Transportation of French Acadians to Louisiana was responsibility of the Spanish ambassador

By Truman Stacey

Part Three

The entire responsibility for transporting the French Acadians to Louisiana, once the Spanish government decided upon this project, was placed in the hands of the Spanish ambassador in Paris, the Count de Aranda.

José de Galvez, minister of the Indies, placed unlimited funds at Aranda's disposal. Galvez made no secret of his eagerness to speed the Acadians on their way to New Orleans. "Le Bon Papa," a reliable ally in Manuel d'Aspres, was given the job of Company of Nantes. The captain was Gabriel Benoist, and he had to figure out the cost of a daily menu of food to stock for serious illnesses. There was a limited menu, and "Le Bon Papa" had to have two cannons and a second deck to defend themselves. The ship weighed anchor from Louisiana, with 15 Acadians on board, as the first leg of the expedition to New Orleans. The voyage was free from storms, and the passengers were able to support themselves. After 29 years of aimless wandering, such a warm welcome must have overwhelmed the Acadians.

The Count de Aranda had appointed Martin Navarro, intendant of Louisiana, as the official to make proper provision for the settlers. Navarro, in turn, appointed Anselmo Blanchard as his commissioner for the Acadians.

Blanchard began his new duties by going aboard "Le Bon Papa" to welcome the new colonists and to begin their registration. And at the same time, the provost marshal of the new Spanish citizens began. They were registered under what the Spaniards thought were their names. French names were difficult to pronounce, and even more difficult to spell.

Thus, Joseph LeBlanc became Jose Blanco, Paul became Pablo, Babin became Vaven or Vaben, Lejune became El Joven, and so on.

Spelling meant little to the Acadians, however, as they gazed on the shores of their new home. They were delighted when Navarro announced that he was granting a subsidy of 10 cents to every family head, seven and a half cents to every adult, and two and a half cents for every child.

With this money, Navarro began to build their new homes in Louisiana, "they can buy the little things necessary in life, such as wood, tools, and so forth."

The expedition remained in New Orleans for about a month, in order to allow the new colonists to become accustomed to the climate and food.

Then, with the assistance of Acadians who had long been in Louisiana, Blanchard showed the new colonists their new homes. There were choice farm lands in the vicinity of Manchac, and 37 of the families voted to settle there. The other family, of two members, decided to settle in Lafourche.

Once the choice was made, Navarro ordered that each family be supplied with meat cleavers, axes, hatchets, hoes, spades, and knives according to their needs, and had them transported to their new homes on launches and barges.

The first leg of the Acadian expedition had been successfully completed.

Here are the names of the heads of families aboard "Le Bon Papa", along with the number of persons in each family, and the composition of the household:

Joseph LeBlanc (6 persons), carpenter; Andre Trampe (10 persons), seaman; Joseph Henry (8), carpenter; Charles Landry (9), carpenter; Amable Hebert (6), carpenter; Jean-Charles LeBlanc (2), seaman; Simon LeBlanc (3), caulker; Alexandre Duraron (8), day laborer; Francois Hebert (1), carpenter; Anna Boudreau (3), widow; Cecille Bourg (6), widow.

Also Pierre Quintin (6), carpenter; Paul Dominique Boudreau (3), seaman; Jean Baptiste Dugast (4), day laborer; Jean Baptiste Dugast (4), carpenter; Joseph Aucin (7), seaman; Eustache Lejeune (7), carpenter; Jean Baptiste Lejeune (2), seaman; Greigore Lejeune (6), seaman; Anselme Landry (2), seaman; Jean Baptiste Boudreau (5), seaman.

Also Angelique Pinel (3), widow; Charles Broussard (7), carpenter; Jean Trahan (1), seaman; Daniel Benoit (3), day laborer; Pierre LeBlanc (6), joiner; Jean Baptiste Guedry (6), carpenter; Louis Stirvin (5), seaman; Etienne Hache (3), unmarried, with two sisters.

Also Charles Daigre (2) block maker; Francois Boudreau (2), widow; Marguerite LaBeauve (3), widow; Jean Baptiste Legendre (3), carpenter.

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