

THE HISTORY OF COBOURG HARBOUR

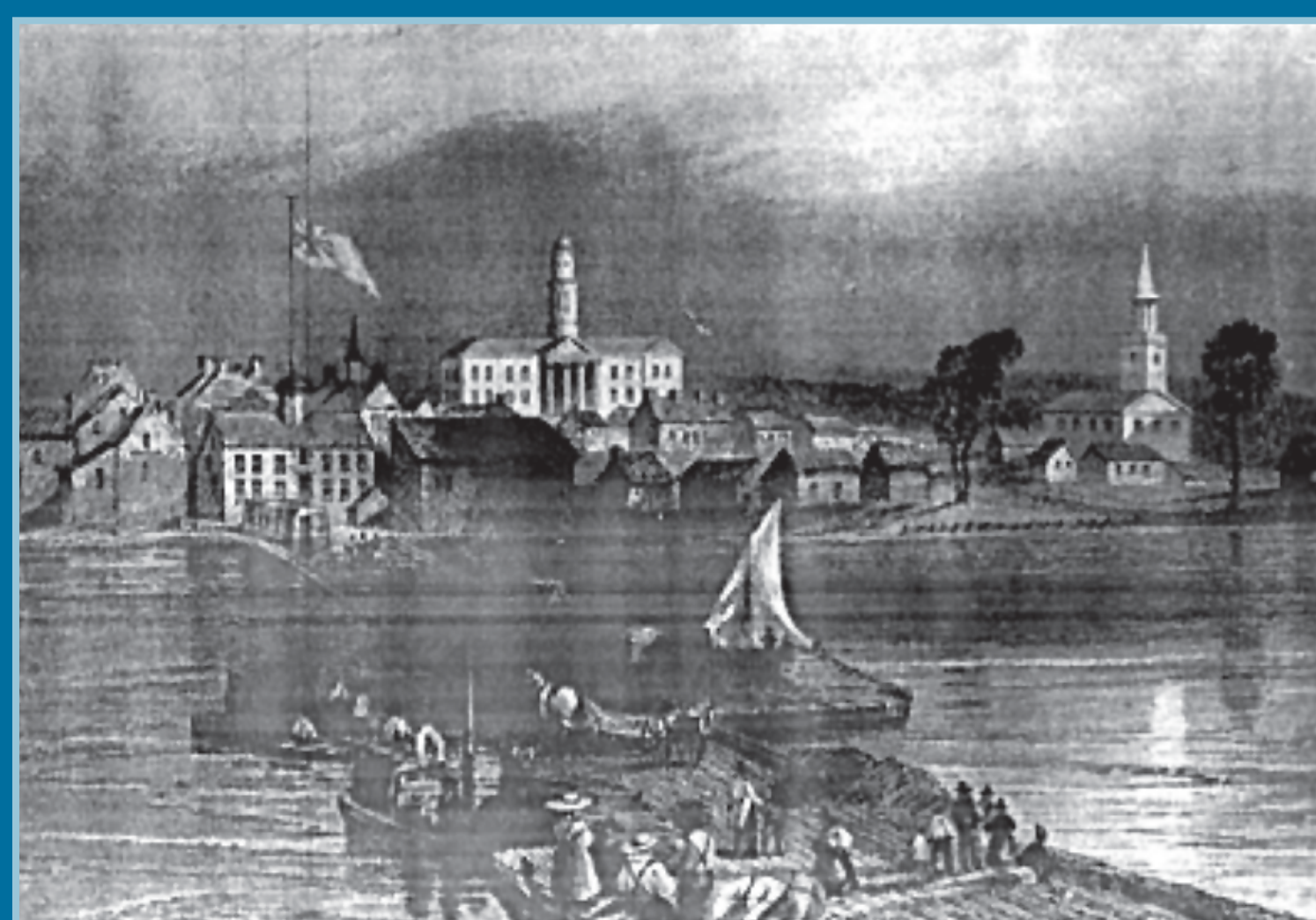
BUILDING A HARBOUR

EAST PIER

In 1829 the Province of Upper Canada passed an Act allowing for the construction of a wharf in Cobourg. The Act specified that the harbour construction was to commence within one year and be completed within seven years.

The next year the Cobourg Harbour Company was incorporated with the following prominent citizens as directors: Captain Boswell, George S. Boulton, Archibald Macdonald, J.G. Bethune, D. Campbell, J. Gilcrest, E. Perry and John Covert as Chair. Work commenced at once.

Wanted for the Cobourg Harbour Company: 500 sticks, pine lumber – 30 feet long and 12" square; 100 sticks pine lumber – 54 feet long and 12" square to be delivered to the beach, near the harbour, on or before the first of March next. E. Perry and D. Campbell (Cobourg Star - Jan 11, 1831)



Many difficulties were encountered getting the timber to Cobourg and some of it was lost. It involved floating the wood onto Lake Ontario and then towing it along the north shore.

The east pier was completed on May 17, 1832. It extended upwards of 500 feet into the lake and was 30 feet wide. Although it did not constitute a harbour, the pier nevertheless opened up many opportunities for the growing town. It provided a much safer means of landing people, belongings and cargo, resulting in a significant increase in trade.

Before the east pier was built, Cobourg's first storehouse for the lake freight was a large, red frame structure at the Third Street wharf. The east pier storehouse that superseded it was built at the foot of Division Street – it extended across Division Street so that wagons could be driven through an archway with the storage facilities on each side. A lofty flag pole rose from the roof. It was usual to run up a flag to notify Cobourg citizens of the approach of a ship.

William Kitson was the first Harbour Master and collector of customs and a Mr. Langton was the first storehouse keeper.

CENTRE PIER

On May 11, 1839, the Government passed an Act increasing the capital stock of the Cobourg Harbour Company and extending the period of completion another four years. The Centre Pier was built for the Harbour Company by a contractor named Joseph Metcalfe.

This pier pushed out from the old Third Street wharf and thus for the first time made a harbour capable of providing fair shelter for vessels. In 1850 Cobourg, now incorporated as a Town, took over full control of the harbour on payment of 10,500 pounds to the Government as its share. The Town began repairs to the existing piers, built the esplanade or quay and enlarged the harbour mouth. A new breakwater was built, as was a new warehouse and lighthouse in the Harbour. The harbour could now support 100 vessels.



WEST PIER

Due to the problems with silting and some continued exposure to the weather, the Canadian Government constructed a long breakwater named the 'Langevin Pier' after Sir Hector Langevin, Minister of Public Works at the time. The pier ran out into deep water and well across the entrance of the old harbour. It was completed during the MacKenzie Administration in 1874-75