



# The Historical Society of St. Catharines

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

Web Site: <http://www.niagara.com/~dmdorey/hssc/hssc.html>

Founded in 1927. Our Society is affiliated with the Ontario Historical Society. Our Mission and Goal is to increase the knowledge and appreciation of the history of St. Catharines and vicinity.

## June 2007 Newsletter

### Upcoming Programs

**Saturday, May 26 – 10:00 a.m.**

### **Oille Fountain Potting Ceremony**

Recognizing the donation of the fountain by Dr. Lucius Oille and the first water supply system in St. Catharines. Ceremony will take place at the corner of King and James streets.

**Saturday, June 16 – 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

### **Bus Tour**

Destination: Galt area of Cambridge - tour will include historical commentary along route  
Details: walking tour of riverfront, Southworks Antique Market and Outlet Shopping Complex  
Lunch: extra and on your own  
**Departure Time: 8:00 a.m. SHARP** --- Departure Location: in front of Old Court House downtown  
Parking: parking is free in all municipal downtown parking lots on Saturday  
Return: just prior to 5:00 p.m.  
Cost: members \$35.00 - non-members \$40.00 - payable to The Historical Society of St. Catharines  
**For Tickets - Contact: Mary Leighton – 905-934-7733**

**Tuesday, July 3 - 7:00 p.m.**

### **William Hamilton Merritt Birthday Celebration**

at the Merritt Monument  
on St. Paul Street at the east end of Burgoyne Bridge opposite the Cenotaph

*The following meetings and speaker programs will be held at the St. Catharines Museum at Lock 3 beginning at 7:30 p.m.:*

**Thursday, September 27** – John Burtiak: *Some Vanished Villages in the Niagara Peninsula*

**Thursday, October 25** – David MacKenzie: A Power Point presentation titled: *Images of a Hero: The Many Faces of Isaac Brock*. Since there are no portraits of Isaac Brock which were painted from life (with one possible exception), this presentation looks at how various artists and sculptors have pictured the Hero of Upper Canada from the 19th century to the present day, and compares these images with contemporary written descriptions.

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

## ***Society News Page:***

As a result of the Annual Meeting, held on April 26, the following is the Board of Directors for 2007/08:

### **Board of Directors of the Historical Society of St. Catharines**

Past President - Bill Stevens - e-mail [bibmstev@computan.on.ca](mailto:bibmstev@computan.on.ca) - tel. 905-934-8966

President - John Burtiniak - tel. 905-227-5120

Vice President - Paul Lewis - e-mail [paul\\_e\\_lewis@ridley.on.ca](mailto:paul_e_lewis@ridley.on.ca) - tel. 905-684-9918

Secretary - Brenda Zadoroznij - e-mail [bzadoroz@becon.org](mailto:bzadoroz@becon.org) - tel. 905-935-3025

Treasurer - Chris Loat - e-mail [chris\\_loat@ridley.on.ca](mailto:chris_loat@ridley.on.ca) - tel. 905-685-6939

Director - Membership - Mary Leighton - [barryl@laurelsteel.com](mailto:barryl@laurelsteel.com) - tel. 905-934-7733

Director - Paul Hutchinson - e-mail [slabtown@niagara.com](mailto:slabtown@niagara.com) - tel. 905-227-2699

Director - Maurice Gomme - e-mail [magomme@cogeco.ca](mailto:magomme@cogeco.ca) - tel. 905-682-2329

Director - Joe Muskat - tel. 905-687-3359

Director - Brenda Fox - [stokely@mergetel.com](mailto:stokely@mergetel.com) - tel. 905-680-8845

Director - David Sharron - [dsharron@brocku.ca](mailto:dsharron@brocku.ca) - tel. 905-684-5355

### **Condolences**

The Society recently lost a valued member in **Norman David Macdonald**, who passed away on Tuesday, April 17, 2007. Norman was a past president of the Society, serving as president in 1960 through 1963. Norman was co-founder of Macdonald Zuberec Ensslen Architects Inc., retiring a little over a year and a half ago. Norman was involved in many historical matters, such as the May-Clark-Seiler house, the MacBeth Nicholson architectural firm's history and subsequent public displays, lectured and wrote on various historical topics, lead architectural walking tours, was Society program chair, involved in the Laura Secord Walks, an active member of the Canadian Canal Society (including President) and the St. Catharines Museum (including Chairman), among several other interests and groups. We extend our sympathy to his wife Barbara, also a Society member, and their two children, Alexandra and Malcolm.

### **New Members – Welcome!**

Steve Hinchliffe, John Bonnett, Susan Bassett, John Fisher, Monica Taylor, Ian and Diana Ellingham

### **Meeting Reports:**

**February 22 - Alun Hughes** once again presented a fascinating lecture titled "The Early History of Merritton, 'Certainly a Most Uninteresting Spot'." Despite less than ideal weather, sixty-four members and guests attended.

**March 22 - Brian Narhi's** research skills and hundreds of hours of research were evident in his presentation on "The Court Records of Niagara." One member present commented that despite our so-called civilization of society, things may be a bit more civil, but the crimes remain somewhat the same! Forty-five members and guests attended.

**April 25 – Walter Asbil** presented an informative and engaging talk, "St. George's Church and the Church of England in Niagara," to sixty-six members and guests who attended.

### **Correction to March 2007 Newsletter:**

- The article headed 1838 Photo Album Donated - should read 1938 (page 5).

### **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 writers and do not necessarily reflect those of the Society. Subscription by paid membership only. Bill Stevens produced this issue.

**Next Issue: September 2007 - Deadline for submission of articles or notices is August 10<sup>th</sup>.**

## **The Friends of Diana Sweets**

From: *Ontario Historical Society Bulletin February 2007*:

For over 75 years, the Diana Sweets restaurant -"the Di"- was a prominent, family-owned and -operated business on St. Paul Street in the downtown core of St. Catharines. Despite three major changes in management during its long history, the Di never lost its ambient charm and atmosphere and remained a social and cultural meeting place for three generations of city residents. This restaurant was a comfortable, familiar destination where the staff knew the customers by name and could take their orders, sometimes without having to ask. Diana Sweets was the favourite destination for detective Benny Cooperman, the hero of a series of novels authored by Howard Engel. When the CBC filmed one of these novels, scenes were shot on location in the Di. Despite last-ditch attempts to save Diana Sweets, the restaurant closed its doors for the last time in 1996. At that time, the original 1930s Art Deco gum-wood interior, soda fountain and other fixtures were purchased by an antique dealer in Buffalo, destined for resale to the highest bidder. The soda fountain has since been sold and installed in the General Store in the town of Barker, New York. The remainder, which represents approximately 90% of this historically and culturally significant collection, is available for purchase at \$32,000 (USD). It is for this reason that the "Friends of Diana Sweets," unofficially known as SODAS (Save Our Diana Sweets), was formed in 2006 and recently incorporated as a non-profit corporation through affiliation with the OHS. The "Friends" hope to acquire and restore this collection through a fundraising campaign, and to determine its best possible end use. Donations to the fundraising campaign will be tax deductible. Donations may be made to the "Friends of Diana Sweets," P. O. Box 4116, St. Catharines, Ontario, L2R 7S3. For further information please contact Brian Narhi by e-mail at: BrianNarhi@AOL.com. Or 905-934-1744.

## **Forging Freedom**

### **A Conference in Honour of the Bicentennial of the Abolition of the Atlantic Slave Trade**

Presented by The Ontario Historical Society, in partnership with the Ontario Black History Society, and the Central Ontario Network for Black History on June 22nd and 23<sup>rd</sup> at Brock University.

#### **Friday, June 22**

7:00 pm - Welcome and Reception followed by a performance of "*The Spirit of Harriet Tubman*" by award-winning actress/historian Leslie McCurdy

#### **Saturday, June 23**

8:30 am - Buffet Breakfast and The Ontario Historical Society Annual General Meeting

10:30 am - Presentations (for a complete list of speakers and their topics, visit The Ontario Historical Society web site: <http://www.ontariohistoricalsociety.ca/>.)

12:30 pm - Luncheon

1:30 pm - OHS Honours and Awards Ceremony

- Keynote Speaker - Dr. Kate Clifford Larsen, from Simmons College in Massachusetts, author of *Bound for the Promised Land: Harriet Tubman, Portrait of an American Hero*.

- *The Road to Freedom* Historical Drama by Bryan and Shannon Prince with musical accompaniment by vocalist Denise Pelley and pianist Stephen Holowitz.

3:30 pm - Bus Tour of African Canadian Historic Sites - Presented by the Central Ontario Network for Black History.

Cost for the Saturday program (not including bus tour) is \$45.00; Bus Tour is \$18.00 extra.

Registration Information: e-mail, fax or mail your registration to: Christine Perfetto at [members@ontariohistoricalsociety.ca](mailto:members@ontariohistoricalsociety.ca) ; fax 416-226-2740; or mail to The Ontario Historical Society, 34 Parkview Avenue, Willowdale, ON M2N 3Y2.

Members of the Historical Society of St. Catharines can volunteer at the conference by contacting the Ontario Historical Society as per the above contact information.



### "Auntie" Katherine Deveau

While researching a totally different topic, I came across an interesting story and photograph on page 3 of the August 28, 1931 edition of *The St. Catharines Standard*. I decided instead that I would research this article further and present it to you. The story and photograph of "Auntie" Deveau was about her celebrating her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday that week. She is quoted in the story as saying "Work hard if you would live long." Mrs. Katherine Deveau was born into slavery on a plantation in Charlottetown, South Carolina on August 24, 1831. Katherine was only five when her mother was sold and left the plantation. Later her father committed suicide rather than be sold. She married Dennis Deveau, who was also a slave and they had eight children. At age 31 (1862), she became a free woman, and as well her husband became free near the conclusion of the Civil War. Not sure that freedom would last, they left the plantation and made their way to St. Catharines in 1863, making their first home on Niagara Street. She voluntarily worked day and night and was a devoted early riser. They later moved to Geneva Street and then a third time, to the east side of Lake Street, two doors north of Albert Street, where "Auntie" lived for 37 years. Her husband Dennis died at the Lake Street home. This house was destroyed, along with her meagre belongings, by a rare cyclone on August 2, 1902. She also lost a sheepskin on which was inscribed her date of birth. She was left destitute, but continued to work day and night, and managed to buy a home of her own at 146 Dufferin Street. She grew a vegetable garden, and depended upon the produce to sell door to door to supplement her earnings from cleaning and doing laundry. She was a member of the Queen Street Baptist Church and regularly attended services there. In politics, she was a Liberal and relished the opportunity to vote. At the time of her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, she was living alone at 146 Dufferin Street and surviving on an old age pension. Almost three years later, "Auntie" Katherine Deveau died on June 25, 1934, just days before her 103<sup>rd</sup> birthday. The news of her early morning death *"spread throughout the city this morning as citizens of all walks of life halted in their day's activities to pay sincere tribute to this district's oldest resident, who died from suffocation when her small home at 146 Dufferin Street was destroyed by flames."* The newspaper report continues: *"Auntie Deveau is dead, said one resident to the other, and there was great depth of feeling in the mere statement of fact. The tragic surroundings of the death of this far famed Negro women, in the home which she had struggled for years to pay for, cast a pall of gloom over the city. 'Auntie' who always responded with a cheery smile and a kind word to greetings from residents had been one of St. Catharines' best known residents ...."* The fire call had come into the Central fire hall at 5:55 a.m. and the firemen found the house in engulfed in flames upon arrival. The cause of the fire was not immediately known, but she did use coal oil on the wood to start fires in the stove, and there was a can of coal oil in front of the charred kitchen stove. The story indicates that the stove likely overheated and in turn ignited the kitchen and "the timbers burnt like matchwood." Katherine was found lying across her bed in the adjoining bedroom and had suffocated. Katherine was survived by one daughter, Mrs. Harry West, and two sons, Fred Deveau and Dennis Deveau, all of St. Catharines. Funeral services were held the following Wednesday from Butler and Son Funeral Home to the B.M.E. Church and then to Victoria Lawn Cemetery. Auntie Deveau was buried in grave #3, row 128, section F of the New Cemetery, near the back (north) property line of the cemetery. No marker or monument marks "Auntie's" plot.

By Bill Stevens

### An Interesting Advertisement on page 107 of 1874 Directory

**MISS M. SNIVELY,**  
ARTIST IN EVERY BRANCH OF

**WAXWORK,**

Manufacturer of Flowers of every variety, Plants in Pots, Crosses, Lyres, Harps, Lillies in Miniature Ponds, Foliage Plants, Autumn Leaves, Fruit, Shells Statuettes, Medallions, Colored Figures, Birds, Vases, &c., Bridal and Funeral Flowers preserved in any design, in a Superior Style. Colors warranted unchangeable. Also manufacturer of the "EXCELSIOR SHEET WAX."

STUEIO—No. 2 Queen Streets, Corner of St. Paul Up-stairs, St. Catharines.

**Removed to Lock 5, Mt. Welland.**

Marilla Snively was born about 1820 in St. Catharines. Her parents, Mary Shainholts and Jacob Snively, were married in 1805 in St. Catharines. Jacob was of German background. According to the 1881 census, Marilla was living with her sister Eliza, who's husband was Richard Collier had died. Marilla was not married, Wesleyan Methodist in religion and an "Artist in Wax."

### **"Old Raceway Was Factor Bringing Factories Here**

The old hydraulic raceway built in 1824, which generated power in its tumultuous water, was the factor that brought factories and mills to St. Catharines in the early days, Francis Goldring told members of the Lincoln Historical Society last evening. Mr. Goldring illustrated his talk with early maps. Many other communities, started at the same time as Shipman's Corners, which became St. Catharines, did not continue to grow. The old raceway wended its way from Hayes Steel Mill to Hutchison's Mills, later the old Kinleith Paper Co. Many old lanes, Mr. Goldring said, led down from St. Paul St. to the mills along the raceway where horse-drawn wagons took their loads down, at William, James, Tannery Lane, Hill, Head and Race streets. Some of the factories were Riordon Paper Mills, Oille's mill, Garden City Paper, Grantham Flour Mills, Phelps' Mill and Packard, first to use the water from the raceway. Mr. Goldring also described types of water wheels used in the mills, turned by the strong raceway current. Norman Macdonald presided at the meeting. Another meeting will be held March 30 in connection with forming a Lincoln Historical Museum at the new Arts Centre in Rodman Hall. A delegation from the society will go to city council to urge the preservation of Lock three of the first Welland Canal. R.S.K. Welch, the society's president, is its representative to the Arts Council." Source: *The Standard*, March 25, 1960.

### **Charles Daley Park**

Charles Daley Park is one of the few public beach fronts along the shore of Lake Ontario in the Niagara Region. It is owned by and located in the Town of Lincoln, adjacent to the western limits of the City of St. Catharines. Access by automobile is from Regional Road 39 (QEW North Service Road), which forms the southern limit of the park. Fifteen Mile Creek on the east side of the park is also the municipal boundary line. Sixteen Mile Creek is essentially the western park limits. This area was part of the former Township of Louth, Lots 9 and 10 Broken Front Concession. Cottage communities were once located at Fifteen and Sixteen Mile beaches along the Lakeshore Road. The cottages are gone and the road has long since disappeared due to erosion and now sits out in the lake beyond the beach. The provincial government expropriated lands for the construction of the QEW beginning in 1937 and this left a strip of land along the shoreline where the park is located. In 1960 the Niagara Parks Commission purchased an 11-acre site between the two creeks, which included 2600 feet of sandy beach and access directly from the QEW. The site ran to a sheer bluff at the lakefront. A large 30-foot-high hill was removed to create a 500-space parking area, some of which is still present today. In 1961 the shoreline was subject to extensive remediation work. Access from the QEW was closed in 1961 with the construction of the Service Road. With the construction of some park buildings, the park officially opened on July 1, 1962 and was named after the then Chairman of the Niagara Parks Commission, Charles Daley. A small campground was added soon after. In 1972 fill from further QEW construction was placed in the park, narrowing the channel and pond of Sixteen Mile Creek and raising the ground level for additional campground area. Because of low day-use the parking lot size was reduced and some trailer sites were added. In 1962 and 1974 the NPC purchased adjoining lands, including two large ponds formed by the creeks, to encompass 39 acres and 3070 feet of beach, and this represents today's park lands. In 1990, the NPC deeded the park to the Town of Lincoln for a nominal sum. The campground use was discontinued and the park is now only used for free day-use purposes. The Friends of Charles Daley Park are planning to construct a boardwalk along the shoreline in 2007 and are selling planks for \$35.00 each. Contact Town of Lincoln, Attn: Friends of Charles Daley Park, 4800 South Service Road, Beamsville, ON L0R 1B1 or tel. 905-563-8205 extension 232.

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#### **SPRINGTIME** by Elsie Stevens (1912 – 1987)

Have you walked through the woods in Springtime,  
When the trees are opening their eyes?  
When the Mayflowers and the Trilliums  
From their winter beds arise?

Have you walked through the woods in Springtime,  
When all is calm and still?

When the hush of evening is broken,  
By the cry of the Whip-poor-Will?

Have you walked through the woods in Springtime,  
When worried and full of fear?  
And the resurrection of all 'round you,  
Has brought new hope and cheer?

## THE COMMUNITIES OF THE "FIRST" FIRST WELLAND CANAL

This article examines the origin and naming of the communities that existed on the First Welland Canal when it opened in 1829, before it was extended to Lake Erie. This "first" First Canal ran from Lake Ontario to the Welland River, with the river itself providing the necessary link to the Niagara River and Lake Erie.

When the schooners *Ann and Jane* and *R. H. Boughton* made their initial trip along the canal in late November 1829 they passed through eight communities: Dalhousie, St. Catharines, Centreville, Thorold, Beaverdam, Deep Cut, Beverley and Chippawa. If one or two seem unfamiliar, bear in mind that these are their original names. Some of these communities existed before the canal, while others developed because of the canal. Some just grew, without any formal plan, while others were laid out as new towns by the Welland Canal Company or by individual landowners.

### Dalhousie

Dalhousie was one of five communities that did not exist prior to the canal and one of two that resulted from individual enterprise. It is first mentioned in an 1826 newspaper advertisement in which Nathan Pawling states that he has "laid out a Town Plot on an extensive scale, with regular and spacious streets, on his premises," and advertises building lots for sale "on a Peninsula at the confluence of the Welland Canal with Lake Ontario." The ad is headed Port Dalhousie and datelined Dalhousie, which suggests a distinction between the port on the one hand and the village on the other. This is supported by ads placed by others later the same year, all referring to the "village of Dalhousie." At this time the port was usually called Welland Canal Harbour, or sometimes Dalhousie Harbour or Harbour at 12 Mile Creek. Not until late 1827 do we find Port Dalhousie being used for both the port and the village, though exceptions do occur even after that date.

The origin of the name is clear. It recognizes Scottish peer George Ramsay, 9th Earl of Dalhousie, and Governor-in-Chief of British North America from 1820 to 1828. Who chose the name is another matter. Some say it was Nathan Pawling himself, as a token of his admiration for the Earl. A more likely explanation is that the Welland Canal Company made the choice, for Ramsay was an enthusiastic advocate of canal-building and provided crucial political support for the Welland Canal venture. Moreover, it is consistent with the naming of other

canal communities (such as Allanburg and Port Robinson) after prominent individuals.

That leaves the question of how to say the word "Dalhousie." The university that the Earl founded in Halifax is pronounced "Dalhowzee," and it is often assumed that the local usage "Daloozee" is an aberration. But this is probably wrong. The local pronunciation is also used elsewhere (e.g., Dalhousie Street in Ottawa), and expert linguistic opinion suggests that it is in fact correct. Significantly, in 1884 Dalhousie University itself was uncertain how to sound the name, and asked the 13th Earl for advice. His pompous response, that he would never pronounce it "Dalhoossie" like "an uneducated Scotchman," speaks volumes, and implies that the real aberration is "Dalhowzee," not "Daloozee."

### St. Catharines

St. Catharines existed before the canal, having emerged in the mid-1790s at the intersection of today's Ontario and St. Paul Streets. The name itself first appears in a document dated 1796 listing 44 settlers who contributed money towards the construction of a church. (The document, now held at St. George's Church, spells the name with an "e.") Only one or two other buildings preceded the church, and though the village grew steadily it was very small until the canal was built, after which it became the largest of the canal communities.

The origin of its name is uncertain, though most sources suggest it honours Catherine Hamilton, wife of Queenston merchant Robert Hamilton. He provided the land for the church and nearby school, and his wife was apparently a caring woman known for helping the less fortunate. Another theory points to Catherine Butler, wife of John Butler, commander of Butler's Rangers during the American Revolutionary War, for many of those on the church list were former Rangers. In the early decades of the last century a fierce debate raged in the pages of the *St. Catharines Standard* between advocates of the two ladies, but nothing was resolved.

For a period the village was also known as The Twelve and Shipman's Corners, but it was St. Catharines that prevailed, and it became the name of the post office in about 1820. The first postmaster was William Hamilton Merritt, and he may have been responsible for the distinctive "a" spelling, this as a tribute to his wife Catharine. She was not, however, the person for whom the community was named, for she was only three years old in 1796.

## Centreville

In 1826 Oliver Phelps, the American contractor responsible for most of the construction work on the First Canal, advertised for sawyers to assist in lock building. The ad was datelined Centreville, so named because it was half way between Lake Ontario and the Welland River and at the mid-point of the series of locks. Phelps was clearly referring to his own farm, which was located on the line of the canal about a kilometre north of what is now downtown Merritton. Though Phelps never laid out a village — indeed he moved to St. Catharines in 1828 — a community called Centreville did evolve later along what became Thorold Road (now Oakdale Avenue).

During the building of the Second Canal it acquired the nickname Slabtown, after the wooden shanties canal workers built for themselves on nearby government land, and in 1847 it was the site of the infamous Battle of Slabtown between Irish Protestants and Catholics. At the time it was the only settlement in the area, but this changed in the early 1850s when the Welland Canal Loan Company established a new town called Welland City where the heart of Merritton is today. Not until 1869, however, were Welland City and Centreville given the common name Merritton, this, of course, in recognition of William Hamilton Merritt.

It is often said that the switch from Welland City to Merritton was part of a name exchange with the people of Welland, which was previously known as Merrittsville. This is not so, for Merrittsville became Welland 11 years before Merritton got its name.

## Thorold

Thorold, like Port Dalhousie, was a product of the canal and individual enterprise. George Keefer, first President of the Welland Canal Company, owned land on the canal route on the Escarpment brow, and in 1828 built a grist mill in anticipation of the canal's completion. He was rewarded with free water rights in perpetuity for his initiative. About the same time he or his son George Junior laid out the rudiments of a village and called it Thorold, and in 1828 the post office was moved there from Deep Cut. Some sources say that the village was originally called Stumptown and St. George's, but there is no hard evidence for this.

In naming the village Thorold Keefer simply adopted the name of the existing township. Originally called Township No. 9 when surveyed in 1788, it was renamed Thorold in 1793 in keeping with a county-based naming policy employed by Governor Simcoe. The counties of Upper Canada west of the Trent River were all named after English counties, and places within each county were often given names from the corresponding county in England. Since the Niagara Peninsula fell in Lincoln

County all the early townships were given Lincolnshire names. Most were named for places, but Thorold is the name of an ancient Lincolnshire family with roots in Saxon times.

Perhaps the most famous Thorold (or Thurrald, as family members say their name) was Godgifu, better known as Lady Godiva, who lived in the 11th century. The story of her unclothed ride through the streets of Coventry in an attempt to persuade her husband Leofric III, Earl of Mercia, to reduce taxes is well known. Less well known is the film about her made in the 1950s. Maureen O'Hara played the title role, George Nader was Leofric, Arthur E. Gold-Porter was Thorold, Sherriff of Lincoln, and the part of First Saxon, very much a minor character, was played by someone named Clint Eastwood.

## Beaverdam

This is not a typographic error. In early times the name was usually written as a singular noun, Beaverdam, though often it was split into two words and/or preceded by the definite article, as in The Beaver Dam. The modern plural form Beaverdams was also used early on, but only rarely before 1830.

The beaver dam in question was located on what became known as Beaverdams Creek, a tributary of the Twelve Mile Creek in Thorold. Its remains were still visible in the late 19th century, but in 1904 were submerged beneath the waters of Lake Gibson. It is likely that the creek was named first (precisely when is unknown), and some time later the name was used for the village that developed nearby at the junction of two important early routes (nowadays the intersection of Beaverdams Road and Marlatts Road/Decew Road).

Beaverdams is not normally thought of as a canal community, but the First Canal ran directly alongside the village, which by then had been in existence for three decades. The earliest written mention of the name is dated 1804, and the first recorded burial in the cemetery is 1801, so there was probably a village before 1800, making it roughly contemporaneous with St. Johns in the Short Hills. Beaverdams flourished briefly while the canal was being built, and in 1826 became the site of Thorold's first post office, but soon afterwards was eclipsed by other canal-side communities.

## Deep Cut

Deep Cut was the original name for Allanburg. Most sources claim that the original name was New Holland, but strictly speaking this is not so. Prior to the canal there was no village, just scattered farms and a tavern run by Joseph Badgley, where Merritt and his associates repaired following the canal sod-turning ceremony in 1824. The name New Holland was applied to the general area, not to a specific

community. Both it and the name Holland Road date at least as far back as the War of 1812, and most likely reflect the Dutch origins of settlers like John Vanderburgh, who had 700 acres of land in the vicinity. An 1818 reference to Holland Settlement seems to imply that a village had emerged by then, but this is unlikely. While the term settlement as used in the 19th century did refer to settlers, it did not mean that they were concentrated in one spot. There was no reason for a village to exist anyway.

With construction of the canal, however, a village did develop at the north end of the Deep Cut, where the line of the canal intersected Lundy's Lane. The Deep Cut was the excavation through the high ground between Beaverdams Creek and the Welland River, and this was the name given to the community. Deep Cut was a bustling place, with several stores and taverns catering to canal labourers, and Thorold's post office moved there in 1827.

In 1827 the Welland Canal Company bought 65 acres of land west of what became Centre Street from Hall Davis. Some time later they laid it out in building lots, possibly in conjunction with Harmonius Vanderburgh, who owned land to the east. By 1830 the village was called Allanburgh (the "h" was later dropped) after William Allan, Vice-President of the Canal Company and President of the Bank of Upper Canada. Some claim that the "burgh" recognizes the Vanderburgh family, but this is uncertain. Much of the new village was wiped out by later canals, but the name survives.

### Beverley

The history of Beverley (later Port Robinson) is not unlike that of Deep Cut/Allanburg. Located at the south end of the Deep Cut where the Welland Canal met the Welland River, the village emerged during canal construction on the farm owned by John Carl. Initially, it may have been much smaller than Deep Cut, and in fact there is no certainty that it even had a name prior to 1830.

The name Beverley (not Port Beverley as some sources claim) appears in canal-related documents at this time. It was very short-lived, however, and soon gave way to Robinson, which in turn yielded to Port Robinson by mid-1831. The names Beverley and Robinson both come from John Beverley Robinson, Attorney-General of Upper Canada and a director of the Welland Canal Company.

As in the case of Allanburg, there was an element of deliberate planning in the creation of Port Robinson, for in 1830 the Canal Company purchased 240 acres from John Carl, and a portion of this was laid out in building lots. They were divided into three classes and were to be sold for £25, £12 10s and £6 5s, prices significantly higher than for corresponding lots in Allanburg. If this

reflected the future prospects of the two places it made sense, for Port Robinson soon oustripped Allanburg in importance.

### Chippawa

Chippawa is possibly the oldest of the First Canal communities and certainly the one with the oldest name. The village developed alongside Fort Chippawa, a storehouse-cum-blockhouse built in 1791 at the southern terminus of the west-bank portage around Niagara Falls. The village took its name from the Fort, and this in turn took its name from the river, which before Governor Simcoe introduced the Lincolnshire name Welland River in 1792 was known as Chippawa Creek.

The earliest known reference to the name is in a traveller's account for 1785, and in old documents it is spelled in various ways, among them Chippawa, Chippewa and Chippeway. It is often mentioned as being an Indian name, and in a sense it is, since "Chippawa" is a corruption of "Ojibway." However, the Indians would not have called it this — it was a name introduced by the British.

The original native inhabitants of the area were the Neutral Indians, and it is not known what name they had for the river. In 1649 they were wiped out by the Iroquois from the Finger Lakes region, which left the Niagara Peninsula uninhabited. During this period the French called the river Chenondac, and some time after the capture of Fort Niagara in 1759 the British substituted Chippawa. Why they chose this name is uncertain, for the Ojibway were not native to the area. There are reports, however, of their camping alongside the river when visiting Fort Niagara, and over time the two may have become associated. Some say that there was an actual native village on the creek in 1788, but this is unconfirmed and is probably not correct.

In the late 1980s local barrister Romaine K. Ross mounted a campaign to make the official spelling Chippewa on the grounds that this was the more authentic version and the one currently used by native peoples, but he was unsuccessful.

**Postscript:** My research on this topic is still proceeding. I don't pretend to have all the answers, and I am very conscious of uncertainties and gaps, not to mention possible errors and misinterpretations. I would be very happy to receive feedback at [ahughes@brocku.ca](mailto:ahughes@brocku.ca).

**Principal Sources:** Aitken, *Welland Canal Company*; Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*; Riddell, *Life of John Graves Simcoe*; Seibel, *Niagara Portage Road*; Styran and Taylor, *Great Swivel Link*; Thompson, *Jubilee History of Thorold*, and other local histories; Registry Office documents; land survey records; Welland Canal plans; Welland Canal Company *Directors' Reports*; *Merritt Papers*; *Farmers' Journal* and other period newspapers; *Third Report*, Bureau of Archives; *Third Report* (of 1836 inquiry into management of Welland Canal).



### **Society Member Honoured**

The Masonic Museum at Niagara Lodge No. 2, Niagara On-The-Lake, was named the Colin Duquemin Masonic Museum in a recent ceremony. Colin was so honoured and recognized for his many years of dedicated service as Lodge Historian, and for his more recent work in organizing and restoring the Museum collection of valuable historical Masonic materials and memorabilia spanning more than two hundred years. In 1992, Colin authored an impressive history, well researched and written, to mark the bicentennial of Niagara Lodge No. 2, and also organized a Niagara Masonic History Conference and edited the Conference proceedings. Congratulations Colin - - well deserved!

### **Welland Canal Survey Maps Online**

By: David Sharron, Head of the Special Collections and Archives at Brock University

In the late 1980s, fifty-three survey maps detailing the second Welland Canal from Port Dalhousie to Port Colborne were destined to be pitched in the trash. Fortunately, the historical value of these maps was not lost on Dr. John N. Jackson who rescued these treasures and transferred them over to the Brock University Archives. These maps have been digitized and will be available for viewing in late June 2007. The website for digital images from the Brock University Archives is <http://images.ourontario.ca/brock/>.

These maps were most likely created in the 1860s in an effort to keep track of the land and structures associated with the Canal. The layout of the Canal is recorded with incredible detail – even the surveyor's notes and measurements in pencil and ink are visible. Remnants of the first Welland Canal are noted where appropriate. But the maps go much further to document some local businesses, homes, landmarks, property owners, and streets. These maps are not only a boon to Canal enthusiasts but are a great resource for historians, genealogists, local governments, and students.

The Welland Canal maps have been mounted onto a digital cultural content portal called OurOntario.ca. OurOntario is designed as a one stop site where digitized materials from all over Ontario can be viewed by researchers anytime. The OurOntario website has a number of features to help visitors utilize the records. You can conduct simple and advanced text searches based on the data supplied about the historical records or you can browse images by subject matter. For image viewing, we took advantage of a special zooming feature built into the website. By clicking on "Full Image", you can magnify any part of the maps to see the finer details of the originals. The website also links to Google Maps which displays modern views of the maps either as a satellite image, road map or a hybrid of both. This Google Maps feature seems to work best with Firefox web browsing software rather than Internet Explorer. Both browsers, however, do work. If you know an individual who would be interested in any or all of the maps, you can make them aware of the website by sending them an electronic postcard featuring the maps.

OurOntario takes the user experience one step further. It allows you to be an active contributor to the presented history. If you have particular insights into a feature on a map, you can add a comment for future users to read, learn from and explore further. You can even create and submit an essay (complete with photos) that can be linked to the map collection. To spark a historical dialogue, we have included one or more "Mystery Questions" to accompany each map. It would be great to have these questions answered and to see new questions posed. Whatever interests you about these maps is up for discussion.

We hope that making these maps accessible on the web assists you in your historical research. Please let us know what you think about the website and feel free to comment on the maps as much as you wish. The more participation and feedback that we see, the more we will be inspired to add more digital content to this website. Our collection of records featuring various elements of the history of the Niagara Peninsula is vast. To the best of our abilities, we want to share this history with the greater community. Please contact me at [dsharron@brocku.ca](mailto:dsharron@brocku.ca) with any questions or comments.

Enjoy the maps!

## **HERITAGE HAPPENINGS**

Events and locations subject to change. Check with the event organizers to confirm details and avoid disappointment.

**June 2 - July 22** – “Canada at Play” - a special exhibit at the St. Catharines Museum surveys over 130 years of Canadian children’s favourite toys and games ([www.stcatharineslock3museum.ca](http://www.stcatharineslock3museum.ca))

**June 4** - Janet Carnochan Day - 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations of the Niagara Historical Society Museum located at 43 Castlereagh Street, Niagara On-The-Lake ([www.niagarahistorical.museum](http://www.niagarahistorical.museum))

**June 9** - 2:00 pm - Heritage Designation Ceremony of Carl-Misener-Bald Cemetery – located at the end of Carl Street in Port Robinson area of Thorold

**Mid June - Labour Day** - 10:00 am - 9:00 pm - Carousel operates in Lakeside Park - still 5-cents a ride!

**June 16** - 8:00 am - 5:00 pm - Historical Society of St. Catharines - Annual BUS TOUR

**June 22 - 23** - Ontario Historical Society Conference at Brock University. Conference honours the Bicentennial of the Abolition of the Atlantic Slave Trade ([www.ontariohistoricalsociety.ca](http://www.ontariohistoricalsociety.ca))

**June 23** - 10:00 am – 4:00 pm - Willoughby Museum - 9935 Niagara Parkway - Rural Roots Heritage Fair

**June 26** - 7:30 pm - Thorold and Beaverdams Historical Society - program speaker and pie social at Chestnut Hall, 14 Ormond Street, Thorold

**June 26** - 7:00 pm - The Rodman Hall Gallery Association presents “Behind the Seams at the Shaw Festival” and a lecture titled “Theatre Costume and The Shaw Theatre” by former costume designer Rita Brown

**July 1** - Canada Day Celebrations held at: St. Catharines Market Square; Charles Daley Park, Lincoln; Fort George and Simcoe Park, Niagara On-The-Lake; Lakeside Park, Port Dalhousie; Optimist Park, Niagara Falls

**July 3** - 7:00 pm - Merritt Birthday Celebration - Merritt Statue - corner St. Paul and McGuire streets

**July 7** - 10:00 am to 4:00 pm - Classic Car Show - downtown St. Catharines

**July 14 - 15** - 1812 Weekend at Fort George (905-468-6614)

**July 21** - The St. Catharines Museum presents the 8<sup>th</sup> annual Dragon Boat Races - on the waters of the historic Henley ([www.stcatharinesdragonboat.org](http://www.stcatharinesdragonboat.org))

**July 29** - 12:30 pm - Battle of Lundy’s Lane Commemorative Service at Drummond Hill Cemetery

**August 4 - 6** - Simcoe Days - Mackenzie Printery and Newspaper Museum, Queenston - special exhibit showing how the nation’s oldest printing press helped John Graves Simcoe shape the Province of Upper Canada

**August 3 - 6** - City of Port Colborne - 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Canal Heritage Festival ([www.canaldays.ca](http://www.canaldays.ca))

**August 4 - October 14** - ‘Ships in the Mind’s Eye’ - a special exhibit at the St. Catharines Museum to celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 4<sup>th</sup> Welland Canal. Ship models and canal artefacts will be featured.

**August 7 - 12** - The 125<sup>th</sup> Royal Canadian Henley Regatta held in St. Catharines ([www.henleyregatta.ca](http://www.henleyregatta.ca))

**August 11 - 12** - The Siege of Fort Erie, 1814 - Old Fort Erie

**August 18 - 19** - Fife and Drum Muster Soldiers Field Day - Fort George (905-468-6614)

**September 8** - Canadian Canal Society - all day BUS TOUR to Newmarket Toronto to tour the Ghost Canal and Sharon Temple

**September 8** - Celtic Festival - Old Fort Erie (<http://www.oldforterie.com>)