

GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY

30

RECALLING HIGHLIGHTS OF THE
GASPÉ HOME, "SPRING GROVE",
AND ITS LINKS WITH THE EARLY
GASPÉ FAMILIES OF ARNOLD,
BOYLE AND SHORT.

KEN ANNETT

"SPRING GROVE" AND ITS GASPE FAMILY LINKS

In the lithographed views of Gaspé Basin that illustrate his book, "GASPE SCENERY", the Gaspesian author and artist, Thomas Pye, identified a number of the homes to be found in the Gaspé of 1866. Among these, located near the point of land long known as Arnold's Point, at the harbour entrance, Pye noted the large, stone residence of John Short, Esq. It may be of interest to the Gaspesians of today, to recall the background of that home and property, then known as "SPRING GROVE", and the Gaspé families linked with it. As the home itself, in the time of Thomas Pye, had older roots in Gaspe than its owner, John Short, it seems appropriate to accord its story priority in this account.

THE REV. WILLIAM ARNOLD AND THE ORIGINS OF "SPRING GROVE"

Records of the Anglican Diocese of Quebec show that in 1826 Bishop Stewart ordained to the ministry the Rev. William Arnold who had been born near Dublin, Ireland in 1804, had come as a lad to Canada with his family that had settled near Hamilton, Ontario, and had received his education in Canada. In November, 1826 the Rev. Arnold was appointed to the Gaspesian parish of New Carlisle and Paspébiac where he served for three years until his move to the parish of the Bay of Gaspé and Percé in October, 1829.

At Gaspé the Rev. William Arnold met and married Maria O'Hara, granddaughter of the Gaspé pioneer and Judge, Felix O'Hara. On a grant of land located between the Point or Bluff that would long bear his name and the little brook known in successive generations as Arnold's and Kavanagh's Brook he proceeded to have built the fine, stone house which he named "SPRING GROVE" from the spring of fresh water in the grove of trees beside the house. The detailed account of that house preserved in the memoirs of Edith Mills, the daughter of the Rev. William and Ellen Boyle Arnold, must rank as a precious part of the literary and historical heritage of Gaspé. When, in 1934, the authors

of "HISTORICAL GASPÉ", the Rev. Charles Roy and Lucien Brault recorded some of the old homes of Gaspé, they noted that "SPRING GROVE" had then become the Jopling home and estate. As such, the house, property and later addition of the Battery Park Hotel on Arnold's Bluff, may still be remembered by many Gaspésians.

Not long after "SPRING GROVE" was built, the Rev. Arnold was moved from the Bay of Gaspé and Percé parish by the Bishop of Quebec. It was while he was serving the parish of St-John's-on-Richelieu that his wife, Maria O'Hara Arnold, died, leaving him with the care and upbringing of their four young daughters, Emily, Julia, Carrie and Jane. To resolve his family problems the Rev. Arnold sought and obtained the permission of the Bishop of Quebec to return to Gaspé and his home, "SPRING GROVE", where his children could have the care and supervision of their maternal grandmother, Mrs. O'Hara. (The family history of the influential O'Hara family has been recalled in an account submitted previously to SPEC as part of the GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY series)

In the course of time the Rev. William Arnold married Ellen Boyle, the daughter of James and Charlotte McKinnon Boyle of the South West Arm of Gaspé Bay. Despite the vigorous opposition of the O'Hara family to the marriage and the fact that at the time of her marriage Ellen Boyle was not much older than the eldest daughter of the Rev. Arnold's first marriage, the union was a happy and successful one. In Ellen Boyle Arnold "SPRING GROVE" found a competent chatelaine and the Arnold family a loving step-mother as is evident in the memoirs of her own daughter, Edith Arnold Mills in "REMEMBRANCE".

The extent of the Rev. William Arnold's knowledge of and service to the early English community of Gaspé Bay can be appreciated by reference to the Anglican Church Records of Births, Marriages and Deaths of his time. At the Basin, his home "SPRING GROVE" was open house not only for his parishioners, relatives and friends but for visitors who reached Gaspé by sea or land. The Gaspesian tradition for hospitality was exemplified by the welcome that

"SPRING GROVE" extended to its visitors from Indian Chief to His Lordship, Bishop Mountain.

THE SHORT FAMILY

In 1828, a year prior to the move of the Rev. William Arnold to Gaspé, a contemporary Anglican minister, the Rev. Robert Short, received his first appointment to the parish of Sandwich in Upper Canada. It was while serving in that district that a son, John, was born to him and his wife, Margaret, a daughter of Captain Lyon of Aberdeen, Scotland. As this son, John, would grow up to become not only a very distinguished citizen of Gaspé but the owner of "SPRING GROVE", it is of interest to consider his background.

Robert Short, the great grandfather of John Short of Gaspé, was a native of Somerset, England where he received his education and was ordained to the Church of England ministry. He came out to Canada via New York in 1796 and after further study at Kingston, Upper Canada, was appointed by the Bishop of Quebec to the parish of St. Armand at Missisquoi Bay. After serving there for two years he became the Rector of Three Rivers in 1801.

At that time Three Rivers ranked in size, activity and importance with Quebec and Montreal. As a garrison town with a considerable English population it then enjoyed a stimulating social life. Though the Rev. Robert Short had lost his wife and was left with a family of two sons and four daughters, the family appears to have thrived in the social environment of Three Rivers.

Tempting as it is to trace the careers of each of its members, and in particular the marriages of the four Short daughters, it is pertinent to this account to recall, simply, that one of the sons, John Quircke Short, rose to be Inspector-General of Military Hospitals for the British Isles and the Colonies. He served Canada well during the War of 1812-1814. His two sons, born in Bristol, England and Edinburgh, Scotland respectively,

returned to live in Canada, studied Law and settled in Sherbrooke, Quebec where they had distinguished legal and public careers. It was there that Robert, the grandson of John Quircke Short, was born, grew up and was educated for the Anglican ministry.

After serving the parish of Sandwich, the Rev. Robert Short, M.A. moved to Gaspesia and a new appointment as Rector of Percé. His son, John, was a young child at the time of this move. At Percé, the Rev. Short would have come to know the Rev. William Arnold and his family of Gaspé. Becoming a widower, the Rev. Short married Miss Boyle, the elder sister of Ellen Boyle Arnold. Later the inter-connection of the Arnold, Boyle and Short families was extended when the son, John Short fell in love with and married Mary Charlotte the younger sister of Ellen Boyle Arnold. This connection was given even more tangible form after the tragic death of the Rev. William Arnold when his widow sold "SPRING GROVE", including her own property rights to Arnold's Bluff to her brother-in-law, John Short, Esq.

THE BOYLE FAMILY

Pending the publication of a definitive history of the Boyle family of Gaspé the records available indicate that the family members were among the early, dynamic English pioneers of Gaspé Bay. The wife of James Boyle, Charlotte McKinnon Boyle, was herself the daughter of a Loyalist settler in Gaspesia as was Flora McKinnon Ascah, the wife of John Ascah of Peninsula. In her memoir, "REMEMBRANCE", Edith Arnold Mills recalled her grandmother, Charlotte, as follows:

"...She was considered very beautiful as a girl -that must be true for she was an exceedingly handsome old lady with her white, wavy hair and snapping black eyes. She was tall and very erect as long as she lived. She was 84 when she died. I have heard that she was 16 and grandfather (James Boyle) 19 when they were married..."

Again, recalling the sisters of her grandfather, James Boyle, Edith Mills referred to Mrs. Eden (Ellen); Mrs. Languedoc (Eliza); Mrs. Coffin and Mrs. (Captain) Hall. Other interesting insight into the generation of James Boyle is to be found in a letter of Maria Languedoc Tuzo to her niece, now in the possession of Francis Languedoc Annett of Gaspé:

"...Mother's brother was Captain Felix Boyle. He used to go whaling and do extremely well and in the autumn he used to take his oil to Quebec to sell. He met in with Joseph Languedoc and he came to Gaspé with him and married sister Eliza..."

Reference has been found to five sons and three daughters of the family of James and Charlotte McKinnon Boyle. Thomas, a mariner, sailed abroad for in Jersey, C.I., he met and married a talented lady, Elizabeth Vodin and brought her to Gaspé as his bride. Mrs. Mills recalled that Elizabeth had one of the first pianos in Gaspé, that she and Thomas conversed in French, that she often returned home to Jersey for the winter and that she was a welcome tutor of the young at "SPRING GROVE".

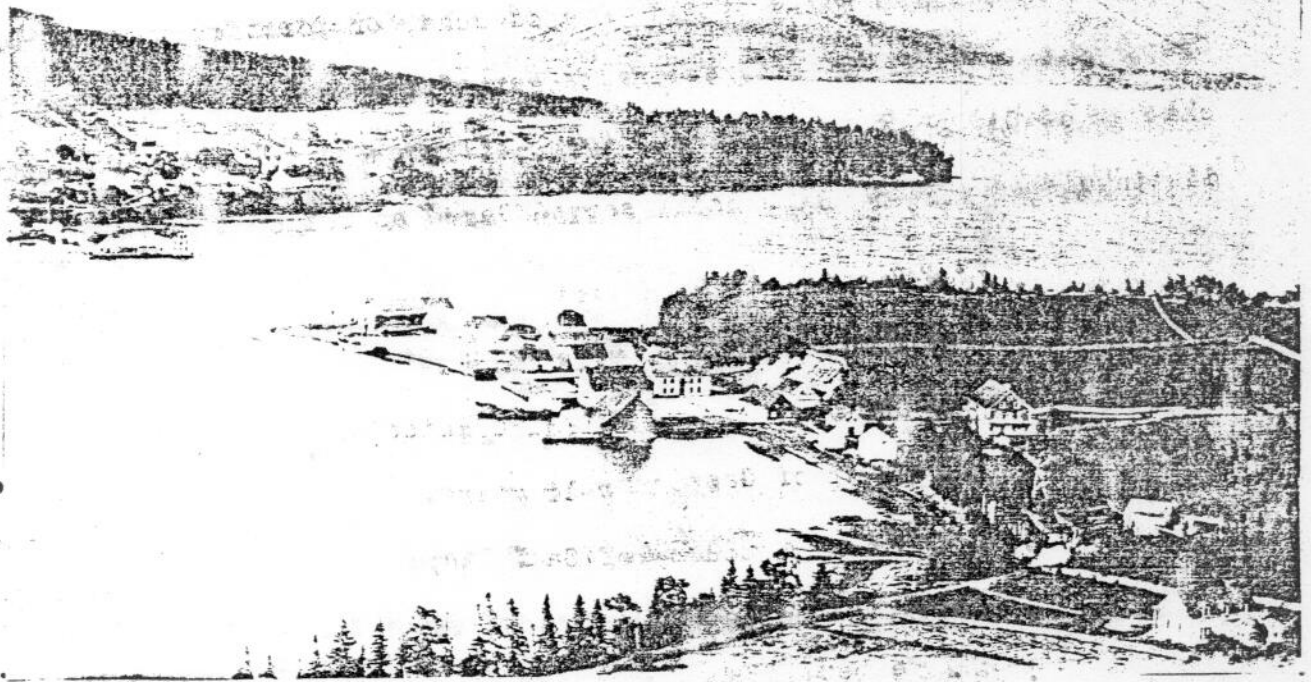
Felix Boyle, brother of Thomas, was educated at Bishop's College in distant Lennoxville and ordained as an Anglican minister. He married Julia, daughter of the Rev. William and Maria O'Hara Arnold. For some twelve years he served the Anglican congregation of the Magdalen Islands.

The full story of the other sons of James and Charlotte McKinnon Boyle must await a later, and more detailed study of the Boyle family of Gaspé. These sons included James Jr., Charles and John Boyle. As to the three Boyle daughters, they became the respective wives of the Rev. William Arnold, the Rev. Robert Short and John Short, Esq., all residents of Gaspesia.

The death of the Rev. William Arnold and the subsequent sale of the house and property of "SPRING GROVE" to her brother-in-law, John Short by the widow, Ellen Boyle Arnold, opened a new chapter for this fine, old Gaspé home. While the interesting career of its new owner must await another chapter of GASPE OF YESTERDAY it may be of interest to note that during his distinguished career, John Short served Gaspé as follows:

- . Justice of the Peace
- . Officer of the Gaspé Militia
- . Chairman of the School Commissioners
- . Mayor of Gaspé for 14 years.
- . Warden of the County of Gaspé
- . Sheriff of Gaspé
- . Member of the Federal Parliament for Gaspé

To attempt recall of this one Gaspé home, "SPRING GROVE" and some of its early family links is to realize how Gaspé has changed with the passing of time and how interesting personalities and events of the past can fade from memory and perhaps be lost forever. The cooperation and help of Gaspésians who have records and stories of earlier times is vital to ensure the preservation of our unique heritage.



EARLY PHOTO OF THE ENTRANCE TO GASPE BASIN ON THE SOUTH WEST ARM OF GASPE BAY.

ARNOLD'S BLUFF IS SHOWN AS THE POINT OF LAND COMMANDING THE ENTRANCE TO THE BASIN. IT IS NOW THE SITE OF THE REGIONAL MUSEUM OF GASPE.

THE CLEARED LAND INLAND FROM THE POINT OF ARNOLD'S BLUFF WAS THE SITE OF "SPRING GROVE", THE HOME OF THE REV. WILLIAM ARNOLD.

ON THE SAND SPIT OF GASPE HARBOUR, IN THE FOREGROUND, CAN BE SEEN STOREHOUSES OF THE COMPANIES ENGAGED IN THE FISHERY.