

HISTORIC  
ST. JOHNSBURY  
WALKING TOUR

**S**t. Johnsbury History & Heritage Center houses the archives and collections that tell the story of St. Johnsbury's history. This organization was formed in 2009-2010 in order to keep St. Johnsbury's unique history available to the school students, town's people and visitors.

The Center opened its doors in 2015 after a long and careful search. Visit us and explore the exhibits in the House and Carriage Barn. Through the timeline exhibited on the wall, you find the name St. Johnsbury can only be found here — nowhere else! See the invention that went on to weigh the world and learn of the Fairbanks family that endowed the town so richly in education, buildings and culture. The story is exhibited of St. Johnsbury's Town Band; the third oldest continual playing band in the country. There is something of interest for everyone, including an extensive Civil War collection and a water wagon that "laid the dust" in early St. Johnsbury's history of roads.

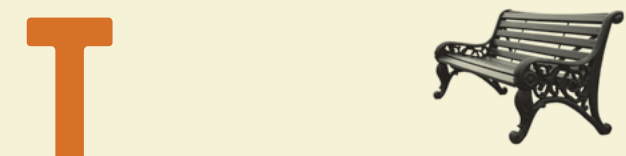
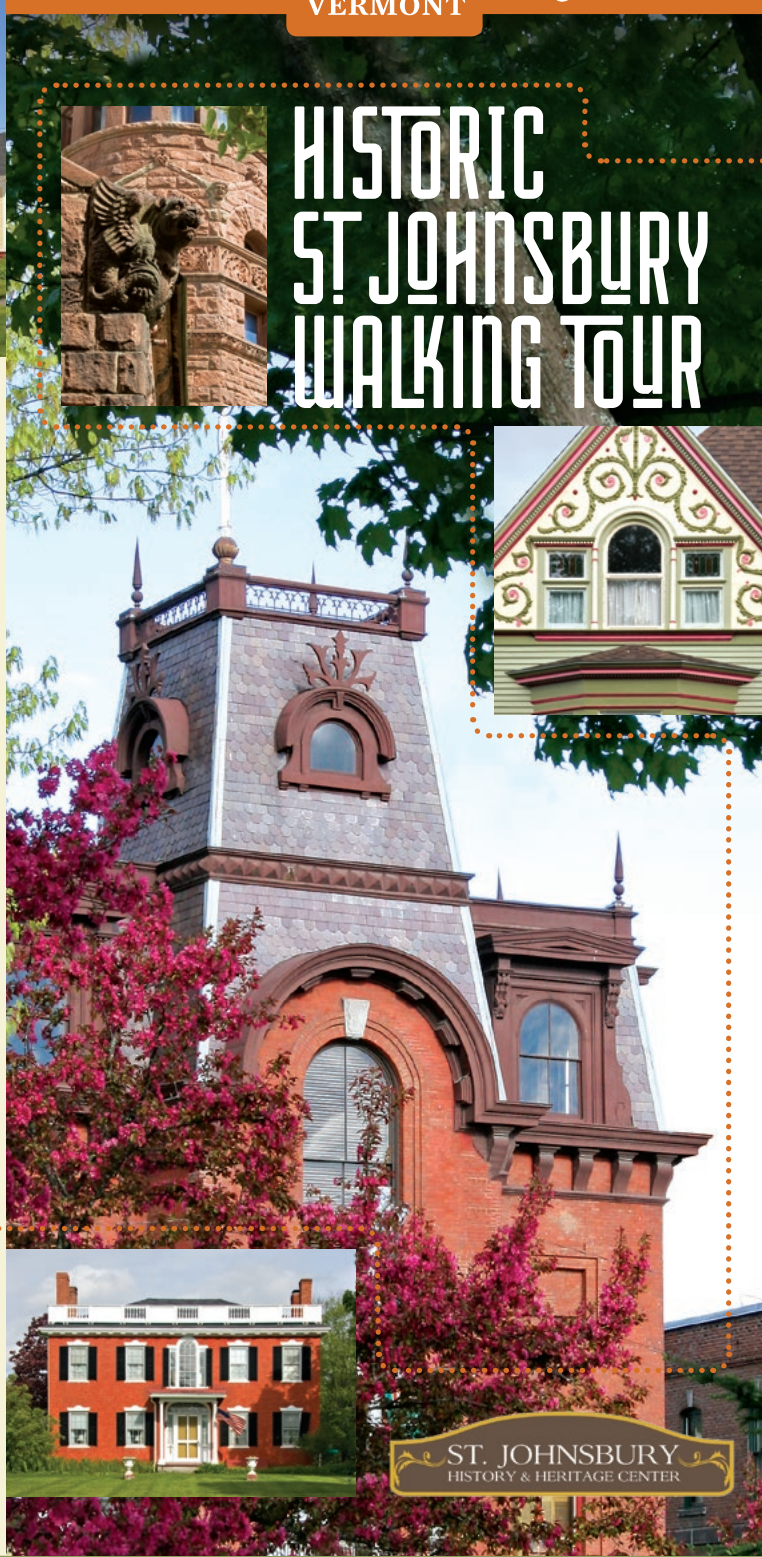


June–September: Monday–Saturday, 10 am–4 pm  
October–May: Monday–Wednesday, 10 am–4 pm

St. Johnsbury History & Heritage Center  
421 Summer Street, St. Johnsbury, VT 05819  
802 424-1090

StJHistory.org

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**T**he Historic Walking Tour of St. Johnsbury had its beginnings with Dr. Norman Atwood, a native of St. Johnsbury and retired Professor of English with a love and knowledge of Victorian architecture. This walk draws on two walks that Dr. Atwood prepared for the Bicentennial St. Johnsbury House Foundation out of an abundance of questions about the community and its buildings. Over the years, additions of other information have been added to give the visitor more of a sense of the town's history.



Lambert Packard



The YMCA Building

Approximately a quarter of the buildings in this town were designed by Lambert Packard, a local architect whose St. Johnsbury connection began in 1866 where he was foreman of the Carpenter shop at the E. & T. Fairbanks Scale company for twenty five years; as well as architect and builder for the company. His capabilities were limitless as he designed churches, a museum, homes, office buildings and his works included a round barn in Waterford, Vermont! His works can be found elsewhere in Vermont and New Hampshire. Unfortunately in St. Johnsbury, some of his finest works were victims of fires including the YMCA, North and South Hall of the St. Johnsbury Academy, Underlyffe, and the Music Hall.

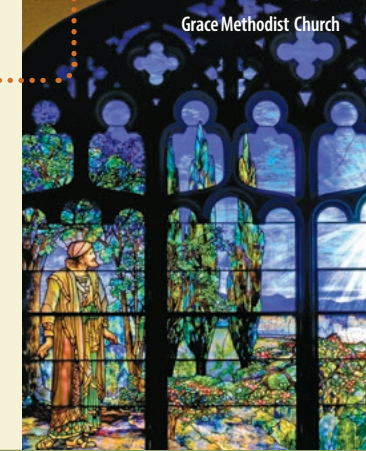
Many of St. Johnsbury's chief architectural achievements are along or near Main Street, once referred to as the Plain. This area of town was added to the National Register of Historic Places in May 1975 and is known as the Main Street Historic District. Along the 4,000-foot length of the street are six churches, the Academy, the Athenaeum, the Fairbanks Museum of Natural History, a Victorian chateau and many architecturally interesting homes.



North Congregational Church



St. Johnsbury Athenaeum and Albert Bierstadt's 'Domes of the Yosemite'



Grace Methodist Church



Fairbanks Museum and Planetarium

The tour has seven viewpoints (A-G on the map).

Each Viewpoint features a bench with a plaque (with the exception of Viewpoint B.) At each you will be encouraged to view buildings roughly from left to right (clockwise).

★ The tour starts at the corner of Main and Eastern Avenue, at the Courthouse Park. You should allow an hour.



D1 Historic Walking Tour Site  
Viewpoint Bench

Look for these plaques for Walking Tour properties.  
Complete tour descriptions are on the back



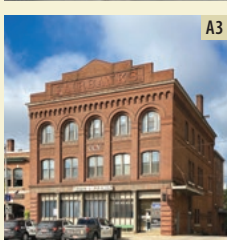
Please...  
The Historic Walking Tour includes many private residences and businesses.  
As a courtesy to the property owners, please stay on the sidewalks during the tour. Thank you.

To Interstate 91 exit 20, Interstate 93 and points south



# HISTORIC ST. JOHNSBURY WALKING TOUR

## VIEWPOINT A



**A1** You are at the Caledonia **COUNTY COURTHOUSE**. St. Johnsbury became the shire town in the 1850s as a result of the railroads and industries that made St. Johnsbury the commercial center of the County. The Courthouse is next to a small park with a Civil War monument, "America," made by Vermont sculptor Larkin Mead. The bandstand is host to the St. Johnsbury Town Band, the third oldest in the Nation. The Band performs on Monday evenings throughout the summer. On the top of this Italianate-style building sits the belfry where the town's fire alarm bell is located.

**A2** The **ST. JOHNSBURY ATHE-NAEUM** was presented to the town in 1871 by Horace Fairbanks, nephew of Thaddeus, the platform scale inventor. Recently, it has been carefully restored to its original splendor, including the upstairs Lecture Hall with its original woodwork and stenciled ceiling. The building, designed by John Davis Hatch of New York, includes an art gallery. Lambert Packard, a local architect employed by the Fairbanks Company, supervised the building. The art gallery is home to an amazing collection of Hudson River School originals. This National Historic Landmark stands as the oldest art gallery in the country in its original setting. This is a "must go into" building!

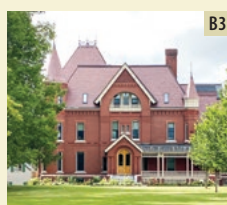
**A3** To the right of the Fire Station stands the **FAIRBANKS BLOCK**, 1892, designed as the company store by Lambert Packard in the Richardson Romanesque style. The dignified, noble façade has at least 11 levels of indentation ("reveals") in the brickwork, which accentuate the five-bay colonnade on the street level and the two-story Romanesque arched windows above. St. Johnsbury is one of the few places outside Boston with so many buildings in the Richardsonian Romanesque style.

**A4** Next to the Fairbanks Block stands the **ST. JOHNSBURY HOUSE**, 1850. This is a gracious North Country hotel that has housed Presidents and other notables. Paired Doric columns frame the two story portico, which is a major architectural feature of Main Street, since it can be seen from both ends of the curved street. It is now home to senior housing and the Good Living Senior Center.

To reach Viewpoint B, walk south (left) past South Church to the Academy complex. Stop in front of Fuller Hall, cross Main Street and turn left. (Please note: You won't find a viewpoint "B" bench.) Pause here to view...

**B1** **SOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**, 1852, replicates exactly the North Church building at the time of its construction. The North Church had outgrown its space and the congregation had to be divided! The interior also has an air of New England neo-Classical formality with its elliptical ceilings and great brass chandelier. The spire, originally of wood is now aluminum. It houses the oldest public timepiece of the town being purchased by individuals in 1853. In 2018, because of declining membership, it became part of the Academy campus and is now known as South Church Hall.

**B2** **ST. JOHNSBURY ACADEMY** was established in 1842 for the town by the brothers Thaddeus, Erastus, and Joseph Fairbanks. None of the original buildings exist; however, the traditions of excellence present from its inception still thrive today. Information on St. Johnsbury Academy can be found at [www.stjohnsburyacademy.org](http://www.stjohnsburyacademy.org). While school is in session, please stay on the public sidewalk.



## VIEWPOINT C



**B3** **BRANTVIEW** ("High View"), 1883, is a sumptuous Queen-Anne style chateau designed by architect Lambert Packard for William P. Fairbanks (son of Joseph, one of the founders of the Academy). It has a 60-foot center hall, grand staircase, painted ceilings and fine woodwork. It is now a dormitory for the Academy. Its carriage barn (in back) also serves as a dormitory.

**B4** **SHEEPCOTE**, 1874, a Lambert Packard design, built for Rev. Edward T. Fairbanks (brother of William P.) by Thaddeus Fairbanks. Edward was the minister of the South Church. Capped by a mansard roof with a round windowed gable in the center of the roof line. The home was acquired by the Academy, renovated and enlarged for use as a dormitory in 1980.

Continue walking down Fairbanks Drive to South Park, which was set aside in 1868 as "a pleasant elevated prospect." The park is a good place for a picnic lunch under the maple trees and a view of a tranquil Victorian neighborhood.

**C1** **THE TOWER HOUSE**, 1871, Lambert Packard, architect, the first home of William P. Fairbanks, is one of two houses in St. Johnsbury reputed to have a ghost. Here, the alleged ghost is that of H. N. Turner, the house's second owner. Turner was a long-time manager of the Fairbanks factory. Turner's wife donated the Tiffany window in the Methodist Church after he died. The home features such emblematic high Victorian details as bracketed eaves, a porte-cochere and an Italianate tower. This is now part of the Academy Campus.

**C2** **CRAMTON HOUSE** is named for Dorothy Cramton, one of the first female trustees of the Academy. The house has many fine examples of quixotic Queen Anne features (bracketed windows, Juliet balcony, etc.). This home was acquired by the Academy and serves as a dormitory.

**C3** **IMPEY HOUSE**, 1912, can be seen at the end of Fairbanks Drive. It is a Georgian Revival house with a nice fan window in the gable.

## VIEWPOINT D



Cross Main Street in front of the Academy's Fuller Hall and return to the Courthouse. If you haven't already, you may choose to stop in the Athenaeum to see the splendid interior as well as the art gallery. The next bench is in front of the St. Johnsbury House, from which you can see the sweep of the 4,000-foot long street as it fans out in both directions.

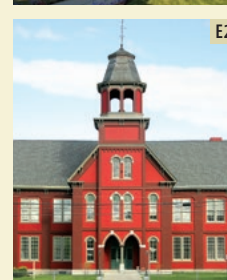
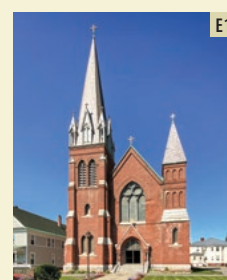
**D1** Across the street is the first **BRICK BUSINESS BLOCK** in town, 1869, designed by George Ropes, Jr., and actually built in five separate sections that are still visible.

**THE CLOCK** at the far right of the brick business block was erected in 1910 by H.W. Randall. It originally stood in Grand Central Station in New York for many years. It stands 19 feet tall and its forty inch dials were enclosed in glass and illuminated after dark.

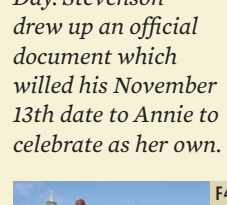
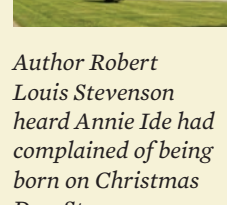
**D2** **O. DEAN HALE BUILDING**, c. 1852, has always been a commercial building. The gable end was squared off to allow for a full third floor. A fire in 2001 destroyed all but the façade, which remained intact; the whole building has been recently restored.

**D3** On Central Street, around the corner and to the left, is the **GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**, notable for the Bethlehem window by Louis Comfort Tiffany in the south wall. The original building was destroyed by fire in 1915 and rebuilt the next year.

## VIEWPOINT E



## VIEWPOINT F



Walk north on Main Street to the next bench at The Common, which is between Main and Summer Streets. You will pass three churches that will be mentioned later. The Common was deeded to the School District #1 in 1863 by Charles S. Dana, Esq. for a consideration of \$1200, "to have and hold... on condition that no building be erected on any part of said granted premises."

**E1** **ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST CATHOLIC CHURCH**, 1896, formerly known as St. Aloysius Church, was established for the Irish Catholics to separate them from the French Cathedral. After Notre Dame des Victoires burned in 1966, the two parishes combined as St. John's.

**E2** **SUMMER STREET SCHOOL**, 1863, was erected in the Italianate style that also characterizes the Courthouse. There is a wonderful view of the building from Main Street. The recently rehabilitated building now houses offices.

**E3** The **PEARL HOUSE**, 1874, formerly known as the Dana House, is a fine example of one of the many stately homes that have graced Main Street for over 125 years. Its grand proportions and large windows make an inviting entrance to the residential north end of the street.

**E4** **CARY HOUSE**, on the corner of Cary and Main, built for George Cary of Cary Maple Sugar in 1900. A mansion by A. D. Houghton and built by James Foye. Woodwork inside was superb and the lot was larger at one time.

**E5 & 6** Across the street are two **ITALIANATE VILLAS** erected in 1874 for Col Fletcher, each has a circular stairway. The one to the south has a porch (added in 1908) and a cupola. Pillars are in so-called Tuscan Doric.

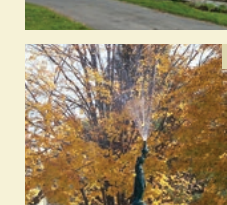
Continue walking north on Main Street, where the next bench is at Arnold Park, which was formerly called The Plain. This was the site of the first framed house (1796) of Jonathan Arnold, the town's founder. Arnold was a friend of the explorer/statesman, St. John de Crevecoeur, for whom St. Johnsbury is named.

**F1** **ESTABROOKS HOUSE**, 1896, showcases an eclectic mix of Queen Anne details: curlicue arabesques in the gable ends, shingled upper stories, decorative metal finials, an eyebrow window, pavilioned porch, Juliet balcony, stained glass windows, etc.

**F2** **PADDOCK HOUSE**, 1820, was the first brick home in town. Bricks were made on the property by brick layers from Connecticut. It is a Federal mansion with a floor plan only slightly changed from that of the home of Charles Bulfinch, a famous Boston architect. The large Palladian window and its glass were transported from Boston by horseback! The front parlor contains its original Bay of Naples scenic wallpaper from France, one of five known existing sets.

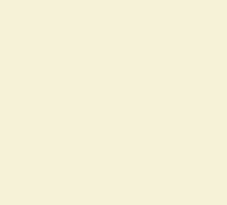
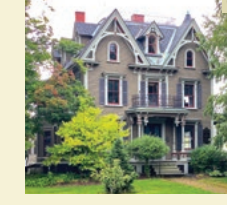
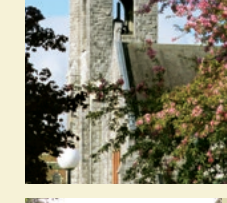
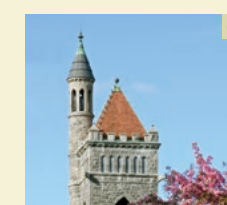
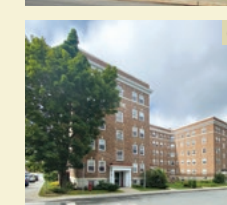
**F3** **IDLEWOOD**, 1874, is also known as the Jewett-Ide house. Mr. Jewett resided here until he founded Vassar College and became its first President. In 1893, Mr. Ide added the porte-cochere, designed by Packard, that grounds the four-story mansard tower. Ide became Chief Justice of Samoa and a close friend of Robert Louis Stevenson. He heard Annie Ide had complained of being born on Christmas Day. She had never had a birthday to call her own, so Stevenson drew up an official document which willed his November 13th date to Annie to celebrate as her own!

**F4** Across the street is the **C.H. STEVENS HOUSE**, 1890, designed by Lambert Packard in the Queen Anne style, with a corner octagonal tower capped with a bell-shaped roof, eyebrow window, porte-cochere and hardwood interiors (gleaned from nearby Victory and Granby, Vermont, as Mr. Stevens was a lumber king.) The foyer has an elegant stairway and fireplace.



Arnold Park is the former home site of the founder of St. Johnsbury, Jonathan Arnold.

## VIEWPOINT G



**F5** The **HUXAM PADDOCK HOUSE**, a white Greek Revival cape, c. 1842, is a fine example of the many elegant New England town houses, with their classical proportions and Doric columns, that still can be found on many streets of St. Johnsbury. It was designed for practical, comfortable living, with low ceilings and iron stoves in the kitchen and parlors for easy heating.

**F6** **ARNOLD PARK** is the former home site of the founder of St. Johnsbury, Jonathan Arnold. Arnold, originally from Providence, Rhode Island, began transforming the unbroken wilderness in 1787 and built a home on what would become Main Street. Fire reduced Arnold's home to ashes in 1844. In 1855 the space was fenced, trees were planted, and it was named Arnold Park. The centerpiece of the park is its fountain, a "Gargoyles Octagon Pan with Vase Bearer," built by Mott Iron Works of New York and installed in 1891. In 2012, the fountain was lovingly restored thanks to fundraising efforts by local residents.

Now walk south on Main Street to the next bench in front of the Fairbanks Museum. You'll walk past several other stately residences on the way.

**G1** **FAIRBANKS MUSEUM & PLANETARIUM**, 1890, by Lambert Packard reflects Richardson Romanesque with its tower, corbel faces, eyebrow windows and rounded arches. Given to the town by Franklin Fairbanks, it is a true "cabinet of curiosities." A must see is the barrel vaulted ceiling running the length of the building.

**G2** **ST. ANDREWS EPISCOPAL CHURCH**, 1878, exemplifies the Arts and Crafts "Stick Style" construction. The charming interior has hammer beams, an old pipe organ and a St. Andrew portrait window in the apse, which contrasts pleasantly in shape and content with the Gothic lancet windows on the side walls.

**G3** **COLONIAL APARTMENTS**, 1925, replaced the Music Hall, which was destroyed by fire. The Music Hall began its life as North Congregational Church across the street, but was moved to make room for the larger church that exists today. It imitates neo-Georgian, with its cornice and brick parapet.

**G4** **NORTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**, 1878, was designed by Lambert Packard in Early English Gothic style. It is faced with Isle LaMotte limestone. The interior has rich windows, cherry woodwork, a stately organ and elaborate pulpit furniture. This building replaced the church that the design of the South Congregational replicates. There is a little irony in the church's foundation: the huge stones that support this tower came from the County Jail in Danville! It's now known as United Community Church after the closing of the South Church.

**G5** **NORTH CHURCH MANSE**, c. 1860, is Italianate in style, with cast-iron cresting on the roof, and has many Victorian touches by Lambert Packard. It is now a law office, but 150 years ago, it was the scene of American medical history. In this house in 1864, Dr. Selim Newell performed a trachea operation, which was relatively unknown at that time. Crowds stood outside cheering the success. Until the 1960s, it housed ministers of North Congregational Church.

And now back to the Courthouse and your starting point. We hope you have enjoyed this glimpse into the social and architectural history of our town.

COME AGAIN!



Discover more of St. Johnsbury's industrial and Victorian legacy at the **St. Johnsbury Welcome Center**, **St. Johnsbury Athenaeum**, **St. Johnsbury History & Heritage Center**, **Fairbanks Museum & Planetarium**, or visit our website at [StJHistory.org](http://StJHistory.org)