

# THERE KATERI BELONGED!

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

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A.D. 1680 (Cont'd.)

THE DEVIL, who saw the glorious success of this Mission, used another kind of battery. Taking the form of an angel of light, he urged on the devotion of some people who wished to imitate Kateri, or do severe penance for their sins. He egged them on to excess, doubtless so as to make Christianity hateful at the outset, or to put on the wrong track the girls and women of this Mission whose discretion never equalled that of Kateri, whom they tried to imitate. Indian women could be seen throwing themselves under the floating ice in the dead of winter; one dipped her daughter who was only six years old [ into the icy water ] to teach her, as she said, the spirit of penance at an early age: the nother was in the water because of her past sins, and she held her innocent daughter there because of the future sins which this child would perhaps commit when she had grown up. Indians of both sexes could be seen who made their blood run under the blows of iron disciplines, of birch rods, of thorns, of nettles; who fasted rigorously without eating the whole day long — and what the Indians eat half the year is insufficient to keep a man alive! These young girls worked hard all day, during the summer at tilling the ground, during the winter at chopping wood. These austerities continued just about without interruption: they mixed ashes into their portion of sagamité, placed burning coals between their toes where the fire burnt in, they went for long walks barelegged in the snow; they all disfigured themselves by cutting their hair in order not to be sought in marriage. This [ mortification ] and all the pain they were able to inflict upon their bodies, which they called their greatest enemies, left them so low that it was not possible undernourished men could persevere. Most of these things took place in the woods where the Indians were hunting either through enthusiasm or an excess of indignation against themselves. The Holy Spirit, however, soon took a hand in this affair and enlightened all these persons and regulated their conduct without diminishing their fervor.



Hot Ashes — Each ship that sails through the Seaway . . .  
Firebrand — . . . should be taxed one dollar for Kateri's Cause

About the middle of the summer, our chapel was threatened with a bolt from the skies, which after several terrible flashes, in broad daylight, and after several loud thunderclaps, struck a few feet from the main door and fell upon two oaks which it scorched. A man who was about to enter into the chapel saw all the stones on the ground bouncing about him without being hurt by any of them.

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For all the optimism felt concerning the happy success of the voyage of Father Frémin who was expected from day to day, the most confident began to have their doubts, seeing that the Father had not yet arrived in the middle of October. Then a letter from Quebec written by Father Frémin himself, scattered what remained of the tempest which had tormented us previously. The news arrived at the right moment, for the Fathers were being accused of concealing their thoughts and this damaged the effects of their preaching in the minds of the Indians. It was clearly explained to them that the French were not like them and were not as faint-hearted as they who were strong only from dissembling and that the Blackrobes had no interest in telling them lies. Against lying, the Fathers, who were not deceitful, cry out and preach daily. All this greatly increased the Christian Indians' trust in the Fathers who teach them.

— (To be continued).