

*Prominent personalities
of the Morgian region*



Morges Région Tourisme

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Get to know the personalities who have left their mark on Morges and its region!

You will discover here, briefly presented, a selection of some of the greatest names who have marked our region by their discoveries, their inventions, their know-how or their talent.

This document was produced as part of an apprenticeship in 2018 with the help of a guide from Morges and a qualified historian. It is regularly updated by the team of Morges Région Tourisme.



Rue Louis de Savoie, 1932, Fête de tir.

The Founder of the City of Morges: Louis de Savoie

Born around 1250, Louis I of Vaud, better known as Louis of Savoy, was the founder of Morges. In 1270, he took part in the eighth crusade led by Louis IX, King of France, the future Saint Louis. He was then in Rome with his elder brother, Amédée V, known as Le Grand, and returned to Savoy, where he fought against the Grandsons, the Belmonts, the Cossonays and the Prangins, all of whom were lords of the Pays de Vaud. The lands he conquered or confiscated increased his domain. On 14 January 1286, the date that put an end to the dispute between him and his brother over the title of Count of Savoy, he received the barony of Vaud as an inheritance.

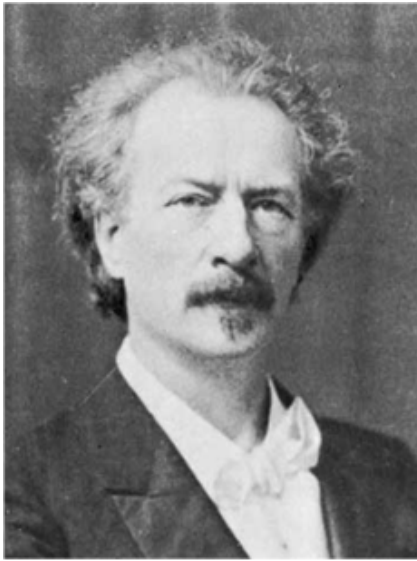
The year 1286 also marked the foundation of the town of Morges, a name borrowed from the river of the same name, and which means "border". On the land belonging to the Sire of Vufflens, Louis had a castle and a town built. The latter provided troops and income. In 1302 or 1303, Louis of Savoy died in Naples, leaving behind him a dusting of fiefs scattered throughout the Pays de Vaud and a new town in full expansion, Morges. One of the city's main roads bears his name: Rue Louis-de-Savoie.



« Morges, 7 siècles d'histoire vivante », rue Louis de Savoie

Musician

Ignace Jan Paderewski



Encyclopaedia Britannica

Ignace Jan Paderewski, a world-famous Polish pianist and politician born in 1860 in Podolia, then part of Ukraine, died in 1941 in New York.

He began his musical studies in Berlin before moving to Warsaw and Vienna. His career as a virtuoso pianist began in 1888.

A guest in Morges from 1899, he lived in his beautiful property in Riond-Bosson where he devoted himself to composition. During the First World War, Paderewski, a generous patron of the arts, worked for the general committee for the relief of war victims in Poland and travelled to the United States to mobilise the American opinion, giving some 300 concerts for this purpose. He presented a memorandum to the Democratic President Wilson in favour of the re-establishment of the Polish state and campaigned to set up an army of Poles in America. An ardent patriot, he was elected President of the Council and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland in 1919. In this capacity, he signed the Treaty of Versailles which recognised the new Republic.

After the coup d'état of May 1926, Paderewski returned to Switzerland and, under the name of the "Morges Front", made Riond-Bosson a centre of opposition to the regime. In 1939, he presided over the National Council in Exile in London and in 1940 went to the United States to rally Poles and help them regain their independence following the German and Soviet invasions.

A museum housed in the great castle of Morges today cultivates the memory of Paderewski, honorary citizen of the cities of Morges, Vevey and Lausanne.

Henryk Opienski



Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne

Born in 1870 in Krakow and died in 1942 in Morges, Henryk Opienski is known as a Polish musicologist, violinist, choirmaster and composer.

He began playing the violin at the Conservatory of his native city before continuing his studies in Paris, where he also practised the piano with his compatriot Ignace Paderewski. From 1898 to 1901, he was a violinist with the Colonne Symphony Orchestra in Paris and then studied in Berlin. Back in Poland, he played in the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra and founded the Philharmonic Choir. In 1904 he studied conducting and musicology in Leipzig.

In 1908, Opienski became the conductor of the Warsaw Opera. He fled to Switzerland in 1914 and joined his friend Paderewski in Morges. Throughout the war, he gave concerts and lectures on Polish music and, with his wife, founded the vocal ensemble "Motet and Madrigal". In 1920, he returned to his homeland to manage the Poznan Conservatory. He returned permanently to Morges in 1926 after his marriage to Lydia Barblan (see next page).

Opienski gave concerts and took over the direction of the "Motet and Madrigal" ensemble. Together with Paderewski, he published an edition of the letters of their compatriot Chopin. Perfectly integrated in his host country, Opienski was president of the Vaud Music Society.

Lydia Opienska Barblan



Born Barblan, a family of Graubünden origin, in Morges in 1890 and died in 1983 in the same town, Lydia Opienska was a talented singer as well as a renowned pedagogue who also specialised in speech therapy, a discipline which enabled her to cure several voice disorders and correct defective speech.

She was also the first director of the women's choir "Les Mouettes". She led various choirs in Morges and in the surrounding area. In 1916, together with her husband, she founded the "Motet et Madrigal" ensemble, the first in Europe to honour Renaissance music.

The ensemble was a great success and toured extensively in Switzerland and Europe (Germany, France, Holland, Poland).

This activity continued until 1942, shortly after the death of Henryk, its director and Lydia's husband.

Also in 1916, Lydia founded the "Barblan Vocal Quartet" with her brother and two other musicians, which also performed abroad. After her youth in Morges, she spent time in Freiburg im Breisgau, Basel and Poznan as a teacher of singing and speech therapy.

Together with her husband, she returned to Morges in 1924. In recognition of her commitment, her native town awarded her the honorary bourgeoisie in 1980.

Igor Stravinsky



<https://static-secure.guim.co.uk/sys->

Born in 1882 in Russia, Igor Stravinsky was the son of artists who introduced him to music at an early age.

From the age of nine, he took up the piano and was also very interested in painting. After his father's death, he was taken in by Rimsky-Korsakov, who introduced him to the music scene in Saint Petersburg.

In 1910, The Firebird ballet premiered: Stravinsky composed the music for it. It was there that he met Debussy, with whom he would have a long-term friendship.

From 1917 to 1920, Stravinsky lived in Morges and composed the music for The Soldier's Tale based on a text by the Swiss writer Charles-Ferdinand Ramuz.

Stravinsky then became a composer of extraordinary fame. His tour of the United States in 1935 brought him enormous success. Unfortunately, he lost his wife, daughter and mother to tuberculosis.

In the 1960s he toured the USSR. Separated from his native land because of the First World War, he felt a deep nostalgia for it which is reflected in his works. He was still successful but his health deteriorated and he died in New York in 1971.

Artists

The Morax Brothers



Deux des frères Morax avec Gustave Doret.

www.24heures.ch/fete-des-vignerons/supplements/supplement-2/vaudois-genevois-parisiens-louent-bacchus-vevey/story/21990211

Jean Morax

Born in Morges in 1869, Jean, a talented landscape painter and portraitist, was also a theatre personality. He designed the costumes for the Fête des Vignerons in 1905. His brother René wrote the show's libretto and his friend Gustave Doret composed the important score.

The sets created for the Jorat theatre ensured Jean's fame and in 1905 he was named honorary bourgeois of the town of Mézières (VD), home of the Jorat theatre.

He spent his last years in the family home in Morges, where he died in 1939.

René Morax

Born in 1873 and died in 1963 in Morges, René spent almost all his life in his native town, where the majority of his works were created.

He began his career with articles, stories and poems and ended up devoting himself mainly to theatre. He was also the founder of the Jorat theatre in Mézières (VD).

His first play, "La Nuit des Quatre-Temps", was performed at the Morges Casino. Two years later, he created "La Dîme", a work that was a hit.

He spent his entire life in his father's house on Rue Louis-de-Savoie, where he devoted himself fully to his literary work. He played a big role in the creation of the Alexis Forel Museum, by donating his collection of dolls, games and old toys.

A great animator of the Jorat theatre, René writes and directs rural and historical dramas, composes small comedies and farces, translates and adapts: a rich activity which makes him one of the most prolific playwrights of contemporary Switzerland.



Victor Morax



https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victor_Morax#/media/Fichier:Victor_Morax.png

Brother of the Morax artists, Victor was born in Morges in 1866.

After his secondary and high school education, he continued his studies in Freiburg im Breisgau (Germany), where he took a semester of chemistry and biology, then in Paris where his friend Alexandre Yersin introduced him to the Pasteur Institute.

He developed an interest for biological research, which he never abandoned.

Naturalised as a French citizen, Victor was appointed extern and then intern at the Hospitals in 1890. He obtained his doctorate in medicine in Paris in 1894. He did several internships at the internationally renowned Pasteur Institute.

In 1896, he discovered the bacillus that causes chronic conjunctivitis, known as Morax's disease, which led to his appointment as a teacher at the Pasteur Institute.

He also became ophthalmologist of the Hospitals and in 1903 he was entrusted with the management of this department at the Hôpital Lariboisière.

He was awarded the distinction of Chevalier (1910) and then Officier (1920) of the Legion of Honour, in recognition of his merits.

In 1930, he was elected member of the Academy of Medicine in Paris, where he died in 1935.

Louis Soutter



<http://www.garnier-luraschi.com>

Born in 1871 in Morges, Louis Soutter showed a talent for drawing and music at a very young age. He became known as a draftsman and painter.

Engaged to an American woman, he left Europe for the United States in 1896. In Colorado Springs, he was appointed head of the Fine Arts Department at the City College. In 1902, following his wife's divorce, he returned to Switzerland. His non-conformist behaviour worried his family, who, in 1923, placed him in a nursing home in Ballaigues, in the Vaud Jura, where he died some twenty years later, in 1942, aged 71.

Louis Soutter's artistic production reflects his internment, associated with the social and mental breakdowns from which he suffered. As if to escape his condition, Soutter never stopped painting and drawing.

Almost all of his works date from this period. From 1930 onwards, he enjoyed the support of Jean Giono and Le Corbusier, his cousin.

Recognised in Europe after his death as one of the most significant works of Swiss art in the 20th century, his work is currently housed in the Musée cantonal des Beaux-arts in Lausanne.

Audrey Hepburn



Fine art America

Born in 1929 in Ixelles, Belgium, and died in 1993 in Tolochenaz, near Morges, Audrey Hepburn, a British actress whose talent marked the history of cinema, lived in Tolochenaz for almost 30 years.

She first worked as a model and then, in the 1950s and 1960s, made numerous films. She was only 24 when, in 1953, *Roman Holiday*, her first Hollywood film, won her the Oscar for best actress. This was followed by *War and Peace*, *Breakfast at Tiffany's* and *My Fair Lady*.

At the age of 38, she ended her acting career to devote herself to helping children. She made numerous humanitarian trips to Africa and Latin America on behalf of UNICEF, which appointed her an ambassador in 1988.

From the Town Hall where she got married in 1969, to the market where she used to shop, via the Dumas grocery shop whose back door allowed her to escape the paparazzi, Audrey Hepburn left her mark on Morges and the Morgian people with her elegance, simplicity and kindness.

The Bolle Museum, in the town of Morges, now cultivates her memory with a summer exhibit about her, every year.

Rodolphe-Théophile Bosshard



<http://www.rthbosshard.ch/>

A renowned painter, Rodolphe-Théophile Bosshard was born in Morges in 1889 and died in 1960 in Chardonne. He attended the Collège de Morges and the Gymnase classique in Lausanne. At the age of 18, he enrolled at the École des Beaux-Arts in Geneva, where he studied with the drawing teacher Eugène Gilliard, who was known for the originality of his method.

Bosshard was 27 years old when, in Lausanne, the Paul Vallotton gallery allowed him an important exhibition. At the beginning of the 1920s, he obtained a federal grant that allowed him to settle in Paris. There, he met Chagall, Derain and the Italian futurist Severini. The Parisian critics welcomed his works, whose style was influenced by cubism and which he exhibited alongside those of Picasso and Chagall.

Generally speaking, however, his creations remained on the fringes of any specific trend, as did his entire production, which was nevertheless marked in the 1940s by a certain tendency towards abstraction. This non-alignment is the originality of his work.

Bosshard's favourite themes are women, nudes, landscapes, mountains and flowers. A first major retrospective of his work was held in 1949 at the Jenisch museum in Vevey, followed by numerous posthumous exhibitions. Throughout his life, the Swiss painter was honoured in Parisian galleries, as well as in German-speaking Switzerland.

Scientists

Jacques Dubochet



<https://www.unil.ch/central/fr/home/menuinst/recherche/prix-et-distinctions/prix-nobel/jacques-dubochet.html>

Born in 1942 in Aigle, Jacques Dubochet completed his primary education in Lausanne and in Valais, where his father worked as a dam engineer.

Once he had passed his leaving certificate, he entered the EPUL, the current Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL), where he obtained his degree in physical engineering in 1967. Passionate about biology, he obtained a certificate in molecular biology at the University of Geneva.

As a budding biophysicist, Dubochet defended his thesis at the University of Geneva and at the Biozentrum in Basel and obtained his doctorate in 1973. His career continued in Germany where he was Head of the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL).

A prolific author, he wrote numerous scientific articles and soon gained international recognition in the field of cryo-electron microscopy.

His discovery, in 1980, of water vitrification led to the development of several methods now used in most large laboratories.

Jacques Dubochet's team has continued to develop other techniques for the structural exploration of biological samples.

In recognition of his work, Jacques Dubochet was awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 2017.

A committed citizen, Jacques Dubochet has been a member of the municipal council (legislature) of the city of Morges since 2011, where he works within the Socialist Group.

Alexandre Yersin



<https://www.rts.ch/archives/radio/culture/destin-des-hommes/4464197-vie-de-yersin-3-.html>

Born in Aubonne (VD) in 1863 and died in 1943 in Nha Trang, Vietnam, Alexandre Yersin, a Franco-Swiss physician, bacteriologist and explorer, is known for having discovered the plague bacillus in 1894 and for having developed a vaccine against it.

Raised by their mother, his brothers, sister and Alexandre settled in Morges. In 1882, he obtained his baccalaureate at the town's high school and began studying medicine at the Lausanne Academy. He continued his medical training in Marburg, Germany, and then went to France where he studied at the Hôtel-Dieu in Paris. There he met Emile Roux, who opened the doors of the Pasteur Institute to him and allowed him to take part in rabies vaccination sessions.

In 1889, he attended Robert Koch's bacteriology course in Berlin, then, on his return to Paris, became the first instructor of the microbiology course at the Pasteur Institute.

In 1902, he founded the Hanoi School of Medicine and became its first director. In 2014, he was posthumously awarded the honorary citizenship of Vietnam.

Alexis Forel



esferasalud.com

Born in Lully (VD) in 1852 and died in Morges in 1922, Alexis was the youngest of three Forel cousins. A chemist, he left his profession at the age of 30 to devote himself to his passion: art.

He practised drawing and copperplate engraving. His career took place mainly in Paris, where he reproduced the houses and quays. He exhibited at the annual Salon in the French capital from 1882 to 1890. He also worked in Brittany and Switzerland. His painting of the *Lausanne cathedral* is one of his best known works. Alexis Forel is also the noted author of the book entitled *Voyage au pays des sculpteurs romans. Croquis de route à travers la France*, published in 1913.

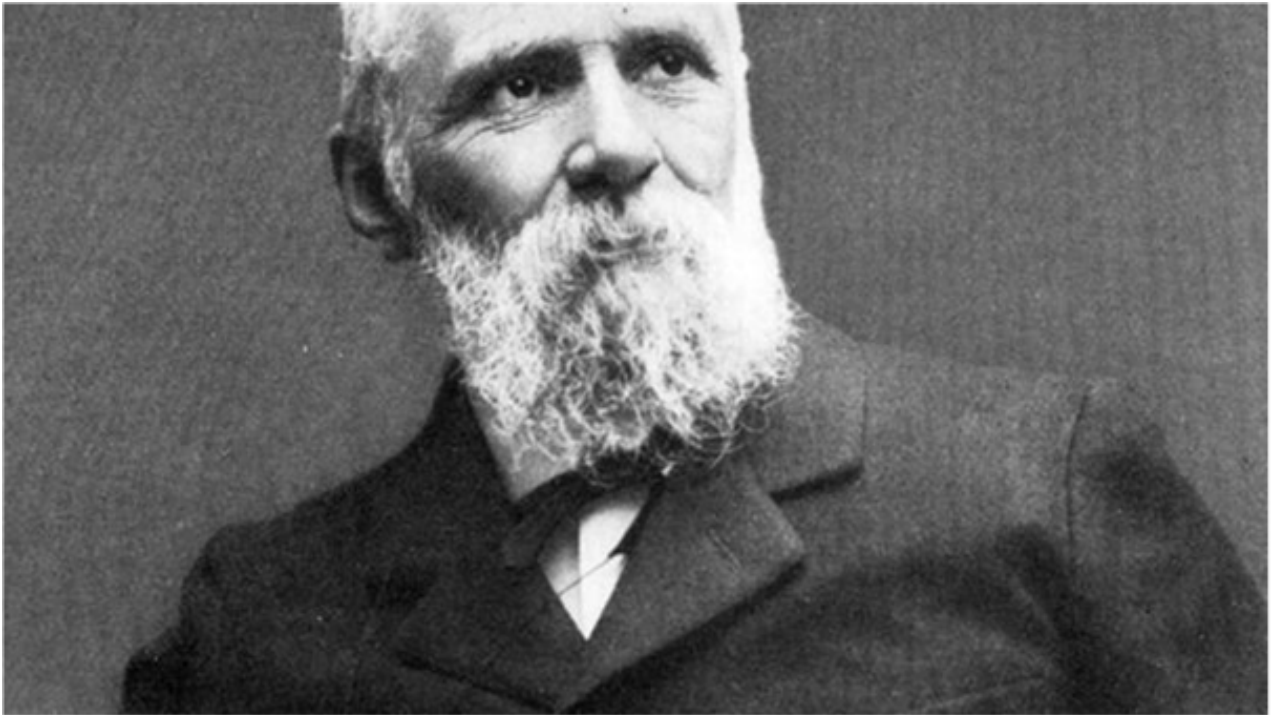
Illustrated by his wife Emmeline, a pastelist, the book was awarded a prize by the French Academy and has been reprinted many times.

Forced to give up engraving for health reasons, Alexis spent the last years of his life restoring the *Blanchenay* house which, since 1920, has housed the Musée du Vieux-Morges. He was a founding member of the *Société du Musée romand* in 1911.

On his death, the Société du Vieux-Morges, founded in 1915, inherited the building as well as the rich collections gathered under its roof and which Alexis had collected throughout his life.

In 1943, as a sign of gratitude, the Musée du Vieux-Morges was renamed the *Musée Alexis-Forel*, its current name.

François-Alphonse Forel



RTS

Born in 1841 in Morges and deceased in 1912 in the same town, François-Alphonse Forel followed in the footsteps of his father François. Like him, he was attracted to sciences and began his education at the Geneva Academy, from which he graduated with a bachelor's degree in physical and natural sciences.

He continued his studies in Montpellier (France) where he obtained a degree in natural sciences. He then studied medicine in Paris and completed his studies with a doctorate at the German University of Würzburg.

Back in his homeland, François-Alphonse was in charge of several courses at the University of Lausanne. He became known as the founder of a new science, limnology, which consisted of the study and comparison of stagnant waters (lakes, groundwater) from a biological and physical point of view.

During his last years, François-Alphonse took up his father's research on lake stations and established himself as one of the best specialists of the Bronze Age in Switzerland.

Politically involved, Forel was a municipal councillor (legislature) in Morges as well as a liberal deputy in the Vaud Grand Council from 1870 to 1874.

Auguste Forel



<https://alchetron.com/Auguste-Forel>

Born in Morges in 1848 and deceased in Yverne (Vaud) in 1931, Auguste Forel, an encyclopaedic mind, is known as a Swiss entomologist, neuroanatomist and psychiatrist.

In the latter capacity, he taught at the University of Zürich and directed the psychiatric clinic - known at the time as the "insane asylum" - at the Burghölzli from 1879 to 1898.

In 1888, Forel obtained the inclusion of psychiatry as an examination subject in the federal medical curriculum.

An advocate of eugenics, a trend of thought in vogue in the Western world at the time, Forel drew up an expert draft for a federal law on insanity in 1894. This law was not promulgated, but it nevertheless had an influence on certain cantons, including Vaud, Forel's native canton, which adopted a law providing for forced sterilisation in 1928. Surprisingly, but undoubtedly attesting to Forel's prestige, this law remained in force until the end of the 20th century.

Forel is also one of the pioneers in sexology in Switzerland and in Europe. Published in 1905, *La Question Sexuelle* has been reprinted many times. It is both a work of popularisation, a condemnation of prostitution and of the opposition of women, and a plea for women's suffrage.

A supporter of the Blue Cross, Forel became abstinent and was deeply involved in the fight against alcoholism. In 1888, he founded the Forel clinic, a detoxification centre for alcoholics in Ellikon an der Thur (ZH).

Another feature of his powerful personality is that Auguste Forel defends the League of Nations (SDN) as a pacifist and socialist.

In 1920, the Swiss people voted, albeit narrowly, for the Confederation to join the League of Nations, whose headquarters were in Geneva. It is likely that Forel's commitment contributed to the positive outcome.

Universally known for his work on ants, Forel was awarded the Schläfli Prize in 1872 by the Swiss Society of Natural Sciences for his work *Les fourmis de la Suisse*. As a result, the scientist had the honour of appearing on the 1000 Swiss franc bank notes until the year 2000.

Charles Dufour



<http://scottish-hegelian.blogspot.ch/2017/03/jean-jacques-cart-1748-1813-this-post.html>

Charles Dufour was born in Veytaux in 1827 and died in Morges in 1902.

After studying at the Academy of Lausanne, Charles, the son of a schoolteacher, was appointed in 1845 - he was barely 18 years old - as a mathematics and natural sciences teacher at the College of Orbe.

In 1852, he was transferred to the College of Morges as a math teacher, a subject he taught until 1892.

A good administrator, he successively directed the Collège d'Orbe (1849-1852), the Collège de Morges (1865-1890) and the Ecole supérieure et gymnasiale de jeunes filles in Morges, where he taught various scientific subjects from 1852 to 1902.

Charles Dufour also taught mathematics and then astronomy at the Academy and the University of Lausanne. As an astronomer, he was the author of works on the scintillation of light, starlight and mirages.

In recognition of his work, Dufour was awarded an honorary doctorate by the Universities of Basel and Geneva. In 1892, he received the honorary bourgeoisie of Morges, his adopted town.

He was also a member of the Morges Municipal Council for 44 years, a legislative assembly which he chaired for 12 years.

Politicians

Jean-Jacques Cart



<http://scottish-hegelian.blogspot.ch/2017/03/jean-jacques-cart-1748-1813-this-post.html>

Alongside Monod and Muret, Jean-Jacques Cart is one of the three "Morges patriots". He was born in 1748 in Morges where he spent his early youth. Contrary to a persistent tradition according to which he enrolled at the Academy of Geneva to study law, Cart began an apprenticeship with a draper. Two years later, compromised in an affair of morals, he surreptitiously left Geneva for England. There he met Admiral Hood, who hired him as a tutor for his son and brought him to America, where the British officer was sent on a mission.

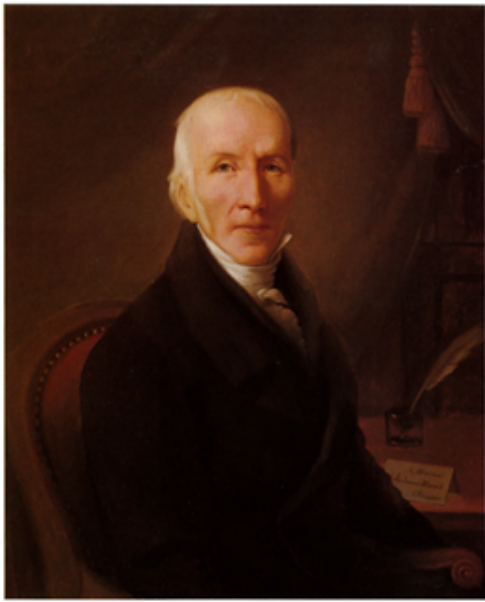
Cart returned to Switzerland in 1773 and opened a law office in Morges, which soon became widely known. He was then at the forefront of the battle that the town waged against Bern in the "Case of the high road". In an anonymous pamphlet, Cart contested certain prerogatives arrogated to themselves by Their Excellencies of the patrician republic on the banks of the Aare.

When the French Revolution broke out, Cart campaigned alongside other Vaud patriots in favour of individual freedom and sovereignty of the people. To avoid arrest, he found refuge in France. As a citizen of a neutral country, Cart was given a mission in the United States by the French revolutionary government. He decided to stay there and set up as a landowner.

After the independence of the Pays de Vaud, liberated in 1798 from the 250 years of Bernese rule, Cart left everything and returned to Switzerland. As soon as he arrived, he was elected senator of the Helvetic Republic. In 1803, he was elected member of the first Grand Council of Vaud and, shortly afterwards, judge of the Cantonal Court, an institution of which he was to become president.

Jean-Jacques Cart died in 1813 in Lausanne. His name is honoured in the Parc de l'Indépendance in Morges alongside those of Monod and Muret.

Henri Monod



"Morges, sept siècles d'histoire vivante"

Henri Monod was born in Morges in 1753 and died there in 1833. After attending the local college, he left at the age of 20 for Tübingen, a small town in Württemberg (Germany) whose university was popular with students from Vaud. Back home, he went to Valence (France) from where he returned as a doctor of law, a title which at the time was easily bought, as he admits in his posthumous memoirs.

Monod was a councillor in Morges at the time of the "Case of the high road", a ten-year dispute (1782-1792) against Bern concerning the road network and its financing. The confrontation with the Bernese sovereign made Monod aware of his country's state of dependence. He first sought a solution to moderate the claims of Their Excellencies on the banks of the Aare. The failure of his efforts pushed him to take up the cause of the Vaud revolution in order to contain it better and prevent it from degenerating into anarchy.

With the Bernese gone, Monod presided over the Administrative Chamber from 1798 to 1800. In 1802, as Prefect of Lake Geneva, he successfully opposed the right-wing turn of the Helvetic Republic. As a member of the Consulta Helvetica held in Paris from December 1802 to February 1803, which led to the Act of Mediation, Monod, together with his colleagues including Cart and Muret, obtained the elevation of Vaud to the rank of sovereign canton within the new Confederation.

Brilliantly elected to the Grand and Petit Conseils of Vaud - parliament and government - in the spring of 1803, Monod nevertheless gave up his functions and retired to write, even if it meant accepting contractual missions entrusted to him by the canton. In 1811, he accepted his re-election to the cantonal executive. As a deputy at the Federal Diet of Zurich, known as the "Long Diet" (1813-1815), he brilliantly defended his canton's cause against the claims of Bern, who argued that the canton had a legitimate claim to the Pays de Vaud and Aargau. Monod, the canton's first Landammann under the Restoration, left office for good in 1830.

Among his contemporaries in Vaud, Monod enjoyed the flattering image of a great patriot who worked primarily to maintain the independence of his canton. As such, he appears on a monument in the Parc de l'Indépendance alongside Muret and Cart.

Jules Muret



« Morges, 7 siècles d'histoire vivante »

Jules Muret was born in 1759 in Vevey, the second largest town in the Vaud region at the time, where he had a happy childhood followed by a studious adolescence. After obtaining a doctorate in law from the University of Paris, he returned to his homeland, opened a law office and obtained permission to plead before the *Chambre des appellations romandes*, whose headquarters were in Bern, the sovereign of the Pays de Vaud at the time.

When Bern renounced its centuries-old sovereignty in 1798, Muret was a member of the provisional Vaud Assembly and then the Helvetic Senate. In 1802, he was a deputy from Vaud at the Paris Consulta which, in February 1803, gave birth to the Act of Mediation establishing the Confederation of the XIX Cantons, among which Vaud was now sovereign. In 1803, he shared with Monod the honour of being elected a life member of the Grand Council. Shortly afterwards, he was elected to the *Petit Conseil* and presided over both assemblies on several occasions, alternating between them.

After the fall of Napoleon and the Act of Mediation, Muret was actively involved in the drafting of the Vaud Constitution, opposing any participation of the nobility in the political affairs of the canton. Also hostile to the Liberals, Muret embodied the Bourgeois conservatism of the Restoration. He was not re-elected when the latter came to power in 1830. He died in Lausanne in 1847 at the age of 88.

Muret is one of the three Morgian patriots who appear on the commemorative monument in the Independence Park: a green space conquered on Lake Geneva and inaugurated in 1898, the centenary of the independence of Vaud in 1798.

Jeanne Huc-Mazelet



Jeanne Huc-Mazelet was born in 1765 in Morges. She was a descendant of a family of Huguenots from Languedoc. In 1790, she joined the court of Tsarina Catherine II of Russia as governess to her granddaughter, Grand Duchess Marie Pavlovna. This opportunity was given to her by a close friend: Henriette Monod, cousin of Henri Monod, who had been charged with finding reliable candidates. Thus, together with Esther Monod, Henriette's sister, she began the long journey that would take them from Morges to St. Petersburg, in the heart of the Russian Empire.

At court, Jeanne accompanied the young duchess throughout the day and took care of her general education. She also attended the official parties and ceremonies, but always behind the scenes. Thus, she was always considered to be a crossing between a family member and a servant. Nevertheless, her role was of crucial importance to the sovereign Catherine II. She expects from her governesses all the simplicity that the Swiss people of the time were accustomed to, together with the Protestant rigour in which she was brought up.

During her 14 years in office, Jeanne saw three successive rulers. Despite the political upheavals, the young woman's daily life remained stable, thanks to the chief governess, Charlotte de Lieven, who ensured this continuity. Throughout her stay, Jeanne kept up an intense correspondence with her younger brother Jean-David and their parents, still living in Morges. She also wrote a sort of diary, which she sent to Jean-David, in which she recounted her exceptional experience at the Russian court.

Ernestine de Castellane, Duchess of Otranto



The Duchess of Castellane worked towards the permission of a public catholic service in Morges.

Born in 1788, Ernestine de Castellane came from a French aristocratic family. She mastered several languages and loved art such as music and painting.

At the age of 27, she married French politician Joseph Fouché, 30 years older than her. They lived in France until his exile, after falling into disgrace. He died in 1820 in Italy.

After the death of her husband, the Duchess of Otranto came to settle at the domain of Riond-Bosson in Tolochenaz, a small village near Morges.

The acquisition of the domain includes buildings, a meadow, vineyards and arable land. She started to work on and transform the mansion named “Le Chalet”.

Despite the fact that she was very busy with the management of her estate, she was a practicing Catholic, but she lacked the possibility to practice her faith. The celebration of the catholic cult was forbidden in the Pays de Vaud since 1536 and has been tolerated only since 1810 outside the district of Echallens.

Having to travel to Assens in order to attend mass, the duchess asked the State Council in 1825 for permission to have a priest come to her home to celebrate mass in a private setting. She received a positive response and so the vicar of Bottens regularly made the journey to the “Chalet”.

About ten years later, she solicited her neighbor, the State Councillor Auguste Jacquet, so that he would work within the government to obtain permission for the celebration of a catholic service for the entire Morgian population.

The duchess promised to provide for the expenses. In 1835, the State Council of Vaud authorized public Catholic mass in Morges, thanks to Ernestine de Castellane, and a first chapel was set up by the Roman catholic community.

Subsequently, in 1844, the Catholic parish of Morges inaugurated a Neo-Gothic church built by the architect Henri Perregaux. Ernestine de Castellane was one of the donors.

The duchess died in 1850 in Paris. Her property was demised to her nephews, then in 1898 it was bought by the famous Polish musician and politician Ignace Paderewski.

Lydia von Auw



She was born on 6 August 1897 in Morges, where she died on 14 May 1994. Lydia von Auw was a Swiss pastor and historian. She was the first woman to be ordained to the pastoral ministry of the Evangelical Free Church in the canton of Vaud, in 1935, and the first to be admitted to attend courses at the theological faculty of the Evangelical Free Church.

She moved to Rolle in 1926, to Cormoret in 1927, and then to Paris, where she frequented the French national library. She then published her first article, a portrait of Ernesto Buonaiuti, in the *Revue de théologie et de philosophie*. In 1929, she was appointed interim pastor of the Free Church of Ollon. During her stay in Rome in 1929, Professor Buonaiuti suggested that she write a doctoral thesis on the Franciscan Angelo de Clareno, a disciple of Joachim de Flore who was at the origin of the Spiritualist movement and who had been neglected by historians of religion until then.

She became a permanent pastor in the village of Chavannes-le-Chêne, a position she held until her retirement. On 15 March 1966, at a service held in Lausanne cathedral to mark the merger of the Free Church and the Evangelical Reformed Church of the canton of Vaud, she signed the register of ministers, her last official act as a pastor.

After the publication of a complete version of her thesis in Rome in 1979, her research attracted international attention. The publication of the full version was hailed by Genevan theologian Henry Mottu, among others, who said that this edition fulfilled "a long-awaited need" for a subject that had been "relatively neglected by French-speaking historians". She also made the acquaintance of eminent Italian medievalists such as Raoul Manselli, Arsenio Frugoni and Romana Guarnieri (it), with whom she collaborated on the printing of her research work. In 1988, RTS produced an interview about her in the series "Plans fixes", in which she was interviewed by theology professor Pierre Bonnard.

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