

GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY

GRIEF IN THE GULF

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Bound from Québec for Montego Bay  
in Jamaica in November 1804, the  
Brig CHARLOTTE was wrecked on the  
Island of Anticosti where her crew  
had to winter.

KEN ANNETT



GRIEF IN THE GULFINTRODUCTION

Outward bound from the Port of Quebec to Montego Bay in the Island of Jamaica, the Captain and crew of the Brig CHARLOTTE experienced the full measure of grief that a November storm in the Gulf of St. Lawrence could mete out. Any dreams they may have had of the tropical pleasures of Jamaica were dashed when their vessel was wrecked on the inhospitable shores of the Island of Anticosti.

Here, in their own words, is the account of their misadventure in that Winter of 1804.

1804 #37 25th APRIL PROTEST OF THE CAPTAIN OF THE BRIG "CHARLOTTE"

BE IT KNOWN that on the twenty fifth day of April in the year of Our Lord One thousand eight hundred and four, at the City of Quebec in the Province of Lower Canada, Before the undersigned Public Notaries, duly admitted and sworn for the Province, residing in the said City, personally came, appeared and were present Robert Cornfoot, late Master on Board the Brig CHARLOTTE of the burthen of ninety tons and a half, by Register, or thereabouts, George Thompson, late Mate, Francois Lebrun, second Mate and William McDougall, Boatswain on Board the said Brig, which said persons on their several and respective corporal Oaths, taken by and before Us, the said Notaries, did severally and respectively declare as follows, that is to say;

That on Monday the fourteenth of November now last past, at eight o'clock A.M., the said Brig CHARLOTTE whereof the said Robert Cornfoot was then Master and the said George Thompson, Francois Lebrun and William McDougall on Board engaged therein in their several capacities aforementioned, being then tight, staunch, strong, in good order and provided with every necessary tackle, apparel, furniture and provisions for a voyage to Montego Bay in the Island of Jamaica, didst sail from the said Port of Quebec, at the City of Quebec, in the said Province, on the said intended voyage.

2.

That the said Brig proceeded down the River St. Lawrence in company with the ship NORVAL bound to Lisbon in Portugal; at mid-night were about the Island Madam, light winds West-South-West. On the fifteenth day of the said month of November at seven o'clock A.M. passed the Brandy Pots, strong wind West-South-West, the top sails single reefed and foresail handed. At eight P.M. the wind North-West, hove to little below Green Island, the wind blew so strong that they could not put the pilot on shore. On the sixteenth day of the said month fine breezes from the North-West, discharged the Pilot and put him on board a Schooner. On the seventeenth at two o'clock A.M. strong breezes from the North-East, parted company with the NORVAL, heavy gales, hazy weather with rain during the twenty-four hours.

#### THE GULF IN STORM

On the eighteenth of the said month at two o'clock P.M. strong gales from the East-South-East parted the Laboard fore tack, hauled the fore-sail up to save it - laid the Brig to under a reefed top-sail, the sea being very heavy. At four o'clock P.M. a heavy sea broke in which carried away three of the Quarter-Deck stanchions, the Quarter board, ..oughtree and Boat Lashings. The gale increasing and the vessel making water, hove over board some hoops to secure the boat and to get at the leak. At six o'clock P.M. wind East-South-East, hard gales, stormy weather, another sea broke on board which split the Main-Stay-Sail and nearly swept the deck. Set the ballance reef main sail.

On the nineteenth at two o'clock P.M. the wind South, more moderate, set the Fore-Sail and fore-top-sail; at meridian variable winds and calm.

On the twentieth at meridian a breeze sprung up from the Westward, Magdelaine River by estimation three leagues distance; employed in securing the Main Mast, the chains having been broken.

On the twenty first fresh breezes from the North West, hazy weather with snow. At eight o'clock A.M. taked ship to the West ward, the South East Point of the Island of Anticosti by estimation

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distant three leagues.

On the twenty second of the said month of November, at two o'clock P.M., strong gales and hazy weather. Close reefed top sails and balance reefed main sail. At eight P.M. ware ship to the Eastward, took in fore top sail. At midnight heavy gales from the South by East - stormy weather with rain. At two o'clock A.M. the main boom top lift broke the gaff in three pieces, which split the main sail. The sea ran high, the wind blowing very strong from the southward. The starboard fore tack parted which split the fore-sail. Endeavoured to ware ship but could not having then no sail but the fore-top-sail close reefed. Then endeavoured to set the fore-top-mast sail, when the ship struck abaft and her stern post was broken in three pieces. Dropped two anchors but the ship filled up so fast with water were obliged to cut both cables. At eight o'clock A.M., finding that they had no other hopes of saving themselves but in having recourse to the boat, they then hoisted it out and got it alongside the vessel, when a heavy sea carried it away with one of the crew on board and drove on shore. Being left thus destitute of the only means they had of saving themselves they hung by the wreck.

CAST AWAY ON ANTICOSTI.

At four o'clock of the said day they cut the fore-mast to try and save their lives by driving on shore upon it, but when cut away the sea ran so high that none of them would attempt it, being then .... and almost frozen to death.

On the twenty third of the said month of November at about two o'clock A.M. the wind blew so strong that it drove the ship far enough on shore so that by God's Blessing the tide left her and she got entirely dry, when they, the said Deponents, with the rest of the crew went on shore and there found the man who had been carried away in the boat the day before.

The season being then so advanced as to leave no hopes of getting away from the Island before the Spring, thought it prudent to take such means as could best preserve them from the inclemency of the weather, and to enable them to subsist during the Winter, that therefore watched all the opportunities providence afforded them in their

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deplorable situation to save such articles as they possibly could get from the wreck; and succeeded in saving, at different times, the following effects, to wit:

- . thirty four tierces of salmon
- . twenty five barrels of flour
- . nine barrels of Herrings
- . fifty two puncheon packs
- . two Bower anchors
- . three cables
- . one job standing main and top rigging
- . two top sails
- . one lower top mast and top mast gallant steering sail
- . one coil of standing rigging
- . twenty chain bolts and dead eyes
- . about six hundred weight of old iron
- . twenty four double and single blocks
- . some parcels of running rigging
- . pump gear
- . a caboose
- . the iron work of the windlass
- . four water pails
- . two kegs of paint
- . a jar of oil
- . two new yards
- . a shovel
- . a hand saw
- . four barrels of beef
- . two barrels of pork
- . six barrels of bread

That they remained on the said Island till Friday the twenty third of March, when they, with the rest of the crew, set off in their boat to get to Gaspee, but when they got within three leagues of that place they met with so much ice that they were obliged to return to the Island where they remained to the eighteenth of April.

5.

From whence they crossed over to Griffin Cove, and on the twentieth at three o'clock A.M. they set off in their boat for Quebec. That at Meridien they fell in with and got on board the ship JANE bound for Quebec and arrived in the said Port of Quebec the twenty fifth of this present month.

All of which several matters and things the said Robert Cornfoot, George Thompson, Francois Lebrun and William McDougall, upon their several corporal oaths declare to be the truth.

IN CONSIDERATION of what is herein before set forth the said Robert Cornforth thought proper to protest as he hereby doth most solmenly protest, as is usual in like cases, against the Seas, Winds, Weather, Waves, Billows and all other accidents for all Damages, Losses, Costs, Charges, Expenses, Hurts and Injuries already suffered or that shall be suffered by the said Robert Cornfoot as Master of the said Brig CHARLOTTE and by all and every other person or persons interested or concerned in the said ship, her cargo, or in any manner of ways regarding the premises.

THUS DONE AND PROTESTED in the City of Quebec aforesaid the day, month and year first above written. The said Robert Cornfoot, George Thompson, Francois Lebrun and William McDougall having to these presents set and subscribed their names in the presence of Us, the said Notaries, who have also to the same set and subscribed Our names in FAITH AND TESTIMONY of the premises.

(Signatures) Robert Cornfoot  
 George Thompson  
 Francois Le Brun  
 William McDougall  
 Jas. Voyer, N.P.  
 J. Lelievre, N.P.