

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

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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.**

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*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  
 Sinasac, 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  
 Squires, 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.

