

GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY

ROUSSEAU AT BONAVENTURE

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Francois Dominique Rousseau, Notary  
Royal, visited the Bar and Beach of  
Bonaventure, Bay Chaleurs in 1771.

KEN ANNETT

## ROUSSEAU AT BONAVENTURE

1771

FOREWORD

Though the settlement and early history of the Gaspesian community of Bonaventure has been recalled by such SPEC articles as: WILLIAM VAN FELSON, PIONEER MERCHANT OF BONAVENTURE, by Doris and David McDougall - SPEC, 21 August, 1980 and BONAVENTURE in the GASPE OF YESTERDAY series - SPEC, 20 January, 1982. An article as yet unpublished, GOVERNOR'S WARRANTS, GASPESIA, 1774-1775, contains the Petitions and authorization for Letters Patent of certain Bonaventure land grants.

The Notarial Deed presented herewith, headed: "ETAT DES HABITANTS ETABLIS SUR LE BANC DE BONAVENTURE, SEPT. 11, 1771" was drawn up by the Notary Royal, Francois Rousseau. It provides yet another portrait of Bonaventure some ten years after it was settled by dispossed Acadians and is linked to other accounts via William Van Felson as Seigneur.

The background and career of Francois Dominique Rousseau remains to be fully researched. It seems possible that he was of Huguenot background and a family connection may exist with the merchant-fur-trader Jean-Baptiste Rousseau, pioneer settler on the site of the City of Toronto.

In 1765, John Collins, Deputy Surveyor General of Quebec, had made a survey and plan of -"BONAVENTUR" - agreeable to the Order and Instructions of the Honourable James Murray, Governor of Quebec and of the Honourable His MAJESTY'S COUNCIL. His plan is included with this article as the location shown on it for fishing stages and for the Chapel lend perspective to the Deed of Rousseau written some six years later



3.

(As translated from the French text of 1771)

ACCOUNT OF HABITANTS ESTABLISHED ON THE BAR OF BONAVENTURE

On this day of September 11th., one thousand seven hundred and eleven, at the request of Willian Vanfalson (sic) the Seignior of part of the Bay of Bonaventure in Bay Chaleurs, I, the undersigned Francois Dominique Rousseau, Notary Royal for the full extent of the South Shore of the Quebec District, presently at Bonaventure, did, in the presence of the witnesses hereinafter named, expressly visit the Bar or Beach of the said place where the fish are cured to make an exact account of the habitants who are, in effect, a third party dependant on this Seigniory of VanFalson Esq., and of their possessions, including houses, sheds and gardens, from the entrance or narrows of the said Bay and following the "Grand Chemain" towards the Chapel.

Firstly was noted three stages built by the Sieurs Guilbert, Plas (?) and Bujau (sic) together with twenty flakes for the curing of the fish. Among these were three storehouses, two of which belong to William Smith, Esq., the other to Mr. Ross. Next was the house of Sieur Vanfalson.

Then was noted the house and out-buildings of Ambroise Babin with a small garden, enclosed by a picket fence, at the rear.

Next was noted a large, new warehouse of two stories belonging to the Guilbert Brothers, which building together with a small house adjacent are, according to Sieur Vanfalson, on his land.

Next was noted another house with an adjoining store and a small enclosure at the rear, belonging to William Smith.

Then another small house belonging to Pierre Poirier.

Next was noted another small house with a little yard enclosed by a picket fence belonging to Jean Arsenaux dit Cointine.

Then another house belonging to Placide Bujau (sic)

