

# **The Quest**

**Paul Hock**



# THE QUEST

A Prequel to The Crispin Trilogy

Paul Hock



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To Uncle Mel, who got me thinking.

*Every book is a quotation, and every house is a quotation out of all forests,  
and mines, and stone quarries, and every man is a quotation from all his  
ancestors.*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

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*Plymouth Hoe Devon*

# The Carrot is Dangled

*Nenagh, Ontario, September 1971*

As a young man Paul Crispin asked his uncle Mel what he knew about their family history. He told Paul they could trace it back to about 1800 when a John & Sarah Crispin showed up in Devon as the birth parents of his Great-Great-Great-Grandfather. Before that date, they knew nothing specific about their family origins.

I was that young man, and when my Uncle Mel planted the seed that led me to write this story and the Crispin Trilogy. I can remember his next words clearly.

“Now, I do recall your Great Grandmother telling me how our distant relatives were Captains and seafarers going a long way back.”

Those words struck a chord. Even as a boy I had always felt, that perhaps in a past life, I was aboard a sailing vessel, sails billowing, salt air filling my nostrils. In my heart, it was the Atlantic, and uncle Mel’s words encouraged me over the years to pursue my roots.

Over the next 40 years, my research into our surname always came to a dead end. It was as if John and Sarah appeared out of nowhere. When I retired, I finally, had time on my hands and was determined to solve the mystery. I set sail for England to meet Peter Crispin, a distant cousin who claimed he held information that would shed some light on my genealogy quest.

Rather than jumping on a jet, I chose to take my time crossing the North Atlantic. I wanted to feel the waves beneath my feet as my ancestors had, almost two centuries before. I admit their journey had been far less luxurious.

The swell of the waves, the smell of the salt air and the broad vista of ocean stretching to the horizon had a mysterious familiarity.

As my ship pulled into the still bustling seaport of Plymouth, with its historic buildings and a host of different vessels, the feeling became even stronger. A sense of Déjà vu enveloped me, as I walked down the gangplank and strode along the cobblestone pavement.

I reflected on how at that very port walked the likes of Nelson, Hawkins, and Sir Francis Drake, along with countless thousands that emigrated to every corner of the world. They included the Pilgrims of Plymouth Rock, convicts of Australia, and indeed my very own Canadian relatives from the early 1800s. They all had walked on these cobbled streets, once lined with old pubs, warehouses, and shipping offices.

An elderly gentleman, who I recognized as my relative Peter, flagged me down. He shook my hand, and gingerly spun around, shouting, “follow me.” Peter had a slight limp and walked with a cane, yet it was all I could do to keep up.

“I have a cab waiting,” he shouted over his shoulder. We strode along a steep alleyway when he suddenly stopped, tapping his cane on a plaque embedded in an ancient stone wall. I read the inscription Crispin Sailmakers Shop 1535 – 1604.

“Our Crispins?” I asked. “Yes, from what we know, they were our Crispins.” Around the next corner, a cabbie stood beside an open trunk, ready to whisk us to our destination.

“I still live in the old homestead.” Peter commented. “It’s been in the family for some four hundred years. Your Grandfather or should I say Great Great Great Grandfather lived under the same roof for some time before heading off to Canada. It was a farm back then, but now the suburbs encroach it. The surroundings are a lot different than when John and Sarah resided there after returning from the island.

“Are you saying John and Sarah lived there as well?”

“Yes, yes, that’s right,” he replied.

My excitement mounted at hearing those names.

“Returned from what island?” I asked.

“Not sure.” he replied, “Some island, never could find out exactly what island, perhaps you can solve that mystery.”

We drove from the ancient seaport and out of the old part of Plymouth, eventually, driving through a mix of suburbs that spanned the decades from the 1950s through today. As we passed by newer homes, we suddenly made a quick right turn into a long laneway. It led to a very old stone cottage sitting beside a small barn.

“There’s the mansion!” Peter exclaimed, as he exited the cab, and headed towards the front door. “I’ll put the tea on!” He had left me to pay the driver, but I didn’t mind.

Stooping to enter the low doorway I had that recurring feeling. “I’ve been here before,” I said.

Peter looked up from the stove without cracking a smile, “me too.”

I thought *this guy might have a sense of humour after all.*

“Have a seat, and I’ll get the bibles.” He disappeared into the next room.

I sat on an old cane chair, the vintage I’m sure was from the early 1800s. Soon Peter presented me with a set of not bibles, but three journals. “That’s all your genealogy from this side of the pond. They are all organized in family trees with up to date information. I’ve made a duplicate set for you to take back. These here are the originals starting with our distant relatives.

“Really!” I exclaimed. I struggled for words to show my appreciation. “What do I owe you?” I asked.

“Just send me all the research from your side of the pond. I have precious little from you folks in the colonies, do that, and we will be even.”

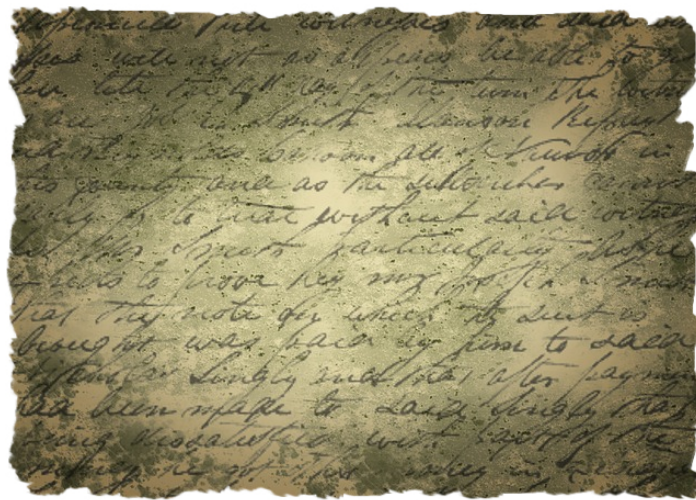
I carefully opened the first journal, it was leather-bound, the cover dark and cracking with age, the pages yellowed and delicate. I was disappointed to see the opening date in that first journal was 1800 the same date as my own research began, still in front of me lay a priceless family heirloom written by the hand of the mysterious island dweller John Crispin.

The opening entry was the most intriguing.

*'Our return from the island was uneventful, perhaps one day we shall again grace its shores.*

*Not soon, however, as my beloved Sarah is with child. When mother and babe are strong, we shall return to that warmer clime, for I fear my health suffers from the damp and cold of this, our forefather's home."*

Certainly, the climate did not agree with him, for shortly after his son John, my distant grandfather was born, the man that wrote those words died of pneumonia. Still, his journal entries made over several months held many interesting clues.



## The Letter

# The Letter

*Devon, January 2014*

I looked at Peter, “Cousin it seems we are at the same dead-end in our quest.

“Ah, yes,” he muttered. “John and Sarah... John and Sarah, from whence do thee come?”

“Little to go on about the island you mentioned,” I replied.

Peter scratched his chin, “Yes indeed, our only clue,”

“Is this the only time our ancestor mentions it?”

Peter sighed. “Yes, there and in the letter.”

“Letter! What letter?” I asked excitedly.

“Why the one on the wall behind your head,” he replied.

I turned and there, hanging on the kitchen wall, was a framed letter. The paper creased and stained; the edges tattered but intact.

“May I?” I asked, reaching for the precious document.

“You may not!” he replied. He then withdrew from his vest pocket, a well-printed facsimile of the letter, and handed it to me.

“You have an interesting sense of humour cousin, withholding this from me.” I studied it carefully. It was dated 1799 and was addressed to the Parish Priest, St. David’s Cathedral, Plymouth. It read as follows:

*Most kind and Holy Sir*

*This Letter is to give notice of my intent to return to Plymouth, Devon from the Caribbean along with my wife Sarah and our children Benjamin, James, and Peter.*

*I say return, as it has been some two hundred and twenty-eight years since my distant grandfather John Crispin, known on Grandfather's Island as Juan Crispino, left Plymouth as a boy, seeking his fortune in the New World.*

*Although our family have since then been practicing Roman Catholics, we are anxious to return to the chosen faith of our forefathers, and upon our return, become devoted practitioners of The Church of England.*

*I ask you for direction in this matter and await your response before we set sail from our temporary home in Bermuda to once again set foot on English soil.*

*Written on this 14th day of September in the year of our Lord 1798.*

*John Crispin.*

My thoughts raced as I turned to my cousin. "That's why we couldn't find them, they weren't even here! Why there was no trace of this branch of our family for over two centuries."

"Correct, Paul, and we would still be at a dead end. However, just last month, in anticipation of your arrival, I had the attic renovated as a guest room. A carpenter found, in the stub wall, a small journal, written by our John Crispin birthdate 1800 with that letter tucked inside. They must have fallen there sometime in the last century. So you see, my dear cousin, you are in a way responsible for discovery this wonderful clue."

It took a moment to sink in. "This is fantastic Peter, we should be able to find this island and perhaps much more about our family."

"Not we, my friend, I might have joined you five years ago, but now I'm too old to go gallivanting around searching for ghosts. I have poured over Atlas maps trying to find our grandfather's island, thinking it would be called Crispin or Crispino Island but to no avail. I would assume from the letter this island is in the Caribbean,

although that would be unusual considering the stranglehold the Spanish held in that area at the time. So, dear cousin, I am passing the gauntlet over to you.”

I sat back, thinking about what would be involved in that task. “Peter, I accept that challenge and will ponder over everything you have shown me.”

“Ponder Away,” he exclaimed. “I am off for my afternoon nap. Your accommodations and the room of the recent discovery is upstairs. At precisely five PM, I will see you for supper.”

Peter retired while I spent the next two hours, pouring over the brief letter and journal for more clues. I understood Peter’s comment about the Spanish in the Caribbean.

Two hundred and twenty-eight years was the 1500s. England had little or no presence in the Caribbean at that time. In 1570 colonization in the “New World” by England was non-existent with the exception of some secret bases. England's first attempt wasn’t until the early seventeenth century on St Lucia, and that ended in disaster with most of the settlers wiped out. So how could any English family have settled there?

Did the reference to grandfather’s island’ mean it was known as Crispin Island or Crispino Island, so named for his distant grandfather? That would simplify my task. However, it could simply be a reference to where they had lived. The island could be any name. I needed more information.

Perhaps they did settle in a Spanish colony, and was that the reason for their being Catholic?

My passion for history had made me familiar with many of the events of that time period, including the almost mythical raids of Drake and Hawkins along what was known as the ‘Spanish Main.’ I had a difficult time imagining any English family living in a Spanish colony but could not rule it out, especially with the intriguing translation mentioning John Crispin as Juan Crispino, and the fact that the letter had reached England via Bermuda.

At supper, I ran over these reflections with my cousin. Good logic he proclaimed and I agree, it does seem far-fetched that they would be Spanish colonists.

Peter reached for the journal and carefully turned the pages until he came to the last entry that John and Sarah's son had entered into the journal before John and his family had left for Canada. It revealed two important facts

Tomorrow we leave for Canada and a new life. I feel as my distant Grandfather must have when as a boy, he departed for the New World on his own. He went on to have an island named for him. I can only dream of such success in Canada.

"Well cousin this certainly answers the question of what the island name should be, and it tells us that just one Crispin made the journey to that island."

Peter reflected, "There is someone I wish for you to meet. Another cousin named James Crispin, who is also a direct descendant of John. He has agreed to join us and will be flying in tomorrow. Considering these clues, I think you will find him quite interesting.

I had trouble sleeping that night. A thousand questions ran through my mind. Hopefully, this newfound cousin James that would have some answers.



*Spanish Grandee*

# Spanish Blood

*Devon, January 2014*

The next day we met Jamie Crispino at Bristol airport. As he approached, I couldn't help but think if ever anyone looked Spanish, it was James. His thick black curly hair, swarthy complexion, dark eyes, and sharp features made him a double for some 16th-century Spanish aristocrat. Indeed, the image of a Spanish Grandee came to mind.

After a brief introduction, he commented with a Spanish accent, "You stare at me as if you have seen a ghost, Paul?"

"My apologies, James. It's just that as Peter might have explained we are on a genealogy quest and our latest clues suggest that some family members may have settled in the Spanish New World and you look, well."

"Spanish," he interjected. "As did my grandfather who would often say to me when I misbehaved "It must be your English blood!"

"Did he ever elaborate?" I asked.

"No, whenever I asked him what he meant by that, he would simply say, it is too difficult to explain." I thought for sure there was a skeleton in our closet, perhaps a grandmother's fling with an English tourist in Madrid."

Once we had returned to the homestead, I showed him the letter and the reasons for our conjecture.

"It is a long shot," he answered, "However, I do prefer it over the other possibility of an English tourist influencing my lineage." He laughed and with a glimmer in his eye said, "perhaps it was an

English pirate. Maybe even Drake was the culprit.” We proceeded with a pleasant visit, three men, who shared a common name, pondering a distant past.

“And how did Peter come to find you?”

“Ahh that is interesting, for as you will see in your journals at one point in the 1800s another Crispin from this mysterious island appeared in Plymouth, and then he and his family decided to move on to Spain. That other Crispin was my Great great grandfather. I can tell you no more than that. But it does seem to point to the Caribbean as you have surmised.”

James had to return to Spain on business the next morning. After exchanging addresses and the promise of a future visit, I saw him off.

The next few days were spent visiting local places of interest including family monuments, St. David’s Cathedral, and Sir Francis Drake’s home, where I was intrigued by the display of a facsimile of Sir Francis Drake’s drum. I recalled Henry Newbolt’s famous poem ‘that I had memorized as a student. It was titled ‘Drake’s Drum’ and would have new meaning to me when I had completed my quest in search of the Crispins.

As I departed for Canada, I promised Peter that I would keep him updated. Soon I was planning my next move. Knowing it would include a trip to the Caribbean, where I believed I might find the answers to our questions.



### ***Drakes Drum - Sir Henry Newbolt***

*Drake he's in his hammock an' a thousand miles away,      (Capten, art  
tha sleepin' there below?)*

*Slung atween the round shot in Nombre Dios Bay,  
An' dreamin' arl the time O' Plymouth Hoe.  
Yarnder lumes the Island, yarnder lie the ships,  
Wi' sailor lads a-dancing' heel-an'-toe,  
An' the shore-lights flashin', an' the night-tide dashin',  
He sees et arl so plainly as he saw et long ago.*

*Drake he was a Devon man, an' ruled the Devon seas,  
(Capten, art tha' sleepin' there below?)  
Roving' tho' his death fell, he went wi' heart at ease,  
A' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.  
"Take my drum to England, hang et by the shore,  
Strike et when your powder's runnin' low;  
If the Dons sight Devon, I'll quit the port o' Heaven,  
An' drum them up the Channel as we drumm'd them long ago."*

*Drake he's in his hammock till the great Armadas come,  
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?)  
Slung atween the round shot, listenin' for the drum,  
An' dreamin arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.  
Call him on the deep sea, call him up the Sound,  
Call him when ye sail to meet the foe;  
Where the old trade's plyin' an' the old flag flyin'*

*They shall find him ware an' wakin', as they found him long ago*



# The Spanish Main

*Plymouth & Cuba, April 2014*

I returned home to make arrangements for my trip to the Caribbean. I determined that Cuba would be a good starting point to research my distant relatives in the New World. I landed in Santiago and after many days of research looking through old records, ship manifests and maps, I could find no mention of any Crispins.

I had thought about John Crispin's letter and reference to the island. There was no Crispin Island or Crispino Island, anywhere in the Caribbean. On the off chance, I even searched for a Grandfather's Island to no avail.

Frustrated, I moved my research to Havana hoping to discover more but to no avail. I was disappointed and deciding I had reached a dead-end, I retained a local genealogist and left him all my information. I then moved on to Bermuda where I knew the letter had been sent from. There I found a ship's register that showed John and Sarah had departed from Bermuda with their family in 1779 on their voyage to Plymouth. I knew from the letter that they had only resided in Bermuda for a few months prior to their return.

I retained another local genealogist Charles Wimble, in Bermuda and was about to return to Canada empty-handed when my cellphone rang.

"Paul Crispin?" an excited voice asked.

“Speaking,”

“It’s Charles Paul, listen, the copy of the letter you gave me refers to ‘Grandfather’s Island,’ correct?”

“Yes,” I answered, “and my distant grandfather was a Crispin, so I have been looking for Crispin or Crispino Island.”

“Maybe not... maybe we should be looking for Grandfather’s Island.”

“Actually I did that Charles, with no luck. Wait... are you saying you found an island named Grandfather’s Island?”

“Not quite, but there is an island whose inhabitants refer to as Abuelo’s Island, and as you may know, Abuelo in Spanish means grandfather. The strange thing is although it’s not the island’s official name. It’s what the people that live there have always called it. Apparently since the 1500s.”

My heart skipped a beat. “How do you know all this?” I asked, trying to contain my excitement.

“That’s the crazy part. I was chatting with a fellow docked next to me at the marina, and he told me he had been sailing in the Caribbean for going on seven years. I asked him if he knew of a Crispin, Crispino or Grandfather Island in the Caribbean? And get this, he says ‘No, however, I am familiar with an Abuelo’s Island, and that means Grandfather in Spanish.’”

I was silent, as I struggled with the possibility. Charles spoke up.

“Paul, are you still there? Jack is still here if you’d like to drop by and speak to him.”

“Sorry, yes, I’ll be there in twenty minutes.” I hung up and headed for the door thinking maybe the universe has provided an answer.

Charles met me at the dock entrance and led me to a tall, middle-aged man named Jack Harmer, who immediately invited us onto his boat. After a quick handshake, he introduced us to what he considered a mandatory tradition for coming aboard. He called it ‘a sharing of the dram’ requiring each of us downing a shot of good rum. Jack then proceeded to tell us about himself and Abuelo’s Island.

I was surprised to find he was actually well into his fifties. He had been a stock-broker that didn't like where things were heading on Wall Street and was one of the few who got out before the crash in 2008. He had cashed in his chips, purchased a forty-foot sailing yacht, and had been island and continent-hopping ever since.

"Abuelo's Island is a Jewel," he reflected, "If I ever give up my vagabond ways and settle down, that island would be my first choice."

"Do you know any of the residents?" I asked.

"I know quite a few of them and finer people you will never meet."

"Anyone named Crispin or Crispino?"

"He laughed, why yes, quite a few. They are a very important family on that island. I know Abuelo, that's Juan Crispino, a fine gentleman, with a lovely daughter named Maria."

I noticed his eyes lit up when he said her name, I had also noticed Maria was the name of his boat. I had trouble containing my excitement as I pulled out my map. "Jack, could you pinpoint the location for me."

"Put that away," he said as he retrieved a chart. He proceeded to point to a small island, "it's about two weeks sailing southwest of Cuba."

The island he pointed to was named Rum Island, on the chart, and I remembered seeing it in my search of both new and old maps of the region.

"You won't find any flights or ships to that place my friend," Jack said.

"Then I'll have to charter something out of Cuba," I replied.

Jack poured another shot into my glass and sat back. "You have your sea legs?" he asked. I gave him a questioning glance, "You ever been to sea, Billy?" He laughed.

"Well no, not unless you count an Atlantic Crossing on an ocean liner," I replied.

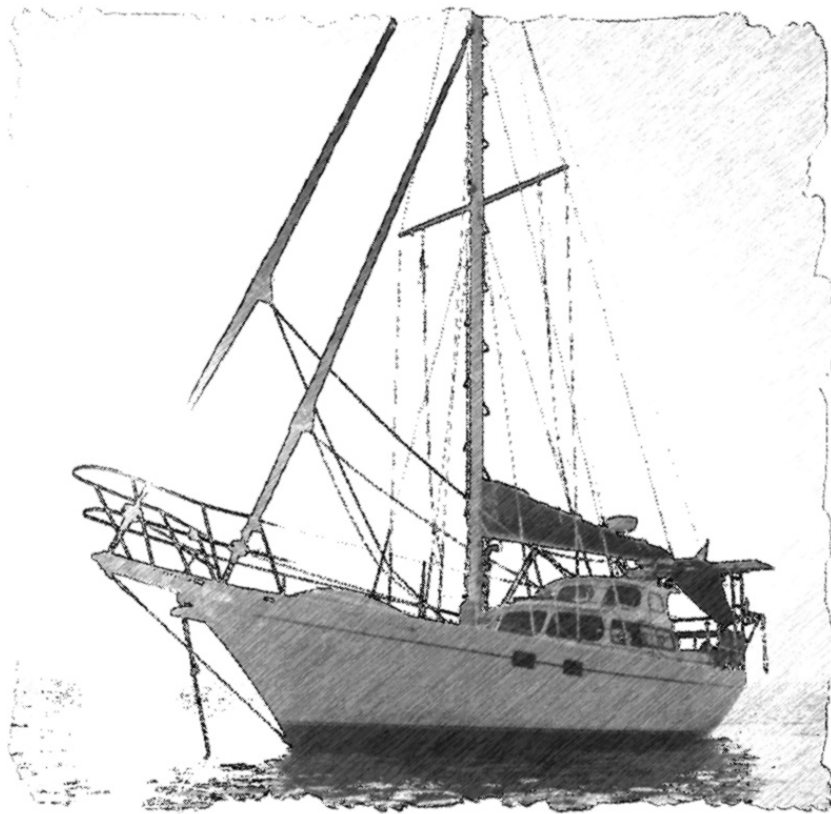
“Good enough, I pass within two days of that island on my next trip and would love an excuse to visit a certain lady that lives there. Good rum, good people and a great stay over on my trip too Paramaribo in South America. The Maria sets sail early tomorrow morning.”

“How much would the trip cost?” I asked.

“First Mates don’t pay, but they do have duties, like helping man the sails, taking turns at cooking, and a host of other chores.”

I didn’t hesitate and shook his hand, “aye aye Captain.” I was suddenly a shipmate on The Maria, it was to become an unforgettable adventure.

“Okay Paul, we set sail at 5:30 sharp, get your sea legs ready.”



***The Maria***



# To Sea Billy

Caribbean, October 2014

The first day out and I swore I would never find my balance. This was no ocean liner, and the heaving waves had me heaving over the railing more than once. Jack just laughed, “I don’t know Paul, those chores are piling up.”

Eventually, I did manage to find my ‘sea legs,’ and actually helped with the rigging, cooking and other chores. Those weeks of sailing created a passion for the art of sailing, and to this day, I am the proud owner of a Hallberg-Rassy forty footer, all thanks to Captain Jack.

I remember on that trip, lying back one evening staring up at a star-filled sky, tasting the salt air, and wondering if my long lost ancestor had done this very thing, on these very waters.

The Spaniards in the 1500s often referred to the Caribbean as their “Spanish Lake.” In truth, no nation could ever claim control over this vast body of water.

This certainly proved true when nature had its way. For as the storms heated up off the coast of Africa they often their way westward across the Atlantic sucking up moisture and strength until they finally released their full fury into the Caribbean waters. Over the centuries, countless souls had life stories cut short both on land and sea.

Three days out from Abuelo’s Island, we were forced to find refuge from just such a storm. We had listened to the marine forecasts, and Jack did his calculations and pointed to a tiny spec on his charts.

“There is a small island here called Sweet Springs and the way this storm they call Hanna is tracking we best anchor on the leeward side

and ride it out. Hanna's not a high category, but better safe than sorry."

Eventually, Sweet Springs Island appeared as a tiny speck on the horizon. We dropped anchor in a small cove. "Follow me" Jack exclaimed and promptly did a perfect swan dive into the emerald waters. He swam towards shore as I followed with a diving style, not nearly as graceful.

"Something I want you to see," he said, as we walked onto the beach. I followed him onto a narrow footpath that wound through a tropical garden. After a short distance, we emerged into a clearing with a pool of crystal water at its centre.

"There's your sweet spring, have a drink, it's tasty." I cupped my hands and scooped the cool liquid to my mouth. Indeed it seemed almost sweet, and I imagined how any ancient mariner might think the same.

"This island is so tiny where does the spring water come from?"

"Nobody knows for sure, it seems to well up from some subterranean source. The islanders used to stop here on their journeys to top up their water supply."

"There's something else over here I'd like you to see." Jack walked through the trees to one side where a clearing appeared. In the middle was a substantial wooden cross, old but obviously maintained, a host of wildflowers had been planted around it. A brass plaque inscribed in Spanish adorned it.

"Could you translate for me Jack? My Spanish isn't great."

"Sure thing, it says, 'Here lie fifteen souls, betrayed and murdered, they will not be forgotten and shall be avenged 1574.'"

"1574? That marker is old but not that old," I exclaimed.

"Nope," He replied, "The folks on the island we are visiting have a history here and still think highly enough of whoever is buried here to keep the site marked and maintained."

A sadness washed over me. I wondered, what was their story? Little did I know the coming weeks would show me who they were and how they died? It would also reveal how part of my own family

history was preserved on this tiny bit of land in a vast sea, for the man that had written those words was my distant relative.



*Hanna Approaches*

# The Island Jewel

*Rum Island, Carribean, October 2014*

The storm hit that evening, and my captain had chosen our refuge well, as we emerged the next morning unscathed. Immediately we set out through the remaining swells of the tempest. Eventually, the seas calmed, and three days later, we approached the island from the westward side.

A brilliant reflection caught my eye as I stared up at an ancient volcano perched at one end of the island. What is that?" I asked shielding my eyes as I pointed to the flashing light on the slope of the mountain.

"That my friend is a natural lighthouse. They call it Abuelo's light, a centuries-old beacon that the islanders maintain, you will want to visit."

We entered a narrow channel between what I thought was an extension of the Main Island. It turned out to be another small island off the western shore. The trough was deep and allowed entry of our sailboat with no problem. Then a bay appeared to our starboard side, and I was met with a magnificent view of a lush valley stretching inland. On the seaward side, a small village was framed by gently rolling hills with the ancient volcano as a backdrop.

"My God Jack, it's beautiful, has no one thought to develop this?"

"Them's fightin' words on this island. Many have tried, but the islanders hold fast and won't allow it. It is, without a doubt, a small piece of paradise."

We pulled alongside a long wooden pier, and a huge man strode out to greet us. In tow were with two young boys and a teenage girl. They laughed yelling “Jacky’s here Jacky’s here,” as they grabbed our lines expertly tying them to the dock

“Captain Jack, you are paying us a surprise visit!” the man shouted.

“Yes, David, I couldn’t stay away from your beautiful island for one minute more.”

The giant laughed aloud. “Stay away from the island, Jack, or a certain lady?” He motioned towards the end of the dock where a tall attractive woman I guessed to be in her early forties stood with arms crossed. Jack jumped onto the dock and ran to her side. They kissed and then approached me, hand in hand.

“Paul, this is Maria Crispino she is the one you will want to talk to about your family. Be careful, though, for she is good at stealing a man’s heart, even a confirmed bachelor.

“A vagabond bachelor, not likely to ever settle down,” she said as she gave him a light punch on the arm.

I extended my hand, “Paul Crispin, Maria, and I hope you will be able to solve a great mystery about my distant relatives.”

“Before we do anything senior you must come to the house and meet my father, Juan. He will want to ask you a few qualifying questions before we delve into the family history.” I will call him and see when he is available. She stood to one side and spoke into a walkie talkie.

David extended a huge hand helping me unto the dock, and we all walked to a golf cart parked in the cobbled courtyard. The words ‘family history’ excited me, and I hoped this would be the place I solved the mystery of our missing relatives.

“Father can see us immediately.” She put the cart in gear, and we drove through the square of the village. It was a busy place surrounded by beautiful stone cottages and buildings, humming with activity. Children ran up to the cart, intrigued by new visitors. I couldn’t help but notice the diversity in skin and hair colour. I also

noticed everyone seemed happy. All smiled and waved as Marie drove into a laneway that led up to a majestic house perched on the side of a hill overlooking the small town.

Standing in the well-groomed entrance was an elderly gentleman. He smiled as he extended his hand, "Senior Crispin?"

"Yes, senior, Paul Crispin, visiting here from Canada."

His face lit up, "I am Juan Crispino senior, but I am also John Crispin as was my father and grandfather and many more going back in time. Welcome to our island, come we have much to talk about." He turned and walked towards the house, our group followed. My mind was swimming with questions.



Grandpa John

# A Skeleton in the Closet

*Rum Island, Carribean, October 2014*

You must sit, rest, eat, and tell me all you can about your Crispin family. It will help me understand how you fit into the mystery of our roots, or perhaps how we fit into your puzzle.” he said with a wink.

Over an early morning feast of island fruits, seafood and freshly baked scones we talked. Eventually, the conversation moved to the front porch with cups of rich coffee that I was told came from the nearby mountain slopes view. I explained to him about the letter and how it had eventually led me here.

Juan leaned back in his chair and continued the conversation. “I am convinced we are related, my friend. I say this because I know for a fact a distant grandfather John Crispin returned to England for reasons, he was not proud of. He left behind a woman with child, and his own wife at the time was also with child, so you can imagine his dilemma. The island woman named her boy John, and I am one of their distant offspring.”

I stared at him, incredulous about this news, for he was likely talking about the very John that appeared out of nowhere with his pregnant wife, Sarah. It explained why he returned to England.

“I hope this information has not offended you, Paul?”

“No senior, certainly not, surprised yes. To be honest, I delight in finding ‘skeletons in the closet’ as long as they are not too recent.”

He laughed heartily, “aside from the fact that we seem to share a grandfather, I assure you that you will find ample skeletons. I will

turn you over to my lovely daughter Maria who is the keeper of the island's journals.

Trust me when I say, few outsiders have gazed upon them. However, I am convinced you are no outsider Paul, and I trust the knowledge you will glean from your research will remain confidential. You are to stay here in the main house, and take all the time you desire, for you are indeed a prodigal cousin, and quite welcome in our home.

The old gentleman rose, "Now you must pardon me, senior, for I have some duties to attend to." He called out to his daughter, who stepped onto the porch. "My dear could you please take senior Crispin to the library and allow him access to the journals. He has a lot of catching up to do."

She kissed him on the cheek, "Se Abuelo, and you put a hat on if you are going about in the sun."

He left us, and Maria motioned for me to follow her. We walked back through the house into a large room with a long table in the middle and shelves of books on every wall.

Puzzled, I asked her, "you called him grandfather, yet he referred to you as his daughter?"

"Don't be confused cousin, the name Abuelo on this island is also a title of the highest respect. Please have a seat, I will bring you another coffee, and you can start with this."

She turned to the wall and pulled out a large leather-bound journal, handing it to me.

"So, does this contain the family records?" I asked.

"Some of them." She pointed to the wall, and a long row of similar leather-bound journals faced me.

"Good heavens are all of those family journals?"

"Not just journals Paul, for they represent over four hundred years of history. They tell the full story of this island and much more. Jack told me you are a writer."

"Well yes, I have written a few novels, mostly historical fiction."

“Well maybe you are the person to write this islands story. You would have to take some four hundred and fifty years of events and put them into a book. Would you be up to that task?”

“No disrespect Maria but a novel about my family’s genealogy hardly sounds like a best seller.”

“She smiled, “you might be surprised, take some time and read, I think you will change your mind.”

I paused, looking up at the huge volume of binders. “I’d best call home and tell my wife I will be delayed.”

She smiled “Oh, I think you should have her join you, for you may be here quite a while.”





# Three Years Three Novels

*My Imagination, Canada, November 2019*

The Crispin Trilogy is fictional. I have used many actual historical events, and people in the telling of this tale. However it is Historial Fiction and the majority of the characters you will read about have been conjured up in this writers imagination.

I felt one novel would be too inhibiting so I will be condensing the journals of Paul Crispin's ancestors into a series of three books entitled "The Crispin Trilogy". Each novel is a stand-alone adventure.

They cover the period from 1550 through 1799. Book I of the Crispin Trilogy is entitled "The Serpent's Eyes and is available online. If you subscribe to my readers circle you will be able to download for free digital versions of all my published books, music, and art as well as receive discounts on printed versions. I trust you will find the reading enjoyable and I welcome your reviews, and feedback.

Paul Hock



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Paul is an author, illustrator, songwriter and storyteller which leaves him little time for fishing and singing although he does squeeze those in as well.

As an author of historical fiction and romance. you will often find him writing away in a local coffee shop at dawn or earlier. He always seems to find something to write about and has yet to encounter that strange thing they call writer's block.

**Paul's Writing**  
✓Published or Completed \*Upcoming

**The Crispin Trilogy**  
Prequel The Quest – Short Story ✓  
Book I The Serpent's Eyes ✓  
Book II The Manila Dragon\*  
Book III Blood & Gold\*

**The Tree Series**  
Book I The Tree\*, will be four illustrated novellas  
The Tree✓ Moonbeam✓  
Footsteps\* The Meadow\*  
Book II Grey Wolf & Shining Moon\*  
Book III Into Their World\*  
Book IV The Highlander's Cabin\*  
Book V Fallen Bird's Cabin\*

✓The Bus to Mauthausen (Screenplay WWII Action)  
The Bus to Mauthausen Novel\*

✓

Pilgrimage To Memphis

**Inspector Hawk Series - The Cold Crimes**  
✓I - The Grim Keeper II - \*The Rum Runners

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