

Chapter X

RECOLLECTIONS

CHAPTER X RECOLLECTIONS

Political Personae

The Amherstburg district has produced many sons and daughters in the 20th century who attained success as lawyers, doctors and other similar professions. However, two in particular have excelled as politicians, achieving national and even international recognition in the political field.

Most times little credit is given to politicians who make it possible for worthy local projects to get grants and other help from the federal and provincial governments. [For example,] Richard Thrasher...arranged for [St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Church] to purchase [its] property from the federal government at a very low figure. When things started to slow up and financing for development was not available, Eugene Whelan...arranged a grant from the government to complete the project. Both Mr. Whelan and Mr. Thrasher were also instrumental in Fort Malden National Historic Park getting grants for park expansion and other park development.¹

Richard Devere Thrasher, Q.C.

Richard Devere Thrasher was born in Amherstburg on March 5, 1922, the son of Devere and Irene (Richard) Thrasher. At the age of five he was sent off to Grade 1 at St. Anthony School but by lunchtime had been sent home because he was not yet six years old. The story is that 'Dick' was broken-hearted and cried all the way home! The years passed with the usual schooling and part-time jobs, and in the late fall of 1940 he graduated from St. Rose High School.

Dick immediately went to work for the Public Utilities Commission. In February, 1941 his marriage to the former Jeanne Whittal was announced. Soon afterwards he left the PUC and went to work at the Ford Motor Company in Windsor. In September of 1942 he joined the RCAF and was commissioned upon graduation. He left for service overseas, returning at the cessation of hostilities in 1945. He returned to school and received his Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Western Ontario through Assumption College, then went to Osgoode Hall in Toronto for three years and was called to the Ontario Bar in June, 1951.

Dick was appointed assistant Crown attorney for Essex County in 1951 and two years later joined the private practice of Holden, McMahon, Padmos, Zuber & Thrasher in Windsor, practising there until 1957. That year he won the nomination for the Progressive Conservative party for the general election scheduled for early June. To the surprise of many he won by 423 votes and became the elected member of Parliament for the Essex South riding. He was named Parliamentary secretary to Minister of Labour Michael Starr.

Dick was defeated in the general election in 1962 and was immediately appointed as special

assistant to Prime Minister John G. Diefenbaker. He ran in the election of 1963 and was again defeated. Dick was then appointed national director of the party at the personal direction of the prime minister. In 1966 Dick resigned and was appointed as a provincial magistrate. The following year he resigned this position in order to act as campaign manager for Senator McCutcheon who was entered in the leadership race. After this convention Dick returned to private practice in Windsor and Amherstburg, serving six years on the Amherstburg Police Commission. He continued in his practice until his sudden death on October 11, 1993.²



Richard D. Thrasher.

Judge Joseph P. McMahon, a longtime friend and colleague of Dick Thrasher, wrote the following recollection.

Dick and I first met when we entered Assumption College in the fall of 1945. We had both been recently discharged, although Dick had far more service time than I. At that point in history Assumption was part of the University of Western Ontario. Our relationship during the three years until graduation in 1948 with a Bachelor of Arts degree was casual.

In the fall of 1948 we had both been accepted at Osgoode Hall Law School, operated by the Law Society of Upper Canada. Our friend Tom Zuber, Dick and I met at the train station accidentally. Since none of us could afford to travel to Toronto previously to secure accommodation, we were all in the same boat. Dick and I became roommates for our duration at law school. For financial reasons our wives could not live with us in Toronto. The stress that we underwent during those law school years emotionally, academically and financially was significant. The support we gave each other during that time was critical to our success and remained so throughout our lives.

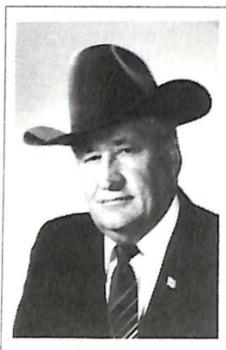
Upon our call to the Bar I joined Mr. J. Al Kennedy, Q.C., in the practice of municipal law and Dick joined with another senior counsel, Mr. McLeod. In 1956 when Mr. Kennedy was appointed chairman of the Ontario Municipal Board, I took over the practice and I called my friend Dick Thrasher and the law firm of McMahon & Thrasher was born. In 1957 Dick accepted the nomination for the Progressive Conservative party for Essex South. As a new firm we could not afford to lose Dick to politics. As that riding had been Liberal for some thirty years, we were not overly concerned and felt that the exposure would be good for the firm. Of course, to the surprise of many and to my personal dismay, Dick was elected.

This required a change in our firm and the law firm of Holden, McMahon, Padmos, Zuber & Thrasher was born. Dick was again elected in 1958 and became a Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour. It was clear that he was being groomed for a cabinet position. In the election of 1962 Dick was defeated by Eugene Whelan but he remained as executive assistant to John Diefenbaker. He later became the national director for the federal Conservative party.

In 1965 I accepted an appointment as a judge to what is now called provincial court. In 1967 Dick joined me on the bench for a short period. He resigned to become the campaign manager for an unsuccessful candidate for the leadership of the federal Progressive Conservative party. Dick maintained his law practice but his true love remained politics.

I remember Dick Thrasher as a trusted and valued friend and partner, and as a man whose great love for Canada led him to a lifetime of service to his community.

Hon. Eugene F. Whelan



Eugene Whelan.

The following recollection of Gene Whelan was written by Edward A 'Pat' Warren.

When Prime Minister Jean Chrétien needed some strong political wisdom in the Senate he called on an old friend, a former Liberal leadership candidate, a visionary Canadian and a well-known Senate abolitionist. This must have been a serious dilemma for Eugene Francis Whelan. There is no doubt in my mind that before he could say, "Yes," he had to convince himself that he could make an important difference. Today many of us talk about him as "Gene" or "the Senator." Few, if any, are surprised that he was asked but many wonder what surprises may be in store for the Senate!

I first got to know Gene Whelan the summer he hired me to work on his farm for a week. Each day started early with chores and then breakfast.

I could not believe my eyes! There were mountains of eggs and bacon, small steaks, platters of chicken and pancakes, endless fresh toast, big jugs of milk, juice and coffee. The kitchen was huge and the table was full. The conversation was easy but it was all about the day's work ahead. The Whelan boys were operating about 300 acres on their own and doing custom work with their machinery for miles around. Mrs. Whelan's chickens were always underfoot near the house. To me, farming and farm life was an idyllic mystery. I guess Gene was busy selling insurance and operating his other equipment because after he gave me my assignment for the day he would disappear. Unfortunately, some cows got out on the road through the field I had been working in, so to this day Gene thinks I left the gate open. Maybe I did, because it was open when I went in and the cows were all on the other side of an electric fence so I must have assumed they were secure.

The next close contact I had with Gene was in 1957 when he was trying to help Bob Clarke get elected against Dick Thrasher. In Amherstburg we all knew and liked Dick but Bob Clarke was another matter and Dick won by 423 votes (one of those votes was mine). In his book, *Whelan: The Man in the Green Stetson*,³ Gene tells many inside stories with surprisingly frank evaluations of the people and politicians he came to know during his years of service.

Born the middle child of nine in a log cabin on the 3rd concession of Anderdon, a stone's throw from the original Canada Southern Railway line and a mile from the Wyandotte stone quarry, Eugene Francis Whelan has become one of the best-known Canadian politicians of all time. His modest start in politics came in 1945 at the age of 21 when the retiring chairman of the local school board nominated him to that post. There was one teacher and one school with 48 students and Gene's contribution was a well he had installed to provide water on demand. He might have refused the job except for his father's strongly-expressed direction to his children that they actively serve their community. Gene was only six years old when cancer took his dad at the age of 57. Before his illness, Charles Whelan had served as reeve of Anderdon Township and in 1918 was warden of Essex County while running a successful farm with a fine herd. With his early death and the Depression, his wife, the former Frances Kelly, was forced to accept the provincial allowance for needy widows which amounted to \$40 per month after the bank took \$5. Gene learned early in life what it was like to live poor and work hard. He knew firsthand that no one chooses to live poor and later he learned that too many of the wealthy choose to believe that people can be happy while they

are powerless and poor, watching the wealthy enjoy their privileges.

Gene was elected to the Anderdon Township Council in 1952 and four years later ran successfully for the position of reeve. During this time he became involved with a number of farm organizations. He became a director of the United Cooperatives of Ontario and was also on the board of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. As well as being a determined, hard-working farmer, Gene became an agent of the Cooperators Insurance Company of Canada, known as the CIA, and later won a seat on the board of directors. In 1962 he ran for warden of Essex County and won. For five years during his time as reeve of Anderdon, Gene was chairman of the Essex County Road Committee which paved roads, built bridges and improved drainage.

When Gene accepted the provincial Liberal nomination in 1959 and lost by 1001 votes, it was considered such an unexpectedly good showing that his whole team celebrated! During the campaign he met Liz Polinger and in the spring of 1960 they were married in her parish in Kingsville. Now Gene was determined to become a rich and successful farmer, but first he was asked to help find a candidate to run federally against Tory incumbent Dick Thrasher who looked absolutely unbeatable. With ten days to go and refusals from every one of the eighteen 'suitable' people on the list, Gene finally decided to seek the nomination himself. The rest is history. After ten stormy years as a backbencher prodding the caucus, cabinet and individual ministers, he finally was asked by Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau in November, 1972 to be the Minister of Agriculture. During his twelve years in that position he raised the income of primary agricultural producers and secured for all Canadians an abundant supply of agricultural products at reasonable prices. His department's research facilities were introducing an average of fifty new plant varieties, each including such giants as Canola and triticale. In 1984, when he was more concerned about fighting starvation in the Third World and Africa in particular, Gene forced the Liberal leadership candidates to discuss his agenda of youth as well as the primary producers in the three renewable resources sector which accounts for 70% of the Canadian economy.

After John Turner made enough mistakes to place Brian Mulroney in the prime minister's chair and Gene rode out the rough waters, his spirits returned and he established a company in Ottawa which provides advice to Third World countries in an effort to stabilize their economies and feed their people. After Jean Chrétien secured the PM's chair he presented Gene with his Senate decision in August, 1996. In my opinion, the right choice was made.

Susan Whelan

Against her mother's advice, the daughter of the Hon. Eugene F. Whelan followed in her father's footsteps. Susan Whelan was born in 1963, the year her father narrowly defeated the Diefenbaker Tory candidate in the riding of Essex-Windsor. There should be few surprises for Susan. She and her two sisters had helped their dad campaign all the way up to 1984 when he was a candidate for leadership of the Liberal party. Over the past fifteen years Susan has been very active in the local riding and in the Liberal Party of Canada. In December, 1992 she secured the nomination and the following October won the seat for Essex-Windsor, defeating the NDP incumbent Steven Langdon, who just happened to be a neighbour.

Law school claimed Susan's intense interest after three years of



Susan Whelan.

Commerce at the University of Windsor. In 1988 she received a Bachelor of Laws from the University of Windsor and her Juris Doctor from the University of Detroit. Susan was called to the Ontario Bar in 1990 and practised business, municipal and real estate law with the Windsor law firm of Yuffy, Roberts, Goldstein & Manzocco until her election in 1993. She remains a member of the Law Society of Upper Canada and is a former member of the Canadian Bar Association and the Essex County Law Association. Susan has served as a director of the Essex County Conservation Authority (ERCA) Foundation and the Alzheimer Society. On December 6, 1993 she was appointed Parliamentary secretary to the Minister of National Revenue and in 1994 was appointed an associate member of the Standing Committee on Finance and a member of the Standing Committee of Public Accounts.

Random Recollections

Throughout 1995 and 1996 residents of the Tri-Community were invited to submit recollections about aspects of Amherstburg that made a lasting impression on them. The response was remarkable! Submissions were received from people who have spent their entire lives in the area, from those who grew up here and have now moved away, and from some who came here as adults from other parts of the world. Each recollection offers a glimpse into Amherstburg life and shows a deep affection for the town.

Memories over 58 Years...by Alice (Calow) Bailey (1995)

- The beauty and expanse of the Detroit River after the Don and Humber Rivers in Toronto.
- A swim and picnic at the beach of John Parks (his home later the John Squire home) when the lady teachers of the public school (Helen Marsh, Mildred Abbot, Josephine Howson, Hannah Jaffary, Belle Rogers and Hazel Webber) entertained the high school teachers.
- Dancing to the music of Matti Holli in the enormous dance hall on Bob-Lo Island.
- Picnics on the west side of Bob-Lo Island away from the noise and food smells!
- My husband taking me for a ride in a horse and buggy on Bob-Lo Island during a Sunday School picnic.
- Hearing "Ghost Riders in the Sky" (Vaughn Monroe) boom out from Bob-Lo's carousel.
- The beauty of the high school girls when I first saw them in 1938.
- The mighty freighters plying the Detroit River and their beauty at night with all deck lights glowing.
- The Greater Detroit and City of Detroit, two large passenger ships travelling daily between Detroit and Buffalo.
- The South American, a larger passenger ship in dock once at Amherstburg, with residents able to tour it.
- Winning the Queen of the Show Trophy and the Peace Trophy twice at the annual Rose Show.
- Taking my small daughter to the Amherstburg Public Library and being fascinated by Loretta

Reaume's ability to help her choose just the right books.

- As a member of the library board for 20 years or so, journeying to Windsor to meet the publishers in one of the hotel rooms to select new books, with Loretta Reaume (the librarian) guiding us in using our allotted funds to the best advantage among fiction, non-fiction and juvenile volumes.
- The renovating of the former Michigan Central Station into an arts and crafts workplace and exhibit site for painters, potters and weavers.
- Learning to weave under the tutelage of Mrs. Muriel Knight.
- Singing in the town choir (the combined choirs of all the Amherstburg church choirs) under the leadership of Mr. Ian Thomson and performing "Olivet to Calgary" and then "The Holy City," the latter in Amherstburg and Temple Baptist Church in Windsor.
- Opening of the Vintage Courts complex with a swimming pool (indoor), the gradual formation of the Aqua-Belles, an exercise group taught by Lucienna (Jones) Boyle: very beneficial, and also a friendship-forming group providing pleasure and mutual help for lonely ladies who gained "a reason for getting up in the morning."
- My association with the Fort Malden Horticultural Society - a happy group of people interested in gardens, the beautifying of the community and introducing, thanks to Bob Sutherland, rhododendrons and azaleas to Amherstburg.
- My happy memories and associations have also come from my church: Chancel Guild, Little Helpers, A.C.W., singing in the choir for some years and playing the organ as one of three volunteers for six years.
- Art by the River - starting with a display of paintings by area artists depicting Amherstburg buildings; adding weaving and pottery booths, all being taught at the Gibson Gallery; and finally last year (1994) with 100 exhibitors and thousands of visitors.
- Red Cross work during the war: knitting, sewing, making jam.
- Bridge games - parties, cozy foursomes and later the marathons which raised money for community projects.
- My second period of teaching at General Amherst High School from 1954 to 1964 - congenial staff and rewarding students. On my last day the Grade 12 class gave me a bud vase with three roses. One girl asked me to read the card which said, "In Loving Memory."
- Square dances at the Brunner Mond Club and the Anderdon Tavern.

Recollections of Steve Trimble...by Virginia (Trimble) Barclay⁴ (1996)

John Nelson 'Steve' Trimble (1891-1953) was born at Elmstead, Maidstone Township, Ontario where his father owned and operated a saw mill. As a lad Steve was so small that the lumberjacks who worked for Granddad called him 'little Stevie' and the name stuck with him throughout his life.

As a young man Dad worked in Detroit tuning pianos for Grinnel's Music Store on Woodward Avenue. Although he had no formal training he came from a very musical family and taught himself to play one of his older brother's violins. He told us how he would wait until his brother Edward left the house for work, then would take Edward's violin, wrap it up in one of Grandmother's tea towels and off he would go to school. On the way was an old hollow tree stump



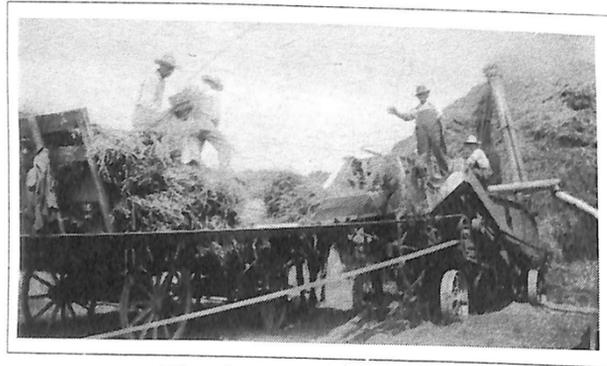
Steve Trimble, circa 1915.

in which he hid the violin. When classes ended for the day he hurried to retrieve the violin and would sit on the stump, practise for a while, then hurry home to put the instrument back before Edward returned from work.

Dad learned to play by ear. The Trimble brothers had their own orchestra in those days and it was said that wherever they played, that's where the gang was. Besides semi-classical, Dad could really play old-time jigs, reels and sacred music. We had many musical evenings at our home. Friends and relatives would come to visit and bring their musical instruments with them. My mother accompanied them on the piano. That was back in the twenties during the Depression and it carried on for many years.

Dad quit his job in Detroit after he and Mother were married. Mother was Alice Pearl Wismer (1892-1981). He moved back from Detroit to Windsor and got a job at the Ford plant but never liked working inside, so as soon as he saved enough money he bought his first threshing machine in 1917. They were living on Malden Road at the time and didn't have much property for a big machine to sit on when it wasn't in operation. Since he did harvesting for farmers in the Anderdon-Malden area, Dad found a home with lots of property on the Pike Road. That property is now part of Amherst Quarries. It was owned by a bank manager named Cuddy who wouldn't sell the land. Just after I was born in 1922 the family moved to Simcoe Street where there was lots of room. Our house fronted on Simcoe. The property was a T-shape and ran back for a block in behind houses. Dad had access and frontage on King Street. The east end ran to George Street but the town never did extend George past Simcoe as was originally intended. If they had, our property would have ended at Park Street. This was my father's home until his demise in 1953.

As Dad accumulated enough funds he would invest in more equipment. In those days not many farmers had their own machinery for harvesting. My father had seven threshing machines as well as John Deere and Allis Chalmers tractors that he used to move from job to job. He had an agency to sell Case and John Deere tractors and owned two old sidewinder Case tractors. I believe one of the old tractors is now at the machinery museum near Essex. He also had two corn shellers, a corn shredder, clover seed huller, bean mill and a couple of stationary boilers.



Threshing time, circa 1925.

Left to right: Ernie Faucher, Pete Faucher, Theodore Wismer, Glen Trimble.

Dad also had equipment for raising and moving buildings. At times he would raise them up with jacks and excavate basements while the people were still living in the houses. I well remember when he raised a portion of St. Joseph's Convent and dug the basement for the Sisters. When the job was finished he lowered the building on its foundation and the nuns weren't interrupted at all. In the mid-forties he took on a job to upright a boathouse that had toppled off its piling into the channel downriver. Louis Bresolin owned the house. My brother Ray

and his friend Peter Tillson helped Dad to upright the house and they pulled it in and sat it down on the beach. Red Browning later bought this place, rebuilt it and lived there for a while. The last person I knew of who lived there was Gordon Knight.

Dad gave employment to many people at harvest time. Some of the men responsible for overseeing the operation of the machines were my grandfather Theodore Wismer and Darwin Wismer. My brother Glen was given a machine after he married and moved to Chatham where he did harvesting in that district. Rolly Spencler, Bill Richmond, Ernie and Paul Faucher, Norman Mickle and Ashley Martin also operated machines. Rolly Spencler was my father's right-hand mechanic. All our family loved Rolly. He was like another big brother. When the harvest was over Dad brought several of his threshing machines and tractors home. My grandfather built a place in his barn to store one and friends kept some in their barns.

Dad was truly a fun-loving, witty, inventive, unselfish and strict father and when God took him home I thought the end of the world had come. He was baling for Mr. McLellan on the Ray McKim farm in Malden when he suffered a fatal heart attack on July 24, 1953. He was 62. His demise came just when combines were coming into use to replace the old threshing machines.

The Poker Den by Martin 'Dick' Boufford (1996)

My grandfather, Dan Boufford, worked at the J.D. Burk store before going into business for himself. Little did he know his grandson would one day be running a poker den in the front upstairs apartment. This was in the thirties when I rented a furnished apartment from Mrs. Grant for \$12 a month. I ran a good game - no booze. The trouble was the wives. I remember one guy - his wife gave him 35c to buy groceries and he lost it in the game. I never saw a guy so scared to go home as he was! I couldn't blame him though - I knew his wife! I've had women knocking on the door looking for their husbands, then calling the law. They (the law) didn't bother me but just said not to let those guys play again.

One day I paid a guy 50c to clean the place. At that time we had what was called the 'Black Diamond Gang'. Five or six of them would leave about midnight, steal bags of coal from Mullen's coal dock and drop off six bags in the shed underneath the stairwell and I paid them 50c a bag. They'd get in the game, lose their money and on the way out steal a few bags back - a vicious circle!

I think the game ran for a couple of years. I got out on account of the smoke and headaches and sold it to another fella who ran it quite a while. I think when he quit Bob Crowder and his family moved into that apartment.

Then I racked a game for Charlie Finlay above the old Peter Hallo building next to the railway station. Every Saturday we'd rent a room for \$120 a day to Bull Fielding. He'd run a craps game and cover all bets. All the big merchants were the gamblers. This wasn't a penny game - big dollars for those times. A few would win but Bull always went home with most of it. If my memory serves me right Bull Fielding was paying the town a yearly tax for every penny slot machine in Amherstburg. Sounds unbelievable but true. Then a relative of his, Gilboe, took over later on.

Memories of Growing up in Amherstburg in the 1950s and '60s

...by Barbra (Bailey) Bradley (1995)

Most everything about remembering life in Amherstburg revolves around the river. The Detroit River makes Amherstburg a three-sided town. There is no west - that's the river. Bob-Lo Island is in the river. The pleasure boats, freighters, and tugs travelled on the river. Fort Malden is situated beside the river, as are most of the buildings and places of interest that make memories. I grew up one block east of the river.

Life for most of our fathers revolved around either Brunner Mond, Calvert Distillers or SKI - the three largest industries of Amherstburg. Their whistles helped to tell time throughout the town. Things got a bit complicated in the summer when some factories went on daylight savings time and the others (and the rest of the town) stayed on standard time.

One of my earliest memories of Amherstburg is of the carnivals put on by various service organizations. I remember them being held somewhere on Richmond Street - perhaps where the post office or Toronto Dominion Bank are now located. I always enjoyed the 'fish pond' and I'm sure that they also had lots of food items and other games.

When the Waterworks was in its place at the end of Rankin Avenue, long before the Navy Yard Park was restored, the Waterfront Ice Cream Parlour (as we know it today) was the home of Otto Nissen's German Bakery (Seaway Café). Christmastime saw the windows filled with gingerbread houses of all sizes, while year-round goodies such as 'pigs-ears', cream-puff swans and tortes of all varieties and sizes were available whenever you felt like going in (and had enough money!). As I recall, it was still there when I came home from college but it is now a thing of the past.

Amherstburg Public School was located on Richmond Street where the nursing home is now situated. It was next door to the Tea Garden Restaurant - very handy for those wonderful french fries if you happened to have money after school. Frequently during lunch time we would find ourselves at the Dime Store (Salmoni building) where we could buy a bag of cinnamon hearts (especially around Valentine's Day.) These candies would be eaten on the sly during class and inevitably some would spill on the floor making loud noises. The school itself grew while I was there, with a 'modern' addition on the front of the original box-like section. The large cloakrooms outside the classrooms and the dark halls in the old section are, of course, a thing of the past although I've been inside old brick schools in Washington, DC that remind me of my days at Amherstburg Public School.

Fort Malden, or 'the Museum' as we knew it, was a treasure trove both indoors and out. In those days the grounds were somewhat overgrown in spots, allowing us many wonderful places for hide-and-seek. Winter brought some of the only sledding hills in the flatness of Essex County and children from all over the Tri-Community would come for the fun. Inside the three-storey building were all sorts of goodies, ranging from old pianos and the phonograph that Mr. Botsford let us try, to the ancient jar of canned cherries (circa 1885?)⁵ and the hair and shell pictures of earlier times. I know that in the back of my mind I knew that the 'Museum' was really a fort - in fact, there was a wonderful scale model of the way it used to be that I think is still there - but to me, it was more of a wonderful place to go and play.

Keeping me in sturdy boots, shoes and other necessary wearing apparel was no problem,

thanks to my father's good friend Max Rubenstein. Mr. Rubenstein had his business on Murray Street across from the Masonic hall. To this day I remember him in the store, cigar in hand, enjoying a visit with Dad while we shopped for my new winter boots. Later on, his son-in-law Elliott Schwartz opened a women's clothing store adjacent to the other business and I purchased many stylish and good quality outfits there. I remember asking for a cheap sweater one day, only to have Elliott reply, "I have no cheap ones, but I do have inexpensive ones!" Once when Mom and I went in after Dad passed away, Mom was talking about how well I was doing in graduate school. She was wishing that she could tell Dad. Mr. Rubenstein, who had been a pallbearer at Dad's funeral, quietly said "He knows!"

Shopping for presents for Mom and Dad was easy. Frank Williamson's Men's Wear and Drayton Jewellers were side by side on Richmond Street. Mr. Williamson had all of my father's sizes memorized and Mr. Drayton could always find something beautiful that could fit into my budget. If neither of these establishments had what I wanted, Moffat's Pharmacy closer to the corner and Ayerst's Pharmacy around on Dalhousie Street were certain to fill the bill.

Going east on Richmond Street one would reach the Oddfellows and Rebekahs Hall. I never did really understand who they were or what they did but I did know that Mr. Floyd Zimmerman taught ballet and tap classes - to the piano accompaniment of his mother, Mrs. Thomas - in the upstairs section of the hall. Once or twice a week, we climbed the long staircase on the east side of the building and took our classes. Yearly recitals showed off our talents to our families.

I got my musical beginnings in Amherstburg, studying piano from age five until I went to college, with Mrs. E.A. Gabus who lived a block north of us on Sandwich Street and whose backyard stretched right to the river. My mother taught me (and a good number of other children through the years) my first theory classes at our kitchen table. Who was to know then that I would go on to become a professional musician and music teacher myself.

Ice skating back then was much different from nowadays. We had basically two choices - we could skate on Big Creek which ran from town out to Highway 18 in Malden (and beyond to Lake Erie if you were feeling strong and ambitious) or we could skate on the rink that was always built in the town park - just west of the tiny swimming pool that is still in use today. Both choices were totally dependant on Mother Nature. Big Creek would either freeze or not. Boards for the town park rink would be put up in November and then water would be hosed onto the snow-covered grass until a thick surface of ice was achieved. Snow could put a damper on things but it could be shovelled off if it did not get too thick. For everyone's comfort while putting on skates and during the night or afternoon of skating, there was a little house beside the rink (close to Dalhousie Street) that always had a nice warm stove going strong.

As I said before, the Detroit River played a vital role in a lot of activities in Amherstburg. (Why, we even used to be entertained by watching freighters gone aground get off again.) My father did not allow us to swim in the river itself but he did give his blessing to Bailey's Beach (no, not because of the name!). Because of its location, just east of Amherst Point, it was considered to be on Lake Erie. That was fortunate for me because I remember going there for a girls' day camp when I was not too old. Some days were spent in the simple pleasure of watching the many types of boats pass by 'the Gully' at the foot of Alma Street and seeing how long you could stay right by the water before the big waves came. All sorts and sizes of sailing vessels went up and down the river. Many times a day the two large Bob-Lo boats from Detroit - the Columbia and the Ste. Claire

- would pass by. The somewhat notorious Aquarama always sent spasms of fear into me as I watched it and the swell of water that it left in its wake. The elegant North American and South American, which we could tell apart by the round port-holes of one and the square port-holes of the other (now I forget which was which) were particularly exciting for me. Freighters and tugs were in abundance. Who could forget the Atomic, the Patricia McQueen and the A'burg and the wonderful tugboat races that they often won. The opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway in the late 1950s brought Queen Elizabeth and the royal yacht Britannia past Amherstburg, along with naval ships from both Canada and the United States. One of the high points of the summer for me was when the Rotary Club of Amherstburg would hire one of the big Bob-Lo boats for a special cruise. Either the Columbia or the Ste. Claire would dock at the Amherstburg dock and we'd all get on.

What would those growing-up days have been like without Bob-Lo Island Amusement Park? The dock was at the foot of Murray Street and I loved it! I remember a lot of white wood and cement and a little boat called the Charlie Park that took us to the island for about fifty cents (maybe less). A lot of my friends worked on the island in later years; I never did. As a child, though, my main Bob-Lo memories were the ice cream rolls that fit into a cone and were called 'ice cream cones'; the best orange pop I've ever had; the merry-go-round and the more frightening Whip that Dad had to go on with me; the horse-and-buggy ride that Dad took Mom and I on one year when they had ponies and horses on the island; Miss Leighton the nurse (who was our next-door neighbour in 'real life' but who became this special person in the big white house on the west side of the island where you went when you felt sick!); the various games of chance that we never actually tried but enjoyed watching others attempt; and the wonderful whistles of the Columbia and the Ste. Claire when they were pulling out of the dock. Who could forget the 'moonlights' on Wednesdays and Saturdays and the final departure on Labour Day of both boats as they each made their last voyage of the season back to Detroit, amidst salutes and cheers from other little boats and from onlookers on shore. What a send off!

My childhood and teenage memories of Amherstburg are wonderful! I'd never trade them in!

Recollections of Amherstburg...by Austin Craig (1996)

Back in the early '20s my Grandfather Craig had a soft drink business in his garage on Laird Avenue. The house and garage were later moved up on the Front Road (583) to make room for the extension of the high school. When the Emancipation Day celebrations were held in the town park, Granddad would put about ten cases of soft drinks in a two-wheeled cart and push it over to the park to supply the soft drink stands. He also had a Model T Ford truck with hard tires and no built-in cab, in which he delivered soft drinks around the town and county. In 1923 he moved the business to Leamington and called it the 'Lakeshore Bottling Company'. Around 1929 he came back to Amherstburg and sold the business to Ranta's on Richmond Street but in the Depression it never survived.

In the early twenties the town ice dealers cut ice on the Detroit River at the end of Alma Street. They had a Model T motor hooked up to a saw sleigh to cut the ice. The teams of horses and sleighs would haul the ice along Sandwich Street to the ice houses in town. The kids would ride the

sleighs to school. At this same location the rumrunners would haul whisky all day and pile it on shore. Then at night they would get a light signal from the U.S. side - that was the 'okay' sign - then they would load the whisky in their cut-down vehicles and away they would go.

Once in a while one would see a steam engine going along Sandwich Street on the streetcar tracks. It would come off the Michigan Central at Gordon then go down Sandwich Street to Richmond, then it would back down Apsley Street to the town hall. Then it would go back up Apsley Street to Sandwich Street. This way it would be turned around.

Before the high school was built, there was an agricultural building on that location. Amherstburg's town fairs were held there.

Just west of the old United church on Richmond Street there was a livery stable. It was later turned into a garage. I do not know who owned it. Also on Richmond Street where the Helper's Home Hardware is now, there was another livery stable owned by the Fox family. It ran back to Rankin Avenue. The Bertrands had a stable on Ramsay Street, which later became Bertrand's Trucking. Bathurst Street would be blocked off from Richmond to Park every Saturday night in summertime for a street dance. The 'medicine men' would sell their wares from the back of their horse-drawn buggies.

A circus was held on the corner of Richmond and Victoria Streets (where St. Bernard School is now). On the south side a tent would be pitched for a Chatauqua Show throughout the summer months.

Mullen's Coal Yard was on the riverbank behind the old post office. Two big hard-tired, chain-driven coal trucks would haul coal up to the Brunner Mond six days a week. In the winter these trucks would pack the snow down for ice hauling. I believe a chap named William Franklin drove one of these trucks.

When the glass factory took over from the auto plant, they built a long shelf on the south side of the building to store the white sand for making glass. When they lost the glass plant, it went to the town for taxes. The town rented this building to the Imperial Bank manager, C.A. Cuddy, who had a tobacco farm on the Pike Road. He stored his barley crop in this shed and he had Belgian families in the wintertime stripping and packing the tobacco for shipping to the factories. He was the first tobacco farmer in this area. The Belgian families lived in a double house on the northwest corner of Sandwich Street and Rankin Avenue.

There were four memorials on the grounds of General Amherst High School, two on Sandwich Street and two on Laird Avenue at each end of the sidewalk. On Remembrance Day we had to march from the public school to the monuments for the services, which at that time were in memory of the First World War.



Harvesting ice at Amherstburg.

Department of Canadian Heritage: Fort Malden National Historic Site

Time, Luck and a Cuckoo Clock...by Margaret Dainter (1995)

In Endymion, I leaped headlong into the sea,
and thereby have become better acquainted
with the soundings, the quicksands, and the rocks,
than if I had stayed upon the green shore, and
piped a silly pipe, and took tea, and
comfortable advice.

-John Keats, 1818

The ignition key turned, the car started out of the driveway. It was close to tea-time and my friends stood waving as though they'd never see me again.

The plane picked up speed and height and the last view of home in the dimming light was of pretty patterns of fields, a long high valley - a warm green stretch of England with distant farmhouses dotted here and there. These were also the first things seen through a misty dawn when another plane brought one back home again.

I sat back in my seat with an iron cage of guilt around my chest. I had agreed, with my husband and three young children, to emigrate to Canada. I said I would try it for two years. Down there, below those clouds, was my life, my family, my friends, disappearing now, melting like shadows into the shade. How could I leave? My mind drifted back to the early days and my dad winding up that old cuckoo clock that hung on the living room wall, saying, "So, you're starting at the big school tomorrow. Don't you be scared now, nothing ventured nothing gained..." Those thoughts didn't help. I was downright homesick already.

But fate had grabbed us by the throat and so we duly landed at the Toronto airport. Somehow we muddled through customs. The kids were excited, eager for the new adventure; John was busy rounding up all the luggage. We'd brought everything, even the dog. Feeling sorry for Zeb after the long plane ride, I opened his pen to pat him. But he shot out like a bullet from a gun, running wildly around. I was told immediately, and in no uncertain terms, that dogs were not allowed to run free here, certainly not in an airport, and that this was not a rabies-free country. Then the official helped me catch Zeb, calmed him down and gave him a drink of water. Smiling kindly, he pointed me towards the coffee shop. "Welcome to Canada," he said.

John had already found us a house to live in, at a place called Amherstburg. We travelled down the 401 looking for this Amherstburg and I remember I was surprised because I'd thought there would be mountains, hills and lakes to see in Canada. Instead the plain vastness seemed to be swallowing us up. I was amazed at the space, the never-ending road. I thought Amherstburg must be at the ends of the earth.

We stopped at a wayside restaurant that was called a 'truck stop' and sampled the burgers. They were tasty with all those extras and dressings, and what a size! I was sure I'd put on two pounds in that minute. The kids bought sweets, too, and had lots of fun deciding what was worth what with the 'Monopoly money', as they thought it. John bought a map and a newspaper while I puzzled over the mug of hot water with a teabag dangling in it. Where was the teapot?

Amherstburg turned out to be a quaint, spacious town of about 8000 people, with a river running by. All the houses appeared big and quite different from each other. The atmosphere felt fresh, clean. And I thought, "Yes, this place I can write home about." There didn't seem to be many pavements, though, and that worried me. I thought my kids might get run over walking on the

road. Knowing only a busy city life until now, we had much to learn.

The kids loved the new house. I liked it too, I guess. But after all is said and done, it was just a house with a swimming pool. I'd have swapped the swimming pool for a few flowers in the garden, a washing line to hang out the washing and another housewife to chat with over the garden fence. Naively I asked the Welcome Wagon lady when the milkman would come, the buses, the dustman, the coalman, the window cleaner. But she said they don't come. Just a machine that collects garbage. That was when I realized I really was in another land. I'd heard life was full of little deaths and births. This was a little death - and it lingered.

It was winter 1980 at the time and I'd never seen so much snow. I couldn't open my front door for the white stuff. I couldn't drive on the 'wrong' side of the road - couldn't even drive on the right side, come to think of it. John started work and the kiddies started school and I remember thinking all I need is some great grizzly bear to stick his head through my window and that would surely finish me off. Even the deejays on the radio weren't funny and I could never decide which TV program to watch with so many channels to choose from. So I played my homemade tapes and wrote letters home instead. I'd wait impatiently for the postman; he always brought me at least one letter.

Dear Maggie:

Thanks for your 15 page letter, a regular book. Everybody's betting you won't last two years, it's a wilderness out there. Why can't you wait tables here? Are the kids warm enough? Don't let them play out too long in the snow; they'll get bronchitis and their lungs'll freeze up. Everyone's just the same here as when you left two weeks ago. Well, write again soon. Kass said she'd had two letters from you this week and mom's pretty mad she only got one. Take care, love and hugs! Sue.
P.S. If you're lucky, you might get a surprise come summer.

I did get a surprise that first summer. Three came to visit and I was in heaven. But I sat reading and writing my letters for months and it finally occurred to me that I'd absolutely no idea what I was supposed to do here. And Lord, it could get cold. I'd never been this cold in my whole life. So I learned to ask questions, bought some thermal underwear and copied everybody else.

I put the girls' names down to join the local Girl Guides. The Brown Owl knocked on my door to inform me of something or other about it. Brown Owl turned out to speak my language, or my accent at least, and I'm pretty sure I almost pulled that poor woman inside. I lavished her with tea, biscuits and cakes, told her my life story and when she insisted she had to leave, begged her to come again soon. She must have thought I was quite potty at the time. But she was from where I was from and for that you are forgiven a multitude of sins. I felt she understood. The brainwave was slowly materializing. If she, a virtual stranger, and I could feel comfortable with one another then there could be others. I just had to find them. It sounded simple enough. And it wasn't that I was such a homebody, really. I'd travelled a bit in the past; true, mostly in Europe. But I wasn't about to be labelled a yellow belly yet.

Fifteen years passed and although we have moved around and from house to house and life has been full of ups and downs, we are still living here in Amherstburg. Why? Because I found many kindly, good Canadian and American people along the way. People I am comfortable with.

Home will always be home and nothing can replace that. I return as often as finances allow. But my children, grandchildren and fellow travellers are here. I've learned to drive on the 'wrong' side of the road. And I've grown to appreciate the choice of so many TV programs to watch. I like the comedies and listening to the radio now that I understand the humour. I think it's great that cashiers bag my groceries for me and even put them in the boot of the car for me. It took time to remember to ask for thumb tacks instead of drawing pins and face cloths instead of flannels, juice instead of squash. But I'm getting there. Just the other day I quite forgot myself and said, "It's choc-a-bloc in that bank, wouldn't bother waiting in the queue if I were you!" And Christmas here is so pretty. I love to see all the houses and shops lit up. Amherstburg's just like a fairyland at Christmastime.

There are many, like myself, who are from different backgrounds and places, who find difficulties overcoming language, custom and culture barriers but who somehow discover you can blend the old with the new. Starting over isn't an easy venture, adjusting is hard. But it's true that much can be gained, given the time and lots of luck. Recently we moved house again. We didn't know it but the previous owners were originally English, the lady a past Girl Guide Pathfinder leader. She remembered our girls. Her house has a garden with flowers, a pear tree, a fishpond - and a swimming pool. In one of the drawers I found they'd left us some seeds to plant in the vegetable patch.

And then just the other day I saw a cuckoo clock, just like the one we had all those years ago, for sale in the local mall.

Otto Nissen's Seaway Café...by Margaret Gregg (1995)

I would say it was about the year 1951, when many immigrants came over from Europe, and we were looking for places to enjoy on a Sunday afternoon. We were told that a coffee shop on Dalhousie Street had wonderful pastries with a European flavour. A miniature lighthouse out front, cemented into the ground, was built of sand pebbles washed out from the river. It was a lovely sight and some customers called the café 'the Lighthouse'. Alas, today it is gone, but for my family and me, it is an Amherstburg memory we often talk about.

Reaume Park Hotel (Classics on the Water)...by Veronica (Reaume) Laing (1995)

Back in the 1920s Eugene and Olympe Reaume left Windsor with their five children to purchase Farm Lot 12, Concession 1 (Highway 18), Malden. While working on the streetcar that travelled between Windsor and Amherstburg, Eugene heard of a farm for sale that had been owned by Reaumes in previous years. Getting back to the country after World War I was a dream finally realized.

Many relatives were welcomed from the city to camp in the large yard and enjoy fresh air, a lovely sandy beach for bathing and boating, nature walks to the marsh and forest and also to watch many passenger ships and freighters sail by. There were Tourangeaux by the dozen, Renauds, Joinvilles and Dupuis who helped with threshing bees, fruit picking and feeding animals and fowl.

Other friends enjoyed the beach too so my father Eugene built picnic tables and swings, put a refreshment stand in the middle of the yard and opened it as a park. I remember the chocolate pop called "Kayo," my favourite; the good ice cream and large chocolate bars for 5¢ that didn't get sold.

People came from the United States and surrounding areas to picnic and we made lasting friends who suggested that my father should get a liquor license and start a hotel. So with seven children to support, my parents decided to give it a try.

Reeve Bob Atkins, seeing a future of more tourists for Malden, assisted my father to apply and succeed in getting the licence. However, this only became a reality after the original home was moved at least 400 feet away from S.S. #1 Public School which was next door (now owned by Catherine and Bill Smith). Harry Delisle Movers accomplished this large undertaking which I believe took place around 1936. A few years later all one-room schools were abolished and Malden Central and St. Theresa's Schools were built.

My mother raised chickens, ducks, turkeys and geese which she killed and dressed herself. She cooked young fryers and sold half a fried chicken, mashed potatoes, a cooked vegetable, cabbage salad and homemade pie with a beverage for \$1.35 a plate. Couldn't be any fresher or tastier! Soon large companies came for picnics: Gray's Department Store; Moose Lodge with 1000 people; Shriners; and Detroit Firemen who arrived by ship and tendered ashore in rowboats. Life was very busy. My father hired local bands Friday and Saturday nights and Matti Holli's Orchestra came once when Bob-Lo closed, so there are many people who still talk about the fun and dancing they enjoyed years ago at "Gene's."

My parents were very self-sufficient and worked hard on the farm and in the hotel, but the years took their toll and my father became ill. He sold the hotel to Tom and Gert Kilgallin who were partners with Bill and Marie Ouellette about the fall of 1946.

There have been many owners over the years. People still remember John and Viola Herceg up to the present owner, Al Pillon, who changed the name to Classics on the Water.

Just a little bit of Malden past experienced by the Reaume family, submitted by daughter number five, Veronica (Reaume) Laing.

Recollections of Amherstburg...by Mary Ella and Jane Lalonge (1995)

We remember Park Street when huge maple trees lined both sides. Like most other streets in town, it was a dirt road which was periodically watered by the town by means of a huge, horse-drawn water tank with a sprinkler at the back. At other times our father would water down the road with the hose to keep the dust from coming into our house. After a snowfall the town used a horse-drawn plough to clean off the sidewalks. At one time a circus arrived in town and set up in the fields at the east end of Park Street.

There were five children in our home. The house was heated with a wood-burning cook stove in the kitchen, a big 'base burner' in the dining room and a fireplace in the living room. In the summer the stove in the kitchen was not used and was replaced with an oil stove. Also at this time of year, the stove in the dining room was taken apart and stored away. It would be reassembled in the fall with much shining of the nickel and replacing the isinglass windows. It would hold at least

a scuttle of coal after it was shaken down and the ashes emptied from the ash pan. There was a hot air pipe running over to a vent in the upstairs hall, which was our only heat in that area during the winter. Needless to say, we often grabbed our clothes in the morning and made a hasty retreat downstairs to dress around this big, cheery burner!

Deeds of kindness are seldom forgotten. We remember our parents talking about a former mayor of Amherstburg, Dr. Fred Park, who visited our home when both parents were ill in bed. Before he left, Dr. Park filled our base burner with a scuttle of coal to make sure we were warm enough. Dr. Park had his own pharmacy in his office and even when he grew older he was able to pour medicines into bottles without a shake in his hands. Nearly everyone in town knew about his famous concoction, the 'black salve', which cured many skin ailments. He was unique in his times, even to the extent of performing tonsillectomies on our older sister and brother on our dining room table which was placed in front of two large windows in our living room.

When it was time to get our hair cut, we ended up at Mr. Forey Deslippe's Barber Shop (located where Fort Malden Animal Clinic is now). This shop was mainly for men, as was evidenced by the various spittoons on the floor, the checkerboard and chessboard and an abundance of newspapers and magazines. Not only could men purchase a shave or haircut but also a bath, which was located in a small room at the end of the shop. When it came time for us to get our 'shingle bob' we climbed up on the board placed across the arms of the barber chair. When he finished Mr. Deslippe would reach for one of the many bottles displayed on the shelf in front of us. These contained various colours of liquid, one of which he chose and sprinkled a few drops on our hair to make us "smell pretty." Needless to say, we looked forward to that last touch.

Like many families in town, we had a chicken yard and coop that housed Plymouth Rock chickens. In the spring we looked forward to receiving about three dozen baby chicks which were kept in an incubator until they were able to cope on their own. We enjoyed big brown eggs and rarely bought a chicken for Sunday dinner.

Almost every Friday was show night. Nick Marra operated the Liberty Theatre and we would certainly get our money's worth with not only the feature show, but also a comedy short, a continuing serial story, Paramount News and 'teasers' about upcoming films. At one time in the theatre's existence, as a marketing gimmick, dishes and silverware (silver-plated) were given out piece by piece each time one attended the show. It was not unusual to hear a dish crash during the show when it slipped out of someone's hands. Many families in town saved up the whole set of dishes and all the silverware. We did and used them for a long time.

It may have been because there were not many cars for transportation in our youth that we enjoyed many kinds of services to our house. The ice man would come twice a week to replenish the ice in our ice box, much to the delight of the children in the neighbourhood who would pick up the bits of ice when Mr. Glen 'Rub' Hamilton (and later our brothers who worked for him) had to 'pick' the huge cakes of ice in order to get the right size for our particular box. One could buy 25- or 50-lb. pieces.

The delivery boy from Harris (Charlie) Groceries would come to the house, stand and take down an order of items needed, go back to the store, fill the order and then return with it. This was, of course, at no extra charge. I believe it was at the end of the month when he collected for the groceries and had some sort of little treat for the lucky kids.

The 'watermelon man' would come around to the house to sell not only watermelons but

every other kind of melon available. Before the melon was purchased, it was 'plugged' to see if it tasted good. If they 'passed', we bought; if not, we tried another.

The insurance man would visit regularly to collect what seems now a mere pittance to cover our life insurance. We also had a bread man who delivered daily and issued tokens to pay for the bread. Two of these men were Miles Beaudoin and Ivan Warren.

Iler's Farm sold milk and made daily deliveries of unpasteurized milk. The top cream on each glass quart or pint was used for coffee and cooking. About once a week our 'butter lady', Mrs. Gibb, would deliver crocks of butter fresh from the farm. In the summer we were able to get fresh farm vegetables and fruit about twice a week by stepping out to the curb when Mr. Simon arrived to sell his produce.

We walked to school twice a day, which was expected. However, the children in the 'country' who attended high school often boarded in town - a few at our grandparents' home on Apsley (Sandwich) Street, opposite the town hall.

At the elementary school the boys had one side for a play yard and entrance and the girls the other side. When the bell rang we lined up according to class and marched into the building to the tune of a lively piano march, often played by a teacher and sometimes by a gifted student like Ethel Steubing. The music helped to alleviate the thought of classes about to begin and did much for morale.

On occasion we would have excitement when a fire drill bell rang, at which time the class would line up and exit the building in an orderly manner. If your class was on the second floor, you lined up and made your exit through a window onto the grated fire escape which gave you the 'whim-whams' when you looked way down through the grills at the playground.

It brightened many a student's day (at the teacher's expense) when as we lined up to go to class we were told we could go home for the day as the teacher was sick.

We remember the auspicious day when King George VI and Queen Elizabeth were visiting Canada and were to arrive in Windsor. Trucks (including Driff Bertrand's big vehicles) were used to transport students to Windsor to see the royal couple. We ended up somewhere on the outskirts of Windsor with a flag to wave and watched the speeding train go by with two specks on a platform. It was a thrill, at any rate!

Our high school was much smaller then and we were more 'like a family' under the fatherly guidance of our principal, Mr. W.K. Sidey. We remember Cadet Day, which was nice for the girls because they could watch while the boys went through their drills, sometimes in pretty hot weather. In those days the uniforms included puttees, which were a source of worry to the boys; often in the middle of the drill someone would have to stop to rewind the puttees or risk tripping over them as they let loose and trailed on the ground.

The schools were quite involved in lacrosse during our time at high school and our school had one of the leading teams. We like to think this was because our brother was the goalie!

During our elementary school days, the first day of school was partly spent in listing all the books and equipment we would need for the coming school year. We would then go to John Cooper's Stationery Store and get the necessary supplies. (Of course, textbooks were handed down from sibling to sibling - pity the youngest one in the family!) Among the standard equipment was the purchase of a straight pen which required a supply of nibs. Each desk contained an inkwell and a 'special' student was allowed to fill the wells periodically from a large bottle of Waterman's ink

which came from the supply cupboard. Later on, the fountain pen was reluctantly allowed. Of course the ink was still required as the rubber reservoir in the pen would empty and more ink would have to be 'pumped' into the pen. Many fingers would become ink-stained if the pen decided to leak and sometimes even pockets would have a big blue stain.

We frequented various places in Amherstburg, depending on the amount of money we were fortunate enough to have. If we had one or two pennies, we headed for Harris' Grocery Store where there were wondrous varieties of candy at one cent each - licorice pipes, suckers of various flavours, buttons (a paper with candy blobs stuck on it), little bottles of wax containing sweet juice of some kind (after the juice was gone the wax remained for chewing). If we had 5c, the place to go was Jones' Soda Shop, where it was a toss-up between an ice cream cone or a big sucker that was guaranteed to last the whole day. If we had a bit more to spend we might even have a tin roof sundae, which was the ultimate, especially if it was made by the expert, Elizabeth Goulin.

Another place we frequented was a little store on the top of the 'hill' (later the location of Seaway Marine).⁶ This was owned by a kindly, bearded old man by the name of Sam McGee. Down the road stood the old flour mill (close to the back of Steve Wigle's home) owned by Mr. Wigle. One could see the farmers come and go with horse-drawn bob sleighs in the winter and carts in the summer.

The town hall had a huge hall which could be reached by climbing up a long flight of stairs. We remember the wonderful concerts that were held there - school Christmas and graduation concerts, as well as guest performers who came to town. This hall was the centre of social activities, including formal balls in our parents' time. It is recorded that the ladies of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church would hold huge dinners at which 300 seats would be reserved on the main floor, some seats reserved in the gallery and the rest (how many is not recorded) were 'rush seats'. It is also recorded that the dishes had to be transported to the hall from the church by hiring a dray (likely from Mr. Bertrand).

During the summer the long hot days were spent swimming in the Detroit River. We would pack a lunch, walk down to Patton's Beach (where the Bob-Lo dock is now) and spend the day. While we were there certain rules applied, such as no swimming when the huge passenger boats were approaching - the Greater Detroit, the City of Cleveland, the Put-in-Bay and later on the North American, the South American and the Aquarama. What a sight to see these huge ships pass! By the time we walked back home we felt the heat twice as much - but it was worth it.

We also used to go for hikes with a picnic in the 'back fields', approximately where the Fort Malden Mall is now.

A once-a-year treat for the family was to board the Bob-Lo ferry (the Columbia or the Ste. Claire) at Amherstburg to ride to Detroit. When we arrived there we would rush up Woodward Avenue to get some hamburgs at the White Tower (we think they were 5c each) and perhaps get some ginger ale at Vernor's. On boarding the boat to return to the 'Burg we would have a feast, complete with bing cherries.

Another highlight in the summer was when our aunt would take us to Detroit by streetcar. Usually we were green around the gills by the time we reached Mill Street (in Sandwich) from Amherstburg with the rocking and swaying of the streetcar. However, we soon forgot our misery when we arrived at the foot of Ouellette Avenue and boarded the ferry for Detroit. There we were treated to a visit at Saunder's ice cream store or perhaps lunch at the Maxwell House Restaurant.

The culmination came when we went to the Fox Theatre to see the stage show, hear the mighty organ and see a current film. A local person, Edith Healey, who was the niece of Pete Fox of the Lake View Hotel, was soloist at the Fox Theatre for many years.

As children we were fortunate to go to Bob-Lo for Sunday School picnics. We would board the little ferry, the Papoose, at the foot of Murray Street where the Bob-Lo dock was located at that time. After the picnic we would have games and a chance to ride the merry-go-round free before the first ferry from Detroit arrived. Our parents gave us the huge sum of 50c to spend on rides and eats and we even managed to bring a balloon home for a souvenir.

In many cases work on the island was a main source of income for many people in town. Our aunt, who was handicapped, worked for many years at the Whip taking tickets. Sometimes we were allowed to ride for free!

Talking of Bob-Lo, we remember the stately dance floor bedecked with palms, and being able to sit in the gallery to watch the people dancing to orchestras such as that of Matti Holli. Mary Ella took tickets at one time for the dance floor. She was instructed to advise that men wearing suspenders and girls wearing shorts were not allowed on the floor.

Recollections of Annie Nattress...by Albert Nattress (1996)

My mother Annie Nattress, now in her 98th year, has been a very active and fortunate lady. She was born in Amherstburg, the daughter of William and Lucy (Mongeau) Finlay, and spent all of her life here.

In her earlier years, Mother played the piano and her father played the violin. Together they often entertained at dances in the community. In the 1920s she was active in helping out with Cub Scouts, along with Miss Helen Marsh. (Helen was called 'Akela' at the Cub meetings.)

Mother and Mrs. Ethel Steubing were very avid swimmers and would think nothing of swimming to Bob-Lo and back. They also taught other children how to swim down at the old 'gully' at the foot of Alma Street - in those days there were no swimming pools.

During the thirties times were hard and Mother did a number of things to supplement Dad's income, including selling homemade bread and donuts. At one time she went to work peeling tomatoes at the old canning factory on Fort Street. After half a day there she said, "To hell with that!" To this day her favourite sayings are "Old Toot," "I don't remember," "Wait till you get to be my age," and "To hell with that!"

Mother was 'first lady' of Amherstburg from 1950 to 1953 when my father, William Nattress, was mayor of the town. In 1951, along with other mayors' wives in Essex County, she was thrilled to meet and dine with Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh. At a banquet held at the old Prince Edward Hotel in Windsor she danced with the Duke and still talks about how down-to-earth the Royals were. This event occurred when I was in high school. I recall that when she arrived home she announced that she wasn't going to wash her hands for a whole week! Prior to meeting the Princess and the Duke, all the mayors' wives had to take curtsy lessons for three or four days.

My mother has been a lifelong member of Christ Anglican Church and was once actively involved in the choir, chancel guild, taught Sunday School and when needed, played the organ. She also played piano for the Eastern Star and Rebekahs. She helped establish the Cancer Society in



Annie (Finlay) Nattress.

Amherstburg; they met on the second floor of the Imperial Bank, corner Richmond and Dalhousie Streets. Mother was an active member of the bowling league at the Brunner Mond Club in addition to the bridge and euchre clubs. She recalls assisting at the street fairs which were sponsored by Christ Church and held on the street in front of the Echo building, back in the 1920s. Mother loved to be involved and took an interest in her community and neighbours, both past and present. She helped make up parcels for soldiers overseas during the Second World War.

My brother Bill remembers the time around 1927-28 when Mother had a beaded flapper dress and hat to match for dances which were held in the town hall. Many who attended would take something from home with which to decorate the hall...it might be a silk-shaded floor lamp or something equally decorative.

In 1990 the Big V Drugstores in Ontario were looking for a senior citizen to make a television commercial to promote their name and services. The local store here in town submitted Mother's name. Out of 100 interviews conducted, Mother won, not just because of her age at that time (91 years) but also for her ability to be witty, spunky, very much alert and natural in front of the cameras. Approximately six months thereafter the television crew came down from Toronto and in 4 to 6 hours a TV commercial was made.

After all the filming and interviews, the crew and director told her she missed her calling, for she had the "right stuff" to have become a movie star. I recall, when living and working in Toronto, how my colleagues at work would say, "Oh, Al, we saw your mother on TV again last night." I myself would be watching a program and all of a sudden there would be Mother doing her commercial right in front of my eyes. Many relatives Mother had not seen for years commented on how lovely and well she looked for her age.

She was always very concerned with her appearance, both in dress and grooming. Every morning when she first gets up, the earrings go on. Her stepmother Lillian (Dube) Finlay was the same way.

There's a program called "Let's Sing Again" from Vancouver every week. We sit and watch this half-hour show. It's a sing-along of old songs and the words are flashed under the picture. She and I sing the words out and have a good old time.

I think that the half-and-half mixture of Irish and French in her is what gives her such spunk and wit, not to mention the twinkle in her eye. I love her dearly and thank the Lord for every day we have her on this earth.

Editors' Note: Annie (Finlay) Nattress passed away on February 25, 1997 at the age of 98.

Memories of Helen Marsh...by Linda (Bertrand) Scott (1996)

I had the great privilege and honour throughout many years in my childhood to be the happy recipient of the graces and generosity of Helen Marsh. This privilege came through my friends Janis Maloney and Jill (Maloney) Beadow, whose family was closely acquainted with the Marshes.

'Grandma Helen', or 'Gram' as we more affectionately called her, was a delightful, friendly and welcoming hostess whom we loved to visit. The three of us, and often Jennifer Evans Vrionis, spent many of our winter hours on the outdoor skating rink at the town park across from the Marsh house. (John Marsh lived upstairs and Gram and Mother Marsh lived downstairs.) We would skate until near exhaustion, always aware of the treats and warm greeting awaiting us across the street at Gram's. Upon our arrival we would knock and enter, calling out to Gram, "Yoo hoo," and awaiting her exact same call in return. We would repeat this often. It was fun for all of us and soon Gram would appear, just so delighted to see us! She would ask all about our adventures and she would rise and fall with us in her facial expressions as our tales of woe or excitement unfolded. Then, when we would lean a bit forward, becoming too exuberant or a mite 'out of control', she would bring us back into a more respectful condition with a quiet, slow tone of her voice and a more sober look. We knew we had been chastised but with gentleness and love.

Respect was the primary foundation of any visit with Gram and I was regularly and properly coached ahead of time and through whispers and sign language by Jan and Jill when Gram would leave the room. I have to admit that I was the quietest of all of us and I was frequently on pins and needles, as Jan and Jill were more lively and bold in conversing with Gram. It was fun to watch how she managed herself around us. She was always proper and always a lady in the true sense. She loved life, especially being with young people, and every visit was a treasured learning experience for all.

When we went in, one of the first things on the agenda was for each of us to politely acknowledge Mother Marsh. She was the elderly and ailing mother of John and Helen. She sat for a period each day in a large upholstered blue chair in front of a window overlooking the park. She watched the comings and goings of a great number of children over many years. As children, we were never too certain of how much Mother Marsh knew or heard. I think I remember waiting patiently on more than one occasion for her to speak. I can't remember if she did. This part of the visit I found difficult as Mother Marsh frightened me for no apparent reason. Still, this was our duty at each visit and we respectfully complied.

Gram always had an endless stock of 'sweets' on hand, especially the most wonderful boxes of chocolates in the world. She seemed to be supplied on a regular basis by her many friends and associates who also knew of her apparent sweet tooth, especially her love of fine chocolates. We were known to get her giggling on more than one occasion about this one passion in her life, besides her writing and her beloved Echo.

Janis especially had a way with Gram as Jan was 'boundless energy' and fun, trying so hard to please but in the end just being herself and making Gram laugh!

At each visit also, over politeness, tea and cookies or chocolates, we each had to give an account of how we were and what we'd been up to - especially with regard to school, marks and family, etc. etc. I was always nervous and shy but she was so gentle, patient and kind with me. Even though I was stressed, I felt so special being there with her. She took an interest in each person individually and the others had to be quiet and listen to the one speaking. We were encouraged in good conversation and good spirit!

Gram was such a lady and she was trying to teach us to become young ladies. To help develop these characteristics and to introduce us to culture, she bought tickets for us to go the ballet. For many years we had the great joy of anticipating our trip to the Cleary Auditorium to

experience either "The Nutcracker" or another of the National Ballet of Canada's great performances.

Sometimes there were parties at Gram's where one of the girls would be allowed to host a party, usually a birthday celebration. As Jan and I have birthdays in January, a skating party at the park would be followed by hot chocolate and food (pizza, I think!). There was always much laughter and we all had great fun.

As with many great privileges of childhood, I did not realize until many years later the extent of the gifts which that great lady shared with me. Regrettably, I did not see her often in my adult life.

I hope that these tales reflect, at least in part, some of the love, respect and gratitude which I feel toward her, and the joy that she gave me as a child, which continues to be mine as an adult as I look back and remember Helen Marsh.

Remembering the Tea Garden Restaurant (1946-64)...by Olga Semeniuk (1996)

The Tea Garden Restaurant was one of the most popular gathering places in Amherstburg. Established in 1946 in a historic nineteenth century residence, it was close to the busy intersection of Sandwich and Richmond Streets. Its size and location, its seven-days-a-week, sun-up to sun-down operation and its excellent food, affordable to even the most modest budget, all contributed to its success.

We [Nick and Olga Semeniuk] opened the Tea Garden as a family business on June 6, 1946, amid lingering wartime restrictions and shortages. 'Meatless Tuesdays' were a part of the menu in the early months and essential food items such as sugar, butter, cooking oil, coffee and tea were in scarce supply. But good cooking and a distinctive personality shaped by the participation of all family members allowed the restaurant to grow and thrive.

The Tea Garden was known for its friendly, lively atmosphere. Its diverse clientele that varied according to the time of day, day of the week and season of the year, kept the conversation stimulating. Typically, milkmen, employees of Marra's Bread, local farmers and factory workers would be the early morning customers. By mid-morning, coffee-breakers from neighbouring businesses and offices, the town hall and the Amherstburg Echo would gather to debate current affairs.

The noon hour saw return visits by many, along with students and teachers on their lunch breaks, salesmen in town for the day, and oil-flecked mechanics from the surrounding Shell, Esso and Texaco stations. The evenings and weekends were family-oriented, with some customers returning for their third Tea Garden meal of the day. Fridays were fast-paced; hundreds of take-out orders of fish and chips were routinely prepared between 4:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m., alongside a steady stream of in-house meals. Business boomed in summer months when cottagers and tourists vied with the regulars for tables or stools at the counter.

As the town developed and major construction projects were undertaken the Tea Garden responded and sustained the hearty appetites of various work crews stationed in Amherstburg. In the mid-1950s during the conversion to dial telephones the Bell Telephone 'boys' were regular



Tea Garden Restaurant.
Watercolour by Steve Brown

customers, along with Ontario Hydro linemen who were working to accommodate the town's growing power needs. Members of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers were well-known to the Tea Garden during the dredging for the St. Lawrence Seaway from the mid-1950s to the early 1960s.

The restaurant's own work crews were sizable with as many as fourteen staff working peak periods such as Mother's Day. Many young people held their first job at the Tea Garden which provided a steady source of employment and customer service training.

With the addition of a banquet room, the Tea Garden became a favourite location for family reunions, wedding receptions and regular meetings of the Amherstburg Rotary Club and other community groups. Other renovations led to the removal of the stucco from the building's exterior in 1961, revealing its original and historic stone work. So interesting was this discovery that for many months passers-by stopped to admire and even to touch the Tea Garden's limestone walls. In an era before malls and community centres existed in Amherstburg, the Tea Garden provided a safe and pleasant environment for social interaction. Because of its proximity to the town's commercial centre and major institutions and because of the number and variety of people who visited the restaurant each day, it formed a part of Amherstburg's community information network.

No visible signs of the Tea Garden now remain on Richmond Street but there are many vivid memories and anecdotes about the good food, good times and distinctive personalities from all walks of life who were its patrons and employees. The Bicentennial provides a fitting opportunity to recall this unique family enterprise, which in many ways symbolized the character of post-war Amherstburg and earned its place in the town's social and economic history.

Editors' Note: Nick Semeniuk passed away in 1964 and five years later Olga sold the business. The building was razed in 1988.

Recollections of Amherstburg...by Joe Sinasac⁷ (1995)

In the late 1960s Amherstburg was a town betwixt and between. Its rural heritage still poked out of every corner, yet change - uninvited and even unwelcome in some corners - had bullied its way in. After all, a border town 25 minutes away from one of the biggest cities in the United States was not about to be left alone by the ferment that was shaking the rest of the modern world.

For a boy on the verge of adolescence as I was - another case of being betwixt and between - Amherstburg was a treasure trove. There were the kinds of rustic delights that would make Huck Finn swoon. Then there were undertones of a larger adult world, more sophisticated and exciting, to be sure, but also less innocent.

Tractors continued to pull tomato-laden wagons into town on their way to the canning factory on Fort Street. They were usually followed by daring boys racing along on bicycles, hoping to pilfer a fat tomato or two to fire at some unlucky target. Since there were no outlying residential subdivisions, corn and soybean fields lined with scrubby, overgrown hedgerows were within walking distance from even the oldest streets. In the fall, it was common to hear the distant bark of shotguns as hunters took aim at rabbits and pheasants on the edge of town.

A short walk from our house on George Street was a thicket surrounding a small pond. It is gone now, replaced by a subdivision just south of the Pike Road and west of the Second Concession. The frogs, tadpoles, turtles and crayfish that called the pond home fell victim to the perennial invasions of small boys and, occasionally, girls. Armed with jars, nets and our bare hands, we took captives and called them pets. We were also able to turn a jumble of scrap wood into a makeshift raft that we would pole around the muddy water hole. It could carry two children, barely, as long as nobody moved too quickly.

As the teen years moved closer, I rambled farther afield with my friends, indulging in the kinds of enterprises parents can only shake their heads at when they hear about them years later. "How the kid lived to be 21 is beyond me," they sigh. Somehow the kid did.

There were empty railway cars to explore on the old siding downtown or out on the north edge of the Allied Chemical plant. We would climb on top of them and leap from car to car, pretending to be hoboes riding the rails.

But the nearby rushing brook coming out of the Allied property offered more potential for our creativity. It emptied out of a culvert into the Detroit River, marking its exit with a swamp of floating, vanilla-coloured foam at least a foot thick and the size of a baseball diamond. Who knows what kind of chemical stew it contained. Not that we cared. This was only a few years after the publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* and before Barry Commoner wrote *The Closing Circle*. Environmentalism had not yet touched our lives. All we knew was that the cast-off bricks and concrete detritus along the brook made excellent building materials for dams and assorted spillways.

Another tantalizing prospect was found at the old coal dock, now the Navy Yard Park at the foot of Richmond Street. It was called the coal dock for a reason: that was where freighters would dump loads of heating coal for the local market. On blistering July days it was not unusual to see smoke rising from the sides of the coal mountains as the fine surface dust approached spontaneous combustion. The mounds, often two storeys high, made great slides, if a little toasty. The down side was the blackened mess of kid and clothes that landed at the bottom. Even Tide was no help there.

For teenagers, half the pleasure of any pastime was in its pursuit. The more forbidden it was, the more we savoured it. And nothing was more likely to challenge us than a chain-link fence

topped with barbed wire - like the one surrounding Allied's old, unused quarries. A particular favourite of ours was west of Anderdon's Second Concession and north of Alma Street. It was half-filled with water. At least it resembled water, although of a pleasant greenish-blue hue not known to exist in nature. But the water was warm and there were enough perches 20 to 30 feet above the surface to make diving interesting. The regular dodging of stern-faced security guards just added a little spice to the steamy afternoons.

Alas, even blissful ignorance has to come to an end. The advent of my teen years coincided with Amherstburg's rough introduction to the upheaval that had afflicted the rest of North America for the better part of a decade. The memories are dim now, vague recollections of the chance overhearing of adult conversations, a glaring headline in the Detroit News or street rumours of nasty business in the old Lake View Hotel. But it was clear, the riots in Detroit in 1967 had their shockwaves in our town, complete with a burning cross, shots fired at the home of a local Black minister and threatening anonymous phone calls. Our racism was no prettier than anyone else's.

Nor was our pollution, even if we played and swam in it in our naïveté. Looking back, it seems incredible now how blind we were to the visible evidence all around us. Fortunately, we woke up and have at least begun the long cleanup job of the Great Lakes. Amherstburg has had its role there, too.

Change, of course, is inevitable. Thank God for that, I suppose, when it comes to the darker side of our quiet community. Yet it saddens me to think my own children will not be able to experience the kind of freedom a kid could still enjoy in that last decade of Amherstburg's innocence. Today we are more sophisticated, more worldly, certainly more knowledgeable and definitely more careful. Maybe we're even wiser, although I'm not sure about that. But happier?

The Old Duck Hunters Club...by Tilly Taylor and Jane (Taylor) Teeple (1995)

The Old Duck Hunters Club existed in Amherstburg during the 1940s and '50s. The four original members were Art Taylor, Bob Denike, Sam Mayhew and Lance Piper but the club soon expanded to include Alec Gardner, Walt Mayville, Lorne Waters, Mac Shaw, Carl Braun, George Kopacz, Bob Wilson, Ralph Jimmerfield, Jake Tremblay and Mickey Finn. The clubhouse was located directly across the road from the brine wells and the Finn residence. Here one could always find some refreshment for a few cents, especially on Sunday when the 'establishments' were closed. There was always a good card game and good conversation about the week's hunting or fishing catch, and a wager or two about who could outshoot whom.

Club members crafted and painted their own decoys, melted lead and poured their own sinkers and set the decoys out in the marsh in back of the brine wells. They built duck blinds out of marsh reeds and heated them with small alcohol-fuelled heaters, while a wooden packing crate or pop case served as seating.

They respected wildlife and game preservation. Not wanting to waste any of their allowed quota, they kept their families well-supplied with wild game dinners until the families found they were eager for the treat of a hamburger!

During the days of the tugboat races and the famous tug Atomic when Preston Foster attended the victory celebrations, the Old Duck Hunters supplied a wild game dinner.

They were sentimental about their loyal hunting dogs who worked hard for them over the years. When a dog died, it was buried in a special area on the clubhouse grounds, still near its master and familiar hunting land. There was no parking allowed on this area.

Many of today's local hunters were taught hunting skills, safety procedures and respect for nature by these Old Duck Hunters.

An example of a typical wager among these friends was found tacked to the clubhouse wall. It is dated February 29, 1952:

Leap Year Day

I, Art Taylor, can outshoot Walt Mayville any old day, day or night, with one eye shut, anywhere, anytime. Beer your choice.

Signed, Walt Mayville

12 gauge shotgun

Art Taylor

Witness, Alec Gardner

School Days...by Edward A. 'Pat' Warren (1996)

The House of Shalom was my grade school for eight years. It was called St. Anthony's then. In '34 Grade 1 seemed O.K. On the very first full day I learned that if you needed to go to the bathroom you had to stay in your seat, raise your hand and wait for permission. The next day was not a good day because Sister Mary Patrick did not see my hand until it was too late. On the good side, the best thing I remember was the special gizmo that imitated our planetary system. It had the sun and all the known planets and even included our moon. What was so great was that it had a tiny crank you could turn and the planets would move around the sun and the moon around the Earth.

Sr. Mary Patrick turned out to be a constant surprise. I thought she was a great Grade 1 teacher. It wasn't just her name, although that was a decided plus. It was also all the things in her classroom. There were plants, animals, fish, bugs, books, alphabets, music, games and fire drills. Sr. Mary Patrick was my home room teacher again in Grade 7 and she was even better than Grade 1. So guess how surprised I was when Sr. Mary Patrick was the Chemistry teacher and my home room teacher in Grade 10 at St. Rose High School! It was the one and only year that I went there. (That was also the year I spent a lot of time trying not to let anyone notice that I was noticing Ann Marra. I finally worked out a weird system to ask Ann to a high school dance. But the word I got back was that another girl said yes. Was I upset when I arrived corsage in hand and knocked on this other girl's door! Her surprised parents informed me that their daughter was out. She had gone to the very first Frank Sinatra movie to come to Amherstburg. I never did get the nerve to talk to Ann. Never did get to like Frank either.) Then when I got to Assumption University, guess who was teaching Chemistry? But my luck ran out - I got the other Chemistry professor.

Of course, every morning at St. Anthony's the bell would ring and the boys would line up by the north entrance and the girls near the south entrance. The good nuns wore their strange 16th-century black and white uniforms, all starched and neat. They were totally surrounded by the strong clean smell of laundry soap. When it was time for us to move, the nun would signal with a sharp

loud clap from the wooden clapper. It was a very similar sound to the exotic clap of the sensual flamenco dancers but without the exotic, the sensual or the colour. The wind-up phonograph player would loudly fill the sudden silence. It would always be the "March of the Wooden Soldiers" and all of us good little boys on one side and girls on the other would march happily to our classrooms. One bit of luck for me, who envies anyone who can carry even one musical note, was the number of good singers we had in each class I was in. To my mind the best was Marguerite Gignac, my neighbour. She was particularly well-gifted with both talent and beauty. Eventually Marguerite became part of the opera scene in Europe.

Some grades left only vague memories but others were stronger. The first thing I remember about Grade 5 was learning to play euchre. Then there was the day Sr. Mary John received a bushel basket of the best-looking apples ever. The odour was just mouth-watering. Each apple looked luscious and shiny red. These apples were just perfect for eating so they had to be protected. Sister had some of us boys move the apples into the storage room. Sister obviously failed to realize the unique gifts possessed by boys of that age. The apples began disappearing from a locked room. The blame rested mainly on the one boy who became famous for the time he charged each of us a nickel to see a horse "whose head was where his tail should be." He had misbehaved so Sister put him in the storage room. The door had glass you could not see through and it had a huge window right beside a giant downspout and lightning cable. When Sister was ready to bring the boy back into the classroom she discovered that the boy and half the apples were gone even though this was the second floor.

Yesteryear Was the Same in a Different Way!

What a contrast! Schooldays in the thirties and school days in the nineties. Memory plays tricks but it seems that the weather has remained more or less the same over the years. Sometimes we got our first snow for a minute in October and sometimes no snow till January. In the thirties just about everybody walked every school day except in a downpour. Today most of our youngsters walk to a collection point and wait for their bus. Hard to compare the effects of weather. But to me there is a really big difference between yesterday and today. In yesteryear you would head for school alone and probably meet up with one or more friends along the way, arriving at school in little groups or alone. But today most of our youngsters collect in a small group, enter a bus to become part of a larger group and arrive at school in a big group just as other big groups are arriving. I could be wrong, but it looks to me like the group energy levels are about the same but the groups start sooner, last longer and are a lot bigger.

In yesteryear when we had a group we had to have action sandwiched between inaction. Seems like action came first. For the boys it seemed awfully important to run and play physical games. The girls seemed to skip rope and play hopscotch a lot. The boys had the biggest part of the school yard. It was the same at both elementary schools.⁸ The boys had the area with the good ball diamond. At my school the boys also had the biggest cinder pile which was good for some 'king of the mountain' physical contact, pushing and pulling games. We also had the big ditch out back which was great for amazing feats of physical prowess, especially when the ditch was full of water. I bet our ditch-jumping champions were world-class. Of course it wasn't so good when you came up short. Even that had advantages. It takes quite a while to walk home a mile, clean up, put on dry clothes and walk back a mile. Cold weather meant ice in a wet ditch but sometimes the ice was

too thin and you had another trip home. Our school did not have a phone in my day but somehow the news always got home before I did. Never figured that one out. Guess it's just one of those small town advantages that parents talk about.

School bullies were always a problem back then just as they are now. Today we know a lot about this problem. Just this week on educational TV they had some 'experts' talking about what they know. They said the best thing you can do for your children to protect them from being the victim of a bully is to give them self-confidence and even 'conflict resolution' and assertiveness training. Well, back in my day we learned avoidance and the value of Shakespeare when he wrote, "Discretion is the better part of valour." But when a fight did break out, there were rules. For one thing, there was no fighting in the school yard. So little fights were sometimes held out back on the other side of the ditch behind the bushes. The serious fights were usually held in the abandoned cement works building that was full of corn cobs. I don't remember anyone being seriously hurt.

The most important bully in my life was John F. He lived with his grandparents on Alma Street. My friends and I avoided him for months but the showdown came on the big ice pond behind Wood's Variety Store (which eventually became Maria's Restaurant). John came out of nowhere and jumped on top of my best friend Pat Whalen (no relation to the famous Gene Whelan family). I reacted without thinking. There were a lot of older boys around and many of them thought that I started the fight. Seldom have I ever been so scared or so angry and I was only about ten. As luck would have it, John was still recuperating from an appendix operation and eventually he had to give up. My dad had a rule that you always had to shake hands after a fight. Almost overnight John and I became good friends and it lasted for years. I even adopted his grandparents because they were so nice and all mine were so far away. The last time I saw John he was still single and looking just great in a Canadian Army uniform, while I was married with one child and teaching Math and Physics at Assumption High School. Sure would be good to see him again.

Remembering Quarry Lake..by Mike White (1996)

My family had just moved into the new home we had built on Alma Street. The year was 1928. At that time the road was unpaved and there were no sidewalks east of Balaclava. Although there were only ten houses on Alma in the block between Victoria and Balaclava (four on the north side and six on the south), there were plenty of kids to play with. The Nye family, who had built the house next door, had a total of ten children, while our family had eight. In those days that was considered to be a normal-sized family.

In 1929 the paving of Alma Street (we always referred to it as the Townline) began. As kids we found it interesting to watch the workmen as they progressed up the street from Sandwich. Everything was done by hand and it seemed as if it took forever to reach Victoria Street. Eventually the job was finished and all the young people in that area who owned a pair of roller skates were delighted with the smoothness of the surface. The road became a regular roller skating rink. At that time, few people owned cars and traffic was not a hazard.

The Mumford family lived on the northwest corner of Alma and Victoria. They had a cow and it was there that we bought our milk. Mrs. Mumford was a kindly English lady. One day when I went to pick up the milk, she informed me that the cow was going to have a calf and they wouldn't

have any milk for sale for a while. She told me to contact the Pigeon family on the corner of Victoria and St. Arnaud to see if they would sell us the milk. I relayed the message to my mother and she told me to go over to the Pigeons and ask if they could sell us two quarts a day.

When I knocked at the door it was answered by a woman who I later found out was 'Dell' Pigeon. After hearing my request, she told me to go out to the barn and talk to her brother 'Judd'. As I walked towards the barn I met two other kids about my age and they took me out to the barn to see Judd. He was a man in his late forties or early fifties and very friendly. I called him Mr. Pigeon and he said, "No mister, just Judd." I told him what I wanted and he said, "Okay." Judd was cleaning out the stable, so I went back to the yard where the other boys had been feeding the chickens. They asked me if I wanted to help and I said, "Okay." They handed me an ear of corn, which I began to shell and throw the kernels to the chickens.

The two boys told me their names were 'Bud' and 'Ev' Deneau and that they lived on St. Arnaud Street. They said they often came up to the Pigeons' because they had lots of fun here. They told me that Judd, Dell and their brother Perry lived in the house along with their father and mother. (That house is still standing on the northwest corner of St. Arnaud and Victoria.) Another brother, 'Jim', lived on a farm on the Fifth Concession of Malden about a quarter-mile north of Malden Centre on the west side of the road.

We walked over to the fence just a few yards northeast of the barn (now the Precision Plastics parking lot) and we could see the two horses at the far east end of the field. Bud gave out with a few short whistles and the horses came galloping up to the gate. He fed them a couple of green apples and when they saw we didn't have anything else, they headed back out into the field. That was my first introduction to 'Doc' and 'Babe'. Ev warned me to watch Doc, as he could be mean at times. I left for home, telling them I would be back the next day.

That day was the beginning of a life-long friendship with the Deneau brothers and years of enjoyable experiences.

My Introduction to Quarry Lake

One day shortly after that, Bud asked me to go to the Quarry Lake with him. I hadn't been there before, so this was a new experience for me. We walked north through the first three fields past St. Arnaud to a path that led northeast directly to the lake. I'll never forget when I first saw it. The path we were following came out on the west side of the lake. The land on that side was about six feet above the surface of the water. The lake was about 150 yards wide by 200 yards long. It was created a long time ago when stone was removed to be used for building purposes (St. John the Baptist Church, the Parish Hall, etc.). The earth had been stripped off and deposited in gently undulating hills around approximately three-quarters of the lake's perimeter. The hills had become overgrown with brush (mostly sumac) interspersed with elm trees. Although the wind was blowing a little at the time, the water was as smooth as glass. The surrounding hills had made the lake virtually windproof.

Bud had told me to bring my fishing line. I followed him over to the southwest corner of the lake where there was an exposed shelf of rock jutting out about three feet from the dirt bank. The shelf was about ten feet wide. This was our fishing dock. I was in for a surprise: as I looked down into the water, it was so clear I could see the bottom. We quickly baited and dropped our lines in and soon we could see the fish darting about trying to nibble off the bait. It was like fishing in an

aquarium.

Somebody must have planted perch in the lake because there were quite a few of them. However, most of them were small. There were also carp and large snapping turtles. I suspected that was the reason why there weren't any large perch. Whenever we caught a fish we would throw it back in. The fun was in watching them. If we caught a large snapper we would sell it at Chan's Restaurant. After about an hour we decided to take a walk around the area.

From the top of the hill on the east side we could see the operating Brunner Mond Quarry. There were rail cars loaded with stone being pulled up a long incline and into a building at the top. The quarry itself was about a quarter of a mile directly to the east. At the bottom of the hill was a small pond. Bud told me there was another one at the north end of the lake. Those, he said, were teeming with frogs and mud turtles. We could also sell the froglegs to Chan's. We were always looking to make a little money; we didn't want to miss the Saturday afternoon serials at the Liberty Theatre!

Looking for Golf Balls

It was early in the afternoon, so we decided to go over to Spring Hill Golf Course and look for golf balls in the creek. To get there we walked through a large bush southeast of the lake, then over to the Second Concession and along the fence row separating the golf course from the Lew Bailey farm (about three-quarters of a mile away). There were two holes (one at the north end and the other at the south end) where the golfers had to drive the ball across the creek to the green on the other side. Many an errant ball found its way into the water. We would remove our shoes and walk around in the muck at the bottom of the creek until we felt a ball underfoot. The balls that we retrieved were sold back to the golfers. I had been out here many times before with my neighbours Jack and Tom Purdie.

Wintertime at Quarry Lake

When the lake froze in the winter, it was generally smooth because of the wind protection mentioned earlier. Unlike the river, there was no current so the water froze very quickly. During a prolonged cold spell the water would freeze to a depth of about three feet, thereby assuring ice for the whole winter. During a warm spell we might get a couple of inches of water on top, but this quickly froze when the weather turned cold again giving us instant safe ice on which to skate.

The only access to the area was by foot, which accounted for the limited number of people who frequented the lake on a regular basis. The area in which they lived was also a factor. The following are those I remember as being regulars: Ian and Rolly Spencler (north Balaclava); Bill, Herb and 'Thorny' Balfour (Brunner Avenue); Bud, Ev and Chet Deneau (St. Arnaud); Sam Demunzio; Joe Demunzio; the Knight brothers; Art, Butch and Syd Steadman (Texas Road); Barney, Ed, Gene and Tom Whelan (Second Concession, Anderdon); my brother John and myself.

The ice surface was large enough to accommodate two hockey games at the same time and yet leave plenty of room for those of us who just wanted to enjoy skating. The goals were made of old fence posts laid out on the ice. There were many spirited games and I recall a friendly rivalry between the Balfours and the Whelans. I think Ed Whelan was one of the best skaters.

The many hours (summer and winter) spent at the lake over the next few years were ones that I recall with fondness. It always held a special attraction for me. Perhaps it was because when I

was there I always had that special carefree feeling we sometimes experience in our youth. Whatever the reason, I enjoyed it immensely.

Occasionally on a bright moonlit winter's night I would take my skates and trudge through the fields to the lake, where I would skate for an hour or so. The reflection of the moonlight on the surface of the ice bathed the surrounding hills in such brightness that the rabbits scampering about at play were plainly visible. Some would even venture out a short distance on the ice, seemingly oblivious to my presence. On this particular evening as I skated around the lake, the title song from a movie I had recently seen kept repeating itself in my mind. The movie starred Sonja Heine and was about a young Dutch girl. It was called, "Heaven in a Pair of Wooden Shoes." Little did I realize as I walked home that evening in late February, 1940 that this was my last skate at Quarry Lake and that in the near future I would fall in love with my own version of heaven in a pair of wooden shoes. (Thanks, Nel.)

World War II started in September of that year. On June 7, 1940 Bud Deneau, his brother Ev and I were at George Girardin's place. George owned the building that now houses the Canton Restaurant on Sandwich Street. The front half of the building contained a store which sold candy, soft drinks, cigarettes, bread, milk, lunch meats and other sundry items. The store was actually a front for a very successful bootlegging establishment, 'Smug Harbour', which George carried on in the back half of the building. Bud and I had worked for George intermittently over the past two or three years. George would have been an unqualified success in whatever profession he chose. He had the best 'people personality' I have ever encountered.

On this particular morning Bud and I were working on the garage roof, staining the wooden shingles. Ev, who had worked at Marra's Bread that year and had acquired an old Ford pick-up truck, was filling in potholes on the driveway and backyard. An army truck drove by with soldiers standing in the back shouting and waving. No sooner had it passed than we heard Ev shout up to us, "Hey, let's join the army!" That afternoon we were at the Windsor Armouries. 'Mission accomplished'.

My story should end here, but unfortunately there is one more chapter. After the war (1945) I was hired to work at the Brunner Mond Quarry and subsequently became a blaster. By the early 1950s we had expanded the quarry to Moore's Lane on the south and the Second Concession on the east. We now began the expansion westward. As we worked our way closer to the old lake I knew that a fracture in the rock wall surrounding it was imminent. Each time we set off a blast in that area I would walk to the edge of the embankment and look down, expecting to see the telltale trickle of water that would corroborate the inevitable. On this particular day it happened. I walked over to the lake and watched the receding water level as the trickle grew to a torrent, cascading down the embankment. My mind was flooded with mixed emotions, happiness for the many fond memories, yet tinged with sadness that I should be instrumental in the destruction of something that had afforded me so much pleasure. My beloved Quarry Lake was gone forever. I must have been standing too close to the spray; as I felt the moisture on my cheeks, I turned quickly and walked away.



Quarry Lake, circa 1920s.

A Recollection of Thomas W. Moffat⁹

Moffat's Pharmacy Limited at 53 Richmond Street, a business which thrived in the same location for forty-three years, was established in May, 1929 when Thomas W. Moffat purchased the stock of the former Theobald Drug Store. Moffat's closed on March 17, 1972.

Tom Moffat was born in 1906 at Tilbury, the son of J.E. Moffat who for several years operated a Ford dealership in Amherstburg. After graduating from high school Tom apprenticed at Pond's Drug Store in Windsor. That prepared him for entry to the Ontario College of Pharmacy at Toronto, obtaining his degree in 1927. (While working at Pond's he met his future wife, Winnifred Pierce, who was a dental nurse working in an office above the drug store. They were married in 1928.) He then joined the staff of Shettler Drug Store in Detroit and while there negotiated the purchase of the Theobald Drug Store in Amherstburg.

When Mr. Moffat first opened his Richmond Street store, Sally Pattenden was his only assistant. Some of the later employees were Bernice (Amaley) Anderson, Toddy (Knight) Ball, Sharon (Bingham) Barron, Glen Belyea, Mona (McBride) Bornais, Luisi (DiGiovanni) DeLuca, Pat (Deslippe) McCaffrey, Carol (McGuire) Mailloux, Sandy (Deslippe) Niven and Dorothy (Pattenden) Fox. In 1972 the Big V Drug Stores purchased the stock and Moffat's closed. Pat McCaffrey, Carol Mailloux and longtime pharmacist Glen Belyea joined the Big V staff. Mr. Moffat began a semi-retirement, working occasionally for the newly-established I.D.A. Drug Store at Fort Malden Mall.

Tom Moffat was a gentleman well-known for his high ethical standards and deep involvement in the community. Not everyone knows that he was one of five area pharmacists who founded the highly praised and much copied Green Shield drug plan which was first used by the automobile companies. In his recollection of Mr. Moffat, Pat Warren wrote,

Another blessing of a small town is that it's hard for the goodness of people to be invisible like it sometimes seems to be in the big cities. The Tom Moffat that I knew was one of those quiet, thoughtful men who got things done without attracting any attention to himself. He was always and completely a gentleman...The man I knew treated everyone with the greatest of respect. He was sincerely concerned about the welfare of others...a highly respected thinker, planner and worker and was quietly involved in just about everything that was going on, but not for personal gain...¹⁰

So much more could be written about Thomas W. Moffat and the men and women of his era who were behind the scenes, movers and shakers of their communities. It seems almost designed that Mr. Moffat's death occurred in 1996, Amherstburg/Fort Malden's Bicentennial year. He left us with a historical recollection written when the drug store closed in 1972. It is fitting that we end with his own words which were printed in the Amherstburg Echo on March 15, 1972:

To Our Many Friends - After 43 years of service to Amherstburg, MOFFAT'S PHARMACY will close on MARCH 17th.

It is a most traumatic experience to terminate an enterprise that has been one's life work. But it is with pride that we look back and realize that every year showed steady growth, and we have been happy that we had earned the confidence and loyalty

of so many of the community.

When MOFFAT'S PHARMACY opened, Dr. James Park still practised medicine in his office in the now famous "Park House" on Dalhousie St. The S.W.A. street car stopped right in front of our door. We not only dispensed prescriptions, but made up numerous veterinary preparations in use at that time.

It was some years until the advent of the sulpha drugs ushered in the age of chemotherapy and specific treatment for infections. The dread pneumonia now responded to treatment instead of the ten day period to crisis, then some recovered, and many did not.

During World War II came the antibiotics introduced by penicillin and steadily perfected to give your physician the sophisticated specific agents available to him today.

Our practise has extended through the most interesting period in world history. From the days of the Model T Ford to these days of interplanetary flights...Never before has progress been so rapid. From the welfare problems of the early 30's to today with widespread health insurance and prepaid prescriptions.

At this time I think of all the loyal members of our staff both past and present. It has always been a source of pride that all of our employees...girls who married and left to establish homes, and boys who left for higher education and other careers, have in every case, been faithful customers of the pharmacy.

So we close wishing everyone health and happiness.

Yours sincerely,
THOS. W. MOFFAT

Echoes of the Past

In 1995 several longtime residents of the Tri-Community were interviewed about their memories of the town. These interviews appeared on the biweekly Bicentennial page of the *Amherstburg Echo* between February, 1995 and January, 1996. Following are brief summaries of these recollections.

John 'Mac' Gatfield - February 19, 1995

Born and raised in Anderdon, John 'Mac' Gatfield's childhood memories include visiting his aunt in Amherstburg and playing with Vincent Price whose family had a summer home on Laird Avenue. He worked for a couple of summers at the quarry before obtaining permanent employment with the Detroit-Windsor Tunnel Corporation and moving to Detroit. Mac returned to Amherstburg after his retirement.

Josephine Ouellette - March 12, 1995

Josephine Ouellette was the first woman elected to public office in Amherstburg when she became a trustee for the Essex County Separate School Board in 1957. She came to Amherstburg at the age of 12 when her family moved here from Windsor. At one time she was a switchboard

operator for Bell Telephone in their office on the second floor of the *Amherstburg Echo* building. During her life in the Tri-Community Josephine met many good friends and has many beautiful memories.

Editors' Note: Josephine Ouellette passed away in July, 1997.

Charlie Bennett - March 26, 1995

Charlie Bennett worked for the Amherstburg Post Office for thirty-eight years. When he started in 1949 the post office was at the corner of Richmond and Dalhousie Streets. By the end of the day the workers' white shirts were covered with coal dust from the coal yard behind the building. Born and raised in Amherstburg on Rankin Avenue, Charlie worked as a teenager at the Bob-Lo roller rink and was a carpenter's helper at Brunner Mond. Charlie retired from the post office in 1987.

Florence Gatfield - April 9, 1995

Florence Gatfield was born and raised in Anderdon. Some of her fondest memories of Amherstburg involve her aunt Irene Kitchen who was a telegraph operator here for a number of years. Florence worked in Windsor at the Land Titles office until she retired.

Annie Nattress - May 10, 1995

Born in Anderdon in 1899, Annie Nattress lived in Amherstburg her entire life. Her husband William Nattress was the town's mayor from 1950 to 1953. Annie's father William Finlay owned a pool hall on the southeast corner of Ramsay and Murray Streets.

Editors' Note: Annie Nattress passed away in February, 1997.

Jack Jones Jr. - August 30, 1995

Jack Jones joined the Amherstburg Community Band in 1956 as a trumpet player. He left the band twenty-three years later after serving as its director. Involvement with the band was a family affair for the Joneses - Jack Sr. also served as director for a number of years while his wife Mary was the band's secretary/treasurer.

Membership in the band had a lifelong influence on Jack Jr. Not only does he have many good memories of local and out-of-town concerts and spring band camp, but he met his wife Jo-Anne through the band. Jack is now a music teacher at Catholic Central in Windsor.

Tom Hamilton - October 11, 1995

For Tom Hamilton, many childhood memories involve swimming in the Detroit River. One year he opened the swimming season in the still-chilly waters on April 15th. He remembers Ray 'Nitchy' Sawyer, a one-legged lifeguard at the Waterworks dock who taught many Amherstburg children to swim. As they grew older, Tom and his friends would swim out to the passing Bob-Lo boats and climb aboard. Upon arrival at the island they would have to outrun the Bob-Lo police, dive off the dock and swim back to the mainland.

Austin Craig - October 25, 1995

Austin Craig moved to Amherstburg with his family in 1920 when his father Herbert was hired as the town's chief of police. Herbert resigned when it became clear that the job description included cleaning the town hall. He then joined the Bob-Lo Island police force. The Craigs moved to Leamington in 1929, then to Delhi and eventually to Windsor. Austin returned to Amherstburg in 1989.

Marianne Nattress - November 8, 1995

A native of Amherstburg, Marianne Nattress joined the RCAF in 1942. After basic training in St. Thomas, she was sent to Rockcliffe Air Station near Ottawa and served as a nurses' aid there for three years. In 1945 she returned to Amherstburg briefly before relocating to Toronto where she lived and worked for 44 years. Several years ago Marianne moved back to Amherstburg to be near her mother Annie Nattress.

Rose Kelly - January 17, 1996

When Rose Kelly entered the political arena after her youngest child left home, she had already been actively involved in the community for many years. One of the founding members of the House of Shalom Youth Centre, Rose also helped with town hockey and baseball leagues. In 1973 she became the first woman to be elected to Amherstburg Town Council, serving for twenty years. Born and raised here, Rose says she's never left Amherstburg and wouldn't leave it for anything.

Wilfred Fryer - January 31, 1996

Born in Amherstburg in 1897, Wilfred Fryer began supporting himself at the age of eight. For eight years he worked on the Lafferty farm in Malden, teaching himself to read by practising with newspapers. He then worked briefly in Windsor and on Bob-Lo Island before obtaining permanent employment at Allied Chemical in 1918, retiring forty-six years later. Wilfred and his wife Cora raised eleven children in Amherstburg but he found the time to join the Amherstburg Volunteer Fire Department in 1921, from which he retired at the age of seventy.

Editors' Note: Wilfred Fryer passed away in 1996.

Bicentennial Events

January 1st - Mayor's Levee

At 2 o'clock pm on New Year's Day over one hundred people, many wearing period costumes, gathered at the town hall for the Mayor's Levee.

January 21st - Ecumenical Service

St. John the Baptist Church hosted the impressive service which brought together members of the various churches in Amherstburg.



Brian Kersey, Bicentennial Town Crier.



Frank Gorham, Amherstburg Town Crier.

Bob McLean photos, courtesy Amherstburg Bicentennial Committee

April 28th - Gordon House Ribbon-Cutting

The ribbon-cutting ceremony for the historic Gordon House was attended by approximately two hundred people on a beautiful spring afternoon. After speeches from local dignitaries, guests were allowed to tour the first two floors of the building, which was in the final stages of restoration.

While other Bicentennial events have come and gone, the Gordon House Restoration Project lives on as a permanent reminder of a landmark year. Built around 1798 on Lot 18, First Street (now Lot 3, Dalhousie Street), the house is named for the Hon. James Gordon who owned it from 1817 to 1851.¹¹ In 1883 it was occupied by the John G. Mullen family who remained in residence for nearly fifty years.¹²

In the late 1970s the Gordon House was threatened with demolition and in 1987 was moved one block north to Lot 7, west side of Dalhousie Street. In late 1995 under the direction of Mary Guthrie, restoration of the house commenced as a Bicentennial project with the assistance of the federal government's Infrastructure Program. The official opening took place August 1, 1996. It is now occupied and operated by Project HMS *Detroit*.

May 7th - Re-enactment of the First Street Survey

A small crowd gathered at the corner of Dalhousie and Gore Streets to watch surveyor Tim Hartley re-enact the survey of First Street using nearly 200-year-old equipment. Wooden street signs marking First, Second and Third Streets were erected for the remainder of Bicentennial year.

May 20th - Victoria Day Parade

Hundreds of people gathered along Sandwich, Dalhousie, Richmond and Simcoe Streets to watch the Victoria Day parade. In addition to dozens of floats created by local groups, participants included members of the RCMP Musical Ride, the Sun Parlour Pipes & Drums, the Essex-Kent Scottish Fife & Drum Band and the Chatham Gregory Drive Colour Guard.

May 20th - RCMP Musical Ride

For the first time since 1984 the RCMP Musical Ride appeared in Amherstburg. Both the afternoon and evening shows attracted large crowds to watch the horses and riders perform in Centennial Park.

May 20th - Old Home Week

Thistle Lodge No. 34 A.F. & A.M. held a week-long display of old photographs and local memorabilia in the Masonic hall on Murray Street.

May 25th - Bicentennial Ball

Three hundred and fifty people, many in period costume, attended the Ball which was sponsored by the Verdi Club. After a full-course dinner the Lancaster Band, accompanied by soloist Marilyn Hanson, played until after midnight to a crowded dance floor.

July 1st - Canada Day

Navy Yard Park was the setting for an eclectic group of activities. The first volume of Amherstburg 1796-1996: The New Town on the Garrison Grounds was officially presented to the town by the Bicentennial Book Committee. Following that presentation, 79 people became Canadian citizens at the Citizenship Court set up in the park. After the ceremonies, the Canadian Maritime Command performed a naval gun run demonstration sponsored by Fort Malden National Historic Site. Children's activities organized by the AAM Chamber of Commerce were ongoing in Toddy Jones Park.

July 27th - Open Air Dance and Barbecue

Country music enthusiasts gathered in the parking lot of the Fort Malden Mall on a beautiful summer evening. Entertainment was provided by several well-known country music performers and dancers.

August 2nd - High School Reunion

More than a thousand former students and teachers of General Amherst and St. Rose High Schools attended the reunion held in the gymnasium of General Amherst. Many came from out of town just for the event. The music room was filled with photographs and memorabilia from the past eight decades. A buffet was followed by presentations, dancing and renewing old acquaintances.

August 3rd - Canadian Coast Guard Day

The annual Canadian Coast Guard Day, which takes place in a different location in Canada each year, was held at the Amherstburg base in honour of the town's Bicentennial. Activities included tours of the vessels *Simcoe*, *Gull Isle* and *Sora* and the Coast Guard helicopter.

August 3rd and 4th - Military Field Days

Activities at Fort Malden National Historic Site's annual event included period encampments by re-enactors and sutlers, mock battles, firing demonstrations, a period fashion show, Sunday morning prayer service and concerts by the Tittabawasee Fife & Drum Corps and the Midnight Riders.

band. Fort Malden also sponsored a weekend-long visit by the tallship *Tecumseh* which docked at the Coast Guard base. Visitors were able to tour the ship and talk to its crew members

August 3rd and 4th - Heritage Festival

The 1996 Heritage Festival began with a parade featuring more than 100 entries, including several marching bands. On Saturday and Sunday, live stage shows in Navy Yard Park showed the talents of local performers. The grand finale of Saturday evening's show featured a mass choir singing "Let There Be Peace on Earth," followed by a fireworks display. Other Heritage Festival activities included arts and crafts booths in Toddy Jones Park and a firemen's tug-of-war

August 3rd, 4th and 5th - Town Criers Competition

Eighteen of Ontario's 33 town criers participated in the 10th annual provincial competition. On Saturday, August 3rd cries were heard from the balcony of the Gordon House. The following day participants boarded the tallship *Tecumseh* at the Coast Guard base for the second cry. The final round was held at Fort Malden National Historic Site on Monday, August 5th

September 4th - Snowbirds Air Show

On a sunny afternoon the skies above Malden Centre were filled with excitement. The Snowbirds, Canada Forces' aerobatic demonstration squadron, treated the audience below to a "fantastic display of precision flying."¹³ About 3000 people turned out for the 25-minute show which also featured parachutists from the South Western Ontario Organization of Parachutists (SWOOP). Many of the observers had met the Snowbirds' pilots the previous evening at a barbecue sponsored by the Verdi Club.

October 5th - Plaquing of Fort Covington

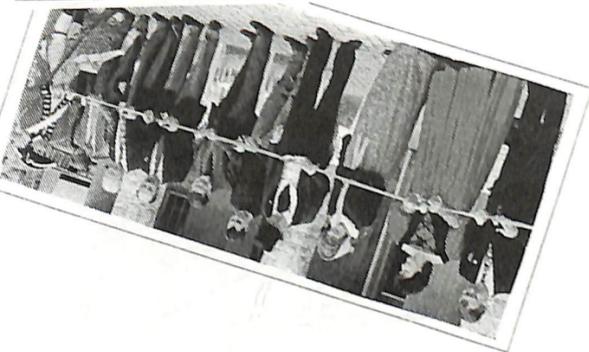
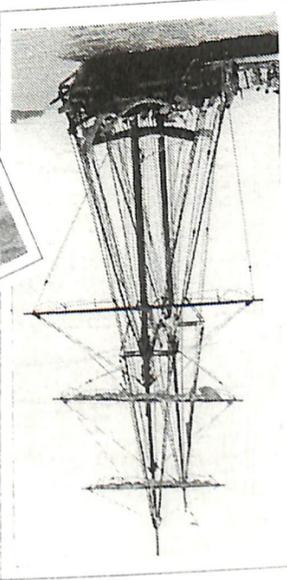
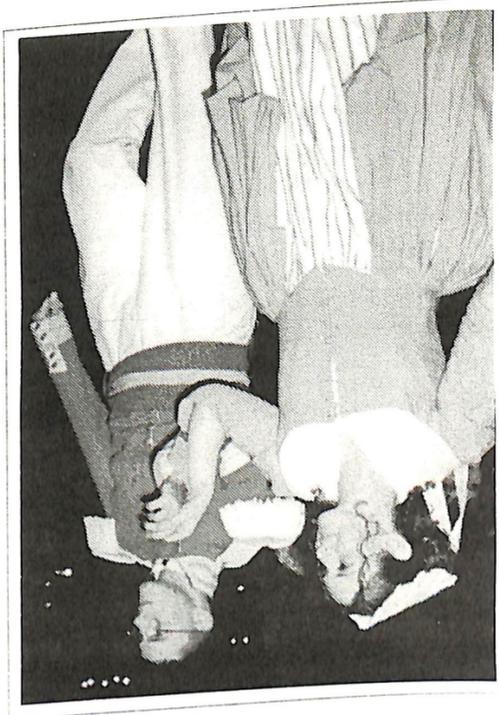
A small crowd gathered for the plaquing ceremony of Fort Covington. The site, located behind the Amherstburg police station, was the location of an American earthworks constructed when the invading army occupied Amherstburg in September, 1813. The ceremony included speeches by local dignitaries and ended with a salute from the two HMS *Detroit* cannons which sit at either side of the plaque.

October 18th - Officers' and Gentlemen's Ball

The Verdi Club was the setting for the period ball at which two hundred people, most in period costume, danced the night away. After an hour of music provided by the Windsor Symphony Orchestra, guests partook of the elegant buffet of period dishes. Later a dance mistress guided the enthusiastic crowd through a number of contemporary dances.

Bicentennial photos by Bob McLean, courtesy Amherstburg Bicentennial Committee (unless otherwise stated)

Memories of Bicentennial

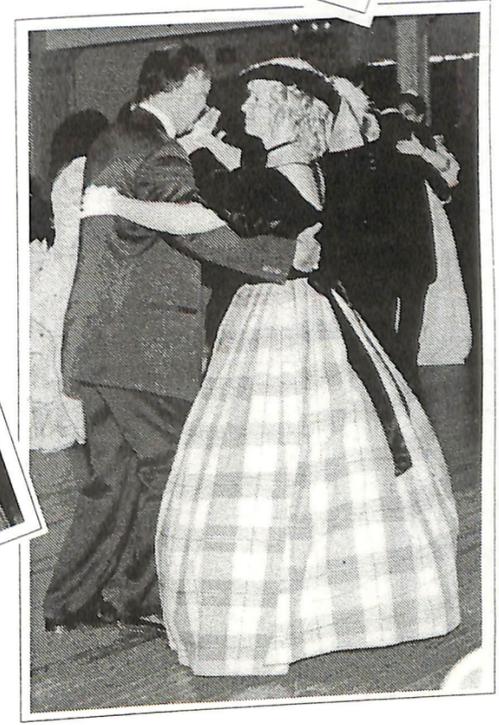
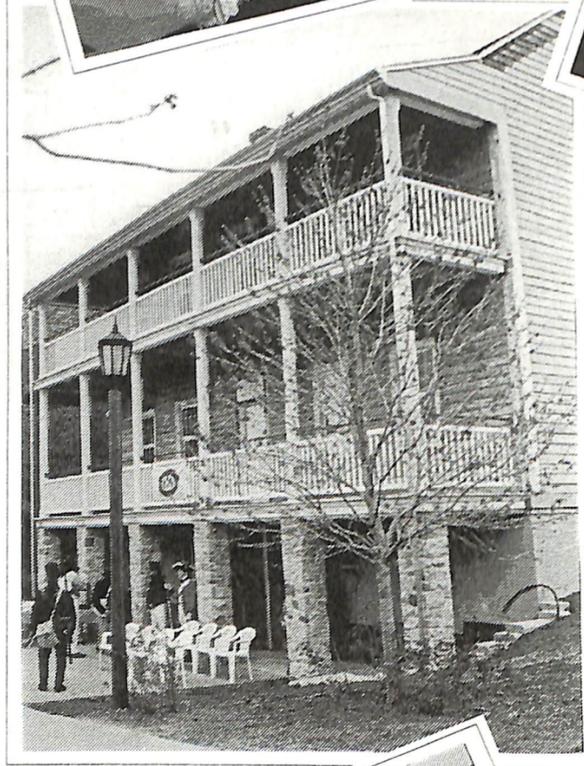
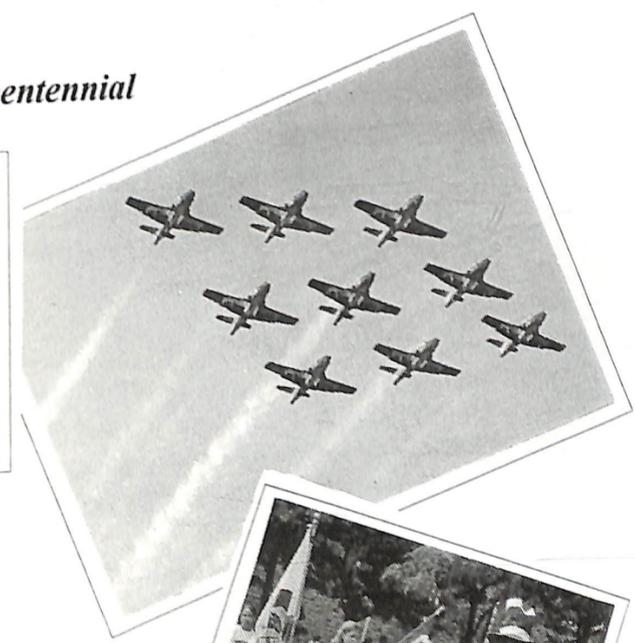


Marsh Collection Society

Marsh Collection Society

Memories of ...

... Bicentennial

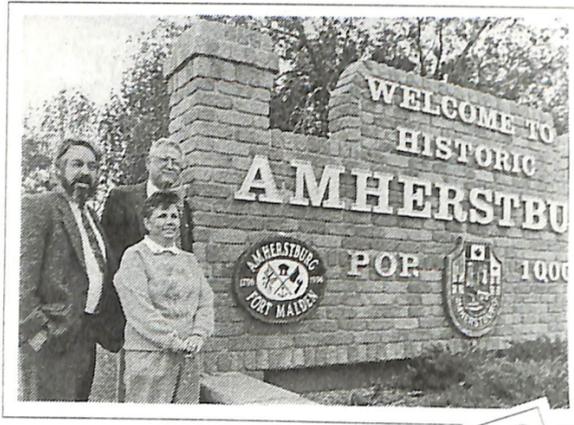


Marsh Collection Society



Marsh Collection Society, P1451

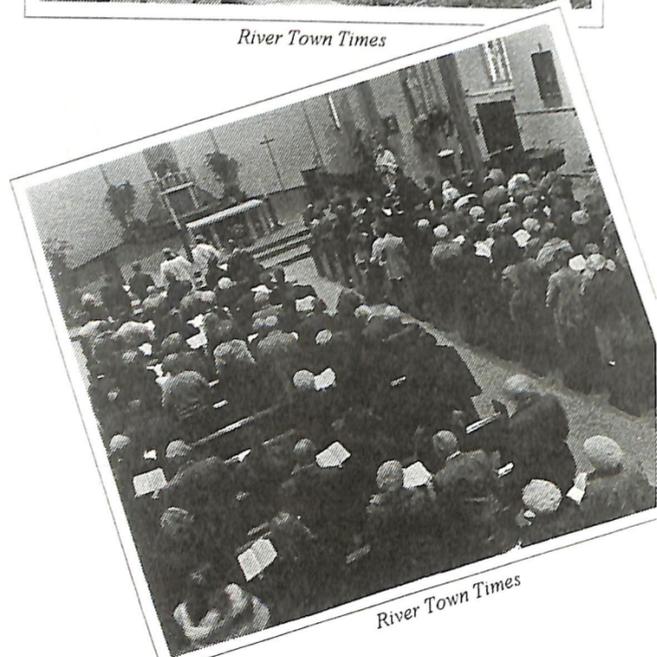
Memories of Bicentennial



River Town Times



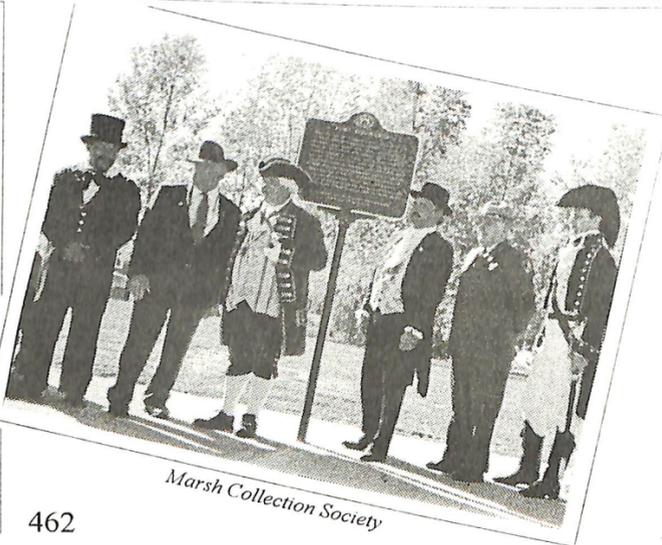
River Town Times



River Town Times



River Town Times



Marsh Collection Society

Endnotes to Chapter X

1. Marsh, John A. With the Tide: Recollections and Anecdotal Histories of the Town of Amherstburg and the Lower Detroit River District. (Amherstburg: Marsh Collection Society, 1995), p. 17.
2. Submitted by Jeanne Thrasher.
3. Whelan, E. & Archbold, R. Whelan: The Man in the Green Stetson. Toronto: Irwin, 1986.
4. Virginia Barclay's recollection contained several pages of detail regarding Mr. Trimble's business and inventions. However, due to the constraint of space it was not possible to include everything. Anyone interested may peruse the material at the Marsh Collection Society.
5. In October, 1944 the Fort Malden Museum received as a donation a jar of Petite Côte cherries canned in 1884. (The *Amherstburg Echo*, October 17, 1984, 'Upsetting the Hour Glass - 1944.')
6. Sam McGee's store (later Seaway Marine) was located at the southeast corner of Dalhousie and Gore Streets.
7. Joe Smasac is the editor of the *Catholic Register*, a national weekly newspaper. He lives in Burlington, Ontario with his wife Tawny and two children, David and Sarah.
8. The two elementary schools at that time were St. Anthony School and Amherstburg Public School.
9. This is a compilation of recollections of several area residents.
10. Printed in the *River Town Times*, October 8, 1996, 'My Town'.
11. For more information about James Gordon and the history of Lot 18, First Street, see Amherstburg 1796-1996: The New Town on the Garrison Grounds, Book I, pp. 142-143.
12. The *Amherstburg Echo*, August 17, 1983, 'Upsetting the Hour Glass - 1883.'
13. The *Amherstburg Echo*, August 28, 1996.