

GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY

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THE O'HARA FAMILY OF GASPE

The story of the life of Felix O'Hara and his family is linked so inextricably with the early settlement of Gaspé Basin and with events in the District of Gaspé that it is unusually significant.

The following attempt at recall of the family story reflects various, widely scattered records. One vital source of information was not available - that of Church records - for Gaspé had no Protestant clergy until long after the death of Felix O'Hara in 1805.

The visitor to modern Gaspé will find no civic memorial to Felix O'Hara. His role as pioneer merchant, surveyor, Justice of the Peace, member of the first Land Board and first Judge of the Court of Common Pleas for the District of Gaspé is unhonoured in the community.

Yet, it was of this man that his son-in-law, John McConnell, could officially report:

"In the absence of other information I may state that the Basin was settled by the late Hon. Felix O'Hara".

THE O'HARA FAMILY OF GASPE

REQUIESCAT

In the community of Gaspé Basin, the diligent searcher will find a gravestone bearing the following inscription:

FELIX O'HARA
HERE LIES THE BODY
OF FELIX O'HARA
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE
10 SEPT. 1805

This inscription, by and for itself, conveys little of the remarkable and influential life and career of this Gaspé pioneer. It is therefore of interest to search out and record what is to be found in various, scattered records about the story of Felix O'Hara and his family.

FAMILY ORIGINS

In an interesting report on Gaspé by Lieutenant Baddeley, Royal Engineers, dated 1833, is to be found the following statement of John D. McConnell, son-in-law of the late Felix O'Hara:

"In the absence of other information I may state that the Basin was settled by the late Hon. Felix O'Hara. That gentleman was a native of Ireland, the descendant of an ancient and no less respectable family of the same name in the County of Antrim and nearly allied to the O'Neils of Shanes Castle, the ancient Kings of Ulster. Col. John O'Hara of O'Hara's Brook still possesses the paternal castle and demesne and is the near kinsman of the late Felix O'Hara of O'Hara's Hamlet at Gaspé Basin. The latter, either from a spirit of adventure or being pleased with the wild beauties of the place, adopted this as his residence and his remaining son, Henry O'Hara, Esq., at present occupies the first house which was erected by him.

The Hon. Felix O'Hara was Provincial Judge for the district, had the charge of the Revenue and being a Justice

being of his colony. He raised a numerous family of sons and daughters, lived an exemplary, moral and happy life, diffusing peace and good fellowship around him and died at an old age much regretted.

The late Col. Edward O'Hara was the eldest son of Felix O'Hara. He died in London last year, was a Companion of the Bath, was for some time Governor of St. Lúcie and was much respected by His Royal Highness, the Duke of Kent, with whom he was on very intimate terms."

Gaspé Basin

20 February, 1834.

EARLY CAREER

The writings of Gaspesian historians, including the late A.D. Flowers, Reginald Day, N.P., and Doris and David McDougall, contribute glimpses of the career of Felix O'Hara prior to his settlement at Gaspé Basin. As an ambitious young Irishman he left his homeland for the British colonies in America. Resident in the colony of New York he met and married, in 1760, Martha McCormach, daughter of Jeremiah McCormach, Middlesex County, New Jersey. Accounts of his early career refer to him as a merchant and purveyor of supplies to the British Army while others indicate that he had military experience. In an article, "LES O'HARA A GASPE", Reginald Day, N.P. has stated:

"....In the Spring of 1764 Governor Murray granted permission to Felix O'Hara, Lieutenant of Marines, to settle at Gaspé. where it seemed good to him, providing that he did not displace anyone else...."

Other indication of a military service is to be found in the following early reference to a colleague:

"John Barnes seems to have arrived (in Canada) with Colonel de Lancey.....Barnes was a soldier as was his colleague, O'Hara of Gaspé....."

However the role of Felix O'Hara in the military campaigns of the British Forces leading to the fall of New France in 1760 remains to be documented. His subsequent association with William Gilliland in petitioning for land in Gaspé suggests

to Doris and David McDougall that O'Hara may have come into Canada via the Hudson River-Lake Champlain route. Gilliland had settled at the mouth of the Bouquet River on Lake Champlain, north of Crown Point, on a land grant made by the colony of New York to officers and soldiers who had served in the wars against the French and Indians. He was thus on the normal route from New York to Montreal and Quebec. General Amherst had requested New York merchants to come to Canada to help get the economy back to normal. These circumstances may account for the meeting and subsequent association of O'Hara with Gilliland. Also associated with Felix O'Hara in early Gaspé land claims was John McCord, Sr., a fellow native of Antrim, Ireland. McCord and his descendants played a distinguished role in the history of Montreal and Quebec. The McCord Museum of McGill University honours the family name.

PIONEER AT GASPE BASIN

It was in 1764-65, only four years after the fall of New France, that Felix O'Hara and his family came to settle at Gaspé Basin. It was then that an official survey entitled, A PLAN OF THE BAY AND HARBOUR OF GASPE IN THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC was prepared by the surveyor, John Collins, on the orders of General Murray, the military Governor. It was then, too, that Felix O'Hara accompanied Haldimand, who was then serving as the military Governor of Three Rivers, on a visit to the shores of Gaspé and the Bay Chaleur. Following upon this visit Haldimand purchased land at Bonaventure and the Seigniory of Pabos. A.D. Flowers refers to correspondence of 1778 in which O'Hara reminded Haldimand:

"I had the honor of accompanying Your Excellency on some of your excursions to the coast."

Again, writing in 1784 to request a re-survey of his original land grant and the survey done by John Collins a decade before, O'Hara noted:

"Your Excellency was there and saw the line
Collins was to be guided by"

A Census for Gaspé in 1765 shows the Felix O'Hara household with 1 female, 2 male children under 15, 1 domestic male over 15, 1 domestic female, 4 strangers, and 2 cattle. Twelve years later, a Census for Gaspé in 1777 showed for Felix O'Hara (from Ireland) 1 male over 16, 3 males under 16, 3 females under 16, 2 servants, and 19 cattle.

THE FIRST DECADE AT GASPE

While records for the first ten years of the O'Hara family at Gaspé are scanty, there are evidences that it was during this period that Felix O'Hara consolidated his position as a Gaspé landholder and merchant. At that time the O'Hara's would have had few English neighbours on the inner shores of Gaspé Bay. Richard Ascah, his wife Christiana and their family had come to settle at Peninsula, at the entrance to the inner bay and on the South-West Arm John Patterson and his family had taken up land along the York river. The summer fishing season brought an annual influx of ships and men into Gaspé Bay and consequent business for O'Hara. In 1769 Felix O'Hara obtained a license for the sale of liquor - no doubt mainly the rum that was so much in demand by seamen and fishermen. As there was then no provision in all of Gaspesia for the maintenance of law and order it fell to established citizens, such as Felix O'Hara at Gaspé and Theophilus Fox at Percé to do duty in those rough and ready times as Justices of the Peace.

THE WIDER PERSPECTIVE

It may be recalled that it was during the first decade of Felix O'Hara in Gaspé that, on the wider North American scene, relations between Britain and her American colonies were deteriorating towards the outbreak of the American Revolution and the American invasion of Quebec in 1775. While it is beyond the scope of this study to trace the course of that bitter struggle which persisted until 1783, it should be noted that the implications of that war in distant Gaspé were significant. For the shores of Gaspé and the Bay Chaleur were open and very vulnerable to sea-borne raids by American privateers. Again, as one result of the conflict, uprooted and distressed Loyalists and veteran soldiers would seek new homes in Gaspesia. The census

of Felix O'Hara would be influenced by such aspects of the American Revolutionary War and the subsequent Loyalist influx to Gaspesia.

O'HARA AND GOVERNOR COX

Following participation in the successful defence of the fortress city of Quebec from the determined American attacks of the forces of Generals Montgomery and Arnold, Major Nicholas Cox took up duty as Lieutenant-Governor of Gaspe. His appointment reflected recognition of Cox's distinguished military service. He had been with the the forces of Wolfe at the capture of the great French fortress of Louisbourg in 1758 and at the decisive battle for Quebec on the Plains of Abraham the following year. In the critical period of American invasion in 1775 he had once again played a prominent role as a Field Officer. [A more detailed account of the life of Cox will be found in the issue of GASPE OF YESTERDAY entitled - THE LIFE AND TIMES OF NICHOLAS COX - 1724-1794 and the related COX CORRESPONDENCE] The appointment of Cox reflected response by the Governor, Sir Guy Carleton (the Lord Dorechester) to the petitions of grievance that were flooding in to Quebec from merchants and other settlers of the Gaspé Coast who were suffering American raids. Governor Cox would consult Felix O'Hara and use his experience and his services in his administration.

The status of Felix O'Hara is reflected in correspondence of the time:

"Haldimand at Quebec to O'Hara at Gaspé, March 1st., 1777

... to show you, however, I am not unmindful of the people's interests or your desserts, I propose sending you down a commission, of judge of that district on that coast, which must be for the present time a good deal limited, though it may hereafter, when the times allow thereof, be further extended. You will execute it, I am persuaded, to the best of your ability, for the King's service and for the satisfaction of the loyal part of his subjects. Only £ 100 sterling is allowed for it..."

residence built at Percé for Lieutenant-Governor Nicholas Cox, who: ... "goes down early in the spring". Haldimand further requested that O'Hara report to him: "...information you believe to be useful to the State or to those living under its protection, and deserving of it..." The Commission for Felix O'Hara as Judge of Common Pleas of Gaspé, Chaleur Bay and other parts of the St. Lawrence was received by him in the autumn of 1779 together with instructions that he proceed to convene a Court of Justice and to that end appoint and instruct in their duties a Court Clerk, Sheriff or Bailiff and a Crier. It was thus that British Justice, with its long traditions, came to Gaspesia.

"CRY HAVOC ..."

For the Gaspesian of today it is difficult to appreciate the climate of alarm and fear that prevailed on the coasts of Gaspesia two hundred years ago because of repeated, devastating raids by armed American privateers. A range of strong emotions can be found expressed in the letters and petitions of such merchants as William Smith, Shoolbred and Barclay and Charles Robin, and in the correspondence of Haldimand, Cox and O'Hara. The following is typical:

" O'Hara to Haldimand, June 19, 1782

...(report deals with) two American privateers which landed at Percé and captured all the craft found there. They spiked the 12-pounder and hove it over the cliff, and took the 4-pounders. Up the bay they burned all the craft there, took me prisoner on board, and after a long examination before the most despicable, rancorous and unjust tribunal....I was acquitted of the false and groundless accusation of being rich..."

Thus, throughout the American Revolutionary War, Gaspé suffered difficult and trying times. Commerce was disrupted, provisions were often in short supply, lawlessness all too common and the tacit collaboration of some elements of the population with the American privateers suspected. Had it not been for the interest and continuing support of such Governors as Haldimand, a Gaspesian landholder himself, on the advice of men such as Cox and O'Hara, and the maritime support given by

such ships of the Royal Navy as could be spared to patrol Gaspesian waters, the critical situation might not have been endured and confidence gradually restored. [Other references to this trying time will be found in the GASPE OF YESTERDAY issue on, THE SHOOLBRED SEIGNIORY]

ARRIVAL OF THE LOYALISTS

As a consequence of the American Revolutionary War the Province of Quebec received a significant influx of Loyalists-dispossessed and distressed men and their families. To provide these unfortunate people with temporary shelter and food, camps such as those at William Henry (Sorel) and Machiche, west of Three Rivers, were established. With the end of hostilities in American victory all hopes of these Loyalists for return to their homes and possessions in the colonies were dashed. Steps had to be taken by the Quebec government to promote their permanent settlement in the province. [Some accounts of the experiences and claims of the Loyalists and retired soldiers will be found in the GASPE OF YESTERDAY account - LOYALIST CLAIMS]

In the summer of 1783, at the personal request of Governor Haldimand, Felix O'Hara accompanied Captain Justus Sherwood, Loyal Rangers, and members of his party of Loyalists in a reconnaissance of potential sites for settlement in Gaspé Bay and along the shores of Bay Chaleur. [A fuller account of this expedition will be found in the GASPE OF YESTERDAY article on CAPTAIN JUSTUS SHERWOOD] Then, in June, 1784, there sailed from Quebec for Gaspesia that first contingent of settlers, so well documented by the late A.D. Flowers in his book, LOYALISTS OF BAY CHALEUR. As Superintendent of Loyalist Settlement in the District of Gaspé, Governor Haldimand appointed Captain George Lawe, Sr., an officer who had served with distinction in the defence of Quebec in 1775.

The historians of Gaspé, Doris and David McDougall, have recorded and published the role of Felix O'Hara in the survey of lands for Loyalist settlement at New Carlisle and Douglastown. [Articles published in "SPEC".] The scope

of such survey work is evidenced by the RETURN OF CAPTAIN GEORGE LAWE, SUPT. OF LOYALISTS IN THE BAY OF CHALEUR - AUGUST 20, 1784, listing some 435 persons in the new settlement at New Carlisle. From the outset the Loyalists and disbanded soldiers were not an easy group to satisfy - O'Hara's efforts in surveying lots for them, proved to be in his own words, a difficult and often discouraging task.

ESTABLISHMENT AT GASPE

His public duties as surveyor and judge did not preclude the attention of Felix O'Hara to his personal and family interests. Over a period of thirty or more years he petitioned for and received various land grants for himself and members of his family. Among such grants were:

- 1767 1300 acres of land on the southwest branch of Gaspé Bay, called York River to Felix O'Hara and John McCord.
- 1785 1500 acres of land to Felix O'Hara and his sons.

Among the locations for land petitioned for were: Sandy Beach; L'Anse aux Cousins (or Mill Cove); the Dartmouth River marshes; Long Beach; Little Gaspé; Lower Lake; First Lake; and, of course, Gaspé Basin.

In another sphere, O'Hara secured appointment as Custom Officer at Gaspé as successor of Edward Manwaring. This was to prove to be of long-term significance for at least two of his sons would serve as Custom Officers in Gaspesia.

As agent for Haldimand in the administration of the Seigniory of Pabos, Felix O'Hara was assiduous in his responsibilities and promoted the settlement there of Acadians and other colonists. When Haldimand left Quebec for England, O'Hara purchased the Seigniory of Pabos from him. It was his intention, documented in his Will, that the Pabos Seigniory be his legacy to his three grandsons who bore his name, Felix.

A VISITOR'S IMPRESSION

Any impression we can gain of this pioneer of Gaspé, Felix O'Hara, from his contemporaries is precious. On June 1st, 1789, the Royal Navy frigate H.M.S. DIDO - 28 GUNS, Commander Charles Sandys, R.N. arrived at Gaspé bearing the Bishop of Nova Scotia en route to Quebec. From the Diary of Bishop Inglis the following entry is of interest:

"Tuesday, June 2, 1789 - Went with Cap't Sandys to see Mr. O'Hara the principal magistrate of this district which is a kind of separate Government in the Province of Quebec and of which Cap't Cox (sic) who resides at Carlisle in the Bay of Chaleur, is Lieut-Gov. Mr. O'Hara is a plain, sensible man and much better informed than might be expected from a person who has resided in this desolate country for 24 years. He was the first British subject that settled in Gaspee . . . Mr. O'Hara dined with us on board the 'DIDO' and, in the evening, went on shore to Douglas Town, opposite to the 'DIDO'."

OF THE O'HARA FAMILY - THE FOUR SONS

While the information at hand on the family of Felix and Martha O'Hara of Gaspé is far from complete, scattered records permit some glimpses of family history:

HUGH O'HARA - In the account of the voyage of Dr. von Iffland of Quebec to the Gaspé District in 1821 he refers as follows to Hugh, son of Felix O'Hara:

"I visited Gaspé Basin towards the end of May (1821) and found it to be, in my opinion, the most beautiful and secure harbour in all of North America. The most distinguished citizens who live near the harbour, are the O'Hara's, the Reverend Suddard and Mr. Stuart, all of whom received me with the most generous hospitality and to whom I shall ever be grateful. Accepting the gracious invitation of Mrs. O'Hara, widow of Major Hugh O'Hara, I lodged at her home.

. . . Major Hugh O'Hara, Deputy Collector of Customs, whose integrity many miss today, died in August,

1818. Here are the circumstances of his death. A ship, the "ROYAL EDWARD", with some 100 immigrants on board, arrived at Gaspé in July. . . . There were a number of persons on board with a contagious fever. Mr. O'Hara, with his unfailing zeal, spared no effort to help these unfortunate persons. He caught the fever from them and died a month later. He had opened his house to many of the sick and, by his efforts, contributed greatly to checking the spread of the contagion. Despite the fact that his death resulted from his extraordinary devotion, and that members of his family were also victims of the disease, the widow of this gentleman, who had served as an officer of the Government with merit for thirty years, has yet to be granted a pension by the Legislature."

When the Gaspé Lands Claims Commission held hearings at Douglstown in 1819 claim was made for various lands in Gaspé by Mary Anna Cort, widow of Hugh O'Hara, and her children, Felix; Edward; Jane; Hugh; Martha; Brian and Maria.

As these grandchildren of Felix and Martha O'Hara would extend the links of the O'Hara's with Gaspé, the following notes may be of interest:

- Felix - One of the three grandsons of Felix O'Hara to whom he bequeathed the Pabos seigneurie acquired from Haldimand. Reginald Day states that Felix died in India, far from his native Gaspé Basin, in 1824, and that his brother, Edward, was a beneficiary of his estate.
- Edward - When his uncle, Edward O'Hara, added a codicil to his Will in 1832 it revealed that his nephew Edward had disappeared from Gaspé owing a considerable sum to his uncle's estate. The Will stipulated that Edward's brother Brian be executor and trustee for this debt due the estate.
- Jane - The Malbay Mission Record Book I has reference to the marriage of Jane Baird O'Hara to John D. McConnell. In his interesting report of 1834 on Gaspé, McConnell notes that he was a Customs Officer, agent for Lloyds of London and a Major in the Gaspé Militia.

Brian - Designated in the Will of his uncle Edward as executor and trustee of his brother Edward's debt to his uncle's estate. In a list of the names of gentlemen recommended to be officers in the first division of the Gaspé Militia (1821) that of Brian O'Hara is shown with the rank of Ensign. (Public Archives - Canada)

Maria - The first wife of the Rev. William Arnold. The following quotation from "REMEMBRANCE" by Edith B. Mills, daughter of Arnold's second marriage to Ellen Boyle, is of interest:

"The O'Hara family (my father's first wife was Miss O'Hara) was a very old aristocratic one and they were exceedingly proud of their lineage and consequently exclusive. Mrs. Hugh O'Hara was an aristocrat and it is within my recollection that a legacy came to each of my sisters from the 'Duff' family when Lady Ann Duff died. Duff is the family name of the Earl of Fife. One of King Edward's daughters married a Duke of Fife. Mrs. O'Hara was kin to Lady Ann Duff and my sisters received their legacies through Mrs. Hugh O'Hara who was their grandmother. She had two daughters, one Mrs. McConnell, whose husband was Collector of Customs and my father married the other. Her name was Maria O'Hara. They had four children, all born in Gaspé. He built a stone house, probably the only one of that material in the place at that time. It was hardly completed when orders came from the bishop for a removal of my father to St. Johns, Quebec, to be chaplain to the forces and to serve other churches as well. One was at Longueuil in 1839. While at St. Johns his wife died leaving him with four little girls. Mrs. Hugh O'Hara still lived in Gaspé and it was his wish that the children be near their grandmother, so an application was made to the bishop for permission to return to his old duties. Leave was obtained and he returned to Gaspé and occupied the house which he had built there some years previous. He called the place 'Spring Grove' because of a grove of trees in which was a spring. That was where water was

obtained for use in the house. Life must have been very difficult for him at that time with his mission work and his little family. That is as may be. He met the daughter of one of the parishoners, James Boyle, and fell in love with her and they were married. She was very young, just twenty, he was forty and his eldest daughter sixteen. The O'Hara's were incensed, and it was years before he was forgiven, but my mother proved to be a good stepmother and eventually affairs became tranquil and happy. The Boyles belonged in the class of hewers of wood and the drawers of water. Nevertheless they were fine people who had the respect of the whole community. My father was, comparatively, a young man when he died, somewhere in the fifties, fifty-five or six thereabouts."

These brief notes on the family of Hugh O'Hara are indicative of the ever widening role and influence of the pioneer O'Hara family of Gaspé. The career of Hugh O'Hara's brother Edward provides further evidence of this.

EDWARD O'HARA - Birthdate of 1767 for Edward, son of Felix and Martha O'Hara would indicate that he was born at Gaspé Basin following his family's settlement there. He may well have been one of the sons referred to in the following extract of correspondence of O'Hara to Haldimand in June, 1782:

"I have ordered my son, who is at school in Quebec, to wait upon Your Excellency on his departure to know if you have any commands for me. This young man, with his brother as stout as himself, after this winter's instruction will want employ. They will be acquainted with some branches of mathematics."

Whatever the "employ" obtained by Edward it appears from references cited by Reginald Day that he became a person in view in Quebec and signatory of addresses to prominent officials. He is reported as having travelled to London in 1788.

In 1792 Edward was elected to represent the Gaspé District in the Legislative Assembly and won re-election in 1796. His attendance at the sessions of the second parliament of Lower Canada was interrupted after 1797 by military service.

In May 1796 Edward married Elizabeth, daughter of Andrew Cameron of Quebec. The marriage was performed by the Rev. Salter Jehoshophat Mountain, nephew of the first Anglican Bishop of Quebec, Jacob Mountain. It may well have been one of the first marriages performed by Salter J. Mountain for only shortly before this in 1796 he had been ordained as priest by his uncle in the Recollet chapel then used by the Anglican congregation of Quebec.

As noted by Day, Edward O'Hara began his military career in October 1796 as a Lieutenant in the 7th Regiment, Royal Fusiliers, commanded by the Duke of Kent. He was promoted to be captain of the York Rangers in 1803 and to the rank of Major of the York Light Infantry Volunteers in 1807. He took part in the capture of Guadeloupe in 1810 and was subsequently Governor of St-Lucia. He achieved the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel in 1815. He retired in 1822 after 26 years of varied and distinguished service. He had been honoured by award of the prestigious Order of the Bath.

Though the career of Edward O'Hara had taken him far from Gaspé Basin it is evident from his Will, made on his retirement in 1822 and revised in 1832 just prior to his death, that he had close family ties. The original Will named as his executors his brother Henry, who had inherited the home of his parents, Felix and Martha O'Hara, with James Stuart, his brother-in-law as substitute in the case of Henry's death and his nephew, Edward, son of his brother, the late Hugh O'Hara. As noted previously a codicil of 1832 replaced his nephew Edward by Brian O'Hara. He willed his estate equally to his brother Henry, his sister-in-law Annabella Stewart O'Hara, widow of his brother Oliver and his niece, Martha Collas.

The career of this distinguished son of Gaspé came to a close with his death in 1833.

OLIVER O'HARA - When in 1785 Felix O'Hara obtained the Customs post at Gaspé in succession to Edward Manwaring he opened up a remarkable association of the O'Hara family with Customs on the Gaspé coast. In the case of his son Oliver it was at Carleton on the Bay Chaleur that he served in Customs. There he met and married Annabella, daughter of the late Robert Stewart of Prince Edward Island and sister of Matthew Stewart who had bought part of the Seigniorship of Shoolbred in 1809 and was a well known business man in Gaspesia.

Mrs Horace Spencer Kipe of Watchung, N.J., U.S.A., who is active in searching the Stewart family, has found at Stewart's Brook, the gravestone of the mother of Matthew and Annabella Stewart O'Hara inscribed:

SACRED TO THE MEMORY
OF
MRS ANNABELLA STEWART
WIDOW OF
ROBERT STEWART
JAN. 1818
AGE 85 YEARS

The family of Oliver and Annabella Stewart O'Hara is not completely documented. There is some reason to believe that a son, named Felix in memory of his grandfather O'Hara may have died in childhood. The records document a daughter, Martha Sophia, who married John Wilkie of New Carlisle, Protonotary of the District of Gaspé. The Diaries of the Rev. George Milne, Rector of St. Andrew's Anglican parish of New Carlisle and Rural Dean of Gaspesia have the following entries for August, 1847:

"August 8 - . . . in the evening at 8 o'clock was called to visit Mrs. O'Hara who was said to be very ill - went & found her so but sensible - she died while I was there at 10 o'clock - was in her usual health till yesterday evening.

August 10 - Buried at N.C. Annabella Stewart wid. of late Oliver O'Hara in life of Carleton, Collector of Customs - died on 8th.

August 15 - Bapt^d Annabella O'Hara (7 Oct 46)
D. of John Wilkie of N.C. Esq.,
Prothon of Dist of Gaspé & Martha
Sophia O'Hara w."

The records of Mrs. Kipe indicate that another daughter of Oliver and Annabella Stewart O'Hara, Annabella, married a Mr. Ritchie.

HENRY O'HARA - The home of Felix O'Hara at Gaspé Basin passed on to his son, Henry. Edith Mills, in REMEMBRANCE, wrote of the O'Hara property:

" . . . Gaspé Basin could then boast some very fine houses, the aforesaid Fort Ramsey (Le Boutellier family) and on the opposite side our house, Spring Grove, then the Perchard house which was very fine and it had a lovely garden and grounds. There were the O'Hara houses, the upper house and the lower house. The latter even in my day (c.1850) people said was a hundred years old. Some used to say it was haunted. It was long and low. The living rooms all on the front and the dining rooms as well as the bedrooms well at the back. It contained a lot of antique furniture that would now delight the heart of a collector . . . "

In 1819, fourteen years after the death of his father, Felix, Henry O'Hara appeared before the Gaspé Lands Claims Commission sitting at Douglstown to make claim to land on both the North West and South West Arms of Gaspé Bay, waterfront lots in Gaspé Basin and land at Sandy Beach. At that time his brother Edward was absent on military service, brother Felix in the far distant Orient and brother Hugh had died the previous year.

Henry appears to have succeeded his father Felix as a leading citizen of Gaspé. He served as Collector of Customs at New Carlisle and Gaspé. McConnell noted in his 1834 report:

" I may however add that with the loyal vigilance of our Militia under command of Col. Henry O'Hara, the Basin would be a safe depot for warlike stores and a secure roadstead for all His Majesty's Navy"

The wife of Henry O'Hara was Mary Stewart. The spelling of the family name appears in Gaspesian records as Stewart or Stuart, loosely, as either of two acceptable forms. Contemporary members of the Stewarts in Gaspesia were Matthew, the Seigneur of Shoolbred, John, a mariner of Cox (New Carlisle) and James, brother of Matthew, of Gaspé. A son of John and Mary McKinnon Stewart of Cox, Captain Charles Stewart of Gaspé, was a noted whaler. The relationship of Mary Stewart, wife of Henry O'Hara, remains to be documented. She died at Gaspé in 1838 - her burial being recorded by the Rev. William Arnold as follows:

" Mary O'Hara, formerly Mary Stewart, wife of Henry O'Hara, Esq., collector of H.M. Customs for the port of New Carlisle in the County of Bonaventure, was buried by me, Rev. William Arnold (1838)

Present: J. McConnell

John Eden

Edward O'Hara had named his brother, Henry, executor for his estate. His Will further provided that in the case of Henry's death his brother-in-law, James Stewart, should take his place. From information available at this time it has not been possible to verify the name of the sister of Edward and Henry O'Hara who was the wife of James Stewart. It may have been Jane as the name recurred in O'Hara generations and a Jane O'Hara is to be found in records of the Gaspé Land Claims Commission of 1819.

THE COLLAS CONNECTION

One of the daughters of Felix and Martha O'Hara married a Collas - likely the John Collas whose signature appears as a God-parent at the baptism of Henry, son of Henry and Mary O'Hara. In her book, TREASURE TROVE IN GASPE AND BAY

CHALEUR, Mrs. MacWhirter refers to the Collas family as among the pioneer English families of Gaspesia - along with those of O'Hara, Patterson, Ascah, et al. Members of the Collas family were at Point St. Peter, engaged in the fishery. In 1819 Henry O'Hara made claim before the Gaspé Land Commission for land - "for and in the name of Julia and Louisa Collas and Anne O'Hara (minors)" Again, the Will of Edward O'Hara provided for an equal division of the balance of his estate to his sisters-in-law, Mary Anna Cort O'Hara, the widow of Hugh, and Annabella Stewart O'Hara, the widow of Oliver, and to his niece, Martha Collas.

QUEBEC CHURCH RECORDS

While Church records of births, marriages and deaths were not kept for the settlements about Gaspé Bay, for Protestants, prior to 1820, the following items from the Church records of the city and district of Quebec (Protestant) are of interest:

- 1796 Marriage of Edward O'Hara and Elizabeth Cameron.
- 1806 Burial of Elizabeth, wife of Edward O'Hara
- 1815 Baptism of Jane Baird, daughter of Hugh O'Hara and Mary.
- 1816 Baptism of Helen Maria, daughter of Henry O'Hara and Mary
- 1816 Baptism of Henry, son of Henry O'Hara and Mary.
- 1816 Baptism of Edward, son of Hugh O'Hara and Mary.
- 1825 Burial of Martha Bridget, daughter of Hugh O'Hara. Age 20.
(Her death attributed to the news of the death of her brother, Lieut. Felix O'Hara, in Ceylon.)
- 1841 Burial of George Stewart O'Hara.
- 1867 Burial, at Levis, of Brian O'Hara. Age 57 .
- 1868 Burial of Charlotte Francesca, daughter of the late Brian O'Hara and Mary.

IN CONTEXT

At the time of his death in September, 1805, Felix O'Hara had been resident in Gaspé for some forty years. During all that time Gaspesia had neither a permanent Protestant clergyman nor any systematic records of birth, marriage and burial. It can be assumed that Felix O'Hara, as pioneer settler,

Justice of the Peace and Judge was often called upon to perform such civil acts for the early English families about Gaspé Bay. If record of these could be found they would be a priceless treasure for all those interested in early Gaspesian history. It was not until fifteen years after the death of Felix O'Hara that the first permanent Protestant clergyman, in the person of the Rev. John Suddard, came to Gaspesia. Thus, for more than a half century the Protestant families of Gaspé had endured the lack of spiritual and pastoral care - so vividly deplored in a letter of Col. Henry Johnston of Douglastown and Point St Peter to the Anglican Bishop of Quebec in 1813.

Martha McCormach O'Hara survived her husband, Felix, and was the recipient of a small government pension until her death.

IN CONCLUSION

It is difficult indeed for the modern Gaspesian to appreciate the degree of isolation experienced by such pioneer families as that of Felix and Martha O'Hara. Roads were practically non-existent. Travel from settlement to settlement was by the sea with all its attendant perils. As late as the 1850's the Rev. William Arnold set out from Gaspé for Quebec on horseback. His daughter, to reach Percé from Gaspé, travelled by schooner. Poignant testimony to the stern realities of early difficulties of travel is cited in the following extract from REMEMBRANCE on the circumstances of the death of the Rev. Arnold:

"....When the end came it was in this way: he had been on a long journey, as usual on horseback, and as he was riding hard he was very much heated. It was early Spring and the wind was cold. He came to a place when he had to ferry across an inlet and he waited three hours for the tide to rise so the ferryman could come and get him. The result of that journey was that after he got home a heavy cold developed in his chest and five weeks later, he died...."

When consideration is given to the primitive nature of life in Gaspesia in his time, the career and accomplishments of Felix O'Hara are a stirring chapter of Gaspé's heritage.

FELIX O'HARA M MARTHA McCORMACH
 b.(c) 1732 1760 (Dtr.Jeremiah, Middlesex Co.,N.J.)
 d. 1805

HUGH	EDWARD	OLIVER	HENRY	FELIX	DTR.I	DTR.II
b.	b. 1767	b.	b. 1780		(JANE ?)	()
d.1818	d. 1833	d. 1809	d. 1853			
M	M	M	M		M	M
	1796					
MARY	ELIZABETH	ANNABELLA	MARY		(JAMES ?)	(JOHN ?)
ANNA	CAMERON	STEWART	STUART		STUART	COLLAS
CORT	d.1806	d. 1846	(STEWART ?)		(STEWART ?)	
			d. 1838			

Mary Anna Cort, dtr. of John Cort, Miramichi, reportedly adopted by O'Haras of Gaspé following death of father - married Hugh O'Hara.

Annabella Stewart, dtr. of Robert and Annabella Stewart, sister of Matthew, James, et al. Long a widow following early death of husband, Oliver O'Hara.

In 1835 a very clear signature, MARY STUART, (wife of Henry O'Hara)

COLLAS. In 1819 Henry O'Hara claimed Gaspé lands "for and in the name of Julia and Louisa Collas" - evidently dtrs of his sister's marriage with (John) Collas.

A Gaspé Census of 1825 lists JAMES STEWART with household of seven, including Widow O'Hara. Was his wife a dtr. of Felix and Martha O'Hara? The generation fits.

Major Hugh O'Hara died from fever spread in Gaspé by immigrants on "ROYAL EDWARD".

HUGH O'HARA M MARY ANNA CORT
 (son of Felix)

b.
 d. 1818

FELIX	HUGH	EDWARD	BRIAN	JANE BAIRD	MARTHA BRIDGET	MARIA CHARLOTTE
b.	b.	b.	b.1810	B:1815 ¹⁰¹⁵	b. 1805	
d. 1824	d.	d.	d.1867		d. 1825	

M

M
 1833

M
 1828

MARY ?

JOHN D.
 McCONNELL

REV. WILLIAM
 ARNOLD

CHARLOTTE
 FRANCESCA

MARIA ANNA
 BRIAN DOUGLAS
 BRUCE

EMILY MARIA
 JULIA LOUISA
 MARGARET CATHERINE
 JANE MAY

FELIX - Died on Active Service in Ceylon in 1824 as Lieut. 16th Regiment. News of his death caused the death of his sister, Martha Bridget in 1825. His estate included share in the Seigniory of Pabos by Will of grandfather, Felix. This share descended to Annabella and Martha Sophia O'Hara, dtrs of Oliver and Annabella Stewart O'Hara, to Felix Stewart, son of a Felix O'Hara daughter to (James) Stewart, and to one of the children issue of the marriage of Jane Baird O'Hara and John D. McConnell. Faith and Homage sworn 1836 on behalf of above heirs by Dr. George Mellis Douglas.

EDWARD - Had evidently been named in the original Will of his Uncle Edward O'Hara as his heir but as of 1832 had left Gaspé reportedly owing a considerable sum to his Uncle's estate. In that year his Uncle Edward added a codicil to his WILL naming Brian O'Hara as trustee and responsible for the repayment of sums owing to the estate. Uncle Edward died in 1833 and his nephew, Edward, reportedly died prior to 1835.

MARIA CHARLOTTE - The untimely death of Maria Charlotte left her husband, Rev. William Arnold with the four young daughters shown above. Subsequently the Rev. Arnold married Ellen Boyle. The story of the Arnold family and their Gaspé home, SPRING GROVE, was recorded by a daughter of the second marriage, Edith Arnold Mills.

JOHN DOUGLAS McCONNELL - Husband of Jane Baird McConnell, John D. McConnell, was in 1833 a Deputy Collector of H.M. Customs, Major in the Gaspé Militia and the local agent for LLOYDS OF LONDON.

OLIVER O'HARA (Son of Felix)	M	ANNABELLA STEWART
b.		b.
d. C.1809		d. 1846

FELIX	ANNABELLA	MARTHA SOPHIA
b.	b.	b. 1808
d.	d.	d. 1879
(Died in childhood)	M	M
	-- RITCHIE	JOHN WILKIE

The share of Felix, grandson of Felix, fell to his sisters - see note Chart II regarding Seignior of Pabos.

In the same year as the Widow Annabella Stewart died in New Carlisle at the home of John and Martha Sophia Wilkie (1846) that couple had a daughter, Annabella.

John Wilkie was Prothonotary, District of Gaspé, Born in 1809, he died in 1862.

The family of Ritchie, Merchants, was associated with Miramichi, Dalhousie, Campbellton and the Seignior of Shoolbred. Annabella O'Hara's husband may have been Arthur Ritchie.

Annabella, wife of Oliver O'Hara, was the dtr. of Robert and Annabella Stewart and sister of Matthew, Seignior of Shoolbred, James, et al.

IV

EDWARD O'HARA	M	ELIZABETH CAMERON
(Son of Felix)	1796	
b.1767		b.
d. 1833		d. 1806

NO RECORD OF
CHILDREN

EDWARD - Educated in Quebec

- 1787 To London on ship "CARLETON" - Capt. Patterson. Ret. "MENTOR" - 1788
- 1789 Merchant - WOOLSEY and O'HARA - Signed petition of merchants to Lord Dorchester
- 1795 Commissioner for Peace - District of Gaspé
- 1796 Married Elizabeth Cameron of Quebec. A son may have died in infancy.
Lieut. 7th Royal Fusiliers - Duke of Kent.
- 1803 Capt. York Rangers.
- 1806 A.D.C. to General Boyer - Commander-in-Chief, Barbados.
- 1807 Major. York light Infantry.
- 1810 At capture of Guadeloupe. Governor of St. Lucia.
- 1815 Promoted Lieut.-Colonel
- 1822 Retired from Army. Awarded Order of the Bath.
- 1826 To Barbados as Merchant on ship "MICMAC".
- 1832 Codicil to Will. Nephew Edward replaced as heir by brother Brian.
- 1833 Died.

V

HENRY O'HARA
(Son of Felix)

M

MARY STUART (STEWART ?)

b. 1780

b.

d. 1853

d. 1838

MARTHA ELEANOR

HELEN MARIA

HENRY

EDWARD JAMES

b. 1813

b. 1816

b.

b. 1826

d. 1842

d.

d.

d.

M

M

THOMAS JACKSON

DUNCAN McCALLUM