

NAME:L'ESPERANCE, Alexis

PARISH: Sorel (Quebec)

ENTERED SERVICE:1816

DATES: b.ca. 1798

Appointments & Service

Outfit Year*:

Position:

Post:

District:

HBCA Reference:

**An Outfit year ran from 1 June to 31 May*

Alexis Bonamie dit L'Esperance from the parish of Sorel, Lower Canada (now Quebec) joined the Hudson's Bay Company in the Montreal Department as a middleman (ie: an oarsman on a freight canoe or York Boat) in 1816. It appears that he came out west shortly afterwards as he is listed at Fort William (now Thunder Bay, Ontario) in 1817. He was employed in the Peace River District in 1818-1819, and in the Athabasca District in 1819-1820. He served in the Lower Red River District until 1823 when, on July 17, of that year, he signed a contract with the Company to act as a bowsman (ie: the crewman of a canoe or York Boat where position is in the bow) for 2 years at wages of 20 pounds sterling per annum. He was posted to the Columbia Department during this time, returning to the Lower Red River District in 1825. His age is given as 26 years in 1824. It was in 1825 that he commenced services as a guide and steersman (ie: the foreman of a crew on freight canoe or York Boat). He retired to the Red River Settlement in 1835. On April 20, 1835, he was granted 50 acres of land in the Settlement (lot number 251) by the Hudson's Bay Company. However, his involvement with the Company did not cease upon his retirement. He was employed seasonally between at least 1846 and 1870 as steersman and guide on the Portage La Loche Brigade. More information on this Brigade may be found in an article by John Peter Turner in the December 1943 issue of *The Beaver* which should be available at the Calgary Public Library. No references have been traced to L'Esperance after 1870.

(HBC Archives B.134/d/8, fo.57: A.16/53, fos.97d,98; B.239/d/204,fo.17d; B.239/d/210, fo.27d; B.239/g/1, fo.32; B.239/g/2, fo.33; A.32/22,fo.7; B.239/g/3,fo.16, B.239/g/4,fo.37' B.239/g/5,fo.10; A.32/22,fos.11,12; B.239/g/15,fo.71; B.6/7,fo.97d; B.239/d/716a,fo.3; B.303/d/33,fo.178; John Peter Turner "The La Loche Brigade", *Beaver* December 1943 pp.32-36)

Biography under Bonami in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, Volume X1 (1881-1890), Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982.

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