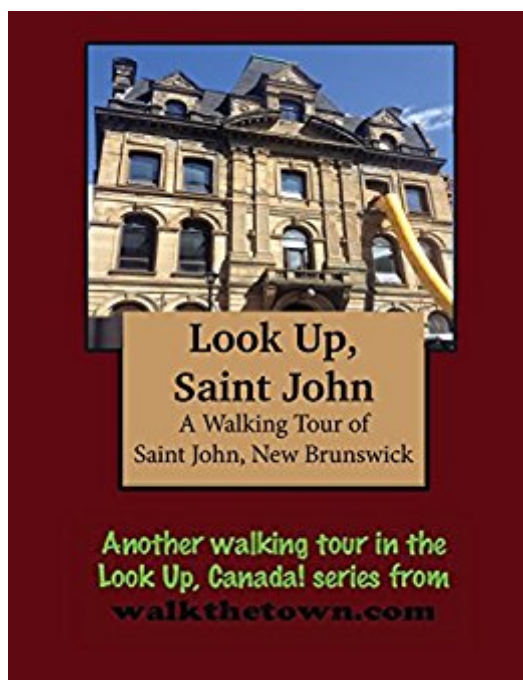


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A Walking Tour Of Saint John, New Brunswick (Look Up, Canada!)



Synopsis

There is no better way to see Canada than on foot. And there is no better way to appreciate what you are looking at than with a walking tour. Whether you are preparing for a road trip or just out to look at your own town in a new way, a downloadable walking tour from walkthetown.com is ready to explore when you are. Each walking tour describes historical and architectural landmarks and provides pictures to help out when those pesky street addresses are missing. Every tour also includes a quick primer on identifying architectural styles seen on North American streets. Explorer Samuel de Champlain was sailing along the North American coast in 1604 when he happened upon the mouth of a mighty river. He checked his calendar and noticed it was June 24 - St. John the Baptist's Day and so the river claimed for France was christened the Saint John River. French Acadia was lost to England with the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 and settlers from the New England colonies began drifting into the valley. With the American Revolution that steady trickle became a torrent. The British crown offered land grants along the Saint John River to 14,000 "Loyalists" departing the newly formed United States. Settlements grew on both sides of the river mouth - Parrtown on the east and Carleton on the west. The two groups were quickly joined by royal charter and in 1785 the City of Saint John became the first incorporated city in British North America. By the middle of the 1800s Saint John was humming; only Montreal and Quebec City were more important towns. Shipbuilding was the main economic driver and it was estimated that the harbor was home to the fourth largest accumulation of vessels in the world. A serious body blow to the city's fortunes was delivered on the afternoon of June 20, 1877 when a small fire in a warehouse in the York Slip triggered a downtown conflagration. Nearly half of the city was destroyed. Most of Saint John's buildings had been constructed from wood and the official tally was 1,612 structures lost. While some 13,000 people were without a home, "only" 20 lives were claimed by the blaze. Even while directing operations from tents, reconstruction - in brick and stone - began immediately. Many businesses were permitted to set up shop in temporary huts in Kings Square in the center of town, with the stipulation that they be gone by May 1, 1878. And "Shantytown" was indeed a memory a year later as new buildings went up at a dizzying pace according to plans drawn by big-city architects. By the summer of 1879, nearly 90% of the city was rebuilt. Within four years there were over 1,000 new buildings in downtown Saint John. Many of those structures still stand as they did nearly 140 years ago when they were the new face of the city. Our explorations of the post Great Fire architecture - and those buildings that came before and after - will begin on the grounds where plans for the rebuilding of Saint John were hatched long ago...

Book Information

File Size: 10728 KB

Print Length: 45 pages

Simultaneous Device Usage: Unlimited

Publication Date: November 12, 2016

Sold by: Amazon Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B01N0CQ28J

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #340,730 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #9

in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Nonfiction > Travel > Canada > Atlantic Provinces #13

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