

The first steamboat constructed in Canada was the "Accommodation," which was placed in 1809 between Quebec and Montreal by Mr. John Molson, whose name recalls a family long associated with the commercial enterprise of Montreal. The first steamer that plied on Lake Ontario was the "Frontenac," built in 1816 at Earnestown, one of the Loyalist townships of the St. Lawrence. The first vessel to cross the Atlantic by steam was the "Royal William," which was built in Quebec, and made the voyage in the summer of 1833. The first regular steamship between Europe and America was established in 1840 by Mr., afterwards Sir, Samuel Cunard of Halifax, in connection with English capitalists, and the "Britannia" was the pioneer ship of a line which has continued with extraordinary success on the same great route of travel to the present time. The first railway in British North America was constructed in 1837 by the enterprise of Montreal capitalists from Laprairie on the other side of the River St. Lawrence, as far as St. Johns—a distance of sixteen miles. The only railway in Upper Canada for years was a horse tramway opened in 1839 between Queenstown and Chippewa by the old portage route around the Falls of Niagara.

The ambition of the people of Upper Canada was always to obtain a continuous and secure system of water navigation from the lakes and Montreal. The Welland Canal between lakes Erie and Ontario was commenced as early as 1824, through the enterprise of Mr. William Hamilton Merritt, and the first vessel passed its locks in 1829, but it was very badly managed, and the legislature, who had from year to year aided the undertaking, was obliged eventually to acquire it as a provincial work. The Cornwall Canal was also undertaken but work was stopped when it was certain that Lower Canada would not respond to the aspirations of the west and improve that portion of the St. Lawrence within its direct control. Governor Haldimand had first constructed a simple system of canals to overcome the rapids of the Cascades, Cedars and Coteau, and some slight improvements were made in these primitive works from time to time. The Lachine Canal was completed in 1828, but nothing was done to give a continuous river navigation between Montreal and the west until 1845, when the Beauharnois Canal was first opened. The Rideau Canal originated in the experience of the war of 1812-14, which showed the necessity of a secure inland communication between Montreal and the country on Lake Ontario; but though first constructed for defensive purposes and following a circuitous route for defensive purposes it had for years decided commercial advantages for the people of Upper Canada, especially of the