

## Reviews and Notices

*The Catholic Church in Indiana, 1789-1834.* By Thomas T. McAvoy. *Columbia University Studies in History, Economics and Public Law*, No. 471, Columbia University Press, 1940. Pp. 226, \$2.25.

Readers interested in the religious history of Indiana and the Middle West should find this little volume bearing the *imprimatur* of the Bishop of Fort Wayne informative reading. Specifically, it is a well-knit study of the early days of the Catholic Church in Indiana. In its broader aspects, it is a general treatment of the French religious contributions to the life of the Mississippi Valley.

Dr. McAvoy has taken for his task the job of bridging the gap in the history of the Catholic Church in Indiana from the days of the French missions to the later American Church. To assist him in treating this neglected portion of church history, he has had access to newly found materials in the form of letters and journals and in addition has made an extensive use of the published documents bearing on the subject.

The work deals largely with the French at Vincennes. To the author the story of the French under American rule elicits the deepest sympathy. Theirs was the history of a culture that could not readily acclimate to American institutions. Contact with the Americans caused a rapid decline in French economy. Their prosperity was based primarily on the fur trade. But American competition, Indian wars, and the depletion of the fur supply almost dried up their once lucrative occupation.

Had the French been able to turn from fur trading to agriculture, they might have become a more influential element in Indiana history. Such a change in occupation was impossible, partly because many were deprived of their lands, and also because they lacked the necessary capital to engage in profitable agriculture.

Dr. McAvoy ably supports his primary thesis that in spite of economic reverses and long periods of neglect by church authorities, the French in the Wabash and St. Joseph valleys remained faithful to the Catholic Church. Because they held to the credo of the Church until it was joined by later immigrants from the South and East, the French

were able to leave the Catholic Church as their one permanent contribution to the institutional life of Indiana.

The biographical portraits of Joseph Flaget, Stephen Theodore Badin, Jean Francois Rivet, and others are well drawn. Many new and significant facts are brought to light by the author as he sketches the difficult labors of those pioneer Catholic missionaries amid frontier conditions. Not alone were they concerned with the spiritual welfare of their flock, but with their social advancement as well. As a result, they struggled for educational and social facilities and made lasting impressions on their contemporaries and their progeny.

CECIL K. BYRD

*Hoosier*. By Heath Bowman. The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Indianapolis, 1941. Pp. 360, illustrated, \$3.00.

In this volume, the author endeavors to draw a "composite portrait" of the Hoosier, setting for himself a difficult task. There is no such composite, and the most that any writer can do is to present the materials to the reader and let that overworked individual in turn have the pleasure of trying to do the impossible. The story runs along (there is a thread to it) simply enough, and the Hoosier communities are revealed as they change from one stage to another. All sorts of conditions and incidents are presented with plenty of the early Hoosier speech thrown in. It is not hard to discover that the author is no Bourbon, and, incidentally, he drops a bit of wisdom here and there.

The book is made up of three parts: "The Sowing"—"The Ripening"—"The Harvest." However, these titles mean little more than an invitation to readers to think of the flow of Indiana history as a moving poem. The chapters, of which there are twenty-five, follow in a general way the historical development of the state. While illustrating conditions that prevailed in succeeding periods and tracing some of the events of Indiana's history, the author introduces a number of the larger actors who have played parts in the Hoosier drama. Light is thrown on the qualities and achievements of these actors, though one will not find much biographical material relative to the noted Hoosiers who find a place in the book.