



# Reflections

Please  
take  
one!

Newsletter of the Marsh Historical Collection  
*Amherstburg, Ontario*

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## Meeting John Marsh

*By E.P. Chant*

I first met John Marsh in 1981, shortly after he had sold The Amherstburg Echo to John James, who had hired me, fresh out of the University of Windsor as a reporter-photographer.

In those early transitional days, JAM still frequently dropped into the office, so I was introduced to him during my first week on the job.

"It's an honour, Mr. Marsh. How are you?" I asked.

"I'm not givin' out any information," he grouched with what I came to know as his usual, faux-curmudgeon response. "Come on. You should have a tour of the town."

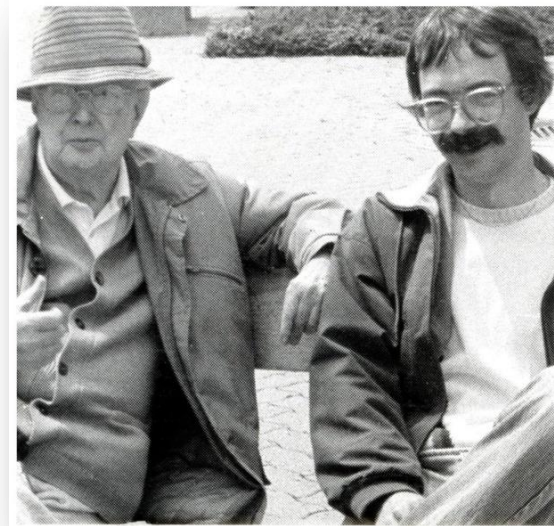
John (James) said, with a bit of a smirk, "Yeah, go ahead. John's the most knowledgeable tour guide in town."

So, out we went, hopping into JAM's car (a brown Chevy Nova, if I recall).

It was a voyage heavy on the history: the pre-moved Gordon House, Fort Malden, Bellevue, an across-the-river-overview of Bob-lo (still an amusement park), the Park House Museum, the Black Historical Museum (just opened by Mac and Betty Simpson), assorted churches, residential houses that were originally pensioner's cottages, Bullock's Tavern (several years later I was living in its top-floor apartment), and other architecturally or historically significant downtown buildings.

A couple of these sites required something more than a few anecdotes, so JAM would pull over to the shoulder of the road or on to a neighbouring lawn to give me several decades – or a century or two – of background info. During briefer descriptions, he would just jam on the brakes, stop in the middle of the road, and expect trailing cars to pull around as he expounded on this or that historical tidbit.

Our tour was capped with a vertical voyage, as he drove through the gates of Amherst Quarries, and plummeted straight down into one of the pits. We got



*John Marsh & E. P. Chant, June 1989*

maybe three-quarters of the way down – good enough to get a good view of this fascinating local industry – and then JAM did something that I didn't think was even possible in an early-'80s-era Nova ... He shifted the car into reverse, and backed all the way out, on a twisty, 75-degree incline for most of the way.

I thanked him profusely when he dropped me back at the office because, for a 90-minute trip, it really had been extremely informative for a journalistic newcomer to the community.

The next day, John (James) wandered into my office and said, "Geez, you really impressed Mr. Marsh."

"Impressed him? How?"

"Well, I guess you were polite and asked good questions," John replied. "But, more than anything, he thought you were really brave."

"Brave?" I was baffled. "What are you talking about?"

*.....continued on p. 2*

"Mr. Marsh is blind as a bat," John chuckled. "Nobody in town will get into a car with him. He shouldn't really even have a license."

Ironically, the accuracy of that description was emphasized that same winter – also in a story that involved Amherst Quarries.

Long-time Amherstburgers will remember that, during major snowstorms, Quarries' owner Murray Smith used to loan his huge, front-end loaders to the town. To avoid covering curbs and sidewalks with snow, the town's trucks would reverse their blades, and plow snow into the middle of certain roads. Then the Quarries' machines would manoeuvre the snow into mountainous piles, eventually scoop it all into dump trucks, and those vehicles would dump the snow into the river at the foot of Murray Street (before the Navy Yard Park had been extended there).

One winter morning after such a heavy storm, JAM was driving down Dalhousie from his home to pick up his copy of The Globe and Mail.

He was soon immobilized after failing to avoid – and presumably failing to see – a 20-foot-tall Alp of piled snow in the middle of Dalhousie, having driven his car into an almost vertical position on the icy heap.

*E.P. Chant started with The Amherstburg Echo as a reporter-photographer in 1981, rose to its Managing Editorship, and departed from the newspaper in 1993. For the past 20 years, he has been the Managing Editor of Student Publications at St. Clair College. He still resides in Amherstburg.*

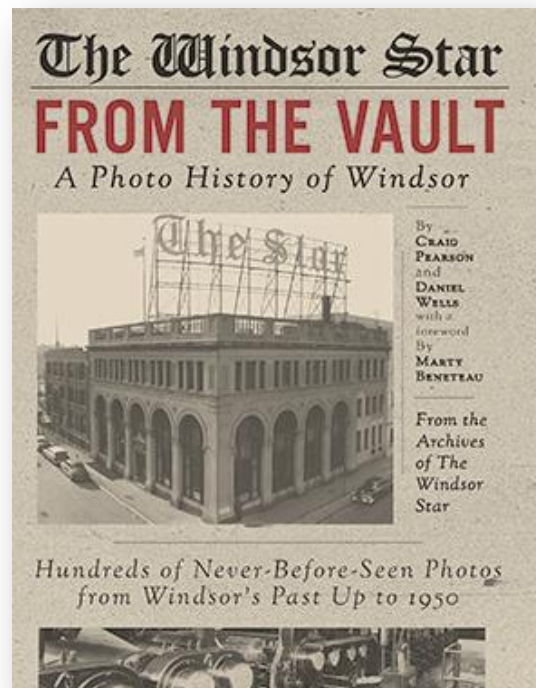


## Recent Donations Calvert/Seagram Newsletters



We recently received a number of Calvert/Seagram (Amherstburg Plant) Newsletters and Distillation magazines. The issues range from 1967 to 1997 but are sporadic. We would like to be able to complete the set. If you have copies that you would like to donate, please contact us.

## New in our Gift Shoppe!



**\$39.95**

**Hard cover, 453 pages**

# Growing Up in the 'Burg

## Memories of Malden and the arrival of "Town Water"

*by an anonymous contributor*

I was a child not too long ago but a part of my life was more old-fashioned than many my age could relate to. In the early seventies we may have watched the Brady Bunch, but my family lived closer to the people on Little House on the Prairie when it came to water in Malden Township.

It was so exciting having rain storms at the farm. Yes, the crops would grow better but as a child that was not the thrill of the rain. Watching the lightning strike from the shelter of the corn shed was great too but the real thrill was I got to have a bath in deeper water! Okay, you may not understand my excitement. The water supply on the farm was from rain water. Our eaves would collect the rain that ran off the roof and it would run down to a cistern or well. We then had a pump that clicked, hissed and hummed our water to the hot water tank and then to the taps. This water was for washing clothes, dishes and ourselves.

We had one separate tap in the kitchen that was for "hard" water. That water came from the ground. This was the water we drank and made our Freshie and Kool-Aid with. Most people who visited did not care for the taste of our hard water. It had a flavour to it that unfortunately I cannot describe any better than "sulphur-ish".

Normally Mom had to save laundry water to do more than one load. She'd do the whites, save the water in the laundry tub and have it suck back into the machine for the dark load. You may think that was gross but we were always clean and never smelled, so it worked. I guess we are too into hyper clean now days with the amount of laundry we do and the water we use.

At bath time as a child I got to bathe in three to four inches of water. I could have another inch of 'warm up' water if I went in after my brothers. Yes, at times we shared water. As they got older the boys changed to having quick showers. Water was just something we could not waste. This is why having a rain storm, especially a significant rain, was so exciting. That would mean our cistern would be so full that our water usage could be increased. I would fill the tub to 7 or 8 inches. That was the best!

I recall only a couple of times when the cistern was dangerously low. We borrowed a tank, pulled it

by tractor and bought the water at the Township Hall where council meetings took place, right beside the fire station. We would fill the tank and then empty it in the cistern.

The day town water came to our place was a big deal. It cost us to put it in but we were ready and willing to get it. Mom and Dad had saved and budgeted for this life altering event. To save even more money we had to dig some of the trenches ourselves. On the west side of the house we dug a deep narrow ditch. My brothers and I liked going in the newly dug ditch. We jumped in, climbed out, leapt over and even excavated. We discovered some medicine bottles that piqued our interest. Most of them were not broken. I don't recall if we ever had a final count on how many bottles we found, but for some reason 22 comes to mind. The bottles did not have paper labels but raised lettering in the glass. I still have one today. It says: Dr. S.N. Thomas Eclectric Oil. Northrop & Lyman Co. Limited Toronto, Ontario. They were probably from the early 1900's. It was fun finding a bit of history in our own back yard but what was even better was the new water supply. "Town water", as we called it, greatly changed our lives.



### ***Amherstburg Echo, September 29, 1971***

*The Amherstburg Area Water Treatment plant went "on stream" Saturday morning at 11:50 a.m. This was at least nine months ahead of schedule. The plant will supply water to the Detroit River Water Works System which services Amherstburg, Anderdon, Malden and a part of Colchester North. It is capable of producing four million imperial gallons of water every 24 hours.*



# Growing Up in the 'Burg



## Fishing and Canoeing – Part 2

by Pat Warren

*An excerpt from his recent book "The Pea Shooter Hit Squad and Other Tales of Growing Up in Amherstburg" which is available for purchase at the Marsh Historical Collection.*

Garnet got permission to borrow a green canoe that had not been in the water for over a year. He asked me to join him in a test run to see how bad it leaked. We brought along some good size cans for bailing and one extra paddle in case either one of us was dumb enough to lose a paddle. The test run went well. After about one hour there still was not enough water in the canoe to bother bailing. We returned the canoe to its resting place behind the boathouse not far from the old fort.

The test went so well we decided to paddle over to Bob-Lo. On a very nice warm day we paddled across and hid the canoe in the marshy area near the south end of the island. We tied the canoe up in a good spot completely out of sight from every angle and walked over to the roller rink first. From there we walked past all the rides on our way to the dance hall where we got a big cup of free "Vernors" because a pretty girl at the soda bar was generous. We didn't have any money and we were getting hungry so we decided to head for home.

The weather had changed. That was the first thing we noticed; the second was the swells rolling in from the lake. We could see even at our young age that we definitely had a problem. If we aimed the canoe directly toward Duby's beach, the shortest path, the waves would hit us sideways and we would tilt and swamp for sure. If we aimed for the coal piles or the swimming dock we might be able to ride the top of one swell and then the next and surf our way across the river. We had seen Fr. Spratt do that with his canoe so we thought we had some idea of how to do it. It was a much longer route but maybe faster and take less time and definitely safer.

So the two hungry optimists untied their canoe, scooped out a bit of water and aimed for the coal piles. The going wasn't too bad. But every time we tried to shorten the trip by aiming more toward the

nearest shore a big swell would threaten to swamp our little craft and we would have to take turns bailing and paddling. It took a bit of time but we got into the rhythm of paddling hard on the rise and top of each swell. The sky was getting darker and there were a few small white caps as we passed the middle of the river. The channel buoys on the east side were getting closer.

Something didn't feel right and we could hear people shouting somewhere. In a strong breeze sound carries a long way over water. But the shouts were getting closer. Garnet and I looked back over our shoulders for the first time and nearly froze. A steel tanker was slowly bearing down on us. Some men with long poles that had something like boxing gloves on the end were shouting, and obviously getting ready to push us out of the way.

We instantly decided they were far enough away and we were scared enough, the best bet was to paddle like crazy mad and we did. Inch by inch we were gaining. A steel buoy was our closest safety shelter but we were also taking on water with no time to bail. The men could see we were going to make it and they put their long poles away.

We tied our canoe to the steel rung of the buoy just as the wash from the tanker hit us and the buoy, but we stayed upright and began bailing with all our might.

After resting a bit, we headed for the nearest shore. By the time we got to shore the canoe was two thirds full of water again and we didn't care. We were just thankful to have made it safely to the shore. We hid the canoe and went home returning the next day to paddle it back to where it belonged, to stay there forever as far as we were concerned.



**The Marsh Collection is  
open 10 am - 4 pm  
Tuesday through Friday  
(closed December 25<sup>th</sup> – January 1)**

**Phone 519-736-9191**

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

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



# Shipping the Detroit

## Winter Woes on the Detroit River

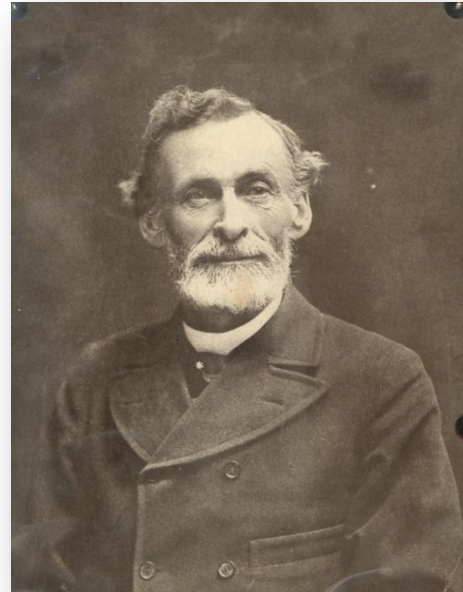
by Carl Russelo

As reported in the Amherstburg Echo the week of February 4, 1876, fog kept the propeller BOB HACKETT, commanded by Capt. Joseph King, from departing Windsor for Amherstburg on time. When the vessel did sail with seven passengers and freight which included barrels of flour, coal oil and coal, it was starting to get dark.

Fog settled in again when they were opposite Wyandotte. Lighthouses were not lit this time of year and Capt. King mistook a light from a small fishery on Fighting Island for the lower lighthouse. He ran east of it and was soon aground on a bank about fifty yards from the channel. King worked the engine forward and backward for nearly two hours to no avail. Odd for a Captain to leave his vessel, but with the Engineer left in charge, King, along with his brother Fillion and Isaac Brown took one of the yawl boats to try and reach Wyandotte. The ice held them back and they drifted down to T.B. White's dock on the Canadian shore.

It was now Saturday morning. With no provisions on the HACKETT, the passengers and crew had to get along on crackers and cheese for almost 24 hours. They had slept on the deck and seats of the HACKETT. Water leaking into the hull had caused the vessel to list to port on the bank. In this disagreeable position they spent the night and part of the next day until the arrival of the tug CROWELL, commanded by Capt. Frank Hackett. He had been notified of the grounded HACKETT by the men who had come downriver in the small yawl boat.

With the CROWELL on the scene, Capt. King and his brother Fillion succeeded in getting all the passengers off the HACKETT using the yawl boat. It took many attempts as it was very cold and the wind was blowing hard. Once this was done, Fillion tried to return to the HACKETT in the yawl boat to remain with the Engineer. His attempt failed and he drifted downriver to the fisheries building where he took refuge. The CROWELL without its boat, had to go over to the Alexander House and borrow a duck boat from Mr. George Alexander. The tug then went to get Fillion King at the fishery and it was Capt. Frank Hackett himself who rowed the duck boat over to bring Fillion back. The CROWELL steamed down to Amherstburg and landed everyone safely.



*Captain Francis B. Hackett, commander of the CROWELL, who came to the aid of the BOB HACKETT*

It would be impossible to get the HACKETT off the bank until the water level rose. On Sunday morning the CROWELL went up to the HACKETT and with the water being up, the HACKETT was taken off the bank with little trouble. The HACKETT was towed to Steven's Dock in Amherstburg where she was expected to lie for the rest of the winter. But that was not to be!

The following Tuesday with the force of the ice moving rapidly down the river, the eight iron chains used to moor the propellers BOB HACKETT and LAKE BREEZE, and the tug MINNIE MORTON were strained and parted. All three vessels went drifting down the river with heavy ice. The BOB HACKETT ran into the bow of the barque FANNY CAMPBELL and had her bulwarks smashed in and her stanchions carried away. The LAKE BREEZE was brought up below Mullen's Dock with little damage to herself but she carried away the after rail and cabin of the MINNIE MORTON with her chains. The MINNIE MORTON drifted down to Kolfage's Dock where she ran aground and was held fast in the ice. On Wednesday the BOB HACKETT and LAKE BREEZE were back at their berth at Steven's Dock. The MINNIE MORTON would stay in place until the ice broke up. Fortunately they didn't drift out into the lake.



# Yesterday's News

**1904/1905**

**December** – Muskrat is in season. That doesn't make it seasonable however to destroy the muskrat houses the way some dead game sports are said to be doing.

**January** – The Amherstburg Skating Rink will soon be in full running order. Contracts having been let and providing we are favoured with good skating weather the boys say the rink will be in skating condition the former part of next week.

**February** – The Bell Telephone Company of Canada is about to issue A New Subscribers' Directory for the District of Western Ontario including the town of Amherstburg. Orders for new connections, changes of firm names, changes of street addresses or for duplicate entries in the list should be handed in at once.

**1914/1915**

**December** – You'll soon be cooking with electricity.

**January** – The deal between Philip Lucier and R. Laframboise for the hotel at Leslie's Corners was closed Monday and Mr. Lucier has taken possession.

**February** – Come to the town hall to hear Mrs. Hick, the elocutionist of Friendly Village, and Mrs. Vernon, on "Womens' Rights".

**1924/1925**

**December** – The B.M. Gun Club, Amherstburg, is holding a clay

pigeon shoot tomorrow when the Sandwich club will be the club's guests. As fowl will be awarded as prizes, this will be a good chance to win a Christmas turkey, duck or chicken.

**January** – On Saturday afternoon, provincial officers swooped down upon the River View Inn, Murray Street and made a seizure of wet goods.

**February** – Joe Cabana is tearing down the old log building which was his former home, corner Murray and Seymour streets and converting it to firewood. This place was partly destroyed by fire last fall. He expects to build on the lot later this season.

**1934/1935**

**December** – An ad promoting Amherstburg boasts that "within the town limits there are 3.5 miles of pavement, 7 miles of sewers, 10 miles of water mains and 15 miles of concrete sidewalks."

**January** – Charging that intolerable working conditions prevail at the river work being conducted by the Geo. Mills Construction Co. at the Livingstone Channel, between 60 and 70 men went on strike Saturday afternoon and walked off the job. They are asking for 35¢ minimum wage and better working and living conditions in the bunk houses.

**February** – A number of vacant houses throughout the town have been broken into and plumbing

fixtures and other moveable articles stolen. Destructive persons have also broken the windows in many vacant houses and in some cases the entire window sashes have been carried away.

**1944/1945**

**December** – The Amherstburg Council authorized Major N.A. Marra to proclaim Tuesday, December 26 as Boxing Day and a legal holiday in Amherstburg.

**January** – Ration Due Dates: All coupons in book three and four expired December 31. Butter coupon 92 becomes valid on January 11 and is good for eight ounces.

**February** – The efforts of an older group of boys have given the community a much needed youth organization, The Amherstburg Boys' Club. Les Temesy, the spirit behind the organization is a Golden Globe Champion.

**1954/1955**

**December** – Orlando DeLuca of Texas Road, Anderdon Township has been awarded the general contract to build the \$28,000 addition to St. John the Baptist School.

**January** – Max Webster was elected president of the Amherstburg Chamber of Commerce at a meeting of the board of directors held Monday evening. He succeeds Thomas W. Moffat who held that office for a year.

**February** – The cold weather over the weekend was ideal for making ice on the municipal skating rink in the town park. Hundreds enjoyed the fine ice on the rink.

**1964/1965**

**December** – Brunner Mond Canada, Limited is no more. In the future, this large chemical plant will be known as the Amherstburg Plant of Allied Chemical Canada Ltd. Brunner Mond, Canada Limited has been dissolved by an act of parliament.

**January** – Fire loss in Amherstburg for 1964 amounted to \$2651.42. Chief Hamilton stated the fire department had answered 16 calls during the year and held 25 fire drills.

**February** – Joey-Anne Gibb, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Phillip Gibb, won the area elementary schools' Canadian Legion Public Speaking Contest held at the Amherstburg Public School, Tuesday evening. Maureen Sellars was judged second and Alla Milko was third.

**1974/1975**

**December** – For the first time in its 150 year plus history, Amherstburg will have a woman on the council. Mrs. Rose Kelly easily won a seat on the board.

**January** – The core in the heart of old Amherstburg has been brightened by three new attractive business places – Past and Present Shop and Cedar Knot Shop on Dalhousie, and the

remodeled store on Richmond Street for the Town Shoppe.

**February** – Henry Eldracher is one of the area scouts who has been chosen to attend the world Brotherhood of Scouting Jamboree in Lillehammer, Norway from July 29 to August 7.

**1984/1985**

**December** – Demolition of Brunner Mond recreational centre began and will take another week to ten days to clear the lot of debris. The end result will be a new municipal parking lot in the downtown.

**January** – A second story addition to the former Callam house on Dalhousie was demolished last week (as were other parts) as Parks Canada moved to restore the building to its original dimensions and condition when it was the Commissariat at Fort Malden.

**February** – Throughout February, the beautiful works of local woodcarver Grant Bone will be on display at the Amherstburg Library.

**1994/1995**

**December** – Sister Elodia Gagnier has been chosen by her peers as the Senior of the Year. Sister Elodia has spent countless hours visiting and caring for ailing seniors throughout the tri-community, providing them communion and words of encouragement.

**January** – The Amherstburg Echo takes pleasure in introducing St. Clair College intern Ron Giofu. Ron will spend a 12-week stint with the Echo, primarily as a writer and photographer.

**February** – Members of town council reiterated their strong support for Malden Township's bid to bring a casino to Bob-lo Island.

**2004/2005**

**December** – Residents of Bob-lo Island are officially tapped into the Amherstburg mainland water plant as of last Thursday. While there is still work to be done, water is now flowing through the Bob-lo Island water main.

**January** – Hundreds of friends, family and well wishers were at the AMA Sportsman's Club Sunday afternoon to bid farewell to long-time town employee Bob Crawford. He was honoured on the occasion of his retirement after 32 years with the Township of Malden & the Town of Amherstburg.

**February** – St. Vincent de Paul ended up winning the annual Chili Cook Off held at the Knights of Columbus, for the fourth consecutive year and will receive 50% of the net profits.



# Bricks-n-Beams

## 217 Sandwich Street South

by Eleanor Warren

The buildings in today's old photo (c.1950), except for the little wood structure on the left side, are still standing and used for business. The small frame building at the far left was once used as an ice house and later became the home of Purdie's Taxi. It



*Photo c.1950's*

*Courtesy of Fort Malden Historic Site of Canada*

was removed some time later before the former Public Utilities office (also now gone) was erected there. The large building on the right is the Liberty Theatre which was built in 1919, the architect being J. C. Pennington.

The centre building, occupied today by WIND Mobile, has in the past 93 years had many occupants. In October 1920, Norman D. Pouget purchased the property from H. G. Duff. In March of the following year the Echo announced that excavation of the basement 25' x 45' x 8' was under way for "Norman Pouget's Ice Cream Parlour." At the same time, the Imperial Bank was being completed on the northeast corner of Richmond & Dalhousie by McEachern & Sons. Their superintendent, a Mr. Pyke, took the contract to erect the Pouget building. By June 1921 Pouget's Ice Cream Parlour was opened for business, specializing in "the richest ice cream in Amherstburg," produced by the Belle Isle Creamery. They also carried a line of home baking. Pouget's place was so popular that

just a couple of months after opening the owner "caught two 9-year-old lads red-handed, helping themselves to cigarettes, money in the till, candy and pop."

It didn't take Pouget long to discover that this business was not his cup o' tea, so he turned over supervision of the confectionery to his sons and went to work as chef on John Mullen's boat ALASKA. In April 1923, Norman D. Pouget died suddenly at the age of 46 years. Guy N. Pouget and his brothers carried on with the business. In December of that same year the Christmas ad in the Echo advertised "Pouget's Sweet Shop" and "Pouget Bros. Café" still "next to the Liberty Theatre" where it remained until 1934 when Henri and Marie Pinard became proprietors and carried



*Marsh Collection photo, 2014*

on in the same lines until 1944 when they transferred ownership to A.K. and Edith Grayson. It remained "Grayson's Confectionery" for at least another ten years. John Zin's Meat Market was the next long-time business there, from 1955 for over 30 years.

From the time that Zin gave up the shop until now, many enterprises occupied the little building at 217 Sandwich Street South. How many do you remember? We would like to hear from you.





# Happenings at the Marsh

by Eleanor Warren

One might think that in today's social media world with so much information on line that the genealogists would be sitting in front of their computer screens gleaning and compiling family histories. Staff at the Marsh Collection know that in their experience so far that is not always the case. They also know that just because it's online, it ain't necessarily true, so be vigilant out there!

In the past three months we have had research inquiries (in person and email) from Kitchener, Oshawa, Toronto, London and various points in Ontario (including Essex County), the Western Provinces and the United States. Some of the names they were researching are Bouffard, Deneau, Fortier, Grasset, Grenier, LeClair, Masse, McLean, Middleton, O'Neil, O'Shea, Pare, Picard, Pilon, Sinasac, Stockwell, Sullivan, Thompson, Tomlinson and Wilcox. It's always surprising to them and to ourselves just how much information is in the genealogy files.

We're gradually working our way through the "Gatfield Collection." Fr. Ted Gatfield, who passed away in February, was a long-time friend of the Marsh Collection Society. Through the years he donated his massive collection of photographs, some of which are historical gems. Long before Ted Gatfield entered the seminary he was a professional photographer, but even before that he was employed

on Bob-Lo where his passion for photography developed. As a result we have several 1941 era photos of a few Bob-Lo workers. During the Second World War he joined the Air Force, so we also have many photos of Ted in uniform as well as the planes in which he trained. One of his donations is a beautiful painting (created by Amherstburg's own Peter Rindlisbacher) of a Cessna T-50. At the end of the war, Gatfield and Norman Harrison formed a successful partnership in professional photography. Then in 1949 Ted Gatfield left the business to enter

the seminary. He was ordained as a Roman Catholic priest in 1955 but never laid aside his passion for photography. During his 50 years as a priest, Father Gatfield continued to take pictures - weddings, baptisms, confirmations, birthday parties, and the list goes on. The Marsh Collection now has file drawers filled with those photos.. Many are identified, but many are not. Perhaps he photographed your special event/s. If you can help

us to put names to these folks, please contact Eleanor at (519) 736-9191.

This being our last "Reflections" for 2014, we take the opportunity to wish each and every one of you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Peaceful 2015!



*Cessna T-50 painting by P. Rindlisbacher  
Donated by Fr. Ted Gatfield*

## Father Callam Celebrates 50 Years



Congratulations to Father Daniel Callam C.S.B., who is celebrating his fiftieth anniversary of ordination to the priesthood in December 2014. Here is a look back to the Amherstburg Echo, December 24, 1964 when he offered his first mass at St. John the Baptist Church on December 20th. Pictured with him are his parents Captain and Mrs. Callam.

# Then & Now

East Side Sandwich Street near Rankin Avenue



1967

Former Christ Church Rectory

1969



2014