

The St. Lawrence River

History, Highway and Habitat

BY JANICE HAMILTON



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COVER PHOTO:

A farm overlooks the broad St. Lawrence River near St. Irénée
in the Charlevoix region of Quebec.

PAGE 1 PHOTO:

Tour boats are tied up in Tadoussac harbour in the late afternoon.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE:

The River and Its Estuary

PAGE 7

CHAPTER TWO:

Five Hundred Years and More

PAGE 33

CHAPTER THREE:

Flora and Fauna

PAGE 63

CHAPTER FOUR:

Landscapes and Legends

PAGE 87

ABOUT THE AUTHOR & PHOTOGRAPHERS – 117

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS – 118

MAP OF NORTHEASTERN NORTH AMERICA – 119

MAP OF THE ST. LAWRENCE RIVER – 120

PHOTO CREDITS – 123

SELECTED SOURCES AND RECOMMENDED READING – 125

INDEX – 127



This cheerful field of dandelions is near Métis on the lower estuary.

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the memory of my father,
Jim (Dr. James D.) Hamilton,
with whom I first sailed down the St. Lawrence River
aboard the Cunard liner *Franconia* in 1963.

JANICE HAMILTON
MONTREAL, 2006



The River and Its Estuary

Stand on the Plains of Abraham in Quebec City. Just down the road are the solid grey stone walls that surrounded the old capital of New France. Beyond the city the ancient, rugged hills of the Canadian Shield fade blue into the horizon, and at your feet, a broad, straight river flows gracefully toward its destiny with the sea. This is the St. Lawrence, third largest river in North America (after the Mississippi and Mackenzie), on its way to the Atlantic Ocean from its source in the Great Lakes.

The St. Lawrence courses northeast from the heart of the continent, draining a vast basin of more than 1.3 million square kilometres (502,000 square miles), to the Gulf of St. Lawrence, where it merges with the Atlantic. Near its source it is headstrong and exuberant, pointing like an arrow towards its destination. As it reaches the end of its voyage, it matures and expands to more than 50 kilometres (30 miles) in width. No wonder the people who live





The rich, varied photographs and informative text of *The St. Lawrence River* combine to provide a wonderful introduction to this great waterway.

This book follows the third largest river in North America from its source as the sole outlet of the Great Lakes on its journey to the Gulf of St. Lawrence, describing its evolution from a freshwater river that forms the international boundary between Ontario and New York State to a salt-water estuary more than 50 kilometres wide that is the artery and soul of Quebec.

"Incorporating a wealth of information and fascinating photos, Janice Hamilton has produced a valuable insight into the mightiest river of North America."

– Benny Beattie, author of *Tadoussac, The Sands of Summer*

The St. Lawrence River also tells the story of the river as the cradle of Canadian history and launching spot for the exploration of North America. Today it is a vital transportation corridor, while its tributaries, tides and turbulent rapids create aquatic habitats for a variety of plants and animals.

The beauty of the river and its surroundings draws visitors from around the world, and inspires celebrations of many kinds. Those who love the St. Lawrence River will treasure this book.

"The fabulous photographs in this book are a tribute to the adventurers, inventors and refugees who've thrived or fallen within the St. Lawrence River's stunning, yet brutal territory. Her accompanying text aptly depicts life on and beside a mighty waterway. This work is long overdue."

– Tracey Arial, author of *Ulysses' Guide to Hiking in Ontario*

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