

**The  
Catholic Church  
in Indiana**



**1686-1814**

## Foreword

These pages are the prologue to a projected chronicle of the archdiocese of Indianapolis, which was in its beginning the diocese of Vincennes; they come to an end in 1814, 20 years before there was even a diocese of Vincennes. The story reaches a sort of climax in the coming for the first time of a bishop to Indiana and Illinois to minister the sacrament of confirmation to the inhabitants. It was a joyful reunion at Pentecost of 1814 when the people welcomed the bishop of Bardstown, Benedict Joseph Flaget, who arriving there at Christmas time some 20 years before the start of his priestly ministry had revealed what was in his heart by adding to his entries in the church registrar "my first funeral," "my first marriage."

The year also marked a new epoch for the Catholic Church in Indiana. From then on the priests that celebrated Mass and administered the sacraments at Vincennes were those coming from Bardstown, and Bishop Flaget himself made visits from time to time. The second war with Great Britain came to an end, and land procured from the Indians was offered for sale by the federal government. In two years Indiana became the nineteenth state of the union. In consequence of these events large numbers of families came into the state, among whom were little groups of Catholics settling here and there, needing the ministrations of religion. No longer would the Church's activity be confined to Vincennes and its environs and the Indians remaining in northern Indiana. From this time on the chronicler must widen his field of vision and cast his eye upon the newcomers from other states and from Europe and differing much from one another, to see what they are about.

Anyone trying to tell the story of a diocese faces a situation that is strictly dilemmatic. He cannot adequately deal with the diocese without relating what happened in the parishes; and no account of a parish is satisfactory that leaves out what took place in other parishes nearby and far away and in the bishop's office. Further progress in the chronicle of the archdiocese must seek to find a way of escape, and the way may turn out to be a maze.

I could not have written these chapters without the materials collected by Father Robert Gorman during his years as historian and archivist of the archdiocese and the notes and comments he wrote regarding them. Equally important has been the large number of works on the history of the Church in the Midwest in the Marian College library, the gift of Archbishop Schulte. Most of the information brought together here I have derived from the Illinois Historical Collections, the publications of the Indiana Historical Society and the Indiana Historical Bureau, and histories of other dioceses and of religious communities. If there is anything not told before the story, it must be attributed to the translation of the registry of the Old Cathedral in Vincennes, made many years ago by Father Frederick Burget but never before studied in detail.

It is my hope that the reading of the story told here may awaken the desire, latent in almost every heart, to understand what we are by discovering how we came to be, and to stir up the ambition to preserve for those that come after us the memory of the works worthy of emulation that God performed by the hands of those that went before us, while we strive to deserve our heritage.

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conquest all the way to the Mississippi River.

In consequence, the indigenous tribes had retreated north and west and south. Though, no doubt, bands of hunters came through in search of game, there seems not to have been a single tribe settled and growing crops in what is now Indiana when the French arrived.

The first French intruders were in search of a passage to the Orient, to China and that India that Columbus thought he had found. Some hoped to come upon silver and gold, as had Cortez in Mexico and Pizarro in Peru. But there was no gold in these hills.

The French quickly found a substitute, however, in the hides and furs that the Indians had long used for clothing and for shelter, in the taking and the processing of which they had well developed skills.

**In the course of time, the demand for furs became so great that the Indians in large measure gave up their cultivation of crops in favor of the trade in furs that enabled them to acquire the metal tools and other gadgets that the French offered in exchange.**

The French monarchy laid claim to all this region that we call the Midwest by virtue of priority of discovery and exploration, taking no account of the Indians' possession, prior to theirs by some thousands of years.

It was in 1671 that Simon Francois Daumont, Sieur de Lusson, took possession of all these regions in the name of Louis XIV, in a solemn ceremony at Sault Ste. Marie. For nearly a century France held sway over all the lands from the Appalachian to the Rocky Mountains, except only the Southwest, where Spain had established its rule a few years earlier. It was an uneasy sway however, disturbed by troubles from within and from without.

**WITHIN THE FRENCH** regime, the older authority of New France or Canada, reaching down from Quebec, came to have a rival in a younger French colony, which was working its way up the Mississippi from New Orleans, which became the capital of the new colony, named Louisiana.

About 1720 the crown sought to settle the altercations between the colonies by drawing a boundary line to separate their jurisdictions; this line extended eastward from the mouth of the Illinois River, passing through the site of the present Terre Haute, the area north of the line to be New France or Canada, that south of the line to be Louisiana.

**Indiana thus lay partly in the northern province, partly in the southern. Even after this action, however, there was less than perfect harmony between the colonies.**

Another source of trouble was the vacillating policy of the metropolitan government with respect to its American possessions. In each colony it tried granting monopolies to individuals or to companies before settling on direct control by Paris.

Moreover, it created disturbances by its efforts to match the supply of furs with the shifting demand for them in Europe, sometimes assigning quotas, sometimes prohibiting all trade, with the usual result of such actions seen in bootleg operations and their attendant violence.

More serious, however, were the troubles arising from without. On the whole, the French enjoyed friendlier relations with the Indians than did the English. One reason for their advantage was the presence of the missionaries, who to some ex-

tent restrained the warlike proclivities of both the French and the Indians.

Another was that, whereas the English set up agricultural colonies, thus taking over large tracts of the Indians' lands, the French for the most part confined themselves to the fur trade, leaving the Indians in undisturbed possession of their corn fields and hunting grounds.

Nonetheless, some tribes resisted these minimal incursions and remained hostile throughout the French occupation. Thus the Iroquois in the east were generally on the side of the English in the wars between the great powers. The Fox tribe in the north never accepted French rule and were often at war with the invaders in a sort of Free Fox resistance movement. And in the south, the Chickasaws did not readily suffer trade to pass up and down the Mississippi, which they regarded as their river.

**BUT THE GREATEST** threat to the French regime came from the English colonies. These were older than the French settlements and far more populous. The grants of the British kings sometimes pretended to extend the colonies' sway indefinitely westward.

In addition, the colonists were an aggressive lot; while developing agriculture and industry on their own ground, they looked with envy on the lucrative fur trade of the French and were determined to get themselves a share of it.

To safeguard its trade, Canada set up trading posts along the waterways by which the voyageurs, who carried on trade, and the Indians themselves brought their furs to Montreal and Quebec and onto which also the perfidious English might be expected to intrude.

Louisiana pursued a similar policy in its domain. Each such post had a garrison of French soldiers to protect it. Each post had nearby a settlement of Indians, who were engaged in the procurement and treatment of the furs; the Indian warriors served also as a sort of militia, prepared to fight along with the French in case of attack by the English or their Indian allies.

Sometimes the French chose a site for their post because of the presence of an Indian town; sometimes they persuaded the Indians to settle at a place they thought strategically advantageous. It was generally at such posts that the missionaries—Jesuits, Recollects, priests of the Quebec seminary—had their stations for the evangelization and instruction of the Indians. Indeed at times the governor held out the promise of the presence of a missionary as an inducement to the Indians to settle where it wished them to be.

About some of these posts there grew up settlements of retired soldiers or voyageurs, carrying on trade with the Indians, purveying goods and services for the soldiers, and finally planting a few crops and founding permanent towns.

**THERE WERE SUCH** posts at many places in the Midwest, as at Michillimackinac, on Green Bay, on the St. Joseph River near Lake Michigan. Because of its strategic position, commanding the strait between Lakes Erie and Huron, the post at Detroit, founded in 1701, soon became the most important in this area. It was essential to the safety of the fur trade and to communication between Quebec and New Orleans.

In 1712, Detroit for several weeks sustained a siege carried out by the Fox and Mascouten Indians with English encouragement. Victory for the attackers could well have endangered the entire French regime. Realizing this, the French and their Indian allies—Hurons, Ottawas, Miamis—withstood the siege, and in the final battle inflicted so great a loss on the Fox tribe that it ceased for some time to be a military threat.

The French commander in this engagement was Charles Reynaud Dubuisson. His

chief lieutenant was Jean Baptiste Bissot, Sieur de Vincennes, who arrived in the midst of the siege with a reinforcement of Miami Indians. The title has no reference to the French nobility; its granting by the government of New France together with a tract of land was a "method of apportioning land, bringing it into production, and obviating the evils of speculation."

In this instance, the famous intendant, Jean Talon, had granted the seigneurie of Vincennes, about 5,000 acres a little below Quebec on the St. Lawrence River, in favor of his godson, Jean Baptiste Bissot, when the latter was four years old.

The seigneurs' "financial rewards were not great," but they did receive "greatly enhanced social status." That this status was appreciated is evident from the use of the title rather than of the family both by Jean Baptiste and by his son, who inherited the title.

In 1712 Sieur de Vincennes was 44 years old. He had long been an officer in the Marines and he had gained the esteem and affection of the Indians during many years of service among them. It was for this reason that he played so large a part in the defense of Detroit.

FOR SOME TIME before this siege the Indians that had moved away from what is now Indian had been drifting back. They had themselves acquired firearms and were thus able to resist the Iroquois on more nearly equal terms. Perhaps the establishment of the post at Detroit and the French victory there accelerated this movement.

Since this ground supported an abundance of fur-bearing animals the French at first encouraged the Indians' return, but as English traders infiltrated the area, often offering higher prices than the French, the latter had second thoughts about the matter and endeavored to prevent the Indians from approaching too close to the English.

The Miami tribe nevertheless showed a determination to return to what they asserted was their ancestral home, Kekionga, at the head of the Maumee River, near the site of the present Fort Wayne. Vincennes accompanied them, apparently having the two-fold mission of persuading them to return to the post on the St. Joseph River and, failing that, of preventing the Indians from trading with the English.

At the same time, a number of Indians belonging to Miami bands, Weas and Piankeshaws, were settling along the Wabash River near where Lafayette now stands, at a site that came to be called Ouiatanon after the Weas.

In 1719 Jean Baptiste Bissot died at the early age of 51. His death ended the hope of the French to persuade the Miamis to return to Post St. Joseph. So great was the Indians' regard for this officer that Kekionga became even more sacred to them as the burial place of the hero. Forty years later, when the Miamis had gone even farther east, the French would be urging them to return to Kekionga for this very reason.

Making a virtue of necessity, the French set up posts both at Kekionga, which came to be called Fort Miami, and at Ouiatanon. These were the first posts on this ground, both established about 1720. It is hard to say which was the earlier. Dubuisson, the victor at Detroit, was placed in command of both posts, with residence at Fort Miami or St. Philippe, as it was first called. Though his appointment was made in 1717, he seems not to have arrived until 1721.

IT IS NOT CLEAR what position Vincennes was to have held had he not died so

young. Perhaps he was to have commanded at Fort Miami under the direction of Dubuisson, living at Ouiatanon, for the governor of Canada wrote in 1717: "I have designated Sieur Dubuisson, captain, to go as commander in chief in the post at Ouiatanon." As things developed, however, Dubuisson took up residence at Fort Miami with jurisdiction over both posts.

The immediate command at Ouiatanon fell to Vincennes' son, Francois Marie Bissot, who inherited his father's title. He had served as cadet under his father, and he apparently inherited along with the title his charm in dealing with the Indians. In making a report in 1722, the governor wrote:

**The Sieur de Vincennes, fils, who is only a cadet in the troops, commands among the nation (Ouiatanon) under the orders of the Sieur Dubuisson. He has been there since 1718, and he serves very usefully because of the great influence he has acquired among the savages, who keep for him the same attachment they had for the Sieur de Vincennes, his father.**

So important were his services that the governor recommended him for promotion when an opening should occur.

How long the young man had served under his father it is not easy to say. In a letter he wrote some time later, in 1733, when he was 33 years old, he referred to his experience of 20 years among the Indians.

For those living today it is hard to picture a boy of 13 in military service. Yet in the account of a battle fought a few years later, great credit attaches to a soldier of 16, whose level-headedness and courage in taking over the command saved the French from an even greater disaster than they actually suffered. Moreover, the very letter of 1733 gives evidence that the writer's academic education had not gone very far; so limited was his writing ability that even an admirer of his remarks about his "orthographie fantaisante" and "plus fautive."

The most convincing evidence, however, that the young Bissot had had a long experience in the military life among the Indians is that in 1718, when he was but 18, he received the command at Ouiatanon and that the reason for his appointment was his influence among the Indians. In this command he was indeed subject to the supervision of Dubuisson, but that supervision could not have been very exacting, for Dubuisson was at Fort Miami, 90 miles away, a trip of several days.

THE YOUNG MAN'S performance must have been satisfactory, for, as has been noted, the governor was recommending him for promotion, and he continued in command for more than ten years. Indeed, before he left the post to accept an appointment in Louisiana, the governor of New France was expressing chagrin at the machinations of the governor of Louisiana to entice the young officer into the service of that province.

Some time before the French had posts in what is now Indiana, there were traders and missionaries along the Mississippi River. Indeed, the first acquaintance the French had with the Ohio seems to have come in their exploration of the Mississippi where the former flows into the latter. When they came upon the Wabash a little later, they took it to be the river they had seen entering the Mississippi. For many years the Ouabache, as the French wrote it, was considered to be the main stream, the Ohio its tributary.

In the course of their epic journey on the Mississippi in the summer of 1673, Louis Joliet and Father Jacques Marquette met many tribes. One of these, the Kaskaskias, living on the Illinois River, by which the explorers returned, so impressed Marquette that he promised to return to them.

He did return the following year and began instructing them. He had been so weakened by his travels, however, that he had to set out for home at Michilimackinac, but he died on the way on May 18, 1675, not quite 38 years old.

The Kaskaskias, whose instruction Marquette had begun, fearing incursions from the north, moved farther south and settled on another river, the settlement and the river coming to be called Kaskaskia. About the same time, the priests of the Quebec seminary, wishing to have a part in the missionary work along with the Jesuits and the Recollects, set up a mission some miles up the Mississippi among the Tamarois and Cahokia Indians. The mission became known as Cahokia. Though both these posts were established under the auspices of New France, after the division of the colonies they fell under the jurisdiction of Louisiana.

**NEITHER KASKASKIA** nor Cahokia was strongly fortified. For this reason in 1712 Governor Bienville of Louisiana had erected a more formidable fort, midway between them, giving it the name of Fort de Chartres or Fort Chartres. This became the headquarters of the commandant, who had previously lived at Kaskaskia.

When Louisiana was divided into districts, Fort Chartres was made the capital of the Illinois district, embracing the country between the Mississippi and the Wabash.

It was not long before the commandant at Fort Chartres became convinced that there should be a post farther east to guard against the depredations of the English. At his suggestion, Bienville began negotiations for such a post on the Wabash, which could be anywhere on our Wabash or on the Ohio below the confluence of the two streams.

The plan was to place a small garrison at a suitable point that would serve to ward off English infiltration and to gather furs brought by the Indians. There would also be a band of friendly Indians, who would engage in the procurement of furs and be ready to act as an auxiliary military force.

It was necessary, therefore, that the commander of the projected post should be not only a competent officer but also a person of sufficient influence to persuade the Indians to undergo the hardships and to face the dangers of moving in the direction from which attacks might come.

It is no wonder that the Louisiana governor saw in the Sieur de Vincennes the man that best met these demands. As early as 1722 he received a commission in Louisiana in addition to the position he held in New France. But for whatever reason, the project of the post on the Wabash was a long time in starting.

Perhaps the reluctance of New France to see Vincennes go had something to do with the delay. Perhaps the Indians were not easily persuaded to leave the center of French power and to face attack from the southern tribes in league with Britain.

**THAT THE INDIANS'** hesitancy played a part is suggested by the fact that the site chosen was that near the present city of Vincennes rather than one at or below the confluence with the Ohio, which would have been uncomfortably near the Chickasaw, allies of the British.

The choice was a compromise. This was the third French post on this ground, the only one of the three that has lasted to the present. Its continued existence is evidence of wisdom of the choice as well as of the competence of its founder and of his successor in command.

There is no certainty as to the exact date of the founding of Vincennes, but the

summer or autumn of 1731 seems to be the most likely date. At first there were only a dozen or so soldiers. At the request of the commander in 1733, however, the number was increased to 30. Several hundred Indians must have accompanied Vincennes from Ouiatanon.

**French settlers seem to have gathered fairly soon, for in 1733 the commander married a Kaskaskia girl of the name of Longpre and brought her to live at the post. It is unlikely that he would have done so had there not been other French women about. Two daughters were born of this marriage, Marie and Catherine.**

The Sieur de Vincennes did not long continue in command of the post that he founded and that came in later years to be called for him. In 1736 he lost his life in a battle with the Chickasaw Indians in what is now the state of Mississippi. Governor Bienville, hoping to crush the Chickasaws and thus gain unimpeded passage on the Mississippi River, planned a concerted attack upon the Indians from the south and the north.

Bienville would lead his troops from New Orleans. He ordered Diron d'Artiguiette, commander at Fort Chartres, to gather the forces of the Illinois district and to meet him. The Illinois contingent was made up of some 140 Frenchmen and 300 Indians. A part of this little army was from the post on the Wabash, led by its young commander. The part played by these men has prompted some to call the expedition Indiana's first war.

**FAILING TO MEET** Bienville, who had met with delays, and being nearly out of provisions, d'Artiguiette ordered an attack on a Chickasaw town, in the hope that its store of food would replenish his supplies and that its stockade would afford his men a secure fort to await Bienville's army.

The attack occurred on Palm Sunday, March 25, 1736. It had success at first, but after a while a large force of Chickasaws came forward and overwhelmed the attackers. Fifty or 60 of these were killed and some 20 were carried off wounded. The Chickasaws captured about 20 men and put them to death by burning on the very day of the battle. These included d'Artiguiette himself, who was badly wounded, the officers Pierre St. Ange and Vincennes, and Father Antoine Senat, the Jesuit chaplain.

It was on this occasion that Voisin, the 16-year-old soldier mentioned before, distinguished himself by his intrepidity and his cool composure in organizing the retreat that prevented the total destruction of the French forces.

**MANY WRITERS**, possibly influenced by preconceptions derived from their knowledge of European practices, state that the captives were burned at the stake. Eyewitness accounts clearly state that they were thrown on two fires that the Indian women had prepared. The fires seem to have needed new fuel from time to time, for these accounts state that the burning continued from three in the afternoon until midnight. The same witnesses say that the victims gained the admiration of their tormenters by singing loudly as they awaited their burning.

Two of the victims receive special mention for their courage. Both Father Senat and Francois Marie Bissot are said to have refused opportunities to escape in the rout, the former because he would not abandon the wounded, the latter because he would stand by his wounded commander. Father Senat was 36 years old, and had been in the country for only two years; Vincennes was 35. One must have compassion and admiration for these brave and idealistic young men in their bitter and untimely death.

On the other hand, one should not be without understanding in judging the Chickasaws. Other surprise attacks have aroused their indignation. That Palm Sunday was doubtless for them a day of infamy.

About two months after inflicting this defeat on the Illinois army, the Chickasaws routed Bienville's larger force in another part of their country. It is likely that they were not surprised on this occasion, having received some indication of what they might look for in the papers taken from d'Artiquette's person.

These defeats brought consternation to the Illinois country. The Chickasaws were not crushed. On the contrary, they were more able than ever to harass shipping on the Mississippi. The loss of so many officers and men left the country more vulnerable to depredation.

The post on the Wabash felt the defeat perhaps more keenly than the rest of the district. It was young and small, and it had no longer the man that had brought it into being and directed it. Many of the Indians left the post and went back to their former home, where they would be closer to the Canadian forts. So great was the discouragement that there was serious thought of abandoning the little post or of replacing it with a larger one down the river where it was first supposed to be.

**BUT THE POST** was not abandoned. The new commander, appointed to replace Vincennes, was Louis St. Ange, younger brother of the Pierre that lost his life along with Vincennes in the burning by the Chickasaw.

Like his predecessor, he was the son of a veteran soldier, Jean St. Ange, once commander at Fort Chartres. He probably had also been in service from an early age. He was 38 years old, three years older than the late commander. He would be 66 when he left the post in 1764 after the cession of the French possessions in America to Britain.

In the intervening years governors of Louisiana and commandants at Fort Chartres came and went, but the commander of the little post on the Wabash kept his place. He must have satisfied both his superiors and his French and Indian subjects to have continued so long in his rule.

The post must have fulfilled its function in handling the fur trade and in protecting the area against British incursions, for there were no great disturbances during these years. Battles were fought between the French and the British in other places, but the post remained tranquil.

The post seems not to have received an official title during the French regime. It was just the post on the Wabash. Sometimes people referred to it by the name of the commandant, Post Vincennes or Post St. Ange. Sometimes they called it Little Wea to distinguish it from the Great Wea-Ouiatanon.

In an account book of 1746, there is a reference to a payment of 600 livres to one l'Allemand of Post Vincennes, which would indicate that ten years after his death the founder's name was at least sometimes attached to the post. Still, Father Watrin, in his letter of 1764, speaks of the post of St. Ange, showing that Vincennes' name had not yet become firmly fastened.

As the city of Vincennes is the only one in Indiana with an unbroken history from the 18th century, so its parish of St. Francis Xavier is alone among the Catholic parishes in tracing its life from the first missionaries. Indeed, the early planning for the post on the Wabash engaged the interest of these missionaries. The area seemed to them to have promise for their work among the Inaidns.

Among the first and most energetic advocates of such a post was Nicholas Ignace

de Beaubois, the Jesuit cure of the Church of the Immaculate Conception in Kaskaskia, newly erected as a canonical parish.

Partly to promote this cause he went to France, taking with him some Indian leaders, whom he presented to the king. His activity probably had something to do with the appointment of a priest to work in this area. In a Memoir Concerning the Church in Louisiana (1722-1728), there is mention of a Pere d'Outreleau as at the Wabash. But though Etienne d'Outreleau was assigned to the post before it came into being, he seems never to have reached it.

He came to the Illinois district in 1726 and was no doubt preparing for the missionary life under the tutelage of veteran priests. By the time the post was established he had returned to New Orleans on a voyage in the course of which he had a hairbreadth escape from massacre by the Yazoo Indians.

Eventually he became chaplain to the Ursuline Sisters. There seems to be good reason for the surmise that his failure to remain in the mission was his lack of linguistic ability, which prevented him from learning the Algonquian language spoken by the Indians of this area.

**THERE IS NO REASON** to suppose that Father Senat, whom some list among the priests serving at the post on the Wabash, was ever there. It was because of his presence at Kaskaskia, where he was doubtless serving his apprenticeship like d'Outreleau before him, that he went as chaplain on the disastrous expedition that cost him his life. It is likely that his superior thought that this would be good experience for the young man, who had been in the country but a short time. The association of his name with that of Vincennes as a hero on that occasion has led to the mistake that he was the priest at the post on the Wabash.

**The first priest to exercise his ministry on the soil that is now Indiana was Father Claude Allouez, who in 1663 had been appointed vicar general to the bishop of Quebec and superior of the Jesuit missions in the west.**

For many years he worked among several tribes of Indians on the shore of Lake Superior. Included in these were some tribes that had left this ground to escape the Iroquois. When, after the containment of the Iroquois, the Miamis and the Potawatomis migrated south again, Allouez accompanied them.

In 1686 the governor of New France granted the Jesuits a tract of 20x20 arpents (about 340 acres) at a site on the St. Joseph River to be chosen by them. The land that Allouez picked out was near where Niles, Michigan, now stands. There he built a chapel and a house.

Since this was near the present Indiana border, and since the Indian settlements and corn fields extended over several miles, we may be sure that Allouez' ministrations brought him into what is now Indiana, perhaps as far as Ouiatanon and Fort Miami.

**ALLOUEZ DIED** in 1689 at the age of 75. His successor was Father Claude Avenau, who remained at Post St. Joseph for 25 years. Other priests serving there included Jean Baptiste Morinie, Pierre de Januay, and Pierre Petier. All these must be counted as precursors in the work of religion on our soil.

As the Indians continued farther south and east, we may suppose that the priests at least paid them occasional visits. Father Jaunay actually was stationed at Ouiatanon from 1748 to 1754, the only priest to have an appointment just for that post.

Before then, however, another priest came to this ground with a definite

assignment to the area, though not to a particular place.

On May 29, 1725 Jean Charles Guymonneau received a permit to go from Montreal "to the Miami and Ouiatanon with two canoes manned by five men each, including a servant . . . and to carry in the canoes the provisions and other goods which it is customary to grant missionaries for their needs." Father Guymonneau was then 41 years old. He appears to have worked in the area until his death in 1736.

Several writers state that he resided at Vincennes. Though there is no documentary evidence for his presence there, there is good reason to believe that he accompanied the Indians whom the founder of the post led from Ouiatanon in 1731 and that he remained there for a time at least. As has been noted, it was a policy of the Canadian government to promise the presence of a priest as an inducement to the Indians to settle where the authorities wished them to be.

The governor did, indeed, vigorously oppose the departure of the Sieur de Vincennes. There is every reason to suppose that he would have viewed with something short of pure delight the priest's cooperation in the venture. But Paris had spoken. If he had to yield in the case of the commander, he could hardly have put obstacles in the way of the chaplain's going along. There would not have been anything in church law to prevent Guymonneau's leaving Canada for Louisiana.

Though there had been overtures for the establishment of a diocese in Louisiana, the bishop had resisted these, and his diocese extended over all the French possessions in America. Hence Guymonneau would not have left his diocese in going to the new post. Since no other priest was in the area except such as might be at Fort St. Joseph, it is likely that Guymonneau continued to minister to the Indians at Fort Miami and Ouiatanon.

**THE NEXT PRIEST** of whom there is any record at the post on the Wabash is Alexander Xavier de Guyenne, who is said to have been there in 1734. How long before that year he came and how long he remained it is impossible to say. The only recorded information is that he was there in 1734 awaiting orders.

The little post was no doubt regarded as a subordinate mission of Kaskaskia, the principal Jesuit station in the Illinois district. Guyenne may have been sent to relieve Guymonneau.

**There is a temptation to surmise that it was he who built the first chapel and gave to it the title of his patron, St. Francis Xavier, which the succeeding churches of the parish have borne to this day.**

Among the many Jesuit missions of the West, only one other, that at Green Bay, established by Father Allouez, who was greatly devoted to the saint, had the name of the Jesuit missionary of the East Indies. It was, therefore, only for a special reason that a mission received that title. Since one of the later churches of the parish was to become the first cathedral of Indiana, it was appropriate that it was dedicated to the apostle of the Indies. But the naming of the territory and of the state came only many years later. Father Guyenne could not, therefore, have appreciated the fittingness of the name he gave it, if indeed he did give it the name.

**FATHER GUYENNE** must have been an extraordinary man. After the expulsion of the Jesuits from Louisiana in 1763, Father Philip Watrin, who was the last superior of the missionaries in the Illinois district, wrote a long letter in defense of

his order and in protest against the action taken against it. In answer to the charge that the Jesuits "took no care of their stations, and that they only gave their attention to their estates," he quotes several statements of officials in praise of the missionaries.

He writes:

**And what other idea could they have of the Jesuits? A single one of the latter could represent them all as men entirely devoted to the instruction of the savages. Such was Father de Guyenne, who died in 1762. Having spent 36 years in the missions of Louisiana, the Arkansas, and the Miamis. He had been cure of Fort Chartres, and had everywhere been respected as a man of rare virtue, of singular discretion, and of inviolable attachment to the duties of a missionary. Since the year 1733 he had devoted himself to the Illinois mission. Called to more honorable and easier positions, he had remained with his savages; and by his constancy he had preserved religion, which had become much unsettled in that nation; he had even greatly revived their fervor by his untiring application to all the exercises. Finally, four years before his death, allicted by a partial paralysis which rendered him incapable of movement, and feeling a great weakness in his chest—an old trouble, which left him hardly strength enough to make himself heard—he did not cease receiving at all times his dear neophytes, who came from a long league's distance to be instructed. He catechized them, exhorted them, and heard their confessions; he prepared them for the Communion; and, in the capacity of superior of the house, he used his power to relieve their poverty. Does not a man so faithful to his ministry up to the last day of his life make it presumable that, among the Jesuits established amid the Illinois, there remained some zeal and care in regard to their missions?**

There is reported to have been one priest that served at the post on the Wabash who was not a Jesuit. This was Father Pacome Legrand, a Recollect, who is said to have been chaplain to the garrison in the early 1740's.

It has been suggested that he baptized Anthony Foucher, born at Ouiatanon in 1741, the first native of the western country to become a priest. Father Foucher was ordained at Quebec in 1771 and served in that diocese until his death in 1812. Nothing more is known of Father Legrand but that he died on his way back to the east at Niagara in 1742.

The earliest records of the church of St. Francis Xavier that have been preserved were made in 1749. These records continue to the present time, though not without some gaps. The very first record is that of a marriage on April 21, 1749, signed by Sebastian Louis Meurin. This priest had come to Louisiana in 1741 at the age of 34, and was therefore 42 when he officiated at the marriage.

His first assignment was to Kaskaskia, where no doubt he received instruction in the language and customs of the Indians and in whatever else a missionary ought to know.

There is no way of knowing how long he was at the Wabash before he wrote this oldest extant record. Perhaps he had been visiting the post occasionally for some time. It may be that his taking up residence there was due to the enlargement of the group of priests at Kaskaskia by the arrival of Father Louis Vivier in 1748.

**ONE PECULIARITY** of the earliest records of the church is the separate listing of sacraments received by the Indians and of those received by the French. This practice continued for only a short time, however. After the first few, the records for both groups occur indiscriminately.

Perhaps Meurin in the beginning regarded himself as playing two roles: as missionary to the Indians and as parish priest to the French and later came to realize that he was simply serving all the people.

Like Guyenne, Meurin seems to have been a priest of exceptional ability and devotion. In Watrin's apologia previously quoted, he had this to say about Meurin's ministry at Kaskaskia, where he was serving when the notice of expulsion came:

At sunrise, the bell rang for prayer and Mass; the savages said prayers in their own language, and during the Mass they chanted to the air of the Roman chant hymns and canticles, also translated into their language, with the suitable prayers; at the end of the Mass, the missionary catechized the children. Having returned to his house, he was occupied in instructing the adult neophytes and catechumens, to prepare them for baptism or for penitence, for Communion or for marriage; as soon as he was free, he went through the village to arouse the believers to fervor and to exhort unbelievers to embrace Christianity. The rest of the day was needed for reciting the Divine Office, studying the language of the savages, and preparing the instructions for Sundays and feast days; for so many exercises, so varied and so continual, there was surely needed care, and a great deal of care. The savages, at least, certainly believed that the Jesuits took care of them; as for the first news of the decree declared against the missionaries, they wished to go to find the officer who commanded that country, to beg him at least to leave Father Meurin, who was charged with that mission.

It would seem to be a valid inference that Meurin's conduct at the post on the Wabash 14 years earlier was similar to that which his colleague described.

The Indians' protest met with refusal, and Meurin went with the other Jesuits to New Orleans on the way to France. At the last moment, however, the authorities relented and permitted him to return to the Illinois country. He was then 56 years old. He remained almost alone for many years, becoming the vicar general of the bishop of Quebec for the West. There will be more about him later.

MEURIN'S PASTORATE on the Wabash ended in 1753. His successor was the same Louis Vivier whose arrival at Kaskaskia was probably the occasion of his assignment there. Vivier was 39 when he became the parish priest at the post.

In a letter written three years earlier when he was still a newcomer to the Illinois mission, he had told that he was residing at Kaskaskia with Father Guyenne and receiving instruction in the language of the Illinois Indians from that veteran of the missions.

The Algonquian language was common to Miami and to most of the tribes of this area, though with some dialectical differences from tribe to tribe. What the young man learned would have prepared him for his work on the Wabash. There can hardly be any doubt that he heard much about the post from his confrere, who had been there 20 years before.

Father Vivier's tenure was a brief one, as was his entire missionary career, for he died on October 2, 1756, age 42. Little is known of his life at the post; even the cause of his death seems not to be recorded. He was probably buried in or near the church.

The third and last of the Jesuits that signed the records of St. Francis Xavier was Julien Devernai, whose first entry was made in November 1756. He came just in time to observe his 37th birthday, for he was born on December 19, 1719.

He had been in America for about two years, no doubt learning the Algonquian language and the ways of the missions like his predecessors. His pastorate corresponded closely in time with the warfare between Britain and France that culminated with the cession of Canada and much of Louisiana to the former.

None of the battles of this conflict took place in this area, though some Illinois troops seem to have fought in battles farther east. Father Devernai's departure was not, however, due to the passing of Vincennes into British possession; it came about because of the banishment of the Jesuits from Louisiana mentioned before. This action of the council of Louisiana was the result of conflicts in the Old World rather than events in America.

In 1762 the Parliament of Paris and several French provincial parliaments had suppressed the Society of Jesus, for reasons unrelated to American affairs. When news of these actions reached New Orleans, the council of Louisiana, observing the direction in which the wind was blowing, issued its own decree of suppression on July 9, 1763.

In addition to the charge of neglecting the missions, the reasons given were that the order was hostile to the royal authority, the right of the bishops, and the public peace and safety, and that the vows taken by the members were null.

This is not the place to inquire into the justice of the charges, which are discussed at length elsewhere. The present interest is only in the effects of the decree. The Jesuits were forbidden to call themselves such and to wear their distinctive cassock. Except for their books and clothing, all their property was to be confiscated. The sacred vessels and other religious goods were to be given to the Capuchins in New Orleans and to the crown in the Illinois district. Their chapels were to be destroyed, and the Jesuits were to return to France.

FATHER WATRIN describes Father Devernai's departure. He narrates graphically the desecration of the church at Kaskaskia, concluding: "to see the marks of spoliation in the chapel, one might have thought that it was the enemies of the Catholic religion who had caused it." He goes on to relate:

It was at that time the Jesuits of Illinois saw their associate, Father de Vernay, arrive; he came from the post of Saint Ange, 70 or 80 leagues distant. The order to carry out the decree in regard to him had been sent also; this order was so exactly followed that from the seizure and sale of his possessions they did not except even a little supply of hazelnuts which was found in his horse. Meanwhile, Father de Vernay had had the fever for six months; it remained with him until his arrival in France six months later. This was no reason for deferring his departure; the order to leave had been given, and how would he have remained in a house stripped of furniture and provisions? He set out on the way; it was then the month of November; he had to travel across very wet woods and prairies, exposed to the cold and rain. It was in this condition that Father de Vernay came to join the band of banished missionaries, who were awaiting their embarkation.

The writer knew whereof he wrote, for Father Watrin was the superior of the Illinois mission to whom the decree of expulsion was read and who had to sign his submission to it, and then witness the spoliation of the chapel at Kaskaskia.

His letter tells of the journey into exile down the Mississippi and across the Atlantic to the landing at San Sebastian on April 6, 1764 and the arrival at Paris some weeks later.

**IN VIEW OF THE** charge made that the usurpations of the Jesuits had been to the prejudice of the Capuchin Fathers, it is worthy of note that Watrin speaks with special gratitude of the hospitality of the Capuchins in New Orleans and of the great joy of the Jesuits in "accepting the invitation that had been given them; and, during the six weeks which elapsed before they embarked, there were no marks of friendship which they did not receive from these Reverend Fathers."

As an expression of their thanks the Jesuits gave their books, which they had been allowed to keep, to the Capuchins.

The Council of Louisiana was, in fact, without authority in the act of expulsion. Its authority had ceased with the Treaty of Paris of February 10, 1763, by which all the territory east of the Mississippi had passed to Britain and the Treaty of Fontainebleu of November 3, 1762, by which New Orleans and the west bank had come into Spanish possession.

But the latter was a secret treaty not yet made public. It is likely that the provisions of the former were unknown in Louisiana. At any rate, the Jesuits were in no position to dispute the orders. Might was on the side of the council and in this case might was right.

Thus after 30 years ended the first period of the life of the church in Indiana, perhaps its happiest time until many years later.

Apparently the emissaries that took Father Devernai away failed in one respect to carry out with exactitude the terms of banishment. The chapel at the post on the Wabash seems not to have been destroyed. But it was not to witness the celebration of Mass for a long time. Six years were to elapse before another priest would come to the parish, and his stay would be but a brief one. It would be 22 years, with only intermittent visits of the priest, before there was a resident pastor.

Meanwhile, the notary, who seems to have performed both civil and ecclesiastical functions, administered baptisms and recorded them as well as marriages and burials.

It is not easy to say just how many Catholic people lived on our ground in this first period. Father Watrin's letter says of "the post called Vincennes or Saint Ange, from the names of the officers who commanded there": "There were at the last, in this village at least 60 houses of French people, without counting the Miami savages, who were quite near."

An enumeration made in 1767 under British auspices shows 12 French families at Ouiatanon, nine at Fort Miami, and 66 at Vincennes. The close accord between this census and Watrin's estimate gives credence to the opinion that the French population of Vincennes was about 400 and that of the other two posts about 100.

The St. Francis Xavier records are not complete, but the numbers of baptisms, marriages, and burials reported there are consistent with such an estimate.

**THERE IS NOTHING** to show how many people were at the Piankeshaw village at Vincennes or of other Miami bands at the other posts. Nor is there any information about how many of these were Catholics. It is likely that a considerable number of those about Fort St. Joseph were Catholics, both because they had been among the tribes evangelized by Allouez at Green Bay and because a rather large number of Catholics were living there a few years later.

The priests at the Indiana posts seem not to have made many converts in the short time they worked here before the expulsion of the Jesuits. Perhaps Meurin's separate listing of the Indians and the French shows an expectation that many

Indians would accept the faith. If so, his abandoning of the practice may indicate his coming to believe that his converts would be few.

In fact, almost the only Indians whose names appear in the church records are those of slaves of French residents. Slavery had existed among the Miamis as the result of the practice of reducing to servitude those captured in warfare. Because many such slaves belonged to the Pawnee tribe, the word "pani" came to mean slave.

The names of several Negro slaves also appear in the records, some at least of these belonging to the Jesuits. Several thousands of Negroes had been introduced into Louisiana "because European laborers prove unable to endure the semitropical climate."

Early in the 18th century certain enterprising Frenchmen, hoping to develop in the Illinois country mines for the extraction of lead and perhaps of silver, brought a number of these Negroes to do the work. Nothing much came of the mines, but the slaves remained, mostly as domestic servants in the area about Kaskaskia and Fort Chartres. In 1732 there were upwards of 200 there.

It was doubtless some of these that the missionaries brought with them to Vincennes. Bishop Brute, in one of the letters he contributed to the *Catholic Telegraph* in 1835, early in his sojourn at Vincennes, recounting the history of the church in Indiana, expresses his sorrow about this phase of the story:

A sad feature of "poste Vincennes" was slavery—that curse now wholly done away with throughout Indiana and Illinois, existed in a double forms, the civil records, and alas! of course, the christian records also had both the negro slave, the victim of distant cupidity to mention, and the red slave, the prisoner sold after his capture in battle array, or through surprise: 'un esclave rouge'—'une sauvagesse esclave'—'a red or savage he or she slave'—is a frequent designation in the baptismal and burial records of the church.

The bishop was more sanguine than the records justify. Nearer cupidity managed to find loopholes in the law to keep some Negroes in servitude even beyond his time. No doubt his own experience of many years in Maryland, where the peculiar institution was the law of the land, helps to account for his loathing of it. He does not mention the fact that some of the slaves belonged to the missionaries.

**IT IS NOT ALTOGETHER** clear just how the missionaries were supported. The mention of Father d'Outreleau as the priest destined for the post on the Wabash contains the notation that the Company of the Indies, which then ruled the colony had assigned him an allowance of 600 livres (\$150 or \$1,200 in today's money).

When the crown took over the direct government it seems not to have continued the practice of subsidizing the missionaries. Nevertheless, the church was not without resources. It is said that the church was given a "village lot of fifty toises square and the first and most valuable parcel of land adjoining the village, four arpents in front adjoining the river, by forty arpents in length."

Such a village lot would have been about 320 feet square, or two acres and a third, surely ample for chapel and residence. The farm land would have been about 136 acres. With a slave or two and the occasional aid of the more dedicated parishioners, such a plot would easily yield enough for the priest and the slaves.

Such a distribution of the land, a small piece in the village for the home and a

larger tract along the river outside the village for cultivation, was characteristic of the post. As along the St. Lawrence River, the farm land was laid out in narrow strips fronting on the river and extending a mile and half inland.

About half the farms were above the village and about half below. But as in France and unlike the Canadian pattern, the families lived not on their farm land but together in the village. If it is true that the church's land was twice the size of the holding of the individual family, then each family had about an acre for its home and about 68 acres for cultivation.

The extremely small size of these farms indicates that the inhabitants received but a little of their subsistence from the growing of crops. The fur trade was their principal source of livelihood. Some families had only the ground on which their homes stood.

Such might be the voyageurs, canoe men who transported goods and passengers along the river, which was the principal way of travel. Two canoes with five men each brought Father Guymonneau from Montreal. Even for such residents, however, the acre on which their homes stood might suffice for a garden. But most of the families seem to have had some farm land.

IN 1759 THE BRITISH defeated the French on the Plains of Abraham outside Quebec. In September 1760 with the capitulation of Montreal all Canada came under British rule. British agents took possession of Fort Miami and Ouiatanon soon afterward.

Only in the Treaty of Paris, however, did France cede to England the part of Louisiana lying east of the Mississippi. Even then, so resentful were the Indians over the high-handed transfer of their lands to a new master without a word to them, that under the leadership of the Ottawa chief Pontiac they made the Illinois country too hot for the British agents to enter.

Meanwhile, tired of waiting, Neyon de Villiers, governor of the Illinois district, ordered Louis St. Ange to replace him and went on to New Orleans.

On May 18, 1764, St. Ange left Post Vincennes deputizing two of his soldiers to command the post. He charged them "that their first care ought to be to maintain a good understanding with the Indians. To prevent disorder during the time it rests with them, whenever complaint shall be made against any one they will take care to call an assembly of the most notable inhabitants of the place, where the matter will be decided by the plurality of votes."

On October 10, 1765 he formally delivered the rule over the fort and the district to a British Captain Sterling. It must have been no happy task. Though Post Vincennes then passed under British rule, it would not see a British officer for 12 years more.

ST. ANGE CROSSED the Mississippi with his company of 30 soldiers to the village of St. Louis, established the previous year. He then became a captain in the Spanish forces and served as commander under the authority of Spain until 1770, when he was relieved by a Spaniard, Don Pedro Piernas. He thus initiated a remarkable series of exchanges between St. Louis and Indiana that has continued to this day.

He remained in St. Louis until his death on December 27, 1774, having the year before performed a last service for his former subjects by testifying to the grants of land he had made while at Post Vincennes.

The day before he died, he made his will, attested by Piernas, his successor as commandant. It deserves to be quoted:

First, as a good Roman Catholic and a true member of the Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church, he commends his soul to God, to the Blessed Virgin and all the saints of heaven, praying them to intercede for him before the Almighty that it may please Him to admit his soul on its separation from his body into the kingdom of the blessed.

He listed his assets and his debts and appropriated 500 livres (\$125 or \$1,000 in today's money) "toward the erection of the church projected for this parish."

Having never married, he bequeaths the remainder of his little property to his nieces and nephews, with special provision for a nephew that was blind. Finally, he leaves to a niece the two children of his Indian slave with the provision that they are to be freed at the age of 21. He charged the commandant to look with special care to this provision.

J.P. Dunn, from whose book, "Indiana," I have taken most of this account of the last days of St. Ange, closes his chapter with these words: "Peace to thy ashes, faithful soldier of France, and may thy honest life be an example to all who shall follow thee as rulers of Indiana!"

The continued existence of the territory and state of Indiana and of the parish of St. Francis Xavier and of the diocese of Vincennes and the archdiocese of Indianapolis and the accomplishments and the noble deeds of their sons and daughters owe much to Francois Marie Bissot, Sieur de Vincennes, and to Father Meurin and the other priests that served on this ground. But perhaps Louis St. Ange did more than any of these to preserve religion and virtue for those of us who come after him.

## Chapter II

By the Capitulation of Montreal on 8 September, 1760, Great Britain gained possession of Canada. By the Treaty of Paris, signed on 10 February, 1763, all of Louisiana east of the Mississippi River also came under British rule. Louisiana west of the river France had ceded to Spain in the secret treaty of Fontainebleau, signed 3 November 1762, though it would be years before an officer of the Spanish king came to govern it.

The British organized their new empire into four provinces: Quebec, Grenada, East Florida and West Florida. In compliance with treaties previously entered into with Indian tribes, they set aside as an Indian reserve the vast territory bounded by the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers and the Great Lakes, part of which had been in Canada and part in Louisiana, prohibiting settlement by American colonists and permitting only licensed fur traders to enter it.

**The Indians, however, did not take kindly the transfer from one European king to another of the land they looked on as theirs.**

Inspired by the preaching of a Prophet of the Delaware tribe, who proclaimed a doctrine containing elements of his tribal religion and of Christianity, and organized under the leadership of Pontiac, a chief of the Ottawas, for two years the tribes waged a war that prevented any British officer from taking possession of this land.

"The English government," as one writer has said, "had no more authority in Indiana and Illinois than it had in China."

ON 15 APRIL, 1765, Drouet de Richardville, whom Louis St. Ange had appointed the previous May to command at Vincennes, died. His successor was another resident of long standing, Nicholas Chappard. Whether he was also appointed by St. Ange, still in command at Fort Chartres, or was chosen by the people, no one seems to know, but he did exercise authority until his death in 1768.

There must have been quite a stir in the town on 15 June, 1765, when a party of Kickapoo and Mascouten Indians marched in, bringing with them as prisoners of war several British officials they had captured in a skirmish on the Ohio River a few days earlier. The chief of the officials was George Croghan, Deputy Commissioner

of Indian Affairs . . . Croghan had come to Pennsylvania from Ireland in 1741. He had made a fortune in the fur trade, largely through his influence among the Indians by virtue of his knowledge of their customs and their languages and his willingness to share their life and to deal with them fairly.

He had lost most of his fortune when the French by force of arms compelled him to give up his operations in what is now Ohio, which they claimed as their territory. Thereafter he had gained new wealth by speculation in land and hoped to extend activities into this land now under British rule.

**His friendship with the Indians made him a natural choice for the office he held. It also was the reason for his being sent to Fort Chartres to negotiate with Pontiac for the coming of a British officer to take over the command of this land.**

Croghan was on his way to Fort Chartres when the Indians captured him. Almost immediately his captors came to doubt the wisdom of their action, for they discovered that the Indians in his party were not, as they had believed, members of hostile tribes, but Shawnees and Delawares, their friends. They became even more remorseful when the Piankeshaws at Vincennes berated them and warned them that they would suffer vengeance.

Nonetheless, after two days they went on with their prisoners, whom they treated with more indulgence, to Ouiatanon, where several tribes resided. Here Croghan met some friends of his furtrading days, who welcomed him and set him free, apologizing for the excessive zeal of the young braves who had attacked him.

**ACCOMPANIED BY THE** leaders of the Ouiatanon tribes, Croghan resumed his journey to Fort Chartres, but soon had the good fortune of meeting Pontiac, who was on his way back home. Pontiac had met with rebuffs from St. Ange, whom he had urged to join him in resistance to the British, and from the French Governor in New Orleans, to whom he had sent emissaries for the same purpose.

Discouraged by these failures and recognizing the futility of further resistance, he was ready to make peace. With Croghan and the other Indian leaders he went on to Ouiatanon, where a truce was negotiated that brought the war to an end. The peace was formalized later at Detroit and at Niagara, but it was at Ouiatanon that organized warfare ended.

Upon receiving from Croghan the news of the truce, Captain Edward Sterling, who was waiting at Fort Pitt, set out with his company for Fort Chartres, where on 10 October he received the surrender of the Illinois country from Louis St. Ange.

In his carefully-kept journal of the trip, Croghan had but little good to say of the French people he met. Of Vincennes he wrote:

**The French inhabitants hereabouts are an idle lazy people a parcel of Renegadoes from Canada and are much worse than the Indians. They took a secret pleasure at our Misfortune and the moment we arrived they came to the Indians exchanging Trifles for their valuable plunder. As the Savages took from me a considerable Quantity of Gold and Silver in Specie the French Traders extorted 10 half-Johannes from them for one pound of Vermillion.**

Of Fort Miami, where his party spent a few days on the way from Ouiatanon to Detroit, he had much the same story:

**All the French residing here are a lazy indolent People fond of Breeding**

**Mischief and Spiriting up the Indians against the English and should not be suffered to remain here.**

One should not take these animadversions too seriously. After all, Croghan was hardly two days at Vincennes, during which he wrote a letter to St. Ange, had "some little apparel made up," and purchased on credit several horses for his trip to Ouiatanon.

Of the 400 inhabitants he could not have met many besides the traders, whose easy acquisition of his half-Johanneses he would hardly have viewed with equanimity. That the French were not grieved at Croghan's discomfiture is pretty certain. It could have only been their native courtesy that led them to make a secret of their feelings.

**THE HOSTILITY BETWEEN** Croghan and the French was of long standing. The posts at Miami, Ouiatanon, and Vincennes had been established with the very purpose of guarding against what the French regarded as the encroachments of the English traders on their lands, the destruction by the French of the British Fort Pickawillany, near the site of Piqua, Ohio, on 21 June, 1751, had dealt a severe blow to Croghan's fur-trading operations.

Moreover, the presence of the French settlements constituted an obstacle to Croghan's enterprise in gaining possession of land. Perhaps one can discern the canny businessman in his judgment that the French "should by no means be suffered to remain here."

One would not be far wrong in saying that Croghan's mind was made up before he ever came to the Wabash.

While organized resistance to British rule ceased with the truce Pontiac and the other chiefs made at Ouiatanon, Indian discontent did not. One reason for this discontent was the failure of the British government to honor its treaty obligations by preventing depredations made by its subjects on the Indians.

In the words of Sir William Johnson, Croghan's superior as Commissioner of Indian Affairs, "the British were compelled to make use of low, selfish Agents, French or English, who at the expence of honesty and sound policy take care of themselves." Furthermore, this official wrote:

**Numbers of Frontier Inhabitants . . . in Manifest Violation of BRITISH FAITH and Strength of the late Treatys attacked, robbed, and Murdered Sundry Indians of Good Character, and Stole and continue to do so, Vowing Vengeance against all that come in their way, while others forcibly established themselves . . . in the Indian Country . . . and still withhold their illegal and unjust possessions, all which produces complaints and complaints.**

The Indians did more than complain. They carried on what amounted to guerrilla warfare, attacking white settlements, trading posts, and boats carrying merchandise. Vincennes did not escape such attacks, for after the Indians' failure to enlist their aid, they came to look on all white men as enemies. Repeatedly the people pleaded for a trading post and a garrison, but to no avail.

The nearest the military authority, which was the only authority in the area, came to acceding to their pleas was to empower an agent of the firm of Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan, which had a trading post at Kaskaskia, to "tender the Oath of Allegiance to the Inhabitants there and to take such Surveys of the country as he may Esteem for the Benefit of his Majesty's Service." This agent, James Rumsey, formerly a lieutenant in Sterling's company, who had resigned his commission to

join the trading company, was at this time, April 1768, a captain in the Kaskaskia militia.

IN 1767 CENSUSES were taken of the settlements on the Mississippi and of Vincennes. The latter showed a population of a little more than 400. Another listing of the inhabitants of Vincennes, Ouiatanon and Fort Miami bears the date of 1769. Perhaps it was the result of Rumsey's "Surveys . . . for the Benefit of his Majesty's Service."

It shows 66 householders in Vincennes, 12 at Ouiatanon, and nine at Fort Miami, representing populations of about 400, 75, and 60. It is likely that Rumsey organized the militia at Vincennes, for a note states that there were about 150 men able to bear arms. Since there were but 66 families, two of them headed by widows, this might seem a high estimate of potential militiamen unless one recalled that boys of 15 qualified for such service. There was a report that a fort had been built about this time. Perhaps Rumsey encouraged the men to repair the old French fort, which was said to have been in ruins.

It was at this time that Jean Baptiste Racine, usually known as Ste. Marie, an old-timer like Richardville and Chappard, became the commandant. Since Rumsey arrived shortly after Chappard's death, he probably had something to do with the appointment.

**THE CAPITULATION** of Montreal assured the Canadians the freedom of the Catholic religion as well as possession of their lands if they chose to become British subjects, and liberty to sell them to British subjects if they chose to leave. The Treaty of Paris extended these pledges to the people of Louisiana. On 30 October 1764 General Thomas Gage, who as commander-in-chief of the British forces in North America held jurisdiction over the Illinois country, issued a proclamation to make known these provisions to the inhabitants. He stated:

**That his majesty grants to the inhabitants of the Illionis the liberty of the Catholic religion, as it has already been granted to the inhabitants of Canada. He has consequently given the most precise and effective orders to the end that his new Roman Catholic subjects may exercise the worship of their religion, according to the rites of the Romish church, in the same manner as in Canada.**

He also assured them:

**That those who choose to retain their lands and become subjects of his Majesty shall enjoy the same rights and privileges, the same security for their persons and effects and the liberty to trade, as the old subjects of the king.**

Despite these solemn assurances, the ministry in London in 1771 commanded Gage to clear out all the French settlers on the Wabash. No doubt the ministry had listened to the reports of interested persons such as Croghan, who looked with a hungry eye on the rich lands of the country.

The people of Vincennes appear to have made the oath of allegiance in accordance with the treaty stipulations when Rumsey came in 1760, but no regular British officer had ever been there to ascertain their status. Such a one would have needed only to look at the church records, dating from 1749, to learn that far from being Canadians, many of the inhabitants had lived there for 20 years or more. Yet

Gage's order to them to leave without delay, issued in obedience to the ministry's command, described them as

**. . . persons (who), contrary to the positive orders of the king upon the subject, have undertaken to make settlements beyond the boundaries fixed by the treaties with the Indian nations . . . where they lead a wandering life, without government and without laws, interrupting the free course of trade, destroying the game.**

It commanded "all those who have established themselves on the lands upon the Ouabache, whether at St. Vincent or elsewhere, to quit those countries instantly and without delay, and to retire, at their choice, into one of the colonies of his majesty, where they will be received and treated as other subjects of his majesty."

**IT IS NO WONDER** that the receipt of this proclamation brought consternation to the people of Vincennes. In a lengthy document, dated 28 September, signed by 56 of them, they pleaded for a withdrawal of the order. With apparent justice, they pointed out that the same act, namely, the Treaty of Paris, that assured the king's sovereignty over the country promised respect for their possessions.

The general's response was a curt command that anyone claiming possession of land by a grant of the French government should produce evidence of its title. In obedience to this order, 88 residents stated their claims, naming the commandants from whom they had received their grants and the dates. Some had documents to prove their claims but most had not, either because they had lost their papers or had received only oral grants.

It was on this occasion that Captain St. Ange showed his continued good will and magnanimity by certifying that he had conceded to many of the inhabitants pieces of ground and that he had permitted many to continue occupying lands of which they had been in possession for many years.

It might seem that the burden of proof rested on the British government (to show that a landholder had no legal right) rather than on the landholder, but there was no question as to where it might lay.

Meanwhile, however, Gage had been replaced by Frederick Haldimand, who was opposed to the removal of the people on the Wabash, and the ministry apparently had a change of heart. Consequently, nothing further was done to disturb the French settlers.

**AT THIS TIME** the government was having troubles of its own. The people of Canada were exerting pressure to restore the old borders of the province and implement the provisions of the Treaty of Paris respecting religious liberty for Catholics and the recognition of French civil law and customs.

Parliament at last responded by passing the Quebec Act, which received the royal assent on 22 June 1774. By this act not only did Canada regain her old territory; she obtained the entire Indian reserve, including the Illinois country, which had been a part of Louisiana. The act also granted freedom to the Catholic Church, including the right of the clergy to tithes, and the application of the French law in civil cases. The enforcement of tithes met with more approval from the clergy than from the laity.

The memorial of the Vincennes people had countered General Gage's charge that they lived "without government and without laws" by reminding him that it was the duty of the king to provide government and laws. It repeated the appeal, often made before, for troops to protect them.

The annexation of this land to Canada was supposed to replace military rule by civil government in the Illinois country. Lieutenant governors were to be appointed for the several districts, who should set up courts to administer justice according to legal procedures to supplant the arbitrary decisions of military officers. These changes were slow in coming, however, for the Quebec Act aggravated the discontent that was already stirring in the Eastern colonies.

**SOME OF THESE** claimed ownership of these lands by virtue of their loyal charters. The annexation of the ground to Canada seemed to them nothing less than high-handed robbery. Even more exasperating was what many of the colonists saw as the establishment of the Catholic religion and of French law on their very borders. On September 1774, the Continental Congress issued an Address to the People of Great Britain, declaring:

**We think the Legislature of Great Britain is not authorized by the constitution to establish a religion fraught with sanguinary and impious tenets, or erect an arbitrary form of government in any quarter of the Globe.**

That the complaint of the Congress about the establishment of the Catholic religion was not of overwhelming importance is evident from its action sending to Canada a commission to induce the people there to remain neutral in the war.

The members of the commission were Benjamin Franklin, Samuel Chase and Charles Carroll, who besides fluency in French had his Catholic faith to qualify him. In addition, the Congress requested Carroll's cousin, John Carroll, a priest to join the commissioners and "assist them in such things as they might think useful."

The Congress was ready to grasp any action of Parliament to justify its rebellious stand. It had grievances of a more serious nature in the matter of taxation to arouse its opposition to the mother country. Matters came to a head at Lexington and at Bunker Hill in the spring of 1775. The rebellion that had long been simmering became open warfare.

Whether or not the shot fired at Lexington was heard round the world, it had echoes in the Illinois country.

In 1776 the soldiers that had been stationed at Fort Gage in Kaskaskia, which in 1772 had replaced Fort Chartres, destroyed by the Mississippi River, where transferred to Detroit to strengthen that post against possible attack. Vincennes had less chance than ever to receive a garrison to protect it. Even Kaskaskia had only the citizens' militia.

To command this force Captain Hugh Lord at his departure appointed Philippe Francois Rastel, Chevalier de Rocheblave, perhaps because of his military experience.

A native of France, Rocheblave had fought with the French forces in the war that ended in 1763; he had then taken a position under the Spanish across the Mississippi, but on falling out with them he had settled in Kaskaskia. Military officers of that time appear to have been like professional athletes of today, serving now for one power, now for another.

**TO CARRY OUT** the provisions of the Quebec Act, Sir Guy Carleton, Governor of Quebec, appointed lieutenant governors for the districts of his province to establish the long-delayed civil government. One of these was Edward Abbott, Lieutenant Governor and Superintendent at St. Vincenne, which was one of the ways the British named the post. So in 1777, 14 years after it came under the rule of the British king, Vincennes received its first representative of the sovereign. The people showed

their appreciation for this belated response to their plea for someone to govern them; a delegation of 25 French and 36 Indians went to Fort Miami to welcome Abbott and to conduct him in proper state to his post. Other Indians joined the party at Ouiatanon.

It must have been an impressive procession that entered the town on 19 May 1777. Some have supposed that Abbott administered the oath of allegiance on his arrival, but, as has been noted, there is reason to believe that this formality had been attended to in 1768.

Much to his chagrin, Abbott had no troops and inadequate presents to gain the support of the Indians to the cause of the king. All he could do to secure the post was to erect a stockade, which he called Fort Sackville in honor of the minister of colonies, and to reorganize the militia. The stockade was probably an addition to the old French fort.

When Henry Hamilton came to Vincennes the next year he described it as "a miserable stockade without a Well, barrack, platform for small arms, or even a lock to the gate." It had, however, four small cannon, which Abbott procured from Rocheblave in Kaskaskia. Abbott found it impossible to carry out the work he was given to do with the parsimonious fund provided. Indeed, he was severely censured by Carleton for extravagance in the gifts made to the Indians. As to the latter, he expressed the belief that they sought "to sett the French against the English government and have told many of them that I should not live long."

**THERE IS AN** interesting contrast between this assessment of the relations between the Indians and the French and Croghan's charge that the French "spirited the Indians against the British." One feature of British policy that provoked Abbott's indignation was the employment of Indian bands to attack frontier settlements, for he believed that many of the settlers would embrace the Loyalist cause if they were protected in their occupations.

On 3 February 1778 Abbott left Vincennes to report to Carleton, having been summoned on so short a notice that he had not time to take with him his effects. He later petitioned the Treasury for 1,200 pounds in compensation for the expenditure he had incurred in the purchase of "the Equipage and Furniture necessary to support the dignity of his Majesty's commission," all of which had fallen into the hands of the rebels." If General Carleton was displeased with Abbott's conduct of affairs, the same could not be said of the people he governed. On his departure they presented him with an address expressing their regret that he was going away and their thanks for his services to them:

**It is with intense sorrow that we have learned from you of the unhappy circumstances that force you to leave us for a while. You have given us numberless proofs of your sincere desire to promote the Public Welfare by your administration, and we shall always retain the deepest gratitude for them. Like you, we hope that the sad division between the Mother Country and the Colonies will soon come to an end. Meanwhile, we are happy to renew our assurance to you of our attachment to the government of his Majesty. We are sincerely grateful to you for your thoughtful admonition that we preserve concord and unity, which are so necessary in the present circumstances. We shall make every effort to preserve these inestimable blessings and to curb every disorder among us. And we give proper thanks to the Government, which we pray that you will seek for a poor and faithful people, wishing you a happy voyage and a prompt return, which alone will lessen our fears. These are the sentiments of**

the inhabitants of your government, presented with the most profound gratitude for all the benefits you have bestowed on us.

The hope of the people that Abbott would promptly return were not to be realized. On his arrival at Detroit, he resigned his commission. Nor was another lieutenant governor sent to succeed him; apparently it was Hippolyte Bollon, who signed the address to Abbott as Major and Commandant of Militia, that was left in charge at Vincennes.

**ABBOT'S PROTEST** against the frontier raids, instigated by the British for the purpose of drawing American forces from the war in the East, met with no greater success than did his appeal for adequate funds to carry out his defense of the area. Because of the numerous attacks in 1777, that year came to be spoken of as the "Bloody Year."

Protection of the frontier against such raids was the ostensible purpose of George Rogers Clark's campaign, already in preparation, which eventuated in the conquest of Kaskaskia and Vincennes by the redoubtable Virginian.

Henry Hamilton, Lieutenant Governor at Detroit, had the reputation, whether deservedly or not, of being the principal fomenter. It was widely believed that he rewarded the raiders with larger bounties for scalps than for prisoners; it was for this reason that he gained the name of "Hair Buyer."

During all this time Vincennes was without a resident priest, though from 1770 on it had occasional visits from Father Gibault, who sometimes included Ouatanon and St. Joseph in his ministrations.

In 1763 about half a dozen Jesuits were attending the religious needs of the Illinois country, with Kaskaskia as their center; Father Devernai at Vincennes was one of these.

At Fort Chartres there were two Franciscan Recollects, the brothers, Luke and Hippolyte Collet, who attended other villages also. In addition, Cahokia had a Seminary priest in the person of Francois Forget Duverger. But Father Forget, taking alarm at the banishment of the Jesuits and fearful of the imminent accession of British power, sold the Cahokia property, though the people rightly protested that he had no authority to do so, and followed the Jesuits to New Orleans, to sail with them for France.

The Franciscans were already in failing health; Hippolyte departed in 1764, and Luke died on 10 September 1765.

Both the Indians and the French were deeply grieved at the departure of the Jesuits. One of these was Sebastian Louis Meurin, the first priest of whose presence at Vincennes there is a definite record: in 1749 he began to make entries in the books of St. Francis Xavier Church, which have been continued to the present. After his return to Kaskaskia in 1753, he had so endeared himself to the people there that they made a special plea for his exemption from the order to depart. But the emissaries from New Orleans were relentless. Their orders were to bring all the Jesuits and so scrupulous were they in discharging their duty that they compelled two members of the Jesuit mission in Canada, who had taken refuge from the war in the north, to go with them, though these were not subject to the Council of Louisiana.

On 24 November 1763 the Jesuits embarked for New Orleans along with 48 Negro slaves, formerly their property but confiscated by the officials, who nonetheless had to depend on the Jesuits for sustenance along the way. There were also some English soldiers, whom Pontiac's partisans had taken as prisoners of war.

On 21 December, five days before Meurin's fifty-sixth birthday, they reached

New Orleans and received the hospitality of the Capuchins, while awaiting the ship that would take them to France. The Council of Louisiana, apparently satisfied that it had destroyed the Jesuits' influence, yielded to the people's importunities and to Father Meurin's pleas, and permitted him to return to his mission; it even promised to apply for an annual pension of 600 livres (\$1,200 in today's value) in his behalf, though nothing seems to have come of this promise.

**MEURIN HAD NEVER** been a healthy man, and perhaps the Council believed that he would not survive for long. It required of him that he should observe two rather severe restrictions on his ministry: That he should remain on the west side of the river, which was about to become Spanish territory, and that he should submit to no ecclesiastical authority but that of the Capuchin superior in New Orleans, who claimed jurisdiction both from the bishop of Quebec and from the bishop of Santiago de Cuba. Meurin may have had some doubt concerning the Capuchins's authority, for he asked for and received faculties from Father Forget, who was vicar general of Quebec. He also wrote to the Holy Office for faculties, which came to him on 4 September 1765.

About the middle of February 1764 Father Meurin set off for the Illinois country. Along the way he made a stop at a mission of the Arkansas Indians to render priestly services. Arriving at his old stamping ground, in compliance with the promise he had made, he took up residence at Ste. Genevieve, a post on the Mississippi River that the Kaskaskia Jesuits had been attending for some years.

The earliest record of his ministry there is that of the baptism of a Negro in May. Apparently he interpreted the conditions he had accepted as applying only to his place of residence, for he recorded baptisms and marriages in Kaskaskia in 1764, and in a letter he wrote some time later he stated that it was his practice to visit the nearby villages twice a year.

ON 15 FEBRUARY 1764, about the time Meurin was leaving New Orleans, a party of traders with a license from the Spanish authorities began the construction of a trading post just across the river from Cahokia, to which they gave the name St. Louis. From the outset, many Cahokians and Kaskaskians, like Father Forget dreading the coming of the English, settled there, and Meurin soon added it to his ports of call. In one of his letters he remarked somewhat disparagingly that the Spaniards had brought soldiers but no priest.

His earliest entry, that of a baptism "in a tent for want of a church," was made in 1766. The second is that of Lizette, a Pawnee slave. He there identifies himself as the priest of Our Lady of Cahokia, though he seems still to have been residing at Ste. Genevieve.

It was on 10 October 1765 that Captain St. Ange surrendered the Illinois country to Captain Edward Sterling at Fort Chartres and with his small force, which had been with him at Vincennes, crossed the river and took command of St. Louis under Spanish rule.

It is tempting to speculate that it was Louis St. Ange that invited the priest with whom for four years he had been associated in Vincennes to bring the consolations of religion to St. Louis. At any rate, it must have been a happy reunion of the veterans after the not-so-happy events of the intervening years. On 9 November

1769, St. Ange, acting as a Spanish official, administered the oath of allegiance to the Catholic Majesty of Spain to the people of St. Louis. He remained in command until 17 February 1770, when the first Spanish Lieutenant Governor, Pedro Piernas, relieved him. It was not until 24 June of that year that the first church was dedicated. While St. Ange was then retired, one may suppose that its planning and building were largely his work and Father Meurin's.

**THE TREATY OF Paris** had provided for the freedom of the Catholic religion in the former French colonies. The Canadian government, however, was in no hurry to implement this freedom. Henri-Marie de Pontbriand, who had been bishop of Quebec since 1741, died on 8 June 1760, about the time his city was taken by the British. The Cathedral Chapter presented the name of Montgolfier, the vicar general, for appointment as the new bishop, but he reached only England on his way to France to receive confirmation from the Holy See and consecration. The Chapter then presented the name of Jean Olivier Briand, who met with similar obstruction. It was not until 1766 that he got word that no offense would be taken if he went to France and was consecrated.

The news that after six years there was again a bishop in Quebec gave joy to Father Meurin and raised his hope that now there might be priests to help him in the immense territory where he was the only priest. Either he had been convinced that the Council of Louisiana had imposed on him in exacting the promise that he would accept only the authority of the Capuchins or he saw the accession of Briand as altering the situation, for in 1767 he wrote two long letters to Briand, asking for directions in his work and pleading for priests.

He expatiated on the difficulties of his work and the dire condition of religion with no priest but himself, "who was exhausted and ruined by mission work in this country for 25 years, for nearly 20 of which sickness and infirmities have shown me day by day the gate of death." Curiously, he stated that he was 61 years old, though the records indicate that he was 59; perhaps people then did not keep a close account of their ages.

Meurin wrote that in compliance with his agreement he resided at Ste. Genevieve, but that he visited four other places twice a year: Kaskaskia, Prairie du Rocher, Cahokia, and St. Louis. He appealed for two or three priests to share the work if the bishop could not spare the four or five that were needed. The omission of Vincennes from the list of places is sufficient to show that he had not ventured so far in the three years since his return.

**MEURIN DID NOT** neglect his former parish, however, for he referred to it in a passage that deserves to be quoted in full:

Post Vincennes on the Wabash among the Miami Piankashaw is as large as our best villages here and has still greater need for a missionary. Disorder has always been great there, but it has increased in the last three years. Some come here to be married or to make their Easter duty. The majority do not wish, nor can they do it. The guardian of the church publishes the banns for three Sundays; to those who wish to come here he gives a certificate of publication without opposition which I myself republish before marrying them. Those who do not wish declare in a loud voice in the church their mutual consent. Can such a marriage be permitted? Since there is no exception to the decree of the holy council of Trent on the reformation of marriage, I pray you instruct me. Does clandestinity render marriage of heretics invalid, as it does that of Catholics? Can their resistance to the Church exempt them from the laws of the Church?

Briand's solution of the case of conscience was as follows:

... the secret marriage of Catholics in your posts is invalid, except in case of impossibility of contracting marriage before you. Now according to the map of your parishes which you made for me, they have always been able to come and present themselves before you or at least they could have waited for you, since you have visited them every year. You must make them renew their consent according to the rules of the Church, and I know that you will act in this matter with the discretion which I discern in you.

He goes on to set the Jesuit straight about the *Declaratio Benedictina*, which explicitly exempts those that are not Catholics from the requirement of marriage before the priest. Since this was issued in 1741, about the time Meurin came to America, it is likely that he had never heard of it. The bishop was certainly in error in his insistence that the Vincennes people must go to Meurin to be married; the distance was nearly 200 miles, and Meurin had made it clear that no priest had been at Vincennes since 1763. Briand, no doubt, had only the vaguest notion of the geography of the country; probably Meurin's map included only the five places where he ministered.

How confused the bishop was appears from the charge he made in a letter to the Kaskaskians he wrote about this time, in which he stated, "... others have the temerity to marry without having their marriage blessed by the priest."

Meurin had made no such accusation regarding Kaskaskia; only in the case of Vincennes did he raise the question. Even toward the Kaskaskians Briand appears to have been unduly rigorous, although Meurin made them two visits a year, rather than the one the bishop refers to. They were some miles from Ste. Genevieve, and a delay of several months would surely satisfy the proviso the bishop mentions "of impossibility of contracting marriage before you" By that time, the jurisprudence of the Holy See had interpreted the decree of the Council of Trent in much the same sense as the Code of Canon Law, which makes a delay of a month sufficient reason for marrying without the priest.

**TO ONE OF MEURIN'S** requests Briand did accede: he appointed a vicar general for the entire western country, extending, as he insisted, to New Orleans. But the appointment he made filled the priest with dismay, for it was Father Meurin himself who received the office. In his acknowledgment he wrote:

I am as unworthy as anyone can be of the honor you confer upon me, and more than ever incapable of such an office of which I know but the name ... I have never been acquainted with any jurisprudence, either notarial, pontifical or any other. I have been too long left to myself, and I hardly know the duties of a simple priest. It is no longer possible for me to learn.

It is impossible to doubt the sincerity of this disclaimer; the tenor of the letter and of all his others shows that Father Meurin was conscientious to the verge of scrupulosity.

In his letter to the Kaskaskians, Briand informed them of the dignity to which he had raised their priest and admonished them to obey him "as you would me." He also promised to grant another of Meurin's requests by sending "one or two missionaries to help him in uprooting among you the vices which I know exist there, because I have been told that the spirit of piety was indeed him among you." Apparently, the prelate's tact did not exceed his geographical expertise.

The bishop kept his word; in the spring of 1768 he sent a priest from Quebec to assist the ailing Meurin. This was Pierre Gibault, who was to spend the 35 years of his priesthood in the Illinois country.

Father Gibault was born in Montreal on 2 April 1737, the son of Pierre Gibault and Marie St. Jean. The unsettled conditions brought about by warfare and the change of government no doubt both delayed and curtailed his studies, for he was almost 31 years old when he was ordained on 19 March 1768 after only two years in the seminary.

After a few weeks of service in a Montreal parish he set out in June, commissioned as "Vicar General for the Illinois country and missionary in all parts of the Illinois and adjacent country from the Mississippi to Detroit and Michilimackinac."

It might seem strange that the bishop should make the only priests in this region vicars general; he probably had some sense of the vastness of the area, which would hamper communication between the two. He did take the precaution of directing Gibault to be guided by Meurin's counsel.

**THE NEW MISSIONARY'S** first work was at Michilimackinac, where he spent the last week in July, baptizing, assisting at marriages, and hearing confessions for many hours, some of his penitents "not having been at the sacraments for three, some not for ten years." Among these were Indians from Arbre Croche, the last mission of Father Dujaunay, who had retired in 1765. These particulars he related in a letter to the bishop dated 28 July.

The next stop was at the St. Joseph mission. The church there was in what is now Michigan, but much of the territory was in the present Indiana. Here Dujaunay had ministered from time to time between 1738 and 1752. The church records show that Father Gibault baptized eight children on 17 and 19 August, one of those baptized being the child of Timothee Boucher de Montbrun and Therese Angelique Gibault, the priest's first cousin.

Since one of the children was five years old and another was six, it is likely that no priest had been at St. Joseph since Pierre Potier made entries in 1761. Father Gibault reached Kaskaskia in the middle of September, three months after leaving Montreal.

**GIBAULT'S TUITION** in the seminary had been paid out of the resources of the Cahokia mission; for this reason the bishop intended that the priest should make that mission the center of his activities. Shortly before this time, however, Father Meurin had incurred the ill will of the Spanish authorities, partly because of his correspondence with Briand, partly because he was a Jesuit. Narrowly escaping arrest, he had crossed the river and settled in Kaskaskia. But Kaskaskia was the largest of the parishes in the area, and upon Gibault's arrival he relinquished it to the younger priest and took charge of the small village of Prairie du Rocher.

The bishop did not take kindly to the switch in his plans by his vicars. He was even more disgruntled when he learned that Father Gibault had taken with him his mother and his sister. The priest's explanation of his action was that only at the last minute had Madame Gibault receded from her firm determination not to leave home.

"I could not send away my mother," he wrote from Vincennes, "who came to me at Montreal saying she would go to the ends of the earth rather than be left in her old age at the mercy of everybody." He did not explain his failure to mention his fellow travelers in the long letter he sent from Michilimackinac. Father Meurin came to his companion's defense when he wrote to the bishop:

His mother, far from being an obstacle to his zeal, is very useful to him by relieving him from his temporal cares and thus making it possible for him to devote himself to spiritual matters, for we do not find here as in France trustworthy and reliable servants—indeed we find none at all. We are obliged to have slaves and oversee them, which is the greatest hardship of all.

The bishop seems to have been mollified. At any rate, the mother and sister remained with Father Gibault, the sister until her marriage to Joseph Migneau on 11 September 1770, his mother until her death in 1775; and Father Gibault continued to live at Kaskaskia. Meurin was high in his praise of the young priest, telling the bishop that he showed himself more and more worthy of Briand's confidence and expressing the wish that he had been as zealous in his youth.

**GIBAULT DID NOT** immediately visit the other missions. On his arrival he became ill with chills and fever, making the customary tribute to the country, as Meurin put it. Meurin continued his visits, while Gibault remained at Kaskaskia. Vincennes remained unvisited, though Meurin had stressed the need of a missionary there. The people were not idle though. On 6 April 1767, Etienne Phillibert, signing himself "garde presbitaire, chantre," had written to the bishop to appeal for a priest.

I dare to take the liberty . . . to represent to you that since the departure of the reverend Jesuit fathers . . . I have the sorrow to see growing up numbers of small children who are of an age to make their first communion and who are unfortunately deprived, as well as many honest traders of the sacraments . . . I have the disagreeable sight of many marriages contracted without the power to make the parties have recourse to our mother holy church; this can cause only great scandal . . . There are fifty children to whom I have given the waters of baptism in the church . . . Our inhabitants have the honor to present to you a plea that you will please accord them a missionary. This is what I am bringing to the attention of your clemency.

The plea brought no response, perhaps because of Briand's ignorance of the country and his belief that Vincennes was one of the cluster of villages along the Mississippi. Accordingly, two years later, on 22 April 1769, the people addressed a more urgent appeal to the bishop, this one signed by Ste. Marie, the commandant. This letter tells of the "misfortunes that befall us because of the little religion we have preserved since we have been deprived of the missionaries." It goes on:

The sad state and the bad disorder causes great evil among the children. They have no fear of their own fathers, live in ignorance and abandon themselves to every vice which wilful youth is capable of and fall from the path of virtue. This plus numerous other inconveniences may be the result of not being able to practice their Christian duties of which they have been deprived for so long a time. A great number of Christians die without the Sacraments of Holy Viaticum and Extreme Unction.

One can only speculate as to the reason why Ste. Marie addressed the letter to Bishop Pontbriand, who had died nine years earlier. Perhaps the similarity of Briand's name to that of his predecessor led to the confusion.

The complaint about the perversity of the young people may be laid to the general tendency of elders to be discontented with the younger generation as well as to the

need to make a strong case for the appeal. On the other hand, the expression of grief for the lack of the sacraments and of religious instruction was certainly justified. That religion was far from dead at Vincennes is clear from the people's writing twice despite their failure to receive a reply to their first appeal, and from their offer "to defray the expenses incurred by his voyage from Canada and to pay the person who will bring him to the Post."

From the second letter the bishop seems to have derived a clearer picture of Vincennes' special problem. He responded by saying that it could be four or five years before he could assign a resident priest but that he had asked "M. Gibault" to visit the post.

In a letter to Gibault on 13 August 1769 he made this request. That he did not even then fully comprehend the situation appears from his suggestion that Gibault should take the failing Meurin along "and give him a small mission there, were it only for no other duties than to say Mass, teach the catechism, and preach occasionally." He failed to see that such a trip was hardly the treatment for a sick man.

Gibault probably received the bishop's letter in October. Early in February 1770 he set out for his first visit to Vincennes against the protests of the Kaskaskians, who, as Meurin wrote, "said boldly that Mr. Gibault had cost them too much to risk him in the service of others."

There was, indeed, considerable danger, for though Pontiac had faithfully kept the peace he had pledged, Indian resentment was still alive, and bands of young men continued to attack travelers. Pontiac himself was assassinated at Cahokia in 1769 by a Peoria Indian, who perhaps was indignant that the chief had given up the resistance. Gibault sought to lessen the risk by taking with him 10 men and by carrying two pistols and a gun. This information comes from a letter he wrote the Bishop three weeks after his arrival. "I am so occupied," he said, "that I do not know if I can collect my thoughts sufficiently to tell you . . . all the things that at different times I had intended to write you."

Perhaps to explain why he had not more promptly carried out the bishop's suggestion, he informed him that on 28 October he had recovered from "a severe and terrible illness" and that he had then made visits to Ste. Genevieve, St. Louis, and Cahokia, being so occupied that "I have slept in my bed only four nights."

It may have been to show why these trips were necessary and why he had not brought Meurin along that he stated that the latter had been unable since autumn to leave his house because of falls he had sustained.

**As evidence that the Kaskaskians' fears were not groundless he stated that since his arrival 22 persons had been killed or captured by the Indians on the road by which he came. If Briand was not convinced that there was ample reason for the delay he must have been hard-hearted indeed.**

As to Vincennes, Gibault wrote that there were 700 to 800 persons there desiring to have a priest. As has been noted, the censuses of 1767 and 1769 showed about 400 inhabitants, the second one listing the householders. In three weeks it was scarcely possible for Gibault to make an accurate count of his parishioners, especially since he was busy with baptisms, marriages, confessions, and instructions. There is no reason to suppose that he meant to deceive the bishop, but he did wish to show the need for a resident priest, and he was never given to understatement.

Nor did he restrain his rhetoric in his description of the religious condition of his parish. No priest had been in Vincennes for more than six years (nearly seven, he says), since October 1763, long enough for piety to have waned, and Gibault is

emphatic in saying that it had. "I found religion nearly extinguished," he wrote, "libertinage and irreligion have been introduced." He goes on:

**Nevertheless, when I arrived everybody came in a crowd to the bank of the river. Some threw themselves upon their knees and were quite unable to speak; others spoke only by their sobs; some cried out: "Father, save us, we are almost in hell;" others said: "God has not utterly abandoned us, for it was He who sent you to us to do penance for our sins;" and others exclaimed: "Oh! Sir, why did you not come a month ago, then my poor wife, my dear father, my loved child would not have died without the Sacraments."**

Whatever allowance one makes for the Gallic exuberance of the people and of the writer, one surely must say that this is not the picture of a parish in which religion is nearly extinguished. But Father Gibault was making a case and was probably unaware that his arguments were mutually exclusive.

**WHAT THE PRIEST** reported regarding the condition of the church property enhances the impression that the people had a genuine concern for their religion. He stated that he was rebuilding the church. "It will be of wood," he went on, "but well built and very strong; there are a good-sized presbytery, a fine orchard, a garden, and a good farm for the benefit of the pastor, who would live comfortably (gracieusement)."

If after six years the church was in good enough condition to be rebuilt, it surely had not suffered complete neglect. And it was not a negligent parish that had kept the other property so well as to promise comfortable living for the pastor. One may suspect that the young priest would not have been unwilling to accept the pastorate if a replacement could be found for Kaskaskia.

Father Gibault's entries in the record books show that he assisted at six marriages and conferred three baptisms on his first visit. One of the baptisms was of a child, "born yesterday," though no date is given. The other two were of adult slaves, one a Negro, one a Cherokee Indian.

More interest attaches to the marriages. Three of these were validations of unions of couples who previously had "taken each other as man and wife for want of a priest." These were on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, 6, 8, and 10 February, probably right after the priest's arrival.

Obviously, Gibault was observing Briand's injunction that couples who had entered marriage without the priest must renew their consent before him. Two marriages were on Monday and Tuesday before Ash Wednesday, which fell on 28 February. For the first, two banns were published and one was dispensed; for the other, all three were dispensed.

Perhaps these couples decided to marry only after the priest's arrival, for there was time for three publications beginning on 11 February. The last marriage was on Monday, 19 March. For this one Gibault dispensed both from the banns and from the forbidden time of Lent. The principals in this marriage were residents of Ouiatanon. They very likely heard of the opportunity to marry before the priest only some time after Gibault's arrival at Vincennes.

**GIBAULT TOLD THE** bishop that he had instructed and received into the Church a Presbyterian family. Since there is no record of their baptisms, one may infer that he admitted them with only the profession of faith. He stated that he had obtained their consent to make a public renunciation of heresy, but that he had deemed it prudent not to have this carried out.

When one considers that Father Gibault must have given these people some instructions as well as the two slaves, that he heard hundreds of confessions, and that he must have prepared the children for First Communion, one cannot escape the conclusion that he spent a busy two months at Vincennes.

He seems to have left the post about the first of April. Easter fell on 15 April, and it is likely that he had promised the Kaskaskians to be back for Holy Week.

**On his return trip he had an escort of 20 men, twice the number that had accompanied him to Vincennes, another indication of the people's appreciation of the ministrations of the Church.**

After the departure of Father Devernai in 1763 until 1770 the only person that made entries in the church records was Etienne Phillibert, the guardian of the church, who wrote the first appeal to the bishop. He recorded 61 baptisms and nine burials. He appears not to have been so careful in recording burials, for six of the nine occurred in 1764. After Gibault's departure in 1770 another name appears, that of Etienne Juteaux, who recorded burials on 10, 17, and 20 April. There is also a record of a baptism on 23 April. The signature has been lost, but one may assume that it was that of Juteaux. The indication seems to be that Phillibert was a member of the priest's escort to Kaskaskia. Strange to say, there is no other certain entry for 1770.

IN 1771 THE ENTRIES are resumed. There is a series of ten baptisms signed simply "Capucin." The date of the first is lacking; it may have been late in 1770, for the second is dated 16 January 1771. The last is dated 26 January "same year," it was probably a mistaken entry of 1772.

Father Gibault returned that year and made entries on 30 January, 4, 8, and 14 February. On 30 January he recorded the baptism of Barbe Seguin, born in June 1768, and the burial of Joseph Levron, who had died the day before having received Extreme Unction.

On 4 February he baptized 11 children, recorded in two groups. Perhaps one group was baptized in the morning, the other in the afternoon. All the birthdays of these children were carefully recorded. They extended from 9 April to 9 November 1770.

On 8 February he baptized two adult Indians, Françoise, a slave, and Marie, previously baptized privately, the wife of Honore Denis. On 14 February he officiated at a marriage, for which three banns had been published. In 1771 Ash Wednesday fell on 13 February, yet Father Gibault makes no mention of a dispensation from the forbidden time. Since one of Capucin's baptisms occurred on 24 February, Gibault must have left Vincennes before that day; his stay seems to have been for about a month. There is some reason to suppose that on this occasion he extended his trip to Ouiatanon and St. Joseph, though there are no entries to show his presence in those places.

No entry for 1772 occurs in the Vincennes books unless the last of Capucin's baptisms occurred in that year. This was the year that brought General Gage's order for all the inhabitants on the Wabash "to quit those countries instantly and without delay," the order that caused much dismay in Vincennes.

The composition of the memorial the people sent in September to protest this arbitrary action must have engaged the attention of the literate members of the community. Whether in all the excitement Phillibert failed to record his activities or misplaced the records is hard to say. He was one of the 14 who signed a letter to

Captain Hugh Lord at Kaskaskia on 21 July, immediately after the receipt of the order, but his name is not among the signatures of the memorial of 18 September.

**THERE IS NO EVIDENCE** that Father Gibault played any part in the efforts of the people to have the order revoked, whether in the framing of the memorial or in the subsequent collecting of evidence to prove the inhabitants' titles. On the contrary, there is evidence that he did not visit the post in 1772. This is contained in the records he made in 1773.

In that year he recorded 24 baptisms and 11 marriages between 14 and 28 January. Two of the baptisms were of adult Negro slaves; the others were of infants, whose birthdays ranged from 6 September 1771 to 31 December 1772. In nine cases the baptisms were said to be conditional, there is no such notation for the others.

Of the 11 marriages, four took place on Monday 18 January and two on Monday 25 January. In three cases there was a dispensation from one or two banns; in the others three banns were said to have been published. The child born on 31 December was baptized conditionally on 23 January. It seems therefore that Gibault was not in Vincennes before the end of December.

One of the marriages for which three banns were published was on 14 January. The third Sunday before that date was 27 December, when the priest had not arrived. It is possible that one publication was on the feast of the Epiphany, 6 January. It is also possible that the guardian began the publications in anticipation of the priest's coming.

Gibault was probably in Vincennes from early January until early February. Records of St. Joseph show that he was there in March, for he entered two baptisms on 7 March and a burial on 21 March. He probably made a visit at Ouiatanon along the way, for the trip to St. Joseph would hardly have taken a month. There is a record of a marriage at Michilimackinac on 28 June, at which the traveling missionary officiated. He could hardly have reached Kaskaskia until August, after an absence of more than six months.

**AFTER SO EXTENSIVE** a journey it is no wonder that Father Gibault did not return to Vincennes in 1774. If his own fatigue did not persuade him to stay at home, the objections of the Kaskaskians to the prolonged absences of the priest they were paying would have been enough to keep him at home or nearby.

There is no entry in the St. Francis Xavier books between 28 January and 28 June 1773, when, after three years, Phillibert resumed the recording of baptisms.

Perhaps he accompanied Gibault to St. Joseph, returning to Vincennes when the priest went on to Michilimackinac. Between 28 June and 21 December he recorded nine baptisms conferred by him. In 1774 he recorded 25 baptisms. Since the records show that there were 20 births in 1772 and 25 in 1774, it is pretty certain that there were more than nine in 1773. One explanation that might be offered for the discrepancy would be that Juteaux or Capucin functioned in Phillibert's absence and failed to keep the records.

Father Gibault's longest missionary journey was in 1775. The Vincennes records show that he witnessed two marriages on 25 and 26 February, just before Lent, for Ash Wednesday fell on 1 March. Between 7 and 17 March he baptized 19 children, most of them conditionally. Seven of these children were born in 1775, the others earlier.

Phillibert baptized 22 children that year, two of whom were later baptized conditionally by the priest. Thus, there seem to have been 27 births in 1775. Beginning with 1772 there seems to have been a definite increase in the number of baptisms,

probably indicating a growth in the population. This indicated growth causes one to wonder that there were but two marriages in 1775 in contrast to the 11 in 1773.

Leaving Vincennes after about a month's stay, Father Gibault proceeded again to Michilimackinac, probably making visits at Ouiatanon and St. Joseph on the way. He seems also to have gone all the way to Montreal on this trip.

One of his letters shows that after leaving Kaskaskia he had word that his mother was dying, and it may have been for this reason that he wished to see his family.

Failing to obtain the expected transportation back to the Illinois country, he spent the winter at Detroit, helping the elderly priests there, the Jesuit Pierre Potier and the Recollect Simplicius Bocquet. Twice he wrote to Briand, begging the bishop to recall him because he could no longer endure the hardships of the frontier and the ingratitude of his people. Those of whose ingratitude he complained appear to have been the people of Kaskaskia rather than of Vincennes.

One wonders that the bishop in all this time did not send other priests to this part of his diocese. Perhaps it was the reluctance of the clergy in Quebec and Montreal to exchange the comforts of their parishes for the itinerant life of a missionary that left the people of this vast area with only Meurin and Gibault to care for their religious needs. Even Father Gibault's description of the Vincennes property seems not to have tempted them.

AS EARLY AS 1772 Briand appointed another priest, Joseph Nicolas Martel, to the Illinois country, but he died by drowning shortly before he was to set out. It is also a matter of wonder that the bishop did not take advantage of Gibault's pathetic plea for recall, since he had already had intimations that the Kaskaskians complained of him.

Even Father Meurin, who had praised the young priest so highly at first, informed the bishop that the complaints were not without substance. "If only he had continued as he began," he wrote, "following the advice which you gave him, he would not be unhappy . . . Over the last five or six years he has lost his reputation."

**It is likely that the two things were connected: the bishop could not bring the priest back because he could not send anyone in his place.**

Father Gibault did not get back to Kaskaskia until 22 May 1776, at the very time that Meurin was writing to the bishop. While he was in Montreal and Detroit he could not have failed to learn of the events that were taking place in the English-speaking colonies. Nor could he have failed to learn of the severe penalties of suspension and excommunication with which Bishop Briand threatened his subjects who should dare to encourage the rebels.

He severely reprimanded Father Peter Floquet for showing hospitality to John Carroll when the latter came to Canada with the commission from the Continental Congress. It has been said that the sentiments of most Canadians were with the other colonies, but that the clergy held them in line and the bishop held the clergy in line.

The bishop was duly grateful for the advantages deriving from the Quebec Act and he took no chances of being thought unappreciative. In one of Gibault's letters to the bishop in 1775 he remarked, "I shall profit by the delay to make a longer retreat than I could have done anywhere else." The happenings in church and state must have provided him with interesting points of meditation.

MEANWHILE, Etienne Phillibert faithfully continued his work in Vincennes. He recorded 26 baptisms in 1776 and 20 in 1777. One of these records deserves special

notice. On 18 April 1776, the guardian of the church baptized and stood as godfather for Jean Baptiste, "born the same day of the slave of Sieur Perron." To this record he appended a note, signed by himself and another witness, to this effect:

**The said Jean Baptiste, free from this day, shall live with him or his until the age of eighteen and shall have independence of slavery from us.**

It was one day short of a year after the battle of Lexington. The echoes of the shot fired there appear to have carried to the banks of the Wabash. Regrettably, this note is the only one of its kind among the many records of baptisms of black and red slaves.

Less than a year later, on 23 February 1777, Father Meurin died, leaving Gibault as the only priest in this missionary country. It was perhaps for that reason that he did not go to Vincennes at the usual time. He did go, however, in June. On Sunday and Monday, 22 and 23 June he baptized eight children; one he baptized on the day of its birth, while most of the others were some months old, most of them baptized conditionally.

STRANGE TO SAY, though it had been more than two years since his last previous visit, he recorded no marriages. It was on 19 May that Edward Abbott, Lieutenant Governor and Superintendent, had arrived with his entourage of Indians and Frenchmen, and taken command of the post.

One cannot escape the conclusion that it was Abbott's coming that occasioned Gibault's making the trip, the first he had made in summer, yet there is nothing to show what took place at the meeting of the British official and the priest.

Other events were in the making that would have momentous effects in Vincennes. George Rogers Clark was laying his plans and recruiting his men for an expedition, one of the consequences of which would be a second summer visit of Gibault to Vincennes.

Just about the time the priest left Kaskaskia Clark's two spies, who had been there for some weeks to learn the lay of the land, were also leaving to convey to Clark the results of their investigation, which were to lead him to believe that Kaskaskia would be a good place to attack. It would be interesting to know whether they ever met Father Gibault.

# Chapter III

Father Gibault's next visit to Vincennes, the one that made him famous, was also in summertime. In July 1778, he appeared in the company of several Kaskaskians and Cahokians and a few Virginians, members of George Rogers Clark's army, which had just captured the Illinois towns. The delegation came to Vincennes to induce the people there to follow the example of their relatives and friends in joining with the rebellious American colonies.

Clark's spies, who under the guise of hunters had spent the May and June of 1777 in the Illinois country, reported to him that the people there were unhappy under Commandant Rocheblave's rule, many of them leaning to the cause of the Revolution. Encouraged by this intelligence, Clark pushed forward his preparations for an expedition against the British outposts.

Though disappointed in his expectation of enlisting 350 militia, he set out from the Falls of the Ohio River, near the present Louisville, on 24 June 1778 with half that number. The little army left the Ohio some 60 miles south of Kaskaskia and marched to the town, arriving on 4 July.

Relying on the terror with which the French viewed the American backwoodsmen, regarding them as "more savage than their neighbors, the Indians," Clark led his men into the town after nightfall and by a combination of surprise and bravado captured Rocheblave and subdued the people without firing a shot.

A few years earlier the Kaskaskians had complained to Bishop Briand about Father Gibault's conduct, asking for his replacement by another priest. Yet in this crisis they looked to him for guidance in their appeal to the swaggering conqueror for clemency and in the negotiations that culminated in their swearing allegiance to the Republic of Virginia.

**It was Sunday morning when they found their town occupied and they were amazed and delighted when Clark assured them that there would be no interference with their religion. The Epistle of the Mass of that day spoke of the sufferings of this time as not worthy to be compared with the glory to come and of the liberty of the children of God. It seems safe to surmise that the sermon dwelt on the blessedness of peacemakers.**

Only Chevalier Rocheblave stubbornly refused to forswear his fealty to the

British king; he was sent as a prisoner of war to Williamsburg, the Virginia capital. In a few days, Cahokia and the other nearby villages joined Kaskaskia in adhering to the American cause.

WITH VINCENNES in British hands, however, Clark's position was untenable. After Abbott's departure in February no British official was there; only the militia guarded the post, but they numbered some 200, and they were sworn to defend it.

In the memorial presented to Abbott when he left, the people had affirmed their devotion to King George and their detestation of the rebels. A surprise attack on Vincennes was out of the question, for news of Clark's movements would reach the post long before his men could arrive.

It is uncertain whether it was Colonel Clark or Father Gibault that first proposed to "bring that place over to the Americans without being at the trouble of marching against it." Very likely the plan grew out of Clark's consultations with his officers and the leading Kaskaskians, including the priest, in which the colonel let it be understood that the company he had with him was only the small part of an army at the Falls of the Ohio, ready to join in an assault on Vincennes.

No doubt the prospect of a bloody attack by the fierce Virginians weighed heavily with Father Gibault when he offered his services in the conquest by persuasion. Not only was he by profession a man of peace, there is every indication that by temperament he shrank from violence.

From the outset he stipulated that his role could be only a spiritual one, since his vocation forbade engagement in temporal affairs. He was aware that his bishop had prohibited priests and people from assisting the rebels, under the threat of severe penalties for the disobedient. Hence the official head of the delegation was Jean Baptiste Laffont, a surgeon and a leading citizen of Kaskaskia. Gibault acted as secretary, but the report he wrote has not been preserved.

On Tuesday 14 July, just a week after the submission of the Illinois towns, the party left Kaskaskia. On Friday or Saturday it reached Vincennes. Little time was needed to persuade the people to renounce their allegiance to Britain and join the rebellion, for on Monday the entire parish assembled in the church and swore "to be faithful and true subjects of the Republic of Virginia as a free and independent state."

The names of 184 men were affixed to this oath, only about 50 actually signing, the rest making their marks. The first name on the list is that of Boulon, the commandant appointed by Abbott. Another notable signer was Phillibert, the guardian of the church.

The news of the alliance recently concluded between France and the United States, which had been one of Clark's trump cards in gaining the support of Kaskaskia, no doubt had influence at Vincennes also. The failure of the British authorities to grant their repeated pleas for civil government and a garrison to protect them must have played a part in the people's decision.

But probably the strongest argument with them as with Father Gibault was the fear that they would suffer grievously if they resisted the savage Virginians. The sermon that Sunday, as at Kaskaskia two weeks earlier, must have been a panegyric of peace as well as of freedom.

The pastor did not neglect his spiritual duties. On Friday 24 July he witnessed three marriages and on the following Sunday he witnessed another. On Saturday he

baptized Etienne Jacques, the infant son of an Indian slave; it was the feast of St. James. The names of the bridegrooms and of Etienne Jacques' godfather are among those subscribed to the oath. The record indicates that three publications of the banns preceded the weddings. Since only one Sunday intervened between the pastor's arrival and the ceremonies, some of the publications must have been made on week-days.

THE DELEGATION probably started back to Kaskaskia on 28 July, for in an account he wrote some time later Clark stated: "Mr. Jebault and party accompanied by several gentlemen of Vincennes returned about the first of August with the Joyfull News."

Although on Clark's authority the people of Vincennes had chosen officers for the militia, the colonel saw fit to send one of his officers, Captain Leonard Helm, to command the post and to serve as his Indian agent, hoping later to receive additional troops and to place a strong garrison at the post.

The captain was received "with acclimation by the people," as Clark put it. He negotiated with Tobacco's Son, the Piankashaw chief, called the Grand Door of the Wabash because of his influence with the other tribes, with whom Gibault had prepared the way; the chief bound himself to an alliance with the Americans from which he never swerved.

Clark was disappointed in his hope for reinforcement, for Virginia was too deeply involved in the war in the East to spare troops for the frontier. Hence Helm had only two or three Virginians and the militia to defend the post. The failure to receive more troops also frustrated Clark's plan to proceed to the conquest of Detroit.

NEWS OF THE capture of outposts, however, was not long in reaching the British in Detroit. Henry Hamilton, the lieutenant governor, whose diligence in organizing raids against the frontier had gained him the sobriquet "Hair Buyer," received the tidings with rage, directed mostly at Gibault, whom he took to be the chief culprit in the submission of the French.

With the consent of his commander in chief, he quickly readied an expedition to recapture the posts. On 7 October, this force, made up of 33 regular soldiers, 125 Detroit militia, and 70 Indians, left Detroit.

The day before, Father Pierre Potier, last of the Jesuit missionaries, whom Hamilton described as "a man of respectable and venerable figure," gave a blessing to the Catholics, "conditionally upon their strictly adhering to their oaths, being the more engaged thereto as the indulgence and favour of their prince exceeded their most sanguine expectations."

Obviously, Father Potier was of the same mind as the bishop with respect to rebellion.

Along the way other Indians were induced to join the expedition, so that Hamilton had about 500 men when he came to Vincennes. Approaching the town, he sent forward a company, provided with a cannon, to convey notice to the people "to remain quietly, each one with his family, to await the arrival of the Lieut. Governor of Detroit."

Pardon was promised to "those who had been so foolish as to listen . . . to bad advice and who recognized their error, but those who remain attached to the Rebels can expect only the punishment their crimes merit."

Not surprisingly, almost all the militia chose to remain with their families, having no more taste for a fight with the Indians than with the Virginians. There

was nothing for Captain Helm and his handful of men to do when Hamilton's army entered the town on 17 December but to surrender the fort, over which the flag of St. George was promptly hoisted.

The next day Hamilton convened the inhabitants in the church and, "having in pretty strong terms painted their poltroonery, ingratitude, and perfidy, I read them an oath to be subscribed only by those who, being sensible of their fault, should publicly acknowledge it." The oath contained a confession of failure of duty to God and men.

It went on: "We ask pardon of God and we hope from the goodness of our legitimate sovereign, the king of England, that he will accept our submission and take us under his protection as good and faithful subjects."

Hamilton stated that the oath was not forced on anyone but was "offered for the consideration of sober people convinced of their faults." It is hard to see what the alternative was but to receive "the punishment their crimes merited."

He was aware that he was rubbing their faces in the dirt. "Humiliating as it is," he wrote, "158 signed it in a few days." His conduct contrasted sharply with that of Clark, who after gaining the Kaskaskians' submission by bluster and braggadocio, quickly became considerate and affable.

It is impossible to render a certain judgment of Hamilton's rule during the two months in which he held sway over Vincennes. Naturally, he ordered all ammunition to be surrendered to himself, though he did issue passports for buffalo hunting, for which ammunition was required. He also took possession of "all spirituous liquors in the place which is the better security for their good conduct and a more beloved hostage than wife or child."

So solicitous was he for the moral improvement of the reformed rebels that he wrote on Sunday 27 December: "Tomorrow I shall destroy two billiard tables, the source of immorality in such settlements."

That he did not obstruct religious observances is clear, for Phillibert continued to record the baptisms he conferred, two of them on 19 and 20 December, just after the capture of the town. In a report he made two years later Hamilton wrote that the French inhabitants "had the effrontery to give Coll. Clark a written account of cruelties executed by us while at St. Vincennes, which our own American prisoners confuted in their Account to Coll. Clark."

Just what the alleged cruelties were is unknown, for neither account has come down to us. If the confiscation of the spirituous liquors and the destruction of the billiard tables are typical, Hamilton's administration was a pretty arbitrary one. There is a revealing sidelight on the matter in the list of supplies sent to the lieutenant governor from Detroit, which includes both wine and brandy.

Hamilton made a census of Vincennes, which showed a population of 621, of whom 217 were able to bear arms. The increase over the 400 of the 1769 census accords with the larger numbers of baptisms from 1773 onward.

It was Hamilton's intention to recapture the Illinois towns also, but he thought the winter too far advanced for a march of 200 miles and so he dismissed his Indian allies to go about their hunting, exacting a promise to return in the spring. He also sent back to Detroit most of the militia, retaining only 30 or 40, for he expected reinforcements in the spring.

He continued the practice of dispatching against the frontier settlements raiding parties, which served also as a screen, preventing news about Vincennes from reaching Kaskaskia and the Falls of the Ohio. Colonel Clark narrowly escaped capture by one of these parties, which had come close to Kaskaskia.

**THE INCIDENT** gave rise to the rumor that Hamilton was nearby with an army of

800. Panic seized the town. Not the least alarmed was Father Gibault, who became so agitated that Clark sent him across the river on the pretext of carrying important papers for safekeeping.

The Mississippi was clogged with ice and the priest perforce spent three uncomfortable days on an island in midstream. If he had had access to Hamilton's letters he might have been even more apprehensive, for the lieutenant governor was then writing to his commander in chief in this vein:

**Could I catch the priest, Mr. Gibault, who has blown the Trumpet of Rebellion for the Americans, I should send him down unhurt to your Excellency to get the reward for his zeal.**

The alarm was groundless, for the raiders on being detected hastily retreated to Vincennes. Their approach gave Clark an inkling that Hamilton was on the move, but he did not learn just how things stood until 29 January 1779, when Francesco Vigo came to town with the information that Hamilton was in possession of Vincennes.

Vigo was a trader, a resident of St. Louis, who had been doing business at Vincennes at the time of the capture. Since he was a Spanish subject, Hamilton could not hold him without the risk of offending Spain, which the British were doing their best to prevent from joining the colonies in the war.

**HE WAS ABLE** to let Clark know that the Vincennes people were still attached to the American cause and that Hamilton had only about 70 men but expected to move against Kaskaskia with a large force in the spring.

It is evidence of Clark's decisive character that in just a week he got ready a boat, equipped with cannon and carrying 46 men, to proceed by the rivers to Vincennes, and organized a company of 170 to march to the post. Half of these were Frenchmen, who replaced the Virginians that had grown tired of the adventure and returned home.

In Clark's account of the departure on 5 February he wrote:

**We were conducted out of town by the inhabitants, and by Mr. Jeboth, the Priest who after a very suitable Discourse to the purpose, gave us all Absolution.**

We may suppose that the tenor of the discourse differed somewhat from that of Father Potier in the previous October.

The first Vincennes residents to learn of the approach of Clark's men were some duck hunters they captured on the Wabash River after an arduous march in almost constant rain on 20 February. Three days later Clark sent one of the hunters into town with a message announcing his impending entrance and giving the people the choice between remaining within their houses if they were "true citizens and willing to enjoy the liberty I bring you and repairing instantly to the Fort to fight like men if they were Friends of the King of England."

No one seems to have repaired to the fort, for while several hours passed after the delivery of the message before Clark and his men entered the town under cover of darkness, Hamilton was unaware of their presence until they began to fire at the fort.

Not only did the inhabitants remain within their houses, several of them supplied the invaders with ammunition, which they had been able to conceal from Hamilton's inquisitors. This was badly needed, for Clark had sent most of his supply

by boat, which had not yet arrived, and much of the powder his men carried was ruined as they waded the last few days in water almost up to their shoulders.

**IN THE FIRST** volleys at the fort, half a dozen of the defenders were wounded. Yet, as Hamilton later reported, the regular soldiers were ready to resist to the death. Not so the Detroit militia. Despite Father Potier's eloquent words, they "hung their heads" and "began to murmur, saying it was very hard to be obliged to fight against their countrymen and relatives, who they now perceived had joined the Americans."

There was reason for Hamilton's bitter remark with reference to Father Potier's exhortation: "The subsequent behavior of these people has occasioned my recalling the circumstance." On the other hand, he manifested a certain naivete in expecting the Frenchmen to become instant Englishmen, eager to shed their blood for King George.

At any rate, with half his men nearly mutinous and a sixth of the rest disabled, he had no choice but to get the best terms he could and surrender. On 25 February he and his men marched out of the fort, over which the flag of Virginia went up, its name being changed to Patrick Henry in honor of the governor of the state.

On the day of the surrender Phillibert baptized a little girl, born that day, who received the name Victoire. While the name was not an unusual one in Vincennes, its choice on that occasion may have had more than usual significance.

In July 1779 there occurred another notable event in Vincennes, the establishment of the civil government for which the people had long hankered. In December 1778 the Virginia legislature had created the temporary County of Illinois, embracing all the country Clark had conquered, and Governor Henry had appointed Colonel John Todd, a former comrade in arms of Clark, as county lieutenant, empowered to conduct the election of judges to administer the law, and to command the militia.

**AFTER HOLDING** elections at Kaskaskia and Cahokia, Todd came to Vincennes to perform that function there. In this election, the first to be held under legal authority in Indiana, all the judges and militia officers chosen were Frenchmen, though by that time a number of Americans had settled at the post.

The judges were Le Gras, Bosseron, Dejenet, Guery, called La Tulippe, Gamelin, Edeline, Barron and Legrand. Most of them also became militia officers. Le Gras was named lieutenant colonel and commandant as well as first judge. Francois Bosseron, as major, became second in command.

It is safe to assume that Father Gibault accompanied Todd to Vincennes and that he took part in the installation of the officials both there and in the Illinois towns, though no record of these celebrations has survived. That he was in Vincennes at this time we know from the church records: between 7 and 27 July he baptized three infants, assisted at four marriages and conducted one funeral.

One of the weddings is especially noteworthy. On Sunday 18 July, Jean-Marie Le Gras, Colonel of Militia and Commandant of the post, widower, and Marie Desvegnets, widow, were married. The record was signed by the groom and by two witnesses, but the bride declared that she could not sign, as in most instances. For the other marriages three banns were published, but for this one Father Gibault as

vicar general, for good and necessary reasons, dispensed from the publications.

This was the first occasion on which Father Gibault visited Vincennes in three successive years. It was also to be the last one for five years. Phillibert continued to administer baptism and to conduct funerals as he had been doing for many years.

The euphoria brought by these auspicious events did not last long. Trade with Detroit, on which the economy of the town depended, was of course no longer possible. Clark's erection of Fort Jefferson on the Mississippi below the mouth of the Ohio enraged the Southern Indians, who in consequence made traffic with New Orleans more difficult than ever.

The overbearing conduct of the Virginia soldiers aroused the hostility of the Wabash Indians, with whom the people of Vincennes had always been on the best of terms. In addition, the merchants discovered that the Virginia money, with which they had been paid for supplies furnished the troops, was almost worthless.

When they refused to accept any more of it, the officers, having no other money and no other source of supplies, simply confiscated what they needed, while the soldiers wantonly killed the cattle, not sparing even the draft oxen.

**IN TWO LETTERS** of complaint to the authorities the people expressed their distress in the same manner: "If it be thus that you treat your friends, what treatment do you reserve for your enemies?" Indeed, the Virginians were more like an army of occupation than of liberation, and the inhabitants were reduced to the status of a conquered people.

The spirits of the French throughout the territory were revived in July 1780 by the arrival of Colonel Augustin Mottin de la Balme. This officer had come from France some years before, recommended by Benjamin Franklin, and had served briefly under George Washington in the Revolutionary War before going into trade.

At this time he came west, encouraged by Washington, who hoped that an attack on Detroit would divert British attention from his own movements. De la Balme, whether intentionally or not, led the French inhabitants to believe that the French king would soon resume his rule over the country he had lost to Britain.

In October, with a company of 80 men from Vincennes and the Illinois towns, he set off for Detroit, expecting that the French and Indians there would join him in expelling the British. His men captured Ouiatanon and St. Joseph and Fort Miami. Having exhausted their provisions, they broke into the Miami trading post and helped themselves to its contents.

Nettled by this high-handed action, the local Indians, who leaned to the British side, attacked and dispersed the little army. The colonel and several of his followers, including some from Vincennes, lost their lives. While this expedition proved a fiasco, it had a salutary effect on the French, who thereafter more boldly resisted the impositions of the Virginians.

It is no wonder that Father Gibault stayed away from Vincennes for five years. Raiding parties, led by British officers, continued to scour the country, and the priest well knew that capture by one of these would result in his trial for treason, however earnestly he might protest that his actions in the taking of Vincennes were purely spiritual.

Under pressure from British officials, Bishop Briand on 12 June 1780 wrote to him, withdrawing his powers as vicar general and pastor, suspending him from all other functions except the celebration of Mass, and commanding him to come to Quebec "without any delay."

It is fairly certain that Gibault never received this letter. The war was at its

height and communication from one side to the other was not an easy matter. At any rate, he made no reference to it in any of his subsequent letters that have survived, and he continued to call himself vicar general.

**IT WAS ABOUT** this time that Father Gibault moved across the river to make his home at Ste. Genevieve, but there is no reason to attribute this move to the bishop's letter. There were quite cogent reasons in local circumstances for his change of residence.

Bad as conditions were at Vincennes, they were a great deal worse at Kaskaskia, where there were more soldiers and more Americans out for all they could get, who with the connivance of the military had taken control of the town.

After the withdrawal of the troops these interlopers remained in power, despoiling the French, many of whom, like the priest, sought refuge under the more orderly Spanish rule. There is abundant evidence of the sorry state of affairs in the records. Father Gibault's description in his letter to the bishop of 1 April 1783 agrees with other accounts:

**The Illinois people are more unfortunate than ever. After being ruined and worn out by the Virginians and left without a comandant, without troops, and without justice, they are governing themselves by whim and caprice, or, to put it better, by the law of the strongest.**

Gibault was true to his character when he fled from the turmoil to the relative tranquility of the Spanish dominion. Another reason for his move was the accession of a resident pastor at St. Louis, which had been one of his early charges, in the person of the Capuchin, Bernard de Limpach.

A more economical division of labor resulted from the Capuchin's undertaking the care of Cahokia, just across the river from St. Louis, while Gibault attended St. Genevieve and Kaskaskia, which are close together. Not having to go to Cahokia, he had no need to reside on the eastern bank of the river.

In 1781 Father Potier, pastor of Sandwich, near Detroit, whose address to the militia had so pleased Henry Hamilton, died at the age of 73. The next year, Simplicius Bocquet, the Franciscan Recollect, who was 80 years old and had for many years been pastor of Detroit, retired.

These were the priests whom Gibault was assisting in the winter of 1775 and 1776, when he was stranded in Detroit and had to wait for spring to return to Kaskaskia. To replace them Bishop Briand appointed the 33-year-old Louis Payet, the two parishes being no burden for one of his years.

On 14 January 1784 the Congress ratified the Treaty of Paris, concluded the previous September, which recognized the independence of the United States. With the advent of peace, travel between the loyal and the lately rebellious colonies became possible.

So it came about that the pastor of Detroit made the journey to Vincennes and became the second priest in more than 20 years to preside over the parish of St. Francis Xavier.

Between 5 July and 20 September 1784, he baptized 13 infants and witnessed eight marriages, six of them on 2 August. For each marriage he recorded that he had made one publication of the banns and as vicar general of Quebec had dispensed from the other two.

In every case but one he stated that the couple had previously given their consent before Mr. Phillibert and four other witnesses to serve as the preliminary of a better form, waiting the occasion to have the marriage ratified by an approved

priest. Apparently he regarded the earlier ceremony as having some measure of validity.

**THERE ARE TWO** peculiarities in Father Payet's entries. One is the absence of burial records; it would be unusual if there were no deaths in the two months and a half that he was in Vincennes. It is probable that the funeral records for 1784 have been lost, for we have none signed by Phillibert for that year.

The other singular feature of Payet's records is the note affixed to nearly every entry of baptism by Phillibert from 1779 to 1784 to the effect that the priest had supplied the ceremonies omitted in private baptism. Some of the children involved were about five years old. One wonders how all these children could have been brought to church. Perhaps Father Payet performed these ceremonies when he visited the homes of the parish.

**Less than three months after Father Payet's departure Father Gibault was back in Vincennes to become the first resident priest since Father Devernal was hauled away in 1763.**

Several circumstances might account for this move. While the Holy See had detached the territory west of the Mississippi from the diocese of Quebec and placed it under the jurisdiction of the bishop of Santiago some years earlier, that prelate had left the parishes to shift for themselves in obtaining pastors.

In 1781, however, his vicar general in New Orleans, the Capuchin Cyrillo de Barcelona, was consecrated as auxiliary bishop and began to regularize parish affairs. About this time he appointed Louis Guignes pastor of St. Genevieve, so that Gibault had to find another residence.

The condition of near anarchy in the Illinois towns, especially in Kaskaskia, would have discouraged a bolder spirit than his from settling there. With the end of the war, however, the danger of arrest by British officers had ceased, and Vincennes was relatively untroubled.

**IN A LETTER** he wrote to the bishop in 1786, Gibault indignantly repudiated the charge that he had come to Vincennes to "procure a better income." It may be that he still felt the affection for the people that began on his first visit in 1770, when they all came down to the river bank to welcome him.

The first act of the pastor was the baptism on 12 December of Joseph Durand, born on the eighth, for whom he himself was the godfather. The second was the burial of Joseph on 13 December. In 1785 he recorded 38 baptisms. One of these was that of Moses Pierre Carter, "a Pensilvanian, aged about 45 years, never having any religion," on 29 June. The choice of the middle name was no doubt due to the feast of the day, the pastor's own saint's day.

On February 1786 he baptized a mother and her five children, ranging in age from six to 17, the wife and children of a Catholic. While these were the only adult baptisms that Gibault recorded, those baptized were not his only converts, for there is no entry of baptism in the case of the Presbyterian family whose reception into the church he related on his first visit. Obviously he did not repeat the baptism of those that had received the sacrament in another church.

**For a short period in 1785 the parish had the unprecedented experience of the presence of two priests. The second was the Carmelite, Paul de St. Pierre, who, though by nativity a German, his name having been Heiligenstein, had served**

as a chaplain of the French troops under Rochambeau in the Revolutionary War.

At the instance of the French Minister to the United States, he elected to remain as a missionary in the new country. After a brief stay in Kentucky he came to Vincennes, where on 30 March he baptized Genevieve Brouillet, taking care to note that he acted with the permission of the pastor. He baptized privately at least one child in danger of death, for on 14 August the pastor supplied the ceremonies for a child baptized by "l'Abbe St. Pierre." From Vincennes he proceeded to Kaskaskia, where as early as July he was deeply involved in the troubles of the town.

There are records of 12 marriages in 1785, three of them validations of unions previously contracted before Phillibert and other witnesses. Phillibert at least appears to have regarded these as valid, for in his baptismal records he referred to the children born of them as the offspring of legitimate marriages.

It is almost certain that the records of 1785 are incomplete. They are found not consecutively but scattered about in several places. There are none for March and April and there is only one each for January and December. Moreover, the two for February and three of the six for May are on loose leaves; one record contains only the name of the groom in a marriage. Only seven burials are recorded, one of which is noteworthy in that Pierre Perron, the deceased, is said to have been 100 years old.

On 6 June 1786 Father Gibault wrote the bishop a long letter, which was in large part an *apologia pro sua vita*. The bishop was Louis-Philipp d'Eglis, who had succeeded to the see of Quebec on the resignation of Bishop Briand on 24 November 1784.

Apparently one of the new bishop's first acts was to write to Gibault, accusing him of many misdeeds. The priest emphatically denied any complicity in the capture of Vincennes, maintaining that Dr. Laffont was the sole agent in the affair and that he had accompanied the delegation only because he was thereby enabled to carry out his spiritual duties in Vincennes, which he had not visited for a long time.

As evidence of the truth of his assertion he sent along a letter written by the doctor shortly after the return to Kaskaskia, in which he assured Colonel Clark that Father Gibault's journal of the mission was accurate. It went on to say "that in all the civil affairs, not only with the French but with the savages (Gibault) meddled with nothing because he was not ordered to do so and it was opposed to his vocation. . . , he himself having confined himself toward both French and Indians solely to exhortation tending toward peace and union and the prevention of bloodshed."

IT WAS EVIDENT that the priest had obtained this letter with just such a charge against him in mind. Clark probably never saw it. There is reason to believe that the doctor wrote it at Gibault's dictation, for the French appears to be superior to what the doctor was capable of. Furthermore, one passage is unlikely to have been the doctor's spontaneous expression: "I acted in all things with inviolable integrity." This is more like a compliment by Father Gibault.

In the present letter there is no reference to the suspension imposed by Bishop Briand or to the order to return immediately to Quebec. Indeed, some passages rather suggest that the writer was ignorant of these pronouncements, for he obliquely referred to himself as vicar general and went on to protest that he would rather receive an "interdiction" from his own bishop than honors from another. The implication appears to be that he had never received any penalty from the bishop.

To refute the bishop's charge that he had come to Vincennes to procure a better income he pointed out that for want of a rectory he had been obliged to

spend his first four months as the guest of Colonel Le Gras. As further proof of his parishioners' parsimony he informed the bishop that they had at first rejected his proposal to replace the church that had been repaired in 1770 with a new one, and that only when the Cahokians invited him to become their pastor had the people of Vincennes, "fearing with reason that I might abandon them, unanimously resolved to build a church."

It was no doubt for this new church that on the parish festival, the feast of St. Francis Xavier, 3 December 1785, Father Gibault solemnly blessed a bell, the contribution of Francois Bosseron. The church was to be 90 feet long, 42 feet wide, with pillars 17 feet high.

It may not have been the sturdiest of structures, for it is reported that when the next pastor came to town six years later he found it in a dilapidated state. Still, it did serve the parish until the present Old Cathedral was erected in the 1820s.

A traveler visiting Vincennes in 1819 described it as being 68 feet long, 22 feet wide, and eight feet high at the eaves, with a bell in a belfry four feet high. Whether the discrepancy between these dimensions and those stated by Father Gibault is due to a change of plans in the course of construction or to the pastor's expansive temperament is hard to say. At any rate, it is good to know that the bell was still there.

TO DEMONSTRATE that Vincennes was not a sinecure the pastor assured the bishop that he devoted himself to preaching on Sundays and holy days "whenever possible." Twice a day he instructed the children, who after 20 years without a resident priest knew but little of their religion, so that now even the youngest knew "tout le catechisme, petit et grand."

When he arrived only an old European could serve Mass, and so scrupulous was the pastor in the observance of the rubrics that when the sole server could not come to church there was no Mass. Now all the boys could serve, even on Sundays and holy days.

Moreover, he was teaching the boys, but apparently only them, to read and write. That his pedagogy was not without success is clear from the bold signature of Michel Brouillet, the 11-year-old godfather of his sister Genevieve, whom Father de St. Pierre baptized. This was one of the rare instances when a sponsor was able to sign.

It is strange that Father Gibault did not mention the name of the old European who was the only one that could serve Mass when he arrived. Almost certainly this was Etienne Phillibert, native of Orleans, who for 20 years was the guardian of the church and who had died at the age of 77 only a short time before, on 25 April, fortified with all the sacraments. He was buried the next day between the holy water font and the door of the church, presumably the new one.

The people's esteem for the old soldier is attested by the pastor's note declaring that nearly the whole parish of both sexes and all ages attended the solemn funeral. They owed him much, for aside from Father Gibault's seven brief visits between 1770 and 1779 he was in effect the pastor.

He recorded more than 400 baptisms that he administered and many funerals at which he officiated, though he appears not to have been so regular in entering these. While he never recorded in the church register the marriage ceremonies that he witnessed, Payet's and Gibault's records show that he presided at many such in default of the priest.

IT WAS NO DOUBT because of the poor condition of the record books, to which reference has been made, that Father Gibault on 17 July 1786 instituted a new register, "containing 368 pages on 184 leaves," which was to continue in use for ten years.

He noted that the register was to be signed by "Monsieur Jean Marie Philippe Le Gras, Colonel Commandant and First Magistrate of this town and dependencies" as well as by himself. A marginal notation states that, since Colonel Le Gras died without signing the register, his successor in office, Jean Baptiste Millet, had signed it.

Although Le Gras' sudden death occurred much later, on 8 February 1788, there was good reason for his failure to sign the register, for at the very time it was begun Vincennes was beset by one of the most severe crises it ever faced.

The register itself bears witness to the unhappy state of affairs: the first burial it records, on 27 July, is that of Paul Ruisseaux, aged 40 years, "who died the day before of gunshot wounds at the hands of the savages in the defense of his family and the village." On 8 August a solemn service was held for the repose of the soul of Louis Boyer, aged 59 years, who was killed by the Indians at Terre Haute on the Wabash; apparently, his remains were not brought to Vincennes.

These are the earliest records of Vincennes people killed by Indians. They mark the beginning of a decided change that was taking place in the relations between the Indians and the French.

The lull in hostilities between Indians and Americans that prevailed during the peace negotiations in Paris after Cornwallis' surrender at Yorktown in 1781 was over. On 1 March 1784, Virginia, unable to provide a stable government for the territory conquered by Clark, ceded it to the United States, but the Continental Congress was in no better position than Virginia to impose order on the country, which was overrun by adventurers, who had no regard to the prohibitions made by Congress.

In 1784 and 1785 agents of Congress concluded three treaties with several Indian tribes, which opened for settlement most of what is now Ohio. Congress also appointed surveyors to prepare the newly acquired land for sale to prospective settlers and speculators.

Taking alarm at these measures, which they took to be a portent of what lay in store for them, the Indian tribes along the Wabash combined their forces and stepped up their raids in Kentucky, then a part of Virginia. These raids led to counter raids by the Kentucky militia, who attacked and pillaged all the Indian villages they came upon, whether hostile or friendly.

IN RETALIATION, a large force of Indians in the summer of 1786 threatened an assault on the Americans at Vincennes, many of whom had taken possession of land the Indians regarded as theirs. Only the intervention of the French under the leadership of Le Gras prevented a massacre.

It is not hard to see why the colonel did not find time to sign Father Gibault's register. While the Indians' animus was directed chiefly against the Americans, the deaths of the Frenchmen show that the friendship between Indians and French was beginning to wane.

In September George Rogers Clark himself led a large force of Kentuckians up the Wabash and destroyed a number of Indian villages and many acres of their crops, but owing to a shortage of provisions and the desertion of some of his men, was unable to proceed far enough to bring the Indians to a pitched battle.

Part of Clark's trouble appears to have been due to intemperance in drinking, of which in his years of enforced idleness he had become a victim. At any rate, he lost control of the militia, who on coming to Vincennes pretty well took possession of the town, providing for themselves by taking from the people what they wanted. Among those they despoiled were three Spanish merchants, who were there engaged in trade.

This invasion of the territory of the United States by the Virginia militia finally provoked the Congress to take action. Perhaps it was motivated more by the peril to the delicate negotiations for a trade treaty with Spain, which were then in process, as a result of the robbery of the Spanish merchants than by concern for the safety of the local people.

On 24 April 1787, Congress ordered Henry Knox, the secretary of war, to direct the commander of the troops of the United States "to take immediate and efficient measures for dispossessing a body of men who have in a lawless manner taken possession of post St. Vincennes in defiance of the proclamation and authority of the United States."

SO IT WAS THAT on 17 July, Colonel Josiah Harmar came to town with a company of the First Regiment of the United States after a hot and wearisome six-day march from the Ohio River, driving a herd of cattle for their meat supply. The rest of their provisions, with an escort under the command of Major John Francis Hamtramck, went down the Ohio and up the Wabash, but the Wabash was so low that it was necessary to transfer the loads from the larger boats to pirogues with the assistance of some men that went down from Vincennes.

As the little fleet made its laborious way upstream it was attacked by a band of Indians, who killed a soldier and a Frenchman and made off with some of the provisions. Six weeks later, on 8 September, Father Gibault recorded the burial of Dominique Bergan, "who was massacred by the Indians at a place called the Grand Rapids of the Wabash some time ago. He added: "He was a good citizen and Christian, aged about 48 years."

Harmar confirmed in office the judges whom Todd had installed in 1779 and who had continued to function, although the law by which they held office provided for new elections every year and their legal status had probably lapsed when the County of Illinois went out of existence in 1782.

The town and the court were henceforth to be under the jurisdiction of Major Hamtramck, whom Harmar appointed military commander of all the territory as far as the Mississippi River. Hamtramck was a Canadian, whose father was an immigrant from Luxembourg and whose mother was of French descent.

The family must not have seen eye to eye with Bishop Briand, for John made his way to New York and joined the Revolutionary army in 1776, when he was about 20 years old. He saw considerable action in the war and remained in the army after it was over.

AS A CATHOLIC and a French speaker, he was eminently qualified to command at Vincennes and he appears to have acquitted himself well in the difficult position. He was not the only Catholic among the officers, for on 2 October 1787 John P. Wyllys, "Majr 1st U.S. Regt.," signed the church register as the godfather of Jean Francois Xavier Richard.

One of Hamtramck's first acts was to dissolve the court and hold an election of new judges in May 1788. His reason was that the people complained of the exor-

bitant fees charged by the court. He believed that the court had been dominated by a group that he referred to as the "ottaman familys," namely, those of Le Gras and Gamelin.

In fact, Colonel Le Gras, who had recently died, was the only one of his name at Vincennes, but he and the Gamelins were related. Hamtramck made no mention of another charge that has been leveled at the court, that of illegally granting lands, sometimes to its own members, the judge that was to receive a grant absenting himself on the day the grant was made.

In this election only two of those chosen were French: Jean Baptiste Millet, who as first judge finally signed the church register, and Nicholas Baillargeon. The others were Moses Henry, who was for many years a resident of Vincennes; James Johnson; and Valentine Thomas Dalton.

Neither Harmar nor Hamtramck was happy about Dalton's election, for he had been one of the ringleaders in the usurpations that provoked Congress to order the army to take possession of the town. He was well liked, however, and the best the major could do was to keep his eyes open that nothing might go amiss. The Gamelins were not entirely left out, for Antoine became the notary of the court.

Repeatedly in his letters to Harmar, Hamtramck told of the fever from which he and his men suffered and of the lack of bark, presumably cinchona, to treat the sick. In his letter of 31 August 1788, he wrote: "Our garrison is very sickly and no medicine." In the same letter he told the colonel: "The village is very sickly. Most every day for a week 3 and 4 children die."

The parish register gives evidence of the sad condition. In no previous year had as many as 20 burials been recorded, but in 1788 there were 56, all but two between 18 June and the end of the year. All but four were children ten years of age or younger; 23 were less than one year old.

There is nothing to identify the disease that brought so much sorrow to Vincennes. There appears to have been a remission at the end of October, though there were 29 burials in 1789, more than in any year prior to 1788.

**ONE REASON** for the greater number of deaths in 1789 was that six members of the parish lost their lives in attacks by the Indians. Two were buried on 15 May—Joseph Brossard and Antoine Pelletier, "killed last night in their house." Antoine was only eight years old.

On 26 May Pierre Codere, "killed by the savages the 24th inst., aged about 51 years," was buried, and on 30 May, Charles Bordeleau, who died the day before of wounds received from the Indians, "aged about 18 years, fortified with the sacraments of penance and extreme unction."

The two incidents received mention in a report Hamtramck made on 27 May to Major Wylls, who was commander at Fort Steuben at the Falls of the Ohio. Of the second he had this to say:

On the 24 four French pirogues were defeated 7 leagues from here, 4 men were killed, 3 mortally wounded, and one is a prisoner, and the remaining made their escape to the village.

In the same report he stated:

The discrimination of French & English is done with; the Negroes are the only ones who have a chance of their lives (I suppose because they sell well).

No doubt he had reason for the remark about the market value of the Negroes; an

account exists of the sale by Potawatomi Indians of two Negroes to British traders at Fort Miami about this time. But the Negroes were not always safe, for the parish register shows that on 15 and 19 September Father Gibault conducted the funerals of two Negroes killed by the Indians, each about 30 years old. Nothing in Hamtramck's correspondence tells of the incident in which they died.

**THESE TWO BURIALS** were among the last acts of Father Gibault at Vincennes. The very last was the baptism of two-year-old Joseph Detailly on 11 October. Two days later, Pierre Mallet, the new guardian of the church, recorded the burial of Janaux, an Indian slave.

The two records place the departure of Gibault quite precisely. On 12 November he began signing the register at Cahokia, where he was to remain for two years.

Why did he leave Vincennes? On 22 May 1788 he had written a second letter to Bishop d'Eglis, complaining of the bishop's failure to answer the first and to solve the problems of conscience he had proposed. He repeated his disavowal of complicity in the capture of Vincennes, calling attention to Dr. Laffont's letter that he had sent.

In further evidence of his loyalty he declared: "I have always regretted and regret every day the mildness of British rule." He earnestly pleaded to be permitted to return to Canada. It is no wonder that he received no reply to this letter, for Bishop d'Eglis died on 4 June, about the time the letter arrived. He was succeeded by John Francis Hubert, his coadjutor.

Hubert had been Briand's vicar general and he shared the latter's unfavorable opinion of the missionary. While he did not write to Gibault, he did correspond with John Carroll, who on 9 June 1784, had been appointed prefect apostolic of the United States.

There was a question regarding the extent of Father Carroll's jurisdiction, whether it was restricted to 13 colonies which had lately won their freedom from Britain and which had been under the ecclesiastical authority of the vicar apostolic of London or extended to the territory northwest of the Ohio River, which by the Treaty of Paris had become part of the new nation.

The latter area had been in the diocese of Quebec, but Bishop Hubert had received no notice of its detachment from his diocese. It was with regard to the jurisdiction in this territory that the bishop and the prefect apostolic corresponded. Hubert explained his position with respect to Father Gibault: "After the disadvantageous opinion that the government has formed of him I cannot prudently consent to his return."

He made no mention of the suspension imposed by Briand but he did point out that, since there had twice been a change of bishops in Quebec, Gibault's position as vicar general had lapsed. He had the grace to say that he ratified whatever Carroll should arrange for the priest.

**AT LEAST AS** early as the May of 1788, therefore, the veteran missionary was longing to return to the civilized life of Canada. After 20 years on the frontier he had reason enough to desire a more comfortable appointment. While the long letter of 1786 contains no request for a recall, its account of the writer's hardships leads one to believe that even at that time he would have welcomed a summons:

Count up, now, the troubles and vexations I have suffered in my various journeys to distant places in winter and summer to minister to so many villages

far separated in distant Illinois, in good and bad weather, by day and by night, in rain or snow, in wind or tempest or fog on the Mississippi, so that I have not been able to sleep in my own bed four nights in a year, never delaying my departure for a moment, even when I was not well myself, . . . without any gain, almost always badly nourished.

It was shortly after this letter was written that the invasion by the Kentucky militia occurred, which led to the threat of a mass attack by the Indians and culminated in the usurpation of control by the invaders. These events could only intensify the priest's wish for a change. In fact, the 1788 letter made reference to the death of Paul Ruisseaux at the hands of the Indians, which occurred at that time.

The coming of the United States Army in 1787 might have been expected to bring peace and order to the area, but the troops were too few to prevent raids by the Indians, encouraged as they were by the British in Detroit to harass the Americans.

Another factor that may have influenced Father Gibault's desire to return to Canada was the coolness toward him that he discovered in the new prefect apostolic, Father Carroll. While it was as yet uncertain whether this territory was to be part of his prefecture, Gibault could foresee that in the long run it would be.

As the months passed without word from Quebec, Father Gibault's hopes faded. Perhaps the last glimmer vanished when he learned that Bishop Hubert was governing the diocese, for he was aware of the bishop's loyalist sentiments. The final blow, convincing him that he must look elsewhere for a refuge, may have been the Indian attack in which four of his parishioners died in June 1789. The priest probably came to the same conclusion as did Major Hamtramck, that the French were no longer immune to attack.

**THERE WAS A RUMOR** abroad that year to the effect that Gibault was to become the pastor of New Madrid, a post projected by the Spanish on the Mississippi some distance below the mouth of the Ohio, to which they sought to draw settlers from the French towns.

Indeed, so concerned was Hamtramck about the efforts of the Spanish to lure his people away that he gave an Indian a bottle of rum for a letter of invitation from the commandant at St. Louis and took care that the people did not see it.

It was not to New Madrid, however, that Gibault went from Vincennes, but to Cahokia, the parish for which he was destined at the beginning of his ministry. The priest he succeeded there was the one that had been his guest shortly after his coming to Vincennes, Paul de St. Pierre.

The Carmelite's stay in Kaskaskia had been a short one, but it was long enough for him to become embroiled with two of the merchants, who accused him of slander because he had charged them with theft in their business dealings.

**The priest did not deny that he had made the charge, but he refused to accept the summons of the court to trial, declaring that as a clergyman he could answer only to an ecclesiastical tribunal. His accusers seem to have yielded to his plea, for they proceeded to direct a complaint to the prefect apostolic.**

Soon after this affair Father de St. Pierre moved to Cahokia, where conditions were never quite so chaotic as at Kaskaskia. He early became disillusioned with missionary life, for within a year of his arrival he was writing to the bishop of Quebec, applying for admission to his diocese, having found the country too harsh to put up with.

His appeal fared no better than Gibault's, and the next year he wrote to Bishop

Cyrillo in New Orleans to ask for a parish on the Spanish side. He mentioned both New Madrid and Ste. Genevieve, from which Father Guignes was departing. It was to Ste. Genevieve that he went, and there he remained for eight years. Later he held pastorates farther south.

**HE MUST HAVE** come to think better of the country, for when Louisiana came into the possession of the United States and the clergy were given the choice of becoming citizens of this country or going to Spain, he opted to stay. He died as pastor of Iberville on 15 October 1826 at the age of 81, esteemed as "one of the most remarkable priests that ever administered St. Gabriel's."

If Father Gibault was so unhappy under American rule and not on the best of terms with the prefect apostolic, why did he accept the pastorate of Cahokia? The likelihood is that the rumor about his going to New Madrid was well founded but that arrangements for opening the post were not yet complete.

Eager to escape from the hazards of life at Vincennes and assured of the appointment at New Madrid, he would be an easy mark for a delegation of Cahokians inviting him to replace Father de St. Pierre. Major Hamtramck's explanation of his going was a simple one: "Gibault has made his exit from this place for Kiokia, where he expects to make more money."

**Father Gibault signed the records at Cahokia from 12 November until 17 October 1791. When he went to New Madrid is not certain. The earliest of his entries in his new post that has come down to us is at Arkansas Post, one of the two missions attached to his parish. This he signed as "pastor elect of New Madrid." Only in July 1793, apparently, did he assume the title of pastor.**

It is likely that he went directly from Cahokia to New Madrid, but that it took some time to organize the new parish. Perhaps his formal appointment as pastor had to await the establishment by the Holy See of the diocese of Louisiana and Florida, with Louis Penalver y Cardenas as bishop, which took place on 23 April 1793. In December 1793 the pastor took the oath of allegiance to the Spanish king.

As pastor of New Madrid, Father Gibault received a salary from the state of 600 pesos, about \$1,200 in today's values. He was also entitled to certain fees. Most of the parishioners were from the troubled French towns in which he had ministered throughout his life as a priest, though there is evidence of a considerable Irish contingent. Many came from Vincennes itself, for on 14 April 1791 Hamtramck reported that "about 260 souls have this spring gone from this village" to New Madrid.

**A FEW YEARS** after his accession the pastor built a church, dedicated to St. Isidore the Farmer, which had about the same dimensions as the one at Vincennes. This time he did not have to browbeat the parishioners for the necessary funds, since the government took care of these.

While from time to time he found himself at odds with the Irish vicar general, James Maxwell, Father Gibault's last years at New Madrid were probably as happy as they would have been in a Canadian parish.

He died in the parish rectory on 16 August 1802, at the age of 65. There is no record of the cause of his death. He was spared the ordeal of choosing between the United States and Spain when Thomas Jefferson purchased Louisiana.

One of the arguments Father Gibault advanced in his plea to be recalled to Canada proved to be mistaken. He wrote:

As to the spiritual succor of the people of these regions, I can assure you that they will lack less than heretofore, for they have a priest at Kaskaskia, one at Cahokia, and they would not be long without one at Post Vincennes were I to leave, since it is the place favored by Congress.

In fact, when he crossed the Mississippi to take up his duties at New Madrid there was not one priest left in the entire Northwest. It would be three years before John Carroll, by that time bishop of Baltimore, should receive priests fleeing from disorder in France whom he could send to the neglected people under his care.

Meanwhile, Pierre Mallet, faithfully upholding the tradition established by Etienne Phillibert, baptized the babies, assisted at the marriages, and buried the dead in the church of St. Francis Xavier.

## Chapter IV

On 13 July 1787, three months after ordering the army to clear Vincennes of the body of men who "in a lawless and unauthorized manner" had taken possession of the post, the Continental Congress enacted the Northwest Ordinance, probably the most important piece of legislation of its undistinguished career.

The Ordinance was to serve as the constitution of the "territory northwest of the river Ohio" and to be the model for the government of other lands the new nation would later acquire. It anticipated many of the provisions of the document the Constitutional Convention was laboring over in Philadelphia that summer and of the Bill of Rights that would become a part of it a few years later; indeed, it went beyond both of these in at least one respect, the prohibition of slavery in the territory.

The form of government the Ordinance laid down would be the law of the land until Indiana became a state in 1816; many of its provisions remain in the structure of the state to this day.

In the initial stage the people would have nothing to say about how they were governed; they would play no part in the enactment of laws or in the choice of those that would administer them. Under Virginia's rule they had elected local officials, but even this prerogative was denied them by the Ordinance. Only after the number of free male inhabitants reached 5,000 might the people apply for an elected legislature.

Meanwhile political power was vested in a Governor, a Secretary, who in the Governor's absence might act in his place, and three Judges, all appointed by Congress; even over their enactments Congress retained the right of veto. All local officials were to be appointed by the Governor and the Judges.

**THE FIRST GOVERNOR** was Arthur St. Clair, a native of Scotland, who had fought with the British against the French and with the Americans against the British, attaining the rank of major general; he was himself a member of Congress from Pennsylvania. After his appointment as Governor on 5 October 1787, he proceeded to Marietta in what is now Ohio, and there established his capital. There also he organized Washington County.

He then sailed down the Ohio River to Fort Washington and organized Hamilton County, with its seat in the nearby village, whose inhabitants he persuaded to change its name from Losantiville to Cincinnati, he having been one of the founders of the society of that name.

Continuing by the river route to Kaskaskia, the Governor organized St. Clair County. Reports received from Major Hamtramck of the continuing hostility of the Indians and their attachment to the British cause persuaded the Governor to return to Fort Washington and take charge of the military operations for a campaign to subjugate the Indians.

**Thus it fell to Winthrop Sargent, the territorial Secretary, as acting governor, to organize the intermediate portion of the territory. With two of the Judges, Sargent on 20 June 1790 organized Knox County with Vincennes as its seat.**

The name no doubt was taken from that of the fort Hamtramck had erected in 1788 to replace the decaying Fort Patrick Henry, naming it for the secretary of war. The county embraced most of what is now Indiana and parts of the present states of Ohio, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin. Thus after three years of rule over civil and military affairs, Hamtramck was relieved "of a variety of business which did not properly belong to the military department," as Harmar, now a brigadier general, put it.

That his conduct of affairs had found favor with the people is shown by an address presented to Sargent on 23 July "by order and in behalf of the citizens of Vincennes," which rendered "a tribute of gratitude and esteem, which every citizen of Vincennes conceives he owes to an officer who has long commanded at the post." It warmly acknowledged the major's attention "to the rights and feelings of every individual craving his interposition." Hamtramck of course continued in command of the garrison.

**THERE ARE** divergent estimates of the population of Vincennes and its environs at this time, but the most credible one is that there were about 750 French and 150 Americans living there. As to the French, the average number of baptisms in the years from 1785 to 1791 was 42, with a range from 27 to 55. While a few of these, as has been noted, were of converts and of Negro and Indian slaves, by far the greater number were of children of the French.

These figures accord well with a population of 750, but of course they say nothing about the number of Americans. The small number of baptisms of slaves' children shows that slavery was unimportant in the town's economy. There is nothing to indicate how many Indians dwelt in their own communities about the town; at any rate, their contact with the Church appears to have been minimal, though there was an occasional baptism of a child of free Indians.

**Sargent and the Judges established two courts in Knox County, one for civil and one for criminal cases, and appointed other county officers. There were about equal numbers of French and Americans appointed to office; the disparity in representation between the two groups reflects the low level of literacy among the French.**

That Hamtramck had come to entertain a more favorable opinion of the "ot-taman family" of Gamelin is evident, for Sargent bestowed offices on Antoine, Paul and Pierre of that name, and he could hardly have acted without the major's counsel. Earlier that year Pierre and Antoine had undertaken dangerous and im-

portant missions among the Indians, Antoine going as far as the old Fort Miami; indeed, it was the information he brought back that determined St. Clair to return to Fort Washington without coming to Vincennes to organize the government.

Hamtramck continued in command of the garrison until 1794. He had been promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel and assigned to the Legion of the United States, with General Anthony Wayne began training in 1792 for his decisive campaign against the Indians. Hamtramck's successor at Fort Know was Captain Thomas Pasteur.

**IN THE THREE** years after Father Gibault's departure all the entries in the church register were made by Pierre Mallet, except four in December 1789, which bear the signature of Antoine Gamelin. Mallet's records differ from Phillibert's in one important respect; while we know from notations made by Gibault and Payet that Phillibert officiated at many marriage ceremonies as guardian of the church, he never recorded these in the register. Mallet, on the other hand entered three such ceremonies in each of the years 1790, 1791 and 1792.

These records contain a notable stipulation to the effect that the marrying couple had consented to pay for the dispensation to marry without the priest's presence and had promised to have the marriage blessed by the priest as soon as possible. One may infer that Father Gibault had given instructions in this matter before going to Cahokia; perhaps he was not clear in his understanding of theology and believed the contract of marriage to be separable from the sacrament.

In 1792 there were only 29 baptisms, the smallest number since 1785. This decline was probably due to the emigration of 260 persons, who, as Major Hamtramck reported, left for New Madrid in 1791. While some of the migrants were probably Americans, these could not have been many if only 150 were in Vincennes in 1790. The decreasing number of baptisms indicates that many of the French people fled from the unsettled conditions at Vincennes and accepted the promise of free land in the Spanish dominion.

At least one conversion to the Catholic Church appears to have taken place in this period: on 17 October 1790 Mallet baptized Louise, the daughter of Geny Grais and Jeanne La Fara, on 14 November he baptized Geny Grais, "bostonais," whose name was probably Gray. The godparents were Mallet and Angelique Sanspeur, Phillibert's widow. Perhaps it was she that instructed the young man in the faith.

The principal reason for the British tenacity in clinging to Detroit and the other posts along the northern frontier appears to have been the desire of the Canadian authorities to further the interests of the fur traders in their domain rather than any intention of the London government to revise the boundary fixed by the Treaty of Paris.

How completely Britain controlled what is now northern Indiana appears vividly in the journal of a young Canadian who spent the winter of 1789-90 in the village that stood on the site of the present Fort Wayne. The journal also presents a tantalizingly sketchy portrayal of religious life at this isolated trading post.

After the little British garrison at Fort Miami was captured by Pontiac's partisans in 1763, there were no troops stationed at this place, strategic as it was, but the settlement continued to exist as a center of the fur trade. It was there that the debacle of de la Balme's expedition at the hands of the Indians occurred in 1780.

By 1789, the number of households had increased from the nine listed in the census of 1769 to about 30, some of which were English. The place had come to be known as Miamitown.

**HENRY HAY**, 24 years old, arrived at Miamitown after a week's trip from

Detroit on 16 December 1789. His carefully-kept journal shows that he sent periodic accounts of his observations to William Robertson, a merchant in Detroit, and to Major Patrick Murray, the British commander there. Indeed, one may surmise that the purpose of the journal was the recording of information to be transmitted to them.

Britain's unquestioned mastery over the area is shown by the entry of 18 January, which Hay erroneously proclaimed to be the Queen's birthday, piously adding, "God bless her!" as he did on another page when he noted his mother's birthday. He initiated and presided over the observance of the day by a generous distribution of rum and by the firing of "three vollies" in Her Majesty's honor. At that night's ball they sang "God Save the King."

One of the inhabitants invited Hay to be his companion on a trip to Vincennes, a proposal he rejected with patriotic indignation. "I told him," he wrote, "that I could not think of venturing my Carcass to such a place as that, among a parcel of renegards."

The journal contains several accounts of the return of Indian bands from raids along the Ohio River with prisoners and booty. The mention of Negroes among the captives seems to confirm Hamtramck's observation regarding Negroes' relative immunity from death at the hands of the Indians because of their cash value.

Hay was a Catholic of sorts. His father was Jehu Hay, a Pennsylvanian, who was long in the British service, having held office under Henry Hamilton, along with whom he was imprisoned after the capture of Vincennes in 1779. At the time of his death in 1785, he was himself lieutenant governor of Detroit.

PERHAPS THE SON'S memory of his father's discomfiture at Vincennes intensified his detestation of the "parcel of renegards" there. Henry's mother was Marie Juelie Reaume, a member of a large Canadian family. He was baptized in St. Anne's church at Detroit and appears to have acted as sponsor in other baptisms there.

On 20 December the newly arrived visitor wrote:

The French settlers of this place go to prayers of a Sunday, morning and evening, at one Mr. Barthelmis which is performed by Mr. Payee; the people are collected by the Ringing of three cow bells, which three boys runs about with thro' the village, which makes as much noise as twenty cows would. I went this afternoon to their prayers, it being Sunday.

There is no mention of his going to the prayers that morning, but on Christmas, which he identified merely as "25th December," he not only attended Midnight Mass but also provided the music by playing the flute while two others recruited by him played fiddles. The trio also played at the morning Mass, "being the particular desire of the Peoples," and again at "Vespars." On the following day they performed at Mass and "at Vespars as usual."

On the next day, which was Sunday, they played at Mass, but there is no mention of vespers. Although Hay remained at Miamitown until 1 April, he did not again refer to prayers or to any other religious service.

THIS ACCOUNT OF religious services is somewhat puzzling. Hay identified the person who "performed" the prayers as "Mr. Payee." It was natural that M.M. Quaife, who edited the journal, should suppose that this was Father Louis Payet,

who became pastor at Detroit in 1781 and spent three months at Vincennes in 1784.

But this priest was transferred to the church of Saint-Antoine at Cambly in 1786 and Chambly is near Montreal, too far away to suppose that he made a winter trip to Miamitown. His successor at Detroit was Father Louis Frechette, who remained until the British withdrawal from that post in 1796; it is unlikely that Hay mistook him for his predecessor and equally unlikely that Father Frechette left his parish at Christmas time.

The journal several times mentions a family whose name is variously spelled as Payett, Payette, and Payee. Quaife suggested that the father was the person whose name was given as Paillet in de la Balme's list of the inhabitants of Miamitown in 1780.

Most probably it was he that presided over the prayers that Henry Hay attended, just as for many years Phillibert did at Vincennes. That the service was called the Mass is not surprising, for no doubt the Mass prayers were recited, the Epistle and Gospel were read, and the Gloria and Credo were sung, at least on the great feasts. What is surprising is that the practice was kept up with only a rare visit of a priest.

Perhaps Father Payet did stop at Miamitown on his way to Vincennes in 1784, though there is no record that he did, nor is there any record of a priest's presence for many years. The hypothesis that the leader of the prayers was a member of the congregation leaves unexplained the lack of any further reference to religious services throughout Hay's sojourn in the town.

IF LIFE AT THE other settlements was like that at Miamitown, Father Gibault had good reasons for his complaints. In his letter of 1786 to the bishop he wrote: "The most solemn feasts and Sundays are days given up to dances and drunkenness, and consequently to quarrels and battles."

Hay's performances on the flute at the prayers were but interludes in the round of parties, which continued until the flooding of the rivers late in February brought the village to sober apprehension. If the journal's references to religious services are meager, its descriptions of ribald parties are plentiful enough. The entry for 26 December is typical:

Got infernally drunk last night with Mr. Abbott and Mr. Kinzie—Mr. A gave me his daughter Betsy over the bottle. Damnation sick this morning in consequence of last night's debashe—eat no breakfast—Kinzie & myself went to mass and played as usual.—Mrs. Ranjard gave us a cup of coffee to settle our heads.

That night the party was at the home of "Mr. Barthelmie (the man of the house where prayer is said)." "Kinzie got very drunk and so did every one except myself," Hay reported. Because this was the Eve of St. John a bouquet was presented to John Kinzie, "a large cake with a stick in the center and some blue ribbon tied about it." Hay enlivened the ceremony by tossing on the fire "three charges of Powder & Ball . . . which made three very good explosions."

On Sunday, St. John's Day, Jean Celoron received a similar tribute. In each case the recipient is said to have been a Freemason, but there is no allusion to the religious significance of the day. In 16 January, the day before St. Anthony's feast, when all presented a bouquet to "Mr. Dufresne in Honor of St. Anthony, he bearing that name," there is likewise no mention of religious observance.

Hay identified 17 March as "St. Patrick's." Apparently because James Abbott was a native of Dublin he noted: "Sent Mr. Abbott a string of potatoes."

On 4 February (1790) a group of *bons vivants* formed the Most Light Honorable Society of the Monks, which a few days later changed its name to the Friars of St. Andrew. George Leith, the justice of the peace, was the Grand Master and Hay was the Secretary, probably because he could translate the constitution into French, the members being equally divided between speakers of French and English.

The society's purpose was the fostering of conviviality, as if any fostering had been necessary. The society received only one other mention. This was on 17 February, which was Ash Wednesday, though not so identified:

Yesterday being Mardi Gras the Friars of St. Andrew supped together at Mr. Richervilles. Mr. Ironside being unwell could not come. They sang a good many songs & retired to their cells in good time.

This was the last of the parties, not because of Lent but because the rise of the water forced many villagers to abandon their homes and take refuge with those on higher ground.

**BOTH A WEDDING** and a funeral took place while Henry Hay was at Miamitown. The first was that of J.B. Lassell and Miss Rivarre on Sunday, 21 February; Hay and three Frenchmen were the witnesses. It may be assumed that Leith, the justice of the peace, officiated, though no mention is made of him. Nor is there any reference to prayer.

The funeral was that of "Mr. Lorrain who had been very ill near Eight months," with whom Hay and several others had sat up the night before his death on 12 March. The journal has this account of the obsequies, which took place the next day:

The young Volunteers of the place gave him three Vollies at the request of some of the Principal People here, in Honor of his services rendered to the King of Great Britain, and long Residence in this place. I showed them how to Proceed respecting the manouvers, the word of Command was given by one Vivie who had been a Drummer in the late 84th Regt. 1 B't.

Nothing is said about any prayers said.

Hay left Miamitown on 1 April, which was Holy Thursday. The journal relates his progress down the Maumee River on that day and on Friday and Saturday, where it comes to an abrupt end, the remaining portions having been lost. It makes no reference to the religious aspect of the days.

**SINCE THE COMING** of the first Catholics to Maryland in 1634 nearly all the priests that ministered to the few small congregations along the Atlantic seaboard were members of the Society of Jesus, mostly English, though some American born.

After Pope Clement XIV suppressed the Society on 21 June 1773 these priests, while obeying the Pope's orders to submit as secular clergy to the jurisdiction of Bishop Richard Challoner, Vicar Apostolic of London, remained a tightly-knit group. When one of their number, John Carroll, a native of Maryland, became Prefect Apostolic of the United States in 1784, he was, as has been noted, uncertain both as to his powers and as to the extent of his Prefecture.

His puzzlement is manifest in his sending to Father Gibault in Vincennes a notice

of the Jubilee granted by the Pope to America in 1785, yet addressing him as the vicar general of Quebec. Bishop Hubert of Quebec was loath to relinquish his authority over the Northwest; he continued to appoint pastors for Detroit and the other posts that Britain held. Nevertheless, for prudential reasons, he asked Father Carroll to assign priests to the places firmly under American control.

There is nothing to indicate that Carroll ever proposed to any of his old comrades that they should venture into the western wilderness. There were too few of them even for the established missions, and many were too old to change to the primitive way of life of the frontier. Moreover, most of them, unlike Carroll himself, had no command of the French tongue.

There were, however, three priests of French speech that did face the hardships and the hazards of the West to bring the comforts of religion to the neglected Catholics of this region.

**THE FIRST OF** these was Father Gibault's visitor of 1785, the Carmelite Paul de St. Pierre, who went on from Vincennes and became pastor of Cahokia but after four years of service there found the life too harsh and went over to the Spanish side and took the pastorate of Ste. Genevieve.

Apparently, Carroll, doubtful of the extent of his powers, had refused to give him faculties but when the priest found favor with the people the Prefect Apostolic accepted the *fait accompli* and sent him also notice of the Jubilee.

The second priest to brave the perils of the Indian country was Pierre Huet de la Valiniere, a Sulpician, already 54 years old. He had had a tempestuous career in several Canadian parishes, culminating in his support of the American Revolution in defiance of Bishop Briand's command. To put a stop to his actions the Canadian authorities in 1779 arrested him and deported him to England.

The London government, however, after holding him for a year, released him, convinced it had not sufficient evidence of treason to try him. The priest made his way back to his native France and from there to the New World again. After some hesitation, Father Carroll accepted his offer of service and appointed him vicar general of the Northwest.

Arriving at Kaskaskia in April 1786, he forthwith came into conflict both with Father de St. Pierre and with the faction that had usurped power in the town and was defrauding the people. It is said that it was in large measure because of his influence that John Dodge, the leader of the faction, took flight across the Mississippi River into Spanish territory.

**IN LETTERS TO** Father Carroll and to Bishop Hubert the new vicar general made accusations against Father de St. Pierre and Father Gibault, who still styled himself vicar general of Quebec. There is no evidence that the two vicars ever met, but it is clear that there were clashes over the question of jurisdiction.

Writing to Bishop Hubert, de la Valiniere stated little but insinuated much, saying: "Mr. Gibault continues always the conduct which is known to you." If Gibault's offenses were no more serious than those with which the vicar general charged de St. Pierre—officiating at a mixed marriage in Lent with mention only of a dispensation from two bans—there was surely not much cause for complaint. What got under the vicar general's skin was the failure of the other priests to knuckle under to his authority and to pay him the fees he thought were his due.

Letters of Father Carroll indicate that others besides de la Valiniere made accusations against Father Gibault, but there is nothing to show just what these were.

Carroll must not have taken them very seriously, for in his letter of 20 January 1790, in which he referred to them, he asked Gibault for information about the other priests he had sent to the Northwest, of whom he had lost track. The letter also mentioned matters regarding Vincennes, but Gibault had left that post for Cahokia some time before and was soon to go over to the Spanish side. It is unlikely that he answered the letter.

Discouraged by the state of affairs in the Illinois country and at the failure of his efforts to set them right, de la Valiniere, like Gibault and de St. Pierre asked Bishop Hubert to receive him in the Quebec diocese.

Receiving no answer to his plea, he departed about the end of 1787, after only a year and a half, taking a boat to New Orleans. His later years appear to have been no less stormy than his earlier ones had been. He held several pastorates in Canada and in New York, in one of which the parishioners burned down the church and the rectory. He died in 1806 at the age of 74 of injuries sustained in a fall from a wagon.

The last of the three priests to come to the French settlements at this time had the shortest stay of all. This was a Dominican, Jacobin Ledru, who had served in Canadian parishes and, like de la Valiniere, had espoused the cause of the American Revolution, though not with so much ardor as to provoke the Governor to arrest him.

In 1789 Carroll appointed him to Kaskaskia. Like de la Valiniere three years before, he quickly entered into the squabbles there, endeavoring to aid the people to free themselves from the faction that had usurped power and to defend the town from the incursions of the Indians.

On 14 September he joined John Edgar, an Irishman, in an appeal to Major Hamtramck at Vincennes to place a garrison at Kaskaskia and to permit the inhabitants to elect a court for the adjudication of disputes until Governor St. Clair should arrive to organize the government. Hamtramck could not send any soldiers; his force was almost too small to protect Vincennes. He did, however, transmit the plea for a garrison to General Harmar, and he authorized the election of magistrates "to serve until the governor arrives."

**BY THE TIME** the Major's answer reached Kaskaskia Father Ledru had gone across the Mississippi, giving Edgar permission to open the letter. As John Rice Jones, like Edgar a prominent Kaskaskian, wrote on 29 October, "unable to reside in a country of anarchy and (I believe) the most miserable in America (he) has accepted the cure of St. Louis."

Jones went on to say that Father Ledru often declared that he would not leave "even after St. Louis was offered to him, but when he came to receive his tythes . . . he found that he had not wherewith to support him two months . . . so that he was in a manner compelled to accept the offer."

He concluded: "He met with no better usage than Mr. de la Valiniere & Mr. Gibault before him did, and I am persuaded that any other priest will not find a better reception until the establishment of a government."

The pastor whom Father Ledru succeeded at St. Louis was the Capuchin Bernard de Limpach, who had been there for many years and who had cared for Cahokia while Father Gibault was serving at Ste. Genevieve and Kaskaskia. Father Ledru

remained at St. Louis for four years, until September 1793.

During that time he recorded 243 baptisms, 31 marriages, and 108 funerals; nearly one-third of those whose names were recorded were Negroes and Indians.

**THE COMPARISON** with Vincennes is interesting: there were about as many whites and Indians at St. Louis as at Vincennes, but the number of Negroes mentioned was much larger at the former place, being about one-fourth of those baptized and one-third of those buried. The inference is that slavery was much more important in St. Louis. There is no record of a marriage of Negroes and there are only two of Indians, in each case the other party being a Frenchman.

One is forced to conclude that the slaves were not permitted to marry. Upon leaving St. Louis, Father Ledru returned to Canada, where he again became involved in the continuing conflict between America and Britain.

**So it was that Father Gibault, who had been at work in the Northwest long before the coming of the other priests, was the last to leave. Hamtramck's observation that the reason for his moving from Vincennes was his expectation of receiving more money at Cahokia was probably not wide of the mark.**

For him and for the other priests who accepted appointments in the Spanish dominion, the security afforded by the government salary must have been a powerful attraction; indeed, in the prevailing circumstances, such a subsidy was almost necessary for the priest's survival.

As long as French rule continued the parish priests were legally entitled to tithes. Likewise, at least some of the Indian missionaries received government allowances. Moreover, the members of the Society of Jesus had support from the Society itself; the publication of the written reports of the missionaries' activities under the title *Jesuit Relations* brought contributions from pious people in Europe.

**EVEN AFTER THE** country passed from French rule and the civil authority ceased to enforce the payment of tithes, Bishop Briand sought to compel the discharge of this duty by spiritual sanctions. Answering Father Meurin's inquiry on the matter, he wrote on 20 April 1769: "No tithes, no sacraments."

The tithe was moderate: it applied only to the wheat harvest, and was only one twenty-sixth of that. Nevertheless, without coercion by the magistrates and with worsening economic conditions, it is no wonder that many reduced their payments or made none at all.

**One clause of the Quebec Act of 1774 that especially pleased Bishop Briand was that which provided that the Catholic clergy "may hold, receive, and enjoy their accustomed rights with respect to such persons only as shall profess the same religion."**

Now things were to be as in the good old days, the secular arm constraining the careless to contribute to the support of the Church. This provision did not meet with the approval of the English-speaking colonies. Rather it added fuel to the flames of rebellion, already lighted; one newspaper commented: "We may live to see our churches converted into masshouses and our lands plundered of tythes for the support of the Popish clergy."

The Canadian Catholic laity did not greet this clause with quite so much delight as did the bishop.

As the Illinois country was in 1774 still under military rule, the enforcement of the

tithes did not take effect there. After Clark's conquest in 1778 the Quebec Act ceased to affect the region. While Virginia assured freedom of worship to all, it was no part of that state's program to collect revenues for any church; nor was the Continental Congress, when it assumed control, of a mind to do so.

But the cake of custom does not suddenly break into pieces. As has been observed, the Kaskaskians were still paying some tithes, however inadequate, in 1789. There was reason enough for their contributions to be meager. Not only was trade with Detroit completely cut off; there was little chance of buying furs from the Indians, since by holding the northern posts Britain assured the Detroit merchants the control of that trade.

Moreover, Spain had closed the Mississippi River to American shipping and so had curtailed trade with New Orleans. Finally, frequent raids by the Indians, with British incitement, rendered even the cultivation of the fields perilous.

**THIS COMBINATION** of circumstances had reduced Vincennes to such straits in 1790 that Major Hamtramck was constrained to appeal to General Harmar for a supply of corn to avert famine. So badly off were the people, he reported, that three persons had died after eating "Indian potatoes" they had gathered in the woods. Henry Hay made note of the news of the famine in his journal; Major Murray was probably not displeased to learn of it. Conditions at Kaskaskia and Cahokia were not much different.

In such a state of affairs it was but natural that the priests should play one congregation off against another, as Father Gibault did when he induced the people to build a new church in Vincennes by telling them of the flattering offer he had received from Cahokia. Though Cahokia suffered from the misfortunes that beset the other French settlements, it remained more orderly and more prosperous than the rest.

It is no wonder, therefore, that it was the last to be left without a priest. Nor is it any wonder that finally all the priests defected to the Spanish side, where they could be sure of payment by the government.

**THE CONSTITUTIONAL** Convention finished its work in Philadelphia on 17 September 1787. Within a year the required nine states ratified the Constitution it had created, and the new government came into existence on 30 April 1789, when George Washington was inaugurated as President of the United States. Early in 1790 the garrison at Fort Knox took the oath of allegiance to the new government, as prescribed by Congress.

At this time also the government of the Catholic Church in the United States underwent a momentous change. John Carroll had never been happy with his status as Prefect Apostolic, removable at any time by the Roman Congregation of Propaganda, which exercised jurisdiction over missionary countries.

To his mind this status was too much like subjection to a foreign power to be acceptable to a people that treasured its newly-gained independence.

The next stage in the development of a missionary country is usually a Vicariate Apostolic, the presiding official of which is ordinarily a bishop. Carroll had no wish to see such a Vicariate established, for even when the Vicar Apostolic is a bishop, he is at the beck and call of the missionary Congregation, just as a Prefect Apostolic is.

**HE LET IT BE** known that he wished a diocese to be erected in the United States, having a bishop whose position would enjoy stability. He also strongly urged that the priests of the new diocese should have to right to submit to the Holy See the name of the one they desired to be appointed bishop.

He was happy, therefore, when both his wishes were granted: on 6 November 1789 Pope Pius VI created the diocese of Baltimore and appointed Carroll, the choice of the priests, as its bishop. It was provided, however, that the permission of the priests to propose their choice as bishop to the Holy See was not to be permanent, but for this time only.

Carroll was well pleased with his success in gaining these points, though his success in the second was only partial. Nonetheless, he was at first reluctant to accept the appointment; his experience as Prefect Apostolic for five years was not such as to encourage him to embrace the permanent office of bishop.

**WHEN HE DID** make up his mind to take the honor and the burden, he hesitated between neighboring Quebec and Dublin in the land of his ancestors as the place of his consecration. In the end, he yielded to the importunities of an English friend, Thomas Weld, to grant to his private chapel the distinction of witnessing the ceremony.

Accordingly, John Carroll received the order of bishop at Lulworth Castle in Dorsetshire on the Feast of the Assumption, 15 August 1790. The ordaining bishop was the Benedictine Charles Walmesley, the senior Vicar Apostolic of England; his assistants were two veteran priests of the American mission, Charles Plowden and James Porter.

At this time the French Revolution was in progress, well on its way to the Reign of Terror. While the most severe measures against the Catholic Church had not as yet been enacted, there were those that saw the foreshadowing of things to come.

One of these was Father James Emery, the Superior of the Society of St. Sulpice. This community, founded in the previous century for the sole purpose of educating men for the priesthood, already had in its charge most of the French seminaries. Fearing that the government would soon suppress the seminaries, Emery was casting about for places where the Sulpicians might go on with their work.

**WHEN HE LEARNED** that there was an American bishop in England he wrote to Carroll to propose the opening of a seminary in the new diocese. The bishop's reply was encouraging, and Emery sent to London as his delegate Father Francis Nagot to negotiate on the matter. An agreement was quickly reached, and within two years 11 priests and seven seminarians came to Baltimore, quite an accession to the 30 or so priests in the young diocese. On 3 October 1791 St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore began its classes, which have continued to this day.

Even with the seven young men from France there was not a sufficient number of seminarians to occupy all the Sulpicians in teaching. Although none of them had had experience in parish work, Father Nagot, the Superior of the group, so far departed from the usual practice of the society as to permit some of the priests to accept appointments from Bishop Carroll to parishes in order to relieve the dearth of priests.

Some went to missions in the East and three were assigned to the Northwest: Michael Levadoux, as vicar general, to Cahokia; Gabriel Richard to Kaskaskia; and Benedict Joseph Flaget to Vincennes.

As their fathers a quarter of a century before had appealed to Bishop Briand for a priest to live among them, so now the people of Vincennes sent a plea to Bishop Carroll to send a pastor to replace Father Gibault, who had left more than two years before.

The bishop's reply, written when Father Flaget was already on his way, assured them of the coming of a priest who "would win all hearts to Christ," and expressed the hope that "by their docility and fidelity in fulfilling their duties they would console and gratify him."

Some time before Carroll had written to Gibault regarding his expectation of the arrival of priests from France, whom he would send to the Northwest. He suggested that Father Gibault should interest himself "so that the expenses of their long voyage may be defrayed, at least their expenses from here." By that time, however, the veteran missionary was in New Madrid, and it is doubtful that he interested himself in the missionaries' expenses.

Benedict Flaget was born on 7 November 1763 in the French province of Auvergne. His father had died before the boy was born and his mother died when he was still an infant. Benedict and his two brothers, one of whom would also become a priest, were reared by their father's sister and brother, who was a priest and canon of the church in Billom; it was for this uncle that the youngest child was named.

Though growing up in the care of his priest-uncle, the boy was not confirmed until at the age of 17 he went away to school at Clermont. His confirmation must have impressed him deeply, for thereafter, almost alone among the clergy of the time, he joined his confirmation name to the one he had received in baptism and called himself Benedict Joseph.

The young scholar paid his way by tutoring two other boys, with whom he made his home. At the seminary he was supported by an episcopal scholarship, won in a competitive examination. He entered the Society of St. Sulpice, which conducted the seminary, and was ordained priest in 1787.

For four years he taught dogmatic theology, first at Nantes, then at Angers. In 1791 the Revolutionary government closed the seminary of Angers, and Father Flaget went to live with his relatives at Billom. Soon, however, he sought out his superior, Father Emery, for counsel as to what a displaced professor ought to do in this time of troubles.

AS WAS NATURAL in view of his agreement with Bishop Carroll, Emery advised him to go to Baltimore, where the first contingent of Sulpicians had already arrived. Emery must have learned something about the American scene, for he is said to have mentioned Vincennes as a possible field of his young confrere's work.

Flaget reached Baltimore late in March 1792. In May he was on his way to Vincennes. The first stage of the journey was by wagon to Pittsburgh. Along the way the driver relieved the tedium by helping the passenger with his English. The water level in the Ohio River was so low that no boats were venturing down the river; so it was that Father Flaget had his first experience in the pastoral ministry at Pittsburgh.

General Anthony Wayne was just beginning to train the Legion of the United States for the campaign against the Indians of the Northwest, which he would lead two years later. The Catholics among the troops and the few French Catholic families resident at the post were the first beneficiaries of the new missionary's ministrations.

The Catholics must have been too poor to entertain a priest, for he stayed with a Huguenot family and said Mass in their home. It is related that he prepared for death several soldiers condemned by court martial to be shot and that he was kept busy for some time in caring for the victims of a smallpox epidemic that struck the post.

IN NOVEMBER the river traffic resumed and Father Flaget got passage to Louisville. There he met Fathers Levadoux and Richard, who, though starting later from Baltimore, had passed him along the way. It was his first opportunity to go to confession since he set out.

At Clarksville, across from Louisville, the captain of militia and justice of the peace was William Clark, a brother of the conqueror of Kaskaskia and Vincennes. He did the new pastor the honor of accompanying him to his post and there thus began a friendship that would endure for many years.

Father Flaget was just past 29 years of age when he came to Vincennes. Except for his ministrations while waiting for the boat at Pittsburgh, this was to be his first pastoral mission; moreover, it was his own parish.

While his entries in the church register are more laconic than the historian might wish them to be, they do permit us a sense of the thrill with which he began his work.

He made careful note of the day of his arrival, 21 December; of his first funeral, 2 January; and of his first wedding, 15 April. His first baptism perhaps came too quickly, just two days after his arrival, to allow any comment. Two boys baptized soon after his coming received the name Benedict Joseph, and the pastor himself was their godfather.

The new pastor's joy was not unalloyed, however, for he found the church, which was just seven years old, "in a sadly dilapidated state." His biographer, who came to know him many years later and had access to his journal, now lost, goes on to relate: "It was a poor log building, open to the weather, neglected and almost tottering. The altar was a temporary structure of boards, badly put together. He immediately set to work to repair the church, and especially to refit and decorate the altar for the coming festival."

PERHAPS THE church was not in so poor a condition as it seemed to the newcomer to be. The churches with which he was familiar were those of France, built of stone and still standing after hundreds of years. Very likely the only church he had seen in this country was the brick one in Baltimore. A log church was something quite new to him.

But those old structures, dwellings or churches, built of logs standing upright with their ends embedded in the earth, were sturdier than they appeared, as we know from those that saw them when they were a hundred years old. As a matter of fact, the Vincennes church was to serve the parish for 30 more years.

Even more dismaying was the failure of the people to respond to the pastor's ministrations. For all his zeal in preparing for Christmas, only a dozen received Holy Communion on the great day. There was reason enough for Father Flaget's disappointment.

On the people's side, however, it has to be said that the town was in a state near to siege, that they had been without a priest for more than three years, and that Flaget had come to town only three days before Christmas Eve. Maybe he had them so busy refitting the altar that they had no time to go to confession.

There was greater reason for sorrow in the middle of January, when smallpox broke out. There were 11 deaths in January and 30 in February. In addition, on 25 February the priest recorded the names of four women who within eight days had suffered miscarriages, then added the names of four others, one of whom had been bearing twins.

By the end of the month the worst of the epidemic appears to have passed. Four deaths occurred in March and six in April, but for the rest of the year the number seems to have been about normal, except in October, when seven deaths occurred. The total for the year was 76, as compared to the 56 that died in the epidemic of 1788. The incidence of deaths in the two years was quite different, however. In 1788 most of those that died were children; in 1793 14 children less than ten years old died, six of them less than a year, but most of the deaths were those of adults.

Though he must have given the sacraments to many of those that suffered from smallpox, Father Flaget did not catch the disease. We know, however, that he was a victim of whatever illness it was that was prevalent in October, for in that month Pierre Mallet resumed his office of conferring baptism and conducting funerals.

This ailment was probably the fever that Major Hamtramck often mentioned as afflicting himself and the soldiers as well as the townspeople, complaining of the lack of bark to serve as a remedy. Very likely it was the one that struck Father Gibault on his arrival at Kaskaskia, when Father Meurin said that he was paying the usual tribute to the country.

**THERE IS EVIDENCE** of the small number of Catholics among the American residents in Vincennes in the fact that only French names occur in the records of burials. On the other hand, at least 13 of those that died were Indians or Negroes. Two of the Indians were wives of Frenchmen and some were slaves, but several appear to have been the children of free Indians living nearby, baptized at the point of death.

Of the 26 that received baptism in 1793, 13 were Indians, more than in any previous year. The number of French children was the smallest in more than 20 years, not surprisingly in view of the exodus of 1791 and the smallpox epidemic.

Strange to say, Father Flaget recorded no baptisms of Indians after 1793 and only two burials, one in 1794 and one in 1795. Perhaps the change was due to the departure of many of the Indians because of the tension resulting from the three expeditions of the army against them at this time. There is evidence of this tension in the record of the burial on 27 September 1794 of Louis Detramble, aged 50 years, "massacred by the Indians almost at the gate of the village."

Father Flaget's biographer states that he had classes for the children, in which they learned reading and writing as well as their catechism. It is in this way, he says, that the pastor brought the elders to a more zealous practice of their religion. One might surmise that his own zeal in caring for the sick had something to do with the revival of piety.

This writer also relates that Flaget bought a house, in which he set up facilities for training in useful trades as well as agriculture, having observed that the people relied almost entirely on hunting and fur trading for their livelihood.

He is said to have procured looms in order that some might acquire skill in weaving. The mention of this project is interesting, for weaving was one of the principal industries of his native Auvergne. Perhaps in his boyhood he had worked at a loom and learned something of the art.

As to the people's alleged neglect of agriculture, it should be recalled that in former times, before the hostility of the Indians had been aroused by encroachments on their lands, Vincennes had produced considerable crops and had

been able to supply much for the needs of Colonel Clark's troops.

With the repeated incursions of Kentucky militia against the Indians, which Hamtramck's small garrison was unable to restrain, there had come to be danger in going far from the town to cultivate the fields. The only entry in the church register that might have a bearing on Father Flaget's educational projects is the record of the burial on 21 October 1794 of Lawrence Moore, "an Irishman, master of the English school, aged 35 years." But there is nothing to tell whether this school was Father Flaget's or one conducted by the Americans.

**SO DESTITUTE** were the people of Vincennes that it is doubtful that the pastor received any compensation from them. If any grew wheat they may have paid some tithes. Perhaps some made offerings for religious services, though one may be pretty certain that not many were able to pay anything for the funerals during the epidemic. The pastor is said to have given some Americans lessons in French, for which he no doubt received fees to supplement his meager income.

But the most substantial help he received was the hospitality of Francesco Vigo, with whom he made his home during most of the time he was in Vincennes.

This was the merchant whose information had led to Clark's decision to make the attack on Vincennes in 1779 and who had been one of the chief suppliers of the Virginians at that time. He had moved from St. Louis to the post some years earlier and had been successful in the fur trade. In 1787 he was appointed major and commandant of the militia by Sargent. He was one of those that appealed to the bishop for a priest in the town. It is not likely that he made any charge for having the priest as his guest.

Some writers state that Father Flaget made periodical visits to Fathers Levadoux and Richard in the Illinois towns. The evidence of the church register is that only once did he make that trip. The only gap of any size in his records is one occurring between 13 February and 19 March 1794. Apparently he was absent for some of that time, for he entered two baptisms on 21 February and a funeral on 22 February, as having been conducted by Pierre Mallet.

Ash Wednesday was on 5 March that year. Perhaps he wanted to begin Lent by going to Confession. The absence of any other priest seems to have been his heaviest cross. He is reported to have offered to give his entire time to ministering among the Indians if only another priest would come to care for the parish and to be his companion.

**THE NEXT SPRING** Father Flaget received orders from the Sulpician Superior to return to Baltimore. Dreading to say good-bye to the people, he set off late in April as if on another visit to the other priests. It was only when his companions returned that the people learned to their sorrow that he was gone for good.

His journey back to the East was as long a one as the trip out had been, for going down the Mississippi to New Orleans and then by sea to Baltimore, he arrived only in December. He then taught for three years at Georgetown College, recently established by Bishop Carroll. He then spent three years in Cuba in a vain attempt to found a college there, probably one of Father Emery's endeavors to find an outlet for the talents and zeal of the Sulpicians.

The Spanish churchmen in Cuba saw no need of a college under the tutelage of French priests. For some time they did not even permit Father Flaget to celebrate Mass.

After his return to the United States he taught at the seminary in Baltimore until his appointment as bishop of Bardstown in 1808. This time the parish of St. Francis Xavier did not have so long to wait for a new pastor. About the first of May Jean Francois Rivet arrived to begin his work, which was to end only with his death, nine years later.

**THERE IS** A striking contrast between the careers of the first three priests that came out from Baltimore to the Northwest and those of the three that followed them. Aside from the characters of the men themselves, perhaps the membership of the second group in a religious community with a lively *esprit de corps* was the most important factor in the stability and success of their work.

None of them had experience in parish work, yet all gained the esteem and affection of their people and all remained at their posts despite the hardships of the frontier until they were recalled by their superior.

Father Levadoux was recalled to France after Napoleon's accession to power. Father Richard, having been transferred to Detroit, became an influential figure in the founding and growth of the state of Michigan.

Though Father Flaget's stay in Vincennes was short, he so endeared himself to the people that after 40 years, as Bishop Brute wrote on coming to the town as the first bishop of Vincennes, they still spoke of him with affection.

Henry Cauthorn, who wrote a history of the parish, told of older people he had known in his boyhood in Brute's time, who "could never tire of speaking of good Father Flaget with tears in their eyes."

It is true that as bishop of Bardstown he several times visited the parish in the exercise of his duties, but these visitations were only of a few days' duration and a bishop would have been too remote a figure to gain the people's affection unless he had already possessed it.

## Chapter V

Returning from Kaskaskia to Cincinnati in the spring of 1790, Governor St. Clair began aggressive military action to bring to an end the Indian raids and to enforce the claims of the United States government to the lands ceded in the treaties of 1784, 1785 and 1789.

The tribes denied the authority of the Indian signers of the treaties and repudiated the cessions. They had combined their forces along the Maumee River, presenting a united front much as they had done 30 years before under Pontiac.

By virtue of a claim to ancient ownership of this region, the Miamis exercised hegemony in what came to be called the Miami Confederacy. Their war chief, Little Turtle, who had led the Indians in the destruction of de la Balme's expedition in 1780, was generally the commander of military operations.

The government was determined to protect the settlers who had bought land acquired by the United States in the treaties, and from 1790 to 1794 there was active warfare, which perhaps was the reason for the decreasing numbers of Indian entries in Father Flaget's records.

**THE FIRST** expedition organized by St. Clair, in the autumn of 1790, was under the command of General Harmar. It reached the Maumee but did not meet the main body of the Indians. In several skirmishes, detachments of the army were badly mauled by bands of Indians, and the expedition is generally accounted a defeat.

More than 200 of the 1,300 men were killed or wounded. Among those killed was Major John P. Wyllys, who on 7 October 1787 had stood as godfather of Jean Richard in Vincennes. Harmar vigorously repudiated the imputation of defeat, pointing out that he had destroyed all the Indian towns and many acres of the crops.

Miamitown, where Henry Hay had celebrated the Queen's birthday a few months earlier, was razed, and thus the last vestige of the old Fort Miami disappeared. Most of the white residents took refuge in Detroit.

Harmar might have fared worse but for an expedition that Colonel Hamtramck led up the Wabash to divert some of the Indians from the Maumee. In this action, the Vincennes militia had a part along with the regular troops of Fort Knox and some 300 Kentucky militia. This force had Ouiatanon for its target, but it reached

only as far as the Vermillion River, where the shortage of provisions resulting from the sorry state of the containers forced it to turn back. The regular soldiers were ready to proceed on half rations, but the Kentuckians flatly rejected such a Spartan measure.

The French were less obstreperous, but they pleaded that "they wanted to return to the village for they had left their corn at the mercy of providence who I must say did not take very good care of it," as Hamtramck reported.

Along the way up and down the Wabash the men destroyed all the Indian villages and crops they came upon. It was their good fortune that they did not go as far as they had intended, for Hamtramck later learned that awaiting them at Ouiatanon were 600 Indians, who would have demolished his little army. The presence of those Indians at the Maumee might have meant a decisive defeat for Harmar.

**IN THE SUMMER** of 1791, two forays were carried out by mounted Kentuckians, who ranged through the Indian country to the west of the concentration of warriors there, having as their objective the destruction of crops and the capture of prisoners to be held as hostages.

They laid waste a number of villages, one of which was Ouiatanon, where they "burned a large quantity of corn, a variety of household goods, peltry, and other articles . . . about 70 houses, most of them well furnished."

Among the houses burnt were those of the French inhabitants. At least some of the French families then took up residence at Vincennes.

**Thus within a year the two French posts that antedated Vincennes on the soil of Indiana came to an end. The second foray found some of the fields burnt by the first replanted and "cut down at least 430 acres of corn. In all, nearly 100 prisoners were taken, mostly women and children.**

In the Autumn of 1791 St. Clair himself, with a commission as major general, led a force of 1,400 against the center of Indian power, erecting forts along the way. On 3 November the troops encamped about 50 miles south of the Maumee.

Early the next morning the Indians struck and smashed the army, which fled in confusion, leaving behind its artillery, baggage, ammunition and provisions. The losses in personnel were 652 killed and missing, 271 wounded. One of those wounded was Major Thomas Doyle, who in 1788 had twice signed the St. Francis Xavier register as a witness of a marriage. The Indians' losses in killed and wounded were not more than 250.

**THOUGH THIS** disaster resulted from the prowess of Little Turtle and his warriors rather than from any misconduct of the major general, St. Clair resigned his commission, while continuing in his office as Governor. The loss of so many able officers led to the reorganization of the United States forces under the command of General Anthony Wayne.

It was the early recruits to these forces, called the Legion of the United States, that received Father Flaget's ministrations during his wait for a boat at Pittsburgh in the summer of 1792. The next year the Legion sailed down the Ohio River and made camp near Cincinnati at a site which Wayne, evidently not thinking much of it, called Hobson's Choice.

In October the general reported that the Legion was "visited by a malady called the influenza, which has pervaded the whole line in a most alarming and rapid degree." Perhaps it was this malady that visited Vincennes that month, putting Father Flaget to bed and taking the lives of some of his parishioners.

Despite the influenza, the Legion marched northward, erecting forts and repairing those built by St. Clair. It wintered near the site of St. Clair's defeat, where Wayne placed a fort, displaying his optimism by naming it Recovery.

**There on 30 June 1794, Little Turtle attempted a replay of the beating he had given St. Clair, but this time he was repulsed with heavy losses. When the news of this action reached Fort Knox, Captain Pasteur was so elated at "this glorious event of having defeated our Savage enemy" that he directed "thirteen charges of artillery and each man of the Garrison to receive one gill of whiskey," only 11 days after granting an extra gill on 4 July.**

Little Turtle, convinced that the Legion, "led by a chief who never sleeps," was unbeatable, urged his allies to accede to Wayne's repeated bids to begin conferring about terms of peace. Failing to persuade the others, he yielded the supreme command to the Shawnee chief, Blue Jacket, while he led only his fellow Miamis.

In July, Wayne moved to the Maumee and built Fort Defiance, the name probably aimed at a new Fort Miami the British had placed a few miles down the river. On 20 August the Legion badly defeated the Indians in the battle of Fallen Timbers, so named because of the presence of a tangle of trees felled by a tornado some years before. The Indians had chosen the spot for an attack in the hope of gaining protection from the litter, but it did not save them from the charges of Wayne's disciplined troops.

After an exchange of politely insulting notes with the commandant of Fort Miami, Wayne moved the Legion up the river to its headwaters at the confluence of the St. Mary and St. Joseph Rivers, where the first Fort Miami had stood and where Miamitown had recently been destroyed.

There he erected a fort, at which he stationed a garrison under the command of Colonel Hamtramck, who had won commendation for his conduct at the recent battle. It was Hamtramck that dutifully gave the fort its name Fort Wayne. The general took the main body of the Legion to Greenville in what is now Ohio to continue his efforts to bring the Indians to the council table.

Another treaty was at this time under negotiation. In April 1794, President Washington had dispatched John Jay to London to settle the conflicts between Great Britain and the United States. On 19 November, a treaty was concluded, whereby the king of Great Britain agreed to withdraw by 1 June 1796 his troops from all posts within the boundary of the United States as set by the treaty of 1783.

To the Indians, weakened by the devastation of their towns and fields, defeated in battle, and disillusioned by the failure of the commander of Fort Miami to give them shelter, the news of Jay's Treaty brought conviction that further resistance would be futile.

After protracted haggling, in which Little Turtle displayed diplomatic skill to match his generalship, on 3 August 1795, the Treaty of Greenville was signed by General Wayne and representatives of 12 tribes, whereby most of the present Ohio and a wedge of southeastern Indiana was ceded to the United States.

In addition, the tribes yielded to the United States the land about Vincennes which the Piankeshaws had granted to the people there, the 150,000 acres of southern Indiana given by Virginia to George Rogers Clark and his soldiers, and 16 other tracts for forts, generally six miles square.

**As a consequence of this treaty, migration into the ceded area, which had been going on for some time, was greatly accelerated. In like manner, there began a slow movement of the Indians to the lands beyond the Mississippi.**

In April 1795, while Wayne and the Indians were dickering over the treaty, Father Flaget left Vincennes, and a few days later his successor arrived there. Strictly speaking, John Francis Rivet was not the pastor's successor. He came with a commission from the Secretary of War to be a missionary for the civilization and education of the Indians.

At the same time, another French priest, Pierre Janin, went to Kaskaskia with a similar appointment. In contrast to Father Rivet, who would remain until his death nearly nine years later, he would within a year become disheartened at the meager results of his efforts and yield to the lure of an assured income from the Spanish king and cross the Mississippi.

Father Rivet did not lack offers of more rewarding charges, but only once, when there appeared to be an opportunity to return to France, did he show an inclination to leave Vincennes.

**THE ANNUAL** salary of the missionaries was \$200. The War Department was usually late in making the quarterly payments, sometimes by more than a year, and the missionary had to borrow at interest to tide him over. Some payments were in paper money, which the merchants accepted only at a discount.

Once his pay was so late in coming that Father Rivet had to beg alms of Captain Pasteur, the commandant of the fort. In fact, the salary was not so niggardly as it appears, for the purchasing power of the dollar was from five to ten times that to today's dollar. Even the territorial judges, who with the governor were the supreme authority of the Territory, received only \$800.

But Father Rivet had extraordinary expenses. He was unable to learn the Algonquian language and had to employ an interpreter at a dollar a day. After Janin's departure he felt himself to be in duty bound to visit the Indians at Kaskaskia once a year, a trip that cost him \$80, for which he was unable to induce the War Department to reimburse him.

**The missionary's commission did not designate his place of residence. It was because Flaget's departure had left the parish without a priest and because nowhere else could Rivet have found shelter that he settled at Vincennes. As with Wayne in 1793, it was a case of Hobson's Choice. For more than a year both priest and people expected Flaget to return. So it was that Father Rivet styled himself: "Missionary to the savages and exercising the functions of the holy ministry in the parish of St. Francis Xavier."**

John Francis Rivet was a native of the Western Hemisphere, having been born on the island of Martinique in 1857. His rearing was entirely European, however, for at an early age he was taken to live with relatives at Brive in France. He was ordained a priest at Limoges on 25 May 1781, and became at once a teacher of rhetoric at the local college, where he made a name for himself as lecturer, preacher, and editor of a literary journal.

One of his lectures drew especial praise for the knowledge it displayed "of the course of empires and the causes of the revolutions they have undergone." One may wonder whether the young priest had any foreboding of the revolution his country was about to undergo.

**HE PREACHED THE** Advent sermons in the Limoges cathedral in 1789, at the very time the National Assembly in Paris was preparing the decrees that would put an end to his preaching in France. We are not told the subject of these sermons.

When the Civil Constitution of the Clergy was put into effect, Rivet with his

colleagues, finding the oath it required at variance with his faith, refused to take it, and was banished to Spain. Finding revolutionary ideology in the ascendancy there also, he came to Baltimore in December 1794 and offered his services to Bishop Carroll.

A few years earlier the bishop had suggested to the new government the sending of priests among the Indians to teach them the ways of European civilization, as the French kings had employed missionaries to foster the Indians' friendship.

**At first the proposal found little favor, but as the war dragged on the officials came to believe that the bishop's idea might have some merit and that there might be a better way than fighting to gain their ends. They then appointed Rivet and Janin to be missionaries to the Wabash and Illinois Indians.**

Father Rivet reached Vincennes about the beginning of May 1795. His first entry in the church register was of a baptism on 3 May. Father Flaget had just left, for his last entry was made on 23 April. The new priest was 38 years of age, six years older than his predecessor. Like Flaget at his coming, he had been but a few months in the country and knew hardly any English. Like Flaget also, he had been a teacher since his ordination and had no experience as a parish priest.

Unlike Flaget, however, he was much given to writing and has left a record of his experiences in long letters to the bishop, in a journal, and in many comments in the register. His very signature to his letters gives us an inkling of his character: he usually signed his letters, *Le pauvre missionnaire*, The poor missionary.

As has been told, the three Jesuit priests that served the Vincennes parish had spent some time with veteran missionaries before being left to their own resources, learning the Algonquian language and the way of life on the frontier. Father Rivet was just beginning to learn English and he found Algonquian entirely beyond him. Had he been a Jesuit, his ineptitude at learning foreign languages would have caused his assignment to work that required only knowledge of French and Latin, as had happened in the case of Father d'Outreleau.

In all his time at Vincennes he appears not to have picked up any Algonquian. He found it "barbarous and unintelligible with an accent which one must have sucked with his milk if he wished to grasp it." Yet there appear not to have been a lack of interpreters among the people of Vincennes to serve him and the commandant of the fort.

**SO FAR WERE THE** Indians from being able to contribute to his support, as he had been promised, that they were at times in such straits that he felt himself obliged to help them out of his slender means. Their own religious observances he regarded, after the manner of his time, as infernal and diabolical.

Next to his ignorance of their language, however, was the prevalence of drunkenness among the Indians. "Our village is stained with blood every day," he wrote. In the whiskey, "which flows in great waves," "like the waters of the Wabash," was the "inexhaustible source of quarrels, thefts, murders, and disorders of all kinds."

But for the whiskey, he believed, the Indians might easily be brought to the faith, but whiskey had made them, once the most mild, cruel and ferocious, a people of bears and lions. Once he and his interpreter fled for their lives when the tribesmen gave vent to their fury, accusing the priest of using bad water and bad grease in baptizing and anointing a dying man.

It is interesting to observe the Indians reciprocating the priest's low esteem of

their religious practices. When they sobered up, however, they came to ask his pardon, "humiliated, confounded, prostrated." As to the sick man, who Father Rivet feared might be lost "by reason of his assent to their magic and infernal operations," he was happy to report that he died in the grandest sentiments of religion."

"I believe," he added, "that his death is truly precious in the sight of the Lord." His repeated appeals to the authorities for a more stringent regulation of the liquor traffic had but little effect.

Father Rivet's bookishness shows itself in his dream of establishing a community for the civilization of the Indians. Within a year of his arrival, after communicating with those most expert, he said, he drew up a detailed scheme, which he communicated to the Secretary of War.

The text was lost in a fire in 1800, but there is a sketch of the plan in a letter to the bishop. There were to be half a dozen French priests, whom he would recruit and who would prepare for the work by a study of the Indian language, certainly a wise precaution.

He must have known something about the Jesuit Reductions in Paraguay, for he asked the bishop to procure for him a copy of a history of that country by the famous Father Charlevoix. It is not surprising that the officials in Washington, after highly commending the plan, allowed it to rest on the shelf. In view of the prevailing sentiments toward the Catholic Church, they probably thought that they had gone as far as was safe in employing two priests as missionaries.

**NOR IS THERE** reason to believe that a scheme, conceived on the principle that the Indians' welfare would be advanced by the imposition on them of European ways, without regard to the merits of their own culture, would have had much effect, particularly while the government was continually exerting pressure to obtain more of their land.

Like Father Gibault, the poor missionary paid his tribute to the country by succumbing to the prevalent fever upon his arrival. After a time his health improved, but he had frequent relapses and he suffered from what he pronounced to be the worst climate in the world.

As Hamtramck often did, he complained of the lack of quinine and even more of the ill effects of the substitutes employed. Once he was forced by illness to turn back after starting to the Illinois country, but another time he reported that following a period of intense work in the three parishes there, which ought to have annihilated him in the August heat, he found himself in better health the following winter than he had been for many years, able to celebrate Mass every day.

At first Father Rivet considered going to live among the Potawatomi at the St. Joseph post near Lake Michigan. These were the most numerous Indians in the area and some of them at least had clung to the Catholic faith they had embraced when Father Allouez was with them.

Soon after his arrival he conferred with their leaders, who urged him to make their village his home. Having grown up in a country where authority in church and state was absolute, the priest was scandalized when they told him that the decision as to the terms of his service rested not with them but with the entire tribe.

The next year the Potawatomi sent him word that they were looking forward to his coming the following summer, but at that time there was a question of Rivet's becoming pastor at Detroit, and nothing came of the matter.

**THAT SOME** Potawatomi had retained their Catholic faith appears from entries in the church register. The first marriage that Father Rivet witnessed was that of "Louis of the nation of the Poux and Marie Angelique of the nation of the Shis" on 9 June 1798, after the publication of three banns.

Marie Angelique had been baptized on 4 June, which was Corpus Christi. Evidently the Sioux had not become Christians. This was the first marriage between Indians recorded since the time of Father Meurin. The following February Father Rivet made this entry of the burial:

**Louis, called The Old Prayer, one of the chiefs of the Pouhoutatamy, died 2 or 3 days ago at his winter quarters on White River. A very good Catholic, he frequented the sacraments assiduously and he came from his winter quarters with part of his family at Christmas and New Year to assist at the offices of the Church and to receive the sacraments of penance and Eucharist, which he did ordinarily with much edification.**

Louis was probably the father of the young man who was married in June. He could hardly have acquired the nickname of "The Old Prayer" unless his practice of coming to the church at Christmas was of some years standing.

Four years after his arrival the missionary's conscience was bothering him for not having gone to live at St. Joseph. His work among the Indians, he wrote, was reduced "almost to zero," and he worried about accepting his salary, meager as it was. He was convinced that only with the appeal of religion could he succeed in his task, but he had to be circumspect lest he open himself to the charge of proselytism. He baptized only the infants their parents brought to him and the sick who were in danger of death.

The number of Indian baptisms he recorded was greater than at any other time except in the smallpox epidemic of 1793, but it was not very great. Most of those he baptized were free Indians, whereas almost all those recorded in previous years since the time of the Jesuits were of the children of slaves. In his last years, from 1801 to 1804, there were almost no Indian entries, perhaps because the Indians were moving away.

**TWO IMPORTANT** changes in government occurred while Father Rivet was at Vincennes, On 29 October 1798 Governor St. Clair proclaimed the advancement of Northwest Territory to the second stage. There would be a legislature, composed of a house of representatives elected by men owning 50 acres, and a legislative council of five, chosen by the President of the United States from a list of ten presented by the House of Representatives.

So great had been the growth of the eastern part of the Territory that 16 of the 22 members of the lower house were allotted to it. Wayne County, which had been organized on 15 August 1796 with Detroit as its seat, was allotted two delegates, while the remaining four counties, including Knox, had one each.

**The esteem that Father Rivet had gained is shown by the offer of the electors to make him the delegate from Knox County and to present to him the 200 acres a delegate must own. As the government was then offering land for sale at two dollars an acre, the gift would have been twice his annual salary.**

He revealed something of his character in his matter-of-fact statement that he could not accept the election. He did, however, consent to serve as tax commissioner, an office that probably brought him some fees.

One of the five appointed to the legislative council was a resident of Vincennes, Henry Vanderburgh, a native of New York, who had come to the town in 1787 and become successful merchant and commander of the militia. He married a member of a French family and his children were baptized in the parish church, but it does not appear that he was himself a Catholic.

The people of Vincennes did not long enjoy the suffrage, for two years later, 7 May 1800, Congress divided the Northwest Territory. The eastern part retained the original name, while the rest became the Indiana Territory with its capital at Vincennes. Since there were not 5,000 free male citizens residing in the counties in the new territory, it reverted to the first stage of government by officials appointed by the President.

The first Governor of the new territory was William Henry Harrison, a native of Virginia, who after serving in the Legion of the United States had been for a short time Secretary of the Northwest Territory and then the territorial delegate in Congress, where he played a major role in passing the bill dividing the Territory.

The Secretary was John Gibson and the judges, who with the Governor, constituted the legislature, were William Clarke, Henry Vanderburgh and John Griffin.

Clarke, who was not related to George Rogers, had been United States attorney in the Kentucky district court. He was a Catholic, but it is not clear whether he had been a member of the Church all his life or was a convert. His tenure was to be a short one, for he died on 11 November 1802.

In his record of the burial Father Rivet paid him this tribute:

**. . . died yesterday in holy dispositions . . . Christian, religious, and enlightened judge as well as firm and incorruptible, he carried with him the just regrets of all good people.**

His two children, one born two weeks after the father's death, were baptized by Father Rivet.

GOV. HARRISON reached Vincennes on 10 January 1801, not quite 27 years old. He must have struck up an immediate friendship with the pastor, for on 10 February Father Rivet wrote to the bishop, informing him that the Governor had asked him to go along on a trip to Cincinnati to bring his wife and children to the post.

Here again his self-effacing character appears in the casual statement that he declined the thoughtful invitation to make the trip "by way of honest recreation." After so short an acquaintance it is not surprising that Rivet did not have all the facts straight. He reported that the Governor had asked him to "take charge of the education of his son who is seven or eight years old." In fact, the boy was only four.

He also informed the bishop that the judges had claimed part of his time "for themselves and for their children." While he did not specify the services for which the judges had claimed his time, one may suppose that Clarke and Griffin needed his knowledge of French in communicating with the people. Vanderburgh, of course, was fluent in French.

**As has been noted, Father Rivet was by this time convinced that his mission to the Indians was a futile one. To add to his distress he learned that an unknown person had lodged a complaint with the War Department, charging that the missionary did nothing to earn his pay.**

This slur hurt him deeply, for he well knew that, despite his failure as educator

and civilizer, he had the trust and affection of the Indians, who found in the Black Robe one to whom they could go with assurance in their appeals for fair treatment and in arbitrating their quarrels.

The Indians' attitude was exhibited on the occasion of a tiff that arose because of a high-handed action of Captain Pasteur. When the unfounded rumor went abroad that Father Rivet was in jail, one of the chiefs came to inquire about the matter. They would know what to do. "If unfortunately anyone had aroused their spirit about these facts," the priest wrote, "I would not have wished to be responsible for what might have followed."

It was natural that he wondered whether it was malice toward him or toward the Indians that prompted the charge against him.

HARRISON CAME to the missionary's defense both by writing to the Secretary of War and by assuring Rivet himself that he troubled his mind without reason, that he was "rendering important services to a people who had from their free choice thrown in their lot with the United States."

He suggested that "two or three others like him might serve with utility." One might surmise that Father Rivet had disclosed to the Governor the grand plan he has submitted to the Secretary some years before.

BISHOP HUBERT of Quebec had clung tenaciously to the parishes in the territory the British held after the treaty of 1783. Even when the Jay Treaty of 1794 provided for the surrender of the posts there to the United States, he appears not to have been immediately convinced that the British forces would be withdrawn.

It was not until 14 January 1796 that he notified Bishop Carroll that he would remove Father Frechette from Detroit and that it would be the American bishop's responsibility to provide a pastor for St. Anne parish. Just two years earlier a parish had been established at Raisin River, now Monroe, some 40 miles south of Detroit. Hubert offered to permit the pastor there, Edmund Burke, an Irishman, to join the Baltimore diocese and remain at St. Anthony parish there.

**There was good reason for Father Burke not to accept this permission. He had been not only pastor of St. Anthony but also an agent of the Canadian government and in this capacity he had incited the Indians not to make peace with General Wayne. Even after the Treaty of Greenville he busied himself to prevent the transfer of the area to American authority.**

Father Rivet had heard something of these machinations while on his way to Vincennes. The officer accompanying him and Father Janin had expressed the wish that one of them might supplant the fiery Irishman. Rivet told the bishop about the matter in a letter written about the same time as Hubert's:

**This man of blood seems to breathe nothing but war to which he incites the savages incessantly; he regales them, and makes presents to them, and omits nothing to bring them to his views. . . . This man is the shame of our State, scandal to the faithful, and a horror to well thinking persons.**

It is no wonder that Colonel Hamtramck declared, as Rivet reported, that "if he could get his hands on this man he would give him a bad quarter of an hour."

A feature of Father Rivet's character somewhat different from that noted above comes to light in his confrontation of Pasteur's arrogance and in his plain speaking with respect to Father Burke's knavery. He was no respecter of persons. He did not

mince words in his narration of the loyalist clergyman's meddling. Neither was he irresolute in challenging the insolence of the American officer.

**THE CONCILIATORY** Carroll appears to have expressed some doubt regarding Rivet's charges. Perhaps he was unwilling to lose the chance to receive an addition to the small number of his priests. In August Father Rivet responded to his doubt by stating that, while malice might have exaggerated the matter, it was impossible that the reports were devoid of all foundation.

Then in a postscript his delicate conscience got the better of him and he assured the bishop that Father Levadoux, who had gone to Detroit, would have better information in the case. He could have set his mind at rest, for Father Burke was no more eager to remain under the American flag than the American officials were to have him. He wrote to Bishop Hubert: "It is evident to Your Lordship that I cannot remain in a post subject to the Yankees. I do not like them and they do not like me."

One week before Hamtramck's soldiers arrived to take possession of Detroit he departed for the more hospitable air of Niagara, still subject to King George.

To fill the parishes at Detroit and Raisin River, Bishop Carroll suggested to Rivet and Levadoux that they should at least visit those places and report to him on the condition of religion.

Levadoux was reluctant to part with his comrade, Gabriel Richard, but he did make the trip in the summer of 1796. A meeting with some of the Potawatomi along the way led to the appeal they made to Rivet to join them that was referred to before. He also went out of his way to make a visit at Michilimackinac along the way.

He reached Detroit on 14 August, a month after the departure of Frechette and Burke. Conditions there convinced him that he should remain, and he asked that Father Richard and Rivet should join him. He believed that Rivet would be more suitably stationed there than at Vincennes.

The Poor Missionary's cast of mind comes to light in his response to the bishop's proposal. He had not committed himself to the painful work of the missions to choose the post he should fill. No mere suggestion but only an order from the bishop or the vicar general would induce him to go to Detroit.

**IN A LATER** letter he let the bishop know that an American had pointed out to him that he could not go to Detroit without resigning his commission, which was to the Wabash and Illinois Indians. It is interesting to note that the priest who a little later became pastor of Raisin River listed both St. Joseph and Fort Wayne among the stations that fell within his jurisdiction.

Later that year Father Rivet asked the bishop for a dispensation, explaining that communication with Levadoux, the vicar general, in Detroit was slower than with Baltimore. Carroll's response was to make Rivet himself a vicar general.

The Poor Missionary suffered even greater distress at this honor thrust upon him than had Father Meurin when Bishop Briand raised him to that exalted office. He begged that another vicar general should be appointed to whom he might apply for the dispensations he needed himself. "I would be very sorry," he wrote, "no longer to be under the hand of authority."

It was in October 1797 that Rivet became vicar general. The letter of appointment was brought by Father Charles Leander Lusson, a Franciscan, whom Carroll had appointed to replace Levadoux at Cahokia. Not long before the coming of Lusson, Rivet had transmitted to Carroll the urgent plea of Father Richard to be recalled to Baltimore.

Nevertheless, he believed that Richard could be induced to remain despite his discouragement. He expressed the opinion that any new priests sent to the Illinois country would not remain long and suggested that the newcomers should go to Detroit and that Richard should continue at Kaskaskia.

**THE FOLLOWING YEAR**, however, Richard met with increased opposition as the result of a rebuke he administered to parishioners who had presumed, in the absence of the priest, to have their marriage witnessed in the church by the magistrate. Perhaps because of the uproar over this matter, Carroll transferred Richard to assist Levadoux to the great joy of both.

On his way to his new post, Richard made a short visit at Vincennes. There on 30 April 1798 he wrote to the bishop in English, which he was endeavoring to learn. He had this to say about the pastor:

**I found Reverend Mr. Rivet but little better. Since fifteen months he has been almost allwais sick, and I am afraid very much that he will never live long while.**

Father Rivet's view of the matter was slightly different. A month later he wrote:

**My health is less shattered than it has been for fifteen to eighteen years. However, Mr. Richard, who always has his little joke, is persuaded that I cannot go for more than three years.**

It would in fact be six years rather than three that he would go on. The visit must have been a delight to Father Rivet, the only one by a priest in his nine years. One source of his sorrow was that he could go to confession only once a year, whereas he had never before gone for more than ten days without confession.

More than once he had invited Father Badin in Bardstown to come to see him, but Badin feared that a parishioner would die in his absence. He had begged the bishop to assign another priest to the parish, offering to allow him all the revenue and to serve as his valet. Now just three years after his coming, he had companionship, perhaps in the newly finished presbytery.

**RIVET'S FOREBODING** that new priests sent to the Illinois country would not stay long was borne out in the event. Father Richard had hardly left when Father Lusson departed for the greener pastures across the Mississippi and the Poor Missionary found himself "alone in this vast district."

The Cahokians asked his permission to request the bishop to appoint him as their pastor. He would have the \$350 they had collected for Father Lusson and the revenue of the three parishes. As in the case of the Raisin River question, he refused to make a decision. All the places were the same to him. If the bishop should order him to go to Cahokia he was ready to go.

"But if this is your intention," he wrote, "you must order me to do it; you know that a permission is nothing to me." He did remark that frequent changes were disconcerting to the people and that removal to Cahokia would prevent his carrying out his mission to the Indians. At any rate the bishop did not order him to go.

In the August and September of 1798 he made a sort of official visit as vicar general to the three parishes in Illinois. It must have been a strenuous exercise, for

he reported to the bishop that he had held as many as four services a day. He had been in poor health for two years, he said, and the oppressive August heat ought to have "annihilated" him.

On the contrary, his health since that time was better than it had ever been. For the first time in his life he had passed the winter without illness, having the inexpressible happiness of "celebrating the Holy Mysteries every day." A year and a half later he was still bragging about how well he was.

Early in the year 1799 there were two disappointments. Louis Buhot, another French priest, came as far as Louisville on his way to the post, but backed out of the trip to Vincennes and went on to New Madrid, writing to inquire of Rivet whether "he could make a living here."

The pastor's affirmative response brought no reply and later visitors from New Madrid had no news from Father Buhot. Since Father Gibault was then the pastor at New Madrid, the reader regrets that there is no mention of him. Father Rivet's comment was:

**The reversal of this project has afflicted me cruelly. It would have been fine to have another priest with me. But I am not worthy of this favor. I have abused it too much before.**

The second disappointment was more than compensated for by the joyful news associated with it. In January two priests arrived at the Illinois parishes, the brothers John B. and Donatien Olivier. At least Donatien had arrived in Baltimore about the same time as Rivet himself, possibly on the same ship.

CONSCIOUS OF his responsibility as vicar general, Rivet regretted that they had not passed by the Post on their way. No doubt he would have welcomed the opportunity of enjoying their fellowship. He wrote to the parishes to "hold everything in abeyance" until he should come after Easter to regulate temporal matters and conduct.

As a matter of fact, it was not until September that he was able to make the journey. Then he gave his formal approval to the Regulations for the parishes, which the Wardens and the priests had composed. These were similar to those put into effect at Vincennes in 1796, but much more elaborate. Donatien Olivier became pastor of Prairie du Rocher with Kaskaskia as a mission, while John took charge of Cahokia. They were about 50 years of age.

**This time the new priests, despite their age, were proof against the seduction of the parishes across the river. In 1800 Father Rivet reported that when the parish of St. Louis became vacant, "No means were left unemployed to get one or the other of the Messrs. Olivier to accept this place. But these men, truly apostolic, did not seem even to have been tempted to accept it."**

The one that did accept it was Father Janin, who had given up as Indian missionary after a year. Because of failing health, John Olivier retired to the chaplaincy of the Ursuline Sisters in New Orleans in 1803. When Bishop Carroll became apostolic administrator of the diocese of Louisiana he made John his vicar general.

Donatien remained at Prairie du Rocher until 1827. Then, though he was nearly 80, he could hardly be prevailed to retire to the seminary that had been established in St. Louis.

**TWO MORE TIMES** Father Rivet thought of leaving Vincennes. By 1801 conditions had so changed in France that it was possible for exiled priests to return and freely exercise their ministry. In that year several friends wrote to the missionary making "urgent and touching invitations to go back to France."

These appeals awakened a desire to return to his own diocese of Limoges, where the need for priests might be as great as at Vincennes. "The will of God," he wrote, "if I can ascertain it, is the only rule which shall guide me." He was eager to receive further information to help him ascertain the will of God. Apparently he learned nothing more, for there is no other mention of a return to France.

On his visit to the Illinois parishes the next year, Father Rivet crossed the river to St. Louis, where, he told the bishop, "everybody expressed a desire to have me there." "Alas!" he wrote, "if they knew what I am they would not go to such trouble."

By this time word of the acquisition of the area west of the Mississippi by the United States, which would be consummated by the Louisiana Purchase on 30 April 1803, was in the air. Most of the priests there intended to "follow the Spanish standard" and so to continue to receive their pension.

Harrison intimated that the government might need Rivet's services in Louisiana. He would be "strongly importuned by the people of the other shore" to send Rivet there. The priest wished to know whether, in the event that "the two shores of the Mississippi" should form one government, the bishop's jurisdiction would extend to the other shore in order that he might know how to conduct himself if sent there.

In fact, the upper part of Louisiana was added to Indiana Territory on 26 March 1804, but Father Rivet had died before that date, and he was not called upon to go to the other shore.

When Father Rivet came to Vincennes in 1795 the parish of St. Francis Xavier had about 600 members. This estimate is based on his statement that there were 104 or 105 families and from 300 to 350 communicants, meaning no doubt those that had received first communion.

In his catechism class there were more than 100. One may assume that these were the children from seven to 15 years old, for he bemoaned the lack of knowledge of their prayers in children of 13 and 14. There was probably an equal number of children under seven, making a total of 250 that had not received first communion.

CONFIRMING THIS conjecture is Rivet's statement in another place that there were 250 children less than 15 years old whom he had "adopted in his heart." The church register contains a few Spanish and English and Irish names, but there were no more than about half a dozen families that were other than French. The reduction of the French population from the estimated 900 in 1790 was no doubt due to the exodus of 260 reported by Hamtramck in 1791 and some drifting away to the Spanish domain in subsequent years.

As the number of French inhabitants fell, that of Americans rose. It is not surprising that not all the arrivals at this post of the frontier displayed the highest moral standards. Two years after his coming Rivet wrote that Vincennes was "swamped with Americans arriving from everywhere."

His account of the newcomers is hardly flattering. They were for the most part without principles of conduct, given to pillaging and plundering of gardens, orchards and livestock. No doubt many immigrants were upright and honorable citizens, but the town suffered from an influx of adventurers, who added nothing to the comfort of the old settlers.

The result of the swarming of Americans appears in the federal census of 1800, which shows a population of 1533 in Vincennes and its environs. The French were by this time a minority, their proportion to the Americans being about the reverse of that of 1790.

An interesting feature of this census is that it shows the presence of 23 slaves, although the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 had enacted that there should be "neither slavery nor involuntary servitude" in the Territory. The small number of slaves indicates that they played an insignificant part in the economy of the community.

Though he arrived almost on the heels of Father Flaget, who had for more than two years been striving to arouse the piety of the parish, Father Rivet found little to comfort him in the spiritual condition of his people. Of more than 300 communicants, he wrote a year after his coming, only 88 went to confession and only 42 received Communion.

Whether these figures were for the year or for a typical week is not clear, but in either case the record was not such as to cheer the pastor's heart. Most of the people looked upon attendance at Mass on Sundays and holy days as a matter of individual choice rather than as a duty.

**NOR WERE THE** parishioners more diligent in seeing to the instruction of the children than in their own religious observance. Of the more than 100 that should be in the catechism class he could get only 40 to attend regularly. It is noteworthy that the pastor blamed not only fathers and mothers but masters and mistresses also for the children's failure to attend, indicating that the children of slaves, few as they were, were members of the catechism class. It was not the fault of the children, for they pleaded, many with tears, to be allowed to come. But the elders usually had some work for them to do.

The pastor's persistence appears to have been effective in this respect at least, for in the spring of 1796, 27 received their first Communion "with the greatest fervor, and several of them have real dispositions and a heart made for virtue." Moreover in the following October he had "managed to establish a fair catechism class."

On Sundays he had instructions for those that had made their first Communion and on other days he had two or three other classes: after Mass for the smallest, for whom he lisped "the sign of the cross and the first elements of faith and morals"; in the afternoon for the more advanced; and at night for those that could not come in daytime.

**The absence of complaints on this score leads one to believe that he had gained the cooperation of the parish in the education of the young. As late as 1802 he stated that he was having catechism classes at least four times a week.**

The widely-held belief that Father Rivet established the first school in Vincennes appears to have its source in the statement of C.F. Volney, a French scientist who in the course of his travels spent ten days there in August 1796. He made a great point of the ignorance of French people in contrast to the Americans.

"Nobody ever opened a school among them, he wrote, "till it was done by the abbe R., a polite, well-educated, and liberal-minded missionary, banished by the French revolution." The traveler's high esteem of the priest was reciprocated, for the latter told the bishop: "I had long and frequent conversations here with Mr. Volney, whom I found extremely moderate in his principles. I even profited by his observations on the political part of my commission."

**THERE IS NOTHING** in Father Rivet's letters, however, about a school except his catechism classes. There can hardly be any doubt though that his instructions went beyond strictly religious matters and it seems likely that he taught some of the children to read and write.

The observation he made in one of his letters regarding the absence of a school at the Post certainly suggests that he made an effort to supply for this deficiency. Lamenting in one of his early letters the paltry payments of tithes despite an abundant harvest, he went on to say: "I would be much better off if they paid me for the work that I have done for the village, which is foreign to my state, or if each of the children whom I instruct would give me but a sou a day."

There is nothing to indicate what the work foreign to his state was, but it is unlikely that he should suggest payment by the children if the instructions were confined to religion. It must have been Father Rivet's description of his classes that prompted Volney's remark. But in this respect, Flaget had started a school of some sort, and even Gibault boasted that he was teaching the altar boys to read and write.

**The people's disregard for the laws of fast and abstinence was another source of grief to the pastor. Only two or three families paid any attention to these, he said. He found some excuse for their neglect in their extreme poverty and in the scarcity of meat except in the hunting season, when one day might bring an abundance after an enforced abstinence.**

Another reason for laxity was the proximity to the parishes on the other side of the Mississippi, where the people enjoyed exemptions from these laws as subjects of the Spanish king. This excuse lost some of its force, however, when Rivet learned from Father Richard that the Cahokians, who lived right on the bank of the Mississippi, were quite faithful in their observance of fast and abstinence.

At that time Saturday as well as Friday was a day of abstinence. Father Rivet sought to bring the people to the Friday observance by commuting the Saturday abstinence to the recitation of the Rosary in common by the entire congregation. Even this relaxation failed of its desired effect, however, and he finally exercised his power as vicar general by dispensing from the Saturday abstinence entirely.

**HIS TENDERNESS** of conscience appears in the question he put to the bishop as to whether he might avail himself of this dispensation when he accepted an invitation to dinner with a non-Catholic family. Even this measure failed, however, and in October 1802, after more than seven years of effort to promote the ascetic practice, he suggested that the bishop might dispense from Friday abstinence too, but there is nothing to indicate that Carroll followed this suggestion.

Father Rivet believed that his people wished for "a religion without thorns," quite at variance with his own ideal and practice. It was in one of his invectives against dancing that took up a great part of the people's lives that he uttered this lament.

The dances drew the entire parish: women with babies in their arms and women advanced in pregnancy; men burnt by the sun and worn out by their work in the fields; young people whose fervor he had been trying to arouse.

**Fearing that Rivet was unduly rigorous in his approach, the bishop cautioned him not to prohibit dancing but to enforce prudent regulations. If the practice was at all like that at Miamitown as portrayed by Henry Hay, the pastor had cause for concern.**

At first he had been distressed by the profanation of Sundays and holy days, and he did succeed in obtaining a promise not to have dances on these days, but the promise was not long remembered. Seven years after his coming he was deploring that laxity had so far progressed that dances occurred in Advent. This encroachment on the penitential season ceased when the right-minded parishioners protested, but Father Rivet was apprehensive about the coming Lent.

Marriage was another subject that occasioned anxiety. Father Rivet was convinced that the decree Tametsi of the Council of Trent, requiring for the validity of a marriage between Catholics that it be witnessed by a priest, had received the publication in the parish necessary to bring it into effect.

The correspondence of Father Meurin with Bishop Briand and the practice of Father Gibault in his ministry at Vincennes confirm this opinion. Yet, at least on his departure from the parish in 1789, Gibault appears to have applied the interpretation of the law which, when a parish priest was not available for a considerable time, permitted a couple to contract marriage before two witnesses.

By Rivet's time, however, another element had entered the picture. Since the creation of Knox County in 1790 there were justices of the peace empowered to witness marriages under the civil law. Some young couples availed themselves of this legal way of marrying in defiance of the church law. Perhaps they were encouraged by the lower fees for the ceremony and for the certificate of marriage charged by the civil authority.

On one occasion at least, Father Rivet excommunicated a couple for so violating the law of the Church and required a public submission at the Sunday Mass before rectifying the union. One party to this marriage was a widow, whose son was married just a year later after three publications of the banns.

**SCHOLARLY AS** he was, Father Rivet appears not to have had a precise understanding of the implications of the law. He was aware of the need for the renewal of consent, yet he asked the bishop what form he should use, as if it might differ from that employed in any marriage.

He was even in doubt whether confession was necessary in such cases, as it was in an ordinary marriage. At times the question of confession arose in the case of those coming to him for their marriage in the first place. There were those that refused to go to confession, even though they had been completely neglectful of their religious duties.

Their obstinacy caused the pastor much distress. He was always able to escape the quandary, however, for he judged that if one party was ready to comply with the requirement of confession he should not be deprived of the grace of the sacrament by the other's contumacy, and he always found one party with proper dispositions.

**Excessive drinking was nearly as much of a problem with the parishioners as it was with the Indians. In an early letter Father Rivet deplored the habitual drunkenness of many, who "assist and even serve sometimes at the most holy functions full of taffia and whiskey."**

He was saddened in telling "of public concubinage, of frequent breaking up of homes with scandal and often the ruin of the children." A little later he suggested that another priest, "more gifted with languages," be given his place with the Indians so that he could devote all his energies to the needs of the parish, where ignorance and indifference prevailed, resulting in "thousands of disorders and often the profanation of the sacraments."

To remedy the sad state of the parish Father Rivet had recourse to the traditional

religious practices. Early in his pastorate he instituted a novena for the feast of St. Francis Xavier, with prayers and hymns and "an interesting lecture" and even Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. There was another novena for the feast of the Assumption.

Throughout Advent and Lent there were instructions for the adults. Once he consulted the bishop about reciting the litany of St. Francis Xavier, though it was not one of the approved litanies. Another time he asked permission to say in French the blessings in the nuptial Mass. "They are beautiful," he wrote, "and could excite the devotion of the faithful."

There is nothing to show what Carroll's response was, but there is little doubt that he sympathized with the request, for he was of the belief that the liturgy should be in the vernacular throughout America.

**EXCEPT FOR THE** children's more regular attendance at catechism, there seems not to have but little increase of religious fervor. Three years after Rivet's coming he was desolate over the "the great number of unmanageable persons," for whom the means of sanctification were fruitless.

Four years later, because scarcely anyone attended the novena in honor of the patron, he announced that he would suppress it and would only have a High Mass on the feast, "since half the people remain at work."

The Olivier brothers were equally disconsolate over the little fruit of their ministry in contrast to the "tender piety" to which they had been accustomed in their French parishes. One might suspect that Flaget and Rivet expected too much from their people.

**Neither had ever been a parish priest until he came to Vincennes. Both had led sheltered lives, first as members of devout families and later as teachers of boys from families like their own.**

But if the Oliviers, who apparently had been parish priests in France, were also saddened by the state of religion, one must conclude that conditions at Vincennes and the Illinois towns fell somewhat short of those in the mother country.

There may be a clue to the sorry state of affairs in an aspect that Rivet himself found surprising: he told the bishop that "it is the oldest ones who are the most remiss in the duties of their religion, even at Easter."

It should be remembered that from the departure of Father Devernai until Father Gibault's visit in 1770 no priest was seen at Vincennes. Between 1770 and 1779 there were seven visits of a month or two; and from 1779 until 1784 no priest was in the town. Thus those that were more than 40 years of age had passed their childhood with an opportunity to attend Mass and be instructed by the priest during only a total period of one year.

On the other hand, except between 1789 and 1792, the younger generation had during their formative years heard Father Gibault's little bell calling them to Mass and had the priest present, giving some lessons to them at least. Perhaps the difference in childhood experience explains the lesser laxity of the younger parishioners.

**IT IS NOT** to be concluded that Father Rivet did nothing but grumble. His remark about adopting the children in his heart reveals his deep concern for the parish. Once when he told the bishop of a disastrous flood of the Wabash he asked the bishop's prayers for his "dear and unfortunate people."

Much of the time he suffered from ill health and he often made reference to his

condition, sometimes to rejoice about how well he was. But he was not unmindful of the afflictions of the people. "I am not the only one thus suffering in the village," he wrote, "I think the plagues of Egypt have come to be renewed. Some have fever, others have eye diseases so cruel that for many it is a sort of rage, . . . others have colic, . . . a great number have all these ills combined."

Many notations in the burial records witness the pastor's attachment to his people. Those he made with regard to Louis, The Old Prayer, and Judge Clarke have been noted. Besides these there are more than 30 others of which the following are examples:

"—died as a true Christian"

"—after a long illness, suffered with great patience and resignation"

"—after a very edifying old age"

"—after an edifying youth, a long sickness suffered with patience and all possible marks of most animated piety"

"—a true Christian . . . loved and esteemed for her charity and the kindness of her character and other precious qualities"

One man at least took to heart the pastor's exhortations regarding the duty of fasting: Jacques La Tremouille died on Christmas after an illness of ten days; he did not wish to dispense himself from the fast on Christmas Eve.

For his first two years Father Rivet occupied a house belonging to Father Flaget, which he shared with Pierre Mallat, who had functioned as guardian of the church from 1789 till 1792 and continued as clerk thereafter.

He received but little help from the parish to supplement his government salary. Only a score of families were able to pay their tithes and the offerings for baptisms, marriages, and burials in the first six months amounted to only ten dollars.

In the second year, however, he put the parish on business-like basis, having Rules of Administration in 15 Articles drawn up to regulate in minute detail the payment of dues and of pew rent. The Rules received the formal approval of the bishop.

A peculiar feature of the Rules is the requirement that the warden should use all means in his power "even by order of court" to collect the pew rent. Once Father Rivet mentioned that he was at the point of taking this ultimate step, but whether he actually did so is not clear. Perhaps the threat was sufficient to bring the delinquents into line. On what ground court action could be taken is not clear.

**ABOUT THE SAME** time the construction of a new presbytery began. In August 1797 the pastor reported that it was not yet completed. The men had not worked on it but three days since Corpus Christi (15 June). But in June of the next year he told the bishop that it was finished, though it would cost him \$50 to make it ready for occupancy.

Perhaps he was not able to entertain Father Richard in the new house. Finding a housekeeper "40 years old and of the character required" presented difficulties. The one he hired was a black woman, which would come "pretty high," he said. He hopes that the bishop would pass on the age, "when the morals, the prudence, and the other qualities" were present. Since there was no mention of the presbytery in later letters, the arrangements must have been satisfactory.

The church was another matter. Just a year after his arrival Rivet reported:

The church of the parish is in the most pitiable state. Four wooden candlesticks are the total ornament of the altar. No communion rail, no con-

fessional, pews are often nothing but planks thrown together. The roof and the floor and the rest are in unison.

He hoped that the new Rules would so increase the revenues that the church could be put in better order, but six years later he had to say that it was in a deplorable state. He threatened that he would place the church under interdict if the people did not repair it. One can only speculate what he would have done for a place to say Mass if he had carried out his threat, for there was no other meeting place in town.

He confessed, however, that "the only improvement to be made would be to pull it down and build a new one." Yet such a project was impracticable, so extreme was the poverty of the people. The church, built by Father Gibault in 1786 and pronounced dilapidated by Father Flaget in 1792 would serve for 20 more years.

**THE PEOPLE** were indeed poor. To what extent their depressed condition was due to their "idleness and ignorance," as Volney maintained, and to what extent it was the result of the "evils of every kind which they had to suffer from the American government and especially from the Indian wars," as Father Rivet contended, is not easy to say.

Volney dwelt upon their lack of skills and foresight: "their women neither sew, nor spin, nor make butter, but pass their time in gossiping and tattle, while all at home is dirt and disorder," "the men take to nothing but hunting, fishing, roaming in the woods, and loitering in the sun."

Father Rivet called attention to the losses sustained while the town was occupied by the Virginia soldiers and to the later invasion by Kentucky militia, which led to the action by Congress in sending the army to expel the lawless men that held the town.

Father Rivet enlisted Volney's help in gaining recognition by the government of the people's ownership of the tract of land ceded by the Piankashaw Indians to the Vincennes inhabitants, arranging that the traveler should be given power of attorney to represent them with the government officials.

He was so confident of the outcome of this mission that he mentioned a proviso in the petition calling for the "establishment of a college for which there will be determined a certain quantity of land to endow it." It was specified that "the choice of masters and the mode of education shall be concerted with the Bishop of Baltimore."

The priest did not understand that the government interpreted this grant of the Piankashaws as having been made not to the inhabitants of Vincennes but to the King of France, from whom it had passed to the British King and then to the United States.

Some years earlier the people had conceded this interpretation and had surrendered their claims when they applied to Congress for grants of land to compensate them for their losses. In all likelihood they had but little understanding of what they were doing in whatever papers they signed.

Several acts of Congress beginning in 1788 had made grants of 400 acres to those who were heads of families in 1783 and of 100 acres to all who were in the militia in 1790. These constituted little enough compensation for the losses the people had sustained, but even from these most of the people gained but little.

The actual conferring of title to the land was delayed for many years by the process of verifying claimants' rights and of surveying the land, but before Rivet's

coming most of the French people had sold their rights for a few cents an acre, though the value was soon to be two dollars.

**The people's improvidence was no doubt due in part to their dire need. The few dollars they got for their claims relieved their families from want. Probably more important was their lack of confidence in the government's promises after the long delay of the law in bringing them relief.**

But the weightiest factor in reducing them to destitution was the breakdown of their way of life. They were never colonists. They were fur traders, retired soldiers who had married into one of the families, voyageurs transporting furs and other goods by canoe. That in the midst of a vast area of fertile ground they were content to cultivate 70 or 140 acres shows how far from their minds was any ambition to be farmers.

**WHEN WAR** diverted the fur trade to Detroit the basis of Vincennes' prosperity was lost. No longer was there an incentive to industry. Then the influx of Americans with experience in farming and a lust for land had an impact on the French inhabitants not unlike the impact of the complex European civilization on the Indians.

To expect them to undertake the clearing of land far from the town would have been as unrealistic as to expect the Indians to settle down like European peasants. Whether Father Flaget's school to "train up youth in the different trades" would have been effective had he stayed a few years longer is doubtful. One might ask of what use looms would be if the women could not spin.

The lowly condition of the French people has an illustration in the incident that occasioned Father Rivet's facing up to Captain Pasteur, referred to above. The priest had arranged a conference between Volney and the Indians, When Pasteur got wind of this he took Rivet's interpreter out to the fort and submitted him to an interrogation regarding what had gone on, threatening him with imprisonment if he failed to tell the truth.

It was this that aroused the priest's ire. Perhaps Pasteur's paranoid behavior arose from his ignorance of French, the language of Rivet and Volney. In this ignorance of the other's language in each element of the population, which Volney mentions, may lie the failure of the two to come together. A bilingual school, in which the children of each group could have learned the other's mother tongue, might have done much for the town.

Notwithstanding the poverty of his people, Father Rivet was able to gather a modest store of possessions. Solicitous for the parish, he made his successor the beneficiary of his will. Writing to the bishop in 1800, five years after his coming to Vincennes, he said:

**My successor, anyway if God allows me yet a few years on earth, shall have, I think, a precious resource in this regard. I hope that on arriving he will find linens, furniture, animals, provisions, and perhaps some money. What a precious resource in arriving in a parish. My greatest desire is to assure the parish which God has confided to me a pastor who may be able after my death to repair my numerous faults and above all to animate in the souls which I have led there the feeble spark of the love of Mary which I have tried to begin.**

Since he did indeed have nearly four more years, he did leave these things, but unfortunately, there was no successor to carry on the work. It was by frugal living

and even self-denial that he accumulated them, yet it would be the fruit of his preaching and example rather than what he called the "precious resource" that would endure.

Father Rivet is said to have suffered from tuberculosis. In his last two years his letters were fewer, perhaps because of the advance of the disease. Still, he carried out his pastoral functions, for his entries in the register continue unbroken except for trips to Illinois in 1802 and 1803. The last three entries were made on 21, 30, and 31 January 1804. He died on 13 February.

**THE STORY IS** told that when he became aware that death was near he sent for Father Donatien Olivier to come and prepare him for his end and that he wrote his confession in case the priest did not arrive in time. It is believable in the light of concern about the lack of opportunity for confession. Another story is that he had himself carried to the church in order that he might administer Holy Communion to himself.

One might suppose another motive, for he more than once showed himself to be uneasy lest the sacred species should remain unconsumed. His extreme rigidity comes to light here, if the story is true, for almost any theologian would have told him that it would be perfectly proper for Pierre Mallet to bring the Blessed Sacrament to him.

Just how soon Father Olivier reached Vincennes is not clear. His first entry in the register was made on 28 February. It recorded the supplying of the ceremonies of a baptism conferred by Pierre Mallet of a baby born on 9 February. The indication is that by that date Father Rivet was too ill to baptize the child.

From the date of this first entry one might conclude that it was not until Father died that a messenger went to fetch Father Olivier. Strange to say, the latter did not notify the bishop but sent word to Father Badin in Bardstown. It is from a letter of his to Bishop Carroll that we know the date of Father Rivet's death.

Father Olivier made other records until 5 March. It was on the next day that he wrote to Badin. Strange to say also, neither Olivier nor Pierre Mallet made an entry in the register concerning the death of Father Rivet.

Father Badin urged that Father Olivier should move to Vincennes to take possession of the pastor's estate, but he apparently returned to Illinois after a week or so and returned only in November. Thus the parish of St. Francis Xavier was to be without a resident priest until 1818.

## Chapter VI

Father Olivier made his report of Father Rivet's death not to Bishop Carroll but to the vicar general of Kentucky, from whose letter to the bishop relaying the "melancholy news" we learn the date of the Poor Missionary's death. The Vicar General was Stephen Theodore Badin, one of the great figures in the early life of the Church in the West, who was to play an important part in the growth of religion in Indiana. He was 24 years old when the French Revolutionary government closed the seminary of Orleans, where he was a student. He came to this country, a shipmate of Benedict Joseph Flaget, in 1792, and became one of the first students at St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore. His ordination to the priesthood on 25 May 1793 was the first in the United States, a distinction he did not allow to be forgotten.

For some years Catholics in search of better farmland had been migrating from Maryland to Kentucky and settling in widely separated groups. A few priests had come to minister to them, but none stayed long enough to make his work effective.

As was noted in an earlier chapter, Father Paul de St. Pierre thought of taking the pastorate of one of these groups before he went on to the Illinois country in 1785, making a brief visit with Father Gibault at Vincennes along the way. To these neglected Catholics Bishop Carroll sent Father Badin in the autumn of 1793, just a year after Father Flaget came to Vincennes.

WHEN FATHER RIVET died, Badin had been riding his horse from one little community to another with a devotion exemplified by his refusal of Rivet's repeated pleas that he come to visit, his excuse being that he feared that a parishioner might die in his absence.

Naturally the news of Rivet's death saddened him; perhaps it caused him some remorse for never having gone to see his neighbor. It also brought him concern lest the Poor Missionary's estate, garnered by careful administration and self-denial and bequeathed to his successor, should be "squandered away if a clergyman takes not soon possession thereof." He sensed a danger than "an adventurous priest without a mission might intrude himself there, as has been done in other places." Thanks to Rivet's exertions and frugality, Vincennes was better able to support a priest than were the Illinois parishes; it was, moreover, the seat of the territorial government. For these reasons Badin urged that Olivier "should provisionally take

his residence at St. Vincent's, persuaded that a Pastor cannot be sent . . . as soon as necessary" and confident that the bishop would ratify his advice.

**Father Olivier had returned to Prairie du Rocher even before Badin received his letter with the news of Father Rivet's death. He was, as Badin wrote, "a gentleman of delicate feelings and perhaps of too timorous conscience" and feared "lest malevolent people should censure him for applying for a removal."**

There is no question about the wisdom of Badin's advice. On the other hand, it is hard to blame Olivier for not following it. In the parishes of Prairie du Rocher, Cahokia, and Kaskaskia there were more Catholics than there were at Vincennes, and on the other side of the Mississippi there was a still larger number, who were dependent on his ministrations since the departure of most of the priests when Spain ceded the territory. Furthermore, he was close to 60 years of age, and he had not learned to speak English.

After five years in the Illinois country he had no doubt made many friends, who would be deeply hurt if he forsook them to take what seemed to be a more comfortable place. At Vincennes, where Americans were swarming and where the principal occupation was political intrigue, he would have been sadly out of his element. So he made a short visit in November 1804 and continued to come to the Post at irregular intervals for 11 years, with no apparent desire to make his home there.

All the accounts of Father Olivier dwell on his piety, zeal, and efficiency; they also emphasize his childlike simplicity. Twenty years later it was only with difficulty that he was induced to retire to the St. Louis seminary, leaving Prairie du Rocher, "where he lived alone without even a housekeeper." He died at the seminary in 1841 at the age of 95.

**IT IS NOT SO EASY** to account for Bishop Carroll's failure to send another priest to Vincennes, which was the seat of government and had long suffered neglect. The bishop was, indeed, hard put to it to provide priests for the more populous Eastern parishes, and Vincennes was far away, still in the wilderness. Especially there was a dearth of priests who spoke French, for in 1803 conditions in France had so changed as to induce Father Emery, the Sulpician Superior, to order his colleagues, including Father Levadoux, to return home and reopen their seminaries.

Father Olivier continued to visit Vincennes from time to time. Strange to say, on neither of his visits in 1804 did he record any marriages or burials; in fact, throughout the 11 years of his ministry there he recorded only the occasional burial of a person who chanced to die while he was in town, though in the later years some of the laymen made such entries. But when he was in town during the first two weeks of July 1805, in addition to 17 baptisms, he recorded five marriages, all on the last two days of his stay.

**Each marriage was the validation of a union previously contracted before the judge or simply in the presence of witnesses. There is no entry for 4 July; the people were probably engaged in secular ceremonies on that day.**

For Father Badin 1805 was a banner year. For 12 years, except for a few brief intervals, he was the only priest in all Kentucky and Tennessee; in 1805, there were three accession to the clergy of the region. First, Father Charles Nerinckx, a Flemish secular priest, arrived in July, sent by Bishop Carroll to assist the veteran missionary; in August, a group of Trappist priests and Brothers came to establish a

monastery and a school; finally, in September, three Dominican priests entered Kentucky with a plan to set up the first house of their order in the United States. It is not astonishing that, with the monks and friars in readiness to answer any sick calls, the vicar general felt himself at liberty to make an official visitation to Vincennes.

**PERHAPS A MORE** positive reason for the trip was to afford Father Nerinckx an opportunity to observe real Indians in their native habitat. Nerinckx was a priest of the diocese of Mechlin, who after his ordination in 1785 devotedly served two parishes until 1797, when the revolutionary government forced him to go into hiding.

After some years on the run, he obtained admission to the Baltimore diocese and came to this country in 1804. For a few months he applied himself to the study of English at Georgetown College, and then was sent by Carroll to assist Badin. He began his journey with the Trappists, praying with them and sharing their diet of bread and water, but characteristically impatient with the slow progress of the boat down the Ohio River, he bought a horse and proceeded alone, reaching Badin's house some weeks before the monks.

The Trappists' austere life so edified him that he had a mind to join their order, but both Badin and the bishop discouraged that notion. Then he thought it might be a good idea to become an Indian missionary, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that Badin took him to Vincennes to look into the prospects of that vocation.

In 1806 Easter fell on 6 April. The two priests (Badin and Nerinckx) must have started their trip on that day, for Badin is reported to have been in Louisville on Tuesday. They probably reached Vincennes on Saturday, for on Monday Nerinckx made a record of two baptisms he had administered.

In the two weeks of their sojourn, Nerinckx officiated at 28 baptisms and Badin at only one, in which he supplied the ceremonies of the baptism conferred on the day of the child's birth. It was Badin, however, who officiated at the two marriages that occurred, both of which were validations of unions entered before witnesses; in each case he identified himself as vicar general for Kentucky. He made note in one case that the whole parish assembled for Benediction was present at the wedding.

In a letter to Bishop Carroll written shortly after his return to Kentucky, Nerinckx reported that the Governor had offered to procure for a priest residing at Vincennes the allowance of two hundred dollars that Rivet had received. He opposed such an arrangement because he believed it would be "hurtful to the freedom of religion, as but too plainly appears from the papers of the deceased priest." What there was in those papers that hampered Father Rivet is not known, but it is easy to sympathize with Father Nerinckx' position.

**THE FLEMISH PRIEST'S** assessment of the state of religion in the parish is not a flattering one. He found the people "like sheep gone astray . . . the worst of men, given to vice, unmindful of the laws of the Church regarding holy days and fast and abstinence . . . lazy and voluptuous." Though they were eager to have a priest among them, he doubted that they would give him any heed.

This judgment ought not to be taken too seriously. After all, he was in Vincennes only two weeks. Likewise, it should be noted that in the same letter he explained Kentucky Catholics' opposition to Badin's being their bishop, though he had been their pastor for many years, by calling them "obstinate, indocile, ungrateful, immoral, quarrelsome, and blasphemous."

**The Dominicans had a quite different opinion of these people and praised their religious spirit highly. Both Badin and Nerinckx were extremely rigoristic**

**in their moral theology; indeed their strict interpretation of the moral law was the source of friction between them and the friars.**

Father Nerinckx was ambivalent with regard to undertaking a mission with the Indians. He renewed his offer to assume this work, but he declared himself unsuited for it. His recommendation was that a bishop should be provided for the region; only a bishop would have the necessary authority to bring order. Neither Badin nor Carroll favored his becoming an Indian missionary, and he continued to share with Badin the vicissitudes of the Kentucky parishes.

Six years later, in 1812, to provide teachers for his schools, he founded a religious community, the Sisters of Loretto at the Foot of the Cross, which continues to flourish. His attraction to the Indian apostolate stayed with him, however, and in June 1824, frustrated by controversies with other priests over the direction of the Sisters and the regulation of the parishes, he left Kentucky for Missouri, where there were still many Indians. He was not to realize his dream, for he became ill and died two months later at the age of 63.

**IN A LETTER TO HIS** parents in 1807, a year after his visit to Vincennes, Nerinckx mentioned that Bishop Carroll intended to send there two Flemish priests, "the Jesuit Fathers Malave and Henry."

The Society of Jesus would not come completely to life again until 1814, but for some time before that date it was reviving little by little. Indeed, one may say that it did not wholly die, for Empress Catherine of Russia, for whom the Pope's writ had no force, forbade the publication of the decree of suppression in her realm, having regard for the importance of the Jesuit schools to education in Russia.

On 7 March 1801 Pope Pius VII recognized the existence of the Society in Russia and authorized it to go on with its work. Learning of this concession, Bishop Carroll obtained permission not only for the American former Jesuits to reenter the Society after a year's novitiate, but for other men to become Jesuits in a similar way. There was a caution that all was to be done "in silence and without noise."

**In 1804 and 1805 several European priests, among them John Henry and Francis Malave, came to Baltimore to join the former Jesuits and other young men in the novitiate.**

Father McAvoy states that the two Flemings died soon after their arrival and so were prevented from coming to Vincennes, but such seems not to be the case. They did become Jesuits and they did become pastors, but not in Indiana.

In 1809 Bishop Carroll was writing about the "assiduity and success" of the new Jesuits in Maryland parishes; as late as 1820 Malave was pastor of Frederickstown, preparing to open a school for poor children. Perhaps their ignorance of French deterred the Flemings from coming to Vincennes, though their French was probably as good as their English. It may be that life on the frontier did not appeal to them. Some years more would pass before another Jesuit came to resume the work of Meurin, Vivier, and Devernai in the parish of St. Francis Xavier.

It was left for Father Olivier to carry on the work in the parish, and he faithfully made his visits. Six months after the departure of Badin and Nerinckx he appeared at the post and between 13 November and 1 December he administered 29 baptisms and officiated at five marriages, the last of which appears to have been his first that was not a validation. On Monday, 1 December, Ambroise Cournoyer and Genevieve Dudevoir were married, the banns having been published "at the parochial Mass" the day before. To this record the pastor cryptically added that he had dispensed

from other publications "by reason of circumstances on account of which I have to leave the parish at once."

**THE EXPLANATION FOR** the priest's sudden departure may lie in the political events of the time. By the Greenville treaty of 1795 the United States government, to manifest its liberality, relinquished all claims to land lying outside that ceded by the Indians, with two exceptions: the Clark Grant of 150,000 acres "near the rapids of the river Ohio," Virginia's gift to George Rogers Clark and his soldiers; and "the post of St. Vincent on the river Wabash and the lands adjacent to which the Indian title has been extinguished." When William Henry Harrison came to Vincennes in 1801 as Governor of Indiana Territory he was also superintendent of Indian affairs, empowered to negotiate with the tribes for the purchase of land.

There was strong pressure upon him both from President Thomas Jefferson and from the swarming Americans to open up land for settlement, and his own sentiments ran in the same direction.

**One of his first chores was to see to the surveying of the land "adjacent" to Vincennes, so that it might be sold to the avid settlers.**

No one denied that the Indians had made a present of some land in the early days of French occupation, but there were two matters on which opinions differed. As is evident from Father Rivet's letters, the French people believed that the Indians had given them the land; the government theory was that the gift was to the King of France, from whom the land had passed by conquest to the British monarch and from him to the United States. That matter was quickly settled: the land belonged to the United States.

**THE OTHER QUESTION** was a little more difficult: what was the extent of the grant? A tract of five miles by two, said the Indians; 60 miles by 30, said Harrison. In addition, he made a claim to a vaster area, the subject of a transaction by a land company, which Congress had twice declared invalid. His purpose in the latter claim may have been to strengthen his bargaining position, but it raised such a storm of protest among the Indians that he quickly dropped it.

After two years of haggling Harrison got the 1,800 square miles he had set his mind to. Since the theory was that this agreement merely settled the boundary of a grant made long before, the Indians received not a cent in payment. There was a handsome profit for the government, which sold the land for two dollars an acre and up.

In the next two years Harrison concluded five treaties by which the United States acquired 6000 square miles of Indiana land and several times as much in Illinois and Missouri. In these treaties the Indians fared a little better, getting a cent or two an acre; still, the government's profit was not a bad one. Harrison accomplished these monumental real estate deals by playing one tribe against another; by judicious liberality to sundry Indian leaders, including Little Turtle, St. Clair's conqueror; and by threats of withholding annuities provided for by the Greenville Treaty.

As the Indians' hunting grounds shrank their anger grew. There was agitation for a union of the tribes, as in 1763 under Pontiac and in the Miami Confederacy of 1790. The leaders in this movement were the Shawnees, Tecumseh, the political and military chief, and Temskwatawa, who provided the religious inspiration and is generally called the Prophet; they are said to have been twin brothers.

The Prophet appears to have been an eloquent and effective preacher, proclaiming a rejection of the white man's ways, particularly addiction to whiskey

and marital infidelity, and a return to an idealized version of the simple life of olden times with the cultivation of the traditional corn and beans and squash and the worship of the Master of Life.

The brothers had only limited success in uniting the tribes; they drew disciples from most of the tribes, but there were as many or more in every tribe that chose the easy path along the edge of white civilization, satisfied with the crumbs that fell to them, rather than accepting the Prophet's ascetic doctrine. Nor were they able to restrain the more fervid youthful warriors, who would have no part in passive resistance but took to direct action.

Some eager white settlers, impatient with the slow acquisition of land, took matters into their own hands and staked out claims in the area still owned by the Indians; often they attacked any Indian that protested.

The upshot of these clashes was that bands of young braves struck at isolated homesteads, inside and outside the Indian lands, and fell upon travelers on the roads or trails. These conditions reached a crisis in 1807. Harrison organized companies of "Rangers," drawn from the militia, to patrol the roads, and to gather into blockhouses those whose houses were unprotected, detaining by force any that ventured alone on the roads.

**It is not hard to understand why Father Olivier made no trip to Vincennes in 1807. Even in his own neighborhood there were fracas. It would have been rash for him to set out on a trip of nearly 200 miles over trails where he might be killed or made a prisoner.**

The conditions were not unlike those that kept Father Gibault away from Vincennes from 1779 to 1784. It may be that his hasty departure in December 1806 was occasioned by the opportunity to travel with a company of Rangers patrolling the roads.

**BY 1808 THERE WAS** a relaxation of tension. The Prophet had made a formal visit to the Governor and had impressed him so favorably that Harrison half believed that he could manipulate the Indian leader in furthering his aims to get more land. The Prophet had transferred his headquarters from Greenville, where the Governor thought he was too close to the British and too amenable to their influence, to the mouth of the Tiptecanoe River, where he could be kept under closer surveillance.

Apparently there was better control over the hotheads among the young men, for the roads were safe enough in May for both Father Badin and Father Olivier to come to Vincennes. After so long a time without the presence of a priest, it is not a matter of astonishment that there were an unusual number of baptisms and marriages, 60 and 17 respectively, all the work of Olivier throughout the entire month.

**All the marriages were validations of unions previously contracted, but there appears a distinction not heretofore noted in the way they are recorded.**

Those couples that had procured a license and were married before the judge simply renewed their consent and received the nuptial blessing, whereas those that had expressed their first consent before witnesses were obliged to separate until the religious ceremony took place, presumably getting a civil license meanwhile.

In one case, the original ceremony had been performed 16 years earlier, one of those at which Pierre Mallet had officiated after duly publishing the three banns,

apparently with Father Gibault's authorization. Neither Flaget nor Rivet seems to have questioned the validity of this union, for they recorded the baptisms of the children as the offspring of a legitimate marriage. So also did Olivier in 1806.

It is difficult to suppress a suspicion that the stern hand of Father Badin had something to do with this new policy, which seems to accord to the civil authority more than its due. The people's submissiveness to the word of the priest gives evidence to their attachment to the Church.

**A FEW DAYS AFTER HIS** return to Kentucky Father Badin wrote to the bishop to tell him that he had been Governor Harrison's guest at Grouseland, the mansion recently completed. The Governor had improved the occasion by proposing to the priest that he "would visit some distant nations of savages, among whom has arisen a certain Prophet inimical to the United States," calling attention to the Indians' attachment to the French and to priests.

**For such a mission, which would be of some duration, the Governor would supply all that was needed, even a Catholic interpreter. The Indians were no doubt the Potawatomi, many of whom had been converted by Father Du Jaunay; this was the tribe of the Great Louis, the Old Prayer, whose burial Rivet had recorded in 1796.**

To the Governor's proposal the priest could only reply that his acceptance of the mission required the bishop's approval. To the bishop he declared that he would undertake the mission if Carroll appointed another priest to go along with him.

Relations between Harrison and the Prophet were improving at this time, and nothing came of the plan. Father Badin's mission to the Potawatomi was not to come about for many years. His view of the project was that it would be a purely religious one. He was less suspicious or less sagacious than Father Nerinckx regarding gifts from the civil power.

The vicar general had another interesting story to tell the bishop about his Vincennes sojourn. A young Kickapoo chief died shortly after receiving baptism. Father Badin preached the sermon, done into the Indian language by an interpreter, probably Joseph Barron, at the funeral services.

The Governor, who was not one to neglect an opportunity of gaining the Indians' favor, saw to it that full military honors were accorded the deceased chief. Strange to say, neither the baptism nor the burial of the chief is contained in the parish register.

Four months after the departure of Badin and Olivier another priest came to Vincennes and rendered a brief service to the parish. This was Urbain Guillet, the Superior of the Trappists that came to Kentucky in 1805.

The Trappists had been expelled from France by the Revolution; after wandering about Europe for some years they had come to this country in 1802 and settled in Pennsylvania.

Not satisfied there, they moved to Kentucky three years later and opened several schools on the peculiar plan of free tuition in the hope that some students would join the community.

The schools did not fulfill Father Urbain's expectations, and he looked farther west for a suitable place to carry on his work. When he came to Vincennes he was returning from an inspection trip to the banks of the Mississippi, where two sites had been offered him, one in Missouri and one at an ancient Indian mound not far from Cahokia. Undecided which to accept, he ordered his colleagues to sail down the Ohio, so that on their arrival the entire community could have a voice in the selection.

BETWEEN 26 AND 28 September Father Urbain baptized three infants and supplied the ceremonies of two other baptisms previously administered by a layman. It is not unlikely that his coming to Vincennes had a connection with a thought that it might be a place for a monastery in case the sites on the Mississippi proved unsatisfactory.

It may be that while there he became acquainted with some influential citizens, for a little more than a year later he was the bearer of a letter of recommendation from one of them in the promotion of his ambition to increase his land holdings at Cahokia, where the monks had settled.

The writer of the letter was John Badollet, a native of Switzerland, who had come to Vincennes in 1804 as registrar of the land office, a position he had obtained through the influence of a schoolmate, Albert Gallatin, the Secretary of the Treasury. Badollet took an active part in the life of the Territory, and his letters to Gallatin are an important source of information concerning the affairs of the time.

IN HIS YOUTH BADOLLET had been a student in a Protestant seminary, but he was later a freethinker, distrustful of "clergymen of all denominations"; his attitude is manifest in one of his letters, in which he wrote of "the attempts made now by the clergy to grasp political power and impose upon us the heaviest of curses, a clerical yoke."

Father Urbain must have made a deep impression upon Badollet to induce him to write in glowing terms of the monks' institution, "which besides religion embraces objects of no small importance in a country where ignorance & a too deplorable want of active industry have excited in every philanthropic mind the most painful emotions" and to state that it possessed "men of Science, artists of merit and mechanics of unusual skill."

Father Urbain failed in his suit, however, notwithstanding Badollet's letter to the Secretary of the Treasury. Because of the fever from which many of the monks suffered and of which several died, but perhaps more because of the Superior's lack of managerial ability, the project failed and most of the Trappists returned to France in 1813.

The prehistoric structure nearby which they struggled for a few years, the largest north of Mexico, still bears the name of Monks Mound.

The man who administered the baptisms for which Father Urbain supplied the ceremonies in 1808 was Antoine Zepherin Chenet. From that time he proceeded to enter baptisms and burials in the parish register; the burial entries were the first since those of Father Rivet.

Perhaps he had some encouragement from Father Urbain to carry on the work of Etienne Phillibert and Pierre Mallet. Not all the parishioners, however, appear to have accepted his ministrations, for in the year and a half before Father Olivier's return in November 1809 he recorded only 15 baptisms, whereas the priest in the month he was there baptized 45 children, most of whom of course were born in the interval.

Perhaps the people's attitude had something to do with Olivier's finding Chenet an unsuitable minister of baptism and prohibiting him from any further activity of the kind.

The five marriages that occurred in 1809 were all validations. In one case, Father Olivier appears to have tempered the severity of his rule with respect to marriages without a civil license because of the couple's good faith and to have conferred the

nuptial blessing without demanding that they separate.

This was the first Christmas since 1803 on which there was a Mass in the church of St. Francis Xavier, for the priest's entries continue until 26 December.

THE YEAR 1808 was an epochal one for the Catholic Church in the United States. In that year Pope Pius VII carved out of the diocese of Baltimore four new sees, and elevated Baltimore to the rank of archdiocese. Three of the new dioceses would have their cathedrals in the larger cities of the East: Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. Bardstown, which gave its name to the fourth, had no church to serve as a cathedral.

This first diocese of the West comprised Kentucky and Tennessee, but all the area that had been the Northwest Territory was for the time being attached to it. As bishop, the Pope appointed Benedict Joseph Flaget.

Since his abrupt departure from Vincennes in 1795 Father Flaget had been teaching at Georgetown, Baltimore, and Emmitsburg, except for the three years in Havana, vainly attempting to open a Sulpician school there. The news of his appointment filled him with dismay, and he made heroic efforts, with the backing of his Sulpician brethren, to have it revoked; he even went to France to enlist the aid of James Emery, still the Sulpician Superior.

He had good reasons for shrinking from the episcopate. His only experience as a pastor was the sojourn of a little more than two years in Vincennes. The vast area of his charge, larger than his native France, was enough to intimidate him.

ONE OF HIS ATTEMPTS to escape was a letter to Father Urbain, asking for admission to the Trappists and averring that he had "already pronounced his vows at the foot of the Crucifix."

Urbain readily accepted him, observing that in compliance with his plea he might fill the office of scullion for three days; then in virtue of his vow of obedience he would have to accept "the office of bishop of Kentucky for the rest of his life." "I did not hesitate to add," the Trappist went on, "that he was trying to escape the work more than the honor, but I am sure that I am too well aware of his great humility to fear that he would be offended by my urging him to submit."

In France, Flaget received no greater sympathy. Father Emery rebuked him for his absence from his diocese. Returning to Baltimore, he brought with him six recruits for the American mission. Of these, five were seminarians, two of whom would later serve in Indiana. The sixth was a priest, ordained two years before, Simon Gabriel Brute, who a quarter of a century later would become the first bishop of Vincennes.

Flaget's long resistance to the appointment was not the only obstacle to his becoming a bishop. Because of the chaotic conditions in Europe the documents authorizing the consecration of the new bishops did not reach Baltimore until 1810. Then within a few days Archbishop Carroll bestowed episcopal ordination on the bishops of Boston and Philadelphia and with them as assistants on Benedict Joseph Flaget on 4 November 1810.

There was further delay, which the bishop later said was due to "the severity of the weather and other obstacles." One other obstacle was the lack of funds to make the trip to Kentucky. Generous friends overcame this obstacle, however, and the new bishop reached Father Badin's house in June 1811, three years after his appointment.

Bishop Flaget and Father Badin had come to this country together, the one a

priest, the other a seminarian. They had begun their American ministry at almost the same time and in quite similar ways. But while the one was soon recalled to resume the work of teaching that he had begun in France, the other continued almost alone to serve the multiplying little parishes in Kentucky.

Naturally, many expected that when Kentucky received a bishop it would be Badin, but, while his people respected his integrity and his devotion to the Church and to his duty, most of them looked askance at his rigoristic and harsh moral teaching, and their views were not unknown to Carroll.

It appears to have been Badin's advice that in large part induced Carroll to propose to the Holy See the name of Flaget as a candidate for the new bishopric.

**FLAGET LOST NO TIME** in appointing Badin as his vicar general, the office he held in the Baltimore diocese. In the months between his return from France and his coming to Kentucky he no doubt gave the vicar general directions with respect to preparing for the new state of affairs; one of these brought about Badin's third visit to Vincennes. In September 1810 he came to town to take possession of the books and other articles Flaget had left behind when he departed, probably hoping to return.

The parishioners were not at all pleased at the removal of the books, which they no doubt had come to regard as parish property, but Badin was not one to be easily turned from his purpose and he bundled the books off to Kentucky to await the bishop's arrival.

**Father Olivier was also in Vincennes at this time, and he officiated at the 10 marriages and at 30 of the 35 baptisms that occurred in the three weeks he was there.**

Previously he had dispensed from publications of the banns at least in cases of validations, but this time there were two publications for one of the weddings and one for each of the others, though most of the couples appear to have had earlier ceremonies. Eight of these marriages took place on one day, Monday, 1 October. The innovation of publishing the banns for validations may have been due to the vicar general's suggestion.

**ON 3 FEBRUARY 1809** Congress had divided Indiana Territory, making its western part Illinois Territory and leaving Indiana with about the same boundaries the state has today. Since most of the land Harrison had bought lay in the western area, now lost to Indiana, the demand for further purchases grew greater.

Relying on the relative quiet prevailing for the past year, Harrison went to Ft. Wayne in September to confer with the Indians about new deals. He met with vehement resistance; the Miami, aware of the price the government received, had the effrontery to ask for two dollars an acre. Again, however, by first drawing into the negotiation tribes that had no interest in the land and then conceding that they did not belong, and by holding back the annuities until the treaty was signed, the Governor prevailed.

**The government acquired two tracts, a small one enlarging the so-called Gore in the southeast and a much larger one north and east of the Vincennes tract, amounting in all to about 4000 square miles. The price was about a cent and a half an acre.**

This treaty fanned into flame the fading embers of hatred in Tecumseh's men.

Harrison convinced himself that it was British influence that aroused Indian resistance; he had a certain condescending sympathy for the Indians, and he believed that only British intrigue could account for their ingratitude in the light of what he conceived to be his generous treatment of them.

Certainly, relations between Britain and the United States were not then the most cordial. The conduct of the royal navy in waylaying American ships and impressing American seaman had much the same effect on American feelings that American encroachment on tribal lands had on the sentiments of the Indians.

**BRITISH OFFICIALS**, in sympathy with the ambition of Canadian fur traders, would have been happy to move the border farther south. The Canadian traders were more liberal in their dealings with the Indians than were the Americans, and they had no scruples about providing them with guns and ammunition that might be used to harass American outposts. But Harrison was deceiving himself if he believed that Indian resentment arose from British incitement and not from the Indians' love of the land.

Tecumseh was determined to prevent the surveying of the larger tract purchased in 1809; Harrison was equally firm in his resolve to open the land for sale at two dollars an acre, and to protect the surveyors by military force if necessary.

**IN THE FOLLOWING** months many letters passed between him and the Secretary of War, and finally the Fourth United States Infantry Regiment was sent to Vincennes to augment the militia.

The absence of any mention of a mission to the Potawatomi in Father Badin's 1810 visit indicates that the Governor had turned from suasion to force. His plan, approved by the Secretary of War, was to confront the Prophet with a demand that he remove his town at Tippecanoe, which was on Indian land but within striking distance of the newly purchased tract, and in case of refusal to destroy the town.

In August 1811 Tecumseh came to Vincennes for a conference, which brought him and Harrison into an exchange of bitter vituperations.

To enforce his words, the Governor had the militia drawn up in battle array. Unawed, Tecumseh set off for a tour among the Southern tribes with the announced intention of persuading them to enter a united front of all Indians in refusing to part with any more of their lands. Immediately Harrison, who had a high regard for Tecumseh's military prowess but deemed the Prophet not much of a warrior, pushed his preparations for a campaign against the Prophet's town.

It was in the final stages of these activities that Father Olivier made the longest of all his Indiana visits. Between 1 September and 14 October he recorded 39 baptisms and four marriages.

A notable gap of almost three weeks occurs in the midst of his entries—from Monday 23 September to Sunday 13 October. Moreover, on 25 and 28 September Ambroise Mallet recorded two burials; in one case he stated explicitly that he acted in the absence of the priest.

**WHERE WAS FATHER OLIVIER** during this interval? Harrison's army moved from Vincennes on Thursday 26 September, having been prevented by a violent storm from starting the day before. It reached Battelle des Illinois, near the present site of Terre Haute, about 1 October, where it remained for nearly a month erecting a stockade and blockhouses, which received the name Fort Harrison, "so called in honor of our worthy Commander," as one soldier wrote.

The army consisted of the Fourth Regiment with more than 500 men; the Indiana militia with an equal number, and 125 Kentucky mounted volunteers commanded

by Major Joseph Daviess.

The regular soldiers had reached Vincennes after dark on Wednesday 19 September after an arduous trip down the Ohio and up the Wabash; they were ten days on the Wabash, pushing their boats a good part of the time.

The regiment was recruited in New England, where Catholics were not numerous. Still one of the new dioceses had its seat at Boston, and there were more than a dozen parishes in New England by this time. There must have been a sprinkling of Catholics in the regiment, who would have had no time for their religious duties amid hasty preparations for the march.

**In Daviess' squadron, which arrived after a march from Louisville about the same time as the regulars, there may have been some Catholics. Some of the French people were in the militia no doubt, though Harrison thought little of the military virtue of the French, generally speaking.**

It seems reasonable to conclude that Father Olivier accompanied the army as far as Battelle des Illinois and stayed there for ten days or so, celebrating Mass and hearing confessions for the soldiers who had a good prospect of going into battle, most of them for the first time. It is true that no mention of the presence of the priest occurs in any of the accounts of the expedition, but then there is no mention of him in any account of Vincennes, though he was there a dozen times over a period of 11 years.

**SEVERAL OF THE** parishioners—notably, Joseph Barron, Toussaint Dubois, Francis Vigo, John B. Laplante, and Michel Brouillett—figured prominently as Harrison's agents and interpreters in his dealings with the tribes, work for which they were qualified because of their personal acquaintance with the people and their ability to speak the languages.

The case of Brouillett is interesting. He was the 11-year-old boy who in 1785 boldly signed the church register as his little sister's godfather. In 1804 he received a license to operate a trading post among the Kickapoo, but Harrison's letters make it clear that the post was merely a blind "to disguise his real character" as the Governor's agent.

**One of the wedding ceremonies of 1811 was that which brought the nuptial blessing to Michel Brouillett and Marie Richarville on 21 September, just five days before the army marched northward.**

On previous visits Father Olivier had baptized children of this union, designating it a "legal" marriage, which appears to have been his term for a union witnessed by the judge—valid, but needing the priest's blessing to make it "legitimate." The delay in the legitimation was no doubt due to the failure of Michel's visits in town to coincide with those of the pastor.

**HARRISON'S EXPEDITION** culminated in the Battle of Tippecanoe. The Prophet's town lay well within the land acknowledged to belong to the Indians, but Harrison saw it as a menace to settlers, especially in view of Tecumseh's declared intention to prevent the surveying of the newly purchased tract.

It was his purpose to deliver an ultimatum demanding the evacuation of the town and the dispersal of the inhabitants; in case of refusal, he would drive the Indians out and lay waste the town.

On 6 November the army encamped before the town after an agreement was

reached for a conference between Harrison and the Prophet the next day. Before dawn, in a heavy rain, the Indians attacked and inflicted heavy losses on the army, but the troops soon gained the initiative and after two hours of heavy fighting put to flight the Indians, who also suffered many casualties.

The following day the army spent in burying the 40 men killed in the battle and in destroying the town, described by the soldier quoted above as "a handsome little Indian village of between one and two hundred huts or cabins and a large store house containing about 3,000 bushes of corn and beans." Then it set forth on its return trip, which seems to have been more like a retreat than a triumphal march, carrying the 130 wounded in jolting wagons, which had been emptied of provisions to make room for them. For five days the wounded rode the wagons, and for five days they floated down the Wabash to Vincennes, in constant dread of an attack, which, however, did not occur.

The only lasting effects of the Battle of Tippecanoe were to exacerbate the hostility of the Prophet's disciples and to drive them into open alliance with the British. In the spring they rebuilt their town, and they increased their depredations on isolated settlements and their attacks on unprotected travelers.

On 18 June 1812 the United States declared war on Great Britain. At first the fighting went badly for the Americans. In short order British and Indian forces took Michillimackinac, Chicago, and Detroit; sometimes the British officers had the first word that a war was on and so were able to attack and overcome the uninformed Americans.

On 28 August an Indian force laid siege to Fort Wayne and thereafter made several unsuccessful assaults on the little garrison there. On 12 September, however, they dispersed without a fight at the approach of troops led by Governor Harrison, who in June had left Vincennes to seek a commission in the regular army, turning over the administration of the Territory to Secretary John Gibson, as acting governor. The loss of Fort Wayne would have laid Vincennes and the entire area open to invasion by the British.

**TWO OTHER NOTABLE** incidents occurred that September. One was the massacre by half a dozen Indians of 20 or 30 persons, mostly women and children, at Pigeon Roost in what is now Scott County. One can only wonder at the foolhardiness of these people in continuing to occupy their unprotected homes in so hazardous a time.

The other was an assault by a band of Indians on the recently erected Fort Harrison, which was manned by a company of the Fourth Regiment under the command of Captain Zachary Taylor.

About midnight the attackers set fire to one of the blockhouses. As the captain reported the affair, the fire "unfortunately communicated to a quantity of whiskey . . . in less than a moment ascended to the roof, and baffled every effort we could make to extinguish it."

**Notwithstanding the illness of many of his men and the desertion of others, the captain rallied the rest to erect a barricade and resist the attack.**

After a seven-hour fight the Indians withdrew, killing or taking with them most of the garrison's and settlers' livestock. This was one occasion on which whiskey worked to the Indians' advantage. With such incidents occurring all over the area, it is small wonder that Father Olivier did not come to Vincennes in 1812.

**DURING THE WINTER** and the spring and summer of 1813 several expeditions

made their way through the Indian country, destroying villages, including the rebuilt Prophet's town, and burning crops and storehouses. As Harrison had anticipated, these punitive expeditions did not take the trouble to distinguish between friendly and hostile Indians; they simply laid waste whatever village or field they came upon.

Some Indians that had thrown in their lot with the Americans sought refuge in Vincennes and were granted protection, but most abandoned the ground within the ambit of the American forces, some of the warriors joining the British, the women and children moving out of the Territory.

By October 1813 the danger of meeting hostile Indians had passed, and Father Olivier came again to Vincennes after an absence of more than two years. Not surprisingly, there were 75 baptisms during his stay of about three weeks. It is a little strange that only five couples presented themselves for the nuptial blessing, all of them having been married by the judge. During the pastor's absence Francois Mallet had recorded 16 funerals conducted by himself.

**In 1812 the people of St. Francis Xavier parish had appealed to their former pastor, Bishop Flaget, to send them a resident priest. There were no priests to spare in Kentucky, however, and the bishop had his hands full with matters needing his attention nearby; he is said to have ridden 200 miles a month becoming acquainted with the Kentucky parishes.**

In addition, the bishop before he was six months in his diocese was embroiled over the ownership of church property with Father Badin, who had held in his own name the title to land acquired for religious purposes.

Badin's word had much to do with Flaget's appointment, yet so bitter did the conflict become that the bishop relieved his old friend of the office of vicar general, "a dignity which has caused me too much trouble to be coveted," said Badin.

A summons from the archbishop to a Provincial Council to be held in Baltimore afforded an opportunity to lay the question before Carroll for adjudication.

Leaving Kentucky in September, the antagonists traveled together by horseback. In Ohio they encountered several groups of Catholics and celebrated Mass and administered the sacraments, the first Catholic ministrations in that state.

Because they were once taken for land speculators, Badin took to proclaiming "to the right and to the left" that they were genuine Catholic priests and missionaries. On reaching Baltimore they learned that Carroll, unable to obtain authorization from the pope, held prisoner by Napoleon, had postponed the council; not until 1829 was it held.

Their hope for a solution of their problem from the archbishop was also disappointed, for Carroll had no wish to intervene in the quarrel between the Frenchmen. Nevertheless, they managed to patch up a settlement, which, however, fell apart some years later when Flaget discovered the true meaning of what he had signed.

The winter intervened, and it was not until May 1813 that Flaget returned to Kentucky. In September he addressed a pastoral letter to the "faithful of the Post and of the Illinois" and promised to visit them after Easter the next year.

In the light of the bishop's mild nature and of his unquestionable affection for the people of Vincennes, the tone of the pastoral is amazingly harsh.

It laments the protracted warfare, which had cut off so many young men, and recent floods that had struck the people to whom it was addressed, and sees these as bringing the floods of God's justice. Feasting and dancing, lewd singing, cursing and blaspheming have taken the place of the Divine Mysteries. Libertinage, seduction, fornication, adultery are the order of the day.

"Where is modest dress?" it asks. "Where are the women adorned with good works and not with curls and gold and jewels and sumptuous attire? . . . Is it to pray to God that you come . . . to adore God or to insult him and to be adored yourselves?"

"Such being the state of the world, it is no wonder that God permits it to be convulsed, with millions of men slaughtering one another. Peace, banished for more than 20 years, will return if, like the people of Nineveh, we cover ourselves with ashes in fasting and penance and prayer. Then it will reign anew, but it will be but a faint image of that which awaits us in our heavenly home; and that we wish for you with all our heart. Amen."

**Perhaps Flaget considered the diatribe against the evils of the world to be obligatory for a bishop. It is likely that the last words express his real sentiments.**

On 10 September 1813 the American naval force under Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry met and destroyed the little British fleet on Lake Erie. The British forces left Detroit and were pursued by the American army under the command of Harrison, now a major general. There were 1,200 Indians commanded by Tecumseh in the British army; they stubbornly continued the fight at the Battle of the Thames River on 5 October after the regulars surrendered, but when Tecumseh was killed they fled. By 1814 the roads in Indiana were safe.

**BEFORE THE FIRST** of May Father Olivier came to Vincennes to make ready for the coming of the bishop and the first administration of the sacrament of Confirmation.

Since it was only six months before that he had visited the parish, there were not so many babies to be baptized, but he no doubt had some children to prepare for their first Communion and many more to instruct for Confirmation, though the church register has no record of these sacraments.

And then there was the reception of His Lordship, the bishop. There were plans for a triumphal procession. Young men on horseback went out on the road to meet the bishop and bring back word of his approach; apparently there was no certainty as to the day of his arrival, and the couriers were on the trail several times.

The priest and the servers were to be at the edge of town with a canopy, under which the bishop would make his entry. When darkness fell on Saturday 28 May, Pentecost Eve, they concluded that there had been a change of plans and everyone went home.

**The bishop had been accompanied as far as Louisville by two priests, but from there he proceeded alone.**

On his first night he received hospitality from "an American borderer," but on the second he had to sleep on "a quilt, extended over a plank which was very uneven and knotty; he, however, slept soundly."

On Saturday night, a quarter of an hour after he was given up, he rode into town. After a visit to the church, which he had pronounced "dilapidated" on his first arrival, he went to the priest's house. Someone then caught sight of him and rang the bell. What followed he told his brothers in a letter he wrote in Cahokia a month later:

"At the signal every house emptied itself; children who had never seen me, but who had heard of me spoken of by their parents rushed toward the presbytery. The

young men who had made their first Communion under me, or whom I had baptized, came with an excess of orderliness, but not with less ardor.

"The young girls, and the women carrying their children disputed among themselves as to who had seen me first. The old men themselves, bent under the weight of years, and supported by long sticks hastened more carefully to have the pleasure of seeing once more in this world, as they said, their 'little priest,' for so they named me when I was among them.

"In a moment I found myself in the midst of all my parishioners. 'Ah, it is indeed he,' they shouted everywhere . . . 'Look at those eyes, it is true they are a little more sunken, but the forehead, those dark eyes, and that hair, without doubt it is a little grey. But is cut the same,' 'I find him a little fatter than when he was with us,' and others, 'but at the sound of his voice alone I would have recognized him.'

"AFTER THOSE FIRST effusions of their heart they got on their knees to ask my blessing, which I gave with a full heart. Not at all content with that general blessing, each one of them wanted to receive a particular blessing. To their surprise, in my turn seeing them in detail, I applied their names and even their first names to their faces.

"And that which most astonished them and drew their admiration, was that combining the characteristics of those I knew, I found them in the children whom I had never seen, telling of them without mistake to what family they belonged.

"That scene continued on into the night, but it was so vivid and tender that the time seemed to be very short."

On Monday, accompanied by the people, the bishop went to the cemetery to bless the graves of Father Rivet and of the others buried there. On that day also he solemnly blessed a company of Rangers, who were soon to set off for the seat of war.

These Rangers were not those organized in the militia by Harrison for the patrol of the roads, but companies authorized by Congress in 1812, recruited from the local population but paid by the federal government.

There were five companies in Indiana Territory, with a captain and four other officers in each company. The only French officers were Pierre Andre, captain, and Hacinthe Lasselle, first lieutenant in one of the companies. It is likely that there were other parishioners in this company and that it was the one that sought the bishop's blessing.

The people appear to have turned out in full force for Sunday Mass during the bishop's presence. He preached in English as well as French, to the delight of the few Catholics that knew no French and of some non-Catholics that came to Mass. It was no doubt the first time that the word of God had been proclaimed in the English language in the church of St. Francis Xavier.

ON TRINITY SUNDAY, Corpus Christi, and the following Sunday confirmation was administered. Again six months later, on his return trip from Illinois and Missouri, the bishop spent two weeks at Vincennes and confirmed 40 persons in two ceremonies.

In a report to the Holy See written the following year, Bishop Flaget stated that there were 130 families in the parish and that he had confirmed more than 230 persons there.

In the 11 years from 1793 to 1803, during the time Flaget and Rivet were resident priests, there were 361 baptisms, an average of 33 a year; between 1804 and 1814

there were 415, an average of 38.

The increase of 15 per cent warrants the belief that the parish had grown in numbers by a similar proportion, say, from 600 to 700.

It was Bishop Flaget's practice to confirm only those that had received First Communion, the age for which was about 14. The children less than 14 years of age probably numbered about 300. Hence, if all the parishioners had been natives of Vincennes or the Illinois villages, to none of which a bishop had ever come, there would have been some 400 persons that had not been confirmed. Such was not the case, however; the parish records of marriages and burials from the earliest times show the presence of persons that had migrated from Quebec, Montreal, Detroit, or other places visited by the bishop of Quebec. Some of these, no doubt, had been confirmed in childhood, but it is impossible to estimate their number. Some parishioners were refused the sacrament because they were unwilling to approach the other sacraments, and it is reasonable to suppose that others had become so alienated from the Church that they did not even wish to be confirmed. All things considered, however, one must conclude that those confirmed in 1814 were a great deal more than half of the adults that had not previously received the sacrament.

FATHER OLIVIER BAPTIZED 33 children on this, his last visit to Vincennes; three of them were those of Colonel Hamtramck's daughter Marguerite, who was the widow of John Braden or Brexton. The only baptism the bishop administered was that of Helene, child of John Dowling and Susanna Cain. One may surmise that it was because of his ability to speak English that he consented to baptize this child.

The four marriages that occurred, all validations, were witnessed by Father Olivier. One of these, for which the banns were dispensed because of the imminent departure of the groom for military service, was that of Honore Genier and "Angelique, daughter of Antoine and Marie-Anne, savages, married in the face of the Church at St. Joseph near Detroit," who had previously given their consent before witnesses. This was one of the rare marriages in which an Indian was a party.

When Bishop Flaget arrived in Kentucky in 1811 he had with him another Sulpician priest, John B. David, and several students, the nucleus of St. Thomas Seminary, and Francis Louis Savine, a Canadian priest, who had chosen to devote himself to the American missions.

Within a few months the bishop appointed Father Savine pastor of Cahokia to relieve Father Olivier of some of his work, and directed him to do as much as he could for the Catholics on the other side of the Mississippi, who had but rare and irregular opportunities to assist at Mass. One might wonder why the bishop did not send this priest to his own old and well loved parish of St. Francis Xavier, which had been so many years the charge of another Canadian, Father Gibault. One reason for appointing him to Cahokia might have been that the Holy Family mission there had been founded and for a long time carried on by the Seminary Priests of Quebec.

A more compelling consideration was that along the Mississippi Catholics were much more numerous than along the Wabash. Even in the three parishes on the east bank there were more Catholics than there were in and about Vincennes, and there were several times as many in Missouri.

Most of the priests west of the Mississippi had accepted the offer of a pension from the Spanish king if they followed the Spanish flag when Louisiana passed out of Spain's possession. At Ste. Genevieve there remained the Louisiana Irish vicar general James Maxwell, with whom Father Gibault had had some tiffs. The

Trappists were still at Monks Mound and made occasional visits when they were not hindered by their frequent bouts with fever. There was certainly a need for another priest in that region.

As has been noted, the Trappists left this country in 1813. On 28 May 1814, at the very time the bishop was making his way to Vincennes, Father Maxwell was thrown from his horse and killed.

When Father Savine crossed the river to conduct the funeral he entered into a contract with the St. Louis parish to make one visit a month there in consideration of a salary of one hundred and seventy-five piastres a year and the use of the presbytery. He was, therefore, pastor of both Cahokia and St. Louis.

Father Olivier was vicar general for the Illinois and the Post, and so it was to him that Bishop Flaget directed his pastoral letter for those parishes. He made a copy of the letter, which he sent to Father Savine with directions to read it at the sermon of the parish Mass. He also requested his confrere to entertain the bishop when he made the visit after Easter. "You are young and vigorous and stronger than I, and you would relieve me of a great responsibility and you would free me from much fatigue," he wrote.

So it was that when the bishop and Father Olivier left Vincennes on 14 June 1814, they directed their steps toward Cahokia. This time the bishop was not alone; besides the priest he had an escort of Rangers as they rode across the Illinois prairies, which he saw, not as prospective corn and wheat fields, but as "destined by the Creator for the rearing of millions of sheep."

On Saturday they reached Cahokia, where they found Father Savine "holding the handle of a skillet to make an omelette." After four days the bishop could take off his boots.

IN 1812, WILLIAM DUBOURG, a Sulpician who had come to Baltimore in 1794 with Olivier, had been appointed administrator of the diocese of Louisiana, which embraced all the land purchased from France in 1803. This diocese had long suffered from discord that was close to schism, not unrelated to the national differences among clergy and people and the changes of civil rule from French to Spanish and American.

Dubourg, who was not yet a bishop, had his hands filled with affairs in and around New Orleans without making the long journey to the upper regions of his diocese. He therefore asked his fellow Sulpician, Flaget, to extend his visitation across the Mississippi when he came to the Illinois parishes.

It was for this reason that Bishop Flaget was engaged for nearly five months among the Illinois parishes and the six or eight on the other side of the river, which he crossed four times.

In 17 ceremonies he confirmed some 1,200 persons, nearly 400 in Illinois, the rest in Missouri. The largest number in any parish was at Ste. Genevieve, where 361 received the sacrament.

TWO INCIDENTS of this visitation, while they have but little connection with Indiana, still seem to merit attention.

The Governor of Missouri Territory was William Clark, who with Meriwether Lewis had made the exploration of the newly acquired Louisiana and on to the Pacific Ocean that has been called "unquestionably the most perfect achievement of its kind in the history of the world."

In 1792 William Clark was justice of the peace and captain of militia at Clarksville

when Benedict Joseph Flaget alighted from the boat that had brought him from Pittsburgh. The captain, who was even younger than the priest, brought the new pastor to Vincennes, a trip down the Ohio and up the Wabash that took a week or two. The two young men appear to have formed a lasting friendship.

The reunion must have been a happy one, with reminiscences of that trip. We can be sure that the Governor had much to say about his other trip of exploration; in one of his letters Flaget told of what he had learned from Clark of the mild and friendly nature of the Indians he had met, who had never before seen a white man.

After his tour of the Missouri parishes, he was the guest at the Governor's table. It was likely then that Clark prevailed upon him to baptize his three children, Lewis, William, and Marie, and an orphan girl he and Mrs. Clark were rearing. The bishop himself was the godfather.

The records of these baptisms were the first in a new register opened with the certification of the Governor, who also signed the entries together with his wife, Julia. By what means Clark prevailed upon the bishop and what obligations he and Mrs. Clark assumed no one seems to know. The eldest child was known in later life as Meriwether Clark.

THE OTHER INCIDENT occurred at Ste. Genevieve.

Bishop Flaget preached to a congregation of Negroes, of whom he stated that there were some 500 in the area, though he did not state how many attended the sermon.

Learning that it was not customary for the blacks to marry, he excoriated the masters and warned them that they would be excluded from the sacraments unless they mended their ways and allowed their slaves the right to marry, as the Church required.

In view of the recent death of the pastor and the irregular visits of a priest, one might doubt the efficacy of such a threat. There is no indication whether any of the 361 confirmed in the parish were Negroes.

Spalding reports that the people of Ste. Genevieve presented the bishop with fifty dollars and a new suit of clothes.

Whether the gift was meant to placate him or to assure him of their intention to abide by the laws of the Church does not appear. In the three years of Father Savine's incumbency at St. Louis two Negro marriages occurred; while the number is small compared with the 34 marriages of whites, though there were 115 baptisms of Negroes and 125 of whites, still they are almost the only such marriages in the history of the parish. Perhaps the bishop's thundering at Ste. Genevieve echoed at St. Louis.

On Tuesday 8 November Bishop Flaget left Kaskaskia on his way home, having an escort of 16, who probably were Rangers again. It must have been a tedious journey, relieved only by occasional hunting to provide some variety in the diet.

Perhaps it was for this reason that either the entire company or some members of it—the record is not clear in the matter—arranged a little diversion for the bishop. The incident illustrates the rapport that existed between Flaget and the people of the parishes.

About noon on Saturday three young men, one of them a Vincennes resident, rode ahead, ostensibly to make ready for the bishop's arrival. Some time later the trio came galloping back with the startling announcement that a band of hostile Indians was waiting in the woods to waylay the company.

With real or feigned alarm, the captain disposed his forces to rout the hidden enemy; he ordered the bishop to stay in the rear, assuring him that the Rangers would make for him "a rampart with our arms and with our bodies." The bishop goes on with the story:

"My heart was perfectly calm . . . and what is very singular, I felt a great desire to be in the midst of this little warlike band . . . Reflecting, however, on my state of life and my character, I believed that it was my duty to remain at a distance, and to raise my hands to heaven, like Moses, in prayer for the combatants."

As the gallant knights (*preux chevaliers*) advanced, there burst from the woods with bloodcurdling war whoops what seemed to be a multitude of warriors, who turned out to be half a dozen young men from the Post, who had come out to get the bishop's blessing and to make his "entrance into the town more brilliant and triumphant."

**Two hours later he arrived, not as in May, alone and unheralded, but "in the midst of the acclamations of all the inhabitants, who had been called together by the ringing of bells."**

The evident relish with which Flaget recorded the incident in his journal makes it plain that he was taken in by the little drama and that he enjoyed it as much as its perpetrators did.

**AS WAS NOTED ABOVE**, Bishop Flaget spent another fortnight at Vincennes and confirmed 40 persons in two ceremonies. Strange to say, he administered baptism to only four infants, or at least he recorded only four; the fact that these are entered in two places arouses the surmise that other records may have been lost.

This tour of the bishop marks the end of Father Olivier's ministrations at Vincennes, for the bishop relieved him of this duty and announced that thenceforth he would send a priest to Vincennes twice a year until he could appoint a resident pastor.

**The people's affection for the priest that had for more than a decade come to provide for their religious needs is attested by the bestowal of his name on several boys baptized during his pastorate and afterwards.**

The Catholics of Vincennes had become even less influential during this period. As has been seen, they were a minority even in 1800, though by no great margin. The population of Indiana Territory in 1800, when it extended to the Mississippi River, was 5,641. In 1810, when it embraced about the same area as today, after losing Illinois and gaining from Ohio the area of wedge shape called the Gore, there were 24,520 white persons.

By this time three counties had been organized in addition to Knox, namely, Clark, Harrison, and Dearborn, the last named being the Gore. Knox County alone had a population of 7,945.

As has been pointed out, St. Francis Xavier parish seems to have grown from 600 to 700. In 1804 Indiana Territory passed to the second stage of government, according to which the voters chose members of a General Assembly empowered to enact laws. Among those elected in this period the only one having a French name was Pierre Menard, who represented Randolph County in what is now Illinois. Some other men active in political life had French wives.

**AS WAS NOTED ABOVE** the baptisms increased in this period by about 15 per

cent. On the other hand, marriages were fewer, the number declining from 71 to 57. There is here perhaps an indication of a growing indifference with respect to the validation of unions that had not been witnessed by the pastor. Such an attitude is what might be expected when the priest came to town only once a year. On the other hand, the enthusiasm that accompanied Bishop Flaget's visit and the good-humored familiarity of the people's dealings with him illustrated by the simulated Indian attack as well as the large number of adults receiving confirmation shows that their faith had not waned.

The growing population of the territory between 1800 and 1810 had among its constituents an unknown number of Catholics in several regions. At this time some of these began to be visible and to attract some of the Kentucky priests, who came across the Ohio River to minister to them. The following chapter will try to say something of these.