



This historical picture shows the opening ceremony at the Peterborough Lift Lock on the Trent Canal, July 9, 1904. The hydraulic lift lock is the highest such lock in the world and is as much an engineering marvel today as it was eighty-one years

ago. A visit to this lock will be only one of many interesting events due to take place during the joint Spring Meeting of our Society and the American Canal Society in Peterborough May 17, 18 and 19. (Photo courtesy of the Peterborough Public Library)

CANAL RECORDS IN THE PUBLIC ARCHIVES OF CANADA

by Glenn T. Wright

The celebration of the National Parks centennial this year is an appropriate time to reflect on the documentary heritage associated with Canada's historic canals. We are indeed fortunate that an extensive array of original documentation relating to our canals has survived and is preserved at the Public Archives of Canada in Ottawa. The Federal Archives Division of the PAC is the official

repository for the historical records of the government of Canada and here one can find the records of Canada's canals. For the uninitiated, I should point out that the archival holdings of the division are organized and maintained according to the government department or agency that created the records and/or transferred them to the archives; these departmental units are referred to as record groups. And

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now, a brief introduction to the archival records relating to the history of canals in Canada.

During the Union period, 1841-1867, and for several years following Confederation, the Department of Public Works (Record Group II) was responsible for the development and operation of canals in Canada. In 1879, a new department, Railways and Canals (Record Group 43), was established, a decision that clearly emphasized the national importance of transportation in the emerging Dominion. The archival records of these two departments consist of correspondence, subject files, contracts and related documentation on all aspects of canal construction, operation, maintenance administration from the early nineteenth century to the 1930's.

In 1936, Railways and Canals and several other departments were amalgamated to form the Department of Transport. Transport administered the canal system until 1972 when Canada's heritage canals were transferred to Parks Canada; responsibility for the Welland Canal has been assumed by the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority in 1959.

The Transport records in the PAC, RC 12, and the records of the Seaway Authority, RG 52, include extensive series of files relating to canals in general and in the case of RG 52, records pertaining to the construction and operation of the Seaway since the 1950's.

Last year, Parks Canada turned over to the PAC about 100 meters of canal records that had been acquired from Transport in 1972. These records, largely correspondence and subject files, cover many aspects of canal administration and operation in Canada dating from the 1840's to the early 1970's. With this large and significant acquisition of records, I have no hesitation in stating that our canal heritage is extremely well documented and available for research at the Public Archives. As in any archives, various inventories, finding aids, lists and indexes have been prepared to assist the researcher.

In the next issue of the newsletter,

I will explore in more detail the archival records in the PAC relating to the history of the Welland Canal.

EDITOR'S CORNER

In our last issue we mentioned "Talking Up the Rideau", an automobile tour of the Rideau Canal on two ninety-minute audio-cassettes. What we didn't mention was how to obtain them. Here is the information you will need to order: \$12 plus 7% sales tax (cheque or money order) to Rideau Watch, Box 196, Station B, Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 6C4.

Speaking of the Rideau, D.G. Brett, who operates Pleasant View Cottages on the Rideau Canal at Seeleys Bay, Ontario has written the Society asking for some help.

As part of Parks Canada's Centennial this year, he is creating a display in several of his older cottages. In one will be a presentation concerning the canals of the world with emphasis on Canadian, U.S. and U.K. canals. The other cottage will feature a video display plus a small exhibition of the arts and crafts of the canals. He also hopes to have an English narrowboat on display. Mr. Brett would appreciate hearing from anyone who could help with the project. His address is Box 98, Seeleys Bay, Ont., K0H 2N0 (613-387-3335).

For canal buffs heading to England this year an attraction not to be missed is the Boat Museum at Ellesmere Point, Cheshire. Many consider it the best canal and boat museum in the world. It will be the location of a Spring Rally May 25, 26 and 27 but anytime is a good time for a visit.

A bit of canal trivia: Up until as recently as 1936 the Chambly Canal (see "The Bookshelf") used wooden scows pulled by horses, the only regular use of horses for canal work in Canada during this century.

My thanks to Colin Dequemin for obtaining our interesting page one photo-

THE BOOKSHELF

graph. Let's hope the weather is less damp for our visit to the Lift Lock in May than it apparently was for opening day back in 1904.

Sherman Zavitz

PROGRAMME COMMITTEE REPORT

The Programme Committee reports plans are underway to host visitors from England for the Fall Meeting. An item in the last WATERWAYS NEWS, published monthly by the British Waterways Board, just received, reads:

"For 1985 Ron has arranged two trips. The first, during the Spring Bank Holiday for up to six days, will be to the Irish Republic. The second one, to Canada, will be at the end of August and last for two weeks. This will include a visit to the St. Lawrence (sic) Seaway, the Ottawa River, the Rideau Canal, the Welland Canal, and Niagara Falls."

Ron Oakly, the organizer, is a member of the Inland Waterways Association, southwest region.

It is now expected that the Canadian Canal Society will host this group, probably the weekend of Sept. 6 and 7, in the St.Catharines area. More definite information will be provided later.

Hayward Madden
Chairman

SEAWAY TRADE MISSION

Canadian and American members of a St. Lawrence Seaway trade mission representing shipping interests and the administrators of the 3700 kilometer waterway completed a two week visit to six of the major commercial and industrial seaport cities in the Common Market on February 12.

Strengthening relations with the Seaway customers and developing new areas for trade development were the purposes of the tour and officials felt both objectives

The Work Force of the Richelieu River Canals 1843-1950 by P.-André Sévigny. Parks Canada, Ottawa, 1983. The book is available (cat.no.R61-219-5E) from the Canadian Government Publishing Centre, Supply and Services, Canada, Hull, Quebec, Canada, K1A 0S9, or through authorized Canadian government bookstore agents and other bookstores. Also available in French (cat.no.R61-219-5F) \$7.50

This is a canal history with a difference. It does not deal with the structural development or record of service but rather is a social history, dealing with the people who, over the decades made possible the actual operation of the Chambly Canal and Saint-Ours Lock.

The book is extremely well researched and, while scholarly in style, is most readable. Numerous photographs, tables and maps enhance the text.

The Richelieu Canals, while no longer in use for commercial traffic, do play host to many pleasure craft each year. Hopefully many of these Visitors give a bit of thought to those who served the canals for more than a century. As the author notes, "Their lives should not be left in obscurity, nor should their accomplishments go unrecorded."

P.-André Sévigny has helped to lift this veil of obscurity most admirably.

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were reached.

The Canadian group was lead by William A. O'Neil of Ottawa, president of the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority. He has been active in the European business community urging use of the Seaway for manufactured goods destined for the heartland of the United States and Canada.

The Bookshelf continued...

The Ottawa River Canal System by Normand Lafrenière. Parks Canada, Ottawa, 1984. Available through the same sources as the previous book. English (cat.no.R61-219-12E) French (cat.no.R61-219-12F)

\$5.25

This is an excellent addition to Canadian Canal historical research. In it the author presents a history of the Ottawa River Canal system from the time construction began until 1963. One of the most interesting chapters, however, deals with the primitive "canals" (so called because of the absence of locks); built long before the official canalization of the river. Very little is known about these "canals".

Between 1819 and 1834, the Carillon, Chute-à-Blondeau, and Grenville Canals were built and quickly began to be used by commercial traffic although they had been constructed with more of a military use in mind.

Numerous and excellent photographs, maps and charts help to make this book most enjoyable and informative.

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Letter To The Editor

Dear Sir:

Over a period of time I have received canal related enquiries from two of our Canadian Canal Society members, both I might add are American friends. I have not been able to answer these enquiries and I would like to share them with the readers of Canals Canada/Canaux du Canada. I would like to suggest that any reader who is able to be of assistance reply through the Editor of the newsletter so that we all benefit.

The first enquiry is from William E. Trout III, Vice-President of the American Canal Society. His enquiry pertains to the present status, condition, and maintenance of the remains of the Baillie-Grohman Canal, British Columbia. It seems that it was just over ten years ago that The American Canal Guide, Part I, featured this canal.

I have also had an enquiry, or rather enquiries, from Mr. Bev Morant, our American member in Sierre Madre, California. Bev directed my attention to an old foundry or workshop alongside the Trent-Severn Waterway at Hastings, Ont. Bev feels the building is of some age with some industrial archaeological importance, and now wonders about its condition and status.

Bev's second enquiry relates to the present Fenelon Falls Lock. He says in his letter: "As one approaches that end of the lock (the south end), there used to be what looks like a light house, although I believe I can see a bell in the top of the tower. Does anyone in the Canadian Canal Society know when this was put in place, its use and when was this very historical looking tower removed?"

Lastly, also from Bev, an enquiry regarding the old Culbute Locks, west of Ottawa, on the Ottawa River. These locks were probably the largest wooden locks ever built stated the Ottawa Saturday Citizen of July 3, 1971, and that year the foundations could still be seen. Does any reader know their present condition?

Yours sincerely,

Colin Duquemin

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

This is my last opportunity to address you directly in Canals Canada/Canaux du Canada. My term of office is closing, and the search is already on for a new President of the Society.

Perhaps, however, I can look back before looking forward. Not long ago, the Board of Directors recognized Donald A. Smithies, the first President of the Canadian Canal Society/Société des Canaux du Canada. The Directors conferred upon Donald Smithies the honorary title of "Charter President" of the Society. Don, now with the Provincial Museum of Alberta, in Edmonton, graciously accepted this recognition.

Over the past year or so we have been able to increase membership in the Society. Some very successful field trips have undoubtedly helped in this regard, and further field trip successes will attract other new members. I feel, however, that it is often the "personal touch" that is the best means of promoting the Society. With this newsletter, each member will receive a letter from me covering a membership application form. I urge you to see that the latter is personally conveyed to a friend or good acquaintance who is interested in canal matters, or who would benefit by becoming familiar with our field trips and other affairs. If each one of us gained another member (or more) by mid-May, our new President would have a solid foundation on which to build our further progress.

Our next President will take office at the Annual General Meeting which will be held at Peterborough on the weekend of May 17, 18 and 19, 1985. The Canadian Canal Society/Société des Canaux du Canada will host the American Canal Society at this Spring Meeting, and we can look forward to a most interesting weekend. I take this opportunity to thank Society member Douglas Stewart for his thoughtful and careful planning of this meeting.

Plans are also under way for the Fall Meeting to be held in St.Catharines on Saturday, September 7, 1985. At that

time, the Society will host 45 members of the Inland Waterways Association of Great Britain on its overseas tour of Canadian canals. The St.Catharines Historical Museum, whose Welland Canals Gallery will be a focus of interest on this visit by the IWA, will be co-operating with us again, both to host the IWA and to co-sponsor a local field trip and evening banquet.

A combination of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Musical Ride and canalling at Peterborough, where we take a boat up the lift lock, appears to be the balance of activities which make our field trips so interesting. I am sure we shall have an excellent muster of members, old and new, at Peterborough. I look forward to seeing you there when we welcome our American Canal Society friends led by their President, Bill Shank.

Colin Duquemin

BRING BACK THE WATER

from Canadian Yachting, Power and Sail,
March, 1985.

For the growing number of yachtsmen who visit Cape Breton's Bras d'Or Lakes each summer, the main question this spring is whether the St.Peters Canal will be back in operation in time for the navigation season. Parks Canada drained the 116-year-old canal last fall so that the walls could be rebuilt. The contractor involved made good progress during an unusually dry and mild fall, but is making no promises about completing the work before his contract date - Sept., 1985. However, everyone is hopeful that the canal can be reflooded near the beginning of the summer so that pleasure craft can enter while the remainder of the work is being finished. The Bras d'Or region can be reached by a northern entrance, but it is by far the long way around unless you happen to be coming south from Newfoundland. If the Bras d'Or is included in your tentative 1985 cruising, check on the status of the project by calling Parks Canada at 902-426-3446.



Canadian Canal Society
 P.O. Box 1652
 St. Catharines, Ontario
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APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Please enrol me as a member of the Canadian Canal Society.

I enclose my membership fee of \$ _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PROVINCE(STATE) _____ POSTAL CODE _____

Please mail cheque payable to CANADIAN CANAL SOCIETY (in Canadian funds, please) with application to:

Secretary,
 Canadian Canal Society,
 P.O. Box 1652,
 St. Catharines, Ontario
 L2R 7K1

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|---------------------------|--------------------|------|
| MEMBERSHIP FEES | Individual..... | \$10 |
| | Family | \$15 |
| | Contributing | \$25 |