

Please
take
one!

Reflections

Newsletter of the Marsh Historical Collection
Amherstburg, Ontario

Please
take
one!

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"Those Were the Days"Something New about Something Old

by Eleanor Warren

Back in the seventies (1970s, that is) I was working on a cataloguing project at Fort Malden. Every Friday afternoon without fail, John Marsh would pop in to see what was happening at "the museum" and he almost always found something to write about in the following week's *Amherstburg Echo*. One particular day in 1975 he questioned what I was doing with all those old photos spread out on a table. This led to an explanation of cataloguing and I recall saying something like how the *Echo* readers would enjoy seeing an old photo each week, to which John replied, "You get them to me and I'll publish them."

We knew that the historic Park House Museum, another of JAM's favourite haunts, also had some old photos in their collection, so we began a search of what we felt would be appropriate and interesting to folks reading the *Echo*. On November 12, 1975 - over 35 years ago! - the *Amherstburg Echo* published the very first "Those Were the Days" photo, an 1890s landscape shot of the original Simon Fraser residence and lumber yard on the Malden riverfront. Folks were asked to assist in identification of some of the pictures. That's how we found that the original 14-room Fraser house was razed in the 1960s and a new brick residence was built there for Al Roberts.



Simon Fraser's residence and lumber yard, circa 1890s, located on the Malden riverfront, approximately where Bastien Street is now.

Courtesy Fort Malden National Historic Site of Canada

Old photos began coming in from all over the district - buildings, schools and classes, marine men and vessels, families, the list goes on and it continues today. After a photo was used in the *Echo* the original was returned to its owner, but today the Marsh Collection has indexed copies of all of them - 35 years of area history documented! They may

be used for research but stringent copyright laws prevent them from being copied or used without the owner's permission.

John Marsh was one of the folks instrumental in getting both Fort Malden and the Park House off the ground. He would be tickled to see that his beloved *Amherstburg Echo* is still publishing historic photos today.

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Growing Up in the 'Burg

I Thought I Found a Career

by anonymous

Let me tell you about my foray into trapping. In winter on my frequent skating travels to Iler's Creek (located just south of what is now Pickering Drive) I came upon many a muskrat house - those mounds of cattails you see here and there throughout the marsh. The muskrat families live in them, or sometimes in burrows on the bank of the creek when there is no more ice.

In spring, along these banks I would sometimes see poles about five or six feet long sticking up in the air at the entrance to the burrows. Investigation on my part showed that these were called "tally poles" and they marked the spot where someone had attached a trap to catch a muskrat. I also found out that despite the name "muskrat" (or for those of you with more delicate ears, "marsh rabbit"), they were good to eat and, over and above that, a good pelt was worth money. I was hooked. The only thing missing was traps. To my pleasant surprise I learned they could be ordered through the Eaton's catalogue. I checked my treasury and found that all I could afford was one trap. I went for it. What the heck - it was a start.

I rushed down to the Eaton's store (located at the corner of Dalhousie and Murray, the present site of Caldwell's Grant), placed my order and sat back to await its arrival. I don't think time ever moved so slowly as it did while I was waiting for that single trap. If I remember correctly, I was at Eaton's on a daily basis checking to see if my parcel had arrived. When it did get here, I think the staff were happier than me.

With trap in hand, I was now ready. I found the straightest stick I could get my hands on and off I went to the creek, looking for a suitable burrow. It wasn't long before I found one. With a great deal of difficulty I set my trap, almost losing my fingers in the process, and went home with visions of returning to find it full of muskrats. When I did return later that day, the trap was just as empty as when I left. This scenario continued for the rest of the week. I began to feel there were no muskrats at all. Finally, after a week of no luck, I returned one morning to see something in my trap. Lo and behold, it contained the most

beautiful muskrat I had ever seen. (Keep in mind that up until that moment I don't think I had ever seen a muskrat.)

I took it home to perform the job of skinning it and preparing for a feast of the beast. I had never skinned anything before so I wasn't too sure how to go about it. I tried every knife in the house but nothing worked. That skin had to be tougher than my boots. Then it dawned on me - Dad's straight razor would do the trick! As he was at work, I couldn't ask permission but in my excitement I was sure he wouldn't mind. I started with the now unpleasant task and by the time I got the skin off it was almost in shreds and Dad's razor looked like a saw. As for Dad's reaction when he found his razor, I can't use the words here that he did.

After all this work the muskrat no longer looked like anything anyone in their right mind would eat, so it was relegated to a freshly-dug grave in our garden. As for the pelt, I thought that maybe there was a chance for salvation. I turned it inside out and nailed it to a board, as I had heard you did this to dry it out. I put it on the floor in the back of my closet, as I figured this would be great place out of the light for the drying process. Well, to make a long story short, it took a little under two weeks for my mother to discover it. Her nose led her to the exact spot where I had left it. She confronted me with the by now stinking fur ball and she had more than a few loud choice words of wisdom for me, and the pelt joined its owner in the garden.

So ended my days as a trapper.

by Capt. John Burck

OK, I'll try a story. About the sea, Detroit River, life in the 'Burg in the '50s - the teenage years.

As a kid I always knew what I wanted to be: "a Naval Officer." Simple as that. Our family had no marine or fishing connection until my older cousin Dave joined the Navy. Yes, sir. There he was, on the sleek-looking Tribal Class destroyer *Athabaskan* and did two tours in Korean waters. Aboard the smaller destroyer *Sioux* he went to the Queen's Coronation in England. Good stuff. Our English teacher Jack Metcalfe was skipper of a minesweeper during the war and we'd

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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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.

get out of some boring parts of his subject if we could get him going on some Navy war stories.

Then there was Boy Scouts. Gordon Frye was our Scoutmaster and had been a Gunner's Mate in the R.C.N. in WW II. More stories. The best ones were at one annual camp on Point Pelee. A classmate's dad, Bill Wright, came along on this one. He had been a Chief P.O. in the engine room. We often sat around the campfires listening to sea stories and scratching the poison ivy we invariably caught. One night's tales were particularly exciting. Gord's frigate, the H.M.C.S. *Annan*, had forced a U-boat to the surface and had a close-quarters gun battle with it. It was hot and heavy, but "we won!" Yeah, right. A heck of a good story, but being a cynical teenage boy I took it with a "dose" of salt. Later in Sea Cadets I won a

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Yesterday's News

from the archives of the *Amherstburg Echo*

1881

March - Wm. Horsman is removing the frame building between his building, NE corner Dalhousie and Murray, and the brick block, and is erecting a 2-storey brick building, the upper storey to be used for hotel purposes.

May - The dangerous shoals in the east channel at the Lime-Kiln Crossing are being excavated. The west channel is unsafe for vessels drawing more than 13 feet.

1891

March - A fire in the town hall has caused a great deal of damage.

- Francis Laramie and Darius Wigle plan to manufacture brick and tile on the Laramie farm, 4th of Malden.

April - Lincoln Lodge has rented the hall in the Webber Block for a lodge room.

May - The contract to build the Amherstburg Waterworks has been awarded to James Wilderspin.

1901

March - The Pittsburg Coal Company is rebuilding its docks between Murray and Richmond Sts.

April - Former Anderdon residents Ed and John Biddle have been arrested in Pittsburg in connection with two murders.

May - The Amherstburg Electric Light, Heat & Power Co. will build an electric light plant on the property behind the post office.

1911

March - J.H.C. Leggatt has sold his Ramsay Street office to F.H.A. Davis [now #254 Ramsay].

May - Charles McLean is superintending the construction of the new R.C. school at the corner of Brock and Gore Sts. [St. Anthony School].

- Capt. T.B. Balfour has been promoted to the command of the First Hussars, whose HQ will be moved from Kingsville to Amherstburg.

- The new public school has been completed by Williamson & Co.

1921

March - James Carl Brandie has been appointed Postmaster.

- The first Amherstburg Businessmen's Association has been organized to promote the interests of the old town.

- Dr. E. Hutchinson will be joining the Brunner Mond staff as assistant to Dr. Fred Park.

- Norman Pouget has begun construction of his ice cream parlour on Sandwich Street beside the Liberty Theatre.

- A committee has been appointed to choose a plan for the proposed new high school.

April - The Imperial Bank has opened in their new building, NE corner Dalhousie and Richmond.

May - The Amherstburg Baseball Club asked the Town to assume half the cost of improvement to the town park, about \$300 - the Town has given them \$100.

1931

March - Water levels in the river are unusually low and trouble for shipping is expected.

April - Municipal garbage collection will begin in Amherstburg on May 1st.

May - Over 500 fans watched the Amherstburg baseball team win the opening game against Kingsville.

1941

April - Capt. J.E. McQueen will purchase from the Town the Wigle Mill property and Pulford property facing Dalhousie St.

- Due to border regulations, the Bob-Lo ferry will run from Amherstburg on only three "Canadian Days" this summer.

May - Capt. McQueen has sold the tug *Progresso* to the International Paper Co. of Toronto.

1951

March - The Legion has opened a new lounge room on the second floor of their clubhouse.

- The old telephone system will be changed to dial operation on March 21st.

- The Dept. of Indian Affairs will assist the Anderdon Women's Institute with improvements to the Wyandotte Cemetery.

April - Work on the new 8-room school at River Canard [St. Joseph] has begun.

- The Amherstburg Volunteer Firemen's Association has agreed to take over operation of the ambulance donated to the Town by the Lions Club.

May - The *Atomic* has won the 2nd Annual International Tugboat Race, repeating last

year's victory.

1961

March - The C.N. Telegraph office in Amherstburg will close at the end of March.

April - Fire destroyed the north elevator building of the Harrow Farmers Co-op in Amherstburg.

- Bellevue Veterans' Home is for sale by the Crown.

May - A 5-room addition to St. Joseph School will be started soon.

1971

March - The Town and School Board have reached an agreement regarding use of the Town Park.

- A figure-skating club is being formed at the new AMA Arena.

April - The new Allied Chemical McGregor quarry is now in full operation.

- Houses are being built in the Flynn Subdivision [Pickering St.].

May - Door-to-door mail service is now a reality in Amherstburg, Anderdon and Malden.

- Malcolm Shaw has presented the Gibson Gallery with the old watering trough once located in front of the old town hall.

- Jack Jones has sparked a plan to form a Calvert of Canada Retirees club.

- Negotiations are underway for the Town to purchase the former Amherst Fuel riverfront property.

- St. Rose High School has been razed.

- St. Mary's Academy in Windsor is closing.

1981

March - The former Esso station, SE corner Richmond and Bathurst, is being demolished and a Bank of Nova Scotia will be built there.

- The Garrison Cinema in Fort Malden Mall will open this month with "Stir Crazy".

April - The Legion has purchased the Bob-Lo Tavern and will add it to their clubhouse.

- Good progress is being made on the 74-unit Ukrainian Village, Dalhousie St. South.

- Council has approved the Tri-Community Boat Club's plan to renovate the boat ramp at the foot of Gore St.

May - Fort Malden Golden Age Club has acquired a mini-bus to transport senior citizens in Amherstburg.

- A large addition to Evangelical Baptist Church has been completed.

Shipping the Detroit

100 Years Ago (Part One)

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.)

Adonis, William, cook on steamer
 Allen, Silas, blacksmith on ship
 Allen, William T., dredgeman
 Alexander, Philip H., mariner
 Amelle, Leo W., clerk on lake tug
 Anderson, John*, mariner, U.S. Govt. light service
 Auffret, Francis, mariner on lakes
 Auffret, John F., fireman, marine
 Autin, Stephen, drillman on river
 Bailey, Charles D., drillman, marine
 Barron, Alfred, carpenter on tugs
 Bartlet, Carleton*, civil engineer, U.S. Govt.
 Belcours, Edward, mariner on lakes
 Belcours, James, drillman on river
 Belcours, Joseph, mariner on lakes
 Belcours, Henry, drillman on river
 Belcours, John L., drillman on river
 Belcours, Orval H., drillman on river
 Bellecours, Augustus, drillman, river
 Bellecours, Louis, mariner, master on American tug
 Bernard, Frank, mariner on steamboat
 Bernard, John, mariner master
 Bernard, Joseph, drillman on river
 Bertrand, Everett, drillman, river
 Bertrand, Felix, carpenter, Sullivan [Dredging Co.]
 Bertrand, Gurvin, drillman, river
 Bertrand, John, drillman on river
 Bertrand, Lorne, mariner on river
 Bertrand, Roy, drillman on river
 Bertrand, Walter James, drillman on river
 Bertrand, Walter, drillman on river
 Bezaire, Adolphus, mariner
 Bezaire, Melville, mariner
 Blair, William*, mariner

Bonnett, Alexander, drillman, river
 Borland, Angus*, mariner, engineer
 Boufford, Henry, dredgeman on dredge
 Boufford, Richard, drillman on river
 Boufford, Thomas, dredgeman, marine
 Boulanger, Joseph Jr., mariner
 Bourdineau, Charles, drillman, marine
 Boxall, Norman, mariner on lakes
 Brantford, James, cook on lake boat
 Brault, Benjamin*, mariner
 Brooker, Albert, mariner
 Brooker, Alexander, drillman, marine
 Brooker, Ernest, mariner
 Brooker, Frederick J., drillman, marine
 Brooker, Thomas, drillman, marine
 Burns, Edward, mariner
 Bush, William H., mariner
 Cabana, Joseph, drillman, marine
 Callam, Alexander, mariner
 Carpenter, Elmer, drillman, river
 Chance, William, engineer, dredge
 Christie, Alex, mariner on lakes
 Christie, William, drillman on river
 Clifford, Charles, drillman on river
 Colborne, Gordon, Cdn. Govt. employee attending lights on river
 Colton, Frank*, mariner
 Conway, Francis, drillman on river
 Cook, Henry, mariner
 Cook, Henry E., captain on tug
 Cook, James, fireman on tug
 Cook, Reuben G., mariner
 Cook, William, engineer, marine
 Cornell, William, sailor
 Cote, Alphonse, engineer, marine
 Courtney, Willis, drillman on river
 Cowan, Lorne, engineer, marine
 Cox, William, dredgeman on dredge
 Coyle, Herbert, dredgeman, marine
 Coyle, John A., drillman, marine
 Craig, Herbert E., dredgeman, marine
 Crosby, William B.*, dredgeman, marine
 Cullen, John, U.S. survey on river
 Cullen, Patrick, drillman on river

Davis, Franklin*, drillman on river
 Davis, Justin J.*, dredgeman, marine
 Dease, George, drillman/dynamiter, U.S.
 Delisle, John W., drillman, marine
 Deneau, Henry, fireman on drillboat
 Deneau, Nelson, drillman, river
 Deneau, Paul, steward, marine
 Deslippe, Ernest, driller on river
 Deslippe, Norman, driller on river
 Dixon, C.Y.*, civil engineer, U.S. Govt.
 Dornan, Edward J., drillman, marine
 Doty, John M., engineer on river
 Dube, Dennis, dredgeman on dredge
 Dube, Henry Robert, dredgeman on dredge
 Duff, Alexander H., drillman on river
 Dunbar, Frederick E.*, contractor, member of Dunbar & Sullivan
 Edwards, Frederick, drillman on river
 Elgin?, Charles, drillman, marine
 Ferriss, Gordon, steward, dredge
 Fortier, Gordon, steward, dredge
 Fortier, Charles, foreman on drillboat
 Fortier, Richard, diver, marine
 Fowler, Cyrus J., sailor
 Fowler, James E., drillman, marine
 Fox, Albert J., drillman, marine
 Fox, Albert W., oiler, marine
 Fox, Esrias, drillman, marine
 Fox, John, drillman on river
 Fox, Louis J., drillman, marine
 Fox, Orval L., drillman, marine
 Fox, Russell J., drillman, marine
 French, Frank, drillman on river
 Fryer, Isaac R., drillman, marine
 Gibb, Walter D., sailor, boat
 Goodchild, Louis, boat engineer
 Goode, Richard*, Supt., Buffalo Dredging Co.
 Gott, Earl E., drillman, river
 Gott, Eccles J., fireman & drill, marine
 Gott, William F., drillman, river
 Goulet, Andrew*, cook on American dredge
 Graham, William, dredgeman, marine
 Graveline, Felix, mariner on lakes
 Grenier, John, laborer on river

to be continued in Summer issue

Bricks 'n' Beams

41 Sandwich Street South

The land between Fort Malden and Sandwich Street was part of the Ordnance Reserve until 1875, when Laird Avenue was laid out and 1-acre lots running from Laird to Sandwich were surveyed. Residential development began and over time the lots were further subdivided into smaller parcels.

Lot 2, opposite the end of Fort Street, was purchased in the Ordnance Land Sale by John Anderson of Grey County for \$665. By 1877 it was in the possession of Richard Golden, a prominent Anderson farmer. The *Echo* of June 1, 1877 reported that "Mr. Richard Golden has begun the erection of a two-storey frame dwelling on his lot on Sandwich Street. It will be 25 x 36 feet with kitchen attached. When the building is completed, Mr. Golden will erect another just north of it."

Assessment Rolls indicate that the house was occupied by Richard's brother Dr. John Golden and/or tenant Charles Fisher.

In 1882 Alexander White bought the south half of Lot 2, on which the house was located, selling it six years later to Thomas Beatty. In 1893 it was purchased by Joseph Fox, who occupied it until his death in 1916. It was then owned briefly by Gordon Deneau before being acquired by Thomas Thornton, who operated the Parkway Confectionery there for many years.

In 1922 General Amherst High School was constructed immediately south of the Thornton house and over the next forty years expanded to several times its original size. A large addition built in 1964 necessitated the removal of four homes along Sandwich Street. The former Golden/Fox/Thornton house was relocated by its owner at that time, Mr. Laframboise, to 41 Sandwich Street South and extensively remodelled. (Another one of these houses was moved to the north side of Richmond Street, just east of Balaclava.) Since

1984 it has been owned by the Renaud family, who occupy the second storey and operate "Rags to Riches", an upholstery business, in the rear of the building. The front is currently occupied by the Baker Busch Law Office.

See "Then & Now" on page 8 for a current photo of the house as well as a view *circa* 1910 when it was occupied by the Joseph Fox family.

"Meloche Road" and Street Naming "Rights"

by Eleanor Warren

Amid the recent weeping and gnashing of teeth over the naming of a certain street near Amherstburg's new recreation complex being contentious, it's time we weighed in about this issue. First, it is our belief that if something is named after a person, that such person should have contributed something of value - not just monetarily - to the community.

Case in point - Meloche Road, the street that takes us to the complex, was named after a person who sacrificed his very life to this district. That person was Private Stanley Meloche (1894-1917) who served valiantly overseas in the First World War. The only son of Frank and Carrie (Bertrand) Meloche of Brock Street, Stanley was a popular local athlete who played 3rd base in the Amherstburg Baseball Club and was learning the plumbing trade. When war was declared he enlisted, as did so many of the area's youngsters. At Vimy Ridge his exploits were such that he was recommended for bravery. He died in 1917 in France from wounds sustained in battle at Lens.

In 1981 the Town of Amherstburg began a program of naming streets in honour of the 44 local men who gave their lives in the First and Second World Wars and the Korean Conflict. Stan Meloche was one of them.

In the past year or so new fancy-schmancy black street signs were installed in and around the downtown area. Isn't it past time that special signs should be created to commemorate those young men who gave their lives so that we can play games at the new complex?

Were Your Ancestors Here in 1812????

Were any of your ancestors in this vicinity during the War of 1812? Would you like to find out? If you are interested in tracing your lineage back to that time and giving your family a place of prominence in our early history, come visit the Marsh Historical Collection and let us help get you started. Our archives contains many records which will assist in your search. We're open from 10 am to 4 pm, Tuesday through Friday. **BUT BE FOREWARNED: GENEALOGY IS HIGHLY ADDICTIVE!**

The following information is from the Assessment for Malden and Amherstburg, 1812-13, Thomas Boucherville, Collector of Rates; William Mills and James Gordon, Assessors.

Some of the names on the Roll are illegible and some misspelled - some may have been property owners but did not actually live here, but most did. There are 118 names on the Roll. Some of them are still familiar here today, such as Barron, Beaudoin, Bondy, Brush, Caldwell, Cornwall, Dowler, Duff, Elliott, Girty, Graveline, Kemp, Langlois, Meloche, Morin, Pouget, Reaume, Splitlog, Warrow, White and Wright.

Ancestral Lines

The Connection (Part One)

Amherstburg, Ontario - Success, Arkansas

Excerpts edited from a detailed story of the McCracken and Fox families, by Frank Fox

There's a connection between Success, Arkansas and Amherstburg, but do you know what it is? This will eventually be discovered by first introducing you to a character by the name of "**Capt. Joe**" **McCracken** whose daughter married one of Amherstburg's sons. We're not sure how he acquired the "Captain" designation but family lore explains that it was likely because of his lumber business. Joe McCracken was known in the last half of the 19th century as the largest timber exporter in Ontario and often travelled with his cargo to Liverpool, England to execute sales. He was a farmer but primarily a lumberman, dealing mainly with Essex County oak and walnut. In the 1870s he built a sawmill in Anderdon Township on the Duff farm. By 1876 he was shipping square timber from Leamington, Wheatley and Buckhorn on its way to Montreal. In 1881 it was noted in the *Amherstburg Echo* that McCracken was here loading lumber for the sixth time that year, consigned to Kingston. Essex County was close to being cleared of its large hardwood forests by that time so Captain Joe moved his sawmill, three sons - Colin, Willis and Joseph - some of his men, and moved his operation to Success, Arkansas.

Born "near Ottawa" (although

the 1871 and 1881 censuses show him born in Quebec), Joseph McCracken was the son of Thomas and Jane (Weir) McCracken, natives of Ireland who emigrated to Canada where they raised a large family. In 1851 they were living in Blenheim Township, Oxford County. Ten years later they were listed in Bentinck Township, Grey County, where they had moved several years earlier to the village of Hanover on the Saugeen River. It was there that Thomas and Jane McCracken lived out their lives. Most of their children eventually moved to Essex County - Joseph, James, Thomas and George came to Mersea; Sarah married Henry Carder and lived in Gosfield, while Selina married John Dutot and lived in Tilbury West. John moved to Pennsylvania.

Ellen Vanidour was born circa 1845 in 1851 in Walpole Township, Haldimand County. She was the daughter of Isaac and Sarah Vanidour (found spelled "Vanorden" in 1851 census of Walpole Township). By 1861 the Vanidour family had moved to Mersea Township. Isaac and Sarah's other children were William, John, Peter, Thomas, Isaac, James, Matthew and Almeron Vanidour.

Whether Joe McCracken and Ellen Vanidour met in the late 1850s as teenagers while they were both living not far from Woodstock (although in separate counties), we just don't know for

sure. But at some point they met up again, were married on Valentine's Day, February 14th, 1866 and settled on a farm near Leamington. Here they became the parents of nine children. When Captain Joe left for Arkansas, Ellen and their two daughters, Margaret and Isabelle, remained in Mersea, where Ellen died of cancer on October 3, 1894.

Isabelle McCracken was born on August 21, 1872 at the homestead on 6th concession, Mersea. At her parents' home on December 23, 1891 she married **William Fox** (1871-1944), son of Albert and Amelia (Beaudoin) Fox and settled in Amherstburg (northeast corner of Rankin and Dalhousie) where they raised their nine children and where Isabelle died in 1928. William Fox was well-known throughout the county. In his youth he drove the stagecoach between Amherstburg and Windsor and was later in charge of the horsebus that operated three times a day between Amherstburg and Gordon Station, which was then the Western terminus of the Canada Southern Railway. Then for many years William Fox operated his draying business from the Fox Livery Barn on Richmond Street, the historic building having been moved there from Fort Malden. It was razed in 1933.

There is more information about these families as well as the Fox draying business at the Marsh Historical Collection. Please feel welcome to come in and browse through the files.

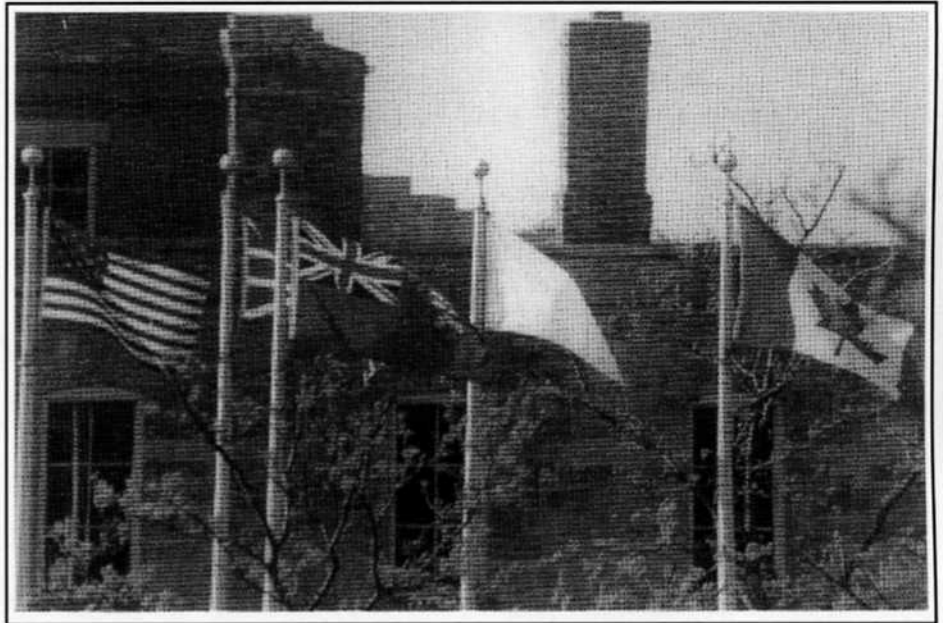
What's Up With the American Flag in the Navy Yard Park?

by Eleanor Warren

Have you ever noticed and/or wondered about the five flags being flown in the Navy Yard Park near the Rotary Clock? Now and then visitors come into the Marsh Historical Collection facility to ask about them. The following explanation might also be interesting to folks who are anticipating the bicentennial celebrations of 1812-15 events.

The poles and flags were placed there in September 1980 for the official opening of the park. Each flag represents a country or nation which has occupied the Amherstburg area at different time periods in our history. The pure white flag marks a time of French rule, thus the French flag of the pre-1750s period; the British Grand Union pre-1801 and the British Union Jack post-1801 mark the Empire's historic status; the United States flag of 15 stars and stripes marks the brief occupation (1813-15) by the Americans; and finally, the Canadian Maple Leaf.

But there's a problem! Today a modern 50-star American flag is fluttering in the breeze instead of the 15 stars and stripes. What's up with that? Did the United States take over when we in Amherstburg had our minds on other contentious issues? The five flags flying today no longer interpret the



This photo appeared in the *Amherstburg Echo* on July 1, 1992.

original intent. Is Amherstburg so hard up that it can't afford to purchase a reproduction of the American 15 stars and stripes? If there's an answer we would love to know what it is. We don't have a problem with the modern U.S. flag being flown around town - it's considered by some a neighbourly thing to do - but not on the poles in the King's Navy Yard Park!

After Confederation in 1867 the need for a distinctive flag emerged. By 1870 the Canadian Red Ensign

began to be used unofficially on land and sea. As new provinces joined the Confederation, their arms were added to the shield on the Ensign. During the Second World War the Red Ensign was the flag which Canadian troops carried into battle. There's lots more information in the Marsh Collection files about the back and forth of our flag (and how it should be displayed) right up to 1965 when the beautiful red maple leaf was adopted as the national flag of Canada.

Growing Up in the 'Burg

continued from pg. 2

book on R.C.N. history (I have it yet) and sure enough, there was the *Annan* story, just like he said.

Any excuse was good enough to slip down to the river to watch the boats, and there were lots of them in those days. Man, I loved it. One morning I was early for high school, if you can imagine that, so went down to the waterworks dock. A big Yank tug was heading upstream with some tall and very narrow tow astern of him. As it passed I noticed it was a submarine, not an American one but a U-boat! Wow! Sure enough, the boat had been captured intact by U.S.N. surface and aircraft. She went up handy to Chicago, where she was hauled ashore and made into a museum.*

The last couple of summers in high school saw me working as a tug deckhand, barge hand and dock labourer for McQueen Marine. I found I loved that kind of work. The money was good, the job interesting and challenging (most of the time) and the guys great to work with (all the time). When graduation finally arrived I was surprised to turn down the application forms for the Naval Officer training plan. Instead I signed a 4-year indentured apprenticeship with a deep sea shipping company out of Montreal. I would get my qualifying sea time there to write a Master's ticket then return to the Detroit River and eventually take command of the tug *Atomic*. That was the plan, but it didn't work out that way. But that's another story.

*The U-505 was captured in 1944 and in the summer of 1954 was towed from New Hampshire to Chicago to become an exhibit at the Museum of Science and Industry.

Then & Now

41 Sandwich Street South



Joseph Fox residence, *circa* 1910, at its original location on the west side of Sandwich Street, almost opposite the end of Fort Street (now the site of General Amherst High School's vocational wing).

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**Below: The remodelled building at its post-1964 location, 41 Sandwich Street South.
Photo taken March 16, 2011.**

Marsh Collection photo

