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Viewed through the trees of Seneca Park across the lower gorge of the Genesee River, St. Bernard's Seminary looks much like a castle on the Rhine. Such glimpses of beauty characterize the river throughout its length.

CHARLEVOIX JONCAIRE

The grand monarch Louis XIV of France died in 1715 after a reign of 70 years. His grandson, then aged 5, became King Louis XV. One of the inheritances of the child king from his grandfather was a string of settlements and forts extending from the mouth of the St. Lawrence River through the Great Lakes and down the Mississippi River to New Orleans, which held in loose control a territory nearly as large as Europe. The ministers of the boy king urged that a report be made of his grandfather's American empire. Now, when something that can't be done is wanted immediately in church, missions, education or exploration, call on a Jesuit. He will do it, and turn all its hardships into spiritual exercises for the enrichment of his soul.

Imagine then the court of the boy king with a Jesuit in black robes standing respectfully receiving at the hands of the king's minister a command to explore and make a report of his Majesty's colonies in America. The Jesuit is Pierre F. X. de Charlevoix, a brilliant historian, called from a comfortable professor-like life in France to go through thousands of miles of wilderness in America. Before us are the words which he wrote months later, in May 1721, as part of his report to his King.

"On l'appelle Casconchiagon" "the river is called Genesee and is very narrow and not deep at its discharge into the lake."

But another character enters in here, for the above is all that Charlevoix ever saw of the Genesee. The Seneca Indians, of the Spring Brook Village at Dann's Corners near Honeoye Falls, and their Iroquois allies had been at war with the French on the St. Lawrence ever since Denonville's army had destroyed their old villages in 1687. On a night in 1692, twelve French prisoners are lying on the ground at Spring Brook Village. (This is probably, but not a proven site.) Their arms and legs are stretched out tied with deer rawhide to pegs driven into the ground. Tomorrow there will be torture and death for them. In the morning Captain Louis Thomas de Joncaire is led to trial first.

Some of the Senecas wanted peace with the French and the release of the captives, especially those Senecas who had been influenced by Father Garnier's teachings, yet a fussy old chief succeeded in getting Captain Joncaire tied to the torture stake. With ceremonial slowness the old chief began burning Joncaire's bare

feet with a red hot gun barrel. Writhing in pain Joncaire pulled his hand loose from its thong. With a lightning quick blow he smashed the old Indian on the nose and rolled him over in ridiculous dismay on the ground. The crowd who wanted peace with the French shouted with glee. Captain Joncaire was released. Emerging thus from a cruel fate which would have left only a few charred bones, he arose to chieftainship among the Senecas and for 47 years, until he died in Fort Niagara in June 1739, he was the most influential human being in all the Genesee Country.

In 1721 this Captain Louis Thomas de Joncaire, who was the father of the other two famous Joncaires, had a trading post on the Niagara River in what is now the village of Lewiston, New York. The site of this post was on the right as you enter the bridge to cross to Queenston, Canada. This is the place where Charlevoix, the royal ambassador of history, and his Indian paddlers must get out of their canoes to start the walk and carry to reach navigation above Niagara Falls. Here two great men met, Charlevoix the priest, the brilliant and courtly scholar of Paris, and Joncaire, the equally brilliant commander of the wild and rough men of the wilderness.

Charlevoix tells of being delayed ten hours by storm on the lake and of taking refuge in Irondequoit Bay. (See his description on the monument in front of Mercy High School.) From Joncaire, Charlevoix received the description of the Genesee which he failed to explore.

Writing in 1721, he says, "There is a little river which I would have visited had I sooner been informed of its singularity and of what I now learnt upon my arrival (at Niagara). They call it Ca-Scon-Chi-A-Gon. It is very narrow and but of little depth at its entrance into Lake Ontario. A little higher it is 140 yards wide and deep enough to float the largest vessels. Two leagues (six miles) from its mouth we are stopped by a fall which appears to be 60 feet high and 140 yards wide. A musket shot further we find a second fall of the same width but not so high by two-thirds. Half a league further a third fall 100 feet high, good measure, and 200 yards wide. After this we meet several rapids and having sailed 50 leagues further we perceive a fourth fall in every way equal to the third (Letchworth Park)."

Failure to mention the middle and upper falls in Letchworth Park is due to the fact that any trail over which canoes could be carried would leave the river below the lower falls and go back into the forest to avoid

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