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## GOLDEN MEMORIES

The Saturday Morning Post

April 15, 1989

By Percy L. Climo

# Harbour Jottings

Sanford A. Fleming tells us the harbour was commenced in 1828. The following year the Harbour Company was incorporated. Since that time, many events, developments and changes have taken place at the harbourfront. The recording and story would require a large book. This writing deals with two or three items that have occurred in my lifetime.

The year 1907 brought a number of alterations. The decision to make the Cobourg Harbour the north shore terminus for the coming car ferry brought on much local activity. The car ferry dock had to be constructed adjacent to the centre pier, with pile driving and heavy timber works. A passenger walkway and an elevated platform was included. The dipper dredge was busy during the season removing sand and silt from the inner harbour and the east side of the outer basin. A ticket and revenue office was erected on the west side of Third Street. New railway tracks were put in place. Even Gull Island Light House received a "face-lift". Repairs were made and the living quarters for the Light House keeper were improved and enlarged.

Until 1907, the light was out during the winter season. Now, with the coming of the car ferry and year round operation, the keeper must stay out on Peter Rock. Mr. Robert Roddick, who for many years "kept the light", was superannuated at \$400 per year by the Dominion Government. A brother, James Roddick, received the new appointment at \$500 per year.

On November 20, 1907, at 1:30 the car ferry arrived in the Cobourg Harbour on its first trip across the lake, with 26 loaded railway cars of coal. The boat remained in port overnight making minor adjustments to the equipment. It was a great day and a proud day for citizens who thronged the harbour area to see the large, new boat, 316 feet long and 56 feet beam, commanded by Captain Forrest.

Another interesting event took place that summer. On July 19, the Cobourg band, in place of giving their regular concert in Victoria Park, changed their local to the newly erected pedestrian platform that was to serve the new ferry boat. From that waterfront vantage point, on a moonlit July evening, they pre-

sented a very fine musical entertainment. The report tells us that throngs of people visited the piers and harbour area. Many small craft cruised about the harbour, their occupants listening to the fine strains of music coming from the ferry dock platform. Even then the harbourfront was a great people place.

### The early 1920's

It was a hot, sunny summer day. My brother, Sidney, Douglas Waldon and myself decided we would like to spend the afternoon swimming at the Cobourg East pier. The old lighthouse, midway along the pier, was a favourite gathering place for a number of swimmers. One could dive off the pier or take a higher dive off the lighthouse building.

We lived in the west end of Cobourg. My brother owned a fine 16 foot canoe. We set out from Burnham Street, down the lake, around the piers and to the old lighthouse gathering place. The canoe was safely tied to the pier while we had a great time, along with the rest of the

crowd, diving, swimming and sporting around.

Finally, it came time for the return to Burnham Street and home. By that time a fresh south-west wind had arisen, giving the lake some fair-sized waves. We set out with my brother and Waldon on the paddles. Everything went fine until we started past the outside of the west pier break-

water. Here we entered the worst type of water for canoes.

The large waves bounced back off the breakwater creating a severe choppy condition.

We were into this choppy water before we realized how serious the situation had become. We were in our bathing suits and getting wet did not matter. If we ever got thrown out or dumped out into that water we would never make it. The canoe bounced up

and down like a cork, eight to ten feet up and down, in quick succession. I sat down low in the centre of the canoe to give it ballast. Walden and my brother took to the paddles with all their strength, one front and one stern. It sure was a choppy ride. We shipped water. Both paddlers were six footers and strong. Finally we reached the

end of the breakwater section and into normal waves. The canoe could ride out the large waves without any difficulty.

Our next move was to go directly to shore and empty the canoe, which by this time was half full of water. My brother and Waldon then continued up the lake to Burnham Street. I

preferred to walk home via the lake shore, across the mouth of Factory Creek, across the then open fields and the streets to home.

