

The Sault Ste. Marie Canal

A Chapter in the History
of Great Lakes Transport

**Brian S. Osborne
and Donald Swainson**



Parks
Canada

Parcs
Canada

Building a Canadian canal at Sault Ste. Marie was the Sir John A. Macdonald government's response to economic and nationalistic arguments by entrepreneurs who wanted to exploit the natural resources of the Lake Superior region and provide an all-Canadian route for grain shipped from the Canadian West. The Canadian canal, opened in 1895, served well the passenger ships and small freighters that plied the Great Lakes, and it was essential to the industrial growth of the adjacent town even though improvements to its American counterpart soon relegated it to a secondary transportation role. Yet at its heyday at the turn of the century, the pioneering adaptation of hydroelectric power to the canal operations put Canada in the forefront of innovative canal technology.