



# Reflections



Newsletter of the Marsh Historical Collection  
Amherstburg, Ontario

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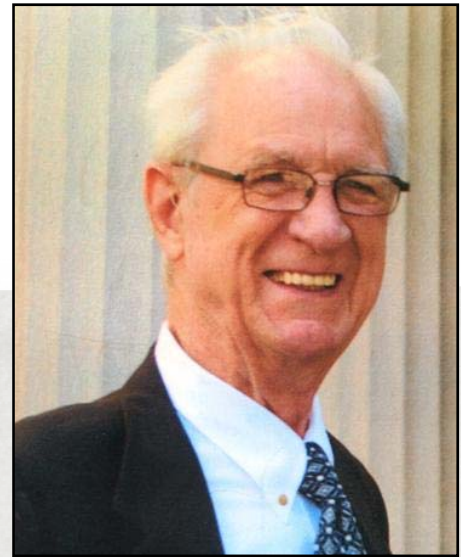
## Edward A. "Pat" Warren

October 1, 1928- June 24, 2021

It is with much sadness and regret that we report the passing of "Pat" Warren (Eleanor's husband) one of our constantly dedicated volunteers. Pat began offering his much valued assistance to the Marsh Collection Society in 1996 when Amherstburg was preparing to celebrate its bicentennial, and continued for twenty-five years until his recent passing.

Having grown up in Amherstburg, his phenomenal memories and knowledge of the community were invaluable to the Bicentennial preparations and the publication of two volumes of Amherstburg's rich history. During that time, Pat wrote a poem about Amherstburg which was meant to be included in one of the books. Unfortunately, the piece was lost in the shuffle of so much material, a fact that has often since been regretted. While leafing through the many boxes of paper that Pat left behind, Eleanor re-discovered the poem which we are proud to publish here in his memory.

Requiescat in Pace, Pat!



**Happy 200<sup>th</sup> Birthday  
Amherstburg 1796-1996  
"Ya' Gotta Love This Place"**

Oh! I love this place, this Anderdon, this Malden, this Amherstburg.  
You are gifted with River's raw power and Lake's many moods.  
God's giant glacier gloves, laid level, lush hands,  
And life springs full force from wetlands and dry, from rivers and creeks.

Here, touch a seed to soil, it grows. Dream a dream, it glows with life.  
As family, friends and neighbours listen, respond and support.

At day's dawning, moon and stars reduce their glow and glitter.  
Sun rises with its stable of fiery brilliance defeating night,  
ascending over life-loving farm fields, barns and homes  
while land-loving families rise and energize.

No timid types, our agrarian clan, but Creation's canny keepers.  
We share our Green Gene with a hungry world beyond.

Schools fill buses, filling roads, becoming full of folks  
returning to haven homes in town and township, riverbank and lakeside.  
Settlers taking 200 years to arrive here,  
the fulcrum between where we've been and where we're going.

As daylight fades, Grosse Ile, River and Lake bask in eternal colours,  
spread by the setting sun, stretching God's glory across our horizon.

Happy 200<sup>th</sup>!

Edward "Pat" Warren

### What's Inside

Happenings at the Marsh.....	2
War Brides of Amherstburg.....	3
Then & Now.....	4
Upsetting the Hour Glass.....	5
Amherstburg Connections.....	6
Bricks-N-Beams.....	7
Collection Highlights.....	8

## Happenings at the Marsh

The Marsh Collection Society has chosen to follow Covid guidelines set out by the Province and as such, we ask that you provide proof of vaccination, and government issued photo ID when entering our office. We are open by appointment only, in order to limit the number of people in the office at any given time. Masks are required. To schedule an appointment, please contact us by phone or email. Thank you for your cooperation.

If you are unable to visit us in-person we are happy to answer inquiries via email and phone. Curbside pick-up is available for gift shop items.

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Do you have Amherstburg-related photos, slides or negatives that you would be willing to share with us? We are always looking for more images from the past to add to the collection. If you would like to keep your originals, we would be happy to take scans and return the items to you.

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### Unidentified Photos

Can you help us identify the people in these photos? These are just a few of the photos at the Marsh we would like more information about. If you think you might be able to assist, please schedule a visit to look through our collection of photos needing identification.



### What's In the Collection?

The Marsh Collection Society 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)**



## From the Shelves

Pat Warren wrote a weekly column called “My Town” for the River Town Times from 1995-2010. In this column he shared memories and stories accumulated while growing up in Amherstburg. These articles are available for reading in our reference library.

*If you have stories of growing up in Amherstburg that you would like to share, please get in touch!*

**My Town**  
 By Patrick



# War Brides of Amherstburg

By Kara Folkeringa

Even during some of the darkest days the world has seen, it was difficult to repress hope and love from growing. Many soldiers from Amherstburg were married while serving overseas in the Second World War. The women they married were given the title “war bride.” Some of their love stories were detailed in the Amherstburg Echo on November 8, 1995. For Nellie and Mike White, their immediate connection to each other at a Dutch dance hall sparked their relationship, and they were married after five months together. When they met, they couldn’t speak to each other as they didn’t know the other’s language, but they were able to communicate in their own way. Another war bride, Jennie Purdie, was married at the young age of 17 to Thomas Purdie. They were both from Ireland, their families living on the same street, but Thomas’ family moved to Canada before Jennie was born. They met during the war when he came to visit family in Ireland and fell in love and were married in 1945.<sup>i</sup>

These war brides left their homes and their families, without knowing if they’d be able to see them again, and made the long journey to Canada. For one family, this trip was very nearly fatal. Anastasia (Ryan) Drouillard was travelling on the Queen Mary with her two children David and Margaret, when Margaret contracted spinal meningitis.<sup>ii</sup> Miraculously, Margaret recovered, and Anastasia and the kids began their new lives in Canada with Frederick. A special part of this story is that while Anastasia cared for Margaret when she was sick, another war bride, Mrs. Florence McGee, looked after David. These women didn’t know they were both heading for Amherstburg, and didn’t see each other again until 1993.<sup>iii</sup>



Frederick, Anastasia, and David Drouillard  
Photo Courtesy of the Author

The sad reality of war is that not every family was reunited. When David Lloyd George Brown was killed in action while serving with the Air Force, his war bride was widowed with a son, Eric. Though her husband was gone, Mary Magnolia (Curtis) Brown came to Amherstburg with her son to live with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. George Brown.<sup>iv</sup> She remained in Amherstburg the rest of her life.<sup>v</sup>



Mary Magnolia (Curtis) Brown and Eric Brown  
Photo taken from the Amherstburg Echo, May 4, 1944

War brides formed a community in Amherstburg and were happily welcomed by the town. To make up for some of the traditions that they lost in their overseas marriage, bridal showers were arranged for them. An example of this was recorded in the Echo on June 13th, 1946, where a Jr. Guild Meeting at St. Andrew’s Church turned into a shower for Mrs. Jack Brush. Mrs. Alvin Risdale, also a war bride, assisted in the planning.<sup>vi</sup> In 2007, after years of creating deep roots in the community, many local war brides were reunited and thrown a luncheon in honour of 60 years since their arrival to Canada.<sup>vii</sup>

*Continued on page 4...*

<sup>i</sup>Tara De Ryk, “War brides,” *Amherstburg Echo*, Nov. 8, 1995.

<sup>ii</sup>“War Bride and Family Ill on Boat,” *Amherstburg Echo*, Aug. 8, 1946.

<sup>iii</sup>De Ryk, “War brides.”

<sup>iv</sup>“War Bride in Amherstburg,” *Amherstburg Echo*, May 4, 1944.

<sup>v</sup>“Obituary of Mary M. Tofflemire,” *Windsor Star*, Aug. 3, 1963.

<sup>vi</sup>“Jr. Guild Meeting,” *Amherstburg Echo*, June 13, 1946.

<sup>vii</sup>Jennifer Littlejohns, “Area war brides honoured,” *Amherstburg Echo*, May 8, 2007.

## War Brides

...Continued from page 3

There are very few alive today who remember first-hand the devastation of the Second World War, but countless people who remember the bravery of those who served, the courage of their war brides, and the legacies they left. Many of us wouldn't be here today if not for the sacrifices of those who came before us. Lest we forget.

Kara Folkeringa is a new volunteer at the Marsh Collection. She is currently working on a Master of Library and Information Studies degree from the University of Alberta. She is a growing genealogist, part of the Drouillard family of Amherstburg. With a passion for local history research, she is so excited to be volunteering with the Collection, and to hopefully meet and learn from all of the history enthusiasts who visit!



## Then & Now

Richmond Street looking west from Ramsay



Postcard showing Richmond St., ca.1958  
Marsh Collection Society PC232



Present-day

## Funny Stuff

### A Precocious Child

“On Friday of last week a farmer from Colchester was in Mr. Whyte’s Drug Store in this town, making some purchases, and was accompanied by a young son three years of age. They had not been in the store long, before the youngster began to cry for a cigar, a stock of which Mr. Whyte keeps exposed for sale, but that gentleman imagined that the boy desired a candy cigar. On inquiring from the father, however, he was informed that it was the genuine article, that his promising progeny required; and was further told that the boy had smoked from the time he was weaned. Mr. Whyte accordingly handed out a cigar which being lighted, the boy sat down in a chair, provided, and puffed away like an “old stager.” Not satisfied with one, this *enfant terrible* finished a second without its apparently having any effect on him. Mr. Whyte vouches for the facts above related.”

-The Amherstburg Echo November 27, 1874

W. A. WHYTE,

APOTHECARIES' HALL,

SIGN OF THE GOLDEN MORTAR,

AMHERSTBURG, ONT.

Ad from The Amherstburg Echo December 4, 1874

# Upsetting the Hour Glass

## 1931

**September-** Amherstburg's second dahlia show will be held in the Brunner Mond Club Saturday afternoon. Everybody is invited to participate in this event.

**October-** General Amherst High School is offering night classes in sewing, commercial, home nursing, French and English for beginners.

**November-** Today (Nov.27<sup>th</sup>) is our 58<sup>th</sup> Birthday. The Echo has never missed an issue. Founded in 1874.

## 1941

**September-** The process of tomatoes at the factory of the Canadian Cannery Ltd., in Amherstburg is underway in earnest now and the plant is in operation between 10 and 12 hours a day.

**October-** An attempted break-in Thursday night at Blaney's grocery store, Sandwich and Alma Street was reported to Chief of Police M.K. Augustine. The same night Chief Augustine accosted three Windsor men sitting in a parked car between Murray and Gore Streets. After questioning and securing their names they were allowed to leave town. Windsor police are now investigating the trio.

**November-** The busiest place in town six nights out of seven each week is the Amherstburg Youth Centre. Go there any night of the week with the exception of Sunday and you find from 30 to 60 boys amusing themselves at various indoor games under the supervision of Ray "Nitchy" Sawyer.

## 1951

**September-** Christ Church Parish Work- sponsored a successful square dance at Bell's Cabin's, Friday last.

**October-** Monday was a great day for the school children of Essex County when they journeyed to Windsor to welcome Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh.

**November-** Work on the two-room addition to the Malden Public School commenced last Thursday.

## 1961

**September-** When Anderdon Central was opened in 1952, 128 students were registered. On Tuesday, 420 students enrolled.

**October-** At Town Council Reeve Harold Jones pointed out that since Park Street had been made a connecting link in the county road system the

plan to make Gore a two-way street had been dropped.

**November-** A Remembrance Day Service will be held at the Memorial Pillars, Amherstburg Town Park beginning at 11 a.m. Saturday. The Amherstburg Community Band will lead the parade which will form in front of the Legion Clubhouse on Dalhousie Street at 10:30 a.m.

## 1971

**September-** A new Medical Centre, on the Warren property, west side of Sandwich Street will be constructed as soon as the Ontario Municipal Board approves of the zoning change to provide parking space on the west side of the structure.

**October-** The McQueen Marine Limited tugs Atomic and Aburg went to the aid of the Imperial Oil tanker in Lake Huron.

**November-** A twister hit the Amherstburg area shortly before six Tuesday morning and did considerable damage. In the Malden Hill Estates Mobile Home Park, one unit was overturned, another badly damaged roof and at least one other was slightly shifted.



# Amherstburg Connections



By Phyllis Chant

*"A man who limits his interests limits his life."*

~ Vincent Price

This iconic actor's 60-year career started with playing Prince Albert to Helen Hayes' "Victoria Regina" (1936) and finished in Tim Burton's "Edward Scissorhands" (1990) with Johnny Depp. Price appeared in more than 100 films and has two stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, one for motion pictures and one for television. Some of his most well known films include "The Song of Bernadette" (1943), "Leave Her to Heaven" (1945), and "The Ten Commandments" (1956). Price's ghostly voice and gaunt face made him perfect for horror films. He starred in classics such as "House of Wax" (1953), "The Pit and the Pendulum" (1961) and, for younger fans, the monologue in Michael Jackson's music video of "Thriller".

Price was born in 1911 in St. Louis, Missouri, the youngest of four children of Vincent Leonard Price Sr., and his wife Marguerite Cobb. Vincent Sr., was the president of the National Candy Company. The family enjoyed travelling, but a part of each summer would be spent at their home in Amherstburg, a two-storey clapboard house on the banks of the Detroit River. The home was called Vinmar Lodge, a combination of the parents' two names. It was located at 40 Laird North, later the home of Mr. and Mrs. Bill Hall and family for many years.

"F.M. Falls has sold his lot on Sandwich Street, just above T.W. Bell's house, to Mrs. V.L. Price, of St. Louis, Mo. This property runs from Sandwich Street to the channel bank of the Detroit River, has a frontage of 130 feet and a depth of about 400 feet." (The Amherstburg Echo, July 30, 1909). Their home was built the following year. The newspaper also recorded an addition, a tennis court, and numerous upgrades being made over the coming years.

At the summer home, Vincent Jr., or "Bink" as he was better known, became quick friends with local children, including John and Helen Marsh. In 1917, Midsummer's Night Fete was held at the Price home. This featured piano and voice recitals, along with a play with a cast of local children including Norma Hackett, Harriet Wigle, Mary Sinasac, Elizabeth Hugh, Fred Cuddy and, of course, Vincent Price. This was possibly his first role at age six!



A young Vincent stands on a rock by the river. The frame barracks at Fort Malden is visible in the background.

Marsh Collection Society P208

As a teenager, Price became consumed with fine art and wanted to travel Europe to see the great museums. At the end of each summer, he would visit his grandmother, Harriet Cobb Oliver, who lived near San Diego, California. She would become his kindred spirit and fully supported his desire to explore the world. Price saved for the financial requirements of his trip, but didn't generate enough money. It was at that time, 1927, that Vincent Sr. sold the Amherstburg summer home "Vinmar", and now his son's dream of travelling abroad became a reality. Although the summer home had been sold, the deep connections with the Price and Marsh families were maintained.

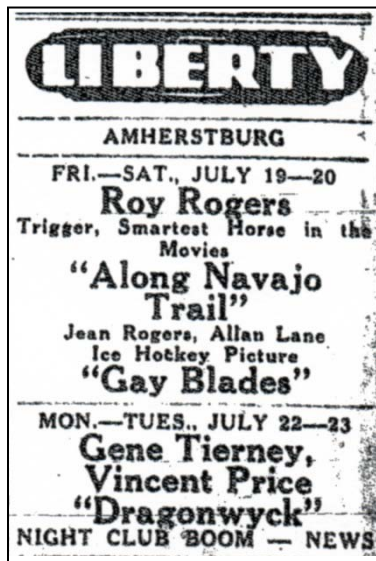
In 1933, Vincent Jr., graduated with a degree in English and a minor in art history from Yale University. Price thought that the world of art was his future, but instead he decided that theatre was his calling. He first appeared professionally in 1934. When Vincent moved to Hollywood, California in 1938 to pursue his acting career, The Amherstburg Echo followed him.

The February 2, 1940 edition of The Echo read, "The appearance of Vincent Price, formerly of Amherstburg, in a moving picture at the Liberty Theatre here, recalled to Harry Spearing Jr., the time he saved Vincent from drowning. The latter had fallen in the Big Creek and had gone down once when Harry, who was nearby, saw his plight and pulled him out."

*Continued on page 7...*

# Amherstburg Connections

...Continued from page 6



Ad from *The Amherstburg Echo*  
July 18, 1946

Helen Marsh always kept the town abreast of Price's life though her column "Conversation Pieces". Whether it was to let us know that he had a role in "The Ten Commandments" as the Master Builder who built the city for Pharaoh, or on the television game show "The \$64,000 Question", the town knew. He was a man of many talents. In June of 1962, Price was named to the White House art committee by Jackie Kennedy. His continued love of art also brought to life the Vincent Price Art Museum at East Los Angeles College with the donation of 90 art pieces from Vincent and Mary Grant Price's private collection. In 1981, at age 80, through the Ontario Arts Council, Price was in Chatham presenting his one-man performance on Oscar Wilde at the Thames Art Centre.

On October 25, 1993, Vincent Price died of lung cancer. This short article can in no way detail Price's impressive life and

career; but one thing that can be said is that throughout his life, a bit of Amherstburg was always with him. As John Marsh wrote in 1978, "The late Mrs. V.L. Price, a world traveller who lived in the home on Laird Avenue ... often remarked there were no sunsets in all her travels that could equal those seen from her home on the Canadian shore of the Lower Detroit River." So, as you gaze upon a sunset while you walk along the shore of our town, remember that Vincent Price and his family did the same.

## Bricks-N-Beams 100 Years Old

The Sovereign Bank opened a branch in Amherstburg on June 23, 1902, in a building on the southeast corner of Richmond and Dalhousie Streets. When the Imperial Bank of Canada took over the Sovereign Bank in 1908, the well-known banker C.A. Cuddy was manager. Cuddy was still manager of the Amherstburg Branch in 1920 when plans were proposed for a new building across the street on the northeast corner. This was the former Bell Telephone office property owned by W.T. Wilkinson.



The new bank building, 1921  
MCS P308

As laid out in the plans published in *The Echo* on April 16, 1920, the new bank would be substantial, constructed of stone and brick 35' x 55', two stories in height with a basement. Plans for the interior were described as follows: "The bank proper is the last word in modern financial institutions with Manager's private office in the southwest corner, ladies' rest room in the southeast corner, large public rotunda, on each side of which are the teller's cages; the rear part to be devoted to clerical staff." The second storey would contain offices accessed by a stairway on Dalhousie Street. The contract was awarded to W.N. McEachren & Co., who at the time were also working on ten tile houses commissioned by the Brunner, Mond Co., for its employees. The excavation work for the building was completed on July 30, 1920. In November, *The Border Cities Star* reported that the steel cross beams and dressed stone for the structure had arrived, and that the brickwork was being rushed.

The cost of construction was more than \$40,000. A quote from C.A. Cuddy was published in *The Border Cities Star* on March 28, 1921: "What is the use of spending a barrel of money on a beautiful building if the surroundings are not in keeping with the improvements?"

On April 12, staff was able to enter their new quarters. During the grand opening the interior was decorated with roses, carnations, and orchids. The new building was described as the finest banking building of any town this size in Canada, a decided improvement to a prominent corner in downtown Amherstburg.

The amalgamation of the Canadian Bank of Commerce and the Imperial Bank of Canada (creating CIBC) was effective June 1, 1961. This was reported to be the biggest merger in Canadian banking history.

# Collection Highlights

By Emily Richard

On June 6, 1939, Windsor, Ontario served as a stop on the first Canadian Royal Tour, an event that brought an estimated 500,000 people to the city to see King George VI and his wife, Queen Elizabeth. The royals arrived in Canada on May 17, 1939, to commence a grand tour across the nation. From their arrival in Quebec City, the King and Queen would continue to travel through the Canadian provinces until their departure from Canada on June 15.

The Royal Tour in Canada held great significance for both Canada and Great Britain. With World War II only months away, it ensured that the British Royals maintained their alliance with Canada. For the Canadian population, this tour also marked the first time that a reigning British monarch had set foot on Canada's soil. It is also seen as the most successful royal tour in Canadian history.

One of the main reasons that the tour was such a success was the extensive coverage of it by media across both Canada and the rest of the world. In order for the media to gain material, members of the press were given armbands to wear during the tour. These armbands were red in colour, with a number written in black writing on each band. Armband #8383 was likely given to John A. Marsh, a reporter for *The Amherstburg Echo*. With this armband signifying his role as a member of the press, Marsh would have been able to get closer to the King and Queen, as well as Canada's Prime Minister, William Lyon Mackenzie King, and other officials. This let the reporters gain information for their articles in order to showcase the grand occasion.

With Windsor as a stop on the tour, people from surrounding areas, including Amherstburg, gathered in the streets to create what was believed to have been the largest amount of people to greet the King and Queen by that point in their tour. With the estimated half-million people, a stop that was scheduled to take 15 minutes ended up being closer to 45, as the King and Queen walked among the spectators and joined members of all different social classes.

Although King George VI and Queen Elizabeth would leave Canada nine days after they arrived in Windsor, this was an event that would shape the relation between Canada and the United Kingdom for many years to come.



*Emily is a grade 12 student at General Amherst High School who plans to study history at the post-secondary level. She has been volunteering with us this past summer, helping out with cataloguing, research and digitization. We are excited to have Emily complete her co-op placement at the Marsh this semester, and look forward to seeing where her passion for history takes her in the future!*

## **Albert Spearing, Amherstburg War Veteran, Talks with King and Queen**

“One of the favoured persons who talked with the King and Queen when they visited Windsor Tuesday evening was Albert Spearing, Sandwich Street, Amherstburg. Mr. Spearing, a veteran of the Imperial Army, was one of the hundred ex-soldiers of this army picked to do special guard duty at the Royal Stand. Also in this guard were Major Harnett, formerly of Harrow, and Captain A. Flowers of Pelee Island.

As the Royal couple were talking to Mr. Spearing, the Queen remarked, “This is the most joyous crowd that we have seen in the whole Dominion.”

“It certainly is,” agreed the King.

“Where did you get all these people?” Her Majesty asked of Mr. Spearing.

“From across the river,” was his reply.

“At this remark the Queen burst out laughing,” Mr. Spearing told this reporter.”

*-The Amherstburg Echo June 9, 1939*