

The Anse du Fort

Right ahead of you, beyond the inn, archeological digs revealed the traces of Native occupancy dating back over three thousand years and belonging to a woodland tradition. This is the site of the anse du Fort, whose name evokes a more recent period in our history, however.

This is where the Hurons in fact settled in 1651 in their efforts to escape the deadly attacks of the Iroquois, who had routed them from the Fort Sainte-Marie in the Georgian Bay region of Ontario. In their desire to provide them with shelter and permit them to live, the Jesuit missionaries rented much of the seigneurie of the widow Éléonore de Grandmaison, located from 1648 on the western tip of the île d'Orléans.

The mission, headed by Father Chaumonot, was defended by a fort comprising a paling surrounding a house for the missionaries and their servants and a chapel in which was likely celebrated the marriage of Éléonore de Grandmaison and Jacques Gourdeau, on August 13, 1652.

Within the protection of the fort were built the cabins of the Hurons, numbering between 500 and 600, according to the Jesuits' *Relations*. They lived a peaceful farming existence until 1656, when they were again attacked by the Iroquois, whose canoes had passed by Quebec City furtively under cover of darkness. The survivors of the massacre sought refuge in the shelter of the canons of Quebec City. They went on to settle permanently in the area around the capital.

The Hurons had lived a little over five years on the lands of Éléonore de Grandmaison - from March 29, 1651, to July 4, 1656.