

GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY

THE CHANNEL ISLANDS FACTOR IN GASPESIA

SOME SOURCES OF
INFORMATION

AN ADDRESS TO THE GASPESIAN CHANNEL
ISLANDS SOCIETY'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
AT PASPEBIAC HISTORIC SITE, JULY 26, 1992.

KEN ANNETT

THE CHANNEL ISLANDS FACTOR IN GASPESOME SOURCES OF
INFORMATIONINTRODUCTION

WHEN LYNDEN BECHERVAISE PHONED TO INVITE ME TO JOIN WITH YOU TODAY I LATER REALIZED THAT I MAY HAVE AGREED TOO READILY AS MY CHANNEL ISLANDS CONNECTION IS NOT AS DIRECT AND STRONG AS IT IS FOR MANY OF YOU. PROBABLY MY ACCEPTANCE OF LYNDEN'S INVITATION WAS AN INSTINCTIVE REFLECTION OF THE GASPEIAN SOLIDARITY OF THE PIONEER BECHERVAISE AND ANNETT FAMILIES OF GASPÉ THAT TRANSCENDS US AS DESCENDANTS OF THIS GENERATION. AS A YOUNG LAD, GROWING UP ON OUR FARM ON THE NORTH WEST ARM OF GASPÉ BAY, I WAS AWARE THAT OUR LAND ADJOINED THOSE OF THE BECHERVAISE FAMILIES ON THE SOUTH WEST ARM. I KNEW TOO THAT WHEN MEN OF OUR FAMILY WANTED A WELL-MADE "FLAT" FOR TENDING SALMON NETS OR A GOOD CANOE FOR RIVER FISHING THEY TURNED TO THE SKILLED BECHERVAISE BUILDERS WHO CONTINUED A TRADITION ESTABLISHED IN GASPE BY PHILIP BECHERVAISE OF JERSEY, MASTER SHIP-BUILDER.

GRANDFATHER BRIEN

THE CHANNEL ISLANDS CONNECTION THAT I CAN CLAIM IS ON THE MATERNAL SIDE, MY LATE MOTHER'S FATHER, CHARLES BRIEN, HAVING BEEN BORN IN THE JERSEY PARISH OF ST. MARY'S, THE ONLY SON OF ESPRIT PIERRE AND MARIE LOUISE LE ROI BRIEN. GRANDFATHER BRIEN CAME OUT FROM JERSEY TO CANADA WITH THE FRUING COMPANY AND SERVED AT SEVERAL OF THE FRUING STATIONS, RISING TO BE THE COMPANY AGENT AT GASPÉ. HE RETURNED TO JERSEY FROM TIME TO TIME ON FRUING COMPANY BUSINESS - I RECALL HIM TELLING ME ABOUT THOSE LONG VOYAGES BY SAILING SHIP. AMONG THE THINGS HE LEFT, I TREASURE PARTICULARLY THIS FINE, OLD, LEATHER BOUND BOOK,

2.

"LES ENFANTS DU CAPITAINE GRANT - VOYAGE AUTOUR DU MONDE", AWARDED TO HIM AS A STUDENT AT THE ECOLE WESLEYENNE DE ST.OUEN, JERSEY, IN 1880 FOR 1st CLASS STANDING IN FRENCH. THE OFFICIAL SIGNING THE PRIZE BOOK WAS ROBERT PIPON MARETT - A NAME WITH A FAMILIAR JERSEY RING TO IT. AT THE AGE OF SIXTEEN GRANDFATHER CAME OUT TO THE BAY CHALEUR IN THE EMPLOY OF THE FRUING COMPANY . WILLIAM FRUING, AND HIS CONTEMPORARY, JOHN LE BOUTILLIER, HAD SERVED AS EMPLOYEES OF THE CHARLES ROBIN COMPANY BEFORE FOUNDING THEIR OWN RESPECTIVE FISHERY FIRMS. IN 1896 GRANDFATHER BRIEN AND HIS WIFE, MARY BLANCHE NIXON OF CARAQUET WERE RESIDENT ON MISCOU ISLAND. IN 1900 THEY WERE SETTLED AT GASPÉ WHENCE MY GRANDFATHER SUPERVISED THE FRUING STATIONS FROM GRAND GRÈVE TO MONT LOUIS AND TRAVELLED ABROAD TO THE CHANNEL ISLANDS AND ENGLAND. MY LATE MOTHER WOULD RECALL THAT HER FATHER OFTEN CARRIED COMPANY MONEY IN GOLD COIN SECRETED IN A POCKETED CANVAS MONEY BELT WORN UNDER HIS OUTER CLOTHING. THE LATE IVY DOLBELL SUDDARD, IN RECALL OF THE FRUING COMPANY, WROTE THAT HER GRANDFATHER, ALFRED WILLIAM DOLBELL, CAME OUT FROM JERSEY IN 1861 AT THE AGE OF SIXTEEN AND SERVED AS MANAGER AT GRIFFON COVE, FOX RIVER AND GRAND GRÈVE. AMONG HIS, AND MY GRANDFATHER'S, JERSEY CONTEMPORARIES WITH THE FRUING COMPANY WERE PHILIP LUCE, WHO LATER ESTABLISHED THE CARIBOU INN AT FOX RIVER; JOHN M. LUCE, MANAGER AT GRAND GRÈVE, TOM MOREL; ELIAS LUCE; CHARLES CARREL; CHARLES LE SELLEUR; PHIL. LE GRESLEY; FRED ROMERIL; MR. LE RICHE; PHIL. HUBERT; NELSON LAFOLLEY.

"GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY" SERIES

IT MAY WELL BE THAT YOUR INVITATION TO ME ARISES, IN PART, FROM THE SERIES OF HISTORICAL ARTICLES THAT I HAVE WRITTEN OVER THE PAST DOZEN YEARS AS A RETIREMENT PROJECT UNDER THE GENERAL HEADING, "GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY". OF THE 300 SUCH ARTICLES COMPLETED TO DATE

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SOME 150 HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED BY THE GASPEIAN WEEKLY NEWSPAPER, "SPEC" AND A NUMBER OF SELECTED TOPICS HAVE BEEN BROADCAST OVER THE CBC RADIO NETWORK PROGRAM, "QUEBEC A.M." IT MIGHT BE HELPFUL TO RECALL HERE SOME OF THE ARTICLES WITH CHANNEL ISLANDS THEMES:

- * DR. ANTOINE VON IFFLAND IN GASPÉ. (1821)
- * COLONEL SIR RICHARD BONNYCASTLE VISITS GASPEIA. (1831)
- * JOHN LE MESURIER
- * THE GASPÉ FISHERY. (1849 Report by Moses Perley)
- * COLONEL FRANCIS LE MAISTRE
- * WITH THIS RING I THEE WED.
- * CAPTAIN PETER DU VAL AND FAMILY.
- * THE WESLEYAN METHODIST CONNEXION.
- * PHILIP BECHERVAISE - SHIPBUILDER OF GASPÉ.
- * GASPÉ BASIN WATER LOTS.
- * INTRODUCING MARTIN SHEPPARD, N.P.
- * CHARLES ROBIN - PIONEER OF THE GASPÉ FISHERY
- * JERRI JADIS - THE BOOK BY GEORGE LE FEUVRE
- * THE SCHOONER "AURORE"
- * FORILLON DEED SERIES
- * RESPONSE TO 1833 INQUIRY ON GASPÉ.
- * GASPEIAN TRAVELOGUE - ABBÉ J.B.A FERLAND.
- * WILLIAM LE BOUTILLIER FAUVEL, M.P.
- * THE BRIG "SEAFLOWER" OF JERSEY
- * INVENTORY - LATE WILLIAM LE MAISTRE
- * BRITISH INFLUENCE IN GASPEIA

AS THESE AND OTHER ARTICLES WITH CHANNEL ISLANDS REFERENCES HAVE INVOLVED SEARCH OF MANY SOURCES, PERHAPS THE MOST USEFUL THING I CAN DO TODAY IS TO IDENTIFY SOME OF THE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON THE CHANNEL ISLANDERS IN GASPEIA.

LIMITATIONS

IN LIMITING THE TOPIC TODAY TO "THE CHANNEL ISLANDS FACTOR IN GASPESIA" IT IS NECESSARY TO SET ASIDE A RECALL OF THE FASCINATING HISTORY OF THE CHANNEL ISLANDS THEMSELVES WHERE MANY RACES - GAULS, ROMANS, FRANKS, AND ABOVE ALL THE VIKINGS HAVE LEFT AN HISTORIC HERITAGE. IT WAS ABOUT THE YEAR 933 A.D. THAT THE ISLANDS BECAME PART OF THE DUCHY OF NORMANDY AND THEIR CONNECTION WITH THE BRITISH CROWN HAS EXISTED SINCE 1066 A.D. WHEN WILLIAM, DUKE OF NORMANDY CONQUERED AND BECAME KING OF ENGLAND.

NOR WILL IT BE POSSIBLE TODAY TO RECOUNT THE LONG AND IMPORTANT ROLE OF THE CHANNEL ISLANDERS IN THE NEWFOUNDLAND AND NOVA SCOTIAN FISHERY. AT LEAST THREE DECADES BEFORE JACQUES CARTIER SAILED INTO BAY CHALEUR CHANNEL ISLANDERS WERE FISHING IN NEWFOUNDLAND WATERS AND LONG BEFORE THE FALL OF NEW FRANCE WE FIND RECORD OF SUCH ISLAND NAMES AS LE BRETON, COLLAS, SEALE, JANVRIN, CARTARET, DEAN, PIPON, NICOLLE, MARETT, MAUGIER, TOUZELL AND OTHERS INVOLVED IN THE MARITIME FISHERY.

BUT, HISTORICALLY, GASPESIA WAS "OFF-LIMITS" TO THE BRITISH (including Channel Islanders) FOR FISHING DURING THE LONG YEARS OF THE FRENCH REGIME. THUS OUR SEARCH FOR GASPESIAN SOURCES CAN BE SAID TO BEGIN WITH "THE GASPEE EXPEDITION" OF GENERAL WOLFE AND SIR CHARLES HARDY INTO GASPESIAN WATERS IN 1758 AFTER THE FALL OF THE GREAT FRENCH FORTRESS OF LOUISBOURG, THE FALL OF QUEBEC IN 1759 AND THE FALL OF NEW FRANCE IN 1760.

ROYAL NAVY

AS FAR AS I KNOW THE ROLE OF CHANNEL ISLANDERS IN THE ROYAL NAVY AND OTHER BRITISH FORCES INVOLVED IN THE REDUCTION OF LOUISBOURG, QUEBEC AND NEW FRANCE HAS NOT BEEN WELL RECORDED. REGARDING ONE SUCH ROYAL NAVY OFFICER, MRS. MARION TURK IN HER BOOK, "THE QUIET ADVENTURERS IN CANADA" HAS WRITTEN, IN PART:

5.

"PHILIP DURELL, VICE-ADMIRAL IN THE BRITISH NAVY, WAS BORN IN 1707 IN ST.HELIER'S, JERSEY, AND ENTERED THE ROYAL NAVY VERY YOUNG AS WAS THE CUSTOM THEN. HE WAS A MIDSHIPMAN ON THE FRIGATE "SEAHORSE" COMMANDED BY HIS UNCLE, CAPTAIN THOMAS DURELL, R.N....

PHILIP DURELL WAS IN COMMAND OF H.M.S. "ELTHAN" DURING THE FIRST SUCCESSFUL ATTACK ON LOUISBOURG AND HE WAS ALSO ON HAND FOR THE SECOND REDUCTION OF FORTRESS LOUISBOURG. THEN HE AMONG THE ROYAL NAVY OFFICERS WHO SUCCESSFULLY BROUGHT THE BRITISH FLEET AND SUPPLY SHIPS A THOUSAND MILES UP THE ST.LAWRENCE FROM THE ATLANTIC - A SEAWAY WHERE SHOALS, REEFS, CURRENTS AND FOGS ARE STILL SNAGS FOR UNWARY SEAMEN. AFTER THE FALL OF QUEBEC HE RETURNED TO ENGLAND TO BECOME PORT ADMIRAL OF PLYMOUTH. LATER, HE WAS APPOINTED ROYAL NAVY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF IN MARITIME CANADA. HE DIED IN 1776 AND WAS BURIED FROM ST.PAUL'S CHURCH, HALIFAX."

AT THE TIME I WAS WRITING THE "GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY" ARTICLE, "THE GASPEE EXPEDITION", PUBLISHED BY "SPEC" IN SEPTEMBER, 1978, I COULD NOT BUT WONDER WHAT CHANNEL ISLANDERS WERE IN GASPESIAN WATERS AS MEMBERS OF THAT EXPEDITION AND RETURNED HOME TO JERSEY AND GUERNSEY WITH PROMISING ACCOUNTS OF THE POTENTIAL FOR A COMMERCIAL FISHERY IN GASPEZIA.

CHARLES ROBIN - PIONEER.

THE START OF CHANNEL ISLANDS INVOLVEMENT IN THE GASPESIAN FISHERY HAS BEEN WELL DOCUMENTED AND DEFINED IN A PAPER ENTITLED -"CHARLES ROBIN, PIONEER OF THE GASPE FISHERY" READ BEFORE A MEETING OF THE SOCIÉTÉ JERSIAISE IN 1929 BY A.C.SAUNDERS, LIBRARIAN OF THE SOCIETY. I HAVE REPRODUCED THAT PAPER IN "GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY" ARTICLE # 154, VOLUME NO.5. IT WAS BASED ON THE FORTUNATE FIND OF A BOX OF OLD DOCUMENTS OF THE PIPON FAMILY AT NOIRMONT MANOR, ST.AUBIN, JERSEY. AT THE OUTSET IT CONFIRMS THE CLEAR DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE NEWFOUND-

LAND AND GASPEIAN FISHERIES MENTIONED ABOVE. INTERESTINGLY, IT POINTS OUT THAT THE FORTUNES MADE BY MERCHANTS OF ST.MALO,FRANCE DURING THE PERIOD OF THE FRENCH REGIME IN CANADA HAD OFTEN BEEN THE SUBJECT OF CONVERSATION AROUND CHANNEL ISLANDS FIREPLACES. WITH THE FALL OF NEW FRANCE, CONFIRMED BY THE TREATY OF 1763, THE JERSEY MERCHANT FIRM OF ROBIN,PIPON COMPANY LOST NO TIME IN DISPATCHING THEIR 41 TON BRIG, "SEAFLOWER" TO BAY CHALEUR TO CHECK ON THE FISHERY POTENTIAL. WITH "SEAFLOWER" CAME CHARLES ROBIN, AN AMBITIOUS YOUNG MAN 23 YEARS OF AGE. THUS BEGAN THE ROBIN COMPANY SAGA WHICH FINDS THE ROBIN NAME STILL WELL KNOWN IN GASPEIA TWO HUNDRED AND THIRTY YEARS LATER IN TIME.

THERE ARE, OF COURSE OTHER IMPORTANT SOURCES FOR THE ROBIN CO. SAGA. THE LATE ARTHUR LE GROS, WITH ACCESS TO THE PRIMARY SOURCE OF COMPANY RECORDS, MADE IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTIONS THROUGH HIS ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN THE REVUE D'HISTOIRE DE LA GASPÉSIE. AGAIN, THE HISTORIAN AND AUTHOR, DAVID LEE, PUBLISHED IN 1984 HIS WELL-DOCUMENTED BOOK OF 148 pp. ENTITLED - "THE ROBINS IN GASPÉ -1766 TO 1825". THIS BOOK HAS AN EXCELLENT BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR BOTH PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES. YET ANOTHER IMPORTANT SOURCE IS THE THESIS FOR A MASTER'S DEGREE BY JOHN P. LE GARIGNON ENTITLED,"NORMAN HERITAGE ON THE GASPE COAST" - A SOCIO-HISTORIC STUDY OF THE JERSEY PRESENCE. THE ORIGINAL THESIS IN ENGLISH WAS TRANSLATED AND PUBLISHED BY REVUE D'HISTOIRE DE LA GASPÉSIE IN 1978. SECTION I CONCERNS PARTICULARLY THE ROBINS AND HAS, IN APPENDIX THE FASCINATING CORRESPONDENCE OF PHILIP ROBIN, MARTHE ARBOUR AND THEIR DAUGHTER, ELIZABETH, WHO BECAME THE WIFE OF JOHN LE BOUTILLIER. SECTION II HAS INTERESTING INFORMATION ON THE FAMILIES OF: LE BOUTILLIER, FRUING; JANVRIN; FAUVEL; LE MARQUAND; COLAS; LE MESURIER; ALEXANDRE; GIRARD; LE GRAND; LE HOULLIER; LE GROS; AND THE JEWISH FAMILIES OF HYMAN AND LEVINE.

SECTION III RECORDS PERSONAL INTERVIEWS THAT THE AUTHOR HAD WITH SEVERAL GASPESIANS OF CHANNEL ISLANDS DESCENT, INCLUDING DOUGLAS BARETTE; FRANK LE GRESLEY; ARTHUR LE GROS; HEDLEY MICHEL; ARTHUR OLIVIER; BERT MANNING; GEORGE CAMIOT; JOHN BECQUET; CYRIL LE GARIGNON; WILFRED BRIDEAUX. THESE INTERVIEWS ARE A RICH SOURCE OF INFORMATION ON MANY OTHER CHANNEL ISLANDERS IN GASPEZIA.

JOHN LE GARIGNON'S THESIS HAS A USEFUL BIBLIOGRAPHY AND NO LESS THAN ELEVEN INTERESTING APPENDICES.

CHURCH RECORDS

FOR THOSE WITH PARTICULAR INTEREST IN THE GENEALOGICAL ASPECT OF CHANNEL ISLANDERS IN GASPEZIA CHURCH RECORDS OF BAPTISM, MARRIAGE AND BURIAL ARE AN INDISPENSABLE SOURCE OF FAMILY INFORMATION. IT WOULD BE NICE TO REPORT THAT ALL CHURCH RECORDS EXIST AND ARE EASILY ACCESSIBLE BUT THIS IS FAR FROM THE CASE. THE ARCHIVES NATIONALES DU QUÉBEC HAS FILMED MANY GASPÉ CHURCH REGISTERS BUT RECORDS DO NOT EXIST OR, AT LEAST, HAVE NOT BEEN FOUND FOR THE PERIOD FROM 1760 TO 1820. NOW AND AGAIN MISSING RECORDS COME TO LIGHT. A DETERMINED EFFORT TO FIND AND CLASSIFY ALL RECORDS FOR THE PROTESTANT CONGREGATIONS OF GASPEZIA IS IN PROGRESS BY M. GUY RICHARD OF STE-FOY, A NATIVE OF MAGDALEN RIVER. THIS IMPORTANT SOURCE OF INFORMATION MIGHT PROVIDE A HELPFUL ACTIVITY FOR YOUR YOUNG CHANNEL ISLANDS SOCIETY.

NOTARIAL RECORDS

A PARTICULARLY RICH SOURCE OF INFORMATION ON CHANNEL ISLANDERS IN GASPEZIA IS TO BE FOUND IN THE RECORDS OF EARLY NOTARIES PRESERVED IN REGIONAL AND PROVINCIAL ARCHIVES. THESE EARLY ACTS OR DEEDS REFLECT A VARIETY OF SITUATIONS, VIZ. PROTESTS OF CAPTAINS AND CREWS OF SHIPS SAILING BETWEEN THE CHANNEL ISLANDS AND GASPEZIA; CONTRACTS BETWEEN FISHERMEN AND FISHERY FIRMS; THE SALE AND TRANSFER OF LANDS; MARRIAGE CONTRACTS; WILLS AND TESTAMENTS; ESTABLISHMENT OF SCHOOLS AND CHURCHES;

THE BUILDING OF ROADS; ETC.ETC. IT IS MOST SIGNIFICANT THAT THE FIRST RESIDENT NOTARY IN GASPEZIA AFTER THE CONQUEST WAS THE GUERNSEYMAN, MARTIN SHEPPARD, SON OF WILLIAM AND ANN GRUT SHEPPARD OF ST. PETER'S PORT. HE SERVED HIS NOTARIAL APPRENTICESHIP UNDER THE GASPESIAN-BORN NOTARY, LAUGHLAN T. McPHERSON IN QUEBEC CITY AND CAME TO GASPEZIA TO PRACTICE IN 1825. HIS RECORDS ARE A PRECIOUS SOURCE OF INFORMATION ON THE PEOPLE AND EVENTS IN GASPEZIA FOR NEARLY SIXTY YEARS. IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT A NUMBER OF HIS ACTS WERE WRITTEN FOR HIS FELLOW GUERNSEYMEN ON THE FORILLON OF GASPÉ BAY. HE AND HIS FAMILY WERE CLOSELY LINKED TO NEW CARLISLE AND TO ST.ANDREW'S ANGLICAN CHURCH WHERE HE LIES BURIED.

ACTS OF MANY OTHER EARLY NOTARIES RELATING TO THE CHANNEL ISLANDERS OF GASPEZIA ARE PRESERVED IN THE ARCHIVES OF RIMOUSKI AND QUEBEC CITY.

ECCLESIASTICAL VISITORS

A DIFFERENT VIEWPOINT ON CHANNEL ISLANDS ACTIVITY AND INFLUENCE IN GASPEZIA CAN BE GAINED FROM THE "JOURNALS" OF TWO PROMINENT ECCLESIASTICAL VISITORS, THE ANGLICAN ARCHDEACON GEORGE JEHO. MOUNTAIN AND THE ROMAN CATHOLIC ABBÉ J.B.A.FERLAND.

ARCHDEACON MOUNTAIN FIRST CAME TO THE GASPÉ COAST IN 1824 AND HE RETURNED IN 1826. ARRIVING IN GASPÉ BAY BY SCHOONER FROM QUEBEC CITY IN AUGUST, 1824, HE FIRST FOUND THE LITTLE PROTESTANT CHAPEL (WESLEYAN METHODIST) AT ST.GEORGE'S COVE BUILT BY THE GUERNSEY COMMUNITY OF FORILLON FISHERMEN. THEY HAD NO CLERGYMAN SO AT THEIR REQUEST ARCHDEACON MOUNTAIN CONDUCTED SERVICES IN THEIR FRENCH LANGUAGE AND PROCEEDED TO BAPTIZE AND MARRY. HE THEN VISITED THE VERY EARLY ANGLICAN CHURCHES AT GASPÉ BASIN, MALBAY AND PERCÉ BEFORE TRAVELLING ALONG BAY CHALEUR BY OPEN BOAT FROM SETTLEMENT TO SETTLEMENT UNTIL HE REACHED RESTIGOUCHE. THOSE SECTIONS OF HIS

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"JOURNALS" THAT SURVIVE, PROVIDE AN INTERESTING AND INFORMATIVE VIEW OF LIFE ON THE COAST SOME 165 YEARS AGO.

THE SECOND VISITOR AND JOURNALIST WAS THE ABBÉ J.B.A.FERLAND WHO ACCOMPANIED THE ROMAN CATHOLIC BISHOP TURGEON ON AN EXTENSIVE VISIT TO GASPESIA IN 1836. THE BISHOP'S PARTY SAILED FROM QUEBEC CITY IN THE CHARTERED SCHOONER "SARA" IN JUNE OF THAT YEAR, MADE CALLS AT SUCH SETTLEMENTS AS STE.ANNE DES MONTS, FOX RIVER AND GRIFFON COVE BEFORE ENTERING GASPÉ BAY WHERE THEY VISITED VARIOUS FISHING STATIONS. FROM GASPÉ THE "SARA" CARRIED THEM FROM SETTLEMENT TO SETTLEMENT AT A TIME WHEN THE FISHERY WAS THE MAJOR INDUSTRY AND ITS CONTROL FIRMLY IN CHANNEL ISLANDS HANDS.

"GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY" HAS SIX ARTICLES BASED ON ABBÉ FERLAND'S "JOURNALS" UNDER THE HEADING OF "GASPESIAN TRAVELOGUES".

THE QUIET ADVENTURERS

MANY OF YOU ARE LIKELY FAMILIAR WITH THE CHANNEL ISLANDS BOOKS OF THE AMERICAN AUTHOR, MRS.MARION TURK, INCLUDING HER 1979 VOLUME, "THE QUIET ADVENTURERS IN CANADA". IN PREPARING TO PUBLISH THIS 550 PAGE BOOK, MRS.TURK CORRESPONDED WITH SEVERAL GASPESIANS ABOUT THEIR CHANNEL ISLANDS BACKGROUND. THE MAIN BODY OF THE BOOK IS ORGANIZED BY FAMILIES IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER. THERE HAS BEEN SOME CRITICISM AS TO THE ACCURACY AND COMPLETENESS OF THE AUTHOR'S DATA BUT THERE IS LITTLE QUESTION THAT MRS.TURK'S WORK SERVES TO CONVEY AN IMPRESSIVE PICTURE OF THE EXTENT AND INFLUENCE OF A REMARKABLE NUMBER OF CHANNEL ISLANDS FAMILIES IN GASPESIA AND BEYOND IN CANADA.

MORE RECENT SOURCES

TWO RECENT PUBLICATIONS THAT PROVIDE INFORMATION ON CHANNEL ISLANDERS IN GASPESIA SHOULD BE MENTIONED. BOTH VOLUMES WERE SPONSORED BY THE INSTITUT QUEBECOIS DE RECHERCHE SUR LA CULTURE. THE FIRST OF THESE, PUBLISHED IN 1981 IS THE MASSIVE, 800 PAGE, "HISTOIRE DE LA GASPESIE"

AUTHORED BY MESSRS JULES BÉLANGER, MARC DESJARDINS, YVES FRENETTE AND PIERRE DANSEREAU. CHAPTER 7, "LA MORUE SÈCHE, MOTEUR DE L'ECONOMIE" FOLLOWS THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GASPEIAN FISHERY FROM THE TIME OF THE CONQUEST TO THE MID 19th CENTURY. AT THE RISK OF OVERSIMPLIFICATION IT TAKES THE POINT OF VIEW THAT THE CHANNEL ISLANDS FIRMS WERE OPPRESSORS - ECONOMICALLY AND SOCIALLY - AND THAT THE GASPEIAN FISHERMEN WERE THE OPPRESSED. A SUBSEQUENT CHAPTER, NO.11, "LES ACTIVITIES MARITIMES" CONTINUES THEIR ACCOUNT OF THE FISHERY UP TO THE 20th CENTURY.

A YEAR AGO, IN JUNE 1991, IN A PAPER ON "BRITISH INFLUENCE IN GASPEIA" PRESENTED TO THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE FEDERATION OF HISTORICAL SOCIETIES OF QUEBEC HELD IN GASPE, I SOUGHT TO PROVIDE SOME BALANCE TO VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS "HISTOIRE DE LA GASPEIE". I SAID, IN PART: "CRITICS OF THE ROBIN COMPANY (AS TYPICAL OF THE CHANNEL ISLANDERS FISHERY FIRMS) CONVENIENTLY OVERLOOK THE RISKS FACED IN EARLIER TIMES. MAJOR CAPITAL INVESTMENT WAS REQUIRED AND THIS FACED RISKS FROM THE FLUCTATIONS OF MARKETS CAUSED BY INTERNATIONAL EVENTS SUCH AS WAR, REVOLUTION AND PERILS AT SEA FROM STORM, PIRACY AND PRIVATEERING. IT IS INSTRUCTIVE TO REFLECT ON THE GREAT NUMBER OF ROBIN'S COMPETITORS WHO WENT BANKRUPT AND ON THE DISCIPLINE, SYSTEM AND ORDER THAT ENABLED THE ROBIN FIRM TO SURVIVE WHERE OTHERS FAILED."

THE SECOND BOOK, "BIBLIOGRAPHIE DE LA GASPEIE" BY MARC DESJARDINS WAS PUBLISHED in 1987. WITHIN ITS 436 PAGES IS A WEALTH OF REFERENCES TO THE LITERATURE ON GASPEIA - BOTH IN FRENCH AND ENGLISH. IN MY OPINION IT IS AN ESSENTIAL TOOL FOR RESEARCH ON MOST GASPEIAN TOPICS INCLUDING THE ACTIVITIES AND INFLUENCE OF THE CHANNEL ISLANDERS.

DR. JOHN MASON CLARKE

IT IS NATURAL THAT EACH OF US WILL BRING TO ANY TOPIC OUR OWN SUBJECTIVE OPINION. ON THE QUESTION OF SOURCES FOR THE CHANNEL ISLANDERS IN GASPESIA I DOUBT IF THERE EXISTS MORE DISCERNING AND ELOQUENT BOOKS THAN THOSE OF DR. JOHN MASON CLARKE. IN HIS "SKETCHES OF GASPE" (1908); "THE HEART OF GASPE" (1913); "ILE PERCEE" (1923) AND OTHER WRITING, DR. CLARKE HAS PUT ON RECORD HIS REMARKABLE INSIGHT AND APPRECIATION OF THE CHANNEL ISLANDERS WHO DEVELOPED THE GASPESIAN FISHERY AND BECAME SUCH AN INTEGRAL AND INFLUENTIAL ELEMENT OF THE GASPESIAN POPULATION. I FIRST READ THE "HEART OF GASPÉ" AS A PUPIL IN A ONE-ROOM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, HAVE REREAD IT MANY TIMES SINCE, AND CAN STILL APPRECIATE ANEW EACH TIME THIS AUTHOR'S ABILITY TO REFLECT THE REMARKABLE QUALITIES OF THE GUERNSEY AND JERSEY FOLK IN GASPESIA.

WHEN JOSEPH SCHLL WROTE HIS OFFICIAL ACCOUNT OF CANADIAN NAVAL OPERATIONS IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR HE WAS INSPIRED TO GIVE IT THE RESOUNDING TITLE - "THE FAR DISTANT SHIPS". HOW FITTING A TITLE THAT WOULD BE FOR ANY ACCOUNT OF THE CHANNEL ISLANDERS IN GASPESIA. FROM THE LITTLE 41 TON BRIG, "SEAFLOWER", THAT BROUGHT CHARLES ROBIN FROM JERSEY TO THIS VERY SHORE in 1764, EXTENDS A LONG, LONG LIST OF SHIPS BUILT AND MANNED BY CHANNEL ISLANDERS, THOSE FAR DISTANT SHIPS IN THE IMMENSITY OF THE OCEAN, THAT BROUGHT OUR ANCESTORS TO THESE SHORES AND SAILED TO THE PORTS OF EUROPE, THE CARIBBEAN, SOUTH AMERICA AND BEYOND.

IT IS INDEED A RICH HERITAGE THAT THE CHANNEL ISLANDS SOCIETY OF GASPESIA CAN JUSTLY CLAIM AND CELEBRATE.