



Reflections

Newsletter of the Marsh Historical Collection
Amherstburg, Ontario



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The Fall Fair & Show

The Malden and Anderdon Agricultural Society was established in Amherstburg in 1844. Robert Reynolds was the President and George Bullock the Secretary. The Society held an annual agricultural show and fair in Town. In 1845 the government granted a charter for a fair in Amherstburg for the sale of agricultural products and the first show was held in 1846.

In early years, the fair is described as being on the military reserve. The event occupied the Town Parks and branched out onto Laird Avenue. The fair featured exhibits of livestock, farming implements, vegetables, ladies work, and more. Prizes were awarded in categories including horses, cattle, poultry, seeds, roots & vegetables, home manufacturing, floral displays etc. Sporting contests were typically on the agenda. Football matches and baseball games were played, and speed races held on the track.

Plowing matches were often held in conjunction with the fair. Early races used oxen, later replaced by horse teams and eventually tractors. The classes were Scotch Plow, Canadian Plow, and Boys. At the 1846 fair, 30 shillings was at stake. First place was awarded to Thomas Horsman, 2nd to John Paten, and 3rd to Chas Sagemen.

In 1855 there were no competitors, which resulted in no ploughing matches for several years afterward. Finding competitors became increasingly difficult, and the matches were no longer held in partnership with the fair.

In 1899, Council granted the Society \$200 a year for 5 years to assist in the construction of a large agricultural building for the fair. A building 50ft by 25ft was constructed of dressed lumber on the Town Park that August. The fair this year was highly successful and what was thought to have been a commodious building for this purpose proved to be too small. Attendance and entries were high. In total, \$279.30 was raised from a combination of member's tickets, privileges, and gate sales. An unusual attraction that year was a display of local curios. Falls Brothers exhibited a large collection of coins, stamps and fossils.

Prize lists for the fair were generally published months in

Baling Hay:
Malden Farm
Ashley Martin
Ray Trimble
Steve Trimble
Ernest Faucher
MCS Photo P419



advance. Aside from the premium provided by the Society, many local businesses sponsored prizes. The Echo Printing Company provided \$1.50 for the largest pumpkin and squash in 1919.

In 1920, the A.A.M. Agricultural Society sold the fair grounds on the Town Park to the Amherstburg High School Board. The Society purchased land on the north side of Pike Road known as the Gibb Farm in 1921. The advertisements for the fair that year describe this event as "The Last and Best of All!" The site lacked buildings and tents were used instead, but the grounds and track were in great condition. The exhibits were even larger than the year before. Brunner Mond's display of soda ash was a popular attraction. Overall the fair was deemed a success and all accounts appeared hopeful for future events, but the Fall Fair & Show ceased to exist in Amherstburg after 1922.

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Amusing Articles

Stories Involving Sly Animals as reported in the Amherstburg Echo

Some Smart Crows:

They fooled the dog and carried off the meat.

In the inn garden I saw a dog eating a piece of meat in the presence of several covetous crows. They evidently said a great deal to each other on the subject, and now and then one or two of them tried to pull the meat away from him, which he resented.

At last a big strong crow succeeded in tearing off a piece, with which he returned to the place where the others were congregated, and after much earnest speech they all surrounded the dog and the leading bird dexterously dropped the small piece of meat within reach of his mouth, when he immediately snapped at, letting go of the big piece unwisely for a second, on which two of the crows flew away with it to the pine, and with much fluttering and hilarity they all ate, or rather gorged it. The deceived dog looking vacant and bewildered for a moment, after which he sat under the tree and barked at them inanely.

A gentlemen told me that he saw a dog holding a piece of meat in like manner in the presence of three crows, which also vainly tried to tear it from him, and after consultation they separated, two going as near as they dared to the meat, while the third gave the tail a bite sharp enough to make the dog turn around with a squeak, on which the other villains seized the moment, and the three fed triumphantly upon it on the top of the wall.

(March 7, 1902)

A short time ago Joseph Bastien, of Anderdon, found one of his pigs in the pen, apparently dead, and the carcass was put in a stable and covered with straw, as it was intended to make soap-grease of it. Eleven days after the pig woke up and broke out through the two-inch door. It was put back in the pen and is now doing well.

(May 4, 1881)



Pigs Beside a Mudhole

Photo by Amherstburg photographer Ben Lapierre c.1895
MCS Photo P1823.5

On Monday morning a great many feared a fatal accident had happened in the second ward to the wife of Awrey Jones, but which turned out to be not so serious as was at first thought. A rat had been running around in and about the house for some time and she determined to get rid of it, if possible; if by no other way, then to shoot it. When the rat made its appearance on Monday morning, she got a 22-calibre revolver which was in the house and loaded. The rat ran behind some obstacle and when it was scared out, womanlike she caught hold of her skirts, forgetting that she had the revolver in her hand to make away with the animal and that the revolver was cocked. As a result it discharged and the bullet went through her skirts and into the calf of her leg. Luckily, when she caught her skirts they were bunched together so that the force of the bullet was spent before it reached her leg and only a flesh wound was made. The leg will be sore for some time, but no serious results will follow from the accident.

(May 12, 1892)

What's In the Collection?

The Marsh Historical Collection mandate is "to collect, preserve and encourage research into the heritage of Amherstburg and the lower Detroit River district."

The facility contains a large collection of photos, books, genealogical records, maps and reference files on a variety of historical topics, plus microfilm of The Amherstburg Echo from 1874 to 2012. There is also a small gift shop which contains various publications about local history.

Funding comes from various foundations and private individuals. While ADMISSION IS FREE, donations are most welcome. A receipt for income tax purposes will be issued upon request for any monetary donation of \$10 or more.

The Marsh Collection is open to researchers and visitors from 10am to 4pm Tuesday through Friday.
Email: research@marshcollection.org
Website: www.marshcollection.org



Bricks-N-Beams

Brunner, Mond Office Building

With credit to Doris Gaspar for her contribution to this article.

According to local tradition, this building was constructed by John Sloan in the 1840s. Research has brought about a new conclusion: that the home was built before 1840 on the lands then owned by the Honourable James Gordon.

James Gordon was the original purchaser of lot 6 on which this building stands. A general rule when government lands were sold at public auction was that a house had to be erected on the land before a patent was issued. If the usual rule was enforced, the stone house was likely built by Gordon before February 3, 1840, when the patent was issued. Gordon sold the lands to John Leggatt, Assistant Commissary-General at Fort Malden, in 1841. Leggatt passed away in 1844 and the next figure to come onto the scene was John Sloan.

Before coming to Essex County in the 1830s, John Sloan was a mariner in the Royal Navy. Once in Anderdon Township, he was an active political figure. He was the first Reeve to represent Anderdon on the District Council, serving for multiple years following, and also acted as Justice of the Peace. Besides being prominent in municipal affairs, Sloan engaged in various commercial activities in Amherstburg, and was part-owner, (then later owner) of the Sloan-Burnell Quarry. Sloan acquired all 83 acres of land on lot 6 from John Leggatt's son in 1852. William Burnell owned the adjacent lands (lot 7). Sloan and Burnell owned and operated two quarries on the western border of the Indian Stone Quarry reserve owned by T.B. White. This would have been the rear of lots 6 and 7 owned by the two men. Burnell later transferred the 87 acres on lot 7 to Sloan in 1857.

John Sloan passed away on February 5, 1860. He conveyed lot 6 to his wife, Anne Marie and lot 7 to his son, Captain John A. Sloan. Captain Sloan, who would have grown up on the homestead, was a well-known local mariner who was master of the steamer ferry Pearl. According to Captain John A. Sloan's obituary, he built the T.B. White house. This would make sense if he lived on lot 7



Brunner, Mond Office c.1920s

MCS Photo 1994.067.001

adjacent to his old home where his mother continued to live. Mrs. John Sloan sold the property to Solomon White in 1867, but continued to live here for some years afterward. Solomon White, son of the Wyandot Chief Joseph White, was the first person of Aboriginal descent elected to the legislature of Ontario.

The house continued to change hands until John and Susan Bray purchased the property in 1885. Bray was the Reeve of Anderdon in 1862 and 1863, township clerk, and also served as Justice of the Peace. John Bray passed away in 1900, and in 1902 an ad appears in the Amherstburg Echo for the estate of Susan Bray. The advertisement: "Lot 6 parcel has a fine stone house, barn, stables, and sheds, the land is all cleared and fit for cultivation and comprises 65 acres more or less". Columbus Martin purchased the house at this time. In 1914 the Amherstburg Echo: "Columbus Martin sold his place known as the Bray farm, of 66 acres to Joseph Merrifield". The Merrifields lived in the home until it was purchased by Brunner, Mond in 1916.

The home was converted into the office headquarters for Brunner, Mond in 1917. The upstairs of the home became the workspace for the general manager, superintendant, purchasing agent, assistants, and draughtsmen. A dormer window was added to provide light for the latter. This building was used as offices through the transition to Allied Chemical and General Chemical. In 1974 updates and expansion of the offices were carried out, while allowing the historic home to continue standing.

A Note on Dates...

According to local historian David Botsford, the home was built by John Sloan in the 1840s and his partnership with Burnell in the quarry business

Continued from Page 3...

was dissolved in 1849. Mrs. John Alexander Sloan is David Botsford's great aunt. Further accounts suggesting that the Sloan's lived on the homestead as early as the 1840s is Helen Sloan's obituary in the Amherstburg Echo from 1919: "Deceased was born on the place [once] owned by Joseph Merrifield at Gordon, which was the Sloan homestead". Helen died when she was 74

years of age which places her birth on the homestead in 1941. Although land records indicate that John Sloan did not own the property until 1852, there may have been an unregistered agreement between John Leggatt and Sloan regarding the transfer of land. It is likely that neither Gordon nor Legatt actually lived in the home and the structure was in fact the Sloan Homestead in the 1840s as local tradition claims.

Upsetting the Hour Glass



1927

September- Parents are hereby notified, and it is ordered, that all children attending the High, Public or Separate Schools in the Town of Amherstburg, who have not been vaccinated within the past seven years must present well defined marks of vaccination or certificates of vaccination to their teacher on the opening day of school.

October- Malden farmers are planning to give a warm reception to chicken thieves.

November- The H.G. Duff old homestead River Front, Anderdon, acquired by the International Golf and Country Club, is being transformed into a fine large, modern club house of Spanish design.

1937

September- The dance held in the Parish House, Gore Street, Friday night was well attended and the snappy music of Ken Carruthers' orchestra was greatly enjoyed.

October- The New York Yankees, power house of the major leagues, blasted their way to a baseball championship

when they defeated the New York Giants four games to one.

November- The annual Corn Show sponsored by the Amherstburg Rotary Club will be held in the building across from Kemp's Meat Market, Murray Street. In all 29 young farmers will take part.

1947

September- A new show room and service centre is being constructed for Ferman Sinasac at the corner of Seymore and Richmond Streets. Construction of the new Knights of Columbus Hall at the corner of Richmond and Balaclava Streets is progressing.

October- A movie projector will be in operation at the Veteran's Home commencing October first.

November- Armistice Day to Be Observed- Legion members to Parade to the Town Park- Official opening of new Legion Hall.

1957

September- Amherstburg Rotarians had a firsthand view of the multimillion Amherstburg

Channel deepening job when they were the guests of Captain J. Earl McQueen aboard his yacht Sheltie.

October- Because of the prevalence of the Asian type flu, district schools were closed last week, to try to curb the spread of the epidemic.

November- Millions of dollars worth of marine equipment sought shelter at the port of Amherstburg Thursday evening due to strong southwest winds that gained gale-like proportions.

1967

September- Weather records at the Research Station, Harrow, reveal that up until Tuesday September 19th there was only 4 100ths of an inch of rainfall in September.

October- The annual Community Halloween Party will be held in the Town Park.

November- There was a lot of excitement on Friday afternoon following the lightning theft of \$4,000 in cash and cheques from in front of the McGregor branch of the Toronto-Dominion Bank.

On The Shelves

Some of you are already familiar with the many and varied publications which fill the Marsh Collection

bookshelves...volumes on genealogy, local history, the Detroit River and Great Lakes, as well as many books containing military and war data, and so much more. One of the most popular sections is the large collection of local marine histories. Please note that we are not a lending library but you are always welcome to come in, browse, and have a seat to read through anything that may interest you.

To give you an idea of what's on the library shelves, in upcoming Reflections we will render a brief synopsis of a book or two. Since Eleanor's favourite subject is cooking, we start with "SHIPS of the GREAT LAKES

COOKBOOK," a 450 page volume of recipes taken from the collections of chefs on various tall ships and freighters which plied the Great Lakes. Along with the scrumptious recipes is a brief history of each ship, when it was built, its dimensions, etc., as well as so much information on each of the Great Lakes. It's a fabulous book!

To whet your appetite, here's what the crew of the steamship William G. Mather (Cleveland Cliffs Steamship Co.) were having for Thanksgiving dinner on November 22, 1973:

Appetizer: Shrimp Cocktail

Soups: Cream of Tomato, Turkey Noodle

Salads: Waldorf Salad, Cranberry Sauce, Tomato and Lettuce Wedges,

Assorted Dressings, Pickles and Olives

Entrees: Roast Turkey with Apple or Sage Dressing, and Giblet Gravy

Orange Duck with Celery Rice

Dressing, and Orange Sauce

Baked Ham with Pineapple and Raisin Sauce

Prime Rib Au Jus

Vegetables: Mashed Irish Potatoes

Candied Sweet Potatoes

Buttered Asparagus

Buttered Whole Kernel Corn

Desserts: Apple Pie

Pumpkin Pie with Whipped Cream

Mincemeat Pie

Fruit Cake

Ice Cream

Mixed Nuts, Assorted Candies, Gum

Jerry the Cook

Lunchtime on the Patricia McQueen

By Captain John Burck



Jerry Stevenson

It was the middle fifties. It was also summer vacation and I was working for McQueen Marine. I was pleased with myself to be doing a man's job for man's wages. We were shoving one of the old barges up the Detroit River with the tug Patricia McQueen. Stan and I were on the barge when we heard a voice on the tug summon us. We went aboard and were met by Jerry, the new cook. He was very agitated and roared, "What's this?". He was holding up a pie. "It's a pie, sir." "I suppose this is a cake then," holding up a cake. "Store

bought cakes and pies are not allowed in my galley. Get them out now!" He had the right men for that job and we squirreled them away on the barge. We were always hungry and not picky about store-bought anything.

Lunchtime came and the crew filed into the mess room. Tablecloths, napkins and small glasses of tomato juice greeted everyone. It looked like a fine-dining restaurant. They laughed and scoffed at the extra efforts, as meals on most like vessels were rough and ready. However, when they had

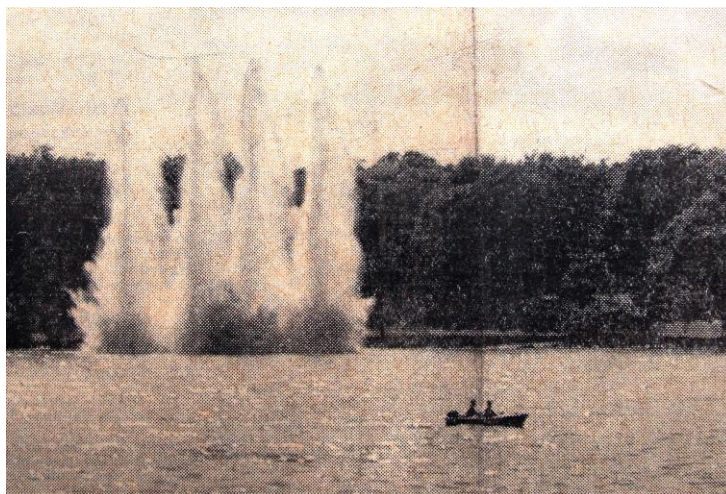
devoured the delicious meal, they gained respect for the cook. He claimed to have been a chef in some of Canada's finest restaurants.

That was my last summer working on the river. I left the old gang with Jerry and thought things were going well. Many years later, I was a policeman in Vancouver. I was walking along skid row doing my beat, when I saw a familiar face from the past, sitting in a bar. It was Jerry, and the years had not been kind to him. We were happy to see each other. I later visited Jerry in his cheap hotel room. I never saw Jerry again.

Great Lakes Connecting Channels

60 Years Since Initiation of Project

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the groundbreaking ceremony for the Great Lakes Connecting Channels project in Amherstburg. Fifteen hundred guests attended the event on Bob-Lo Island and thousands more watched from the Canadian shoreline. Many speeches addressing the significance of the project were given, including an opening welcome by the Honourable Paul J. Martin. Tugboat races and river parades were held as part of the event. A symbolic four blasts in the Amherstburg Channel marked the beginning of this five-year project headed by the United States Army Corps of Engineers. The purpose of this undertaking was both to modernize the channels to improve inland navigation and to allow larger deep draft vessels with higher cargo capacity access to upper lakes harbours from the St. Lawrence Seaway. This would result in large savings on the transportation of commodities. The contracts for work to be done in the Amherstburg Channel were awarded to Marine Operators of Minneapolis and Great Lakes Dredge & Dock Co. of Chicago. Activities included drilling, blasting, dredging and the construction of compensating dikes. Overall approximately three million cubic yards of material was removed, including both rock and earth excavation. 200 Canadian personnel were hired for the project, the headquarters stationed in the former post office on Dalhousie Street. The project was completed in 1962 and opened the way for the large freighters we see coming through the Amherstburg Channel today.



The above photos were published in the Amherstburg Echo on May 30, 1957 (courtesy of the Windsor Daily Star). Top (left to right): Honourable Paul J. Martin, National Health and Welfare Minister, Wilbur M. Brucker, United States Secretary of the Army, Walker L. Cisler, Chairman of event committee
Bottom: Symbolic Blast in Amherstburg Channel

For more information on the details of the project in the Amherstburg Channel, please read *Essayons: A History of the Detroit District U.S. Army Corps of Engineers* by John W. Larson. Available in our reference library.



Collection Highlights

Commemorative medallion produced by Seagram's for the official opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway on June 25, 1959. The first ocean passenger ship to pass through the Amherstburg Channel was the Prinses Irene en route to Chicago. On June 26th, Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip boarded the Royal Yacht Britannia in Saint-Lambert, Quebec, initiating a cross-country voyage in honour of this historic event. The Britannia came through the Amherstburg Channel on July 2nd of that year.



Royal Yacht Britannia
Upbound at Lime Kiln Crossing
MCS Photo P1354



Post-Summer Prep

Ad from the Amherstburg Echo October 5, 1900

Scott's Emulsion of Cod Liver Oil

"If you have not tried it, send for free sample its agreeable taste will surprise you"

Don't Get Thin

Get fat; get nice and plump; there is safety in plumpness.

Summer has tried your food-works; winter is coming to try your breath-mill. Fall is the time to brace yourself.

But weather is tricky; look out! Look out for colds especially.

Scott's Emulsion of Cod Liver Oil is the subtlest of helps. It is food; the easiest food in the world; it is more than food; it helps you digest your food, and get more nutriment from it.

Don't get thin; there is safety in plumpness. Man, woman and child.

General Amherst High School 1949-1950

With the help of our visitors, we have put names to many of the students in this group. Please stop in at the Marsh to see a larger version of this photo and help us identify the rest!



Don Nedin



Drifford Bertrand



Jim Lenson



Fran Whittal



Marilyn Franklin



Then & Now- 281 Dalhousie Street



Stancliff Hall, c. 1920



Royal Canadian Legion Branch 157, 2017