

GASPÉ OF YESTERDAYSHIPWRECK AT GRAND ÉTANG

The Schooner "LARK", Captain Lamb
Master, wrecked at the place called
L'Ance de l'Étang in the Inferior
District of Gaspé in May, 1826.

KEN ANNETT

SHIPWRECK AT GRAND ÉTANGFOREWORD

Some of the early story of Grand Étang with particular reference to the role of Sieur Denis Riverin and Dr. Michel Sarrazin was published by SPEC in the GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY article, GRAND ÉTANG, on November 19th, 1985. Subsequently, highlights of this story were featured on the radio broadcast of QUEBEC A.M. with hostess Louise Penney on November 2nd, 1987. The interest aroused by this recall of Grand Étang during the French Regime raises hope that in time the subsequent history of this remarkable locale of "secluded beauty" on the north coast of the Gaspé Peninsula will be written.

That Grand Étang continued as a fishing station and settlement is confirmed by notarial deeds such as that found in the records of E.B.Lindsay, N.P. dated 12 November, 1824:

Sale of a lot in the Seigniory of Grand Étang,
one arpent frontage by one arpent in depth,
by Sieur Nicolas Bernechy, dit Berneche, fisher-
man of St.Thomas (Montmagny) to Francois
Le Boutillier, Mariner, living at the Seigniory
of Grand Étang, bounded on the South by lands
occupied by Louis Boucher Esq.,
Louis Panet, Seigneur.

It was on the shore of Grand Étang that the schooner, "LARK" was wrecked two years later in 1826 . Let us turn to the story of "LARK" and its misfortune as recounted by her Master, Captain Thomas Lamb.

PROTEST

28th June 1826

Thomas Lamb
Master of
the Sch'r
LARK.

BY THIS PUBLIC INSTRUMENT OF DECLARATION AND PROTEST-
Be it known and made manifest unto all to whom these presents shall come or whom the same may in any wise concern, that on this Twenty eighth day of June in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and twenty six, Before us the undersigned Notaries public duly admitted and sworn for the Province of Lower Canada and residing in the City of Quebec in the said Province, personally came, appeared and were present Thomas Lamb, Master Mariner and late Master of the schooner or vessel called the LARK of St. John's, New Brunswick, of the burthen of ninety two Tons or thereabouts, now lying wrecked on the south shore of the River St. Lawrence at the place called L'Ance de l'Etang in the Inferior District of Gaspé, Richard Murphy, acting Mate and Owen Roberts, Seaman, late of and on board of the said vessel, who in pursuance of a protest entered and noted by the said Thomas Lamb in the office of Errol Boyd Lindsay, one of the said Notaries on the thirteenth day of June Instant, and in extension of the same, the said Thomas Lamb, Richard Murphy and Owen Roberts of their own free will and voluntary accord, in the presence of us, the said Notaries, did and by these presents do jointly and severally allege, affirm, declare, protest and say, that the said schooner, LARK, being tight, staunch and strong, well and sufficiently manned, provided, equipped and furnished with all things needful and necessary for a voyage to sea, loaded with a a cargo of Rum and Molasses, and her hatches well and sufficiently caulked and covered, they, the said appearers, set sail on board of the said vessel from the Port of St. John's, New Brunswick, on the thirtieth day of April now last past, on a voyage to this Port of Québec; that they proceeded on the said voyage without anything extraordinary occurring till the twenty fourth day of May last, when the said vessel, being then in the River

St. Lawrence, was overtaken by a strong gale of wind and thick, stormy weather, on which day at two o'clock P.M. they single reefed the topsail - at three P.M. the wind shifted to the East and the weather having cleared up a little, they could see the land distinctly - that they kept standing to the westward, the Northernmost land bearing West North West and that suddenly the wind shifted again to North North East which compelled them to haul to the wind in order to avoid running on shore, and finding they could not clear the land and the sea running very high, they wore ship, but the gale having increased considerably the said appearers saw no other way of saving the vessel from driving ashore than running her into the nearest and most sheltered place, that accordingly they ran their said vessel into the place called L'Ance de l'Etang on the South side of the River St. Lawrence, the entrance to which lay between two points of rocks, and the said appearers, fearing their said vessel should strike on the rocks, the wind then blowing with great violence, they let go the best bower anchor and brought her up in two fathoms and a half water, afterwards carried the stream anchor out to the westward that the said vessel might be better secured - that the vessel remained in this situation riding very easily until about eight o'clock P.M. when all of a sudden, owing to the falling of the tide. she twice struck the bottom with tremendous force, capsized the windlass and parted the stopper, whereupon they immediately tried the pumps and finding that the vessel made water very fast, made a signal of distress but received no assistance from the shore on account of the roughness of the sea - that afterwards there came a heavy snow storm and at ten o'clock P.M., notwithstanding the pumps had been kept continually going since the time of her first striking, they found five feet water in the hold of the said vessel - that at one o'clock A.M., the sea being still greatly agitated, their said vessel again struck the bottom with such violence and pitched to such a degree that the other cable parted, which occasioned her to beat so heavily on the beach that the pumps started out of their places, and at about two o'clock A.M. the sea continuing to beat with fury on and over the said vessel in all directions and she constantly striking upon the bottom, unshipped the rudder, carried away nearly the whole of her stern frame and broke the head of the stern post - at four o'clock A.M., the tide having ebbed entirely, left the vessel - nearly dry upon the beach with a great list-

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-and these appearers found that part of her bottom was stove in and that some of the casks of her cargo were in a leaky state, but could not ascertain the whole extent of the damage - that with the rising of the tide the vessel did not float but the water went in and out of her as the tide flowed and ebbed - that during the remainder of that day and those following the crew were employed carrying the sails, rigging and other things from the vessel to the shore and putting the same in a place of safety, the said appearers judging it safer to leave the cargo on board than to land it, the more so as a schooner was daily expected at the said place which might be hired to transport the same to Québec - that on the second day of June these appearers, with the rest of the crew and assistance from the shore, succeeded in nearly righting their said vessel and secured her the best way they could with a tackle to the shore and the next day at about five o'clock A.M. the schooner, MARGARET, Captain Talbot, having arrived with a cargo of salt from Gaspé, they hired the said schooner, in consideration of one hundred and fifty dollars, for taking forty two puncheons of Rum and Molasses, together with part of the LARK's sails, the running rigging and cambouse and giving a passage to the Master and two of the crew to Québec - that accordingly, on the day following, they commenced loading the MARGARET, having hired boats from the shore to take the puncheons on board of her from the wreck - that after loading thirteen puncheons of Rum and eight of Molasses it came on to blow very hard with a heavy sea running which caused the boats to pitch and take in so much water that they could not proceed with the loading - that on the fourth instant the weather being fair, these appearers with the rest of the crew, and such other hands as they could procure, tried to heave the vessel off to keep her clear of the Fish Houses, but could not succeed, owing to her not being afloat - that on the fifth they finished loading the MARGARET, and on the succeeding day, the sixth instant, another schooner, the DOLPHIN, having arrived at Grand Étang, they agreed with the Master thereof to take the remainder of the Molasses to Québec at the rate of two dollars per puncheon, he refusing to take any part of the rigging that remained. Whereupon the said appearers seeing no means of getting their said vessel off in her present state and leaving two of the crew to take care of the

wreck and of the articles saved, proceeded in the MARGARET the same day on their way to this Port of Québec where they arrived on the thirteenth Instant -

And the said appearers do further jointly and severally allege, affirm, declare, protest and say that all and singular the losses, injuries and damages which have happened to the said vessel and her cargo were in no way owing to or occasioned by any unseamanship, mismanagement or neglect of any of them the said appearers or of any of the rest of the crew of the said vessel, but solely and entirely to the perils before mentioned and that during the said time they and the remainder of the crew of the said vessel used their utmost endeavours and exertions to preserve the said vessel and her cargo from damage.

To the truth of all which several matters and things herein before alleged and declared they the said appearers have duly and severally made Oath on the Holy Evangelists before us the said Notaries.

Now therefore that these presents may enjoy full force and effect we, the said Notaries, at the request of the said Thomas Lamb, did protest, as by these presents we do most solemnly protest, against all and every person or persons whom the same doth, shall or may in any wise concern and do declare that all damages, losses and detriments which have happened to the said vessel and her cargo and the Total loss thereof are and ought to be borne by the Merchants and Freighters interested or the Underwriters on the same or whomsoever else it shall or may concern, by way of general average or otherwise - the same having occurred as before mentioned and not through or by insufficiency of the said vessel or neglect of the said Thomas Lamb, his Officers, or any of his Mariners.

THUS DONE, PROTESTED AND SWORN to in the said City of Québec in the said Province of Lower Canada /where no stamps are used/ at the office of Errol Boys Lindsay, one of us the said Notaries, on the day and year first above written. IN FAITH AND TESTIMONY WHEREOF the said appearers have to the original of these presents, first duly read and remaining of record in the said office, severally set their hands in the presence

of us the said Notaries, also hereunto subscribing.

(SIGNATURES)

Thomas Lamb
 Richard (x) Murphy
 Owen (x) Roberts
 Errol B. Lindsay, N.P.
 Chas De Foy, N.P.

APPENDIX

Province of Lower Canada
 District of Quebec

to wit,

Before me, Errol Boyd Lindsay, Notary Public in and for the Province of Lower Canada, residing at Québec, personally came and appeared John Brown and Thomas Owens, both seamen late of and on board the schooner or vessel called the LARK of St. John's, New Brunswick, mentioned in the foregoing PROTEST, who, being severally duly sworn on the Holy Evangelists, did depose and say that the said foregoing PROTEST hath been clearly and distinctly read over to them, these deponents, and that the several matters and things therein contained are right and true in all respects as the same are therein particularly alleged, declared and set forth and further that they are lately arrived from Grand Étang where they left the said schooner, LARK, in the same wrecked and damaged state as mentioned in the said PROTEST, the said vessel not having floated since the Master and the rest of the crew abandoned her thereat and the water going in and out of her with the tide.

Sworn at the City of Québec this eighth day of July 1826

Before me - Errol B. Lindsay, N.P. (Signed) Thomas Owens.

John (x) Brown