

GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY

DR. GEORGE LONGMORE

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KEN ANNETT

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As the Gaspesian communities of Bay Chaleur prepare to recall and commemorate, in 1984, the Loyalist settlement of two hundred years ago it is relevant to remember the role of Dr. George Longmore in that pioneer venture. Indeed, it is interesting to speculate as to why Gaspesia has had so many medical doctors serve the public good over and beyond their strict professional vocation. GASPE OF YESTERDAY has recalled previously a number of these men, including Doctors Von Iffland, Felton, Douglas, Robitaille, Fortin and Wakeham, whose interests and achievements transcended their medical service. This pattern was set early in Gaspesia and is reflected in the following extract of a Petition of Dr. George Longmore to the Governor of Québec:

"...that in the month of October, 1784, your Excellency's Petitioner was ordered by General Haldimand, then Commander-in-Chief, as a Surgeon to attend a settlement of American Loyalists, at that time forming in the District of Gaspé. Finding, on his arrival in the Bay of Chaleur, that Government in that newly settled country required services entirely out of the lines of his Profession, your Excellency's Petitioner cheerfully came forward and both as Secretary to the late Nicholas Cox, Esq., then Lieut.-Governor of that District, and as a Magistrate, did everything in his power to promote the prosperity of the settlement and the real interests of the British Government on that Coast..."

BACKGROUND OF GEORGE LONGMORE

That more is known in 1984 on the life and career of George Longmore is due in large part to the research of Mrs. Barbara Tunis of Ottawa and Dr. Mary Lu MacDonald of Halifax. The recent publication of the Fifth Volume of the definitive DICTIONARY OF

by Mrs. Tunis. Dr. Mary Lu MacDonald approached the Longmore family story through interest in George Longmore Jr., probably the first native-born, English-speaking Canadian poet. An article she wrote on George Jr. appeared in the DALHOUSIE REVIEW of February, 1980. GASPE OF YESTERDAY appreciated the opportunity to contribute some information on the role of Dr. Longmore in Gaspesia to these researchers and authors.

Born c.1758 to a family of western Scotland that valued learning, George Longmore attended King's College, Aberdeen and studied medicine at the University of Edinburgh. From his social and professional life we gain the distinct impression of engaging personality, open and inquiring mind and a deep conviction of social responsibility.

As a young man in his 20's, George Longmore joined the Medical Service of the British Army and was posted to America and New York at the time of the American Revolutionary War. As that conflict drew to a close, he was posted to Québec where he provided medical service to the refugee Loyalists in their temporary camps along the St. Lawrence River. At Camp Machiche, near Three Rivers, he would have come to know well those Loyalist families that would later elect to seek permanent settlement in Bay Chaleur. An Order for him to travel to Bay Chaleur and provide for the medical care of the Loyalist settlement there was issued by Governor-General Haldimand at his Chateau Saint Lewis Headquarters in Québec.

Dr. Longmore would have known personally most, if not all, of the Loyalists that are the subject of the late A.D. Flowers book, "LOYALISTS OF BAY CHALEUR" published in 1973. As their medical officer, magistrate, and administrative secretary to the Lieut.-Governor of the District of Gaspé, Nicholas Cox, he would have had unique insight and knowledge of the Loyalist settlement in Bay Chaleur.

THE LONGMORE-COX CONNECTION

"THE LIFE AND TIMES OF NICHOLAS COX". published by SPEC on April 15, 1981, recalled that Cox, late of the 47th Regt. and apointee as Lieut.-Governor of the District of Gaspé, his wife, Deborah and their family had reached Québec from London in August, 1775 after a crossing of eleven weeks in the brig. commanded by Captain Edward. Plans of Cox to proceed to Bay Chaleur and take up his new duties had to be put aside because of the American invasion of Canada, the fall of Montreal to the invaders and the seige of fortress Québec by the armies of Arnold and Montgomery. During the tense and dangerous period of the war Nicholas Cox served as Field Officer on the staff of the Governor, General Guy Carleton.

As noted above, George Longmore was a student in his native Scotland when the War of the American Revolution erupted in America and it would be some eight years later that his service with the medical corps of the British Army brought him to Québec. There he met and married Christina Laetita, daughter of Nicholas and Deborah Cox. Their marriage is thought to have taken place c.1784, at which time the bride may have been about eighteen years of age. Records show that in June, 1788, Dr.Longmore, his wife and family returned to Québec from Bay Chaleur on the schooner "ANGELIQUE". The Longmores would have ten children in all, eight of whom survived the death of their father in 1811. Christina Laetita Cox Longmore lived on for some thirty-four years after the death of her husband. She died at Kingsey in Québec's Eastern Townships at age 77 years.

Had Mrs. Christina Longmore kept a JOURNAL of her impressions and experiences of the Loyalist settlement at New Carlisle what a precious source of information it would be today for those commemorating the 1784 anniversary. As the daughter of the Lieut.-Governor and the wife of the first medical officer she had a unique and privileged position from which to record the news and views of the pioneer Loyalist families in Bay Chaleur.

GRANTS OF LAND

Reference to the 1785 PLAN OF LOTS AT NEW CARLISLE by the Surveyor, William Vondenvelden, published by SPEC on Nov. 23, 1982, under the title, NEW CARLISLE IN INFANCY, will show that Dr. George Longmore had been granted at least nine of the acre square TOWN LOTS in the new settlement. These included lots number. #74; #75; #92; #106; #107; #112; #146; #147 and #232. It is assumed that the generosity of these grants reflects the status of Dr. Longmore in the Loyalist community.

Mrs. Tunis, in her official biography of George Longmore, states that in 1791 he was the holder of a 200 acre farm lot in Bonaventure.

Subsequent to his period of service in Gaspesia, Dr. Longmore and his family received from the Québec Government a large (10,000+ acres) land grant in Kingsey Township along the St. Francis River. His sons lived on the Eastern Townships lands and, as noted above, the Widow Longmore died there.

QUEBEC CAREER

Though the career of Dr. George Longmore was linked with the City of Québec from 1788 onwards there is little doubt that he maintained interest in Gaspesia and kept in touch there through his many friends and acquaintances such as Colonel Francis LeMaistre, Captain George Lawe, Sr., and members of such Gaspesian families as O'Hara, Robin, Mann, Caldwell etc. who were in Québec on business from time to time. In the medical field he was a pioneer in vaccination against the dreaded smallpox and doubtless played a part in the early introduction of such vaccination in Gaspesia by Theophilus Fox of Percé and Dr. Von Iffland. The following extract from the book, " A TRAVERS L'HISTOIRE DE L'HOTEL DIEU DE QUEBEC, by P.G.Roy is of particular interest as it is from a source that might be expected to be critical:

"Dr. Longmore...practiced his profession in Gaspesia before

"Strongly recommended, and perhaps imposed, by government, Dr. Longmore began his service at the Hotel-Dieu from April, 1789. However, relations of the Sisters of the Hotel-Dieu with Dr. Longmore were always most cordial. He was an excellent doctor and had the advantage over his French-Canadian confreres in having done his medical studies in a large European university.

Dr. Longmore was Apothecary of the Québec Garrison Troops and in this role was part of the British Medical Service. He was a candidate in 1803 for the office of First Medical Officer of the Army at Québec. It was Doctor James McAuley, with more seniority, that won the post. They consoled him (Dr. Longmore) by giving him the post of Health Officer of the Port of Québec and a little later that of Commissioner for the Care of the Insane and Foundlings...

Give Justice where Justice is due. Dr. Longmore was perhaps imposed on the Hotel-Dieu by the Government of the time but, during the 22 years of his medical service to the Poor he never charged a cent in fees, either to the Poor or to the "Communauté". He was content with his salary as Apothecary which we believe was paid by the Imperial Government. This is all proved by a request that Dr. Longmore made to the Milnes Government in 1800-1801. In his Will, signed, June 6, 1810, Longmore advised his wife and children that upon his death they should petition the Governor for an indemnity for the services he had given "without the smallest reward" during 22 years for the Poor of the Hotel-Dieu. He told his wife to annex to her request to the Governor a certificate of the Sisters of the Hotel-Dieu that he had never received a cent for his services..."

While the full story of Dr. George Longmore's career, to be found in the biography of Mrs. Tunis, is less simplistic than this account of P.G. Roy, there is little question that he was one of the outstanding personalities of his time. In 1811, he travelled to Britain, and on July 3rd., of that year the Québec GAZETTE

the GAZETTE was to report his death on August 9, 1811.

As one who provided medical service to the refugee Loyalists at Camp Machiche and who, with his wife and young children shared their difficult, early years at New Carlisle, Dr. George Longmore is deserving of grateful recall by Loyalist descendants as they commemorate 200 years of Loyalist settlement in Bay Chaleur
