



Reflections

Newsletter of the Marsh Historical Collection
Amherstburg, Ontario



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The Diary of Flora Hodgman

By Phyllis Chant

In the Marsh Historical Collection, we have Flora Hodgman's diary which dates from 1907 – 1920. Flora was born December 21, 1900. Her diary follows her from childhood to being a well-educated young woman. Her father, Harry C. Hodgman worked for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers office at Amherstburg from 1896. In 1912, he was transferred to work on the Missouri River with headquarters at Kansas City, Missouri. From this time forward, the family divides their time between Amherstburg and Missouri. The Hodgman family was rather well off, and their daughter's friends were from important local families.

Her first diary posts show the excitement of birthdays and Christmases. They describe in great detail, as with most children, the gifts she received and parties she attended. In December, 1910, Flora wrote, "We are now having delightful Christmas Holidays.

Christmas came on fast...We also had a little Xmas tree at home on Xmas day. Papa acted as Santa Claus. And was very funny. I got a postcard book from mama. A two dollar bill from papa. A sachet handkerchief holder from mama. A big doll from Mama...The day after Xmas Mrs. Laitner gave a little party to fifteen of my friends. I wore my yellow chiffon dress and pearl necklace from Europe. We played all kinds of games & had a very dainty supper."

Life between birthdays and Christmases moves along with fun events for this young girl. Picnics and "pleasure trips" to Bois Blanc to ride the Merry-Go-round all day. Spending time with friends in Detroit brought excitement with trips to the theatre and automobile rides.

On December 25, 1911, Flora writes: "We had our Christmas tree last night in the library. I got many nice gifts. I got about 27 presents in all. Among them were

Post Card Projector from Papa & Mama, Pearl & Gold Pen, the book Ann[e] of Green Gables from Aunt Amy, slip[p]ers, beads and bag from Miss Farr. And all sorts of things from my girlfriends & other people. We spent Christmas evening at Doctor Abbott's."

Christmas of 1912, again brought wonderful presents but, this year, Flora and a group of her girlfriends started a sewing club. "We have pins with the initials of the club "C.S.C." which stands for Cross-stitch Club. The colours are red, white and blue. We meet from house to house & serve luncheons. We have bags with the initials of the club on them. The members are Helen Barnes, Helen Marsh, Elizabeth & Alex (Alexis) Hackett, Sybil Park, Marjory Park, Gladys McGregor, Wynona Cuddy & myself."

Continued on page 3...



Flora Hodgman & Helen Marsh, c.1920
Marsh Family Papers

WHAT'S INSIDE

Gift Shop.....	2
Then & Now.....	3
Ancestral Lines.....	4
Philo Parsons Incident.....	5
Bricks-N-Beams.....	6
Upsetting the Hour Glass.....	7
Collection Highlights.....	8

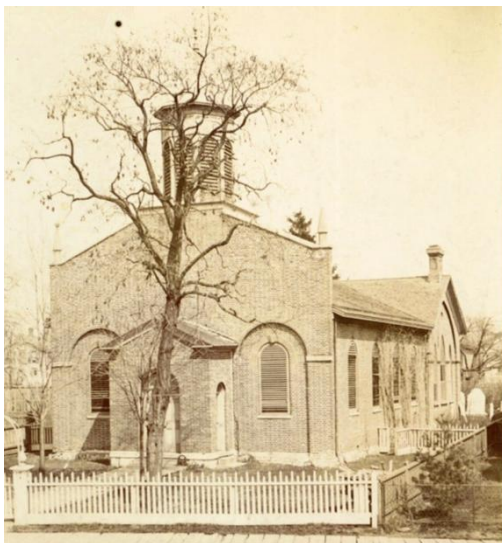
IN MEMORIAM

Our condolences to the families of David Hamilton and John Burck. Both were long-time writers for *Reflections* and will be greatly missed.



Christ Church Celebrates 200 Years

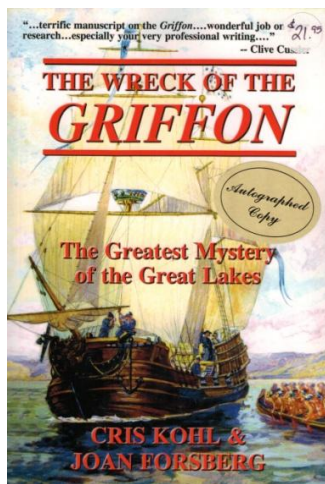
This January, Christ (Anglican) Church celebrates its 200th year. The church was constructed in 1819 by soldiers stationed at Fort Malden. Brick for the structure was donated by Robert Reynolds of the Commissariat Department, who lived at Belle Vue House.



Gift Shop

These titles and many more are available for purchase:

War of 1812
The Marine Art of
Peter Rindlisbacher
\$40



The Wreck of the Griffon
\$22

"McGREGOR NEWS"
Volume III
1915 - 1920
THRU THE 'GREAT WAR' YEARS



McGregor News Vol. III
Thru the Great War Years
\$20

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.

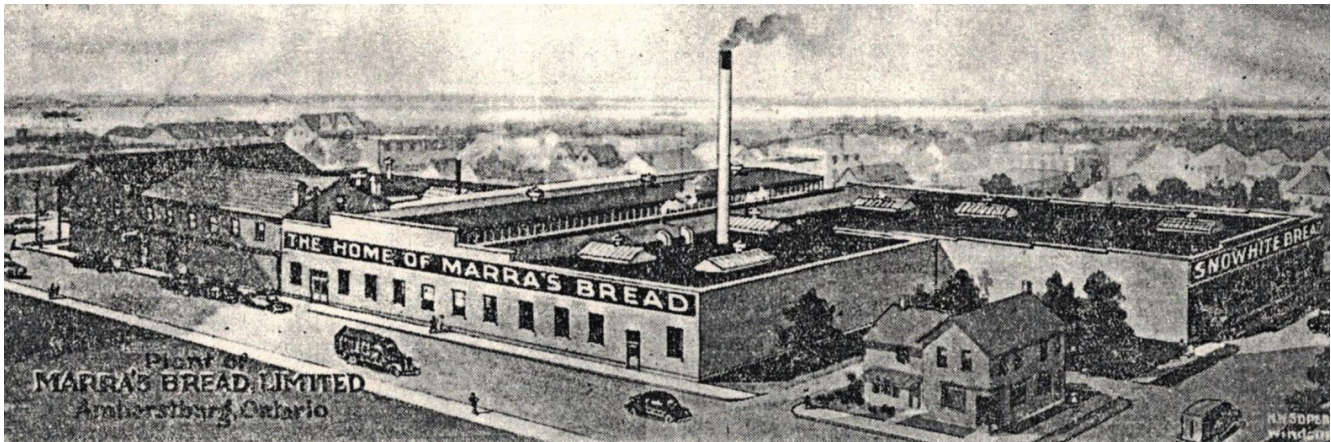
The Marsh Collection is open
to researchers and visitors
from 10am to 4pm Tuesday through Friday.
Email: research@marshcollection.org
Website: www.marshcollection.org



**Merry Christmas &
Happy New Year!**

From the Marsh Collection Society
We will be CLOSED Dec.22
and will REOPEN Jan. 8

Then & Now- Corner of Murray & Bathurst



Above: Marra's Bread
This sketch appeared in
The Amherstburg Echo
December 9, 1938

Right: Navy Yard Condominiums,
present-day on same site



The Diary of Flora Hodgman

...Continued from page 1

Skating parties back of the Hodgman house, tobogganing, socials and schoolwork kept this young lady busy. In 1914, a trip with her mother to Edmonton, Alberta would have been a large undertaking for the Hodgman women. Flora writes: "When passing the Blackfolds the scenery was very beautiful. A line of C.N.R. runs from there into Rocky Mountain House. Then we passed Lacombe and came into Wasaskiwie...we were surprised to see that Edmonton was such an "Up to date" progressive city." Flora, now at age fourteen, writes in great detail about her travels through Alberta and even includes some history of the area. She mentions seeing soldiers leaving for this "dreadful European war at all points along the CPR even when we reached Toronto."

As Flora got older, her posts focused more on some of the events that happened during Christmas: "The high school concert was before Xmas and was a great success. It was opened with a patriotic chorus by the school. Then the 'Dance of the Snow Maidens' by twelve girls. Our costumes were

white cheesecloth tinsel trimmed, long full skirts and wings."

In 1915 Christmas came quietly as Flora's father could not come home from Kansas City. Flora mentions the gifts she gave family and friends. Her description of December 25th sounds lovely: "It snowed Christmas Eve making Christmas quite 'Christmassy'. We had roast goose, oysters, celery, olives, suet pudding etc, etc. New Years (1916) spent quietly at home. Went to the city Tuesday...we took in three movies, seeing Charlie Chaplain in "Kid Auto Races" and in "Earning A Living."

By 1920, Flora is living in Jefferson City, Missouri, and her occupation is listed as teacher (1920 U.S. Federal Census). In about 1933, Flora marries Wallace A. Temple, and they move to Grosse Pointe Farms. The 1940 U.S. census lists Wallace's occupation as "prosecutor assistant".

Flora's diary gives us a small look into the life of a young girl in Amherstburg at the turn of the 20th century. It is available for reading in our reference library.

Ancestral Lines

By Phyllis Chant

After the last "Ancestral Lines" column for the Fall newsletter, I thought that Benjamin LaPierre would slip away into the files at the Marsh Historical Collection. But something about this unique and unusual photographer still fascinated me. I tried to piece together his life, thinking that he quietly went around Amherstburg and the county taking photos of everyday life. I also wondered what type of camera he would have used, and where he would have set up a darkroom, as I knew that he created a special emulsion for developing the dry glass plates he used for photos.

Then, luckily for me and, more importantly, for the Marsh Collection and the community, Terry Hall (after seeing the column) donated Benjamin's camera, leather carrying case, five exposed plate holders and two boxes of glass plates. What an unexpected thrill!

Many thanks to Terry Hall, and his grandparents Harry and Mary Jane (Goodchild) Hamilton, who have saved these items throughout most of the 1900's. Terry was unsure of how his grandmother came into possession of the camera and the glass plates, but the most important thing is that she saved them.

The wooden-cased field view camera with its large leather bellows is unidentified by a maker. Due to its possible delicate condition, we did not open the bellows for the accompanying photograph below. It is, however, in relatively good condition for being approximately 123 years old. The white tubing and bulb are the shutter release. These are both in poor condition as they have dried out over the past 100 years. The two boxes of glass plates are marked as Illford and Kodak. Some of the wooden exposed glass plate holders are also marked as being Kodak made.



LaPierre's field view camera is shown at right. We hope to have this on display in the coming year, along with some photographs from the new glass plates.

Most of the glass plates from the first cardboard box (Illford) we already have prints or scans of prints of. Most of them are from the late 1800's and are in excellent condition. Between the two boxes of plates, we now have 30 plates. A couple of them also include LaPierre's unique watermark. After close examination, I saw that he probably used ink to sign his initials in the lower left-hand corner of the glass plate. The black signature would have ended up as white on the finished photo. The second cardboard box (Eastman Kodak) contains 16 glass plates. We only have a couple of prints made from these. The rest are new photos for us.

We now have the glass plates for the two photos included here. The first photo is one of a finished original print from an album page, and includes LaPierre's impressive cursive handwriting, entitled "Aunt's Residence" (P1826.4). This photo is dated 1895.



The second photo is a scan of a photo entitled "Thomas Mill" (P4133.7). In the bottom left-hand corner is LaPierre's watermark "BL", and this photo is dated 1894. Again, the new donation gives us the original glass plate for this photograph. The jagged black edge around the photograph is where the emulsion is coming away from the glass plate.



The Marsh Collection Society sincerely thanks Terry Hall for this generous donation to the enhancement of our Amherstburg heritage.

Philo Parsons Incident

By Al Jackson

On August 21, 1968 an historical plaque was unveiled at Holiday Beach Provincial Park, Malden Township (now known as Holiday Beach Conservation Area). This plaque commemorates an event in 1864 during the American Civil War when a group of southern Confederate agents living in Canada devised a plan to capture a Union warship and also free Confederate prisoners of war being held in a prison camp on Johnson's Island in Sandusky Bay, Ohio. The text on the plaque mentions the part played by the town of Malden (now Amherstburg) in one of the most daring but unsuccessful escapades in the American Civil War.

"Philo Parsons" was the name of a small 163 foot side-wheel passenger and freight steamboat that plied between Detroit and Sandusky with regular stops at Sandwich and Amherstburg on the Canadian Shore. "Michigan" was the name of a large heavily armed Union gunboat that was stationed in Sandusky Bay to guard the prison at Johnson's Island.

An article in the Amherstburg Echo of May 23, 1979 recalled "The Philo Parsons Incident" as follows: "The day chosen for the attempt was September 19, 1864... The passenger vessel "Philo Parsons" left her Detroit dock on schedule at eight in the morning... She stopped at Sandwich where four passengers came aboard... Proceeding downstream she called in at

Malden (Amherstburg) where twenty more passengers came aboard bringing with them a trunk bound securely with rope. At Middle Bass Island, Captain S.F. Atwood, who made his home there, got off as usual leaving his mate Campbell in command for the rest of the run to Sandusky... When about five miles off the island, the roughly dressed passengers threw open the trunk and pulled guns, knives and axes out of it. Four of them burst into the pilothouse and seized the wheel. Another held the clerk, W.O. Ashley at gunpoint... Still others herded the male passengers into the hold and locked the women and children in the women's quarters. Mate Campbell was ordered to head the "Parsons" down the lake for about an hour because it was too early to approach the gunboat "Michigan".



The engineer reported fuel was running low so "Parsons" headed back to Put-In-Bay to take on wood. At the dock another island steamer drew alongside, the tiny "Island Queen", which numbered among her passengers 35 members of the Ohio National Guard, en route to Toledo to be mustered out... No sooner were the lines of the "Island Queen" made fast to the "Parsons" when the Confederates leaped aboard the smaller vessel... Several shots were fired... The astonished soldiers did not have a chance to fight back... The passengers and Union soldiers

were put ashore under pledge they would sound no alarm for 24 hours... The "Parsons" finished loading fuel and with the "Island Queen" lashed alongside headed out into the lake at sunset... The "Island Queen" was later scuttled.

A Confederate spy Charles H. Cole had become a friend of the officers of the gunboat and was aboard it at the time... His job was to signal the "Parsons" an opportune time to attack... The "Parsons" laid her course for Johnson's Island and her rendezvous with Cole... There were lights from the "Michigan" but not the signals Cole was to have raised... Finally the leader of the conspiracy decided to go ahead and not wait for the signal but mate Campbell warned him of shoal waters in the area and the men fearing an ambush refused to tackle the gunboat so the "Parsons" was turned about and the enterprise forsaken."

The "Parsons" steamed back to the safety of the Canadian shore where the original crew and passengers were let off at Amherstburg and Fighting Island before the "Parsons" was taken to Sandwich where it was scuttled in shallow water. The conspirators left the ship with anything they could carry including the ship's piano and dispersed inland. It was later learned that they were in fact very lucky since the Union knew of this plot well in advance and were waiting in high alert for any attack. The ringleader of this failed attack was John Y. Beale, a southern naval officer who was eventually captured and hung in the State of New York. The "Philo Parsons" was returned to service but met her fate when she burned to the waterline in the Great Chicago Fire of October 8, 1871.

Bricks-N-Beams

This is the first of two articles describing the history of the property now known as 58 Richmond Street, currently occupied by Precision Jewellers.

Early on this was the site of the Albert Fox Livery and Feed Barn, which operated here for nearly 40 years. Albert Fox, a native of Malden, purchased the property from Catherine Brown and had a structure moved to the spot. On July 19, 1889, the Echo reported that "Augustus Bastien expects to commence on Monday, to move A. Fox's large building on the MacLeod property to Richmond Street, where he will fit it up for barns." The large building referred to is the former Number 2 Frame barracks at Fort Malden.

Originally situated on the grounds of the Old Fort, it was one of two frame barracks erected in 1838 under the orders of Sir John Colborne. He ordered several improvements and repairs to the Fort site that year, instructing the engineer to provide accommodation for 400 men of the 34th regiment who would be stationed here. Number 2 Frame Barracks was the smaller of the two barracks erected. It measured 125ft by 38ft and was situated just south of the men's brick barracks which still stand at Fort Malden today. Rooms were set up to accommodate 20 men. A room at the south end was used as a regimental store and orderly room, and at the north end was a school room. The interior was finished with lath, plastering and paint. Troops took possession of Barracks No.2 on January 7, 1839.



A. Fox Livery, c.1910, MCS Photo P5333

In 1859 military operations at Fort Malden ceased and ownership of the land and buildings was turned over to the Province of Ontario. Soon after the site became the Fort Malden Lunatic Asylum, and No.2 Barracks was designated for use as the female ward. The building required significant repairs which were carried out by the patients. According to Dr. Andrew Fisher, superintendent of the asylum, the "upright posts as well as the sills and joists...had become so rotten by the water soaking down the wood as to render them insecure." Decayed wood components were replaced and new shingles put on the roof. The Asylum was abandoned in 1870 when the patients were moved to London.

Seventeen years later in 1887, Albert Fox gave his son Theodore \$300 to purchase the structure from Mrs. John McLeod who owned part of the old Fort Malden grounds. As mentioned above it was moved to Richmond Street by Augustus Bastien two years later. The massive structure was brought to its new location through the rear of the lot from Rankin Avenue. Here, it was converted into a barn which extended almost to Rankin Avenue from Richmond. As many as 24 livery horses would be housed here at a time.

The Albert Fox Livery and Feed Barn became a principal part of Amherstburg transportation.

Fox operated the stage between Amherstburg and Windsor, and Gordon and Amherstburg. The coach was first driven by his brother William

Fox, and later by Albert's son, also named William. If the roads were in good shape a trip to Windsor from the Richmond Street terminal would take three hours, but would normally take around five.



Stagecoach outside of A. Fox Livery, c.1900 MCS Photo P5055

The Livery is also remembered as home to many famous racing horses, the first of which were Sleepy Tom and Honest John. According to Albert's Obituary in the Echo, he became known as the "Pop Geers of Canada" after a famous horse racer from Tennessee. Albert Fox passed away December 12, 1915 and the business was carried on by his son, Esrias. Under Esrias a taxi service and a gasoline and oil station were added. Esrias passed away in 1928.

Continued on page 7...

Bricks-N-Beams

...Continued from page 6

The Fox Livery property was purchased by Ben L. & John H. Shillington in 1932. The barn was razed and the property cleared in 1933. According to an article in the Amherstburg Echo at the time, the livery was a "staunchly built structure and much of the timber from it [was] still good. The nails and bolts [were] hand wrought and well made. The nails and bolts have been kept by many as souvenirs of the old building."



Gas Pumps at Esrias Fox Livery, c.1920
MCS Photo2043

Information regarding the structure's function as a barracks and ward at Fort Malden sourced from:

Fort Malden: A Structural Narrative History 1796-1976 by Dennis Carter-Edwards.
Available in our reference library.

Upsetting the Hour Glass



1928/1929

December- J.H. Pettypiece, collector of taxes for the town of Amherstburg, stated that the total amount of taxes collected for the year to date was \$76,000.

January- Public and Separate schools reopened for the term yesterday (Thursday) and the High School will re-open next Monday. The flu epidemic is interfering with attendance.

February- Work on the Pioneer Distillers' plant is progressing very fast.

1938/1939

December- Burley tobacco growers in Colchester South and Malden were elated when the buying of the 1938 crop commenced and there was a wild scramble by five companies to snap up the tobacco.

January- At the regular meeting of town council on Monday evening, the Advisory Committee was entrusted with the duty of looking into the numbering of houses in Amherstburg.

February- Bob-Lo steamers, Inc., announced that the

Georgian Bay Line will take over the management of the Bob-Lo Line. One of the new features of this will be the transformation of the two steamers, the S.S. Columbia and the S.S. Ste. Clair, into oil-fueled ships.

1948/49

December- More than a thousand youngsters attended the Christmas party stage by the Amherstburg Lions Club.

January- There was good attendance of New Canadians at the first English speaking class sponsored by the Ladies of Rotary, in the General Amherst High School.

February- Big Billy Docherty will highlight the main event again, Friday night at the Boxing Show in the Town Hall. His opponent will be Chuck Glaser, a smooth, good looking fighter from Toledo.

1958/1959

December- Lake storms in recent weeks have disrupted shipping schedules, and as a result some vessels will be making one less trip than anticipated this season.

January- Three hundred district hunters took part in the fox hunt

staged by the AMA Sportsmen's Assoc. in Malden on Saturday. The hunters gather at Bell's Triangle on King's Highway No.18 below Amherstburg and swept the area along the lake front through to Holiday Beach.

February- A hungry thief whose girlfriend apparently needed a new dress made a double strike on Monday night and broke into the Old Colony Coffee Shop Dalhousie Street and the adjoining Terry's Dress Shop.

1968/1969

December- A motion that the council ask for a re-count of the votes cast in the recent municipal election was turned down by the Anderdon council.

January- The Amherstburg area will be one of the first ones to get door-to-door mail delivery when the freeze on further expenditures in the post office department is lifted.

February- First step in the construction of an apartment complex on Dalhousie Street South, across from the McQueen Marine Limited Office, was taken Monday morning when trees were cut down by the Amherstburg board of works gang.

Collection Highlights

Amherst Dairy Milk Bottle

George C. Chapman was the first proprietor of Amherst Dairy. According to The Amherstburg Echo, Chapman had been serving dairy to the Amherstburg Community since 1920. The original slogan for the business was "Baby First" in reference to the pureness of the milk. The milk came exclusively from Durham, Jersey, and Holstein cows, and was bottled in a sanitary plant. In 1923 Chapman advertised that he would deliver milk twice daily throughout the summer months and was at that time operating out of Malden. He opened a new sterilizing plant in the Hadley Block (now 63-73 Murray) in May of 1924. Upon opening the prices were as follows: Cream, 18¢ half pint; milk, 14¢ quart, 7¢ pint, 5¢ glass.

In 1924, J.C. Elliot purchased Amherst Dairy from Chapman. He made some improvements including the installation of a sterilizer and cooler in a vacant adjacent store. He delivered milk throughout Amherstburg, as well as from Edgewater Beach to Lake Erie Country Club.

John Bates purchased the company from Elliot in 1928 and began operations with his sons Carl and Lloyd. Bates purchased an Excelsior electric refrigerator, capable of handling 4 tons of milk daily in order to provide better cooling. Under Bates' ownership, a dairy bar was added which served milk, ice cream and soft drinks. After a decade of prosperous ownership, Bates sold the business to Henry H. Godden, an experienced dairyman from Toronto. At the time of the sale in 1938, the Echo described the dairy as "one of the most modernly equipped dairies in Essex County".

Soon after the transfer, H. Godden announced the installation of equipment to make hot chocolate, and a fudge warmer for the dairy Bar. By 1948, the company decided to discontinue the dairy bar due to the growing dairy department and need for space for retail products. The sale of milk, butter, and dairy tickets would continue.

In November of 1948, Purity Dairies purchased Amherst Dairy from H.H. Godden, and the company name was retired.



Amherst Dairy Milk Bottle
MCS2003.091.001

To go with your Milk...

Winter Dessert Recipes from the Amherstburg Echo

Chocolate Drop Cakes

1 egg, 1 cup brown sugar, ½ cup butter, ½ cup buttermilk, 1 teaspoon soda in 1 ¼ cups flour, 2 squares chocolate, ½ cup nuts.
(February 27, 1925)

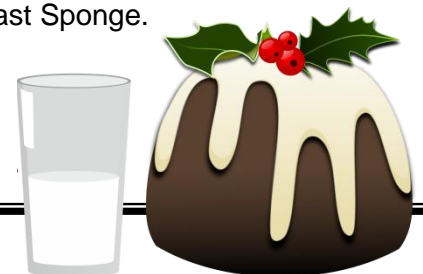
Excellent Dessert

For a scrumptious dessert fold a half cup of chopped pitted dates into a package of butterscotch pie filling that's been prepared and cooled; fill small tart shells with the pudding and top with whipped cream and finely chopped nutmeats.
(December 13, 1951)

Cinnamon Buns

Dissolve 3 tablespoons sugar and 1 teaspoon salt in ½ cup scalded milk. Cool. Mix with 1 cup Royal Yeast Sponge. Add 3 tablespoons melted shortening and 2 ¾ cups flour. Knead to soft dough. Let rise until double in bulk. Knead again. Roll out ½ inch thick. Spread with melted butter and sprinkle with sugar and cinnamon. Roll up like jelly roll and cut off thick slices. Place these on end in greased pan and allow to rise until double in bulk. Wash with egg or milk and bake about 40 minutes at 375° F. Makes 12 rolls.

See Echo article for Royal Yeast Sponge.
(January 15, 1932)



Letter to Santa Claus

Dear Santa, I am writing you a few lines to tell you what I would like- a pair of bob-skates, 1 doll and 1 teddy bear, 1 erector set, a couple of nice warm night shirts, and can you please bring me lots of candy, nuts and fruit. Dear Santa Claus, I will leave you some Christmas Cake and a glass of milk on the table for you. I will close. Hope you don't forget me, and I hope your sleigh don't break down with the big load you got. With love, from Mark Jubenville.

Published in the Amherstburg Echo December 21, 1923