

THE PROTESTANT SCHOOLS.

During the early history of Gaspé. instruction was given at the children's own home by private teachers, itinerant teachers or by the more educated residents. One of the first teachers was Charles Davis, who, after studying and teaching Latin in Quebec, began teaching at L'Anse-aux-Cousins, upon his arrival around 1808. There was another teacher at Gaspé Harbour, called James Mills.

On September 29, 1810, a petition, prepared by Hugh O'Hara, and signed by the residents of Gaspé and Grande Grave, was sent to Governor Sir James Craig, asking him to have a school built at the Basin and to appoint a teacher to provide for ~~the education of~~ the education of the hundred or so children who resided there. The Governor replied that they should first build the school, in accordance with the laws of the Province. Nothing further was accomplished.

On January 7, 1812, the same petitioners notified the then Governor, Sir Georges Prevost, that they were ready to build the school, and asked him to designate the location of the school and to appoint a teacher. It would seem that their intention was to build the school at Gaspé Harbour. There were about forty names on the petition, Protestants and Catholics alike, residents of the Basin, L'Anse-aux-Cousins, Pointe Navarre, and Grande Grave. Among them we find the names of James Stuart, Abraham Coffin, William Patterson, Francois Giffard, John Adams, John Trudel, Pierre Chouinard ETC. They recommended that a certain James Mills be appointed as teacher.

On the 10th the same month, a counter-petition was presented to Governor Prevost, signed by some thirty residents of the South West, Anse-aux-Cousins, and Penouille, protesting against the

proposed site for the school and the appointment of James Mills. On the one hand the site selected was not central. On the other hand most the persons who signed the petition were strangers whose names had been obtained merely to swell the list of those who had signed the request. James Mills, it was alleged, should not be appointed as he was nothing but a drunkard.

The same petitioners had joined the first, ⁱⁿ 1810, to ask for a school and the appointment of James Mills, providing he would better his ways. Unfortunately Mills had not changed his way of living and they could not accept the site selected by the first petitioners. They claimed to be the only true citizens who kept Gaspé what it was, and they insisted that the Governor have the school built in a central location which would be accessible to all. Among the names of the second petitioners we find George Boyle, Abraham Coffin, Jr. John Patterson, Richard Annett, Richard Miller. Charles Davis ETC.

A Committee was appointed on March the 16th, to study the situation. It could reach no decision. During the following month of September, Herman Ryland, civil secretary, went to Gaspé, to make an investigation there and then, In this report dated March the 13th, 1813, he declared himself in favor of the site proposed by the second petition, namely the property adjoining that of Samuel Tripp, on a point called "Half Way Point" about a mile and half from "Grand Point" beyond the village. He also recommended, to a certain extent the appointment of James Mills.

As a result the school was built on "Half Way Point". It was the first school in Gaspé. It is the site occupied at present by the Wakeham Church.

Since that time the school situation has Developed Very considerably. But the Records available of the early days are slender. And the ones that have been Gathered are Just hear say. How-ever as slender as the records may be they will Give some idea of our Grand Parents schooling.

In Haldimand, school was taught by Alexander Baird at John Cunning's home around 1860. The first school was built around 1890, and the second school was built 1938. There was also a school at Haldimand West known as Carter it was built in 1928, and it came under the York school board. Emmiline Annett was the first to teach in that school.

In Sandy Beach there is nothing known about the first school, which was probably built in the 1830's. The first school that there is records of was a school built around 1870 as an elementary and later changed into a modern school. Some of the older teachers of the country received their diplomas there, Matthew O'Mara and John Pope both taught in that school.

The second school in Sandy Beach was built in 1890 and the third one in 1937. In 1947 Sandy Beach and Haldimand school board joined the school board of Gaspe Basin, they established a bus service to carry the children to and from the school at Gaspe Basin and closed the Sandy Beach and Haldimand schools.

York school was first taught at Benjamin Annett's home, then in an old well house on Percy Patterson's property. Around 1880 the first and only school of York Center was built near Russell Coffin's home. Helen Davis was the first to teach that school.

In Sunny Bank Annebella Boyle taught school from 1869 to 1872 at Edmund Patterson's home, in 1872 the first school was built and she taught until 1876. In 1915 a second class room was added to the old school. The first to teach in that class room was Ada Boyle and Ada Bechervaise.

In 1935 a new school was built, a two class room in 1938 two more class rooms were added to the school and it became an Intermediate School. The same year the York school board closed York Center school and established a bus service to carry the children to and from school at Sunny Bank. York was the first school board in Gaspé to have that service.

In Wakeham the first school has already being mentioned P Philip Bechervaise the 1st, built a school around 1840 on his property to teach his own children, but it is believed that other children attended it also. It is not known how long it was used.

Around 1870 the second public school was built on the grounds of the present one, Helen Ross, Alice Charleston and Annebella Johnson were among the first to teach at that school.

In 1910 the school board built a second school on the property of Angus Patterson it still stands to day but is closed. Flora Boyle was the first to teach at that school.

In 1935 the present school was opened, it had at that time only one class room . In 1939 it was enlarged to a three class room, it then became an Intermediate School. The same year the school board established a bus service and closed no. 2 school. In 1943 the fourth class room was added. (Mrs) Alice Edeh has taught in that school since it was built and several years in the old one. The school board also had a school at Point Navarre built in 1905, that school was closed in 1948 and children came to Wakeham.

L'Anse Aux Cousins always belonged to the Gaspé School Board and it was the first place in the bay to have school taught in private homes.

It's not known what time the first school was built, how ever records show they had one in the early 1860's Helen Davis and Mary Thompson both taught at that school.

The second school was built in 1892. Emily Suddard and Hilda Boyle were among the first to teach at that school.

The third school was built in 1918 on the same grounds that school was closed in 1955 and the children then went to Gaspe Basin.

Gaspe Basin like all other places around had school taught in private homes. Matthew O'Mara taught at F Viet. The first school was built around 1855 the first teachers that taught in that school were John Pope, Mary Pope and Thomas Laws.

The second school at Gaspe Basin was built in 1887 the contract was given to P. Machon of Rosebridge, to build the school for \$575.00.

The third school was an intermediate built in 1914, pupils from all over the eastern half of the Gaspe Coast attended that school and was taught by (Mrs) Beatrice Coffin she taught at Gaspe from 1919 to 1944.

The fourth and present school is a High School with fourteen class rooms, a gym and auditorium it was opened in January 1956. In 1956 the school boards of Haldimand, Sandy Beach, York and Wakeham amalgamated with Gaspe Basin. Only a few years ago there were ten schools open, to day even with more children attending there are only three open York, Wakeham and Gaspe Basin.

In the school term of 1957 - 58 at Gaspe Basin School there were nine teachers with 286 children attending classes. At Wakeham there were three teachers for grades one to six with 96 children attending classes. At York there were two teachers for grades one to four with 45 children attending classes.