

Guide to the Michel Bégon Papers

GEN MSS 1756



by Brooke McManus

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
P. O. Box 208330
New Haven, CT 06520-8330
(203) 432-2977
beinecke.library@yale.edu
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

CALL NUMBER: GEN MSS 1756

CREATOR: Begon, Michel, 1638-1710

TITLE: Michel Bégon papers

DATES: circa 1651-1718

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 3.72 linear feet (6 boxes)

LANGUAGE: In French, with a small amount of material in Italian.

SUMMARY: The collection contains correspondence, reports, journals, lists, pamphlets and broadsides, and other papers relating to Michel Bégon and French colonial administration in the Caribbean, French maritime commerce, foreign relations, domestic economic matters, and botany in the 17th century.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.begon>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.begon>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to beinecke.images@yale.edu.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of William S. Reese (Yale 1977), 2000, 2001. Purchased from William Reese Co. on the Library Associates Fund, 2001. Purchased from William Reese Co. on the Edwin J. Beinecke Book Fund, 2002, 2013.

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research

Conditions Governing Use

The Michel Bégon Papers is the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

Preferred Citation

Michel Bégon Papers. General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

Processing Information

Collections are processed to a variety of levels, depending on the work necessary to make them usable, their perceived research value, the availability of staff, competing priorities, and whether or not further accruals are expected. The library attempts to provide a basic level of preservation and access for all collections as they are acquired, and does more extensive processing of higher priority collections as time and resources permit.

Information included in the Description of Papers note and Collection Contents section is drawn from information supplied with the collection and from an initial survey of the contents. Folder titles appearing in the contents list were transcribed as found, retaining variant spellings. Titles have not been verified against the contents of the folders in all cases. Folder titles in brackets were supplied by staff during processing.

Some materials in the collection are enclosed with typed transcriptions, translations, or description created by a previous custodian; the information provided in those documents has not been verified.

This finding aid may be updated periodically to account for new acquisitions to the collection and/or revisions in arrangement and description.

Former call numbers: Uncat MSS 108; Uncat MSS 211; Uncat MSS 138; Uncat MSS 123.

Associated Materials

Other material by or relating to Michel Bégon (GEN MSS File 232, GEN MSS File 233, GEN MSS File 234) can be found by searching Orbis (Yale's Online Catalog).

Michel Bégon (1638-1710)

Michel Bégon was a French colonial administrator during the Ancien Régime. He served as intendant of the Windward Islands from 1682 to 1684, and subsequently intendant of Saint-Domingue, where he became involved in the spice trade. After he returned to France in the late 1680s, he was appointed intendant of Rochefort (1688-1710), and in 1694, obtained the intendance of the généralité of La Rochelle. Bégon also was an amateur botanist.

Scope and Contents

The collection contains correspondence, reports, journals, lists, pamphlets and broadsides, and other papers relating to Michel Bégon and French colonial administration in the Caribbean, French maritime commerce, foreign relations, domestic economic matters, and botany in the 17th century.

Reports concern expeditions led by Jean d'Estrées and other French naval officers during the Dutch War and War of the Grand Alliance, voyages of French ships to Africa and the West Indies, and commercial and military activities of other colonial powers, particularly Spain. The collection contains intelligence profiles

on Spanish mining and trade of silver and salt, as well as the movements, structure, and economics of the Spanish fleet. Several reports are addressed to French Navy Secretary Jean-Baptiste Colbert, Marquis de Seignelay, and some were compiled for Bégon in his capacity as intendant of Saint-Domingue, and later La Rochelle. Other topics of reports include French relations with the Vatican and political developments in the Ottoman Empire. Also present are decrees, publications, correspondence, and writings related to horse breeding in France, and trade of tobacco, sugar, and chocolate.

The collection additionally contains journals, correspondence, and reports of Jean de la Mousse, a Jesuit missionary living among the Kalina people in French Guiana; an account of Spanish food offered to d'Estrées in Cadiz; and a journal detailing the voyage of a French ship to the West Indies, which contains references to slavery and the slave trade.

Arrangement

Organized into four series: I. Correspondence, Reports, and Other Papers of Michel Bégon, circa 1651-1718. II. Letters and Reports from Jean de La Mousse, 1690-1695. III. Description des Repas Espangnols et Collations qu'on a Donne a Monsieur Le Comte D'Estrées à Cadiz, circa 1700. IV. Extrait du Journal du Sieur Boureau Pour L'Amérique, 1689.

Collection Contents

Series I: Correspondence, Reports, and Other Papers of Michel Bégon, circa 1651-1718

2.34 linear feet

This series contains correspondence, reports prepared by and for Michel Bégon, printed material, and other documents relating to French colonial administration and maritime commerce, the War of the Grand Alliance, activities of British and European navies, horse breeding in France, French papal relations, and the geography, manufactures, and agricultural production of the province of Auvergne. Included are a number of reports providing intelligence on the Spanish fleet in the Caribbean and Spanish commercial interests, such as salt and silver mines, tobacco, and silk. The series additionally contains a report on the Ottoman Empire from Constantinople (now Istanbul), a small amount of drawings and maps, and papers related to botany.

Materials maintain order found at time of acquisition.

b. 1, f. 1	Manuscript to-do list	circa 1675
b. 1, f. 2	Lettre a Mr. le Marquis de Seignelay par la concord Bégon reports that he arrived in Saint-Domingue to carry out the king's orders to survey the fortifications.	1684
b. 1, f. 3	Manuscript copy of a letter sent by Bégon to an unidentified recipient, regarding affairs on Martinique Regarding a judicial appointment at Saint-Domingue.	1684
b. 1, f. 4	Memoire de ce qui est Contenu dans la Boette envoyé a Mr. de Tildmont [?] par [illegible] de St. Preuil	circa 1685
b. 1, f. 5	Memoires sur l'Auvergne	1692
b. 1, f. 6	Abregé du travail fait dans les monoyes, ouvertes tant en Louis d'or et Louis d'argent depuis les 1er. Octobre 1693 jusqu'au dernier Septembre 1697, que en solz, liards, et pieces de 4e pendant la premiere et seconde Reformation [and addendum]	1697
b. 1, f. 7	List of wines, liquors, and other trade items which passed through the port of La Rochelle	circa 1694-1700
b. 6, f. 80	Mats de France	1698
b. 1, f. 8	Manuscript account by French official reporting on his visit to Rome, relations between France and Pope Innocent XII, and the like	1692
b. 1, f. 9	Memoire sur les principales marchandises d'Alican	circa 1697
b. 1, f. 10	Raisons que le Commerce a pour n'en registrer pas tout l'argent qu'on tire hors le royaume d'Espagne pour le transporter en France et autres pays etrangers	circa 1700
b. 1, f. 11	Receipt signed by the Duke of Sully	1718
b. 2, f. 12	Notice des voies Romaines qui ont existé dans l'ancienne province de Bourgogne	undated
b. 2, f. 13	Etat du commerce des Pyrenées	circa 1690-1700
b. 2, f. 14	Coppi collationée du don du Roi de l'ancien college, a la Compangnie avec 2000th sur le Domaine Decembre 1629	circa 1651

b. 2, f. 15	Copie D'une Lettre En forme de Relation Écrite de Constantinople Le 8.e De mars 1688 à un Ami De Smyrne Unsigned copy of an intelligence report to a French agent in Smyrna (now Izmir), which discusses the reign of the newly crowned Sultan Suleiman II, activities of the Grand Vizier, ministers, and janissaries, and politics and unrest in Constantinople and elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire.	1688
b. 2, f. 16	Regarding a matter dealing with a merchant of La Rochelle and American trade of products including tobacco and chocolate	undated
b. 2, f. 17	Depuis la revolte du prime Soubasin qui fut en l'année 95...	1697
b. 2, f. 18	Memoire su Les droits de Consuls de la nation francoise qui sont en Espagne	1698
b. 2, f. 19	Memoire de ce qu'on peut apporter de Cartagene	
b. 2, f. 20	Pour les pauvres Honalis de Blois... Account in Bégon's hand showing monies allotted to impoverished people in Blois, the church, and individuals	undated
b. 2, f. 21	Memoire pour faire voir a Monseigneur le Marquis de Seignelay le profit que sa Majesté retirera par le moyen du secret de rendre leaüe de la mer douce...	undated
b. 2, f. 22	Memoire du Commerce qui se peut[?] a la Coste de L'océan de Barbarie, a Saló, Saffy, et a St. Croix	undated
b. 2, f. 23	Articles et fleurs a tirer de Provence	undated
b. 2, f. 24	La gumme blanche & sèche...	undated
b. 6, f. 81	Considerations sur le commerce de la ville de Nantes que ses negociants suplient monseigneur l'intendant de represanter au conseil du roy en leur faveur	circa 1700
b. 3, f. 25	Memoire de ce qui est contenu dans la boete de hetre que [j'ai] donne a Capt. Fage A list of American goods sent by an unidentified party to Bégon, M. de Villermont, and the Reverend Father Prior of Poitiers. Included in the list are vanilla pods, fruits, alpaca wool, manatee bones, and various Indigenous artifacts.	circa 1685
b. 6, f. 82	Manuscript plan for a parterre garden	circa 1700
b. 6, f. 83	Contemporary manuscript copy of plans to organize a French trading company with interests in the West Indies, Canada, and New Spain	1682
b. 3, f. 26	Memoire sur l'arsenal de Cadix et de l'estat present de la marine d'Espagne	circa 1700
b. 3, f. 27	Memoire sur les salines d'Espagne salines de Cadiz	circa 1710
b. 3, f. 28	Memoire sur les officiers de mer des espagnols	circa 1700
b. 6, f. 84	Manuscript table of French ships' flags, also noting flags of foreign nations	circa 1680s
b. 3, f. 29	Collection of six French manuscript versions of two reports regarding silver mines in the West Indies and Spain compiled circa 1690-1700 for French administrators concerned with finance, commerce, and trade References both Indigenous and African mining workers.	circa 1690s

b. 3, f. 30	Collection of manuscripts relating to Michel Bégon's botanical interests In addition to various writings on botany and medicine, the materials include a list of items Bégon hoped to procure for his West Indian cabinet, such as birds and bird eggs, feathers, turtles, snakes, and mats made from porcupine quills by Carib Indians.	circa 1680s
b. 3, f. 31	Manuscript copy of a letter sent by Bégon to an unidentified recipient, regarding affairs on Martinique	1684
b. 3, f. 32	Coppie de lettres patentes du Roy portant don de 2000th sur le petit Brevet novembre 1640 et registrées en la Chambre des Comptes le 11e. Mars 1641 au Bureau finances a Poitiers le 9 decembre 1649 et en Parlement le 18 mars 1651	circa 1700
b. 3, f. 33	Memoire pour servir d'instruction au Sr. Galifet lieutenant de marine comandant la flute du Roy nomme Le Large, Memoire du Roy par la fregate du Roy La [illegible] [in Bégon's hand]	1684
b. 3, f. 34	Coppie de la lettre escripte par Mr. Allegre a ses soeurs de renoures le 15 avril 1663 et par elles receve le 10 aoust suivant Regarding a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.	1663
b. 3, f. 35	Autograph letter, signed, from the Jesuit Paul Bodin, to his unnamed superior regarding the martyrdom of a young female Muslim convert Bodin, a Jesuit missionary in Africa, reports on Fatmé, a young woman who converted from Islam to Catholicism and was subsequently murdered by her family.	1697
b. 6, f. 85	Manuscript map illustrating a shoreline and shoals, possibly in French West Indies	circa 1685
b. 3, f. 36	Traduction d'une lettre escrete d'Espagne a un seigneur du Perou et surprise dans un vaisseau pris par des armateurs francois dans la Mer du Sud [by "François de Colmenaves"]	1692
b. 3, f. 37	Memoire sur le Change de Cadix pour les pays etrangers au mois de 7bre 1698, et sur le Commerce des piastres	1698
b. 3, f. 38	Relation de ce qui s'est passé pendant la Campagne des vaisseaux du Roy commandés par monsieur le Comte [Jean] D'Estrées Related to a three-month cruise by a French naval squadron off the Spanish coast. D'Estrées describes interactions with Spanish officials such as Francisco Fernández de la Cueva Enríquez, the health of King Charles II, the Spanish fleet, and relations between France and Great Britain.	1698
b. 6, f. 86	Journal de la croiziere dest et ouest entiere ouessan et livuoise par ordre de Monsieur le Mareschal [Jean] Destrée Report on a French coastal patrol under the command of Jean d'Estrées during the War of the Grand Alliance.	1692
b. 3, f. 39	Memoir sur le commerce de Cadiz et les marchandises quon y peut envvier	circa 1685
b. 3, f. 40	Ordonnance portant defenses de tout commerce estranges dans les isles francoises de l'Amerique; Ordonnance portant defences aux propres des vaisseaux bastis, dans les isles francoises des l'Amerique, et de la nouvelle France, de trafiquer dans les pais estrangers	1670-1671
b. 6, f. 87	Arrest, du conseil pour interdire aux estrangers le commerce des isles de l'Amerique	1668

b. 3, f. 41	Articles d'accord touchant la reddition du fort de Pondichery [India] Copy of treaty signed by Francois Martin of the French East India Company, and Lawrence Pit, who represented the Netherlands, after the town was captured by Dutch forces in 1693.	1693
b. 3, f. 42	Memoire pour Monsieur de Bégon intendant des galleres du Roy a Marseille touchant le fil et taba qu'on peut tirer de l'Amerique faite Monsieur Jean Ange Manfredino Genois	circa 1685-1689
b. 3, f. 43	Memoire sur le tabac d'Espagne	1685
b. 6, f. 88	Arrest portant que les passeport pour les vaisseaux francois qui irons aux isles de l'Amerique doivent donné par le Roy	1669
b. 3, f. 44	Memoire sur le depart et l'arrivéé des gallions et flottes	circa 1690
b. 6, f. 89	Copie du memoire pour Monseigneur le Marquis de Seignelay du fort du Port Paix le 29 Aoust 1690; extrait de la lettre de Monsieur de Cussy a Monsr. le Comte de Blenac Report compiled by a military officer for French Navy Secretary Jean-Baptiste Colbert, Marquis de Seignelay, regarding events in Saint-Domingue and other French settlements in the Caribbean, including naval activities related to the War of the Grand Alliance. The report is accompanied by an extract of letter from Saint-Domingue Governor Pierre-Paul Tarin de Cussy to Charles de La Roche-Courbon, le Comte de Blenac, who was governor of Martinique at the time.	1690
b. 3, f. 45	Manuscript memoir of M. La Vallier des Roches, French naval officer, spanning thirty years of French involvement in the near East, Africa, and the Americas Includes descriptions of the march of French soldiers to Hungary before the battle of St. Gotthard during the Austro-Turkish War; the seizure of the Dutch colonies of Gorée in Africa, and Tobago, and the sinking of ships in the French fleet on the way to attack Dutch Curacao in 1678; a naval reconnaissance voyage off the coast of Central America in 1682; demonstration by the French fleet off the coast of Copenhagen in 1683; and the battle of Beachy Head during the War of the Grand Alliance.	1690
b. 6, f. 90	Memoire ou journal de ce qui s'est passé aboard du <i>Faucon Anglois</i> , commande par le Sr. Petit, depuis son départ des rades de La Rochelle...a son arrivéé au fort rojal de la Martinique Journal kept by Malescot de Coulomiers, the King's scrivener, on a triangular voyage of the English Falcon, captained by Gilles Petit; the ship launched from La Rochelle, France, in September 1705, and sailed to the coast of Africa, arriving in Martinique in July 1706. The report describes Petit's attempted privateering, and violence perpetrated by the crew on African tribes, particularly women, burning villages and attacking, killing, and abducting African people.	1705-1706

Series II: Letters and Reports from Jean de La Mousse, 1690–1695

0.21 linear feet

Jean de la Mousse was a Jesuit missionary who arrived in French Guiana in 1684.

Letters and reports from Jean de La Mousse to Michel Bégon and M. de Villermont. Some items are in La Mousse's hand, and others are in the hand of a copyist. Topics include La Mousse's missionary work with the the Kalina people and his impressions of their customs, events in Cayenne and other French settlements, the killing of Cayenne Governor Charles Poncet de Brétigny in 1645, and agriculture and commerce in the Caribbean. He also discusses the Royal African Company and the slave trade, and free Black people in the West Indies, as well as French colonial interests in North America and relations with the Iroquois.

Materials maintain order found at time of acquisition.

b. 4, f. 46	Lists and inventories of materials in Series II	
b. 4, f. 47-58	Untitled letters and reports	circa 1693, undated
b. 4, f. 59	Continuation du journal de la Mission de la Magdelaine a Tulery en terre ferme a 15 lieües de Cayenne depuis le 15 Octobre 1690	1690–1691
b. 4, f. 60	Continuation du journal du Pere de la Mousse a la Mission de la Magdelaine de Tulery chés les Galibis de terre ferme a 16 lieues de Cayenne	circa 1691
b. 4, f. 61	Lettres du Père de la Mousse jesuite à Cayenne adressée à Mr. de Villermont à 1694, et 1695 [cover sheet]	circa 1695
b. 4, f. 62	Lettre du P. de la Mousse Jesuite a Mr. de Villermont	1692–1693
b. 4, f. 63-66	Letters from Father de la Mousse to Mr. de Villermont	1694
b. 4, f. 67	Letter from Father de la Mousse to Michel Bégon	1691
b. 4, f. 68	Letter from Father de la Mousse to Michel Bégon	1692
b. 4, f. 69	Letters and reports from Father de la Mousse to Michel Bégon	1693–1694
b. 4, f. 70-74	Letters and reports from Father de la Mousse to Michel Bégon	1694
b. 4, f. 75-78	Letters and reports from Father de la Mousse to Michel Bégon	1695

**Series III: Description des Repas Espagnols et Collations qu'on a Donne a Monsieur Le
Comte D'Estrées à Cadiz, circa 1700**

Manuscript and corrected copy of a report on Spanish food served to Jean D'Estrées in Cadiz.

b. 4, f. 79

Series IV: Extrait du Journal du Sieur Boureau Pour L'Amerique, 1689

Extract from the diary of Martin Boureau recounting a voyage from Dunkerque, France to the Caribbean in a ship commanded by Captain Pierre de Latre. Topics include Saint-Domingue Governor Pierre-Paul Tarin de Cussy and other colonial governors, Spanish and Dutch traders, conflicts in the region, activities of the Brandenburg African Company, and trafficking abducted Africans. The journal also makes note of other ships, such as a frigate from Vlissingen, Netherlands, and a flute from Brandenburg-Prussia.

b. 5

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Spain. Armada

Subjects

Botany -- West Indies
Carib Indians
Colonial administrators -- West Indies, French
-- 17th century
Dutch War, 1672-1678
Grand Alliance, War of the, 1689-1697
Horses--Breeding--France--History--17th
century
Indians of South America -- Missions
Salt industry and trade -- Spain
Silver mines and mining -- Mexico
Silver mines and mining -- Spain
Slavery -- West Indies, French.
Slave trade

Geographic Names

France -- Colonies -- Administration
France -- Colonies -- Africa
France -- Colonies -- West Indies
France -- Commerce -- 17th century
France -- Commerce -- 18th century
France -- Foreign relations -- Netherlands
Netherlands -- Foreign relations -- France
Spain -- Commerce -- 17th century
Turkey--History--Ottoman Empire, 1288-1918
West Indies, French -- Commerce -- Early works
to 1800

Occupations

Colonial administrators

Names

Begon, Michel, 1638-1710
Estrées, Jean, duc d', 1624-1707
La Mousse, Jean de, 1650-1699
Signelay, Jean-Baptiste Colbert, marquis de,
1651-1690

Corporate Bodies

Catholic Church (Foreign relations)
France. Marine