J. Radenhurst, Turton Penn, Wm. Moore, John Young to Henry Griffen, Catharine Young (wife of John), Walter Crooks, Mr. McCormick (Bank of Upper Canada), James Henderson, Jacob Tufford, John Harris.

1.10 Church Papers 1817, 1823-1824, 1826, 1828-1829, n.d.; includes 12 items numbered 314-348. Also includes Edward Pilkington correspondence

1.11 Legislative Assembly Papers 1800, 1803, 1807, 1810, 1815-1816, 1818; includes 11 items numbered 349-391. Also includes voters’ lists, correspondence from Richard Beasley, Wm. B. Peters, Donald MacLean, Wm. Stant, Wm. Halton, Report of the Committee on Education, 1816, and Title Book.

1.12 Militia Papers, 1812, 1813, 1820, 1822, n.d.; includes 12
items numbered 392-422, including sample forms for reporting loss during the War of 1812, sample forms of affidavits, muster rolls for court martial duty, circular from George Bowles, correspondence from James FitzGibbon, promotions list for 4th Regiment, Lincoln militia, Robert Morrogh correspondence, regimental orders.

1.13 Various documents, 1798-1800, 1803-1804, 1809, 1812, 1817, 1819, 1837, n.d.; includes 18 items numbered 423-472. Also includes road appropriations, search warrant, tavern license, affidavit, witness statements and proceedings against John Beam re: unlawfully serving spirits, Peter Tining Bargain & Sale, correspondence from Stephenson, JP, statement of judgment, witness statements against William Hepburn, copy of correspondence to Thomas Scott, Robert Nelles and John Nolte agreement, deed between Benjamin and Jemima Willcox and Robert Nelles, copy of correspondence to John Green, Township of Flamborough, William Thorn-Robert Nelles agreement for the operation of a carding machine and Fulling mill, notes regarding grain for Mr. Tice, report of special session, agreement with Gillespie, Moffat & Co. of Montreal.


Sub-Series B: Original documents donated by Mary Burnham, 1819

1.15 Account notice for pair of boots and other items, 1819

Series II. William Nelles, 1792-1846; includes originals and photocopies
1.16-1.17  Account book, 1792-1837 (photocopy) [TPL]

1.18  (Account) Day Book, 1834-1844 (photocopy) [TPL]

1.19  Account book, 1819-1838; includes accounts, copies of correspondence, Edward McCarten bond (photocopy) [TPL]

1.20  Fourth Lincoln Regiment militia records, 1812-1815; includes muster rolls, clothing accounts, absent without leave list, copy of correspondence (photocopy) [TPL]

1.21  Various documents, as listed below, 1798, 1808-1816, 1818, 1826, 1829, 1831, 1835, 1840-1842, 1844-1846

- Memorandum of expenses for Grand River road opening, 1798 (photocopy)
- Five promissory notes to John Pettit and Jonathan Woolverton, executors to the estate of Nathaniel Pettit, signed William Nelles and A. (Abraham) Nelles, witnessed by Will Crooks, 1808-1816.
- Notebook, 1818, 1840-1842; includes notes about work done at the school house and account of Mrs. Mitchell
- Account with Henry Fairfield, 1826, 1829
- Quit Claim with Margaret Nelles (wife), 1831 (photocopy)
- Account with Jacob Kitchen, 1835
- Account with George Grout, 1835
- Bond (mortgage) with Thomas Combs for land in Caistor Township, 1842
- Bond with Lewis Combs, 1842 (photocopy)
- Receipt from Lewis Combs, 1842 (photocopy)
- Bond with George B. Stephenson, Moses H. Merritt and Alexander L. McPherson with Wm. and Margaret Nelles, 1844
- Bond with Aaron Price Buckbee, July 5, 1845 (photocopy)
- Bond with George Addy, Township of Vaughan, 1846 (photocopy)

1.34  Lewis Burwell, Deputy Provincial Surveyor Notice, 1835

Series III. Abram (Abraham) Nelles, 1829-1838, 1884

1.22  Diary of Abram (Abraham) Nelles, 1829-1838, 1884; includes photograph of a male identified as Shequaqknind. [This was the Mohawk name given to Rev. Nelles], taken by Park & Co., Brantford

1.23 Various documents, as listed below, 1833-1834, 1836, 1838, 1840-1843, 1845-1849, 1854, 1856, 1862, 1865, 1868, 1873, 1875, 1883-1886, n.d.

- Correspondence to unknown, 1833; re: military commission for John Adolphus Nelles
- John Moore to Adolphus Nelles account, 1834
- Account with Zenas Beach, 1836
- Military commission – 1st Regiment of Frontier Light Infantry, as ensign, 1838.
- Christjohn Tip and Hesikiah Fraleigh to J.A. Nelles account, 1840
- Account with Thomas Bingle, 1841-1843
- Receipt from Ann (Smith) Nelles (wife of late Henry William Nelles 1798-1842), 1842 (photocopy)
- Peter Ballenough to J.A. Nelles account, 1843
- Promissory note from William H. Tipp, 1845
- Tally sheet for John A. Nelles, 1845
- Receipt from Wm. F. McMaster, 1846
- Agricultural Society of the Township of Grimsby constitution and reports, 1846-1849
- Report of the Agricultural Society of the Township of Grimsby by Adolphus Nelles, 1846
- Resolution and notice of ploughing match, 1854; includes signature of J.A. Nelles
- Funeral notice for Mrs. John W. Ball, 1856
- Note to Mr. William Farmer, 1862
- Account with Nelles & Palmer, 1865
- Accounts with E.J. Palmer, 1868, 1871-1873, 1883-1886 (13 items)
- Account notice from MacKelcan & Gibson, 1869-1871 (4 items)
- Account with Wm. Forbes, Grimsby, 1875
- Royal Insurance Company receipt for Mrs. Adolphus Nelles, 1884
- Tax assessment notice for Mrs. John A. Nelles, 1886
- Account of E. Oill, n.d.
- Formation and resolution of the Township of Grimsby Agricultural Society, n.d.
- List of persons performing road maintenance, n.d.
• Note for mason work performed, n.d.

Series V. James W. (Willison) G.(Grout) Nelles, 1862, 1865

1.24 Account with J.A. Nelles, 1865

1.25 Diary of travel to Cariboo Mines and back, 1862 (photocopy); includes transcript. Diary is inscribed to W.B.N. [his cousin, William Ball Nelles, son of Peter Ball Nelles]

Series VI. Various other Nelles documents, 1817, 1824, 1826-1828, 1831, 1845, 1847-1848, 1911

1.26 Various documents related to other Nelles family members, 1817, 1824, 1826-1828, 1831, 1845, 1847-1848, 1911

• Account of Jacob Nelles, 1817
• A. Nelles account to William Rilley or Kelly, 1824, 1826-1828
• Marriage license for Margaret Nelles and Charles Nickles, 1831
• Mrs. Nelles account with Murray & Drynan, Hamilton, 1845
• Correspondence, Mr.’s Nellis & Sumner, Merchants from W. Hamilton Merritt, 1847
• Correspondence, Mrs. Sumner & Nellis, from Wm. McMaster, Toronto, 1847
• Correspondence to or from Robert F. (Fanning) Nelles, 1848; includes letter from the Office of the Niagara District Memorial Council.
• Correspondence, “Dear Mabel”, 1911

Series VII. Allied Families, 1814, 1825, 1833-1834, 1841, 1845-1875, 1916, 1921, 1923, 1927, n.d.; includes Sumner, Bell, Manson, Millard and Pettit,

Sub-Series A. Sumner family, 1825, 1834, 1841, 1846-1847, 1849-1850, n.d.; includes the California Gold Rush correspondence and diary of Cyrus Sumner Jr,

1.27 Cyrus Sumner Journal, as copied by Jane Sumner McMaster, nd.; includes transcript (photocopy from original in the possession of Mary Burnham, copy made for archives in 1976; Jane Sumner McMaster was a sister to Cyrus Sumner)
1.28 Cyrus Sumner California Gold Rush documents, 1849-1850. Includes the following.

- Cyrus Sumner to brother Walter, 1849 (2 items)
- Cyrus Sumner to Cyrus [nephew, Cyrus Sumner Nelles], 1849
- Cyrus Sumner to nephew Cyrus [Sumner Nelles], 1850
- Clipping, 1850; includes letter originally published in the Hamilton Spectator, Cyrus Sumner of Sacramento City, to his brother William Sumner, Grimsby, 1850

1.29 Various other Sumner family documents, 1825, 1834, 1841, 1846-1847, n.d.

- Correspondence, Mary Sumner to Mrs. McCartney, 1825
- Obituary of Dr. Cyrus Sumner, 1834
- Correspondence, (Dr.) Cyrus Sumner to James Graham, Charlotville [sic], Long Point, 1834
- Summons to appear before the Court of Requests, James Kerr vs. Elisha Newton, delivered by James Burtch, signed by Walter Sumner, clerk of the court, 1841
- Summons to appear before the Court of Requests, Robert Osborn vs. John Shadwick, signed by Walter Sumner, clerk of the court, 1841
- Invoice from estate of Jas. & O.T. Macklem, 1846
- Invoice from James Cummings & Co, 1847
- Clipping, n.d.; includes Nelles and Sumner family biographical information supplied by Cyrus Sumner Nelles.
- Diary, n.d.; includes transcript (photocopy) Copy made from original in the possession of Mary S. Burnham, Grimsby, 1976
- Genealogical notes of Elizabeth Pettit and Benjamin Bell, n.d.
- Genealogical notes of Cyrus and Mary Sumner, n.d.; includes birth and some death dates of children
- Mary Bell Sumner silhouette, n.d.; includes photographic copy of original.

Sub-Series B: Manson family documents, 1916, 1921, 1923, 1927

1.30 Various documents, including a financial statement for the Grimsby Hospital Supplies Club, H.S. (Helen Sumner) Manson, Treasurer, W. C. B. (William Charles Balfour) Manson share certificates in the Grimsby Packing Company Limited, and
Niagara Peninsula Growers, Limited, 1916, 1921, 1923, 1927

Sub-Series C: Millard family records, 1814, 1833, 1841, 1845-1875, n.d.

1.31 Millard family records, 1814, 1833, 1841, 1851, 1862, 1866, n.d.; includes legal writ to Thomas Millard, military commission for Thomas Millard as Captain, North Somerset Regiment of Yeomanry Calvary serving under Col. Thomas Strangways Horner Esq., Buffalo City cemetery receipt and agreement, genealogical notes of the Thomas Wells Millard family, insurance policy, apprentice indenture for William Stallard Millard.


Series VIII. Unattributed items, 1799, 1815, 1830, 1834-1837, 1844, 1883-1884, 1850, 1922, n.d.

1.33 Various documents and records without any attributable notation to the Nelles family or any of the allied families, 1799, 1815, 1830, 1834-1837, 1844, 1850, 1883-1884, 1922, n.d.

- Survey of land for Nathaniel Pettit and David Cargill, 1799 (on reverse of page: This may certify that Thomas Church lately from Ireland arrived here Grimsby forty mile creek on the 20th Instant, with a wife five sons and…… (rest of page has been cut off)
- Accounting of work done by Sumner & Nismasder?, 1805; reverse includes names Nelles, Clement, Anderson, Merritt
- Account, 1815; includes names Robert Nelles and Mr. Camp
- List of work performed, 1830
- Account book, 1834-1837; includes Benjamin Nelles, George Lewis, Samuel Edmonds, Jacob Clause
- Chart containing names and includes the months of July and August, 1844
- Indenture, Bargain and sale – John Carpenter Pettit and his wife Elsea Pettit to Hannah Smith, wife of Isaac Brock Smith, 1850
- Abstract of 12 acres, part of lot no. 4 in the 1st and 2nd concession in the township of North Grimsby, 1883; also includes affidavit of M. O'Reilly
- Advertising item – Tableaux Vivants, in aid of the organ fun St. Mark's Church, at Music Hall, Niagara, 1884; includes program items
- Bank of Hamilton cheque, 1922
- Handwritten speech to Prince of Wales?, n.d.; includes draft of speech written to present to the Prince of Wales during his visit to Niagara in 1860
- Correspondence, re: survey of lands on the Grand River, n.d.
- Small half page of figures, n.d.
- John Vandoran account, n.d.
- An effectual cure for the Cholera, n.d.
- Promissory note Mr. Dickerson to John Dochstader?, n.d.
- Partial correspondence, n.d.
- List of names with number of days worked?, n.d.; includes Julian Goodrow, John Nelles, John Vensickel, Isaac Vosbourk, Peter Countryman, etc. On reverse are notes Grans, Wm., Jacob.

**Added Entries:**

600  Nelles Family

**Subject Access:**

650  Nelles, Robert
650  Nelles, William
650  Nelles, Abraham
650  Nelles, Cyrus Sumner
650  Sumner, Cyrus (Dr.)
650  Sumner, Cyrus
650  Millard Family
650  Millard, William Stallard
650  Millard, Thomas Wells
650  Merritt, William Hamilton

**Related Materials:**
Nellis-Nelles – Immigrants from the Palatinate, 1710, Vol. 1 and vol. 2 – compiled by the Nellis and Nelles Family Associations.

**Material Held at other Repositories:**

- William Nelles papers – Toronto Public Library
- Hendrick Nelles papers – Archives of Ontario
- Robert Nelles papers – Library and Archives Canada
- Nelles Family material – Grimsby Museum and Archives