

GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY

THE GASPESIAN FISHERY

Historical references and Deeds
relating to the vital FISHERY
ROOMS or EMPLACEMENT DE PÊCHE.

KEN ANNETT

THE GASPESIAN FISHERYBACKGROUNDREFERENCES

The existence of the fishery in Gaspesian waters antedates the first voyage of Jacques Cartier to our shores in 1534. In his book, FISHERIES OF THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC, published in 1912, Mr.E.T.D. Chambers has noted, by way of historical introduction:

" More than four hundred years have passed away since Basque and Breton fishermen gathered the first harvest of the sea from the waters that wash the coasts of Labrador and Gaspé on the one side and those of Newfoundland on the other; (and there is some reason to believe that this fishery existed before the voyage of Cabot in 1497; there is strong evidence that it began as early as the year 1504 - Francis Parkman) Some comparatively modern students of these fisheries have clung to the more or less suppositious belief that it is necessary to go back still another four hundred years if we would reach a period of time prior to the earliest pre-Columbian visits of Icelanders, Norsemen or Basques to the fisheries of our eastern coasts..."

JACQUES CARTIER'S FIRST VOYAGE

The great significance of the voyages of Jacques Cartier lies in the written record that has come down to us of his travels and observations. In the Log of his first voyage in 1534 he wrote of the sedentary fishery of the Micmac Indians of Bay Chaleur and even described the hempen nets that they employed and the large quantity of mackerel which they took in them near shore. Here is a short extract, in its original form, of Cartier's Log for July 25,1534 in Bay Chaleur:

"..durant lequel temps nous vint grant nombre de sauvages qui estoient venus en ladite

"riuiere pour pescher des masquereaulx,desquelz il y a grant habondance; et estoient tant hommes, femmes que enffans plus de deux cens personnes qui auoyent envyron quarante barques....il n'ont aultre logis que soubz leurs dites barques qu'ilz tournent auant de se coucher sur la terre dessoubz icelles....nous trouvasmes grant quantoté de macquereaulx des raiz qu'ilz ont à pescher, qui sont de fil de chanure qui croist en leur pays, ou ilz se tierinent ordinairement, car ilz ne vyennent à la mer que au temps de la pescherye, ainsi que j'ay sceu et entendu...."

CHAMPLAIN ON FISHING

Samuel de Champlain who is commonly called, "The Father of New France" mentions in his writings the fisheries of Gaspé and Percé. He knew of the offshore "banks" where cod and other fish abounded. The harpooning of whales in the Gulf was described by Champlain- the whale fishery having been developed by the Basques. Later in time the whalers of Gaspé Bay would continue this fishery. Ref.- GASPE OF YESTERDAY. #30 "THE GASPE WHALERS"

MISSIONARY REFERENCES

The early missionaries, unlike their contemporary fishermen, had the ability to write and record information on the Gaspesian fishery. The Recollet Father, Gabriel Sagard Theodat, in his 1636 HISTOIRE DU CANADA described in detail the Gulf fisheries and listed the various types of fish taken in Gaspé Bay. He was so impressed with the enormous wealth of the fish and whales in Gaspesian waters that he described the resource as - "among the marvels of God"

The JOURNALS of the Jesuit Missionaries contain interesting items on the fishery including the losses of fishing vessels that occured off Gaspé from time to time in the 17th century.

NICOLAS DENYS ON THE FISHERY

By far the most complete and most authoritative description which we have of the cod fishery in the Gulf and Bay Chaleur in the 17th century is to be found in the second volume of Deny's "DESCRIPTION GEOGRAPHIQUE ET HISTORIQUE DES COSTES DE L'AMERIQUE SEPTENTRIONALE" which was translated into English by the late William F. Ganong, Ph.D. for the Champlain Society under the title DESCRIPTION AND NATURAL HISTORY OF THE COASTS OF NORTH AMERICA. From 1633 to 1688, with a few breaks, Nicolas Denys was personally engaged in the cod fishery in Acadia which then included the Gaspé Peninsula. He wrote with great clarity on every detail of the fishery. In his time the fishermen were mostly Normans from Honfleur, Dieppe and other small harbours of North West France. Some were from Bologne and Calais, Brittany, Olonne and all the country of Aulmais. "The Basques", Denys wrote, "are the most skilful, after them the Rochelle men and those from the neighbouring islands, then the Bourselois and Bretons".

Reference to the Denys family in Gaspesia will be found in GASPE OF YESTERDAY: # 39 THE DENYS FAMILY

50 NEW RELATION OF GASPEZIA

It is of interest to note that the Magdalen Islands were included in the Deny's concession. However, in 1663, the Islands were given to Francois Doublet who gave them the name of his wife, Madeleine. Prior to the grant of the Magdalens to Admiral Isaac Coffin in 1798 the fishery had been in the hands of Sieurs Antoine and Joseph Pascaud.

REF. - GASPE OF YESTERDAY- # 71 THE DOUBLET'S IN GASPÉ AND THE GULF
#134 THE MAGDALEN ISLANDS - DR. CLARKE
#170 THE NECKLACE

RIVERIN'S FISHERY ENTERPRISE

After the time of Denys steps were taken by the Sieur Riverin to establish permanent fishery settlements on the Gaspé Coast from 1688 onward. No less a personage than King Louis XIV of France supported the plans of Riverin - plans put forward in a "MEMOIRE SUR LA PÊSCHE". Reference to Riverin's base of operations at Matane is to be found in the GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY article # 49 - "THE SEIGNIORY OF MATANE". In this period fishing stations were established at Metis, Magdalen River, Grande Rivière, Pabos and

Paspebiac. The last of the above, Paspebiac, was granted by the Marquis de Vaudreuil in September, 1707, to Pierre Haimard. It comprised the Point of Paspebiac with a league of seafront on each side of the Point.

Thus prior to the Fall of New France serious efforts had been made to develop the fishery in Gaspesia and the Gulf - efforts that had the support of the Royal authority in distant Paris and of the Vice-Regal Governors in Quebec.

THE GASPEE EXPEDITION

Following the British capture of the French fortress of Louisbourg, Cape Breton, in the summer of 1758, the Gaspee Expedition led by General James Wolfe and Sir Charles Hardy, R.N. came to Gaspé Bay in September. The GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY article #5, THE GASPEE EXPEDITION AND OTHER MATTERS, has recalled the British naval and military action against various French fishing stations, including those at Gaspé Bay, Pabos, Grand Riviere and Mont Louis and included a statement of the extent of the damage done to the French fishery.

AFTER THE CONQUEST OF 1760

With the Fall of New France a new era opened for the fisheries in Gaspesia. Merchant houses of Québec were early on the scene and were followed soon after by Jerseymen and Guernseymen from the Channel Islands off the coast of France. The claim of the Channel Islanders to British Citizenship dated from the Norman Conquest of England when "their" Duke, William of Normandy, led a successful invasion of England in 1066 and won the Crown of England as King William I. A number of articles of the GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY series recall the initiative and accomplishments of these Channel Islanders in the Gaspesian fishery, including:

- #008 REPORT ON THE FISHERY -1849.
- #038 JOHN M'GREGOR ON GASPE.
- #045 THE COX CORRESPONDENCE.
- #154 CHARLES ROBIN
- #211 FORILLON DEED SERIES

THE FISHING ROOM
OR POST.

As the Fishing Room was at the heart of the production of the world famous sun-dried cod these shore plots of land were greatly valued.

GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY presents here, in summary form, notarial deeds relating to such Fishing Rooms.

DEED BY NOTARIES PUBLIC J.A.VOYER,N.P. AND J.E.LELIEVRE, N.P.

DATE: 27th OCTOBER, 1802

TITLE: DECLARATION BY CHARLES ENOUF

VENDOR: CHARLES ENOUF. RESIDENT AT BEAUMONT, COUNTY HERTFORD.

BUYER : AUGUSTIN LE HOULLIER, ST.GEORGE'S COVE, GASPE BAY.

POST : A FISHING POST OR ROOM AT ST.GEORGE'S COVE, GASPE BAY WITH THREE WOODEN HOUSES, AN OLD STAGE AND ALL NECESSARY EQUIPMENT FOR THE COD FISHERY.

PRICE : THIRTY LOUIS OF CURRENT MONEY

PRIOR ACQUIRED BY CHARLES ENOUF FROM SIEUR CONNORS
OWNER :

DEED BY ISAAC DÈCHENE, J.P. OF PERCÉ.

DATE: 31st MARCH, 1828

TITLE: DONATION BY THEOPHILUS FOX TO JOHN LE BOUTILLIER

DONOR: THEOPHILUS FOX J.P. OF PERCE.

DONEE: JOHN LE BOUTILLIER, AGENT AT PERCE FOR MESSRS CHARLES ROBIN AND CO.

GIFT : A LOT OF LAND WITHOUT A NUMBER SITUATED IN THE NORTH-EAST COVE OF PERCE OF THREE "ARPENTS" OR MORE, BOUNDED ON THE NORTH SIDE BY LOT NO.12 BELONGING TO THE GOVERNMENT OF LOWER CANADA, ON THE SOUTH SIDE BY THE LOT OCCUPIED BY SIEUR THOMAS MORIARTY, IN FRONT BY THE MAIN ROAD AND AT THE REAR BY A PUBLIC ROADWAY, ALSO A FISHING ROOM SITUATED BELOW THE SAID LOT AND MAIN ROAD WITH A FRONTAGE OF ABOUT NINETY SIX FEET ON THE SEA, BOUNDED AT THE REAR BY THE MAIN ROAD, ON THE NORTH SIDE BY A FISHING ROOM BELONGING TO THE SAID

GIFT: DONOR AND ON THE SOUTH SIDE BY A FISHING ROOM BELONGING
(ctd) TO THE SAID THOMAS MORIARTY, WITH DEPENDENCIES AND
APPURTENANCES, ALL AS PRESENTLY EXISTING, WITHOUT EXCEPTION
OR RESERVE...

TERMS: THE DONOR, THEOPHILUS FOX, WHOSE POOR HEALTH PREVENTED HIM
FROM LOOKING AFTER HIS PROPERTY ANY LONGER, TO BE PROVIDED
FOOD, LODGING AND CARE BY THE DONEE, JOHN LE BOUTILLIER,
FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE.

WITNESSES: WILLIAM DRISCOLL
EDOUARD TRACHY

DEED BY HENRY B. JOHNSTON, J.P. OF POINT ST. PETER

DATE: 24th JULY, 1830

TITLE: SALE AND ASSIGNMENT OF A FISHING ROOM FROM WILLIAM
ALEXANDRE (ALEXANDER) TO MESSRS JANVRIN.

VENDOR: WILLIAM ALEXANDER OF MALBAY, MERCHANT

BUYER : JOHN AUBIN OF GRAND GREVE, AGENT (WITH POWER OF ATTORNEY)
FOR PHILIP JANVRIN, FRANCIS JANVRIN, JOHN JANVRIN, DANIEL
JANVRIN AND JOHN LOUIS JANVRIN OF THE ISLAND OF JERSEY,
MERCHANTS, CARRYING ON BUSINESS AT GASPE UNDER THE FIRM
NAME OF PHILIP AND FRANCIS JANVRIN AND COMPANY.

POST/
ROOM : THE FISHING ROOM BEGINNING AT A STONE PLANTED IN THE LINE
WHICH DIVIDES IT FROM THE PROPERTY OF CHARLES VARDON,
RUNNING THENCE NORTH, FORTY SEVEN DEGREES WEST, ONE HUNDRED
AND SIXTY TWO FEET, THENCE NORTH, THIRTY NINE DEGREES
THIRTY MINUTES EAST, FOUR HUNDRED AND SEVENTY FOUR FEET
(HIGHWAY INCLUDED) THENCE SOUTH, FIFTY DEGREES EAST, ONE
HUNDRED AND FORTY SIX FEET, THENCE SOUTH, SEVENTY FIVE
DEGREES WEST, SIXTY TWO FEET TO WHERE THE SAID LINE IS
INTERSECTED BY CHARLES VARDON'S PROPERTY, AND THENCE
SOUTH, THIRTY NINE DEGREES THIRTY MINUTES WEST TO THE FIRST
STATION OR POINT OF DEPARTURE. BOUNDED ON THE EAST BY THE
FISHERY ROOM OF CHARLES VARDON, ON THE WEST BY THAT OF
MICHAEL BUCKLEY, IN REAR BY THE INTERSECTION OF THE LINES

POST/ OF THE SAID MICHAEL BUCKLEY AND CHARLES VARDON AND IN
ROOM FRONT BY THE COVE OF MAL BAY.

PRICE: THREE HUNDRED POUNDS (L 300) JERSEY CURRENCY.

WITNESSES: MATTHEW STEWART
HENRY STEWART

DEED BY JAMES ROONEY, J.P. OF PERCE.

DATE: 24th MAY, 1833

TITLE: CONTRACT - LOUISE ARBOU TO JOHN LE BOUTILLIER

VENDOR: THE WIDOW OF THE LATE ANGUS MCGINNIS OF PERCE, DAME
MARIE LOUISE ARBOU

BUYER: JOHN LE BOUTILLIER, AGENT AT PERCE FOR MESSRS CHARLES
ROBIN CO.

POST/ A FISHING ROOM SITUATED IN THE NORTH EAST COVE AT PERCE
ROOM WITH A FRONTAGE OF EIGHTY FEET, MORE OR LESS, BORDERING
IN FRONT ON THE SEA, ON THE SOUTH SIDE BY THE FISHING
ROOM OF THE WIDOW CHARLES BOURGET, ON THE NORTH SIDE BY
THE FISHING ROOM OCCUPIED BY JACQUES LABBE, TO THE REAR
BY THE KING'S HIGHWAY, TOGETHER WITH THE STAGE, HOUSE,
SHED AND ALL OTHER BUILDINGS ERECTED ON THE SAID FISHING
ROOM.

PRICE: (TOGETHER WITH ADJACENT LAND) £ 80 HALIFAX CURRENCY.

WITNESSES: EDMUND FLYNN
STEPHEN WALSH

