

Dufty's Blue Water Inn

The Blue Water Inn was built in the late 1890s by Neil Conolly. It was called McKinley Department Store. It was operated by Jim McKinley until 1910. The store sold general merchandise including dry goods, clothing, furniture, shoes- even coffins. There was also 500 bolts of material, including long wearing cotton plaids costing 25 cents a yard, dress trimming, and beaded braiding.

The store was purchased by Albert and Lewis Oppenheim who owned it until 1916 when Neil McLean bought it. McLean was an undertaker and stored the coffins upstairs. He also sold building materials.

In 1937, William Dormey leased the building and called it the Blue Water Inn. He came from Athens, Greece and first operated restaurants in Bad Axe and Port Austin. He occupied the building for \$672 at \$28 a month and at the end of two years bought it for \$3000. Dormey and his wife, Eva, finalized the purchase on April 5, 1939. They served more than a million "Roadhouse Dinners" during the 25 years here. The restaurant was known for its homegrown country foods and elegant dining area- linen tablecloths and napkins. A three course meal cost 50 cents- with a salad 75 cents. They also added the old Bay Store and post office to their property.

The building is named for the Blue Water highway which travels along the Michigan coastline. The business was sold to Peter L. Ozarko in 1965 for \$42,500 from the Dormey estate. Lowell and Janet Dufty bought it in 1984 and called it Dufty's Blue Water Inn. Several improvements have been added including the easy access ramp, back porch and enlarged kitchen. It is now owned by Todd Talaski, serving a variety of dinners, adult beverages always with friendly service.