

ECHOING THROUGH THE AGES

A Timeline of Various Events

In and Around Amherstburg During the 1950s

Extracted from The Amherstburg Echo (1950-1959)

Judging by what was reported in the papers during the beginning of the fifties, those were rather non-productive years for Amherstburg's town fathers except for a couple of major projects, one being the completion of the housing project in the Fort/Main Street section of town which came to be known as **Warren Park**.

J. C. Pennington was the architect for the **new intermediate school** (St. John the Baptist) which was built in 1950 on the southeast corner of Brock and Murray Streets. It would contain grades 7, 8, 9 and 10, a first for Amherstburg. **Marontate & Paisley** were the electrical firm, **Carters** did the plumbing and **Huron Construction** was the main contractor.

In May the new **Malden Central School**, the first of its kind built in Southwestern Ontario, was opened and some of the old one-room township schools were sold by tender.

There was bad news and there was good news. **J. W. Westcott's Marine Office** on the Livingstone Channel was destroyed by fire so temporary quarters were set up in the Livingstone lighthouse. At the end of May, 1950 Captain J. Earl McQueen's tug **Atomic** created some excitement for local folks when she took first place in the **1st International Tugboat Race** held on the Detroit River. Then in August that year a major **fire at Calvert Distillers** destroyed the distilling building; losses were estimated at over a million dollars,

S.K.D. began manufacturing and painting "Beauty-Line" steel folding doors and there was talk of building an **artificial ice rink** in town. **Anderdon Tavern's** "grand new dining lounge" on the west side of the original building was opened in April that year and a roast chicken dinner at the **New Palms Grill** on Murray Street could be enjoyed for eighty-five cents.

County Council at a fall meeting advocated lashes for parents who evaded or ignored their responsibilities to their children. Didn't hear much more about that! However, this discussion seems to have taken place after three out-of-town children, aged 12, 11 and 7, were picked up local police, thus solving a **juvenile crime wave** in Amherstburg. It seems the children had been missing for over 24 hours from their Wheatley residence before anyone noticed.

By the time Autumn rolled around business was on the upswing. It was announced in October 1950 that a new **Shell Service Station** would be built on Richmond Street on the site of **Jones' Garage** which had been destroyed by fire during the summer. At the same time **Harry and Ruth Duby** opened a **new, modern appliance and furniture store** on Ramsay Street.

And good news for the business girl ! - **seamless stockings** - which would "eliminate the constant straightening of seams." Then more good news - **dial telephone** came to town and around Christmastime the **first dial phone** was installed in the home of **Mayor William Nattress**, but it would be spring before the system was in working order.

There was more Christmas cheer - **S.K.D.** employees received the first payment (in silver dollars) of their new profit-sharing plan and the **3rd Annual Christmas Community Sing** was held in the **Liberty Theatre** on the Sunday evening before Christmas. A good crowd enjoyed listening to a variety of local groups and got to sing along, the event sponsored by the recently formed **Amherstburg Chapter of the Barber Shop Quartets**.



LATTERDAY SAINTS SOFTBALL CHAMPS 1951

Left to Right:

Back row - Jake Tremblay, Roy Bondy, Norm "Porky" Jones, Glen Carnahan, Mac Maloney, Eddie "Bimbo" Kopacz;

Middle row - Bob Sinasac, Raymond "Tucker" Spearing, Austin "Toddy" Jones, Lloyd Jones, Harvey Jones.

Front row: Stan "Turk" Nicholson, Morley "Pops" Murray, Glen Murray, Bill Jones.

Bat boys: Gaylord Jones and Darwin Wismer

Early in **1951** the **Amherstburg Lions Club** purchased an **ambulance** which they turned over to the town and **Amherstburg Volunteer Firemen** agreed to take over its operation.

An **addition** to **General Amherst High School** was expected to cost \$120,000.

Tom Hamilton opened a modern **radio repair shop** at 201 Ramsay Street.

Ten letter boxes were installed at various locations in town and **Marion** (Mrs. John) **Fox** was given the pickup contract.

Ten dollars down and five dollars monthly would buy a lot in any of the **Flynn Subdivisions**.

In June 1952 the Red Ball Parking Meter Company surveyed the town, hoping to install **parking meters**, but council wasn't ready to commit yet.

The **Swiss Chalet Shop**, northeast corner Sandwich and St. Arnaud, opened for business.

Graeme Hutchinson was the first customer at the new **Simpson's Order Office** which opened at No. 17 Dalhousie Street in July 1951.

In November a meeting was held to organize the Amherstburg Chapter of the **Goodfellows** which would encompass Amherstburg, Anderdon and Malden.

The **Beta Sigma Phi Sorority** held their annual "**Mid-Winter Whirl**" at the Anderdon Tavern. **Mrs. Arthur Pattenden** was crowned Queen of the Ball and **Gordon Breeze** was King.

The "**Lord's Day Act**" was still being strictly enforced - no opening on Sundays for dance halls, pool rooms and bowling alleys.

The old 4-room **St. Joseph's school** at River Canard, a 2-storey brick structure built around 1894, was dismantled.

These were generally good times for the tri-community. People were working and able to buy certain commodities and luxuries which hadn't been available since before the war, one of these being **automobiles**. Now folks who worked in the city could afford the luxury of buying their own car and driving to work. But there was a downside. Fewer people were taking the **bus to Windsor** - so in March **1952** it was announced that service between the city and Amherstburg would be greatly reduced due to lack of patronage... not good for those who didn't have their own transportation. There would be **only 8 return trips on Sundays, 13 on weekdays and 16 on Saturdays!**

In April 1952 Alex Gardiner was elected president of the **AMA Sportsmen's Association**, organized five years previously, now had over 400 members.

Canadian Salt Company began drilling in Ojibway, seeking evidence that might lead to establishment of an underground commercial rock salt supply.

Popular young Amherstburg athlete **Tormey Hamilton** was killed in an auto accident on Sandwich Street.

Bob Sinasac pitcher for the RLDS softball team, shut out the Legion 6-0.

Molise's Grocery, corner 2nd of Anderdon and Texas Road, owned by Nick Cappocilli, opened for business.

Modern and square dancing was held every Saturday evening at **Bell's Triangle** in Malden.

Local baseball pitcher **Bill Wigle** contracted to pitch for Fort Lauderdale this season.

By July 1952 progress was being made on the new \$142,000 **Anderdon Township Central School**.

A five-hour **fire at the garbage dump** on Dalhousie Street spread an unforgettable stench over the town and got nearby residents up in arms, but it also caused the town fathers to take a closer look at ways and means to dispose of the town's garbage.

Graeme Hutchinson was the first customer at the new **Simpson's Order Office** which opened at No. 17 Dalhousie Street.

On September 10th the **Livingstone Channel Lighthouse** was damaged beyond repair when hit during a fog by the freighter **E. J. Kulas**. **J. E. Maguire**, reporter on duty, was toppled, office and all, into the river.

Norm "Porky" Jones pitched a **no-hit, no-run game for the RLDS** against Ingersoll. After 8 scoreless innings, **Trombley** singled and scored behind **Bob Sinasac's** mighty home run.

Five **Anderdon school buildings** were for sale, two to be moved off site.

Construction began on a 40' x 60' building, south side of Richmond Street, to house **Copeland's Book Store** and **Frank Williamson's Men's Wear** store.

Jack Parent of Leamington purchased the **Amherstburg Recreation** building.

By November 1952, **eighty building permits** had been issued for the year - 17 for homes - a **Sunoco** gas station, **Canadian Cannery** warehouse, **Marra's Bread** garage, several new stores and alterations.

Dizzy Trout, former Detroit Tigers pitcher, was guest speaker at the **RLDS Softball Team** dinner. Team manager **Austin Jones** introduced players - **Bob Sinasac**, **Jake Trombley**, **Bill Jones**, **Ken Laing**, **Junior Wismer** (mascot), **Bob Barclay**, **Glen Carnahan**, **Harvey Nicholson**, **Lloyd Jones**, **Mac Maloney**, **Norman Jones**, **Glen Murray**, **Eddie Kopacz** and **Harvey Jones**.

Council moved to turn over the old Packard ambulance to the Volunteer Fire Brigade.

At Christmastime 1952 the Columbian Squires, who had in the past displayed a nativity scene in local store windows, purchased twenty 21" statues and set up a crib on the grounds of the Amherstburg Public Library.

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Fresh Sliced BOLOGNA	lb. 39c	THIS WEEK'S FEATURE— MEALD COTTAGE ROLL 1b. 55c
Sliced SIDE BACON	lb. 35c	
Fresh Ground HAMBURG	lb. 49c	
Pork Shoulder ROAST	lb. 43c	

YOUR BUY OF THE WEEK—
Kellogg's 2-^{8-oz.} Packages
CORN FLAKES **29c**

INGRAM'S Good Morning **COFFEE** 1b. **93c**
 INGRAM'S Orange Pekoe **TEA BAGS** 30 BAGS **29c**

KRAFT MIRACLE 8-oz. JAR Sandwich Spread 29c FANCY TENDER KING 15-oz. TINS Libby's Peas 2-31c SUNNY SPAIN 12-oz. Salad Olives Jar 25c GLOBE CHOICE 15-oz. TINS Dessert Pears 2-31c FROSTEE Chocolate or Vanilla PKGS. Ice Cream Mix 2-29c	GRANULATED SUGAR 10-lbs. 95c CLUB HOUSE 10-oz. SHAKER Black Pepper 29c PITTED Dates 1b. 19c	DEL MAIZ 15-oz. Cream Corn 2 tins 29c LIBBY'S CHOICE 15-oz. Diced Beets 2 tins 25c WHETHEY'S 24-oz. JAR Raspberry Jam 39c HEINZ in Tomato Sauce 15-oz. Spaghetti 2 tins 29c YORK CHOICE 20-oz. TINS Green Beans 2-35c
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Home Grown Leaf Lettuce 1b. 17c
 Firm Ripe Tomatoes, Cello Pkg. 17c
 288 Sunkist Oranges 2 Dozen 49c

LIBBY'S FANCY 15-oz. Fruit Cocktail Tin 25c BURLINGTON 13-oz. KETCHUP Bottle 17c MITCHELL'S CHOICE 20-oz. Apple Sauce 2 Tins 29c GOLD MEDAL 16-oz. Peanut Butter Jar 35c CALIFORNIA SEEDLESS RAISINS 2-lbs. 45c	ROSE BRAND MARGARINE 3 lbs. 87c GOLD SEAL FANCY 8-oz. TIN Red Collog Salmon 35c CAMPBELL'S 10-oz. Tomato Soup 2 Tins 23c TIDE Reg 38c Giant 75c P & G Soap 2 lge bars 15c JAVEX 32-oz. 25c
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PARADE:

- Best Decorated Float, Business or Industrial Truck or Car
- Best Decorated Bicycle
- Best Old Time Costume
- Best Scout Group, Girl Guide, Cubs, Brownies, Etc.
- Best Clown

SATURDAY NIGHT

- Oldest Couple on Ground — \$5.00
- Largest Family on Ground — \$5.00

Drawing for Prizes

Refreshments — Games for Old and Young

Ponies on Grounds each night

For Information on the Parade or Bicycle Races—
 Call **MERLE'S Soda Bar** RE 6-9887, or **Oscar Bondy** RE 6-4086

(BAND IN ATTENDANCE)

Tragedy ushered in the **1953 New Year**, A devastating **fire** had taken the lives of two of **Herman Wilson's** young children and destroyed their home on the last afternoon of 1952. The community pulled together and within hours a committee had been organized to assist the stricken family. The local Chamber of Commerce and service clubs immediately began a drive to rehabilitate the family and provide them with a new home. Funds, furniture, clothing and building supplies poured in from throughout the county. Local carpenters, electricians and other workmen volunteered their services and by the end of January the Community Emergency Committee reported that sufficient funds had already been contributed from the public to build the Wilsons a new residence. \$4,000 had been raised in the community and donations also came from outside. At the end of February the Wilson family moved into their **new home** on George Street.

In 1953 the new **Anderdon Central School** officially opened.

Council passed a by- law to provide for **installation of parking meters** in the downtown section over the objection of Reeve Ferman Sinasac who felt that meters would drive business out of town. (Note: Twenty years later the parking meters were removed.)

The local **Chamber of Commerce** discussed sponsoring a **course for Amherstburg shop clerks** so they could relate some **local history** and other information to tourists.

Business in Amherstburg prospered as most **folks were employed** and able to purchase the goods displayed in the many local stores. One had to go no further than "**downtown**" for groceries at the **Dominion, Ingrams, Amherst Provision, HiGrade Market and the Blue Ribbon Meat Market**; the **Dime Store** carried a variety of almost anything one wanted; there were two drug stores - **Moffat's** and **Ayerst's**. **Max Rubenstein's** and **Balla's** Department Stores sold boots, shoes and other dry goods for men, women, children and the home, as did the **Right Store**. If looking for jewellery, then **Drayton & Young** was the place to go.

Some of the other regular downtown advertisers in the Echo in 1953 were **Frank Williamson's Men's Wear, Kemp Furniture, Copeland's Book Store, M & R Television, Kendall's and Wigle's Hardware stores. The Pennington Shop, Poppy's Ladies' Wear** and the **Elizabeth Dress Shop** all carried very good lines in women's clothing. After shopping there was always a cup of coffee at **Vic & Julia's Bakery & Delicatessen**, the **Tea Garden**, the **Green Lantern** and **Ridley's Coffee Bar**, or some other cooler thirst quencher at one of the local taverns - the **Amherst Hotel**, the **Anderdon Tavern**, the **Bob-lo Tavern** and **Duffy's** being the most popular. The old "Bucket o' Blood" **Lakeview Hotel** on Dalhousie Street and the **Lakeshore Tavern** in Malden were also popular. At times on Saturday afternoon in downtown Amherstburg during the fifties, especially during the summer, the sidewalks weren't wide enough to keep shoppers and tourists from bumping into one another.

The spring of 1953 saw more building in town. The Federal-Provincial housing project on the **Bell Farm** was progressing. By mid-September 25 houses were under way in that section of Fort and Main which would later be called **Warren Park**.

The **Bank of Montreal building** (erected in 1849 for Thomas Paxton) was demolished to make way for the new one which opened in May, 1954. **Calvert Distillers** opened a **bottling room** in the summer of '53 which gave employment to 60 women.

Ralph McCurdy received his Bachelor of Science degree at Detroit Institute of Technology.

The **Bob-Lo Tavern** was under new management. (Former owner George Speal died in January 1953.)

The **6th concession of Malden** was being paved.

Sid Hinch, Amherstburg Cardinals southpaw, was top pitcher in the Essex County Baseball League this summer.

McNamara Construction was awarded the contract to rebuild the **Livingstone Channel lighthouse** which was wrecked on September 11th, 1952 when hit by the freighter **E. J. Kulas** during a dense fog. A cornerstone was laid for the new **Lincoln Lodge hall**, corner of George and Murray Streets and in August, 1953 Hydro changed over from 25 to 60 cycle.

The year ended on a pleasant note with Amherstburg merchants reporting a "bumper" Christmas trade. Local kids were ice skating on the **rink at the town park**, so well maintained by **Lee St. John**. Council passed a by-law amending the zoning which would pave the way for the construction of a **proposed government dock** to be built on south Dalhousie Street.



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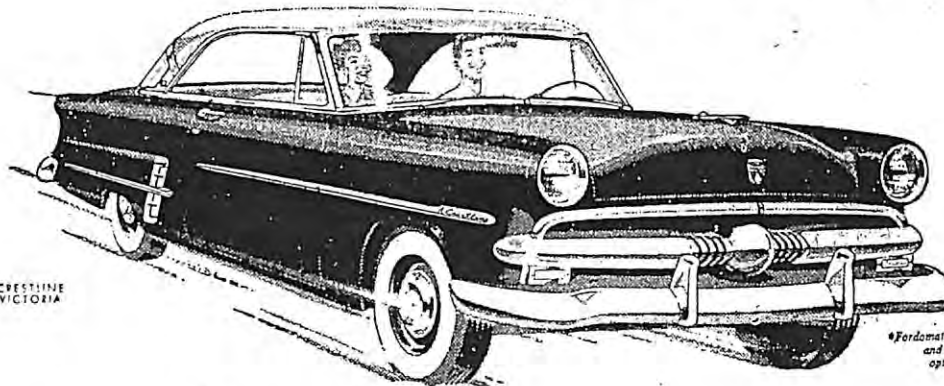
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It was **1954** - a year that would be quite challenging to members of town council as there were many problems to be faced, stated incoming mayor Dr. E. M. Warren at the opening of the first meeting in January. "*Progress should be our aim but it must be solid progress with caution*", he added.

One of the first items on the to-do list was for council to work with the Chamber of Commerce in bringing **new business to town** as well as making an effort to keep present industries happy.

Council had a **long wish-list**. Among the needs were a survey of sewers and watermains; business tax reform; repairing sidewalks, erection of proper street signs; some form of recreation for the young people especially during the winter; the town hall was badly in need of repair, and a solution must be found to the ongoing problem of the garbage dump. Early in March that last problem was partially solved when the town crew covered the **garbage dump** on Dalhousie Street and levelled the site, leaving only the southeast corner to be used until a new dump site was found.

Construction continued in 1954. A **new distillery building** was erected at Calvert's to replace the one destroyed by fire in August 1950. In March the old **Green Lantern Restaurant**, established in the 1920s by **Guy Pouget**, was **demolished** by the owner of the property, **Alex Taskey**. Two weeks later work began on a new restaurant immediately south of the Amherstburg Public Library. Called the **Blue Bird Restaurant**, it opened later that summer.

Just before winter officially ended an unexpected and unpredicted storm dropped 13 inches of **snow** on the community in a 24-hour period.

In April there was talk of putting a **traffic light** at the corner of Richmond and Sandwich.

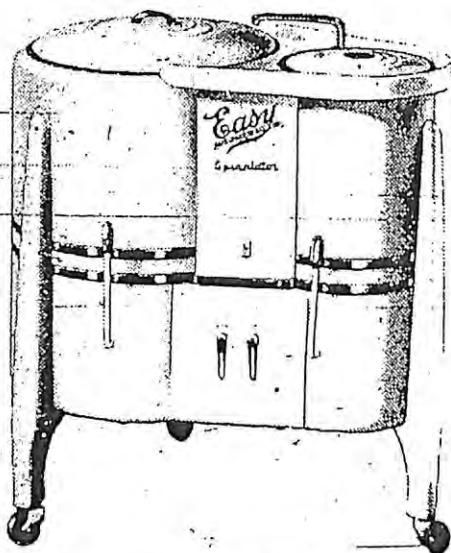
Amherstburg council turned down **Daylight Savings Time** in a 5-3 vote.

In May 1954 several district organizations held a joint meeting at the Brunner Mond Club to discuss the feasibility of building a **Community Centre** for the Amherstburg, Anderdon & Malden district; it would include an **arena**, auditorium and other facilities. Cost estimated for the project was \$150,000. **Henry Jacomb** was chairman of the fact-finding committee for the **Amherstburg Rotary Club**. In the weeks that followed a cross section of organizations in the tri-community was polled.. .out of 40 groups questioned 30 were in favour of building a community centre, one opposed and nine had not replied by the end of June.

In October 1954 the **Amherstburg, Malden and Anderdon Arena Committee** was organized. **C. Devere Thrasher** was chosen as general chairman. Members of the **Beta Sigma Phi** sorority offered to do the secretarial work. **Henry Lavers** was treasurer. Other board members were **Bill Ouellette**, **Frank Ferguson**, **John Marsh**, **Mayor Warren**, **Reeve Alvin Vermette**, **Reeve Thomas Dufour**, **S. Murray Clark, M.P.**, and **Wm. Murdoch, M.P.P.**

Work continued in the new provincial housing project. Before the summer was out there were **25 houses** built and rented. A contest was held in local schools to name that section of town. "**Warren Park**" in honour of Mayor E. M. Warren, was selected from among the many entries as the official name for the new housing project, the winner being Elizabeth Breeze.

The Amherstburg Echo
June 1954

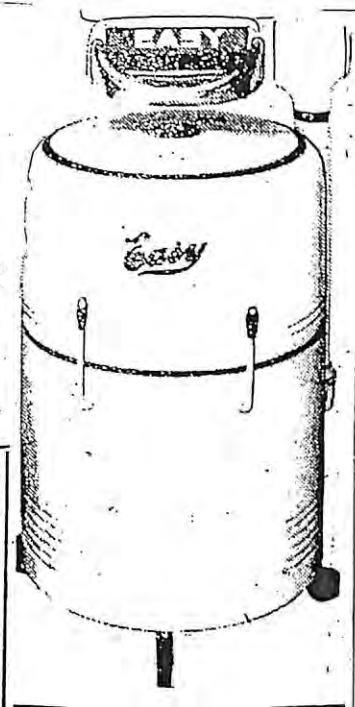


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More excitement for local river buffs in May 1954 when Capt. J. Earl McQueen's tug *Atomic*, skippered by **Jake Penner** and engineered by **Joe Fox**, again won the **International Tugboat Race** in the Detroit River.

Also in May 1954 the **new Bank of Montreal building** opened with a new manager; **Gordon Oder** succeeded **H. Aldrich** in that position.

Before school ended for the summer, local public school children for the second time requested council to install of a **traffic light** at Sandwich and Richmond.

On July 1st large crowds once again enjoyed the annual **Amherstburg Firemen's Field Day** on the Town Park which ended with a great variety show of local talent, arranged by **Tom Hamilton**.

In September the **Bellevue Veterans Home** closed (it had opened in 1947) and the vets were taken to Western County Lodge at Westminster in London.

Building continued. In October the cornerstone was laid by **Capt. C. R. Hackett**, the oldest living member of **Thistle Lodge No. 34**, for the new **Masonic Temple** on Murray Street, the site formerly occupied by the **White Way Service Station**.

More marine news. In late October 1954 **Capt J. Earl McQueen's** new 66-foot yacht the *Sheltie* was launched at Port Dover. Two weeks later his new tug *A'burg* (the former *Henry Stokes*) was taken on a trial run and expected to be put to work in the spring of 1955.

In late November notice of **expropriation** was given of the **Flynn property** on Dalhousie Street south where a **government dock** would be built.

Then in early December a devastating fire gutted the **Amherst Recreation** building on Richmond Street.

The foregoing items are taken from the headlines of the Amherstburg Echo for 1954, but there was always much more news.. .who was born, married and buried.. .sports events and scores.. .social events.., school news.. .happenings in the surrounding townships and the county.. .on and on. Some good news and some not so good.

At the end of 1954 it was announced that during the period of April 15th to December 15th the **Detroit River** lived up to its reputation as the **busiest waterway in the world**. 19,461 vessels passed Amherstburg in that time - 9,768 upbound and 9,693 downbound.

But the year ended on a very sad note. The community was devastated on Christmas Day, 1954 when word spread that one of its popular native sons, 20-year old **Drifford Bertrand, Jr.**, had been killed the previous night in an **automobile accident** at **Busy Bee Corners** while travelling to Harrow to pick up his fiancée for Midnight Mass. That was a Christmas we'll always remember.

At first glance it seemed that the second half of the 1950s were fairly uneventful - but upon reading the Echo files of those years it soon became apparent that wasn't the case at all.

As in every year there were joyful events and celebrations as well as tragedies in the community, but 1955 also proved to be another prosperous year for local businesses. Several new buildings were added to the streetscapes while others were relegated to history. Early in 1955 the **Knights of Columbus** completed a new addition, 28 x 80, to their hall on Richmond Street and progress was being made on the new brick veneer 2-storey **Masonic Temple** on Murray Street. By May the Masonic Hall was ready for the **Amherstburg Rotary Club's annual Home and Garden Show**.

Tenders were called for the construction of a new **government dock** to be located on the Flynn property, south of what was then the **Department of Transport** dock on Dalhousie Street South, much to the chagrin of neighbouring residents who felt that a large shipping dock would mean noise, dirt, heavy traffic and rats. They also opposed the dock in their vicinity because it would be placed in what was considered prime future residential property. Some felt that since the neighbours on south Dalhousie already put up with rats and odours from the garbage dump, it would only be fair to build the new government dock at the north end of town in what was considered the industrial area and give the folks in that district some of the aggravation! However, after much controversy for and against, **McNamara Construction** began building the new dock that spring.

In March the Federal Government chose a Richmond Street site for a **new post office and customs building**. Properties of **L. J. Fox** and **M. Wigle** were expropriated for that purpose. The editor of the Echo expressed concern that this would eliminate a great deal of **public parking** as Fox had for years allowed people to park on his large lot free of charge.

Then construction began in May on a 50,000 barrel capacity rack warehouse for **Calvert Distillers**; it would be 180' x 120' x 82 feet high.

In the midst of what appeared to be more of the good times for Amherstburg, in the middle of May tragedy struck when a devastating **fire on Murray Street** claimed the lives of a young mother and her three children aged 13, 12 and 8 years.

In December the community was again saddened when it learned of the sudden death of the well-known and popular **Captain Jake Penner**, skipper of the tug *Atomic*, while in command of the tug near Waukegan Ill. He was 45 years old.

By 1956 it began to look as though Amherstburg would one day have an **arena**. In February, **C. Devere Thrasher** (chairman of the **AMA Arena Council**) and **Wm. J. Ouellette** (chairman of the Building Committee) made a formal request to council, asking that 12 acres of property on the **Bell Farm (Victoria St.)** be set aside for a **skating rink and recreational centre**. Fourteen years later sod was turned and the arena opened in December, 1970.


The new **Dominion Store** opened in the former **Amherst Recreation** building on Richmond Street in 1956. Having operated in Amherstburg since 1928, the Dominion was first on Murray Street and later moved to the **Florey Block**, east side of Dalhousie.

In June the community was once again called upon to mourn the death of two of its young citizens. **Robert and John Crowder**, aged 17 and 19, had been fatally injured in an **auto accident** at the same corner where young **Drifford Bertrand** had met his death a year and a half earlier.


Summer Hours

Bell's Triangle

King's Highway No. 18 Below Amherstburg



8 a.m.
until
10 p.m.



DINNERS SERVED DAILY

CHICKEN FISH STEAK

LUNCHES and SNACKS
From opening
until closing

TAKE OUT ORDERS
Fish and Chips
CHICKEN

There were several "firsts" in Amherstburg in 1956, continuing the town's steady growth. In May, sod was turned for the new **Latter Day Saints Church** on Alma Street.

A very important first took place in June 1956 when the **Amherstburg Kinsmen Club** was chartered with **Lionel Galipeau** as president; **Les Thrasher**, vice-president; **Lee Deneau**, secretary; **George Nicholson**, treasurer; **Stan Bertrand**, registrar; **John Palmer**, bulletin editor; **Frank Pietrangelo**, **Roy Riel** and **John Mallet**, directors.

During the following month the new **million dollar highway** between Amherstburg and Harrow was officially opened. Built by **Woollatt Construction** it was said to be one of the finest heavy duty roads in the province.

In mid-October 1956 Amherstburg district bowlers were out in full force to open the new "**Imperial Lanes**" bowling centre in the **Masonic Temple building** on Murray Street. Two well-known pro bowlers, **Buzz Fazio** and **Pete Carter**, teamed up to roll some nifty games; **Bob Deslippe** and **Bill Wigle** rolled along with them in a double match to thrill the crowd. **Larry Shaw** was winner of the contest to name the alley.

James H. Sutton Co. purchased the former **Dr. O. Teeter residence** (northwest corner Gore and Sandwich Street) in November, 1956, which they converted into a **funeral home**, after which they moved from their site on Elm Avenue. The original section of the residence was moved there by **Dr. Forest F. Bell** in 1878 from Victoria Street where it had been the residence of his father, **John Bell**. Dr. Bell later went into partnership with Dr. Teeter. Also in November the new **Federal Building** on Richmond Street was completed and the post office was preparing to move in.

Good news arrived in early February 1957 for local river workers when it was announced that in the spring an **International ceremony** would take place marking the **first phase in deepening the connecting channels** of the Great Lakes.

In March of '57 **Vic Nedin** moved the former **S.W. & A. Electric Railway Station** from its site on Richmond (adjacent to the west side of his building at **67 Richmond Street**) around the corner facing Ramsay Street (where **Critique** is today) and erected a **new brick building** to accommodate two stores.

Then in April 1957 the **Amherstburg Kinette Club** was organized. **Mrs. James Scarlett** was its first president; other officers were **Mrs. Wm. Wigle**, **Mrs. Stan Bertrand**, **Mrs. Tom Hudson**, **Mrs. George Nicholson**, **Mrs. Stan Nicholson**, **Mrs. David Wigle**, **Mrs. Lionel Galipeau**, **Mrs. Lee Deneau** and **Mrs. Murray Kennedy**.

Spring was in the air - BUT - during the first week of April 1957 **nine inches of snow** blanketed the "Banana Belt".

However, the wintry background didn't dampen the 8th annual "**Musical Tea with Fashions**" sponsored by the **Catholic Women's League** and held at the **Anderdon Tavern** on that Sunday afternoon to a full house. **Jeanne Thrasher** as commentator eloquently described the fashions presented by **Marie Antoinette Hats, Swiss Chalet, Elizabeth Dress Shop, Mrs. Kopacz' Shop, Francine's, Leslie's Style Shop, Amherst Shoe & Sports Wear Centre and Terry's Dress Shop**. How many of those do you remember? On the fashion side, if you didn't have **Bermuda Shorts, Pedal Pushers and Strides** (slacks with very narrow ankle openings) in your summer wardrobe you were definitely 'not cool - from squaresville' -absolutely not in style!

In mid-April over 400 people attended the annual **AMA Sportsmens' Banquet** at the **Anderdon**. **Malcolm Shaw** was MC for the event and **Lorne Waters** was president of the Association that year. This too was always a very popular evening's entertainment with good food, good music and lots of door prizes.

As always there were businesses that came and went, buildings erected and razed. It was during that time in 1957 that the former **Ed Grondin Barbershop** and house on Murray Street were torn down to make way for a new & used car lot for **Roy McKim & Son**. The new **R.L.D.S. Church** on Alma Street was completed and dedicated on May 19th.

At the end of May 1957 ceremonies were held to officially open the 5-year, \$136 million **Connecting Channels Project** in the **Detroit River** at Amherstburg. The **detonator handle**, made from a piece of the cedar stockade around old Fort Lernoult at Detroit, used to set off the first blast opening the project was donated to **Fort Malden**. By the middle of June **Marine Operators** were drilling 284 holes each day and setting off **blasts in the river** every hour and a half; much to the chagrin of many local residents. It was expected that 175,000 holes would be drilled by the end of the contract in 1960.

During the summer of '57 the **rose garden** at **Calvert Distillers** was a showplace. The **everblooming roses** so prevalent in town at that time were developed by a Japanese gardener and brought to Amherstburg some years previously by the **Horticultural Society**.

The **OPP** intended to leave town by the end of 1957 - Amherstburg would once again have its own police service. **George Hannah,, OPP**, was chosen as chief as of August 1st that year. A **local police force** would be hired from the 34 applications received and a **police commission** would be formed. By mid-August the new chief moved his family from Essex into the brick house on the old **waterworks property**.

It was a very busy summer on the Detroit River. In late June the 520' steamer **Aquarama** began daily trips between Detroit and Cleveland. **Ray Duby, Collector of Customs** for the Port of Amherstburg, reported that **nearly 16,000 tourists** had come to town in pleasure craft during the season.

There was some excitement in the middle of September 1957 when a large white disc was seen hovering for some time over Amherstburg and then suddenly disappeared. It was later learned that the 'flying saucer' which had instigated so much speculation about alien beings watching us was actually a **weather balloon** which had sprung a leak.

At the end of September the **Amherstburg Chapter of Sweet Adelines** received their Charter. Several choruses from other Chapters joined in the celebration to the delight of the standing room only crowd at the **Lakeshore Tavern**.

In October one of Amherstburg's most colourful citizens for several decades - 66-year old **Captain J. Earl McQueen** - died in Grace Hospital.

The year 1957 ended on a happy note for seniors. In November the **Old Age Pension** increased from \$46 to \$55 per month and **1958** began with the Amherstburg Echo once again stressing the need for a **yacht basin** in Amherstburg as the number of small boats and yachts was increasing annually, bringing in thousands of tourists.

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In the spring of 1958 the **Amherstburg Lions Club**, after investigating the feasibility of building a **public swimming pool** for both children and adults, decided it would be a valuable gift to the town so members vigorously began fundraising. One of the first big events was a **Celebrity Softball Game** held that June at the town park. Celebrities included such well-known sports figures as **Gordy Howe, Ted Lindsay, Marty Pavelich, Johnny Wilson, Reno Bertoia, Hank Biasati and Marc Reaume.**

The "**sack**", a straight, usually soft wool dress was the latest fashion; worn straight or belted every young woman had to have at least one.

The Ontario Government in March, 1958 bought 262 acres in Malden which would be turned into a **provincial park**. Around the same time Walter and Mary Kudla purchased **Woods' Confectionery** on Sandwich Street which they remodelled into a family restaurant named **Maria's** (a business still thriving today, owned since the mid-1980s by Tony and Theresa Pietrangelo).

River watchers were thrilled that summer when the largest ship ever to sail the Great Lakes up to that time - the 729 foot **S. S. Edmund Fitzgerald** built at River Rouge, Michigan and launched on June 7th - made her trial run down the Livingstone and back up the Amherstburg Channel. While downbound she met the second longest freighter, the **Cliffs Victory**.

And wonder of wonders!! In June, 1958 the Amherstburg Council approved of **Waterworks Park** as the site for a **small boats harbour** as recommended by the Amherstburg Yacht Basin Committee. The property was town-owned and "an ideal location" for a **yacht basin**. The federal government had already allocated **\$55,000 for development** of the site which would **accommodate 25 boats and a landing ramp**. Three sites had been considered - the **Lalonde property** at the foot of Gore Street (which was not for sale) and the **coal dock property** (too expensive) and the **Waterworks Park property**. The Committee members were **Mayor Harvey Hamilton, Stanley Dupont, Gordon Oder, E. T. Laframboise, John Marsh and Dr. E. M. Warren**. Some thought had been given to the **Fort Malden Museum property** but "it would cost too much to develop". The project "would not cost the ratepayers a cent." So what happened??

More building. At the end of June the new **Amherstburg Public Utilities** facility on Sandwich Street was officially opened.

Another event of more delicious importance occurred in July, 1958 when **Otto and Charlotte Nissen** purchased the former **Wilkinson house** on Dalhousie Street. Soon folks were coming from miles around to the "**Seaway Cafe**" for their famous rum cake and other scrumptious baked goods. (For the past thirty years this has been the home of equally delicious treats, and known as the "**Waterfront Ice Cream Parlour**.")

Jimmy Pouget opened his new flower shop on the east side of Sandwich Street in November 1958, adding something totally new to that section of town.

Although it didn't happen here, a tragedy on the Great Lakes was keenly felt by marine buffs in this district. In November 1958 the 615-foot *Carl D. Bradley* broke in half and with most of her 31-member crew went down in Lake Michigan.

Windsor and Detroit had been neighbours for 257 years. Towards the end of 1958 a committee began to formulate plans for an annual goodwill celebration which could possibly include a **fireworks display** from a barge on the river, the brainchild of James M. Hare, Secretary of State for Michigan. (We know it today as the "**Annual International Freedom Festival**.")

Before the year ended work was well under way on the **Highway 18 diversion** extending Apsley Street from Park to just past the Lowe Sideroad.

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Elvis, the **Everly Brothers** and the **Fleetwoods** were on top of the popular music charts early in **1959** and the new **Ontario Hospital Insurance** went into effect on January 1st that year. **Bill Knight** was Amherstburg's new Postmaster and Anderdon Reeve **Eugene Whelan** was expected to run as Liberal candidate in the next provincial election.

The first meeting of the recently-formed **Amherstburg Police Commission** was held with **G. Eric Dennison**, **Judge A. J. Gordon** and **Mayor E. T. Laframboise** forming the Commission. One of their first duties was to hire three constables.

In April the **Kinsmen** finalized plans to build a **Scout Hall** on Victoria Street at Simcoe, the new **Masonic Temple** on Murray Street was dedicated and **Ranta Enterprises** was contracted to erect a new grain elevator in Amherstburg for the **Harrow Farmers Co-op**.

The Misses **Edna and Grace Smith** opened the "**Malden China & Woolen Shop**" at their home on the river front south of town and **Marra's Bread** was sold to **General Bakeries**; **Paul Marra** remained as general manager of the Amherstburg plant.

At the same time **Amherst Quarries** on the Pike Road was being developed, expecting to be in operation by mid-summer. Amherstburg was a hustling, bustling town and life was good for most of its citizens.

It was also a **baseball town**. The softball season opened on the east town park that summer with a Saturday night game when the town team met the **Embassy Hotel** nine. The 'burg team was made up of local stars **Glen Murray**, **Mac Maloney**, **Lloyd Jones**, **Len Duby**, **Bob Sinasac**, **Bill Jones**, **Garnet Jones**, **Norm "Porky" Jones**, **Bob Fryer**, **Gord Beetham**, **Paul Murray** and "new talent" **Tom Kilgallin** and **Butch Rivard**.

The town fathers had some interesting moments too. When an **asphalt plant** started to go up two blocks from downtown, councillor **George D. McCurdy** suggested that council should pass a **by law to prevent unwanted businesses** from establishing here.

In June construction began on the **Verdi Club** hall on Texas Road.

Boat watchers had five days to watch six tugs and a U.S. cutter free the 612-foot freighter **Benson Ford** which was aground at the **Limekiln Crossing**. And sadly for those who liked to take a dip in the Detroit River, the **Waterworks Park** was closed to swimming due to **high pollution**.

But soon there was good news for the water lovers.. sod was turned at the end of June for the \$40,000 **Lions Swimming Pool** on the **Bell Farm**. For 50 years now many local children have been enjoying an afternoon dip and morning swimming lessons there, safe from the dangers of the **busiest waterway in the world**. On opening day **Larry Renaud** was the first of over 200 children to jump into the **Lions Pool**. **Mary Murdoch** and **Tom Holt** were the first lifeguards.

Hundreds of folks lined the banks of the Detroit River from **Bell's Triangle** to River Canard in early July when **Her Majesty's** royal yacht "**Brittania**" passed Amherstburg upbound to pick up **Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip**. She was escorted by Canadian destroyers **Gatineau** and **Kootenay** as well as a number of RCMP and US Coast Guard vessels. McQueen's tug **Atomic** berthed and unberthed the **Brittania** at Windsor and Sarnia.

Still more building - **Amherst Motors Limited** built a new, modern structure at St. Arnaud and Sandwich Streets and moved their old building to Gore Street opposite the town hall, where it was remodelled for **Marontate & Duby**.

The new **B.A. Service Station** at the corner of Sandwich and North Streets was leased to "**Len**" **Lenson** and opened in early September. And at the end of the year 1959 it was reported in the Amherstburg Echo that construction in Amherstburg during the year had reached the **three-quarter million dollar** mark. Included in that figure were 12 new homes built at a total cost of \$128,400.

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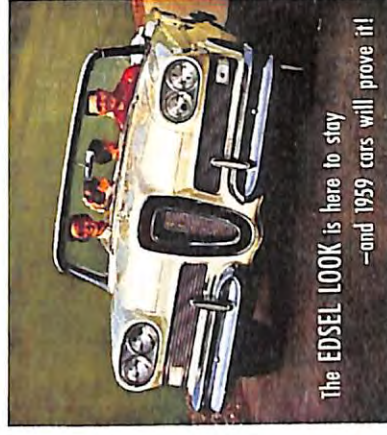
59 BUICK WILDCAT CONVERTIBLE



58 MERCURY PARKLANE PHAETON SEDAN



58 EDEL PACE



The EDEL LOOK is here to stay
-and 1959 cars will prove it!

58 EDEL CITATION



53 STUDEBAKER COMMANDER



56 BUICK SUPER RIVIERA SERIES 570
4 DR HARDTOP



56 CHEV BEL AIR CONVERTIBLE



52 CHEV STYLELINE



55 OLDS SUPER 88 2-DR SEDAN



56 CHEV 210



51 CHEVROLET FLEETLINE



55 CHEV "ONE FIFTY"



56 CADILLAC SERIES 62 COUPE de VILLE



50 STUDEBAKER STRAIGHT



54 CHEV BEL AIR 2DR SEDAN



56 CADILLAC SER 62 CONVERTIBLE



1957 CHEV BEL AIR CONVERTIBLE

NEWEST OF ALL STATION WAGONS

1959 Mercury Country Cruisers

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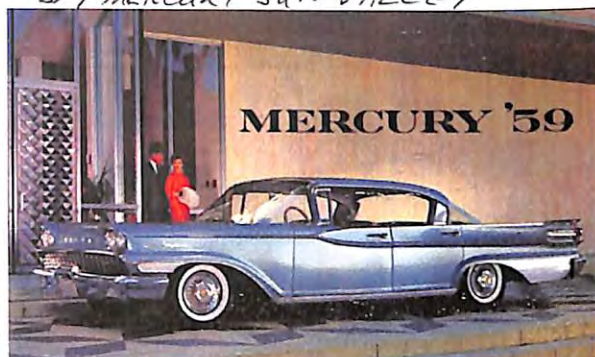
59 FORD THUNDERBIRD CONVERTIBLE



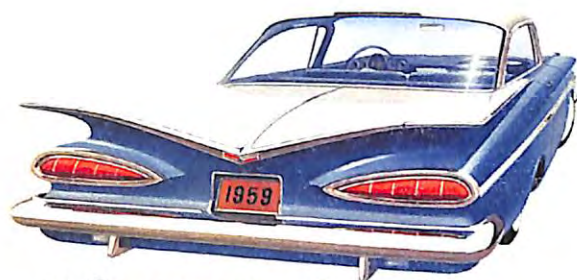
59 CHEV IMPALA



54 MERCURY SUN VALLEY



59 MERCURY 4-DR HARDTOP



59 CHEV IMPALA SPORT COUPE



58 CADILLAC SERIES 62 SEDAN