

Explorations

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The old scout looked at the pieces of Indian pottery, then at the aluminum kettle which, standing in contrast, represents the period of greatest progress in human invention in the whole story of mankind.

Besides all of the ancient records to be had from French, Indian and other sources, here were relics to complete and corroborate the story. The old scout pointed to the relics and aluminum kettle, then said:

"What a contrast! And how few ate the places where this contrast may be brought out so accurately, in a brief space of time, as this area of the Diocese of Rochester. Superb opportunities are offered right here for teaching much of the story of mankind while viewing the exact sites where events of the story occurred. Let those teachers whose minds are not ossified by conventional education lay hold of the opportunity."

REFERENCES

Previous CATHOLIC COURIER "Official Diocesan Review and Annual Calendarium" articles by A. M. Stewart are keyed in this text as follows: (A.) refers to the "Calendar" published October 25, 1934; (B.) November 7, 1935; (C.) November 26, 1936; (D.) November 25, 1937; (E.) April 20, 1939. Copies of the above may be had at the Rochester Public Library, Colgate Rochester Divinity School Library, and at the Courier Office, 50 Chestnut Street.

RISE OF THE SENECAS

The Senecas appear at the beginning of this story as a people living in fear of surrounding enemies in villages secluded in the hills of our Bloomfield-Lima region. Fear had compelled them to join the Iroquois League composed of their blood relations, namely, the Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas and Cayugas. This union was the beginning of Seneca military power. When the Senecas had risen to the height of their military power the French were compelled by circumstances to dominate the Senecas and other Iroquois or to get out of North America.

Let us trace some of the circumstances. The first circumstance is the geographical position of the French colony which being located on the St. Lawrence River was five hundred miles and more inland, so that like no other colonists of the 17th century in North America outside of Mexico, they were surrounded by Indians on all sides. The tributaries of the St. Lawrence River and of the five Great Lakes which it drains make canoe route connection with all of northern North America from Labrador and Hudson Bay to Alaska and southward into the whole of the Mississippi Valley. Indians from far away tribes came down to salt water fishing on the St. Lawrence River.

The French, first of all Europeans by this latter circumstance, became acquainted with the great variety of tribes of the interior of America. The coming of many tribes to the St. Lawrence River promoted exploration because any Frenchman willing to take the risk could get into a canoe of the members of a visiting tribe and be carried to the tribes and remote villages, possibly a thousand miles into the interior.

But many tribes coming to the St. Lawrence River often got into deadly conflict. The French, in order to carry on the fur trade which was the commercial blood of their colony and also because they placed a religious value on the souls of Indians, were constantly compelled to act as arbitrators between various tribes.

Agriculture made little progress in New France. In contrast with New France, other colonies

had commercial resources apart from trade with the Indians. All of these others were close to the sea. Shipping and cod fishing made New England prosperous. Other colonies could live independently upon their own agriculture. Tobacco became the chief trade crop of Virginia. To some extent these other colonies could ignore the Indians or even set out to annihilate them like Governor Kieft of New Amsterdam. France was compelled to deal with the Indians.

Compelled by these circumstances, the French were officially first nearly everywhere in the interior of eastern America. Champlain and Brule had entered Central and Western New York in 1615, several years before James of England included this said region, of which he knew nothing, in a charter granted to New England colonists. French contacts continued during a century in which New England did nothing sufficiently to establish claims to Western New York superior to those of French Catholic France.

The English were the invaders when they forced the Seneca coun-

try out of French control. Champlain, as will be seen in the story of Brule, very soon after the founding of Quebec took sides with the Hurons and their Algonquin allies. For nearly 40 years the Hurons who came and went on the Ottawa River route were the chief allies of the French. During these 40 years the fort at Midland, Ont., was built, 1640. Father Simon Le Moyne, Rene Menard, and Joseph Chamonot, who later came to the Rochester Diocese area were resident missionaries in Huronia, as well as many other able and saintly Jesuits.

Among the Franciscan fathers who were the first in this Huron mission was Father De La Roche Dallion (or Dailion) who evangelized the neutral Indians who lived one day's journey west of the Genesee River during the very mild winter of 1626-1627. He had been told of the Neutrals by Brule. From Huronia there also came to the Neutrals in 1649, St. Jean de Brebeuf and Father Joseph Chamonot. Their report shows that French traders were coming along the south shores of Lake Ontario immediately after Brule 1616, us-

ing for money the beads, knives and other articles which we unbury in nearby Indian village sites.

Several months before the Pilgrims had landed on the "Wild New England shore" late in November 1620.

Jean Nicolet, official representative of the French, had also come from North of Lake Ontario and made peace with the "Hyroquois."

During these 40 years, except for time out for the English Admiral Kirk at Quebec, evangelization of the Hurons proceeded continually to such an extent that the Hurons just fell short of being a Christian nation. Later, when scores of Hurons' Christians were captives of the Iroquois, it was their urgent demands for religious teachers which brought the French Jesuit missionaries into the Iroquois captions. The tragedy and horror of the wreck of the Hurons by the Iroquois in the years 1648 to 1650 caused the death of five of the eight Jesuits martyr saints.

It broke the Hurons as allies and protectors of the French on the western waterways, and such

was the murderous fury of the Iroquois against the Hurons and Algonquins who had taken refuge near the French settlement on the St. Lawrence that the French were forced to seek peace with the Iroquois or give up their fur trade and abandon their blood-bought colony and retire to Europe. The chief peace-maker was Father Simon Le Moyne, S. J. The history, "Le Moyne the Peacemaker" is brought out in the Catholic Courier Calendar of April, 1939. It was done in detail at considerable length so that it does not need to be repeated here.

It is important to mention in this connection that Father Le Moyne opened the stretch of the St. Lawrence River from Montreal to Lake Ontario and thence to Onondaga and the Oswego River in 1654. His work signalized that change in the course of direction of French empire in America from an arduous detour around the Iroquois to entering the Iroquois country and then going beyond with their permission into the Ohio and Mississippi Valleys. Following Le Moyne came a century of French control over the Indians of the American interior. From Quebec to New Orleans some years after Le Moyne was all French territory.

The work of Le Moyne also opened the way for a long time of Jesuits missionary residence among the Senecas. The Senecas at the time of Father Le Moyne had equipped themselves with white men's guns ("thunder sticks") and iron hatchets, and when they conquered the Hurons they gained access to a land where white birches grew large enough to provide covering for light, swift moving birch bark canoes, and the Senecas' race to conquest and to dominance of the other Indians was on.

But let us leave these broad generalizations long enough to mention some explorers, beginning with Stephen Brule.

STEPHEN BRULE

One of the earliest written accounts of a visit to the Senecas was what Samuel de Champlain, the founder of Canada, wrote of Stephen Etienne Brule's report. Brule visited the Senecas in 1616 as a captive. He stands at the beginning of French Catholic contacts and explorations of this region. This French period (1616-1739) from Brule to the fall of Fort Niagara, is nearly as long as the modern period of white residence, 1787 to 1939, or from Phelps and Gorham Purchase until now. We owe much to Brule, because you cannot settle a country which has never been explored.

In previous Catholic Courier articles Brule is mentioned in A-3 and 4, B-29 and in C-9. Champlain account of Brule occurs in his works Vol. III page 49 and pp 213-225. This latter account is in French and is translated into clear and simple English. It is delightful reading. See Rush Rhees Library, U. of R., or ask your librarian. G. B. Selden's three "Brule" accounts are in Rochester Historical Society Publication iv 83-102. See also Consul Willshire Butterfield's "Brule," ask Pub. Library.

With abundant information easily available, it is sufficient to sketch Brule briefly for the purpose of showing on our map his contribution to exploration. Champlain reports in 1615 that Brule had been with the Indians for eight years before that time, or in 1607. First he was with the Iroquet Indians whose villages were near the northeast of Lake Ontario in the region of modern Kingston, Ont. Since the Iroquois Indians hunted and fished along the south shores of Lake Ontario and visited the tribes, it is possible that Brule entered the Seneca country much earlier than 1616 while traveling with them.

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Editorial Note

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"I was and am now unmistakably a non-Catholic of Huguenot ancestry, yet I have found great blessing in turning my misunderstanding into love. This change involves a spiritual exercise which is to be recommended to persons of all creeds. In other words, find reasons in your creed to love other people of different creeds."

The Courier has offered in its historical articles, information about heroic and devout French Catholic characters which any priest, or minister, or teacher might well develop and use to inspire admiration and to lift minds to a brotherly understanding of men of a different nationality and, in many cases, of men of a different ritual.

Some effect on the teaching of local history in Rochester public schools is beginning to be realized as a result of the Catholic Courier articles. Among other articles taken from the Courier for a syllabus of history for the seventh grades of the Rochester public schools is the story of the very able Father Picquet, pioneer resident of Ogdensburg, leader of 3,000 Indians at La Presentation.

On July 12, 1751, he entered the Genesee River at the head of a flotilla of canoes containing many Indian young men. They encountered a mass of forty-two rattlesnakes in the River Gorge and killed all of them.

When the prospectus of the syllabus containing this story of Father Picquet was submitted for the approval of a committee which was acting for the Rochester Board of Education, someone voiced the objection: "Too many details." In response to this objection, the forty-two snakes' tails and all were kept in the syllabus of local history for the seventh grade of the Rochester public schools, and Father Picquet was left out.

One or two of these details in the form of names of priestly pioneers seem also to have been omitted from this syllabus at points where they should occur. Good work has been done, however, by some open-minded historian, and the names of some Catholic missionaries are now mentioned in our public schools for the first time in 100 years.

Ebenezer Allen, whose regret seems to have been that there were only Ten Commandments to break, and whose residence at the Falls of the Genesee was less than three years, beginning 1789, is given more space in books for children's education in Rochester than all of the pioneer missionaries, Catholic or Protestant, put together.

It seems like a choice of Barab- bas, rather than Jesus. Remember,

Seneca Indians in the Seneca Hotel and let them be comfortable? Children learning about Seneca Indians in Seneca Park calls attention to an expenditure for better information which has gone off on a siding. Nearly a million dollars has been spent by the City of Rochester for a city historian's office and for the work of the Municipal Museum over a term of years.

This expenditure has not brought out enough orderly information about the Senecas, of the white contact period, or of the men who made the first white contacts. Nor of whence our contact pioneers came and went, figuratively speaking, to keep the Senecas from living in the Seneca Hotel during the contact period. Briefly, no orderly statement of the Indians of white men, or list of book sources or identification of sites of the contact period from 1616 to 1789 can be had from our museums or from the city historian's office.

There should be no condemnation of the Board of Education of the Rochester public schools. It is subject to criticism for any show of religion whatsoever. Such are the jealousies among the fifty-seven varieties of churches in this city that anything favorable to religion in the schools would bring a zealot to protest against proselyting for any other than his denomination. Nevertheless, since the Courier history began to be published, there has been painted a mural of "LaSalle at Irondequoit Bay." Beside LaSalle, in full costume is a Franciscan priest. This valuable painting by Ezra Winter is on the wall of the assembly hall in Monroe High School. It is possible that other schools will recognize the romantic past of this section and of our country in the same way.

When the Jewish Temple Berith Kodesh, Grove and Gibbs Streets, Rochester, celebrated its ninetieth anniversary in May, 1939, one part of the celebration included a pageant of the religions of the people of Western New York. Honorably represented in this pageant were the two Sulpitian priests, the Rev. Rene Galinee and the Rev. Dollier de Casson, who, in 1669, had come to Irondequoit Bay with LaSalle on his first visit to this region.

Progress toward the light of truth is being made. It is the fervent hope of the Courier that presentation of the facts contained in this article by Mr. Stewart will hasten the advance which is under way.

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