



# Reflections

Newsletter of the Marsh Historical Collection  
Amherstburg, Ontario



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## Ancestral Lines

Olga Semeniuk (nee Zin), emigrated to Essex County from Ukraine with her family in 1937. Olga contributed a chapter titled "Ukrainians in the Tri-Community" to the Amherstburg Bicentennial Book published in 1996. Below is a summary of the chapter, describing the history of the Ukrainian community in Amherstburg.

On February 10, 1917, Brunner, Mond Canada announced that a soda ash plant would be built in Amherstburg. Employment prospects drew workers from Windsor and surrounding areas, including Peter Machura, a young Ukrainian Immigrant. Ukrainians were also employed as seasonal workers at local farms. Many families started their own successful farms in Anderdon and Malden Townships.

A second wave of Ukrainian Immigrants came at the outbreak of WWII. Workers were again attracted to the region as jobs came available in Windsor when the auto industry was converted to wartime production. At the time, Amherstburg was a choice place to reside and public transportation provided easy access to Windsor.

A third wave occurred following the war. Displaced persons from Europe arrived, almost doubling Amherstburg's Ukrainian population. If you'd like to learn more, contact us or visit the office!

PAUL & TILLY PERSONALLY  
INVITE YOU TO CELEBRATE THE  
**HERITAGE Festival**  
UKRAINIAN & CANADIAN STYLE

THURSDAY, FRIDAY & SATURDAY  
SEPTEMBER 9 - 10 - 11

**LIVE UKRAINIAN MUSIC**  
**GREAT FOOD**  
**DANCING**

• OUR SPECIAL MENU •

CITY CHICKEN CABBAGE ROLLS PYROHY	ODESSA CHICKEN CABBAGE ROLLS PYROHY
PRIME RIB WITH YORKSHIRE PUDDING CABBAGE ROLLS PYROHY	CUTLETS WITH WHITE WINE SAUCE CABBAGE ROLLS PYROHY

ALL ENTREES INCLUDE  
★ BORSCH SOUP  
OR JUICE  
SAUERKRAUT,  
ROLLS & BUTTER  
SALAD BAR,  
COFFEE OR TEA

PAUL & TILLY  
MARNEY

**Ankerst HOTEL**  
61 Richmond St. W. 784-4479

The Amherstburg Echo September 6, 1982



Maria's Restaurant was opened by the Kudlas in 1958



St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Church opened on June 3, 1962. The Church occupied Belle Vue, originally the Reynolds family home, until the property was sold in 2000.



A Suffering World Calls to You!

On all the war fronts, and in the countries torn by war, suffering is greater now than ever before. Your Canadian Red Cross brings relief and comfort to prisoners of war, wounded and sick on the field and in hospital; refugees and victims of the Nazi hordes; besides a host of other services to Canadian soldiers, sailors and airmen and their dependents at home and abroad. Your dollars are needed as never before. Give generously!

National Appeal, 1945

**CANADIAN RED CROSS**

This space contributed by

**YAKIMA BROTHERS**

MEAT - FISH - GROCERIES - FRUITS  
Corner Sandwith and Murray Streets, Amherstburg

The Amherstburg Echo  
March 8, 1945

**ZIN'S  
MARKET**

Sandwich Street North  
Near Richmond

Proprietors:  
MR. and MRS. JOHN ZIN

Centennial Cookbook 1867-1967

It is our pleasure to wish every one of our friends a most happy and joyous Easter. May the beauty of Easter be with you always.

**HIGH GRADE GROCERY**  
ALEX & ANN TARKOV  
Apley at Murray - Amherstburg

The Amherstburg Echo  
March 18, 1948

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# Happenings at the Marsh

**Our office is now open Monday to Friday from 10-4.  
Appointments are recommended but not required.**

## Welcome, Kara!



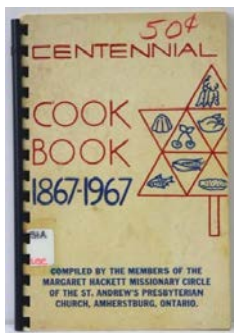
Kara puts some finishing touches on a mini-exhibit of spring related artifacts to celebrate the coming of warmer weather. Come check it out!

In our Fall 2021 issue of *Reflections*, we introduced Kara Folkerling as one of our amazing volunteers. We are happy to announce that Kara has joined our team as our newest staff member!

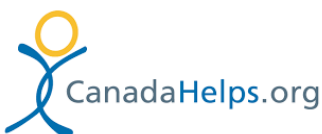
Kara is continuing to work on her Master's degree in Library and Information Studies, and is so grateful for the opportunity to learn about archives first-hand here at the Marsh Collection. Genealogy is a particular interest of hers, with ties to the Drouillard and Bernard families of Amherstburg. She's looking forward to meeting and learning more from all of the local history buffs that use the collection. She'll be here on Mondays and Thursdays, come in and say hi!

## Amherstburg in the 1960s

Do you have photos, documents, or other items relating to Amherstburg in the 1960s? We would like to add material from this decade to the collection and design a mini-exhibit. Please get in touch if you are interested in donating to the collection.



## THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS



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

## 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](mailto:research@marshcollection.org)

Website: [www.marshcollection.org](http://www.marshcollection.org)



## GIFT SHOP

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CALL TO RESERVE YOUR COPY**



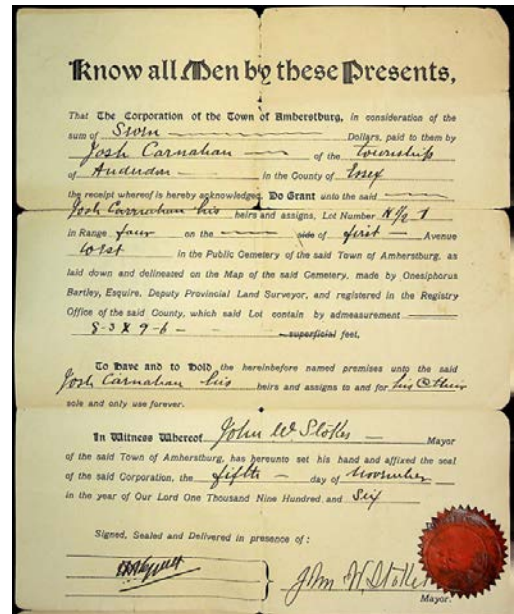
**Check out our website  
for a list of available titles!**





*By Kara Folkeringa*

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you'd like to take a look at this collection. Thank you to Gwen Tytgat for generously donating these materials!

[illegible]

# Please Pass the Muskrat



*Shown here near a muskrat house in the marsh are Earl Dube (left) and Bert Johnson (centre) with the game warden.*  
MCS P3045

It isn't the first robin, nor the first warm breeze, nor kids playing marbles that heralds the arrival of Spring in the Banana Belt. No, it's something more delicious—the first muskrat dinner. When you can sink your teeth into that gastronomic delicacy, brother you know Spring is officially here. Spring in Amherstburg without muskrat would be like ham without eggs or a hep cat without a sweater. When the sun melts the ice in the marshes it's time to let muskrat melt in your mouth. Not only do the citizens of these parts enjoy them at their family dinners but muskrat dinners are held by organizations to raise money and to say that they always attract capacity crowds would be an understatement. Newcomers to this district are introduced to "marsh chicken" at these dinners and while many hesitate to eat "rat" at first, they usually become ready to sing its praises after the first mouthful. It has often been said, but will bear repeating, that the muskrat is one of the cleanest of all animals so that any qualms a person might have on that score can be forgotten. It lives only on roots and herbs and washes every morsel of food before eating it. Even writing about it is making our mouth water. Garcon, another plate of muskrat please.

*Printed in The Amherstburg Echo March 28, 1941*

# Upsetting the Hour Glass

1932

**March-** Low grade gasoline has increased in price 2 cents a gallon, high grade hit the bean some time ago at 29 cents a gallon.

**April-** Decorators have completed their work at the Jones Soda Shop and the Ray Nicholson Barber Shop.

**May-** Milk bottle thieves are again operating in town.

1942

**March-** A camera club has been formed at the Amherstburg Youth Centre under the direction of Harvey Webster.

**April-** The bicycle being raffled by the Amherstburg Chamber of Commerce to raise money for the Smokes for Soldiers Fund is now on display in the Pickering Electric store. This gives everyone an opportunity to help keep the soldiers overseas happy.

**May-** Several local students are taking advantage of the Department of Education's offer to allow farm service in exchange for final examinations.

1952

**March-** The members of Sigma Beta Phi sorority were the hat models at their "Bonnets on Parade" held Sunday afternoon in the K. of C. Hall.



**April-** The Canadian Salt Company, Limited, last Tuesday began drilling operations on the shore of the Detroit River, in Ojibway.

**May-** Elections were held at the annual meeting of Amherstburg Chapter of Barbershoppers in the banquet room of the Amherst Hotel.

1962

**March-** A building that was to have been used as a clubhouse by members of Brunner Mond Boat Club was razed by a fire. Originally built at Gordon Station on the Sandwich Windsor and Amherstburg Railway line it was later converted into a garage when moved behind the Brunner Mond Infirmary and recently moved to the dock.

**April-** Fifteen thousand trees were planted on the new Holiday Beach Provincial Park 14-acre woodlot over the Easter weekend.

**May-** Workmen of Ranta Enterprises Limited are busy this week laying the concrete top of the new main dock under construction at Bob-Lo.

1972

**March-** Two major business places were formally opened last week. The large Big V Drug Mart, east side of Sandwich Street, north of the Amherstburg Public Utilities Service Centre, and the enlarged and improved showroom and office of Conklin of Amherstburg, Dalhousie Street South.

**April-** Seems like old times with the Bob-Lo dock, foot of Murray Street, again in use. There is considerable activity on Boblo with the building of a new large ride on the west side and the construction of a sewer system and sewer lagoon.

**May-** Many people in the area served by the Amherstburg post office have received letters with enclosures. Accompanying letter stated: "The enclosed letter mailed to you was burnt during conveyance to Windsor despatch point. It would appear someone mailed a package containing combustible material which ignited and caused damage to the mail." The mail truck took fire late Tuesday afternoon on the Pike Road near Howard Avenue, as it was proceeding towards Amherstburg.

**Rose Bushes 85¢**  
2 YEAR OLD CANADIAN GROWN BUSHES — No. 1 GRADE — INDIVIDUALLY WRAPPED AND TAGGED

*Mother's Day*  
**SUNDAY, MAY 11th**  
A Nice Selection of Cards For This Occasion  
Now On Display

Full Line of Seeds and Gardening Supplies

**AMHERSTBURG 50¢ to \$1 STORE**

*The Amherstburg Echo May 1, 1962*

**DANCE**  
MODERN and SQUARE  
**BELL'S TRIANGLE**  
3 Miles South of Amherstburg  
**Friday, May 30 at 8:30 p.m.**  
60¢ PER PERSON

*The Amherstburg Echo May 29, 1952*



# Amherstburg Connections

By Phyllis Chant

Growing up, every Saturday morning there was a mad dash to get the newspaper. How we loved the comic section! Everybody had their favourites, whether it was a strip, panel or editorial.

Amherstburg was the home base of a famous American cartoonist, syndicated in newspapers throughout the continent. Lee Stanley and his wife, Harriet, lived at 30 Laird Avenue from 1943 to 1955.

Stanley was born in Topeka, Kansas on May 2, 1885. With only a Grade 8 education, he began his career at The Cleveland Press in 1903. Comic strips such as "Freddy Flip" and "The Summer Pest" were his beginnings as a cartoonist. By 1920, Stanley had created his most popular and longest-lived cartoon "The Old Home Town"; and married his wife, Harriet. A memorable year!

A 1950 article in The Blue Bell, a magazine for Bell Canada employees, stated that, "... between 1923 and 1929, Mr. Stanley spent his vacations on Pelee Island and during this time visited Amherstburg for the first time."

Lee and Harriet had a home in Cleveland and an apartment in Detroit. But a doctor's recommendation for both of them to live in a quieter location brought their thoughts back to Amherstburg. So, in 1943, they purchased 30 Laird Avenue from Mr. and Mrs. Andrew B. Lewis. According to The Blue Bell article, Stanley would create six cartoon panels a week. Part of the week

was spent coming up with ideas, and the other part was devoted to drawing. Quite often, he would include his beloved cats, Blackie and Sugar, in his cartoons. It is said that many of the human characters were drawn from his childhood home of Clyde, Ohio.

In 1955, the Stanleys sold their Laird home to Mr. and Mrs. William Murdoch. He was the (Progressive Conservative) MPP for the provincial riding of Essex South from 1943 to 1963, and for the last three of those years served as the Speaker of the House at Queen's Park. In the mid-1980s, the home was sold to John and Linda James, owners and publishers of The Amherstburg Echo.

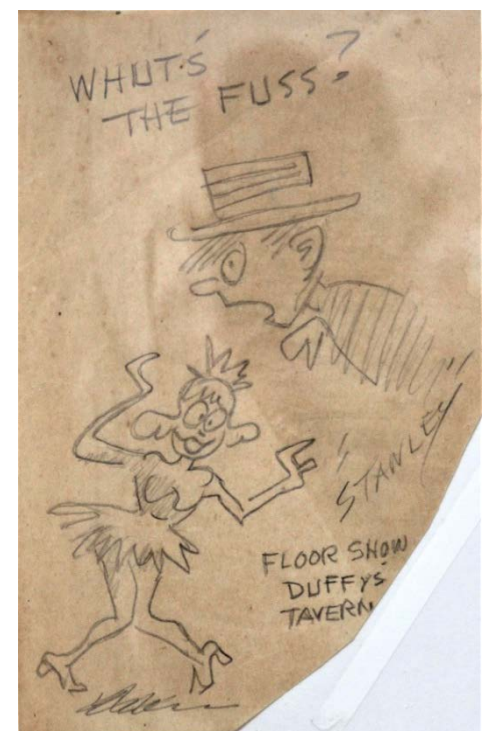
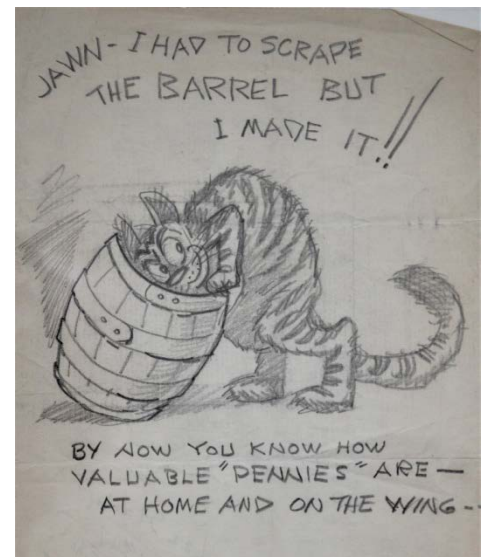
In 1966, Lee Stanley retired. By that time, "The Old Home Town" had been syndicated to 400 American and Canadian newspapers by King Features Syndicate. Sadly, he lived only four more years, dying on February 12, 1970 in Rocky River, Ohio.

If, in fact, Stanley did get his ideas for his characters from his small town life, maybe a bit of Amherstburg ended up in some of his syndicated creations.

The quick sketches of the striped cat, Duffy's floor show, and panel of The Old Home Town (1945) are part of the Marsh Historical Collection archives.



Lee Stanley





# The Loch Ness Monster of the Detroit River

In July of 1892, the *Echo* reported that Lake Erie's sea serpent was working its way to the Detroit River. Captain Patrick Woods, of the schooner *Madeline*, encountered the monster on his way from Buffalo to Toledo. He described the serpent as having viciously sparkling eyes, a large head, fins, and a brown body 50ft in length and 4ft in circumference. By October, his prediction was confirmed:

"The sea serpent has reached the mouth of the Detroit River. Deputy Marshal Beasley, who, with his wife, lives on Sugar Island, is authority for the statement. He says that on Friday morning last his wife went down to the shore on the south side of the island to get a pail of water and a loud noise caused her to look out into the lake, where a terrible sight met her gaze. She saw a pair of jaws which she thought would be 20 feet in length and the animal was apparently coming toward the island. She immediately made haste to their house on the island, but as soon as she got there she fainted. After giving her the assistance necessary, Mr. Beasley went to the shore to ascertain the cause of her fright, but could see nothing. Two other men walking nearby saw the monster, which seemed to be 50 feet in length. Mr. Beasley is confident that it was the sea serpent that Mrs. Beasley saw. The place where it was seen is just where the Detroit garbage scows deposit their cargoes and no doubt his fishship will live highly on the city's refuse. Andrew Hackett says he would like to see the monster as he has a good gun always in readiness for him."

– *The Amherstburg Echo* October 7, 1892

"Referring to the sea serpent apparition at the mouth of the river, E.N. Clark, one of the trustees of the J.P. Clark estate, says he is firmly convinced that Mrs. Beasley saw just what she describes. He is inclined to believe that the animal is a large alligator, which someone has placed in the lake. The muddy bottom off Hickory Island, across from Sugar, would furnish a congenial home for this class of reptiles. One moonlit night only a few days previous to this incident, several workmen on Sugar Island saw the strange animal, but they assert positively that the body was round like a huge snake's."

– *The Amherstburg Echo* October 14, 1892



Figure 1

## Then & Now



Above: West end of Murray Street looking east toward Dalhousie, circa 1907. Part of the Lakeview Hotel is visible on the left and the Shillington Hardware Building on the right. Both buildings have been razed. MCS PC 187.  
Below: Present-day view now within the King's Navy Yard Park.



Figure 1: Portion of Lloyd's Map of Essex County Showing positions of Sugar Island and Hickory Island west of Bois Blanc MCS2005.024.002



# 150 Years of Railway History in Amherstburg

By Ken Hutnik

This year marks 150 years since railroads first operated in and around Amherstburg. As early as May of 1872, the first tracks were laid in Gordon, just north of Amherstburg, between Texas Rd. and Brunner Ave. In November of 1872, the first train would arrive from St. Thomas. By February 1873, the Canada Southern Railway (CSR) reached all the way from Gordon to Fort Erie and on to Buffalo, N.Y. River ferry service was established between Gordon and Stony Island in 1873. Bridges to Grosse Ile and mainland Michigan linked the line to other railways at Slocum Junction (Trenton MI). The dream of a more direct link from Chicago to the eastern U.S. was finally realized.

The celebrations would not last long, as the Canada Southern (CSR) went bankrupt for a variety of reasons by September 1873. Although it continued to operate under bankruptcy, the CSR would be taken over by the Vanderbilt empire in 1876. On paper the CSR still existed and the Michigan Central (MCR), another Vanderbilt railway, would lease the CSR trackage for 99 years.

Amherstburg would continue to see the history unfold with the expansion of the line into downtown proper from Gordon Station. The beautiful MCR station was built in 1896 and still stands today housing the Gibson Gallery of the Fort Malden Guild of Arts and Crafts. New York Central, Penn Central, Conrail as well as CN and CP would all become echoes of the CSR around Essex County, with Amherstburg seeing its last train under Penn Central in 1976.

Amherstburg railway history may stretch back as far at the beginning of the CSR, but other lines also make up its history. Brunner Mond (later Allied/ General Chemical) operated its own railway inside the quarry and plant facilities from its beginnings. The Sandwich, Windsor & Amherstburg railway brought trolleys to the streets of Amherstburg. The Essex Terminal Railway still operates today and continues Amherstburg railway history. These railways served many industries and businesses over the last 150 years. In future articles we will explore more of our railway heritage.



Figure 3: "Last Penn Central Train at Amherstburg Station, February 1976"  
Photo Credit: Terry Hall

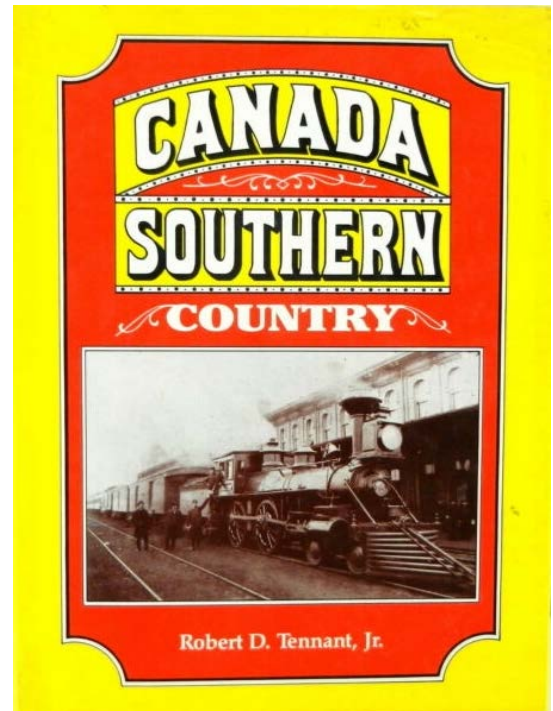


Figure 1: "Canada Southern Country" is an invaluable reference about the CSR

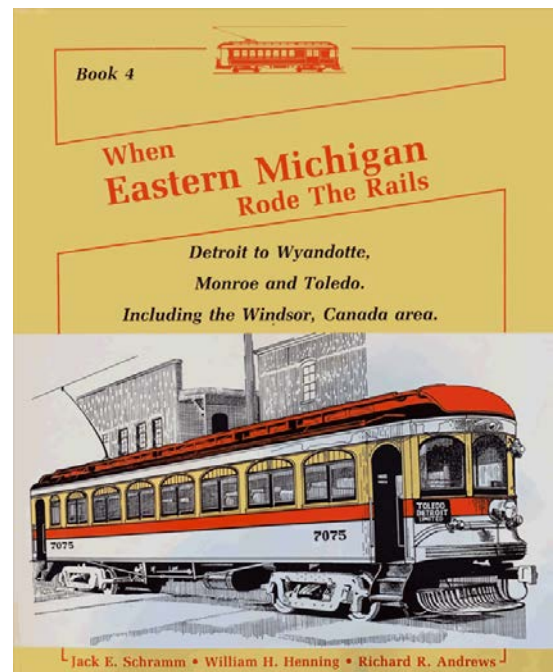


Figure 2: "When Eastern Michigan Rode the Rails - Book 4" has a detailed chapter about the SW&A

The Marsh Historical Collection has a variety of materials available if you are interested in Railway History. If you have historical materials, photos or stories that you would like to share, please reach out to us at [research@marshcollection.org](mailto:research@marshcollection.org).

# Bricks-N-Beams

## Bank of Montreal Corner

By Meg Reiner

On September 8, 1849, *The Amherstburg Courier* reported that two brick houses were being erected on Front Street (now Dalhousie Street). One was the three-storey Salmoni Building and the other was a two-storey store built by Mr. Paxton. Thomas Paxton was a merchant and fisherman, and owned quite a bit of land in the area. At the time, the property at the southeast corner of Richmond and Dalhousie was owned by Margaret and George Keefer who lived in Thorold. Although Mr. Paxton did not own this property, articles suggest this was the site of the new building. In the painting titled "Amherstburg, from the South" by Catherine Reynolds circa 1851, a structure that matches the skyline of the corner building is visible. *Note: The original of this painting is in the ROM Collection and a copy hangs in the Council Chambers at Amherstburg Town Hall.*

The Keefers rented to tenants during their ownership. James Baker occupied the new store as a grocery and residence through most of the 1850s and 60s. William Bungey and George Green then operated a billiards saloon until 1873. That

year, T.N. Johnson announced that he converted the building into a hotel called the Johnson House. William T. Wilkinson, harness maker, purchased the property from the Keefers in 1880. He had the block refitted and improved that year.

In 1902, the Sovereign Bank rented the W.T. Wilkinson corner. That March, tenders were let for alterations including a brick addition. A vault was installed and part of the one-storey addition on the east side was used as the manager's office. On June 23, 1902, the new Sovereign Bank was officially opened.

In the remaining portion of the one-storey addition facing Richmond Street, Wilkinson operated a harness shop. Afterwards this was the Joe Matta Fruit Store and later the C.J. Saad confectionery. The south part of the main building was used for various shops as well.



In 1908, the Imperial Bank of Canada took over the Sovereign Bank and leased the property from the Wilkinsons. Molson's Bank bought the building in 1921 and hired local contractor Charles McLean to transform the interior into a "modern, up-to-the-minute banking house." Four years later, the Bank of Montreal bought from Molson's and has occupied the site ever since.

The 104-year old structure was razed in 1953 and a new building constructed. The two-storey brick and stone bank opened on May 31<sup>st</sup>, 1954. Some of the features of the new building included: a modern, low-type counter line, two coupon booths, recessed incandescent lighting, colorful rubber tile flooring, and lights installed in the window sills for night-time illumination.



### Images:

*Top Right: New Bank of Montreal Building, 1954  
MCS P299*

*Left: Bungey & Green Billiard Saloon  
Photo by W.W. Davidson, circa 1869  
MCS P431*

*Right: Molson's Bank, circa 1921  
Showing 1-storey addition to rear  
MCS P3394*

