



Reflections

Newsletter of the Marsh Historical Collection
Amherstburg, Ontario



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Ice Harvesting

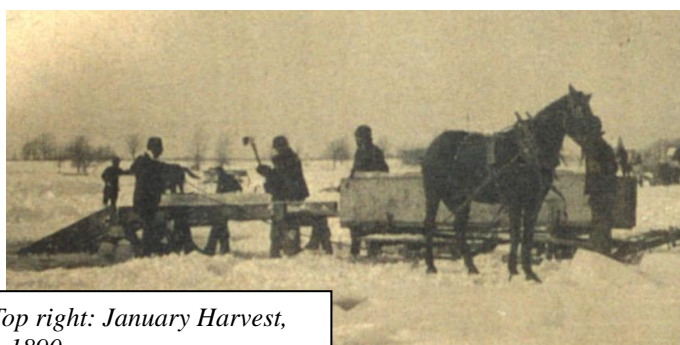
One of our volunteers suggested we write about a bygone industry that was once a big business in Amherstburg. This previously essential trade has since been entirely abandoned.

The harvesting of ice from the Detroit River in the winter was for many years relied upon for food preservation in the warm summer months. The annual ice harvest was a major event not only for the local ice dealers and butchers, but for the many restaurants and private residences needing to cool their ice boxes holding meats, fruits, ice cream, and other perishables. Each year, the ice men would wait for favourable weather conditions to produce thick ice on the river. The harvest typically occurred in January or February when the ice was reported to be anywhere from 10" to 2' deep. John Marsh described the process of retrieving the ice in his column, *With the Tide*: "When the ice was frozen to proper thickness the task of plowing a furrow and sawing the ice into uniform scales had to be accomplished quickly. Scores of men worked hard and fast. They crawled out of bed at cold-gray dawn and hurried to the ice claims using large saws to cut the frozen squares which would be loaded up when the men and teams arrived at 7 a.m.

A man and his team earned an average of eight dollars per day. The ice was uniformly piled on the large bobsleds and pulled by horses up the banks near the end of Rankin Avenue." The most popular areas to harvest from were from north of the current Navy Yard Park to Alma Street, and in Callam's Bay south of town.

Many men were employed in the natural ice business. Some of the local ice men over the years were John Stokes, Edward Crimmins, Si Bertrand, Arthur Kemp, Remi Primeau, Samuel McGee, George Girardin, and Henry Florey. John Hamilton Sr. was the biggest ice dealer. In 1908, it was announced in *The Echo* that the ice business in town would be centralized the coming season under Mr. Hamilton who was purchasing all existing ice businesses in town. In 1909, high temperatures resulted in an ice famine that created worry for many local merchants. In March, signs of an early spring were showing and the ice problem had yet to be solved. On March 19, *The Echo* reported that John Hamilton had ordered 1,500 tons of ice from Tawas, Michigan. A week later, 30 cars of ice had already arrived and another 20 were on their way. The ice was reported to be clear and of high quality (not honey-combed). According to Marsh, this was the heaviest load to arrive here by freight in the history of the old 'Plug' Line.

Continued on page 3...



*Top right: January Harvest, c.1890s.
MCS P691.*

*Top left: Cutting ice for 1895.
MCS P1822.4.*

Bottom middle: Cutting ice for [John] Stokes, 1895. MCS P1822.6.

Photographs by Ben Lapierre.



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Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

from the Marsh Collection Society



CONTACT US

The Marsh Collection office remains closed to the public. If you have any research questions or other inquiries, staff can be reached by email or phone.

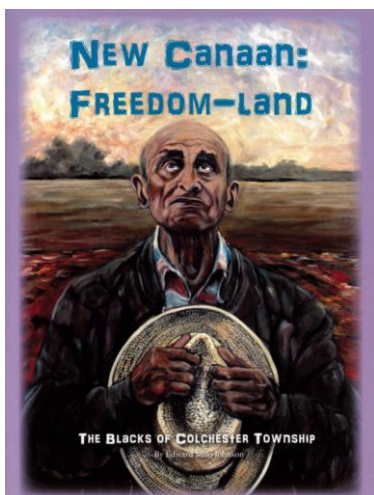


Gift Shop

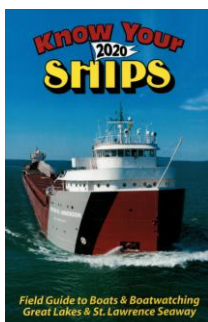
Books can be purchased by calling 519-736-9191 or emailing research@marshcollection.org. We will schedule curbside pickup or arrange for shipping.

Here are a few of the books available. For a more detailed listing, visit:

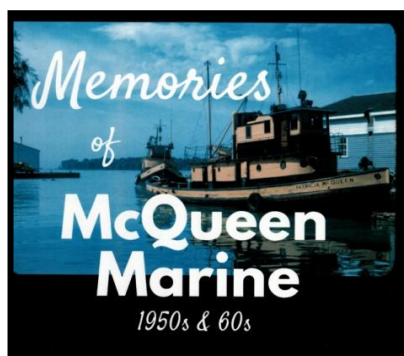
<https://www.marshcollection.org/gift-shop/>



**New Canaan:
Freedom-Land**
\$30

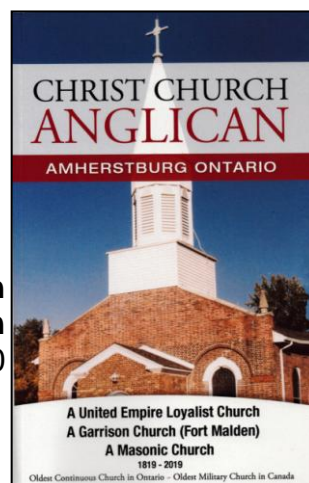


**Know Your Ships
2020**
\$22

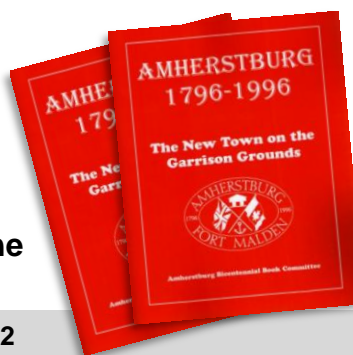


Memories of McQueen Marine
\$25

**Christ Church
Anglican**
\$20



**Letters Home
1940-1945**
\$20



Amherstburg 1796-1996
*The New Town on the
Garrison Grounds*
Vol. I \$35 Vol. II \$40

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.

Phone: 519-736-9191

Email: research@marshcollection.org

Website: www.marshcollection.org

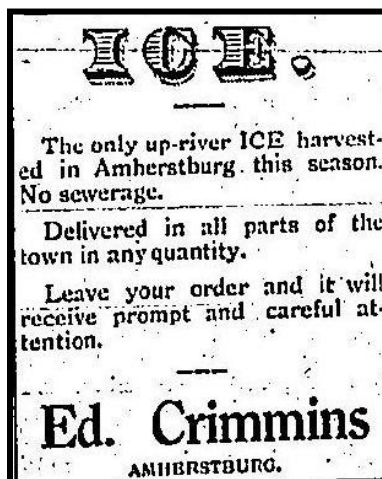


Ice Harvesting...Continued from page 1

Around this time, artificial ice was becoming popular. In May of 1909, Scott Atkin made a deal with the Marx Brewing Co. in Wyandotte for a summer's supply of ice made by machinery from filtered and distilled water. Artificial ice companies started popping up around town. In 1925, the Echo reported that "a number of local capitalists are planning to establish a municipal ice plant for the manufacture of tri-pure artificial ice for which there is a growing demand". The Bell Ice Company opened an artificial ice depot on Sandwich Street next to Pouget's Ice Cream Shop in 1927, under the management of Collier Hunt. By 1927, Hamilton Bros. (sons of John) were advertising both natural and artificial ice. Ice was sold in 25 lb cakes, which around that time sold for about \$0.20 a cake.

Aside from not having to rely on the weather, artificial ice was advertised as lasting longer than natural ice. Pollution was also avoided using this method of manufacture. Ice from the river had the potential to cause typhoid and other sicknesses. Many ads claimed to use "Up-River Ice" free of sewage etc. In one report, the area of the river in front of Fort Malden is described as being above all sewer outlets as was approved of by the Board of Health.

In her column *Conversation Pieces* Helen Marsh recounts the ice box days when men would bring a large cake of river ice and place it in the top of the box to cool food on hot summer days. Eventually, with the advancement of refrigeration technology, private households were able to own electric refrigerators. By the late 1950s the home ice delivery business became obsolete as well.



The Amherstburg Echo May 31, 1912

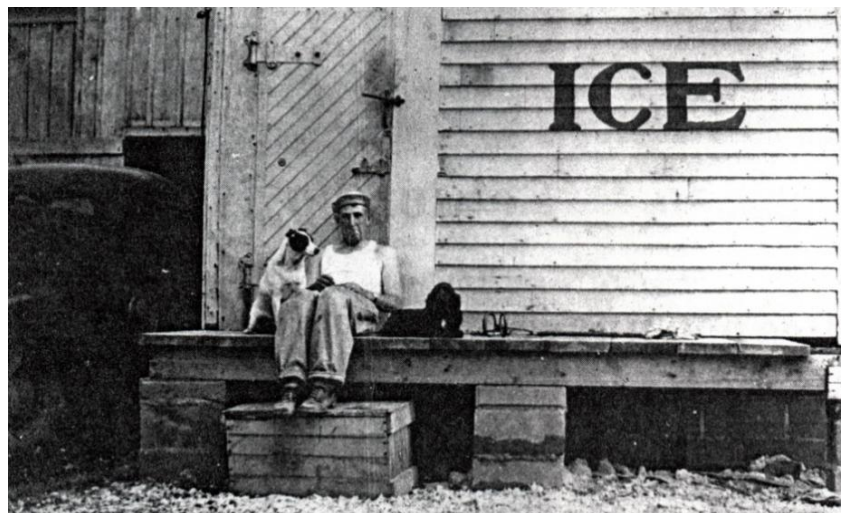
Bricks-N-Beams

There were once several ice houses scattered throughout town. Ice dealers, butchers, and even private residents would build their own ice houses. An article in *The Amherstburg Echo* in 1887 provided instructions for the erection of an ice house:

"It will soon be time for those without an ice-house to be preparing one. No well-appointed farm or summer residence should be without this luxury any more than without a well or a good spring of water. It is not only a comfort, but a means of economy in preserving meats and fruits in the heat of summer, while one that will answer every purpose may be put up and filled at a trifling expense. No elaborate house is necessary for preserving the ice. There are some requirements, however, that must be attended to.

First, good drainage must be secured without giving the air access to the ice through the drain. If the soil is porous or gravelly, no artificial drainage is required. It is not essential that the ice be stored underground, as it keeps quite as well above the surface. The ice should be compactly packed and enclosed and packed with saw-dust, or tan-bark, on all sides, and on the top to the depth of at least 12". This packing is the great preservative of the ice. The larger the body of ice stored the better it will keep. The ice house should not be less than twelve feet square on the inside, and eight feet high. A few square rods of ice will suffice to fill an ordinary house, and the depth of water need not be more than three feet."

The old version of the ice house was eventually upgraded. In 1929, the Hamilton Bros. completed a modern ice station with a motor installed to keep the ice temperature consistent. This would keep the storage facility at 3 degrees below freezing at all times, allowing them to guarantee "full weight ice". This structure had the capacity to hold 15 tons of ice. The Hamilton Ice House was one of the last of these structures in town. It was situated on the south side of Gore Street between Dalhousie and Ramsay.



Hamilton Ice House c. 1944 with Glen Hamilton seated on the steps.

Upsetting the Hour Glass

1930/31

December- Not among the least of interesting events transpiring at this season, are the annual Christmas entertainment provided by practically every rural school.

October- Chopping every afternoon at Wigle Mill, Amherstburg, commencing January 2nd, 1931

February- Bridge and euchre party under the auspices of the Canadian Legion in the Library Auditorium, February 11th. Good prizes.

1940/41

December- Recruiting for the Royal Canadian Air Force in Amherstburg has been slow since an office opened two weeks ago in the town hall.

January- The annual meeting of the Amherstburg, Anderdon and Malden Red Cross Society will be held Monday afternoon at two o'clock January 20, in the work room, Scratch Block. The Society reports a new quota of 30 men's dressing gowns.

February- In four drives last week hunters of Anderdon bagged 92 jackrabbits. There was an average of 15 men on each drive.

1950/51

December- The regular meeting of the Amherstburg Lions Club was held Monday night at the Amherst Hotel.

January- Both the Amherstburg Council and the Amherstburg PUC have been notified by Local 1628, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers that the union wishes to open negotiations on a new contract.

February- A group of friends of ten years standing are having a Valentine Party and Get-together in the Stone School House, Pike Road, Saturday evening.

1960/61

December- Ranta Enterprises has been awarded the contract to haul 600 tons of stone to fill in the riverbank in front of the McGregor property, Fort Malden National Historic Park.

January- It did not take long over the weekend for floating ice to block the lower part of the Amherstburg Channel.

February- The Verdi Club banquet was held February fourth to celebrate the first anniversary of the new building and was attended by over 300 people made up of members, their families and relatives.

1970/71

December- A tour through the Amherstburg, Anderdon and Malden area discloses hundreds of homes decorated with Christmas lights.

January- The Canadian Coast Guard buoy tender Kenoki is wintering on the inside side of the marine services base on Dalhousie Street south.

February- The Township of Malden has signed a contract with the Ontario Provincial Police to provide municipal policing for the township.



Indexes to Upsetting the Hour Glass as published in The Amherstburg Echo are available on our website under Online Resources.

Unravelling the Story of...

The Hamilton & Lewitt Knitting Co.

Over the last two hundred years of the history of our town, many businesses have come and gone. Some have stood the test of time and others were only here for a short time. One of these cases is the little known Hamilton and Lewitt Knitting Company.



The Lewitt family, father James E., sons Charles and Wilfred, daughter Thirza and James' wife Mary, came to Amherstburg in 1912 and moved their knitting company with them. One of the former Middleditch Foundry buildings (north of Park Street on the east side of Dalhousie) was purchased and refitted to produce hosiery, sweaters and underwear. The Essex Free Press wrote in its May 10, 1912 edition that, "The Hamilton and Lewitt Knitting Company, which is removing from Glencoe on account of the shortage of labour at the Middlesex town." Before its move to Amherstburg, the company's name included the last name of Hamilton. Background information regarding the "Hamilton" name cannot be found. The newly based company looked to the Town of Amherstburg for help in purchasing \$5,000 stock to assist with its start

up. Advertisements ran in The Amherstburg Echo looking for people to purchase shares in the business. Excitement also ran high in town as this business was hopefully going to hire 25 women. The factory was supposed to begin with the production of hosiery and sweaters. Once they were up and running, Lewitt was going to bring the underwear machinery from Glencoe to add to the new location.

By March of 1913, the sweater plant was fully operational and orders for socks were coming in from as far as Toronto and Montreal. By May a new buttonhole machine was installed, one of only six in Canada. This exciting news was reported in the Essex Free Press.

As noted in March 1914 annual meeting of the share-holders report, "the factory has enough orders on hand to keep it working full capacity all year, twenty girls are now employed, and two instructors are being engaged to look after a number of additional employees who will be taken on from time to time until every machine is in operation, so that the production for the year will reach the limit of the factory's capacity."

With the start of World War I in July, 1914, the Hamilton and Lewitt Company also started to receive orders for grey socks from the Canadian Militia Department.

Charles Lewitt, (1885-1928) the oldest son of James and Mary, was a bookkeeper when he started with the company at the beginning of the Amherstburg transition. Around 1914, he left town and married Jessica May Precious in Edmonton, Alberta in 1915. By 1920 Charles, his wife Jessie and his two children were living in Detroit, Michigan.

Wilfred Lewitt (1891-1957), youngest child of James and Mary, also worked with the family business. He promoted Hamilton and Lewitt at the Amherstburg, Anderdon and Malden Fall Fair in 1912, as noted in The Amherstburg Echo. In January, 1915 Wilfred signed up to serve in World War I. His trade is listed as "knitter". In 1921 he married Jennie May McCulloh and lived in Hamilton, Ontario.

Continued on page 5...

Above Photograph: Lewitt Family, c.1890

Hamilton & Lewitt Knitting Co.

...Continued from page 5



In the February 12, 1937 edition of The Amherstburg Echo an article read that the old knitting mill, a landmark for over fifty years, was razed. The article also mentions, "During the war L.W. (sic) Lewitt and Son opened a knitting mill there, financed by local capital and it was a busy concern for a year or two, but some rejected war orders which cost a lot to produce, put the place on the rocks."

By October of 1915, the Hamilton & Lewitt Knitting Co., was unable to pay its creditors.

The company assigned J.E. D'Avignon, Sheriff of the Town of Sandwich, to its property. This was an alternative to formal bankruptcy.

In the September 15, 1916 edition of The Amherstburg Echo there was an ad put in by Mrs. J.E. Lewitt for an auction sale of the family's household furniture, stoves, etc. The public auction was to be held on September 23, 1916 at their residence on Sandwich Street. From Amherstburg, James and Mary moved to Ottawa. On James' death certificate of July 8, 1936 it stated that he had lived in Ottawa since 1916.

In 1919, a judge issued a certificate of order for Foreclosure on the former knitting company lands and building. It was then sold by Annie Lett, who held the mortgage on the property. William Stansell, an auto manufacturer from Detroit, and Frank Laramie, Esquire, of Amherstburg made the purchase.

The pressures of a World War along with the departure of James' sons from the area, could have been too much for the little company. The Hamilton and Lewitt story is another small part of Amherstburg's very interesting commercial history.

Photo: Hamilton & Lewitt staff on Bob-Lo Island with James Lewitt at centre, c.1915. MCS P5019

Then & Now

Ray's Handy Place

Corner of Pike Road and the 6th Concession of
Malden (Busy Bee Corner)
c.1940

Owned by Raymond and Alma Deslippe.



Andy Cap Truck Accessories Inc.
Present-day
6011 County Road 18

Ancestral Lines

Levi Jariett, Sr., son of Richard Jariett and Philadelphia (nee Skinner), and Susan (nee Lepain), daughter of Hubert Lepain and Theresa (nee Caldwell), were married on October 7, 1873 at St. John the Baptist R. C. Church, Amherstburg. Sixty years later they celebrated the anniversary of that event, details of which were published in The Amherstburg Echo on October 13th, 1933, as follows:-

"HAPPY WEDDING ANNIVERSARY - The Echo is more than pleased to report the celebration by Mr. and Mrs. Levi Jarriett, Sr., of their 60th wedding anniversary, which occurred last Sunday. Their family were home for the occasion: Mrs. Oscar Shepley, who lives with her parents; Mr. and Mrs. Frank Delmore and family; Mr. and Mrs. Fred Dufour and family, and Mr. and Mrs. Levi Jarriett, Jr., and family. During the afternoon the honored guests were presented with a clock and sincere congratulations and wishes for many more years of married life. Mr. and Mrs. Jarriett were married October 7th, 1873 and had a family of eight children, four of whom are living. Mr. Jarriett will be 86 years old next March....."

In June 1934, The Echo published an article about part of the life of *"Levi Jarriett, Malden Pioneer A Respected Citizen of Township"*, from which we extracted the following information. His parents, Richard Jariett and the former Philadelphia Skinner, sailed from England to New York in 1836...a trip that took eight weeks and two days. A few years later they came to Canada and *"took up land near Paquette, where Levi Jarriett was born, and they later moved to the Wm. Borrowman farm in Malden, and then to the Robert Snider farm. From there they went to the Caldwell farm and finally settled on the farm where Levi Jarriett now lives on the seventh concession of Malden."*

Levi Jariett passed away on February 20th, 1936 *"at his home on the seventh concession of*



Seated: Levi Jariett, Sr. (1847-1936) and Susan (Lepain) Jariett (1851-1937). Standing: Maude (Mrs. Oscar Shepley) (1874-1965), Nora (Mrs. Frank Delmore) (1881-1964), Levi (Jr.) (1885-1980), Lena (Mrs. Fred Dufour) (1888-1979). It is believed that the above photo was taken in 1933 on the occasion of their 60th wedding anniversary.

Malden", in his 89th year. His obituary in The Amherstburg Echo on February 21st, a copy of which is in the Marsh Collection files, is very informative but unfortunately far too lengthy to include here. Susan (Lepain) Jariett died a year later, on February 11th, 1937. Her obituary states that she and Levi came to Malden *"first on the George Levergood farm for eight years, and 32 years ago (c. 1905) bought the William Mickle farm, lake front road, where they remained until their deaths."*

Delving into earlier history revealed that Levi's father, Richard Jariett, , son of Richard and Sarah Jariett, was born November 5th 1809, christened December 25th 1831 at Mayfield, Sussex, England. On January 2nd 1832 at Mayfield, Sussex, England, he married Philadelphia Skinner. Four years later, with their one-year-old daughter Eliza, they left from London on board the *Westminster*, arriving in New York on April 25th. According to his obituary in The Echo (November 28, 1879), *"after spending a few years in the States, the family removed to Canada and settled in the township of Malden, where he resided until within a few months previous to his death."*

Continued on page 8...

Collection Highlights

Maps are valuable resources that hold a wide range of information about the area they depict. Physical land features, place names, buildings, railway routes, and property ownership are all examples of information that can be gleaned from maps.

At the Marsh Collection, we have over 150 maps in the archives- both copies and originals. Over the past year, our dedicated volunteer, Ken Hutnik, took on the massive task of organizing and digitizing the collection. Ken first performed a review of the collection to locate each map, identify duplicates, and determine whether the maps fell with the Marsh Collection Society mandate.

Maps can be cumbersome items. They are often oversized, rolled or fragile. It is not ideal to pull out the original map each time a researcher would like to have a look. In order to preserve the physical copies while ensuring that they are accessible, we decided to create digital images for reference. Ken has gone through and photographed each map, creating a digital file labelled with a corresponding object ID.

Now photographed, the maps have been stored in the archives for long term preservation. We are in the process of creating a catalogue record for each map to which the digital file is linked. The record is entered into our collections database which is searchable by keyword, place, name reference etc.

Thanks very much to Ken for all of his work so far. We have many projects to keep him busy for quite a while!



*Left: Ken at work in the archives.
Above: Archival rolled map storage.*

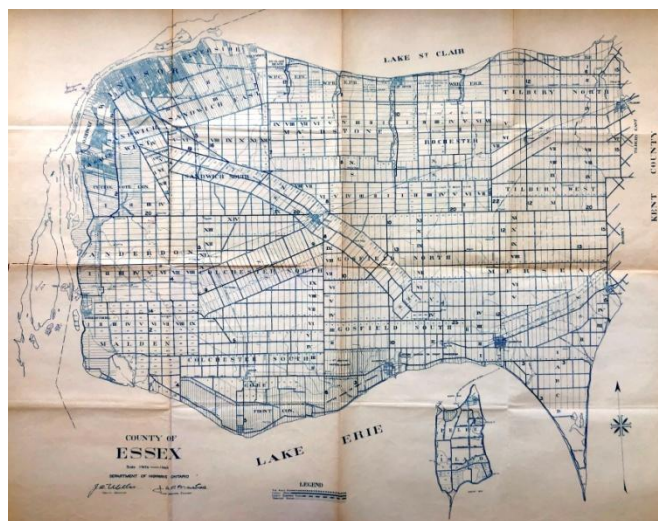
Ancestral Lines

...Continued from page 7

Not all of their children followed them to Essex County. In the 1861 census of Malden, Richard Jariett, his wife and 5 of their 9 children - Mary, John, Levi, James and Alfred were living on 25 acres in Lot 64 on 6th of Malden.

When Philadelphia (Skinner) Jariett died in Malden on April 23, 1888, nine children survived her as follows:- George, who lived in Rochester, N.Y.; Levi, in Sandwich East; James and Alfred, in Malden; Richard and John, in Missouri; Mary (Mrs. Jacob Levergood), in Colchester; Eliza (Mrs. George Levergood), in Malden, and Harriet (Mrs. James Hollinsworth), in Sandwich.

The Jariett genealogy file in the Marsh Historical Collection is quite extensive. Due to Covid-19 we are not open to the public, but if you have questions please feel free to contact research@marshcollection.org.



*Map of Essex County, 1948
Department of Highways Ontario
Photograph by Ken Hutnik*

VOLUNTEERS

If you are interested in volunteering at the Marsh Collection, please fill out a form on our website: <https://www.marshcollection.org/volunteer/> or give us a call at 519-736-9191.