

Title:	William Hamilton Merritt Welland Canal circular, July 12, 1823		
Creator:	William Hamilton Merritt		
Dates of Material:	July 12, 1823	Record Group Number:	RG 506
Summary of Contents:	<p>This circular, dated at St. Catharines, July 12, 1823, and addressed to Alexander Hamilton, Esq., from W. Hamilton Merritt, is one of the earliest printed references to the construction of the Welland Canal. That same year, Merritt had organized local meetings to gain support for his plan to build a canal connecting Lake Ontario and Lake Erie. The circular reads “the accompanying Report and Address to the Public, together with the Proceedings of the Meeting, will point out to you the object of this Circular...”. The report and address are not enclosed. Merritt asks for Hamilton’s assistance in “promoting so necessary an undertaking...I have taken the liberty of appointing you an Agent for Queenston without your previous concurrence. If you decline acting, have the goodness to hand it to some respectable person of your acquaintance who will exert himself...”</p>		
Physical Description / Condition:	1 leaflet, 23 x 19 cm.		
Other Notes:	<p>William Hamilton Merritt (1793-1862) was a soldier, merchant, and politician who was instrumental in the promotion and development of the Welland Canal. After serving with the Lincoln militia during the War of 1812, Merritt became a merchant in St. Catharines, and purchased some land on Twelve Mile Creek on which he ran a sawmill and constructed a grist mill. He initially envisioned a canal between the Welland River and Twelve Mile Creek, which evolved into a plan to link Lake Ontario and Lake Erie. This would enable goods from western Canada to be conveniently shipped to Montreal and Great Britain through the St. Lawrence, while bypassing the Niagara portage. His plan met with opposition for financial and political reasons, as well as from those along the Niagara portage whose businesses would suffer if the canal were built. Despite this opposition, the Welland Canal Company was chartered by the Upper Canadian assembly in January, 1824. Construction on the canal began later that year, and was completed in 1829.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Source: Dictionary of Canadian Biography online http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/merritt_william_hamilton_1793_1862_9E.html retrieved 2014/07/09</p>		
Location:	Brock University Archives		

Source Information:			
Described by:	Chantal Cameron	Date:	July 2014