

POUR CONSULTATION
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Sous la direction d'Alexand

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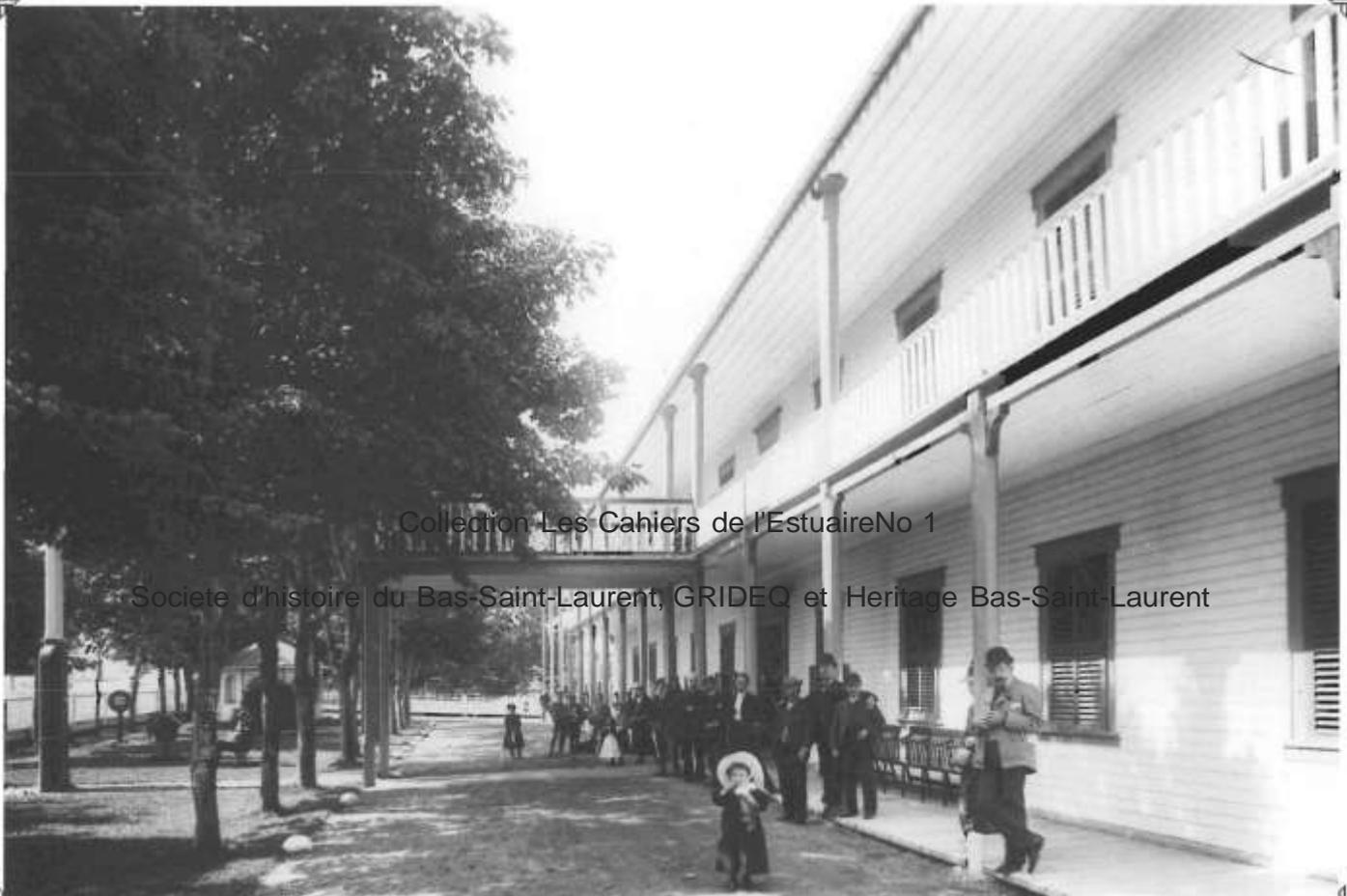
**Villégiature a
Mét**

nglophone au Bas-Sai
is-sur-Mer, Saint-Patrice et Cacoun

**nt-Laurent :
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Summer communities along the St. Lawrence River :

Metis Beach, St. Patrick and Cacouna



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A profile of Alice Sharples Baldwin, author of «Metis - Wee Scotland of the Gaspé» By Julie COULSON ... p. 37

Alice Sharples Baldwin was a frequent visitor to the Lower St. Lawrence. She wrote about the area on several occasions. Her booklet, *Metis Wee Scotland of the Gaspé*, was first published in 1960. Heritage Lower St. Lawrence asked Julie Coulson to write about Alice Sharples Baldwin as an introduction to a new edition of *Metis Wee Scotland of the Gaspé* we hope to publish in 2002. We also plan to publish a French edition, making it available for the first time to many new readers. This is an excerpt from Julie Coulson's introduction. We also excerpt several passages from *Metis Wee Scotland of the Gaspé*.

A profile of Alice Sharples Baldwin

It is my honour to be writing the foreword of this, the newest edition of *Metis Wee Scotland of the Gaspé* no less than 42 years after it was written by Alice Sharples Baldwin, my great aunt. Her younger sister, Doris Sharples Powell, was my grandmother. Their family tradition of summering in Metis began in the early 1900s.

The author was first known to me as an octogenarian, and entertaining babysitter. Dressed as a convincing witch every Hallowe'en; introducing us to pirate's hideouts and brownie homes we had theretofore known only as rocks and woods; and of course rounding out my 1972 table manners with some Victorian concepts of etiquette, Alice struck me as flirtatious, interested and interesting, and youthful.

This last impression is somewhat surprising since, born in 1899, she had already seen so much of a century. And not from a stationary vantage point: raised in Quebec City, the daughter of parents from iron and lumber families, Alice attended McGill University in an age when few women did, and proceeded to Paris, preceding even the flappers, to do a Master's degree at the Sorbonne, with my grandmother.

She travelled widely, writing and self-publishing several books as lively as this one: *Ports of Palm, Ports of Pine, Tales of Buck and Lynk*, (both set in Bermuda, where she often vacationed); *The Price Family*, a history of the family of lumber fame; *The Wee Kirk on the Hill*, written for the hundredth anniversary of the Little Metis Presbyterian Church, of which she was a staunch supporter. Many of these books are illustrated with her own drawings. She filmed many of these adventures on a Super 8 camera. In 1981, at 82, she wrote a final novel, largely autobiographical, *High, Wide, and Handsome*, which I also love, especially the moonlit encounter between the heroine and a rider, the outcome of which the author wisely leaves open to the reader's imagination (you can see how easy it must have been for even Alice to forget her age!)

Alice's literary executors in the Powell family have sought to maintain the original spirit of the book, while adding some photographs, a new cover and some comments on the (remarkably few!) things that have changed in the 42 years since the book originally went to press.



Alice wrote this book in the beloved Metis home she shared with her husband, Billy Baldwin, (whom she met in Metis!). She wrote it with a pencil and paper, by daylight or lamplight. In the «Thanks» before the Introduction Alice gives us a glimpse into the research she did for the book, which must have meant hours of delighted listening to oral lore, diary reading and scanning archives.

How can we account for the astounding longevity of this book, which has continually managed to find new readers? Granted, it is the only history of Metis readily available in book form. (There are many unpublished compilations on different themes by different Metis authors.) However, I believe it is not simply that it is the only book available on the history of a beautiful area that accounts for its success: I think you will find in these pages a gifted, animated and well-informed storyteller breathing life into history, and transmitting the love she had for the place, and that it is these qualities of the book that have earned it its place in the Metis canon.

My own first contact with the book was at age ten, when I presented a book report to my class shortly after moving to Alberta. What an eye-opener it was for my audience, who had never known salmon fishing, sunsets over a sea, salt air, cool sea breezes or a Scottish burr, or any place with a written history that extended through the centuries.

For Metis is a particular place, with so many striking qualities, as Alice so beautifully and lovingly describes, that I hope readers of her book will be as inspired by them as my classmates were.

Alice passed away in 1987, having lived as a bona fide Real Metisian (to steal one of the concepts she develops in her Introduction), having lived a life with as much imagination, wit, and creativity anyone could hope for.

The pages of *Metis Wee Scotland of the Gaspé* are as vibrant and energetic as their author, and leave the reader feeling the profound attachment for the place she had, whether they are «Real Metisians» or passers-by, sure to return, even if only in their dreams.