Canadian Niagara Power Company and Norman Ball research collection

1890-2005, n.d.

RG 572

Brock University Archives

Creator: Norman Ball

Extent: 90 cm of textual records (3 boxes)
374 photographs
81 audio cassettes
6 mini audio discs

Abstract: This collection contains research material acquired by Norman Ball about the history of hydro-electric power generation at Niagara Falls. Norman Ball was commissioned by the Canadian Niagara Power Company to write a book about the Company’s history. Materials include interview audiotapes and transcripts, photographs, legal and legislative material, manuscripts, and book drafts.

Materials: Transcripts, audiotapes, photographs, book drafts, manuscripts, newsletters, and legal and legislative material.

Repository: Brock University Archives

Processed by: Chantal Cameron

Last updated: November 2016

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Administrative History/Biographical info.

The Canadian Niagara Power Company (CNP) was created in 1892, in large part due to the efforts of William Birch Rankine, a businessman who pioneered the development of hydropower on both the Canadian and American shores of the Niagara River. Numerous delays and problems postponed the construction and operation of the company's powerhouse, which was formally opened on January 2, 1905. Upon opening, the powerhouse boasted the largest generators of their kind in the world, with a capacity of 10,000 electrical horsepower each. The company was acquired by Fortis Ontario in 2002, and the powerhouse was decommissioned in 2005. In 2009, the company's water rights expired and the Canadian Niagara Powerhouse building, also known as the Rankine Generating Station, was turned over to the Niagara Parks Commission. To commemorate the Company’s 100th anniversary, Norman Ball was commissioned by Fortis Ontario to write a history of the Canadian Niagara Power Company, which was published in 2005.

Scope and content:

Fonds contains research material acquired by Norman Ball about the history of hydroelectric power generation at Niagara Falls. Norman Ball was commissioned by Fortis Ontario (owners of the Canadian Niagara Power Company) to write a book about the Company’s history. Materials include interview audiotapes and transcripts, photographs, legal and legislative material, manuscripts, and book drafts.

Organization:

The records were arranged into two series:

Series I: Research material, 1890-2005
   Sub-series A: Interviews
   Sub-series B: Printed material
   Sub-series C: Photographs
   Sub-series D: Legal and Legislative material

Inventory:

Series I: Research Material, 1890-2005

Sub-series A: Interviews – Names marked with asterisks have corresponding cassette tapes or a mini disc located in Box 1, 1898-2005

Box 1
Audiocassettes from interviews, 2003-2004, n.d. Contains 81 audio cassettes and 6 audio discs. Those interviewed are listed below. Several cassettes are labelled “Board of Directors”, “minutes”, and “CNP”. One cassette is labelled “Boyne, Power behind the wheel – transcript is included”.

2.1-2.2 Shirley Athoe, 2003. Contains a transcribed interview, interview notes, and material copied from Shirley Athoe including promotional material, programs, company histories, newsletters, and photographs.

2.3 Fred Barber, 2004. Contains handwritten notes.

2.4 Bob Barnett*, 2003. Contains a transcribed interview, interview notes, and an article by Bob Barnett entitled The frequency that wouldn’t die: North America’s Niagara River is the site of operating 25-hertz hydroelectric generators that date to the dawn of the electrical age.

2.5 Beverly and Ken Barnhart, 2005. Contains handwritten notes.

2.6 Barry Bracken*, 2005. Contains a transcribed interview, correspondence, and photographs.


2.9 Jan Carr*, 2003. Contains a transcribed interview, interview notes, and an excerpt from The History of Engineering in Niagara on hydro-electric power.


2.12 Bill Daley, 1898-1902, 2004. Contains material to show Bill Daley, including
correspondence from an engineer of the Canadian Niagara Power Company to Wm. B. Rankine, with an attached blueprint (1902); photocopied correspondence from Wm. B. Rankine to the Commissioners of the Q.V.N.F. Park (1898); and a photocopy of a photograph showing local politicians at the inauguration of two-way radio service in Canadian Niagara Power Co. trucks.


2.15 Bob Douglas, 2003*. Contains a transcribed interview and interview notes.


2.20 Frank & Sandra Flake*, 2003. Contains a transcribed interview and interview notes.

2.21 John Fogg*, 2003. Contains a transcribed interview and interview notes.

2.22 Sid Freeman*, 2004. Contains a transcribed interview and interview notes.


2.25 Mary Genco-Brant and Maria McKinnon*, 2004. Contains a transcribed interview and interview notes.


2.27 Ray Gosine, 2005. Contains notes from a telephone discussion.

2.28 Stanley Hall*, 2003. Contains a transcribed interview, interview notes, and a print of a cartoon with negatives.


2.31-2.32 Leonard Heximer material, 1934-1975, n.d. Contains material relating to Moffat’s electric stove, including correspondence and recipe books.

2.33 Leonard Heximer material, 1929-2000, n.d. Contains employee information, including social events and entertainment. Documents include a petition from Canadian Niagara Power Co. employees to management; a small book entitled *Niagara the unconquered* published by the Buffalo, Niagara and Eastern Power Corp. (1929); a commemorative booklet on the Morse & Son Chapel funeral home; an application for employment with Niagara Hudson completed by Leonard Heximer; photographs of the interior of a power plant; a photograph of items from the power plant, including lights, call bells, oiler, telegraph key, and buzzers; a program for Niagara’s Phunny Phollies and Minstrels and photographs from the performance; and issues of Niagara Hudson news (1943-1948).

2.34 Rick Heximer*, 2003. Contains a transcribed interview and interview notes.


2.41 Don Kelly*, 2004. Contains a transcribed interview and interview notes.


2.45 Harry Macdonell & Don Smith*, 2003. Contains a transcribed interview and
interview notes.


2.52 Dave Renshaw, 2004. Contains handwritten notes and a map of the sanitary sewer system in the Niagara region.


2.57 Harry Saylor material, n.d. Contains news clippings about the Rankine Station and photocopied photographs.


2.59 Hector Smith (Jr. & Sr.)*, 2003. Contains a transcribed interview and interview notes.

2.60 Wendy Spry*, 2002. Contains a transcribed interview and interview notes.


2.64 Craig Woodward*, 2004. Contains a transcribed interview and interview notes.


3.9 The Tattler, 1944. Contains 2 copies of the CNP Company’s in-house publication.


3.12 Canadian Niagara Power/Niagara Falls Power Company original material, 1899-1973, n.d. Contains a booklet by the Niagara Falls Power Company, Niagara Falls, New York, featuring black and white photographs of Niagara Falls, the Niagara River, the interior and exterior of their generating stations, hydraulic pressure tunnels, and transmission lines; a leaflet about Ontario Hydro’s new Niagara development, the Sir Adam Beck-Niagara generating station no. 2; a news clipping about the Canadian Niagara Power Company franchise bylaw (1935); the Niagara Falls Power Company rates for metered power, July 1899; A Hundred Million Workers: a story of the electrical industry in Canada by J.K. Thomas; Weir Construction at Niagara by the Canadian Niagara Power Company Limited; and an issue of Niagara Mohawk News featuring an article about the Rankine Station, owned by Canadian Mohawk Power (1973).

thoughts on the fiftieth anniversary of Nikola Tesla’s death.


3.16 Historical clippings, 1967-1976, n.d. Contains clippings about Niagara Mohawk, including some about repairs to power lines due to winter storms.


3.18 Promotional material, 1992. Contains a news release, 100th anniversary celebration program, and a commemorative booklet.

3.19 Norman Rothwell Gibson biographical material, 1907-1930. Contains correspondence containing information about Norman Gibson, Vice President and Chief Engineer of the Buffalo, Niagara and Eastern Power Corporation (1930); and a completed form for admission to the Canadian Society of Civil Engineers by Norman Gibson (1907).


**Sub-series C: Photographs, 1890-1997, n.d.**

3.22 Canadian Niagara Power illustrations, chapters 6-10, ca. 1914-1939. Contains photographs from the first World War and the 1920s, and the new service centre and the 1930s.

3.23 Illustrations from Todd Docker, “Babe” Douglas and Harry Saylor Sr., 1925-1969, n.d. Contains photographs of CNP workers, including Harry Pomeroy, Wally Kelly, Don Collins, Ross Copeland, Lance Taylor, Joe Parisi, Don Mosher, Dick Beam, Harry & Ivan Braden, and Todd Docker; the Bertie Service Centre open house; linemen at Cherry Hill Golf Course; and construction of a new substation, Station 15 on Gilmore Road.

3.24 Rankine construction, Canadian Niagara Power, 1901-1904. Contains photographs of manholes and conduits; construction of the powerhouse; intake, forebay and bridge; the shaft and tunnel; and the portal.

3.26-3.27 Brock scans, ca. 1890-1994, n.d. Contains postcards, photographs and advertisements scanned from Brock University Archives collections. Contains scans of historic mills along the escarpment in Niagara Falls, New York, ca. 1890; the electrical showroom and demonstration kitchen at Canadian Niagara Power; the Canadian Niagara Power Co. power house; the CNP building in Fort Erie; the CNP power house in winter; Niagara Falls and the Niagara River in winter; the arch bridge over the Niagara River; advertisements for Crystal Beach, Canadian Lake Shore & River Properties and the Hart & Cooley Company; postcards and photographs of Crystal Beach; a scrapbook of the CNP Christmas Parade (1974-1976); ice jam in the Niagara River; and victory loan parade floats.

3.28 Scanned photographs and illustrations, 1912-1996, n.d. Contains scanned photographs of the CNP power house; CNP workers and managers; the electrical showroom and demonstration kitchen; the electric service Canadian Niagara building in Fort Erie; and photographs of the construction and finished weir at the CNP power house.

3.29 General photographs, 1917-1994, n.d. Contains photographs of workers; the CNP building in Fort Erie; an Esso gas station; a no. 2 turbine upper distributor; staff training in Buffalo; CNP workers cleaning up after an ice storm (1977-78); a CNP scrapbook of the Christmas parade (1974-1976); and the annual bowling tournament.

3.30 CNP/Barnhart, n.d. Contains black and white photographs of the CNP building in Fort Erie, and a transformer station.

3.31 CNP/Burtniak, advertisements and passes, 1907-1915. Contains coloured prints of tickets and passes for admittance to the CNP power house.

3.32 CNP/Sid Morris, 1940-1983, n.d. Contains photographs of power line towers; the electrical shop; and a retreat for electric utility executives, including the main house and boat house.

3.33 Sid Morris photographs, n.d. Contains extra copies of photographs from Sid Morris, including photos of workers and CNP trucks.

3.34 CNP/Rouse, n.d. Contains photographs of workers erecting poles; the interior and exterior of the CNP building in Fort Erie; and a speedwagon (Reo).

3.35 CNP/Smith, 1936. Contains photographs of a boat after an ice storm and part of the Niagara River.

3.36 Extra photographs, 1904-ca. 1997, n.d. Contains copies of photographs, many with captions. Photographs include the CNP building in Fort Erie; proposed plans for the power house; linemen making repairs after a storm; an early electricity bill
from Canadian Niagara Power (1925); the demonstration kitchen; power lines (ca. 1940); an advertisement by Canadian Niagara Power at the end of World War II; the meter and test shop across from the Queen St. office; construction of the ice racks in the forebay; staff training at Niagara Mohawk; Niagara Mohawk linemen, including Sid Freeman and Walter “Babe” Douglas; the open house at the Bertie St. service centre (1974); the Friendship Festival with Ken Taylor, co-sponsored by CNP (1996); a celebration of 90 years of electricity in Fort Erie (1997); control room of the Ontario Power Company; ice jams in the Niagara River below the Falls; and advertisements by Canadian Niagara Power containing information on canning fruits and vegetables, making food go further, hot weather aids for electric appliances, and keeping your refrigerator working at top performance ((1945).

3.37
Photo lists, 1901-1918. Contains an accession list and index of photographs at Canadian Niagara Power. Dates of the photographs range from 1901-1918. Also contains an alphabetical list of subject headings and a list of lantern slides.

Sub-series D: Legal and Legislative material, 1892-1996

4.1
CNP legislative documents, 1892-1907. Contains the following:

- 55 Victoria Chapter 8 (Ontario). An Act to confirm a certain agreement made between the Commissioners of the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park and the Canadian Niagara Power Company, and to enable the said company to carry the agreement into practical effect [assented to 14th April, 1892].
- Agreement between Canadian Niagara Power Company, the Niagara Falls Park and River Railway Company and the Commissioners of the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park, 27th November 1897.
- 62 Victoria (2) Chapter 11, Section 36 [Assented to 1st April, 1899].
- Agreement between Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park Commissioners and Canadian Niagara Power Company dated 15th July, 1899.
- Agreement between Canadian Niagara Power Company, the Niagara Falls Park & River Railway Company, and the Commissioners of the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park, dated 27th July, 1900.
- Agreement between Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park Commissioners and Canadian Niagara Power Company dated 19th June, 1901, respecting certain changes in plans.
- Agreement between Queen Victoria Niagara Parks Commissioners and Canadian Niagara Power Company dated 19th June, 1901, respecting extension of time.
• 2 Edward VII. Chapter 11. An Act to approve and confirm an Agreement between the Commissioners for the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park and the Canadian Niagara Power Company [Assented to 17th March, 1902].
• Edward VII. Chapter 7. Statute Law Amendment Act. [Assented to 12th June, 1903].
• 4 Edward VII. Chapter 10. Statute Law Amendment Act. [Assented to 26th April, 1904]…the Act to approve and confirm an agreement between the Commissioners for the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park and the Canadian Niagara Power Company passed in the second year of the reign of His Majesty, Chaptered 11, is amended by adding thereto the following section…”
• The Statute Law Amendment Act, 1906. Sections 44 & 45.
• No. 41. Legislative Assembly. Toronto. Friday March 22, 1907. Routine Proceedings. Under the heading Private Bills, we find item 65 “second reading bill (no. 69) respecting Canadian Niagara Power Company, Mr. Fraser.
• No. 42. Legislative Assembly. Toronto, Monday March 25, 1907. Routine Proceedings. Item 49 in the list is “House Committee” on Bill (no. 69), respecting Canadian Niagara Power Company, Mr. Fraser.
• No. 43. Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario. Toronto, Tuesday March 26, 1907. Under a list of Bills read the third time and passed we find “Bill (no. 69) respecting Canadian Niagara Power Company”.

4.2 CNP Articles of Incorporation, Water License, Power Exchange, Water Use & Franchise Agreements, 1892-1996. Contains the following:

• Copy of Bill Pr12, An Act respecting Canadian Niagara Power Company Limited together with Restated Articles of Incorporation dated July 25, 1996.
• Water Licence Agreement between the Commissioners for the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Parks (now the Niagara Parks Commission) et al dated April 7, 1892 and Water Licence Amending Agreement dated July 15, 1899.
• Water Use Agreement made between Ontario Hydro and CNP as of April 1, 1971 and the January 1, 1988 amendment thereto.
• Franchise Agreement made between CNP and the Corporation of the Fort Erie and dated May 28, 1985 (together with a copy of OMB approval thereof).


4.5 Chapter 1, 2003. Contains an outline of chapter 1 and drafts of this chapter, covering to 1905 when the Rankine Station started generating electricity.

4.6 Old chapter 1, n.d. Contains a draft of chapter 1 with handwritten notes and revisions.

4.7 Chapter 1 inserts, n.d. Contains inserts to be added to chapter 1.

4.8 Chapter 1 revised, n.d. Contains two copies of chapter 1, one copy with handwritten notes and revisions. Also includes a draft table of contents.


4.11 Chapter 3 in process, 2003. Contains a draft of chapter 3 with some handwritten notes and revisions.


4.13 Chapters 1-5, n.d. Contains drafts of chapters 1-5, with some handwritten notes and revisions. Chapter titles include the Frightful Falls and the Monstrous Mill-Dam (chapter 1); The Birth of the Canadian Niagara Power Company (chapter 2); Building the Powerhouse (chapter 3); Getting the Power to Buffalo (chapter 4); and Extending the power to local communities (chapter 5).

4.14 Chapters 1-7, n.d. Contains drafts of chapter 1-7. Some chapter titles include The First World War and the 1920s (chapter 6) and the New Service Centre and the 1930s (chapter 7).

4.15 Chapters 7-8 and 10-16, n.d. Contains drafts of chapter 7, 8, and 10-16. Some
chapter titles include The War Years (chapter 8); Electric meters and meter readers (chapter 10); 60-cycle Conversion—the carnival and the iceberg (chapter 11); In praise of the women who got the bills out (chapter 12); The great ice storm of 1976 (chapter 13); Dangerous work (chapter 14); Linemen then and now (chapter 15); and What’s to become of us? Searching for the future of Canadian Niagara (chapter 16).

4.16 Chapter 9, Ice and Diversion, n.d. Contains a draft of chapter 9 with some handwritten notes and revisions.

4.17 Chapters 14, n.d. Contains a draft of chapter 14: Linemen then and now. Also contains unnumbered chapters of sections with the following titles: What’s to become of Us? Searching for the future of Canadian Niagara; Work safely, be careful with dynamite, wear rubber gloves and avoid hits; Electric stoves and load building in the 1920s; and 60-cycle conversion, the carnival, the iceberg and the swan.


4.18 60 cycle Conversion: the carnival, the iceberg and the swan, n.d. Contains a typewritten draft and handwritten notes.

4.19 Climbing and the making of linemen and riggers, n.d. Contains a typewritten draft and handwritten notes.

4.20 Electric meters and meter readers, n.d. Contains a typewritten draft.

4.21 Electric stoves and local building in the 1920s, n.d. Contains a typewritten draft with some handwritten revisions.


4.23 In praise of the women who got the bills out, n.d. Contains typewritten drafts with some handwritten revisions.


4.25 The Second World War, n.d. Contains a typewritten draft with some handwritten revisions.

4.26 Work and memories at the Goderich Street Service Centre, n.d. Contains a typewritten draft with some handwritten revisions.

4.27 Work safely, be careful with dynamite, wear rubber gloves and avoid hits, n.d. Contains a typewritten draft.
Related material

RG 5, Canadian Niagara Power Company fonds, Brock University Archives, Brock University.

RG 170, Canadian Niagara Power Company fonds, 1807-2001, Brock University Archives, Brock University.
