



Vézelay

Avallon

Mornan

Soyons

Châtel-Censoir

and «le Canal du Nivernais»

The origin of the name

Sometime around 500 AD, during the reign of king Clovis, St Censure who was the 9th bishop of Auxerre had some land in our village and thus gave his name to the village, Castrum-Censurium.

It is not until the 7th century that the earliest evidence of the name in recorded history appears in the bishop of Auxerre's Cartulary. The inhabitants of Châtel-Censoir are called Castelcensoriens and Castelcenoriennes.

Location

The village of around 650 people is situated not far from the "Parc Naturel Régional du Morvan". The limestone rock in the South is part of the large coral reef of the Jurassic period and in the South West is part of the Parisian Basin.

The village is situated in the heart of a large clearing in the middle of forests like an amphitheater by the river Yonne. Forest, water and stone has played a major part in the local economy.

The headland at the end of the plateau of the "Montorés", between the valley of the river Yonne and the valley of the stream of Ausson, dominates the basin where the rivers meet. The particularities of the site gave rise to the higher town and the lower towns.

The High Town

This was a citadel and was the seat of political, military as well as spiritual power and from 1618 also of learning with the collegiate church of St Potentien.

Firmly rooted in the Burgundy territory, it is facing l'Île de France towards the North. The proximity of Paris has had a great impact on the population. It remains an aristocratic city crowned with 16th and 18th century beautiful houses which were often refurbished. Its elegant port is dominated by the collegiate church of St Potentien.



The Lower Town

It was mainly the city of the common people, the parishioners but also the city where trade, work, crafts, farming with 6 farms within the city walls and finally people working on the river. In the 18th century, a change occurred with wood merchant aristocrats installing themselves followed eventually by political power in the

19th century.

The Lower Town originally situated in the basin where the two rivers meet, extended to the valleys nearby, over the hills and in the valley towards the railway station in 1886.



Tourist lodging

- Petit Port camp site between the river Yonne and the Nivernais canal
- VVF: Family Holiday Village

Celebrities

- Edme Champion (1764-1852) also called 'Small Blue Coat' who was the first one to organize meals for people in need in Paris. His house is at 18 rue Champion and he is buried in the 'Père Lachaise' cemetery in Paris.
- Achille Tenaille de Vaulabelle (1799-1879) who was the author of the "History of both Restorations" and the Education Minister from July till October 1848. The house

where he was born is at 10 rue Vaulabelle.

- the Cotteau brothers with Edmond who was the Mayor of the city between 1830 and 1870 and Gustave (1818-1894) who founded the "Yonne Academy of Sciences".
- Group captain Rozanoff (1905-1954) who was a test pilot for Dassault on "Mystère 4).

Main remarkable features

P: 6 boards (pulpits) with information on the history of the place

1- the citadel: a large postern beneath the last tower left over from a total of seven towers and two small posterns, one in the north and one in the south, all part of the defensive system of the city walls. Some beautiful houses can also be seen.

2- the collegiate church of St Potentien with inside, in the nave, a panel and an exhibition giving some information on the history and the building of the church. In the western apse some pre-Romanesque capitals can be seen. The chapter house and the sacristy conceal a pictorial treasure and a collection of 12th century enameled tiles with yellow decoration on a red background which are unique in Burgundy. However, they cannot be seen!

3- Square pigeon houses indicate the lord's right to keep pigeons.

4- Lovely view over the river Yonne valley and the St Pèlerin rocks and the tower, the Nivernais canal that joined the river Seine to the river Loire through the river Yonne in 1842, over

the Petit Port campsite where the first rafts of wood destined for Paris were made in 1547 and which is also the nearest nautical halt to Vézelay. To reach the canal climb few steps down to the rue de la Fontaine.

5- The St Fiacre washhouse which is the oldest one in the village (1764). In the recess stands a polychrome statue of St Fiacre.

6- In the rue de Magny, just before the level crossing of the garden of the Pâtis, a panel briefly tells the story of the floating of logs down the river. A piece of reconstructed wood raft is found there.

7- Nautical halt and panels with information on the Nivernais canal and on the tow path which is now a cycle track.

8- the Petit Port campsite.

9- Vaulabelle House at 10 rue Vaulabelle (1742).

10- 1750-1800 : Montjoie House (rue du Moulin).

11- 1790-1810 : Family De Vaux castle, 4 rue du Cotteau, along the stream of Ausson, at the back of the rue des Bordes.

12- Formerly the St François Home and now a holiday cottage on the Place Aristide Briand.

13- The Berthier house at 31 rue Cotteau

14- the floating of the logs quarter in the cul de sac of Villiers with two well preserved wells.

15- City Hall (1842) place Aristide Briand.

16- Formerly the village school at 36 rue Cotteau, now a surgery.

17- Colonel Rozanoff's stela in the street of the same name. He was a test pilot who lived in Châtel-Censoir and who died in a demonstration flight in 1954.

18-19- Several water mills on the stream including the Vannoise mill in the rue du Moulin.

20-21- Washhouses on the Ausson stream in the rue de la Fontaine.

