

TRAILS, ROADS & INNS

ROADS DEVELOPED

CORDUROY ROAD

As trees were cut down to create a roadway through the forest, gangs of woodsmen cleared away the brush and laid the logs side by side, creating the same effect as in the ridged cloth called “corduroy”. The stumps were left to rot, so the roadway was rarely straight. To drive in a wagon over this ridged surface was a bone-shattering experience!



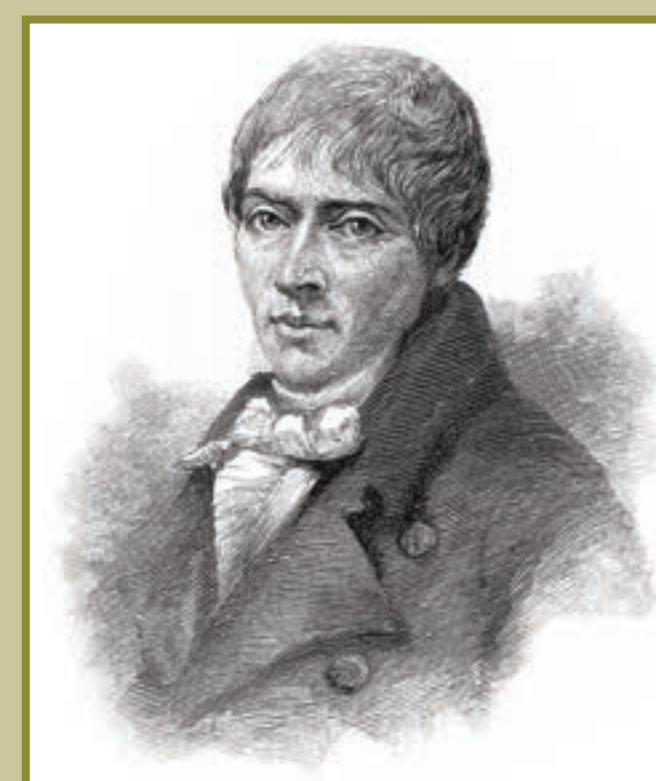
PLANK ROAD

For two decades in the mid 19th century, the plank road attracted the most expenditure and the most admiration of all methods for vehicular transport. The first plank roads were of pine planks three or four inches thick, laid tight against each other and at right angles to the stringers to which they were securely spiked. Usually a thirty foot wide roadbed consisted of a sixteen foot wide plank road with the rest in gravel, for “turn-off”. Ditches were required on each side since good drainage would inhibit rotting of the planks. The wooden surface was given a light covering of sand or fine gravel, in order to reduce wear from horses' hooves and wagon wheels, and to reduce noise.

In 1845 a plank road was built from Cobourg to Gore's Landing, on Rice Lake, via Coldsprings. It was the work of the Cobourg and Rice Lake Plank Road and Ferry Company (whose president was William Weller). However, this business venture failed within five years, since revenues from the toll charges were low, and there was much damage to the road by frost. Another plank road between Cobourg and Port Hope also failed. Inhabitants refused to travel it, the tolls being generally higher than those recommended by government. Nevertheless, five tollgates survived until 1918 on roads leading out of Cobourg.

Design provided by Steve Smiley, RGD, Quench Design & Communications, Port Hope.

MACADAMIZED ROAD



John Loudon McAdam

A few sections of roads in Upper Canada were given a treatment that resembled macadamizing. One ran from Napanee to Kingston, and another was a twelve mile stretch of Yonge Street running north from York. Gravel being scarce, an approximation of McAdam's formula was employed – only three inches of gravel on a dirt base was used, not the three layers of large gravel, then medium gravel, and then small stones. Consequently, many of these roads became impassable, as wagon wheels wore deep ruts into the surface.

The modern highway system dates from the introduction of the internal-combustion engine some 20 years after Confederation. In 1898 John Moodie of Hamilton brought a one-cylinder Winton “horseless carriage” from the US. Six years later a Ford assembly plant was built in Windsor, Ontario - and Canada's automotive industry was born. By 1907 there were 2,131 cars registered in Canada, and by the outbreak of WWI there were more than 50,000.

In 1915 Ontario completed the construction of a concrete highway from Toronto to Hamilton, the first in the province and one of the longest intercity concrete roads in the world. The next year, Ontario, which had had a provincial instructor in charge of road making attached to the Dept of Agriculture since 1896, formed a separate highways department.

In 1917 a 73.5 kilometer section of road from the Rouge River to Port Hope was named the Provincial Highway. It soon became King's Highway #2 and by 1997, just before responsibility for it was downloaded to the municipalities, it was 834.6 kilometers long. King's Highway 401 (the MacDonald-Cartier Freeway) was begun in 1952 and is now the main traffic route through Southern Ontario. It is 817.9 kilometers long (1 km = .62 miles).



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