

Deportation to France

In the Fall of 1758, several members of the Acadian Samson family were captured and deported to France by the British Government. Many were transported on the ship "La Reine d'Espagne" for the long journey across the Atlantic. Casualties due to disease, hunger and malnutrition were numerous, especially among the young children, and many did not survive the crossing. Worse still, when the ship disembarked at St. Malo, France, on November 17, 1758, several of the survivors were so weak they died in the following months.

The poem below describes the terrible atrocities the families endured during the voyage on "La Reine d'Espagne". It is about the entire family of Honore Prejean, who perished onboard. The Prejeans were closely tied to the Samson family, and in fact, Honore's brother, Nicolas Prejean married Anne Samson, and Charles Samson married Nicolas' daughter Marie Prejean. Both Anne and Charles Samson also died during the crossing to France.

The Family of Honore

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"I'm hungry, dear mother", said little Marguerite.
Who had little but stale bread in more than a week.
"I've saved us some good cheese I made at St. Johns
There's a small piece for everyone, come now, come along."
Madeleine, Felicite, Pierre and Cyprian,
Julian, Felix, Paul, Marguerite, Marie-Anne.

Contagion was spreading as every day passed.
We lost little Marge, born next to the last.
And over the side went her limp form one night
With only Honore, in the dark, without light,
To kiss her cold brow and bid her goodnight,
To seal those sweet lips on a cold, stormy night.

Let me ask you, good parents, whoever you are,
Have you buried a child in the light of a star?
Who should have been home in a warm, cozy bed,
Now runs with the tide and is fish bait instead.
Think of our people, who harmed not a soul,
Who groped in the dark, of a damp, freezing hold.

In less than a month the children all died.
Ten precious jewels went over the side.
Madeleine, Felicite, Pierre and Cyprian,
Julian, Felix, Paul and Marie-Anne.
His dear wife soon followed and now all alone,
Everything lost, and so far from home.

What had they done to deserve such fate?
Honored all treaties,
Returned love for hate.
And so many others joined the children and Marie,
So they wouldn't be lonesome, down in the sea.

When La Reine d'Espagne arrived at Malo
No trace of Honore could be found on her roll.
Some say one dark night he went over the side

To search for his loved ones asleep in the tides
Together they rest in the land of the tides.

Mr. Boatswain, sound your pipes, sir!
Twelve calls if you please.
One each for this family
Who sleeps in the sea,
And waits for the last trump in long days ahead,
When the oceans will part and give up their dead.

In the far off bright morning,
From the depths of the sea,
The Lord God will smite the deep
And set the Prejeans free.
The wonderful family of brave Honore
The family of Honore.