

GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY

A MUNIFICENT DONATION

For "divers good and pious causes"
the Widow Maria Anna Cort O'Hara
donated land for St. James Church,
Gaspé Bay South (Wakeham) and for
the cemetery.

KEN ANNETT



ST. JAMES ANGLICAN CHURCH

WAKEHAM

A Munificent Donation

Preface

In the issue of April 11th., 1989 SPEC published the article, GASPÉ CHURCH RECORDS, part of the "GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY" series. The article included the 1840 DEED OF DONATION whereby the Widow Mary Ann Cort O'Hara of Gaspé donated the land on which would be built St. James Church of the present community of Wakeham. This donation was made to the Bishop, the Right Reverend George Jehosaphat Mountain as represented in Gaspé by the Rev. Edward Cusack. John D. McConnell, J.P., son-in-law of the Widow O'Hara drew up the Deed and the witnesses were Julia Collas, and the Rev. Charles Morris. The land donated, on the North side of the South-West Arm of Gaspé Bay, part of Lot No. Four, contained one half acre.

Nor did the munificence of the Widow O'Hara end there for in the following year she donated additional land as is reflected in the 1841 Deed that follows:

DONATION FROM
MRS. MARY A. CORT
WIDOW OF HUGH O'HARA
TO
THE RIGHT REV. G. J. MOUNTAIN

DISTRICT OF GASPE
CANADA

On the Twenty fourth day of April in the Year of Our Lord ~~One Thousand~~ Eight Hundred and forty one, before me, James Perchard, Esq., one of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the District aforesaid, acting in this behalf under the authority of an Act of the Provincial Parliament of Lower Canada, passed in the fourth year of the reign of His Majesty King George the Fourth, entitled, "An Act to Render Valid Certain Acts, Agreements-in-Writing and Contracts if Marriage, "sous seing privé" heretofore executed in the Inferior District of Gaspé, and to provide for the want of Notaries in the said Inferior District, Personally came and appeared Mary Ann Cort, Widow of the late Hugh O'Hara of Gaspé Basin, of the One Part and Edmund Cusack, Missionary, being duly authorized for and in behalf of the Right Reverend, Father in God, George Jehosaphat Mountain, Lord Bishop of Montreal, of the Other Part, and

acknowledged as follows, that:

Whereas the said Mary Ann Cort, divers good and pious causes and considerations moving, did on the eighteenth day of November last past, give, grant and make donation, pure and simple and irrevocable unto the said George Jehosaphat Mountain, Lord Bishop of Montreal, as aforesaid, for the purposes and on the conditions more particularly set forth in a certain Deed executed for the conveyance of the same one piece or parcel of Ground, lying and being upon the North side of the South-West Arm of Gaspé Bay, containing one half acre of land in superficies, being of an oblong form measuring one hundred and four feet in Front to the Road leading from Gaspé Basin aforesaid to the settlements in the South-West Arm, which said Piece of Land has been used for sometime as a Cemetery or place of burials of the dead, according to the rites of the Church of England -

And Whereas the said piece of land being found insufficient for the purposes contemplated in the said Deed, the said Mary Ann Cort hath agreed to make a further grant of one half acre of land near to the said burial ground, being of a square form and distant from said burial ground about two hundred and eighty four feet, as is more particularly described in a certain Plan of the Ground as laid out and certified by Henry O'Hara, Esq., Land Surveyor.

The said Mary Ann Cort, being moved by similar good, pious causes and considerations as heretofore, hath agreed and doth hereby agree for herself, her heirs, executors, administrators and assigns, to make over the said Piece of land of a square form, as described in the said Plans, with all the rights and members in any wise hereunto belonging, in as full and as complete a manner, ~~without~~ the hope of being able to the same, as the aforesaid piece of Land of an oblong form was made over as is more particularly and at large set forth in the Deed executed by the said Mary Ann Cort on the eighteenth day of November last past to the said George Jehosaphat Mountain, his assigns and his successors in office forever, for and upon the said interests and purposes particularly set forth in the said Deed of Gift of the Eighteenth day of November last,

together with a Right of Passage of Twelve Feet wide leading from the highway to the square piece of land, as is also laid down in the said Plan annexed hereto.

And lastly the said Mary Ann Cort, Widow of Hugh O'Hara, Esq., of Gaspé Basin doth declare that she hath good right, full power, and lawful and absolute authority to make and execute this further Deed of Gift and Donation and doth hereby bind and oblige herself, her heirs, executors, administrators and assigns, from time to time and at all times hereafter, upon every reasonable request and at the proper cost and charges in the Law of the said George Jehosaphat Mountain and his assigns, to make, sign and execute all such further Deeds, Acts and Assurances in the Law for the further better and more perfectly assigning and making over the said premises for the purposes herein before mentioned, as by the said Lord Bishop of Montreal and his assigns, or by his or their Counsel learned in the Law shall be lawfully and reasonably devised, advised and required.

This done and passed at the house of John Douglas McConnell, J.P. Gaspé, by me the undersigned Magistrate.

And in Witness whereof the said Parties and the said Magistrate have signed these presents, the same being first of all duly read.

(SIGNATURES)

Witnesses

John Eden
Henry O'Hara

Maria Anna O'Hara
Edward Cusack
James Perchard, J.P.

N.B. The PLAN by Henry O'Hara, referred to in the above Deed, has not been found, to date.

ST.JAMES CHURCH
GASPÉ BAY SOUTH OR WAKEHAM

The churches of St.Paul, Gaspé Basin and St.James, Wakeham were linked traditionally in a parish served by a minister resident at Gaspé Basin.

St.Paul's, first built c.1820 was totally destroyed by a forest fire in June,1821, as witnessed and reported by Dr. Von Iffland of Quebec who was in Gaspé on medical duty.It was replaced and in turn followed by new buildings on the same site consecrated respectively in 1853, 1884, 1909 and 1944.

The site of St.James Church was donated in 1840 and presumably the building followed shortly. Records, however, show its date of consecration only in 1853.

In chronological order the clergymen who served the Parish of St.Paul-St.James included:

Rev.John Suddard

Rev.Richard Knagg

Rev.William Arnold

Rev.Edward Cusack

Rev.Charles Morris

Rev.William Arnold

Rev.Francis de la Mare

Rev.Frederick A.Smith

Rev.John Pettener Richmond (From 1867)

Kenneth H. Annett, C.D., D.C.L., F.C.C.T.
Historian

10-12-97

Letter to the Editor,
SPEC

The publication by SPEC since 1977 of more than 190 of my GASPE OF YESTERDAY articles is greatly appreciated.

Despite the care taken to ensure historical accuracy it is regretted that an error of interpretation occurred in the article, "A MUNIFICENT DONATION" in the SPEC issue of December 7th. Research by the Gaspesian author, Miss Dorothy Phillips of Peninsula has established that the land donated by Mrs. Hugh O'Hara was for St. Paul's Church, Gaspé Basin, rather than for St. James' Church, Wakeham.

Commenting on this donation Miss Phillips has noted, in part:

"...The lots concerned were for St. Paul's Church, Gaspé. When I was doing my School Book (HISTORY OF THE SCHOOLS AROUND GASPE BAY - DOROTHY PHILLIPS, 1990) I obtained a copy of a document made up in 1869 by Antoine Painchaud to clarify, "several discrepancies, confolutions and omissions" in the boundaries of the church lot, burying ground, "glebe" and school lot. His map, based on a survey by F.W. Blaiklock, was included and I used it in my book (above page 48). Painchaud and the two wardens of the time, George Dumaresq and John Short, and the chairman of the school commissioners, J.J. Kavanagh, took four days to review all the previously made deeds and decide on the appropriate boundaries. Two of the deeds mentioned are the two deeds of gift mentioned in the article "A Munificent Donation".

It appears to me that a new church must have been built in the 1840's on the land given by Mrs. O'Hara...

1225 Lavigerie, Ste-Foy, Qué. G1W 3W8
'Gaspé of Yesterday', Volumes 1-9 incl. to 1995
'Huguenot Influence in Québec'
Contributor to 'Spec'; 'Huguenot Trails';
CBC - 'Quebec A.M.'

(ctd)