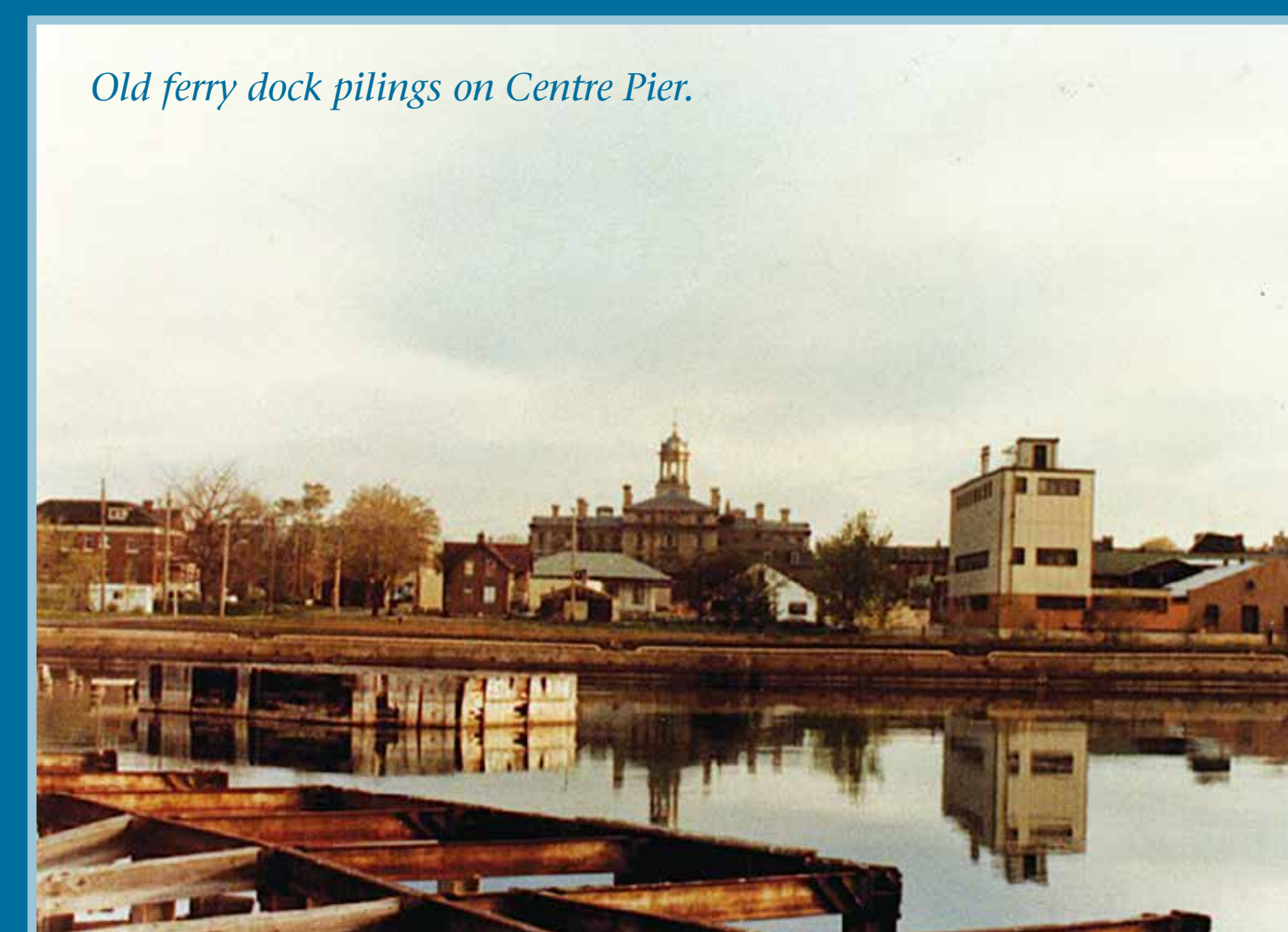


THE HISTORY OF COBOURG HARBOUR

THE RENAISSANCE

In the 1950s and 60s commercial activity in the Cobourg harbour was booming. Most of the activity was from trains and deep sea freighters. Oil tank farms belonging to Shell, Sunoco and Imperial Oil were located between Third and Hibernia Streets. Oilers docked along the west side of the Centre Pier and pumped their oil and gasoline through pipelines along the pier to the tank farm. Tanker cars travelled up Spring Street by railway heading to Peterborough and other destinations on the CN/CP rail lines.

General Wire and Cable had a manufacturing facility on Factory Creek at William Street. The company imported steel from Germany which was unloaded off deep sea freighters on the East Pier. Coal carriers unloaded coal on the north wall creating huge coal piles. The north wall also had CNR freight sheds – truly an industrial scene!



Old ferry dock pilings on Centre Pier.

Rick Stinson, the Town's Municipal Clerk until 2007, fondly remembers the noise and power of trains that travelled up and down Spring Street in 1976. Cobourg Council and municipal staff had been relocated to today's Cobourg Police Station during Victoria Hall's major restoration. A crossing guard at the corner of Spring and King Streets would halt traffic at the

intersection to let trains through. *"When those trains used to shunt and come down Spring Street, I remember the walls shaking and you couldn't talk to anyone because it was so loud"*, recalls Stinson.

Perolin-Bird-Archer Company located its industrial water treatment plant just north of the harbour between Third and Division Streets. It eventually became Diversey Water Treatment Technologies. The little railway activity which did occur after the late 1970s was for this plant.

Although the waterfront was very much an industrial area, many people have fond memories of climbing or biking up the coal piles and becoming totally black with coal dust. The old ferry pilings on the east side of the Centre Pier were at least twenty feet high and were a favourite platform for jumping into the harbour. The coal piles disappeared in the mid 1970s. Mayor Mac Lees did the honours as grass sod replaced the coal.



Cobourg Harbour in the 1950s.
(Credit: Peterborough Post Card Co. c66091)

It was not until the 1980s that a vision began to develop for the waterfront, particularly between Third and Division Streets. It was the Department of Oceans and Fisheries which suggested that Cobourg consider changing its harbour designation to a small-craft harbour, and in mid 1981 that designation was received.

Over the next ten years major upgrades took place including the construction of six new docks and a fine new building for the Marina offices. This building was completed in 1991 and quickly gained a reputation from boaters as being the cleanest and most modern facility on the lake.



Cribwork of the old ferry slip serves as the marina in the 1960s/70s.

