



## **The Historical Society of St. Catharines**

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

Founded in 1927. Our Mission and Goal is to increase the knowledge and appreciation of the history of St. Catharines and vicinity.

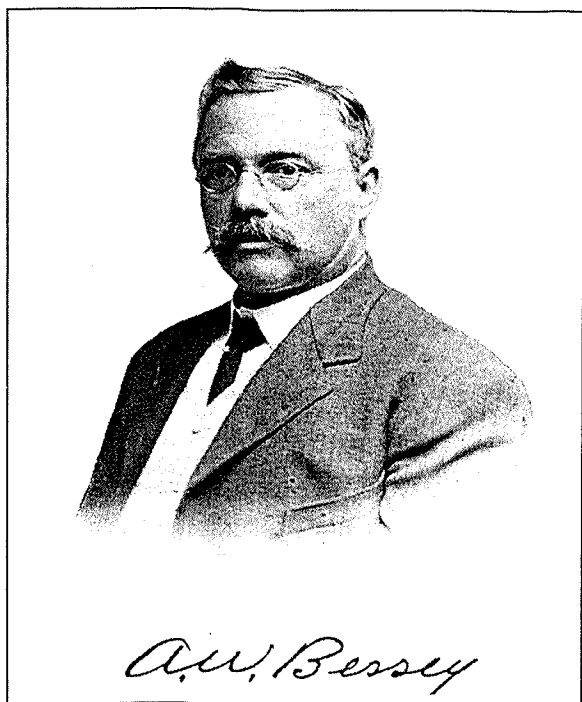
Our Society is affiliated with the Ontario Historical Society.

Our NEW website is: <http://stcatharineshistory.wordpress.com/>

# ***June 2008 Newsletter***

**Thursday, June 5 – 7:30 p.m.**

## **Preview Showing of “ECHO OF THE FUTURE: A Tale of Sunnyvale”**



By special permission of the producer a Canadian Preview Showing in partnership with the St. Catharines Public Library will be held in the:

**Mills Room of the St. Catharines Public Library, downtown.**

This 47-minute-long DVD highlights the founding of Sunnyvale, California, where the electronics industry was started by former St. Catharines residents Albert Bessey and his son Arthur. The early years of radio manufacturing, radio broadcasting, heritage destruction and the opening of the new Sunnyvale Museum in September will be detailed in the Premiere held to celebrate the occasion.

**Saturday, June 7 - departing at 8:00 a.m.**

## **13th Annual Historical Theme Bus Tour**

This year's tour will feature the Historic Sharon Temple and Heritage Complex located in the Newmarket area. The motor coach will depart from the Market Square, King Street at 8:00 a.m. and return between 4:00 and 5:00 p.m. Cost is \$40 per person. Reservations: Brenda Zadoroznij e-mail [bzadoroz@becon.org](mailto:bzadoroz@becon.org) - tel. 905-935-3025. This trip will include the colourful commentary of John Burtiak and feature an additional attraction on the return bus ride. Lunch will be at a pre determined location at your own cost.

**Thursday, July 3 – 7:00 p.m.**

## **William Hamilton Merritt Birthday Commemoration**

A commemoration of the July 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday of William Hamilton Merritt will take place at the Merritt Statue at the corner of St. Paul Street and McGuire Street.

*At the Annual Meeting, the following were elected to the Board:*

**Your 2008 Board of Directors of the Historical Society of St. Catharines**

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

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

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 - e-mail [Leightonbarry@yahoo.ca](mailto:Leightonbarry@yahoo.ca) - tel. 905-934-7733

Director - Paul Hutchinson - e-mail [slabtown@cogeco.ca](mailto:slabtown@cogeco.ca) - 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 - David Sharron - e-mail [david\\_sharron@hotmail.com](mailto:david_sharron@hotmail.com) - tel. 905-684-5355

Director - Elizabeth Finnie - e-mail [finnies@sympatico.ca](mailto:finnies@sympatico.ca) - tel. 905-684-4416

**It's your website – <http://stcatharineshistory.wordpress.com>**

By David Sharron

Our new website has been in operation for a couple of months now and it is starting to work as intended. Now is a good time to describe some of the features of the website.

First, the website is hosted by the blogging website WordPress. Blogging software invites you, the reader, to contribute to the website. Every entry to the site has a link at the end that says either “No Comment” or “Comment.” By clicking on this, you can add to the historical conversation. If there is a note or update that you want to talk about, your views will be placed on the website. It is a great way to discuss historical points, voice your opinions and participate in the Society.

Secondly, the website can work for you. Along the left-hand column, you will find two orange and white icons under the heading “Subscribe.” These are RSS feeds. When subscribed to, RSS feeds check for changes to the website and notifies you. This way you do not have to visit the website at random to see the most up-to-date information. If a new entry or comment is made, a message will appear in your favourite tab on your Internet browser telling you about the changes.

The other advantage to the new website is that adding new information to the website is much easier. It is so easy and instantaneous that anyone can initiate a news item. If there is anything relating to the Historical Society that you would like to announce or contribute, e-mail the text to David Sharron ([david\\_sharron@hotmail.com](mailto:david_sharron@hotmail.com)) or Marilyn Gomme ([marigomme@cogeco.ca](mailto:marigomme@cogeco.ca)) and we can add it to the website. So, if you discovered a new website that others would enjoy, found a historical tidbit to share (an important date in history, an anniversary, etc.), or wanted to announce something, pass it on and we will share it with the rest of the Society.

We encourage members to take advantage of the website. Visit it often. And be a part of it. It is yours to enjoy – <http://stcatharineshistory.wordpress.com>.

**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: September 2008** - Deadline for submissions for the next issue is August 10, 2008.

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

## **Report of the Membership Meeting of February 28**

Held in the Burgoyne Room, St. Catharines Museum at Lock 3.

President John Burtiak opened the meeting at 7:35 pm. and welcomed those present. He noted that the latest newsletter is available and thanked editor Bill Stevens for his work.

The Bus Trip will be on June 7th this year and we will be visiting the Sharron Temple in Newmarket and possibly Pickering College. The Oille Potting Ceremony is on May 10th and will be combined with the designation of the former Grantham Township Hall building by the St. Catharines Heritage Committee. David Sharron from Special Collections at Brock asked for help identifying a photograph of St. Catharines. The speakers for the evening, Professors Carmela Patrias and Larry Savage were introduced by Maurice Gomme. Their presentation "The History of the Labour Movement in St Catharines" was illustrated with a power point presentation. Professor Patrias talked about the labour movement in earlier times and mentioned specifically the 1938 Textile Workers strike and the 1941 autoworkers strike at McKinnon's. Professor Savage talked of the labour movement in the post-war era, especially relating to the union fundraising for the building of Brock University and the 'Strike Wave' across Canada in 1972-76. They also discussed the changing face of the labour movement.

The speakers were thanked by Alun Hughes. Refreshments and Social followed.

## **Report of the Membership Meeting of March 27**

Held in the Burgoyne Room, St. Catharines Museum at Lock 3

President John Burtiak opened the meeting at 7:35 pm. and welcomed those present.

He reminded members about the bus trip, the Oille Potting Ceremony and the Merritt Birthday Celebration.

David Sharron announced that the Society has a new website and encouraged members to visit it.

Other announcements included the formation of 'The Friends of the St Catharines Museum' and the upcoming O.H.S. AGM on June 13-14 at the University of Guelph.

John Burtiak again asked for a volunteer to look after refreshments for the meetings.

The speaker for the evening, Alun Hughes, was introduced by Maurice Gomme.

The Society was treated to another information-packed presentation by Professor Alun Hughes.

Entitled "Lord' Simcoe, Lady Godiva and the Naming of Niagara's Townships," the talk looked at how many of the townships, towns and other places in the Niagara Peninsula and elsewhere in Ontario were named during the tenure of Lieutenant-Governor John Simcoe in the 1790s. Beginning with a wide view of Upper Canada, Alun demonstrated that many of the counties in Upper Canada were named directly after the counties along the eastern coast of England - starting with Kent and all the way through Northumberland. The Niagara Peninsula was given the name Lincoln County after Lincolnshire County in England. As such, many of the place names within Lincoln County have their roots in Lincolnshire - examples: Gainsborough, Grantham, Grimsby, Louth, Newark (now Niagara-on-the-Lake), Saltfleet, Stamford and the Welland River. Other place names stem from influential individuals and families, such as Sir John Thorold, the Pelham family and Clinton family. Still more names were to come much later or were derived from contemporary First Nation place names.

One of the most interesting findings from Alun's presentation was the discovery that Simcoe's reputation of not being in favour of First Nation place names is false, according to surviving evidence.

For generations, Simcoe has carried a legacy for changing established First Nation names to English names, such as Toronto being changed to York and Niagara to Newark. Alun proved that the shift to these new place names had occurred prior to Simcoe's appointment as Lieutenant-Governor. Plus, Simcoe was more apt to change place names of French and German origins rather than First Nation. More importantly to this area, Simcoe openly advocated that Newark be renamed Niagara later in his term.

The English government agreed and adopted this change.

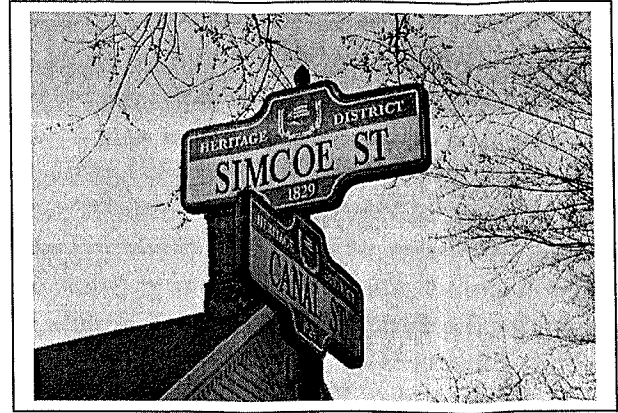
Alun proved once again that there are many errors in our history that are taken as fact after years of retelling and misinterpretation. With sound research and use of good evidence, these local myths can be corrected.

The speaker was thanked by Elizabeth Finnie. Refreshments and Social followed.

## **ENJOY SIMCOE DAY! (editor's title)**

Monday, August 4 (better known as the Civic Holiday)

This is Opening Ceremonies and Practice Day for many crews that will be participating in the Royal Canadian Henley Regatta, which starts on Tuesday and runs through Sunday on the world-famous Henley rowing course in the historic Old Port Dalhousie area of St. Catharines. A great view of the course can be found near the corner of Simcoe Street and Canal Street, the course being on the former old First and Second Welland Canal routes.



### **An Interesting Poem**

**MARION**

Dedicated to Miss Marion Hope Nelson

Angels guard her while she sleeps –  
Marion, with her soft grey eyes;  
With thy wings her dark hair waving  
Gently as a zephyr sighs.

Tell her, tell her if she wakes,  
What her heart's love is to me!  
Tell her I am weary, weary,  
Thinking of what cannot be.

This poem was written on December 1, 1902

and appears on page 29 of a 100-page booklet titled *A Glimpse into My Garden Short Poems by Thornapple* and printed in Thorold by the Thorold Post Printing & Publishing Company.

Thornapple is the pseudonym of Blanche Jennings Thompson. Marion Hope (Nelson) Hooker became a well known painter who learned her skills from Charles Blisset Millner here in St. Catharines.

If her eyes should darken then,  
Slowly, as with growing pain,  
Brush her eyelids, oh so gently,  
That my love may sleep again.

Give her dreams of crystal rivers  
Sparkling through the livelong day;  
Say, O say not I am weeping  
At the parting of our way!

Angels, guard the path between!  
Stretch thy wings o'er her and me!  
I am weary, weary, weary,  
Thinking of what cannot be.

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## **2008 Membership**

The Society wants you to bring along a friend to any one of our program meetings and encourage others to join. Let's try and reach the 200 membership mark!

Individual \$10.00 or Family \$15.00 - Make cheque payable to: The Historical Society of St. Catharines.

### **Early Bird Membership Renewal Winner Announced!**

Congratulations to Richard and Monica Taylor who won the Early Bird Membership Renewal Draw

### **A Warm Welcome To Our New Members**

Lorraine Westhouse; John and Jean Bullivant.

### **At the St. Catharines Museum**

Visit the St. Catharines Museum and view the exhibit titled "Satisfaction Guaranteed: The Mail Order Catalogue in Canada" on exhibit from June 2 through August 31. Don't forget the Dragon Boat Festival on Saturday, July 26 on Martindale Pond. Competitors, volunteers and spectators are all welcome to Henley Island.

### **St. Catharines Sports Hall of Fame**

Congratulations to Ken Croft, Norm Defelice, Bob Gear, John Mouradian and Neil Stevens on being inducted into the St. Catharines Sports Hall of Fame. The ceremony took place on April 29, 2008 at Club Roma. The Hall of Fame is located within the St. Catharines Museum.

### **Stone Cairn in Grantham Avenue Park**

There is a stone cairn located in Grantham Avenue Park that I believe was placed there to honour Elva Stoneman who lived across the street from the park. No inscription is on the marker. Mrs. Stoneman was the first president of the Grantham Women's Institute in 1914.

Her husband William James Stoneman died on February 9, 1917 in Grantham Township and is buried in Victoria Lawn Cemetery. This is all that I have been able to find and I am not even certain that this is the cairn, so if you can add anything more to this research, please contact Bill Stevens at my e-mail: bibmstev@computan.on.ca

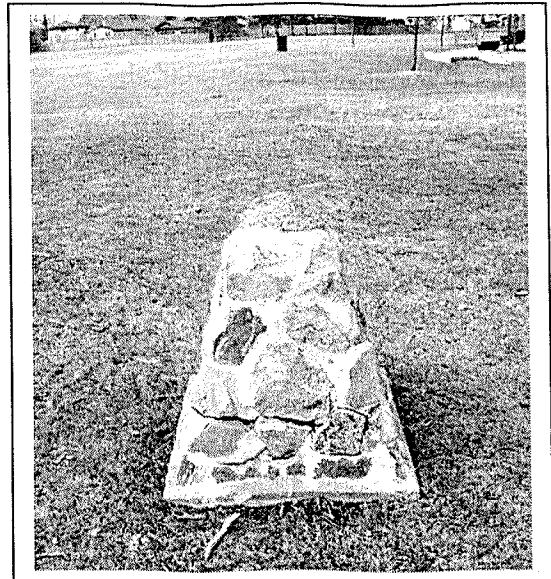


photo by Bill Stevens

### **Society Donates Another Book!**

As reported in the March 2008 *Newsletter* your Executive has established a policy of acquiring rare or missing items that complement the already extensive local collection of the St. Catharines Public Library's Special Collections.

An example of the first category is the recent donation of a reprint of radical abolitionist John Brown's *Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the People of the United States*. Originally, it was thought the pamphlet had been published by Brown (1800-1859) following his Convention in Chatham, Canada West, of 8-10 May 1858. But an earlier 1949 reprint established that, in fact, it was printed in St. Catharines before that Convention. The copy acquired for the Library is a 1969 facsimile edition of the 1949 reprint, complete with preface that says the 1858 *Provisional Constitution* was prepared by Brown with the help of an itinerant printer by the name of William Howard Day. Past Society President Dennis Gannon has confirmed, by tracking down contemporary local newspaper references, the details both of Brown's stay in our City before going on to Chatham and of Day's involvement in the project.

As to the second category, in April a fifth volume of Middleton and Landon's classic *The Province of Ontario: a History, 1615-1927* showed up on the internet and was quickly purchased. The first four volumes (two of history, two of contemporary biographical sketches) had been acquired by the Library when first published in 1927. But for some reason, the fifth volume published a year later was never added. Your Society has now corrected that oversight. (To show the comparative rarity of this volume in the set, neither Brock University nor the National Library of Canada have as yet added it to their collection!) submitted by Alex Ormston

### **Meeting Reminder – Thursday, May 22 – 7:30 p.m – Pat Menon will tell us all about W.B. Allan, a St. Catharines Architect. At the St. Catharines Museum**

#### ***Coming Up in September***

Thursday, September 25 – 7:30 p.m. – Denis Cahill will be our speaker. His topic: "From Glass Negatives to Digital Images: How *The Standard's* Negative Collection was created." There will also be a complimentary exhibit at the Museum.

## TERRORIST ATTACKS ON THE WELLAND CANAL

At about sunset on April 21, 1900, the peace and quiet of Thorold was shattered by a huge explosion, quickly followed by another. The blasts shook houses nearby, broke windows over a wide area, and were heard as far away as Port Dalhousie. Terrorists had dynamited Lock 24 of the Third Welland Canal.

The canal was a vital link in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence transportation system, and the aim of the attack was to destroy that link. It became headline news across the country, and since then has become firmly entrenched in local lore. This, however, was not the first terrorist attack on the canal, nor was it to be the last.

### **"Rob Roy," 1841**

The first attack took place 60 years earlier, on the First Welland Canal at Allanburg in the centre of Thorold Township. At about 11 p.m. on September 9, 1841, a charge of gunpowder was exploded at the head of the upper of two locks in the village. One of the lock gates was completely destroyed, and a disastrous flood was averted only when the sudden rush of water caused the guard gate above the lock to slam shut. A spare gate, stored nearby in case of an accident, was quickly installed, and navigation resumed by noon the following day. A reward of £100 was offered for information leading to the arrest of the "evil disposed persons" responsible, but they were never identified, let alone caught.

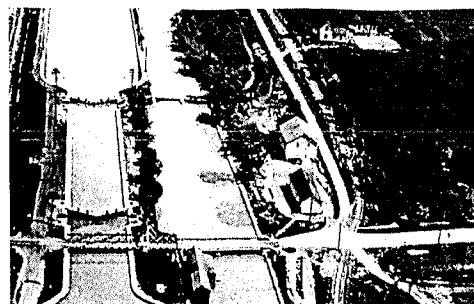
There was much speculation as to who they were, most of it easily dismissed as wild rumour. But three strangers had been seen in the area prior to the attack and the local consensus was that they had come from Buffalo. Only the previous year in April 1840, the monument to Isaac Brock on Queenston Heights had been badly damaged by gunpowder. Though nothing was ever proven, suspicion fell on Benjamin Lett, an Irish-born Canadian who as a member of Mackenzie's Patriots had been conducting guerilla operations from the United States since 1838, gaining him the sobriquet "The Rob Roy of Upper Canada." Though he was arrested by the American authorities on another matter after the Queenston incident, he escaped and was still at large when the lock was bombed. Lett, or others sympathetic to the rebel cause, may well have been responsible for the Allanburg attack.

Whoever it was, the assault caused considerable anxiety in the Niagara Peninsula. The War of 1812 was still in living memory, the Mackenzie Rebellion of 1837 was barely over, and after the attack on Brock's monument the frontier was patrolled by

regular troops. Not only was the political situation unstable, but industry, commerce and finance were a mess. Major changes were underway — the government had bought out the financially-strapped Welland Canal Company, construction had begun on the Second Canal, and Upper and Lower Canada had just been united into the Province of Canada. Change brought uncertainty, and the terrorist attack at Allanburg did not help calm nerves.

### **"Dynamite Luke," 1900**

If the perpetrators of the 1841 attack are unknown, there is no doubt about those responsible for the attack in 1900. The two culprits, John Nolin and John Walsh, arrived in Thorold on April 21 by the evening train from Niagara Falls (the "Buffalo Express"), each clutching a "canvas-covered telescope valise," a type of adjustable carrying case, containing dynamite. They alighted at the Thorold station of the St. Catharines and Niagara Central Railway (later the NS&T), located at the head of Front Street where the Thorold Community Credit Union now stands. They then walked back along the tracks that curved in a south-easterly direction towards Chapel Street, and crossed the Third Canal by the bridge leading to Niagara Falls (just beyond the present-day Peter Street Bridge).

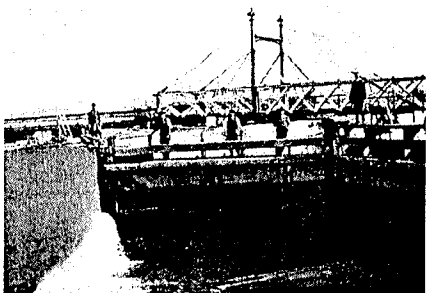


*Lock 24 looking north, with the bridge and road to Niagara Falls at bottom and the Constable home at top right*

Lock 24 of the Third Canal was located just north of the bridge, east of Lock 7 on the present canal. Nolin went to the head of the lock and Walsh to the foot. They lowered the valises by rope alongside the lock gates, ignited the fuses and ran off towards Thorold Stone Road and Niagara Falls. Walsh's dynamite exploded a few minutes after 7 o'clock and Nolin's a moment later.

Fortunately for those who lived downstream, the charges were placed at the gate hinges, not inside the V where the gates met, so the damage was relatively slight. Had the gates been destroyed the outcome

would have been very serious indeed, for upstream from Lock 24 was a mile-long reach containing an estimated 12 million cubic feet of water. While this would not have killed everyone in Merritton, as some alarmist reports claimed, it would certainly have resulted in loss of life and property, and would have put the canal out of commission for some time. As it was, all that happened was that holes were blown in the gates, and the damage was easily repaired. The canal, which had been closed for the winter, opened on schedule.



*Lock 24 showing water pouring through the head gate*

The residents of Thorold soon realized what had happened, and Mayor James Wilson and Police Chief Adelbert Clark formed a "posse" to pursue the "dynamitards." It was split into three parties, each taking a different route. The Mayor and Chief went down Thorold Stone Road by carriage, and soon caught up with the bombers, but instead of apprehending them continued to Niagara Falls to warn the police. This was a wise move, for when Nolin and Walsh were captured on Bridge Street they were carrying loaded revolvers. Very soon after another arrest was made — of Karl Dullman, who was staying at the Rosli Hotel nearby. Several witnesses had seen him with the others in Thorold and Niagara Falls in the week preceding the attack.

There was only one witness to the bombing itself, 16-year-old Euphemia Constable, who lived on Cemetery Road just north of Lock 24. She saw Nolin and Walsh lower the valises alongside the lock gates, but was struck unconscious by the first blast. The following morning (a Sunday) she was the centre of attention as she walked to St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church escorted by a red-coated militiaman, one of two who had guarded her home overnight. Euphemia was a prime witness, and there was concern that she might be abducted, especially when rumour spread that four strange women had been asking around town where she lived.

The military was very much in evidence in the days following the attack. The 19th St. Catharines battalion of infantry was sent to guard Lock 25, and immediately became the centre of controversy when local MP William McCleary complained that they had to borrow ammunition from private sources! Soldiers ringed the jail in Niagara Falls where the prisoners were first held, and at the preliminary hearing on April 30 the court house in Welland was

swarming with redcoats, rifles in hand and bayonets fixed, while other soldiers patrolled the aqueduct nearby. The military continued to guard the canal during the trial, often with humorous outcomes, as when the "sojers" at Port Robinson mistook a tramp and then a black dog for terrorists.



*Euphemia Constable*

At first the authorities had no idea who the bombers were, except that they came from the United States. Speculation was rampant, and early suspicion fell on Buffalo grain handlers, who had been engaged in a bitter dispute with their employer, the Conners Syndicate. The Syndicate was building grain elevators in Port Colborne and Montreal, which threatened to divert trade from Buffalo and the Erie Canal to the Welland Canal and the St. Lawrence. Other theories suggested that the attack was the work of Boer sympathizers (the Boer War was approaching a conclusion in South Africa), or Irish nationalists, or some combination of the two. It was some time before the attack was shown conclusively to be an Irish-American plot.

This followed ten days of investigation in the United States by Chief Inspector John Wilson Murray, arguably Ontario's leading detective of the day. He found that Nolin and Walsh were both Irish-born members of the Napper Tandy club of New York. This was a branch of Clan-na-Gael, the successor organization to the Fenian Brotherhood, which had been responsible for the Fenian raids in Niagara in 1866. However, Murray had no information about Dullman, the suspected ringleader, but since "Karl Dullman" turned out to be an assumed name this was not surprising.

If the case against Nolin and Walsh was ironclad, the evidence against Dullman was largely circumstantial, and his lawyer did his best to disassociate him from the other two. But the effort failed, and on May 25 all the accused — who had not testified on their own behalf but maintained a "rigid silence" in the face of over 50 witnesses — were found guilty and sentenced to life in prison.

The verdict must have pleased John H. Thompson, proprietor of the *Thorold Post*, who had earlier described the trio in most unflattering terms. Dullman was "fat, pockmarked, yellow ... looks like the manager of a medicine wagon or a 'Sapho' burlesque." Walsh was "smooth shaven, with big rabbit teeth; his mouth is always open, and he has a



hairless and vacant face ... would be called a gossoon in his native land." Nolin was "what biologists call a low-browed pug-ugly ... the type of man that cleans spittoons because he has not enough enterprise to be a burglar." Dullman was the "slick man" of the trio, while the others were "degenerate outcasts." All in all they were "about the toughest looking specimens of humanity imaginable."



*John Walsh and John Nolin*

The three were incarcerated in Kingston Penitentiary, and it was not until two years later that Dullman's true identity became known. He turned out to be Luke Dillon, a leading member of Clan-na-Gael with an impressive pedigree of terrorist activity. His parents left Ireland for England during the potato famine, and he was born in Leeds in 1848. After emigrating to the United States he served in the army and worked as a shoemaker and bank teller. Though he had never set foot in Ireland (and never did so throughout his life), he became active in the nationalist movement, and allied himself with a faction in Clan-na-Gael that favoured extensive use of dynamite. (The group's slogan was "Not one cent for blatherskite, every cent for dynamite!") In 1884 he was part of a group that bombed Scotland Yard and the Junior Carleton Club in London. The following year he was involved in an explosion at the House of Commons and an attempt to destroy London Bridge.

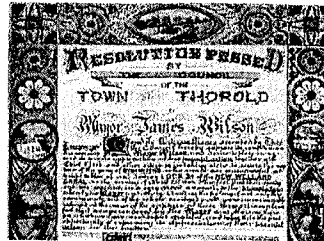


*Luke Dillon, a.k.a. Karl Dullman*

Dillon, known as "Dynamite Luke" in the Irish underground, was clearly well qualified to launch an attack on the Welland Canal, and his exploits were later commemorated in song in *The Ballad of Luke Dillon — The Hardest Man of All*. One of the nine verses reads as follows:

At the Welland Canal they captured me,  
My secrets I would not tell,  
The Orange warden cursed me hard  
As I sang in my prison cell,  
"Go to hell you Limey warden,  
You can screw me to the wall!  
You'll never break Luke Dillon!  
I'm the hardest man of all."

Dillon never did admit his guilt, and though he was clearly involved in the canal plot the clumsy manner in which it was carried out suggests that the other two may have done the detailed planning. Clan-na-Gael mounted a major campaign for his release, and took it to the highest levels of government in Canada and the United States, arguing that his sentence was much more severe than for others convicted of similar crimes. In 1908 Dillon's wife even wrote a plea to President Theodore Roosevelt, testifying to his service in the American army and his qualities as a father. Eventually, on July 12, 1914, at the age of 66, he was set free and deported to the United States, where the "aged and bent ... Irish patriot" was united with his wife and family. Though he never made it to Ireland, he remained an active republican until his death in 1926. As for the other terrorists, Nolin and Walsh, one went insane and died in prison, while the other was released soon after Dillon. But the sources available can't seem to agree on who was which!



*Detail of scroll presented to Mayor Wilson*

On May 3, just two weeks after the attack on Lock 24, Thorold Town Council presented Mayor Wilson with a splendid hand-drawn illuminated scroll in recognition of his role in the capture of the terrorists. It is now in Thorold Historical Museum.

### "Satan in Top Hat," 1914-15

The more recent attacks on the Welland Canal also originated in the United States, but this time it was Germans rather than Irish who were responsible. When World War I broke out in August 1914 the United States remained neutral, understandably so given that Germans were the second largest ethnic group in the country. Germany sought to keep the States neutral and at the same time to impede the flow of war materials and food supplies from North America to the allied powers. This required a combination of diplomacy, espionage and sabotage.



Count Johann von Bernstorff, the German ambassador to the United States, had overall charge of these strategies, but the real work was done by military attaché Captain Franz von Papen, naval attaché Captain Karl Boy-Ed, and commercial attaché Dr. Heinrich Albert. With Bernstorff in Washington, the others set up offices in New York City and began seeking out recruits. One of the very first to be enlisted, at the very start of the war, was Horst von der Goltz, this with a view to destroying the Welland Canal. The aim was not only to cripple a vital supply route from Canada to Britain, but also to create such panic among the Canadian people that the troops training for Europe at the newly-established Valcartier camp in Quebec would be forced to remain home to defend Canada.



*Franz von Papen and Horst von der Goltz*

As befits someone involved in espionage, Goltz's background is full of mystery, and he came to the States following a stint in the Mexican army (which included, so he claimed, no fewer than three last-minute reprieves from death by firing squad). Barely a month into the war he had met with Papen, acquired dynamite and plans of the canal (the latter apparently from Irish Americans), and lined up accomplices. They took a train to Buffalo, where they stayed for a few days, possibly crossing the border to reconnoitre the canal. Goltz even claimed to have flown over the Niagara River by aeroplane. But then, for reasons that are not entirely clear, they suddenly returned to New York City.

Goltz's explanation was that he received news that the troops had left Valcartier on September 23 (this would have been the 30,000-strong First Division of the Canadian Expeditionary Force), which removed a prime motive for an attack on the canal. But it could also be that the canal was too well guarded — the Welland Canal Force, recruited largely from two militia regiments, the 19th Lincoln and the 44th Lincoln and Welland, was in position within hours of the declaration of war. According to one participant, however, the real problem was the amount of time Goltz, who seems to have enjoyed the high life, spent carousing in Buffalo instead of concentrating on the task at hand.

Goltz was recalled to Germany, travelling on an American passport obtained illegally under the name Bridgeman Taylor. By his own account he was

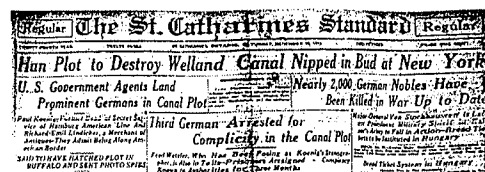
then directed back to America, but on returning via London he was recognized by a Russian agent. Fearing that his cover was blown, he offered his services to the British authorities, without however mentioning the Welland Canal. Understandably suspicious, the British jailed him "for failing to register as an alien enemy" — a technical offence, but enough to keep Goltz in custody while further investigations were made. As it happens, this was a very prescient move.

Meanwhile, Papen and his cohorts engaged in a variety of subversive activities in the United States, including the acquisition of fraudulent passports to enable German reservists to return home and German spies to enter Britain, plans to place explosives on allied ships leaving American ports, attempts to foment labour unrest that would impede the export of munitions and other supplies to Britain, and dynamite attacks on the International Bridge linking Maine and Quebec and on facilities at Walkerville and Windsor in Ontario. Some of these involved Paul Koenig, Police Superintendent for the Hamburg-American shipping line, and it was Koenig that Papen engaged in early September 1915 to lead another attack on the Welland Canal.



*Paul Koenig*

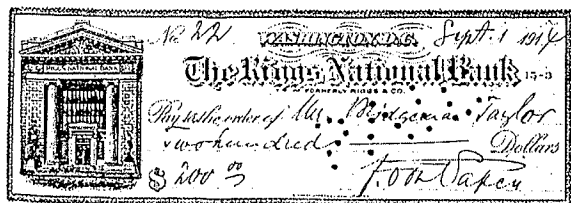
In some respects this second attempt was much like the first. On September 27 Koenig and his co-conspirators (who included his wife) proceeded to Buffalo. He booked into a hotel under the name Mundy, one of 13 different aliases, German, Irish and English, that he was known to use. Like Goltz before him, he spent some time surveying the canal — an unnamed retired St. Catharines manufacturer later recalled seeing Koenig and his wife in Port Dalhousie — but then abruptly called off the mission. Koenig's reasons were twofold: the canal was very well guarded, and he suspected (correctly) that he was being trailed by American secret service agents. In fact they had been watching him from the beginning, but lacked evidence to make an arrest. It was only after tapping his phone following his return to New York City that they were able to do so, and he was charged on December 17.



*Newspaper headline on December 18, 1915*

Just six days later Papen was on his way back to Germany, having been expelled from the United States (together with naval attaché Boy-Ed) for activities that violated its neutral status. The documents found in Koenig's office obviously implicated Papen, but his fate was sealed well before their discovery. German Embassy personnel had been under surveillance by the secret service since mid-May, and two lucky breaks in July and August yielded conclusive evidence of their guilt. The first came when commercial attaché Albert left a briefcase full of incriminating documents unattended on the Sixth Avenue El (the elevated railway), where it was picked up by the American agent who had been trailing him. A month later, American journalist James Archibald, whom Papen had persuaded to carry (illegally) a pouch of documents to Berlin, was pulled off his ship by the British and the documents confiscated. Among them was a letter from Papen to his wife in which he spoke of "these idiotic Yankees," a remark that did not endear him to the American public.

Papen's problems were not over. As a diplomat he was guaranteed safe-conduct back to Germany, but when the Dutch ship on which he sailed put in at the English port of Falmouth on January 2, 1916 the British impounded a suitcase-full of receipts, cheque stubs, cancelled cheques, letters and documents further implicating the German Embassy in Washington. The safe-conduct applied to Papen himself, but not, argued the British, to his luggage. Among the items confiscated were cheques made out to Koenig and Goltz, the latter under his alias Bridgeman Taylor. Goltz was still in a British jail, and when confronted with the new evidence he freely admitted to his role and that of Papen in plotting to blow up the Welland Canal. Having been granted immunity from prosecution, he was returned to the United States on March 28 to testify at the trial of Hans Tauscher, who had supplied the dynamite for the attack. As a result of this Papen was formally indicted by Grand Jury, though as a diplomat he was not going to be called to account.

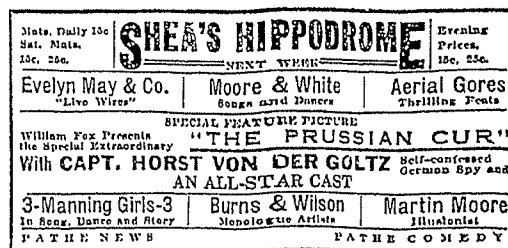


Cheque from Papen to Goltz a.k.a. Bridgeman Taylor

What was the fate of the three principals, Papen, Koenig and Goltz? About Papen we know a great deal. After serving in World War I he entered politics, and in 1932 was appointed Chancellor of Germany (at which point the American indictment was quietly dropped). Forced to resign a year later for lack of support, he was nonetheless instrumental in helping Hitler gain power, and served as Hitler's Vice-Chancellor and later as Ambassador to Austria

and Turkey. Called "Satan in Top Hat" by one biographer, he was tried at Nuremberg, but was acquitted on the grounds that "political immoralities" were not war crimes.

About Koenig we know nothing, but Goltz is another matter. In 1917, only a year after testifying at Tauscher's trial, he brought out a 288-page book called *My Adventures as a German Secret Agent*, in which he laid bare his entire career, though how much is fact and how much the product of a fertile imagination is unclear. Two years later he was starring in a movie called *The Prussian Cur*. This was one of a series of films made by Hollywood at the behest of the Committee for Public Information, established in 1917 to prepare the American people for entry into the war. The movies were classic propaganda, designed to portray Germans in the worst possible light, as is evident from titles like *The Claws of the Hun*, *To Hell with the Kaiser* and *The Kaiser, the Beast of Berlin*.



Movie advertisement featuring Horst von der Goltz

There were at least two other plots against the Welland Canal during World War I, though neither came to anything. The first involved a most unlikely culprit — Harry L. Newton, a foreman in the munitions plant established at the McKinnon Dash and Hardware Company in St. Catharines as part of the war effort. In April 1916 he was arrested in Buffalo with a bomb he had smuggled across the border. His motives were purely mercenary, for as he told police posing as German agents, he was prepared to blow up the canal or any munitions factory for \$5000. He proposed to bomb the canal "from a boat ... and [he] would carry the dynamite past the guards in a dinner pail." The second plot, the brainwave of "Count" Max Lynar Loudon, would have seen the Welland Canal seized as part of a huge invasion of Canada by an army of 150,000 German reservists based in the United States. A fund of \$10 million was established, arms were stashed in secret locations, and men were recruited, but nothing was done. The end finally came in October 1915 when Loudon was arrested on a charge of bigamy...

**Principal Sources** (in addition to those cited in text): *Globe*, 1900, 1915-16, 1919; *New York Times*, 1900, 1914-17; *St. Catharines Journal*, 1841; *St. Catharines Standard*, 1900, 1915-16; *Thorold Post*, 1900; *Times of London*, 1884-85; *Papers Found [on] Archibald*, 1915; *Papers Found [on] von Papen*, 1916; Brannigan, "The Luke Dillon Case and the Welland Canal Explosion of 1900"; Clark, *The Irish Relations*; Green, "The Fearful Forties of Welland County"; Jones, *America Entangled*; Koeves, *Satan in Top Hat*; Murray, *Memoirs of a Great Detective*; O'Brien and Ryan, *Devoy's Post Bag*; Rogers, *History of Lincoln & Welland Regiment*; von Papen, *Memoirs*.