

Please take one!

Reflections

Newsletter of the Marsh Historical Collection
Amherstburg, Ontario

Please take one!

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“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



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New Publication
Brunner Mond Highlights
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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.

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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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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

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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.

