



Reflections

Newsletter of the Marsh Historical Collection
Amherstburg, Ontario



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60th Anniversary in 2011 for Amherstburg Goodfellows Club

CONGRATULATIONS and MANY THANKS!!

December of 2011 will ring in the 60th year since members of the Amherstburg Goodfellows began peddling papers on the streets of Amherstburg. An annual event since 1951, the practice has been widely accepted each year by this giving community. For many years the local club operated under the umbrella of Windsor's charter and sold the annual *Windsor Star* Goodfellows Edition papers. Sale of the papers allows the Goodfellows to provide Christmas baskets of food for families in need at this time of the year. In 1984 the papers took on a local flavour, being printed at the *Amherstburg Echo* by staff volunteers. (Congratulations and thanks also go out to the Windsor Goodfellows who are observing their 100th anniversary this year, 2010.)

Amherstburg district citizens have always been known for their giving spirit, especially at Christmastime. While going through old *Amherstburg Echo* files at the Marsh Historical Collection, it was discovered that the practice of distributing Christmas baskets goes back at least to 1912 when predominantly women's groups initiated it. In December of that year the "Amherstburg Literary Club" requested donations towards their Christmas charity work. Contacts were Mrs. Oscar Teeter, Mrs. F. M. Falls and Mrs. Arthur Marsh. A week later the "Women's Reading Circle" had undertaken the "worthy object of providing Christmas baskets for a number of families."

The first mention of a "Goodfellows Club" appeared in a 1925 *Echo* as a request to anyone knowing families in need to contact the club care of the *Echo* office and the committee in charge would see to their needs. In 1926 the local paper noted that the work of the "Amherstburg Goodfellows" was eminently successful. A committee consisting of two ladies from each of the local churches was chosen to look after



Amherstburg Goodfellows assembling Christmas baskets, 1990.

gifts, food, clothing, etc. That year, 60 baskets were distributed.

The following year the *Echo* reported that "there was great excitement around the Public Library auditorium as Drifford Bertrand's Minute Delivery trucks dashed back and forth carrying loads of baskets (50 of them) filled with clothing, meats, groceries, toys and delicacies, to the homes investigated by the Goodfellows which were "found to be in need of Christmas cheer." Research in the old *Echo* files indicates that the Goodfellows were active until 1931 but any news of their work in Amherstburg was unreported for 20 years thereafter.

In November 1951 a meeting of several community organizations was

held, the purpose being to organize an Amherstburg chapter of Goodfellows, the territory to include Amherstburg, Anderdon and Malden. That first meeting was held in the upstairs dining room of the Amherst Hotel. A second meeting a week later took place in the Library and was open to everyone. At the third meeting, held in Christ Church Parish House, a Board of Directors was appointed and committees - Investigating, Purchasing, Packing and Paper Sales - were formed. That year the club provided 52 Christmas baskets to less fortunate families in the Tri-Community. Five years later there were 80 baskets delivered, then it doubled to 160 in 1961;

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Growing Up in the 'Burg

Always Use the Facilities Provided

by anonymous

Back in the days of drive-in movies in Windsor, one of the things to do if there was nothing else going on was to head there and watch whatever was playing. Watching a movie with three guys in a car can be a rather dry experience. To alleviate this dryness somewhat, people were known to bring a few bottles of libation to help pass the time. You always parked in the last row so as to not disturb others (actually, you didn't want to get caught). Anyway, to make a long story short, "what goes in must come out." Parking in the last row of the Windsor Drive-In made for a very long trip to use the facilities. It was much more convenient to head the other way to a nearby old abandoned house to take care of things.

As the night progressed and the libation disappeared, two of my buddies decided it was time to head to the old house. The night was dark, probably darker than the inside of a cow. Off they went. When they hadn't returned after a reasonable time I went looking for them. I didn't get more than a hundred feet when there they were, heading back to the car, only they weren't walking together as you would expect. They were about twenty-five feet apart. One was dry and the other was soaking wet and stinking to high heaven. The dry one was laughing while the wet one didn't see any humour in the situation at all.

The mystery was soon solved when I found out that during the trip to the old house they encountered an old open septic tank, filled to the brim. One missed it in the dark but the other didn't. He smelled like you can't believe and we had to put him in the trunk to bring him home. It took at least a month and every air freshener we could find to air out the car and it was necessary for him to burn his clothes. A very valuable lesson was

learned that day: "Always use the facilities provided."

Iler's Bush and Creek

by anonymous

Iler's Bush, Iler's Creek - I have no idea where the names came from; they were there long before I was around.* What I can tell you is these places were heaven on earth for a group of adventurous kids. They supplied visions of the jungle, camping, trapping, hunting, horseback riding and many other escapades. They were enough to supply a lifetime of memories.

The bush and creek were located immediately south of Park Street and covered the area bounded by Park on the north, Dalhousie on the west, Lowes Sideroad on the south and Flynn Subdivision on the east. Contained in this area was also the town dump, that supplier of all that was needed for kids with a wild imagination.

I mentioned horseback riding - attempted horseback riding would be a better description. Two horses had the complete run of the bush and it was a matter of ritual that when we were going there we would call the horses to the fence by offering them something to eat - an ear of corn or an apple we had brought. The plan was to get the horse as close to the fence as possible and hold it there with the appetizer while one of us would climb up on the fence and jump on the horse's back. Our plan always failed, as no one told the horse of our intentions and, to show how upset he was, he would buck and either throw us back on the fence or over it. Nobody got hurt but we never did get a horseback ride.

Camping was a major part of our bush experience and many trails and clearings were made by us in the quest for the perfect campsite. One day our

*For many years the Iler family occupied the property, residing in the house which is now #433 Dalhousie Street.

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.

plan came together. We had recently cleared a nice small area deep in the middle of the bush and we had it ringed with the brush we had cleared. All it needed to make it perfect was a tent of some sort. We scoured around and were at the dump when "Bingo!" - there it was: a whole roll of discarded linoleum. With a great deal of difficulty we hauled it back to our campsite and made a teepee out of it.

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Yesterday's News

from the archives of the *Amherstburg Echo*

1881 January - A New Year's Eve party was held in the upper floor of George Middleditch's new foundry building, northeast corner Dalhousie and Park Streets [now the site of The Beer Store].

- A stretch of smooth ice on the Detroit River on the east side of Bois Blanc Island is being used for horse racing.

1891 January - Apron parties, spiderweb parties and oyster suppers are popular these days.

- D.L. Wigle will open his hardware store in the 3-storey brick block, corner Dalhousie and Murray, which he recently purchased. The third floor will be used as a Masonic Hall.

1891 February - John Cooper has purchased the old R.C. presbytery and is moving it to the northwest corner of Brock and Gore Streets.

1901 January - The Detroit, Belle Isle & Windsor Ferry Company has purchased a dock at the end of Murray Street from the Town.

- The Public Library Board has approved the purchase of the Smith property, Ramsay Street, and will renovate the house for library purposes.

1901 February - February 2nd has been declared a day of mourning for the funeral of Queen Victoria, who died January 22nd. All public places are draped in black and memorial services are being held at local churches.

1910 December - The steamer *Papoose* with a big gang of men is building small islands on the west side of Bois Blanc Island.

1921 January - Louis Fox will open a menswear store in the Lake View block.
- For the first time, Amherstburg's mayor and council will be paid.

1921 February - Interior work is nearly

completed in the new Imperial Bank building on the northeast corner Richmond and Dalhousie [now CIBC].

1931 February - Ignace Kopacz has torn down the old frame building on the northeast corner of Bathurst and Murray and will build a brick block with two stores and an upstairs flat. [This brick building was razed in October 2010.]

1940 December - Flying Officer Hugh Fleming will be in town to enlist those wishing to join the RCAF.

1941 January - Fort Malden is now officially a National Park.

1950 December - SKD employees have received their first payment of the new profit-sharing plan.

- Branch 157, Royal Canadian Legion, burned the mortgage on its building.

1951 January - The first dial phone in town was installed in the home of Mayor William Nattress.

- A \$120,000 addition is planned for General Amherst High School.

1951 February - The Amherstburg Lions Club has purchased an ambulance and turned it over to the Town.

1960 December - Bus service on the Windsor-Amherstburg run will be discontinued on Sundays and holidays due to lack of patronage.

- The Verdi Club's first annual New Year's Eve party will cost \$5 per couple.

1961 February - The General Amherst Cadet Corps has won the Strathcona Shield for obtaining the highest marks for a school of its size in Western Ontario.

- The Verdi Club is celebrating the first anniversary of its building.

1970 December - The official opening of the Tri-community Arena takes place Dec. 12th.

- Construction is proceeding on the 26-unit senior citizens' housing project on Victoria Street.

- Women clerks at Haselhurst Big V pharmacy now wear pantsuits in the company colours.

1971 January - Plans have been submitted for a jug milk store on the southeast corner of Simcoe and Sandwich Streets.

1971 February - General Bakeries Ltd. will phase out its operations in Amherstburg and move to London.

- The contract to raze St. Rose High School has been given to M&H Wrecking Company.

- The new Canard River bridge on Hwy. 18 [Cty. Rd. 20] is Ontario's first two-lane Bailey bridge. It is 250 feet long and 17 feet wide with a 3-foot sidewalk.

1980 December - A large marina is under construction at the foot of Gore Street for Duffy's Tavern.

- If there is no appeal, parts of Anderdon and Malden will be annexed by the Town of Amherstburg effective Jan. 1, 1981.

- Parking meters downtown may soon be a thing of the past.

- Construction of the North American Black Historical Museum is progressing rapidly.

1981 February - A 3-bedroom apartment is renting for about \$250/month plus utilities.

- A mini-mall will be built on the southeast corner of McCurdy and Sandwich Streets.

