





# Pilgrims

## Josephine. USA. 2018

She learned of the Camino only two years ago. Things had happened in her life that lead her to the Camino. Many life events occurred in a short period of time. Retiring, caring and death of her mother, six months later also her father passed away. During this period of time, her husband's work led them to leave the city where they had lived for 20 years, and they went to live in Las Cruces.

Already in Las Cruces she took care of her sick father-in-law. He was a veteran of World War II and she, aware of the importance of honoring veterans, participated in a memorial event which participants walked 26.2 miles. At the event she met people who introduced her to a hiking group in Las Cruces, and among them was her friend Annie who invited her to do the Camino. She, alone, did not dare because she had never travelled, she had never left the country, she felt incapable; but when her friend announced last

fall that she would do it, she decided that she would too and began walking in preparation for the event. Her husband supported her, in her idea and later would join her in Santiago after completing the Camino.

She loves to walk, hiking connects her with nature and she thought that the Camino would also put her in touch with her inner world, which would be a good experience to reflect on. She is a religious and a sister of hers had also made a religious pilgrimage (Fatima). She wanted her pilgrimage to have that aspect: devoting part of the day to prayer and meditation, even bringing petitions for her family. But above all she wanted to give thanks- thanks for the life she had lived and had, she wanted to give thanks for her life.

The importance of this aspect of gratitude was revealed to her on the Way, but also other reasons. In one village, a priest asked the group of pilgrims with whom she participated in the mass "why did you come?", She replied "out of gratitude", but the priest told her that he did not think it was just for that, "it's not only that, "and at that time she replied that she had lost a child in 2002.

She thought of her son on the Camino, prayed for him and the Way helped her to celebrate his life, but also with regard to her son this had been the central aspect of her experience. She felt grateful for the relationship she had had with him and for the good life he had lived.



For her, her experience of the Way had a spiritual side. Also there were memories and memories have had a great importance, and they have appeared again and again on her Way. For example, the smells that she smelt on the Camino often brought her back to her youth, and the song of the birds, memories of many kinds ... memories and sensations that came to her and always made her feel grateful.

She came from the United States with other people and planned to walk with her friend. They flew to Paris and from there to Biarritz, where they



encountered transport problems in reaching their starting point of Saint-Jean-Pie-de-Port.

They realized that it was best to take a taxi and there they found four complete strangers ready to share a taxi with them: two Australian pilgrims and two Irish pilgrims. For her this beginning was already a novelty, she was not used to trusting strangers, but on the Camino it is normal to do so.

She remembers a woman she met on

the Camino and told her that she walked alone and got lost many times but that she always found someone to guide her, including people driving her to her destination.

On the Camino you can trust others, you learn to be trusting. They tell you stories that give you constant assurance: pilgrims who forget their hiking sticks in a pharmacy and others, locals or pilgrims, who offer to call and locate them, go and look for them, etc.

She is not yet aware of what and how many will be the consequences of her Camino, but she already knows that, for example, she has lost her fear of travelling and also that she has lived through a great experience, having found people from all over: South Africa, Korea, Iceland...

She believes that for someone of her age, already retired, the Camino is a perfect place to start living that way. She remembers some friends and acquaintances who travelled alone at the age of twenty, and she envied them but she was not able to do it then. She would have wanted to do it but only now and through this experience has she finally been able to fulfill that desire.

Remember that on the Camino she met an 18-year-old girl who walked alone and, one night, arrived at the shelter too late and could not get in, she slept alone outside, when she heard her she thought: that's courage! Now she knows that she would also have it and that she could return alone to the Camino, without fear.

She believes that the pilgrim associations are important, she contacted American Pilgrims to get her credential and it was important for her to participate in their social networks, get practical information but also see that she was not the only person who felt anxious.

At this moment, rather than going back to the Camino, she believes that she would like to be "hospitalera". As to what she has obtained, she believes that above all she has found strength, physical strength and courage, and she has discovered that she has it. She has learned not to be afraid of the unknown. You do not know where you will sleep or eat and you are not afraid. That has been her great lesson: be not afraid.

## **Svend. Denmark. 2018**

Svend has suffered from depressions since 2009. That year he suffered a particularly strong depression and his therapist recommended that he walk. He found information about the Camino and decided to come to Spain and visit it.

His first experience was the French Way from Roncesvalles. It began in

the month of May, it was not difficult physically, but it was mentally. Along that Camino he often thought of going home, especially during the first 300 kilometers, in which he walked a long time alone. But little by little he began to feel more energy and in the end he completed his Camino and realized that it had been very positive for his mental health. In fact, that winter was much better.

Since then, Svend has come to walk the Camino every year. He always travels by French Way and he is then charged with energy to face the dark winters of Denmark.

Each winter he feels that the energy lasts longer, the depression weakens and takes longer to arrive. When it returns, he can face up to it better knowing that he will soon be returning to the Camino. The Way is the best help for your health.

The experience of the Camino is incomparable. There you find a great number and an extraordinary variety of people: people who are looking for answers, who need to make decisions, who are living through changes in their lives and who, precisely for that reason, are very open and very receptive. The Camino





is a space for help and meeting place for all, it is an open space. The experience of that openness to others in the Way is important, many people think that opening up to others makes you weaker but in reality it is the opposite. If you are very open to others, able to talk them and listen to them, you are actually more protected.

The Camino de Santiago is also a good place to help people, pilgrims are open both to help and to be helped. That is why the Camino is a special place, because it has this human dimension, of encounter and exchange, that other pilgrimage routes no longer have. For example, in Denmark there are pilgrimage routes such as the Path that departs from Trondheim (Norway), but it is not the same because there are very few people who travel it.

He believes that languages are not a problem on the Camino, there is always a way to communicate, he has made a good Italian friend on the Camino with whom he speaks English. But also, sometimes talking is not what is the most important. On the Camino you can share the joy of being together simply by walking with others, feeling good among pilgrims.

This year he started his Camino in Saint-Jean-Pie-de-Port, it took 34 days to travel to Santiago. It was quite a solitary experience, which was in part of his choosing. He had a lot of time to reflect but he knew that if you want to be with others it

is easy to find them, somehow you you meet the people you are supposed to meet.

Now from Santiago he will go to Finisterre to rest for a few days in one of his favorite hostels, for him finishing the Camino en Finisterre is important, he always does it.

Every year he feels better and believes that the Camino helps him, to walk, to visit some places again, people he has met and continue to meet him ... He thinks that he will keep on coming every year.



# The Way of St. James

## The English Way: A little history

The importance of pilgrimages by sea is unquestionable, some specialists like Lacarra even maintained that the sea was the oldest route of pilgrimage, since it was by the maritime route that the news of the discovery of the tomb of Santiago spread to the Carolingian world.

The pilgrims who came to the ports of northern Galicia were of many nationalities - English, Irish, Flemish, Scandinavian or Hanseatic - but it was the English who left the most indelible footprint, as is indicated by the fact the Way that connects the sea with the city of Compostela is known as the English Way.

Pilgrimages by sea to Compostela have been documented since the 12th century, specifically since 1147, when a company of English, German and Flemish crusaders visited the city and basilica of Santiago. The Crusaders went to the Holy Land but also to Lisbon, in whose conquest they participated by helping the first king of Portugal to liberate the city from Arab occupation. So that in 1255 Lisbon would become the capital of Portugal.

The research of specialists such as

Constance Storrs allow us to know better how these pilgrimages developed. Thus, her work on an important pilgrimage that set sail from Dartmouth in the twelfth century, is a prime example of how pilgrims on their way to Santiago sometimes made stopovers in other ports to visit other pilgrimage shrines, in this case San Salvador of Oviedo.

From these researches we know that most of the pilgrim ships disembarked in A Coruña and Ferrol, the two most important ports in the north of Galicia and those referred to the most in the pilgrims' accounts.

Padrón was also important for some centuries, since it depended on a small port on the banks of the Sar built in time of the archbishop Diego Gelmírez, but in the XVII century it ceased to be viable when the estuary fell into disuse.



Currently, the ports of A Coruña and Ferrol continue to receive pilgrim ships and have become the two starting points of the Camino Ingles itinerary.

Although the importance of pilgrimages to the ports of northern Galicia is well documented, the absence of systematic records prevents us from knowing the proportions reached. For that reason, historians such as Ilja Mieck have pointed out that the information we have allows us to know that in the XV Century, at least 8,000 pilgrims disembarked at the ports of A Coruña and Ferrol, but it is still unknown whether this figure constitutes a more or less representative part of a total that could, in theory, exceed 35,000.

The truth is that maritime pilgrimages developed a great deal,

particularly during the late Middle Ages, when the wars between France and England made pilgrimage by sea a lot safer than by land routes. This point is borne out by the testimony of the pilgrim Willian Wey, who in 1456, claimed to have found 84 ships from all the northern nations in the port of A Coruña.

In the sixteenth century maritime pilgrimages to Santiago fell into serious decline, owing to the birth of Protestantism and, particularly, the Anglican Church.

But in recent decades the revival of the Camino de Santiago has led to numerous pilgrimages by boat to the ports of A Coruña and Ferrol and, consequently also the land routes that have their starting points in both towns.



## The Cruz de Ferro

Along the Camino the pilgrim will find many mounds of stones known as "humilladeros", true symbols of the Camino among which the Cruz de Ferro is the most famous. Located at an approximate height of 1,490 meters, between Foncebadón and Manjarín, not far from the traditional beginning of the stage of Rabanal del Camino. The mound of the Cruz de Ferro is topped by a wooden pole, of an approximate height of five meters and with an iron cross of a meter and a half as a finishing touch.

There is a tradition according to which the origin of the 'humilladeros' was linked to the worship of the god Mercury, protector of merchants and walkers, to the point that they were known as "Montes de Mercurio". For other historians, the origin of the 'humilladeros' could be prior to romanization or be linked to the Roman Empire but, they maintain, their function would have been to mark territorial limits.

However, the passage of the Camino de Santiago has given rise to a large number of pilgrimage legends that explain the meaning of the Cruz de Ferro and similar "humilladeros" in relation to the pilgrims. It would be the pilgrims themselves who created them by leaving stones in their path, stones that they carried with them from their homelands.

But why would the pilgrims have brought stones from their lands over such great distances? The legends that explain it are many and diverse. Some relate it to an ancestral ritual of gratitude, by which the walkers would thank a pre-Roman deity or Mercury himself for having arrived at this point.

But the most popular legend related to the Camino de Santiago is the one that talks about how, during the Middle Ages, parishes and councils would have required the help of pilgrims to obtain the necessary stones for the construction of their churches and chapels, including the cathedral of Santiago.

In any case, regardless of their origin, the 'humilladeros' and the legends that surround them continued to spread among the pilgrims, some of whom even today contribute to sustain them by throwing stones that they bring with them from their towns and cities.

Of course, the pilgrim who is interested should know that the current post and cross are a copy, and if you want to visit the originals you can do it on the previous stage, in the city of Astorga, where they have been preserved since 1976 and can now be visited in the Museum of the Way. significance of the pilgrimage.



# Santiago de Compostela

## The Casa de la Troya

A very special corner of the city of Santiago is the Casa de la Troya, a former student boarding house from the late 19th century, now converted into a romantic museum. The architecture and decoration of this historic guesthouse allow the visitor to relive the experience of university life in Santiago in former times. These were the times that Alejandro Pérez Lugín portrayed in his novel "La Casa de la Troya" seen through the eyes of Gerardo Roquer and his fellow students.

The pension-museum is housed in a historic building of the eighteenth century, which functioned as a student's pension in the times immortalized by the novel by Pérez Lugín, between 1886 and 1906, when its owner was Generosa Carollo. Later it was run by several families until the sixties, by which time it had become so dilapidated that a collection was set up in order

to raise funds to restore it. When this was achieved its function changed to being that of a museum, and one that is much loved by compostelanos and students, as well as by visitors from all over the world who, despite the chronological distance, relive in it their own student days.

Acquired by the Council of Santiago and converted into a museum thanks to the patronage of Benigno Amor Rodríguez, it is currently part of the network of museums in Galicia and is open to the public for several months a year (between May and September).

The interior of the house-museum is decorated with furniture and accessories dating from the late nineteenth century. Next to the rooms of the pension, the old basement plays a central role, currently dedicated to the university 'tunas' or singing groups and, in particular, to the Compostela Tuna. The visitor can travel through the history of these student musical



groups - given great prominence in Lugín's novel - through a collection of musical instruments, scholarship certificates, capes, trophies and photographs.

Next to the space dedicated to the tunas, we would draw your attention to the historical library in which copies of different editions of the novel «La Casa de la Troya» and publications by authors related to Pérez Lugín and his novel or the compostelana theme are preserved. , from Valle-Inclán to Camilo Bargiela, Manuel Casás or Enrique Labarta.

To grasp the importance and popularity of the novel "La Casa de la Troya", it is sufficient to remember that there have been five screened versions. The first version dates from 1924, but the most popular one was filmed in 1959, which was directed by Rafael Gil with Arturo Fernández playing the leading role.

## The Palace of Raxoi

The palace of Rajoy - Raxoi court in Galician - which closes off the west side of the Plaza del Obradoiro, and is directly opposite the cathedral. Currently, it is home to the city council of Santiago. This magnificent neoclassical building took its name from one of its patrons: Bartolomé Rajoy Losada, Archbishop of Santiago who promoted its

construction in order to use it as a seminary.

Its construction was very complex, because it generated conflicts that ended up being resolved in the law courts. The reason for this was the question of the joint custody and ownership of the space it was going to occupy: a space in which the prisons of the city - civil and ecclesiastical - and a fragment of the city wall were involved, thus involving both the Bishopric and the City Council.

Both institutions struggled to build two separate projects: in 1764 the city council put forward a project by Lucas Ferro Caaveiro in order to establish its headquarters there. While in 1766, Archbishop Rajoy presented plans made by the French engineer Carlos Lemauro to erect a seminar.

In addition, a third institution joined the conflict: the Royal Hospital, according to which the building works could threaten their property. Finally, the courts resolved the mess in a way which was worthy of King Solomon himself. It was decided in 1767 that the building would house the Council of Compostela, the Seminar of Confessors and the prisons.

The project chosen was that of the engineer Carlos Lemauro.

Following the plans of Lemauro, the works were directed by fray Manuel de los Mártires and masters Juan

López Freire and Alberto Ricoy, between 1766 and 1772. The final result is a palace in the French style, very similar to that which was developed by Mansart and some Italian architects. It has a markedly horizontal character, with a long loggia porticated in the lower body and two upper storeys of classical proportions with 50 bays or niches for doors and windows in each one and that, in its central part, are supported by massive columns with Ionic capitals.

The austerity and classicism of the façade does not exclude the presence of sculptural elements, among which is the great relief history that covers the central pediment of auction and the sculpture that crowns it.

In the tympanum of the pediment, the battle of Clavijo is developed in relief, a legendary battle in which, according to tradition, the Apostle James intervened by supporting and leading the Christians to victory. The relief was designed by a painter, the Galician Gregorio Ferro, and its execution was entrusted to the sculptors José Gambino and José Ferreiro, both of them Galician. José Ferreiro is also responsible for the sculpture that crowns the pediment, an equestrian representation of Santiago as Matamoros.

The rear façade of also well worth seeing, and is particularly visible to the pilgrims who pass before it when going to or from the Pilgrims' Office of the Cathedral of Santiago, which is very close by.





