

History of Florenceville-Bristol, New Brunswick

In 2008, the Village of Florenceville and the Village of Bristol amalgamated to form New Brunswick's newest town. Both communities wanted to keep their names as a tribute to their rich histories. As such, the newly-amalgamated community was named the Town of Florenceville-Bristol.



In 1604, French explorer Samuel de Champlain "discovered" the Wolastoq River as he sailed into its mouth at the Bay of Fundy on June 24, the feast day of John the Baptist. He renamed the waterway "la rivière St-Jean" or the St. John River.

Bristol's history can be traced back hundreds, if not thousands of years when the Wolustoquiyik (Maliseet) occupied the land. They set up their camps near a fork in a stream that led to the Wolastoq (St. John River). Legend has it this area of land was once the scene of a battle where a great Mohawk chief was slain by a Wolastoq'kew chief. The land and streams were then called "Shiktehawk", which in the Maliseet language means "where he killed him".



In the 1870's when the New Brunswick Railway was being built, railway officials would not accept the name Shiktehawk for their station. New Brunswick Railroad Company changed the name to Kent. Villagers did not like this name and petitioned the Post Master General in Ottawa to choose a name from a list they had submitted. The name "Bristol" was selected as it was not in use elsewhere in New Brunswick.

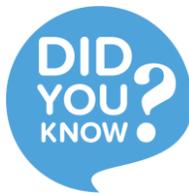
Settlement in the Florenceville area began in the late 18th century. The Presqu'Île military post was built in 1791 at the junction of the Presqu'Île and St. John Rivers. Along with Fort Carleton at Grand Falls, these posts were designed to safeguard the strategic communications route that ran along the St. John River from the Bay of Fundy to the St. Lawrence River. Following the War of 1812, a military settlement was created along both sides of the St. John River between Hartland and Grand Falls. Soldiers from a number of disbanded regiments, included the famed 104th Regiment of Foot (New Brunswick) were given land grants here.

The community of Buttermilk Creek formed on the west bank of the St. John River circa 1832. It took its name from a small creek that churned up whitish water that looked like buttermilk. Another settlement, called Buckwheat Flats, formed on the other side of the river. Florenceville played a minor role in the Maine/New Brunswick border controversy when, in the winter of 1839, a company of the 1st Battalion, Carleton County militia, was stationed at Buttermilk Creek during the Aroostook War.



In 1855, during the Crimean War, Buttermilk Creek was renamed Florenceville in honor of the famous nurse, Florence Nightingale. The two settlements on either side of the river became known as West and East Florenceville. In 1966, East Florenceville and West Florenceville amalgamated to become the Village of Florenceville.

In 1957, a local family built a frozen potato processing plant in East Florenceville. That plant was the start of the globally successful McCain Foods who now produce 1/3 of all French fries consumed world-wide. In 1998, Florenceville was bestowed with the title “French Fry Capital of the World” in recognition of McCain’s outstanding achievement on a world-wide basis. The Town of Florenceville-Bristol still holds the distinction of “French Fry Capitol of the World”.



Fact: Almost anyone who eats French fries will at some point eat a McCain French fry. Consumers around the globe enjoy about one hundred million servings of McCain French fries each and every day. McCain opened its first factory in Florenceville in 1957. Today, it has more than 50 factories on six continents around the world.