

from Onondaga September 11, 1654. This journal of Father Le Moyne is the first written record of travel from Montreal to Lake Ontario by way of the St. Lawrence River. It is absolutely fundamental to all succeeding travel on the that river and it is the beginning of civilized contacts with central and western New York. It should be included in the curriculum of our schools. Its inclusion on the ground of its originating from any specific religious effort opens wide the way to say that a fair application of the rule would expel the landing of the Pilgrims from our histories or the story of William Penn and the Founding of Philadelphia a result which no sane person would desire.

Chapter X

FIRST TRIP TO THE MOHAWKS

JESUIT RELATIONS XIII p. 251 following: August 1, 1655. The Mohawks who were the easternmost group of the Iroquois league had failed to send delegates to the peace conference at Onondaga. Father Le Moyne's efforts to make peace would be completely successful if the Mohawks could be won over. Consequently four canoes could be seen moving with regular paddle strokes on the St. Lawrence River bound for the Mohawk villages on the Mohawk River. The party consisted of Father Le Moyne, two Frenchmen, and twelve Iroquois Indians.

The Richelieu River, Lake Champlain, Lake George, Canoe Route was the usual way to the Mohawk country. This canoe route also connected with the Hudson River and was the main highway between Montreal, Fort Orange (Albany) and New Amsterdam (New York). No names of waterways are mentioned in the RELATIONS in connection with this trip. It is stated however that the trip was one of waterfalls, lakes and rivers of hunting and fishing of weariness and recuperation of plenty and starvation. Eighteen wild cows were killed within an hour soon after starting. Then came famine with a slim diet of wild cat, bear and fox. After experiencing an interesting variety of vicissitudes this peace party arrived at the Mohawk village on September 17, 1655, one month after starting, which seems like too long a time for the Champlain canoe route. Another canoe route from the St. Lawrence River to the Mohawk River was by the Raquette River, Long and Raquette Lakes, and the Fulton chain of lakes. The description of Father Le Moyne's journey indicates this route since there are rapids but no waterfalls on the Richelieu River.

Nine years before Father Isaac Jogues a Jesuit brother with whom Father Le Moyne had lived and labored for part of the time while in the Huron mission had been murdered by these Mohawks. Father Le Moyne came to these murderers of his Jesuit brother not with vengeance but with peace and with forgiveness and life everlasting. Most likely the Mohawk village was at the site of the Shrine of the North American Martyrs at Auriesville. The shrine is on a high hill on the south side of the Mohawk River overlooking a long bend in the river. Across the river is Fonda, New York, and beyond to the north are the southern foothills of the Adirondacks. The view alone is worth climbing the hill. Today the emotion aroused by the soulful meaning of this shrine is beyond expression. With some such emotion Father Le Moyne must have viewed the site of the deaths of his friend, St. Isaac Jogues and of his two martyr companions, St. John Lalande and St. Rene Goupil.

A large peace council was held in the Mohawk village. Rich presents were exchanged accompanied in the giving with diplomatic eloquence. One chief gave a chain of six thousand porcelaine beads. Temporarily the hostility of the Mohawk tribe was quieted.

After the council, Father Le Moyne made a journey of ten or twelve leagues to New Holland. These must have been long leagues. Fort Orange (Albany) is at least forty miles from Auriesville. In New Holland Father Le Moyne was received by the Dutch with great demonstrations of affection. During his stay with the Mohawks, Father Le Moyne must have been in New Holland many times, while it is reported

that he made but one trip (1655) to New Amsterdam (New York City). JESUIT RELATIONS XIII p. 41. On his return to the Mohawk village he had a narrow escape. At night a murder-crazy savage ran about the village singing a demon song and saying that he was going to kill Ondessonk (Father Le Moyne). A Mohawk woman said, "Here kill my dog for Ondessonk is too good a friend of ours. In the morning the relatives of the crazy man brought Father Le Moyne costly presents "to wipe away the dust of the night" so they said. (JESUIT RELATIONS XIII p. 42).

While returning to Montreal from this Mohawk conference, Father Le Moyne and his party had to leave their canoes cached near the lake side and take to the unbroken and pathless forest to avoid a hostile band of Algonquins of whom they had been warned. Four days they were lost in a great swamp where they sank knee-deep in mud which had been frosted by the chilly October nights. What a keen appetite they gained in the frosty air all to no purpose. They had no food. After crossing a river on logs which they had felled for a bridge they came to a river which they knew and soon reached Montreal. Thence Father Le Moyne arrived in Quebec November 5, 1655. (JESUIT RELATIONS XIII p. 251).

About this same time the summer of 1655 Fathers Joseph Chaumonot and Claude Dablon had gone to Onondaga (region of Syracuse, New York) in response to the request of the Indians for missionaries, which invitation had been given to Father Le Moyne in the Onondaga Council of 1654. Father Chaumonot remained at Onondaga but at the time of the breaking of the ice in the spring of 1656, Father Dablon returned to Quebec. The terrific struggle which Father Dablon and his party had with mushy snow and ice while traveling along the east end of Lake Ontario is a piece of hardship equal to anything endured by Arctic explorers. Father Dablon had been compelled to take this arduous trip by news which could not wait. The Onondagas and other Iroquois sent an invitation to the French which in effect amounted to this: Unless the French sent a colony of Frenchmen to come and live in the midst of the Iroquois the whole Iroquois league would rise as one man and attack the French settlements on the St. Lawrence. No such frank words were spoken by the savage Iroquois who sent the invitation but that is what it meant.

At this time the colony of New France was in a state of military helplessness. The Governor called a council. Indian envoys from the Iroquois cantons were present urging that the invitation be accepted and that the colony start from Quebec at the earliest possible time.

Even at the beginning of the council some Huron captive who had escaped from the Iroquois whispered that the invitation was only a plot to massacre the French.

The French Governor listened to many considerations at the council but he seemed to think that some lives must be risked to save all the rest.

The reason for starting the colony came from the men who were accused to challenge death to let them die in sacrifice as Jesus Christ had died. These men were the Jesuits Eleven members of their Society had already been killed by the Iroquois. (Melancon p. 83).

Chapter XI

IN COUNCIL AT QUEBEC

In the report of this council one of them wrote: "The members of our Society who up to this present moment have never



been frightened at seeing their own blood or feared the fires and lightning of the Iroquois in their most horrible tortures, said that if they were permitted to go with this colony that before they themselves died they would baptize a number of Iroquois who would be ready for baptism because they were about to die. This number of dying persons whom they would baptize would at least equal the number of those who baptized them. In such an event, in giving their own bodies in exchange for the souls of others the Jesuits of this colony would lose nothing. The blood shed for the faith by the members of our Society who have been killed by the Iroquois (RIES OUT TO GOD, NOT FOR VENGEANCE, but for blessing and forgiveness of those same Iroquois." (See Thwaites' JESUIT RELATIONS, Vol. XIII, p. 133).

One of the "seven words from the Cross" at the time of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ was "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." The words of the Jesuits are like this.

This conclusive argument of the Jesuits was a declaration of genuine devotion and intention, because on May 14, 1656 a colony of fifty Frenchmen started from Quebec to go up the St. Lawrence River to Onondaga. Among the members of the expedition were Francis Le Mercier who was the Father Superior of the Jesuits and the Jesuit Fathers Rene Menard, Claude Dablon, James Fremin, and Brothers Ambrose Broas and Joseph Bourcier. Father Joseph Chaumonot had remained at Onondaga since the year before. The venturesome, hazardous and thrilling journey to Onondaga is fully told in JESUIT RELATIONS Vol. XIII, p. 12, and following. Part of the story of this colony is told in the life of Rene Menard published in the Courier in 1931 which also may be found in book form in libraries. A visit to the French fort on Onondaga Lake which closely represents the fort built by this colony would help to dramatize this heroic piece of our own history.

Father Le Moyne did not go with the colonists to Onondaga. Yet he is an essential part of its story because it was largely through his very able peace-making negotiations that this colony was possible.

After May 1656 when the colony left Quebec Father Le Moyne was kept for a while in the French settlements using his superb native gifts and his intensive experience of Indian language and character in consultation.

According to our present research Father Le Moyne did not visit Onondaga during the existence of the French colony there between 1656 and 1658. The hostility of the Mohawks kept him busy elsewhere. (See JESUIT RELATIONS Vol. XIII, p. 201).

Chapter XII

SECOND TRIP TO THE MOHAWKS

"When Father Le Moyne made his first visit to the Mohawks in 1655 he promised to make another. He had pledged his word, and it must be kept (1565). But as the Father was about to start, incidents happened which made it doubtful whether the journey could be undertaken. A band of Iroquois who had come down to Quebec attacked the Hurons. Another band of the Mohawk tribe prepared an ambush for the upper Algonquins when they were returning from Quebec to their own country. When the Algonquins approached the place of ambush the Mohawks fired a volley fatally wounding in the head with gunshot Father Leonard Garreau who was one of two Jesuit priests who was going with the Algonquins to their own country "to show them the way to heaven." (JESUIT RELATIONS, Vol. XIII, p. 211 and following.) Father Leonard Garreau died of his wounds in Montreal on September 2, 1656. (Melancon, Liste Des Missionnaires Jesuites; p. 83.) The ambush four days before had occurred on August 30 on the Ottawa River near the third portage above Montreal.

The visit of Father Le Moyne to the Mohawk villages, when in council he chided them for the murder of Father Garreau, must, therefore, have occurred after September 2, 1656.

Before starting on this perilous journey to the Mohawk country he had

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