

Josette Vieau Juneau. (1803-1855)

Josette was born at Sheboygan, Wisconsin, one of twelve children in the family of Jacques Vieau and his Menominee wife Angelique. Angelique was the daughter of Joseph Le Roy, a French trader and his wife Marguerite, who was the daughter of Ah-ke-ne-pa-weh (Standing Earth), an important Menominee tribal leader from the La Baye, Wisconsin area. Her father Jacques was a French Canadian fur trader. Josette was educated at the St. François Xavier mission near Green Bay, Wisconsin and became fluent and literate in French. She also spoke Menominee, Chippewa, Potawatomi, and Winnebago.

At age seventeen Josette married Metis trader Solomon L. Juneau who was working under her father's supervision at Milwaukee. They had at least 17 children, 14 of whom lived past childhood. Her son Joseph went on to become the co-founder and namesake of Juneau, Alaska. Josette was known as an extraordinary hostess and within her home she provided nursing, and charity as well as education in housekeeping and Christian doctrine. Eventually, she persuaded her husband (who was also the first mayor of Milwaukee) to build a rural home at Theresa, Wisconsin, so she could be near her Menominee kinfolk. After 1852, this became their retirement home. Her charity and good works were acknowledged by a gift from Pope Leo XII and she was universally mourned and eulogized by the press upon her death.

Reference

Thiel, Mark. "Josette Juneau," in Gretchen M. Bataille (Editor). *Native American Women: A Biographical Dictionary*. New York: Garland Publishing, 1993: 132-133.



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