



Coin-du Banc 1937. Road signs presenting directions to Gaspé and Percé.
Musée de la Gaspésie. Fonds George Bertam Wilmott. P76, 82,5,5

THE CORNER OF THE BEACH'S MABE, LOYALIST MULTI-ENTREPRENEURS

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Barachois

A 19th century family with an atypical journey, the Mabe have developed numerous industries (sawmill, shipbuilding, lobster canning and general store) in this small village on the edge of the historic district of Percé. A fascinating story about pioneers of industrial development on the tip of the Gaspé Peninsula.

A Loyalist expatriate to conquer the Corner of the Beach

Serial entrepreneurship, today' *"Startups"* is a contemporary economic concept defined by the propensity of one or more individuals to start and perpetuate the economic growth of a number of viable and sustainable enterprises, vertically, by controlling all the variants of production. In more maritime terms, entrepreneurs who have always tried to diversify the coastal economy by using a river (or the sea) and its shore, not always quiet place of trade because of conflicts since the 17th century, difficulties to dock or go to port while avoiding pitfalls, as well as crosswinds which could cause their livelihoods to be reversed at any time. Although it is easy to say that today, in economic development, timing is of the essence, instantaneous and international, it is essential, in our view, to return to the genesis of this Gaspé creative spirit to grasp its nuances and its asperities.

In praise of the best example of this concept of serial entrepreneurship in the Gaspé, we identified "a family business" with this dream of greatness, the Mabe of "Coin-du-Banc". With its footprint and unwavering involvement in the English-speaking community of the Gaspé Peninsula, in addition to passing on their entrepreneurial know-how to shipbuilding and maritime traffic, the Mabes leave behind an impressive archives fund at the Musée de la Gaspésie. The "fonds" consists of legal documents, diaries, correspondence and hundreds of photographs illustrating the life of the Mabe, mainly that of the family tree of Captain Daniel Mabe. This return on an intergenerational microhistory seems relevant to us to understand an economy consolidated by the authenticity and the risk-taking aiming to create the bases of a perennial company.

The genesis of the Mabe in Gaspésie

Rooted in the Percé region since the beginning of the 19th century, the Mabe family settled and prospered precisely at Corner of the Beach. Their changing surnames also guarantee their impressive adaptability from the De Mabile du Chêne, Van Naarden, Mabile, Maybe, Mabee and later Mabe, all to the rhythm of the uprooted experiences that we consider essential to the origins of the resilience of the siblings of the Mabe. From Huguenot descendants, the Mabes fled Catholic Europe, then revolutionary America and eventually settled on lands lured by the waves offered by the British Crown, grateful for their allegiance. Eventually taking roots in the Gaspé, the Mabe took advantage of an extremely fertile soil to conceptualize the foundations of companies that will have an impressive hold on the region.

The arrival of Peter Mabe, a pioneer of the Mabe in Gaspésie, took place around 1802-1804 with the formal allocation of land 15 years later in the Malbay Township. During the following century, the Mabe, especially the grandsons of Peter; Christopher, Edward, Alfred, will become seasoned entrepreneurs in the fields of agriculture, fishing, logging and shipbuilding with the creation of the Mabe Brothers. For the record, Peter Mabe's sons were particularly identified as shipbuilders, but were also owners and masters of ships



Captain Daniel Mabe between 1880 and 1918.

Photograph of Daniel Mabe standing with his arm leaning on a chair and wearing his captain's cap. Daniel Mabe was the son of Edward Mabe and Mary Hogan and the grandson of Peter Mabe, an American loyalist who arrived at Coin-du-Banc in 1804. With his three brothers, Christopher, Henry and Alfred, Daniel Mabe set up a successful business called Mabe Brothers. This company has worked in economic sectors as varied as retail, wood processing, shipbuilding, the transport of goods by schooner and finally the canning of lobster.

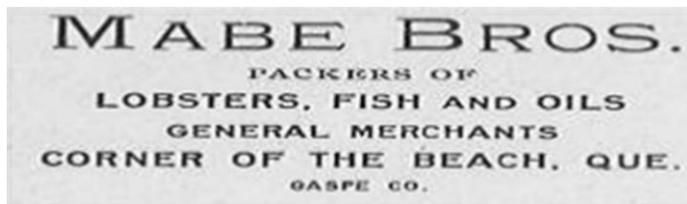
Musée de la Gaspésie. Fonds Famille Daniel Mabe. P68/3b/107

and one of them was killed by pirates in the West Indies. From these rudimentary bases of serial entrepreneurship, these Anglo-Gaspésiens quickly became a figurehead in the economic organization of Coin-du-Banc and the neighboring localities. They will hold this leading role until the early 20th century.



Johannes "Jan" Mabe and Alida Toll's house in New York. Parents of Peter Mabe.

Family's collection



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Multiple economic activities

By the end of the 1820s, the Mabe boasted various successes that highlight a commercial empire in their image that will take many forms. With diversification

aimed at multiplying their assets, the Mabe play on several tables. Co-owner of brigantine Francis in 1828, Peter Mabe supervises and charters his 84-ton ship to destinations as far away as the Caribbean, Ireland, England and even France. Overseas voyages, those of the Francis in particular, whose charter signed between the shipowners and Captain Aubin on November 18, 1828, indicates the financial importance of owning some of the boats built. This charter also specifies the details of the responsibilities of each party (cargo, destination, related costs, supply, etc.) and salaries of seamen, shipmasters and master. This openness to the world will allow the Gaspésie to take part in international trade from its earliest beginnings.

A large appendage of shipbuilders in the counties of Gaspé and Bonaventure testifies to an expansive construction of small schooners (25 tons or less). During the Golden Age of shipbuilding in the Gaspé Peninsula between 1820 and 1860, competition between manufacturers increased in relation to the number of shipyards and the tonnage of vessels. The Maritime Navigation Register of 1833 lists the names of Béchervaise, Briard and Peter Mabe Jr. as shipbuilders in the county of Gaspé. At the same time that important builders are found around Paspébiac and Gaspé, a new geographical focus of builders moves between Percé and Gaspé with the Collas, which built ships in Pointe-Saint-Pierre.

In his publications David J. McDougall, a Robin family historian, identifies three vessels built by the Mabe family, namely the schooners Maria (44 tons in 1849) and Pilot (64 tons in 1851) and the Union, a brigantine of 99 tons in 1847). In addition, our research in the Ship News - Port of Halifax, official publication of ships



Photograph of Christopher and Henry Mabe driving agricultural machines, circa 1890. We see Henry Mabe's house and the barn in the background.

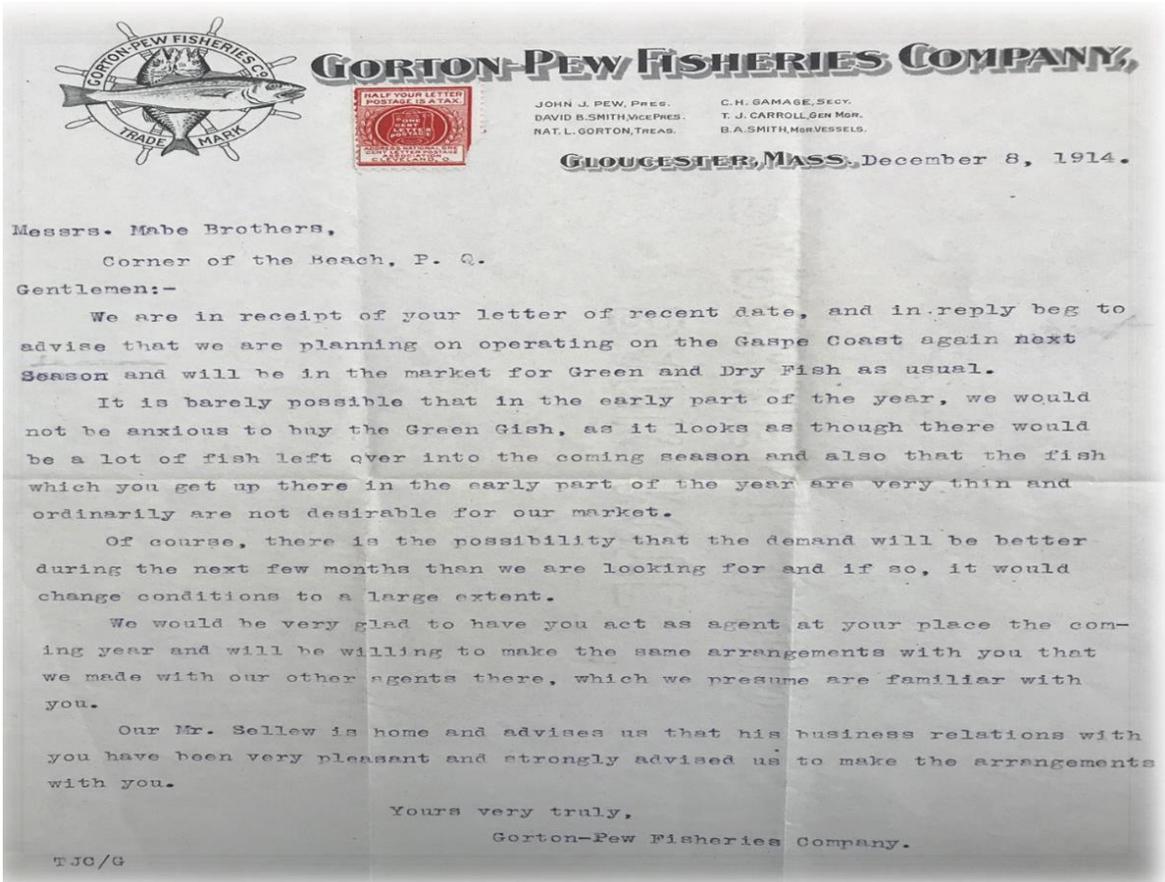
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crossings in Nova Scotia, indicates that on November 14, 1817, the schooner Ann, owned by the Mabe from Gaspé, is moored at the port of Halifax. Finally, in his will in 1886, Edward Mabe, bequeathed to his two sons his interests in the schooner Good Intend who was in the roads for wintering in the Barachois inlet. This set constitutes a non-exhaustive inventory of the navigable properties of the Mabe.

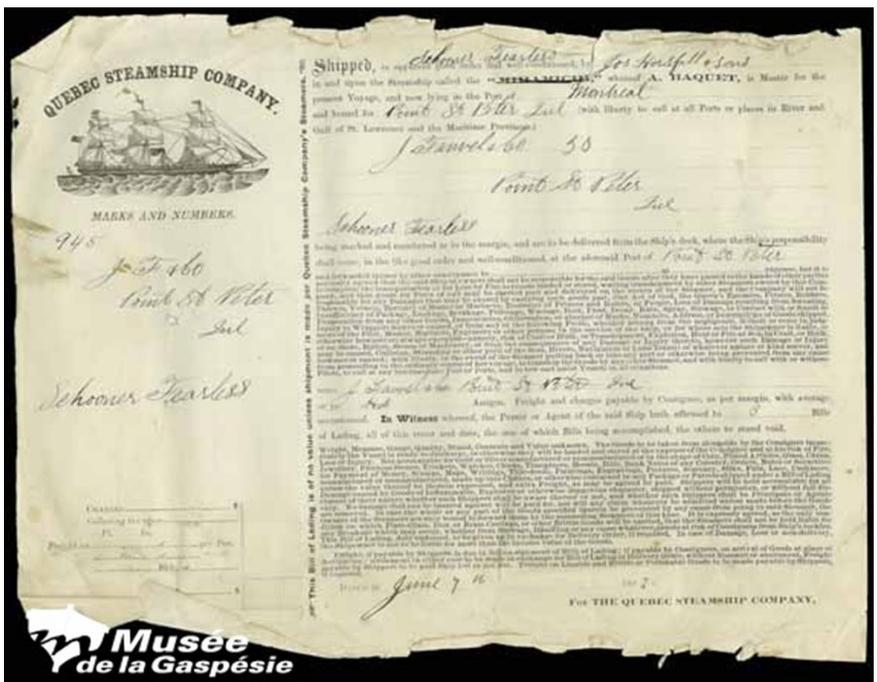
It was subsequently in commercial and local affairs that the family also enjoyed great success with their general store. According to the documents consulted in the archives, the "Mabe Brothers" general store is the center of the family's commercial activities, as well as a real center of attraction for the community, with a turnover 1921, which is close to \$ 175,000 annually in 2017 dollars, a phenomenal amount for the family banner. It is therefore easy for us to assume that the store maintains a loyal clientele, in close custody, mainly composed of more than 100 customers. They obtain goods of all kinds and receive in return numerous promotional documents (calendars, advertising, etc.). These data are available to us thanks to the mailing lists of the companies that use the brothers as distributing agents mainly for products such as marine paint, varnishes for boats or other products resistant to the aggressions of the maritime climate of the Gaspé.

An international company and charity

The national and international character of the economic activities of the Mabe family can also be understood by consulting correspondence with its various canadian and american clients such as JW Windsor, an important Montreal cannery with which the lobster canning section is very active and for which shipbuilding plays a dynamic role. On the American side of the Mabe Brothers business, there is a partnership with the Gorton-Pew, which buys dried fish or salted cod (morue verte) from Coin-du-Banc.

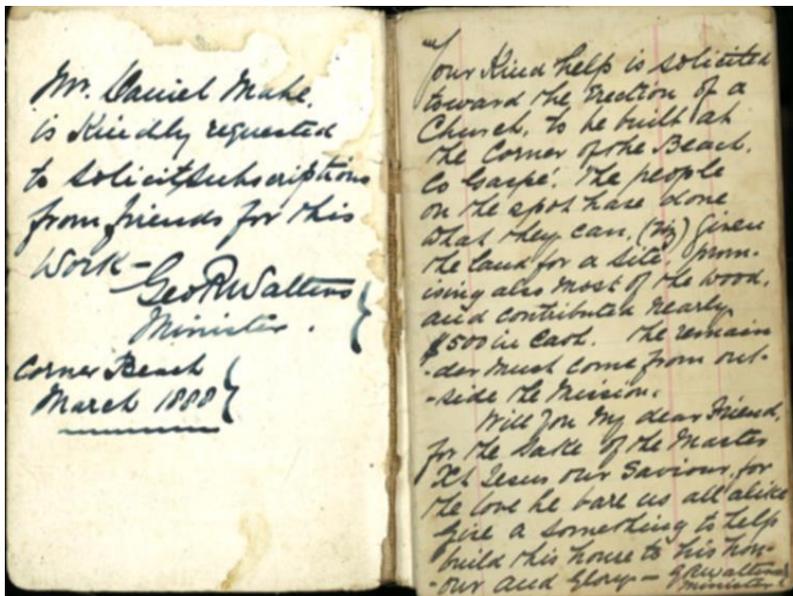


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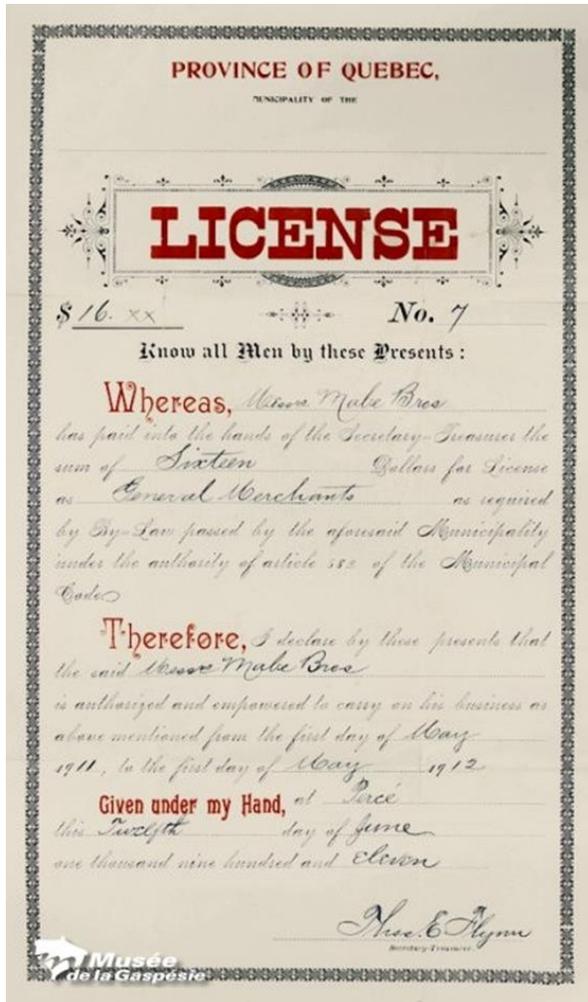
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The archives consulted also show a great involvement of the Mabe in their community other than economic. In 1888, Daniel Mabe and his family (Maybe and Vibert between 1891-1893) organized a fundraiser for building of the St. Luke's Anglican Church in Coin-du-Banc in Percé, which became a museum in August 2013. Too much "creative" accounting does not allow us to determine the total amount raised for this fundraising, but an amount between \$ 5,500 and \$ 7,500 (nearly \$ 130,000 to \$ 150,000 in 2021 dollars) can easily be confirmed as the amount raised by the Mabe-Vibert.



The construction of the St. Luke's Anglican Church in Coin-du-Banc.

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Licence granted to the Mabe Brothers company for the operation of a general store, 1912. The document was signed by the Secretary-Treasurer of the Municipality of Percé, Thomas E. Flynn.

Musée de la Gaspésie. Fonds Famille Daniel Mabe.
P68/4

steps of the General Store of the Mabe Brothers still stroll around the small quiet village at the bottom of the sinuous coasts of Cannes-de-Roches. For the traveler who leaves Percé in the direction of the northern coast of the Gaspé Peninsula, emerging from the mountain road, he then understood, as Peter Mabe probably understood in 1804, that it was possible to domesticate both sea and forest in this place of the Corner of the Beach.

Magazine Gaspésie, « Nos faiseurs de bateaux », no 189, vol. 54, no 2, Août–Novembre 2017, p. 34–35.

The decline of the Mabe Brothers

In the mid-1930s, the difficulties associated with the economic crisis, the rush to the west of some heirs and the lack of interest of others sounded the death knell of the Mabe companies in Coin-du-Banc. From the Mabe Brothers businesses, there is the most impressive trace of the village of Coin-du-Banc, l'Auberge de Coin-du-Banc, which occupies the grounds of the lobster cannery. Journalist and author Thierry Haroun left a lyrical portrait in a notebook of the Plaisir section of *Le Devoir* in 2003: "The buildings used for this family business have been restored and landscaped by Sydney Maloney, another expatriate from Bonaventure Island and of Irish descent three years ago, as well as his wife, Lise De Guire, to make it the Auberge Le Coin du Banc, the secret of an alcove with Irish green gables. [...] Concretely, the main building, a centennial house clad in cedar shingles, consists of eleven bedrooms [...] (which) are loaded with old objects.

The smells of freshly cut timber used to build boats, of lobster carcasses discarded near the cannery, and the noise of lively conversations on the

Sources:

Fonds Famille Daniel Mabe (1790-1972). P068. Musée de la Gaspésie. Les documents furent versés au Centre d'archives de la Gaspésie en 1993 et en 1994 par madame Gurty Cavier Coderre qui a retrouvé les documents dans sa propriété, achetée d'Almeda Stewart Mabe.

Ken Annett, *Gaspé of Yesterday*. « Charter of the brigantine *Francis* ». 1987.

Thierry Haroun, « Une autre Gaspésie. La présence anglo-normande, principalement des îles Jersey et Guernesey, de Gaspé à New Richmond », *Le Devoir*, 23 août 2003.

Pierre Dufour, « La construction navale à Québec, 1760-1825 : sources inexplorées et nouvelles perspectives de recherches », *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*, vol. 35, n° 2, 1981, p. 231-251.

David J McDougall, *Ship builders, whalers and master mariners of Gaspe Bay in the 1800's*, 1978, 54 p.

David J McDougal, *SPEC* 1982.

David Lee, *The Robins in the Gaspé 1766-1825*.