

Welcome to Croissy's Historical Pavilion /PHL

During fourth century, Croissy was a gallo roman farm. We suppose the name of the first man living here was « Crocus », and the village name was then Crociacum and then later became Croissy.

In the year eight hundred and fifty (850), people from North Europe (Normand) landed here.

They wanted to go to St Denis's abbey near Paris as it was a very rich abbey, but the King's army pushed them back.

They landed again in Croissy and then slaughtered all village residents and ravaged all the land which was then laid fallow.

Here you can see the story written by a monk to his bishop.

The place was called Malus Portus or Mala Mansio (as in Malmaison, a town just over the river from Croissy).

A long time passed, before the people came back to Croissy.

The Croissy coat of arms or Emblem shows: a fortified castle, Jean Chanorier's coat of arms (3 golden triangles, The river, Gardening tools and vegetables, A merino sheep's head).

In the town hall is kept one example of an original "measurement" representing one « meter ». A modern copy of this is embedded in a wall in « la rue au Mètre ».

In about the year 1200 (one thousand two hundred), the Lords built fortified castles. They were farmers and wine growers. (We suppose that the wine was not as good as Burgundy!) A church was built and dedicated to St Martin and St Leonard. It was the village church until 1881 (one thousand eight hundred and eighty one).

During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the church was not looked after as the Lords were Huguenots, and Croissy was a very poor village, unknown to anybody.

However, as Croissy is situated on the road from Paris to St Germain-en-Laye, people from the King's and Queen's Houses: chambermaids, preachers, apothecaries, ..., stayed in Croissy.

During the seventeenth century, Queen Anne d'Autriche, (King's Louis XIII's wife) came here and prayed in the hope of having a child.

In gratitude for her prayers being granted, Louis XIV was born, she gave money to restore the church. She donated a lectern which was restored a few years ago. The photo of it is in next room, as the original lectern is now in a safe place.

Previously, fortified castles were built here, but the existing one, built in 1754 (seventeen fifty four) has been recently restored. It is just over here.

Agricultural growth was expanded a little, as the lords gave land to the villagers.

During the Revolution in 1793, Joséphine, the widow of General Alexandre de Beauharnais stayed in Croissy with her two children. Eugène, the boy, was apprenticed to the local carpenter and Hortense, the girl, apprenticed to a dressmaker.

Later on, Joséphine married Napoléon, Eugène became a lord in Germany and Hortense married Napoléon's brother and became the Queen of Holland.

During the French Revolution the village stayed quiet.

The last Lord of Croissy, Jean Chanorier, built wells, norias (water powered machines used to lift water), the school, which was surely one of the first schools in France. He helped with the breeding of the merino sheep and built a wall around the village as wild animals destroyed harvests. In the sheepfold there were more than 300 sheep and lambs.

Jean Chanorier was the last Lord of Croissy but became the first Mayor.

Around 1880 (one thousand eight hundred and eighty), Croissy counted 500 inhabitants and the beginnings of market gardening took place.

A lot of people came here from Brittany to cultivate the soil. They came by walking from their villages to Croissy. Then they often married girls from Croissy and so in our town some people's name are of Breton origin (Le Guelvenec, Le Goff, Nedelec...).

In 1837 (eighteen hundred and thirty seven), the first railways linked Paris to St Germain-en-Laye and stopped in Chatou station. Horse drawn carriages took passengers then to the river as Parisians were fond of picnics and used to come here on Sundays.

Then in 1860 (eighteen hundred and sixty), as they loved dancing and bathing in the river Seine, « La Grenouillère » was created.

Later on, rich families built large and beautiful houses on river bank.

About the same time, bridges were built to link together Croissy and Bougival.

So part of Croissy was a resort and the other part, a market garden and this for one hundred and fifty years.

Croissy was a major provider of vegetables and was known as « The Queen of the Central Foodmarket of Paris ».

Market gardeners gathered carrots, leeks, turnips and parsnips, loaded them in carts, driven by horses, or more recently motors, and unloaded them in the food market during the night so as to be ready early in the morning to sell them.

During those years market gardening flourished.

As the population was increasing, a new church was built in 1880 (eighteen eighty).

In 1900 (nineteen hundred), Croissy was a village of 2000 (two thousand) inhabitants.

Croissy is 10 km from Versailles and 18 from Paris, agricultural lands became lands where houses started to be built .

In beginning of the 20th century, a teacher, Mr Brochet, made a prediction « one day there will be no more market gardeners but only houses”. As it is nowadays. Mr Brochet’s photo is in next room.

Markets gardeners started leaving Croissy and the last one left in 2002 (two thousand and two).

During the First and Second World wars, some villagers lost their lives. The village itself did not suffer but the bridges were destroyed.

In 1970 (nineteen seventy), there were 7000 (seven thousand) inhabitants.

Now Croissy is no more a village but a lovely little town with 10 000 (ten thousand) inhabitants.

In the second part of the Pavilion, you can see some of the tools which were used by market gardeners and you can visit at your leisure.

VOCABULARY

Arrosage = watering Arroser = to water Arrosoir = watering can

Bêche = spade
(turnwrest plow *US*) Binette = hoe Brabant = swivel plough

Brouette = weel barrow Charron = wheelwright

Carottes = carrots Charrette = cart Charrue = plough or plow (*US*)

Dirigeable = blimp *The blimp landed on the crops*

L'enclume = the anvil

Faucille = reaping hook Fléau = flail Forgeron = blacksmith

Maréchal ferrant = farrier La forge = the smithy

Herse = harrow Houe, binette = hoe

Navets = turnips

Panais = parsnips Pompe à bras = hand pump Poireau = leek

Radis = radish

Selle = saddle Semoir = seed-drill Serpette = bill-hook

Tamis = sieve

Van = winnowing basket Vignoble = vineyard

Maraîchage = market gardening

Market gardening is the relatively small-scale production of fruits, vegetables and flowers as cash crops, frequently sold directly to consumers and restaurants.