



Reflections

Newsletter of the Marsh Historical Collection
Amherstburg, Ontario



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Of Interest to Women

Printed in *The Amherstburg Echo* on August 30, 1935:

"House guests of the Byron G. Radcliffes over the weekend were Mrs. Katherine Luce, Mrs. William McLean, of Detroit, and Dr. May Allen, of Rochester, New York, a reunion of the members of a winter's motor trip through Florida recently. Doctor Allen, who is a graduate in medicine from the University of Michigan and a well known member of the Michigan Author's Association, is also a noted writer on topics of health and her works on this subject are in national circulation. Perhaps most interesting of all is that Doctor Allen is a niece of the noted American novelist Louisa May Alcott (1832-88) the author of the ever-delightful stories of "Little Women," "Little Men," "The Old Fashioned Girl," "Under the Lilacs," and other tales of fond memories of past and present generations. As a child, Doctor Allen resided in the home of Miss Alcott in the east and is able to clearly relate many interesting incidents of her childhood days which were spent in the home of the famed author. Dr. Allen is now carrying on some health research and publication work at the University of Michigan."*
*relative

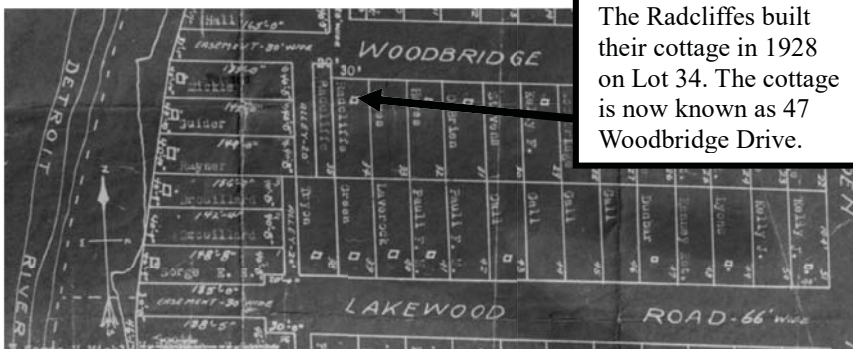
The Radcliffes were residents of Detroit who kept a summer cottage at Amherst Pointe. This particular gathering at the Radcliffe residence brought together an interesting group of women. As the article mentions, Dr. Allen was a noted writer in the medical field. Her obituary described her as a pioneer in public health, women's suffrage leader, and friend of Susan B. Anthony. She is often written about in American newspapers for her impressive accomplishments. The host, Dr. Jean Vernier Radcliffe practised medicine in Detroit for almost forty years. She graduated from the American Medical Missionary College in Chicago in 1900 and was an assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology there for five years. We have not been able to uncover much regarding Mrs. Luce or Mrs. McLean but they certainly kept good company. It would be interesting to know what these women discussed while vacationing in Amherstburg.

*Continued at Work
after End of War*



DR. M. MAY ALLEN.

Dr. Allen in uniform while serving under the Red Cross, WWI/ Published in the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle October 9, 1919



What's Inside

Happenings at the Marsh.....	2
Sinking of the Wallshiff.....	3
Then & Now.....	4
Upsetting the Hour Glass.....	5
Bricks-N-Beams.....	6
Collection Highlights.....	7
Thistle Lodge.....	8

HAPPENINGS AT THE MARSH

ON THROUGH JULY 12TH

BOATS IN THE 'BURG: A River Town History

This display features several aspects of Amherstburg's marine history, including shipping, salvage work, tugboat races, lore, passenger steamers, local mariners & more.

JULY 20TH & 21ST

AMHERSTBURG ART CRAWL

We are participating in this year's Art Crawl, with an exhibit featuring Benjamin Lapierre, local 19th century lifestyle photographer.

Visit <https://www.artamherstburg.ca/> to learn more.



JULY & AUGUST

HERITAGE PASSPORT

Pick up your Heritage Passport at the Marsh office beginning July 1st to play.

Amherstburg Museums & Galleries
HERITAGE PASSPORT

HOW TO PLAY

- Visit all 6 stops and have your passport stamped
- Answer the question provided at each stop
- Submit your completed passport at one of the stops by August 31st

FOR A CHANCE TO WIN A PRIZE

BEGINNING THIS FALL

MONTHLY TRIVIA NIGHTS

Stay tuned for details on how to register.



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 Tuesday- Friday. (Mondays by appointment only)

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/>



Are you interested in having your **memories** recorded and preserved?



Anyone with stories about life in Amherstburg (across generations) is welcome to participate!

Reach out to us to start the process!
 (Remote options available if unable to attend in-person)

The Sinking of the M/V WALLSHIFF (Part I)

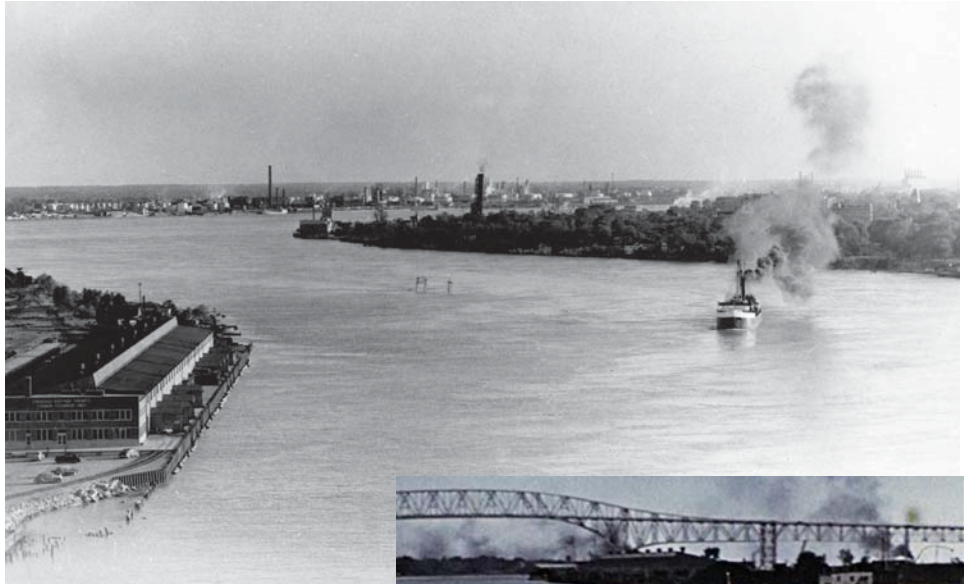
By Al Jackson

In the early morning of October 2, 1953 a small ocean going vessel flying the flag of Germany was seen upbound in the Amherstburg Channel of the Detroit River heading for Detroit to off-load a small amount of general cargo. This little diesel-powered vessel was registered in Hamburg, Germany with the name WALLSHIFF. She was launched at Lauenberg, Germany on February 25, 1953 and the 880-ton motorship was barely seven months old when she made her maiden voyage into the Great Lakes. Her crew at this time consisted of sixteen men all of whom spoke no english except the captain and first mate. Being unfamiliar with the navigation rules of the Great Lakes the ship was required to carry a licensed Great Lakes pilot who would issue navigation orders to the ship's captain to be translated into German for the wheelsman. The pilot for this leg of the voyage was an experienced 72-year-old retired Canadian captain who had boarded the ship at Kingston.

After a nine hour stop in Detroit the 206-foot ship proceeded upbound once again for Muskegon, Michigan with 325 metric tons of special-made French sheet steel used in the manufacture of automobile tops. All was going well on their upbound trip in the St. Clair River until they reached Port Huron and it was realized that the WALLSHIFF was on the wrong side of the river. The "Rules of the Road" specify that upbound vessels stay on the Canadian side of the river and downbound

vessels stay on the American side. At the wheel of the WALLSHIFF was a fifteen-year-old cabin boy

tore a large hole in the port side of the German freighter. The captain of the PIONEER then ordered full



who was steering on a wrong light of the Blue Water Bridge. Because of manpower shortages the cabin boy was occasionally used as a relief wheelsman. An order was immediately given to get the ship back to the Canadian side which meant that they had to cut directly across the shipping channel but this put the WALLSHIFF in harm's way of any downbound traffic. This was exactly what happened as the fully loaded downbound iron ore lake freighter PIONEER bore down on the WALLSHIFF and was unable to avoid a collision due to the strong current, the narrow channel, a bend in the river, and excessive headway needed to maintain steering. The collision occurred in midstream at 23:00 hours on the Canadian side of the international boundary just south of the Blue Water Bridge. The PIONEER slammed into the WALLSHIFF at a right angle and



ahead so that the two vessels would remain locked together to try and push the WALLSHIFF into shallower water on the Canadian side of the river. This action also allowed a little more time to launch a lifeboat from the sinking WALLSHIFF.

On the German casualty the cabin boy was sent below to alert the rest of the sleeping crewmembers and the third mate was sent to launch the port side lifeboat. In a sinking condition the ship was developing a substantial port list and the starboard lifeboat could not be launched. Eleven of the German crew escaped in the one lifeboat with only five minor injuries. *Continued on page 4...*

Photo at top right: The Wallshiff submerged in the St. Clair River/ Father Edward J. Dowling Photo, Courtesy Marine Historical Society of Detroit. Photo lower right: Close-up of the submerged Wallshiff/ Al Jackson Photo Collection.

M/V WALLSHIFF

...Continued from page 3

injuries. They were later rescued by a United States Coast Guard launch which was stationed at Port Huron. At the time of the collision, four men jumped overboard with two swimming to the Canadian shore and the other two were picked up by the Westcott reporting station boat. One other German crewman was able to get onboard the PIONEER when a ladder was lowered to him by the crew of the ore carrier.

The impact of the collision had knocked the pilot to the wheelhouse floor where he said he was having a heart attack and possibly suffered a broken leg. The German captain left the wheelhouse to retrieve two lifejackets, one for him and one for the pilot, but when he returned the pilot could not be found. The captain, after watching his crewmen leave in the port lifeboat, was able to climb to the top of the forward mast until he was rescued by the United States Coast Guard. The body of the pilot was later recovered from the river and an autopsy showed that he did die from a heart attack. He was the only loss of life from this unfortunate mishap.

The swift current eventually broke the two ships apart and the WALLSHIFF sank in fifty feet of water with only the top few feet of her two king posts and forward mast showing above the surface of the St. Clair River.



The Wallshiff between the lighter T.F. Newman and tug Patricia McQueen in the St. Clair River/ Father Edward J. Dowling Photo, Courtesy Marine Historical Society of Detroit.

The PIONEER had only superficial damage to her bow, did not take on any water, and went to anchor awaiting a Coast Guard inspection.

A salvage contract for an undisclosed amount was awarded to J. E. McQueen of McQueen Marine of Amherstburg on October 22, 1953 to refloat the WALLSHIFF.

To be continued...

Then & Now

Aerial view looking southeast from west of Victoria Street towards the corner of Simcoe & Fryer Streets



*Taken from the steeple of St. John the Baptist Church, 1978
MCS P1068*



*Present-Day, June 2024
Photo by Windsor Aerial Drone Photography*

UPSETTING THE HOUR GLASS

1934

June- Calcium chloride will be put on streets near town park to abate dust nuisance there.

July- The Amherst Oil Refineries are preparing to begin operations. Tankers with crude oil are on the way and it is expected that actual refining would begin in about 10 days.

August- Some small repairs are being made at Bob-Lo Island by carpenters and other workmen. The leaks in the roof and floor of the dance hall are being fixed up and the grounds given their usual cleaning.

1944

June- There are more juvenile readers and less adults reading at the Amherstburg Public Library this year than last, reported by Mrs. Walter Reaume, librarian.

July- There will be an Emancipation Day celebration in Amherstburg on August 1, and permission was given by the council Monday evening to stage this picnic in the town park and to hold a dance in the town hall that evening.

August- Customs and excise collections in Amherstburg for the month of July more than three times total of same month in 1943. The collections totalled \$203,353.90 this year as compared with \$69,624.60 in 1943.

1954

June- The new Bank of Montreal building at the corner of Richmond and Dalhousie Streets was opened for business on Monday morning. This beautiful building was constructed by Eastern Construction Company of Windsor.

July- There were a lot of thirsty citizens in Amherstburg this week as the brewery workers strike cut off the flow of beer. The Brewer's Warehouse was closed and neither glass nor bottled beer could be purchased in Amherstburg licensed premises.

August- Mrs. Mary McLeod Bethune, prominent American educationalist and W.C. Handy, composer of the St. Louis Blues, were visitors to the Fort Malden National Historic Park on Saturday.

1964

June- Sixty safety patrol boys and girls of the Amherstburg schools were guests of the Amherstburg Lions Club at the Detroit Tigers-Minnesota Twins baseball game last Thursday.

July- The three pair of range lights that guide vessels up the Amherstburg Channel have been modernized by the Department of Transport. New type lights were erected on the Hackett Reach Range, Fort Malden Range, and the Lime Kiln Crossing range. The lights

taken off these towers will be installed as steering lights along the St. Clair River.

August- Construction started on the two portable classrooms west of the Amherstburg Public School building.

1974

June- The children of Amherstburg owe a vote of thanks to Mayor H. Murray Smith who has donated one thousand dollars to purchase a large spiral slide to be erected in the Centennial Park ward three.

July- The committee in charge is starting to beat the publicity drums for the annual downtown sidewalk sale which will be staged July 11th, 12th, and 13th. Taking part in this event will be merchants in the Dalhousie, Murray, and Richmond Streets area. The program includes clowns on the street, daily pottery making on the street, karate exhibition, bicycle parade, and many other events. Thirty-one merchants are co-operating. The town has given permission to the merchants to block off the streets during the three days.

August- A historic pensioner's cottage is being moved to the Fort Malden National Historic Park where it will be restored and furnished in its period.



Bricks-n-Beams

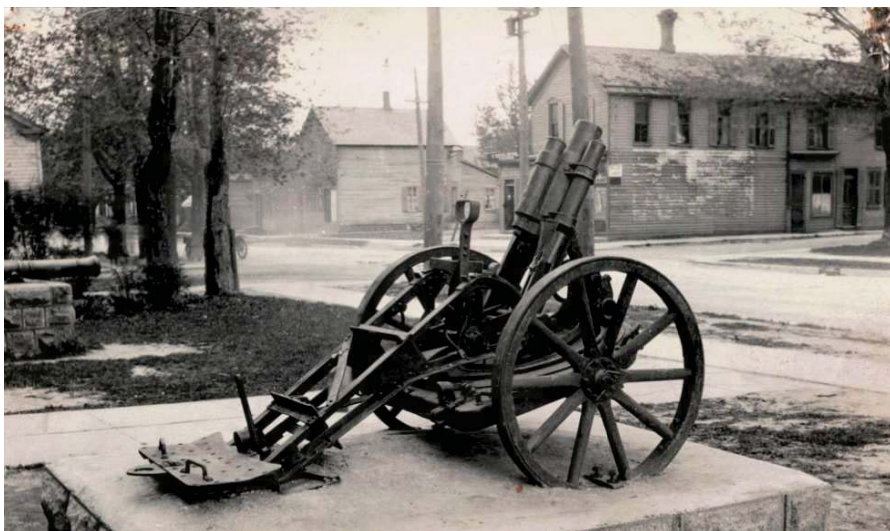
The Hunt Block

By Meg Reiner

Sometimes, what is captured in the background of a photo can be just as interesting as the featured subject. Such was the case with this photo depicting a mortar from WWI on the front lawn of Amherstburg Town Hall, around the 1920s. The background shows a large two-storey frame building on the southwest corner of Apsley (Sandwich Street South) and Gore Streets. This image sparked an investigation. What stories does this building hold?

A bit of digging revealed that for many years, this was the business corner of W.T. Hunt. In 1875, William Theodore Hunt opened his first grocery provision store on the lot. Seven years later in 1882, *The Amherstburg Echo* reported that he was moving his house back from the corner in order to build a new store for the sale of groceries and liquor. This new building measuring 20ft by 40ft is the structure visible in the photo. W.T. Hunt would operate his business here for the next 30 years, retiring in 1913 and relocating to Detroit. That year, he cleared out his stock and advertised the space available to rent. His son, William Hunt Jr., put the building up for sale a year later. Jacques Laframboise took over the grocery stand in 1915 and the storefront received a fresh coat of green paint by local painter Gus Manson.

W.T. Hunt's daughter Myrtle married a barber named George Cowper in 1901. He opened a parlour in the one-storey addition on the south side of the building called "The Little Cadillac." After selling the shop to Forest Deslippe in 1911, the Cowpers relocated to Detroit. Forest or "Forey" Deslippe remained here for 42 years.



Mary Ella and Jane Lalonge recalled visiting the shop for hair cuts as children: "This shop was mainly for men, as was evidenced by the various spittoons on the floor, the checkerboard and chessboard and an abundance of newspapers and magazines. Not only could men purchase a shave or haircut but also a bath, which was located in a small room at the end of the shop."* In May of 1957, Deslippe moved the barber shop to his house on George Street, deciding to dedicate more time to his garden.

The building sat vacant for a few months until it was condemned and subsequently razed by the municipality. At that time, the property was managed by an official trustee of the Hunt Estate. Baise DiPasquale received the contract for the building's removal.



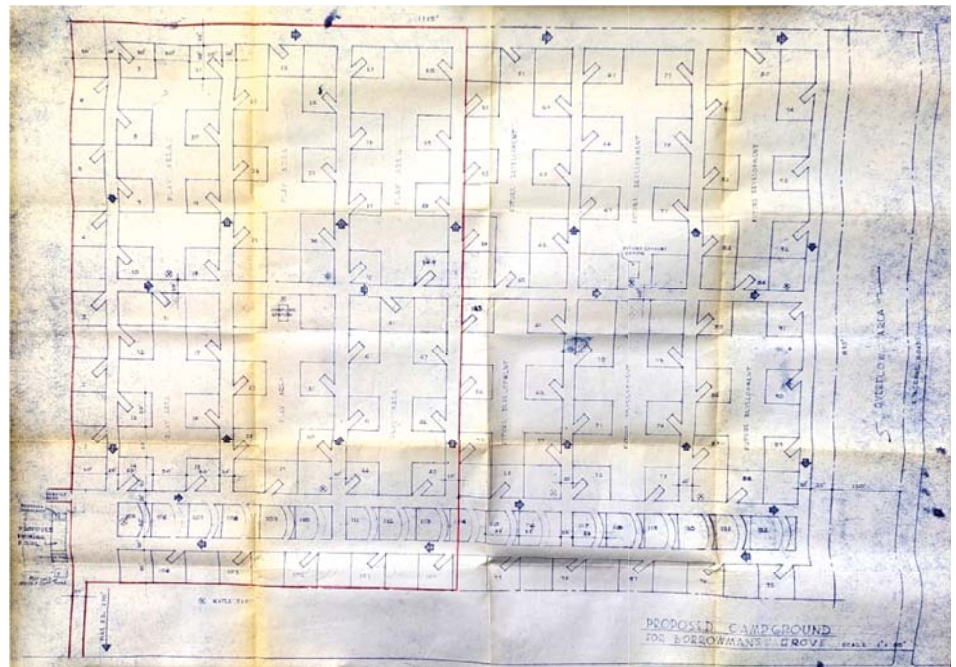
Top photo: MCS 2019.041.012
 Middle photo: The W.T. Hunt block.
 Left to right: Forest Deslippe, Dickie Bertrand, & L.B. Hunt.
 Lower right: Advertisement from *The Echo* December 18, 1914

COLLECTION HIGHLIGHTS

By Meg Reiner

At the Marsh Collection, we preserve land records relating to Amherstburg and the former Anderdon and Malden Townships. Records include land deeds, mortgages, leases and more. These documents are crucial for property research as they provide details about each transaction, describing the parcel of land, and allowing a timeline to be determined regarding ownership of the property. In some cases, a plan is included with the instrument. We recently acquired a house lease on the east ½ of Lot 42, Concession 4, in Malden Township between Harold and Irene Borrowman and Calvin and Donna Borrowman. Included with the lease was a proposed plan for a campground called Borrowman's Grove.

In 1911, Thomas Borrowman purchased this property, spanning 100 acres, from John Thorne. The family resided here and farmed the land, which passed to Thomas' son Harold in 1941. Harold continued the farm and resided here with wife Irene and children Ena and Calvin. The next generation had new plans for the grove (a wooded area) on the Borrowman farm. In 1963, Harold's son Calvin requested permission from Malden Council to establish a campground there. The proposal included plans for 122 sites for trailers and tents, divided into 50 ft square blocks. The schematic shows a swimming pool, play areas, comfort stations and an overflow section.



On July 23, 1964, the following was printed in *The Amherstburg Echo*: "Grove now quiet sanctuary-The beautiful old Thomas Borrowman grove on the Pike Road, one of the last in this area, has been opened up as a quiet campground by Mr. and Mrs. Calvin Borrowman. Modern facilities are available to those campers who wish for peace, quiet and contentment when they are holidaying in cool, leafy surroundings."

In 1972, the on-site facilities included swimming and wading pools, a country store with snack bar, a 4-acre recreation field, and recreation shelter. A small hairdressing salon was run by Calvin's sister Ena. The grove at that time had 250 sites. In 1973, seasonal attendance reached 75,000 campers.

In 1977, Borrowman's Grove joined the Jellystone Park franchise and the name was changed to Yogi Bear's Jellystone Park, a well-known brand. After this transition, a 125% business

increase was observed over three years. The facilities continued to expand, including an 18-hole mini golf course, games room, and additional camp sites. The Borrowmans received several Jellystone Park Franchise Awards during their proprietorship. Calvin Borrowman passed away in 2008 and Donna in 2019. 60 years after Borrowman's Grove was founded, the site remains in use as a campground today.



Entrance Booth at Yogi Bear's Jellystone Park, 1984
Photo by Rev. Theron Brock Buchanan/ MCS 2019.035.142

Thistle Masonic Lodge No. 34 (A.F. & A.M.)

175th Anniversary

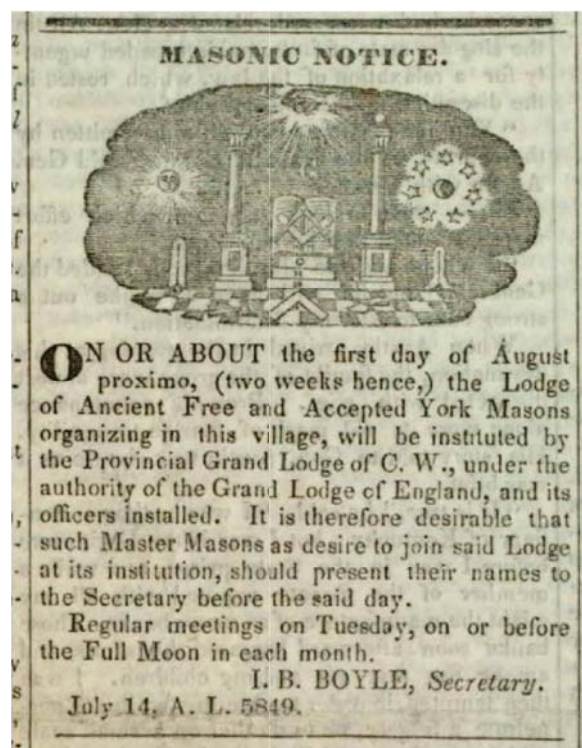
By Kara Folkeringa

Over 175 years ago, on February 24, 1849, Thistle Lodge No. 14 (later No. 19, and now No. 34) was instituted at a Masonic convention in Amherstburg. A petition was made for a warrant to form a new Lodge, and on August 21, 1849, it was granted by the Provincial Grand Lodge of Canada West.

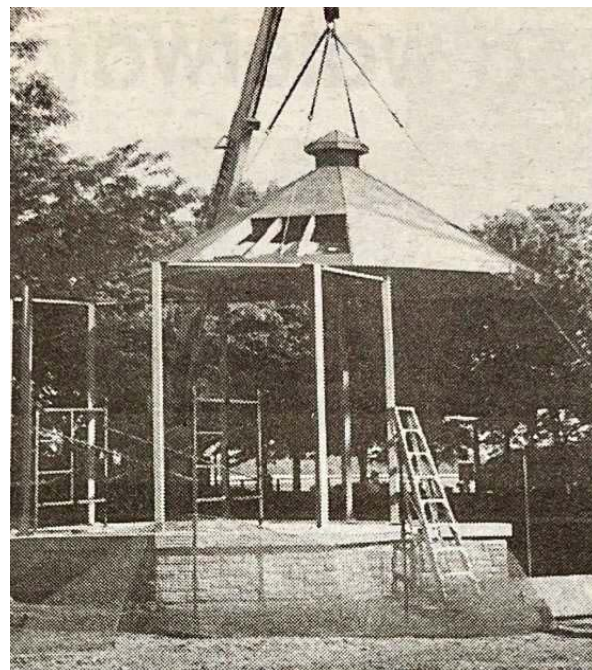
Although Thistle Lodge is long-established in Amherstburg, this is not the first instance of masonry in town. Many officers stationed at Fort Malden were masons, part of the Zion Lodge in Detroit, but found the commute difficult and petitioned for an Amherstburg lodge. A warrant was granted and resulted in the Adoniram Lodge No. 18. Records are limited for this lodge, but it is believed to have been formed before 1802, and that meetings ceased during the war of 1812. Between the end of the war and 1849, there is no indication that Masonic gatherings took place in town.

Thistle Lodge has used several buildings as their Masonic hall, but in the early 1890s they began to meet at the building on the southwest corner of Dalhousie/Murray (demolished 1975). In 1954, construction began at their current location, 68 Murray Street, and a dedication service for its completion was held in April 1959. In the late 1960s a fire caused significant damage to the building. Despite this, in 1975 they were able to celebrate a mortgage-burning ceremony.

Although their activities remain shrouded in mystery, Thistle Lodge has taken part in initiatives to benefit the community through the years. Examples include donating sports equipment to local schools and participating in the Masonic blood donor program. Of note, in honour of the lodge's 150th anniversary in 1999, they donated the pavilion that stands in the Navy Yard Park.



The Amherstburg Courier – July 21 1849



*The Navy Yard Park pavilion under construction.
The Amherstburg Echo June 8, 1999*



*A 1950s picture of the building at the southwest corner of
Dalhousie/Murray/ MCS 2009.019.247*