

official slogan. Lock 6 is hidden from sight, but you can obtain good views of the two lower locks from the Trail.

The Flight Locks are so named because each lock connects directly to the next without an intervening reach, akin to a staircase astride the Escarpment. Unlike the other locks, they are twinned, with separate upbound and downbound lanes, enabling ships to pass through them without waiting for vessels coming in the opposite direction.

At the foot of Lock 4 the canal is crossed by a bascule bridge carrying the CN main line. This line was originally built in 1853 by the Great Western Railway from London to Niagara Falls. After 1882 it was carried beneath the Third Canal through what has become known as the “Blue Ghost Tunnel,” which now lies abandoned beyond Pond 6. In the distance to the north can be seen the Glendale Bridge, one of the few vertical lift bridges remaining on the present canal.

6. REGENT AND CHAPEL

After you leave the Trail, pause at the intersection of Regent and Chapel Streets. When the Township of Thorold (originally Township No. 9) was created in 1788 it was divided into rectangular 100-acre lots to provide land for Loyalist and other settlers after the American Revolutionary War. The lots were bounded by lot lines running north-south and concession lines running east-west. Chapel Street is a lot line and Regent Street is a concession line.

As you walk uphill on Chapel Street you are retracing the steps of pioneer surveyor Augustus Jones over 200 years ago. Jones, arguably Upper Canada’s greatest surveyor prior to 1800, laid out the northern half of the Township late in 1788. Another surveyor, Thomas Welch, finished the job in 1794.

To the left of Chapel lies Township Lot 15 and to the right is Lot 16. Each measures 50 chains

north-south by 20 chains east-west; since 1 chain = 66 feet this makes them 100 acres in area. In the 19th century they were divided up into building lots by different subdivision plans (the Hoover Plan to the left and the Rolls Plan to the right) which is why streets like York and Vine do not line up.

7. MEMORIAL PARK

When you turn right on Albert Street, you are entering what was once the estate of James “Squire” Black, Secretary of the Welland Canal Company, who acquired most of Lot 16 in 1832. At one time the estate extended on both sides of the street, then known as Bridle Avenue, but the portion to the north has long been built over.

The land to the south is now Memorial Park, a beautiful oasis of peace and quiet in Thorold Old Town. It was created in 1919, and two years later the War Memorial was erected. The pedestal below the statue carries the names of those who died in the First World War and a list of the battles they fought in, and a nearby stone lists those who died in later wars.

The monument also bears the City of Thorold’s coat of arms, which are based on the arms of the ancient family of Lincolnshire, England for whom Thorold is named (Lady Godiva, who lived in Saxon times, was a Thorold). The arms include a shield, three leaping goats and a walking stag, plus an open-faced knight’s helmet and the Red Hand of Ulster (both marks of a baronet). The Thorold family’s Latin motto “Cervus non Servus” means “The Stag is not a Slave.”

Squire Black’s house still exists on the other side of Albert Street, but is hardly recognizable as such. Built as a single house, it now comprises two homes, numbers 48 and 50, which stand at an angle to the street and are near mirror images of each other. In 1914 the house was split and the two parts were remodelled as separate dwellings. The larger

part was left in place and became No. 48; the smaller part was moved a few yards to the right, and an extension was added to make No. 50. Original materials survive inside both houses, making them possibly the oldest in Thorold Old Town.

8. THE RETURN TO LOCK 7

On the left, as you walk up Carleton Street, is L.G. Lorriman Public School. It opened as Central School in 1914, replacing the old East Side School across the street. From 1982 to 2006 it served as Thorold City Hall.

At the corner of Clairmont Street is the Church of St. John the Evangelist (Anglican), completed in 1856. The Rector was Rev. Thomas Brock Fuller, godson to Isaac Brock, hero of the Battle of Queenston Heights. The church was built with a tower only — the spire was added in 1878, by which time Fuller had been appointed the first Bishop of the Diocese of Niagara. Alongside is Memorial Hall; originally erected in 1925, it was rebuilt after a major fire in 2004.

The return walk along Clairmont and Chapel Streets takes you past a number of mid-19th century houses. They include the classic Georgian house at 42 Clairmont, the Lampman House next door at No. 44, and the house that forms the core of the Inn at Lock Seven — the old stonework is still visible in the facade. This house was used as an Engineers’ Office during construction of the Fourth Welland Canal, and was converted into a motel in 1965.

Finally, be sure to note the two attractive stone houses on Chapel Street near the Lock 7 Viewing Complex, both dating from the 1850s.

Published by the Thorold Heritage Walks Committee, July 2007.

Research and text by Alun Hughes and John Burtiniak. Map by Loris Gasparotto.

THOROLD HERITAGE WALKS

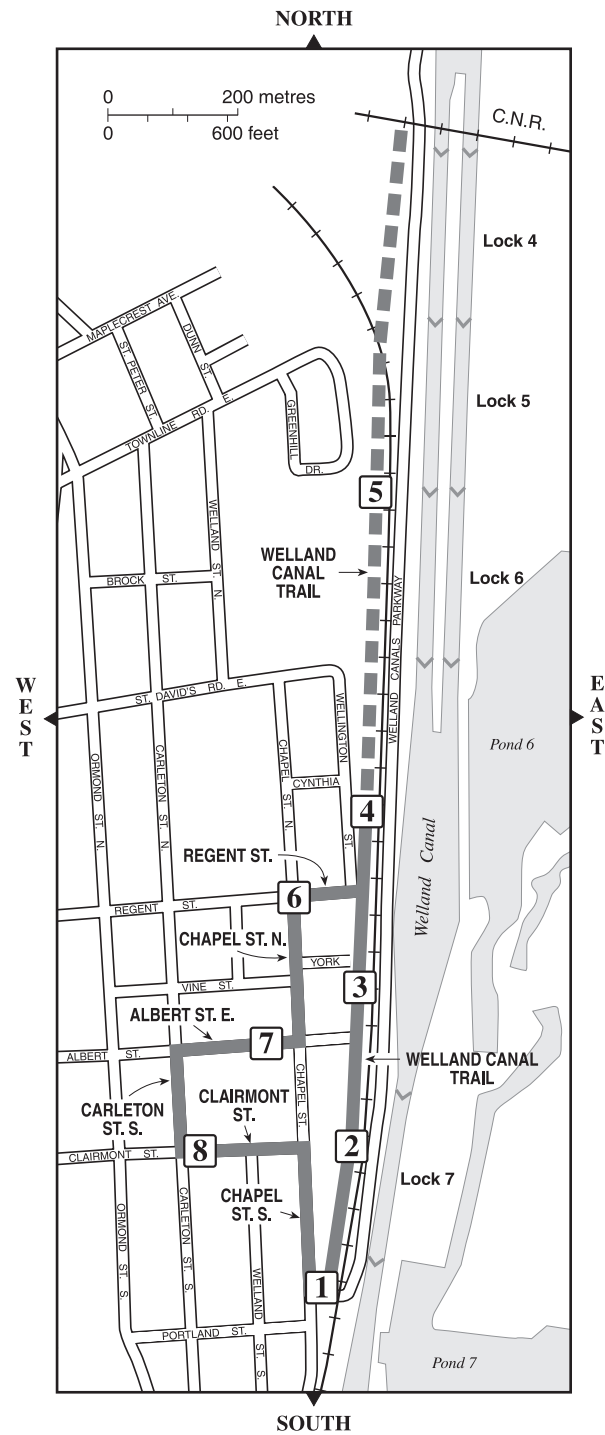
THE WELLAND CANAL WALK

Follow the Welland Canal Trail north to the Thorold Murals, and be amazed at the wealth of history packed into such a short distance. View the Murals, and if you’re feeling energetic continue along the Trail to Thorold’s world-famous Flight Locks, “where ships climb the mountain.” Return to your starting point via the tree-lined residential streets of Thorold Old Town.

The basic walk is 2 km (1.25 miles) in length. With the Flight Locks included the distance is 4 km (2.5 miles).



The “Columbus” in Lock 7



1. LOCK 7 VIEWING COMPLEX

Before embarking on the Welland Canal Trail, take a moment to survey the scene from the Viewing Complex deck. Directly to the south is the site of the Battle of Beaverdams, fought on June 24, 1813. It doesn't look much like a battlefield any more, having been transformed by industry and canals, but here Native troops loyal to the Crown ambushed and defeated an invading American army. The battle is especially significant because it took place after Laura Secord's historic walk from Queenston to the Decew House in Thorold to warn the British of the enemy advance.

The present canal, the Fourth Welland Canal or Ship Canal, opened in 1932. In the distance beyond the canal is Abitibi Consolidated, established in 1912 as the Ontario Paper Company. To its left is the channel of the Third Welland Canal, completed in 1882. The remains of American soldiers killed in the Battle of Beaverdams were unearthed during the excavation of this canal in 1873.

Just beyond the head of Lock 7 is the old bridge that carried the main road to Niagara Falls over the abandoned Third Canal. It connected with a single leaf bascule bridge over the present canal; this was dismantled when the Thorold Tunnel opened in 1968.

Also beyond Lock 7 are the buried remains of Lock 24 of the Third Canal. In 1900 this lock was the object of a terrorist attack by Irish-American Fenian sympathisers. Fortunately for those living downstream, the attackers placed dynamite on the wrong side of the lock gates, causing them to close tightly instead of springing apart. The perpetrators were soon captured and imprisoned.

2. THE UPPER TRAIL

As you proceed along the Trail you are following what was once the valley of Ten Mile Creek. The creek, running west from

Niagara Falls, turned northward in Thorold and descended the Niagara Escarpment through a ravine and over a 40-foot waterfall before flowing on to Lake Ontario.

The railway alongside the Trail originated in 1859 as the Welland Railway, which ran between Lakes Erie and Ontario roughly parallel to the Second Welland Canal. This canal, like the First Canal before it, passed to the west through downtown Thorold.

Lock 7 on your right is the highest lock on the Niagara Escarpment. It is 859 feet long, 80 feet wide and has a lift of 48 feet; ships take about 30 minutes to pass through it. As you crest the Trail and begin to descend you see Lock 6 of the Flight Locks in the distance.

3. THE LOWER TRAIL

On the far side of the canal immediately below Lock 7 are the stone walls of Lock 23 of the Third Welland Canal. Both the Third and Second Canals had cut-stone locks, while those on the Fourth Canal are concrete. The First Canal had small wooden locks.

The Ten Mile Creek valley at this point was quite narrow, the Third Canal clinging to the far side and the Welland Railway running down the middle. With the building of the Fourth Canal it was greatly enlarged, and the railway was shifted to its present alignment.

Look upwards to the left and you see the red walls and roof of the Constable House, one of Thorold's many designated homes. Built in 1907 of red Grimsby sandstone and grey Queenston limestone, this house is the city's only example of Jacobethan architecture.

In the mid-19th century the valley floor was the site of a quarry that provided limestone to the Thorold Cement Mill, operated by John Brown in the centre of town. Brown won awards for his "Thorold Hydraulic Cement" at international exhibitions held in London and Paris. He died in 1876 after his

horse bolted and he was thrown from his carriage at the quarry entrance.

The large expanse of water beyond the canal is Pond 6, which stores water for use in the Flight Locks. Submerged beneath it are the remains of several locks of the Third Canal, and the sites of Thorold's first churches (the German Meeting House, ca. 1800, and St. Peter's Anglican, 1832) and Thorold's original cemetery (the Old Burying Ground).

4. THE THOROLD MURALS

The Thorold Murals are a work in progress. They were begun in 2006, and all 12 panels are due for completion in 2008. They are drawn on the rear walls of factory buildings along Wellington Street. When completed, the murals will cover almost 2000 square metres, making the Thorold Murals Project the largest in Canada.

Each panel depicts a significant aspect of Thorold's history. These include the Second Welland Canal, Thorold's veterans, the bombing of Lock 24, Thorold's educational heritage, and, in black-and-white, images from late 19th century Thorold.

This last panel shows: Thorold's old fire hall, built in 1878; the city's volunteer fire service, Protection Hose Company No. 1, founded in 1853; the NS&T railway station that once stood at the head of Front Street; an NS&T passenger coach alongside the Second Welland Canal; and a Cannon Ball bicycle (made in town in the 1890s) pictured at the former Third Canal bridge in Allanburg.

5. THE FLIGHT LOCKS

At this point you have a choice. You can either go directly to the next leg and start your return trek or you can continue along the Trail to Thorold's Flight Locks. These locks, numbered 6, 5 and 4 in the order in which you reach them, are "where ships climb the mountain," to quote Thorold's