

**A CENTENARY OF CATHOLICITY IN
KANSAS, 1822-1922; THE HISTORY OF
OUR CRADLE LAND (MIAMI AND
LINN COUNTIES); CATHOLIC INDIAN
MISSIONS AND MISSIONARIES OF
KANSAS; THE PIONEERS ON THE PRAIRIES**

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THOMAS H. KINSELLA

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THE MOST REVEREND LOUIS WILLIAM VALENTINE DUBOURG

First Bishop of the Diocese of St. Louis, Missouri.

Most Rev. Louis William Valentine Dubourg, Archbishop of the Cardinalatial See of Besancon; consecrated in Rome, Sept. 24, 1815; Bishop of Louisiana, Upper and Lower, took his first residential seat in St. Louis, Jan. 8, 1818. On July 18, 1826, the Diocese of Louisiana was divided and the Sees of St. Louis and New Orleans erected. Bishop Dubourg, having resigned the See of Louisiana, was transferred to the Diocese of Montauban in France, Aug. 13, 1826, and made Archbishop of the Cardinalatial See of Besancon, Feb. 15, 1833, where he died Dec. 12 of the same year.

A CENTENARY OF CATHOLICITY IN KANSAS

1822 - 1922

THE HISTORY OF OUR CRADLE LAND

(Miami and Linn Counties)

CATHOLIC INDIAN MISSIONS AND MISSIONARIES OF KANSAS

THE PIONEERS ON THE PRAIRIES

Notes on St. Mary's Mission, Sugar Creek, Linn County; Holy Trinity Church, Paola, Miami County; Holy Rosary Church, Wea; Immaculate Conception, B. V. M., Louisburg; St. Philip's Church, Osawatomie; Church of the Assumption, Edgerton, Johnson County; to which is added a short sketch of the Ursuline Academy at Paola; the diary of Father Hoecken, and old Indian records.



Written and compiled by

REVEREND THOMAS H. KINSELLA, LL. D.

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To

THE RIGHT REVEREND JOHN WARD, D. D.

by the grace of God and the favor of the Apostolic See,
BISHOP OF LEAVENWORTH—

A WORTHY SUCCESSOR TO THE SAINTS AND HEROES
OF A GLORIOUS PAST—THOUGH RECENT AS TO TIME,
YET MOST ANCIENT AS TO THE SPIRIT THAT ANI-
MATED THEIR DEEDS AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT
RENDERED THEM TRUE APOSTLES OF JESUS CHRIST,
THIS WORK IS AFFECTIONATELY AND RESPECTFULLY
DEDICATED.

ST. LOUIS UNIVERSITY,

September 27, 1919.

Reverend and Dear Father:

I have been unable to answer your letter until now; kindly pardon the delay.

As I wrote to Father Cogley, your history of pioneer Catholicity in Miami and Linn Counties, is extremely interesting and will be a valuable contribution to the story of the upbuilding of the Church in Kansas. I am sure that everybody will be pleased when they see this chapter of Western ecclesiastical history in print.

Your record of the labors of the first Jesuit missionaries in Kansas is accurate and in keeping with the facts.

I regret to inform you that to my knowledge no portrait or photograph of Father C. Hoccken is extant. The picture at Marquette University of which Father Harvey speaks in his letter is, no doubt, a picture of Father Adrian Hoccken, brother of Father Christian H.

In conclusion, dear Father, let me congratulate you on the zeal you manifest in gathering up and preserving for the edification of posterity the rather meager data that survive concerning the pioneers of the Faith in Kansas. It is a noble work in which you are engaged—and I pray that heaven may prosper your labors more and more.

With every good wish,

Very sincerely yours in Deo,

G. J. GARRAGHAN, S.J.

PREFACE.

One hundred years—a full century has elapsed since the saintly Du-bourg laid the humble foundations of his mission work at Florissant, Missouri. The mustard seed then planted has sent forth its branches far and wide. The southwest, the middle west, and the northwest have been evangelized. A transformation has taken place the like of which the annals of our race furnish no parallel.

In the comparatively short span of years from 1818, great commonwealths have been formed, opulent cities have arisen and the vast plains have become the granary of the world. All the great natural resources have been developed and every art and craft has been cultivated. The wilderness of one hundred years ago has become the home of men and women from every civilized nation on earth; their children have become true Americans—lovers of law and order, zealous for education and religion; sober, industrious, frugal, and withal, bold and frank and fearless. The type is well defined—a thing apart, the "Westerner."

The advance guard of all this, at least in a Catholic sense, passed through what is now Miami and Linn Counties in the person of Father De la Croix on his way to the Osages in 1822. Father Van Quickenborne, S.J., repeatedly visited the same tribe a few years later. Doubtless he followed the trail marked out by his predecessor, as this section lay in the direct route from Florissant to the Great Osages. He also visited the Miami tribe in 1835. After this the Kickapoo Mission attracts our notice. This mission was established in 1836-7—on the banks of the Missouri River, north of Fort Leavenworth. It was the first organized, permanent mission of the Jesuit Fathers, and no effort was spared to make it a success, but Divine Providence was guiding the destinies of the future Church into other channels. The tree that had been planted at Kickapoo and tended with so much zeal and self-sacrifice for years, produced no fruit. The mission was abandoned in 1840 and another tribe—the Pottawatomies—received the blessings rejected by the unfortunate Kickapoos.

It is here our history begins. Father Christian Hoecken, S.J., emerges from the gloom of failure at Kickapoo to become the morning star of a new day about to break over the gliding waters of Pottawatomie Creek near where they join the Marais des Cygnes River at Osawatomie, Miami County.

This was in January, 1838, and the long course of events that led up to this, as well as the subsequent happenings of four score years, make up the burden of the following pages. This history is only an attempt to snatch from oblivion something of the rich heritage left us by men inspired by God to do and dare marvelous things for His greater honor and glory.

Finally, after Kansas had become a regularly organized Territory in 1854, Father Ponziglione remained for a few years as the last repre-

sentative of the early Jesuit Missionaries. He was undoubtedly the greatest of them all and may be likened to a graceful pier supporting the last bridge that led from savagery to civilization. After him came the first secular priest in the person of Rev. Ivo Schacht, who at the end of 1858 arrived from Leavenworth to minister to the scattered settlers of the plains. He is regarded as the founder of Holy Trinity parish at Paola.

The writer and compiler of this history knew Father Ponziglione well, and, what is more remarkable perhaps, he, as a youth, knew Father Schacht after the latter had left Kansas and returned to his former home in the South. All succeeding pastors were or are contemporaries of the writer, who now feels it an honor as well as a labor of love to chronicle even a small part of their heroic deeds performed when heroism had little value, since every man entering the field in those early days was a hero, and every woman that braved the enmity and loneliness of the prairies and dared the cyclones no less than the winter's blasts and the summer's terrific heat was a veritable heroine, notwithstanding the compensations that quickly followed.

Probably this attitude of mind accounts for the paucity of documents or other details that would convey to the present generation a clear idea of the unusual circumstances then encountered—it was simply a commonplace fact and, therefore, needing no elaborate chronicling. All being equal, the law of contrast failed to work and hero-worship was almost entirely unknown. Not even is the life of Bishop John B. Miege written, although it is now certain that he was one of the greatest missionary bishops of the Nineteenth Century. Nor has the life of Bishop L. M. Pink so far been given to the world, yet we are aware that he was a truly noble character, a great scholar, a wise ruler, and a benefactor of the State of Kansas. Some day, with God's help, those dry bones will stir again and new men will marvel at the miracles of energy and the deeds of self-sacrifice wrought on the prairies of Kansas by the Jesuit, Benedictine, and Carmelite Fathers and afterwards by the humble secular priests who so worthily followed them.* The Catholic families that settled on the land proved themselves worthy of such men.

Nor do we doubt but that generations yet unborn will boast of being the descendants of those first families, not questioning the source of their pride, for, in truth, there is nothing to be especially proud of unless it be their perseverance, their indomitable courage in a well-nigh hopeless cause; the elements and the fates were against them but they "stuck it out" and won, that is all. Through unusual difficulties, they

*That this state of affairs is not alone peculiar to Kansas is evident from the following extract culled from a letter written by the Mother General of the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, Kentucky:

"Reverend dear Father: I thank you very much indeed for the kind interest you are taking in trying to get some information for the Life of Bishop David.

"Sister Aurelia (Leavenworth) wrote me at once, but she had no data to give us. I suppose people, in the early days were more intent on doing good and spreading the Kingdom of God, than in keeping a record of what was done. It is certainly difficult to get any historical facts about many men and women who made Catholic history in Kentucky, at least."