Old Northumberland Hall built about 1830 by George Boulton

Northumberland Hall was built by one of Cobourg's early distinguished citizens George Strange Boulton, about 1830. The house was standing in 1831 when William Cattermole, a visitor to the town, wrote that, "Mr. George S. Boulton has built himself an elegant mansion, on a rising ground below the village."

Cobourg at the time was one of the most important towns in Upper Canada, ranking behind Kingston, and about the same size as York, before it was incorporated as Toronto.

George Strange Boulton was born in 1797, and was a son of D'Arcy Boulton, an English lawyer who was appointed a judge in Upper Canada in 1803. D'Arcy Boulton became solicitor-general of Upper Canada at York. In 1810, he was wounded in an encounter with the French on his return to England, and was a prisoner in France until after the Napoleonic wars. He returned to Canada in 1814 as attorney-general of Upper Canada. One of his sons, D'Arcy Boulton, built the Grange in 1817 to 1819, the house which later became the beginnings of the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto, and which was recently been elegantly restored. Another son, George Strange Boulton, became a lawyer and moved from York to Cobourg where he built Northumberland Hall.

George Boulton was a legislative councillor in Upper Canada for 26 years, in the days when there was an appointed upper chamber. George had a son, named D'Arcy, who also became a lawyer in Cobourg. It was this D'Arcy who built "The Lawn", the large house on the west side of D'Arcy St. which in later years became the Dumble estate and is now in apartments. D'Arcy, the son, was president of the Cobourg Board of Police, the forerunner of a municipal council, in 1840 to 1842 and in 1846. He was mayor of Cobourg in 1854 to 1857 and D'Arcy St. is named for him. He was also a lieutenant-colonel in the militia. He died in 1869.

The Northumberland Hall property ran south to the lake, and including what is now Donegan Park, but was then call "Boulton's Woods." In time, a race track was located on the property, and in 1855, it was the starting point for a famous "Grand Steeple Chase" which was run from the rear of the Boulton house east to the Haldimand township line as a finale to the provincial exhibiton which was held for a second time that year at Cobourg. The provincial exhibition was the forerunner of today's Canadian National Exhibition, and it used to move to various centres from year to year. It was in Cobourg in 1848 and 1855, and was held on land west of Cobourg Creek, north of King St. Eventually, it settled down in Toronto and became the CNE.)

Many years later, the park area became the site of the early Cobourg Horse

A - Boulton Family (03-02) C.1

Boulton

show was an elegant event, lasting for most of a week. Northumberland Hall was owned for a time by a Mr. Rosamond, who operated the woollen mills on Tremaine St., in Cobourg, one of the largest of their type in the province and which later became the now-demolished original buildings of the Cooey company which is now Winchester-Western.

Daintry Fitzhugh's grandfather, a U.S. General, bought Northumberland Hall. He also built the "west house", a large home on the lakefront east of the town. About 1902, a second lakefront house, almost identical, was built for Carrell Fitzhugh, the "east house", and it is this house where Daintry Fitzhugh now makes his home. Mr. Carrell Fitzhugh was well known in Cobourg, and is commonly referred to by many as "Uncle Carrell".

The Fitzhughs, originally from Kentucky, were responsible for Cobourg's early development as a summer resort for Americans. There was easy access across Lake Ontario, and Rochester, in turn, was well connected by rail to Pittsburgh and Louisville. The development of iron ore in the Marmora area, and its transport by rail south to Cobourg for shipment, also attracted many Americans associated with the steel industry.

Cobourg's good summer climate brought Americans north. But one of the major attractions after the American Civil War, was that Cobourg was a pleasant place where Southerners could vacation without meeting too many Northerners.