

From The Cobourg World...

World...

With the help of a Federal SEED grant, a group of students at the Cobourg Public Library are making the past more accessible to area residents. Along with indexing old newspapers, the project is also progressing in the compilation of a photograph and local history reference collection. The article that appears in this spot weekly is a sampling of newspaper articles, photographs and reference material that can be found in the local history corner of the library.

In the 1860s, the Cobourg and Peterborough Railway was in financial trouble. As a result, several American Capitalists became interested in the mines at Marmora and Blairton. In 1867 they acquired control of the railway and named it the Cobourg Marmora Railway and Mining Company. The wealthy Pittsburgh steel magnate George K. Shoenberger was the majority share holder. He instructed his son-in-law, Colonel W.P. Chambliss, to move to Cobourg and manage the company.

Upon arrival in 1867, Chambliss purchased the Albion Cottage. It had been built by John Vance Boswell, a prom-



Albion Cottage, circa 1875

inent merchant in the 1820s on the east side of Green Street just south of King Street. With an increase in the size of the Chambliss family, an addition was built in 1868. However, in 1879 the house was destroyed by fire. Following the fire, Chambliss built a much larger house which Colonel Douglas Cornell of Buffalo purchased in 1890 and renamed Hadfield Hurst. In 1929, the property was purchased for use as a private girls school. The estate was renamed Hatfield Hall and operated as a school until 1951.

Colonel Chambliss enjoyed the advantages that Cobourg offered as a summer resort. In the 1870s he encouraged many American Army friends to escape the smog of industrial Pittsburgh and to summer in Cobourg. One of the men who came was his brother-in-law General Charles Lane Fitzhugh. Fitzhugh became involved in the railway through the family of his wife, Emma Shoenberger. Fitzhugh remained in Cobourg and in 1902, on what is now Fitzhugh Lane, he built two large homes. He built East House (photo c. 1910) for his son Carroll Fitzhugh. The name East House was in reference to the main family home built nearby, Ravensworth. The Fitzhugh family sold Ravensworth in 1926 but maintained ownership of East House until 1976 when it was destroyed by fire on Christmas Day.



General Fitzhugh



East House, circa 1910

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