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Places Statistias, de la Carrière
et d'Alliance à Nancy
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NANCY TOURISME
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PLACE STANISLAS

After the death of Leopold, Duke of Lorraine, King Louis XV entrusted his father-in-law, Stanislas Leszczynski, former king of Poland, with the duchy of Lorraine in order to prepare the unification of the Lorraine territory to the kingdom of France. Therefore, in 1737, Stanislas Leszczynski was the last sovereign Duke of Lorraine until he died in 1766. After that date, the Lorraine territory became part of the kingdom of France. All along his thirty years of reign, during which he lived on royal incomes, he undertook considerable works to establish the king's authority on the territory. As part of these works, he entrusted architect Emmanuel Héré with the construction of the 'Place Stanislas'.

In the eighteenth century, the city of Nancy was composed of two parts: the Old Town ('Ville Vieille'), surrounded by battlements and extending from the former royal gate (current 'Arc Héré') to the Craffe gate ('Porte de la Craffe'), and the New Town ('Ville Neuve') imagined by the Duke Charles III and surrounded by a compound wall. Between the two towns, a wasteland prevented to draw a connection between these two architectural ensembles. On request from the Duke Stanislas, architect Emmanuel Héré began the construction of a Place Royale, current 'Place Stanislas,' that would link the two towns together. Its construction took place between the years 1752 and 1755.

The main feature of the 'Place Stanislas' is to be a Place Royale, built in honour of Louis XV, the king of France. The, a great number of royal symbols are to be observed, starting with the royal statue in the center of the square, which, until 1831, represented the king of France. At that date, it was replaced with the current statue representing Stanislas Leszczynski. Other elements are meant to refer to the kingdom of France: the gold foils sitting on top of the ironworks of the railings, the fleur-de-lis settings on the railings and the Gallic cockerels covering the capitals overhanging the pilasters of the different railings.

The second feature that makes the 'Place Stanislas' unique is the fact that it is a semi-open square. Indeed, the square is not surrounded by buildings of identical height. North of the square, in the direction of the 'Arc Héré', the buildings are lower for historical and military reasons.

Eventually, one last feature of this square is that its angles are open, allowing it to serve many places such as the 'Pépinière' park.



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PLACE STANISLAS

As for its architecture, the 'Place Stanislas' was built in a classic style typical of the eighteenth century. Along with the different buildings surrounding it, the 'Place Stanislas' constitutes a scheduled architectural ensemble. South of the square is the Nancy City Hall. Its facade is decorated with the coat of arms of the Duke Stanislas and the shield of the city. West are the Jacquet lodge ('Pavillon Jacquet') and the Nancy Museum of Fine Arts ('Musée des Beaux-Arts de Nancy'), formerly College of Medicine ('Collège de Médecine') under Stanislas. East is the 'Grand Hôtel,' formerly occupied by the Intendant Alliot ('Pavillon de l'Intendant Alliot') and the Nancy opera house ('Opéra National de Lorraine'), formerly 'Hôtel des Fermes.' All these buildings are responding to one another in a symmetry typical of the classic style. Finally, the horizontality of the lines of all these buildings is representative of this movement as well.

The six railings surrounding the square were the work of Nancy metalworker Jean Labour. They link the buildings together in a Rococo style, as do the Amphitrite and Neptune fountains sculpted by sculptor Barthélémy Guibal.

In 2005, the 'Place Stanislas' was made entirely pedestrian and car-free after two years of rehabilitation works. On that occasion, the square was completely repaved with bright pavings. Two diagonal lines of black pavings structure the square. Some elements were restored as well, such as the railings and the decorative features of the surrounding buildings.



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ARC HÉRÉ

Héré's triumphal Arch ('Arc Héré') is located on the 'Place Stanislas,' offering a perspective on the 'Place de la Carrière' and the 'Palais du Gouvernement.' Emmanuel Héré, ducal architect at Stanislas' court and draughtsman of the former king of Poland's town-planning project, was asked to design it.

At the time of its construction, between 1753 and 1755, the fortifications of the city were erected at the same location of the 'Arc Héré.' A gate linked the Old Town ('Ville Vieille') and the New Town ('Ville Neuve') which were separated by these battlements. Accordingly, the 'Arc Héré' fit perfectly in the fortifications of which it was a true opening. As a consequence, the building also had a military use since the itinerary of the rampart walk included the arch's terrace.

As any triumphal arch, the original purpose of the 'Arc Héré' was a commemorative one. The building's first appellation was the reflect of this initial purpose since it was referred to as a Porte Royale, in honour of the king Louis XV, father-in-law of Duke Stanislas. The building lost its royal function when, in 1847, the last battlements surrounding the gate were demolished.

In order to conceive this monument, Emmanuel Héré took inspiration from models of the Antiquity, a period that was popular in the eighteenth century. More precisely, he was influenced by the Arch of Septimius Severus of Rome. The 'Arc Héré' displays the distinctive features of this type of construction. It is made of stone and three porticoes are to be observed. In the center, the semi-circular portico is the biggest one. It is flanked by two smaller arches, semicircular as well. These three bays are all flanked by two columns and topped by an entablature decorated with a frieze. From the 'Place Stanislas,' the two side openings of the 'Arc Héré' are overhung by decorations honouring the king of France. On the left, the king's commitment to peace is symbolized by the ram's head, the 'Principi Pacifico' writing - which is accompanied by musical instruments and artists' tools -, the olive branches and the wheat sheaf. Likewise, a bas-relief depicting Apollo playing the lyre with his muses as well as two statues representing Ceres and Minerva stand for this idea of peace. On the right, it is the king's military victories that are celebrated. From bottom to top, the symbols are the lion's head, the 'Principi Victori' writing - which is accompanied by trumpets, axes and flags -, a quiver and arrows. Finally, a bas-relief depicting Apollo killing a dragon as well as two statues of Mars and Hercules are the last elements referring to this military aspect. In the attic, a Latin motto in the glory of Louis XV can be read. Eventually, on the arch's top, the 'Renommée,' putting a trumpet to its lips, is accompanied by two statues representing Minerva and a woman carrying an olive branch.



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PLACE DE LA CARRIÈRE

Located between the 'Arc Héré' and the 'Palais du Gouvernement,' the 'Place de la Carrière' is not a square of the eighteenth century as are the 'Place Stanislas' and the 'Place d'Alliance.' It was built in the sixteenth century and it took its name from the equestrian games that were organized at the time, such as jousts, contests and races. Back then, it was a popular and lively place much appreciated by the Nancy inhabitants. In the eighteenth century, under the Duke Stanislas' reign, some modifications were made.

These changes were part of the town-planning project imagined by Emmanuel Héré, the Duke's architect. As he planned the construction of the Place Royale (the 'Place Stanislas' to be), the Duke Stanislas wanted the 'Place de la Carrière' to be more luxurious. Hence, the owners were asked to raise the facades of their buildings, the Duke having financed these works. Likewise, some of the buildings surrounding the square were given new functions and new constructions were erected. East of the square, the building of the current Nancy Court of Appeal hosted the town house of the Beauvau Craon family, commonly referred to as the 'Hôtel de Craon' ('Craon Hotel'). Built in the eighteenth century, it was designed by Parisian architect Germain Boffrand. Emmanuel Héré, as a former Boffrand's pupil, preserved this building but decided to change its function. From town house, it became the seat of the Lorraine Parliament ('Parlement de Lorraine'). West of the square, where stands the current Nancy administrative tribunal, Emmanuel Héré had had an exact replica of the 'Hôtel de Craon' built at the very place of Lorraine engraver Jacques Callot's former house (1592 - 1635). This new town house became the 'Bourse des Marchands.' On the balustrade, the five monograms, still visible today, make reference to the building's original function : 'La Bourse.' This symmetry, intended by Emmanuel Héré, is typical of eighteenth century classicism. It establishes a continuity between the 'Place de la Carrière' and the 'Place Stanislas.' South of the square, the town houses of the sixteenth century have given way to a coherent and homogeneous architectural ensemble thanks to the building of houses with similar facades that are perfectly aligned. As a conclusion to the 'Place de la Carrière,' two town houses were built, facing each other, ending the square in a renewed symmetry. These were the Héré Morvilliers town houses.

To finish with, on the square's central reserve, the railings, made by metalworker Jean Lamour, echo those of the 'Place Stanislas.' Rococo vases, as well as sculptures representing children made by sculptors Lépy and Mesny finish to decorate this square.

PLACE D'ALLIANCE



The 'Place d'Alliance' is the last of the three squares forming the 'ensemble XVIIIe' conceived by Emmanuel Héré. Unlike the 'Place Stanislas,' initially dedicated to Louis XV, the 'Place d'Alliance' was dedicated to the Duke Stanislas. As a matter of fact, the square was first referred to as the 'Place Saint Stanislas' ('Saint Stanislas square'). It differs from the other two squares as it is smaller and more simple. These aspects can be explained by the fact that this square could not outshine the 'Place Stanislas' and 'Place de la Carrière' which were built in honour of the king. It is not paved and no gold foil ironwork is to be found. As was already the case at the time of its construction, the square is surrounded by private housing.

The construction works of the 'Place d'Alliance' were concomitant with the signing of the Treaty of Versailles(1756) which led to the union of France and Austria. It was after this alliance that the square was finally named. The square's central element is the fountain sculpted by Paul-Louis Cyfflé which was made in reference to this treaty. In the center of a trifoil bowl are three elderly and bearded male figures. They are depicted carrying a three-sided platter and pouring water in a stone bowl. Actually, these men are allegories of the Meurthe, Moselle and Meuse rivers. On the platter is a marble obelisk decorated with trophies of arms made of lead. At the tip of the obelisk is a bronze Genius blowing a horn. Several Latin mottoes can be read. On the medallion held by the Genius, the writing 'Perennæ Concordiæ Foedus Anno 1756' (Eternal treaty of agreement year 1756) is visible. On the thickness of the platter held by the male figures, the following writings can be read : 'Prisca recensque fides votum conspirat in unum' ('The old and the new faith now form a same vow'), 'Publicam spondent salutem' ('They assert the salute'), 'Optato vincta discordia nexu' ('The dissension is overcome by this wanted union'). This fountain was built after the baroque Fountain of the Four Rivers of the Piazza Navona, Rome.

The Duke Stanislas, very pleased with Emmanuel Héré's work, offered the architect a town house on the square.

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PLACE STANISLAS

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