

Please
take
one!

Reflections

Newsletter of the Marsh Historical Collection
Amherstburg, Ontario

Please
take
one!

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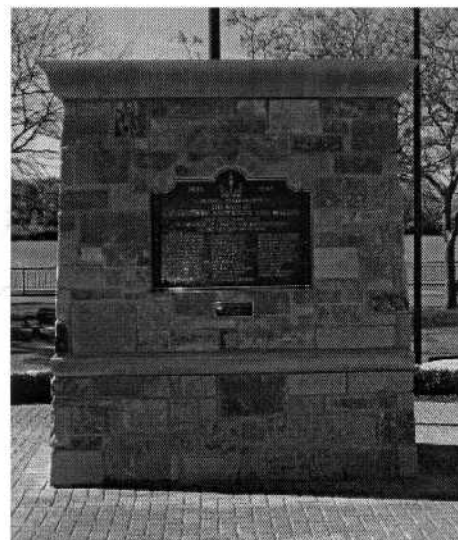
Lest We Forget

In 1981 the Town of Amherstburg created a unique way to recognize the local men who gave their lives in the First and Second World Wars and the Korean Conflict - they began to name new streets after the men on our cenotaph. Names were used in random order, and only four do not yet appear on an Amherstburg map. How many of you live on one of these streets and had no idea how it got its name?

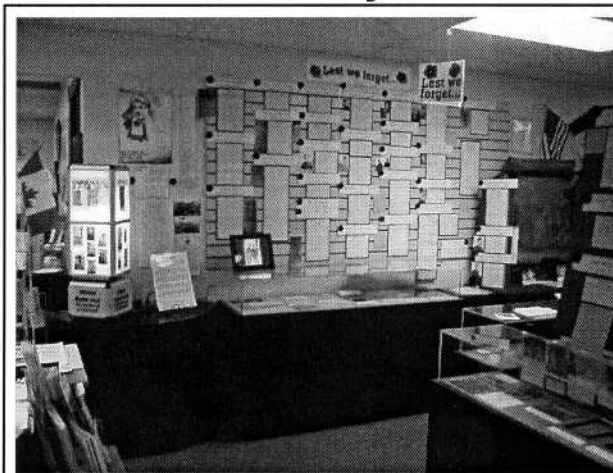
Adams, Charles P. 1908-42
Allen, Ellis W. 1910-42
Amlin, Edsal 1919-45
Bastien, Ovide 1918-44
Bratt, Donald 1914-44
Brown, D.L. George 1922-43
Brown, Ernest David 1896-1918
Brush, Gordon R. 1922-44
Eggleton, Cleveland John 1918-42
Forhan, Wilfred 1898-1942
Fox, Orville L. 1893-1917
Fox, Russell 1893-1917
Fryer, Robert I. 1894-1916
Gibb, Marvin J. 1914-44
Girard, James 1919-44
Girard, Robert F. 1933-53
Hainer, Lawrence 1916-45
Hart, W. Ray 1924-44
Heaton, Albert Kencil 1917-44
Higgins, Frank 1922-43
Hilton, Garnet 1925-45
Jones, George Hayward 1920-44
Lavers, W.H. 1919-1942
Martin, Raymond 1924-43
McLellan, Eugene 1923-44
McLellan, Ross 1919-43
Meloche, Stanley 1894-1917
Pettypiece, William J. 1902-44
Renaud, Ivan 1922-44
Renaud, Leo A.J. 1924-44
Reynolds, Arthur Mac 1919-1943
Reynolds, Douglas 1923-44
Reynolds, Hugh G. 1921-1943
Shaw, M. Crimmins 1923-1943
Sullivan, Desmond 1921-1942
Thomas, Albert 1890-1915
Thomas, John R. 1921-44
Thrasher, John W. 1920-43
Tofflemire, Roswell 1919-44

Welsh, Charles 1918-43
White, James 1916-44
Wigle, Roy 1920-42
Williams, Arthur F. 1915-42
Wilson, Harold -1943

A free pamphlet on the origins of street names in Amherstburg is available at the Marsh Collection.



Remembrance Day exhibit



More information on Amherstburg's Honour Roll; local women who served in World Wars I and II; and war efforts on the homefront can be found in our annual Remembrance Day exhibit, on display from late October through November.

What's inside...

Growing Up in the 'Burg.....	pg. 2-3
Yesterday's News.....	pg. 4
Bricks 'n' Beams - Kolfage/Hadley Block.....	pg. 5
Ancestral Lines.....	pg. 6
Recent Donations.....	pg. 7
Then & Now - Kolfage/Hadley Block.....	pg. 8

Growing Up in the 'Burg

Taking a Flyer

About fifty years ago two popular mail-order offices existed in Amherstburg: Simpson Sears and Eaton's of Canada, both located on Dalhousie Street, in the present locations of Our Place and Caldwell's Grant, respectively. My mom worked part-time for Eaton's and later full-time for Simpson Sears. When I was old enough to run a paper route, I peddled 110 issues of the *Amherstburg Echo* from one end of town to the other in all kinds of weather every Thursday for a profit of 2 cents per issue. The *Windsor Star* carriers did the same thing six days a week for a tidier sum, but that was a tougher haul than I was willing to put up with. The bag of *Echoes* weighed more than I did and the high centre of gravity pulled me down more than once on ice, gravel, mud and dog droppings. The money was good enough for me at first. Then I began to realize what having money in your pocket could do and I became interested in making more.

Simpson's and Eaton's periodically had flyers that needed to be hand-delivered to the homes in town. These were ad papers of maybe 2 or 3 full sheets, a little smaller than the *Echo* in size. Mom brought this to my attention and I immediately thought that at 1 cent per unit profit, I could buy a lot of plastic race cars and airplane models and that nifty Zippo lighter at Beckett's Confectionery. These ad notices came in maybe once a week in bundles of 500 - a lot of peddling, so I made a partnership with a neighbourhood buddy to make deliveries. At least we didn't have to stop and knock on doors.

This work began in late fall. Soon Christmas was around the corner and the bundles were heavier and arriving more frequently, two thousand at a time. Even though we sat and wrap/folded them before starting out to make it easier to throw them on the doorsteps, we were falling behind in deliveries, sometimes finishing late at night on a two-day double delivery run, only to

have another thousand waiting for us. The money was good and Mr. Beckett had introduced us to something called the "layaway plan." I had a number of payments staring at me for various items he was holding. The Zippo was already paid for and in my pocket.

It was a cold, drizzly night and we were exhausted when we spied a large semi-circular sheet of steel in a field. It would make a great bonfire pit. Thanks to the Zippo we got rid of a load. We thought the still-burning sheets that rose fifty feet in the air were kind of neat. We did this a number of times before someone warned us to stop. The order offices were wondering why ad responses were dropping off.

Another bad night and more bundles waiting. We knew of an old vacant house with a wrap-around porch on our route. Late at night we stuffed our excess loads under the porch...there was room for more.

Finally the order offices had too many complaints from people not being aware of current ad sales because of non-delivery of the flyers, and we were fired.

Several years later, my dad decided to buy a rental property - a quaint old house with a wrap-around porch that needed fixing up. I was told to be there to help. When I arrived, my knees weakened and my stomach lurched. You can't imagine the look on dear old mom's face when she discovered what was holding up the porch. I was smacked with a soggy bundle of old flyers and ordered to clean out every damp, mouldy one of them.

- by an anonymous former paper boy who believes in poetic justice

Where to find us

The Marsh Collection is located at 235 Dalhousie Street on the upper floor.

We are open **Tuesday to Friday from 10am to 4pm.**

235A Dalhousie Street
Amherstburg ON • N9V 1W6
(519) 736-9191
www.marshcollection.org
e-mail:
research@marshcollection.org

If you enjoy Reflections, please let us know! We welcome your comments. Reflections is also available by e-mail - please contact us for details.

What is the Marsh Collection?

The Marsh Historical Collection is a local history/genealogy centre located in the heart of Amherstburg. Researchers, genealogists and history buffs utilize our information files, books, photographs, maps, genealogy files and other items. Even if you have no specific research purpose, come in to see our exhibits on Detroit River history and other aspects of Amherstburg's rich heritage. We also produce and sell a variety of local history publications and notecards.

The Marsh Collection takes its name from its founders, the Marsh family, who owned and operated the *Amherstburg Echo* for over 80 years.

Quiz

Can you name 12 things in Amherstburg that are named after Fort Malden?

Answers on page 6.

Growing Up in the 'Burg

The Building in the Centre of Town

by Antoinette Pecaski

In the mid-1950s my family joined the flow of immigrants moving across the Atlantic to begin a new life. In the railway car on the way from Halifax to Windsor I asked my parents, "Is this Canada?"

"No, no," they said. "This is the baggage car." I guess when you're four years old it's hard to conceptualize a country.

We settled in Amherstburg and after a few short years the town library became my best friend. Television was new back then (gee, did I just admit to that?) so books taught me to learn the language, to know the culture and, more importantly, to think and dream.

One day I heaved my pile of books onto the librarian's desk. She was a kind but reticent lady swathed in shiny taffeta black and with a brace on her leg (these were post-polio days). "Antoinette," she said, pointing to one particular title, Sexuality and the Criminal Mind, "this book is not suitable for children." I dutifully put it back, but even now, a half-century later, I still wonder about that book (you know, forbidden fruit and all that).

Another time I hurried home clutching How to Hypnotize Yourself under my arm. I shut my bedroom door, turned off the light and lay on the bed and, as per the book's instructions, commanded my arm to touch my nose. The inert arm slowly responded in a spasmodic rhythm and when it was nearly at my nose I panicked, flung open my eyes, turned on the light and tossed the sinister book into the dark depths of my closet.

Today another generation has discovered the joys of the town library. My little granddaughter got her first library card when she was two years old. Whenever we drove by she would say in her emerging diction, "There's

the liberry." The library is her best friend too.

I believe there's a reason the beautiful stone structure is in the centre of town, for it has been central to the lives of many generations. Today in my (hem, hem) senior years (gee, did I just admit to that?) the library is still very much a part of my life. And occasionally when I visit I think about that little immigrant girl whose spirit still hovers happily somewhere in the building's ethereal depths.

Be Careful What You Ask For

by Pat Warren

End of summer already and Mom wanted me to go back to school and enter Grade 5 with a fresh haircut. She sent me downtown to see Dad at his dental office on Richmond Street to get some money to pay for it. Dad was busy so I had to wait, and that was good because he had some interesting magazines. You could learn a lot just from the pictures. One of the best ones was *National Geographic*. The guys even knew which months had the best photographs. *Life* magazine was good, too, with very colourful photos. Dad always kept these adult magazines at his office so it was not very often we got to see them.

The nurse had me come into the back room where Dad had his lab for making dentures and doing gold and other inlays and fillings. There was a technician there named Rill Wigle who helped Dad. Some of the equipment involved vulcanizing the dentures and that could be very dangerous. On this day all that equipment was put in its proper place, neat and tidy, to be used another time.

Mom had phoned so Dad knew why I was there. He gave me a quarter and told me to go over to Murray Street and get a haircut from Nick the Barber. I held the quarter in my hand as I sat to wait my turn. There were things to read with pictures, mostly about boats and guns and tractors. When it was my turn, Nick knew my name but called me "Doc" like lots of people did. That was often what they called my dad, too. "So what kind of haircut does Doc want today?" he said and I said, "A pompadour!" - meaning a brush cut, because I had heard a guy with a great brush cut say that word in such a way that I thought it meant a brush cut like his. Nick frowned and asked again, and again I said, "Pompadour. My dad wants me to get a pompadour."

It turned out to be very complicated, including having my hair washed and waxed and looking a little weird but standing straight up like a sort of brush cut. However, my quarter was not enough and I went to Dad's office a block away and told him he owed Nick the Barber more money. I don't know which made Dad laugh more, my asking for a pompadour or the pompadour itself. Nick said it was his first one for a boy.

Congratulations

to **Courtney Lassaline**, the 2010 recipient of the **Arthur W. Marsh Award**.

This award is given annually to a student graduating from General Amherst High School and entering the University of Windsor's History programme. We wish Courtney much success as she begins her post-secondary education.

Yesterday's News

from the archives of the *Amherstburg Echo*

1880

October - Amherstburg was shaken up when 300 lbs. of Hercules powder blew up on Dunbar's drill at the Lime-Kiln Crossing opposite the C.S.R. depot. Only one man was injured.

- One of the most disastrous storms in several years raged through the whole lakes region. Loss of life and several wrecked vessels were reported.

1890

November - J. Ross Robertson, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Canada, is visiting Thistle Lodge, No. 34, A.F. & A.M.

1900

November - Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier is visiting Amherstburg.

1910

September - Several homes in town are quarantined with scarlet fever.

November - Delos R. Davis, senior member of the Amherstburg bar, has been crowned with the title of King's Counsel.

1920

September - Due to increased traffic between Detroit and Windsor, it is proposed to build an international bridge spanning the Detroit River.

October - Four bowling alleys arrived for the Brunner Mond recreation building on Richmond Street. They will be installed as soon as the building is ready.

- Four new houses under construction on Brunner Ave. are already spoken for.

1930

September - Two thousand cases of tomatoes a day are being put up at the Amherstburg canning factory.

October - A branch of the Essex County Sportsmen's Assn. has been formed in Amherstburg.

November - Contracts will soon be let for dredging improvements to the 18-

year-old Livingstone Channel.

- The new Detroit-Windsor Tunnel officially opened Nov. 1st.

- Canadians will celebrate Thanksgiving Day on Monday, November 10th this year.

1940

September - The Amherstburg Fire Brigade is holding their 1st annual Field Days at the town park.

- Ray "Nitchy" Sawyer, lifeguard at the Amherstburg Municipal Bathing Beach, was honoured by the Rotary Club.

1950

September - Plans are nearly complete for a new 8-room school at River Canard, to replace the present 2-room structure. It will be built east of St. Joseph's Church and will be called St. Joseph's Parochial School.

October - Dedication of the new St. John the Baptist Intermediate School took place. There are 230 students in Gr. 7 through 10.

November - Duby's opened a new modern store on Ramsay St., dealing mainly in appliances and furniture.

1960

September - Construction of the new Kinsmen Scout Hall, corner Victoria and Simcoe, is being rushed by the contractor, Peter Jaber.

- The Amherstburg Recreation Commission has suggested that part of the Bell Farm on Victoria St. be put aside for a recreation area.

October - Amherstburg Rotarians will hold their annual Hallowe'en party for children in the town park.

1970

September - Two secondary schools in Essex County are operating out of one building for the first time. Both General Amherst and Sandwich Secondary students are using the General Amherst High School this

year.

- Footings have been poured for the new 26-unit senior citizen complex on the west side of Victoria St., south of Simcoe.

October - Optometrist Dr. Frank Fox opened his practice on Grand Marais West, Windsor.

- The first blast was set at the McGregor quarry of Allied Chemical.

- The Tri-Community Figure Skating Club held its first meeting.

- The site is being readied for eight pre-fab units at the Fort Malden Motel.

November - The horse-watering trough that stood for many years in front of the town hall has been donated to the Gibson Gallery.

- The cornerstone was laid for the new Western Secondary School.

1980

September - An agreement has been reached for the Town of Amherstburg to annex part of Anderdon Township.

- The Business Improvement Area Association is asking council to remove parking meters downtown.

- Sod has been turned for a 73-unit senior citizens' building just north of Bellevue.

- The grand opening of the King's Navy Yard Park took place September 28th.

October - Sod was turned for the North American Black Historical Museum on October 25th.

- The same day, the H. Murray Smith Centennial Park Track & Field Complex was officially opened.

November - ERCA has purchased property at the foot of Murray St. (northwest corner Dalhousie St.) and will lease it to the town for development and maintenance.

- A large marina is being constructed at the foot of Gore St. for Duffy's Tavern & Motor Inn.

- Work is progressing on a \$3 million addition to the Fort Malden Mall, including a movie cinema.

Bricks 'n' Beams

Kolfage/Hadley Block

Current renovations on Murray Street have prompted interest in the two-storey brick block on the southwest corner of Murray and Ramsay Streets. Known at various times as the Kolfage Block, Fraser Block and Hadley Hall, the building still retains many of its original architectural features (see *"Then & Now"* on page 8).

John Gerhard Kolfage (1819-1890), a German-born hardware and dry goods merchant, purchased Lot 17, west side Ramsay Street, in 1853. This property extends along the south side of Murray Street halfway to Dalhousie and contained a series of commercial spaces which were rented to various merchants. These frame buildings, along with similar ones on the north side of the street, were destroyed in a fire in November of 1875. Kolfage lost a total of five buildings, only one of which was insured. His own hardware, boot and shoe store was located in a building rented from the Menzies estate at the southeast corner of Murray and Dalhousie (now 273 Dalhousie) which was only slightly damaged by the fire.

Even as the extensive property damage was being tallied, the *Amherstburg Echo* reported that "in the spring Mr. Kolfage will likely build a two-storey brick block on Murray Street...[J.H.] Leggatt will also probably put up some buildings in the spring." (See the story on the Leggatt Block, northwest corner Murray and Ramsay, which appeared in the Winter 2009-10 issue of *Reflections*.)

It took a year longer than anticipated, but the *Echo* of February 23, 1877 reported that "Mr. John G. Kolfage has expressed his intention of erecting a block of three brick stores on Murray Street the coming spring. They will be two storeys high and the one on the corner of Ramsay Street will be 20 feet wide by between 30 and 40 deep and will be rented to suitable tenants." (The new block actually contained five

stores.) In June of that year, Kolfage purchased 140,000 bricks from the Bratt brickyard in Malden and in July he "gave the contract for the brick work of his new block to Mr. John Bergin of Detroit." It was reported at that time that "Mr. Kolfage intends occupying three of the stores himself, one each for hardware, groceries and boots and shoes. The second storey over three of the stores will be built for a public hall and will be 58 by 40 feet, and will have a ceiling 12 feet high, with an extra three feet of an arch." The following month, galvanized iron cornices for the upper windows were installed.

The hall was ready by mid-November, with the first concert being given by the Cecilian Glee Club of Windsor. "Twelve dozen chairs have been purchased especially for reserved seats for this hall, and benches with backs, gradually rising above each other towards the rear of the hall, will furnish seating accommodation for 250 more. Elegant new curtains have been made for the stage which extends across the entire width of the west end of the hall, and will accommodate a large number of performers." The stores were soon ready as well, with the first occupants being (from Ramsay St. westward): Kolfage, hardware; Kolfage, grocery; Kolfage, boots and shoes; S.J. Johnson, grocery/confectionery; and Fred Maloney, boots and shoes.

Early in 1878 the stores and hall in the Kolfage Block were illuminated by the new gas machine Kolfage had installed, "and the effect was really splendid." The annual hop of the Amherstburg Cornet Band on January 17th was "the first time the people of Amherstburg had an opportunity of dancing by gaslight in their own town."

After Kolfage's death in 1890 the building passed into the ownership of



Close-up of detail above window.
Marsh Collection photo

Perry Leighton, then in 1901 to lumber merchant Simon Fraser, who made "extensive improvements" in the hall. "A new stairway, 8 feet wide, is being put in from the Ramsay Street side. Last week 400 opera chairs arrived from Chatham and will be placed as soon as a new maple floor can be laid. The interior of the hall will be renovated, the stage and the stage fittings renewed and the dressing rooms so placed as to be more convenient."

Upon Fraser's death four years later, ownership of the brick block passed to his daughter Elizabeth Fraser Hadley, the building becoming known as "Hadley Hall." In 1909-10 Mrs. Hadley had the windows lowered, "plate glass windows and transoms [being] installed...which will greatly improve the place." She retained ownership until her death in 1949, her heirs selling to Max Rubenstein, who had operated a clothing store there since the early 1930s and continued to do so until his retirement in 1978.

The Kolfage/Hadley Block has housed many businesses in its 133-year existence, including Dominion Store, T. Eaton mail order office, William Finlay's café and poolroom, Chan Quan's restaurant, Amherst Dairy and long-time occupant Hamilton Insurance. It is currently the home of the Willow Cottage Shop and Moe's Smokehouse.

Ancestral Lines

William and Mary Ann (Murphy) Kelly

It was a very busy summer for the folks at the Marsh Historical Collection. We're constantly cataloguing artifacts and photographs, planning new Amherstburg history-related exhibits, answering email inquiries and assisting visitors with their research on a variety of topics. The percentage of genealogists has increased dramatically during this past couple of months. They came from Australia, California, Colorado, Michigan, Ontario, Wisconsin and parts unknown. Our records show that in just the past 3 months we have assisted genealogists in researching the following family names, some in great detail:

Béchar, Belcours, Beneteau, Bondy, Brown, Brush, Bungey, Caza, Clarke, Drouillard, Dubay, Fagan, Gatfield, Geauvreau, Girty, Grondin, Huffman, Kemp, Knapp, Little, Maçon, Mahon, Mayville, McIntosh, Meloche, Mickle, Morency, Morrow, Odette, Renaud, Ribble, Richard, Rocheleau, Rumble, Sauvé, Splitlog, Tobin,

Warren, Warrow, Webber, White, Wilcox and Wilson.

As we are all aware, the local (Amherstburg) weeklies have been for a few years owned and operated by comparative newcomers to the district who have minimal knowledge of this community's history or its residents. So when a member of an old and well-established family dies, unless it is brought to the attention of the local newspapers or an obituary sent in, no mention is made of the death. This happened again recently in the passing on July 30th of Fr. Thomas I. Kelly CSSR. Fr. Tom was born in Amherstburg on May 10, 1928, the second son of Irving T. and Monica (Scott) Kelly. He was predeceased by his older brother, Fr. James Kelly, CSB, who died at the Basilian infirmary in Toronto in 1996, and his sister Eleanor Frabotta in 1993. Surviving are his sister Eileen (Norm) Purdie, and his brother, Fr. Abbott Timothy Kelly OSCO, Rome, Italy.

The Kelly family has a long and well-established history in this community. William Kelly, son of Thaddeus Patrick Kelly and Bridget O'Connor, married Mary Ann Murphy, daughter of Thomas Murphy and Margaret Carmady. The bride and groom, both natives of Ireland, were married in 1853 at St. John the Baptist Church, Amherstburg. They settled in Anderdon Township and raised twelve children - ten sons (!) and two daughters. The Marsh Collection files contain a lot of data about this family and their descendants. We'll attempt to document some of it in a future *Reflections* newsletter.

**The Marsh Collection is pleased to announce
its new exhibit**

The Marsh Family Chroniclers of Amherstburg 1897-1981

**highlighting the lives, careers and accomplishments of
Arthur, Bessie, John and Helen Marsh**

On display now

Answers

to Quiz on page 2

Fort Malden...

- 1...National Historic Site of Canada
- 2...Animal Hospital
- 3...branch of the Royal Canadian Legion
- 4...Pontiac
- 5...Guild of Arts & Crafts
- 6...Army Cadet Corps
- 7...Horticultural Society
- 8...chapter, Order of the Eastern Star
- 9...Motel
- 10...Drive
- 11...Road
- 12...Volunteer Association

Gone but not forgotten...

- 13...Mall
- 14...Building Centre
- 15...Drug Mart
- 16...chapter, Imperial Order of Daughters of the Empire

Bonus: The "Fort Malden March," composed for the Amherstburg Community Band in the late 1960s

*Let us know if we've missed any!
research@marshcollection.org*

New Additions to Our Collection

Books

The Marsh Collection has an extensive reference library containing books on local history, Ontario history, a large Great Lakes/marine heritage section, Black history and other topics. Although material cannot be signed out, books can be perused in our reading room any time during open hours.

The Marsh Collection recently purchased two new publications:

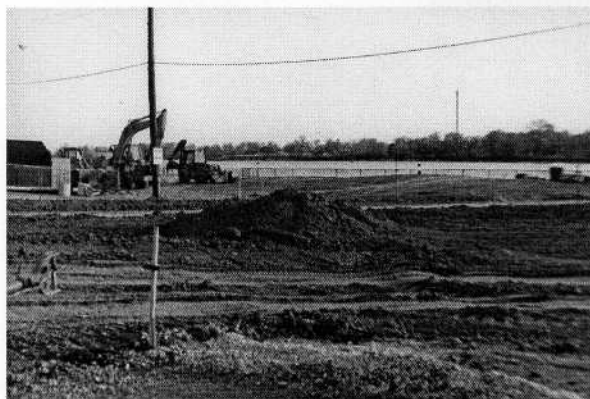
- **Emancipation Day: Celebrating Freedom in Canada** by Natasha Henry
(Dundurn Press, 2010, softcover, 282 pp., ISBN 978-1-55488-717-0)
- **Grist for the Mill** by Herb Colling
(Town of LaSalle, 2010, softcover, 79 pp.)

Recent Donations

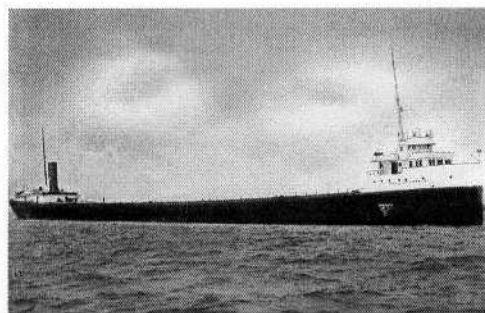
The Marsh Collection accepts donations of artifacts, books, photographs and other items which are relevant to our mandate. We received several donations this summer, including the photographs below. Ironically, two separate donations provided us with a series of photos of the construction of Phase I of the Navy Yard Park in 1979, as well as the construction of Phase II ten years later.



**Construction of Phase I of
King's Navy Yard Park, 1979.**
Marsh Collection P4490.9



**Construction of Phase II of
King's Navy Yard Park, 1989.**
Marsh Collection PA62



Steamer Matthew Andrews, circa 1910.
Marsh Collection P4482



**Capt. J. Earl and Patricia McQueen,
circa 1950.**
Marsh Collection P4484

The mandate of the Marsh Collection is to collect, preserve and encourage research into the heritage of Amherstburg and the lower Detroit River district.

Then & Now

Kolfage/Hadley Block

southwest corner Murray and Ramsay Streets



Our good friend Serendipity visited again recently in the person of Mr. David Jack of Chicago, who brought us this *circa 1929* photo of Finlay's Café and Billiard Parlour, just as we were working on the article about the Kolfage/Hadley Block for "Bricks 'n' Beams."

Left to right: David Jack (*on tricycle*), unidentified man, William Finlay, two unidentified women, Susan Jack, children Lorraine and Jimmy Finlay.

Marsh Collection P4493

Below: Photo taken September, 2010

Marsh Collection photo

