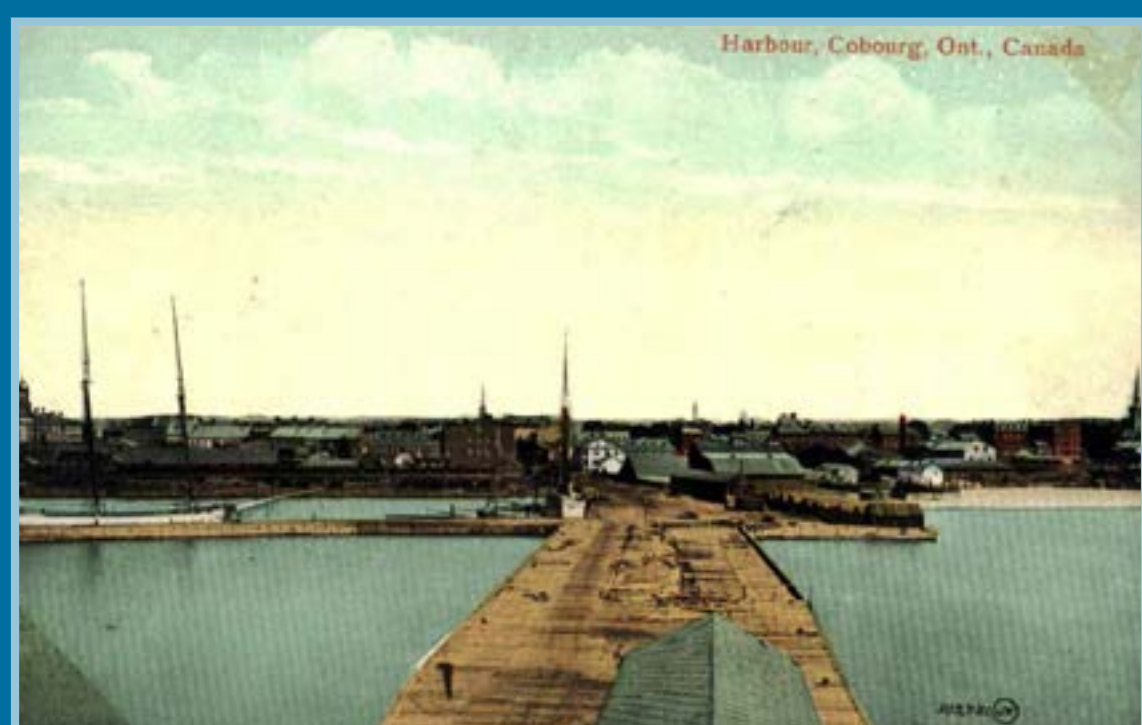


THE HISTORY OF COBOURG HARBOUR

THE BOOM & BUST YEARS

When you go down to the harbour today, you experience tranquility with the gentle sounds of the lake, the squeals of seagulls and other waterfowl and the excited screams of the kids on the beach or in dinghies, kayaks and canoes.

In the mid 1800s, Cobourg's harbour was radically different with the cacophony of sounds of a very busy harbour – sounds of train whistles and shunting railcars, steam whistles from ships, sounds of horses and wagons plying the piers, the bustle of loading and unloading cargoes from ships and, of course, the fog horn.

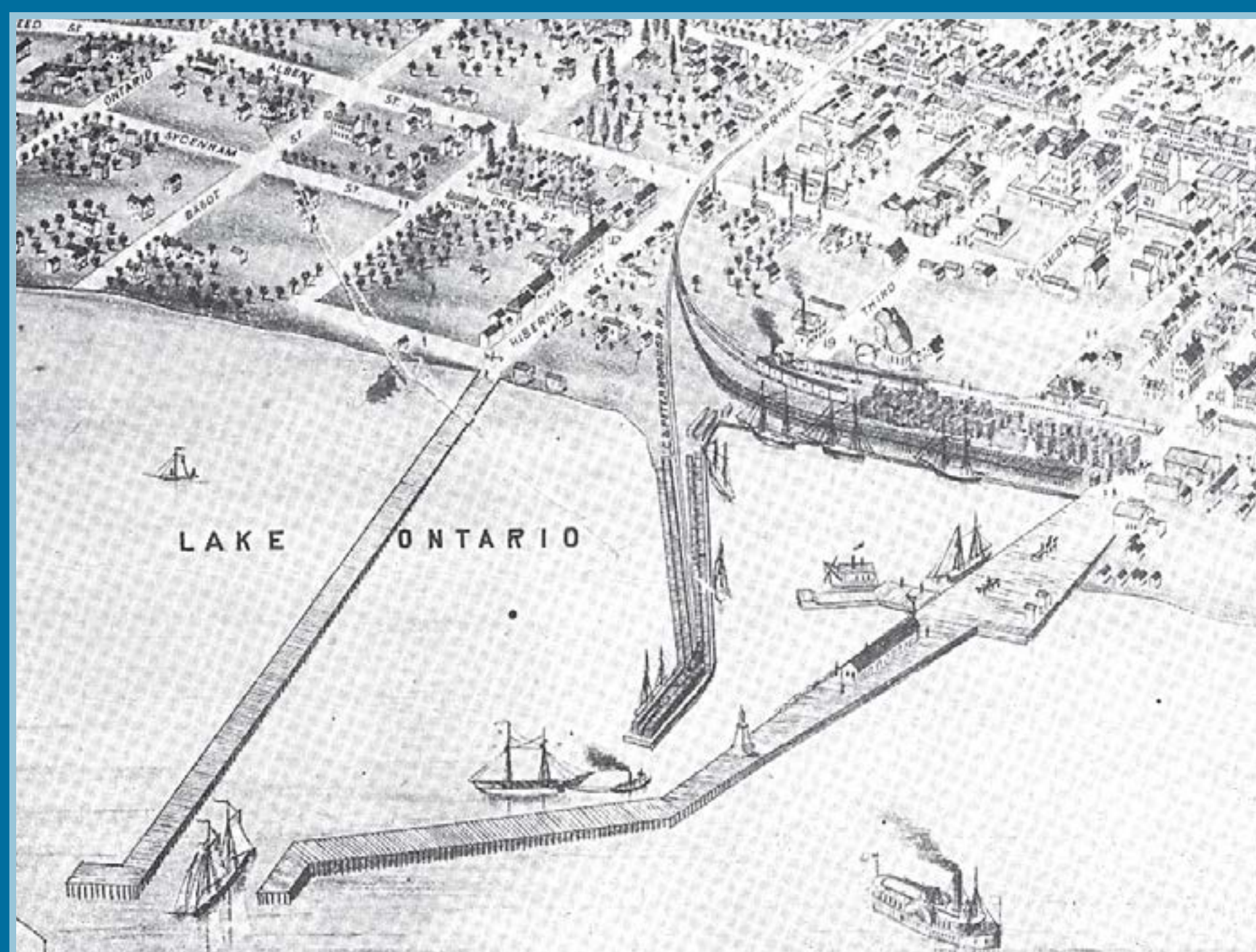


The harbour could accommodate 100 vessels. Four steamers and several schooners frequented the Town daily. In 1841, 597 vessels over 50 tons and many smaller vessels called at the port.

With the completion of the Cobourg and Peterborough Railway in 1854 and the Grand Trunk Railway in 1856, traffic in the harbour boomed. The peak year was 1857 during which 14 million board feet of lumber, 8,000 barrels of flour and 200,000 bushels of wheat were shipped out of Cobourg.

The main trade circuit on Lake Ontario began at a centre such as Toronto; from Toronto vessels would voyage to Dundas (Hamilton), Charlotte (Rochester), Oswego, north to Kingston and then to Cobourg.

Beginning in 1861 Cobourg experienced a severe economic depression. The Town was almost bankrupt from the expense of the rail-way and the construction of Victoria Hall. In the spring of 1864, the famous Globe Hotel on the northeast corner of King and McGill Streets burnt down to its shell. Later a second disaster occurred with a severe flood on Factory Creek, destroying or damaging everything in its path.



Aerial interpretation of Cobourg Harbour, c1874

In 1865 Cobourg's fortunes improved and its harbour's business picked up with the exports of lumber and grain and in the late 60s, iron ore from the Marmora Iron Mine. The Cobourg to Harwood portion of the railway was still operating, and by 1870 it was at capacity. In 1868 an elevated railway trestle was erected along the esplanade. This made it possible to dump the contents of ore cars directly into the holds of schooners.

Over the next forty years, the harbour activities advanced and declined reflecting the prevailing economic conditions of the times.

In the late 1800s, Cobourg became renowned for its sailing regattas and yachting. Cobourg was always the third point in a race between Toronto, Rochester and Cobourg. One of Cobourg's most famous yachts was the *Gorilla* – described as “ugly as sin and swift as Satan” - a three time winner of the Prince of Wales Cup.

Another notable yacht, the *Countess of Dufferin*, was designed and built by Alexander Cuthbert in Cobourg and competed in the America's Cup Challenge.



The Yacht 'The Countess of Dufferin' being built in time for The International Regatta being held in Philadelphia in 1876. (by Eugene Haberer, May, 1876)