Often referred to as “Canada’s Loyalist City”, Saint John is one of the oldest settlements on the North American continent. European seamen are known to have landed in the area as early as 1623. However, it wasn’t until 1604 that Samuel de Champlain, the great French explorer, first entered the harbour. His arrival on the feast day of St. John the Baptist resulted in the city’s present name, Saint John.

Early in the 17th century the first settlement, Fort LaTour, was established by Charles de LaTour at the mouth of the river. The Frenchmen developed a rich fur trade in these lands of Acadia. After a number of years of competition for supremacy in the fur trade, LaTour and another Frenchman, D’Aulnay de Charmisay of Port Royal, entered into open conflict. In the spring of 1645, Fort LaTour fell to the enemy forces of Charmisay.

Frenchmen continued to dominate the area, reaping great rewards from the fur trade. However, their pre-eminence ended in 1758 when an English expedition captured Fort LaTour. The English trading companies continued to send ships to the region, and by the end of the 18th century, Saint John had become one of the largest trading centres in the British Empire.

At the end of the War of American Independence, thousands of colonial citizens, still loyal to the British Crown, emigrated to the area and overnight a city was born. In 1785 these Loyalists banded together to form Canada’s first incorporated city. Their action has resulted in the reference “Canada’s Loyalist City”. As their city prospered, the Loyalists turned to the sea for a livelihood. Through the 19th century, Saint John became home for great fleets of sailing vessels. At one time, it was the world’s fourth largest port in registered tonnage of wooden ships, and became known as the “Liverpool of America”.

Today, the greater Saint John area has a population of almost 100,000 and is an industrial centre of the Atlantic Provinces. Oil refining, pulp and paper processing, power development, urban renewal, and shipbuilding are all a part of modern-day Saint John. The progressive atmosphere combined with the romantic past and its historical landmarks make Saint John a veritable paradise for the visitor.

Points of Interest in Saint John

- **Mortello Tower**: A magnificent panoramic view of the city and its surroundings may be seen from this unique and massive stone fort, constructed in 1812.

- **Loyalist House**: Furnishings and fixtures of the Loyalist period enhance the fascination of this old house built shortly after the American Revolution.

- **Old Court House**: An unsupported spiral staircase spanning three stories is the dominant feature of this historic old Court House, completed in the 1820s.

- **Reversing Falls**: The unique natural phenomenon of the Reversing Falls is formed where the Saint John River meets the tremendous tide of the Bay of Fundy. Waters in the swirling rapids rush downstream at low tide and, as the tide rises high, boom upstream through the narrow gorge.

New Brunswick Museum, Canada’s first public museum was founded in 1842. Outstanding features are the Loyalist Period Collections and the Marine and Natural History Galleries.