GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY

GASPESIANS WIN NOTABLE LEGAL CASE IN 1822 BEFORE THE COURT OF KING'S BENCH.

The landmark legal case brought by George Arnold, Québec Merchant, as Plaintiff, versus the Gaspé firm of Merchant-Traders with John, George, Felix and James Boyle and Richard Annett as Co-partners, the Defendants

and

the related legal victory of Notary Public L.T. MacPherson, Plaintiff, versus George Arnold, the Defendant, in 1823, for Defamation of Character by malicious declaration.

KEN ANNETT

GEORGE ARNOLD, PLAINTIFF, VERSUS JOHN BOYLE AND OTHERS, DEFENDANT.

SOME BACKGROUND

One hundred and sixty-five years ago the legal and business circles of Québec City and the families of distant Gaspé Bay were agog over a case before the 1822 Term of the Court of King's Bench of the District of Québec. The case of ARNOLD VERSUS BOYLE AND OTHERS had its origins in a rather routine notarial deed by L.T.MacPherson, N.P. for the payment of business obligations by the Gaspé Bay firm of Co-partners John, George, Felix and James Boyle and Richard Annett to the Québec City Merchant, George Arnold. Tension between the parties to this Deed had escalated with the arrest and imprisonment of George Boyle at the instigation of George Arnold and the conflict had burst into flame, publically, with formal challenge by Arnold to the integrity and veracity of the Notary Public, L.T.MacPherson.

The Gaspé men involved were capable and successful sons of pioneer English/Scottish settlers on the shores of Gaspé Bay. They were shipbuilders, mariners, whalers and merchant-traders, forming a tight-knit fraternity of entrepreneurs. The Boyle brothers held their lands on the South-West Arm of Gaspé Bay. Richard Annett, their brother-in-law, was a son of the Peninsula family of William and Elizabeth Siddon Annett. In a single generation the nine sons of the Boyle and Annett families had a remarkable impact on the economic and social life of the Bay of Gaspé.

L.T.MacPherson, N.P., whose Deed of Obligation was challenged by George Arnold at the heart of this case was a son of that wellknown Gaspesian, Daniel MacPherson, a contemporary of Charles Robin in the Gaspé Fishery. In consequence of testimony by Arnold in the case versus JOHN BOYLE AND OTHERS, MacPherson sued Arnold for Defamation and Character in 1823 and won his case.

The evidence from witnesses in these respective actions provides a unique view of life in Gaspé back to the year 1792.

THE CASE OF GEORGE ARNOLD, PLAINTIFF, VERSUS JOHN BOYLE AND OTHERS, DEFENDANTS,

ARGUED AND DETERMINED IN THE COURT OF KING'S BENCH FOR THE DISTRICT OF QUEBEC IN THE TERM OF APRIL, 1822.

This was an Action upon a Note of hand made by the Defendants in favor of the Plaintiff for the Sum of Three Hundred and Twenty Six Pounds, fifteen shillings and two pence, to which the Defendants pleaded the general issue and also a Plea of Temporary Exception, and a Plea of Perpetual Exception.

By the Plea of Temporary Exception the Defendants pleaded,
"that the promissory Note and supposed promises and undertakings in the said Declaration mentioned, if any such were
at any time made, were jointly made with one Richard Annett,
a Co-partner in Trade with the above mentioned Defendants,
who was still living, to wit, at Gaspé in the Inferior District
of Gaspé, and not by them the said John Boyle, George Boyle,
Felix Boyle and James Boyle alone."

By their Plea of Perpetual Exception the Defendants pleaded, "that heretofore, to wit on the seventeenth day of November One Thousand eight hundred and nineteen, at the City of Québec aforesaid, they, the said John Boyle, George Boyle and Felix Boyle, acting as well for themselves as for the said James Boyle and one Richard Annett, their Co-partners in Trade, carrying on business under the firm, JOHN BOYLE AND BROTHERS, by a certain Notarial Act or Instrument, in writing (an authentic Copy whereof was therewith fyled) bearing date the day and year aforesaid at Québec aforesaid, duly made and executed before M'Pherson and Confrère, Notaries Public, for the causes and considerations therein mentioned, did acknowledge themselves to owe and be indebted to the said George Arnold, and did also then and there by reason thereof undertake and oblige themselves and their said Co-partners, the said James Boyle and Richard Annett, their respective Heirs and Assigns, jointly and severally (Solidairement) to pay to him the said George Arnold (then and there personally present and accepting thereof) the sum of Three Hundred and Twenty Six Pounds, fifteen shillings and two pence current money of this Province, that is to say;

one just moiety or half thereof, with legal interest thereupon, on the first day of November in the year One Thousand eight hundred and twenty and the other moiety or half thereof on the first day of November in the year One Thousand eight hundred and twenty-one, they, the said John Boyle, George Boyle and Felix Boyle thereby, then and there, mortgaging and hypothecating all the property amd Estate, real and present and to come, of them the said John Boyle, George Boyle, Fdlix Boyle, James Boyle and Richard Annett -

For securing to him, the said George Arnold, the payment of the said sum of money and interest, at the periods and in the manner above-mentioned, and the better to secure to him, the said George Arnold, the said Sum of Money with interest thereupon, James M'Callum Sr., of the said City of Québec, Merchant, did, in and by the said Notarial Act or Instrument in writing, also bind and oblige himself 'solidairement' with the said John Boyle. George Boyle, Felix Boyle, James Boyle and Richard Annett, as upon reference to the said Notarial Act or Instrument would more fully appear, which said Notarial Act or Instrument had not, since the making and executing thereof, been cancelled, revoked or annulled, but still remained in full force and effect.

And the said George Boyle, John Boyle, Felix Boyle and James Boyle in effect said that the said sum of money in the said Notarial Agreement or Instrument mentioned was the same identical sum of money or debt specified in the said promissory note, in the declaration in the said cause fyled, and upon which the said action was instituted and that no new consideration of any kind or description had at any time been made, given or allowed by him, the said George Arnold to them, the said John Boyle, George Boyle, Felix Boyle and James Boyle, for and in consideration of the said promissory note, but that the same (if any such existed) were at any time made, which the said Defendants nevertheless denied, had been unduly, unjustly and wrongfully obtained from George Boyle, one of the Defendants in the said cause, by the said George Arnold, and that the same was to all intents and purposes null and void at Law. By reason whereof the said action could not be maintained,

inasmuch as the action of him, the said George Arnold, (if any he had against the said Defendants, which nevertheless the said Defendants denied) ought by Law to have been instituted upon and in virtue of the said Notarial Act or Instrument in writing, above mentioned."

To these Pleas the Plaintiff (Arnold) filed general Replications - He also filed a Petition alledging that no Intrument, as stated in the Defendants last mentioned Plea, was ever executed by him, that the Copy filed in the cause was a false Copy and praying that the Defendants might be ordered within a certain time to declare whether they intended to avail themselves of the said, pretended Act or Instrument.

The Defendants having thereupon declared that it was their intention to avail themselves of the said Instrument, the Plaintiff filed a formal "INSCRIPTION EN FAUX" and obtained an Order upon L. MacPherson. Esquire, the Notary Public, before whom the said Instrument purpoted to have been executed, to produce and file the original thereof, which he accordingly did.

The Plaintiff then alledged and propounded as "MOYENS DE FAUX" the causes, matters and things following, that is to say :-

"That they, the said Respondents, heretofore to wit on the seventeenth day of November, 1819 were insolvent and unable to pay their just debts and being so insolvent they, the said Respondents, on the day and year aforesaid, at Québec, wickedly and fraudulently intending and contriving to injure the said party complainant, did execute and carry into effect the following false and fraudulent acts, deeds and transactions to the great and manifest injury and damage of the said party complainant, and without his knowledge and consent, they, the said Defendants, under several false pretences, and as they alledged and intended, to induce the other Creditors of them, the said Defendants, to give and grant them a term of two years for the payment of their respective debts, did procure the said L.T. MacPherson to draw and prepare or cause and procure to be drawn and prepared, the said alledged Act or Instrument, then purpoting to be a Bond or Obligation, as well in favor of the Party Complainant, Robert Richardson, John Macnider and Co., Jean Huot,

Pierre Doucet, Ann Sprowl and James Hunt, whose names and signatures appear to have been set and subscribed thereto, as in favor of John Thompson, acting as well for himself as for and in the name of William Thompson, his Co-partner, trading under the firm of John and William Thompson, James Ross, Michel Clouet and William Hall, whose names have been obliterated from the said paper, writing or instrument, whereby they, the said Respondents, should have a delay of two years for the payment of the several sums of money due them to their several Creditors respectively.

That the Party Complainant did set and subscribe his name to the said paper, writing or instrument, but in truth and in fact at the time he so set and subceribed his name and signature thereto the said several persons whose names had since been obliterated therefrom as aforesaid purpoted to be parties thereto, and no unjust preference should be shown to any of the said Creditors of them, the said Respondents, but, on the contrary, mutual and equal rights created and constituted by and between them respectively.

"That although the said paper, writing or alledged instrument ought to have been signed by all the persons purpoting to be Parties thereto, as aforesaid, in order to render the same binding and obligatory upon him, the Party Complainant, yet the names of the said several persons aforesaid, were, after the same had been signed by him, and without his consent and contrary to the intention of the Party Complainant and greatly to his prejudice, struck out and obliterated from the said alledged original "MINUTE" of the said Act or Instrument."

"And the Party Complainant did further say, alledge and propound that since the same had been so signed as aforesaid, the amount for which the said alledged Instrument was to have been given had been falsely obliterated and defaced and the sum of Six Hundred and eighty six pounds, fifteen shillings, put and substituted in the place of Eleven Hundred and thirty pounds, eleven shillings and one half penny, greatly to the prejudice of the said Party Complainant, as aforesaid.

"And the Party Complainant further alledged and propounded that the words alledged to have been struck out of the said writing or pretended Instrument were not authenticated or PARAPHE in the presence of the said Party Complainant or before the same had been signed by him or with his knowledge or consent"

For these causes the Plaintiff prayed that the aforesaid Instrument alledged to have been made and executed before MacPherson and Confrère on the 17th of November, 1819 might be declared to have been falsely counterfeited and fabricated and that the same might be rejected and not received as evidence, but be taken from the record in the said cause.

For answer to the above "MOYENS DE FAUX" the Defendants pleaded:-

- First.- That "all and singular the allegations, matters and things in the "MOYENS" contained, except as to the making and signing of the said Act or Instrument by him, the said Complainant, in the presence of the said Notary, were wholly and altogether insufficient, untrue and unfounded in fact.
- Second.- That the said Notarial Act or Instrument was full, perfect and entire and had in no wise, since the signing of the same by the said Complainant, been falsified, fabricated or counterfeited, and as such remains and is still in full force and effect with respect to the Complainant and Respondents in this cause.
- Third. That it was apparent by the said Notarial Act or Instrument that the said Respondents, "EN FAUX", far from being insolvent debtors, and, as such, contriving and intending to injure and defraud the said George Arnold, the Complainant "EN FAUX", did by the said Act or Instrument give good, sufficient and approved Security to him, the said Complainant, and to divers others therein mentioned, for the full and entire payment of their several demands against them, the said Respondents.
- Fourth.- That the said Act or Instrument contained as many separate distinct and perfect promises, undertakings or agreements

Fourth.-(ctd) as there were parties, Creditors of the said Respondents, each agreement perfect in itself and independent of the others.

Fifth .-

That the obliterations in the said Act or Instrument were immaterial with respect to the said Complainant and did not invalidate or annul the agreement between them, the Complainant and R spondents, the said Act or Instrument remaining in every respect as when executed, as far as the same related to them, the said Complainant and Respondents.

Sixth .-

That no letter, word, sentence, clause or stipulation of any kind, sworn in the said Act or Instrument, had been obliterated, expunged or altered, whereby the nature or substance of the agreements, undertakings or engagements entered into between the said Parties to the said Act or Instrument, had been altered or changed, either to the advantage of them, the Respondents or to the prejudice of the said Complainant, who was still in full possession and enjoyment of all the rights, benefits and advantages, in virtue of the said Act or Instrument, which by the execution thereof he intended to have, possess and enjoy.

The Respondents prayed, in consequence, that the "MOYENS DE FAUX" of the said Complainant, by him filed, might by the Judgment of the Court be declared irrelevant and altogether insufficient to enable him, the said Complainant, to have and obtain the conclusions of the said "MOYENS DE FAUX" and that the said inscriptions "EN FAUX" might be dismissed with costs.

To these answers a general Replication was filed by the Plaintiff and the Parties went into Evidence upon these several issues.

The following witnesses were called to testify:-

- . JAMES ROSS, Québec City Merchant.
- , JEAN HUOT. A Creditor of the Defendants.
- . COLIN M'CALLUM. A Clerk in the firm of James M'Callum Co.
- . MARTIN SHEPPARD. Student "en Droit" in the Office of Mr.M'Pherson.

- . GEORGE WHITFIELD. Clerk for Mr. Languedoc.
- . JOHN ROBERT ROBINSON. Clerk for the Plaintiff.
- . JOHN MOUNT, Clerk for James Ross Co.
- . RICHARD DALLOW. Tailor.
- . E.B.LINDSAY. Student "en Droit" in the Office of Mr.M'Pherson.
- . BENJAMIN RACEY. Québec City Merchant.
- . ROBERT RICHARDSON. Québec City Merchant.
- . JAMES LAMPRIERE MARETT, Québec City Merchant.
- . CAPTAIN LOUIS BRULOT. Mariner

While the complete testimony of these witnesses is on public record it is beyond the scope of this article to present it all here. In terms of particular interest to the "GASPE OF YESTERDAY" reader, the following items of testimony have been selected:-

RICHARD DALLOW, Age 43, City of Québec, Tailor. "I have known John and George Boyle since 1809...after the said George Boyle was let out of prison, after having been arrested by the Plaintiff, he (George Boyle) told me then that he had been confined at the suit of the Plaintiff but that the Plaintiff would probably lose his cause as he had omitted to put into his "DEMANDE" one of the co-partners - he told me that one, Richard Annett, was a partner of the firm of JOHN BOYLE AND BROTHERS...

...I have never had any dealings with the Messrs Boyles and Copartner but on their separate and private accounts only, and that too only in the articles of my line of business as Merchant Tailor...I know Annett."

JAMES LAMPRIERE MARETT, Age 49, Québec City Merchant.

"I know the Plaintiff and John, George, and Felix Boyle, three of the Defendants in the cause...I know also one, Richard Annett. I have been in the habit of doing business at the Bay of Gaspé since the year 1792. I have known the firm of JOHN BOYLE AND BROTHERS since the year 1814. I have dealt with them to a considerable extent. I know the firm to consist of John Boyle, George Boyle, Felix Boyle and James Boyle and the said Richard Annett; and I think it has consisted of these persons since 1814. Annett is a brother-

-in-law of the Defendants; he has taken an active part in that firm since I have known him to be of the firm. I think I have seen him in Québec (City) once or twice...

(ON CROSS EXAMINATION)

The Boyles and Annett himself informed me that Annett was a partner of that firm more than three or four years past. I have been in habits of friendship and personal intimacy with the Defendants ever since they were children ... The four Boyles live together with their mother on a farm which I believe is their joint property in Gaspé and is cultivated by them jointly. They build boats and schooners for themselves, fish for whale, codfish and salmon, which is their business. The produce of the fishery is generally brought to Québec where they generally provide themselves with their outfits and in purchasing goods which they take down and sell to their neighbours...they are also employed in the wrecking business...they were concerned (in 1814) in taking goods out of the MINERVA wreck, Jackson, Master and from another wreck coming to Mr. Brown the same year. The Boyles were then in Québec and I observed to them that it was a pity that they were not there (at the wreck site) to render assistance to that vessel; when I was informed that Felix Boyle and Richard Annett were there, and were perfectly able to do what was necessary, being partners of the Boyle firm..."

LOUIS BRULOT, Age 31, Point Levy, Mariner.

"... I know one, Richard Annett. I am Master of a schooner belonging to Jas. Ls. Marett. I have, for the last 10 years, performed voyages yearly from here to Gaspé. I often saw all the Defendants at Gaspé and also the said Richard Annett. There were five - John, George, Felix and James Boyle and the said Richard Annett-partners there. Mr. Annett told me he had been in partnership with the Boyles since 1815 and that he was so still. That firm has been there generally known for many years and even previously to 1819 its trade consisted in the Whale, Cod and Salmon fishery.

Mr.Annett, in the name of and for the firm, has every year since 1818 put on my schooner oil for Québec. Annett is a brother-in-law of the Messrs Boyle...whenever I had goods or letters for that firm

I delivered them to either of the parties without distinction. They transact their usual business in the same "CHAUFFAUX" and "SIGNEAU" and they have two vessels which go upon the whale fishery. Mr.Annett is in the vessel called the ANNABELLA, which belongs to the firm and which, I think, was built by it.

I was formerly acquainted with Thomas Boyle, now actually deceased. I cannot recollect in what year he died. [Ref.-"THE DAVIS FAMILY OF GASPE", SPEC. 16-10-80 (Part I) "ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF THOMAS BOYLE" by William Fleming.]

There is no Priest in the District of Gaspé where the Defendants live nor was there an Enhlish Minister at that place..."

The case was finally argued on 9th April, 1822 and on 17th April the COURT OF KING'S BENCH pronounced the following Judgment -

LA COUR, APRÈS MURE DÉLIBÉRATION SUR LA DEMANDE EN FAUX INCIDENTE EN CETTE CAUSE, LA REJETTE AVEC DÉPENS.

LA COUR, FAISANT DROIT SUR LES ISSUES LEVÉS ET PARFAITS PAR LES PLAIDOYERES DES PARTIES, SUR LA DEMANDE PRINCIPALE, DÉBOUTE LADITE DEMANDE PRINCIPALE, QUANT À PRESENT, AVEC DÉPENS.

LA COUR, SUR LA MOTION DE MTRE CHRISTIE, PROCUREUR DES DEFENDEURS, LUI ACCORDE DISTRACTION DE FRAIS.

The Judgment was appealed by the Plaintiff but it was upheld in the Appeal Court.

In 1823, as a result of charges made by the Plaintiff in the above case of ARNOLD versus BOYLE AND OTHERS, the Notary Public, L.T.

MacPherson sued George Arnold for Defamation of Character by malicious declaration. Again, the proceedings of this interesting case are on public record and provide an interesting glimpse of two of Québec's outstanding lawyers of the time in action - Robert Christie and Andrew Stuart.

MacPherson won the case and was awarded symbolic damages of ± 5.

COPY OF THE NOTARIAL ACT

OF

L.T. MacPHERSON

17 NOV.1819

EVIDENCE BEFORE THE COURT OF KING'S BENCH OF QUEBEC, 1822 TERM, IN THE CASE OF GEORGE ARNOLD, PLAINTIFF, VERSUS, JOHN BOYLE AND OTHERS, THE DEFENDANTS.

[This Act was missing from the records of L.T.MacPherson and was made available to GASPE OF YESTERDAY by the kindness of staff of the ARCHIVES of Québec]

Ann Sproude much sit, James that sail Maker & Robert Hickordson Victually and William Half Months America all of the bit of Queles of the seconds parts: which Said John Boylos Georges Boyle ands Helip Boyle and Promuse formett for hereby acknowledge Visoufels themselves to be wells, justly and truly indebted with Richards annets the said persons and find of the second Jestilo harts for goods, wares, and merchundiges by theny heritofore solds and delivered in there the said John Goyle & Brother the following owns of money doings surency that is to say) ___ E. G. 54. 5 the recept when that the said George Arnolds in the Amn of three hundreds and twenty six the do henly hounds fifteen shillings and two fewer \$ 326.15.2 acknowledge In the same of our hour breek and forty It to the said Turnet Rope in the succes of the houndred and twenty town frames the Shillings and on pury half henry 127. 5 1/2 furt the long of thicked blood in the £ 326-15.2 Goin of our hounded and dig 12/10

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and assign jointly and severally Solidaninest under the different reumaintions required by law to pay unto the said respective person and from or thin spective heirs or assigns in 9=1 manner following that is to say, Ou just half of the amount thereof with legal J. H. Interest therrong on the first lay of Noumber in the year one thousand eight hundreds and twenty and the I the half thereof with legal interest as aforesaid on the like day of Noveender_ in the year one thousand eight hundreds duch the to one for all delay. and for securing the payment of the said respect sums of money with the Interest which make grow due and accrus theren as a fousaids The said John Boyle George Boyle & Felig Boyle Tourd Freshard Stronetto do hereby build Oblige, anotigogo ando hypothecutes goverally ale thin property present wird fature, moreables and unmoveable and for better securing the fragment of the said several and respective Jums of honey at the time our in the manner aforesaid with the Interests which may grow due and accrus thereon: to these presents came intervened and was also present Mr James Mc Callum Source of the City of Lucker Therehant, who after heeving had and takens communication of the punises forgoing did voluntarily become the surety of thing the said John Boyles George Boyles Thely Goyles James Proyle and Richard Aunt (James Boyle) and did

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420 x Thus done and passedo the daid lit of Dun 1 4 - Efficer of L. J. Mora Pherson one of us the said notaines on the day and year first about Written - In Faith and Festimony where the said several parties hereto as aforesaid have to these presents first dry rad, set and subscribed thin re--protie name and signatures in the. presence of us the said Notains also herent subscribinge Tix marginal notes approved and me handand. words Thick Out are hull. Tarner Mifallion John Boyle Affrond