

GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY

124

YO-HO-HO FOR HISPANIOLA :

Trade link between Bonaventure
in Gaspesia and Môle St.Nicolas
in St.Domingue (formerly the
Isle Hispaniola)

KEN ANNETT

YO-HO-HO-FOR HISPANIOLA !

PREFACE

... "Ay, ay, mates", said Long John, who was standing by, with a crutch under his arm, and at once broke out on the air and words I knew so well :-

"Fifteen men on the dead man's chest -"
And then the whole crew bore chorus :-

"Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum !"
And at the third "ho !" drove the bars before them with a will.

... Soon the anchor was short up, soon it was hanging dripping at the bows, soon the sails began to draw... the HISPANIOLA had begun her voyage to the Isle of Treasure.

TREASURE IALAND

Robert Louis Stevenson.

An ocean away from the English seaport of Bristol whence the HISPANIOLA of Stevenson's TREASURE ISLAND sailed for the Spanish Main, and those adventures so well remembered by the readers of that book, another vessel, the ESTHER of Carleton and Bonaventure in the District of Gaspé, registered at the Port of Québec in July, 1775, was destined to link Gaspesia with Hispaniola or St. Domingue in the Spanish Main. But, unlike the vessel of Stevenson's story, the ESTHER sought the more prosaic treasure of trade rather than buried gold. The ESTHER was owned by Raymond and Esther LeBlanc Bourdage of Bonaventure - an Acadien couple whose story has been mentioned in previous issues of GASPE OF YESTERDAY. Here is the certificate of registration of the vessel.

Port of Quebec - Province of Quebec

In pursuance of an Act made in the seventh and eighth of King William the Third entituled (sic) an act for preventing frauds and regulating abuses in the plantation trade -

Esther LeBlanc maketh oath that the ship, the aimable ESTHER, of Quebec, wherof Michel Pin is at present master, being a square sterned Schooner of seventy tons or thereabouts, was built at Tracadigouche in the Bay of Chaleurs this present year, 1775, and that Raymond Bourdage and this Deponent are at present owners therof, and that no foreigner directly or indirectly hath any share or part or interest therein.

Dated at the Custom House, Quebec, the eleventh July, 1775

(signed) L' B' Bourdage

Sworn before us

Thos Ainslie, Collr.

Sam'l Phillips, N. Offr.

There are to certify whom it may concern, that the above register is recorded in this office -

Given under our hands and seals of office the 26th August, 1778

Custom House, Quebec

(signed) Thos Ainslie, Collr.

Thos Scott , Comp'y

CASCAUD TO BORDAGE

At Quebec the 6th July, 1775

M. Bourdage,

Dear Sir,

Having learned from my friends and also from Madame, your wife, that you are inclined to send a vessel to the Islands, in particular to Môle St. Nicolas in St. Domingue, from whence your wife showed me a letter of your mariner friend, LeBlanc, whom I know well, I believe that in the present circumstances you could not

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CASCAUD TO BORDAGE (ctd)

make a better move. Navigation to the seaports of New England has been entirely closed off. I am advised that flour, all salt fish, all lumber for building, planks and all marine produce such as salmon, eels, oil, are paid for in gold in St.Domingue.

I wish to advise you that I have a commercial business on the Môle and that if you wish to direct your vessel to my associates you are assured that you will have prompt service in finding a return cargo. Note well that all goods mentioned above have doubled in price within the last two months and that only Canada can supply the needs of the Islands. You know that St.Domingue is an immense market and that sugar, molasses and coffee are good there and at a very modest price that is condusive to good business.

The name of my firm is MESSRS. PASCAUD, REGNAULT and L'ETANG, MERCHANTS, at Môle St.Nicolas, Isle St.Domingue. If you have several friends who have several cargoes ready, advise them to go to St.Domingue where twenty shiploads will be purchased the instant of arrival and where there is gold in abundance to pay.

I cannot go into greater detail as your vessel is about to leave. Send me word on her return here in order that I may know your thoughts on this matter. I would give you letters to my associates should you decide to ship to Môle St.Nicolas. I advise you to do so as soon as possible.

I have the honour to remain

Your very humble and obedient servant

(signed) Cascaud.

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ST.DOMINGUE (HISPANIOLA)

As distant St.Domingue was hardly a household name in the Gaspesia of 1775, it is appropriate to locate the island and describe it briefly.

Immediately to the East of Cuba, across the Windward Passage, lies the large, mountainous island that is shared today by HAITI and the DOMINICAN REPUBLIC. The aboriginal Arawak Indians called their island home, QUISQUEYA or HAITI.

In December, 1492, Columbus landed on the north-western tip of the island at the place now known as Môle St.Nicolas. He gave the name ESPAÑOLA to the island - a name later anglicized as HISPANIOLA.

Few Spaniards settled the western part of Española but French buccaneers gained permanent footholds there and formal French possession of St.Domingue was recognized in the late 17th century. In the 18th century the export of sugar, coffee, indigo, cotton, cacao and dyewoods made St.Domingue one of the richest colonies in the New World.

Prosperity was largely the result of Negro slave labour which the Spaniards and later the French, brought in from Africa. In the last quarter of the 18th century St.Domingue had a population of some 32,000 French, 24,000 of mixed ancestry and almost 500,000 Negro slaves. A relatively small percentage of the French and freedmen owned most of the plantations and slaves.

CASCAUD TO BOURDAGE

Québec, 1 Sept. 1775

A M. Bourdage,
bée des Chaleurs

Monsieur,

To reply to the honour of yours of August 4th., I am delighted to learn that the propositions that I made to you are agreeable to you and that you continue in your plans to ship to Môle St.Nicolas. I also appreciate the good confidence that you have in our firm down there. Rest assured, Sir, that justice will be done for you and that all will be concluded to your greatest

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CASCAUD TO BOURDAGE (ctd)

advantage. Business conditions appear to be even more favourable according to news that we have received by Captain MaKnille, commandant for M. Dromond. He has assured us that fish sells for 36 to 40 shillings and that all kinds of provisions are so scarce that an embargo has been placed on Dominigue. Warships about the English islands are stopping all English provision ships and oblige them to sell their cargoes in those islands where the price of provisions is controlled. You will see that there would be no advantage for you in sending your vessel there. I advise you to send to us, with all diligence, your goods. I enclose letters to my associates which I pray you to entrust to your Captain - these letters advise these gentlemen of the confidence that you have in them and instruct them to find freight for your vessel during your time in port at the Môle. They are instructed to regard your interests as our own.

It is advisable that you write to them also to advise them of your intentions regarding the sale of your goods and on the return cargo, so that they can act with all diligence.

Please write to me when your vessel sails from the Bay Chaleur. If there is anything that I can do to be of service, you can count upon me.

I have the honour to be, sincerely,

Your very humble and very obedient servant
(signed) Joseph Cascaud

M. Ponpanon, a resident of the Môle, whom I knew during my sojourn there, is leaving us to sail in your vessel. I recommend him to your care. Please treat him as a person who has my interest and provide him with passage in your vessel which, I hope, will go to Môle St.Nicolas. I count on this - M. Ponpanon is carrying my mail for my firm at the Môle.

CASCAUD TO BOURDAGE
(Postscript ctd)

I must warn you that according to the news we have had from Captain MaKnille of Martinique there is an embargo in effect at Dominigue and that frigates (Royal Navy) crusing in these waters stop all English vessels loaded with provisions and escort them to the English islands where they are obliged to sell their goods at fixed colonial prices. This is why I advise you to warn your friends not to send their vessels anywhere but to us as we are sheltered from such imposition.

DEPOSITION BY CAPTAIN MICHEL PIN

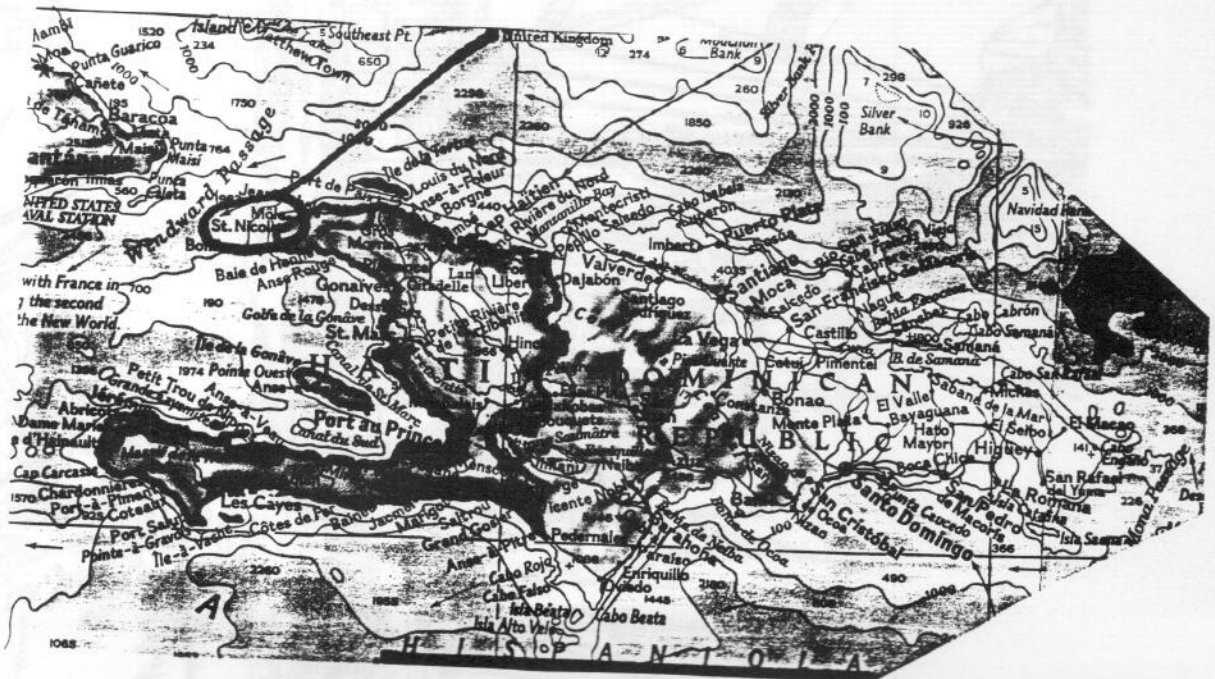
53 Boucaut de morue	I, Michel Pin, resident at Québec, Master,
827 quinteau idem	after God, of the vessel named the aimable
16 quart huile	ESTHER of the burden of 70 tons approx.,
1 barique "	presently at Bonnaventure, will go for the
2 barils "	first time it will please God to send me by
3 quart macreaux	a direct route to Molles St.Nicolas, Island
2 idem Enguilles	of St. Dominigue. I acknowledge to have
2 idem Somon	received and loaded aboard the said vessel
7 barils neauve	the following goods of Raymond Bourdages of
1 quart capillaire	Bonnaventure, as also listed in margin -
10 quart farine	. fifty three boucats of dry cod
103 boucaut en bottes	. eight hundred and twenty seven quintals
1000 feillard	of same
137 planches	. sixteen quarts, one barique, two barrels
2500 bardeaux	of cod oil
	. 3 quarts mackerel
	. 3 idem eels
	. 7 idem salmon
	. 7 barils cod sounds
	. 1 quart "capillaire"
	. 10 quarts flour
	. 103 tub staves
	. 1000 boards
	. 137 planks
	. 2500 shingles

DECLARATION BY CAPTAIN MICHEL PIN
(ctd)

All the above goods in good condition.
Which goods I promise and oblige myself
to transport in the said vessel, subject
to the perils and fortunes of the sea, to
St. Domingue and there to deliver them to
Messrs Regnault and L'Etang, the freight
being paid by the said Raymond Bourdages
in accordance with maritime custom.
To achieve and accomplish this I pledge
myself entirely to the said ship, freight
and all concerned.

In witness and truth I have signed four
bonds at Bonnaventure this 26 October,
1775

(signed) Ml.Pin





CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS LANDING AT
MÔLE ST. NICOLAS, ESPANOLA,
DEC. 6, 1492.

5. Septembre 1778. Copie collationnée à la requiſition de l'épouſe du ſieur
Raymond Bوردage. —

Lord of Quebec Province of Quebec

Guy Carleton

In purſuance of an Act made in the ſeventh and eighth
of King William the Third entitled an Act for preventing
frauds and regulating abuſes in the plantation trade. —

Tho. Ainslie
coll.

Etteſur Le Blanc maketh oath that the ſhip the
aimable Eſther of Quebec whereof Michel Pin. is at preſent
maſter being a ſquare ſterned Schooner of ſeventy tons
or thereabouts was built at traacadigoucke in the Bay
of Chaleurs this preſent year 1775. and that Raymond
Bوردage and this Deponent are at preſent owners —
thereof and that no foreigner directly or indirectly hath
any ſhare or part or intereſt therein. —

Tho. Scott Compt.

Dated at the cuſtom Houſe Quebec the
ſeventh July 1775. —

(ſigned) L' B' Bوردage

Sworn before us

Tho. Ainslie coll

Sam. Phillips N. off.

Sam. Phillips
N. off.

There are to certify whom it may concern, that the above
register is recorded in this office —

Given under our hands & ſeals of office
the 26th August 1778.

Custom House Quebec
(ſigned)

Tho. Ainslie coll.

Tho. Scott Compt.

M^r. bordage

a Quebec le 6^{me} Juillet 1775.

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Monsieur

Ayant été instruit par mes amis insi que par Madame votre Epouse que vous seriez bien aise d'envoyer un batiment aux isles, surtout au Mole S. Nicolas isle S. Domingue d ou votre épouse ma montré une lettre de votre ami marin Le blan que je conois boeup. je croi que dans les circonstances presentes vous ne pouvez mieux faire, La navigation étant entièrement fermée a la nouvelle Angleterre. Je suis informé que la farine tout poisson sallé tout bois a batiser planches essentes merin cerches somon et enquilles huile a bruler, sont paye au poids de l'or chez nous Je vous diray que j'ay une maison de comerce au mole et que si vous voulez adresser votre batiment a mes assoiers, vous pouvez compter que vous trouvairez une prompte expedition dans le retour de ce que vous jugerez a propos faite attention que tous les articles cy dessus mentionnés ont double de prix seulement depuis deux mois et qu'il ny a plus que le Canada qui puisse fournir aux isles leur besoin vous savez que S. Domingue est immense pour la consommation et que les sucres et melasse et taffias y sont bons et a un prix tres mediocre ce qui peut ne faire que de bonnes affaires.

Le nom de ma maison est à Mess^{rs}. pascaud - Regnauld & Létang Negociant au mole S. Nicolas isle S. Domingue Si vous avez quelques amis qui ayent quelques cargaisons praitte avise les d aller -

Dans ce pays la il y a dequoy employer vingt ⁴¹
cargaisons a l'instant meme de leur arrivie insi que
lor en abondance. —

Je ne puis entrer dans un plus grand detail a cau
du Depart de votre batiment faite moy un mot de
reponde a son retour icy afin que je puisse savoir vo
sentiments a ce sujet parceque je vous donnerai des
lettres pour mes associés si vous prenez le parti
d'envoyer au Mole et vous conseille de le faire le plus
possible. —

J'ay l'honneur d'etre tres parfaitement
Monsieur

otre tres humble et te
obeissant serviteur
(signé) Bascaud

(Au dos est écrit :)
A M^r. Bourdage
bée des Chaleurs

A Monsieur Monsieur Bourdage
Québec le 1. sept^{bre} 1775.

Monsieur

Pour répondre a l'honneur de la votre du 4. Aoust je suis
charmé d'apprendre que les propositions que je vous ai fa
vous soyent agréables et que vous continuez dans les
sentiments de faire des envoys au Mole S^t. Nicolas Je
vous suis aussi obligé de la bonne confiance que vous
avez dans notre maison la bas soyé persuadé Monsieur
que justice vous sera faite et que tout sera terminé a
votre plus grand avantage, le tems paroissant d'autant
plus favorable que nous venons de recevoir des nouvelles
par le Cap^{ne} Mathville Comandant p^r. M^r. Dromond.
il nous assure que le poisson vaut de 36. a 40 shelling
et toutes sortes de provisions si rares que l'on a mis

un embargo a la Dominique et que les vaisseaux de guerre autour des isles Angloises arrestent tous les batiments Anglois chargez de vivres et les forcent de venir leur cargaison dans ces isles sur lesquelles provisions on a mis un prix reglé Vous voyez par la qu'il ny auroit point d'avantage d'envoyer votre batiment de ce costé la, Je vous conseille de faire toute diligence pour l'acheminer pour chez nous vous avez cy inclus des lettres pour mes associez que je vous prie de recomender a votre Capitaine elles instruisent ces Messrs de la confiance que vous avez en eux et les engage a trouver du fret pour votre batiment pendant le sijour qu'il sera obligé de faire au mole enfin de menager vos interets comme les nôtres propres, il conviendrait que vous leur ecriviez aussi pour leurs avis de vos intentions sur la vente de vos effets et sur le retour que vous demende afin que toute diligence soit faite, Ecrivez moy par la premiere occasion pour icy lorsque votre batiment sera party de l'abée des Chaleurs si il y a quelque chose icy pour votre service vous pouvez conter sur moy ayant l'honneur d'être bien

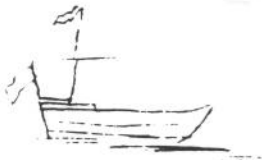
sincèrement
Monsieur

Votre tres humble
& tres obeissant serviteur
(signé) Joseph Cascaud.

M^r. Ponpanon habitant du mole que j'ai connu pendant mon sejour la part pour chez nous dans votre batiment je vous recommande d'avoir soin de lui et de le traiter comme

une personne pour qui je m'intéresse et de lui procurer le passage dans votre bâtiment qui j'espère va au mole St. Nicolas c'est surquoy je conte sans quoy M^r. — panpanon est chargé de mon paquet pour ma maison au mole. —

Je dois vous avertir par les nouvelles que nous a — doné le Cap^{te} Mathville de la Martinique qu'il y a un Embargo a la Dominique et que les fregattes qui croisent dans ces parages arrêtent tous les batimens Anglais — chargé de provisions et les conduisent dans les isles Angloises ou ils sont obligé de vendre leur marchandises au prix qu'ils ont fixé dans leur colonies C'est pourquoy je vous conseille d'avertir vos amis de ne point envoyer leur — batimens ailleurs que chez nous étant alabry de ces sorte d'imposition. —



R B

Je Michel Bin demeurant à Quebec Maître après — Dieu du navire nommé l'aimable Esther du port de 70.

53. Boucaud de moue
 27. quinteau idem tonneaux ou environ, étant de présent à Bonnaventure
 16. quard } pour du premier temps qu'il plaira à Dieu envoyer, aller
 1. barrique } huile en droite route au Molles St. Nicolas isle St. Dominique
 2. barils }
 3. quard macreaux. confesse avoir reçu et chargé dans le bord de mondit —
 2. idem Enguilles navire, sous le franc tillac d'icelui, de vous Raymond
 2. idem Somon Bourdages de Bonnaventure cinquante trois boucaud de
 7. barils neuve
 1. quard capillaire
 10. quard farine moue seche huit cents vingt sept quinteau idem en
 103. boucaud en botte gramier saise quard une barrique deux barils huile de
 1000. feuillard morie trois quard de macreaux deux idem Enguilles deux
 137. planches. idem Somon sept barils de neuve de moue un quard de
 1500. bardeaux — idem Somon sept barils de neuve de moue un quard de
 capillaire, dix quard de farine cent trois boucaud vides
 en botte trois mille feuillard cent trente sept planches deux
 mille cinq cents bardeaux le tout bien conditionné & marqué

de la marque mis. a la marge: lesquelles marchandises je
promets & m'oblige de mener & conduire dans mon
navire, sauf les perils & fortunes de la mer, audit lieu de
St. Domingue en la les delivrer a Messieurs Regnault
& Etang, le fret étant payé par ledit Raymond Bourdage
avec les avaries, aux us & coutumes de la mer. Et pour ce
tenir & accomplir, je m'oblige corps & bien avec mon
navire, fret & appareils d'icelui. En temoin de verité j'ai
signé quatre connaissements d'une teneur, l'un accompli,
autres de nulle valeur. fait a Bonnaventure ce 26. Octob
1775. que dit être (signé) M. Pin. —

Je donne un plain pouvoir a ma femme Dagis a mon lieu
et plasse a Quebec ce 11. May 1778. —
(signé) Bourdages —