

THE SAGUENAY TRIP

Every day from the first of June to the last of September one of the passenger ships of the Canada Steamship Lines, with its black, white, and orange funnels silhouetted against the sky, leaves Victoria Pier in Montreal on a three-day cruise of the St. Lawrence-Saguenay Rivers as far as Bagotville, two hundred and fifty miles distant. Hundreds of American tourists take this cruise along one of Canada's great waterways, following the routes of the voyageurs and the fur-traders of old. I shall attempt to describe the route with its places of historical interest, folklore and magnificent scenery.

We leave Montreal at eight in the evening and arrive at Quebec City at half-past six the next morning. The traveller who gets up early will be very glad to exchange his sleep for an early morning ride in a caleche along the narrow, winding streets of this historic, medieval city. As we leave Quebec we pass the Davie shipbuilding yards at Lauzon, with one of the largest drydocks in Canada; Montmorency Falls; the Beauport shore, where the French under Montcalm waited for Wolfe in 1759; and then we come to the Island of Orleans, shaped like a huge Malpeque oyster.

This island is a favorite summer resort for many Quebec families, the haunt of artists, and the delight of all who yearn for a complete change; for here time hesitates: oxen plow the fields, and life is lived at the unhurried tempo of a hundred years ago. It was named the Island of Orleans in honor of King Francis I of France. Before that, Champlain had called it Bacchus Island because of the profusion of wild grapes. It also had another curious name—the Island of Sorcerers. It was the custom years ago for the fishermen there to visit their nets late at night by light of torches. From the mainland these eerie moving lights looked like the signals of some ghostly band. Some even imagined they were sparks from the eye of the Evil One himself. Residents on the Isle of Orleans were sometimes called “the flapjack eaters” because of the quantities of fluffy pancakes made by their women. The island is also noted for a delicately perfumed cheese, a near relative of Limburger cheese.

Behind the Island of Orleans, at the foot of Mont Ste. Anne, is the famous Church and Pilgrimage Shrine with its relics of the Mother of the Virgin Mary, which has been the scene of many miraculous cures.

As we pass the tip of the Isle of Orleans, we enter salt water near Grosse Ile, the government quarantine station for immigrants. Seven thousand Irish immigrants died here of typhoid fever in 1847, and are buried in a common grave. Every year the Quebec Irish Society organizes a pilgrimage of their burial place. Next we come to Cape Tourmente, Storm Cape, so named by Champlain because

of the ceaseless battering of the waves at its base. It is eighteen hundred feet above the level of the river. The country here is a long ridge of high capes, giant rocks and boulders, deep gaps and bays, massive hills and precipitous canyons. It is not uninhabited, however, and the spires of many a little country church can be seen. Bail-Ste-Paul is one such prosperous little parish opposite Ile-aux-Coudres (Hazel Tree Island).

It was on the shores of Ile-Aux-Coudres that the first white men who visited North America landed, centuries ago. On Sept. 8, 1535, on the feast of the Nativity of the Virgin, Jacques Cartier set foot on the soil of New France, and had a mass of Thanksgiving celebrated there. The oldest residents of the island tell a legend of the death of one of the first parish priests. One evening in the year, 1782, Father de la Brosse was playing cards with the men of the parish at Tadoussac.

"I wish you all goodnight", he said to them about nine o'clock, "and it is for the last time because at midnight I will be dead. You will hear the bell in my chapel toll three times. Send for Mr. Compain of Ile-Aux-Coudres. He will be waiting for you at the lower end of the island."

The men continued their little game until midnight, when the chapel bell tolled three times. They rushed to the church and found Father de la Brosse dead before the altar. When they sent for Mr. Compain, they found him ready, waiting on the island for their boat.

"What have you been doing?", he called to them before they could speak to him, "Father de la Brosse is dead, and I have been waiting here for over an hour."

Tradition adds that all the bells in the Jesuit missions on both shores of the St. Lawrence tolled at midnight when the most beloved priest on the North Shore died.

The next place of interest has several names: Pointe-au-Pic, Malbaie, Cap-a-l'Aigle, or as it is generally known to the tourist, Murray Bay. It is one of the most popular summer resorts on the north shore of the St. Lawrence. The Canada Steamship Lines Hotel, Manoir Richelieu, is beautifully situated on a natural terrace about one hundred feet above the level of the river with an unsurpassed view of the broadening St. Lawrence and the rounded summits of the Laurentian mountains. As we leave Murray Bay we approach Tadoussac, summer resort and ancient Indian Fur-Trading Post, first visited by Jacques Cartier in 1535. It is the entrance to what the Indians called "the kingdom of the Saguenay". The Indians told a strange tale of copper and gold, of emeralds and rubies and of white men living in cities up the Saguenay. They told too of a race of pygmies who were eternally at war with giant birds. These tales reached the ears of the king of France, and he thought he had within his grasp a domain as wealthy as the Indies.

He sent several expeditions to find the kingdom but always without success. There never was a kingdom of the Saguenay. But there was what the Indians referred to as "the River of Death", a long wide abyss in the midst of a huge pile of mountains—in one place one hundred and fifty fathoms, or nine hundred feet, deep.

The trip up the Saguenay is one of continuous grandeur. The scenery is a panorama of beauty, majesty, and natural splendor. A sunset on the Saguenay is an experience that cannot be painted or described. Artists have tried in vain to interpret the vast range of color, the shades of the frowning heights of solid rock, and the ever-changing reflections that are the color symphony of this Canadian canyon. For a brief time, the last flame-touched hues play over the inky waves; and then they fade suddenly, leaving stretches of utter blackness dotted by the phosphorescent whiteness in the wake of the ship. Along the desolate shoreline, occasional lights, miles apart, but serve to emphasize the vast and lonely reaches of rock; and one could feel a mighty despair, I think, except that the nearness and brilliance of the stars, and sometimes of the Northern Lights, give instead a comforting sense of the nearness of the creator in the primitive wilderness.

In deep silence, we glide through the shadows cast by two mighty pillars of stone, as our steamer swings into the natural bay at the foot of Cape Eternity. The foghorn sounds a long, mournful wail which strikes every ledge of the two granite masses, and echoes as many as eight times around the bay. Cape Eternity is the highest peak on the shores of the Saguenay, eighteen hundred feet high. Its companion, Cape Trinity, is formed of three immense peaks, and on the summit of the nearest one stands the aloof, white statue of "Notre Dame du Saguenay" with her hands clasped in prayer for her lonely, beautiful country. The statue is thirty-five feet high and is covered with lead sheeting. It was erected in 1881 by a traveller who was stricken by an incurable disease while visiting the Saguenay. He vowed that if he lived for ten years, he would erect a statue of the Virgin on Cape Trinity. After the ten years he kept his promise and then lived for eight more years. There is an interesting Indian legend explaining the three peaks of Cape Trinity. It relates that when the world was in its early infancy the Great Spirit sent all the evil spirits to the bottom of the Saguenay. One of these demons, although seriously hurt, was struggling to get away. He rose to the surface one morning as the powerful father of the Indians, Mayo, was walking toward his hunting-grounds. Mayo seized the demon by the tail and flung it against the cape; but it was necessary to do this three times before the demon perished, leaving three wide gashes in the cape. The outline of the face of cape Trinity, when seen from a certain angle, presents a singular likeness to the profile of an Indian's head.

After we pass Cape Trinity, we sail direct to Bagotville, the centre of the pulp and paper industries in the North and the gate-

way to the great new empire of aluminum and hydro-power, the Lake St. John district. This district is also the land of Maria Chapdelaine, the heroine of Louis Hemon's novel of that name. Today there are thriving industrial cities: Chicoutimins, meaning "up to here it is deep" at the head of navigation on the Saguenay; Arvida, the aluminum city; and Shipshaw, one of the greatest power sites in the world. The Lake St. John district is the centre of the paper industry of today, and of the cellulose industry of tomorrow. The Upper Saguenay is the site of great hydro-electric power developments, especially that at Shipshaw which was constructed in record time during the past war. The unlimited possibilities for future development in this district make it likely that the old Indian legends of a great, rich kingdom up the Saguenay River will finally come true in the world of tomorrow.

—EVELYN HESSIAN '49.

HOLD IT!

Cameras unnerve me. At the sight of a photo-album I turn pale, and at the click of a shutter I tremble. When people commence discussing things photographic I abruptly leave the room, and when I see some one peering into a camera lens I grow panicky. When people ask me if I've taken any good snap-shots lately, I deliberately change the subject; if they persist and change it back again, I crawl into the nearest dark corner. In short, I have a humiliating allergy to photography.

You see, it all started when I got the notion somewhere or other that it was easy to take pictures. All you needed was a camera, the proper film, willing (if living) subjects, and average intelligence, and there you were—an unbeatable combination.

Well, I started out with the first three; of that I am positive. I am not so sure about the fourth.

That first film—why must I remember it and its every detail? How eagerly I dragged my brothers and sisters from hedge to hill-top and made them stand stiffly, grinning six a-row! How I draped them, each in his turn, about the family pet, Bowser, and how flagrantly I interrupted the daily routine of our household!

Those first eight shots should have been good. Indeed, they may have been perfect examples of accurate timing and proper lighting. But I can never prove it. For across the centre of each and every one loomed a sinister shadow bearing an unmistakable resemblance to my own—it just couldn't be anyone else's—left thumb.