

GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY

MONT LOUIS SEIGNIORY

Known to and used by Basque, Breton and Norman fishermen as a seasonal fishing station during the 16th and 17th centuries, Mont Louis became a Seigniory c.1700 by Royal grant to merchants of Paris.

KEN ANNETT

MONT LOUIS SEIGNIORYFOREWORD

Mont Louis lies on the rugged North coast of Gaspesia - roughly mid-way from the western limit of Gaspé County at Cap Chat to Rivière au Renard. The Seigniory, granted circa 1702 to Nicolas Bourlet, a merchant and financier of Paris, had a frontage on the St. Lawrence of three leagues, a depth of three leagues and an area of some 68,000 arpents. On the East it was bounded by Anse Pleureuse and to the West by the Rivière a Pierre. Today's motorist along the coastal highway can turn inland near Mont Louis to reach the Gaspesian mining town of Murdochville.

The noted author, Blowden Davies, includes this account of Mont Louis in her 1949 book, "GASPÉ - LAND OF HISTORY AND ROMANCE":

"...the next village we reach (after Mont St. Pierre) is Mont Louis, one of the oldest villages on the North Shore. Wolfe (General James) sent ships and men from Gaspé to sack it in the summer of 1758 for it was even then one of the most important fishing stations in the peninsula.

Although all the fisher folk were dispersed, some carried off as prisoners, some to hiding places in the woods, yet eventually Mont Louis came to life again and went back to its work of catching and curing cod.

The village is impressively situated at the foot of a green hill that makes a velvet setting for its little white houses. The church stands right in the middle of the town with something of an old monastic air for it gathered around it convent and presbytery, all about the village square.

There is a long quay here and ships call for fish from the ports of France and Italy and Spain...

The coast is everywhere along here precipitous, rising behind the narrow beach into mountain two or three thousand feet high..."

Though the above may lean more to the romantic than the historical, it does convey the impression of a keen observer of the Gaspé scene some forty years ago.

2.

EARLY
VISITORS

Fishermen from the ports of western Europe - Basques, Bretons, Normans and others had found their way across the Atlantic to the Gulf of St. Lawrence and its rich fisheries prior to the well-documented arrival of Jacques Cartier at Gaspé in 1534. They were the first Europeans to use the coves that indent the rugged North shore of Gaspesia to cure the cod that they took back home with them before the cruel Canadian winter set in. Such early visitors to Mont Louis are hidden from us by the mists of time but we can imagine their craft at anchor in its crescent shaped bay and their activity on its forest backed beach.

More is known of Mont Louis in the time of Sieur Denis Riverin whose role in the Gaspesian fishery has been referred to in previous articles of this GASPÉ OF YESTER-DAY series. Riverin had come to New France as Secretary of the Intendant or Business Manager of the Colony in 1675 and had ambitions of making his fortune through subsidiary commercial activities. By 1685 he had made money through the fur trade and next turned his interest to the development of the Gulf fishery. Over the next twenty years he acquired fishing stations on the shores of the Bay Chaleur and the Gulf of St. Lawrence, brought out fishermen and whalers from France, secured both government and private funds to expand his fishing operations and had an active export-import business with France. At Mont Louis a major fishing station was established and could claim a substantial population of some one hundred persons by 1700.

SEIGNIORY
GRANTED

Among the French backers of Denis Riverin was the Paris merchant and financier, Nicolas Bourlet. He obtained a grant of Mont Louis in fief and seigniorship - with frontage of three leagues on the St. Lawrence, depth of three leagues and the right of high, medium and low justice. His partner

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and co-owner of the seigniory was another Parisian, Etienne Magneux. Though Denis Riverin obtained the financial backing of these French merchants and invested heavily in Mont Louis both in terms of personal effort and the development of a fishing station his high hopes did not succeed. The cost of maintaining the post was too high and he became involved in a legal wrangle with the representative of the Parisian financiers who had been sent to Mont Louis to see to their interests. A discouraged Riverin turned away from the Mont Louis project and eventually returned to France where he died in 1717

ACT OF
SALE -
1719

In the month of May, 1719 the Mont Louis Seigniory was featured in an ACT OF SALE AND ABANDONMENT when it was sold to Pierre Haymard "of the habitation of Mont Louis of which he has been in possession for several years". The vendors were François Magneux, Parliamentary Lawyer and Inspector General of Crown Lands, his sister, Marguerite, a spinster of major age and Jacques Sondé.

François Magneux and his sister were heirs of their mother who, at the time of her death, was the Widow of Etienne Magneux, partner of the late Nicolas Bourlet. Jacques Sondé of Paris was Curator to the vacant estate of Nicolas Bourlet.

The ACT OF SALE above was echoed in New France in 1721 by an ORDONNANCE issued by the Intendant, Michel Bégon, to all those holding location tickets in the Mont Louis Seigniory, belonging to Pierre Haymard, to come forward within a month to settle their lands - else Sieur Haymard would cancel their location tickets and grant the land to those to whom it seemed good to him.

LOUIS
GOSSELIN

In July, 1723 Louis Gosselin, a Québec merchant, received by an ACT OF DONATION that half of the Mont Louis Seigniory held by Pierre Haymard in community of property with his wife, Louise Guillot. Louis Gosselin was the son of Louise Guillot Haymard by a previous marriage. (Haymard being her third respective husband)

4.

LOUIS
GOSSELIN

ctd.

In 1725 Louis Gosselin acting in his own behalf as well as of the behalf of his mother, the Widow Louise Guillot Haymard, swore the required and traditional "ACT DE FOI ET HOMMAGE" for the Mont Louis Seigniorship. From the text of this ACT we learn that the late Pierre Haymard was "Juge prévôt" of Notre Dame des Anges.

Records show that Mont Louis had no more than five or six families in 1725.

JOSEPH
CADET

There entered subsequently the Mont Louis scene one of pals of the infamous Intendant Bigot, Joseph Cadet. Generally referred to as the "King's butcher", Cadet was the manager of the King's slaughterhouse and, in addition, carried on flour milling and trade in wine, spirits and other food supplies. To accomplish this he fitted out ships and had an import-export business with France. Like other members of the Bigot clique he soon made a fortune.

In April, 1753 Joseph Cadet bought at Auction Sale the the Fief and Seigniorship of Mont Louis from the Prévôt of Québec. This sale and the award to Cadet followed a legal action involving descendants of the late Pierre Haymard who claimed rights to Mont Louis through Simon Haymard, brother of the late Pierre.

A year later, in April, 1754, Joseph Cadet, "Bourgeois of Québec" swore FOI ET HOMMAGE before the Governor of New France for the Mont Louis Fief and Seigniorship.

To manage Mont Louis Cadet entered into association with Michel Mahiet who installed his family on the Seigniorship and who proceeded to restore it as a major fishing station. It was this prosperous settlement under Mahiet that the British force of General Wolfe from Gaspé Bay would sack in 1758 after the Fall of Louisbourg.

5.

THE GASPEE
EXPEDITION
AT MONT LOUIS.

As it is almost ten years ago that SPEC published "THE GASPEE EXPEDITION AND OTHER MATTERS -1758" in the GASPE OF YESTERDAY series, together with the related correspondence of Doris and David McDougall, it seems relevant to recall that part of the record about the raid on Mont Louis.

From the JOURNAL of Captain Bell, A.D.C. to General James Wolfe for the 14th of September we read - "...Major Dalling was detached to Mont Lewis, about 130 miles up the River (St.Lawrence)"

and the JOURNAL entry for September 23rd states -

"...Major Dalling came back to Gaspee with his party from Mt.Louis, where they arrived the 19th. They took about 35 People, women and children included. The Seigniory belonged to a Mr.Maillette (who was taken), who gave the King (of France) £ 3000 for it. Only 3 shaloupes (fishing craft) were there - all his fish had been sent to Quebeck except 2000 Quantil. There was but little in the Magazine. Maillett offered £ 3500 ransome for the place: while the Major was there a Sloop appeared off the place, he made use of the usual signal to call her in. She stood in and was taken. She had on board wine and provisions for the settlement, having delivered which, she was to gett Intelligence of our Squadron (the Royal Navy Squadron of some fourteen ships under Sir Charles Hardy that sailed from Louisbourg on August 29th and entered Gaspé Bay September 4th.,1758)

There was on board a good, jolie fille enough, Mlle Le Bruys, going to Gd.Riviere and a Reverend Père going to Miramichi - he (Major Dalling) found by them that Mons. Chaufort (Du Chaffault) was getting under way from the Kamaruska's the 17th Sept. with the "DRAGON", "BELLEQUEUX" and 4 other 64 Gun ships

6.

with two frigates and 3 or 4 Merchantmen, was to go thro' the streights (sic) of Bell Isle and so to Brest.

The march to Mt.Louis was extremely bad, all the way along the sea shore upon sharp stones and rock, they were obliged to wait for the Tides going out at 2 places and only sutt (sic) into the wood a league the whole march - they returned to Gaspee in the Sloop and Shaloupes...."

The Royal Navy Squadron that conveyed General James Wolfe and his force to Gaspé Bay was part of the Fleet under the Command of Admiral E. Boscawen, R.N. The following EXTRACT from the Official Despatch of Admiral Boscawen gave an account of the damage done in the Gulph of St.Lawrence at "Mount Lewis" -

Sept.23, 1758. - Major Dalling, with a Detachment under his command, marched to Mount Lewis, and on his march surprised 6 people curing fish at Les Grand Etangs and took three of them, destroyed their fish and rendered their Shallops useless, but the others got into the woods.

After 5 days march to Mount Lewis he burnt and destroyed at

that place:	Houses.....	9
	Storehouses.....	7
	Quintals of Fish.....	6000
	With Stables, Outhouses and a Cellar with Molasses.	
	Schooner.....	1
	Shallops.....	2
	Boats.....	2
	With Fish Stages	

Found there- 4 Barrels of Powder
4 Barrels of Musquet Balls
2 Cows and a calf.

And brought from thence -

Cannon.....	4
Swivels.....	2
Drums.....	2

7.

Fuses.....16
 Colours..... 1 pair

He took also a Sloop with Provisions on board for 7 men for a month and some of Monsieur Mackette's (sic) Effects, and took Monsieur Mackette, his wife, with 22 men, 4 women and 14 children, Prisoners.

It is of interest to note that Michel Mahiet, who was taken prisoner together with his family by Major Dalling at Mont Louis, was released in his native France and found his way back to Canada after the Fall of New France to live out the rest of his life in a Québec under British rule.

JACQUES
CURCHARD

In the years following the Fall of New France a number of the Seigniories were acquired by new owners. Such new ownership has been reflected in previous articles of the GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY series on Gaspesian seigniories. In the case of Mont Louis a London merchant, Robert Hunter, obtained the Seigniorie prior to 1786 for in that year he resold it to James / Jacques Curchard, a Merchant of Québec City. The Deed of Sale was confirmed by a Certificate signed by the Governor-General, Lord Dorchester in May, 1789. However, some problem, possibly financial, arose, leading to legal action by Robert Hunter against James Curchard. Mont Louis was put up for Sheriff's Sale and was adjudicated by James Shepherd, Sheriff of Québec to James Crawford, acting for and in the name of Robert Hunter of London.

In the closing decade of the 18th century and indeed through the early decades of the 19th century Mont Louis did not recover and regain the population and prosperity it had during the final years of the French regime. Only a very few families lived there year around though it did experience seasonal fishing activity.

8.

SALE OF LAND
JOHN STEWART
TO
MATTHEW BELL

DEED # 869 OF ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL, N.P.

On this day the twentieth of July in the Year of Our Lord one thousand eight hundred and twenty four - Before the undersigned Notaries Public duly admitted and sworn for the Province of Lower Canada, dwelling in the City of Quebec in the said Province, Personally came and appeared John Stewart, Esquire, of the City of Quebec, Merchant, of the one part, and the Honourable Matthew Bell of the same City of Quebec, Merchant, of the other part, which said Parties in the presence of the said Notaries have declared, admitted and covented to and with each other in manner and form following, that is to say -

The said John Stewart on his part acting for and on behalf of Robert Hunter, Esquire of the City of London. the Executor to the last Will and Testament of the late Robert Hunter in his life time of the City of London, Merchant, and for and on behalf of the legal representatives of the said Robert Hunter, deceased, hath granted, bargained, sold, aliened and confirmed by these presents, the said John Stewart, acting as aforesaid, doth grant, bargain, sell, alien and conform unto the said Matthew Bell and to his heirs and assigns all that Post and Seigniory of Mount Lewis situated down the River Saint Lawrence on the South Shore in the Province of Lower Canada being about three leagues in Front upon the said River upon three leagues in depth, bounded on the North East side by L'Anse Plureuse and on the South West by the River a Pierre, with all its appurtenances and also all the Dependencies, Tenenents, Houses, Out Houses, Edifices and Buildings, stages, Wharves, thereon erected, standing and being and all and every Waters, Watercourses, Trees, Woods, Commons, Common of Pasture, Waste Grounds, Rights, Privileges, Advantages, Improvements and appurtenances whatsoever to the Post or Seigniory of Mount Lewis belonging or in any wise appertaining -

9.

and which said Post or Seigniory and Premises belonged to the late Robert Hunter as having acquired and purchased the same from the Sheriff of this District of Quebec at a date of which the said John Stewart is not acquainted -

To have and to hold the said Post or Seigniory of Mount Louis aforesaid with the appurtenances and all the Dependencies, Tenements, Houses, Out Houses, Edifices and Buildings, Stages, Flakes and Wharves, Hereditaments and Premises whatsoever now granted, bargained, sold, aliened and made over or meant or intended to be with their and every of their appurtenances unto the said Matthew Bell, his heirs and assigns to the only proper use and behoof of the said Matthew Bell, his heirs and assigns forever.

The present Sale is thus made for and in consideration of the sum of Fifty Pounds Sterling, Money of Great Britain. And also for and on condition of the said Matthew Bell paying all such quints or rents as may be due to His Majesty, as well upon the instant Sale as on all former Sales and Assignments which may be found hereafter to remain in default and also upon condition of the said Matthew Bell and his heirs and assigns taking all risks as to the Title Deeds and Validity of the Title of the said Robert Hunter and the legal representatives of the said late Robert Hunter and without any Guarantee, Restitution or Recourse whatsoever of any kind - the said Matthew Bell accepting of the present assignment and sale at his risk, peril and fortune.

The present sale and assignment is made subject to the ratification and confirmation of the said Robert Hunter and others, the legal representatives of the said Robert Hunter, deceased, Twelve Months from the day of the date hereof and in default of such ratification and confirmation these presents to be null and void in the same manner to all intents and purposes as if the same had not been signed and executed.

Which said sum of Fifty Pounds the said Matthew Bell did and

10.

by these presents doth oblige himself to pay and satisfy to the said Robert Hunter or to such person as may be legally empowered to receive the same on demand immediately after delivery of the said ratification and confirmation. The expenses of which said ratification and confirmation and of such other Deeds, Titles and Writings as the said Matthew Bell and his heirs may require to be had at the proper costs and charges of the said Matthew Bell, his heirs and assigns -

And for the due execution hereof the said parties do hereby make election of their Domiciles at their respective places of abode in this City of Quebec.

THUS DONE AND PASSED at Quebec aforesaid the day, month and year first above written. In Witness whereof the said Parties have hereunto set their hands, these presents being first duly read according to Law.

SIGNATURES -

J. Stewart

M. Bell

Arch. Campbell, N.P.

C. Huot, N.P.

Appeared John Stewart, Esquire, who in his capacity of vendor and assigner in the foregoing written Instrument or Deed of Sale, hath acknowledged, declared and confessed, as by these presents he doth acknowledge, declare and confess to have and received of and from Matthew Bell, Esquire, the vendee and purchaser therein the sum of Fifty Pounds Sterling, Money of Great Britain, being the amount of the consideration and purchase money thereby agreed to be paid, and of and from which he doth by virtue hereof acquit and exonerate the said Matthew Bell, his heirs and assigns forever, hereby giving and granting such full and ample receipt and discharge as can or may in Law be desired.

In Witness whereof the said John Stewart hath set hereunto his signature together with us, Notaries. Done and passed at the City of Quebec in the Year of Our Lord one thousand eight hundred and twenty five, this 6th day of September.

SIGNATURES:

C. Huot, N.P.

J. Stewart

Arch. Campbell, N.P.

11.

MATTHEW BELL
AS SEIGNIOR

The record shows that on May 15th.,1830 the Hon. Matthew Bell, Member of the Legislative Council of Quebec swore FAITH AND HOMMAGE as the Seignior of the Fief and Seigniory of Mont Louis.

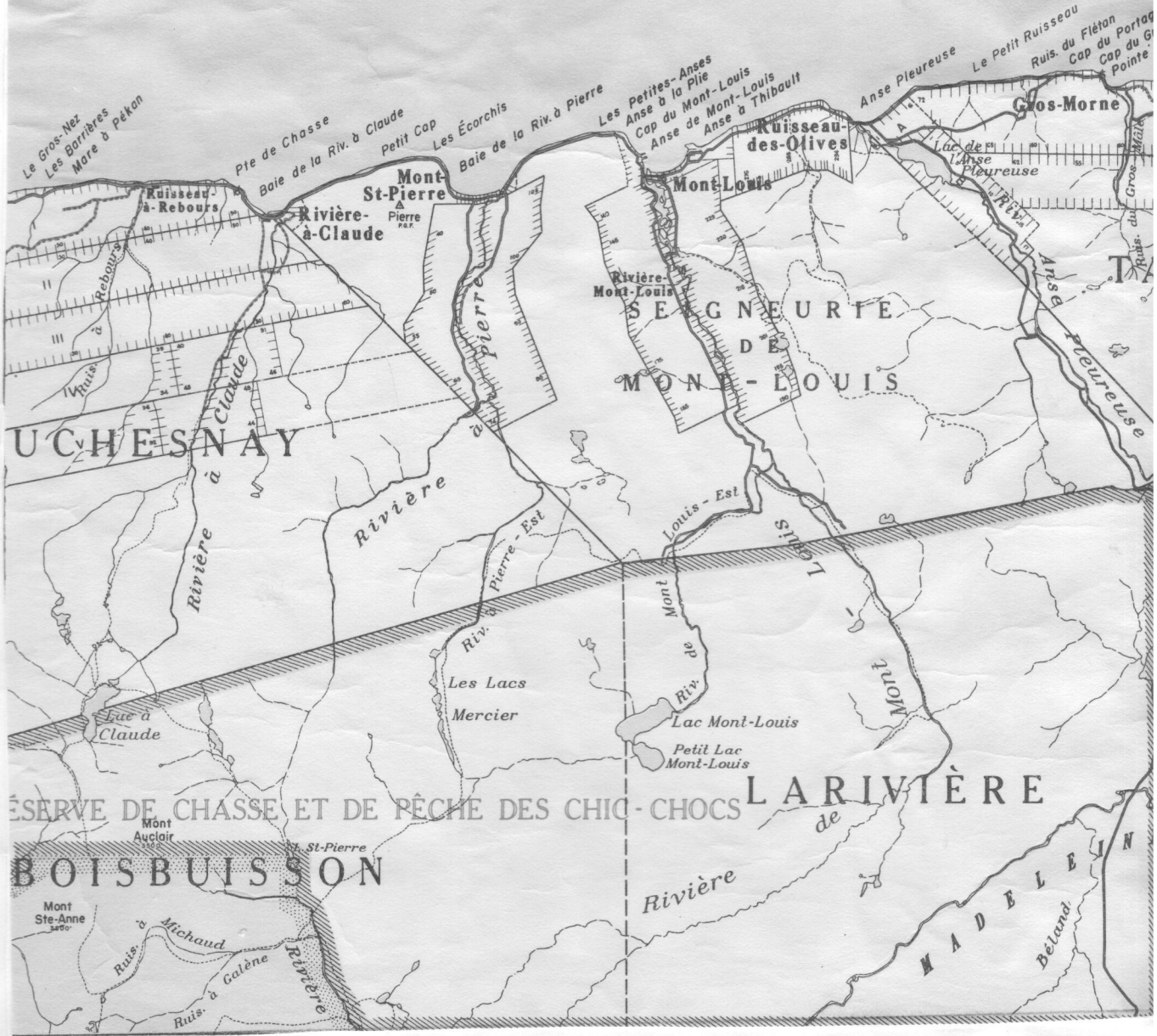
A decade later, in June 1839, he was given grant and release in the old English tradition of FREE AND COMMON SOCCAGE for Mont Louis in the Inferior District of Gaspé.

MONT LOUIS
AND THE COD
FISHERY

Following the British Conquest of New France in 1760 the centuries old Gaspesian cod fishery was continued under new management - mainly by enterprising merchant-traders from the Channel Islands of Jersey and Guernsey. As the 19th century dawned the Bay Chaleur fishery was dominated by the Jersey firm of CHARLES ROBIN COMPANY while on the Forillon at the entrance to Gaspé Bay the men of Guernsey - the Simons, Bichards, Hamons and others had settled and established fishing "rooms" and trading firms.

In the early decades of the 19th century a need was felt to expand the fishery to new posts on the North Coast of Gaspesia as new names - Le Boutillier, Fruing, Luce and others - competed with the older, established firms. Both the company founded by John Le Boutillier and that founded by William Fruing established a fishery based at Mont Louis. Slowly a permanent settlement of fishermen,who came at first on a seasonal basis,began.

GULF OF ST. LAWRENCE



SEIGNIORY OF MONT LOUIS
DISTRICT OF GASPÉ



MONT LOUIS

THE "ANSE" OR COVE OF MONT LOUIS HAS CHANGED LITTLE SINCE IT FIRST SERVED AS A 15th CENTURY FISHING STATION. HUMAN SETTLEMENT HAS GROWN, HOWEVER.