

Please
take
one!

Reflections

Newsletter of the Marsh Historical Collection
Amherstburg, Ontario



Volume V Issue 4

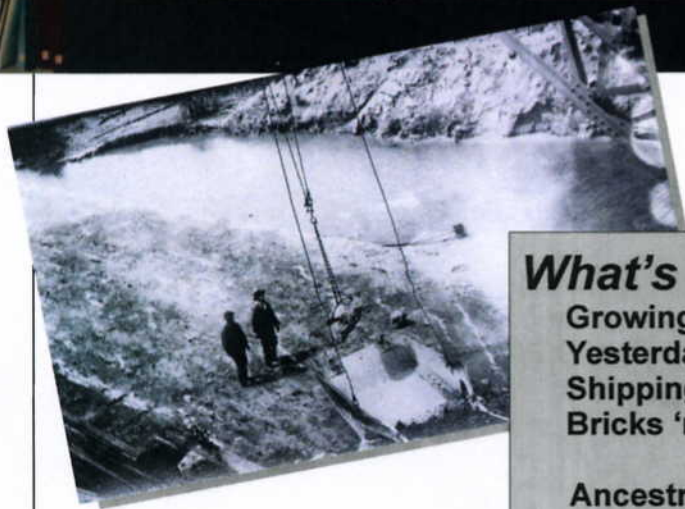
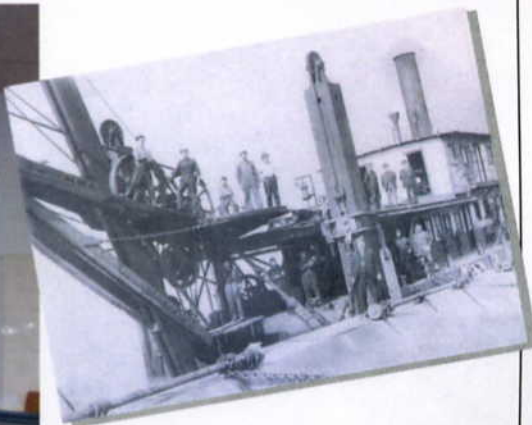
Summer 2012

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\$10 Million Ditch Building the Livingstone Channel

A timeline commemorating the upcoming 100th anniversary
of the Livingstone Channel, opened October 19, 1912

235 Dalhousie Street (upstairs) • Open Tuesday to Friday 10am to 4pm • Free admission



What's inside...

Growing Up in the 'Burg.....	pg. 2
Yesterday's News.....	pg. 3
Shipping the Detroit - Good to Be Home.....	pg. 4
Bricks 'n' Beams - 1927: Happy Days Are Here Again.....	pg. 5
Ancestral Lines- The Noted Sadler Family of...?.....	pg. 6
Then & Now - West Town Park	pg. 8

Growing Up in the 'Burg

Missing Person

by anonymous

I'm not sure of the exact date, but I do know it was in the latter part of the 1940s. I was just getting started in school at St. Anthony's, now the House of Shalom. We quickly learned that our favourite part of school was just before class, recess, lunch, recess and dismissal for the day. New friends were made at every turn and as school was some distance from home, this meant, at least to me, new avenues for exploring and adventure. The area behind St. Anthony's at the time was certainly not like it is today. Then it was nothing but empty fields, an abandoned house and a large ditch that ran next to a dirt path that today is called Kempt Street.

This next part I mention here because it plays an important part in the rest of this narrative. While in class, the first subject every day was Religion, and I remember the dear nuns drilling into our young heads the necessity for prayer. Prayer, they said, would take care of everything, and we believed them. Some of us more than others. Now back to the story.

It was a beautiful fall day and at the afternoon recess my new friend Larry and I decided to do some exploring near the ditch next to the bone-dry grass-filled field. One of us had some matches and we decided to see just how dry the grass was. Suffice it to say that it was drier than we had thought, and it didn't take long for the field to catch on fire. Naturally when this happened we both took off in different directions and I remember the Fire Department showing up quickly and putting out the flames before any major damage could occur.

The school bell rang for us to return from recess and when everyone had settled, one seat was empty. It was Larry's, and no one had seen him since the excitement. A search was quickly started with the students from the senior grades being the searchers. They checked the fields and everywhere else they could think of, to no avail. Everyone was wondering what our next step would be when suddenly the priest showed up with Larry. He had found him in church on his knees at the front altar, praying his heart out for the fire to be extinguished.

Whether it was the prayers that did it, I don't know. What I do know is that it firmly cemented in my mind that prayers will help everything, and even more so if you don't play with matches.

The Double-ENDER

by River Rat

This boat story is about an old lifeboat that a neighbour's dad brought home from McQueen Marine. It was in pretty sad shape, as it had been caught between a couple of scows or barges and "sandwiched". The result was a lot of cracked ribs and shattered planks, but it was a real prize as far as we were concerned. The old grey paint was peeling, the ribs were cracked and there were numerous splits in the planking, but we knew we could patch the old girl and give her a fresh coat of paint.

Work was started by fabricating wooden blocks roughly 4 x 4 x 1" to cover the cracks in the planking, and with a mixture of white lead and putty smeared on one side, the blocks were placed face down between the ribs and secured in place with brass screws. After that we busied ourselves scraping and sanding the old paint in readiness for a fresh coat of McQueen Marine dark green and black paint. The outcome was better than we expected. She (almost) gleamed. It now came time to launch and I can't remember how we got her down to the river, but we did, and after tying a couple of lines on the boat it was pushed out into the water and then secured to the dock. It didn't take long before we could see the water seeping through the seams in the hull. The poor old thing had been out of the water for so long, it had dried out and needed time in the water to enable it to swell (take up) and close those smaller cracks in the hull, ones we either missed or couldn't see. Even our paint could not keep the Detroit River from invading our craft.

Our next job descriptions changed from "repairmen" to "watcher" and "bailer" so she didn't fill up and sink, and after about a week or so the leaks stopped, more or less. The boat, as I mentioned, was an old lifeboat and was fitted with two pair of oarlocks, so our new task was to secure a couple pairs of oars and back in those days there were numerous boats which were powered by oars, so procuring these was no problem - borrowed, of course, with the owner's permission. After our initial "shakedown cruise" we set to perfecting our rowing skills with two pairs of oars, and in no time we were a real team and making waves on Callam's Bay. My memory fails me again and 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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can't recall when we received permission to leave the confines of the bay and venture further out and away. I do recall rowing over to this side of Bob-Lo where large willow trees had grown out over the water, and in the shelter of the little bay we could nudge the boat up into a spot under cover of the branches, tie up and go exploring, over to the old blockhouse and the lighthouse.

continued on page 4

Yesterday's News

from the archives of the *Amherstburg Echo*

1882

June - Tenders are being received for the construction of a hose tower at the town hall.

July - Amherstburg barbers agreed to close their shops at 8:30 each evening except Saturday during the summer months.

1892

July - The steamer *Labelle* has been seen dumping Detroit garbage in the Canadian channel at Turkey Island. Riverfront residents of Anderdon and Malden are complaining of the floating refuse and foul smells.

- The new organ for St. Andrew's Church, a Mozart Grand, has arrived.

August - Dedication of the new Methodist church in Malden will take place Sunday.

1902

June - The pastor of First Baptist Church has moved into the new parsonage adjoining the church on George Street.

- A petition is circulating asking Town Council to support a brass band.

- A by-law to grant aid to the S.W. & A. Electric Railway has been passed. This will induce S.W. & A. to extend their railway to Amherstburg.

July - The *Echo* has published a special Coronation issue on pink paper.

- The new D.B.I. & W. Ferry Co. steamer *Columbia* has made her first public trip.

1912

June - Machinery for the Lewitt Knitting Co. has arrived.

July - The new school for S.S. #11, Anderdon, is completed. [It is now a private residence on the west side of Concession 5 North, south of Middle Sideroad.] (See photo at right.)

- The first auto turned out by the Two-in-One Auto Co. is being tested this week.

August - The building of the new

canning factory at River Canard will be celebrated with a social dance on its new floor.

- The new Westcott Marine Reporting Agency at the Livingstone Channel is ready for operation.

- Work will soon start on the new church at River Canard.

1922

July - The D. & W. Ferry Co. is planning to build a new women's cottage, four large lavatories and a new wharf on Bob-Lo at the end of this season.

August - Dodge Brothers, auto manufacturers of Detroit, purchased a large factory site in Windsor and will erect a plant there.

1932

June - A.K. Duff has re-opened his restaurant above the Bank of Commerce.

August - Harry Wood is building a new frame store on the east side of Sandwich Street on property purchased from Wm. Haynes [now Maria's Restaurant].

- A memorial will be erected on the Mickle farm, riverfront, Malden, in honour of Simon Girty.

1942

June - Council has passed a by-law prohibiting use of bicycles on sidewalks.

July - Helen Marsh has resigned from the staff of Amherstburg Public

School to join the news staff at the *Echo*.

1952

June - The Women's Auxiliary of the Fort Malden Branch Royal Canadian Legion has received its charter.

July - Good progress is being made on the new Anderdon Central School.

- A service station will be built on the northeast corner of Alma and Sandwich Streets.

1962

June - The official opening of Ukrainian Village apartments will take place June 3rd.

- The federal plaque to mark historic Bellevue has been unveiled.

- A small boat ramp has been installed at the foot of Gore Street.

July - Wesley United Church has purchased 4 acres from the James Flynn estate on which to construct a new church.

August - Richard D. Thrasher has been appointed special assistant to P.M. Diefenbaker.

- The AAM First Aid Squad will hold an open house at their new quarters, northwest corner of Sandwich and Rankin.

1972

June - A 2-storey motel will be built at the northwest corner of Dalhousie and Gore by Zarko Vucinic.

- The old building in the west town park, originally built for the Amherstburg Lawn Bowling Club, will be moved to Sandwich Street near Pickering to be used as a real estate office.

- The new wading pool in the town park is ready. This replaces the one donated in 1928 by Malcolm McGregor.

1982

August - The Town of Amherstburg has a new official crest.

- The Verdi Club has increased its seating capacity to 550.



S.S. #11, as it appeared in 1942.

Marsh Collection P93

Shipping the Detroit

Good to Be Home

by Capt. John Burck

It was good to be home. My 4-year apprenticeship as a Cadet Officer with a deep sea shipping company was completed and I had some leave to enjoy. Later in the Fall I would go to Marine School somewhere, to study for a certificate, which was why I had gone to sea in the first place. In the meantime I was lucky to get back with McQueen Marine. I was planning to return later with a ticket and possibly become one of their tug masters.

I was assigned to work with Doug Smeltzer on a crew boat servicing dredges and drillboats working near the mouth of the Detroit River. This was 1961 and the Seaway was coming through. The boat was a beauty. Recently completed as a yacht, her interior was not fitted out, but would be lavishly furnished when this job was over.

She could really go, with a large "rooster tail" in her wake. She was fun to "work" on. On the back shift we'd tie up to one of the rigs on stand-by and since there was nothing to do, we could stretch out on the seats below and rest our eyes.

Yes, life was good. Maybe "too" good. So it was with much foreboding that I answered my summons to the office where the boss, Stan Dupont, asked if I would like to go on the *Atomic*, which was to tow an old freighter from Windsor to Port Colborne. (Was this man insane?) "No, thank you, sir. I am quite content with my present job." "But Cap Morrison asked for you specifically," he continued. (Drat! He was about to lay a guilt trip on me!) I liked Capt. Angus Morrison as a person and admired him as a tug master. I knew why he wanted me. I had just finished 18 months as 3rd Mate on deep sea freighters, in charge of a sea watch, so the crafty old fox knew he could put his feet up and sleep well, knowing he had a competent man on watch on his *Atomic's* bridge.

So here we were, heading down Lake Erie with a stiff wind and rough sea following us. The old freighter (I think it might have been the *Canopus*) surprisingly was sailing almost parallel to us on our starboard beam, and we were towing her. The movement of the ship was not all that

uncomfortable, but the breeze was pushing the diesel exhaust fumes into the wheelhouse. I was very glad when I was relieved by the Captain at midnight, as I was not feeling that good. Darn fumes!

The chief engineer, Alex Deehan, was playing cards at the mess table as I went past on the way to my quarters in the fo'c's'le. I just got to the bottom of the steep ladder when my brain finally gave in and signalled I was about to be SEA SICK! I made a mad rush up the stairs and my head had just cleared the coaming at the base of the galley door when "out she comes". It shot right under the chief's chair. He casually looked at me and said, "Not feeling good, eh?" - a master of understatement.

No, I was not feeling good. I was darn well near "dying", or felt like I was! It's funny when someone else is sick, but the most serious thing in the world when it is you. Here was the old "deep sea sailor" come to impress these lake guys and look at him, sick as a dog - and not a sea dog, either! I was lucky the boys did not tease me (to my face) but I am sure they enjoyed it.

Yeah...it was still nice to be home.

Growing Up in the 'Burg

The Double-Ender

continued from page 2

We even ventured up into the amusements area and all the while our craft was safe and sound in the shadows of those willow trees. If someone had found the boat and decided to take it for a ride I don't know what we would have done, but at that time it didn't seem important - we were on our island and having fun. Our rowing skills were improving and two young guys with strong backs didn't mind the work, but the sound of outboard motors was all around us and the bug finally bit us. A 3½-hp outboard

motor was loaned to us by Mr. Dupont and the boat was fitted with a motor bracket which was made from scrap aluminum left over from the refurbishing of the McQueen yacht *Sheltie*.

Now we were motorized but the boat was heavy and that little 3½-hp was not too powerful, so we kept the throttle in the full position at all times. Needless to say, after that summer we gave the motor back to Mr. D. before it was worn out completely. Then a Scott Atwater motor was obtained

from a neighbour, traded for a big fistful of nails. This motor was a "bit" cantankerous and had the habit of the carb float sticking, so he, not me, beat the poor old S.A. with an oar to free up the float, and it worked! The dings and dents were smoothed out and a fresh coat of paint was applied and no one was any the wiser. We used that boat for a few years until it was eventually sold, to whom I don't know, but I hope they had as much enjoyment as we did.

Bricks 'n' Beams

1927: Happy Days Are Here Again!

by Eleanor Warren

For 85 years folks around the 'Burg have been able to legally purchase and sip a foaming brew or two without keeping a lookout or glancing over their shoulders in fear of the Provincial watchdogs. In the summer of 1927, with Prohibition a recent memory, the *Amherstburg Echo* announced that a beer and ale depot would be established in Amherstburg.

In August of that year, representatives of the Walkerville and British American Breweries, accompanied by an official of the Provincial License Department, came down to look over potential sites for a building. By early September, the Beer Distributing Station and Warehouse (established by the aforementioned) was opened in the Hough Block, west side of Dalhousie Street. J.E. Bailey was in charge with Claude Reaume as his assistant and Leo H. Grondin was acting inspector for the Government. The place was open for business every weekday from 7:00 a.m. till 6:00 p.m. Under a new ruling, liquor permits were then issued at the new Brewers' Warehouse.

Six months later the popular business had grown to such an extent that a larger facility was necessary, so in June 1928 the Beer Warehouse moved to the former Alex Park building, southeast corner of Murray and Ramsay, where it remained for six years. During that time management received word that keg beer or ale would no longer be sold to individuals - only hotels would be allowed to purchase kegs - but

individuals could still buy bottled beer. This was allegedly designed to eliminate the illicit beer-by-the-glass sales in bootlegging joints, otherwise known as "blind pigs."

In November 1934 another move brought the Brewers' Warehouse to part of the former Bank of Commerce building, northeast corner of Dalhousie and Murray (the building known today as Caldwell's Grant). There it stayed for another six years.

In June 1940 for tax arrears the Town of Amherstburg sold property on the southwest corner of Bathurst and Murray streets. For one hundred dollars Drifford Bertrand became the new owner of the site. The land was surveyed immediately by the firm of Newman & Armstrong at which time it was discovered that this lot was part of Plan No. 1, registered in 1846, the first ever registered in Essex County. It had been owned by the O'Madden family for many years.

No time was lost in erecting the new building (today the site of Malden Automotive). At the end of July 1940 the Brewers'

Warehouse stock was moved into the commodious structure which was "*attractively finished with vitrolite marble in black colour both under and above the enormous glass windows.*"

Twenty-six years later a new Brewers' Warehouse was built at the northeast corner of Dalhousie and Park Streets, where it remains today. (The building at the corner of Bathurst and Murray was then rented by Bowman Anthony Limited.)

Opened for business in September 1966, the new Brewers' Retail warehouse (known to some as the "In & Out" store) was the latest in construction and labour-saving devices. Around 1983 it was again refurbished and renamed The Beer Store.

Today, owned by Labatt Brewing Company Ltd., Molson Coors Canada and Sleeman Brewers Ltd., the Beer Store carries over 350 brands of liquid libation and operates under the authority of the Liquor Control Act and the Alcohol and Gaming Public Protection Act, 1996.



Amherstburg Echo photo, December 1983.

Ancestral Lines

The Noted Sadler Family of....?

The "Those Were the Days" column in the *Amherstburg Echo* of March 14, 1984 featured this photo (now in the Marsh Collection) of the "noted Sadler family". The caption read, "*The Essex family, which consisted of four spinster sisters and a bachelor brother, whose ages averaged nearly 90 years, lived in the cabin shown above for almost 60 years. They made all their own clothes, using cotton cards, spinning wheels and knitting needles.*"

This is the kind of image that piques one's interest! A couple of times over the years we have attempted to figure out if the story is true by looking for the family in census records from the late 1800s, but to no avail. Although there has been a Sadler family in Essex from the mid-1900s, nothing could be found of them earlier than that. We began to think that perhaps the photo was staged, just a hoax.

During the current project of scanning our photo collection, this image was revisited and a close examination revealed faint white printing along the bottom edge, which reads, "The noted Sadler family of White Plains Ala." Well! That made a little more sense - although how the photo became part of the Marsh family's photo collection remains a mystery, along with the source of its accompanying information (which is not written on the back of the photo but is on a separate paper).

Here at the Marsh Collection, we like a good mystery as well as



Marsh Collection P167

anyone - probably more than most, actually. And we couldn't let this one go. So we popped onto Ancestry.ca to check out census records for White Plains, Alabama - and found the following family in 1880: Bluford Sadler, age 75, living with five unmarried sisters: Elizabeth, age 73; Fannie, age 71; Polly A., age 69; Sallie, age 67; and Jane, age 63.

Unfortunately, the 1890 U.S. census for that area no longer exists, but we did find Bettie (Elizabeth) Sadler, age 92, living with a niece in White Plains in 1900.

We then looked in the Family Tree section of Ancestry.ca and, sure enough, found the same Sadler family. Bluford and his sisters were part of a family of 9 children

born between 1805 and 1823, only one of whom, Samuel, seems to have married and had descendants. Corresponding to the information accompanying the photo, Bluford, Elizabeth, Fannie, Polly and Sally all died between 1896 and 1902, at ages ranging from 86 to 95. The photo therefore can be dated to *circa* 1895. (There was no death date given for Jane, the fifth sister, who does not appear in the photo.)

We were unable to find any connection between the Sadler family of White Plains, Alabama, and the Sadler family of Essex, Ontario, and have no explanation for how this photograph made its way to Essex County. But it did provide an entertaining afternoon for the Marsh Collection staff!

Research at the Marsh Collection

Reasons for Research

Over the last three months, the Marsh Collection has assisted researchers with the following topics, among others:

various house histories
General Amherst High
School murals
Marra's Bread
McQueen Marine vessels
Malden Lunatic Asylum
"Quest for the Golden Key"
riddles
 skirmish at River Canard (1812)

Family History

Andrews
Barron
Bastien
Bondy
Brault
Brett
Burns
Campeau
Carr
Christian
Cook
Elford
Elliot
Flynn
Gatfield
Girardin
Goodbody
Hackett
Higgins
Holdaway
Kemp
Lalonge
McQueen
Meloche
Reaume
White
Wilcox
Wright

The Marsh Collection Local History & Genealogy Centre is open Tuesday to Friday from 10 am to 4 pm. There is no charge for use of our materials, and staff is available to assist you. Photocopies are 25 cents; copies from microfilm are 50 cents.

We Have Books!

Although we are not a lending library, we do have a wide range of reference books which anyone is welcome to come in and read. Spend an afternoon reading in air-conditioned comfort!

Subjects include Black history, Local history, Ontario history, Great Lakes and Canadian military. The following books in our Prohibition section are quite popular:

- Booze, Boats & Billions
- Whiskey River •Rumrunners
- The Bootleggers

We Have Wi-Fi!

Bring in your laptop and access your Ancestry subscription or family tree websites while doing your genealogical research.

(Note: We do not provide public access to Ancestry.)

Photos (top to bottom)

Gavin Greig, manager of Bellevue Veterans' Home, circa 1950
 P32

Amherstburg Public School, 1911
 P111

Capt. David J. Girardin, pre-1909
 P697

Tug *Abner C. Harding*, undated
 P1192

Murray Street, April 1886
 P1520

Photos from Our Collection



Then & Now

West Town Park



Courtesy Fort Malden NHSC

**West Town Park (now known as Toddy Jones Park),
taken from the northeast corner of the park looking southwest.**

Above: circa late 1930s

Below: June 15, 2012



Marsh Collection photo