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The **P**ALIMPSEST

JULY 1923

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THE EDITOR

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THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE

The PALIMPSEST, issued monthly by the State Historical Society of Iowa, is devoted to the dissemination of Iowa History. Supplementing the other publications of this Society, it aims to present the materials of Iowa History in a form that is attractive and a style that is popular in the best sense—to the end that the story of our Commonwealth may be more widely read and cherished.

BENJ. F. SHAMBAUGH

Superintendent

THE MEANING OF PALIMPSESTS

In early times palimpsests were parchments or other materials from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete; and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the records of successive generations. To decipher these records of the past, reconstruct them, and tell the stories which they contain is the task of those who write history.

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THE PALIMPSEST

EDITED BY JOHN ELY BRIGGS

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Pointing the Way

Toward the Mississippi Valley the tide of world empire has been setting for three quarters of a century and is not even yet at its height. The financier may turn his eyes toward Wall Street or Threadneedle Street, the student may plan his pilgrimage to Cambridge or Leipzig, the artist may long for the inspiration afforded by the Louvre or the galleries of Florence, but the teeming millions of the overcrowded places of the world, with hands restless to do and hearts ready to dare, turn eager faces toward this great central basin of North America. In the center of this vast tract, midway between the mountain barriers to the east and to the west, midway between the tropic sea to the south and the frozen sea to the north, stands Iowa. And the way thither — will it interest you for a few moments?

[This account of the French explorations which led to the discovery of Iowa is adapted for THE PALIMPSEST from an address by Mr. Weld before the State Historical Society of Iowa in 1910.— THE EDITOR]

Singularly enough the history of the Mississippi Valley began with Jacques Cartier's voyage up the St. Lawrence in 1534. Fishing fleets began to frequent the waters about Newfoundland, occasionally ascending the river for the winter and carrying on a profitable fur trade with the Indians. It soon became evident that this trade was well worth developing, and furs came to be sought by the French in the north as eagerly if not as rapaciously as was gold by the Spaniards in the south. Champlain came up the river, bringing colonists who founded Quebec in 1608, the same year that the English founded Jamestown.

Whence came this supply of furs? And whence came this great river, mightier ten-fold than any of the rivers of Europe? The first of these problems appealed to Champlain's superiors, the latter to Champlain himself. He took but little interest in his colony except as it served him as a base for his explorations. He heard of a great sea to the west and would reach it and find thereby the way to Far Cathay. The St. Lawrence itself was blocked by the Iroquois Indians of northern New York, whose hostility to the French, and particularly to Champlain, was fierce and unrelenting. So he pushed his canoes up the Ottawa until its waters enmeshed with those of a lake called Nipissing. From this lake he followed a river, now known as French River, down to the Georgian Bay of Lake Huron. The Great Lakes lay before him, but it was not his to explore them.

Indeed he had been preceded thus far by Franciscan missionaries who were already established among the Huron Indians at the head of this same bay.

Then followed two decades of confusion and reorganization of the French colonies. The great Richelieu next assumed their management and, though Champlain was reappointed Governor, commerce and trade were monopolized by a company known as the Hundred Associates; while the Jesuits were virtually in charge of all other interests, temporal as well as spiritual.

In July of 1634 it was that the Jesuit missionaries Brébeuf, Daniel, and Davost embarked with the Indian canoe fleet on its annual return journey from Three Rivers to the Huron country. Jean Nicollet was one of this motley company, but the situation was far less novel to him than to his black-robed fellow countrymen. Brébeuf speaks admiringly of him as being "equal to all the hardships endured by the most robust savages." The tiresome ascent of the Ottawa was finally accomplished and the canoes glided out upon the waters of Lake Nipissing; thence down French River to Georgian Bay and on to its head, where the Jesuits established themselves in the place formerly occupied by the Franciscans.

They were soon joined by Nicollet, who had tarried for a time with the Indians on an island in the Ottawa. After procuring a suitable outfit and engaging seven Hurons to act as guides, Nicollet bade adieu to Father Brébeuf and his associates and set

out on his voyage westward. His commission required him to explore such countries as he might be able to reach and to make commercial treaties with the people dwelling therein. The party coasted along the eastern and northern shores of Lake Huron, passing through the dangerous channel to the north of the Manitoulins until they found themselves tossing about in the eddies below the Sault Ste. Marie in water through which now floats a commerce whose tonnage is three times that which passes Port Saïd and Suez.

But for Nicollet the scene seems to have had no special interest. He must have heard from the Indians of Lake Superior, but makes no mention of having visited it. The water coursing past his camp at the foot of the rapids was fresh and gave no promise that the "salt sea" of which he was in search lay beyond. Thus did he miss discovering the greatest of all the Great Lakes.

Dropping down St. Mary's Strait he rounded the upper peninsula of Michigan and passed on through the Straits of Mackinac. The "second lake of the Hurons," as Lake Michigan was for a time called, lay before him. Boldly following the northern shore of this new-found sea Nicollet entered Green Bay, land-locked by the present State of Wisconsin. He pushed on to its head, where he for the first time encountered tribes of Indians with whom he could not converse. He believed himself upon the outskirts of the vast Chinese Empire. Being invited to a

council with the chiefs he donned the gorgeous mandarin's cloak, which he had brought in an oilskin bag to wear at his appearance before the Chinese court, and approaching, discharged his pistols into the air. The impression was all that could be desired, but he soon discovered that he had not yet reached China nor even its outskirts. He was well received, however, and passed on up the Fox River.

After traversing Lake Winnebago he found himself once more among Indians of the Algonquin stock whose language was intelligible. From them he heard of a "great water" which could be reached in three days by a short portage from the upper Fox River. The portage referred to was, of course, that into the Wisconsin River at what is now Portage City. Had he taken this "three days' journey" he would have debouched, not upon a new sea as he supposed, but upon the upper course of the Mississippi at Prairie du Chien opposite McGregor, Iowa. The "way to Iowa" had been pointed out, but many years were to pass before the first white man set foot on Iowa soil. Why Nicollet missed this opportunity, as he had already missed that at Lake Superior, is not in the least clear. What he did do was to travel overland to the south to visit and establish friendly relations with the great nation of Illinois Indians, obtaining at the same time some general notion of the extent of Lake Michigan.

But the discoveries of Nicollet were not soon to be followed up. Scarcely had he returned to Three

Rivers when Champlain died. Then came a succession of incompetent Governors. The Iroquois took advantage of the situation and devastated the country, utterly destroying the Huron nation in 1649. Such of the Jesuit missionaries as had escaped death were hastily recalled. The fugitive Hurons and Ottawas betook themselves to the remotest shores of the Great Lakes or sought refuge at Quebec, while others became amalgamated with the Iroquois themselves. Even the fortified settlements on the St. Lawrence were in danger.

In 1660 Radisson and his brother-in-law, Grosseilliers, launched their canoes upon Lake Superior and followed the south shore to the end of the lake. Here they located the remnants of the Huron and Ottawa tribes, secure in these distant regions from the fury of the Iroquois. It is claimed that the brothers, in their overland explorations, came upon the Mississippi; but, while it may be reasonably inferred, this is not definitely confirmed by Radisson's journal.

Jean Talon, the capable Intendant of New France, was now devoting his best energies to establishing the claim of the mother country to the broad interior, the real extent of which was beginning to unfold with the simultaneous advance of missionary and fur trader. He meant to occupy this region and secure control of its great waterways. Little recked he of Far Cathay. He dreamed of a vast new empire for France. The English, mere grubbers of the soil,

were to be confined to the region between the Atlantic coast and the Alleghanies, while Spanish influence was to be thwarted by the establishment of French colonies on the Gulf of Mexico.

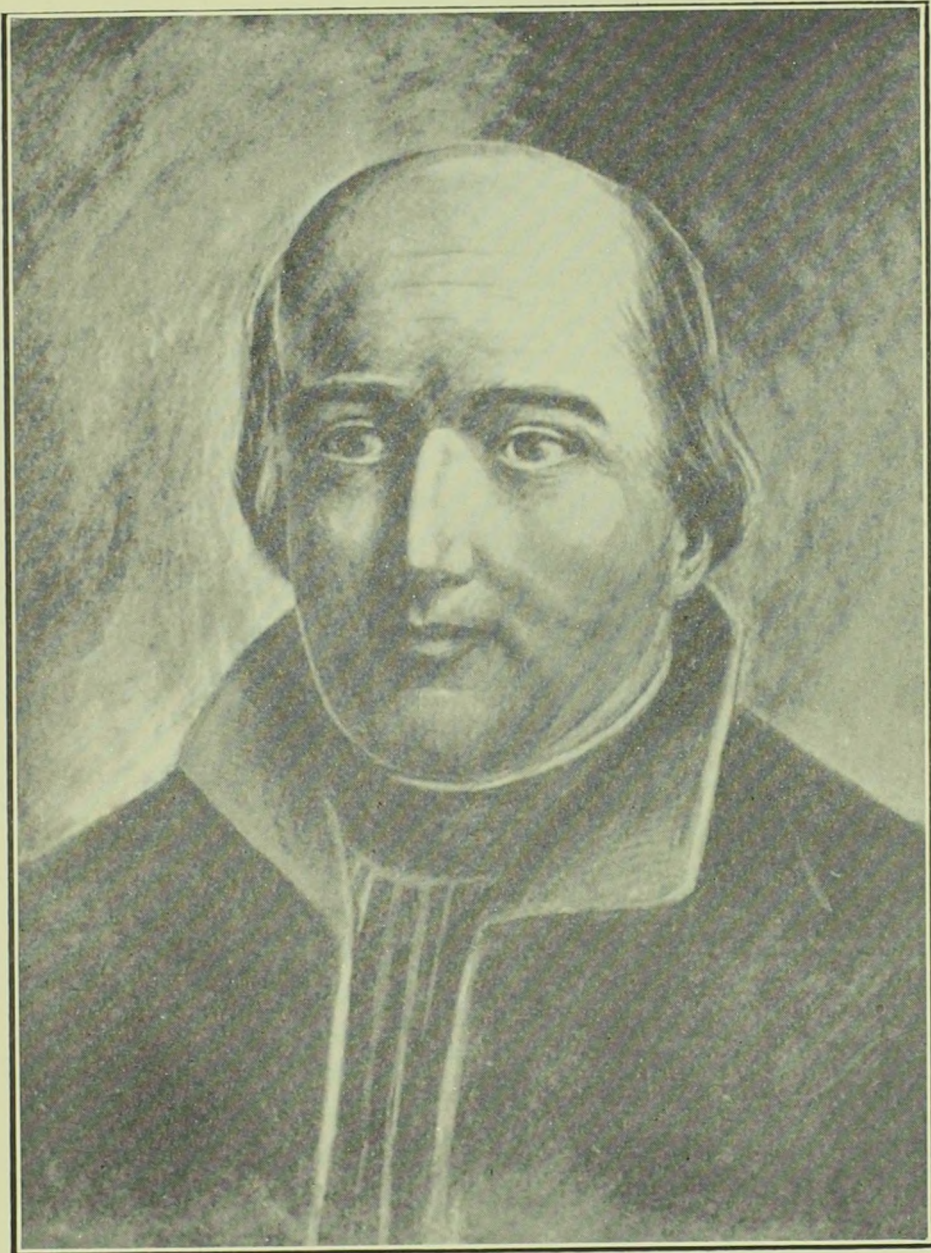
A splendid expedition was organized under Saint-Lusson and sent to Sault Ste. Marie to take formal possession of the whole interior of North America in the name of the French King, Louis XIV. But Talon was determined to give the claim made in behalf of his sovereign a more substantial foundation. He resolved to discover and map the course of that mysterious "great river" concerning which such conflicting but insistent rumors had been current ever since the days of Champlain. To execute his purpose he chose Louis Joliet.

The experienced explorer was joined at Mackinac by Father Marquette, then in charge of the Huron mission at St. Ignace. It was early spring. The ice had just left the straits. They made instant haste to prepare for the journey. Five companions were chosen — all Frenchmen and experienced wood-rangers. Their two canoes of birch bark, stiffened with cedar splints, were selected with unusual care. Though large enough to carry safely the seven *voyageurs* and their provisions of smoked meat and maize, besides blankets, camp utensils, guns, instruments, and a quantity of trinkets to serve as presents to the Indians, they were still light enough to be easily portable. Joliet and the five wood-rangers were dressed in the buckskin suits then worn by

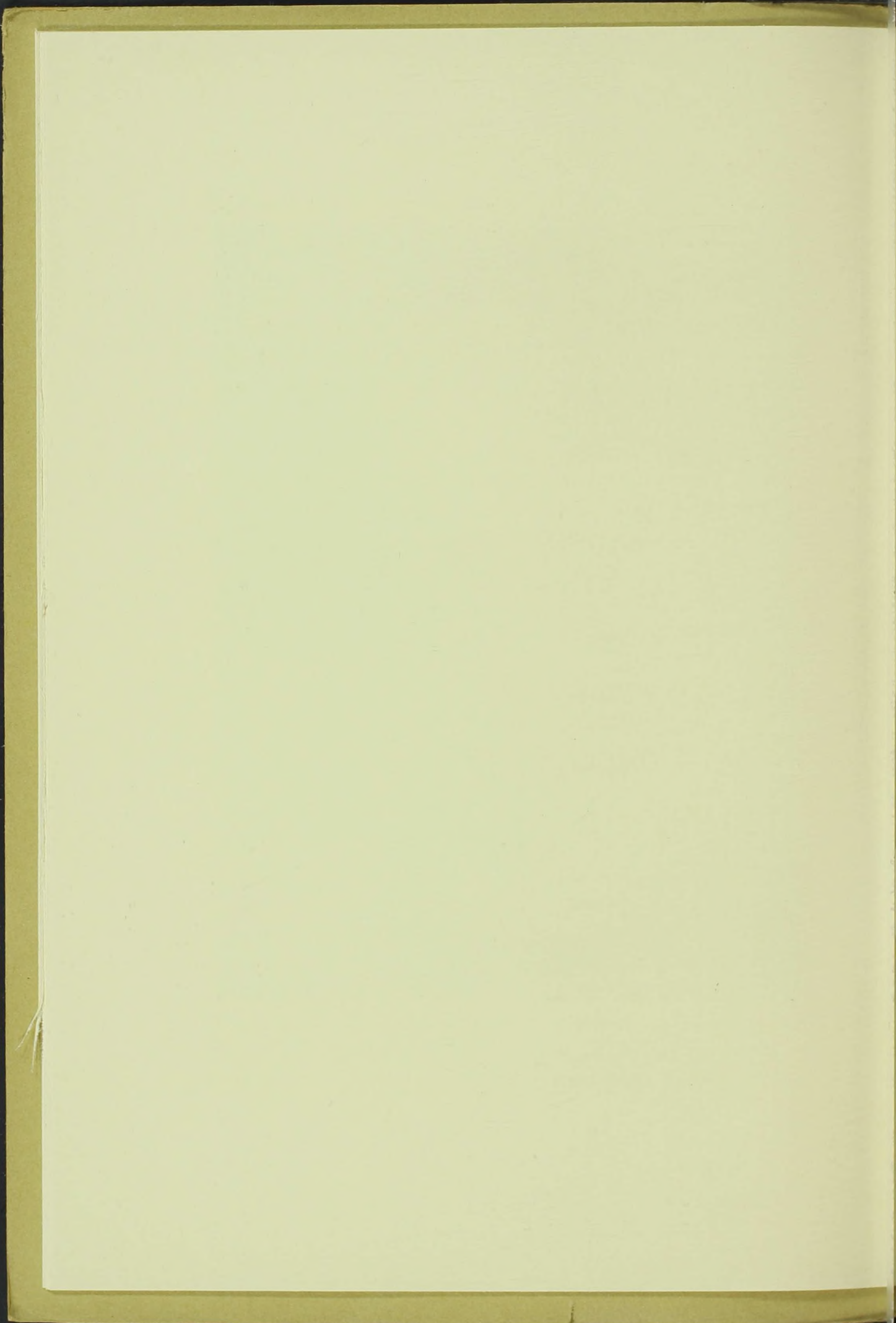
frontiersmen; but Marquette retained his long black Jesuit's cassock and cumbered himself with no weapon save his rosary.

On the seventeenth of May, 1673, they pushed off their canoes into the crescent-shaped bay at St. Ignace, rounded the point to the south, and headed westward along the northern shore of Lake Michigan. The *voyageurs* must have felt the quickening influence of the changing season. They paddled all day, relieving one another by turns. Trolling lines were set to catch fish. At twilight they landed to prepare for the night. The sand of the beach still retained the heat of the midday sun. Each canoe was hauled up beyond the reach of the waves, turned over, and propped up by one edge to serve as shelter. One of the party collected dry driftwood for the fire. Another cut forked sticks and set them up in the sand to hold a crossbar upon which the kettle was hung. Hulled corn was cooked; the fish were broiled in the embers; and Marquette blessed the simple meal. Then, sitting 'round the camp fire, the tired explorers smoked their pipes and rested. Such was the routine of their voyage on Lake Michigan.

Pushing on day after day, along the route followed by Nicollet thirty-nine years before, the party soon entered Green Bay. They turned into the Menominee River and visited the village of the Indian tribe of the same name, which signifies wild rice. Here they heard dreadful tales of the country and the river which they were about to visit and



FATHER MARQUETTE
A RETOUCHEd COPY OF A REPUTED PORTRAIT



were urged to go no farther. A few days later they were welcomed at the mission at the head of the bay, still conducted, as it had been founded, by Father Claude Allouez. After making some final arrangements here they ascended Fox River, crossed Lake Winnebago, and entered the devious course of the upper Fox. On the seventh of June they had reached the neighborhood of the portage to the Wisconsin River, first made known by Nicollet.

Guides were secured to conduct them to the point at which the portage was easiest. This point reached, they carried their canoes and baggage a mile and a half over a marshy prairie and, parting with their guides, launched upon the Meskousing (Wisconsin), whose current might bear them to the South Sea, the Gulf of California, or the Gulf of Mexico, they knew not which.

The navigation of the Wisconsin presented no serious difficulties and ten days later, on the seventeenth of June, the explorers floated out upon the broad surface of a mighty river, which they must have recognized at once as the "great water" which they had been sent to find out and explore. They were in the shadow of the almost mountainous bluff at the foot of which lies the quaint little town of South McGregor, the Bingen of the Mississippi. Beyond lay the rolling prairies of Iowa; but little did they, or their successors for a century and a half to come, dream of such a Commonwealth as ours. The depth and breadth of the channel and the swift-

ness of the current gave them some notion, however, of the extent of the territory to which they had gained access.

The way to Iowa — to the whole Middle West as well — had been discovered. But between the discovery of Iowa and the beginning of the history of this Commonwealth there is an interval of a century or more. During this interval the region was frequently visited by white men. Its broad prairies, the Mesopotamia of the New World, were doubtless well known to the French and American traders who by turns coursed up and down the Mississippi and the Missouri in quest of buffalo skins.

But the men who have made Iowa and our Middle West what it is to-day came, not by way of the Great Lakes from Canada, nor up stream from the French colonies of Louisiana; not in canoes laden with baubles for cheating the savage, but in emigrant wagons with wives and children and bringing agricultural implements. They came swarming through the passes of the Alleghanies and brought with them into this new land the spirit of the American Revolution.

LAENAS G. WELD

The Discovery of Iowa

On the seventeenth of June, 1923, two men stood on the heights above McGregor, Iowa, and gazed upon the panorama of river and tree-clad islands below, and the sweep of Wisconsin farm land in the distance. One wore the long black cassock, the cincture, the crucifix, and the shovel-board hat of a Jesuit missionary of the seventeenth century, while the other was clad in the fringed coat, trousers, and moccasins of a *coureur de bois* of New France. Both were Iowa men — one impersonating the brave but gentle Father Jacques Marquette, the other enacting the rôle of the intrepid and skilled Louis Joliet — who, with boatmen five, newspaper representatives, and cameramen, were that afternoon about to start on a two hundred and fifty mile replica voyage in commemoration of the discovery of Iowa.

Far below them a ferry boat churned its way up the channel toward the pontoon railroad bridge. Horseshoe Island, with its graceful curves and luxuriant foliage, presented a bit of nature's landscape gardening. Across the Mississippi, framed in a setting of green-topped hills and bluffs that merged into soft blue haze in the distance, lay the quaint old French town of Prairie du Chien. Above the trees to the southeast loomed the towers of Campion College. Farther north gleamed the limestone ruins of

Old Fort Crawford above which the Stars and Stripes were proudly waving, a reminder of the importance of this frontier post in the days of the fur traders. The spacious buildings and lawns of St. Mary's College were visible on a gently sloping hillside, where amid a riot of color, Wisconsin citizens were celebrating the discovery of the Mississippi with a pageant, "The Father of Waters".

Some four miles below, the gentle current of the Wisconsin River disembogued into the swifter flowing Mississippi almost opposite the bold promontory now called Pike's Hill. It was there, two hundred and fifty years ago, that "we safely entered the Missisipi on the 17th of June, with a joy that I cannot express", wrote Father Marquette. On the seventeenth of June, 1923, the replica *voyageurs* floated out upon the choppy surface of the mighty river, not perhaps with joy but with wonder at the magnificence of the view. The mountainous range of bluffs dominated by Pike's Hill overshadowed the river on the west, while scallops of green-clad hills with layers of outcropping limestone framed the scene on the east, back of the flood plain along the shore.

Turning downstream, the explorers of 1923 beheld new features at every bend of the river. New scenic delights greeted them on every hand, much as the view must have charmed the adventurers of two and a half centuries ago. Islands, willow fringed and crowned with cottonwoods, maples, and elms, ap-

peared; the river widened and the sun dipped in a blaze of color behind the western hills. Then came modern touches of life and action. A lumbering freight train thundered along the base of the cliffs and the engineer whistled a noisy greeting. Clam muckers watched the symbolical voyage pass by, amazement pictured on their faces. Passengers on an upstream packet waved handkerchiefs and shouted salutations. Twilight settled down and yellow gleams atop the light boards along the shore marked the course of the channel. Guttenberg appeared off the starboard bow and two paleface braves in Indian garb put out in a canoe from shore bearing a message of welcome and an invitation to spend the night as guests of the town.

How different must have been the first night passed by the seven Frenchmen along the Iowa shore two hundred and fifty years ago! Then, as the golden sun sank to rest behind the bluffs and twilight fell, they pushed the prows of their two birch-bark canoes ashore. Stretching their cramped limbs they prepared to do their simple cooking. A tiny campfire was built with dry driftwood and in the glowing embers they cooked their frugal meal of Indian corn and smoked meat. Perhaps a fish caught on a towline added a supply of tasty food. Father Marquette invoked a blessing, and they all ate heartily after the day of paddling and the thrill of a great achievement. A short rest, a pipeful of fragrant tobacco, and then the boatmen extinguished

the red coals of their dying campfire and again launching their canoes, the party floated a few miles farther on to spend the night. When darkness spread its sable robes over the river they anchored at some distance from the shore, and a boatman watched while the others slept.

At sunrise they were on their way. Once a huge fish struck Marquette's canoe with such violence that the frail craft was nearly overturned. The great sturgeon which "rushed through the water like hungry sharks" excited their admiration and the curious paddle fish aroused their wonder. Herds of deer and buffalo were seen and wild turkeys made a welcome addition to their meager food supply, but no sign of human habitation met their searching gaze. They seemed to be alone on the long sweeps of the broad Mississippi with its changing kaleidoscope of wooded islands and sand bars, its tree-covered bluffs and open spaces alternating along the banks, and its wide surface, now smooth as glass, now churned to white-capped angry waves by a stiff south wind. Every night, however, they took precautions against a surprise attack. Thus they journeyed along the eastern shore of the Iowa land during that eventful month of June, 1673.

The river then flowed untrammelled to the sea, but the *voyageurs* of 1923 saw on every hand the attempts of man to subdue the spirit of the Mississippi and to control its moods. Wing dams made of woven willows weighted down by limestone rocks directed

the current into the channel. Government dredges and snag boats puffed upstream pushing barges piled high with willows. Dingy steamboats nosed along barges heavily loaded with sand and rock repairs for the levees. Red buoys and black buoys slowly bobbing in the water and light boards and diamond boards at intervals along the shore made modern navigation easy.

An excursion boat, gleaming white in the glaring sun, appeared around an island downstream and, with black smoke pouring from the twin stacks, it approached and passed on the port side, following the deepest part of the channel. The high swells made by its large stern paddle wheel tossed the small canoes of the replica explorers like chips. Spray from the plunging bows dashed over the boatmen, drenching their costumes and glistening on the fringed coat of Joliet and the black robe of Marquette.

A herd of cattle standing knee deep in the water far out on a sand bar took the place of the buffalo and deer that were seen by the original explorers. A sail boat manned by a sunburnt, barefoot boy dashed athwart the bow of the accompanying launch and careened at a dangerous angle as he doubled back to watch the flotilla pass. He yelled and waved, and his companion, a fox terrier, barked excitedly. Fishermen in motor dories trailed their lines and waved a salute in passing. Sandy bathing beaches and summer cottages with pleasant names — Wood-

side, Chalet, Three Elms, and Idlewild — suggested cool retreats from the scorching heat. A cluster of houseboats with drying reels and fish racks marked the approach to a city. Then in the distance appeared the graceful outline of a high-arched traffic bridge and the squatty, rugged framework of a railroad bridge — signals for the readjustment of wigs and the refashioning of French beards. A scheduled stop lay just ahead.

No such sights greeted the original *voyageurs*. Not a canoe, not a hut or tepee, not a single sign of human life did they descry for eight days. Finally on the twenty-fifth of June, 1673, as the exploring party drifted along the Iowa shore, one of the group noticed footprints on the sandy beach near the water's edge. Quickly the canoes were beached and the two leaders, unarmed, started out to follow the marks in the sand, leaving their five companions to guard the supplies. It was a bold action for the explorer and the missionary, for neither knew what dangers lurked at the end of the narrow, somewhat beaten path which led up the bank to the prairie.

Silently following the slender trail for about two leagues — five or six miles — they beheld an Indian village on the bank of a river and two others on a hill about a mile from the first. Here the two Frenchmen commended themselves to God, imploring His aid, and then cautiously approached without being noticed until they could hear the Indians talking.

On that quiet day in June the beauty of early summer had settled upon the Mississippi Valley. The streets of the Indian villages were quiet, smoke curled slowly above the lodges, and the murmur of voices drifted through the open doorways. Inside, Indian women pounded corn into meal in heavy bowls while the braves lolled at ease on the blankets or mended bows and smoked long-stemmed pipes. Blinking papooses, brown bundles of stolid indifference or squalling animation, leaned in cradle-boards against the walls.

Suddenly the village was startled into life. A loud shout from the strangers announced their approach. The two messengers from France stopped to watch the effect. In a moment the villagers swarmed out into the sunlight, pipes were tossed aside, broken bows were forgotten, and the women ceased their work to rush about in wild excitement. As quickly as it began the tumult quieted. Someone had recognized the strangers as Frenchmen and friends; someone in the village, doubtless, knew whence the visitors came; someone, perhaps, had seen the energetic fur traders and the black-robed priests on the shore of Lake Superior or beside the waters of Green Bay.

Four old men stepped out of the crowd and advanced toward the strangers. Slowly they walked, two of them holding aloft in the bright sunlight finely ornamented tobacco pipes adorned with multi-colored feathers. Not a word did they speak as with

solemn tread they slowly covered the distance between the village and the white men. Finally, as they drew near, they stopped and gazed attentively, yet with respect, at the visitors. Thereupon, Father Marquette, assured that the solemn approach of the four old men was meant as a courteous welcome, asked in Indian dialect, "Who are you?"

"We are Illinois", the old men answered, and as a token of peace they offered the strangers the calumets to smoke, and invited them to enter the village.

Together the four Indians and their guests approached the cluster of lodges where the Indians awaited them impatiently. At the door of one of the huts stood an old man, with his hands extended toward the sun. As the group drew near the old man spoke, "How beautiful is the sun, O Frenchmen, when thou comest to visit us! All our village awaits thee, and thou shalt enter all our cabins in peace."

Then he bade them enter his lodge where a crowd of savages looked upon the visitors in curious yet respectful silence. From time to time in a low voice came the words, "How good it is, my brothers, that you should visit us." Again the pipe of peace was passed, first to the strangers and then to the elders. During this ceremony of friendship a messenger arrived bearing an invitation from the great chief of all the Illinois to proceed to his village for a council.

Thither they set out, the black-gown and the explorer and the elders accompanied by a great crowd of Indian braves, squaws, and children. The un-

usual sight of two Frenchmen in their village attracted all of the Indians. Some lay in the grass along the path and watched the procession pass, others ran on ahead and then retraced their steps in order to see the strangers again. Yet all this was done noiselessly and with great awe of the white men.

When the procession reached the village of the big chief he was beheld standing at the entrance of his lodge between two old men. All three stood erect and naked, holding their calumets high toward the glowing sun. The chief welcomed the party and drew them within his cabin. Again they smoked the calumet in silence, and the Indians awaited the message of the white men. Father Marquette spoke first and, following the custom with the Indians, gave them four presents, each the token of a message.

With the first he told them that he, Jacques Marquette, a priest of the Jesuit Order, and his companion, Louis Joliet, were journeying peacefully to visit the tribes dwelling on the river as far as the sea. With the second token he announced that God, who had created them, had pity on them and, wishing to make Himself known to all people, had sent the priest for that purpose. Then he gave them a third present saying that the great chief of the French had subdued the Iroquois and had restored peace everywhere. Finally, with the fourth gift, he begged the Illinois to give him and his companion all the information they had about the sea and the na-

tions through whose land they must pass to reach it.

When the black-gown finished speaking the chief arose, and resting his hand upon the head of a little Indian boy, a captive slave, he spoke thus, "I thank thee, Black-gown, and thee, O Frenchman, for having taken so much trouble to come to visit us. Never has the earth been so beautiful or the sun so bright as to-day. Never has our river been so calm or so free from rocks, which thy canoes have removed in passing. Never has our tobacco tasted so good or our corn appeared so fine as we now see it. Here is my son whom I give thee to show thee my heart. I beg thee to have pity on me, and on all my nation. It is thou who knowest the great Spirit who has made us all. It is thou who speakest to Him, and who hearest His word. Beg Him to give me life and health, and to come to dwell with us, in order to make us know Him."

Then the chief placed the captive Indian boy near the visitors and gave them a second present, a long-stemmed calumet, elaborately carved and decorated with feathers signifying peace. It was to be a talisman for the rest of the journey. With a third present he begged the visitors on behalf of his nation to go no farther on account of the dangers that lay ahead. Marquette replied that he feared not death and regarded no happiness greater than that of losing his life for the glory of Him who had made them all. This sentiment amazed all the Indians, but they made no reply and the council ended.

A feast followed. During the progress of the council Indian women had hurried to prepare a meal worthy of the occasion. Young girls now brought into the lodge the food which the squaws had made ready. The first course was sagamité—Indian corn meal boiled in water and seasoned with fat. An Indian, acting as master of ceremonies, filled a spoon and presented it several times to the mouths of the visitors as if they were children. Then the maidens brought fresh from the fire a second platter on which lay three smoking fish. The same Indian took some pieces of this, removed the bones and, after blowing upon the morsels to cool them, placed the fish in the mouths of the Frenchmen as he had fed them the sagamité. For the third course they brought a large dog freshly killed and roasted for the occasion, but when they learned that their guests did not eat that delicacy, it was removed. The fourth course was roast buffalo meat, the fattest and choicest morsels of which were given the priest and his companion.

When the feast ended the hosts conducted the Frenchmen through the entire village consisting of fully three hundred lodges. During this tour an orator harangued the people to see the visitors without annoying them. Everywhere the natives presented their new friends with gifts—belts, garters, and bracelets made of hair dyed red, yellow, and gray. When nightfall came the explorers slept in the cabin of the chief as his honored guests.

On the afternoon of the next day Marquette and Joliet took leave of the chief promising to pass his village again within four moons. They retraced their steps along the trail to the Mississippi, courteously accompanied by nearly six hundred Indians. On the Iowa bank of the Father of Waters the Indians watched the white men settle themselves in their canoes, taking with them the Indian slave boy who was destined to share their adventures in the Great Valley. The sun was midway down the sky when they shoved off from the shore and slowly paddled downstream amid the shouts of the Indians in manifestation of their joy at the visit of the gallant strangers.

Thus ended the first visit of white men to Iowa. Two hundred and fifty years later the replica *voyageurs* encountered much the same hospitality, friendliness, and kindly interest that the original travellers met when they visited the Illinois Indians. Hundreds of Iowans at McGregor, Guttenberg, Dubuque, Bellevue, Clinton, Davenport, Muscatine, Burlington, Fort Madison, and Montrose met the explorers of 1923 at the water front, looked at them in friendly curiosity, and then adopted them as honored guests. They harangued the travellers and the *voyageurs* responded. Redmen in full regalia added color to the welcome at the landings. The trip became a continuous pageant in commemoration of an important episode in Iowa history. Each city feasted the party, gave them presents, and showed them

places of interest. The modern explorers were taken to the Abbey of New Melleray where Trappist monks practice the rules of an order founded almost six hundred years before the discovery of Iowa; they visited the quaint village of Tête des Mort, a bit of rural Europe in an Iowa valley; they inspected the United States Arsenal at Rock Island; and they went through the government Biological Station at Fairport.

Finally, at the beautiful Crapo Park of Burlington, in a natural amphitheater overlooking the river, with green trees for a background and a vista of wooded islands and rolling prairies in the distance, was reënacted the welcome of Marquette and Joliet by the Illinois Indians. Jesuit priest and French explorer, Indian braves, chiefs, old men, squaws, and children, appearing before an audience of thousands of people, caught and reflected the spirit of the first visit of white men to Iowa. Then followed an eloquent address by a priest of the same missionary order to which Father Marquette belonged. Appropriate ceremonies at Bluff Park, Montrose, culminated the ten day celebration in honor of the discovery of Iowa and the first visit of white men to her borders.

As the sun was midway down the sky the replica *voyageurs* set out for home in a launch, towing the two canoes. Darkness overtook them, and in the north jagged flashes of lightning silhouetted the bluffs and trees on the shoreline. The heavy rumble

of thunder echoed down the valley. A train rushed past, the glare of the headlight piercing the darkness and the flare from the opened fire box revealing the fireman. Then the rain! Curtains hastily lowered protected the travellers who had endured ten days of stifling heat on the river without a suggestion of a storm. At last the docks loomed ahead out of the darkness and the launch slid into its quarters. The *voyageurs* of 1923 had rediscovered the Father of Waters and the friendliness of the people who to-day inhabit the Iowa country.

BRUCE E. MAHAN

Father Marquette

Humanity is relentless in its quick forgetfulness of the dead, but more than two centuries have not dimmed the achievements of Father Jacques Marquette, nor obliterated the memory of the fine idealism of his life. Much of the wilderness in which he lived and worked has become peopled, the little mission of St. Ignace which he built has long since fallen to ruins, but Marquette's spirit is still felt by the hundreds of summer tourists who visit the monument at St. Ignace, Michigan, which marks the site of his former chapel.

Jacques Marquette grew to manhood in the shadow of dominant personalities and past glories of France. Born in Laon in 1637, he came of a family which cherished the memory of a long line of valiant warriors and distinguished statesmen. As a child he played among the crumbling ruins of walls and ramparts which had withstood the attacks of many foes of France; a dozen times a day he gazed upon the imposing cathedral built by the Church of Rome in the twelfth century; and his walks frequently led him among the ruins of an ancient leaning tower, built like that of Pisa.

The influence of the boy's mother, Rose de la Salle, together with a natural tendency toward a life of piety, soon made him determined to abandon the

traditions of his ancient house which marked its sons for statesmen and warriors, and to enter the service of the Cross. Shortly after he was seventeen, he went to the neighboring town of Nancy and entered the Jesuit college as a novice.

Beginning in 1632, the Jesuits had gradually penetrated far into the forests of North America and were attempting to spread Christianity among the Indians of lower Canada. During his long and tedious months of study in France, Marquette had, no doubt, read accounts of these Jesuit activities and pictured himself as a savior of the savages in this strange, far country. Whatever his hopes may have been, he burned with an intense desire to try his fortunes as a forest missionary in America.

For twelve years his ambition remained ungratified, but he did not lose his ardor. At last, in 1666, when he was twenty-nine years of age, the long-wished-for orders arrived and Marquette quickly embarked for the missionary field of New France. He reached Quebec in September of the same year and it was there, while he was gaining his first impressions of the New World, that he met Louis Joliet, with whom he was afterward to share one of the greatest adventures of his life.

After a rest of twenty days, Marquette was sent to Three Rivers, seventy-seven miles above Quebec, to become a pupil of Father Gabriel Drüillettes in the many-sided art of the Indian missionary. In marked contrast to the theological seminaries of Old

France, Three Rivers was a rude school in which the young priest learned to endure the hardships of toilsome journeys, to face the horrors of famine, pestilence, and war, and to speak the strange languages of the Indians. But Marquette's natural ability, coupled with his great zeal, seems to have overcome all obstacles.

Daily association for two years with the greasy savages of Three Rivers, constant observation of their manners and customs, and the mastery of six dialects was deemed to be sufficient apprenticeship, and Marquette was sent to the Ottawa mission at Sault Ste. Marie in the summer of 1668. There he was associated with "twenty or thirty Nations, all different in language, customs, and Policy." After his first winter's work, he wrote that the harvest of souls "is very abundant, and that it only rests with the Missionaries to baptize the entire population". He was skeptical of the sincerity of the Indian converts, however, fearing that they were "too acquiescent" and that after baptism they would still "cling to their customary superstitions." He gave especial attention to baptizing the dying, "who are a surer harvest."

Marquette remained only a year at the Sault and then he was sent on to the farthest corner of Lake Superior to take charge of the mission at La Pointe. Built on a narrow spit of sand and gravel some six miles long, the mission was surrounded by a wild and picturesque landscape of

steep cliffs of sandstone and dark pine forests. Marquette assumed his duties with a quaking heart for it was a hazardous undertaking, but it was exactly the opportunity for which he had been longing. He went at once to visit the neighboring Indians, and found them to be of the Huron nation and practically all baptized. Some of the other tribes, however, were found to be "very far from the Kingdom of God."

It was during his service at La Pointe that Marquette first heard of the great river which flowed so far southward that the nations about the Great Lakes had never heard of its mouth. He also learned of the Illinois Indians — a strange tribe of savages who raised maize and enormous squashes, and who did not know what a canoe was. Then and there Marquette conceived the ambition to explore the Mississippi and to carry the Gospel to the benighted Illinois who worshipped the sun and the thunder.

In the spring of 1671 the Hurons near La Pointe were threatened with an attack by the warlike Sioux, and fled to Mackinac Island. Marquette abandoned the mission and went with them. There, at the junction of lakes Huron, Superior, and Michigan — the gateway to the land of the Illinois in the great valley — the shrewd Jesuit took his post and bided the time when he could fulfill his desire.

Meanwhile he was kept very busy, ministering to the religious needs of the Indians, baptizing the infants, and making excursions into the surrounding

country by canoe and on foot. Near the edge of the island he established the little mission of St. Ignace, which was later transferred to the mainland. Its site is to-day marked by an imposing monument, a shrine for hundreds of tourists.

Scarcely more than a year had elapsed before Marquette's dreams came true. It was in December, 1672, when his friend Joliet arrived from Quebec with orders for him to join in exploring the Mississippi River and to spread the faith among the natives of that country. It was a momentous occasion in the little settlement, and during the winter months Marquette and Joliet were busy collecting information about the great western country, drawing maps, and preparing for the long journey in the spring.

On the seventeenth of May, 1673, the two Frenchmen, together with five boatmen, set out in two small birch-bark canoes. By way of the Fox and Wisconsin rivers, they reached the Mississippi just a month from the time they started, and eight days later paid their first visit to the people who then lived in Iowa.

After two days of feasting with the Illinois Indians, the party proceeded on down the river. Various thrilling adventures convinced the explorers that they were in a strange land indeed. They had not gone far when they saw, painted high upon the smooth surface of a cliff, two hideous monsters, the work of some imaginative Indian artist. "They are

as large As a calf", writes Father Marquette. "They have Horns on their heads Like those of deer, a horrible look, red eyes, a beard Like a tiger's, a face somewhat like a man's, a body Covered with scales, and so Long A tail that it winds all around the Body, passing the head and going back between the legs, ending in a Fish's tail."

While still discussing these pictured rocks they heard the rush of a rapids and in a few moments they were in the muddy and turbulent waters of the Missouri River. "An accumulation of large and entire trees, branches, and floating islands, was issuing from the mouth of the river, with such impetuosity", says Marquette, that they could not pass through without great danger.

Going farther to the south, the explorers encountered great swarms of mosquitoes near the broad mouth of the Ohio. The heat and the insects made life miserable until the men hoisted canvas tents over their canoes, after the manner of the southern Indians.

A few days later, as the *voyageurs* approached a village of Mitchigamea Indians, they saw the savages preparing for battle. "They were armed with bows, arrows, hatchets, clubs, and shields", relates Father Marquette. "They prepared to attack us, on both land and water; part of them embarked in great wooden canoes — some to ascend, others to descend the river, in order to Intercept us and surround us on all sides. Those who were on land came

and went, as if to commence The attack. In fact, some Young men threw themselves into The water, to come and seize my Canoe; but the current compelled Them to return to land. One of them then hurled his club, which passed over without striking us. In vain I showed The calumet, and made them signs that we were not coming to war against them. The alarm continued, and they were already preparing to pierce us with arrows from all sides, when God suddenly touched the hearts of the old men, who were standing at the water's edge."

The elders succeeded in checking the ardor of the young braves and invited the Frenchmen to their village. The Indians could not understand Marquette's Algonquin dialects, but they told him that another tribe farther down the river near the mouth of the Arkansas could give what information they desired.

The Arkansas Indians received the explorers with unmistakable demonstrations of friendship. The white men were feasted until nightfall, while the Indians told of the dangers of the river below, of the fierce tribes that inhabited the country, and of the murderous Spaniards not far away. Pondering upon these warnings, convinced that they were within three days' journey of the sea, and anxious to report their discoveries, Marquette and Joliet decided to turn their canoes northward.

The trip home was begun on July seventeenth. Paddling against the stream was far different from

floating with it, the boatmen soon discovered. They were forced to thread their way back and forth across the river to avoid the swiftest currents. As if to multiply their woes, the heat became almost unbearable and the mosquitoes were a constant irritation. Camping in the damp night air, without fire to avoid attack, and sleeping in cramped positions in the canoes were unhealthy practices which would harm the health of any man, and Marquette, being naturally of a delicate physique, began to show signs of collapse.

At last they reached the Illinois River, where friendly Indians told them of a shorter way to Lake Michigan than the route by which they had come. In the course of their journey up the Illinois, they came one day to a village in whose lodges lived the same Indians they had visited in Iowa. The tired *voyageurs* were welcomed with such hospitality that they remained three days in the village. Marquette told the Indians of the God who had protected him on his long voyage, and before he departed he promised to return some day and establish a mission among them.

Reaching Lake Michigan, probably by way of the Chicago River, the weary explorers pushed their sadly worn canoes on toward the Jesuit mission of St. François Xavier at De Pere, where Marquette had been assigned for service. There he arrived at the end of September, ill and exhausted, just four months after he had started on his journey.

During the long and tedious winter which followed, Marquette's mind was busy making plans to return to the Illinois tribes and establish a mission near Kaskaskia. In the early autumn he believed himself well enough to accomplish this task and he started from De Pere in October, 1674. Two French servants accompanied him.

Along the shore of Lake Michigan the travellers encountered cold and stormy weather. Constant exposure to wind, rain, and cold so weakened Father Marquette that, upon reaching the Chicago River in December, the two boatmen were forced to build a rude hut and there, amidst the great silences of the wilderness, the three men spent the winter. The black-gown struggled through the strain of the cold season and in March the three men pursued their journey toward Kaskaskia.

Marquette's health failed rapidly but they reached the Indian village on the eighth of April where Marquette "was received as an angel from Heaven." A tabernacle of saplings covered with reed mats and bearskins was built close to the village and in it were hung "several pieces of chinese taffeta, attached to these four large Pictures of the blessed Virgin, which were visible on all Sides." There the priest spoke eloquently to more than a thousand braves who listened "with universal Joy", and prayed that he might return to them again as soon as his health would permit.

Marquette's illness grew steadily worse and,

realizing that death was not far distant, he started north with the hope of reaching the mission of St. Ignace before he died. His two faithful servants, taking advantage of the northward current, pushed the little canoe along the eastern shore of Lake Michigan, but April and early May were cold and stormy, and the two boatmen despaired of being able to reach their destination in time. Marquette, preparing to die, reclined upon the reed mats in the bottom of the boat.

At last, perceiving a high eminence which he deemed well-suited for his burial, Marquette directed his servants to stop, for he had selected that spot as the place of his last repose. It was early in the day and the boatmen wished to go farther, but "God raised a Contrary wind", and they were compelled to turn back to the place which Marquette had pointed out. There they built a little fire, made a wretched cabin of bark, and the dying missionary was laid beneath the humble roof. While the men were tearfully engaged in making camp, Marquette spent his last hours in prayer, and on the eighteenth of May, 1675, "with a countenance beaming and all aglow, he expired so gently that it might have been regarded as a pleasant sleep."

The two servants buried their master as he had directed, and placed a large cross to mark his grave. In the spring, some Kiskakons carried his body to St. Ignace and lowered it into a small vault in the middle of the church. The little mission was burned

in 1700 and for more than one hundred and seventy-five years his resting place was unknown. In 1877, Father Edward Jacker discovered the grave and Marquette's remains now rest in the church of St. Ignace and at Marquette University in Milwaukee.

Marquette was never a man of great strength; he was unfitted for the rough life of the wilderness. His gentle manner and frail physique, however, concealed a will of iron. Earnest, kind, and sincere, the model of his whole life was Saint François Xavier, probably the greatest of all Jesuit missionaries, who extended the faith through fifty-two kingdoms in Asia. In many respects, the incidents of Marquette's life ran parallel to those of his great predecessor. When death overtook him, alone in the wilderness, he spent his last few hours giving thanks to God that he could die "as he had always prayed, in a Wretched cabin in the midst of the forests and bereft of all human succor", exactly as Saint François Xavier did many centuries before him on the other side of the world.

RUTH B. MIDDGAUGH

Louis Joliet

The story begins on Thursday the twenty-first of September in the year 1645. It was on that day that Jean Joliet, a poor wagon-maker in the service of the great fur-trading company of the Hundred Associates which then controlled Canada, might have been seen by some of the inhabitants of Quebec as he and his wife, Marie, climbed slowly up the heights with their infant son and made their way to the church of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Mary. There, in the presence of parents and godparents, the curé baptized and christened the child Louis. Afterward the little family returned to their humble home in the old Lower Town at the foot of the towering rock of Quebec beside the mighty St. Lawrence.

During the years that followed, while the little French trading post with its two or three hundred colonists, adventurers, priests, and nuns was just beginning to assume the dignity becoming to the capital of New France, the sturdy youngster outgrew his infancy and thrived in the midst of hardship and privation after the manner of the hardy race from which he sprang. The winters were long and cold, and the summers were filled with dread of the Indians. Yet the cheerful French folk faced impending calamity with a laugh or a *bon mot* and

society in the Upper Town, where the *seigneurs* brought their families to spend the winter months, reproduced the gaiety of the salons of Old France.

Louis Joliet developed into an alert and active boy. Before he was old enough to remember distinctly his father died. He attended the Jesuit school with the other children of Quebec, most of whom lived in the Lower Town near the landing. Proximity to the St. Lawrence no doubt inspired the boy with a fancy for voyages, while the arrival and departure of missionaries, traders, and Indians gave rise to dreams of adventure and manly ambition. One of the youthful amusements was to play in the brook that came down from Cape Diamond in a succession of little cascades. Often, as a boy, Louis Joliet may have climbed the steep and narrow ascent from Wolfe's Cove to the Plains of Abraham, just as a century later the British stealthily gained the same impregnable heights and wrested an empire from the French.

Joliet seems to have been none the less a student for all of his boyish activities. In the Department of Marine in Paris there is a remarkable map of the island of Anticosti and the Gulf of St. Lawrence, drawn by him when he was only thirteen. The work is carefully executed and the notes and legends indicate maturity and accurate observation. In 1662 he decided to become a Jesuit priest and took his minor orders in August of that year. He cultivated his talent for music and continued his classical course

by a study of philosophy. Four years later he is mentioned with special honor for his participation in a public debate in philosophy, at which the dignitaries of the colony were present and in which the Intendant, Talon himself, took part. The arguments were made in Latin and the disputants were confined to the syllogistic method.

During the following year Joliet, who had then reached his majority, was "clerk of the church" in the seminary. Father Jacques Marquette came to Quebec in September, 1666, and during the three weeks he tarried before going on to Three Rivers the two young men must have become well acquainted. Joliet, however, gave up his training for the priesthood about the time that Marquette entered upon his chosen field as a forest missionary, and in the summer of 1667, probably at the instigation of Talon and for the purpose of pursuing special studies in the Old World, he sailed for France.

After a happy year in the land of his fathers, Joliet returned to Quebec and began his career as explorer. Only the most resourceful, intrepid, and sturdy young men ventured upon that arduous calling. The successful *coureur de bois* had to know the craft of the wilderness — how to find his way in the depths of the forest; how to fashion shelter huts, weapons, and canoes; how to survive alone far from the base of supplies. He had to live with the Indians, interpret their moods, and speak their dialects. Above all, he had to be tactful, brave, and alert.

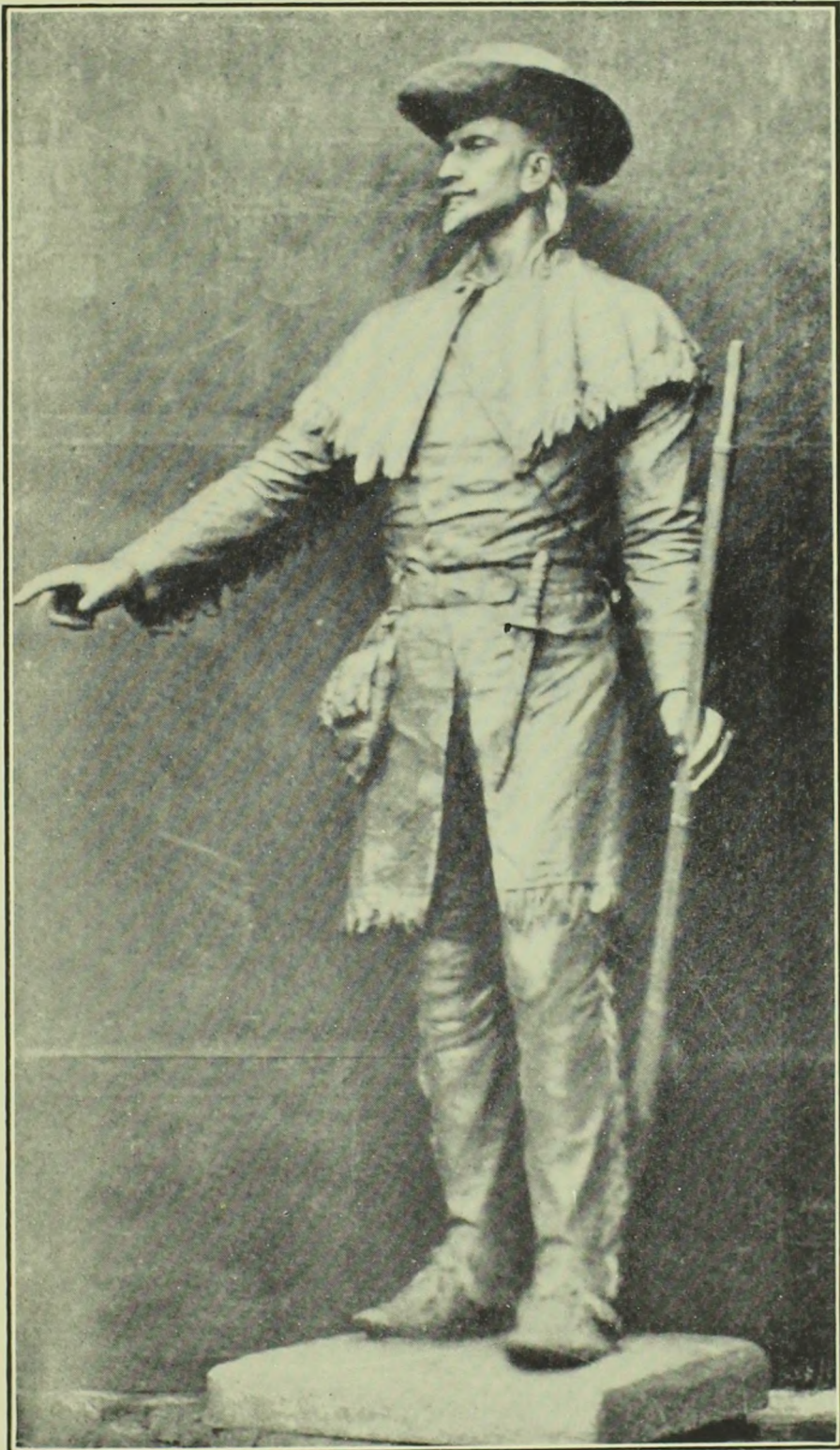
Commissioned by the Governor of New France to accompany Jean Péré on an expedition in search of fabulous boulders of pure copper on the shores of Lake Superior, Joliet plunged into the wilderness early in the spring of 1669 and was not heard of again until the following autumn. One day in September the Sieur de La Salle with his party of explorers and Sulpitian missionaries in search of a new route to the South Sea were amazed to hear of another Frenchman in a neighboring Indian village near the western end of Lake Ontario. It was Joliet on his way back to Quebec. He had failed to find the copper mines, but he had obtained precious knowledge of the region of the Great Lakes, had visited Green Bay, had won the friendship of the Indians, had made peace between the Iroquois and the Ottawas, and had discovered a new and less difficult route to the West by way of the Grand River and Lake Erie. For these services he was paid four hundred livres — not quite eighty dollars.

Late in the following year Joliet returned to the Great Lakes as a member of Saint-Lusson's pretentious expedition, and the early summer of 1671 found him at Sault Ste. Marie where a great concourse of Indians, priests, and soldiers had assembled to witness an imposing ceremony. There, on the fourteenth of June, he stood with a little group of Europeans surrounded by hundreds of dusky savages, their eyes wide with wonder, while Father Claude Dablon invoked a blessing upon the huge

wooden cross erected as a token of spiritual dominion. Saint-Lusson, lifting a sod and holding forth his sword, in the name of His Most Christian Majesty, Louis XIV of France, then took formal possession of all the territory from Hudson Bay to the South Sea and westward to the ocean — a realm of which none of them knew the extent. “*Vive le Roi!*” shouted the Frenchmen, and the Indians howled in concert.

One of the most alluring mysteries of the continent still remained unsolved. What was the “great water” to the west of which the Indians had told the explorers and missionaries, and whither did it flow? When Talon received instructions in 1672 to direct his attention to the exploration of the Mississippi as the most important project that could be undertaken in behalf of New France, his choice of a person to entrust with such a mission naturally fell to Louis Joliet, the brilliant young scholar whom he had sent to Europe six years before and who had since distinguished himself as a zealous and trustworthy explorer.

By November, after Talon had been recalled to France and Joliet was far on his way, the new Governor, Frontenac, wrote to the prime minister that he had “deemed it expedient for the service to send Sieur Joliet to discover the south sea by way of the country of the Maskoutens and the great river called Mississippi, which is believed to empty into the California sea. He is a man of experience in this kind of



LOUIS JOLIET

discovery and has already been near the great river, of which he promises to see the mouth." To his friend Father Marquette, who was patiently waiting at the mission of St. Ignace for an opportunity to visit the Indians who lived along the great river, Joliet carried instructions to accompany him on the voyage.

Slowly and apparently alone, Sieur Joliet paddled his birch-bark canoe up the turbulent Ottawa and Mattawan, laboriously he traversed the portage to Lake Nipissing, and finally emerging from its forested islands, gay with autumnal foliage, he rapidly descended the French River and floated out into the isle-strewn expanse of Georgian Bay. Weeks must have passed while he threaded that gloomy archipelago, genial October was succeeded by chill November, each morning when the traveller awakened beneath his shelter of boughs he found the damp mosses crisp under foot, while fitful winds laden with snowflakes whistled mournfully in the tree tops. To reach Mackinac before the ice blocked his passage the bold explorer must have taken many risks, for it was the eighth of December and floes were already forming in the straits when he beached his canoe at Point St. Ignace, embraced his priestly friend, and placed within his eager hands the fateful message which was to link their names upon a page of history.

All through the long winter Joliet and Marquette made careful preparations for their momentous ex-

ploration. On the seventeenth of May, 1673, the little party set out, and it was late in the autumn before Joliet, weary and travel-worn, pulled his canoe onto the beach at St. Ignace. Cold weather was at hand, so he spent the winter at the Mackinac settlement, writing his report to the Governor, drafting a map of the Illinois country, and preparing his journal of the voyage.

When spring came and the ice went out of the strait, he embarked upon the long trip back to Quebec. Week after week Joliet and his companions paddled homeward. At last they approached the town of Montreal and entered the troubled waters of La Chine Rapids — the last ordeal of the perilous journey. Many a time Joliet had passed those foam-covered rocks before, but the fates that day were capricious and overturned the light canoe. The men were thrown into the swift current and the box containing Joliet's precious map and his journal was deposited at the bottom of the river. Frantically, Joliet struggled against the tugging whirlpools until his strength was gone and he lost consciousness. Four hours his body tossed in the water when at last some fishermen pulled him out and brought him back to life. His French companions and the Indian lad, gift of the Indians in Iowa, were drowned.

The news of Joliet's discovery and the accident in the rapids preceded him to Quebec. When he finally entered his native town the church bells were rung and he was enthusiastically welcomed. After em-

bracing his mother and visiting a little with friends and relatives he hastened to make a verbal report to Governor Frontenac. Later he wrote a brief account of his voyage, the country he had explored, and the ease of establishing communication between the Great Lakes and the Gulf of Mexico. Accompanying this letter was a map of the region drawn from memory.

For several years the young explorer was haunted with the memory of the beautiful prairies, the luxuriant vegetation, the abundance of game, and the innumerable herds of bison which he had seen in the fertile valley of the great river. In 1676, the year following his marriage, he proposed to establish an agricultural colony in Illinois, believing that was the best method of maintaining the French claim to that region, but Paris officialdom vetoed it. Thereafter, for a time, he seems to have fallen into disfavor, perhaps because he was outspoken in opposition to the policy of supplying the Indians with liquor.

So ended the period of greatest accomplishment in the life of Louis Joliet, though for a quarter of a century longer he continued to occupy an important place in Canadian history. A man of scholarship and versatility (he played the cathedral organ between voyages), his whole career is one of remarkable achievement. In the Jesuit and official records of that time he is always referred to as a man of discretion, bravery, and unusual ability who might be trusted to do difficult work.

In 1679 Sieur Joliet was granted the *seigneurie* of the Mingan Islands, and later in the same year he made a survey of the region between the Saguenay River and James Bay, where he found the British firmly established. In return for his services he was given the island of Anticosti in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. There he went to live with his family and was growing wealthy when Sir William Phips appeared with his British fleet in 1690 and destroyed his establishment. A few years later he explored the coast of Labrador, made numerous maps, and studied the Eskimos and the resources of that country. In 1695 he went to France where he was received with honor and respect. When he returned to Quebec he was appointed royal professor of navigation and was given another *seigneurie* which bore his own name and which his descendants possess to this day.

Louis Joliet died sometime in the summer of 1700 — nobody knows just when or where or how. It is probable that the illustrious explorer met his end some place in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, where so often he had guided his boat on adventurous voyages. Perhaps his body rests on one of those rugged islands which the fogs envelop with a white shroud and whose shores reverberate incessantly with the cry of gulls and the thunder of billows.

JOHN ELY BRIGGS

Comment by the Editor

THE REDISCOVERY OF IOWA

During the eleven days from the seventeenth to the twenty-seventh of June, there occurred one of the most significant episodes in the recent history of Iowa — the celebration of the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the exploration of the Mississippi River by Louis Joliet and Father Marquette. The central feature of the event was a replica voyage from the mouth of the Wisconsin River to Montrose — a continuous pageant lasting ten days, extending over a stage two hundred and fifty miles long, and witnessed by great numbers of people in audiences sometimes of thousands and again composed of only a few uncomprehending clam muckers. At the end of the trip the visit of the Frenchmen to an Indian village in Iowa two centuries and a half ago was re-enacted, and the commemoration of the coming of the first white men was made the occasion for observing other events in the early history of this Commonwealth.

The significance of the celebration, however, lies not so much in the length of the replica voyage, the size of the pageants, or the cost of the whole enterprise as it does in the spontaneity with which the project began and the wide-spread interest it

aroused. The whole affair was the work of the "history fans" of Iowa, inspired by Ben Hur Wilson of Mount Pleasant, who sells insurance for a living and studies local history for pleasure. Wherever the proposed celebration was mentioned the community eagerly responded. Before the end of May cities and clubs were vying for a place on the program, so that it became a problem to accommodate all who wished to share in the observance of Iowa's oldest anniversary. For every task there were ready and willing hands. Finances took care of themselves. No individual, city, society, organization, or group dominated the celebration: it was thoroughly democratic — the culmination of a common impulse.

Scarcely less impressive is the unusual interest in Iowa history that the event engendered. To many people who had never heard of Father Marquette or his picturesque companion, Sieur Joliet, those names are now familiar. For some, the "Black-Robe chief, the Prophet" in Longfellow's *Song of Hiawatha* has become real and the poem has a new significance, for Father Marquette was that Black-Robe. Busy public officials, matter-of-fact business men, and energetic club women have haunted the libraries to learn of the adventurous Frenchmen who explored the Great Lakes and came into the Mississippi Valley seeking the Chinese Empire and a way to the sea. Newspapers have printed hundreds of columns concerning Joliet and Marquette and the recent reincarnation of those forgotten times. Far and wide

people of every station in life have learned of the discovery of Iowa, have caught a glimpse of the great valley as it was when the white men found it. The story has become common knowledge: the people of Iowa have come into a part of their rich heritage of the past.

The celebration of an event that occurred in Iowa two and a half centuries ago has done more than anything else to teach the people of this State that Iowa has a past — a past venerable in years and full of romance. The realm of Iowa history is broad and many fertile fields remain as yet uncultivated, their resources undeveloped and their potentiality unknown. There are more lessons to follow.

THE SPIRIT OF IOWA

Iowa has many distinctive characteristics — thrift, contentment, homogeneity, literacy, wealth — but one of the finest of all is Commonwealth consciousness. Perhaps it is the sum of them all. It is founded not upon climate or class or creed, but upon an all-pervading community of interests. Less than a year ago a cynical and superficial critic wrote that no one had yet been able “to rouse this people to a participation in any creative expression of the commonwealth” and concluded, “Seldom has a people been less interested in spiritual self-expression and more concerned with hog nutrition.” To such a libel the recent memorial celebration is the answer. It was the true expression of the spirit of Iowa — a

spontaneous, whole-hearted, unselfish response to a worthy enterprise.

In the years to come there will be many occasions for the recognition of important events, noble achievements, and glorious days in the history of this Commonwealth. Let there be similar demonstrations of the spirit of Iowa in the future. Let us maintain respect for our own institutions, let us write and read the story of our own State, let us compose our own music and create our own art, that the democracy of our fathers, the romance of our history, and the character of our prairies may live in the hearts of our people and find expression in the perpetuation of our native traits.

J. E. B.

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