

GASPÉ OF YESTERDAYCONTRETEMPS IN CHALEUR BAY

Captain Francis Gibaut, Master of the
Brig PATRIUS of the Island of Jersey,
recounts the serious marine misadventure
that befell PATRIUS in Chaleur Bay.

KEN ANNETT

CONTRETEMPS IN CHALEUR BAY

On May 13th., 1845 Francis Gibaut, Master Mariner and Master of the Brig PATRIUS of Jersey, together with John Hubert, the Chief Mate, John Heulin, Second Mate, Charles Marett, Ship Carpenter, and George Vicq and George Le Brocq, Seamen, appeared before Martin Sheppard, N.P. at Paspebiac to file a formal, notarial PROTEST regarding the marine misadventure they had experienced in Bay Chaleur.

The Brig PATRIUS, in good condition for sea, had sailed from St. Peter's Port in the Island of Jersey bound for Paspebiac in Bay Chaleur on March 25th., 1845 with passengers, a cargo of salt, and dry goods. The ocean crossing had been made without incident. Percé had been reached on May 3rd and there fourteen passengers disembarked.

Sailing from Percé on May 4th the PATRIUS encountered storm conditions off Point Maquereau at the entrance to Chaleur Bay. The wind veered round to the north-eastward and thick snow fell to obscure visibility. At about three o'clock P.M. they had a sight of land on the larboard bow. At that time the wind was scant and light - the vessel making little or no way through the water. They noted a strong current setting to the southward in a direction towards the shore.

To the great surprise and consternation of the experienced Captain and crew their vessel suddenly struck with the utmost violence and heavy shock on a reef of sunken rocks at or near the East Point of Miscou Island in the Province of New Brunswick. The crew got out the ship's boats without delay and carried out warps and anchors astern to endeavour to heave the vessel astern into deep water. But as the tide was on the ebb they could not succeed.

At four o'clock A.M., the wind and sea having increased the vessel still struck violently and the sea made a clear break over her. Having got everything in readiness they used all means in their power to lighten the vessel but their utmost efforts still proved fruitless and unavailing. A strong tide, setting to the southward at a rate of at least three miles per hour, swept the vessel towards the shore.

MONDAY, MAY 5th

On the next day, Monday the fifth, the wind having greatly increased, blowing with violence from the north-eastward and a heavy sea running from the same direction, the vessel still struck with violence on the rocks. They were in momentary expectation of her going to pieces - the sea was flowing over her and making it unsafe to remain on deck. Got all hands in the boats and reached the shore with great danger and difficulty and the almost total loss of the jolly boat (a medium-sized ship's boat used for general rough or small work). Ascertained that no boats could be procured from the shore to assist in lightening the vessel and unloading her cargo. In consequence they sent an express (British term for a messenger sent on a special errand) to Caraquet for boats and assistance to unload.



THE "PATRIUS" WENT AGROUND AT OR NEAR EAST POINT OF MISCOU ISLAND. MEN AND BOATS FROM CARAQUET HELPED IN RESCUE.

Got on board with difficulty and found the rudder broke and carried away from the second braces. Tried the pumps but found the vessel free as before. Hired a Schooner, then at hand, to take in part of the cargo for Paspebiac. Hauled her alongside and loaded on board part of the goods. At noon hired five men and five boats sent from

3.

Caraquet to assist in unloading the vessel and employed loading goods on board the Schooner and boats and the warps and anchors. Carried away part of the stern of the long boat (the largest boat carried by a merchant ship) which then became useless and unserviceable.

TUESDAY, MAY 6th.

On the next day (Tuesday) hove some salt and other heavy parts of the cargo overboard to try to lighten the vessel and float her off, if possible. At three o'clock A.M. still throwing salt overboard and heaving on the warps, one of the latter of which having given way from cutting and chafing on the rocks was thereby lost with a kedge anchor. The tide not having still risen sufficiently to float the vessel, discontinued discharging more of the salt to prevent her floating further inshore until the next tide.

At eight A.M. finished loading the schooner and dispatched her to Paspebiac. Again tried the pumps but the vessel continued free. Found some of the sheathing of the vessel on the shore.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 7th.

The next day (Wednesday) at the hour of three P.M. the wind and sea increased considerably from the eastward and the vessel continued to strike with violence, the sea, all the time, making a breach fore and aft over the vessel. But in an hour or so afterwards the wind having moderated, with a strong swell, continued heaving salt overboard until the rising tide, expecting thus to float the vessel off - but did not succeed.

Continued heaving salt overboard, the vessel all the time striking heavily. At ?three? o'clock A.M., with a light breeze from the southwestward and cloudy, set the top sails aback and hove on the warps, and in half an hour afterwards the vessel hove off a little but still continued to strike hard. At about four A.M. slipped the warps and backed the vessel off and shortly came to an anchor in seven fathoms of water. Blowing fresh from the southwestward and cloudy. All hands employed getting in readiness to proceed to Paspebiac and in taking in the goods on board from the boats.

4.

THURSDAY, MAY 8th.

The next day (Thursday) the eighth, the wind having veered round to the eastward with snow, finished taking in the remainder of the goods from the boats. At eight o'clock A.M. sent a boat and crew to weigh the anchors which were slipped when the vessel floated. At ten A.M. the boat returned alongside with the anchors and chains, which were safely secured. In an hour afterwards got underway and proceeded for Paspebiac in light winds from the north-eastward, assisted and accompanied by the schooner towing astern of the said vessel to enable her to steer, having lost her rudder as before stated.

SATURDAY, MAY 10th.

Arrived and came to anchor in the roadstead of Paspebiac on Saturday last, the tenth day of May and where she now remains in order that the damage the said vessel may have sustained be inquired into and established and, if possible, repaired.

(SIGNATURES)

Francis Gibaut

John Hubert

John Heulin

Charles X Marette

George Vicq

George X Le Brocq

M. Sheppard, N.P.

George Jenne (Witness)

Peter Briard (Witness)