



Chemin du Saint-Germain-en-Laye June 2023

Footsteps in Saint-Germain-en-Laye where my French ancestor Francois Sirois dit Duplessis lived during the 17th century.

Francois is my 6th great grandfather (matrilineal line), his granddaughter Catherine Sirois dit Duplesis (born 1773) is my 4th great grandmother.

Also, described here are **footsteps** in the adjacent royal forest of Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

FRANCOIS SIROIS DIT DUPLESSIS 1673 - 1737

The birth date and place for my ancestor Francois Sirois dit Duplessis are not known with absolute certainty. I have provided some details about the origin of Francois on the last page of this presentation for readers that may be interested. It is likely that Francois spent most of his years living in France in the town of Saint-Germain-en-Laye. Therefore, I visited this former royal town.

On December 18, 1711 Francois signed his name as a witness to the notarized sale of land between Charles Dechennes and Felix Aubert at Kamouraska. His actual arrival date to New France is believed to have been about 1700. Marcel Fournier, a renowned historian and genealogist has recently created a file for Francois Sirois dit Duplessis in his pioneer database (found at <https://archiv-histo.com/pionniers.php>). Due to the dit nickname of Duplessis and his arrival date after 1700, Marcel believes that is reasonable to assume that Francois Sirois dit Duplessis was a soldier in the Marine Troops.

Francois signed both his marriage contracts; this indicates that he had received some education in France.

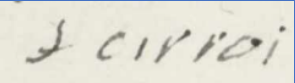
Francois appears to have been well established when he married Marie Anne Thiboutot, a widow, on November 28, 1713, at Riviere Ouelle. His dowry was 500 pounds. Marie-Anne Thiboutot offered her future husband the share of land that belonged to her in the estate of her first husband, Noel Pelletier. Francois and Marie Anne had 5 children between the years of 1714 and 1721, 2 boys and 3 girls. All these children were born and baptized at Riviere Ouelle.

In March of 1721, Francois became a widower with 4 children and one step-daughter (from Marie Anne Thiboutot first marriage to Noel Pelletier). On June 5, 1721, Francois married Marie Francoise Roy. Francois and Marie Francoise had 8 children between the years of 1722 and 1736, 5 boys and 3 girls. At least 6 of these children were also born and baptized at Riviere Ouelle.

Francois worked hard as both a farmer and a fisherman. A 2nd beluga fishing society was formed by the settlers at Riviere Ouelle in 1710. The settlers in the area had fishing rights included in their concession contract, however they did not have the money required for a commercial fishing venture. There were merchants interested in the commercial fishing venture, but they did not have the legal rights, or the labor required. The two parties will undertake various agreements and participate in vigorous disputes over many years. As a settler at Riviere Ouelle, and a husband to a widow previously married to one of the founders of the 2nd fishing society Francois was involved in this activity. And he would eventually own all the land concession at Riviere Ouelle which was originally granted to his first father-in-law Jacques Thiboutot in 1676. This land included six acres of frontage along the St. Lawrence River and was about 250 acres in total.

Alas, famine and disease struck the area in 1737. Francois died as a result and he was buried on November 15, 1737, in Riviere Ouelle.

Francois' Legacy: 11 of his children raised large families; at least 102 grandchildren; almost one million descendants.

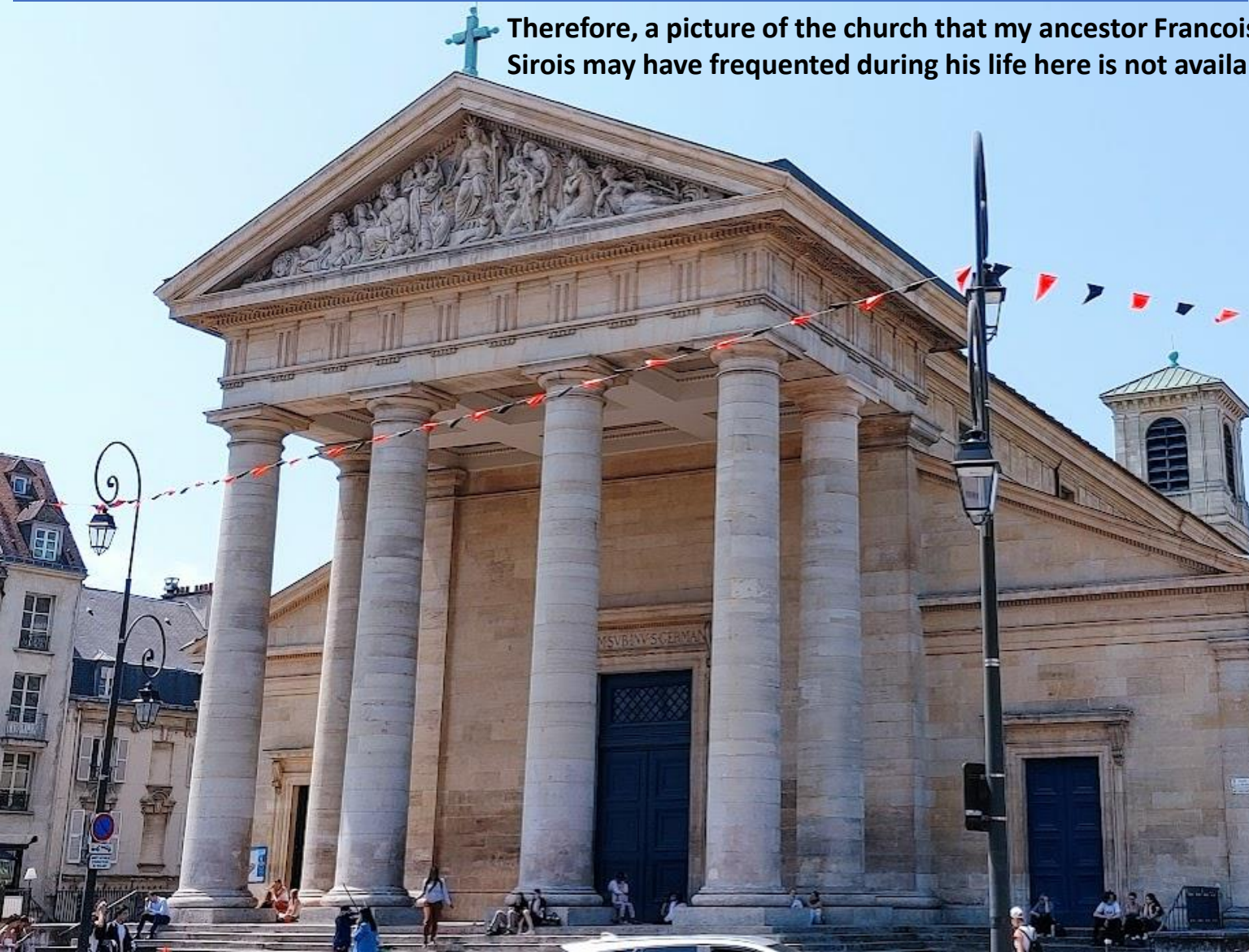


Left: This is an image of Francois Sirois' signature his 1721 marriage contract: "F Cirroi"

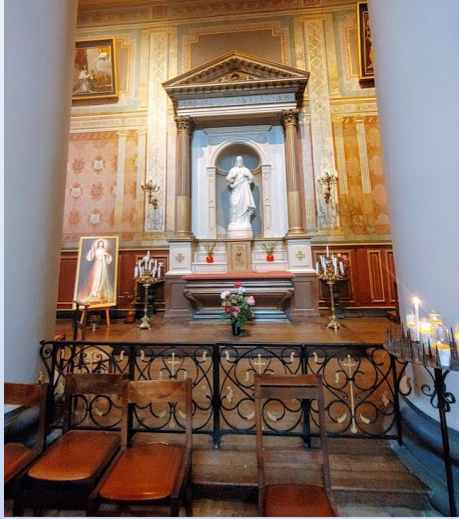
EGLISE SAINT GERMAIN Exterior Views

This is the 4th church erected on the same site. The first church was built around 1020, it was devoted to Saint Vincent & Saint Germain. The 2nd church was built during the reign of Charles V, 14th C and fell into ruins in 1681. Louis XIV had the 3rd church built –it was consecrated in 1683. The 4th church was started in November 1766 but not consecrated until 1829.

Therefore, a picture of the church that my ancestor Francois Sirois may have frequented during his life here is not available.



EGLISE SAINT GERMAIN Interior Views



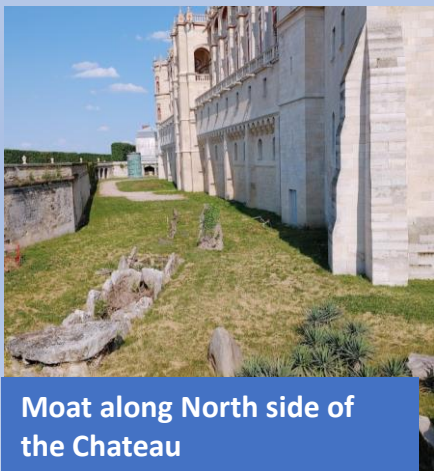

 PRIEURS-CURÉS DE ST GERMAIN-EN-LAYE

 MEMENTOTE PRAEPOSITORVM
 VESTRORVM

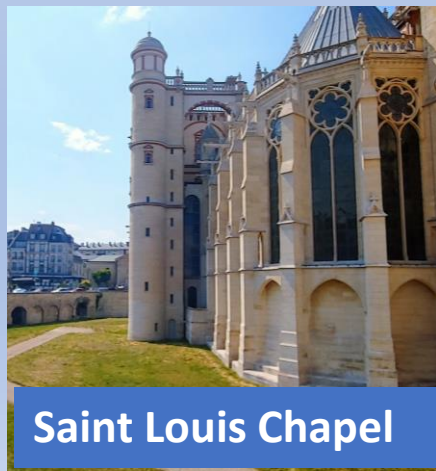
NIVARD	1196
GUILLAUME LEJEUNE	1454
DOMINIQUE BOULARD	1558-1596
JACQUES HEQUET	1596-1628
CLAUDE BENOIST	1628-1637
PIERRE GAGNYÉ	1637-1664
AUGUSTIN NICOLAS GAGNYÉ	1664-1686
RENÉ DE MORNAY DE LA VILLETERRE	1686-1690
FRANÇOIS CONVERSET	1690-1698
JEAN FRANÇOIS DE BENOIST DE CHAZELLE	1698-1729
LOUIS CONYGHAM	1729-1754
JÉRÔME JOSEPH LEGRAND	1754-1786
MARTIAL MELON DE PRADOU	1786-1791

My ancestor Francois Sirois dit Duplessis may not have been baptized at this location but it is likely that he would have visited the 3rd church built on this site that was completed in 1683.

CHATEAU de SAINT-GERMAIN-EN-LAYE A former royal palace, numerous kings of France lived here over the centuries. From King Louis VI in 1122 to Louis XIV who moved the royal court to Versailles in 1682.



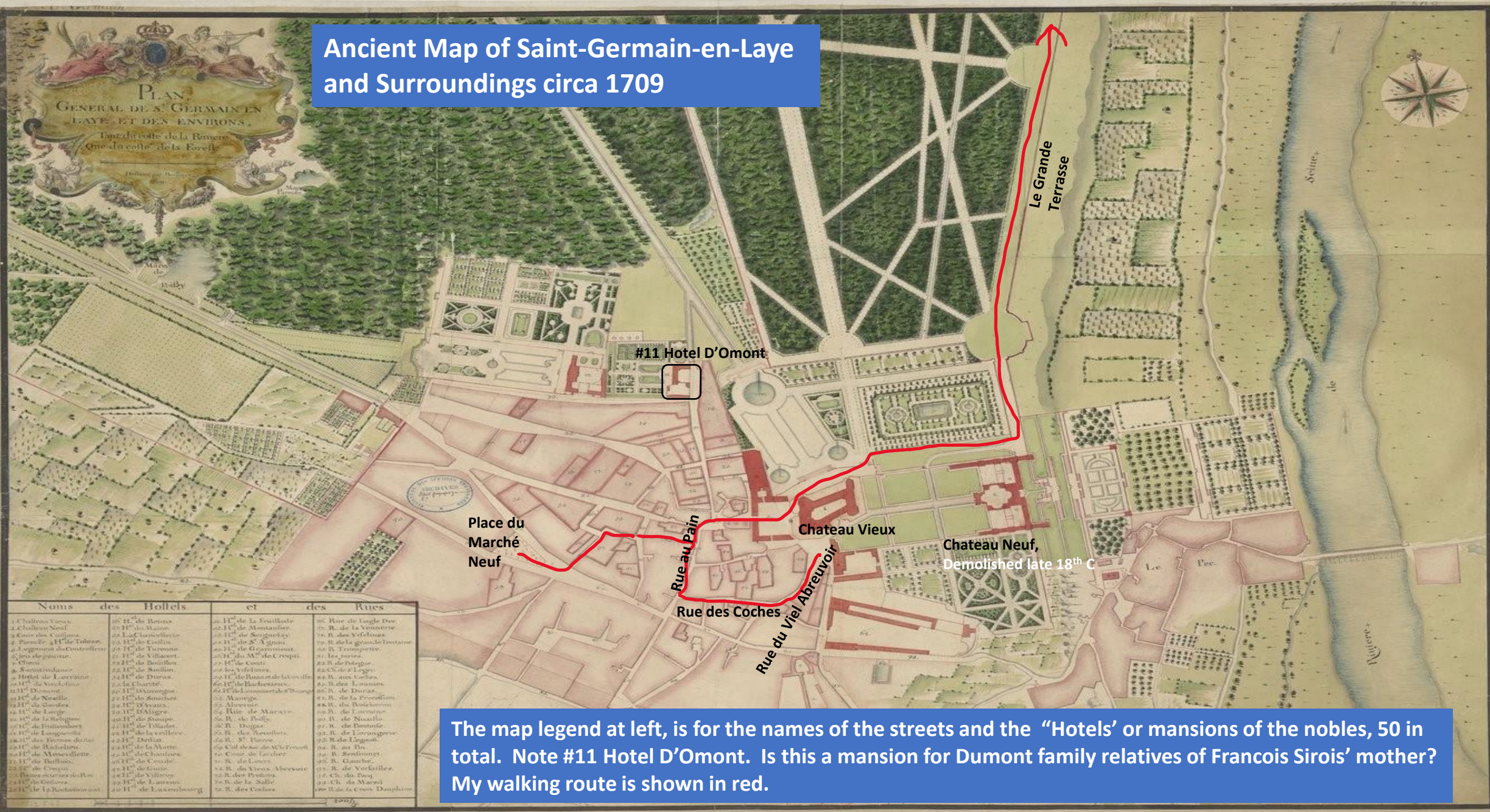
Moat along North side of the Chateau



Saint Louis Chapel

Louis XIV turned the chateau over to King James II of England in 1688 and for more than a century English royalty and nobles lived here. So, during the time that Francois Sirois dit Duplessis lived at Saint-Germain-en-Laye the chateau was not occupied by French royalty. Many royal edicts and peace treaties were signed here, including a significant peace treaty at the end of World War 1. Thanks to Napoleon Bonaparte, it is now an archaeological museum. Unfortunately, it was closed on the day of my visit to the town.

Ancient Map of Saint-Germain-en-Laye and Surroundings circa 1709



Noms des Hôtels et des Rues			
1. Chateau Neuf	20. H. de Beuville	39. H. de la Feuillade	58. Rue de la Vierge
2. Chateau Neuf	21. H. de la Motte	40. H. de Montaubert	59. R. de la Vierge
3. Cour des Capucins	22. H. de la Motte	41. H. de St. Germain	60. R. de la Vierge
4. Cour des Capucins	23. H. de la Motte	42. H. de St. Germain	61. R. de la Vierge
5. Cour des Capucins	24. H. de la Motte	43. H. de St. Germain	62. R. de la Vierge
6. Cour des Capucins	25. H. de la Motte	44. H. de St. Germain	63. R. de la Vierge
7. Cour des Capucins	26. H. de la Motte	45. H. de St. Germain	64. R. de la Vierge
8. Cour des Capucins	27. H. de la Motte	46. H. de St. Germain	65. R. de la Vierge
9. Cour des Capucins	28. H. de la Motte	47. H. de St. Germain	66. R. de la Vierge
10. Cour des Capucins	29. H. de la Motte	48. H. de St. Germain	67. R. de la Vierge
11. Cour des Capucins	30. H. de la Motte	49. H. de St. Germain	68. R. de la Vierge
12. Cour des Capucins	31. H. de la Motte	50. H. de St. Germain	69. R. de la Vierge
13. Cour des Capucins	32. H. de la Motte	51. H. de St. Germain	70. R. de la Vierge
14. Cour des Capucins	33. H. de la Motte	52. H. de St. Germain	71. R. de la Vierge
15. Cour des Capucins	34. H. de la Motte	53. H. de St. Germain	72. R. de la Vierge
16. Cour des Capucins	35. H. de la Motte	54. H. de St. Germain	73. R. de la Vierge
17. Cour des Capucins	36. H. de la Motte	55. H. de St. Germain	74. R. de la Vierge
18. Cour des Capucins	37. H. de la Motte	56. H. de St. Germain	75. R. de la Vierge
19. Cour des Capucins	38. H. de la Motte	57. H. de St. Germain	76. R. de la Vierge
20. Cour des Capucins	39. H. de la Motte	58. H. de St. Germain	77. R. de la Vierge
21. Cour des Capucins	40. H. de la Motte	59. H. de St. Germain	78. R. de la Vierge
22. Cour des Capucins	41. H. de la Motte	60. H. de St. Germain	79. R. de la Vierge
23. Cour des Capucins	42. H. de la Motte	61. H. de St. Germain	80. R. de la Vierge
24. Cour des Capucins	43. H. de la Motte	62. H. de St. Germain	81. R. de la Vierge
25. Cour des Capucins	44. H. de la Motte	63. H. de St. Germain	82. R. de la Vierge
26. Cour des Capucins	45. H. de la Motte	64. H. de St. Germain	83. R. de la Vierge
27. Cour des Capucins	46. H. de la Motte	65. H. de St. Germain	84. R. de la Vierge
28. Cour des Capucins	47. H. de la Motte	66. H. de St. Germain	85. R. de la Vierge
29. Cour des Capucins	48. H. de la Motte	67. H. de St. Germain	86. R. de la Vierge
30. Cour des Capucins	49. H. de la Motte	68. H. de St. Germain	87. R. de la Vierge
31. Cour des Capucins	50. H. de la Motte	69. H. de St. Germain	88. R. de la Vierge
32. Cour des Capucins	51. H. de la Motte	70. H. de St. Germain	89. R. de la Vierge
33. Cour des Capucins	52. H. de la Motte	71. H. de St. Germain	90. R. de la Vierge
34. Cour des Capucins	53. H. de la Motte	72. H. de St. Germain	91. R. de la Vierge
35. Cour des Capucins	54. H. de la Motte	73. H. de St. Germain	92. R. de la Vierge
36. Cour des Capucins	55. H. de la Motte	74. H. de St. Germain	93. R. de la Vierge
37. Cour des Capucins	56. H. de la Motte	75. H. de St. Germain	94. R. de la Vierge
38. Cour des Capucins	57. H. de la Motte	76. H. de St. Germain	95. R. de la Vierge
39. Cour des Capucins	58. H. de la Motte	77. H. de St. Germain	96. R. de la Vierge
40. Cour des Capucins	59. H. de la Motte	78. H. de St. Germain	97. R. de la Vierge
41. Cour des Capucins	60. H. de la Motte	79. H. de St. Germain	98. R. de la Vierge
42. Cour des Capucins	61. H. de la Motte	80. H. de St. Germain	99. R. de la Vierge
43. Cour des Capucins	62. H. de la Motte	81. H. de St. Germain	100. R. de la Vierge

The map legend at left, is for the names of the streets and the "Hotels" or mansions of the nobles, 50 in total. Note #11 Hotel D'Omont. Is this a mansion for Dumont family relatives of Francois Sirois' mother? My walking route is shown in red.



Hotel de la Marquise Maintenon



Further along the RUE DU VIEIL ABREUVOIR
Street Referenced on ancient map.



In the latter part of the 17th century the town developed rapidly. By 1680 Saint-Germain-en-Laye had 12,000 inhabitants. The nobles built numerous mansions –some of which still exist today. The Marquise de Maintenon who was the mistress and later the second wife of King Louis XIV, purchased this mansion in 1680 (built 1643). The wrought iron balcony however dates to 1880

Below: RUE DES COCHES. Since 1700 the street has had this name because it was the departure point of the public “coche” or stagecoaches travelling to neighboring towns including Paris and Versailles. Right: The Hotel de Guise was a private mansion owned by Henri II de Lorraine, Duc de Guise and grandson of the “Balafre” or slashed face a reference to a famous duel fought on the grounds of the Chateau Saint-Germain. *Street Referenced on ancient map.*

Hotel de Guise



More views of RUE DES COCHES



RUE DES VIELLES BOUCHERIES The meat market was held here in the Middle Ages.





RUE AU PAIN

So called since 1667, it has long been considered the main street in the town. It takes its name from the bakers who set out their stalls there on market days.

Referenced on ancient map.



RUE DES ECUYERS (SQUIRES)

So named since 1618,
probably in reference to
the numerous knights
who lived in Saint-
Germain-en-Laye along
with their horsemen.

The first marriage record
for Francois Sirois
includes a unique
description of his
parents back in France:
“son of Jean Sirois and
Marie Therese Dumont
both residing at the
home of the Duke of
Elbeuf being his under
squire at SGeL.”
Could Francois have
spent some of this time
along this street?



Place du Marché Neuf -Referenced on ancient map.

It was market day in the old center of the town.



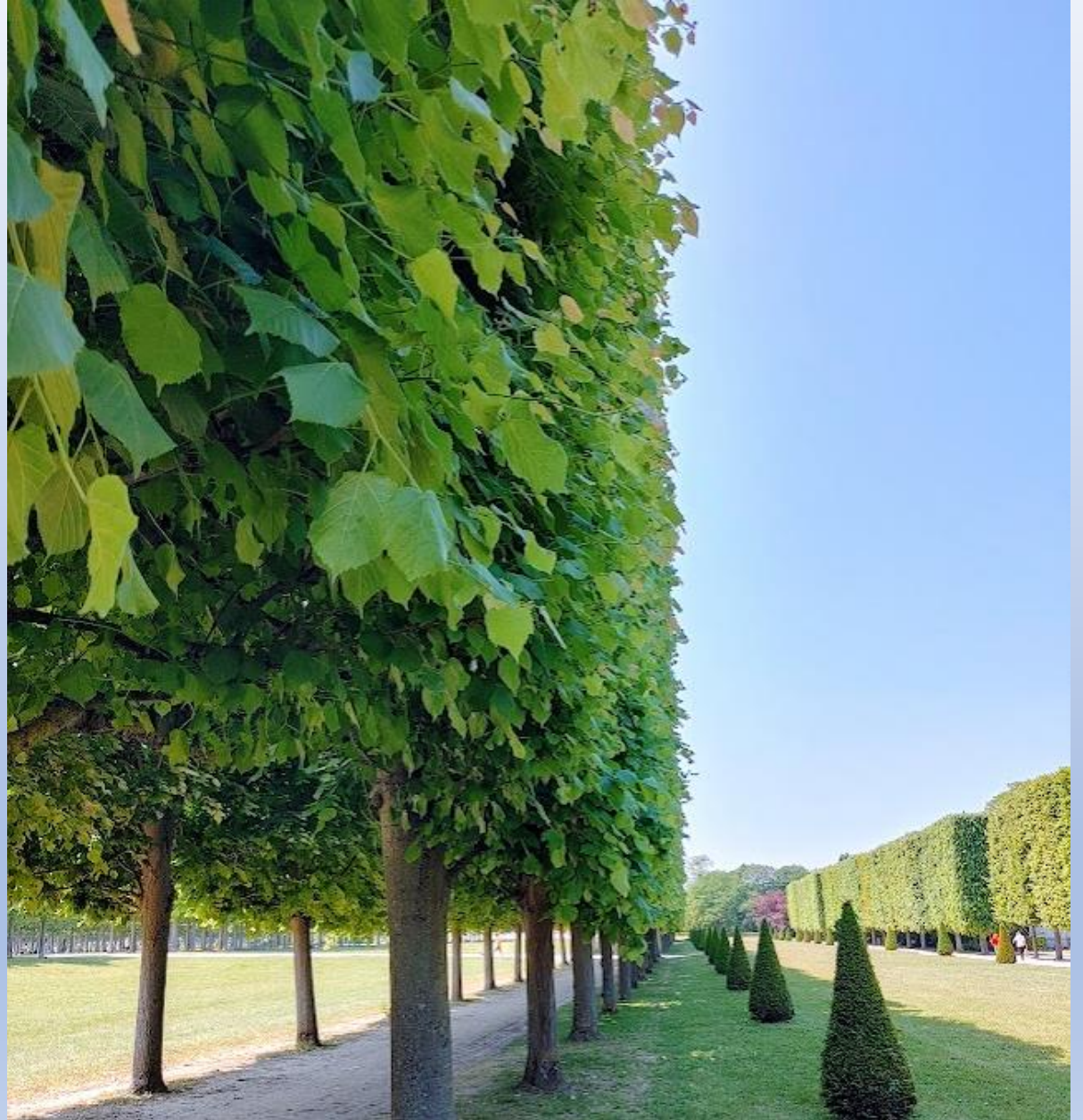
VIEW OF PARIS from the “Terrace”, André Le Nôtre’s landscape masterpiece –a huge balcony over the Seine.



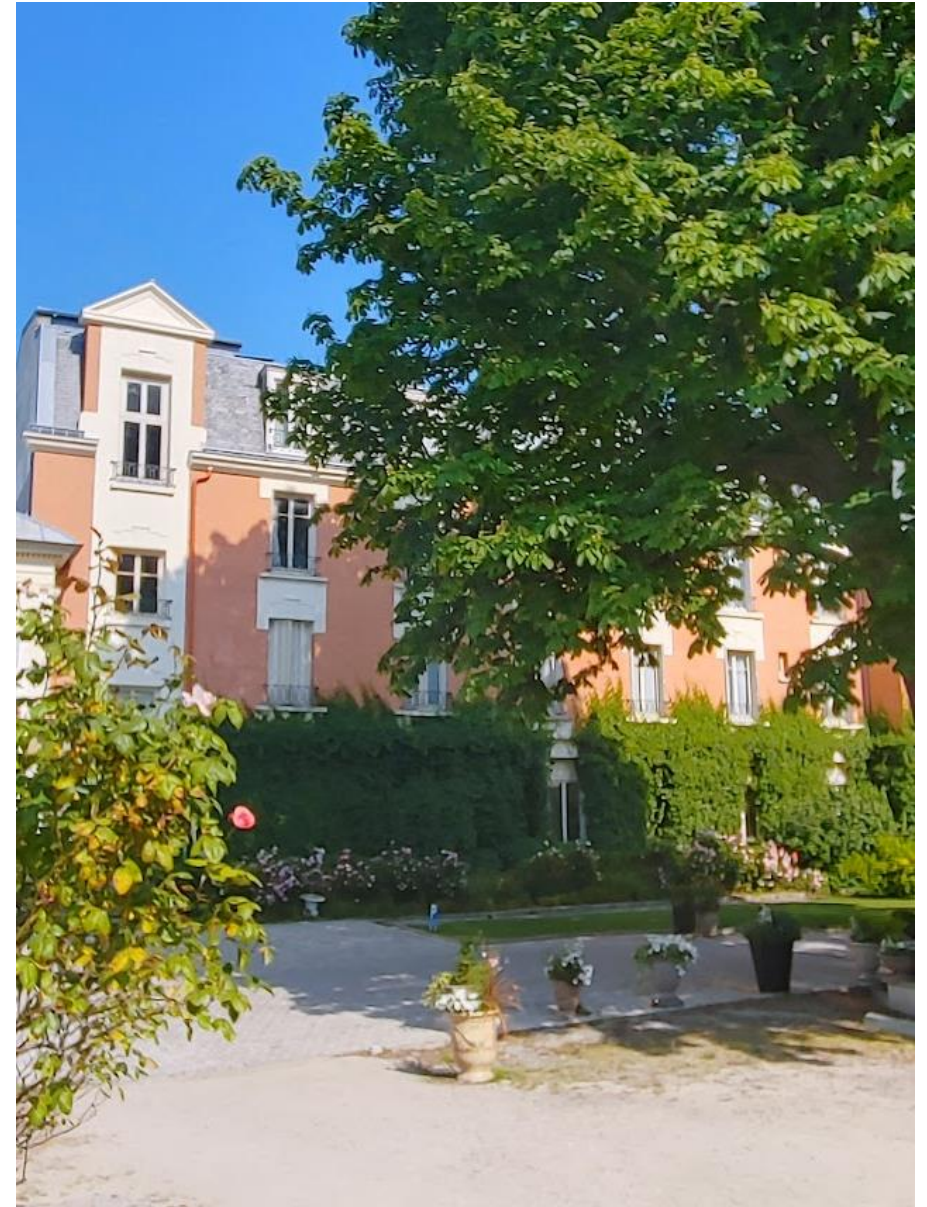
Grande Arche de la Défense

Eiffel Tower

Some views of the "The Terrace" located along the cliffside overlooking the Seine River.



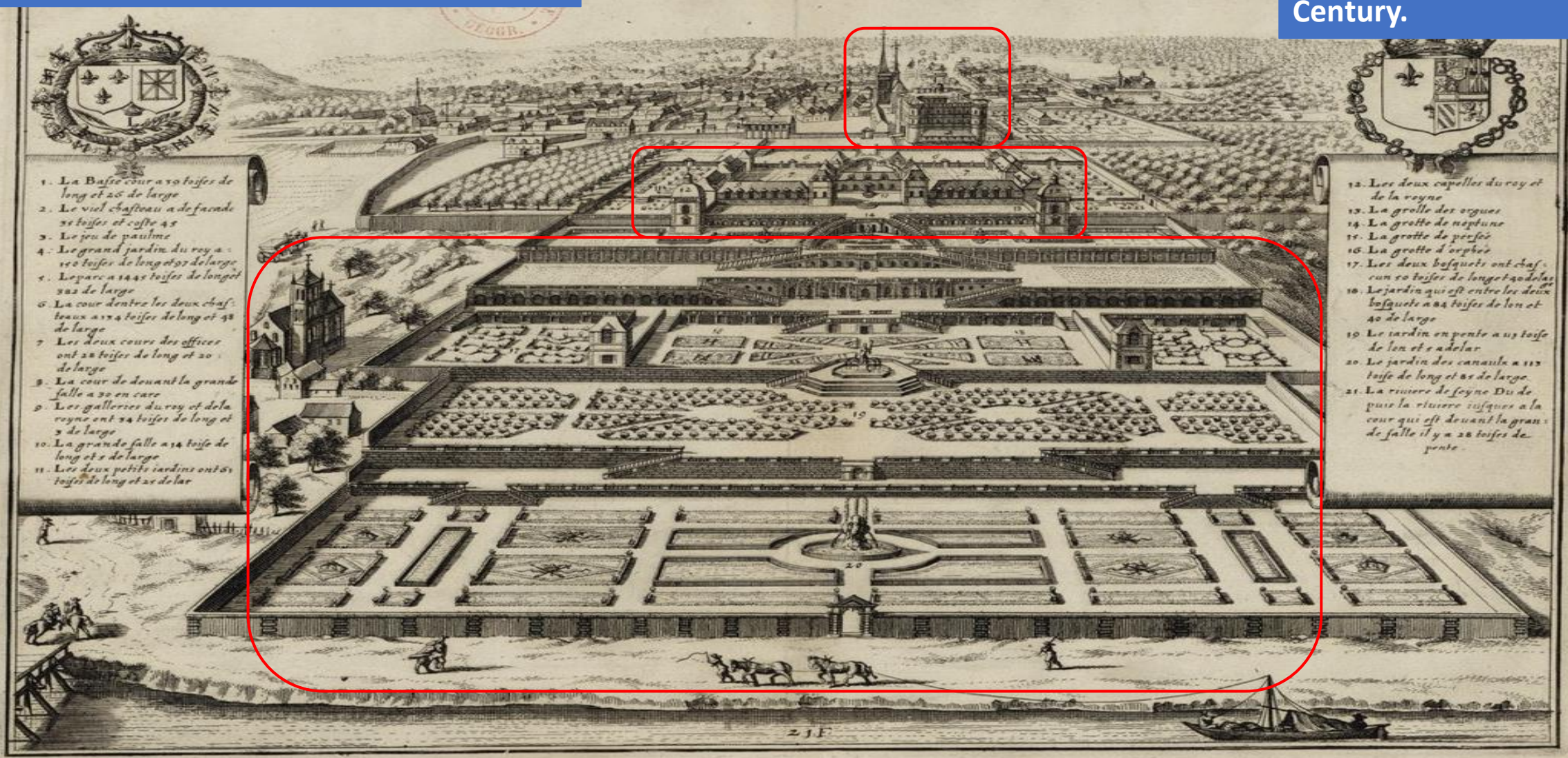
PAVILLON HENRI IV, Restaurant and Hotel are located on the site of the former Chateau Neuf overlooking the Seine River.



Circa 1665. Top Red Outline: Chateau Vieux
 Middle Red Outline: Chateau Neuf
 Bottom Red Outline: 7 Terraces

The Chateau Neuf and Terraces Gardens were demolished in the late 18th Century.

Les Chasteaux Roijaux de S^t GERMAIN en LAYE



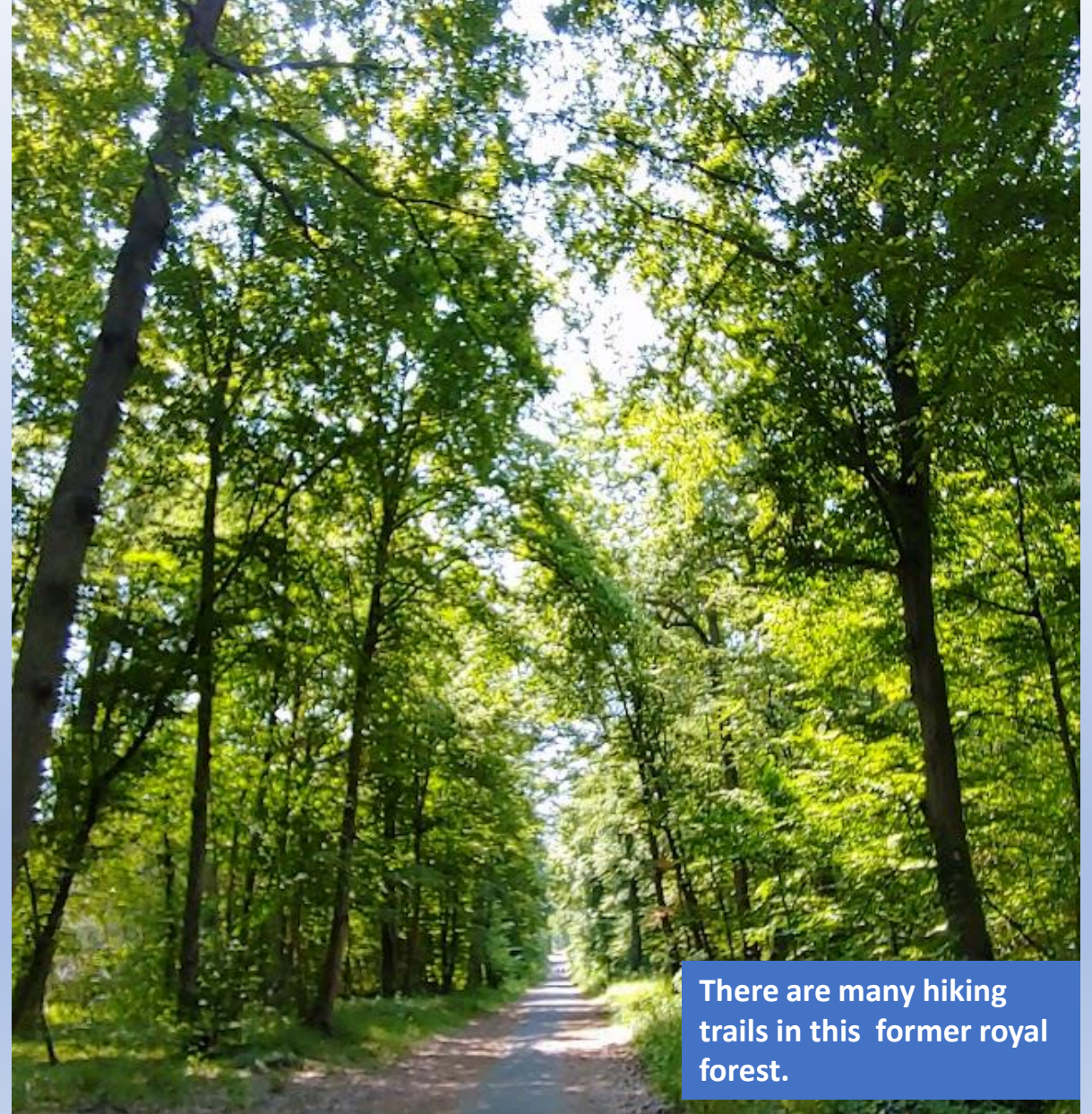
1. La Basse cour a 90 toises de long et 25 de large
2. Le viel chasteau a de facade 36 toises et costé 45
3. Le jeu de paillme
4. Le grand jardin du roy a 150 toises de long et 97 de large
5. Le parc a 3445 toises de long et 322 de large
6. La cour dentre les deux chasteaux a 174 toises de long et 93 de large
7. Les deux cours des officiers ont 28 toises de long et 20 de large
8. La cour de devant la grande salle a 30 en carré
9. Les galleries du roy et de la royne ont 24 toises de long et 3 de large
10. La grande salle a 24 toise de long et 8 de large
11. Les deux petits jardins ont 51 toises de long et 25 de lar

12. Les deux capelles du roy et de la royne
13. La grotte des orgues
14. La grotte de neptune
15. La grotte de persee
16. La grotte d'orphe
17. Les deux bosquets ont chascun 50 toises de long et 40 de large
18. Le jardin qui est entre les deux bosquets a 24 toises de lon et 40 de large
19. Le sardin en pente a 23 toise de lon et 8 a delar
20. Le jardin des canaux a 112 toise de long et 25 de large
21. La riviere de feyne Du de puis la riviere jusques a la cour qui est devant la grande salle il y a 28 toises de pente

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I walked along the terrace to the Forester's House then into the forest and back to the Chateau. Was this a walking route that my ancestor Francois Sirois also took during the years he lived here?



There are many hiking trails in this former royal forest.

HISTORIC SAINT-GERMAIN-EN-LAYE

The history of the town of Saint-Germain-en-Laye (SGeL) has long been linked to the presence of the chateaux which was a regular residence of the kings of France until the mid 17th century. The present chateau and chapel were originally built in the 12th century. This chateau was devastated by a storm in 1390, pillaged in 1415, and occupied by the English in the early 15th century. In 1539, King Francois I sponsored a major transformation of the chateau into the Renaissance style, (it was restored under Napoleon III, to its present form today). The village surrounding the chateau benefitted from the development of trade linked to the court such as taverns and silk merchants. The country inhabitants showed up at increasingly famous fairs (wine growers, plowmen).

From 1559 to around 1600 a second chateau, known as the “Chateau Neuf” was constructed during the reigns of Kings Henri 11 to Henri IV. Terraces, fountains, grottos and gardens from the Chateau Neuf down the Seine River were completed during this time. With this large construction project, the population grew: In 1600 it was 3,540 and in 1640 it was 6,000.

From 1661 to 1682, King Louis XIV spent a significant part of his time in Saint-Germain-en-Laye. He had French gardens and the Grande Terrasse designed by André Le Nôtre between 1663 and 1680. The town developed further at this time and its population reached 12,000 inhabitants in 1680. The nobles built numerous mansions during this time, many of these still exist today, and they are included on the tourist walking routes for the town.

Francois Sirois lived in SGeL from about 1683 to about 1700. The royal court left and moved to Versailles in 1682. This departure resulted in a prolonged decline to the town during the next few centuries. From 1689 until 1701, the exiled King of Great Britain James 11 lived at the chateau. His widow Marie De Modena lived there until 1715.

Side note: Louis de Buade de Frontenac was born in SGeL in 1622. He was a soldier, courtier and Governor General of New France from 1672 to 1682 and again from 1689 to 1698. Is it possible that the New France Governor and my ancestor Francois Sirois crossed paths at some point when Louis de Buade returned to France from 1682 to 1689?

SAINT-GERMAIN-EN-LAYE TODAY

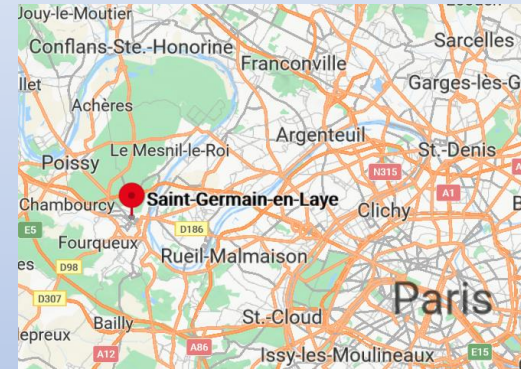
LOCATION: Saint-Germain-en-Laye is located 19km west of Paris. It is a western suburb of Paris, and it occupies most of one of the loops of the Seine River, with its historic city center in the southeast and the national forest dominating the remainder of the commune.

POPULATION: In 2020, just over 44,000.

ECONOMY: Saint-Germain-en-Laye is home, among others, to the headquarters of Ford France, the French subsidiary of the Bose group, Pall France and Cargill France. Saint-Germain is a school town with at least forty primary and secondary education establishments.

My visit to the historic town of Saint-Germain-en-Laye started with a brisk walk to the old market square, as I arrived just before noon, and was unsure how long the market would be open. After visiting the market, I purchased a baguette and a very nice pastry from the Boulangerie du Chateau, for a picnic lunch in the former royal forest. I walked along the grand terrace, which overlooks the Seine River. Paris was visible from here, but the smog had to clear, and the pictures included on previous slides here were taken late in the afternoon.

The forest was lovely to walk in as the temperature soared to more than 30 degrees during my visit. After my forest walk, I visited the tourist center. As I walked along the suggested walking routes I passed by small cafes, restaurants, small shops and outlets for popular French and International brands. I enjoyed a beer at Le Soubise open air café in the Charles de Gaulle Plaza before taking the RER to return to Paris. Many of the other patrons (mostly French) enjoyed coke and ice cream!



THE ORIGIN OF FRANCOIS SIROIS DIT DUPLESSIS

My ancestor Francois has proved to be a very difficult ancestor to find definitive documents for his France origins.

There is no “Fichier Origine” file for Francois Sirois dit Duplessis.

TJ Laforest has written a chapter about Francois in Volume 20 of “Our French-Canadian Ancestors”. The chapter starts with some key questions: about the meaning of Sirois as a surname? what is the origin of Duplessis? Why did Francois leave his homeland? No answers were found or provided.

Many of my ancestors appear in “Ces Villes et Villages” whereby a team of researchers from Quebec and France have compiled short dossiers (birth, marriage, burial details) for many French born pioneers of New France. Although there are 23 entries for the town of Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Francois Sirois does not appear.

A distant cousin has recently completed extensive research that includes searching through many archival records in France. He has concluded that Francois most likely was not actually born in Saint-Germain-en-Laye. A birth certificate for a Francois Siroy dated 1673, at Seraincourt (a nearby town) records his father’s name as Jean and his mother as Pacquette Bourdillion. See FamilySearch.com for details.

Francois was married twice, and the two notarial documents (both were prepared by the same notary) state his French origins slightly different. In the first marriage notary document “Francois Sirois Duplesy, son of Jean Syrois dit Duplesy and Marie Theresse Dumon, lived in St. Germain [En Laye], diocese of Paris, both lived with the Duke of Alboeu and his under squire” In the second marriage document “Francois Sirois dis Duplesy living in the seigneurie of La Bouteillerie, born native of St Germain En les, Bishop of Paris, son of the late Jean Sirois and Marie Angelique dumon, his father and mother”

There are 3 issues with the Seraincourt birth certificate document. First, the location of Seraincourt. It is possible that while Francois was born there, but he lived most of his life in Saint-Germain-en-Laye after his father re-located there on or before 1683. If Francois lived in SGeL from 1683 onward until he left France, he would have spent most of his life in SGeL and he therefore considered it be the town in France where he was from. Second the date of 1673, does not agree with the age of 33 that Francois provided in the parish record for his first marriage. If he was 33 in 1713, then his birth date would be 1680. It is possible that Francois lied about his age to improve his suitability as a husband. Third, the name of his mother. He stated her name as Marie Angelique Dumont, but the birth certificate names Pacquette Bourdillion. It is possible that Marie Dumont was a second wife for Jean Sirois, (no actual marriage record has been found for either woman). Perhaps Francois considered his step-mother as his actual mother and provided her name to honor her.

The bottom line here is that it is likely that Francois Sirois did spend most of the years he lived in France at Saint-Germain-en-Laye and that is why I chose to visit this suburb of Paris.