

GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY

GASPÉ CHURCH RECORDS

Some references from historical records
of the Church of England in the District
of Gaspé, Diocese of Quebec.

KEN ANNETT

GASPE CHURCH RECORDSINTRODUCTION

More than forty years have gone by since the official report of the Archivist of Quebec for 1946-1947 published the HISTORICAL RECORDS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN THE DIOCESE OF QUEBEC as organized by the late Canon A.R. Kelley. At the time of that publication the records were to be found in the Provincial Archives at Quebec City. Since then they have been moved to the Library of Bishop's University in Lennoxville. In introductory remarks, "On the value of these records", Canon Kelley wrote:

"The religious history of a Community bears an intimate relation to the social life of its people and for this reason the records of the history of the diocese of Quebec...are of much value. They bring to mind the every day life of people living on the frontiers of civilization and, in particular, their efforts to erect a House of God in the midst of their primitive settlements. The first church which they built was usually a plain, wooden structure, but gradually a spire or tower was added and in it was placed a bell. Then was experienced the thrill of hearing for the first time the clear tones of the church bell ringing across the fields. A long time usually elapsed before the rising village could enjoy the privilege of having a resident clergyman. The early missionaries had to serve a number of settlements scattered throughout the townships which they served. When the day arrived that the settlement was large enough to have a priest of its own, a petition was addressed to the bishop, praying that this boon might be granted, was circulated amongst the inhabitants, and, when signed, was sent to Quebec, but months and even years had to pass before their prayer could be granted. The finding of missionaries and the procuring of money to support them presented grave problems to those in charge of the diocese of Quebec."

Canon Kelley continued on the value of these records:

" The first settlers were generally unaccustomed to the duty of supporting ministers of religion. They also were unable to do so because they often consisted of luckless families who had been forced to leave their native land for economic and other reasons. ...The first to arrive were the civic officials and their followers who came to Quebec, Three Rivers, Sorel and Montreal after peace had been declared in the year 1763. Shortly afterwards, a number of families from the Channel Islands crossed the Atlantic to engage in fishing on the Gaspé Coast. Then came the Loyalists from New England and other states. The number of loyalists who entered British North America after the year 1783 is given as being 45,000...In addition, there were several thousand soldiers, disbanded after the war of 1812 who settled in Upper and Lower Canada.

It is the trials and tribulations of these exiles from their native land, some political, some economic, some religious exiles that confront the reader of the early records of the Diocese of Quebec.

SECTION II - SERIES B PARISHES OF THE DIOCESE OF QUEBEC.

VOLUME III

CAPE COVE, Percé Township, Gaspé Co., Qué. St. James Church 1845.
Consecrated 1853. Rev. Septimus Jones 1854. Rev. W.G.
Lyster 1863-1902 (Letters and Testimonials 1839-61)

VOLUME VI

GASPÉ, in Gaspé Bay South Township, Gaspé Co. Qué. St. Paul's Church, Gaspé Basin, before 1823. Replaced and consecrated 1853, 1884, 1909 and 1944.
St. James' Church, Gaspé South consecrated (? 1813 ?) Replaced and consecrated 1893.
Rev John Suddard 1819. Served by Rev. R. Knagg, Percé, 1821.
Rev. E. Cusack 1837. Rev. C. J. Morris 1841. Rev. Wm Arnold 1829-37, 1841-57. Rev. F. de la Mare 1850-1864, Rev. F. A. Smith 1864. (125 letters 1806-1867. Parish Reports 1825, 1827, 1833.)

VOLUME XIMAGDALENE
ISLES

in the Gulf of St.Lawrence, including Grosse Isle and Entry Island. Holy Trinity Church, Grosse Isle, 1853. Consecrated 1884. St.Luke's Church, Grindstone Isle, consecrated 1879. Visited by Bishop 1850. Rev.F.Boyle 1851-66. Rev.J.Walters, 1866. (Letters 1850-62) Report 1867.

MALBAY

Malbaie Township, Gaspé Co., Qué., including Sandy Beach, Peninsula, Douglastown. St.Peter's Church 1823-1843. Burnt 1853, replaced, consecrated 1856. St.John's Church, Sandy Beach 1843 consecrated 1856. St.Matthew's Church, Peninsula, consecrated 1884. Rev.F.A.Smith 1850-54. Rev.J.de Mouilpied 1860. (See also under Magdalene Islands.)(Letters and Testimonials 1834-62.) Report 1835,1851.

METIS

Matane Co., Qué. St.George's Church, Little Metis, consecrated 1907. Rev.W.B.Robinson sent 1840. (Letters 1826-41.)

VOL.XIIINEW CARLISLE
AND
PASPEBIAC

Cox Township, Bonaventure Co., Qué. including Hopetown and Port Daniel. St.Peter's Church, Paspebiac 1825-1827, consecrated 1847. St.Andrew's Church, New Carlisle 1826, consecrated 1856. Rev.W.Arnold 1826. Rev.L.Doolittle 1828-32. Rev. G.Milne 1841-1873. Parish Report 1851, 1864066.)

PERCÉ

Gaspé Co., Qué. including Cape Cove, Cape D'Espoir, L'Anse a Beau-fils. Church at Percé 1823-28. St.Paul's Church consecrated 1862. Rev.R.Knagg 1821. Rev.R.Short 1839-54. Rev.W.G.Lyster 1863-1902. St.James Church, Cape Cove 1845, consecrated 1853. (Letters. Clergy Reserves. Papers. Families 1821-62. Parish Report 1855.)

PORTDANIEL

Bonaventure Co., Qué. St.James' Church 1859-1860. Consecrated 1869. Rev.W.G.Lyster 1859. Letters 1838-1859. Reports 1864-1867.

VOLUME XXIII

SHIGAWAKE Hope Township, Bonaventure Co., Qué. St.Paul's Church 1865-66, consecrated 1869. Served by Rev.W.G.Lyster of Hopetown, 1859. Rev.R.J.Harvey 1877.
St.James' Church, Hopetown, consecrated 1893. Rev.P. Tocque 1863. Rev.J.B.Debbage 1869. Rev.H.C.Stuart 1873.
(Letters 1862-1867)

NOTE ON "SERIES B" ABOVE.

Although Series B's twenty-five volumes contain a unique collection of parish records the Gaspesian reader will recognize that not all of the Anglican Churches of Gaspesia are reflected there. "GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY" has referred to some of the early Gaspesian churches and missionaries in various articles such as ST.PETER'S ANGLICAN CHURCH - MALBAY by the Rev.Hugh I.Apps. A fine record of ST. ANDREW'S ANGLICAN CHURCH, NEW CARLISLE, was compiled by Mrs. Eleanor Blois Hall in 1984. It is possible that other parish histories have been written. Should any reader know of such records GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY will appreciate information on them.

APPOINTMENTS TO PARISHES IN DISTRICT OF GASPÉ - FROM APPENDIX III.

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>APPOINTMENT</u>
1819	REV.JOHN SUDDARD	DISTRICT OF GASPÉ.
1821	REV.RICHARD KNAGG	PERCÉ AND PARTS ADJACENT.
1826	DEACON GEORGE SALMON	NEW CARLISLE AND PASPEBIAC.
1826	REV.WILLIAM ARNOLD	NEW CARLISLE AND PASPEBIAC.
1828	REV.LUCIUS DOOLITTLE	BAIE DES CHALEURS.
1829	REV.WILLIAM ARNOLD	BAY OF GASPÉ AND PERCÉ
1833	REV.ANDREW BALFOUR	BAIE DES CHALEURS
1837	REV.EDWARD CUSACK	GASPÉ BAY, PERCÉ, AND PARTS ADJOINING.
1839	REV.ROBERT SHORT	PERCÉ AND PARTS ADJOINING.
1840	REV.CHARLES MORRIS	GASPÉ BAY.
1841	REV.GEORGE MILNE	BAY OF CHALEURS
1843	REV.WILLIAM ARNOLD	GASPÉ BAY
1850	REV. FRANCIS DE LA MARE	GASPÉ BASIN.
1851	REV. FRED.A.SMITH	MALBAY
1851	REV.FELIX BOYLE	MAGDALEN ISLANDS

SOME REFERENCES TO EARLY CHURCHES IN GASPEZIA

- A) The pioneer Bishop of Nova Scotia, Charles Inglis, was in Gaspé in June, 1789 while en route to Quebec on the Royal Navy Frigate DIDO - Commander Charles Sandys, R.N. The following text from his DIARY is of interest.

MONDAY, JUNE 1, 1789 - bore away for the port of Gaspee, A.M. where we arrived in the evening.

TUESDAY, JUNE 2, 1789 - Went with Cap't Sandys to see Mr. O'Hara the principal magistrate of this district, (1) which is a kind of separate Government in the Province of Quebec and of which Cap't Cox (sic) (2) who resides at Carlisle in the Bay of Chaleur, is Lieut-Gov. Mr. O'Hara is a plain, sensible man and much better informed than might be expected from a person who has resided in this desolate country for 24 years. He was the first British subject that settled in Gaspee. Fishing is the only business carried on here. Agriculture is almost wholly neglected, though the soil in level spots appears to be fertile. The sea abounds with a great variety of fish, particularly cod and salmon. The former chiefly at Gaspee, the latter at Chaleur though both are caught in great abundance at each place. There is no place of worship at Gaspee. The inhabitants are fishermen. The number of Souls there and at Pierce (sic) Island about 400 or 500 and in a state of heathenism. Few members of the Church of England among them; the greatest number consisting of Papists and Protestant Dissenters. The inhabitants of Chaleur are more numerous. Besides the English fishermen there is a settlement of Acadians who have a Priest, his name is Bourgh (3) who is allowed 100 pounds a year by the Government. There is also a settlement of Indians who also have a Priest. Mr. O'Hara dined with us on board the DIDO and in the evening went on shore to Douglas Town, opposite to the DIDO.

- (1) Felix O'Hara was a native of Ireland who came to New Jersey and in 1764 settled at Gaspé. In 1765 he and two other merchants formed an association. Dorchester granted them 1300 acres of land part of which lay in the heart of the village of Gaspé. In 1779 Haldimand made O'Hara Judge of the Court of Common Pleas for Gaspé and the Bay of Chaleur. In 1786 he purchased the Seigneury of Grand Pabos from Haldimand. He died at Gaspé in 1805.
- (2) Nicholas Cox was Lieutenant-Governor of Gaspé which was made a separate government in the year 1788.
- (3) Joseph Mathurin Bourg was born at Riviere aux Canards, Acadia. He studied in France, was ordained in 1773, and became Curé of Carleton in the Bay of Chaleur. His charge included all the maritime missions and part of Gaspé until 1786. He was Curé of Bonaventure 1786-1789 and died at St-Laurent near Montreal in 1797. (See "Vie de l'Abbé Bourg" by Abbé A. Melançon, Rimouski, 1921.)

B) Though the visit of Bishop Inglis to Quebec was followed by the appointment of Jacob Mountain as the first Anglican Bishop of the Diocese of Quebec in 1793 it would be twenty-six years more before Gaspesia would have its first resident Protestant minister. Midway through that long waiting period Henry B. Johnston of Douglstown and Point St. Peter wrote to the Bishop at Quebec about the situation:

"...I will now crave your Lordship's attention to the degraded state of the protestants as such. As in other quarters of the Globe they are the best supporters of Commerce and good faith. They are here also the very life and support of the fisheries. In this north-eastern Division of the District and where three-quarters of the commerce centers, there are fifty-six protestant families producing a population of three hundred and thirty-six souls, on an average of six to a family. ALL OF WHOM (A FEW PARENTS EXCEPTED) HAVE NEVER LOOKED A REGULAR PROTESTANT CLERGYMAN IN THE FACE...."

Reference by Henry Johnston to "itinerant preachers" in Gaspesia and shadowy references from other sources led GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY to search out and record the presence in Gaspesia of :

THE REV. JOHN MITCHELL	. 1765-1841
THE REV. JOHN YOUNG.	1759-1825
THE REV. EDWARD PIDGEON	1778-1843
THE REV. MATTHEW DRIPPS	1768-1828

C) Six years after the letter of Henry Johnston above, the Guernsey settlers on the Forillon, of the Wesleyan Methodist faith, built the Chapel at St. George's Cove. An account of this early Gaspé Bay Church is to be found in Chapter 3 of Miss Dorothy Phillips interesting book, ST. MATTHEW'S CHURCH, PENINSULA. Archdeacon George Jehoshaphat Mountain visited and preached in this Chapel on his visit to Gaspé in 1826. (Ref.- GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY. VOLUME I. GASPÉ VISITS OF

ARCHDEACON G. J. MOUNTAIN.)

- D) The first resident Anglican clergyman, the Rev. John Suddard, was appointed to the District of Gaspé Mission in 1819 and the first St. Paul's Church of Gaspé Basin was built, likely on the site of the present St. Paul's Church, in 1819-20. In the summer of 1821 Dr. Antoine Von Iffland of Quebec was in Gaspé to promote vaccination and left this report on that first Church:

"...At the beginning of June when it was very warm and the air very dry some persons set fire imprudently in various woodlots so as to clear land and the most terrible consequences followed. Fire consumed the woods for a league and a half and burned down five houses; indeed the fire was so violent that it menaced the woods of all the land bordering Gaspé BAY. THE PROTESTANT CHURCH WAS BURNED TO THE GROUND FOUR HOURS AFTER THE CONGREGATION HAD MET IN IT FOR SERVICE..."

Letters of the Rev. John Suddard in Diocesan Archives state that a temporary church was built in the Fall of 1821 and that a parsonage was building in 1822.

In 1833 there was a proposition for a new church at Gaspé Basin

- E) At New Carlisle, Mrs. Eleanor Blois Hall in her history of St. Andrew's Anglican Church, recalls tradition that a log cabin on the beach-bordered Common served both as school and first Anglican Church. By 1824 the frame of the New Carlisle church was up on the site of the present church building. The church was completed in 1826 and named St. Andrew's. It served until 1894 when it was replaced by the existing St. Andrew's.
- F) St. Peter's Church, Malbay dates from 1823 but when Archdeacon G. J. Mountain visited the community in 1826 he wrote:
- "...our little Church was not sufficiently finished to hold service in it...we had service, therefore, at the house of a fisherman who is one of the Church Wardens and whose mother told me that she settled there 53 years ago (i.e. 1773) before the Revolutionary War..."
- Eleven years later, at the time of another visit of Bishop

Mountain the outside of the Malbay Church remained unpainted and weathered.

- G) The first Anglican Church at Percé dates from the early 1820's and was located in the center of Cape Canon beside the small enclosure which served as a cemetery. It was named Christ's Church and its faithful called themselves the "Protestant Episcopal inhabitants of Percé" In 1860 a decision was taken to rebuild on a new site at the corner of the Irishtown and Grand-Côte roads. The new church, named St. Paul's, was opened for worship in 1862.

DONATION OF
CHURCH SITE

Over and beyond the Diocesan Records are those of local origin of which the following Deed of DONATION by Mary Ann Cort to G.J. Mountain, Lord Bishop in 1840 is typical.

On this day the Eighteenth day of the month of November in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty. Before me the undersigned Justice of the Peace duly commissioned for the Province of Lower Canada, dwelling at Gaspé Basin in the aforesaid Province. Personally came and appeared Mary Ann Cort, Widow of the late Hugh O'Hara of Gaspe Basin aforesaid, of the one part and Edward Cusack, Missionary, being duly authorized for and on behalf of the Right Reverend Father in God George Jehosaphat Mountain, Lord Bishop of Montreal, of the other part. And acknowledged as follows.

Whereas the said Mary Ann Cort, Widow as aforesaid, divers good and pious causes and considerations her thereunto moving, hath given, granted and made donation pure, simple and irrevocable and in the best manner that a donation can be made to be valid and to take effect without the hope of being able or willing to revoke the same under any pretext whatsoever, unto the said George Jehosaphat Mountain, Lord Bishop of Montreal and now administering in the Vacant Diocese of Quebec, the said Edward Cusack duly authorized as aforesaid being present before me the said Justice of the Peace accepting hereof for the purposes hereinafter mentioned -

All that piece or parcel of ground lying and being upon the North side of the South West Arm of Gaspe Bay, forming a part or parcel

of the lot commonly called Number Four upon which a graveyard has been already marked out or partly enclosed, containing one half acre of land in superficies, being of an oblong form measuring one hundred and four feet in front to the road leading from Gaspe Basin aforesaid to the settlements in the South West Arm, measuring in the rear a like quantity of one hundred and four feet and bounded on the East and West by lateral lines running North six east being magnetically drawn according to a survey lately made by Henry O'Hara, Esq.

AND WHEREAS the faith of the united church of Great Britain and Ireland, commonly called the Protestant Episcopal Church is professed by the majority of the inhabitants residing in the neighbourhood of Gaspe Basin and the said Mary Ann Cort, alais Mary Ann O'Hara, Widow aforesaid being anxious to promote the Glory of God by Founding a place of public worship for the use of the Protestant Episcopal inhabitants, hath agreed and doth hereby agree for herself, her heirs, executors, administrators and assigns to make over the said piece of land, as already described, with all rights, members and appurtenances in anywise thereunto belonging unto the aforesaid George Jehosopht Mountain and his assigns or his successors in office, being Protestant Bishops of the See of Montreal or Quebec aforesaid, or to any other See to which the District of Gaspe may at any time hereafter be annexed, forever upon and for the sole trusts, interests, intents and purposes herein after mentioned, That is to say -

First of all For the Erection of a Church or other buildings upon said piece of land where divine worship is to be celebrated duly according to the rites of the United Church of Great Britain and Ireland, commonly called as aforesaid the Protestant Episcopal Church.

Secondly, that after the building or buildings shall have been completed the aforesaid Mary Ann Cort shall be entitled to make the first choice of a Pew therein for herself, her heirs and assigns forever.

Thirdly that the said piece of land shall be regularly inclosed with a substantial fence by the inhabitants and that no person shall be buried in the Graveyard except by the officiating minister of the Protestant Episcopal Church or in his absence from this part

of the Mission by a person duly authorised to read the order for the dead as used in the book of common prayer of the Church of England.

PROVIDED ALWAYS, and it is expressly understood, that the present donation is made upon the condition that if at anytime hereafter the said piece or parcel of land or any church or other buildings to be erected thereon should be applied to any other purposes than such as may be found necessary for the maintenance of true religion according to the rites and ceremonies and usages of the united church of Great Britain and Ireland, commonly called the Protestant Episcopal Church, then, and in such case, the present donation shall and will become null and void to all intents and purposes as if the same had never been made and the hereby granted piece or parcel of ground and the buildings to be erected thereon shall revert to the lawful possession of the said Mary Ann Cort, otherwise O'Hara, Widow, her heirs, executors, administrators and assigns.

AND LASTLY the said Mary Ann Cort, alais O'Hara doth declare that she hath good right, full power and lawful and absolute authority to make and execute the present Deed of Gift and Donation and doth hereby bind and oblige herself, her heirs,executors, administrators and assigns from time to time and at all times hereafter upon every reasonable request and at the proper cost and charges in the law of the said George Jehosophat Mountain, Lord Bishop of Montreal and his assigns to make, sign and execute all such further Acts, Deeds and Assurances in the Law for the further, better and more perfectly assigning and making over the said premises for the purposes herein before mentioned as by the said Lord Bishop of Montreal and his assigns or by his or their Counsel learned in the Law shall be lawfully and reasonably devised or advised and required.

This Done and Passed at the house of John Douglas McConnell, Esq., Gaspe Basin, By me, the undersigned Magistrate.

In Witness Whereof the said parties and I the said Magistrate have signed these presents, the same being first duly read aloud

(WITNESSES)
Julia Collas
Charles Morris, Missionary.

(SIGNED) Maria Anna Cort
Edward Cusack
J.D.McConnell, J.P.

A GLEBE FOR THE
PROTESTANT MINISTER

The Oxford Dictionary defines glebe as a portion of land attached to a clergyman's benefice while Webster's Dictionary expands the definition to land belonging or yielding revenue to a parish church or ecclesiastical benefice. In either case, as a complement to the foregoing Deed of Donation, the following Deed drawn up by John Eden, J.P. of Gaspé is presented below:

BILL OF SALE FROM JOHN Fr. WILSON, ESQ. TO THE LORD BISHOP OF
QUEBEC - BEING A GLEBE FOR THE PROTESTANT MINISTER.

Province of Canada
District of Gaspé

This Indenture made at Gaspé Basin in the County and District of Gaspé in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and fifty before me, John Eden, Esq., one of Her Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the District of Gaspé and in this case acting in default of a Notary Public as by Law provided, Between John Fr. Wilson, Esq., Merchant, of the one part and the Right Reverend Father in God George Jehoshaphat, Lord Bishop of Quebec of the other part -

Witnesseth That for and in consideration of the sum of one hundred and fifty pounds current money of the Province of Canada, with Lawful interest of six per cent until the Capital of the said sum be fully paid to the said John Fr. Wilson, Esq., He, the said John Fr. Wilson for himself his heirs and administrators agreeing and consenting not to require the above stated Capital until such time as the parties purchasing can conveniently pay for the said sum of one hundred and fifty pounds to the said John Fr. Wilson, Esq., hath granted, bargained, sold and confirmed, and by these presents doth grant, bargain, sell and confirm unto the said Right Reverend Father in God, George Jehosophat, Lord Bishop of Quebec and Successors in Office, forever, a certain piece or parcel of land situated at Gaspé Basin in the County and District of Gaspé aforesaid, bounded on the North by lands owned by Michael Costello, on the East by lands owned by Nicholas Dumaresq, Esq., on the South by the Church and School lots, and partly in front by the South West River, on the West by lands owned by the said Michael Costello, containing

twenty four acres, more or less, and to the uses and upon the trusts following, that is to say. Upon trust to hold the same forever hereafter as a Church Glebe for the site of a Parsonage for the Clergyman residing and officiating at Gaspe Basin and vicinity and their successors for said place being in full Communion according to the Doctrines and Disciplines of the United Church of England and Ireland and for no other purposes but for the aforesaid, To have and to hold the said piece or parcel of land and premises herein before granted, bargained and sold or intended so to be unto the Right Reverend Father in God George Jehosophat, Lord Bishop of Quebec and Successors in Office forever and for the purposes aforesaid.

Given under our hands and seals in presence of the undersigned Witnesses, day and date as within written.

WITNESSES

Joseph Eden
Francis Ahier

SIGNED BY

John Francis Wilson
Rev. Francis De La Mare, Minister
of Gaspe Basin, on behalf of the
Lord Bishop of Quebec
John Eden, J.P.

In Testimonium Veritatis.