



Reflections



Newsletter of the Marsh Historical Collection
Amherstburg, Ontario

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Such Rubbish!

A Timeline of Trash Collection in Amherstburg

1925 to 1931

The Collection Conundrum

1925 April - Town Council discusses a “systematic collection of garbage.” It is recommended that an individual be appointed to collect garbage once a week, to be paid by participating householders.

1926 June - The *Echo* reports, “Some day, we hope it may be soon, the question of garbage collection as a civic system will be solved in Amherstburg...”

1929 March - A Letter to the Editor urges Council to “undertake...a system of garbage collection...[as] the absence of garbage removal leads to an invasion of rats, to bad odors and also to an epidemic of disease-carrying flies...”

1931 April - “Garbage Collection System Owned By the Municipality to Begin Operation on May First”. “The dump ground is the low spot on the Dr. McBride flats*, and this will be in charge of a man who will keep the garbage covered and levelled down...”

1931 May - James P. Gibb is hired to collect garbage twice weekly.

*Dr. McBride lived on the south side of the bend on Dalhousie Street (now #361 Dalhousie) - the dump was located behind his property on the present location of Caldwell Towers.

If you enjoy Reflections, please let us know! We welcome your comments. Reflections is also available by e-mail - please contact us for details.

1941 to 1955

The Disposal Dilemma

1941 March - An Editorial in the *Echo* states: “While Amherstburg is not yet troubled with a dumping-ground problem it is just a matter of time until the residents in the odorous vicinity of the present dump are going to get fed

up...Amherstburg’s garbage dump is an eyesore, a smell-sore and a health-sore...and it is only surprising that the citizens have not got up in arms about the matter long ago...”

1941 May - The Board of Health recommends that “action be taken regarding eliminating the smell and rat nuisance at the town dump...The Board favors the use of insecticide to kill the smell and rat poison to kill the rats...improvements will be undertaken which will include planting trees and using snow fence to keep the papers from blowing away...James P. Gibb was complimented...on his work in keeping the dump as clean and



Town dump, circa 1946.

Photo courtesy C. Morrison

odorless as possible. He ploughs the refuse under every day and gradually the actual dumping ground is going farther back on the property where it will be less and less of a nuisance.”

1945 August - Council discusses the possibility of building a garbage disposal plant. Mayor N.A. Marra says it won’t be needed for at least 15 more years. “There is little odor from the dump except when the wind is blowing in a certain direction...the rat situation is under control and...the scum-covered creek is being filled in.”

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Growing Up in the 'Burg

Sea-faring

by Capt. John Burck

The summer of 1958 was my best one.

I was home on leave after a year of work on an old wartime-built 10,000-ton cargo ship, as a deck apprentice with a deep-sea shipping company in Montreal.

Boy, it was good to be home! I was looking for action. "In Amherstburg?" you say. Yes, sir, and I found it!

I was talking to one of the local maidens who mentioned that her godmother had a cottage that needed painting. Since I was obviously bored, I should go and see her. So I did.

As it turned out, she had gone to school with my uncle so I was in. If I painted her cottage with her paint, I could use the place all summer for free - a nice little place on an Edgewater beach. Unbelievable.

I needed labourers. Luckily I was able to recruit a crew, all mates from high school. It didn't take long before the job was done and the cottage was ours, rent-free.

One of the guys had built two kayaks, and one morning we decided to take them out for sea trials. We paddled upstream into the mouth of the Canard River. Up ahead we noticed a "stick" moving steadily across the current. We soon discovered it was a snake, and before we knew it, the snake was coming down the starboard side of Al's boat, looking to come aboard. I managed to swat him with my paddle, resulting in the three of us going in three different directions as fast as we could go!

We caught a big snapping turtle and dropped it off at the house of the tug *Atomic's* cook, Bill Wilson. He was glad to see him. He said they could be dangerous and showed us a scar on his hand 50 years old to prove it. Turtle soup, anyone?

That was enough sea-faring. The rest of my leave was spent ashore. I got plenty of sea time at work.

Such Rubbish!

continued from page 1

1949 May - Deputy-Reeve Wm. Nattress proposes a central plant for garbage disposal, to serve 12 communities in Essex County. "People down the front are complaining about the smoke and smell...we will soon have to do something about it..."

1951 June - "Fires at Dump Are Cause for Some Concern" - "The town is experiencing a lot of trouble with fires at the dump, which...are set by scavengers..."

1952 May - "Dalhousie Street South Residents Ask Town Council to Discontinue Use of Present Garbage Dump" - "The garbage dump is a disgrace and conditions there are very bad."

1952 July - Council decides to appoint a committee to investigate the possibility of building an incinerator and/or possible locations for a new garbage dump.

1952 August - "Dump Fire Burns for Hours - Smoke Covers a Great Part of the Town - Stench Beyond Description".

1953 April - Garbage collection recently was decreased to once a week, which is unpopular with residents. Twice weekly collection will resume May 24th; paper and cardboard will only be picked up on the last Thursday of the month.

1954 January - Council decides to contact the Ontario Dept. of Health "for advice re the disposal of garbage".

1954 March - "The garbage dump...was completely covered and

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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The Marsh Collection gives charitable tax receipts for donations of \$50 or more.

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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the ground levelled. At the present time the dumping is being done at the southeast corner of the property and provision has been made to keep the dump properly covered. As yet the committee has not reported to council on the location of a new dump..."

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Yesterday's News

from the archives of the *Amherstburg Echo*

1884

June - Work on the new town hall is progressing well.

July - The first storey of the new post office is being built.

August - A new regulation has gone into effect whereby groceries and liquors must be sold separately.

1894

June - Hobb's Hardware Co. of London are installing stained-glass windows in St. John the Baptist Church.

July - The first races of the Amherstburg Driving Park Assn. will be held "on the half-mile track about half a mile east of town." A grand stand and 20 stalls are being erected. (*see photo below*)

August - Over 1000 people attended Emancipation Day celebrations at Amherstburg.

1904

June - An electric light wire became crossed with the S.W.&A. electric trolley wire and the current was carried downtown. Wm. Fox's stagecoach and W.W. Trimble's team of horses discovered the problem.

July - Town Council proposes purchasing a second-hand pump for the waterworks plant. The *Echo* is encouraging them to buy a brand-new pump instead.

August - Nineteen Anderdon men have been charged with playing baseball on a Sunday.

1914

June - The Mickle Reunion Assn. was formed at the 4th annual Mickle family



Amherstburg Race Track, undated.

Courtesy Kent Wigle

reunion on Bob-Lo, to "give permanency to the annual gatherings."

July - Amherstburg hotel keepers have formed an association under which they pledge to adhere to the rules set out by the Liquor License Act, hoping to improve the bad reputation of Amherstburg hotels.

August - The Solvay Process Co. has completed the purchase of several properties in Anderdon and is drilling test wells.

1924

June - Babe White, "The Human Fly", will climb the Lake View Hotel.

July - Cement sidewalks are being installed at Willow Beach.

August - The Bob-Lo Café, a large frame structure which extends out over the river on the island's east side, will be moved back to a more accessible location.

1934

June - Brick from the old waterworks tower is piled away, waiting the time when Council sees fit to build a museum on the property [Dalhousie Street, opposite Rankin].

July - Brunner Mond is adding a plant for the manufacture of calcium chloride, which will result in an additional 20-30 permanent jobs.

August - Town councillors are disagreeing about whether to continue relief, and whether to pay the tax collector extra for doing clerical work in connection with welfare.

1944

June - The Town solicitor recommends banning swimming at the Waterworks dock.

July - A branch of the Canadian Legion has been organized in Harrow.

August - Outbreaks of rabies have occurred in Malden and Anderdon.

1954

June - For the second time, Amherstburg Public School has requested that a traffic light be erected at the corner of Sandwich and Richmond Streets.

July - Large crowds attended the Amherstburg Firemen's Field Day in the Town Park on Dominion Day.

August - A new cross is being erected atop the steeple of St. John the Baptist Church, to replace the one that blew down in March.

1964

June - Council is investigating the possibility of using an \$8800 Centennial grant to develop a recreational park on the Bell Farm.

July - The Island of Bob-Lo Co. has purchased the Scratch block, southwest corner Dalhousie and Murray.

August - Rose Hill and St. John the Baptist Cemeteries will soon be operated under one Board.

1974

June - It has been proposed that Amherstburg Town Council be reduced from nine members to five.

July - The Town intends to purchase the General Bakeries [Marra's Bread] property, to be used by the Board of Works Dept. [This property was bounded by Richmond, Murray, Ramsay and Bathurst Streets.]

August - An historic Pensioner's cottage has been moved from Lot 31, Fort Street, to Fort Malden, where it will be restored and furnished.

1984

June - ERCA has purchased the former Lakeview Hotel property, northwest corner Dalhousie and Murray Streets.

July - Several local events are scheduled during the summer to commemorate the Bicentennial of Ontario.

August - The new comfort station in the West Town Park has been officially opened. It contains washrooms, equipment for the wading pool and a concession stand.

Shipping the Detroit

The steamer *Tashmoo*

by Vince Spearing

New Year's Eve, 1899, marked the end of the century with the launch of a new ship at the Detroit Shipbuilding Co., opposite Amherstburg on the American side of the river. The vessel was christened *Tashmoo* and was designed by the famous marine architect Frank Kirby, who would later design the Bob-Lo steamers *Columbia* and *Ste. Claire*.

Tashmoo was 320 feet in length and powered by 2500 hp triple-expansion steam engines. She was driven by two massive paddlewheels on each side of her sleek hull. The ship was reported to be able to carry 1400 passengers at 25 miles per hour. Her owners were the White Star Line and she was built to sail the popular route from Toledo, Ohio, to Tashmoo Park on the St. Clair River.

In the early 1900s Detroiters often cruised to beat the Detroit city heat during the hot summers. People would enjoy dinners and entertainment, stopping at several dance pavilions and parks along the river and lake.

The *Tashmoo* was based in Detroit and her owners claimed she was the fastest ship on the Great Lakes. In 1900 a challenge was made to this claim by the steamer *City of Erie*'s owners. Bets were made and a 100-mile race was arranged from Erie, Pennsylvania, to Cleveland, Ohio. The *Tashmoo* led for most of the race but lost it by 45 seconds due to a mechanical problem. The results of the race earned her the nickname "The White Flyer" because of her speed and white superstructure.

For three decades *Tashmoo* carried passengers on pleasure cruises through the U.S. Prohibition era and the Great Depression. This would come to a dramatic end at Amherstburg on a beautiful June evening in 1936.

On June 18, 1936, the *Tashmoo* had just departed the Sugar Island dock, opposite the west side of Bob-Lo Island. The ship had over 1000 passengers aboard. Enroute to the open Detroit River, she struck an underwater rock and began to take on water.

Her captain could see the lights of the Brunner Mond chemical plant and

headed for the safety of the Canadian shore. As a result of his quick thinking and the efforts of his crew, a tragedy was averted.

The ship reached the dock on the Amherstburg shore and slowly sank to the river bottom in 18 feet of water. Her upper decks were above water level and all passengers and crew left the ship for the safety of the shore.

Many of the older residents of Amherstburg have related how, in parade fashion, the ship's orchestra led the stranded passengers down Sandwich Street. Buses and streetcars eventually transported everyone back to Detroit.

Over the next few weeks, salvage operations began. After several attempts to raise her failed, she was declared a total loss. Her engines and boilers were removed and her hull towed to Detroit and scrapped. Thus came to an end one of the most loved and enjoyed ships on the Detroit River. It is ironic that *Tashmoo*'s life ended across the river from where she was launched.



The *Tashmoo*, sunk at Brunner Mond dock, June 1936.

Marsh Collection P1752



The people in this photo are believed to be passengers on the *Tashmoo* on the night she sank.

Marsh Collection P1693

Amherstburg's Changing Population

by Eleanor Warren

While researching changes in population in Amherstburg, we came across the late David P. Botsford's notes on this subject. Gleaned from assessment and census rolls, his figures range from 1,824 in 1867, Confederation year, to 2,330 in 1876, with the following explanation for the fluctuations*:

The rise in population between 1867 and 1876 was mainly due to the building of the Canada Southern Railway, with another peak in 1882 when the population was 2,663. Then the Essex "Cut-off" induced a population drain to Windsor.

The 1891 Census lists a total population of 2,285 - 1,098 males and 1,187 females. Included in those figures were 640 unmarried males and 667 unmarried females (mostly children), 48 widowers and 113 widows. By 1913 a further rise brought the total to 2,654. Channel work in the Detroit River was largely responsible for that growth.

The outbreak of the Great War in 1914 drew many from Amherstburg to war service and working in munitions, so the town then lost population, but recovery came with the opening of the Brunner Mond Canada plant in 1918. By 1924 the population was estimated at 2,850. Two years later it had increased to 3,000.

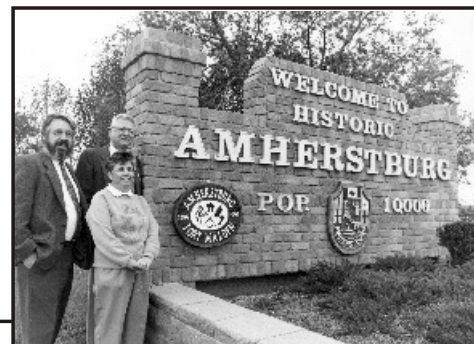
In the ensuing years, industry and business increased in Amherstburg. By 1951, the ninth Census of Canada indicated that the population of Amherstburg was 3,638; Anderdon boasted 2,925 and Malden 1,807. By 1975 the numbers had jumped to 5,696; in 1985, parts of Malden and Anderdon having been annexed four years earlier, there were 8,474 citizens with a further increase in 1991.

Then with the amalgamation of the rest of Anderdon and Malden in 1998, Amherstburg's population took a giant leap. Current statistics show 21,784

* Mr. Botsford's notes were used in this article for the statistics up to the 1970s.

folks living within the expanded perimeter.

There's more information about the town's growth in population at the Marsh Historical Collection. If interested, you are invited to come in; we will pull the files for you and you may browse to your heart's content.



Above: Amherstburg welcome sign, 10,000 residents, 1996.

Left to right: Frank Gorham, Bill Gibb, Nancy Shaw.
Marsh Collection P1597

Left: Amherstburg population sign, 8500 residents, circa 1988.

Marsh Collection P5064.18

Such Rubbish! *continued from page 2*

1954 April - "Firemen Battle Blaze at the Garbage Dump".

1955 May - "Dalhousie Street Residents Protest Smoke from Dump - Get Promise that Something Will Be Done". A fire on May 14th sends burning embers over the neighbourhood, some landing on a baby buggy that was occupied by a child.

1955 June - H. Murray Smith, a resident of Dalhousie Street South, has his lawyer issue a writ against the Town.

The only difference between the sanitary habits of the Town of Amherstburg and an alley cat is that he buries his when we burn ours. - H. Murray Smith, quoted in the Amherstburg Echo of May 26, 1955

1955: The Sanitary Solution

1955 November - "Garbage Contract Finally Accepted By The Town Council - Nye Brothers to Take Over on December 15th". Nye Bros. lease property in Colchester North Twp. for a disposal site and sign a ten-year contract with the town. "The garbage dump on Dalhousie Street South will not be available for any type of dumping after December 15th and will revert to the control of the property owner".

1966 January - The contract with Nye Bros. has run out and Crowder Bros. are hired until the town takes over garbage collection. An agreement is signed with David Bondy for a disposal site.

1968 November - Essex County will "establish a system of garbage disposal on a county basis". Annual cost to the Town of Amherstburg is \$4079.10.

The complete newspaper articles used to compile this article can be found in the files of the Marsh Collection.

Ancestral Lines

The Kane Family, Amherstburg Druggists

Amherstburg Echo
December 2, 1904

Death of Mrs. Kane

Mrs. Mary Ann Kane, who for many years took a very active and prominent part in business affairs in Amherstburg, passed away at the residence of her daughter, Mrs. Owen, at Grand Rapids, Mich., on Saturday last. Mrs. Kane was born in Halifax, N.S., on January 10, 1837. Her maiden name was Mary Ann Murphy and she was a daughter of the late Anthony Murphy and Mary Reynor.

When deceased was a mere child, the family moved to Amherstburg. Her father was a customs officer for many years under Collector Kevill. She was married to John A. Kane at the R.C. Church, Amherstburg, on September 8, 1852, by Rev. Fr. Daudet, Capt. Wm. Caldwell and his wife (Ann Cousins) being groomsman and bridesmaid on the occasion. By this union they had nine children, of whom five daughters survive her:-

Mrs. Janet¹ Macdonald, of Grand Rapids, Mich.;

Mary A. (Mrs. W.H. McEvoy), of Amherstburg;

Nellie² (Mrs. R.H. Owen), of Grand Rapids, Mich.;

Florence (Sister Eulalia), of St. Joseph's Convent, Walkerville;

Blossie³ (Mrs. Harry Clarke), of St. Louis, Mo.

Mr. Kane died on November 15, 1870 at the age of 48 years. Referring to the *Essex Record and Journal* of November 26, 1870, which says:- "Mr. Kane, after serving an apprenticeship to A. Sutton, druggist, of Bowmanville, Ont., came to Amherstburg about twenty years ago, and has ever since been identified with the affairs of the town,

having held several municipal offices, and also being appointed Coroner, which office he held until the time of his death. During the years 1854 and 1855 he owned and conducted the *Amherstburg Telegraph*, a paper having a wide circulation, strongly advocating the construction of the then talked of Southern Railway, and devoted to the best interests of the country. Mr. Kane was a man of rare attainments and highly respected by those whose pleasure it was to know him. He leaves a wife and seven children to mourn his loss. His remains were followed to their last resting place by a large circle of mourners, among whom were the Masonic Fraternity of Amherstburg, of which he was an honoured member, the usual imposing funeral ceremonies of the order being performed over his grave. Requiescat in pace."

On the death of her husband, Mrs. Kane went to Toronto and passed the necessary examination and received a certificate as a chemist and druggist,

and for 26 years successfully managed the business, having not only the confidence of the public but of the physicians of the community. In 1896 she retired from business and went to Grand Rapids to reside with her daughter, Mrs. Owen.

Mrs. Kane, although of a frail frame and delicate constitution, had wonderful energy and great business tact. She had been ailing for some years and during the past years gradually failed. On Thanksgiving Day (Thursday of last week) she suddenly took a very bad turn, gradually grew worse and passed away on Saturday. The remains were brought to Amherstburg and the funeral took place on Monday morning to the R.C. Church (where she was married 52 years before)...Mrs. Kane had spent a very active life, one that few women can compare with, and she was never too busy to give care and attention to those in distress. Where there was sickness, Mrs. Kane was always to be found, and she made many life-long friends who will ever cherish her memory.

**Mary Ann (Murphy) Kane
and John Kane**

*Photos courtesy
Gatfield family*



Nettie (Kane) MacDonald



Mary (Kane) McEvoy



Nellie Kane (later Mrs. Owen)



**Florence Kane
(later Sr. Eulalia)**

¹ Janet was also known as Nettie

² Nellie was also known as Ellen

³ Blossie was also known as Eliza Maria

Three Years and Counting

by Liza Price

Three years ago this past February, I began another chapter in my "Employment Book". Yes, there are a lot of chapters - some interesting and some not - but until I win the lottery...

I am an employee of the Marsh Historical Collection, and like so many people in Amherstburg, I had a vague idea that this office existed but I had no idea what they did...or how they did it!

However, I now know this office has a wealth of Amherstburg historical information, all painstakingly (and sometimes painfully) referenced, cross-referenced and cross-referenced again. Eleanor (the Boss) and Jenn (#1 Employee) have spent 20 years organizing the Collection, which includes thousands of files, pictures and artifacts, all pertaining to Amherstburg, its history and its people. I am afraid I am a tad too old to ever catch up to Eleanor and Jenn's huge amount of knowledge, but I have found I am pretty good at taking messages and eventually finding the answer so I can call a person back.

I also discovered that there were some pretty good house parties in the 1800s in the old 'Burg...usually lasting till sunrise! And some of those houses still exist, even if the parties wrap up earlier now. Also there was more than a fair share of horse racetracks and hotels if the house party wasn't your cup of tea (so to speak). As well, the graphic and gory news reporting in the early *Amherstburg Echo* would make today's TV show "Extra Extra" seem very tame indeed! And as time marched on, families got bigger and bigger (darn those Catholics!) and so have the Marsh genealogy files! And yes, there are pictures, thousands and thousands of pictures... which someday I hope to be finished scanning and finally get them online...which is probably what I should be doing now...so it's been three years and counting!

Looking Back on the Last 20 Years

by Jennifer MacLeod

Where does the time go? It seems impossible that October 1st will be the 20th anniversary of the day Eleanor and I found ourselves in an empty unit at 235 Dalhousie Street, surrounded by boxes of files and books, with only a dining room table and a few chairs. We had no desks...no computer...no bookshelves or filing cabinets...not even pens or a stapler - but a trip to the office supply store soon fixed that - and the fun began!

At the beginning, we didn't know what to expect or what our role would be in the heritage community, so we kept an open mind. It soon became evident that genealogical materials were much in demand, and before long Eleanor's cabinets of family files had a new home within our walls. As people became aware of our existence, donations of artifacts, photos and other items began to appear.

After only a few years it became clear that we had outgrown the space and in the Spring of 1999 we took the opportunity to expand into the unit next door, doubling our square footage and allowing for separate public and storage spaces.

In twenty years, the Marsh Collection has had hundreds of researchers and visitors from all over the world. We have catalogued thousands of photographs and looked through many miles of microfilm of the *Amherstburg Echo*! Indexes and finding aids that in some cases took years to create have made the collection even more accessible and easy to use. We acquired some volunteers and many "regulars" who can always be relied on to pass along town gossip or come in looking for answers "to settle a bet". *Reflections*, which began in 2007, has collected even more supporters, near and far. This year we hope to take things one step further and begin to digitize items in the collection for on-line access.

On a personal level, during my twenty years at the Marsh Collection I bought a house (and am now in the process of selling it), had two babies (the oldest of whom is graduating from Gr. 8 this month), welcomed two Black Labs into the family, made a large circle of friends and acquaintances and drove countless times to Niagara to visit my family...which brings us to the reason

for this missive.

This summer I am moving back "home" to Niagara Falls. It was a difficult decision but I know it is the best thing for me and my family. I will miss the people and places of Amherstburg very much - I can't even begin to express how much I will miss Eleanor and Liza and the Marsh Collection - but change, as they say, is good.

The Marsh Collection has come a long way and accomplished a lot in 20 years and I am so happy to have been a part of it. To our researchers and supporters, I have very much enjoyed meeting you, assisting you and listening to your stories of "Growing Up in the 'Burg". To my colleagues in Amherstburg Museums & Galleries, it has been an honour to work with you in promoting the wonderful heritage of our little town. Keep up the good work! To our Board of Directors, I thank you for the opportunity to have a job I truly love.

The Marsh Collection is a valuable addition to Amherstburg's heritage community, and I wish it every success in the future.

Jennifer

Then & Now

Southeast Corner Apsley* (Sandwich) and Simcoe Streets



Above: Alfred Pulford's Carriage Shop, *circa* 1896.

Marsh Collection P4133.1

Below: Super Green Convenience, June 2014.

Marsh Collection photo



* Prior to the 1950s, Sandwich Street south of Richmond Street was known as Apsley Street.