

# The Grand Homes

Around 1890 a change in style took place among the Americans. They started to rent summer residences and eventually bought or built their own grand residences. Some examples include:

**Sidbrook** was built in 1857 by Kivas Tully, the architect of Victoria Hall. Major David Campbell remodeled it in 1860 and in 1901 William Abbott enlarged and further remodeled it. Later it became the summer home of the Haas family of Toronto. It is a fine example of the style known as Beaux Arts Classical a popular style in the US at the close of the 19th century. It became a private hospital in 1952 and closed in 2002. It remains as a deteriorating relic of a storied past.

**Interlaken**, built by William Graveley in 1854, and originally known as the Maple Grove, was adjacent to Colonel Chambliss' home. In 1893 Signor Albertini and his wife, Madame Albertini, purchased Maple Grove and renamed it Interlaken. Mme. Albertini was a professional singer, and the couple became the very successful proprietors of the Arlington Hotel. In 1922 the house was sold, and in the late 1960s demolished to make way for the Roma Apartments

**East House:** General Charles Lane Fitzhugh was the youngest civil war general in the Union Army. The Fitzhughs were an old Virginia family of great wealth who spent much time in Cobourg. Charles built a pair of houses in 1902. Ravensworth he built for himself and his wife Emma Shoenberger, one of the wealthiest steel heiresses in the US. East House he built for his newly married son, Carroll. The Fitzhugh family owned the East House until it was destroyed by a fire on Christmas Day in 1976. Ravensworth, however, remains as a beautiful family home, now 115 years old.



Sidbrook



Interlaken



Easthouse



The Cobourg Horse Show



Tennis on Cornell lawn - c1905



Cornell/Pringle Wedding

# Entertainment

During the first fifteen years, **activities centered around the hotels.** Dances, "hops" and soirees included prominent local families, who in turn hosted their American friends. By 1900, the American colony was well established and the lifestyle became more elaborate. The entertainment included **large dinner parties as well as masquerade and book parties.** Garden parties were popular with some of the estates being able to accommodate up to 200 guests in lavish surroundings, including oriental rugs spread among the lawns. When the Arlington hotel held its formal ball, known as the "Grand Hop", local children gathered to watch the guest arrive in their carriages and to peer in the windows at the grand spectacle. Dinner parties were sometimes followed by poker or bridge games.

**Amateur theatre was popular,** with productions of music, comedy and burlesque takes on popular operas. These productions were held at Victoria Hall or St. Peter's Church and were frequently in support of charitable causes. Madame Albertini was a trained opera singer and therefore a frequent performer at these events.

# Sporting Activities

Sports, too, were very popular during this time. The **Cobourg Golf Club** was established in 1898 with the help of the American visitors. In addition to the actual game of golf, the club held exclusive dances and parties in the Club House where local dignitaries mingled with the American visitors. **Tennis** was played on the lawns of the great estates. Starting in 1905, the **Cobourg Horse Show** was the highlight of the season and ran for two weeks in August. It was an annual affair from 1905 to 1914 and from 1919 well into the 1920s. It attracted competitors from some of the finest stables and was considered **one of the best in North America.**