

Michigan Every Day **By Patrick Sullivan and Carole Eberly**

Oct. 4, 1641
First Europeans come to Michigan

The first Caucasians who ventured into the land that would become Michigan arrived in birch bark canoes. French priests left the Penetanquishene, which is on the Georgian Bay in Ontario, paddling north toward Manitoulin Island. It took 17 days to arrive at their destination but on Oct. 4, 1641, Father Isaac Jogues and Father Charles Raymbault arrived at the falls of St. Mary's River, where they found thousands of Chippewa Indians.

The Europeans and their religion were unknown to the Indians but they warmly welcomed the newcomers. The priests discovered the attraction the area held for the Indians- the river teemed with whitefish and wildlife abounded in the thick woods that surrounded the settlement. The Chippewa told their guests about a great body of water to the west which they called Gitchi Gomee, or great water. This would later be named Lake Superior. Beyond that were lands filled with deer and buffalo, although the Indians warned the priests about traveling too far west to land inhabited by Sioux Indians, who would accord a much less friendly welcome. The priests were encouraged that the Chippewa would be receptive to a permanent mission at the Sault. Although the Chippewa invited the men to stay for the winter, the priests decided to make their way back to Canada, a decision that would prove fatal for Raymbault. Raymbault attempted to return to a village of Algonquins near Lake Nippissing but the

weather slowed his journey. He spent the winter on the shore of Lake Huron, sickened with tuberculosis that would kill him the following year.

Jogues also would run into bad luck that would prevent him from returning to the Sault. He returned to what is now Canada to live with a tribe of Huron Indians but was captured by a marauding band of Mohawk Indians. Jogues' Huron Indian friends were burned at the stake and Jogues was tortured. He eventually was ransomed to the Dutch and he returned to France. He came back to North America in 1646 and again was captured by Mohawk Indians and this time was tortured to death.