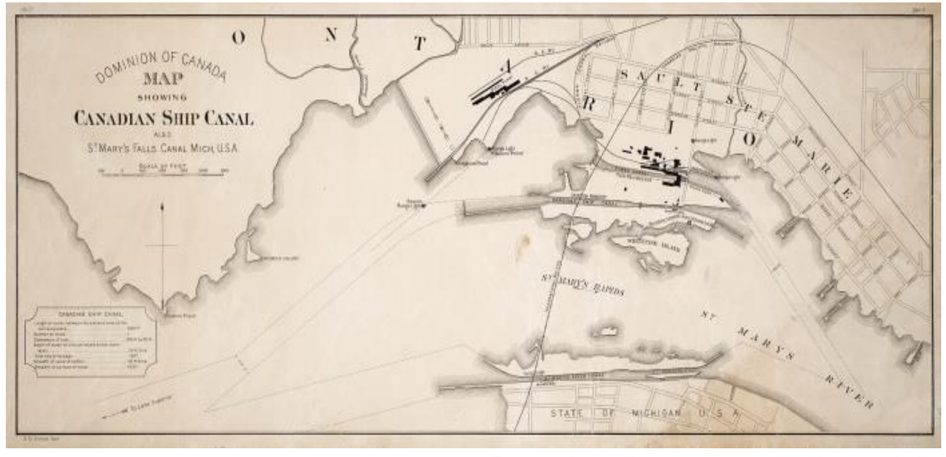
St. Marys River Heritage Waterway

Transportation History – Industrial History - Human Adaptation

Transportation History

A key transportation link in the Great Lakes System, the St. Marys River connects Lake Superior and the rest of Canada.

- Men exploring the region looking for copper built the first wooden sailing vessel at Pointe aux Pins
- The North West Company lock was built for canoes and bateaux to eliminate the fur traders' arduous portage around the rapids
- Eight American and Canadian locks were built between 1855-1968 to meet the growing demand for improved water transportation
- International Railroad Bridge contains nine truss sections, including vertical lift railroad bridge, double bascule bridge, and swing bridge
- Ontario Provincial Air Service pioneers forest fire surveillance and fire fighting
- International Bridge established road link, replacing passenger ferry service between Canada and the United States.



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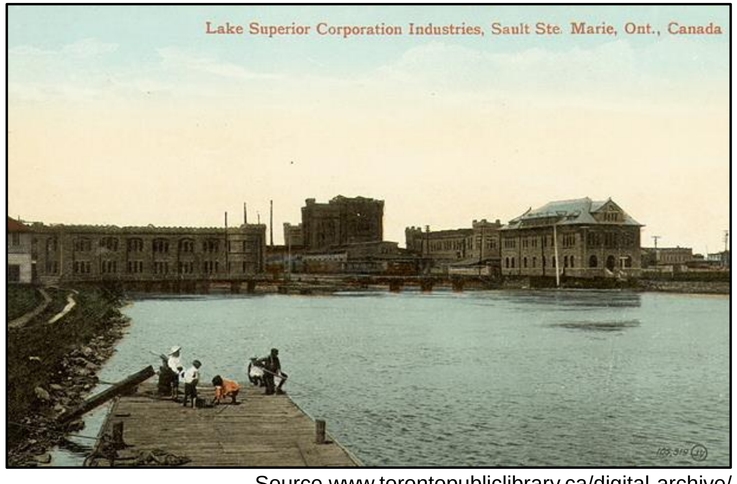
Human Adaptation to the St. Marys River

- Downtown streets reflect orientation to the river
- Construction of locks and hydro electric power station altered section of the river at the rapids
- Water outflow from Lake Superior controlled by compensating gates
- Improved industrial landscape, with waterfront boardwalks, trails, parks and public buildings, to enhance public use and enjoyment of the St. Marys River

Industrial History



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Industrialist Francis H. Clergue recognized the importance of cheap hydroelectric power and an abundance of natural resources - namely wood and iron ore. Clergue's industrial empire included iron and nickel mines, wood pulp, paper mill, steel manufacturing, and railway and shipping companies.

van Haaften, J. (2018, June). *St. Marys River heritage waterway transportation history – industrial history – human adaptation*. Sault Ste. Marie, ON.: City of Sault Ste. Marie Municipal Heritage Committee.