
Eight Murals
at the
Michigan Exhibit



CENTURY OF PROGRESS EXPOSITION . . CHICAGO

PRICE, TEN CENTS



INTRODUCTION



THE murals in the History and Education Room of the Michigan Exhibit are intended to be symbolic representations of Michigan's historic past. Six Michigan artists painted these especially for the Century of Progress Exposition. In viewing these, it would be useful for the visitor to bear in mind the difficulty of combining in one medium the ideals of the artist and the demands of the historian. There is no good reason why these two should not be synthesized, so as to conform to the definition of art as the communicable essence of a dream — a definition formulated by Michigan's principal authority on aesthetics, Mr. DeWitt Parker. These events of the far distant past are fascinating not only because they are filled with romance, but also because they constitute the foundations of our Commonwealth.



THE ARRIVAL OF JEAN NICOLET IN MICHIGAN IN 1634

A Painting by Zoltan de Sepeshy



WHO was the first white man to set foot upon the soil of Michigan? This question, like the problem of who discovered America, remains shrouded in mystery. But there is reason to believe that the first white man was a Frenchman, and that, like Christopher Columbus, he may have had a notion of finding a new way to Cathay (China). Possibly as early as 1612, one Etienne Brulé, of Champigny, visited the shores of Georgian Bay. There is also reason to believe that in 1622 this same Brulé visited the copper country of Lake Superior. His explorations are attested in the writings of both Champlain and Sagard, but without sufficient precision to establish the fact that he actually landed in what is now the state of Michigan. We must therefore turn to Jean Nicolet, of Cherbourg, as the subject of our illustration of the landing of the first white man in Michigan. Nicolet set out from Quebec in 1634 to explore the upper lake country. He went up the Ottawa River, and across Lake Nipissing into Lake Huron; then north up the St. Mary's River as far as modern Sault Ste. Marie. Descending this river, he turned west, skirting the south shore of Michigan's Upper Peninsula, passed the straits of Mackinac and reached Green Bay, Wisconsin. As he travelled by canoe, it would have been impossible to have made such a trip without many a night spent upon the shores of Michigan. Like Cartier and Champlain, Nicolet had faith in his ability to penetrate the North American continent and find a way through to China. In anticipation of a meeting with the Emperor of China, it is recorded in Father Vimont's *Relation* of 1642-1643, that Nicolet took with him a "damask robe" marvelously wrought in colored flowers and birds to resemble a Chinese costume. In the representation given here, Nicolet is shown wearing this exotic garb in the presence of a group of puzzled Indians.



FATHER MARQUETTE AND HIS MISSION AT ST. IGNACE

A Painting by Vivian Browne Boron



WHEREVER the European has gone, he has attempted to spread the gospel of Christianity. Among the earliest and noblest efforts to convert the Michigan Indians were those of Father Jacques Marquette, of Laon. He came first to Canada as a Jesuit priest in 1666. After mastering the Algonquin dialect, he took charge of the Mission of St. Esprit, on Lake Superior near modern Ashland, Wisconsin. But the Indians with whom he lived were soon threatened by hostile neighbors and in the winter of 1670-1671, the whole body, accompanied by Marquette, moved around to Mackinac Island, where a Mission was established. Shortly thereafter, Marquette moved the Mission from the island to the neighboring mainland where stands the modern town of St. Ignace. His labors are known to us chiefly through Father Claude Dablon's *Relation* of 1671-1672, and through Lamberville's *Relation* of 1672-1673, wherein is published Marquette's own story. The scene here depicted is that of Marquette before his rude shelter at St. Ignace. At his left stands an Indian who is keeping vigilant watch lest the Indian whose hand is in the bowl, should serve himself too generously. As Marquette explains the story of the crucifixion, one of the Indian girls appears deeply impressed, as may be seen by her kneeling figure. The reclining girl is obviously regarding her companion's reaction with some cynicism. The Indian peering from beneath Marquette's arm, at his right, is frankly puzzled at the interest of the Indian girl in the Christian faith, and somewhat uncertain as to his own feeling toward her obvious emotion. The French voyageur, seated in his canoe is engrossed in watching the faces of the two Indian girls. The whole setting indicates the lonely isolation in which Marquette lived and worked. The huge cross was erected where it might catch the attention of the numerous canoes passing between Lakes Huron and Michigan.



THE PAGEANT OF SAINT LUSSON

A Painting by Hunter Griffith

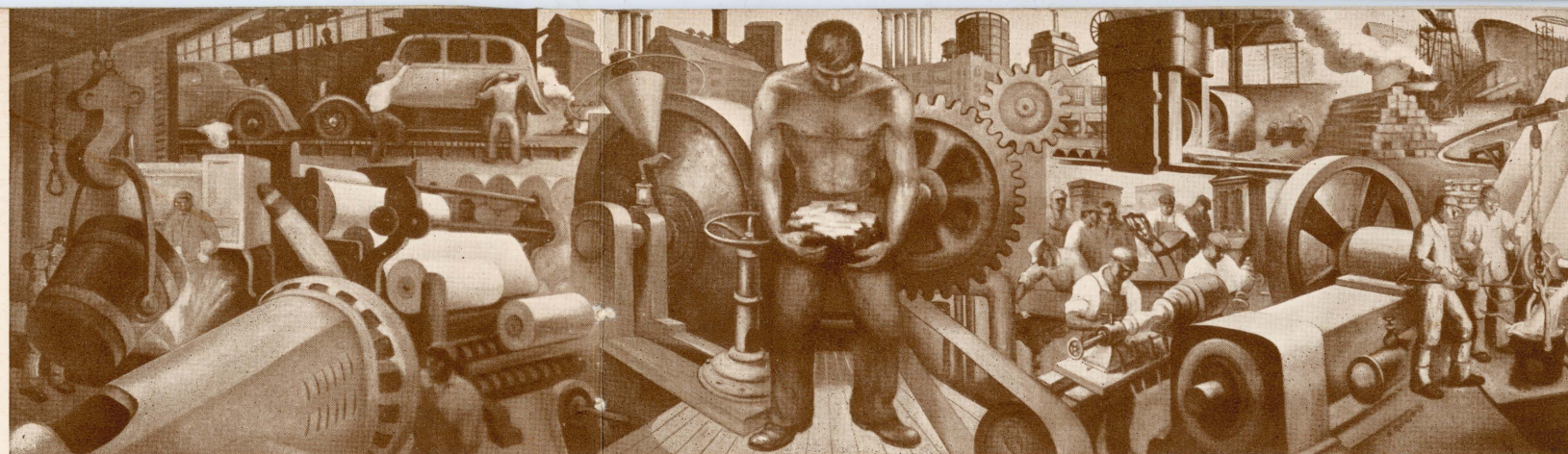


SUCH is the title given by Justin Winsor to a commencement address delivered at the University of Michigan at the time of the first Chicago World's Fair, forty years ago. Simon, François d'Aumont, Sieur de St. Lusson, came out to Canada about 1670, and was dispatched into the western country to proclaim the sovereignty of the King of France and to search especially for the copper mines. His accomplishment is best told in his own words taken from his official report dated June 14, 1671: "... We having made, in virtue of our commission, our first landing at the village or hamlet of Ste. Mary of the Falls, the place where the Reverend Jesuit fathers are making their mission . . . we caused the greatest portion possible of the other neighboring Tribes to be assembled there, who attended to the number of fourteen Nations . . . To whom in presence of the Reverend Fathers of the Company of Jesus and of all the French hereafter mentioned, we have caused to be read our said Commission and had it interpreted in their language by Sieur Nicolas Perrot, his Majesty's interpreter in that part . . . afterwards causing a Cross to be prepared in order that the fruits of Christianity be produced there, and near it a Cedar pole to which we have affixed the arms of France, saying three times in a loud voice and with public outcry, that 'In the name of the Most High, Most Mighty and Most Redoubtable Monarch Louis, the XIVth of the name, Most Christian King of France and Navarre, we take possession of the said place of Ste. Mary of the Falls as well as of Lakes Huron and Supérieur, the Island of Caientoton (Manitoulin) and of all other Countries, rivers, lakes and tributaries, contiguous and adjacent thereunto, as well discovered as to be discovered, which are bounded on the one side by the Northern and Western Seas and on the other side by the South Sea.'"

MICHIGAN'S INDUSTRIES

by

Reginald O. Bennett



Michigan's industries are, in Mr. Bennett's mural, naturally dominated by the metallurgical aspects of the state's activities. Its composition is centered about the heroic-size human figure bearing a lump of raw material from Michigan's soil, which underlies the state's industrial importance. In groups to the left and right he has portrayed the major industrial operations of Michigan. On the left is

shown the manufacture of stoves and refrigerators, airplanes, paper, chemical products and motor cars. On the right one sees furniture making, the building of ships, the production of steel, and the development of electrical power. In the distance, above the center figure, he has utilized modern factory buildings with their towering smoke stacks, and gasometer as the broad symbolization of his theme.

MICHIGAN'S NATURAL RESOURCES

by

Paul Honoré



Mr. Honoré's mural is divided into groups of activities more or less closely associated with each other. The central group symbolizes the general agricultural productivity of Michigan under present-day conditions, with a harvest of fruit and vegetables in the process of transportation to the people of the world. At the left is an agricultural survey showing the tilling of the soil, orchards,

dairy and meat cattle, mint fields and still, reaper and binder, and in the distance an urban community, the market of the farmers. On the right are groups of native factors: the lumber industry, iron and copper mines, fisheries, oil and salt wells. This group is expressed by a somewhat more primitive set of symbols, thereby typifying the native character of these deposits and products.



CADILLAC AT THE COURT OF LOUIS XIV.

A Painting by Leon A. Makielski

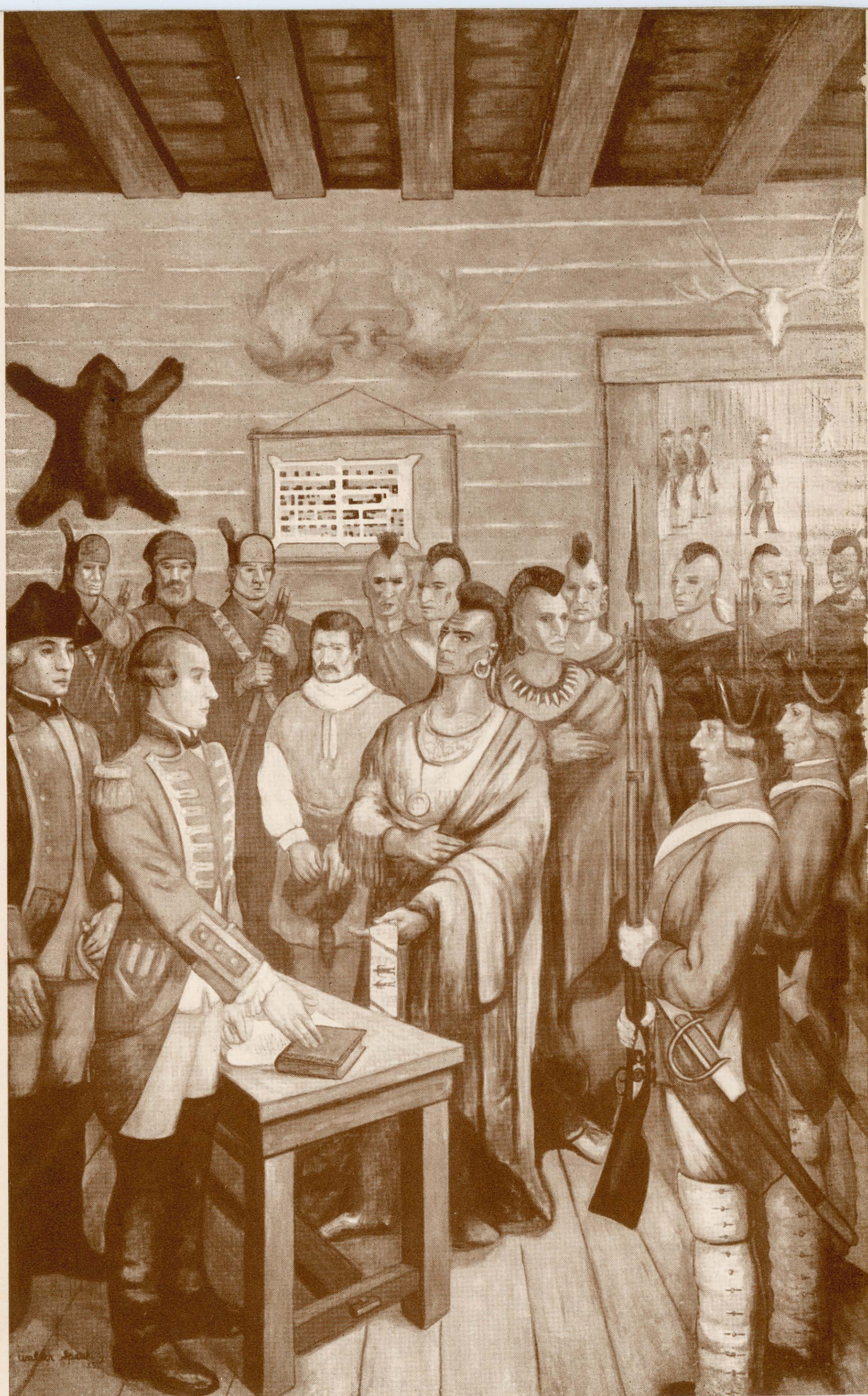


SIEUR Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac, of Gascony, came first to America in 1683. In 1694 he was sent by Count Frontenac to be commandant at the post at Mackinac, but a change in French colonial policy entailed the temporary abandonment of Mackinac in 1697. Nothing daunted, Cadillac returned to France in 1699 and laid before the government a plan for a new fort on the banks of the Detroit River. In those days the government of France was Louis XIV. Our artist has chosen to depict that moment when Cadillac is standing before the Grand Monarque, explaining with the aid of a copy of Franquelin's map, the superior advantages of the post he proposes to establish at Detroit. At the moment, Cadillac has shifted his attention from the King to the group of counsellors, notably to the distinguished scientist, Jean Dominique Cassini, who is trying to find the Detroit River upon his globe. Back of the King stands the Cardinal, Noailles. At the King's left is the inscrutable Madame de Maintenon. Between her and Cadillac stands Pontchartrain, the chancellor of France. The pictures of Indian life below the Franquelin map are taken from the manuscript "Codex Canadiensis," which was prepared for Louis XIV. by Bécarré de Grandville, and which contained some of the best representations of the flora and fauna of the Great Lakes region. Cadillac was less intent than his predecessors upon finding copper, or the South Sea, or spreading the gospel. His interest was in developing the business interests of Detroit, notably, of course, the fur trade. Upon one occasion his reports waxed so enthusiastic that a Minister at Paris responded, somewhat drily, "I am glad to be assured that Detroit will become the Paris of New France!"

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GLADWIN AND PONTIAC

A Painting by Walter Speck



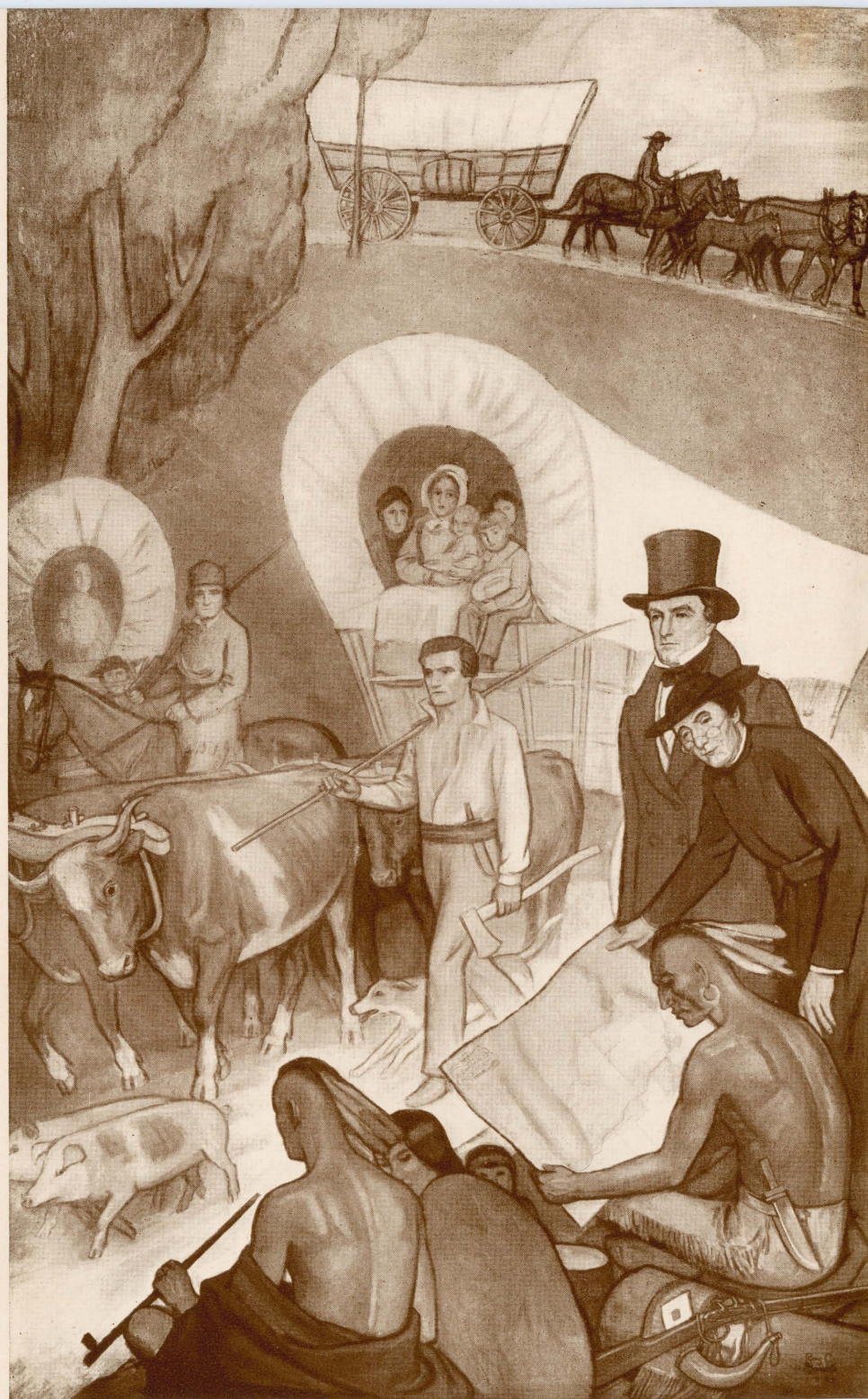
IN the year 1763, Major Henry Gladwin and his gallant garrison at Detroit virtually saved the western country for the English-speaking people. After the capitulation of Montreal in 1760, France gave up its dominion of the Great Lakes to Great Britain. British troops were sent out to garrison the numerous forts and posts in the western country previously held by the soldiers of the French King. But Britain had reckoned without the erstwhile red allies of France, for a fierce Indian war broke out on the frontier. Detroit was the only post on the upper lakes to survive. But let Major Gladwin tell his own story in a letter, the original of which is now in the William L. Clements collection.

“Detroit, May 14th, 1763

“Sir

On the first instant, Pontiac, the Chief of the Ottawa Nation, came here with about fifty of his men, and told me that in a few days he intended to pay me a formal visit. The 7th he came, but I was luckily informed the night before that he was coming with an intention to surprise us, upon which I took such precautions that when they entered the Fort . . . they were so much surprised to see our disposition that they would scarcely sit down to council—however in about half an hour after they saw their designs were discovered, they sat down and made several speeches, which I answered calmly . . . and after receiving some trifling presents they went away to their camp.”

The artist has chosen that moment in the meeting of Gladwin and Pontiac when the latter is still undecided whether or not so to turn the wampum as to give the signal for attack. Upon the wall of Gladwin's headquarters may be seen the earliest map of Detroit, made about 1752 by the French engineer de Lery.



PIONEERS ALONG THE DETROIT-CHICAGO ROAD

A Painting by Roy Gamble



ONE of the most striking phenomena of human history is the spread of white civilization during the last one hundred years into the great valleys of North America. A century ago that immense area of the United States which is drained by the St. Lawrence and the Mississippi, was inhabited by approximately two million people. Today it is a vast agricultural and industrial empire holding above sixty million. The wagon roads were among the most important factors in this development. Pre-eminent among these was the road which ran from Detroit to Chicago. Originally an old Indian trail, known at the eastern end as the "Montreal Trail" and at the western end as the "Sauk Trail," this pathway became the "Chicago Turnpike" of the 19th century, and today is the magnificent concrete highway for which, unfortunately, the modern American has been able to find no better name than "U. S. 112." The artist has selected a point upon this road where it winds through the Irish Hills. In the right foreground are the figures of the two men whose unceasing energy and activity converted the old trail into a wagon road. Lewis Cass, Governor of the Territory of Michigan, personally explored the route on horseback and by canoe and urged upon Michigan and the Federal government the importance of a highway which would facilitate the westward advance of immigrants arriving at Detroit by way of the Erie Canal and Lake Erie. In those days, Michigan's lone delegate in Congress was the indefatigable Father Gabriel Richard of Detroit. A speech he delivered in 1825 before Congress resulted in the appropriation of the funds necessary for the construction of the road which brought the pioneers overland from Detroit. This concluding picture of the six historical murals in the Michigan Building emphasizes the transition from early Michigan to modern Michigan. The keynote is transportation—for it is in transportation that Michigan has achieved world-wide importance.

