

## LEDINGHAM COTTAGE 1879

### 1.0 History

#### 1.1 General History of Grimsby Beach Area

Originally the Grimsby Beach area served as a Methodist meeting ground from the mid 1800's to the early 1900's. Prior to any development of the area, John Bowslaugh "offered the use of his shoreline for a gigantic outdoor temperance meeting" (1) in 1846. By 1859, "it was decided that a permanent site was needed for a camp meeting ground", (2) so the site chosen was that of the 1846 temperance meeting on John Bowslaugh's land along Lake Ontario. The camp ground served as a focal point for the Methodist community and allowed them to celebrate their devotion to the Methodist faith in a large communal outdoor setting.

The one hundred acre (3) site originally had very few lasting facilities and tents usually provided shelters for those attending meetings. By 1874, it had become evident that the meeting ground was becoming more and more popular and that permanent facilities and structures would be more appropriate for the site.

By an Act of Parliament "the Ontario Methodist Camp Ground officially became the Ontario Methodist Camp Ground Company" and was chartered in 1875. It was this company that subdivided the land and built the first picturesque cottages on former tent sites in the year of the company's inauguration.

These cottages were characterized by their 'gingerbread' fretwork and board and batten siding; 252 Lake Street is a prime existing example of the style of cottage that were once prevalent in the Grimsby Beach area.

The lots were initially leased from the company on a 99 year basis. They were leased, instead of being sold outright, because it allowed the company to impose restrictions and have the leaseholders follow a proper code of conduct. It was the decision of the potential cottager to sign the lease and accept the condition or refuse to sign altogether. One may assume that the atmosphere of the cottage community was prudent, however, since the cottagers all had similar outlooks, a strong bond would have been formed with each other and the beach community as a whole because of their commonality.

Things began to change by the beginning of the twentieth century for the cottage community. In 1901, the Ontario Methodist Camp Ground Company was officially re-named Grimsby Park Company. (5) By 1910, the Grimsby Park Company was sold to H. H. Wylie, (6) a newspaperman and executive from Cleveland, and the whole Methodist character changed. The area took on more of a carnival atmosphere with amusement rides and side shows, and in 1916 Canada Steamship Lines (7) purchased the property. By 1927, the 99 year leases were called in and deeds to the property were issued and the park was taken over by the Grimsby Beach Cottager's Association. (8) The picturesque resort feeling finally came to an end during the depression and World War II, when combined with a lack of financial resources and housing shortages, the cottages became year round dwellings.

In the course of events, the architectural details slowly were removed by the installation of modern siding and trim. There are now very few cottages that have the original ornamental fretwork remaining, many details were lost in the process of upgrading and modernization. Fortunately, there are a few existing cottages that retain some of the original detail, these details still reflect the character of what was once a popular resort area during the late 1800's and early 1900's.

## 1.2 History of Ledingham Cottage

The first person to lease the cottage was a Reverend Gallagher. He was most likely a Methodist Minister, since the meeting ground was established primarily for Methodists and followers of the temperance movement.

Due to the fluid nature of his ministry, since it was and still is a common Methodist practice to have their ministers preach at one location for a four year period then move elsewhere to another congregation, it is difficult to establish where Reverend Gallagher preached. The problem of tracing this particular person is further compounded by the fact the cottage only acted as a summer vacation residence and was leased, so there would not be a permanent record of ownership perse, as there would be if a property deed was issued and registered.

The next leaseholder to have the cottage was Reverend Doctor Smith. (10) Again, it is difficult to draw even a scant biography of this man because of the same circumstances as were encountered for Reverend Gallagher.

In 1910, the cottage changed hands to an ancestor of the Ledinghams' (the cottage is known locally by the Ledingham name, the Ledingham family being the longest and best known persons to use the facility as a summer cottage), to a Charles Gillard Hardie (11). "Like many of the well-to-do businessmen from Toronto, Hamilton and Buffalo" (12) who had cottages at Grimsby Beach, Charles Hardie was a successful entrepreneur from Hamilton. He operated a feed and grain business and also had a number of stores on York and Market Sand Market Streets in Hamilton.

The next person in line to use the cottage as a summer retreat was Walter Edwin Pescott, (13) he was Charles Hardie's son-in-law. Walter Pescott came to Canada from Guernsey off the coast of England in 1880. In 1891, he graduated from Victoria University and soon became a Methodist minister. After moving to Ontario, Walter preached in various communities throughout the province in keeping with the ministry's practice of rotating its ministers on a four year basis.

The cottage became known as Ledingham's Cottage when Walter's daughter, Aleda, married into the Ledingham family. It served as a summer cottage for many years for the Ledinghams and they became the longest and best known summer residents of the cottage.

Both Aleda and her husband were employed by the National Research Council of Canada for many years.

A noteworthy accomplishment performed by Aleda was to graduate from the University of Toronto with a degree in chemical engineering. Today it is very common for a woman to graduate with any degree she may wish to achieve, however, during the earlier part of this century women were not expected to enter into a profession dominated by men; in a sense Aleda is a pioneer for the further advancement of women's equality.

## 2.0 Architectural Details

### 2.1 General Description

This one and a half storey wood frame cottage is located in the once well-known Grimsby Park area, and is now known municipally as 252 Lake Street.

Ledingham Cottage is an excellent existing example of the architectural style that was once prevalent throughout the Grimsby Park area and is characteristic of Victorian architecture.

These cottages were originally built by a construction method called 'balloon framing' where the outer walls were raised in one section with no fire stops, and the floors were added later. (14) Since the cottages were not intended to be a permanent home or year round dwelling, it was built using relatively simple method of construction which lacked many amenities. For example, the cottages were originally built on cedar posts, so there was no substantial footing for a long lasting stability. (15) There has been interior modifications to Ledingham Cottage to improve its year round livability, such as insulation and other forms of upgrading, but this particular cottage has retained many of the finer external design details that have been removed or covered over on other existing cottages of the area.

Perhaps the most prominent attribute to qualify this particular structure as Victorian is the decorative fretwork trim. The barge board, decorative railings and other intricately detailed trim that adorns the cottage all help to give the cottage a more opulent appearance than it really warrants. The barge board serves to conceal exposed rafter and the ornate trim adorns what is in reality a relatively plain and simple structure.

## 2.2 Details of the Three Bay Short Facade (West Side Elevation, refer to Photo 1)

### 2.2.1 Roof and Roof Trim

The hipped gable roof is adorned with decorative barge board fascia along the verges. There is no decorative trim along the eaves, only plain fascia and the roof rafters are exposed. The roof rafters are also exposed on the underside of the porch roof.

### 2.2.2 Windows

#### First storey Windows:

The head of the structural opening is semi-circular decorated by a hood mould with side projection.

The sides and sill of the windows are plain trimmed, with the trim extending slightly beyond the window frame.

The sashes are double hung with a one over one pace arrangement. Storm windows are also in place.

This window design typifies the type of window found on the first floor facade.

#### Upper Storey Windows:

The head of the structural opening is flat, adorned with a shaped moulded trim. Sides and sills are plain and protrude slightly beyond the siding. The trim within the opening includes a transom with two lights.

There are two window divisions, with the sashes placed side by side.

### 2.2.3 Main Entrance (see Photo 2)

The two leaved door is centrally located on the facade. Each door has a semi-circular window pane and has a paneled lower portion.

The flat structural opening at the head is trimmed with a wooden entablature, while the sides are plain.

Within the head of the structural opening is a flat transom with two lights.

#### 2.2.4 Upper Storey Porch Entrance

The head of the structural opening is flat, trimmed with plain moulding. The sides of the opening are also plain trimmed.

The door is plain apart from three window panes arranged vertically in the upper portion of the door.

#### 2.2.5 Two Tiered Porch (refer to Photo 3)

Two decorative posts support the upper floor of the porch, while four posts support the hipped roof. The posts are bracketed by decorative trim.

The roof rafters are exposed, with the rafter braces exposed also.

### 2.3 North Side Elevation (refer to Photo 4)

Many of the details have already been covered, however, the window arrangement and type is unusual on this side.

#### 2.3.1 Windows

Lower storey (described left to right as one faces the north side elevation):

1. The head is flat, trimmed with plain moulding around the whole unit. The windows are double hung with a two over two pane arrangement.
2. The head is flat, adorned with a shaped moulded trim. The trim is otherwise plain.
3. The window on the extreme right has a semi-circular head and is similar in all respects to the type found on the west side facade.

#### Upper Storey Windows (left to right):

All the upper storey windows are similar in trim and detail. They are relatively small in size, with three horizontally arranged panes apart for the centre window by the chimney which has two. The head of all the windows are flat surrounded by plain trim.

### 2.3.2 Upper Storey Protruding Extension

From the exposed roof rafters to the moulded board and batten siding, all the architectural details are consistent with the details found on the house.

## 2.4 East Side Elevation (refer to Photo 5)

### 2.4.1 Lower Storey

The main entrance has a single panelled door, with a windowed upper portion and a decorative screen door.

The open porch has decorative railings with square corner posts.

### 2.4.2 Upper Storey Porch and Windows

The roof is gabled on this end of the cottage. The roof trim, (i.e. the fretwork) has a somewhat different design than the west side decorative trim. Many of the other details, however, are similar, including the exposed rafters and four supporting post with decorative brackets.

The two windows are identical to the ones located on the upper storey of the west side.

An unusual feature of this upper storey porch is that there appears to be no doorway to give conventional access to the porch.

## 2.5 South Side Elevation (refer to Photos 6 & 7)

The arrangement of architectural details are very similar to the north side, including the upper storey protruding extension. A substantial detail that make this side unique is the first floor protruding extension.

### 2.5.1 First Floor Protruding Extension

The trim of the hipped roof is again similar to the trim of the rest of the cottage (i.e. plain fascia and exposed rafters).

The south facing windows are double hung with an eight over one pane arrangement. The head of the windows has moulded trim, otherwise the trim is plain.

Side windows (east and west side) are similar to those on the south side except for a four over one pane arrangement and there is only one window on either side.

#### 2.5.2 Other Details of the South Side

The lower storey windows are plain trimmed all around. Window pane arrangements are four over four double hung for the window located to the right (as one faces the south side) of the protruding extension and the window to the right of this window has four fixed panes.

Upper storey details are almost identical to the north side's upper storey, including the protruding extension.

#### 2.6 Miscellaneous Details

##### 2.6.1 Chimney

There is an external brick chimney located near the centre of the north side of the cottage. It is a modern structure without any significant detail.

##### 2.6.2 Siding

The entire house is clad with moulded board and batten siding. This siding is reminiscent of the type of siding that was found on many of the original cottages of the late 1800<sup>s</sup> in that area.

END NOTES

- (1) Dorothy Turcotte, Greetings from Grimsby Park The Chautauqua of Canada (The Boston Mills Press; Erin Ontario, 1985) P• 10
- (2) Ibid, p• 11
- (3) Ada Bromley and Jean Powell comp., Once Upon a Little Town, Grimsby; 1876 to 1976 (Rannie Publications; Canada, 1979), P• 71
- (4) Dorothy Turcotte, Greetings from Grimsby Park The Chautauqua of Canada (The Boston Mills Press; Erin Ontario, 1985) P• 15
- (5) Ibid, p• 39
- (6) Ibid, p• 41
- (7) Ibid, p• 46
- (8) Ibid, p• 56
- (9) Mrs. Aleda Ledingham of Guelph, phone interview June 30th, 1987  
Note: the spelling of Rev. Gallagher's last name is not certain
- (10) Ibid, June 30
- (II) Ibid, June 30
- (12) Ada Bromley and Jean Powell comp., Once Upon a Little Town.....Grimsby:1876 to 1976
- (13) (Rannie Publications, Canada, 1979) P• 38
- (14) Mrs. Aleda Ledingham, phone interview July 15, 1987
- (15) Dorothy Turcotte, Greetings from Grimsby Park The Chautauqua of Canada ( The Boston Mills Press; Erin Ontario, 1985) p. 55
- (16) Alan Smith, phone interview, June 30, 1987



## Bibliography

Bromley, Ada and Powell, Jean comp. Once Upon a Little Town, Grimsby: 1876 to 1976 (Rannie Publications, Canada, 1979)

Ledingham, Aleda, granddaughter of Charles Hardie who purchased cottage in **1910**.

Smith, Alan, Architectural Photographer for Grimsby Historical Society

Turcotte, Dorothy, Greetings from Grimsby Park The Chautaugua of Canada (The Boston Mills Press; Erin Ontario, 1985)

PHOTO 1

EAST SIDE ELEVATION  
3 BAY SHORT FACADE)

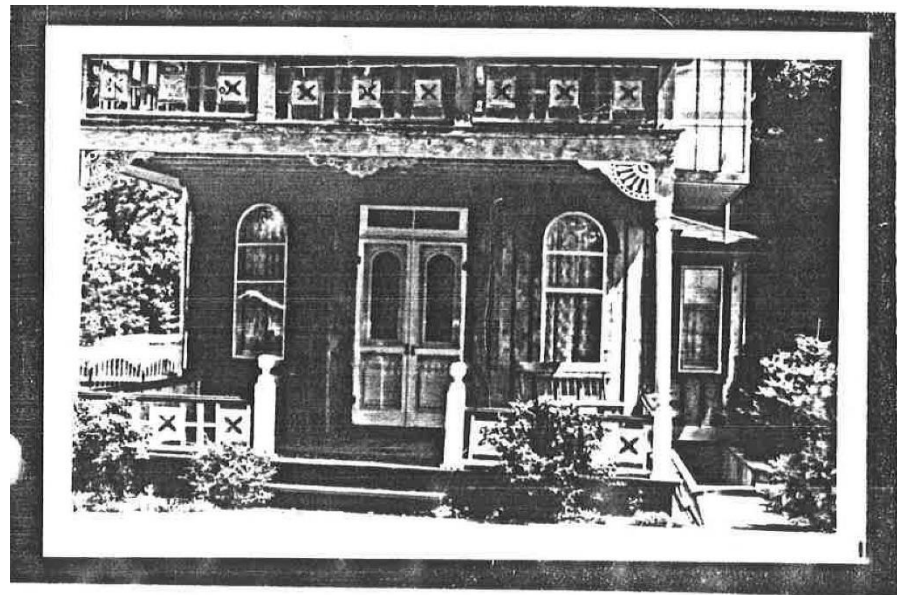
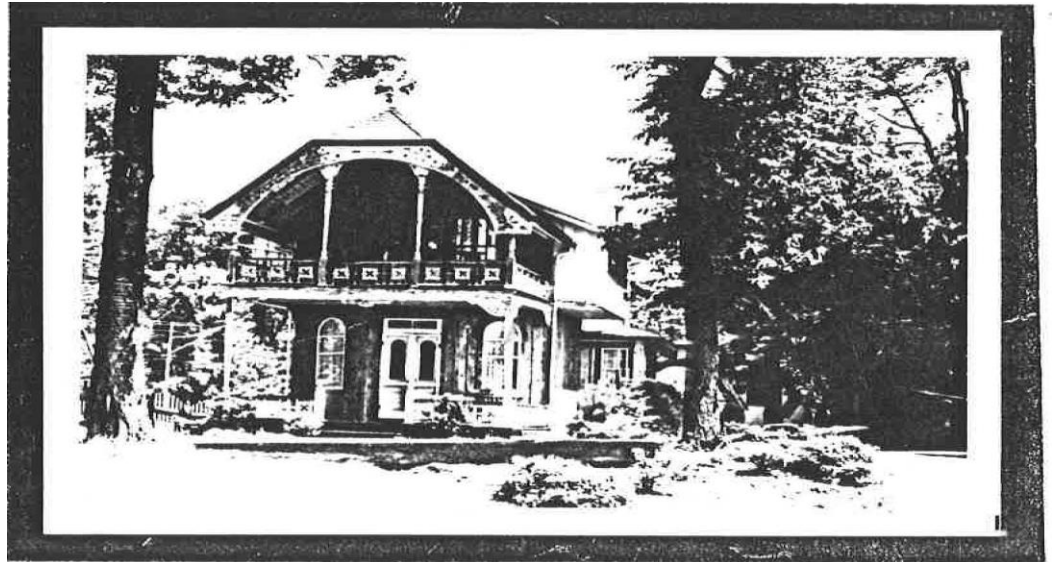


PHOTO 2

MAIN ENTRANCE ON WEST SIDE

PHOTO 3

THE UPPER TIER OF THE  
WEST SIDE PORCH

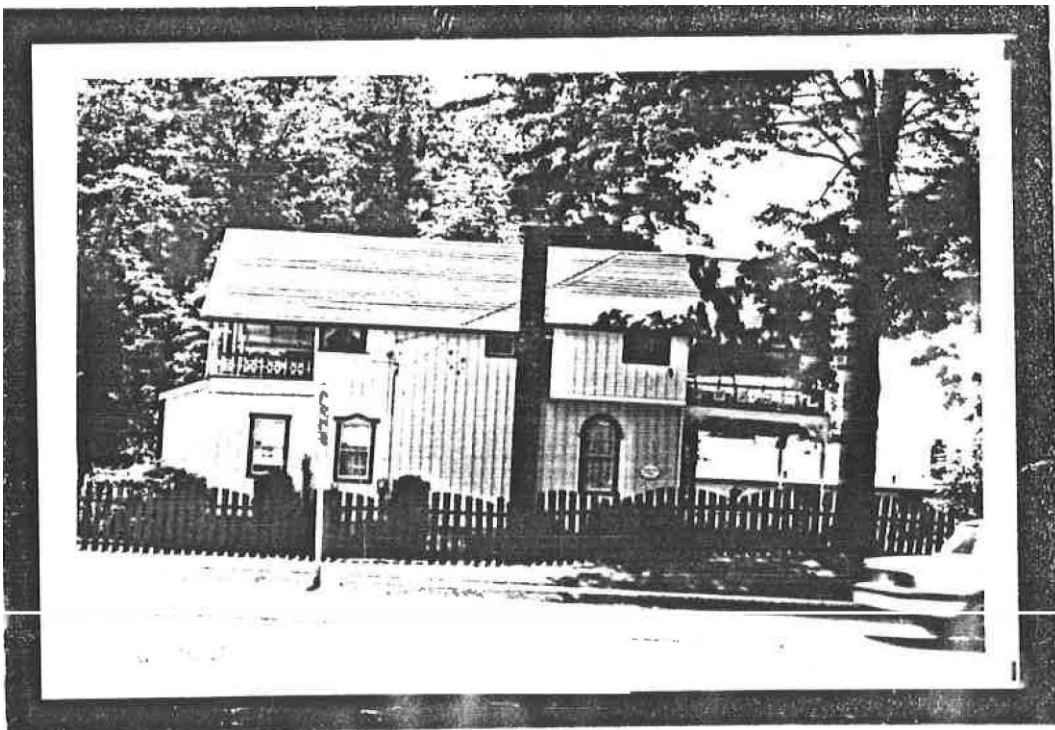
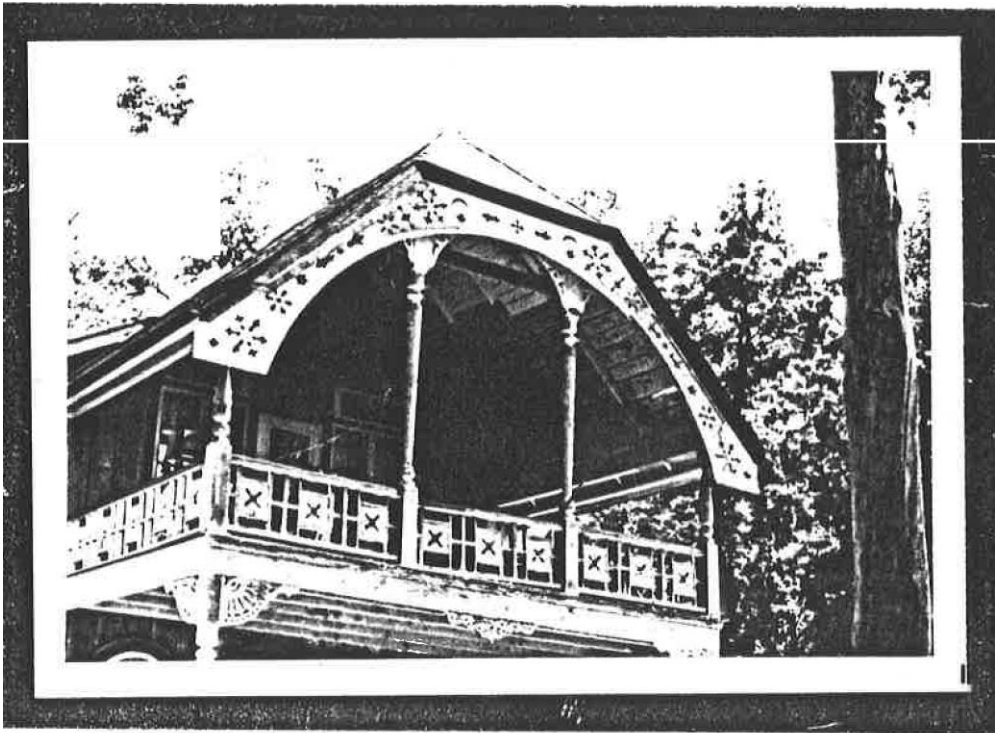


PHOTO 4

NORTH SIDE ELEVATION

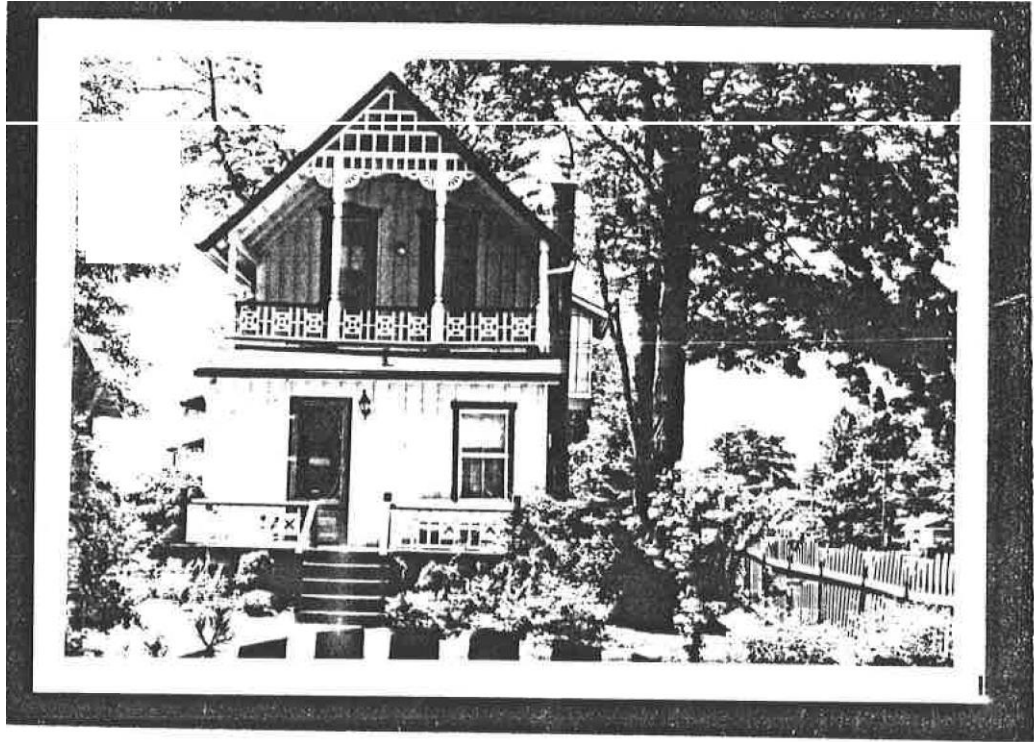


PHOTO 5 EAST SIDE ELEVATION

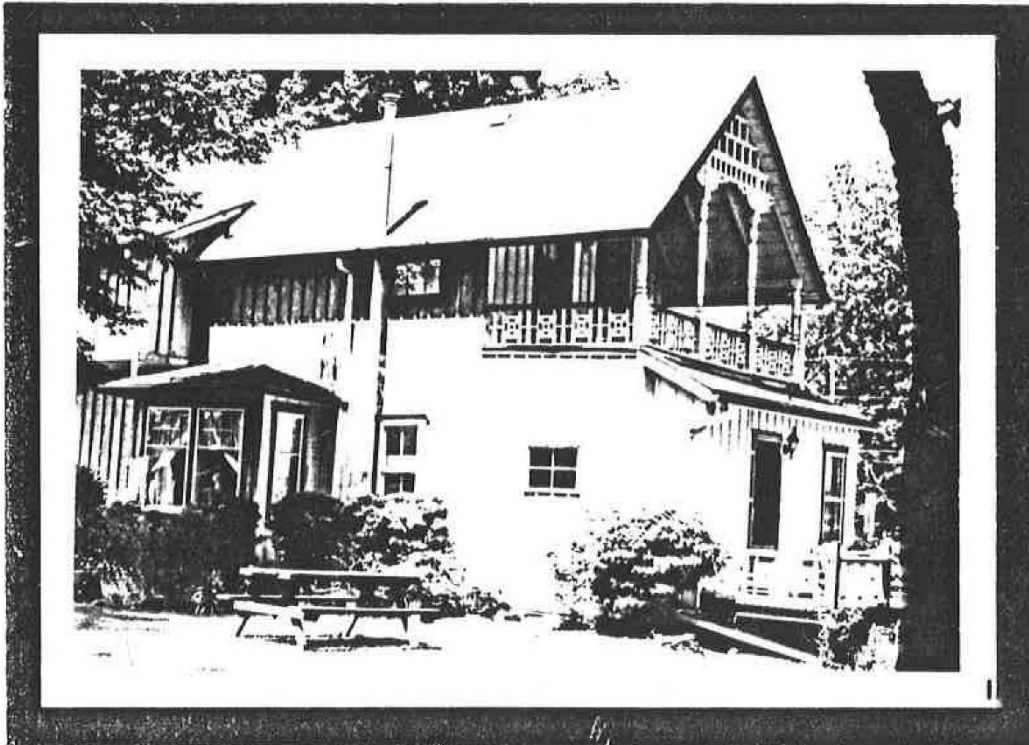


PHOTO 6 SOUTH SIDE



PHOTO 7

SOUTH SIDE CONTINUED

