

GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY

Though the name of Sir William Logan, the renowned geologist, is known to Gaspésians from the Logan Memorial at Percé and majestic Mount Logan in the Shickshock Mountains, the scope and influence of his work in Gaspé may not be recognized. This sketch will attempt, with selected extracts from Logan's remarkable JOURNAL, to recall his association with Gaspé.

LOGAN IN GASPE

William Edmond Logan, son of James and Janet Edmond Logan, was born at Montreal in April, 1798, and christened a month later in the little Presbyterian church on St. Gabriel Street. He grew up on the spacious Logan farm in the vicinity of the city and, with his brothers, became a student at the school of Alexander Skakel on Little St. James Street. In 1814 his father sent William and his brother, Hart, to Scotland, the native land of the Logans, to attend Edinburgh High School and University. After a sound Scottish education, William entered the London business firm of his uncle, Hart Logan, where he worked until his uncle's death in 1838. The firm had financial interests in the mines of Wales. From 1830 on William Logan lived in Swansea where he developed the keen interest in mining and geology that became his life passion and career. His brilliant studies of Welsh coal mines and subsequent reports on mineral production and geology in France and Spain earned for him, in 1837, election as a Fellow of the Geological Society of London.

Freed of business engagements by the death of his Uncle Hart, William returned to Canada in 1840. A meticulous and interesting diarist, his account of the trip via Liverpool, Halifax, Pictou and Quebec provides a fascinating insight for the modern reader into conditions of travel in that era. Reaching Quebec from Pictou he embarked for Montreal on the paddle-wheel steamer "CANADA". On arriving in his native city, after long absence, he wrote:

" . . . The first person I saw on the wharf was John Molson - looking just the same as ever. There were multitudes of calashes on the wharf and Molson got one for me . . . "

From the time of his return to Montreal in 1840 until his appointment to head the first geological survey of Canada in 1842, William Logan enhanced his growing reputation as an active and brilliant geologist. He studied mineral deposits about Sherbrooke in the Townships, landslides at Maskinongé, coal deposits in Nova Scotia and Pennsylvania and gypsum mining in New Brunswick. He met the distinguished American geologist Lyall, and formed a life-long friendship with Dawson, the Nova Scotian geologist, who, as Dr. Dawson, became Principal of McGill College in

1855. He read Papers on his work before the Geological Society of London which won him critical acclaim and the support of the Society's influential Fellows in his appointment as Chief Geologist for Canada.

In the Spring of 1843 Logan began the work of the Canadian Geological Survey. En route to Gaspé from Halifax he examined the coal deposits at Joggins on the Bay of Fundy and some fifty miles of coast on the south side of Bay Chaleur. He reached Gaspé in July.

Beyond the coast line little of the topography of the Gaspé district was known in 1843; of its geology practically nothing. The scattered settlements were confined, almost exclusively, to the coast. There were no roads through the interior, most of which was a wilderness known only to a few Indians and hunters. The courses of most of the rivers were unknown and the mountain passes untraversed. Such was the country whose geology Logan was now to investigate.

Through the summer of 1843 Logan's only companions were his assistant, Stevens of Bathurst, N.B. and his faithful Indian, John Basque. Work was begun at Cape Rosier and the coast examined from there all the way to Paspébiac. Logan paced along the shore all of this distance of some 100 miles while the Indian, John Basque, followed with his birch canoe to ferry the geologist over streams too deep to wade or around projecting cliffs. When evening came they camped, or sought the shelter of a fisherman's hut or Indian wigwam.

Each evening Logan wrote up his measurements and findings of that day and entered in his JOURNAL the observations and comments that remain a precious and unique source of information on early Gaspé. Thus, on July 13th, he noted:

" . . . It is very dark, and our fire brightens up its face. Our pork for tomorrow boils away right busily. The woods are becoming as silent as the grave; not a breath of wind is stirring. The faint stroke of the axe against a tree tells us that others are camping, probably within half a mile, and the monotonous gurgling of the river will perhaps lull them to slumber as well as we. Basque is on his knees, and though his back is towards me, I can see from the crosses he makes that he is saying his prayers. So it is time to prepare for bed . . . "

That bed was a blanket sack upon a mattress of spruce boughs under the Gaspé sky.

The wigwam of John Basque, a summer residence of the Indian Family, was described in Logan's Journal of Sunday, July 16th, with the same minute detail that characterized his reports of geological findings:

"Basque's wigwam is about fourteen feet square. The sides and ends are constructed of unplanned boards, placed edgewise on one another for about three feet up, and kept together by stakes on each side at the corners. There is a space left for the door in one of the ends. Upon these boards peeled pine poles are placed in a sloping position for rafters. They rise up to a height of about eight feet in the centre, where they are supported by two poles that run from end to end. On the rafters is laid a quantity of spruce bark, making a roof. The bark lies across the pole lengthwise, and one piece overlaps another, tile-fashion, while sticks and boards, with one end on the ground, are made to rest upon the bark to keep it in its place. One gable end is constructed in the same manner, but the other is made of boards, one end of which rests on the horizontal boards of the walls. A piece of coarse canvas, with several holes in it, hung on pegs, constitutes a curtain for the door - a very convenient one for dogs and cats to make their exits and entrances by. But a board placed edgewise for a lintel debars the pigs from the same privileges.

"In the centre of the floor is placed a cracked stove. . . from which rises a pipe passing through the roof left open for the purpose and for the sake of light. . . Between the stove and the wooden walls, on all sides but that of the door, is a space covered with a carpet of fir boughs, confined at the outer edge by three poles stapled with willow down to the earth. This fir carpet is about four feet wide, and forms a sitting place by day, and a sleeping place by night. In one corner is an unplanned board for a dresser. . . pails and tubs occupy the space

below, cups and dishes that above . . . two dogs, two cats, two Indians (Basque and his brother, two squaws, two children, two strangers (Stevens and myself) occupied this apartment last night . . . "

Logan remarked further that Basque's wife served, as a delicacy, roasted young porcupine, and that after the meal the Indian household joined in sacred songs that had, for him, the character of Welsh psalm tunes.

On July 20th the JOURNAL comments:

"Today we have come round to Little Gaspé, which is a regular fishing-station. Fishing stages and drying-houses occupy a high, pebbly beach, which, on the upper part, is dotted with stacks of dried codfish, covered with birch-bark, weighted to keep it down. In the bay is a whaling schooner at anchor, and fishing boats in numbers keep it in countenance. On the left a long limestone point projects away to the south-east, and completely shields the bay by its height on that side. On the right is a projecting horn of sandstone, and Douglas and the Highlands are seen beyond.

"Our tent is pitched on the beach, and there is nothing between us and the pebbles beneath but a few fir-tree boughs . . . Our fishermen friends have given us some mackerel for supper, and I have bought three large lobsters for threepence, one of which is changing his colour in the pot. We are beginning to have rain and I fear it is to be a wet night . . . "

A week later Logan was at work in Indian Cove and wrote:

"The water is so quiet and so clear that we plainly see the bottom in four fathoms . . . Grey limestone cliffs, crowned with pine trees are on my left, while on my right the craggy mountains of Isle Percée are seen some twenty miles off . . . Two other canoes are upon the water, with Indians going to Cape Rosier. They look very picturesque.

"A Jew who came to the neighbourhood to trade the other day hailed my canoe just as we had passed Grande Grève. I, fancying he might have geological information to give me, hastened

nearer the shore. When we were closer, I asked him what he wanted. He put his hand to his mouth, trumpet fashion, and bawled out, 'Have you any beaver skins?' He took us all for Indians. I put my hand to my mouth and roared out, 'I have no skin but my own and that I am unwilling to part with'."

Taking advantage of fine calm weather Logan decided to risk rounding Ship Head in Basque's birch bark canoe and on July 31st was camped in "a most beautiful little cove at Cape Bon Ami, surrounded by the most romantic and magnificent scenery". His Journal continues:

"There is just one house near, and French Canadians live in it. They have a capital little garden, with the first flowers I have seen in this part of the world, in addition to abundance of cabbages and potatoes. Like everybody in this region, they are fishing people. . . They preserve their fish round Cape Bon Ami, in another cove, about a quarter of a mile off. We are thus relieved from the abominable stench of decaying codfish-offal and putrid whale-blubber, which have been offending my nostrils ever since I came to Gaspé. When we last camped at Indian Cove, two barrels of putrid blubber, from which the oil was straining, stood within two yards of us, and when a gust of wind came from them, I thought I should become ill. . . ."

Leaving the faithful Indian, Basque, to bring the canoe round the rugged point of Cape Gaspé, Logan walked across the mountainous spine of the Forillon by the pass called the Portage. Embarking in the canoe at Little Gaspé he set out for the Basin, passing en route a naval frigate recently arrived and anchored off the port. At the Basin he took lodging at Mr. Paddy McCarmah's hotel and gave John Basque leave to go and see his family.

On August 11th., much refreshed from his stay with Mr. and Mrs. Paddy, Logan set out on an excursion up the south-west arm of Gaspé Bay to investigate reports of a spring said to be of coal tar. His JOURNAL continues:

" . . . Here we are, camped in the woods on the south-west arm, and to-morrow we visit Silver Brook, on which the tar spring is. We have dined on three trout, which John speared as we came along. To-night we are going out trout-spearing by torch-light, to provide our breakfast for tomorrow morning. John has prepared birch-bark flambeaux, which consist of strips of cedar root. The flambeau is split up into small strips at one extremity for the purpose of easy ignition. We are only waiting for the dark . . . "

It was the day following that Logan met with an accident on the banks of the York River that came close to putting an end to his life and career. A great stone weighing half a hundredweight fell upon him and dealt a glancing blow upon the left side of his head. His face and jaw were temporarily immobilized and when John Basque found him and got him back to camp he was only able with difficulty to take some soup. But, after a day of rest, he felt normal again and resumed his work.

By September 2nd Logan reported that he had got to Percé and had taken up quarters with Mr. Moriarty. As Percé is a geologists paradise, Logan's JOURNAL has much interesting detail. Percé Rock, Mount Ste. Anne and Bonaventure Island were visited in turn. He confirms the tradition, from his conversations with Moriarty, that up until 1837 there had been an annual harvest of hay on the top of Percé Rock. That had ended, by interdiction of the magistrates of Percé, when a foolhardy fellow named Pierre L'Egle, took it into his head to dance upon a projecting piece of the Rock which gave way dashing him to atoms on the beach below.

Moving on from Percé after some ten busy days, Logan encamped at L'Anse aux Beaufils where he reported a few fishing-sheds on a brook and a few dwelling-houses. He noted that there was "a good road" all the way from Percé. He then moved along the coast to camp at Little River Cove and on the bar at the mouth of the Grand River

before reaching Port Daniel on October 13th. His JOURNAL of that date comments:

"Port Daniel is a very picturesque place. It has a lagoon and a sand-beach between it and the sea with a narrow outlet. The lagoon is shallow and is frequented by wild fowl. Two rivers flow into it, the East and the Middle River. The people are all fishermen. They secure their boats in the lagoon and this circumstance gives it the air of a harbour, but no vessel can enter . . . there is too great a freshet in the river now to permit a proper examination of the spot where Mr. Williams saw indications of a coal field."

Logan ended his Gaspé survey for 1843 on October 18th at Paspébiac where he enjoyed the hospitality of the fishing establishment managed by Mr. Hartley. From there he crossed to Bathurst and made his way to Pictou to take the steamer to Quebec. At Pictou he met with Mr. Dawson and the American geologist Lyell and exchanged experiences.

In the period from July to late October Logan had achieved a geological survey of the coast of Gaspé from Cape Bon Ami to Paspébiac. He returned to Montreal with voluminous field-notes, his JOURNAL and some seventy cases of rock samples and fossil specimens. His initial findings fired his interest to return and penetrate into the vast wilderness interior of Gaspé and to that end he began to plan a return expedition for the following summer. That story will be the subject of a subsequent sketch in this Gaspé of Yesterday series of SPEC.

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Part II of this account of
the pioneer geological work
of William Logan in Gaspesia
relates some highlights of
the expedition of 1844

Ken Annett

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In the Spring of 1844 William Logan prepared for another season of geographical work in Gaspé. On May 27th he left Montreal by steamer in company with two assistants, Murray and De Rotterdam, and reached Gaspé May 31st. There they were joined by Stevens, Logan's assistant of the previous year and the indispensable Indian, Basque. Logan's JOURNAL noted:

"Here I am again at my old quarters, in the elegant hotel of Mr. and Mrs. Paddy . . . My present intention is to return up the St. Lawrence in canoes to Cape Chatte and then cross over to Baie des Chaleurs, which I expect to strike somewhere near Tracadigash Mountain. We go over St. Anne's Mountain, reported to be the highest land in Canada, its elevation being somewhere about 4000 feet. As we came down the St. Lawrence in the "UNICORN", we saw these mountains, white with snow to the very summit. They looked very formidable. Captain Douglas of the "UNICORN" has given us a Union Jack to plant on the very highest peak . . ."

Early in June Logan and his party began their geological investigations at Cape Rosier and worked westward along the one hundred miles of rugged coast to Cape Chatte. The lack of agricultural land was noted. Fishing stations at Anse à Griffon, Great and Little Fox River and at the mouth of the rivers Magdalen, Mont Louis, Ste. Anne and Chatte were visited. Fish and game were secured daily to provide food. The neck of the porpoises shot from the canoes was pronounced by all hands to be excellent. Basque produced roast porcupine and salmon, speared at night in the rivers with the aid of flambeaux.

On July 11th Logan's party turned away from the coast to ascend the Chatte river to a point nearest to the place of easiest ascent to the peak of the mountain range. Leaving caretakers of the canoes and camp, Logan and his men began the ascent of the mountain on July 16th. His JOURNAL recorded in detail the difficulties encountered in the climb and on July 18th noted:

"We have had a grand day on the peak. It has been windy, but bright, with the exception of one squall which brought clouds about our ears . . . the panorama displayed was of the grandest description. In the northern half of the circle the waters of the St. Lawrence, dotted with its ships and fishing boats . . . unaided vision could plainly distinguish the lighthouse of the Pointe des Monts, some fifty miles off . . . in the mist of the distance we thought we could discover the Island of Anticosti, one hundred miles away . . . to the eastward a confusion of mountains and ravines fills up several degrees of the circle, and one summit, which exhibited a patch of snow, we supposed might be higher than the point we stood upon . . . southward a sea of parallel undulating ridges . . . and through one gap, which was probably the valley of a south-flowing river, we distinguished a faint blue horizontal line, which we fancied might be in New Brunswick. We have planted the Union Jack Captain Douglas gave us . . . "

After measuring angles to the various peaks as a guide to the forward journey, Logan and his party went forward into the wilderness of Gaspesia. His JOURNAL noted:

"The order of our march is this: John goes first in the direction indicated by me for the day . . . Louis follows, and these, with their axes, as they go, clear the branches a little, I follow next, then comes Murray and then Stevens . . . I count my paces, making such allowances as I judge fit for zig-zags and short steps necessary to avoid stumps and to get over wind falls; and thus our distance is estimated approximately. If I come to any geological feature I note it down in its relative place, and as every now and then we have bearings on the hills the whole will ultimately be given with considerable correctness . . . "

It was not until mid-August that Logan and his men crossed the watershed and made camp by the side of a small brook the water of which flowed to the Baie des Chaleurs. Logan recorded:

"In this cold brook water we have washed the blood of the fly-bites from our hands and faces . . . I am very tired . . . My skins are black and blue all over with thumps against stumps and fallen trees and my foot has been squeezed by getting into the fork of a root. I shall sleep without rocking . . ."

From the summit of the Conical Mountain Logan saw, on August 16th, a branch of the Cascapedia river coming from the west which he judged to be larger than the Chatte where they had left their canoes. He estimated they were within 40 to 60 miles of the Baie des Chaleurs. However, it took two full days to reach the river and the best part of a week for the Indians to gather bark and make the new canoes required to descend the Cascapedia. He noted that the largest of the three canoes was eighteen feet long, two feet nine inches wide and fourteen inches deep.

At midday on September 2nd, they met up at length with people from the mouth of the river - a man and his wife in one canoe and three boys in another - who told Logan that they were about seventeen miles from the sea. The JOURNAL of September 4th relates:

"We have again got into the region of civilization, or semi-civilization. We reached the first clearing about 1 p.m. and were very glad to see it."

Finally on September 6th the weary trans-Gaspesian expedition reached the mouth of the Cascapedia and Logan wrote:

"We have pitched our tent upon the west side of the river, at its mouth, close by a settlement of Indians, who live in sugar-loaf wigwams. They have several canoes, and as I have obtained money (hard dollars) on my letter of credit, I have no doubt of obtaining a couple at a fair price. I obtained the money from Mr. Cuthbert,

the great man and shop-keeper of the district. Murray, Stevens and I called at his shop, which is about a couple of miles on the other side of the river, round a point which projects into the bay. When I reached his house he was not in, being on a visit of inspection to his ship-yard where he has a large vessel on the stocks . . . when Mr. Cuthbert came home he knew who I was the moment my name was mentioned. He is a Scotchman who has planted himself here, and by attention to business he is fast making his fortune . . . "

During the following month Logan examined the coast between the Cascapedia and Matapedia Rivers. His JOURNAL continued to reflect his contacts with the settlers he met in the course of his work. Thus, the entry for October 4th recalls his conversation with an old French settler who welcomed him into his house for the night:

"While I was writing the old man was reading, and after supper I had the benefit of his learning . . . he made mention of Spain and asked me whether Spain was under the dominion of France or of England and was made aware for the first time in his life that it was an independent country. He asked me if Louis XVIII was still on the throne of France and was surprised to learn that he was dead, that his successor Charles X had been sent adrift and that Louis Philippe was the king . . . his book was an old one, without covers and an abundance of dog-ears, and it was amusing to find how he considered the events he was reading of as having just happened, never thinking that time had been running on since the days of his youth . . . "

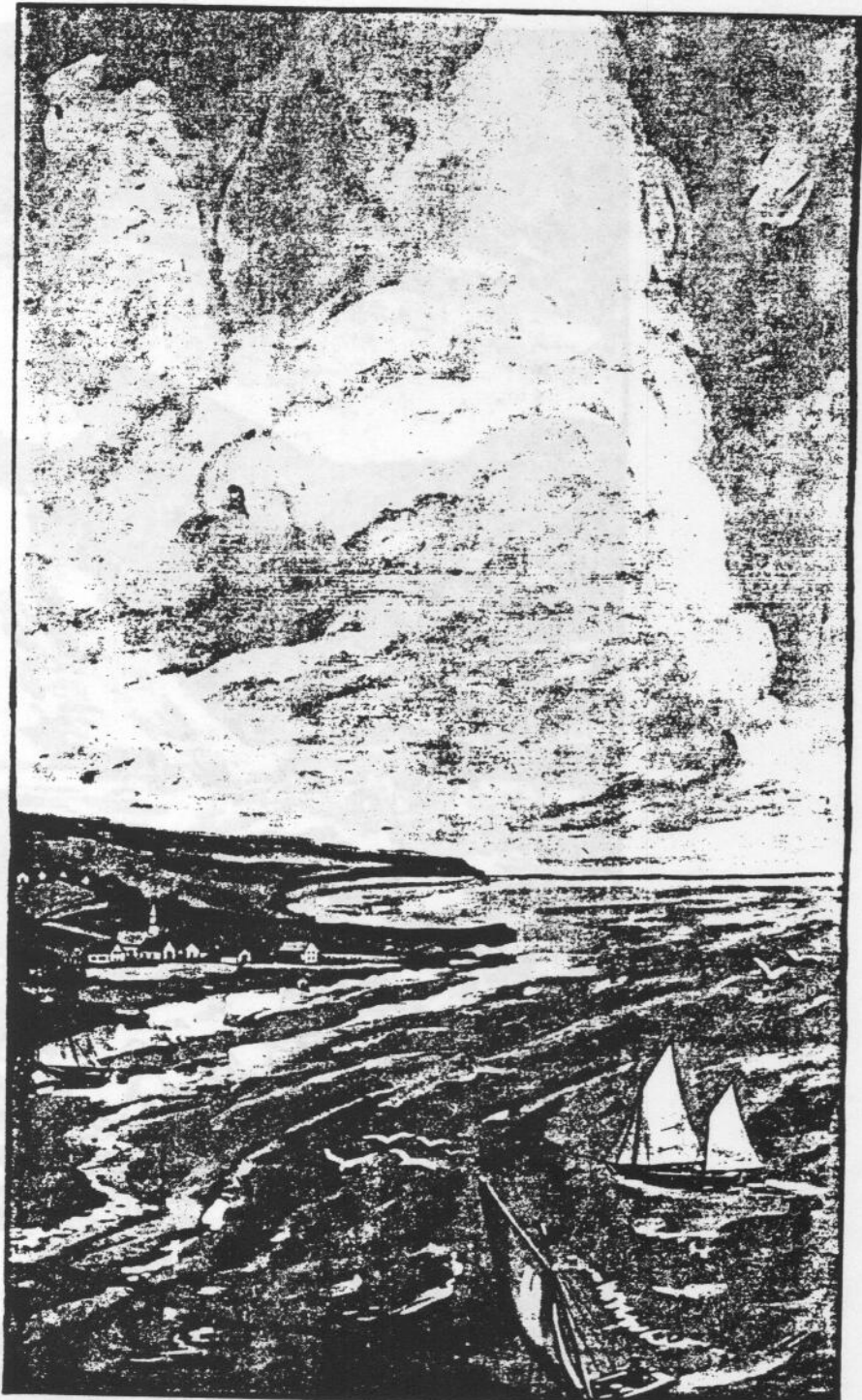
On October 11th Logan ended his work and left Campbellton on his homeward journey. He descended the Matapedia river as far as Lake Matapedia in a birch-bark canoe. Reaching the St. Lawrence at Metis, he began the long tedious journey upriver to Montreal.

The monumental work accomplished by Logan during those first years of the Geological Survey in Gaspé provided the sure foundation upon which his successors, Murray, Richardson, Bell and other geologists would build. The striking accuracy and the minute details of his reports, made under primitive and difficult conditions remain impressive. But over and beyond his professional renown as a pioneer geologist, recognized by a knighthood from Queen Victoria in 1855, Gaspésians can remember Logan's warm and human chronicle of their land and its people in the Gaspé of Yesterday.

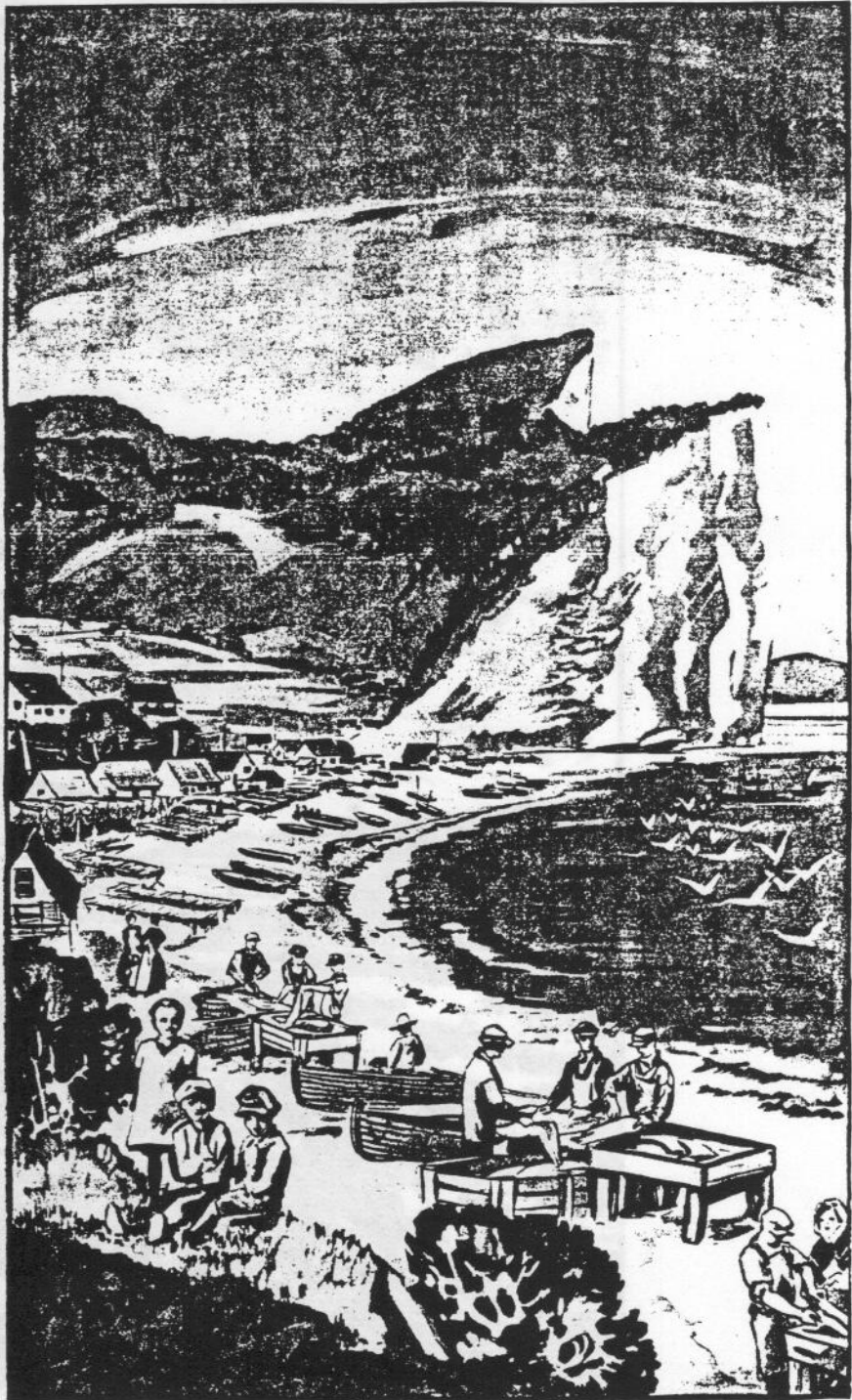




THE MATAPEDIA VALLEY
"The Valley lay smiling before me..."



BAIE DES CHALEURS
Cliffs and sea and sandy beaches



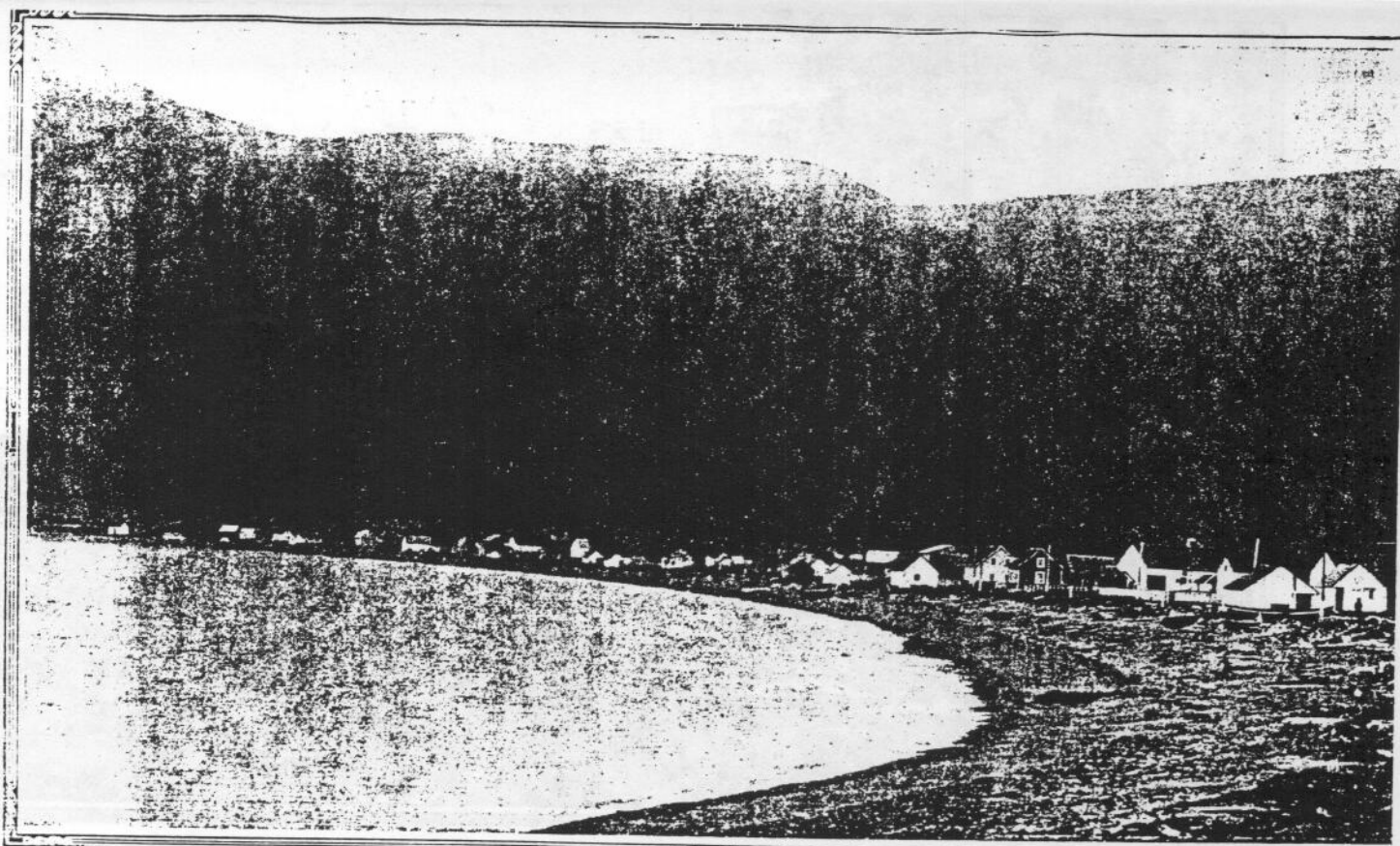
GASPE FISHERIES
Splitting and preparing cod in Gaspé



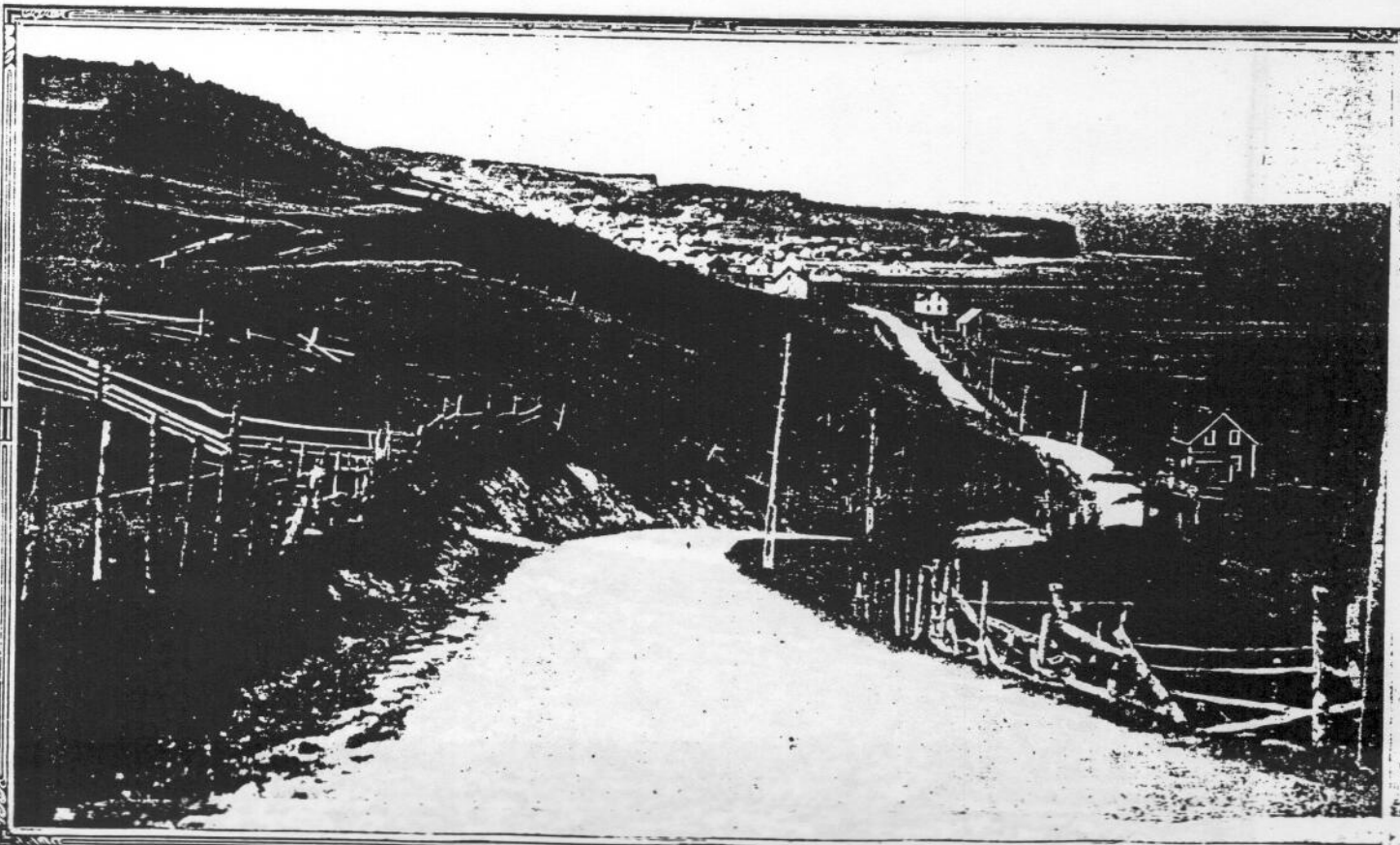
THE PHANTOM SHIP
The "Flying Dutchman" of the Gaspé coast



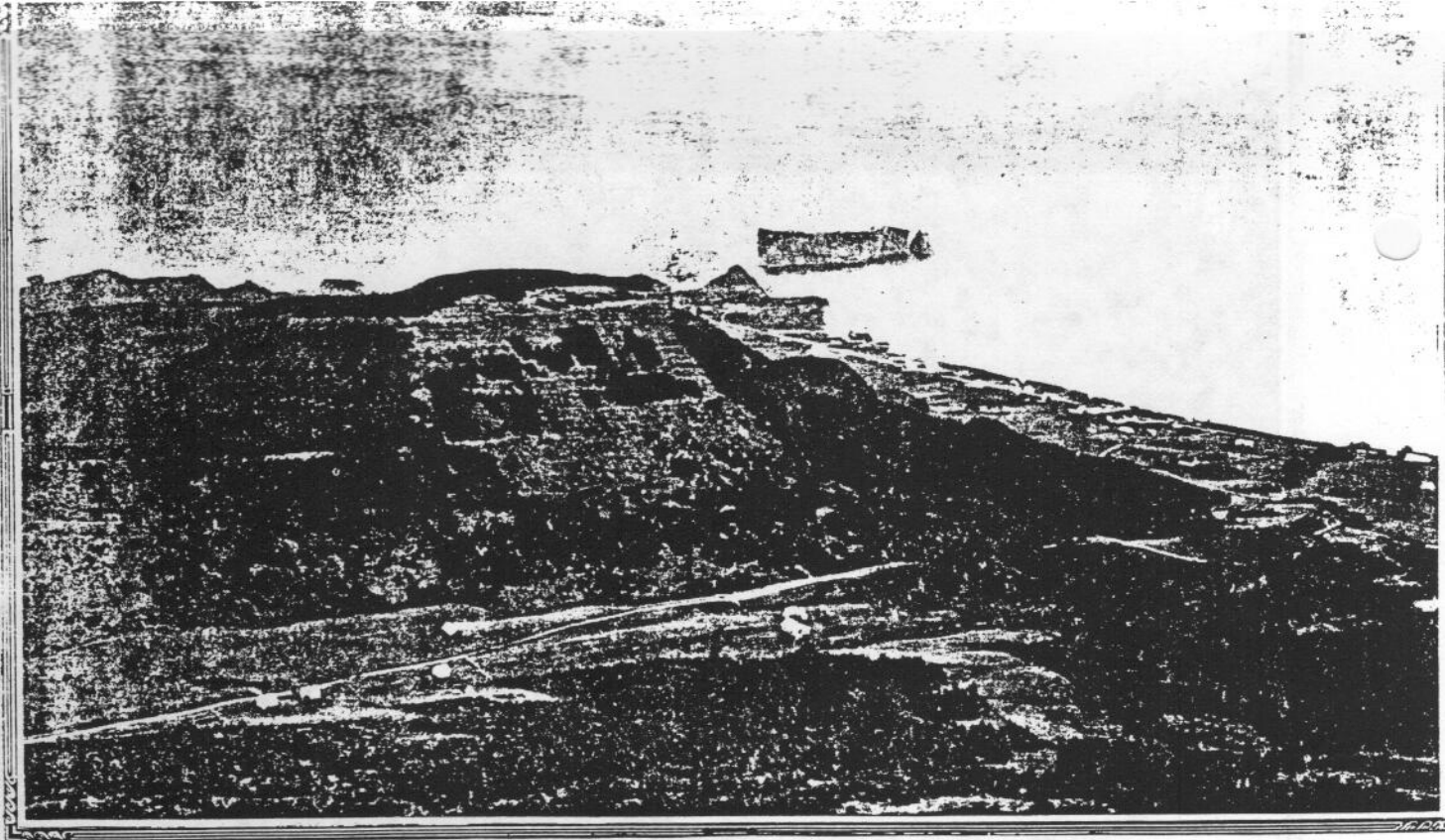
THE TYPICAL VIEW
FROM THE ENTRANCE OF THE CAVE



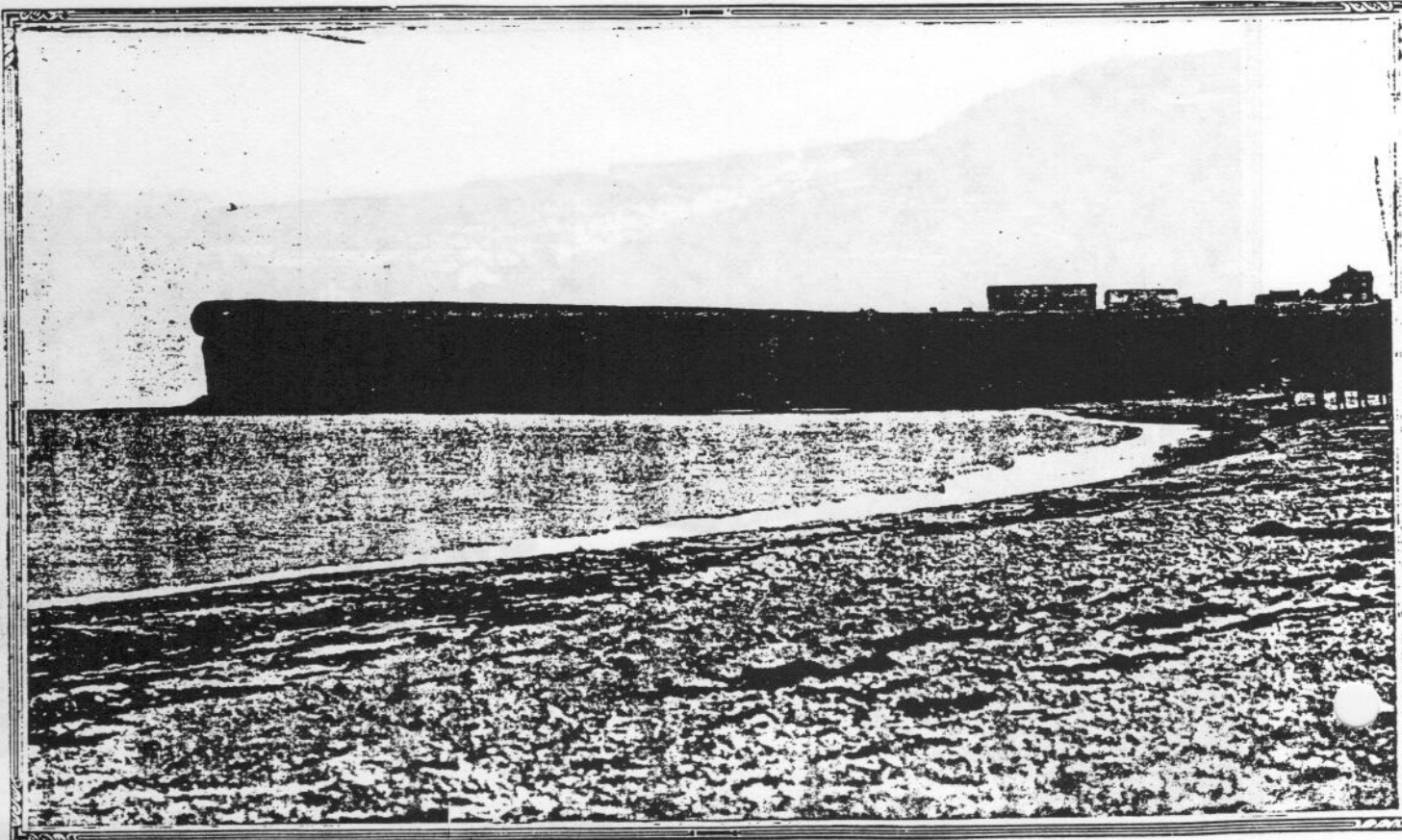
Beautiful rounded bay at Mont-Saint-Pierre



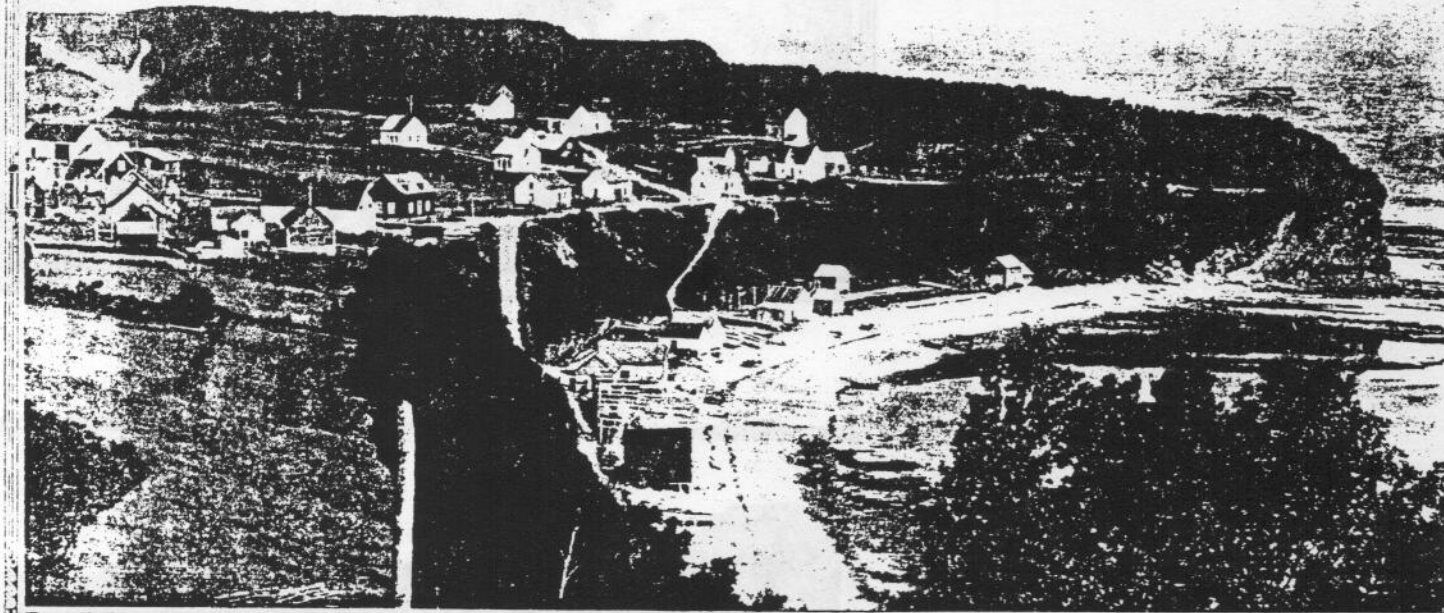
Ups and downs on the Gaspé Belt Highway



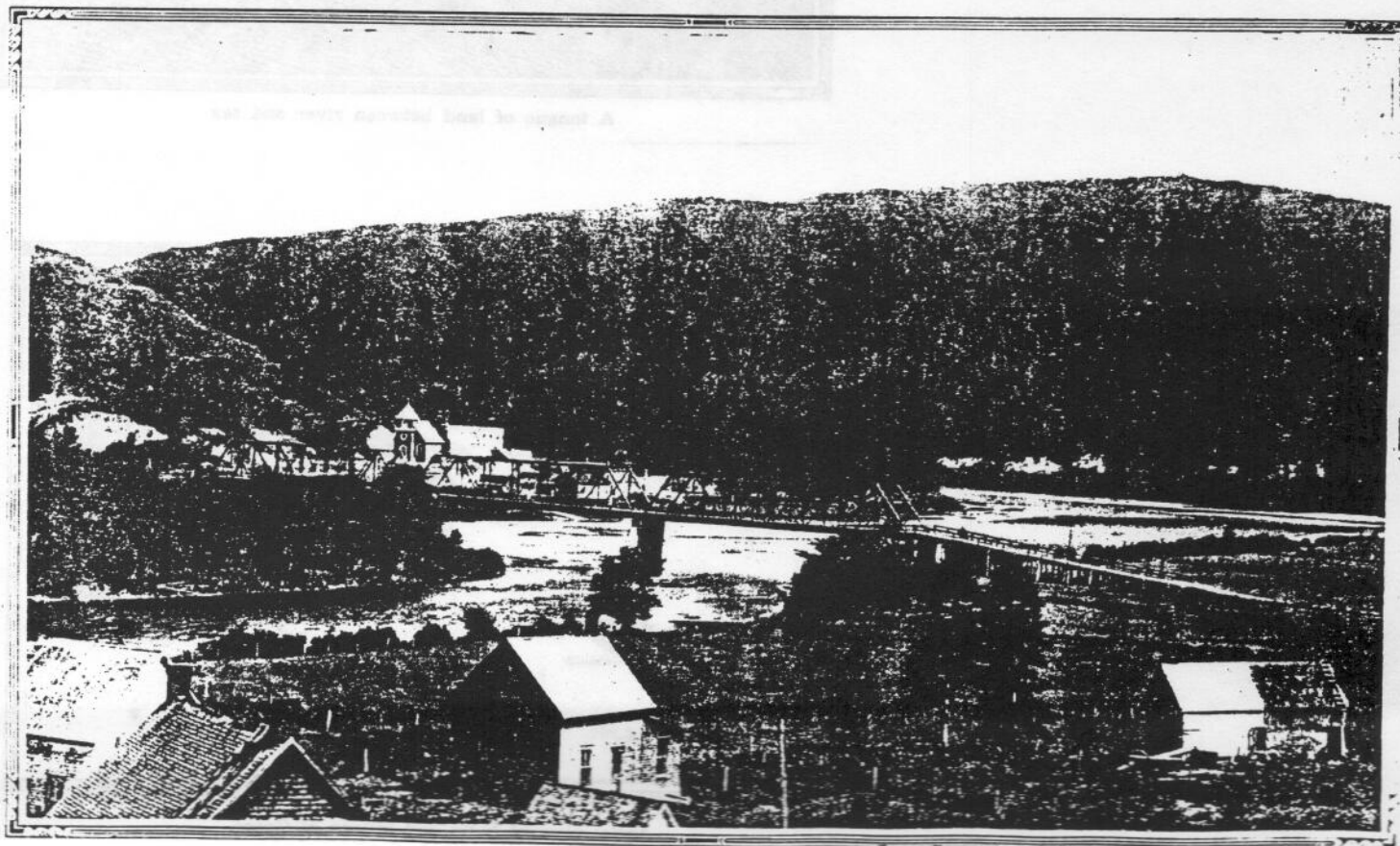
Black cape and beautiful beach at Cap-d'Espoir



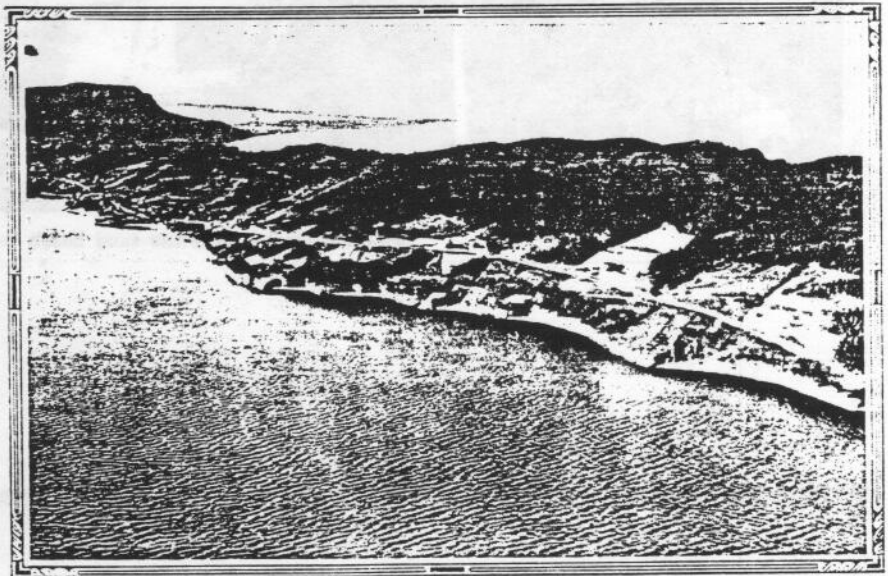
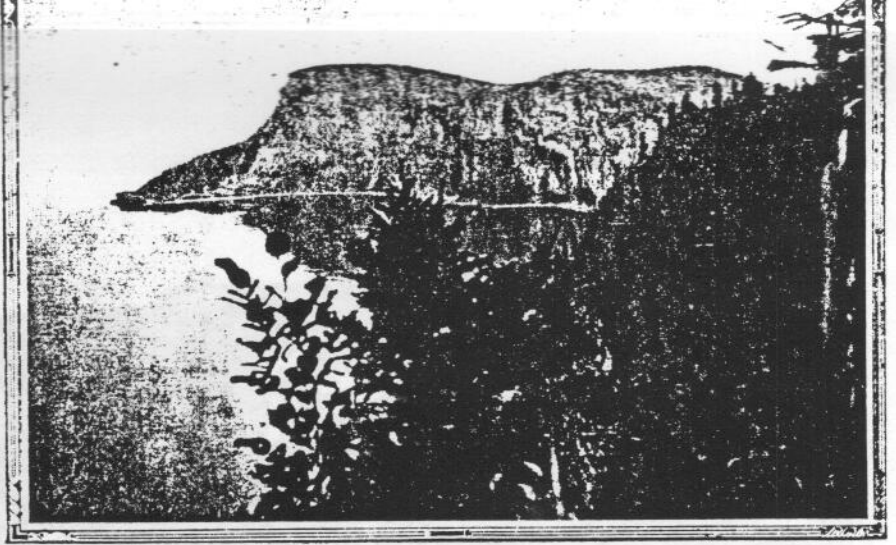
Black cape and beautiful beach at Cap-d'Espoir



Beautiful stretch of white sand beach on North shore



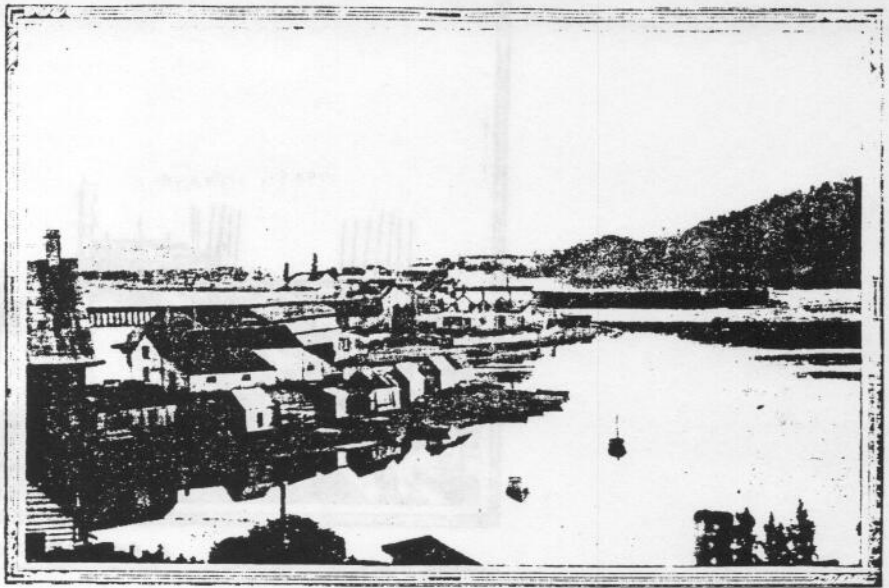
The entrance to the beautiful Matapedia Valley



A tongue of land between river and sea



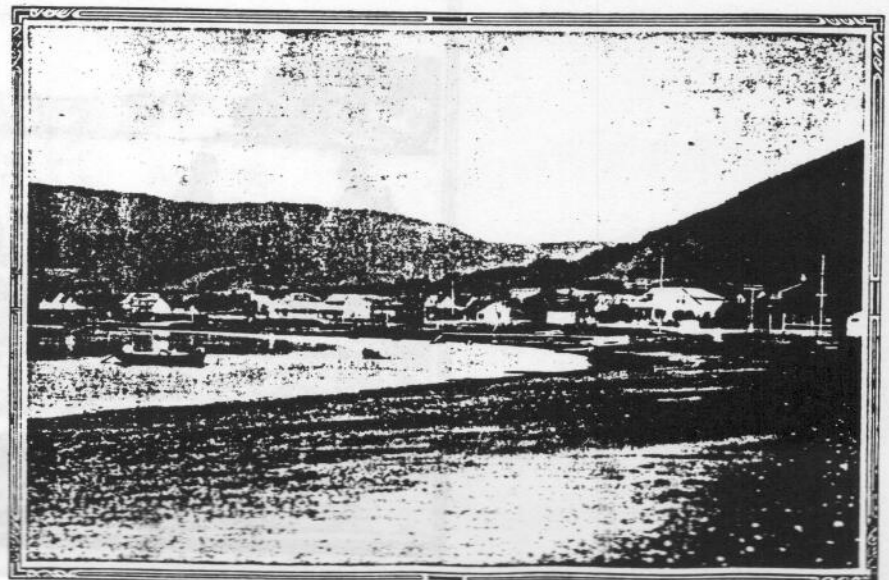
Aerial view of basin and village of Gaspé



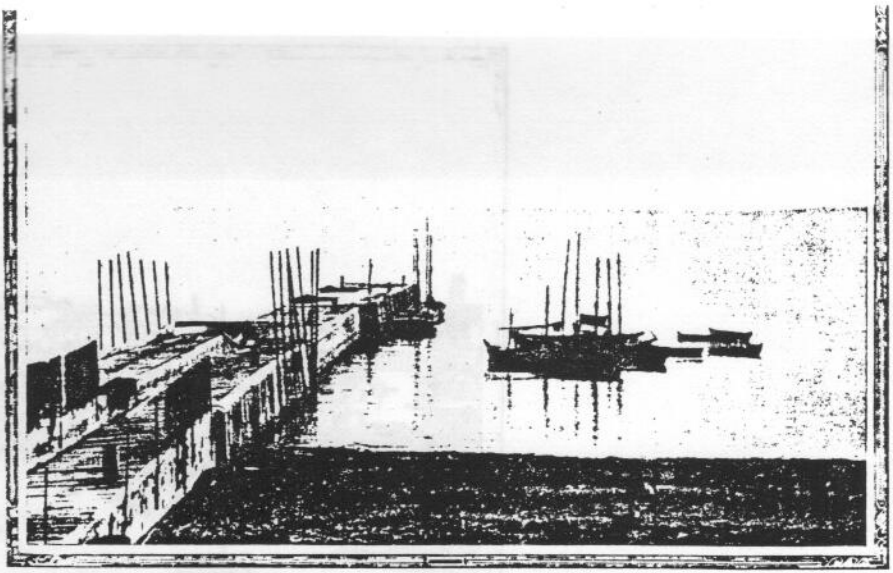
Beautiful scenery at Port-Daniel



In the village of New Carlisle



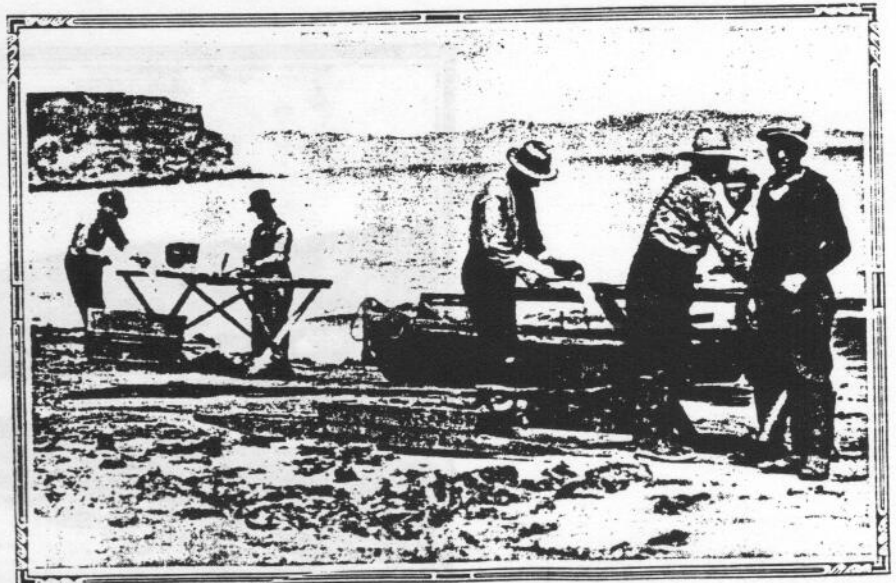
General view of Carleton



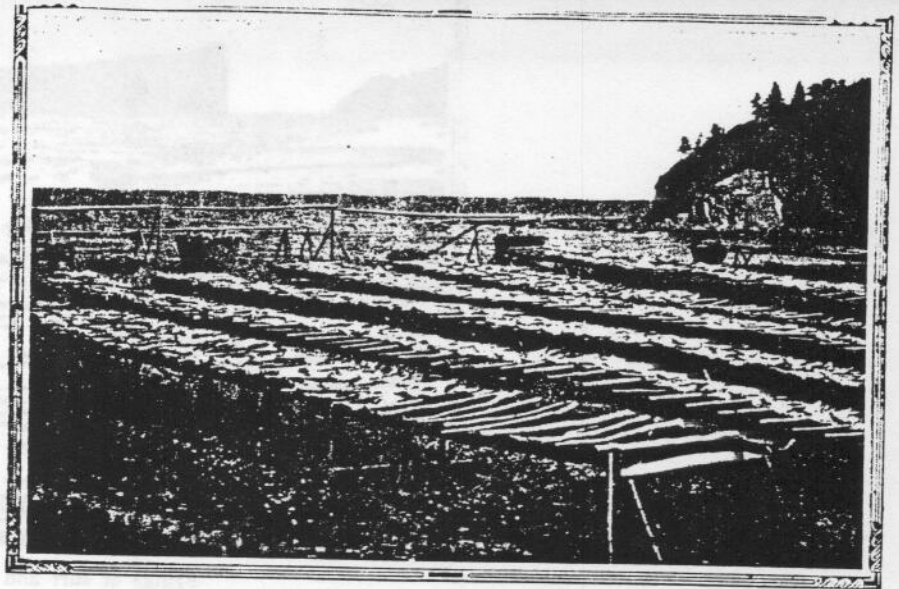
A fishing fleet in harbor



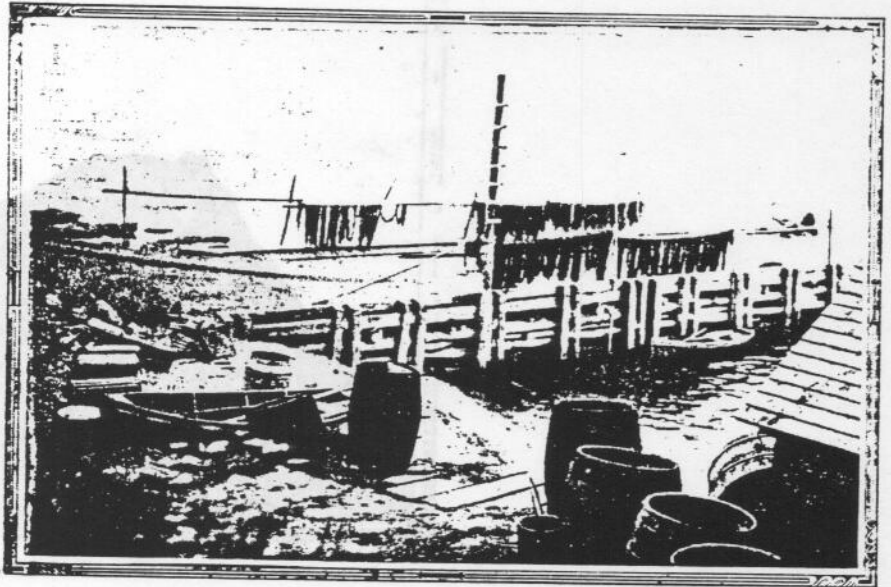
Cod fishing—Landing the catch



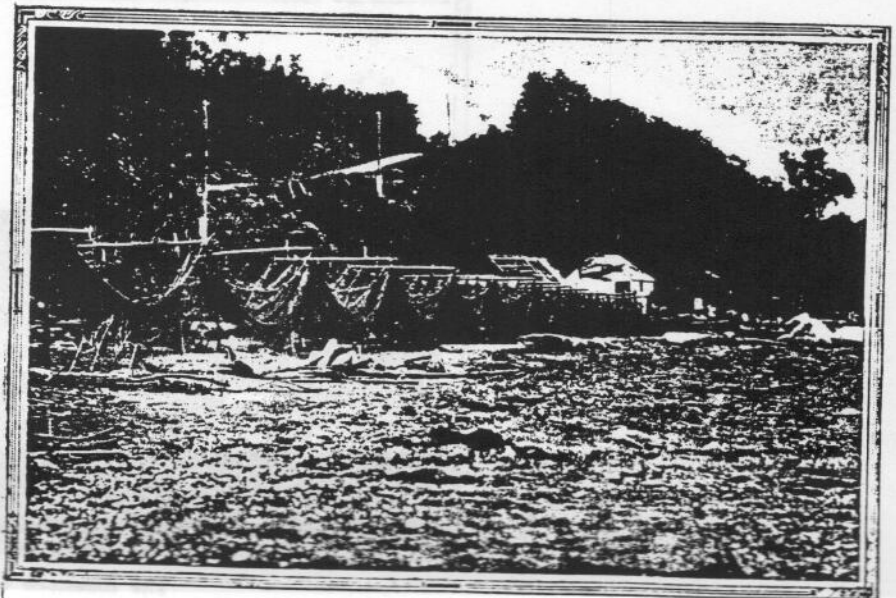
Splitting cod fish on beach at Percé



Drying cod on the "flakes"



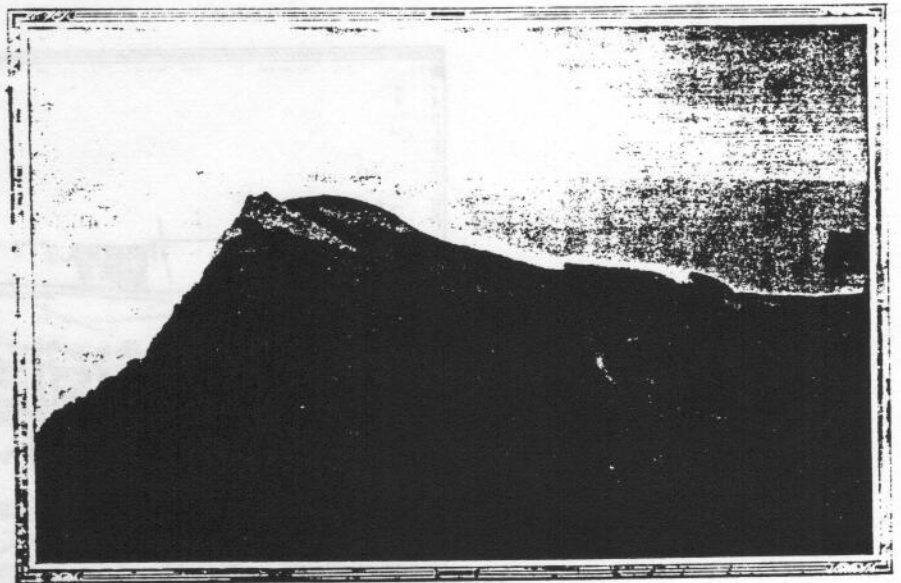
Nets and "gurry" barrels



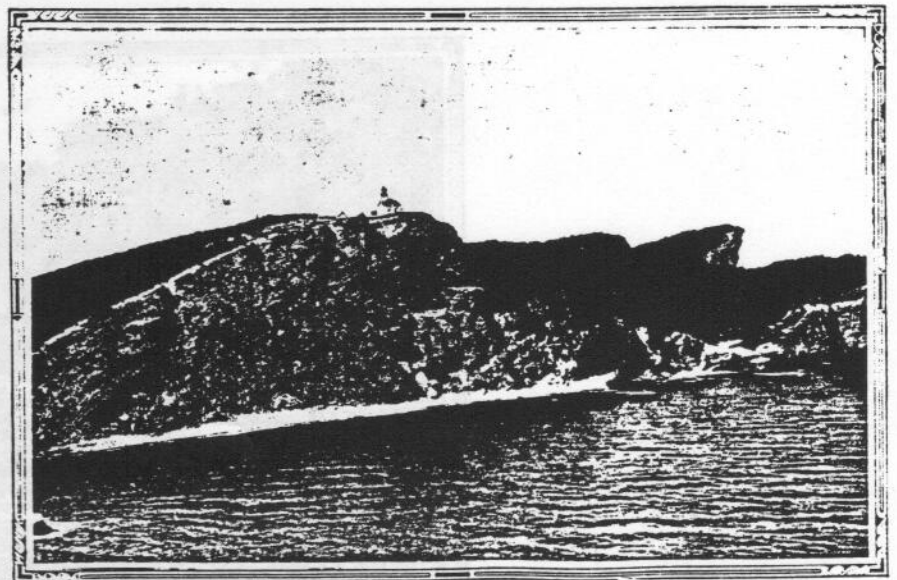
Drying nets on the sea shore



Fringe of surf and the "Roche Percée"



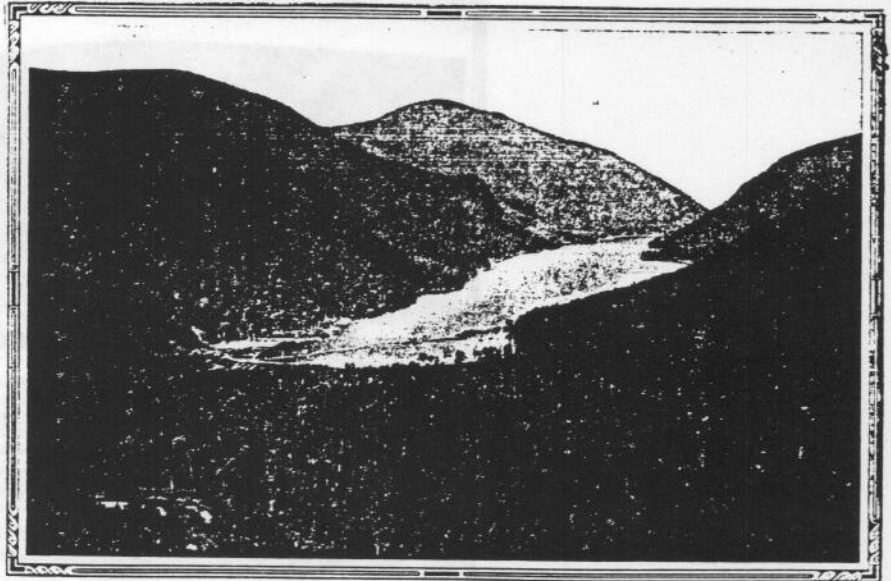
The "Peak of Dawn" at Percé



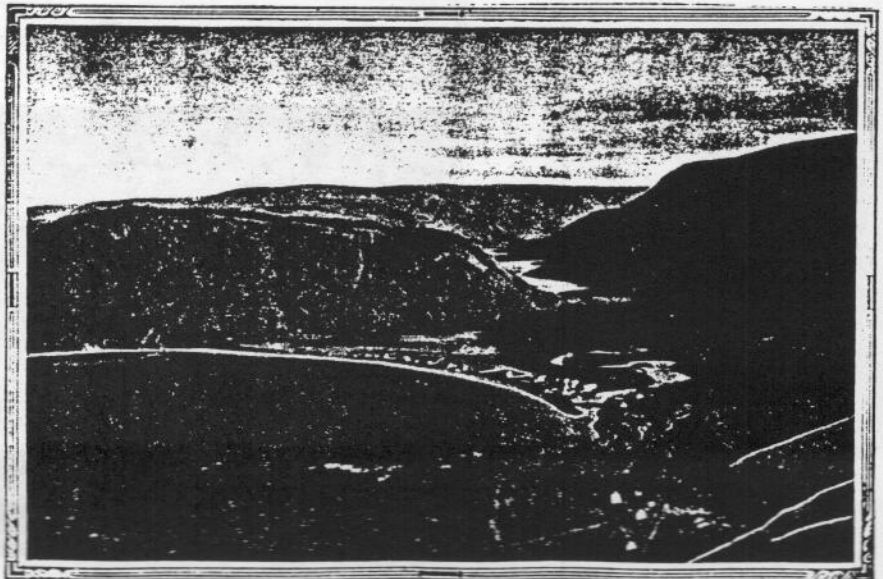
The limestone cliff of Percé



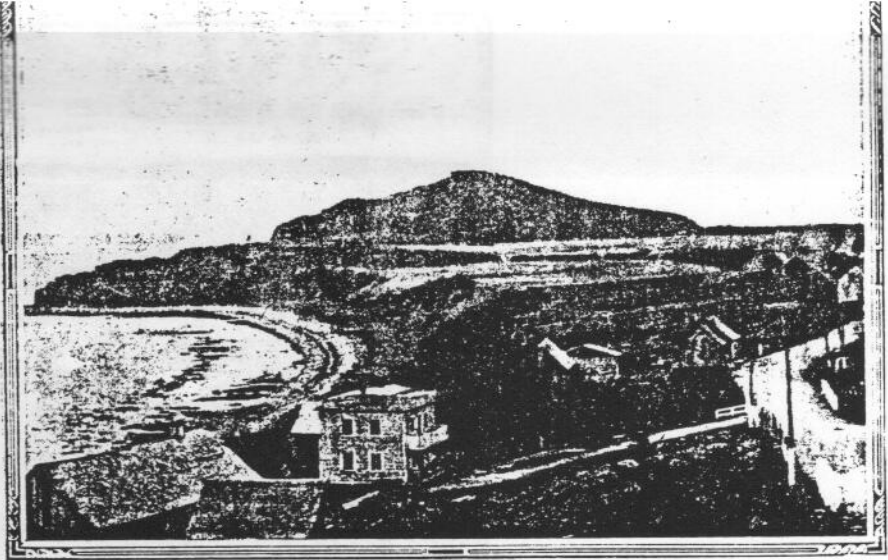
A rugged Gaspé landscape



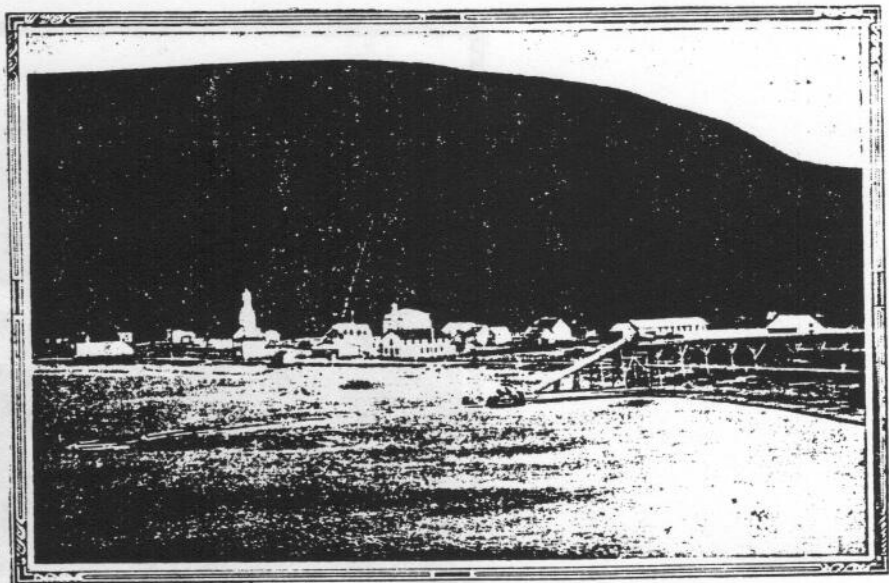
A lake in the mountain



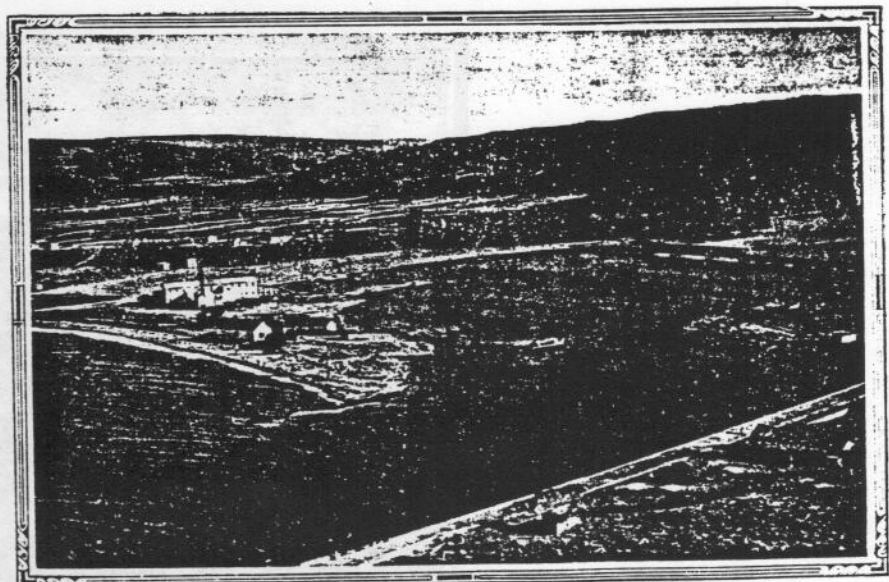
Where solitude reigns supreme



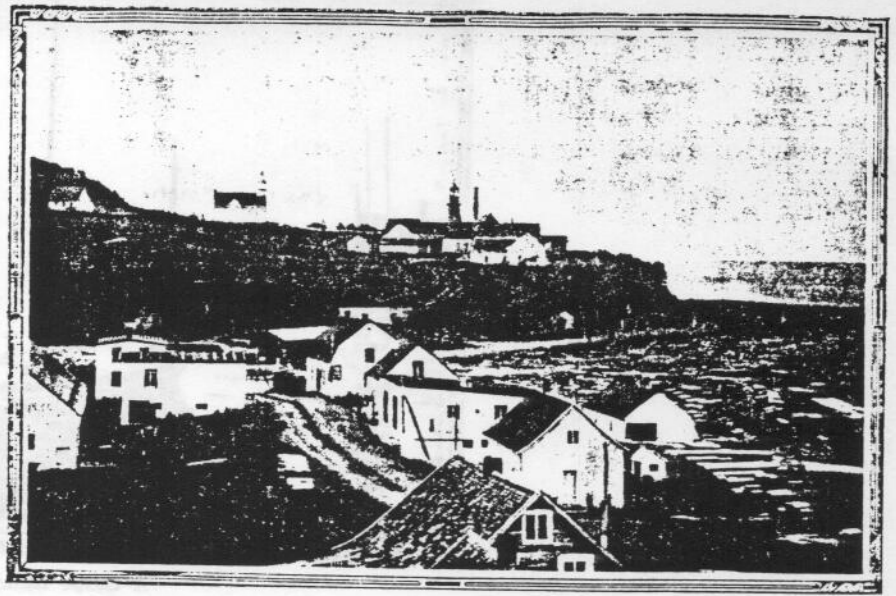
The mountain at Cap-Chat



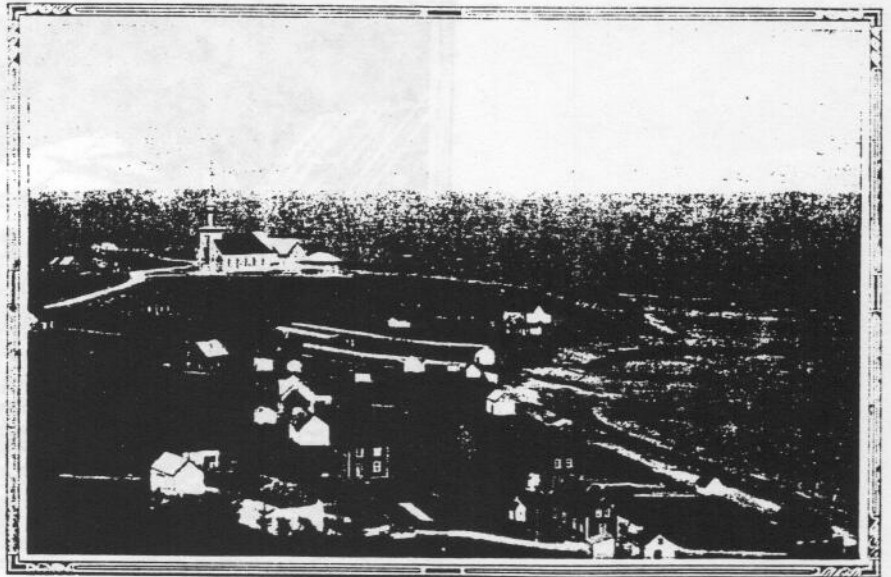
Beach and village of Mont-Louis



The "barachois" at Sainte-Anne-des-Monts



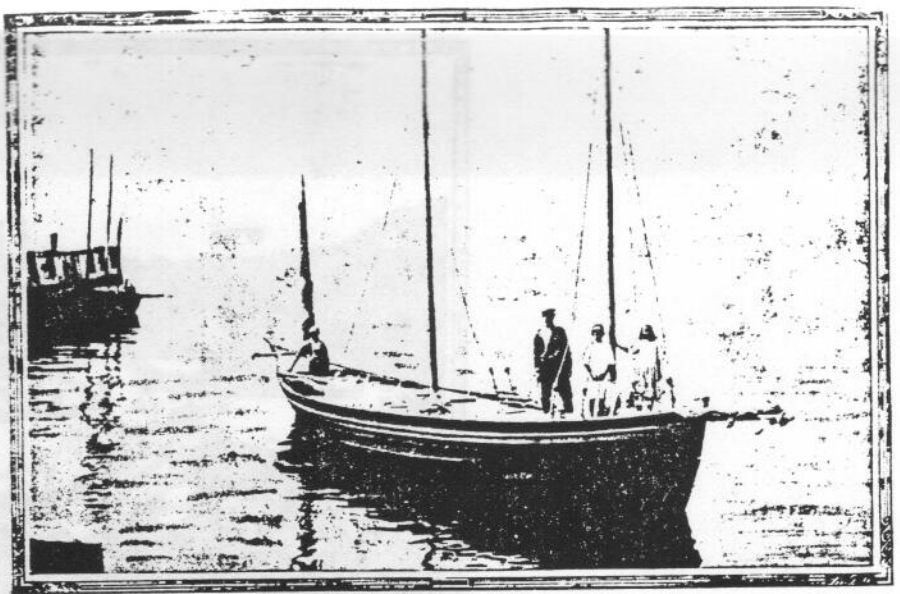
Village and light-house—Rivière-à-la-Marte



Beautiful twin bays at L'Echouerie



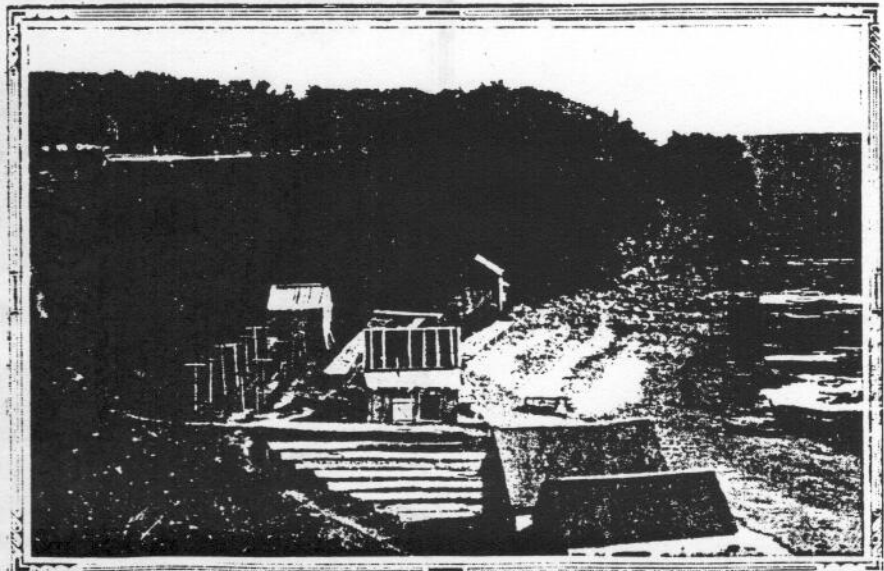
Saint-Antoine-du-Gros-Morne



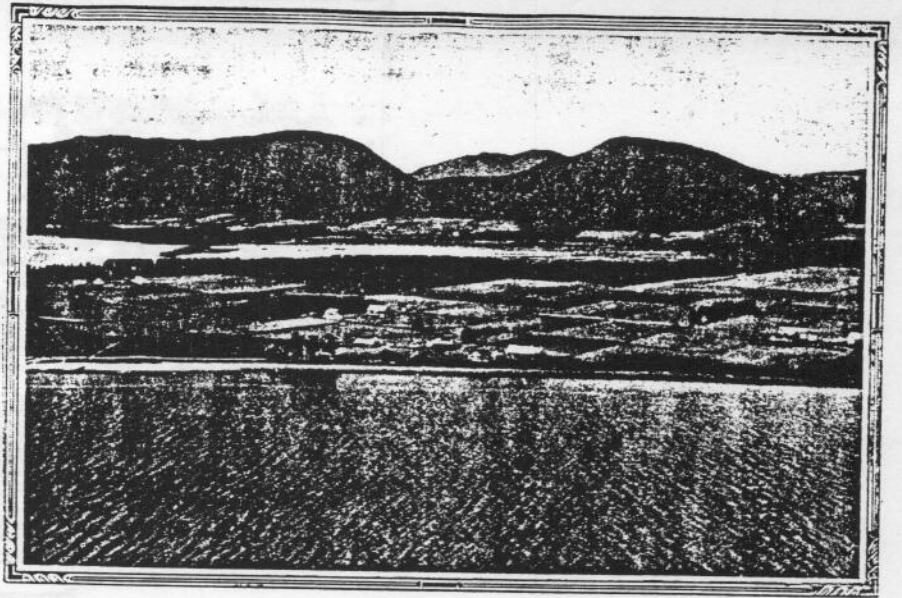
A Gaspé fishing boat



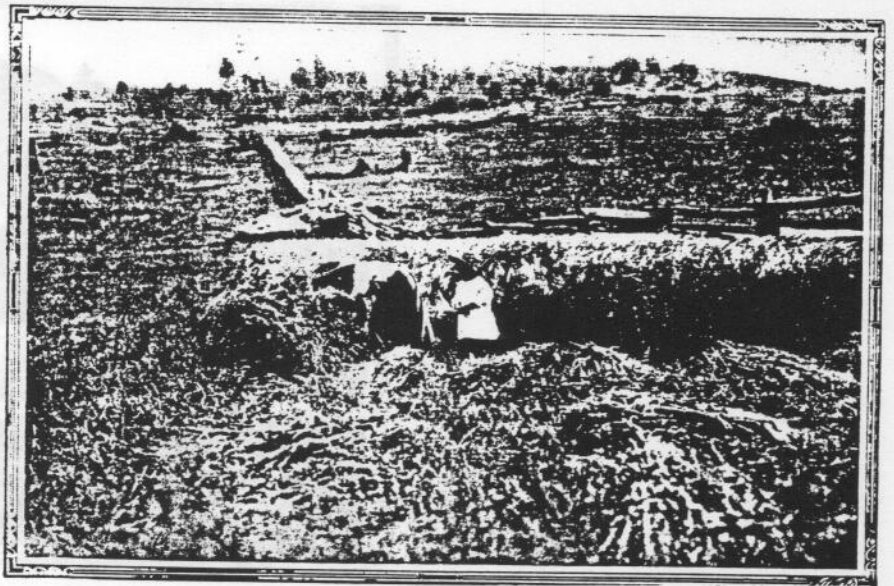
Families of humble fishers—Ruisseau-Castor



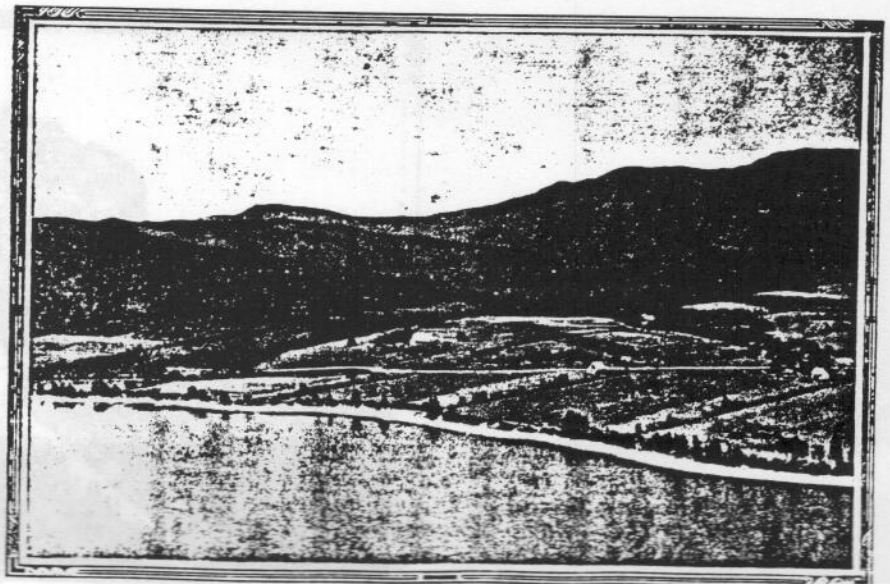
Where dwell the humble toilers of the sea



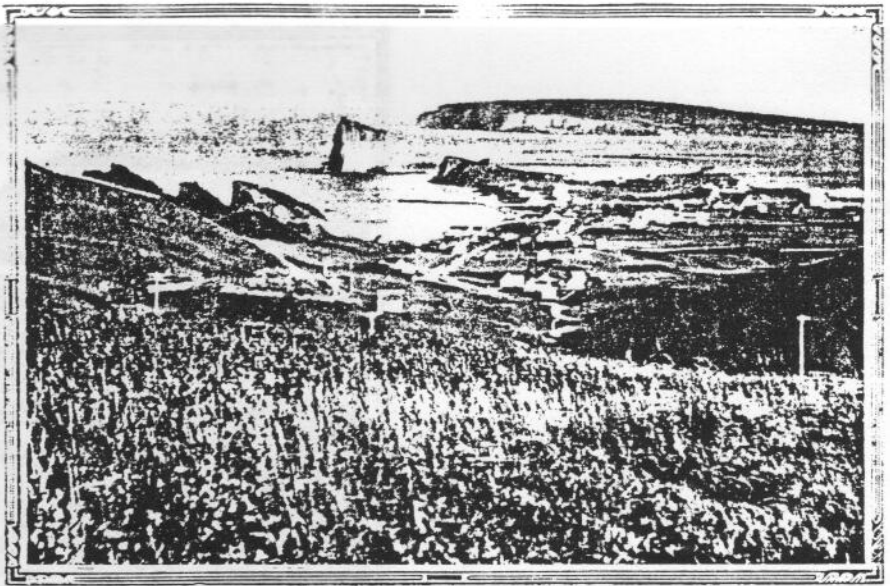
Calm weather along the coast



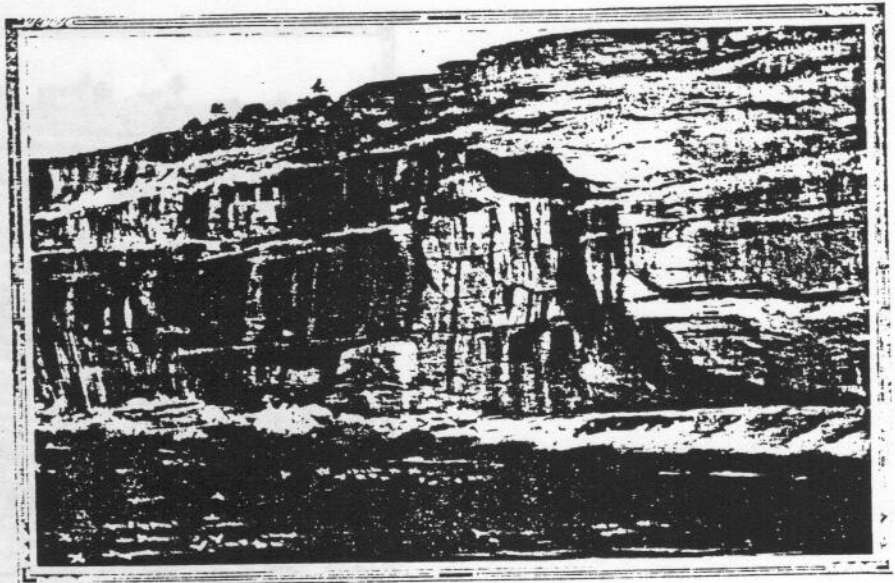
Sickle and reaping hook



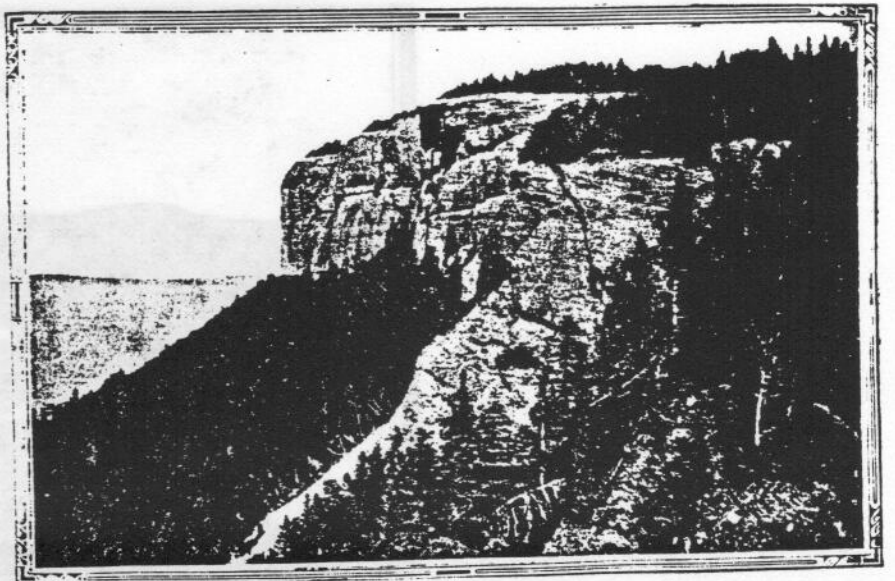
Sea, meadows and mountain



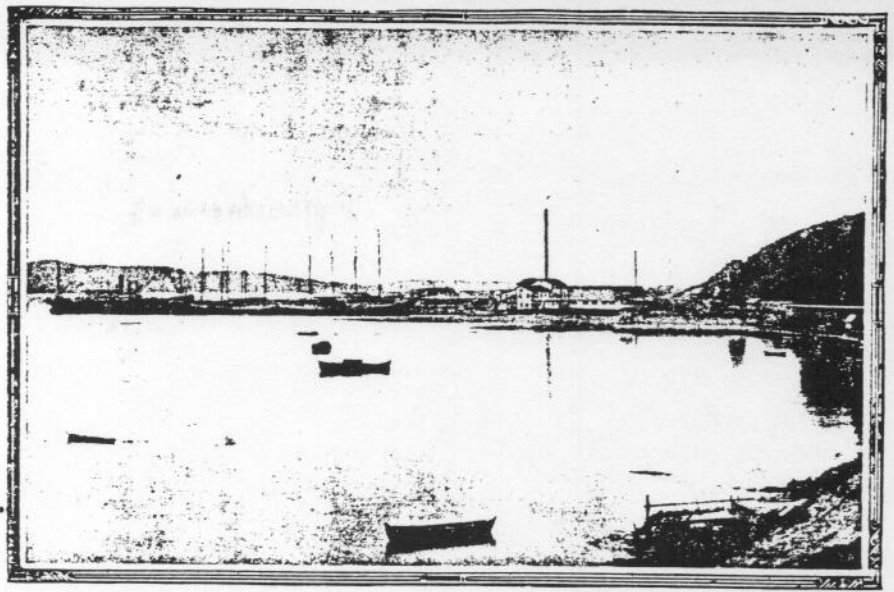
Panorama of Percé Village



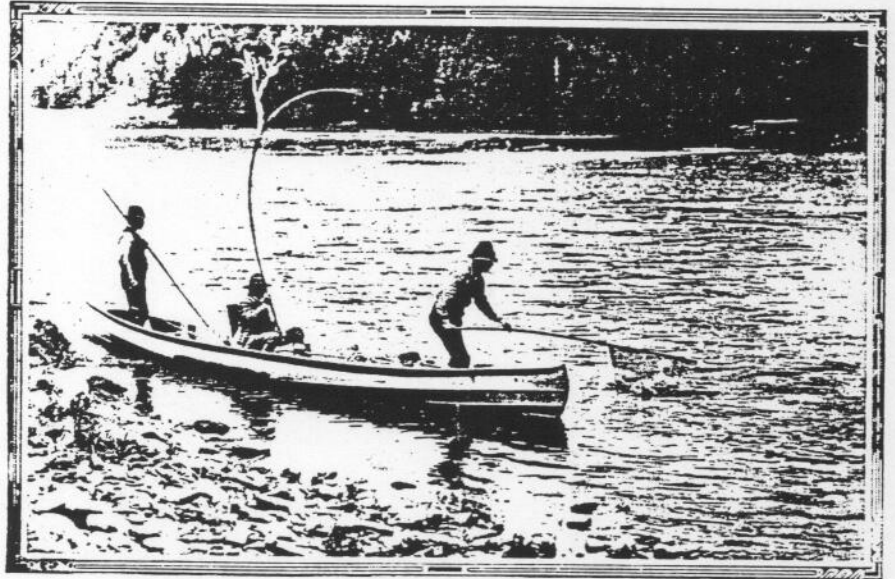
Gannet ledges on Bonaventure Island



Bald rocks and scrubby woods



Steamer and "Windjammers" at Gaspé



Where salmon literally swarm



Fishing smacks at anchor