



[Photocopy of the original.]

**Andre' Lamoreaux
 "The Pirate Letter"
 4 May 1706**

This wonderful letter is found, in the New York Colonial Manuscripts, vol 51, page 125B, New York State Archives, Cultural Education Center, Empire State Plaza, Albany, New York, 12230. It was found, transcribed and researched by Isabelle Cluff, Tom Lamoreaux and April Coleman with help from David Kendall Martin in 1988.

It reads as follows:

By His Excy Edward Viscount Cornbury

Whereas Andrew Lamoureux hath by his Petition to me Sett forth that he being lately Master of a sloop was unfortunately taken by a ffrench Privateer in the West Indies, and having procured his -releasmt

[One word is crossed out here. It may be "worked"...

The next four words are written over the crossed out word.]

shipt himself at Curaçao

on board the sloop Orange in order for his - transportation hither, but that upon ["its" is crossed out to say "his"] arrival ["of the --" is crossed out. The last word I can't read. It's probably sloop.]

here he was impreset to serve on board Her Maj-ties Ship Triton's Prize under your command. You are [one word is crossed out, maybe, "therefore" or] hereby required to re-lease the sd [said] Lamoureux from her Maj-ties said

ship and service given under my hand att Fort Anne in New Yorke this 4th day of May 1706.

**To Capt Thomas Miles Commander
 Of Her Maj-ties Ship Tritons Prize**

The Pirate Letter

We Isabelle, Tom & April, found this page in 1988 and contacted David for his help. We printed and mailed the letter to all descendants of André Lamoreaux in the USA that we could find, with this preface:

The preceding page was written 1706 May 4, in Old English by the then New York Governor, Edward Cornbury. We studied it and offer our findings to you.
30 March 1991

We call this our **Pirate Letter**. It was referenced in *The Lamoreaux Family In America*, edited by Harold Dane L'Amoureux, written in 1939, 50 years previous to our finding it. As far as we know no one had looked up the reference until we did in 1988. This letter, the interpretation, and the explanation took the united effort of Isabelle L Cluff, Tom Lamoreaux, David Kendall Martin, and April Coleman. We live in Arizona, Utah and New York. It was a miracle how it all fell together.

My thoughts on the letter:

It's too bad we don't have the original petition that **André** wrote to the governor referred to here in the governor's responding letter. We learn much from what we do have. We have studied, in depth, the time and area and terms listed in this letter. Listed here are some of the things we found. The details suggest a very interesting story.

"Ship Master" **André Lamoreaux** is listed as a ship master as early as 1689 in Bristol, England records. Before that he said he was a ships "pilot." In "The Life Story of David Burlock Lamoreaux" by Edith Ivans Lamoreaux it says **André** brought his family out of France to Bristol and then over the ocean in his own ship, which he built, from Bristol to New York. At that time many ship masters built & sailed their own ships.

"Sloop" This is an ambiguous term as far as size of the vessel. It was a small sailing vessel with from one to three masts, usually smaller than a frigate.

"French Privateer" In the 1700's there was much fighting between the French, English, Dutch & Spanish, all vying for positions of power in the new world. At that time these countries didn't have large navel forces. There were, however, many merchant ships sailing in the area from these countries. In order to use them to the best advantage, each country issued "Letters of Marque," authorizing captains to capture ships flying flags of competing countries. No better than legal pirates, they were called "privateers."

André was at this time, a British citizen. He had taken out denization papers in England, 22 June 1694 and therefore was probably flying a British flag. This being so, he was seized by his own French countrymen, and was forced to surrender his ship and all goods, everything that was on his ship. Many times privateers kept the men from the ships they captured either to work the ship for them or to hold as ransom. Some were taken to the leaders of the enemy countries. Papers and other official looking documents were also captured and taken back to government officials.

André had to "**procure his releasmt**" so he must have been held for ransom. Since most of the Huguenots left France without official permission, they were always in danger of being taken back to an unfriendly France where they would be held captive, set to work rowing on galley ships, or put into dungeons for having left the country illegally. **André** was lucky to have only lost his ship & goods and the ransom money.

A friend of **André**'s, Elie Neau, lived in New York this same time. About ten years earlier he too was captured by French Privateers. They held him for ransom in the French West Indies while he sent his son back to New York for money. In

The Pirate Letter

stead of being ransomed the French government got hold of him and took him back to France. He served three years in prisons, one year on a ships galleys, and finally more than a year in a dank, smelly, dark dungeon with four other men. His clothes started rotting off his backs before he was released. The great crime of these poor unfortunate men was in being Protestant & they would not recant their protestant faith. Because Elie was a British citizen with influential friends, the British government finally interfered and had him released.

A "Prize" Ships that were captured by Privateers were called "Prize" ships. They were legally awarded to the capturer. Therefore, the "Triton's Prize" was probably a ship that had been captured before, maybe by a ship called the Triton? There are records of Prize Courts stating when & where ships were taken & awarding them to the captor.

WE SHOULD TRY TO FIND THESE RECORDS FOR **ANDRÉ'S** SHIP!
FIND THE NAME OF **ANDRÉ'S** SHIP!

"Letter of Marque" Official notice, in the form of a document, given to private, armed vessels, stating that their government gives them authority to capture any ship on the high seas flying an enemy flag, giving captains, under the rights of war, permission to take ships, goods, official papers, if any, and seamen, without fear of arrest or reprisal.

Curaçao An island in the Dutch West Indies, just off the coast of Venezuela. A very strong trading center for the past 300 years.

LOOK FOR RECORDS OF ANDRÉ' TRADING THERE &
ON OTHER WEST INDIES ISLANDS.

"Impressment" Kidnap & Shanghai are other words that have the same meaning. An official order was given authorizing men to be picked up off the streets or off other vessels coming into port, and force them to work on a certain ship for an indefinite length of time. Some times the ship left harbor & it was years before the seaman got back home.

Governor Cornbury Governor of New York colony in 1706. The reason we have this letter is because his papers were important enough to be preserved and have been indexed among the New York City records.

In the index listed on **15 March 1706**, the governor signed a warrant allowing men on incoming ships to be impressed for service on British Ships. If **André** had been the master of his sloop he would not have been impressed but since he was sailing on someone else's vessel, he was impressed by the order from the governor. He was released from impressment **4 May 1706** so he must have been on board the "Triton's Prize" for less than two months.

Gov. Cornbury was said to have missed the comforts of England very much in the rough new land, so he entertained pirates and seamen who could get him the comforts he missed. It is written that he was open to bribes and such. **André's** release is only one of two that were listed on the index page of this time. Why did **André** receive special recognition? Was his story touching enough to engender sympathy? Was **André** prominent or had prominent friends so the governor knew him? Was he rich enough to bribe the Governor? Had **André** done him favors before? What ever it was he was released by the governor of New York in 1706.

Capt Miles David Kendall Martin searched the archive records in Albany, New York and found an order from Gov Cornbury dated 15 March 1706, giving Capt Miles and two other Captains authority "to impress seamen from inward bound vessels." By these dates, we know when **André** had to have been impressed between 15 March 1706 and 4 May 1706, not before this time.

"ff" ...in "ffrench" In Old English the "double f" stands for a capitol "F."

Following are some things the Pirate Letter infers:

- *André petitioned Governor Cornbury of New York in 1706. And was answered in the affirmative by him.*
- *André was the master of a sloop in the New World. This sometimes meant a master of someone else's sloop or even a joint venture with several people financing trips. Edith Ivans Lamoreaux says he sailed his family and friends to New York from England in his own ship. Therefore this was probably his own ship.*
- *André probably traveled up & down the coast of the new world on a regular basis from the time he arrived 1700 to at least 1706. This may be why he is not listed on more church records in New York for this time. He may have gone no farther than "the plantations" i.e. Virginia in his travels or his regular route may have included the West Indies. Many of his friends did sail to the islands. (See Baird & Agnew)
New York had goods to trade for raw materials such as sugar, tobacco & coffee in the West Indies and manufactured goods from England. There was also a strong slave trade. There was a triangle route from New York to the West Indies to England and back. Lighthouse records were kept of ships that passed by them. Port records must have been kept at this time.
FIND & LOOK UP SAILING RECORDS. TRY TO FIND OUT THE NAME OF **ANDRÉ'S** SLOOP & FIND LIGHTHOUSE RECORDS. FIND THE SLOOP ORANGE'S RECORDS FOR THIS TRIP. FIND PILOT & SHIPING RECORDS IN FRANCE. FIND SHIP RECORDS THAT WENT UP THE GIROND IN FRANCE. FIND PORT RECORDS FOR MECHE & BORDEAU & LA ROCHELLE. FIND BRISTOL SHIPPING RECORDS.*
- *André was captured "in the West Indies" not in the plantations or on the way to the West Indies. Shipping was dangerous at best, besides the weather, there seemed to be a constant threat of war, first between the Dutch & English then between the English, French & Spanish. Everybody wanted the new world. Also, pirates were rampant in the area.*
- *André must have been flying a British flag. That is the most likely explanation as to why he was captured by the French Privateer.*
- *André was impressed to serve on the "Triton's Prize." There are prize court records listing ships that were taken & what was done with them. It was all very legal.
FIND PRIZE COURT RECORDS ON THE TRITON'S PRIZE & FRENCH RECORDS ON **ANDRE'S** SHIP. CHECK FRENCH WEST INDIES SHIPPING RECORDS. CHECK NY HARBOR RECORDS.*
- *André had to "procure his releasmt" The privateers held people for ransom besides taking ships, goods and/or monies. He might have had friends in the Dutch West Indies or he did he have to send home for money. ?*
- *André was in danger of being returned to France. The loyal French Roman Catholic officials were fierce about returning the Huguenots to France for punishment and re-conversion. The Huguenots had to leave France illegally. **André**, family and friends left "with candles burning and dinner on the table."*
- *André "shipt himself" back to New York. He didn't work his way back. He must have been a man of some means. He might have known the owner of the sloop the "Orange." He may have promised payment on his return.*
- *André shipt himself from Curaçao, in the Dutch West Indies. This is a major trading center off the coast of Venezuela near Granada. This is a trip of about 2000 miles due south from New York.*
- *Upon **André's** arrival (into New York Harbor) he was "impressed to serve on the Triton's Prize. He must have been an able bodied seaman, young enough to do the rigorous work. This was 1706. The 1703 census says he was younger than 61. He was born in 1660. In 1706, he would have been at 46 years old. That's not very young to be so active in those times. He had to have been at least 25 years*

The Pirate Letter

- old to be a pilot in France in the 1680's. AND How long before this time had he been a pilot?
- ***André** was not held in impressment for more than 45 days. The letter authorizing impressment was written on March 15. The letter releasing André was written on May 4.
 - ***André** must have been anxious to be home after his ordeal. He could almost see his house. His family must have been anxious for him. What a frustrating chain of events. I wonder if he acquired a new ship or retired from shipping after this. His son was not a seaman after him. **Daniel** apprenticed out to a boot maker in 1723. Which children were still at home when **André** was captured? Census records of 1703 say the family was made up of one male & one female ages 16 to 60 and one male & one female child under 16. This is three years later. **Daniel** would have been 10, Judith 14. Elizabeth was married?
 - ***André** is listed as "**Andrew Lamoureux**". The name is Anglicized and spelled right... which was impressive. Why did the Governor say the captain was "required" to release him? This seems to be strong language. How influential was **André**?
 - ***André** was on board the ship. Who presented the petition? **Suzanne**? Probably not. It seems that someone was right there dictating the circumstances to the governor. That may be why there are corrections about the details of his situation on the page. With the crossed out words and such, it looks as though someone may have been there as the letter was written, prompting or correcting the words to be used.
 - *We have found no record of **André** after this date. He does not appear in the church records as witness. Would he be in colony or city records? Did he sail again? **Suzanne** is said to have been very active in affairs of the city, especially in regards to educating her children. Someone taught **Daniel** to read & write. I don't know if **Suzanne** ever did learn. Did **André** have another trade after this? His son **Daniel** kept an account book for his business. Did **André** work with his son? The last record of **Suzanne** is in May 1720. **André** is not listed in that record.
- Oh, if only our people had written their own story! There are so many missing pieces. How did they feel about what happened? Was it as unique as it sounds today, or were these everyday occurrences?

Note: Elie Neau was captured by French Privateers, as was our **André**, about 10 years earlier, he was taken back into France, where he was held for five years in galleys, prisons, and dungeons. This could have happened to André also.

Elie writes "...we continued all four in the other pit for some time without seeing any light at all; but at last they gave us leave to have a lamp while we ate our vitals. The place being very damp, our clothes were rotten by this time; but God was pleased to have mercy upon me, ...and another of my fellow sufferers ...The Lord broke our fetters... We left two of our companions in that dreadful pit, and about 370 others on board the galleys, where they glorify the name of God with unparalleled courage and consistency."

After Elie's release, he says he writes his account, "To comfort ...the faithful servants of Jesus Christ, and to confound the Emissaries of Satan, who would fain make the world believe that there is no persecution in France."

David C. A. Agnew, *Protestant Exiles From France*, Vol 2 p 32-37

This was found by a joint effort of Isabelle Cluff, Tom Lamoreaux & April Coleman in July 2000.

We contacted everyone we could find from Andre's descendants and share it with them.

See also the picture of the NY Custom House 1700

And Lamoreaux Family timelines from France, England, NY, & Canada

July 2000- May 2007

April Coleman

Email akcoleman1@yahoo.com

Address: 2608 E Camino, Mesa, Arizona 85213

Phone: 480-834-3209