

## The First Wharf on the Île d'Orléans

In 1855, not far from the anse du Fort, solicitor Noël Hill Bowen had a one hundred and fifty foot wharf built, which permitted a depth of twenty foot draft at even the lowest tides.

### The Island's Portal

This undertaking boosted the economy of the île d'Orléans through the links provided with Quebec City thereafter by schooners and steam boats, much more effective than small boats, especially for the market farmers who supplied the markets of the city. In turn, the residents of the capital, drawn by the bucolic charms and stunning vistas of the western tip of the island, began to invade it on weekends. Those better off chose to move there during the fine weather. This is the setting for the birth and development of the village of Beaulieu, which, later on became Sainte-Pétronille.

### Ferry Traffic

In order to accommodate ferry passengers, at the other end of the rue du Quai, the *Maison du passage* provided a waiting room and a livery stable and vehicle park. In 1924, a new ferry accommodated passengers and vehicles on board. From then on, the islanders had a steamboat that could, in an emergency, set sail for Quebec City at any hour, as the crew lived near the wharf.

It was, however, the construction of a bridge in 1935 that promoted land traffic and tolled the knell of the Sainte-Pétronille wharf: the tip of the island welcomed only small excursion boats, like the famous *Duc d'Orléans*. Finally, the decline of the facilities led eventually to the abandonment of the wharf and the loss in the early 1980s of its use.

### A Favorite Look-out

Traditionally considered the place publique of Sainte-Pétronille, the wharf is still a delightful destination for walkers and still offers, in addition to unique access to the Seaway, a fascinating place to view the activity on the St. Lawrence, which begins, at the pointe de Lévy to bend in front of Quebec City and Cap-aux-Diamants. In short, along with Dufferin terrace in Quebec City and that of Lévis, the Sainte-Pétronille wharf provides a third exceptional window on a panorama that could well be described as imposing.