

CHAPTER VIII

MISSIONARY EXCURSIONS IN MISSOURI AND ILLINOIS

§ I. CENTRAL MISSOURI

The four parishes of St Ferdinand, Portage des Sioux, Dardenne and St Charles, all taken over by Father Van Quickenborne in 1823, formed but a small portion of the field worked by the Jesuit superior and his associates.¹ The entire state of Missouri, exclusive of St. Louis and the southeastern counties, fell to their spiritual care. Moreover, as many of the western counties of Illinois were for a period under the provisional jurisdiction of the Bishop of St. Louis, these also came to be cultivated for a while by Jesuit workers. Hence, three distinct areas of Jesuit missionary enterprise in the West in the late twenties and early thirties of the last century came to be recognized, one stretching to the west for an indefinite distance along the banks of the Missouri, another lying along the Salt River Valley in northeastern Missouri, and a third comprising a wide sweep of Illinois territory with boundary points set roughly at Alton, Quincy, Springfield, and French Village. Each of these areas has its own record of zealous endeavor on the part of the Missouri Jesuits for the spreading of the Faith.

The missionary activities of the fathers assumed considerable proportions only with the establishment in 1828 of the St. Charles residence. Up to that date they had extended their ministry in periodical visits westward as far as the mouth of the Osage River and northward to the Salt River districts and the adjacent counties, but lack of priests and the difficulty of crossing the Missouri River reduced their visits to a minimum by no means adequate to relieve the spiritual destitution which they encountered. The presence of two fathers at St. Charles altered the situation essentially. To one of the two, called generally in the mission catalogues, *operarius secundus* or *missionarius excurrens*, was assigned the duty of systematic visitation of the mission-stations scattered along the Missouri and Salt River Valleys. Hence, it came about that during the decade 1828-1838, or up to the opening of the Westphalia and Washington residences, St. Charles became a base of operations from which went forth periodically on regular missionary circuits the only Catholic priests that western and northern Missouri knew

¹ *Supra*, Chap VII

during these years. This extra-parochial activity of the Jesuits resident in St. Charles overshadowed their local ministry in importance and spiritual results.

Early in the nineteenth century a tide of immigration began to roll up the valley of the Missouri. The settlers came from Virginia and the Carolinas, later from Illinois and Kentucky, and, as early as the thirties, from Germany. Even before Missouri came into the Union in 1821 after a memorable political contest which was to find its closing chapter only in the Civil War, a few white settlements had risen on the banks of her great internal waterway. Franklin, Boonville, Columbia, Jefferson City and Liberty had all been started on their career before Van Quickenborne and his party crossed the Mississippi. The return of peace after the war of 1812 gave a new impetus to western immigration. So great was the rush into Missouri of settlers from Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia and the Carolinas that the *Missouri Gazette* of October 26, 1816, declared "that a stranger witnessing the scene would imagine that those states had made an agreement to introduce the territory as soon as possible into the bosom of the American family." As many as a hundred persons passed through St. Charles in one day on their way to Boone's Lick (Old Franklin), Salt River or some other point of attraction, many of the immigrants bringing with them a hundred head of cattle, besides horses, hogs, sheep and from three to twenty slaves.² In December, 1823, Van Quickenborne informed Father Benedict Fenwick that the population of Missouri was rapidly increasing. "Some times last fall as many as thirteen families passed through St. Charles Franklin and Missouriopolis, where the seat of government will be, are growing fast. The land is as yet very cheap. In my opinion this is the time for settling ourselves here."³

By a right guaranteed to them in the most formal terms by the Concordat entered into between Bishop Du Bourg and Father Charles Neale, the Jesuit missionaries were to have exclusive spiritual charge of what was practically the whole watershed of the Missouri River. Article 10 of that remarkable document may be cited again:

The Bishop of New Orleans cedes and surrenders to the Society of Jesus forever, as soon and in proportion as its increase of members enables it to undertake the same, the absolute and exclusive care of all the missions already established, and which shall be hereafter established on the Missouri River and its tributary streams, comprising within the above grant and cession the spiritual direction, agreeably to their holy institute, as well of all the white population as of the various Indian tribes inhabiting the above mentioned district of country, together with all the churches, chapels, col-

² Carr, *Missouri*, p. 117

³ Van Quickenborne to B. Fenwick, December 12, 1823 (A)

leges and seminaries of learning already erected and which shall hereafter be erected, in full conviction of the blessed advantages his diocese will derive from the piety, the learning and the zeal of the members of the said religious society ⁴

The provisions of the Concordat were to become operative only after their confirmation by the Holy See and the General of the Society of Jesus. That confirmation, however, could not be expected till after the lapse of months, if not of years, and might not, in the issue, be obtained at all. The Jesuits, on the other hand, were on the ground and the extent of their actual jurisdiction called for immediate determination. Accordingly, shortly after their arrival at Florissant they were charged with the care of four parishes in the neighborhood of the Seminary and with the mission-stations up the Missouri. No limits were set to the range of their ministry in this direction, in a word, they found themselves assigned to a field of operations as impressively broad and far-reaching as that defined in sweeping terms in the Concordat. "It begins," Van Quickenborne explained to the Father General in September, 1830, "at the spot where the Missouri flows into the Mississippi, or rather the Mississippi into the Missouri, distant from Florissant eight or ten miles, then it extends westward to the head of the same river Missouri" ⁵

Here was a great spiritual field of operations stretching in solitary grandeur from the outskirts of St. Louis to the Rocky Mountains. A dozen dioceses and more with a Catholic population of many hundreds of thousands have since been organized within its borders. The care of this vast ecclesiastical domain by any single religious order must, in the nature of things, have soon become impracticable. Yet it was this domain that had been tendered in all seriousness and with every hoped-for guarantee of canonical effect to the Society of Jesus. The fact is significant as showing the inability of even far-sighted prelates like Bishop Du Bourg to realize the swiftness and extent of the expansion the Church was to undergo west of the Mississippi.

To cultivate this great sweep of territory Fathers Van Quickenborne and Timmermans were at first the only hands available. Already in December, 1823, the Florissant superior was informing Benedict Fenwick that Timmermans, besides attending to the parishes of Portage des Sioux, St. Charles and Dardenne, visited Hancock Prairie six times and Cote-sans-dessein four times a year ⁶. At Hancock Prairie a log

⁴ For complete text of the Concordat, cf. *supra*, Chap. II, § 4.

⁵ Hughes, *History of the Society of Jesus in North America*, Doc., 2, 1028.

⁶ Van Quickenborne to B. Fenwick, December 12, 1823 (B). "Sphere of our operations Florissant, which congregation I attend regularly. St. Charles, Portage. In both of them Father Timmermans keeps church twice a month. In

church was in course of construction.⁷ The sermons which Timmermans wrote out carefully while in Maryland are indorsed with the names of the localities in which they were now preached. Some of them are marked "Cote-sans-dessein," indicating that the missionary put them to use on his visits to that Creole settlement.⁸ "Father Timmermans' mission," wrote Mr. Van Assche in 1824, "is about thirty leagues from here. He would go farther if it were possible, for there is no priest between us and the Indians though many Catholics. It is sometimes a dozen days before he arrives at a lodging place."⁹ After his colleague's death, Van Quickenborne made an occasional circuit of the western stations, which in 1827 were again visited with something like regularity, this time by Father Smedts. In 1827 Van Assche informs a correspondent that "Father Smedts has four small missions, the farthest is about forty-four leagues from here. All these places are daily growing in population. In no country in the world do people change their habitation as often as here, some because they have to, others with a view to gain. You must know, my dear friend, that there are immense tracts of land here belonging to the government. Permission is granted to work this land and even to build on it, with the understanding that, if some one buys the land, you may carry away only what belongs to you, such as a log cabin. Others sell their farms in Maryland, Kentucky and other states, which are well populated, and come here to buy three or four farms for the same money. Our state, as a consequence, will in a few years be as populous as others, probably one day one of the

Portage only one family not French. Dardenne, where Timmermans keeps church every 5th Sunday of month and on all holidays not coming on Sunday. Hancock Prairie, where there are several pious Catholic families and where at this time Father Timmermans thinks a log church has been erected and finished. These families are visited once every two months. They live eighty miles from the Seminary Cote-sans-dessein. Father Timmermans goes there four times a year, if possible."

⁷ Hancock Prairie, in southeastern Callaway County, Mo. Two baptisms of Van Quickenborne at this place, September 7, 1827, are recorded in the Florissant register.

⁸ Cote-sans-dessein in Callaway County, Mo., on the left (north) bank of the Missouri two miles below the mouth of the Osage. "It was first settled by French emigrants in 1808 and was once a populous village. Its name (signifying a 'hill without a design') is derived from an isolated limestone hill, some six hundred yards long and very narrow, standing in the bottom, which, it is thought, some convulsion of nature separated from the Osage Bluffs on the opposite side of the river." Campbell, *Gazetteer of Missouri*, p. 96. Cf. also Ovid Bell, *Cote Sans Dessein* (Fulton, Mo.), 1930. The first priest to visit Cote-sans-dessein (1819) was Father Charles De La Croix, pastor of St. Ferdinand's Church, Florissant, Mo. Garraghan, *St. Ferdinand de Florissant the Story of an Ancient Parish*, pp. 158-160.

⁹ Van Assche à De Nef, April 29, 1824 (A)

most flourishing of all because of the two rivers Mississippi and Missouri.”¹⁰ Father De Theux made a missionary excursion to central Missouri in the spring of 1827 “Easter Monday I left for a mission [Cote-sans-dessein] situated forty leagues from our Seminary There are settlements scattered here and there which have not been visited for three years through lack of priests. I was cordially received, baptized ten infants, and had I prolonged my visit every one of the settlers, I am sure, would have come to confession In this short excursion I saw squirrels, wild-turkeys, prairie-chickens and ducks, all within pistol-range All these kinds of game are common, as are also panthers and bears, which are harmless provided you let them alone The flesh of the latter is quite good to eat On my way I passed over a prairie eighteen miles long and broad in proportion Almost all the country I traversed is in prairie or wood. If the distance were not so great, I would invite some millions of my fellow-countrymen to come out to Missouri, where I believe they could do wonders.”¹¹

In the autumn of 1828 Father Verhaegen made a missionary excursion as far west as Jefferson City. He was the first Catholic priest whose name is distinctly connected with the capital of the state.¹²

The establishment of the St. Charles residence in 1828 removed many of the difficulties which had hitherto attended the visitation of the outlying stations To Father Verreydt, assigned to that residence at its opening, fell the duty of performing at fixed intervals the two considerable mission-circuits of central Missouri and the Salt River district Verreydt was to prove himself an efficient missionary, whose labors were to carry him in successive periods of his career over a great range of territory extending from northeastern Missouri to Council Bluffs in Iowa and Sugar Creek and St. Mary's in Kansas As a seminarian, still pursuing his studies, he had, owing to certain peculiarities of character, been a source of anxiety to Father Van Quickenborne, who felt reluctant

¹⁰ Van Assche à De Nef, March 1, 1827 (A)

¹¹ De Theux à sa mère, May 13, 1827 (A) April 19, 1827, Father De Theux baptized at Cote-sans-dessein James Roy, born November 9, 1826 Seven baptisms were performed by the father at the same place on the following day The earliest recorded baptisms (“à Cote-sans-dessein et dans ses environs”) were administered by Father De La Croix May 6, 1821, Alexis Faille, May 13, 1821, Jean de Noyer, Jean Baptist Roy, April 21, 1822, Paul de Noyer, Celeste Renaux, Agnes Faille, Martha Nash Dillon Baptismal Register, St Ferdinand's Church, Florissant, Mo The Catholic population of Cote-sans-dessein in 1836 was sixty-three

¹² Van Quickenborne to Dzierzozynski, November 17, 1828 (B) The writer has been unable to find any earlier reference than this to the exercise of the sacred ministry in Jefferson City According to a ms memorandum (1838) in the St. Louis archdiocesan archives Father Verhaegen preached in Jefferson City in 1827, probably a mistake for 1828

for a while to recommend him for ordination. Subsequently Van Quickenborne was able to report of Verreydt to the superior in Maryland "That good Father has won a great victory over himself and has been a great consolation to me. All these places he visits three times a year with the greatest labor, zeal, consolation on his part and fruit on the part of the faithful." In 1829 Father Verreydt was evangelizing both banks of the Missouri up to a point beyond Franklin in Howard County. A trip in this direction, one hundred and sixty miles beyond St. Charles, lasted six weeks and brought him through Hancock Prairie, Cote-sans-dessein, the crossings of the Gasconade, Jefferson City, Franklin and Boonville. These and other river settlements had their little groups of Catholic residents, who eagerly welcomed Verreydt into their midst three times a year. In 1833 Father De Theux informed a correspondent in Europe that Verreydt was still cultivating this same mission-field of central Missouri.

Rev. Father Verreydt, *missionnaire ambulant* of the Society of Jesus, whose missions extend for more than a hundred and sixty miles into the southwest of Missouri, left St. Charles, his place of residence, May 20, 1832, and returned the 23rd of the following June. In this short interval of time he made the rounds of nearly all the towns and villages of which he has charge. You can judge for yourself the extent of his labors in those places when I tell you that he preached fourteen times, gave sixteen instructions, baptized fifteen infants, heard fifty confessions and distributed the bread of life to forty persons, nine of whom were children who had never received it before. I indicate here only the fruits of the Father's first mission, not having taken note of the results of the two or three other missions which he carried on in the same localities during the course of the year 1833. He is accustomed to visit all these stations two or three times a year, a thing which requires health and strength, as you see, for although these good people receive you kindly, you must, when you are on a mission, know how to put up with anything. Still another inconvenience is that these trips have to be made in summer, for during the winter the roads are impassable, being cut up by creeks, the bridges of which are often swept away from their foundations.¹³

Every phase of the work carried on at this period by the Missouri Jesuits meets somewhere with minute description in Van Quickenborne's correspondence with the Father General. In a letter of September 9, 1830, details are furnished concerning Father Verreydt's missionary excursions in the interior of Missouri and the conditions there existing among the Catholic settlers.

¹³ Van Quickenborne ad Dzierzynski, November 13, 1829 (B) *Ann Prop*, 7 117. In August, 1830, Father Van Quickenborne was called to a sick person one hundred and twenty-five miles away, Father Van Assche not going for fear of getting lost in the woods.

The circuit is very trying and is made in the following manner. As there is no church, everything has to be done in private houses. These are, as a matter of fact, merely cabins of the poorest kind, being made of trees usually forty feet long, cut square and placed one on top of the other. One such house answers every need. The priest on his arrival is cordially received by the family, who are glad to have him in their midst. Pork, coffee, if there is any, and bread from Spanish wheat (corn-bread) make up his dinner and supper. The Catholics of the neighborhood are given notice to approach the sacraments on the next day. The Protestants also like to be informed so they can come to the sermon. In the evening prayers and rosary are recited in common. Then the dining-room is changed into a dormitory. In the morning, prayers again in common, after which all the beds are removed from the room. The priest prepares the altar and begins to hear the confessions. These ordinarily last till 10 or 12 when Mass is celebrated, during which there is a sermon and a practically general communion. After thanksgiving the altar is taken away and kitchen preparations begin. Meantime, on nearly all these occasions a number of Protestants are calling on the priest to have points not well understood cleared up and doubts solved. The priest is thus kept busy sometimes late into the night. The Catholics on hearing the objections of the Protestants refuted so effectively are strengthened in the faith and encouraged to imitate the priest in taking issue with error. Protestants are mentally convinced and seeing the piety of the Catholics their hearts are drawn to imitate them. All this business having been attended to, the priest starts off for another house 20 or 30 miles away, where the same routine is repeated and so on until the whole district has been visited. This Father [Verreydt] is absent from home on these circuits almost eight or nine months of the year, he rests for a few weeks after each circuit.

This state of poverty does not last always. The Catholics, seeing how unseemly it is to have everything done in one place, as soon as they are able to do so, build the priest a room out of logs. Then, as their numbers increase, they think of putting up a church, also of logs, and after some time do so. When it is built, services are no longer held in the houses of the vicinity and the Catholics flock to the church. Greater decency is thus possible in the celebration of the sacred mysteries. For the convenience of the congregation this church is located centrally with reference to the houses of the Catholic settlers and as these houses are at first very sparse it happens that a forlorn church is sometimes found right in the woods, 3 or more miles from any house. After some years, as the population increases, what was formally a center ceases to be so. Moreover, cities are built up, some of them solidly and, as far as appearances go, to last for ever. People flock in great numbers to take up residence in them and business prospers. Other cities are started, of which some die out almost immediately, while others develop, but slowly . . .

Why this region is so quickly populated. A great quantity of land in this state is very rich and fertile and is sold cheap by the government at \$1 25 an acre, whereas in Maryland and Kentucky the same land would be sold for 15, 20 and 40 dollars an acre. Therefore, when a paterfamilias who

owns a farm of 200 acres in the aforesaid states sees his family growing considerably in numbers, he sells his 200 acres, comes here and buys 3000 or 4000 acres and so can settle all his sons and daughters. These generally marry very young. Last year 3000 families came into our district from Kentucky, Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee and Alabama. Among them were 14 Catholic families. If we do not receive help, how can we attend to all these people? In order that they may be cared for more easily in a spiritual way by the priest, these families on the advice of Ven. Bishop Flaget of Kentucky have settled close to one another. They are good Catholics and many more are to come this year.¹⁴

One would not expect the religious welfare of the few Catholic settlers of the Missouri Valley in these pioneer days to be a matter of concern to the Jesuit General in distant Rome. And yet we find the latter bringing to the attention of Father De Theux a report which had reached him that these settlers, whom the Jesuits were under obligation to look after, were being neglected. Father Verreydt, to whom appeal was naturally made for information on the subject, denied that any Catholic family in the district in question had been left unvisited by him, with the exception of a single one living a hundred miles or so apart from the others. Even this family, he declared, he would have seen, had a guide been available, though they were very indifferent Catholics indeed and had received him with scant courtesy on occasion of the single visit he had paid to them. In March, 1835, Van Quickenborne was appointed to succeed Verreydt as "rural missionary for both banks of the Missouri River," being cautioned on this occasion by his superior, Father De Theux, not to build or even contract for log cabins without his permission. The reasons for thus providing this territory rather than others with a missionary, so De Theux made known to the General, were fourfold: it was to be ceded to the Jesuits according to the Concordat, had been cultivated by them since their arrival in Missouri, offered many promising locations for new centers of Jesuit apostolic work and, finally, was the open door to the long-contemplated Indian mission. As late as 1847 Archbishop Kenrick of St. Louis was representing to the Propaganda, on what grounds is not known, that the Missouri River stations were not being adequately served by the Jesuits and he made a move apparently to reopen the entire question of the Concordat, with what result has been recorded above.¹⁵

The total number of Catholics in the Missouri River district in the twenties and thirties of the past century was not considerable. When Father Van Quickenborne, while on his way to the Osage in the sum-

¹⁴ Van Quickenborne ad Roothaan, September 9, 1830 (AA)

¹⁵ De Theux ad Roothaan, September 5, 1833, June 28, 1835 (AA) *Supra*, Chap. VII, § 7

mer of 1827, passed through the interior of Missouri for the first time, he found with the aid of a Catholic settler only six members of his own faith, which number, he further declared, had in 1829 increased to one hundred and eighty¹⁶ Here, however, he was referring to attendance at so-called "reunions," which were seemingly impromptu gatherings of the Catholics in the country districts to meet the itinerant missionary, so that his figures scarcely include the Catholic population of all the river towns. But they do not differ widely from those given by his fellow-Jesuits for the entire Catholic population of "central Missouri" at this period. Father De Theux calculated the population for 1831 as only between two and three hundred. But by 1836 according to a census made at the time by the Jesuit missionaries, the number of Catholics in the nineteen towns visited by them between St. Charles and Columbia was five hundred and six.¹⁷ The total Catholic population of central Missouri for that year is estimated by the compiler of the *Annual Letters* at about six hundred.

While the spiritual harvest gathered in by the missionaries as they went up and down the interior of the state was considerable, it was soon felt that the difficulty of reaching the Catholic population settled there was a serious check on the results of their ministry. As a missionary center, St. Charles was found to be too remote from the field of actual operations, a more central headquarters for the fathers who ministered in the Missouri River towns had now to be looked for. The *Annual Letters* for 1836 suggest that two priests be stationed in the town of Mary Creek, Gasconade County, whence they could easily visit the stations lying twenty or thirty miles away. The *operarius* of St. Charles in his last excursion up the state administered fifteen baptisms, four of them to adult converts. The results, however, scarcely answer to the labor expended as the missionary can remain only a few days at each station. What good could not be accomplished were a father not merely to remain in a station a few days, but live permanently with a companion in the interior of the state?¹⁸ This was the plan eventually carried out. With the establishment of the Westphalia residence in 1838 by Father Ferdinand Helias begins a notable chapter in the history of Catholicism in central Missouri.

¹⁶ Father De La Croix early in 1819 found twenty-two Catholic families in Cote-sans-dessein and fifteen Catholics, all told, in Franklin, Howard County, Garraghan, *St. Ferdinand de Florissant*, p. 158.

¹⁷ *Status Missionum S. J.*, 1836 (C).

¹⁸ *Litterae Annuae*, 1836 (A). *Status Missionum S. J.*, 1836 (C). "Mary Creek—*locus aptissimus Residentiae*." Mary, now Maries Creek, is an affluent of the Osage. The town of Mary Creek, later New Westphalia or Westphalia, on the right bank of Maries Creek four miles above its mouth and about fifteen miles southeast of Jefferson City. *Infra*, Chap. XIV.

The *Annual Letters* for 1837 have preserved a carefully drawn up statement of the numerical status of Catholicism in the interior of Missouri at that date. With its reproduction may be concluded this account of the ministry of the Jesuit fathers in the district named during the years 1823-1838. The number of Catholic inhabitants follows the name of the town visited.

On the right bank of the Missouri (1) Manchester, 10. A great crowd of non-Catholics, many of them well disposed towards the faith, also attend the services. (2) Merrimac, 14. (3) Washington, 118. The people here are building a church for us, 30 by 40 feet, and have given us ten acres of land. (4) Burbus, 11. (5) Bailey's Creek, 22. Preparations are here being made for a church. (6) French Village, 24. (7) Mary Creek, 80. The people wish to build a church. The place seems suitable for a Residence. (8) Jefferson, 9. (9) Boonville, 20. On the left bank (10) Fayette, 1. (11) Columbia, 11. (12) Chariton, 2. (13) Rocheport, 26. A church here is projected. (14) Cote-sans-dessein, 63. (15) Hancock Prairie, 14. (16) Portland, 14. (17) Lay Creek, 34. (18) Marthasville, 3. (19) Mount Pleasant, 30. On a single circuit of these stations, about 150 confessions were heard and 115 Communions administered.¹⁹

¹⁹ Manchester, St. Louis Co. On the Manchester Road, eighteen miles west of St. Louis. Merrimac, Jefferson Co., eighteenth-century French-Canadian settlement beginning at about Fenton and extending to mouth of the Merrimac. Washington, Franklin Co. On the south bank of the Missouri, fifty-four miles west of St. Louis. Burbus (Bourbois), Gasconade Co. Twenty-four miles southeast of Hermann, seat of Gasconade County. The Bourbeuse (French for "muddy") Creek, a branch of the Merrimac, flows through Franklin and Gasconade Counties. Bailey's Creek, Osage Co. Eight miles northeast of Linn. French Village, Osage Co. On or near the site of Dauphine, subsequently Bonnot's Mill, on the south bank of the Missouri, a short distance east of the mouth of the Osage and twelve miles east of Jefferson City. Mary Creek, Osage Co. German settlement later known as Westphalia. Jefferson, Cole Co. State capital, on the south bank of the Missouri, one hundred and twenty-five miles west of St. Louis. Boonville, Cooper Co. On the south bank of the Missouri one hundred and eighty-seven miles by rail from St. Louis. Chariton, Chariton Co. Near the mouth of the Chariton River, about two miles above the present town of Glasgow. Fayette, Howard Co. Thirteen miles north of Boonville. Columbia, Boone Co. "The great western mail-route runs through Columbia and the post-coaches pass tri-weekly through this town" Wetmore, *op cit*, p. 44. Seat of the State University. Rocheport, Boone Co. On the north bank of the Missouri, fourteen miles west of Columbia. Cote-sans-dessein, Callaway Co. On the north bank of the Missouri, two miles below the mouth of the Osage, opposite Bonnot's Mill. Hancock Prairie, in southeastern Callaway Co. North of Portland, crossing line between Callaway and Montgomery Counties. Portland, Callaway Co. On the Missouri River twenty-five miles southeast of Fulton. Lay Creek. Not listed in Wetmore or Campbell. Marthasville, Warren Co. On north bank of the Missouri opposite Washington in Franklin Co. Mount Pleasant, now Augusta, St. Charles Co. On the Missouri, thirty-six miles above St. Charles. Robert A. Campbell, *Gazetteer of Missouri* (St. Louis, 1874), Alphonso Wetmore, *Gazetteer of the State of Missouri* (St. Louis, 1837).

§ 2. THE SALT RIVER MISSION

In the twenties and thirties of the last century two principal highways of immigrant travel led out of St. Charles in Missouri. One ran westward for some distance and then bent in towards the Missouri River, meeting it opposite Jefferson City, the other, taking a north-westerly course, brought the traveller through Lincoln, Pike, Ralls and Marion Counties and beyond. Along the latter road were a number of small towns, chief among them Troy, Alexandria, Bowling Green, New London and Palmyra, none of which has since achieved any notable measure of growth or commercial importance. And yet to the Jesuit missionaries of the period 1825-1835, the northeastern counties of Missouri, designated by them "the Salt River district," from the name of an affluent of the Mississippi which meets the latter at Louisiana in Pike County, appeared to be one of the most promising sections of the state both in an economic way and for the prospects it seemed to offer of future Catholic development.²⁰

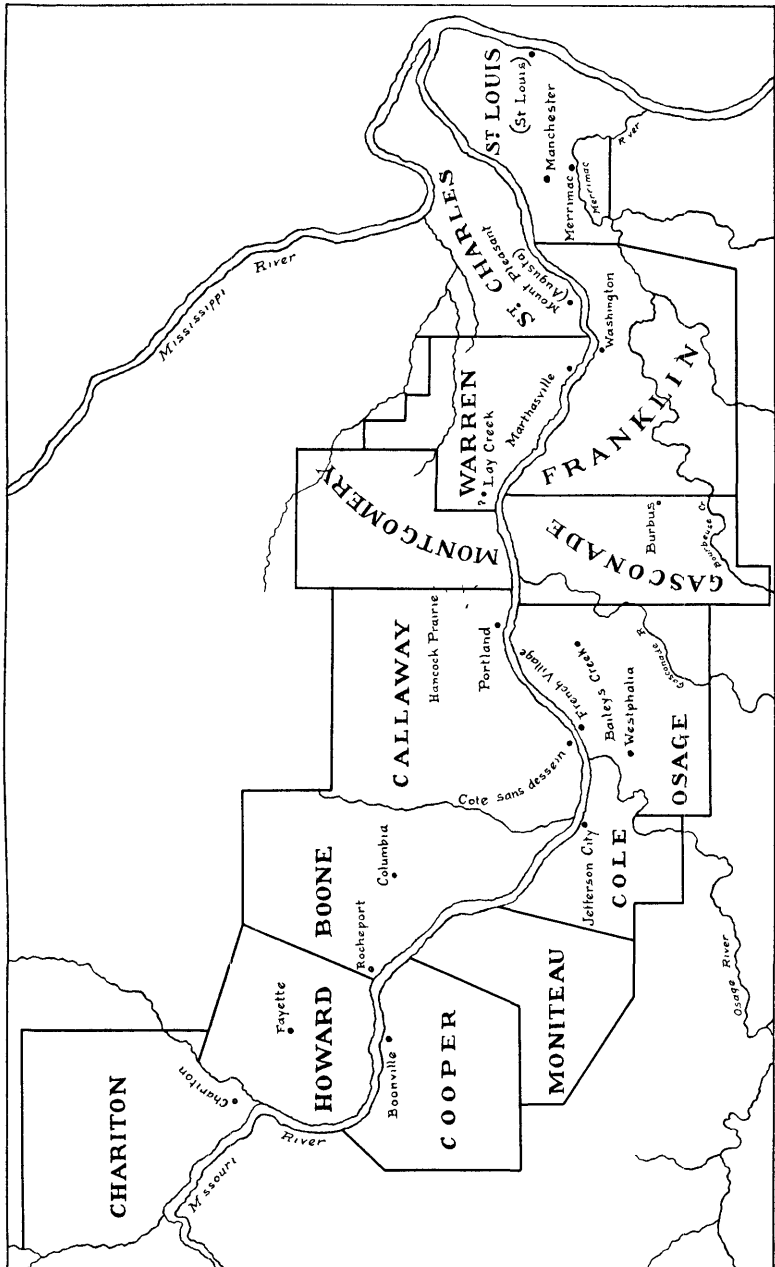
In December, 1827, northeastern Missouri received its first recorded visit from a Catholic priest in the person of Father Felix Verreydt. He was sent in response to a petition from the eighty Catholics settled there, who in 1826 had written to Father Van Quickenborne to obtain the services of a missionary priest. At the beginning of 1828 Van Quickenborne wrote to Bishop Rosati, who was looking forward to a reported influx of Catholics from Kentucky

Father Verreydt is back from his mission on Salt River. He had thirty-two communicants there. The Catholic families are so scattered that he has not been able up to this to fix on a meeting place. Instead of the forty families who were to have followed those settled there last year, or rather two years ago, only four came. All we can say to the Gentlemen of Kentucky is that three or four times a year a priest visits the Catholic families residing along Salt River in the vicinity of Palmyra and Louisiana.²¹

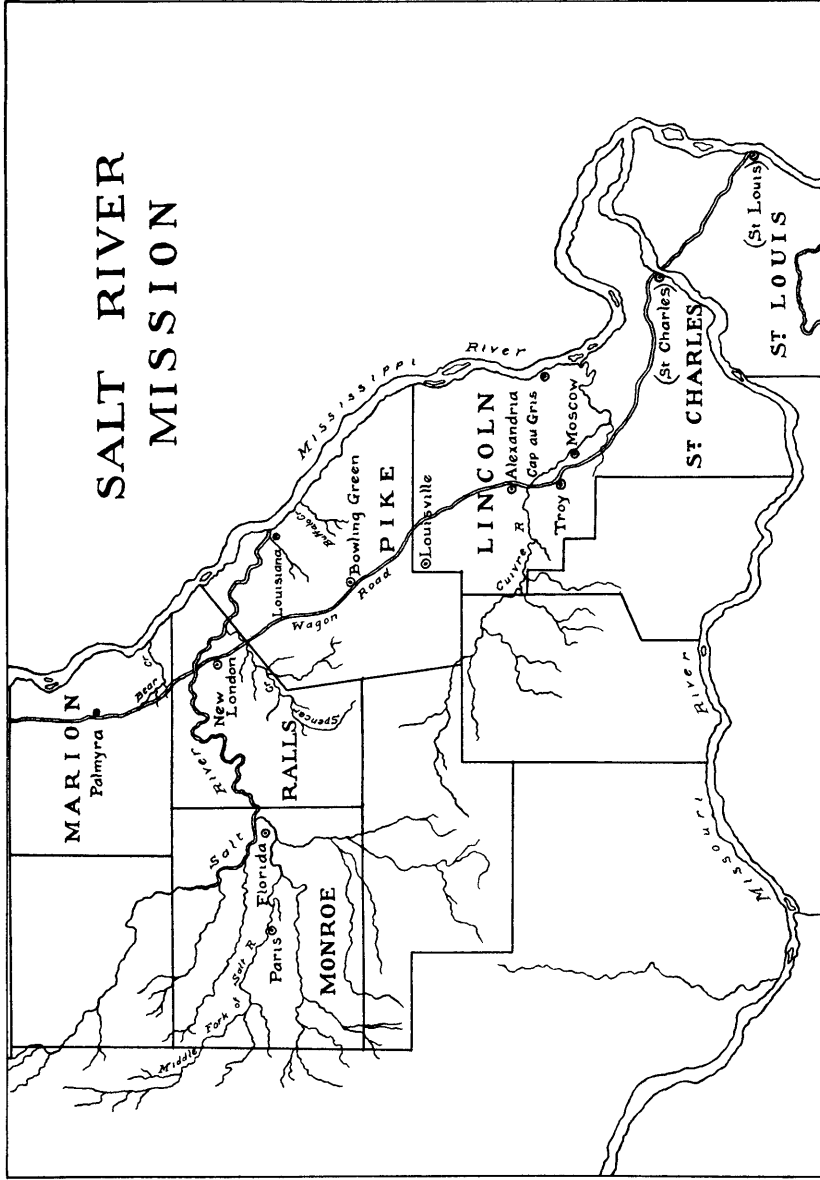
In February, 1828, Father Elet was sent by Van Quickenborne to northeastern Missouri. He was, according to the latter, "the first in that

²⁰ Troy, Lincoln Co. Fourteen miles northwest of Wentzville, St. Charles Co. Alexandria, Lincoln Co. Five miles north of Troy. Bowling Green, Pike Co. The county seat, about ten or twelve miles southwest of Louisiana, the latter town, on the Mississippi, being the largest town in the county. New London, Ralls Co. Contained in 1837, "a brick Court House, five stories, four grocery-stores, and one tavern, a church, a clerk's office, and a jail—which is of little use" (Wetmore). Palmyra, Marion Co. In 1837 "a flourishing town of about fifteen hundred inhabitants" (Wetmore).

²¹ Van Quickenborne à Rosati, January 2, 1828 (C)



The nineteen settlements on or near the Missouri River attended by Jesuit missionaries, first from Florissant, 1823-1828, later from St. Charles, 1828-1838, until the establishment in 1838 of the Westphalia and Washington residences, after which date most of the settlements were visited from the two latter centers. Compiled by G. J. Garraghan, drawn by J. P. Markoe



District served by Jesuit missionary priests during the period 1827-1833, first from Florissant, later from St Charles Compiled by G J Garraghan, drawn by J P Markoe

region to say Mass and preach ”²² The statement is a puzzling one in view of Father Verreydt’s recorded visit of three months before, it is probably an inadvertence on the part of Van Quickenborne The sixteen days that Elet spent on this mission of February, 1828, brought a harvest of sixteen baptisms, thirty-six confessions, seventeen communions and twelve conversions of adults He found on his arrival that, one family excepted, the children of the Catholic settlers had been baptized by Protestant ministers. One instance of heroic Catholic faith among these settlers, nearly all of whom were recent immigrants from Kentucky, deserves to be recorded. A Mrs. Shields, whose husband was a Presbyterian, journeyed more than once with her daughters all the way from northeastern Missouri to Kentucky for the purpose of there receiving holy communion, not being aware that there were English-speaking priests in St. Louis. An account of Father Elet’s mission of February, 1828, in the Salt River district was drawn up in English by Van Quickenborne and sent to Dzierozynski, the Maryland superior

Father Elet has three stations (1) Buffalo Creek, (2) at Mr Shields near Louisiana on the Mississippi, (3) at Mr Leake’s in the vicinity of New London and on Salt River, about one hundred and forty miles from the Seminary On Buffalo Creek there is but one Catholic family, whose house was not prepared to say Mass in Another one very spacious was selected, belonging to a Protestant

Father Elet said Mass there and preached before 130 Protestants and 20 Catholics The room was so filled with people that after Holy Communion he could not turn himself to say Dominus Vobiscum All the hearers were highly satisfied He explained the meaning of each of the sacerdotal vestments He gave an English missal to one, who showed the prayers to the others These were found by them to be very good He preached during Mass for three-quarters of an hour and after Mass was forced to yield to an unanimous request to preach another sermon, which was done to their great satisfaction. Late in the afternoon Father Elet sat down at a very sumptuous table and after dinner retired At the second station (Mr. Shields’) he said Mass and preached before an audience of thirty persons, chiefly Protestants Here thirteen persons went to Holy Communion You can easier imagine than I can express how Mrs Shields now rejoiced, she who had been led to this country by her Protestant husband and had gone several times a distance of 800 miles to obtain the happiness which was now brought to her home From this place Father Elet set off with Mr Shields in search of the Catholic families living, as was supposed on Spencer’s Creek and whose names he did not know, for they were newcomers At the end of their first day’s journey, they had not as yet found any, and when late in the evening they did not even find a house, upon Father Elet’s saying to Mr Shields that he had steel, etc , to get fire, they were on the point of alighting

²² Van Quickenborne to Dzierozynski, March 4, 1828 (B)

from their horses to pass the night in the woods without having had a dinner or a supper, when Mr Shields going about to reconnoiter the place, saw at a distance a cabin Thither they went, but on their arrival they found the cabin was abandoned Father Elet observed to Mr Shields that it was already some comfort to have a roof, but Mr Shields going still to reconnoiter the place from a high hill, saw lights at the great distance and, though it was now very late in the night, they resolved to go thither The cabin was inhabited by a poor settler who, however, received them with cordiality They got dinner and supper at once and the bed of the settler was put up straight against the wall to afford room to lie on the floor, so small was the cabin Here they heard that some newcomers had settled at a small distance Before breakfast they repaired to the spot pointed out and found a settlement just begun They asked whether they could get breakfast R[eply] "Yes, such as we have" Father Elet being covered by his great white coat could not be distinguished He saw some books in the cupboard and found they were all Catholic books He asked the man in a tone of surprise, "Are you a Catholic?" "Yes, sir, we are Catholics" "Do you know me?" continued Father Elet "No, sir!" "Then," said Father Elet, "I will pull off my great coat and you will know me" When he had done so, the man cried out, "You are a Catholic priest!" and such a transport of joy was he in that he left everything and ran off to his wife, who was at her sugar-camp at some distance from the house The man, coming to the camp, found his wife sitting on a log in great melancholy, thinking within herself that she would be perhaps forever deprived of the holy sacraments This thought had made her sick for several days past Upon his seeing her, the man said, "Nelly, guess four times and you will not tell me who is at our house" R[eply] "Who can be at the house but some friend from Kentucky?" "No" "Who then?" "A Catholic priest" As soon as the words had dropped from the lips of her husband, she ran as quick as she could to the house and seeing Father Elet, she threw herself at his knees, crying and shedding many tears "Father, give me your blessing! Father, give me your blessing!" The man said, "Father, I would give everything I have for your presence Come, sit down! Breakfast will be prepared" The name of the family is Leake They came out from Kentucky last fall, three families They went at St Louis, all of them, to their Easter duty Father Elet says he has never seen finer Catholics than they are They all communicated again They are well off Have several negroes and are settled in a very good part of the country, this spring seven families more must come and they come with the intention of bringing out forty families, being told in Kentucky that they would have a priest They offer to build a brick church—as also at Louisiana, a very thriving town Such also is Palmyra on Salt River Father Elet says it is the finest country he has seen—land like about Florissant, well-timbered, watered, and having many very fine sugar-camps They sell their produce as high as about St Louis, because they are convenient to the Lead Mines in Fever River, and send their stock of cattle to New Orleans by water.²³

²³ Van Quickenborne to Dzierzynski, March 4, 1828 (B)

With the visit of Verreydt to the Salt River district in December, 1827, followed by that of Elet in February, 1828, began a Jesuit missionary activity in that quarter that continued until the arrival in 1833 of Father Lefevere, future first Bishop of Detroit. In 1829 Verreydt from his headquarters at St. Charles was making apostolic expeditions three times a year to the northern counties of Missouri, spending six weeks on the circuit. The stations visited included Moscow, Troy, Alexandria, Bear Creek, Louisiana, Palmyra, New London, and the houses of certain settlers on the Salt River. The district thus evangelized by the Jesuit missionaries was visited by them in default of other priests and not in discharge of any duty devolving upon them by the Concordat, as was the case in the Missouri River towns. Writing May 6, 1823, to the Father Prior in Rome, Father Rosati, then superior of the Lazarist community at the Barrens, says that Bishop Du Bourg had assigned to the Lazarists the territory along the Mississippi, as he had assigned to the Jesuits the territory along both banks of the Missouri. Four missionaries from each body were to be placed as soon as possible in their respective fields of labor and Father Rosati petitions the Father Prior to send the subjects necessary to discharge the obligations thus assumed by the Lazarists.²⁴ It does not appear that the latter group, presumably through lack of missionaries, ever worked the part of their Mississippi River district lying north of St. Louis, though the part south of the metropolis enjoyed for years the fruits of their ministry. We find Bishop Rosati offering in 1830 to the Society of Jesus the spiritual charge of northeastern Missouri. "The day before yesterday," Father Van Quickenborne informed the General, September 9, 1830, "our Bishop told me that he desired much to have the Society take charge of the district lying on the right bank of the Mississippi, beginning at the confluence mentioned above and extending northward thence as far as the limits of this state, that is, about two hundred and fifty miles."²⁵

No formal transfer of the Salt River territory to the Society of Jesus was made by the Bishop of St. Louis in the sense implied by Father Van Quickenborne's words, namely, an exclusive cultivation of the territory by Jesuit missionaries similar to that which the Concordat secured to them in regard to the Missouri Valley. Yet, as a matter of fact, the Missouri Jesuits worked this promising field freely and alone during the years 1827-1832 and more than once devised plans for a permanent residence within its limits. On September 2, 1829, Van Quickenborne made a proposition to one of the Salt River congregations to enter government land to the extent of one hundred acres and to

²⁴ Hughes, *op cit*, Doc., 2 1018

²⁵ Van Quickenborne ad Roothaan, September 9, 1830 (AA)

build a house, church, kitchen and stable. If the house were ready by March, 1830, and if nothing unforeseen occurred in the interval, the congregation was to receive a resident Jesuit pastor. The plan, however, like many other plans of the sanguine superior, was not realized. "We ought," so he suggested to Father Roothaan, "to have a residence at Franklin and another at Louisiana [Pike Co., Missouri] and in each two priests and a brother, the latter to teach school, that is, reading, writing, arithmetic, English grammar and geography. We now lose too much time in travelling—our men are too much exposed to disease—we cannot visit Protestants and have private talks with them on religion—we cannot build churches, for the people do not contribute for these unless the priest lives in the place. But what would they live on? I answer, as at St. Charles, on the pew-rents and *jura stolae*. In accordance with episcopal statute Catholics pay something on occasion of a marriage, burial or funeral." ²⁶

Father Van Quickenborne, it would appear, had so far committed himself to the project of a Jesuit residence in northeastern Missouri that his successor, Father De Theux, felt it necessary to attempt to carry it through. "I have hopes," says the latter in 1831, "of beginning a new establishment one hundred and twenty miles from Florissant near New London, some distance from Louisiana on the banks of the Mississippi." ²⁷ However, the following year, 1832, it was ruled by Father Kenney, the Visitor, that all plans for the proposed residence should be abandoned, as the venture would delay still further the inception of the Indian mission, which was a matter of far greater urgency for the Jesuits of Missouri. "This cogent reason," Father Kenney declared in his Memorial, "united with the wish to relieve the wants of St. Louis College induced the Visitor to adopt the advice of the consultors and desire that the contemplated Mission on the Salt River should not be undertaken. He felt the less regret in being obliged to withdraw our priests from this work of charity and utility, because the mission assumed

²⁶ *Liber Consultationum*, January 8, 1830 (A) Van Quickenborne ad Roothaan, September 9, 1830 (AA)

²⁷ De Theux à sa mere, Florissant, October 12, 1831 (A) Father Verreydt when at the Salt River in 1831 was assured by Mr. James Leake of board and lodging at his house until the proposed church and presbytery should be erected. "This proposition appeared to me to be very helpful towards the establishment I have in view and the spiritual well-being of these few Catholics. I hastened to inform Mr. Leake that if he persevered in the offer he had made to Father Verreydt, I would in future send one of the two Fathers I had assigned to them." De Theux à Rosati, February 26, 1832 (C) In a note addressed to Van Quickenborne, January 12, 1831, James Leake acknowledges the Superior's letter promising to send him "Mr. Varite" or some other clergyman. "I will make them as comfortable as we can. I need not tell you that we want a guide." (C)

a new burthen, without fulfilling by it any of the obligations contracted by the Concordat between Rt Rev Bishop Du Bourg and Rev F Charles Neale, and as the Salt River is not within the sphere assigned to the Society by that instrument, to begin a mission there before we were invited to do so by the Bishop might have the appearance of unnecessarily taking to ourselves a mission that could be supplied by the secular clergy."

Early in 1833 the Salt River stations were taken over by Father Peter Lefevere, through whose efforts the settlers of St Paul's, Ralls County, were brought to complete a modest church edifice, in which Mass was said for the first time in June, 1834 ²⁸

§ 3. WESTERN ILLINOIS

Shortly after retiring from the office of superior of the Missouri Mission in 1831, Father Van Quickenborne was assigned a Latin class in St. Louis College "After such an active life as he has led since coming to America," wrote Father De Theux at the time, "it is astonishing to see how well this employment agrees with him" ²⁹ But the ministry was the proper field of the tireless missionary. In the spring of 1832 he began a series of missionary excursions through northeastern Missouri, western Illinois and easternmost Iowa which made him a pioneer apostle of the Faith in those parts. The diocese of St. Louis, until the erection of that of Dubuque in 1837, included all of the Louisiana Purchase north of the Louisiana state-line, moreover, by provisional arrangement, it included the western counties of Illinois until 1843, when these became part of the newly erected diocese of Chicago. Van Quickenborne's baptismal and marriage register for this circuit, neatly and accurately kept, records at least six missionary excursions during the years 1832, 1833, and 1834 ³⁰ The first of these, made during May and June, 1832, resulted in forty-two baptisms and a number of marriages. The missionary visited Lincoln, Pike, Ralls, Marion, and Monroe Counties in Missouri, the localities visited including Bowling Green, New London, Leake Settlement and Paris. This was the Salt River circuit visited, as has been seen, in December, 1827, by Father Verreydt, and perhaps earlier even by Father Elet. A second excursion, from August to December, 1832, was marked by eighty-eight baptisms. Van Quickenborne on this occasion covered a wide sweep of territory. Crossing over into Illinois, he exercised his ministry in Edwardsville, Wood River, Springfield, Lick Creek, Brush Creek, Bear Creek, Flat Branch, South Fork of Sangamon River, Indian Creek, Head of the

²⁸ Ms memorandum (C)

²⁹ De Theux à sa mère, Florissant, October 12, 1831 (A)

³⁰ These registers are in the archives of St Mary's College, St Marys, Kansas

Rapids, Crooked Creek, Keokuk (Iowa), Fort Edwards and Quincy. Returning to the west side of the Mississippi, he revisited the Salt River district, including Florida in Monroe County, Palmyra and Louisiana. A third excursion, February and March, 1833, was confined to Illinois, chiefly to Calhoun and Schuyler Counties, with a harvest of twenty-two baptisms. A fourth excursion during May and June, 1833, took the missionary through St. Clair, Madison, Sangamon, Montgomery, and Shelby Counties. A fifth excursion in July, 1833, with twenty-five baptisms to its credit, included visits to Galena, Dubuque, Mill Seat, and Gratiot's Grove. The baptismal and marriage records of these ministerial trips of Van Quickenborne's are in all probability the earliest extant for numerous localities in northeastern Missouri, Iowa and western Illinois. Among the earliest incidents of Catholic history in Dubuque, Keokuk, Springfield, and Edwardsville are to be reckoned the visits paid to these towns by the zealous missionary from Missouri.³¹

³¹ Van Quickenborne's first recorded baptisms in the following localities

<i>Missouri</i>			
Lincoln County,	May	20, 1832, Maria Joanna Galloway,	18 days
Bowling Green,	"	23, 1832, Mary Magdalena Rule,	20 "
New London,	"	30, 1832, Julia Ann Boarman,	35 "
Leake Settlement,	"	31, 1832, Stephen Benedict Eliot,	51 "
Monroe County,	June	8, 1832, Joseph Addison Abell,	3 mos
Paris, Monroe Co ,	"	15, 1832, Edward Holden,	4 "
Louisville, Lincoln Co ,	"	27, 1832, Enoch Cryder,	3 days
Florida,	Nov	22, 1832, Ottonianna Penn,	32 "
Mulder Prairie,			
Marion Co ,	Dec	1, 1832, John Reynay,	7½ mos
Palmyra,	"	7, 1832, Joseph Stephen Angevine,	6 wks
Louisiana,	"	15, 1832, Elizabeth Delphina Mudd,	14 mos
<i>Iowa</i>			
Keokuk,	Oct	6, 1832, Maria Louise Fraiser,	1 yr
Fort Edwards,	"	12, 1832, Anna Maria Allridge,	5 wks
Dubuque,	July	10, 1833, Henry Monaghan,	8 mos
<i>Illinois</i>			
Edwardsville,	Aug	23, 1832, Eligius Lobé,	6½ mos
Beardstown, Morgan			
Co ,	Sept	24, 1832, Marie Elliot,	2 yrs
Springfield,	"	6, 1832, Marie Helen Alvey,	14 mos
Brush Creek, Montgomery			
Co ,	"	9, 1832, Mary Anne Simon,	3 "
Quincy, Adams Co ,	Oct	14, 1832, William Edward Stebbins,	6 wks
Gratiot's Grove,	July	23, 1833, Charles Gagnard,	21 mos
<i>Wisconsin</i>			
Mill Seat, Michigan			
(Territory),	July	22, 1833, James Murphy,	16 mos

Father Vincent Badin's baptisms in Galena antedate those of Father Van Quickenborne for that town. Moreover, diocesan priests from St. Louis were in



Father Van Quickenborne's missionary excursions in Missouri, Illinois, Iowa, 1832-1834. Places indicated on the map were included in the circuit. Compiled by G J Garraghan, drawn by J P Markoe

One interesting item to be found in the Van Quickenborne records may here be noted. On October 5, 1832, he baptized at Crooked Creek, Hancock County, Illinois, two children, Benjamin and Abraham Mudd, the god-parents being Abraham and Elizabeth Lincoln. The Lincolns of Hancock County were a collateral branch of the family line to which belonged President Lincoln. Many Hancock County Lincolns were Catholics. The Abraham Lincoln who was sponsor at the two baptisms administered by Van Quickenborne was a son of Mordecai Lincoln, a brother of Thomas Lincoln, father of the President, and was accordingly a first-cousin of the latter.³²

Here and there in these missionary rounds Van Quickenborne was instrumental in having the Catholic residents set about building churches in their respective localities. Thus, in July, 1833, building committees were formed in Galena and Dubuque. On July 19, "at an aggregate meeting of the Roman Catholics living at the Dubuque Mines," resolutions were passed for the erection of a "hewed log building 25 ft. by 20 and 10 or 12 ft. high." On the building committee were James McCabe, Thomas Fitzpatrick, Patrick O'Mara, N. Gregoire and James Fanning, the last named being appointed treasurer. In his hands accordingly Father Van Quickenborne left a copy of the resolutions passed at the meeting. In Galena, Illinois, a tract of five acres was purchased on July 19, 1833, for two hundred dollars from Patrick Gray, payment to be made when the amount should have been collected from the congregation. The property lay "near Galena, sown in timothy and clover, being bounded east by the road leading to Meeker's farm, south by Martin Gray's claim, west by the burial ground, north by the public land." According to Van Quickenborne's memorandum, a block-house, which apparently stood on the property, was to furnish the timber for the proposed church, which was to be of frame and twenty-five by thirty-five feet in size. Nicholas Dowling was appointed treasurer of the building committee and was to collect from the congregation the money needed for the purchase of the property and the erection of the church, the specifications of which were agreed upon before Van Quickenborne left Galena.³³ Thence the missionary passed over into Wisconsin, then

Sangamon and other Illinois counties before Father Van Quickenborne. Cf. *SLCHR*, 5, 193 *et seq*.

³² *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, February 9, 1909, "The Lincolns of Fountain Green", Lee and Hutchinson, *The Ancestry of Abraham Lincoln*, p. 84, Garrahan, *The Catholic Church in Chicago, 1673-1871*, p. 69.

³³ Details of the arrangements sanctioned by Van Quickenborne for the building of churches in Galena and Dubuque are contained in a memorandum of his in the St. Louis archdiocesan archives. "Churches should be built at Galena, Dubuque and Lower Rapids, as the funds can be raised very easily. Churches might be built at Lower Alton and at Springfield."

a part of Michigan Territory, where we find him baptizing at Mill Seat, July 22, 1833. Certain difficulties attending the exercise of the ministry in this new field occurred to him, as he notes in a memorandum: "It will be necessary for the clergyman living there [Galena] or visiting to see the Catholics of a part of Michigan Territory since the line of Illinois goes only six miles above Galena, and of course he must have the necessary powers. Is meat allowed on Saturday there? how is Lent kept? which are the holy days? the fast days? days of abstinence? Was that country under Canada when in 1764 the dispensations were given about marriages?"

Missionary circuits such as Van Quickenborne was now engaged in were the very thing needed at the time to save the faith of the neglected Catholic settlers in the rural Middle West. The circuits were financed, in part at least, by Bishop Rosati out of the funds allotted to him by the French Association of the Propagation of the Faith. It was in fact the Bishop himself who secured the services of the Jesuit as a means of relieving in some measure the spiritual distress prevalent in great stretches of his diocese where there was not a single resident priest. The General wrote to Father De Theux:

That Father Van Quickenborne acts as a missionary for the Bishop throughout his diocese does not prevent him from depending on your Reverence, as he ought to. And yet it is proper that we deal generously and liberally with the Bishop in this matter as in others. Certainly Father Van Quickenborne in those excursions is doing a work by no means to be regretted. In general, when a service of this nature on behalf of the abandoned faithful or others can be rendered by the Fathers without neglect of their own duties (and it is said this can be done conveniently even by the Fathers who reside in parishes), the opportunity should not be allowed to pass by nor should we expect and much less demand of the Bishop a subsidy for meeting the expense of such excursions since the necessities are usually supplied by the faithful and in abundance.³⁴

In a lengthy letter to the Father General, January 16, 1834, Father Van Quickenborne pleads with customary ardor that the Jesuits be made to enter in a larger way into this new ministry, which by his own experience he had found at once so necessary and so effective.

Since by the will of Superiors I have traversed the region watered of old by the sweat and blood of our Fathers but now in a state of most pitiful neglect, I thought it might be agreeable to your Very Rev. Paternity were I to write you such particulars as may seem useful concerning this region and the immense fruit which may be gathered in by the ministry of two rural missionaries. In so doing I shall find some relief in bearing the really

³⁴ Roothaan ad De Theux, May 24, 1833 (AA)

bitter grief of soul which is stirred within me by the abandoned state of this region in regard to spiritual aid, for it is my hope that your Reverence in his charity towards all may sooner or later send assistance. At least I hope that I may certainly contribute something towards letting your Reverence know what kind of ministry is calculated above all others in these parts to bring forth the most abundant fruit. I therefore greatly desire your Very Rev. Paternity to know that there is a well founded hope that if two rural missionaries were to take in hand the canvassing of one state, going through towns and villages, visiting families, preaching the word of God everywhere in public buildings and private houses and administering the holy sacraments, they could in a short time with the grace of God convert a great multitude of persons in these western states. And since this is new country, houses could be founded resting on a solid foundation, and that at little expense compared with elsewhere, and this expense would transmit its fruit to future generations at the highest possible rate of interest. Non-Catholics are very active in this field of endeavor. So necessary is this ministry of the rural missionary that without it religion cannot be here set up at all. And that this may be made still more evident, I shall tell of conditions among the people, of their ways, of their preachers and the manner in which the latter exercise their ministry in the particular halves of the states of Illinois and Missouri which I lately canvassed for about 12 months and which the Bishop is anxious for Ours to canvass and where he would be delighted to have us settle as he has witnessed to me himself.

Van Quickenborne's shrewd analysis of conditions in pioneer Illinois and Missouri as he saw them is not here reproduced *in extenso*, but one passage is cited for the light it throws on the phenomenon of leakage in the Catholic population of the United States in the early decades of the last century. He is enumerating the evils due to lack of priests, the numbering of separate heads in an argument or exposition of facts being a favorite literary device with him.

1. Catholics dare not declare themselves. In the second town I visited in Illinois, after I had left, a minister in a sermon publicly called me Anti-Christ, a man of sin, whom no one should allow to enter his house and he said this with so much bitterness that his own people condemned him. In the third town my host, a non-Catholic, did not dare to keep me in his house any longer, as his business would otherwise have suffered. In the fourth town the two Catholic families did not even dare to receive me in their houses. 2. Calumnies against the Catholics are spread about and are accepted by many as true. 3. Many become apostates. I shudder to think of what I have seen in this matter. I had on my list 26 apostate families, namely, where the father or mother fell away from the faith and the whole family were living as non-Catholics, having joined some sect. One of these persons had even become a minister, and several Catholic women had married preachers, thereby losing the faith. 4. Boys and girls at school do not dare to say they are Catholics. The teachers indoctrinate them with the principles of the

Protestant religion From childhood on not only do they learn to be ashamed of their own religion but by means of principles contrary to it they are grounded in a false religion 5 According to civil law marriages must be contracted either before a minister of some or other religion or before a magistrate They generally take place before a minister as the more respectable way of the two When no priest is at hand, people marry before a preacher, in case one party is Catholic and the other non-Catholic, and no stipulation is made as to the education of the children in the true faith 6 The sick are placed in a deplorable position Though it is possible for them in certain cases to obtain a priest from a distance, they do not venture to send for one on account of the rather considerable expense involved and often, too, for fear of being recognized as Catholics. When the parents die under such circumstances, the children are wont to have no regard at all for religion But what does this excessive fear come from? From the fact that many of the Protestants have this conviction regarding the Catholic religion Catholics look upon the priest as God, without him no remission of sins is possible When present, he forgives all sins for money, without any contrition on the part of the one receiving forgiveness The priest even goes so far as impiously to sell a license for committing sin in the future. To prove all this they have a Roman table which indicates the sum of money to be paid for each sin

The only remedy for this distressing condition of things, so it seemed to Father Van Quickenborne, was to have the Catholics of the rural districts visited at intervals by a priest How he himself conducted such visits and with what results is told in a contemporary account by Father De Theux

Such was the state of things in the section of Illinois traversed by Father Van Quickenborne He knew there were Catholics living there but had definite knowledge of only some dozen families But what are a dozen families over a stretch of country such as he had to visit? Crossing the Mississippi on the way to his mission, he knew not whom he was to visit or whom he was to lodge with on that very day He enters the first village he comes to, announces himself for a Catholic priest, and inquires whether there is any Catholic family in the place This question at first provokes astonishment, but soon to the emotion of surprise succeeds one of curiosity, for the person addressed is one of those good people who have never yet seen a priest Finally, learning that he is to preach in English, they allow themselves to yield to the desire of hearing him Ministers, just as curious as the people, come to hear him, it has happened at times that they were on either side of him while he was preaching "I come," he would then proceed to say, "to speak to you of the oldest of all religions, but one which has been disfigured in your eyes by the most atrocious calumnies" He then develops the principles of the Catholic faith, establishes them by good proofs within the grasp of his audience, and finishes by refuting the falsehoods which he knows to be the stock-in-trade of the ministers As these are personally

unknown to him, he challenges them to prove in his presence the charges they are accustomed to level against the Catholic religion. It is rare that the ministers fail to keep silence. The people conclude they are afraid of the missionary, while the missionary himself concludes that the Catholics and their religion have been calumniated. He adds that perhaps the ministers have spread their calumnies about without examining them, but just here is the height of imprudence, for they brand their fellow-citizens without being sure they are guilty. Hence, in the future they ought to abstain from all assertions of this sort or take upon themselves the obligation of proving them. At these words the Catholics take courage and invite the Father to come to their houses, while the Protestants ask one another how it is possible that after so many violent attacks against the Catholic religion, their ministers have not dared to defend themselves. They come to the missionary, ask him for explanations and then go off to attack the ministers themselves, reproaching them for their systematic calumnies. The Father preached regularly once a day and that frequently in town-halls or other public buildings. In the course of a single year he travelled 4373 miles, baptized 213 persons, 83 of whom were Protestants, discovered more than 600 Catholics in Illinois and more than 700 in a part of Missouri where eight or nine years before he knew of scarcely more than eight.³⁵

Despite the prevailing bigotry there was on occasion a readiness on the part of the non-Catholic residents to receive a Catholic priest cordially, strange and unfamiliar figure though he was among them. This is illustrated by an incident that occurred in the spring of 1832. In Carrollton, Greene County, Illinois, a Catholic, James Sullivan by name, was under sentence of death for the murder of Samuel Loftus. He declined the services of a non-Catholic clergyman who sought to console him, but begged earnestly for a priest. Governor Reynolds of Illinois, hearing of the condemned man's desire, wrote at once to Bishop Rosati requesting that a priest be sent from St. Louis. "There has been a person sent to Portage des Sioux but I am informed there is no priest resident at that place. The above man is much distressed for his situation and wishes religious consolation, which I hope will be afforded him. I take the liberty of informing you of the above, so you can send to him a priest to console him in his dying moments."³⁶

Familiar as he was with the country on the Illinois side of the Mississippi from his repeated missionary excursions in that direction, Van Quickenborne was promptly sent on this errand of mercy. Arriving in Carrollton he was at once invited to become the guest of a leading

³⁵ *Ann Prop*, 18 282. The statistics of Van Quickenborne's Illinois ministry, as given by De Theux, cover the period May 16, 1832, to July 16, 1833. Van Quickenborne memorandum (C).

³⁶ Reynolds to Rosetta (Rosati), April 10, 1832 (C). Cf. also *Illinois Historical Collections, Governors' Letters, 1818-1834* (Springfield, Ill., 1909).

citizen of the town, who showed him every attention and courtesy as though he were an old-time friend. So also the sheriff, a Mr Colkey, showed himself very obliging to the missionary and eager at the same time to render the prisoner every facility for the exercise of his religion. There was only a single Catholic in the town, but some of the Protestant residents provided a place for the celebration of Mass, which the father had the consolation of saying every day before a considerable gathering of persons, all of them very attentive and respectful during the sacred rite. On Easter Sunday he preached in the town-hall on the object and nature of Catholic belief.

Meantime the condemned man, in whom the vitality of a one-time active faith now reasserted itself in the face of death, was making edifying preparations for the end. He made his confession and prayed earnestly and at frequent intervals by day and night. On the eve of the execution he asked three favors of the sheriff, that arrangements be made to have Mass said the next morning in the jail, that he be permitted to go all the way to the gallows on foot, and that he be dispatched as soon as possible after reaching there, which favors the sheriff promised to grant. But so many of the townspeople were eager to attend Mass the following morning that the sheriff felt called upon to request Father Van Quickenborne to perform the service in the town-hall, whither he engaged to conduct the prisoner and preserve proper order. It was a reasonable request and the father acquiesced in it without difficulty. During Mass the man bore himself devoutly and in a manner to repair as best he might the scandal he had given. He held in his hands a rosary and a crucifix, on which he steadily fixed his eyes, praying earnestly all the time. This gave the father an opportunity to explain to the large audience before him the use of the crucifix. "You see for yourselves," he told them, "that the crucifix is an excellent book, full of the most beautiful instruction, of which unlettered persons like the prisoner before you can avail themselves as readily as the educated." During Mass the prisoner received holy communion, after having recited aloud acts of faith, hope, charity and contrition and asked pardon from all present for the scandal he had given. Immediately after Mass Father Van Quickenborne delivered a sermon on the justice and goodness of God. Directing it partly to the prisoner, he sought to awaken still further in his heart sentiments of sorrow and contrition for his sins and of confidence in the infinite mercy of the Saviour. He recalled to him that the God Who was about to judge him had deigned to come down from heaven to save him and he cited the words of Scripture, "Come to me all you that labor and are heavily burdened and I will refresh you." In conclusion he pointed out to his hearers that the man was very happy indeed in dying in the Catholic Church,

for he found therein not only whatever means of salvation he might have found elsewhere, but in addition a well-grounded hope of the remission of his sins in the sacrament of penance, and of life eternal in partaking of the Body and Precious Blood of Jesus Christ, in fine, the certainty of being in the true way which leads to life. On the way to the scaffold the prisoner, still clasping the crucifix in his hands, performed the Catholic devotion of the "Stations of the Cross," the guards and accompanying throng of people stopping with him at each of the fourteen stations to allow him to pray, which he did with obvious recollection and compunction. On the scaffold his suffering seemed to last but an instant and he died with the crucifix in his hands. The execution took place April 26, 1832.³⁷

One would not suppose that the Springfield of 1835, with its two thousand residents, of whom not more than nine were Catholics, was a promising place for a college under the auspices of that religious denomination.³⁸ And yet the hope of such an institution in the future capital of Illinois appears to have been entertained at this time by Bishop Rosati. Father De Theux reported to the Bishop in March, 1835, in regard to the question of a college in Springfield that Father Verhaegen and himself were opposed to the venture, deeming it impracticable in the existing straitened condition of the Missouri Mission as regarded both men and material resources. In any case, the Indian mission would have to be opened first, as the Father General and even the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda were urging that a start be made in this important field of labor as yet untouched by the Missouri Jesuits. And yet the Indian mission could not be started, as men and money were lacking.

As a consequence, all that remains for us to do in regard to Springfield is to write to the Father General and to pray, in union with your Lordship, that God may deign to give us the strength necessary to cooperate everywhere and in every detail with the ardent zeal for the sheep of your flock with which you are devoured. So to do, Monseigneur, we shall ever regard as a genuine honor and an integral part of our happiness. In the meantime, believe me, Monseigneur, that if only we be permitted to go our humble way quietly and according to the measure of our strength, we shall, *Deo dante tempore suo*, be of real help to your immense diocese, contrariwise, push us and we shall accomplish nothing that is worth while. It is to the desire of doing more than it was able to do that they attribute the state of languor in which the Society spent its first thirty years in Maryland.³⁹

³⁷ *Ann. Prop.*, 7, 105-108

³⁸ *Peck's New Guide for Emigrants* (1836), p. 305. "It [Springfield] is a flourishing inland town and contains about 2000 inhabitants."

³⁹ De Theux à Rosati, Florissant, March 28, 1835 (C)

In April of the following year, 1836, the question of a college in Springfield was again before De Theux and his consultors. Conditions for the step, so it was thought, would not be ripe for the next ten years. No conclusion was therefore reached except that the matter be referred to the Father General.⁴⁰ The following month, however, Father Verhaegen journeyed to Springfield with a view to obtaining first-hand information as to conditions in that rising town. He took with him all that was necessary for the celebration of Mass in case he should find opportunity during his visit to perform the sacred rite, and before leaving solicited from Bishop Rosati a grant of faculties or spiritual jurisdiction. "I believe Springfield is in your diocese."⁴¹ Shortly after returning to St. Louis, his stay in the town having lasted but a few days, he let Bishop Rosati know of his experiences, trying at times, in a region which he described as only one-fourth civilized. "I am well satisfied with my visit to Springfield. Everything appears to be highly favorable to the progress of our Holy Religion. I saw all the gentlemen of influence in the town and all, with one accord, are anxious to have a college established there, on a decent and limited plan but susceptible of progressive improvement." However, writing to the General later, July 16, 1836, Verhaegen expressed himself as not in favor of accepting any invitation at all to settle in Springfield, if indeed such invitation was ever to be tendered. As a matter of fact, he had found the townsfolk ambitious indeed to see a "literary institution" set up in their midst but divided as to what religious denomination should be asked to take it in hand. Some favored the Methodists, others, the Presbyterians, still others, the Episcopalians, some, finally, the Catholics, who, however, could claim only nine adherents in the place. Moreover, Springfield, not yet the state capital, was a hundred miles from St. Louis, and the road between the two towns was well-nigh impassible. The lapse of more than a century has seen the metropolis of Missouri and Abraham Lincoln's town brought together by a pleasant auto or railroad ride of a few hours. But in 1836 a journey between the two was not an agreeable adventure as Verhaegen undertook to inform the General, taxing in the effort all the resources of his copious Latin vocabulary for vivid description. An English version of the graphic narrative may be attempted

I set off in a public stage. There were seats in it for six persons and we were nine. As a result, much crowding. The road runs now over high hills, now across the prairies, to which the eye can see no limit. So steep are the hill-sides that, though a wheel of the coach was chained, it seemed to me that

⁴⁰ Verhaegen à Rosati, May 15, 1836 (C)

⁴¹ Verhaegen à Rosati, May 22, 1836 (C)

I was not rolling along but flying. Such things, however, have no terrors for the half-savage drivers, but for me and my fellow passengers they were, I must confess, a subject of constant alarm. The state of Illinois is still very slightly cultivated. The cabins which you see along the way give every evidence of extreme poverty and, indeed, travellers can scarcely find in them what they need in the way of food. There is no better drink than good water, but this is a great rarity up there while the water that does abound is scarcely fit to drink. The way over the prairie is not any too pleasant. Swarms of gnats besiege the stage-coach and the stagnant waters that lie across the road make it necessary for the passengers to proceed on foot through horrid places if they would not see the coach sink in the mire. At the same time the prairies are not without features agreeable to the eye. Deer running about here and there in the grass, prairie chickens, so they call them, on the wing, large-sized snakes coming out of the thick of the grass and crossing the road, wolves running from the farm-houses, flowers of almost every kind and color lifting their heads above the meadow, if one would gaze on sights like these, he will find an abundance of them in the summer-time amid those prairies. But when you have to put up for the night, all the other miseries of the journey pass out of memory. I had to spend the first night in a room about 20 feet long by as many wide. In it were four beds in which, besides myself, seven men had to sleep, two of them, who were sick, occupying the same bed. I was allowed to choose my companion for the night and lying on one of the beds with my clothes on I passed three hours dozing. Moreover, the room being filled with an unpleasant odor from various drugs suggested an apothecary's shop. At three in the morning the horn blows, everybody makes ready for the journey and the coach starts off in the shades of night. A cow with a bell around its neck was lying down on the road. The coach going at its usual speed drives straight for the cow. One of the four horses falls, the cow catches its horns in the harness of the fallen horse and in the trappings of the coach and is badly wounded by one of the wheels. The suffering animal groans and sets the bell a-ringing. The horses become terror-stricken and we are all in danger of our lives. The driver shouts out that he can't keep the horses in any longer. We all leap from the coach and seizing the horses' bridles do our best to hold the foaming steeds until the coach is out of trouble and we are able to resume the journey. Other discomforts along the way I omit to mention.

Nothing ever came of this early project of a Catholic college in Springfield. One or two years later, on the arrival of Father George Hamilton, the first resident priest of the town, the Catholic population of the place numbered only five families besides some seven or eight single persons. In 1839, when the number had grown to thirteen or fourteen families with between forty and fifty single persons in addition, a church was yet unbuilt despite the efforts of Father Hamilton to erect one. One wonders how the idea of a Catholic college in so

unlikely a center for such an institution as Springfield at this period surely was ever came to be seriously entertained ⁴²

§ 4 AT THE MOUTH OF THE KANSAS

How itinerant Jesuit missionaries, *missionarii excurrentes*, with headquarters first at Florissant and afterwards at St Charles, evangelized both sides of the Missouri River as far west as Boonville in Cooper County, has been told above. The circuit, which embraced nineteen towns, most of them situated on the river, was covered as a unit in missionary trips of four or six weeks' duration up to 1838, after which date most of the stations were visited from the newly founded residences of Washington in Franklin County and Westphalia in Osage County. It remains to sketch with brevity the ministry of the Jesuit missionaries on the Missouri border during the decade 1835-1845, when they were the only priests serving the Catholic settlers in that part of the West.

On June 30, 1835, Father Van Quickenborne, whose name is a conspicuous one in the story of the pioneer Church on the Missouri border, arrived for the first time at Independence, a town in Jackson County three miles south of the Missouri River and ten miles east of its junction with the Kaw or Kansas River. Laid out as the seat of Jackson County in 1827, Independence four years later became the eastern terminus of the Santa Fe trade. The goods were shipped from the East in wagons over the Alleghanies and then by water to Blue Mills or Independence Landing on the Missouri. They were next transported in wagons drawn by mules or oxen or on pack-mules over the historic Santa Fe trail for a distance of eight hundred miles to the city of Santa Fe, then within Mexican territory. Independence prospered on this commerce, but only for a brief spell, the source of its wealth being soon diverted to enterprising little Westport with its better landing-place on the Missouri. When Independence saw its own landing-place at Blue Mills washed away by the great flood of 1844, its dream of great commercial expansion vanished forever into thin air.

To this bustling frontier town, then in the hey-day of its short-lived prosperity, Van Quickenborne came in the June of 1835, being on his way to the Indian country to prospect for a mission-site among the native tribes. "As I found five or six Catholic families in this place, I stayed there a few days. A lady offered me her house for a chapel. I preached, celebrated the holy mysteries and had the consolation of seeing nearly all the Catholics avail themselves of the occasion to make

⁴² Hamilton to Rosati, July 7, 1839 (C)

their Easter duty.”⁴³ Van Quickenborne was at Independence again in March, 1837, in the course of one of his periodical missionary excursions from the Kickapoo residence, which was opened in 1836. On this occasion he baptized John Birch and Mary Pollard, the latter conditionally, as she had previously been baptized by a Baptist clergyman⁴⁴ In June, 1838, Father Verhaegen passed through Independence on his way to the Kickapoo and Potawatomi and on his return journey preached there one evening at the request of the residents, his topic, “Why I am a Catholic.”⁴⁵ Father Aelen, on his way to Sugar Creek Mission, which was opened in 1838, baptized at Independence on May 26, 1839, Mary Anne Cosgrove and Marcella Davy, Verhaegen standing sponsor for the last named⁴⁶ The following year Father De Smet, *en route* for the first time to the Rocky Mountains, baptized Lucille, a Negro slave belonging to Dr. Dillon of Independence⁴⁷ Father Nicholas Point, during his stay at Westport from November, 1840, to April, 1841, attended to the needs of the few Catholics at Independence Subsequent to his departure from Westport, they were looked after by the priests of the Sugar Creek Mission Father Verreydt, superior of that mission, visited Independence in July, August and December, 1844, and in March and October, 1845.⁴⁸ With the arrival of Father Bernard

⁴³ *Ann Prop*, 9 96 Van Quickenborne was not the first priest to visit Independence Father Lutz had been there in 1828 and Father Roux in 1833 Garrahan, *Catholic Beginnings in Kansas City*, p 63

⁴⁴ *Kickapoo Baptismal Register* The Kickapoo and Sugar Creek mission registers are in the Archives of St Mary's College, St Marys, Kansas

⁴⁵ Verhaegen à M——, June 20, 1838 (A)

⁴⁶ *Sugar Creek Baptismal Register*, 1838-1850 (F)

⁴⁷ *Kickapoo Baptismal Register* Cited generally as *Kickapoo Register* (F)

⁴⁸ *Diary (Diarium)* of Father Christian Hoecken This is in the archives of St Mary's College, Kansas For a translation of the Latin original of the *Dial*, 1891, a student publication of St Mary's College When Father Roux first arrived in Independence in November, 1833, he found there but two Catholic families, both named Roy (Roux à Rosati, November 24, 1833 [C]) According to O'Hanlon, *Life and Scenery in Missouri*, 132, Thomas Davy settled in Independence in 1824 Father Roux's records make no mention of Independence as the *locus* of any of his baptisms The first recorded baptism for the place is that of John Birch, administered March 19, 1837, by Van Quickenborne (*Kickapoo Register*) On October 24 of the same year was baptized, also at Independence, Sarah, daughter of Cornelius Davy and Sarah Haskins Wakefield The *Kickapoo Register* contains three and the *Sugar Creek Register* eight Independence baptisms for the years 1837-1841 The names of Catholic residents of Independence found in these records include those of Cornelius Davy, Sarah Hoskins Wakefield, Anthony Cosgrove, Brigetta Gilchrist, Thomas McGuire, Maria Pollard, Dr Dillon, Elizabeth and Jane Montgomery, and Lucilla and Sally Davy The baptism, April 19, 1843, of Susan May, daughter of James McGill and Catherine Sanders, took place in Independence, Father Verreydt being the officiating clergyman

Donnelly in the town in 1845, the care of its Catholic residents passed into the hands of the diocesan clergy, the first Catholic church there, which bore the name of the Most Holy Redeemer, being erected in 1849 under his supervision ⁴⁹

Ten miles west of Independence, near the confluence of the Missouri and Kansas Rivers, had arisen the thriving town of Westport. It was laid out in 1833 by John Calvin McCoy, a surveyor, whose father, Isaac McCoy, was a Baptist minister conspicuous in early missionary enterprise along the Missouri frontier. McCoy settled down at about the intersection of the Independence-Santa Fe road with the present Grand Avenue of Kansas City. The town soon assumed importance as an outfitting station and "jumping-off place," eventually wresting from its neighbor, Independence, the coveted prize of the Santa Fe trade. It had an excellent landing on the Missouri, known as Westport Landing, four miles to the north at the present foot of Grand Avenue in Kansas City. As late as 1846 when Francis Parkman passed through Westport to begin his journey over the Oregon Trail, it was still a typical frontier town. "Westport was full of Indians whose little shaggy ponies were tied by dozens along the houses and fences. Sacs and Foxes with shaved heads and painted faces, Shawnees and Delawares, in calico frocks and turbans, Wyandots dressed like white men and a few wretched Kansas wrapped in old blankets, were strolling along the streets or lounging in and out of the shops and houses" ⁵⁰

Only for a brief spell did Westport hold the prize of the Santa Fe trade. It was doomed to relinquish the booty into the hands of its younger rival, Kansas City. As early as 1821 Francis Gessseau (Jesse) Chouteau, a son of Pierre Chouteau, Senior, of St. Louis, established an agency of the American Fur Company opposite Randolph Bluffs on the right bank of the Missouri a few miles below its junction with the Kaw. Other Frenchmen, chiefly traders, trappers, laborers and voyageurs, with their families, soon joined Chouteau, thus forming the first permanent white settlement on the site of Kansas City. In 1828 a land office was opened in Boonville, Cooper County, and settlers began to purchase farms. In 1831 Gabriel Prudhomme, whose daughter Father Point, the Jesuit, was in later years to marry to Louis Turgeon, entered 271.77 acres of government land. The tract passed out of possession of the Prudhomme family in 1838. By an order of the Circuit Court of Jackson County, issued in August of that year at the petition of Prudhomme's heirs, his farm was advertised for sale in the *Missouri Republican* of St. Louis and *The Far West* of Liberty. It was sold to a stock-company for forty-two hundred and twenty dollars. The land was

⁴⁹ St. Louis *News Letter*, May 1, 1847.

⁵⁰ Parkman, *Oregon Trail* (Boston, 1882), p. 4.

at once subdivided into lots and called Kansas (later, at successive intervals, Town of Kansas, City of Kansas, Kansas City) But the town-building project lay dormant until 1846 when the stock-company disposed at public sale of one hundred and twenty-four lots at an average price of about fifty-five dollars each The town started at once to develop rapidly, reaching within a few months a population of four or five hundred It was first officially organized May 3, 1847 The chief cause of its early development was the Santa Fe trade, which had been diverted almost entirely from Westport as early as 1850, during which year six hundred wagons started westward from the Town of Kansas to the ancient Spanish capital. In 1889 the Town of Kansas adopted the style "Kansas City" and in 1899 it absorbed Westport within its corporate limits.⁵¹

The first Catholic priest to visit the locality which is now Kansas City and there exercise the sacred ministry was Father Joseph Lutz of the diocese of St. Louis, who in 1828 resided for a while as a missionary among the Kansa Indians at their village on the banks of the Kaw River some sixty-five miles above its mouth ⁵² After Father Lutz came Father Benedict Roux, also of the St. Louis diocese, who arrived at "Kawsmouth" November 14, 1833 ⁵³ Roux lived with Francis and Cyprian Chouteau, brothers of Frederick Chouteau, at their trading house on the Kaw River about ten miles above its mouth until the summer of 1834 when he moved into a small dwelling-house situated two miles from the chapel.⁵⁴ The chapel, a house located somewhere on the site of the future Kansas City, was rented in the beginning of February, 1834, by the Catholic congregation, which consisted of twelve French, two American and two Indian families Already on Christmas Day, 1833, Father Roux, vested in cassock, surplice and stole, had preached to the assembled Catholics in the house of an American resident placed at his disposal for the occasion On the second Sunday of Lent, February 23, 1834, he performed his first baptisms, thirteen in number, the names of the first four children baptized being Martha Roy, Adeline

⁵¹ Garraghan, *Catholic Beginnings in Kansas City*, pp 13-21, Conard, *Encyclopedia of the History of Missouri*, 3 486 A later settlement than Francis Chouteau's, consisting largely of Indians and half-breeds who came down from the Rocky Mountain region, was formed at Kawsmouth or West Bottoms on the low level ground that skirts the right bank of the Kaw at its junction with the Missouri Barns, *Commonwealth of Missouri*, p 749

⁵² The *SLCHR*, 5 183, contains an account from original sources of the "Abbé Joseph Anthony Lutz" by F S Holweck A letter of Lutz's in the *Ann Prop*, 3 556 (English tr in *SLCHR*, 2 77) is the earliest record extant of the exercise of the Catholic ministry along the Kansas River, 1828

⁵³ Garraghan, *op cu*, p 43

⁵⁴ *Kansas Historical Collections*, 9 573-574

Prudhomme, Martha Lessert and Amelia Roy⁵⁵ On the following Easter Sunday he said Mass publicly for the first time before the congregation. Meantime, property was acquired by Father Roux as a site for a church and presbytery. On this property some time after his departure from the West in the spring of 1835, a log church, twenty by thirty feet in size, with presbytery, was erected, largely with money furnished for the purpose by the Chouteaus, a circumstance which led to its being called "Chouteau's Church."⁵⁶ This pioneer shrine of Catholic worship on the Missouri border stood a few yards from the site of the Catholic cathedral in Kansas City, at what is now the intersection of Pennsylvania Avenue and Eleventh Street⁵⁷

Father Roux, after being in charge of the Catholic settlers at the "mouth of the Kansas" from November, 1833, to the spring of 1835, was transferred to Kaskaskia His baptisms on the Missouri border range from February 23, 1834, to April 25, 1835. They were forty-eight in number, thirty-six of whites, seven of Negroes and five of Indians March 15, 1834, he baptized Elizabeth Boone, and on April 19, 1835, Eulalie Boone, daughters of Daniel Morgan Boone, son of the pioneer Daniel Boone, and reputed first white settler on or near the site of Kansas City.⁵⁸

Within a few months after Roux's departure for St. Louis, Father Van Quickenborne, on July 3, 1835, appeared at the French settlement at Kawsmouth in the course of the same prospecting trip of which mention was made in connection with Independence⁵⁹ It was the first recorded visit of a Jesuit priest to the locality which has since become Kansas City. On July 15, 1835, he baptized in "Chouteau's Church," Louis, son of Clement Lessert and Julie Roy, the god-parents being Benjamin Chouteau and Thérèse Tullie. On July 18, he baptized Cyprian, son of Cyprian Terrien and Louise Vallé, the god-parents, Gabriel and Marie Prudhomme⁶⁰ With the establishment of the Kick-

⁵⁵ Transcript of Roux's baptisms, Kansas City Diocesan Archives, Kansas City, Mo

⁵⁶ The log-church had been built prior to 1837 Garraghan, *op cit*, p 66

⁵⁷ For description of the church see St. Louis *News Letter*, May 1, 1847 "The church measures thirty feet in length by twenty in width, of a proportionate height and is surmounted by a humble imitation of what was designed for a cupola with a cross above" This pioneer house of Catholic worship in Kansas City, first designated in contemporary baptismal records as "Chouteau's Church at the mouth of the Kansas River," was known as early as 1839 under the title of St. Francis Regis For a drawing of the church by Father Point cf Garraghan, *op cit*, p 102

⁵⁸ Transcript of Roux's baptisms Kansas City Diocesan Archives

⁵⁹ *Ann Prop*, 9 96

⁶⁰ *Kickapoo Register* (F) Garraghan, *op cit*, 93, 94

poo Mission in 1836 the French Catholics at the mouth of the Kaw were visited at intervals from the mission-house.

In July, 1836, Van Quickenborne was again at the mouth of the Kaw baptizing and marrying. The records of the ceremonies he performed on this occasion are entered in his own hand in the *Kickapoo Register*. On July 18 he baptized fourteen mixed-blood Indian children, omitting the non-essential ceremonies because the holy oils were not on hand. Of these, some were Flatheads, others Kutenai, still others Iroquois, all belonging, it would appear, to the group of Rocky Mountain Indians and mixed-bloods who had come down the Missouri in 1831 or earlier and settled at the West Bottoms on the right bank of the Kaw near its mouth.⁶¹ On the same day he performed two marriage rites, the earliest recorded in the history of Kansas City. "July 18, 1836, dispensation having been given in the three publications for just reasons, I have received the consent of marriage of Benjamin Lagautherie, son of Victor, and of Charlotte Gray, daughter of John and Marianne [Gray], both Iroquois, and have given them the nuptial blessing according to the rites of our Holy Mother, the Church, in presence of Louis Morin and Marianne Gray. Done at the mouth of the Kansas River, State of Missouri, July 18, 1836. Cs. F. Van Quickenborne, S. J." "July 18, 1836, Clement Liserte [Lessert] and Julie Roy renew consent of marriage contracted some years before, when there was no resident priest." November 22 of the same year Van Quickenborne married Prosper Marcier and Marie Louise Prudhomme "*Faite à l'église de Mr. Chouteau à l'entrée de la rivière des Kans, dans l'état du Missouri.*" On March 19, 1837, he married Pierre Perialt and Marguerette [*sic*] Desnoyers of the Kutenai nation, the record of the ceremony being in English "Done at Chouteau's Church at the mouth of the Kansas river, State of Missouri."⁶²

Father Van Quickenborne's last recorded visit to Kawsmouth occurred on May 28, 1837, on which occasion he administered three baptisms. Altogether he had administered forty-one baptisms in "Chou-

⁶¹ Van Quickenborne in a letter dated Kickapoo Village, October 4, 1836 (*Ann Prop*, 10 144) has the following account of the settlement in West Bottoms "Twelve families have lately come down from the Rocky Mountains. They are living at present at the junction of the Kansas and Missouri, about 40 miles from our village. I have visited them twice, they came with the intention of not returning and of looking to the salvation of their souls. At my first visit they all asked to be married according to the Catholic rite. I thought their baptisms and marriages should be deferred on account of their inconstancy and lack of instruction, but on my second visit I found them all sick and, in despair of being able to live here, they were talking of going back to their mountains."

⁶² *Kickapoo Register* (F). No record of marriages by either Father Lutz or Father Roux at Kansas City is extant.

teau's Church," all duly entered by him in the *Kickapoo Register*. After his withdrawal from the field the Catholic Creoles at the mouth of the Kaw still continued to be served by the fathers resident at the Kickapoo Mission. Van Quickenborne's successor as superior of the mission, Father Christian Hoecken, administered eight baptisms in "Chouteau's Church," one on October 2, 1837, and seven on May 27, 1838.⁶³ In the same church Joseph Papin and Mary Cave were married October 25, 1837, by Father Verreydt. The last baptismal entry in the *Kickapoo Register* for "Chouteau's Church" is dated September 8, 1839, the officiating minister being Father Anthony Eysvogels, third superior of the Kickapoo Mission, under whom it was closed in the autumn of 1840.⁶⁴

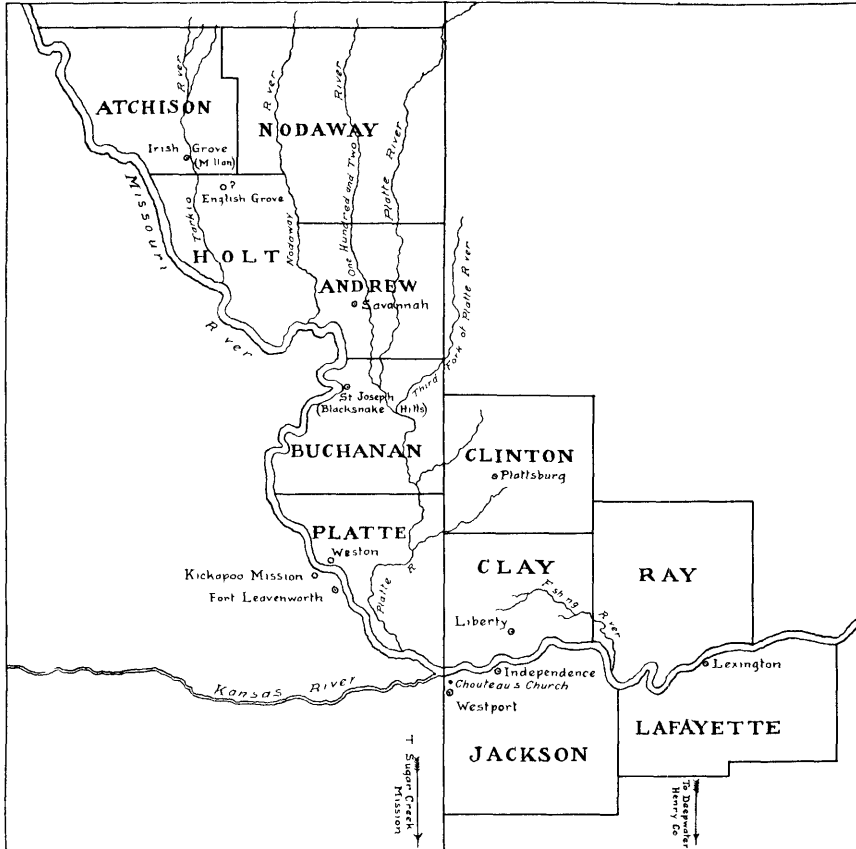
The first series of missionary visits to the Catholics at the mouth of the Kaw, carried on by Jesuit priests from the Kickapoo Mission, was followed in 1839 by a second series carried on from the Sugar Creek Potawatomi Mission as center, and lasting until 1846, when the diocesan priest, Father Bernard Donnelly, shifted his headquarters from Independence to the site of Kansas City. The *Sugar Creek Register* shows a number of baptisms for that locality. Four are recorded for as early a date as June 2, 1839, "*in ecclesia prope oppidum cui nomen Westport*" ("in the church near the town called Westport").

The historic log building erected on the property purchased by Father Roux and first designated in the records as "Chouteau's Church" was soon to bear the title of one of the Catholic Church's canonized saints. Under date of September 25, 1839, Father Herman Aelen, superior of the Sugar Creek Mission, in a communication to Bishop Rosati, submitted the following points of inquiry: "What was the title of the Church formerly administered by the Rev. Mr. Roux in Westport? Should the new church in that place be dedicated to God under the same title? If no title existed, may the present structure be dedicated under the invocation of St. Francis Regis?"⁶⁵ Though no answer from Rosati to these inquiries is on record, it may reasonably be inferred that the prelate acceded to Father Aelen's request that the church be named for St. Francis Regis. At all events, within less than two months of his communication to the Bishop, Aelen began to designate the Westport church by the title, St. Francis Regis. In an entry dated November

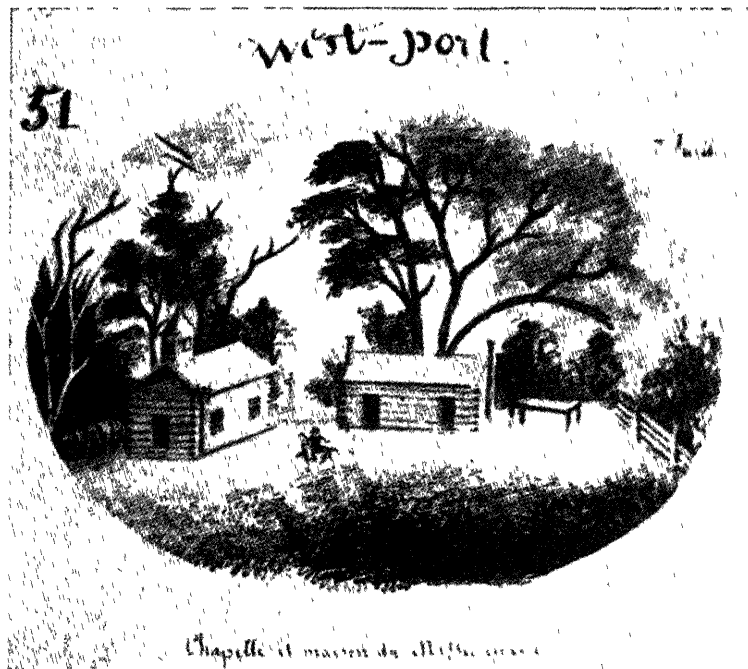
⁶³ Father Christian Hoecken, born February 28, 1808, at Tilburg in Holland, entered the Society of Jesus at White Marsh, Maryland, November 5, 1832, died of cholera on a Mississippi steamer near Council Bluffs, June 21, 1851. Reinterred in the Jesuit cemetery, Florissant, Mo.

⁶⁴ Father Anthony Eysvogels, born at Oss, Province of North Brabant, Holland, January 13, 1809, entered the Society of Jesus, December 31, 1835, died at New Westphalia, Osage Co., Mo., July 7, 1857.

⁶⁵ (C)



District served during the decade 1836-1846 by Jesuit missionary priests resident at the Kickapoo, Council Bluffs or Sugar Creek Indian missions. Places indicated on the map were among those where the missionaries exercised their ministry, as attested by their baptismal and other records. With the arrival in 1846 of Reverend Bernard Donnelly at Independence and of Reverend Thomas Scanlan at St. Joseph the district was thereafter served by the diocesan clergy. Compiled by G. J. Garaghan, drawn by J. P. Markoe.



The church and rectory of St. Francis Regis ("Chouteau's Church") on site of Kansas City, Missouri. The city's first house of worship. Sketch by its pastor, Nicholas Point, S. J., in his *Souvenirs des Montagnes Rocheuses*, Archives of St. Mary's College, Montreal.

ad Majorum Dei gloriam

1836 July 18 Dispensation having been given in the three publications for just reasons, I have received the mutual consent of marriage of Benjamin Lagautherie son of Charlotte Gray Victor, & of Charlotte Gray daughter of John & Marianne both Jacques, & have given them the nuptial blessing according to the rites of our Mother the Church in presence of Louis Morin & Marianne Gray Done at the mouth of the Kansas river, State of Missouri 18 July 1836
C^t J. VanLuekenbonne, P^r

Record of the marriage of Benjamin Lagautherie and Charlotte Gray. Apparently the earliest recorded marriage within the limits of what is now Kansas City, Missouri. From the *Kickapoo Mission Register*, Archives of St. Mary's College, St. Marys, Kansas.

17, 1839, in the *Sugar Creek Register* he writes, "*in ecclesia S. F. Regis prope oppidum Westport*" ("in the church of St Francis Regis near the town of Westport") Thenceforth references to the log church under that title are frequently met with in the ministerial records of the period. Thus the *Kuckapoo Register* records a marriage performed by Father De Smet April 20, 1840, "*dans l'église de St Francis Regis à Westport,*" while the *Sugar Creek Register* records a baptism administered by Father Aelen May 9, 1841, "*in aedibus S. Francisci Regis prope oppidum Westport.*" Aelen baptized on this occasion Emilie, daughter of P. P. McGee, the god-parents being Benedict Troost and Madame Thérèse B. Chouteau

In 1840 Westport again had its own resident Catholic pastor though his stay there lasted but a few months The *Annual Letters* of the Missouri Mission for that year note that a priest had long been needed to minister to the white settlers along the Missouri border To Father Nicholas Point was now assigned this important duty He was a native Frenchman attached to the Jesuit Mission of Louisiana, which had been incorporated into the Missouri Mission in 1838, and he had been founder and first rector of St. Charles College at Grand Coteau in Louisiana. Early in 1840 he was relieved of his rectorship and summoned to St. Louis, where Father Verhaegen appointed him a companion to De Smet in the projected Rocky Mountain Mission Pending the return of De Smet from his prospecting tour to the mountains, Point was assigned to parochial and missionary duty at the mouth of the Kansas He left St. Louis October 24, 1840, and arrived November 1, at Westport Landing, where he took in charge the parish of St. Francis Regis, established by his predecessor, Father Roux Point remained at this post until May 10, 1841, when he joined Fathers De Smet and Mengarini on their way west to establish the first of the Catholic Oregon missions The months that he spent at Westport were crowded with works of charity and zeal, of which he has left a record in his memoirs.⁶⁶

I was sent to Westport to exercise the holy ministry there until the return of Father De Smet The district in which I took up my abode was peopled by an assemblage of twenty-three families, each family group comprising a Frenchman with his Indian wife and half-breed children⁶⁷ Immediately upon my arrival these people found a place in my sympathies, for

⁶⁶ *Kuckapoo Register* (F) Father Point, after spending six years in the Rocky Mountain Mission, was recalled by his superior to Canada, where he died at Quebec, July 4, 1868 For his career in the Rocky Mountains cf *infra*, Chap. XXVI, § 1, *Mid-America*, 13-236 For extracts from his memoirs, cf *WL*, 12-4-22, 133-137

⁶⁷ In Father Roux's time (1833-1835) the French families numbered twelve Roux à Rosati, June 27, 1834 (C)

albeit very poor they had somehow contrived to build themselves a church, and again and again they had asked for a priest before succeeding in getting one. It was well enough that I had sympathy to spare, there being no lack of ills awaiting cure at my hands. What with the ignorance of some, the drunkenness of others, the sensuality of almost all, there was misery enough to inspire zeal in the most laggard of missionaries.

I went to work with great confidence, the more so, because I had found the sovereign remedy for ills of this sort lay in a little good will and in the use of one's common sense. Another consideration also had much weight in animating me with confidence,—who could tell but that in God's providence this town, small as it now was, might some day attain to distinction! Even as it was, Westport was the gathering point for all expeditions to Mexico, California and the Rocky Mountains, and it was no uncommon thing for travellers to sojourn there for weeks and weeks together. Easter time generally brought great numbers of people hither, and I often thought, if only the Easter holidays had been kept as by right they should have been, what an influence for good had been gained over the travellers and through them over the savages.

I landed at Westport on All Saints' day just as cold weather was setting in. The cold of winter, by the by, lasts until Easter, and at times it was so intense as to freeze the chalice even when the altar had a chafing-dish full of live coals placed at either end. Yet neither the severe cold, nor long distances, nor bad roads were obstacles formidable enough to prevent the people from coming to church, where on Sundays and festivals you could make sure of seeing them crowding the little house not only at the time of Mass but also during the other services.

Meanwhile, one of my chief cares was to keep my ministry high in repute with all. To this end I tried to be as slight a burden as possible on the community.

As the children's piety depends greatly on that of their mothers, I undertook to increase the store of piety of the latter by establishing a sodality of married women in honor of Our Lady of the Seven Dolors. Soon after I formed another for young girls under the patronage of Mary Immaculate. These young girls I found to be very modest, and so remarkable for natural piety and goodness. It is a fact that in all the twenty-three families living here, there was not a young girl whose moral conduct was not above reproach, and this marvel took place in a section where man's licentious nature brooked no bounds. A few of these young persons, encouraged by the example of a pious widow, took it upon themselves to make some artificial flowers for the church and I can say with truth that the work of their hands was not to be despised.

Before Lent it happened that I made mention of the prayers of the Forty Hours Devotion, immediately, men, women, children, all offered to make in turn their hour of adoration and during the three days several persons were constantly before the Blessed Sacrament. The novena in honor of St. Francis Xavier, the patron of our parish, had also a large attendance of people, it consisted in having evening prayers and an instruction in the

church At the close of this novena, as was also the case at Christmas, two-thirds of the congregation received Holy Communion

On the Sunday before my departure, all the married women belonging to the sodality of the Seven Dolors, the members of the young women's sodality, and all the children who had made their First Communion, approached the Holy Table In the afternoon there was the blessing of beads, medals and pictures, the premiums for catechism were distributed Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament followed, and finally a large cross was erected in the grave-yard In the evening I administered the last consolations of religion to a man who had given to his wife and children the most beautiful example of faith and resignation during his sickness, and whose last recommendation was an expression of the most tender confidence in the Blessed Virgin The day before, for the first time since my arrival at Westport, I had caused the consecrated earth to be opened in order to receive the mortal remains of her who had been first prefect of the sodality She had had the consolation during the course of the last year to see all her children and grandchildren approach the Sacraments

Only three marriages took place while I was at Westport, but they were in truth marriages, where the contracting parties were all in those dispositions which it is to be wished that the children of the Church should ever possess⁶⁸ Thus from the first day of my new career, did God still support my feeble steps by giving me new proofs of the care which He takes of those who put their trust in Him

With the departure of Father Point from Westport, the duty of visiting the parish devolved upon the Sugar Creek missionaries, who thus attended it up to the arrival in 1846 of Father Bernard Donnelly of the St. Louis diocesan clergy The priest whose name appears most frequently in the *Westport Register* during this period is Father Verreydt, superior at Sugar Creek from 1841 to 1848 Ministerial visits of his to Westport are recorded for July, August, and December, 1844, and for March and September, 1845 His name is almost the only one signed to Westport baptisms from October 7, 1841, to September 28, 1845. He was there as late as April, 1846, when, at the request of Bishop Barron, he came up from Sugar Creek to enable the French settlers at Westport to discharge their Easter duty.⁶⁹ Verreydt was virtually the pastor of Westport during the interval between the departure of Father Point and the arrival of Father Donnelly. In November,

⁶⁸ The three marriages are entered by Point in the *Westport Register* (F). Names and dates are as follows: Moise Bellemaire and Adele Lessert, January 7, 1841, Jean Baptiste de Velder and Marie Françoise Cadron, February 8, 1841, Louis Turgeon and Marguerite Prudhomme, April 29, 1841

⁶⁹ Father Hoecken's *Diarium* (F) Bishop Barron, Vicar-apostolic of the two Guianas, was at this time making a confirmation tour through Missouri under commission from Bishop Kenrick of St. Louis

1846, Father Donnelly was installed at "Chouteau's Church" (St. Francis Regis) as resident pastor and with his arrival the pioneer Jesuit ministry at the mouth of the Kansas came to an end.⁷⁰

§ 5. THE PLATTE PURCHASE

During the period 1836-1840 the Missouri counties lying along the western limits of the state and north of the Missouri were visited periodically by the Kickapoo missionaries. In a trip through Clay, Clinton, Platte and Jackson Counties in 1838 one of their number heard sixty confessions, administered twenty baptisms and prepared twelve children for their first reception of the Eucharist.⁷¹ Liberty, the seat of Clay County, contained at this time fourteen stores and four groceries and had a newspaper of its own, the *Far West*.⁷² The first Catholic priest known to have visited it was Father Joseph Lutz, which he did in 1828. He was followed by Father Benedict Roux, who arrived in the town for the first time on November 4, 1833. Roux performed seven baptisms in Clay County in June and September of 1834.⁷³ On November 22, 1837, Father Christian Hoecken, then resident at the Kickapoo Mission, baptized at Liberty, William Riley, Ann Virginia Curtis, and Josephine Esther Curtis.⁷⁴

The counties comprised in what was known as the Platte Purchase owe the earliest exercise of the Catholic ministry within their borders to the Jesuits of the Kickapoo and Sugar Creek Missions. When Missouri came into the Union in 1821, the straight line that forms its western boundary south of Kansas City continued due north. The triangular strip lying between this original western boundary of the state, the Iowa line, and the Missouri River, was formerly a part of Iowa Territory, though inhabited by Iowa, Sauk and Fox Indians, who claimed its ownership. The Potawatomi Indians, before occupying their reservation in the Council Bluffs district, settled for a while on this triangle.⁷⁵ Here, in their camp opposite Fort Leavenworth, they were visited in January, 1837, by Van Quickenborne, who found their prin-

⁷⁰ Additional details concerning the ministry of the Jesuit fathers in early Kansas City are in Garraghan, *Catholic Beginnings in Kansas City, Missouri*

⁷¹ *Litterae Annuae*, 1838 (A)

⁷² Wetmore, *Gazetteer of Missouri*, p. 59

⁷³ Transcript of Roux's baptisms. Kansas City Diocesan Archives

⁷⁴ *Kickapoo Register* (F). When Father Roux first visited Liberty in 1833, Mrs. Benoist with the families of her two sons-in-law, Messrs. Riley and Curtis, were the only Catholic residents in the place. Father Lutz in 1828 found only one Catholic in Liberty, Mrs. Curtis.

⁷⁵ Charles H. Babbitt, *Early Days at Council Bluffs* (Washington, 1916), p. 26

cipal business chief, William or "Billy" Caldwell of Chicago, as also a number of his tribesmen, to be Catholics.⁷⁶ Nature had been lavish of her gifts in this wedge-shaped section of land. The soil was excellent, game abundant, timber not scarce. To the pioneer farmers of the border counties, who saw themselves cut off by this intervening agricultural paradise from easy access to the Missouri River, it offered a tempting bait. Moreover, the Indians were troublesome neighbors and their removal beyond the Missouri seemed imperative for the white man's peace. In response, accordingly, to a petition from the Missouri counties adjacent to the lands of the Sauk and Foxes, a bill, framed and introduced by Senator Benton, was passed by Congress in June, 1836, authorizing the purchase of the triangular strip from the Indians and its subsequent annexation to the state of Missouri. Treaty negotiations with the Iowa, Sauk and Foxes for the transfer of their lands were successfully conducted by General William Clark of St. Louis. The Platte Purchase, so called from a river of the same name which flows through northwestern Missouri into the Missouri River (not, therefore, identical with the larger Platte River of Nebraska) contained over three thousand square miles, which were organized between the years 1838 and 1845 into the six counties, Platte, Buchanan, Andrew, Holt, Nodaway and Atchison.⁷⁷

More than half the population of these six counties is concentrated today in the city of St. Joseph, the founder of which was Joseph Robidoux, a native St. Louisan and merchant fur-trader by occupation. On his way up the Missouri to trade with the Indians, this successful man of business of the frontier period noted that at Blacksnake Hills, as the Indians named the place, there was a crossing of the river where the natives were accustomed to hold their pow-wows. Here he established in 1827 a trading post at what is now the intersection of Jule and Main Streets in the city of St. Joseph. In 1830 he acquired all the land on which the future city was to rise. Robidoux's Landing, the name the trading-post originally went by, attracted so many settlers that Robidoux had a plat made out for a town to be called St. Joseph, which he sent to St. Louis, where it was duly recorded in 1843. The founder of St. Joseph, dying in 1864, had lived to see it a town of twenty thousand inhabitants.⁷⁸

The history of the Catholic Church in the Platte Purchase begins with the visit of Father Van Quickenborne to a Potawatomi camp opposite Fort Leavenworth in the present Platte County, Missouri. There, on January 29, 1837, he baptized fourteen Indian children, the

⁷⁶ *Kickapoo Register* (F)

⁷⁷ Carr, *Missouri*, pp. 185, 186

⁷⁸ Conard, *Cyclopedia of the History of Missouri*, 5: 439.

first of the number being Susanna, the daughter of Claude La Framboise and a Potawatomi woman. This would seem to be the earliest recorded baptism in the territory known as the Platte Purchase. The first recorded Catholic marriage in the Purchase also took place in the Potawatomi camp, where on May 13, 1837, Van Quickenborne joined in wedlock Michael La Pointe and Marie La Framboise "of the Potawatomi nation" Concluding the marriage-entry in the *Kickapoo Register* is the missionary's attestation, "Done at the Potawatomi Camp opposite Fort Leavenworth in the State of Missouri."⁷⁹

Catholicism in St. Joseph, Buchanan County, the metropolis of the Platte Purchase, may be said to date its beginning from the visit in May, 1838, of Father De Smet, then on his way up the Missouri with Father Verreydt to open a mission at Council Bluffs "We stopped for two hours at the Blacksnake Hills There I had a long talk with Joseph Robidoux, who keeps a store and runs his father's fine farm He showed me a great deal of affection and kindness and expressed a wish to build a little chapel there if his father can manage to get some French families to come and settle near them The place is one of the finest on the Missouri for the erection of a city."⁸⁰

The first Mass on the site of St. Joseph was said in the house of Joseph Robidoux by a visiting Jesuit missionary, probably Father Eysvogels, some time in the course of 1838.⁸¹ Eysvogels is the first Jesuit whose name is distinctly connected with the exercise of the Catholic ministry in Buchanan County He was in or in the immediate vicinity of Buchanan County at least as early as 1839. On May 30 of that year he baptized Sophie Hickman, the place of the ceremony being described in the *Kickapoo Register* simply as "the Platte." The next day, May 31, he united in marriage John Byrne O'Toole, son of James O'Toole and Abigail Wilson, and Sophie Weston Hickman, daughter of Thomas Hickman and Sara Prewett. The marriage apparently took place, though of this circumstance there is no direct evidence, at the bride's home in Buchanan County. Father Eysvogels notes in the record of the marriage that after the ceremony Mass was celebrated⁸² James O'Toole, father of the bridegroom, was one of the earliest among the Irish settlers of the Platte Purchase. A pen-picture of him has been left by Canon O'Hanlon, author of the scholarly *Lives of the*

⁷⁹ *Kickapoo Register* (F)

⁸⁰ CR, *De Smet*, I 151 Young Joseph Robidoux, whom Father De Smet met on this occasion, was a student at St. Louis University during the years 1829-1833

⁸¹ *Catholic Encyclopedia*, 13 356

⁸² Eysvogels's marriages in Buchanan County were entered by him in the *Kickapoo Register*.

Irish Saints, who, while yet a theological student, spent the winter of 1846-1847 at St Joseph in search of health ⁸³

What was probably the earliest marriage in St Joseph (originally Blacksnake Hills) by a Catholic priest was that of a Miss Marechal, March 12, 1841, the bridegroom's name not being recorded On March 14 followed the marriage of Caesar Ducas and Clarice Ducas, Father Christian Hoecken, then stationed at Council Bluffs, being the officiating priest on both occasions.⁸⁴

Father Eysvogels was again in Buchanan County, baptizing and performing other functions of the ministry, in October, 1839, March, 1840, and February, 1841 In March, 1841, he was at Weston in Platte County In a missionary trip which lasted from July 8, 1842, to November 20, 1842, he administered twenty-two baptisms, visiting on this occasion Clay County, English Grove in Holt County, Blacksnake Hills, Buchanan County, Third Ford of the Platte, Kickapoo Village, Platte County, Fishing River in Ray County, and Lexington, Mo In 1843 Father Christian Hoecken baptized eleven persons between May 28 and July 9, the *locus* for all these baptisms being recorded as the "Platte Purchase" ⁸⁵

The first mention of St Joseph in the *Catholic Almanac* occurs in the issue for 1845. It is there stated that a church was in course of erection, the attendant priest being Father Anthony Eysvogels, who also visited Irish Grove, German Settlement, Liberty and Weston ⁸⁶ Moreover, the register of the Missouri Vice-province for 1845 records a mission at St. Joseph (*Missio ad S Joseph*), with Eysvogels in charge and with Westport, Weston and Independence as visited stations It is not likely that Eysvogels ever actually resided at St Joseph It was decided at St Louis by Father Van de Velde, the vice-provincial, and his consultors, April 11, 1844, that nothing could be done at that time for the "new church and congregation of St Joseph at Blacksnake Hills," though possibly a determination may have been reached later on to station Father Eysvogels at St Joseph At all events, the first Catholic church in St. Joseph, if not actually begun, was completed only after the arrival in the town in 1846 of the diocesan priest, Reverend Thomas Scanlan An account of the church, which stood at Fifth and Felix Streets and was dedicated by Archbishop Kenrick June 17,

⁸³ O'Hanlon, *Life and Scenery in Missouri Reminiscences of a Missionary Priest* (Dublin, 1890), pp 127-132

⁸⁴ *Council Bluffs Mission Register* (F) In the marriage of Miss Marechal, Father Hoecken made use of a dispensation from the matrimonial impediment *disparitas cultus*, the bridegroom having, it would seem, been unbaptized

⁸⁵ *Sugar Creek Register* (F) Cf *infra*, Chap XXIII, § 7

⁸⁶ Irish Grove, now Milton, Atchison Co, Mo German Settlement, probably Deepwater, Henry Co, Mo Weston, Platte Co, Mo

1847, was penned by the seminarian O'Hanlon, who was residing in St. Joseph at the time of its erection

Among the most enterprising and intelligent traders in that town, Mr. John Corby, an Irish Catholic and a native of Limerick, had started a successful business house, well stocked with general merchandise and having large stores for country produce provided for export and import goods. He was then unmarried, and he proposed to maintain a resident priest in his house until a Catholic church was built, and a parochial dwelling could be provided. Mr. Robidoux was willing to grant an eligible site, and accordingly, application having been made to the Bishop of St. Louis, the Reverend Thomas Scanlan, a native of Tipperary, was selected to open a mission and there to reside. A small but handsome brick church was soon commenced and the work of building proceeded very rapidly, while a temporary place of worship was provided in the town.⁸⁷

Father De Smet was a visitor in St. Joseph while Father Scanlan's church was in process of erection. "Eastward and at the foot of these hills [Blacksnake] stands the town of St. Joseph. We reached there on the 23 of November, 1846, and paid a visit to the respectable curate, Rev. Mr. Scanlan. In 1842 [?] St. Joseph did not exist, there was only a single family there. To-day there are 350 houses, 2 churches, a city hall and a jail, it is in the most prosperous condition. Its population is composed of Americans, French Creoles, Irish and Germans."⁸⁸

With the arrival in 1846 of Father Donnelly at Westport Landing, the future Kansas City, and of Father Scanlan in St. Joseph, the work of the pioneer Jesuit missionaries among the Catholic settlers of western Missouri came to a close. It had extended over a period of eleven years, beginning with the first visit of Van Quickenborne in 1835 to Independence and the mouth of the Kansas River.

⁸⁷ O'Hanlon, *op cit*, p. 106. Though O'Hanlon says plainly that the first church in St. Joseph was commenced only after Father Scanlan began to reside in the town (1846), the contemporary notices cited above would seem to indicate that a Catholic church of some kind was in course of construction in St. Joseph before that date. Probably the notices refer merely to plans and preparations for a new church that were carried out only at a later date.

⁸⁸ CR, *De Smet*, 2: 612.