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Lock 27 may have been incorrectly named by me and others! In reading various articles on it, it was on occasion designated as Lock 27. However, after talking with one of the authors, he contends that this was misunderstood; a comma was not properly understood by readers thus changing the meaning of a sentence. Lock 27 was a Port Colborne lock. It seems our Lock 27 was simply named the Port Maitland Lock. I like the name so I think I will keep it for now!

If you are a serious history buff or professional you will find my writing frustrating. I seldom use primary documents, but instead use the works of others and when possible memories of our old-timers. Problem with trying to find old-timers is I too am now reaching the age of "old-timer" and it is getting harder each day to find that rare person older than myself!

The Welland Feeder Canal has been called Merritt's Ditch and other less attractive names over its one-hundred and seventy odd years. Today, I would name it *The Forgotten Canal*. This has become more apparent to me in the past two years as visitors and passer-by's to Lock 27 tell me of their surprise to discover it and how they are amazed when they learn its history. You are not going to learn much about its history in this article. I love teasing my grandchildren and my readers as well. There are a number of books and articles which do document the Feeder and might be worth your reading. Mind you they have a common thread throughout. That is they often differ on facts, and more importantly dates.

Lock 27 was built circa 1846 for the purpose of extending the Feeder Canal from Dunnville to Port Maitland. Prior to the opening of Lock 27, ships, barges etc. could not travel from the upper river at Dunnville to the lower river due to the dam at Dunnville. Short of building a lock at Dunnville which would have only served river traffic, it was decided to connect the original canal which passed by Stromness to the lower Grand River at Port Maitland. In this way ships at Port Maitland and Dunnville could use the Feeder Canal to connect to the main canal a Welland.

The name *Feeder* comes from the fact that it was originally dug as a water feeding ditch, supplying the original Welland Canal with water to operate the many locks needed to ascend and descend the escarpment at Thorold.

Many dates have been offered as to when the Feeder Canal and or parts of it was last used. Some of those dates are difficult to accept as they are as early as the early 1890s,

yet Lock 27 was rebuilt in 1904. A considerable amount of money and time was put into this rebuild at that time, which makes me wonder why this would be done more than ten years after the Feeder Canal was last used. Old-timers have told me stories of the 1922 building of the nine-foot road from Stromness to Dunnville. They tell of barges filled with gravel from the shore at Port Maitland being shipped through the lock to work-sites along the Feeder where concrete was made from this gravel. Newspaper articles from 1904 tell of the lock being electrified. I believe all they meant by this was that electricity was provided to the lock-keeper's home. There is no one I can find who remembers, and there is no evidence of electric lights being installed. We believe we know where one of the gate winches is and it is not electric.

In 2002, I contacted the former Mayor of Haldimand, requesting her support in a clean up of Lock 27. This was met with great enthusiasm and soon I met Lee Rozen an ambitious county manager who loved the idea. Lee provided good counsel and by Oct. 2003 George Barnes & Sons Excavating of Stromness brought in their heavy equipment and several large dumpster loads of debris were removed from the east end of the lock. The following spring, our current Mayor and councillor Buck Sloat along with twenty other volunteers did a manual cleanup. We removed tires, bottles, boots, and garbage of every description, along with a considerable amount of nature's leftovers. Prior to any cleanup by volunteers, Georg (Georg is spelled correctly) Madsen of Mosaic, formerly known as I.M.C. removed the sumac trees and heavy weed growth from the east apron. In 2004, the Grand River Trail Association (Please check with Bill Haartman re the correct name.) moved their route in order to include the lock, now taking them closer to the river and along the Feeder Canal.

Today, the old girl (Sorry ladies, but I mean this in the politest of terms.) is looking just fine thank you! We have hopes for her to look even finer as we develop plans and move the projects along. On June ?? of this year our club held it annual picnic there. To my knowledge this was the first time a picnic had been held in this location. My hope is that this, picnic will be the first of many.

A proposal was made by myself to Council in August, requesting they obtain permits to allow us to dig out the area between the two fills. This could be the first step to someday having the gates replaced and will unquestionably make the area look considerably nicer. Much more work is required, much more will be asked of volunteers, but change has come at an astounding pace. If any of you have a few hours three or four time a season to offer, please let me know and I will put you to work trimming, picking up garbage, planting grass, or who knows what else. You can reach me at wwarnick@cogeco.ca or by the old method at 905 549-6086.