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Men of Determination



These birch-bark canoes served as the sole means of travel to the early explorers. Whether they would return or not was never known, yet they pushed on with a courage and determination that could only result in success. Shown here is a group of voyagers shooting the St. Lawrence Rapids. Their lives depended on their skill in guiding the large war canoe. (Photo furnished by Public Archives, Canadian Government, Ottawa, Canada.)

**LE MOYNE
THE
PEACEMAKER**

(Continued from Page 4)

Jesuits, thereby taking the wobble out of their sea legs, he noticed that many of the buildings of Quebec were of rough, unshewn logs. A few of the official buildings of government and religion were more elaborate. A military outlook surmounted the hill three hundred feet above the river. The view except for the town and the river was forest in every direction. Forest in fact from Arctic waters on the north to the Gulf of Mexico on the south, and from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi River.

*Rev. Jacques Beaudou, of Paris France, Class of 1938, Colgate Rochester Divinity School.

A scholarly young Frenchman recently studying in Rochester, asked a dozen times, "And was this country all forest, and now all gone? How wasteful!" Yes, this denuded country was all forest in Father Le Moyne's time. The ways of travel were by canoes on rivers and lakes or by Indian carry paths or portages through the woods. Men were the only carriers on portages. There were no pack animals. Indians north of Mexico had no horses. Out of this manifold toil has come a legendary strong man who carried such a load that it pushed his feet down knee-deep in solid rock. Closer to fact is a load of 700 pounds carried one mile by a champion of the Hudson's Bay Company.

Without waiting in Quebec to learn the Indian language, Father Le Moyne was sent to the Huron country, where in company with other Jesuits who were already there, he would learn most rapidly. Two other Frenchmen went with him. He did learn rapidly and well. In the command of the Huron Iroquois language and in Algonquin, only Father Jacques Bruyas, later of the Mohawks, was his equal among more than 300 Jesuit missionaries of New France between 1611 and 1800.

**Chapter III
QUEBEC TO
HURONIA**

The usual way of travel in the 17th century over the 150 miles from Quebec to Montreal was on the river by shallow, a sail boat small enough to tack and navigate in places where the river was less than a mile wide.

The La Chine Rapids which rush by the western side of Montreal Island are the last tumultuous descent of the waters of Lake Ontario toward tide level in the great river. These rapids stop all sailboat navigation at Montreal. These rapids also were one of the natural causes which tended to detour the westward course of French Empire in America up the Ottawa River and toward the agriculturally profitable regions north of the upper Great Lakes. (Lake Huron and Lake Superior.) There were a dozen places on the upper St. Lawrence River (varying with the stages of the water) above the La Chine Rapids where canoe parties going to Lake Ontario must wade and

drag their canoes upstream or walk through the forest handicapped by heavy burdens. Canoe parties attempting to travel this part of the St. Lawrence River, were in danger of capture and torture by the Mohawks and other Iroquois, making St. Lawrence River travel above Montreal dangerous and to be avoided, if possible. The Ottawa River was the way to the Algonquins and Hurons whom the French had befriended. In befriending the Hurons the French had gained that hostility of the Iroquois which had made New France a tragedy. Much of this life of Father Le Moyne was to heal this hostility and abate this tragedy. At first though Father Le Moyne went up the Ottawa River to the Hurons.

There were a few log buildings and a log trading post but no organized community where now Montreal, the city of a million people now stands. Notice on a map how at the northwest end of Montreal Island the Ottawa River enters. Its coffee brown waters flow a long distance into the sky blue St. Lawrence River without blending. The Ottawa River, Mattawa River and Lake Nipissing series of waters make an almost direct line of travel to the upper Great Lakes and thence to Georgian Bay and the land of the Hurons.

Probably at the trading post of Montreal, Father Le Moyne engaged paddlers to take him up the Ottawa to Huronia. Plenty of food for a long wilderness journey was provided. Advice from experienced wilderness voyagers as to shelter and bedding was heeded. All equipment was packed up so that it would be carried on portages, lifted in and out of canoes and kept safe from damage by rain. The canoes were much like the canoes we now see at canoe liveries at summer resorts. But instead of canvas covering, birch bark was used. Canoes 16 to 20 feet long and 24 to 32 inches wide, which would carry three or four men and their baggage, weighed from 60 to 100 pounds and could be carried inverted on paddles resting on the shoulders of one man. They could be easily handled in dodging the rocks in rapids and in avoiding trees in the narrow paths of the uncleared forest. Birch bark canoes were the principal vehicles of travel for more than two centuries in the vast lake dotted regions of North America.

With a friendly breeze blowing the fragrance of the pine, balsam and cedar forest into his nostrils and carrying away the unwashed smell of the Indian paddlers, Father Le Moyne found himself seated down on the floor of one of these bark canoes with his back resting against a pack of baggage. The Lake of the Two Mountains had been passed and the long reaches of the Ottawa River were ahead. With a throbbing rhythm of steady paddling, his canoe moved forward along with the other canoes of the flotilla. Two other Frenchmen were with him in the other canoes. At night his paddlers put up with another Indian camp and traded with the Indians in the camp. Father Le Moyne saw food being given to the strange Indians, but could not speak the language well enough to protest that the food which he had provided would be only sufficient for the journey. After several days of travel, his Indians said that the food was all gone and that they were not going farther until they had spent some time hunting and fishing. So his Indians left him encamped on a sand point in the river without provisions and beyond all chance of going forward or back to friends.

Chapter IV

**LE MOYNE IN
HURONIA**

At night on this sand point on the Ottawa River Father Le Moyne could hear the wolves voicing the hunger cry of the wilderness. A brood of blue herons in a nest in a tall pine tree chattered noisily at dawn. The pine trees whispered in the summer breeze, a faint rippling sound in the river spoke of the waters searching for their boundless destiny in the far away ocean. These sounds were lost in the vast lonely silence. Then after weeks of waiting, the flash of a wet paddle blade was seen far down the river. A flotilla of canoes was returning to Huronia. The lonely vigil on the sand point was over. Happy shouts pushed back the crushing silence. Grateful words rose up to heaven from Father Le Moyne's lips. No other sorrow could have been so great for him as that he should die useless to the service of God, just before entering it.

Other hardy young men will rejoice in being hardy in making the canoe trip from the upper Ottawa River westward through the Mattawa River to Trout Lake. Portage at the Provincial Highway north of Callander the home of the famous quintuplets, thence through broad Lake Nipissing and down the French River past the Indian reservation where live the Indians who built the log house recently acquired by Reverend Father Zwierlein on Lake Avenue, thence from the mouth of the French River southeastward to Midland and Penetang through a maze of thirty thousand granite islands. It is still a journey of paddling and portages of overnight camps with the loons and owls and the moon for pictures and music on rivers and lakes. It is a trip of fierce down rushing in running rapids, heavy carries and of delicious weariness disappearing slowly at night on beds of fragrant spruce, (or balsam, if you can get it) while a haunting wind or a far away waterfall whispers of fear and loneliness and yearning and mystery. Some invisible spirit seems so near. The striving of this little life seems so far away. Not all of Father Le Moyne's life was labor and sorrow. The forest was always at hand with its sanctuary of peace.

Chapter V

**AMONG THE
HURONS**

In August, 1938, Bernard and Justin Brown, students at Aquinas Institute, Rochester, followed part of Father Le Moyne's canoe route. They used their own packs and paddles, and their own muscle power.

"The Arendaronons tribe is the most eastern nation of the four nations which properly are called Hurons." So wrote a scribe of the Jesuits 300 years ago. The location of this tribe may be easily reached by auto on good state and provincial highways. Beginning at Toronto, Canada, a good concrete road



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