

Lewis House

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Construction of the Lewis house began in April 1878. By the end of November of that year, the house was completed and ready for occupancy. Mr. L. L. Marble was in charge of the construction and shared some of the details for the Gothic style house with the local newspaper.

The front porch runs the entire length in front and 20 feet on the south side with bay windows and other projections.

The basement will extend under nearly the entire house and is divided into three sections. The main cellar is 16x20 feet; the next area will be the furnace room at 42x28 feet; and then the wood room at 14x24 feet. There is a 7 foot ceiling height.

The first story has a ceiling height of 10 ½ feet. The hall is 6 ½ x15 feet and conveniently arranged for entering from the front porch, with direct access to the parlor and dining room, and the main stairs to the second story.

The parlor is 13 ½ x15 feet; sitting room is 12x15 feet with a large bay window which adds much light and cheerfulness to the area. The dining room has a double window on the north and is conveniently arranged with doors opening from the hall, parlor, sitting room, kitchen, and stairs.

The kitchen is 11 1/2 x15 feet and has two windows onto an outside rear entrance and a large convenient pantry and a wood room.

The family bedroom is 11x15 feet and directly off from the sitting room and bathroom.

The second floor has 9 foot ceilings. There is a hall 8x15 feet leading from the front of the house to the rear stairs and five separate bedrooms: 11 ½ x 12 ½; 10 ½ x 12; 12 x16; 11 x11 ½; 8 ½ x 11 ½. There are five closets on this floor and stairs leading to the attic.

The foundation for the main house is of cut stone and mortar. A 24x30 foot barn will be constructed on the property after the completion of the house.

Mr. John C. Lewis was a lumber baron and one of the wealthiest and most prominent citizens of the area. He was born near Montreal in 1837. He came to Whitehall in the Fall of 1860 and spend the first winter in the woods, lumbering. In 1862, he is a sawyer. By 1864, he had risen to a manufacturer of lumber, having purchased the Weston sawmill which he sold that Fall. He then built a mill which became known as the A.J. & C.E. Covell mill, which operated for many years. He also purchased extensive pine lands for use in his mill.

John Lewis married Augusta Covell, daughter of Calvin T. Covell in 1865. (She was also the sister of A.J., L.T., C.E., M.B. & D.W. Covell and Rebecca Covell-Staples.) They had three daughters: Lizzie, Nettie and Florence.

Florence Covell Hodges maintained the house until 1944 when she sold it to William and Rose Hildebrandt, who renovated it and operated it as a boarding house which they called Lakeview Rooms. Rose died tragically when a boiler exploded in the basement. William died not long after that. Their son Carl and his wife Lois ran the boarding house until 1976 when they sold it to Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp.

The Camp used the house for campus faculty and out-of-town actors for the Howmet Playhouse.

The Lewis House received some minor damage in 1983 as a result of an electrical malfunction. The damage was repaired and the house continued to be used by BLFAC.

In 2006, the BLFAC donated the Playhouse to the city of Whitehall. In 2007, the Lewis House was for sale and its preservation was uncertain.

In 2009, Greg and Debi Hillebrand purchased the house and began the lengthy challenge of renovation. In 2015, they opened the Lewis House Bed and Breakfast.