SOME ASPECTS OF THE DOWNFALL OF HURONIA
1646 - 1650

by

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ABSTRACT

This work is an attempt to explain the military collapse of the Huron people between 1646 and 1650. It commences with the description of a border skirmish between Algonquins and Mohawks which had some significance in leading to the peace of 1645. Following this and in the preliminary chapters, there is a brief survey of French, Huron, Iroquois relations and the economic factors that led to this long and savage war.

The conflict actually began in 1642 and in the following three years the Iroquois had, in large measure, succeeded in blockading the rivers, thus preventing the Huron fur flotillas from reaching the warehouses of New France. In 1645, the French governor, Montmagny, managed to arrange a peace that held until September of the following year, when the war flared up anew.

The strategy of the French and the Hurons, which was to encircle the Iroquois by alliances with the New Englanders to the east and with the Andastis to the south is discussed, as is the Huron attempt to divide the Five Nations of the Iroquois by a treaty with the Onondagas. Unfortunately for the Hurons these endeavours, though bold and imaginative, failed and in its final years Huronia had to depend largely upon its own resources.

The country of the Hurons is described, as is their way

of life and the type of villages in which they dwelt. Particular attention is paid to the fortifications of the larger of these villages, as well as to those of the Jesuit stronghold of Ste. Marie. There is evidence of French influence in the defence layout of the palisades and bastions in some, though not in all, of these fortified communities. The influence of the French priests is also discussed and note is made of the fact that in its later years, Huronia was a country divided against itself, with the Christian and non-Christian elements of the population viewing each other with suspicion and hostility.

In July of 1648, the Hurons suffered a grievous blow when the populous frontier village of St. Joseph was surprised and captured. This capture is examined in detail, as is also the capture of the defended villages of St. Ignace II and St. Louis in the following March. These blows spread panic and despair throughout Huronia and by the spring of 1649 the great dispersion of the Hurons had begun. There was to be one more military disaster inflicted by the Iroquois in December of the same year when St. Jean, a village of the Tobacco people, who were neighbours and close allies of the Hurons, was surprised and destroyed.

The terrible winter spent by many of the panic-stricken refugees on Christian Island is described, as is the final flight of the few hundred survivors down the Ottawa and St. Lawrence Rivers to the comparative safety of Quebec.

Throughout this work the reports of the Jesuits from the fortress of Ste. Marie among the Hurons has been the principal source of information.

In conclusion, the writer attributes the military downfall of the Hurons to a number of factors, the principal among these being a lack of discipline and leadership among the people, a sense of defeatism that seemed to permeate the whole nation and, finally, the deep divisions brought about by the introduction of the Christian faith into Huronia.

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With deep gratitude I dedicate this work to my late wife, to the very good friends who have read and typed for me, and to the members of the History Department and Library staff of the University of Victoria who have assisted me with their advice.

J. B. W.

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND

"This peace with the savages seems like a miracle from Heaven," wrote Mother Marie de l'Incarnation to her son, and indeed the coming of peace must have seemed almost miraculous after the long years of horror and disaster. Strangely enough it was the launching of yet another war party that was to begin the slow process of bringing Iroquois, Huron, French and Algonquin together in amity.

In the early spring of 1645 seven Christian Algonquins, led by one Pesquith, a redoubtable warrior, set out to hunt Iroquois. The St. Lawrence was still frozen so they dragged their canoe over the ice until they reached the mouth of the faster flowing Richelieu, which was already clear. Their way led up this river and into Lake Champlain, where they camped on a small island while they waited for some unwary enemy. One of their number was left on guard while the others rested. Presently he returned to his companions to report the sound of a distant arquebus shot. In this lake this would almost certainly be a foe so the men began to make ready, first eating a hearty meal. Then one, by the name of Makon, stealthily moved through the trees to the

water's edge to reconnoitre. It was probably with the fierce thrill of the hunter that he saw two canoes, each with seven Iroquois warriors, approaching the island.

Pesquith and the others, jubilant about the trap they would spring, concealed themselves along the shoreline and waited. As the first canoe came in towards the beach a volley of arquebus shots rang out and six of the paddlers slumped down, dead or dying. The seventh plunged into the water and swam to the other canoe, whose occupants pulled him in before paddling further down the island, seeking a place to land and fight on shore. However, the Algonquins, realizing their intention, ran through the woods and greeted them with a second volley. Only one man was hit this time, but as he fell he tipped the canoe, throwing his fellows into the water. As they floundered in the shallows, Pesquith and his men rushed upon them, killing four in a savage fight. The survivors turned to run but two were quickly captured, leaving only one out of the original fourteen to make good his escape.

After scalping the dead, the victors with their bound captives set off on the return journey. Apart from a few blows bestowed on one of the prisoners for his mocking insolence, there were none of the pleasantries which usually occurred in such a situation. No nails were torn out, no fingers were cut off, no fire was applied to flesh, and Father Vimont, the Superior of the Jesuits, was to write

that it was perhaps fifty years since any savage prisoner had been so gently treated.

Pesquith sent word ahead that he was returning with prisoners for the Governor and also for his friends, the Christian savages, so when they arrived off St. Joseph's, near Quebec, a crowd of Indians, Frenchmen, priests and soldiers were waiting to receive them. They swung into the bank chanting a victory song, the two prisoners erect and dancing as was their custom, and the eleven scalps fluttering from sticks.

Before disembarking there were speeches of welcome and congratulation from Jean Baptiste Achinawana and from other captains of the Christian savages, and also from the Jesuit father in charge at St. Joseph's, while a squad of soldiers, sent down by the Governor, fired a salute. In reply Pesquith made a short speech, which contained the significant statement, "I gave my word that the prisoners would not be harmed."

Then the chiefs and their people, along with the bound and apprehensive captives, moved to one of the larger cabins or lodges, where the young girls danced in celebration of the victory, and there was much feasting and rejoicing. Normally this would have been the time to have begun the torture, but on this occasion no move was made against the hapless wretches. One old woman did indeed ask the priest for permission to "carress," or torture, the prisoners a

little as the Iroquois had killed, roasted and eaten her father, her husband and her children, but this permission was sternly refused.

On the second day after their arrival Monsieur de Montmagny, the governor, well escorted, came down to the residence at St. Joseph's to meet in council with the Jesuits and with the local Algonquin chiefs. Pesquith addressed the assembly, describing his raid and finally concluded with, "I have seen, I have killed, I have captured, I have brought back. Here they are present. I enter into your thoughts. They are good. I penetrate into your hearts, you who have but one abode and the same opinion. Be the gods of the earth. Cause peace to reign everywhere. Give rest to the whole country." Then laying his hands on the heads of the bound prisoners he continued, addressing the Governor directly: "Here they are, uninjured and without harm. I deliver them to you. Do as you think best with them."[1]

There are indications here that this was more than just another random raid by one tribe of Indians against another. Vimont's words about the gentle treatment accorded these prisoners and Pesquith's statement that he had promised not to harm them, are significant. So too was the talk of peace at the council and the unconditional manner in which the captives were turned over to Montmagny. It seems likely, especially in view of the rich presents that the war party

received for their work, that they had been sent out by the Governor with the express object of bringing in some unharmed Iroquois prisoners. Why though, would the French want live Mohawks who would require constant guarding rather than dead ones who could do them no further harm? To answer this it is necessary to survey briefly the events of preceding years.

The five Iroquois tribes--the Mohawks, the Oneidas, the Onandagas, the Cayugas and the Senecas--did not always possess the reputation for military prowess and ferocity that they were later to receive. Some time in the sixteenth century the Algonquin people had pushed them back from a lodgement on the St. Lawrence, and they had retreated to the security of strongly palisaded towns in the highlands to the south of Lake Ontario. Here they were to be found when the Dutch came to settle on the Hudson and the French on the River of Canada.

It was not, though, to the Iroquois but instead to their enemies, the Hurons, that Champlain, the first French governor, turned when he sought Indian allies. This was logical because the Hurons, a sedentary people of Iroquoian stock, were shrewd traders and their strategic position athwart Georgian Bay made them ideal middlemen to tap the vast fur resources of the north and west. Thus, in 1609 Champlain, joining a war band on a minor foray against the Iroquois, began a military, commercial and religious

association between Hurons and French that was destined to last some forty years.

Meanwhile the Iroquois, less well-placed than their Huron cousins to gather in the northern furs, and further prevented by the latter's hostility, were forced to rely upon their own resources in beaver and other valuable skins in order to get the means to trade with the nearby Dutch for the guns, knives, hatchets, blankets, duffel cloth and all the other items that were so desirable in Indian eyes. However, theirs was not a fur-rich area and Hunt, a leading American historian, in his book The Wars of the Iroquois notes that on at least two occasions, once in the 1620's and again in 1633, they attempted to reach an agreement with the more powerful Hurons in order to obtain a share of the northern trade. In both cases, according to this historian, the attempts were nullified by the subtle intrigues of the French who wished for no peace that would allow their Huron middlemen to trade for the cheaper and better Dutch goods being sold at Fort Orange.

Thus, throughout the decades of the twenties and thirties there was intermittent but minor hostility between these two Indian peoples, and if anything the Hurons were the more aggressive and the more successful.

Then, in 1640 there occurred an event that was to prove of profound significance to both nations. The beaver had long been over-harvested in Iroquoia and now it began to

disappear altogether from large areas, leaving the inhabitants with nothing to trade to the Dutch for the European goods that had now become a necessity.[2]

Even more than a mere necessity was the absolute need for guns. Both the Iroquois and their enemies did possess arquebuses, though probably bows and arrows, spears and clubs were still the armament for most of their warriors. The French officially sold firearms to those of their Huron and Algonquin allies who were Christian, but this kind of rule would have been almost impossible to enforce, and we can be sure that independent French traders were not over-particular about an Indian's religious persuasion, provided that he could pay a stiff price in beaver skins.

To the south of the Five Nations, along the Delaware, was another hostile people, the Andaste, or Susquehannah, who seem to have been well supplied with muskets by the Swedish traders, and who even boasted a cannon on the palisaded wall of their principal town.

As for the Iroquois, they had purchased their arms and ammunition from Fort Orange until a 1639 decree of the Council of New Netherlands forbade this trade to the Dutch on pain of death. As with the French, though, Dutch and English free-traders were prepared to risk breaking the law for the sake of handsome profits, and finally this regulation was repealed in 1648. Thus guns were available, provided that customers had the price. But with their furs

running out, this was what the Iroquois no longer had. It must have seemed to them that unless this condition was somehow changed they would eventually be forced back to total reliance on bows and arrows, while all about them would be enemies armed with firelocks, a position somewhat akin to that of the Polish cavalry pitted against Nazi tanks and aircraft.

In this desperate situation an attempt was once again made to reach some sort of an arrangement with the Hurons. The details of the proposal are unknown, probably it would have given the Five Tribes some share of the northern trade, but apparently it was after some deliberation rejected.[3]

Then, in the following year, 1641, a party of some five hundred Mohawks, armed with thirty-six muskets, visited Three Rivers in an unsuccessful attempt to obtain firearms from the French.[4] After this it must have seemed to the Iroquois that there was no other alternative save war and plunder if they were to obtain the furs that they must have.

While Huronia was strategically located, as far as trade was concerned, it had the great weakness, from a military point of view, of long lines of communication back to the supply bases at Quebec and the other French posts. Conversely Iroquoia, while poorly situated for trade, was well-placed to cut these lines of communication. The southern route, through Lake Ontario and down the upper reaches of the St. Lawrence, was almost on their doorstep and could

be effectively blocked with little trouble. However, it was the more northerly and safer way across Lake Nipissing and down the Ottawa River that was favoured by the Huron fur fleets and now the Iroquois set out with unusual perseverance and skill to blockade this passage.

The war really began in 1642 with border forays on both sides and with Iroquois raids along the Ottawa and St. Lawrence which achieved, among other successes, the destruction of the Iroquet-Algonquins, and the capture of Father Isaac Jogues and two donnés (men who volunteered to serve the Jesuits). One of the donnés was murdered soon after, while some years later Jogues was himself to become one of the Jesuit martyrs.

In the following summer the pressure on the Huron trading flotillas was to increase with the Iroquois capturing rich plunder, while at the same time they successfully defended their own homeland against hostile raids. Father Jerome Lalemant, the Jesuit superior in Huronia, was to write of this period that "The Iroquois, who are the enemies of these tribes, have closed all the passages and avenues of the river that leads to Quebec," and also that "the villages were in a state of continual alarm and all the troops that were raised in good numbers to pursue the enemy over the frontiers were defeated and routed."[5]

By 1644 the tide of war was flowing strongly in favour of the Iroquois with only one out of four fur flotillas

getting through and with the French along the St. Lawrence being confined more closely to their forts and strongpoints than were the members of religious communities in France to their monasteries and convents.[6]

Some soldiers had arrived from Europe and that fall Montmagny sent twenty of them up to Huronia to serve as an escort for the fur fleet that would next year try to break through to Quebec.[7] Almost the only economic reason for New France was the beaver, and for several years now they had not been reaching the warehouses at Montreal, Three Rivers and Quebec. Either they must be got through or the colony must wither and die.

What was really needed though, by the French and their Indian allies, was peace, preferably obtained with as few concessions to the Iroquois as possible. Montmagny already had one Mohawk prisoner whom he had secured from his Algonquin captors. He had been burned and tortured but was alive. This man could be sent back to Iroquoia with an offer of negotiations, but once he was gone, the Governor would be left without a hostage. As the Mohawks held at least one Frenchman, as well as numerous Hurons, it would certainly strengthen his hand in any future bargaining if he too held some prisoners. Thus it seems almost certain that Pesquith was purposely sent out with instructions to bring in some unharmed captives, and that his turning of these over to the French was not a spontaneous act of generosity, but rather

the fulfilment of a business agreement.

Soon after this incident the two prisoners were sent down under guard to Three Rivers. Here was held the other Mohawk, now recovered from his torments. The Sieur de Champfleur, who was commander at the post, was instructed to equip and send this man back to his people, where he was ordered to give them the message "that this was a most excellent opportunity to smooth the earth and to bring about universal peace among all the nations."[8]

Thus was taken the first hesitant step toward the peace that Mère Marie was to describe "as like a miracle from Heaven."

Footnotes

[1]R. G. Thwaites, ed., The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents, vol. 27 (Cleveland: Burrows Press, 1899), p. 229ff.

[2]George T. Hunt, The Wars of the Iroquois (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1940), pp. 33-35.

[3]Thwaites, ed., Jesuit Relations, vol. 27, p. 263.

[4]Hunt, Wars of the Iroquois, p. 74.

[5]Thwaites, ed., Jesuit Relations, vol. 27, pp. 63-65.

[6]Ibid., p. 221.

[7]Hunt, Wars of the Iroquois, p. 76.

[8]Thwaites, ed., Jesuit Relations, vol. 27, p. 245.

CHAPTER II

NEGOTIATIONS FOR PEACE

On July 5th, 1645, a shallop from Fort Richelieu pulled into the bank at Three Rivers. Aboard, apart from the crew, was a delegation from the Mohawk country consisting of three Iroquois and a white man. One of these Iroquois was the prisoner who had been released in May, while another was Kiotsaeton, a great orator in their country, who was to handle the negotiations. The Frenchman was Guillaume Couture, one of the donnés captured with Father Jogues some three years before. He was now fluent in the Mohawk tongue and had been brought along by them to act as interpreter.

As soon as he was recognized by the crowd of French on the shore, they welcomed him with cries of happiness as one who had returned from the dead or from hopeless captivity. Then Kiotsaeton, almost completely covered with porcelain beads, mounted to the shallop's bow to address the throng.

> "My brothers," he called out, "I have left my country to come and see you. At last I have reached your land. I was told on my departure that I was going to seek death and that I would never again see my country, but I have willingly exposed myself for the good of peace. I come therefore to enter into the designs of the French, of the Hurons, and of the Algonquins. I come to make known to you the thoughts of all my country."[1]

After this, salutes were fired, both from the shallop and the fort. Then the ambassadors were taken to the quarters of the Sieur de Champfleur for refreshments, while at the same time a canoe was despatched post haste to Quebec to summon the Governor. It would be some days before he could arrive, and in the meanwhile the Iroquois were feasted by the Algonquins, the Montagnais and the French. At one of these feasts Kiotsaeton showed his ready wit when Champfleur observed that here at Three Rivers he was to feel as though he were in his own house and in his own country.

"That is a great falsehood," retorted the Indian, pausing for dramatic effect. "I would neither be honoured nor treated with such consideration in my own country, while here everyone honours me and pays me attention. I am maltreated in my own house but here I fare well every day and I am continually feasting."[2]

Thus the time passed with courtesies and entertainment until Montmagny came up from Quebec, probably on the eleventh of July. He held a private meeting with the ambassadors and then, on the following day the great council was held in the courtyard of the fort, which had been canopied over with large sails to keep out the heat. This initial phase of the negotiations was primarily between the Iroquois and the French because, though Algonquins, Montagnais and Hurons were present, there was none among them of sufficient importance and authority to speak for their people. The Governor,

supported by Father Vimont of the Jesuits and several other advisors, sat on one side. Kiotsaeton, who was the first to speak, held the centre of the courtyard.[3]

He was to make seventeen points in his presentation, each one validated by the gift of a collar of porcelain beads. Addressing the assembly with the somewhat flamboyant oratory admired by the Indian people, he declared himself the spokesman of all the Iroquois, which was almost certainly an exaggerated claim. Then he went on to gently chide the French for releasing an Iroquois prisoner with a message of peace but giving him no escort to guard against the perils of the journey. After this the thrust of his remarks was almost entirely concerned with setting up channels of communication and, though unspoken, of trade. Gifts were given to smooth the path and to calm the waters on the route to Iroquoia, and those who came were assured of food and shelter and firewood.

With the thirteenth and fourteenth necklaces he seems to have addressed the Hurons, asking them why they had not responded to the peace proposals of five years past and urging them to make known quickly their thoughts on this matter. If it was to be peace he invited them to come and visit the country of the Iroquois, passing by that of the Algonquins and the French. Stripped of its rhetoric, this would clearly indicate that the price for peace was to be a share of the Huron trade that hitherto had gone almost

exclusively to the French.

On the lighter side was the information which he supplied to the Europeans that, in his country there was plenty of deer and other game. "Give up," he said, "those stinking hogs that run about among your houses, that eat nothing but filth, and come and eat good meat with us. The road is clear; there is no longer any danger."[4]

On the day following this eloquent presentation a great feast was held for all the peoples, and then it was the Governor's turn. He replied to the Iroquois with fourteen presents, each of which had a meaning, but the Jesuit chronicler does not detail them. They were, though, satisfactory to Kiotsaeton and his associates and peace was formally concluded between them and the French, with the proviso that there would be no acts of hostility against the Hurons or the Algonquin tribes until their captains had had an opportunity to negotiate for peace.[5] Finally, after more speeches of goodwill from both sides, and a private meeting with the Reverend Father Vimont of the Jesuits, the ambassadors left on July 15th for the Mohawk country, promising to return soon to continue the negotiations.[6]

Now came a period of waiting, and as the summer passed with no fur brigades coming in from the Hurons, the Algonquins or the Montagnais, the pessimists began to fear that some disaster had struck and that they would not arrive that year. This was not so, however, and late in August and

during the early days of September the Indians under French influence began to reach Three Rivers. First the Montagnais, then bands from several important Algonquin tribes, and lastly sixty canoes from Huronia, loaded with furs and carrying among others Father Jerome Lalemant, the score of French soldiers who had been sent up last fall, and probably most important of all, a number of influential chiefs who had authority from their people to reach an agreement with the Iroquois. All that was now needed were the emissaries from the enemy and these came a week later on September 17th.

There were four of them, though Kiotsaeton is not mentioned as being with the delegation. However, the Frenchman, Couture, apparently was, and this time he was to act as spokesman rather than interpreter.

The council began on the following day with Couture presenting the Iroquois case to the Governor and some four hundred of his Indian allies. In brief, this was a warm invitation to the French to visit Iroquoia where they were promised good treatment. Then came a somewhat urgent demand, directed to the Algonquins and Hurons to state whether they were for peace or war.[7]

After this the Algonquin and Huron chieftains spoke in turn, both pledging their people to peace, and with the Algonquins promising to hunt with and for the Iroquois, while the Huron captain, emphasizing his speech with fourteen presents of beaver skins and porcelain beads, opened his

country to the visits of his erstwhile enemies and made the significant promise that the Hurons would soon go to the Iroquois country. Obviously the only reason they would make this journey would be to bring furs to trade with the men of the Five Nations for Dutch goods. The Chevalier de Montmagny was one of the last to speak, praising the tribes for their wisdom and assuring the Mohawk ambassadors that he would see that the Hurons and the Algonquins kept their word.

Then, after an exchange of hostages and a great feast for the hundreds who were present, the council broke up with peace "concluded as far as the French [were] concerned, and in a very advanced state as regards the savages."[8]

Couture, the Frenchman, was one of those who accompanied the Iroquois embassy back to their own country so that he might witness the ratification of the peace. All three Mohawk towns seemed to be genuinely pleased at the ending of the long war, though they gave warning that the Oneidas were still hostile.[9] Couture spent much of the winter with these people until in February he returned to Three Rivers accompanied by the great orator Kiotsaeton and six other ambassadors, who had come for yet another round of negotiations. As the conference would not begin until early in May, when the rivers were open for travel, the Iroquois party filled in the time pleasantly enough with feasts and hunting expeditions.

Meanwhile, some weeks before on January 8th, 1646,

Father Jerome Lalemant, the new superior of the Jesuits, had been shocked by the story brought in by one Tandihetsi, a Huron. This man had made friends with some of the Mohawk visitors who had come up to Three Rivers during the winter and some of them, in a burst of confidence, had told him the secret of their people. This was that they and the French had made a covert understanding that though the peace would cover the Hurons and the Christian Indians, the Mohawks were to be allowed to attack the other Algonquins with impunity.[10]

As Tandihetsi was married to an Algonquin woman the story was soon known and caused much consternation among her people. Lalemant himself could not understand why his confreres had not reported the matter to him from Three Rivers. However, in later despatches from that place, he did receive information that allowed him to write that Tandihetsi's story was false "at least in the main." This "at least in the main" is significant as it indicates that there was at least some basis to this charge of French and Mohawk treachery, and the matter was to be brought up again by one of the Algonquin captains at the peace council on May 7th.

At this meeting held at Three Rivers and presided over by Monsieur le Governeur, Kiotsaeton formally announced his tribe's acceptance of the peace with the Hurons and the Algonquins, though at the same time he warned that the Upper Iroquois, the Onondagas, the Senecas and others were still hostile and liable to continue with their attacks.

Montmagny replied with suitable gifts, praising the Mohawks for their indications of good faith and expressing his pleasure that the peace was now to include his Indian allies.

Then Tesseouat, an Algonquin chief, spoke pledging the good faith of his people though admitting that he was still somewhat suspicious of the Mohawks. Turning to the Governor he begged "that he should not walk all alone in safety within the roads which he had levelled and broken, but that this happiness should also be common to the Algonquins and Hurons."[11] In a word, this man, utterly distrustful and suspicious, was afraid that the French might make their peace in private without troubling themselves about the savages who were their allies.

Apparently his worst fears were calmed for the conference seems to have ended on a note of general optimism, with Montmagny announcing that he would, within a few days, be sending two French delegates to visit Iroquoia.[12] These two Frenchmen were Father Isaac Jogues and the Sieur Bourdon, a prominent settler in the colony, and they left three days later on May 16th, accompanied by two Algonquins and four Mohawks. After a two week journey, during which they passed the Dutch post at Fort Orange, they reached the land of the Mohawks and here their visit seems to have been successful in cementing good relations. Jogues also took the opportunity to send messages of peace to the hostile Upper Iroquois

tribes. Only one matter seems to have caused unease among the Indians and this was the Father's decision, when returning to Quebec, to leave a small black box, containing some personal possessions, with his hosts until his return. They were concerned that it might have magical properties that could cause them evil, so he showed them the contents and apparently presumed the matter closed.[13] This black box or chest was to play a part in the new war that was so soon to come.

All seemed well though, throughout this summer and on September 10th a great fleet of Huron canoes arrived at Montreal, apparently having come down the Ottawa without let or hindrance. Never had trade been so brisk, and at the end of the great fur sale the Hurons had to carry away twelve bales of pelts because the French warehouse had run out of goods with which to barter.

Two weeks later, on September 24th, news of the arrival of the fur fleet at Montreal would almost certainly have reached the Mohawk country. On that same day Father Isaac Jogues, accompanied by a young French donné, and both with strong premonitions of martyrdom, set out for Iroquoia.[14] Somewhere along the way they encountered a Mohawk war party which seized and took them as captives to one of their towns which they reached on October 17th. There was considerable discussion over their fate with the Wolf and Turtle clans being for mercy, but the powerful Bear clan decreed that they

must die, though not under torture. On the following evening the Father was called to one of the houses of the Bear people and as he entered, his skull was crushed by a hatchet blow, the same fate that soon after befell his young companion.

The Governor of New Netherlands, Wilhelm Kieft, wrote to Montmagny in November telling of the tragedy, but this letter did not reach Quebec until June of the following year, by which time some escaped Algonquin prisoners had brought in news of Jogues' death. Kieft, before writing, had sent up to Fort Orange to enquire into the cause of the murder, but the only information that he could obtain from one of his officials there was the report that the Indians believed that the black chest left behind by the Jesuit on his previous visit had caused an evil blight to fall upon their corn fields. However, Kieft also enclosed a letter from an unnamed Dutchman to the Sieur Bourdon. Probably these two had met during the latter's visit to the Mohawk country in May and June, and no doubt they had formed a friendship. The Dutchman wrote to tell of the Father's death though he confessed that he had been unable to discover the reason from any savage. He went on to warn the French that the Mohawks hoped to surprise them with a sudden attack.[15]

Thus the long and bitter war recommenced. Was it because of the black chest as suggested by the Dutch official? Mother Marie de l'Incarnation makes no mention of

this in a letter to France but attributes the cause to the Mohawks missing the plunder that they had formerly taken along the Ottawa before the peace.[16]

Hunt, in his book The Wars of the Iroquois, points to another reason. The Mohawks had appeared to be happy with the peace and carefully adhered to its terms, while the welcome they gave to Jogues and Bourdon in May 1646 was extremely friendly. What caused the change that occurred some four months later? As Hunt sees it, the significant feature of the treaty, and the only reason why the Mohawks would consent to stop a successful war, was the proviso that they would receive a share of the Algonquin and Huron trade. When word reached them in the latter part of September that all the Huron furs had gone to the French at Montreal, they must have felt betrayed and that the treaty had been broken. This would appear to be the logical explanation for the recommencement of hostilities and the sudden despatch of the war party which came upon the unfortunate Jesuit and his companion.[17]

How then do we account for the story of the black chest? It would seem to this writer that Jogues, during his May visit made good friends among the people of two of the Mohawk clans, the Wolf and the Turtle, but also that he had made, or else continued to have, implacable enemies within the third, the Bear clan. When he was captured, and it would appear from the indications to have been by Bear warriors,

they wished to vent their hatred by putting him to death. However, the people of the Wolf and the Turtle were opposed to this, probably realizing that Jogues could have had little or no influence on the decision of the Hurons to break the treaty by doing all their trading with the French. This obviously would not have appeased the Bear warriors, but they had to have some valid reason for putting the missionary to death if they were not to lose the support of the other clans in the forthcoming war. Remembering the momentary flurry of suspicion that had arisen when Jogues left the chest behind in the spring, and using this fear to account for the poor harvest that had been gathered in that year, the Bear clan would then have a reason of sorts for their bloody action. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that this was only a side issue and that the true cause of this conflict, as of the previous one, was economics.

Hunt's theory

Footnotes

[1]R. G. Thwaites, ed., The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents, vol. 27 (Cleveland: Burrows Press, 1899), p. 247.

[2]Ibid., p. 251.

[3]Ibid., p. 253.

[4]Ibid., p. 261.

[5]Ibid., p. 267.

[6]Ibid., p. 273.

[7]Ibid., p. 287.

[8]Ibid., p. 305.

[9]Ibid., vol. 28, pp. 275 ff.

[10]Ibid., pp. 147-155.

[11]Ibid., p. 303.

[12]Ibid.

[13]Ibid., vol. 29, pp. 47 ff.

[14]Ibid., vol. 31, pp. 111 ff.

[15]Ibid., p. 115.

[16]Mère Marie de l'Incarnation, Lettres de la Révérende Mère Marie de l'Incarnation (née Marie Guyard) Première Supérieure du Monastère des Ursulines de Québec, Tome I (Paris: Librairie Internationale-Catholique, 1876), Letter #LXXXI, p. 333.

[17]George T. Hunt, The Wars of the Iroquois (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1940), p. 86.

CHAPTER III

CONDITIONS IN HURONIA

Meanwhile, far to the west in Huronia, Paul Ragueneau, the Jesuit Superior of the Mission of St. Marie Among the Hurons, was to write on May 1st,1646, "Although truly speaking, this past year cannot be called a happy one for our Hurons, yet their misfortunes have been less frequent than in the past."[1] He went on to compare the conditions of the people to those of sailors, shipwrecked in a great storm, who now begin to see hope as the worst violence of the elements commences to subside. The terrible epidemics of contagious diseases that had depopulated the villages in recent years now seem to have run their course, and to be on the decline. The harvest of Indian corn had been good last fall, unlike the disappointing yield of '44, while the lakes and rivers were producing good quantities of fish, one of the staples of Huron diet. The trading expeditions of the young men to the distant tribes of the west and the north had produced a rich store of furs. These had gone down to the French warehouses at Montreal and Three Rivers last September in a powerful sixty-canoe convoy that had made the long journey unhindered by any Iroquois attack.

This was possibly due in some part to a strong escort of warriors and French soldiers, but possibly even more to the fact that the Mohawks were honouring the armistice. While the Upper Iroquois, the Senecas, Cayugas, Onondagas and Oneidas were still at war, the Mohawks had been the most aggressive, and the most efficient in the blockade of the rivers, so, with this blockade lifted, the way lay open to the trading posts of Montreal and Three Rivers. That winter Huronia, after four or five years of shortages, was once again filled with French goods.[2]

Nonetheless, though conditions had improved, Huronia was a troubled land, jabbed at by the sudden thrusts of external enemies, and weakened by the internecine hostility between those who had become converts to the new Christian faith, and those who followed the old ways and the old beliefs. As has been mentioned, the war still went on with the Upper Iroquois, but it was largely an undirected war of raids and ambushes, fought in the traditional native style. In these desultory combats, success was divided, though Father Ragueneau, in the examples he gives, seems to indicate that most of the minor successes were with the Iroquois. One such had to do with an unnamed Huron frontier village, possibly St. Jean Baptiste, situated near the narrows of Lake Couchiching.[3] On a dark spring night a marauding band of Iroquois landed near this village and hid in the encircling forest. Soon after dawn a company of women came from the

village to work in the fields. Before they realized their danger, they were surrounded, seized, and dragged down to the canoes. Their screams roused the Huron warriors, and some two hundred of them rushed out of the village and down to the water in an attempt to rescue them, but too late. All they could do was to stand and listen to the pitiful cries that came from the rapidly distancing canoes, as their wives, daughters and mothers were carried off into captivity.

On another occasion, a Huron war party was cheated of its victory by the cunning of the enemy. Coming upon a band of Iroquois in the forest, they forced them back into the shelter of a primitive stockade. The Hurons were close to victory when the Iroquois called out for a parley, throwing down their arquebuses as a sign of good faith and distributing porcelain collars, tobacco, and supplies of meat to their erstwhile enemies. While the leading men on both sides were engaged in the parleys, one of the Iroquois warriors who had spent a number of years as a prisoner in Huronia and knew the language, moved among his former captors sowing dissension. Some were angered because they had not received porcelain necklaces, others because they had not been invited to the council, and before long, groups of dissident warriors began to straggle away in undisciplined confusion. At a secret signal, the Iroquois suddenly fell upon the now weakened Hurons, killing or capturing some and driving off the rest in headlong flight.

Not only were Indian war bands generally ill-disciplined, but Indian warriors were also highly individualistic, and at times capable of great courage. Two examples might be given of this sort of derring-do. In the first, a strong force of Iroquois was known to be in the area of the Huron frontier village of St. Joseph, so the young men mounted guard at night, manning the watchtowers. There was much shouting and yelling, both to keep up their own courage and to warn any prowling enemy that they were ready. However, two Iroquois had detached themselves from their main party and, under cover of darkness, crawled up close to the palisade. As dawn began to lighten the eastern horizon, the men in the watchtowers, feeling the danger of night attack was now past, relaxed their vigilance and settled down to sleep.

As silence spread over the still-sleeping village, one of the two Iroquois dexterously climbed up the logs to a watchtower where a couple of sentinels lay dozing. With a swing of his hatchet he brained one, and picking the other up, hurled him screaming to the ground below where his companion promptly murdered and scalped the unfortunate wretch. Climbing back down, the adventurers with their grisly trophies set off at a run toward the nearby forest to be swallowed up in its dark depths long before any pursuit could be organized.

Some time later to avenge this insult, three Huron warriors struck an equally daring blow against the Senecas,

the western-most of the Iroquois tribes. After a march of twenty days they reached Sonontowon, one of the larger villages of the Seneca. In the darkness of the night they silently broke into a longhouse, re-kindled the fires to give light, and then each selecting a man, murdered and scalped him. Setting fire to the building, whose occupants were waking to panic, screams and confusion, they beat a hasty retreat. The aroused Seneca village, buzzing angrily like a disturbed bees' nest, sent out a strong party in pursuit, but the interlopers were gone.[4]

Thus the pin-prick war of raid and counter-raid, swift attack and ambuscade continued on, but as long as the peace held with the Mohawks the river road to the French warehouses remained open. In Huronia itself there was internal dissension as the new Christians, encouraged by the Jesuit Fathers, attempted to evangelize their fellows. The threat of hellfire formed a major part of this proselytizing, and all too frequently there were vivid examples to hand, as captives were burned and tortured in the flames. One such was at the village of St. Ignace, where a wretched Iroquois shrieked in agony as his executioners applied red hot brands to his shrinking flesh.

A zealous Christian sprang forward to harangue the crowd and warn them of their own fate:

> Do not think that I wish to seize that captive from your hands or to procure his liberty. The time of all his happiness is past, and now that

> he burns in the flames, death alone can put an end to his misery. My compassion is for yourselves, for I fear for you infidels woes a thousand times more terrible and flames more devouring for which your death will furnish a beginning, and which will never have an end. 5

He then went on to describe at great length the horrors of hell and the eternity of its pain for those who had not been saved.

Such sermons can have been little to the taste of those infidels who did not wish to give up their old ways and their old customs in favour of this strange and demanding new faith, with its dichotomy of heaven and hell. Their own beliefs were not formalized, but they must have presented to many Indian minds a more attractive hereafter than that of the Christians, with its emphasis on hellfire and damnation. For them the deity was:

> A phantom of prodigious size who bears in one hand ears of Indian corn and in the other, a great abundance of fish. They assert that it is he alone who has created men, who has taught them to till the earth, and who has stocked all the lakes and the seas with fish, so that nothing might fail for the livelihood of men. These he recognizes as children, although they did not yet recognize him as their father. Just like an infant in the cradle who has not yet firm enough judgment to recognize those to whom he owes all that he is and all the support of his life, but this phantom added, they said, that our souls, being separated from our bodies, would then have a greater knowledge and they would see that it is from him that they hold life, and then upon rendering him the honours which he deserves he would increase both his love and his cares for them, and that he would do good to them all. He also said that to believe that any one of them was destined to a place of torment and to the fires which are not beneath the earth were false notions. 6

At death, it was believed, the soul left the body, which was a worn-out husk, in order to reappear in a new and more vigourous body, in a village somewhere far to the west. In this village, populated by those who have passed through death to a new life, all was happiness, contentment and prosperity, as the people enjoyed the pleasures but not the evils which distressed them in this life. All in all, it was a conception of hope and a better hereafter, though naturally enough the Jesuits and their converts branded it as nothing but lies. In fact, both sides, Christians and pagans alike were busy trying to discredit the others' beliefs. One such vilification, as reported by Father Ragueneau, runs as follows:

> It was said that a Huron Christian woman, of those who are buried in our cemetery, had risen again. That she had said that the French were imposters, that her soul, having left the body, had actually been taken to heaven, that the French had welcomed it there, but in the manner in which the Iroquois captive is received at the entrance of their villages with firebrands and burning torches, cruelties and torments inconceivable. She had related that all heaven is nothing but fire, and there the satisfaction of the French is to burn now some, now others, and that in order to possess many of these captive souls which are the object of their pleasures, they crossed the seas and come into these regions as into lands of conquest, just as a Huron exposes himself with joy to the fatigues and all the dangers of war in the hope of bringing back some captive. It was further said that those who are thus burned in heaven as captives of war are the Hurons, Algonquins and Montagnais Christians, and those who have not been willing in this world to render themselves slaves to the French or to receive their laws, go after this life into a place of delights where everything good abounds, and

> whence all evil is banished. This risen woman added, they said, that after having been thus tormented in heaven a whole day, which seemed to her longer than our year, the night having come, she felt herself roused near the beginning of her sleep, that a certain person moved with compassion for her, had broken her bonds and chains, and had shown her at one side a deep valley which descended into the earth and which led to that place of delights where the souls of the infidel Hurons go. That from afar she had seen their villages and their fields and had heard their voices as of people who dance and who are feasting, but she had chosen to return to her body as long as it was necessary to warn those who were there present of such terrible news, and of that great misfortune which awaited them at death if they continued to believe in the impostures of the French. 7

Thus, as the Hurons approached the years of trial and disaster their nation, already weakened by disease, famine and external attack, was also internally divided. Brawls and violence were not infrequent between the Christians and the infidels, and this enmity and mutual suspicion was to increase as the black clouds of danger and disaster thickened over Huronia.[8]

Footnotes

[1]R. G. Thwaites, ed., The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents, vol. 29 (Cleveland: Burrows Press, 1899), p. 247.

[2]Ibid., pp. 247 ff.

[3]Conrad Heidenreich, Huronia. A History and Geography of the Huron Indians 1600-1650 (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Ltd., 1971), p. 41.

[4]Thwaites, ed., Jesuit Relations, vol. 29, pp. 249 ff.

[5]Ibid., p. 263.

[6]Ibid., vol. 30, p. 27.

[7]Ibid., pp. 29 ff.

[8]Ibid., p. 101.

CHAPTER IV

FRENCH STRATEGY IN THE NEW WAR

Once the war recommenced in the late September of 1646, the Mohawk war bands quickly took to the field. This would have made small difference in Huronia where the desultory war with the Senecas and other western Iroquois tribes had never ceased. Further, for the last two summers large fur fleets had safely made their way down the Ottawa to the French warehouses and had returned unscathed with large quantities of European goods, sufficient to supply both the personal and the trading needs of the Hurons for the next couple of years.

The French along the St. Lawrence, however, after more than a year of peace and relaxed vigil, were to quickly feel the cutting edge of this new conflict. By November, bands of Iroquois were in the vicinity of Montreal and along the lower reaches of the Ottawa River, to begin the long years of siege and blockade. In that same month two white men and several Hurons, hunting near the settlement, were seized and carried away by the enemy, while throughout that winter many Algonquin hunting parties were ruthlessly tracked down, with the men being either killed or captured to feed the torture

fires, while the women were carried off into slavery. It is an indication of the isolation and the lack of communication, especially in winter, that news of these events at Montreal did not reach Quebec until a number of months later, in the following year. However, as word of the new conflict slowly spread down the valley of the St. Lawrence, the French tended to cluster together for protection into strong points and forts, so that one observer was to write that they were more cloistered and secluded than were those who lived in monasteries and nunneries back in Europe.[1]

There are indications that during this early stage of the new war both the Hurons and the French sought alliances which would divide and encircle their enemies. Certainly the Hurons sought the aid of the Andastes, a cousin people who were settled to the south on the Delaware, near the colony of New Sweden. As to the French, their intentions are less clear, though there is military logic in the idea that they would seek an alliance with the strong and populous colonies of New England, so as to forge a ring of hostile peoples, Huron, Andastes, English and French, around the lands of the Five Nations. Some historians speculate that possibly the Iroquois had knowledge of this proposed encirclement and recommenced the war to forestall this grand strategy.[2] If this was indeed the French plan, then their agent must certainly have been the Jesuit, Father Gabriel Druillettes. On August 29th, 1646 he left Quebec accompanied

by a party of Abenakis, in order to make the long journey southeast to their lands in Acadia and south along the Atlantic coast.

In September, along with an Indian guide, he descended the Kennebec River to the English settlement of that name where he reported being very well received. After a brief visit he returned upstream to preach and work among the Abenakis.

Sometime later he once again descended the river to the sea and then, by canoe, travelled along the coast visiting a number of the English settlements as well as the Capuchin mission at Pentagouet, where he was warmly received. From thence, returning to the post on the Kennebec, he brought letters and seems to have had a most friendly conference with its New England commander. "That Captain, having received these letters and taken a copy of the Father's credentials, showed him all the courtesies that he could think of, and, sometime after, went away to Pleimot [Plymouth] and thence to Boston."[3]

The Father spent the balance of the winter up-country with his Indian converts, joining with them in the New Year in their great hunt. With the spring though, he was back at Kennebec to be once again entertained by his friend the English commander, now returned from his visit to the towns of Plymouth and Boston. This official, according to the Jesuit Relations, reported to Druillettes that he had placed

the priest's credentials before twenty-four of the foremost persons in New England, including four of their most famous ministers, and that all had applauded his design to instruct the savages. Further, the Company of Kennebec would welcome a French settlement on their river, which would have complete freedom from molestation. "The Father, having no order with reference to this proposition, answered the Captain that he would write to him again in due season if the matter were judged feasible."[4] Saying farewell about May 20th, Druillettes was once again in Quebec by mid-June.

The report of his travels as recorded in the Jesuit Relations leaves the main question unanswered. Did he go down the Kennebec and visit the English settlements solely in his capacity as a priest, or was he also a political agent representing Montmagny, the Governor of New France? He had left Quebec in August 1646, a month before the war flared up once again, so if he had a commission to negotiate an offensive alliance with the New Englanders against the Iroquois it would indicate a lack of good faith on the part of the French. If, on the other hand, he had no such commission, could it then have been that when news of Jogues' death and the new war came up the coast and reached him, he took it upon himself to open negotiations with the English? There is no hard evidence that this was the case and in fact his going almost directly to the post at Kennebec and his several subsequent visits to the English settlements is

interesting, as is the fact that the commander at Kennebec, after talking with Druillettes and receiving his letters and credentials, seems to have departed promptly to report to the authorities in Plymouth and Boston.

Again, when this commander returned, he reported that he had contacted twenty-four of the foremost citizens of New England who were agreed that Druillettes might instruct the Indians. This does seem a rather imposing collection of notables to sanction something which the priest had been doing without hindrance throughout the whole of the winter and spring.

Also this tolerant spirit on the part of the lay and religious leaders of New England is rather hard to comprehend when in that same year, 1647, Massachusetts, the most influential amongst the four colonies, passed an act expelling Jesuits from its territory.[5]

Then there is the Jesuit's statement about writing to the English captain in due season, indicating that lines of communication had been, or were being, established between Quebec and New England.

Finally and probably most significant of all is a letter written by Druillettes to John Winthrop, Jr., Governor of Connecticut early in 1651. In this communication in which the cause he is pleading is to get New England support for the war against the Iroquois, the Jesuit makes reference to the late John Winthrop, Sr., who in 1647 was the Governor of

Massachusetts.

> I now approach you by letter in order to beseech and implore you by the spirit of exceeding benevolence towards all but especially towards our New France, which Sieur Winthrop, whose memory is both happy and grateful to all, bequeathed to you the heir to all that he possessed, not to refuse your protection to the cause which has brought me to these shores. That cause is the same as that which your Father of most grateful memory, by the letters which he sent in the name of your commonwealth to Monsieur our Governor in New France at Quebec, took up as far back as the year 1647, and which he would long since have brought to a happy conclusion had not death prevented him, as I have learned from many responsible persons. 6

Thus it seems amply clear from Druillettes' own statement that much more than the religious education of the Indians was being negotiated between the Catholic priest and the twenty-four leading citizens of New England.

The letter referred to, which was sent by John Winthrop, Sr., Governor of Massachusetts to the Chevalier de Montmagny, Governor of New France, dealt with the improvement and extension of commercial relations between the English and French colonies in North America, and this was exactly the same carrot that Druillettes was once again to dangle before trade-hungry New England in 1651, in order to obtain their military support.[7]

> . . . our most illustrious Governor of Quebec commanded me to offer you in his name the most ample commercial advantages and considerable compensation for the expenses of the war in order to obtain from New England some auxiliary troops for the defense of the Christian Canadians which he has already begun against the Moaghes [Mohawks]. 8

Druillettes himself was once again to leave Quebec in the fall of this same year, September 22nd, 1647.[9] This time his journey took him down river to Tadoussac, accompanying an Algonquin band on its great winter hunt which, because of the war, was forced to take place far to the northeast in order to escape the menace of rampaging Iroquois war parties.

From Tadoussac they crossed to the south shore of the St. Lawrence, a journey of some ten leagues, and then proceeded along the coast until they reached a river which was known by the Indians as Kaparipataouangak, which means 'land that is pierced' because the mouth through which it enters the great river is only a small opening in the land, while behind this the stream is wide and full. Today this is called the Mataine River which runs through the southwest Gaspé countryside some two hundred miles below Quebec.[10]

Disembarking here they followed the Mataine upstream and into the mountains of Notre Dame. Near starvation and with too little snow yet on the ground to successfully hunt the larger animals such as moose and elk, they divided into smaller parties which eked out a precarious existence until the heavier mid-winter snows brought better hunting conditions. It was the following May before Druillettes, ragged and barefoot, returned to Quebec. There is no indication that on this journey he had any contact or communication with the English. This would seem to have been a winter entirely devoted to the spiritual care of his Algonquin

converts and far removed from the plans and strategies of the war.[11]

It was some two years later in the fall of 1650 that Druillettes once again travelled southeast to the Atlantic coast and New England, this time as the openly acknowledged ambassador of the Governor of New France, and also as the representative of the Christian Indians of Canada.

Leaving Quebec on September 1st with a commission from Governor D'Ailleboust, and accompanied by Noel Nagabamat, the Christian chief of Sillery, he journeyed to the Kennebec and on down that river to the English settlements.

The chief agent here was John Winslow, whom Druillettes considered a most helpful friend and this man, though growing old, accompanied the priest and his Indian companion on the winter sea voyage down to Boston where they arrived on December 5th. Here they had conference with Thomas Dudley the Governor, Edward Gibbon a prosperous merchant who commanded the militia, and with many of the leading citizens of the colony of Massachusetts to whom they appealed for aid, either official or unofficial, for the hard-pressed Christians of New France. Unofficial aid would have been the permission to privately recruit New Englanders into the French service and to march them through New England against the Iroquois.

From Boston they journeyed to Plymouth where William Bradford was Governor. This official and his council gave

them a warm welcome and promised to do all that they could to further their cause before the supreme council of New England, which consisted of representatives from the four colonies of Massachusetts, New Haven, Plymouth and Connecticut, where John Winthrop, Jr. was Governor.

At the same time Druillettes and Noel Nagabamat had made contact with four Indian tribes down the coast and received their promises of help against the enemy. As they were well armed, Druillettes felt that even if the English did not come into the war, they would help draw some of the Mohawk fury away from the St. Lawrence.

Also this indefatigable man wrote to the Dutch officials at Manhattan, earnestly requesting that they would not support the Mohawks or supply them with arms for their war against the French.

Despite the somewhat pessimistic prognostication of Edward Gibbon, who did not believe that Massachusetts would enter the war, Druillettes was full of hope and confidence when he left for Quebec in the spring of 1651. However, his optimism was to prove ill-founded for as it turned out the English colonies were not to be coaxed into war in support of New France.

Still Druillettes appears to have been an able and well-liked envoy. He probably came closer to success in his secret mission of 1647, when he was dealing with the powerful John Winthrop, Sr., than he was to be in his later, openly

publicized mission to Boston and Plymouth during the winter of 1650-51.

Why, though, the secrecy about the reasons for the 1647 visit to the English, a secrecy that was maintained for some four years until the almost casual reference in the letter to John Winthrop, Jr. about the part his father would have played in the war had not death intervened?

It would seem to raise the very definite possibility that Druillettes had been sent to New England by Governor Montmagny to negotiate an offensive alliance, even though the peace with the Mohawks still held and was being carefully observed by this tribe. Thus this action would have appeared as a case of bad faith on the part of the French, so it was carefully excluded from mention in the Jesuit's report on his first journey. However, by 1650 the war was in full and bloody sway so there was no need for secrecy about the legitimate actions of a belligerent in attempting to gain allies against a powerful enemy.

If though the French were to have no luck in their attempt to forge an iron ring about the Five Tribes, what success were the Hurons to have in the same undertaking?

Footnotes

[1]R. G. Thwaites, ed., The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents, vol. 27 (Cleveland: Burrows Press, 1899), p. 221.

[2]J. Kupp, Fur Trade Relations. New Netherland-New France 1600-1664, unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Manitoba, 1968.

[3]Thwaites, ed., Jesuit Relations, vol. 31, p. 189.

[4]Ibid., pp. 183 ff.

[5]Ibid., vol. 36, p. 90. Note 11A makes reference to Hazard's Historical Collections, vol. I, p. 550.

[6]Ibid., p. 75.

[7]Ibid. Note 3 makes reference to Hazard's Historical Collections, Philadelphia, 1794, vol. II, p. 182.

[8]Ibid., pp. 83 ff.

[9]Ibid., vol. 32, pp. 259 ff.

[10]Ibid., p. 263.

[11]Ibid., p. 259.

CHAPTER V

HURON STRATEGY IN THE NEW WAR

In Huronia there seems to have been two distinct but allied strategical thrusts. As with the French sending Father Druillettes to New England, so too did the Hurons send a responsible embassy on the long and dangerous journey southeast to their friends, the Andastes, whom they hoped to persuade to enter the war as their allies.

At the same time there was a bold scheme afoot to try and divide the loose Iroquois confederation. The five tribes whose lands lay roughly parallel to the south shore of Lake Ontario were from west to east the Senecas, Cayugas, Onondagas, Oneidas, and to the east, the Mohawks. Of these the Cayugas and Oneidas were smaller and less powerful than the other three. Whether by chance or by design, a plan had been evolved to try and persuade the powerful Onondagas to drop out of the war, and it was felt that if this should happen the Cayugas, at any rate, and possibly the Oneidas, might be persuaded to follow the lead of their powerful neighbour and declare for neutrality. This, if it was successful, would then only leave the Senecas in the west and the Mohawks in the east to continue the conflict.

The plan began, in a somewhat unlikely fashion, early in 1647. A war party of Onondagas appeared on the frontiers of Huronia, prowling through the woodlands in a grim search for scalps, captives and loot. However, they were discovered, pursued and finally overtaken by a powerful band of Huron warriors.

After a sharp fight the Iroquois war leader was killed, as were a number of his men, while the rest were either captured or put to flight.

The prisoners were brought in to a nearby village to make sport for their captors as they died slowly under torture. One of them, determined to avoid this terrible ordeal, broke free and threw himself into a great cauldron of boiling water, preferring to die more quickly in this manner. For the rest, with one exception, it was the fire, the stake, and the sadistic attentions of their conquerors.

The one exception was a chief named Annenraes, a man of great importance among the Onondagas. Sparing his life was obviously a wise move as it gave the Hurons a bargaining counter with at least one of their enemies, but the act of mercy was resented by the younger more hot-headed warriors. Their muttering gradually grew into a conspiracy and in the spring Annenraes was warned by a well-wisher that his death was being planned. Not wishing to be the central figure in such a drama, he determined to attempt an escape.

Word of this was secretly brought to some of the more

prominent members of the council of chiefs, the ones who had originally spared him, and they determined to assist him in his escape, feeling that his goodwill might serve them well in the councils of the Onondaga. Unobtrusively, he was provided with food and equipment for the journey, together with presents, and then on a dark night he was guided from the village and sent on his way.

There are no details of his journey except that after crossing Lake Ontario he came upon three hundred of his countrymen preparing their canoes for an attack northwards against Huronia. In addition, some five hundred Senecas were to join the expedition, which had been planned to seek revenge for his supposed death. His arrival caused something of a sensation as he was regarded almost as one who had returned from the dead, and the upshot of it was that the Onondagas called off the raid and returned to their villages.

Here, at a great council, Annenraes put the case for peace. Part of his argument was that the Mohawks were becoming increasingly arrogant in their attitude towards their allies. Also if the warriors went north against Huronia, there was some danger of attack by the Andastes coming up from the south. He carried his audience and it was decided to send one Soiones, a noted warrior, to discuss peace with the Hurons, and he took with him three prisoners who were to be returned to their people as a goodwill gesture.

The delegation reached St. Ignace on July 9th, and its proposals for peace brought bitter division among the Hurons. The men of the Bear clan were suspicious and hostile, while the people of the frontier villages, who had borne the brunt of Iroquois attacks, were all for an armistice, especially as they were led to hope that a number of their people who were captive among the Onondaga would be released.

After about three weeks of argument and discussion it was decided to send a return embassy to the Onondaga to discuss the matter further.[1] It consisted of five Hurons, headed by a Christian captain, Jean Baptiste Ataronto, and it was accompanied by the enemy ambassador Soiones.

After a journey of twenty days they reached the principal Onondaga town, where they presented valuable furs as gifts to the leading men, in return for the porcelain bead collars that Soiones had presented to the Huron chiefs.

Then followed a month of friendly negotiations. Apparently the Onondaga felt that peace was assured, so that when Jean Baptiste Ataronto returned to his own people he was accompanied by one of their great chiefs, Scandaouati, and two other envoys, together with fifteen Huron captives who were being released as a pledge of good faith.

The return journey took thirty days, though as Father Ragueneau, the Jesuit chronicler, pointed out, twenty of these were spent in hunting, in building canoes, in sheltering against storms, and in all the other trail-side opera-

tions of a leisurely journey which finally brought them back to Huronia on October 23rd, 1647. The affair seemed to be progressing well and both the Cayugas and the Oneidas began to put out tentative feelers towards peace. Then, either by design or accident, ill fortune blasted the plan of the Hurons.

Early in January 1648 they decided to send yet another embassy to Onondaga. It consisted of six men, accompanied by one of the Onondaga envoys, Scandaouati.

As they slowly travelled south through the deep winter snows they were ambushed by a force of about a hundred Mohawk and Seneca warriors. Four of the Hurons were killed, the two others broke free and escaped, while the Onondaga, as an Iroquois, was not harmed, but he was forced to join the war band.[2]

An indication of the Iroquois sense of honour can be seen in this man's subsequent actions. His captors made him join with them in an attack in which he captured a Huron woman. After this, however, he faced them boldly, telling them that he was a peace envoy from his people and could not take part in such hostile acts. Either, he insisted, they must release him and his prisoner so that he could act with honour and return to Huronia, or else they must kill him. He was allowed to leave and so brought back to the Hurons the story of what had befallen their envoys.[3]

When Scandaouati heard what had happened, he became

increasingly depressed, feeling shame that other Iroquois tribes, the Mohawks and Senecas, had cared so little for his safety that they struck their blow and put his life in jeopardy while he was a hostage among the Hurons. "I am not a dead dog to be abandoned," he had complained with bitterness. Then, early in April he suddenly disappeared. For several days it was thought that he had fled back to his own people. Then his body was found out in the woods where he had cut his own throat because of the slight to his honour.[4]

The Hurons, still anxious for peace, brought one of the other Onondaga envoys to view the body so as to bear witness that it was suicide and not murder. Despite this, though, the negotiations seem to have come to a sudden end. If not the Hurons, then it must have been at the wish of the Onondagas, but why? There seem to be two possible reasons. One is that they were forced back into the war by some form of threat or pressure from the powerful Seneca and Mohawk nations. If not that, could it have been that the negotiations for peace were merely a delaying tactic to give them time to prepare against a possible Andaste attack? When this danger did not materialize they would then have been able to break off negotiations and re-enter the war.

Scandaouati's suicide does give slight support to this latter theory. He was negotiating for peace against the interests of the Mohawks and Senecas so his supposed bitterness about their lack of concern for his safety when they

killed the Huron envoys, does seem a little far-fetched. If, though, his own people were implicated in this, his bitterness and anger would be understandable. Even before the murders had happened, he had sent word down to Onondaga "that if during these negotiations for peace, while he was here, any evil blow was struck, the shame of it would cause his death. That he was not a dead dog to be abandoned, and that he well deserved that the eyes of the whole earth should be fixed on him, and it should remain quiet while his life would be in danger."[5]

Be this as it may, and whether it was pressure or treachery that ended the negotiations, the hard fact remained that by the spring of 1648 the Huron policy of driving a wedge between their enemies lay in ruins.

What, though, of the attempt to encircle the Iroquois within a ring of enemies? The Neutral Nation, whose territory ran along the northern shore of Lake Erie and who thus formed a sort of buffer state between Huronia and Iroquoia had, as their name implied, a tradition of neutrality. This tradition would only preserve them for a few brief years from total destruction. Far to the southeast, however, was a more war-like people, the Andastes, whose lands were on the Delaware River, and whose principal town was not only strongly fortified and defended by fifteen hundred warriors, but it also boasted a cannon, probably acquired from the nearby colony of New Sweden. These people had long been

friends and allies to the Hurons and hostile to the Mohawks with whom, only a few years before, they had been at war. Now, early in 1647, they sent two envoys to Huronia to find out if any assistance was needed against the mutual enemy. Their message to the Hurons was that "if they lost courage and felt too weak to contend against their enemies, they should inform them and send an embassy to Andastaway for that object."[6]

This invitation was promptly acted upon and a Christian chief, Charles Ondaaiondiont, was sent off with a party of eight others, four infidel and four Christian, to seek the help of the Andastes.

Leaving on April 13th, they took a long and circuitous route to avoid the chance of capture by their foes and so did not reach Andastaway until early in June.

An interesting sidelight on Indian hospitality is that on his arrival, Charles Ondaaiondiont was offered a young woman. Being a strict Christian, he refused her as a snare of the devil. Another, even prettier, was brought forward but she too was rejected. Finally his hospitable hosts, misunderstanding his reasons, suggested that he should choose any woman he fancied, a tempting offer which the Jesuit chronicler proudly reported as having been piously refused.

At the great council, Ondaaiondiont spoke gloomily of his people's future.

> He told them that they came from the land of souls where war and the terror of the enemies had desolated everything, where the country was covered only with blood, where the cabins were filled only with corpses, and that they themselves had only enough life remaining to come to ask their friends to have pity on a country that was drawing near to its end. 8

While the Hurons had certainly suffered during the years of war, their sufferings had been essentially a long series of pin pricks and thrusts rather than any single major disaster. It may be a psychological clue to the reason why Huronia fell that more than a year before the great calamity at St. Joseph's their leaders were already speaking like defeated and dejected men. It may have been prophetic but it was not the kind of talk that would inspire a people to a stubborn resistance.

The Andaste reply, on the other hand, although sympathetic, seemed primarily to be trying to inject some spirit into the Hurons. Their chiefs deplored "the calamaties of a country that had suffered so great losses. Then they added that tears and regrets for the past were not the remedy for those evils, but that the course of those misfortunes must be arrested as soon as possible."[9]

After a number of councils it was decided that the Andastes would send ambassadors to the Iroquois to see if they could not be persuaded to lay down their arms so that peaceful trade between the peoples might recommence. As Hunt points out, the war was begun because of Mohawk dissatisfaction with patterns of trade, so this attempt to have them

return to the old pattern was not likely to yield much success.[10] However, the ambassadors were also to try and urge or pressure the Onondagas, Cayugas and Oneidas into neutrality so as to isolate the Mohawks and Senecas. This paralleled the objective of Jean Baptiste Ataronto, who was also in Onondaga at about this same time, although apparently the two missions never met.

While he waited for news from Iroquoia, Charles Ondaaiondiont made the three-day journey down the Delaware to visit the colony of New Sweden, where he noted with disapproval the licentious behaviour of some of the young traders.

While he was there a Dutch ship came in from the New Netherlands, a colony which Father Ragueneau later described in his report as the ally of the Mohawks. It was from the crew of this ship that he first got word of the tragic death of Father Jogues.

By August 15th there was still no word from the Andaste ambassadors, so Ondaaiondiont decided to return home, leaving one Huron behind to bring back later news.

The Senecas had had word of their embassy so they had men lying in wait to take them on their return. The Hurons, either being warned or else guessing at this, travelled far to the west through deep forests and over mountains to outflank their foes. In this they were successful, reaching Huronia safely after a forty-day trip.[11]

Despite all the efforts involved, this embassy seems to

have failed. The Andaste did indeed send a delegation to Iroquoia but any success they may have had was marginal and temporary. When the peace initiative collapsed, there is no indication, either in the Jesuit Relations or in the Dutch documents of the time, that they went to war. One may speculate that if Charles Ondaaiondiont's defeatism was at all representative of the general Huron attitude, then it is understandable why the Andaste would not wish to ally themselves with a broken-spirited people in such a bloody conflict.

Thus, though the Huron strategy was sound in its conception, to divide and to surround, yet it failed to turn any enemies into friends or any friends into military allies. Like New France hundreds of miles to the east, Huronia would have to stand alone against the rising tidal wave of blood and fire that was rushing to engulf her.

Footnotes

[1]R. G. Thwaites, ed., The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents, vol. 33 (Cleveland: Burrows Press, 1899), p. 121.

[2]Ibid., pp. 117-125.

[3]Ibid., p. 165.

[4]Ibid., p. 125.

[5]Ibid., p. 127.

[6]Ibid., p. 129.

[7]Ibid., p. 185.

[8]Ibid., p. 129.

[9]Ibid., p. 131.

[10]George T. Hunt, The Wars of the Iroquois (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1940), p. 88.

[11]Thwaites, ed., Jesuit Relations, vol. 33, p. 131.

CHAPTER VI

HURONIA AND ITS INHABITANTS

It might be well at this juncture to give some description of Huronia. Generally speaking, it lay to the south of Georgian Bay, but with its northern frontiers extending as far as the Severn River and the shores of Matchedash Bay. To the east the water barrier of Lakes Simcoe and Couchiching formed a natural frontier, while on the west the border ran along the line of Nottawasaga Bay as far as the modern town of Collingwood. From here it ran south to the highlands and then east to approximately where the city of Barrie now stands on Kempenfeldt Bay. All in all the region was not large, being less than five hundred square miles in area.[1]

It is an undulating country, studded with rivers, lakes and marshes, while the land itself ranges from six to nine hundred feet in elevation. The soil is fairly fertile, though in some areas it is extremely sandy. Today much of it is cleared, but in the seventeenth century it was largely covered with forest, except around the villages where the trees had been slowly hacked down with primitive stone axes for firewood and to create open fields on which such crops as Indian corn, horse beans, and squash were grown.

In 1615 when Champlain visited the region it was estimated that there were some thirty thousand Hurons living in eighteen villages or towns, of which eight were fortified. The ones without defences were clustered in groups about these latter eight, usually no more than two or three miles distant, so that in time of invasion their inhabitants might seek safety in the fortified strongholds. All these settlements were located on high ground, not far from a good stream, and most important of all, with a spring of clear water close at hand. They were only semi-permanent, however, as primitive methods of agriculture depleted the soil, so that every ten or twenty years a village had to move and rebuild in a new location.[2]

The fortified villages might have a palisade thirty-five feet high, and the palisade itself would stand in three rows, interlaced one into the other and reinforced on the inside by heavy pieces of bark reaching up eight or nine feet. Behind this again, there would be logs, parallel to the ground and resting in the forks of trees, which formed galleries and watch towers from whence the defenders could fire arrows and hurl rocks down upon an attacking force, while during a siege, water was kept ready in case of fire.

In plan, an Indian village was usually oval-shaped, with its palisade being constructed from saplings of various species, ones that were easy to chop down with stone tools. A meandering and fairly shallow trench would be dug, in

which the young trees would be placed in an upright position and then secured with banked earth.

French stockades, or those which they had advised on the construction, were stronger and more defensible than were the Indian ones. In the first place they had iron tools so that it was easier to cut down and split the much more durable straight-grained red cedars. Then they were able to draw on their knowledge of European fortifications so their palisades, dug in to a uniform depth of two and a half feet, ran on straight lines to form a square with each corner having a powerful outthrusting bastion. The Jesuits, as they gained influence, advised the Hurons on this type of construction and Father Brébeuf wrote:

> We have told them also that henceforth they should make their forts square and arrange their stakes in straight lines, and that by the means of four little towers at the four corners, four Frenchmen might easily with their arquebuses or muskets, defend a whole village. They are greatly delighted with this advice and have already begun to practice it at La Rochelle, Ossossane. 3

It is interesting to note that Dr. Jury, the eminent Canadian historian and archaeologist, during his archaeological diggings in the area in 1946 and after, discovered that St. Ignace II and St. Louis, the two villages whose capture by the Iroquois brought on the final collapse of Huronia, were both fortified along these more modern lines. This indicated a considerable amount of French influence over the people who, incidentally, were under the spiritual care of Fathers Lalemant and Brébeuf.

Within an Indian village there would be a number of cabins or lodges haphazardly placed, some more than one hundred feet in length. These lodges would each hold a number of families and they were constructed from saplings dug in along two parallel lines. The tops would be bent in and secured to form a circular-shaped roof, with a slit being left along the ridge as a smokehole. The whole structure would be sheeted with heavy pieces of bark, attached by strips of wood fibre to the frame and there was normally an entrance only at one end.

Inside there was a sleeping bench running along the walls beneath which family possessions, clothing, weapons and firewood might be stored, while above pieces of meat would hang from the beams, both to keep them away from the dogs and to facilitate their smoke curing. Along the centre of the lodge was a line of cooking fires used by the different families, and the smoke from these filled the air, causing a considerable amount of eye trouble among the inhabitants. To a European, life in a Huron lodge was a foretaste of hell, with men, women, children and dogs packed in indiscriminately, winter draughts, clouds of smoke, noise, lack of privacy, and the smell of urine, rotting food and unwashed bodies, together with a plentiful variety of vermin and insects of all kinds.

Corn was the staple food of these people, pounded and boiled to form a soupy porridge called sagamite. When the

season permitted, wild fruit might be added or meat, if available, while the lakes provided fish, some of which would be dried in a somewhat rotten condition to be sprinkled on the sagamite as a garnish. No doubt this was a taste which took a certain amount of acquiring.

Tending the fields, gathering firewood and cooking was women's work, while the men turned their energies to hunting, fishing and war. However, for them there was another outlet--trade. The Hurons were a people with a strongly developed commercial sense and every summer a proportion of the young men would travel out to the west and northwest, carrying with them both European and Indian wares, the latter including such items as tobacco, fish nets and wampum, to trade with the tribes of those distant regions for their valuable furs. Others, meanwhile, at least in normal years, would make the long fifty-day journey down the Ottawa with the pelts from the preceding summer's trading, to barter at the French warehouses on the St. Lawrence. By the forties the Huron population had dropped from Champlain's estimated thirty thousand to somewhere between twelve and fifteen thousand according to Father Jerome Lalemant's census,[5] and this pattern of activity tended to deplete the Huron villages of many of their best fighting men during the campaigning summer season. Therefore, in times of war the older men sometimes spread rumours about Iroquois raiders being in the vicinity, in order to keep the young warriors at home.

However, there was no strong authority in Huronia, either at the village or the tribal level, and no man could be forced to stay against his will. Every Huron was, in the most complete sense, his own master and only rarely could he be prevailed upon to accept the orders of others. This lack of leadership and discipline was certainly one of the contributing causes of their final downfall in their struggle with a better-disciplined people, the Iroquois. Why, though, these latter, a similar people with a similar tradition of individualistic action, should have so improved their military efficiency in this war is hard to explain. Jan Kupp, in his doctoral dissertation, suggests that possibly the influence of the Dutch and of the Dutch half-breeds living with the Iroquois tribes was the factor.[6] In support of this theory there was the Flemish Bastard, a noted war leader among the Mohawks, whose military skill was reluctantly conceded by the French. Mother Marie de l'Incarnation also mentions Dutchmen being with at least one of the Mohawk bands invading New France and further mentions an Iroquois war party commanded by a half-breed. On the other hand, however, the Hurons certainly had the benefit of French military advice, as for example in the European-style defences of St. Louis[7] and St. Ignace II.[8]

Again, it is possible that the Iroquois, a smaller tribe, short on the natural wealth of furs and ringed by hostile peoples, was forced to submerge individual initiative

in favour of greater military effectiveness, achieved through disciplined action. If this is the case, though, then why did not the Hurons, who were in trouble from 1642 on, follow the same path and strengthen their leadership and discipline?

Located to the west of Huronia was the Tobacco or Petun nation, situated along the southwest shores of Georgian Bay and in the Blue Hills of the Bruce Peninsula. These people, akin in both language and customs, might be described as rural or backwoods Hurons, and although there had been wars in the past, at this time they got along well with their relatives, to whom they were economically subservient. They were not traders but rather fishermen and agriculturalists, growing the normal Indian crops of corn, beans, squash, sunflower seeds and in addition large quantities of tobacco. They also produced hemp, which the women wove into fish nets, and the surplus of all these items was bartered to the Hurons for the desirable trade goods which these latter had to offer. There is no accurate estimate of their population, but judging from the number of their villages they must have been a somewhat smaller tribe than their neighbours. They too, despite their inoffensive life-style, were also to be caught up and destroyed in the coming disaster.[9]

Finally, to the south there was the Neutral Nation whose boundaries ran from Lake St. Clair on the west, along the north shore of Lake Erie to the Niagara River on the

east, while somewhere to the north there was an ill-defined frontier with Huronia. Like the Petuns, they were not a trading people and seem to have made small use of their lakes and rivers for travel. They too were agriculturalists and also grew large quantities of tobacco for barter. Their land was rich in deer, beaver and bears, whose flesh was reported as being more savoury than that of the finest French pigs. To add to their blessings, wild fruit grew in profusion throughout the region. There is some doubt as to how they managed to develop their tradition of neutrality, but a likely theory is based on the fact that their land contained large flint beds. Before the arrival of the white men with their iron axes and knives, flints were vital in the Indian economy, and it is thought possible that the surrounding mutually hostile peoples found it each to their own advantage to allow one another free and unhindered access to these valuable deposits by keeping the area neutral.[10]

Turning now to the Jesuits, when they returned to Huronia in 1634, after the English occupation of Quebec, they lived isolated from each other in scattered villages. Here, however, they were at the mercy of their hosts and it would obviously be of advantage if they had a strong central headquarters to which they might return for retreats and conferences and from where they could go forth to their missions. With this in mind, Father Jerome Lalemant, then

the Superior in Huronia, decided in the fall of 1638 to establish just such a Christian stronghold. Advised by Father Brébeuf and others who were familiar with the terrain, he inspected various sites over the next months and finally settled on a location in the heart of the country. It was on a short river no more than a mile in length, connecting what is now called Mud Lake to the waters of Georgian Bay and near to the site of the present town of Midland. The location had many advantages. There was a good spring in the area where the fort, which was called Ste. Marie, was to be built, while Mud Lake had streams navigable by canoes coming in from the south so that there would be easy communication with other Huron villages. Finally, and probably most important, the land around was capable of development for agricultural purposes so that the new community could soon become self-sufficient.[11]

In 1639 construction began under the direction of a master builder and it was to continue on, in improvements and new additions, until its destruction ten years later. Hayes, in his book Wilderness Mission, describes the modern reconstruction of Ste. Marie thus:

> From a hill to the north one can look down upon a fort measuring 765 feet from north to south, completely surrounded by double palisades, with bastions and look-outs placed at strategic points. From the square stone bastions in the north-west corner watch could be kept on the River Wye and the water channel to the fort. The north-east corner juts out in a sharp look-out point which guards the only approach by land.

The five-sided tower at the southern tip points into Indian country.

Inside the northern end of the fort are stone walls flanked with impregnable stone bastions. This is the completely self-sustaining European compound, separated from the southern portion by double palisades and ditch works. It is the most crowded part and the buildings form two courtyards. South of the ditchworks lies the area designated as the Indian compound. It contains few buildings, with one longhouse situated between the inner and outer palisade.

Ste. Marie's main entrance is at the north end of the east wall and is flanked by a stone-walled building on the left and a timber-walled building on the right. Passing through a ten foot wide wood and stone entrance with massive timber gates which swing up and out of the way on hinges, we find ourselves in a low ceilinged passage-way leading to the inner court. To the left and right of the passage-way in a windowless gloom are Ste. Marie's most invulnerable rooms. These are large rooms, about thirty-five feet wide and a good seventy feet long. The one on the right is presumed to have been a barracks which housed some twenty French soldiers, sent to Ste. Marie in the mid-forties. The outside wall of this portion of Ste. Marie is not of stone but of heavy timbers. It has been concluded that at the time of its burning in 1649, Ste. Marie was still being strengthened and that this portion had yet to be walled with stone. Bearing out this conclusion was the discovery of a line of post holes, archaeological evidence of a timber palisade, which formed a fan-shaped protective wall around all of the stone portions of the mission. It seems likely that the builders of Ste. Marie erected this outer protective palisade to provide a temporary barrier while the work of building the stone walls went on behind. On the basis of chemical analysis on the earth, which revealed a high saturation of animal oil, we assume that the room to the left of the passage-way, identical in size to the barracks, was used for hanging skins and pelts to dry. There are no openings in the outer walls of either building but windows were cut to face the compound inside. Both barracks and drying room joined strong stone bastions at either end, which had no openings except an arched entrance facing the inner

> compound. There are loopholes or slits to shoot through on the second storey, which are positioned to sweep the eastern approach to the fort with musket fire. Built of solid stone, about two and a half feet thick, the two main bastions were impregnable to Indian attack. They extend beyond the barracks and drying room, and the upper storey is well above the roofs of the buildings within the fort, thus providing a constant lookout over the land. 12

In addition there was a church, quarters for the Jesuit Fathers and for the workers, a hospital, storerooms, workshops and barns in this strong, European-patterned fortress, while beyond the walls were the pasture lands for cattle and the wide fields where corn and other crops grew in such abundance that not only did Ste. Marie have a three-year supply of food, but it was also able to feed the many hundreds of Indians who came there each year as on a pilgrimage.

This was the headquarters in its final years for some sixty Frenchmen, of whom eighteen were Jesuit Fathers. Of the Jesuits, though, only three--Paul Ragueneau, the last superior, his assistant, and one other who acted as parish priest to the nearby Indian villages--were in permanent residence. The others, like Fathers Brébeuf and Gabriel Lalemant, a nephew of Jérome Lalemant, who were in St. Louis, Father Daniel at St. Joseph, and Fathers Garnier and Chabanel at St. Jean in the Tobacco country, would return intermittently for meditation and discussion of policy. Then they would sally forth once again to their various missions to continue their struggles with the demons of

Huron disbelief. Tactically the concept of Ste. Marie as a strong Christian bastion was very sound, but strong as it was it could not stand out when the nation it served came to its end.[13]

Footnotes

[1]Conrad Heidenreich, Huronia. A History and Geography of the Huron Indians 1600-1664 (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1971), p. 95.

[2]John Francis Hayes, Wilderness Mission. The Story of Sainte-Marie Among the Hurons (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1969), pp. 3-4.

[3]Ossossane is the Indian name for La Rochelle. See Wilfred Jury & Elsie McLeod Jury, Sainte-Marie Among the Hurons (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1954; rpt. Oxford paperback, 1965), p. 26.

[4]Hayes, Wilderness Mission, p. 6.

[5]Jury & Jury, Sainte-Marie Among the Hurons, p. 15.

[6]J. Kupp, Fur Trade Relations. New Netherland-New France 1600-1664, unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Manitoba, 1968, pp. 212-221.

[7]Wilfred Jury & Elsie McLeod Jury, Saint Louis--Huron Indian Village and Jesuit Mission Site, Museum Bulletin No. 10, Museum of Indian Archaeology, University of Western Ontario, London, 1955, pp. 13 ff.

[8]Wilfred Jury, "St. Ignace II," Canadian Catholic Historical Association, 1946-1947, pp. 15-27.

[9]George T. Hunt, The Wars of the Iroquois. A Study in Intertribal Trade Relations (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1940), p. 42.

[10]Ibid., p. 49.

[11]Hayes, Wilderness Mission, p. 31.

[12]Ibid., p. 45.

[13]R. G. Thwaites, ed., The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents, vol. 33 (Cleveland: Burrows Press, 1899), p. 253.

CHAPTER VII

HURONIA IN 1647

What was happening in Huronia during 1647, this first year of the new war? No great fur convoy came from there down the river to trade at the French warehouses, although this was not serious as the trading fleets of the two preceding summers had brought back large supplies of European goods. However, it did show the caution inspired by the Mohawk blockade, in which the blockaders had every advantage. They would watch from high headlands that commanded long reaches of the river and so had ample time to prepare their ambushes. A powerful flotilla, manned by well-armed warriors might force its way through, but isolated canoes had little chance. Six Hurons did indeed attempt the passage but of these only two escaped with their lives and liberty.

These two decided, wisely enough, not to attempt the return journey until conditions improved, but instead chose to spend the winter in the small frontier settlement of Montreal. Life here was also precarious as is shown by their subsequent adventures. They were hunting in the snow-covered woods when, building a shelter, one of them had his hand badly smashed and cut by an ill-directed axe blow.

Being a pious Christian convert, he felt certain that God had done this for some good reason, though for what he was not exactly sure. However, this was revealed on their way back to Montreal to get medical assistance from the surgeon, when they came upon the tracks in the snow of some seven or eight Iroquois. Had it not been for the accident, they would have been firing their arquebuses and so would have given themselves away to their enemies.

The unharmed Huron went hunting again a few days later. Approaching a small lake he suddenly heard the calls and cries of a number of birds. Realizing that this probably meant that men were coming his way, he hid in the rushes by the water's edge. Several minutes later a party of Iroquois passed by only a few feet from his hiding place.[1]

Because of the blockade, no written word came down from Huronia that year, but things were not going well in that region. The Iroquois, principally the Senecas and the Mohawks, were increasing their pressure on the frontier villages with apparently considerable success. Occasionally the defenders would score a small triumph, such as the defeat of the Onondaga war party at the beginning of the year, which was to lead to the negotiations with that tribe described in a previous chapter. In general, though, it was the aggressive Iroquois invaders who were achieving most of the successes, and there is no record of Huron warriors reciprocating by carrying the war into Iroquoia. While some

of the Hurons were still as warlike as they had ever been, it would seem that the malaise of cowed defeatism was numbing much of the will to resist among the people.

As far as the Jesuits were concerned, their attitude was somewhat ambivalent. Naturally enough they regretted the disasters that were happening to their people, however, their chief concern was less with the present agony, and more with the urgent need, as they saw it, to convert and baptize as many as possible so that they might avoid an eternity in the flames of hell. As calamity followed calamity, a growing number of Hurons embraced the new faith as an insurance against the perils of the hereafter. Father Ragueneau wrote regarding this:

> We desire neither sufferings nor misfortunes for our Christians, but still I cannot refrain from praising God for those that happen to them, because experience has shown me that their faith is never livelier, nor do their hearts belong more fully to God than when considering matters with too human vision, we have most fear and compassion for them. All those I have seen who have fallen into the hands of the enemy and have afterwards escaped have admitted that, at the height of their misfortunes they felt more Christian courage and sweeter consolation, and had more complete recourse to God than at any time in the whole of their past lives or even after their deliverance. 2

On the other hand, the suspicion and hatred between Christian and infidel Huron continued to grow as this divided land approached its Armageddon. The latter continued to point out that since the priests had come with their new religion, the people had suffered from epidemics and starvation. This was quite true, as whenever Europeans first made

contact with primitive tribes, they brought diseases to which they had immunity, but which were disastrous to the Indians. These epidemics swept through the population, bringing illness and death to many. This in turn meant that crops were left untended, and to a people whose subsistance was at best marginal, this would mean famine and further desolation. Of course it was not only the Hurons who suffered thus, because escaping prisoners brought word to New France that the Mohawks were also plagued with famine and disease, possibly a by-product of their proximity to the Dutch at Fort Orange.

This bitterness between Christian and pagan was to lead to a tragic murder in the following spring. Six chiefs of the Hurons who saw in the French the cause of their troubles, determined to strike a blow against them. They commissioned two brothers to go to Ste. Marie and kill the first white man they encountered. This proved to be a young man of twenty-two, a servant to the Jesuits by the name of Jacques Douart, who had wandered outside the stockade after his day's duties were done for an evening stroll. The assassins came upon him by chance and immediately killed the unsuspecting Frenchman with a hatchet blow.

By the next day word of the murder had spread to nearby villages and a steady stream of Christian families converged on Ste. Marie, determined if necessary to protect the Jesuits with their lives. Civil war was very close, but cool and

wise heads must have prevailed for a great council was called of the notables from both sides. Here there were demands that the priests and their converts should be banished from the country, while the Christians on their part stoutly avowed that they would never abandon their spiritual fathers, and in turn accused the instigators of the crime of being in Iroquois pay, deliberately fomenting division among the Huron people.

After several days of debate, the arguments of the Christians prevailed and it was decided to make reparations to the Jesuits in the name of the whole country. This was normal, as among the Hurons responsibility for a crime was accepted by the whole society rather than solely by the guilty persons. What, if any, pressures were exerted by the Fathers to bring about this decision is not recorded, though there may well have been some, as the native spokesman was abject in his address to Father Ragueneau:

> Thou alone supportest this country and bare it in thy hands. A bolt from the heavens has fallen in the midst of our land and has rent it open. Should thou cease to sustain us, we would fall into the abyss. Have pity on us, we come here to weep for our loss as much as thine, rather than to discourse. This country is now but a dried skeleton without flesh, without veins, without sinews and without arteries, like bones that hold together only by a very delicate thread. The blow that has fallen on the head of thy nephew, for whom we weep, has cut that bond. Our enemies the Iroquois will rejoice at that death and will hold a solemn triumph over it when they see that our weapons destroy ourselves and strike a blow in their favour from which they know this country cannot recover.

> Have pity on thy country. I say thine because thou are the master of it and we come here like criminals to receive our warrant of condemnation. It is thou who has strengthened this country by residing in it. If thou should withdraw from our midst we would be like a straw pulled out from the earth, that serves as but sport for the wind. . . . 3

This would indicate that the pressure exerted by Father Ragueneau was the threat that the French might leave Huronia. Fear of this, and even more the fear of being cut off from French arms and supplies might well have induced the Francophobes to agree to reparations for the murder.

One can detect here the same hopeless note that seems to permeate all Huron oratory at this time. How seriously had the country been hurt? With the Iroquois on the offensive there were certainly reverses, some serious, while others were only of minor importance from a tactical, if not a psychological, point of view. One such concerned a small party of Hurons who had established a summer fishing camp on one of the islands in Georgian Bay. In either August or September of 1647 a troop of Iroquois led by a renegade Huron surprised them, killing five and capturing seven and leaving behind a dying girl of eighteen who had been mortally wounded and scalped. Only one man escaped to raise the alarm and alert the warriors in the nearby villages.

A strong force took up the pursuit and finally overtook the raiders some ten leagues beyond the southern borders of Huronia. They were completely surprised. Two were captured and the seven prisoners were all released unharmed, an

almost miraculous escape which they attributed to the intervention of the Virgin Mary.[4]

Possibly more significant for the future of the country were the attacks mounted against the people of St. Jean Baptiste and St. Ignace. St. Jean Baptiste was a village on the eastern frontier of Huronia, located near the "narrows" of Lake Couchiching. Here and in the surrounding countryside dwelt the Arendaenronnon clan. Because of its exposed position, the area suffered much from Iroquois attacks. One such, described in a preceding chapter, was when the women were surprised as they came out from the village to work in the fields and were carried off in canoes before a pursuit could be organized.

Finally, under constant harassment, the inhabitants of St. Jean Baptiste abandoned their homes and retreated westward to larger and better-defended villages where they hoped for safety. Thus the eastern defences had crumbled and an enemy coming from this direction could now penetrate deep into the heart of the country without let or hindrance.[5]

In the case of the people of St. Ignace, they were badly mauled while out on a winter hunt. Some three hundred of them--men, women and children--had camped in the woods, two days' journey south from their village, in the direction of Iroquoia. They erected rough cabins for protection against the cold, and one of these, built at some little distance from the others, sheltered the Christians who

sought this isolation so that they would not be disturbed in their morning and evening prayers.

While most of the party were hunting and so scattered throughout the forest, a band of Senecas fell upon the inhabitants of this cabin. There was a savage fight, in which seven of the Christians were killed, some others made their escape, and twenty-four men and women were captured and dragged away.

As news of the disaster slowly spread among the hunters, it was decided, after they had buried the dead, to take what game they had killed and return to St. Ignace. Unfortunately, with an almost blind disregard for the danger, they scattered here and there on the homeward journey. Some twelve miles short of their village, the scattered groups were pounced upon by a raiding party of a hundred Mohawks and forty more of them were either killed or captured.

Under the weight of this double calamity, the people of St. Ignace decided to abandon their village and rebuild a few miles further north in what they hoped would be a stronger and better position, closer to the imagined protection of the French.[6]

With Huronia being criss-crossed by enemy war parties, rumours of an Iroquois army spread like wildfire and villages such as St. Joseph, one of the biggest and strongest, located toward the southern frontier, were in a constant state of apprehension.

However, it was a village of the Neutral Nation to the south that was to receive the heaviest Iroquois blow in this year of 1647, even though the Neutrals were at peace with both sides. It came about because of a lone Seneca who had penetrated deep into Huronia during the preceding winter and successfully killed his man. However, he was hotly pursued and the Hurons caught and captured him at the gates of this Neutral village. As he had not entered a cabin where he would have received the protection afforded a guest, it was considered a fair capture, though the Seneca people, when word finally reached them, considered otherwise.

Still they made no move at the time to seek revenge. Instead they took part with the Mohawks in the summer campaign of harassment against Huronia. In the fall, three hundred Seneca warriors on their way home came to this particular Neutral village where they were greeted courteously and invited in to the various cabins or lodges for food. Once inside and at a given signal, they seized their weapons and attacked their hosts, killing many and carrying off even more as captives.

It was hoped by the Hurons that this brutal and treacherous attack might bring the Neutrals into the war on their side, but when Father Ragueneau reported on the matter in the spring of 1648, this had not happened. The best then that could be hoped for was that possibly the Neutrals were waiting until they got their prisoners back before they

sought revenge.[7]

Thus it can be seen that neither from a political nor from a military point of view was this a successful year for the Franco-Huron alliance. Druillettes' mission to New England, despite his optimism, was to lead to nothing, while in New France itself the land was under virtual siege from the encroaching Mohawk war parties who, at the same time, seem to have maintained a successful blockade along the Ottawa that was designed to isolate Huronia from its supply base. As for the Hurons themselves, neither their peace initiative to the Onondagas nor their mission to the Andastes in search of aid were to bring more than passing benefits. In fact, while these endeavours were being made, the land itself was being ravaged by the Seneca and Mohawk war bands, who were steadily pushing back the eastern and southern frontiers against the northwest heartland, in which was located the Jesuit stronghold of Ste. Marie.

At a later date when the whole process had gone even further, Father Ragueneau described this roll-back in a letter to the Very Reverend Vincent Caraffa, General of the Society of Jesus at Rome in the following terms:

> Truly we are so threatened by the hostile rage of our savage enemies that, unless we wish our enterprise and ourselves to perish in an hour, and indeed that the faith, now widely spread in these lands, should be utterly destroyed, it was quite necessary for us to seek the protection of these men [soldiers and lay workers] who devote themselves to both domestic duties and farm work and also to building fortifications and to mili-

> tary service, for since, until late years this our abode, which we call the Residence of Ste. Marie, was surrounded on every side by the numerous villages of our friends the Hurons, we feared more for them than for ourselves from hostile attack. So, during that time, no matter how small our numbers, we lived in safety, without anxiety, but now far different is the aspect of our affairs and of this whole region, for so crushed are our Hurons by disaster that their outposts, being taken and laid waste with fire and sword, most of them have been forced to change their abodes and retreat elsewhere. Hence it has come to pass that at last we are devoid of a protection of others, and now we, stationed at the front, must defend ourselves with our own strength, our own courage and our own numbers. 8

With the war increasing in intensity, what was the reason for the savage attack on the Neutral village? Even if the Neutrals were at fault in not giving sanctuary to the fleeing Seneca warrior, reparations for his subsequent death might well have been made in accordance with the Indian custom, yet they were not, nor were they apparently asked for. Why?

It seems to this writer that the massacre was probably not savagery for the sake of savagery, but savagery for the sake of policy. This particular village was close to the Huron border and most likely it had many links with the Hurons which made it partisan in their favour. With the growing aggressiveness of the Iroquois, this partisanship may have been a general feeling among the Neutrals which could, unless it was checked, lead to open hostility and war. One way to check it would be by an act so blood-thirsty and brutal that the whole tribe would be cowed into continuing

its neutrality. Thus we have the policy of intimidation by massacre, a policy that did indeed keep the Neutrals out of the war until it was too late for them to do anything but die.

Footnotes

[1]R. G. Thwaites, ed., The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents, vol. 32 (Cleveland: Burrows Press, 1899), pp. 29 ff.

[2]Ibid., vol. 33, p. 97.

[3]Ibid., pp. 229 ff.

[4]Ibid., p. 91.

[5]Ibid., p. 81.

[6]Ibid., p. 83.

[7]Ibid., pp. 81 ff.

[8]Ibid., p. 255.

CHAPTER VIII

HURON VICTORY NEAR THREE RIVERS

It would be wrong to give the impression that the Hurons were always unsuccessful and the Iroquois always successful in the waging of this war. Certainly victory was generally with the warriors of the Five Nations, but there were occasional clashes when the Hurons could boast a victory, and one of the most dramatic of these occurred in the summer of 1648, and it occurred not in Huronia but on the banks of the St. Lawrence near Three Rivers.

On July 17th, the small garrison of this fort got word from an escaped Huron that a war band of about one hundred Mohawks was in the neighbourhood. There seems to have been a succession of such bands hovering about the settlement, one apparently taking over from another and "who like sprites, infest the woods and rivers."[1] A few days later, on July 21st, this Iroquois party appeared, approaching to within long cannon shot range of the stockade.

A force consisting of French, Algonquins and refugee Hurons went out to meet it, and as they came closer the Mohawks made signs that they wished for a parley. Some of them came forward to the neutral ground between the two

groups to act as spokesmen and they were met by an equal number of French and French-allied Indians.

What the Iroquois wanted was supplies of food, but this was refused until two French prisoners who had been captured while out hunting were released. No understanding was given to fulfil this demand, but while the two parties were arguing a Huron prisoner among the Mohawks managed to whisper a warning that his captors were planning some form of treachery.

The French were now even more on their guard, but they did agree to meet with an Iroquois negotiator on the following day.

It was while this next meeting was taking place that dramatic events began to occur out on the river. Two canoes were suddenly observed close in toward the northern bank and paddling in the direction of the fort. Not only the French, but the force of Iroquois on the southern shore also saw them, and these latter immediately took to their canoes to attempt an interception.

At the fort the tocsin was sounded and the French and Indians of the garrison and the settlement took up their arms, mustered, and then marched along the river bank in the direction where the two Huron canoes had last been seen. As they cautiously advanced through the woods, heavy arquebus firing suddenly broke out ahead and the party halted to assess the situation. Was the firing merely a ruse, and could this be the trap that the Huron prisoner had warned

them against? It seemed possible, so with caution prevailing, they decided to retire back upon the fort.

Once there, a rumour somehow began to spread to the effect that the firing had not been a trap but rather a band of Hurons fighting a desperate but losing battle for their lives. Then soon after, as though to confirm this, a Huron canoe was seen out on the river, apparently being chased by two of Iroquois design. The whole situation seemed desperate, but in actual fact it was greatly different from the way in which it appeared.

It had been Hurons battling the Iroquois, but rather than a small band, it was a powerful force. No trading flotilla had come down from Huronia last year, both because their own country was under attack, and possibly even more because of the powerful blockade along the river which had been instituted by the Mohawks. Now, however, the Hurons were short of arquebuses, lead, powder, hatchets, knives and all the other French goods which had become a necessity to them as a way of life, for trade, and also as a defence against their enemies.

Two hundred and fifty of them, about half being Christians, led by five of their chiefs and accompanied by Father Bressani and two other Frenchmen, determined to make the attempt to break through to Three Rivers. Maintaining good order, more than sixty canoes, filled with warriors and peltries, swept down the Ottawa and the St. Lawrence without

once sighting an enemy.

Within several miles of their destination they pulled their canoes into the rushes by the bank while the warriors oiled and painted themselves with gaudy colours in order to make an impressive arrival.

Meanwhile two scouting canoes went on ahead to notify the fort, and it was these canoes that were seen by both the French and the Iroquois. Being pursued, they signalled back to their concealed fellows, probably by means of arquebus shots, and then headed in for the safety of the nearest shore.

The main body of the Hurons, realizing what was happening, seized their weapons, and leaving their canoes, ran at full pace through the woods to the point where the Iroquois were landing. Here they fanned out into a wide arc or crescent and then lay down to receive the enemy's first volley.

Obviously, the Mohawks had no idea as to the strength of their opponents. Discharging their weapons, they charged forward fiercely, only to be shattered by a Huron volley, followed by a counter-charge. Now the fighting was hand to hand, man against man in a whirling, grappling frenzy, with the five chiefs and Father Bressani running up and down the line exhorting their men to even greater efforts and lending aid to any who were hard pressed.

It was extremely difficult for the Europeans to differ-

entiate friend from foe, and one of the Frenchmen, coming upon a frightened warrior whom he thought to be one of his party, clapped him encouragingly on the shoulder and tried to cheer him with the words, "Courage, my brother. Let us fight bravely." Only later did he discover that it was an enemy that he had been cheering on.[2]

All the Mohawks might have been killed or captured had not a section of the Huron line broken at the outset of firing, thus allowing the trapped enemy warriors to pour through and make their escape. Some though, braver than the rest, scorned flight and stayed to fight savagely with knife and spear until they were at last cut down. As for the others, there was a pursuit, but it was somewhat desultory as the Hurons were eager to take their ease at Three Rivers and so it was soon abandoned, allowing most of the Iroquois to make their escape.

Immediately after the battle Father Bressani, taking a Huron canoe and two other canoes that had been captured, proceeded down to the fort to bring news of the victory. Meanwhile, the main body returned to where they had left their canoes in the reeds, finished the painting of their faces and then, with the Iroquois prisoners standing and chanting their songs as was the Indian custom, the whole flotilla paddled the last few triumphal miles down to Three Rivers, sweeping into the beach in slow and impressive formation.

Here for the next two weeks there was feasting and trading, with the Governor coming down from Quebec in order to take council with the five Huron chiefs and assure them of continued French support.

Finally, on August 6th, the fleet, heavy-laden with trade goods and other items, among which was a heifer and a small cannon for the fort of Ste. Marie, set forth on the return journey. In addition there were both lay and ecclesiastical reinforcements for Huronia consisting of five Jesuit priests and a lay brother, three boys, nine workmen and eight soldiers, as well as another four who were to be taken on at Montreal, for a total of thirty Frenchmen.[3]

Thus occurred one of the few Huron victories of this war, but even here there was some evidence of the disintegration that was undoing the whole nation. This was a large force, two hundred and fifty men, all warriors and all volunteers for this dangerous mission. In the battle they outnumbered the Iroquois by two or three to one, and yet a section of them broke at the first sound of firing. Father Lalemant was scathing in his comment, "If the Hurons at the base of the crescent had not given way at the first report of the arquebuses, not one of the enemy would have escaped, but those cowards left a door open by which many got away."[4] Nevertheless, after a long succession of disasters, it was an achievement of some significance and when word of it reached Huronia, it might have done much to raise morale had

it not, as a success, already been overtaken by the grim and terrible march of events.

Footnotes

[1]R. G. Thwaites, ed., The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents, vol.32 (Cleveland: Burrows Press, 1899), p. 173.

[2]Ibid., pp. 179-181.

[3]Ibid., p. 99.

[4]Ibid., p. 181.

CHAPTER IX

THE CAPTURE OF ST. JOSEPH II

On the southern frontiers of Huronia, some fifteen miles northwest of the modern city of Barrie, lay the Indian settlement of Teanaustaye, or to give it its Christian name, St. Joseph II. This was an important fortified town, housing at least two thousand people, and it was the capital of the Cord, or Barking Dog tribe. This tribe, along with that of the Bears, situated further to the northwest in and about Ossossane or La Conception on Nottawasaga Bay, had been the progenitors of the Ouendats or Huron confederacy. Later they were joined by the Rock tribe, situated about the western shore of Lakes Couchiching and Simcoe, the tribe of the People Beyond the Silted Lake, located near Ste. Marie, and a small tribe, the People of the Deer, centred about the village of St. Michel.[1] The Cord people were vigourous and aggressive and their chiefs exercised greater than usual authority at both the council fire and on the war path. As they had been the first to ally themselves in friendship with Champlain on his visit in 1615, they felt a sort of proprietorial right over all the French in Huronia. It was they also who, after much persuasion and some reluctance,

had brought Jean de Brébeuf back into the country in 1634. This was not to say that they liked the white men, nor in particular the Jesuit Black Robes. In fact, the reverse was the case. The priests were viewed with great suspicion and hostility as sorcerers, and the Cords stoutly persisted in clinging to their old beliefs and customs which were anathema in the eyes of the Fathers; the very rituals of the devil.[2]

Brébeuf and his fellows found readier acceptance among the people of the Bear nation, but sometime in the winter of 1634 he travelled the snow-covered trail through the thick forests that sprawled across the hills and valleys, to visit Teanaustaye. Officially he had come to thank the chiefs and councils for bringing him to Huronia last summer, but Father Francis X. Talbot, S. J., in his book Saint Among the Hurons, suggests that more probably he was there to consult with his handful of converts, and most especially one--Louis Amantacha --who was a warrior and probably carried some influence, and who might be instrumental in laying the groundwork of Christianity among the Cords. As it happened, he arrived while the chiefs of the Huron confederation were discussing a proposed peace with the Seneca, and as the Superior of the Jesuits he was invited to accompany an embassy that was setting out for Iroquoia, but this he refused, feeling that if things went wrong he would receive the blame, no matter what the cause.[3]

During the next several years Brébeuf occasionally visited Teanaustaye, but his efforts bore little fruit and the thinly disguised hostility of the Cords continued unabated. Disaster was already striking at the Hurons. First an influenza epidemic, followed by smallpox, both probably brought in by the white men, decimated the population so that it was estimated that their numbers dropped from some thirty thousand in 1636 to about twelve thousand by 1640.[4] Among the villages where the Jesuits had great influence and many converts, such as Ossossane and Ihonatiria, or St. Joseph I, this tragedy was viewed as an act of God by the Christians, but among the rest and elsewhere throughout the country they were blamed, feared and hated for what was happening. By 1638 St. Joseph I, where three priests were in residence, had been hard-hit by the epidemics and most of the population was either dead or had scattered to other villages, leaving only a sad handful to the ministrations of the Fathers. Under these circumstances Brébeuf determined upon a bold step. Unregenerate Teanaustaye, its population swollen by refugees from plague-stricken villages, had so far suffered less than elsewhere from the epidemic. If he could obtain permission to transfer the mission of St. Joseph from Ihonatiria to Teanaustaye, it would enable the Jesuits to commence the difficult task of trying to convert the Cord people.

In April and May he visited the town to encourage its

few Christian families, and while he was there he let it be known that he would like to be given a cabin in which some of the Fathers might take up permanent residence. Eventually he spoke to the senior chief, and this man, feeling that there might be certain advantages to be gained in their trade with the French if the Jesuits actually lived among them, called a council in early June.

At this meeting the speakers generally voiced suspicion of, and hostility to the Black Robes, but most agreed that it might be wise to have them close so that their activities might be observed, and most telling of all, the argument for better trade relations with the French carried the day. However, they would not agree to build them a new lodge but instead gave to Brébeuf one that was old, derelict and deserted.

Summoning workmen from La Conception, the Superior set them to making the place habitable, while at the same time he sent word to Father Isaac Jogues, later to be martyred in Iroquoia, to close down the first St. Joseph at Ihonatiria and transfer the mission to Teanaustaye. Here, in the new St. Joseph II, the first mass was celebrated on June 25th, amid a hostile population.[5]

During the next few years the Jesuits felt that they were making some progress at the new St. Joseph, though the epidemics increased the hatred of many toward them and at times their lives were in actual danger. One result of this

continuing hostility was that Lalemant, the new Superior in Huronia, advised by Brébeuf, decided upon the building of Ste. Marie as a strong headquarters fortress for the French.[6]

One of the veteran priests who had arrived in 1634 was Father Antoine Daniel. Thin and gaunt, this forty-eight year old native of Dieppe was noted for his piety, his gentleness to others, his submissiveness to his superiors, and yet with it all he was a man of great courage. At his own request he had spent the last nine years in villages on the dangerous frontiers of Huronia, first with the Rock clan on the east and later as the priest in charge of St. Joseph II. Over a ten year period this mission had at last begun to make significant progress toward Christianity. A church had been built, as well as a residence for the Father, while a considerable minority of the Cord people had at last accepted the new religion.

This was the situation at St. Joseph in June of 1648 when, about the 23rd of that month, Daniel left his post to make the twenty mile journey to Ste. Marie. Here he engaged in eight days of spiritual exercises, together with conferences with his Superior, Father Paul Ragueneau. His retreat was completed on July 1st, and early the next morning he set off back to his mission, arriving there in the late afternoon. What would he have seen as he approached and entered the village?

St. Joseph was located at the southern end of a north-

south ridge, several miles in length, and it had been built on a broad plateau that spread over a number of acres. Here would be the fields of corn and the vegetable plots where, during the day, many of the women would be at work. The village itself, fairly extensive in area, was surrounded by a triple-poled palisade which was strengthened by being interlaced with branches. It was of native design and therefore somewhat irregular in its outline, in order to take advantage of the ground. This palisade contained several narrow gates in its circumference and probably also a number of escape holes, gaps at the base which would have been hidden on the outside by bushes or clumps of tall grass. On the inside there was a gallery or platform of logs, from which the defenders could loose arrows down upon an attacking force, while along its length there were interspersed several higher watch towers from whence the broad, forest-covered valley below spread out panoramically to the distant ridges some twelve or fourteen miles to the southeast. Finally, to complete the defences, a deep tree-filled ravine encircled the back of the village, just beyond the wall, adding greatly to the strength of that sector.

To accommodate the population there must have been at least several score cabins or lodges, both large and small, set down haphazardly without any thought of a plan, and separated from each other by patches of sun-baked dirt, worn bare under the tread of many feet. Somewhere amidst all

this confusion, and there are indications that it was toward the back of the village near the ravine, was Daniel's church, adjoining which were his living quarters. Pervading the whole village would have been an unforgettable smell made up from the odours of human and canine elimination, rotting food, the carcasses of animals and whatever else might add its aroma to the general stench.

By the time the Jesuit entered the village in the late afternoon, the women would have left the fields, and the smoke from their cooking fires, seeping out through the roofs of their lodges, would have made a blue haze over the area. Lounging about the doorways the men waited for the sagamite to be made ready while they watched noisy children and barking dogs chase each other across the open spaces between the lodges. Probably as he made his way through the maze of huts, the missionary would have received a variety of greetings, all the way from the smiles and friendly words of his converts to the suspicious and hostile glances of those who still looked upon him as the Black Robe sorcerer.

Throughout the next day he worked among his flock, visiting the sick and infirm and hearing the news of what had happened over the past ten days. There were rumours of an Iroquois war party in the region, but such rumours were not uncommon in a frontier town. Besides which, the scouts posted in the countryside around had reported nothing, so there seems to have been no particular feeling of alarm.

Many of the fighting men were away at this time. A contingent of them had joined the powerful fur flotilla that had left Huronia earlier in the summer, and which defeated the Mohawk force near Three Rivers. Others would have been away hunting or trading with the western tribes, while Ragueneau reported that a war band from the town was away on some unspecified campaign.[7] Nevertheless, it is reasonable to assume that in a frontier post such as St. Joseph, long harassed and menaced by the enemy, a sufficient number of warriors would have remained behind to adequately man the defences, always provided that they were alert and not caught by surprise.

Early the following morning, Saturday July 4th, as the sun came up over the eastern horizon, Father Daniel celebrated mass for his Christians. The church was full and the Father, after laying aside his red chasuble, and before commencing to chant the prayers, spoke to the congregation on the joys of paradise and the happiness of those who died in a state of grace. Suddenly his words were interrupted by a distant shouting and a cry that came nearer as it was taken up by new and terrified voices.

"The Iroquois! The Iroquois!"

The Christians, followed by their pastor, rushed out of the chapel and into the bright morning sunlight. More clearly now they could hear shrieks of terror and the dreaded war cry of the enemy. From the congregation and

from every lodge men seized their weapons--spears, bows and arrows, possibly even a few arquebuses--and ran to the threatened gate. It would appear that the enemy, later determined to have been a force of some six hundred Senecas, had early made a breach at this point and as the Huron warriors came up, a fierce fight developed as they attempted to drive back the invaders and close the gap. Meanwhile, others of the defenders clambered up to the platform at the wall, but here too the situation was confused as some of the Iroquois had already managed to climb over the hitherto unprotected palisade and establish bridgeheads on this very same platform. One can imagine savage hand-to-hand conflicts raging along this gallery with the individual losers, wounded or dead, being hurled to the ground below in order to leave fighting space for the living.

As the men desperately sought to repel the enemy a growing stream of women and children, many only babes in arms, began to surge through the village, past the church and on to the small gate that led to the ravine. Panic and confusion began to increase as the noise of the battle rose higher and higher and the terrified throng jostled and pushed as it strove to get through the narrow exit and into the hoped-for safety of the trees.

Daniel, still clothed in white alb and red stole, forced his way down to where the fighting raged with unabated ferocity. Lifting his arms he shouted a general absolution

toward his believers. Some of the unconverted, seeing him there, broke off from the conflict and came to kneel before him, seeking baptism. More than one of these, according to Father Ragueneau's report, received his baptism and the arrow or arquebus ball that carried him to heaven at almost the same instant. It must be pointed out that while this was edifying as far as the faith was concerned, it must have been disastrous from a military point of view. An outnumbered and hard-pressed garrison, trying desperately in hand-to-hand combat to close a breach, cannot afford to have men drawing back to care for their souls when they should be hacking, hewing and thrusting in the front line.[8]

From the gate the Father ran to those lodges wherein lay sick or enfeebled Christians, so as to bring them spiritual comfort. By now the panic was increasing and terrified mobs were attempting to escape not only through the gate to the ravine but also through every gap in the palisade that would allow a human body to pass. Struggling through the crowd, Daniel returned to his church where some of his people still awaited his guidance. Quickly he gave them absolution and then ordered all who could to flee while there was still time.

All this while the battle had raged at the gate and along the palisade but now, suddenly, the Huron dam broke, and like a flood the Iroquois poured through the breach. The yells, shrieks and shots began to come closer, and those

fleeing desperately for life now included men, both wounded and unwounded, all who had survived the struggle at the gate and on the stockade. From the exit to the ravine, through every gap in the palisade, some even jumping down from the wall, men and women frantically sought to escape from the doomed village.

On surged the Iroquois tide, killing as they came. As they approached the church, wherein huddled a number of the old and feeble who were too weak for flight, Daniel determined to give his life so as to delay, if only for a few moments, the pursuit of the Huron survivors.

"My brothers," he is reported to have said, "today we shall be in heaven."[9]

Then with crucifix upraised, he went forward to meet the Senecas who were surging toward his church. According to Ragueneau, they paused momentarily at sight of this strange apparition coming toward them, but only momentarily. Then, first one but followed immediately by many others, they raised their bows and loosed arrows at him. He was wounded in many places but still continued to live until a warrior with an arquebus despatched him with a ball into the chest.

Some of the Senecas dashed into the church to hatchet those who had sheltered there, and with burning brands set the building afire. Others continued on with the pursuit, while a group clustered about the body of the dead Father, tearing off his scalp, stripping him naked and then mutilat-

ing his body with club, knife, spear and hatchet. Finally, they picked up his corpse and hurled it into the blazing heart of this, his chapel.

While this was going on, a small detachment of the enemy had surprised and overwhelmed a nearby small and undefended hamlet. Now, with all resistance at an end, parties went out in pursuit of the fleeing Hurons. Most of these, spurred on by terror, were beyond their reach, but a number of women, cowering in the thickets were betrayed in their hiding places by the crying of their babies. In the village hell broke loose. Screaming survivors were dragged from places of concealment and, depending upon their age and strength, were either butchered on the spot or driven to join the herd of prisoners, mostly women and children, who were being collected by the gate. Senecas moved from lodge to lodge, gathering up the spoils which were loaded onto the backs of the fear-numbed captives. As each lodge was looted, the torch was applied to its tinder-dry bark walls. At the same time, others were lighting fires all along the line of the palisade, so that before long flames were leaping up from every cabin and from the wall, to rival those that roared and burst upward from the funeral pyre that had once been the chapel of St. Joseph.

That evening the first exhausted survivor reached Ste. Marie and gabbled out the ghastly news of what had happened to his people. Many hours before this, however, the Iroquois,

mindful of the fact that the countryside might be roused and a determined pursuit undertaken, had completed their work of destruction. Amid blows and abuse the unfortunate prisoners were heavily loaded with the spoils that had been seized and, then, at a fast pace, they were driven off in the direction of Iroquoia. As the sun dipped toward the western horizon on that Saturday of July 4th, 1648, all that remained of the once-proud settlement of Teanaustaye was the charred stumps of the palisade looking like a line of black and broken teeth, and the carpets of grey ash that had once been lodges and the church. In the spaces between, burned, mutilated and blood-stained, lay the bodies of men, women and children, twisted and distorted in the grotesque convulsions of death.[10]

How can one explain this military disaster, this overwhelming of a strong and populous village with a long tradition of martial valour? Father Paul Ragueneau, the Superior of the Jesuits in Huronia, attributed the defeat to the absence of warriors. "Last summer in the past year, 1648, the Iroquois, enemies of the Hurons, took from them two frontier villages from which most of the defenders had gone forth."[11] Certainly this was a contributing factor, but it seems to this writer that it was only a contributing factor, and that the immediate cause must be sought elsewhere.

Ragueneau in the same report estimated the population of St. Joseph as about four hundred families. Anthropologists have determined that in Indian tribes with a similar

agricultural-hunting life-style to that of the Hurons, the size of the family averaged from five to eight persons.[12] If, in this case, we take a conservative average of six, this would give us a population of about 2,400. He further states that while some 700, mostly women and children, were either killed or captured, many more escaped. If by "many more" we take the figure of 1,400, this would add the number of villagers up to 2,100. Added to this would be the prime warriors who were away with the fur flotilla, making for Three Rivers, and on the military expedition. There were 250 men all told with this flotilla, and on a percentage basis of the population of Huronia, St. Joseph's share would have been no more than fifty. Then there was the unsuccessful military expedition, and it seems unlikely that a single village would have put more than 200 or 250 warriors into the field. This, along with those away trading or hunting, would give us a rough figure of some 2,400 inhabitants.

If we further assume that approximately half the population would be male, this would give us some indication as to the size of the defending force. From 1,200 we must eliminate the 300 prime warriors who were away. Of the 900 males left at Teanaustaye, possibly half, boys under twelve and feeble old men, would be unfit for any sort of defensive role. This would leave us with a force consisting of teen-aged males who were not yet adult; middle-aged men past their best fighting years but still seasoned and capable;

and the hard core of prime warriors who had been left behind;[13] possibly a total of 400 to 450. Most of these would not have the strength or endurance for the hardships of a war band, but they would be most effective fighting from a raised platform behind a palisade. Even a twelve or thirteen-year-old boy could thrust a spear, hurl rocks or loose arrows down upon attackers on the ground below. Here every advantage would be with the defenders, who would require neither great endurance nor great strength to maintain their position, and it would seem that such a sized defensive force, if alert and resolute, should have been able to have held out against six hundred attackers. The case of Madeleine de Verchères who, with a handful of old soldiers and boys, fended off an Iroquois assaulting party, is a case in point.

Though Ragueneau does not do so specifically in this case, many Jesuit writers tended to attribute Huron reverses in the war to the Iroquois superiority in arquebuses provided, as they claimed, by their Dutch allies. Whether there was any overall superiority is doubtful, as official Dutch policy regarding the sale of guns was even more strict than that of the French. It has been completely forbidden, on pain of death, since March 31st, 1639,[14] though this edict was finally revoked in the summer of 1648 as being impossible to adequately enforce.[15] However, in the case of St. Joseph, the Senecas undoubtedly had superiority, as most

of the Huron arquebuses would have been taken along by the war party and by the trading expedition to Quebec. Conversely, the Senecas would have brought along all the guns on which they could have laid their hands. This would still, in all probability, have been only a few score, as Ragueneau in describing Daniel's death states, "they surrounded him on all sides and cover him with arrows, until having inflicted upon him a mortal wound with an arquebus shot which pierced him through and through in the very middle of his breast, he fell."[16] This is a fairly clear indication that the enemy still mainly relied on bows and arrows. Nevertheless, any advantage they had in this respect would not have been decisive. An archer, protected behind a palisade and able to loose off his arrows quickly and at close range, would be more effective than a slower firing arquebusier. An interesting fact, reported by Winston Churchill in his book The History of the English Speaking Peoples, is that a staff officer soon after Waterloo seriously suggested that the British Infantry should be armed with long bows rather than muskets, to increase both their range and their speed of discharge.

If neither lack of manpower nor weapon inferiority caused the tragedy, what then? This writer suggests that the clue to what happened is to be found in Chapter III, where Ragueneau reports how, in 1647, two Iroquois crept up during the night close to the wall of St. Joseph. The

sentinels were alert, calling back and forth to one another during the dark hours. At dawn, though, after satisfying themselves that there was no enemy about, they either left their posts or lay down on the watchtower floors to sleep. It was then that one of the Iroquois scaled the palisade, and coming upon two sleeping guards, slew one and threw the other down to his comrade for a like despatch. With this in mind, let us try to reconstruct what happened.

On July 3rd, the Senecas lay concealed along the ridges some fourteen miles southeast of Teanaustaye, until nightfall, when they would have set off, moving fast and silently toward their objective.[17] Their way led through the forested valley and there would have been no lack of guides; men who had been here on previous campaigns, as well as renegade Hurons. As far as the Huron advance scouts were concerned, these had probably kept a good watch during the day, but observing nothing suspicious had settled down to sleep when night came on. Sometime before dawn, the force reached the village, and while some remained hidden in nearby woods, a portion would have crept forward and hidden in the cornfields close by the walls. An official of the British Columbia Department of Agriculture estimated that such native corn would have stood from three to four feet in height at that date; amply tall enough to hide many prone men.

Militarily, the best time for a surprise attack is in the hour before dawn when morale is low and sentinels are

tired and most likely to be drowsy. As this did not happen, we can presume that they were alert and probably calling back and forth, one to the other, to ensure wakefulness. Then at dawn, as the sun began to edge over the horizon, the guards would have carefully scanned the countryside, only to find it peaceful and without trace of an enemy. Satisfied that there was no danger, some would have lain down to sleep where they were, others would have returned to their lodges while the Christians would probably have hastened directly to the church, where Father Daniel was preparing to celebrate the mass. No doubt they leaned their weapons, spears, bows or hatchets, by the door because Ragueneau in his first report on the affair mentions how at the first alarm, men from the congregation seized their weapons and ran to the fight.[18] Men going to an early service in a secure and fortified village would not normally carry their arms with them.

This was the moment, then, with the sun beginning to rise, most of the villagers rousing but still in their lodges, and with the palisade deserted, that the Seneca captain signalled the attack. Silently the warriors would have run forward, the more agile to climb the poles of the stockade and gain a foothold on the platform, while the others would hack and pull on the logs at the gate to make an opening.

Sometime during this period, someone saw them. Perhaps

it was a woman, come out from a cabin, or a guard roused from sleep by some unusual noise, but one glance would have brought horrified comprehension, and the scream of alarm that was echoed through the village.

We know then that the defenders seized their weapons and ran to the threatened area in a vain attempt to close the gap. Now, however, the odds would be strongly against them, with boys and older men trying to fight twice their number of seasoned warriors. The end was almost inevitable, and in this case the inevitable happened.

There is little more that needs be written. Two factors underline the horror of St. Joseph. One was the excellent planning and leadership of the Iroquois captains and the discipline of their followers. The other was the lack of leadership and discipline among the Hurons. Individually they seem to have been courageous and alert as far as they saw the need, but apparently there was no wise and powerful captain to ensure that watch was kept both day and night. The result was, as is usually the case, that the disciplined and well-led force gained the victory at Teanaustaye.

Footnotes

[1]Conrad Heidenreich, Huronia. A History and Geography of the Huron Indians 1600-1650 (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1971), pp. 81 ff, also Map 17.

[2]Francis X. Talbot, S. J., Saint Among the Hurons (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., Image Books, 1956), p. 193.

[3]Ibid., p. 133.

[4]Ibid., p. 225.

[5]Ibid., p. 193.

[6]Ibid., p. 206.

[7]R. G. Thwaites, ed., The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents, vol. 33 (Cleveland: Burrows Press, 1899), pp. 259 ff.

[8]Ibid., p. 261.

[9]Ibid., pp. 261 ff.

[10]Ibid. See also Talbot, Saint Among the Hurons, pp. 284 ff.

[11]Thwaites, ed., Jesuit Relations, vol. 34, p. 87.

[12]Heidenreich, Huronia, p. 99.

[13]Ibid. Conrad Heidenreich states: "David Thompson's observations among pre-epidemic Mandan populations in 1797-98, tends to reinforce the opinion that one warrior for every six or seven people in an agricultural North American Indian group is a reasonable estimate" [Thompson 1962:173]. This would give us a total of 400 prime warriors for St. Joseph. As 300 were absent, we can presume that approximately 100 would have remained as the hard core of the defending force.

[14]Kiliaen Van Rensselaer, Van Rensselaer-Bowier Manuscripts, Being the Letters of Kiliaen Van Rensselaer, 1630-1634, translated and compiled by A. J. F. Van Laer (Albany: University of the State of New York, 1908), p. 426.

[15]A. W. Trelease, Indian Affairs in Colonial New York: The 17th Century (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1960), p. 99.

[16]Thwaites, ed., Jesuit Relations, vol. 33, p. 263.

[17]Talbot, Saint Among the Hurons, p. 284.

[18]Thwaites, ed., Jesuit Relations, vol. 33, p. 261.

CHAPTER X

IROQUOIS STRATEGY IN 1649

There was a strange aftermath to the tragedy at St. Joseph and the martyrdom of Father Daniel. Sometime later his ghostly form appeared on two occasions before one of his fellow Jesuits. Father Ragueneau somewhat tersely described the incident as follows:

> In fact, by one of our number, a man of eminent piety and of well attested humility, Father Joseph Marie Chaumonot, he was seen once and again after death. But at first, when our Fathers were gathered in council and in planning, as was their wont, for the promotion of Christianity, Father Antoine was seen to appear in their midst to revive us all with his strong council and with the divine spirit which filled him. He seemed to be about thirty, as far as could be judged by his face, which presented to the Fathers a noble aspect quite unlike anything human. The Father was asked how divine goodness could suffer the body of his servant to be so shamefully treated after death, disfigured as if by a disgraceful wound, and to be so consumed by fire that nothing, not even a handful of ashes was left to us. "Great is the Lord," replied he, "and the most worthy of praise. He beheld the approach of his servant and to compensate for this in divine fashion he granted me many souls from purgatory to accompany my triumph in Heaven." 1

While this vision of Antoine Daniel no doubt gave the Fathers consolation, there was much in the realm of this world to give them concern. Many of the hundreds of refugees

from St. Joseph had been fed and cared for at Ste. Marie until they could be absorbed into neighbouring villages. The harvest from their destroyed town would have been lost, so it was necessary to provide for some thousand extra people out of the subsistence economies of the surrounding Indian communities. We can also be sure that with the increased terror gripping Huronia after the attack, the women of the villages would have been extremely reluctant to go out and work in the fields, risking the danger of capture. This neglect, added to all the extra mouths, made for a poor harvest insufficient to feed the people. By the following spring Ragueneau was reporting widespread starvation throughout the country.[2]

Some encouragement was no doubt felt at the safe return from Three Rivers of the fur flotilla with its two hundred and fifty warriors and with their story of the victory over the Mohawk war band blockading the St. Lawrence. This returning convoy, loaded with French goods, also brought back a small cannon for one of the bastions of Ste. Marie. Such a weapon would have been a valuable addition to the defences for now, with the frontier villages destroyed or abandoned, the Jesuit post was wide open to attack and must look to itself alone for protection.[3]

Meanwhile, what of the overall strategy of the war? Up to and including 1648 the Iroquois plan seemed to have called for a two-pronged attack. On the east the Mohawks, and to a

lesser extent the Oneidas, blockaded the Ottawa and St. Lawrence, while in addition they harried the French settlers and the local Algonquin Indians. In the west it was the Senecas, the Onondagas and the Cayugas who carried the war into Huronia, killing or capturing men, women and children, spreading terror and a sense of imminent doom throughout the land. In his book Huronia, Heidenreich points out that Iroquois tactics were flexible enough to adapt to the needs of the war.[4] Initially the Mohawks sent very large bands to blockade the Ottawa and the St. Lawrence. These bands would remain in the field for a number of weeks before returning to their villages, and the Huron fur traders, realizing this, would wait patiently far upstream until their enemies had retired and the way lay open to Montreal and Three Rivers. Then the Mohawk tactic changed, smaller forces were sent in, one relieving another, so that the blockade was maintained on a continuous basis and the rivers were effectively closed to anything but an extremely powerful convoy such as the one that forced its way through in 1648.

Conversely, the Senecas had originally staged their attacks on Huronia in the traditional Indian manner; small parties striking suddenly on a hit and run basis, interested primarily in captives and loot. Victory would never come with these haphazard methods and the Senecas also changed their tactics so that in forty-seven and even more in forty-eight they invaded with large well-led bands that were there

not for random opportunities, but with a clear and well-defined objective such as the capture and destruction of St. Joseph II.[5]

In 1649 the strategy seems to have changed. In that year the Mohawks appear, in large measure, to have abandoned the river blockade and the harassment of the French colonists. Jérome Lalemant, the Superior of the Jesuits, wrote in September that "the Iroquois have given us a little repose down here but I know not whether it will be for long."[6]

This may have been caused by the reverse suffered in the preceding year, but it does not seem likely. The defeated Iroquois force was estimated to be about one hundred strong, and many of these escaped owing to the Huron line giving way at the very outset of the fight. Probably no more than fifty were either killed or captured, and this would not have been a loss of sufficient magnitude to cause the Mohawks to give up the struggle. What, then, was the reason for the suspension of the war against New France?

Hunt suggests that by the winter of 1648-49 the Mohawks and Senecas came to realize that their policy of blockade and of pushing in the Huron frontier by the capture of border towns would neither break the encircling alliance of hostile peoples, nor would it divert the trade to them. Only if the Hurons could be driven from the area about Georgian Bay might the Five Nations be confident of a plentiful supply of furs and the resulting prosperity. Such a

dispersal would require an attack right into the heartland of the country, to Ste. Marie itself and to the nearby fortified villages. A large force would be required, and to provide this the Mohawks moved west in this winter to join with the Senecas and other Upper Iroquois tribes in a combined operation against Huronia.[7]

Also it may be that the Mohawks were finding that their task in this conflict was both arduous and unprofitable. During forty-five and forty-six the fur convoys had not been attacked because of the peace talks and the subsequent peace. In the following year no convoys had come down from Huronia, while the strongly protected one in 1648 had forced its way through. Thus for four years the fur-starved Mohawks had taken no rich prizes while their brothers, the Senecas, were gaining great profit and many prisoners from the capture of such a town as St. Joseph II. A campaign in the west against a rich but demoralized people would certainly have been looked upon with favour by the Mohawk warriors.

Sometime in the autumn of 1648 the Iroquois tribes must have come together to determine their objectives and lay their plans. What were these objectives?

It will be remembered that in the preceding winter many villagers from St. Ignace, while on a hunting expedition towards the southern boundary, had been attacked, first by a Seneca and later by a Mohawk raiding party. This had resulted in a considerable number of casualties, either

killed or captured, among the Hurons, and it must have made the survivors realize that they and their village were vulnerable to the enemy. In the early spring of that year, 1648, they began the task of building a new and stronger village some four or five miles to the north and six or seven miles to the east of Ste. Marie. From the description in the Jesuit Relations and from the archaeological diggings of Wilfred Jury at the site, a description of St. Ignace II, or Taenhatentaron to give it its Indian name, can be formulated.

It was situated on the east bank of the Sturgeon River on an area of land projecting out from a north-south ridge. This land was some fifteen acres in extent and was surrounded by steep ravines on three sides, along the base of which ran the Sturgeon River and two of its tributaries. They were covered with a tangled mass of shrubs and creepers through which it would have been extremely difficult to force a way. These slopes ranged in height from twenty to fifty feet and even had an enemy managed to climb upward, the noise and difficulty of his ascent would have revealed him to an alert defence. The spur itself was joined to the main ridge by a stretch of level ground which was the only practical way of approach and which was, therefore, from a military point of view, the only weak area. Apart from this it was a naturally strong defensive position. It is not certain whether the French assisted in the selection of this site, but their

advice was apparently taken with regard to the planning of the fortifications. The palisade, built of pine poles, ranged in height from fifteen to twenty feet, and Jury, reporting on his archaeological excavations in 1946, wrote as follows:

> It was apparent that the site was a highly strategic one for defence purposes. At no place within a radius of several miles had nature provided a stronger defence, flanked on three sides by the banks of the Sturgeon River and two of its tributaries. A small space only, to the east, remained unprotected by nature.
>
> Our attention was first directed to this weak point in the fortifications, and exploratory trenches were run in that region. We were rewarded by the discovery of an inner row of palisade post holes at a distance of twenty-five feet from the outer palisade. At the south-east corner . . . a complicated maze of post lines came to light. No immediate explanation can be offered concerning their meaning but it is reasonable to surmise that they were part of the scheme for defence, possibly the remnants of posts that upheld a platform near one of the main entrances of the village. All post-moulds of the palisade were in a staggered position about one foot apart. Thus we know that the walls consisted of brush and bark woven into upright posts, but in the eastern section, and only in this section, gaps of four to eight feet were found in both the outer and inner palisades. The apparent carelessness of the builders in leaving this side thus exposed, in spite of their obvious plans to doubly fortify it, can be explained only, if at the time of its destruction the village was still under construction and the material for building was being carried through these gaps from the level lands to the east, rather than up the high banks that surrounded the other three sides. Substantiating this belief were several large ash pits located some six to eight feet within the eastern walls. We believe that these are the remains of fires used for buring the poles to a length suitable for building purposes. Had the village been completed, the remains of such fires would have disappeared.

The Indians, as is well known, followed the practice of burning poles to a cone-shaped point, and the charred remains of such points were clearly discernable throughout the foundations of all the buildings and palisades on the site.

As we extended our exploratory trenches in the vicinity of the palisades, a line of posts became evident, a distance of eight feet apart and four feet within the palisade wall which proved to encircle the whole site. These imprints were undoubtedly the remains of posts that had upheld a platform or catwalk for defence in case of attack. It was from such platforms that the Indians threw rocks and poured boiling water upon attacking bands. They were built by placing posts, usually four or five feet within the village walls and attaching cross pieces from the posts to the walls upon which rested a flooring of poles. . . .

At the north-west corner of the site where the Sturgeon River bends, the bank is fifty feet deep. There is a ledge consisting of approximately an acre of land, about eight feet below the level of the village. At the brink of the bank, a line of Wintemberg's [the late W. J. Wintemberg, of the National Museum of Canada, who dug at this site 1937-38] stakes followed for twelve feet beyond the walls of the village. Another line of Wintemberg's stakes left the village walls one hundred and forty feet to the east. No explanation can be given for Wintemberg not having completed these lines. Post moulds came to light readily and surrounded this ledge, except for a short distance in the western section where water erosion had destroyed the evidence. This area then, had been surrounded by a palisade similar to the palisade that surrounded the village. It is probable that this compound served as an additional fortification for the village at a point which was vulnerable to attack by water, providing also a place in which to store canoes and to house visiting tribes. It was a custom for Indian villages to have accommodation for visitors outside the walls. The gates of the village could be closed and the visitors, friendly or otherwise, would be relatively safe within the outer compound. A thorough investigation of this tract of land yielded no evidence of buildings or of storage pits. . . .

The village site had two well-protected gate-

ways. In the north-west corner a ten-foot laneway, eighty feet long, ran through the compound just described, into the village proper. A gateway led from the village to the compound, and a second one probably from the compound to the river, but this second gateway must only be conjectured, as it is at this point that erosion of the river banks has destroyed all evidence. The path however can be traced to the river's edge and at this point only, is the slope to the river gradual.

The second gateway was in the opposite or south-east corner. Here a similar laneway extended throughout both palisades to the flat land beyond. It was around this opening that the maze of post moulds mentioned above and still unexplainable, were found. Both laneways were barred by gates, as indicated by a series of post moulds at intervals of twenty feet through which there were openings. . . . Thus the builders provided against an attack by assault. As with the palisades, evidence of a catwalk or platform ran on both sides of the laneways. This method of protecting the gateways was an innovation in Indian warfare and was not found in pre-European fortifications. . . .

The excavation revealed an Indian village site surrounded by a strongly constructed palisade. To the east a double palisade existed, and in the north-west corner a double palisade enclosure, a rather large compound which bore no evidence of buildings. The two main entrances to the village were squared with lengthy laneways of a construction obviously planned for strong defence, as were the palisade walls with their catwalk or platform.

The houses in the village numbered twenty-seven and were placed orderly, [sic] running from the centre of the site to the palisade, with only two exceptions. Obviously the village was built under European influence. Prehistoric Indian village sites show no such orderliness in the planning of the longhouses. Prehistoric longhouses too, were of half the width found here and therefore were constructed without centre poles. The cooking fires were in the centre rather than to the side of these [prehistoric] houses. The number of doorways in the longhouses on this site and their method of construction was European. Definite European influence is found in the fact that split timber was used, especially in site 26, where the

> walls were split timber throughout. The division of rooms, the fence, the split timber walls, the doorways, all point to the fact that site 26 was a purely European building.
>
> In the palisades too the square corners and straight laneways indicate that the builders were under European direction. 8

This strongly fortified, and to judge by the size and number of longhouses, populous Indian town was to be the first objective of the Iroquois attack in the early months of 1649. Some three miles away, in an easterly direction across the intervening Vasey Ridge, lay St. Louis on the banks of the Hog River. While St. Ignace II, like St. Joseph II, was inhabited by members of the Cord or Barking Dog tribe, St. Louis was one of the principal villages of the People Beyond the Silted Lake, a tribe that so far had been sheltered by others and had not felt the terrible weight of the sledge hammer blows of their enemies. Like St. Ignace II, St. Louis was also fortified under French direction, but it seems to have been a smaller village. Elsie McLeod Jury, writing in the Canadian Geographical Journal, stated:

> It was situated similarly to St. Ignace, on a flat plateau rising above the winding Hog River. . . . In places a slight mound along the river bank marked the palisade wall. The excavations again revealed the remains of an Indian village where French strategists had aided in straightening palisade walls and squaring corners. In place of saplings, split posts had been used. The dwellings, in this case paralleled the walls, and, situated in the centre of the compound was a European structure similar in plan, although half the size of the central building or church at St. Ignace. 9

Heidenreich estimated its population at six hundred[10] which, taking the rule of thumb of one warrior for every six people, would give us a first line fighting force of one hundred men, and these approximate numbers seem to be borne out by Ragueneau in his report of its capture.[11]

Heidenreich also estimates the population of St. Ignace II as eight hundred, a somewhat low figure in the opinion of this writer. Jury in his digging discovered, among other structures, the remains of nineteen similar sized longhouses, each of which, apart from several that apparently were unfinished, contained ten fire pits. Normally two families would share a fire, but as these were laid out in a double row on either side of central poles, it is possible that each family had its own. Taking six as average family size, this would give us a population of 1,140, a figure somewhat more in keeping with the ten acre area of the village site.

Three miles to the west of St. Louis on the Wye River lay Ste. Marie, the Jesuit stronghold which by now had, in large measure, become the heart and centre of Huronia and the Huron Nation. The Iroquois plan, as revealed by events, was to first take St. Ignace and then move on to St. Louis. It would seem probable that their further intention was then to assault Ste. Marie and if this fortress should fall, the likelihood was that all further resistance by the demoralized Hurons would cease. The first two objectives in this plan were to be achieved but, because of the gallantry of a small

band of Huron warriors, the crowning success, the destruction of Ste. Marie, was to be staved off for a few brief weeks.

Footnotes

[1]R. G. Thwaites, ed., The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents, vol. 33 (Cleveland: Burrows Press, 1899), p. 267.

[2]Ibid., vol. 34, p. 197.

[3]Ibid., vol. 33, p. 255.

[4]Conrad Heidenreich, Huronia. A History and Geography of the Huron Indians 1600-1650 (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Ltd., 1971), p. 275.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Thwaites, ed., Jesuit Relations, vol. 34, p. 85.

[7]George T. Hunt, The Wars of the Iroquois. A Study in Intertribal Trade Relations (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1940), p. 91.

[8]W. W. Jury, "St. Ignace II," Canadian Catholic Historical Association, 1946-1947, pp. 15-27.

[9]Elsie McLeod Jury, "Indian Village and Mission Site of Huronia," Canadian Geographical Journal, Ottawa, September 1963, p. 101.

[10]Heidenreich, Huronia, p. 102.

[11]Thwaites, ed., Jesuit Relations, vol. 34, p. 125.

CHAPTER XI

DISASTER AT ST. IGNACE II AND ST. LOUIS

In the autumn of 1648 a force of about a thousand Iroquois left their own country, beginning a long journey that would cover some two hundred leagues and carry them almost to the walls of Ste. Marie. Ragueneau reported that they were "well furnished with weapons, and mostly with firearms which they obtained from the Dutch, their allies," and that they had hunted the forests throughout the winter.[1]

It is interesting to speculate as to why this powerful force would have left its own country in the autumn and crossed over into what is now Ontario. They may have hunted, but obviously their purpose was war, a fact that would be clearly evident to any who happened to observe them. This would seem to increase the possibility that word of their presence would reach Huronia and so eliminate the element of surprise. Brébeuf had reported that the Hurons maintained spies in Iroquoia. "They maintain paid spies among the Neutral Nations, and even among their enemies, through whom they are secretly notified of all their plots."[2]

One possible explanation may have been in the attitude of the Neutral tribe. In the autumn of the preceding year,

as mentioned earlier, a Seneca war band returning from Huronia visited a Neutral town. Rightly or wrongly, they blamed this particular community for violating the rules of hospitality by allowing a Seneca warrior to be captured at their gates some months before by his Huron enemies. After a courteous welcome, the Senecas, at a secret signal, massacred many of the inhabitants and carried others off into slavery. At the time the Hurons hoped that this would draw the Neutrals into the war on their side, but nothing happened. However, it may have been that there were secret plans afoot for these people to enter the conflict against the Iroquois, which would probably have tipped the balance against them, so it is possible and logical that this powerful force left its own country in the autumn with the intention of first cowing the Neutrals into quiescence before moving on to their main goals. There is nothing in the Jesuit Relations to either confirm or disprove this theory, but it seems the only reasonable explanation as to why the Seneca-Mohawk army would prematurely reveal its strength and risk losing the element of surprise. Whether word of its presence did indeed reach Huronia is uncertain. Ragueneau does say that the enemy arrived by night at the frontier of the country without the Hurons having any knowledge of their approach. It must be borne in mind, though, that with the borders being so much compressed, the frontier was only a few miles from their first objective. On the other hand, writing about St. Ignace

he stated, "This first village . . . which had been abandoned by most of its people at the beginning of the winter, the most apprehensive and the most clear-sighted having withdrawn from it foreboding the danger."[3] This would seem to indicate that the villagers of St. Ignace had some knowledge of coming danger, though no exact knowledge as to when the blow would fall. Obviously the assumption of those who did not flee was that the danger would come in the spring or summer, the traditional time for Indian war.

After a winter of hunting through the deep snows and dense forests, the Iroquois moved towards their first objective, the newly-built and strongly fortified village of St. Ignace II, sometime during the first half of March. Heidenreich, using Bressani as his source, states: "In the spring of 1649 they destroyed 'two or three frontier villages' in the vicinity of St. Ignace II,[4] and then the main mission of St. Ignace II and St. Louis. The 'two or three frontier villages' were probably St. Jean, St. Joachim and Arethsi."[5]

It would appear to this writer that Dr. Heidenreich has made an error in interpretation. If the Iroquois had previously taken two or three frontier villages before going on to their main objectives, the whole countryside would have been roused and in a turmoil as it was after the destruction of St. Ignace II and St. Louis. Ragueneau, who wrote at the time,[6] made no mention of these supplementary disasters. Although Father Bressani was also in Huronia, he did not

make his report until more than four years later, after he had returned to Italy, when he stated:

> The enemy had already taken two or three frontier villages. The others had sufficiently fortified themselves, but in the winter of the year 1649, more than a thousand Iroquois came so secretly through the woods for the space of more than six hundred miles that at the dawn of day on the sixteenth of March they appeared unexpectedly at the gates of the first fort of the Hurons called St. Ignace. 7

Bressani's writing is here somewhat ambiguous, but obviously he was not referring to an attack in the "spring" of 1649 on the villages of St. Jean, St. Joachim and Arethsi, all of which were close to St. Ignace II, but rather to the capture of the frontier communities of St. Joseph II and the unnamed hamlet, in the preceding summer.

From what direction the Iroquois army approached St. Ignace II is not known. They may have come in across the ridges and valleys to the east, an area that had been abandoned by its inhabitants, or they may have moved along the north-south ridge, on a projecting spur of which lay their goal. As there was still snow on the ground, moving along the more open uplands would have been easier than crossing the forest-tangled valleys, but there is no firm evidence in the Jesuit Relations from which to establish any particular route.

On the night of March 15th-16th, and with apparently sure knowledge of its location, they approached the village. While the main force rested at a distance, scouts were sent

ahead to reconnoitre the palisade walls, and almost immediately they must have discovered the incompleted gaps that had been left on the eastern side to facilitate the bringing in of building logs. There were some four hundred Hurons in the village at the time, but apparently they had posted no sentinels, a folly equal to that of leaving unprotected openings in the double stockade. It is almost inconceivable that a people at war and with the grim example of what had happened at St. Joseph II a few months before could be so criminally careless. The construction of the fortifications shows that they were under French influence, and one wonders, if their two priests, the Fathers Brébeuf and Lalemant, had been in the village on that night, would better precautions have been taken, or was it a case of general overconfidence born of the belief that there was no danger of an attack while the winter snows were on the ground?

At dawn, or possibly shortly before, the main Iroquois force, led by their scouts, must have silently filed through the breaches in the double wall. Once inside, and with disciplined precision, they would have spread out to cover each of the twenty-seven buildings inside the fortifications. At a given signal, possibly a war cry or an arquebus shot, they would have rushed into the longhouses, clubbing or hatcheting any who opposed them, and herding the rest into terrified groups. There was some slight resistance as ten Iroquois were killed, along with many more Hurons, but the

surprise was complete and only three men, almost naked, managed to escape and run frantically, with terror at their heels, through the wooded valley and across the snow-covered Vasey uplands to bring the terrible news to St. Louis, some three miles to the west.

In this latter village, as the three men gasped out their awful story, there was a growing tumult of fear and confusion. Before long this fear and confusion took on a purpose, to get away, to hide in the dark and secret depths of the forest. Soon a terrified throng of some five hundred fugitives, mostly women and children, began to pour out through the gates, leaving a force of about eighty, mostly warriors, to defend the place.

In St. Ignace the Iroquois army showed its excellent discipline. It might have been expected of a force of men which had for months been on the winter trail that they would have indulged in an orgy of feasting, torture and rape that could have gone on for hours or days, but this did not happen. Almost immediately, after providing for a garrison to guard the prisoners and defend the village against counter-attack, the main body pushed on to St. Louis, arriving outside its walls just before sunrise. The Jesuit Relations give little description of this village, but we do have the report of Wilfred Jury who headed archaeological expeditions which dug at the site in 1951 and the following summers.

The area formed a plateau bounded on the east and the

north by a sweeping curve of the Hog River. On the west was the five to seven foot bank of an almost dried-up stream that ran into the river at the northwest corner of the location. Only in the south and southwest sectors was there no natural protection. Along the eastern boundary the land dropped sharply for some fifty feet down to the river and these slopes were covered with a tangled mass of cedar, elm and white birch. On the north the slope was much more gradual, descending to the river in two distinct terraces. In general, the ground fell away gently from a high point in the northeast corner down to the southwest limit of the village which in shape might be very roughly described as rectangular with its length running north and south and its width east and west.[8]

St. Louis was apparently surrounded by a single stockade on which Jury reports as follows:

> By a series of trenchings, post moulds of a palisade were discovered and completely traced during the three summers. Some difficulty was encountered in the cultivated field to the southwest, which is the only portion not naturally defended by a bank or gully. Considerable test trenching was necessary in this area before the line of post moulds was located. It was expected that, as at St. Ignace, a double line of palisades would be found in this area where it was not naturally protected, but although an extensive search was made, no indication of a second line was found.
>
> Two breaks occurred in the palisade line, one to the east where the Hog River had cut into the bank and an estimated one hundred and fifty feet of the original bank had disappeared. On the west erosion had destroyed the bank and erased all

evidence for a hundred-foot distance. Entrances may have been located at these two points. . . .

The moulds in the palisade ranged in size from two inches in diameter to large split posts seventeen inches in diameter. They extended to an average depth of two and a half feet below the present sod level. The areas where banking was still in evidence proved that they had originally been supported by at least three feet of soil.

Whereas in dwelling sites, single post moulds occurred at intervals along the walls, in the palisades the moulds touched and often appeared as a continuous line. The poles had been placed side by side, with smaller poles as fillers for the gaps where crooked or outsized poles had caused irregularities.

The palisade post moulds could be followed best at a depth of eighteen inches to two feet where the definite outline of a trench could be traced by a mixture of subsoil and top soil. Where the timber of the posts had completely disintegrated leaving practically no stains at a higher level, the outline could be traced at this depth because of the carbon deposit resulting from burning the ends of the posts before placing them in the ground. Tracing the moulds to their extremity, the base of the trench was dotted with small black indentations where the points of the posts had lodged.

The moulds that remained most definite were those of cedar posts. Where disintegration had occurred, leaving little or no evidence, we assume that softer timbers such as bass wood, elm, maple and birch had been used.

Fragments of charcoal and carbonized bark occurred in the line of the palisades and an occasional clam shell was found, suggesting that shells had been employed in digging the trench. In places there were deposits of carbonized elm bark, especially on the inside of the line. It is possible that sheets of bark had been placed along the wall to prevent missiles being shot through the crevices. These deposits occurred chiefly on the east where the soil had been relatively undisturbed and where mounds had been visible.

> Whereas on an Indian site saplings were used for the palisade, at St. Louis the palisade had been built of split posts, some of them seventeen inches wide. An Indian stockade follows roughly an oval or egg shape. At St. Louis there were pointed corners. The posts of an Indian-built palisade are placed irregularly and the line curves and wavers. The lines were straight at St. Louis, the posts having been placed in straight trenches.
>
> On the river side the palisade followed the contour of the bank yet the trench remained uniform in width and did not stagger or zigzag. From the southern-most point on the bank the line extended due north-west for two hundred and fifty feet and turned due north for two hundred and forty-five feet.
>
> On a spit of land formed by a bow in the river the palisade came to a sixty degree angle. Unrelated post moulds occurred inside the angle. This feature had every appearance of being a lookout, not unlike a European pointed bastion and similar to the one uncovered at the south end of the European compound at Ste. Marie. The straight lines, true bearings and equilateral triangles indicate an application of surveying that was unknown to the Indians. 9

Before sunrise the Iroquois force was outside St. Louis. Its eighty defenders, supported by the presence of the two priests, Father Jean de Brébeuf and Father Gabriel Lalemant, were all prepared to sell their lives dearly. Almost immediately the enemy must have mounted an assault against the palisade wall, and while there is no knowledge as to where this attack went in, it would in all probability have been across the open ground to the southwest, where there was no natural defence. No doubt the Iroquois, flushed by their easy success at St. Ignace, hoped that a wild rush would carry the place, but in this they were disappointed. One

can visualize the foremost and bravest of them reaching the stockade wall, hacking and prying with their hatchets to try and force an opening, but being beaten back under a hail of arrows, arquebus balls, rocks and javelins, showered down upon them by the defenders.

A second attack was soon organized, this time no doubt, with more care. The palisade was some fifteen to sixteen feet high and it would be logical to presume that they would carry forward young saplings, the branches of which had been lopped off, to serve as scaling ladders. The fighting must have been sharp and the defenders resolute because these two unsuccessful assaults cost the Iroquois some thirty killed and many more wounded before they were finally beaten back.

Apparently undeterred, despite these severe casualties, the Iroquois rallied for a third attempt. Again we have no knowledge as to just where this was made and all that Ragueneau reports is that, "Finally number has the advantage. The Iroquois, having undermined with blows of their hatchets the palisade stakes and having made a passage for themselves through considerable breaches . . . the enemy having entered victoriously, had reduced everything to desolation."[10]

It may be that this final and successful effort was made against the same place in the stockade that had been previously attempted and no doubt already weakened. On the other hand, the second attack may have been a ruse to draw and hold the defenders at what seemed the place of greater

danger, while a body of the enemy approached unobserved toward some lightly guarded sector of the wall. Jury suggests that the two areas where all traces of the palisade have disappeared owing to erosion, the one along the steep eastern bank and the other by the creek in the northwest of the perimeter, may either or both be places where a breach was made. He reasons that in both places the poles were probably close to the edge and the attackers could have cut into the bank to bring a section of the palisade crashing down.

Wherever the entrance was forced, and from Ragueneau's writing it would appear to have been only at one place, the alarm must have been sounded and the Huron warriors must have rushed to try and block the gap. There was fighting at the breach and one of the two Fathers was at this point baptizing catechumens. In this desperate situation one Huron warrior suggested flight, but a chief rejected the idea because the two priests, the one frail and the other elderly, would be unable to escape with them.

Once the Iroquois had made their initial break in the palisade, it would soon have been widened and within a very short time the few score defenders would have been overwhelmed and made captive by their enemies. Then followed the normal aftermath of such a victory. The longhouses were ransacked and set on fire, while those of the prisoners who were seriously wounded or otherwise incapable of marching

were either butchered or thrown into the flames. For some unexplained reason, possibly a desire to return quickly to their base at St. Ignace, the Iroquois did not fire and destroy the palisade, and this omission was to prove costly to them on the following day.

Towards nine o'clock in the morning, watchers on the lookouts at Ste. Marie, three miles to the west, saw the flames and smoke, and by the colour of the smoke they "understood sufficiently what was happening." Almost immediately after, two Christians who had escaped from the doomed village arrived to confirm the worst fears of the watching Jesuits.[11]

At St. Louis the captives, including Fathers Brébeuf and Lalemant, were stripped naked and some preliminary torture, such as the tearing out of nails, was commenced. Soon, though, they were driven out onto the trail back across the Vasey ridge to St. Ignace. Here they were greeted by a throng of Iroquois armed with sticks and cudgels, and forced to run the gauntlet as their bodies were bruised and beaten under a hail of savage blows. The torture of prisoners was common among both the Hurons and the Iroquois and in this case Father Brébeuf was selected as the first victim.

Sometime in the late morning his sufferings began. Father Ragueneau, basing his information on the reports of eye witnesses who later escaped, described them in detail, but this would be unnecessary for the purposes of this work.

Suffice it to say that among other horrors he was seared with red hot hatchet blades, his waist was encircled with a resinous belt of burning bark, his body was three times scalded with boiling water in an awful mockery of baptism, this latter being done by renegade Hurons serving with the Iroquois, and at some period during his anguish his lips were girdled and his tongue torn out to prevent him calling words of encouragement to his fellow captives. Finally, at about four in the afternoon as he was on the point of death, his heart was torn out and eaten so that his captors might acquire some of his great courage.

Several hours later it was the turn of Father Gabriel Lalemant, who was to suffer throughout the long night. His tortures were similar to those of Father Brébeuf and, though a small frail man, he was to linger on until nine o'clock on the following morning. Then, at the point of death, his heart was also torn out and eaten in savage recognition of his fortitude.

While the names of these two martyrs have come down in history, it must not be forgotten that the bravest of the Huron captives would also have died in the same way, though their individual sufferings were not to be chronicled. Also, while we may condemn these terrible happenings as the work of barbarous savages, it must be remembered that at this same time the rack, boot, thumb screw and faggot were still being employed in civilized Europe.

Footnotes

[1]R. G. Thwaites, ed., The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents, vol. 34 (Cleveland: Burrows Press, 1899), p. 123.

[2]Jean de Brébeuf, The Travels and Sufferings of Father Jean de Brébeuf Among the Hurons of Canada, Theodore Besterman, editor and translator (London: The Golden Cockerel Press, 1938), p. 135.

[3]Thwaites, ed., Jesuit Relations, vol. 34, p. 125.

[4]Ibid., vol. 39, p. 247.

[5]Conrad Heidenreich, Huronia. A History and Geography of the Huron Indians 1600-1650 (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Ltd., 1971), p. 53.

[6]Thwaites, ed., Jesuit Relations, vol. 34, p. 123.

[7]Ibid., vol. 39, p. 247.

[8]Wilfred Jury & Elsie McLeod Jury, Saint Louis--Huron Indian Village and Jesuit Mission Site, Museum Bulletin No. 10, Museum of Indian Archaeology, University of Western Ontario, London, 1955, p. 3.

[9]Ibid., p. 13 ff.

[10]Thwaites, Jesuit Relations, vol. 34, p. 127.

[11]Ibid.

CHAPTER XII

THE SECOND BATTLE FOR ST. LOUIS REPRIEVES STE. MARIE

Though the night of March 16th-17th must have been terrible in the captured village of St. Ignace, given over as it was to an orgy of torture and rape, the Iroquois leaders never for a moment lost sight of their main purpose. In the evening, scouts were sent out to reconnoitre Ste. Marie, some six miles to the west. This fortress, now in the front line, stood like a great rock against which the enemy wave was beginning to lap. That night, and for many nights to come, its garrison stood to arms, with the palisades and watch-towers manned by sentinels whose eyes strained to make out any movement in the darkness beyond the walls. Arquebuses were ready and the small cannon, mounted on a bastion, would have been laid to sweep a possible area of attack. No doubt it was loaded almost to the muzzle with musket balls or gravel, so as to act like grape-shot against an enemy force.

Sometime during the night the scouts returned to St. Ignace and a council of war was immediately convened to hear their reports. They would have told of the strength of the fortress and the alertness of the defenders, but measured

against this in the minds of the council was the known fact that the garrison was extremely small, less than fifty fighting men in all. It must have seemed an insignificant number at this moment, when they were sweeping everything before them, and all there knew that the greatest triumph they could achieve in Huronia would be to capture and destroy the French stronghold. With it gone the demoralized Hurons would lose whatever heart they still had left. Under these circumstances the Iroquois council decided to make an attack on the following day.

Meanwhile, refugees and runners had carried word of the twin disasters out to the west and southwest, the region inhabited by the Bear nation, the most powerful of the Huron tribes. So far this area had been unravaged by the war, as the Iroquois thrust had come from the east and the southeast. From their chief village, Ossossane or La Conception on Nottawasaga Bay, and from another, La Magdalen, some three hundred Bear warriors hurriedly armed and set off towards the danger area. They must have travelled on the night of March 16th-17th, and by morning they were in an ambush position somewhere on the trail between the abandoned, fire-ravaged shell of St. Louis and the fortifications of Ste. Marie. Either they had had word from spies or else they had correctly assumed that the Iroquois would attempt to capture Ste. Marie. Apparently it was their intention to try and inflict a sharp reverse on the enemy advance guard while

they awaited powerful reinforcements from other Huron villages.

The plan seemed as though it might succeed, as a force of two hundred of the enemy left St. Ignace well ahead and therefore unsupported by their main body. Somewhere, not far from St. Louis, this force encountered the advance guards of the Hurons and after a few minutes of skirmishing these latter took flight, hotly pursued by the Iroquois. Panic breeds panic, and as the terrified men fell back on their main force many other Bear warriors, probably about half the total number, joined the fear-crazed rout. Floundering through the snow, many were overtaken and killed in a pursuit that continued almost to the walls of Ste. Marie.

Not all the Hurons broke though. Some one hundred and fifty of them held their ground and fought so successfully against those who attacked them that they forced this portion of the now scattered enemy to retreat. The Iroquois sought safety inside the breached palisade of St. Louis, but here they were given no time to block the gap. The Bear warriors, close behind, poured in and after a brief struggle triumphed, taking some thirty captives. What happened to these prisoners is not related, but in all probability they were promptly put to death because their captors had none that they could spare to act as guards.

The main body of the enemy, while close, had not yet reached St. Louis, but they would very soon have received

word of the defeat of their comrades. One can imagine that in this short respite the Hurons used the time to drag charred timbers into the breach to form a barricade. Soon the Iroquois were in position to make their first attack, but this was driven back after heavy fighting.

Ragueneau only gives the briefest details of this battle, although it went on throughout most of the day and quite far into the night. There must have been many assaults made against the damaged palisade, while the defenders on a number of occasions sallied forth and drove back the attackers in savage fighting. Finally, when there was only a score of Hurons left, and most of these wounded, human courage could do no more and St. Louis fell, for the second time. It had been a costly victory for the Iroquois, however, for one of their leading chiefs had been gravely wounded and they had lost nearly a hundred men in the many hours of fighting.[1]

"All night our French were in arms waiting to see at our gates this victorious enemy,"[2] wrote Ragueneau, but that night and the following day a strange and unnatural silence hung over the country. Terror gripped the Huron villages. At Ste. Marie the French waited grimly for the onslaught, while the Iroquois, ensconced at St. Ignace, made no move. What went on there is not recorded, but we can imagine that on that day many men died at the stake so as to make sport for their conquerors.

March 19th was the feast day of St. Joseph, the patron of the country, and on that day, according to Ragueneau, their prayers were answered and "a sudden panic fell upon the hostile camp, some withdrawing in disorder and others thinking only of flight."[3] The Iroquois certainly withdrew on that day, though the word 'panic' may be an overstatement of their frame of mind. They seem to have gone about their preparations methodically enough, eliminating such prisoners as would not be able to keep up on the march, by a blow from a hatchet or else by tying them to stakes inside the long-houses which were then fired. With St. Ignace in flames, the remaining captives were heavily loaded with plunder and then driven out on the long trail that led to Iroquoia. The time taken to complete this destruction and the marshalling of a column of slow-moving prisoners does not seem to be the work of men fleeing in blind panic. Again, on the march south some Hurons were tied to stakes and burned, a time-consuming form of cruelty not likely to be indulged in by men running away in terror.

One person, an old woman, managed to escape from St. Ignace, and she carried the news of the Iroquois retirement to St. Michel, the village of the Deer tribe. Here there were seven hundred men in arms, and on receiving this information they set out in pursuit. The chase, if such it could be called, lasted for two days, but the men of St. Michel made no attempt to close with their enemy, and finally gave

up on the grounds that they had run out of provisions. Ragueneau suggested that the real reasons were an inferiority in firearms compared with the other side, and a reluctance to engage a victorious Iroquois force without overwhelming superiority in numbers. Of these two, the latter is probably the real cause, as it is unlikely that the invaders had any significant advantage in arquebuses. If the Hurons had been bolder, it is quite possible that they might have been successful because the Iroquois, their numbers depleted by casualties and with their wounded, their prisoners and their plunder to be either cared for or guarded, were in no position to beat off a strong attack by a determined enemy of almost equal number. However, the attack was not made, and the warriors of the Five Nations returned to their homeland without hindrance.

To summarize, this lightning campaign vividly portrays Huron folly and indecision as compared to Iroquois leadership and discipline. St. Ignace II was a strong position and the people, to judge by the number who had left, were apprehensive of attack and yet it was left unguarded and with openings in the palisade through which an enemy could pour. Even though winter still gripped the land, making attack unlikely, it is difficult to comprehend that the villagers could have been so blind to the possibility. Here the French must take some share of the blame. They had obviously acquired considerable influence over the people, both in the matter of

religion and in such secular fields as the designing of the fortifications, and it is hard to understand why they did not use this influence to ensure that there were temporary barricades at the gaps in the stockade and guards posted at all times. After the disaster in St. Joseph II the need for such precautions would seem to have been self-evident.

At St. Louis, thanks to the warning given, the Hurons put up a good fight and cannot be faulted for their conduct. On the following day, however, March 17th, their performance left much to be desired. Apart from the one hundred and fifty who defended St. Louis during its second siege with such outstanding gallantry, there was cowardice and indecision. Half of the three hundred Bear warriors fled at first contact with the enemy, and almost without firing a shot or loosing an arrow. Then there was the 'powerful help' that was expected by this force. There were about fifteen Bear tribe villages, and two of them, La Conception and La Magdalen, had raised three hundred warriors, but the other thirteen apparently put no fighting men into the field. Added to this were the villages belonging to other tribes such as St. Michel, where a band of seven hundred warriors was armed and waiting, no doubt wondering what to do, when the old woman reached there with the news of the Iroquois retirement. Had some or all of these men come with the 'powerful help' that was expected by their comrades in St. Louis who fought throughout the long day and far into the

night, they might at the very least have succoured them and at best inflicted a defeat upon the Iroquois who would have been caught in a pincers between the defenders and the relieving force. Obviously this failure was due to fear, hesitation, and a woeful lack of leadership, and here again the French and the Jesuits must take a considerable share of the blame. The Bear tribe was referred to by Ragueneau as the Christian nation[4] because of the great measure of influence that the priests had there achieved. If native leadership failed, why did not the resident priests, or others sent post haste from Ste. Marie, hasten to the villages to rally the warriors and encourage them to go to the support of their fellows? Further, there must have been a considerable number of men sheltering in the Indian compound at Ste. Marie, including those who had fled from the battle on the morning of March 17th. While the French garrison was too small and too necessary for the defence of the Jesuit stronghold to attempt any offensive action, one wonders why these Indian warriors were not rallied and sent out, along with a Father to give them spiritual support, to form the nucleus of a relieving force, or as that failed to materialize, to harass the rear of the Iroquois besiegers and so take some of the pressure off the defenders of St. Louis.

Finally, there was the fiasco of the so-called pursuit by the seven hundred men from St. Michel. Had they been resolute they might have inflicted a reverse upon the

Iroquois, whose numbers by this time cannot have been more than eight hundred or, failing that, have at least forced them to abandon their prisoners and plunder in a series of punishing rear-guard actions. In these terrible few days, as throughout the whole of the war, one can see the Huron weakness in lack of morale, discipline and leadership. Here also the French showed that, although they may have succeeded spiritually, they failed militarily to give their people the leadership that was required.

On the other hand, the Iroquois demonstrated a high level of leadership and discipline. These qualities were clearly evident in the capture of St. Ignace and St. Louis. After this latter had fallen, another three-mile march and another attack might have overwhelmed Ste. Marie while the French were still unready and shaken by what had happened. However, there were sound reasons why the Iroquois captains decided to pull back to their base. The men must have been tired and hungry, and there were a considerable number of wounded to be carried back. Besides, the French position needed reconnoitring and in a hostile country this could be done best at night.

On the next day, given their huge superiority in numbers, it is possible, though not certain, that they might have taken Ste. Marie but for the very gallant stand made by the one hundred and fifty defenders of St. Louis, a stand that could be likened to that of the Spartans in the pass at

Thermopylæ. By the time they were finally subdued, late in the evening, the Iroquois warriors would have been exhausted by hard fighting and probably despondent from the loss of a hundred of their comrades. Once again it would have been a reasonable decision to return to St. Ignace for rest and food.

One can imagine the sombre council held there on the following day. Their losses had been heavy; ten killed at St. Ignace and probably more wounded. At least thirty killed at St. Louis and many more wounded, while from the fighting on March 17th they had received about a hundred casualties. This would give us a total of about two hundred, a very heavy casualty rate for a force of a thousand, and the seriously wounded would have to be carried back over several hundred miles of snow-covered countryside to Iroquoia. Further, the fighting, if they attacked Ste. Marie, would also be heavy, which would mean more casualties and a diminishing number of effective warriors. All the while the Hurons might be rallying and making ready to fall upon them in overwhelming strength, either wiping them out or else forcing them back to the shelter of St. Ignace where they would be caught like rats in a trap. Under these circumstances it is understandable why they abandoned any plan of attacking the Jesuit stronghold and instead retired back upon Iroquoia.

Ste. Marie was saved, at least for a short time, by the

gallantry and devotion of a small band of Huron warriors who were prepared to fight to the death and who did that very thing.

Footnotes

[1]R. G. Thwaites, ed., The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents, vol. 34 (Cleveland: Burrows Press, 1899), p. 131 ff.

[2]Ibid., p. 135.

[3]Ibid., p. 137.

[4]Ibid., p. 105.

CHAPTER XIII

THE FLIGHT TO CHRISTIAN ISLAND AND THE DISASTER AT ST. JEAN

Terror gripped Huronia in that March of 1649. Within two weeks of the capture of St. Ignace and St. Louis, fifteen villages had been burned and abandoned by their inhabitants, who then sought safety in flight. Many looked for sanctuary in the upland villages of the Tobacco people, situated in the Blue Mountains of the Bruce Peninsula, while others hastened south to seek refuge among the Neutrals. Some paddled northwest to join the Ottawa Algonquins on Manitoulin Island, while still others, abandoning everything, fled into the depths of the forest or eked out a starving existence on rocky islets in Georgian Bay. For those who sought safety closer to home, there was St. Joseph or Christian Island to the west of Huronia.

This forest-covered island, about six miles in length, already had some inhabitants, as Father Joseph Marie Chaumonot had been working among them for the past year, but now more than three hundred families, probably close to two thousand people, descended upon it in the hope of here finding security and a new life.[1] This number was to increase over the

summer and fall as Ragueneau, in a report written in the following year, 1650, speaks of a hundred longhouses each containing from sixty to eighty inhabitants. This does seem like an overestimate, but be that as it may, it is certain that a vast number of frightened people crowded onto this small, unproductive, tree-tangled island.

Another problem also beset the unfortunate Hurons. The preceding year's harvest had been poor and now drought and famine, like two carrion birds, came to plague a dying people. In the spring the corn and other crops, suffering from both lack of attention and moisture, were dry and shrivelled in the fields, and the lake fishing, normally an important food source, this year failed. Instead of bulging netfuls, the fishermen were fortunate if they managed to take a few small "herring." Men, women and children took to the woods, searching for edible roots, for acorns, wild carrots and garlic, which might be boiled in water to give some nourishment. Bad as it was in the spring and summer, though, the famine was to become progressively worse throughout the fall and winter.[2]

In Ste. Marie, Ragueneau and his Jesuits pondered and prayed, seeking guidance as to what they should do. Now that Huronia was largely abandoned, they stood alone in an almost deserted land with their congregations dispersed and with their fortress standing isolated, to meet the fury of the Iroquois attack. Another very practical consideration

was that now the Algonquins no longer dared come to trade, and the fur trade was the economic base on which both New France and the Jesuit missions rested. What was required was a new Ste. Marie from where the missionary priests could be sent forth, but the question was, which group of Huron refugees should they follow--those who had gone to the Tobacco nation or to the Neutrals, to Christian or to Manitoulin Island where some missionary work had already been done. After much earnest consideration, this latter was chosen, as here they would be able to work among both the refugee Hurons and the Ottawa Algonquins, while at the same time they could maintain contact by canoe with the Neutral and Tobacco people. Further, and in Ragueneau's own words, "Moreover in the island . . . we shall always be able, more conveniently than in any other place to maintain and preserve the trade of the Algonquins and Hurons with our French at Three Rivers and at Quebec, which is necessary for the maintenance of the faith in all these regions, for the good of the French colonies and for the support of New France."[3]

This certainly was the best plan, as Manitoulin Island was further from Iroquoia and large enough to encompass the formation of a new Huronia, but it was not to be. Before any action could be taken, a group of twelve chiefs came before the Fathers, presented them with ten collars of porcelain beads and then, in a three-hour harangue, begged them to re-establish themselves on Christian Island where so

many of the refugees were gathering. The orators were both eloquent and persuasive, and after the council was concluded, the Fathers decided that it must be the will of God that Ste. Marie should be rebuilt on this small island.[4]

The plan was to move as much as possible to the new location and with this in mind a boat was built, as well as a large raft, constructed from tree trunks fifty or sixty feet in length. On this was loaded the most vital necessities and the remains of the store of food, much depleted now because they had fed more than six thousand refugees over the last twelve months. Then on May 15th, with the preparations for departure completed, Ste. Marie with all its buildings and defence works was set afire to prevent the Iroquois using it as a stronghold.[5] Within an hour the work of ten years was largely consumed. Then, sometime between five and six in the afternoon, the saddened Jesuits and their lay assistants boarded the boat and the big raft for the trip to their new home.

Their way led down the River Wye, along the shores of Matchedash Bay, and then out to Christian Island, a distance of some thirty miles. Fortunately the weather was calm, and by using oars and paddles they covered the distance in several days. Even as they moved slowly along the coast, though, the Iroquois were in the field and a force of them, attacking in the night, fell upon a small Huron community that had not fled and either killed or captured all its people.[6]

The French landed on the southeast coast of Christian Island where the Huron refugees gathered to receive them. Then began for them a time of frantic activity as they laboured to build a small stone fort which "could be easily defended and would fear neither the fire, the undermining nor the escalade of the Iroquois."[7] They also worked to fortify the adjacent village, erecting bastions along its palisade so that the whole complex formed a strong defensive position. Meanwhile, the Indians were desperately struggling to cut back the forest and clear fields for planting, but in their every action fate seemed against them. They were already weak from famine and much of the time that should have been given to clearing and planting had to be spent in scouring the woods for acorns, roots, bulbs or berries, just to keep alive. Compounding this suffering was the failure of the fishing and the fact that drought parched such crops as had been planted. Some in their desperation returned to the mainland to try and glean food from the fields of abandoned villages, but most of these were taken by the Iroquois whose bands were prowling through what had once been the Huron countryside.[8]

As the dying community approached a new winter, the food resources were pitifully inadequate. There was the drought-shrunken harvest from their fields, together with the meagre returns from the fishing and gathering activities of the summer and fall. In addition, the Jesuits had

brought over a few cattle and pigs and a dozen chickens, the progenitors, as they hoped, of new herds and flocks. Also, with forethought for the lean times ahead, they had managed to obtain a limited supply of corn meal, as well as five or six hundred bushels of acorns and several canoe loads of dried fish which they had procured from Algonquins further up the coast. Given the size of the refugee population, these were indeed starvation resources with which to face a harsh northern winter.[9]

Throughout the spring, summer and fall, there had been rumours and constant fear of an Iroquois attack that would seek to wipe out this last Huron bastion. Toward the end of November these fears were given substance with the arrival of two Christian Hurons who had managed to escape from an Iroquois war party of some three hundred. Apparently this force was undecided as to whether they should attack the island or else strike their blow against the Tobacco nation. There was apparently some desire among the Huron warriors to go out and track down and destroy this comparatively small body of the enemy, but Ragueneau and the French advised against this and instead persuaded them to hold themselves in a state of alert defence. At the same time, they sent word of the danger to the two missions in the Tobacco country, to St. Mathias, and to St. Jean where Father Charles Garnier was in charge.[10] This was a large village of some five or six hundred families situated in the mountains

nearest to the frontier that faced toward Iroquoia.

St. Jean, to judge by the number of its families, must have had at least five or six hundred warriors, if not more, and the men, not as yet cowed by defeat, were eager for a battle. For several days they awaited an attack but this not coming, a sizable portion of them set out on December 5th, making for a place where they might intercept the Iroquois. This latter, however, either because of luck, skilful leadership, or the warning of some local traitor, took a roundabout route and so slipped past the Tobacco warriors. Approaching St. Jean on December 7th, they seized a man and a woman who had just left the village, and from them learned how lightly it was defended. With this information and at about three in the afternoon, they stormed through one of the unguarded gates and began a rampage of killing and burning. The inhabitants were taken completely by surprise, some at the far end of the village not even realizing that the enemy was among them until they saw the smoke and flames from burning longhouses. There was no resistance, panic was everywhere and the only thought was of escape. Some did, but most were either captured or killed and among these latter was Father Garnier, who refused to join the flight and died bravely, shot through the chest by a ball from an arquebus.

It must have been all over, with the longhouses and mission church collapsed into piles of glowing embers, well

before the early winter dusk closed in about the scene of carnage. Fearing the sudden return of the Tobacco force with its superior numbers, the Iroquois hastily marshalled their prisoners, culled out with hatchet blows those who were too old or feeble to keep up, and drove the rest out onto the trail. Their haste was prudent, although as it turned out, unnecessary, as it was not until December 9th, two days later, that the war band from the village returned, fearful of what they might find, because they now realized that they had been outflanked. When they reached St. Jean and discovered the magnitude of the disaster, it is reported that they sat, squatting on their haunches, for half a day, neither talking, crying, nor making any movement, in an abyss of silent, hopeless despair.[11]

This disaster was to bring another death to the ranks of the Jesuits. This was Father Noël Chabanel, missionary companion to Father Garnier, and a man for whom one can feel much sympathy. Despite a scholarly background in France, he had been quite unable to learn the Huron language. Furthermore, their way of life,and more particularly their food, filled him with horror and disgust. Nevertheless, despite this, he had made a solemn vow to pass the rest of his life among the Indian people. At the time of the attack he had been away from St. Jean for several days, but on December 7th he was returning, accompanied by seven or eight Hurons. There was much snow on the ground and the way was difficult,

but they had covered about eighteen miles of their journey before darkness closed in about them. Exhausted, and with some distance still to go, they decided to spend the night in the forest. At about midnight Chabanel, who was awake praying, heard the sounds of many people coming down the trail. Quickly he awakened his companions and they listened with dawning comprehension and horror to the approaching tumult. It was in fact the Iroquois war party with their captives, and they could make out the triumphal shouts of the victors and the sombre voices of the Huron men singing their war song, as was the custom among Indian prisoners.

Precipitously the priest and his companions fled into the depths of the forest, but after a short while the former fell behind and lost contact with his party. He must have struggled on, though, apparently making for Christian Island, because at dawn he was seen crossing a river that lay in that direction. The man who had seen him was a Huron in a canoe, and this man later produced Chabanel's hat and blanket, which he claimed the Father had discarded before entering the river.

After this last sight of him, the priest's later movements are unknown. Ragueneau, in his report of the matter, speculated that he might either have been captured and killed by some Iroquois, or have died of exposure, but that in all probability he had been murdered at the river bank by the Huron, who then threw his body into the water. It was

felt by the Jesuits that this man might, under close cross-examination, be made to confess, but by then so many disasters were crowding in upon Christian Island and its people that it was felt better to accept the man's story and let the matter drop.[12]

Considering the tragedy at St. Jean, one must question whether it was brought about by two unconnected and random chances, the one that the Tobacco warriors advanced along a particular route to intercept their enemy, and the other, that this same enemy at the same time came in upon the village from another direction. Were these actions mere chance or were they the result of a carefully worked out and clever plan? In this writer's opinion the latter would seem to be the case.

It was late in November when the two escaped Hurons brought the news to Christian Island that their Iroquois captors were planning an attack, either there or against the Tobacco nation. As this information proved correct, we can presume that these two men were genuine escapees, and also, as they came to the island, that the Iroquois force, when they left it, was somewhere in Huronia.

However, such a medium-sized force--three hundred men--would not have been static as this would leave it open to a planned attack by superior numbers. Instead, it would tend to move frequently, ranging back and forth and so keeping its opponents off balance. Thus Ragueneau's advice to his

Indians to remain in a strong defensive position rather than to go out seeking a will-o-the-wisp foe and so leave Christian Island unprotected, was sound. The warriors of St. Jean also followed the same plan for some days, but then, on December 5th, "wearying because victory was so slowly coming to them, they desired to go and meet it, at least the inhabitants of the village of St. Jean, men of enterprise and valour. They hastened their attack, fearing lest the Iroquois should escape them and desiring to surprise the latter while they were still on the road. They set out . . . directing their route towards the place where the enemy was expected, but the latter, having taken a round-about way, was not met."[13]

If all this was chance, it was indeed a most fortunate chance for the Iroquois. It seems more likely that it was by design. Many renegade Hurons served with the Iroquois, and one can speculate that such a man was sent into St. Jean on December 5th, posing as an escaped prisoner. He would have brought word that the Iroquois were planning to retreat back to their own country along a certain route. Such a retreat would rob the Tobacco warriors of their expected victory unless they moved fast to block their enemies' path. They did this, were absent from their village from December 5th to the 9th, and exactly midway through this period, when they would be at their furthest distance, the Iroquois slipped in and destroyed St. Jean and its people.

Another puzzling feature, at least to the modern mind, is why, when the Tobacco warriors discovered what had happened they did not commence a hot pursuit. The Iroquois certainly had a good start, but they had a long way to go. They would have also been slowed to a certain extent by their prisoners, and they would have had to have broken trail through the snow. Under these circumstances a determined chase might have overtaken them and resuced some of the captives. Instead, the men of St. Jean sank into a lethargy of grief, neither moving nor speaking for a whole half day. Even more than with their Huron cousins, defeat seems to have come to these people, not because they were crushed militarily, but rather because of a sudden and complete collapse of morale and the will to fight back.

Footnotes

[1]R. G. Thwaites, ed., The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents, vol. 34 (Cleveland: Burrows Press, 1899), p. 223.

[2]Ibid., vol. 35, pp. 87 ff.

[3]Ibid., vol. 34, p. 205.

[4]Ibid., p. 211.

[5]Ibid., p. 225.

[6]Ibid., vol. 35, p. 83.

[7]Ibid., p. 85.

[8]Ibid., p. 91.

[9]Ibid., p. 99.

[10]Ibid., p. 107.

[11]Ibid., p. 117.

[12]Ibid., pp. 147 ff.

[13]Ibid., p. 109.

CHAPTER XIV

THE TERRIBLE WINTER ON CHRISTIAN ISLAND AND THE WITHDRAWAL TO QUEBEC

On Christian Island the terrible famine became even worse as winter gripped and covered the land with three to four feet of snow. The small reserves of corn and other foods were soon used and then a single acorn became an object of value, and people would barter away prized possessions for a handful. They would be boiled in a lye solution made from ashes to take away some of the bitterness, and for some at least they prolonged the misery of life. Others, not so fortunate, eagerly devoured rotting carrion, while still others, in their agony of hunger, even ate the excrement of man and animal. As was to be expected, starvation brought on cannibalism. While the Hurons had always eaten their enemies, they felt horror and revulsion at the idea of eating their own dead. Yet as the winter progressed, "famished teeth ceased to discern the nature of what they ate. Mothers fed upon their children, brothers on their brothers, while children recognized no longer in a corpse him whom, while he lived, they had called their father."[1] As if all this was not enough, an epidemic scourged the

community, carrying off the weakest, the children and the old people. In some ways, though, this may have been a blessing, as few of its victims would have survived through to the spring, so it mercifully shortened their time of misery and suffering.

The French were somewhat better off, as they had had the forethought and the trade goods with which to purchase such supplies as were available during the summer and fall, and there is no report that any of them died of hunger. Beyond their own needs they cared, to the best of their ability, for those who most required their help. Small pieces of copper were stamped and used as tokens by the Fathers. As they made their daily rounds of the cabins, these would be given to the completely destitute who then at noon lined up at the door of the French fort to receive either a few acorns, a handful of corn, or possibly a piece of dried fish that would be boiled in water to form a watery soup. In this way at least some of those who would have died clung to life and managed to survive the dread winter.

The famine seems to have been widespread, as the drought and the failure of the fishing must have affected a wide area. The Tobacco people were short of food, while many of the Algonquins up the coast and the Huron refugees who had fled to them were starving. Towards the end of winter, some of these people made a slow and painful six-day journey on the ice, hoping to find help on Christian Island.[2] However,

there was nothing for them there, and they merely swelled the ranks of the dead and dying.

Added to all this was the constant fear of an attack by the Iroquois. Some of their bands had wintered in the region of Huronia, and there were rumours that these were preparing an attack against the island that would sweep away the last of the Hurons. Because of this, both night and day, in cold and in blizzard, the French and those Indians who were strong enough, maintained a ceaseless vigil, while even the men who were off duty slept with their weapons by their side, ready to try and repel a surprise attack.[3] It is well that this never came, because it is doubtful if the enfeebled and demoralized Hurons, even with French aid, would have been able to have made much of a stand.

There were other rumours and also much dissension throughout the surrounding countryside. While the inhabitants of Christian Island had, in their despair, all accepted Christianity, this was not the case with all the refugees, nor with all the people of the Tobacco nation. Many of these blamed all their troubles and disasters on the French, and there were sinister stories spread abroad of their treachery. One such began in a village belonging to the mission of St. Mathias where at a council:

> It was boldly announced that a certain Huron, lately escaped from the hands of the Iroquois, near to Quebec, had seen there some large porcelain collars sent by Onontio, the name which the Hurons give to Monsieur our Governor. It was

> stated that this Onontio wished to turn aside the weapons of the Iroquois, fearing lest they should make a dash upon the French at Montreal, Three Rivers and Quebec, and had sent these presents and these porcelain collars into the enemies' country in order to induce them to transport an armed force into the Huron territory, and he had promised them that the French who were there should betray the Hurons and the Algonquins by pretending to go bravely in their defence, but that in fact when the fighting took place they were to kill no one, having received from him secret orders to load their firearms with powder only, without bullet or shot. 4

It seems inconceivable that Ragueneau, a man of honour and compassion, could have been party to any such treachery. Further, if there had been a secret understanding, one might reasonably presume that Brébeuf, Lalemant and Garnier would have been held as captives instead of being tortured to death. However, it does seem possible, and more likely, that the French civil authorities in Quebec, clinging desperately to their precarious footholds on the St. Lawrence, bought a little relief by bribing the Mohawks to campaign elsewhere in 1649. There was the incident, mentioned in an earlier chapter, where there was some indication that the French might have been prepared to betray some of their Algonquin allies in order to secure a peace in 1645, when New France was fighting with its back to the wall. Possibly this time also, though it must be stressed that it rests upon the story of a single escaped Huron prisoner, the French bought time without too much concern as to the result of their action on their native allies.

In the early spring of 1650, many of the famine-wracked

survivors of Christian Island decided to return to the mainland, despite the danger, to search for food. Some hoped to fish in places where the ice was beginning to melt and others to search for acorns on the hilltops where the March sun was clearing away the snow. To increase the chance of eluding the ranging Iroquois patrols, they divided into a number of bands, some of fifty or a hundred and others of only one or two families, and these scattered over an area of some twenty-five miles. Unfortunately for them, a strong enemy war party, which had apparently just arrived from Iroquoia after a long and hard march through the snow, surprised and overwhelmed one of these groups. Then, in Ragueneau's words: "It seemed as if heaven directed their every step, as if they had an angel for guide, for they divided their forces so successfully as to discover, in less than two days, every party of our Christians who had scattered hither and thither."[5]

Only one man out of all the number managed to escape capture and bring the dreadful news back to Christian Island. The sure way in which the Iroquois managed in only two days to track down all these scattered people would seem to once again indicate betrayal. This time, though, it would appear that some of the captives, probably under torture, served as guides in the hunting down of their fellows.

Despite this calamity, the agony of hunger was so great that within a matter of a few days, other Hurons were pre-

pared to risk the torture fires of the Iroquois in an attempt to find food. At least two other large groups left the island in that spring, and both suffered much the same fate as the first, however, from them a few more survivors did manage to struggle back with the news of these fresh disasters. They also brought the news that two more large bands of Iroquois were soon expected and it was their plan not only to wipe out the remnants on Christian Island but also, with fire and hatchet, to turn the Huron countryside into a desert.[6]

For those who were left on the island, this was the end. All they now wanted was to leave this doomed and dreadful place. A council was held and various methods of escape were discussed. Most were for scattering in small family units that might hope to survive, lost in the deepest depths of the forest. Others thought of seeking sanctuary with their former allies, the Andasti, far to the southeast, or with other distant tribes, while some talked of "taking their wives and children and throwing themselves into the arms of the enemy, among whom they have a great number of relatives who wish for them and counsel them to make their escape as soon as possible from a desolated country if they do not wish to perish beneath its ruin."[7] Incidentally, this latter statement clearly indicates that there must have been a considerable measure of communication between the opposing forces.

Late at night after the council had ended, two old chiefs came to the Jesuits. Mournfully they recapitulated the horrors that their people had suffered, how more than ten thousand of them had died, and what was in the minds of the survivors. If such a dispersal took place, though, the Hurons would be lost to the priests, and with this in mind they put forward a bold proposal. Would the Fathers and the French conduct those who were left down to Quebec where, close to the shelter of the fort, they might hope to begin a new life as a community of Christian Indians?

No immediate answer was given, as Ragueneau felt the matter was so important that he must consult with all his colleagues and also seek guidance through prayer. After a number of days it was decided that they had no other option if they wished to preserve at least a nucleus of the once powerful Huron nation.[8]

A modern Jesuit historian, Father Francis Talbot, is critical of Ragueneau for his decision to abandon the region. He felt that the survivors should have been moved to Manitoulin Island so that a Christian presence could have been maintained in the area.[9]

In this writer's opinion, though, Ragueneau made the only possible choice. A community of a few hundred Hurons, dispirited and weak from hunger, would not have been able to have defended themselves against the fury of their enemies, and Manitoulin was not sufficiently isolated that the

Iroquois would not have soon tracked them down.

With the decision for flight made, it was imperative to move quickly before word of their plans reached the Iroquois and enabled these latter to prepare an ambush. Certainly they can have had little to take with them, and on June 10th some three hundred men, women and children, together with the fifty or sixty French, the pitiful remnants of the thousands who had crowded onto Christian Island in the preceding year, left their homeland for the last time.

Their way led northwest, along the shores of Georgian Bay to the French River, which brought them to Lake Nipissing. A few years before this whole region had been well populated, but now all that was to be seen were burnt and deserted villages and abandoned longhouses.

After they had traversed Nipissing and reached the headwaters of the Ottawa River, they came upon two abandoned stockades in which Iroquois war parties had wintered. Fortunately for them, these bands were absent, probably engaged in the ravaging of the Huron countryside, so they were able to pass unscathed.[10]

Always on the alert, as though they were moving through enemy territory, Ragueneau and his party of French and Hurons moved carefully down the long stretches of the Ottawa. There was to be some excitement when scouts came upon the fresh footprints of what they thought was an Iroquois band. Actually this was a party of forty Frenchmen and a number of

Indians who were being brought up to Huronia by Father Bressani, and they in their turn observed footprints of Ragueneau's scouts, which they also took to be Iroquois. The two groups advanced cautiously upon each other, ready to fight, but as they approached more closely they made joyful recognition the one of the other.

Several days before, Bressani's force had a savage brush with the enemy. A prowling band of ten Iroquois had spotted their evening campfires and crept in among them during the night as they slept. They managed to kill seven of the Hurons and might easily have escaped unscathed, but instead they stayed to fight it out. Overwhelmed by superior numbers, six of them were killed, two were captured, and the remaining two managed to make their escape. No Frenchmen were reported as having been killed in this encounter, but Bressani was thrice wounded by arrows.[11] This incident shows the overwhelming confidence of the Iroquois. To judge by Bressani's wounds, many of them had only bows and arrows, yet they were prepared to attack and fight it out with a heavily-armed force of at least six or seven times their own number.

The rest of the journey made in the company with the relieving force was relatively uneventful, apart from the normal hazards of rocks, whirlpools and rapids. After a passage of about fifty days, the tattered remnants of the once-proud Hurons arrived off Quebec. Here, under French

protection and with the assistance of French charity, they would gradually fashion for themselves a new life and, as the Lorette Hurons, they would continue on the name of a nation that had died. As for Huronia, the country they had once inhabited, it would remain empty and desolate for almost two hundred years, until a new and different people came to brush aside the ghosts of the past and build a new society in the forest wilderness.

Footnotes

[1]R. G. Thwaites, ed., The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents, vol. 35 (Cleveland: Burrows Press, 1899), p. 89.

[2]Ibid., p. 179.

[3]Ibid., p. 91.

[4]Ibid., p. 165.

[5]Ibid., pp. 183 ff.

[6]Ibid., p. 191.

[7]Ibid., p. 193.

[8]Ibid., p. 191.

[9]Francis X. Talbot, S. J., Saint Among the Hurons (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., Image Books, 1956), Notes and References, p. 339.

[10]Thwaites, ed., Jesuit Relations, vol. 35, pp. 191 ff.

[11]Ibid., pp. 201 ff.

CHAPTER XV

CONCLUSION

Why did Huronia fall? Can one, looking back over a period of more than three centuries and using the somewhat scanty reports on the military situation which have been left us by the Jesuit writers, find a cause or causes for this bloody disaster? On the surface there would have seemed to be little reason why this should have happened, but the terrible fact is that it did, and a once-populous region became a deserted forest wilderness.

It has long been generally believed that the Iroquois were a bloody-minded, savage and war-like people who fought and killed for pleasure, while on the other hand the Hurons were thought to have been a gentle and peaceful folk who were unfortunate enough to play the lamb to their enemy's wolf. This view, though, does not seem to be borne out by the historical evidence. The Hurons and the Iroquois were of the same stock, and as Hunt points out, it was not until the fifth decade of the seventeenth century that this latter people began to emerge as a powerful and successful military force.[1] Before that time they had suffered such reverses as being pushed back from the St. Lawrence, being blocked from

the Hudson Valley by Algonquin tribes, and had been forced to seek a secure heartland in the high country to the south of Lake Ontario. Conversely, Wilfred Jury, referring to the Hurons, quotes Gendron who lived with them in their later days and thought them, "Warlike and valiant and skilful with arms so that for a long time they were dreaded and feared by other neighbouring nations, although latterly they seem to have degenerated in some manner from their former position, being often vanquished by their enemies because, I believe, of too much confidence in the arms the French deliver to them at Quebec for their furs."[2]

As the Hurons seem to have been every bit as martial as their cousins, the Iroquois, what causes can we find for the terrible change in their fortunes which led, by 1650, to their elimination as a people? The Jesuits make constant reference to the Iroquois supremacy in arquebuses supplied by the Dutch, but this superiority is somewhat doubtful. Both New France and New Netherlands had arms policies, the Dutch refusing to sell firearms to the Iroquois up to the summer of 1648, and the French selling only to Christian Indians. There were official policies, but unofficially, French, Dutch and English traders made arms available to any who could pay an exceedingly stiff price in furs. However, this number was probably only a minority on both sides. For example, in 1641 when a force of some five hundred Iroquois visited Three Rivers, they possessed only thirty-six arque-

buses between them.[3] Again, when St. Joseph II was captured in 1648, many of the Iroquois must still have been carrying bows, because Daniel was transfixed with arrows before an arquebus ball finally killed him. In a somewhat similar incident during the summer of 1650 when Bressani's party was attacked by ten Iroquois, the priest was thrice wounded by arrows, a fairly clear indication that the bow and not the arquebus was still the main weapon among the warriors of the Five Nations.

On the other side, there was the incident of the ambush laid by Pesquith and his companions, and described in Chapter One. These were French Indians, and each one of them possessed an arquebus. At a later date, 1650, mention is made of a trading expedition from Three Rivers that carried guns, lead and powder to barter with the northern Indians.[4] While these are only scattered incidents, they do tend to show that the Iroquois did not possess large numbers of firearms, and in all likelihood the wealthy Hurons had as many or more. However, as they were heavy, awkward, inaccurate and slow firing, their advantage, after an initial surprise volley, was doubtful and probably a native warrior was more effective with his bow and arrow than with this product of European civilization.

What about the relative size of the populations? Before the epidemics decimated the people, Champlain and the Jesuit writers estimated the population of Huronia at about thirty

thousand. By the early forties, however, disease had reduced this to some twelve to fifteen thousand, and even here Heidenreich estimates the number at less. The Iroquois were a smaller tribe, with their numbers estimated to be about twelve thousand. However, like the Hurons with the French, they were in contact with the Dutch and would certainly have suffered from epidemics brought in by the white men. Also they would have endured intermittent crop failures; one is reported in 1646 and, in such a primitive society, crop failure, famine, disease and death was a normal sequence of events, so their numbers may also have been less than estimated. Therefore, it would appear that the Hurons, despite the high mortality rate caused by influenza and smallpox, still had a population as large if not larger than that of the Iroquois, and this in turn could be translated into at least an equality in the number of warriors.

In location also, the Hurons would appear to have had a certain advantage. The five Iroquois tribes were stretched thinly for well over a hundred miles, too far removed to support each other effectively in case of an attack. On the other hand, Huronia was geographically more compact, and had there been good leadership, the villages and tribes were close enough to give each other prompt assistance. When St. Ignace II and St. Louis were captured, Bear warriors from Ossossane and Deer tribe warriors from St. Michel, had they been more resolute, could have attacked the Iroquois force

and possibly changed the fate of their nation.

If the Hurons seem to have been at no particular disadvantage regarding arms, numbers and location, what other factors may have contributed to their defeat? One that immediately comes to mind is that they were a divided and disunited people with the Christians pitted against the non-Christians. Relentlessly the Fathers worked to gain converts and to undermine the old beliefs which formerly had had a unifying influence on the people. Thus throughout Huronia in the decade of the forties we have two strong and mutually hostile factions facing each other with a degree of dislike and antagonism which was second only to their fear and hatred of the Iroquois. In the case of the murder of the donné Jacques Douart, we see the Hurons close to civil war, with many of the infidels advocating that the Christians should be driven out from the tribe; and this at a time when every able-bodied warrior was needed to help hold off the enemy. Huronia was indeed a house divided, and both sides on occasion suspected the other of treachery. The Hurons, according to Brébeuf, maintained spies in the country of their enemies, and we can presume that the Iroquois did likewise. Also there were Hurons, mostly former captives, serving with the Iroquoian forces. Some of these might cling to their old loyalty, while others would adhere to the new, and both groups probably maintained contacts with friends and relatives in Huronia, so there was communication and the

means for betrayal. It is a rather strange coincidence that, except for St. Louis, which was a smaller and secondary objective, the last three major villages selected by the Iroquois as targets for destruction--St. Joseph, St. Ignace II, and St. Jean--all had most of their best warriors away when the attack came.

In addition to Huron distrusting Huron, the French were also viewed with the greatest suspicion by the unconverted. Not only were the motives of the Black Robes questioned, but more tangibly there was some evidence of bad faith on the part of the French governor toward the Algonquins in the peace treaty worked out with the Mohawks in 1645. This would have been known to the Hurons, and in addition, there was the story brought back by the escaped Huron in 1649 that the French had bought off the Mohawks to give themselves a little respite. There is, of course, no evidence available to support this charge in the Jesuit Relations, except for the fact that the Mohawks did indeed switch their attack to Huronia in that year.

Psychological factors also played a part in the outcome of this war. As early as the summer of 1647, long before the Hurons had suffered their most serious reverses, their ambassador to the Andasti, a Christian chief, was speaking of his tribe as a defeated and dying people. The Andasti spokesmen did their best to encourage him, but it is significant that they did not enter the war despite earlier offers

of assistance. No doubt they had no desire to ally themselves with a people who were psychologically defeated almost before the struggle had commenced.

Why, though, this recurring theme of disaster and death that seemed to form a part of Huron oratory throughout the war years? Certainly they had been mauled by the Iroquois in the earlier stages of the conflict between 1642 and 1644, but while their lands were raided and many of their fur convoys harassed or captured, these would not seem to be calamities of a sufficient magnitude to warrant the complete breakdown in morale which occurred.

It would seem to this writer that a factor here may have been the growing strength of the Christian church. After each new catastrophe there was a surge of recruits joining its ranks, both in the hope that the white man's God might help them in this life, but probably even more to ensure for themselves a place in the heavenly paradise that was so fervently preached by the Jesuits. These Fathers seemed to have had a personal desire for martyrdom as the most glorious way of achieving heaven, and they also tended to look upon the travails of the Hurons with some detachment. For them, the sufferings of this life were only transient, and what really mattered was the act of baptism so that souls might be assured of ascension to heaven rather than a descent into hell. As they gained more and more influence over their Indian charges, it is probable that this other-

worldly attitude tended to be accepted by many of them with a resultant loss of interest in the hard struggles that were needed in this life in favour of a more passive attitude that almost embraced calamity as the preliminary to a happier hereafter. An example of this disregard for the here-and-now in favour of concern for a future life is to be seen in the way that many of the St. Joseph II warriors abandoned their posts at the breach in a moment of crisis so that they might run back and kneel before Father Daniel to obtain blessing or baptism.

While tribal division and low morale both played a part in the downfall of Huronia, probably an even more significant cause is lack of leadership and discipline at a time when the Iroquois seem to have achieved both. Why this occurred is not clear. Was it because the Five Nations were encircled and hard-pressed by enemies, and had to give up the luxury of individualistic action in favour of tight organization and strong discipline? If so, though, then why, when the Hurons were themselves under pressure during the decade of the forties, did they not also improve their leadership and discipline? Again, were the superior Iroquois tactics and strategy the result of Dutch advice, implemented by half-European chiefs such as the Flemish Bastard, for whose military skill and generalship the French gave grudging admiration?[5] Bearing this possibility in mind, there is the letter writen by Director Stuyvesant of the New Netherlands

to Governor Winthrop at Boston on April 3rd, 1648, vehemently denying the accusations that he had tried to incite the Mohawks against the English, and instead claiming that he had sought to establish peace between the French, the English and the Mohawks.[6] This letter would indicate that many did indeed believe that Stuyvesant was directing and urging on the Iroquois in their attack against New France. Referring to the overall campaign, C. C. James wrote: "Iroquois expeditions against Huronia look as though the plans of campaign had been laid down by some master General. It was not a sudden attack, but an extensive campaign that was Napoleonic in extent."[7]

Although it proved unsuccessful, the Franco-Huron strategy of encirclement was sound in its conception. It was in their tactics, in the conduct of the fighting, and the contacts with the enemy that the Hurons were weak. They were obviously under French influence, at least in the construction of some of their fortified villages, and there were French soldiers in Huronia who might have taught them something of leadership and discipline, and yet they never seemed to rise much above the level of a disunited rabble, sometimes, though not always, individually brave, but unable to act collectively in a disciplined and controlled way. A typical example of this was the battle near Three Rivers in July of 1648, when a superior Huron force ambushed an Iroquois band. Despite everything being in their favour, a

section of the Hurons broke and allowed their enemies to escape. Even then, a stern pursuit would have tracked most of them down but there was apparently no voice with enough authority to insist upon this, so instead the chase was soon given up in favour of the flesh-pots of Three Rivers. This was the attitude that all too often brought on defeat and snatched away the spoils of an occasional victory. Possibly this somewhat casual attitude was further emphasized, as Gendron suggests, by too much reliance on French weapons, and also for the Christian section of the population, too much reliance on the French and the French God to look after their protection.

In summation, the downfall of Huronia was a tragedy that should not have happened. It did, though, and it seems to this writer that it must be attributed to three major causes: disunity within the nation, brought on by the struggles between the Christians and non-Christians, and secondly, the low morale and spirit of defeatism that possessed the Huron leaders and no doubt their followers throughout the war years. This was in sharp contrast to the aggressive fighting spirit of the Iroquois, who would attack against superior numbers and on many occasions fight to the death, even though escape might have been possible. Finally, there was that lack of leadership and discipline without which no people can wage a successful war.

Footnotes

[1]George T. Hunt, The Wars of the Iroquois. A Study in Intertribal Trade Relations (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1940), pp. 32 and 42.

[2]Gendron quoted in Wilfred Jury, Sainte-Marie Among the Hurons (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1954; rpt. 1965), p. 16.

[3]R. G. Thwaites, ed., The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents, vol. 21 (Cleveland: Burrows Press, 1899), p. 37.

[4]Ibid., vol. 35, p. 239.

[5]Ibid., p. 213.

[6]B. Fernow, Keeper of the Historical Records, ed., Documents Relating to the History and Settlements of the Towns Along the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers, From 1630-1684, vol. XIII (Albany: Weed, Parsons & Co., n.d.), p. 23. This amplifying letter from Governor Stuyvesant to Governor Winthrop is included in this volume.

"I am on myne owne pte trulie gvined that my real intentions of mutuall amitie and goodwill are for present (by theire misconstruing my actions and some unkind passages) in parte obstructed and being likewise wounded in my reputation in a high degree by theyre scandalous reportes raised and credit given to them of my indeavours to raise Mohocke Indians against English there, it being soe farre from the rules and principles of Christiantie and charitie, soe much as to have a thought thereof, much more to put in practise such a divilish and wicked device; but according to my bournden duty to God and my neighbor, att my being att our fort of Auranie I reallie indeavoured to establish a firme peace not only betwixt the Mohocks and all the Indians there and us here (but likewise as I then declared myself to them) betwixt them and my brethern the English and Ffrench, which was for present well accepted of them."

[7]C. C. James, The Downfall of the Huron Nation, From the Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, Second series, 1906-1907, vol. XII, section II (Ottawa: J. Hope & Sons; Toronto: The Copp Clark Co.), p. 322.

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APPENDIX A

Glossary of Unusual Names and Terms

Abenakis: An Indian people who lived in regions along the Eastern seaboard that now form the Maritimes in New England.

Achinawana, Jean Baptiste: A Christian chief at St. Joseph's, near Quebec.

Algonquins: Nomadic Indian people who hunted and fished across much of northeastern America.

Annenraes: An Onondaga chieftain captured by the Hurons. Returning to his own people, he was responsible for initiating negotiations with the Hurons.

Ataronto, Jean Baptiste: A Christian Huron chief involved with the negotiations with the Onondaga.

Clan: An exogamous cross-tribal group claiming descent from a common mythical ancestor, e.g., Bear, Turtle, etc.

Cords: or Barking Dog tribe of Hurons.

Donné: French Catholic laymen who dedicated themselves to labouring with the missionaries without pay for a specific term of service.

Douart, Jacques: A servant of the Jesuits who was murdered by non-Christian Hurons.

Druillette, Father Gabriel: A Jesuit priest who travelled down the Kennebec River in what is now Maine, and conducted negotiations with the New England authorities.

Five Nations: The five Iroquois tribes.

Flemish Bastard: A leading Mohawk chief, the offspring of a Dutch father and a Mohawk mother.

Huron: An Indian nation or confederacy consisting of five tribes, viz., the Bear, Barking Dog, Rock, Deer, and People-Beyond-the-Silted-Lake.

Ihonatiria:	or St. Joseph I.
Iroquet:	A tribe of the Algonquin nation.
Iroquois:	An Indian nation or confederacy consisting of five tribes--the Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, and Mohawks.
Kieft, Wilhelm:	Governor of New Netherlands from 1638-1647.
Kiotsaeton:	A famous Mohawk orator who took a prominent part in the peace negotiations of 1645-46.
La Conception:	See Ossossane.
La Magdalen:	A Bear tribe village.
Montagnais:	A wandering Algonquin tribe hunting and fishing for survival, as opposed to the sedentary Iroquois.
Neutrals:	An Indian nation of Iroquoian stock who inhabited the region to the north of Lake Erie.
Ossossane:	The chief village belonging to the Bear tribe of Hurons--sometimes known as La Rochelle or La Conception.
Ouendats:	or Hurons.
Petun:	or Tobacco Nation. A people closely related to the Hurons, who lived in the Blue Mountains of the Bruce Peninsula.
Stuyvesant, Peter:	Governor of New Netherlands from 1647-1664.
Taenhatentaron:	or St. Ignace II.
Teanaustaye:	or St. Joseph II.
Winthrop, John, Sr. & Jr.:	Governors in colonial New England during the period covered by this thesis.

APPENDIX B

Maps

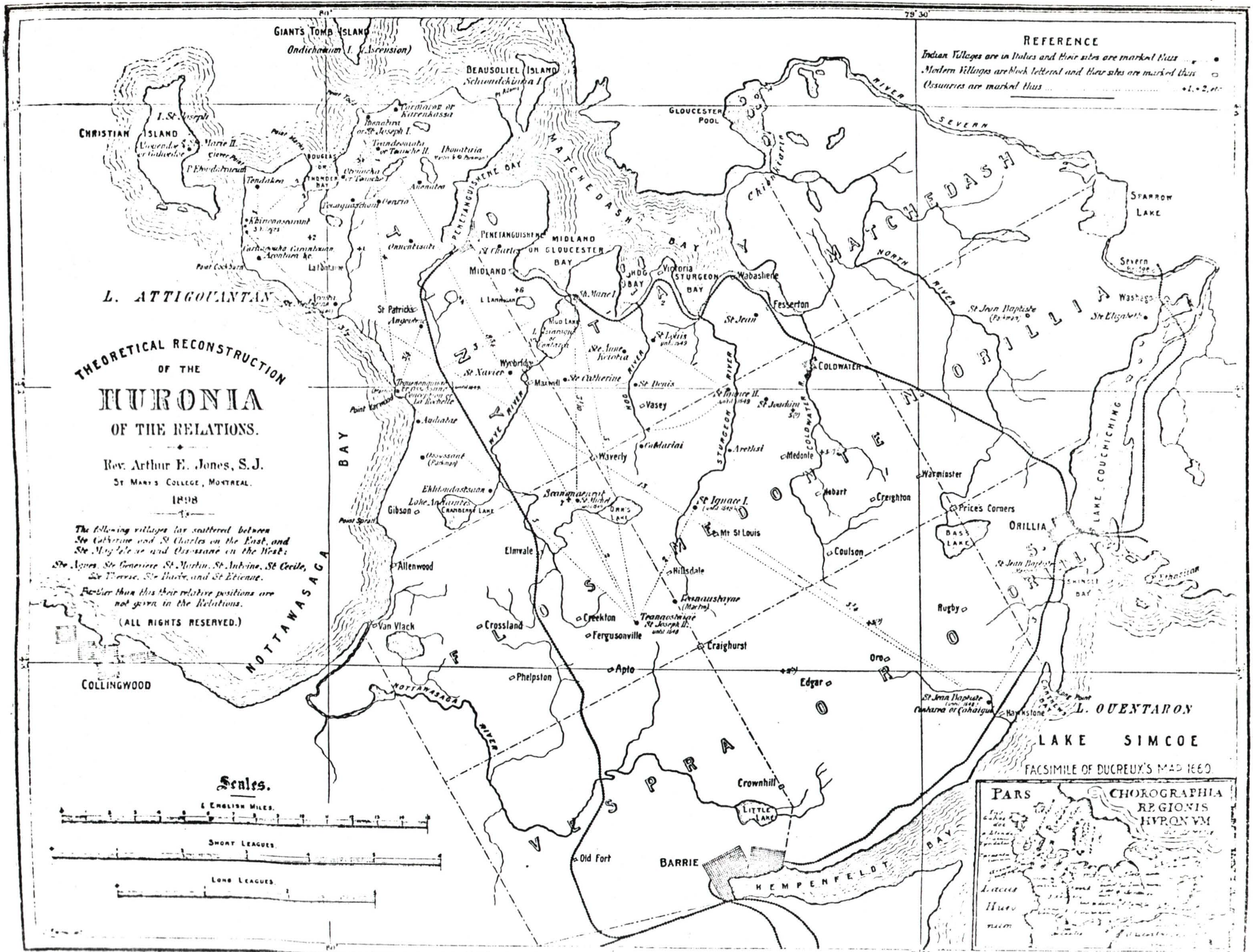
MAP A — The Theoretical Reconstruction of the Huronia of the Relations. Compiled by the Rev. Arthur E. Jones, S. J., 1898. The map is found appended to Vol. XXXIV of The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents, edited by R. G. Thwaites (Cleveland: Burrows Press, 1899; rpt. New York: 1959).

NOTE: I find this map accurate according to the Relations, except for the positioning of St. Ignace II on the west side of the Sturgeon River, and St. Louis, on the east side of the Hog River. Wilfred Jury, excavating nearly half a century later, placed St. Ignace II further downstream and on the east bank of the Sturgeon, while his excavations indicated that St. Louis was actually on the west bank of the Hog River. In this thesis I have accepted the positions as located by Jury.

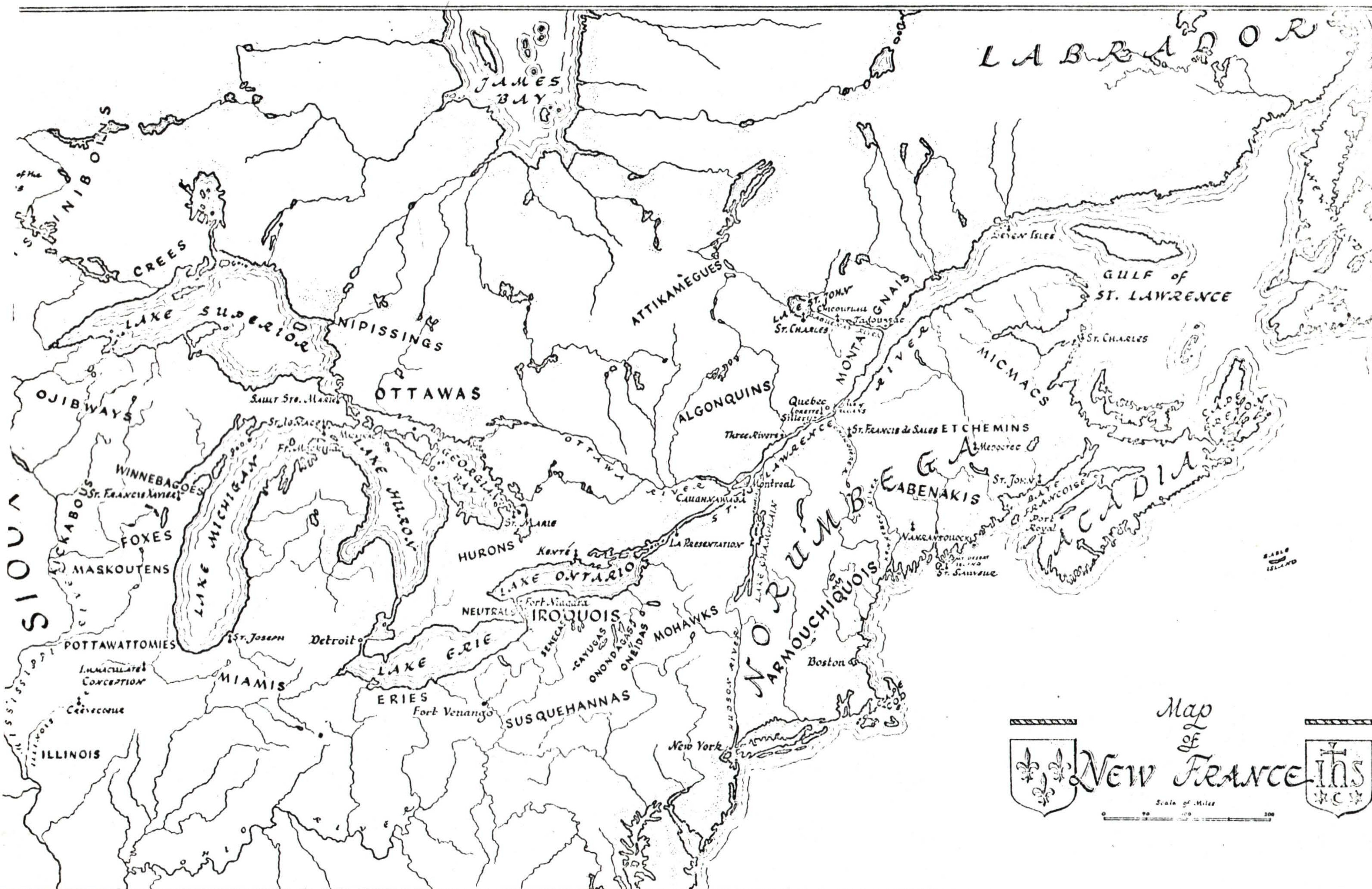
MAP B — Map of New France, showing the approximate locations of Indian nations and tribes from the Great Lakes to the Atlantic coast. This map is appended to Jesuit and Savage in New France, by J. H. Kennedy (Yale University Press, 1950). The Kennebec and Chaudière Rivers traversed by Father Druillette in 1646 are clearly marked in the Abenaki territory between Quebec and the present state of Maine.

MAP C — A section of the map appended to Indians of North America, by Harold E. Driver (University of Chicago Press, 1962). This map is entitled "Principal Indian Tribes of North America" with numbers 43 and 44 representing the Tobacco and Neutral nations respectively.

MAP D — St. Louis as excavated and mapped by Wilfred Jury.



THEORETICAL RECONSTRUCTION OF THE
HURONIA
OF THE RELATIONS.
Rev. Arthur E. Jones, S.J.
St Mary's College, Montreal.
1898
The following villages lay scattered between Ste Catherine and St Charles on the East, and Ste Magdeleine and Ossossané on the West:
Ste Agnes, Ste Genevieve, St Martin, St Antoine, St Cecile, Ste Therese, Ste Barbe, and St Etienne.
Further than this their relative positions are not given in the Relations.
(ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.)
REFERENCE
Indian Villages are in Italics and their sites are marked thus
Modern Villages are block lettered and their sites are marked thus
Ossuaries are marked thus
Scales.
6 English Miles.
Short Leagues.
Long Leagues.
GIANT'S TOMB ISLAND
Ondichaouan I. (Ascension)
BEAUSOLIEL ISLAND
CHRISTIAN ISLAND
I. St Joseph
GLOUCESTER POOL
SEVERN RIVER
SPARROW LAKE
MATCHEDASH
MATCHEDASH BAY
PENETANGUISHENE BAY
PENETANGUISHENE
MIDLAND OR GLOUCESTER BAY
MIDLAND
HOG BAY
STURGEON BAY
Victoria
Wabashene
Fesserton
St Jean
NORTH RIVER
St Jean Baptiste
Washago
St Elizabeth
L. ATTIGOUANTAN
COLDWATER
COLDWATER R.
St Ignace II.
St Joachim
STURGEON RIVER
HOG RIVER
WYE RIVER
Wyebridge
St Xavier
Maxwell
Ste Catherine
St Denis
Vasey
Ste Anne
St Louis
Cahiagué
Arethsi
Medonte
Waverly
Ossossané
Ekhiondastsaan
Gibson
Lake Ste Marie
Ste Marie I
MUD LAKE
Ihonatiria
Anenatea
Ounentisaté
La Fontaine
St Patricks
Angoutenc
Teanaostaiaé
Arent
Karenhassa
Toanché
Ekhienonsoanét
Tendakea
DOUGLAS OR THUNDER BAY
Point Varwood
Point Spratt
BAY
Scanonaenrat
St Michel
ORR'S LAKE
St Ignace I.
Mt St Louis
Hobart
Creighton
Warminster
Prices Corners
ORILLIA
BASS LAKE
LAKE COUCHICHING
ORILLIA
ATHSHINGE BAY
Coulson
Elmvale
Allenwood
Hillsdale
Taenhatentaron
(Martin)
Rugby
Creekton
Teanaostaiaé St Joseph II.
Fergusonville
Craighurst
Crossland
Van Vlack
NOTTAWASAGA
NOTTAWASAGA RIVER
COLLINGWOOD
Phelpston
Apto
Edgar
Oro
St Jean Baptiste
Cahiagué
Hawkstone
L. OUENTARON
LAKE SIMCOE
Crownhill
LITTLE LAKE
Old Fort
BARRIE
KEMPENFELDT BAY
FLOSPRAVESPRA
OSSOSSANE
MEDONTE
FACSIMILE OF DUCREUX'S MAP 1660
PARS CHOROGRAPHIA REGIONIS HVRONVM
Lacus Huronum


Map of New France
Scale of Miles
LABRADOR
JAMES BAY
GULF of ST. LAWRENCE
ACADIA
NORUMBEGA
CREES
LAKE SUPERIOR
NIPISSINGS
OTTAWAS
ATTIKAMEGUES
MONTAGNAIS
ALGONQUINS
MICMACS
ETCHEMINS
ABENAKIS
ARMOUCHIQUOIS
MOHAWKS
IROQUOIS
SENECAS
CAYUGAS
ONONDAGAS
ONEIDAS
NEUTRALS
HURONS
LAKE ONTARIO
LAKE ERIE
LAKE HURON
LAKE MICHIGAN
GEORGIAN BAY
ERIES
SUSQUEHANNAS
MIAMIS
POTTAWATTOMIES
MASKOUTENS
FOXES
WINNEBAGOES
OJIBWAYS
ILLINOIS
SIOUX
Quebec
Three Rivers
Montreal
Boston
New York
Detroit
Fort Niagara
Fort Venango
Port Royal
Sault Ste. Marie
St. Joseph
Sillery
Tadoussac
Seven Isles
Immaculate Conception
Crèvecoeur
La Presentation
Kenté
Caughnawaga
St. Marie
St. Ignace
St. François Xavier
St. Francis de Sales
St. Charles
St. John
St. Sauveur
Lake St. John
Lake Champlain
Baye Françoise
Cape Breton
Sable Island
Hudson River
St. Lawrence River
Ottawa River
Ohio River
Mississippi

MAP C


NETSILIK-MIUT
UN-INHABITED
AIVILIRMIUT
BAFFIN LAND ESKIMO
TAHAGMIUT
ITIVIMIUT
KIGIKTAGMIUT
SUKININMIUT
MONTAGNAIS
NASKAPI
BEOTHUK
MICMAC
MALECITE
PENOBSCOT
ABNAKI
PENNACOOK
ALGONQUIANS OF S. NEW ENGLAND
ALGONQUIN
OTTAWA
OJIBWA
HURON
IROQUOIS
MAHICAN
DELAWARE
SUSQUEHANNA
ERIE
POTAWATOMI
MENOMINI
SAUK
FOX
SANTEE
YANKTON
IOWA
OTO
MISSOURI
KANSA
OSAGE
ILLINOIS
MIAMI
LITTLE DATA IN EARLY HISTORICAL PERIOD
TUTELO
POWHATAN
PAMLICO
TUSCARORA
SHAWNEE
YUCHI
CHEROKEE
CATAWBA
CHICKASAW
CREEK
CUAPAW
WICHITA
CADDO
TONKAWA
ATAKAPA
NATCHEZ
CHOCTAW
BILOXI
MOBILE
CHATOT
TIMUCUA
CHITIMACHA
43
44
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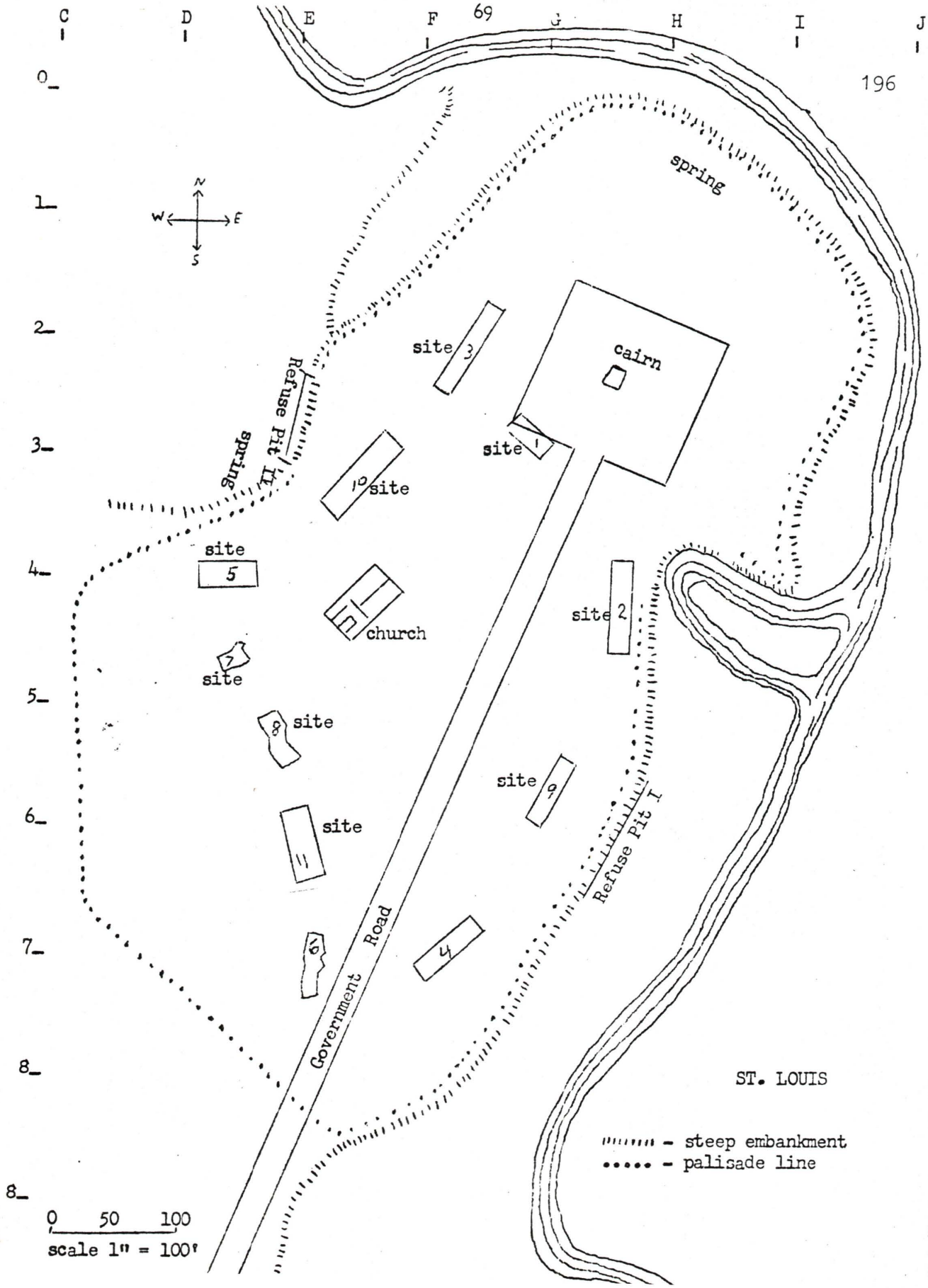
42
50
40
60
30


C
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3
4
5
6
7
8
8
N
W
E
S
spring
site 3
cairn
site 1
Refuse Pit II
spring
10 site
site 5
church
site 2
7 site
8 site
site 9
site 11
Refuse Pit I
Government Road
6
4
ST. LOUIS
- steep embankment
- palisade line
0 50 100
scale 1" = 100'

VITA

Surname: WINDSOR Given Names: JOHN BEST

Place of Birth: EDMONTON ALBERTA

Date of Birth: NOVEMBER 22, 1920

Educational Institutions Attended,
with Dates of Entering and Leaving:

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School of Industrial Relations & Personnel Management Dip.	1946	Queen's University
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Honours and Awards:

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General Pearkes Award, University of Victoria, 1970-71

Fellowship, University of Victoria, 1972-73 & 1973-74

Publications:

Several hundred articles for newpapers, magazines, journals.

Blind Date, Autobiography, Gray's Publishing, Sidney, 1961.

Nowhere Else to Go, Biography, Gray's Pub., Sidney, 1963.

Mouth of the Wolf, War Story, Foreword by Field Marshal Montgomery. Gray's Pub., Canada & Hodder & Stoughton, U.K. 1967.

contd...

VITA contd...

Publications contd...

Girl From Tibet, Biographical and Historical, with Foreword by His Holiness, the Dalai Lama. Evanston, Illinois: Loyola University Press, 1971.

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Title of Thesis/Dissertation

SOME ASPECTS OF THE DOWNFALL OF HURONIA 1646 - 1650

Author [redacted]

JOHN BEST WINDSOR

Name

November 18, 1974

Date