

[Page 15 - The Wreck of the "Auguste", 1761](#)ISSUE : [Issue 18](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1977/12/1

of snow had fallen, but this did not deter us. The cabins gave us hope that we would soon find something better, but the snow hid from us any trails there might have been. We had much to endure, for there were many rivers which we had difficulty in crossing. No one else would lead the way, so I always went first. Often I had to re? turn to take over the packs before I could get the others to follow. This was true of all except the captain who trusted entirely in me and did exactly as I instructed. The others declared a thousand times that they would rather perish than continue a jour? ney so exhausting. They were so much demor? alized that I had to make shoes for them and often to carry their packs. We continued our journey through woods and mountains imtil the third of December, when we came to the Bay of St. Ann. There were oray five of us, and we still had no know? ledge of where we were. We found a shallop on the north bank of the channel, apparent? ly long since abandoned. It was high and dry on the end of a sand bar. This discov? ery gave us new hope, but we were less san? guine when we saw that the boat lacked three planks and was almost rotten. There was nothing for it but to work on the boat and get it in shape to make the cros? sing, about 1200 feet (Englishtown ferry crossing today). The captain, expert in such matters, was of great help. We made camp on the end of the bar and worked to the limit of our strength in repairing the boat. The work was hardly completed when a north-east wind accompanied by heavy snow put us in miserable straits. We all but per? ished from cold. We had only barrel staves for fuel and the heavy snow-fall kept ex? tinguishing our little fire. In such miserable circumstances the dearth of provisions filled up the measure of our misfortunes. For food we had only one ajid one-half ounces per day of spoiled provi? sions, except that we sometimes found some red seeds called rose hips and some sear weed known as baudy. These quieted the pangs of hunger, but left us weakened. On the 4th of December the storm died down and we found our shallop covered deep in' snow. We made superhuman efforts to get it into the water, and finally succeeded. This did us little good, however, for the cap? tain, who up till then had kept up a good front, declared that he could not possibly go further. Not only was he very weak, but the pain that he was suffering in his legs, all torn and festered, had given him a high fever. The three Frenchmen, almost as sick, applauded his decision. Finding myself a- lohe, I had to agree to remain with them, although I was much less afflicted than the others. I did not want to abandon them, and so we rested in Providence. A few minutes after we had made our fateful decision, two Indians came upon us. Their coming was announced by the joyful shouts of my companions, who ran to them with out? stretched arms, tears preventing them from speaking. I could hear their sepulchral voices, choked with sobs, babbling these words: "Have pity on us! Have pity of us!" I smoked away at my pipe, looking quietly on at this moving scene. My companions pointed me out and explained that I had led them thither, but that they no longer had strength to follow me. The two Indiajis came over to me, and shook hands. They did not recognize me for some time, so greatly was I changed by my long beard and my



emaciated condition. On more than one occasion I had done a good turn for this people, so I was given a hearty welcome. I asked how far we were from Louisbourg. The Indians told me that we were within thirty leagues of the place, and that they were ready to take me to St. Peters. I accepted their offer with a full heart. After transporting the captain and three Frenchmen to the other side of the channel, I made them a good fire and left them the little flour and fat that was left • enough to make them a scanty meal. Then I set out with the two Indians for their cabin, situated on the bay about three leagues from where we were. I was very well received there. The Indians shared with me what little meat they had. It was only dried meat, but they gave me enough for two days. On the morning of the 5th I set out again with my two savages to return to my companions. We took with us two birch-bark canoes, and we all set off for St. Peters. We succeeded in getting round Cape St. Ann (Cape Dauphin; in a strong north-east wind, and entered the bay of La Brador (via the Great Bras d'Or) • Here, because of wind and snow and rain, we were held up for two and a half days, during which time we ate up all the dried meat the Indians had given us. We finally arrived, at midnight on the 8th of December, at St. Peters. Here we found five Acadian households, comprising in all ten persons. I immediately sent off the two Indians to go to the rescue of the two poor Frenchmen I had left at Niganiche. I gave them twenty gold louis, 80 pounds of flour, fifty pounds of lard, tobacco, powder, lead, a silver cup, and many other things I had. They promised me they would make all possible despatch in going to save the men. But in spite of all my efforts I doubted that they would find them alive. We took two and a half days to get rested and lay in supplies. On the 11th I wrote a letter to the governor of Isle Royale, informing him, without going into much detail, of our shipwreck. I explained to him that I wanted to make 'the most of the closing season to cross from Isle Royale to Acadia; once there I would give every effort and employ every means to get back to my homeland. In earnest of what I said in my letter, I sent to him the captain of the ship and the two French soldiers, La Foret and Laforce, with two Acadians as guides. On parting with me the captain was deeply moved. He wanted me to go with them and did