



Jacques Marquette

Given by Wisconsin to the National Statuary Hall Collection

JACQUES MARQUETTE, FRENCH JESUIT missionary and explorer, was born in Laon, France, on June 1, 1637. After years of preparatory study and teaching, he arrived in Quebec in 1666, studied Indian language and culture, and was sent in 1668 to Sault Ste. Marie, a mission among the Ottawa Indians, and to La Pointe de St. Esprit.

While he was at St. Ignace on Mackinac Island in December 1672, an old friend, the trader Louis Jolliet, arrived with orders for Marquette to accompany him on a journey to explore the Mississippi. Embarking in May 1673, they reached the confluence of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers. Indians told them that the Mississippi (which Marquette named Riviere de la Conception) emptied into the Gulf of Mexico and warned them of Spanish settlers farther downstream. They turned back to avoid being captured with their information on geography and Indian culture. By May 1674 Marquette was very ill; while recovering his health he prepared notes for publication in *Jesuit Relations*, since the official record had been lost.

In October 1674 Marquette fulfilled his wish to establish a mission at Kaskaskia, where he and Jolliet had spent time. Marquette's poor health forced their return to Sault Ste. Marie. Marquette died en route and was buried on May 18, 1675. His remains were returned to St. Ignace by Indian converts and placed in a chapel, which was destroyed by fire in 1706. In 1877 the grave was discovered, and a marker was erected in 1882.

April 2011

Marble by Gaetano Trentanove

Given in 1896; located in House connecting corridor, 2nd floor.

