

The English were the first Europeans to inhabit this area. In 1754, General John Winslow's soldiers and 11 families settled at Teconnet Falls, presently Fort Halifax in Winslow, which then included the west side of the Kennebec, today's Waterville. Prior to that time, Native Americans migrated through the region during certain seasons. One of their burial grounds was located near the Lockwood mills.

By 1777, development was such that the first of several dams was built to power sawmills, grist mills, and other small industries. A small shipyard, built in 1794, operated for the next 56 years on the present site of the Lockwood/Hathaway parking lot.

On June 23, 1802, the west bank of Winslow was incorporated into a separate town called Waterville. Most of its first settlers were of Scotch-Irish-English descent, but there were a few French Huguenots as well, among them Dr. Stephen Thayer. It was not until the late 1820's that French-Canadians from Quebec came to live in Maine.

THE MUSEUM IN THE STREETS® focuses on the latter, the largest ethnic minority to settle in Waterville during the 19th and early 20th centuries. The "Museum" tour will walk you through the heart of their community, an area in the south end of the city commonly called "The Plains," which runs from the Lockwood Mills to the end of Water Street and west to, but not including, Silver Street. It was here that the earliest French-Canadian settlers worked, lived, shopped, played, and worshipped. This was very much a self-contained community, with its own French dialect, its bilingual schools, a variety of stores, a movie theater, bars, a sports center, and churches, both Catholic and Protestant. Among other sites, you will see the original home of Jean-Baptiste Mathieu — purportedly the first French-Canadian settler in Waterville — and his wife, Sarah Dostie, who came here from Beauceville, Quebec in 1827 and settled in their Water Street home in 1831.

The 1830 census shows some 20 French-Canadians (1% of the town population) living here. By the time of the American Civil War (early 1860's), their numbers had grown to 544 (12.5%). In 1851, they built their first Roman Catholic church, St. John's, at the east end of Grove Street, which was replaced some twenty years later by the

new, larger, more centrally located St. Francis de Sales, on Elm Street. They saw Peter Bolduc open his business in 1862, the first store to be operated by one of their own.

Prior to the early 1870's, over 85% of Waterville's French-speaking population had come from just two small towns — Beauceville and St. Georges de Beauce — but as the Lockwood mills expanded and new industries flourished, there was a veritable rush of immigrants from Quebec coming down to Waterville to find work and a better life. By 1890, the combined French-Canadian (immigrants) and Franco-American (native-born descendants) population had grown to 3,228, or 43% of the city's population, a percentage which has remained virtually unchanged to this day.

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THE MUSEUM IN THE STREETS®

*A heritage walking tour
of the City of Waterville, Maine.*



Welcome to
WATERVILLE

1 IMMIGRATION
L'IMMIGRATION

2 WORKERS AT THE LOCKWOOD
COTTON MILL
LES OUVRIERS DU MOULIN DE
COTON LOCKWOOD

3 BUSINESSES ON WATER STREET
LES COMMERCES DE WATER
STREET

4 EDGAR R. POULIN

5 THE "MAYOR" OF
WATER STREET
LE "MAIRE" DE WATER
STREET

6 NOTRE-DAME PARISH
LA PAROISSE
NOTRE-DAME

7 SOUTH END ARENA ON
KING STREET
SOUTH END ARENA,
SUR LA RUE KING

8 HOME OF THE FIRST
FRENCH-CANADIAN
SETTLER
LA MAISON DU PREMIER
CANADIEN-FRANCAIS DE
WATERVILLE

9 THE SECOND BAPTIST
CHURCH
LA SECOND BAPTIST
CHURCH

10 TROLLEY LINES
IN WATERVILLE
LE TRAMWAY À
WATERVILLE

