



FREE Informative 40-minute Guided Tours
on Oct. 14, 21, 28 and Nov. 4, 10 at 11:00 am.
Meet in Victoria Hall lobby.

www.armistice18.ca



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CENTENNIAL | 1918-2018

ARMISTICE18
COBOURG | ONTARIO

THE
POPPY TRAIL

Come Walk Our History!



**Walking Tours of Historic Cobourg
with a World War I Theme**

Text by Hugh Brewster
Historical consultation by Robert Mikel, author of
COBOURG: The Spirit of the Place

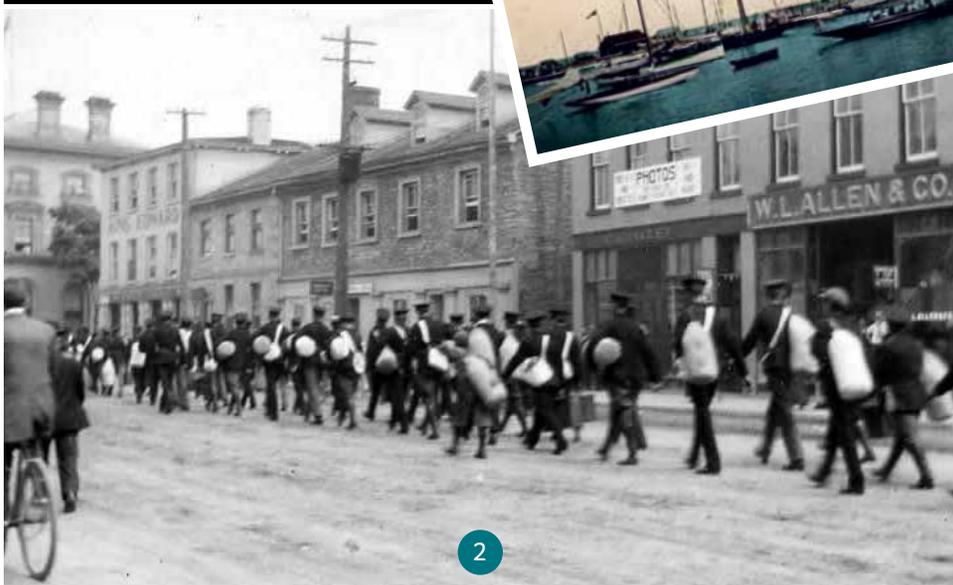
THE WAR CAME OUT OF A CLEAR SKY....

Stephen Leacock remembering August 4, 1914

On the August day in 1914 that war was declared, Cobourg's harbour was dotted with sailboats, its many hotels were filled with visitors, and wealthy Americans were hosting garden parties at their large summer homes by the lake. Yet the following day, the men of the Cobourg Heavy Battery marched off to war and for the next four years Cobourg never wavered in its support for King and Empire.

Every group of soldiers that departed for war was given a huge send-off at the train station and returning soldiers were greeted in similar fashion. Cobourg raised more money for the war effort than any town of its size and the American summer colony pitched in by hosting bazaars and theatrical fundraisers. On November 11, 1918, the town celebrated the Armistice with a big bonfire and celebration on King Street, confident that it had done its all to win the peace.

With this booklet, we invite you to walk our history. It describes two self-guided walking tours of Cobourg's historic downtown that will allow you to savour charming period architecture and streetscapes while experiencing some of the town's Great War past.



19) Cenotaph, 1924, Victoria Park

In 1920 the local chapter of the I.O.D.E (Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire) began fundraising for a Cobourg cenotaph and in 1924 it was unveiled by Effie Bolster, a Cobourg nurse who

had served overseas, in a ceremony attended by thousands. The design of a Roman cross with a brass sword superimposed on either side was one created for the Commonwealth War Graves Association and used at war grave sites in France and Belgium. Emblazoned on the cenotaph is a quotation from a speech that Rudyard Kipling wrote for King George V to give when visiting war memorials. It ends with the words: "Sacrifice and honour are No vain things but truths By which the world lives."

Return to King Street and walk west along the top of the park to the "Four Corners" at the corner of Division and King.

OPTIONAL LOOP: 5 minutes: If you walk to the east side of the park on Queen Street and over one block to Green Street and then north you will pass a large Victorian Gothic building on the east side at No. 202 Green. This was once Hatfield Hall, summer home of the Cornells from Buffalo, parents of the celebrated actress Katherine Cornell. To see more of Cobourg's summer colony mansions, drive east on King Street East and you will pass Sidbrook at No. 411 on the south side, now sadly boarded up, and the splendid Strathmore on the north side at 390 King Street East.

20) The 'Four Corners', King and Division Streets

Once the main hub of the town, this intersection was known as the "Four Corners." It was here that a bonfire was lit during the victory celebrations on the night of November 11, 1918, and the Kaiser in effigy was consigned to the flames. On the southeast corner stood a very handsome Classical Revival stone building that housed the Bank of Montreal and later the town's post office. Its height and design made it the perfect complement to Victoria Hall. Sadly, it was torn down in 1960 to make way for a Woolworths store. It was in the old Gem Theatre just east of the post office, that the Khaki Club, a recreation and assistance centre for soldiers, was established by local women during World War I.

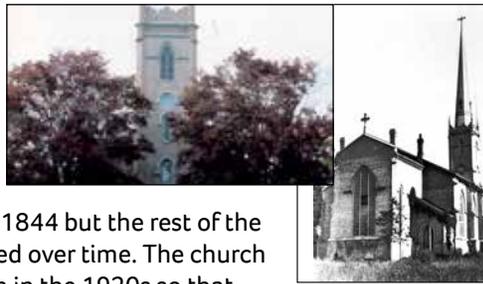


Walk west to King Street to return to Victoria Hall.

If you have time and a car, the Alderville War Memorial is well worth a visit. Simply drive up Division Street past Highway 401 and stay on Highway 45 for 25 minutes until you come to the small community of Alderville. You will see the large white monument, the country's first cenotaph to First Nations soldiers on your right. From a tiny community of only 63 adult males, Alderville sent 35 soldiers off to war and nine of them never returned.

17) St. Peter's Anglican Church, 240 College Street, c. 1844

An Anglican church has stood on this site since 1820. The façade and tower of the present church date from 1844 but the rest of the structure has been extended and altered over time. The church once had a spire which was taken down in the 1920s so that chimes could be installed, and the turreted square tower was dedicated to the men of the parish who had served in World War I. St Peter's was the regimental church for the 40th Northumberland Regiment and the Canadian Garrison Artillery and the colours for both are framed inside the sanctuary. (Now closed for roof repairs and not open to visitors.) On November 7, 1976, a service was held in this church for Victoria Cross and George Cross winners from all across Canada. (These are the highest awards for gallantry in the Commonwealth.) One of the two World War I veterans attending was Victoria Cross winner, Charles Rutherford, who lived in Cobourg at that time. As a 26-year-old lieutenant in 1918, Rutherford had persuaded 50 German soldiers to surrender to him while armed with only a revolver.



Cross King Street and walk west to the stone Memorial Gates that lead to the Cenotaph in Victoria Park.



18) Memorial Gates and Victoria Park

The handsome stone Memorial Gates that lead into Victoria Park were installed in the late 1940s to honour Cobourg's soldiers who had died in the Second World War. They were designed by Dunnington Grubb, a well-known landscape architect

who had been responsible for the gardens at the Parkwood Estate in Oshawa. They complement Victoria Park, Cobourg's spectacular 12.5 hectare park. Much of what is now the park was once the grounds of the Arlington Hotel, a large summer hotel built in 1874 that stood at the north end. An avenue of trees led down to the waterfront and some of them still stand. In 1898 the grounds south of Queen Street were acquired as the town's first public park and in 1921, the land north of Queen Street was added. After the Arlington was demolished in 1931, some forward-thinking citizens purchased the land for the park. The bandshell in the park was built in 1934 to replace a gazebo bandstand that had stood there since 1902.

Follow the walkway from the Memorial Gates to the Cenotaph.

Choose from 2 Self-Guided Walking Tours – or do both!

ARMOURIES, ARMOUR AND VIMY OAK LOOP

Approx. 30 minutes

See the town's 1904 Armoury, the 1902 collegiate, and 'Lakehurst' the elegant home of WW1 surgeon, Dr. Donald Armour, as well as Cobourg's Vimy Oak. With an optional loop to visit the Marie Dressler House, birthplace of the famous actress.

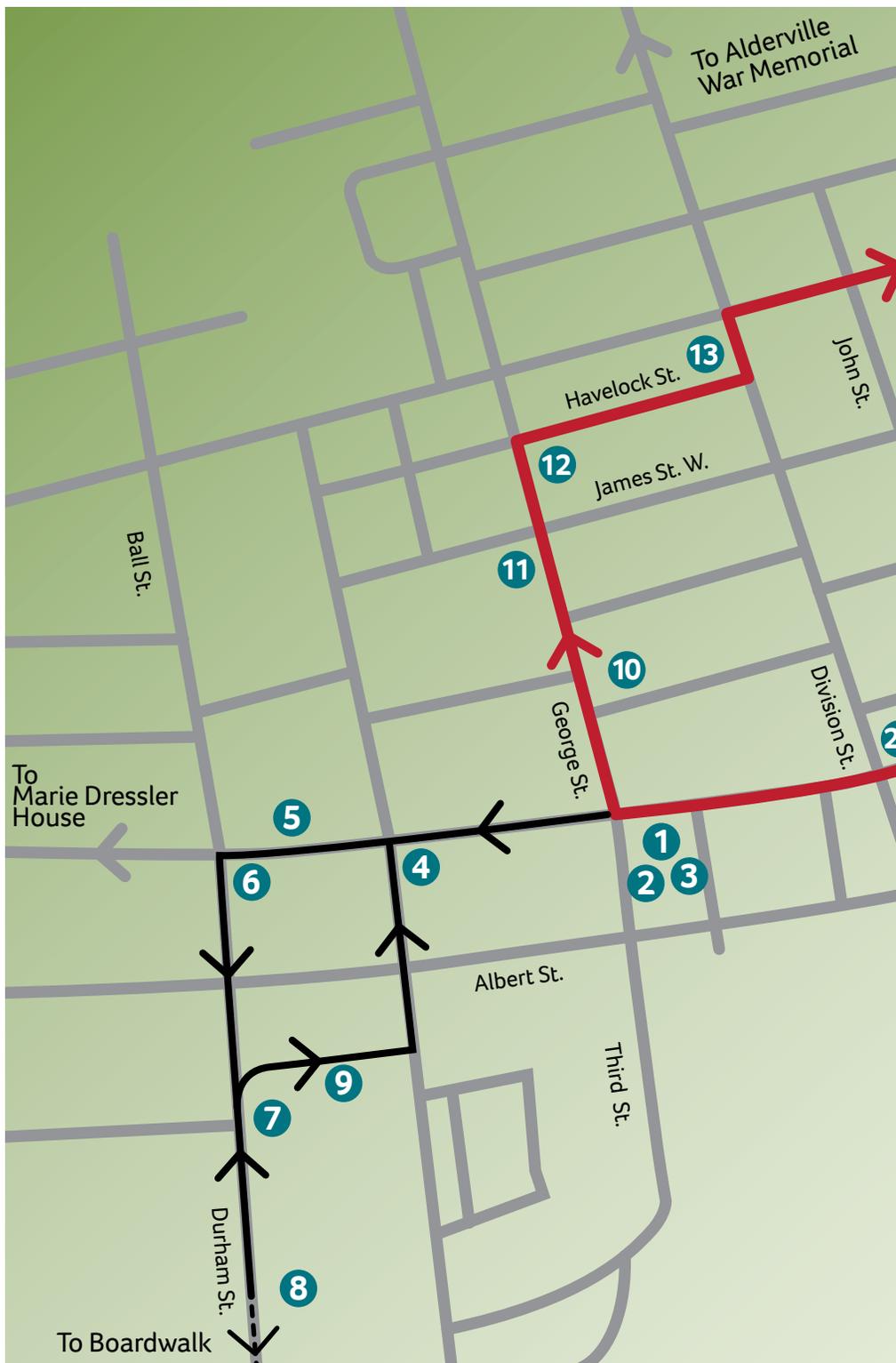


VICTORIA HALL TO VICTORIA COLLEGE LOOP

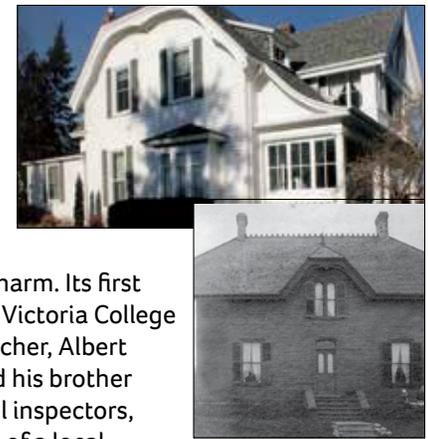
Approx. 40 minutes

View some of Cobourg's finest Victorian houses, homes to families who sent their sons to war. Then see the neoclassical building that housed the first Victoria College and became a hospital for shell-shocked soldiers in WW1. An optional loop highlights some other historic homes.





15) 'Sunny Brae', home of Lt-Colonel John Odell, 1876, 356 Walton Street



When it was first built in 1876, this house was thought to be “new and peculiar” by Victorian standards since it lacked much ornamentation. The front gable and porch, added circa 1905, gave ‘Sunny Brae’ more charm. Its first owner was Nathanael Burwash, a teacher at Victoria College who later became its president. Another teacher, Albert Odell, bought the house in 1900. Albert and his brother John were both teachers who became school inspectors, and both had married sisters, the daughters of a local merchant. When Albert’s wife died in 1904 John and his family moved in with his brother. When war broke out ten years later, John enlisted at the age of 48. He had been the commanding officer of the Cobourg Heavy Battery, a militia regiment, which became part of the 2nd Heavy Battery, Canadian Field Artillery, under Lieutenant-Colonel Odell’s command. This battery arrived in France in September of 1915 and returned home in May of 1919.

Return to James Street and walk one block west to Henry Street and walk south briefly to No.336 on the east side.

16) Hewson/McNaughton home, 1859, 336 Henry Street



This well -proportioned Victorian house shows Regency influence in its three-bay façade and hipped roof but also has a Gothic-style gable with an attic window. It was built for Andrew Hewson, an Irish immigrant who operated a successful dry goods and millinery store in town. He and his wife had six children, and their daughter, Charlotte, and her husband, Deputy-Sheriff David McNaughton, lived with them



for many years. Their only son, Edmund Hewson McNaughton, was killed at Bully-Grenay, France, while serving with the Cobourg Heavy Battery. On August 9, 1918, an enemy shell hit a storage shed containing 9 artillery shells and 5 tons of cordite. A 9.2 Howitzer gun (at right) was destroyed and 26-year old McNaughton and two other Cobourg young men were killed.

Return to James Street and walk west to College and then down to King Street.

14) Victoria College, 1832-36, 100 University Avenue East

This handsome Greek Revival building began life in the 1830s as a Methodist school for boys called Upper Canada Academy. In 1841 it became Victoria College, one of Canada's first degree-granting institutions, with Egerton Ryerson as its first president. In 1884 it gained university status but only eight years later it became part of the University of Toronto and relocated there. In 1901 the building was converted to the Cobourg Asylum for Women, a mental hospital housing 150 patients. In 1917 it became a military hospital for officers suffering from shell shock, a condition that would cause men to twitch or shake uncontrollably, seem deaf or mute or simply gaze off into the distance. Now known as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, this condition was little understood at the time. Treatment at the Cobourg Hospital ranged from counseling and physical therapy to electric shocks. As patients improved, they could take up pottery, carpentry or gardening, and volunteers from the town mingled freely with them. Yet some men chose to flee the institution or escape by suicide. When the hospital closed in 1920, a large farewell ball was held with many people from the town attending. In 1921 it once again became a mental care facility for women. Two large wings added during WW1 were eventually taken down and the building is now a seniors' residence.



Volunteers from the town pose with some of the patients after a tennis game.

Walk south on College Street two blocks to James Street. If taking the optional loop to see two more soldier's homes (see p.5) turn left at James St. If continuing without this added loop walk south on College past some very fine Victorian and Edwardian homes to King Street. On your left at King you will see St. Peter's Anglican Church.

OPTIONAL LOOP: 10 minutes: Turn left at James Street and walk east one block to Walton Street. Turn left and walk one house north to No. 356 on the east side of Walton.



- **Armouries, Armour & Vimy Oak Loop**
- - - **Victoria Hall to Victoria College Loop**

Cobourg Beach

ARMOURIES, ARMOUR AND VIMY OAK LOOP

Approx. 30 minutes

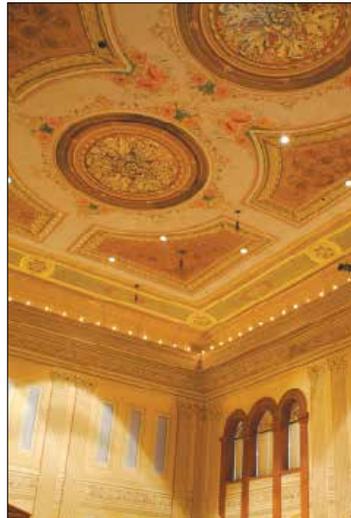


1) Victoria Hall, 55 King Street West, 1860

Begin your tour in historic Victoria Hall, one of Canada's most beautiful public buildings. It was officially opened on September 6, 1860 by the 18-year-old Prince of Wales during his North American tour, and named for his mother, Queen Victoria. That evening in the Concert Hall the prince (later King Edward VII) attended a grand ball and thrilled the local citizenry by staying for the midnight supper. Edward VII's funeral fifty years later, on May 20, 1910, is often seen as a prologue to the Great War; nine ruling sovereigns, including the king's nephew Kaiser Wilhem II, attended, most of whom would have their thrones toppled by the war.

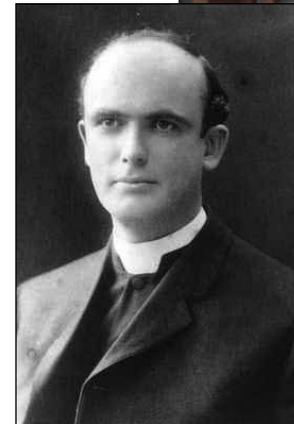
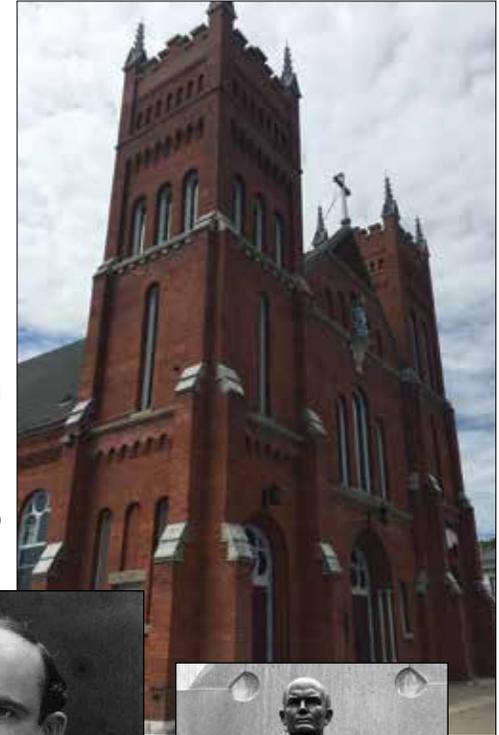
2) Victoria Hall Concert Hall

With its wall and ceiling paintings carefully restored, the 2nd floor Concert Hall today looks much as it did when the royal party danced there by gaslight in 1860. Twenty years later it was converted to a theatre and then in 1899 became a grand opera house with red plush seats, elaborate balconies, and boxes for the town's elite. Many famous names appeared there, including the Dumbells Concert Party, the soldier's troupe that got its start on the Western Front.



13) St. Michael the Archangel Roman Catholic Church, 1895, 379 Division Street

This Romanesque Revival basilica was designed by Peterborough architect John Belcher. Between its two towers topped with Gothic-style metal corner caps, stands a white statue of the church's patron saint. The Roman Catholic church in Cobourg dates back to 1837 and many of its first parishioners were Irish immigrants who had fled the potato famine. A descendant of one of these families was Father Francis P. Duffy who became a famous chaplain in the U.S. army during World War I. Born in Cobourg on May 2, 1871, Duffy graduated from St. Michael's College in Toronto and then moved to New York City to teach at St. Francis Xavier College. As the chaplain for New York's 69th Regiment, (known as "the Fighting 69th"), Duffy became the most-decorated U.S. cleric for his actions in battle and for rescuing wounded men at the front in 1918. A statue of him stands in Duffy Square at the north end of Times Square in Manhattan.



Father Francis Duffy in the 1890s and the statue of him in Duffy Square in New York.



Cross Division Street at University and walk east two blocks to the neo-classical former Victoria College building on the north side at 100 University Avenue East.

12) 'Dromore', childhood home of Colonel Wilfred Dumble, 1857, 364 George Street

If you look up at the roof brackets of this picturesque Gothic villa you will see the letter 'D' for Dumble, the name of the wealthy family who built it and dubbed it 'Dromore'. Thomas Dumble came to Canada from Cornwall in the early 1840s and made a fortune building many of Cobourg's roads and bridges. When Thomas moved to a substantial new home up the street (at 475 George) in 1871, his son John, a railway contractor, took over Dromore. One of his children was Wilfred Dumble, who as a young man joined the British Navy's Royal Engineers and later became the head of the London Omnibus Company. In February of 1915, Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty, invited Dumble to be part of a secret committee to develop large fighting vehicles that could crush barbed wire and crash through trenches. The Landships Committee, as it was known, met in secret because Churchill did not want Lord Kitchener at the War Office to dismiss this as "another of Winston's crackpot schemes." Dumble was instrumental in the creation of "Little Willie," the world's first armoured tank and by the Hundred Days advance in 1918, tanks had become highly effective vehicles of war. Dumble would return to Cobourg after the war and marry Mary Speer, a wealthy American woman who owned 'The Lawn' estate on King Street East.



A roof bracket bearing the letter 'D' for Dumble and Colonel Dumble as a young officer.

Proceed east on Havelock Street past St. Michael's School to Division Street. Turn left to walk north one block to University Avenue. Pause to admire the Romanesque red-brick façade of St. Michael the Archangel Roman Catholic Church.

3) Victoria Hall Courtroom

On the main floor, be sure to see the Courtroom, often called the Old Bailey since it is patterned after the legendary criminal court in London. The painted Royal Arms crest behind the judge's seat was designed by Moser, the same German artist who did the ceiling and wall paintings in the Concert Hall upstairs. And it retains its original paneling and prisoner's box. The most famous case to be tried here was the 1928 libel suit brought by the Canadian WW1 commander, Sir Arthur Currie, against a Port Hope newspaper which accused him of taking the Belgian town of Mons on the last day of the war purely for his own glory.



Be sure to see artist Charles Pachter's *Lest We Forget* exhibition in the 3rd floor Northumberland Gallery, the *Great War in Colour* display of colourized WW1 photos, the *Trench Art • Trench Life* exhibit and the *Canada's Hundred Days* photo show in the Concert Hall.

After exiting Victoria Hall, cross the street and turn back to admire the symmetry of architect Kivas Tully's neo-Palladian design, from the magnificent clock tower to the Corinthian columns of the portico carved from Cleveland stone. (And give quiet thanks to the group of Cobourg citizens who saved this building from the wrecker's ball in 1971 and worked tirelessly to have it restored and re-opened in 1983.)

Turn left and proceed west on the north side of King Street until you see the large red-brick building on the south side at 207 King West that is now the Cobourg Police Department.

4) Cobourg Armoury, 1904, 207 King Street West

This imposing red-brick and stone building once housed the 40th Northumberland Regiment and the



Canadian Garrison Artillery and was a recruitment centre in two world wars. The letters E.R. on the keystone over the doorway stand for Edwardus Rex since it was built in 1904 during the reign of Edward VII. Thousands of soldiers passed through here during World War I and a large part of the building was converted to dormitories. The large drill hall was the scene of Saturday night dances which were popular with the young women of Cobourg. It was also later used for community events such as the annual Motor Show. In 1968 the building was sold and became the town's main police station.

Continue west along the north side of King Street until you see the Shawarma House at 144 King West. Look up the alley beside it to see the mansard roofline of a Victorian house.



5) Home of Reverend William Beattie, 1874, 144 King Street West

The Second Empire-style home behind the Shawarma House was built in 1874 by William Battell, a local builder who later became a mayor of Cobourg. It once had stables, a coach house and an elaborate fence in front. William Beattie, the minister

of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, was a lodger here and purchased the house after Battell's death. When war broke out in 1914, Beattie enlisted as a chaplain of the 40th Regiment of the Cobourg Battalion and rose to become the chaplain of the entire 2nd Division. His letters from the front sent to the local newspapers comprise a remarkable chronicle of the war. In describing his first impression of the Western Front, he wrote: "Imagine trying to live for over a year in the trenches which you have seen workmen in Cobourg digging when laying sewers." After the war, Beattie moved to Ottawa and in 1956 the house was converted to a Canadian Tire store and the front addition has been a retail space ever since.



11) Central School, 1906, 323 George Street

When completed in 1906, this imposing building with its tall Ionic columns was the pride of Cobourg. It had been built to replace five smaller schools with the aid of a \$10,000 grant from local benefactor Thomas Gillbard, for whom the school was later named. In the custom of the period, there was a Girl's Entrance on the north side of the building and a Boy's Entrance on the south. There was once a bell tower on the roof which was destroyed in a fire in November of 1917 along with much of the sloping roof and the third-floor assembly hall. (Local historian Percy Climo, author of two books about Cobourg's Great War, recalled that patriotic wartime songs were part of the Friday afternoon school assemblies and that 'Tipperary' was always sung with great gusto.) The school was refurbished and re-opened in September of 1918. During the 1990s it was decided that the old school should be closed and it was converted into the Mansions on George condominiums.

Continue north on George Street to Number 364 at the corner of Havelock.

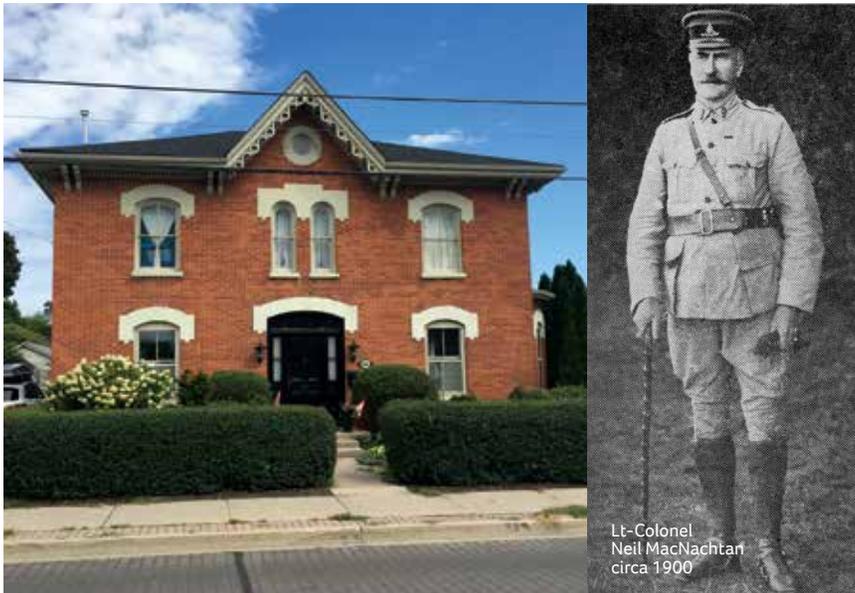
VICTORIA HALL TO VICTORIA COLLEGE LOOP

Approx. 40 minutes

If starting at Victoria Hall, please see the description on p. 6. From Victoria Hall turn left onto King St. and walk west one-half block to George Street and turn right. One block north you will come to 314 George Street on the right-hand side.

10) The MacNachtan home, 1876, 314 George Street

This red-brick Italianate house has a lively façade with contrasting window and door heads in buff brick and a circular window in the gable that provides an unusual detail. It was home to three generations of the MacNachtan family, three of whom served as county clerks. Edmund A. MacNachtan, a Scottish immigrant, came to Cobourg in 1863 to take up that position and was succeeded by his son Neil MacNachtan in 1891. Neil was a crack marksman who became the commanding officer of the Cobourg garrison. When he collapsed and died in his office at Victoria Hall in 1928, he was succeeded by his son Edmund L. MacNachtan who had served in World War I. Edmund had enlisted as a sergeant in the Canadian Field Artillery in September of 1914 and returned home with the rank of captain in late June of 1919, having served a remarkable four years and nine months on the Western Front.



Lt-Colonel
Neil MacNachtan
circa 1900

Proceed north on George Street and note the large pillared building across the street at 323 George which was once the town's Central School.



6) Cobourg Collegiate, 1902, 135 King Street West

Now a private school, this building was formerly the home of Cobourg Collegiate. Many men from the town who served in WW1 attended high school here and some of them returned to finish their studies after their time at the front. Built in 1902 in a style known as Edwardian Classical, the building features oversized Palladian windows on the second level which add drama to its front façade. Additions to the school building were made in 1939 and during the 1960s, but in 2015 the collegiate moved to a new facility on King Street East.

Cross King Street at the corner of Durham Street.

Proceed south on the east side of Durham Street and continue past Orr St to 'Lakehurst' at 128 Durham.



7) 'Lakehurst', home of Dr. Donald Armour, 1834, 128 Durham Street

This handsome Georgian brick residence was built in 1834 by James Calcutt who owned a brewery, distillery and flour milling business, the Hibernia Mills, located just east of here. Judge John D. Armour purchased the house in 1871 and his family created beautiful gardens that extended down to the lake. Judge Armour was a distinguished jurist who became the Chief Justice of Ontario and in 1901 was appointed to the Supreme Court of Canada. One of his eight children, Donald Armour, became a noted London Harley Street practitioner and chief surgeon of the Queen's Canadian Military Hospital in Shorncliffe, England, during WW1. Donations from the town outfitted the Cobourg Operating Theatre at Shorncliffe. One of Dr. Armour's patients was Major Georges Vanier, later Canada's Governor General, who lost a leg during the Hundred Days campaign in 1918. The two men became friends and Vanier gave a heartfelt eulogy at Armour's funeral in 1933, praising his humour, strength and kindness. In 1910 Lakehurst was converted to a summer hotel, and later divided into apartments, before recently being handsomely restored.



Dr. Armour (top) and the Cobourg Operating Theatre at Shorncliffe.

Continue south on Durham Street. On your left you will see a small oak tree planted in front of the Legion Village seniors' residence. This is a Vimy Oak.



8) Vimy Oak, Durham Street, at Legion Village

After the battle of Vimy Ridge in April, 1917, a young soldier named Leslie Miller surveyed the barren landscape, blasted by shellfire, and wondered if there was a memento he could take back to Canada. He soon found the remains of a half-buried oak tree and gathered up a handful of acorns. Back on his farm in Scarborough, Ontario, he planted the acorns which sprouted into trees. He named his farm Vimy Oaks Farm and today several of the original oak trees survive. But there are no original oaks left on Vimy Ridge itself. Now

the Vimy Foundation and the Vimy Legacy Oaks Corporation have nurtured young oaks from these trees to help preserve Canada's World War I legacy. The oak planted here is one of them. The goal is to return 100 Canadian Vimy oaks to a park at Vimy Ridge in France as a living memorial to Canada's sacrifice during the battle of Vimy Ridge.

If you want to see the lakefront walk south to the boardwalk. Then return and walk north to the corner of Orr Street. If you wish to visit the Marie Dressler House, which has a small museum on the life of the famed movie actress, continue north and then west to 212 King Street West. If not, turn right on Orr Street past the solid stone building on the corner.

9) The Barracks, circa 1814-1820, corner of Orr and Durham Streets

This low stone building is believed to have been built for military purposes around the time of the War of 1812. The masonry work is very similar to the powder magazine at Fort York, Toronto, so the building may have been used for storage or served as a barracks. Today it houses the Sifton-Cook Heritage Centre, a museum which is open to visitors on summer weekends.



Continue east on Orr past the Cobourg Legion and turn left and walk north on Hibernia to King Street. If you wish to begin the Victoria Hall to Victoria College Loop turn right one block to George Street and walk north.