

The Historical Society of St. Catharines

P.O. Box 23104, 124 Welland Ave., St. Catharines, ON, L2R 7P6

Founded in 1927.

Our Mission and Goal is to increase the knowledge and appreciation of the history of St. Catharines and vicinity.

Our Society is affiliated with the Ontario Historical Society.

December 2007 Newsletter

Upcoming Speakers Program

All programs start at 7:30 p.m. at the St. Catharines Museum

January 24 - Ian Ellingham: "My Nicholson and MacBeth Gate"

February 28th - Prof. Carmela Patrias and Larry Savage: "The History of the Labour Movement in St. Catharines"

March 27th - Alun Hughes - topic to be announced

April 24th - John Burtiak: "Some Vanished Villages of Niagara"

May 22 - Pat Menon: "W. B. Allan, St. Catharines Architect"

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME

Membership is for the calendar year. Individual \$10.00, Family \$15.00.

The Society does not share our membership list.

Please make your cheque payable to: **The Historical Society of St. Catharines**

Please Remit to: The Historical Society of St. Catharines

P. O. Box 23104, 124 Welland Avenue

St. Catharines, Ontario, L2R 7P6

Remove and return with your cheque ... thank you for your renewal!

Membership Renewal: **Individual \$10.00** _____ **Family \$15.00** _____

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ - E-Mail: _____

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!

From your Board of Directors

Board of Directors of the Historical Society of St. Catharines

President - John Burtiak - tel. 905-227-5120
Past President - Bill Stevens - e-mail bibmstev@computan.on.ca - tel. 905-934-8966
Vice President - Paul Lewis - e-mail paul_e_lewis@ridley.on.ca - tel. 905-684-9918
Secretary - Brenda Zadoroznij - e-mail bzadoroz@becon.org - tel. 905-935-3025
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Director - Joe Muskat - tel. 905-687-3359
Director - David Sharron - e-mail david_sharron@hotmail.com - tel. 905-684-5355
Director - Elizabeth Finnie - e-mail finnies@sympatico.ca - tel. 905-684-4416

Appointment to Board of Directors

The Board is please to announce that Elizabeth Finnie has joined the Board. Welcome Elizabeth!

Two Auditors Needed

The financial books close December 31 and the Auditors are handed the books in late February to prepare an audit for the Annual Meeting in April. The Society needs two auditors, please check the space on the back of the renewal form or indicate to a Board member that you are willing to perform this function.

Nominations to the Board of Directors

At the next Annual Meeting the six Directors' positions are up for election. Please give this request some serious thought, as we need to ensure that the Society continues with a strong Board. The Board is also looking for a Social/Refreshment Chair, a position that does not need to be filled by a Board member.

Newsletter Notes

The Historical Society of St. Catharines *Newsletter* is published up to 4 times per year by the Society. The purpose of the *Newsletter* is to inform the membership of issues pertaining to the Society and items of historical interest. Comments and queries should be directed to the Society postal address. Opinions and comments expressed in the *Newsletter* are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect those of the Society. Subscription by paid membership only. Bill Stevens produced this issue.

Next Issue: March 2008 - Contributions of articles and notices are always appreciated! Deadline for submission for the next issue is February 10, 2008.

RENEW NOW! And be eligible for the prompt renewal draw. The draw will be for a gently-used copy of the book "*St. Catharines: Canada's Canal City*" authored by Society members John Jackson and Sheila Wilson. This book has been out of print for some years and highly sought after by local residents and historians who do not have a copy. Draw will take place at the March 2008 Meeting.

Speaker or Activity Suggestions:

Would you like to be nominated to the Board of Directors? Yes _____; as an Auditor? Yes _____

Society Meeting Reports:

September 27th Program Report

What can we say? The meeting with Ben Koning, who drove here all the way from California to tell us about the documentary film he is undertaking and our President John Burtiniak's presentation, were foiled by the closure of the Museum due to a broken watermain. The Society received the news mid-afternoon and checked on the availability of alternate locations to no avail and then attempted to contact via e-mail and telephone as many members as possible to advise of the cancellation. Bill Stevens took Ben to Victoria Lawn Cemetery to see the gravesites of Bessey family members, a tour of downtown and the sites where Bessey had his businesses and lived, to the flight locks, stopped at the Museum to speak to John Burtiniak and a few other members, and then took him to dinner. John's presentation has been rescheduled for April 2008 and the 45-minute Bessey documentary will be shown upon completion scheduled for springtime.

October 25th Program Report

David Mackenzie brought to 'life' a true Canadian hero in a captivating presentation. Through a series of images of Major General Isaac Brock and the research that David has undertaken, we learned so much more about this man who gave his life for our country. I am sure that this presentation will be in demand, so if you were not able to attend our meeting be sure to attend a presentation in the future.

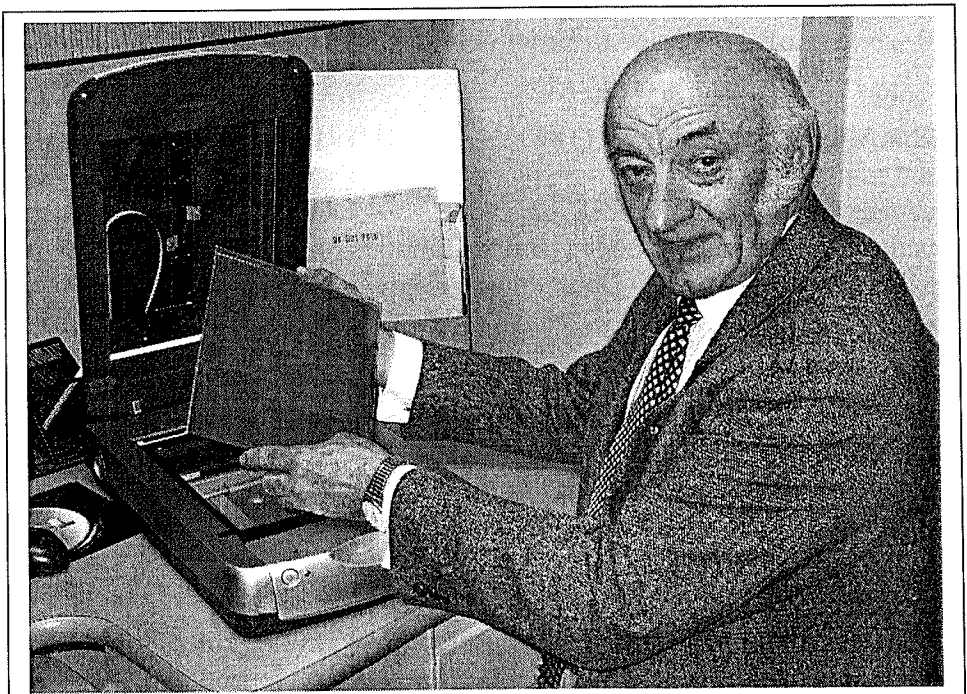
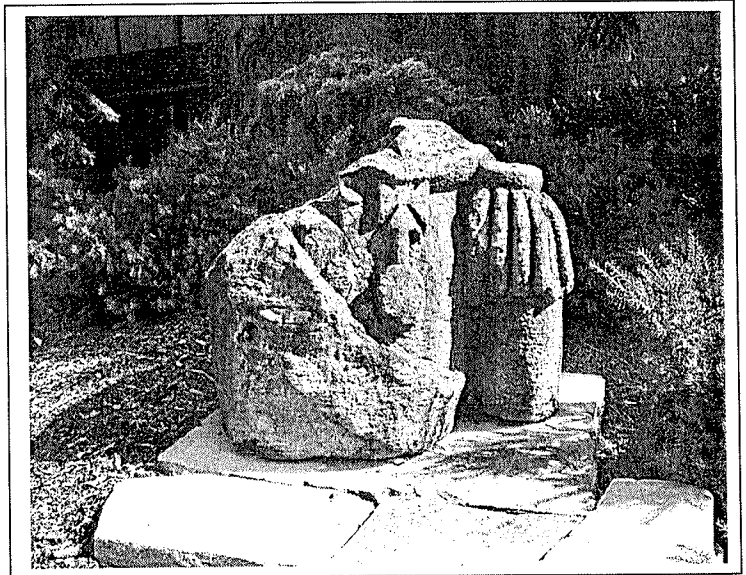
John Burtiniak introduced David and Wes Turner thanked him. Fifty-one people attended the evening presentation at the museum on a lovely fall night that featured a large full moon. Arden Phair displayed a print of a photo that was created utilizing the new scanner that the Society purchased for the Museum and it was simply brilliant. Bill Stevens acted as refreshment host.

The photo top right is the piece of Brock's Monument that broke off due to a lightning strike in 1929. The monument was restored and the piece of the right shoulder eventually was placed on the grounds of Brock University. It is located near the E and F entrance to the Mackenzie Chown Complex.

Bill Stevens Photo

The photo bottom right is our President John Burtiniak using the new scanner the Society donated to the Museum.

Arden Phair Photo



The Society gratefully acknowledges the support of the Ontario Ministry of Culture.

Lincoln County Court Judges 1850-1969

Prior to 1850 the local provincial law courts were under the jurisdiction of the individual districts. The Court House and Gaol of the Niagara District was located at the Town of Niagara. (By 1850 they were separate buildings.) Effective 31 December 1849, districts were abolished and replaced with the English system of counties.

1. 1850 - 1860+

CAMPBELL, Edward Clarke (1806 - 1860+)

Called to the Bar: 1830

Practiced: Town of Niagara (1830-1841)

Previously District Court Judge (Niagara): 1841-31/12/1849

Appointed County Court Judge (United Counties of Lincoln, Welland and Haldimand) effective: 01/01/1850

Died while in office and is buried in St. Mark's Cemetery, Niagara

2. 1860 - 1877

LAWDER, John Marjoribanks (1824/25 – 1893)

Called to the Bar: 1845

Practiced: Town of Niagara (1845 – 1856)

Crown Attorney and Clerk of the Peace (Lincoln County): 1856 – 1860

Appointed Lincoln County Court Judge: 1860 (retired November 1877)

Buried in St. Andrew's Cemetery, Niagara

In 1862, the County Town was removed to the Town of St. Catharines. The Court and County offices took over its Town Hall and an addition was built to accommodate them. A separate County Jail was erected on Niagara Street.

3. 1877 – 1900+

SENKLER, Edmund John, Q.C. (1835 - 1900+)

Called to the Bar: 1860

Practiced: Brockville (1860 – 1863)

Crown Attorney (1863) and Clerk of the Peace (1876) (United Counties of Leeds and Grenville) to 1877
Created QC: 1876

Appointed Lincoln County Court Judge: 1877

Died while in office, buried in Brockville

4. 1900 – 1916+

CARMAN, Robert Baldwin (1843/24 – 24/01/1916+)

Called to the Bar: 1873

Practiced: Cornwall (1873 – 1879)

Served as Deputy/junior Judge (United Counties of Stormont and Glengarry): 1879 – 1900

Appointed Lincoln County Court Judge: February/March 1900

Died while in office, buried in Victoria Lawn Cemetery, St. Catharines

5. 1916 – 1936

CAMPBELL, Col. John Samuel, KC (1860 – 1950)

Called to the Bar: 1887

Practiced: St. Catharines (1887 – 1915)

Colonel commanding 19th "Lincoln" Regiment 1906 – 1910

Mayor of City of St. Catharines: 1908 and 1909

Created KC: 1910

Colonel commanding Welland Canal Force (WWI): 09 February 1915 – January 1916

Appointed Lincoln County Court Judge: Early 1916 (retired 1936)

President, Lincoln County Law Association: 1929 – 1933

Buried in Victoria Lawn Cemetery, St. Catharines

6. 1936 – 1949

STANBURY, James George Stuart, KC (1873 - 1951)

Called to the Bar: 1899

Practiced: Exeter and London (1899 – 1936)

Created KC: 1935

Appointed Lincoln County Court Judge: September/October 1936 (retired 1949)

Buried in Victoria Lawn Cemetery, St. Catharines

7. 1949 – 1969

DARBY, Thomas Jefferson (1896 – 1976)

Called to the Bar: 1925

Practiced: Welland (1925 – 1949)

Appointed Lincoln County Court Judge: 09/02/1949 (retired as Judge from the Judicial District of Niagara North in 1971)

Buried in Victoria Lawn Cemetery, St. Catharines

Effective 01/01/1970 counties were abolished by the Province of Ontario and replaced by Regional municipalities. The Lincoln County Court became part of the Judicial District of Niagara North, thus ending 120 years of separate existence under its former name.

Researched and Compiled by Alex Ormston

Headline: A Gravestone Found In Cellar In Canal Zone

‘It Was Unearthed by One of the Canal Workers in an Old House Tuesday’

An extraordinary discovery was made Tuesday by one of the Hill-Leonard Engineering Co. laborers on the Welland Ship Canal, near Homer. The man was engaged in removing debris from the cellar of an old house which stands on the canal right of way, when he uncovered a flat stone slab. On investigation this was a tombstone with this inscription, the Christian names having been erased with a cold chisel: “In memory of _____ wife of John Lancaster, died 19th February 1873, aged 25 years, 2 months.” It is hardly supposed that this can be the original location of the grave and no further search has been made.

Source: *St. Catharines Standard*, 15 July 1914, page 1.

Headline: The First Fatal Accident On The Canal Construction

‘George Robertson Was Run Over by a Train He Was Brakeman On’

‘Taken to The Government Hospital at Homer, Where He Died Thursday Evening’

George Robertson, an Englishman recently out, 21 years of age met with a fatal accident Thursday morning between 8 and 9 o’clock, on section 3 of the new canal construction at Thorold. Robertson was brakeman on a line of dump cars, and went to jump onto the moving engine when his foot caught in a frog and he was thrown down the engine passing over both legs. He was taken at once to the Government Hospital at Homer where one leg was amputated at the thigh. He died Thursday afternoon at 5 o’clock. The funeral will be held Saturday at 2:30 from the company’s boarding house on the townline. Robertson had only been in this country about eight months and has one cousin Mr. Holden in Hamilton. It has not been decided yet as to when an inquest will be held, but an inquest is necessary, the victim having been employed on a public work, Coroner Armour stated this afternoon.

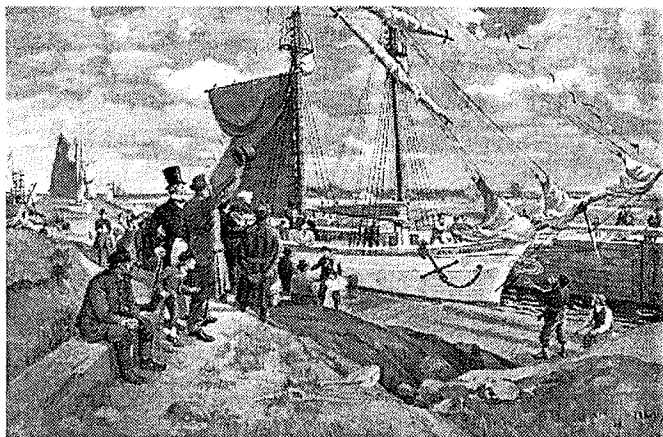
Source: *St. Catharines Standard*, July 24, 1914, page 1.

Welland Canal Routes Now On-Line

All of the Welland Canal Routes can now be visually followed through the Niagara Region by accessing the web site www.YourNiagara.ca and entering the “Niagara Navigator: Interactive Maps” area of the site. Once on the map site, on the right side of the screen under “Available Maps – Public” – click on “Niagara Navigator” (make sure that your pop-up blocker is off). Once you have accessed the air photo page, you can add layers to your map. Within the “Historical” section are layers for Cemeteries and the Welland Canal Routes and Welland Canal Points of Interest (POI) – once you have selected the layers you wish to see, click on the refresh tab. By using the tool bar icons, you can enlarge and move the map area.

THE OPENING OF THE FIRST WELLAND CANAL

When the First Welland Canal formally opened in November 1829 there were no photographers or artists present to record the scene. But a twentieth-century artist, John David Kelly, imagined what it was like, and his popular painting is reproduced here. It shows the *Ann and Jane*, one of two lake schooners that made the inaugural passage along the canal, in Lock 1 at Port Dalhousie, with the other schooner, the *R. H. Boughton*, about to enter the canal from Lake Ontario. The passage of these ships is a well known fact, but the story of their journey has not been told until now.



When work commenced on the First Welland Canal after the sod-turning on November 30, 1824 no one imagined that it would take five years to complete. But the venture was beset by problems, starting in 1825 with the abandonment of the tunnel that was to link the Welland River with Beavercreek, and culminating in 1828 with the collapse of the banks of the Deep Cut. These all caused delay, and by the middle of 1829 the Welland Canal Company was desperate to bring the project to a conclusion. Besides, additional financial support was urgently needed, and the best way to secure this was to pass a ship through a completed canal.

The slips in the Deep Cut meant that water could not be taken directly from the Welland River as planned; it had to be brought through a feeder canal from the Grand River. Though excavation of the feeder did not have to start from scratch — a secondary canal was already being built through Wainfleet Township — it was still a big undertaking. And problems continued: there were labour disputes, workers came down with ague (malarial fever) — William Hamilton Merritt was himself a victim — and the need for haste meant that the work was not always of the best quality. Thus when water was let into the feeder on October 7 it had to be turned off

immediately because the Grand River dam settled, and repairs were not completed until November 6.

By November 12, however, the Company was able to announce that the “opening [of] the Welland canal for navigation, and the passage of the first vessel thro’ all the locks” would take place on the 24th. The Lieutenant-Governor Sir John Colborne was invited, the citizens of St. Catharines composed a special address of welcome, the band of the 71st Regiment was engaged to play, and preparations were made for a “grand celebration ... in a style worthy of this most important and beneficial epoch in the history of Canada.” But again fate intervened. Severe frosts threatened to freeze up the canal and a storm prevented company directors from travelling from York, so it was reluctantly decided to postpone the public opening until spring.

Then on the 26th the storm abated, and Merritt resolved to go ahead anyway, at least with an inaugural passage through the canal. The American schooner *R. H. Boughton* had arrived from Youngstown, and the Canadian schooner *Ann and Jane* was expected from York. She finally made it at mid-afternoon the following day, and though there was no “grand celebration” the epic journey began.

The Master of the *Ann and Jane* was Joseph Voller, and Isaac T. Pheat was at the helm of the *R. H. Boughton*. In addition to their crews, the boats carried a number of passengers. Some were on board for the entire journey, while others joined en route. Company director George Keefer of Thorold came on board at Chippawa, while his son Jacob and Merritt himself were there from the start. Other passengers included two members of the Upper Canada Legislature, Robert Randal and John J. Lefferty, and two of the earliest settlers of St. Catharines, John Hainer and Jacob Dittrick. However, Company President John Henry Dunn was absent, possibly detained by bad weather at York.

The identity of another important passenger is unknown. This is the person who wrote an account of the voyage in the *Farmers’ Journal, and Welland Canal Intelligencer* under the pen name “A Passenger,” and who provided some of the details that follow. Though he claimed that he had “never taken an active part in this great undertaking,” one can’t help wondering if the anonymous scribe was not Merritt himself.

The journey began at about 3 p.m. on Friday, November 27. The *Ann and Jane* was decorated with a variety of “national ensigns, flags and

pendants," including "a beautiful small silk flag, with the words 'The King, God bless him' imprinted in gold letters, surmounted by the crown." Though there was little time for advance publicity, the people of Port Dalhousie and St. Catharines came out in force to cheer the boats on.

The two schooners proceeded for three hours before stopping for the night. The sun had set before 5 p.m., but an hour or so of twilight allowed them to keep moving until six. By that time they had passed Lock 19, which placed them just north of the present location of the Lybster Mill in Merriton. Where everyone slept is unknown. In July 1829 John Vanderburgh bought land for an inn just beyond Lock 20, but it is uncertain if it was built by November. There were only a few farms in the area, so perhaps everyone huddled together below deck.

The schooners set off again at 7 a.m. on the Saturday morning, and by 9:30 had reached George Keefer's flour mill atop the Niagara Escarpment in the village of Thorold, an achievement marked by "three hearty cheers for the King." The accolades were well deserved, for in just 5½ hours (spread over the two days) the schooners had travelled 8½ miles, passed through 32 locks (at an average of about 7 minutes per lock) and climbed over 330 feet. A modern laker, travelling from Port Weller, takes 6 to 7 hours to reach the same level, having travelled only 7 miles through 7 locks. Bear in mind also that the schooners were towed along the canal, either by oxen (the "horned breeze") or horses, the locks had to be operated by hand, and there were no locktenders at the locks — all the labour was done by those on board. "More work than play" is how Jacob Keefer described the experience later.

The remainder of the journey went much more slowly. After crossing the reservoir south of Thorold (later known as Marlatt's Pond), the ships encountered ice 2 to 3 inches thick, which had to be broken up by a scow hauled by a heavy team. Then as they approached the village of Deep Cut (now Allanburg) they were delayed for some hours by wood chips stuck in the paddle-gate of a lock. They moored after sundown at the bridge that took Lundy's Lane (now Hwy. 20) over the canal, and spent the night in one of the local inns (at least the passengers did — the crew no doubt slept on board).

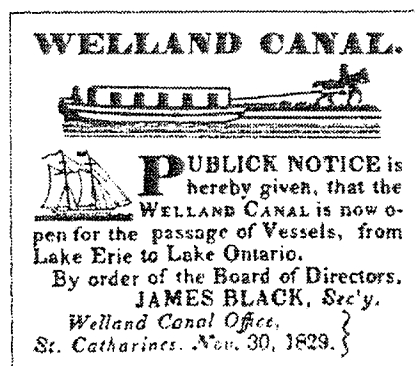
The following day, Sunday the 29th, the schooners passed through the Deep Cut proper, the excavation through the high ground between Beaverdams Creek and the Welland River. The *Journal's* correspondent was most impressed, proclaiming, "This is certainly the most magnificent and imposing part of the Welland canal; and one cannot but feel a degree of self-importance in contemplating what the exertion of man, when properly directed, can bring about." But progress was slow. The boats were delayed by ice and floating timber, and when they exited the Deep Cut and

locked down to the level of the Welland River they grounded on a sand bar. The guard gates had to be closed and the water level raised to set them free.

Wisely, perhaps, they decided to tie up for the night. Again it is not clear where they slept. A small village called Beverley (later Port Robinson) had developed during canal construction, but it is not known what accommodation existed there in 1829. Their sleep was interrupted anyway by "a most unpleasant event," when Irish canal labourers attacked the captain and crew of the *R. H. Boughton* and drove them from the vessel. Why they did this is unknown. One of the passengers — Samuel Street, a magistrate — intervened to restore order.

The passage through the canal was completed the following day, as the ships followed the Welland River down to Chippawa. (The canal was not extended south from Port Robinson to Lake Erie until 1833.) The date was Monday, November 30, five years to the day from the sod-turning ceremony in 1824. Once more, however, the going was slow. The weather was stormy, there was a snowy headwind, and an unfinished towpath caused great difficulties on marshy ground.

Someone had obviously gone ahead to tell the people of Chippawa that the ships were coming, for they were welcomed by a salute, and several of the principal houses were lit up. Someone must also have ridden off immediately to St. Catharines with the news, for the following announcement was submitted to the *Journal* the very same day.



The schooners moored overnight at Grant and Kerby's wharf in Chippawa, and after dinner a number of toasts were drunk to celebrate the first transit of the canal. The journey was still not complete, however, for the ultimate destination was Buffalo. At 11 the following morning the boats sailed through Campbell's Cut at the mouth of the Welland River into the Niagara River, and were then towed 9½ miles against the current and a headwind to Palmer's Tavern, which they reached at nightfall.

On Wednesday December 2, aided by offshore breezes, they set sail at 7 a.m., crossed the Niagara River just off the southern tip of Grand Island, and moored at Black Rock harbour, which, in the words

of the *Buffalo Republican*, “opened its arms and gave the ‘tars from [Lake] Ontario’ a glorious hug.” Then it was on to Buffalo, which they reached at midday. They were greeted by bursts of applause, discharges of artillery from the park, and a gathering at the Eagle Tavern. Considering that the Welland Canal was competition for the Erie Canal, completed four years previously, the people of Buffalo welcomed “the navigators of the Deep Cut” with remarkable generosity, though the *Republican* did remind the state and federal governments of the need for a north-south canal on their own side of the frontier.

The intention of returning to Upper Canada the same day was thwarted by a strong west wind. Jacob Keefer took advantage of the delay to go shopping, buying a blue soup tureen, which he presented to the Thomas Rodman Merritt family 36 years later as a souvenir. (It is now on display in the St. Catharines Museum.) The return trip finally began at 7 a.m. on Thursday, December 3 and ended two days later when the *Ann and Jane* reached Port Dalhousie. The *R. H. Boughton* had stopped at Centreville (later part of Merritton), where it laid up for the winter.

So ended a remarkable journey, and at 4 p.m. on the 5th about 30 gentlemen “partook of a sumptuous dinner, at the Welland Canal Hotel in St. Catharines.” They celebrated in fine style, and Merritt in particular must have been well satisfied that the naysayers who had cast doubt on the canal project since its inception had been confounded.

To confirm the achievement, the newspapers published no less than seven signed statements — by the two Captains, by groups of passengers and by others — testifying to the fact that two schooners had indeed passed through the Welland Canal in both directions. The first of these, dated December 2 at Buffalo, appeared in the *Journal* that very same day, testimony to the speed with which news could be communicated even in those bygone days.

Principal Sources (apart from those cited in the text): Merritt, *Merritt Biography*; Styran and Taylor, *Great Swivel Link*; *Merritt Papers*; First Welland Canal plans and documents, other contemporary maps; Welland Canal Company *Minutes, Correspondence and Directors’ Reports*; *Third Report* (of committee of inquiry into management of Welland Canal).

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The Naming of Lakeside Park

The following appeared in *The Evening Star* (St. Catharines), July 22, 1902, page 1.

‘Improvements at the Port’

The management of the N.S.&T.R. is sparing no exertions to make Port Dalhousie without any equal as a summer resort. Everything that can be done to contribute to the pleasure, comfort and convenience of summer residents and the citizens of the Port, is being done, and it is greatly to the credit of General Manager Seixas that so much has been accomplished. Under his energetic and capable direction the improvements and innovations made are rapidly bringing to the Port the importance and thriving prosperity which it deserves as a first-class summer resort.

The latest work to be completed under the direction of Mr. Seixas is the erection of twenty-five bath-houses along the beach. The entire structure measures 80 by 42 feet, and each of the twenty-five compartments is of ample size to give every accommodation and convenience to its occupant. For the further accommodation of bathers a four-foot walk has been laid to the bath-houses and thence to the beach. The spot will henceforth be known as Lakeside Park, and when all the contemplated improvements have been made it will be one of the prettiest spots in Ontario. For scenery, fishing, cool bracing air, and general enjoyment the summer tourists will find Port Dalhousie unexcelled.

Exhibit at the St. Catharines Museum

October 27th through January 6th - exhibit titled: “Voices of the Town: Vaudeville in Canada” – ham it up at the Museum with an exhibit from the Peterborough Centennial Museum and Archives!

Heritage Grant

The Society is very pleased to receive a Provincial Heritage Development Grant of \$831.00 and we thank the Ontario Ministry of Culture for this assistance with our programs.

Remembrance Day

On Sunday, November 11, 2007 the Society placed a wreath at the Cenotaph during the Remembrance Day Service. The wreath was laid by President John Burtniak. There were many Society members in attendance, several who had experienced the War sixty and more years ago. It is right and fitting that those who made the supreme sacrifice be remembered. Lest we Forget!

ST. CATHARINES' "NEGRO VILLAGE" 1853

Samuel Ringgold WARD was the founding editor of the Provincial Freeman, the first and most successful of 19th century black-run newspapers in Canada. In early January 1853 he undertook a tour of six weeks length that took him to Hamilton, St. Catharines, Niagara on-the-Lake, London, Chatham and Buxton, a small black settlement near Chatham. His report on his visit to St. Catharines begins with his acknowledgement that he feels both "curious" and "anxious" to be there. In so doing he is referring back to an incident that would still have been vivid in the memories of his readers, and certainly of those he visited here -- a shocking race riot that had taken place in June of the previous year, in which according to one report, "much of the Negro Village was burnt to the ground." That event would not only have been vivid in the memories of his hosts in St. Catharines, but it continued to be an irritant since no restitution had yet been made to the Black population. On the whole Ringgold's reaction to the treatment and status of Blacks in St. Catharines might be characterized as "pleasantly surprised." Herewith, Mr Ringgold's report on the situation of blacks in St. Catharines, early 1853 (printed in the March 24, 1853, issue of the Provincial Freeman)

"On the 11th of January last we started upon a tour of some six weeks time, and some 565 miles travel, in the western and frontier districts. At Hamilton, on the 11th of January, we found a protracted meeting in progress, under the charge of Elders Hawkins and Brown, aided by Elder Garrett. This was in the colored Baptist Church. Arriving at St. Catharines on the 12th, we were a little curious, not to say anxious, to see for oneself what is the state of Negro hate in that town. We stopped at the St. Catharines House, and found that the servants, landlord, and all others, were both polite and kind. At the invitation of the Rev. Hiram Wilson, whose guest we had the pleasure to be, we attended a temperance meeting, addressed by the eloquent Elder Ryerson, of the Baptist Church. After Mr. R. had finished his very able discourse, we were invited to say a few words, which we consented to do, though our awkwardness, in contrast with our predecessor, must have been apparent to all. On the 13th, Brother Wilson introduced us to Hon. Mr. H. Meritt (sic), His Worship the Mayor, Mr. Adams, of the Custom House, and several other gentlemen of prominence. We lectured, that evening, in the Town Hall, to a large audience, who seemed to evince a good degree of interest in our cause, enough, at any rate, to request us, by a unanimous vote, to speak again the next evening. The meeting on the 14th was also a large one, and, at the close, a vote of thanks was offered us by Rev. Mr. Ryerson, and carried unanimously. In company with our excellent friend, Wilson, we went to Niagara on the 15th, where, through the activity of William Barr, Sen., Esq., a large assemblage was ready to hear us at the appointed hour. Mr. Barr occupied the chair with great ability. A most encouraging meeting was that at Niagara. Returning the same night to St. Catharines, we accepted the invitation of Rev. Mr. Cooke, of the American Presbyterian Church, to preach for him. We spoke, the same day, in the two colored churches, Rev. Mr. Helmseley's and the Baptist. We must confess that we found things better in St. Catharines than we had feared. The prejudice against our people, was not so strong, so prevalent nor so unprovoked as we had thought, from what we had heard. Personally, we were treated by persons of all classes as well as we ever were, anywhere. Our people in St. Catharines are not the poorest in the town, by a good deal. Many of them own little houses and lots, and enjoy a comfortable maintenance. Mr. J. W. Lindsey and Mr. James Harris live as comfortably as any one needs to live. Each of them has a good team, and they are making as rapid progress, in worldly weal, as the majority of their white fellow-subjects. As much may be said of Mr. J. W. Taylor and others, on whom we did not have time to call. The 'Negro Village,' of which so much has been said, we expected to find in a swamp or a mud-hole. But the settlement, if such it may be called, is on a street (North Street) running parallel with the main street and within one hundred rods of it. The site is good, the property valuable, the part of the town respectable, and whites live in the most immediate vicinity of it. Some foolish actions of our people have given occasion for some prejudice, and there are too many who would rather cringe than contend for what law and right entitle them to. It is true too, that there are some natives of the U.S.A. there, who act the part of fools and knaves towards our people. Having aided in trampling Negroes under foot at home, they seek to engraft their pro-slavery Negro hate upon British stock. It is also true, that they now and then find a Canadian soft sapling that will bear inoculation; but we are quite

convinced that when our people shall have done all they ought to do, in St. Catharines, towards their own elevation, the whites will be right enough..... (he closed his report on his tour with the following remarks) Our tour satisfied us abundantly that the colored people of Canada are progressing more rapidly than our people in the States -- that the liberty enjoyed here makes different men of those once crushed and dispirited in the land of chains -- that along with the other poor classes who come here, and improve themselves in wealth and status, the black people will also arise, in some cases, very rapidly, but generally slowly, though surely - that the day is not far distant when we shall put to shame the selfish, systemic charity seekers who go to the States, and some of them to the South, to beg, partly for fugitives, but chiefly for their own pockets...." (note: the original newsletter article contains photos and an illustration of the North Street area and can be seen in Special Collections at the St. Catharines Public Library)

The Provincial Freeman was published from 1853 to 1857, first in Windsor, then in Toronto and Chatham. Published weekly, it advocated equality, integration and self-education for black people in Canada and the United States.

The debate on integration versus segregation was an important one in the black community at the time, many advocating separate institutions as a way to preserve their community's identity.

One of the editors of *The Provincial Freeman*, Mary Shadd Carey (1823-1893), was the first black woman publisher in North America and the first woman publisher in Canada.

She and her co-editor, the Rev. Samuel Ringgold Ward (1817-1867), were two of about 20,000 American-born black immigrants – both free-born and fugitive slaves – who moved to Canada between 1800 and 1865.

At the time *The Provincial Freeman* existed, the black population in Ontario was more than 35,000

Samuel Ringgold WARD – a chronology of his life

- * 17 October 1817 - born into slavery in the Eastern Shore area of Maryland
- * 1820 - escaped with his parents to Cumberland County, New Jersey
- * 1826 - the family moved to New York City, where he grew up and attended Mulberry School for Negro Children
- * 1833 - became a school teacher at a school for coloured children and then moved to New Jersey and continued teaching
- * 1838 - married Miss Reynolds in January in Newark, New Jersey where he was living
- * 1834 - became involved with the abolitionist movement in New York
- * May 1839 - licensed to preach by the New York Congregationalist Association assembled at Poughkeepsie, N.Y.
- * November 1839 - appointed travelling agent first for the American Anti-Slavery Society and afterwards the New York Anti-Slavery Society.
- * April 1841 - accepted invitation of the Congregational Church of South Butler, Wayne County, New York to be their pastor
- * 1843 – relinquished the pastorate at South Butler due to illness preventing him from speaking properly
- * December 1843 - he visited Geneva where he commenced the study of medicine
- * 1844 - he resumed public and continuous anti-slavery labours, in connection with the Liberty Party
- * 1846 – 1851 - was pastor of the Congregational Church in Cortlandville, New York – while there he was editor of newspaper devoted to religious education
- * 1850 - Fugitive Slave Act passed
- * 1851 - moved to Syracuse, N.Y. - Ward edited two Syracuse-based abolitionist newspapers, including the *Impartial Citizen*, but both failed financially
- * October 1, 1851 - became involved in the "Jerry rescue case"
- * November 1851 - decided to move to Canada where he continued to be active in abolitionist circles
- * **January 1853 - he undertook a six weeks tour visiting various cities, including St. Catharines**
- * April 1853 - travelled to London, England to further his anti-slave work there
- * June 7, 1853 - delivered his major London anti-slavery speech, which resulted in financial support for anti-slavery efforts in Canada by the *Anti-Slavery Society of Canada*
- * 1855 – while in England - He authored his life story in the influential book: *Autobiography of a Fugitive Negro: his anti-slavery labours in the United States, Canada and England*
- * Late 1855 - an English friend gave him 50 acres of land in St. George Parish, Jamaica, and he settled there with his family, serving as a pastor to a small group of Baptists retired to Jamaica and served as pastor to a small Baptist group
- * 1866 - died in Jamaica