

With The Tide

Recollections and Anecdotal Histories
of the
Town of Amherstburg
and the
Lower Detroit River District

By John A. March

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MARSH COLLECTION SOCIETY

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INTRODUCTION

JOHN ARTHUR MARSH (1901-1993) and HELEN MARSH (1900-1986) were born at the family's first home on the west side of Dalhousie Street, to Arthur Wesley Marsh (1872-1940) and his wife, Bessie Hicks (1876-1968). Arthur W. Marsh was at that time associated with John A. Auld at The Amherstburg Echo. In 1919 he built a new home at the north end of Dalhousie, across from the west town park. Arthur Marsh died from injuries sustained in an automobile accident in 1940. His widow remained at the family home until her death in 1968.

John and Helen Marsh received their early education at the Amherstburg Public School, where Helen returned to teach after completing her education at the Amherstburg Continuation School and London Teachers' College. She remained there until 1941 when she gave up teaching to join her brother at The Echo, following their father's untimely death and reporter Bill Currie's enlistment in the service.

For forty years "Miss Marsh" kept the community informed of social and family events in Amherstburg, Harrow, River Canard and the surrounding townships. In that position she carried on telephone friendships with news contacts for many years, some of whom she never met in person. During World War II Helen's duties kept her in touch with families of servicemen and women overseas. She was involved with the Canadian Red Cross and reported on the boys killed and wounded, as well as those taken prisoners-of-war. One of her more pleasant duties was to advise families when their "war-bride" daughters-in-law would be arriving in Canada. Helen was an encyclopedia of this century's local history and genealogy. Her weekly "Conversation Pieces" in The Amherstburg Echo were models of how the English language should be written.

John Marsh attended the Amherstburg Public School, completing entrance requirements at the tender age of eleven. His parents felt that he was too young to be thrown in with the big boys at the Continuation School, so they kept him out of school for a year, during which time he peddled papers and performed other tasks at The Echo. John always said that he started out as a paper boy and ended up as one.

He then entered high school but by the end of Form III found that school was getting tiresome. His father wisely agreed that perhaps John would be happier doing manual labour at the newly-established Brunner Mond of Canada plant. After a year there, returning to school looked very good to young John. He completed his high school education in Amherstburg and then travelled to Windsor Collegiate for a year, obtaining his Upper School diploma. He then entered McGill University in Montreal and graduated in 1924 with a Bachelor of Commerce degree. John Auld died that year so following graduation from McGill, John Marsh joined his father full time at the newspaper.

Activities on the Detroit River were an integral part of the lives of John and Helen Marsh. Their childhood was filled with exciting events. They witnessed Amherstburg's history first hand - from the dredging of the Amherstburg and Livingstone Channels - purification of the town's water - ice harvesting and horse racing on the river - changes on Bois Blanc Island and the advent of automobiles. They lived through the horse and buggy era, the electric railway and motorized buses, to seeing-through a new invention called television - man walking on the moon.

The development of Fort Malden as a National Historic Site and John Marsh are synonymous. It would be difficult to relate one without the other. That's just one of the stories John dictated for the book. There were many things he didn't mention - particularly if might bring him attention.

In 1942 he was elected President of the Ontario-Quebec Division of the Canadian Weekly Newspaper Association. His father had held that position as the National President. In 1953 he was Secretary-Treasurer of the Southwestern Ontario Weekly Newspaper Association and in 1954 was elected President of that body. During his more than sixty years' association with The Amherstburg Echo, from paper boy to publisher, the role of reporter was the one he most enjoyed. Throughout those years he strove constantly to develop and maintain the interest of The Echo readers in their heritage and community, all the while keeping tabs on the town fathers!

It might appear from this sketch that John and Helen Marsh had no personal life. . .such is not the case. They both experienced a full life but only a few close friends know of their personal joys and tragedies. . .and they would have it no other way.

In 1981 John and Helen sold The Amherstburg Echo to John and Linda James. They looked long and hard at other offers but decided that The Echo should be in the hands of the grandson of John's old friend, George James, publisher of a family-operated weekly in Bowmanville, The Canadian Statesman.

Upon retirement John had more time to devote to his lifetime loves - talking to people and collecting things. He has met and mingled with dignitaries, prime ministers and people from all walks of life, but derived the most enjoyment from sitting on his favourite bench in front of the Bank of Montreal, conversing with his favourites - the folks from Essex County.

Paul Vasey was a Windsor Star staff writer in 1981. He interviewed John and we believe that his perception of the "white-haired bespectacled" Marsh, "sitting with his bare feet on the couch in the glassed-in den of his river-facing home" was, as he himself would say, "Right on the beam!" "Most of the talk", wrote Vasey, "has to do with the history of this town . . . talk of brothels and

bootleggers and rum-runners and politicians with their hand in the cookie jar. And most of the good stories he tells only after putting you off the record. Which makes you guess John Marsh may be thinking of writing a book about it all."

In 1985 Helen and John Marsh were the recipients of that year's Chamber of Commerce "CITIZENS OF THE YEAR" Award for their contribution to Amherstburg and the tri-community. . .nominated by his old friend, H. Murray Smith. On that occasion E. P. Chant wrote an insightful article in The Amherstburg Echo about John and Helen Marsh, aptly labelling them "The Curmudgeon and the Lady". "As a true journalist", he wrote, "that is a recorder of a community's life and times, its foibles and strengths, John Marsh is without peer. As a citizen, he has always fought for what he believed in, striving to improve his town and its government with kid-gloved appeals, or both-barrels editorial comments. . . .Helen is the perfect counter-balance to her brother; loved and admired without exception or qualification, tactful and fashion-conscious. . .for the most part she is a thoroughly modern woman who can chuckle at fads, welcome beneficial technological developments and caution against those swings pinpointed above which can only bring ill results. . .Thus if John was the recorder of this area's government for the past forty years. . .Helen's job was no less important; she looked at the day-to-day triumphs and tragedies of individuals and families. . . together they were a team which turned out a unique and weekly-awaited publication."

THE MARSH COLLECTION SOCIETY

During the early 1980s many discussions took place between John and Helen Marsh, their dear friend and attorney Richard D. Thrasher, Q. C., and Eleanor Gignac, concerning the eventual disposal of the extensive library of historical books and papers collected by the Marsh family during their lifetime. Realizing that their collection of not only books and papers but photographs, genealogical and personal recollections was a valuable asset to the community - particularly to researchers of local history - the "MARSH COLLECTION SOCIETY", a non-profit organization, operated with a board of directors, was established and chartered in 1983. The intention of the Collection, as outlined in the Policy Statement, is "to encourage research into the history and development of the lower Detroit River, the Town of Amherstburg and areas adjacent thereto; to collect and to preserve all articles of interest relating to such history and development; to provide a place to house, display, conserve, restore, conduct research into and otherwise, to accept gifts, legacies, devises, and bequests, and to hold, invest, expand or deal with the same furtherance of the objects of the Corporation."

The Marsh family left not only a legacy in the way of research materials, but also a foundation which can operate the Collection. One of the few stipulations which John insisted upon was that a facility would not be opened

until after his death, which took place in February, 1993. Helen passed away in March, 1986. Dick Thrasher also left us all too soon; he passed away in September, 1993 but not before getting the wheels in motion for the opening of the Marsh Collection.

In October, 1994 the Marsh Collection Society rented temporary quarters on the second floor of 235 Dalhousie Street. . . across the street from The Amherstburg Echo. . . above Tempest Books. . . with a view of the Detroit River, in the same neighbourhood where John and Helen Marsh had spent their entire lives. An archivist was hired to catalogue and maintain the collection and facility, which opened to the public at that time.

In the early 1980s, John Marsh recorded some of his recollections of life in Amherstburg from boyhood through almost sixty years at The Echo. Those who knew his feisty nature may expect to find some juicy tidbit or caustic remarks in his recollections - but such is not the case. John had no intention of causing ill-will or embarrassment to anyone - though at times he was very tempted! His only wish was that you read and enjoy the stories and perhaps along the way pick up a bit of information previously unknown to you about his beloved Amherstburg. After John retired from The Echo he walked the town every single day for a couple or more years. On one of these walks along Dalhousie Street, he was interviewed and filmed for a documentary about Amherstburg. His last comment in the film was, "I love this town. . . I love every crack in it."

Eleanor Gignac
Marsh Collection Society
May, 1995

MARSH PAPERS

The 'MARSH PAPERS' is an incorporation of items assembled during our lives, many of which were spent enjoyably as editors of The Amherstburg Echo, a weekly newspaper established in November, 1874 by John A. Auld and William D. Balfour.

Included in the 'MARSH COLLECTION' is an excellent library of books which contain material relevant to historic Amherstburg and the surrounding district. However, we are primarily concerned here with relating some history of Amherstburg and the area as we knew it from the early 1900s. We will focus on tales of this wonderful river town and some of its beloved characters with whom over the years we have been acquainted and blessed.

In the years to come the MARSH PAPERS will be a source of information and interest to Amherstburg's future generations. We pass it on to the community with our love.

Sincerely,

John A. and Helen Marsh



Courtesy Fort Malden National Historic Site



MARSH FAMILY - Arthur and Bessie (Hicks), Helen and John



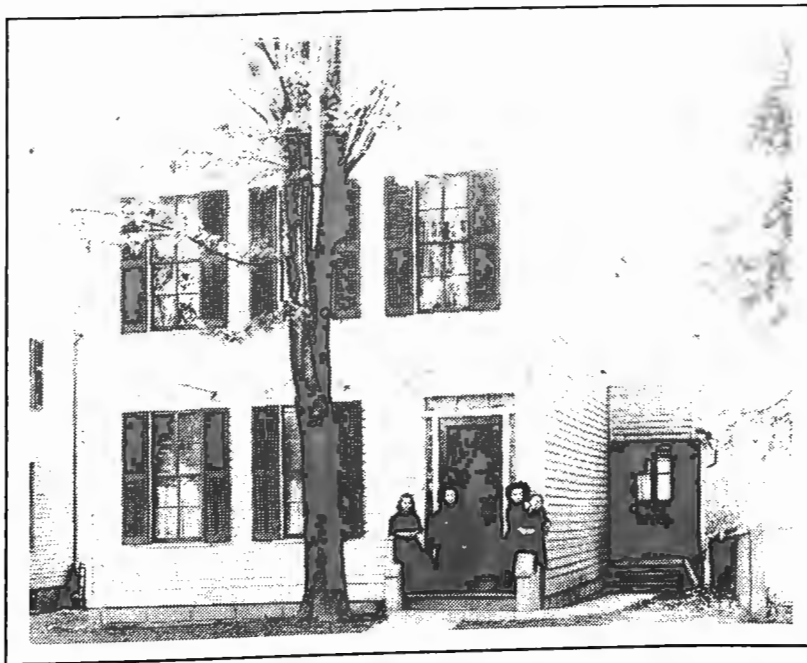
**Helen and John Marsh
Circa 1904**



Courtesy Fort Malden
National Historic Site

RECOLLECTIONS OF A BOY GROWING UP ALONG THE DETROIT RIVER

It was a great privilege for me to grow up and spend my entire life along the river. I was born in a house on north Dalhousie Street which was torn down many years ago to make way for the spacious yellow brick residence where Mr. & Mrs. Drifford Bertrand and later Mac Gatfield resided. The John Auld home was next door on the immediate north...John Mailloux' family has been living there for a number of years now. Around 1914-1915 father had our present home built across from the park, so the river has always been an integral part of me.



Original Marsh residence

HARRY ATWOOD'S FLYING BOAT

Many memories come to mind, one of the first being during the period prior to World War I when Harry Atwood, a well-known American aviator, landed his flying boat on the river at Amherstburg. The aeroplane, with a break in her hull, was towed ashore just north of what is now the King's Navy Yard

Park. Fred Girardin, a master ship's carpenter with The U.S. Corps of Engineers, was engaged to repair the damage. Day after day the flying boat was taken out into the river but Atwood failed to get it off the water. Hundreds of people were attracted to the scene - they sat along the bank from the Waterworks Park to North Street, enjoying the fruitless efforts. Finally, Atwood gave up in disgust and the plane was towed to Detroit.

ICE HARVESTING

Along that same stretch from the Waterworks Park north, in front of old Fort Malden to Alma Street as well as at Callam's Bay south of town, local butchers and ice dealers waited anxiously each winter for steady, cold weather which would freeze the river solid for harvest time. As soon as the waters froze over and ice was a suitable depth, they carefully wandered out onto the surface and staked their claims. While there was supposed to be an unwritten law that a staked claim not be violated, there were times when claim jumpers disregarded this agreement and trouble brewed.

John Hamilton Sr. usually reaped the biggest crop of clear blue ice. Other dealers were Edward Crimmins, Si Bertrand, Arthur Kemp, Remi Primeau, Samuel McGee, George Girardin, Henry Florey and the Lake View Hotel.

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. Area icehouses, large frame buildings, hummed with activity. The blocks of ice were systematically packed away between tons of sawdust or hay, where they remained intact until needed during the warm summer months. Much of the ice was stored in John R. Hamilton's three ice houses.

While this annual harvest was far from being a picnic, the men did manage to have some fun. To see a man fall in and get a cold ducking was usually a big joke for awhile. If the man didn't come down with pneumonia, he was the target for kidding by his fellow workers for some time. Betting by owners of the horses' pulling strength was another method of taking the frosty sting out of what was otherwise a heavy task. Whose team could pull the most and the fastest up the bank made for some interesting wagers.



(January Harvest)

There were times when, due to mild weather, the ice harvest was very poor, or even non-existent. One winter, I think it was 1914, Arthur Kemp began to cut ice on January 1st. The other dealers ridiculed him for harvesting so early on ice that was only about eight inches thick. But a couple of days afterwards, the ice went out and the river didn't freeze up again that winter. This forced ice dealers to import. Realizing that an ice famine would seriously hurt his butcher business and render a hardship on the community, John R. Hamilton Sr. contacted harvesters in the Lake Simcoe district and was successful in securing tons of ice. (John R. Hamilton Sr. operated a "Grocery and Meat Store" on Gore Street, which in the early 1940s was moved back ten feet from the sidewalk and has since been the Glen Hamilton residence.)

STRANGE FLOATING THINGS

During the pre-WWI period, we boys were playing along the river bank and while walking north one day came across a man's body. It later developed that this man had been killed in a drunken brawl, which made a lasting impression on our young minds.

THE CIRCUS COMES TO TOWN

During the same week that Harry Atwood was trying valiantly to get his plane off the water, a circus came to Amherstburg and they set up in the west town park. It was quite a tug for a small boy to decide whether he wanted to haul water to the elephants or watch the work on the Atwood flying boat.

FIRST HUSSARS... WORLD WAR I

At the outbreak of World War I Major Thornton Balfour recruited for the First Hussars. After joining up, the local boys were stationed in the former Two-In-One Auto Factory building (now Faucher Lumber) on Sandwich Street. We well remember the day they left Amherstburg for Val Cartier on their first step to the war zone. A parade was held through the town to the Michigan Central Depot on Richmond Street, where the boys boarded the 'Plug'. This was a branch of the railway between Amherstburg and Essex. The parade was led by a band and the recruits were bid a tearful farewell. Some never returned to their beloved home town. Their names are engraved on the Cenotaph in the King's Navy Yard Park.

RACING IN WINTERTIME

Horse racing was a very popular winter sport in this area. There were several tracks, one of which was on Sandwich Street from the Pioneer Distillery (Seagrams) for exactly one mile, ending at the Tin House (Library Corner). Throughout the winter matched races were staged over this course and the roadway was lined with warmly-clad onlookers. The intersecting streets were blocked for these occasions. The horses belonged mainly to Albert Fox, Jim Cousins, Ed Boyt, Theodore Langlois, Tobe Mickle and J. G. Maloney. Among the hardy animals were Strogoff, Colonel Pepper, Ingomar, Jack the Ripper, Grey Duke, Greyhound, Grey Frank, Erie Mae and Sleepy Tom. There was plenty of betting and it was a blood-tingling experience to watch the beautiful pacers tearing along the snow-packed track with the shouts of excited spectators ringing out in the clear, frosty air. There was also a track on Bois Blanc Island from where the Papoose used to dock to the foot of the Island. And yet another was on the River Canard from the bridge by the church to Willie Drouillard's hotel. Nearly every Frenchman in the district had a horse which he thought was the fastest animal in those parts.

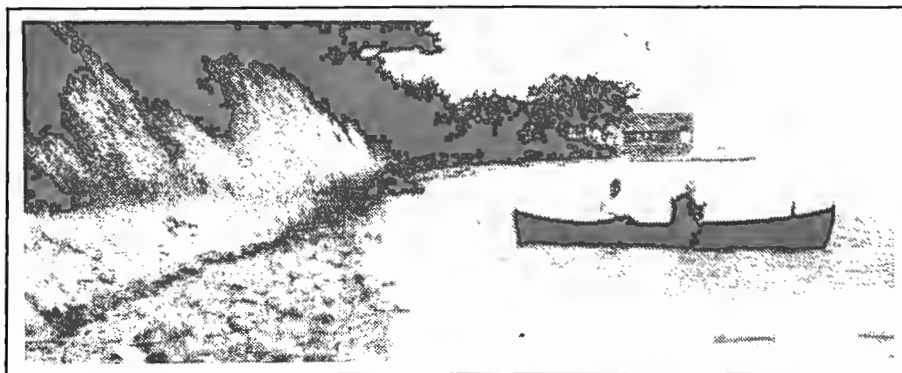


Racing on the ice

CRUISIN' DOWN THE RIVER

In the 1920s, most local boys and girls had canoes or row-boats. The young people thought nothing of swimming from the Amherstburg shore to Bois Blanc, usually accompanied by a boat. There was no danger then from boats with high-powered engines racing up and down the river.

The older young people, or "young adults" as they are called today, often went over to the dances on Sugar Island in their canoes or row-boats. There was no fear of the river and no lights required as these trips were usually made on a moonlit night - the young lady ensconced in cushions, a victrola playing, the young man pressing his love and singing romantic songs while paddling along.



Courtesy Park House Museum

AIR SHOW

During the 1940s, Amherstburg citizens were treated to many aerial displays put on by planes from the Grosse Ile Naval Air Station at the south end of Grosse Ile. The bugle calls could be heard in Amherstburg. This base was used to train young men entering the Naval Air Force. On July 29, 1949 the Constitution, the largest troop-carrying transport plane, visited the station. It came to Grosse Ile on a test flight prior to acceptance by the Navy. A number of distinguished guests, both American and Canadian, were invited on a flight from Grosse Ile. From Amherstburg were Captain J. Earl McQueen, Alex Traeff (Manager of Calvert Distillers) and myself as editor of The Amherstburg Echo.



Left to right: John A. Marsh, Capt. J. Earl McQueen, Alex Traeff

The Constitution was capable of carrying 187 passengers. The wing spread was 189 feet, maximum speed 300 m.p.h., cruising speed, 250 m.p.h. It had 4 motors, each 350 h.p. It was the last of the large planes built prior to the abandonment of prop engines. The Constitution never passed the requirements set down by the Navy, and building of other prop planes of this size ceased with the introduction of jet engines.

About this same time the only all-metallic dirigible ever built by the U.S. Navy was constructed at the Grosse Ile Airport. People of Amherstburg witnessed its test flights. It looked like a giant pig in the air. It left the Grosse Ile Airport for the east coast and while flying over the mountains the hillbillies took pot shots and finally did so much damage that the dirigible had to be abandoned.

AMHERST HOTEL

In the last hundred years there have been many hotels in Amherstburg. One by one they disappeared, until now (1982) there is only one of these original inns operating and that is the Amherst Hotel on Richmond Street, owned and operated by Paul Masney. This structure was built in 1882 and for many years was known as the Brown House. It was built by Ellis Brown who was the son of Charlotte Brown who operated the original inn by that name. Ellis took over from his mother and decided to construct a new hotel across from the Albert Fox Livery which was the terminus of the Amherstburg-Windsor stage coach, and which also ran a service from the Canada Southern Railway at Gordon. This Station was situated on the riverbank in Anderdon township opposite the present



Allied Chemical plant. The new inn was modern and attracted many visitors who came to Amherstburg by railway, stage coach and passenger boats.

The Brown house, later the Amherst Hotel, had a long list of owners including George Holmes, George Addleman, W. R. Pizer, W. T. Gunn, Eugene Joli, W. J. Alexander, John Casey, A. J. Brooker, Charles Fleming, Andrew

Masney and Steve Butchok, Andrew Masney and sons Steve and Paul Masney. Before the turn of the century this inn was a popular place for travellers. It was especially busy in the early 1900s when there was a lot of dredging activity on the lower Detroit River. During the days of prohibition in Ontario the bar continued to operate and spirits were openly sold. It was a swinging place where often there was a lively crap game in progress at one end of the bar.

Many interior changes were made when the Amherst Hotel came under the Masney ownership. When the Masney family entered the picture in 1949, the high quality of the food in the dining room became well-known. Several structural changes have been made through the years including updating of guest rooms and facilities, enlargement of the main floor dining room, a second floor banquet room, and an addition to the south of the original building providing for an enlargement of the bar room, and a modern kitchen.

AMHERSTBURG BOARD OF WORKS

Amherstburg's first Board of Works was headed by Freeman McCaffrey, who was in charge of the waterworks on Dalhousie Street. His total force consisted of four men - Andrew Boyd and Walter Mann (known as "Mutt" and "Jeff"), Charles and Jack Gibb. There was also a period when Ed Kemp assisted him but my memory isn't clear on that. They dug all the sewers, put in the water lines and worked long hours for little pay.

In the spring of 1938 when McCaffrey's health began to fail David Pettypiece was appointed as "working foreman" for the town. However, he (McCaffrey) was kept on in an advisory capacity and maintained an office in the Town Hall.

In 1942 upon the death of Mr. McCaffrey, H. Lester Hamilton resigned from council to become town foreman. At that time the department had little in the way of equipment. Mr. Hamilton's first duty was to purchase a pickup truck. He also gathered the engineering records of the sewage and roads system, and provided the ground work that enabled the town to establish the records of the Department of Public Works. It was during Hamilton's term that the town's garbage pickup service was started. Such a service was not available to many towns the size of Amherstburg. After Lester, not necessarily in this order, I recall that Bill Nye occupied this position for a number of years, also Jim Wigle and Pat Cunningham. At the time of writing Dominic Donofrio is head of the department.

For many years the population of Amherstburg remained fairly stable and there was little growth. An upward swing began when several local industries expanded and brought in additional employees. . .Peace River Smelting in

Anderdon was one. In the 1970s the Fort Malden Mall and four apartment buildings were developed by the Flynn Development Co., of which David Dufour was part owner and main promoter. In 1981 when Amherstburg's bid for annexation of sections of Anderdon and Malden was approved by the Ontario Municipal Board, the population increased to 8,500. This increase necessitated additional equipment and employees for the Board of Works. The increased demand for services also resulted in the town fathers seeking a place to build a new structure. They chose a site south of the Water Pollution Control Plant on Highway 18 at the southern end of town. However, it was not until the property, then in Malden, was annexed to the town that the place could be put into operation. The new Board of Works building was officially opened in June, 1982 and is modern in every respect and will serve the town for many years to come. It is a good investment.

AMHERSTBURG CHANNEL DREDGING

In 1957 two companies were engaged in the deepening of the Amherstburg Channel. The Great Lakes Dredge & Dock Company, used the conventional type of equipment, regular type drill boats and a dipper type dredge. Marine Operators, on the other hand, used the unorthodox type of drill boat with twenty drilling frames and the drills operated by compressed air. Rock and other material was lifted out of the river by a huge dragline.

The first dredging ever done in this section of the lower Detroit River was at the Lime Kiln Crossing. A ridge of limestone stretched from above the Brunner Mond Canada Limited pumping station across the river. This prevented boats with more than 12-foot draught from crossing. Few Canadian ships were loaded beyond this depth but United States vessels wanted to carry large cargoes and about eighty percent of the traffic on the lakes was by American tonnage. Although the Canadian Government had started the work of dredging a channel across the Lime Kiln Crossing, an agreement was made between the Canadian and United States governments that the latter would undertake the improvements on the Lower Detroit River. Congress appropriated \$25,000 for the beginning of the work and on September 25th, 1876, Case and Jennings started operations at a point opposite the Gordon Station in the river immediately in front of Brunner Mond (Allied Chemical Limited).

At that time, rock drilling was done by hand power from the deck of a raft anchored in the desired position by spuds. Iron pipes, three inches in diameter, were fixed at regular intervals through the deck of the raft and drilling was done through these pipes. Eight drills were used. The average depth of a hole was 4.5 feet and at first 3.5 pounds of oriental rifle powder per hole was used for each charge. After about a month, nitroglycerine in three-pound charges was used instead of rifle powder. In 1877 mica-powder in 4.5 and 5.5 pound charges

was used.

At intervals during the next ten years the United States Congress appropriated additional funds for continuing the improvement and several contracts were let for rock excavation in this locality. Charles F. Dunbar and the Dunbar and Sullivan Dredging Company were mainly responsible for early improvements in the methods and equipment of drilling and dredging.

History has shown that Amherstburg was prosperous when river work was in progress. One of the town's most opulent eras was when the Livingstone Channel was being constructed between 1907 and 1912. H.S. Locker Company performed the first dry dredging in the river. The Great Lakes Dredge and Dock Company, the Dunbar and Sullivan Dredging Company and the M. Sullivan Dredging Company were all employed on the channel job and the headquarters for all crews was in Amherstburg.

In 1957 history was again written with the first work on the 136 million dollar connecting channels projects. Although not a part of the giant St. Lawrence Seaway Project it was vital to the successful operation of the Seaway in that it provided proper depth of water in connecting rivers for the larger ocean vessels to get up to the important lake ports.

SAM ARMSON - October, 1984

Mrs. Sam Armson has donated a picture of her late husband to the Marsh Collection. It shows him at work in his blacksmith shop on the south side of Gore, east of King. The shop was the original Primeau blacksmith shop. In the early days of Amherstburg, it was a busy place, taking care of the horseshoeing trade. Sam's iron furniture and other iron pieces were well-known and in demand. The iron gates at Fort Malden are his work. In addition, he was well-known for his photography. Soon after his death Mrs. Armson donated his picture scrap books to the Collection. These contain copies of pictures of early Amherstburg that appeared in the Echo feature "Those Were The Days".

Sam took many pictures around town and processed them in his own studio. These covered a variety of subjects - whatever struck his fancy. His iron furniture items are prized by his friends. We have two coffee tables which are priceless. He loved flowers, and had a keen interest in his garden, one of those men who had a green thumb. Sam Armson possessed unusual talent and was an artist in every sense of the word. He was a good neighbour and helped in many ways. It is fortunate this picture of Sam and his scrapbooks will be preserved in a provincial chartered collection for future generations to enjoy.

AMHERSTBURG MAYORS - 1983

A look at the men who headed the Amherstburg Municipal government from the time I first reported council meetings in the late 1920s until this date . . . Among those on the list are a few capable, unselfish men who had the interest of the town at heart and worked towards its betterment. Then there were the few who enjoyed being called 'Mayor' and the honours that came with the position, and last but surely not least, the political types who didn't contribute much unless it was to their benefit - we won't mention their names!

Dr. W. Fred Park had the honour of serving the town as chief magistrate for the longest period, 1917 - 1927 and again from 1932 to '34. It was in the early twenties that the town began to grow, due mainly to the establishment of Brunner Mond Canada, Limited. Before that time the economy of the district depended very much on river activity. Brunner Mond changed this dependence. Dr. Park served Amherstburg with ability and dignity. He was instrumental in getting a purified supply of water for town residents through a deal he engineered with Brunner Mond, in the construction of a purified water plant above the Amherstburg water department main. This ended the annual typhoid epidemic. He was also active in the promotion of an automobile plant in town which turned out a few models of the Amherst 40, otherwise known as Two-In-One.

Another outstanding mayor was F. "Ted" Pickering. Prior to taking over the Red Chair in 1946-47, he served with distinction on the Amherstburg Public Utilities Commission. To his credit was the cancellation of the huge Sandwich, Windsor & Amherstburg Railway debt; putting the program for construction of a Federal-Provincial Housing project (Warren Park) on the proper track after it had been turned down by the Federal government; and last but far from least, keeping the town from going into default through the sale of the Park farm for \$10,000 to James Flynn. This action eventually led to the development of the Flynn Subdivision, the Fort Malden Mall and adjacent apartment buildings many years after Mr. Pickering's death. His work was rewarded in the naming of Pickering Drive and one of the apartment buildings.

H. Murray Smith, former head of S. K. D. Manufacturing Company, served as mayor for several years and during his term more progress was made by the town than in the previous hundred years. Needed services were constructed as well as Class A roads. Parks were developed and Mr. Smith had the courage to carry out his dreams. He was liberal with donations to the common cause both in work and money. He did, in our opinion, go off the beam some when he was responsible for the demolition of the old town hall and post office. Murray's dream, told to me by him in July, 1982, was to demolish all the old buildings on the west side of Dalhousie Street from Murray to the Waterworks Park and extend the King's Navy Yard Park to Fort Malden. He eventually admitted to this erroneous thinking and took an active part in the

development of the King's Navy Yard Park. Present day Amherstburg owes a lot to Murray Smith. He had a certain vanity about wearing the chain of office in his Red Chair, which we got a bang out of!

Garnet Fox became head of Amherstburg's government in 1979 and was fearless in taking steps to preserve the town's heritage. He played an important part in the development of King's Navy Yard Park and at times had a hard row to hoe. Garnet will be remembered for his ability to get grants for the upgrading of streets in the old section of town, particularly Gore, King, George and Brock Streets. At this time of writing we feel that he may have political aspirations and probably will be a Conservative candidate in the next provincial election.

There was a period between 1942 and 1946 when little or no progress was made in town development. This was the period during war years when Nick Marra was mayor. He was against spending any money for improvements and resisted any increased taxation to allow such needed work. F. T. Pickering was faced with the problem when he took over the chair from Mr. Marra.

In our opinion there were no other outstanding mayors in Amherstburg. However, there were several items of interest to the history of municipal government. Mayor Harvey E. Hamilton, an employee at Brunner Mond Canada, Limited, resigned his company job and the office of mayor to accept a position in the operation of a new soda ash plant in South America. I believe that he was deputy reeve at that time. On returning to Amherstburg he again entered municipal politics and served as mayor in 1957-58. Incidentally, Mr. Hamilton was responsible for bringing the U. A. W. Union to Brunner Mond.

Ferman Sinasac served twelve terms as town Reeve. During that time he was elected Warden of the county of Essex.

George D. McCurdy was the first black citizen to be elected to the position as Deputy-Reeve. This also gave him the distinction of being the first black member of the Essex County Council. He served with credit to Amherstburg and distinction to himself.

ARGUMENT CLUB

This is just one of those little things that came to mind. Back in the twenties I believe, a group of men met between 6 a.m. and 8 a.m. every weekday morning in the office of the Mullen Coal Company, west side of Dalhousie between Richmond and Murray Streets. Regular members were Arthur W. Marsh, A. F. Falls, Tom Healey, Captain Gale Hackett, Jimmy Elliott, John Dickerson, Maurice Mayville, William Amlin and Si Hulbert. This was told to me by John Dickerson. Dues were five cents a month. This wasn't an organized

club, it just happened. . .no race, creed or colour. Discussions of affairs of town, province, nation, almost anything would start a lively discussion. At first sign of spring, every member appeared in a white hat.

ART BY THE RIVER - September, 1984

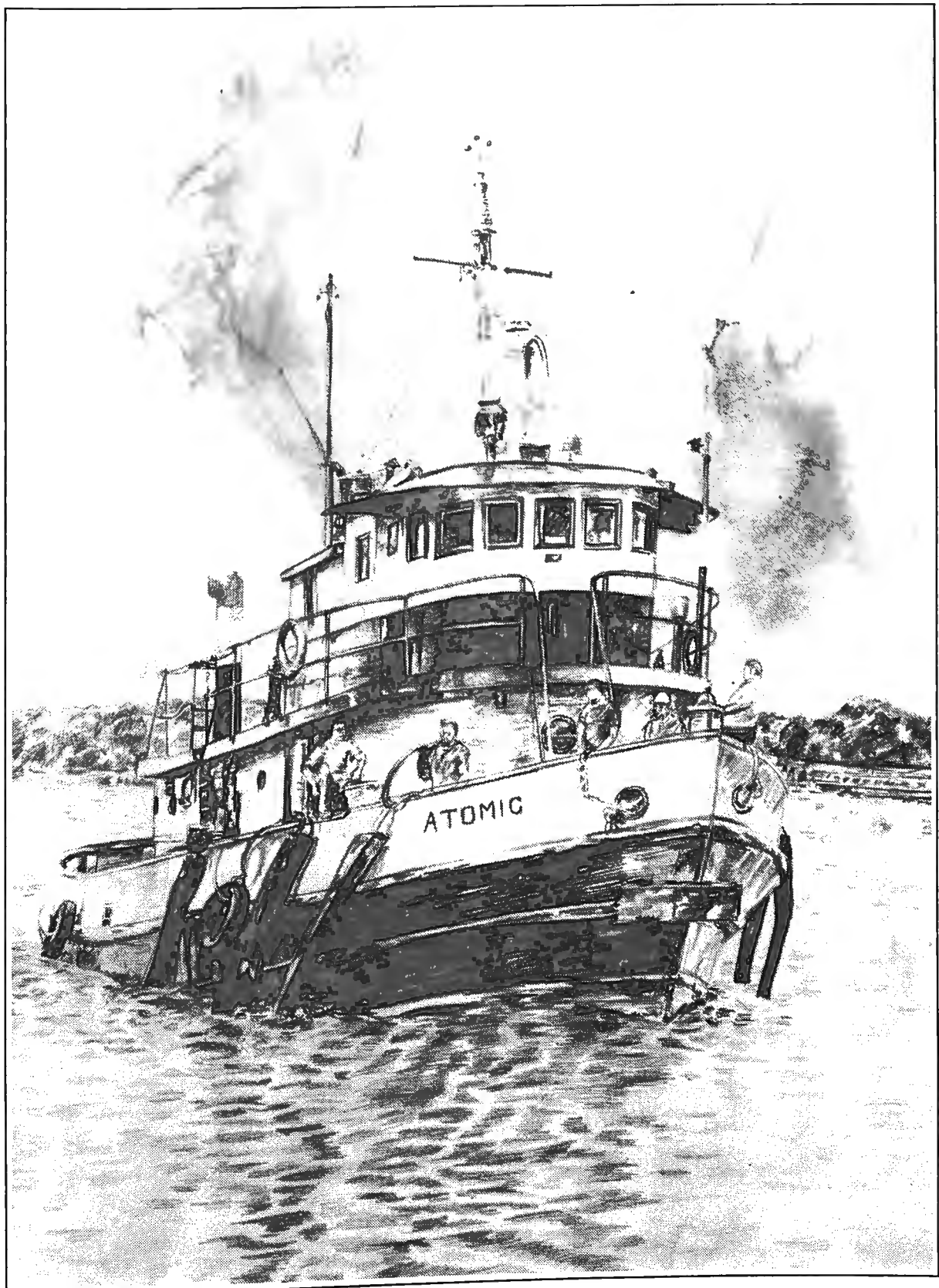
The recent Art by the River show drew an attendance of over four thousand. It was started by Fort Malden Guild of Arts and Crafts on the east bank of the Detroit River at Fort Malden National Historic Park. During the early days of Fort Malden Park, the Guild was formed by a number of civic minded people who felt such an organization was needed to foster work of local artists. In those early days the Guild held meetings in the McGregor House, north end of Dalhousie Street. After several years of successful operation, it was decided to purchase the former Amherstburg train station, and convert it into an art gallery. This move was made possible through diligence of members. Substantial financial donations were made towards the project by Flo Gibson and H. Murray Smith.

The conversion of the building was carried out by members with David P. Botsford and Hazen Price taking an active part. Very active in the beginnings of the arts and crafts group were Mrs. Percy Waldron, Mrs. Fred Thomas, Maurice O'Beay, Daphne Ellis, Helen Marsh, Mrs. Marwood Parks, Alice Bailey, Muriel Knight, Florence Woof and many others. From time to time art shows are staged at the gallery. The building, although owned by the Guild, stands on a site owned by Penn Central Railway. From time to time negotiations have been underway for the guild to acquire the property.

A few years ago Elizabeth Willmot, a well-known Canadian railway historian, visited Amherstburg and spent some time at the art gallery. This resulted in a fine essay on Amherstburg, featuring the gallery in her book "Faces and Places Along the Railway". In this feature is a splendid picture of the old station. Incidentally, the building erected in the mid-1890s, was located at the western end of the Essex-Amherstburg branch line, which terminated on Richmond Street.

ATOMIC - May, 1982

At 6:30 a.m. the other morning the telephone sounded - it was a call from Wes Ball, Malden River Front, to inform us that the beloved tug Atomic had passed up, out in the Amherstburg Channel. In a matter of minutes it was seen from our window, passing Canadian floating buoy 64D. The Atomic, once the pride of the people of Amherstburg, is now owned by Great Lakes Marine. It was



Artist - Rocco DiPasquale

a real thrill to see her steaming up the river.

For many years the Atomic was the bright star of the Amherstburg river scene. She was designed by Captain Earl McQueen and constructed by Russel Brothers Shipyard in Owen Sound. The Atomic was commissioned on the day that the Yanks dropped the Atomic bomb on Japan and was named for that historic event. We followed the design of the tug on the drawing board. The Captain wanted a powerful utility tug that could handle the problems connected with salvage work and also ice breaking.

The Atomic soon proved the skipper knew what he was doing in his design for construction of a utility tug. She won her spurs in salvage work, ice breaking, and other marine operations. The skippers were Captain McQueen, Captain Jake Penner, Captain Angus Morrison and Captain Clifford Morrison. Following Captain McQueen's death, McQueen Marine was purchased by Stanley Dupont who ran a very successful marine operation for a number of years.

The Atomic was one of the best known tugs on the Great Lakes, noted for its ice breaking ability and the fact she won champion tugboat races for a couple of years until the Yanks put in a ringer. She was on call during the winter months to keep the freighters on the Detroit-Toledo coal run moving during periods of heavy ice. It was not uncommon for the Atomic to free United States Coastguard cutters stuck in the ice. Townspeople turned out by the hundreds to welcome the Atomic and her crew back to home port after tugboat races. She created pride in residents of her home town. With the colourful Captain McQueen on the bridge she generated a lot of good publicity for Amherstburg.

B.C.M. TECHNOLOGIES LTD.

B.C.M. TECHNOLOGIES LIMITED, a Sodium Chlorate plant was established in Amherstburg in November, 1981. It was decided this was important material for the Marsh Papers when I realized the real story behind this event had not been told.

At an official announcement meeting in the Amherstburg Council chambers with television, radio and news media present, Mayor Garnet Fox was lavish in his praise of members of council, town administration and other municipal employees who had a hand in the negotiations for the plant. Never a word was said in praise of the man who pulled the rabbit out of the hat! We refer to David Dufour, a local promoter, who was really responsible for getting the company interested in the Amherstburg site. The Company had previously made a decision to build their plant in the Windsor industrial area. Dufour went to Toronto and spent some time with the principles, explaining how

expensive it would be to sink piling and other work to prepare the Windsor site. At first they were lukewarm. He persuaded them to come to Amherstburg to look over a site on the Second Concession Road. They left, discussed the matter, called Dufour back in and finally signed an option for the property.

Had it not been for Dufour's aggressiveness the plant never would have come to Amherstburg, yet nary a word of praise for him was voiced by the mayor - in other words, the politicians were out to take the credit and forget the person who did the job.

BANANA BELT

Many years ago, the Amherstburg Echo was looking for a catchy slogan that could be used in the promotion of national advertising. Members of the Echo staff held a think tank discussion and the late A. W. Marsh came up with "Serving the Banana Belt of Canada". He pointed out that in the area served by the Echo, many crops were grown that were not common to other parts of Canada. From that time on, this slogan was carried on the masthead, and on all letterheads and other advertising material. This catchy slogan produced results and interest. Soon the whole of Essex County was often called "The Banana Belt."

BED AND BREAKFAST - October, 1983

Some weeks ago, Councillor William Ferguson suggested to his fellow council members that a "Bed and Breakfast" program be established in Amherstburg, this to take care of tourists seeking accommodation. His suggestion did not meet with much enthusiasm and consequently died by the wayside. As a matter of fact we didn't at the time think the plan held much merit. Since then we have changed our thinking due to information we received on the merits of a "Bed and Breakfast" plan.

Probably the main reason for the changing of our mind was an article in the Sunday Detroit Free Press by Rick Sylvain. He extolled the merits of the "Bed and Breakfast" concept and told what it means to a special class of tourist, the type most wanted in Amherstburg. Not only does this plan provide needed tourist accommodation but it makes it possible for more people and families to travel and avoid the high cost of hotels. Amherstburg is ripe for such a plan as it would provide good accommodation at prices an average tourist could pay and in addition provide an income for taxpayers in designated sections of the town.

BELLEVUE VETERANS HOME

In July, 1947 thirty or so veterans of World War I began to arrive in Amherstburg. The Department of Veterans Affairs had purchased the former John G. Mullen property on Dalhousie Street South and established a convalescent home to serve the needs of aged veterans in Southwestern Ontario, specifically Essex and Kent Counties. Gavin A. Greig was appointed as manager of the home. He had been engaged in this type of work in London at Westminster Hospital.

The first eleven patients arrived with the matron of the home, Miss Laura Moutrie. On a Saturday afternoon in early August of that year, the Bellevue Veterans' Home was officially opened. The program included short talks by various government officials, but tribute was especially paid to S. Murray Clark, M. P. for Essex South and to the Essex County branches of the Canadian Legion who had worked so hard in promoting the establishment of the veteran's home. I had the honour of being called upon to speak and as editor of The Amherstburg Echo observed that we were very proud of this fine home and would do our utmost to assure our guests that their stay in Amherstburg would be a pleasant one.

In March, 1949, Prime Minister Louis S. St. Laurent visited the Veterans' Home. When the motorcade, headed by the Ontario Provincial Police, arrived at the northern end of town, it was taken over by Amherstburg Police Constable H. Peever, at which time I had the privilege to join the Prime Minister who was accompanied by the Hon. Paul Martin (then Minister of Health), and explained the historic points of interest along the route to the veterans' home.

Many visitors came to Bellevue and during the few years that it was in operation we had Christmas dinner with the veterans, which was a real treat.



Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent visits Bellevue Veterans Home - 1949. Left to right: Prime Minister St. Laurent, S. Murray Clark M.P., Capt. J. Earl McQueen, Gavin Greig - Manager.

Gavin Greig did his level best to purchase supplies from local stores. He found, however, that food prices in Amherstburg were much more expensive than in Windsor and was forced to buy out of town. The Amherstburg Echo took up the challenge and in our column we compared Amherstburg food prices with the same items in Windsor stores. Naturally the local merchants resented our approach and we were threatened with advertising boycott. We didn't budge an inch, the result being that the Dominion Store and other food outlets in town fell in line with Windsor prices. In later years this meant a great deal to the community.

In 1954 Bellevue was becoming too costly to maintain and on September 30th operation of the home was discontinued. The patients were moved by Greyhound Bus to Western Counties Lodge at Westminster, London, accompanied by orderlies and matron Peggy Zeigel. The following August, Mrs. Nellie Tetzlaff purchased the home from Crown Assets Corporation, with the intention of operating a nursing home there. This enterprise, however, never developed according to the plan and some time later the property reverted to Crown Assets Disposal Corporation.

On Sunday, June 3, 1962, the Essex County Historical Association sponsored the unveiling and dedication of a historical plaque at Bellevue. Simultaneously, the building and grounds, which had been purchased by the Ukrainian Catholic Church of Eastern Canada, were dedicated by the Most Reverend Isidore Boric, Bishop of Toronto. Bishop Boric celebrated Pontifical High Mass in the garden where nearby still stood two Jesuit pear trees which were planted, according to local legend, when the Jesuits made their first trip up the Detroit River in the early 1700s. Subsequently the name was changed to St. Nicholas Ukrainian Village and in 1981 an attractive, spacious senior citizens housing complex was erected adjacent to the historic "Belle Vue".

Most times little credit is given to politicians who make it possible for worthy local projects to get grants and other help from the federal and provincial governments. At the recent dedication ceremony of the federal historic plaque at Bellevue, there was no mention of the two members who used their influence in making it possible for St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Church to purchase and develop the historic building. Richard Thrasher, who once served as an Executive Assistant to former Prime Minister John Diefenbacher and Secretary of the federal Conservative Party, arranged for the church to purchase the property from the federal government at a very low figure. When things started to slow up and financing for development was not available, Eugene Whelan, Minister of Agriculture, arranged a grant from the government to complete the project. Both Mr. Whelan and Mr. Thrasher were also instrumental in Fort Malden National Historic Park getting grants for park expansion and other park development.

BLOOD AND GUTS GANG

We lost an old friend recently (1983) in the death of Walter Goodchild, Park Street. To residents born in the post prohibition era, his name may not ring a bell. During the days when liquor exporting was big business in Ontario and the United States, Walter was a prominent participant in the business. This was an exciting period in our town's history. In recent years, although in failing health, Walter enjoyed relating stories of those days when he took part in "over the river" liquor traffic to help quench the thirst of the 'dry' Americans.

In those days, Ontario was also supposed to be dry, but residents could order liquor for their own use from the province of Quebec. It was surprising how many residents took advantage of this opportunity. So much so that large stocks of liquor were built up in garages and basements. These caches were in turn sold to bootleggers who either turned the grog back into the local trade, or shipped it over the river. This should not be confused with the legal export of liquor to other countries. In the case of booze that went over Amherstburg docks, it was all consigned to Cuba.

Not to be outdone by American bootleggers, several local gangs went into the act. Walter was a member of the then famous "Blood and Guts" gang. These young men specialized in highjacking loads and they gathered in many a dollar. One of their hits was at the home of a Colchester Village resident who had a large supply of booze.

The theft was investigated by the Provincial Police, with the result that several young bloods, including Walter were arrested and charged. The case drew a lot of attention. The trial was held in the second floor auditorium of the Amherstburg town hall, with a packed house. Presiding magistrate was William McCormick, clerk of the town of Amherstburg. At the conclusion of the trial, he found the defendants guilty and sentenced them to ten years in Kingston Penitentiary, along with ten lashes. In comparison to other sentences of the time, this was cruel and unjust punishment.

As a young reporter we covered the trial. When my father, the late A. W. Marsh read the story, he remarked, "There is something wrong here. Your job is to check and find out the reason for this unfair sentence." Check it we did and discovered some interesting facts. Our findings were sent to the Federal Minister of Justice and the sentence was shortened. It was too late to avoid the lash, however, and the spirit of the young men was broken. None got into any further trouble.

Walter made no bones about his part in the illicit liquor racket. In fact, he liked to talk about it and told many a story of those old days. One story was about the "Battle of Old Crow." Walter and some friends had brought in a carload of "Old Crow" whiskey from Montreal for their "personal use", which

they planned to run across the river. The cache was stored on Gore Street in the abandoned horsebarn of St. John the Baptist Church. At that time autos had come into popular use, so the shed was neglected.

Prior to the liquor being moved, the route to the Indian Burial Grounds in Anderdon was checked by a constable in on the deal. He found a horse drawn wagon with another large load of booze mired in the mud on George Street. This was seized and turned over to the Blood and Guts Gang. When the cases of Old Crow were assembled on the shore of the river at the west end of the Middle Side Road in Anderdon, another group of Amherstburg men tried to stage a hold up, resulting in the famous battle.

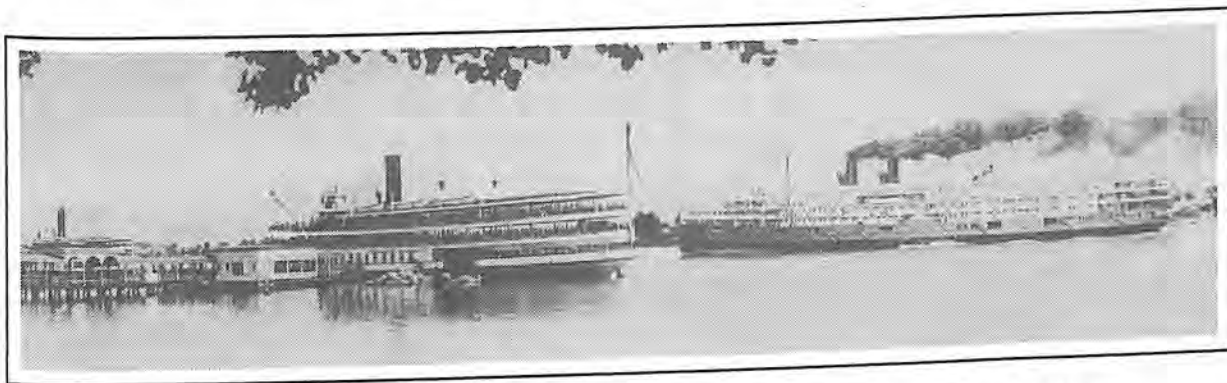
Yes, we will miss Walter and his entertaining stories. The business brought many millions of dollars into the coffers of Canadian distillers, and those involved became known as Rum Runners.

BOBLO

The operation of Boblo played an important role in the economy of Amherstburg down through the years.

For many years Boblo was mainly a recreational site for church and family picnics. Liquor was forbidden on the island, which was open each day for only a few hours and closed at six o'clock. In later years the open hours were extended and more emphasis was placed on games and rides and when a restaurant was put into operation, a liquor licence was obtained. Then the island operated each day until midnight.

Back in the days when Boblo was used primarily as a picnic grounds, there were many large firms who would once a year book the island for an annual outing for their employees and their families. So many people came



Str. Columbia at Boblo dock, Str. City of Cleveland passing. Circa 1910.

down on these excursions that the Detroit, Belle Isle and Windsor Ferry Company put their passenger boat into operation in addition to the Columbia and Ste. Claire. After a few hours on the island the young bloods became bored so they ferried over to Amherstburg, where the hotels had arranged to look after the influx. Extra police were engaged to control the conduct of the visitors and children were absolutely forbidden to venture into the downtown area near the hotels, where the crowd was making whoopee! At the end of the day hundreds of tipsy revellers were hauled back to the island and returned to Detroit on the steamers. In the meantime the Amherstburg hotelkeepers and other businesses had reaped a tidy profit from the free-wheeling Americans.

Free passage of Canadian citizens to the U.S. without official papers came to an end in July, 1940 when the Americans became paranoid and closed the border to anyone who didn't have a Canadian passport or a border crossing card. This came with great suddenness and for weeks there were lineups in the American Consulate in Windsor of Canadians seeking proper credentials. This had a reaction on the ferry between Amherstburg and Boblo. Suddenly on a day in July the U.S. Immigration authorities told the owners of the Boblo Company that the service had to be discontinued if Boblo was to operate without immigration services when the passengers returned to Detroit.

This action caused a lot of consternation among Amherstburg merchants. We were charged with finding a solution to the problem. One Sunday morning a meeting was held in the Echo office. Murray Clark, M.P. Essex South, representatives from both Canadian and American Immigration and the Canadian Legion were present. The U.S. authorities pointed out that these agents had found many "undesirables" were slipping into the U.S. They came to Amherstburg and bought a return ticket to Boblo. On the island they met friends from Detroit and switched tickets. This was causing a lot of trouble. The U.S. officials said the only way this practice could be stopped would be the discontinuance of the ferry service between Amherstburg and Boblo. After some discussion a solution to the problem was suggested by the U.S. authorities that an American immigration officer be stationed on the Amherstburg dock. He could not have the authority to refuse passage of a Canadian citizen from one point in Canada to another point in Canada. However, the Boblo Company had the right to refuse admission to the island of anyone they thought was undesirable. The American officer would signal to the ticket seller when he sighted anyone who would ordinarily be refused to enter the U.S. This solution was acceptable to both Canadian and American Immigration authorities. At first there was a bit of a problem from some Canadian citizens. However, it was soon ironed out and this plan was followed without incident for many years and Boblo was again opened to Canadians using the Amherstburg to Boblo ferry.

MORE ABOUT BOBLO

The 1984 season ended on Labour Day. As per custom, the people of the Amherstburg area went down to the river to bid goodbye to the last boat leaving the island. This farewell rite has been carried out down through the years. Boblo is more than a resort out of Detroit - it is a part of Amherstburg. It generates a great deal of money for the town's economy through its large employment and purchase of supplies. There are many successful professional men and women who earned their needed college and university financing via jobs on the island. This happened again during the past season when several hundred young people had jobs... not the case in many western Ontario towns. The 1984 season was a successful one, thanks to its operation by the new owners - - Michigan Auto Club. The future looks bright for Boblo.

The island was first purchased by the Detroit Windsor and Belle Isle Ferry Company, which operated the cross-ferries between Windsor, Detroit, and Belle Isle. Walter Campbell headed the company. He took a personal interest in its operation and development. In its early days, the emphasis was on family picnics. The Columbia was the first large vessel to serve the Island. On busy days the ferries Britannia and Pleasure were called upon to carry larger than normal numbers of passengers. The Columbia left Boblo at 12 noon, crossed over to Amherstburg and picked up locals (mostly women) bound for an hour or two of shopping in Detroit. They disembarked on the return trip at four o'clock. These passengers had to pass through Canadian Customs inspection. The officers were not very strict and most of the women came back loaded with goodies from large Detroit stores. In those days people were allowed to pass to and from Boblo freely.

Some years later the United States immigration service threatened to make it difficult for Detroiters to come down to the island without going through immigration inspection on their return to Detroit. To allow the Detroit passengers to avoid the inspection, the U.S. authorities demanded the Amherstburg-Boblo ferry service be discontinued. This ruling went into effect for a while but was finally rescinded. Ferry service between Amherstburg and Boblo was allowed from the island to Amherstburg except for U.S. returning passengers.

Following the closing down of Amherstburg-Boblo service, the publishers of the Echo arranged a meeting to which the owners of the island, S. Murray Clark M.P. Essex South, representatives from both Canadian and United States immigration services, the mayor of Amherstburg, and a member of the Legion were invited. This meeting took place in the Echo office. All phases of the problem were discussed and finally the United States authorities agreed to lift the ban providing a U.S. immigration office be stationed at the Amherstburg dock to check over all purchasing tickets. He did not have the authority to ban anyone from the island, however, so when he gave a signal to the ticket seller,

he or she refused to sell the ticket. The island owners had the right to refuse ticket sales to anyone. The ruling dated back to problems which the company encountered when Detroiters, fining no liquor sold on the island, crossed over to Amherstburg to get their thirst quenched. Sale of tickets from Boblo to Amherstburg was cancelled. The drunks had to get back to Detroit via the Amherstburg-Windsor trolley, plus the Detroit/Windsor ferry.

A lot of changes were made - all for the better, since the Michigan Automobile Association purchased the resort and took over its management. The club deserves a lot of praise for the upkeep and management of the Park. We did not get over to the island in 1983, so were determined to make it before the end of the 1984 season in order to see for ourselves what so many were talking about. This excursion was made on Saturday, before the end of the season. The weather was ideal, resulting in a large crowd on the island. Several thousand crossed over from Amherstburg on the Boblo ferries. Many came over from Gibraltar, Michigan by the ferry service established at the beginning of the 1984 season. In addition, the Ste. Claire and Columbia brought down thousands from Detroit. It was a very happy day for the visitors. Several new rides were in operation, the island was spic and span, without litter, and the flower gardens put on a good showing. We walked around the south end of the island, viewing the historic lighthouse, the block house and the white sands beach off the south end of the island. The grass was well kept. The general appearance of the island was good. The attendance showed a marked improvement over previous years. Plans are underway for further improvements before the 1985 season opens. All power to the Auto Club for a job well done.

ANOTHER BOBLO STORY

The Spring of 1982 was a tough time for young people to enter to labour market. With few jobs to be had in the Amherstburg area many of our locals had to look elsewhere for work. One young Amherstburg man went out West and stood in a number of lines waiting to be interviewed. At one point he was asked for his resume. The official read it and told him to come back the next day, which he did. During the interview he was asked about previous employment. The young man replied that the only job he ever had was during the summer cooking hamburgers on Boblo. "You cooked hamburgers on Boblo?" asked the interviewer. "Yes" he replied. "So did I!" answered the official. Of course, this cinched the job for him.

Through the years young people have worked on the island in order to finance their education. Many prominent doctors, lawyers and other professionals in Windsor and Detroit boast of their early experience while working on Boblo.

BOOTLEGGING AND RUM-RUNNING

There has been a good deal written about bootlegging and rum-running along the lower Detroit River. To set matters straight, there was a vast difference between rum-running and bootlegging.

Rum-running was legal export from Canada to foreign countries. In the case of Amherstburg shipping, all the booze was destined for 'Cuba'. The operation was mostly carried out on the Fred Woods dock, Dalhousie Street South - that water property being owned by Conklin Planing Mills and still later, a part of it by McQueen Marine Limited. Bootlegging covered the illegal sale of booze in Ontario. The two are confused and intertwined.

In Amherstburg during the "Dirty Thirties" times were tough and many residents resorted to bootlegging to keep body and soul together. While there are many humorous stories from those days, following is one of my favourites:

Joe Fleury lived at the corner of Gore and George streets and across from him lived Henry Odette. One day Joe called Constable Carl Farrow of the Provincial Police Detachment at Amherstburg and reported that his neighbour across the road was bootlegging. "How do you know?" asked Constable Farrow. "I know because he's taking all my customers", answered Joe.

ANOTHER BOOTLEGGING STORY

This particular tale concerns Alexander K. Duff, a son of Henry G. Duff and Mary Cunningham, early Amherstburg area citizens.

Coming back from overseas following World War I, Alec got into the bootlegging business. He opened the Deerhead Club on the west side of Sandwich Street, a site now covered by General Amherst High School. Being very successful there he decided to move downtown where he opened a club on the second floor of the building known as Bullock's Tavern, northeast corner of Dalhousie and Murray Streets. The club was set up, also a hiding place for the liquor, and Alec prepared for a grand opening. A few hours before this event took place, however, the Provincial Police raided the premises and went directly to the hiding place. Alec never knew how the liquor was discovered. It so happened that a young man working for him at the time had asked for a raise in salary, which Alec refused. Irate, the young man went to the police and gave them full information.

Later, Alec moved his operation to the Fraser building, southwest corner of Gore and Dalhousie. Here, because of his political influence, he was able to



Alec Duff

open a bar and also established a restaurant in an adjoining building, which provided him the proper regulations for a liquor license. He soon tired of operating the restaurant but continued running his tavern.

He eventually changed the name to Duffy's Tavern, which he later sold to Zarko Vucinic and Mike Jovich. After selling the tavern, Alec moved into an apartment in a small building adjoining the tavern and did a little bootlegging business on the side. . . just to keep in practice.

BOWLING ON THE GREEN

Around the turn of the century and into the 1900s lawn bowling was a very popular sport in Amherstburg. The first greens were constructed on the river front west of the W. S. Falls residence. Later, membership in the club increased to such an extent that the west section of the west town park was used for this purpose. A number of fine greens were constructed and the club held an annual bowling tournament that covered the weekend of the August holiday. Bowlers came from all over Ontario for this popular event. The last night of the gathering was highlighted by a moonlight cruise on the river. This was one of the biggest events of the year.

Interest in bowling waned around the 1920s and soon the greens were abandoned and the lights taken down. This area, once part of the old parade grounds of Fort Malden, was later converted as part of the West Town Park.

RED BROWNING - August, 1983

Lorenzo D. (Red) Browning has been chosen as mayor of Grosse Pointe (Michigan) to replace Mayor David Robb who resigned. Mr. Browning has been a member of the Grosse Pointe council since 1971. This is of special interest to Amherstburg area residents as 'Red' was president of the Island of Boblo Company for the period 1958-1979. For several years the Browning family lived in Amherstburg in the former McGregor home at the north end of Dalhousie Street. This house has since been demolished in expansion programs at Fort Malden National Historic Park. Red Browning was a hard worker and guided the operation of Boblo Island during a very difficult period. This ended in the

sale of the island to a group of Americans who did not have experience in the operation of such a park. This ended in failure and it looked, for a time, that it was the end of this popular resort. The Michigan A.A.A. stepped in, purchased the island and are doing a good job in its operation.

Back to Red Browning - he was a hard worker and kept the operation afloat despite unforeseen obstacles. He spent a great deal of his time, during the season, on the island and made many friends in Amherstburg. Going through some of the pictures in the Marsh Collection, there was one of a derrick hauling his station wagon from the river. It was Red's custom to load his vehicle on the Boblo barge to have it carried to and from the island. One day he had driven his car aboard the barge and whether or not he set the brakes is unknown. Shortly after leaving the island, the car rolled off the barge, and into the river. Luckily, Red was able to escape from the car and was rescued. The McQueen Marine derrick Commander raised the vehicle.

BRUCE HOUSE - July, 1982

We were saddened the other day when the town fathers turned down the offer of the Amherstburg Rotary Club to purchase and restore the historic Bruce House, northwest corner Murray and Ramsay Streets. The defeat of the motion to accept the Rotary Club offer came at the end of a lengthy difference of opinion, and one that was punctuated by a series of personal attacks against some council members in stories appearing in the "Gloom and Doom" Daily. Were it not for attacks, we feel the historic house could have been saved.

In our personal opinion we feel the council erred in not accepting the offer of the Rotary Club. This organization has a good track record on promotion of heritage in Amherstburg. It has put its money where its mouth is, as shown by the purchase, moving and restoration of the historic Park House now located on the King's Navy Yard Park. The museum is attracting hundreds of tourists. Had the council accepted the offer of the Rotary Club, it would have been money in the bank for the town. Before the vote we tried to figure out its result. It was quite evident that four members of the Town Council, as their right, would vote against the sale. We figured the mayor, reeve, and deputy reeve would vote in favour. That left two members, one of whom was a school teacher, the other a retired school teacher. Our thinking was that both would vote in favour of accepting the Rotary Club offer. Not so. The teacher voted against the offer, and the retired teacher didn't vote claiming conflict of interest. This doomed the fate of this historic structure.

Unfortunately, the day the Bruce House crashed down, members of the Ontario Heritage Foundation visited Amherstburg. The story in the Gloom and Doom Daily featured this aspect of the foundation visit, and brushed aside the

outstanding heritage program carried out by the town council over the past number of years. This oversight was corrected by John White, chairman of the Ontario Heritage Foundation. He remarked that he couldn't criticize the town council for allowing the demolition, because council has limited resources to use on historical structures. "I don't want to criticize the Amherstburg town council because their heritage accomplishments have been superior to most Ontario towns. They have done more than any other community of their size, and proportionally more than nearly any other community with the exception of Perth and Kingston."

FIRST BUS TO AMHERSTBURG - 1938

At a Sandwich, Windsor and Amherstburg Railway dinner at the Anderdon Tavern in 1953 W. H. Furlong, chairman of the board, recalled that the first bus used by the company came to Amherstburg on a trial run. He further stated that the company did not own the bus but borrowed it for the occasion from the Ford Motor Company. Irvine W. "Mickey" Cochrane was driver of the bus on that March day in 1938.



The bus pulled up in front of The Echo office where a representative group of Amherstburg businessmen were waiting to go for a spin. After a ride over to

Harrow and back they were completely sold on the fact that street cars should be scrapped and replaced by buses. On this historic trip were Louis J. Fox, T. H. Fox, C. E. Flood, W. M. Menzies, Alexander Bertrand, Charles Fleming, R. D. Wigle, Drifford Bertrand, John Gott, J. R. Hamilton, W. S. Woof, George Pettypiece, Arthur W. Marsh, J. H. Lovegrove, J. J. Quinn, C. S. Hall, J. H. Shillington and myself.

It was shortly afterward that sufficient buses were purchased to start on the Amherstburg-Windsor run and the early drivers were Arthur Taylor and Joseph Armstrong. At that time Mr. Furlong lived in Amherstburg and his idea of a good time was to follow the buses in his car to see what kind of business they were doing.

For a number of years Amherstburg had super-duper bus service. This was especially so during World War II when cars, gas and tires, were short. However, following the cessation of hostilities cars again came on the market and many of the bus riders used their own autos for trips into Windsor. Commuters began carrying passengers in their cars and the whole effect was that bus traffic was cut down and the service had to be curtailed. In those days the retain fare from Amherstburg to Windsor was 50 cents.

CALLAM HOUSE - January 1984

Late in the afternoon, Thursday before Christmas (1983), we had a call from Harry Bosveld, head of Fort Malden Historic Park, informing us the keys of the Callam House on Dalhousie Street had been turned over to Parks Canada. This historic building for many years served as the commissariat for Fort Malden. For nearly a century it served as the home for the Callam family. When the estate of Mrs. Walter Callam was being settled, it was intimated that the family was in favour of selling the property to Parks Canada. Negotiations began and continued. Thanks to the co-operation of the family and the efforts of Eugene Whelan, federal minister of agriculture, the deal was completed and a treasure was preserved for Canadians to enjoy. Its restoration will be carried out after a plan has been developed to make it a part of Fort Malden.

We can thank the Honourable Eugene Whelan for his efforts in making the purchase possible. Too often we expect a lot from politicians and seldom say "thanks". Mr. Whelan also played an important part in getting federal financial grants for the development of King's Navy Yard Park. Major financial contributions towards this development were also made by the provincial government.

Three federal members of parliament played important parts in the development of Fort Malden National Historic Park. The late S. Murray Clark,

M. P. Essex South, got the ball rolling and worked with the Fort Malden Management Committee in the original thrust. Expansions were made possible through efforts of member Richard Thrasher and later by Mr. Whelan. It would be remiss for the Amherstburg Council not to officially recognize the contributions made by these men.

CALVERT DISTILLERS - January 1984

A man who played an important part in the affairs of Amherstburg in the late 1940s and early 1950s died recently in Montreal. He was Alex Traeff, manager of Calvert Distillers' Amherstburg plant. He guided this operation through good times when the plant produced large quantities of industrial alcohol. Traeff was in charge when a disastrous fire swept the plant on the evening of August 15th, 1950, destroying a number of buildings including the still. Alex loved Amherstburg and it was he who persuaded Sam Bronfman (head of Seagram Distillers Corporation) to rebuild the plant, add increased facilities and make it one of the most modern distilling plants in Canada. This all resulted in an unprecedented program of expansion and modernization.

The explosion took place at 8:15 p.m. The tremendous roar of four exploding rectifiers filled the night with flames shooting 200 feet skyward. The force of the explosion jarred the countryside for miles. The heat was so intense that within minutes the steel beams of the still house were twisted, misshapen hunks of steel. Windsor and other county fire departments sent equipment to help fight the inferno. Calvert employees did an outstanding job in saving remaining buildings. The wall on one rack warehouse collapsed and barrels spilled out. Employees recognized the danger and removed them from the area. Jim McBride, Lloyd Brown and Ted Pickering took a leading part in this operation. Later Lloyd Brown and Ted Pickering climbed to the roof of the warehouse and poured water on the building to prevent spread of the fire caused by red hot flaming debris. Ernie Naylor, chief distiller, cut the pipelines leading from the distillery building to the warehouses and storage tanks. It took several hours and four fire departments to bring the blaze under control. It burned until two o'clock in the morning and smouldered long past dawn. It was some days until an investigation into the fire was finished, after which a clean-up of the premises was carried out.

Prospects of rebuilding the plant were not bright. The loss of this industry was a belly blow to the town. In fact it was not until 1953 that a decision was made to rebuild the plant and make it one of Canada's most modern distilling plants, its output to be mostly Seagram's V.O. for export to the United States. Were it not for Alex Traeff the new bottling building, distillery and many warehouses may not have been built.

While in Amherstburg, Alex Traeff took an active part in community activities. At that time softball diamonds were located on the east town park. Play was limited in the evenings due to lack of floodlights. Mr. Traeff spearheaded a drive to raise money to finance this needed facility. His company led the way making a major donation to the campaign. He was an active member of the Chamber of Commerce and served on other local boards. Leaving Amherstburg, Alex supervised the construction of distillery plants in other parts of the world. Until his death Mr. Traeff retained his interest in Amherstburg and made annual visits to the town. He subscribed to several copies of *The Echo* for members of his family and was keenly interested in the activities in the town that he loved.

The distillery in Amherstburg came into being in 1928 when Border Brewers and Distillers of Vancouver decided to build a plant here. This decision was prompted by two shareholders, Harold and Joseph Massey. The idea was to build a distillery close to the American border so that shipments could be exported to that whiskey-hungry country during prohibition. The plant opened in 1929 under the name of Pioneer Distillers Limited (to commemorate the early settlers of the area). To facilitate export of whiskey to the United States, the company established a small airport at the north-east corner of Texas Road and the 2nd Concession of Anderdon. Some liquor went over the border from this airport but it never became a major operation. The market to the States only continued until the early 1930s when prohibition there was repealed. Final clearance papers for export to the U.S. were issued in Amherstburg on May 31, 1930.

CANADA SOUTHERN RAILWAY - September, 1982

Had a call the other evening from a railway buff who lives in Connecticut. His special interest is the Canada Southern Railway which ran between Niagara Falls and Gordon -- two miles north of Amherstburg. He is an official of a world wide electronic company and his hobby is research into Canada Southern. He came across our name when he was reading Elizabeth Willmot's excellent book "Faces and Places Along the Railway."

Canada Southern played an important part in the economy of Amherstburg during the period of 1873 to 1883. The car ferry Transfer operated from the foot of Texas Road to Stoney Island, then over a railway bridge to Grosse Ile. The tracks crossed the island to the west side, where they crossed over to the United States mainland at Trenton. The head office of Canada Southern was in Amherstburg, in the building that now houses the Fort Malden Branch 157 of the Royal Canadian Legion. Ice conditions in the lower Detroit River made for difficult passage of the Transfer and for several other reasons the section of the line from Essex to Amherstburg was discontinued around 1883.

and the cutoff from Essex to Windsor was put into operation. Canada Southern later became Michigan Central Railway, New York Central Railway and Penn Central Railway.

There was a lot of wheeling and dealing done by Samuel Zimmerman, promoter of the Amherstburg and St. Thomas Railway, which after Mr. Zimmerman's death became a section of the Canada Southern. There were two factions involved in the Amherstburg and St. Thomas Railway. The Buchanan group and the Zimmerman group. The Amherstburg and St. Thomas was chartered in May 1855 but was slow getting off the ground until after Mr. Zimmerman's death in 1857.

The battle for the control of the Amherstburg and St. Thomas raged between the Buchanan and the Zimmerman groups. Two organization meetings were held in Amherstburg on August 7, 1856, one in the Amherstburg Town Hall and the other in the Horsman Hotel, corner Dalhousie and Murray. John McLeod, distiller, was elected chairman of the Buchanan slate and Arthur Rankin, the Zimmerman slate. The Amherstburg and St. Thomas Railway was slated to be the western link of the then called "Southern" railway.

CAULKINS

The Ralph S. Caulkins was once skippered by Captain Walter Callam. He was in command for a number of years beginning in 1942. From time to time some Amherstburg residents were members of the crews. Included were David, Mac and Jack Maloney, Russ Fox, Alex Callam, Hank Whelan and Bill Miller. No doubt we have missed the names of some. The Caulkins held special interest for local river watchers. Its whistle blast was familiar -- upbound as it came to the southern tip of Boblo Island the whistle would wail one long and three shorts. The word of its passing would rapidly get around. Friends and relatives would go to the river and wave to local crew members. This blast was especially welcome to Captain Callam's wife and family who lived on Dalhousie Street south of the Waterworks Park.

Captain Walter Callam was the third generation of Great Lakes Skippers. He had a reputation of being one of the best on the lakes who often took his command out when other skippers stayed in port. Some thought he took chances -- probably so, but he never endangered members of his crew. Incidentally, the 414 foot Caulkins was built by American Shipbuilding Company at Lorain, Ohio in 1902. She was first named the J. M. Jenks, then renamed R. R. Richardson. At one point in its career it was chartered to Nicholson Universal. In 1942 she was purchased by Henry L. Caulkins and named for his son Ralph H. Caulkins. After being sold by Caulkin she was renamed Poweraux Peter and scrapped in 1965.

Sidelights on the Caulkins family; Henry L. Caulkins was married to the daughter of S. O. Johnson. Mr. Johnson was head of the Penberty Injector Company, a large plant operating in Detroit. He maintained a summer home in Amherstburg on property west side of Laird, south of Alma Street. This large tract now (1984) contains a number of homes south from Alma to property owned by Gordon Williams. There was a large house and well furnished boathouse, barn for carriage horses, tennis courts and many other facilities enjoyed by the well-to-do. It was usual for Mrs. Johnson to be driven downtown each day in a horse drawn carriage. We remember oldtimers telling us she was a large woman who sat alone on the back seat. Her only companion was a small dog. The house was eventually destroyed by fire and later the property was divided and sold. Another interesting angle was Mr. Simpson, divorced husband of Wallis Simpson, married the divorced wife of Homer Johnson, son of Mr. and Mrs. S. O. Johnson.

CHAN QUAN

A small item in the October 4, 1962 Echo revealed the fact that Chan Quan, a former beloved Amherstburg restaurant proprietor, died in Canton, China at the age of 88. He returned to his homeland in 1956. Chan Quan's place of business was in the southeast corner of the Hadley Block at the intersection of Ramsay and Murray Streets. He always seemed to be an old man with a big heart who never forgot his friends. In the rip-roaring days when Amherstburg was the centre of the liquor export business to the dry United States, the rum runners would go into Chan's to put away hefty meals - at all hours of the day and night - prior to or after completing a successful trip to the American mainland. After the Canadian government banned the legal export of liquor and when the Depression brought business to a standstill, Chan sold his Amherstburg restaurant and after a year's visit to his homeland with his family in China, returned to Canada. He bought a restaurant on Drouillard Road and later one on Ottawa Street.

WINSTON CHURCHILL

On December 27, 1941 we received a telegram from Herb Lash, Director of Public Relations for the Federal Government:

"John Marsh

Echo

Amherstburg, Ontario

*Request of Prime Minister King you are invited
to gallery seat for Churchill's speech.*

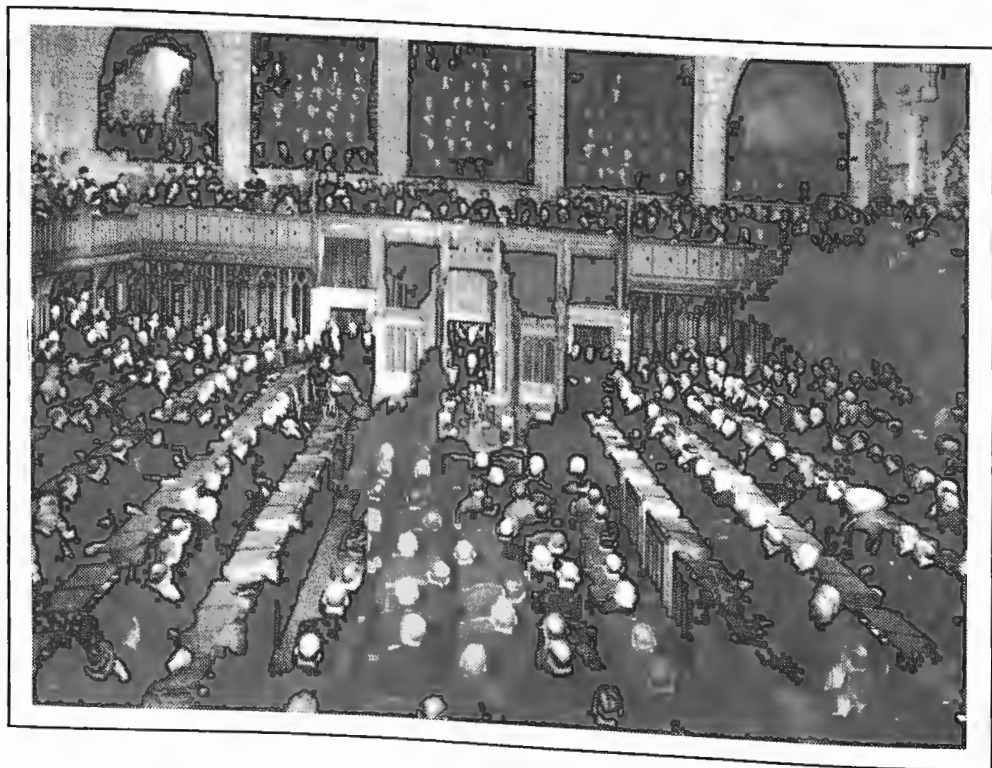
Tuesday 3 p.m. Stop. Please wire at once if you accept. Stop. No acceptances later than ten o'clock Monday morning. Stop. If coming pick up ticket at my office. Stop.

*G. H. Lash
Director of Public Information
Stop"*

Needless to say a wire of acceptance went back immediately. Mr. King had invited 50 top publishers of daily and weekly newspapers to go to Ottawa to hear Mr. Churchill speak. They were given prime seats on the floor of the House of Commons. Mr. Churchill had been in Washington and on his way back to Britain stopped at Ottawa.

His visit followed the capitulation of France to Germany. The French people were saying that soon England would be invaded and also come under German rule. Commenting on this statement in his House of Commons speech, Mr. Churchill said that the British people would be like a chicken and soon have its neck wrung. "Some chicken - some neck", he said.

Following the speech, Mr. Churchill met privately with a select group of the invited newspaper publishers in a closed room behind the House of Commons. Before he came in, Prime Minister Mackenzie King told the news people that Mr. Churchill was weary and not to ask him questions. He further said that Churchill would make a statement. A few minutes later Mr. Churchill



came into the room looking like a baby's bottom, red-cheeked and smiling. He had a long cigar in his mouth. When no one put forth any questions Mr. Churchill said, "What's the matter with you Canadian newspapermen? I just came from the States where they hounded me to death." The editor of the *Toronto Globe* answered, telling Mr. Churchill about Mr. King's instructions. "Ask anything you want and I'll answer as long as none of the information goes past these four walls until the war is over", said Churchill. Then followed spirited questioning in which Churchill told of the abortive invasion, the dummy guns, the Hess affair and other secret information which was unknown to the public. Be it said to the credit of the Canadian newspaper people that not a single bit of information given by Churchill that day was ever revealed until the war was over. That evening clusters of news people from Canada and the British Empire gathered in a room in the Chateau Laurien to discuss Churchill's visit and speech. It was like men who had been to a revival meeting and hit the trail.

One British newsman who had come to North America with Churchill told us some of the experiences that he had while covering Churchill in Great Britain: Following an intense bombing of the east end of London, Churchill went to view the section early in the morning. Standing on a pile of rubble he gave courage to the English people. Having the call of nature he turned his back on the crowd and relieved himself. Turning back he said, "That's what I think of that Nazi bastard." Another story was told of his close friendship and association with Franklin D. Roosevelt. Once when Churchill was staying at the White House, Roosevelt wished to talk to Churchill in the middle of the night. He wheeled down to Churchill's room, saw a light under the door and knocked. Churchill called out to "come in" and the President, upon entering, encountered the British Prime Minister parading around in the nude. Roosevelt started to back out when Churchill boomed out, "Come in, come in. We Englishmen have nothing to hide!"

Another WWII story concerned a meeting of the executive of the C.W.M. Association in Ottawa. W. Mackenzie King was invited to speak at the dinner meeting. At this small gathering he also pledged the secrecy of the Canadian news people and told of the white papers that had come to his desk that day. In these it was revealed what would probably happen to Hitler and his mistress Eva. Subsequent events proved that Mr. King's information was very accurate.

The day following his address to the House of Commons, Churchill held a press conference at Government House. Several hundred newspaper people from Canada and the U.S. attended. Several times Churchill avoided answering questions. At this public conference he did not take the media into his confidence as he had earlier.

Following this he left for Great Britain. Churchill's visits to Canada did much to lift spirits during those troubled times.

CLOSED MEETINGS

In our many years of writing stories about local government we didn't tell many tales about public officials with a hand in the cookie jar. During one period, however, we did malign a mayor who continually battled The Echo and warned the town they'd be better off without this newspaper. We had a tip one day that he would be required to appear before a closed "off the record" meeting of the Amherstburg Council. At this meeting he was charged with using municipal services for his own benefit. Admitting to this he promised to make restitution, which he never did.

Over the years there were two other known cases where public employees stole funds from the town treasury. As for closed meetings of the Amherstburg Council, we were never barred from these gatherings. It was understood that any information we received would not be made public. The town fathers wanted to keep us fully aware at all times of what was happening in local government. This same privilege was extended to the representative from the Windsor Daily Star. Their representative broke a confidence which resulted in the press being barred from several 'in camera' meetings, this to the detriment of the electors.

J. "NIG" CLARK

The Amherstburg district has always had its share of 'characters' and we're proud of them.

One of them was J. "Nig" Clark, the only local boy who ever made big time baseball. Born in Anderdon at what was known as "Hell's Corners" (corner Texas Road and 3rd Concession) in 1882, Jay Justin Clark was the son of Jerome and Catherine Clark who were of Wyandotte Indian descent.

In the summer of 1902 the 20-year-old "Nig" was a rookie catcher with the Corsicana club of the Texas league. His team was playing Texarkana. The first time at bat Clark socked the ball over the right field fence for a home run. The same thing happened on his second, third and fourth times at bat - in three innings. A wealthy Texas cattleman walked out on the field and offered the catcher fifty dollars if he would hit one more homer. So Nig obliged and hit his fifth home run of the game. The Texan ran back out and offered Nig another fifty and he hit the sixth home run of the game. Every time he came to bat the crowd went wild. . . in that game he hit eight homers for eight at-bats. Somebody in the crowd passed the hat and collected more than two hundred dollars as a reward for his incredible feat. After that game he was showered by admirers with all sorts of gifts, mostly new clothes.

He also played for the Cleveland Naps and Indians, St. Louis Browns, the Pittsburgh Pirates and the Philadelphia Phillies. Nig was the only big league player in baseball history who scored eight home runs in a single game, a record which we believe still stands.

We met Nig Clark in 1940 when he came home to attend an Old Boys' Reunion in Amherstburg. He was then a patient in the Dearborn Veterans' Hospital. At that time he had come to the end of the road and was sponging drinks from his old friends. He died in 1949 at his home in River Rouge. Someone ought to make a movie of Clark's life and career.

CRYSTAL BAY - November, 1983

Clean up Crystal Bay and Hidden Lake! This is the objective of a number of area boaters and scuba divers who enjoy their sport in this section of the lower Detroit River. Crystal Bay was created when the United States Corps of Army Engineers constructed a compensating dyke on the east side of the Livingstone Channel, to control the level of the water in the Amherstburg Channel over the Lime Kiln Crossing. At that time it was feared water drained from the Upper Great Lakes by the Chicago Drainage Canal would interfere with the water level over the dangerous Lime Kiln Crossing. The danger involved the increasing size of Great Lakes freighters which needed assurance of proper depth over this section of the river.

In the building of the dyke, the contractors left a section of the dyke open. This became "Hidden Lake", favourite recreational centre for many. The lake was fed by underground streams through the limestone. Entry to the lake was closed by a loose stone fill that allowed the water to escape into Crystal Bay. The water in the lake is crystal clear. More and more boaters discovered this prime swimming and scuba diving area. Soon, thoughtless people began removing the blocking stones, small craft began entering the lake and its charm soon disappeared.

There is a movement among Amherstburg area boaters and scuba divers to restore the lake to its original charm. Some progress has been made, but not enough. Thomas Hamilton drew the attention of town council to the deplorable condition of Hidden Lake and Crystal Bay. One of the real problems is there is little or no control over the users of this recreational area. Many are from the American side of the river. Beer cans and other trash is thrown into the bay. There is no patrol at this time by either Canadian or American authorities. The international boundary line crosses over the northern part of the area. Most of both Crystal Bay and Hidden Lake are part of the township of Anderdon. A small section is located in Amherstburg. At one time, the province took responsibility for policing, but little attention has been shown in recent months.

The only answer seems to be for interested boaters to put the pressure on the politicians to clean up the area, and police it before its use is totally destroyed. On a bright warm day in the summer, it is not uncommon for several hundred small craft to be anchored in Crystal Bay. Aquatic activities are carried on by many hundreds. Most of the boaters are tops, but there is a minority who cause real problems. These can only be controlled by proper policing. We hope Tom and his friends strike real pay dirt in their program to clean up this popular spot which is used by Canadians and Americans who love the river.

F. H. A. DAVIS/PERCY COYLE - February, 1984

Recently two old homes along the west side of Sandwich Street between Rankin and Richmond were demolished, this to make way for a new entrance and parking lot for Richmond Nursing Home. One of the houses was formerly the home of F. H. A. Davis, a prominent black lawyer, who for many years acted as town solicitor. The other house was the residence of the W. P. Coyle family. For a number of years Percy Coyle was Essex County clerk and a good one too. He travelled to Sandwich each day aboard the Sandwich, Windsor and Amherstburg electric railway trolley. Mr. Coyle was an outstanding official and served the county well. He lived in Anderdon Township before moving to Amherstburg.

DEPRESSION

The Depression of the 'Dirty Thirties' hit practically every family in Amherstburg. There was little money and in those days, there were no cushions such as old-age pension, mothers' allowance, baby bonus, etc. It was hard-going, with most people scratching to make a living.

There was no organized help except charity committees in local communities. The Amherstburg Charity Committee of the Town Council was headed by Reverend H. A. Wright, rector of Christ Church. Thank goodness he was a man of compassion. Small food orders were given, these to the stores winning the contract. The main contract was given to a local grocer who thought that he could make a fast buck by giving recipients inferior goods. Anything was good enough for people on charity, was his philosophy. His game came to an end one day when the Charity Committee held an in-camera meeting at which we were present. Mr. Wright charged the grocer who admitted that he gave cornmeal filled with bugs to a charity case. Needless to say this problem was closed in a hurry. The Charity Committee continued along for a number of years until there was a radical change. Amherstburg was lucky to have a man of Mr. Wright's calibre looking after its unfortunates.

We well recall a trip made to Winnipeg in 1936 to attend the annual meeting of the Canadian Weekly Newspapers Association, our first trip to Western Canada and a memorable one indeed. The first morning heading west out of Sudbury we passed train after train parked on sidings waiting for the transcontinental to go through. On top of the boxcars of these freight trains were hundreds of young men travelling across Canada seeking employment. The railways couldn't put them off the trains in the wilderness over the great shield. Winnipeg was a gathering point for the jobless and we well recall attending a gathering of these fine young men on the grounds of the Parliament Buildings, when Tim Buck, head of the Communist Party in Canada, spoke to them. Thank goodness this bad economic condition in Canada was righted in a fairly short period.

On the brighter side of the thirties was the low cost of food and other services. We recall that the Windsor Rotary Club sponsored a package trip to New York to be at the French Pier when the Queen Mary made her maiden voyage to that city in 1933. The party from Windsor and a number from Amherstburg were taken to New York in a private car attached to the Detroit New York train. Arriving in that city in early evening we registered at the Commodore Hotel on 42nd Street. Included in the package tour was a bus sightseeing trip of New York, a visit to a nightclub and a bus trip to the French Pier. The private car was attached to the Windsor-bound train the second morning. Tom Moffat of Amherstburg recalls that the total cost of this package was \$42.00.

H.M.S. DETROIT - November, 1984

The plan to build a replica of H.M.S. Detroit, flagship of the British Navy during the War of 1812-14, has got off the ground in a big way. The enthusiasm for the project is mounting. Already a good part of the million dollar cost has been nailed down. Industry has made major contributions. The Ford Motor Company will cast the twenty cannons to be placed aboard the vessel.

Interest could not have been generated but for hard work and organization on the part of the chairman Murray Kennedy and the members of the "Project H.M.S. Detroit" committee. Mr. Kennedy recently retired as head of Murray Kennedy Motor Sales. He has a good track record for organizing and carrying on a successful operation. He has used this experience in planning and directing the operations of this committee. He is well liked, able and an excellent organizer. These qualities paid off. One million dollars seems like a lot of money -- this sum did not faze committee members, rather it spurred them on to do the seemingly impossible. The Detroit is shown at the King's Navy Yard in the Margaret Reynolds painting of Amherstburg 1813. When completed, the Detroit will supplement the other Amherstburg historic attractions: Fort Malden

National Historic Park, historic Park House, King's Navy Yard Park and the Black Historical Museum. We're 100 per cent behind Mr. Kennedy and associates.

DALHOUSIE STREET

Helen and I reminisced about businesses that we recall on Dalhousie Street. . . here are our ramblings.

The Salmoni Hotel, southwest corner of Dalhousie and Richmond, was in our time the Cooper Dime Store and today (1981) the Navy Yard Restaurant and Preservation Hall, a pine furniture and gift shop, occupy the site. South of that on the west side of Dalhousie was the Mullen Coal Co., which was previously the local fire station. This station housed the hand-drawn hose carts which were hauled by citizens to a fire when the siren sounded giving the correct ward.

South of Mullen's was Falls Bros. office which at one time was the Cuddy-Falls Bank. Along the street in the office now occupied by Laframboise Insurance was the William Menzies liquor store, and on the corner was the Lakeview Hotel which at one time was one of the most elegant buildings in town.

Across Murray Street, still on the west side of Dalhousie, was the F. P. Scratch Dry Goods Store. It was not generally known but Colin Wigle, a local industrialist, had financial interest in this store. Many years later it was purchased by the Boblo Company. The south side was for many years a hardware store owned by D. L. Wigle, then the Shillington Bros., and later, Kendall Hardware.

On the east side of Dalhousie in the building occupied today by the Dalhousie Market there was the D. H. Terry Photography Studio and later John Cooper's Stationery, then Ayerst's Drug Store. The present "Plants 'n Things" building (southeast corner of Dalhousie and Murray) was for many years Jones' China Shop. Before that it was the Lovegrove Grocery Store.

The building now occupied by the Royal Canadian Legion was the Stancliffe house. This was an elegant building with a widow's walk and an interesting iron grille fence. It was at one time headquarters for the Canada Southern Railway. . . a private school run by the Riley sisters who were ancestors of the Scratch family. . . and later it was occupied by H. M. Stancliffe who was chief accountant for Brunner Mond. To the south of that during the twenties was the Stancliffe & French greenhouse, a fairly large operation, which was later purchased by John Gray. At the northeast corner of Dalhousie and Gore was the early Customs House which was later turned into a two-family residence known as the Cunningham house (after the family who owned it for many

years). This was a fine example of early French architecture (built early 1800s for the Customs House) according to Franklin Davey McDowell, author of *Fortress of Freedom*. It was later moved around the corner to Gore Street and remodelled into four apartments.

Over to the west side of Dalhousie across from the Legion is the historic Gordon House; the historic Park House was south of that, moved around 1970 to the King's Navy Yard Park and now operated as the Park House Museum.

The Kane Drug Store was situated north of the Gordon House across from the Legion. Mrs. Kane was the first woman druggist in Ontario and ancestor of Mac, Florence and Fr. Ted Gatfield.

On the southeast corner of Dalhousie and Gore was Samuel McGee's China and Groceteria. Sam McGee was a prominent Amherstburg resident who was also a local magistrate. Seaway Marine has been on the site since 1958. For a time before that it was MacDonald Heating. Across the street is Duffy's Tavern, formerly the Simon Fraser house, built in 1885 by D. L. Wigle. Simon Fraser was a lumber merchant. On the river side was a wharf where the Fraser tugs were moored. It is interesting to note that an early street in Amherstburg ran along the river from Richmond to the west of Dalhousie. It was known as Water Street.

On the east side of Dalhousie from Sam McGee's store to Park Street was the Amherstburg Roller Skating Rink, now used as a storehouse by Conklin Lumber. South of that was the Lewitt Knitting Mill and later the site of an auto factory where the "Brock" was built. Further along was the Woods Foundry and also the Middleditch Foundry. These two businesses were very active during dredging of the lower Detroit River. Across the street on the river side was once located the McLeod Distillery, later purchased by Hiram Walker. Walker owned the white frame house now occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Sonny Boulton, but there is no evidence that he ever lived there. After the McLeod distillery burned, Walker established a distillery in Walkerville. The "Club" whiskey produced was so popular in the United States that the American distillers persuaded the government to pass a law that the country of origin must appear on all labels of imported whiskey and this is the reason that this popular liquor was named "Canadian Club".

South along the river was the Wigle Flouring Mill where the well received "Calla Lily" flour was processed. Colin Wigle, the owner of the operation, also operated one of the early electric plants in Amherstburg.

North along the river was the Woods dock which in the 1920s was the centre of the liquor export business. It was illegal to export liquor into the United States; however, it was not illegal for the people hauling the booze to thirsty Americans to fill out export papers stating the cargo was going to Cuba!

Down at the left end of the curb on Dalhousie Street where the Canadian Coast Guard station is located, was the Amherstburg headquarters of the United States Corps of Army Engineers. This is one of the few foreign stations of the Corps and has been in operation in Amherstburg since the turn of the century.

Some of the other businesses we recall on Dalhousie Street through the years are Balla's, Stedman's, Francine's, Grant McCready's law office, Blanche and Ernestine Mickle's Wool Shop, Poppy's Ladies Wear, Montgomery TV, Al Horne's Insurance, Ingram's Meat Market, Jimmy Gowing's Market, Eaton's Order Office, Ridley's Coffee Shop, Kitka Shoe Repair. . . and so many more, in our walk down memory lane.

DOMINION STORE - 1983

We are interested in the current renovation of the former Dominion Store building to a mini mall. The heritage theme structure was designed by architect David Novick, who is supervising the changes. This mini mall will contain two large offices on Richmond Street and several business places. It is owned by Motorco.

The building was initially constructed by Lucien Beneteau, I believe in the early fifties, as a bowling alley which was called Amherst Recreation. It has had an up and down career since fire put an end to the lanes. Prior to that it contained several stores on Richmond Street, including Les Temesy's Men's Shop and Pennington Ladies' Wear.

Dominion Store entered the picture when its Amherstburg branch on Dalhousie Street couldn't handle the increasing business. The "Rec" building came into possession of Sam Bolus, a Harrow merchant, who renovated it to suit the needs of a chain store operation. Mr. Bolus was a kind and astute man who delved into real estate after selling his Harrow store.

Dominion was originally brought to Amherstburg in 1922 by Hazen Pettypiece, who operated a food store on the south side of Murray Street in the Kolfage building. He sold his food store to Dominion and carried on as manager. The store flourished and soon needed larger quarters, which were obtained in the former G. T. Florey store on the east side of Dalhousie Street. Business continued to increase in spite of the fact that prices here in Amherstburg were at that time higher than in the Windsor Dominion Stores, a fact which was later corrected.

It soon became apparent with the increase in business that the Dalhousie Street store was too small and new premises were needed. The former Amherst Recreation became available and a long term lease was signed with Mr. Bolus,

still in effect when Dominion closed its doors for the last time on August 28th, 1982. Too much education, not enough understanding and a little bullheadedness all combined in a great deal of the reason why Dominion Stores Limited decided to close its Amherstburg store in 1982 after operating in town for over half a century.

Some months previously the big brass in Dominion came to town to look over the probability of building a supermarket on the west side of Sandwich Street, south of the Metropolitan Store at Fort Malden Mall. A roadblock was discovered in that this property was zoned "Highway Commercial". Therein lies a tale. The original designation of Sandwich Street south of Park Street was "commercial". The designation passed the town council with only one vote against it - that from the chairman of the Planning Board.

This action was opposed by the Chairman of the Essex County Planning Department who was looking after the planning needs of Amherstburg. It was contended that allowing certain commercial development which they thought should go in the old downtown was against the principles of good planning. Following this, some wheeling and dealing was done by the County Planner who contacted the Planning Department in Toronto with the result that the Ministry refused to approve the commercial designation, but only the highway commercial designation. Highway commercial designation allowed for the construction of such businesses as Colonel Sanders, farm equipment, auto sales, etc., but nothing that would compete with businesses in the old downtown section. After the Dominion pressed on, council again considered rezoning the property and finally changed the zoning so that the large supermarket could be built on the west side of the street south of the Met.

Chairman of the Planning Board again bitterly opposed this change. The whole deliberations took so many months by the time action was possible - this in spite of the fact that Dominion had given approval for the new branch - the economic picture had changed so that the conspiracy decided not to proceed. As for the Richmond Street location, it had become totally inadequate to compete with the A & P at the mall. Not only was Dominion saddled with an extra Business Improvement Area tax, but it was subjected to the closing of part of the main street when the BIA group held Sidewalk Sales and other downtown events.

We forgot to mention one of the colourful men who operated the bowling alley prior to the major fire. He was Sam Pearl of Toronto. Besides running the bowling alley, Sam was heavy into loaning money at rates above bank interest. We recall being in his office one day when he showed us a pile of promissory notes. We had to particular interest in them but he insisted that we check them over. "I'll make a pile of money from these", Sam said. Most of them were signed by persons who couldn't get bank credit. We have no idea how that story

turned out but would opine that Sam eventually was taken for a financial ride by these sharpees.

DOWNTOWN AMHERSTBURG - October, 1983

It is probable that soon the weather will be such that we cannot hold our usual morning sessions on the park bench, corner of Dalhousie and Richmond. We refer to this bench as our 'private office.' It give us an opportunity to talk with old friends and get us a feel of what is going on in town. Also to get a cross section of public opinion. Probably on warm sunny days we will be able to continue these sessions from time to time.

Sitting on the park bench at this busy corner we think back on the drastic changes that have taken place over the years. Our bench is located on the west side of the Bank of Montreal building facing the river. This building was once the site of the local branch of the Imperial Bank of Canada which came into town when it purchased the Sovereign Bank on Murray Street. Incorporated in the block and owned by the late W. T. Wilkinson was the Wilkinson Harness Shop on Dalhousie and the J. H. Lovegrove Grocery on Richmond. The Lovegrove store, first known as Lovegrove and Scratch, was first operated in a building on the south-east corner of Dalhousie and Murray. When the Imperial Bank moved in 1921 to a new building across Richmond Street the site was taken over by the Bank of Montreal, which came to Amherstburg when it purchased the Molson's Bank west side of Dalhousie in the Bullock's Tavern building now occupied by the Bookshelf.

The building on the west side of Dalhousie, now the Navy Yard Restaurant, for many years was the premises of Berube General Store. Later the business was purchased by I. S. Brown. Still later the building was purchased by John Cooper and his son Ronald. For many years it housed the Cooper owned Stedman Store and the Right Store. The site of the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, northeast corner of Dalhousie and Richmond once housed the Amherstburg branch of the Bell Telephone Company. When The Echo building was erected in 1915, the second floor was used to provide space for the Telephone Company. When the phone service grew Ma Bell wanted to purchase The Echo owned lot north of the newspaper building. The company wanted us to sign a long term lease at an unheard of low rental. Ma Bell also wanted to delay the installation of modern phone equipment in the area. To speed up the modernization of the system we refused to sign a lease. This was the reason for building the large telephone building east side of Sandwich Street.

Back to this busy corner. For years the Amherstburg Post Office was located on the northwest corner of the intersection. In spite of the efforts of The Echo and others who wanted to maintain this fine old building, the town fathers

decided to tear it down around the same time the town hall, corner of Sandwich and Gore, was replaced with an uninteresting box of a building which was not planned to take care of future growth of services. Be that as it may, just before this period a new federal building was constructed on the north side of Richmond near Ramsay. The former post office building was used by the town for offices during construction of the new municipal building. It also housed the Amherstburg office of the United States Corps of Army Engineers during the deepening of the east side of the Amherstburg Channel.

Over the years further changes in this intersection have taken place. An unsightly coal dock was replaced by a beautiful King's Navy Yard passive park. The park has brought a great deal of pride to the community. Let us hope local politicians will stand firm and maintain the park as is and not be influenced by selfish pressure groups who would change the passive nature of the beauty spot.

There is a revival of interest in the downtown. This is evidenced by the revitalization of the former Dominion Store building on the north side of Richmond Street east of the Post Office. Across the street is an attractive women's dress shop ("Margy's") in the former I.O.O.F. building. Other improvements are on the planning board for this part of the old town. They have not taken any action to eliminate a flashing electric sign on the east side of Dalhousie across from the Gordon House. Does it mean, to these elected officials, "heritage" is but a word to bandy about but not one to protect? We musn't be too hard on members of local government as they have a good track record, such as the creation of the King's Navy Yard Park and the purchase of the former Jaber property for expansion of the King's Navy Yard Park.

Playing an important part in the promotion of tourist business is the elegant King's Navy Yard Restaurant. Soon to be added to attractions in this part of the town is the acquisition of the former Fort Malden Commissariat property (Callam House). Fortunately many attraction shops have been added to the area and things look good for the future. There is no place to go but up. We have a great town. It can become much more productive if the downtown merchants and the mall merchants get into communication and make their main objective to do what is best for the good of the whole town.

DUFF & GATFIELD

At the west end of Texas Road on the river bank was located a wharf on which once stood the office of the Duff and Gatfield Marine Reporting Agency. This was owned and operated by Captains William H. Gatfield and Henry G. Duff. They provided a pilot service to take the ships through this dangerous passage and were engaged each season by the Lake Carriers' Association to daily tend the range lights which guided the ships at night. The range lights then

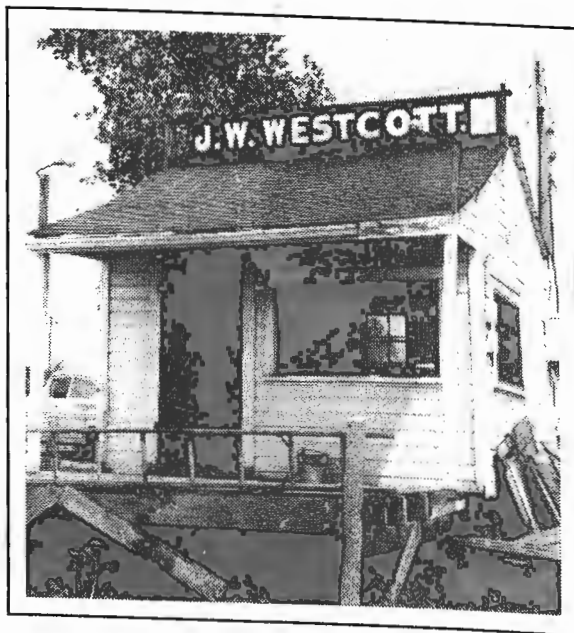
consisted of lanterns hanging on trees. Nobody but the members of the Duff and Gatfield organization knew the proper location for these lights, which were put in place each day by Mrs. Duff. One year the Lake Carriers failed to pay Duff and Gatfield for the previous season's service, so no navigation guides were put in place and they could not sail their vessels. Finally they coughed up the proper fees and ships began to sail again.

Before the days of ship-to-shore phones the skippers of upbound vessels would call in to the Duff and Gatfield office using a loud hailer. They would announce to which port the vessel was bound and also give the marine reporter Irving T. Kelly a grocery order. Mr. Kelly would call the order into the Bennie Appel Grocery, corner of Sandwich and Prince Road in Sandwich, and the groceries were picked up when the vessel called into the Mullen Coal Company dock at Windsor.

J. W. WESTCOTT MARINE REPORTING AGENCY

For many years H. Grant Duff and I. T. Kelly were the chief operators of the office. Some years later Kelly left the firm and opened an Amherstburg office on Dalhousie Street south for the J. W. Westcott Marine Reporting Agency, on a little man-made island in front of the home of Captain Charles Hackett. A few years after the deepening of the Amherstburg Channel at the Lime Kiln Crossing, Duff and Gatfield ceased to operate and the service was supplied solely by the J. W. Westcott Marine Reporting Agency.

The Westcott firm closed its Amherstburg office on August 15, 1964, after operating for fifty-two years along the Lower Detroit River. The firm established its first station here as previously mentioned, on "Hackett Island", opposite the residence of Captain Charles Hackett, Dalhousie Street South. When the Livingstone Channel was opened the Westcott firm relocated on the west bank of the Livingstone Channel, still under the direction of Irving Kelly, who remained head of the Amherstburg firm until his death. The third move was made in 1917, the site being at Gordon Station, on property owned by the Canada Southern Railway Company (now Allied Chemical). Finally, in 1927, the office was established in the Livingstone Channel Lighthouse. Records were



maintained of passage of vessels both downbound in the Livingstone and upbound in the Amherstburg Channel, where operations continued until it was violently moved from that location.

In September, 1952, the Lighthouse was hit during a heavy fog by the downbound steamer E. J. Kulas of the Wilson Line. The office, with Joseph E. McGuire - reporter on duty - was toppled into the drink. H. Grant Duff and Irv Kelly raced to the scene upon hearing a short-wave radio distress signal from the Kulas. They found McGuire on the light and brought him back to the Duff boat house where he was treated for shock. The reporter was fortunately in one piece except for some missing front teeth which had been knocked out by the impact. "When I came to, I found that I was in the water and inside the floating office. It seemed like hours before I could get out and when I did I swam towards the light. Nearing the light I looked up and saw that it was leaning towards me and I waited a few minutes before going on and finally made the light."



McGuire told The Echo that another ore freighter, the George H. Fink, was also involved in the crash. In swinging wide to avoid the Kulas she was carried by the current into the Amherstburg Channel and grounded at Gordon. When the fog cleared the Kulas was lying on the east bank of the Lime Kiln Crossing and the David M. Weir of the Hannah Line was out of the Channel in front of the Webster residence.

Following this incident the office was again opened at Gordon. Miles Maricle joined the firm and took over the office after Irving Kelly's death. J. E. McGuire and James Turner were the other reporters. From the figures recorded of vessel movements in both the Amherstburg and Livingstone Channels, it was shown that this stretch of the Great Lakes carried more tonnage than anywhere else in the world.

In October, 1953, the crib for the new Livingstone Channel light was put into place, replacing the one demolished by the E. J. Kulas. Coincidentally, the

crib was sunk into position by the freighter Ben Moreel, which was the former E. J. Kulas, renamed after the crash.

FLOATER

I. T. Kelly ran the Westcott Marine Reporting Office at Amherstburg. The last location of this office was on the dock in front of Brunner Mond. One day he called us and said that he had picked up a half a man in the river and had pulled him ashore in front of the Anderdon Tavern. Not having a car we went out of the office and found Hugh Fleming who was a little the worse for wear, having been out at a party the night before. He drove us up to the Anderdon and we went down on the shore and there was this large torso stacked up against a container. The sight of this man upset Hugh so much that he went up into a field and lost everything he had eaten for many days. It turned out that the man had been found in bed with a friend's wife, and the friend had cut him in two and thrown both parts in the river. The torso came up at Amherstburg, while his lower half came up at Mammy Judy light off Wyandotte, Michigan.

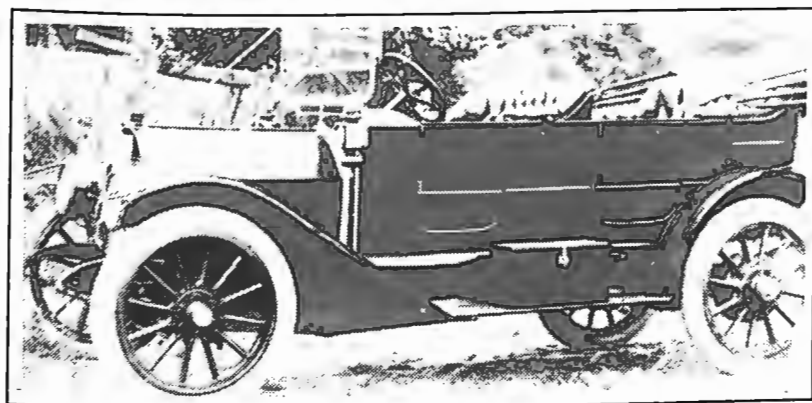
Incidentally, Irv and Mona (Scott) Kelly raised three sons and two daughters. All three boys became Catholic priests, all in different orders. Jim joined the Basilians, Tom the Redemptorists, Pat was ordained at Our Lady of Gethsemane Monastery in Trappist, Kentucky. In 1973 he was installed as Abbot with authority over Trappist monasteries in six U. S. states and Chile. Irv's parents were William H. Kelly, an M. C. R. engineer, and Maud Doherty. They lived near the Gordon Station.

EARLY AUTOMOBILES

(Reprinted from The Amherstburg Echo June 6, 1946)

On Tuesday morning as is our daily custom we dropped into Joe Lovegrove's store and the discussion that day was about the early automobiles in Amherstburg. This all came about as Detroit is celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the first auto built in that city and there has been much in the Detroit papers about this event and the early days of car building... "I think Doctor Teeter had the first auto in Amherstburg", stated Joe. "If my memory serves me right it was a Regal. . . I well remember he used to take us to lawn bowling tournaments in other Essex County towns and half of the time we would never get there. Doctor Teeter was a hard working man and had many night calls and I remember how sometimes he would become so tired that he would stop his car in the middle of the road, catch a nap and then come on home."

Mr. Lovegrove recalled that the late John Fraser and the late Dr. W. Fred Park were amongst the early car owners in Amherstburg as well as Walter Papst who drove a Brush. Many of our newer residents will not remember the days when Amherstburg had its own auto factory and the famous Two-In-One auto was built here in the building now owned by the Canadian Cannery Limited on Sandwich Street. Its promoters stated this new car would revolutionize the industry as it embodied an entirely new idea. It got its name from the fact that it was a touring car, yet the back of the body could be removed with little difficulty and the converted car used for hauling farm produce or other material. Several of these cars were built and they were in use for many years. Of course, local investors went for the stock in the Two-In-One Auto Company like a trout goes to a fly and like the trout they soon found they had lost everything.



"Amherst 40" Built 1912, Two-In-One Auto Co.

Some years later a new motor company under the name of Stansell Motors started in Amherstburg but this too was short lived and survived just long enough to suck in a little more local capital. We well remember the first auto we ever saw. It was a car belonging to a Mr. Pirie of Detroit

who owned considerable property in Amherstburg along the river on Dalhousie Street North. It was cranked from the side. Passengers got in the back and as it went down the street it sounded like the firing of a bunch of fire-crackers.

ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL - WARDEN'S DILEMMA

From the turn of the century until recent years The Amherstburg Echo covered all sessions of the Essex County Council. In the early 1900s County Council was made up of sincere men working (for the most part) for the good of all citizens. It is only in recent years that the council has become so large that it operates away from the people.

The highlight of the council year early in the century was the Warden's Banquet, which usually was held in one of the hotels in Sandwich and confined to members of County Council and other county officials. One particular year soon after the sale of liquor again became legal, banquet time was rolling around. The Warden of the county was a Colchester farmer who was a Temperance advocate. He was, however, persuaded to get a licence and to

purchase a bottle of whiskey and a case of beer for the event, which he did. On his way home he thought to himself, "I must remember to get rid of this licence", (so that his wife wouldn't discover his sin) and he put the paper in the pocket of his overalls with the intention of destroying the evidence upon reaching the barn. Unfortunately, he forgot about it completely. It was not until his better half accused him of purchasing the liquor that he realized his horrendous error. She had found the paper when washing his overalls. Needless to say, this incident nearly broke up his happy home!

ELLIOTT'S POINT

In 1984 the Marsh Collection received a welcome acquisition. This was a print of Catherine Reynold's painting, "A view of Amherstburg 1850". Better known is a painting by her sister, Margaret Reynolds, "A View of Amherstburg 1813". Both paintings view the Amherstburg Channel and the shore line of the town from Elliott's Point.

Elliott's Point is located about where the Boblo dock juts out into the river. The point extended nearly to the south end of Bois Blanc Island. It was a sand formation and remained as such until it was realized the large quantity of available sand could be used in building the streets and other construction projects in the growing city of Detroit. Much of the sand was loaded onto barge type sailing vessels which ran close to the point. The sand was taken aboard in large wheelbarrows and often spent a long time waiting for a favourable wind to allow them to go upriver against the current. Later, tugs towed the barges upstream over the Lime Kiln Crossing.

Interesting too, at the mouth of the river was a larger deposit of high grade silica sand used in the manufacture of glass. In more recent years, large quantities of the silica sand were dredged up in the deepening of the west side of the Amherstburg Channel. Much of it was dumped on the dyke below the island. This created a popular spot called White Sands Beach. Many plans have been made to mine the silica sand for commercial use. In years gone by, the late Captain David Hackett formed a company to mine and market the sand. This venture died through lack of funds. Later came a dream to develop a major glass factory in Amherstburg. A start was made using a warehouse on Sandwich Street as a manufacturing centre. The townspeople went wild when one sheet of glass was drawn. There was a town wide celebration but the enthusiasm soon died down. When it developed, there was no money to carry on. In recent years there was again interest in getting the silica sand out to commercial market. Test holes were drilled in several sections of Malden Township close to the river. High costs plus transportation to the market soon put a damper on the plan. Goodness only knows with high grade silica sand in

short supply, some major company might enter the field and get a sand mining operation underway.

FORT COVINGTON - September, 1983

A constant reminder of the United States occupation of Amherstburg in 1813 is the naming of the new strip plaza on Sandwich Street South, 'Fort Covington Mall'. Fort Covington was the name of the camp of General William Henry Harrison and the American invaders who took over this section of Canada following the British defeat in the Battle of Lake Erie. The William Harrison flag of fifteen stars and stripes replaced the British flag, and remained for a couple of years.

Records show that the American troops landed below Amherstburg and marched up to a position which now can be described as north of present day Lowes Side Road and east of the riverfront road.

The William Henry Harrison flag now flies at Fort Malden National Historic Park, and the King's Navy Yard Park, constant reminders of the historic days of 1813.

FORT MALDEN MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Fort Malden National Historic Park was the dream of a man who didn't live to see it materialize. That man was Major A. W. "Mac" McNally, a lawyer in Amherstburg, who had a vision of the restoration of Fort Malden. Others over the years had this same idea, but it was McNally who got the ball rolling. He was instrumental in the formation of the 1933 Amherstburg Historical Sites and Museums Association, the object of which was to establish a permanent policy in preserving and restoring Amherstburg's historic sites and to establish and maintain a museum. Mac was successful in gathering together numerous important relics of Amherstburg's rich history and soon exhibits were set up and early records made available in the Amherstburg Public Library. This historic collection would eventually be moved to a permanent home at the Fort Malden Museum - but he was not to see his dream come true. His untiring efforts were constantly met with opposition and ridicule by the 'establishment', a group of so-called prominent businessmen in town who thought McNally to be idealistic and eccentric - a group which lacked foresight and were more interested in their own personal gain. Mac finally became so frustrated that he disappeared and committed suicide in Cincinnati, Ohio.

A few hours before committing the deed he wrote letters to myself and to J. Earl McQueen in which he outlined his dream. He said that he had contacted the principles of Cleveland Cliffs Iron and Coal Company and had persuaded them not to renew their mortgage on the north section of the Fort Malden property which contained the northwest bastion (where the stone building stands today.)

After A. W. McNally's death The Amherstburg Echo took an active part in going ahead with this plan. The property in question came up at a tax sale. Fortunately, I had received word that there were certain people who wanted to buy the land for residential development, so I persuaded the town to let me know at which point in time the property would come up for sale. A few moments before this time arrived, the representative for the developer was called out to take a long distance phone call. When he returned, the Town of Amherstburg had acquired the property! A few months later the town turned the property over to the Department of Mines and Resources (National Parks Division) and it was designated as a National Park Site.

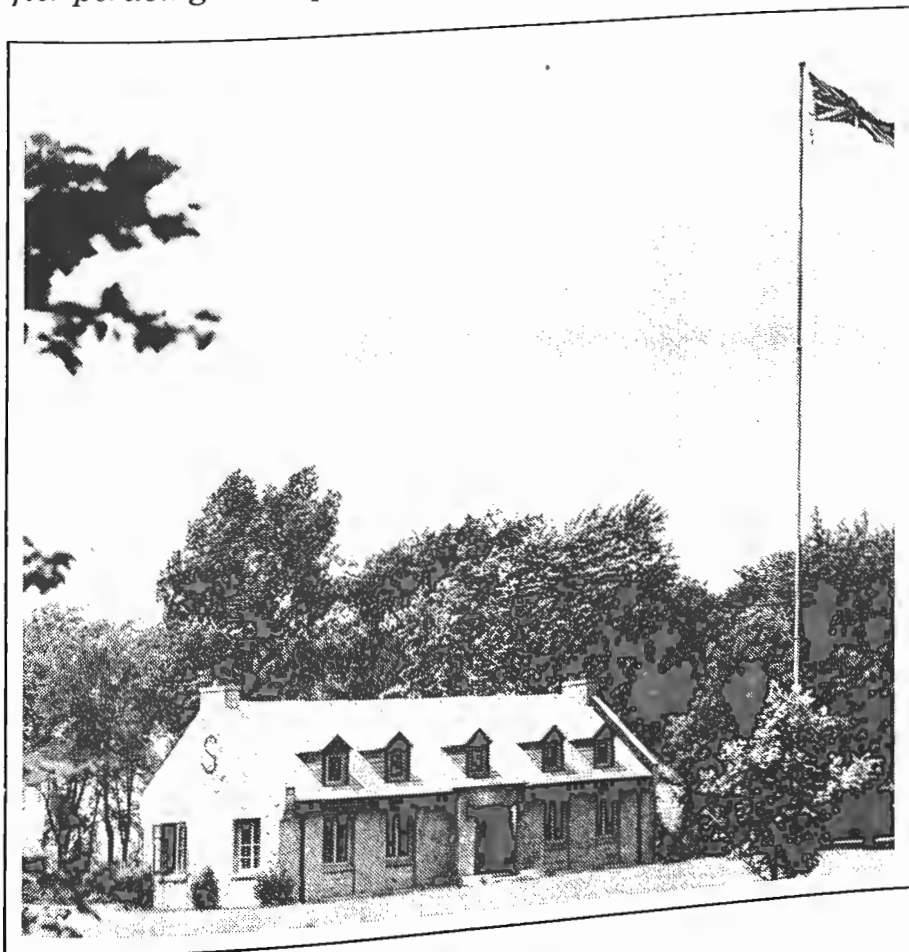
When the government took no action towards the site's development I went to Ottawa and contacted H. Murray Clark, Liberal member for Essex-South at the time, who introduced me to the deputy-minister. I made the pitch but it didn't have any effect on this official who told me there would be no money available for many years for the development of the park. Leaving his office Mr. Clark turned back to the deputy-minister and said "You're only a civil servant. We will have money before the end of this fiscal year!" On the trip back to Amherstburg, Mr. Clark told me that The Amherstburg Echo could not develop the site alone and advised me to appoint a committee composed of the Mayor, a strong Liberal and a strong Conservative. The people chosen were J. Ernest McGee, Mayor of Amherstburg; Captain C. R. Hackett, a Liberal; Devere Thrasher, a Conservative; and myself. This proved to be a very potent and active committee. Official letterheads were printed and the committee operated as though it were properly appointed. Mr. Clark advised that the first step was to hire an architect and proceed as though money was available. I contacted James Pennington, a Windsor architect, and told him that the committee wanted the building to be of stone, early French chateau design, like Chateau de Ramezay in Montreal. Plans were drawn up and the next step was to get the limestone from Brunner Mond Canada Limited.

The committee planned a wild duck dinner at a Sandwich West roadhouse, at which the manager of Brunner Mond was to be the honoured guest. That noon, the head of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police for that area called me with a warning not to hold the dinner at that particular site. As it turned out, the roadhouse was raided that evening for serving migratory birds. We had, however, changed the dinner location to the Anderdon Tavern, where Stan and Betty Gott cooked a marvellous meal. That, combined with a few drinks, softened up the Brunner Mond manager and he agreed to furnish the

stone for the building.

Although there was a period with no action, *The Amherstburg Echo* pressed on. During the autumn of 1937, Victor Renaud was hired by the committee as caretaker and he cleaned up the badly neglected property. Towards the end of that fiscal year at the end of March, Mr. Clark called me and said that money was available as a sum which had previously been allocated to a National Park in Nova Scotia was not being used. He asked that the plans be sent to him immediately that day via C. N. to Ottawa. There was a terrific snowstorm that day and very little traffic to Windsor but the committee, armed with shovels in their cars, managed to get through to the Windsor train station and the plans were sent on their way.

Not long after that tenders were called and the contract for the building was awarded to Luigi De Appolonia. As the building progressed a sod-turning ceremony was held at which, unfortunately, I was not able to be present as I was down with the flu. The contract price awarded was \$13,000 to which there were to be no extras. It happened that I was in the minister's office in Ottawa one day later on when, coincidentally, he had that very day received a letter from the contractor requesting additional funds to prepare for extra work. The minister turned the letter over to me with the comment "You said there would be no extras". After perusing the request, I saw that there indeed was no need for any extras".



of the extras mentioned, so the contractor received the original contract price of \$13,000.

One day the minister called Amherstburg and asked me to check on exhibit cases and to set up a display, as Canada needed foreign exchange and this would bring American visitors and American money into Canada. Assisting the committee with setting up this exhibit were George MacDonald, a well-known historian and Dr. Milos Quaife, editor of the Burton Collection in Detroit. The building was opened and right from the beginning there was a steady flow of United States visitors. The operation rolled along very well and it soon became apparent that a permanent curator was needed. The committee looked over the situation and in 1940, without federal authority appointed David P. Botsford, a local historian, to the position which he held until his retirement in 1964.

It became obvious that there was need for expansion of the park and Mr. Clark very diligently pushed this along as did his successors Richard D. Thrasher (later executive-assistant to Mr. John Diefenbaker) and Eugene Whelan (later Minister of Agriculture). The Hough and McGregor properties were eventually purchased and the park expanded.

One of the major events in promoting the beginning of Fort Malden was a joint meeting of the Michigan-Ontario Historical Societies which was held on



Members of the Fort Malden Management Committee:
J. E. McGee, John A. Marsh, J. Dudley, S. Murray Clark M.P.,
George MacDonald, Nick Marra, Devere Thrasher.

June 9, 1938 at "Bognie Brae", the riverfront home of Mrs. Malcolm McGregor, who was the gracious hostess of the afternoon Tea and Garden Party. Members of the Amherstburg Rotary Club and their ladies gave the Fort Malden Management Committee a great deal of help in this event (especially Ben Shillington and Ted Pickering), as did the Fort Malden Branch of the Canadian Legion, the Businessmen's Association and the local Boy Scouts.

Among the illustrious visitors to Fort Malden in its early days were the Honourable Prime Minister John Diefenbaker; the Honourable Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent; Premier George Drew of Ontario; and many other federal and provincial ministers, and other prominent Canadian and American figures. Among the well known visitors was W. C. Handy, father of the 'blues' and author of "St. Louis Blues". He was accompanied by Mary McLeod Bethune, a leading black educationalist.

The Fort Malden Management Committee continued to operate the park until the mid-1950s, during which period the Committee ceased to function as the Federal Government assumed full control.

FRENCH, DR. W. S. (1874 - 1930)

Early in this century a popular man in Amherstburg was Dr. W. S. French, a dentist, whose first office was on the second floor of a building on the north side of Murray Street between Dalhousie and Ramsay. Some years later he built an office on the east side of his residence at the southeast corner of Richmond and Ramsay, where he had moved in 1901. (That residence is still there in 1994.)

In those days Dr. French also had an office in Harrow. Every Wednesday he made the trip to Harrow, accompanied by Arthur W. Marsh, publisher of The Amherstburg Echo. Dr. French looked after his patients while my father collected the news of Harrow and district.

The good dentist liked the libation and was known to go on prolonged drinking sprees - but most people didn't know that he was often under the influence. Dr. French had a brilliant mind and spoke eloquently. On one occasion he preached a Temperance sermon in Wesley Methodist Church in Amherstburg while the juice of the grape was in complete control. The result of his fine sermon was that many people were attracted to the Temperance movement!

William S. French was born at Campbellford, Ontario, son of Charles and Katherine (Cook) French. A graduate of Toronto University's Dental College, he came to Amherstburg in November 1897 and immediately became a valued

member of the community. Dr. French's love of athletics made him an ardent advocate of sports. He was a bowler in the Amherstburg Cricket Club, a prominent member of the Amherstburg Lawn Bowling Club, as well as the Brunner Mond Club.

In 1899 Dr. French married Josephine Auld, daughter of the late John A. Auld, co-owner of the original Amherstburg Echo.

In February, 1930, Dr. French became ill while at the death bed of his aged mother. He contracted pneumonia and died not long afterwards. His remains were buried from the family home on Richmond Street to Rose Hill Cemetery.

FLO GIBSON - August, 1983

After a lengthy illness one of Amherstburg's leading citizens in the person of Flo Gibson recently died. During her residence in town she played an important part in community and church affairs, generous in the support of town activities. A couple of years ago she was named "Citizen of the Year". Many of her good works were unknown to all but her closest friends. When the Fort Malden Guild of Arts and Crafts was negotiating the purchase of the Michigan Central Railway Amherstburg depot to be converted into an art gallery, she made a financial contribution making the purchase possible.

When the Amherstburg Rotary Club was negotiating for the purchase of the Park House in order that this historic structure be saved, she came up with the needed dollars to complete the purchase of the building. She was also a major contributor to the finances of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church.

A week before her death, Flo called telling us plans to back another town project. Amherstburg has been a better place to live thanks to the love and generosity that Flo Gibson gave to the town.

CAPTAIN DAVID JOSEPH GIRARDIN (1848-1909)

David J. Girardin was born in Amherstburg on the 4th of March, 1848, one of Jean Baptiste and Julie (Fortin) Girardin's thirteen children.

He began his career on the Great Lakes at the age of 12 or 13 as a wood passer, in the days when tugs called in at Amherstburg for fuel. Next he became a



deckhand and advanced by successive steps to the Master's post on the bridge. His first berth was as wheelsman on the tug DART, which plied between Lakes Erie and Huron ports in the 1860s, under the command of his uncle, Captain Alexander Wilcox. Later he sailed as master of the tugs KATE WILLIAMS, BURNSIDE, HECTOR, JOHN MARTIN and O. WILCOX, all famous among the vessels which operated on the Detroit and St. Clair rivers. For more than twenty years Captain Girardin sailed as master with the Northwest Transportation Co., commanding in turn the steamers R. J. HACKETT, FOREST CITY, S. R. KIRBY AND H.H. BROWN.

In 1869 at Amherstburg, David J. Girardin married Elizabeth Hutton, widow of John Gleason and mother of five children - George, Rose, John, Elizabeth and Thomas Hutton. David and Elizabeth had five children - Eva (Mrs. Alex Callam); Stella (Mrs. John Mertens); David C. Girardin married Edith Pizer - he lost his life in 1916 when his ship the S. R. Kirby went down in Lake Superior; Walter L. Girardin married Irene Smith - he too was a mariner; George F. Girardin married Lila Beatrice Hamilton.

In early December, 1909, Elizabeth Girardin accompanied her husband aboard the steamer Harvey H. Brown on his last trip of the season. Before reaching Milwaukee Captain Girardin became ill. Upon reaching that city he was taken to Chicago to the home of his daughter, where six physicians, including Dr. Teeter who had rushed there from Amherstburg, were consulted. He gradually improved and was planning to return home to Amherstburg when he suddenly collapsed and died on December 19th.

Captain David C. Girardin was also a well-known Great Lakes captain like his father. A story was told amongst old sailors that Captain Dave could wake up any time of the day or night and without looking at the charts tell just where his ship was sailing. His early training was received under the "old guard" of Amherstburg - his father, Capt. E. C. Gatfield and Capt. C. C. Allen. In May, 1916 Capt. Dave's ship went down on Lake Superior after smashing on the rocks near Sawtooth Reef during a violent storm. Twenty-two of the crew lost their lives, including the captain and the cook, Harry Martin, also of Amherstburg. Harry was married to a daughter of John Bailey of Amherstburg and she was left with four children - Percy, Ray, Ralph and Frances Martin. Edith (Pizer) Girardin and her three children - Reva, Whitney and Robert - were left to mourn their captain.

GEORGE GIRARDIN (1880-1949)

We had a number of characters in Amherstburg and one of them was George Girardin, gentleman bootlegger - who ran a 'respectable' blind pig here

for many years. I'm not betraying any secrets for George said he was a bootlegger.

George was born in Amherstburg on May 27th, 1880, the son of Captain David and Elizabeth (Hutton) Girardin Sr. He grew up in town and as a young man was quite a sport. Captain Dave decided to make a man of this boy and took George aboard his freighter, the Harvey H. Brown.

In those days cock-fighting was a major sport. One never knew where a match would be held until a few hours previous to the event. George shipped to Buffalo with his father aboard the Harvey Brown and going ashore went into one of the waterfront pubs where he connected with some men interested in cock-fighting. There was a fine bird, champion of all, that he coveted and somehow eventually became its owner. George figured on cleaning up with this bird back in town, but he didn't know how to get it back to Amherstburg without his father making the discovery. After a bit of conniving with a couple of the crew members, the bird was stowed away up forward in the hold of the vessel below the Captain's cabin.

For several hours before the ship was due at the mouth of the Detroit River there was a heavy fog and the "Brown" was proceeding with extreme caution. George was at the wheel and his father pacing behind him, very much worried. Suddenly a cock crowed! Captain Girardin said "My God, we're off our course and going up on Bar Point! Full steam astern!"

Within a reasonable time the ship came to a stop - the lead line went over the side and when Captain Girardin found that the "Brown" was in safe waters he heaved a sigh of relief. Then the cock crowed again and the old man was puzzled. Upon investigation he discovered the fighting fowl. Needless to say, as soon as the Brown headed up the Detroit River the good Captain signalled for a small boat to come out from the Duff and Gatfield Marine Reporting Agency and young George was put ashore!

In the 1920s George went into the grocery business and had a quality grocery store on the southeast corner of Murray and Bathurst. He did a thriving business and had all the richest customers in town. Unfortunately, they didn't pay their bills so the end of the store soon came. Later he bought a small grocery store on the east side of Sandwich Street just north of Alma (now the Canton Restaurant). He progressed along and finally decided to go into business as a bootlegger during prohibition. The place was popular with bigshots both from town and out of town, and especially popular with the mariners who would gather there, have a few drinks, swap tales, play cards and have a good old time. It was seldom that the police visited this spot as George ran his place very carefully. Known as Snug Harbour, it was a rendezvous for many men of high position.

GORDON, JUDGE P. H.

Canadian Red Cross Society

An item of interest locally took place during World War II. In 1941, I had been in Ottawa at a meeting of the executive of the Canadian Weekly Newspapers Association, where I met the Hon. Mr. Justice P. H. Gordon who was chairman of the Canadian Red Cross Society. He said he would like to come to Amherstburg so I invited him to address the Amherstburg Rotary Club, which he did. He told of the privation being suffered by Canadian prisoners of war and stated if it were not for the Canadian Red Cross food parcels these men would starve. I was the only reporter at that meeting and we printed Judge Gordon's remarks in The Echo.

Imagine my surprise two weeks later when a letter arrived from a friend who was editor of the Kelowna (British Columbia) Courier, in which was included a clipping from his paper whereby he had reported an address given by Judge Gordon to the Kelowna Rotary Club. In his talk, Judge Gordon spoke of visiting Amherstburg and his talk in connection with the prisoners of war. He said that within two days after his visit to the Amherstburg Rotary Club had appeared in The Echo, the German government protested his remarks to Red Cross Headquarters in Switzerland.

GROSSE ILE AIR BASE

There was, during the WWII period, a large United States Naval Airport at the foot of Grosse Ile, Michigan where young flyers were trained. Many of these planes used a course directly over Amherstburg. Residents here protested at these low-flying planes so a meeting was arranged between the heads of the Naval Air Station and the Amherstburg Council. That particular summer evening, I was out cutting the grass and five minutes before the meeting suddenly realized that I had to get going. Grabbing note paper and pencils, without changing my clothes, I went to the meeting. Council was in session so naturally I took a place in the corner. In came several Naval officers, all spit and polish. The mayor introduced them to every member of council, entirely overlooking me. After the meeting, however, the mayor called me over and said these men had heard about what was going on at Fort Malden. They had brought their wives with them and would like to see what is being done. "You are the only one who has a key to the building. Would you look after them?"

It was a pleasure for me to meet these fine people. They understood my predicament in not being properly dressed. However, after showing them around the Fort I took them to the Anderdon for a drink and we had a good

visit. The following week Commander Walker called and invited me over to the Officers' Mess for dinner. He said to bring along a friend, so I took Captain J. Earl McQueen. Following that visit I was sent a membership in the Officer's Mess (a Mess Card) and during Commander Walker's tenure of office, he sent a crash boat over for me every time there was a special event at the Naval Air Station - including the appearances of the Blue Angels and many famous people.

HAAS, RUTH

The first woman president of an American College was Ruth Haas of Amherstburg. Ruth as a child came to Amherstburg from Syracuse, N.Y., with her family. Her father, F. W. Haas, was chosen as purchasing agent for the then newly-founded company, Brunner Mond Canada Limited. Ruth attended the Amherstburg Continuation School, then located on the second floor of the Amherstburg Public School on Richmond Street and she was further educated at Syracuse University. Later she joined the faculty of Connecticut Teachers' College at Danby, Connecticut and through her ability eventually became head of that institution. Ruth became known as one of the top educationalists in the United States.

HARROW RESEARCH STATION

Way back in 1909, a major farm crop in Essex South was the growing of flue cured tobacco. So important was it that the Federal Department of Agriculture decided to establish the Harrow Experimental Station to help tobacco growers with their problems. To head the station and supervise Experimental work, an expert in tobacco growing was hired as the first director of the station. This man was Dudley Digges, who did an excellent job.

This small beginning has resulted in the Harrow Research Station - a large centre, staffed by experts who have made a mark in research in the Canadian agricultural picture. The station can rightfully lay claim to many firsts that have made an impact on production of food products in Canada. In recent weeks, this outstanding research station observed its 75th anniversary.

For many years during our newspaper days we visited the Harrow Research Station each week to talk with many members of the staff. In the beginning we called in at a small office. The research facilities were located on the south side of Highway 18, east of Harrow. Additions were later made to the original building including greenhouses. Our first contact with a director was Herb Murwin who came to the station from the United States. Down through the years he supervised expansions to the research facilities and enlargement of

the acreage used in added research projects. A substation under the direction of John Aylesworth, to conduct experiments on the land, was established. Before Mr. Murwin's retirement, there was serious talk about construction of large research buildings. This plan was carried out by Mr. Murwin's successor, Dr. L. W. Koch. Many hours were spent by Dr. Koch, departmental heads, Don Lee (administrative officer), and the architect in the planning of the new building. The project had the blessing of the Honourable Eugene Whelan, Federal Minister of Agriculture, who pushed the project along. The station was constructed, and in operation before the retirement of Dr. Koch.

HAUNTED HOUSE - November, 1983

In the not too distant future, Amherstburg's "Haunted House" will be but a pleasant memory. The structure will be demolished to make way for the extension of the King's Navy Yard Park. In its last days it made possible the holding of a three-day haunted house session, sponsored jointly by the Amherstburg Rotary Club and Project Mainstreet group. It enabled these community minded people to raise well over three thousand dollars to go to the trust fund to pay for an expensive liver transplant operation for Eric Middleton, a local youngster. Not only did the locals get a thrill but the attendance showed that the people of this area are warm-hearted in caring for this little boy.

But back to the Haunted House -- Peter Jaber was the last owner of the building. We well remember it as the residence and office of the Dr. R. H. Abbott family. After the doctor died and the family moved, it was the centre for singing lessons for youngsters taught by Miss Lovedy Barret. Following that it was the home of a number of local families. The town in its wisdom purchased the property following the death of Mr. Jaber. It is thought that after the house is demolished the site may become a downtown parking lot to serve the King's Navy Yard Park and provide extra off-street parking for businesses in the old core area.

Back to the Abbott family. During the early part of the 1900s, Callam's Bay in Malden Township was utilized as a boneyard for abandoned vessels that had seen better days and were no longer in service. There were a number of old wrecks that marred the beauty of the river. Best remembered were the Bulgaria, a wooden freighter and the Freemont, a former passenger boat. The Bulgaria was a total wreck -- the young bloods of the town had a ball stripping the vessel of artifacts, not realizing they were stealing. Many a home in town now has an artifact off the Bulgaria. The reason we are linking this episode with the Abbott family is the fact the young people of the Abbott family camped out each summer on the upper deck of the Freemont.

The ships' boneyard was an eyesore. The Echo led the demand for their removal. At first there was little interest in the matter, many locals taking the attitude The Echo was trying to run the town. However, local and federal politicians began to see the light. Finally, the federal government decided to take action. Tenders for the removal of the hulks were called. The lowest was submitted by Captain J. Earl McQueen. It did not take long for the job to be done.

This section of the riverfront is shown in the Margaret Reynolds painting of Amherstburg 1813. It shows Elliott's Point and the Amherstburg shoreline, including the British vessel "Detroit" on the drydock, the Park House and the Gordon House. Elliott's Point eventually disappeared when sand was loaded aboard flat bottom sailing vessels and hauled to Detroit to build streets and other construction during the development of that city.

Yes, the "Haunted House" is a thing of the past, but it will long be remembered. Probably by Hallowe'en in 1984 the Rotary Club and Mainstreet group will be able to find another site for this popular event.

HORSE AND BUGGY ERA. . .

On March 1st, 1935, Fred Bertrand sold his livery stable business to his son, Drifford, but retained the taxi service - a year or so later he also turned over to his son this branch of the former livery business. Fred Bertrand conducted a livery stable business in Amherstburg for 38 years. The first location was an old stone building at the corner of Dalhousie and Park Streets, a building that was commonly known as the Middleditch Foundry. His stable numbered from 25 to 40 horses. There was considerable demand for horse power in those days both for work and pleasure and he had no trouble in keeping the animals busy. In fact, business increased to such an extent that he decided to build his own barn. He bought a piece of property on Ramsay Street from Miss Bruce and in 1912 erected a livery barn that stood until it was destroyed by fire in February, 1935. This was immediately north of the former Echo office in the Sons of Temperance Building.

Mr. Bertrand not only let horses for hire but during the war bought horses for the Government and sold as much as \$1,975 in one day. . . He also bought horses for use on the old horse-drawn street cars in Detroit and Windsor. Horse racing aroused his sporting blood and he was the owner of three horses in the 2.20 class.

When Drifford returned to Amherstburg from serving overseas in World War I, he joined his father in business. Motor trucks and cars were beginning to replace the horse-drawn vehicles and the Bertrand firm - to keep abreast of



the times - began to get rid of their horses and do more and more business by motor truck. Thus the livery stable business merged into the trucking business and resulted in the creation of the trucking firm of Minute Service. A number of years ago Gerald Bertrand became associated with his father and fairly recently the name of the company has been changed to D. Bertrand Transport Limited. The once small livery stable grew into big business. In 1962 it operated 26 units and hauled Amherstburg produced products to all points of Ontario.

The story of the livery business in Amherstburg would not be complete without mention of the Fox Livery Stable that was operated by the late Albert Fox and on his death was taken over by his son Esrias Fox. This was the local headquarters of the Amherstburg-Windsor stage and was famous as a racing stable as well as a livery barn. It was from this place that carriages were called to take Amherstburg socialites to dances and it was also from here that carriages were supplied for funerals and other special affairs. The large barn extended from Richmond Street to Rankin Avenue on the site where the Amherstburg Cold Storage and the Federal Building now stand. In the front was a small office where hostlers and many transients slept. The main barn was a large two-storey structure that was moved to the property in 1880 by Mr. Fox. The building originally stood on the grounds of Old Fort Malden and was first used as barracks. Later it became part of the Insane Asylum and was abandoned when this institution was moved to London. The other large barracks building was

moved off the Fort property when part of it was purchased by F. A. Hough. This particular section was cut into three parts and now forms three residences on the east side of Laird Avenue.

The late Albert Fox was well-known to the travelling public in his day as it was his stage coaches that ran for many years between Amherstburg and Windsor and from Amherstburg down the Lakefront to Oxley. The coaches continued to operate until the first electric cars came to Amherstburg over the tracks of the Sandwich, Windsor and Amherstburg Railway. Mr. Fox also held the contract to haul passengers and mail from Gordon Station - now the Brunner Mond Canada, Limited riverfront - to Amherstburg. Gordon Station was the western terminus of the Canada Southern Railway and from this point the trains were ferried across the Lower Detroit River to Sugar Island, over a bridge to Grosse Ile and over another bridge to the American mainland.

HORSESHOE BAY - November, 1983

In the past few weeks there has been some discussion as to the location and naming of Horseshoe Bay. We well remember when this bay was created off the northern tip of Bois Blanc Island by Captain Orville Duncanson. The walls of the bay consisted of rock dredged out of the Detroit River during deepening of the Livingstone Channel. After the bay was completed it was used as a haven for small craft. One idea the promoters had was a grandiose plan to purchase an abandoned passenger craft, tow it to Horseshoe Bay and create a gambling mecca, mostly for the American trade. The Echo led the fight in opposing this plan much to the disgust of those who would make a fast buck and ruin the tranquillity of the residents in homes along the Amherstburg Shore. There was such a clamour that the plan was abandoned.

HOTELS IN AMHERSTBURG

(Reprinted from The Amherstburg Echo November 4, 1932)

Down through the years, from the days when Amherstburg was old Fort Malden, public hospitality here has been a by-word. The practise of the owners of hostelryes of giving the finest and most efficient service available has been carried on from generation to generation. At present (1932) only two hotels exist which used to be located in Amherstburg and vicinity. And not only the hotels, but the people themselves have on all occasions exhibited that spirit of public hospitality which has meant a great deal in the history of this town. Perhaps it is that spirit of good fellowship which has done so much toward our tourist

trade during the summer months. "The stranger within our gates" is always given the greatest possible consideration.

In the early part of the last century such celebrated figures as General Sir Isaac Brock, Simon Girty and Tecumseh are said to have been regular patrons of public houses in what was then Fort Malden.

At one time there were four hotels on Dalhousie Street in the block between Richmond and Murray Streets. The site of the present Bank of Montreal was the JOHNSTON HOUSE. HORSMAN'S HOTEL stood firmly at the corner of Dalhousie and Murray where the Bank of Commerce is situated, for nearly a century. There was a hotel at the present location of the Lakeview and another in the Mullen Block - the SALMONI HOUSE - once owned by the grandfather of ex-mayor Salmoni of Kingsville. The old BRITISH NORTH AMERICAN, famous as headquarters of British army officers, held forth at the present Dominion Stores location on Dalhousie. The old CONROY HOUSE was a tavern on Murray St. which did business across from the PRINCE ALBERT HOTEL, owned and operated by the late William Bungey. Bungey later built the UNION HOTEL, which is now a residence at the corner of the Pike Road and Sandwich Street owned by Thomas Lucier. The WILCOX HOUSE on Simcoe St. operated for many decades as the official stopping place in Amherstburg for the stage coach lines which communicated with Sandwich and other towns. Over half a century ago the BRUCE HOUSE on Ramsay Street which stood near the old Echo office was a famous hotel - officials of the Canada Southern Railway made it their headquarters while in town. The SEARLE HOUSE stood on the corner of Richmond and Bathurst Streets across from the public school. This hotel was one of the most famous in the district and flourished in 1812. It was on the upper floor of this hostelry that Adoniram Masonic Lodge No. 18 held meetings at which it is said both General Brock and Tecumseh attended. Military history tells of the exciting days of that midsummer of 1812 and of that memorable evening in June when the lodge was in session, that a runner brought the news of General Hull's intention to cross the Detroit River at Sandwich and that reinforcements were needed to strengthen the small garrison at Fort Malden, which was within sight of the lodge room at Amherstburg. These men left the lodge room, buckled on their swords, shouldered their flintlock guns and as a part of a mere handful of troops repelled Hull's forces at the River Canard three miles from Amherstburg. A British soldier named Handcock, was killed in the skirmish.

Where the Public Library now stands the AMERICAN HOTEL served the public for many years, and the DOMINION HOUSE was located where Leo Grondin's grocery is now located (southeast corner of Richmond and George). One of the most famous in its day was the old GORDON HOUSE at Gordon just north of Amherstburg on property now owned by Brunner Mond Canada, Limited.

All of these hotels were operating at one time and doing well, but the trend of traffic from slow-moving vehicles to swift transportation have forced many out of business - the TEMPERANCE ACT too, made the hotel business unprofitable.

The AMHERST HOUSE, formerly known as the BROWN HOUSE, was built in 1882. Since that time it has seen local history in the making. It is now owned by Charles Fleming.

The Lakeview Hotel, now owned and operated by T. H. Fox, was built in 1876 by the late Theo Park, father of Dr. T. James Park, Medical Officer of Health for Amherstburg. This building was erected on the site of the Amherstburg public market which was laid out in 1853 by the late James A. Wilkinson, Provincial Surveyor. The market lands also included the property on which the present Scratch block is situated. For some reason this project of a market place was abandoned.

HYDRO CONVERSION STORY

During the period 1948-1955 the hydro power lines in Ontario were converted from 25 cycle to 60 cycle. This conversion was done with a minimum of inconvenience to hydro consumers. Ontario Hydro paid the bill for the conversion of all electrical matters and equipment.

Prior to the conversion, Amherstburg was well served with hydro power lines - 2 lines came into town which ensured that service could be maintained during most interruptions in the main lines. After conversion, Hydro engineers decreed that only one main line would come into Amherstburg. This did not serve the town well and there were many interruptions in production schedules for local industries. Marra's Bread Limited plant was one that suffered the most.

Much was written about this condition in The Amherstburg Echo. The Hydro district engineer maintained that a second service would not be installed as such lines were not available in other Western Ontario towns. However, a senior employee of the Essex County Hydro Office contacted us one day and brought in a plan which showed that a second line could easily come into Amherstburg if a short span was built from the Kingsville station to a line which ran to Amherstburg.

About this time Robert Saunders, a chairman of the Ontario Hydro Commission, was coming to the Clark Keith plant in Windsor to meet with members of the Southwestern Ontario Weekly Newspapers Association. We felt that the map with the suggested change should be brought to Mr. Saunders'

attention. Through the good graces of Rev. M. C. Davies, member of the Ontario Legislature for Windsor and Speaker of the House, and William Murdoch, M.P.P., Essex South, a meeting was arranged with Mr. Saunders in the board room of the Clark Keith plant.

When he started to explain our needs to Mr. Saunders, the Hydro engineer interrupted and said it could not be done. "Hold on there, young man", Mr. Saunders said. "Let John make his pitch". After we had shown how a second service could easily be established Mr. Saunders turned to the Hydro engineer and asked, "Can this be done?" The engineer hung his head and replied, "I think so but it would cost a lot of money." Mr. Saunders questioned him again and found that it was a minimal expense. He said to the Hydro engineer, "I want this line in operation by midnight". The work was accomplished and Amherstburg had a second service without a lot of "to do".

INDIAN ON STACK

The Detroit River and the passage of vessels up the Amherstburg Channel is a constant source of information.

We recall that when Bellevue was a Veterans' Hospital in the 1940s, high Canadian officials coming to visit Bellevue would sit on the front verandah and be astounded by the vessels passing upstream. One frequent visitor through this section of the Detroit River was the steamer Wyandotte of the Wyandotte Transportation Company, the first self-unloader on the Great Lakes. On her stack was painted an Indian. On either side of the stack were landing ladders.

One official seeing the Wyandotte going upstream turned to Gavin Greig, manager of the Veterans' Hospital, and asked why the ladders. Gavin answered, "They are there to allow the Indian to climb down to relieve himself."

ICE BREAKING

We have lived all our lives on the banks of the Detroit River. The river holds a great fascination for people who love the ships and activity in this section of the Great Lakes. Fortunately we have been able to spend considerable time on the Detroit River, Lakes Erie and St. Clair and the St. Clair River.

In the late forties, one cold, foggy Sunday morning we walked downtown to pick up the morning paper when we heard that a plane had gone down on Boblo Island, so we hurried to contact Capt. J. Earl McQueen to see if he was sending over a tug to investigate. He told us that Capt. Jake Penner would take



Capt. J. Earl McQueen aboard tug Atomic.

the Atomic out and cut through the thick ice to the island and we were welcome to go along. On board were members of the O.P.P. Reaching the island we walked over to the west side but found no plane. We returned to the Atomic - a message came through for the tug to go to Toledo and bring back a freighter in the Detroit Toledo coal run. This vessel was under the command of Capt. Duncanson. We left Toledo keeping ahead of the freighter, being held up many times by the thick ice and finally managed to get her into the Rouge River. A signal came from the freighter to go to the port side of the river. The captain, rather than taking to starboard, headed for the tug missing us by inches.

The trip downriver to Amherstburg was uneventful except for a windrow at the head of Bois Blanc in front of our residence which we could not see on account of the fog. It took several hours to break through this massive ice field. When we reached Amherstburg the O.P.P. officers stepped ashore, exclaiming how happy they were to be on land again.

Another memorable trip through the ice was aboard the Canadian Coast Guard ice breaker, the Griffon. One day about 5:30 Capt. John Bennett of the Amherstburg depot of the Canadian Coast Guard called and said the Griffon was lying at Amherstburg but would soon be going to the head of Lake St. Clair to free a giant ice block near Marine City. He invited us to go along and minutes later we were on board.

The Griffon proceeded up the ice-clogged Detroit River and Lake St. Clair without too much trouble. Upon arriving near Marine City she began cutting through the deep ice to put it on the move. We spent most of the time on the bridge with the skippers. There was little vibration in the powerful vessel and after a couple hours' work the job was completed and the Griffon proceeded back to home port. It was a memorable day.

The Griffon was named for the first sailing vessel that came up Lake Erie through the Detroit River around 1679. The story is that LaSalle, skipper of the

Griffon, was afraid to enter the narrows between Bois Blanc and the mainland, and he sent men ahead to set fires on the island and the banks of Malden to guide him through.

ON THE MARKHAM

Since the early 1900s the U.S. Corps of Army Engineers has maintained an office in Amherstburg for the purpose of directing the vessels in maintenance work on Lake Erie and the Detroit River. Near the beginning of the last major deepening of the Amherstburg Channel, Fred Smith was head of the Engineers in Amherstburg. One day he asked us to accompany him to the suction dredge Markham which was working near the Detroit River light. The Markham had suction arms on each side. It made its rounds and after filling up went to the dumping grounds south of Boblo to discharge its cargo. This procedure continued day and night. We boarded the Markham while it was in motion.

Nearing dinner time Mr. Smith asked how we would like a T-Bone Steak dinner. He said we would have to pay for our own meal which we were more than happy to do. The charge was 15 cents.



The Dredge Markham.

INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE - August, 1983

Once again there is some talk about the construction of an International bridge to connect Highway 75 in Michigan with Highway 401 in Ontario. Unless the economy improves and there is a lot of political pressure on both sides of the Lower Detroit River, this will remain a dream. When the original plan for Highway 401 was made public, provision was indicated for a cut off near the town of Essex and an extension to a point in Malden, what is now the Boblo ferry dock. It is not outside the realm of reason that someday there will be an International bridge over the Lower Detroit River to connect Ontario Highway 401 and Michigan Highway 75.

Some years ago a plan for an across-river bridge was prepared, the bridge crossing over the Lime Kiln Crossing Channel and Livingstone Channel on to Stoney Island across Grosse Ile by bridge over the Trenton Channel to the mainland. In fact, a ceremony was held when the first earth was turned. That's as far as this promotion went.

In later years the Island of Boblo Company financed a feasibility study for the building of an International bridge from the Michigan mainland south of the foot of Boblo Island to the Malden Shore. There was a lot of enthusiasm about this venture but it, too, did not get beyond the talking stage. We well remember an enthusiastic meeting of the Amherstburg Chamber of Commerce when the proposal was outlined by Red Browning of the Island of Boblo Company. Shortly after this gathering, the finances of Boblo Company turned sour, resulting in its sale to a group from the west. The new group did not have experience in such an operation, and it went belly-up in a few years. It looked like Boblo park was doomed when the company went bankrupt. At the last minute the chestnut was pulled out of the fire when David Dufour, Amherstburg promoter, managed to enlist the aid of several monied men, and make a bid for the island. This allowed enough of a delay for American interests to take another look at it. Remo Mancini persuaded Michigan Automobile Association to enter the picture. The rest is history, and Boblo opened on time for the 1983 season.

INTERNATIONAL YACHT AND COUNTRY CLUB

During the 'roaring twenties' a Yacht and Country Club was established along the riverfront on the Henry G. Duff property, which extended from Duff (then Morrow Lane) to Brunner Avenue. This club was the brainchild of H. Grant Duff, who secured the financial backing of several Detroit millionaires, notably Aaron DeRoy, who at that time held the largest Hudson motor car dealership in Michigan. (He also had the largest yacht, which took up the whole length of the dock.)

By the spring of 1928 the old Duff homestead had been remodelled into a clubhouse for the newly-formed International Yacht and Country Club. An imposing structure of Spanish architecture, the building was complete with a large dining room as well as a smaller, private dining room, lounges, dressing rooms, lockers and showers, manager's apartment, kitchen and service rooms. S. F. Cooper, who had previously been connected with the University Club of Detroit, was general manager.

There was an open deck on the second floor where members could sit out and watch the river or the eighteen-hole putting course which was laid out on

183 acres of beautiful, rolling grounds. Large yachts came up the river and docked across the highway from the clubhouse.

A few local citizens belonged to the club, but for the most part its membership was made up of people from the Windsor-Detroit area. Unfortunately, this operation never really got off the ground, having its ups and downs for a few years before it was totally destroyed by fire.

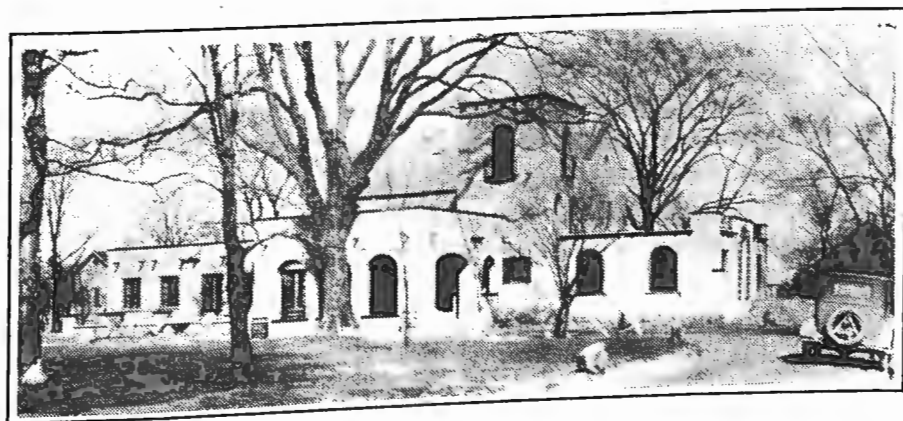
An amusing incident of this operation was a raid held one night by the Provincial Police in search of liquor. One of the Amherstburg young-bloods, "Cuss" Falls, had a bottle of whiskey hidden in the water tank of a toilet there. The police went over the building with a fine-tooth comb but didn't find the booze.

This local "hotshot" at a party in Windsor one evening was out to impress some friends and invited them to come out to the International for Sunday lunch, but forgot all about it by the time I arrived home. At eleven o'clock on Sunday morning, I received a phone call from one of the 'guests' asking what time he should be at the club for lunch. It took some fast manoeuvring. I called the steward and thanks to him, saved face. At 12:30 p.m., twenty-one people showed up for lunch!

The club had a nine-hole golf course on the second concession of Anderdon, which in 1931 was operated by Grant Duff. It was known as the Springhill Golf and Country Club.

The Amherstburg Echo - March 30, 1928

"Citizens of Amherstburg have been watching with great interest the remodelling of the old Duff homestead this winter into the clubhouse for the newly formed International Yacht and Country Club. A remarkable change has been wrought and now stands an imposing structure of Spanish architecture which will be formally opened early in April. This building is most complete, containing a large dining room, lounge room, ladies' lounge and dressing rooms,



men's lounge, locker and shower rooms, private dining room, manager's apartment, kitchen and service rooms.

S. F. Cooper, formerly of the University Club of Detroit, is general manager of the institution. One of the features of the building is the deck on the second floor. Here club members may be out in the open overlooking the river, the bonny wee course or the eighteen hole putting course. The docking facilities will be improved besides which a championship 18-hole golf course will be constructed. It is expected that this will be playable this year. A number of local citizens belong to the club, although for the most part its membership is made up of Border Cityites and Detroiters."

IRWIN WOMEN

While the following incidents occurred before I was even a twinkle in the old man's eye, they are treasures of an earlier Amherstburg which I believe deserve to be recalled. Both are from *The Amherstburg Echo* in 1880 during Messrs. Balfour and Auld's ownership.

"The youngest of the Irwin women who keep the disreputable house on Bathurst Street, feeling annoyed at our reference to their establishment in last week's issue, came to our office on Wednesday morning and threw a parasol at Mr. Balfour and fled. We understand that several of the male friends of these parties are considerably annoyed and say that we have no reason to condemn the disorderly proceedings that lately took place. Perhaps these thin-skinned individuals may give us some good reasons for our condemnation when summoned to give evidence in a court of law as the residents of the neighbourhood have made up their minds to be no longer annoyed by the presence of such a resort."

"On Saturday afternoon last the woman calling herself Octavia Irwin made another attempt to assault the editor of this paper, this time by striking him with a rawhide on the street near this office. He threw her down and took the whip from her and shortly afterwards had her brought before Justice McGee, who fined her one dollar and costs on the first charge of assault, and five dollars and costs on the second, and ordered her to furnish securities to keep the peace for one year. In connection with this matter we would inform such degraded women and their advocates that no act or menace on their part shall deter us from doing our duty to the public by condemning the existence of such disreputable haunts in the town and their accompaniments of drunkenness, fighting and robbery."

JOHNSON, DAVE

Dave Johnson was a Linotype operator who was with The Amherstburg Echo for many years. I remember him with his curving pipe, lack of teeth, and the picturesque way he could swear.

He spent part of his youth in Kingsville and part in Amherstburg, and used to tell us about searching in the sand at Elliott's Point for relics of Indian days and of wartime; of being chased out of the melon patches and apple orchards on dark summer nights; about the gang swimming in their birthday suits and taking rides on the sand barges; of playing baseball with The Echo team, and cricket with home-made bats.

In 1941 Dave celebrated his 50th year as a member of The Echo staff. When he joined the paper in 1891, printers didn't sit down and punch at little keys to set type. They picked their letters from a case one by one - and had to replace them after the paper was printed. When he was around we didn't need a dictionary, geography or encyclopedia. Dave retained a wealth of information in his memory bank. If one wanted to know what Sarah Smith's grandmother's maiden name was, he knew; who fought in the Battle of Bull Run? Ask Dave. For information on the history of a certain landmark or town, or the name of a catcher on a local ball team 25 years ago, he always had the right answer.

Dave separated from his wife very early in the marriage and his idea of a real night was to go to Windsor on Saturday payday and travel the bars, eventually picking up a young woman of easy virtue who wanted a fast buck or two. The story goes that one evening he was debating the fee with a tired young thing, when he finally said, "Young lady, I don't want to buy the damn thing! I just want to rent it for a very, very short time".

Dave remembered the toll gates on the Pike Road. He recalled a trip he made out that highway when he was a lad of nine years old. . . . "The first toll gate was at the Second Concession and was operated by Timothy P. Barron", he said. . . . "There was another toll gate at Leslie's Corners (corner Pike and Walker Road). I remember going out the road - there was a bar across it and before it was raised old Tim Barron came out and collected a dime to let us go through." Dave told us that the money which was collected from the tolls was supposed to have been used for the upkeep of the road but much of it found its way into somebody's pocket and the Pike was kept in no better shape than the other roads in the district, which was terrible. The tolls were abolished in April, 1889. Looking back in The Amherstburg Echo of that time we found that "On Monday of this week for the first time in 28 years travellers upon the principal highway of this week for the first time in 28 years travellers upon the principal highway into Amherstburg, through Malden Township, from Colchester, were able to journey thereon absolutely free from any liability to pay tolls for the privilege, or to have their way blocked by that relic of barbarism - the toll gates period.

Amherstburg borrowed and invested \$20,000 in the road while Malden paid \$6,000 and private parties \$345.

JONES CHINA SHOP

The 1984 sale of the former Jones China Shop, Dalhousie at Murray, has awakened a lot of memories. The store was also know as Jones Soda Shop. The new owners of the premises are Gene and Jackie Sliepenbeek and Judy O'Gorman. The name is Renascence Jewellers and China Shop. Close by are the Past and Present Shop, Sandpiper Art Gallery and the beautifully restored Fort Malden Legion Clubhouse. The Legion building was originally headquarters for Canada Southern Railway.

But back to the Jones China Shop whose business was a strange mixture of fine china and delicious ice-cream treats. Customers came from far and wide to buy china. The company had a fine reputation. It carried fine china lines not readily available in Windsor or Detroit. As for the other side of the business, the shop specialized in chocolate sodas and tinroof sundaes. Both of these mouth watering items featured a homemade chocolate sauce made by a secret recipe. In addition to the chocolate sauce, tinroof was topped with home roasted fresh peanuts. For many years Elizabeth Goulin managed the store. She carried on after Mr. Jones' death, and during the period when he was town clerk.

JOHN A. KLING - August, 1984

We are indebted to Bill Byron for a 1937 picture of the self-unloader John A. Kling. It will become part of the Marsh Papers, which is a provincially chartered non-profit research project to gather stories of Amherstburg and the River from the turn of the century until the present. We hope others having pictures and information of local sailors will give them to the collection.

Back to the Kling. She has a warm spot in the hearts of many Amherstburg families as a number of local sailors were, from time to time, members of its crew. A partial list includes: Captain Mel Bezaire, Captain Carl Shaw, Lorne (Butch) Bertrand, Cecil Brown and Bill Byron. The Kling and Mond Canada Limited plant in Amherstburg. The Kling is still in service. We haven't any information on the West.

As mentioned above, we are anxious to get pictures and information of lakers that had crew members from the Amherstburg area. At one time, there were many Great Lakes Captains whose home port was Amherstburg. To break

the boredom of the winter layover, a goodly number passed time in poker games on the second floor of the Mullen Coal Company office on Dalhousie. These friendly spirited games were carried on for over a half century.

LAKE CAPTAINS - February, 1983

For many years Amherstburg was the home port for sailors and crew members of the long ships that sailed the Great Lakes. A number became well-known skippers of the large freighters. Others became members of the engine room and deck crews. During the winter lay-off periods they came home and added much colour to the life of the old town. Favourite places for them to gather were the card game on the second floor of the Mullen Coal Company office on Dalhousie or Girardin's Snug Harbour (Sandwich Street North). In addition to these Great Lakes sailors, there were many members of tug boat crews that worked out of Amherstburg.

It is of the lake captains that this article is directed. It was brought to mind by the talk of the sale of the Callam House, Dalhousie Street, to Parks Canada. The main part of this building was the commissariat for Fort Malden. Beside it were several large warehouses in which were stored supplies for the fort. For many years the house was the home of the Alexander C. and Walter Callam families which had deep roots in the history of Amherstburg. Alexander Campbell Callam was a well-known mill operator whose mill was located on the river front (Callam's Bay) - where the Boblo Ferry dock is located. His son, Captain Alexander C. Callam, was the skipper of the William Wolfe of the Sullivan Line. He was married to Eva Girardin, daughter of Captain David Sullivan. He was the captain of the (then) longest and largest freighter on the Great Lakes - the Harvey H. Brown. Captain Walter Callam was also captain of the Wolfe, Caulkins and Bradley self-unloaders.

On and off we have been collecting information and artifacts about Amherstburg sailors for the Marsh Collection. We have gathered quite an array and are hoping to build up a fine collection. Aware of our plan and dream, Mary Ann Smythe of Detroit sent us the letter below. Mary Ann is the former Mary Ann Kelly, whose father was Captain James Kelly.

"... My father sailed on the William P. Snyder Jr. with Captain John Jones for twenty years before he was given command of the "Shenango" of the Shenango Steamship Lines. There were six sister ships of which the Snyder Jr. was one. He only sailed it two years before he died.

Captain John McCarthy was captain of the ferry boat Halcyon of the Walkerville Ferry Co. between Walkerville and Detroit.

Captain Melville A. Bezair sailed the Reiss Brothers, the flagship of the Reiss steamship company. At one time he was the youngest captain on the Great Lakes.

Captain Carl Shaw commanded the William Reiss. Captain James T. McCarthy sailed the A. E. Stewart for the James Playfair company out of Midland.

Captain Harry Cook sailed tugs and was Port Captain at Rodgers City, also the Sachem of the Dunbar and Sullivan Company. Captain James (Jim Cook) sailed the Limestone and was Port Captain at Rodgers City like his father before him. Captain Daniel McCarthy sailed several of the ships called Razerbacks or Pig boats, to the port of New York. (not animals!!)

Captain Henry Kelley sailed the Peter A. B. Widener, his last ship was the William B. Schiller. Captain Henry Cook of Amherstburg sailed the tug Columbia. Captain Patrick Harry McCarthy sailed the Kling out of Cleveland.

Captain Neil Rolphson was captain of the famous "Rodger Blough" of the U.S. Steel Company and was the largest boat on the lakes. His wife is Dorothy Cook of Amherstburg, daughter of the late Captain Harry and Catherine Cook of the 'Burg. . ."

CHRISTMAS AT THE LAKEVIEW

A spinet was donated in 1976 to the historic Park House by Mrs. Claude Fry . . . this brought back memories of certain Christmases during a very rough economic period in the history of this old town. Three names run through my mind - Ted Pickering, Ben Shillington and Rev. M. C. Davies - and Christmas in the 'dirty thirties'. Ted, Ben and Dave were active Rotarians and through that organization brought holiday cheer to many families that might not otherwise have had a Merry Christmas.

The Christmas dinner of the Rotary Club was a formal affair, held in the second floor dining room of the Lake View Hotel which had a good view of the river. Dining tables and the room were suitably decorated for the holidays. Prior to the serving of the meal, eggnogs were served. A roast turkey was brought in and placed on the table in front of the president who did the carving. During the course of the meal Christmas carols were played on the spinet by Edith Healey (Mrs. Claude Fry). Before the serving of the last course, the room was darkened after which Henry Banks, the Lake View chef, carried in the flaming Christmas pudding. A short Christmas message was given by Rev. M. C. Davies. This custom was carried on for several years and was the highlight of the Rotary year.

Following the annual Christmas dinner, members of the Rotary went out in teams to distribute Christmas baskets to the less fortunate folks in the community. In those days the need was great and the distribution was carried out with little fuss and without the knowledge of a goodly number of citizens.

We well remember one Christmas Eve when in the company of Ben Shillington we visited a home where there had been a breakup in the family, with the mother leaving her husband to look after a large family. On going into the house we found the family was not only without fuel but the cupboard was bare. It didn't take long for Rotarians to rustle up the needed fuel and other essentials. The Club took this family under its wing and continued to quietly give it help until the father found a job.

This Christmas operation was a fairly expensive one, but the bills were met without a murmur of protest. One of the big money raisers used by the Rotary Club was "Keno Under The Stars", staged on a lot owned by Louis J. Fox on Richmond Street (this site is now occupied by the Federal building). The spark plug behind this venture was Ted Pickering, who later served as a most efficient mayor of Amherstburg. Long tables were set out which accommodated hundreds who enjoyed playing each week during the summertime. Ted's enthusiasm was transferred to many members of the club and the weekly gatherings continued to bring money into the club coffers. In taking over this responsibility, the Amherstburg Rotary Club truly lived up to its motto - Service Above Self.

Following the 1945 death of the Lakeview Hotel owner Pete Fox, the hotel was taken over by a series of owners, each one operating at a lower level until it finally became a hangout - nicknamed in latter years "Bucket o' Blood".

One evening a river man was out cheating with the wife of a local citizen. The site for their rendezvous was the Lakeview. The irate husband walked into the bar, revolver in hand, and shot the man dead. The body was dragged over to the southwest corner of the bar, a sheet thrown over it while the habitués of the bar continued to drink.

LAPIERRE, BENJAMIN

Benjamin Lapierre was born in Amherstburg on the 23rd of December, 1866, son of early French settlers Benjamin Lapierre dit Alloir and Angelique Champagne dit Beaugrand. He was christened on Christmas Day by the pastor of St. John the Baptist Church in Amherstburg.



Bennie was one of the most unforgettable characters this town has ever known. He had an inventive mind that worked twenty-four hours a day and was an excellent photographer. He also painted some beautiful portraits of people and places around Amherstburg - most of which were never at that time taken seriously enough, and the collection has since scattered about. Ben invented an emulsion which was used to cover glass plates of which most of the early pictures in the Amherstburg area were made. He kept scrapbooks of many of his photographs, recognized by "BL" logo in the corner. Bennie was way ahead of his time in getting action shots of local people and places. Among the more interesting shots we enjoyed while first browsing through an album in 1934 were a dandy shot of local lads doing their fancy dives off the Murray Street dock, and not a bathing suit in the crowd; in contrast, another snap shows two young maids and a Beau Brummel in for an afternoon dip - the gals looking as if they were dressed for a party, while the lad seems to have forgotten to take off his winter underwear; the 1894-96 dredging of the Amherstburg harbour; Pulford's Carriage shop in 1896; racing on the frozen river, 1894; the steamer Frank E. Kirby passing downstream, 1895; shots of the Perry Leighton house, 1896; Father Marseilles, pastor of River Canard church, and splendid views of the buildings of that parish, 1895; the Thomas Mill in Anderdon, 1894; Lewis Wigle of Leamington leading the Leamington band down Dalhousie Street, 1894; the funeral procession of W. D. Balfour on August 4, 1896; the 1896 visit of Sir Wilfred Laurier; an interesting shot of Jean Baptiste Girardin repairing his wooden sidewalk on Dalhousie Street, 1895; Maxime Dumont in his fix-it shop, 1894; Moses Brantford in top hat with riding crop, mounted on a spirited steed, leading the Emancipation Day parade down Dalhousie Street, either 1894 or 1896.

Bennie was like so many residents then, a 'river rat' and he built a coal-fired steam engine for his 18-foot clinker boat. He painted this craft a yellow-brown colour and named it "The Diarrhea".

As far as we know Ben Lapierre never married. In October, 1911 he climbed into his boat and headed out into the river which was a usual thing for him to do. However, Bennie was never heard from again and it was believed that he had drowned. The mystery was cleared up the following June (1912) when his body was found floating near C. A. Cuddy's residence down the bank. He was survived by his aged mother, one sister Mary Lucy (Mrs. Lemuel Parker) and two brothers, Maxime and George Lapierre.

LEACOCK, STEPHEN

The other day there was a story in the Globe and Mail about the awarding of the Stephen Leacock medal. This brought to mind the personal friendship that I had with Dr. Leacock in his later years.

Dr. Stephen Leacock, a well-known Canadian humorist, was head of the School of Economics at McGill University. While I did not have the privilege of being a member of one of his classes, we became well acquainted after I graduated from McGill.

Several times when he came to the Windsor-Detroit area, graduates of McGill honoured him with a dinner. At one of these affairs at the Prince Edward Hotel in Windsor, we decided to open the gallery to those who wished to hear him speak. Prior to the dinner a cocktail party was held in one of the upper rooms of the hotel. This was during the period of prohibition in Ontario. We thought that "Doc" Young, editor of the Windsor Star, would like to meet Dr. Leacock so I invited him to be our guest at the cocktail party and dinner. When he met the guest of hour, Doc said, "Dr. Leacock, did you see our front page story on today's Star?" It was about the noted comic addressing the Town Hall lectures in Detroit. The eight-column headline read: "LEACOCK CALLS HUEY LONG A SAUSAGE". Incidentally, Huey Long was Governor of Louisiana, whose questionable career ended in 1935 when he was assassinated. Leacock turned to Young and said "You're just like Marsh and the other newspaper reporters. You always mis-quote speakers. I didn't say Huey Long was a sausage. I said I THOUGHT he was a sausage."

At this particular dinner one of my tasks was to see that Leacock's coffee cup was amply supplied with Scotch. While he was delivering his after-dinner address I stood a bit behind him. He went along for a spell, stopped, put on his glasses, picked up what appeared to be his notes, took a minute to scan them and continued his talk. From my observation point I noticed that there in fact were no notes. All he did was look at the blank side of the hotel menu! This was just a little ploy that gave him breathing time to collect his thoughts. A memorable evening followed another of the McGill dinners for Stephen Leacock. This was held at the Essex Golf and Country Club.

Malcolm Bingay was one of the outstanding newspaper editors in the United States. For many years he headed the editorial staff of the Detroit Free Press. Bingay's daily column on the editorial page was one to be treasured. One particular day he wrote a column about Stephen Leacock, in which he praised not only Leacock's economic knowledge but also his humour. I cut out the article and sent it to Dr. Leacock at his home near Orillia, Ontario. A few days later I received a post card from Orillia that took me nearly six months to decipher because of the hand-writing. It was from Stephen Leacock - a thank you note for the Bingay article.

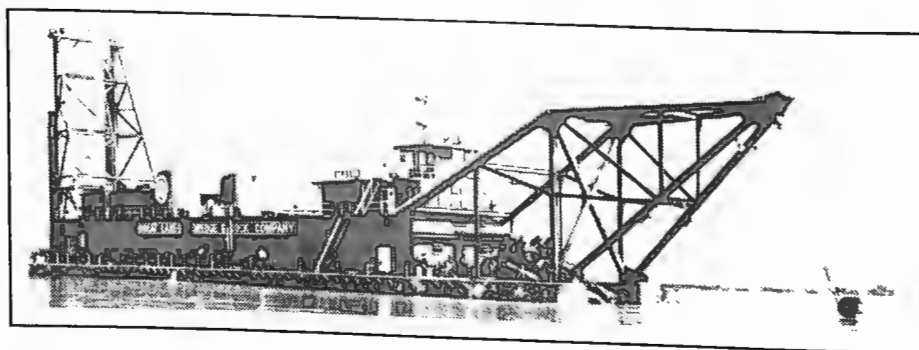
LIVINGSTONE CHANNEL

As a lad in 1912 I well recall going with our friend Donald Dixon aboard

his father's yacht 'The Don' and leading the parade of downbound ships at the opening of the Livingstone Channel which ran south from the Livingstone Channel Light to the Detroit River Light. The yacht was the one used by C. Y. Dixon, head of the U. S. Engineers' office in Amherstburg.

The first freighter downbound in the channel was the Wm. Livingstone, so named for the head of the Lake Carriers' Association. The opening of the channel was a major event in Great Lakes history. It provided for increased traffic on the lower Detroit River with all downbound vessels (except passenger ships) using the route to Lake Erie. Upbound traffic from the Detroit River light passed in the Amherstburg Channel.

Redeepening of the west 300' of the Amherstburg Channel from the Livingstone Channel light to the Detroit River light - the upper and most difficult part of the 300' wide deepening job, was awarded to Marine Contractors. This was a co-operative group of financiers from Minneapolis, whose engineers came up with an unconventional method of doing marine work. A land drag line was put on a large scow. This operation enabled marine operators to underbid the conventional marine contractors by two million dollars.



Great Lakes Dredge & Dock Company "Alaska"

The lower part of the contract was carried out by Great Lakes Dredge and Dock Company and Dunbar and Sullivan, while the part of the channel north of the Livingstone Channel light was done by the MacNamara Company.

In the second deepening of the upper end of the Livingstone Channel, done in the dry, the contract was given to the Arundel Corporation. Two former passenger liners, the Arizona and the Indiana were parked alongside the Dyke. The Arizona was used as a hotel for the men working on the dry work while the Indiana furnished the power.

I remember an incident that happened while work was being performed on the lower end of the Livingstone. It was during a winter the river was frozen over with ice when an Amherstburg man (Laramie) dropped dead of heart failure. Doctor E. C. Harris, the coroner, drove over the ice to the scene of the

death. The ice was not heavy enough to allow an ambulance over, so they propped the man up between two workers in the back seat of Dr. Harris' car and Dr. Harris drove back to the mainland, up to the funeral parlour with the body.

MABEL

Down through the years Amherstburg has been a hard-drinking town and any man or woman who couldn't handle their liquor had better not try to keep up with some of the local characters.

Recalling just a few years ago, a group of our 'sports' devised a plan to deal with some of the men who bragged about their prowess with women and liquor. Sitting around having a few drinks with a braggart, they would begin to spin a yarn about a luscious area housewife who was not averse to passing out her favours to young gentlemen of class who visited her when her husband was out of town. Her name was "Mabel". After considerable prodding the naive newcomer would decide to see Mabel. He was instructed that before proceeding to the rendezvous, he should get a bottle of booze and other presents to take to this local lovely.

In the meantime, the instigators went to a particular abandoned house in the area and left one of their group there with a shotgun. The excited hopeful was taken to the house and instructed to go up to the door, knock and whisper "Mabel, Mabel". Suddenly the door would open and standing there in the darkness of the doorway with a shotgun was the straight-man, who fired into the air and shouted "I'll Mabel you, you s-- of a b! In most cases the visitor quickly disappeared and never came back to town again.

This same joke was once played on a prominent South Essex citizen who was aspiring for political honour. His visit to Amherstburg and Mabel suddenly ended his political career.

MARRA, N. A.

The late N. A. Marra, head of Marra's Bread Company, was mayor of Amherstburg from 1939 to 1945 as we have mentioned in previous stories. During his term of office, little progress was made on the physical side in the Town of Amherstburg. Mr. Marra delighted in holding 'in camera' meetings of the town council, which action was deplored by The Amherstburg Echo. In our column we did not hesitate to criticize him time and time again for such practice, with the result that he had to discontinue this type of council meeting. At the last one when the decision was made by the town fathers to end this

practice, Mr. Marra remarked that Amherstburg would be a much better town without the disturbing influence of The Amherstburg Echo. Thank goodness The Echo continued to expose anything in local municipal life that was not on the level!

MARRA'S BREAD

The Marra's Bread Company, once a thriving food industry located in the heart of the old town, is but a memory. The building has been wrecked and hauled away (1982). Plans for the development of the site have been discussed, one of which is the creation of a heritage shopping centre which has been designated as the David Botsford Village.

From a small beginning Marra's Bread grew to be one of the largest bread factories in Ontario. It all began when N. A. Marra came to Amherstburg and opened a store at Gordon, east of the railway bridge on property being used for the construction of Brunner Mond Canada Limited plant. When construction was completed, Mr. Marra purchased a grocery store in the Bruce Block, northeast corner of Murray and Ramsay. The business thrived. Mr. Marra was a restless person looking for opportunities to expand his operations. This resulted in him going into the bread business in a small way. Demand for his product grew to a point where he decided to build an addition to house a bakery. He found the cost of bread delivery in town high so he decided to sell exclusively through grocery and other food outlets. His idea proved to be a gold mine. Demand grew and grew, and his market expanded to a point where the company soon had trucks serving not only Essex county, but towns further east. Continued demand for Marra's Bread made it necessary to establish a depot in London to service trucks delivering Amherstburg-produced bread over most of southwestern Ontario. One of the company slogans was "If it's not wrapped - it's not Marra's" - this when only a few companies wrapped their bread.

Mr. Marra was a hard worker, so much so that he suffered a heart attack which made it necessary to sell the business. The new owners did not have the Marra touch and were unable to do the merchandising job done by Nick Marra. When his health improved, Mr. Marra repurchased the bread plant and ran it successfully until his death, after which Mrs. Marra and her son Paul took over and successfully operated the business until it was sold to General Bakeries. The new company dropped the Marra's Bread name and changed the name of their product to "Wonder Bread" to conform with their other factories. When General Bakeries built a new modern plant in London, the Amherstburg operation was closed. Few of the employees moved to London.

The growth of a large bread plant in the heart of downtown Amherstburg was both a blessing and misfortune. It supplied work for a large number of area

residents, mostly women, but it blighted this part of the town for retail stores. As the company continued to grow, more and more retail store sites were gobbled up, among which were Curtis Bakery on Murray Street, the Gibb Seed Store on the north west corner of Murray and Bathurst and the Harry Kemp Garage on Richmond Street. When the Wesley United Church building on the southwest corner of Richmond and Murray Street was condemned and ordered demolished, the Marra company purchased this choice site for a loading dock. At one time, Murray Street between Dalhousie and Sandwich was a prosperous business section of the town.

The Marra's Bread building remained empty for several years until it was taken over by the town for a Board of Works garage and headquarters. Soon it was found that the upkeep and heating costs were totally out of line. Thoughts were given to a new Board of Works building, and a site was selected on the west side of Sandwich Street, south of the water pollution control plant. The carrying out of the plan was not possible until after annexation when ownership of the site came to Amherstburg. The modern and well equipped new headquarters was officially opened on June 6th, 1982.

MARSH, ARTHUR W. (1872-1940)

My father, Arthur W. Marsh, was a man who quietly achieved a great deal for his beloved Amherstburg. Born on February 11, 1872 on the 6th line of Moore Township, Lambton County, he was the son of John and Jane (Courtney) Marsh. Educated at Strathroy Collegiate Institute, he followed the teaching profession for several years. He taught at the Kimball School in Moore Township and was later principal of the Public School in Mooretown.

In 1897 father moved to Amherstburg and after spending a year as a reporter for the Essex Free Press, became permanently associated with John A. Auld, M.P.P. for Essex South and owner of The Amherstburg Echo. This was after the death of Mr. Auld's former partner, W. D. Balfour.

Arthur Marsh had a keen nose for news and loved to travel about the county meeting people and writing about them. He adopted the policy that The Echo would print the news as it happened without fear or favour. Holding the philosophy that residents of a community should take an active part in its affairs, he sat for one year on the Amherstburg Town Council, but gave it up when he found that being a member of that body tied his hands in free and open reporting.

From the turn of the century Arthur Marsh successfully guided The Echo through some very difficult periods. He was responsible for the building in 1915 of the present Echo building on Dalhousie Street. Prior to that time the paper

had been located in the Sons of Temperance Hall on Ramsay Street. He worked many long hours to make *The Echo* a success.

Devoted to Amherstburg, he was very active in promoting and accomplishing many things for the welfare of the community, including obtaining a large grant from Andrew Carnegie for the construction in 1913 of the Amherstburg Public Library which still stands at the southwest corner of Richmond and Sandwich streets. Thomas B. Bellhouse donated the stone for the building from the Amherstburg Stone Quarry. My father was also instrumental in persuading the County of Essex to pave what is now known as Highway 18 from Petrimoulx Corners to Amherstburg.

It is a little-known fact that the late editor of *The Amherstburg Echo* was responsible for the establishment of the Rotary Club in town. In 1933, Arthur Marsh was elected president of the Canadian Weekly Newspapers Association at their convention in Vancouver. He learned there from speaking with fellow editors how communities across Canada had received so many benefits from the Rotary Club. Upon returning to Amherstburg, father contacted C. S. K. Robinson and an active Windsor Rotarian, who arranged that a survey of Amherstburg be made with respect to the establishment of a club here, which, in a few short months, became a reality. He was never a member of that organization, preferring to start the ball rolling and then stepping back out of the limelight.

Prior to an accident in 1932, Arthur Marsh was president of the Canadian Weekly Newspapers Association and the Ontario-Quebec Weekly Newspapers Association at the same time. He was the only man in Canada to hold such an honour.

Unfortunately, his active and benevolent life was brought to a sudden conclusion when he was killed in an automobile accident near Blenheim in 1940. We had gone to Woodstock to attend the Ontario Ploughing Match, and more specifically to see if a similar match could be arranged in connection with the Harrow Fair. While en route home, upon rounding the corner into Blenheim the Marsh car was hit by a bunch of drunks.

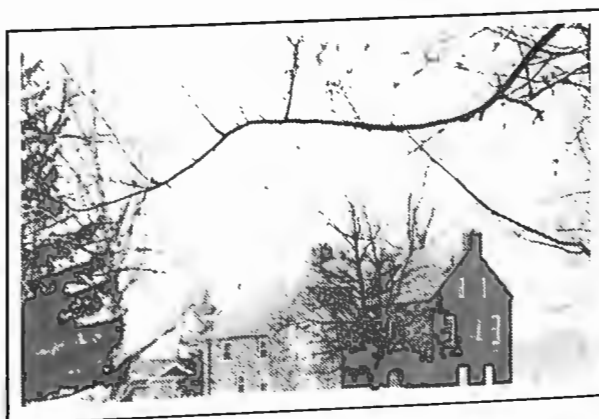
The "old man" got a big kick out of scooping the daily press. He often would say when news broke during the night before the paper was put to bed, that the people were very thoughtful to hold the story until that particular time so *The Echo* could get a break. . . Ironically, death came to Arthur Marsh at 2 a.m. . . his beloved Amherstburg *Echo* was the first newspaper to carry the story. Following through with the policy set by the boss, the Marsh family left the Chatham hotel shortly after my father's death in the Chatham General Hospital. Arriving home at 5 a.m., mother and Helen went home, while I went to *The Echo* office and wrote dad's obituary. At 8 o'clock it was set on a

Linotype and by 10 a.m. it appeared in the issue of *The Amherstburg Echo* which was distributed within a few hours throughout the county.

McGREGOR HOUSE

November 9th, 1982 was a sad, sad day around the Marsh household. Wreckers began tearing down the old red brick residence next door, on the grounds of Fort Malden. The "McGregor House", previously the "Falls House", was earlier occupied by Dr. Andrew Fisher when he was Medical Superintendent at the Malden Lunatic Asylum, which was situated on the Fort Malden property from 1858 to 1870.

This fine structure was purchased by Malcolm McGregor in 1927 from the W. S. Falls estate and remodelled into a beautiful home. The razing of the building was sad in that it held so many pleasant memories of the McGregor family and the surrounding gardens. It had stood idle for many years and upkeep was excessive, which necessitated its removal. Added to that, the site was needed for restoration of the southwest bastion of the old Fort.



Malcolm McGregor was the son of William McGregor, once an Amherstburg resident who was member of parliament for Essex South. Malcolm was ill when he moved to Amherstburg and never regained his health. Following his death Mrs. McGregor carried on and kept the premises as a showplace.

When the Fort Malden Management Committee was trying to develop Fort Malden National Historic Park, she offered to donate the McGregor property to the park if and when it got underway. Unfortunately, Franklin A. Hough, who owned the property between the McGregor House and the small section being operated under the direction of Fort Malden Management Committee, was against the development of the park.

Mrs. Malcolm McGregor (nee Eva Bartlet) was very interested in the future of Fort Malden. During the early stages of development she held a garden party for members of the Ontario and Michigan Historical Societies. This gave a big boost to the proposed park. Following Mrs. McGregor's death in 1946 the house was occupied by several tenants, one being the Browning family, owners of Boblo Park. Later the residence fell on evil days, the house was sold and the new owner created four apartments therein. He was not able to carry out his

commitment and the property reverted to the McGregor estate. Some years later the McGregor family sold this lovely property to National Parks for the sum of \$20,000.

W. S. Falls, the owner before the McGregors, had found the large site was a heavy burden for him financially. He developed the first residential subdivision in Amherstburg, bounded by the former fort property to the north, Laird Avenue to the east, a road through the park to the south, and Dalhousie Street. A number of lots were sold, among which the first was purchased by Mr. Gatfield, the second by H. Grant Duff (later sold to Blake Winters and eventually to myself). Arthur Marsh purchased the lot at the north end of Dalhousie Street. In a few years a number of residences were constructed, which resulted in this attractive part of the town.

On the Falls property was the old stone barracks of Fort Malden, which was used as a barn. On the north side was constructed a handball court and to the west a tennis court. In front of the Falls home to the west was the first Amherstburg Lawn Bowling Rink. (Lawn bowling became so popular that the Amherstburg Lawn Bowling Club developed a number of rinks on the west town park.)

Incidentally, W. S. Falls was the son of Canon Alexander Falls, rector of Christ Anglican Church. He began his financial career as an executive of the Cuddy-Falls Bank, which in turn was purchased by Molson's Bank and in turn by the Bank of Montreal.

The demolition of the McGregor House marked the passing of a wonderful era in Amherstburg's history.

MENZIES HOTEL ON BOIS BLANC

William Menzies operated a liquor store and boat livery in Amherstburg. In the early 1900s he purchased a few acres at the north end of Bois Blanc Island and opened a fine summer hotel.

We well recall as a boy having dinner at this well-run inn. The view from the front porch looking north was awe-inspiring. Many customers came to Amherstburg via the Sandwich, Windsor & Amherstburg electric railway. The street cars ended their run at the western end of Richmond Street at Dalhousie. It was only one half a block walk to the Waterworks Park, where the town dock was then located. Mr. Menzies carried on a boat livery business at the dock and ferried guests to the island resort. Unfortunately, the success of the hotel was short-lived. In May, 1913 Menzies sold the property at "Point Boblo" to A. P. E. Panet of Windsor. It was reported in *The Amherstburg Echo* of that time that

this was "one of the most beautifully located island resorts on the chain of lakes." Mr. Menzies retained all the furnishings, which were brought to the mainland and sold.

William Menzies was born September 9th, 1864 at Armada, Michigan, son of James and Allison (Macaulay) Menzies. In 1898 at Christ Church he married Isabella Gatfield, daughter of William and Jeanette (Norvell) Gatfield. In 1909 he built a beautiful pressed brick veneer residence at the north end of Dalhousie, next door to the home of Mrs. Peter Menzies. In 1919 he sold that home to a Mr. Ellenstein of Detroit, and William Menzies moved to Michigan. He operated a bowling alley in Detroit until being instantly killed when he alighted from a streetcar and was hit by a Cadillac.

MORENCY, LEROY

Leroy was the son of "Rags" Morency, who ran a bootlegging place on Richmond Street in a location east of the present Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce. Leroy was a ragamuffin, and although a bit of a devil, a likeable little devil and a hero in death. He lost his life when, in a homemade diving suit, he was searching the bottom of the Detroit River at the end of Murray Street for the car of a young Amherstburg woman who had disappeared some months before. At the time of her disappearance the river had been dragged but no evidence of the automobile existed. One evening, Leroy was having a drink or two in the Lakeview Hotel with the girl's father. They felt very strongly that she was somewhere in the river and had driven off the end of Murray Street. Leroy decided he would go down himself and search. Sure enough, he came up once and shouted that he spotted the vehicle and it was just past where dragging operations had been carried out some months before. Leroy went back down . . . something went wrong with his gear. . . his body was found by divers, lying on the bottom of the river on which he grew up.

MULLEN, JOHN G.

(Reprinted from The Amherstburg Echo, March 19, 1942)

"One day this week a large padlock was placed on the door of the office of the Mullen Coal Company in Amherstburg (west side of Dalhousie between Richmond and Murray) and with the placing of that lock an era passed. . . for this well-known company had occupied that building since 1892 and never has it been known for the door to have been locked. The lock was not placed to protect the records of the company as these have been moved to a temporary office over the Bank of Montreal. It was put there to prevent accidents, as the

floor had been torn up and a new sewer was in the process of being dug, the first steps in the complete renovation of this building which at one time was a fire hall - municipal building - Frank Carroll's Stationery Store and Perry Leighton's Real Estate Office.

It is not about the history of this particular building that we are interested - but that of the life of a young Irishman who came to Amherstburg as a young man, built himself a fortune and left for his two sons to operate the largest independent steamboat fuel dock on the Great Lakes.

Ever since the Mullen Company moved into that building in 1892 the door was never locked. It is said that the late Mr. Mullen took the large key down to the river, threw it in and remarked, "What the hell do we want a key for?" The Mullen office was more than the head office of a large company - it was a social centre for marine men. All down through the years the gathering place for the male friends of the Mullen family at any hour of the day or night, it was often referred to as the night police office as the officers of the local, Provincial and R.C.M.P. used the phone in this office during the wee small hours of the morning.

In spite of the fact that the late John G. Mullen died in March, 1930, his personality for many years dominated this well-known business. His was a kindly nature - he had high ideals in business, was philanthropic and down through the years his name, his deeds and his cheery greeting were not forgotten. His two sons followed in the footsteps of their father.

The late Mr. Mullen was born in the village of Westport, County Mayo, Ireland, and came to the United States when he was only a youngster. As a young man he entered business first as a clerk in a flour and feed store - later with Cross-Payne Oil Company and then with J. K. White, coal dock operator. The business alertness of the young man attracted the attention of Mr. White's competitors - the firm of McDowell, Caul and Brett - who were doing a considerable business at Amherstburg, their only Canadian branch. The firm offered Mr. Mullen the management of the branch at "Malden" at a nominal salary, with the understanding that he would be entitled to one-half the profits over that salary - the second year he received more in bonus than his salary.

From the day in March, 1873, until his death in March, 1930, the late John G. Mullen was a dominant figure in the steamboat fuel business on the Great Lakes . . . Two years after coming to Amherstburg he bought the company out and operated along until 1891 when the late Captain W. H. Gatfield became associated with him and was in the company until 1893 when the Cuddy, Mullen Company was organized with docks at Cleveland, Amherstburg and Sandwich. Their purpose in forming this was to supply James J. Hill - the railroad builder - with coal for his boats and cargoes of coal for the northwest. This was the largest coal contract ever given to one company at that time -

aggregating 800,000 tons. In 1905 this company was sold out to the Pittsburg Coal Company and Mr. Mullen remained in Amherstburg in charge of that company's business. In 1910 he organized the Mullen Coal Company and remained at its head until his death.

Mr. Mullen loved to play cards and ever since his company took possession of their present office there was a room upstairs designated as the 'social hall' where his friends could enjoy a friendly game of cards. This game went on for over 69 years and as the years would pass old-timers would drop out and new faces would take their places. Among the best known of the 'old gang' were Martin Mullen, Steve Pettypiece, W. M. MacEvoy, Fred I. R. Tulip, Captain A. C. Callam, Edward Crimmins, Captain Ingersol, Charles Hart, Dr. O. Teeter, Jim Hart, Captain Hackett and Captain David Girardin - most of whom have gone to their last reward. The last game was played there on a Thursday evening in 1942 and it was with heavy hearts that the regulars realized that they'd raised their last ante.

As mentioned above, the Mullen Coal Company was carried on under the same ideals as followed by the founder who was a man of great simplicity of life and conduct - broadminded - frank in his opinion and very industrious. J. Norval Mullen assumed the presidency on the death of his father. J. Macomb Mullen, vice-president and Fred J. Maloney, Secretary-Treasurer. With the opening of navigation in 1942 the Mullen family entered their 70th season of operation of a steam boat fuel business."

BILL MURDOCH - 1984

A public servant in every sense of the word in the person of William Murdoch died recently. Mr. Murdoch represented Essex South in the provincial legislature for many years. He entered public service while a resident of Harrow. He became a member of the town council there and first took part in provincial politics in 1943, when he defeated Charles Fletcher, sitting Liberal member. Entering the House he was appointed Conservative Whip and several years later Speaker of the House. Bill served the province and riding well.

During a good part of his political career Bill lived in Harrow, later moving to Amherstburg when he purchased the Lee Stanley house, Laird Avenue North. While in Amherstburg he took a keen interest in the activities on the river and became an authority on lakers and salties.

Two special services he performed in the interest of Amherstburg taxpayers come to mind. The first, when he convinced the Ontario government to cancel a large debt owed by the town in connection with the Sandwich, Windsor and Amherstburg Railway. The second was his warning Mayor

Pickering that the plans for the federal-provincial housing development could be dumped by the feds. Mayor Pickering sprang into action and contacted S. Murray Clark, M. P., Essex South, who speedily corrected the situation. This eventually resulted in a large housing development in the northeast section of the town.

Mr. Murdoch was an able representative and well respected throughout the riding. We recall one year when both federal and provincial elections were held within a week. William Murdoch, Conservative, was returned to office by a large majority, while S. Murray Clark, Liberal, received the same from the electors. Both Mr. Murdoch and Mr. Clark lived in Harrow at that time.

"JAKE McLEAN" - November, 1983

A tradition for many years will be carried out on Monday when the annual municipal dinner will be held in the Harrow Municipal building. This will be an occasion for elected and appointed officials to get together, have a few drinks, enjoy a country style dinner and listen to a lot of oratory, much of which doesn't mean anything. It gives local politicians an opportunity to be recognized. Most important speakers will be those who strive for the 1984 county wardenship. This year the TD Bank will pick up the tab for the drinks. In many cases local municipal councils purchase tickets for their official representatives.

This affair started years ago shortly after the late J. K. McLean ended his term as warden of the county. At that time the Harrow and Colchester South councils held a yearly dinner. Mr. McLean and the late Howard Heaton, then mayor of Harrow, thought it would be a good idea to expand the dinner and include members of the county council and other local politicians. The annual dinner was a success from the start. Both Jake McLean and Howard Heaton have long gone to their spot in the sky but the tradition they started is still being carried on in a big way.

Not only do the local politicians get an opportunity to hear from the county warden aspirants, but also from other county V.I.P.'s. The pre-dinner reception and the euchre games that follow the meal are tops in the minds of many. It really amounts to a day of fellowship and a lot of hot air.

McNALLY, A. W. (1891-1934)

Arthur Watson McNally was born near Walkerton, Bruce County, Ontario, one of the four children born to W. J. and Helen (Flett) McNally. He

was a brilliant scholar, finishing high school at such an early age that he was not allowed to enter University. Not to be easily discouraged, he worked for a year in a Walkerton law office while studying shorthand in his spare time. Before that year ended he was working as a court stenographer. When he entered Queen's University the following autumn, he continued to excel in academics and upon graduating found that he had won a free trip to the Panama Canal by writing an outstanding thesis.

As a young man Arthur McNally took an active interest in the military and attained the rank of Captain of the Bruce County Militia. While on a trip across Canada he received the news that a World War had broken out and in August, 1914, being near Vancouver, enlisted there under Colonel John Warden in the 7th Irish Fusiliers. Anxious to get overseas, he reverted to the rank of Lieutenant and saw service from the beginning of that war, being promoted to Major while on the other side. He was wounded in December, 1915 and was sent to England and later to Canada for recovery. While recuperating at home, Major McNally assisted in the raising of the Bruce Battalion. He also at that time married Vera Wesley of Walkerton, a graduate nurse from the Toronto General Hospital.

In 1916, when McNally returned overseas, his wife also went to England where she worked in field hospitals. As there were so many officers in England at the time, he again reverted to the rank of Lieutenant so that he could get back on active duty. For the second time he won promotion on the field and attained the rank of Major. He was at the head of his company when the Canadians made their triumphant entry into Germany, where he remained until April, 1919, when he came home.

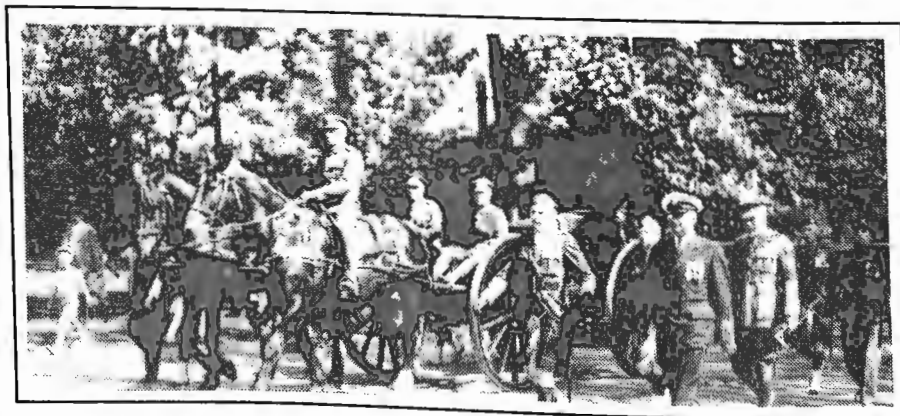
Upon his return to Canada, McNally entered the law office of Ellis & Ellis in Windsor, remaining there for six months, after which he went into partnership with W. S. Haney of Sarnia. In 1928 he came to Amherstburg and purchased the law office of Wm. C. Inch. From the beginning he took an active part in the affairs of this community. Major McNally was a facile speaker, a deep reader, had a splendid vocabulary and breathed culture in every action of his life. He had a great love for his fellow veterans and arranged every year for their Armistice Program. He interested himself in municipal life and employed his scholarly talents as a local historian, museum director, the organization of Rose Hill cemetery board and was generally one of Amherstburg's most useful citizens. It was generally conceded that if he had not been a victim of shell shock during World War I, he would have gone into public life. In 1931 McNally was elected as Amherstburg's Deputy-Reeve, served one year in that position and then maintained a seat on Council every year thereafter.

When he came to Amherstburg in 1928 the old town bragged about its historic background but not much had been done to preserve this heritage. When tourists came, there was no place to send them as all the historic property

had fallen into private hands and the owners did not welcome sightseers. McNally saw the need of developing this phase of the community and formed the Amherstburg Historic Sites and Monument Committee and started an historic collection in the Amherstburg Public Library. It happened that the Webber property on which the northwest bastion stands was mortgaged to the Cleveland-Cliffs Iron and Coal Company of Cleveland. The taxes had been allowed to lapse and property was coming up at a tax sale. He went to the head office of Cleveland-Cliffs and persuaded them not to redeem the property, then made local citizens aware that this property should be bid in by the town and developed into a National Historic Park, for which he had the support of the Mayor and all but two council members. The rest is history, told in detail in the Fort Malden Management Committee story. Unfortunately, Major A. W. McNally died before the development of his idea became a reality. He was buried at Rose Hill Cemetery with full military honours on a very hot Sunday afternoon, June 24th, 1934.

Following the service at the late residence of Major McNally on Fort Malden Drive, the funeral cortege, led by Dr. E. D. Hutchinson and Charles Webb of the Fort Malden Branch of the Canadian Legion and the Essex Scottish Band proceeded at a solemn dead march to Christ Church, Ramsay Street. Following the band were war veterans in their peace-time uniforms, the General Amherst High School Cadets and the Amherstburg Town Council. The firing squad from the Essex Scottish, with arms reversed, immediately preceded the gun carriage on which was the flag-draped casket of Major McNally. Glen (Rubber) Hamilton was in command of the horses and seated on the gun carriage were veterans Keith Cornwall and Alex K. Duff. Following the casket was the Major's horse. It bore no gallant soldier; it felt no spurring touch; but bore a riderless saddle, with boots reversed in the stirrups.

Glen and Laura Updike Hamilton had been married a short time before McNally's death and were living with his parents in the old Hamilton place at the corner of Ramsay and Gore. On the day of the funeral, Grandma Hamilton filled a large canning kettle with ice and water, with which they refreshed the Essex Scottish Band and the rest of the funeral cortege as it passed by the corner of Ramsay and Gore Streets.





A. W. McNALLY LETTER

Copy of letter from A. W. McNally addressed to John A. Marsh, Amherstburg, Ontario, with the notation in the hand-writing of John A. Marsh: "June 14th, 1934, Letter received this morning. "Mac" died in N.Y. yesterday morning." (Written on the stationery of the Hotel Delano, 108 West 43rd Street, New York City).

*"John A. Marsh
Amherstburg, Ontario.*

Well John Old Man, I want you always to think well of me, no matter what you hear. You at least know that, I have always been imbued with a desire to promote the interests of the people and the community. I am not going to try to explain what I am doing - perhaps you wouldn't understand and if you did, you would not approve anyway.

With startling suddenness there had developed on you the responsibility of carrying on the work of the Amherstburg Historical Sites and Museum Association. Do not let what I have done so far be in a lost cause like that of the southern Confederacy, although they were wrong like me - perhaps. Pay the bills and get the signs up and carry on. You will have to give it much time but your great work is education and publicity - to stir the imagination and interest.

I have tried to suggest a provision in my will that my wife might follow if she does not have to make other arrangements for her own maintenance. In this document my second and third alternatives were prepared with the idea that the School Boards would never employ anyone who did not appreciate the Fort Malden site, its associations, and would encourage public interest. The idea of course was subject to the right of my people and my wife's people to occupy it, before the trust became effective. Now just one thing more. In Cleveland on June 6th I spent nearly two hours with Mr. Mather and Mr. Heer

of the Cleveland Cliff Iron Company who are practically mortgagees in possession of the Webber properties. I went over the whole situation and Mr. Heer is coming over to Amherstburg to look into the matter personally. My suggestion was that they redeem all but 100 feet which will include the trenches. This would require the town to apportion the arrears.

Then at the Elliott place I urged the setting aside of 300' x 300'. Both of them seemed sympathetic and some arrangement can be arrived at if you go after it properly.

*Good bye Old Friend.
(signed) A. W. McNally.*

Treat Heer well, he was kind to me."

P.S. "If you do these things I can feel that my life has not been in vain. But John you will be much better equipped if you would take this trip or similar trips to see what the other fellow is doing and the publicity methods adopted. Then there must be some real research work continually carried on to add to the accumulation of valuable and accurate facts.

I urge upon P. M. Mullen, Cuthbert, Geo. Jones, Father Perdue, and the Legion through Devere Thrasher to give you every assistance. You can count upon the ladies because I notice the initiative throughout Virginia in preservation and restoration has usually been taken by their organization."

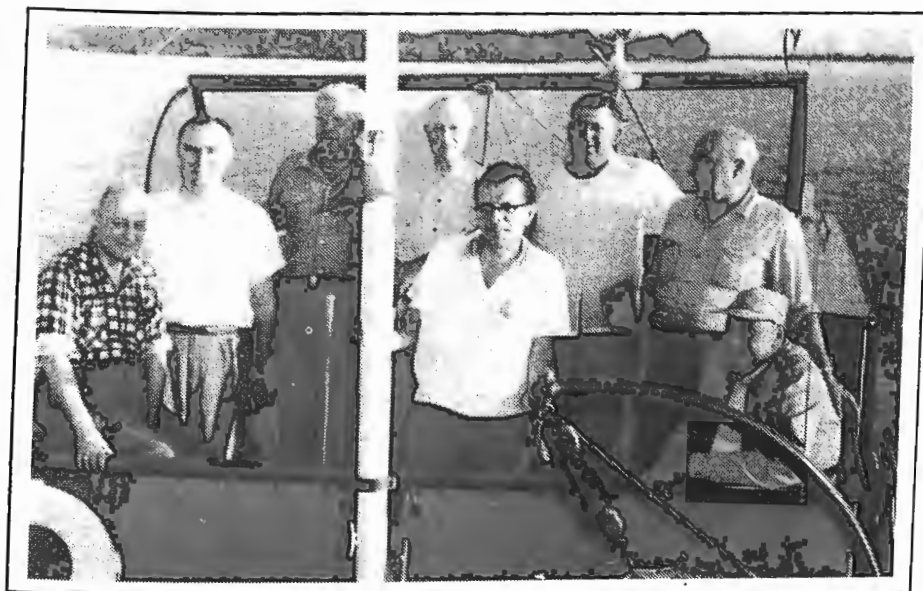
McQUEEN, CAPTAIN J. EARL

There have been many stories told about "Cap" McQueen, but this is one he told me himself. He and Val Clare, a CKLW Radio newsman and Pete Fox, proprietor of the Lakeview Hotel, were having a drinking session one night in the bar-room. They locked all the doors and were having a great old time when a knock came at the door. Opening it was a furious Mrs. Fox. She took a look at Pete and heaved a beer bottle at him. "You're pitching a little low tonight, Susie", was Pete's retort. Time passed and an argument ensued as to their prowess with a rifle. Pete pulled a .22 from under the bar; Val Clare put a salt cellar on his own head, and Cap McQueen shot it off.

Suddenly they realized it was twenty minutes of eleven and Val had to be on the air at eleven. Cap McQueen and Val climbed into McQueen's large Buick, raced to Windsor, and Val began his eleven o'clock news broadcast right on time!

This tale is about the grounding of the salty Facto on the east side of the Amherstburg Channel. Captain McQueen was living aboard his yacht, the "Sheltie", which was moored at the dock in front of his house at Dalhousie Street South. One morning at four o'clock his bedside telephone rang and it was the Skipper of the salty. He said that his ship had run aground near Amherstburg and asked "Cap" to send out a tug. "Cap" got up, looked out the porthole, and there was the Facto several feet from his yacht. In subsequent days it took five tugs to release her.

"Cap" McQueen loved publicity and was a natural for stories. He brought a lot of attention to Amherstburg through his exploits. With all his flamboyant exterior, he really had quite an inferiority complex, a fact which few people ever knew. Cap was a man who drank a bottle of V.O. every night. For many years he could hold it, but in his later years, it showed. At one period in his life he got mixed up with the Moral Re-armament Movement and for a time it looked like these high-pressure evangelists would get hold of not only his mind, but his money as well. Fortunately, he saw what was happening in time to avoid disaster. This group would come down day after day and give him the works. Finally he decided to get rid of them once and for all. One Sunday afternoon aboard the Sheltie, we were sitting around talking when these people drove up in their car. We took bottles of liquor from the galley, put them on the table and made out that we were drunk. When they came aboard and saw the scene we portrayed, they left and never returned!



Aboard the "Sheltie" - Left to right: H. Aldrich, B. Thompson, J. Marsh, - Sonley, A. Jackson, O. Hamilton, "Cap" McQueen and L. Pettypiece

The small freighter, James Watt, was stuck in the ice off Kingsville. In those days before ship-to-shore communication, helicopters and all sorts of

rescue machines, word came that supplies were running low on the Watt. "Cap" McQueen organized a rescue operation consisting of a large lifeboat on runners, filled with food and other supplies, to be hauled out over the ice to the Watt. He was standing in a shed, directing the operations, wearing a fedora. A photographer from the Detroit News was there. He suggested that "Cap" lead his men in the rescue attempt. "Cap" grabbed a fur cap and went out, took hold of the lead line, and the next day an eight column picture appeared on the front page of the News. There was "Cap" leading his men to the rescue . . . closer scrutiny showed that he was wearing a pair of spats. He was really kidded about this one!

NOMINATION MEETINGS AND ELECTIONS

In this year - 1982 - it is difficult to get highly-taxed citizens to take an interest in the selection of members for local government. Probably one of the reasons for this is that the members now sit for a period of two years and the old plan of holding annual nomination meetings has been done away with, this on the pretext that the operation of local governments be streamlined. The net result is that little improvement has been made and interest in local government has waned.

The nomination meetings each year attracted fairly good crowds and in their fervour to be elected some of the candidates made statements which they later regretted. During the formation period of Unions in Amherstburg, Fred Lukes, a very competent member of local government and a strong union man, made a pitch for the support of labour. In his fervour he stated that he was a communist which resulted in Mr. Lukes' defeat that year.

At the nomination meeting financial statements were presented to the ratepayers and the town fathers had the opportunity to explain why certain expenditures were made. At the present time local citizens get little information about the finances of the community until the middle of the following year when the auditor's report is published.

The two-year system is fairly good - however, it works against good municipal government in that some members forget that they have an obligation to serve in the best interest of the electors.

ODDS 'N ENDS

J. 'Nig' Clark, who lived in Anderdon Township, was a descendant of an Indian family living on the Huron Reserve. Clark was the only local boy who

ever made it in big time baseball. 'Nig' was born at Hell's Corners (Texas Road and 3rd Concession). He was a star catcher with the Cleveland team in the American League called the Cleveland Naps for reason that the manager was Napoleon Lajoie, a former second baseman. He made all the plays look easy. More about him in another story.

Another local connection with the Naps was Lee Stanley, who covered sports for a Cleveland paper. Later he became an internationally famous cartoonist. His daily strip 'Old Home Town' appeared in over 400 Hearst papers. Lee lived on the west side of Laird Avenue, north of Alma. This former home is now (in 1983) occupied by the Wm. Murdoch family. Lee had a studio on the east side of his house. While living in Amherstburg, he took exception to the coal pile located in front of what is now the beautiful Navy Yard Park. In the Marsh Papers we have the original copy of a cartoon he drew in connection with his dislike of this eyesore.

During the war when labour was very scarce, there was a Windsor printer who was robbing employees from weekly newspapers. He came to our plant to steal a linotype operator. The operator came to me and said that he wanted to stay with The Echo and resented the pressure put on him by this Windsor printer. When this printer's attempts failed to move our operator, he blamed me and wrote me a letter in which he belittled me and said that I was hated by the Windsor printers, I didn't have any brains, and should be out of business.

I kept his letter in my files for years and every time I reached a point where I thought I was somebody, I would read the letter and soon get back to earth.

In our 'With the Tide' column of The Amherstburg Echo we never hesitated to criticize when we thought that criticism was justified. In one particular case we objected to the manner in which a particular reeve of Amherstburg was conducting his position as the Reeve of the town, for which we publicly chastised him.

The upshot of this happened at 6 o'clock one morning when we were in the office writing last minute material for The Echo to be published at ten o'clock. The door burst open and the reeve came into the office with a paper in his hand. "I hate to give you this", he said, and handed us a Notice of Liabile suit. It so happened that at the point we were desperate for a front-page story. We thanked him for coming to our rescue in giving us a dandy front-page liable suit story. That's all part of the game in running a weekly newspaper.

OLD BOYS' REUNION

The time is ripe to begin thinking about an old boys' reunion of former

Amherstburg, Anderdon, and Malden residents. In the last few years there have been so many changes and improvements in this area that it would be a lot of fun to show these off to former residents.

The last successful old boys reunion was held in 1935. The inspiration for this event was furnished by Elmer Tansey, an Amherstburg resident and executive of Detroit Edison. A strong committee arranged and carried out a program of fun and reunion of former friends. A highlight was the special church services. A few suggestions include the reunion of former students of General Amherst and St. Rose High Schools, former employees of Allied, Calvert and Boblo. This is just a tickler. It gives some food for thought. A strong committee could successfully swing such an event.

The committee for the 1935 reunion as mentioned, was sparked by Elmer Tansey, chairman; Ben Shillington, general chairman; F. C. B. Falls, treasurer; A. W. Marsh, program; George Jones, decorations; William H. Timmis, sports; William Currie, dinner and concessions. Included in the two-day program were river rides, band concerts and street dancing. Reporting the reunion an Echo headline read: "Hearty laughter resounds as former residents recall incidents of yesterday."

DR. W. FRED PARK (1871-1936)

Dr. Fred Park devoted many years of his life in Amherstburg to public service. In spite of a very large and active medical practice he found time to guide the town for nineteen years as mayor and three as a member of the town council. He served as mayor from 1911 to 1915 and was defeated in the next election by John A. Auld, editor of The Amherstburg Echo. Staging a come-back in 1918 he served with distinction until 1930. In 1930 and '31 Dr. Park served on town council, being elected mayor again in 1932. Two years later he suffered his first heart attack.

Dr. Park came to Amherstburg in 1899, six years after he had opened a practice in Harrow, coming from Chatham. He covered his long route on foot, horseback, bicycle and motorcycle, tending his patients whether or not they had the wherewithal to pay the bill. He was active in promoting Amherstburg and was in demand as a public speaker, many times as an impromptu speaker. Doc confided to us that he never went to a function where he might be called upon to speak, that he didn't prepare a few words ahead of the event. . . just in case.

Around 1918-19 Solvay Process Company announced that they would build a soda ash plant at the north end of Amherstburg. This decision was made after checking over results of the survey made by the late Rev. Thomas Nattress in connection with the large limestone deposits and the proximity of an

unlimited supply of salt. (Rev. Nattress was a very knowledgeable geologist.) As a result Brunner Mond Canada Limited was established.

Dr. Park was mayor during the critical period from 1918 to the end of 1929. He was instrumental in having Brunner Mond build a purified water plant large enough to serve both the company and the Town of Amherstburg. Prior to the arrival of purified water, there was an epidemic of typhoid fever every spring, which resulted in many deaths. Dr. Park was also plant doctor for Brunner Mond and looked after the company hospital which was located at the northwest section of the property on No. 18 Highway.

He was active too in the promotion of Amherstburg's first automobile plant - the Two-In-One Automobile Company - which produced the "Amherst 40". Few cars came off the assembly line before the plant closed. The designers of this vehicle were many years ahead of their time. It was so constructed that the rear end of the touring car including the seats could be lifted off and the vehicle converted into a pickup. Dr. Park purchased the first car which he drove for many years. He later build his own "Amherst 40" with parts manufactured at the factory.

Dr. Fred Park was always a gentleman, but he didn't stand for monkey business and had a sometimes explosive temper. We remember fondly his consideration when I was a young reporter. In spite of the fact that he was a strong Conservative and one of the owners of The Echo (John A. Auld) was a strong Liberal, Dr. Park never allowed politics to colour his kindness to us when I joined my father in the business following Auld's death. He realized the importance of local coverage of Council, discouraged closed sessions and always insisted that the Echo reporter be present at all meetings.

Dr. Park, along with the late Arthur W. Marsh, was involved in the construction of the Amherstburg Public Library in 1911, at the corner of Sandwich and Richmond Streets. His portrait hung there for many years. Although Amherstburg saw little actual growth in those post-war and pre-depression years what progress there was, was due to Dr. Fred Park.

PARK HOUSE MUSEUM - November, 1983

It does not seem possible but the tenth anniversary of the opening of the historic Park House Museum was recently held in the form of an Open House. The Park House originally stood on the west side of Dalhousie Street south of the Gordon House. Tradition tells us the house was built in Detroit about 1796. Three years later it was moved to Amherstburg by a loyalist who preferred not to leave his new house for the Americans after the signing of the Jay Treaty. The house was dismantled, the logs numbered and floated down the Detroit River to

Amherstburg. Here it was re-erected on Lot No. 1A on First Street. It stood on this site until 1972 when the owner, Zarko Vucinic, decided to demolish the structure to make room for a motel.

At that time a committee of the Amherstburg Rotary Club recommended Rotary purchase the building and move it to the Waterworks Park (later the King's Navy Yard Park). The club backed the committee headed by Hazen Price and a deal was made with Vucinic. The building was moved north up Dalhousie Street, a foundation laid and prepared for a museum, to be operated by The Amherstburg Historic Sites Association. In the first few years, recognition of the museum was slow. However, it soon got off the ground and now it is one of the town's main attractions. Many school children from Ontario, Michigan, Ohio and Illinois come to Amherstburg to visit the Park House. Area citizens take great pride in taking their visitors to view the collection and see the activity at the centre.



A spinoff at the Park House was the formation of the Park House Tinsmiths, manufacturers of and dealers in all kinds of reproduction tinware. The tinware is produced by a small number of interested citizens who meet each Monday evening to create their works. Their products are recognized by

collectors and dealers. The group has filled orders from Fort Malden, Fort George and some dealers in the United States. A collection of their wares is on display at the Park House and the sale of these items produces income to help finance the operation.

Incidentally, the Washington Hand press that put out the first edition of The Amherstburg Echo in 1874 was given to the Park House by Echo management. It is located in the Pensioners' Cottage west of the main building and on special occasions it is put into operation.

The other day we were in the Park House when two couples from a large Michigan town were visiting. They were astounded at this restoration as well as the beautiful King's Navy Yard Park. "Wish we had the interest in our community as in Amherstburg," the man said. We could not help but think some town residents do not realize the many assets this town enjoys. Thank goodness the majority do!

PARK HOUSE TINSMITHS - June, 1984

The Park House tinsmiths are rapidly gaining a national and international reputation. This is shown by the orders for items from Canadian and United States points. Recently a large order of tinware items was sent to the Ukrainian Cultural Centre in Edmonton, Alberta. An order has been received from Fort Western Museum in Main. A large order is being filled for Fort Malden National Historic Park. The other Sunday a buyer from Toronto called in at the Park House and plunked down his cheque to pay for items which he picked up in the neighbourhood of three hundred dollars.

This increase in sales of tinware could not have been accomplished without the work and the dedication of volunteer tinsmiths. They meet and work at the Park House each Monday evening. In addition, items are produced by Alan Bald, resident tinsmith. The program was started several years ago by Park House board members Hazen Price, John Burkhart and Harvey Webster. They had a dream that has been successfully carried out. A number of budding tinsmiths have joined the group. They are residents of Amherstburg and Harrow districts.

PARKING METERS

The last vestige of the detestable parking meters in the Business Improvement District of Amherstburg was removed in the fall of 1982. These were the standards along Dalhousie, Richmond and Sandwich Street South. The meters were a bone of contention to shoppers who wanted to shop in the core district. Unfortunately, a majority of the merchants in this area were short-sighted and did not see that the meters, rather than attracting business to the area, were driving it away.

In our 'With The Tide' column in The Amherstburg Echo, we carried on a constant fight to have the meters removed. Finally, after some years the B.I.A. asked the town to hood the meters in two pre-Christmas periods to entice shoppers into the old downtown. This was the beginning of the end as far as the meters were concerned. In the spring of 1982 all members of the B.I.A. were contacted as to the removal of the meters. The opinion was that these one-arm bandits should be removed and it was not long until that was done.

TED PICKERING (1899-1970)

In our opinion Ted Pickering was one of the best mayors that the Town of Amherstburg ever had. His term of office was for two years, 1946 and 1947.

Before taking over the red chair, Ted was the first chairman and a member of the Amherstburg Public Utilities for eight years. It was through his efforts that membership on the Utilities Commission was increased from three to five.

Born in Amherstburg, son of a well-known merchant/tailor, Horatio and Ellen (Sage) Pickering, Ted was educated in Amherstburg after which he joined the Detroit News as a cub reporter. While he liked newspaper work, his first love was tinkering around with things electrical so he turned to Western Electric in Detroit where he took a course in the new automatic telephone system. In this connection he assisted with the installation of the first automatic telephone system in the city of Detroit. He later entered the employ of the Detroit Shipbuilding Company as an electrician until 1929 when he came back to Amherstburg and married Una Marontate, daughter of Theodore and Mary (Caldwell) Marontate. Ted started up an electrical contracting business with Stan Eggleton and later became associated with his brother-in-law Caldwell Marontate in the firm known as Pickering Electric. He was later employed at Calvert Distillers in charge of electrical equipment.

During the serious fire at Calverts in 1950, Ted and Lloyd Brown managed to get on top of the rack warehouse where they sprayed the building with water and thus prevented its collapse. They took their lives in their hands in so doing.

Ted was a power in the Conservative Association in Essex South and used his political clout to good advantage. At that time Amherstburg owed the Sandwich, Windsor and Amherstburg Railway Company a debt of over a quarter of a million dollars. To pay this would have put a heavy burden on the Amherstburg taxpayers. Working through William Murdoch, M.P.P. for Essex South and speaker for the Ontario legislature, Ted persuaded the Ontario government to cancel this debt.

At about that time there was a movement in Amherstburg by the Canadian Legion, headed by ex-mayor Dr. E. M. Warren, to have Provincial-Federal housing built at the eastern end of town on the former Bell farm. Things went along fairly well and it looked like the plan would be carried out. One day Ted got word from Mr. Murdoch in Toronto that the Provincial government had approved of the plan but the Federal government would turn it down. Ted came to me and said, "It's up to you now". Fortunately I had a good relationship with Murray Clark, M. P., Essex South, and a single call to him put the plan back into operation.

In the promotion of the Provincial-Federal housing project, Ted was responsible for a high Provincial government official coming to Amherstburg. We accompanied Ted when he showed Mr. Lewis the proposed site for the development. Standing at the corner of the townline (Alma) and Victoria Street,

Ted remarked, "Someday, Mr. Lewis, you will see houses as far as one can see". His prediction was realized.

While Ted was mayor of Amherstburg, we were still in a depression and it looked like the town would go broke as had Essex, Kingsville and Leamington. Taxes were slow in coming in and one of the heaviest burdens on the town was a large acreage known as the Park farm in the southeastern section of the community. If this property could be sold and put back on the tax rolls it would straighten out the financial problems of the town. Local bigshots were approached to purchase this property but none of them had enough faith in the community to do so. A new resident of the town at that time was James Flynn, a Chicago industrialist, who had money to invest. Ted went over and made an attempt to sell this property to Mr. Flynn. At first he was hesitant, but finally Flynn agreed to purchase this property for the sum of ten thousand dollars. That ten thousand kept Amherstburg from going into default. Much of this property has since been developed through the efforts of David V. Dufour, who, with his associates William Docherty and Mike Tomek, purchased a good portion of the site from the Flynn family. They formed a company called Flynn Development and this company developed the Flynn subdivision, the Fort Malden Mall and the four apartment buildings along Dalhousie Street - the Caldwell Towers North and South, the Lafferty (LaFerte) and the Pickering, named for this man who left a heritage to the town - a heritage of love.

A sidelight on the part paid by Flynn Development was a substantial financial contribution to restoration of the historic Park House. With the slow up of home construction, Dave Dufour has not been idle in promoting the town. When it was announced a chemical plant was looking for a suitable site in the Windsor area, he went to Toronto and contacted the principals of the company. He brought them to Amherstburg and showed them property on the Second Concession Road in Anderdon. He brought the officials to meet with town fathers. They took over and gave the company every help. This resulted in the B.C.M. plant now in full production. It is erecting an addition in order to double its capacity.

Development of the former Park farm acreage has resulted in the bringing of the Canadian Tire store to town as well as construction of Four Seasons Bowl, and the large A & P supermarket. In recent months, Mr. Dufour has sold sites on the west side of Sandwich Street South, both to Pontiac and Chrysler car agencies.

POLITICS AND POTATOES

One of the most memorable elections in Essex South was one in which Eccles J. Gott defeated George Graham, the Minister of Railways. Ecc Gott won

support with his slogan: "A South Essex Man for a South Essex Seat."

One episode involved a time during the Depression when he teamed up with a fellow from New Brunswick and brought in a carload of potatoes to be distributed among the so-called "needy" farmers of Essex South. The potatoes were distributed from Harrow and it so happened that many of them went to wealthy Tory farmers along the lakefront. This started a controversy which carried into the Provincial elections when Austin "Buster" Smith, Conservative of Kingsville, was being opposed by his next-door neighbour, Lambert Wigle, Liberal. The controversy raged so hot that Mr. Smith struggled to save his seat. We were with him when he called the Ontario Premier and said that it was very necessary to continue the second half of 18 Highway east of Harrow to Kingsville. Half of the highway had already been built. In spite of this election ploy, Mr. Smith was defeated.

Several months later, as a member of the Ontario Newspaper Executive, we were in the office of the new Premier Mitchell Hepburn, who had been swept into office on the Liberal landslide. Mr. Hepburn turned to me and asked, "How's my old friend Ecc Gott?" He continued by saying that Mr. Gott was in his office trying to get the province to pay for the potatoes distributed to the Tory elite. "He never will be paid", said Mr. Hepburn.

A few years later Eccles Gott was defeated in his bid for re-election by S. Murray Clark, Liberal, of Harrow. Mr. Clark served with distinction in the Federal House.

As stated earlier, Messrs. Wigle and Smith were Kingsville neighbours. Austin Smith was a son of County Magistrate W. A. Smith. Prior to the 1934 election I went to Kingsville every Sunday and wrote campaign ads for both candidates, but neither one ever knew what the other was up to. When Wigle was drafted in 1933 to be the Liberal standard-bearer for the riding, he was rather reluctant to accept the nomination, one reason being that his old friend and next-door neighbour Austin Smith, for whom he had a great deal of respect, was the opposing member. But he felt at the same time that it was his duty to get into the fight to try and bring about a change in government. Although political opponents, they remained good friends throughout the battle and waged a good, clean fight.

In the next Provincial election (in 1937) William Murdoch of Harrow defeated Mr. Wigle. Bill Murdoch had a long career as M.P.P. for South Essex and served as Speaker of the House. He moved from Harrow to Amherstburg some years ago when he purchased the Laird Avenue residence of Lee Stanley, an internationally known cartoonist whose feature "Old Home Town" appeared in the Hearst Newspapers.

POSTMARK AMHERSTBURG - February, 1984

In the not too distant future mail carrying the postmark Amherstburg may be collectors' items sought after by philatelists. This observation would also apply to postmarks of other towns in Essex County. This has come about by Canada Post's decision to process mail from county post offices at the large plant in Windsor. In other words, all mail dropped at local post offices and drop boxes will be put in mail bags, and shipped to Windsor for sorting, after which it will be shipped back to points of origin. It's all so simple. For instance, a letter put in the local mail slot, addressed to a nearby post office box, will be sent to Windsor and later returned to the place of origin. Efficiency with a small "e"! In other words, the mailed piece will not bear the date of mailing, or the time.

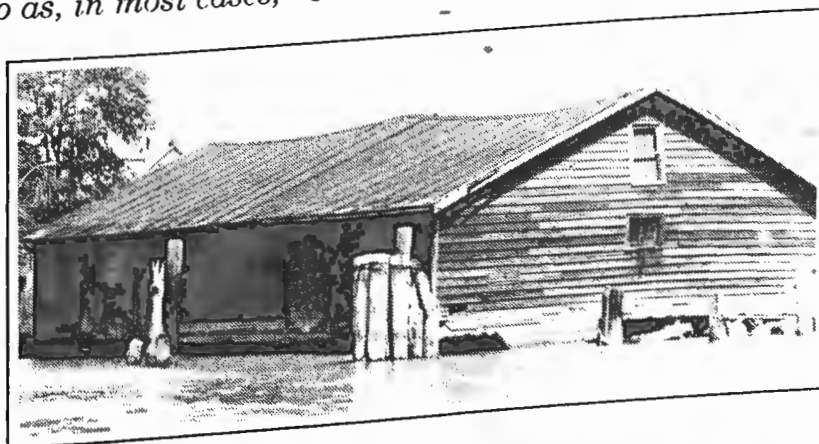
Each town sending out mail got a good deal of publicity on account of postmarks. In other words an Amherstburg post mark brings to mind Fort Malden. Kingsville - Jack Miner Bird Sanctuary; Leamington - Point Pelee National Park. In the future the only postmark on letters will be Windsor. It's sad that local post offices have become so impersonal. We doubt very much if one out of ten knows or can give you the name of the Amherstburg postmaster. It appears Canada Post's only interest is getting as much revenue as possible, without taking any part or having any interest in local matters.

PROHIBITION

Many of the stories here are related to bootlegging in Ontario. Bootlegging - the selling of alcoholic beverages without a license - is still carried on but not to the degree that it was during the prohibition years.

Rum-running relates to the legitimate exporting of liquor, authorized by the Canadian government, to a country other than those which had laws prohibiting the import of intoxicating beverages. The United States had such a law (Volstead Act 1920) so export papers were completed which denoted the destination of their cargo as, in most cases, "Cuba". The hypocrisy of prohibition was shown by the fact that one could order any amount of spirits from outside the province and have it delivered in Ontario.

The major liquor export dock in Amherstburg was on property owned for



many years by McQueen Marine. It was the former Woods dock and there were a number of liquor export warehouses there. Boats would load up at Amherstburg during the daytime and cross the Detroit river under the cover of darkness, carrying export papers for legitimate cargo to Cuba. In spite of tight surveillance by the Provincial and Royal Mounted Police, there was a certain amount of liquor back-tracked in to serve the Ontario thirst for booze.

Prohibition was a distinct failure as far as the Amherstburg and Detroit River area in general were concerned. Many citizens in those troubled times turned to bootlegging and rum-running to make a living.

Down the front in Malden Township there was one farmer who entered the business in a big way. He ran an open bar in a cottage on the riverfront and on Sundays hundreds of people congregated there. Beer was sold openly and there was no interference by the law. All one had to do at other times to get a case of beer was to call and place an order. When one went down to take delivery the farmer simply hauled it out of the well.

One Colchester South farmer laid in a large supply of liquor. This came to the attention of a group of young smarties from Amherstburg, who called themselves the "Blood and Guts Gang". They raided the house, stole the liquor and shipped it across the river to the States. Police cracked the case and these young men were brought up in a public court held on the second floor of the Amherstburg Town Hall. The magistrate was a tough one. After finding them guilty, he sentenced them to ten years in Kingston and ten lashes. (The magistrate was a brother-in-law of the liquor owner and half owner of the booze.) I was a young reporter on The Amherstburg Echo at the time and this was my first major court coverage. When I handed my story over to "the boss", Arthur W. Marsh, he read it through and said, "There's something radically wrong here. Keep after it until you find out what the true story is". I found out that there was some skullduggery involved and the stiff sentence reflected the narrow thinking of the magistrate. My father drew the attention of this case to the Federal Minister of Justice, who saw that the sentences were reduced, but not before the spirit and the lives of these young men had been wrecked.

During the prohibition years, Amherstburg hotels never stopped selling liquor. As a matter of fact, little attempt was made to hide the operation. At the Lakeview Hotel on Dalhousie Street which was owned and operated by T. H. (Pete) Fox, the booze was kept in an adjoining store which at one time was a bank. The liquid refreshment was locked in the bank safe. Ted Pickering, a local electrician, wired the hotel with a bell system. The lobby was always immaculate and along the south wall was a row of chairs. On the side of the window was a small hole where a lookout was always sitting. Upon the approach of a police officer, the lookout rang the alarm and the booze disappeared.

Operation of the Amherst Hotel on Richmond Street was not such a secret. It was a wild old place and late in the evening crap games were held at the end of the bar where thousands of dollars changed hands. In addition to the Amherst and the Lakeview, there were many, many more places where one could buy liquor in town. During the Depression people were desperate and many used this method to keep the wolf away from the door. Strangely enough, when times are toughest there is always money around for a drink or two.

During Prohibition the annual Legion Armistice Day Banquet put on by the Fort Malden Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion was held in the D & C Café, located on the south side of Murray Street between Dalhousie and Ramsay. The boys had started to celebrate when a member of the distaff side called the Ontario Provincial Police to report the activity. When the police raided the place and started to haul out the liquor, they were seized by the irate Legionnaires and carried to the river bank at the foot of Murray Street. The O.P.P. were threatened that they would be thrown into the drink unless they left town and stayed away. Needless to say, the police left and the party continued uninterrupted for most of the night.

One day late in December during Prohibition, we wanted to go over to Detroit to a New Year's Eve party. We had a number of friends in the theatre there, some of whom were members of an international fraternity to which we belonged while at McGill University. We went down to a warehouse on the fenced-in Woods dock in Amherstburg and purchased a bottle of Scotch. Putting the bottle in the car we were off and it wasn't until we reached the gate on Dalhousie Street that we realized we would be searched by the police. As our car pulled up, one of them remarked, "Oh, it's only John Marsh. Let him go through". Needless to say, we were relieved, having been frightened more than a little. Later that day we transferred the Scotch into a flask to carry it over the border. Unfortunately, we filled the glass flasks too full and when going through America Customs the heat of our bodies caused the alcohol to expand and the flasks to break. We walked up Woodward Avenue with a strong aroma of alcohol following us all the way.

PUT-IN-BAY CAPSTAN

A conversation piece in the King's Navy Yard Park, Amherstburg, is the Capstan from the Put-In-Bay, an early steamer owned and operated until 1951 by the Ashley and Dustin Steamer Line of Detroit. The excursion vessel was a long-time favourite, plying daily between Detroit, Put-In-Bay and Sandusky, Ohio.

The 42-year-old Put-In-Bay was placed on the auction block and sold for scrap to the Browning Lines in 1953. We called "Red" Browning and asked for

a memento off the ship, to be placed in the Marine Museum at Fort Malden. He said the only thing left was the capstan, which we were welcome to have and could pick up anytime. We told Mr. Browning that we had no means of transporting this heavy item to the park, so he hired a truck and delivered it.

In later years, when Fort Malden began to emphasize its military history, the capstan was taken out of storage and given to the Town of Amherstburg for a final resting place at the King's Navy Yard Park. On the head of the capstan is a brass plate with the following wording: **"DETROIT SHIPBUILDING COMPANY-BUILDERS. PUT-IN-BAY - 1911. DETROIT, MICHIGAN."**

Commissioned in 1911 the Put-In-Bay was the last of four passenger boats which the company operated between Detroit, Put-In-Bay and Sandusky. The first one was the J. Cooke, a sidewheeler named after the man who helped to finance the Civil War for the Union Army. The Alaska was another sidewheeler (1875-1890) and followed her on the run. Dismantled in 1890, the Alaska's engine was installed in a new steel hull equipped with all the modern devices of the day. The new ship was designed by marine architect Frank E. Kirby, and named after him. Mr. Kirby designed all the sidewheel steamers on the Great Lakes, numerous lake freighters and many ships for foreign countries. Remarkable for her speed, she put up a record of two hours and 54 minutes for the 60-mile run to Put-In-Bay. All of the fast steamers took after the Kirby and her captain, Arthur J. Fox, flaunted them by carrying a broom at the masthead. She was nicknamed "The Flyer of the Lakes". In her daily trips up and down the Detroit River, Amherstburg residents used to rely on the Kirby for the correct time, as they do today with radio and television. She always left Detroit at 9 o'clock in the morning and passed Amherstburg at 10:20 a.m.

It was customary for passengers when they boarded the Frank E. Kirby to turn over their valuables (jewels, money, etc.) to Captain Fox, who put them in the ship's safe and returned them to their owners when the ship docked. A group of criminals working out of Detroit knew this practice and one night, upbound past Amherstburg, they held the passengers at bay and robbed the safe. However, Captain Fox was not to be outwitted. When the Kirby arrived at Detroit he kept the ship away from the wharf and in a loud voice over a hailer said to those on shore, "Send all your police down here! Bring out the riot squad!" He kept the vessel a short distance offshore until he saw the police arriving. Then he docked and let the law bag the criminals. One fellow jumped overboard and got away, never to be seen again. The gang was not charged with robbery. They had committed a far more serious crime - piracy. For that, some of them got life and others as much as forty years in prison.

Back to the Put-In-Bay. . . throughout the 1920s and into the early thirties, moonlight excursions and dances were popular. Major organized groups such as clubs and associations held annual moonlight parties for their members. These were the most sought-after dates of the year by the younger set

of the area. The bright lights of the ships, their happy passengers and the music of a leading dance band of the time was a combination few could resist. However, by 1947 her days were numbered. She was taken off the run and sold to a Chicago company for \$1,400. The Chicago syndicate's plan was to put her into service for excursions between Chicago and Michigan City, Indiana. By 1951 she was moored at the foot of Wayne Street where she remained for two years. Former owners, the Ashley and Dustin Steamship Co., had gone out of business. Her sale was ordered to satisfy claims of mortgage holders. In 1953 she was auctioned off, the successful bidders at \$11,000 being Troy H. Browning of the Browning Steamship Lines and David C. Lowe, president of Detroit Marine Terminal, who expected to make a profit by junking her.

Dismantling the vessel would have been an expensive and unprofitable method of scrapping, so a few weeks later the 'Put' was towed out to Lake St. Clair, where she was set on fire. More than 200 small craft stood off while she burned. Heat from the towering flames blistered paint on some of them as distant as 300 feet. She was later towed back to Detroit for salvage operations.

WALTER RANTA

In late October, 1982 Walt Ranta passed away. He was just a few months past his 66th birthday.

Walter came to Amherstburg from Finland with his parents and sister Liisa. His father, Karl Ranta, was a master mechanic who never learned to speak fluent English, nor did his mother, Laimi, ever master the language. They were very poor, but soon managed to make their way in Canada.

Walt attended the Amherstburg schools and later worked for Brunner Mond Canada Limited. During that period he took night classes in engineering in Detroit. In a matter of a few years Walt had his degree, left Brunner Mond and started out on his own. It wasn't long before he had established the successful firm of Ranta Enterprises. A man of great ability, he soon became well known in his profession.

Walt once told me he resented the fact that as a boy he was poor and had to wear second-hand clothes. He vowed to be a millionaire before he died. As a workaholic he soon acquired a substantial financial position. After being warned that he should stop drinking, Walt suffered a heart attack, then had a pacemaker inserted. . . in spite of warnings, he didn't change his way of life.

Few people in Amherstburg knew or understood Walter Ranta. To the outsider he was gruff, sometimes crude, and gave the impression of being very hard-boiled. As a matter of fact, he was a pussy cat who quietly gave a great

deal to his town, community organizations and churches, as well as to many of his old friends who had fallen on hard times. It was a tragic loss of a man so talented - there won't be another like him.

DICK REID - December, 1983

The recent death of our old friend Richard (Dickie) Reid recalls the time when he and his good wife Celia operated Reid's Confectionery, south side of Richmond Street on the site now occupied by the addition of the Amherstburg Branch of the Bank of Montreal. On their retirement the Reids moved to their home at Amherst Point.

"Dickie" Reid was a loveable person. He had a great sense of humour and was proud of his place in the old town. Here one picked up morning and Sunday newspapers, had lunch or ice cream. Some local citizens who followed the ponies came in to see Dickie each day to get a hot tip. It so happened that Dickie ran a private book. He and his wife loved horses and he maintained a close connection with the ponies. Dickie was one of a kind. He had many friends and loved his town. Each morning when we went over to his store to pick up our papers we would ask, "What's new this morning Dickie?" His reply always was, "New York".

The Reid store was in the centre of Amherstburg's downtown. A great many locals daily came into this area as the post office, two banks, two hotels, two food stores and many other service places were located on Richmond Street west and a section of Dalhousie Street. The character of this part of the town started to change when parking meters went into operation, shifting of stores to Sandwich Street strips and the opening of the mall. A major change in shopping habits took place when the door-to-door mail delivery was instigated. We do not recall any protest against such a move by local merchants in this part of the old home town.

RIVER NOTES - January, 1984

A number of downbound vessels were caught in the heavy ice off the Detroit River light last week. It took several days to free them. They were cut out and sent on their way by the United States Coast Guard Bristol Bay cutter. This all reminds us it is not unusual for freighters to be caught in the ice. Especially so when an attempt was made to keep the coal boats moving between Toledo and Detroit to feed the blast furnaces. For a number of years the Lake Carriers' Association paid Captain J. Earl McQueen and McQueen Marine tugs to stand by. It was not unusual for them, especially the Atomic, to be out for

hours on end. Finally, the American vessel owners persuaded the U. S. Government to pick up the tab for the cost of the service. The U. S. Coast Guard vessels took over and kept the coal boats moving until the ice became too heavy. At that time the Atomic was hired to free the freighters and U. S. Coast Guard cutter.

On Thursday afternoon, December 29th, 1983, the Canadian Coast Guard ice breaker Griffon came into the Amherstburg base to lay-in over night. She had her Christmas lights aglow and was quite a sight. The next morning before daylight she proceeded up the Amherstburg Channel enroute to Parry Sound and Midland. The heavy ice did not in any way cause her any trouble. Frankly, we were reminded of a hot knife passing through butter. This reminds us that Captain J. Earl McQueen often said he preferred ice breaking jobs with his tug Atomic in below zero temperatures. He contended it was easier to break through. He said the ice in below zero temperatures reminded him of glass shattering when hit. Shortly after noon on Friday, December 30th some freighters moved in the Livingstone Channel. A path for them was carved out by a United States cutter Bristol Bay. The icebreaking type vessel has considerable trouble getting through the window formed where the Sugar Island Channel crosses over the Livingstone Channel.

Another thought about the river. The buoys in the Amherstburg Channel were the last picked up by the buoy tender Kenoki. The Amherstburg Coast Guard depot looks after all the floating and stationary Canadian Navigation aids from the Bluewater Bridge at Sarnia to Port Colborne. The floating aids are brought into Amherstburg where the base crew services them and gets them ready to go out in their stations at the opening of the navigation season. In the early days most of the traffic up and down the lower Detroit river was guided by land based lights. The early ones were kerosene fuelled, later carbide was used and then electric. In the early days the Duff family held the Lake Carriers' Association contract to look after the lights guiding vessels over the dangerous Lime Kiln Crossing in front of Texas Landing. Mrs. Duff would hang the lanterns on trees. One year the association failed to pay the account for the previous season; Mrs. Duff would not put up the lanterns until the bill was settled. A number of sailing vessels were held up in the lower Amherstburg Channel until the matter was settled to the satisfaction of the Duffs.

ROTARY CLUB IN AMHERSTBURG

The idea of Rotary was brought to Amherstburg by Arthur W. Marsh, then editor of The Amherstburg Echo. While attending the 1933 Vancouver convention of the Canadian Weekly Newspaper editors, he heard from fellow editors how their communities had received so many benefits from their Rotary Clubs. Returning to Amherstburg, he contacted C. S. K. Robinson, an active

Windsor Rotarian, who arranged that a survey of Amherstburg be made with respect to the establishment of a club here. This was completed by Mr. Robinson, Rev. M. C. Davies and Ross McKenzie (then president of the Windsor Rotary Club). A meeting was called and it wasn't long before a Rotary Club was started in Amherstburg.

On November 25, 1933, Ross McKenzie brought the glad tidings to local Rotarians at their meeting in the Lakeview Hotel, that a charter had been granted by Rotary International and henceforth the number of the local organization would be 1731. The first officers of the Club were: George H. Jones, president; Wilfred Patterson, vice-president; Ben Shillington, secretary; Carl Brandie, treasurer; N. A. Marra, Fred Nill and Thomas W. Moffat, directors; Louis J. Fox, sergeant-at-arms. The charter was officially presented on January 24, 1934. Mr. Marsh never became a member of the club. Prime movers in its formation were Ben Shillington, Ted Pickering and several other prominent Amherstburg men. The Club took a little while to get off the ground but once it got going, it began to perform a real service to the community.

Ben Shillington was the first secretary and spark-plug of the Rotary Club during the trying times of the 'dirty thirties'. Through his efforts the Rotary District Assembly, 153 District was held in Amherstburg on August 31, 1939. Sessions were held in the high school and the noon banquet in Christ Church Parish Hall. I was fortunate enough at that time to be able to relate to the visitors the story of Amherstburg. Later that afternoon and evening, a memorable cruise was enjoyed aboard Captain J. Earl McQueen's cruiser, The Erie Isle.

In 1944 a Youth Committee of the Amherstburg Rotary Club under the chairmanship of Ted Pickering sponsored a Junior Rotary Club, its members being boys from General Amherst and St. Rose High Schools. This Junior Club prospered for a number of years but eventually was allowed to lapse, interrupted by World War II. Many of the boys who were members of the Club were on active service during that war, some of whom lost their lives overseas.

In those days we didn't have Goodfellows, Mothers' Allowance and other social services which are so much taken for granted today. Most of these humanitarian tasks were performed by the Rotary Club. They took over the task of providing Christmas food baskets to the underprivileged in the community. I remember one particular Christmas Eve when Ben Shillington and myself went to a home on Brock Street where the father of a family was doing his best to look after a number of children. His wife, unable to take the pressure, had left them. We found this home in spotless condition - but there was no coal, no food, nothing for Christmas. In a matter of hours the material needs of this family were looked after and for many months thereafter the Rotary Club helped them to get back on their feet.

Funds for the club's activities were raised in many ways, the major project being Ted Pickering's baby - "Keno Under the Stars". Once a week during the summer months Keno was played outdoors on a lot which is now occupied by the Toronto-Dominion Bank and Kendall Hardware. Tom Moffat handled the chairmanship of the Crippled Childrens' Committee and carried on in that capacity for a number of years. Many families in Amherstburg managed with the quiet aid of Rotary to hold on during those Depression years.

The annual Christmas Dinner at the Lakeview Hotel was one of the highlights of the Rotary Club year. It was a formal affair, held in the second floor dining room which had an excellent view of the river. The tables and the room were suitably decorated for Christmas. Prior to the serving of the meal eggnogs were served, after which a roast turkey was carried in and placed on the table in front of the president, who did the carving. During the course of the meal Christmas carols were played on the spinet by Edith Healey. Before the serving of the last course the room was darkened and Henry Banks, the Lakeview chef, carried in the flaming Christmas pudding. A short message was given by Reverend Davies. This enjoyable custom was carried on for several years. Following the dinner, members of the Rotary Club went out in teams to distribute Christmas baskets to the less fortunate people in the community. In those days the need was great and the distribution was carried out with little fuss and without the knowledge of a goodly number of citizens.

In the early days such men as Captain E. McQueen, Dr. Fred Park and heads of industry played an important part in the club. It was usual after dinner meetings for a small group to gather at Captain McQueen's where a few drinks were downed and lively discussion took place. Anyone who was thin-skinned, didn't last long and many only went to one gathering.

The meetings at Cap McQueen's continued for a number of years. However, they ceased when membership in the club deteriorated.

RUM-RUNNING

On February 8, 1929 the following story appeared in The Amherstburg Echo: "There was a lot of excitement among the rum-runners in Amherstburg on Tuesday when a thousand dollar cargo of beer in bags was seized by the Provincial Police. A party of rum-runners left the Canadian shore at midnight the day before and got over to the International line. They were transferring their load to a truck when a rum patrol approached on the American bank. The load was hauled back to the Canadian shore only to be seized by the Amherstburg Provincial Officers who were waiting to enforce the rule against the re-entry of export rum."

The post-script to this story was told to us in 1982 by Carl Farrow, former Chief of Police for the City of Windsor, who in 1929 was in charge of the Provincial Police detachment at Amherstburg. Mr. Farrow said that the transfer of the beer to trucks was an arduous job. Captain McQueen and Russ Wigle offered to help load the police truck. When they had finished Cap McQueen turned to the officers and said, "When you come back to Amherstburg drop into my house and get a cold beer, which you rightly deserve!"

In checking the load when it arrived in Windsor the officers found that two cases were missing. Later the two officers arrived at the McQueen home for a refresher. Cap told them how he and Russ had spirited away the two cases. Needless to say, no report was made of this incident.

S. K. D.

A minimal investment by each of three Walkerville men turned into a million dollars each when they sold S. K. D. Manufacturing Co. Limited on St. Arnaud Street. The three men were H. Murray Smith, G. Eric Dennison and Douglas Kirkaldy. Each had been employed by Windsor firms.

They started the business in a garage at the rear of a Walkerville home. In a few years the three became interested in the Amherstburg area as a good place to live. H. Murray Smith bought the Captain Hackett property on Dalhousie Street South. Kirkaldy and Dennison each bought lots on the west side of Highway 18 near the Middle Sideroad, Anderdon.

Commenting on the combination, Murray Smith remarked to me that the men were of entirely different personalities and training. Each had a unique ability which combined made the whole. After selecting Amherstburg as the site for their new plant, construction began and before long it was operating. As Mr. Smith said, "In the early days we were bankrupt a number of times but didn't know it!"

The company operated as a partnership until 1945 when it was incorporated. Later it was sold to a promoter who put the stock on the Toronto Stock Exchange. By that time, H. Murray Smith had left the company, as had Doug Kirkaldy. A combination of Windsor money, headed by Gordon Knight and Walter McGregor, bought enough stock to control the company, which operated under the management of Gord Knight. This continued until the majority of the stock was purchased by Continental Can. Soon after Mr. Knight retired and Henry Horn became head of the local company, which has continued to be a major source for automotive parts.

SANDWICH, WINDSOR & AMHERSTBURG RAILWAY

The Sandwich, Windsor and Amherstburg electric railway came to town in 1902 and supplemented the stage coach service which operated between Amherstburg and Windsor.

Down through its history, which encompassed about 40 years, the railway was an integral part of community life in Amherstburg and was fairly prosperous until the hard surfacing of the road (later Highway 18) and the increase in automobile usage.

The Sandwich, Windsor and Amherstburg Company was established in Windsor as part of the Detroit United Railway System. Incidentally, the head of the D.U.R. was Elliot G. Stevenson, whose home on the Front Road, Anderdon was later enlarged to become the Anderdon Tavern.

In its heyday the electric railway served a great purpose to the community, providing not only passenger but freight service as well. During its peak period the service operated from 6 a.m. until 2 a.m. The 6 a.m. upbound from Amherstburg carried workers to various plants in Windsor and a couple of hours later transported students to and from Amherstburg and Windsor schools. The line came into Amherstburg down Sandwich to Richmond, turned right towards the river and ended at Dalhousie Street. The cars then backed up Richmond to Sandwich, turned south on Sandwich to Gore and then north on Sandwich back to Windsor. The late service at night allowed Amherstburg residents to attend the theatre and other social events in Windsor and Detroit, returning home the same evening. During the days of 'legal export', beer and liquor spur lines were put into docks at LaSalle and other points along the river. It was picked up at these docks by rum-runners who took the booze to the 'dry' American market.

The railway fell on hard times and by the early 1930s had amassed a tremendous debt due to the operation of the railway by Ontario Hydro. Each municipality in the railway district was compelled to pass a by-law assuming their portion of the debt. Amherstburg's portion was \$232,535. In spite of threats from the Ontario Legislature that steps would be taken to collect this debt, the Amherstburg Town Council held off and did not pay any part of the principle or interest. In the meantime, a strong lobby was formed, headed by Ted Pickering, who worked with William Murdoch, member of the Ontario Legislature for Essex South. Finally, in 1937 the debt of the Town of Amherstburg was cancelled. The telegram making the announcement of the cancellation was sent to Ted Pickering by Mr. Murdoch, which read: "S.W.S. meeting takes place in Windsor, December 2nd. Amherstburg bonds in the amount of \$232,535 will be cancelled by the province and returned to the council. Service will be maintained to Amherstburg at present level and efficiency".

Despite this cancellation the railway continued to go downhill and finally was taken over by the City of Windsor, who appointed a board headed by W. H. Furlong, a Windsor lawyer, and some Amherstburg residents. The board, realizing the day of interurban electric service was past, began the discontinuation of the use of electric cars, substituting them with buses.

"NITCHY" SAWYER

Ray Sawyer (1900-1974) was born in Amherstburg, son of Robert and Alvira (Goodchild) Sawyer. He is best remembered for the excellent work he did as lifeguard and supervisor during the swimming season at the Waterworks dock, starting there in 1937. I wish I could recall how he got his nickname - however, everyone knew him as "Nitchy". He had several jobs and did plenty of hard work before this position. Nitchy worked on the tug sapper for Captain Kenneth Fraser and on the steamer Alaska for the Mullen Coal Co. Then he worked as fireman and first mate on the South East Shoal Lightship under the command of Captain Jacques Bernard.

In 1919, while working as a repair man at Brunner Mond, he suffered an accident which crippled him for life. Nitchy slipped and fell on a conveyor, losing his right leg above the knee. Hospitalized for several weeks, he returned to work at the plant but after a year there he left to work on the ill-fated steamer City of Dresden, then owned by Captain John S. McQueen. While there in 1922, the steamer left Belleville bound for Port Huron. Not many hours out of port a wind of gale velocity began to blow. The rough sea pounded the old hull and it soon began to take on water. The crew manned pumps but water continued to rise and McQueen decided to beach the boat at Long Point near Port Rowan. The lifeboat capsized. Captain McQueen's son Peregrine drowned. The remaining crew members clung to the overturned boat until it finally washed ashore. The following spring, as a diver for Lew Goodchild, Nitchy returned to the scene of the disaster and aided in removal of the remains of the City of Dresden.

He then took a job as engineer on one of Dunbar and Sullivan's drill boats and later transferred to Great Lakes Dredging Company. After two seasons there Nitchy went to work for the Detroit & Windsor Ferry Company as a fireman. Two years later he entered the employ of a Detroit automobile shop where he remained for four or five years before returning to Amherstburg.

Being a strong swimmer, Nitchy frequented the waterworks area a lot during the summer and before long realized the place could stand a few improvements. With the aid of some other swimmers he built a diving tower and board at the dock, and right away the number of swimmers began to increase. There was some objection to the "radical" measures he had adopted, so he secured the approval of F. T. Pickering, then chairman of the Parks Committee,

and changes started to take place in earnest at the Old Swimming Hole. When the next swimming season rolled around, councillor Harvey "Chub" Hamilton began a plan to have him officially hired as lifeguard. He remained in that position for many years.

As many as 300 children could be in swimming at one time. Patience was Nitchy's chief asset but when discipline was necessary he remedied the situation and the offending children ended up better friends than ever. All the kids showed him respect and he probably knew the first name of every child that ever visited the Waterworks dock.

SEPPALA FAMILY

During the 1980s the Assistant Chief Commissioner of the RCMP in charge of the Alberta division was a young man from Amherstburg by the name of Waitto Seppala, son of Mr. and Mrs. Eino Seppala. The family were Finns who were driven out of Finland following the Communist invasion. The Seppala family was one of the leading families in Finland. They came out to Amherstburg penniless. However, by hard work they soon made a niche for themselves. Mr. Seppala was in charge of mill grinding operations at Calvert Distillers. Besides Waitto, they had Vilho and a daughter Lea. Vilho was an engineering graduate who worked for the Kodak Company in Rochester, N.Y. Waitto was a top student at G. A. H. S., a top athlete who won many honours for his school. Following graduation he joined the RCMP and served in several posts across Canada. After the end of WWII he was sent to Europe to interview people from Finland, Germany and Denmark who had made application to come to Canada. On his return here he renewed active duty with the RCMP.

Through the years, Waitto kept close contact with Amherstburg and local friends. He visited many times - a fine upstanding man who was every inch a leader.

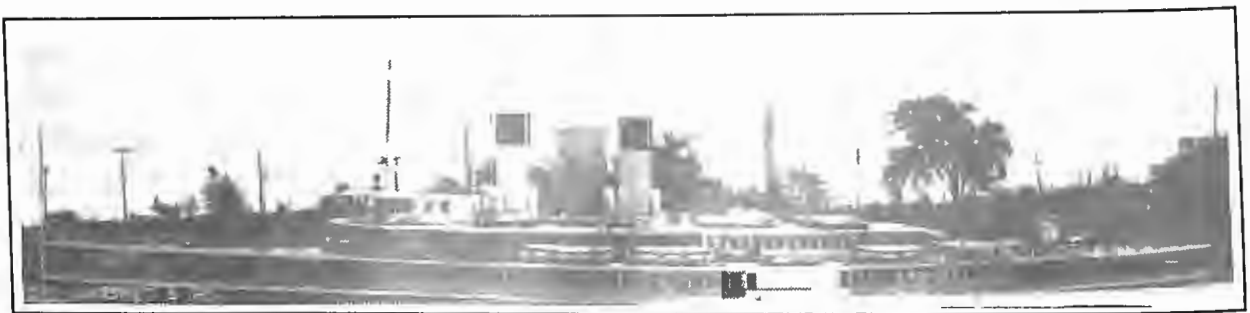
SIMRALL REFINING

An oil refinery was built and put into operation in Anderdon Township - north of the New York Central Railway track - during the thirties. It was known as the Simrall Refining Company. The firm operated for a number of months using a new process to produce the highest type of gasoline then on the market. Economic conditions and other factors entered the picture and the company didn't operate for long. The original gasoline storage tanks remained on the property and more were constructed in 1962 when the site became the marine depot for Regent Oil Company. Gasoline and fuel oil were brought to

Amherstburg in tankers, pumped to the storage tanks and drawn off into tank trucks, to be distributed over a wide area in Western Ontario.

Mr. Simrall (the oil operator) was the great-grandson of Colonel Simrall who was General Harrison's chief of staff during the time of the American invasion here. The Simrall family in the south have letters written by Colonel Simrall while he was stationed at Fort Malden.

SINKING OF THE TASHMOO



Shortly after midnight on June 18, 1936 we were awakened by the ringing of the bedside phone. It was the police calling to inform us that the passenger steamer Tashmoo was sinking at the Brunner Mond dock.

We lost little time in getting dressed and away in the car, all the while envisioning a panic-stricken crowd clawing and fighting to survive. Upon reaching the Brunner Mond bridge we saw the Tashmoo lying at the dock. Her lights were out but the band was playing. There was no apparent evidence of anything serious.

Parking at the side of the road, we walked down to the coal dock where an entirely different picture presented itself. The vessel was moored to a platform dock and a wide wooden plank had been raised between the platform and the second deck of the steamer. Assisted by members of the crew, the passengers were disembarking quietly. Some fourteen hundred young people, most of whom were feeling no pain and were unaware of the danger, milled around the dock, built bonfires and one had the impression of a very large, happy beach party. A half hour after the last passenger was ashore, the vessel settled to the bottom, leaving only the upper works above water. The quick thinking and manoeuvring of Captain Donald McAlpine and his brave crew had saved them and it was a miracle that the boiler didn't explode.

The Gene Calloway Band didn't stop playing until all danger was past. We interviewed George Moffet, manager of the band. He said that he had been in the office talking with a ship's officer at the time of impact. He said, "The

band doesn't play while the boat is going through the shallow Sugar Island channel. We went to find out what had happened and when we went below deck found water rushing in. I went up and told the band to play and keep playing regardless of what happened. They kept at it for over an hour after the lights went out."

The Tashmoo had been chartered for a Moonlight Cruise that particular evening by the Pals Club, a Hamtramck social group. She left the dock at the foot of Griswold at 9:20 p.m. for Sugar Island downriver from Grosse Isle. At 11:20 she started the trip back to Detroit and when coming out of the Sugar Island Channel struck a submerged rock which punched a hole in her hull. Water poured in faster than the pumps could handle it. Captain McAlpine ordered full speed ahead to the Amherstburg shore. About ten minutes after the initial shock had vibrated through the ship, she was moored at the Brunner Mond coal dock.

Much has been written about the Tashmoo - i.e., where she was built, some of her escapades, etc. . . . but we are concerned here with the incident mainly because of its happening in our community. While the vessel was settling in eighteen feet of water we mingled with the crowd, trying to get a cross-section of the merrymakers to comment on their near-tragic end. None seemed to realize the seriousness of the situation. Many said that they didn't know what had happened until they were on dry land. The main concern seemed to be how they would get back to Detroit. One lad said, "I'm in a terrible jam! I have to be on the job at 6 o'clock. . . and how will I ever explain to my girlfriend's old man for keeping his daughter out all night?" One of the entertainers, Mrs. Babs Drouillard, worried that she had a six-months-old baby alone at home. Her mother was to stay with the infant until 2:00 a.m., but would then leave, confident that her daughter would be home shortly.

Lloyd Brown of Amherstburg was on duty at the Brunner Mond filtration plant when he saw the Tashmoo coming into the dock. Sensing that something was wrong he told David Brown, his relief man, to look after the plant while he went out to the dock to investigate. Lloyd made fast the lines of the boat, moved the improvised gangplank to the second deck and helped the passengers off the sinking vessel.

Once they were safely ashore came the problem of getting the people back to Detroit. Captain McQueen in his tug Progresso arrived on the scene, as did the Coast Guard boats, and a conference was held aboard the tug between Captain McAlpine, C. F. Bielman, manager of the Tashmoo, and W. W. Subner, representative of the Insurance company. It was decided to have the Boblo steamer Columbia come down and pick them up. As the Columbia couldn't tie up at the Brunner Mond dock, it was necessary for the passengers to walk down to the Boblo Dock at the foot of Murray Street in Amherstburg.

During this period there was talk of war. Imagine the consternation of the residents along Sandwich and Richmond Streets when their sleep was interrupted in the wee hours of the morning by fourteen hundred boisterous folks marching down the street. They thought the enemy had invaded Amherstburg!

It wasn't until the next morning that most of the town found out what had happened. The passengers though it was a great joke and carried on with huggin' and kissin' and all sorts of antics. Going aboard the Columbia they thought it was the end of a gala occasion. The parting shout from some of the merrymakers as the Columbia pulled away from the dock was, "Alright folks . . . we're going home so you can roll up the sidewalks and put out the lights!"

The police officers on duty that fateful night cannot be given enough praise for their quiet and efficient handling of the crowd. They were Provincial Constables Mulholland and McQueen, Chief Joseph Taylor, Constable Farrow of the RCMP, Constable Harold Brush of Ojibway and S. E. M. Taylor, Collector of Customs for the Port of Amherstburg.

The Pike Salvage and Wrecking Company of Kingston got the contract to raise the vessel but failed to do so and after many weeks of work had only accomplished stripping the super-structure off the hull. McQueen Marine Limited was awarded the contract to raise the hull on a "no-cure, no-pay" basis. Work began and after many weeks the actual raising of the hull began. it was found that a lot of water was coming in through cracks and other small holes, so a wagon load of manure was brought to the scene, which was spread around the hull and sucked into the holes. It swelled and did the job. Later the actual raising began and as the hull began to come up there was evidence of cracking, so Captain McQueen sent over to the Ford Marine Division in River Rouge for a huge pump. As the pump was being lowered under his direction, Cap standing below, one of the chainfalls broke. He never blinked an eye but carefully lowered the pump into the hull and in a matter of hours up she came. It was towed to Horseshoe Bay at the north end of Bois Blanc by the tugs Progresso, Henry Stokes and Patricia McQueen. After being examined for safety it was towed to the scrapyard in Windsor.

Many local residents obtained souvenirs from the Tashmoo . . . these were sold by the Pike Company. Irving Kelly, marine reporter for Westcott Marine Reporting Agency which had an office in Amherstburg, obtained a pair of deck chairs in perfect condition. Following his death these were given to us by his son, Rev. James Kelly. Father Kelly said that it was his father's wish that the chairs should come to us. They are now in the Marsh Collection.

SLOT MACHINES

During the Depression years The Amherstburg Echo took a strong stand against the slot machines in many stores and other business places around the area. One day Ray Vigneux, owner of Chateau LaSalle who also owned these machines, came into our office and protested the rough treatment which we had given him. We replied that we had no objection to the slot machines, but we did object to them being in places where children could play them. He said, "Show me some of these machines". We took a walk around town and he saw the children playing the slot machines and remarked that he didn't have to make his money off of children. The next day he ordered all of his machines removed from the town and that was the last seen of those particular one-armed bandits.

SPEAKERS OF THE HOUSE

Three men associated with Amherstburg were at one time Speakers of the Provincial legislature. The first was Wm. D. Balfour (1851-1896), co-founder of The Amherstburg Echo. He was the Liberal member of Parliament for Essex South. Balfour was not only Speaker of the House but Provincial Secretary at the time of his death.

For some years the Rev. M. C. Davies was a resident of Amherstburg while a member of the Provincial Legislature. He also sat as Speaker of the House.

The third was William Murdoch, for many years a resident of Harrow who later moved to Laird Avenue in Amherstburg. Mr. Murdoch was a member of the Provincial Legislature for Essex South and during the period was Speaker of the House.

STOP SIGNS, AMHERSTBURG

Essex County Auto Club Protest

When stop signs were erected at the corner of Sandwich and Richmond Streets, a couple of Windsor drivers came down to Amherstburg, ignored the signs, were brought into court and fined. The Essex County Automobile Club took exception to stop signs on a Provincial Highway and fought the fines. Finally, the town asked the Minister of Highways to come to Amherstburg and see what it was all about.

When he arrived in this part of the country he was met at the train station in Windsor by members of the Automobile Association. They wine and dined

him and when they finally reached Amherstburg, he was in prime alcoholic condition.

A special meeting of the town council was held at the home of Dr. Fred Park, then Mayor of Amherstburg. Dr. Park introduced the minister, and when he got to me the official asked, "Who is that sitting in the corner?" Dr. Park answered, "John Marsh of The Amherstburg Echo". "I will not talk with a reporter present", the minister replied. Dr. Park responded by saying, "All of the meetings of the Amherstburg Council are public business and John Marsh will stay at this meeting if it is held. Mr. Minister, you arrived in Amherstburg in an alcoholic condition. You're starting to argue already. This meeting is over. Council is adjourned."

The next day the mayor got a telephone call from the minister agreeing to the position taken by the Amherstburg Council.

TECUMSEH STONE

On the grounds at Fort Malden National Historic Park is a stone that is a real gem of Canadiana.

For many years it was located at the west end of Gore Street under a chestnut tree on the property now occupied by Duffy's Tavern, property which was for many years owned by the John Fraser family, and later Captain Kenneth Fraser.

While working towards Fort Malden's development, Captain Kenneth Fraser used to meet us on the street saying he would give us the Tecumseh Stone for the museum. We chided him that we would be glad to take the stone and move it to the Fort grounds the minute that he made the statement when he was sober! One day he came along the street minus the influence, made the same statement, and within a few hours the stone was moved to its resting place on the Fort grounds.

Traditionally, this is the stone on which Chief Tecumseh stood and harangued Proctor's soldiers and Indians when the British decided in face of advancing Americans to burn Fort Malden and retreat up the Thames River and to the east. He compared the British to 'dogs with their tails tucked between their legs.'

TEMPERANCE ADVOCATES

A very strong Temperance man in Harrow used to call us at the office every other week, to bring him a bottle of liquor from Amherstburg, which we did.

One day I said, "Now that Harrow has its own liquor store, why don't you go there to buy it?" His reply was, "What would people think of me if they saw me in a liquor store?" My answer was, "Well, what do they think of me?", to which he replied, "It doesn't matter because you're a newspaper reporter."

TEXAS ROAD

Through the years we have been asked several times how Texas Road in Anderdon Township got its name. Texas Road runs from King's Highway 18 east to Walker Road.

At the northeast corner of 18 Highway and Texas Road, the corner house was once owned and occupied by Dallas Norvell, who had come to Anderdon from Grosse Isle. He was a brother of Mrs. John Mullen. Mr. Norvell was a contributor to the Detroit Free Press and wrote under the pen name of "Texas". The road was named in his honour.

Along Texas Road from 18 Highway to the 2nd Concession is now densely populated, the majority of its residents being of Italian extraction. Many of their forefathers came to Anderdon Township to work in the Amherstburg stone quarry which later was purchased from T. Bellhouse by Brunner Mond Canada Limited.

TOWN HALL AND THE COMPUTER AGE - 1984

The other week we checked in at the town offices, and saw a goodly number of cartons along the east wall of the main office. These contained the new computer hardware and software. When the proper electrical wiring is installed, the computer will go into operation. The software is ready to be used. Amherstburg is one of several Essex County municipalities to adopt the computer method of processing and storing information about all phases of municipal record keeping. This equipment will allow the town staff to provide up to the minute information on matters which, under the old method, took hours to dig out.

We cannot help but think back to the time when we were a young Echo reporter covering the town hall beat. In those days the town clerk also held the office of Justice of the Peace. The assessment and tax collection systems were the horse and buggy type of bookkeeping. Town assessors were hired each year. There was no yardstick as to values. Many times friends got a break. When his records were finally turned over to the town clerk he prepared a tax roll, which often took months to complete. You can imagine it was late in the year before tax notices were sent out. Taxes were payable in one lump sum. Naturally this method resulted in large tax arrears. It was not until many years later the tax system was changed and the instalment method of collection adopted. Great changes have occurred over the years. This latest step is one that will pay off many, many times. It should result in less and less tax arrears as town employees will be able to keep track of trends and take immediate action when an unfavourable one shows up. The town fathers were very wise in approving the purchase of this latest record keeping equipment.

TOWN PARKS - EAST AND WEST - 1983

At the end of this year, two construction programs are being carried out in our part of the old home town. Large earth-moving equipment is working outside of our window, shaping and reconstructing the south west bastion and ditch at Fort Malden. On the west town park a new comfort station is being built. This will provide an expanded facility for the hundreds of people who use this section of the town park. Many do not realize the entire town park as we know it was once the parade grounds of Fort Malden. The federal government retained ownership of this property for many years after the Fort was abandoned - until around the mid thirties when it was leased to the town for one dollar a year. Murray Clark, then M. P. of Essex South, arranged for its sale to the town for one dollar. There was only one stipulation - that it only be used for recreational purposes - otherwise it would revert back to the government.

At one time the entire park was the setting for the annual Fall Fair staged by the Amherstburg, Malden and Anderdon Agricultural Society. The livestock were tied to a cable attached to trees on the Dalhousie side of the park. The main building, such as it was, sat on Fair Board property north of the park (now site of General Amherst High School). There was a race track around the perimeter of the park and once each year local sports had an opportunity to put their money where their mouths were.

The east section was the first to be developed into a recreation area. For many years this was the home of the Amherstburg senior baseball team. Before each game its members and fans turned out, cut the grass and got the diamond in shape. Over a period of many years there was a keen rivalry between Amherstburg and Harrow nines. It was not uncommon for several thousand

fans to turn out for games. Usually after each event the players and fans joined in a little beer drinking. The local team was financed by money collected for the fans. Several boosters moved among the spectators passing the hat and more often than not enough money was collected to pay for supplies. The east town park was used for other sporting events and utilized by the Amherstburg High School for cadet training and school athletic activities.

On the other hand, the west town park didn't receive much attention. In fact the grass was only cut once or twice each season. It was not until the late Malcolm McGregor donated money for the construction of a swimming pool that it began to come into its own. Previous to that time the Amherstburg Lawn Bowling Club built a large green along Dalhousie Street. Lawn bowling became a major sport and many a hotly contested game was played under the lights. The greens were kept in near perfect shape with the aid of an overhead sprinkling system. The first of August of each year, a three-day tournament was held with hundreds of lawn bowlers coming to Amherstburg from many towns in Ontario and Michigan. The event was climaxed by a moonlight cruise and dance on one of the Detroit, Windsor and Belle Isle Ferry company boats, ending a grand and glorious weekend!

U. S. CORPS OF ENGINEERS - December, 1983

No longer will hopper type dredges be operated by the United States Corps of Army Engineers. It has been decided to have this work handled by private contractors. Recently the hopper dredge Haines was decommissioned and sent to a berth in Cleveland. A much larger hopper dredge Markham was decommissioned a while ago. Both of these dredges are well-known to local boatwatchers. They operated to sweep downriver channels and clean out River Rouge. When the last deepening of the Amherstburg Channel took place, Fred Smith of the United States Corps of Engineers in charge of this job took us out to the Markham. We spent several hours on the bridge. She was working near the Detroit River light and the vessel operated like a giant vacuum cleaner. The rocks and other material were sucked up, dumped into a large hopper and carried to the spoils area. The dredges operated day and night. The taking of the hopper dredges out of service marks the end of an era.

WADING POOL

Looking out our window this summer (July 1982) there were many young children enjoying themselves in the wading pool in the west town park.

In the early 1930s, money for the construction of this pool was given to the town by Malcolm McGregor who built the beautiful red brick residence on the

Fort Malden grounds (razed in 1982). The property on which the residence stood was earlier owned by W. S. Falls, Manager of the Molson's Bank in Amherstburg. Mr. McGregor was alarmed by the number of small youngsters who were swimming in the Detroit River. He was prompted by this thinking to contact then Mayor George H. Jones and offer to finance the pool.

Down through the years the pool has served the area well. Children learn to swim and have respect for the water at an early age. They are taught by competent instructors.

Some years ago the old pool developed an old leak and a new pool was installed by the town.

WALKER ROAD RACKET

In the early days of the automobile, when I was a young reporter on The Amherstburg Echo, there were two county constables who had a real racket going. They patrolled Walker Road from McGregor Village south to Leslie's Corners. If they caught up with an American car going over the speed limit, which in those days was 30 m.p.h., they hauled the driver into magistrate's office and held a closed session of the court. Usually the speeder was fined between twenty and fifty dollars, half of which went to the magistrate and the other half was divided between the two constables.

The boss (Arthur W. Marsh) got wind of these secret courts and sent me to investigate. When I went into the magistrate's office he immediately told me to get out. Of course, I refused to go but stayed to see what it was all about. Sure enough, an American visitor who had been speeding along at 35 m.p.h. was brought into court and given the works. After our story appeared in the paper, this racket came to a very rapid end.

WATERFRONT

A popular television show in 1954 was entitled "Waterfront" in which a well-known American actor Preston Foster played the lead as "Captain John". During the summer of that year the International Tugboat Race was creating a great deal of interest.

Captain Earl McQueen conceived the idea of inviting Preston Foster to come to Amherstburg and be on the bridge of the tug Atomic during the race. The Management Committee of Fort Malden held a public reception in front of the stone museum building to which area school children were invited to meet

and talk with Preston Foster. The gathering was a great success - thousand of "Waterfront" fans turned out to meet their idol. Mr. and Mrs. Foster were very gracious to the many children.

WATERWORKS PARK

For many years the overhead water tower on Dalhousie Street was a landmark.



In the early days Amherstburg citizens got most of their drinking water directly from the river. Householders, other than those who were fortunate enough to have a well of their own, bought their water in the summer at a cost of 25cents for two barrels and 25 cents for one barrel in the wintertime.

It was dipped from the

Detroit River and distributed about town by Eli and Peter Mero, and Arthur "Dandy" Harris. The price included fish, bugs, seaweed and anything else that happened to float in as the tanks on the two-wheeled horse drawn carts were filled at the foot of Murray and Gore Streets.

Once a place where ships were constructed for the British Navy, the old waterworks park has undergone many changes over the years. Where once men in knee breeches built ships, children in knee pants sent their toy sailing vessels out on the blue waters of the Detroit River. Following its shipbuilding days, C. W. Thomas, a well-known merchant here, built and operated a grist mill there. Farmers from all over the district brought their grain to the mill by oxen and horse-drawn carts and often on their back. Amherstburg was a central spot for the rural people and the mill by the water's edge was a meeting place as well as a hive of activity. The mill later came into the possession of Dennis Barron and associated with him in the grain business was William Borrowman. It was a busy shipping centre and continued to be the headquarters for farmers until it was bought by the Town of Amherstburg and in 1891 the waterworks tower was erected down by the river side (behind the spot where the historic Park House Museum stands today in the King's Navy Yard Park).

As mentioned previously, the town was then getting their water from the river without any kind of purification. Sewage from the City of Detroit was dumped into the river and as the population of that city increased (due mainly to the activity at the automobile plants) the sewage also increased and poisoned the water. The result was that an average of sixty or so people a year contracted typhoid fever from the drinking water.

Raw water was drawn in from the river and then pumped up to the overhead tower. Chlorine was added, but that didn't stop the annual spring typhoid epidemics. One often had to blow off the scum before taking a drink. The average death rate here was four or five a year from this disease. In March, 1912 residents were cautioned through The Amherstburg Echo to boil all drinking water. "Mrs. J. W. Gibb noticed that a tap didn't run freely and pulled a 4-inch lizard out by the tail".

The operation of the waterworks plant was discontinued around 1919 when Brunner Mond Canada Ltd. built their plant at the northern end of town. The company was not allowed to dump their sewage into the river as it was above the Amherstburg intake. To get over this hurdle they built a water purification plant on the front road and built a main to serve the town. It opened on August 5th, 1920. During the previous year while the old waterworks was closed there were 36 cases of typhoid in the area.

The abandoned tower fell into disuse and the timbers began to rot. A family of owls took possession and disturbed the slumber of surrounding neighbours; the two combined caused the town council to have the tower razed in 1933. While it was being torn down a decision was made to provide a swimming wharf at the site. A breakwall was built and a dock erected. The waterworks again became a favourite meeting place. The park was a pleasant spot with well-kept lawns and rock-bordered driveways. The brick from the old tower was piled away in the hope that council would see its way clear to build a museum on the property.

Some years later the old residence was razed as well and the old swimmin' hole was no longer used. In the 1970s the Amherstburg Rotary Club, having obtained the historic Park House at the northwest corner of Dalhousie and Gore, moved the ancient building to the old waterworks park site. This was the beginning of a new life for that section of the riverfront and by 1977 steps were underway to transform the property into what is today the beautiful King's Navy Yard Park, which was opened in 1980. We don't know what became of the brick which was saved, but today the old waterworks park is once again lively with people strolling the walks and boat watching in the beautiful King's Navy Yard Park. . .complete with the long envisioned museum.

On the river west of the water plant was the town dock where water shipments came in and were stored in a warehouse on the wharf. Later, the

warehouse was used by William Menzies, who ran a boat livery. During this period, a number of tugs worked out of Amherstburg. Many engaged in salvage and wrecking jobs. Here was stationed the well-known (at that time) Great Lakes Wrecking Company tug "Abner C. Harding", skippered by Captain Thomas Hagen. It was one of the most powerful tugs along the Great Lakes. It did not have a conventional steering wheel. This function was performed by a steering stick which made it possible for the tug to roll from side to side during ice breaking. While laying at the dock, many a youngster was taught to swim by the crew of the Harding. Willing teenagers were thrown off the tug into the deep water. If they showed any sign of panic, a member of the crew was quickly into the water to guide them to safety.

While browsing through the town's old by-law books in 1941, we discovered that in 1919 a by-law was signed setting aside the Waterworks building and lot as a Community House and Park "for community purposes and a place of recreation FOREVER for parents and relatives of deceased soldiers and for returned soldiers and for all good citizens and for all persons, groups of persons or societies following laudable pursuits." The proposed Community House and Park was to be under the control and management of the corporation through a board of commissioners known as the Community Park Commissioners.

When the Brunner Mond water and filtration plant opened in 1920, the cost of water to the town was nine cents per thousand gallons and this rate remained in effect for many years. The town received purified water and typhoid epidemics ceased.

The cost of water played an important role in Amherstburg politics and many a local politician won a seat on council by campaigning for lower water rates. This cheap water disappeared a number of years ago when Allied Chemical offered to sell the plant to the town for a small sum. This was not satisfactory and resulted in the construction of the Provincial Water Plant on the front road in Anderdon north of Allied Chemical. The cost of water has since risen and risen. Today Amherstburg's wholesale water cost is one of the highest in Ontario.

EUGENE WHELAN - July, 1984

In his position as federal Minister of Agriculture, the Honourable Eugene Whelan was an authority on international food supply. He took an active part in this field as president of the World Food Council. He can further this interest

in his recent appointment as Ambassador and permanent representative of Canada to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization in Rome. Many other countries including the United States have ambassadors to this organization. Canada has played an important part in the organization and this is recognized in the recent appointment of Mr. Whelan to the Rome post. We are sure he will make a major contribution to the organization.

In his long term as federal Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Whelan headed his ministry in such an efficient manner he received praise from the Auditor General for his track record. He has earned the reputation as being the hardest worker on the Hill. In spite of his heavy schedule, Gene always found time to look after the interests of his electors. In addition to his Ottawa ministerial offices, he maintained an efficient riding office.

But back to the beginning - - As a young resident of Anderdon Township, Gene ran and was elected a member of a rural school board. Stepping up the ladder, he ran and was elected to the Anderdon Township council. His next step was the reeveship, and eventually the wardenship of Essex County. While in this position, he was chosen as the Essex-Windsor Federal Liberal candidate. He did not remain a back-bencher for long before he was named federal Minister of Agriculture. In this position, he became one of the best known and hardest workers in the Cabinet. When the Liberals were thrown out by the Joe Clark government, he lost the Agriculture post but soon took over again when the short-lived Tory government was thrown out of office.

Gene deserves a vote of thanks from the people of the tri-community for obtaining federal grants for many projects. Naming but a few, construction of the King's Navy Yard Park and the purchase by Parks Canada of the Callam House to become part of the Navy Yard Park development. He carefully looked after the interests of farmers. In a nutshell, Gene has a good track record. In closing, during his time as head of Agriculture Canada, he brought many foreign dignitaries to Amherstburg, among whom were agriculture ministers from Russia, China, Brazil and other countries.

WINTER ON THE RIVER

There was a time in the early 1900s when many of the winter activities centred on the river. This was the period before pollution and construction of dykes in the Amherstburg Channel that changed the whole behaviour of the current in the channel. In those days river ice remained for several winter months. Usually the first deep freeze came in December and colder weather held on for several months. This was before the floating ice in the early winter created windrows and other barriers to cross over on the ice to Bois Blanc, Grosse Ile and other islands in the lower Detroit River.

For many miles there would be long stretches of clear smooth ice, much to the delight of the youngsters in town. Many of them built large sails held by one or more skaters. If there was a good wind they would sail up or down the river at high speeds. It was not unusual to cross over to Grosse Ile or go upstream to River Canard and inland to the bridge at St. Joseph's Church. At that time there was no such thing as a town constructed hockey rink on the west town park. The hockey enthusiasts would pick a choice spot near the Amherstburg shore and use branches to mark the hockey area and stones to mark goal posts. Many a hot match was played between Amherstburg and several other county teams. If a snowfall came along it was up to the hockey players to clean the ice before a game could be played.

Another popular sport in those far off days was horse racing on the ice. Before races the horses were shod with special shoes. Needless to say a lot of money changed hands after each race.

In those days many local butchers harvested their summer supply of ice from the river late in January or early February. Each would check the ice on the river off the Amherstburg shore, near present Fort Malden Park. When the ice reached the proper thickness the harvest would begin. Large saws were used to cut out blocks of ice. These were hauled out of the river and loaded onto sturdy farm wagons equipped with runners. The loaded vehicles were horse drawn. It was great fun for young skaters to latch onto the sides of the wagons and ride along to the point where they left the river on their way to the ice houses.

Major ice harvesting was carried out by John Hamilton, who had a large storage house on Gore Street, and Billy Stokes, whose storage building was located on Bathurst, east of Sandwich (then Apsley) Street. The ice cakes were carefully packed in sawdust or straw. In the hot weather the ice was delivered about town. Even in those days there was some pollution in the river. It was not uncommon to have many cases of typhoid fever, caused by the pollution in the delivered ice.

There are many stories of the ice-covered river. It was not uncommon for Boblo workmen to walk across the ice on their daily jobs. For many years the Hackett family looked after the lighthouse at the southern end of the Island. We recall a story told to us by Captain Charles Hackett. One day when crossing over, he came to a point where the current had caused a section to become weak and an air hole developed. Captain Charlie fell through and the current carried him under the ice downstream. Suddenly, another air hole developed and he was able to pull himself out of the water to safety.

WOMEN IN SHORTS AND THE PARISH PRIEST

The editor of the weekly newspaper runs into a number of problems which must be dealt with tactfully. If one is not firm, readers are soon running the newspaper rather than the editor.

A case in point - a few years ago the senior priest at St. John the Baptist Roman Catholic Church in Amherstburg preached a sermon about young women appearing in shorts on the town streets and he put a ban on this practice. The following week The Amherstburg Echo received a fine letter about the problem, written by a prominent Catholic woman of Amherstburg who took exception to the edict issued by the priest. The ink on The Echo hardly had time to dry before he stormed into the office and demanded from us the name of the woman who wrote the letter. He threatened all sorts of things that would happen to the paper if we did not disclose the source.

Of course, we didn't bow to his demands and asked him, "Do you disclose information that you receive in the confessional?" He replied with a short "No". We retorted that we too had this privilege and would not divulge private information. The priest thought awhile and then he smiled. "I congratulate you", he said, "on taking such a firm stand and now I realize I did not have the right to ask for the information."

In the ensuing years this fine man became one of our best friends.

WOOD DOCKS IN AMHERSTBURG

Before the advent of coal as the chief fuel for steam tugs and other vessels operating on the Great Lakes, there were at Amherstburg and several other points along the Detroit River, fuel docks known as "wood docks". Wood - the finest oak, maple, birch, ash, all were sold to boats plying their way in these waters. These docks have long since passed out of existence, replaced at Amherstburg by coal docks where tugs and freighters called in for a supply of coal.

Theodore J. Park, father of Dr. Jim Park, owned and operated one of the largest docks here on what was later the Mullen property. Here a thriving business was carried on. Tugs, both large and small, took on their fuel there. In this connection it might be mentioned that most of the freighting on the lakes was done by tugs towing barges laden with goods.

Other docks north of the Park property were those owned by Messrs. Angus Keville, Ouellette and Norvell. At Gordon there was quite a famous dock owned by T. B. White. At this point as well as several others along the route to

Sandwich, it was convenient for the light draught vessels to come into dock. The greatest volume of business at these docks was done in the decade between 1855 and 1865. By the seventies coal was becoming a popular fuel and the wood business gradually dwindled away.

In the years that wood docks flourished, most of the dense forest which at one time covered this county was cut down. In those days lumbermen bought the timber on a place and proceeded to market it. Expert axemen cut down the trees and the wood was cut into four foot lengths, piled in cords and later hauled on sleighs to the wood yards. A famous wood yard in Amherstburg was situated next to the old Echo office on Ramsay Street. Here the wood was piled and left during the winter - then in spring and summer it was moved to the docks and sold to vessel operators. It was a laborious process to get the wood from the bush to the boat - all manual labour and hard work. One of the fine features of the old system of fuelling boats was that a great number of men were employed annually as wood cutters.

One of the most prominent docks on the Lake Erie shore was the Colchester dock built in 1867 by Alexander Hackett. Besides doing a thriving business in wood this dock came to be one of the most important shipping centres in the county.

WRIGHT FAMILY

Jim and Isobel Wright were the children of the Rev. and Mrs. Harry Wright. Both received their secondary education in the Amherstburg High School where they were top students. Jim was an honour graduate of the University of Toronto and later Osgoode Hall. As a young man he joined the legal department of the Canadian Pacific Railway. His knowledge and ability were recognized by continued flight up the ladder.

His sister Isobel graduated in medicine from the University of Toronto. After graduation she became one of Canada's leading pediatricians and had a prosperous practice in Montreal. She gave this up to become a medical missionary and served in Africa and India. One of her accomplishments was the opening of a medical school in Africa. Isobel returned to Canada and continued her practice but time after time returned to Africa and India.

Rev. Harry A. Wright (1870-1956) came to Amherstburg in October, 1913, succeeding Rev. A. B. Farney as rector of Christ (Anglican) Church on Ramsay Street and Trinity Anglican Church in Anderdon, where he remained for 32 years. Born in Chesley, he was the son of Rev. F. A. Wright.