



# Reflections

Newsletter of the Marsh Historical Collection  
Amherstburg, Ontario



Volume 12 Issue 4

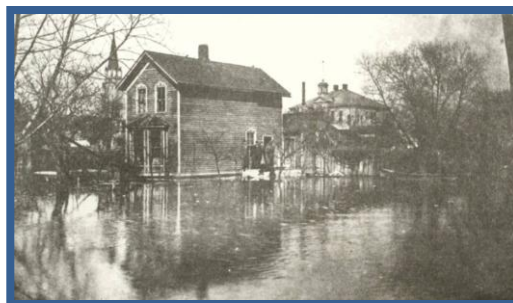
Summer 2019

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## FLOODING REPORTED IN AMHERSTBURG

*February 23, 1883:* The Echo reported that several parts of town had flooded. Park Street was particularly affected, with water coming down from Pike Road. George Middleditch's shops (foundry/blacksmith), on Dalhousie South were covered in 1-3 feet of water.

**With the amount of rain we've experienced this spring we thought it might be interesting to take a look back on floods reported in The Amherstburg Echo over the years.**



George Street, 1912: Ice melted and rushed west down Pike Road.

MCS P2049

*April 11, 1947:* This was the first major flood in over 30 years. The downtown area from Simcoe Street to Richmond and between Brock and King was covered for most of the day in up to 3ft of water. Manhole covers were hurled into the air and water came out to a height of more than 3 ft. The greatest damage was to George Street where the water level rose above the 1<sup>st</sup> floor in several homes.

1883

1892

1909

1912

1947

1952

1983

1989

2011

*May 12, 1892:* Heavy rains flooded George Street along with parts of Brock and King. All of George Street was covered with about a foot of water.

*March 5, 1909:* Flooding reported in Anderdon Township. The waters of Sucker Creek overflowed carrying away the planks on the 7<sup>th</sup> Concession bridge. The Bray Bridge (over the railway in front of Brunner Mond) was shifted off of its foundations.



George Street, 1947  
MCS P1814

*March April 3, 1952:* The Echo reported that more rain had fallen than normal in the last three years causing a higher water level in the lakes. The east wind blew for 18 hours causing water to flood the area along the east bank of the river. The wind held the water in the river and drove in more from Lake Erie. Edgewater Beach subdivision was greatly affected. Parts of Highway 18 were covered from Bondy's Gas Station to the Brunner Mond Pump House, and the dock at Duff's was completely covered. There was also damage to the beach areas below Amherstburg.

*July 26, 1989:* Described as the worst rain storm in the history of Essex County. According to ERCA 10.5" of rain fell over a period of 20 hours. Anderdon was the hardest hit of the tri-community in the area of Middle Side Road between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Concession.

*August 11, 2011:* The Monopoly subdivision, Centennial Park, Simcoe St., several concessions, and Lowes Side Rd., were greatly affected by flooding.

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*July 6, 1983:* Heavy rains on June 27<sup>th</sup> caused John Goodchild's dock, Dalhousie Street, and the dock at Duff's to be completely covered by water.

# CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS

Are you interested in volunteering at the Marsh Collection? Please contact Meg Reiner at 519-736-9191 or [megreiner@marshcollection.org](mailto:megreiner@marshcollection.org)

## Current Volunteer Positions

We are looking for a volunteer to gather information posted on Facebook that pertains to local history. This includes photos and relevant comments associated with those photos. Contact us for details.

## Other available opportunities:

### **Resource Assistant**

Assist with indexing, typing, transcribing and other related tasks to promote the preservation and accessibility of the materials in the Marsh Collection. Applicants must have some experience with computer programs such as Microsoft Word and must have accurate typing skills.

### **Research Assistant**

Volunteers compile information from sources within the collection for the purposes of publications, exhibits, lectures, and more.

### **Article Submission/Writing**

The Marsh Collection publishes a quarterly newsletter, along with occasional papers and local history books. We welcome the submission of local history-related articles for the newsletter.

### **Digitization**

Projects include scanning items from the photograph and archival collection for digital storage and cataloguing. This position requires some computer skills and experience using scanning equipment.



## **What's In the Collection?**

The Marsh Historical Collection mandate is "to collect, preserve and encourage research into the heritage of Amherstburg and the lower Detroit River district."

The facility contains a large collection of photos, books, genealogical records, maps and reference files on a variety of historical topics, plus microfilm of The Amherstburg Echo from 1874 to 2012. There is also a small gift shop which contains various publications about local history.

Funding comes from various foundations and private individuals. While ADMISSION IS FREE, donations are most welcome. A receipt for income tax purposes will be issued upon request for any monetary donation of \$10 or more.

**The Marsh Collection is open to researchers and visitors from 10am to 4pm Tuesday through Friday.**

**Email: [research@marshcollection.org](mailto:research@marshcollection.org)**

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



# WEBSITE

## **Our website has a new look!**



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

Has been updated and made-over. Please let us know if you have any problems accessing material on the site.

# Bricks-N-Beams

Known by many as the "Patton House", "Dubé House", and later the "Bob-Lo House", this residence is remembered fondly by many in town. It was razed in February of 2005 after sitting abandoned for several years.

The house was built in 1881 by Judson S. Patton. Patton grew up in Colchester South, worked in the implement business for 45 years and was very active in local affairs. Among other rolls he served as Deputy Reeve of Colchester South in 1879. Patton purchased land on the riverfront in Malden Township from F.E. Elliot in 1879, intending to erect a new residence there. In 1880, he moved into a frame dwelling on the

lot, while work was carried out on his new brick residence. The stonework for the foundation of the structure was completed in 1880, and by December 30, 1881, The Amherstburg Echo published a full description of the new build:

"A first-class brick dwelling house, size of main building 28 x 40 feet, with addition at rear 18 x 25 feet, both two storeys high with 10 and 9 feet ceilings. The walls are 10 inches thick with 2-inch air channels, and (tred) at every seventh course. There is a good cellar under the rear part, 18 x 25 feet in size. The stone foundations and first storey of brick work were built by A. Maycock, and the balance by E. Lockwood and B. David, under the direction of James Wilderspin, builder and draughtsman. The plastering was done by Bangham & Neal, who also furnished the cornices, run and centres. The roof is covered with a slate dome put on by E. Davis & Co., of Detroit. On the first floor of the main part a hall 8 feet wide runs through the main building, the stair being finished with an octagon post, of walnut, with maple panels carved top post and rail to match. On the south side of the hall are parlor and bedroom, and on the north side sitting and dining rooms, divided with sliding doors. In the second storey are a hall and five bed rooms. The first floor of the rear part contains kitchen, pantry and wash room, and the second floor a hall and three bedrooms. The parlor and sitting rooms are furnished with fine bay windows. The outside painting and striping was done by John B. Fillion, of Amherstburg, and the inside painting and graining by John Cumming, of Detroit. There is a handsome porch, and a piazza runs from the front to rear on the north side, and the length of the kitchen on the south side. All the drawings and plans were furnished by Mr. Wilderspin. The out-buildings consist of barn, stable, driving house, cow house, hog house, hen house, ice house, and sheds. These outbuildings were all put up by Miles Patton, of Harrow. The whole were erected at a cost of \$7,000. Besides the buildings Mr. Patton has a new picket fence in front and new board fences all over the farm."



Judson Patton  
MCS P3347

The cost of the finished 3-storey brick residence was \$4500. James Wilderspin, the architect behind this residence, is also remembered for the construction of many other impressive buildings in Amherstburg, some of which have also been razed. These include the Napoleon A. Coste residence (Chateau la Rose), Wesley Methodist Church, and Hough Block on Dalhousie Street among others.

Some interesting notes about the house are written in the journal of Alger Wright Luckham, grandson of Judson S. Patton, available in our Reference Library. He notes that his "Uncle Ed" explained to him how masons who learned their trade in Scotland constructed the chimney flues before the days of terra cotta flue linings. Lightning rods were secured to each chimney and high point of the house, advertisements for which can be found in the Amherstburg Echo in 1882. Alger also makes some interesting notes about heating on the interior. Despite the many fireplaces in the residence, heating was achieved by means of one coal-fired base burner in the dining room. The second floor stairwell could be closed off with a hinged panel, an early effort at insulation.



MCS P5257

In 1890, Judson moved out of the brick residence to a frame house (also built by Wilderspin) south of the homestead and his son Edward moved there in his stead. Edward was a scientific farmer who experimented in the best ways of producing grain and stock. In 1926, Edward sold the homestead to a Detroit syndicate of real estate dealers. It was acquired by Stan Dupont, manager of McQueen Marine, and Troy Browning, president of the Browning Line, Detroit in 1957. Bob-Lo used the residence as offices for a time until it was abandoned in 1993 when Bob-Lo closed.



# Upsetting the Hour Glass

## 1929

**June-** Water was turned into the Park swimming pool last week and again is the centre of attraction for the youngsters who throng the Park daily.

**July-** The new nine hole golf course of the International Yacht and Country Club opened on Thursday, July 4<sup>th</sup>.

**August-** The council held a special meeting Monday night in Amherstburg to consider a petition from Lakewood Beach for building a five thousand foot seawall under the Local Improvement Act.

## 1939

**June-** Everything points to a bumper crop of strawberries this year.

**July-** Yachtsmen appreciate the newly rebuilt town dock, foot of Murray Street, and every day one or two yachts tie up there while their owners are shopping in town.

**August-** There's no question but that the great majority of the people of this town are in favour of controlling slot machines, pin ball machines, and the banning of minors from pool rooms.

## 1949

**June-** Amherstburg and district boxing and wrestling fans will have a chance to see the local boxing club in action July First and Fourth at eight p.m. sharp in front of the Lakeshore Hotel on Highway No.18, where they will hold their weekly open air shows.

**July-** The small ferry C.E. Park, operating between Amherstburg and Bob-Lo Island was busy last Sunday taking over a thousand people to the island.

**August-** Construction of the new dial Bell Telephone building is progressing. It is expected that the dial phones will be in operation in the district in early 1951.

## 1959

**June-** The 612 foot Benson Ford of the Ford Motor fleet went aground on the east bank of the Lime Kiln Crossing at 2:05 a.m. Friday morning. The grounding was in front of the Brunner Mond Canada, Limited.

**July-** With the diversion of King's Highway No.18 a reality it becomes more imperative than ever that a traffic light be installed at the corner of Sandwich and Richmond Streets.

**August-** The tomato crop is now producing heavily and processing in the area is in full swing. Sweet corn processors are also packing a very fine crop.

## 1969

**June-** On Sunday, June 22<sup>nd</sup>, "Gibson Gallery" the Fort Malden Guild of Arts and Crafts new cultural centre- the former M.C.R. Railway Station on Richmond Street- will be officially opened to public.

**July-** Holiday Beach Provincial Park is chalking up all sorts of attendance records. This year to date 71,734 visitors have been registered.

**August-** Good progress is being made on the conversion of the former public school building, Richmond Street, into the 100-bed Richmond Nursing Home. According to the owners the basement and first floor will be completed and ready for occupancy early in September.



# Wish You Were Here

By Phyllis Chant

Those four words almost inevitably make you think of an earlier time, a favourite childhood vacation, and, of course, a postcard.

The humble postcard originated as a "correspondence card" in 1865 at the Austro-German Postal Conference. By 1869, the Austrian postal authorities decided that this new communication form would be less cumbersome than mailing a letter in an envelope. The first "postal cards" were sold with a pre-printed stamp. One side was for the address, with the opposite side for any correspondence. Soon, other countries changed their postal regulations to allow these new cards: Germany and the United Kingdom in 1870, Canada in 1871, and the United States in 1873. There were no illustrations or images on these cards. These cards were used for business purposes to make appointments, confirm orders, and arrange deliveries.

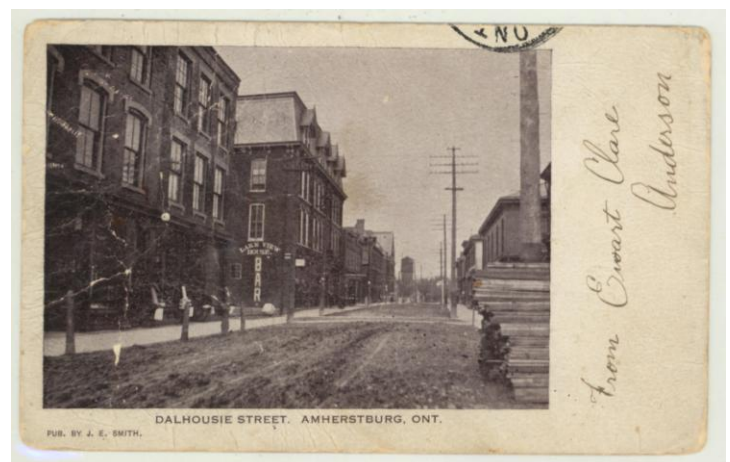
By the late 1800s, businesses began to have their names or a small image printed on the address side of this "government postal". This style of card were common to about 1897, and were also referred to as "pioneer postcards". The next era of cards are the "private postcards" created when postal services allowed private companies to make such items.

In 1904, Canadian postal regulations allowed a divided back of the postcard. The address and message were on one side of the card, and the opposite side of the card allowed for an image. With this change, the exciting era of picture postcards began.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the publishing of printed postcards grew quickly, doubling every six months. The official figures from the U.S. Post Office for 1908 cited 677,777,798 postcards as being mailed that year. Three-quarters of all postcards were printed by European publishers, with Germany being the main producer of the highest quality postcards. With the start of World War I, countries looked to creating their own postcard industry, as patronizing German printers was now not an option.

The Golden Age of postcards was from 1900 to 1920. "View" and "topical" cards were the most popular categories. "View" cards were produced as tourist souvenirs, and showed public buildings, scenery and landscapes. These types of cards are an important part of creating a fuller picture of what Amherstburg looked like over the past 100 years.

Although the Marsh Historical Collection has thousands of photographs, postcards give us a unique picture of how our town has evolved. They show us various views of buildings, like the Lake View house, old Town Hall, "Eliza's" Cabin (Elliott House) and the Waterworks, all of which no longer exist. They also show us how streets change over a few decades. The two views of Dalhousie Street (looking north) show us a first a dirt street (PC27) with no activity, to a 1940s' paved and bustling downtown street (PC355).



MCS PC27



MCS PC355

...Continued on page 6

...Continued from page 5

“Topical” cards are a large part of the postcard collection at the Marsh. With Bois Blanc Island and Bob-Lo Amusement Park being right across from us, postcards of the island, park, steamers (Columbia and Ste. Claire) and activities were popular (see 2017.017.001 – postcard of the Ste. Claire in the 1950s). The Detroit River and the ships that sailed it were also frequently featured postcard themes for this area.

Deltiology - or the hobby of collecting postcards - is still a popular hobby today. The Toronto Post Card Club is the largest in Canada, and the Metropolitan Post Card Club of New York City is the oldest continuously run postcard club in the United States since its founding in 1946.

## Tug Maudie

In honour of the passing of Maude Jarriet Gurak on January 29, 2019, we've included a bit of information about her namesake tug, “Maudie”.



Maudie with Don Turner aboard, no date.  
MCS P975

The Maudie ran from Amherstburg to Bob-Lo and was responsible for transporting everything over to the island. She made her first trip from the Amherstburg dock every day at 5:30 a.m. The tug would push the island work barge delivering a range of items from food and beverages to people and trucks. Cliff Thompson was captain of the Maudie for many years. An account of time spent on the tug by the Captain's daughter Elizabeth Thompson is available in the book *Summer Dreams* by Patrick Livingston. She recalls that the Maudie was an old boat and would often “conk out” in the middle of the River or the hold would start flooding. The passenger vessel C.E. Park was in operation during the same time as the Maudie and would save

Although email, social media posts, or text messages may be the way you let people know where you are while on holidays this summer, take a moment to jot a note on a postcard and send it off. Keep your memories alive the old-fashioned way.



MCS 2017.017.001



MCS Gatfield Collection P5339

the faltering tug in times of trouble. When the Aquarama came through the Amherstburg Channel, the Maudie would “roll all over the place”. Staff rode the C.E. Park to Bob-Lo each morning but if they were late they would ride aboard the Maudie. In an article printed in *The Amherstburg Echo* on August 21, 2008, Maude Jarriet recalls that the Maudie transported celebrities like Roy Rogers and his horse Trigger to the Island.

In June of 1956 Glen McKenzie brought the new Bob-Lo workboat down from Goderich called the H.E. Gorry and the Maudie was replaced. According to the Ojibway Nature Centre website, the Maudie was moved to Ojibway Park in 1968 and placed next to the creek. It remained in the park until 1990.

We are still researching the origins of this tug before her days servicing Bob-Lo. **If you have any information please contact us!**



# Then & Now

Callam House/ Commissariat



West side of the Callam House during Phase 1 Construction of the King's Navy Yard Park in 1979.



Present-day photo of the Commissariat Building, with the Callam additions removed, in the King's Navy Yard Park.

## Collection Highlights

### Malden Cook Book, 1924

This cookbook was put together by the Ladies' Guild of St. Alban's Church. Recipes for the book were donated by locals and the ladies provided a guarantee that "Every recipe a tested one." The book is also a great resource for advertisements from the time.

Here is a recipe for Scalloped Tomatoes submitted by Mrs. Forest Pigeon:

*Season half a can of tomatoes with a spoon full of salt, a saltspoonful of pepper and the juice of an onion. Add a cupful of finely minced celery. Butter baking dish, and first put in half of the tomatoes, then layer of butter crackers sprinkled with 2 heaping tablespoonfuls of grated cheese. Then add the tomatoes, sprinkle the top with crumbs and bits of butter, and bake for 20 minutes.*

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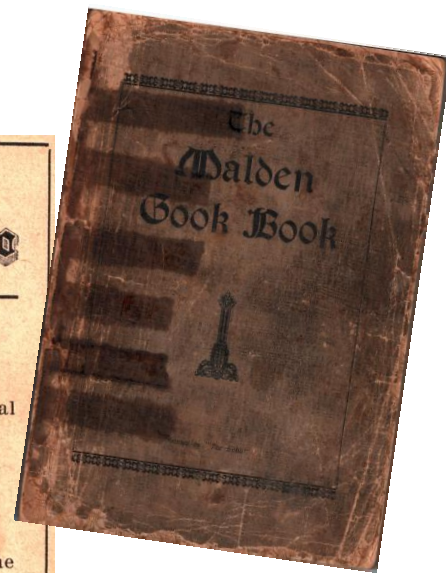
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Advertisement for The Echo Printing Company in The Malden Cookbook. This book was published by The Echo in 1924.



# Wimpy's Tales

*The late Martin Bouffard- known as either "Dick" or "Wimpy" to most who knew him- was one of Amherstburg's great storytellers. One of his favourite subjects was Art Taylor, another well-known Amherstburg character and jokester.*

## Art Taylor Story As told by "Wimpy"

Does anyone remember the race between Art and Nap Charette? Charette played mostly softball and was one of the fastest runners in town. So somebody decided they should have a contest between the two to see who was [fastest] because there had been a lot of debate over it. Anyhow, to see Art Taylor run was a thing to behold. Finally the day came- everything was set up on the High School [grounds]. It was to be a 100 yard dash. There was a lot of money riding on this race.



Art Taylor, 1934  
MCS 2017.009.002

Art was a big man- big legs, broad in the beam. Nap was a greyhound. "Bang", the gun went off. Nap was off like a shot. Art was slow getting those big legs and hips moving but when he got his full head of steam he passed Nap like he was standing still!

## FUNNY STUFF

### **Humourous pieces as printed The Amherstburg Echo:**

*June 21, 1889:* "A new mixed drink called a "business brace," but its practical tendency is more that of a business suspender. "

*July 5, 1889:* "At Racine, Wis., admission to saloons on Sundays is gained by imitating the hoot of an owl."

*August 8, 1884:* "The kazoo is the name of the most newly invented description of infernal machine. It is a harmless-looking little affair of wood and tin, and is operated by applying it to the mouth and forcing air into it from the lungs. The result is that the victim is saluted with a horrible noise, which is a cross between the sound of a broken-down clarinet and a penny squeak, and which is calculated to drive him into a lunatic asylum in a very short time."

# HERITAGE LOST

This series will look at some of the heritage buildings that are now gone, beginning with those that stood on **RICHMOND STREET**.

## **Wesley United Church**



*Corner Richmond & Bathurst*

Built: 1892  
Razed: 1964

MCS PC110.05

## **Tea Garden Restaurant**



*North side Richmond*

Built: 1864  
Razed: 1988

MCS 2017.019.014

## **Brunner Mond Club**



*North side of Richmond*

Built: By 1880  
Razed: 1984

MCS P2436

## **Amherstburg Public School**



*North side of Richmond*

Built: 1910  
Razed: 1990

MCS P3426

## **Dr. French Dentist Office & Residence**



*Southeast corner Richmond & Ramsay*

Built:  
House 1901  
Office 1910  
Razed: 2008

MCS P328