

## LEWIS CAMP – BLACKMAN COTTAGE LOT 4, CONCESSION 11

*Submitted By: Ted Blackman*

Lewis Camp, a red roofed log cabin located in a west bank clearing, has been an Oxtongue Lake landmark for almost 100 years. Dr. Edwin A. Lewis, a New York City surgeon, was a frequent visitor to the Dwight area in the 1890's. He bought 26 acres on Oxtongue Lake from the crown in 1902 for \$1.00 per acre. In 1904, Dr. Lewis purchased the hand hewn, two room log cabin which had been built on the east side of Oxtongue Lake by Mr. McCann and his 2 sons in the late 1800's. During the following winter, the cabin was disassembled, skidded across the Lake by mules and horses, and reassembled in its present location. For many years, the family lore had it that the four bedrooms over the log cabin were added in the 1920's. The truth surfaced recently when photos from about 1906 turned up. They clearly showed the log cabin and its framed second story were then as they are today. The photos also show that the clearing around today's Lewis Camp is much smaller than it was at the turn of the century. A two story, four room addition to the original cabin dates from the 1930's.

From 1920-1980, the property was jointly owned by Dr. Lewis's children, Marion Lewis Blackman and Edwin Tuttle Lewis and their families. In 1985, the property was divided. Mrs. Blackman's son Edwin T. (Ned) Blackman retained the cabin and 16 acres; ownership of the remaining undeveloped acreage remains in the family of Edwin T. Lewis.

In 1993, following the death of Ned Blackman, Lewis Camp, now well known as Blackman's cottage, was passed on to Ned's son, Ted Blackman.

To the delight of the present day family and friends who have loved and enjoyed Lewis camp for many years, Dr. Lewis started a guest book, "The shack", in 1906. The signatures and comments of the many, many guests of "The Camp" over the past 90 plus years are a great treat to read.

In addition, the memories and stories recounted by early visitors add charm and pleasure to all who made the trek to Lewis Camp. Marion Blackman, a yearly visitor until she was 96, often told her grandchildren about the challenge of getting to Lewis Camp in those early days. From Huntsville, one took a boat through Pen Lake to the Portage Railway, then took the tiny train to Lake of Bays, where you loaded onto another boat to Dwight. From there, you, your food, and everything else you might need for the duration of your stay at "The Camp" were loaded onto a cart which was drawn along a track to the Oxtongue River and then along the river to the Lake.



*Dr. Edwin Augustus Lewis on porch of Lewis camp sometime between 1915-1920*

Coal oil lanterns, a big wooden icebox cooled by real ice, a hand pump in the front yard which pulled lake water to a tank outside the kitchen and delicious meals cooked on a wood stove by Pearl Parris were all part of summer life at Lewis Camp prior to the installation of hydro in the mid 1950's. Key to happy times enjoyed by Mrs. Blackman and so fondly remembered by her grandsons, were Pearl and Tom Parris. Not only was Pearl a marvelous cook, often preparing meals for 12-15 guests, she organized picnics, played cards with the children and taught them how to fish! Tom Parris manned the local fire tower. He sometimes took the young people to see his tower and would entertain them

with stories at his cabin at the mouth of the river. He took care of Lewis Camp during the winters and made it ready for the summer visitors. A fine and much loved couple!

For most years from the '50's until her last visit in 1979, Mrs. Blackman's son, Ned, and her several grandchildren accompanied Marion Blackman at the camp. The family's love of Oxtongue Lake was shared by grandson Wilbur's wife, Neal, who joined the family in 1966. They and their children have been annual visitors since 1979. The Camp continues to be the summer highlight for Ted, his sister Charlotte, their friends and family as well as cousin Wilbur and his family.



*Ned Backman & Jack Hayden crooning Oh Danny Boy - 1991*



*Chicken Q. at Lewis Camp - early 1990's*