HISTORY OF SAINT JOHN, NEW BRUNSWICK

It was on June 24th in the year 1604, on the feast of St. John the Baptist, when Samuel de Champlain landed at the mouth of a mighty river. In honour of the day, he proclaimed the river and the harbour be named" St. John ".

Thirty years later in 1631, Charles de La Tour, Governor of Acadia, built a fortified trading post at the river mouth. It was captured by his rival Charles d' Aulnay in 1645.

In 1713, the Treaty of Utrecht ceded French Acadia, including the St. John River Valley, to England. A Massachusetts firm established the first permanent trading post at Saint John in 1762.

In 1774 the American Revolution broke out and threatened to topple the trading post. With the erection of Fort Howe in 1777, the river mouth was safeguarded and the settlement continued growing.

At the end of the revolution in 1783, American supporters of the British called "Loyalists" established two settlements on either side of the river mouth, "Parrtown" on the east and "Carleton" on the west. In 1785, the two settlements were incorporated by Royal Charter into the City of Saint John – Canada's first city.

At that time Saint John boasted a thriving shipbuilding and commercial sector. One of its shipyards had just launched the" Marco Polo" which was proclaimed the fastest ship in the world.

Meanwhile, Saint John had attracted an influx of immigrants, principally from Ireland in the 1800's. Many suffered from smallpox, typhoid and cholera and had to be quarantined on Partridge Island, where over 600 were buried.

Bishop Thomas Louis Connolly, OFM (Cap), the second Bishop of Saint John saw the need to care for and house many Irish Catholic orphans. He appealed to the Sisters of Charity in New York and as a result four novices in the novitiate returned to Saint John with the Bishop. The Bishop formed a new community under the leadership of Honoria Conway (Mother M. Vincent) on October 21, 1854, the first English-speaking Sisters founded in Canada, the Sisters of Charity of Saint John (of the Immaculate Conception).

In the same year, Bishop T.L.Connolly, was able to bring the Religious of the Sacred Heart to Saint John to establish a school. They are considered the first religious foundation in Saint John, probably because the Sisters of Charity were only novices at the time.

In 1877 a disastrous fire destroyed the city's central business district and much of the residential South End. The task of rebuilding the city with brick and stone was an enormous one, but done in an even grander fashion than before.

The Diocese of Saint John is the seventh oldest Roman Catholic Diocese in Canada. It was established on September 30, 1842 by Pope Gregory XV1 when New Brunswick was detached from the Diocese of Charlottetown. Irish-born Father William Dollard was named its first Bishop. The Saint John Diocese, originally embraced the entire province of New Brunswick, and the Episcopal Seat was in Fredericton for a short time before it was established in Saint John in 1852 by the second Bishop-Thomas Louis Connolly, OFM Cap. from Cork, Ireland.

ITEMS OF INTEREST IN SAINT JOHN

Area---321 sq. km. Population of Saint John City 70,000, Saint John area pop. 122, 000.

Saint John is 103 km from the capital Fredericton, 424 km from Halifax, 90 km to USA

Saint John is located on the Bay of Fundy and the home of the world's highest tides and the famous Reversing Falls. These tides force the Saint John River to reverse direction and flow upstream.

Old City Market, 1876 the roof is built like a ship's inverted hull, reflecting the city's shipbuilding past.
Loyalist House, 1810 the former house of a Loyalist Family.
Carleton Martello Tower, a circular stone fort built with ties to both the War of 1812, and World War 11.
Fort Howe Lookout, a replica of the blockhouse that was built in 1777 in Halifax, then disassembled and rebuilt to protect the Saint John Harbour.
Partridge Island, site of Canada's first quarantine station, where more than 2,000 Irish immigrants who died of typhus fever, contracted on shipboard during the voyage from Ireland in the famine year of 1847 and of whom 600 were buried on this Island.
Loyalist Old Burial Grounds, in the centre of the City, Kings Square.
Three Sisters Lamp, this historic iron lamp has guided mariners into the Saint John harbour since 1848.
Shaarie Zedek Jewish Historical Museum, to preserve the Jewish Heritage of Saint John, the only Jewish museum in Atlantic Canada.
Old Stone Church, St. John's Stone Church 1825, was the first stone structure built in the city, a national historic site.
Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Roman Catholic Cathedral was built in 1855.
Trinity Church, built in 1880,to replace the Old Trinity ,a wooden structure, which was built in 1791 and was destroyed in the Great Fire.
Imperial Theatre, described by the "Globe and Mail" as the most beautifully restored theatre in Canada.
King's Square, one of four squares, cleared in 1847 and laid out in a Union Jack pattern.
Market Slip, the site of the first Loyalist landing on May 18, 1783. At one time there was a slip of water that extended to the foot of King Street. Ships arrived at the slip and were able to unload their goods.