

Please  
take  
one!

# Reflections

Newsletter of the Marsh Historical Collection  
Amherstburg, Ontario

Please  
take  
one!

Volume V Issue 3

Spring 2012

ISSN 1913-8660

## "An Auto Factory for Amherstburg"

In the Spring of 1912 the Canadian Two-in-One Auto Co. met with Amherstburg Town Council to reach an agreement regarding the establishment of an auto factory in town. The company intended to manufacture the "Amherst 40", a five-passenger touring car which could be converted into a truck by removing the back seat and doors. A public meeting resulted in \$19,000 in stock sales in one evening. The company stated that the factory would make 200-300 cars in the first season and would later increase to 500 cars per season. The Town passed a by-law loaning the company \$10,000, plus giving them free water and taxes for ten years.

In May of 1912, Two-in-One Auto purchased a lot of Sandwich Street and work began on the new factory in August. In the meantime, a test model produced in Detroit was driven to Toronto to be displayed at the CNE. However, by September the Detroit backers stopped paying their shares and the company was re-organized. Two more cars were produced, but the company could not pay their bill for parts and were forced to declare bankruptcy.



One of the three "Amherst 40" cars made in Amherstburg. Photo below shows the vehicle with the back seat removed, converting it into a truck.

*Photos courtesy Fort Malden NHSC*



### New Publication Brunner Mond Highlights

see page 5 for details

### What's inside...

Growing Up in the 'Burg.....	pg. 2
Yesterday's News.....	pg. 3
Shipping the Detroit - 100th Anniversary of the Livingstone Channel - Part Two.....	pg. 4
New Publication - Brunner Mond Highlights.....	pg. 5
Current Exhibits.....	pg. 5
Recent Donations.....	pg. 5
Wimpy's Tales.....	pg. 6
Pork Causes a Sensation.....	pg. 7
The Marsh Library.....	pg. 7
Then & Now - Southwest Corner Murray & Apsley.....	pg. 8

# Growing Up in the 'Burg

## We Learned a New Word Today

by anonymous

The year was 1958, things were going great. Most of us had jobs and not very many of us had any serious responsibilities. In other words, for a bunch of young bucks just starting out, it really could not get much better. Then disaster struck. A Beer Strike. The local supply soon dried up and what was left was getting what they call "skunky".

It was summer and a few of us had rented a cottage south of Amherstburg for a couple of weeks. This was our first attempt to leave the nest and it didn't get much better than this. After a day of work, with dinner cooked and the dishes washed, we would sit around enjoying the summer evening while relaxing, sipping beer and swapping stories of whatever. How could they have a beer strike and interrupt our little slice of heaven right here in Amherstburg?

While commiserating on the unfortunate turn of events, someone came up with the idea that we could make our own beer. We jumped at the idea, but there was one drawback: bottles would be needed and a way to cap them. This small glitch in our plan was quickly overcome when someone said that his mother was no longer doing any canning and she had enough preserve jars and caps to bottle beer for the entire 'Burg if we had to. We took him up on his offer and proceeded to gather the necessary supplies to go into the beer business. No beer strike was going to stop us guys.

We purchased the ingredients and started on our adventure. It was kind of like a miniature assembly line with each individual doing their little thing to achieve the final result. The guys at the end of the line gently poured the golden liquid into the jars and set them aside to cool and when cool we would cap them. (A slight pause is warranted here. Anyone familiar with canning knows that capping a preserve jar seals it - but more about that later on.) By the time we were done we had canning jars full of beer all over the countertop and tables as well as the chairs. Our plan was coming together. We were overjoyed.

Just prior to going to bed, someone remarked that there was no room on the counter to make breakfast in the morning,

no table to eat it on and no chairs to sit on to eat it. We would have to find another place for the jars of beer. Again someone came up with the bright idea of putting them in the cupboard, their argument being that in the cupboard with the doors closed the jars would be out of sight as well as out of any light which might tend to spoil the taste we so much anticipated.

Now here is the word we learned that night: "fermentation". About two in the morning there was a loud explosion and we quickly awoke to find the cottage covered in beer and broken glass. The cupboard doors were across the room and we thought we had been hit with a bomb. Closer inspection revealed what happened. Beer gives off gas when it is being brewed and as the jars were sealed, this gas had no place to go. So - guess what? - the canning jars blew up. We had the biggest mess to clean from the floors, the walls, the ceiling, the bed clothes and our own clothes and fortunately no one was injured. After we did a modest clean-up we went back to bed and cleaned the cottage the next day. We also vowed that instructions would be followed if there ever was a next time, which we highly doubt.

## My Friend Johnny

by Pat Warren

Back in the 1930s school started in Grade One. The first three years were hazardous because you were in school with kids you were just getting to know and walking through neighbourhoods where you didn't grow up. As a result, a guy would get into a fight now and then. Mom insisted that Dad teach me a few things about fighting. Turns out the first rule is never start a fight, and the second is when the fight is over, win or lose, you offer to shake hands.

My very best friend at that time was a boy my age named Pat. He lived at the northwest corner of Sandwich and Alma Streets opposite Mr. Haines' candy store. One winter day we were playing with our new sleighs in behind Woods' Grocery store, where Maria's Restaurant is today. Between the store and the railway tracks, where the parking lots are today, were large and small ponds after every rain, so in winter there would usually be a huge

## 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.

Articles in *Reflections* are copyrighted and may not be reproduced in any form without the permission of the Marsh Collection Society.

ice rink that the big guys hogged for hockey. So Pat and I and other young kids would skid across a smaller frozen pond nearby.

And that's when it happened: Johnny, a guy known to be a bully at the other school, jumped on Pat as he was sailing across the ice on his sleigh. Nobody was going to do that to my very best friend who was a lot smaller than this bully, so I pulled him off

*continued on page 6*

# Yesterday's News

from the archives of the *Amherstburg Echo*

**1882**

*April* - Smallpox is prevalent and citizens are urged to get vaccinated.

*May* - According to the 1881 census, there were 2672 people in Amherstburg.

**1892**

*April* - An ad claims that "Herman the magician cannot work greater miracles than can Magic Pile Lotion with piles of all kinds."

*May* - The cornerstone of the new Methodist Church, Richmond and Bathurst Streets, will be laid with Masonic honours this week.

**1902**

*May* - Much construction is going on at Bois Blanc Island, including the expansion of the dance pavilion, the addition of a photography gallery and the enlargement of the building on the dock.

**1912**

*March* - Extensive improvements are being carried out at Christ Church.

*April* - The contractor for the new library has begun cutting stone.

- Work of fitting out the Amherstburg canning factory is going along smoothly.

*May* - A gang of men is working on the new dance pavilion on Bois Blanc Island.

- Residents voted to give the Two-in-One Auto Co. a \$10,000 loan. A site will be purchased at once and a start made on a building. [See story on front page.]

**1922**

*March* - Amherstburg merchants are holding a "Dollar Day...on which they will give the people of

the whole district one of the greatest Bargain Feasts ever offered by them."

*May* - The Dept. of Marine & Fisheries has installed a storm signal station at the Waterworks Park.

**1932**

*March* - Deepening the Livingstone Channel in the coming season will give employment to 1500 men for at least 4 years.

*April* - Sightings of ghostly spectres in the Wyandotte Cemetery have been reported.

**1942**

*March* - Capt. Walter Callam has been appointed captain of the steamer *Ralph S. Caulkins*.

*April* - George Speal of the Bob-Lo Restaurant has installed the first BBQ in Amherstburg.

**1952**

*March* - Mr. & Mrs. Charles Malczyk have painted murals in St. Joseph's Church, River Canard. Austin Meloche has built three new walnut altars.

*May* - A 36 x 27-foot building will be erected at the northeast corner of the town hall property for a new fire hall.

**1962**

*March* - Reg Cozens is the new principal at General Amherst High School.

- Amherstburg Council intends to close Sherbrooke Street between King and Brock Streets.

*April* - The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are moving their HQ from Amherstburg to

Wyandotte, Michigan.

- The new Harrow Farmers feed mill is nearing completion on the east side of the railway tracks.

*May* - Malden Council held their first meeting in the town hall at Malden Centre.

- A plaque to commemorate historic Bellevue will be dedicated this month.

**1972**

*March* - The Tri-Community Figure Skating Club is presenting its first ice show.

- The possibility of establishing a Black history museum in Amherstburg is being discussed.

- Construction has begun on the new Anderdon Police building, Middle Sideroad.

*April* - The historic Park House was moved from its original site to the King's Navy Yard Park.

*May* - The new Fort Malden Motel is open for business.

**1982**

*March* - "Metric Madness" is working its way across the province.

*April* - The blue spruce on the library lawn has been uprooted by strong winds and a blizzard.

- Bob-Lo acquired a new "Big Wheel" ride which towers 80 feet in the air.

- A part of Thomas Road (Second Concession, Anderdon) has been sold to BCM Technologies for \$10,500.

- Town council decided to raze the Marra's Bread building.

*May* - DeSantis Bakery is opening on Dalhousie Street.



# Shipping the Detroit

## 100th Anniversary of the Livingstone Channel - Part Two

from *Amherstburg Echo*, January 5, 1912  
continued from Winter 2011-12 issue

**An Enforced Rest.**—Then came several weeks during which the contractors' crew lay idle, awaiting the official awards. March 1st last, the whistle at the compressor plant on Stoney Island blew three long blasts to let the workmen know that they could once more get busy. By the end of the present week, the last shovelful of rock will have been removed and a solid mass of rock one mile long, 1500 feet wide and ranging in depth from ten feet at the ends of the course to twenty-two feet at the crown in the centre will have been removed in the record-breaking time of a trifle more than nine months.

It will take another month to dismantle the machinery and prepare it for shipment. A week hence, most of the workmen whose services will not be required in the packing up process will have gone to other fields of activity. When the last of the wrecking is done, the men and their families will depart and Stoney Island will settle back to its former state of innocuous desuetude.

Marine annals fail to record a more nearly perfect piece of work than is represented in the "dry" section of the Livingstone Channel.

The story of how with the completion of the cofferdam the enclosed area was pumped dry, permitting the men to quarry the rock the same as though it had been far up a hillside, is well-known. But the detail resulting from this method must be seen to be appreciated. On either side of the channel the limestone walls rise abruptly where the channelers cut them with saw-like precision. The rocky floor has been stripped so clean that not a stone the size of one's fist can be found in the entire mile stretch and there are great spots sufficiently smooth to provide a dancing floor, if desired.

Perhaps all this care wasn't necessary, but it was matter of personal pride with the contractors, and the captain who navigates his vessel through the Livingstone Channel for all time to come need have no fear of striking any obstructions in this stretch.

Great concrete piers have been placed along the channel bank, two at either end and two in the middle. These are perhaps twenty-five feet square and will rise some

six feet above the water when the area now dry is flooded and the river returns to its natural course. On these, lights will be located for the guidance of mariners. Four hollow concrete piers have been constructed within the dry section. Later they will be floated downstream and sunk. They will support lights indicating the pathway to the cut.

**There'll Not Be a Rush.**—Considerable speculation has been indulged in among marine men and others as to just what would happen when the ends of the cofferdam were removed and the waters rushed in. Those who looked forward with interest to this performance are doomed to disappointment. It has been decided not to pursue this course. Instead the water will be permitted to seep in and fill the enclosed area of its own accord. Stopping the pumps that have run steadily for more than three years to keep the cut dry will cause the channel to fill gradually and, accomplishing the desired end, will give the contractors plenty of time to remove their equipment, a consideration of moment when it is understood that when everything has gone back to normal anywhere from four to twenty feet of water will flow where a narrow gauge railroad now runs, while twenty-four feet of water will engulf the spot where the steam shovels have toiled so steadily. Besides, it will occasion no delay, as the wet section of the channel will not be finished for some time.

Already there are indications of the passing that is close at hand. Some of those who spent so many happy months in the little colony on Stoney Island have gone, and their former abodes are being taken down and moved away by the wreckers to whom such an occurrence is a harvest. Many other shacks that sheltered the foreign population are deserted. Others contain but a fraction of their usual quota of inhabitants.

**Good-Bye, Locherville.**—With the passing of Locherville, a unique institution will have become only a memory, although a pleasant one to every person who came in contact with those responsible therefor.

Here was established a full-fledged village, with every agency considered indispensable in a town of the size, save a gaol, a striking commentary on the good behavior enacted and accorded. The first thing Grant, Smith & Company and Locher, the contractors, did was to build comfortable homes for their employees, most of whom came with them from West Neebish, near Sault Ste. Marie, where they had just completed a similar piece of work, although on a smaller scale.

Cottages were provided for the men with families, the foreigners being kept separate from the rest. Bunkhouses were furnished the single men and there was a "hotel" where table board was furnished at the lowest figure that would insure against actual loss.

A public school was established, the company engaging the teacher. This building also served as a social centre, with dances and parties of frequent occurrence. On Sundays religious services were conducted here. A doctor engaged by the contractors furnished free medical attendance. A company store sold goods at a figure considerably below the prevailing market prices elsewhere.

G.P. Locher, superintendent of the work on the channel, was mayor, council, magistrate and general poohbah of the island. His word was law, but it was a just law, and the five hundred or so inhabitants of Stoney Island was loyalty itself.

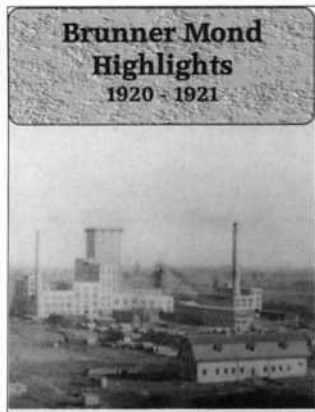
Now the end is at hand. In a few weeks this happy family will be scattered to the four winds. Many of the workmen will be taken care of on other contracts. The houses will be dismantled and the lumber removed. Where once dwelt a prosperous band of men and women and children will once more be solitude.

And what of the men responsible for this state of affairs?

C.H. Locher is already located in New York, where his firm has a large contract on the new aqueduct that will supply that city with water and where many of the old men from Stoney will go.

G.P. Locher has made enough to take care of his modest wants and a comfortable farm home down in Old Virginia, far from the bustle and strife of the busy arts, is awaiting his coming with the return of spring.

# New Publication - Brunner Mond Highlights



Beginning in April, 1920, a weekly column of "newsworthy" items concerning employees of Brunner Mond Limited was published in the *Amherstburg Echo*. Included were bowling scores and reports of other sports events, organizational meetings of Amherstburg Boy Scouts, the Brunner Mond Band, history of the Bowling Club, the Gun Club, as well as some local "gossip" etc. The column was published in the *Echo* from April 23, 1920, until 1924.

The first volume, 1920-21, is now available at the Marsh Collection.

125 pages • cerlox bound

**\$20**

## Current Exhibits

### *Brunner Mond*



### *Cornerstones of Our Community*



### *Great Lakes*



*Open  
Tuesday to Friday  
10 am to 4 pm  
Free admission*

## Recent Donations

- compiled family histories: "A **Knapp** Family Tree Project: Descendants of Friedrich Christian Knapp in Canada from 1777" and "The Joseph N. **Lucier** Family Book"



- **downspout** remnant from the Gordon House, circa 1798
- photo of the Amherstburg **Town Hall**, circa 1920s



*Marsh Collection P4703*

# Wimpy's Tales

*The late Martin Boufford - known as either "Dick" or "Wimpy" to most who knew him - was one of Amherstburg's great storytellers. In his later years Wimpy became a regular visitor at the Marsh Collection and he regaled us with a different story or two each time he came in. He enjoyed telling them in his inimitable fashion, chuckling all the while as though the incidents had just happened yesterday. One of his favourite subjects was Art Taylor, another well-known Amherstburg character and jokester. Art drove the Amherstburg-Windsor bus for many years during the 1930s and '40s.*

## Art Taylor Story No. 1

After the War, the Canadian Legion was using the old brick home in the Waterworks Park as their headquarters. I was appointed caretaker, I lived upstairs. They held their meetings downstairs once a month.

I was working at Kelsey Wheel in Windsor and catching the 5:30 a.m. bus. The bus was parked in front of the *Echo* building. If I wasn't there, Art would back the bus down to the waterworks and blow the horn and I would run out and get aboard. One morning he blew the

horn, I ran out and started to get on. He said, "Didn't you forget something?" I said, "What?" He said, "Your false teeth!" He held the bus while I ran back to get them.

How he could drive that bus! Going past the marsh at the Canard he would say, "Look at that raccoon" or duck or whatever. We'd still be at University and Ouellette at exactly 6:00 a.m. He never missed.



Art Taylor, circa 1940s.  
Marsh Collection P4272

## Growing Up in the 'Burg My Friend Johnny

*continued from page 2*

Pat's back and the fight was on. The big guys must have thought I started it and poked me with their sticks. To me that meant that I had to win or I was going to get beat up by the bully and the big guys.

Eventually Johnny gave up and as soon as he did I stood up and offered to shake hands. That took everybody by surprise and the bully's friends invited me and him and Pat to warm up at their house on the corner of Fort Street. And that's the story of how Johnny stopped being a bully and I came to have a new friend.

That summer Johnny and I often

played at his grandmother's house at the northeast corner of Alma and Bertrand. There were almost no other houses around so we had big fields to play in. That's where I got to see hummingbirds close up and learned from Johnny's grandpa how to build boomerangs that worked if you threw them right.

I don't remember why but Johnny ended up in Hotel Dieu Hospital twice that year. Mom took me to see him the first time and let me bring a gift. But what I got him was a bow and arrow set with suction cups,

much to my mother's and the nurses' disapproval. The second time Dad took me because he was going to Windsor anyway. That time I got Johnny a wind-up, brightly painted tin power boat that we played with when he got home. Bertrand Street was mud and after a rain it had some long ruts. We filled them with water and sent the power boat racing from one end to the other, pretending all the while that we were the mechanics for Gar Woods' famous race boat with the big V-8 engine.



# Pork Causes A Sensation

from the *Amherstburg Echo* October 3, 1946

I surely would like to have that meat," an employee of the Bob-Lo Island Excursion Company remarked one day last summer when a large pork roast fell into the river at the foot of Murray Street as a load of meat was being transferred from a truck to the scow en route to Bob-Lo Island.

That particular piece of meat was not entirely lost, for it turned up on the shore of Lake Erie, below Amherstburg, and caused much trouble and embarrassment to the authorities.

Late Friday afternoon Crown Attorney C.C. Millbro of Gray County, who was visiting in Amherstburg, was walking along

the beach when he came across a bundle that looked like a human body. He reported the matter to the provincial police and Sergeant David Duncan of Windsor and Provincial Constable Harold Yule of Essex made an investigation. 'The body' was so badly decomposed that a close examination could not be made.

It was thought it was the torso of a 12-year-old girl or boy from which the head, legs and arms were missing. A deep mystery seemed to have developed and it was conjured that 'the murder' had taken place on a boat and the 'body' had been thrown into the water. The 'corpse' was rushed to Windsor by

ambulance and there was a lot of talk on the streets in Amherstburg that evening about the 'torso murder'.

Arriving in Windsor the 'torso' was given a careful examination by Dr. S.W. Asselstine, who reported his findings as follows:- "Gentlemen, this isn't a human torso. It's part of the body of a pig - pork, that is."

And so the lost parcel of meat dropped in the river at Amherstburg last summer turned up again, without the benefit of coupons, and put active minds to work on trying to solve the deepest mystery that ever hit this town.

## The Marsh Library An Important Local Resource



When the Marsh Collection facility was established in 1994 at 235A Dalhousie Street, it contained a substantial and impressive library of local history. Today, almost 18 years later, the library has gradually expanded to now contain approximately one thousand books and

periodicals. We are not a lending library, but visitors and researchers are welcome to browse, or sit and read at their leisure.

While genealogical materials take up an appreciable amount of the shelves, the library has volumes which cover many topics, such as Great Lakes, Canadian, Ontario and Local history, Canadian Military, Prohibition, First Nations and Black history. We also have a few high school yearbooks, city directories, church histories and other miscellaneous subjects.

Feel free to come in, peruse and use the collection - Tuesday thru Friday, 10 am to 4pm. You just might find something you've been looking for!

# Then & Now

## Southwest corner Murray & Apsley (Sandwich) Streets



Above: George Pettypiece's Flour & Feed Store, *circa 1896.*

*Marsh Collection P4700*

Below: Tim Horton's parking lot, March 9, 2012

*Marsh Collection photo*

