

13 March 2023
English
Original: French

**United Nations Group of Experts
on Geographical Names**

Session 2023

New York, May 1–5, 2023

Item 12 of the Provisional Agenda *

**Geographical names as culture, heritage and identity,
including indigenous, minority and regional languages and
multilingual issues**

**Interactive maps highlighting the place-name heritage of
Québec**

Submitted by Canada**

Summary:

The Commission de toponymie du Québec is the body responsible for the management of place names in Québec. It has a mandate to formalize and disseminate Québec place names.

In addition to its place name database, which provides access to all the official place names of Québec, the Commission now disseminates interactive maps focusing on particular themes. The maps highlight place names that take the user on a journey through the political, social and cultural history of Québec.

The maps, which were posted online between March 2021 and June 2022, cover the following themes:

- Notable women of Québec
- Key figures in the patriot movement
- Premiers of Québec
- Features of the indigenous place-name heritage of Québec

* GEGN.2/2023/24

** Prepared by Marie-Ève Bisson, Commission de toponymie du Québec, Canada

Interactive maps highlighting the place-name heritage of Québec

Resolution related to this document

VIII/1 Promotion of minority group and indigenous geographical names

Background

The Commission de toponymie du Québec is the organization responsible for managing place names in Québec. Its mandate is to officialize and disseminate Québec place names.

Toponymy is published primarily on the Commission's website (toponymie.gouv.qc.ca), in the *Banque de noms de lieux du Québec* [database of Québec place names]. This database includes all official and former place names, as well as traditional Indigenous place names that are not official. Each place name in the database has a corresponding toponymic record containing information on the place and the origin and meaning of its name, when known.

Over the years, the Commission has also published several works on Québec's toponymy.

In 2021 and 2022, the Commission posted online interactive maps on various themes, including Indigenous toponymic heritage and women in toponymy. These maps highlight place names that allow users to travel the political, social and cultural history of Québec through its toponymy. They allow to discover places, but also people and various aspects of history. Each theme is accompanied by explanatory texts, geographical descriptions, biographical sections and numerous illustrations.

These new tools designed by the Commission therefore contribute to a better understanding of Québec's territory and to promoting Québec's toponymic and cultural heritage.

To date, four interactive thematic maps have been posted on the Commission's website (toponymie.gouv.qc.ca/ct/cartes-interactives/index.aspx).

Femmes remarquables du Québec [Notable women of Québec]

The very first interactive map was unveiled in March 2021, on the occasion of International Women's Day. Initially, the map highlighted the place names of 50 Québec women who have left their mark on history, from the 17th century to the present day.

The map was updated a year later and now includes more than 500 place names of 100 women who have had an outstanding career in health, education, business, unions, social justice, science, the arts and politics.

Currently, there are over 4,500 official place names in Québec that represent hundreds of different women. The Commission has established certain criteria to build up the group of women whose names appear on the map. These include:

- 1) pioneers or prominent figures in different fields of activity;
- 2) historical or popular figures who have left their mark on the collective imagination;
- 3) women who represent the whole of Québec society;
- 4) women from all eras;
- 5) Québec women by birth or adoption.

This interactive map is not an ordered list of Québec's most outstanding women. Rather, the map may be improved over time so that the invaluable contribution of as many women as possible in various fields is highlighted.

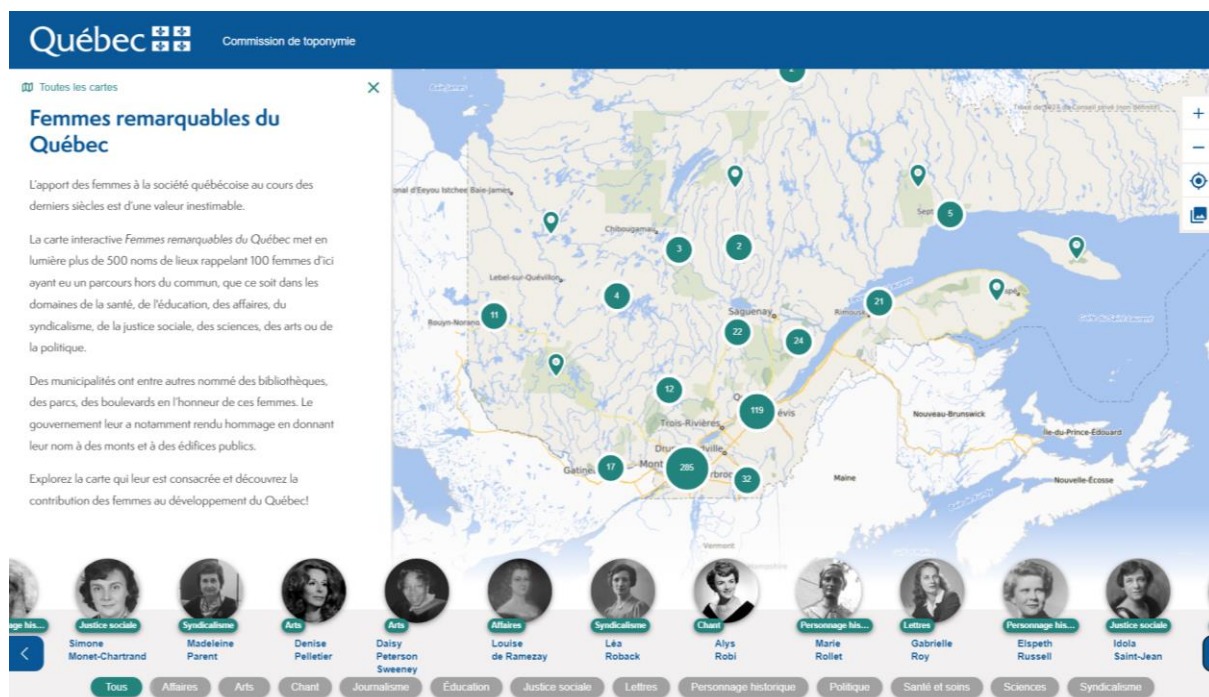


Figure 1. Each map is introduced by an explanation of the theme, and the general map shows all the place names highlighted.

Figures marquantes du mouvement patriote [Key figures of the patriot movement]

The second interactive map developed by the Commission highlights some 200 place names recalling 12 political, intellectual or other key figures involved in the Québec patriot movement of the 19th century.

This map was unveiled in May 2021, on the occasion of National Patriots' Day. This day of commemoration in Québec was established to honour the memory of the men and women who fought for the national recognition of the people of Québec, for their political freedom and for a democratic system of government. The large popular gatherings of 1837 and the battles waged by the patriots paved the way for the Québec of today.

The map *Figures marquantes du mouvement patriote* provides an opportunity to discover people whose writings, achievements and actions marked a crucial period in the history of Québec.

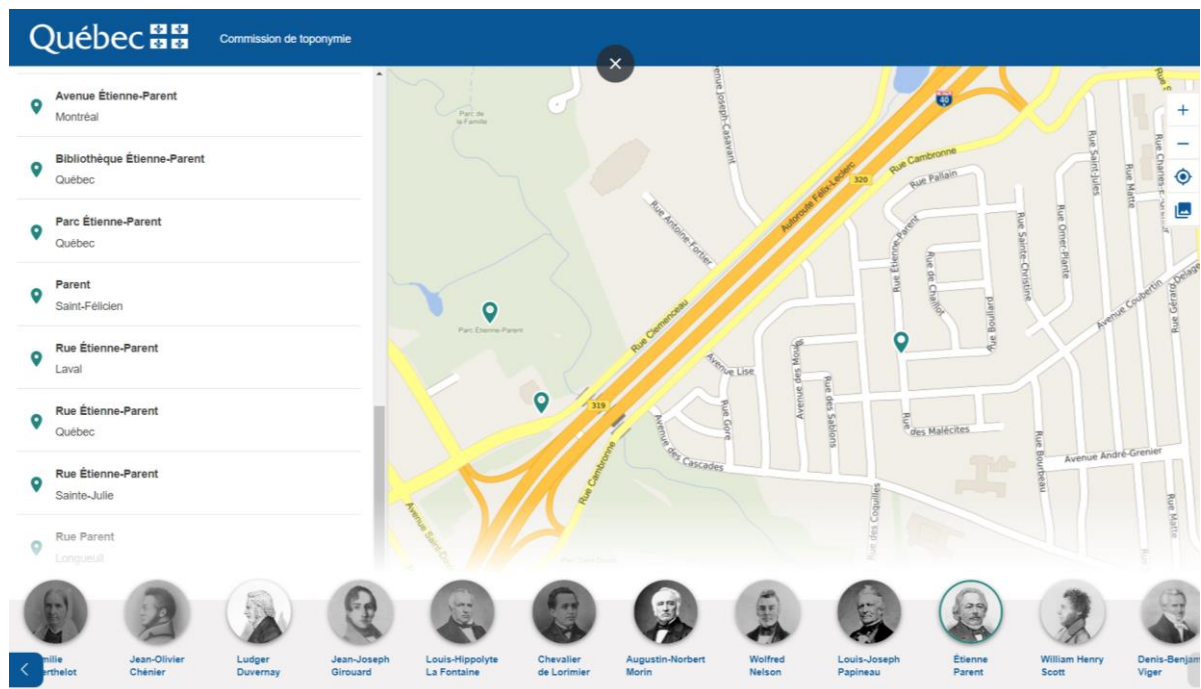


Figure 2. When a historical figure is selected, the list of place names commemorating that person is displayed.

Premiers ministres du Québec [Premiers of Québec]

The third interactive map was launched in June 2021, on the occasion of Saint-Jean Baptiste Day in Québec. Entitled *Premiers ministres du Québec*, the map highlights some 450 place names recalling the 25 Québec premiers commemorated in the toponymy and makes it possible to learn more about these individuals who have served the nation of Québec.

At its unveiling, the Minister responsible for the French Language introduced the map as follows: [translation] “Through their decisions and policies, the people who have held the office of premier have influenced the course of Québec’s history. This interactive map highlights the achievements and legacy of Québec’s premiers in a new way [and contributes] to the enhancement of Québec’s toponymic, cultural and historical heritage, a cornerstone of the preservation of our national identity.”

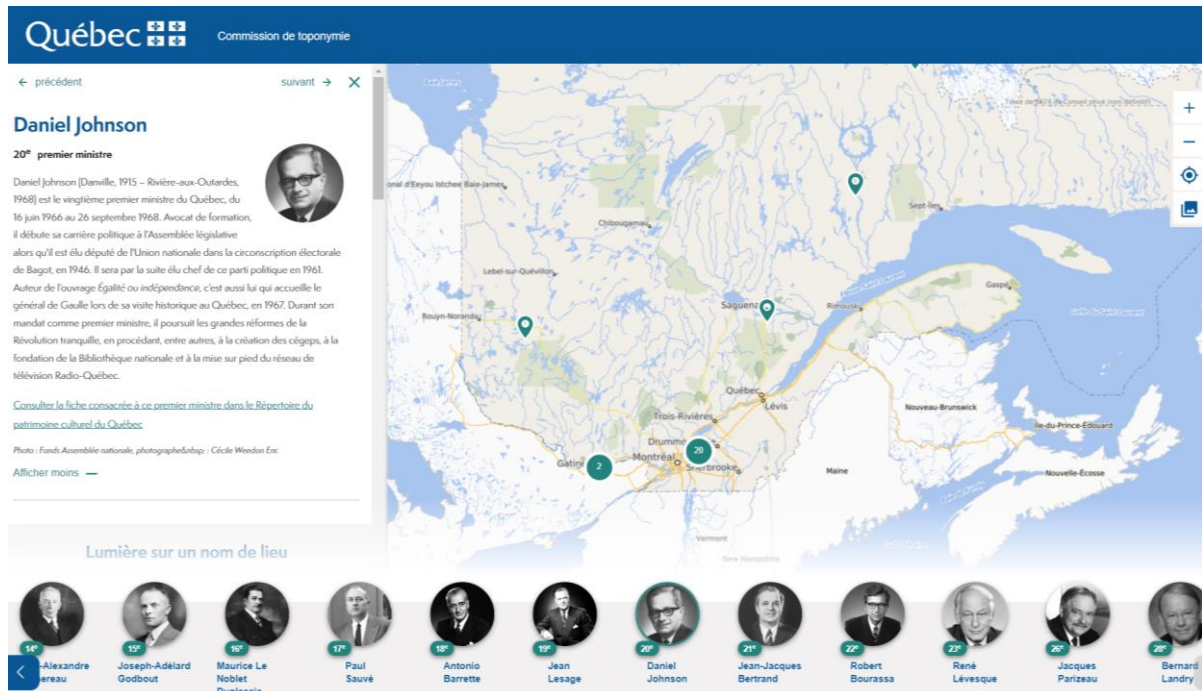


Figure 3. For each individual featured on a map, there is a portrait and a biography.

Éléments du patrimoine toponymique autochtone du Québec [Elements of Québec's Indigenous toponymic heritage]

The most recent interactive map produced by the Commission was unveiled on June 20, 2022, on the occasion of National Indigenous Peoples Day. This map highlights some 100 particularly significant Abenaki, Innu, Naskapi and Wendat place names. These names were chosen by representatives of Indigenous communities because of their cultural value, either because they designate geographical entities that are important in the history of the communities or because they have a strong symbolic value for them.

An introductory text describes each of the participating communities. Sound files, recorded by members of these communities, allow you to hear the pronunciation of the toponyms that appear on the map.

Québec's official toponymy includes more than 14,000 place names of Indigenous origin. The Commission also recognizes and disseminates more than 2,000 traditional First Nations and Inuit place names in its database, the *Banque de noms de lieux du Québec*.

By distributing this map, the Commission hopes to contribute even more to preserving and promoting Indigenous toponymy, which it recognizes as an integral part of Québec's toponymic heritage.

For now, the map contains names chosen by six communities from four First Nations, but work is under way with several other communities so that, in time, toponyms in the languages of each of the eleven Indigenous Nations in Québec will appear on the map.

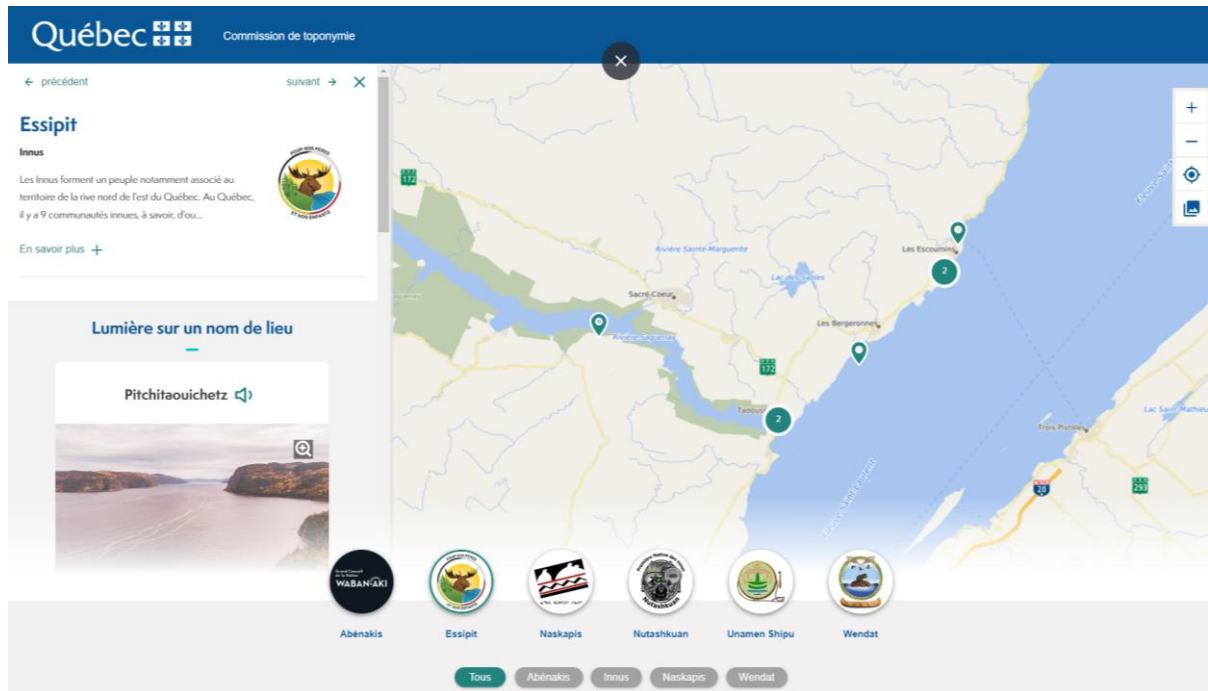


Figure 4. For each group of place names appearing on a map, a featured name is provided with a photograph of the place it refers to along with a detailed text about the place, its name and the origin and meaning of the place.

Points for discussion

The Group of Experts is invited to:

- (a) Take note of the progress made toward raising public awareness of the cultural and historical significance of place names and in promoting and preserving Indigenous-language toponyms;
- (b) Discuss and report on similar work undertaken in other countries.