

**FATHER WEIKMANN, MISSIONARY
OF THE KANSAS FRONTIER**

SISTER MARY RAPHAELLA TALLMADGE

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FATHER WEIKMANN, MISSIONARY
OF THE KANSAS FRONTIER

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

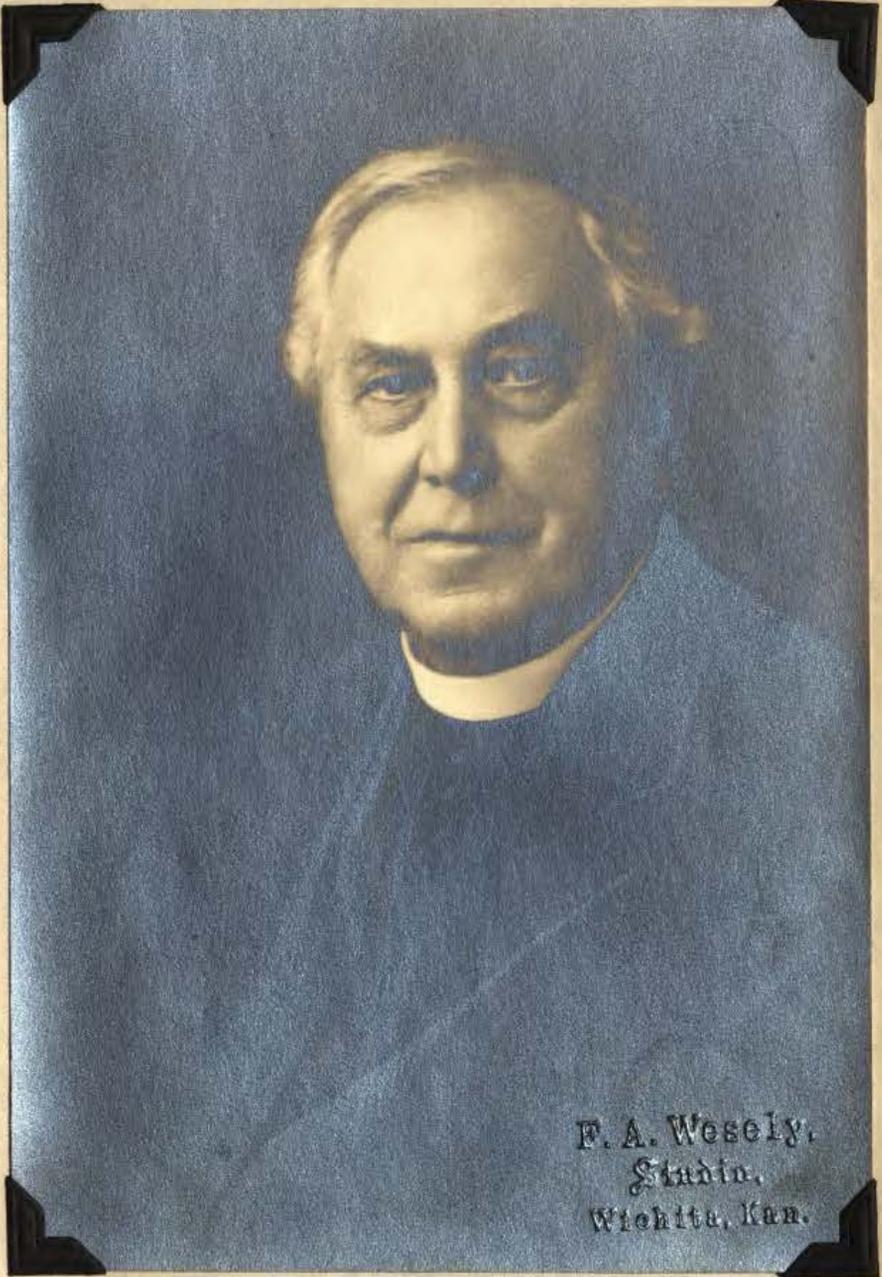
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

BY
SISTER MARY RAPHAELLA TALMADGE

WICHITA, KANSAS

MAY, 1932

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The data for these reports on early Kansas missionary life are largely the result of Interviews with the Rev. A. M. Weikmann, sometime missionary in western counties, pastor, and at present, retired, residing at 1802 West Maple, Wichita, Kansas. There are some to whom the gift of memory comes as a signal possession from earliest years. Macaulay was thus privileged, manifesting a fancy for wealth of detail.

Although Father Weikmann is in his eighty-third year he evinces an exact remembrance for happenings in their chronological order and recalls names and incidents with remarkable clearness. He can conjugate Greek verbs with alacrity, although he has not studied the language for years. These facts lend to the missionary's recollections of early Kansas experiences the reliability of truth.

The Diary of Father Hoecken is invaluable source-material covering the activities of the early Pottawatomie Mission at Sugar Creek, 1837-1847. He founded the mission for the Pottawatomie (about 150), who had migrated

from Indiana and located in the present Miami County, Kansas. Later, 1847, the government assigned a reservation on the Kansas river, known as St. Mary's, to which the tribe removed. Father Hoecken was one of the early companions of Father Van Quickenborne.

In the Manuscript of Rev. Edmund Pusch, O.S.B., is recorded the life and work of Father Fink during his years as Prior of St. Benedict's, later as co-adjutor to Bishop Miege and finally as the first Bishop of Leavenworth.

The Letters from the private correspondence of Father de Coen, who is mentioned in the Diary, give interesting and reliable accounts of some local experiences during a period of conflict. They have been used for the first time and owing to the character of the writer, a man whose religious companions and Indian subjects alike, revered for his sanctity in pioneer mission days, lend historical value by their insertion.

Secondary Sources:

John Gilmary Shea's History of the Catholic Church in the United States is the earliest contribution we have of the progress of the Catholic Church in this country. Much valuable material, not available at the

time it was written, 1879, has since been opened to students of research. Notable are the Westminster Diocesan Archives, 1685-1784, during which period the Catholics of the English Colonies were ruled by London Vicars-Apostolic. Although the work lacks the accuracy of modern critical method it serves as a substantial background for historical data.

The Macdonald Selected Documents are well adapted for reference, as they give concise and accurate statements regarding national official transactions. The volumes are further enhanced by tables of the best source material relative to each subject.

A study of the critical essay on the sources, subjoined to Guilday, Life and Times of John Carroll, Vol. II, is excellent as to method and authorities followed. The work, written in vigorous style, hedged in by numerous references and quotations, is masterful in its portrayal of life and events in that far-away chaotic period. The network of facts and dates becomes vital under his gifted pen. Truth stands in her emblazoned mantle with shame hardby. As a guide in the study of Church History of this period, it is wholly reliable, being without bias.

The researches of Kinsella, History of Our Cradle Land (1921), have received the imprimatur of such an authority as G. J. Garraghan, S. J. of St. Louis University, whose books on pioneer Catholic history have merited him a rank among outstanding authors. The volume deals specifically with Miami and Linn Counties, Kansas (1822-1922). Additional chapters give experiences of the pioneers on the prairies and the valuable reproduction of Father Hoecken's Diary, an account of the earliest Catholic missionary activities in pre-territorial days.

The contributions in the Catholic Encyclopaedia have been written by eminent scholars and subjected to critical investigation so that we have the assurance of their integrity. The following articles were particularly useful in this survey: "Alabama", Vol. I, p. 240c, Thos. M. Owen; "Andreis", Vol. I, p. 470, John J. a'Becket; "Columbus", Vol. IV, pp 140-149, Ad. F. Bandelier; "Denver, Diocese of," Vol. IV, pp 733-734, W. J. Howlett; "Du Bourg", Vol. V, pp 178-179, Celestin M. Chambon; "Germany", Vol. VI, p. 508, Martin Spahn; "Kansas", Vol. VIII, pp 597-602, J. A. Shorter; "In Partibus Fidelium", Vol. VIII, p. 25, A. Boudinhon;

"Leavenworth, Diocese of", Vol. IX, pp 102-104, J. A. Shorter; "St. Louis, Archdiocese of", Vol. XIII, pp 358c-364a, Paul L. Blakely.

The Catholic Directory, U. S. ed., contains ecclesiastical statistics of the Catholic Hierarchy, Archdiocese, Dioceses, Vicariates-Apostolic and other information of clergy obtained from official sources. It is the handy reference book for the plodding researcher in matters diocesan.

The Life of Bishop Machebeuf, Howlett, is enriched by many personal letters of this apostle of the Rockies. Written by a personal acquaintance, during pioneer days in Colorado, little incidents of ordinary life, retain the flavor of the "wild and wooly" west. Accounts of perilous journeys through dangerous gulches, harrowing experiences with hard times and harder characters, mark the heroism of this French missionary. There can be no more reliable source, than that supplied by such written testimony.

In St. Ferdinand de Florissant, Gilbert J. Garraghan follows the most approved methods of historical research. Much archival material from Baltimore, St. Louis, and Quebec enters into its story. This is amplified by official quotations from the Department of Interior, and

aids from the Missouri Historical Society. The author, 1929, served as editorial director of the Illinois Catholic Historical Society Review, and occupies the Chair of History at St. Louis University.

Kansas State Historical Collections: records of eye witnesses, reminiscences of pioneers, and carefully scrutinized accounts of the various stages of Kansas occupation. They contain a wealth of information. The Volumes indicated in the bibliography were useful in the present study. The publications of the Society are accepted as authoritative on transactions of pioneer days.

The Jesuit Relations, 73 Volumes, is a particularly scholarly work of editor Reuben Gold Thwaites. The Relations are reports written by the early French Jesuits in the New World. They range from 1632 to 1672. Thwaites was a prolific writer and is classed as one of America's foremost historians. He is eulogised by Frederick Jackson Turner, (1914) a fellow historian, who has written a biography of Thwaites. He was a master in research in scientific method.

There is a glow of old world romance in Herbert E. Bolton's, The Spanish Borderlands. Florida and the

colorful Southwest still reflect the language, customs, architecture and ruins of the chivalric Hispanic pathfinders. An indefatigable searcher, Dr. Bolton has drawn from a wealth of original documents, scholarly volumes and papers, including many of Hubert Howe Bancroft's Works. The latter pertain to the Southwest.

Crusaders of New France by William Bennett Munro is one of the delightful "Chronicles of America Series". The volume is replete with informing references from unchallenged sources. Written in easy narrative style it gives well defined portraits of the early gallant French explorers.

In the sketch, Our North American Martyrs, Wynne gives a short survey of pioneer missionary activities in Canada and the Great Lakes district. Many references are made to "The Jesuit Relations," upon which he builds his narrative.

Andreas, Arnold, Beebe, Mannion, Prentis, Turner, and West and West were used for general reference.

PROLOGUE

The Reason for this unwritten bit of Kansas history may be explained in this wise.

On a day in beautiful May, 1930, registrations for the summer session were being conducted in a certain noted Kansas University. The halls were filled with students scanning the long list of subjects offered, and from the offices came the buzz of hurried conferences. One by one the line of march lessened, as the clock pointed toward the lunch hour.

A "lone figure" stood by the registrar's window. "You will have to consult Dean Hillbrand in regard to that course," directed the clerk. The Dean was gracious and assured the "lone figure" that the Seminar in Pioneer Kansas History would be a delightful choice.

The first class assemblies proved the truth of that statement, when suddenly the weather-cock veered, as Doctor Rydjord announced that out of the dark past of Kansas life, must be fashioned a vital unit destined to fit into a composite whole. Material? That was left to the choice of each student. And just here began the earthworm process. In this instance the burrowing

brought the "lone figure" in touch with the subject of this sketch, the Reverend Albert Magnus Weikmann, Pioneer Missionary, a maker of the historic past, looking back from the threshold of the opulent present.

In order to develop more thoroughly the procedure of scientific historic research, several chapters have been included as a background. These trace the diffusive nature of Christianity from its beginning even to the heart of the New World; through the periods prior and subsequent to the organization of Kansas; glimpsing its Civil War days and culminating, 1872, with the advent of our missionary upon Kansas soil.

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Chapter I

THE BIRTHRIGHT

The scene of the first Council of Christendom, on the mount of appointment in Galilee is a familiar theme embodying a fundamental doctrine of the new gospel program. From St. Paul's testimony¹ we have it that more than five hundred met there together in response to the summons of the Risen Christ to the holy women. "Fear not. Go tell my brethren that they depart into Galilee, there they shall see Me."² The moment had come when the Saviour was to enact the fulfilment of His promise that He would manifest Himself to all His disciples together. Appearing in their midst, Jesus proclaimed with grave authority, "All power hath been given Me in Heaven and upon earth. Go, then, and teach all nations."³

This missionary spirit, a birthright of Christianity, fostered through the ages, came to exert a powerful influence during the period of trans-Atlantic exploration.

1- First Epistle to Corinthians, XV, 6.

2- Matthew, XXVIII, 10.

3- ibid., 18, 19.

Spain was glorified in her first discovery. It was laudable pride for a sovereign to augment his domain, yet this was not the prime motive which prompted Ferdinand and Isabella to sponsor a second expedition under Columbus.

Long and bloody battles with the Moors, which resulted in wresting the last stronghold on the Spanish peninsula from the Moors, had heightened the ardor of their Majesties in the cause of Christianity. With glowing zeal they listened to the tales Columbus related of the dark-skinned savages of a strange land, and pledged support to his projects in the hope of evangelizing these natives.¹

Together with the adventurer and the soldier, went the missionary. The cross was planted with the banner of discovery and possession.² Not only did the friar instruct the natives in the tenets of Christian faith, but he taught them agriculture and exerted an extraordinary influence towards their civilization. His figure was in the vanguard in explorations into the unknown interior.³

1- Catholic Encyclopaedia, Vol. VIII, p. 178.

2- Bolton, Spanish Border Lands, p. 2.

3- ibid., pp 52, 124.

When the Spanish explorer Ayllon, 1523, was granted a royal patent to Chicora, Charles V provided a bounty for the accompanying friars and further enunciated, "Our principal intent in the discovery of new lands is that the inhabitants and natives thereof, who are without the light or knowledge of the faith,...may become Christians and be saved, and this is the chief motive that you are to bear and hold in this affair."¹

With the exception of Cabot, Verrazano, and Cartier, all the voyages to America between 1492 and 1578, were under the auspices of Spain, thereby conceding to that country the right of possession for the greater part of the sixteenth century.²

Champlain, "The Father of New France," considered the missionary essential in maintaining the morale of the ship's crew, as well as a necessary factor in the conversion of the Indians.³ At his invitation the Recollect Fathers came to Quebec in 1615.⁴ Soon they were aided and later, 1625, succeeded by the Jesuits.

1- ibid., p. 16. From Lower, Spanish Settlements, p. 162. This wilderness called Chicora by the Natives lay along the Carolina coast, near Cape Fear River.

2- West and West, The Story of Our Country, p. 41.

3- John J. Wynne, Our North American Martyrs, pp 4, 8.

4- William Bennett Munro, Crusaders of New France, p. 119.

These explorations of North America are signally characterized by the important role of the missionary. As their work broadened "the footprints of the Jesuits, were everywhere from the St. Lawrence to the Mississippi, from the tributaries of the Hudson to the regions north of Ottawa....They soon formed a legion whose works of courage and devotion stand forth so prominently in the early annals of New France."¹

Marquette and his companions have left in The Jesuit Relations² convincing evidence of their bravery and zeal in dealing with the Aborigines, while in the line of discovery, the record was no less remarkable than their deeds of valor.

With the recent canonization at Rome, June 29, 1930, of Isaac Jogues and his seven martyred companions, their story of surpassing heroism is vividly recalled. Scholars all, Frenchmen of refinement and culture, who lived within the birthtime of the science and art which we are cultivating today. But the genius of the missionary spirit eclipsed the cravings of intellectual progress and today they are officially proclaimed saints, the Jesuit Martyrs³ of North America.

1- William Bennett Munro, Crusaders of New France, p. 119.

2- Reuben G. Thwaites, Editor (73 Vols.), 1896-1901.

3- John J. Wynne, Our North American Martyrs, p. 1.

With the standard of France planted by LaSalle, 1682, at the mouth of Marquette's great river, the whole interior of the continent was claimed in the name of the King, and to honor him, called Louisiana. In the company of this illustrious explorer was the Recollect Father Zenobe Membre.¹ The missionary interests in the far-reaching territory were from this early period until 1763 under the supervision of Quebec. In 1722 three spiritual jurisdictions were established, each sponsored by a religious order.²

The Capuchins, with a center at New Orleans, served from the mouth of the Mississippi on the West to the Wabash;³ the Jesuits, the old Illinois country⁴ with headquarters at Kaskaskia; and the Carmelites, with residence at Mobile, assumed charge of the remaining territory east of the Mississippi.⁵ The latter community being unable to supply priests withdrew and their district

1- John G. Shea, History of the Catholic Church in the United States, p. 609.

2- ibid., pp. 609, 610; Munro, Crusaders of New France, p. 128.

3- Guilday, Life and Times of John Carroll, Vol. II, p. 701.

4- Catholic Encyclopaedia, Vol. VII, p. 660. Greater part of Illinois, the adjacent portion of Wisconsin, Iowa, and Missouri.

5- Guilday, Life and Times of John Carroll, Vol. II, p. 701.

was conceded to the Capuchins. A later adjustment placed all the Indians of the territory under the care of the Jesuits.¹ Restricted by the paternalism of the royal government,² French colonization progressed slowly. The only southern settlement of consequence was for long the province of Louisiana with its thriving New Orleans port. It is here our interest centers, as the logical point from which to trace, in successive periods, the evolution of Catholic missionary activities in relation to Kansas.

Before the Treaty of Paris, 1763, France recompensed Spain for her aid by cession of New Orleans, together with the French territory west of the Mississippi.³ A group of French settlers, resenting the English rule on the east bank, moved across to the Spanish side and formed the nucleus of our present St. Louis.⁴ In 1783, the United States obtained control of the eastern bank of the River as far south as the 31st parallel. The Western section was retroceded to France in 1800; however, the

1- John G. Shea, History of the Catholic Church in the United States, p. 610; Guilday, Life and Times of John Carroll, Vol. II, p. 701.

2- Munro, Crusaders of New France, p. 201.

3- John G. Shea, History of the Catholic Church in the United States, p. 610; Guilday, Life and Times of John Carroll, Vol. II, p. 701.

4- West and West, p. 129.

Spanish retained the government.

When the port of New Orleans was closed to American ships in 1802, the President and Congress were roused to action. It was a propitious moment for the United States, since Napoleon being sorely pressed for money, consented to cede the entire territory to the Union for the sum of fifteen million dollars. The formal ceremony of transaction took place on December 20, 1803, when French representatives at New Orleans transferred the Lower Province to the United States.² Upper Louisiana executed a similar function at St. Louis, early in March 1804,³ "and thus expired the last vestige of French power on the mainland of North America, almost exactly two centuries⁴ after the first successful settlement in Nova Scotia."

Among the many consequent readjustments which followed the absorption of so vast a territory, not the least was in the matter of ecclesiastical legislation.

1- MacDonald, Select Documents, 1776-1861, p. 160.

2- Guilday, Life and Times of John Carroll, Vol. II, p. 703.

3- On First Street between Walnut and Elm in "old St. Louis" there is a plaque on one of the buildings which states: "Here stood the Spanish government house and here on March 10, 1804, upper Louisiana was transferred to the United States."

4- R. G. Thwaites, France in America, pp 294-295.

Under the old regime New Orleans was largely Catholic. Records show that its first Bishop, a Spaniard, was consecrated in 1793.¹ However, the shifting of political authority greatly affected the peace and progress of religion. Many priests had returned to their native lands, not willing to continue their service under foreign rule. Others were unsympathetic with American interests, and still others, malcontents, sought a haven in Louisiana. Such were the perplexing conditions when Bishop Carroll of Baltimore,² authorized by Rome to assume jurisdiction "in the provinces of Federated America,"³ found himself obligated to legislate for this new and storm-driven district. The situation was indeed most delicate. It was deemed inadvisable to appoint a native of France or Louisiana to the post of administrator since the germ of sedition existed within the colony. Bishop Carroll addressed himself to James Madison, then Secretary of State, explaining conditions and soliciting an expression from the President as to a prudent course

1- Catholic Directory, 1922, p. 96.

2- Bishop Carroll, the first Catholic Bishop in the U. S. was an American and a cousin of Charles Carroll of Carrollton, signer of the Constitution.

3- Guilday, Life and Times of John Carroll, Vol. II, p. 704, quoted from Propaganda Archives, Letters, Vol. 893, not folioed.

of action for the public welfare. Jefferson declined this request, not only for reasons of state, but as Madison stated in his reply, "in his perfect confidence in the purity of your views, and in the patriotism which will guide you in the selection of ecclesiastical individuals, to such as combine with their professional merits, a due attachment to the independence, the Constitution and the prosperity of the United States." ¹ It was 1812 before Bishop Carroll succeeded in securing in Father DuBourg an Administrator-Apostolic for the Diocese of Louisiana and Florida. Father DuBourg was no stranger in the New World. Born at Cap Francois in Santo Domingo, 1766, he completed his studies in Paris and entered the Sulpician Order in 1788. During the early terrors of the French Revolution he retired to Bordeaux from whence he emigrated to the United States in 1794. Bishop Carroll accorded him a gracious welcome and appointed him President of Georgetown College from 1796-1799. The following year he became First Superior of St. Mary's College, Baltimore. ²

It was with great reluctance that Father DuBourg consented to the appointment at New Orleans. He realized

1- ibid., p. 708, quoted from the Baltimore Archives, case E: printed in the Records Vol. XX, pp 62-63. With this official answer Madison enclosed his personal views, and commended the Bishop on his proposals.

2- ibid., p. 710.

the existing serious difficulties and the lack of missionaries to supply the outlying districts with even meagre attention. After three years of indefatigable labor he decided to go to Rome for aid and counsel. Before departing, however, he witnessed, January 8, 1823, the harassing siege of the city, in which the valiant Jackson with six thousand untrained Americans matched against British veterans, immortalized his name as conqueror. This victory has always appealed to the people of New Orleans as bordering on the supernatural. Weeping wives, mothers, sisters, and children of the town joined the Ursuline nuns in their chapel while Father DuBourg offered the Mass for the success of the Americans. During the services messengers rushed in with news of the victory. On the occasion of a Solemn Mass of Thanksgiving, on January 23, 1815,¹ Father DuBourg "in receiving General Jackson at the door of the Cathedral, thanked

1- Catholic Encyclopaedia, Vol. V, p. 178--Jackson made this request of DuBourg, "The signal interposition of Heaven in giving success to our arms requires some external manifestation of the feelings of our most lively gratitude. Permit me, therefore, to entreat that you will cause the service of public thanksgiving to be performed in the Cathedral in token of the great assistance we have received from the Ruler of all events, and our humble sense of it." Guilday, op. cit., p. 484; cf. Latour, Historical Memoir of the War, p. 68. Philadelphia, 1816.

him publicly for his recognition of the 'Prime Mover of
your wonderful success'.¹"

The Right Reverend Louis William Valentine DuBourg,
D. D., was consecrated in Rome, September 24, 1815,
Bishop of Louisiana, Upper and Lower.²

As matters concerning the diocese detained the newly
consecrated prelate in Europe, he took the opportunity
of seeking recruits for his momentous work. Pope Pius
VII listened to his eager plea for missionaries and gave
sanction for the scholarly and saintly Vincentian, Father
DeAndreis, then teaching theology in Rome, to be of the
twenty-nine who pledged their fealty to this cause.³

Bishop DuBourg deemed it advisable, consequent upon
a recent anti-clerical feud in New Orleans, to establish
his residence in St. Louis. When this information reached
the settlement, repairs were immediately begun on a dilap-
idated presbytery and money subscribed for the erection
of a new log church. With all in readiness, the Bishop
was installed, amid rustic surroundings, on January 6,
1818.⁴

1- Guilday, Life and Times of John Carroll, Vol. II, pp
484-485.

2- ibid., p. 712.

3- Catholic Encyclopaedia, Vol. I, p. 470.

4- Gilbert J. Garraghan, St. Ferdinand de Florissant,
p. 125.

The material and spiritual interests of the numerous Indian tribes inhabiting this great expanse of territory continued to be vital issues with Bishop DuBourg. His appeal to Washington for financial aid coupled with his search for an increasing number of missionaries, is told in a letter of March 17, 1823, to his brother living in Bordeaux:

Providence deigns to grant a success to this negotiation, far in excess of my hopes. The government bestows upon me two hundred dollars a year for each missionary and that for four or five men, and it promises to increase the number gradually, and I am sure that it will do so. For an enterprise such as this, it was essential that I should have men especially called to this work and I had almost renounced the hope of ever obtaining such, when God, in His infinite goodness, has brought about one of these incidents which He alone can foresee and direct the results. The Jesuits of whom I speak had their institution in Maryland, and finding themselves excessively embarrassed for lack of accommodation, were on the point of disbanding their novitiate, when I obtained this pecuniary encouragement from the government. They had seized this opportunity and have offered to transport the whole novitiate, master and novices, into Upper Louisiana and form there a preparatory school for Indian missionaries. If I had my choice, I could not have desired anything better. Seven young men, all Flemings, full of talent and the spirit of St. Francis Xavier, advanced in their studies, about twenty-two to twenty-seven years of age, with their

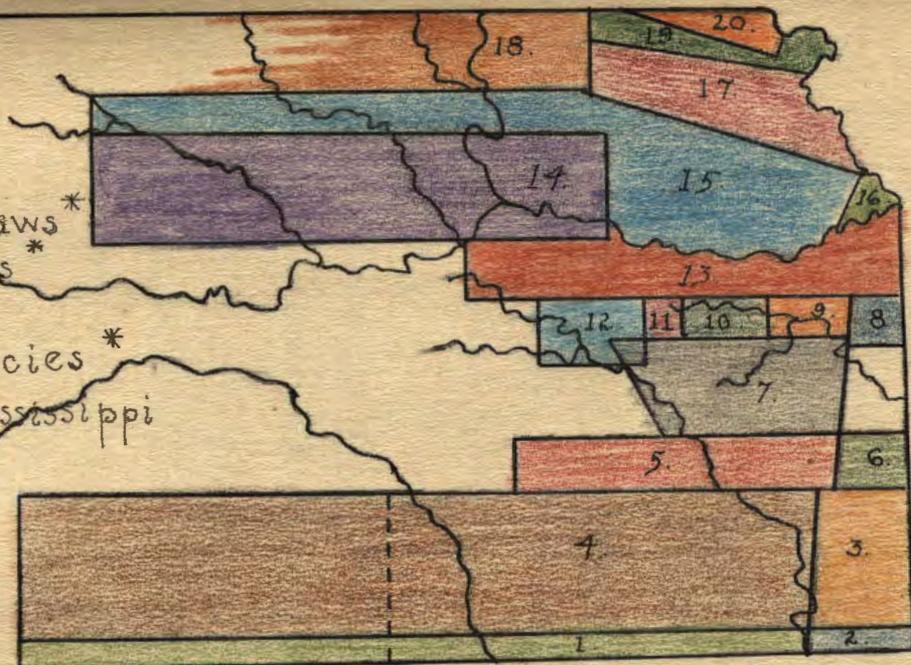
two excellent masters and some brothers;
that is what Providence at last grants
to my prayers. ¹

One of the earliest enterprises undertaken by the Superior of this Jesuit colony, Father Charles Felix VanQuickenborne, at the suggestion of the Bishop, was the opening of an Indian school at Florissant, Missouri, May 11, 1824. Under the title of St. Regis Seminary, the institution existed until 1831, receiving an annual appropriation from the Government. This was the first Catholic Indian school founded in the United States, ² and from it was gleaned valuable experience for later establishments among the tribes in Kansas and the west. As civilization progressed, the Government effected treaties with the Indians, pushing their reservations beyond the ken of the white man.

1- Thomas T. Kinsella, History of Our Cradle Land, p. 7.

2- G. J. Garraghan, St. Ferdinand de Florissant, p. 198.

- 1 Cherokee Strip
- 2 Quapaw Strip
- 3 Cherokee Neutral Lands
- 4 Osages *
- 5 New York
- 6 Miami *
- 7 Pottawatomies *
- 8 Weas and Piankeshaws *
- 9 Peoria and Kaskaskas *
- 10 Ottawas *
- 11 Chippewas and Muncies *
- 12 Sac and Foxes of Mississippi
- 13 Shawnees
- 14 Kansas
- 15 Delawares
- 16 Wyandottes
- 17 Kickapoos *
- 18 Ojibes and Missouris
- 19 Sac and Foxes of Missouri
- 20 Iowas



* These tribes were attended by the missionaries from Osage Mission.

After Prentiss

Chapter II

THE BLACKROBE IN KANSAS

The Second Council of Baltimore held in 1833, made an appeal for the Jesuits to assume entire charge of the Catholic Missions west of the Mississippi.¹ Accordingly Father Van Quickenborne established the first mission for the Kickapoos in 1836. Others followed for the Pottawatomies, Osages, Weas, Miamis, Peorias, Piankishaws, Ottawas, and Chippewas, many of them within the boundaries of our present State of Kansas.²

Father Hoecken's Diary, of the Pottawatomie Mission at Sugar Creek, covering the years '37 to '47,³ serves as an interesting and reliable guide to the variety of activities that confronted these pioneer missionaries. The task of organizing the lives of these children of nature to accord with civilized customs was at best a slow and oftentimes discouraging process. Invariably the first work undertaken at the missions was the preparing

1- John Gilmary Shea, History of Catholic Church in the United States, pp 645, 646.

2- T. F. Kinsella, History of Our Cradle Land, p. 10.

3- Father Hoecken's Diary, printed in T. F. Kinsella, History of Our Cradle Land, pp 225, 236.

of material and erection of the log church. A school soon followed, usually there were few pupils at first, with a gradual increase of attendance. A novel organization at Sugar Creek in 1843, was the anti-liquor brigade, consisting of a number of trustworthy Indians under the leadership of Brother Van der Borcht. Any member who knew of liquor being brought into the village, was pledged to spread the alarm, the company to surround the place, institute a search, break the bottle and spill the contents. The diarist concludes with the prophetic statement, "and the custom is kept up to the present day."¹

The working guilds of which Father Hoecken writes, were evidently forceful means of equalizing the labor problems of those days. Being organized into bands or groups, a foreman was chosen from among the tribe, who planned the work and gave directions to each Indian regarding his specific task. This supervisor also presided at prayers, which were held in common.² On certain days, special religious exercises were celebrated, at which the instructions were given both in English and Indian.

1- ibid., p. 228.

2- ibid., p. 229.

Books in the Pottawatomie dialect had been prepared at the mission, sent to Cincinnati and Saint Louis for printing, and were returned ready for circulation in May, 1845. Later an extensive grammar and dictionary were completed in manuscript, but never published.

During 1846 Father Hoecken made a tour of the States to secure financial aid for the missions and while en route left with the publishers, "two books, one in Pottawatomie dialect and the other in the vernacular¹ of the Peorias, Piankishaws and other tribes."

What was probably one of the earliest temperance councils held within Kansas boundaries took place towards the end of July 1845 among the Indians at Sugar Creek. The punishment for offenders was a period in the lock-up at Fort Scott. In July, 1847 the tribe from Pottawatomie Creek joined the band at Sugar Creek in a second Council to enact more stringent legislation in regard to prohibition. Their unanimous decree was that: "Whoever thereafter should bring into these lands intoxicating liquor, should forfeit for his first offense half his annual pay from the government,² and for the second offense should forfeit all his money".

1- ibid., pp 231, 233.

2- ibid., pp 233, 235.

Although a subsidy was provided by the government for the support of the mission schools, it was inadequate to meet various other needs. Father De Smet, Procurator of the Missions, 1846, received helpful donations from France and Belgium.¹ Especially were the destitute widows and orphans objects of the missionary's solicitude, and several entries mention the distribution of alms in their behalf.

Of the many zealous missionaries who shared in the labors of pre-territorial and subsequent years in Kansas, we note one concerning whom Father Hoecken makes this entry in his Diary.²

October 31, 1844, Father Verreydt returned from St. Louis with Rev. Francis Xavier de Coen, who had been sent by Father Provincial to do work on these missions.

Since it will be of interest to compare the Kansas of 1844 with accounts from personal letters written by Father de Coen, during the stirring civil war period of '61 and '62, a brief survey of his specific duties may not be amiss.

1- John Gilmary Shea, History of Catholic Church in United States, p. 646.

2- p. 230.

During the two consecutive years he was stationed at Sugar Creek, the Diary credits this missionary with many excursions to the various tribes. Early in January 1845, he established a mission at the Ottawa Reservation, to which, thereafter, a monthly visit was made. In March of the same year Father de Coen extended his customary journey to include the Chippewas and Peorias. Both tribes received the Blackrobe kindly. The Chippewas, being brothers to the Pottawatomies and Ottawas held council with these tribes, after which they decided to accept the same religion. Upon invitation of the chief, Father de Coen opened a mission at their reservation.

The Peorias and Weas also assembled in council and consented to embrace the teachings of Christianity. It was during this period that the government had promised to provide school buildings for the Osage Indians. In June 1846, we note that Father de Coen went to inspect the progress of their erection, and on August seventeenth,¹ during a second visit, that he baptized the Osage infants.

Father John Schoenmakers, who succeeded Father de Coen on the missions, opened the Osage school in 1847,

1- ibid., p. 233.

in what is now St. Paul, Kansas. It was this "school¹ that made the life and habit of the Osages." Under the influence of their humble missionaries this tribe became peace-loving citizens and furthermore, ardent supporters² of the Union during the strife of Civil War.

About eight miles west of the Missouri state line, Fort Scott was established by the Government in 1844, as a military post and post-office.³ It was located on a branch of the Osage called Marmaton Creek. The Fort was among the stations visited monthly by the missionaries from Osage Mission, forty-five miles distant, on the Neosho river.⁴

It was Father de Coen who started this mission for the soldiers on July 12, 1845, on which occasion "he preached and broke the Bread of Eternal Life to them, and left them the following day rejoicing."⁵ In the

1- Hon. T. F. Morrison - "Osage Treaty of 1865", Kansas State Historical Society, Vol. XVII, 1926-1928, p. 696.

2- ibid., p. 697.

3- Fort Scott was the second postoffice established in Kansas, Ft. Leavenworth being the oldest. Kansas State Historical Society, Vols. I, II, 1875-80, p. 255.

4- From New York Tribune, June 28, 1854. "Early Posts, Missions and Camps". ibid., p. 264.

5- Father Hoecken's Diary, p. 233.

autumn of the same year he was recalled from Sugar Creek, to labor for a time in other fields.

In our present age of comfortable travel it is difficult to realize the hardships endured by the missionary of frontier days. Long journeys on horseback, in every condition of atmosphere, often lack of food and shelter, the loneliness of the trail, together with long intervals when the Indian was his sole companion, these are but a suggestion of the sacrifices which rounded out the days and years of the pioneer missionary.

The ever westward trend of civilization so increased the responsibilities of the Bishop of St. Louis, that in 1850 the Holy See formed the Vicariate Apostolic of Indian Territory, east of the Rocky Mountains.¹ The Jesuit, John Baptist Miege, professor of St. Louis University, received the papal bulls, appointing him to assume charge of this exclusive domain of the redman. His consecration as titular Bishop of Messenia, in partibus infidelium,² occurred March 25, 1851. The

1- John G. Shea, History of the Catholic Church in the United States, p. 646.

2- Catholic Encyclopaedia, Vol. VIII, p. 25. Term meaning "in the lands of unbelievers" given in memory of Ancient Christian Churches that had fallen into the hands of unbelievers. The words are added to the name of the See conferred on non-residential or titular Latin Bishops.

following May, the new prelate, accompanied by Father Paul Ponziglione and a lay Brother, journeyed to St. Mary's Mission on the Kansas river and from there directed his activities.

John Baptist Miege, born in Upper Savoy, 1815, was the youngest son of wealthy and devout parents. Upon completing his philosophical course at twenty-one, he entered the Jesuit Novitiate in Milan. During ensuing years his exceptional talents prompted his superiors to place him under eminent masters in Rome. He was ordained in 1847, and scarcely had he completed the final theological course the year following, when the revolutionists secured the suppression of the Jesuits. With others Father Miege sought refuge in France. His earnest desire to labor among the Indian Missions of North America was fulfilled when in the autumn of 1849 he reached St. Louis. Here the young missionary's energies were divided among pastoral duties, teaching, and mission work until 1851, when he was called to assume the greater responsibility of carving out a new diocese in the heart of the wilderness, among the Indians.

1- James A. McGonigle, of Leavenworth, "Rt. Rev. John Baptist Miege, S. J., First Bishop of Kansas", Kansas State Historical Society; printed in T. F. Kinsella, History of Our Cradle Land, pp 43, 44.

According to statistical tables of 1850,¹ the Vicariate covered approximately 518,000 square miles, Nebraska and Kansas being 450,000, and Indian territory 68,000.

With its organized territorial accession in 1854, Kansas began a new life. The pioneer, with or without his covered wagon, followed the lure of its trackless prairies. Bishop Miege alert to the transition, transferred the episcopal seat to Leavenworth in 1855, though there were but seven Catholic families resident in the city.² At the close of this year the Vicariate numbered six churches completed, three in course of construction, eleven stations, and eight priests. As the settlements increased Bishop Miege extended the scope of his visitations. Denver was the outpost of the vast diocese on the west, and in 1860, with Brother John as companion, the Bishop undertook this perilous journey of over six hundred miles, in their own conveyance. Since the discovery of gold in Colorado, 1858, caravans were crossing the plains, many starting from Leavenworth, to seek

1- Mitchell's School Atlas, Table No. IV.

2- Catholic Encyclopaedia, Vol. VIII p. 601.

their fortunes, and it devolved upon Bishop Miede to investigate religious conditions in these "Mushroom" camps of the Rockies. Upon his arrival, a general meeting of the Catholics was called, at which the Denver Land Company donated a site for a church, and plans were placed in charge of a committee for its erection. At this early period Denver had a population of three thousand, of which about two hundred were Catholics. There was no priest available for the new mission, so upon his return and the consequent advice from Archbishop Kendrick of St. Louis, it was decided to attach this western territory, temporarily, to the Santa Fe diocese. ¹ Bishop Lamy acquiesced, appointing his faithful friend and assistant Father Machebeuf, ² together with Father Raverdy, for the new country. In late September, 1860, the missionaries left Santa Fe on their way to Pike's Peak. Present day Catholic interests in that far

1- W. J. Howlett, Life of Bishop Machebeuf, p. 284.

2- Willa Cather has left us in Death Comes to the Archbishop, a graphic as well as a reliable historical account of Bishop Lamy and his devoted confrere, who became the first Bishop of Denver. Her data corresponds to that of W. J. Howlett in work quoted above.

land of nature's marvels, substantiate the effective manner in which these venerated pioneers extended their labors even to the most inaccessible mountain regions.¹

1- W. J. Howlett, Life of Bishop Machebeuf, p. 297.

Chapter III

WHILE WAR CLOUDS GATHER

Meanwhile events in Eastern Kansas had assumed an ominous character. True, she had won the challenged privilege of "Free Statehood" but at "What price glory?" The cannon's warboom was her ovation.

After a lapse of full fifteen years, on the eve of the Civil War, Father de Coen resumes his missionary labors in Kansas under Bishop Miege, this time among its early pioneers. Writing to a friend and recent parishioner,¹ we glimpse somewhat of the changes being wrought in the name of justice and liberty:

Leavenworth City,
October 8, 1861.

A. H. Johnston, Esq.

Esteemed Friend,

Long since have I desired to write to you, the interruption and uncertainty of the communication have hitherto pre-

1- Mr. Alexander H. Johnston, a pioneer of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Emigrating from Scotland to Beaufort, South Carolina about 1840, he removed seven years later to the north, where the rolling country reminded him of "bonnie Scotland". Here he became a prominent business man, and served as a public official for many years in the various capacities of City Treasurer, Assessor and Councilman. At his death in 1866, the

vented me, a letter which I received from Father Lalumiere is a good sign that Uncle Sam's mail succeeds at least occasionally, to run the blockade, although a dispatch was again received yesterday that the bridge on the Platte, 10 miles from St. Joseph's was down and communication interrupted; this is an annoying and terrible state of affairs and no one can tell when it will end. I am afraid we have not seen the worst of it. . . . We have a fine congregation here. . . but it is impossible, at present to form a correct idea of it; the unhappy state of the country has scattered them a great deal and has caused many of our most respectable Catholics to leave the city.

For some time past, everything has been tolerably quiet here, but occasionally Madam rumor takes delight in running up and down the streets telling everybody that Price¹ or Rains or McCulloch² is coming and

city paid him marked tribute. His love of Burns was intense and he was perfectly conversant with all his poems. The family hearth was his cherished sanctuary, and frequently his sentiments found expression in the lines of his favorite poet; "To make the cheerful household chime - For weans and wife - This is the true pathos and sublime - O' human Life."

1-Beebe, Kansas Facts, Vol. II, 1930, p. 77. "October 1, 1864, General Sterling Price, of the Confederate Army, was reported advancing toward Kansas with a force of 15,000 men." Similar entries during this entire year convince us that "Madam rumor" was busy in the vicinity of Leavenworth during the greater part of the war.

2-Col. S. W. Eldridge, "Early Days in Kansas," Kansas State Historical Society, p. 155, p. 172, p. 136. General James Rains and General Ben McCulloch, were also commanders in the Confederacy.

threatens to take revenge on Leavenworth for the outrages committed on the Missourians by the people of Kansas; for the moment all is stir and bustle, but it soon evaporates. . . . Gen. Fremont has taken the field, it is his intention to redeem Missouri from disloyalty or fail in the attempt. They say that his victorious legions will soon clear the state of secesh and sweep them down to the Gulf. "Fremont and Victory, remember Bull's run, Boys!" is their battlecry.

This slogan is strikingly characteristic of Fremont, ever a Kansas favorite. His policy, always vigorous and drastic, was severely censured by McClellan, and re-¹sulted in his command being withdrawn. That a crisis had come is divined in the following:

I have heard from the best authority that the government at Washington have the fear of Beauregard in their heart, and that they are getting anxious to come to a settlement, if they could do so in an honorable way, but under the present circumstances, they feel that the South would pretend to prescribe the conditions. All reflecting men have become satisfied that the preservation of the Union, as it was, has become an impossibility; if so, the sooner they stop quarreling the better it will be for both parties. . . . In our goodly state of Kansas movable property, such as money, horses,

1- ibid., pp 171, 172.

mules and the like, is changing hands very briskly; bands of secesh overrun the country and relieve the loyal inhabitants of any further care of their horses, cattle & swearing by Jeff. Davis that they will hang every Yankee on the nearest tree; in the same manner parties of Union men pay unwelcome visits to those whom they call seceshers and help themselves freely to the most desirable contents of their house and stable, in the name of Uncle Sam. There are other lawless marauders who fight under both flags, as the occasion may be, they plunder union men today and secesheners tomorrow. This if you remember is an old Kansas institution.

Evidently Father de Coen kept well informed of the depredations enacted in territorial days, for a counterpart of these lawless happenings of '61, is furnished in a report forwarded to Washington, by John W. Geary, Governor, in 1856, in which he states that murders for mere plunder are of daily occurrence and no man's life is safe.¹ The atmosphere being charged with violations of all laws prompts the missionary to further expostulate upon conditions:

This is indeed a deplorable state of affairs; a Gentleman who had just come in from the country told me that he had counted from 70 to 80 large farms entirely abandoned. This indeed is a great country, but from the enclosed slip of newspaper, you will

1- ibid., p. 104.

see that Missouri cannot boast of much better. I am sure you did not expect this kind of a letter from me, but how can I help it, it is the topic of the day; I am involuntarily carried away by the current of the times; the safety of the country is the supreme law. . . .

Your devoted friend,

F. X. DeCoen, S. J.

During the succeeding four months the turmoil continued to increase as is evidenced by the following from the same correspondence, under date of January 27, 1862.

Business in Leavenworth is very brisk, owing particularly to the presence of the soldiers, there are at present about 3000 quartered in the city, besides a large number at the fort, many more are expected every day, it is said that an army of 30,000 will be concentrated here shortly; all this gives life to the city: and the greatest trouble of our merchants is to keep the market supplied with goods. I wanted a pair of shoes myself the other day, and after having visited a dozen of stores, I gave it up in despair, I could find none that were suitable. The neighboring towns, such as Kansas City, St. Joseph and others having been more exposed to the inroads of marauding parties than we at Leavenworth, the country people came here with more security to buy their provisions, so that traders of all kinds,

not excepting the grogshops, are making hay while the sun shines, it would be a very bad wind indeed that blows good to nobody, as the old woman said when she was gathering the spoils of a wrecked vessel on the coast.

From early territorial days Leavenworth had been a thriving business center, since it served as a supply depot for the throngs of new settlers en route over the principal highways, the Lawrence and Fort Riley roads.¹ The "grogshops", too, plied a lucrative trade, and were not restricted by any civil laws from furnishing their patrons with liquor in unlimited measure.² The military atmosphere pervading the city at this later period is unmistakable as the writer continues:

The 9th regiment of Wisconsin, Col. Salomon, is just now entering the city and are passing under my windows, the 13th Wisconsin, Col. Malone, has been here for some days, the 12th, is at Weston on the other side of the river, they will come here, it is said as soon as quarters can be provided.

January 29.

I have been obliged to interrupt my letter for two days. I was looking at the soldiers marching down the street,

1- Frank M. Gable, "Memoirs of a Pioneer of Kansas", Kansas State Historical Society, Vol. XVI, 1923-1925, p. 576.

2- ibid., p. 581.

and they were hardly out of sight, when a messenger came to me in great haste from the German Church telling that the soldiers had broken open the church door and were installing themselves there; the german priest being confined to his bed and the Bishop in his retreat, it devolved on me to attend to that business. I found a sentinel walking up and down along the Communion railings: I asked him by whose authority he was there, and who had broken open the Church door: he told me that he was ordered to do so by his officer, the officer told that he was sent by the captain, the captain could not be found, and I inquired from Col. Salomon, who said that he knew nothing about it and referred me to the quarter-master, who was not at his office and could not be seen: by that time it was night and I had to come home without doing much. Yesterday morning I went early to the office of the quarter-master general, he said that he had given no such order and could not account for it. I told him that I had been sent from Herod to Pilate, and as every officer seemed to disavow the act that I would have the soldier arrested as a highway robber, and that I would address myself at once to the commanding General at the fort, here Mr. Quartermaster caved in, and expressed his great regret at what had taken place and promised that he would have them removed immediately; so yesterday afternoon they were marched out of the church, very much displeased and cursing a little, the only consolation they could obtain in their distress. The next thing to be done is to make them pay for the damage

they have caused, for they have broken the lock, broken up the pews and dreadfully dirtied the floor, and stolen about two cords of wood; I will attend to that part of the business this evening. Now I understand that this 9th regiment is from Milwaukee, I suppose they are the old turners; if you have nothing better to send I would advise you to keep them at home. They are a disgrace to your city, and the Lord knows we have had enough of that stamp here, more than we have room for. How long we will be pestered with them here I cannot tell. . . most of the robberies, and fighting and shooting and murdering that has been going on here for some time has been done by those that were sent here to protect the citizens.

This is a sad commentary on the conduct of a regiment, supposedly the defenders of law and justice. However, much can be overlooked in the first excitement of war. If we follow Col. Salomon and his regiment in their later activities, it will be seen what valuable service they rendered in the Army of the Frontier, during the Indian campaign. In August '62, Salomon was made a General, in command of the First Brigade. In Father de Coen's next communication under date of June 19, 1862, there are still rumblings of trouble and while the Govern-

1- Theodore Gardiner, "The First Kansas Battery", Kansas State Historical Society, Vo . XIV, 1915-1918, pp 238, 241, 242, 244.

ment seemed to be establishing firmer control, he is not too optimistic. In part he says, after thanking his friend for the much needed boots which were not to be had in Leavenworth:

business continues to do well and there is a promising crop in the country if the burning wind does not dry it up before it comes to maturity; there appears also to be some danger from the locusts and grasshoppers. . . . Armed bands of marauders still continue to infest Missouri and Kansas and we hear daily of their depredations: the Government is building blockhouses at all the bridges crossed by the railroad: this would indicate that there is still some threatening danger, troops are stationed all along the road; the only democratic newspaper, the Inquirer,¹ published in the city, was suppressed a few days ago, and the editor and proprietors five in number, lodged in the calaboose, for what cause is not known but undoubtedly they had incurred the displeasure of somebody. The good times coming are as far away as ever they were.

Notwithstanding these disturbed conditions, Bishop Miede felt assured of the future prosperity of Leavenworth and in 1864 began the erection of a stately Cathedral. Shortly after its completion he was summoned to

1- Beebe, Kansas Facts, Vol. II, 1930, p. 73, gives the following item: "January 13, 1863- A mob of citizens of Leavenworth, incensed at the sympathy of the Leavenworth Daily Inquirer for the cause of the South, destroyed the office. The editor, Burrill B. Taylor, fled from the city." The temporary suppression referred to in the above letter was occasioned, no doubt, by favoring southern policies.

Rome for the Ecumenical Council of 1869, and later proceeded to South America on a tour for funds.

In the archives of St. Benedict's College, Atchison, is preserved the following letter ¹ making provision for this absence.

Leavenworth, Kansas
Sept. 10, 1869

Rev. and Dear Father,

During my absence the Very Rev. L. M. Fink, O.S.B. will administer the affairs of the Vicariate Apostolic of Kansas, and is hereby appointed to that effect with all the powers and jurisdiction necessary for the fulfillment of the duties of the office. His virtues, zeal and learning are a guarantee to you and to me for the security and prosperity of the Catholic interests of this state.

I remain

Rev. and Dear Father

Yours Sincerely in Christ

J. B. Miede, S. J.

Father Louis proved worthy of this trust, in recognition of which Bishop Miede, in 1871, secured papal approval for his appointment as co-adjutor. His colleagues could write of him - "Father Lewis was a man of

1- Probably addressed to Father Bartle.

order, a man of discipline, a man of erudition, a man of character,"¹ but withal was he a man of broad vision. After liquidating, in great measure, the Cathedral debt, resultant upon the successful collections in South America, Bishop Miede resigned his ecclesiastical dignity and returned to St. Louis University, among his Jesuit brethren,² 1874. The Vicariate of Indian Territory continued to exist until 1877, when the diocese of Leavenworth was created and its jurisdiction assigned to Bishop Fink.³ To his unflagging energy and benign influence is due the colonization of hundreds of families in the state of Kansas.⁴ Being in active communication with Mr. D. C.

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- 1- Rev. Edmund Pusch, O.S.B. "St. Benedict's College" (Manuscript in the Archives of Atchison) p. 87.
 - 2- T. F. Kinsella, History of Our Cradle Land, p. 45. In 1877 Bishop Miede opened the Jesuit College in Detroit, now a leading University. He was greatly beloved by the people. His last years were spent in Woodstock, Md., where he died from paralysis, 1884.
 - 3- ibid., pp 100-101, Bishop Fink was born in Bavaria, 1834 and came to the U. S. at the age of 18. He entered the Benedictines in Pennsylvania and saw missionary work in that state and New Jersey. He was given pastoral duties in Kentucky and Chicago before being appointed Prior of St. Benedict's, Atchison.
 - 4- Rev. E. A. Pusch, O.S.B. "St. Benedict's College" (Manuscript Archives of Atchison) p. 88. Father Weikmann cites Odin, near Claflin, a Moravian settlement, and St. Peter and Paul's near Ellinwood, a Bavarian settlement, as colonization projects of Bishop Fink. The Bishop always insisted that groups of the same nationality would form the various settlements. Interview, April 15, 1932.

Smith, who was associated in 1879 with the State Agricultural board and who supervised emigration, the Bishop secured pamphlets and according to his own statement "I, myself, sent out 12,000 and about 3,000 in addition which I prepared myself. I sent these pamphlets to England and Ireland and secured the emigration of many thousand souls."¹

So deeply concerned was the Bishop in the material well-being of his flock, that he kept informed of the results of experiments made by the Bureau of Agriculture, and distributed bulletins explaining the properties and adaptability of the soil.

During the "grasshopper pest" of '74 he saved many settlers for Kansas, by securing money, food, and clothing from the East, and likewise strengthening their² courage and hope in a more prosperous future.

1- T. F. Kinsella, History of Our Cradle Land, pp 100-101.

2- Bishop Fink sent Father Kuhls and Father Cunningham at this time to visit the larger eastern cities, where they were permitted to preach at the churches, and collect money, and provisions for the destitute of Kansas. Carloads of food, flour, and corn, and quantities of clothing were the result of these appeals. The pastors in stricken districts made application to the distributing stations to have their needs supplied. Many articles were written to eastern papers for help, especially the Cincinnati publication "Warheits-Freund", (Friend of Truth) and a Baltimore German paper. Bishop Fink was called the Emigration Bishop. Interview, April 15, 1932.

Through pastoral letters the earnest Bishop councilled his people in matters of spiritual concern, stressing in a particular manner the sanctity of the home. He organized a diocese that proved to be a "model of discipline and unity of action."¹

These combined efforts and sacrifices of the stalwart pioneer and the zealous missionary were essential factors in transforming the wilderness into the garden plains of Kansas.²

1- Rev. E. A. Pusch, O.S.B. "St. Benedict's College" (Manuscript Archives of Atchison) p. 90.

2- Kansas or Kanza signifies in the Siouan tongue, "Wind People, or the land of the people of the South Wind". Kansas State Historical Society, Vol. XIV, p. 461.

Chapter IV

PLEDGED TO KANSAS

The period of readjustment after the conflict of the Civil War, opened up new hopes for the early Kansas pioneer. Gradually the line of eager homesteaders settled down in peaceful seclusion, along the numerous rivers and creeks, between vast prairie stretches, the grazing lands of a glorious future.

By 1872 the north-eastern section of the still young state could boast several worthy towns. Leavenworth was first in importance, being the gateway through which came a new civilization--a triumph for the Railroad. Here the Missouri Pacific stopped en route from St. Louis to Omaha. The Rock Island Railroad came from St. Paul, the Union Pacific had a branch from Lawrence to Leavenworth, and on the Missouri side of the River was located the St. Joe and Council Bluffs Railroad, which sent a spur with one passenger coach and mail car across to Leavenworth. Mule street-cars were operated on the principal street.

The most pretentious building was the Cathedral of Romanesque Architecture, built during the late '60's by Bishop Miede who travelled in South America to collect funds for its erection. There were several fine Protestant churches and also St. Joseph's Catholic Church, two Catholic Schools, St. John's Hospital, Mount ¹ St. Mary's Academy, and an orphanage.

Fort Leavenworth, a mile north on the Missouri river, was attended by a Jesuit, Father Pankins, who resided at the Cathedral, and also took charge of the Penitentiary at Lansing, four miles distant.

In this setting we find on August 2, 1872, mingling with the tide of newcomers, a young seminarian, Albert Magnus Weikmann, full of the ardent zeal of the missionary and welcomed by Bishop Fink as a promising shepherd to care for a portion of his scattered flock.

Judging from early portraits and listening to the spirited recitals of events in these newly-chosen ² surroundings, one may picture the well-trained student, possessed of a native ruggedness, an attractive personality, intellectually alert. The tall, well-proportioned

1- Catholic Encyclopaedia, Vol. VIII, p. 601.

2- Interviews, April 8, 9, 1932.

figure gave the impression of a maturity beyond his years, the large head bore a mass of black curly hair, while from the deep hazel eyes came a kindly, genial light of sincerity and trust.

Born February 10, 1850, in Grosskuchen, Kingdom of Württemberg, Diocese of Rottenberg, Southern Germany, Albert Magnus was the only son in a family of seven children, by a first marriage.¹ His father, Charles Borromeo Weikmann, a teacher in the elementary school of the village, instructed the child at home during the pre-school years. Before the age of six he entered the regular classes. Here the discipline was very rigid, and for the least misdemeanor or childish prank prompt punishment was administered with the stinging strokes of a ratan. In October, 1859, having completed his primary studies, Albert was sent to the Gymnasium (Klosterle) at Schwäbisch-Gmünd, about thirty miles from his native village. This is an ancient city, completely surrounded by walled fortifications, situated in the fertile valley of the Rems, with the Jura mountains forming a picturesque background. The romantic Black Forest, with its Erl-king, sprites, and kindred mysterious characters of rhyme and

1- The details of his early life have been pronounced "correct" by Father Weikmann, after reading the manuscript notes.

story, is not a great distance to the west. In feudal times the armed forces of the town engaged in paid warfare for the surrounding kings and nobles.

The Napoleonic era wrought great changes in Schwäbisch-Gmünd, as in other parts of Germany.¹ Three at least of its magnificent monasteries were secularized and given to the government for state colleges. The smallest of these edifices was called the Klösterle (little cloister) and it was here that Albert, not yet ten, began his second exacting period of school life. The government provided free tuition in these establishments, but the students purchased their books and were taxed one gulden (practically one dollar in U. S. money) a semester for a "famulus" or caretaker. This indispensable individual wore a uniform and played an unique part in the disciplinary program of the institution. If a professor so chose, he was privileged to summon the "famulus" and charge him to administer any designated punishment to a refractory student. His other duties included the care of boys during recess, providing and superintending lunch periods.

1- Catholic Encyclopaedia, Vol. VI, p. 508.

The government made it possible for even the poorest boy to secure the highest type of education, for he could apply or be apportioned out, for lodging and free meals, to willing citizens.

Albert's uncle, Sebastian Weikmann, lived in Schwäbisch-Gmünd, and it was at his home the boy was domiciled. The curricula of the Lower Gymnasium or Klösterle, included Reading, Writing, Geography, German, Latin, History of Württemberg, and Arithmetic, Interest (Fractions having been completed in the elementary school). Classes convened on the twenty-fifth of October, allowing one week of vacation at both Christmas and Easter. Long vacation consisted of one month from the twenty-fifth of September to the opening in October.

In early April, 1860, during the Easter Holidays, Albert met his first great sorrow in the death of his cherished mother. Her loss was deeply mourned by this "only son" whose fidelity to her memory has hallowed each succeeding anniversary these past seventy-two years. Albert remained for two years with his uncle, whom he often found a severe task-master. Although the father paid for his board, the child complained of suffering hunger, for the food was rationed out according to his

uncle's orders, and all the members of the family fell under his iron-clad rule. The allotment for breakfast was a square (about four inches) of dry bread and black coffee. A supply of "small coins" from home promised to give relief from the hunger pangs, but the joy was short lived. Albert hid the little wallet in his boot, and one evening, as the family (including several boy cousins) sat together, just before retiring, he started to pull off the boot, forgetting the hidden treasure. The coins scattered on the floor, there followed a grand scramble and vanished were the dreams of visits to the "famulus" for the coveted sweet buns and cakes. Albert further resented being given the difficult task of grinding the knives used in the uncle's butcher shop.

At the opening of the third year at the Gymnasium the young student began French and Greek which he continued for four years, carrying also Latin. This, when he was but twelve. He enjoyed the new environment at the home of the Bergers where his father had placed him. While there he joined a crowd of students in a rather dangerous winter sport. Blending gun-powder and snow they constructed volcanoes "with an open crater" into which they poured more powder. When a torch was applied, there resulted a great explosion and lurid phenomena.

Another "thriller" was constructing "serpents" on the ice out of the same composition. Once the powder did not ignite, so the intrepid Albert added another supply which exploded instantly, burning his face in a serious manner and blinding him completely. The attending physician despaired of the youth's sight and the father, inconsolable, consented to try a remedy suggested by an "itinerant medicine man". He prescribed bandgaging the eyes, after applying an ointment containing honey. The recovery was slow but normal sight was restored after some months. He returned to College the following October and continued without any further mishap until he completed the Klosterle in 1866, at the age of sixteen and a half years.

The method of examinations in vogue at the college is interesting in comparison to modern methods, even in Germany. For the first year pupils, each lay-professor prepared the questions and examined his own class, but two men chosen by the government were sent to examine second year students. While one examined the other noted the marks, which were sent to the government. Written examinations took place in the afternoon of the same day and the papers were likewise forwarded to headquarters, at Stuttgart. Many of the third and fourth year pro-

fessors were priests in the service of the government. In the fifth and sixth years the professors were also mixed, laymen and ecclesiastics. The latter taught only the classics, but in all cases representatives of the State conducted the examinations and reported the results.

Before entering the Upper Gymnasium it was compulsory for the candidates to present themselves at Stuttgart for the honor scholarship examinations. The government provided board, room, and books in what was called the "convict",¹ for the thirty having the highest averages. There were eighty-two in the class of 1866. Paul William von Keppler, later the renowned Bishop and author, carried off the highest distinctions though he was only fourteen, two years under the required age for entrance. The students who were not so fortunate as to make the convict went to Ellwangen where they were obliged to pay for board and books. It was here that Albert entered the Upper Gymnasium in the fall, adding Hebrew to his already long list of languages.

1- A boarding school, from the Latin "convivere", to live together.

At Christmas a letter came from an uncle, Reverend John Weikmann, in America, urging the father to remove to that beautiful land of promise. Mr. Weikmann decided to make the change and the following May brought his family to New Vienna, Iowa, where his brother lived. After looking about in different portions of the state for a desirable location, the immigrant invested \$3,000 in a quarter section in Chickasaw County, near North Washington.¹

In September 1867, Albert decided to enter the seminary at St. Francis, just south of Milwaukee. Although only seventeen years of age, he was admitted to Philosophy and shortly advanced to Theology, under the scholarly Dr. Joseph Salzmann and Dr. Frederic Katzer,² later Archbishop of Milwaukee.

His expenses at the seminary were defrayed by his Reverend uncle, so he was free to choose, after hearing the many appeals made by Bishops from various parts of

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- 1- Time proved that the returns from the nominal sum of \$18.75 per acre, were multiplied many times before the farm passed into other hands.
 - 2- The Diamond Jubilee Brochure, 1856-1931, of St. Francis Seminary, records that Dr. Salzmann, in 1867, had recently returned from a begging tour in Europe. Ludwig I of Bavaria gave him three thousand florins; Emperor Franz Joseph and the Duke of Modenna donated generously; while Emperor Ferdinand the Good of Prague, advanced the largest sum, six hundred gulden. From the abbeys in Austria he received many duplicate copies of books

the country, the place of his future destiny. Father John F. Cunningham, Vicar-general from Leavenworth, visited the seminary in the spring of 1870, in the interests of the Vicariate of Indian Territory. Being an eloquent talker he enlarged upon the ennobling work in behalf of the Indians and the pioneers of the new west. He further gave promise that Kansas would become a veritable paradise, owing to its climate, location, and natural resources, thus challenging those in the vigor of youth to dedicate their zeal and energies to the cause of the Kansas Frontier. It was the moment of crisis for the ardent seminarian, who, before the speaker departed, was pledged to labor in the Vicariate.

On December 21, 1870, Minor Orders were conferred but the candidate was too young for final Ordination. After the Christmas holidays spent at the seminary, the Bishop permitted him to teach for the Capuchin Fathers, Mount Calvary, near Fondulac, where he conducted classes in Latin, History, Geography, and Arithmetic. The summer of 1871 was passed in the home of his parents in Iowa. During the scholastic year from September 1871, to August 1872, he was engaged as a professor at St. John's

for the Seminary library. These are a few testimonies of the interest shown by Europeans in education in the New World.

College, Collegeville, Minnesota.

Ordination is not as a rule administered before the age of twenty-three, however, the urgent need of priests in the new country prompted the Pope to grant a dispensation in this instance and anticipate, by six months, the customary time.

The Apostolic Vicariate over which Rt. Rev. J. B. Miede, S. J., D. D., had charge included the entire state of Kansas and Indian Territory east of the Rocky Mountains. Bishop Fink (1871) performed the duties of co-adjutor, residing at the Cathedral Rectory in Leavenworth. Here were passed the first weeks of August, 1872, the student preparing for the taxing examinations in philosophy and theology which were to immediately precede Ordination. Under the scholarly tutorship of a Dr. Ackley, then living at the rectory, the ordeal was successfully accomplished, in the presence of the Rev. Bishop and two professors from the Seminary in Topeka, Dr. Favre and Dr. Defouri, and Father Giles, Prior of St. Benedict's College, Atchison. On August 27, 1872, the solemn ceremony of Ordination took place in the Cathedral.

His first Mass was said in North Washington, Iowa, in presence of his parents, sisters, and friends. After a brief vacation, Father Weikmann returned to Leavenworth

towards the middle of September where he remained until October 12th. On this day he was appointed to take charge of St. Ann's Church, Wyandotte, (now Kansas City, Kansas) during the absence of the pastor, Father Anthony Kuhls, whom the Bishop desired to go to Wichita and there establish a permanent congregation.¹

Prior to Father Kuhls' arrival in Wichita, 1872, Catholic activities in this typical western prairie town, were under the supervision of the Jesuit, Father Paul Ponziglioni, of Osage Mission. On the tour of November, 1870, this missionary records that sixty persons were present at Mass.²

From Wyandotte to Newton Father Kuhls traveled on the Midland Railroad (now the Sante Fe), then made connections with a branch line running into Wichita. Writing to his new curate, Father Kuhls mentions that "great herds of Buffalo are roaming not far from the

1- "Father Kuhls remained over Sunday to instruct me in my duties and say a parting word to his people."
Interview - Rev. A. M. Weikmann, June 16, 1930.

2- Journal of Father Paul Ponziglioni, Manuscript in St. Louis University. An incomplete census of Wichita, 1871 lists the following: "Mr. Meagher and wife, Mary Still (Husb. Protestant) Mr. James Mahoni and wife, two children, Mr. Bert Mahoni (single) Mrs. Giffenstein (Husb. Protestant) Mrs. Pierce (Husb. Protestant).

town", and made the statement realistic by an accompanying package of buffalo meat.

Father Kuhls' mission in Wichita lasted until the 10th of December. During this time he held services and lectured frequently in one of the public halls.

He succeeded in raising sufficient funds to purchase an unused Protestant Church, and vacant property on Second and St. Francis. The Church was then moved on to the property and thus was founded the first Catholic parish in Wichita. The Church was visited monthly by various priests for ten years, when Rev. Michael Casey became the first resident rector in 1882.¹

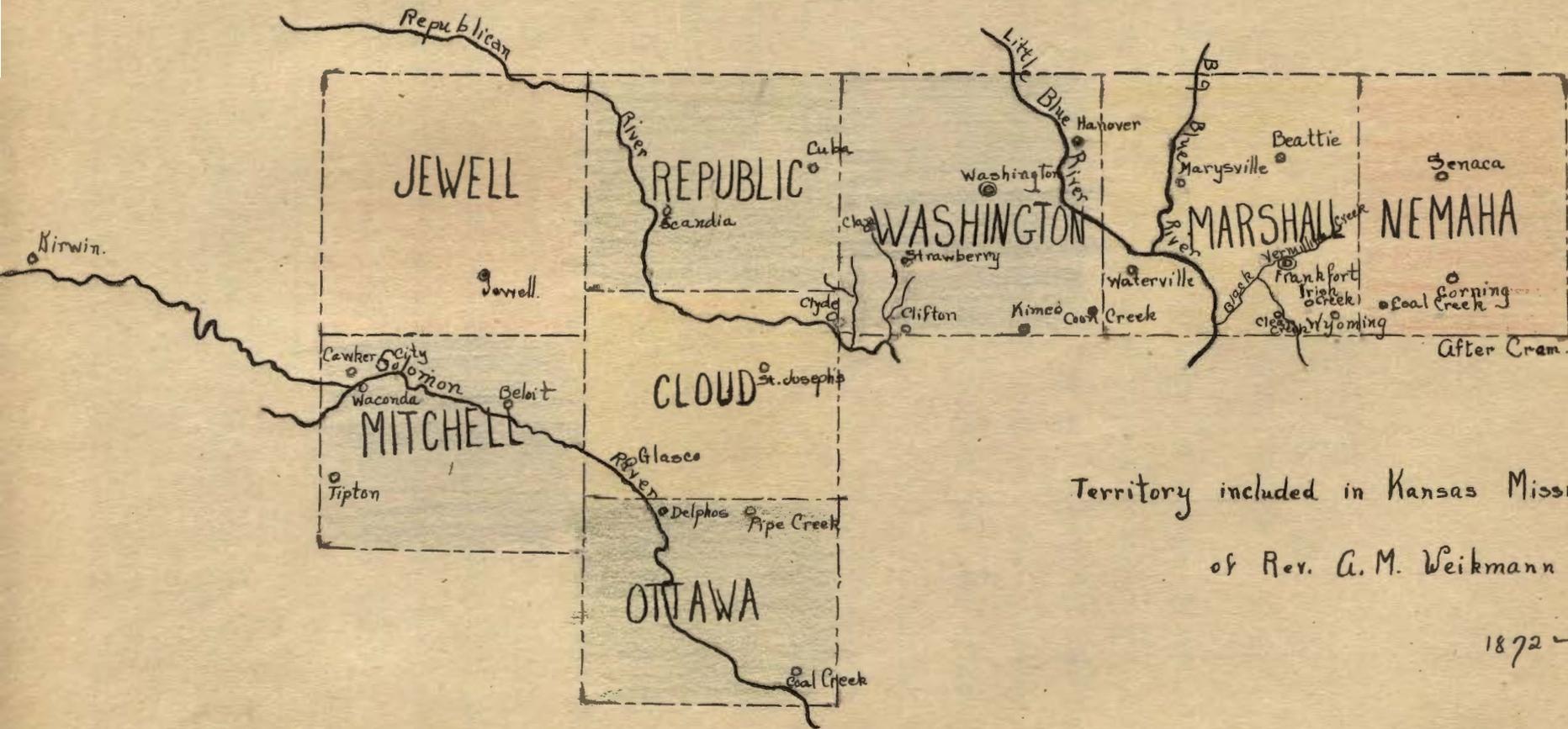
While Father Kuhls was absent in Wichita, Father Weikmann became initiated in pastoral duties. Wyandotte, with a population of eight or ten thousand, was built on quarries, rising high above the surrounding timber land. Minneapolis Avenue was the principal thoroughfare and there were few side streets. Towards the river were the "bottoms", where shanties and hard characters abounded and where police protection was necessary when

1- The Church has since been sold, moved and remodelled and is now used as a rooming house.

a sick call had to be attended. Visits to outlying districts were made on horseback. The parish included an area of over ten miles. At the edge of the town were located Fowler's, Armour's, and Dohl's Packing Houses, whose extensive plants are now included in making Kansas City, the first, first-class city in Kansas.¹

1- Argentine, Armourdale, and Wyandotte are now called Kansas City, Kansas.

NEBRASKA



Territory included in Kansas Missions
of Rev. A. M. Weikmann

1872 - 1876.

Chapter V

IN THE KING'S SERVICE

The real missionary life of Father Weikmann began on December 12, 1872, when in response to the Bishop's orders he left Wyandotte for St. Joseph of the Valley, on Irish Creek in Marshall County. The railroad passed through Frankfort and this proved the nearest station to Irish-Creek, eleven miles distant. Arriving in the late afternoon he was obliged to seek shelter with the general storekeeper until the following morning when some one from the Creek would bring in eggs, milk, or butter in exchange for staple foods. About ten o'clock a Mr. Gregg drove up in a primitive wagon and it was not long before they were crossing the rolling prairies, a long cheerless stretch, with not a house in sight. As they neared the end of the journey a beautiful grove of trees was visible and along the banks of the pretty creek¹ appeared the log houses, some twelve in number.

1- The data for this chapter is entirely the result of personal interviews with Father Weikmann, who designated on the map, the points included in the mission tours.

The settlement was happily called Irish Creek, composed of immigrants from the Emerald Isle, who sought the liberty denied them in their own land. Each family had at least a quarter section of land for which they had paid the Government \$14.00 with the pledge to remain five years and improve the land. They were exempt from all tax, and after the allotted time, could, upon the confirmation of a witness, secure a deed of clear title from the land office. A small parsonage and church had been erected from the native lumber for Rev. Wm. Fitzgerald, predecessor of Father Weikmann. The Church was about twenty by thirty feet and contained a drygoods box for an altar and the chairs were brought in from wagons for each service. From this point of vantage the oft repeated journeys over eight counties began.

When we consider that the young missionary was not facing material privations only but struggling with a foreign tongue (and the English is formidable in its inconsistency of grammar) we may gauge what "a stout heart and strong" was necessary to surmount the difficulties.

The nearest settlement to Irish Creek was five miles distant, called Clear Creek, consisting of about twelve Irish families, as the names of Donohue, Sullivan, Riordan, Burke, and Gregg will testify. These people

all attended Church at Irish Creek.

About midway between the settlements was the district school, a sod structure, its only redeeming feature being a warm shelter from the driving blizzards. It was the priest's duty to engage the teacher from Leavenworth.

It is interesting to note that some of the descendants of this primitive educational training became prominent lawyers while others have remained agriculturists in the thriving community of Lillis, as the Railroad Station is now called.

After remaining a few days at Irish Creek and securing a horse, (a gift from the congregation) with a blanket for saddle, the missionary started on his itinerary Saturday morning, making the first stop at Coal Creek, twenty miles across the prairies. Eight families gathered for services Sunday which were held in a school house. Then on to Corning, Sunday afternoon, eight miles away, where the Railway Section Boss, Fitzgerald and four helpers - all Catholics, had their quarters. Here he remained over night, sharing Fitzgerald's bunk and saying Mass the following morning at six o'clock in the one room which served for all purposes. The section helpers slept in a loft above this room which they reached by a nearly perpendicular ladder.

1- On Railroad from St. Joe to Marysville.

Fifteen miles north-east was Seneca, where the Benedictines had a monastery and where Father rode Monday morning for confession and spiritual advice.

Tuesday morning he left for Beattie, twenty miles north-west to remain for the night with the Section Boss and helpers as at Corning, hear confessions and say Mass Wednesday morning.

Five miles to the north-east lived a small colony of six families, French Canadians, in what was called Smith Settlement. They were all farmers and very poor. Returning to Beattie Thursday, he passed on to Marysville, the county seat, which was reached Friday or Saturday. There were some twenty Catholic families living in this vicinity. All church services were conducted in the public school, a two story rock building. At a specified hour the Methodists held their meetings, after which the Catholics attended Mass. Occasionally if services conflicted, Mass was said in the Odd Fellows Hall. Marysville was one of the largest missions. The community was composed largely of farmers, though the general storekeeper, a tailor, shoemaker, harness maker, brewer, and carpenter were members of the congregation.

Situated on the Big Blue River, Marysville had been one of the early Indian trading posts. It was due south about fifty miles from Beatrice, Nebraska, the reservation of the Otoe Indians. Even as late as 1872, some commerce was carried on with this tribe. The missionary states that after the hunting season he saw trains of Indian ponies, carrying shafts loaded with buffalo meat, which had been hauled over two hundred miles from their hunting grounds in the west, on the Republican river, between Kansas and Nebraska. It was the duty of the squaws to load the shafts and they also made the long journey with their chiefs, carrying the papooses on their backs to the trading post. Buffalo robes, raw, were sold for twenty-five cents, tanned for \$2.00. Money was not the only means of exchange. Saloons were numerous in Marysville and the Indians bartered their handsomest robes or furs, even their ponies, for the coveted "fire-water". It was not long before the town would be in a state of wild revelry, the intoxicated redman being a sad commentary on the charity dispensed by his rough-hewn white brothers.

The population of the town of Marysville numbered between two and three thousand. The Catholic congrega-

tion consisted of some twelve to fifteen families. They were all Irish and German homesteaders, new settlers. Some had frame homes but the majority lived in log cabins. A grist mill brought the farmers from great distances to have their wheat and corn ground here. The town had a prosperous growth.

For four years, 1872-1876, Father Weikmann attended Marysville. In 1875 he purchased lots for \$200.00 and erected a brick church at the cost of \$5,000. When the congregation outgrew this church, it was sold, remodelled into a dwelling and replaced by a larger building which is in use today.

The missionary usually remained two or three days at Marysville at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Kohlhoefer, then started for Waterville, twenty miles south-west. While riding across the vast prairies he encountered thousands of grazing cattle, each branded with a distinguishing mark. The owners could only approximately estimate the number of their herds. Cattle thieves were plentiful, their method being to ride the animals down, shoot, and then haul them away without being discovered.

The Railroad Section Boss at Waterville was one Brady, with two Catholic helpers and a third, a Scotch Presbyterian named Rogers. He was fond of argument and took a friendly interest in correcting the missionary's many mistakes in English.

Mass was said in the house of the butcher. Occasionally when the Waterville trip was made to include Sunday, all the people of the settlement would assemble for services at the school house. Not being fluent with the language, Father Weikmann would prepare and memorize one sermon in English which would suffice for the entire journey. Upon returning to headquarters at Irish Creek, after several weeks, he would set about the momentous task of writing and learning another.

The Little Blue River flowed into Waterville from the north-west. Following the cattle trails along its banks, and now and then fording the stream, the missionary reached the border town of Hanover, twenty miles distant, in Washington County.

The country about was rocky, the soil unfertile, except along the bottoms. The colony consisted mostly of Germans who had come in answer to the lure of free

land distribution. A few Bohemians made their presence doubly acceptable since they had organized a band and would provide music during the Mass. These latter were also homesteaders living along the bluffs of the river in small houses built of the surrounding rock. The Hellman Brothers from Fort Madison, Iowa, kept the town grocery; the smithy and wagon shop were other familiar haunts.

A missionary's career may have many interesting angles. At Hanover, a bachelor named Neigebauer, applied to the young priest for assistance in finding a wife. He had been a very lax Christian and did not bother attending the services, even though these were held at rare intervals. "How can I know you are a deserving man, if you do not serve God", said the priest "and how could I trust you to be a devoted husband?" "Well, Father," the man replied, "if you secure me a good wife, I'll promise you to be exact in my duties as a Catholic." And he was true to his word, as the missionary had occasion to know. A Luxemburg maiden from Marysville accepted the unique proposal and Father Weikmann performed the marriage ceremony upon one of his visits.¹

1- This is one of the missionary's stock stories. He has repeated it so often that he instinctively introduces the above quoted phrases.

Previous to 1872, the Jesuits and Benedictines had made annual visitations to this territory. Services were then held in Germania Hall, but early in 1873, Father Weikmann had a small church, twenty by thirty feet, erected. The ceiling was made of wooden beams; there were no pews, but later such furnishings were added.

It was a long tiresome journey of thirty-six miles, from Hanover, south-west to Clifton on the Republican River. The sorrel mare, Dolly, travelling between five and six miles per hour would reach the County Seat called Washington, about noon. This offered a place of refreshment and rest. Passing on through Clifton, the journey ended at Upper Parsons Creek, two and a half miles north.

Nestled on the wooded banks of the stream was a colony of Luxemburgers, twelve families of them, a very industrious community. Wheat and corn were the principal crops raised. The pioneers had been there since 1865 when the Indians still surrounded the place, living on peaceful terms. The settlers followed the fashion of their red brothers in hunting buffaloes, and even in 1872, when the growing civilization had pushed far back into the prairies the line of habitation of this larger

prey, hunting parties for smaller game were organized. Stories were told of the long tramps to Waterville, thirty miles north-east to secure provisions; and how the teams of oxen followed the narrow trails to Leavenworth and St. Joe, carrying the wheat and corn to be ground. This last adventure would consume from two to three weeks, dependent upon the weather and the time spent waiting for service at the Mill.

A small church had been built, but since there was no stove in it, Mass during the cold season was said in the primitive sod school house, where that luxury had been provided. Instructions for the children was a part of the daily program during the two days spent at the settlement.

Lower Parsons Creek proved a haven of comfort to the missionary, for there alone he had the privilege of a bed for himself. There were but six families and each was possessor of a comfortable log house.

One notable ride from Hanover to Parsons Creek was in answer to a sick call. The son of a dying man reached Hanover about seven o'clock in the evening urging the necessity of the priest coming at once. It was winter and the travellers had not gone far when they encountered

a blinding snow storm. On they journeyed against the biting wind of the prairies which somewhat slackened their pace. About 3 o'clock in the morning they reached the Creek, benumbed with cold, but grateful that the poor sufferer still breathed as if lingering for those solemn words which bid the departing soul take courage on its momentous flight into the vast unknown. A small plot of ground had been marked out in this community for a Catholic cemetery, one of the few in all the round of missions. Strawberry, ten miles north of Parsons, was a German settlement. Groves of walnut and oak trees along the creek supplied the busy saw mill with materials for houses and church. The thrifty workmen built an altar and kneeling benches, a luxury in the missions.

Crossing over into Republican County, a ten mile stretch, north-west over the prairie, brought one to Cuba where Bohemians, Germans, and Irish formed the entire congregation. Mass was celebrated in the Fusseller home, owned by two old bachelors and their mother.

Returning again through Clifton where the night was spent, the route lay east fifty miles from Cuba to Kimeo or O'Hare Settlement. Conditions were very primitive

among these Irish families. Only one log house existed, dugouts being the common shelter. In one of these the missionary slept on the earthen floor with his buffalo robe for covering. When the weather was propitious all the men slept in the open.

Coon Creek, ten miles north of Kimeo, numbered six Irish families. One Morrissey was host to the priest. His log shanty had no plaster, so sheets were draped about the common room to give the semblance of comfort.¹ The furniture consisted of a very large home-made bed, packing boxes for chairs, and boards mounted on boxes for a table. Arriving one wintry evening very tired, the missionary sat reading his office by the feeble light furnished by a wick placed in lard. When supper was prepared they found the visitor asleep and it was decided thereupon that he must retire as soon as the meal was finished. Into the great bed he rolled, immaculate in its fresh covering. His first deep slumber was disturbed by Mr. Morrissey saying, "Move over, Father, make room for us." Then a child of three or four was laid

1- In some places where sheets were not available, newspapers were used.

across the foot of the bed, and Mr. Morrissey climbed in normally.

Quiet again reigned but not for long. "Father, Father," called the man with an accompanying vigorous shake - "move over as far as you can to the wall" - and so this commodious bed was made to accommodate another child and its mother. But the night was not to be a harbinger of peaceful rest. A fierce blizzard arose, the wind whipping out the loose packing between the logs, drove the snow in upon the sleepers, who were virtually "snowed under" their protecting buffalo robes.

The routine of missionary journeys usually ended with the visit to Coon Creek after which a few days of leisure and rest were spent at Irish Creek, the resident headquarters twenty-eight miles distant. Prairie chickens were plentiful in the locality and hunting this game in season, constituted a novel recreation for the young priest, between trips.

The distance covered each week during these short circuits averaged between eighty and ninety miles. The entire trip consumed over two weeks; the number of missions visited, twelve, and all were located within the counties of Nemaha, Marshall, Washington, and Republic. It was a gala day at Irish Creek when the pastor returned. The people, simple, genial Irish folk, were eager to hear

of the lot of other pioneers, as well as news of the great outside world, which had not reached their isolated spot.

Chapter VI

ALONE ON THE PRAIRIES

Twice a year, in May and September the journeys included the territory west to Cawker City, on the extreme border of Mitchell County. This town was one hundred and twenty-five miles from Hanover. Starting from the latter in early September, 1873, the first stop was Clyde, southwest on the Republican river. Clifton was the only place of note passed en route because here was located a postoffice. Clyde was the opening wedge for new missionary life and Father Weikmann was the pioneer priest delegated to explore the Kansas prairies to the north-western boundary of civilization.¹

Picking up a cattle trail at Clyde, the priest rode till nightfall. He had missed the direction to Delphos, thirty miles south-west and was hopelessly lost among the hills. The divide between the Republican and Solomon rivers, is rugged and barren, save for the buffalo grass

1- His first trip consumed one month, of which he sent a detailed account to Bishop Fink at Leavenworth. There is no doubt as to the existence of these records in the diocesan archives. Interview - June 22, 1930.

which appears in patches. There was no alternative but to spread the buffalo robe on the edge of an inviting creek and prepare to spend the night, supperless, under the stars. Not far from the selected spot was a haystack, protected by a rail fence and to this Dolly was tied.

The moon rose late transforming the shadowy bluffs with its soft light. The priest awakened after an hour and sat up to enjoy the beautiful scene. A huge white object appeared on the brow of yonder hill, he thought it must be a dwelling and he would go to it. So arousing the mare and throwing the saddle bags across loosely he mounted the hill. Coming close to the object he discovered the skeleton of a house, the window casings covered with boards. He called several times but received no response so he proceeded to loosen one of the supports at the casing. A mighty howl came from inside, children crying and calling for help, and above all a woman's voice, demanding "Who's there?" "A Catholic missionary looking for a lodging" came the answer. "I've lost my way and have travelled all day, so I beg you let me in. I will not hurt any of you." "No, no," replied

the woman, "I cannot let you in, but go to the hill north of here and you will find shelter, and put back the support before you leave."

Off again among the illusive hills! For an hour or more the priest rode up and down but no trace of a habitation, when suddenly, following the sound of a dog's bark, he stopped before a dugout. In answer to a call, a man appeared through a canvas curtain serving as a door. "I'm a missionary priest. May I have a night's lodging?" questioned the rider. "I'll ask my woman." The moment's suspense was disheartening but passed with the welcome words, "She says you can stay!" The family, man, woman, and one child were new-comers, staking out a claim in this lonely region. The dugout was about twelve feet square, miserably furnished. Along the ceiling were strung bunches of dried wild grapes. A bunk in a corner served for the bed while a small iron stove was the most valuable article in sight.

The priest had not eaten since noon and it was now ten o'clock, so he ventured to ask for some refreshment. "We have nothing to eat." said the man. "Not even a

1- This conversation is quoted just as the missionary gave it in his interview.

piece of bread?" questioned the priest. "I am very hungry and must get something, just anything." The woman who heard the conversation, softened and volunteered to get up, while the two men attended to the horse, brought water from the creek and gathered some hay in a sack for a pillow.

It was not long before the fire was kindled, the flour biscuit baked and wild grape tea ready to serve. That was a repast fit for a king--if he were hungry!

The ever-ready buffalo robe and hay pillow placed in the far corner served the missionary as a bed. "Nature's sweet restorer, sleep," came quickly only to be remorselessly interrupted by a savage grunt and a sense of terrible pressure. A sickening fear took possession of the priest, while he felt some huge body push him close to the wall. When full consciousness returned he discovered that a litter of pigs with their mother had come to seek shelter from a thunderstorm and claimed the corner from the usurper.

Then wakeful hours passed, until the early dawn was heralded by "chanticleer" perched inside above the doorway in the midst of his feathered companions. This was

more than the priest's sensibilities could endure so he arose and followed the path to the refreshing creek. Here to his dismay, he discovered that his clothing was filled with fleas. Shake, brush, "catch" as he would, the tiny creatures were too swift for human movements. They had even found the recesses of the inside seams.

A call for breakfast interrupted his new occupation. More biscuits and wild grape tea! After paying the exacting price of seventy-five cents for the "comforts" of the night, the journey to Delphos was resumed. Evasive twenty miles!

That graceful little animal, the antelope, roamed in great numbers among these bluffs and deep defiles. Its native curiosity was sated in a game of hide and seek with a chance horse and rider. He would advance in friendly mood, secure attention and upon the first move of the horse, scamper up the rugged slope.

What youth of twenty-three would not give chase when tempted by such rare sport? Winding around the steep trail to a point of vantage, the priest would scan the surroundings and chuckle to discover the fleet animal topping an adjoining cliff. Wily companions filled in the scene, lending an air of tense expectancy. But this

was not getting to Delphos, and which way lay the trail!

Gauging the direction by the sun, hill and valley were crossed until he came suddenly upon a mill, with no other evidence of habitation visible. Farther on he met a man driving a team hitched to a spring wagon. "Am I on the right road to Delphos?" he called. "Yes, follow that trail" came the gruff reply. An hour passed, when a lad of twelve came towards him on horseback. "My boy, how far is it to Delphos?" "Why, sir, you are going in the wrong direction. Go back to where the trails cross near the mill, and take the one going south-east."

Truth is a distinctive mark of childhood, and he would accept this utterance as a testimony, but "just why" did the man deceive? Pondering this question over and over in his mind, he finally reached the brow of the highest hill and saw below, the valley of the Solomon in its primitive beauty, and close by, Delphos, at last!

The first of a group of six houses belonged to a Mr. and Mrs. Krohne, Germans. Here the priest was welcomed. Plans were made immediately to notify Catholics in the surrounding country of the advent of the missionary. It was noon and with hearty gusto disappeared a dinner of eggs, bread, and coffee.

1- The recital of these experiences was almost invariably given in dialogue. They are faithful repetitions of the interviews.

Those tenacious fleas had been terribly annoying, so the missionary borrowed a suit of blue jeans from Mr. Krohne and left the infested clothes to the skill of the good wife. The two horses galloped at normal speed reining up at a log cabin in the woods. Krohne shouted "Murphy, come out!" A man appeared and was told that his companion, a priest, had just arrived and would say Mass the following days at the Krohne home. "A missionary in blue jeans!" laughed Murphy a bit skeptical, "I've met you before", ventured the priest. "Were you not the man that directed me on the trail this morning? Why did you tell me a lie?" "Good heavens," said Murphy, "was that you? I thought you were one of those ---lawyers." Murphy was owner of the mill and prepared all the lumber for the community.

Pressing on to reach the other four or five Catholic families, they forded the Solomon river, north and south and returned to Krohne's for supper. It was here that Mass was said for three consecutive days at nine, a sewing machine serving as altar. Two sermons were preached each day, in English and German. The people were nearly all young couples so there were no children

to instruct. They came supplied with food and the noon meal was prepared in real picnic fashion.

The stage coach passed through Delphos, connecting railroad points on the Union Pacific. A postoffice and district school were the only public buildings. It was early September when the first visit to Delphos ended.¹ The warm sun dispersed the autumn fog over the valley and brought into view great flocks of wild geese flying south. The stage coach route led to Glasco, where the priest was invited to join "the boys" at dinner at the Government Stage Station.

By evening he reached Beloit, twenty miles northwest of Delphos. There is no record of an earlier missionary having visited this settlement. The general storekeeper, Zeigler, regaled the newcomer with crackers, cheese, and water, and notified the few Catholics that Mass would be said the following morning in a vacant room over the store. After exhorting the meagre congregation in the essentials of faith and promising to return in a few months the missionary continued twenty

1- After the final gathering on the third day, tearful farewells marked their departure from this heaven-sent visitor. God was enshrined in the hearts of these children of the wilderness and the presence of His minister gladdened them. They kissed his hands reverently and pleaded for him to return soon. Murphy, by his offering of ten dollars, conferred an unusual token of appreciation in these early "lean years".

miles north-east to Cawker City, on a branch of the Solomon river.

This was the outpost of civilization in the north-western section of Mitchell county. The hotel-keeper, Kelly, was a devout Catholic and offered hospitality to the priest. As the city was a rendezvous for cowboys, word was dispatched through them for the Catholics to assemble for services on Sunday at the school house in Wacanda, one mile south, on the Solomon river. The people were hungry for religion and all sects united in offering praise to their Maker. Sixteen men from Tipton, an outlying German colony, arrived on horseback, and being well versed in music, sang the High Mass without any accompanying instrument.¹ That was a red-letter Sunday in September 1873. Fish were plentiful here, large pike. The priest joined a party and made a "good catch."

Not far from Cawker City were located hot springs, called Spirit Springs. They were large round openings about twelve feet across. The water bubbling up then receding without an overflow. The springs were highly

1- While travelling in London in 1900, Father Weikmann officiated at the German Church at Whitechapel, where the same music was rendered. His thoughts reverted to this occasion in 1873, on the plains of Kansas.

medicinal and have since become celebrated. The country about was high tableland.

Coupled with the Bishop's earnest exhortation in the interest of his diocese, was the missionary's instinct to scout for souls. Such forces place at naught all dangers and privations incident to such a quest, counting not the cost but rather rejoicing in being "deemed worthy to suffer something for Jesus Christ."

The call came from the wild frontier and in response, an initial effort was made to reach Kirwin, in Phillips County, thirty miles north-west on the North Fork of the Solomon. A postal station was there but the missionary could gather no satisfactory information about the surrounding country.

Out on the plains from Cawker City he met many Indians going to or returning from the hunting grounds in the west. Small herds of buffalo grazed in isolated pasture lands. Aside from these, there existed but earth and sky, surely the land of the "far horizons"! A stage coach ran between Abilene and Kirwin, both junctions of the Union Pacific. This was the trail followed.

Towards noon he hailed the welcome sight of the oncoming coach. The driver drew rein and inquired the destination of the lone rider. Upon hearing the plans he persuaded the missionary to return to the city as he could testify that there were no inhabitants in that section. Another night was spent at Kelly's Hotel where he chanced upon information about a settlement in Jewell County.

The following day travelling to the north-east he noted buffalo skulls and piles of the animal's bones at varying intervals. He learned later that these were the marks used by the homesteaders to divide their sections. Buffalo licks, immense holes, were common along the way, proving that the "king of the prairies" had congregated here and satisfied their natural craving for salt.

After a ride of twenty miles, the priest came to Jewell City, a town of three hundred people. Five miles beyond, along Pipe Creek, was the colony of Irish Catholics. There were four or five families, all living in dugouts. Mass was said in one of these. The poverty of the people was really distressing. They suffered from hunger and felt embarrassed not to be able to supply a substantial meal for their guest.

But privation of food was no new experience for this traveller of the trails. It had never been his custom to carry provisions, other than the Mass outfit, and a meagre supply of clothing. A sandwich of crackers and sausage could be obtained at any hamlet and if he passed none, well, he could wait till the end of his journey, and share in the bounty or frugality of his host.

The weather in Kansas played the same pranks in the '70's as today and once when an unseasonable blizzard blew up, the missionary was grateful for an old civil war overcoat, gift of a chance philanthropist.

Twenty miles north-east of Jewell City was Scandia, in Republican County. Here the Republican river was spanned by the only bridge the missionary saw in all of his journeys. Fording was the usual method of crossing, though occasionally a rustic ferry constructed of planks was available.

At Scandia the worshippers were few, but others were summoned from the outlying districts. The missionary was given the one upper room in the only mansion of the hamlet, a substantial rock house, built on the river bank. Fur-

niture was lacking so the neighbors lent four chairs. These served as posts for the bed and the seats held boards on which a straw tick was placed. For Mass, an altar was improvised out of these same materials.

After services the people tarried outside to meet the pastor. A woman carrying something with great care was seen approaching. "I suppose there is a baby to be baptized." thought the priest, so he walked a few steps toward her. "Father", she said, unwrapping the precious bundle, "I have brought you some corn for your horse." The priest needed some swift mental adjustment to express appreciation for this kind act.

In these small settlements the number of baptisms were few and children were few. But in the better established centers, like Hanover, and Marysville, this Sacrament was frequently administered and catechism taught. The largest record at Marysville was fourteen baptisms in a few months.

With Scandia concluded the semi-annual western tour. The return to headquarters at Irish Creek, included stops at Cuba, Hanover, and Marysville.

The cycle of 1872-'73 covered territory in eight counties. East to west, these were, Nemaha, Marshall, Washington, Republic, Cloud, Ottawa, Jewell, and Mitchell.

Five counties bordered on Nebraska, and the two farthest west, Jewell and Mitchell, marked the "frontier line" of this period in the northern section of the state.

Late in the fall of 1873, Bishop Fink sent Rev. James O'Reilly, a newly ordained priest from Ireland, to assist with the missions. The same Mr. Gregg who had given Father Weikmann the first ride across the prairies, met the train at Frankfort. The pastor and people eagerly awaited his arrival but could scarcely suppress a smile when the prairie wagon drove up and a dapper looking gentleman alighted, frocked in a stately Prince Albert and wearing a tall silk hat.

News of "dear old Ireland" satiated the craving hearts of the pioneers. They were loyal indeed, to the land of their adoption, though it demanded heroic sacrifice and dire privations, yet the reward was "freedom and equality." Their Isle of the Seas, enthralled by tyrannous laws, gave no beckoning call; but it harbored those dearest on earth, and to everyone who first breathed its hallowed air, no fairer spot exists, than the bit of green, called Ireland.

The following days were spent in training the newcomer in the art of horsemanship. An indispensable part of the outfit was the silk hat, which, with many ludicrous positions effected by the neophyte, occasioned great merriment to the onlookers.

The eaglet was ready for its first flight into the realms of mission life, when a letter was despatched from Bishop Fink, recalling Father O'Reilly to Leavenworth. Here he remained at the Cathedral and was later transferred to Topeka where he received the appointment as first Bishop of Wichita. The ceremony of consecration, however, was deferred because he contracted typhoid malaria from which he died before establishing this See.

Meanwhile, life at Irish Creek, between missions, was quite uneventful. Meals were taken at Greggs' where the pastor's cow was also cared for. Late in 1873 a sister and grandmother of the priest came to keep house for him. But as they could speak no English, they found it very lonely.

In 1874 the French Canadian Colony at Clyde had prospered in numbers sufficient to warrant a resident

priest. During this same year, Bishop Miege resigned his episcopal dignity at Leavenworth, to resume the life of a humble Jesuit.¹ In July 1874, Father Weikmann's headquarters were changed to Hanover. He was relieved of a number of settlements but retained the western missions, including Marysville, Kimeo, Waterville, Upper Parsons, Lower Parsons, Delphos, Beloit, Cawker City, Jewell, Scandia, and Cuba.

1- Before his departure, the priests gathered for a farewell visitation, when the Bishop interviewed each one privately. It was Father Weikmann's initial introduction to the kind and lovable prelate, who cordially greeted him as "our beloved Benjamin". Father still treasures a crucifix and rosary as mementoes of this occasion, while he recalls vividly the Christlike personality and remarkable humility of this early Blackrobe Bishop.

Chapter VII

MORE INCIDENTS AND MISSIONS

"The prairie's afire! The prairie's afire!" Such was the shrill alarm at Irish Creek settlement that initiated the missionary in his first battle for the safety of lives and crude possessions. Some keen vision had discerned the treacherous flaming line miles away, near Frankfort. A brisk wind was blowing, aiding by "leaps and bounds" the red tongues, in their frenzied course to "lick up" the dried grass of the prairie. Action, prompt and concerted action came in response to the growing chorus of shouts and the vigorous ringing of cow-bells. Men, women, and children ran towards the lurid flare, some burdened with axes, rakes, or any handy implements which could be used in breaking the prairie, some carrying gunny sacks to beat out the flames, and still others in the advance guard starting the "old reliable" backfire. The little army worked far into the night at the various posts, and dispersed, to seek a grateful and needed rest, only after the wind had ceased and the danger from flying sparks was passed.

Near Marysville are great stretches of low land running along the Big Blue River. Often grass in the valley grew to a height of three or four feet and when killed by the frost and dried by the sun and wind became a constant menace through fire. On one of his journeys Father Weikmann witnessed this vast expanse turned into a seething furnace.

The flames bounding many feet high, and with lightning speed leaping across the river, even where it measured one hundred feet, produced a hideous reflection. After such an experience it was not difficult to visualize the scriptural pit of eternal fire.

However terrorizing prairie fires may be, they reach to fiendish proportions when human life is exacted as their holocaust. Deep seared in the memory of the missionary is such a tragic visitation, which occurred near Clifton in the fall of '73.¹ A French family, new settlers, had just completed their dug-out. A daughter, eighteen, and a son, sixteen, were engaged in breaking prairie at the outer edge of the claim. The girl, with the horse's reins fastened about her shoulders and waist was evidently so intent on guiding the plow, that she failed to notice

1- Interview, April 9, 1932.

clouds of smoke in the distance. Suddenly the horse began a mad dash forward, dragging her and the upturned plow into the oncoming fire. Her screams brought the brother on his horse. Dismounting, he succeeded in loosening the reins and carried her to a nearby creek thinking the water would revive her. The father and mother saw the horses plunging into the fire and fled towards it. As they came near the creek they heard the boy's call for help. What a terrible sight met them! The girl, wholly unconscious, with face and body charred, the breath coming in gasps. When she was carried to the dug-out, the father hurried to a neighbor's to despatch him to Clifton for the priest who was due there that day. Though his response was immediate, the young life was all but gone. He anointed the blackened members, so shortly before vigorous in youth, and as he ceased the prayers, her soul had departed from its mortal temple. When attention was directed to the boy it was thought only his hands were badly burned, but he had been internally injured with smoke and flames and followed his sister in a few days, an unknown hero of the prairie. The horses ran through the fire but had to be killed to end their suffering. The missionary concluded his story with, "It is hard to describe the horror, but always shall I remember how courageously the grief-stricken parents accepted their

heavy cross. Faith abounded in the wilderness, and the God-fearing pioneers, under its enduring support, steeled themselves against hardships and trials."

One of the never-to-be-forgotten incidents of early August 1874, occurred between Upper Parsons, now called Strawberry, and Clifton. The missionary relates:¹

Dolly was making excellent speed that Sunday afternoon when I was suddenly jerked in the saddle by the abrupt veering of the horse. I drew the check and headed her south-west again, puzzled by this quick turn. After a few steps the action was repeated and at the same instant I felt my face pricked as if with some sharp instrument. I was conscious of a buzzing sound, noted a cloudlike darkness over the prairie and the truth flashed upon me, we were captives of a vast army of winged insects. They came with incredible swiftness, fastened in the horse's mane, on her face, forcing the eyes to close. Then on they hurried giving place to companions whose lancelike attack renewed the stinging pain.

It was fully an hour before this great horde of grasshoppers passed over us settling down upon the only herbage the prairie offered, patches of buffalo grass. When the air cleared we continued our way observing the ground covered with the devastating pests.

Following in the wake of destruction we passed farmlands stripped of their products, the bare corn stalks, standing like ghostly sentinels amid the ravages.

1- Interview, July 12, 1930.

During the priest's absence from Hanover the plague had devastated that section even eating the paint off the house shutters and boring into the wood. Bishop Fink ordered special prayers to be included in the Mass to avert another visitation of locusts. The fields were blessed in many settlements. The following spring, the eggs laid in the fall were hatched, producing millions of grasshoppers. They wrought little damage, however, for on a day, lo, the sun was obscured as with a cloud, and when it shone again, the scourge had passed, disappearing with the like rapidity which had marked its advent.

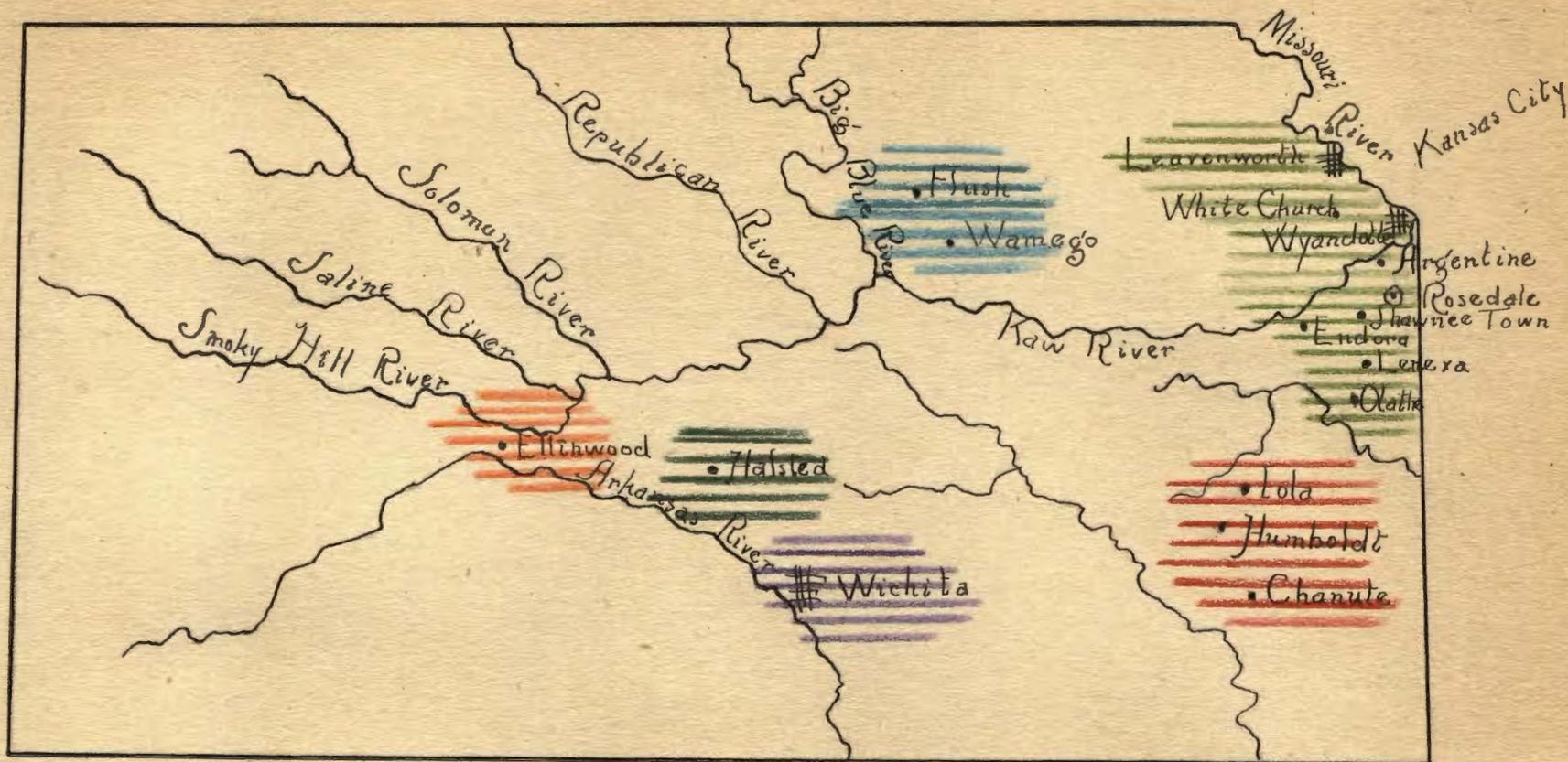
The first confirmation tour made to the western missions by Bishop Fink was in the fall of '75. Leaving Leavenworth over the Missouri Pacific Railroad, a connection was made at Atchison on the Central Branch, to Waterville. The missionary had come on horseback from Hanover to Waterville to meet the Bishop. They remained at the hotel for the night. Cowboys and rough characters were "a plenty" in these parts and the timid Bishop insisted on Father Weikmann sharing his room. But even with such protection he passed the night in vigil. The hotel was poorly constructed and the continuous noise of late-comers was no panacea for jarred nerves.

Clifton, the point of destination, was thirty-six miles south-west from Waterville. Mr. Eslinger and his two sons came from Clifton to meet the Bishop and priest. He drove a splendid team and spring wagon. Over the prairies they flew, when an unexpected lurch sent the missionary overboard and crushed the saddle bags, containing the bottles of sacrificial wine. Fortunately it was the season for wild grapes and after the boys had gathered a quantity, the Bishop pressed them between his hands securing sufficient juice to use for Mass. The broken altar-breads were easily replaced. A mixture of flour and water baked between two heated flat-irons supplied the unleavened wafer from which the hosts were cut.¹ At least ten children were confirmed at this visitation.

The French settlement at St. Joseph, Cloud County, was also visited. A Gregorian High Mass, without accompaniment, was sung by the Canadian emigrants. After the Bishop inspected the country about to select a site for a church, Mr. Eslinger drove the party again to Clifton, then on to meet the railroad at Waterville.

Ever an intense lover of nature and the hunt, the missionary with his dog often breasted the western wilds.

1- Interview, April 15, 1932.



Missions —

Outlined from Rend-McNally.

- 1876 - 1884
- 1884 - 1896
- 1896 - 1900

- 1900 - 1912
- 1912 - 1927
- 1927 - Present Residence, May 1932.

He was an excellent marksman and seldom returned empty-handed from these wholesome jaunts. He recalls with much gusto the first antelope chase in which he participated. It was in the vicinity of Clifton, where great numbers of these animals ranged along the rocky slopes. The party of four started for a distant valley in a prairie-schooner, and when arrived, the horses were unhitched and allowed to graze. Then a ten foot pole surmounted by a red flag was planted near the wagon. The men returned to cover, made ready their guns, and watched for results through the peek-holes in the canvas. Antelopes are very inquisitive and, attracted by the red and white objects, several soon came stealthily down from the hills to investigate. Two came within short range and were shot, one not outright. The all but human cries of the suffering animal filled the sensitive heart of the missionary with remorse. His sure aim immediately quieted the piteous wailings, but never again was he enthusiastic in hunting this particular prey.

A transition from the severer trials of mission life came in July, 1876, when Father Weikmann assumed charge of Shawnee Town, Johnson County, with its surrounding hamlets.

Eudora, thirty-two miles south-west of Shawnee and seven miles east of Lawrence, was visited once a month. A small parish house and rock Church had been constructed by the settlers, but they were not able to support a resident pastor. There were sixteen families of Germans and Bohemians and the first year about twelve children to instruct. During the summer months, this journey was made on horseback or with horse and buggy during the night to escape the burning heat.

Olathe was en route and here the traveller would visit an hour with Father Casey, who afterwards became the first resident priest in Wichita. At Rosedale, now part of Kansas City, four lots were purchased and a frame church twenty by forty feet erected. The pews were so constructed that they served for school desks during the week. The congregation was entirely Irish with the exception of one family. They were liberal people. Most of the men were employed at the rolling mills and one foreman, Gibbons, received seven dollars per day. There were many saloons in the vicinity and the different shifts leaving the mills would file in to allay the intolerable thirst caused by the intense heat from the furnaces. "Charge accounts" were the general order and the bulk of the pay-day check was

often left in this place of menace. This condition caused the pastor great uneasiness, but until the mills closed down the abuse continued.

Argentine, another suburb now included in Kansas City, was so called because of its great silver smelter. There was no church here so the few Catholics gathered for Mass once a month in the public school house.

White Church, ten miles from Wyandotte, was an Irish settlement including fifteen families. They had a small church where Mass was said once a month.

Lenexa, a German Hungarian community, after erecting a frame church, was anxious for a bell. Father Kuhls of Wyandotte was investing in new chimes, so consented to sell the old bell for \$75.00. This was placed on a support in the churchyard, as the belfry was not beamed to hold its weight.

From 1884 to 1896, Father Weikmann was in charge of Meyers Valley, now called Flush, Pottawatomie County. Thirty families of Bavarians comprised this excellent farming district. Wamega, fifteen miles distant, was an out mission with German and Irish settlers. In October, 1896, Humboldt, Allen County, with Iola, and Chanute, became the territory for which the missionary

was responsible. Recovering from a severe attack of Typhoid malaria in 1900, he spent three months in Europe in company with the Rev. Schwamm, now of Topeka. Their itinerary included England, Belgium, Italy, France, and Germany. In the latter country he visited relatives with whom he parted as a youth of seventeen in 1867.

Renewed in health he returned to Kansas where an appointment to Ellinwood¹ awaited him. This community was established by immigrants whom Bishop Fink had secured from Bavaria. Father remained here until February 1912, when he was removed to Halstead.

There was much to be accomplished here in the line of building. The parish house was enlarged and equipped with modern conveniences. In 1916 a splendid church, forty-two by eighty feet, was completed at a cost of \$20,000. Many friends from Wichita and Newton, together with former parishioners, were generous in their donations for this new enterprise so that the debt was soon liquidated. The Catholic patients at Hertzler Hospital received the ministrations of the new pastor.

1- Barton County.

On October 4, 1922, was celebrated the Golden Jubilee of Father Weikmann, marking fifty years since that auspicious day in Leavenworth, when he became a priest "according to the order of Melchisedech"¹.

The occasion was marked with solemn services at the church in Halstead in the presence of three Bishops, three Monsignori, fifty priests, as well as a devoted congregation.

During 1925 came the first indication of declining years. Suffering a slight stroke he was gradually released from responsibility, until in 1927, the Bishop accepted his resignation from parish duties.

1- Genesis, XIV, 18. St. Paul to the Hebrews, Chap. VII. Melchisedech was the first high priest to offer sacrifice of bread and wine and symbolizes the priesthood of the New Law as distinct from that of Aaron, the Levitical Order, of the Old Law.

Chapter VIII

POWER THROUGH ADVERSITY

The appointment to Myers Valley,¹ now known as Flush, was to prove a severe test of Father Weikmanh's powers of endurance and calm judgment. For some time there had existed a dispute among the parishioners concerning land purchased in 1868, through the Jesuit missionary, Father Remelle,² the proceeds of which were to go towards the support of the priest and church. The controversy had proved so distressing to the gentle and timid Father John Loevenich, predecessor of Father Weikmann, that he asked to be removed before it had reached a serious issue.

In early September, 1884, Father Weikmann left Shawnee Town for Wamega, the nearest railroad station to, and an outmission of, Rock Creek.

1- Myers Valley was the name of the postoffice, but locally the community was called Rock Creek.

2- Residence, St. Mary's College, Kansas.

Mrs. Lonergan, the housekeeper, accompanied him, and besides trunks, books, the effects included two horses, a buggy, and two rat-terriers.

The people of Myers Valley, expecting a new pastor, delegated Richard Swords to meet him. The horses were disposed of in the livery and after dinner at the Swords home, two other men came requesting the priest to return with them to the Valley in order to read the burial service for a child. When the mourners had left the premises, the committee men approached asking abruptly, "Is the land for sale? It is whispered about that bids are out." The clean-cut answer came, "That land is for sale". "Well then you can pack up and go where you came from". While the newcomer, non-plused, was deciding what action to pursue, the men held a hasty conference reversing their decision. The Bishop was expected in Alma, twenty miles away, in two weeks on a confirmation tour, and a personal call on him there was deemed advisable. Accepting their condescending approval the missionary was driven back to Wamega to remain over Sunday and meet his congregation, and promised to return to Rock Creek Monday, with all his possessions.

The parish house was in a state of utter ruin, since in it had been stored the grain harvested from the "church land" and yet unsold. It was infested with rats and mice and much of the plaster had fallen. The new arrivals were accommodated temporarily, at the home of Frank Floersch,¹ who had been married in the spring. The new house had nine large rooms and was convenient to the church.

As soon as could be arranged Father summoned the committee men to ask for a full explanation of the mooted question. Their story held that Father Remelle, who was their itinerant pastor between '65 and '70, had counseled them to buy land, and with the income from the crops to form a church fund. In this way, also, he advised them they would the sooner be able to support a resident priest.

John Eckert, a Bohemian, placed eighty acres of excellent farm land at their disposal. His price was ten dollars per acre. They contended that the Bishop was usurping their rights in selling what justly belonged to the congregation. According to Mr. Eckert, who supported the Bishop, he and Father Remelle had a

1- Mr. Floersch is now living in Omaha, Nebraska, 1931.

verbal understanding that the land would be at the disposition of the Bishop at such time as the parishioners would be able to otherwise support a priest. It was their hope that it would yield sufficient revenue for the education of young men to the priesthood or the care of orphans. As this circumstance had been explained to the Bishop, he felt justified in requesting the sale of the land for needed seminary funds, 1882. The Community was thriving and under present conditions not taxed in the least for church expenses. He did not doubt but that the deed to the land was made out according to the intentions of the founders of the fund. However, the announcement of the Bishop's proposal aroused a furor among eight or ten leading church members, some of them belonging to the Committee. Their interpretation of the deed which rendered the land to the Bishop in "fee simple" could not and would not admit the right of disposition.

The trip to Alma proved unsatisfactory as the Bishop refused to discuss matters but promised to notify them by letter to the pastor, of his decision. When the information came that the land was sold to the highest bidder, Michael Floersch, father of Frank, the parties belonging to the faction threatened the law

upon the Bishop. In vain did the priest and their fellow churchmen try to dissuade them from such procedure. They engaged lawyers from Manhattan and issued notification. It was then the Bishop required Father Weikmann to read a letter of excommunication from the pulpit at Sunday services. The offenders paid no more heed to the order than if they were not concerned. They persisted in performing the duties of their office, held the funds and passed the collection plate. When Father carried out instructions by appointing another committee, they ignored his authority and for weeks two sets of ushers directed all meetings, and "took up" the collections. The sympathizers of each side were well defined during the latter proceeding. Committee No. 1 refused to relinquish the book of accounts, so a new set was opened by Committee No. II. A spirit of disobedience reigned during the entire year. As the dissenters refused to enter the parish house Father Weikmann arranged to meet them at a place they specified in an effort to conciliate matters, but to no avail. Meanwhile lawyers for both sides, the Bishop's from Leavenworth, were prepared and the suit tried in the District Court of Pottawatomie County, at Manhattan, Kansas. The names of the plaintiffs were in

part, Constantine Umscheid, Sebastian Umscheid, Oliver Umscheid, and Peter Noll. The principal defendants, Bishop Fink, Frank Winters, Michael Floersch, and John Eckert.¹

Mr. Eckert was called on to testify why he sold the land at such a sacrifice. He explained that Father Remelle intended the funds to revert to the Bishop for for the good of the diocese when the community would be able to support a priest and for this reason he felt he was giving to a worthy cause. Mr. Eckert complained that he could not comprehend the lawyer and asked that the priest be permitted to act as interpreter. The request was denied and a citizen of Manhattan, Mr. Assmusen, was asked and proved competent. The court house was crowded, with the Bishop's party from Leavenworth, several clergymen having accompanied him, both factions from Rock Creek, and the townspeople. The Bishop lost the case owing to a technicality in the deed, which gave him the right to hold the property "in trust" only. The Bishop appealed to the Supreme Court but with no better success. To this day the revenue in that particular parish is obtained from the most disputed "church land." As matters quieted down the bann of excommunication was removed and harmony restored, though the

1- Green and Hessin, Attorneys for Plaintiffs. "Brief of Plaintiffs". Bishop Fink employed Lucian Baker and Fenlon.

participants in the feud were never very friendly towards the pastor, who spent twelve years in this Bavarian settlement.

Mail was received at Myers Valley postoffice about twice a week in the early '80's, being carried from St. George, on the Union Pacific. Later the delivery was made every day. Floersch had planted an orchard during his supposed ownership of the church farm, for which he was reimbursed from the general fund. This proved to be an excellent investment, and many barrels of apples were shipped to market. Even the Bishop did not disdain to accept an occasional gift of the "forbidden" fruit. The Valley is very fertile, corn, wheat and grapes being its prime products. Father Weikmann rented the farm, with the exception of the orchard, which made it possible to discontinue storing the grain in the rectory. This building he had entirely replastered, repaired and enlarged, perhaps fifteen or twenty feet. It was built of native rock, and at present serves as a convent for the sisters who teach the parish school. A new barn proved essential and with it the plant was quite complete. The school, of timber, fifty feet long, was not in session during the period preceding the lawsuit, but classes were resumed in 1887. An unusual custom prevailed here. Practically the entire community

of Myers Valley was Catholic. The public and the parish schools were about a mile and a half apart. The law required the children to attend the public school during January, February and March, when they were removed for the remaining six months to Rock Creek. The teacher was transferred with the pupils, about fifty in number. Classes included eight grades.¹ Father Weikmann conducted the classes in religion and every four years the Bishop administered Confirmation.

In 1886 Bishop Fink proposed to Father Weikmann to build a house in Wamega, as he was obliged to sleep in the Sacristy of the Church, week-ends. It was a more scattered and less prosperous community than Rock Creek, composed of Germans and Irish, about thirty families. The missionary realized how difficult would be the problem to finance the undertaking. Meetings were called to form a building committee but all refused to serve. Notwithstanding, the Bishop persisted, assuring the missionary that some means would be forthcoming. It so happened that the Rock Island was beginning construction on a line from Topeka north and west to Belleville. The route lay between fifteen and eighteen miles south of Wamega. Upon investigation Father Weikmann discovered that the majority of laborers in the construc-

1- Miss Anna Häuptle, Milan, Ohio, who taught for three years 1890-92, was an accomplished musician, trained the choir of mixed voices and played the organ.

tion "gangs"¹ were Irish Catholics and would be willing to make a monthly donation for the proposed residence in Wamega. In return the foreman invited Father to hold services at least once a month, when convenient for the men, usually six a.m. The camps were moved to accommodate the locality of construction. Mass was said in a tent. Many wives joined their husbands, forming a veritable travelling colony. It took from May to September, inclusive, to complete the railroad. By that time at least one thousand dollars had been collected and plans for the rectory prepared. The Wamega people, being of better mind, contributed nearly eight hundred dollars, so that when the house was finished it was free from debt.

Some of the parishioners offered their services in place of cash donations. The women of the "railroad colony" supplied the furnishings. With the convenience of an abode Father changed the schedule for Wamega, usually spending Friday and Saturday nights there and saying "first" Mass on Sunday before driving to Rock Creek for later services.

1- There were about five "gangs" working in different locations.

On one week-day of each month, a trip was made to Laclede, about fifteen miles northeast of the Valley. The settlement included five or six Irish families. Mass was said in one of the homes.

The more ambitious members of the Wamega congregation in '88 or '90 began discussing the prospects for a cemetery. Father Weikmann urged the project and a Mr. McMahon was appointed to negotiate for five acres some distance from the town. The property belonged to one of the parishioners, a Mrs. Merritt, who boasted some Indian blood. McMahon did not acquaint her of the purpose for which he wished the land, nor did she make inquiry. The stipulation was \$300 cash, with the deed made in McMahon's name. When the transaction was completed McMahon proceeded to make a quit claim deed out to the Bishop and had the news of the proposed cemetery published. Mrs. Merritt was incensed and wanted the land back. She consulted lawyers in Topeka, who advised a lawsuit since the land was obtained "fraudulently". Anonymous letters began to appear in the Kansas City Times threatening harm to Catholic Institutions of a certain area, if this land were not returned to the owner. The mysterious significance of

"White Caps" subscribed to these articles, set ecclesiastical authorities on the alert against depredations, and the Jesuits at St. Mary's College were among the cautious who secured special guards for protection against surprise attacks.

When the Bishop was apprized of the disturbance and that the deed was made out in his name, he was greatly grieved, not wishing to suffer another indignity of a lawsuit. In a hurried message to Father Weikmann is expressed the reproof:

That in spite of your zeal and good intentions you have brought your good Bishop and all the diocese into trouble. I wish you to inform the lady that the land will be deeded back to her.

Father Weikmann lost no time in an effort to calm the Bishop's fears, assuring him:

I am not afraid of Red-caps, White-caps, Black-caps or any other kind of caps, and that land of five acres will not be deeded back, but will be kept for the purpose for which it was bought, a cemetery.

Though the threats continued to appear, even affirming that all Catholic churches and rectories would be destroyed by Easter, Father Weikmann's courage was undaunted. The people begged him not to remain in his Wamega house on the nights preceding Easter, which

promised to be a day of doom, rather than the joyous feast, "Resurrexit".

However, he disdained their warnings, and with his faithful dog as companion, prepared to take his repose there. A perfect day dawned and he was up early to greet his anxious people. The cloud seemed lifted from that hour as there were no more harassing threats, and all memory of impending peril gradually faded away. Even the occasion of the first funeral failed to cause any unwonted scene. The county surveyors were engaged to plat the property into lots, while trees and flowers were added to beautify the enclosure.

Travelling along the highway connecting Wamega with Westmoreland, Pottawattomie County-seat, one passes this gently rising knoll. Its monuments, its greensward and the cultured condition of the larger vegetation give evidence of the continued care bestowed on this turbulently acquired "God's acre".

EPILOGUE

What more ideal situation could be imagined at the eventide of a well-spent life, than that the shepherd of the plains should exchange his sheep cote for a cozy bungalow! When life was young, the great open spaces called to him no less than to the brave and rugged frontiersman. But with what a different meaning! To the one it signified above all a home, the highest earthly gain a man can hope for, to the other it carried a plea for souls. "Be a shepherd to my flock" came the voice. And with obedience born of faith, "not counting the cost", the true pastor followed the sheep in their wide wanderings, exceeding, in his ambitious zeal, the farthest boundary of civilization on the Kansas prairies. Time has dealt benignly with our venerated missionary since the period of his retirement from active duty, five years ago. Unloosening the bow of responsibility has wrought such compensation in renewed energy, that at the esteemed age of fourscore and two, his activity is a marvel to his many friends. He reads much, and is ever ready to untangle a knotty theological difficulty

to the satisfaction of the inquirer. Long walks are his hobby; his step is firm and rapid, made more flexible, perhaps, by the adroit handling of a prized "old world" cane.

During the summer of 1931, Father Weikmann was the guest of honor of the Faculty, on the occasion of the diamond jubilee of St. Francis Seminary, Milwaukee. He is the oldest living alumnus of his Alma Mater, as he is also the veteran priest in this section of the country. It is whispered that the sixtieth anniversary of Ordination, occurring this coming August 27, 1932, will be marked with fitting ceremonies by his brother priests. To them, in particular, is significant the apostolic spirit, the invincible courage in all difficulties and dangers, the humility and perseverance so strikingly exemplified in this patriarch of the Kansas frontier. As a member of the Bishop's Council, Father Weikmann holds a distinctive privilege in the diocese. Living close to St. Joseph's Church, where the Redemptorist Fathers are in charge, affords him the opportunity of offering Mass daily. Occasionally, when the chaplain is absent he comes to conduct services at Mount Carmel. His exhortations, always interesting, bear the force of one who has

experienced life with its "sunshine and shadows". But above all is the listener impressed with that radiance of peace which reflects an inner life, anchored, these many years in the Source of Life.

In retrospect we see pioneer Kansas welcoming a fledgling in the ministry. Under the maturing influence of time, the commonwealth has kept apace with the onward progress of the nation, utilizing, broadening, and enriching its native resources. And "through the arches of the years" we glimpse the missionary, faithful to his trust, playing his part in the ever changing vicissitudes of life. In each instance has been fulfilled the motto of the State of Kansas -

"AD ASTERA PER ASPERA"

