



Press Release

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University Marketing & Communications
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Brock celebrates historic local archives donation

Today, Brock University and FortisOntario Inc. (formerly the Canadian Niagara Power Company Ltd.) celebrated an historic archives donation to the school that will keep a significant piece of Niagara's cultural heritage in our region.

Working together, FortisOntario and Brock had a collection of the Canadian Niagara Power (CNP) Company's early records certified as being of "outstanding and national importance" to Canada by the Moveable Cultural Property Review Board in Ottawa.

The collection, valued at more than \$650,000, includes correspondence, design and operation records; photographs and field notebooks; and more than 1,000 maps, sketches, blueprints and plans.

The donation has been earmarked as a gift to the Campaign for a Bold New Brock.

"Such a collection of records could easily have ended up in an archive in Ottawa," said Jack Lightstone, President of Brock University.

"This Niagara collection is staying here in Niagara because the people of FortisOntario determined that this is where it belongs, and they collaborated with Brock to make it possible," he said. "They also agreed to make this collection a gift to the Campaign for a Bold New Brock, a gift not just to Brock, but to the entire Niagara community."

FortisOntario has sent more modern CNP records to Library and Archives Canada in Ottawa, but wanted these early records to stay in Niagara.

"Canadian Niagara Power has a long and proud history of providing electricity to communities in the Niagara region for over 100 years," said Bill Daley, President and CEO of FortisOntario. "We are delighted to donate this historic material to Brock University's exceptional archive facility, and thereby ensuring that this one-of-a-kind collection will be available to the entire Niagara community for decades to come."

The Canadian Niagara Power Company was the first hydroelectric venture on the Canadian side of the Niagara River. It harnessed electricity from Niagara Falls and distributed it to help power the industries and light the homes where Ontarians worked and lived.

The collection contains materials relating to the CNP and power generation on the Niagara River mainly dating from the 1890s until the 1950s. The records document the early years of the company revealing details on the political, economic and technological efforts required to make the venture a success.

The acquisition of this significant collection, a major milestone for the James A. Gibson Library, prompted the Library to work for and achieve its recent Department of Canadian Heritage Category “A” designation for textual and archival materials. The accreditation means that Brock’s Special Collections and Archives have achieved the highest standards for an archival repository in Canada.

“Preservation and stewardship of the Canadian cultural record are one of the Library’s most important functions,” said Margaret Grove, University Librarian.

“Materials like the Canadian Niagara Power Company archives require the proper environment and organization to ensure long-term access for researchers and members of the community,” she said. “We thank FortisOntario for their trust and patience as we pursued the lengthy process of attaining this significant designation.”

The Canadian Niagara Power Company archives at Brock are open for research. The collection will be of interest to students, faculty and community researchers interested in local history, engineering, power generation, Niagara Falls tourism, and international and domestic politics.

For more info:

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Images (attached): Courtesy of the Niagara Power Company Archives at Brock University

- CNP - Turbines plans - 1903.jpg
- Niagara park map - 1888.jpg