



Reflections

Newsletter of the Marsh Historical Collection
Amherstburg, Ontario



Volume 15 Issue 4

Summer 2022

ISSN 1913-8660

Crazy for Carp

The Carp Harvest.

The Detroit River and Lake Erie Fish Co. are shipping their eleventh car of carp to-day (Friday), and expect to ship two cars more next Monday and Tuesday. A packing plant has been placed at the M. C. R. depot to expedite icing and boxing. These fish are the harvest of Messrs. Chappus and Healy, who sold their output to the above company, and it is their first reward after five years' work, a scheme in which Messrs. Chappus and Healy ought to clean up \$5,000. What with the original fish dammed in the stream and the young spawn grown to maturity, the marsh is literally swarming with thousands of carp, which consumed over 1,000 bushels of grain the past season. So that he could be on the job all the time, Mr. Chappus moved his family to a house near the marsh and watched the dam night and day. Besides small quantities to Toronto, Montreal and other points, the bulk have been shipped via the Michigan Central from Amherstburg to New York and Philadelphia, where, as soon as the train comes in, Jewish peddlers are waiting by the score to secure their allotments, which they sell on the streets and in the store for a good price. It is also stated that the carp is used for canning as salmon, and when people do not know what they are eating it doesn't go bad at all. The carp from this marsh weigh from two to 30 pounds each.

-The Amherstburg Echo October 14, 1910

What's Inside

Happenings at the Marsh.....	2
Amherstburg Connections....	3
Upsetting the Hour Glass.....	4
Ancestral Lines.....	5
Collection Highlights.....	6
Railway History.....	7
Bricks N' Beams.....	8



"Bringing Home our Catch" Postcard, circa 1923. (MCS AS2019.043.104)

Despite its popularity, someone at The Echo had a distaste for this species of fish. The following was published in The Amherstburg Echo September, 1910:

HOW TO COOK CARP.

"Wrap a hook with cotton saturated with gasoline and near it fasten a flint and steel. Drop the line to the desired carp and give the line a movement like a decayed oyster; this will hasten the carp's strike. When the bait has been assimilated a slight jerk on the line will cause the flint and steel to spark, igniting the gasoline. If the carp remains whole it is too tough to eat; but if the cooking is successful the pieces should be gathered and buried so the cat can't get them."

"The Carp Industry- The papers these days are publishing quite a number of items about the shipping of many tons of carp to New York City. This used to be a live industry in the lower part of Malden Township which has been allowed to languish, but will no doubt be revived again in a few years as the marshes here provide a good spot for the carp to become plentiful."

- The Amherstburg Echo July 28, 1933

In 1963, The Windsor Star reported that Bruce Harris of Malden Township had already started shipping carp hauled from Big Creek. Several tons were taken out of Big Creek that year and shipped alive to Toronto and New York Markets, where it was smoked and becomes a delicacy.

Happenings at the Marsh

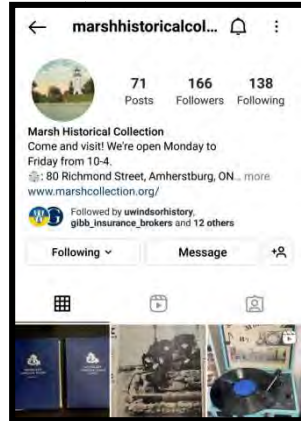
Our office is now open Monday to Friday from 10-4.
Appointments are recommended but not required.



We currently have a mini-exhibit on display featuring the goings-on in town in the 1960s. The display includes lots of photos, news, and even some music. Come in and check it out!

Instagram

Do you follow us on Instagram? Our account is up and running. Give us a follow for posts about happenings at the Marsh, interesting finds in the archives and more!



GIFT SHOP

Check out our website
for a list of available titles!

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/>



Then & Now

West side of Dalhousie Street between Murray & Gore. Sandpiper Gallery & Cranberry Company, 2001 (left) & present-day Queen Charlotte Condominiums



Need for Speed - Garfield Wood

By Phyllis Chant

Garfield "Gar" A. Wood was born on December 4, 1880 in Mapleton, Iowa. His father was a ferryboat operator and Gar worked on boats from an early age. He was the first winner for the United States of the Harmsworth British International Trophy, and successful defender of it seven times with one of a long series (I through IX) of "Miss America" speedboats. He was the first to average over 100 miles an hour in the straightaway mile in 1931. Wood is still known in the boating world for his mahogany-hulled runabouts which were constructed from the early 1920s into the late 1940s in Marysville, Michigan. A restored Gar Wood Runabout can fetch well into six figures.

Wood was an industrious young man, and was awarded 30 U.S. Patents during his lifetime, most of which were related to hydraulic lifts and truck bodies. The hydraulic lift invention would be the beginning of his fortune, and would allow him to start building the speedboats of his dreams. He eventually moved to Algonac, Michigan to oversee the production of his boats, which were constructed by Chris Smith and Sons Boat Company from 1916 into 1921. Smith and Wood broke apart in 1923, with Smith becoming Chris-

Craft and Wood becoming Gar Wood Inc. Wood specialized in the building of runabouts for the wealthy. By this time, Wood also had three factories for the Wood Hydraulic Hoist & Body Company: Detroit, Michigan; Windsor, Ontario (857 Tecumseh Rd); and an assembly plant in Paris, France. His company also branched into the bus manufacturing business, creating a streamlined coach. Fortunately, Wood's eight brothers were all involved in his multi-faceted business.

Although virtually his entire life was spent with inventing, racing and his numerous businesses, Wood did find time to relax. In 1936, he purchased Lots 34 & 35 on Concession 4 of Malden, which he owned until his death in 1971. The late Pat Warren, former columnist for The River Town Times newspaper, wrote about his childhood encounter with the famous racer. Pat's family was heading down to Lakewood Beach in the 1930s. When they arrived, Pat's friend excitedly announced that Gar Wood had arrived just two cottages down from them. Pat had seen Wood's boat racing out on the river earlier. Short boat rides were being offered to kids that had a lifejacket and an older sibling with

them. Unfortunately, little kids like seven-year-old Pat didn't get a chance for a boat ride with the legendary Gar Wood.

In December, 1941, The Amherstburg Echo reported that hunting season had been "brisk" and that American hunters had erected hunting lodges in the area, including "a resort owned by the internationally-famous Gar Wood". In 1949, Wood made his property available to Amherstburg boys through the town's Rotary Club. The two-week outdoor vacation would bring the boys out each morning and returned to their homes in the evening. A local man, Earl Dube, was the estate caretaker and oversaw the daily outdoor fun, which included organized sports, hikes and swimming at Willow Beach. The Amherstburg Scout Troop also used the Wood estate for camping trips.

Continued on page 4...



Photos- Top right: Gar Wood with A.B. Cohen, writer for Outdoors magazine, at Wood's Malden hunt club. Undated. (MCS P3047) Bottom left: Gar Wood in a speedboat, 1940s (MCS P3053) Bottom right: Gar Wood with his ten "Miss America" speedboats and, his personal mechanic, Orlin Johnson (MCS P3054)

Upsetting the Hour Glass

1932

June- Bob-Lo Island opens this week. This is the thirty-fifth season for this popular resort.

July- The Snowwhite Bread plant at Amherstburg has been equipped by the Canadian Sirocco Company with a bread cooler.

August- 'Burg boys fight depression by diving at the beer docks for empty bottles. It has become a highly lucrative business and the lads are earning a good living at it. Earle Steubing invented a diving helmet made out of the top portion of an old water tank allowing them to stay underwater for 15 minutes, collecting on average 50 bottles a trip.

1942

June- Some thieves who were apparently more interested in quenching their thirst than in putting money in their pockets broke into the Brewers' Warehouse, Bathurst Street, early Sunday morning and stole one case of beer.

July- Trooper Andrew Gibb, the first soldier to enlist from Amherstburg, is back from England. He was injured while carrying despatch. He is his old cheerful self despite his injuries and considers himself lucky to be back home.

August- Even spiders are wearing "V's for Victory" as Cliff Wigle discovered the other day when he found a bright yellow spider in his flower garden with a perfect "V" in black.

1952

June- South Dalhousie Street residents got a real dose of smoke on Thursday evening when there was a serious fire at the town dump.

July- Traffic in the Lower Detroit River begins to get back to normal following the settlement of the steel strike which cut down lakes shipping nearly 70 percent.

August- There was a lot of excitement when a large boar roamed the streets, sampled flower gardens, visited yards and finally was cornered in front of the S.K.D. Manufacturing office on St. Arnaud Street.

1962

June- There are forty entries in the outboard regatta to be staged on the River Canard in June by the River Canard Outboard Racing Club.

July- B.B. pellet breaks large window in Amherstburg Public Library.

August- A key to the lower blockhouse on Bois Blanc Island recently turned up in Barrie. It was found near the blockhouse 32 years ago by a Canadian Shriner. It was returned to Amherstburg.

1972

June- The second annual cancer car rally was held starting at General Amherst High School and finishing in the Amherst Point area.

Need for Speed- Garfield Wood

...Continued from page 3

Gar Wood almost lost his life twice. In April 1944, he was struck by lightning as he was exiting a plane at Miami airport. Luckily, he only suffered a cut over one eye as he was thrown into the side of the plane. Ten years later, Wood and eight others were rescued after his 188-foot yacht broke up in heavy seas in the Bahamas. He was always living life to the fullest, even when he retired. Fisher Island, Florida was his 230-acre island complete with a staff of servants and daytime assistance of three mechanical engineers. During his last few years, Wood had designed a battery-powered, electric, fibreglass body vehicle.

Gar Wood died on June 19, 1971 at the age of 90, about one week before a planned celebration in Detroit to honour the 50th anniversary of his first Harmsworth win. George Van of The Detroit News wrote, "To the public, he was Tom Swift, Jules Verne, Frank Merriwell with a little bit of Horatio Alger thrown in." Wood is buried near his home in Algonac, Michigan.

July- The children's swimming pool in the west town park opened this week. Although the weather was cool, quite a number of children enjoyed this new facility.

August- A two-day horse show was staged on Bob-Lo Island this week. The weather was ideal and it was witnessed by thousands. Some 150 horses took part in the various events.



British Home Children in Amherstburg

By Kara Folkerling

Between 1869 and 1948, Canada received over 100,000 children from the UK; they were called "British Home Children." These children primarily came from impoverished families; their parents struggled to care for them, inevitably bringing them to charitable housing organizations such as Barnardo's. Eventually, a decision was made to send these kids to Canada to work as a "solution" to overcrowding in these homes. Only about 12% of the children were actually orphaned, but many were told that their parents died. The parents, on the other hand, would often return once their circumstances improved to bring their child home, to be told that they were sent away.¹



Ethel & Guy Wood
(Photo part of the Marsh Collection)

In Canada, British Home Children were typically put to work on farms (boys) or as domestic servants (girls). They were not

always treated well, and the sad reality is many of these kids simply "disappeared" or died while indentured.² Two mass graves of 75 British Home Children were discovered in recent years in Etobicoke, as a shocking example of this.³

We have collected records for 19 British Home Children with connections to Amherstburg, but space only allows us to focus on a few here. One of these children was Ethel Bryan who was born in England in 1899, and was sent to Canada in 1912 at 13 years of age to work as a house maid. Six years later she was married to Guy Wood of Amherstburg. At the time of her death, she and her husband had a legacy of 4 children, 14 grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren.⁴

Another British Home Child was Georgina Pritchard, born in England, who was first placed in the Sandwich area in 1890 at age 11, but found herself in River Canard as a young woman. There, at St. Joseph's Church, she befriended and enjoyed the company of Emile Joseph Pare. Time passed, and both were married to other people and Emile moved to the United States. Years later, after both of their spouses had passed away, Georgina and Emile reconnected through letters. Emile proposed marriage in one of those letters, and Georgina happily agreed. 40 years after their meeting in River Canard, they were reunited and married.⁵

Two other British Home Children with ties to this area were brothers, John N. Cooper and Cecil G. Cooper, who were

separated from their sisters and sent to Essex County in 1901 at ages 14 and 15, respectively. Although they were placed at different farms, family members have stated that they stayed in touch, both working at Brunner Mond after they finished their indentures. John N. Cooper became a prominent businessman (owning stores such as the 5 & Dime) and town councilman in Amherstburg.⁶ Cecil Cooper lived in town as well and pursued work in the tourism trade, purchasing Chateau La Rose.⁷ Despite the difficult circumstances of their childhoods, both brothers persevered and left their mark on this town.



John N. Cooper⁸

It is important to include that although British Home Children were not born in Canada, and were frequently subjected to abuse here, many enlisted to serve Canada in World War I.

Continued on page 6...

British Home Children

...Continued from page 5

Lewis Alexander Upstone is an example of this: he enlisted in Amherstburg in June 1916 and died of his wounds by November of that year.

It is estimated that over 10% of Canadians today are descendants of a British Home Child.⁹ Their stories deserve to be told and remembered.

This is an ongoing research project, and we are still actively working on collecting information about British Home Children with connections to Amherstburg. If you have any information about a British Home Child who lived in this area, we would love to hear it and record it to keep their memory alive.

¹British Home Children in Canada, "Who are the British Home Children?", accessed May 26, 2022, <https://canadianbritishhomechildren.weebly.com/>

²Gollom, Mark, "It's like they never existed': Toronto monument will honour mistreated British Home Children," *CBC News*, Oct. 1 2017, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/british-home-children-farms-abuse-1.4314384>

³Christopher Reynolds, "Dozens of 'British home children' lie forgotten in Etobicoke cemetery," *The Toronto Star*, Feb. 27, 2016, <https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2016/02/27/dozens-of-british-home-children-lie-forgotten-in-etobicoke-cemetery.html>

⁴Obituary of Ethel Wood, *The Windsor Star*, Jul. 12, 1977.

⁵Adelaide Leitch, "Childhood romance ends happily after 40 years," *The Windsor Star*, Dec. 6, 1947.

⁶"Former merchant John N. Cooper dies," *The Amherstburg Echo*, May 7, 1975.

⁷"Cecil Cooper Buys Chateau La Rose," *The Amherstburg Echo*, Jul. 17, 1936.

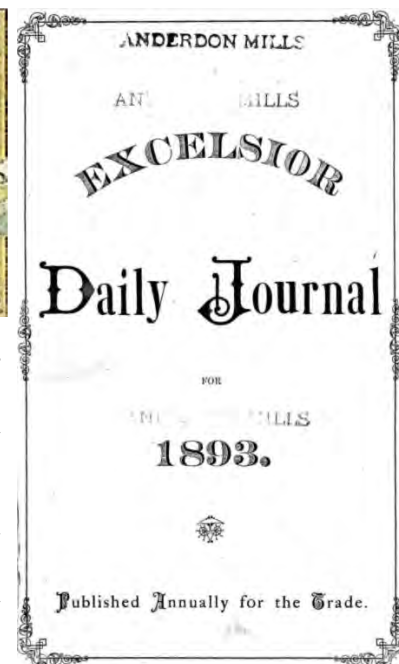
⁸"Like Father Like Son," *The Amherstburg Echo*, Dec. 20, 1935.

⁹British Home Children in Canada, "Who are the British Home Children?", accessed May 26, 2022, <https://canadianbritishhomechildren.weebly.com/>

Collection Highlights

Thomas Mill Journals

Charles W. Thomas was a successful miller in both Amherstburg and Anderdon for many years. We recently acquired Mr. Thomas' business journals created during operation of the mills. The journals contain information not only about daily activities of the business but also local events and vital statistics.



Above is a label from the cover of an Amherstburg Mills Journal. Charles W. Thomas built a lumber and flour mill in Amherstburg which burned in 1868. It was located at the north end of the present King's Navy Yard Park. This journal discusses a bit of the rebuilding of the mill after the fire. Thomas sold his Amherstburg Mills in 1878.

The Anderdon Mills were located near the southeast corner of Texas Road and Concession 3. C.W. Thomas also ran a mill at the foot of Texas Road for a short time. Thomas continued to operate his lumber and flour mills in Anderdon until his death in 1899.

Sample Entries:

January 20, 1870:

"McGee & Botsford & Stokes commenced filling ice houses."

January 23, 1874:

"Team No. 1 hauled 3 loads for W. Borrowman to CSR."

Monday, January 4, 1875:

"Election of municipal councillors today."

Thank you to the family of Reverend John & Shirley Burkhardt for donating these items.

Amherstburg's Michigan Central Railway Station

– The “Middle Sister”

By Ken Hutnik

On Tuesday October 8, 1895, John Dewhirst of Woodslee and his crew began the contracted work of grading the new extension of the MCRR line from Gordon to Amherstburg. Residents had long been awaiting the railway to come to Amherstburg proper since the second Gordon Station burned down in August 1892. Ten thousand railway ties were brought in by the locomotive Huron City and staged for construction to start. The line would extend from the waterfront north of Williams St., to where the station still stands today at Richmond Street.

By early November, the tracks had been laid. Joseph Wilson of Amherstburg was contracted to do the foundation, stone and brickwork on what would become a splendid building. On November 4, 1895, the contractor A. Ellison, the architect and Engineer Swartcut marked out the foundation on the west side of the track and excavation began immediately. The freight house, to be built by Rogers & Son of Detroit, would be erected north of the station and D. Barron would erect a grain warehouse with a second track serving both. Two thousand yards of crushed stone had been secured from White's quarry and work was progressing spreading it along the track.

By November 22, 1895, the foundation was completed and the brick work was begun. Brick and stone work were completed around December 14, with carpenters beginning to put on the roof. At the same time, business was already picking up around the new station and H. W. Allan shipped two carloads of pork from the station just after Christmas. In late January 1896, the telegraph lines were run to the new freight station. Station Agent Moffatt moved into the freight station on January 25, 1896 and began conducting all railway business from there. All freight would now be received and dispatched from Amherstburg. It would be May before the station was finished and he would not move there until September of that year.



Figure 1: Historic Amherstburg Depot, c1912, east side (Photo: Louis James Pesho)

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.com. You can also call us at 519-736-9191, or visit at 80 Richmond St.

Thanks to the generosity of the late Flo Gibson who purchased the station when the railway was abandoned, you can still visit this beautiful historic Romanesque style building today as the Gibson Gallery of the Fort Malden Guild of Arts and Crafts. The Caboose Museum attached to the gallery also has displays about railway history and operations.

Equally wonderful, either by design or coincidence, Amherstburg has both a younger and an older “sister” station that amazingly still stand today. Columbiaville Michigan and Three Oaks Michigan both have Michigan Central stations built around the same time as Amherstburg.

Three years earlier, in 1893, lumber baron William Peter built a similar depot in Columbiaville MI, about 90 minutes north of Detroit. The depot was built on the site of the original depot for the Detroit & Bay City Railroad Company, which the Michigan Central had gained control of. The station was a mix of architectural styles, including Romanesque, built to help grow the village and ensure continued railway service. By prior agreement, the station was deeded over to the railway for \$1. The station recently housed the Columbiaville Rotary Club and a public library, but appears to now be closed. The station is registered as both a state and national historical property.

Two years after the Amherstburg station was completed, the depot in Three Oaks, MI was built in 1898. Designed by the Boston firm of Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge, it is similar in style to the other two stations. It is also well kept, and currently houses an antiques shop. Three Oaks is about a three hour drive west of Detroit.



Figure 2: Columbiaville MI Depot
(Photo: Paul R. Burley, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons)



Figure 3: Three Oaks MI Depot
(Photo: Three Oaks Depot Facebook Page)

Bricks-N-Beams



229 Dalhousie

By Meg Reiner

In 1879, John Wells Harris put an advertisement in *The Amherstburg Echo* for his “nearly new” house on Dalhousie Street. The residence had eight rooms and closets, a good well of water, stable, storehouse and additional outbuildings. The following was also noted: “Garden in good order with a number of bearing fruit and ornamental trees on the premises.” John Harris was a cabinet maker, turner, and builder in Amherstburg for about a decade. He purchased the property on the east side of Dalhousie Street in 1871 and completed a residence there by 1877. After selling the house to William T. Wilkinson in 1880, Harris moved to Michigan and went into the grocery business.

William T. Wilkinson Sr. owned a large portion of the block between Richmond and Rankin Avenue on the east side of Dalhousie. He owned a total of four houses within the block as well as the corner buildings on Richmond which he used for his harness business. After his death in 1885, the property passed to his widow, Julia Wilkinson. William T. Wilkinson Jr. followed in his father’s footsteps taking on

the harness shop and maintaining the family properties. In 1897, the *Echo* announced that he was “boulevarding” his property from Richmond north, likely meaning he was lining the street with trees.

The residence was rented to tenants for many years. In 1905, while occupied by Alva Bennett, a new foundation was built. The kitchen was raised a storey and other repairs made. Eventually, the Wilkinsons themselves resided here. A basement was excavated and the residence remodeled before William and his mother moved to the house in 1918. In 1922, he constructed a stucco and frame garage on the north side of the home. His intention was to stucco the house as well, but it does not appear this ever happened.

In 1956, Otto and Charlotte Nissen opened the Home Baking and Coffee Shop in the former Wilkinson home. By 1958, the shop was called “Seaway Café” and was a thriving establishment serving bread, loaves, pastry, cakes, and more. In 1963, *The Echo* reported that the former S.S. No. 3 in Malden was moved to the rear of the café to be used as part of the bakery operation. Originally built in 1892 on the corner of the Pike Road and 3rd Concession, the school building was first moved and converted into a



residence back in 1916 by William Goodchild. In 1965, the Nissens had the lawn south of the residence fenced, creating Amherstburg’s first outdoor café.

In 1975, the property was sold to James White, a former employee of the Nissens, who three years later applied to remodel the former Seaway Café into apartments. A fire in the upstairs bedroom on January 31, 1979 caused several thousand dollars-worth of damage.

In the spring of 1979, members of the DeLuca family purchased and renovated the building. An ice cream parlour and four-table lunch room were opened that year. An article in *The Amherstburg Echo* celebrating seventeen years of operation described some of the changes to the structure: “on the north side, where a driveway exists today, there had been a bake oven. Where the dining room is currently located, there was once a closed-in porch.” Still operated by the DeLuca family today, the Waterfront Ice Cream Parlour continues to serve cold treats on hot summer days. Both the building and the business inside have become Amherstburg landmarks.



Top Right: Photo by James Cripps, 1981

Bottom left: Construction of addition in 1984 (MCS P4503)