

Historical Highlights

- 1825 First church on the site destroyed in the Miramichi Fire, October 6
- 1829 Second church, the one you see today, built
- 1830 First church service conducted on September 30 by Rev. James Souter
- 1874 First organ installed
- 1908 Large memorial stained glass windows installed
- 1919 Casavant Freres organ installed, a gift of Lord Beaverbrook
- 1926 St. James Presbyterian and St. John Methodist unite
- 1948 Steeple chimes installed, a gift of Lord Beaverbrook
- 1996 Graveyard records updated

Designed and constructed by William Murray, an immigrant Scotsman, the church is considered one of the finest examples of colonial architecture in New Brunswick. Built of native white pine, the front and the steeple are a combination of Grecian, Doric, Tuscan and Ionic features, typical of Murray's work. On Murray's own home, now a tourism center situated at Ritchie Wharf, can be seen examples of his fine craftsmanship.

Lord Beaverbrook, Max Aitken is buried in the Town Square. The home he lived in as a child is now Beaverbrook House, at 518 King George Highway. It was the United Church manse until 1953.

A Walk in the Graveyard – self guided

The graveyard surrounding St. James & St. John is the resting place of some notable Miramichiers and also has some interesting stones. Each tells a story.

1. **Peter Mitchell** was a Member of Parliament, a federal minister of Fisheries in the government of John A. MacDonald and a Father of Confederation. His grave is marked by a plaque placed by the Centennial Commission during the centenary of Confederation in 1967.
2. **Rev. Wm. Aitken** was the father of Lord Beaverbrook and minister of St. James Presbyterian from 1880 to 1903.
3. **Rev. D. F. Hoddinott** was minister of St. James & St. John from 1942 to 1950 and author of From Whence We Came, a history of the church.
4. **John Harkins** (1790 – 1837) was a successful merchant and benefactor. He left funds in his will to provide for a schoolhouse and a teaching master for the poor of the parish of Newcastle.
5. **William Loch** (1797 – 1855) was an original member of the committee set up in 1825 to build St. James. At his death in 1855 he bequeathed money and land to the church.
6. **Ernest Hutchison** (1847 – 1918) is best known as the builder of the Miramichi Hospital. He appeared to be following the example of his father of benevolence towards public welfare. Richard Hutchison contributed thousands of dollars to aid in the building of the Sailors Hospital in Saint John.

7. **George Watt** died in 1815. This is the earliest date recorded on a stone in the graveyard (from the transcript of Dr. Louise Manny). Mr. Watt's stone is west of the front steps.

8. **Willard Read** died in 1874 at age 23. His stone is an unusual shape – a tree trunk and scroll carved from sandstone. This stone is pictured in A Photojournal of Our Church and can be found behind the church, about halfway to the back fence on the west side.

9. **John Gifford**, special constable, killed at age 22 in the Caraquet Riot of 1875.

