

Textes en anglais – Texts in English

Dossier thématique : « **LA GASPÉSIE BRITISH** »

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The role and influence of the English Gaspesia

In attempting today to recall and define some aspects of the role and influence of the English in Gaspesia* it may be helpful to extend the definition of ENGLISH beyond the basic criterion of language to reflect that of origins. Thus we include among the English of Gaspesia all persons from England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, the Channel Islands (particularly Jersey and Guernsey), the United Empire Loyalists and the veteran soldiers of British and Colonial forces in the Colonial and American Revolutionary Wars. In general these folks shared an English language that had, over time, evolved from Celtic, Anglo-Saxon and Norman French roots. Equally they shared a code of Law and tradition of individual rights rooted in the Magna Carta of 1215 and Bill of Rights of 1689.

The end of the Seven Year War by the Treaty of Paris in 1763 ended the colonial regime of New France and ushered in the British regime. In the period of twenty years that followed, prior to arrival in Gaspesia of the United Empire Loyalists together with veteran soldiers, a significant English presence developed in the following areas of Gaspesia.

◆ **Lynden Bechervaise,**
New Carlisle

Pre-loyalist years, 1763-1783

Area of Gaspé Bay and Percé

The pioneer settler at Gaspé Basin, was Felix O'Hara, a native of Ireland, colonist of New England until the War of the American Revolution. He and his family came to Gaspé in 1764. As land surveyor,

merchant, landowner, Justice of the peace and first Judge of Gaspesia, he was influential in Gaspesia. His early neighbours in Gaspé Bay included the Ascah family of Peninsula and the Patterson family of the South-West Arm of the Bay. Among the other pioneer English families who came to this area in the pre-Loyalist era were those of Adams, Annett, Baker, Boyle, Coffin, Miller, Simpson and Stewart to mention a few. The rich cod fishery off Cape Gaspé brought Guernsey families to the coves of the Forillon, now within the National Park. At Percé a census of 1777 recorded that of 35 resident families no less than 24 were of Irish, Scotch and English origin. These pre-Loyalist settlers endured raids from American privateers during the War of the American Revolution. At Gaspé Felix O'Hara was taken prisoner and Percé was invaded and plundered.

Charles Robin and the Jersey fishery.

The merchant-traders and fishermen of Jersey had long been aware, from neighbouring Bretons and Normans, of the rich cod fishery of Chaleur Bay – a fishery denied to them by the authorities of France and New France. The Treaty of Paris now provided them with access as British subjects, and in 1766 the Jersey merchant, Charles Robin, arrived in Chaleur Bay to lay the foundations of a fishery that served international markets and was to have major social and economic consequences for Gaspesia. Access to English risk capital enabled the Robin Company, and the firms that grew up with time to compete with it, to survive losses experienced through war, piracy, storm at sea and economic depression. Paspébiac Point developed as the Robin headquarters with a shipyard and other facilities necessary for a fishery empire.

Robin fishing stations along Gaspesian shores were the nuclei of many of our communities. Today, after more than two centuries, a reading of the Gaspesian telephone directory bears eloquent testimony to the many Channel Islands name among residents of our shores.

The Restigouche estuary area.

The rich resources of the Restigouche estuary in salmon, timber and furs drew the Scotch traders, George Walker and Hugh Baillie to the area as early as 1768. They were followed by the English merchants, John and Henry Shoolbred. Frustrated by raids of American privateers and Amerindian bands the Shoolbreds leased their holdings to Samuel Lee in 1779 but John Shoolbred was later recompensed by the award of the Shoolbred Seigniorie. Among the many English family names of early settlers from Nouvelle to Matapédia were those of Adams, Duncan, Fraser, Ferguson, McGregor, Duthie, Busteed, Rimpfhoff, Pratt, Smith and Gerrard. Shipbuilding developed and was linked to an export trade in fish and timber.

Loyalist and veteran settlement, 1784-1800

During the War of the American Revolution (1775-1783) Loyalist refugees fled into Quebec and were sheltered in temporary camps along the Saint-Lawrence between Montreal and Three Rivers. With the end of hostilities by the Treaty of Paris in 1783 Governor Haldimand arranged for a survey of lands in Gaspesia for permanent Loyalist settlement, the report of that survey by Captain Justus Sherwood, a prominent Loyalist, saw possibilities for settlement in Gaspé Bay, Percé, Pabos, Paspébiac, New Richmond and Restigouche estuary lands. Governor Haldimand gave the responsibility for Loyalist movement and settlement in Gaspesia to Captain George Law, a distinguished officer of the 84th Royal Highland Emigrants Regiment, and by June, 1784, a party of some 500 Loyalist men, women and children embarked in Quebec for Gaspesia. A town site was laid out in New Carlisle by Felix O'Hara to accommodate most of this first party of Loyalist. Other Loyalist and veteran soldiers made new homes in Hopetown, Port Daniel, Pabos and on the shores of Gaspé Bay. A second townsite was laid out in Douglstown. This major infusion of English settlers had a widespread and significant impact on Gaspesia as reflected in education, religion, courts of justice, occupational initiative in industry such as shipbuilding and resource development beyond the traditional fishery. In 1984 the Gaspesian descendants and friends of the Loyalists celebrated the

bicentennial of Loyalist settlement. The Gaspesian British Centre of New Richmond reflects the Loyalist aspect of our English inheritance.

Shipbuilding and seafaring

With the possible exception of the Amerindians, all of the early people of Gaspesia had come by sea. The role of shipping was thus primordial and the building of ships a regional necessity. Shipbuilding required capital and skills. Making use of a range of wood from Gaspesian forests, shipyards developed early in the British regime from Gaspé Bay along the Chaleur Bay to Restigouche. Typical of the family names involved in shipbuilding were those of Annett, Bechervaise, Mabe, LeBoutillier, Savage, Kelly, Billingsley, Caldwell, Cuthbert, Mann and Stewart. John Day, renowned shipbuilder for the Charles Robin Co., built and repaired company ships as the shipyard he established and supervised in Paspébiac. In Gaspé Bay was based a cluster of some dozen whaling schooners, locally built and manned, that pursued whaling in the Gulf and Estuary of the Saint Lawrence. Gaspé built ships carried cargoes of cod and other products of sea and shore to major seaports such as Quebec, Halifax and Saint John's and made regular transocean voyages to markets in England, Spain, Italy and the Island of the Caribbean. In all such maritime activity the English Gaspesians played a significant role.

Forest resources

In 1799 Napoleon Bonaparte seized power in France and as a result of his conquest of Europe, Britain was cut off from many European imports, including the timber required to build and maintain the Navy that was so essential to defence. Thus began British interest in the forest resources of North America- particularly those stands of timber near tide-water and seaports. From Metis and Matane on the Saint Lawrence, in Gaspé Bay and along Chaleur Bay to the Restigouche, Gaspesia was blessed with forested watersheds of rivers that could carry cut timber to the sea. The capital required for the development of early timber trade in Gaspesia came from England and Scotland. The family names of Duncan, Fraser, Ritchie and Gilmour are recalled regarding early lumbering on the Matapedia and Restigouche. Cuthbert and Montgomery lumbered on the Cascapedia. Cullen, Sinclair and Hay exported timber from the Bonaventure. William Price operated a mill and export of lumber at Metis. In time, Canadian and American capital came in to finance the forest operations and mills that were a vital economic factor of life in Gaspesia.

Search for petroleum

Long before Europeans came to Gaspesia the native Amerindian inhabitants knew of springs in the Gaspé region that produced a liquid that we now know as petroleum. These springs near the York and Saint Johns rivers were examined by the renowned geologist William Logan in 1844 and led to the incorporation of the Gaspé Petroleum Company and drilling of test wells in 1860 to 1913 a large inflow of English capital led to the drilling of some 57 wells and the building of pipelines and storage facilities. The search for drilling sites, the building of roads to them, the transportation of equipment to Gaspesia by sea, the construction of derricks and the process of drilling was an important economic factor over some fifty years.

Gaspé Coast Railway

The building of the historic Intercolonial Railway via Matapedia in 1870 raised high hopes and petitions by Gaspesians for the building of a connecting rail line along Chaleur Bay from Matapedia to Gaspé. English Gaspesians were prominent promoters of this project and two of the major contractors, Charles Armstrong and Alfred W. Carpenter relied heavily on British capital to finance construction. Built in sections over time the line was first operational to Caplan, then later to New Carlisle. Soaring costs of the section to Gaspé Harbour forced a London, England bank into bankruptcy. It was not until 1912 that the first train reached the Gaspe station. English personnel were prominent in survey, construction, operation and management of the

railway until it was absorbed, eventually, into the Canadian National Railway system. As Gaspesia didn't have a belt highway until the 1930's, the railway provided an essential service in the movement of Gaspesian people and goods for a long period.

Schools

In an age when government took no responsibility for public schools, English settlers in Gaspesia took early, practical steps to build community schools and support schoolmasters. One can find the following notarial phrasing in many old documents – "...divers inhabitants, moved by zeal for the advancement of learning and education, did erect and build, at their own paper costs and expenses, a schoolhouse..." In New Richmond, New Carlisle, Hopetown schools operated prior to the building of a church. The Loyalist schoolmaster, Benjamin Hobson, had taught school at Camp Machiche on the Saint Lawrence and continued as schoolmaster in New Carlisle. The Gaspé Bay- Perce schools have been recalled in detail by Dorothy Phillips in her "HISTORY OF THE SCHOOLS AROUND GASPÉ BAY" (1990). The high priority given to community schools from the outset of settlement reflected a conviction and influence of English settlement in Gaspesia.

Justice and law

The Quebec Act of 1774 was significant in that while retaining the French Civil Law it required that English Criminal Law prevail hence forth. In common with English practice, Justices of the peace were appointed on Gaspesian communities and given limited powers to maintain law and order. As noted above, Felix O'Hara of Gaspé was appointed as the first Judge for the District of Gaspé and was ordered by Governor Haldimand to organize the first court. Thomas Mann, a son of prominent Loyalist settler, Colonel Isaac Mann of Restigouche was commissioned as the first Sheriff of Gaspesia - a post that was later held for many years by the Sheppard family of New Carlisle. At the outset the Court held sessions at various locations but subsequently Perce and New Carlisle became "shiretowns" or centres of justice with the building of Court Halls and Gaols. Registry Offices at the same centres provided archives for records of land ownership and transactions, church records of birth, marriage and death and other notarial documents. In this gradual development of Gaspesia's legal system, over time, the English exercised a significant role. ♦

* This text has been adapted from a much fuller consideration of the "Role and influence of the English of Gaspesia" presented by Mr. Ken H Annett, C.D. D.C.L. F.C.C.T. to a forum in August, 1999.

Early Settlers of Gaspé Bay

Among the early settlers of Gaspé was John Paterson, by family tradition, a soldier in the army of General Wolfe¹ who settled on the York River. While there is much evidence to support this tradition², no soldier has been found in the surviving records who could be this settler.

◆ John Patterson, Moncton

It is almost certain that John Paterson was either a corporal or a sergeant, as his initial land grant was for 400 acres³. At that time disbanded privates were given 50 acres each, while non-commissioned officers (corporals and sergeants) were given 200 acres and subalterns (which kind of soldiers were subalterns ??) were given 2 000 acres each (Is-it the good number??). There was also an additional allotment of 50 acres per dependent. John probably arrived in Gaspé with his wife and three daughters⁴, providing him with an entitlement to an additional 200 acres.

John appears to have settled in Gaspé in 1764. A land petition made by his son Peter in 1793⁵ included an endorsement by the late President of the Land Board of Gaspé, Felix O'Hara which stated "the petitioner is the son of John Paterson who has resided in this bay for this twenty nine years". *Historical Gaspé*⁶ also states:

"In the spring of 1764, Governor Murray allowed Felix O'Hara, a naval lieutenant, to settle wherever he wished in Gaspé, provided he did not take anyone else's place. On June the 23rd of the same year, Hugh Montgomery asked for a grant of land on the north shore of Gaspé Basin. At the same time John Patterson, a lieutenant in Wolfe's army, settled on the upper York River."

Unfortunately, no sources are cited, and it is almost certain that John was not a lieutenant. It is unfortunate that neither petition nor grant has been located for Paterson. That no petition appears to have been written and no grant prepared seems to be typical of the Gaspé area at the time John arrived. Permanent settlers on the Gaspé coast were few and the land plentiful. Most of the settlers were fishermen who were more anxious for good beaches to dry their catch on, than land to farm. In 1784 Felix O'Hara petitioned Governor Haldimand to address some grievances⁷. In his petition he noted that :

"I was similarly duped with respect to the spot on which I have resided and Improved for this twenty years past. I have not one right to plead except possession and an order from General Murray to set down anywhere in Gaspee that was not in the immediate occupation of any other."

Felix O'Hara's offer for land in the Gaspé was probably similar to the offer that John Paterson accepted, although Peter noted in his land petition of 1793 that his father held land "under the Honourable John Collins certificate"⁸. Collins, Deputy Surveyor General of Quebec⁹ completed a survey of Gaspé Bay in September, 1765¹⁰. That John's grant was a bit up river from where Collins stopped laying out lots, and thus not on the plan is a bit perplexing.

In the notes to his plan Collins states: "The climate is cold, the season short, the frost sets in the middle of September & continues until the last of May." He also described the quality of the lands and woods for all

lots on the south side of the York River as “Lands bad, Woods the same.” This is a pretty accurate description of York from Gaspé Basin to the Mill Brook, but up river from the Mill Brook, where John settled, the York River Valley widens and forms a fertile flood plain in what is Sunny Bank. One wonders why Collins made no reference to John Paterson, and why does he not mention the good farmland that did exist, given he supposedly issued a certificate for it.

The land that John received in 1764 was later confirmed to his daughter-in-law in 1820¹¹, after both he and his eldest son Peter had died.

John Paterson’s first documented appearance in civilian life is in a census taken 1765¹². In this census John Paterson is shown as the head of a household containing 1 man, 1 woman, 1 boy under 15, and 3 female children. It would appear that the boy, Peter, was born in Gaspé. In the petition endorsement of 1793 Felix O’Hara noted that Peter “wishes to improve a little spot of (his) native land in the vicinity of his father”¹³ a strong indication that Peter was born in Gaspé. Also, if Peter had been born before their arrival in Gaspé, John would have been entitled to 450 acres rather than 400.

On August 28, 1777 John Paterson’s family was enumerated in Gaspé for a second time¹⁴. This time his household consisted of 2 males under 16 and 1 female over 16, John also indicated that he was from Scotland, owned a boat and two head of cattle.

When the two censuses are compared the standard assumption has been that between the first and second census John and his wife had a second son (John), and something happened to the three daughters. There is reason to believe one possible daughter, Mary – wife of James Boyle - was still in his household. Boyle did not arrive until sometime after the 1777 census was taken¹⁵ and he and his wife had their first child in 1780¹⁶. If James did marry one of John’s daughters after his arrival in Gaspé, then the female over sixteen in 1777 must be a daughter, and not a wife. If this is correct then John’s wife must have died before the 1777 census, and possibly shortly after the birth of their second son John in 1766, thus explaining why there were no more children after the birth of their second son. A second daughter may be the Eleanor (Helene) Paterson who appears as a sponsor in the Roman Catholic Records for, Perce¹⁷.

In September of 1768, John was appointed Bailiff for Gaspé¹⁸, a position he held until at least 1773¹⁹. This continuous service was unusual, as Bailiffs were not supposed to serve for more than two consecutive terms²⁰. It is also interesting to note that most of the bailiffs in Quebec were elected with the election results still preserved in the National Archives²¹. There are, however, no election results for a number of Gaspé area communities, suggesting that, for some reason, they may have been appointed. Unfortunately no records pertaining to John’s appointment as bailiff have been found.

It is also possible that John Paterson was commissioned as a Lieutenant in the Gaspé militia when it was established in 1777. Surviving militia records do not start until a later date²², however this could explain why Roy and Brault assumed John was a lieutenant in Wolfe’s army²³. It is possible that Brault found a record in the archives that refers to him as a lieutenant. Felix O’Hara was Captain of the militia for Gaspé Bay²⁴ and someone was the Lieutenant in Captain O’Hara’s company. There would not have been a lot of choice for militia officers amongst the itinerant fisherman of the area, but a retired sergeant settled in the area could be a good choice.

John was still alive in October of 1798 when he has transactions appearing on the ledgers of Janvrins²⁵. From the ledgers we see that John made a number of purchases starting in January, including nails,

molasses, cloth, rum, salmon twine, flour, vinegar, cider, candles, pitch, canvas, tobacco and other supplies, totaling £155 19 5 (155 pounds, 19 shillings et 5 pence). He sold to Janvrins several boats at £10 a boat, provided some labour at 5 shillings a day, moved 2330 quintals of fish to Gaspé at 6 pence a quintal and sold ten tierces of Salmon at 40 shillings each. At the end of the year he owed £14, 19 5.

There is no record of John's death but information contained in the Gaspé land papers suggest that he may have died in 1807²⁶. On July 8, 1819 "Widow Paterson, relict of the late Peter Paterson, in his lifetime of Gaspé Bay", appeared before the commission²⁷. At that time she claimed six hundred acres on the south side of the South West Branch of Gaspé Bay. This claim, consisting of her late husband's 200 acre grant and her father-in-law's 400 acre grant, was made by Occupancy during twelve years. What is interesting is twelve years previous was 1807. The original grant of 400 acres was made around 1764 (55 years). Her husband Peter had occupied 200 acres of it since 1793 (26 years) and Peter died in 1818 (one year). One reasonable conclusion is that 1807 was the year that the first John Paterson died.

Although he appears to have spent over forty years of his life in Gaspé, the surviving documentary record of John Paterson's time there is sparse. The basic questions of when and where he was born, when he died and who he married remain unanswered. The glimpses into his life that the surviving documents provide are tantalizing, but raise more questions than they answer. His big legacy is the story of his family. Through his two sons he left 18 grandchildren and 114 great grandchildren, a blood line that permeates the English speaking population of Gaspé Bay and much of the Gaspé coast. With the diaspora of English speaking Gaspésians of the past two generations, John's genetic legacy is now spread across the continent and around much of the globe. ♦

1. Patterson, Raymond, *Family Gatherings*, Typescript, c. 1957 Original in the Archives of Musée de la Gaspésie, p. 364.
2. John settled in Gaspé in 1764. With the Treaty of Paris on February 10, 1763 a number of British Regiments were either disbanded, or returned home with soldiers being offered grants of land if they stayed. John's grant of 400 acres is consistent with him being a non-commissioned officer, and his appointment a few years later as Bailiff, a position generally given to Sergeants or junior officers suggests he probably had a military background.
3. No actual record has been found indicating how much land John Paterson was granted. The best guide to indicate the size of John's grant is the fact that his daughter-in-law claimed 600 acres of land from the Gaspé Land Commission in 1819 and her late husband had been granted 200 acres in 1793, leaving an initial grant of 400 acres.
4. Reports of the Archives of Quebec, vol. 1936/37, p. 114.
5. Library and Archives Canada (LAC), RG 1 L3L Lower Canada Lands Papers, p.75907.
6. Roy, Charles-Eugène & Lucien Brault; *Historical Gaspé*, Au Moulin des Lettres Quebec, 1934 p. 116.
7. Haldimand Papers. LAC MG 21, B-202, p. 214.
8. LAC RG 1 L3L Lower Canada Land Papers p. 75,907.
9. Canadian Dictionary of National Biography, Vol. IV Pg. 114.
10. A Plan of The Bay and Harbour of Gaspey in the Province of Quebec, (Sept ?) 12, 1765. LAC Map Collection NMC 0017995.
11. LAC, RG 1, L7 Pg. 61 Gaspé Land Papers.
12. Report of the Archives of Quebec, vol.1936/37 page 114.
13. LAC RG 1 L3L Lower Canada Land Papers Pg. 75,9077.
14. LAC Haldimand Papers MG 21 Add Mss 21,862 B-202 Pg. 8.
15. Ibid.

16. Church Records for the Anglican Church in Gaspé, November 18, 1829 records the death of their eldest son John at age 49.
17. Ste Anne de Restigouche 1759-1795.
18. Records of the Civil and Provincial Secretary & Clerk, LAC, RG 4, A3 Vol. 1, Pg. 1. also in Royal Gazette or Quebec Gazette.
19. Records of the Civil & Provincial Secretary & Clerk, LAC RG 4, A3, Vol. 1, Pg. 24.
20. NAC State Minute books, State Minute Book A RG 1 Series E Vol. E1 Pg. 55.
21. LAC RG 4, B 22 Records Relating to Appointment of Bailiffs.
22. LAC, RG 9, 1A1, Adjutant General.
23. Roy, Charles-Eugene and Brault, Lucien, *Historical Gaspé*, Au Moulin des Lettres, Quebec, 1934, Pg. 116.
24. Haldimand Papers. NAC MG 21, B-202 correspondence with Maj Cox, Lt. Governor of Gaspé, Pg. 64. Letter dated Dec 18, 177(8). One of several signed *Capt. O'Hara*.
25. LAC, MG 23 – G111 15 Pg. 21.
26. NAC RG 1 L7 Vol. 79 Pg. 61 Gaspé Land Commission.
27. Ibid.

New Richmond's First Settlers

The area between the Little Cascapedia and Grand Cascapedia Rivers in Chaleur Bay was previously known as “Cascapédiac”. In 1865, Missionary to Cascapédiac, F.X Bossé stated in the New Richmond parish report that the first settlers to Cascapédiac were two Scotsman by the name of McMartin and McLaren, who were later followed by French families such as the Cyrs, Cormiers and Leblancs.

◆ Kim Harrison,

director, Gaspesian British Heritage Village, New Richmond

Little is known of Martin and McLaren, however the next Scottish settlers were brothers John and George Duthie, natives of Aberdeen who arrived in Restigouche in the 1770s. There, the brothers worked for Schoolbred where George was a cooper and John was a salmon fisherman. Schoolbred's commercial fishery was destroyed by American privateers in 1776 and everyone who lived and worked there was forced to flee; the brothers settled in New Richmond on a piece of land which was to be called Duthie's Point.

They were the first shopkeepers in the area and set up a trading post to exchange goods with the Acadians and the Mi'gmaq. The first surviving record of their presence in New Richmond comes from the diaries of Charles Robin who mentions that the Duthie brothers were building a ship on "Duthie's / Shipyard Point" in 1787. It is clear that John Duthie was a very active member of his community, he signed and initiated numerous petitions to improve New Richmond and he was recognised for these efforts when he was appointed Inspector of Fish by His Excellency Sir James Henry Craig in 1808.

The Loyalist movement, beginning in 1784, brought many new settlers and one very intriguing individual to New Richmond. Captain Azariah Pritchard was master of the Snow Liberty, one of the ships used to transport Loyalists to Chaleur Bay. A Loyalist of Welsh ancestry, he had lived in Connecticut before being caught up in the confusion of the Revolutionary War. In 1784, because of his record of service to the British Army where he was involved mainly in espionage, he was granted over 1,000 acres of land, some of it along Cascapedia Bay. He also owned the Seigneurie of Bic for 21 years until he exchanged it for property in Quebec City in 1822.

Spy, army and militia officer, possibly a double agent and often “sailing close to the wind”, Azariah Pritchard built a grist mill on the Caplan River and added a saw mill to his businesses. He later became a Justice of the Peace. Despite his high office, Captain Pritchard was suspected of dealing in counterfeit documents. Specific charges of selling forged certificates of British citizenship and of trafficking in false papers of registry for trade to the Mediterranean were brought against him in June 1790. He was brought to trial, but acquitted by jury in New Carlisle. He died in 1831; the original Pritchard land in New Richmond is still owned by his direct descendants.

The real influx of Scottish and Irish immigration started in Chaleur Bay after the Loyalist movement in 1784. Some of the Scots who settled in New Richmond had re-located from the Maritimes or elsewhere in Canada, but a number of them came straight across the Atlantic to the shores of Cascapedia Bay. Their contribution to the economic, social, cultural and political development of New Richmond is indelible.

The following family names belong to Scottish families who had settled in New Richmond before 1861: Adair, Anderson, Brown, Calder, Campbell, Carswell, Cochrane, Colville, Cooke, Cuthbert, Cruger, Fairservice, Fallow, Fletcher, Harvey, Henderson, Howatson, Jamieson,, Johnston, Kerr, Langwill, McWhirter, McNair, McRae, McColm, McCormick, McGregor, McKay, McKenzie, McLellan, McLelland, Montgomery, Mowatt, Peebles, Pickan, Powell, Robertson, Steele, Stewart, Taylor, Thorburn, Turner and Wilson.

Perhaps one of the most influential and important Scottish settlers was William Cuthbert, who arrived via Prince Edward Island in the 1820s. By the beginning of the next decade he was the wealthiest man in the in New Richmond.

In the 1831 census, Cuthbert was clearly the most important person in New Richmond with 50 acres of land under cultivation. Cuthbert became involved in all sectors of the region's economy. With his brother Robert, of Greenock in Scotland, he formed William Cuthbert and Company, at first specializing in the import trade. To further its trade with Great Britain the company soon went into the lumber trade and obtained grants of land in New Richmond and Maria. The company hired many Scottish and Irish workers.

In 1833, William Cuthbert turned his attention to the undeveloped timber industry and then next logical step in the building of his empire was the construction of ships to transport his wares. It is believed that the firm of William Cuthbert & Co. constructed at least 14 vessels in their shipyard at "Duthie's Point". Two of the largest vessels constructed on the Gaspé coast during the first half of the nineteenth century were products of the Cuthbert Shipyard. At least 28 vessels were built in New Richmond between 1778 and 1870; the majority of them built in Cuthbert's yard before it ceased operations about 1854.

William also became an important political figure. In 1828, he was appointed Justice of the Peace for the district of Gaspé and in 1829 appointed commissioner for improving the road between New Richmond and Bonaventure. In 1833, he became a militia captain and was later promoted to the rank of lieutenant-colonel in the Bonaventure County militia.

In 1848, at the urging of a group of influential men from Bonaventure riding, William Cuthbert turned his attention to provincial politics. Three candidates divided the votes but, due to overwhelming support for Cuthbert in New Richmond, Maria and Restigouche, he was elected to the Legislative Assembly. Due to poor health, Cuthbert resigned as Member for Bonaventure in 1850.

During the summer of 1854, Cuthbert travelled to Greenock, Scotland and to Liverpool, England. Seriously ill with erysipelas (St. Anthony's Fire), he died and was buried in Greenock on August 9, 1854.

His assets were divided equally between his widow, Christiana, and his daughter, Ann. Ann moved to England with her husband and Christiana's brothers Hugh and John Montgomery became owners and operators of the various Cuthbert businesses.

Christiana Montgomery Cuthbert died in 1891 at 99 years of age and is buried in St. Andrew's United Church Cemetery. Beside her grave is a stone erected in memory of her husband William Cuthbert. Thus ended the saga of one of the most influential and wealthy Scottish settlers of Cascapedia Bay.

Another prominent Scottish settler was John A. Campbell who came from PEI to work as a clerk for William Cuthbert. He soon established himself as an important member of the community and opened his own

general store some time prior to 1845. He was the founder of the New Richmond Lending Library which began in 1842.

The Campbell property became the centre of commerce after the construction of a wharf, the remnants of which can still be seen today. During the nineteenth century many ships docked at this wharf and a number of ship owners and captains dry-docked their vessels in the “ballast grounds” for the winter months and readied them in the spring for the sailing season.

The vessels docking at the wharf carried lumber, fish, shingles, cod, eels, cod oil, flour and furs, among other items, to Quebec City, Newfoundland, the West Indies and Europe. These vessels always returned home fully loaded with items such as rum, brandy, molasses, tea, sugar, salt, cotton, threads, laces and other items not available locally. Mr. Campbell kept a daily diary in which he recorded entries of all the arriving and departing vessels. Sailing vessels were still docking at Campbell’s Wharf in 1915; unfortunately, the wharf was demolished during the 1980’s. However, Mr. Campbell’s great-great grandson, Bruce Willett, now resides in the family home which housed the general store and post office. He is ensuring that this important part of local history is restored. ♦

Sources

1. Extrait du rapport de M.F.X. Bossé, Missionnaire de Cascapédiac, 16 août 1865, cité dans *Rapport sur les missions du diocèse de Québec et autres missions qui en ont ci-devant fait partie*, Québec, 1866.
2. *Dictionnaire biographique du Canada* http://www.biographi.ca/fr/bio/cuthbert_william_8F.html
3. New Richmond Heritage Group, *Cascapedia Bay Heritage – A History of New Richmond and Environs*, 1980

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