

GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY

WINTER VOYAGE IN BAY CHALEUR

A tale of hardship experienced by Alex and Adam Brotherton and their crew of the Schooner "ANGELIQUE" in severe cold and storm on Bay Chaleur in November and December of 1835.

KEN ANNETT

WINTER VOYAGE IN BAY CHALEURPREFACE

As this tale of a winter voyage in Bay Chaleur will introduce the sons of Alexander Brotherton, Sr., a pioneer Loyalist settler of Bay Chaleur, it is in order to recall briefly the Brotherton family's experience.

Born in 1748, Alexander Brotherton Sr. was resident in the British Colony of New York at the time of the outbreak of the American Revolution. A staunch Loyalist, he sought refuge, together with his wife and young children in Canada. They first found shelter in the refugee camp established for Loyalists at Pointe-aux-Trembles.

By the year 1784 this Brotherton family were living in Quebec City where Alexander, whose trade was that of "joiner" or cabinet-maker was a partner of James Chambers in the making of furniture. An official Proclamation of 1784 by the Government offered land in Bay Chaleur to Loyalists and veteran soldiers. The Brothertons decided to take up this offer and accept the challenge of a new life in distant Gaspesia. They sailed from Quebec on the Brig "POLLY" with other aspiring settlers led by Captain George Lawe, Sr. When lots for farm lands were drawn at Paspebiac on August 3rd., 1784 Alexander and his family received 300 acres.

Unlike many of the Loyalists who reached New Carlisle in 1784 and soon left to settle elsewhere, Alexander and his family remained and prospered. Active in the Gaspesian fishery and as a merchant trader, Alexander was a ship-owner as early as 1806. His sturdy sons took to the sea as mariners. From his home base in Paspebiac Alexander acquired lands in Cox Township, Hope Township and Gascons. In time he was appointed as a Justice of the Peace.

PREFACE

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By marriage the sons and daughters of Alexander Brotherton Sr. extended and deepened family ties with other pioneers of Gaspesia. Adam Brotherton married Jane McKinnon of New Carlisle, daughter of Neil McKinnon, Sr. (Jane's sisters married into the families of Beebe, Christie, Ascah and Boyle) John Alexander Brotherton married Esther Duguay. Isabelle Brotherton became the wife of John Ahier; her sister, Joanna Maria married James Scott and sister Margaret first married Francis Gallie and was subsequently the wife of Jacques Lemay.

As for that staunch Loyalist, Alexander Sr. he lived to the age of 72 years. He died in October, 1821 and was buried in the cemetery of St. Peter's Anglican Church, Paspebiac, near the beach where he and his family had landed from the "POLLY" in 1784.

An interesting and informative article on the family of Brotherton is to be found in the historical journal GASPÉSIE. It was written by Mr. D.R. Garrett with the aid of documentation provided by Mr. Gerald Brotherton of Gascons.



WINTER VOYAGE IN BAY CHALEUR

On May 16th., 1836 before Martin Sheppard, Notary Public, came Alexander Brotherton, Master Mariner and Master of the Schooner "ANGELIQUE" of Paspebiac, his brother Adam Brotherton and Louis Roussy, Mate of the "ANGELIQUE" to lodge a formal, notarial PROTEST of their voyage in November and December, 1835. In their own words, as recorded by Martin Sheppard, here is their incredible tale:

"...That the said Schooner or vessel called the "ANGELIQUE" being tight, staunch and strong, well and sufficiently manned, provided, equipped and furnished with all things needful and necessary for the voyage hereinafter mentioned and her hatches well and sufficiently caulked and covered, they the said Alexander Brotherton, Louis Roussy, Adam Brotherton and Louis Huard, the appearers, set sail on board of the said vessel, loaded with a full cargo of Flour, Pork, Onions, Apples, and other articles of provisions and divers other goods and effects, from the Port of Quebec, in the City and District of uebec in the said Province, on Tuesday the tenth day of November now last past on a voyage to the Port of Miramichi in the Province of New Brunswick.

That the said appearers proceeded on the said voyage with their said vessel from the Port of Quebec aforesaid experiencing at times strong breezes accompanied with snow and by which they were necessitated to take in all sails and proceed with bare poles but without anything particular or extraordinary occurring until Friday the twenty first of November last at two o'clock P.M. when the wind suddenly veered round from the South West to the South East blowing a strong gale accompanied with snow. At four O'clock P.M. bore up for the land under foresail double reef'd and made the harbour or roadstead of Grand River in this District. Tried the pumps this day and the day before and occasionally before that period but always found the vessel free.

On Sunday, the twenty second of the same month, the wind blew strong from the North West with snow falling thick. At nine o'clock P.M. made "mise au point" the vessel being then

under her bare poles and the cold so intense that the rigging and ropes were quite frozen and the rigging thereby rendered incapable of being used or worked for the ordinary purposes of navigation; the vessel on this day being as it were coated or sheathed with ice, with a large quantity of ice on deck, and floating on the water like a log and from the causes aforesaid rendered totally unmanageable.

At three o'clock P.M. the wind moderated some. Tried the pumps but owing to being chocked with ice could not work them. Poured hot water down the rudder case to enable the pintles to work and cut away the ice from and about the vessel. At eight o'clock A.M. hoisted a small part of the foresail to try to make the land, being then as they supposed between Prince Edward Island and Miramichi.

On the next day the wind moderated considerably and veered round to the South West. Saw land and supposed it to be Tracadie. Employed cutting ice from the vessel and rigging-but the cold was so severe that they could not keep the vessel clear. At two o'clock P.M. calm with a heavy swell setting in from the East South East. At eight o'clock P.M. it blew a gale from the East South East with thick snow. Proceeded on under all sails close reef'd and stood to the northward to clear the land.

On the next day, the twenty fourth of November, strong gales from the North Eastward with snow falling thick. At six o'clock made Point Maquereau. Lay to for about ten hours but the wind beginning to increase and freshen found it impossible longer to lay to the vessel, being entirely unmanageable, with large quantities of ice on deck and, as it were, cased and encrusted with ice to the thickness of about twelve inches and these appearers being benumbed with cold and seeing no prospect of being able longer to surmount the difficulties which the state of their vessel and her rigging presented. And having been already baffled in their attempts to enter the harbour of Miramichi when within about

four miles from that harbour deemed it advisable to make sail in the best manner they could for Paspebiac in the said District where they cast anchor at about one o'clock P.M. of that day.

Remained at anchor all the next day and employed themselves cutting and clearing ice from their vessel. The next day, still at anchor, employed as before, great quantities of snow having fallen and the harbours being frozen and blocked with ice, these appearers deemed it impossible from the advanced period of the season to proceed further on their said voyage. Employed several boats and men to assist in discharging and securing the cargo of their said vessel and succeeded in storing in good order all the said cargo with the exception of one boat load of the same when, through the urgent representations of one of the parties interested, who came on board at the time urging them to reship the cargo and make one final effort to proceed to Bathurst in New Brunswick, these appearers being so solicited and desirous to evidence their willingness and determination to do all in their power for the interests of all parties concerned in the said cargo, caused one hundred barrels of provisions to be reshipped on board of their said vessel without delay.

The next day the wind blew strong from the North West and could not succeed in shipping any more of the cargo that day. The next day, the twenty eighth of November, the weather moderated considerably. Employed boats and men to reship the remainder of the cargo and succeeded in doing so at a great expense and with considerable risk and trouble. At seven o'clock P.M., all hands being on board, weighed anchor with a strong breeze from the North Eastward and proceeded on to about mid-way from Paspebiac to Bathurst aforesaid in a heavy snowstorm which rendered the weather so obscure that from every consideration of their situation and for the safety of their vessel and cargo these appearers, after consulting together, deemed it prudent for the safety of their vessel and her cargo and the lives of all on board to shape their course again for Paspebiac.

All this time the pumps were so fast frozen that they would not work. The next day (Sunday) the wind being strong from the North East and a heavy snow storm found it impossible to get under way. Sent the boat on shore. Succeeded this day in working the pumps but found the vessel free and that she made no water. At eight o'clock P.M. the winf having veered round to the Westward again attempted to get under way but the wind coming on to blow with violence could scarcely clear the point of the beach at Paspebiac. Anchored to the leeward of that point. The next day (Monday) blowing a strong breeze from the Westward with the frost, snow and cold so severe that ice formed to the thickness of four inches on the decks, so glare and slippery that it was impossible to stand on the deck. And such was the intense severity of the cold that the rigging became quite useless and unserviceable. The mate and another of the crew had their ears and feet frozen and the weight of the ice on the vessel was so great that serious apprehensions were entertained of her sinking.

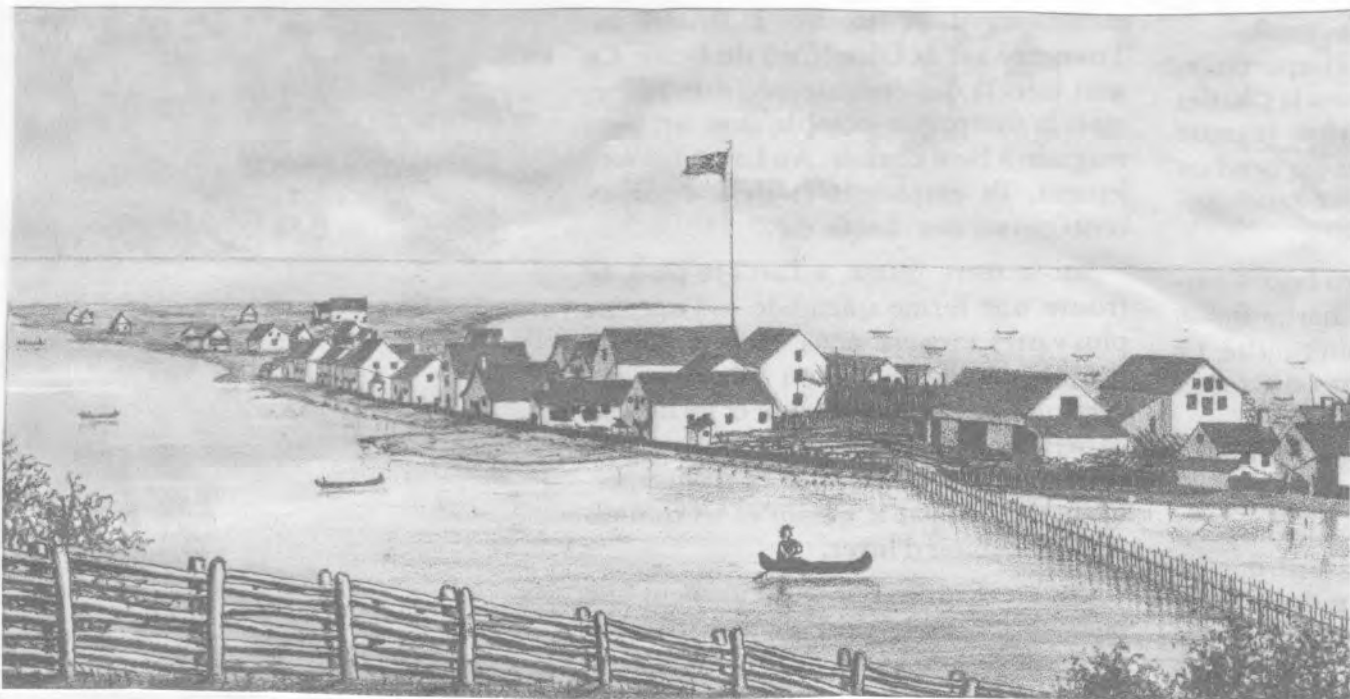
The next day, Thursday the first December, strong gales from the North Westward and clear weather with hard frost. The rigging still remaining frozen as before. Found it impossible to navigate or work the vessel and consequently sent the boat with part of the crew and came ashore. The pumps also remaining frozen and unserviceable.

And these appearers, having been credibly informed that the harbour at Bathurst was entirely frozen determined on abandoning all further attempts to reach the latter place that late and remained at their anchorage at Paspebiac.

On the second of December blowing a strong breeze South West with clear weather and intense cold. Employed clearing ice from about the vessel to enable the boats to approach the vessel to discharge her cargo. At ten o'clock A.M. commenced discharging the cargo but the weather being extremely cold and severe could not succeed in discharging the whole of her cargo. The next day owing to the severity of the weather could not discharge the rest of the cargo. On the fourth of December last the wind having moderated

employed laborers to discharge the rest of the cargo which they succeeded in doing and stored and secured the same in good order and condition, after which the said appearers succeeded in putting the said vessel in a place of safety for the winter in Paspebiac aforesaid.

And the said Alexander Brotherton doth further, separately, allege, declare and affirm that having inspected, with others, a number of the barrels of apples and onions forming part of the cargo of the said vessel and finding some of the same beginning to rot and in danger of becoming shortly entirely useless, he caused the same to be sold at Public Auction in Paspebiac to the highest and best bidder on the twenty sixth day of January last, as will fully appear by the Account of Sale of the same transmitted herewith for the information of all interested or concerned..."



PASPEBIAC POINT AS SEEN BY THOMAS PYE.