

Sainte-Marie Among the Hurons

Sainte-Marie Among the Hurons was a Jesuit settlement near Midland, Ontario from 1639-1649. It was a center and base for the Jesuit missionaries as they worked amongst the Huron. The first Canadian Christmas Song, "Huron Carol," was written here by Jean de Brebeuf, a Jesuit.

In 1649, the Iroquois became more aggressive and the Jesuits decided to abandon the settlement and burn it. Brebeuf and Lallemant (Jesuits) were seized by the Iroquois, fastened to stakes and tortured to death by scalping, mock baptism using boiling water, fire necklaces of red hot hatchets and mutilation. According to Catholic tradition, Brebeuf did not make a single outcry while he was being tortured and the astounded Iroquois cut out his heart and ate it in hopes of gaining his courage.

His bones were buried at Sainte-Marie. Pope John Paul II visited this site twice with the last being in 2004. Brebeuf was canonized in 1930 with seven other missionaries. He is the patron saint of Canada.

It is also said that Brebeuf coined the term "lacrosse."

