



Reflections

Newsletter of the Marsh Historical Collection
Amherstburg, Ontario



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A Tribute to Effie

The Amherstburg district lost another of its local historians in the recent passing of Effie (Bondy) Botsford one week before her 90th birthday.

Effie was born in Colchester South township, the middle child of fourteen born to Ivan and Mabel (Fox) Bondy. The family lived at different times in other agricultural areas of the county where Effie received her formal education, at the same time, with her siblings, always assisting with the farming. In those days a farm girl from a large family didn't enjoy the luxury of a career or higher education. As the country was just coming out of the Depression and into the Second World War, Effie remained at home helping to raise her younger siblings. The family saw many hard times but she was always optimistic and cheerful, traits which she never lost.

Early in 1946, on a visit to the museum at Fort Malden, Effie met her future husband, David P. Botsford, who had been curator there since the site's opening a few years earlier. Mr. Botsford was well known as the authority on local history and genealogy. By the end of that afternoon, Effie had learned a great deal about those topics, and David had met his very pretty future wife. After a whirlwind courtship, in October that year, Effie became Mrs. David

Patterson Botsford. The Botsfords over time raised five children while living in the third floor apartment of the Hough house on the museum grounds, and later in the barracks.

Between feedings, diapers and all that goes with child care, Effie found time to help out at the museum where she had become a fountain of information regarding local history and genealogy, all the while greeting visitors and imparting knowledge of the area. In 1958 she officially became an employee of Fort Malden National Historic Park. Five years later the family moved into the Botsford homestead in Malden township. David Botsford retired in the mid 1960s and he and Effie became what would today be termed as a very modern couple - she went to work and he attended to the children and household duties, at the same time compiling notes for a future book of local history. (After David's demise in 1978, a book of many of his stories was published - entitled "At The End of The Trail.")

Many things have changed since the day that fresh-faced little farm girl came to town. She raised a family and saw that they were well educated. She worked with four superintendents, met two prime ministers and a premier. She learned how to handle and teach



The Amherstburg Echo, June 5, 1985

others how to handle a musket as well as a soup ladle. She held groups of school children spellbound, teaching them how to cook over an open fireplace, carding wool, dying it, using the loom, and so many other pioneer activities.

Continued on page 3...

What's Inside

Happenings at the Marsh.....	2
Upsetting the Hour Glass.....	3
DNA Testing.....	4
Bricks-N-Beams.....	5
Collection Highlights.....	6
Funny Stuff.....	7
Then & Now.....	8

Happenings at the Marsh

What's new?

Recent Donations

Part of the mandate of the Marsh Collection Society is to collect and preserve items relating to the history of Amherstburg and the lower Detroit River. We often receive donations of objects, books, documents and photographs that reflect the heritage of this area. If you have an item that you may be interested in donating to the collection, please contact:

Meg Reiner, Collections Coordinator
519-736-9191
megreiner@marshcollection.org

Below are some of the items that have been donated in the last few months:



A series of photographs of Richmond Street ranging from 1969-1990. These include images of the old Amherstburg Public School and Richmond Terrace Nursing home.



Edward Bondy Family Portrait c.1900

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



Website



The Marsh Collection website is getting a new look! Our site may be temporarily unavailable while we make the changes. Please contact us if you have any difficulty accessing content on the site.

Upsetting the Hour Glass



1928

March- A well signed petition asking for the establishment of a liquor store in Amherstburg has been forwarded to the Ontario License Commission.

April- The Horticultural Society are having the beds around town cultivated and their spring work done.

May- The flu epidemic is playing havoc with school attendance, which is cut nearly in half during the past week.

1938

March- Forcing a window off the bowling alley thieves gained entry into the Brunner Mond Club, Richmond Street, Amherstburg sometime early Tuesday morning and looted the showcases of confectionery and tobaccos.

April- The Ladies of Rotary are holding their annual Spring Rummage Sale at the store across from Marra's Bread on Friday and Saturday, April 29 and 30.

May- Max Rubenstein was in Toronto last week buying stock for the spring and summer trade.

1948

March- First installment of the 1948 taxes is due next Thursday March 18.

April- The Amherstburg Boxing Club is going steadily ahead, through initiative and self-sponsorship, and has developed into one of the most enviable boxing clubs in Western Ontario. Leslie Temesy, manager of the local club, has been receiving calls from other boxing clubs for fighters.

May- McQueen Marine Limited have finished putting out all the Detroit River buoys.

1958

March- St. Patrick's Day was suitably observed by the members of the Amherstburg Branch of Dominion Stores with the wearing of the green. All staff members wore Paddy Green plug hats.

April- The Ontario Government has purchased 262 acres in Malden Township for a provincial park. The area includes Holiday Beach and Malden Farms Ltd.

May- Property at the rear of the Amherstburg Federal Building will be rented by the town to convert into an off-street parking area. It will cost the town a yearly rental of \$12.00 to lease this property.

1968

March- Nine members of the General Amherst Key Club spent the latter half of their winter holiday in Ottawa with 400 Key Clubbers from Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes.

April- A lot of early potatoes are being planted. Most of the lettuce has been planted. Cabbage is being planted and onions will go out in the fields this week. There have been some growers who have put in sweet corn, however, it is considered early for corn seeding.

May- On Sunday last seven hundred visitors were registered at Fort Malden National Historic Park. The increased number of cars coming to the park is creating a parking problem.

A Tribute to Effie

...Continued from page 1

Effie pursued education in several ways such as learning to type and quilt; she and her husband visited historic sites in Canada and the United States. Her adult life was her formal education. When she retired from the Fort in 1985, she volunteered at the Park House Museum, teaching children pioneer skills, at the same time assisting in publishing her late husband's lifelong work. Valerie Buckie, retired curator of the Park House, credits Effie as having been her mentor in learning the domestic skills of running an historic house. We wonder who will be our next "pioneer" person who will educate our youth in pioneer living.

Effie (Bondy) Botsford will be sorely missed by so many. We have all heard the saying that "she was one of a kind." That was our friend Effie - one of a kind. R.I.P.

Finding My Past: DNA Testing

By Phyllis Chant

Genealogy TV shows have become popular over the past few years. “Long Lost Family”, “Finding Your Roots” and “Who Do You Think You Are?” are series that help celebrities and regular folk trace their family roots or even find their biological families. All three of these shows use traditional genealogy research practices, and are now including DNA testing. By watching these shows, we can get some useful tips and strategies that we can use with our own family history research. And we can sometimes get some much needed inspiration to carry on with our own genealogy search.

In my own family, I have a sister who is a human geneticist. She works for a company that creates genetic diagnostic tests for cancers, patient responses to chemotherapy, and inherited diseases like cystic fibrosis, among numerous other tests. Watching my sister’s career in this field, along with the interesting genealogy TV series, have led me to think about DNA testing for myself.

Being adopted as an infant, I was always curious about my ethnic background. My parents were always very supportive about me finding my biological family. Nine years ago, after many years of searching, I did find my maternal side’s half-siblings, and found out that I am French Canadian (numerous generations). So, to create a more complete picture of my ethnicity, I decided to order a DNA test.

After doing some research and checking with my sister, I found that there are numerous companies that offer this service. 23 and Me (CAN \$249) DNA test will give you information about your ethnicity and also your genetic health risks. Ancestry.ca (CAN \$99) gives you information about your ethnicity across 150 world regions, and identifies potential relatives among others who have also done the Ancestry DNA test. Currently, seven million have done the test.

There is also My Heritage DNA (\$99), Living DNA (CAN \$169), Vitagene (US \$99), and many others. Prices listed are as of publication of this newsletter.

I decided to order the Ancestry.ca DNA test. A colleague of my sister works for a large genetic testing service, and was able to answer my questions about the DNA test.

The Ancestry DNA test comes with a small saliva tube, instructions, and a pre-paid return mailing package. The completed saliva test is sent to Dublin, Ireland and then sent on to partner labs. At the labs, they extract the DNA from the cells contained in the saliva. After they have the DNA, it is run on an array of equipment to see what DNA base (A,C,G, or T) is at each marker. This creates a file listing the marker and the corresponding base. For each marker, you actually have two bases, one from your mother and one from your father.



Kit includes detailed & easy instructions, a saliva tube, tube collection bag and a postage prepaid international mailing box.

The lab will then look for long stretches of markers that match between people who have previously done the test. The longer the stretches and the more stretches there are, the more closely it predicts that you are related. DNA testing surveys a person’s entire genome at over 700,000 genetic locations.

It takes approximately six to eight weeks to process your sample from the time the lab receives it. Once completed, it will map your ethnicity going back multiple generations, and will provide insight into such scenarios as what parts of the world you are from. It also gives you a list of potential relatives who share your DNA. I will be sharing my test results in the Summer newsletter. I am excited to see what my global ancestry is and, hopefully, continue to research my biological family tree.

If you are interested in doing your DNA test, or for more information, please see Ancestry.ca or 23 or 23andme.com.

Bricks-N-Beams

Brunner Mond Water Purification Plant & Pump House

Upon driving into Amherstburg via Front Road North, many drivers have likely observed the two white buildings, one on either side of the highway, just north of the old Honeywell property. While the purpose may not seem obvious now, these structures once served a vital function for not only the company that built them, but also the Town of Amherstburg as a whole.

In 1891, a waterworks tower was erected at the foot of Rankin Avenue, on the lot where Park House Museum now stands. While this provided running water to the town using a high tower distribution system, the water came directly from the Detroit River and was untreated.

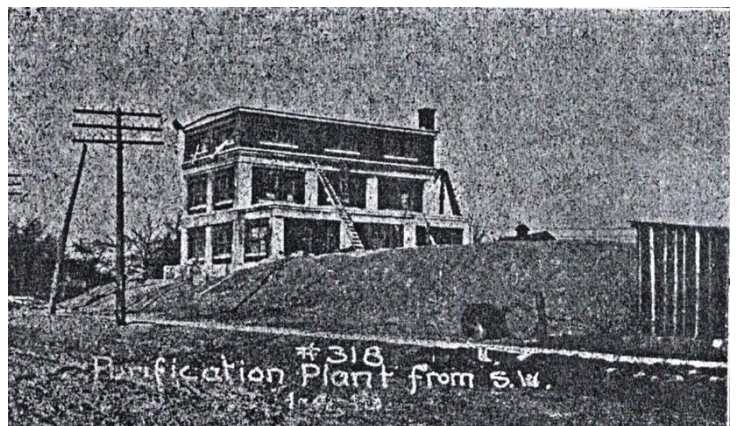
Several articles from the Amherstburg Echo at this time reported concern as to the water quality. The water was polluted by a high level of waste dumped from upriver cities and was becoming undrinkable. Frequent typhoid epidemics and outbreaks of other diseases were an ongoing issue.

On February 10, 1917, Brunner Mond announced that it would be building a soda ash plant in Anderdon Township. The site selected for the plant was located just upriver from the Town's water source. This news essentially confirmed that the town could not continue to source drinking water from the Detroit River, if untreated. Brunner Mond acknowledged that they too required a water purification system in order to keep their employees in good health. As such, the company entered into negotiations with the town and proposed to erect a modern waterworks system that would serve both the town and the plant. The official agreement, dated August 14, 1918, is as follows: "Whereas in order that the Company may dispose of its drainage and sewerage in the Detroit River in the Township of Anderdon, and in order that the said drainage and sewerage shall not effect, contaminate or pollute the water supply of the Corporation or the Company, the company has proposed and offered to establish a pumping and purification plant for the supplying of, and to supply purified, filtered and wholesome water to the Corporation, and to the inhabitants of the said Corporation." The initial financial agreement, which was renegotiated over the years, was that the supply would not exceed 500,000 gallons per day for all

purposes except fire purposes at the cost of production, a maximum of \$10,000 annually.



Building the Pump House
MCS Photo P2442



Purification Plant, 1919
Photo from the Amherstburg Echo, June 27, 1919

Plans for a water purification plant and pumping station were drawn up by Morris Knowles, engineer, and were approved by the Provincial Board of Health. The cost for construction was estimated at \$80,000. The buildings were of reinforced concrete with tapestry brick panel walls. The Pump Station, located on the harbor line was built by the Foundation Company of Montreal. It housed two coagulating and settling basins, and four sand filters above a 100,000 gallon purified water reservoir along with other specialized apparatus. The filtration plant, positioned 300ft inshore and 30ft above mean water level was built by the Brunner Mond, Canada Ltd.

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...Continued from page 5

It contained two low lift pumps, three service pumps, and three fire pumps for the filtered water, as well as three pumps to deliver raw water to the plant. The pumps ranged from 300 to 2000 gallons capacity per minute, operating under heads of from 50' to 250'. Water was delivered to the town through a 12" class C pipe about 8000 feet long that connected to the distribution mains.

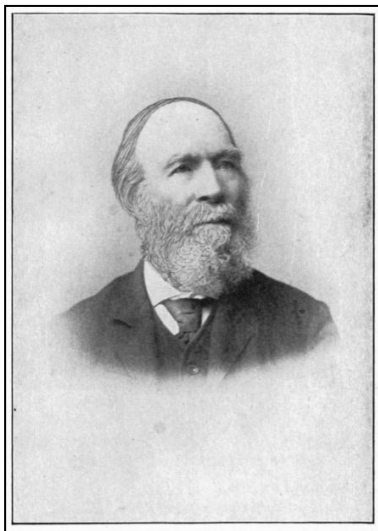
By March of 1919, the Town's water was coming from the Brunner Mond Plant. In order to operate this water system, Brunner Mond established a subsidiary company called Brunner Mond Water & Gas on Dec. 1, 1919. The plant's chief chemist was given the responsibility of ensuring that the water was adequately purified. After the opening of the Brunner Mond Plant, no typhoid deaths were recorded.

Due to an increase in population the Ontario Water Resource Commission took over water distribution for the town in 1969. A new water tower was erected on the south side of Alma that year. On November 16, 1971, a new treatment plant with the capability to process 4 million gallons of water per day opened on Highway 18. When first assessing the need for a larger water filtration system in the early 1960s the town looked at purchasing and redesigning the Brunner Mond Plant but this was determined to be unfeasible. The plant remained in operation for a time under Allied Chemical and pumped water into the plant for use in operation. Brunner Mond Water & Gas Company dissolved in 1973.

If you would like to receive an electronic copy of our quarterly newsletter by email, please contact us. You can also access the newsletter on our website.

Collection Highlights

Duncanson Papers



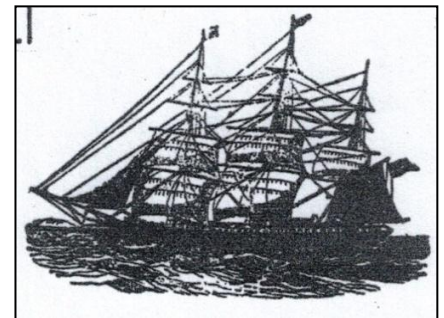
Captain John Duncanson

We have in our archival holdings several collections and fonds compiled by local families, organizations, and businesses. One such compilation is the Duncanson Papers, donated in

2009. This collection contains a wealth of information relating to local and marine history, conveyed through a series of photographs, books, documents, and artifacts accumulated through the years by the Duncanson, Scratch and Wilson Families.

The collection originates with Captain John Duncanson, who was one of the "best known of early lake and river pioneers" according to the Amherstburg Echo. He was born in Scotland in 1822 and took to the sea at the young age of 12, working as a deckhand. Duncanson came to Amherstburg with his parents and later became the captain of multiple vessels, including the

Thomas F. Park and Ellen Park. Under Captain Duncanson, the Thomas F. Park made a trans-Atlantic voyage from Amherstburg to Liverpool. The log book from this trip is now housed at the Marsh Collection. *Continued on page 7...*



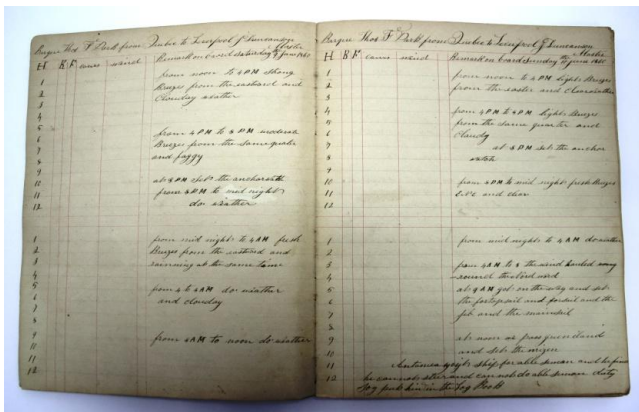
Thomas F. Park

The Thomas F. Park was a 3-masted sailing ship named after owner Thomas Fletcher Park, a merchant who at one time in the 19th century owned a large portion of the waterfront in Amherstburg. This vessel was originally built for John MacLeod of Amherstburg, and was launched in 1855. It measured 136' 4" long by 25' 6" in width with 280 tons carrying capacity. T.F. Park purchased the vessel in 1861 and was the owner during the voyage under Captain Duncanson.

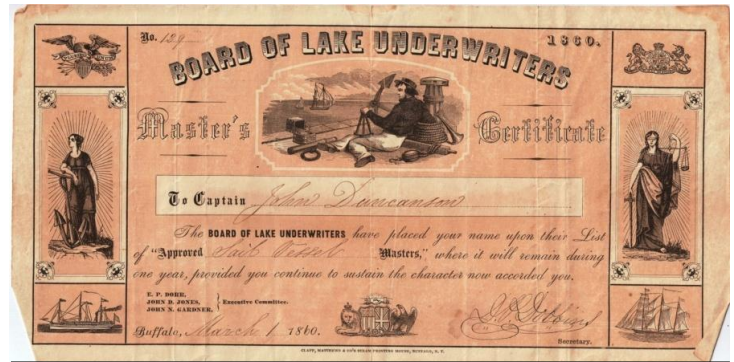
In 1874, Duncanson became commander of a steamship called the Lincoln. In 1887 the Lincoln's ship's engine broke down upbound on Lake Huron and she drifted hard aground on a reef. Duncanson managed to save his navigational instruments and ship's papers, many of which we now have in our collection. Shortly after this event Duncanson retired around 1889.

Duncanson married Sarah Ward in Amherstburg in 1854. They lived at 284 Ramsay Street, bought in 1880 from another Great Lakes Captain by the name of James Duncan. They had five children. All three of Duncanson's sons became Great Lakes Captains: Captain Joseph, Captain Don. J., and Captain John. The streak continued with the next generation, through a grandson, Captain Orval L. Duncanson.

Captain Duncanson passed away in 1905, but his legacy lives on. An article in the Amherstburg Echo from July 26, 1967, writes about a family salute that was often heard sounding from freighters coming through the Amherstburg Channel: two longs, two short, one long, one short.



Log of Barque Thomas F. Park- May 29 –August 11, 1860



Master's Certificate for Captain John Duncanson, 1860

Funny Stuff

From the Amherstburg Echo

"Hit With Drumstick- The leg of a chicken became a bone of contention in Essex county court last week as Mrs. M. testified her husband heaved it at her with such velocity it fractured her skull. She charged him with assault. Mrs. M. said she threw the chicken bone into the stove, disposing of some of the evidence. She said, however, it was a double-jointed chicken bone and it was wet. Magistrate W.A. Smith remanded the case for a week so doctors who attended Mrs. M. may testify." (March 13, 1936)

"Personal- Certain young gentleman of good education and in good circumstances also belonging to the highest society circles, wish to correspond with young ladies of the same class with a view to matrimony. Photos exchanged." (March 17, 1882)

"Captain Theodore Young thought spring had arrived and got gay, coming to town without rubbers. He got a chill and had to call a doctor. He's all right again, and will wait for spring to arrive in earnest." (April 4, 1913)

"St. Louis has ten thousand dogs. The natives wear a section of stovepipe on each leg during the mad dog season. Amherstburgians will please take the hint and prepare for the mad dog season." (April 16, 1875)

Then & Now- 232 Sandwich Street South



American House (c.1848-1897)
MCS Photo P2038



Anglo-American Hotel (1898-1910)
Photo from the Amherstburg Echo, 1898

Correcting History

In 1978 a photo of the "AMERICAN HOUSE" was published in the "Those Were The Days" feature in The Amherstburg Echo. That building for many years stood on the southwest corner of Richmond and Apsley (Sandwich) Streets where the Library is today. The text with the photo erroneously stated that the building was known as the "Tin House" which was destroyed by fire. We recently discovered that the "AMERICAN HOUSE" in the photo was actually built in the mid-1840s by Louis Marié, an Amherstburg pioneer. A carpenter and joiner by trade, he was listed in various research materials as "Innkeeper" and "waggonmaker." The Marsh Collection files contain much material about this man, his long and interesting life, and his family. He died there in 1881.

Through the years, a variety of tenants rented parts of the building from Marié, and parts of the property were sold off. In 1874, Simon Bertrand became owner of what was then called the "NATIONAL HOTEL", which he sold for \$1,500 in 1876 to John Maloney. By May of that year the structure was called the "AMERICAN HOUSE." That name remained until the building (the one in the photo) was totally destroyed by fire in December 1897.

In January 1898, the Maloneys decided to rebuild. They commissioned architect Alfred Wood to design the new structure, which would be called the "ANGLO-AMERICAN HOTEL." George Bailey was awarded the contract for the three-storey building. The Amherstburg Echo described the magnificent hotel, both exterior and interior, in great detail. The upper storey would be "finished with ornamental steel shingles, the roof being covered with the same material," which explains why it was later nicknamed the "TIN HOUSE." Twelve years later, on a very cold, early Sunday morning in January 1910, that impressive twelve-year-old building became victim to a totally disastrous fire. Three years later the new Carnegie Library opened on the site.



Amherstburg Public Library, Present