

## PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE OF HAMILTON CANAL

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The greatness of the irrigation systems of Sri Lanka is summed up in the book "History of Ceylon". Accordingly, during colonial period in Sri Lanka, especially in the Portuguese Era when new canals were constructed. The purpose of the original waterways was to transport goods to seafaring ships leaving from the port of Negombo; the cargoes consisting of precious stones, pearls and spices, cloves, cardamoms, pepper and above all, cinnamon. In Dutch Era, they expanded the canal system but some canals remain unfinished. During British Era, which is in the beginning of nineteenth century, they completed construction of canals which were not completely built during Dutch Era. Some canals were expanded and some canals were newly built. The Hamilton Canal was built by Gavin Hamilton, Agent Revenue Commerce, Colombo. Hamilton Canal links the Kelani River with the Negombo lagoon. There was a boat system called "Padda boats" which were used to transport the goods in colonial Sri Lanka. Eventually, Hamilton canal was no longer used but it has now been reconstructed in a modern way. It is now capable of attracting tourists, thus boat rides; water jets have been introduced. In this research we discuss the discovery of Hamilton canal, historical evidence on this canal, how to attract local and foreign tourist by introducing Boat Houses instead of Hotels, use modern barges to transport goods and use public boats to transport people. The objective of this study was to examine the history, heritage and to use it for tourism and as a transport. In this research we collected different data such as written documents on ancient irrigation work in Ceylon by R. L. Brohier, Muthuraja Wela by Abeysekara Henry P. and documents from Irrigation Department. We observed plans, maps and visual data for the research. As field data, we took photos and personal interviews from the elderly residents and analysis was based on qualitative research method. Further, we were able to find a very clear collection of photos of Hamilton canal.

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