

HENLEY ARCADE

JUST PASSING THROUGH



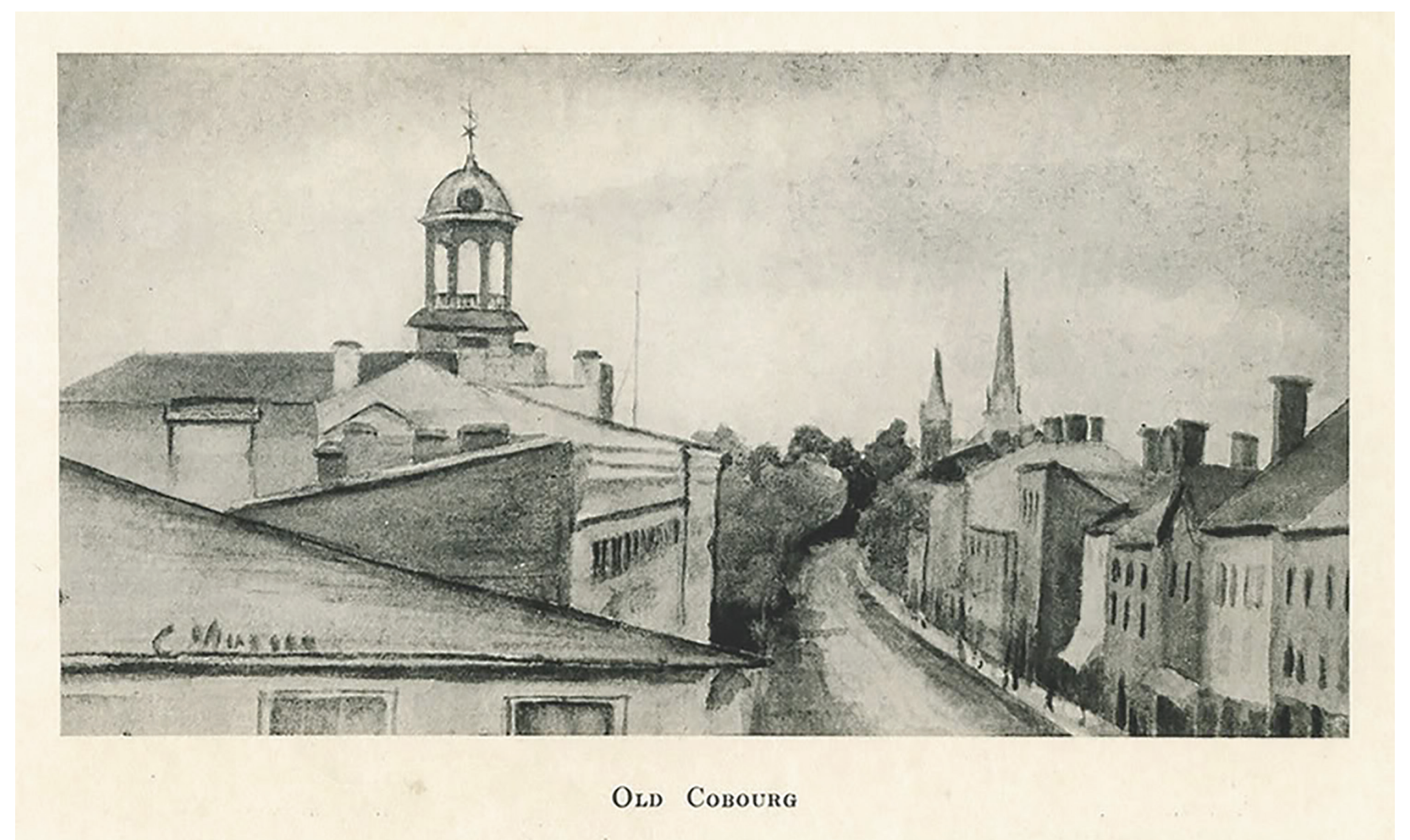
John Henley

For many, Henley Arcade is just a convenient shortcut between King Street and Covert Street. But for those who know, it is much more - **a reminder of times gone by** and of a well regarded and enterprising businessman, John Henley. The arcade used to be John Henley's Shoe Repair and before that, J. S. Bowen's Variety Store and Barber Shop. But it is best remembered as the place where Cobourgers went to see Mr. Henley to have their shoes repaired - until disaster struck.

This shop was typical of a genre of shops that many among you may still recall, long and narrow with large storefront windows with wood paneling along the bottom and almost **always run by a single hard-working man**. Henley's Shop was one of several businesses located at street level within the still-existing brick multi-storey commercial building. Typically, the store was heated by a Quebec heater, similar to a pot-bellied stove.

In 1972, Henley's 46th year in business, a fire that began in the Quebec heater destroyed his premises and took the life of Herbie Lewis who lived upstairs. **After this double tragedy Henley retired.**

John Henley was very well-regarded in the Cobourg community. He was quiet, kind, friendly and enterprising, with a great sense of humour as seen in his ad in Edwin C. Guillet's *Cobourg 1798-1948*. **He was a true craftsman** who could repair any shoes. When business slowed down he began repairing bicycles as well.



OLD COBOURG

1798—We were not here
2798—We will not be here
1948—We are here on the sunny side
of King Street

JOHN HENLEY
Shoe Repairs and Bicycles



TODAY

When the town of Cobourg acquired the burnt-out premises, the Covert Street parking lot was in the planning stage. It was a logical progression to **utilise the empty shell of the store to create a walkway.**

For more than 40 years Henley Arcade has been used as a handy mid-block shortcut. This year (2015) the arcade will receive a much-needed facelift as part of the Downtown Vitalization initiative.

It is fitting that **John Henley's name is immortalized** across the top of this thoroughfare.