

AMERICA IN FRANCE

IX—St. Mihiel

One of the first towns that Americans traveling in France after the war will insist on seeing because of its historic association with the work of the A.E.F. will be St. Mihiel, on the right bank of the Meuse.

This little city—in peace time it boasted 10,000 inhabitants—besides giving its name to the salient reduced and recaptured by the Yanks on September 12 and 13, 1918, had almost no small place in the history of France and of Europe before those eventful days. It has given to France many illustrious sons famed in the arts and sciences, and it owes its very existence to its proximity to a seat of learning which kept the torch of culture burning during the so-called dark ages.

It was in 706 that Saint Mihiel, otherwise known as Saint Michel (but not to be confused with the patron saint of Paris, who is none other than Saint Michael the Archangel himself), established, at about six kilometers' distance from the town which now bears his name, a great abbey for the Benedictine monks, of whose order he was an influential member. A little more than a century later, this abbey was brought nearer the banks of the Meuse under the direction of the celebrated abbot Inaragide, counselor to no less a prince than Charlemagne.

Capital of a Duchy

The school of the abbey, under the direction of the Benedictines, flourished during the centuries that followed, and the town prospered in proportion. In 1301 St. Mihiel became the capital of the independent province of Bar, called a duchy, which later became one of the fiefs of the Duke of Lorraine.

In those days the Samtuelois were a race of noted weavers, and may were the habits roses and satins brocades that their dexterous hands turned out for the adornment of the great ladies of the royal and ducal courts of the period. The gold workers of the town also added to the richness of its cloth products with their ornaments, and to be dressed in the cloth and gold of St. Mihiel was the height of ambition for many a lord and lady of high degree in France and across the Rhine.

In the sixteenth century, St. Mihiel became an artistic center, and the school of art which bore its name continued to spread its influence over France and beyond in the great days of the Renaissance.

Chief among the exponents of the Samtuelois school was its founder, Ligier Richier, born in St. Mihiel in 1506. He was a pupil of Michael Angelo in Italy, and wrought much of his sculpture in the stone of his native region. The stone of St. Mihiel, when soaked in wax and oil, has much of the appearance and the durability of marble, as the works of Ligier, of his son, Gerard, and of Jean, Joseph and Jacob Richier, who followed amply attest.

St. Mihiel's Churches

The old church of Saint Etienne in the town boasts a depiction of the Holy Sepulchre by Ligier Richier, considered the sculptor's masterpiece, as one of its most highly prized possessions. In the group an angle is seen bearing the Saviour's Cross and the nails and addressing condolences to Mary. St. Veronica stands alongside, holding the crown of thorns; below, Mary Magdalene is seen kissing the feet of the dead Christ, and Salome is preparing the winding-sheet in the tomb.

In the church of Saint Michel, which is part of the abbey group of buildings, is another of Ligier's works, this time in wood, representing St. John the Baptist in the act of comforting the weeping Mary.

The church of Saint Michel has one example of the work of Jean Richier, grandson of Ligier, in its baptistry—a statue of a child playing with two skulls.

The more somber subjects seem to have appealed particularly to the art of the Richiers.

That the people of St. Mihiel have not been forgetful of their most famous townsman is attested by the Place Ligier Richier, at the head of the Rue de l'Église. There, in 1909, was erected a bronze statue of the sculptor, executed by a latter-day artist of St. Mihiel, named Vadel.

Other Famous Inhabitants

But the Richiers have had no monopoly of the work of bringing fame to the town of their birth.

Nicolas Cordier, born at St. Mihiel in 1567, was a sculptor who decorated the city of Rome with his works. Jean Béran, born there in 1640, was called the greatest designer of his century, and strove mightily to add to the brilliance of the reign of his monarch, Louis XIV, the "Sun-King." His brother Claude and his two sons, Jean-Baptiste and Jean, distinguished themselves in the decorative art. With the exception of Jean, all were natives of the little city by the Meuse.

In yet another line St. Mihiel has been known. Albert Girard, the mathematician, first saw the light of day there in 1588. He it was who made possible the further developments of mathematics and metaphysics by such men as Descartes and Sir Isaac Newton, who followed in his footsteps.

Before the fall of 1914, when the German army gobbled up the town in its advance and then held it for four years, St. Mihiel had known capture and siege.

In the course of the struggle between the duke of Lorraine and Bar with his liege-lord, Louis XIII, and Louis's great manager, Richelieu, it was captured and taken by the royal troops in 1635, but only after an heroic resistance by the garrison, loyal to the duke to the last. French strategical authorities of later times have not failed to recognize its importance, and during the last century it has always quartered a garrison of considerable size, particularly since 1870, when the Germans secured Metz.

A Descendant of Lafayette

The Roman invaders and conquerors of Gaul were not unaware of the strategic value of the spot, for to the south of St. Mihiel can be found the Fort du Camp des Romains, deriving its name from the Caesar's warriors. The modern fort, held by the Germans up to the eventful close of last week, was built on the side of the old Roman encampment, which in turn took over the site of a still earlier Gallic "oppidum" or fortified town.

Of particular interest to Americans, outside of the outstanding recent events, is the fact that near St. Mihiel is the chateau of the Comte de Chambrun, a direct lineal descendant of the Marquis de Lafayette. The count, in company with Marshal Joffre and former Premier Viviani, was one of the first Frenchmen to welcome the United States into the war as a sister-ally, being a member of the official French mission that visited the States in April and May, 1917.

He re-entered his abode in company with American and French troops for the first time in four years, following the recapture of the old town last week.

HENRY'S PAL TO HENRY

INDICATING THAT IF YOU DON'T KNOW HOW YOU HAD BETTER ADMIT IT BEFORE YOU'RE SHOWN UP



I ran smack into the mayor and knocked him kookoo

France, Sept. 19, 1918.

Dear Henry, Well Henry if some bird tries to tell you that driving a truck in a conveyer is a easy job you can figure he has been a hod carrier or a lumber jack something and don't know what a easy job is like.

The other day some guy from the Q.M. dept. come over and says that he is looking for volunteers to go to a place down in the S.O.S. and drive some ford trucks up here. I never drove a ford truck and neither did Buck but we said we'd go anyway.

This guy wanted to know if we could drive one up here without busting a wind shield or something and Buck said he had never busted one yet. Of course he hadn't Henry because he never had a chance, and a hint saying anything about myself either Henry.

Well there was 24 of us guys went down on the train and there was 24 fords all lined up and waiting for us. This bird in charge of us, who I bet couldn't herd a bunch of baby buggies down a street without getting scared, lined us up and assigned us to a truck.

Right off the bat Henry I got little old no. 13 and Buck got no. 23. They all had numbers on them from 1 up to 24 and that's the numbers we got.

Well Henry I bet you know there would be something terrible happen.

Well this guy had a truck full of gasoline come up and told us to fill up our gas and etc. I never gassed up a ford of course but I watched another cink and got the dope pretty strait.

I did it like he did and of course it was all right. Then I went down to where Buck was and he had filled up the water tank with gasoline and so we had to drain it all out and do it over.

I like to wear out my right arm cranking my old liz up but I got her started and then helped Buck get his going.

Well Henry this bird in charge of us got up in front and blew his whistle 3 times for us to start and we was off.

I busted a lamp first crack out of the box when this guy in front of me didn't get started with the rest of us.

What in hell's the matter with you anyway this bird in front say, don't you know how to drive a ford. Well I says if I don't I ain't got much on you, stopping in front of me like that.

Well I waited till this guy pulled out then I socked Henry into low and got a good start. Everything was going all right when the radiator or something began to suck air and she died on me like she had quick nemonia.

I got out and cranked her Henry and first thing I knowed she walked right up my stummick and knocked me down and I fell into the gutter. I forgot to pull the brake back which disconnects the gear.

Well Henry you should've seen that loot came back there and tip me up the back. I can't tell you all he said to me Henry but it was enough to convince me I wasn't no expert when it come to driving a ford.

Well I backed her off the telephone pole and got her started again. For about a mile Henry I wasn't sure whether I was going to kill some guy or just cripple him.

I guess everybody along the road took a good look at me, but I was so busy about the time I come along and it was pretty lucky for one guy that he run when he did or his folks might be going to his funeral or something today.

I kind of scraped one guys fender who passed me and nearly run into an old car that was stuck in the gutter. We was going down a long hill and I had to put the brakes on all the time to keep from running into this bird ahead of me.

I was thinking about Buck and how he was coming etc. when I heard a hell of a noise and everybody got over to the right of the road for some bird to pass and pretty soon he passed at about 70 miles an hour and when I saw that little old no. 23 dauling on the car I knew that Buck would either be in the hospital soon or I would have an extra set of bandages on my bunk. He was sure rambling Henry.

Well when we got to the bottom of the hill Buck was alright but his car had to be towed in. He hit something which disconnected the dardat that connects up the dudinkus on the steering wheel with the gas tank or something. That little old no. 13 was through yet Henry. This loot in charge says Buck is too incompetent to drive a ford so he steered it and Buck got in the car with me.

Right then I had a hunch that Buck would bring me a lot of hard luck or something. I had my old liz running as smooth as a alarm clock.

We was coming through a French town when I run smack into the mayor of the place and knocked him kookoo. And the more I think about it the more I think this gink ought to be hen hit.

He started across the street when I was driving and I bet you can hear my horn tooting all the way down the street because that was Buck's job. Well Henry everybody stopped and got out and it took about 5 minutes to bring the mayor to. All the time they was working on him the loot was looking at me like he was going to court-martial me or something.

Then after he come to the loot made a speech to him about how sorry he was and how unfortunate he was in having with him a guy who was wished on him by accident and who didn't know the first principals of driving a car etc.

And all that time Henry I was standing there while everybody looked at me and grinned. Buck was the only one who didn't look at me like I was a German or something who had come along just for the purpose of killing of the French population and smashing up cars that was being used in the war etc.

ROSEY IS ABDUCTED, 50 FRANCS OFFERED

Villain in Motor Car Sought by Engineer Hawkshaws After Deed

Somebody has abducted Rosey, and Company E of the — Engrs. is hot up about it.

What's more, that somebody was seen to alight from an American car on or about July 15, near the Camp of Company E, — Engrs., if you know where that is. Company E's alert guard gave chase to the end of his post, but couldn't chase any further without violating G.O. No. 5 — set down in the M.G.D. The car started up too quick anyway, and the sentry was so flustered at the spectacle of the dastardly act that he saw red, and consequently couldn't lamp the number.

Company E says, right out bold in writing, that it will collectively pay 50 francs for Rosey's return or for information leading to her recovery, and hereby makes the offer through this newspaper. Company E doesn't furnish Rosey's descriptive list or service record, but it does send a picture. It is a little bit blurred and perhaps not flattering, so we won't use it, but here is a description compiled from it:

Nose, pronouncedly long; hair, stiff and bristly; eyes, narrow and set well into the head; ears, sharply pointed and laid back along her hairy neck; hands and feet, small, well-calloused and cloven.

"Hold on," says some one about now, "who'll is this itoger, you're getting intimate in describing?"

A fair question and a just one. Rosey is the five months' old wild bear mascot of Company I, — Engrs., and they love her like a buddy.

THINK OF VLADIVOSTOK

"Bet this is going to be an awfully tough winter."

"Cheer up. We might have been in that outfit they sent to Siberia."

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They are going to wear patches of scarlet cloth right under their collar ornaments. The patches will be 2 inches long and 1 1/4 inches wide, rounded at the corners. They will be worn on both sides, sewn lengthwise, 1 inch from each end and midway between the upper and lower edges, according to G.O. 152.

Officers will wear the bronze metal letters "U.S." and enlisted men the regulation button insignia "U.S." in the center of the scarlet pieces.

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