French Clandestine Slave Trade Records: Finding Aid

Processed by Huntington Library staff; supplementary encoding and revision supplied by Xiuzhi Zhou.
The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens
Manuscripts Department
1151 Oxford Road
San Marino, California 91108
Phone: (626) 405-2129
Email: reference@huntington.org
URL: http://www.huntington.org
© 2000
The Huntington Library. All rights reserved.
Overview of the Collection
Title: French Clandestine Slave Trade Records
Dates (inclusive): Approximately 1822-1828
Collection Number: mssHM 43974-44029
Creator: Jeune Louis, Le (Ship : Nantes, France)
Extent: 106 pieces;
Repository: The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens. Manuscripts Department
1151 Oxford Road
San Marino, California 91108
Phone: (626) 405-2129
Email: reference@huntington.org
URL: http://www.huntington.org
Abstract: This collection contains the original French documents relating to a secret African slave trade expedition undertaken by the French ship Le Jeune Louis in 1824-1825.
Language: English.
Access
Open to qualified researchers by prior application through the Reader Services Department. For more information, contact Reader Services.
Publication Rights
The Huntington Library does not require that researchers request permission to quote from or publish images of this material, nor does it charge fees for such activities. The responsibility for identifying the copyright holder, if there is one, and obtaining necessary permissions rests with the researcher.
Preferred Citation
[Identification of item]. French Clandestine Slave Trade Records, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.
Provenance
Purchased from John Howell, September 1958.
Historical Note
A French brig "Le Jeune Louis" under the command of the supercargo Jean-Baptiste Menard went on a secret slave-trading expedition organized by Menard and backed by Francois Fernandez of Bordeaux and others. The ship embarked from Nantes in November 1824. The crew signed an affidavit stating that the brig's official cargo, palm oil, had been taken by an American ship and that the vessel was proceeding on ballast. The brig escaped two men-of-war before it was boarded by an English frigate. The English officer who inspected the ship was satisfied with the captain's explanation on the nature of its cargo. In late December, Le Jeune Louis arrived at the mouth of the Niger river; Menard purchased 394 African slaves and in late April continued to Havana. Fever and dysentery claimed lives of 115 Africans. Nine more committed suicide. Captain Menard died five days after the departure from African coast on April 24, 1825. Bejaud, the ship's surgeon, took command of the cargo after the death of Menard. But he died shortly after on May 5, 1825, along with eight crew members. Francois Demouy assumed the command. Le Jeune Louis arrived to Havana in June 1825; the cargo was sold there at 250 piastres each. Six weeks later it departed for Flushing. Demouy was interrogated in Flushing and was unable to prove to the court that the purpose of his voyage was not slave trade. Ship returned to Antwerp where Jean Donnet was the shipping agent.
Frances
Scope and Content
This collection contains the original French documents relating to an African slave trade expedition undertaken by the French ship Le Jeune Louis in 1824-1825. The trip extended from Nantes to the coast of Nigeria, from there to Havana and back to Flushing.
There are 38 letters, 63 documents, and five volumes, one of which is the captain's letterbook. All of the papers pertain directly to the slave ships equipment, the crew, salaries, merchandise, accounts, passports, bills of health, and an insurance policy. The actual purchase of the slaves, their prices and negotiations with Negro Kings is discussed in one of the journals and other papers. There are records of suicides and deaths. Information regarding the precautions taken to veil the true nature of the expedition is included. The record of the voyage extends from November 1824 through October 4, 1825.
Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Huntington Library’s Online Catalog.

**Subjects**
- Jeune Louis, Le (Brig : Nantes, France) -- Archives.
- Slave trade -- France -- 19th century -- Sources.
- Slave trade -- Africa -- 19th century -- Sources.
- Slave trade -- Atlantic Ocean -- History -- Sources.
- Slave trade.
- Slave traders -- France -- 19th century -- Archives.
- France -- History -- Restoration, 1814-1830 -- Sources.

**Forms/Genres**
- Letters (correspondence) -- France -- 19th century.
- Business records -- France -- 19th century.

Box 1

mssHM 43974-44029