

## Lewiston History Mysteries

# Turn of the Last Century

**Lewiston bustles with 10,000 to 25,000 steamship passengers a day at the river dock.**

Before people got around in automobiles, Lewiston was a major Great Lakes destination for steamship passengers who were traveling back and forth from Canada. Steamship service started around the 1830s and lasted until 1959. Traffic was booming in 1901 during

the Pan-Am Exposition in Buffalo when an estimated 25,000 passengers a day came through Lewiston to take a train to Niagara Falls and Buffalo and then on to destinations throughout the U.S.



**The Chicora The Chippewa The Cayuga The Corona**  
(Above) This is the fleet of steamships that serviced Lewiston, owned by the Niagara Navigation Company, later to become the Canada Steamship Lines.

By 1918, these four steamers were arriving everyday, unloading about 2500 passengers each. But with the advent of the automobile, service declined. The Chippewa was retired in 1935 and The Corona in 1937. (The Chicora was actually a converted Confederate blockade running ship from the Civil War!)

The Cayuga made regular stops in Lewiston until 1959. Many area residents can still remember taking The Cayuga during the summertime to visit the CNE in Toronto.

(Photo from the Francis J. Petrie postcard collection at the Niagara Falls, Ontario, Public Library.)



(Above) Throngs of passengers entering Lewiston at the steamship docks which processed thousands of people a day. At the upper right you can see the Cornell House.



(Left) Here is the steamship The Cayuga at the Lewiston dock.



## Lewiston's Silo and Terminal Built in the 1920s

The Silo and the Terminal were built as one complex to accommodate steamers and passengers, replacing earlier structures. In 1938, most of it was destroyed by a river ice jam. Soon after, the terminal was torn down, while the Silo remained.

If you look closely, you can see the Cornell House Hotel immediately to the right of the terminal (no longer standing). You can also see the former Riverside Inn at the far right, which today is known as Water Street Landing.



## Lewiston in 1895: Ships, Trains and Trolleys

This realistic painting by Niagara Falls artist Bob Averill shows what the Lewiston Landing looked like in 1895. The Canadian steamship, The Cibola, arrives to drop off passengers from Toronto. Travelers would then get on a train to Buffalo and points beyond. You can see Angler's Retreat (upper left and commonly known as the former Riverside Inn) and the American Hotel (upper right) which was built in 1858, which replaced the Steamboat Hotel.

Tragedy struck in 1895 when The Cibola caught fire at the dock and in turn, burned the American Hotel to the ground. The owner, Nelson Cornell (cousin to the University founder) rebuilt and called his replacement hotel the Cornell House. The anchor of the sunken Cibola is now owned by the Historical Association of Lewiston.

The red trolley was part of the Great Gorge Route and took passengers along the bottom of the gorge to Niagara Falls. President McKinley took the trolley to Lewiston in 1901. His assassin was here in Lewiston and stalked him, eventually killing McKinley later the same day in Buffalo at the Pan-Am Exposition.

The original oil painting and prints can be seen at the Averill Gallery at 424 Center Street, Lewiston (716-754-8101).

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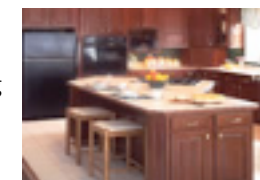
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## Welcome to Lewiston, NY

[www.HistoricLewiston.org](http://www.HistoricLewiston.org)

The Historical Association of Lewiston hopes you enjoy your visit to our historic and charming village. The Lewiston Museum is at 469 Plain Street.

Mark your calendar for our next spectacular Historic Home Tour on Dec. 1 & 2, 2007.

To get the latest news and monthly program notes, join our free email list by sending an email to: [join@HistoricLewiston.org](mailto:join@HistoricLewiston.org) Phone: 800-714-9540