

**TRUE STORIES OF
GREAT AMERICANS.
LA SALLE**

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True Stories of Great Americans. La Salle by Louise Seymour Hasbrouck

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PREFACE

THE author makes little claim to originality in the following work, though the original sources of the history of the period have been carefully studied. Her aim has been, first and foremost, to give to younger readers what has hitherto been lacking — a short, yet not too short, account of La Salle's career, with details enough of contemporaneous history, scenery, manners, and customs to indicate the picturesque background against which La Salle's lonely figure moves in all the heroism of his magnificent journeys.

If the work of La Salle's matchless biographer, Francis Parkman, has been too freely quoted, the excellence of the quotations must be their own excuse. The writer also acknowledges her grateful indebtedness to the Pierre Margry publication of documents relating to La Salle, the Caxton Club reprints, edited by Melville B. Anderson, John Finley's "The French in the Heart of America," John G. Spear's "The History of the Mississippi Valley," Mark Twain's "Life on the Mississippi," and many other authorities, whose works have been frequently consulted.

FOREWORD

On the banks of the St. Joseph River, on the outskirts of the town of South Bend, Illinois, stands to-day an old red cedar tree,¹ which once had its roots in French soil. Push away the sand and earth near its base, and you will find on the tough bark the marks made by the broad-bladed axes of the early French explorers, probably La Salle's party, as they blazed the trail from the Great Lakes to the waters flowing to the Gulf, and claimed all that fair, unknown country for Louis the Fourteenth, "by the grace of God King of France and of Navarre."

Nearly two centuries and a half have passed. The tree that was once French has seen the passing of the red hunters and warriors, the savage allies of its nation; it looks no longer upon herds of buffalo, serves no longer as a landmark for daring explorer, wild *coureurs de bois*, gray-robed and black-robed missionary priests of Old Canada.

¹ Mentioned by John Finley, in "The French in the Heart of America."