

THERE KATERI BELONGED!

A yearly account of the foundation of the Mission of the
Sault up to 1685

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A.D. 1678 (Cont'd.)

SMALLPOX laid siege to our village at the beginning of autumn. Afterwards, however, people were surprised at the few burials that had taken place and this blessing of God led the Iroquois to say no longer that faith and baptism caused death, since in the Iroquois country hundreds died from each attack of smallpox. The trust with which the Indian were inspired during their sickness produced its effect not only on the sick who were all cured and on the persons who had not contracted the sickness, but it was discovered too, that God also had blessed their fields. An island in the vicinity of the village had been abandoned a short time before. It was alive with worms which ate all the seed-corn for three consecutive times. Finally the Indians who had sowed it came and begged the Father to sprinkle it with Holy Water. The Missionary went and seeing the confidence of these poor people, who were all on their knees around him, full of faith and charity, he recited the prayers of the Church. The following autumn the crops were so abundant on this island that all were surprised. There was not a field at the Sault (St. Louis of the Mission St Francis Xavier) where there was as much ear-corn as on the island, although the sowing had been done earlier in other places, where the Indian corn had not been eaten by worms as on the island during the entire spring. The Indians were the first to understand the significance of this after the crops had been gathered in, admiring and thanking God for His goodness. This they also understood the following years, particularly in 1685, for while the priest was blessing the sowing a woman scooped up in an instant a handful of worms and that autumn the crops were marvelous. While the village was in flames in 1686, they remarked that as soon as the bell had rung out, the fire, which had nullified until then all the efforts of the fire-fighters, was mastered.



FIREBRAND: She weighs 300 pounds!
HOT ASHES: No, 340, she didn't help
Kateri's Cause!

1679

The malice of men, this year, brought things to such a pitch that on all sides the Mission was threatened with misfortune. Now it was said that a cabin was to be built above the village for trading and unloading what was taken to and brought back from Fort Catarakoui, and that an order thereon had been issued in France. Then it was asserted that the Captain of our village was to be imprisoned in Montreal, since he was accused of spreading confusion and since they wished to hold him responsible for what the pagan Iroquois did. At other times it was claimed that liquor was to be sold in the village, which was certain, because a Frenchman had already been there several times during the summer in hope of obtaining permission to do whatever he wished by making himself useful to the Indians, being an armorer by trade. In their problems and contradictions, the poor and afflicted Missionaries had recourse to God alone who was favorable to them, disposing all things for the trip that Father Frémin made to France at the end of this year. It was a successful voyage which resulted in having the Mission triumph over its enemies in such a surprising fashion that it would merit a special retelling of it. (*To be continued.*)