In 1664, Louis the 14th and the ‘Con
trolleur général des finances’ Colbert set up as East Indian company, followed the model of the British and the Dutch in the early 17th century. The ‘Compagnie des Indes Orientales’ received trading rights from the Mughal ruler Aurangzeb to set up an establishment in Surat in 1666. The southern operations from Pondicherry commenced in 1673 and prospered until 1750 with textiles being the largest trade item. The company was unable to sustain profitable ventures during the times of war and by 1769 the Compagnie des Indes Orientales was taken over by the French crown.

RUE DE LA COMPAIGNE

Governor General Pierre Benoît Du
max (1734-41) was instrumental in enlarging both trade and territory of Pondicherry. He gained Karkal for the French in 1738 and he initiated the French policy known as ‘nababism’ and earned the right to mint gold pa
godas and silver tazzas in Pondicherry from the Mughal courts (1736). The income from this venture augmented greatly the profit of the La Compagnie Française de Indes Orientales and due to this new wealth, the urban develop
ement of Pondicherry was completed by the addition of many ornamental buildings.

RUE DUMAS

Governor General Charles Joseph Patissier, Marquis de Bussy-Castelnau (1783-85) was a flourishing trade centre.

Pondicherry due to his initiatives, making it

RUE FRANCOIS MARTIN

Governor General Francois Martin is con
idered to be the ‘founder of Pondicherry’ where he settled as early as 1673, as its first admin
istrator. He was made the first govern
er general in 1669 and Pondicherry was established as the headquarters of French India in 1701. The urban character of the city began to evolve after he implemented a grid patterned town plan, Indian weavers and artisans came to settle in Pondicherry due to his initiatives, making it a flourishing trade centre.

RUE DE BELLECOMBE

Governor General Guillaume Léonard de Bellecombe (1779-78) was the heir of the colony, he was named governor per interim soon after, which made him the youngest of all the governors of French In
dia, when the new authorities wanted to erase the symbols of colonial domination, but also recognize the special relation Pondicherry had with France, the name of Romain Rolland came naturally.

RUE ROLMAN ROLLAND

Romain Rolland was a famous 20th century French dramatist, novelist, essayist and artist historian after whom Pondicherry’s public library is also named. Romain Rolland had close ties to Mahatma Gandhi with whom he had been corresponding for a very long time. After the merger with India, when the new authorities wanted to erase the symbols of colonial domination, but also recognize the special relation Pondicherry had with France, the name of Romain Rolland came naturally.

RUE MAHÉ DE LABOURDONTIS

Comte Mahé de La Bourdonnais (1669-
1753) was a French naval officer who achieved success as the governor of the île de France (now Mauritius). He was made administrator of the colony to help Dupleix and participated in the first Carnatic war by laying siege to Madras which he took in 1746. Having negotiated the surrender of Madras with the British, he stood in opposition to Dupleix who wanted the complete destruction of Madras. La Bourdonnais also distinguished himself in the defence of the French outpost of Mahé. Where he came back to France, he was jailed at the Bastille due to the ac
cusations against him sent to Company by Dupuy.

RUE MAHE DE LA BOURDONNATIS

De Bellecombe bravely held ground for ten
weeks after which he was forced to
surrender to the English.

RUE DUMAS

Rue de Bellecombe

Ananda Rangapillai street

Ananda Rangapillai (1709-76) was a wealthy commercial agent work
ning for the Compagnie des Indes as a ‘courtier’ who also acted as chief in
terpreter or ‘dukhsh’. He served under four governor generals, notably Du
pleix. During his governorship he was made Divan (councillor) and ‘chief of the Indians’. Rangapillai maintained a private diary in which he left a vivid picture of Dupleix and Pondicherry of the 18th century. Rangapillai’s home, a fine example of Franco-Tamil architec
ture, built in 1735, still exists on the street that bears his name.

RUE ANANDA RANGAPILLAI STREET

Rue Dupuy

Charles Joseph Patissier, Marquis de Bussy-Castelnau (1783-85) was the first lieutenant of Dupuis who was keen to further the French influence among the local rulers by participating in regional conf
licts. Marquis de Bussy aided Count Lally in the third Carnatic war in 1757 during the French campaign against the British in Madras. When the French lost, he along with Lally, was taken as a prisoner of war but was later released in Europe. He returned to Pondicherry twenty one years later as the new governor general in 1778. The two years of his governorship were spent in continuous warfare against the British until a shaky peace was established in 1783-84.

RUE DE BUSSY

Rue Desbassayns de Richemont

Governor General Comte Desbassays de Richemont (1826-1828). First made administrador of the colony, he was named governor per interim soon after, which made him the youngest of all the governors of French In
dia (25 years). In two years of governorship he managed to completely re
new the French administration. Under Governor de Richemont significant advancement were made using a strong authoritative policy in the fields of health, education, law, commerce and industries. Under his patronage the College Royal, now the lycée François de Pondicherry, was established on 26th October, 1826 and Bibliothèque publique, was inaugurated in 1827. He brought in qualified European teachers with a view to introduce industrialisation and the first modern spinning wheel was established in 1829. During his admin
stration, the ‘Compagnie’ were completed and the ‘Cours Chafarz’ (Goubert Salai) was started.

RUE RUE DESBASSAYS DE RICHEMONT

Rue Colbert

Edouard Goubert, the French Indian croque who played a major political role during the decolonisation process, became the first chief minister of the Union territory of Pondicherry in the independent India.

RUE COBERT

Governor General Arthur de Lally, Baron de Tollenard (1758-61), was a renowned hero of the French army. He was personally commis
sioned by the directors of the Compagnie to defend King Louis the 15th to fight the seven years war in India (also known as the third Carnatic war). Of Irish origin, he was eager to defeat the British. Made the gover
nor general in 1756, he launched a series of attacks against the British soon after his arrival in Pondicherry. He was failing to besiege Madras, and left on their own, the British, the French subsequently lost the war and Pondi
cherry was handed to the British in 1761.法定代表 Pondicherry, was sentenced to death in 1766.

RUE LALLY-TOLLENDAL

Rue Law de Lauriston

Governor General Jean Law de Lauriston (1765-
1777) was sent as the governor general when Pondicherry was given back to the French, fol
lowing the peace treaty of Paris in 1763. His pri
mary task was to re-build the town and he was successful in restoring some of its lost glory in a period of acute financial distress and political disorder. The current Raj Niwas was constructed at this time as the New Government Palace by the engineer Bourcet, and was extended at the end of the 19th century. Works on the canal (of which still exists today) and divides the French and Tamil town were planned at this time and slowly realized between 1770 and 1827.

RUE L LA-LAW DE LAURISTON

Rue Suffren

Admiral Pierre André de Suffren de Saint Tropez, Bailli de Suffren (1729-1788) was a brilliant naval commander known both for his nerve and skills in handling his ships. Suffren navigated the south eastern coasts of India in the 1780’s to support Bussy dur
ing the French-Indian war.

RUE DU Suffren

Rue Basleu

Basleu was a wealthy seafarer who died just before the Seven years war leaving no children. He gave all his fortune to the poor children and widows of Pondicherry, but as it was placed with the French Company, which actually was bankrup in 1764 and sus
pended in 1769, the beneficiaries had to wait for more than 15 years before receiving the benefits.

RUE BASLEU

Rue Victor Simonel

Vicor Simonel was a young aspiring officer, who belonged to a well known French family of Pondicherry and having com
pleted his studies at the Collège colonial, he served during the WWI. He was killed in action at the battle of Verdun. After the war, the street was renamed to honor his sacrifice as a symbol.
TALKING STREETS OF PONDICHERRY

Any town is truly experienced when we have walked its streets and felt its air. We invite you to walk through our town and take in the unique Franco-Tamil atmosphere that pervades the streets of Pondicherry. As you walk through the ‘French Town’ look out for the signboards with street names. Most of the streets carry the name of people involved in the history of this town. Each name is like a door opened to a moment in history.

INTRODUCTION

During the 1500s the Indian coastline was explored by Portuguese, Dutch and Danish merchants in search of lucrative trade. By comparison the French were relatively late entrants. They were invited in the 1670s by Sher Khan Lodhi, vassal of the Sultan of Bijapur, to settle down in the region of Pondicherry. Bellanger de Lespinay was the first French official to come to the future settlement. It was, however, his successor Francois Martin who laid the foundation of the town.

HISTORY

The political intrigues among the European nations in India affected Pondicherry on many occasions. In its long vibrant colonial history it changed hands many times.

OPEN THE GATES OF PONDICHERRY HISTORY THROUGH ITS STREETS

Intach, 62 Rue Aurobindo, Pondicherry - 605001

FRENCH RULE

1700-1761

1761-1765 1778-1783 1793-1815

FRENCH

DUTCH

BRITISH

PORTUGUESE

DANISH

BRITISH

DUTCH

PORTUGUESE

DUTCH

FIRST FRENCH SETTLEMENT 1674-1693

DUTCH RULE 1693-1700

1700-1761

1815-1954

1761-1765 1778-1783 1793-1815

FRENCH