

historian, J. G. Shea, pointed out in a volume of Jesuit *Relations* the following words, written from Quebec to France, in 1640, by Father Le Jeune: "M. Nicollet, who has penetrated into the most distant regions, has assured me that if he had pushed on three days longer down a great river which issues from the second lake of the Hurons (evidently meaning Lake Michigan), he would have found the sea."

The word *Mississippi*, meaning "great water," was ambiguous, and, though really denoting a river, might well be mistaken for a sea, especially by an adventurer who knew the sea to be in that direction, and who believed it by no means remote.

On the strength of this Jesuit testimony, Parkman remarks: "As early as 1639, Nicollet ascended the Green Bay of Lake Michigan and crossed to the waters of the Mississippi." This was within nine years after the founding of Boston, which claims to be of all northern cities the most ancient.

But in the lowest deep a lower deep still opens. According to the latest researches of Benjamin Sulte, Nicollet was in Wisconsin four or five years earlier than 1639. He started west from Canada in 1634, and returned the year following. The best Canadian investigators assure us that he never traveled west again, but, marrying and becoming interpreter at Three Rivers, below Montreal, he remained there or thereabouts thenceforward till his death. All agree that Nicollet visited Wisconsin. If it is proved that he was not here in 1639 or afterward, he must have been here before. There is some reason for holding that Nicollet had penetrated into Wisconsin at a date still earlier than 1634.

Chicago is not known to have been visited by any European before 1673. In the autumn of that year Marquette, returning from his voyage down the Mississippi, was conducted from the Illinois river by Indians to that spot as affording the shortest portage to Lake Michigan. The next year that missionary, on a coasting tour along the lake, after a voyage of forty-one days from Green Bay, reached Chicago,—which was then uninhabited. As sickness disabled him from going further, his Indian oarsman built him a hut, and two French traders who already had a post a few leagues inland, ministered to him till the next spring, when

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