

GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY

THE GASPÉ AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY

1828

Ken Annett



THE GASPÉ AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY OF 1828FOREWORD

In May, 1983 SPEC published, as part of the "GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY" series, an account of the BONAVENTURE COUNTY AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY. In equity, the following article will show that the County of Gaspé also demonstrated an interest in agriculture and had formed a society early in the 19th century.

HISTORICAL
BACKGROUND

In the latter half of the 18th century numerous societies were formed in Great Britain whose objects were to foster agricultural development. In Scotland such a society was founded in 1723 and evolved into the ROYAL HIGHLAND AND AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY OF SCOTLAND. In England, the Bath and West and Southern Counties Society founded in 1777 collected information about the best farming practices, arranged for plowing matches, and offered prizes for improved livestock. Other agricultural societies sprang up in numerous counties and in 1838 the ENGLISH AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY was formed to encourage improvement in every branch of agriculture. As noted in the foreword to the Bonaventure County Society such interest in agricultural was reflected in the wish of King George III to be known as "Farmer George" and in the instructions given to the Governors and Civil Servants in Britain's overseas colonies to promote improved agriculture. Thus, in Quebec, from the 1820's onward, the Legislature passed a series of Acts promoting Agriculture and encouraging the creation and work of County Agricultural Societies.

MINUTES OF THE GASPÉ AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY - 1828

At a General Meeting of the Gaspé Agricultural Society held on Tuesday the 26th February 1828 at 4 o'clock in the evening at the School House, were present -

Benjamin Coffin	}	Vice Presidents
John Boyle		
Abraham Coffin		Treasurer
A. McArthur		Assistant Secretary
Henry O'Hara, Esq.		James Boyle
William Annett		Benjamin Patterson
Richard Patterson		Frederick Coffin
J.D.McConnell		Philip Bechervaise

But in consequence of a fire breaking out in the house of John Boyle no business was done and the Meeting adjourned until Tuesday the fourth March 1828.

At a General Meeting of the Gaspé Agricultural Society held on Tuesday the fourth of March 1828 at three o'clock in the evening at the School House, Where Present -

George Boyle in the Chair		
Benjamin Coffin	}	Vice Presidents
John Boyle		
Abraham Coffin		Treasurer
Arch.McArthur		Assistant Secretary

COMMITTEE

James Boyle	Richard Patterson
Philip Bechervaise	Benjamin Patterson

The President arose and addressed the Committee as follows,

Gentlemen,

It appears that there was an omission in the proceedings of the Meeting of Tuesday the 9th October, 1827, in not having stated how the money granted by the Government to this Society should have been disposed of, as you will perceive by Mr. Cochran's letter which the Secretary will lay before you -

Castle of St. Louis

Sir,

In answer to your letter craving an advance of money on account of the Agricultural Society of Gaspé, I have to acquaint you that such advance should first be called for by a resolution of the Society in which the general objects to which it is proposed to apply it should be stated. And the warrant, when issued, will be in the name of the Treasurer who must authorize some person in Quebec to acquit the warrant and receive the amount. I am at the same time to inform you that His Excellency approves of the organization of the Gaspé Agricultural Society as reported in your letter.

(Signed) A.W. Cochran,

Secretary.

RESOLUTION PASSED BY THE GASPÉ AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY.

On the motion of James Boyle and seconded by Philip Bechervaise -
That regular application be made to Government for the money granted to this Institution and that it shall be appropriated as follows - viz in Wheat, Barley, Oats and other seeds to be further specified by the Treasurer, and resolved on by the Society,

the quantity of each to be proportioned to the amount granted.

Resolved on the motion of Philip Bechervaise, seconded by Richard Patterson - That the Treasurer send a Power of Attorney to some person in Quebec to Authorize the same to receive the amount granted by Government to this Society.

Resolved on the motion of Richard Patterson, seconded by Benjamin Patterson - That the President, Treasurer, and three members shall form the Committee for the distribution of the seeds purchased by the Treasurer.

Resolved on the motion of James Boyle, seconded by Philip Bechervaise - That every member shall give a receipt to the Treasurer for the seed or seeds which he may receive, and that he shall give a just account of the manner it has been disposed of and what his returns are to the Society.

Resolved on the motion of Benjamin Patterson, seconded by James Boyle - That in consequence of the Secretary's having resigned, Archibald McArthur be appointed Secretary, and, Samuel Ray, Assistant Secretary.

The above resolutions passed unanimously.

(Signed) A. McArthur
Secretary.

REGARDING SOME MEMBERS OF THE GASPÉ AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY

The brothers George, James and John Boyle were sons of Gaspé pioneers, James and Mary Boyle, of the North side of the South-West Arm of Gaspé Bay. Together with their brother, Felix, and brother-in-law, Richard Annett, they held some 1000 acres of land. They were active as ship-owners, mariners, whalers, fishery managers, and in maritime salvage, in addition to the farming of their extensive lands. References to their life and times will be found in various articles of "GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY".

Richard Patterson (1788-1868) appears in the volume of Andrew Patterson, SUNNY BANK-OUR ANCESTRAL HOME, (1995) as a son of John Patterson and his wife, Margaret Ascah. He married Lucy Patterson, daughter of William Patterson of Wakeham.

From the same source, Benjamin Patterson (1790-) appears as a son of William Patterson of Wakeham. He married Sarah Coffin in 1815 and made his home on Lot #14, Wakeham. His sister, Lucy, was Mrs. Richard Patterson.

Benjamin Coffin (1780-1806), Frederick Coffin (1787-1856) and Abraham Coffin (1789-1867) were sons of Abraham (1750-1816) and Hannah Ascah Coffin. Benjamin married Christianna Patterson, Frederick did not marry and Abraham married Annabella Boyle.

William Annett (1778-1851) was the second of the four sons of William (c.1740-c1810) and Elizabeth Siddon Annett of Peninsula. He held 300 acres of land at L'Anse-aux-Cousins. He married Margaret (Nancy) Patterson, daughter of William Patterson.

Philip Bechervaise (1787 -) was a son of Philip Bechervaise of Jersey, Channel Islands. He was apparently in Gaspé c.1810 but was captured at sea by a ship of Napoleonic France and was a prisoner for some years. He returned to Gaspé c.1820 and established a reputation as a ship-builder. He married Margaret Coffin.

Henry O'Hara was one of the sons and the heir of Felix O'Hara, pioneer settler at Gaspé Basin. He was prominent in many roles - as a Customs Officer, Land Surveyor, Militia Officer and Justice of the Peace. He married Mary Stuart, daughter of George Stuart, Sr.

John D. McConnell was Collector of His Majesty's Customs at Gaspé and served also as a Militia Officer and a Justice of the Peace. He was Agent for Lloyd's of London. He and his wife, Jane Baird O'Hara were widely known hosts at Fort Ramsay, their Gaspé Harbour home.

Archibald McArthur, a retired Officer of the Royal Marines, chose Gaspé for retirement. Why, remains an open question. He and his family were active members of the Anglican Church at Gaspé. Any information that some Gaspesian may have on this family will be appreciated by "GASPE OF YESTERDAY".