

GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY

THE BRIG "SEAFLOWER" OF JERSEY

Captain James Balleine and members of
the crew of SEAFLOWER recount problems
of their voyage from Jersey to Bay
Chaleur in the Spring of 1841.

KEN ANNETT

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FOREWORD It is always an interesting challenge to the imagination to attempt reconstruction of the scene presented in the pages of notarial records of early times in Gaspesia. As example, that of the meeting some one hundred and fifty years ago in the office of Martin Sheppard, Notary Public, "by Royal authority duly admitted and sworn for that part of the now Province of Canada, heretofore distinguished as the Province of Lower Canada." Present on that occasion of June 1st., 1841, were the following men from the Brig SEAFLOWER, then anchored off Paspebiac :

James Balleine, Master Mariner and Master of the SEAFLOWER.
 John Hacquoil, Chief Mate.
 John Hubert, Second Mate and Ship Carpenter.
 Edouard Syborn, Seaman
 Philip Luce, Seaman

And present as Witnesses to the Deed of Protest:

George Jenne, Merchant of Paspebiac.
 James Le Maistre, Merchant of Paspebiac.

One can well imagine that before Martin Sheppard began to draft the Deed there was animated discussion between these native sons of the distant Channel Islands of events in their homeland and word of relatives and friends.

Then, turning to the business at hand, the Notary Public, began to take testimony and to draft his formal PROTEST of misfortune experienced by the SEAFLOWER on her recent voyage from the Port of St. Helier, Jersey to Bay Chaleur and the New Brunswick port of Caraquet.

OUT TO SEA It was on April 6th., 1841 that the SEAFLOWER, in every respect ready for sea, sailed from St. Helier with a load of salt and goods, bound for the Bay Chaleur and the Port of Caraquet in New Brunswick. All went well until Sunday, April 25th., when, in the words of the Deed of Protest: the weather, which had the fore part of the day been squally and tempestuous, with a heavy sea, and the wind blowing strong from the Northwestward increased at about seven

6 o'clock P.M. of the same day to a violent gale with sudden squalls and a heavy sea in which the said vessel laboured considerably and almost buried herself. Handed the fore top sail and balance reefed the main try sail, which eased the said vessel.

At two o'clock A.M. a heavy sea struck their said vessel which nearly swept the decks, split the trysail, carried away the greater part of the bulwarks and stanchions and the rail on the larboard side, broke and started the cambouse house and started the longboat of their said vessel from her chocks, by which their said boat was considerably injured and damaged. Handed in the trysail, foresail and fore topmast staysail and lay to under close reefed small topsail. tried the pumps but found that their said vessel continued free. (of water in the hold)

STORM CONTINUES

The next day, the gale still continuing unabated, with a heavy sea running, lay to as before under close reefed main topsail and occasionally shipping some heavy seas, but without receiving any material damage, and their vessel still remained free. At two o'clock P.M. set the main stay sails and wore ship to the Westward. The next day the wind having moderated some, but still being squally and tempestuous, lay to under the close reefed main top sail and fore sail and main stay sail. Wore ship to the Northward, the weather being still squally with rain, and a heavy sea occasionally breaking over their vessel. The next day wore the vessel round to the Westward and the wind increasing handed in the main sail and fore topmast stay sail.

MODERATING WEATHER

On the first day of May last, the weather having moderated, let the reefs out of the sails and set the top gallant sail and took latitude by observation at 41 degrees 12 minutes North. Proceeded on their said voyage without experiencing anything further particular- occasionally trying the pumps without however finding their said vessel less free than usual. Arrived and came to an anchor at Paspebiac on the fourteenth day of May last. Lay there at anchor without discharging any cargo until the twentieth of the same month.