

## **"Maisons de bois, maisons de pierre, clochers pointus..."**

Félix Leclerc, Le tour de l'île

During the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, homes began to appear along this part of the road, which, from the rocky outcropping where you stand now, descends steeply toward the River. The outline of three of them bears witness to their French architecture and to the start of adaptations to the climatic conditions of the St. Lawrence valley. Their construction here indicates that the western tip was the first part of the île d'Orléans to be inhabited, despite the hilly terrain of a sector ill-suited to agriculture.

### **The Heart of the Village**

It was here that the seigneur gathered his first tenants 'round him in anticipation of possible attacks by the Iroquois. The oldest and most famous of the properties is Number 137: the first manor built on the island, in 1647. It housed two of the first families on the island: the one founded by Éléonore de Grandmaison and her two husbands, François de Chavigny de Berchereau and Jacques Gourdeau de Beaulieu and the children she had with each. The manor was burned in a fire on March 8, 1652, and burned a second time at the time of the tragic death for Jacques Gourdeau, in May 1663, and was immediately rebuilt where it had burned.

This is the oldest sector and the very heart of what would become the sixth village on the island in the early 1870s. The houses little by little melded into the décor formed of the white-painted wooden villas built on the tip of the island. Added to the picture were two churches, located somewhat back from the road : the Anglican Chapel, St. Mary's, built in 1876 on the Dunn property near the golf club and the Catholic Church, dedicated to Sainte-Pétronille, in 1871 atop a virtually deserted rocky outcropping.

### **The Old Families**

The first ancestral homes heralded in a way all of the other, often more modest homes, of the dozen or so families living permanently in the village. They held jobs that were often hereditary, while providing a variety of services to the community - both seasonal and permanent. In their own way, these people made a major contribution to the quality of life enjoyed today by the people of Sainte-Pétronille. A tribute then to these old families.