The Welland Canals Foundation Fonds

1839-1990, n.d. (non-inclusive)

RG 75-11

Brock University Archives

Creator: Welland Canals Foundation

Extent: 1.5 m (5 boxes) textual material
        1 folio (newspapers)
        1 cassette tape
        22 b&w. photographs
        13 col. photographs
        4 b&w negatives
        5 col. postcards
        1 pin
        2 coins
        1 slogan button

Abstract: This archive contains materials relating to the Welland Canals Foundation, Honourable William Hamilton Merritt and the St. Catharines Historical Society and Museum. The bulk of the materials are correspondence, minutes and media releases. The materials have been kept in original order, except where noted. The title reflects the organization and designation used by the donor.

Materials: Typed and handwritten correspondence, reports, media releases, clippings, photographs.

Repository: Brock University Archives

Processed by: Jen Goul and Anne Adams

Last updated: October 2017

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Preferred Citation:
The Father of Canadian Transportation” is a term commonly associated with William Hamilton Merritt. Although he is most known for being one of the driving forces behind the building of the first Welland Canal, he was many things throughout his life; a soldier, merchant, promoter, entrepreneur and politician, to name a few. Born on July 3, 1793 at Bedford, Westchester County, N.Y. to Thomas Merritt and Mary Hamilton, Merritt’s family relocated to Canada shortly after in 1796. The move came after Merritt’s father petitioned John Graves Simcoe for land in Upper Canada after serving under him in the Queen’s Rangers during the American Revolution. The family quickly settled into their life at Twelve Mile Creek in St. Catharines. Merritt’s father became sheriff of Lincoln County in 1803 while Merritt began his education in mathematics and surveying. After some brief travel and further education Merritt returned to Lincoln County in 1809 to help farm his father’s land and open a general store.

While a farmer and merchant, Merritt turned his attention to military endeavours. A short time after being commissioned as a Lieutenant in the Lincoln militia, the War of 1812 broke out. Fulfilling his duty, Merritt fought in the Battle of Queenston Heights in October of 1812, and numerous small battles until the Battle of Lundy’s Lane in July 1814. It was here that Merritt was captured and held in Cheshire, Massachusetts until the war ended. Arriving back in the St. Catharines area upon his release, Merritt returned to being a merchant, as well as becoming a surveyor and mill owner.

Some historians hypothesize that the need to draw water to his mill was how the idea of the Welland Canals was born. Beginning with a plan to connect the Welland River with the Twelve mile creek quickly developed into a connection between the Lakes Erie and Ontario. Its main purpose was to improve the St. Lawrence transportation system and provide a convenient way to transport goods without having to go through the Niagara Falls portage. The plan was set in motion in 1818, but most of the people living in Queenston and Niagara were not happy with it as it would drive business away from them. Along with the opposition came financial and political restraints. Despite these factors Merritt pushed on and the Welland Canal Company was chartered by the Upper Canadian Assembly on January 19, 1824. The first sod was turned on November 30, 1824 almost a year after the initial chartering. Many difficulties arose during the building of the canal including financial, physical, and geographic restrictions. Despite the difficulties two schooners passed through the canal on November 30, 1829. Throughout the next four years continual work was done on the canal as it expended and was modified to better accommodate large ships.

After his canal was underway Merritt took a more active role in the political arena, where he served in various positions throughout Upper Canada. In 1851, Merritt withdrew from the Executive Council for
numerous reasons, one of which being that public interest had diverted from the canals to railways. Merritt tried his hand at other public works outside transportation and trade. He looked into building a lunatic asylum, worked on behalf of War of 1812 veterans, aided in building Brock’s monument, established schools, aided refugee slaves from the U.S. and tried to establish a National Archives.

He was described by some as having “policy too liberal – conceptions too vast – views too comprehensive to be comprehensible by all”, but he still made a great difference in the society in which he lived. After his great contributions, Merritt died aboard a ship in the Cornwall canal on July 5, 1862.


Numerous groups continued to carry on the legacy of Merritt and the canals both in the past and present. One such group was the Welland Canals Foundation. In 1979, Louis Cahill of the Ontario Editorial Bureau established Welland Canal 150th Anniversary Inc. to commemorate the opening of the first canal. The region and local municipalities banded together to promote the Welland Canals. After the celebrations, the Welland Canals Foundation was formed as a successor to the 150th Anniversary. This was a private group who worked in conjunction with the Seaway Authority. Private initiatives included the 1977 formation of the Welland Canals Preservation Association (WCPA) which was a citizen’s group.

The Welland Canals Preservation Association was established in 1978 as a nonprofit charitable organization. The goals of this organization were: to preserve the remnants of the Old Welland Canals, to increase public awareness of the old canals and to encourage development of the potential of these lands through an historic network which would beautify the land and provide residents with recreational facilities.

The association was successful in building a 28 mile hiking and biking trail from Port Dalhousie and Port Colborne; the building of parking lots at Oakdale, Westchester and Glendale Avenues; the creation of signage and brochures to advertise the trails and local history; the building of a pavilion at Lock 7 Park in Port Colborne and a grandstand in Dain City and the development of a park at the south end of the canal in Port Colborne. The association also undertook the Lock 24 archaeological dig and related park development; renovation of the Knife works (formerly the Belmar Welding building) and providing and storing of a tourist information booth for the St. Catharines Chamber of Commerce. In 1988 the group worked alongside the Regional Municipality of Niagara and the municipalities to link canal communities. The Welland Canals Preservation Association cleared debris and partially restored Lock 1 of the Second Canal at Port Dalhousie. This was a community-service project which was done in conjunction with the Correctional Institute in Thorold. The Welland Canals Society was formed in 1986. This was an independent, private organization which was formed as an offshoot of the Welland Canals Preservation Association. It ceased operations in 1991 when financial support from the region was withdrawn.

Scope and Content:

The fonds contains materials relating to the Welland Canals Foundation, the Honourable William Hamilton Merritt and the St. Catharines Historical Society and Museum from 1971 to 1990. The materials included are minutes, annual reports, media releases and correspondence and some photographs. The bulk of the materials are from the Welland Canals Foundation. Materials have been arranged according to their original folder titles. Any folders marked “Welland Canal” refer to the “Welland Canals Foundation”. Media releases, meeting minutes and clippings were removed from the general correspondence of the Welland Canals Foundation and placed in separate folders, for easier access and research. The minutes for the St. Catharines Historical Society were retained within the original order as to not mix them with the Welland Canals Foundation minutes. Large newspaper clippings are in folio storage, cabinet, their numbers correspond to the numbers listed in the finding aid.

Organization: The records were arranged into three series:

Series I, Administrative, 1972-1990

Sub-Series A. Minutes of the Welland Canals Foundation, 1973-1989 (non-inclusive)

Sub-Series B. Minutes and Correspondence of the St. Catharines Historical Museum, 1973-1985

Sub-Series C. “Mr. Merritt” (David MacKenzie), 1978-1979

Sub-Series D. Correspondence, 1972-1990

Series II, Media, 1839-1990, n.d. (non-inclusive)


Sub-Series B. Clippings, 1971-1989


Series F. Historical Items, 1839-1990 (non-inclusive)

Inventory:

Series I. Administrative including minutes, correspondence and speeches, 1972-1990

Sub-Series A. Minutes of the Welland Canals Foundation to discuss the preservation and recreational development of the old Welland Canal System. Included are: Minutes from the 150th Anniversary of the First Welland Canal Committee; the Communications Committee; the Planning, Development and Co-ordination Committee; Directors’ Meetings; the Fund Raising Committee, the Management Committee and the Ad Hoc Welland Canal Group. The Niagara Editorial Bureau Limited Directors’ Meetings and Executive Officers’ Meetings are included as well as some correspondence and some clippings, 1973-1989 (non-inclusive)

1.1 Minutes and notes used by Paul D. Normandeau, President of the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority for a civic ceremony to honour William Hamilton Merritt are included as are plans for the 150th Anniversary events, 1973-1974, 1977-1978

1.2 Minutes, 1979

1.3 Background notes for Lou Cahill are included as well as a position paper regarding the proposed Welland Canal Central Committee, 1980

1.4 Minutes and a review of fund-raising sources and included. Canalscape Features of the Welland Canals by John N. Jackson is also included within this file as well as a list of officers and directors, 1981

1.5 A Constitution meeting was held as well as a Founding Member of the Canadian Canal Society meeting, 1982

1.6 An Ad Hoc Chamber of Commerce Tourist Representatives (Port Colborne, Welland, Thorold, St. Catharines and Niagara Region Tourist Council held a meeting, 1983

1.7 Minutes, 1984

1.8 Included is a share purchase agreement between Grimshaw and Cahill and 628764 Ontario Limited. Also included is a questionnaire about why the canals should be developed, 1985

1.9 Minutes, 1986

1.10 Minutes including information from the Open Air Marine Engineering and Technological Museum Steering Committee, 1987-1989

1.11 Canadian Canal Society by-laws and the Canadian Canal Society constitution, 1982-1983

Sub-Series B. St. Catharines Historical Museum minutes and correspondence, 1973-1985

1.12 Minutes and correspondence including the Constitution of the St. Catharines Historical Museum, 1973-1974
1.13 Inaugural address by the Chairman of the Museum Board and inaugural meeting. Also included is a submission to the Provincial Parks Council, 1975-1976

1.14 Minutes and correspondence, 1977-1978

1.15 Minutes, correspondence and clippings. Some involve the unveiling ceremony of a plaque honouring Louis Shickluna. Information about Shickluna is included. The by-law to establish the St. Catharines Museum Board is also in this file. Merritton Town Hall celebrated its 100th anniversary. Merritt Day was also celebrated and a list of William Hamilton Merritt’s important years is included, 1979

1.16-1.17 Minutes and correspondence, 1980

1.18 Handbook of the Board of Management of the St. Catharines Historical Museum, 1980

1.19 Minutes, correspondence and the By-Laws and Policy Manual. Included is a report on the Summer Canada ’81 Project. There was also a program commemorating the opening of the Military Gallery at the St. Catharines Historical Museum, 1981

1.20-1.22 Minutes and correspondence including discussion of allocation of space in the Old Court House for the St. Catharines Historical Museum, a by-laws and policy manual and an address by Mr. MacDonald of MacDonald, Zuberek and Kamada Architects, 1982

1.23 Minutes, correspondence and news releases on the Days of Steam Ships, Antique Dolls, and Our Loyalist Heritage, 1983

1.24 Minutes, correspondence and clippings. Fred S. Pattison’s Aviation Collection was donated to the St. Catharines Historical Museum, 1984

1.25 The Wintario Project was the cataloguing of the Fred Pattison Aviation Collection. A ceremony was held to honour local Black Settler and Soldier, Richard Pierpoint, 1985

Sub-Series C. “Mr. Merritt” – David MacKenzie, a professional actor and playwright portrayed William Hamilton Merritt. He was a travelling ambassador who was outfitted in the authentic style of the 1820s. He spoke about the problem of raising venture capital from Canadians, government interference and labour disputes regarding the Welland Canal which was celebrating its 150th anniversary. “Mr. Merritt” was in great demand as he made people aware of the significance of this anniversary, 1978-1979

1.26-1.28 Correspondence regarding the speaking engagements of “Mr. Merritt”, 1978-1979

Sub-Series D. Correspondence which includes some minutes and clippings from the First Welland Canal Committee, the Welland Canals Foundation, the Welland Canals Preservation Association and the Ontario Editorial Bureau, 1972-1990
2.1 Contains programs for the official opening of the Welland Canal Display and the Welland Canal. There is a speech by Transport Minister, Jean Marchand to the Dominion Marine Association. There is also an address by The Honourable John Munro, Minister of Labour at the official opening of the Welland by-pass. Much of the correspondence deals with the commemorative postage stamp to honour William Hamilton Merritt, 4 b&w photos, 1972-1973

2.2 Correspondence deals with the William Hamilton Merritt stamp, the William Hamilton Merritt trophy (with diagram) and the Henley Regatta, Jan. – Aug. 1974

2.3 Included are notes for an address by The Honourable John Munro, Minister of Labour to the General Council of the Canadian Daily Newspaper Publishers Association. Correspondence addresses the William Hamilton Merritt stamp and the play Merritt. Other items included are: The Spirit of ’67 Carries On! By John Fisher and speech notes for Dr. S. Victor Railton at the Commemoration of the Honourable William Hamilton Merritt. A speech by Dr. J.C. McIsaac, M.P. of the Saskatchewan Riding is also included, Sept. – Dec. 1974

2.4 Louis Cahill submitted a report on William Hamilton Merritt. A submission to the Provincial Parks Council regarding the recreational potential of the Welland Canal System is included. Most of the correspondence dealt with William Hamilton Merritt and the Keefer Family, 1975

2.5 Included is the text of a talk by John N. Jackson on the importance of the Welland Canal to St. Catharines, 1976

2.6 Correspondence including notes for Lou Cahill for “Fellows of Ellsworth’s” and notes for remarks by Hon. Warren Allmand to announce the Lachine Canal Action 77. Notes on William Hamilton Merritt are also included regarding the erection of the statue of Merritt, 1977

2.7-2.8 The beginning of planning for the 150th anniversary of the first Welland Canal and the 20th anniversary of the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway including reference notes for Paul Normandeau, President of the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority. A statement by Mr. Ralph S. Misener regarding the organization, structure and aims of the Welland Canal 150th Anniversary Committee is also included, 1978

2.9 Correspondence regarding planning and fundraising for the 150th anniversary as well as some minutes, Jan. 1979

2.10 Correspondence including a list of contractors that worked on the canal in the late 70s, a list of members of the Lake Carriers’ Association, information about the play, Don’t Tell ‘Em You’re Irish, which was written by David MacKenzie (“Mr. Merritt”), a proposed budget for the First Welland Canal Committee, information about a commemorative postage stamp – The First Welland Canal, 1 b&w photo, Feb. 1979

2.11 Correspondence regarding the 150th anniversary planning and fundraising, along with some minutes from the First Welland Canal Committee, Mar. 1979
2.12 Includes facsimiles of ‘Lantic Sugar packages which featured the Welland Canal, Apr. 1979

2.13 Correspondence regarding the anniversary and the fact that Mayor Drapeau of Montreal has reservations about attending the celebration because the mayor should not participate in programs in which actors are involved. Correspondence also concerns fundraising, May 1979

2.14 Correspondence concerning events sponsored by the Pelham Historical Society and events on the recreational waterway. The Welland Chamber of Commerce had some medallions minted to commemorate the 150th anniversary. Excerpts from The Welland Canal Company, A Study in Canadian Enterprise by Hugh G. J. Aitken are also in this file, June 1979

2.15 Includes information about events taking place in Winnipeg in honour of the first ship passing through the Welland Canal as well as correspondence, minutes and a poster for Don’t Tell ‘Em You’re Irish, July 1979

2.16 150th anniversary list of events is included. Don’t Tell ‘Em You’re Irish was presented numerous times in the week of August 20th to the 26 and bus tours of the historic and newer canals were given. Tours were given which included the site of Merritt’s first grist mill, Dick’s Creek and Shickluna’s ship yard. There was a re-enactment of the turning of the first sod by George Keefer and William Hamilton Merritt. There was also a re-enactment of the arrival of the “Annie & Jane” as well as other festivities, Aug. 1979

2.17 Anniversary events continued into September. This file also includes correspondence regarding canal expansion. Canada’s Role in Canal Development: An Historical Perspective by Dr. Pierre Camu is also included, Sept. 1979

2.18 The anniversary events continued until the end of the year. A poem entitled Canals by Ennio A. Paola was submitted to the committee. A donations report concerning companies deserving special recognition is included. A report from the Special Events Committee is also a part of this file, Oct. 1979

2.19 Correspondence regarding the new shop centre at Murphy’s in Port Dalhousie. A tract of parkland commonly known as “the Island” was officially named Merritt Island. Also included are notes for Robert S.K. Welch on his talk about the Welland Canal Anniversary, Nov. – Dec. 1979

2.20 Correspondence regarding the success of the 150th anniversary. A book by John Bassett and A.R. (Pete) Petrie, entitled William Hamilton Merritt was sent out to various institutions, clubs and schools, Jan. – Feb. 1980

2.21 Actor, David MacKenzie who played the role of William Hamilton Merritt was presented with a painting rendered by Jim McConnell by the 150 Anniversary of the Welland Canal Committee. Included is a Welland Canals Preservation Society folder entitled An Opportunity to Preserve our Heritage: an Investment in our Future. The Friendly Border text by John Fisher (Mr. Canada) is
also included as well as a position paper regarding the proposed Welland Canal Central Committee. Minutes are also within this file, 1 b&w photo, March – July, 1980

2.22 Correspondence regarding proposals for improvements to the old Welland Canals. A copy of the Welland Canal 150th Anniversary Communications Report was sent out to various institutions. File also contains some minutes, Aug. – Dec. 1980

2.23 A book was being prepared by the Welland Canals Foundation in order to have material prepared for the 1981 tourist season. The title was The Welland Canals Guide. The City of Thorold submitted a request to have the Flight Locks designated as a National Heritage Park. Included is an outline of the Welland Canals Heritage Project, Jan. – Feb 1981

2.24 R. Roy Timms expressed his desire to resign as a Director of the Welland Canal’s Foundation, March – April 1981

2.25 There was an unveiling of a historic plaque at Lock 1, Second Welland Canal in Port Dalhousie. Mr. Frank Zimmer was elected to the Board of the Welland Canals Foundation. A report on Canada Community Development Projects is enclosed, May 1981

3.1 This file contains correspondence regarding the first Canal Days celebration and the “Group of 19” was formed. The group is so named, because 19 different organizations are part of the committee. The focus of the group was the Welland Canals. Welland Canal 150th Anniversary Inc. changed its name to the Welland Canals Foundation, June – July 1981

3.2 Canalscape Features of the Welland Canals by John N. Jackson is included in this file. Much of the correspondence concerns the foundation of a Canadian Canal Society, Aug. – Sept 1981

3.3 Members of the Provincial Great Lakes/Seaway Task Force are listed. The officers and directors of the Welland Canals Foundation are also listed. Correspondence is once again focused on the formation of a Canadian Canal Society, October 1981

3.4 Included is a proposed strategy for developing the St. Catharines tourist industry, Nov. – Dec. 1981

3.5 This file includes Facts and Figures Relating Canals to Economy and information about the 1982 fundraising campaign. Brock University introduced a general interest course on the Welland Canals. A request was submitted to the Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation for funding. Graphics for the feeder canal are included. An application for incorporation of a corporation without share capital for Welland Canal 150th Anniversary Inc. is also included, 3 b&w negatives, Jan. – Feb. 1982

3.6 Correspondence regarding displays erected by the Department of Public Work to identify the canal corridor and the progression of the Lincoln Street Bridge Project. A paper entitled Welland Canals: Past and Present is included. Other items which are included are: a list of initial founding patrons; progress and support update on the linear park network and bicycle trail and a fact
sheet about old lock one. A report regarding the Welland Canals: Developing the Opportunities is also available within this file, 1 b&w photo, Mar. – Apr. 1982

3.7 The Welland Canals Preservation Association: An Opportunity to Preserve our Heritage, an Investment in our Future is included. The Welland Canal’s Preservation Association President’s speech for the official opening of Revitalized Old Lock 1 is also within this file. An Old Lock One fact sheet is included. Ten new postcards featuring the Welland Canal were issued. Also in this file is a list of founding patrons and a list of directors, May – July, 1982

3.8 Contains a book review on The Welland Canals: A Comprehensive Guide by Dr. John Jackson and Fred Addis. Some information regarding the Lock 3 complex is included, Sept. – Oct, 1982

3.9 Ceremonies to celebrate the first canal passage took place. An attempt was made to move the Royal Henley Regatta from its traditional location to Montreal, Nov. – Dec. 1982

3.10 Contains background information on the Welland Canals Foundation which is the successor to the Welland Canal 150th Anniversary group. A resolution was passed that the Canadian Henley Regatta should remain on the Martindale Pond site. Information on guided tours of the Welland Canals is included, Jan. – Feb. 1983

3.11 Brian Lambie submitted his resignation as Director of the Welland Canals Foundation, Mar. – May 1983


3.14 John VanKooten handed in his resignation as Director of the Welland Canals Foundation. Information on William Hamilton Merritt is included. There is information on the tall ships in anticipation of a visit by a fleet of tall ships. Also included is a report by the Interministerial Task Force on the Welland Canals, Jan. – June, 1984

3.15 Included is information on the tall ships visit and information on the Welland Canals Preservation Association Canal Colour ‘85 program. A ceremony was held at the Lock 3 Viewing Centre as the Welland Canal marked its 155th anniversary, July – Dec. 1984

3.16 Correspondence citing the Welland Canals as a major attraction. The Welland Canals Preservation Association approached Thorold council for funding. A Lock 3 campground looking out on the Welland Canal was tentatively approved by city council, Jan. – Feb. 1985

3.17 A brief was presented to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Regional Development by The Welland Canals Preservation Association. The Association was hoping for a $1-million federal grant to turn the canals into a major tourist attraction. Correspondence focused on promotion and historic development of the canals. Alan Veale, Planning Director submitted a report on the old and new canals, March – April 1985
3.18 Included is a paper on the accomplishments of the Welland Canals Foundation. The ceremonial beginning of the construction of the Merritt Trail was held in Thorold. Skip Gillham and Alfred Sagon-King produced the publication The Changing Seaway which featured more than 30 photos. Alan Pietz, Member of Parliament made a speech entitled Day on the Island, 2 b&w photos, May – June, 1985

3.19 Included is the Welland Canal Viewing Centre, Lock 3 Redevelopment Proposals by M. Harrison and M. Spytkowsky. The history of the official opening of the Welland Ship Canal on August 6, 1932 is also included. Information on William Hamilton Merritt and the actual wording on the Merritt statue are also part of this file, Aug. – Oct. 1985

3.20 Correspondence and 2 b&w photos, Nov. – Dec. 1985

3.21 A list of officers and directors for 1986 is enclosed. Malcolm Campbell retired from his post as Vice-President of the St. Lawrence Seaway. John N. Jackson was elected as the President of the Welland Canals Foundation. A series of lectures on the Welland Canals was planned. Also included is a statement to the combined meeting of the Welland Canals Preservation Association and the Welland Canals Development Group by Member of Parliament, Joe Reid, Jan. – Mar. 1986

3.22 Correspondence which deals with a coordinated approach to the development of the Welland Canal. The concept of a Welland Canals Parkway was proposed, March – May 1986

3.23 Included is a presentation to the Welland Canal Trust Meeting from the Welland Canals Preservation Association. Correspondence and minutes are dealing with the Welland Canals Parkway, June – Aug. 1986

3.24 Brock University announced the launch of a new lecture series on the significance of the Welland Canals and water transportation in North America, “The William Hamilton Merritt Lecture Series”. The Contribution of the Welland Canals to Canadian Achievement which was presented by W.A. O’Neil, President of the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority is included, Sept. – Dec. 1986

3.25 Included is a report on opportunities for economic development, tourism promotion and heritage recognition. There is some opposition to the Welland Canals Foundation not being a member of the newly-founded Welland Canals Society. Dr. John Jackson was re-elected to his second term as president of the Welland Canals Foundation. The Welland Canal Planning Study and Development Guide is included in this file. There is information on Gravelly Bay Waterfront Development at Port Colborne, Ontario. The Welland Canals Preservation Association received a $47,500 grant from the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Culture. The last remaining lock on the First Welland Canal was to be on show and excavated (Lock 24 at Merritton). Regional Council approved, in principal, a total of $75,500 as a contribution to the Welland Canals Society for canal-related work. Jan. – Mar. 1987
3.26 Correspondence from John Jackson regarding the demolition of the locktender’s house in St. Catharines. Dr. Jackson points out that St. Catharines pays too little attention to its past, Apr. - May, 1987

3.27 A Teaching Manual: William Hamilton Merritt and the Canal Legacy in St. Catharines and Thorold prepared by the Welland Canals Foundation for the Lincoln County Board of Education - John N. Jackson, President of the Welland Canals Foundation and Professor of Applied Geography at Brock University, May 1987

3.28 A speech by R. Peter Misener is included. The title is The People and Economics of the Welland Canals, Yesterday and Today, June – Sept. 1987

3.29 Includes a presentation to the Lincoln County Board of Education by John N. Jackson and a presentation to the Port Colborne City Council by John N. Jackson as well as a Welland Canals Corridor Development Guide Progress Report and a Welland Canal Cruise Vessel proposal, Oct. – Dec. 1987

3.30 Included is information on the Outdoor Marine Museum: Port Colborne. A Welland Canals Corridor Development Guide by John N. Jackson is also included, Jan. – Feb. 1988

3.31 Includes a brochure statement for the Welland Canals Foundation. There is also a Progress Report on the Welland Canals Corridor Development Guide, Mar. – June 1988

3.32 Correspondence deals with the Open Air Museum, and a progress report is included. Coloured photos of David MacKenzie as William Hamilton Merritt are also within this file as is a complete list of the Excellence in the Eighties Speakers Series which was sponsored by the School of Administrative Studies at Brock University from 1984-1989, July – Sept. 1988


3.34 A reaffirmation of the Welland Canals Society is enclosed. Correspondence dealt with planning of the 160th anniversary of the St. Lawrence Seaway and the Port Colborne Open Air Marine Museum. There was also a report regarding the Welland Recreational Waterway: Review of Federal Lands and a Welland Canals Society mission statement, Jan. – May 1989

3.35 Correspondence deals with tourism and its potential in Port Colborne. The plaque unveiling ceremony at the Welland Canal Viewing Centre took place in September of 1989, June – Sept. 1989

3.36 Correspondence regarding Welland Canals Society project involvements and 1989-90 Board of Directors, Oct. – Dec. 1989
3.37 Glendon R. Stewart became the President and Chief Executive Officer of the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority. Correspondence regarding the Port Dalhousie Power Generating Station lock wall, 1990

Series II: Media,


Sub-Series B. Clippings, 1971-1989

4.2 The museum opened a canal display. There was quite a bit of publicity about the canal becoming a tourist attraction and the Post Office considered a Merritt stamp, 1971-1972

4.3 Clippings regarding William Hamilton Merritt, the Merritt stamp, re-routing the Welland Canal and a play called Merritt, 1972-1975

4.4 Clippings regarding commemorative coins to celebrate the canal’s opening, an agreement was reached to study the old canals, an historical plaque of the Mountain Locks was erected and planning for the 150th birthday of the canals was in full swing. Text of the radio broadcast by John Fisher The Big Bash/Gash which aired in 1979 is included, 1976-1979

4.5 Merritt Island had a dedication ceremony despite vandalism which had taken place there. W.A. O’Neil was appointed as president of the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority. The Welland Canals Heritage Foundation was established. A commemorative coin was designed for Merritt Island and Niagara College offered an educational excursion through the Welland Canal, 1980

4.6 A grant was sought for canal rehabilitation. A group was discussing a new feeder canal. The group of 19 was formed (19 different groups formed in the interest of the Welland Canal) and a canal guidebook was published, 1981

4.7 Canal displays were planned. They were to be set up along the canal lands. Lock One became a park. An anchor from Shickluna Shipyard was installed on a downtown street corner in St. Catharines. Ceremonies which observed the first canal passage took place. There was a bid to move the Henley Regatta out of St. Catharines, 1982

4.8 A visit from the tall ships was planned for Hamilton Harbour. Plans were in place for a downtown marina in Port Colborne, 1983-1984

4.9 Funds were sought for canal projects. There was dissatisfaction within the Welland Canal Parkway Development Board. The Hansen Family donated a ship’s anchor to the city of Port
Colborne and an old oak-timbered lock was found on Merritt Hill behind the old Riordon Paper Mill, 1985

4.10 Welland City Council was debating about the fate of federally owned land along the Welland Canal and Port Colborne unveiled a nine million dollar waterway development plan to transform Gravelly Bay into a major tourist industry. The archaeological dig at the site of the first Welland Canal yielded some artifacts were given to the St. Catharines Historical Museum, 1986-1987

4.11 Declining use of the Welland Canal cost Niagara 6,000 jobs within the last decade, 1988-1989


4.12 Highlights include the official opening of the Welland Channel relocation and the first winners of the William Hamilton Merritt trophy at the Henley Regatta. Ralph S. Misener was elected general chairman of the Welland Canal 150th Anniversary Committee. Included is an information kit on William Hamilton Merritt, 3 b&w photos, 1971-1978

4.13 David Mackenzie, an actor and playwright, portrayed William Hamilton Merritt at various 150th anniversary celebrations. Underwater explorations at Allanburg uncovered historic artifacts and information. The play Don’t Tell ‘Em You’re Irish premiered. The Welland Canal brochure was produced by the Region Niagara Tourist Council. The “Pride of Baltimore” clipper sailed into Port Dalhousie Harbour. A cycle trail was opened by Premier William Davis and the “Annie and Jane” arrived at Port Dalhousie Harbour, 1979

5.1 A 61 page book on the life and times of William Hamilton Merritt was distributed to schools, libraries, museums and government representatives. The Welland Canals Heritage Foundation was established, 1980

5.2 The official unveiling of the Shickluna anchor and plaque took place. Colin Duquemin was elected as president of the Canadian Canal Society, 1982-1985

5.3 Postage stamp information including: a list of William Hamilton Merritt descendants and information on William Hamilton Merritt. Also included are first day covers, a flyer and an address by Andre Ouellet, Postmaster General, 1972-1974


5.4 Photographs include boats, canal and the Schickluna plaque, 13 col. photos, 8 b&w photos, 1 b&w negative and 5 col. postcards, 1976, 1986, 1988, n.d.


**Series F. Historical Items, 1839-1990 (non-inclusive)**

5.9 Historical items: Welland Canal Plans and Maps 1839-82; An excerpt from *Smith’s Canadian Gazetteer* from 1846; *The St. Lawrence Route, its Past and Future* by Thomas Conlon, 1909; Welland Ship Canal: History by Alex J. Grant, Engineer-in-Charge of the Welland Ship Canal, 1926 Quotes on W.H. Merritt from the article *H.W. Merritt and the Expansion of Canadian Railways* by Donald C. Master; 1931 and *The Lock is the Key* by John Fisher, 1970


**Series G. Three Dimensional Items, 1979, 1982, n.d.**

5.10 1 lapel pin, 1 slogan button and 1 cassette tape entitled Welland Canal Anniversary CBC, 1982, n.d.

5.11 2 Welland Canal anniversary dollars, 1979

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Subject Access: 650 Commemorative postage stamps -- Canada.

650 Welland Canal (Ont.) -- History.

650 Welland Canal (Ont.) -- Anniversaries, etc.

650 Recreation -- Ontario -- Welland Canal.

650 150th Anniversary of the First Welland Canal Committee.

650 St. Catharines Historical Museum.

650 Museums -- Ontario -- St. Catharines.