

KATHARINE

CORNELL

FIRST LADY OF THE
AMERICAN THEATRE
1893-1974



Cobourg Sun

Cobourg Sun, Vol. 1 No. 1 (4 page sheet in pencil!)
Katharine Cornell and Jo Pierce wrote an A-1 play called **The Hidden Treasure**. The editor played the part of the Duke. In one part where Katharine was on the stage and the curtain man was half asleep, she called out "Curtain, curtain," which made the people laugh. We made 20 cents on the whole thing. (Katharine's first review, from her autobiography, "I Wanted to be an Actress" }

KATHARINE AND COBOURG

Katharine Cornell was born on February 16, 1893 in Berlin, Germany, where her father, Peter C. Cornell, was a post-graduate medical student. After his studies were complete, the family moved back to the United States and settled in Buffalo, New York.

By this time **the family already had a Cobourg connection**. Back in 1879 Peter's father, the wealthy Samuel Douglas Cornell, (Katharine's grandfather) had been one of the first Americans to purchase a summer home in this lakeside town. It was called Hatfield Hurst and was located at 202 Green Street.

Katharine later recalled, "**As a child I spent all of my vacations in Cobourg**. They were wonderful summers, and for that reason seemed much more like home to me than Buffalo."*

The home had a long gallery at the back of the house where her grandfather, and young Katharine in her turn, used to put on plays. Recalling those days, she wrote, "My companions and I gave plays in our gardens. **It was in Cobourg, I think, that I first acquired a leaning towards the theatre.**" *

After Samuel died in 1910 the house became a private girls' school, Hatfield Hall. It remains today, but now as an apartment building.

Giving up his medical practice, Katharine's father became part owner and manager of the Star Theatre in Buffalo. This undoubtedly further fueled her theatrical ambitions.

