

## **Lester-Garland Family fonds. - 1761- 1764, 1803 - 1930. - 5.5 cm**

### *Administrative history*

Benjamin Lester became the most powerful and wealthiest merchant in the Newfoundland fishing trade both in England and Newfoundland towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. He dominated Poole politics serving as Mayor 1781 - 1783 and Member of Parliament 1790 - 1796. Until 1776, Lester spent summers in Trinity and occasionally overwintered. He married Susannah Taverner and had a son and four daughters. He left Trinity for good in 1776 after the Americans offered a bounty for his capture. Agents kept his business going until he died in 1802. Shortly after Lester's death, the whole of his estate was acquired by his son-in-law George Garland. Two of George's sons, John Bingley and George Jr. came to Trinity to work for their father and in 1824 the business became theirs. Between 1772 - 1774 Benjamin Lester raised a massive three storey Georgian style dwelling which was renovated by the Garlands in 1819. Although Trinity experienced some population decline in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the town still supported a few merchants and a sizeable middle-class. When the Ryan Brothers acquired the Garland Plantation in 1905, they re-established Trinity as a major mercantile centre. The decline of the salt codfish trade and the collapse of the Labrador fishery caused Ryan's to close in 1947.

### *Custodial history*

The files that make up this fonds come from various sources: the diary of Benjamin Lester was donated by George Lester-Garland in February, 1970; correspondence came from the estate of John Lester Garland, 2006; and the ships log was donated by Corbett Pittman in May 2007. For the most part, Series 3 became via a visit to Trinity of Dr Alan Perry in the autumn of 2008 and are from the estate of John Lester Garlan.

### *Scope and content*

The fonds consists of a diary written by Benjamin Lester between December 24<sup>th</sup> 1761 to June 15<sup>th</sup> 1764 as well as a typed transcription of the diary that was completed by David White, President of the Trinity Historical Society in 2004. It also contains a ship's log of the ship *Industry* from Trinity towards Poole and the ship *Minerva's* return trip from Poole towards Trinity in 1803 that was captained by Corbett Pittman as well as correspondence to various members of the Lester-Garland family from 1922 - 1930. There exists some considerable correspondence (dated from 1946 - 1973, with some undated) from Rachel Paterson to Miss Edith Lester-Garland sent from Australia and other points in S. E. Asia and N. E. Africa. Included also is a house plan as well as a pocket diary for 1891 ( author unknown ).

### *Notes*

Supplied title based on provenance.

### **Series 1: Diary of Benjamin Lester. - 1761 - 1764. - 2cm**

This photocopy of Benjamin Lester's diary was presented to Walter White, member of the Trinity Historical Society, from George Lester-Garland in February, 1970. The diary was written from Trinity and Poole between December 24<sup>th</sup> 1761 to June 15<sup>th</sup> , 1764. The diary was received November 17<sup>th</sup>. 1874 by John Bingley Garland the last surviving grandson of Benjamin Lester. The original diary is held in the Dorset County Records Office.

**Series 2: Ship's Log. - 1803. - 0.5cm**

Contains a record of the ship *Industry's* voyage from Trinity towards Poole and the ship *Minerva's* return voyage from Poole towards Trinity. The log records weather conditions, courses, direction of wind, etc

**Series 3: Correspondence. - 1922 - 1930. - 0.5cm**

Correspondence written within the Lester Garland family regarding the family business, etc

**Series 3b: Correspondence. - 1946 - 1973. - 1cm**

Correspondence from Australia, SE Asia and NE Africa to Miss E. Lester Garland, a pocket diary, extract on the firm of Messrs. Stilwell & Sons, floor plans of a house and garden, and a newspaper photo of "Bathurst Carrillon"

**Series 4: Various. - 1.5 cm**

(A) Writings of Edith Lester Garland re the genealogy of the Lester-Garlands. A manuscript in a hard cover book with lined pages. The book also includes instructions for the disposal of the property of Lester Vallis Lester-Garland (1860 -1944), written in his own hand.

(B) Several loose leaf notes of various handwritings related to the Lester-Garland genealogy.

(C) A newspaper clipping of the Rev. George Vallis Garland's last will and testament.

Location: Box 1