

The Jesuits
of the
Middle United States

by

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TO HIS PATERNITY ✠ THE VERY REVEREND WLODIMIR
LEDÓCHOWSKI ✠ TWENTY-SIXTH GENERAL OF THE SOCIETY
OF JESUS ✠ IN TOKEN OF THE HIGH REGARD AND DEEP VEN-
ERATION BORNE HIM BY HIS SONS IN THE MIDDLE UNITED
STATES ✠ WHO HAVE ENTERED INTO A GREAT TRADITION OF
ZEALOUS WHOLEHEARTED EFFORT FOR THE COMING OF
CHRIST'S KINGDOM ✠ AN INHERITANCE UNTO THEM FROM
THE MEN OF THEIR ORDER WHO IN PIONEER DAYS OPENED
THE WAY OF JESUIT ENDEAVOR IN THAT SPLENDID AND FAR-
FLUNG REGION

ON OCCASION OF THE IMPENDING QUADRICENTENNIAL OF THE
FOUNDING OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS IN 1540

P R E F A C E

This history purposes to tell the authentic story of the Society of Jesus in the Middle United States. That body, as other Catholic religious bodies of men and women having international affiliations, is organized into administrative units or provinces, the Jesuits of the Middle United States constituting, during practically all the period covered by the present work, the province of Missouri with executive headquarters in St. Louis.* But the territorial extent of the province of Missouri has been of far greater sweep than the historic commonwealth the name of which it borrows. It embraced up to recent date fifteen states, lying severally in the upper Mississippi Valley or in the basin of the Great Lakes or in both. The term "Middle United States" consequently best describes the widely extended area which constituted the field of operations of the Jesuits of the jurisdiction named. That area, roughly outlined, included the territory lying between the forty-ninth parallel, Mason and Dixon's line, the Rocky Mountain Continental Divide and the eastern boundaries of Michigan and Ohio.

The history of the midwestern Jesuits has now filled out a hundred years and more, crowded with every sort of ministerial and educational endeavor. Reaching out from St. Louis in this direction and that over the territory indicated, they have through the agency of schools of every grade, as also of parishes, mission-posts and other media of apostolic effort and enterprise, identified themselves with the religious and in a measure with the civil beginnings of most of the important localities of the central states. What lends special significance to the record before us is the circumstance that this particular branch of the Jesuit organization grew up from rude beginnings to maturity *pari passu* with the great expanse of territory on which its activities have been staged. Men of its jurisdiction were spending their energies in religious and humanitarian service of various sorts in most of the great western cities of today at a period when the latter were but pioneer communities painfully struggling forward to their present growth. Furthermore, over the earlier chapters of the story hangs something of the romance and glamor of the Old Frontier. The paths of the first midwestern Jesuits

* In 1928 the Missouri Province territory lying east of the Mississippi River (Wisconsin and a part of Illinois excepted) was organized into a separate and independent Jesuit province with headquarters in Chicago. The history here set before the reader chronicles the activities of both provinces, Missouri and Chicago.

lay across those of many of the history-making figures on the stage of the advancing frontier. Van Quickenborne, their leader, had frequent business dealings with William Clark of the Lewis and Clark expedition, America's greatest epic of exploration, while their best known Indian missionary, De Smet, made personal contacts with John McLoughlin, "Father of Oregon." In fine, the Old Frontier, "the most American thing in all America," eloquent of every manner of daring and adventure, was in large measure the historic background against which the pioneer missionary and educational efforts of the Jesuits of the Middle West were set.

The material of this history has been derived from a great range and variety of sources, among them, in particular, the general archives of the Society of Jesus, the archives of the Jesuit provinces of Missouri, Maryland-New York, Northern Belgium, and Lower Germany, the Baltimore and St. Louis archdiocesan archives, the "Catholic Archives of America" (Notre Dame University), and the files of the Indian Office, Department of the Interior, Washington. But numerous other archival depositaries have also been drawn upon, an effort having been made to set the narrative at every stage of its development on a secure basis of first-hand documentary information. In fine, the absence, in general, of printed accounts bearing in any significant way on the history of the midwestern Jesuits made it necessary for the author to derive his material almost entirely from original and unpublished sources.

The problem of handling the great complexity of detail involved in such a comprehensive record as is here attempted has been met, wisely, it is believed, by adopting on the whole a method of treatment broadly topical rather than stiffly chronological. Hence, it results, the Kickapoo and Council Bluffs Missions, to cite these two instances by way of illustration, are disposed of in individual chapters, each presenting a comprehensive and rounded-out treatment of the respective missions for the entire course of their history. This plan, while necessitating an occasional overlapping of content and a certain forward and backward movement among successive administrative periods, has the outbalancing advantage of making for unity and continuity of treatment in all important topics that come to hand. A merely chronological scheme has too many inconveniences to commend itself for adoption in a record like the present, set as this is against a frequently shifting physical background and presenting a very great diversity of concurrent activities, missionary, educational and otherwise.

This history, as originally planned and written, did not extend beyond the Civil War period or the end of the sixties. Later it was thought advisable to continue the narrative so as to have it cover at least the first century, 1823-1923, of Jesuit activity in the Middle

United States and even more recent years. But for the period subsequent to the sixties no attempt is made at documentation. Here the treatment is necessarily sketchy, being only a brief survey of matters an adequate account of which is precluded by limitations of space. The dispatch with which many topics are thus disposed of can be no measure of the significance that is theirs in the Jesuit story here told. The outstanding gain achieved by carrying the narrative up to recent date is that it becomes possible on this plan to bring to the reader's notice the impressive development that has come to crown the efforts and sacrifices, often of heroic degree, of the pioneer Jesuits of the Middle West.

Translations of letters and documents are the author's own unless otherwise indicated in the foot-notes. In all quoted matter, whether original text or translation, in all verbatim citations of documentary material, the original text is reproduced without change, except in rare instances where slight verbal alterations are introduced. In the case of translations the capitalization and spelling of proper names which obtain in the original are retained even though at variance with the style adopted in the text of the history. The spelling of Indian names conforms to the usage of the United States Bureau of Ethnology.

For key-letters to archival depositaries and abbreviations of titles of periodicals, the reader is referred to Vol. III, pp. 602, 614.

The author makes grateful acknowledgment to all, and their number is considerable, who have in any manner assisted him in the preparation of the work. In particular, he is greatly indebted to Reverend Laurence J. Kenny, S. J., and Reverend William T. Doran, S. J., for their careful and critical reading of the manuscript. A similar service was rendered by the late Reverend William Banks Rogers, S. J. Again, the author expresses cordial thanks for the courtesies shown in his regard by the keepers of archives, civil or ecclesiastical, whether in the United States, Canada or Europe, who have obligingly placed their treasures at his disposal or otherwise aided him in his researches. Acknowledgment is likewise made to Reverend Alfred G. Brickel, S. J., and Reverend Gerald A. Fitzgibbons, S. J., who gave generous assistance on the proofs. Reverend Francis X. Talbot, S. J., and Reverend Francis P. LeBuffe, S. J., lent valuable aid in attending to details of publication. A special measure of grateful appreciation is due to Reverend Charles H. Cloud, S. J., provincial superior of the Chicago Province of the Society of Jesus, 1930-1936, to whose enlightened enterprise is due the solution of the economic problem attending the publication of the volumes.

The sketch-maps illustrating the text at various stages are due to the technical skill of Reverend John P. Markoe, S. J., and Reverend Jerome V. Jacobsen, S. J., whose services in this connection are acknowledged with many thanks.

Finally, the author cannot but express the hope that the following pages may serve in some small measure to bring home to the reader the efforts of three generations of earnest men to pursue on the stage of the Middle United States the high ideals traced out for them by their religious leader under Christ, St. Ignatius Loyola

THE AUTHOR

Loyola University, Chicago
January 1, 1938.

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