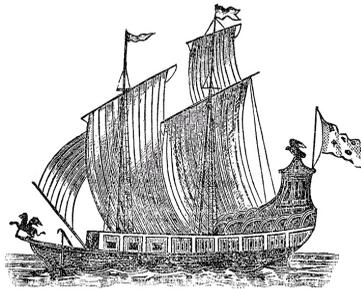


Eleven Regional Events that Changed the World and Our Lives

Lewiston History Mysteries

1679: The LeGriffon, a 40-foot long wooden sailing ship, is constructed and launched in Niagara Falls, NY. It was built by French explorer Robert de La Salle to find the fabled Northwest Passage to China and Japan. It was the first full-sized sailing ship on the upper Great Lakes, leading the way for hundreds of thousands of commercial ships that have sailed for centuries on the Great Lakes.



1720: Frenchman Chabert de Joncaire constructs the first permanent European settlement in Western New York located at today's Artpark. It was called the "The King's Store" and marked the beginning of what was to become the Niagara Portage, a critically important trade route that opened up the

interior Great Lakes to the outside world. It was the primary trading route for over 100 years until the Erie Canal opened.

1759: The Battle of LaBelle-Famille and the Siege of Fort Niagara in today's Youngstown. This was a pivotal battle in the French and Indian War that determined who would control the territory that would eventually become part of the United States. Had results been different, we could have been a French colony rather than an English colony, and we'd be speaking French today!

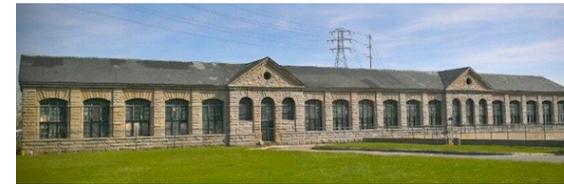
1825: The opening of the Erie Canal — one of the most important engineering projects in the history of the world. It was the nation's first superhighway of commerce and was wildly successful in building the American economy.

1855: The Niagara Falls Suspension Bridge, which stood from 1855 to 1897 across the Niagara River, was the world's first working railway suspension bridge. The railroads brought a large influx of trade and tourists into the region. Before the American Civil War, the Underground Railroad helped fugitive slaves escape across the Suspension Bridge to freedom in Canada. After the war, the bridge became a symbol of inspiration, encouraging Americans to rebuild the country and industrialize the nation.

1885: The Niagara Falls State Park opens and offers free access to the public. Previously, the land surrounding the world famous Niagara Falls was privately owned

and access was limited. Key to "freeing" Niagara was landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted and NY State Assemblyman Thomas Vincent Welch.

1895: The opening of the Edward Dean Adams Power Plant in Niagara Falls is probably the single most important local event that permanently changed the world. It was the first large-scale, alternating current (AC) electric generating plant. It set the accepted



The Adams Power Plant in Niagara Falls is the birthplace of the world's electrical systems. Photo by Andrea Megan.

standard on how electricity would be distributed to billions of people and businesses around the world. AC is still the standard today. The power plant was created by inventor Nikola Tesla and George Westinghouse. Tesla even recalled, after hearing a description of Niagara Falls as a child, that he "pictured in my imagination a big wheel run by the Falls."

1901: The Pan American Exposition World's Fair made Buffalo the world's first "City of Light." People couldn't believe what they saw — no candles or kerosene lamps. The Exposition was bathed in spectacular illumination from wired electricity coming from Niagara Falls. It was also was the site of McKinley's assassination which resulted in Teddy Roosevelt becoming President — an event that truly

changed the world.

1902: The first air conditioner, designed and built in Buffalo by Willis Carrier, began working on July 17, 1902.

1905: The "Niagara Movement" began when a group of 32 prominent African-American leaders met to discuss the challenges facing people of color. Hotels on this side of the border were segregated, so the group met at the Erie Beach Hotel in Fort Erie, Ontario. The group became the forerunner of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, which was founded in 1909.

1947: Chuck Yeager was the first man to break the sound barrier as he piloted the Bell X-1, designed and manufactured at the Bell factory in Niagara Falls. It was a new era!

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