

GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY

GASPESIAN TRAVELOGUE

PART VII

The previous six articles of
Abbé J.B.A.Ferland's account
of his 1836 visit to Gaspesia
with Bishop Sidyme in the
schooner "SARA" traced the
route down the St.Lawrence,
into Gaspé Bay and along the
Bay Chaleur to Cascapédiac.
His account resumes on July
16th.

Ken Annett

GASPESIAN TRAVELOGUE - PART VII

MICMAC
INDIAN
RESERVE

Proceeding westward from the Grand Cascapediac River, the Abbé Ferland remarked on the little village of Micmac Indians located on a reserve of some 800 arpents. He presumed that it had links to the larger Ristigouche village to the West at Cross Point

HERRING

Across Bay Chaleur the SARA's passengers could see Heron Island where the previous Spring local fishermen had found herring in abundance. The herring fishery had been neglected previously in favour of the cod and salmon fisheries but now that cod and salmon were starting to decline in the upper Bay Chaleur there was more reason to fish herring of a big scale. Abbé Ferland recalled that 300 to 400 years ago the fishing of herring had enriched the Dutch. In a single year they had sold over a million barrels worth \$1,500,000. English and Scotch fishermen had since profited from the herring fishery.

Herring are preserved either by salting or smoking. The English refer to the salted herring as white or pickled fish. The secret of successful salting of herring had been discovered by the Dutch and was considered of such national importance that a statue had been erected to the man responsible, a Fleming by the name of Beuklen in 1397.

To smoke herring they are placed in brine for 24 to 30 hours after which they are fastened by the head and hung exposed to smoke. The Dutch say that to be good the fish should be large, fat and soft. At Bonaventure and Cascapediac they smoke a lot of herring - perhaps it would be better to salt them because those taken in Bay Chaleur are generally very lean.

OYSTERS It is said that oysters have been found near Black Cape. Some years ago fishermen reported having seen beds of them at a depth of two fathoms. However, at present, Caraquet is the sole source of oysters in Bay Chaleur.

ON TO Before a brisk breeze the SARA made rapid progress
CARLETON towards Carleton. The sea was rough, breaking over the side of the schooner. While M.N. was stretched out on deck enjoying a snooze a wave came and washed over him, drenching him from head to foot. The brave sleeper raised himself on his elbow, opened an eye to assure himself that he hadn't been carried off to sea, drew his cloak more tightly about him then went back to sleep and snored. In an hour and a quarter SARA sailed the 15 miles between Cascapediatic and Carleton and came to anchor off the latter place.

CARLETON Carleton or Tracadigetché resembles parishes of the Quebec district. For its inhabitants fishing is of secondary importance; farming is their principal occupation. Well kept roads permit travel by horse and carriage all through the settlement; every farmer has a horse and equipment for travel or to work his land. This is a luxury we had not found elsewhere in Gaspesia.

After the dispersion of the Acadians several families, originally from Tracadie, came here and gave it the name, Little Tracadie. These families were the nucleus of the present population. Maria, Carleton and Megoucha, which make up the Mission, include some 1300 souls. The latter two of these townships are almost entirely Acadian while Maria has a number of Irish people. At Maria there are two or three ranges between the sea and the foot of the Mountains suitable for cultivation but at Carleton the first range reached the foot of the abrupt mountain.

M. the missionary, who didn't expect us so soon, was still at Ristigouche preparing the Indians for the episcopal visit. Yesterday a light canoe was sent to advise him that the Bishop, whom they believed to be at Port Daniel, had arrived at Carleton.

NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM The missionary at Carleton had set up a natural history museum rich in exhibits of the resources of this part of Gaspesia. The exhibits included birds of the sea and of the forest, fish hung on the line used to catch them, Micmac bark work decorated with porcupine quills forming symbols and flowers, Peace Pipes, War Pipes, MicMac ceremonial costumes, Arrowheads and Agates

BARACHOIS In front of the Carleton Church lies a big barachois similar to that at Paspébiac, with water 4 to 5 feet deep. In time of storm the waves of the Bay break against the outer sand banks of the barachois. Within it is calm,

The missionary arrived from Ristigouche on July 17th. The church services were dignified, the church being larger and more richly decorated than usual.

THE LAW The population of Carleton included several bourgeois, including lawyers who practice there and at Court in New Carlisle. One older citizen remarked, "Before we had lawyers we lived in peace". He explained that in former times when a difference arose between neighbours two experts were called and the matter was soon settled on the spot. Now, with lawyers, it is not as easy to settle matters. As example the experience of Dr. La B. with regard to his right to fish salmon was cited. When he and his neighbour couldn't agree on their respective fishing rights the matter was referred to three arbitrators who settled it within an hour.

JULY 21
1836

The SARA with the Bishop's party sailed from Carleton and, in the words of Abbé Ferland, "entered the Ristigouche River. To the left they observed low land that was the New Brunswick shore called Point Bonami. Facing it, on the Canada side was Cape Megoucha - its Indian name derived from their word for red earth. At the very tip of Megoucha was a grove of trees that had long been the nesting place of ravens. These birds, glossy black, were noted to be much larger than the crows found elsewhere about Bay Chaleur. They appeared to be very protective of their grove of trees, protesting any approach of man with prolonged and noisy cries.

DALHOUSIE

A mile from Point Bonami and on the same shore of New Brunswick was the town of Dalhousie comprising some thirty dwellings. In 1835 some 60 ships had loaded lumber there. A small islet near the shore gave shelter for shipping from winds. Near this islet, on the steep slope of the shore, was the infant town which might one day achieve more importance. The rivers that empty into the Ristigouche drain a vast hinterland with vast woodlands and fertile valleys. When this country becomes settled Dalhousie would be the centre for a busy export-import trade.

The SARA anchored off Dalhousie and though the Bishop remained on board the Abbé Ferland and others landed to visit was they called - "the future Capital of Ristigouche". They found it rather amusing that the inhabitants referred to the small settlement as a "town" and attributed this to "Yankee" influence. The part from the SARA went to Point Bonami to visit Indian families there and followed along the shore to Riviere-à l'Anguille (Eel River) whose inhabitants were served by the Carleton Mission.

About mid-afternoon of July 21st the SARA sailed from Dalhousie bound upstream for the Ristigouche Indian Village some six leagues distant. The wind was not favorable but the schooner progressed with the rising tide and by 7:00 p.m. came to anchor for the night off Battery Point.

AT THIS POINT THE ABBE FERLAND RECOUNTS
THE BATTLE OF THE RESTIGOUCHE AND ITS
IMPACT ON THE ACADIANS THAT HAD FOUND
REFUGE AT THE HEAD OF BAY CHALEUR.

JULY 22
1836

With morning light the SARA continued her journey upstream, proceeding with caution along the narrow channel of the Ristigouche. There soon came into view the houses of Campbellton or Pointe à Martin, a little village on the New Brunswick shore that had grown up within the last 3 or 4 years. It faced Cross Point on the Quebec shore where Mr. Christie, former member of the Provincial Parliament had his estate and summer home. Upstream from Cross Point was the Indian Village at Point Restigouche,

MICMAC
GREETING

Three Chiefs of the Micmac Indians were on hand to greet the Bishop on the arrival of the SARA. They were:

FRANCOIS COUNDEAU - The 75 year old Head Chief.
THOMAS BARNABÉ - The second chief. A merchant-trader.
JOSÉ MARIE - Third chief. Resided in Cascapédiac.

The Abbé Ferland has provided a vivid portrait of Chief Coundeau. Descended from a long line of Chiefs he considered himself superior and had agreed to meet Lord Dalhousie only on the basis of an equal. He addressed the Bishop in the Micmac language.