

Please
take
one!

Reflections

Newsletter of the Marsh Historical Collection
Amherstburg, Ontario

Please
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one!

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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.

Shipping the Detroit

McQueen Marine Re-visited

by Capt. John Burck

I had worked a couple of summers at McQueen Marine and really enjoyed it, so when my buddy Stan Ferriss told me a bulk carrier was aground off Brunner Mond, I knew we just *had* to go.

When the *Atomic* arrived we jumped aboard and asked Capt. Penner if we could go. He gave us half an hour to get our parents' permission and be back aboard. We made it.

We were put right to work at menial jobs, but we figured it was essential work. At least, to us it was. The next day was Thanksgiving and around midday I was on the freighter looking down at the tug *Patricia McQueen* when her cook, Jerry Stephenson, saw me and called me to the mess room. A full-course turkey dinner was consumed and greatly enjoyed.

Sadly, ten minutes later the *Atomic's* cook, Bill Wilson, shouted up,

asking if I had eaten. Not wanting to offend (as the ship's cook is a hungry teenage deckhand's best friend) I replied, "No, but I'll come back later when you aren't so busy." He wasn't busy, so I would eat *now*!

Well, I guess I could eat a small meal, but Bill didn't know what a small meal was. I got the works and he hovered nearby to ensure I had enough. Did I want dessert? No, that was okay. But Bill was just being polite. He slapped down a big slice of pumpkin pie and stayed there watching me "enjoy" it. Man, when I staggered out of that galley, I was so stuffed I thought I was going to be sick. "Come again, boy, come again."

You can't tell me that old scoundrel "Willy Bill" didn't suspect I had eaten already. Neither of us ever let on, but it was a Thanksgiving I never forgot.

Goodfellows

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140 in 1962; 125 in 1963; 101 in 1964. In 1994 there were 152 baskets provided. Last year (2009) 50 to 60 volunteers, many of them youngsters, assisted with packing 192 baskets (up from 186 in 2008) with another 30 helping with distribution.

In 1981, thirty years after operating under Windsor's charter, the local Goodfellows decided to go it alone. They applied for and received the AAM Goodfellows charter on March 17th of that year. Keith Clark was chosen as president; Jerry Beneteau, secretary; and Maurice Glen as financial secretary.

We are so grateful to the many dedicated men and women, boys and girls who assist in this mighty endeavour each year. Merry Christmas to all!

Iler's Bush and Creek

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Things couldn't be any more perfect.

We decided then and there that we would ask our parents if we could spend the night camping in our new digs. To my surprise, my dad said okay, if we would allow him to come and check out the place. He did, it met with his approval and plans were made for that night.

Everything was packed - our lunch, our bedrolls and our trusty BB guns in case there was any big game around. Off we went on the biggest jaunt of our lives. Supper consisted of hotdogs we roasted over our campfire and at dark we crawled into our beds and slowly drifted off to sleep. We weren't asleep any more than an hour when the horses decided to drop by for a visit. They didn't knock or anything civil like that.

They just walked up, stuck their heads in the doorway and snorted. Suffice it to say that being awakened so suddenly by a large horse breathing in your face makes your body do things that can't be printed here. A bunch of yelling (actually screaming) and some lead from our BB guns chased the horses away. We hoped that we scared them as much as they did us.

After we settled down and were sure the horses had gone, we went back to sleep, only this time with one eye and ear open. About one in the morning we thought we heard something and we were sure it was the horses returning. This time we were ready. We crawled out of our teepee and were looking around when

a large white apparition appeared. We immediately set off blasting it with BBs, as our motto was "Shoot first, ask questions later." It let out a scream and begged us to stop. When the dust settled we saw it was my dad, who had become concerned about us and had come to see how we were doing. Dad had a beige car blanket over him to keep out the cold and there is no way he could have anticipated how badly he scared us. I might add that Dad was none the worse for wear, as we couldn't shoot that straight, shaking as we were.

Dad was either satisfied of self-preservation set in, and he allowed us to camp there many times after that. The horses eventually treated us as part of the landscape and never bothered us again. It was, as I said, heaven on earth.

Bricks 'n' Beams

Royal Canadian Legion Branch 157 Clubhouse

Although this building is often attributed to merchant Peter Menzies, who died in 1857, evidence indicates that it was built around 1866 by John R. Park Jr., a local merchant, shipper and landowner. Designed as an Italianate villa, the structure had a symmetrical façade, wide cornice with bracketing at the eaves and bracketed verandahs. The rough-laid limestone walls were plastered and smoothly finished to contrast the detailed millwork. A high widow's walk at the top point of the roof completed this home. The residence remained in the Park family for 80 years, passing to Grace (Park) Stancliffe in 1904.

In the early 1920s Grace's husband Harold M. Stancliffe joined with P.G. French in a side business of growing plants and flowers. By

1929 the pair had 15,000 square feet of greenhouse space on three downtown lots and French left his job at Brunner Mond to manage the business full-time.

Stancliffe & French sold the business to John and Ted Gray in 1946. Later that year the former Park/Stancliffe residence was purchased by Royal Canadian Legion Branch 157, who modified the building to suit their needs, including making the main floor into one large room. Other major renovations were carried out in 1964 and 1984, when the exterior plaster was removed to reveal the limestone walls. The original widow's walk had previously been



Branch 157 clubhouse, 1978.

removed.

In 1981 Branch 157 purchased the former Bob-Lo Tavern building immediately to the north and converted it into a banquet hall.

This information was originally compiled for Doors Open Amherstburg, 2009.

Ancestral Lines

by Eleanor Warren

When I was a little girl - and yes, it's been a very long time since I was either little or a girl - my grandmother often tuned in to a radio serial called "One Man's Family" which ran from 1932 to 1959. I was reminded of this recently while compiling the genealogies of a couple of early Amherstburg area families who had many, many children. Can you imagine putting together a radio or TV show if the One Man's Family was Tremblay, which is one of the most prolific French-Canadian names in Canada? We would never attempt anything quite so challenging, but what we do at the Marsh Historical Collection

can be sometimes just as complicated and a heck of a lot of fun. It was suggested that I keep this column short because of space, like that's possible! So, just for fun, follow the next paragraph and catch how many local surnames you recognize. If you're not related to at least one or two of them it will be surprising!

FREDERIC MOSES TREMBLÉ was born on November 6, 1802 at St. Philippe, LaPrairie County, Quebec, son of Henri Eloi Tremblé and Marie Toulouse dit Raymond. On January 19, 1831 at St. Philippe, he married **FELICITÉ DESLIPPE**,

born there on March 5, 1811, daughter of J. Deslippe and Felicité Binet. Eight of their ten children married here, as follows: Alfred married Harriet **SENESEAC**; Flavie married Edward **DUPUIS**; Marie married Germaine **DUPUIS**; Daniel married Emily **MARION**; Gilbert married Annie **MULLEN**; Charles married Elizabeth **RICHARD**; Agnes married Edward **GRONDIN**; and Noé married Matilda **BERTRAND**. That's just one generation! Then they all raised large families who married into a whole other set of surnames. I wonder if Fred and Felicité had any idea what they had started!

Then & Now

Dalhousie Street



Photo courtesy Park House Museum

Above: This view of Dalhousie Street, looking north from just north of Gore Street, was taken in the 1920s. At the far right is the Stancliffe residence, now the clubhouse of Royal Canadian Legion Branch 157. In the left foreground is the front porch of the Gordon House (residence of the Mullen family at that time) at its original location. The frame residence just north of the Stancliffe house was razed in 1948 and replaced by a cinder block building which was occupied by the Bob-Lo Tavern for many years.

Below: Photo taken December 7, 2010.



Marsh Collection photo