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EAST ROCHESTER

**LE MOYNE**

THE

**PEACEMAKER**

(Continued from Page 13)

ages would most likely be put to death. To crown these difficulties, such quantities of Holland liquor were brought in, that pandemonium reigned at Onondaga. When a drink-razed Onondaga Indian tried to smash the crucifix in Father Le Moyne's chapel, Father Le Moyne offered his own head to receive the blow instead of the crucifix. Friends drew the drink-enraged man aside. While this storm of drunkenness at Onondaga was passing, Father Le Moyne, accepted an invitation to go to Cayuga. The principal village of this mission was on one of several sites which are on Great Gully Brook, from one to three miles east of Cayuga Lake and about midway between Union Springs and Aurora in Cayuga County. Later this was Father Stephen De Carheil's mission (1668-1684). Other Cayuga mission sites with the choice of several nearby are down river from Cayuga Lake and near the Reno Mandard Bridge, "one four leagues and one six leagues from Cayuga." In this Cayuga mission Father Le Moyne was graciously received and when at the close of a short month he went back to Onondaga, the Cayugas showed kindly regret at his departure.

The lance of a young French surgeon who accompanied Father Le Moyne to Cayuga helped to heal ailments, and to make friends by letting blood to overcome the excess of the sanguine humor. Today we put blood into people. This surgeon was the first on record to attempt to practice medicine west of Onondaga in New York State. Rene Richter who helped Father De Carheil in 1669 among the Cayugas was the second physician of this diocese of Rochester. (JESUIT RELATIONS XLXII pp. 185-187, also in Hawley, Cayuga History p. 35.)

When Father Fremin visited St. Michael's, in 1669, the Seneca village of Huron Christian captives on Mud Creek east of Holcomb, N. Y., he says in his Journal that the very exemplary Christian captive Huron, Francis Teoronhongo, which means "he who looked up to heaven," had "formerly been the host of the late Father Le Moyne." (JESUIT RELATIONS, LIV, p. 89. This might mean that Father Le Moyne had come from Cayuga (at this time 1661-1662) and stayed with Francis Teoronhongo, at St. Michael's on the said Mud Creek, or since this Francis was a member of St. Jean's Mission near Bass Lake among the Hurons before the dispersion of the Hurons where Father Le Moyne was missionary he might have been his host then. So we have this answer to the question as to Father Le Moyne visiting the Senecas. Either he did visit the Senecas at this time and with old converts of the Old Huron mission only two days walk from Cayuga where he was staying it seems most probable that Francis who was one of the earliest and most exemplary Christians in western New York was host to Father Le Moyne while in the Huron mission. This Francis like a lay or unordained preacher, continued to utter the parts of the gospel and the Mass which he had learned from Father Le Moyne, so that at least an echo of Father Le Moyne's voice was heard in the Seneca country. This brings us to the remark that the Indians Father Le Moyne lived with, Garacontie and Francis Teoronhongo, became Christians.

For some notable people distance lends enchantment and absence makes the heart grow fonder, but Father Le Moyne was not an ordinary puffed up great man, because those whom he lived with learned to love him and became converted Christians by knowing him.

After the winter of 1661-1662 Father Le Moyne, who had gone on the perilous errand to Onondaga nearly a year before, came back to his friends who greeted him as one returned from the dead and with him were 19 released French captives. The twentieth captive who probably had a wife in the French settlements refused to become the husband of an Onondaga Indian woman. And for this refusal to become a member of the tribe by marriage, he was struck dead by a blow from a tomahawk, a martyr to the sacredness of marriage.

In some way, Father Le Moyne had mad himself known to the Senecas so that they coveted the privilege of having him come and live amongst them. This is shown by part of a letter of the Reverend Jerome Lalomant to the Superior General, written at Quebec. It says, "Father Le Moyne has gone some while ago from here to wait for a chance to go back to the Iroquois, not those from whom he brought back prisoners last year, but others who expressly seek him. (JESUIT RELATIONS, Vol. XLV, p. 163; See Index, Lalomant to the Superior, August 18, 1663.) These others were the Senecas as is shown by a record in the Journal of the Jesuits, Vol. XLVII, p. 307 dated in Quebec July 31, 1663. "Father Le Moyne started for Montreal and if circumstances are favorable for 'Sonontwan' (Seneca Land) never again did he visit the tribes of Central New York," says J. G. Shea (Catholic Missions among the Indian Tribes, p. 248).

In Hawley's Early Chapters of Cayuga History, Shea says, in an introductory note, that Father Le Moyne did not go beyond Montreal on this proposed journey to the Senecas. A life sketch in Thwaites' JESUIT RELATIONS gives the opinion that he did go. We cannot point to any spot in our Seneca region and say surely he stood here. But his influence continued to sway the councils of the Senecas and the missions to all the Iroquois tribes long after he had ceased to come amongst them.

A double portion of the power of the Old Testament prophet Elijah fell on Elisha as the first went up to heaven in a chariot of fire. Father Fremin in this case was Elisha.

In November 1665, Father Simon Le Moyne and Father James Fremin both lay sick of a fever in Cap de la Magdeline which is across the St. Maurice River from Three Rivers. Three years after this sickness of Father Fremin, he was appointed Superior of Iroquois missions to follow Father Le Moyne. Beginning with the Mohawks, he made what might well be called a triumphal missionary march from the Mohawks to the Senecas planting chapels and missionaries in each one of the Five Iroquois cantons. As he went he was received in each tribe with extreme joy like a conquering hero. The Mohawks had captured a cannon with which they fired salutes when Father Fremin marched to their village escorted by one hundred warriors on dress parade. This result was the climax of Father Le Moyne's work for peace, but Father Le Moyne did not see it. Of the two men sick of a fever at Cap de la Magdeline Father Fremin recovered, but Father Le Moyne died November 24, 1665.

The success of Father Le Moyne's ten years of brilliant peace parleys with the Iroquois tribes is shown by the fact that at the very moment of his death, four of the Iroquois tribes were seeking peace with the French. Garacontie, eloquent ambassador of the Onondagas was in the midst of a peace council in Quebec when the news of Father Le Moyne's death was brought to him.

**Chapter XVI**

**GARACONTIE'S**

**ADDRESS**

Garacontie, upon hearing of Father Le Moyne's death gave loving tribute to him by saying in a loud voice "Ondessonk, hearest thou me from the country of the dead whither thou hast so quickly passed, Thou it was who so often didst risk thy life on the torture scaffolds of the Mohawks, who didst go into their very fires to rescue so many Frenchmen from the flames; who didst carry peace and tranquillity whither so ever thou didst go; and who didst convert whomever thou didst dwell."

"We have seen thee on our councils deciding questions of peace and

war; our cabins then were too small, when thou wast present, so great was the crowd of people who came eager to hear thine eloquent words, even our villages were cramped by the crowds of people when thou wert present. But I disturb thy rest by calling on thee now. Often didst thou teach us that this life of travail and sorrow is followed by a life of everlasting happiness; since therefore thou hast entered upon that life, why now should we grieve for thee? But we do mourn for thee because we have lost our Father and our Protector. We, nevertheless, will comfort our hearts with the thought that thou dost still hold that relation ship to us in Heaven, and that thou hast found in that eternal home the infinite joy whereof thou hast so often told us."

Article 4 of the Treaty of Peace between the four of the Iroquois tribes and Governor Tracy dated Quebec, 1665 contains the following stipulation: "That agreeably to their desires and earnest prayers (of the Iroquois) two Black Gowns (may be sent) one of whom shall assume the charitable charge of their instruction which the late Father Le Moyne took." (See Documents of New York, Vol III, p. 123.)

The Mohawks did not join in this treaty. They remained bedevilled with the conceit of their military prowess, and contrary to their safety and continued existence as a tribe, they had considered seceding from the Iroquois league. Their military conceit received a salutary spanking when in the winter of January 1666, a French army under Tracy and Courcelles entered the Mohawk Valley and burned their villages. This wholesome humiliation brought the Mohawks into peace with the French and saved them from committing tribal suicide by restoring them to equal standing in the Iroquois league. Then came a long peace, and there happened what would have most gladdened the heart of Father Le Moyne. The gospel was preached and there was a missionary and a chapel in every Iroquois canton. (1669-1683).

Jesuit missionaries visited the Iroquois as late as 1720. These French in central and western New York were not enemies of George Washington and the American constitution as is sometimes implied. George Washington was not born before 1732. Father Le Moyne and his compatriots are essential to the American history in that they opened the pathways of the wilderness so that civilization followed in their footsteps. But most of all, these early missionaries were among the most heroic and most glorious followers of Christ and most worthy men of God who have blessed the land of this state. May God deliver the souls of all of our historians from that bias by which such leaders in the path of civilization and heroes of Faith are scribbled off into the corners of our histories, if not excluded entirely.

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Grateful acknowledgments are due to Burroughs Brothers, Cleveland, Ohio, publishers of the Thwaites edition of the JESUIT RELATIONS and Allied Documents, 73 Vols. abbreviated to Jes. Rel., in text.

The writer is grateful also for the use of these RELATIONS in the Colgate-Rochester Divinity School Library.

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Other references are mentioned in the text where they occur.

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