



PEOPLE OF THE RIVER

ANGLOPHONE LIFE
ON THE ST. LAWRENCE

MAIN ORGANIZER



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graphisme : David Dupuis

A gift of the St. Lawrence

The Greek historian Herodotus summed up Egypt's dependence on its great river by calling the country a "gift of the Nile." In the same way, it could be said that Quebec is a gift of the St. Lawrence.

The St. Lawrence was the "boulevard" of the territory's first inhabitants, the Aboriginal people. Then it became the access route for French explorers. Samuel de Champlain thought it was a route to China, and this was a determining factor in his decision to found a colony at Quebec.

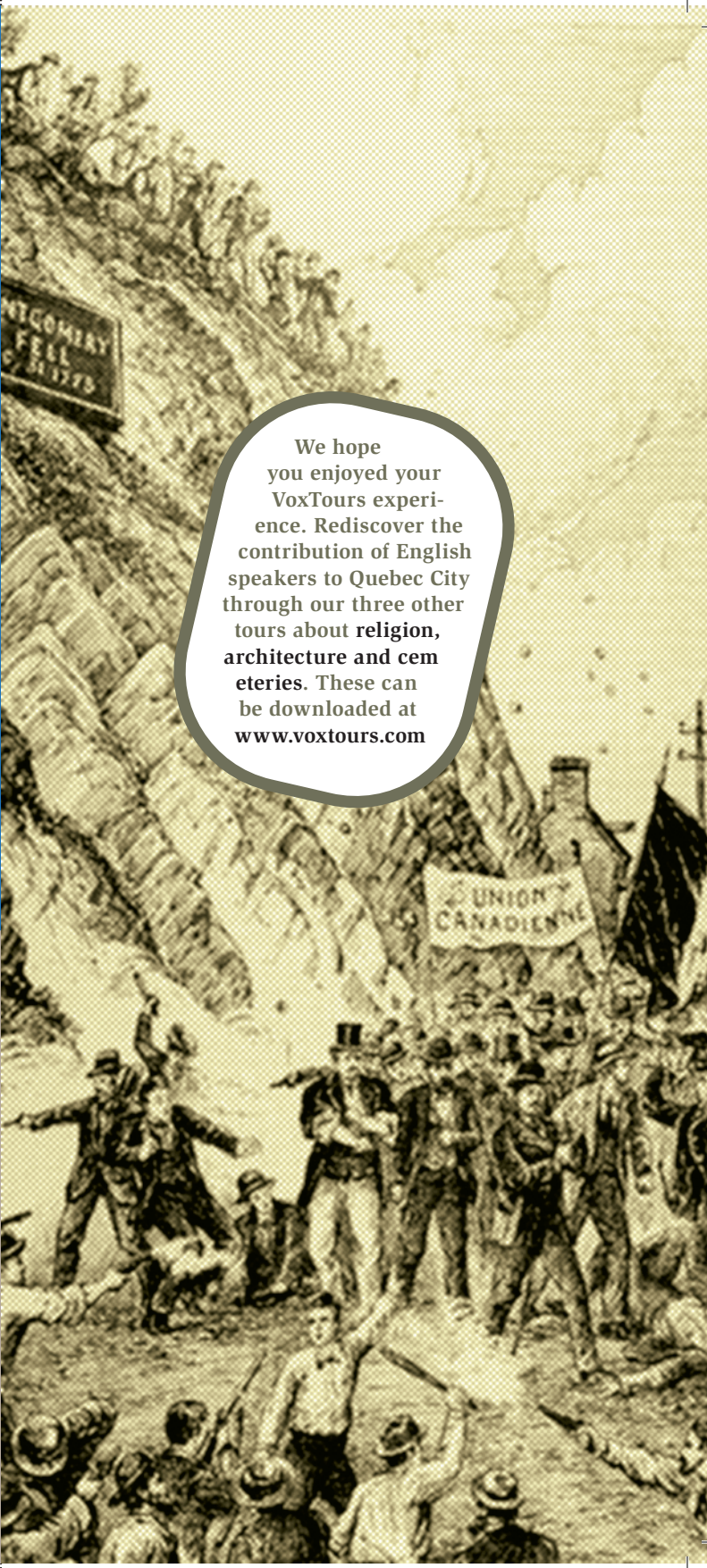
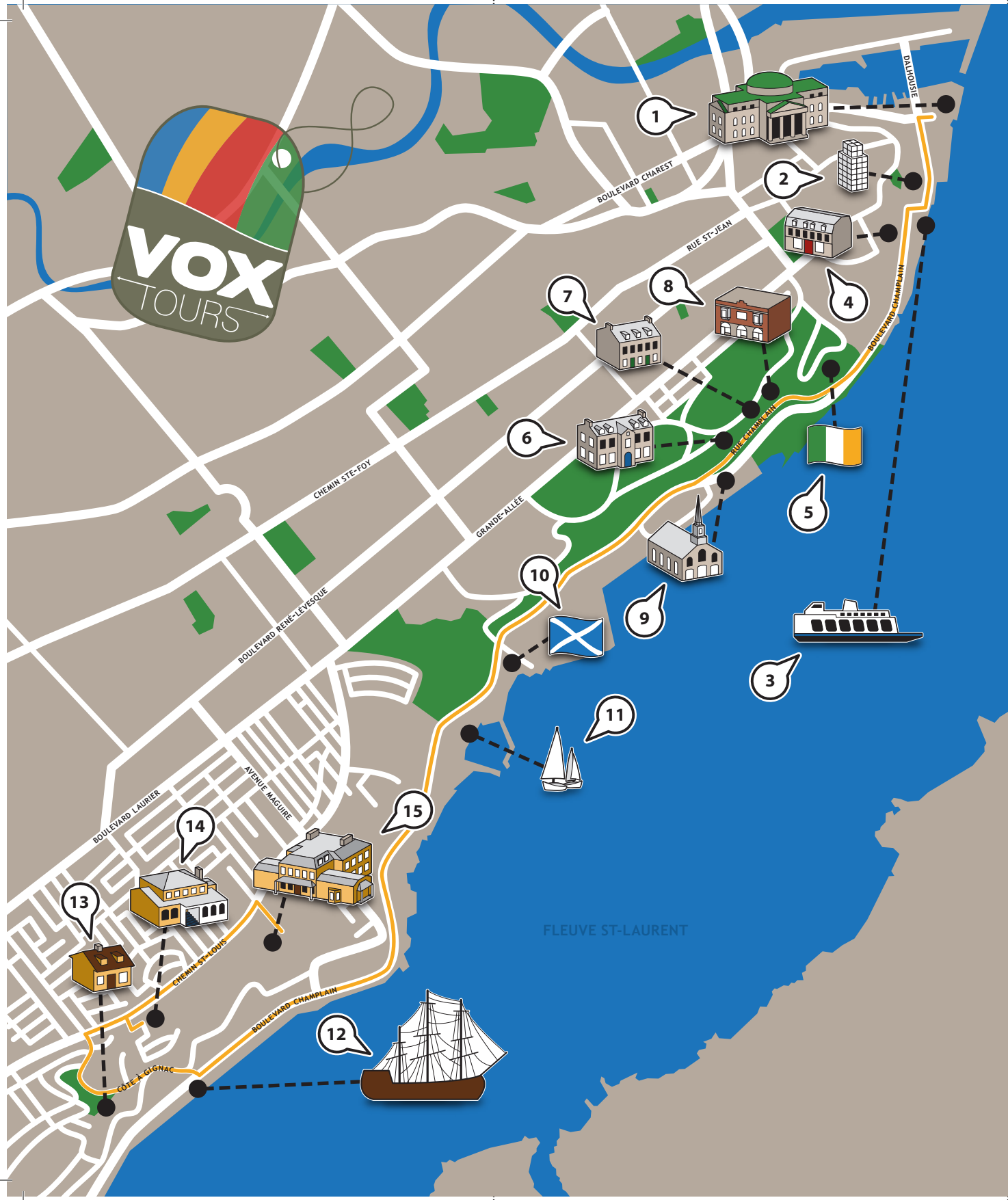
During the French regime, the St. Lawrence was essential to New France's transportation and communications. It was the commercial artery par excellence and a source of food for the habitants, who fished for eels in the St. Lawrence. For the British, it was their chosen invasion route for attacking the French colony.

After the British conquest, Quebec City's location on the river made it one of the five major ports of the Empire, and numerous shipyards grew up there. Anglophones played an important role in this growth — as workers, businessmen and colonial administrators.

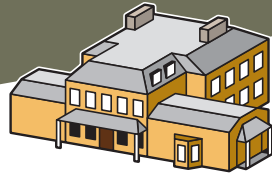
Thus, the St. Lawrence determined Quebec's destiny as a port city and profoundly influenced its development. During your visit, you will discover the role of anglophones in this fascinating history.

Head towards the New Customs Building, a large classical domed structure at the eastern edge of the Old Port

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ANGLO HERITAGE”



We hope you enjoyed your VoxTours experience. Rediscover the contribution of English speakers to Quebec City through our three other tours about **religion, architecture and cemeteries**. These can be downloaded at www.voxtours.com



Cataraqui, 2141 Chemin Saint-Louis

Like other estates, Cataraqui belonged to a succession of timber merchants from 1840 to 1909. It was even the official residence of the Governor General for three years. In the twentieth century, the painter Percyval Tudor-Hart lived here until 1972 with his wife, who was also his muse.

The timber merchant James Bell Forsyth gave the estate the Aboriginal name Cataraqui, which was the original name of Forsyth's birthplace of Kingston, Ontario. This was consistent with the British custom of personalizing one's home by giving it an evocative name. While in North America the custom of naming houses is exclusive to the wealthy classes, in Britain, even today, it extends to more modest homes, and a third of British houses have names.

Cataraqui is one of the few estates in Sillery that is still in its original state. Others have been demolished, integrated into the suburban landscape or taken over by religious or educational institutions. Development of the estate, making it possible to discover the magnificent interior of the house, is currently in progress. Go take a look at the house from the front — it may be open!

The former town of Sillery has always contained the largest proportion of anglophones in the Quebec City region. Even today, almost 5 % of its population is anglophone — three times the proportion in the rest of the region.

Why not end your visit with a stroll down Sillery's main commercial street, Maguire Avenue? It's a few blocks to your right along Chemin Saint-Louis.

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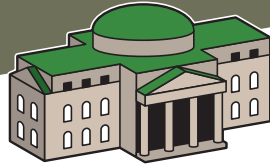
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Total cycling distance:
11,6 kilometres

Optimal time and period:
Spring, summer and fall

1

Customs and excise



New Customs Building, 2 Quai Saint-André
Quebec Naval Museum, 170 Dalhousie Street

Our visit begins at the most impressive of the many successive customs houses built in Quebec City. Customs was among the first institutions established by the British after the conquest, allowing the government to finance itself. In fact, duties collected on imported and exported goods were the government's main source of income until World War I.

This customs house was built in the 1850s, when Quebec City was the main port of entry into British North America. Monumental customs buildings once graced all major port cities throughout the world. These temples to trade and capitalism were located by the water, intended as gateways to continents and countries. They typically housed the offices of staff who processed documents and duties, as well as storage rooms for the goods being processed.

In 1853, a shipping channel was created in the St. Lawrence — that is, the river was dredged so that large transatlantic ships could sail upriver past Quebec City. Montreal became Canada's international trade centre and the Port of Quebec lost its role as gateway to the continent.

Before we move on, notice the long gray building to your right, which houses the Naval Museum of Quebec. This museum focuses on the history of national defence and the Navy. It reminds us that Quebec City was not only a trading port, but also a military one. Drop by and have a look, or visit after the tour.

Head back to Dalhousie Street and turn left. You will pass the Musée de la Civilisation and Auberge Saint-Antoine. Then, on your right, you will notice a small square, Place de Paris, with a work of art in the form of superimposed white cubes. This is our next stop. Distance: 500 metres

14

Estates of the elite (part 1)



Beauvoir, 2315 Chemin Saint-Louis

During the nineteenth century, the heights of Sillery became the dwelling places for a steadily increasing number of merchants who had made their fortune in the timber trade or shipbuilding. They bought large tracts of land that they converted into estates after the fashion of the time, with a large home, servants' quarters, stables, conservatories and landscaped gardens. Particularly after the cholera epidemic of 1832 and the typhus epidemic of 1847, they were also escaping the city for a healthier place to live.

The first large home in this area, Beauvoir, was built for a timber merchant, Henry LeMesurier. He was born on the Channel island of Guernsey, inhabited by anglophones with French names. Instead of "How do you do?", Guernsey gentlemen would greet one another in their Norman dialect: "*Coume tchi que l'affaire va?*" Quebec ("Tchubec") — especially the Gaspé — was a major destination for emigrants from the Channel Islands. LeMesurier arrived in Quebec City around 1820 and established a timber export business. When he died, the *Gazette* described him as "possessing all the qualities of a gentleman of the old generation."

In 1871, another timber merchant, Richard Reid Dobell (1837–1902), acquired Beauvoir. Originally from Liverpool, England, Dobell settled in Quebec City in 1857. The timber business was good and he decorated his home with art treasures and hunting trophies. He later entered politics, appealing to Sillery's francophone voters by presenting himself as a defender of the language rights of Manitoba's francophone minority. After Dobell died in 1902, his family continued to occupy the estate until 1939, when they sold it to the Marist Fathers, who built the large school building that is now attached to the house.

Go back towards Chemin Saint-Louis and turn right. Turn right at 2101 Chemin Saint-Louis. Cross the parking lot until you reach a set of yellow houses with green trim, our final stop. Distance: 1.6 kilometres

13

Nolansville, workers' village



1745 Côte à Gignac

This part of Sillery was once a working-class village called Nolansville. The Nolans, who lived at the top of the hill, leased out part of their lands to workers in the middle of the nineteenth century. Small square houses with gabled roofs like the one on this street corner are typical of working-class housing from this period. An extension was added to the back later on, but the living space was originally limited to the front part.

The residents of Nolansville worked in the timber coves, in the sawmills or in the shipyards. It seems that shipyard workers were paid a little better than the others at the time: the average industrial wage was \$262 a year, while shipyard workers earned an average of \$375.

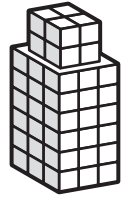
While most workers managed to make ends meet, their lives were hard. When work was scarce, competition among workers became even more intense, and wages could fall quickly. In addition, most industries had a dead season, forcing some workers to leave home for a few months and find work in another region. The other members of the family had to contribute to the family income: women worked in factories or as domestic servants, while young people started to work at an early age.

It's important to remember that those who controlled the economy in the nineteenth century were only a fraction of the anglophone population. Most anglophone families were working-class families living in small houses at the mercy of fluctuations in the labour market.

Keep cycling up the hill. Turn right when you reach Chemin Saint-Louis, and right again on Avenue du Parc Beauvoir. When you reach the stop sign, keep going straight towards the Séminaire des Pères Maristes. Stop in front of the beige gabled house on the right, attached to the larger school building. Distance: 1 kilometre

2

Trade in the port of Quebec



Place de Paris

In the first half of the nineteenth century, Quebec City was Lower Canada's leading commercial port. Shiploads of timber destined for Britain left from Quebec City, while a variety of commodities from all over the British Empire arrived in port: spices, tea, sugar, wine, spirits, etc. These products could be transferred to merchants for resale, or simply sold to the highest bidder on the docks and in the marketplaces.

Place de Paris, where you are standing, was at the time the Finlay Market, the largest market in Quebec City. There was more than imported merchandise for sale. Farmers, market-gardeners, butchers, fishmongers and other tradespeople of the region came to Finlay Market to sell seasonal products to the public. The stalls stretched to the water's edge where fishmongers sold their wares fresh off the boat. The marketplace was dismantled in 1906 and the square resumed its old appearance with the redevelopment of Place Royale in the 1960s.

Head back to Dalhousie Street and walk along the small fortifications on your right. Cross the street diagonally and you will see the Quebec-Lévis ferry terminal. Stand at the water's edge and look across the river towards Lévis. Distance: 150 metres



3

A river to be crossed



Near the Quebec-Lévis ferry

Residents of the Quebec City region have always had to cross the St. Lawrence. While the means have changed, the need to overcome this natural obstacle has remained.

Aboriginal people crossed the river in their famous birchbark canoes. The *habitants* of New France imitated them. In the early nineteenth century, birchbark canoes were replaced by wooden ones.

The nineteenth century brought other innovations as well. Firstly there was the horseboat, propelled by a paddle-wheel turned by a horse. There were also the early steamers, which were of wooden construction and had unreliable motors. Then came second- and third-generation steamers, with iron and steel hulls.

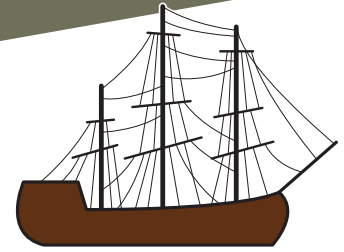
But crossing the river didn't always require a boat. During the long winter months, an ice bridge formed between Quebec City and Lévis. Paths were marked out using fir trees stuck into the snow, and people could cross the St. Lawrence by cart or sleigh.

If you want to know more about the history of crossing the St. Lawrence River, we invite you to take the ferry, which has a small exhibit on board that will answer many of your questions. Take advantage of being in Lévis to visit the Davie Shipyard National Historic Site of Canada (6220 Rue Saint-Laurent). It is in the house with the red roof in front of you — it's right near the ferry terminal and entry is free.

Continue along the bike path, which merges with Boulevard Champlain. Soon afterward, on your left, you will see the first customs house built by the British, identified by a commemorative plaque on the wall. Cross the boulevard here and head for the house at 102 Rue du Petit-Champlain, easily recognizable by its mural. Distance: 300 metres

12

A well-earned tot



Sillery, on the riverbank, near Côte à Gignac

Welcome to Sillery, a former municipality that was merged with Quebec City in 2002. Imagine that you are here in 1811, when the *Mercator*, the first ship built in Sillery, is being launched. The day of the launch was no ordinary day — this was a memorable event.

The workers had to be in the shipyard before dawn; when they arrived, they were served a glass of whisky. At sunrise, they began to remove the blocks of wood that held the ship on land. When they reached midship, they were entitled to a second glass of whisky. The work continued, and after they drank a third glass of whisky the “key” was knocked out and the ship slid down into the river. The ship's godmother (often the shipbuilder's wife) stood on a platform and smashed a bottle of Madeira or port on her bow. The ship was then towed to a wharf where she was fitted with sails.

Once the ship was launched, the workers could celebrate the occasion. Long tables were set up for the workers and their families, and a meal of sandwiches, biscuits and spruce beer was served. Every workman received a full day's pay.

If the shipbuilder was a prominent citizen, the Governor General might attend the launch, accompanied by a few officers from the Quebec garrison and a drum and bugle corps. Ship launches were spectacles that never failed to attract spectators.

Evelyn Lambert grew up by the coves in Sillery. In those days, Quebec was still a major shipping port:

“My dad worked for Mr. John Sharples. He had twenty men under him. He used to go away to buy the trees. Then, the trees would come in by rail. The men would trim the all bark off them, and make logs out of them, and then they'd shape them. Then the boats would come from England, and they used to anchor at the wharf there — big boats from England! And the men would load them with a hoist, there. Fill those boats. And those logs, they used to build houses and buildings in England with them.”

Catch your breath before climbing Côte à Gignac. Stop half-way up the hill at the corner of Rue du Père Ménard, at 1745 Côte à Gignac. Distance: 500 metres

11

Yachting in Quebec City



Quebec Yacht Club, 1225 Boulevard Champlain

Aside from large ships and heavy industry, the Port of Quebec was also home to small yachts for sporting and leisure. From the early seventeenth century onward, yachting emerged as a pastime for the British upper classes in Europe. They brought this interest with them to British North America.

In 1861, the first yacht race, or regatta, was held in Quebec City. It was such a success that the Quebec Yacht Club was organized soon after, becoming the first yacht club in Canada. The earliest officers, and most of the pilots, were part of the city's wealthy English-speaking elite.

Then along came *La Mouette*, which soon became a symbol of national pride for many French Canadians. In 1866, it won its first race against a flotilla of boats with English names piloted by anglophones. It later went on to defeat many prominent American yachts. In an era when "Britannia ruled the waves," *La Mouette's* victories were more than mere wins, they were a demonstration of the superior skills of French-Canadian shipbuilders.

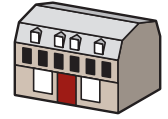
But *La Mouette*, like many things in Quebec City, was not *pure-laine* French. It was designed by Dr. Philippe Wells, a French-speaking Roman Catholic whose surname suggests English ancestry. Wells was the son of a shipbuilder and volunteer firefighter who served at the Number 6 station we saw earlier. Dr. Wells worked at the Marine Hospital, treating workers crushed by timber or sailors suffering from venereal disease. In his spare time, he read engineering magazines, where he learned about the theories of Scottish engineer John Russell. These theories were applied to the design of *La Mouette*.

A francophone doctor with an English name using Scottish theories to design a winning vessel — the pride of Quebec indeed!

Continue along the river to Côte à Gignac, where the last of the old shipyards before Cap Rouge was located. Stop on the riverbank at the bottom of Côte à Gignac. Distance: 3 kilometres

4

Immigration and the Patriotes



Petit Champlain Mural, 102 Rue du Petit-Champlain

The maritime history of Quebec is also the history of immigrants who arrived by the thousands every season throughout the nineteenth century. The vast majority of the new arrivals came from England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland. They helped make Quebec a city in which anglophones made up more than 40 % of the population around 1850.

More than half the new arrivals in Quebec City were Irish. In 1847, as a result of the Great Famine that struck Ireland, over 100,000 people were herded like cattle into unhealthy boats and shipped off to Quebec City. Thousands died, but most arrived safely. Irish immigration had a major impact on Quebec society at the time.

This was not always the upscale neighbourhood you see today. In the nineteenth century, Petit Champlain was an English-speaking shantytown where poor and mostly Irish immigrants lived. The mural in front of you tells part of this story. Note the young boy seated on the left on the second floor. In his hands he has a hurley, a stick used in hurling, an Irish sport similar to field hockey.

Some of the Irish were better off, but that did not necessarily make them loyal subjects of the Queen and her Empire. Look on the right side of the second floor. The man in the top hat with a beer in his hand, hidden behind the cask, is Edmund Bailey O'Callaghan, an Irishman who arrived in Quebec City in 1823. Having studied medicine in Dublin and Paris, he practised as a doctor in his new home, but he became known primarily as a journalist and politician. He was a supporter of the Parti Patriote and an implacable critic of the British administration. His articles took on an increasingly radical tone, culminating in a call to rebellion in the fall of 1837. When the rebellions of 1837–38 broke out, a price was placed on his head. He fled to New York State, where he died in 1880.

The Irish presence is still visible in Quebec City today. It is said that 40 % of Quebecers have at least one Irish ancestor. A number of place names in the region are of Irish origin: Shannon, Coleraine, New Waterford. There is even a Gaelic football team in the region, with a name that would make O'Callaghan proud: the Patriotes de Québec.

Get back on the Boulevard Champlain bike path. Stop at the first intersection, where Rue Champlain crosses Boulevard Champlain. Distance: 650 metres

5

The birth of trade unions and labour unrest



Rue Champlain / Boulevard Champlain intersection

The Irish immigrants who arrived in Lower Canada starting in the 1820s lacked both the capital to buy land and the skills to get well-paid jobs. With work in the shipyards monopolized by French Canadians, the Irish had to accept unskilled jobs. Many of them worked as ship labourers, loading timber onto ships.

There was fierce competition for jobs between the Irish and the French Canadians, with each group in turn agreeing to work for increasingly lower wages. In 1857 the Irish ship labourers formed a mutual aid organization, the Quebec Ship Labourers' Benevolent Society. As trade unions were not yet legal in Canada, this was a way for workers to organize without breaking the law. Three years later, French-Canadians formed their own mutual aid organization, the Union Canadienne. Competition between the two groups intensified.

The skirmishes culminated in violent rioting and a battle that took place near here on August 14, 1879. The Irish set up a barricade and cannons. The toll: two French Canadians dead and about 30 injured in the two camps.

Keep cycling along the bike path until you reach the second traffic light near a swimming pool. Cross the street and walk along the small path until you reach the cliffside Rue Champlain and set of stairs. Distance: 700 metres



10

The Gilmour dynasty and Scottish immigration



Parc de l'Anse-aux-Foulons / Wolfe's Cove

You are now at Anse-aux-Foulons, also known as Wolfe's Cove — the road that climbs the hill follows the path that Wolfe and his troops used when the British conquered Quebec. Today this road is called Côte Gilmour. We know who Wolfe was, but who was Gilmour?

The Gilmours owned the largest shipyard in Quebec City, which was located here. In 1804, in his native Scotland, Allan Gilmour founded a timber-importing firm. The business flourished, and Gilmour and his partners decided to build their own ships to carry timber. Around 1830, their fleet consisted of some 130 ships, the majority of which were built in Quebec City or Saint John. The company passed from one generation of Gilmours to the next. In the 1870s, a partner who was speculating in pork lost large sums of money and fled. John Gilmour, who was running the company in Quebec City, was deeply affected. He disappeared in 1877 and his body was found under the ice in Montreal harbour.

Scottish immigrants like the Gilmours had a considerable impact on the economic development of Quebec City. Although they never represented more than 5% of the city's population at their peak, many of the major bankers, merchants and industrialists were Scots. Nevertheless, not all Scots were wealthy — Scotland had its own potato famine and many farmers living in the highlands were forcibly evicted to make way for large-scale industrial farming. For every Scottish industrial baron in Quebec, there were thousands of struggling Scottish immigrants. In the late nineteenth century, 80% of the Scottish immigrants in the province were farmers, artisans, unskilled labourers or domestics.

Keep cycling along this path until you begin to see small boats appear on your left. This is the Quebec City Yacht Club. Distance: 400 metres



Royal William / source: LAC

9

Ships and the market for ships



Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde church, 761 Rue Champlain

In front of you is Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde, Cap Blanc's neighbourhood Catholic Church. The church is in Anse-des-Mères, which means "Mothers' Cove" — it got its name because it once belonged to religious communities whose members fished there. In the nineteenth century, its tranquillity gave way to the noise and bustle of industry and shipbuilding.

Colonial trade in the British Empire required a large commercial fleet. More than two thirds of the ships built in Quebec City were sold to interests in Britain. Shipbuilders planned not only to use their ships to sell timber, but also to sell the ships themselves, which were used in colonial trade — for example, between Britain and India. There were Quebec City ships in the ports of Bombay and Hong Kong!

Building a wooden ship was no small thing, and a dozen or so separate trades were involved. The ship carpenter made the major pieces, such as the keel and the frames that made up the ship's "skeleton". Then the planks that formed the ship's hull had to be laid and then carefully caulked to ensure that the ship was watertight. For caulking they used oakum, tarred fibre made by prisoners in the Upper Town out of pieces of old rope and fir resin. Then the joiner, ship carver, painters and glaziers came in to give the ship its final form — except for the masts, blocks, rigging and sails. Once those were added the ship was ready to sail.

A few ships built in Quebec City became famous. The *Royal William*, launched near here in 1831, was the first Canadian steamship to cross the Atlantic (in 1833). The *Columbus*, launched in 1824, was considerably longer than the largest British warship at the time. A number of observers even predicted that the *Columbus* wouldn't float! They were wrong, as it enjoyed a long career. Finally, there was the *Jeanie Johnston*, a famous ship originally built in Quebec. A replica was completed in Ireland in 2002, and its journey to Quebec was sponsored by local businessman James Donovan. Here's what he has to say:

"The Jeanie Johnston was an Irish immigrant ship. It had something quite peculiar about it, having done thirty two crossings without losing a soul. This is contrary to the coffin ships that often lost over 25 % of their population. The original ship had been built in Quebec by John Munn, but was later acquired by a merchant from Tralee in Ireland."

Continue on the bike path for more than a kilometre. Stop just after you cross a railway overpass. Distance: 1.7 kilometres

6

Solace for the sailors



Old Scandinavian Church, 540 Rue Champlain

Welcome to the Cap Blanc neighbourhood. In contrast to the Irish neighbourhood of Petit Champlain, French Canadians were in the majority here. However, there were people from all over. With the high crime rate around the harbour, dogooders were worried about the sailors' morals, which were a threat to public order and a bad example for youth. Some thought that religious practice could put these wayward sailors back on the straight-and-narrow.

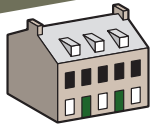
The building you see was once a church for sailors. Built as a school in 1852, it was sold to a Scandinavian Lutheran minister in 1876. He opened the Scandinavian Church of Quebec in the building. This church was affiliated with a Protestant missionary society and its aim was to offer religious services to Scandinavian sailors. The Anglicans of the Lower Town also used the building for meetings. In 1899, it was sold to the Sarsfield Club, a sporting club. Today it is a residential building.

This site reminds us of the ethnic and cultural diversity of nineteenth-century Quebec City. From May to October, sailors from a variety of countries mingled with the city's French-Canadian, Irish, Scottish, English and Welsh residents. But not all the Scandinavians who passed through Quebec City were sailors. From 1850 to the early 1870s, Quebec City was the main port of entry for Scandinavian — especially Norwegian — immigrants to North America. Out of a total of almost 45,000 immigrants who landed at Quebec City in 1870, a little more than a third, or about 16,000, were Scandinavians. But as Quebec City was probably, for most of them, just a stopping point on their migration to the Canadian west or the American Midwest, few traces of their presence remain.

Continue along Rue Champlain to number 450, where you will notice a former tavern. Distance: 200 metres

7

Life on the docks



Hayden's Wexford House, 450 Rue Champlain

Built in 1832, Hayden's Wexford House was an inn and tavern in the days when this area of Quebec City was bustling with activity. It was managed by James Hayden, from Wexford, Ireland, who probably intervened in a fair number of bar brawls between drunken sailors. Today it is owned by a Belgian couple, who run it as a bed and breakfast, attracting a less rowdy crowd.

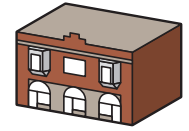
In the nineteenth century, a motley crowd could be seen on the docks, with immigrants, travellers and sailors in transit jostling one another on the quayside. There were many taverns and inns like this one near the harbour. Not all of them were respectable. In addition to prostitutes, this is where you would see crimps — thugs who used trickery to persuade sailors to desert their ship for higher wages. They were then resold to other ship owners. Some crimps used violence or alcohol as a means of persuasion, since they were paid “by the body.” Sailors who tried to resist were beaten up. Public authorities never succeeded in eliminating this practice, which ended only with the decline of shipbuilding in the late nineteenth century.

And so, from about May to October, Quebec City's harbour was a lively — and sometimes unsavoury — place.

Walk with your bike to the corner of Rue des Sapeurs, three houses to your right. You will see a former fire station. Distance: 50 metres

8

Firefighters and police



Number 6 Fire Station, 428–436 Rue Champlain

Hoping for speedy upward mobility, many poor Irish immigrants to North America joined the police force or the fire department, eventually dominating both. It is said that four out of five policemen in New York City were Irish at the turn of the century. Even today, a hundred years later, people of Irish origin continue to dominate the police forces and fire departments of many English-speaking cities in North America.

At one time Quebec City was no different. This building is the old Number 6 Fire Station, which dates from the time of horse-drawn fire reels. Look at the crest in the top middle, with its Irish shamrocks. The motto of this fire station was “Faugh a Balla,” meaning “clear the way” in Gaelic. Few Irish immigrants spoke Gaelic by the end of the nineteenth century, as a result of anglicization efforts by the British, but their traditional link with the language fostered a distinct identity.

Go down Rue des Sapeurs and get back on the cycle path. Cycle past the traffic lights you passed earlier until you reach a church with a tall silver spire. Distance: 850 metres

