



## **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 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.

## **March 2006 Newsletter**

### **Spring Meeting and Speaker Programs**

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

Thursday, **March 23** - Alun Hughes, Department of Geography, Brock University - "Too Many Cath(a/e)rines - the Founding and Naming of the Garden City"

Thursday, **April 27** - Hannelore Headley, St. Catharines Antiquarian Book Seller - "A Half Century of Bibliophile Pleasures"

Thursday, **May 25** - Michael Peterman - English Literature, Trent University - "James McCarroll" - poet, contributor to the first Ontario Magazines and proprietor of two journals.

### **Notice of Annual Meeting – Thursday, April 27, 2006 – 7:30 p.m.**

To be held in the Burgoyne Room, St. Catharines Museum, 1932 Welland Canals Parkway, St. Catharines.

#### ***Agenda***

Call to order, President's Report, Minutes of previous annual meeting (held April 28, 2005 and published in *June 2005 Newsletter*), Financial Report, Auditor's Report, Nominations and Elections, Amendments to Constitution, Any other business properly brought before the membership, Close of formal meeting, Guest Speaker, Announcements, Social.

#### ***Nominations and Elections***

Note: The following were elected to a two-year term last year and are not up for election at this annual meeting: President – Bill Stevens; Past President – John Burtiniak; Vice President – Paul Lewis; Secretary – Brenda Zadoroznij; Treasurer – Chris Loat.

The following have been nominated for a one-year term as Directors (maximum six to be elected) – Joyce DeForest, Dee Dickman, Maurice Gomme, Bill Harder, Paul Hutchinson, Joe Muscat.

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## ***Reminder: 2006 Calendar Year Membership Renewal***

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**NOTICE:** The Society issues annual membership cards to paid-up members. If you have paid your dues and do not have a membership card yet, please contact Bill Harder or Bill Stevens.

Individual \$10.00 or Family \$15.00 - Make Cheque Payable to - The Historical Society of St. Catharines

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Individual \_\_\_\_\_ or Family \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_; e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

### **Membership Matters**

***Our Sympathies:*** The Society extends our sympathies to the family of longtime Society member James Purdie, who passed away on Thursday, January 12, 2006. Jim was a former member of the Board of Directors, a member of the Bruce Trail Association and a Board member of the Canadian Canal Society.

***Welcome to New Members:*** H. A. Patrick Little, Julie Aylward, Roberta Styran, Wayne Smiley, Allen Stokely, Peter Vietgen, Betty Edmonds, Kurt Heidebrecht, Ruth Heidebrecht.

***Members in the News:*** Dr. John Bacher's picture appeared on the front page of *The Standard* issue of Saturday, January 14, 2006 along with his views on the Hamilton and Niagara Waste Study.

***Nominating Committee:*** Only Directors are elected this year and up to 6 can be elected. Anyone wishing to nominate someone, or be nominated, is asked to speak to John Burtiniak.

***Appointment of Auditors:*** Society members Janet Lewis and Ted Crabtree have been appointed auditors.

### **Upcoming Program on Saturday, June 10**

***Oille Fountain Planting:*** will take place at 10:00 a.m. at the fountain, corner James and King streets.

***Victoria Lawn Walking Tour:*** as part of Victoria Lawn Cemetery's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, a walking tour featuring "Past Mayors of St. Catharines" will take place at 2:00 p.m.

### **Grant Received**

The Society received a Heritage Organization Development Grant of \$831 to assist in our 2005/2006 operations. The Province of Ontario plays an active role in community and economic development, by providing resources for organizations such as ours. Ontario has a proud culture, diverse in languages, histories and traditions. Our richest communities are those in which culture and heritage are nurtured and thrive. The Society is grateful for the grant.

### **November Show and Tell**

It was a winter night for sure, but 42 members enjoyed the warmth of our annual Show and Tell and Christmas social. Twenty-two members brought items of all sorts. Each year, the question is, how long can we continue this event, but we always seem to fill our hour with interesting artifacts, pictures, books, mementoes and art works. We thank all those who shared their treasures with us.

### **January Meeting - Street Names of St. Catharines**

A beautiful winter evening saw 64 members and guests attend our January 26<sup>th</sup> meeting at the St. Catharines Museum. Our program for the evening featured Society member Maurice Gomme, who has spent the past year researching the street names of St. Catharines. In the course of an hour, he presented an over view of the project and the history surrounding the naming of over 25 streets. He indicated that he now has information on over 500, but lots of work remains and any contribution of information is welcome. Following the presentation, he opened up his research notes for those wishing to see information on a particular street of interest. Thank you Maurice for a great presentation!

### **Donation to British Methodist Episcopal Church**

The BME Church on Geneva Street celebrated its 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2005. In recognition of these milestone, the Society Board of Directors decided that a donation of \$250.00 would be made towards the ongoing cost of maintaining this important National Historic Site. The BME Church members have thanked the Society for this donation.

### **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: June 2006 - Deadline for submission of articles or notices is May 1<sup>st</sup>.**

## **Highlights of Society Activities in 2005**

January 27 – Speaker – Sheila Wilson – History of the St. Catharines Public Library – attendance 54

Street Names of St. Catharines – project underway

February 24 – Speaker – Alun Hughes – Captain Dick: Treasure Trove and Toponymic Truth – attendance 58

March – Newsletter published

March 24 – Video – St. Catharines Shipwreck Millennium Project – attendance 44

April 28 – Annual Meeting – Reports and Election of Board of Directors – attendance 66

April 28 – Speaker - David R. Murray – Justice and Crime in Early Niagara

May 26 – Speaker – David Beasley – The Knight of San Fernando Comes to St. Catharines – attendance 41

May 28 - Society participated with display at the St. David's Heritage Festival

June – Newsletter published

June 11 – Annual Bus Tour – Discover Niagara West – attendance – 40

July 2 – Downtown History Day – Oille Fountain Planting Ceremony, Downtown Walking Tour and Merritt Birthday Recognition

September – Newsletter published

September 22 – Speaker – Mark Dobell – St. Catharines Transit: People Moving People Since 1961 – attendance 37

October 15 and 16 – Doors Open Niagara – many Society members assisted at the sites

October 27 – Speaker – John Burtiak – Gettysburg and Lundy's Lane: A Twist on History – attendance 68

Donation – in conjunction with the British Methodist Episcopal Church's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, one of only two National Historic Sites in St. Catharines, the Society made a \$250.00 donation towards the continuing cost of maintaining this important site

November 10 – Historic Places in Niagara Summit – Society President William Stevens represented the Society at this day-long workshop to identify Niagara's Unique Heritage – held at Beacon Motor Inn

November 11- Remembrance Day – Society President William Stevens placed a wreath on behalf of the Society in remembrance of those who made the supreme sacrifice

November 24 – 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Member's Show and Tell and Christmas Social – attendance 42

IODE Park – the Society requested that St. Catharines City Council name the park at the intersection of Church and King streets the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire / IODE Park – Council subsequently passed a motion to do so on December 12, 2005

December – Newsletter published

Membership for 2005 – paid up membership at year-end was 178

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

## **IODE Park and the History of the IODE**

At the November General Membership meeting, Alex Ormston brought forward a motion, which was approved, that the Society request that the City of St. Catharines name the park at the intersection of Church and King streets the IODE park. A letter was prepared by the Society president, who approached Councillor Dawn Dodge, and she agreed to put our request forward as an 'extra' at the November 28 City Council meeting. The request was received and forwarded to Parks staff for a report back to Council. At the December 12<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting, staff recommended that the park be named the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire / IODE Park. Councillor Dodge moved to accept the staff recommendation and the motion passed unanimously.

### **Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire / IODE Park Background**

On April 28, 1902 a local chapter of the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire (I.O.D.E.) was organized and it was subsequently chartered in 1905. The local chapter was very active from the beginning. The chapter was instrumental in organizing the Niagara Peninsula Sanatorium and on October 19, 1909 the local chapter unveiled a tablet to commemorate the furnishing of the Consumptive Hospital, as it was first known. The Sanatorium was subsequently renamed The Shaver Hospital for Chest Diseases in more recent years.

In 1912 another chapter, the St. Catharines Municipal Chapter I.O.D.E., was chartered. This chapter was also very active from the beginning. Early minutes of the Chapter indicate that property was purchased from James M. McBride for the sum of \$1,700.00. A newspaper article in *The Daily Standard*, of September 30, 1913, indicates that the old frame structure formerly used by J. M. McBride as a planing mill has been nearly all torn down to make way for a new park. This property was located at the gore of King Street and Church Street. On Dominion Day 1917, Mrs. Bessie Mulock (1868-1952), a charter member of the new chapter, presented the property to the City of St. Catharines. Mayor W.B. Burgoyne, accepted the gift on behalf of the City. The members wished the property to be designated as "Memorial Park", but this name, was given to the park on St. Paul Street, adjacent to CKTB Radio Station, and the I.O.D.E. lands simply became known as the King-Church Gore. The city continues to do a wonderful job of maintaining this downtown beauty spot.

(The following are excerpts from an article on the Events on Dominion Day in the July 3, 1917 issue of the *St. Catharines Standard*, page 3, column 4)

Another feature of the day's events was the presentation of the deed of the park at the junction of King and Church streets to the city from the City of St. Catharines Chapter I.O.D.E. The presentation took place in the pavilion shortly after the parade had disbanded. Mrs. Dr. Mulock as Regent of the Chapter made the presentation to Mayor Burgoyne. Mrs. Mulock referred to the work of beautification, which the Chapter had done, and how the lot at the corner of King and Church streets was purchased and beautified without using any or the Chapter's patriotic funds. To Mr. Robert Mills she paid tribute for his generous contributions to the beautification of the lot. Mrs. Mulock at the close of her address presented the Mayor with the deed to the lot. Mrs. Williams, Regent of the Municipal Chapter referred to the day as a great one in the history of Canada and remarked on the thousands of school children on parade and was of the opinion that the returned soldiers were glad to note the inspiration of the event and to see the children for whom they have been fighting. She congratulated Mayor Burgoyne upon being head of the city at such a notable time and gave a brief outline of the prosperity of the I.O.D.E. in this city and of the work, which the Society is doing. She referred to the work of beautification undertaken by the St. Catharines Chapter and of the work for the soldiers and their dependents, which is being done by all the chapters. Mayor Burgoyne was deeply honoured to be the recipient of the beautiful lot and accepted it on behalf of the City Council. He congratulated the St. Catharines Chapter for their generosity and also spoke of the generosity of one of St. Catharines former citizens Mr. Robert Mills who donated liberally to the beautification of the lot. To St. Catharines His Worship referred as "The most beautiful small city in the Dominion," and the larger cities could perhaps be included. He congratulated the St. Catharines Chapter for having a large part in the beautific action of the city. And still he saw where much more could be done and which after the war and after our boys had returned victorious, would be accomplished. Members of the St. Catharines Chapter and other chapters of the I.O.D.E., His Honour Judge Campbell and Ald. Gray were among those who witnessed the presentation.

## **The IODE in St. Catharines Today**

According to the IODE Canada web site, the mission of IODE, a Canadian women's charitable organization, is to improve the quality of life for children, youth and those in need, through educational, social service and citizenship programs.

The IODE was founded in 1900 by Margaret Polson Murray as Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire. The IODE, as the organization is now known, has changed over the years to meet the needs of all Canadians from coast to coast, with a particular focus on children and their needs. The name was officially changed to IODE in 1978.

In Ontario the IODE has over 4,000 members in 171 chapters. Membership is open to Canadian women of all ages, backgrounds and interests. In St. Catharines there are two chapters. The Earl Mountbatten Chapter, which was founded in November 1947 by Gertrude Millward. The William Hamilton Merritt Chapter was established on May 6, 1957. Both chapters hold monthly meetings and new members are always welcome. To contact the Earl Mountbatten Chapter, telephone 905-934-4241.

## **Those Who Served as Reeves of Louth Township**

1850 - William ADAMS	1907 - Stewart RANDALL
1851 - D. BRADT	1908 - 1912 – Adam CRAISE
1852 - William ADAMS	1913 - John A. WILLS
1853 - D. BRADT	1914 - 1919 – Charles H. CLAUS
1854 - William ADAMS	1920 - 1921 – Edward W. FRY
1855 - 1858 – G. P. M. BALL	1922 - 1924 – Andrew C. GREGORY
1859 - 1861 – Solomon SECORD	1925 - Samuel C. HONSBERGER
1862 - William ADAMS	1926 - William SCULL
1863 - Nathan H. PAWLING	1927 - 1930 – Melvin HONSBERGER
1864 - Eli GREGORY	1931 - Sol H. RITTENHOUSE
1865 - 1866 – G. P. M. BALL	1932 - 1935 – J. Roland STORK
1867 - 1869 – Nathan H. PAWLING	1936 - 1937 – Harvey FAWELL
1870 - 1876 – Henry WISMER	1938 - 1944 – N. D. MILLER
1877 - 1878 – John D. CROWE	1945 - 1946 – George Edward WILEY
1879 - 1887 – Frank WYATT	1947 - J.R. STORK
1888 - 1893 – Daniel B. RITTENHOUSE	1948 - 1951 – J. D. TAYLOR
1894 - 1896 – William F. WILEY	1952 - 1954 – Charles PLATTS
1897 - 1898 – Mortimer A. BALL	1955 - 1957 – W. Elston HONSBERGER
1899 - 1902 – Elisha STAFF	1958 - 1959 – Herbert S. COLE
1903 - 1904 – Adam CRAISE	1960 - 1963 – Frederick Dawson McKENZIE
1905 - Edward W. FRY	1964 - 1967 – R. H. RITTENHOUSE
1906 - Camby WISMER	1968 - 1969 – Frederick Dawson McKENZIE

## **Become Want to be an Artifact Sleuth?**

Housed in the storage areas of the St. Catharines Museum are thousands of artifacts waiting to be re-discovered! Many need to have their story told, their history presented and documented. The Society is pointing this out to our members, to see if you have any knowledge of even one of these artifacts or would like to learn more about it. Perhaps you have a hobby collecting something and have knowledge of that collectable, an interest, a past use of an artifact and know what it was used for. Volunteer and have fun investigating and writing up an artifact.

The Museum Board has a special committee set up to co-ordinate the researching of artifacts in the Museum's collection. Call Arden Phair at the Museum (905-984-8880) for more information.

## The PROWETT BEYER and Charles Quackenbush

Looking through old city directories can be fun, and one never knows what interesting advertisement you will find. The advertisement here is found in an 1877-1878 *City Directory* of St. Catharines. The Special Collections room in the Library's Downtown branch has many old directories.

One must remember that the automobile had yet to be invented and people used horses, trains and ships. In 1877 the Second Welland Canal was still in use. Remnants of Lock One still remain in old Port Dalhousie. Ships entered the harbour and passed through Lock One near the intersection of

Lakeport Road and Lock Street and into the canal, which ran through today's Rennie Park area and along a route which is now the rowing course and then under the Q.E.W. Henley Bridge. Following the route of Twelve Mile Creek, ships sailed up towards Lock Two located near Welland Vale.

The PROWETT BEYER was constructed in Buffalo, New York in 1874 and originally named the Prowett Boyer. It was registered as the PROWETT BEYER on 21 August 1875 and Port of Registry was St. Catharines. An advertisement in the October 9, 1875 *St. Catharines Daily Times* announces that the steam yacht PROWETT BEYER goes between Port Dalhousie and St. Catharines and that A. Quackenbush is the proprietor.

The ship was built of iron and wood and had a gross tonnage of ten tons, with a net tonnage of six tons. It was 46 feet long, had a breadth of 9 feet and a depth of 4 feet, with steam screw propulsion, and one deck. The hull was built in the Carvel style with a round stern type, no figurehead and unriggering and made of composite hull material.

Charles Quackenbush was born in Fort Erie around 1853 to Alonzo and Elizabeth Quackenbush. Charles is listed on his marriage registration as an engineer, living in Toronto and a member of the Church of England. He married Mary Piouette, daughter of John and Marry Ann, at the residence of William Hutchinson, Port Dalhousie on 11 July 1879 by Rev. John Gribble of the Church of England. This was a couple years after the advertisement appeared in the *City Directory*. Alonzo Quackenbush is listed in the 1865 *Directory* living on Queen Street in Port Dalhousie and shown as a tugboat owner. Alonzo is buried in St. John's Cemetery in Port Dalhousie. The 1877-1878 *Directory* lists four Quackenbush's in Port Dalhousie (Capt. Alonzo, Capt. Conrad, Charles and Edward); Charles is listed as living on the west side of Lock Street. The 1881-1882 *Directory* has two Quackenbush listings in Port Dalhousie: Charles, a tug boat proprietor living on Queen Street near Gertrude; and Connor, also a tug boat proprietor, living at the corner of Lock and Main streets. In the 1881 Census Charles and his wife Mary are shown as having a baby boy, Conrad, born in September 1880.

The PROWETT BEYER burned on Lake Erie on June 18, 1892 and registry closed on July 21, 1892. In the 1898 *Directory* entries for Port Dalhousie show only a Capt. and Mrs. Quackenbush and they are living on Queen Street. A newspaper entry in the March 14, 1900 edition of the *Standard* indicates that Captain C. Quackenbush and family moved to Niagara Falls, New York to take up residence there. What happened to Charles after this is unknown?

The Commodious, Fast Sailing  
**STEAM YACHT FERRY**  
**"PROWETT BEYER"**  
Has resumed her trips between  
**PORT DALHOUSIE & ST. CATHARINES**  
AND WILL RUN AS FOLLOWS UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE:  
Leaves Port Dalhousie, at 8, 10, A.M., 1, 3, 5, P.M.  
Leaves St. Catharines, Lock 2, at 9, 11, A.M., 2, 4, 6, P.M.  
AN OMNIBUS WILL RUN IN CONNECTION WITH THE BOAT, TO  
ALL PARTS OF THE CITY.  
Calls at the Ellis House will receive prompt attention.  
**CHAS. QUACKENBUSH,**  
LATE COOKE & QUACKENBUSH.] Proprietor

## **Best From The Past (From the February 1996 Newsletter)**

### **"The Church At St. Catharines': The St. Catharines Bicentennial, 1796-1996**

In the basement of St. George's Anglican Church on Church Street there is a vault. In that vault there is a sturdy cardboard file box. In that box are some very ordinary file folders, one of which is marked "1796." But in that folder is an extraordinary document – tattered, discoloured, and stained though it is. That document will be responsible for a year of special events related to the history of the City of St. Catharines. Why?

As we mentioned in our October newsletter, 1996 will be a bicentennial year for the city of St. Catharines because this 1796 document, which lists the contributions of 44 Niagara residents willing to support the newly constructed church building, refers to the building as "the church at St. Catharines." This is the earliest known documented reference to our community as "St. Catharines." (In its early years, the community was just as likely called "The Twelve" or "Shipman's Corners," until St. Catharines became the generally accepted name shortly after the War of 1812.)

### **Some Anniversaries in 2006**

1796 - 2006 - 210<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the City of St. Catharines.

May 1796 - May 2006 - 210<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Col. John Butler, leader of Butler's Rangers during the American Revolutionary War.

June 24, 1813 - June 24, 2006 - 193<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of Laura Secord's heroic journey to warn of an American attack. This event is being recognized by the Bruce Trail Association Niagara Bruce Trail Club with the 15<sup>th</sup> annual Laura Secord hike.

1812 - 2006 - 194<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of the War of 1812-1814.

1856 - 2006 - 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Victoria Lawn Cemetery - watch for special events being held to recognize this milestone anniversary.

1896 - 2006 - 110<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first commercially successful production of Calcium Carbide.

May 23, 1906 - May 23, 2006 - 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Official Opening of the Armoury on Lake Street.

June 8, 1996 - June 8, 2006 - 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Heritage Designation of the Locktender's Shanty and Dalhousie House.

### **Thorold & Beaverdams Historical Society Program**

March 27 - 7:00 p.m. - at Chestnut Hall, Ormond Street, Thorold – Speaker: Michael Ripmeester will present a lecture titled "Why do we remember that? – Interpreting Monuments and Historical Sites in Niagara."

April 24 - 7:00 p.m.- at Chestnut Hall, Ormond Street, Thorold - Speaker: Sherman Zavitz will present a lecture titled "Niagara Falls - The Honeymoon Capital"

May 29 - 7:00 p.m. - at Chestnut Hall, Ormond Street, Thorold - Speaker: Wilma Morrison will present a lecture titled "Black History in Niagara"

### **Plaque Inventory Project**

Paul Lewis is compiling a comprehensive list of exterior plaques, excluding military and signs, found in the City. Jot down the inscription and location of any plaques near your residence or work place and e-mail them to Paul. [paul\\_e\\_lewis@ridley.on.ca](mailto:paul_e_lewis@ridley.on.ca)



## THE 1855 MAP OF WELLAND CITY

If the accompanying map of Welland City looks nothing like Welland it's because it is a map of Merritton! Welland City was an older name for what in 1869 became Merritton, and in 1855 it was mapped by the firm of John Ellis, Printers and Lithographers, of Toronto. The map shows land located "at the Mountain descent" in lots 10, 11 and 12 of concessions 9 and 10 of Grantham. At the bottom is the boundary between Grantham and Thorold (now St. David's Road and Townline), across the middle runs the road allowance that became Glendale, and at the top is the line of Abbot Street and Rockwood Avenue. The lower portion of today's Burleigh Hill Drive lines up with Division Street in the west.

The map shows many interesting features, most notably the Second Welland Canal climbing from Lock 11 in the north to Lock 21 at the Escarpment brow. The Great Western Railway, completed in 1853, crosses the canal just below Lock 12, with the station close by. North and east of the canal is the distinctive pattern of east-west streets and laneways with tree names — Walnut, Chestnut, Almond, Hazel, etc. — that still marks downtown Merritton today. (A notable exception is Tunnel Street, but what tunnel, existing or projected, this refers to is unknown.) Running north-south are Hartzell Road (now Merritt Street) and Bessey and Kerr Streets, all named for early settlers.

South of the canal, on the slope up the Escarpment, we are in less familiar territory. Lock Street (now Bradley) is easily recognizable, but the other streets are a bit of a puzzle. Most are named for people. William, Hamilton and Merritt Streets clearly denote Merritt himself, and Catherine (despite the spelling) suggests his wife. Thomas and Lawlor may be a local surveyor of that name, while Raglan could be Lord Raglan, who led the ill-fated British forces in the Crimea and died the year the map was drawn. Other names are less certain. What is most puzzling, however, is that with the exception of Lock Street and a few short segments here and there none of the streets south of the canal ever seems to have existed!

It is a commonplace that maps can mislead, and this map is a classic example. Beautifully drawn (possibly engraved in copper), Ellis's map depicts a large, established, well-laid-out town, and does so with an air of authority. In reality, nothing could have been further from the truth.

Welland City was a new town proposed by the Welland Canal Loan Company, which was incorporated in 1851 with a view to promoting industry, commerce and settlement at the key intersection of the Welland Canal and the Great Western Railway. With William Hamilton Merritt as President and James Rea Benson as Secretary-Treasurer, the Company bought up over 500 acres of land, some from the government and some from private owners, and in 1855 began advertising lots for sale and water rights for lease in the new town of Welland City (the name was available because at that time Welland was called Merrittville).

That same year they commissioned Ellis to produce his map. But how much of the map actually existed on the ground? The canal and railway did, as did the "Macadamized Road" between St. Catharines and Thorold (now Oakdale and Merritt), but beyond that not much. Possibly the only other "real" features were the tavern that John Vanderburgh had established alongside the First Welland Canal in 1829 (at the very centre of the map), a barn, tollhouse and two dwelling houses nearby, and the historic Ball House, which still stands on the Escarpment slope south of the canal. There were other people living in the Merritton area, but aside from the locktenders in their cottages most were further north on the St. Catharines road in what was known as Centreville or Slabtown. Though there is evidence that some surveys were carried out by the Loan Company, it seems most likely that in 1855 Welland City existed only on paper, save perhaps for some stakes in the ground. Most telling perhaps is the fact that the railway station was called, not Welland City, but Thorold Station, this after the nearest community of any size.





Ellis's map was really a promotional document, intended to proclaim the Company's vision of an industrial powerhouse to be established on the Welland Canal. The text accompanying the map makes this clear, boasting that "no site on the Continent of America, combines greater natural and artificial advantages, or presents a more favourable opportunity for the Investment of Capital or Employment of Labour." It adds for good measure — entrepreneurs take note — that the "Mountain Terrace" (marked "Esplanade" on the map) "is admirably suited for private dwellings, for which purpose it has been reserved."

The history of the Welland Canal Loan Company has yet to be written, but though it survived until 1930 it clearly achieved only mixed success. Though it did bring industry to the area, notably the Gordon & McKay (later Lybster) cotton mill and Riordan's paper mill, it became embroiled in major disputes over water and property rights, and the city itself never expanded to anything like its full extent. Indeed, when surveyor George Z. Rykert drew up a registered plan of Welland City in 1867 the Company's ambitions had been scaled back considerably, for his map shows only those streets in the immediate vicinity of downtown Merritton. And, as is clear from later maps and air photos, that is how Merritton remained until well into the last century.

Unfortunately, a misconception has arisen that Merritton was a large town from an early date, and for this the blame lies with H. R. Page, who in 1876 published the Historical Atlas of Lincoln and Welland Counties. This atlas contains a full-page map of Merritton that is simply an updated version of Ellis's map. The Welland Railway and some mills have been added, but nothing has been omitted. All the roads of the original Welland City remain, even though by that stage large swaths of the project had been abandoned, notably the residential streets proposed for the Escarpment slopes south of the canal. This atlas and others like it are invaluable sources of historical information, but sometimes the maps they contain need to be taken with a grain of salt.

*Acknowledgement: Welland City map reproduced by permission of Library and Archives Canada, copy courtesy of Brock University Map Library*

*Principal Sources: WCLC Cash Book, WCLC Articles of Incorporation, St. Catharines Constitutional, Ellis, Rykert and Page maps, Province of Canada and Dominion of Canada government documents, Registry Office records*

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## **Saturday, June 17 – The Historical Society's Annual Bus Tour**

This year, the Guelph Line (Halton Road 1) will take us to Campbellville for a one hour stop, then to the Halton Radial Railway Museum before visiting the Crawford Lake Conservation Area. Campbellville is a nice place to stop for a coffee and a bit of shopping and Global Genealogy is the place for family historians to spend some of their hour. The Halton County Radial Railway Museum is a streetcar museum with a short operating line that will carry us aboard vintage streetcars through a scenic section of the surrounding countryside. Vehicles from several cities are displayed in barns that are open. The former Rockwood CNR station stands on the site. Bring along a picnic lunch as current plans do not call for a stop at a restaurant, as both locations have snack bars on-site and offer eating areas and a group picnic might just be fun! The Crawford Lake Conservation Area is a fitting place to visit as June 18 is Aboriginal Awareness Day and the site features a museum and a 15<sup>th</sup> century Iroquoian Village to explore. Hiking is very popular here and a minimum of 2 hours is planned to enjoy the area. Walking shoes will definitely be required here. The tour will be 8 hours, leaving at 8:30 and returning by 4:30. The cost of the bus and two admittances will be approximately \$40. A minimum attendance number is required by June 2 in order to confirm our bookings. Those interested should advise Joyce DeForest or Bill Stevens so additional details can be provided to you as they develop.