

The Sulpician Mission on the Bay of Quinte.

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By 1663 the powerful League of the Iroquois was showing signs of decay. It was having troubles within its own confederacy. The Senecas had not been successful in their attacks upon the Andastes. The Onondagas, probably influenced by the Jesuits, were becoming friendly towards the French and the telling attacks made by New France against the Mohawk strongholds were having their desired effects. In September of that year a deputation of Iroquois Chiefs had proceeded to Quebec and had arranged a truce with the Governor M de Mesy.

Until this date the Upper St. Lawrence, above the Ottawa, had been closed to French navigation and exploration. In this year the "Gentlemen of St. Sulpice" had become owners of the Island of Montreal and its surrounding territory. They had established themselves and were now ready to expand not only their territory but their religious activities.

The Senecas, who were now established on the Bay of Quinte and the north shore of Lake Ontario, had, no doubt, attended this peace party at Quebec. Either on their way down or up they had stopped at Ville Marie and requested the Sulpicians to send to their settlements members of their Order. While this request was looked upon with favor no definite action was taken and they returned to their homes.

It must have been with some surprise that, late in the autumn of 1667, from the deep mullioned windows of the Sulpician Presbytery the fathers saw, in the distance, a flotilla of canoes descending the St. Lawrence River. When they came nearer they noticed, in the leading canoe, the aged figure of Rohario, Chief of the Kentes. It was not long before they were acquainted of his mission. Rohario had come, in person, not only to ask for the "Black Robes" to be sent amongst his tribe but to personally

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guarantee their safety, shelter and transportation to his village. With this security offered ^{his} ~~their~~ request was readily granted by the Superior of the Sulpicians, Abbe de Quelylus and two of his priests, MM. Fenelon and MM. Trouve volunteered to go to this indian out-post. It was, however, necessary to get the permission of ~~the~~ Governor and the Bishop before embarking and Fenelon was sent to Quebec to obtain this. The mission sanctioned Fenelon returned and preparations were gotten under way. Fenelon was not only a able priest but he was a good soldier . He had travelled much. He was the son of Count Fenelon Salignac an influential nobleman at the Court of France. Some canadian historians have confused him with his half-brother, the famous Archbishop of Cambray. Both were called Francis and both entered the Order of St. Sulpice. Both desired to come to Canada but the younger, afterwards the archbishop, was in too delicate a state of health for this task and remained in France. While his brother was teaching the indians upon the shores of Whitby Bay the younger Fenelon was teaching the grand-son of Louis XIV.

No time was lost by these two priests preparing for their journey up the St. Lawrence. On October 2nd. 1667 they set out from Lachine accompanied by Cayuga guides. It was a long and tedious journey particularly at this late season of the year but they took their full share in the toils and trials of the voyage and arrived at the Village of Kente on October 28th. They were well received and soon became active in their missionary work.

There has been some doubt as to the exact location of the indian settlement of Kente. Dr. Canniff in his most authoritative work " The Settlement of Upper Canada with special reference to the Bay of Quinte seemed to have ~~sixx~~ satisfactorily settled its location at Bald Bluff overlooking Weller's Bay on the Lake Ontario side of the Carrying Place.

He writes as follows.-

" From the nature of the relics found in the Indian Burying-ground near the Carrying Place at Bald Bluff, by Weller's Bay. It (Kente) might have been situated there. Silver crosses and other evidences of Roman Catholic Christianity have been found in this place"

How many outposts from this mission have not been recorded but there were of some importance. The Secena village on Frenchman's Bay where Fenelon spent the winter of 1668...1670 . Ganeraski now Port Hope; Gameious probably situated at the mouth of the Napanee River have been mentioned.

Evidently the mission prospered for in the spring of 1669 Abbe Fenelon returned to Montreal and arranged for materials to erect a mission and a farm-house, cattle, swine and the necessary farm impliments to be sent up the River. He took back with im another priest MM. d Urfe. d Urfe remained at Kente during the winter of 1669 while Fenelon went to Frenchmans Bay. It was a hard cold season. Little food was available and he was forced to live on the meat of squirrels and chip-munks . It was probably due to this hardship that Fenelon died at the early age of thirty-eight.

In 1671 it is recorded that D Urfe was at Port Hope and in all certainty the shores of the Bay of Qunite and Lake Ontario were thoroughly explored and charted. Fenelon even went as far as what is now known as Victoria County and visited the charming village and falls which are named after him.

This mission was evidently too far from Montreal to be serviced by them. It was a difficult and hard journey and the results were not as to be expected. It lasted but five years and was taken over by the Recollects who stayed but a short time after. The region was entirely forgotten until the building of Fort Frontenac and a permanent settlement was established at Cataraqui.

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" My footsteps press where, centuries ago
The Red Man fought and conquered; lost and won.
Whole tribes and races gone like last year's snow
Have found the eternal hunting grounds, and run
The Fiery Gauntlet of their active days
Until few are left to tell the mournful tale;
And these inspire us with such wild amaze
They seem like spectres passing down the vale
Stepped in uncertain moonlight, on their way
Towards some bourn where darkness blinds the day
And night is wrapped in mystery profound.
We cannot lift the mantle of the past;
We seem to wander over hallowed ground;
We scan the trail of thought but all is overcast".

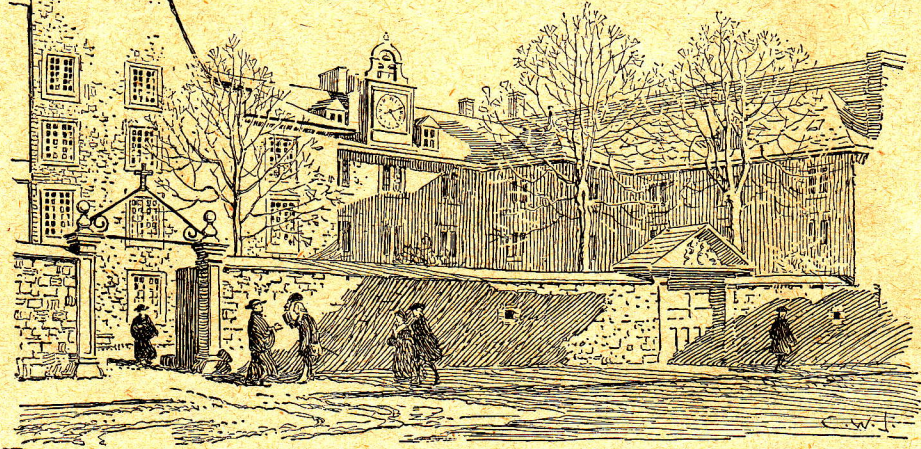
(Sangster)

Macaulay Pope.

Old buildings of the
Seminary of Saint
Sulpice, Notre Dame St.,
Montreal. Built about
end of 17th Century.

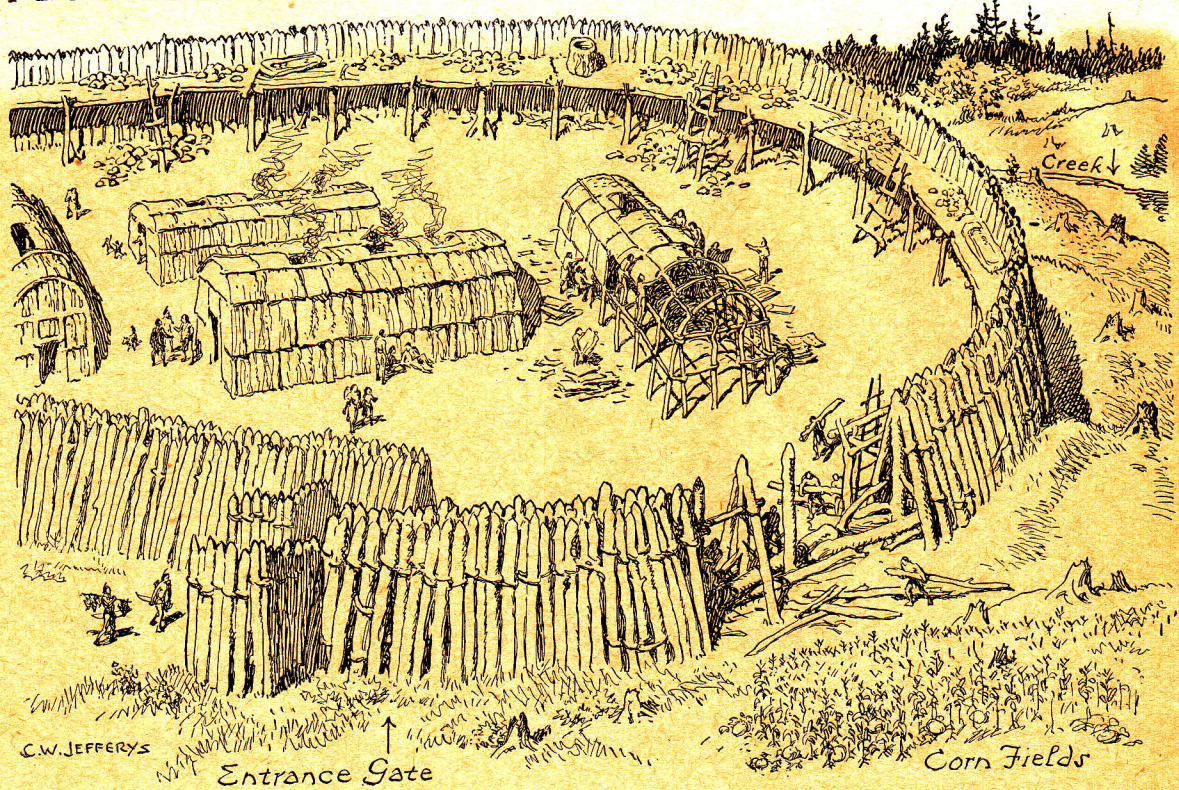


Towers of Fort of the Gentlemen of Saint Sulpice, Sherbrooke Street



Part of A PALISADED HURON-IROQUOIS VILLAGE

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C.W. JEFFERYS

↑
Entrance Gate

Corn Fields

Creek ↓