

ABOUT SAINT JOHN FIRSTS

In Canada

- First incorporated city, created by Royal Charter in 1785.
- First Common-law market in Canada, created by Royal Charter 1785.
- First biscuit factory in Canada, established in 1801 (Rankin Biscuits).
- First chartered bank in Canada, 1820 (Bank of New Brunswick).
- First YWCA, established in 1870 by Mrs. Agnes Blizzard, in a house on Germain St.
- Mid-1850s invention of the “Long Reacher” skate by James Whelply advanced the nineteenth-century speed skating tradition.
- First industrial Exhibition - 1851. (This is the same year as the Great Exhibition at the Crystal Palace in London, organised by Prince Albert).
- First public museum opened in 1842. Known today as the New Brunswick Museum, it was originally called the Gesner Institute after its founder Abraham Gesner, a Nova Scotia-born doctor credited with the invention of kerosene.
- First female golf champion, Miss Mabel Thompson, 1902.
- First female commercial pilot, Mrs. Tony Shelfoon (nee Daphne Paterson).
- First Miss Canada, Mrs. Harold Drummie (nee Winifred Blair).
- First public playground which was started by Miss Mabel Peters. This playground is known as the Allison Ground Playground in Rockwood Court, 1908.
- First Board of Trade, originated in 1821.
- First woman to get a diploma in agriculture, Miss Katie Broad, 1915.
- First Board of Fire Insurance Underwriters, 1865.
- First overshoes in Canada brought to the country by Francis and Vaughn.
- First orchestra to accompany a silent moving picture in the North American continent was by Walter Golding in the old nickel theatre, May 1907.
- First wire nails in Canada, manufactured by Penders Ltd., 1891.
- First soda crackers in Canada, manufactured by T. Rankine & Sons, Church Street, 1823.
- Canada’s First vocational school erected on Douglas Avenue.
- 1840 Prof. L.A. Laurat starts the first balloon ascension in Canada from Barrack Square. Tickets for select seats were four shillings.
- June Clark was the first woman in Canada to run for the United Church Ministry, 1945.
- First quarantine station in Canada, 1785.
- First waterfront union in Canada 1849.
- First National Historic Streetscape in Canada, Prince William Street, designated in 1981.
- First Boys and Girls Club of Canada was founded in Saint John, circa 1903. Second club was formed in Montreal.
- First use of anaesthetic in Canada during an operation December 17, 1847.

In the British Empire

- First penny newspaper, “Saint John News,” established in 1838 (tri-weekly) by George E. Fenety.
- First Minister of Health in the British Empire, Hon. W.F. Roberts, M.D.
- First Knights of Pythias in the British Empire.
- Mrs. R.J. Hooper was the first woman in the British Empire to sit as a member of the Board of Health.

In the World

- First compound marine engine developed by Benjamin Tibbets - 1842. The “Reindeer” was the first vessel to be propelled by a compound steam engine (ie. One in which high and low pressure steam were combined). Tibbets was granted \$100 for his work by the Legislature of the province.
- First river cable ferry invented by William Pitt and was installed on the Kennebecasis River near Saint John, early 1900s.
- First police union formed in 1919.
- First variable-pitch aeroplane propeller invented by Wallace Turnbull in 1927. He went on to pioneer developments in aeronautics in his home in nearby Rothesay. Saint John Airport is named in his honour. He also designed boats and built one of the first wind tunnels.
- First postage stamp album invented by Robert Reid, 1853. The original is now in the Collector’s Club in New York City.
- First monitor top railroad cars invented by James Ferguson. Original model is located in the NB Museum collection.
- Kerosene oil discovered by Dr. Abraham Gesner founder of the NB Museum.
- First Boy Scout Apple Day, organised by Eli Boyaner on January 30, 1931.
- First Automobile Fire Harness invented by Hiram Webb.
- First steam fog whistle was invented by Scotsman, Robert Foulis in 1854. It was erected on Partridge Island in 1859 to aid approaching mariners in determining their direction.