

GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY

REMEMBRANCE

OF

MAJOR JOHN SLOUS

Prominent Militia Officer, Merchant
and Land Owner of Gaspé Basin.

KEN ANNETT

REMEMBRANCE OF MAJOR JOHN SLOUS

FOREWORD

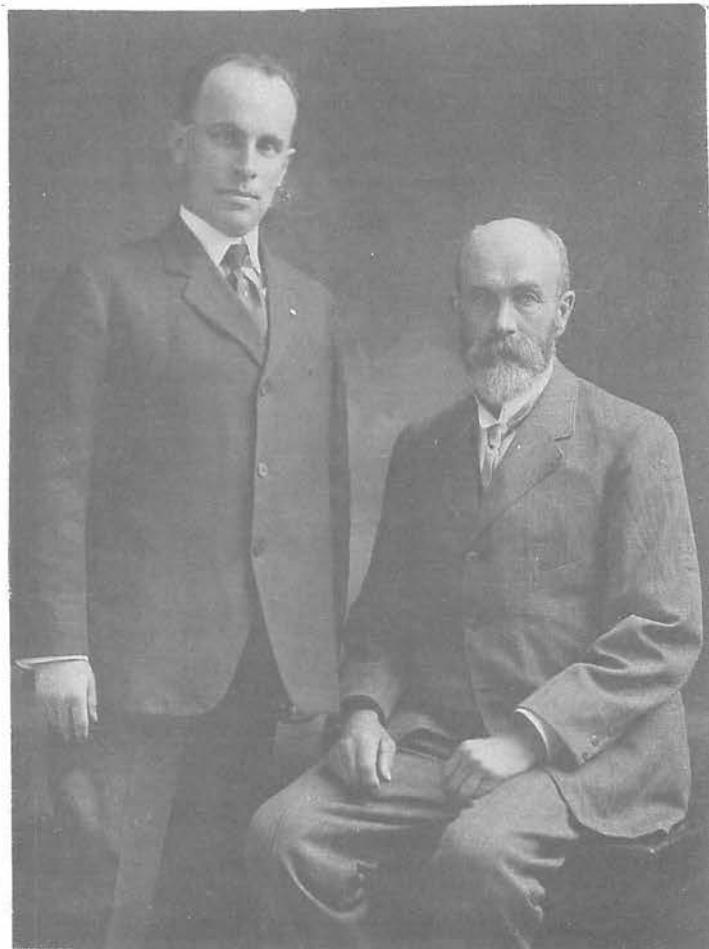
Among the citizens of Gaspé Basin in the latter half of the 19th century Major John Slous was prominent in the community as an Officer of the Gaspé Militia, merchant and land-owner. In the years of my youth, in the 1920's, memory of the Slous name and influence was fading as no member of the family remained. It is not surprising that today, in the 1990's, few members of the Gaspé Basin community have any knowledge of the name.

I recall the Slous property and spacious home on the "Wakeham Lane", the street that ran at right angles from the Main Street along the West side of the "ONE ASH" estate of Commander (Doctor) William Wakeham. (Ref.- "LE 'ASH INN' - CAHIERS GASPÉSIE CULTURELLE - MONIQUE BOURGET.) Eventually the Slous property was purchased by the Davis family whose homes were on the adjacent and parallel DAVIS STREET to the West. (Ref.-"THE DAVIS FAMILY OF GASPE". PART I and PART II - GASPE OF YESTERDAY.)

The Gaspesian author, Margaret G. MacWhirter, noted in Appendix II of her book, "TREASURE TROVE IN GASPE AND THE BAIE DES CHALEURS" : "...The officers of the Gaspé Battery Artillery, Active Militia, were: Major Slous, Captain A.T. Carter, Lieutenant F.J. Annett, Sergeant-Major Patterson, Sergeant-Major Bechervaise, Corporal Cass and a number of Privates, among whom were Messrs John Coffin, Benjamin Bechervaise, Felix Bechervaise, Joseph Cass, Charles Patterson, Thomas Miller, Henry Ascah and Lewis Annett. ...Gaspé Battery took the highest prize for shooting given by the Dominion Artillery Association for the highest score with s.b.guns in 1878 and 1879. The only two prizes won in those years were awarded to Major Slous and Captain A.T. Carter..."



THE GASPE BATTERY ARTILLERY, ACTIVE MILITIA, OF THE ERA OF MAJOR JOHN SLOUS. BELOW - F.J.ANNETT, LIEUTENANT OF THE GASPE BATTERY WITH HIS SON, HARVEY.



AN 1873

GLIMPSE ?

In three earlier articles of the GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY series, " LADY DUFFERIN VISITS GASPÉ", the wife of the Governor-General recounted her experiences on a visit to Gaspé in July, 1873. She recalled that on the afternoon of Tuesday, July 8th., a Gaspé deputation consisting of the Mayor, the Custom House Officers, the Doctor and other local dignitaries came to meet the Governor-General and his party, to read a formal Address and offer a sight-seeing drive. Though not specifically mentioned by name, it would appear that Major Slous, as a senior Militia Officer, was a member of the deputation, and that it was with him that Lady Dufferin went driving. She wrote, "...at four o'clock we go ashore. On the landing place we are met by our friends, and I find that Gaspé driving is all to be done 'tête-a-tête'. The Mayor takes His Excellency in a gig. I follow with a millowner in the next..." Number three contains the Colonel (Col. Fletcher, C.M.G., Scots Fusilier Guards, the Military Secretary to Lord Dufferin.) and Mr. Eden; Number four, Lady Harriet (Col. Fletcher's wife - a daughter of the Earl of Romney, and close friend of Lady Dufferin) and the Doctor; Fred (Lieut.-Col. Frederick Rowan Hamilton, brother of Lady Dufferin and A.D.C. to the Governor-General) closes the procession with I don't know who, but he must have been fifth in order of precedence at Gaspé. It was amusing starting off in this way, and we took a pretty drive for nearly two hours, and made ourselves as agreeable as possible to our several companions.."

As the notarial deeds summarized below indicate, Major Slous was the proprietor of the mill site on the shore of Gaspé Basin to the West of the Anglican Church and may well have been host to Lady Dufferin for a sight-seeing drive on that July afternoon in 1873.

and also a Marsh Lot situate in the North West of Gaspé Bay, beginning at a spruce tree on the eastern bank of George's River ...containing about fifty-five acres, excepting however six acres which were sold by Nicholas Dumaresq, the previous proprietor... The sale price was \$3000.00

The witnesses to this important Deed were James Collas and J.S.Hamon

1886. MAY DEED OF SALE BY JOHN SLOUS TO ELIE deROY.

Deed prepared by Alfred T.Carter, J.P.

Elie deRoy, a labourer of Gaspé Basin, bought from John Slous -"all that certain lot or parcel of land situated in the Village of Gaspé and known as the East half of Lot "B", bounded as follows: on the East by land owned by Abraham LeMesurier, on the South by the waters of Gaspé Basin and on the West by the West half of the said Lot "B", owned by the Vendor, the said Half Lot now measuring fifty feet along the highway, by the Depth to the High Water mark.

The sale price was \$75.00

John Carter and William Fingleton were witnesses.

1886. AUGUST. DEED OF SALE BY JOHN SLOUS TO JOHN J.ANNETT

Deed prepared by Alfred T.Carter, J.P.

The land sold was - "...all that certain lot or parcel of land situated in the Village of Gaspé, containing 30.000 square feet more or less, on a Frontage of One Hundred feet, by a Depth of Three Hundred feet, bounded in front, or on the South, by Third Street, on the East, North and West by land owned by the Vendor and known as Lot No. Eleven, with access to the said Lot through Third Street, thence through a road running East of Lots Nos. One and Six to the Queen's Highway.

The sale price was \$150.00

The Witnesses were John Davis and W.H.Annett.

TO CONCLUDE

Much remains to be known and recorded about the background and career of Major John Slous. So this brief sketch would conclude with a plea to any reader with such information to make it known so that it could be recorded for posterity. As a case in point is the reference to the late Joseph Shaw of Gaspé Basin in one of the Deeds cited above. Had not the late Senator, The Hon. Eugene A. Forsey, C.C., Ph.D., D.C.L., LL.D., F.R.S.C. kindly agreed, in response to a Gaspesian request to record for publication in SPEC (1983) his recollections of his great-grandfather, Joseph Shaw, that interesting and important item of our heritage might well have died with him. One can hope that equally interesting and important information on Major John Slous will come to light.

The house and barn of Major John Slous appears behind the "ONE ASH" house of Dr. Wakeham

