

ALEXANDER STEWART ON THE OLD CUSTOM'S HOUSE

Warren Bellamy's wonderful find of the old survey chart with the Customs House on it has created much interest and debate.

Warren is fascinating to talk to as he has become quite an authority on nineteenth century Illawarra.

Alexander Stewart has this to say on the old Customs House. Writing of the progress and development of Wollongong Harbour:

24th May, 1894

"Before the rival companies were amalgamated the Kiama used to lie against the southern wall of the dam (where the I.S.N. Company's boats now lie), and the I.S.N. company steamers used to lie on the wall opposite the (northern) side of the dam, beside the pier head. Where now is the water in "Lahiff's dam" was then made ground behind the pier head. On this latter ground stood the I.S.N. Company's stores, between the present crane on the western side of Belmore Basin and the old Customs House (a little white box like a sentry box), which still exists there on its old site."

The surviving pictorial and photographic record does show a building in such locations. But the pictorial record (1880s?) shows what looks like a dwelling, whereas the photos show a structure more like a sentry box - but one looks white and the other black.

Examine the images I've included in Frank Osborne's article and decide for yourself.

Joseph Davis