

THE LEWIS HOUSE:::

This Inn at the foot of Catherine St., the S.E. Corner built in the early 1800's was operated by the Lewis family for most of its early years. In front of it was their Ferry dock, and Mr. Lewis along with his partner Mr. Kenneth Mc. Kenzie operated the Lower Ferry from this spot. running into no end of trouble with the Customs officer Col. Kerby. There were two other hotels on the site, one on the dock and another to the south. Between Magwoods hotel and The Lewis House was a small building that houses the post office. This place was also a stage stop, so the mail was picked up at this location.

A short history of the Post Office, in the Village of Fort Erie follows::

1829- 1830- 1831. William Smith was Postmaster.

The Honourable James Kerby.

1844. Kerby transferred the Postmaster job over to Wm. Rainsford Sr.

The post office operated from his store. *EAST SIDE OF RIVER Rd*  
*by KERBY & WOODS*  
In the possession of the Fort Erie historical Society is a map of the village marked 1807 however it is no doubt later about 1850. On the map drawn by John Douglas the location of both the old and the new post office is shown. They are both on the same parcel of land behind the old Douglas homestead. Wm. Rainsford's store was just south of the Douglas property, *EAST SIDE, THEN WEST SIDE*

1860's The site of the Postoffice was moved to the building adjacent to the Lewis house and George Lewis was postmaster.

It then moved to the store of Mr. Baldwin on the west side of the river road just north of the corner of Bertie St. The building still stands in 1979

1910 The post office then moved to the heart of the Village on the east side of the river road in the middle of the block. Carry Griffin became post-mistress. The Post master was Emerson Plato who remained till 1934 over 20 yrs. He died 1945. Harvey troupe asst. It moved across the road to the small building attached to the old Ferguson Store. south of the King Edward.

1922 F.E. Post Office was in the Harris building opposite the Anglo American Hotel. On Mar. 22 it moved to the King Edward with Emerson Plato postmaster.

DUNHAM::: site of the Lewis House Ctherine St. & Niagara River Rd.

in the early 1900 a family by the name of Dunham lived in this old inn. They were from Niagara Falls St. near Franklin.

John C. Dunham      b.                      d.  
marr. Gibbon. b. 1850 d. Feb. 19, 1925.  
bur: St. Pauls Cemetery.

Children:                Thomas M. of Aurora ILL.  
                              Frederick G. of Ridgewood N.J.

In her death notice the old homestead is mentioned as being 75 years old however old records including those of Kerby, point to a much older date. " By far the oldest home in Fort Erie is the Dunham home which faces the river three or four blacks from tht Ferry landing. It was built about (75yrs) ago and although the clapboard of moderity cover its exterior, the beams are the sturdy hand hewn products of the pioneer forester who built them of the timber cleared on the lot."

When the old home was remodelled to house the Ontario Bakery, these very beams were in evidence, and some stretched the width of the house, and many saw blades were damaged trying to cut them up for disposal.

When the Fenians. raided the house one of the young British officers escaped out the back door into a brick root house which formerly stood there. The signs of bullet holes couls still be seen in the front door.

Mr. & Mrs. Dunham had one of the most charming old fashioned gardens ever see. Each year they were successful in the most colorful blooms of all kinds of flowers that grased grandmother's gardens.