

After many years of agitation the era of railway construction began in Upper Canada in 1851.

On 15th October, 1851, Lady Elgin turned the first sod for the Ontario, Simcoe and Huron Railroad (afterwards the Northern Railway, and later amalgamated with the Grand Trunk Railway), 100 feet west of Simcoe Street, opposite the Parliament Buildings. The first locomotive engine for the railway named the "Lady Elgin," was built in Portland, Maine. It weighed about 24 tons. The second engine, called the "Toronto" was built at James Good's foundry on the north side of Queen Street between Yonge and Victoria Streets. This is said to be the first locomotive engine constructed in Canada, and indeed in any British colony. The passenger coaches were built and painted in car shops at Niagara and then brought across the Lake on barges to the Queen's Wharf.

The Northern Railway was opened as far as Aurora on 16th May, 1853. The first train started from a little wooden shed opposite Queen's Hotel dignified by the name of a station. It was extended to Collingwood in 1856, when Toronto got railway communication with Hamilton by the Hamilton and Toronto Railway and with Montreal by the Grand Trunk Railway.

Thus before any railway reached Toronto from East or West, Toronto had the Northern Railway through the enterprise of its citizens, amongst whom were F. C. Capreol, the originator and organizer of the undertaking, who was ably assisted by J. C. Morrison, President of the Board of Directors of the Ontario, Simcoe and Huron Ry. Co., succeeding Hon. John Henry Boulton. Much of the progress and prosperity