

## Book Reviews and Notices

*The Shattered Cross: French Catholic Missionaries on the Mississippi River, 1698–1725*, by Linda Carol Jones. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2020. xiv, 297 pp. Maps, figures, notes, index. \$50.00 hardcover.

Reviewer Patrick J. Jung is a professor of history and cultural anthropology at the Milwaukee School of Engineering in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He is the author of *The Black Hawk War of 1832* (2007), and “Lonely Sentinel: A Military History of Fort Madison, 1808–1813” (*Annals of Iowa*, 2016).

Scholars have produced many fine studies of the French Jesuits who labored as missionaries in the Great Lakes region and other parts of the Midwest throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This abundant corpus of works is due in large part to the Jesuits’ published *Relations*, which have been readily available to scholars for over three centuries. The edited and translated collection of the *Relations* produced under the direction of Reuben G. Thwaites between 1896 and 1901 has been particularly important in this regard. In contrast, almost nothing has been written about the missionaries of the Séminaire de Québec (Seminary of Quebec), founded in 1663 to provide secular (or diocesan) priests for both the French and Native inhabitants of the colonies of New France and Louisiana. Later, the Séminaire de Québec united with the Séminaire des Missions Étrangères (Seminary for Foreign Missions) in Paris and in 1698 sent its first missionaries to preach the Gospel to the Native societies of the lower Mississippi Valley. Linda Carol Jones has thoroughly mined a rich number of unpublished archival sources, particularly those of the Séminaire de Québec and the Séminaire des Missions Étrangères. The result is an important and highly readable account of these largely unknown missionaries and the American Indians among whom they labored.

In 1698, three priests of the Séminaire de Québec departed for the lower Mississippi Valley, a region south of the Jesuit missions in the Illinois country. Two other priests later joined their colleagues in a venture characterized by an abbreviated planning period of a mere three months, a lack of adequate funding, and little understanding of the Native communities they would serve. Jones chronicles the travails of

these five missionaries over the next quarter century as their initial optimism gave way to the harsh realities they faced in their attempts to convert the Indians to Christianity. They became embroiled with the Jesuits over which group had jurisdiction over the Illinois-speaking Tamarois Indians. Unlike the Jesuits, the priests of the Séminaire de Québec initially pursued a “Frenchification” strategy with the Native societies that sought to establish not only the Christian faith but also the French language and culture. Not surprisingly, their failures to win large numbers of converts forced them to shift both their tactics and expectations. Even then, their final successes were meager when the last of these priests departed the lower Mississippi Valley in 1725.

Jones skillfully integrates a wealth of ethnographic information concerning the regional Indian societies into her analysis of the missionaries’ efforts at proselytization. Of great importance was the Native concept of reciprocity or developing and maintaining relationships between individuals and communities through exchanges of gifts and trade goods. The priests of the Séminaire de Québec, on the other hand, believed the individual must accept Christianity for the sake of salvation and not material gain. The missionaries only slowly experienced limited successes by eventually embracing the “middle ground,” a concept Jones borrows from Richard White and deftly employs in her analysis of how “individuals of different cultures came together to forge new meanings and understandings” (3). In the case of Jean-François Buisson de Saint-Cosme, this included abandoning his vow of celibacy and engaging in a sexual relationship with the sister of the Great Sun, the chief of the Natchez people, in order to end the practice of human sacrifice among them.

The work of these missionary priests occurred well outside the boundaries of present-day Iowa, but for researchers interested in the history of French North America, and particularly the French missionaries who worked among the Native societies of the continent, this book will be greatly appreciated. The priests of the Séminaire de Québec are largely unknown to historians, and their labors offer a striking counterpoint to those of their Jesuit contemporaries. Jones has produced a well-researched account that will be the standard work on this subject for the foreseeable future.

*The Imperial Church: Catholic Founding Fathers and United States Empire*, by Katherine D. Moran. The United States in the World Series. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2020. 303 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$48.95 hardcover.