

Journey to the New World

Bon Voyage!

February 8 to May 30, 1818

February 8, 1818



- ❖ **Philippine and 3 Religious of the Sacred Heart companions leave the convent in Paris. Duchesne and Perier relatives bid her farewell this morning.**
- ❖ **After Mass and a family lunch the doorbell rings and it is announced that the carriage has arrived to carry the nuns to Orleans; then Tours, Blois, and Poitiers, where the fifth member of their group will be added.**

Bordeaux, France



- ❖ **They had expected to board the vessel immediately, but in this matter the weather had its way, and the waiting seemed very long.**

(Callan, p. 212)

- ❖ **February 15, 1818: I may set sail any day now—and I may also have to wait. It all depends on the weather.**

(Callan, p. 215)

Early 1800's Sailing Ships

- ❖ **In the early 1800's, sailing ships took about six weeks to cross the Atlantic Ocean. With adverse winds or bad weather the journey could take as long as fourteen weeks.**
- ❖ **It all depended on the wind and the weather.**



Predicting Weather in 1800's

Old Weather Sayings

- * **“Red sky in the morning, sailor’s warnings; red sky at night, sailor’s delight.”**
- * **“If there appear a circle about the moon, you may expect stormy weather to appear shortly after.”**
- * **“If the sun set under a thick black cloud, it is almost a sure sign of some rain the next day.”**
- * **“If the clouds appear of a scarlet red at or near the setting sun, it is a sure sign of fair weather.”**

- * **People looked to the sky, and depended on weathervanes and almanacs.**
- * **Weather moves from west to east, blown by the winds aloft.**
- * **The first almanac was published in 1792.**

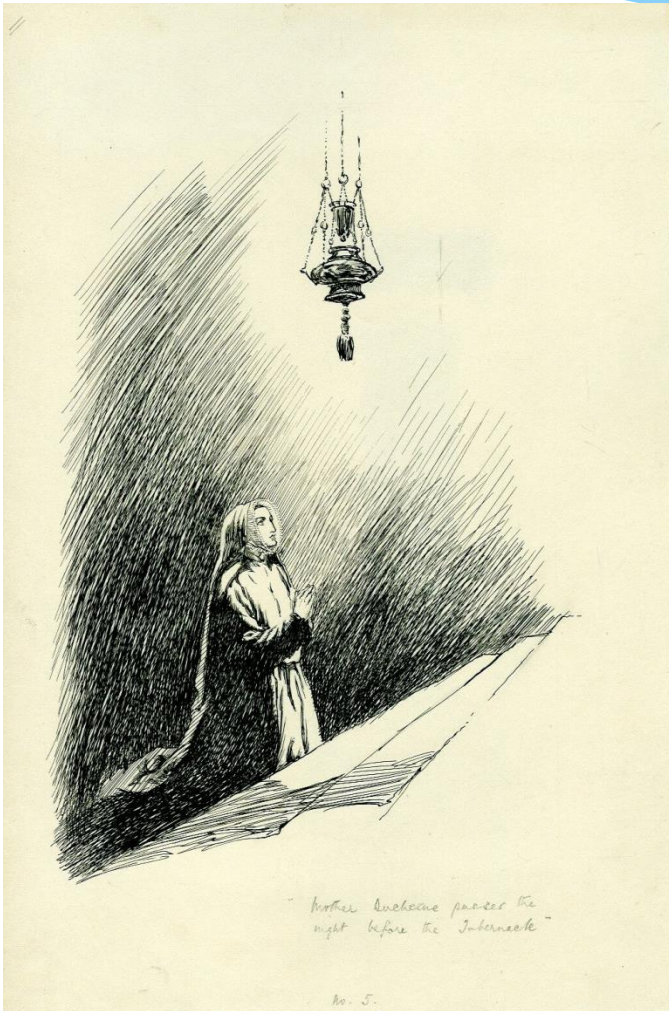
To learn more K-5:

<http://makinghistorynow.com/2015/07/we-want-to-know-how-did-they-predict-weather-in-the-18th-century/>

To learn more 6-12 Weather Forecasting Through the Ages:

<https://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/Features/WxForecasting/>

February 18, 1818



- ❖ **As the sailing was delayed rather indefinitely, the nuns made a retreat.**
- ❖ **I have seen no one about the sailing and know no more about the date of departure.**

(Callan, p. 216)

The *Rebecca*

- * **“Unfortunately, we do not know the precise type of ship the *Rebecca* was. Most depictions of it are square-rigged ships, though those depictions shouldn’t be considered authoritative. Most likely it was rigged as a brigantine, two masts and square rigged, but that is based purely on conjecture.”**

**Michael Pera, Archivist
Religious of the Sacred Heart**

To learn more – Complete List of Sailing Vessels:
http://www.thepirateking.com/ships/ship_types.htm



March 1818



March came in with the westerly winds still blowing a fierce gale from the sea and keeping the *Rebecca* at her mooring in the Garonne, but a change in weather was predicted.

(Callan, p. 220)

March 2, 1818

❖ **The *Rebecca* begins to move away from Bordeaux only to be stalled again by bad weather.**

(replica of the *Rebecca* at the Academy of the Sacred Heart in St. Charles, Missouri)



March 5, 1818



We did not sail today; a contrary wind detained us.

March 14, 1818



❖ **Five weeks after leaving Paris and many false starts because of unfavorable weather, the *Rebecca* finally sails from Bordeaux to Pauillac.**

The storm at sea.
La tempesta durante la navigazione.

March 16, 1818

❖ **After spending one night on the ship, bad weather requires that the passengers disembark again.**



March 20, 1818



❖ **The *Rebecca* is tossed for one week in the Bay of Biscay, causing widespread seasickness among the passengers.**

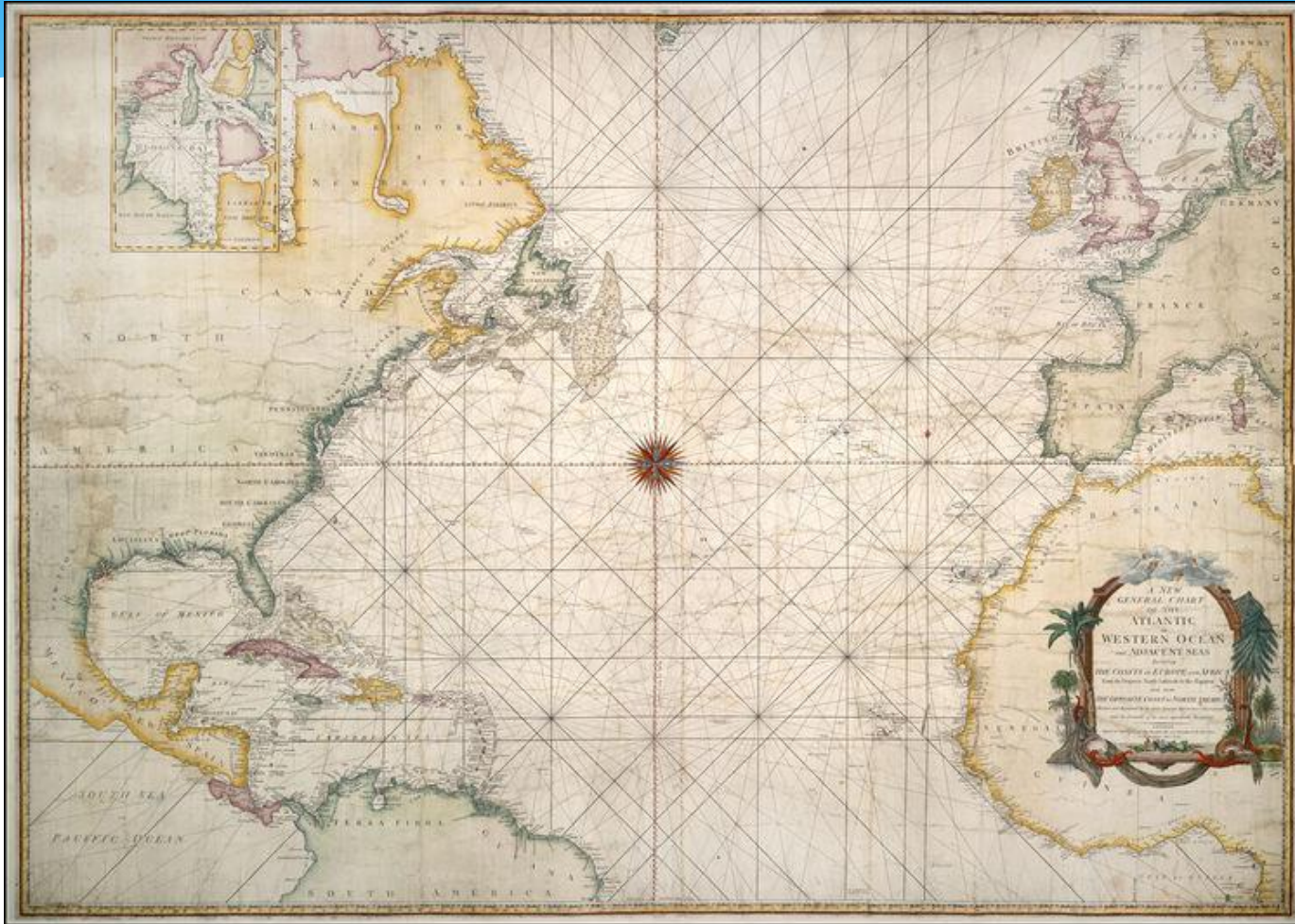
Sailing Superstition

- * **At Bordeaux, the captain had been advised not to take priests and religious, which would lead to certain shipwreck. He answered: “I have found that they do not bring misfortune.”**
- * **At the end of three weeks of misfortunes, one day someone said to the captain at table: “If by tomorrow the weather does not change, we will have to draw lots to see who is bringing the bad luck.**
- * **We prayed very much and the next day, at the end of twenty-four hours, the captain told me: “We are saved! We are now on good seas, under the influence of the trade winds near the Tropic, which we have crossed and recrossed seven or eight times.”**

Letter 92 Philippine to Mother Barat



March 30, 1818



They reached the latitude of Lisbon, nearly identical with that of St. Louis.

(Callan, p. 224)

April 2, 1818

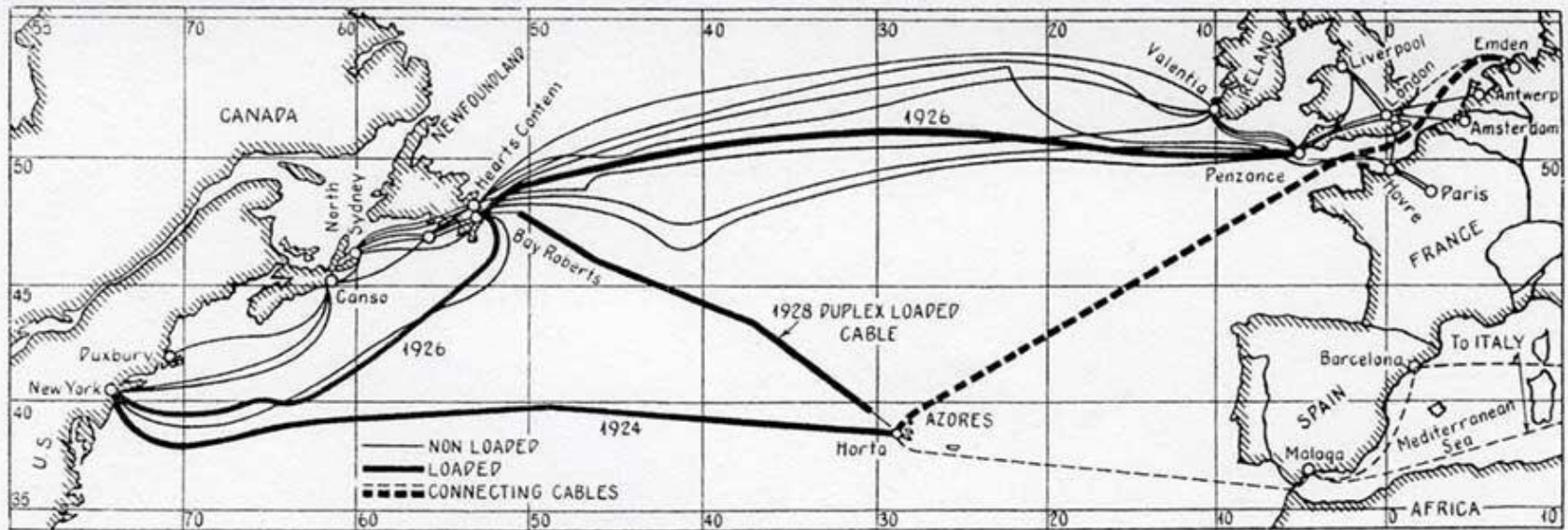


FIG. 1—WESTERN UNION CABLE SYSTEM IN NORTH ATLANTIC

The *Rebecca* finally rounds the Azores, then came the long stretch of unbroken ocean, when there were pleasant days on deck.

Transatlantic Crossing

❖ **Terrific storms that threatened to drive the vessel on rocky islands, torrential rains and violent headwinds.**

(Callan, p. 225)



Transatlantic Crossing



Excessive heat and calms that kept the helpless boat drifting idly in the doldrums

(Callan, p. 225)

Transatlantic Crossing



- ❖ **An encounter with a pirate ship from Buenos Aires, manned with one hundred and twenty sailors and armed with eleven cannons.**
- ❖ **“They forced us to stop,” noted Mother Duchesne, “but on being informed that this was an American vessel, they allowed it to pass unmolested.”**

(Callan, p. 225)

April 21, 1818

- ❖ **Superstition was stirring among the sailors: who could interpret the double sign of a partial eclipse of the moon, followed shortly by a comet that was visible for several nights?**

(Callan, p. 225)

To learn more:

http://moonblink.info/Eclipse/eclipse/1818_04_21



Transatlantic Crossing



❖ **And then a fire on the deck, with Sister Catherine giving the alarm and the passengers extinguishing the blaze.**

(Callan, p. 225)

Transatlantic Crossing

❖ **There were stretches of beautiful weather, when a good stiff wind filled the sails.**

(Callan, p. 225)

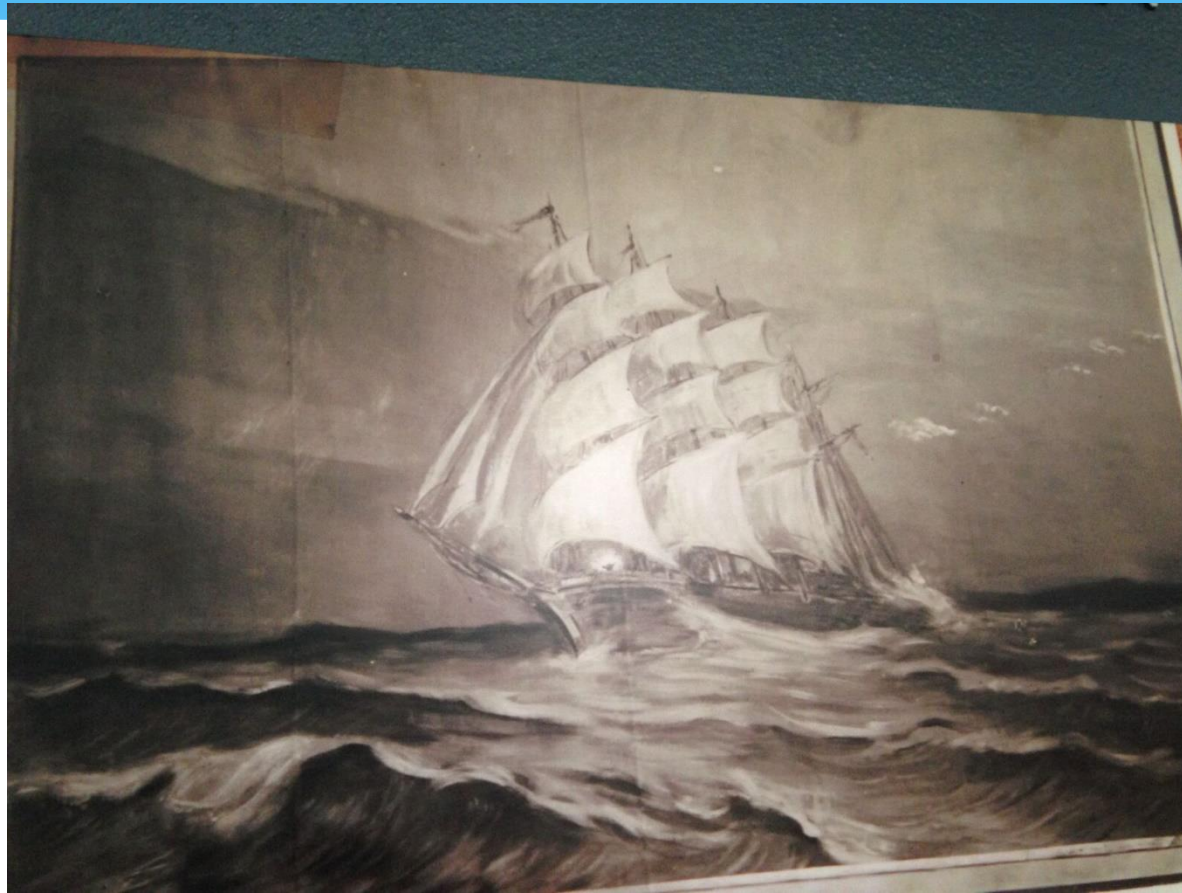


May 1, 1818

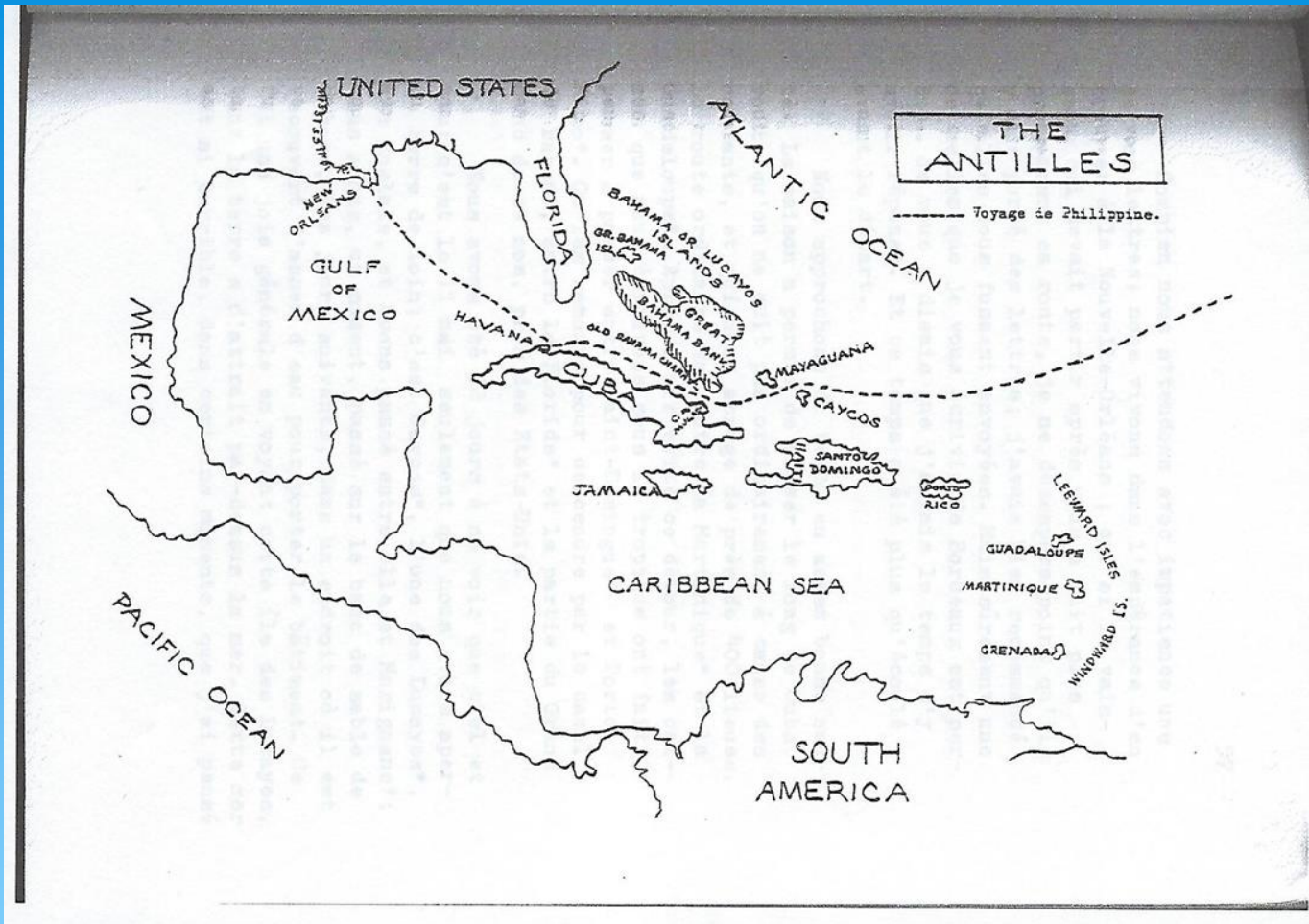


❖ **The nuns had a little celebration for Philippine on the feast day of her patron, St. Phillip the Apostle, with special “feast wishes.”**

May 10, 1818



The watch in the crow's nest sights land. A great storm forces them to stop.



We are nearly at the end of our voyage and are in fairly good health. The weather has allowed us to sail along the coast of Cuba, a route not ordinarily taken because of the currents. It shortens the voyage by 400 leagues. The ordinary route is between Martinique and Guadeloupe. We avoided that detour, but we were so becalmed south of the Tropic that there was question of passing between Santo Domingo and Puerto Rico, taking a northerly course and then coming south through the Bahama Channel, which separates Florida from the Great Bahama Bank near the United States.

Letter 92 Philippine to Mother Barat

May 11, 1818



We have been 52 days seeing nothing but sea and sky; only on May 11 did we sight land from a distance; this was Caicos, the first of the Lucayan Archipelago, which belongs to the English. We passed between it and Marignane. At one moment we passed over the Bahama Sand Bank; the following days in a spot where the water was deep enough to keep the ship afloat. Everyone rejoiced at seeing that Lucayan island, as the land is so much more appealing than the sea.

Letter 92 Philippine to Mother Barat

May 14, 1818



The *Rebecca* sails through the channel between Cuba and the Bahama Bank.

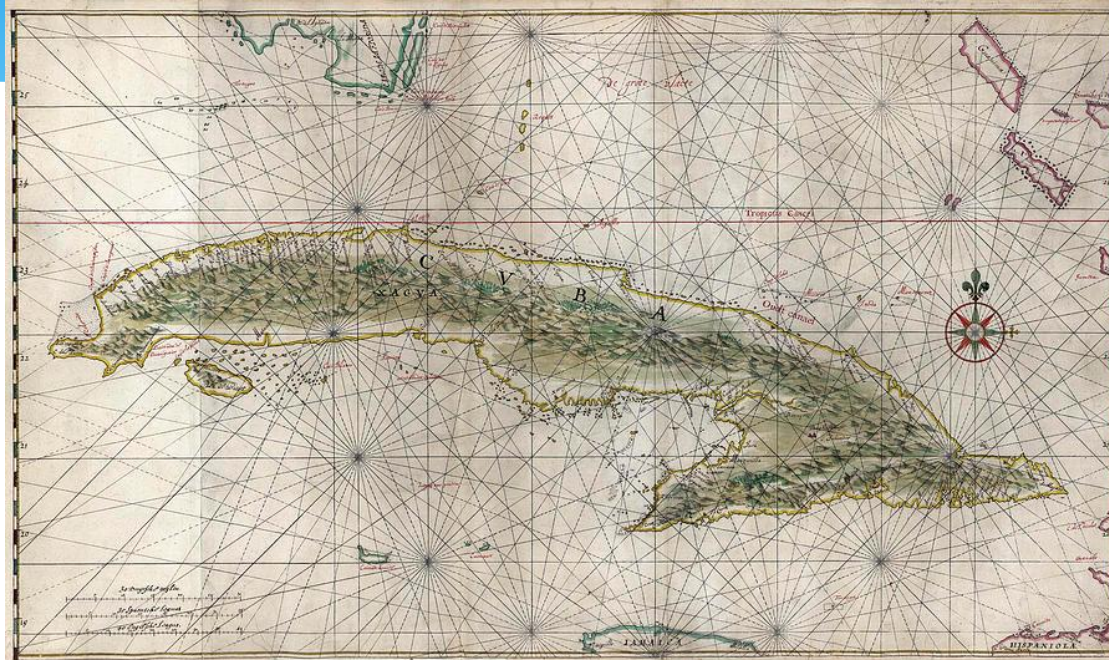
May 16, 1818

❖ **Nearing Havana, in calm waters at last, Mother Duchesne writes a letter to Mother Barat describing the voyage. One year since Philippine gained approval for the trip, she writes: “For fifty-two days we saw only sea and sky.”**

(Callan, p. 227-228)



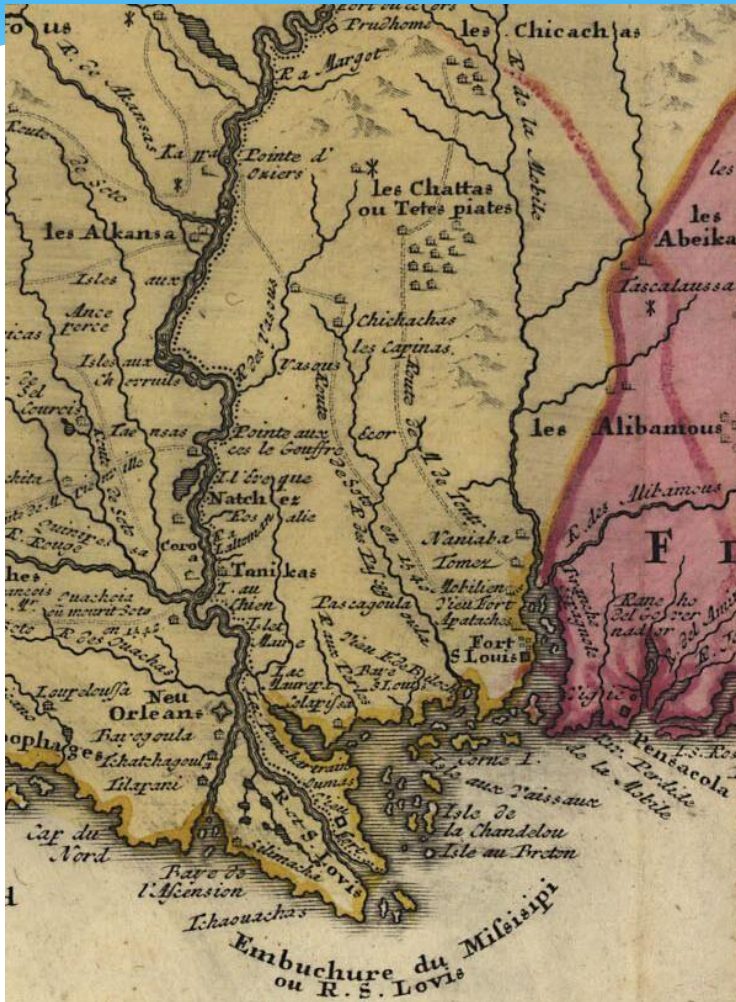
Havana



- ❖ We encountered a ship whose captain asked us to take a passenger from that city to New Orleans. He was French, Basque in origin and 12 years in the islands.
- ❖ He learned the reason for our voyage and came one morning to give me out of generosity a roll of money, 212 francs in all, saying that he was very eager to contribute to our foundation, adding with a simplicity that reassured me: 'If you do not succeed in St. Louis, and if you should have projects in Havana, I will give you everything you could want.' When he departed, he also left us his supply of paper and pens. Havana is a Spanish city, adorned with superb churches. There are already several convents, among them one of Spanish Ursulines who had left New Orleans at a moment of crisis. The city has a population of 80,000.

Philippine's Letter to Mother Bigeu
From New Orleans, May 30, 1818

May 25, 1818



- ❖ In the Gulf of Mexico, the *Rebecca* reaches the place where the Mississippi's waters flow into the Gulf. The Pilot from New Orleans boards the ship to guide it through the difficult channel.

Unpredictable Sailing

❖ **It only took 15 days from Havana here, a distance of 180 leagues, but our ship is one of the lucky ones: another that left before us took 78 days to Havana, and another that had only a quarter of our route, 35 days.**

**Philippine's Letter to Mother Bigeu
From New Orleans, May 30, 1818**

May 29, 1818

- ❖ **“We renewed our vows on board the vessel in union with you and all our friends.”**
- ❖ **“It was the feast of the Sacred Heart.”**

**Philippine’s Letter to Mother Bigeu
From New Orleans, May 30, 1818**





**Callan, Louise. Philippine Duchesne: Frontier Missionary of the Sacred Heart
Maryland:Newman, 1957, Print.**