



Reflections

Newsletter of the Marsh Historical Collection
Amherstburg, Ontario



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HISTORIC HAUNTS

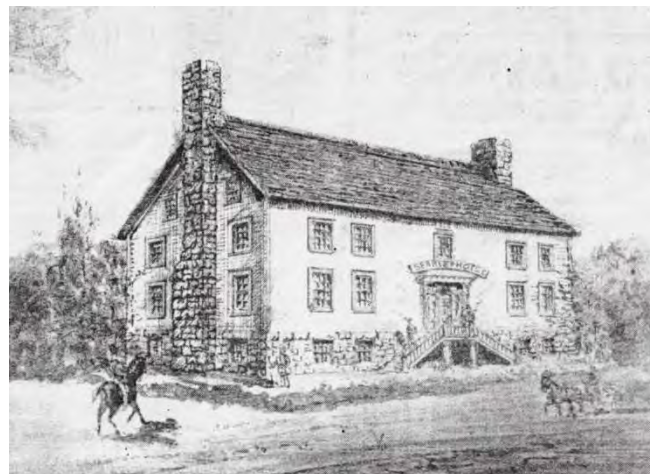
The following are excerpts from an article written by James Hedley in 1908. James spent his childhood in Amherstburg and went on to become director of the Great North Western Telegraph Company and editor of the "Monetary Times." He writes about his recollection of a historic building that once occupied the southeast corner of Richmond and Bathurst Streets, now the site of Scotiabank.

"There was a house on the corner of two streets in the old Town of Amherstburg which was the source of much interest to visitors during the second quarter of the last century, while it remained standing. Tall, gaunt and weather-beaten, in colour a greenish gray from age and fungus, it raised its great bulk like a square and formal light-house above every structure around. To anyone coming down the Sandwich Road from northward this bulky building was the first to catch the eye. It was known as the old Drake house, and had a history almost romantically full of interest."

"Never having known it in the days when inhabited, the place bore to me from 1850-1860 the aspect of a haunted house. Its [two] stories of oaken frame rose from an unusually high stone foundation, and the main entrance at the west side was reached by means of twin flights of massive wooden steps, giving upon a railed platform. Over the door so reached was an oblong sign, perhaps 20 inches by 30, bearing, in gold letters, still fairly brilliant, the name William Searl, who had kept hotel there in the last century."

"There was an air of almost spectral loneliness about this dismantled old tower. It remained vacant for years. And it is to me another instance of the astonishing neglect with which municipalities treat objects of historical interest that this most interesting building, which might quite well have been preserved, was allowed to be torn down."

"I have said that this old house, gazed at from the outside, was spectral-like. This perhaps because it was untenanted. Once inside, however, it had the appearance of a haunted house. Several times, as a boy, I ventured alone up the outside stairs to the main floor. Here the bare floors crackled, the doors creaked, the windows rattled and the wind made an eerie sound in the chimneys, seeming even to shake the old fabric. To me there was a constant fascination in the mirrors, of which several ornamented the main room at the northwest corner. One was a plain mirror of great size



Sketch of the Searl House

over the generous fireplace; others were circular, both convex and concave, all gilt, and with candlestick attachments to their frames on either side. To look into these latter uncanny things, and to see my small face reflected as broad and flat as Sancho Pansa's in the one glass and as attenuated as Don Quixote's in the other, had as much of fright as of fun in it."

"We are told, by a writer who had sense as well as imagination, that all houses wherein men have lived and died are haunted houses, and that harmless phantoms glide through their doors with feet that make no sound upon the floors. And although I had been brought up to disbelieve in ghosts, I was never, while in those strange, neglected rooms, free from a feeling mystery, of something very like fright."

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HAPPENINGS AT THE MARSH

PROJECTS

We were able to hire Darryn Walls this summer with a grant from Canada Summer Jobs. She built an oral history program from scratch and was able to interview eight community members. Darryn was outstanding in this role, choosing questions to hone in on individual experiences, and then recording and transcribing the interviews. The recorded content has covered a wide range of memories, including family history and experiences living, going to school, and working in town. We are grateful to Darryn for the hard work she put in this summer and wish her the best in all future endeavours.

We will continue to conduct oral history interviews throughout the year. An oral history interview gives you a chance to have your memories recorded and preserved in our collection for years to come. Reach out to us if you're interested in learning more about the process.



EXHIBITS

Amherstburg From Above: Then and Now



Join us for an exhibit displaying past and present aerial photographs of Amherstburg.

The exhibit will be on display from
September 8th to November 30th, 2023.

Free Admission - Donations Gladly Accepted



80 Richmond Street, Amherstburg, ON
Monday-Friday 10AM - 4PM

Sponsored by:

Windsor Aerial
DRONE PHOTOGRAPHY

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 & visitors from 10am to 4pm Monday- Friday.

Email: research@marshcollection.org

Website: www.marshcollection.org



THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

If you enjoy reading our newsletter please consider making a donation through our website:
<https://www.marshcollection.org/donate/>



GIFT SHOP

Eight Steamboats: Sailing Through the Sixties by Patrick Livingston

Boblo Boats

The Anguish of War (2-Volume Set) by Gene Lotz

CHECK OUT OUR NEW ONLINE STORE!

Led By the Shepherd

\$5.00

[View details](#)

200 Years and Growing (1804-2004) - Debra Honor

\$21.00

[View details](#)

Christ Church Anglican by Terrance Hall

\$21.00

[View details](#)

Access from our website: www.marshcollection.org

PRUDENCE (PART II)

By Al Jackson

During the first year of ownership by McQueen Marine the PRUDENCE had a crew of men mainly from Amherstburg. The following is a list of crewmembers and their weekly salaries as of August 18, 1957:

Captain (J. Nelson @ \$100.00); (H. Atkinson @ \$150.00); Mate (D. Smeltzer @ \$60.00); Oiler (R. Lauzon @ \$60.00); Fireman (J. Richard @ \$60.00); Fireman (J. Helfich @ \$60.00); Deckhand (R. Lucier @ \$60.00) and Cook (W. Wilson @ \$81.69). These salaries were for a standard 48 hour week and don't ask why the cook's is different because I don't know. The working conditions in the engine room of a coal fired tug were not the best resulting in a relatively high turnover of firemen and oilers.

After coming out from her winter layup the PRUDENCE once again went to work for the Underwater Gas Developers Co. but this time on a bareboat charter meaning that McQueen Marine would supply the tug at \$125.00 per day but Underwater Gas Developers Ltd. (UGDL) would have to supply everything else including the crew.

Things were pretty quiet for the PRUDENCE until June 24, 1958 when she ran hard aground on the submerged foundation of the original Point Pelee lighthouse. This lighthouse was built in 1889 and was known as the Pelee Spit but more commonly just called "the dummy." On April 17, 1900 the lighthouse was destroyed by fire with the lightkeeper and his assistant narrowly escaping with their lives. Eventually nothing remained above water and a bell

buoy was placed at the site to warn all mariners of the hazard to navigation. For some unknown reason the PRUDENCE did not see or hear this buoy and ran headlong onto the old foundation. Two McQueen tugs and several fish tugs tried in vain to release her on June 25th but had to wait until the tug STRATHMORE joined in the salvage effort before she was released.

Some smaller insurance claims were paid out for damage occurred on three separate occasions. The first accident occurred on October 10th when she was tied to the pier at Leamington and large waves from the lake caused her to surge against the pier causing \$211.00 damage to her port side fender strakes and rail. The second accident occurred on October 25th when she hit the concrete wall of the Welland Canal while taking the ACCOMODATION to the Port

Weller drydock causing \$148.00 damage to her starboard side fender strakes and rail. The third incident occurred on February 3rd when a small fire caused \$223.00 worth of damage.

On December 21, 1958 she went off her bareboat charter to UGDL and inter winter layup at Amherstburg.

On March 26, 1959 the PRUDENCE was sold to UGDL for \$40,000.00.

On May 17, 1959 she departed Amherstburg for her new home at Erieau, Ontario.

She was sold again in 1963 to Donald L. Lachine of Blenheim for reasons unknown but in the early morning hours of February 9, 1963, she caught fire and burned for several hours in the Erieau harbour. The insurance

Continued on page 4...



*The Prudence being repainted in McQueen Colours.
Cliff Morrison Collection, MCS P3563*

...continued from page 3

underwriters deemed her a total constructive loss and she was later scrapped at Erieau. The only thing saved was her large propeller which ended up at the shipyard in Collingwood.

A note of interest comes from the late Captain Clifford Morrison former captain of the WILFRED M. COHEN:

When A.B. McLean & Sons Ltd. Of Sault Ste. Marie were refurbishing their big tug WILFRED M. COHEN with a new diesel engine they needed a new propeller. The old PRUDENCE wheel was found in the tall weeds of the Collingwood shipyard and A.B. McLean had it trimmed down a bit and installed it on the COHEN. To my knowledge this piece of marine history may still be in use on the Great Lakes.



Photos show fire damage to the Prudence at Erieau, no date.
Mark Santavy Collection.

90 Years of Rotary

AMHERSTBURG

Rotary Carnival

JULY 25 - 26 - 27
THURS. - FRI. - SAT.
(EVENINGS)

Rotary Lot - - - Richmond Street

FUN FOR ALL - YOUNG AND OLD . . . BINGO
'AND A VARIETY OF GAMES . . . REFRESH-
MENTS . . . GROUNDS SPRAYED WITH DDT
TO KEEP AWAY THE "SKEETERS"

Bring The Family

SPONSORED BY THE AMHERSTBURG ROTARY CLUB

The Amherstburg Echo July 25, 1946



Amherstburg Rotarians gathering for a dinner in the 1950s, MCS P3477

The Rotary Club is celebrating 90 years since its provisional founding as a club in the fall of 1933 in Amherstburg. Rotarians have worked hard to support our community through the years; a poignant example is in the purchase and restoration of the Park House, which now serves as a museum.

UPSETTING THE HOUR GLASS

1933

September- While there will be no celebration in Amherstburg on Labor Day, St. Joseph's Church, River Canard, invites all to their big picnic. Country style chicken dinner from four to eight that afternoon, at 35 cents for adults and 15 cents for children, is enough itself to attract thousands.

October- For the second time this season thieves entered a barn on the property of the Spring Hill Golf Club on Monday morning and stole saws, picks, and other tools. The theft was apparently made about 9:30 in the morning as everything was in order earlier. The entry was made by prying a padlock off the door.

November- Tired and weary, trundling their bicycles that had become not a means of transportation but an extra burden, two Amherstburg girls, Mary Callam and Margaret Manson, returned from a cycling trip to Harrow last week. The first half of the trip was a pleasant journey but the last lap exhausted their strength and they had to get out and walk most of the way home.

1943

September- 20-Year-And-Over Club Picnic. The members of the club to which employees who have been with Brunner Mond for 20 years and over, are eligible for membership, and their families, thoroughly enjoyed a picnic at Sunset Beach Saturday afternoon.

October- In these days of rationing when we speak of the "privileged" class, nine times out of ten we're referring to the infant population. When sweetspreads were rationed, Moms were permitted to exchange the baby's sugar coupons for those for those of corn syrup; using both exchanged and "D" coupons, baby

can have 7 lbs of corn syrup a month. Now comes "G" coupon by which they can get evaporated milk, through their own Local Ration Board. We've got to protect our future citizens.

November- LAC Ted Gatfield of the R.C.A.F. School, Regina, is spending a furlough with his mother, Mrs. John Gatfield, Dalhousie St. LAC Gatfield is taking a navigators' course.

1953

September- The capstan of the former excursion boat the Put-In-Bay has been presented to the marine museum at the Fort Malden National Historic Park by the Island of Bob-Lo Company.

October- Over the weekend the glass in several parking meters in front of the public library and the Green Lantern Restaurant was broken. Every attempt is being made by the police to catch the culprits.

November- Characters from the favourite books of children came to life at the Amherst Public Library Friday night at the concluding activity of Young Canada Book Week. About 25 children came in costume, all well done.

1963

September- Nature didn't supply enough water to maintain wildlife in Big Creek, Malden Township, so man has stepped in and is pumping 420,000 gallons per hour from Lake Erie into the creek. The pumps are in operation 24 hours each day.

October- Pigeons fool town gang. Ever since the United States Corps of Engineers vacated the former Post Office building, corner of Dalhousie and Richmond Streets, the pigeons have been busy dirtying the front of the building and the adjoining sidewalk. The condition

was drawn to the attention of the board of works committee and early Friday the town gang gave the building and adjoining walk a hosing and cleaned up the mess. The pigeons had a busy weekend and by Monday morning the situation was nearly as bad as ever. The only answer seems to be to get rid of the pigeons.

November- Silver Cross Mother - Mrs. Arthur Reynolds, now of Chatham, and her son Wright were in town Monday. Mrs. Reynolds placed a cross on the Cenotaph during the Remembrance Day Services in memory of three of her sons, Mac, Hugh, and Douglas, who died in World War II. The boys' names were enscribed on the arms and upright piece of the memorial cross.

1973

September- Construction of Richmond Street between Sandwich Street and Victoria Avenue has been completed. The final coat on the road was laid last week.

October- The former office building of Calvert of Canada Limited, corner of Sandwich and William Streets, has been razed. Until this space is needed for plant expansion, it will be seeded and be a green area at the northern entrance to the town. The building was constructed in 1928 and used until the new office building bottling room complex was constructed on St. Arnaud Street.

November- Christmas lights appeared early on lakers passing upbound in the Amherstburg Channel. The first vessel carrying the lights was the Patterson Steamship "Canadoc" which passed Amherstburg November 20th.



DAIRY QUEEN RETURNS

Dairy Queen opened on Sandwich Street North in July of this year, but did you know that this isn't the first time a Dairy Queen franchise operated on this street?

In 1967 Linn & Gail Beckett opened Dairy Queen on the property that now houses Shooter's Roadhouse. It was operational until 1977-1978 when the Coach Stop Restaurant opened for a brief time.

17 Sandwich Street North has been the site of many joints through the years: Dairy Queen, Coach Stop Restaurant, Snug Harbour Restaurant, Dom's Restaurant, Pirates Snug Harbour, Hurricane's Roadhouse, and now Shooter's Roadhouse.



*Cars in the parking lot at Dairy Queen, 1977
Photo by Rev. Theron Brock Buchanan, MCS 2019.036.202*



The Amherstburg Echo April 13, 1977

THEN & NOW

Northeast corner of Sandwich & Alma Streets
Dairy Queen is visible in the background.



*Then: 1975, Photo by Rev. Theron Brock Buchanan, MCS 2019.036.163
Now: Photo taken September 19, 2023*

BRICKS-N-BEAMS

102 Murray Street

In 1931, *The Amherstburg Echo* printed the following headline: "Modern Brick Block to Replace Old Murray Street Landmark." According to the article, the landmark in question was a frame building that had been on the site since before 1863, while the Drake House was in operation. The Drake House was originally known as the Searl House, and was operated by William Searl as early as 1806. When William Searl's daughter (Ann Drake) took over the property, it became known as the Drake House. The hotel itself was located at the corner of Richmond and Bathurst Streets, but the grounds and outbuildings occupied the entire block between Richmond and Murray Streets. For many years, the large structure sat vacant, inspiring the article on the first page of this issue (Historic Haunts). It was torn down in 1863 after the death of Ann Drake. The property then passed to her daughter, Annie Archer.*

Ignace Kopacz purchased part of the old Drake property in 1930. On it sat the two-storey frame building described by the *Echo* as being "of somewhat antique vintage." *We will cover the history of this building in the next issue of Reflections.* After coming to Amherstburg in 1927 along with his wife, Anna (nee Mucha), Ignace worked in shoes. His business was called the O.K. Shoe Repair. On the site of the old frame building, Ignace had a two-storey brick building constructed. One of Anna's brothers received the contract. The brick block would be used both for his business and residence, and included space for a tenant. He only remained in the building for 5 years, before publishing a moving announcement in *The Amherstburg Echo*: "We are moving our clothing and shoe repair business to the Park Store, corner of Ramsay and Murray Streets." This is the building now known as 79-81 Murray Street (see *Reflections Spring 2023*).

Mrs. Anna Kopacz opened a dry goods store in the brick block that year called Amherst Dry Goods. This would become a well-known business in Amherstburg, operating for the next twenty-five years.

The former Kopacz building was once again replaced by a new structure by 2013, just at the old frame building was replaced by what was considered a modern brick block in 1931. The site is now occupied by HL Hamilton Insurance.

STREET DRESSES
HOUSE DRESSES

SEE OUR STOCK MEN'S

- OVERALLS
- WORK PANTS
- WORK SHOES
- DRESS SHOES

NEW LINE
CHILDREN'S DRESSES
75c to \$1.79

THE WOMEN'S STORE
MRS. A. KOPACZ
Murray St. AMHERSTBURG

The Echo March 18, 1938

*For more information about the Searl House and other early Amherstburg inns see "The New Town on the Garrison Grounds" by Doris Gaspar in *Amherstburg 1796-1996 Vol. I*, pages 48-207.



102-106 Murray, 1982. MCS PA16

Fine Show Of Colorful Flowers In Garden Of Mrs. Anna Kopacz

Last week forsythia was in bloom at the home of Mrs. Anna Kopacz, Murray Street. If the weather doesn't get too cold it is possible that the bush will bear as many blooms as in the spring.

The Kopacz garden was very colorful with roses and asters in full bloom. Our visit to the garden was made on November 12 and there was a fine show of colorful flowers.

Anna Kopacz continued to reside in the brick block above the store until her death in 1962. This piece about the Kopacz garden was published in The Amherstburg Echo on November 18, 1954.

Here's a Number to Remember

REdwood 6-4684



We Provide The People of Amherstburg and District a Complete Dry Goods Service

Make It a Point to Visit Our Store And See Our Excellent Stock — It Will Pay You Big Dividends.

AMHERST DRY GOODS

MRS. ANNA KOPACZ
Murray Street Amherstburg

The Echo March 22, 1951

COLLECTIONS HIGHLIGHTS

Spring Hill Golf Course Membership Card



In the last issue of *Reflections*, we covered the history of the International Yacht and Country Club, a venture that came and went in a matter of ten years. A golf course located to the rear of the property in the second concession, was an amenity that continued on beyond the club itself. The course was built in the summer of 1928 and officially opened July 4, 1929. An unsubstantiated note in our files indicates that the course was designed by golf architect William Robinson and was constructed by T.T. Robertson, a local golf pro. It was a nine hole course, with what the papers described as "beautifully wooded, undulating land, with a stream winding its way through the plot," including "long fairways and dog-legs through the virgin woods; short sporty water holes across the valleys cut by the winding stream upon whose banks stands majestic oaks and elms." Alex Scott, who had previously been the pro at the course on Bois Blanc Island, came on as golf pro.

In 1931, the club turned public and the name was changed to

Spring Hill Yacht and Country Club. Bob Williamson, a former Essex-Kent amateur title holder, was manager that year. The Spring Hill Golf Club was a member of the Southern Ontario Golfers League which included the

Roseland, Little River, Leamington and Kingsville clubs. Large tournaments were held at the course, bringing golfers from courses throughout the region. The course was often referred to as the "sportiest golf course" in the region. Due to the growing number of members, plans were made to build a large sun shade beside the first tee. A "bonnie wee," also known as miniature golf course, was also advertised. Even after the clubhouse burned in 1931, Spring Hill Golf Club continued on.

**Why Go South?
Play December
Golf In 'Burg**

In 1932, William Whitt, of Detroit, shot the first hole-in-one at Spring Hill. This was on the number eight hole, which was described as a par 4, with a distance of 345 yards and a sharp dog-leg to the left. In 1933, John N. Cooper and Fred Wilson broke the record for late season golf by playing a round at Spring Hill on December 1st. Among the

skilled local golfers were Norval and Si Bertrand, who tied a round with a score of 34 on the par 36 course.

In 1936, the new owner Bob Whittle, former pro at Roseland Golf Course, announced plans for a clubhouse with locker rooms, rest rooms, and refreshment services due to increased membership. Over 100 golfers from the border cities played the course over a weekend early in the season, indicating the improvements were attracting players. The following year, Alex Scott again took over as manager. This was the year for which John Marsh was issued his membership card. The course was not in operation for much longer, as an article in 1939 described Spring Hill Golf Club as defunct.

In 1968, Henry Grant Duff, one of the original directors of the International Yacht and Country Club, sold the former Spring Hill property to Great Lakes Forgings Ltd. This company, a subsidiary of Peace River Mining and Smelting, had plans to open an iron powder plant on site. This will be covered in the next issue.



Image at top right: Bob Williamson, *The Echo* October 9, 1931/ Headline: *The Amherstburg Echo* December 9, 1933