



# Reflections

Newsletter of the Marsh Historical Collection  
Amherstburg, Ontario



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## November Marks the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the End of the Great War Amherstburg Honour Roll Lest We Forget



**Russel Fox**

April 3, 1893-  
April 21, 1917



**Robert Isaac  
Fryer**

June 12, 1894-  
Nov. 18, 1916



**Stanley Meloche**

April 19, 1894-  
July 29, 1917



**Ernest David  
Brown**

June 28, 1896-  
Oct. 11, 1918



**Albert Edward  
Thomas**

Nov. 9, 1890-  
April 23, 1915



**Orville L. Fox**

Sept. 18, 1893-  
April 9, 1917

### The Dawn of Peace

*(The Amherstburg Echo, November 15, 1918)*

The end of the war has come with dramatic suddenness. Three German envoys met General Loch in conference Friday, and were given the terms on which an armistice would be granted. Not being invested with full powers, it was necessary for them to communicate with the German High Command, and they were given 72 hours in which to sign or fight. The terms, published elsewhere, amount to unconditional surrender, and were accepted early Monday morning. Firing ceased at 11 a.m. that day, and the whole world rejoiced that Peace had come. Thrones began to tumble. Kaiser Wilhelm and the Crown Prince abdicated and with their retinue fled to Holland, where they will remain until called upon to answer for their crimes. Emperor Charles, of Austria, has also abdicated and both Germany and Austria have now Republican forms of Government. A peaceful revolution is now taking place in Germany and the most momentous events in the world's history are being enacted looking to a reign of peace by the people without dictation from kings, princes and lords.

In the meantime our armies will be maintained in the field to enforce the terms of the armistice and ensure peace, the terms of which are now being worked out. It is not likely that demobilization will begin until the new year, and then it will proceed gradually so that each group of returned soldiers will be absorbed into civilian life before others are brought home. The wisest kind of administration is required to prevent rebel outbreaks and the conclusion of a peace begun so gloriously.

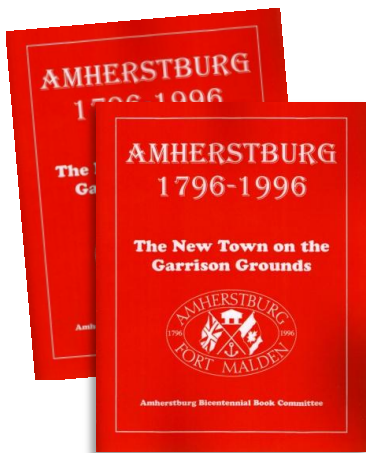
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# Happenings at the Marsh

## Upcoming Publications

*-Available this November-*



### Amherstburg 1796-1996 The New Town on the Garrison Grounds

*-Reprint-*

In 1996, to acknowledge Amherstburg's Bicentennial, the Marsh Collection Society published 2 large hard-cover volumes of well documented local history, beginning in 1796 when the town was laid out. Both of those volumes have been out of print for some years now, but are available once again!

Vol. I (softcover) **\$35** Includes a Map Package

Vol. II (softcover) **\$40**

To reserve, please email [megreiner9@gmail.com](mailto:megreiner9@gmail.com)



### Letters Home 1940-1945 \$15

This book contains a collection of local soldiers' letters from the Second World War, as originally published in the Amherstburg Echo. The letters describe the experiences of the brave young men who somehow always managed to convey a message of patriotism and hope to the folks back home.

## Photos

The Marsh Collection archives include over 5000 photos of people, buildings, events, etc. from Amherstburg's past. Come in and browse our photo binders by subject, or help us identify people/places/events in some of the images.

Digital copies/prints of photos are \$5.00/image

Photocopies are \$0.25

Copyright restrictions may apply.

### 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](mailto:research@marshcollection.org)  
Website: [www.marshcollection.org](http://www.marshcollection.org)



## Exhibit

Late October through November  
**Remembrance Day**  
**Lest We Forget**

Exhibit will include Information on Amherstburg's Honour Roll, women who served in World Wars I & II, and war efforts on the homefront.



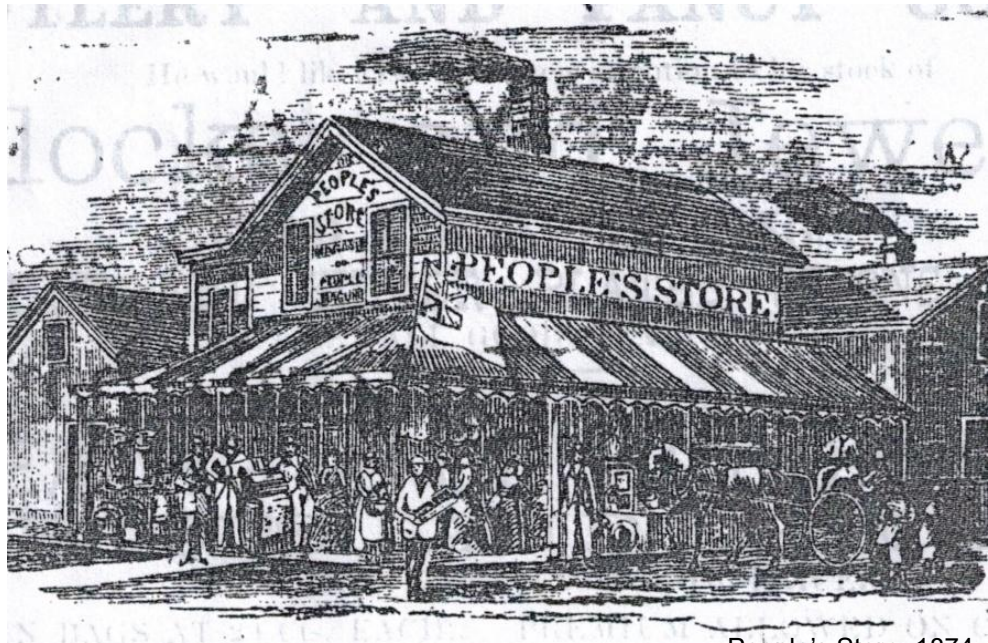
Remembrance Day Ceremony, Amherstburg  
Les Hudson Photo Collection B177



# Then & Now People's Store

241 Sandwich Street South

*" Sign of the Red, White and Blue,  
Corner of Apsley and Murray  
Streets, Directly opposite Mrs.  
Archer's Grocery and Pork Market,  
next block east of Cousin's  
Grocery and Liquor Store."  
(The Amherstburg Echo,  
November 27, 1874)*



People's Store, 1874

The above illustration first appeared in several issues of The Amherstburg Echo in 1874. That same building, situated on Lot 14, northeast corner of Sandwich and Murray streets, has housed Romano's store since 1970. The first owner of the land on which it stands was Francois Primeau, a prominent Amherstburg blacksmith.

In 1871, Francois Primeau leased the corner property "fronting 25 feet on Apsley and 29 feet on Murray street, for yearly rent of 22 dollars" to John Maguire, a native of Ireland (no relationship to local McGuires). It was Maguire who called the business "People's Store." The lease indicates that Maguire would "have the privilege and right of using the yard adjoining said premises for the purpose of placing empty boxes in, and cordwood for use in the Store..."

In 1879, Maguire advertised a bankruptcy sale of stock, after which he travelled throughout Essex and Kent Counties "taking orders and delivering goods such as Sheffield Cutlery, Paisley Shawls, Belfast Linens, etc." He died in 1896 at his daughter's home in Woodslee, and was buried there.



Romano's Present-day

The owner (F. Primeau) then deeded the property to his daughter and son-in-law, Wm. And Matilda Cousins and the family ran a grocery there for a long period of time. For 147 years now (and possibly longer) this building has housed a grocery store, operated by various operators - Maguire, Cousins, Jaber, Yakima, Kranovich, Komlvich, and finally, since July 1, 1970, the Mancini family. It was then that Panteleone Mancini, a resident of Fort Street, took over "Amherst Provision" and changed the name to "Romano's." Anna and Claudio Mancini have operated "Romano's Specialty Meats and Italian Deli" there since 1983.

# Upsetting the Hour Glass

1928

**September-** Pettypieces Ltd. organization is gravelling the middle sideroad from T. Lowe's corner to the Creek Road bridge.

**October-** The Steamer Crete, down-bound with ore, ran aground between the Detroit River light and the buoy on Saturday night.

**November-** Annual Bazaar, Wesley United ladies, lower floor I.O.O.F. Temple, Amherstburg, Friday afternoon, November 16<sup>th</sup>. A splendid place to secure your Christmas gifts.

1938

**September-** A Corn-Husking Contest, which is considered to be one of the most exciting competitions, is to be held in Anderdon Township within the next few weeks, as soon as the corn is ready, under the auspices of the Amherstburg Rotary Club.

**October-** "Step right this way boys, there's big opportunities in Amherstburg." No less than 109 spinsters are here according to the Amherstburg Voters' List and not one bachelor.

**November-** "Marihuana Is Just Hemp Plant Under A Different Name"- Because of the interest in marihuana, which is just the common

hemp plant under an assumed name, and which is grown in many places in this district, The Echo is publishing a special article telling of its origin and uses.

1948

**September-** Construction started this week on three homes in the new Flynn subdivision which is located at the southern extension of King Street.

**October-** Prior to the Hallowe'en party to be staged by the Amherstburg Rotary Club in the town hall, a parade will be staged. Youngsters in costume will gather at the town park and move off at seven-o'clock headed by the South Essex Associated Boys' Band.

**November-** Tonight (Thursday November 11<sup>th</sup>) the Fort Malden Branch of the Canadian Legion are holding their Armistice banquet at the Lake Shore Hotel.

1958

**September-** The all-men Flower Show Committee of the Fort Malden Horticultural Society, did a fine job with the annual show of the society held Saturday and Sunday at the General Amherst High School Auditorium.

**October-** Due to the increased attendance at the

General Amherst School it has been decided to add another bus to overcome the large loads. When this bus is put into operation the loads will range from 55 to 60 in number.

**November-** The Harrow Farmers Co-Operative will expand its holdings in Amherstburg with the addition of a feed mill and elevator.

1968

**September-** The mighty arm of the law was felt by speeders Monday morning when Constable Joseph Duby laid five charges. Included were two speeding transport trucks on Simcoe Street, two speeding autos on the same street and one on Sandwich Street. The charges were laid between 8 a.m. and 11 a.m.

**October-** A section of William Street between Balaclava Street and Victoria Street will be closed to allow for an expansion of the Calvert or Canada, Limited plant.

**November-** Amherstburg electors will have a wide choice at the polls. For Mayor- H. Murray Smith and Anthony Tiefenbach. For Council (six to be elected)- Lawrence Baker, Thomas Hamilton, Edward Kopacz, E.T. Laframboise, Ralph McCurdy, William Murdoch, John "Jack" Purdie, Russell Renaud, Dr. E.M. Warren, Fred A. Watson.



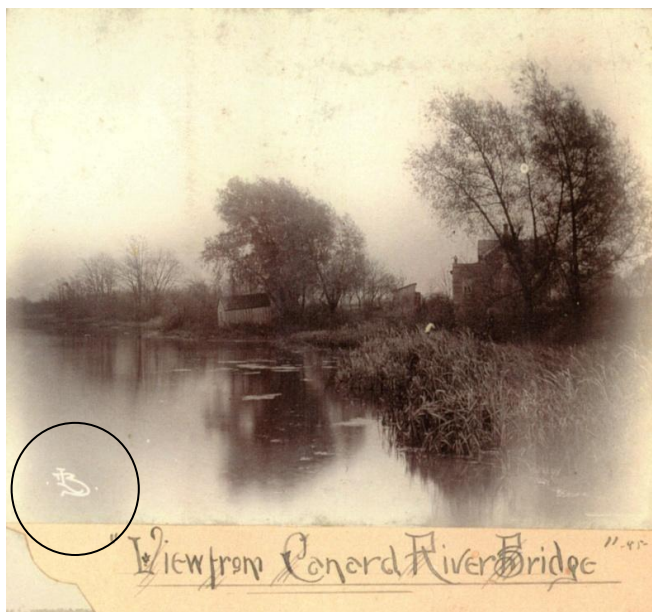
# Ancestral Lines

**“Photography takes an instant out of time, altering life by holding it still.” –Dorothea Lang**

Benjamin Lapierre (1866-1911) was a unique Amherstburg photographer who did just what photographer Dorothea Lange did, to capture everyday life.

Lapierre was the son of Francois Benjamin Lapierre (1829-1874) and Angelique Beaugrand dit Champagne (1833-1914). They were married On August 14, 1866 at St. John the Baptist Church. The Lapierre family grew quickly to include Benjamin (1866), Joseph (abt.1868), Maxine (1871) and Mary Lucy (abt. 1870). In 1874, Francois Benjamin died, leaving his wife with four young children to care for. Canada Census records for 1881, 1891 and 1901 show Angelique and her children, with the exception of Mary Lucy in 1910, living with their mother. Amherstburg Voters Lists show Angelique as a tenant at various properties in Amherstburg.

Benjamin was a painter and paperhanger by trade. The Amherstburg Echo had an advertisement in 1894 for B. Lapierre & Lewis Brown’s “Painting and Paper Hanging” business with its headquarters at the corner of Murray and Apsley Street. Echo references also include Benjamin painting and papering John Gant’s barbershop on Dalhousie Street. Benjamin never married, and continued to paint throughout his lifetime as a means of income...but he had one true love.



Marsh Collection Society P1825.4

What captured Lapierre’s heart was photography. Lapierre did not use a studio for his work as the entire town of Amherstburg and the Detroit River were his focus. His work was carried out for his own enjoyment, as only once was it recorded, in the Amherstburg Echo on October 7, 1898, that “Ben Lapierre secured a snapshot of the first prize baby...” at the Union Fall Fair. There is no mention of him ever owning or running a photography studio as D. H. Terry did at the same time in Amherstburg.



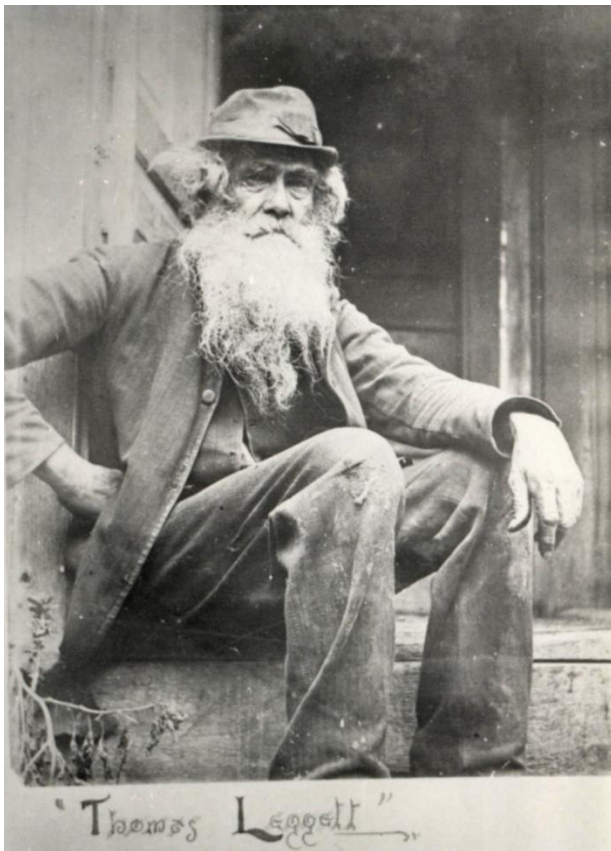
Marsh Collection Society P1852.7

Again it seems that Benjamin was photographing the town and river for his own enjoyment. He was also more than likely doing his own developing. In John Marsh’s book “With The Tide”, he states, “Ben invented an emulsion which was used to cover glass plates of which most of the early pictures in Amherstburg were made”. Many of his photos included a stylized watermark of his initials in the corner. (See photo at left “View from Canard River Bridge”. Watermark is in the lower left hand corner.) He also put his photos into albums and, with most, included a title and date. This is quite helpful when identifying townspeople.

*Continued on next page...*

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Lapierre photographed everyday activities like men cutting ice in the winter, a game of chess, cattle in a farmer's field or two men building a wooden sidewalk. The river and ships captivated him, with his numerous photos of ships/boats like the "Promise", "Fortune", "Canada" and the "Dove". Captured were the late 19<sup>th</sup> century architecture of such landmarks as St. John the Baptist Church, Amherstburg Water Works, Fort Malden barracks (now the three homes on Laird Avenue), Rondot House, and the Block House on Bois Blanc Isle (as he entitled it). He also photographed important events like the funeral procession of W.D. Balfour on August 4, 1896 and in "With The Tide", "Moses Brantford in top hat with riding crop, mounted on a spirited steed, leading the Emancipation Day parade down Dalhousie Street in [1894]".



Marsh Collection Society P3305

Lapierre's casual portraits covered family members and local residents like, Perry B. Leighton (owner of Belle Vue), "Old Man Vessey", George Pettypiece, "Little Jim", Thomas Leggatt and Eva Patton. The photograph of Eva and a man kneeling down and tipping his hat to may be the only photograph of

Benjamin himself. He looks to be the right age, and appears to be wearing clothes with paint on them. There are a couple of copies of this photograph, and one has Eva and Benjamin's name written on it.



Marsh Collection Society P690

On June 17, 1910, the Amherstburg Echo noted, "Benjamin Lapierre, who is employed this season as painter in Pulford's carriage shop, is building, between times, a new yacht..." Marsh's book notes that "he built a coal fired steam engine for his 18 foot clinker boat". His boat and the river were a large part of his life. His river photographs would have to have been taken while out on the river, which would have been quite a feat using a large format camera.

One October day, Benjamin headed out on his boat into the river. It is unknown exactly what happened, but he drowned on (his death certificate states) October 9, 1911. He was survived by his elderly mother, Angelique, his sister, Mary Lucy (Mrs. Lemuel Parker), and two brothers, Maxime and George Lapierre.

The Lapierre family lost a son too early, and I'm sure they and Amherstburg mourned the loss of this artistic and unique man. What they didn't know at the time is that Benjamin's photos would be treasured for many years to come by Amherstburg.



# Bricks-N-Beams

## Blue Haven Apartments

681 Front Road S.

Originally known as Blue Haven Lodge, this structure was built as apartments in 1950. The owner, Sol Goldman, came to Malden Township from Detroit and built his home, known as "Blue Haven", just north of the Lodge property in 1939. Upon completion of the lodge in 1950, the Amherstburg Echo reported that the building contained "12 apartments in the main building and one on the second floor of the utility building at the north east part of the property". The Lodge was constructed by Henry Dube and his sons Howard, Donald, and Carl. All units had a view of the river, were fully furnished, and were available for rent by season or annually.

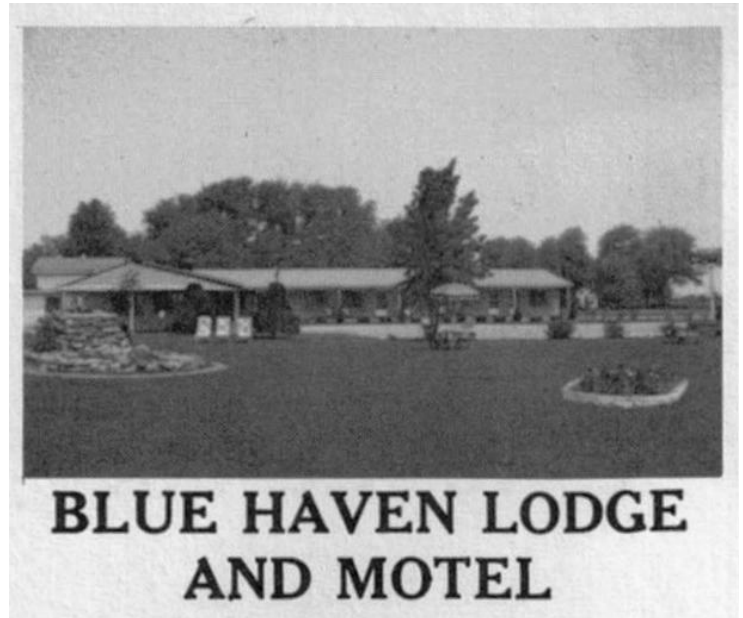
In 1951, Goldman announced that through his will the Lodge and property would be left to the Windsor Lodge B'Nai B'rith to be used as a convalescent home for children. Terms of his will included that the building must be kept up for 50 years and the name "Blue Haven" preserved. The property could not be operated at a profit. Goldman passed away on June 20<sup>th</sup> 1955. It appears that the property was never transferred to B'Nai B'rith and as early as 1958 the Lodge was owned by Hyman and Rebecca Matoff.

In 1958, a modern six unit motel and office was constructed on the east side of the Blue Haven apartments. The hotel was to be managed by Mr. and Mrs. Earl Mower. Further construction took place in 1963, as six new 2<sup>nd</sup> storey units were built.

In 1975, Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Wynne purchased the property. They opened a restaurant in the Blue Haven in 1977, called Cozy Corner. The Grand Opening took place on Friday, April 29<sup>th</sup>. Around 1979 the property passed back to Rebecca Matoff. She continued to operate Blue Haven until 1986 when she sold the motel and left the business to Dianne and Lou Hermann.

Another major renovation took place in 2015. The Blue Haven Motel was remodeled and now contains 26 apartments. The building is now known as Blue Haven Apartments.

*We have some blank spaces of ownership in the more recent years. If you are able to fill those in please contact us at the Marsh Collection.*



Ad from St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church Centennial Cook Book 1867-1967



Ad from The Amherstburg Echo, April 27, 1977



Marsh Collection Society P2373, August 2001

# Collection Highlights

## The Coste Family

We recently acquired articles, photos, and land instruments relating to the prominent Coste Family, who resided for a time in Malden Township. The Coste name is associated not only with the founding of the gas industry in Canada, but other memorable aspects of local and international history.

*This article describes the family's connection to Amherstburg, thus making this material an important part of the Marsh Collection archives.*

Napoleon A. Coste was born in Marseilles, France, in 1835. His father placed him as a midshipman on a merchant vessel and through a series of unconfirmed events he landed aboard a Great Lakes Schooner passing Amherstburg upbound on the Detroit River. Napoleon jumped ship and ventured into Malden Township where he met farmer John B. Robidoux, the father of his future wife. He worked for a few years as a teacher in Malden Township and married Mathilde Robidoux, in 1854. Napoleon became involved in municipal affairs in 1860, the beginning of what would be a 22 year career with the Essex County Council. Over that period he served as Reeve of Malden, and Warden of Essex County for two separate terms.

In 1863, Napoleon returned to France. There, he played a prominent role as an engineer in the construction of the Suez Canal. Upon completion, he was awarded the honour of piloting the first English vessel into its waters.

By 1883, the family returned to Malden Township. At this time, a grand family home was built, the residence known as "Mirielle" and later "Chateau la Rose". Plans for the impressive structure were drawn up by prominent local architect James Wilderspin, and the building was constructed of red brick imported from France. Unfortunately, the residence was razed in the 1960s, but remains in the memories of many Amherstburg residents.

Napoleon and Mathilde had five children: Anna, Louis, Eugene, Denis A., and Maurice. Apart from Maurice, who was born in Egypt, the children were born in Amherstburg. All spent a



Coste Family, c.1905

portion of their childhood here. Anna passed away while the family resided in London. Louis, an engineer, was appointed a member of the International Waterways Commission. Maurice was an actor involved in theatrical enterprises and also became editor of a local conservative paper known as the Amherstburg Leader in the 1890s. Eugene and Denis A. Coste formed the Ontario Natural Gas Co. in 1888. They struck a gas flow in Gosfield South in 1889 which marked the beginning of the natural gas industry in Canada. Eugene was inducted into the Canadian Petroleum Hall of Fame in 2002.

Mathilde and Napoleon both passed away in 1910 in Amherstburg. They are buried at St. John the Baptist Cemetery on Brock Street.



Mirielle, no date