

Title:	Letter from Augustus S. Porter to Walter Bryant, June 9, 1853		
Creator:	Augustus S. Porter		
Dates of Material:	June 9, 1853	Record Group Number:	RG 717
Summary of Contents:	<p>A letter from Augustus S. Porter of Niagara Falls, New York, to Walter Bryant, an attorney in Boston, Massachusetts. The letter concerns a parcel of riverfront land in Niagara and the rights of public use or benefit. Bryant represents an unspecified company that would like to secure the land for their own use. The transcribed letter is included here.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Niagara Falls June 9, 1853</p> <p>My dear Sir,</p> <p>I am sorry to find your company regard the proposition of the trustees as inadmissible. In view of the power they possess in regard to this ten rods of River front, I <u>know</u> their <u>intention</u> was to make you a fair and...one. Perhaps you may not fully understand their views, and the extent of their power. In the concluding part of your letter you say "The company would have no objection to giving the village the right to use the wharf or street for all public privileges or Town purposes but to throw it open for every individual to use appears to me to be unjust".</p> <p>This ten rods front is open now and has been for years to <u>every individual</u>, here or elsewhere, who may wish to use it. It was granted by our Father in that sense and with that object. The Town as a Town and village as a village have no right superior to that of the [humble?] citizen, and the Trustees have no power whatever to give them any superior right, and of course they have no power to entertain the proposition embraced in the above.... What they shall reserve in exchange for the relinquishment of this ten rods to you, <u>must be for the common benefit of every body</u>. They can reserve in no other form whatever, by the very language of the grant under which they hold, for it belongs to every body.</p> <p>Now it really seems...you should have this whole river front put up to the west...of Tenth Street. As you are unwilling to take it, on the terms offered, will you state what concessions you are willing to make, in return for this ten rods of public front relinquished wholly to you? Do not fail however to bear in mind that what you concede must be for <u>universal use</u>, for it is only in that form that the Trustees have any power over the subject, and they cannot, as I conceive sell the right away for money, or any other consideration than an exchange deemed equivalent to the right now possessed.</p> <p>I have said the Trustees meant to make a fair offer, and I now say they are...by the same spirit still. They may be willing to modify, but the</p>		

	<p>difficulty with them is to determine in view of their limited powers how to modify. They will cheerfully entertain and consider now any proposition you may make and they hope you will submit one. You may certainly rely on all the aid we can afford you in bringing the matter to such a settlement as will meet your wishes.</p> <p>By way of illustrating the matter as plainly as possible and to facilitate your preparation of our offer, I give herewith a plan of the whole part, laid down correctly by scale, except...the extent of the wharf from the shore unto the river. That is imaginary and restricted too, by the size of my paper.</p> <p>I must add that for town or village purposes, only this ten rods of front has never in a single instance that I know of, been used. For such limited purposes, my impression is, it never would be.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">A.S. Porter</p>		
Physical description/condition	1 letter		
Administrative/Biographical Sketch:	<p>Augustus Seymour Porter (1798-1872) was the son of Augustus Porter and Lavinia Steele. He became a lawyer and practiced in Detroit, Michigan. In 1838 he was elected mayor of Detroit and the following year to the U.S. Senate. In 1848 he moved to his father's residence in Niagara Falls, New York, and remained there until his death in 1872.</p> <p>Augustus' father, Augustus Porter (1769-1849) purchased land near the American Falls with his brother Peter Buell Porter (1773-1844). This gave them water rights to the eastern rapids above and below Niagara Falls. They built several mills but were forced out of business when the Erie canal opened in 1825. They also worked to develop and promote tourism around the Falls, and had a plan to develop a hydraulic raceway for power and transportation which was never built.</p>		
Location:	Brock University Archives		
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