

The founding of Sturgeon Falls was foreshadowed when, in 1880, the surveyors for the Canadian Pacific Railway discovered the difficulties of a route south of Lake Nipissing and decided to run the line north of the lake. Settlement on the site of the town had begun in 1879 with the arrival of James Holditch of Bracebridge who had purchased from the Crown the lands west of the present Nipissing Street for a farm. He sold land to others who were preparing for the coming of the railway builders and when the C.P.R. people arrived in 1881 they found a few traders and hunters ready to do business with them. There were already some log cabins to make the beginnings of the town.

There had of course been Ojibways in the area for centuries and there had been some white visitors before Holditch. In 1641 Father Le Caron camped at the mouth of the river while on a mission to the Indians. In 1847 Father Hanipaux erected a little bark-covered chapel at the river-mouth for hunters who were putting up a log fort there. This fort was soon replaced by a Hudson Bay Company trading-post which was bought by Holditch in 1881 and abandoned the next year when our first merchant began to operate a general store on what is now King Street. Among the first families to come here were the Cockburns, Richardsons, Lillies, Parkers, Stillers, Clarks, Bards, Coombs and Kinches. J. D. Cockburn had a farm south of the town and soon started on King Street a store that also contained the Post Office.