

Richard Spencer St. Lawrence Seaway Expansion Research Files

MSS COLL. #192

1.50 feet

Historical Note

While the St. Lawrence Seaway project is considered one of the great engineering feats of the 20th century and resulted in easy movement of cargo from the Atlantic Ocean to the heart of the continent, it is generally accepted that the waterway was under-sized from its beginning in 1958. By the 1970s, some policy makers and industry representatives lobbied to expand the Seaway. Lengthening the navigation season from 8 ½ months to roughly 11 months was seen as one way to move more goods on the “lower” portion of the Seaway between Montreal and Lake Ontario. But strong opposition to “winter navigation” on the St. Lawrence River emerged. In the late 1970s, a handful of 1000 Islands region activists formed Save the River, which would spearhead opposition and eventually help defeat the idea.

Biographical Note

Richard M. Spencer has spent much of his life working as an advocate for the natural resource that is the St. Lawrence River. A resident of Clayton, NY, Richard was an original board member of Save the River and has researched and written about the St. Lawrence Seaway extensively.

Scope and Content

This partially-processed collection consists of Richard Spencer’s personal research files on the U.S. and Canadian Seaway agencies’ winter navigation and other expansion proposals. The documents span the years 1972-2002. Included are materials that discuss the proposed infrastructure expansion of the lower Seaway, which includes adding locks and additional dredging to make more of the river navigable. A thesis paper written for Mr. Spencer’s Master’s degree at Cornell University in 1992 exploring the winter navigation issue is also included. Also included are some early records of Save the River.

Provenance

Donation of Richard Spencer, October 2014

Box 1

Winter Navigation files, 1973-1983
State Agency Files, 1975-1979
Fish and Wildlife, 1973-1981
Seaway Expansion Files, 1983-2002
Miscellaneous material

Box 2

Save the River files, 1977-1985
Rick Spencer’s thesis notes
Master’s thesis *Winter Navigation on the Great Lakes & St. Lawrence Seaway: A study in Congressional Decision Making*