

## Orléans port

### Its rehabilitation

Thriving, the port brought prosperity to Orléans until the middle of the XIXth century, when it began to decline soon after the apparition of steam navigation, the improvement of road substructures and, finally, the extension of French railway.

### General stock room of France

Since the beginning of the XVIIth century, Orléans port had to go through numerous transformations due to its increasing traffic and fame. It was first a general stock room of France, on a three-way crossroad: terrestrial ways for the Centre and the North, the two others, South-West and South-East, being fluvial ways. It carried out the distribution of the different products from Low Loire, Bourgogne and the colonies to Paris.

At the same time the port was in development, the city was building its urban background: Royal Street and Royal Bridge are a wonderful example of it.

### Arrival of railways and decline

After a brief enthusiasm following the introduction of steam navigation in 1829 and the opening of Paris-Orléans railway in 1843, Orleans port declined because of the development of transport substructures in France. In 1850, The Loire is deserted in Orléans and the port degenerated.

### Loire navigation renewal

However, navigation tradition in the Loire Valley stayed particularly fixed in Orléans inhabitants' mind. Nowadays, and thanks to the Loire festival occurring every two years (<http://www.festivaldeloire.com>), Orléans and the Loire River host the boats that used to navigate during the glorious times of Orléans port again.

### A city turned to its river again

The port brought Orléans wealth and fame until the middle of the XIXth century and it is now rediscovered and rehabilitated thanks to the efforts of the city council. The rehabilitation of the lock of Orléans canal and the building of a new port authority next to it is a perfect example of the will of Orléans to promote the Royal River. Orléans, obviously turned toward its past but determined not to turn its back to its future, chose to rehabilitate its fluvial substructures.

