



Fort of Québec, illustration in Champlain, *Les voyages du sieur de Champlain Xaintongeois*, 1613



Québec, n.d.

QUEBEC

DESCRIBED

1676, 1684

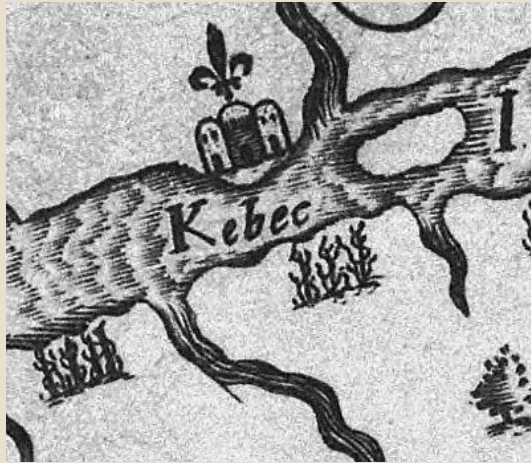
LETTER from Father Jean Enjalran, S.J.,
to a Jesuit official in France,
13 October 1676, excerpts

I may say to you that Quebek is, in regard to its situation, one of the most beautiful ports in the world, and one that would be very suitable as the location of a fine city. However, it is nothing but a very pretty village, which is divided into a lower and an upper town. In the lower town are the warehouses and residences of the merchants, which give it a fine appearance. In the upper town are the houses of monseigneur the bishop; he is building a very fine edifice for himself and all his ecclesiastics, whom he is training there, with about thirty youths of the country, to supply with them the parishes which are being formed in various places.

There also are the house of Monsieur the governor, the fort, the house of Monsieur the intendant, the houses of the hospital and Ursuline nuns, who are magnificently lodged; and finally, our house or college [of the Jesuit missionaries], which is finer on the outside than convenient within. Our church is, however, as beautiful and as large as the church of the college of Puy. We saw it consecrated, and the feast of St. Ignatius was observed there as magnificently as one can observe it in France. Our house bears the name of college, and there is an endowment for three masters. . . .

That is what I can tell you of our house and of Quebec, where there are in all not more than a hundred houses and eight hundred persons. They reckon in Canada more than ten thousand French people, many of whom have much trouble to live.

Excerpted, some paragraphing inserted, and images added by the National Humanities Center, 2006: www.nhc.rtp.nc.us/pds/pds.htm. 1676 of Fr. Jean Enjalran in *Relation of New France, 1676-1677* (Jesuit Relations). 1684 letter from Baron de Lahontan in Lahontan, *Nouveaux Voyages en Amérique Septentrionale* (New Voyages to North-America), English ed., 1703, Vol. I, Letter III. Complete image credits at www.nhc.rtp.nc.us/pds/amerbegin/imagecredits.htm.



Kebec, detail of map by Marc Lescarbot, *Figure de la Terre Neuve*, drawn in 1609, published in *Histoire de la Nouvelle-France*, 1612

LETTER from Louis Armand, Baron de Lahontan, 15 May 1684, excerpts

Quebec is the Metropolitan of New-France, being most a league in circumference . . .

Quebec is divided into the upper and the lower city. The merchants live in the latter, for the conveniency of the harbor; upon which they have built very fine houses, three story high, of a sort of stone that's as hard as marble. The upper of high city is full as populous, and as well adorn'd as the lower.

Both cities are commanded by a castle, that stands upon the highest ground. This castle is the residence of the governors, and affords them not only convenient apartments, but the noblest and most extensive prospect in the world. . . .

Those who live on the river side, in the lower city, are not half so much pinched with the cold, as the inhabitants of the upper; besides that the former have a peculiar conveniency of transporting in boats, corn, wood, and other necessaries, to the very doors of their houses; but as the latter are more exposed to the injuries of the cold, so they enjoy the benefit and pleasure of a cooler summer.

The way which leads from the one city to the other is pretty broad, and adorned with houses on each side; only 'tis a little steep. Quebec stands upon a very uneven ground; and its houses are not uniform. . . . The intendant lives in a bottom, at some small distance from the side of a little river, which by joining the River of St. Laurence, coops up the city in a right angle. His house is the palace in which the Sovereign Council assembles four times a week; and on one side of which, we see great magazines of ammunitions and provisions.

There are six churches in the high city: the Cathedral consists of a bishop, and twelve prebendaries (priests), who live in common in the chapter-house, the magnificence and architecture of which is truly wonderful. . . . The second church is that of the Jesuits, which stands in the center of the city; it is a fair, stately and well lighted edifice. . . . The third church is that of the Recollects (Franciscans) . . . The fourth church is that of the Ursulines [nuns], which has been burn'd

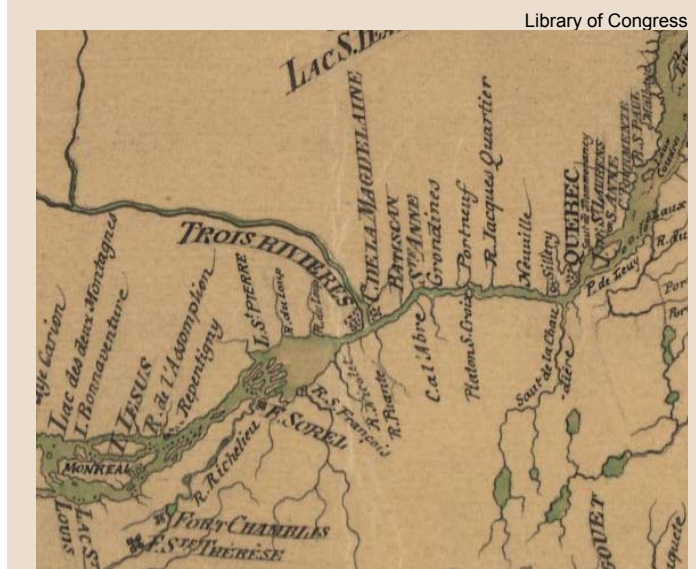


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Franquelin, *Amérique septentrion.le . . . en l'année 1685 & 1686*, detail

down two or three times, and still rebuilt to the advantage. The fifth is that of the hospital-order [nuns], who take particular care of the sick . . .

The way of travelling in the winter, whether in town or country, is that of sledges drawn by horses; who are so insensible of the cold, that I have seen fifty or sixty of 'em in January and February stand in the snow up to their breast, in the midst of a wood, without ever offering to go near their owner's house. In the winter-time they travel from Quebec to Monreal upon the Ice, the river being then frozen over; and upon the occasion these sledges will run you fifteen leagues a day. As for their travelling in summer, I shall transmit you an account of it, when I come to be better informed.



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Mon[tr]eal (bottom left) and Quebec (upper right) on the St. Lawrence River



Jean Baptiste Louis Franquelin, *Amérique septentrionale* [i.e. septentrionale] . . . en l'année 1685 & 1686, early 20th-century copy of 1688 manuscript