

GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY

ON THE ROAD TO GASPÉ  
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Amy Oakley's travel book, "KALEIDOSCOPIIC  
QUEBEC", with its remarkable illustrations  
by Thornton Oakley, is a vivid account of  
the impact of Gaspesia on visitors of the  
late 1940's.

KEN ANNETT

ON THE ROAD TO GASPÉ

In line with the rationale stated in the FOREWORD of Volume 7 of "GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY" the books of more than twenty-five authors on a variety of Gaspesian themes have been recalled to date. Most of these authors, beginning with the works of Sir James McPherson Lemoine and Lt.-Col. Sir Richard Bonnycastle, R.E., at the outset of the series to the present travel book of Amy and Thornton Oakley in this three hundred and first issue, wrote from personal experience as visitors to Gaspesia. The topics dealt with by authors recalled range from a detailed account of the MicMac Indians of early days in the District of Gaspé to a masterful review of Channel Islanders in the various Gaspesian communities by George Le Feuvre. The work of the twenty-five or more authors recalled to date are a part of our Gaspesian heritage and provide a unique series of windows on our past. "KALEIDOSCOPIIC QUEBEC" by Amy Oakley, published in 1947 by D.Appleton-Century Co. Inc. of New York and London, includes two fascinating chapters (X and XI) on impressions gained in tours of Gaspesia. The text is enhanced by many remarkable sketches by Thornton Oakley, a number of which are included herewith.

ON THE PERRON BLVD.

"At Sainte-Flavie, where the river widens and the Perron Boulevard begins, we entered Gaspésie", noted the author. The travellers stayed at the Boule Rock Hotel, Metis, where welcome was extended by "Mr. Gordon Astle, the affable owner, (who) said that the hotel had been in his family for a hundred years." Alas ! in this present year of 1992 the Boule Rock Hotel, so widely known in its time, is no more.

At Sainte-Anne-des-Monts the travellers enjoyed the fine food of the Hotel "A La Bonne Table" run by the Pelletier sisters. The menu

including "soupe aux pois", roast beef, freshly churned butter, cretons, apple pie with maple syrup, Canadian cheese and coffee, was a veritable feast for less than one dollar :

#### EASTWARD HO!

Motoring onward through Saint Joachim the travellers paused to view the "bridal veil" falls of the Ruisseau Sorel before reaching Rivière à la Marte, noting also the rich and colourful variety of wild flowers on hillsides recovering from forest fires- bunch-berries, blue bells, asters, goldenrod, fire-weed and snow-white immortelles. They marvelled at the stupendous scenery of Mont Saint Pierre, Mont-Louis, with its old covered bridge and the stratified cliff of Cap Gros Morne. Their goal was Rivière Madeleine and the Hotel Bon Accueil, kept by the Berubé family.

#### AT MADELEINE

The travellers made the Bon Accueil Hotel their temporary base for exploration of the neighbourhood. Mention is made of visits to the strategic lighthouse at Cape Madeleine, to the "sunset tower" beside the Blanchet Cabins, to the home of the Russian artist, Bercovitch, to the Wood Mill, to the soaring heights of the look-out eastward to Grande Vallee, to Sunday Mass at Petite Madeleine.

#### ON TO FOX RIVER

It is surprising that the chapter, "ON THE ROAD TO GASPÉ", makes no reference to scenic and historic GRAND ÉTANG or to such well-established fishing stations along the way to Rivière-au-Renard or Fox River as Cloridorme (bearing the Jersey name, "Chlorydormes") and L'Echourie. The travellers pressed on to the important fishing port of Fox River and its noted "CARIBOU INN" on the water-front at the western edge of the village.

### CARIBOU INN

The author recalls that as early as 1937 the Caribou Inn had been notable as the choice for overnight stay by the wife of the President of the United States, Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, on her motor tour around the Gaspé Peninsula. The Inn occupied the site of the William Fruing Co., fish merchants in the tradition of the Robin, Janvrin and Le Boutillier Companies. Following the failure of the Fruing Co. its last Agent, Philip M. Luce, acquired the property, and proceeded to convert the main Fruing storehouse into an Inn. In this work he was aided by his wife whom he had met on shipboard as an English lass from Shropshire bound for New Zealand, had married her and changed her destination to Fox River in Gaspesia. Her influence was reflected in the "TEA ROOM" - an integral feature of the original Inn.

The author had first stayed at Caribou Inn soon after it opened in the 1930's and again in August, 1945 on the occasion of Canada's V-J Day. Among the interesting momentos of the Inn that she recalls was a Coat-of-Arms of the Luce family in stained glass and weather-beaten name-plates of wrecked ships. The waterfront windows of the Inn provided a panoramic view of the busy fishing port with its hundred odd craft and the colourful "BANC" or Bar across the mouth of the Fox River.

### BEYOND FOX

From Fox River eastward the travellers followed the coastal road past Griffon Cove with its old manor house of the Le Boutillier era, to Cape Rosiers with its soaring lighthouse. They stopped to examine the grim monument to the 187 Irish immigrants that drowned in the wreck of the ship "CARRICK" and were washed ashore by the thunderous surf.

GASPÉ BASIN

The intermingling of impressions from two visits to Gaspé Basin a decade apart may lead to some initial confusion for the reader. The first visit has as its main theme the festivities attending the unveiling of the Jacques Cartier Cross in 1934 while the second visit in 1945 recalls Gaspé at the end of World War II. However, the combined account of these visits reflects the rich, historic heritage of the Gaspé Bay area through its references to the visit of Cartier, of the Kirke brothers, of William Phipps, of Admiral Sir Hovenden Walker, of General James Wolfe and the role of the magnificent harbour of Gaspé in both World Wars I and II. The author recalls visiting the captured German submarine, U-109, in company with Mayor Charles Davis of Gaspé and other dignitaries, adding: "...What deep satisfaction we felt in coming out of this diabolical product of man's ingenuity to stand once more in the open beneath the blue sky of Gaspésie..."

PERCÉ

The second chapter on Gaspesia in "KALEIDOSCOPIIC QUEBEC" with the title, "PERCÉ AND THE ISLE OF GANNETS", devotes more than half of its text to the travellers impressions and comments relating to the Percé area, including Bonaventure Island, "the Isle of Gannets". We are reminded of the tourist role of Percé in the 1940's by reference to the Percé Rock Hotel of Mr. and Mrs. Bisson, the Motel Au Pic de l'Aurore of Mr. and Mrs. Guité and to the North Beach and Normandie Hotels. Activities of the visitors included a memorable visit to the gannet colony on the cliffs of Bonaventure Island, a climb to the summit of Mont Sainte Anne, and a view of "La Grande Coupe" with its mighty, fir-topped rock wall. But always the visitors returned to marvel at unique Percé Rock and to stroll the North and South beaches.

PERCÉ (ctd)

Sunday services took the visitors to the impressive Roman Catholic church and also to the more modest Anglican Church of St. Paul. The cemetery of the latter reflected the names of many families of Channel Island origin - Orange, Esnouf, Gibaut, Biard, to name but a few.

Reference to distinguished geologists who have studied and recorded the unique rock formations of Percé was noted - to Sir William Logan, Father of Canadian Geology, to Dr. John Mason Clarke, whose books such as "THE HEART OF GASPÉ" and "ISLE PERCÉ" are classic records of Gaspesia and to the visit of the 12th International Geological Congress. (Ref. "GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY", #220 "THE WORLD'S LEADING GEOLOGISTS VISIT GASPÉ")

But over and above all else the visitors were aware of the long history of Percé as one of Gaspesia's great fishing stations. Frequented by the Basques in the 16th century, by the Denys family of France in the 17th century and by the Jersey firms such as that of Charles Robin in the 18th century, Percé had been witness to the lives of generations of fishermen and merchants.

ALONG BAY CHALEUR

Apparently the visitors drove on from Percé to Bonaventure with little pause for it is disappointing to find little in their account of the interesting communities along the way. They did note the charm of Anse-à-Beaufils, "its harbour crowded with fishing schooners", and the increasing amount of farmlands from Cape Cove onward. Brief mention was made to Chandler, with its pulp mill, and to the descriptive names of Anse-aux-Basques, near Pabos, and Anse-aux-Gascons. Surprisingly, there is no mention of Port Daniel.

ALONG BAY CHALEUR

The United Empire Loyalist origins of New Carlisle are mentioned together with reference to it being the terminus of the former Bay des Chaleurs railway. Continuation of the railway line for another hundred miles to Gaspé Basin had been so costly an undertaking that it broke the Charing Cross Bank in London, England.

At the Acadian village of Bonaventure the travellers stayed at the "Le Chateau Blanc" hotel of Alexandre Bernard. They reported that "...the cuisine was, as customarily, delicious; upon the beach the single wave lapped as ceaselessly, the sunset flared as brilliantly as of old, while we lingered, that evening, in the wide-windowed "salle-à-manger". Across the open plaza stands the church, the center of life on Sunday..."

Motoring along westward on the Perron Boulevard the travellers noted the long covered bridge that then spanned the renowned salmon river Cascapedia. At Maria they admired the "irrestible basketry" of the Micmacs and recalled that the Indian name formerly borne by adjacent Carleton - TRACADIGÈCHE - translated as THE PLACE OF MANY HERONS. Still further along, at Restigouche, with its historic Indian village, they noted that the Micmac church bore inscription of the early conversion of the Micmacs to Christianity, in three languages.

The sketch of "LOG STORAGE AT RESTIGOUCHE" recalls the vast booms of wood that provided temporary storage for the wood harvested in the Matapedia-Restigouche river basin. Here, too, in 1760 was fought the last naval battle in the Fall of New France when supply ships bound to Quebec from France were destroyed by a squadron of the Royal Navy commanded by Admiral Byron.

At the Hotel Restigouche in Matapedia, where the Restigouche and Matapedia rivers unite, the author heard sportsmen from far and wide spin "tales of the fish that did not get away" in recounting their zealous pursuit of the lordly salmon.

#### IN CONCLUSION

"KALEIDOSCOPIIC QUEBEC" concludes with this message: "...to Gaspésie, to its hills and vales, its rivers and sea, its birds and forests, its fishermen and boats, its farms and homesteads, to all of these...my final message comes from the heart -  
FARE YOU WELL.

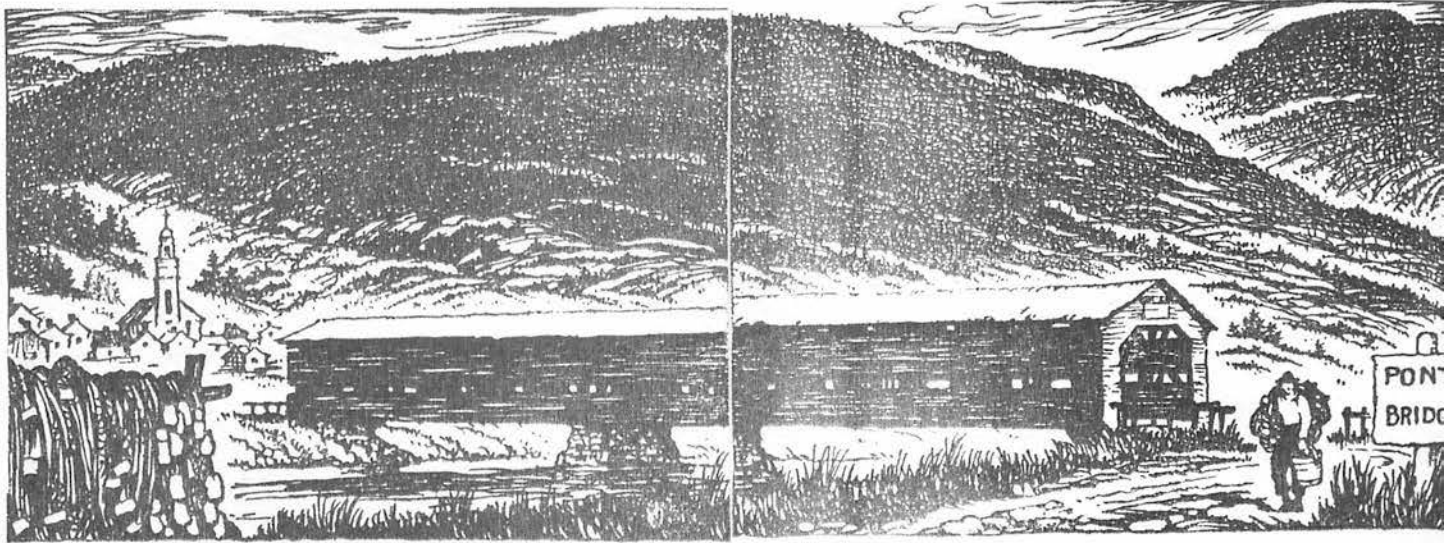




The Heart of Gaspésie +



Herring-nets at Mont-Saint-Pierre



Mont-Louis † The covered bridge



The Wood-Mill at Madeleine

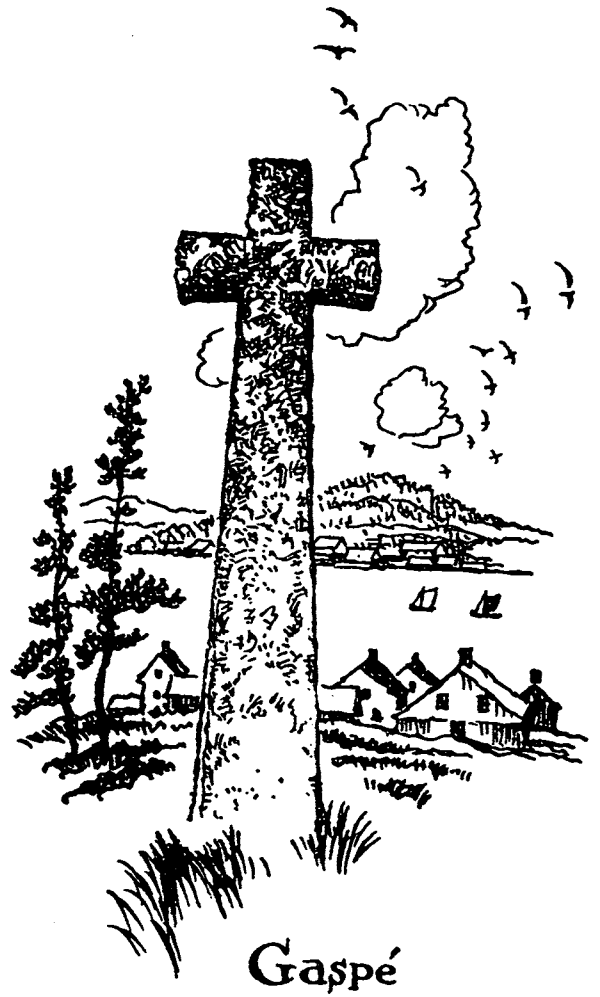


Rivière-aux-Renards } Le Banc } } }

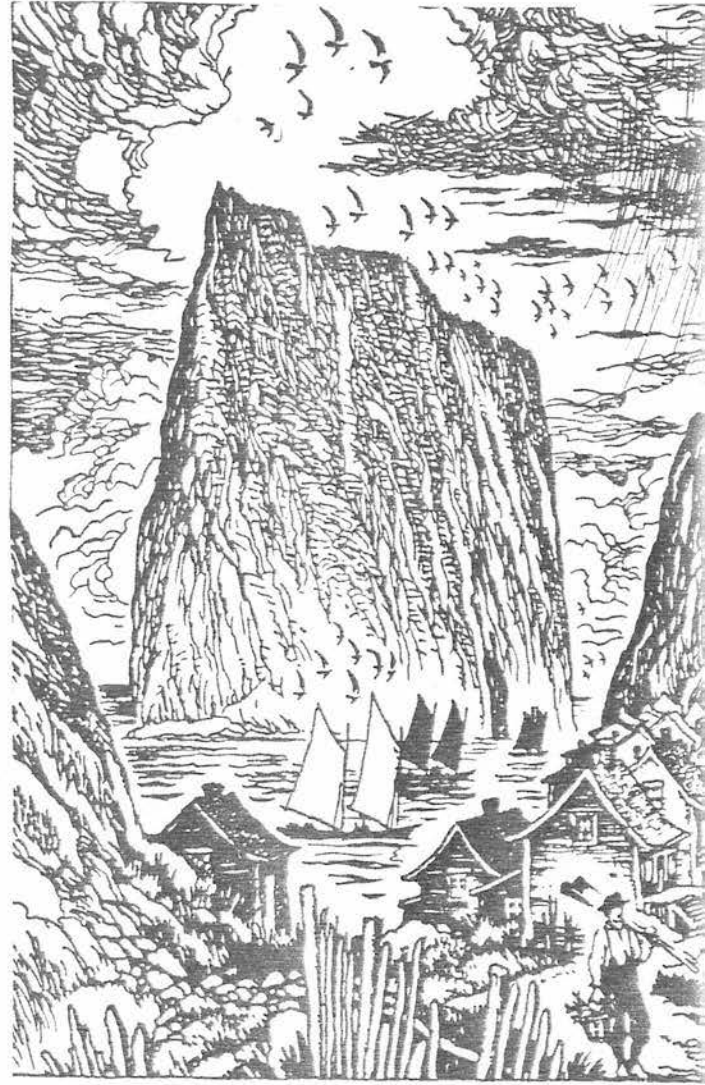


1491 Jacques Cartier 1557

*Jacques Cartier*

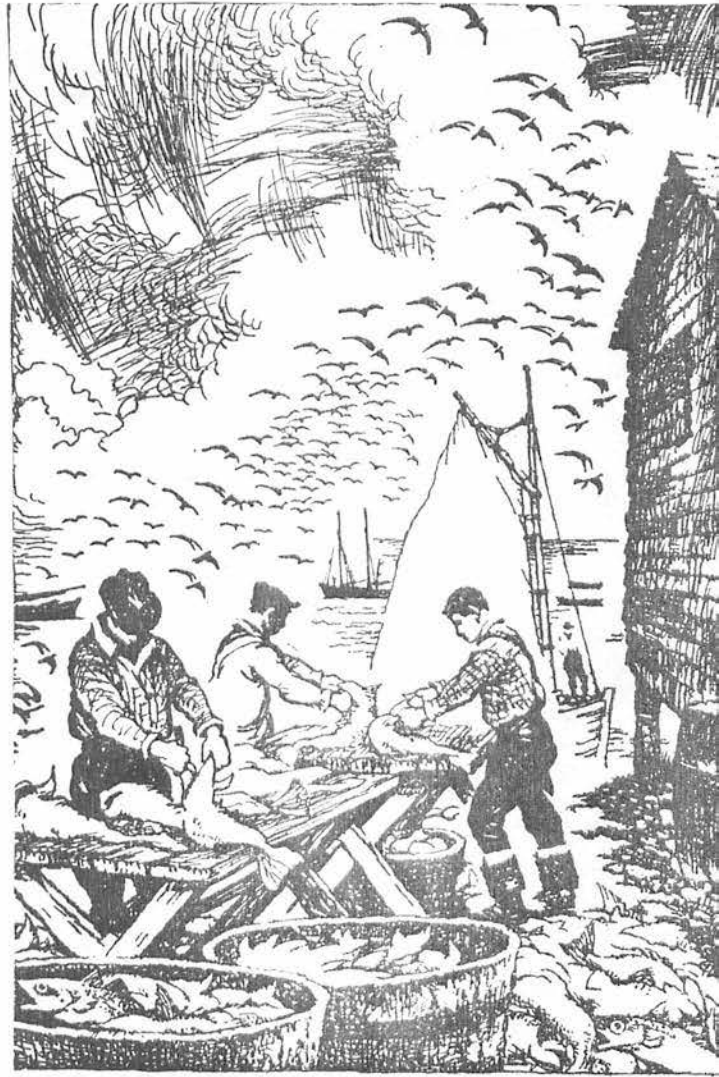




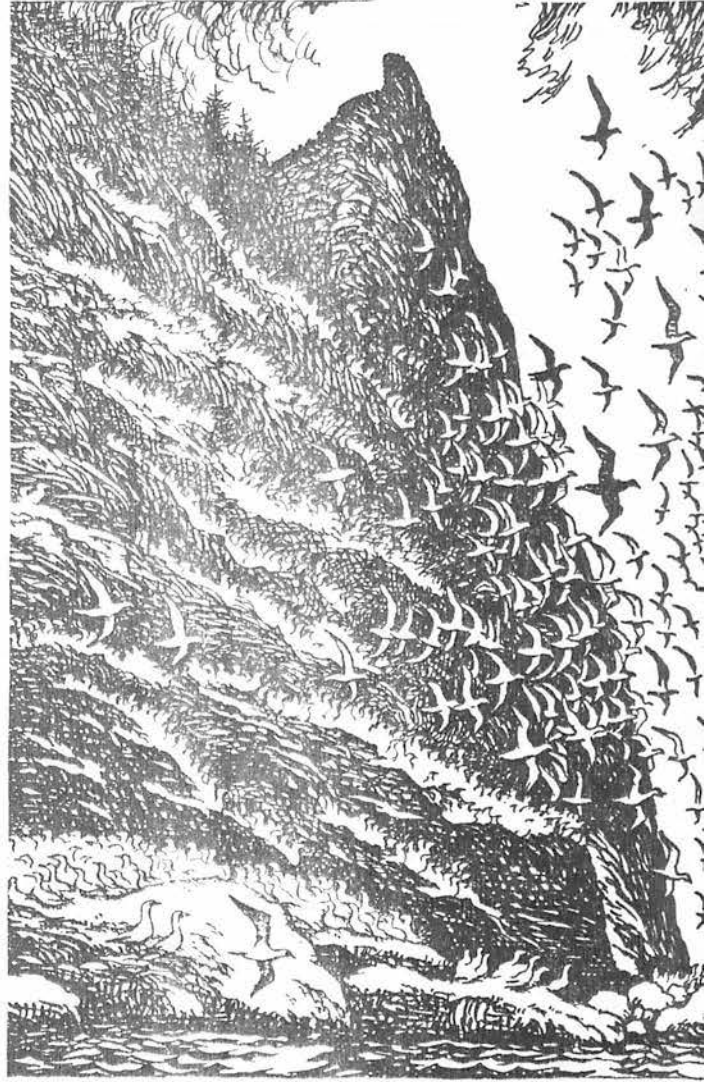


Percé Rock from Biard's Beach.

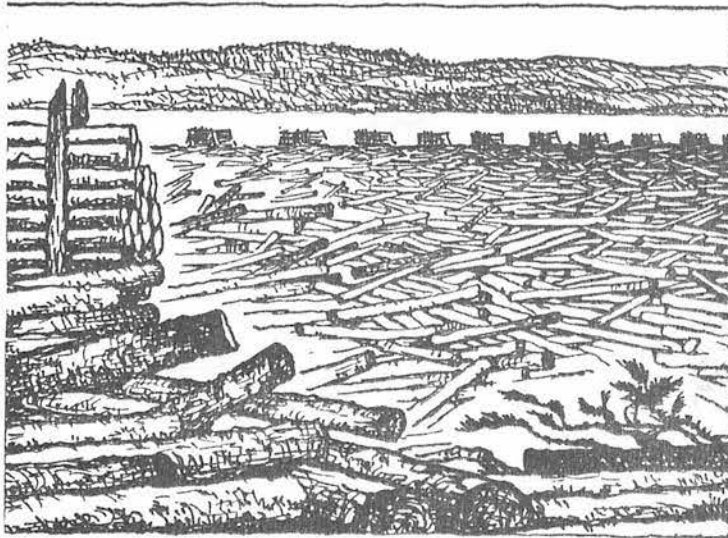




Splitting Cod & Biard's Beach }  
— fish —



The Isle of Gannets 



Log Storage

at Restigouche

