

# Lorne Villa Mansion

---

Location: 90 Goderich St. West, Seaforth, Ontario

Year built: 1886-1890

LORNE VILLA MANSION is an example of the “nameless vernacular” style of late Victorian architecture. The style was called vernacular because it differed from community to community depending on the creativity of the individual builder and it drew on design features from architectural styles popular at the time. The Lorne Villa Mansion was built between 1886 and 1890. The Villa illustrates many of the style’s basic design features: a two-storey semi-circular bay, two second-storey gable roofs with exposed woodwork, a large verandah, large brackets, and a gable roof over the front entrance.



The Villa with its coach house at right built in 1884

The builder of Lorne Villa Mansion, Phillip Sparling, emphasized the structure of the two gable roofs on the upper storey rather than resorting to applied decoration. Each gable was treated individually. The one on the right is accentuated by the simple A-shaped truss while the larger gable houses a small balcony. The railing of the balcony has its centre two vertical posts that extend to the roof and two large brackets beneath. It

illustrates the builder’s use of symmetry and balance on an overall asymmetrical form, characteristic of this style. A complex roofline was created by the three gable roofs of progressively greater height.

The main floor of the house originally had two large formal parlours, a library, dining room, and, in the back and in the basement, kitchens and work rooms. A wide grand staircase to the second floor led to at least three bedrooms and an indoor bathroom with running water—a luxury and rarity at the time. The attic was left unfinished.

---

Lorne Villa Mansion was named after the Marquess of Lorne, Governor General of Canada from 1878 to 1883. The house was built for Leonard McFaul, who was the son of a United Empire Loyalist. In 1875, McFaul was the principal of the Seaforth Public School. See the story of Maplewood Manor, the former Seaforth Public School, for more about Leonard McFaul.

Edward McFaul, Leonard's brother, ran an extensive dry goods business with his nephew, John McTavish. The white brick building with



red brick accents was built in 1872 by C.H. Cull. It was remodeled in 1881 and large plate-glass lights were placed in the front window, the first used in Seaforth. The photographs of McFaul's dry goods store were taken c. 1900. The stores in the photograph are now occupied by Pete's Paperclip and Desjardins Credit Union.



Leonard, and his wife, Grace Henderson, had two children, a son John and a daughter Grace. Grace McFaul Mullen performed for the 1918 Victory concert at Cardno Music Hall. She and her husband, James Mullen, who was manager of the Bank of Commerce in Seaforth at the time, lived in the house after 1916.

John McFaul's daughter, Mabel Grace Crouch, recalled fond memories of visits to her grandparents' home as a child. In the early 1970s, Mabel and her husband, Stewart Crouch, converted the Villa into five apartments. Five more apartments were added by later owners. The Lorne Villa is now home to the Canadian Mental Health Association.

---