

BERTIE HALL ~~WIFE~~ 1833

This large home on the ground floor has at the front two large parlors back to back. The ceilings in both rooms are at least 12ft. high and on the north wall of each is an imported Italian fireplace that came across in sailing boats for the original owner.

To the Phipps st. side as you enter the front door is a hudge winding staircase that would be a credit to any southern mation. The ceiling in this hallway from the floor to that over the stair is 22ft. in height. Behind the hall on the Phipps St. side is a small room used in later years by Mr. Pattison for a bedroom ; but no doubt in years gone by a serving pantry. To the rear of this on the same side is a very narrow kitchen. Behind the front Parlors on the north side is an average sized room for the dinning area and to the back of the house another room about half the size of this.

As you come out of the kitchen there is a narrow winding back stairway leading to the second floor.

Beginning at the front are two large bedrooms back and reached from the landing surrounding the staircase. Each of these rooms has its imported Italian Marble fireplace; but they are not as elaborate as those on the ground floor. To the back of the house are several rooms perhaps used for servants or for the children for the original William Forsyth had nine children from one wife and ten from another. The floors throughout the house are the original wide pine boards. It is surprising but most of the rooms upstairs seem to have had only two layers of Wallpaper.

A very narrow stairway leads to the Attic ; and to one from the Year 1969 this is the most striking part of the house. Not having been lived in the wood stands as it did the day it was first put into place. The beams are all hand huen timbers of black walnut and the size and length is something to behold. The trees growing in the area must have been of emence size. All show signs of work with the ADZE and all the cross beams are put together with pegs that are at least fifteen foot in length. There are at each cross piece four of these pegs about six inches apart and about a ft. one above the other. The attic is only about six to eight in the centre the only place you can stand. It stretches from the veradach at the front just back of the two large parlors. A look at the outside of the building one can see the back part of the house is much lower. The wall at the end of the attic is of stone faced with brick and it is original in colour

stone and brick and never having been painted over it shows only the mellowness of time. This inside wall which rises from the basement is solid flagstone from there to the rafters over a ft. in thickness and faced on either side with red brick and in the main and second floors this is covered with lath and plaster. The floor boards in the attic are the original ones and are at least twice the size of those on the other floors being at least three hands wide.

The cellar of the home is most notorious for it has been said from time immemorial that there was a trap door leading into a tunnel and from the house proper to the river. The Forsyth's were noted smugglers on the River ; and this was what was to have given them the edge over KERBY and his men. It is hard to vision digging such an immense cellar by hand and then hauling all the flagstone to build the walls which are twelve ft. in height ; and at least seven of this is under ground level. The cellar is cut into two large square rooms ; one of which would equal one of 1969. To the Phipps st. side there is two smaller rooms. Three of the rooms have exposed beams and flagstone walls and dirt floors. The small cellar to the south west corner had a brick floor over the dirt then this was cemented. The beams were covered and plastered , as were the walls. No doubt this was used for food storage. In the northwest corner of the larger cellar there is a huge door at least ten foot in height that leads to an outdoor entrance. There is only one other door and that is to the small cellar that has the plastering. The stairway leading down to the cellar is only about four ft. wide and you descend straight down the narrow steps with the flagstone walls surrounding you on either side. This is indeed the sturdiest built house in fort Erie if not in the area for miles around.

My personal views of Bertie Hall as seen in 1969.

Louis Mc, Dermott