



CANALS CANADA/CANAUx DU CANADA

Newsletter of the Canadian Canal Society
Société des Canaux du Canada

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President's Message

Recently, there have been encouraging signs that Canadian canals are gaining a higher profile among the general public. This may be due, in part, to several favourable media reports about canal-related activities.

In the Niagara area, two small-scale hydroelectric generating stations at the weirs of Locks 1 and 2 of the Fourth Welland Canal have just become operational. A third generating station at Lock 3 will come on-line in 2009. The Seaway already generates electricity for its own needs at an existing station at the bottom of Lock 4. Water power was an important reason why many early canals including the original Welland Canal were built. We are rediscovering the value of canals as power sources.

This past year, two buried locks on previous Welland Canals were uncovered: Lock One of the First Canal in Port Dalhousie and Lock Three of the Second Canal in the valley below downtown St. Catharines. The locks have now been reburied to protect the remains. Lock One in Port Dalhousie is especially important because it is an extremely rare example of an early 19th Century wooden lock. The entrance locks of the Second and Third Welland Canals are located nearby so the confirmation of the First Canal remains reinforces the importance of Port Dalhousie as a 19th Century canal port. St. Catharines City Council has adopted a motion directing City staff to report on ways to preserve and interpret this discovery. Although the excavation of the First Canal is exciting, the goal should be to preserve and interpret the entrance locks of all three canals in a manner that will emphasize Port Dalhousie's canal heritage and will enhance its attraction as a tourist destination.

The Regional Municipality of Niagara has submitted a request to the Federal Government (National Historic Sites and Monuments Board) to designate the Welland Canals corridor as a National Historic Site. This request has been championed by Regional Councillor **Bruce Timms**, the Canal Society's Vice-

President, and has been endorsed by the local municipalities that contain the current and heritage canals. This proposal has captured the imagination and support of the public in the Niagara area. Recently, it was announced that the Federal Board might not make a decision on the designation request until 2010. Although this announcement is disappointing, it does provide an opportunity to strengthen the case for a heritage designation by preparing additional research and by engaging more public support. The Regional Government is organizing a symposium on the heritage of the Welland Canals corridor for the end of March 2009 to generate ideas and support for the requested designation.

In 2007, the Rideau Canal was designated as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. For 2008, the communities along the Rideau Canal corridor embarked on a major tourism campaign emphasizing the heritage of the Canal and the surrounding area. This campaign, by focusing on a common theme, the "Rideau Heritage Route", should raise the profile of the Rideau Canal and its communities and should enhance their tourist potential. The Rideau experience in obtaining and exploiting its heritage designation should provide lessons for other areas with heritage canals.

There is an increased appreciation by the public and community leaders that canal heritage has value for several reasons: for personal interest and enjoyment, for a sense of community identity and as a catalyst for tourism and economic development. The Niagara and Rideau areas are not the only areas that are attempting to exploit their canal heritage resources. Other on-going efforts to preserve and to partially restore heritage canals include the Shubenacadie Canal in Nova Scotia, the Soulanges Canal on the St. Lawrence River upstream from Montreal, and the Galop Canal on the St. Lawrence in the Iroquois area of eastern Ontario. However, progress in preserving and enhancing canal heritage may be slow and often consists of a series of small improvements. Patience and persistence will be necessary if our canal heritage goals are to be achieved. We will need to engage the public on a continuing basis to maintain and grow support for canal heritage. This can be done by organizing annual festivals such as Canal Days in Port Colborne, by issuing news releases and sending letters to the newspaper and by celebrating canal anniversaries. Two anniversaries for 2009 are the 50th Anniversary of St. Lawrence Seaway opening and the 180th Anniversary of the opening of the First Welland Canal.

Tom Whitelaw, President

Secretary's Report

The Annual General did not achieve a quorum. So that we may deal with the proposed amendments to the Constitution we are going to a mail-in ballot. Please see the separate insert of the Secretary's Report on this matter.

Please ensure that you mail your ballot, on the Constitution amendment, along with your Membership Renewal.

The Annual General Meeting will be held on 19 April 2009 at 2 o'clock. The meeting will be held in the Burgoyne Room at the St Catharines Museum, 1932 Canal Road.

George Hume, Secretary

Louis (Lou) J Cahill – 10 July 1914 – 12 November 2008

The Canal Society has lost one of its early driving forces and founders with the passing of Lou Cahill. Lou was also the first Society member to be recognized for his achievements by the awarding of an Honourary Membership.

Lou started with the St Catharines Standard at the age of 18 in 1932. In 1936 he founded the Niagara News Bureau, which eventually became the Ontario Editorial Bureau in 1949, now OEB Enterprise. Lou loved to work and be involved, and was at the office until he was 91.



He was instrumental in the founding of a number of organizations: the Welland Canals Foundation, the Mackenzie Printery and Newspaper Museum, and the Canadian Canal Society.

The Welland Canals Foundation has sponsored the Top Hat Ceremony for the first vessel to pass through the Welland Canal each year. The Foundation, under Lou's guidance, also obtained Trillium Foundation funding to produce "Conquering Niagara". The film was produced to mark the 175th anniversary of the Welland Canal and premiered at the World Canals Conference in 2004 held in St Catharines.

Lou was able to witness in his early years the transition from the Third to the Fourth Welland Canal. Perhaps it was this exposure to canals and shipping which led to his lifelong fascination with this subject.

In 1976 Lou became the second Canadian to become a director of the American Canal Society; six years before the founding of the Canadian Canal Society. Perhaps it was his involvement at that time that led to his efforts to form a Canadian society.

When the time was right to form a Canadian Canal Society perhaps it was Lou who persuaded Hayward Mayden of New York State to bring his expertise to this fledgling organization. Hayward was to become our first Vice President.

With no Canadian organization Lou was involved with other organizations that celebrated the canals and shipping on the Great Lakes. One of these organizations was the Marine Historical Society of Detroit which awarded him the William J Luke Memorial Award for Outstanding Achievement.

Lou was always involved with his community and was exceedingly proud of receiving the Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice medal from Pope John Paul II. The medal is highest honour for a lay person in the Catholic Church.

Locally he also worked to promote the founding of Brock University. His efforts of service to the community were recognized by the University with the awarding of an Honourary Doctor of Laws in 1961. In 2006, the 60th anniversary of OEB Enterprise, the Lou Cahill Scholarship in Communications was established at the University.

World Canals Conference 2008 – Kingston, Ontario



The conference was held during the 176th year of operation of the Rideau Canal and followed its designation as a World Heritage Site.

The majority of the presentations given at the conference may be found on the Friends of the Rideau website.

www.rideaufriends.com/wcc2008/index.html

World Canals Conference 2009 Serbia – 23 – 25 September

The conference dates have changed from a Monday to Wednesday format, to Wednesday to Friday. This allows for a better fit of the pre and post-conference tours.

The overall theme of the conference will be raising awareness and improving the economic performance of waterways, especially in Eastern Europe and Asia, two world regions which have not previously been covered by World Canals Conferences.

The conference will be centred on Novi Sad, the capital of the Province, and will include tours in Serbia to the spectacular Iron Gate section of the Danube including the hydropower scheme at Djerdap I, shared with Romania, then to the most important sites on the canal system of Vojvodina – Middle Danube.

Further information and registration details may be found at

<http://www.euromapping.com/en/category/6>



World Canals Conference 2010 Rochester – 19 – 22 September

Canals in the Urban Setting, New York State, and Worldwide: Challenges and Opportunities

Although this international conference will underscore the New York State Canal System and its tangible accomplishments in cooperation with all levels of government, business, and the volunteer sector it will also have a strong national and international focus. Local initiatives and innovative development schemes in urban and rural settings such as Rochester, Buffalo, Lockport, Port Byron and Camillus will be highlighted. The organizers believe that waterway managers and users can all learn from one another, despite cultural differences, and that many of the problems besetting waterways today are mutual concerns. Grappling with these issues at the international level not only will help to breed new ideas at home but may also vindicate local initiatives as being correct approaches and strategies. In addition we feel that some recent conferences have been too parochial in content, stressing the local canal network, at the expense of the international component. Therefore we intend to have a balanced approach of both geography and content by committing sufficient financial resources to bring in a number of presenters and panelists from outside New York State and around the world.

From the Fossa Carolina (793 AD) to the Main-Donau-Kanal (1992), Three Canals and Waterways of Southern Germany:

Uniting the Black Sea with the North Sea, In the Footsteps of Karl der Grosse (Charlemagne) and King Ludwig the First

Led by Thomas X. Grasso
President, Canal Society of NYS &
Vice-President Inland Waterways International

By the Canal Society of New York State and Inland Waterways International
A Study Tour of the King Ludwig Kanal (built 1836 to 1846) and the
Main-Donau-Kanal (built 1960 to 1992)

02 - 13 October 2009

This tour is the successor to the previous Germany tour which explored the canals and waterways of Northern Germany. The German state of Bavaria is one of the more beautiful areas of Germany. It has a long, rich history dating back to Roman times.

The tour will have only two hotels stays, five nights each in Nürnberg and Regensburg. With a minimum of packing and unpacking there will be lots of time to explore. Included in the package are 5 boat trips, 7 museum/castles and 39 site visits.

For the tour to run there must be 20 participants booked by 10 February 2009. CCS members can view the detailed program at the CSNYS website www.canalsnys.org or contact Tom Grasso at tgrasso1@rochester.rr.com or 585-387-0099.



Canal Restoration

Over the last few editions we have made a number of references to canal restoration. Here is a list of canal restorations completed, planned or awaiting an influx of funds to complete the dream. If I have missed any please let me know.

Welland Canal

The last several editions of Canals Canada have offered a number of options that could be implemented to re-invigorate previous iterations of the Welland Canals.

Welland Canal Feeder

There have been several proposals to re-open the feeder as a recreational waterway.

Grand River Navigation

This is a recreational waterway waiting to be developed. Present status unknown.

Wolfe Island Canal

I think that in my lifetime I now need two hands to count the number of times that proposals have been put forth to re-open this canal. There is only one bridge that blocks through traffic but to be truly functional requires dredging to provide a decent draft for recreational boating traffic. A lift bridge of some type, and there are many example on British Waterways, would even allow sailboats a through passage.

Galops Canal

It is possible that this short canal could re-open to recreational boating traffic. Funding has been received from the township and the province to examine the options.

Lachine Canal

Some \$300 million was spent by the federal, provincial and municipal governments; the canal re-opened to recreational traffic in 2002.

Cornwall Canal

There have been suggestions that the re-opening of this canal would be beneficial to the City of Cornwall and provided an alternative route for recreational boating traffic.

Soulanges Canal

A proposal has been put forward to re-open this canal to recreational boating traffic. Over \$2,000,000 has been spent on preliminary studies and the total project is estimated to cost \$160,000,000 over ten years. The re-opening of the canal would provide a 23.5 kilometre (14 miles) alternative to using the Beauharnois Locks on the St Lawrence Seaway. Details may be found at www.canalsoulanges.com.

Shubenacadie Canal

The Business Plan for the Canal Commission proposed the re-opening of various locks to provide partial restoration of navigation. It is not proposed at this time to seek complete through navigation restoration. There is inadequate funding to even proceed with partial restoration, at this time.

Upper Ottawa River

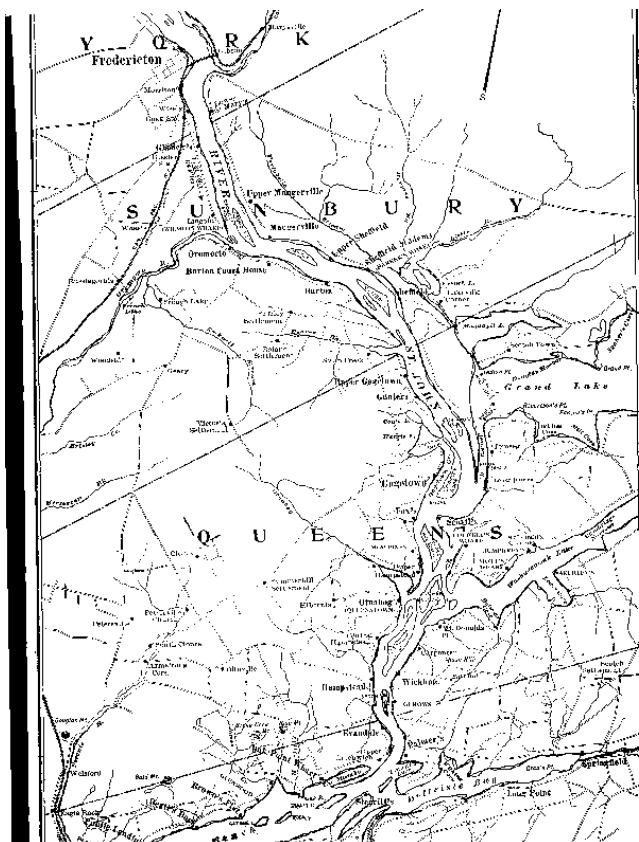
Great strides have been made by providing trailers that provide a means for powerboats, of up to 30 feet, to bypass various dams along the river. What is

missing at this time is the link from below the Chaudiere Falls in Ottawa to above them. Provision of this link would provide navigation along the Ottawa River from Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue in Montreal to New Liskeard and Notre-Dame-du-Nord at the northernmost end of Lake Temiskaming. This would be a partial fulfillment of the Georgian Bay Ship Canal.

St John River – Artery to the Interior

The St John River is best known worldwide for its famous “Reversing Falls”, but the river was also a vital artery in the settlement of New Brunswick. The river and its banks were the highway that connected the provinces two major settlements, the port of St John and the capital at Fredericton.

The river rises in north-east Maine and flows generally southward for 673 km (404 miles) before mingling with the tides of the Bay of Fundy. During the days of steamboats it was possible to travel from St John to Grand Falls, a distance of 375 km (225 miles), where navigation ended at the spectacular 75 foot falls.



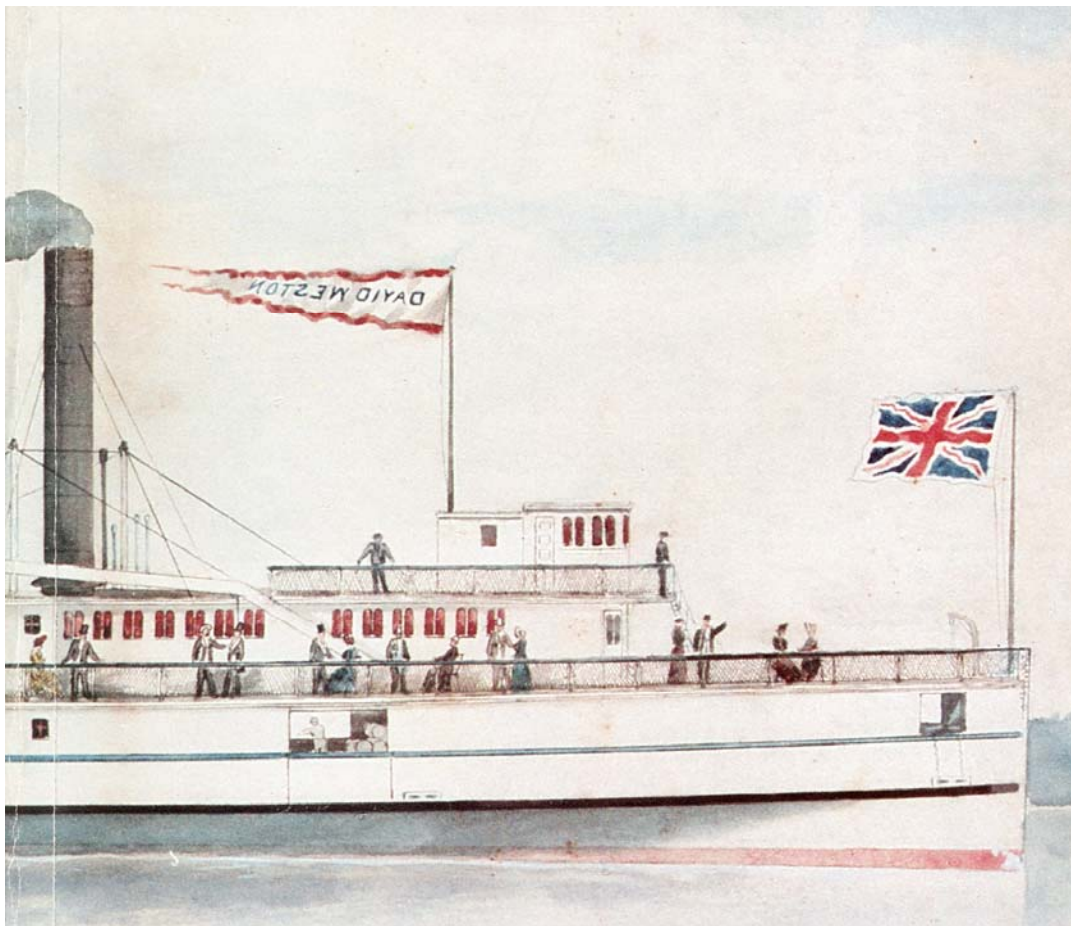
Middle section of St John River

The region was sparsely populated until it came under British control and in 1762; New Englanders were attracted to the area and began permanent settlement. It is during this period in 1765 that a sloop is recorded as travelling on the river. The population expanded further with the coming of the United Empire Loyalists in 1783. In 1785 the first election was held to select representatives for the Assembly. The following year one of their first acts was to provide for highway construction. A survey was made in 1787 and actual construction began in 1788. But the ease of water transport resulted in the slow growth of roads. In 1786 they also passed an act that provided for the clearing of tow paths on the river shore, beside rapids, and at other places where it was necessary to use horses, or oxen, to tow the freight boats and rafts.

After 1800 large sums of money were being set aside for road improvements and the removal of rocks and boulders from the river bed. These continual improvements along the river resulted in an increased variety and number of craft on the river. A regular mail service was established and for passenger vessels without accommodation Inns were opened for overnight stays.

In 1809 John Molson successfully ran the steamer *Accommodation* between Montreal and Quebec City. In 1812 the Assembly in Fredericton was petitioned for exclusive steamboat rights on the St John River. The War of 1812 intervened and the petitioners were allowed until two years after the war to put a boat on the river.

During the summer of 1815 the keel was laid and the following year the steamboat *General Smyth* was launched. The vessel had been named in honour of the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Province. She was capable of carrying sixty passengers and was the fourth steamboat in North America. The vessel was 32 metres long (105 feet) and with her 20 horsepower engine she was to provide dependable service on the river for the next five years.



The side-wheeler DAVID WESTON was built in 1866 and was broken up in 1903

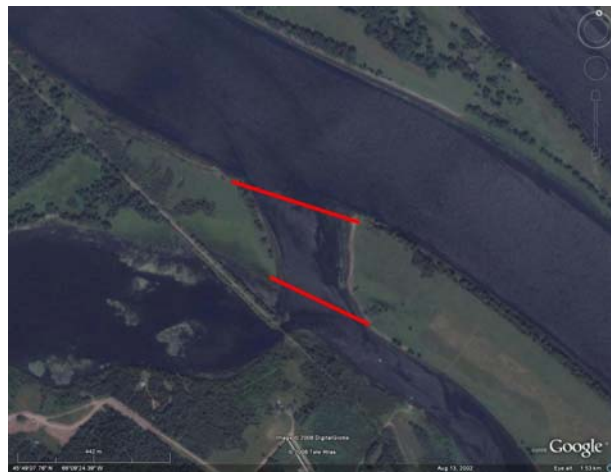
There were many more steamboats on the river until the era came to an end in 1946.

Grimross Canal

The spring floods brought much silt down the river and this silt built up in the many slow moving parts of the river. One of these deposits was known as the Grimross Neck and was located on the west bank, as the river turned southward, north of Gagetown. Gagetown was located partway up the inlet opposite the Neck. Steamboats had to backtrack southward before they could resume their trip north to Fredericton. This was inefficient and time consuming and a solution was sought to overcome this, the result was the Grimross Canal.



1764 Gagetown Island John Marr Map



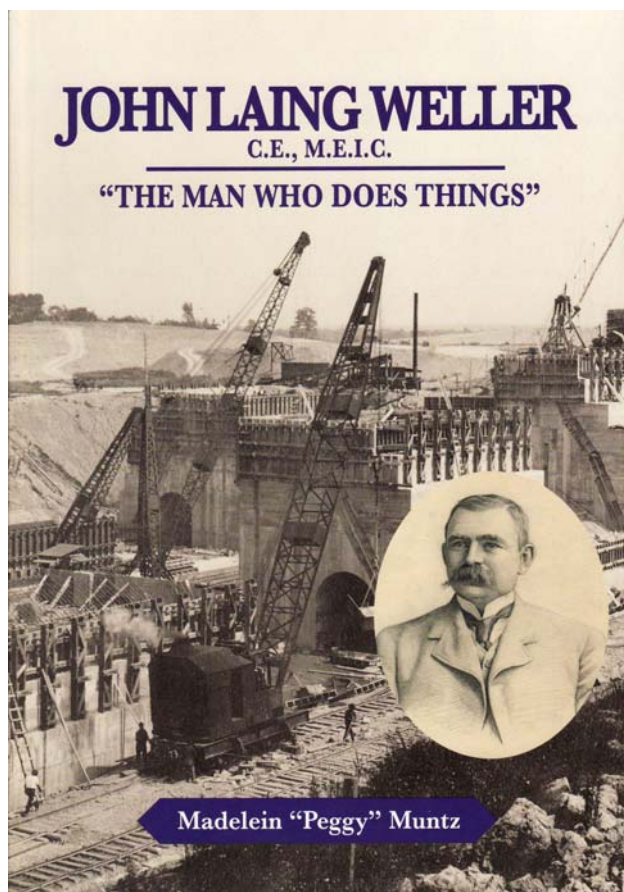
Google Earth showing existing canal

The canal was finally dug in 1855 even though there had been a proposal over 40 years earlier. The current has widened the canal over the years and it is now 350 metres long (1,138 feet) and 240 metres wide (780 feet). The canal is still in use today by recreational vessels.

Further reading:

Steamboat Days on the St John 1816 – 1946
Dr George MacBeath and Capt Donald F Taylor
ISBN 0-920732-24-0 Print'N Press Ltd 1982

Thanks also to Heritage Branch of the Government of New Brunswick who provided information on the Grimross Canal and the two illustrations. Editor



***John Laing Weller, C.E., M.E.I.C.:
"The Man Who Does Things"***

by Madelein "Peggy" Muntz,
150 pp, photographs, 4 appendices,
endnotes and index,
Vanwell Publishing Limited, \$22.95
sales@vanwell.com
ISBN 978-1-55068-984-6

Reviewed by
Roberta (Bobbie) Styran

Available at the:
St Catharines Museum
Welland Canals Centre

or order through your local
bookseller

John ("Jack") Laing Weller, "The Man Who Does Things," was intelligent, creative, hard-working, ambitious and feisty. Peggy Muntz has written a delightful and informative account of her grandfather and his work, illustrated with over 170 black and white photographs from his papers, as well as others belonging to the family. The account of his life and work is fleshed out by Peggy with details of family life at home and abroad – all shedding light on the social activities of the time.

Jack Weller was born in Cobourg, Ontario, and graduated from Kingston's Royal Military College in 1883 with a First Class Certificate. In his last year at RMC he took up canoeing, which he continued to enjoy as an award-winning member of the American Canoe Association. On graduation he began his career with the Department of Railways and Canals, starting on the Trent River system. In 1885 he abandoned civilian life to serve as a Lieutenant in the Midland Battalion, and traveled west to assist in the North-West Campaign to put down the rebel Métis leader Louis Riel. Having served as Staff Adjutant under General Laurie, Weller returned home in July of that year, and rejoined the Civil Service. He was promoted first to Assistant Engineer on the Cornwall Canal Enlargement in June 1887 and to Resident Engineer in the early 1890s.

While working on the Cornwall Canal Weller continued to be active in the militia, joining the 59th Stormont and Glengarry Battalion of Infantry, rising to Major by June 1897. In 1886 a Rifle Association had been formed in Cornwall, and Weller took to the sport becoming so adept that in 1896 he was one of two members of the Canadian Bisley team traveling to England, where he placed on the prize list on eight occasions.

In May 1900, having already worked on the Trent, Murray and St Lawrence Canals he was put in charge of improvements to the Port Colborne harbour, and by the end of that year he was appointed Superintending Engineer of the Third Welland Canal. An imaginative entrepreneur as well as an engineer, he owned the Concrete Pole Company of St Catharines, which pioneered reinforced concrete poles for power and streetcar company use. (Two of these stood for many years taking hydro wires across the Second Canal in St Catharines.) As well, several houses of concrete remain in Thorold — another of his company's experiments. His designs for concrete scows were also innovative: the *Pioneer* was launched at Port Dalhousie in November 1910.

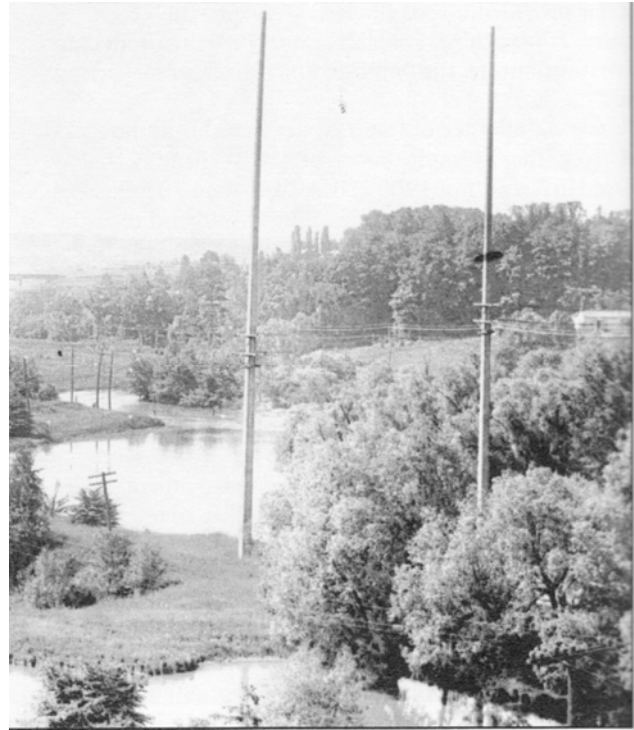


Photo: St Catharines Standard

By this time Weller was already deeply involved in planning for another enlargement of the Welland — what would become known as “the Ship Canal.” This work he carried out along with his regular duties until late 1911, when he wrote to WA Bowden, Chief Engineer of the Department of Railways and Canals, asking that he be moved from his position as Superintending Engineer of the operating Welland and put in charge of the surveys and design of the planned Ship Canal. Both Bowden and the Minister, FC Cochrane, approved the appointment, which became effective in April 1912. Cochrane noted that Weller had already, “for some time past, been engaged in making surveys for the proposed ship canal and is an engineer of well-established competency and reputation.”^[1]

On assuming his new position Weller wasted no time, and “immediately rented a vacant flat for an office [in St Catharines], and commenced gathering a staff together” In the summer of 1912 he “had a fine office building erected in

the rear of the present canal office at the corner of Yate [sic] and St Paul Streets, St Catharines, in to which we moved in January, 1913. The new office is fully equipped and enables good work to be turned out with dispatch.”[2]

Weller’s tenure as Engineer in Charge was a lively one. He was an energetic and intellectually curious engineer, confident of his own abilities. For eight days in March 1913 he and Bowden inspected the Panama Canal. This visit “completely satisfied me,” he reported, “that my designs while differing radically from the Panama canal, are fully equal if not superior to them or the conditions to be met with in the proposed Welland ship canal.”[3]

Not long after his return from the Panama, his work was temporarily interrupted, when he had one eye removed as a result of a diseased optic nerve.[4] Apparently this had been bothering him for some years, but does not appear to have affected his achievements.

From the point of view of Ottawa, he seemed to carry on the Ship Canal construction independently of direction from the Department. When he did not report to Bowden on flooding problems in Thorold South in 1916, the latter admonished him, “This is not the only instance which has recently come to my attention of your failure to fully report on phases of the construction works under your jurisdiction which should be reported upon by you.”[5] According to his son-in-law, Eric Muntz, Weller was “as diplomatic as a hedgehog.”[6]

When difficulties resulting from the First World War halted Ship Canal construction in May 1917, he was retired from the project, but was taken on as a consulting engineer when work resumed in 1919, serving in this capacity until 1926.[7] (Port Weller is named after him.)

To the canal historian, the photographs (most not previously available) provide an invaluable insight into Weller’s engineering career, at the same time illustrating many aspects of his daily life. In other words, Peggy Muntz has given us a picture of not only “The Man Who Does Things,” but also of the things that he (and his family) did, how they did them, how they dressed, the homes they lived in, the cars they drove, their pets and friends, the social events they attended or hosted, their recreations, and their travels.

Weller’s chief professional achievements were undoubtedly the concept and design of the Welland Ship Canal (the Fourth Canal), including as it did many innovative features, and the supervision of the early years of its construction. Peggy Muntz has proved herself a worthy descendent, and may truly describe herself as “A Woman Who Does Things.” This has been a labour of love, for which all canal buffs, and those interested not only in technological but also social changes are grateful.

- [1] Cochrane to Treasury Board, 22 January 1912 (NAC, RG 43, Vol 1381, File 3856). Surveys and borings for the Ship Canal had begun in 1905 (Report of the Deputy Minister, *Sessional Paper no. 20* for 1920, Vol 56, no. 10, 17).
- [2] Weller, Annual Report for 1912-1913, *S.P. (No. 20-20b.) for 1914*, 330.
- [3] Weller, Annual Report for 1912-1913 (*ibid*).
- [4] *St. Catharines Standard*, 3 May 1913.
- [5] Bowden to Weller, 20 November 1916 (NAC, RG 43, Vol 2155, File 255).
- [6] Muntz, *op cit*, 1.
- [7] Perhaps his hard-driving nature sapped his health, for the Department of Railways and Canals records show several requests — usually granted — for sick leave. For example, in December 1910 he asked for six weeks “leave of absence” because “Mrs. Weller has not been very well and requires Southern air, and I think it would do me good also, in any event I have to go with her.” Similar requests were granted in January 1914, February 1916, and January 1917. On the latter occasion, Weller wrote to Bowden that he had “been notified by my Physician to go to a warmer climate for a month or so in order to protect my eyesight.” These leaves were all taken in the winter months when construction was reduced to a minimum (Weller to Bowden, 12 December 1910; 21 January 1914; 14 February 1916; 8 January 1917 [NAC, RG 43, Vol 1381, File 3856]).

(Peggy Muntz is one of the Canadian Canal Society originals having been a member since our founding in 1982. Editor)

Lock 8 – Welland Canal

Lock 8 has long been described as the largest ship lock in the world at 1,380 feet in length (425 metres). But I have recently seen literature describing it as the second longest.

There is a longer lock in Antwerp. But it is a sea lock as opposed to a canal lock. That is it connects a tidal river to an inner harbour. This lock also uses a rolling lock gate.

The locks on the present Panama Canal are wider than lock 8, but not as long. The locks on the Panama Canal expansion will be longer than lock 8, but they will also use rolling lock gates.

So, for the time being, lock 8 is, the longest mitre gated ship canal lock in the world.

From the Editor's Desk

My apologies for the lateness of this issue of Canals Canada. In this day and age when your computer doesn't work things grind to a halt. Fortunately I did not lose any data but it took over a week to re-install programs and re-organize all the data. Other commitments limited the time available to finish this edition in a more timely manner.

Enclosed with this issue is the premier publication of the **Welland Canals Advocate**, a bi-monthly publication. We hope that this new publication will bring focus to the push to have the past and current Welland Canals declared a National Historic Canals Corridor.

St Catharine's residents will find the Welland Canals Advocate available at stores throughout the city. This free publication survives on advertising, so please visit their advertisers and tell them you saw their name in the Welland Canals Advocate. For the rest of us the on-line edition is available at www.thewellandcanalsadvocate.ca.

As always I welcome your contributions.

Bob Sears, Editor

The Canadian Canal Society

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