

Title:	Erie & Niagara Railway collection, 1864-1884		
Creator:	William A. Thomson, Lavinia Thomson, Macalester		
Dates of Material:	1864-1884	Record Group Number:	RG 491
Summary of Contents:	<p>The collection includes 2 letters written by William A. Thomson, a letter addressed to William Thomson by Macalester, a letter written by Lavinia Thomson, and a sheet of 40 Erie & Niagara Railway Company bonds.</p> <p>The first letter by Thomson is dated February 1, 1864, suggesting a business arrangement between the Erie & Niagara Railway and the Great Western Railway. The letter is eleven pages, written on 3 folded sheets of paper. Thomson was vice-president of the Erie & Niagara Railway and is attempting to establish a connection between the American and Canadian railways. A port in Niagara-on-the-Lake then makes it possible for goods delivered by these lines to be shipped by water. He also suggests that more hotels would be needed on the Canadian side of the border to accommodate increased tourism, which could be financed collectively by the Railway companies. Mention is also made of the plans to construct a bridge over the Niagara River, as well as the possibility of a ferry operating between Fort Erie and Buffalo.</p> <p>The second letter by Thomson is addressed to F.A. Pinchoff and dated at Queenston, 21 June, 1873. The letter is marked “private and confidential” and concerns payments due to F.A. Pinchoff and Halsey.</p> <p>The third letter is dated at Chicago, 29 August, 1873 and is addressed to “my dear Thomson”, and signed “Macalester”. He thanks Thomson “for the hospitality you have shown me. I enjoyed my trip on your hill very much and congratulate you on the works being so well carried out.”</p> <p>The last letter is written by Lavinia Thomson and dated at Queenston, 25 Feb. [18]79. It is addressed to J.L. Tallinghast, Esq. She writes that “I wrote to you on the 11th Jan, regarding the Charter of the Grand Island Bridge Co. but have had no intimation of your receipt of the letter. I desire to carry out Mr. Thomson’s wishes by giving preference to the Canadian Southern, but if they do not regard the charter as of any importance to them, I must make arrangements else where.” She makes reference to the fact that her husband, William Thomson, died the previous year. The letters also makes reference to Henry Vanderbilt, president of the New York Central railway.</p> <p>The collection also includes a sheet of 40 uncut Erie & Niagara Railway Company bonds, dated 1865-1884.</p>		

Physical Description / Condition:	<p>4 letters, 27 x 21 cm or smaller.</p> <p>1 sheet of bonds, folded. Unfolded dimensions are 27 x 40 cm.</p>		
Other Notes:	<p>William Alexander Thomson (1816-1878) was a promoter and developer of railway systems in western Ontario. He incorporated the Fort Erie Railroad Company in 1857, purchased the Erie and Ontario Railroad in 1863, and incorporated the Erie and Niagara Extension Railway Company in 1868 (later renamed the Canada Southern Railway). Thomson was also elected to the House of Commons for Welland in 1872, and re-elected in 1874. He was known for his support of public management of the currency and is seen as a pioneer advocate of government monetary policy. He was also an advocate of radical agrarian economic doctrine, believing that Canadian laws favoured mercantile interests over those of the producers of goods, and that this hindered national development.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Source: Dictionary of Canadian Biography online http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/thomson_william_alexander_10E.html Retrieved 2013/11/07</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Jackson, John N. and John Burtniak. <i>Railways in the Niagara Peninsula</i>, 1978.</p>		
Location:	Brock University Archives		
Source Information:	Acquired from Rodger Friedman Rare Book Studio in 2013.		
Described by:	Chantal Cameron	Date:	February 2014