

# The unique history of St-Jean Lodge



In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Saint-Jean was already known as one of North America's finest rivers because of its combative salmon and the striking beauty of the Gaspesian landscape. It was even said to be the richest fishing ground of the greater Gaspé three rivers: the Saint-Jean, the York, and the Dartmouth. At the time though, it was at the exclusive disposition of a wealthy Bostonian.

Later in the 1870s, Canada's Governor General Lord Dufferin began making frequent visits to the river with his wife, inviting ambassadors and friends. Below is an eloquent and remarkably charming passage taken from Lady Dufferin's journal and dating back to July 1873:



**Friday, 11<sup>th</sup>** – Finding an invitation from an American gentleman to go up his river, the St. John, and to stay with him. We accept; so we go onboard the Druid, wash and dress better than is possible in a tent, and in two hours begin a new adventure.

We drive for half an hour, cross a stream in a boat, walk a little way and then meet six saddle-horses. Then we mount and ride for three hours through the forest; five miles of the way being through a burnt wood. The tall, charred trunks are all that remain of the old forest, but a beautiful fresh underwood has grown up everywhere. This ride brings us to Mr. Curtis's "shanty" on the St. John. (...)

**Saturday, 12<sup>th</sup>** – After breakfast this morning, we got into canoes and were four hours going up the river. However, we stopped five times on our way to fish, and so the time did not appear long. We only caught trout thus far, but we have reached "Kelly's Pool" and are told that here salmon will surely come. D. [Lord Dufferin] catches one (18 lbs.) almost immediately. Mr. Curtis hooks one for me, and hands me the rod but in so doing, off it comes (...)

The St-Jean Lodge was built to accommodate sportsmen in the 1950s and was entirely rebuilt recently. Today, the Lodge's world-renowned reputation remains founded on the standards and noble values of its patrons, who are among Europe's and America's most demanding salmon anglers.