Published by the University of Manitoba Press, *Dammed: The Politics of Loss and Survival in Anishinaabe Territory* by University of Guelph Professor Brittany Luby is this year’s Floyd S. Chalmers Award winner for its outstanding contribution to the history of Ontario. Challenging “the dominant narrative of postwar affluence” (p. 172), Dammed addresses major themes in Ontario history from an original and vitally important perspective. The dams in question, at the outlet of Lake of the Woods (built in the 1890s) and farther down the Winnipeg River (built in the 1950s), took no account of Indigenous communities along the river. They varied water levels, currents, and ice conditions, at first unpredictably and then permanently; contributed to the accumulation of pollutants and toxins; and ultimately destroyed a viable Indigenous economy. Drawing on extensive oral and documentary sources (including otherwise closed records of Ontario Power Generation) and her own family’s history, Luby explores this story from the perspectives of members of the Dalles 38C First Nation Reserve as they adapted their lives to the accumulating changes and, still, eventually were forced to move away. Luby’s account highlights “the experiences of average families, not just leaders” (p. 171), such as the men who worked on the construction of the Whitedog Falls Generating Station but were not offered other work by Ontario Hydro when the project was completed, the families who opened bank accounts in Kenora to save money earned in good years, and the mothers whose ability to breastfeed was transformed by the destruction of manomin fields and the toxicity of the fish on which they had relied. In documenting these complex outdoor lives of Northwestern Ontario – harvesting manomin and blueberries, for example, or making and using ice roads – Dammed also provides a vivid account of the world which the dams destroyed.
Established in 1983, the Floyd S. Chalmers Award is given annually to the best book written on any aspect of Ontario history in the preceding calendar year. This year’s award selection committee included Douglas McCalla (University of Guelph), Michael Stevenson (Lakehead University), and Janet Noel (University of Toronto) as members, with Craig Mantle (Champlain Society) providing secretarial support. The prize includes a $1000.00 cash award as well as an Inuit carving, as dictated by Floyd S. Chalmers himself. Brittany Luby will receive her award at a future date.

For more information, contact: info@champlainsociety.ca.

About Mr. Chalmers
Floyd Sherman Chalmers (1898-1993) made outstanding contributions to Canada through his work as a journalist and philanthropist. He started in the newspaper business when he was 17 as a reporter for the Toronto News and Toronto World. Chalmers moved on to the Financial Post in 1919, advancing to the position of editor in 1925. He eventually rose to occupy several senior executive positions within the Maclean-Hunter publishing company, becoming its Honorary Chairman in 1979.

Chalmers was extremely active in promoting the arts in Canada. He guided numerous organizations by serving in influential roles: director of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, vice-chairman of the Royal Conservatory of Music, president of the Canadian Opera Company and the Stratford Shakespearean Festival, and chancellor of York University. He founded the Floyd S. Chalmers Foundation and initiated the Encyclopedia of Music in Canada. The foundation continues to provide substantial assistance to young Canadian artists. Chalmers was the recipient of numerous honorary degrees, was made an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1967, and was elevated to a Companion of the Order in 1984 in recognition of his contribution to the arts.

The Floyd S. Chalmers Award in Ontario History was originally established by Chalmers in 1983 when he was a member of the Board of Trustees of the Ontario Historical Studies Series. In 1993, having completed its government mandate to commission and publish 30 books on the history of Ontario, the Series was disbanded. Its final act was to transfer the administration of the trust fund and the award to the Champlain Society.

About the Champlain Society
For more than 100 years, the Champlain Society has worked to spread awareness of Canada’s documentary heritage. The Society has published over 100 volumes on a wide variety of explorations and discoveries and will continue to do so with the support of its members. From the lively episodes of the Witness to Yesterday podcast series and the informative monthly Findings/Trouvailles blog posts to the extensive collection of digital archives, the Champlain Society continues to increase public awareness of, and accessibility to, Canada’s rich store of historical records. Members benefit from full access to all Society publications and resources.

Explore the Champlain Society at www.champlainsociety.ca