



Reflections

Newsletter of the Marsh Historical Collection
Amherstburg, Ontario



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Obituary

The Amherstburg Echo

November 24, 1874 - October 25, 2012

It was with much sadness that we received the announcement of the passing of our beloved *Amherstburg Echo* less than a month before its 138th birthday. Predeceased by numerous weeklies, excellence in journalism, ethics and integrity, the *Echo* is survived and sadly missed by countless former dedicated co-workers, loyal readers and friends.

Gone but never to be forgotten, the *Echo* from its first issue on November 24, 1874 to October 25, 2012 has been preserved through modern technology and is available for future generations and researchers to peruse at the Marsh Historical Collection, 235 Dalhousie Street (upstairs), Amherstburg, Ontario.

- by Eleanor Warren

A Bit of Amherstburg Echo History

by Eleanor Warren

Four years before Amherstburg officially became a town (January 1878), William D. Balfour and John A. Auld, both politicians and newspapermen, came here from St. Catharines and established their four-page weekly newspaper on November 24, 1874. The paper was to be "*Liberal in politics*" and "*essentially local*," devoting "*considerable space to the interests of farmers*" and advocated whatever would "*tend to advance our educational interests*."

The first home of the *Amherstburg Echo* was in a building on the west side of Ramsay Street (the former Sons of Temperance Hall), where it remained for 41 years [see photos, pgs. 6 and 8]. Wm. Balfour was elected Speaker of the Legislature in 1894 and Provincial Secretary two years later. He passed away on August 19, 1896 just two weeks after assuming his duties there. Shortly thereafter, Arthur Marsh of the *Essex Free Press* joined the *Amherstburg Echo* as John Auld's partner. Thus began the involvement of the Marsh family, which lasted for 85 years.

As the paper grew in size and

stature, a more modern facility was required. Prominent architect J.C. Pennington was hired to draw up plans and in 1915 the *Echo* moved into its new building on the west side of Dalhousie Street.

When John Auld died in 1924, Arthur Marsh's twenty-three-year-old son John, a recent graduate of McGill University, joined his father at the paper. Arthur and John Marsh, along with a dedicated staff, produced one of the finest weeklies not only in the Province, but in Canada as well. Being the recipient of many awards for excellence throughout the years proved its stature, as did letters of admiration from other weeklies.

When Arthur Marsh was fatally injured in an automobile accident in 1940, his daughter Helen left her

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Books for Sale

The Marsh Collection has a variety of local history publications for sale...

Summer Dreams

The Story of Bob-Lo Island
\$30

Amherstburg 1796-1996 (Book I)
\$40

Know Your Ships 2012
\$18.95

**Stacks & Flags
of the Great Lakes (chart)**
\$8.95

Windsor Border Region
\$25 - \$35

Richardson's War of 1812
\$25

Invasions
Western District during the War of 1812
\$15

John Marsh's With The Tide
\$20

and more

Please note - cash or cheque sales only

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Growing Up in the 'Burg

Bambi and Friends

by anonymous

It was around 10 pm on an evening in late October, 1957 and I was wending my way home to Amherstburg. I had just left work at the bank in Harrow and was late, as the inspectors had just finished their surprise audit. The inspection was nothing to be alarmed about, just something that happened at random times to ensure the protection of your money.

Anyway, I digress. I was travelling west on Highway 18 (now County Road 20) and was just east of the Big Creek Bridge when way up in front of me I saw what I thought to be a group of people with flashlights. They seemed to be milling about in the centre of the road and all I could think of was that there had been an accident. I proceeded slowly and came upon a large herd of deer. The "flashlights" were their eyes reflecting in my headlights. There must have been at least 20 of the creatures. To my surprise, they didn't move. I kept edging forward, revving the car engine occasionally in the hope that they would move and let me get home. I hesitated in blowing the horn as I didn't want to startle the deer and have them stampede across the top of my car, leaving it looking like I had lost a serious battle with a hail storm.

So I waited and waited some more. The deer were in no hurry to go anywhere and continued walking around, occasionally stopping to look in the window of the car and ask themselves who I thought I was, interrupting their meeting. Seeing all these deer at that spot didn't surprise me, as I had seen the herd before while I was skating on the creek, only that time they were back in the bush at the side of the creek and not out on the highway. What did surprise me was they showed no fear whatsoever with me and the car in their midst. After what seemed to me to be an eternity (probably only ten minutes in reality) they called an end to

the meeting and left slowly one or two at a time.

To this day I don't know what that was all about and the only thing I can think of is that they were deciding who was going to the North Pole to pull that famous sleigh, or possibly they were making a stag movie. Anyway, the whole episode was magical and I was glad they had allowed me to share whatever it was they were doing.

The Sunker

by River Rat

This tale is about a boat that belonged to a buddy of mine. It was a Thornes Aluminum, well-known to many people in A'burg. These boats were manufactured in Windsor and in their heyday, everywhere you looked there was a Thornes boat in the yard, at the dock or on a trailer waiting to head out for a jaunt.

This model was either a 12-foot or 14-foot, I can't recall, but he had powered it with an outboard which exceeded the manufacturer's HP limit. The day I was able to "take her for a spin" was just a normal day at the beach at Callam's Bay. There was a group of guys hanging around, shooting the breeze, when R. showed up with his newly-acquired craft and immediately I wanted to take it out for a trial - on my own, of course. R. knew me well and cautioned me, "When you slow the boat down, do it slowly," as it was a tiller-steer boat which was controlled from the rear seat and the throttle was in the handle of the motor. I told him not to worry, as I had been around boats for a long time. I started the motor, put the lever in forward and started off on my test ride. The boat performed well and I circled the bay a couple of times with no problem, until I decided to shut it down, for what reason I still don't know. Sure enough, I slowed it down too quickly and the backwash rolled

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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up to the back of the boat and over the transom. It did not take long for me to realize I had not heeded his warning and here I was in the middle of Callam's Bay with only about 2 feet of the bow above water.

Now, the only boat available to come to my rescue was in my boatlift, and it was secured with a combination

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Yesterday's News

from the archives of the *Amherstburg Echo*

1882 December - John B. Grenier is building a shop on his Apsley Street lot for a cabinet-making, undertaking and general building business.

1883 January - Quite a skating rink has been formed on the river opposite J.P. Jones', just above Bickle & May's mill, [now the north end of King's Navy Yard Park] by cleaning off a large piece of ice and flooding it. At night torches are placed around the rink and the pleasures of skating are enjoyed till a late hour, in perfect safety, by scores of young and old.

1892 December - Cabinetmaker John B. Grenier, who died this week, had made his own coffin of black walnut.

1893 January - The Sisters of St. Joseph's Academy now give instruction on the guitar.

1902 December - Construction of the SW&A Railway Co.'s line to Amherstburg began 45 days ago and is already halfway to Anderdon Twp. 186 men are engaged on the job.

1903 February - The local Board of Health has ordered smallpox vaccination of all residents who have not been vaccinated in the past 7 years. A physician for each ward will visit house to house.

1912 December - Work on the new church at River Canard is going slowly due to trouble getting cement.

1913 January - The ice harvest is on, the crop being 12 to 14 inches thick and good quality.

- There is a movement afoot to have the Dominion Government purchase the old Fort Malden property.

1922 December - At the first meeting of

the Amherstburg Hockey Club, it was decided to build a pen on the ball park and enter a team in the Border Cities Amateur Hockey League.

- James Scott of Amherstburg has the contract to build the first cottage in the Lakewood Beach subdivision for Mr. Leiserman of Detroit.

- Council is negotiating with Brunner Mond regarding a price for a domestic supply of water for the town.

1923 February - Louie Phillips and Mike Meretsky have established a large junkyard at the corner of King and Gore Streets.

1932 December - Dr. W. Fred Park was acclaimed as mayor, thus entering his 19th term.

1933 February - Labourers working on the Livingstone Channel are paid 30 cents per hour.

1942 December - Butter rationing by coupon has gone into effect throughout Canada with a weekly ration of ½ lb. per person.

- Four Amherstburg merchants were fined \$200 each for keeping gaming and slot machines on their business premises.

1943 February - At last the steady flow of mail from Stalag 8B has begun. Mrs. Donald Dornan and Mrs. Howard Heaton have finally had cards from their sons who are POWs.

1952 December - The Colchester South Police Dept. will come into being January 1st, 1953. The OPP contract expires Dec. 31st.

- Canadian Rock Salt Co. officials have announced that a modern salt mining plant will be established at Ojibway.

1953 February - The new Anderdon Central School will officially open Feb. 26th.

- Malden Twp. has given notice of intention to close the 4th Concession Road south of Hwy 18 [County Rd. 20].

1962 December - A meeting of Anderdon Twp. ratepayers has been called to discuss the construction of a new township building and fire hall.

1963 January - A large electric clock which can be seen for several blocks has been installed on the Bank of Montreal building, southeast corner Dalhousie and Richmond Streets.

- The Amherstburg Recreation Committee has recommended to Council that the Bell Farm be laid out as a town park [now Centennial Park].

1963 February - Over 300 young people appeared at Council requesting that action be taken on building an arena.

1972 December - Duffy's Motor Inn will hold its Grand Opening Dec. 9th.

- Construction is proceeding on the new Canadian Tire store, west side Sandwich Street south of Park Street.

- Amherstburg Lions Club purchased a small bus to provide affordable transportation for senior citizens.

1973 January - Stanley Sprague has bought Speck's Coffee Shop from Carlos Bates.

1982 December - According to an Ontario Liberal report, Fighting Island is ecologically dying of chemical poisoning.

1983 February - Parks Canada has been given permission to obtain the historic Callam House [former Commissariat].

Shipping the Detroit

Greatest Number of Boats In History Of Navigation Pass Amherstburg To Make This Waterway Busiest In World

Amherstburg Echo December 19, 1941

I.T. Kelly, Marine Agent, Records 29,770 Passages Vessels Ply River Every Month In The Year Ore Trade Is Cause Of Great Increase

That Amherstburg sees a greater procession of boats than any other place in the world was definitely proven when Irving T. Kelly, manager of the Westcott Marine Agency, whose office in the Livingstone Channel records the passage of every freighter or passenger boat that travels the lower Detroit River, compiled his figures for the year after navigation closed Monday, December 15. There were 29,770 boats, which tops all previous records by several thousand. Last year the total was 26,273, which was greater than any other year, but that figure pales into insignificance beside the 1941 total.

This year was also unique in the fact that the marine office was open for the entire twelve months. Boats were recorded in every month to make this the longest and busiest season in the history of navigation on the Great Lakes.

The chief reason for the great increase was the need for ore in the war industries. Every boat in every fleet was pressed into service and the total tonnage that this figure represents is tremendous. The busiest month of the year was July when 2156 boats upbound and 2169 downbound were recorded.

The total of downbound boats always exceeds the upbound total and this year there were 14,946 downbound and 14,824 upbound.

Great Lakes Books

Although we do not lend our books, researchers are welcome to come in (Tuesday to Friday, 10am to 4pm) and make use of our reference library. We have a large "Great Lakes" section, which includes:

History of the Great Lakes (2 volumes) by J.H. Beers, 1899

Dana Bowen's *Lore of the Lakes, Memories of the Lakes, Shipwrecks of the Lakes*

The Fleet Histories Series, Vols. 1-6 and 9 (John Greenwood)

Namesakes of the Lakes (Greenwood), several volumes covering 1900-1980

Great Lakes Ships We Remember, Vols. 1 to 3 (Marine Historical Society of Detroit)

Ladies of the Lakes (James Clary)

Great Lakes Red Books, 1930-1993

Monthly Figures

The figures by months are as follows:-

Upbound: January, 24; February, 16; March, 85; April, 1158; May, 1940; June, 2058; July, 2156; August 2089; September, 1702; October, 1768; November, 1494; to December 15, 346.

Downbound: January, 26; February, 13; March, 85; April, 1024; May, 1959; June, 2043; July, 2169; August 2067; September, 1737; October, 1780; November, 1551; to December 15, 497.

The reason for the sharp decrease in the number of passages in September is because the ore boats began carrying coal up instead of travelling light and therefore could not make the round trip so quickly.

Growing Up in the 'Burg

continued from page 2

lock - and I was the only one who knew the combination. I had to shout out the numbers and hope the gang could hear me and know how to "do the numbers". It wasn't long before I saw the boat being lowered into the water and it came across the water to fish me out.

R. was hopping mad and repeated over and over, "I warned you, I warned you!" Within a short time after hauling the boat onto shore, emptying the water and drying out the motor he was back out there zipping around, but never again did I get the chance to take the little Thornes for a buzz around the bay.

Bricks 'n' Beams

From McColl-Frontenac to Naples

by Eleanor Warren

The northwest corner of Richmond and Sandwich Streets, with the exception of a couple of brief periods, has been the site of active business for 62 years.

In December 1939, the McColl-Frontenac Oil Company Ltd. purchased Lot 10, north side Richmond Street, from the Mary C. Goodchild estate for \$1000. In July 1940, just as the call for more soldiers won a ready response from some of Amherstburg's finest, the *Amherstburg Echo* announced the opening of McColl-Frontenac's "Red Indian Station".

H. Lester Hamilton was the general building contractor. Don Curtis of Webster Brothers-Labadie Ltd. (Ford dealers) was appointed as "Associate Dealer for Amherstburg and District." The operation included "gasoline, oils, automobile and truck tires, tubes and general repairs." The "Red Indian" trademark was advertised as a symbol of the "highest quality

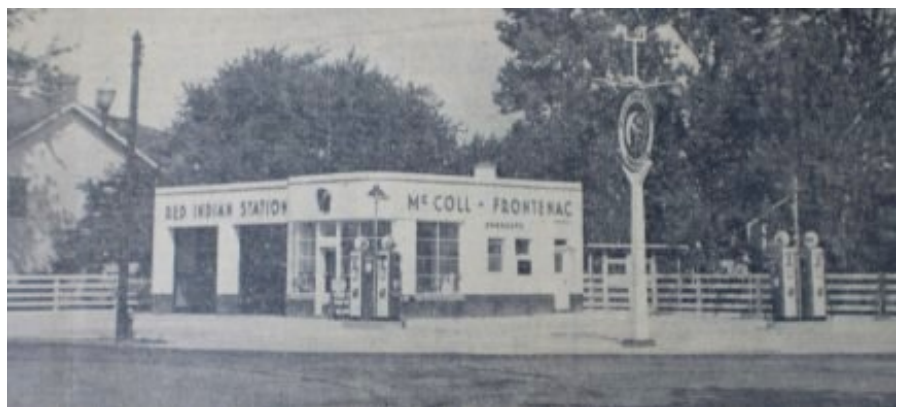
petroleum...rendering excellent service and products."

In 1948 the business was called the "Amherstburg Service Station" and M.A. Cornwall was manager. In 1950 the *Echo* announced that Marvin French was managing the "Amherstburg Service Station - Texaco Gas & Oils." In 1952 Carl Imeson took over as manager, and in 1969 Ron Dupuis was running the operation.

The Texaco Station was still there in 1981 but we've had some difficulty tracing the year that it

closed. The staff at the Marsh Collection would like to be able to complete the file with more names and dates. If you have that information we would be very interested in hearing from you. Please call Jennifer or Liza at 519-736-9191.

In 1996, Naples Pizza owner Glenn Harvey renovated the former Texaco building and moved his restaurant there. Ownership has changed since that time but today Naples Pizza remains a thriving business on a busy corner.



McColl-Frontenac "Red Indian" Station, July 1940.

Amherstburg Echo photo, July 26, 1940



Texaco station, 1981.

Marsh Collection PA17



Naples Pizza, November 2012.

Photo by P. Warren

Echo

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teaching career behind and joined her brother John Marsh at the paper. Helen contributed new and innovative ideas and features to the weekly, including her widely read "Conversation Pieces" column which is significant as a social history of Amherstburg from 1940 to 1980. (The first 25 years of "Conversation Pieces" are available in booklet form at the Marsh Collection.)

Through its 138 years the *Echo* kept us informed as to who was born, married and died in the county. It began with the old Washington hand press and took us through to the computer age. Through wars (Boer, WWI & WWII, Korea) it published the devastating reports of our boys who sacrificed their lives for us during those horrific times. It kept us in touch with our native sons and daughters who served overseas, ensuring our freedom to read the hometown newspaper. It recorded the Great Depression, the establishment of industries - Brunner Mond, Canadian Cannery, Calverts, Marra's Bread, SKD, to name just a few - and the demise of many. Elections, politics and celebrations found space in the pages of the *Echo*, including stories of local shenanigans and unsavoury activities. Through the industrial age to the green age, the *Echo* was there to inform us. It was witness to the advent of the space age, Neil Armstrong's walk on the moon and so much more.

In 1981 as John and Helen Marsh were approaching their "twilight years," the *Echo* was sold to John and Linda James, who provided tender, loving care for another ten years, again adding new, innovative and at times exciting stories, photos and editorial content. They handled the news of the tri-community, town and township councils and all the rest with integrity and balance, thanks not only to the Jameses and their newspaper background, but also to their wisdom in hiring the young and highly talented editor E.P. Chant (a.k.a. "Olsen"). With their abilities and the dedication of their carefully chosen staff, the Jameses produced an excellent 32-page weekly.

But for most of us there comes a time to move on. In 1990, after careful consideration and soul-searching, John and Linda James sold the *Echo* to Bowes Publishers Limited. By 1994 the weekly was on what seemed to many to be a downhill course. E. P. Chant moved on to greener pastures.

Over the next few years various managers took the helm and the *Echo* continued to publish from its home on

Dalhousie Street. But when management made the decision in 2009 to move from the building in which the weekly had survived for 95 years, the writing was on the wall. Then on October 25, 2012, to the sorrow of its faithful readers, historians and staff, the *Echo* was euthanized and a vital piece of our history was removed from our midst.

R.I.P.



Interior of *Echo* building, Ramsay Street, circa 1900. John Auld is seated at left.
Marsh Collection P57

***Echo* composing room. Left to right: John Auld, Frank Carr Jr, Allan Auld.**
Marsh Collection P56



Christmas Shopping

Businesses advertising in the *Amherstburg Echo*, December 1982

A & P
A.M.C. Mechanical
Al Lesperance Ford
Ala Shoes
Amherst Hotel
Amherst Quarries
Amherstburg Pizza & Spaghetti
House
Amherstburg Big V
Anderdon Tavern
Bank of Montreal
Barron Poultry
Bookshelf-Dave & Maggie
Brewin's Bake Shop
Buck Anderson's Garage
Butch's Shell Service
C. R. Farmer Enterprises
Canadian Imperial Bank of
Commerce
Canadian Tire
Canton House
Chan's Garden
Church & Dwight Limited
Creative Kitchens
Crowder Brothers Cartage
Custom Cleaners
DeLuca Construction Company Ltd.
Dick Geiger-Painting & Decorating
Duby's Furniture & Color Your
World
Duffy's Tavern & Motor Inn
E. T. Laframboise
E. Bondy Excavating & Trucking
Earl Jones & Sons Limited
Economy Rug & Upholstery
Cleaners
Elliot's Limited
Fort Malden Mall
Fort Malden Drug Mart
Fort Malden Tobacco & Lottery
Shop
Four Seasons Bowl
Frank's Kustom Collision
Garrison Cinemas
H. Lester Hamilton Insurance
Agency

Hairline Unisex & Assoc.
Hamilton Video
Heyme Wood Products
It's About Face
J. B. Chicken & Pizza
James H. Sutton Funeral Home
Jimmie's Flowers
Karen's Shoes
Ken's TV
Kennedy Amherstburg
Kubis Realty Ltd.
Lawrence Cote Insurance
Broker
Malden Automotive
Maria's Restaurant
Mat Cristofaro Construction
Ltd.
McNeil's
Navy Yard Restaurant
Norman A. Faucher Limited
Parkview Hair Styles
Pic-A-Pet
Pirates Snug Harbour
Precision Jewellers
Preservation Hall Gift Shop
Racicot Plymouth Chrysler
Ranta Enterprises
Reade's Photo Shops Ltd.
Richmond Nursing Home &
Lodge
Riverfront Florist
Riverside Esso
Rocco's Fine Foods
Royal Bank
S. K. D. Manufacturing Co.
Limited
ScotiaBank
Seagram Company Ltd.
Seaway Marine & Sports
Shoreline Tours
Sophisticated Lady
Speck's Confectionery
Spindler Baxter & Beneteau-
Insurance Brokers
Steamer Electric
Sun Parlour Gas Bar

Sunrise Sunoco Service
The Money Broker
The Dalhousie Market
The Front Porch
The Upholstery Shop
The Glass House
The Past & Present Shop
The Olde Brewer's & Winemakers
Supply Shoppe
The Amherstburg Echo
Toronto-Dominion Bank
Town of Amherstburg
Toy & Hobby
Trillium Treasure House
Universal Hair Styles
Uptown Body & Paint Shop
Vintage Courts
W. A. Atkinson Plumbing Co.
Waterbee Pools & Construction
Wayne's Equipment Rental
Wigle Hardware
Wool & Tot Shop

How to Be a Happy Old Maid. from the *Amherstburg Echo*, April 1891

To have so much to do that there is no time for morbid thoughts.

To never think for a moment that you are not attractive, and to make yourself look as charming as possible.

To be so considerate of the happiness of others that it will be reflected back to you as from a looking-glass.

To never permit yourself to grow old, for by cultivating all the graces of heart, brain and body, age will not come upon you.

To believe that a life-work has been mapped out for you, that it is near you, and to do that which your hands find for you.

To remember that the happy old maid is the one member of a family who, not having any other claims on her, can be God's own sunshine to those in sorrow or in joy.

-From *The Ladies' Home Journal*.

Then & Now

Ramsay Street, West Side between Murray and Gore



Above: *Amherstburg Echo* building, photo circa 1900.
Marsh Collection P55

Below: Photo taken November 2012.
Marsh Collection photo

