

Please
take
one!

Reflections

Newsletter of the Marsh Historical Collection
Amherstburg, Ontario

Please
take
one!

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Bell Telephone operators, 30th anniversary of Ruth Brown as manager, 1956.

Marsh Collection P3542

Seated (left to right): Rosemary Faucher, Marilyn Beaudoin, Dorothy Bruner, Isabel Kennelly, Rosemary Butts, Ruth Brown, Lorna Fox, Frances Rose, Cecilia Faucher, Rita? Pattenden

Standing: Margaret Roadhouse, Marceline Bratt, ? Hadash, Toni Maitre, Ruth Beaudoin, Rosemary Baltzer, Leona Brush, Virginia Fox, Mary Denunzio, unidentified, Pauline King, Noreen Shaw, Betty (Brown) Ransome.

Think What You Owe the "Telephone Girl"

The telephone girl sits in her chair and
listens to voices from everywhere.
She hears all the gossip, she hears all the
news,
She knows who is happy and who has the
blues;
She knows all our sorrows, she knows all
our joys,
She know every girl who is chasing the
boys;
She knows all our troubles, she knows all
our strife,
She knows every man who is mean to his
wife;
She knows every time we are out with the
boys,
She knows the excuses each fellow
employs;
She knows every woman that has a dark
past,
She knows every man who's inclined to be
fast;
In fact, there's a secret 'neath each saucy
curl
Of that quiet, demure-looking "Telephone
Girl".

If the Telephone Girl would tell all she
knows
It would turn half our friends into
bitterest foes;
She'd start a small wind that would soon
be a gale
And engulf us in trouble and land us in
jail.
She would let go a story which, gaining in
force
Would cause half our wives to sue for
divorce.
She would get all the churches mixed up
in a fight

And turn all our days into sorrowing nights.
In fact, she would keep all the world in a
stew
If she told a tenth part of things that she
knew.
Now, doesn't it set your head in a whirl
When you think what you owe the
"Telephone Girl".

from *Amherstburg Echo* June 4, 1922

See related story on page 7.

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Growing Up in the 'Burg

by "River Rat"

One bright summer day, back a few years, two neighbour boys decided to go exploring on the river. Now, we had rowed across to Bob-Lo and back, but our problem was we wanted to venture farther than our arms could row the old boat we had. It just so happened that one of the boys' dads had an old Neptune or Waterwitch outboard that was available, but it was really a cantankerous thing to get started.

We had seen his dad a couple of times using a battery hooked up to the magneto on the motor. Apparently the magneto was weak and the battery gave it the necessary boost to fire the motor up. This took place while the motor was hung in a 45-gallon drum filled with water in the backyard.

Well, we figured if his dad could do it, so could we, and our adventure began. Now, the boat had been readied beforehand with all the "gear" - oars, lifejackets, gas can etc. With that done, we readied the motor, hung it in the water drum in the backyard, hooked up the battery, wound the rope around the flywheel and pulled. Just a couple of sputters and nothing, but there was hope - "It sputtered!" We tried again and had success this time, as the old girl roared to life. A small adjustment to the carburetor and we were ready. Now we lifted the motor out of the drum while it was running and ran like the wind from the backyard, through the front yard, across the highway and down to the beach to the boat. We secured it to the transom, climbed in and struck out for Horseshoe Bay, Sugar Island, Grosse Isle and who knows where - I don't know how far we went that day.

My memory fails me here because I can't remember if we thought to take that battery with us, just in case the motor quit, but we still had our oars and strong backs.

There are more adventures to tell, but that is another story.

~~~~~

## 3 HP is Not Enough

by anonymous

Dad and I built our very own boat. It was plywood, 10 feet long, 3 feet wide and around 15 inches deep. It was, to me, better than any cruise ship and it sure beat scrounging around looking to borrow a boat to go fishing. It did, though, have one problem. If you wanted to go anywhere you had to row and, as you might guess, the best fishing spots were west of Bob-Lo. What I really wanted was a motor. Nothing big, mind you, just something to replace the oars.

After a great deal of shopping, I finally settled on a new 3 HP Evinrude (which I still have). It was available at Windsor Outboard at the corner of Wyandotte and McDougall for the sum of \$183. With monies saved from my paper route, together with funds from setting pins at the various bowling alleys in Amherstburg, I scraped together this unheard-of sum of money. (As an aside, pin setting was paying 5 cents a game for 5-pin and 7 cents a game for 10-pin. It took a lot of work to get it all together.)

The big day came with the marriage of the motor to the boat. The thrill of captaining my own power boat was absolutely the greatest. With practice I found that by setting the throttle to "fast" (at my age, there was no "slow") and sitting in the middle of the boat, I could steer it by gently shifting my weight from side to side. I had to be the fastest thing on the Detroit River.

One day during the summer, the AMA Sportsmen's Club had a day of activities on the water for the young guys in town. One of these activities was a boat race. You were matched by horsepower and as I was the only one with a 3 HP, which was the smallest, I figured the prize was mine and mine alone. Now, the powers-that-be didn't quite agree with my philosophy, so they decided that I

## 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](http://www.marshcollection.org)

e-mail:

[research@marshcollection.org](mailto: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.

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would run against a 5 HP motor and to be fair they would give me a half-lap lead, with two laps being the length of the race.

We took our positions on the course in front of Duffy's and with the sound of a starter pistol, we were off! I quickly pushed my throttle to as fast as it would

*continued on page 6*

# Yesterday's News

from the archives of the *Amherstburg Echo*

**1881**

*September* - P. Barron & Sons have had to shut down their grist mill in Malden, there being no water available due to dry weather.

*October* - The telephone line from Windsor to Texas Landing has been extended to Amherstburg and a business office opened in C. Wright's bookstore, Murray Street.

*November* - George Pettypiece is building a cement block fence around his "hard scrabble" house, [northeast] corner Gore and Bathurst.

**1891**

*September* - Three lives were lost when the steam barge *E.H. Jenks* collided with the steam barge *G.W. Morley* in the Detroit River, just north of the Lime-Kiln Crossing.

*October* - About \$3500 has been pledged to the building of the new Methodist Church, which will likely be at the corner of Richmond and Bathurst Streets.

*November* - Voters have passed a by-law authorizing a \$3000 debenture for the town to put in an electric light plant; however, there is an issue about whether the proper voters' lists were used.

**1901**

*October* - 2400 pleasure-seekers on Bois Blanc Island Saturday evening did not arrive home until Sunday morning, due to forest fire smoke and fog settling over the Detroit River and tying up traffic.

*November* - The first annual reception and ball given by the Union Tugmen, Shipmasters' Association and Drill & Dredgemen will be held in Fraser Hall, Murray Street.

**1911**

*September* - Trustees of S.S. #11, Anderdon, are tendering for a new frame school, 24 x 36 feet, as the old building has been condemned for some

time. [This school is now a residence, clad with brick, on the west side of Concession 5 North, south of County Road 10.]

*October* - Andrew Carnegie has approved a \$10,000 grant for the erection of a library building in Amherstburg.

- St. Alban's Church, Malden, has been re-opened after extensive renovations.

*November* - Fr. Loiselle bought Alfred Knapp's farm across the river from the church (River Canard) for \$1200, to be used for a cemetery.

**1921**

*October* - Ground has been broken for the new high school.

*November* - The old wooden bathhouse on Bois Blanc is being replaced by a new one, 155 x 24 feet with lockers and marble floors on a concrete foundation.

**1931**

*September* - Amherstburg has won the Essex-Kent County Baseball Championship.

- Monday October 12th has been chosen for Thanksgiving this year, the first time it will be separate from Armistice Day.

*November* - 500 men are at work on the new highway between Amherstburg and Harrow.

**1941**

*October* - High winds lowered the Detroit River so it was dry almost to the channel bank.

- Gasoline is now 37 cents a gallon.

*November* - Instead of medals, War Savings Certificates were given to General Amherst students at Commencement Exercises.

**1951**

*October* - Stores in Amherstburg and Harrow were closed to allow people to see Princess Elizabeth and Prince

Philip in Windsor.

*November* - A meeting was held for the purpose of forming an Amherstburg chapter of the Goodfellows.

**1961**

*September* - A restaurant called the Sandwich Platter is opening in the former Fox grocery building, Sandwich Street North.

*October* - Plans are afoot for the formation of a Community Credit Union in Amherstburg.

- A regulation hockey rink will be constructed on the town park this winter.

- A new township hall is being constructed for Malden at the corner of Hwy. 18 [now County Rd. 20] and Concession 6.

*November* - The walls are now going up on the new two-room school, northeast corner 6th Concession and Townline, Anderdon.

**1971**

*September* - Anderdon Twp. has increased its police force from 5 to 6.

*October* - Church & Dwight finally has a sign in front of its Amherstburg plant after being here for 35 years.

- Construction has begun on the first house in the new Venetian Gardens subdivision.

*November* - The new Western Secondary School will officially open November 14th.

- The new Water Treatment Plant will officially open November 16th.

**1981**

*September* - The North American Black Historical Museum will officially open September 20th.

- Fort Malden Branch 157 has officially opened its new Legion Hall addition [the former Bob-Lo Tavern].

*October* - Mike and Lillian Duffy have announced the opening of the Navy Yard Restaurant and Preservation Hall gift shop.



# Shipping the Detroit

## 100 Years Ago (Part 3)

One hundred years ago, work on the Livingstone Channel was in full swing and Amherstburg was booming. An analysis of the 1911 census shows that 31% of employed people in town had a marine-related occupation; following is a list of their names and jobs. (\* denotes an American citizen.)

continued from Summer 2011

Sanford, Alvin, engineer, marine  
Sauresote?\*, Leo, drillman, river  
Scott, John\*, drillman on river  
Sherrol, Walter, driller, drillboat  
Shewfelt, William\*, tug engineer  
Shrein?, George, drillman on river  
Sinasc, James, drillman, marine  
Smith, Archibald, drillman, river  
Smith, Clarence E., mariner, American boat

Smith, Ethel, bookkeeper, Buffalo Dredging Co.  
Smith, John T., civil engineer, U.S. govt.  
Smith, Mortimer, mariner, American boat  
Snyder, Charles\*, civil engineer, marine  
Squiers, Harry J., drillman, marine  
Squires, Marshal J., drillman, marine  
Stage, Robert, engineer on steamboat  
Stewart, James D., engineer, marine  
Sullivan, John B., engineer, marine  
Sutts, William, drillman on river  
Taylor, George, dredgeman, dredge on river  
Taylor, Stewart, U.S. survey  
Taylor, William John, dredgeman, river  
Thrasher, Devere, U.S. govt. survey  
Tobin, Edward, mariner  
Tobin, Gordon, mariner  
Tobin, Richard, mariner

Tobin, William, mariner  
Triolet, Oscar, drillman, marine  
Trombley, Raymond, driller on river  
Trotter, Frederick, mariner, tugboat  
Turton, Albert, drillman on river  
Ulch, George Henry, deckhand, steamboat  
Urbain?\*, Peter, dredgeman on dredge  
Vigneux, Clement, drillman on river  
Warrow, Walter W.\*, drillman, marine  
Westaway, Albert A., engineer, marine  
Westaway, Beverly J., drillman, marine  
White, Mark, drillman, river  
Wilson, Albert, cook on lakes  
Wilson, Cornelius, mariner on lakes  
Wilson, Norman, mariner on lakes  
Wilson, Simon, mariner on lakes  
Wilson, William, mariner on lakes  
Wright, Allen, civil engineer, Detroit River improvements

## Serendipity Strikes Again



by Kent Wigle

This summer I was at Harold Crowder's, watching his new house being built, and his dad Don

Crowder was also there. I was talking to his dad and he mentioned he had worked for McQueen Marine during the war. So I told him that Cliff Wigle, my dad, had also worked for

McQueen Marine. Then we talked about the tugs which were made for the American Navy. They were built across from the Windsor Raceway. Don then said he went on the trips to deliver the tugs to New York - they left Windsor in December and went down the Mississippi River and around Florida and up to New York. I said that my dad had gone on those trips, too. Then I proceeded to tell him that I had a couple of photos of the tugs and that I would show them to him. Later on that day I stopped and showed him the pictures and he said, "Do you know who that is standing on the tug? That's me." Then I said, "What are the chances of finding the person that was in the picture on the tug?" I often wondered who the person was and now I know, and he is probably the only person from those trips who is still living.

# Bricks 'n' Beams

## 107/109 Gore Street

This pretty property on the southwest corner of Gore and Bathurst Streets was designated by the Town of Amherstburg as historically significant in 1979. Although modified greatly a century ago, the origins of the house may date to as early as 1828.

The Crown Patent for Lot 25, west side Bathurst Street, was granted in 1833 to François Aulin, who had obtained the property 30 years before. The 1827 Assessment for Amherstburg and Malden lists Aulin as living in a house of timber "hewed on 2 sides, under 2 storeys". However, the following year his residence is described as "framed, brick or stone, 2 storeys". In 1840 Aulin is described as an "innkeeper".

The property was conveyed to Amherstburg merchant John G. Kolfage in 1842 for £200 and was

occupied by tenants for the next half-century. The 1861 Assessment shows tenants William S. Jones and Jean Baptiste Maiville, who are listed in the 1861 Census, along with their families, as sharing a 2-storey frame house.

In 1897, butcher John W. Stokes acquired the residence and "commenced making extensive improvements...Scarcely anything old will be left but the frame..." The *Echo* of October 15, 1897, contained a detailed description of the "handsome residence of John W. Stokes, with its spacious grounds...The building is painted in lemon buff and relieved with white trimmings." Renovations included a "spacious reception hall," wainscoting and ceilings "richly finished in a treatment of delicate tinted Jacobean design."

The drawing room ran the full depth of the house with a "rich arch in the centre." The mirrored, antique oak mantel was ceiling-height and had a carved shelf. The parlour, on the opposite side of the entrance hall, featured a mantel "finished in Queen Anne style."

The second floor contained three bedrooms, each with its own closet, and a bathroom "fitted with the latest style of tank closet, porcelain bath tub, marble-topped wash stand etc." The *Echo* stated that the "entire improvement is a credit to the owner and a valuable embellishment to our town."

The Stokes estate sold the property in 1917 to Joseph and Mary Mahon. Lloyd Brown purchased it in 1957.

See "Then & Now" on page 8.

## Current Exhibit



Showcasing the 42 buildings designated by the Town of Amherstburg as historically significant.

Free admission  
Open Tuesday to Friday  
10am to 4pm



# Ancestral Lines

## The Connection (Part Two)

### The Foxes of Amherstburg

by Eleanor Warren

Our Spring issue contained a story about local lumberman Joe McCracken and his connection to the Fox family in Amherstburg. It was called "The Connection (Part One)," suggesting there would be a Part Two in the Summer issue. Well! "Somebody" forgot about Part Two, so here goes.

Part One ended with the marriage of Joe McCracken's daughter Isabelle to William Fox, an Amherstburg legend who became well-known for his operation of the Windsor-Amherstburg stagecoach as well as his father's livery barn on Richmond Street. "Bill" Fox (1871-1944) was born at Oxley, the fourth of at least seven children born to Albert and Amelia (Beaudoin) Fox. The others were: Esrias, Chloe, Edward F., Theodore "Pete", Albert Jr. and Louis J. Fox.

Around 1880 Albert Fox moved his family to Amherstburg, where he conducted the old Wilcox Hotel for three years before purchasing the livery which he managed until his death in 1915. Amelia remained at the family home on Richmond Street until her demise two years later.

The first ancestors of the Fox family in Essex County were Philip and Catherine (Latimer) Fuchs (which was anglicized to Fox), who hailed from Pennsylvania and raised ten children in Essex County. Their son **Michael "Big Mike" Fox** became the father of **Jonas** who was the father of **Albert** who was the father of our subject, **William Fox**.

In 1891 at the McCracken home in Mersea Township, William Fox married Isabelle, the daughter of Joe and Ellen (Vanidour) McCracken. They immediately set up housekeeping in Amherstburg, where they spent the rest of their lives. William and Isabelle Fox raised a large family, as follows: Russell J. (1893-1917), Killed in Action



Family of Albert and Amelia Fox, circa 1898.

Front (left to right): Ed, Albert Sr., Louis, Amelia, Chloe  
Back: Theodore "Pete", Esrias, Bill, Albert Jr.

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in World War I; Blanche (1894-1977); Grace (1896-1978), married Claire Hannah; Colin Edward (1898-1959), married Hazel Coyle; Ruth (1900-1992), married Andrew Belcoure; Ada (1904-1932), married Angus

Bernard; Louis (1906-1906); Joseph (1909-1989), married Frances Primeau; Margaret (1912-2001), married Charles Mager. Many of their descendants are still members of the Amherstburg community today.

## Growing Up in the 'Burg

### 3 HP Is Not Enough

*continued from page 2*

go and moved to my spot in the middle of the boat. Man, I was flying! At the end of the first lap I was still in front, but my competitor was slowly moving up. About three-quarters of the way through the second lap, with the finish line in sight, lo and behold, I got passed and we hit the finish line with me a boat length behind. So much for me being the fastest item on the river.

I wasn't too disappointed, as the motor still beat the heck out of rowing. There was a down side, though. I still had to keep working to buy gas. I don't remember what happened to the boat but, as I said earlier, I still have the motor. It doesn't run anymore but that's OK. I don't either, and every time I see it the memories flood back.



# Bell Telephone in Amherstburg 1881-1956

## A Timeline

**1881** - Bell Telephone purchased agency of Montreal Telegraph Company which was in Thomas Board's bookstore in the Kolfage Block on Murray Street. Colborne Wright bought the bookstore, ran a stationery store there and became the first local Bell Telephone manager.

**1885** - Bell office moved from the Kolfage Block to the Wilkinson building, northeast corner of Richmond and Dalhousie (where CIBC stands today). Company now renting 'instruments' for \$25 per year or \$20 for three years.

**1888** - Miss Minnie Brett joined Colborne Wright as 'operator'.

**1899** - Minnie Brett was appointed manager on June 1st.

**1915** - Wilkinson Block sold to

Imperial Bank. Bell Telephone entered into a contract with Echo Printing Co. for space on the second floor of their new building, west side Dalhousie Street.

**1926** - Minnie Brett retired after 38 years' continuous service; Miss Ruth Brown was appointed manager.

**1930** - Amherstburg and Windsor were linked by a new long-distance circuit.

**1930** - Photo in *Echo* of Bell Telephone operators includes Pauline Manson, Jenny Autin, Myrtle Gibb, Marie Gibb, Iva Jubenville and Ruth Brown, manager.

**1947** - Bell purchased property, east side Sandwich Street, to erect a building to house a dial system for the district.

**1949** - Ground was broken for new building. First dial phone installed in residence of W. W. Nattress, mayor of Amherstburg.

**1951** - Amherstburg's magneto system was replaced by modern dial telephone equipment in the new exchange building. On March 21<sup>st</sup> the Amherstburg telephone system was converted to dial service and a new exchange, Redwood 6, came into being.

**1951** - Photo in *Echo* of operators at old switchboard includes Betty Brown, Kay Matyshak, Lois Bolton, Cecilia Faucher, Ruth Beaudoin, Frances Rose and Jeanette Dufour.

**1956** - Ruth (Brown) Hamel retired after 30 years as manager.

## St. Rose High School

### Class of '56 Reunion



Class of '56 Reunion attendees, August 27, 2011.

Names not in order: Pete & Annette Simone, Ron & Kathy Raume, Wess McCauley, Verna & Pat Warren, Anne Pascoe, Bev & Roger Bezaire, Pat Marshall, Pat & Larry Bondy, Bob & Barb Mayville, Barb & John Meunier, Bill Gibb, Marilyn & Tom Loxton, Sue Licheron, Sheila Meunier, Lou Ann Sinasac, Kathy & Gene Balon, Arlene Irwin, John & Joan Fryer.

Submitted by Bev Bezaire

The St. Rose class of 1956 celebrated 55 years of friendship with a party at Duffy's on August 27th. Fond memories were shared of the fun times we enjoyed together. A photo of old St. Rose shows quite a difference from the schools of today, but still more amazing is the success we managed to accomplish regardless of our meagre supplies. Sister John spearheaded most of the studies and events. She was an inspiration to all of us.



St. Rose High School, circa 1952

Photo courtesy St. John the Baptist  
Historical Committee

# Then & Now

## 107/109 Gore Street

See "Bricks 'n' Beams", page 5



**"Residence of John W. Stokes"**

from *Amherstburg: A Souvenir*, a booklet published in 1898

*Marsh Collection 007.1*

**Photo below taken May, 2011**

*Marsh Collection photo*

