First Things First
Innovations, Inventions, and Incidents in Indiana History

Gary:
Richard Hatcher became the first elected Black mayor of a major U.S. city in 1968.

La Porte:
Belle Scornoson Gunness was believed to be America’s first female serial killer, murdering an estimated 40 people over several decades beginning around 1900. Gunness was never apprehended.

South Bend:
The University of Notre Dame boasts the oldest college marching band in continuous existence (since 1846).

Fort Wayne:
The first professional baseball game was played between the Ft. Wayne Kekiongas and the Cleveland Forest Citys in May of 1871.

Wabash:
Wabash became the first city in the world to use electric street lights in 1880.

Kokomo:
Elwood Haynes test-drove the first internal combustion engine here, and the city also produced the first pneumatic rubber tires.

Muncie:
In 1920 the Congerville/Muncie Flyers were one of the original 14 teams in what would later become the National Football League.

New Castle:
The first train robbery in the U.S. was perpetrated by the Reno Gang here in 1866, later featured in a motion picture starring Elvis Presley.

Indianapolis:
The first Black female millionaire in the country was Madam C.J. Walker, who built a beauty products laboratory and factory here in 1910.

Speedway:
The first long-distance auto race in the U.S. was at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway in May 1911.

Mooresville:
Native John Dillinger was named the first “Public Enemy Number One” by the new FBI in June 1934 following a two-year string of bank robberies around the Midwest.

Bedford:
Bedford is the leading producer of Indiana limestone, which has been used in the construction of the Empire State Building, the Pentagon, and the National Cathedral.

Corydon:
Corydon was the first state capital until 1825.