DuBignon collection

Descriptive Summary

Repository: Georgia Historical Society
Title: DuBignon collection
Dates: 1442-1845, 1976
Extent: 3.25 cubic feet (2 boxes, 4 oversize boxes)
Identification: MS 1716

Biographical/Historical Note

Caro duBignon Henry Howell McDowell was the collector of the materials in this collection. She was born in Columbus, Ohio in 1909, where her father, W. C. A. Henry, worked as an executive of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company. Her mother, Mary duBignon Henry, grew up in Savannah and Atlanta. As a child, Caro Henry often visited her grandmother, Mrs. Fleming duBignon, and her aunt, Caro duBignon Alston, in Atlanta. After attending school in Philadelphia and Warrenton, Virginia, Caro Henry had an opportunity to spend a year in Paris with her aunt, Miss Anne Grantland duBignon. During that year, she resumed her acquaintance with Albert Howell of Atlanta, then a graduate architecture student at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. They married in Atlanta in 1930.

Caro Howell's abiding interest in her French ancestry stemmed from her experience in Paris in 1928-1929 and from her close relationship with her duBignon relatives. When she was diagnosed with acute tuberculosis in 1938, she spent five years recuperating in Colorado and Arizona. Her aunt Anne duBignon accompanied her and engaged her curiosity about the duBignon ancestors, especially Christophe Poulain DuBignon, the patriarch of the American line.

The same determination she showed in overcoming tuberculosis was evident in her research into the life of Christophe Poulain DuBignon. She found a willing collaborator in Miss Carroll Hart, then serving as Assistant Director of the Georgia Department Archives and History. With professional guidance from Miss Hart, she began corresponding with various archives in Paris, Brittany, and Mauritius, as well as DuBignon descendants in the United States and abroad. Mlle Madeleine Groleau, a French native who taught at Westminster School in Atlanta, translated her letters and proved indispensable in deciphering and translating copies of eighteenth century documents sent from France. The bulk of the collection was assembled during the 1960s. The six hundred page Fonds Revel from the Archives Departementales des Cotes d'Armor was a significant part of the collection, accessible thanks to Mlle Groleau's dedicated and meticulous translation.

Caro Howell put research aside when her husband Albert was stricken with cancer and died in 1974. Five years later, she married Michael A. McDowell, a noted Atlanta music authority. In the late 1980s, she shared her collection with another DuBignon researcher, Dr. Martha Keber of Georgia College & State University. Dr. Keber built on Mrs. McDowell's research and followed leads in France, India, and Mauritius that revealed DuBignon's activity as a privateer in the Indian Ocean and his standing as an aristocratic capitalist in Brittany. In 2002, the University of Georgia Press published her biography of Christophe Poulain DuBignon under the title of Seas of Gold, Seas of Cotton.


Scope and Content Note

The primary focus of this collection is the life of Christophe Poulain DuBignon (1739-1825). Born into the ranks of the minor French nobility, DuBignon went to sea at age ten to escape the poverty so common to provincial aristocrats in his native Brittany. In his thirty-five years in the French India Company and the French merchant marine, he advanced to the rank of captain, commanding merchantmen in the Indian Ocean. With his fortune secured, he retired to his Breton estate but the upheavals of the French Revolution caused him to immigrate to Georgia in 1790. At that time, he was one of five shareholders in the Sapelo Company that owned Sapelo and Jekyll Islands. When the company collapsed, DuBignon bought out his partners' interests in Jekyll and recreated himself as a cotton planter. His early successes as a planter
faded when hurricanes, pests, and economic downturns undermined the viability of the plantation. He died at Jekyll at the age of eighty-six.

The collection contains significant information concerning DuBignon's seafaring career, his business affairs in France, the Sapelo Company, and the plantation at Jekyll. It also includes material relating to the first marriage of his wife, Marguerite Lossieux DuBignon (1748-1825), and her children and grandchildren from that marriage. There is also correspondence of his younger son, Henry Charles Dubignon (1783-1867), concerning DuBignon's French property and assets.

Collateral papers in the collection include documents concerning DuBignon's ancestors dating from the fifteenth through the early eighteenth centuries, sketches of manor houses owned by family in Brittany, the inventory of property left by his brother Ange Dubignon on the island of Mauritius, and letters of emigrant Grand Dutreuih family from Haiti that DuBignon befriended.

This collection consists exclusively of photocopies of documents from various repositories and microfilm collected by Caro McDowell.

Index Terms

Architectural drawings (visual works)
Aristocracy (Political Science)--France.
Brittany (France)
Cotton farmers--Georgia.
Deeds.
DuBignon family.
DuBignon, Christophe Poulain, 1739-1825.
DuBignon, Henry Charles, 1783-1867.
DuBignon, Marguerite Lossieux, 1748-1825.
Dutreuih, Grand
Financial records.
France--History--Revolution, 1789-1799.
French India Company.
Georgia--History--1775-1865.
Jekyll Island (Ga.)
Letters (correspondence)
Merchant Marine--France--History--18th century.
Sapelo Company.
Sapelo Island (Ga.)
Seven Years' War, 1756-1763--Campaigns--India.
Wills.

General Notes

DuBignon family name: Christophe Poulain DuBignon's actual surname was "Poulain" (also spelled "Poullain"). Added to the surname was "DuBignon," the name of a family estate. This device helped to distinguish different branches of the Poulain clan, such as the Poulain de la Fosse-David or the Poulain de Meleau. Typically, French emigres in the United States used the estate name as their last name rather than their ancestral surname. In Georgia, Christophe Poulain DuBignon was commonly known as "DuBignon."

DuBignon spelling: Christophe Poulain DuBignon spelled his name in several different ways over the course of his lifetime. Among the various spelling were "Du Bignon," "duBignon," "dubignon," and "Dubignon," but during most of his adult life he used "DuBignon." In the interests of consistency, "DuBignon" will be used. His son, Henry, and his brother, Ange, preferred "Dubignon" and that spelling will be kept in reference to them. Family members of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries often used the spelling of "duBignon."

French Revolutionary calendar: In 1792, the revolutionary government of France established a new calendar system to mark the overthrow of Louis XVI and the Bourbon monarchy. That calendar remained in use until 1806. Letters from France during that period commonly use the new calendar, such as 26 pluviôse an V (14 February 1797). On most document translations in this collection, the date has been transposed to the Gregorian calendar.

Place name changes: References to several islands using their eighteenth century French names may be unfamiliar to
modern researchers. As a point of clarity, "Bourbon" refers to the island of Réunion in the Indian Ocean; "Ile de France" is Mauritius, also located in the Indian Ocean; and "Saint-Domingue" is today’s Haiti.

Significant persons mentioned:

Nicolas Anciaux (d. 1810) Savannah merchant who served as the agent for the French consul over the Carolinas and Georgia during the 1790s.

Claude Marie Bernard Lawyer at Nantes who worked on DuBignon's behalf in an effort to force payment from Derivas from 1805 through 1811.

Charles Pierre Cesar Picot de Boisfeillet (1744-1800) Breton aristocrat and retired army officer who was recruited to invest in the Sapelo Company by his nephew Chappedelaine. He criticized Dumoussay's management of the company. In 1794, he quarreled with his nephew and killed Chappedelaine. He was indicted but never tried for murder.

Clemence DuJong de Boisquenay: See Clemence DuJong de Boisquenay DuBignon

Jean Pascal DuJong de Boisquenay (1739-1774)
Officer in the navy of the French India Company. He married Marguerite Lossieux in 1761 and died in 1774.

Louis Jerome DuJong de Boisquenay (b. 1764)
Son of Marguerite Lossieux and Jean Pascal DuJong de Boisquenay. His charges of financial mismanagement against his mother aroused her anger and that of his stepfather, DuBignon. An officer in the royal navy and republican navy, he fell into poverty when laid off in 1802. He eventually sent his four children to Georgia to live with his mother.

Marguerite Anne Etienne DuJong de Boisquenay (b. 1766)
Daughter of Marguerite Lossieux and Jean Pascal DuJong de Boisquenay. In 1789, she married François Olivier LeCourt de Billot.

Marie Melanie DuJong de Boisquenay: See Marie Melanie DuJong de Boisquenay Laffiteau Carié

Notary in Nantes who worked from 1829 to 1835 on behalf of Henry Dubignon in an effort to force payment from Derivas.

Peter Catonnet
Savannah merchant and factor who was an important business contact for DuBignon.

Julien Joseph Hyacinthe de Chappedelaine (1757-1794)
Breton nobleman who recruited wealthy friends and relatives to invest in the Sapelo Company at Dumoussay's request. Chappedelaine remained under Dumoussay's influence in Georgia until the financial collapse of the enterprise poisoned their relationship. Chappedelaine was killed by his uncle Boisfeillet shortly after the death of Dumoussay.

Luce de Cottineau de Kerloguen
Sister of the Marquis de Montalet and widow of Captain Denis Nicolas Cottineau de Kerloguen, a hero of the American Revolution. She was an advocate for the Boisquenay granddaughters who attended her school in Savannah.

Moise de Rostaing Derivas
Manufacturer in Nantes and son of Pierre Auguste de Rostaing Derivas. He prolonged the conflict over the debt owed to the DuBignon family until the 1840s.

Pierre Auguste de Rostaing Derivas
Nantes merchant who evaded payment on a loan sold to DuBignon in 1790. At his death, the loan continued in arrears.

Ange Paul Poulain DuBignon (1695-1763)
Father of Christophe Poulain DuBignon. Although born into the Breton nobility, he had a small inheritance and a limited income to support his family. Rather than perpetuate the cycle of poverty with his sons, he arranged for both boys to enter the navy of the French India Company.

Ange Poulain DuBignon (1742-1806)
Brother of Christophe Poulain DuBignon. A veteran of the navy of the French India Company and the merchant marine, he served twice on ships commanded by his brother. He settled in Mauritius where he became a prosperous merchant.

Angelique Poulain DuBignon (1748-1808)

Sister of Christophe Poulain DuBignon. She joined the Congregation of the Daughters of the Holy Spirit in 1767. Although anti-clerical forces in the French Revolution closed her convent in 1793, she returned to it in 1802 and rose to the rank of mother superior.

Clemence DuJong de Boisquenay DuBignon (b. 1801)

Granddaughter of Marguerite Lossieux DuBignon who came to Georgia about 1810. She married Joseph DuBignon, her half-uncle, in 1819. She attempted to claim a share of her grandmother’s estate without success.

Henry Charles DuBignon (1787-1867)

Younger son of Christophe Poulain DuBignon. He helped his father run the plantation at Jekyll and took over its management during his father’s old age. He was named primary heir to his father’s estate.

Jeanne Poulain DuBignon (1746-1808)

Sister of Christophe Poulain DuBignon. She remained unmarried and was supported financially by her brother.

Joseph DuBignon (1785-1831?)

Eldest son of Christophe Poulain DuBignon. His marriage to Clemence DuJong de Boisquenay alienated his father and, as a result, Joseph DuBignon received only a token bequest from his father’s estate.

Marguerite Lossieux DuBignon (1748-1825)

Wife of Christophe Poulain DuBignon. She spent her childhood and much of her young adulthood in Mauritius because her father was a captain in the French India Company. She married in 1761 at the age of thirteen to Jean Pascal DuJong de Boisquenay and they had three children. Her husband died in 1773, leaving her and her children in difficult financial circumstances. She married Christophe Poulain DuBignon in 1778, and they had three sons. After she moved to Georgia, four of her grandchildren by her first marriage joined her there because of her son’s inability to support them. She provided for her grandchildren sometimes against the wishes of her husband. In 1819, her granddaughter Clemence DuJong de Boisquenay married her son Joseph DuBignon, creating a permanent rift between her husband and Joseph.

Charles Louis Marie Dubois

Notary in Nantes who acted as Marjot’s agent in the Derivas affair from 1828 to 1829.

François Marie Loys Dumoussay de la Vauve (1754-1794)

The mastermind of the Sapelo Company. A bourgeois Parisian with little ready cash of his own, he envisioned profits to be made on Sapelo from timber and livestock with the investments from his partners. In Georgia, Dumoussay was the undisputed manager of the company. When the promised profits were not realized, the partners turned against Dumoussay and the company was dissolved.

Jacques Fourmy the elder

Ceramicist in Nantes who sold the Derivas annuity to DuBignon in 1790.

Louis Claude Grand Dutreuilh

French emigrant who left Haiti as a child in 1793 and finally settled in New Jersey and later Philadelphia. His mother’s finances are precarious and he returned to Haiti in 1802 in the vain hope of reclaiming family property seized during the Haitian uprising. In his travels, he meets with the DuBignons on Jekyll Island.

Pierre Jacques Grandclos Meslé (b. 1728-1806)

Wealthy shipowner in Saint-Malo who joined the partnership of the Sapelo Company. Unlike the other partners, he never traveled to Georgia. His refusal to invest additional funds helped to bring about the Company’s dissolution.
Louis Jean Marie Harrington

Brother-in-law of Grandclos Meslé, Louis Harrington bought one-fourth of Jekyll Island after the dissolution of the Sapelo Company. He sold that land to DuBignon in 1800, giving DuBignon ownership of the entire island. He returned to Saint-Malo by 1810 and often helped DuBignon with financial matters in France.

Meslé, Harrington (first name unknown)

Wife of Louis Harrington and sister of Grandclos Meslé. She was one of DuBignon's most dependable contacts for financial matters in France.

François Scott

Lieutenant of the King at Saint-Malo and first cousin of Christophe Poulain DuBignon. He tried to use his influence to secure officer's rank in the navy of the French India Company for Christophe in 1758 without success.

Marie Scott, Dowager of Kermenenan

First cousin of Christophe Poulain DuBignon who received his proxy in 1766 to finance his sister Angelique's dowry.

Marie Melanie DuJong de Boisquenay Laffiteau (b. 1797)

Granddaughter of Marguerite Lossieux DuBignon who came to Georgia about 1810. She married Pierre Stanislaus Laffiteau in 1815. She attempted to claim a share of her grandmother's inheritance without success.

Pierre Stanislaus Laffiteau (1790-1847)

A refugee from Haiti, Pierre Stanislaus Laffiteau settled in Charleston where he became a clerk and bookkeeper. He married Marie Melanie DuJong de Boisquenay in 1815.

François Olivier LeCourt de Billot

Husband of Marguerite Anne DuJong de Boisquenay. He and his brother-in-law Louis Jerome DuJong de Boisquenay provoked a dispute with Marguerite Lossieux DuBignon by questioning her management of the financial affairs of the Boisquenay estate.

Harrington, Widow LeFer (first name unknown)

Daughter of Louis Harrington and widow of Joseph Lefer. She occasionally helped DuBignon with financial matters in France.

Marguerite Lossieux: See Marguerite Lossieux DuBignon

Maisonneuve (first name unknown)

Attorney at Nantes who took over direction of the Derivas case in 1835.

Charles Louis Marie Marjot

Nephew of Peltier who took over his uncle's notary office in Lamballe in 1826. Marjot was a key figure in helping Henry Dubignon bring the Derivas case to a resolution.

François Rene de Montigny, the elder

Agent of the French navy in Cape Town who commandeered DuBignon's ship, Salomon, in 1779 for the transport of ailing French sailors and soldiers to the island of Mauritius.

Rene Servant Yves Peltier (d. 1835)

Notary in Lamballe who conducted DuBignon's financial affairs in France for forty years. He collected rent, sold property, pursued debtors, and looked after the DuBignon sisters in DuBignon's absence. He retired as notary in 1826.

Nicolas François Magon de La Villehuchet (1727-1794) Shipowner in Saint-Malo who bought a half-interest in Grandclos Meslé's share in the Sapelo Company. In Georgia, he contributed little to the enterprise. Homesick, he returned to France in 1793 and was guillotined in the Terror in 1794.
Location of Originals

Series 1: Archives Départementales des Côtes d'Armor (ADCA)
7, rue François Merlet
22000 Saint-Brieuc
France

Series 2: ACDA (see Series 1)
Archives Départementales de Loire-Atlantique (ADLA)
6, rue de Bouillé
44000 Nantes
France

Catholic Diocese of Savannah Archives (CDSA)
600 E. Liberty Street
Savannah, GA 31401

Glynn County Court House (GCC)
701 H Street
Brunswick, GA 31520

Mairie de Lamballe (ML)
B. P. 109
22402 Lamballe Cedex
France

Mairie de Vannes (MV)
B. P. 509
56019 Vannes Cedex
France

Mauritius Archives (MA)
Development Bank of Mauritius Complex
Petite Riviere
Mauritius

McDowell Collection (MC)
Please see GHS staff for contact information

Series 3: Archives Départementales de Morbihan (ADM)
B. P. 405
Technical Access Restrictions

Microfilm reader is required to view microfilm.

Administrative Information

Custodial History

The collection was handed down from the creator to her son, Henry L. Howell, who donated the collection to the Georgia Historical Society.

Preferred Citation

[item identification], DuBignon collection, MS 1716, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia.

Acquisition Information


Accruals
Accruals are expected.

Restrictions

Access Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

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Publication Note


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Container List

SERIES 1:: Fonds revel, 1555-1845

This series, found in the Archives Departementales des Cotes d'Armor under the name of "Fonds Revel," consists of papers collected by Rene Peltier, DuBignon's business manager in France. After DuBignon's departure from France, Peltier kept receipts and correspondence concerning the DuBignon properties and investments in France and preserved DuBignon's rare letters from Georgia. Also included in the series are undelivered letters to DuBignon from Julien Joseph Hyacinthe de Chappedelaine dated 1791-92 that provide the best glimpse of life on Sapelo Island during the time that Chappedelaine and DuBignon were partners in the Sapelo Company.

The largest collection of correspondence concerns Peltier's efforts to collect payments from one of DuBignon's debtors, Pierre Auguste de Rostaing Derivas. The Derivas affair outlived both creditor and debtor and continued after their deaths by their sons, Moise de Rostaing Derivas and Henry Charles Dubignon. The dispute was not resolved until the 1840s, more than fifty years after the debt was incurred.

Most of the documents pertaining to DuBignon's wife, Marguerite Lossieux DuBignon, relate to her marriage to her first husband, Jean Pascal DuJong de Boisquenay (1740-1773). When her children by DuJong de Boisquenay challenged her management of their financial interests, a dispute in 1790 generated considerable paperwork that validated the indebtedness of the adult Boisquenay children to their mother and their stepfather DuBignon. Correspondence concerning the grandchildren's claims on Marguerite Lossieux DuBignon's estate is also in this series.

Four rolls of microfilm of the original documents of the Fonds Revel are also available in box 6 of the collection.

SUBSERIES 1.A:: DuBignon ancestors, 1555-1720
SUBSERIES 1.B:: Sapelo Company, 1791-1792

Significant documents located in folder 3 of this subseries include:

• Chappedelaine to DuBignon, 1 December 1791: Chappedelaine describes life on Sapelo, especially the problems with the slaves and the poor crops. He criticizes Villehuchet, referring to him as the "old fellow" or "Codfish."

• Chappedelaine to DuBignon, 20 December 1791: Chappedelaine discusses the possibility of selling Jekyll Island on the premise that slaves were a better investment than land. He comments on the hired workmen and rebellious slaves.

• Chappedelaine to DuBignon, May 1792: Chappedelaine identifies where each of the partners want to build homes on Sapelo or Jekyll. He requests supplies for DuBignon to bring back on his return to Georgia. He mentions the progress made by DuBignon's son, Joseph, speaking English. Chappedelaine apparently nicknamed the boy Jason.

SUBSERIES 1.C:: DuBignon financial records, 1782-1822

Significant documents in this subseries include:

• Folder 4, Notre Dame d’Alampadoza Accounts, 1784: Document from DuBignon's voyage from Lisbon to Calcutta, 1783-1784, on the Portuguese merchantman, Notre Dame d’Alampadoza. This account lists sales of cargo from Portugal, value of cargo for the return trip to Europe, as well as expenses incurred while the ship was tied up at Calcutta.

• Folder 11, Espivent Villeboisnet and Company, 16 June 1808: This letter from Espivent Villeboisnet and Company explains its offer of 6,000 livres to DuBignon for investments he made in several voyages of Le Breton and other ships owned by the company. DuBignon's claim for over 35,000 livres was disputed by the company.
SUBSERIES 1.D:: DuBignon-Peltier correspondence, 1798-1825

Significant documents in this subseries include:
• Folder 12, Proxy of DuBignon, 16 January 1798: In 1798, DuBignon gives his proxy to Peltier an his sister, Angelique Poulain DuBignon, to sell his French property.
• Folder 13, DuBignon to Peltier, 1 March 1798: DuBignon urges Peltier to sell his property in France, intending to invest the profits in the United States. He is content with his life at Jekyll.
• Folder 13, DuBignon to Peltier, 27 August 1801: DuBignon discusses debts owed him by Espivent Villeboisnet and Derivas. He refers to his purchase of the last fourth of Jekyll Island and comments on the prosperity of his plantation.
• Folder 13, DuBignon to Peltier, 30 August 1804: The postscript, dated 20 September, describes the ruin of his crop from the 1804 hurricane and the caterpillar infestation.
• Folder 13, DuBignon to Peltier, 17 February 1825: In his last letter to Peltier, DuBignon grieves over the death of his granddaughter. He also describes the devastation from the 1824 hurricane.

Box Fldr
1 12 DuBignon proxy, 1798
13 DuBignon-Peltier correspondence, 1798-1825
14 Peltier's itemized accounts, 1802-1819

SUBSERIES 1.E:: Derivas annuity and debt, 1787-1845

Significant documents in this subseries include:
• Folder 1, Notarial Act, 2 November 1787: Creation of annuity by Pierre Auguste de Rostaing Derivas and his wife Marie Perrette Fourmy for repayment of a mortgage loan by his brother and sister-in-law Jacques Fourmy and Marie Louise Fourmy.
• Folder 1, Notarial Act, 22 March 1790: Sale of annuity by Jacques Fourmy to Christophe Poulain DuBignon.
• Folder 3, Notarial Act, 15 May 1805: Agreement between Derivas and Bernard to limit the arrears owed to DuBignon to a sum representing eight years of payment.
• Folder 7, Proxy of Henry Dubignon, 11 December 1827: As executor of Christophe Poulain DuBignon's estate, Henry Dubignon gives his proxy to Marjot to act as his agent in France.
• Folder 7, Notarial Act, 18 July 1828: Dubois, acting on Henry Dubignon's proxy transferred to him by Marjot, brings Derivas' son Moise to acknowledge the debt he and his siblings inherited from their father. Moise de Rostaing Derivas promises to pay Henry Dubignon as the legitimate heir of Christophe Poulain DuBignon. Best summary of the documents and events of the Derivas debt up to 1828.
• Folder 9, Marjot to Dubignon, 30 July 1835: Marjot summarizes the events from 1826 to 1835 concerning the Derivas debt.
Folder 9, Tribunal Judgment, 26 November 1835: Art. 1912 of the Civil Code was invoked against Derivas because he was more than two years in arrears for the annuity payment and could be legally required to pay the principal and the money in arrears. The court found, however, that the creditors had been negligent in demanding payment and being available to receive the payment. The demand for reimbursement of the principal was rejected.

Folder 10, Marjot to Dubignon, 27 November 1838: Good summary of events from 1826 to 1838 concerning the Derivas debt, with special attention to the 1835 judgment.

Folder 11, Marjot to Dubignon, 8 June 1842: Derivas affair resolved with the sale of the annuity.

Box Fldr

2 1 Creation and sale of annuity, 1787-1790

Correspondence

2 Jacques Fourmy, 1790-1805
3 Bernard, Derivas, Peltier, 1800-1805
4 Bernard-Derivas, 1806-1807
5 Bernard, Derivas, Peltier, 1808
6 Bernard, 1809-1818
8 Carié, Dubois, and Marjot, 1829-1831
7 Dubois, Peltier, and Henry Dubignon, 1827-1828
9-11 Marjot, Maisonneuve, and Henry Dubignon, 1834-1845

SUBSERIES 1.F:: Marguerite Lossieux DuBignon, her first husband Jean Pascal DuJong de Boisquenay, and their children, 1761-1801

Significant documents in this subseries include:

Folder 5, Notarial Acts, 21 July 1782 and 29 June 1785: Documents acknowledge the debts owe jointly by Louis Jerome DuJong de Boisquenay and Marguerite DuJong de Boisquenay and paid t their stepfather, Christophe Poulain DuBignon.

Folder 5, Agreement between Marguerite Lossieux DuBignon and her children, 24 April 1790: Dispute between Marguerite Lossieux DuBignon and the children of her first marriage is resolved this agreement, stipulating that the money owed by the children to their mother and stepfather wil be reduced if they acknowledge their indebtedness and promise not to question their mother's p handling of their financial affairs.

Folder 6, Donation, 14 September 1785: In this document known as a "donation," Christophe Poulain DuBignon and Marguerite Lossieux DuBignon give to the surviving partner all personal an community property at the death of their spouse.

Box Fldr

3 1 Marriage contract, 1761
2 Financial affairs of Jean Pascal DuJong de Boisquenay, 1764-1777
Management of the estate of Jean Pascal DuJong de Boisquenay, 1775-1778

Financial affairs of Louis Jerome DuJong de Boisquenay and his sister Marguerite Anne DuJong de Boisquenay, 1777-1790

Financial dispute between Marguerite Lossieux DuBignon and her children, 1782-1790

Community property statement between Christophe Poulain DuBignon and Marguerite Lossieux DuBignon, 1785

Financial dispute between Christophe Poulain DuBignon and the DuJong de Boisquenay children, 1790-1791

Marguerite Lossieux DuBignon in Georgia, 1799-1801

SUBSERIES 1.G:: DuJong de Boisnay and LeCourt de Billot grandchildren, 1815-1837

A significant document in this subseries includes:
• Folder 11, Luce de Cottineau to Peltier, 6 April 1827: Madame de Cottineau seeks documents from Peltier that will affirm the Boisquenay granddaughters' claim to the estate of Marguerite Lossieux DuBignon.

Box Fldr

3 10 DuJong de Boisquenay granddaughters, 1815-1817

11 Claims of DuJong de Boisquenay granddaughters on estate of Marguerite Lossieux DuBignon, 1827-1837

12 Claims of LeCourt de Billot grandchildren on estate of Marguerite Lossieux DuBignon, 1827-1830

SUBSERIES 1.H:: Henry Dubignon-Peltier-Marjot correspondence, 1826-1839

Significant documents in this subseries include:
• Folder 13, Henry Dubignon to Peltier, 23 April 1826: Henry Dubignon announces the death of his parents, informing Peltier that he is executor of his father's estate.
• Folder 13, Henry Dubignon to Peltier, 9 February 1828: Dubignon explains that the rift between his father and his brother was largely due to Joseph's marriage to Clemence DuJong de Boisquenay.

Henry Dubignon

13 Peltier correspondence, 1826-1828

14 Marjot correspondence, 1834-1839

SUBSERIES 1.I:: Miscellaneous documents, 1802-1840
SERIES 2:: Poulain and DuBignon family documents, 1442-1825

This series contains documents relevant to the early family history of the Poulain clan in France and to the life of Christophe Poulain DuBignon and his close relatives. The Poulain are members of the provincial Breton aristocracy and their noble status was confirmed in 1669 during a "reformation of the nobility" to weed out pretenders to aristocratic privilege. An extract from the royal register of noble families is included in this series. The papers of Pierre Poulain, Sieur de Tramains et du Val, figure prominently in the seventeenth century papers but there are also documents from his ancestors that date from the fifteenth century. Documents pertaining to Christophe Poulain DuBignon include his birth, marriage, and death records as well as his will and other legal papers. There are also documents concerning DuBignon's father, Ange Paul Poulain DuBignon. An extensive inventory of the property owned by his brother, Ange Poulain Dubignon, is a substantive part of this series. Sketches of many of the Poulain ancestral manor houses in Brittany are of special interest.

SUBSERIES 2.A.: Poulain Family in the Ancien Régime, 1442-1751

Significant documents in this subseries include:
• Folder 17, Confirmation of Noble Status, 1669: In accordance with the order of Finance Minister Jean-Baptiste Colbert, all noble families were required to present documents to prove the authenticity of their aristocratic titles. This extract from the register of the Breton Chamber that was in session from 1668 to 1671 confirms the noble lineage of the Poulain clan. Of particular interest in this document are the annotations that show it was passed to Ange Paul Poulain in 1724, who in turn bestowed it to his son and namesake, Ange Poulain Dubignon in 1751.

Box Fldr

3 17 Pierre Poulain and ancestors, 1442-1667
   Provenance: ADCA

Box Fldr

4 1 Confirmation of noble status, 1669
   Provenance: McDowell Collection

SUBSERIES 2.B.: Manor Houses of the Poulain Family

Box Fldr

4 2 Sketches of Poulain manor houses by unknown artist, 1896-1931.
SUBSERIES 2.C.: Ange Paul Poulain DuBignon, (1695-1763)

Significant documents in this subseries include:
• Folder 4, Property Partition, 1719: Ange Paul Poulain DuBignon and two of his brothers filed suit against the oldest brother, Jan Baptiste Poulain de la Fosse-David, questioning the inheritance he received from their parents and maternal grandmother. This agreement in 1719 resolved the dispute by apportioning the property and debt liability among the four brothers. Ange Paul Poulain DuBignon's share of the inheritance provided him such a small income that he fell into the ranks of the impoverished nobility.

Box Fldr
4 3 Baptismal record and will, 1695, 1763
   Provenance: ADCA

4 Notarial Act: Property Partition, 1719
   Provenance: McDowell Collection

SUBSERIES 2.D.: Christophe Poulain DuBignon, (1740-1825)

Significant documents in this subseries include:
• Folder 6, Notarial Acts, 27 October 1766 and 13 October 1767: Christophe Poulain DuBignon grants a proxy to his cousin, Lady Marie Scott, Dowager of Kermenenan, to sell his property or to borrow money in order to finance his sister Angelique's dowry to join a convent. By 1767, Lady Scott had found no potential buyers for the DuBignon property and she borrowed 700 livres from Catherine de Kergu, the dowager Du Boisgle.
• Folder 7, Will of Christophe Poulain DuBignon, 2 April 1823: DuBignon designates his son Henry to be his executor. Bequests are made to his wife, granddaughter Louisa, and his son Joseph but most of the estate is left to Henry. DuBignon emancipates (illegally) his slaves Marie-Therese and her daughter.

Box Fldr
4 5 Baptismal record and marriage record, 1740, 1778
   Provenance: ML, MV

6 Notarial acts, 1766-1767
   Provenance: McDowell Collection

7 Will, inventory, and obituary, 1823-1825
   Provenance: GCC, Savannah Republican

SUBSERIES 2.E.: Henry Dubignon, 1787
SERIES 3:: Seafaring papers of Christophe Poulain DuBignon, 1758-1792

This series contains documents from DuBignon's thirty-five year maritime career that included his experience in the navy of the French India Company and in the French merchant marine. Of particular significance are the papers pertaining to the captaincy exam he passed in 1775 and DuBignon's correspondence with admiralty officials in the 1770s. In 1965, the Marine Nationale Service Historique at Lorient prepared a summary of DuBignon's naval career until 1781 and this document is also included in the series. Although the summary is not complete for the period between 1749 and 1781, it is a guide to DuBignon's service in both the French India Company navy and the merchant marine. DuBignon's voyages to Georgia in 1790 and 1792, represented by muster rolls from the *Silvain* and *Sappello*, mark the end of his seafaring days.

SUBSERIES 3.A.: French India Company papers, 1758-1792

Significant documents in this subseries include:

- Letter from Scott, 30 October 1758: François Scott asks for a promotion to officer grade for his first cousin DuBignon. Scott attempts to use his influence as King's lieutenant at Saint-Malo and he also stresses DuBignon's service to the Company and his desperate circumstances.
- Letter to Scott, 10 November 1758: Scott's unknown correspondent states that he cannot intervene on DuBignon's behalf because promotions are decided only by the Company.

SUBSERIES 3.B.: Merchant Marine papers, 1775-1781

Significant documents in this subseries include:

- Folder 11, Sartine to Prevost de La Croix, 28 January 1775: All mariners in hopes of taking the
captaincy exam had to have two campaigns' service with the royal navy. Sartine, the Minister of the Navy, grants DuBignon an exemption for this requirement.

Folder 11, Record of Captaincy Exam, 4 February 1775: DuBignon passed the captaincy exam and was appointed "captain master commander and pilot" by the Admiralty Court in Vannes. A partial list of ships DuBignon had sailed on prior to 1775 is included.

Folder 13, Agreement between DuBignon and Montigny, 12 October 1779: DuBignon agrees to transport sailors and soldiers from Cape Town to Mauritius on board the Salomon, a merchantman he commands. Because the Salomon has been retained for the king's service, Montigny agrees to compensate DuBignon for the profits his cargo would have earned in Mauritius.

Folder 14, DuBignon to Sartine, 1 June 1778: DuBignon was required to report his arrivals and departures on board merchantmen to the Minister of the Navy. DuBignon announces that the ship he commanded on the outbound voyage to India, the Merger, sank in 1777. He has returned as captain of the Ville d'Archangel.

Folder 14, Sartine to DuBignon, 8 May 1778 [incorrect date—it should read 8 June 1778]: Sartine chastises DuBignon for the escape of two prisoners from the Ville d'Archangel. (These two men were soldiers condemned to the galleys who jumped overboard near Cape Town and probably drowned.)

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<td>Merger and Ville d'Archangel, 1775-1778</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>DuBignon correspondence, 1773-1778</td>
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<td>Naval career summary, 1749-1781</td>
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**SUBSERIES 3.C.: Voyages to Georgia, 1790-1792**

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<td>Sappello muster roll, 1792</td>
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**SERIES 4:: Sapelo Company, 1790-1803**

This series includes significant documents, correspondence, and accounts concerning the partnership of DuBignon and five other Frenchmen who purchased Sapelo and Jekyll Islands off the Georgia coast. The
partnership was established in 1790 between Charles César Picot de Boisfeillet, Julien Joseph Hyacinthe de Chappedelaine, François Marie Loys Dumoussay de La Vauve, Pierre Jacques Grandclos Mesle, Nicolas François Magon de La Villehuchet, and DuBignon. The threats to noble status and fortunes posed by the French Revolution encouraged the creation of the Sapelo Company but the company was largely the vision of Dumoussay. Chappedelaine recruited most of the men to invest in Dumoussay's dream and all but Grandclos Mesle came to Georgia. Like many of the partners, DuBignon lashed out against Dumoussay's mismanagement of the enterprise and by 1793 the partners dissolved the company.

The correspondence in this series reveals both the hopes and ruin of the Sapelo Company, as the letters date from the beginning and from the disintegration of the partnership. The accounts originate from a series of lawsuits that occurred after the deaths of Chappedelaine and Dumoussay in 1794. What is clear from the accounts is the floundering financial state of the company almost from its inception.

**SUBSERIES 4.A.: Deeds, 1791-1796**

Significant documents in this subseries include:

• Deposition Clearing Title to Jekyll Island, 1796: According to French law, Villehuchet's wife had a claim to Jekyll Island when he briefly owned the island in 1792. In order for her to give up her claim, the partners' deeds to Jekyll were sent by ship to France but they were lost at sea. DuBignon appealed to the Georgia legislature to restore his deed to his portion of Jekyll and the legislature complied in 1796.

**Box Fldr**

5 1 DuBignon's deeds, 1791-1796

Provenance: GDAH

**SUBSERIES 4.B.: Sapelo Company accounts, 1795-1803**

**Box Fldr**

4 16 Accounts, 1795-1803

Provenance: NASER

**SUBSERIES 4.C.: Correspondence, 1790-1793**

Significant documents in this subseries include:

• Chappedelaine to Dumoussay, 3 August 1790: Chappedelaine reports to Dumoussay that he has recruited DuBignon as a partner in the Sapelo Company and that DuBignon will be a great asset to the enterprise.

• DuBignon to Boisfeillet, 13 March 1793: DuBignon expresses his anger about Dumoussay's unwillingness to give the partners specific titles to their property in Georgia. DuBignon promises to confront Dumoussay in Savannah and expose his "tricks." Boisfeillet earlier had complained openly about Dumoussay's mismanagement and DuBignon urges him to remember those accusations and join him against Dumoussay.
SERIES 5:: Grand Dutreuilh papers, 1798-1817

Two years after the Haitian slave uprising of 1791, Marie Anne Felicite Rossignol Grand Dutreuilh left the island with her four children. Her husband, Jean Baptiste Jerome Grand Dutreuilh, stayed behind to look after their property and was killed in 1802. The family eventually settled in New Jersey and became naturalized American citizens.

Connections between the DuBignon and Grand Dutreuilh families began in 1809 when Christophe Poulain DuBignon offered Louis Claude Grand Dutreuilh the chance to start a store on Jekyll. Although Louis Claude declined the offer, his sister Marie Anne established Georgia roots after her marriage to Charles Pierre Riffault of Savannah. Her daughter, Felicite Elizabeth Riffault, was born in Savannah in 1812 and married Joseph duBignon, Christophe's grandson, in 1839.

Because of the intermarriage between these families, the Grand Dutreuilh papers have a special place in this collection. The letters are poignant in describing the financial and emotional heartaches the emigre family endured during its first years in the United States. In the explanatory notes, Polly Parker Kitchens provides genealogical information about the family and short biographies of family members.

SUBSERIES 5.A.: Grand Deutreuilh correspondence, 1798-1817

Significant documents in this subseries include:

• Folder 2, Louis Claude Grand Dutreuilh to Marie Anne Felicite Rossignol Grand Dutreuilh, 14 July 1802: Writing from Haiti, Louis Claude Grand Dutreuilh reports on the capture and murder of his father in February 1802. The loss of their cotton crop exacerbates the family's financial distress.

• Folder 2, Louis Claude Grand Dutreuilh to Marie Anne Felicite Rossignol Grand Dutreuilh, 12 January 1809: Louis Claude Grand Dutreuilh describes the generous offer made to him by Christophe and Henry DuBignon. They offer a location on their wharf for a store as well as half the capital needed for the business. Louis Claude Grand Dutreuilh is touched by the kindnesses shown him by the DuBignons.