History of St. Ignatius Mission, Montana

Gerald Lee Kelly

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THE HISTORY OF ST. IGNATIUS MISSION, MONTANA

by

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Master of Arts

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Approved by:

[Signatures]

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PREFACE

This is the story of St. Ignatius Mission, Montana and its influence on those Indians with whom it had contact. Like all Indian missions, St. Ignatius has had its ups and downs. This study is an attempt to show how the Jesuits, acting under tremendous difficulties overcame the hardships that faced them and, with government aid, tried to educate the savages and bring the blessings of Christianity to those whose homes and mode of life were swept away as the white man penetrated the continent of America. The efforts of the missionaries compensated to a certain degree for the resulting loss.

St. Ignatius Mission will celebrate its centennial in 1954 and it is hoped that this will be a true history of its past and an attempt to fill in the gaps of its story, only casually mentioned in other works.

I am writing as a Catholic and a student of history and since most of my original research has been done with works made available to me through the Society of Jesus, my work may be, as the critic may point out, somewhat biased. This will be unavoidable, although an earnest attempt will be made to be as objective as possible.

The task of the missionary has not been an easy one.
Beset by the normal hardships to be encountered in the pioneering of an area left virtually untouched by the white man, together with the difficulty of the Indian character itself, plus the corrupting contact of certain elements of the white, the politicking of government officials in hamstringing the work of the missionary and the uncooperative ness of the elements have made the job of the missionary almost superhuman, let alone one of a lasting influence. Only the zeal and courage of those associated with the mission could have made such a thing a success.

St. Ignatius Mission has run its cycle—from a humble beginning in 1854 to a thriving, prosperous, lauded institution of missionary activity in the '90's to the "beautiful ruin" as it was called in 1929 and to the shell of greatness of today. Who can judge its true influence when such influence is clouded over by the stormy tide of civilization? Only through reconstructing its once great past can an appreciation and an understanding be attained.
CHAPTER I

EARLY MISSIONARY ACTIVITY IN THE NORTHWEST

The Jesuits\(^1\) who came to present Montana had their headquarters at St. Louis, where a novitiate had been established in 1823. Five years later, they were appointed as the exclusive agents of the Catholic Church among the Indians of the United States. The Society recruited most of its workers from Europe; France, Belgium, and Italy contributing the greatest number.

Some years before the order became the sole agent of the Church, the Indians of the Rocky Mountains were searching for a "Black robe" or priest. Many reasons have been given as to just where these Indians obtained their idea of a white man's God. Some maintain that they received some notions of Christianity from pious traders or from transient ministers who visited the Columbia River country. Duncan McDonald claimed to be descended from Baptiste, a half-breed from Quebec who came west after the war of 1812 and brought

\(^1\)The Society of Jesus was founded in 1534 by Ignatius Loyola, a Spanish nobleman. Its chief purpose was to stem the swelling tide of Protestantism in Europe and to spread the faith among the infidel peoples of the globe. The Jesuits had been in America as early as 1565 and by 1697 they had a mission in lower California. (Hiram M. Chittenden and Alfred Richardson, Life, Letters and Travels of Fr. Pierre Jean De Smet, 1801-1891, New York, Harper, 1905, p. 1).
with him his Christian teachings. Another story, about which revolves some controversy, is that of Spokane Garry. He had been selected by Sir George Simpson of Hudson's Bay along with another brave by the name of Kootenai Pelly. These two were sent to an Episcopal mission school at Red River, Canada. They were baptised in the summer of 1829 and in 1831 Kootenai Pelly died. Garry returned to his people and read to them from his Bible. Tribes came from all over the area to hear Garry every Sunday when religious services were held.2

The greatest influence concerning Christianity was brought to the Rocky Mountain tribes by a band of Iroquois who had left the Jesuit mission of Cahnawaga on the St. Lawrence river. This group travelled to the Northwest in search of furs while in the employ of the Northwest Fur Company. One of these bands, under the leadership of Old Ignace, came to the land of the Flatheads, where it soon became assimilated with the easy ways of this mountain tribe. The Flatheads, though a peaceful tribe themselves, had been constantly harassed by their enemies, the Blackfeet, so when Old Ignace told them of the "Big Medicine" of the blackrobes, they looked about for means to secure this medicine. In the spring of 1831, an expedition set out for

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St. Louis. Some months later, the group reached its destination and there visited with General Clark. Soon after their arrival, two of them fell dangerously ill and were visited by two Catholic priests. The Indians managed to convey to these priests an interest in the Catholic faith before they died. After succumbing to their illness, they were buried in the St. Louis Cathedral cemetery. The remaining two Indians, having failed in their purpose, returned to the mountains, where their news was received with great disappointment.

The news of these strange Indians and their journey to St. Louis aroused much interest in missionary circles. The Jesuits were unable to fulfill the request for missionaries as no members of the order were available. The Methodists and Presbyterians thought of establishing a mission among the Flatheads, but for various reasons, changed their minds.

The reason for going south to St. Louis, instead of northeast to Canada to find a missionary was due to the fact their route to Canada lay across the land of the Blackfeet, their mortal enemies.


Probably the smallness of their number, coupled with their isolated location were the reasons. At any rate, the Methodists, under the leadership of Jason Lee, moved west into the Willamette Valley, where a more advantageous place for missionary operations was found. (Theresa Gay, Life, Letters of Mrs. Jason Lee, Portland: Metropolitan Press, 1936, p. 13 ff.) Reverend Samuel Parker passed through the region on his way to Oregon in 1834, but did not settle among the Flatheads and two years later, Dr. Whitman and his party stopped at the camp of Nez Perces, but decided to establish themselves on the upper Columbia country.
The Flatheads did not give up, however, and another expedition to St. Louis was organized and set out in the late summer of 1835. This time Old Ignace, together with his two sons, made up the party. While at St. Louis his two sons were baptised and he was assured by Bishop Rosati that a blackrobe would be sent out as soon as possible. With this assurance, the Indians departed for their home.

Eighteen months passed after the return of the second expedition and still no missionary was forthcoming. A third delegation was dispatched, but perished at the hands of the Sioux. Undaunted by this, a fourth party was formed and left in the summer of 1839. Upon reaching St. Louis, they were again reassured with the promise that a priest would be sent out to them the following spring. One brave, Peter Gaucher, returned to tell the news and the other, Young Ignace, stayed behind to accompany the missionary on the return journey.

Father De Smet, who was to be that missionary, had been working among the Potawatomies in Kansas, where he and

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6Pierre Jean De Smet was born in East Flanders, Belgium, on January 31, 1801. He had entered the Society of Jesus novitiate in Whitmarsh, Maryland, the first Jesuit novitiate to be located in the United States. Two years later, he left for the new one at Florissant, near St. Louis, where he gained a favorable reputation due to his great physical strength and restless energy. He made good progress in his studies and soon became a teacher at the university. He was ordained a priest in 1827, and became a citizen of this country in 1833. Soon after this, he left again for Europe and recruited some novices in Belgium. He spent two years travelling abroad on the Society's business, securing funds, books for the university, and recovering from an illness incurred in his travels. He returned to this country in 1837 with three recruits. (Chittenden and Richardson, p. 2.)
two lay brothers had founded a mission. In 1838, he travelled to St. Louis for supplies and was taken ill from exposure. After recovering from his illness, he was ordered, much to his disappointment, to go to the country of the Flatheads and examine the prospects of establishing a mission there.

The missionary and his guide left St. Louis in April, 1840 and travelled to Westport in present Kansas and there joined the annual expedition of the American Fur Company to the Green River. At this spot they were met by a band of Flathead warriors who were sent out as a welcome party for the priest. Leaving the fur company, they continued their journey northward and nine days later reached the main camp of the Flatheads.

Religious Ideas of the Flatheads

The Flatheads,7 though more virtuous than most of the Indians in the West,8 were still superstitious savages. They imagined the beaver to be a fallen race of Indians, who had been condemned by the Good Spirit to this present fate, but

7The term, "Flathead," is really a misnomer as there is no evidence that this tribe of the Rocky Mountains ever practiced the barbaric practice of head-flattening. (Palladino, Indian and White in the Northwest, Baltimore, John Murphey & Co., 1894, p. 1.)

8Sergeant Gass of the Lewis and Clark party states: "To the honor of the Flatheads who live on the west side of the Rocky Mountains, we must mention them as exceptions (after citing the loose morals of all the other tribes they had met); they are the only nation on the whole route where anything like chastity is regarded." (John Bakeless, Lewis & Clark, W. Morrow & Co., 1947, p. 6.)
in due time would be restored. Some even maintained they heard the beavers talk with one another and had seen them sitting in council passing judgment on an offender. The Flatheads also had their medicine men, incantations, and charms. They believed in a Good Spirit and in a Bad one and in future states of reward or punishment. Their heaven was a country of perpetual summer where the deceased would meet his wife and children, and where the rivers abounded with fish and the plains teemed with buffalo and horses. Their hell was a place covered with perpetual snows where the departed would be constantly shivering with cold even though he could see a fire from afar. Water, too, was visible, but at too great a distance for the doomed one to wet his parched lips.  

Moses Comes to the Mountain

Such were the people to whom Father De Smet was sent in 1840 to convert. For two months, he worked feverishly instructing his newly acquired parishioners. He then returned to St. Louis as his original purpose was to make a cursory inspection of the tribe and its area and report back as to the advisability of establishing a permanent mission there. When he left the Indians on August 27, he promised to return the following spring with other blackrobes. He reached St. Louis on the eve of the new year and immediately began

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9 Palladino, p. 5.
preparations for his return trip. In May, 1841, he, together with Father G. Menegariné, Father N. Point, and three lay brothers left St. Louis and made their way northward to the Bitterroot Valley, where their work began. They arrived at their destination on the twenty-fourth of September and established the first mission of the mountains, St. Mary's. They erected buildings immediately and in a few weeks' time a log chapel was built, capable of accommodating most of the tribe.

The Coeur d'Alene Mission

Now that the mission was established, the energetic Belgian priest looked about for means to putting to use the soil as a mission was not only a place for religious instruction, but also one for teaching the Indian the farming methods of the white. No seed was available, so he set out for Fort Colville, some three hundred miles away. While on this shopping trip,¹⁰ he encountered the Coeur d'Alenes,¹¹ with whom he was favorably impressed. His first journey for supplies was only partially successful, and, in the spring of the

¹⁰ Father De Smet's visit to Fort Colville was not only of a material nature. He baptized one hundred and ninety persons on the forty-two day journey. (William N. Bischoff, S.J., The Jesuits in Old Oregon, Seattle: Lowman & Handford Co., 1932, Vol. 1, p. 37.)

¹¹ Besides the Coeur d'Alenes or "Pointed Hearts," as their name signifies, he was received by the Lower Kalispels. The latter tribe were so close to the Flatheads, they joined them in the winter buffalo hunts. (Ibid., p. 33.)
following year, he again left St. Mary's, this time heading for Fort Vancouver, more than eight hundred miles away. Again he passed through the land of the Coeur d'Alenes and became convinced that they too, would be likely prospects for Catholicism.

By August 7, he was back again at St. Mary's, but left a week later for Europe to find more recruits for this ripe missionary field. Before leaving home, he instructed Father Point, who had been on the buffalo hunt, to leave the Bitter-root mission and go to the Coeur d'Alenes. Although Father De Smet had been impressed with this new flock, Father Point was not, for he described them as:

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12 The rising water made overland journey impossible and the Hudson's Bay Company's canoes would not be finished until May 30 so he worked with the Kettle Falls Indians, among whom a mission was later established. (Ibid., p. 38.)

13 He had instructed the Coeur d'Alenes, but since he was needed in other places and wanted their prayer to continue until a mission could be established, he devised this method:

"After a long instruction of the most important truths, I collected around me all the little children, the young boys and girls; I chose two from among the latter, to whom I taught the Hail Mary, assigning to each one his own particular part; then seven for Our Father; ten others for the Commandments; twelve for the Apostles Creed. . . . I repeated to each one his own part until he knew it perfectly. I made him repeat it five or six times. These little Indians, forming a triangle, represented a choir of angels, and recited their prayers, to the great astonishment and satisfactions of the savages. They continued in this manner morning and night, until one of the chiefs learned all the prayers, which he then repeated in public." (Chittenden & Richardson, p. 376.)

14 Bischoff, p. 39.
... squalid faces, unkempt hair, ... repulsive sounds emitting from the mouth, nose and windpipe. This external misery feebly imaged forth the pitiable state of their souls. For at this date there still reigned among the benighted people idolatry so debasing that they paid divine honors even to the vilest animals, a moral abandonment which knew no check save caprice, a passion for gambling so absorbing that it trenched even upon their time for sleep, unmitigated sloth which nothing but the pangs or hunger could make them shake off, and finally an habitual inclination to cheating, gluttony and every mean vice...

In spite of this rather disappointing first impression, Father Point and Brother Huet established a mission on the St. Joe River in November, 1842 which took the name Sacred Heart. So St. Mary's, only a year old had been responsible for the founding of another mission, one which gained importance and outlived its founder.

The Pend d'Oreilles

In 1844, Father De Smet returned from Europe with more recruits. He decided that a mother house for all Jesuits in the Oregon territory was needed, and, in October, St. Francis Xavier was established on the shores of Lake Ignatius in the present Washington. He summoned Father De Vos from the Flathead mission to take charge of this latest addition to his family of missions. Father Hoecken who had taken over the mission of the Coeur d'Alenes had become estranged from his flock and together with Father De Vos was sent to the land of the Pend d'Oreilles 

Father De Smet had met the Pend d'Oreilles in 1841 and 1842 on his trips to Colville and Vancouver and was most favorably impressed. (Bischoff, p. 50.)
mission known as St. Michael's.

Father Hoecken had nothing but praise for this tribal organization:

The first thing which struck me on my arrival among them was a truly brotherly love and perfect union, which animated the whole tribe and seemed to make them but one family. They manifest great love, obedience and respect for their chiefs, and what is still more admirable, they all, as their chiefs declare, speak and desire but one and the same thing. These chiefs are as much the real fathers of their people as is a good superior the father of a religious community. The chiefs among the Kalispel speak calmly, but never in vain, the instant they intimate their wish to one of their followers, he sets to work to accomplish it. If anyone is involved in difficulties—if he is in want or sickness—or does he wish to undertake a journey, whether long or short—he consults his chief, and shapes his conduct in accordance with the advice he receives. Even with regard to marriage, the Indians consult their chiefs, who can sanction or postpone or disapprove of it, according as they deemed it conducive, or otherwise, to the happiness of the parties. A man who had a hereditary ailment would not obtain a marriage permit 'because' says the chief, 'the village would otherwise soon be filled up with people of that kind, and they would never listen to reason.' . . . The chief, in the quality of a father, endeavors to provide for the support of his people. It is he, consequently, who regulates hunting, fishing, and the gathering of roots and fruit. All the game and fish are brought to his lodge, and divided into as many shares as there are families. The distribution is made with rigid impartiality. The old, the infirm, the widow will receive their share equally with the hunter.

However, he was not so impressed with their religious

16Chittenden and Richardson, p. 458.

17The name Kalispell or Calispel is used interchangeably with Pend d'Oreilles, both Upper and Lower tribes. The word Pend d'Oreilles, a name given them by French traders due to their mode of dress, refers to "ear drops".
beliefs:18

Of spiritual things, they are utterly ignorant. Unlike the Indians east of the mountains, they had no idea of a future state or of a Great Spirit, neither had they any idea of a soul; in fact, they had not words in their language to express such ideas. They considered themselves animals, nearly allied to the beaver, but greater than the beaver, 'because the beaver builds houses like us, and he is very cunning; true, but we catch the beaver and he cannot catch us, therefore, we are greater than he.' They thought that when they died, that was the last of them. While thus ignorant, it was nothing uncommon for them to bury the very old and the very young alive, because, they said 'these cannot take care of themselves and we cannot take care of them and they had better die!'

Governor Stevens, in a letter to the President, eleven years later, also mentioned their superstitions:19

... Before the advent of the missionaries, the inhabitants, ... still believed that evil and bad luck emanated from a fabulous old woman or sorceress. They were great believers in charms and medicine. Every man had his particular medicine, or charm and from it they expected either good or ill. With some it would be a mouse, with others the deer, buffalo, elk, salmon, bear, etc. ...; and whichever it was, the savage would carry a portion of it constantly with him. The tail of a mouse, or fur, hoof, claw, feather, fin or scale, of whatever it might be, became the amulet. When a young man grew up he was not yet considered a man until he had discovered his medicine. His father would send him to the top of a high mountain in the neighborhood of the present mission; here he was obliged to remain without food until he had dreamed about an animal; the first one so dreamed about becoming his medicine for life. Of course, anxiety, fatigue, cold and fasting would render his sleep troubled and replete with dreams. In a short time he would have dreamed of what he wanted and return to his home, a man.

Father Joset, a Jesuit who came out in 1850, described

18 Chittenden and Richardson, p. 1270.

19 Ibid.
them as "given over to superstitions of a gross fetish toward the furies of a spirit of vengeance and to a double immorality, that of gambling and polygamy."  

Such was the Coeur d'Alene tribe in the eyes of the whites. The first site of the new mission had been rather hurriedly selected by Father De Vos and it soon became necessary to look about for a more suitable place. In this search Father De Smet who had left St. Mary's on his way to Vancouver a few days after Easter, had a prominent part. He stopped at the mission where he was received "amidst volleys of musketry and the sounding of trumpets."  

He and Father Hoecken then went in search of a new location for their mission, which was to also be known as St. Ignatius.

The First St. Ignatius Mission

The site selected for the mission, near the present Cusick, Washington, was not only impressive, but seemed to meet the agricultural needs of the mission. De Smet described their find as:

The country, generally on both sides of the Coeur d'Alene river and lake is rolling and beautiful. It is interspersed with many small prairies. . . I have no question that all the country. . . a region of 3000 or 4000 square miles, is adopted to grazing and culture. A small portion will be occupied by the mountain spurs or isolated peaks,

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20 Bischoff, p. 51.
21 Chittenden and Richardson, p. 457.
22 Ibid., p. 1274.
capable simply of furnishing timber and fuel.

Before the building was completed, the missionaries began seeking the good will of the Indians. They gave them small presents and manifested a great interest in their welfare. The spiritual progress of the mission manifested itself at the outset. All adults, led by the chiefs, were baptized and the beads were said every evening in public. One of the chiefs remarked, "The people look to the Father and love him. They say that if the Father should go away, they would die." 23

For the first two years, the missionaries and the Indians found living quite difficult. The missionaries lived in skin lodges and accompanied the natives on their periodic hunts and fishing trips. Their diet consisted of camas roots and dried berries together with a little wheat which they boiled in the beard for fear of waste. As a substitute for coffee, they parched some of the grains.

Potatoes were also raised. The Indians had been quite successful in growing them even before the advent of the missionaries. Father De Smet was surprised and described them as the "finest I have ever seen since I left the U. S." 24 These potatoes were cultivated in common fields rather than individual plots and the scheme worked so well that the missionaries adopted it. In many cases, some individuals who

23Ibid., p. 1270.

24Ibid., p. 347.
had started to farm on their own gave up and went to work in the common fields.  

The new location for the mission, however, did not fulfill the expectations which De Smet had first mentioned and soon it was beset by many difficulties. One of these was the severe winters. Father Hoecken wrote in the latter part of March, 1849, mentioning that there was ten feet of snow on the ground. Such conditions restricted farming operations to April and May. High water also added to their troubles. In the spring of 1845, the Indians lost all the potatoes, and barely enough wheat and barley were saved for seed for the following year. They tried again the next year, but their 100 acre field was reduced to a marsh.

The animals and the young Indian workers sank knee-deep in the mud while in the flooded section, two plows were in constant use for fifteen days, the Indians behind them keeping up their courage with song.

Such losses forced them to a diet of "pine moss cooked with a little gamache, a meal of which no beggar would care to taste." The Indians resigned themselves to their troubles, believing them to be punishment for their sins, while their success they attributed to God.

25 Garraghan, p. 305.
26 Ibid., p. 309.
27 Ibid., p. 307.
28 One day, a blackrobe was praising a young hunter for his skill. He blushed and replied, smiling, "I am no hunter at all. I pray and when the Great Spirit send a deer my way, I let fly at him and he is dead." (Chittenden and Richardson, p. 400.)
After two years of crop failure they began to show signs of prosperity and when Father De Smet visited them in 1849, he was quite pleased with their material progress. He noted that they had put up fourteen log houses, a stable, a large barn, a wooden house containing a kitchen, dormitory, dining room, and office. They had upward of three hundred acres in grain plus thirty head of cattle and the squaws had learned to milk the cows and were raising a few hogs and chickens.

Notwithstanding this, it soon became evident that a more suitable place must be found. The land was poor and there was not enough of it to offer farms for all the families. The severe winters continued and, in the spring, floods inundated the farms. Most of the big game had been destroyed during the first few years as the hunters had killed three hundred a day.\(^{29}\) The priests wanted a place more centrally located to serve other tribes, such as the Upper Pend d'Oreilles, so they looked about for a new site for the mission.

Thus the year 1851 brought to a close the first ten years of missionary activity of the Jesuits in the Northwest. Six missions had been established in this period and five remained active. These included: St. Francis Xavier, the mother house, located on the shores of Lake Ignatius, founded in September, 1844 by Father De Smet with Father De Vos left

\(^{29}\text{Ibid.}, p. 467.\)
in charge; the Mission of the Sacred Heart, founded in November, 1844, among the Coeur d'Alenes, but moved in 1846 to about ten miles from Coeur d'Alene Lake by Father Nicholas Point; St. Paul's among the Kettle Falls Indians, established in July, 1845 by Father De Smet in the neighborhood of Fort Colville; St. Francis Borgia among the Upper Pend d'Oreilles in 1845 and St. Peter's north of the Kettle Falls tribe, along the Columbia River in 1845.

St. Mary's, among the Flatheads, was closed in 1850 and no mission was left in what is now Montana. It was not until 1854 that a new St. Ignatius was established to take the place of St. Mary's and to carry on the noble work among the Flatheads. St. Mary's would always be the first mission within the present boundaries of Montana, but St. Ignatius would far surpass her in influence.

The reasons for closing St. Mary's are many. Missionaries were needed in the newest office of the Mountain Missions, that of California. Father Michael Accoli had been appointed Superior of the Rocky Mountain Missions in 1850 and his predilection had been for California. Father Accoli had had a misunderstanding with Father Blanchet and a mission at Oregon City had been abandoned. The Blackfeet were molesting St. Mary's Mission, too. Another reason often advanced for the closing of St. Mary's was the polluting influence of the white prospectors who flocked around the mission in the winter and who spent their time gambling and drinking and who poisoned the minds of the Indians against the blackrobes. Father Mengarini, who had seemed to aggravate the Indians, was another reason. (Bischoff, 38 ff.)
CHAPTER II

THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE MISSION (1854-1889)

The new St. Ignatius established in Montana was the successor of St. Ignatius Mission on Lake Pend d'Oreille. The missionaries there had been looking about for a more centrally located station for the Indians of present western Montana and one where they would not suffer so greatly from the spring floods which had made life miserable at the first mission.

The new site for the present St. Ignatius Mission was selected by Father Menetrey and Brother McGean, in consultation with the chiefs of the Pend d'Oreilles. The missionary and the Indians agreed on a very beautiful and breathtaking location. This new mission had its setting in the valley of the Mission Range in the northwestern section of what is now Montana. These mountains rise eight thousand feet into the air and are covered with snow the year round. The two highest peaks are called the Twin Sisters due to their similarity in shape and height. A little to the left of these is Elizabeth Falls,¹ four thousand feet high. Lake McDonald is only a few miles to the northeast and St. Mary's Lake a

¹Named by General Meagher just before his mysterious death in the Missouri River, near Fort Benton. (Palladino, p. 93.)
little to the southeast of the mission. Other small bodies of water add beauty to this "hidden valley," called by the Indians, "Sinieleman," meaning "meeting place." The valley is about twelve miles wide and thirty miles long, extending from the base of Flathead Lake to the present railway station, Ravalli.

To this natural setting came Father Adrian Hoecken in the fall of 1834. He had left his work at the old St. Ignatius Mission to replace Father Joseph Menetrey. Father Hoecken celebrated his first Mass in the open air of this wonderful valley with many Pend d'Oreilles in attendance. Not only did the priest administer to the spiritual needs of the Indians, but began construction of a log cabin to house himself and fellow workers who later arrived. This cabin still stands as a reminder of the early beginnings of the mission. Soon other buildings appeared—a chapel, two houses and a carpenter and blacksmith shop. Some eighteen thousand rails were cut and split for use in the projects. During the next few years, the missionaries labored on additions to the physical plant. They erected a flour mill, the stones of which had been quarried and cut from native rock and a

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2At this time the valley was reached by a natural opening which was known only to "angels and the Indians." (Ibid., p. 92.)

3Mr. Albert J. Partell, an authority on Northwest History, contends the mill stones were purchased from Missoula and not hewn from native rock. He bases his contention on the fact that there is no rock suitable for these stones in the vicinity of the mission and also that mill stones of the same period bearing like iron rings in the center and similar shape were found in Missoula.
whip saw mill. They built a dam across a nearby creek and thus secured the power for both plants. The whip saw mill later furnished the lumber for the construction of the first church, forty feet by one hundred feet, plus a belfry, some fifty feet high. Wooden pins were used to fasten the frame together as nails were too scarce and expensive.

Such building activity plus his administering to the natives, kept Father Hoecken very busy during the beginning period of the mission. So indefatigable were his efforts that he earned the praise of the general superior, Father N. Congiato, who visited the mission in the summer of 1856: ⁴

He does the work of several men and has succeeded in uniting together three nations under his spiritual jurisdiction.

Numbers of these tribes moved into the valley and soon the little community was surrounded by scores of wigwams, the homes of the parishioners. Father Hoecken was happily surprised at the results of this movement by the Indians to the new location. Over one thousand of the different tribes, Upper Pend d'Oreilles and some Lower Pend d'Oreilles drifted in during the winter when they heard of the arrival of the long-awaited blackgown. These Indians proved to be willing converts to the new religion which the Jesuits had brought and many were baptized in this faith of the founding fathers.

While St. Ignatius Mission was thus getting established ⁴Palladino, p. 74.
in the wilderness of present Montana, reorganization of all the Northwest missions was going on. In the year of the founding of St. Ignatius Mission, 1844, the Rocky Mountain Missions were withdrawn from the St. Louis Jesuits, due to lack of financial support and transferred to the Oregon branch of the order. Two years later, Father Congiato was appointed Superior of both the California and Oregon missions. On the same day, these two became a joint dependence of the Jesuit province of Turin, Italy.  

The Council Grove Treaty of 1855

After this reorganization of the missions had been completed, other developments were taking place in the Northwest which were to affect the progress of St. Ignatius Mission. The next year, 1855, came the treaty at Council Grove which established a great Indian reservation for the three nations near the mission. In the negotiation of this treaty, the missionary played an important role. At this meeting between the agents of the United States government and the Chiefs of the Flatheads, Upper Pend d'Oreilles and Kootenais was Father Hoecken's first official contact with the representatives of the government and was the beginning of a long and difficult struggle between the two agencies which were to aid the Indian.

Governor Isaac J. Stevens, Superintendent of Indian

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Affairs, represented the government in the negotiations. Father Hoecken\(^6\) came by invitation to the deliberations and affixed his signature to the completed document. The treaty provided for a reservation for the "exclusive occupancy of the tribes, to be known as the Confederated Tribes of Flatheads, Pend d'Oreilles and Kootenais." The rest of the Indian-claimed land was ceded to the government. In return for this, the government promised school teachers, a blacksmith and a carpenter to train the Indians in the fields of agriculture, mechanics, and the ways of the white man. This treaty also promised the sum of one hundred twenty thousand dollars to be paid in installments to the Indians to reimburse them for the loss of land. Another agreement was reached between Governor Stevens and Father Hoecken, in which the missionary agreed to perform for the government the conducting of schools with certain government financial assistance.

**Early Problems of the Mission**

Acting under the implied promises of the government, although no specific mention had been made of mission

\(^6\)Governor Stevens had this to say of Father Hoecken: "... whose influence over these Indians is almost unbounded. ... he has labored faithfully among the Indian tribes for the last ten years, and has gained his influence by energy, devotion and the natural ascendancy of a patient and indomitable will. He has promised to interpose no obstacle whatever to the views of the government, and I have confidence in his singleness of purpose." (Letter from Isaac I. Stevens to George M. Many penny, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, dated Council Grove, Bitterroot Valley, W.T., July 10, 1855, Pacific Northwest Quarterly, July, 1938, p. 313.)
schools, a school was begun at St. Ignatius, but no money was forthcoming. Even the specific sum promised by the government to the Indians for their land was never paid in full and it is extremely doubtful if any of it reached the hands of the Indians. As the missionaries had no money of their own, the school was forced to close until 1864, at which time the fathers were able to carry on at their own expense.

Such lack of finances affected not only the school, but the mission itself. The work of the mission continued only by the aid of Father De Smet and the generous contributors of the St. Louis area. Money, blankets, seeds and agricultural implements were forwarded by Father De Smet to the mission. Although Father Hoecken had asked for about a thousand dollars' worth of goods, Father De Smet was able to provide only about three hundred dollars for these supplies. The goods were shipped along with the government goods to Fort Benton to save the cost of transportation. 7

Other problems faced the mission at this time, besides the constant press of money. One of these was the Indian wars. War against the whites had broken out among the lower Columbia and Northern California tribes and Father

7Transportation on the Missouri was quite expensive at this time. Father De Smet wrote in November, 1866: "As to the price of passage upon the steamers from St. Louis to Fort Benton, it amounts to three hundred dollars for each passenger; and for all that he brings beyond fifty pounds, he pays from fifteen to twenty cents a pound." (Chittenden and Richardson, p. 1237.)
Ravalli who was at St. Ignatius Mission, feared an outbreak among the Flatheads.

His fears were not realized, however, as the Indians of the mountains did not join in the conflict. Their distance from the war theatre and their slight intercourse with the warring tribes, plus the influence of the missionary in spreading the doctrines of peace were the reasons for not participating in the fight. Although not actively engaged in this war, its effect was felt at the mission as the storehouses were empty and there was little hope of securing other supplies.

The other Indian tribes near the vicinity of the mission also caused some alarm to the missionary. The old hostility between the Blackfeet and the Confederated tribes continued as many of the principal chiefs of the Flatheads had been killed by Blackfeet in 1851. Largely due to the

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8Father Anthony Ravalli was born in Ferrara, Italy, May 16, 1812. At the age of fifteen he entered the Society of Jesus, and after his novitiate he devoted himself for several years to the study of belles-lettres, philosophy, mathematics and the natural sciences. He took his final vows in 1844 while on his way to the Rocky Mountains with Father De Smet. Always seeking to improve himself, he studied medicine and also became quite proficient as an artist and mechanic. He worked for many years among the missions of the mountains and served for a time in California, returning to the mountains in 1853, where he re-established St. Mary's Mission in 1864. Many of the miners as well as the Indians benefited from his teachings as a priest and skill as a physician. He died at St. Mary's on October 2, 1884. His funeral attended by all the Flatheads and neighboring tribes, plus a great many whites attested to his great number of friends. The railway station, Ravalli, forty miles from Missoula, was named after him. (Palladino, p. 73 ff.)
efforts of the missionary, however, relations had improved five years later to such an extent that Father Hoecken wrote in 1856:9 "We had several Blackfeet here. They behaved extremely well." Hoping to maintain the friendly relations and to pacify some of the remaining hostility, Father Hoecken was ordered to leave St. Ignatius in 1858 and start a mission among the Blackfeet. Thus St. Peter's was established a short distance above the Sun River. Due to the efforts of this good missionary, the Blackfeet became quite pacified until the rush of the miners into their lands. They then became so incensed against the whites that the missionaries had to leave St. Peter's and flee for their lives to St. Ignatius.10

Relations with the other tribes also continued to be strained. The Flatheads and the Crows had extremely bitter feelings toward one another as Father Hoecken's letter testifies:11

The Crows stole about twenty horses from our nation. A few days after, others visited our camp. The remembrance of this theft so excited the people that, forgetting the law of nations, which secures protection to even the greatest enemy as soon as he puts foot within the camp, they fell upon our poor guests and killed two of them ere they had time to escape.

Among the other difficulties facing the early growth

9Chittenden and Richardson, p. 1247.

10St. Peter's remained closed from 1866 to 1874. (Palladino, p. 211.)

11Chittenden and Richardson, p. 1239.
of the mission was the movement of whites in large numbers into the gold fields of the area. Governor Stevens, while making surveys for a railroad route to the Pacific, a move which would encourage more of an influx, wrote in 1866:

The missions are all in great danger. The rich mines are now attracting attention and thousands of whites will soon be on the move, to take possession of them. . . . Unhappy times, I am afraid, may befall the Indians of the mountains before long. Two years ago, whilst I was with the army in Oregon, the transportation of liquor toward the newly discovered mines of Colville was immense and the baneful effects on the poor, simple savages was soon felt.

One of the missionaries had written after Father De Smet's visit in 1863:

Today it is upon us; and this ceaseless current of immigrations, following one another like the waves of the sea, will, I think be the sorrow and ruin of our poor Indians.

Sickness was also a problem which confronted the missionary from the outset. The priests even found themselves called to administer to the sick far from the mission. In 1857, a young Pend d'Oreille, between the age of twelve and fourteen was taken ill at Council Grove, some forty miles away. A messenger was dispatched for a priest from the mission and one of the fathers came, diagnosed the illness as a case of pneumonia, left some medicine and returned home. The youth began to show signs of recovery when a person who seemed to know a little about everything intervened and administered

12Ibid., p. 1321.
13Ibid., p. 1518.
some medicine from a bottle which had no label, and as a result, the boy died. 14

The Effect of Religion on the Indian

In spite of these numerous problems, the mission progressed. The Indians flocked to St. Ignatius and by 1862 there were between twelve and fifteen hundred Pend d'Oreilles and Kalispels or Upper Pend d'Oreilles, about six hundred Flatheads and a thousand Kootenai at or near the mission. Many of these, after receiving the instruction from the fathers, eagerly embraced the new-found religion. Usually, the women and children were baptized first, followed by the men of the tribes. Father De Smet, in his visit of 1859, commented on the effects of Christianity on these people. After mentioning the fraternal union, evangelic simplicity, innocence and peace which the Indians manifested in his presence, he goes on to praise their honesty: 15

Their honesty is so great and so well known, that the trader leaves his storehouse entirely, the door remaining unlocked often during his for weeks. The Indians go in and out and help themselves to what they need and settle with the trader on his return. He assured me, himself, that in doing business with them in this style he never lost the value of a pin.

Mr. Doty, a special agent for the government also


noted this new honesty, when Alexander and five principal men of the tribe had returned some horses which two young braves had stolen:16

Thus the six Indians proved themselves not only honest, but brave in the highest degree, coming as they did, five days and nights into an enemy's country, simply to do an act of justice to strangers.

This was quite an accomplishment for the Indians, for they did not consider horse-stealing to be criminal, before the advent of the missionary.

This change in the behavior of the Indian was attributed to the practice of the faith which the converts had embraced. The religious fervor, which the Flatheads possessed, was noted by the testimony of the agent stationed near the mission:17

These people possess strong religious feelings as the well-filled and commodious church of the Reverend Fathers of St. Ignatius Mission on every Sabbath testifies.

The Opening of the School

Not satisfied with the changes noted in the nature of the older men of the tribes, but realizing the real hope and the immediate task of the missionaries was to develop the young along the lines of Christian behavior, they turned their energy to providing more buildings and teachers for

16Chittenden and Richardson, p. 1272.
17Ibid., p. 1227.
the education of the Indian youths.

Father De Smet had noted that materials were ready for the construction of school buildings, but that Father Grassi, who had assumed control of the mission, was at a loss for nuns to conduct the educational establishment. Father De Smet again came to the rescue, and on his return voyage to St. Louis, approached the Sisters of Charity of the House of Providence, located at Montreal, Canada.

The request for Sisters was answered favorably and, in June, 1864, four nuns from the House of Providence departed from Montreal to their new jobs in the frontier of present Montana. Sister Mary of the Infant Jesus was in charge of the group consisting of Sister Mary Edward, Sister Paul Miki and Sister Remi. This courageous band travelled to the destination in the wilderness via New York, the Isthmus of Panama and San Francisco and reached Vancouver on July 16. After a few days rest, they left for Walla Walla, in the present Washington, the outfitting and starting point for all travel to the upper country.

By September 17, all was in readiness for the overland journey. Besides the four sisters, there were Father J. Giorda, Father G. Gazzoli, Father F. X. Kuppers, plus two Irish laymen, who were in charge of the prairie schooner on which was carried the luggage and effects of the party. Travelling by horseback and boat, the group reached the Coeur d'Alene mission on October 5. After resting for two
days, they resumed their journey and reached the agency on the seventeenth of the month. By evening of this day, they were at the mission ready to begin their work. Crowds of Indians gathered about the nuns and welcomed them with this salutation: 18

You are the first white women who ever crossed the high Rocky Mountains. The Indians admire your bravery.

The Sisters immediately set about teaching the "wild daughters of the forest" by opening a boarding school for girls. This was the first mission school of its kind in the Northwest. Besides the ordinary academic subjects, gardening, housekeeping and sewing were taught.

The missionaries hoped, at this time, to set up a boarding school for boys, but as this was financially impossible, a day school 19 was established, but this proved to be an utter failure.

Even though the government had provided eighteen hundred dollars for the school, which sum was to be the last governmental aid for a decade, 20 the financial burden proved

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18 The Institute of Providence, Sisters of Providence in Oregon, 1856, Montreal, 1949, p. 90.

19 The government preferred the industrial boarding school and hence denounced the day school. The mission day school was patterned after the white day school. Pupils lived with their parents, with whom they received industrial training after school hours. The missionaries met the Indians on friendly terms and encouraged them to take part in a community program of a practical nature. (Evelyn C. Adams, American Indian Education, New York: King's Crown Press, 1946, p. 45.)

20 In 1870, Congress authorized the first annual appropriation for Indian education. A sum of one hundred thousand dollars was set aside for the support of boarding and other schools among tribes not otherwise provided for.
very great. It looked for a time that the girls' school would have to be closed, so the Sisters and the Fathers went on a tour to secure enough funds to keep the establishment going. They canvassed the mining camps of the territory begging for money and through the generosity of the miners, the school was saved.

The Government Policy Toward the Mission

Such success on the part of the missionary continued in the next years although few records are available until 1871. During these years, however, the government was beginning to take an interest in the Indian problem. President Grant, who assumed office in 1869, began a policy which aimed to:

... achieve the civilization and the ultimate citizenship of the Indians through peaceful means.

The President hoped to accomplish his purpose by transferring control of Indian affairs from the military to the Department of the Interior. To help the Department in its new job, a board of commissioners was organized in 1869. This board consisted of ten prominent citizens appointed by the President, who served without pay, but who received travelling expenses if their travel was in an official capacity. Their job was to supervise annuity payments,

21Adams, p. 47.

22Ibid., p. 48.
inspect agencies and make recommendations for the improvement of the Indian service. In 1873, inspectors were appointed and six years later, the special agents were created who had duties similar to those of the inspectors.

For many years, the agent\textsuperscript{23} was the only governmental representative among the Indians. He was the important field officer after 1870 when the post of superintendent was abolished. It is through the reports of the agent to the Secretary of the Interior that the progress of St. Ignatius Mission and the dealings of the government with the mission can be noted in the years 1870 to 1889.

\textbf{Removal of the Indians to the Jocko Reservation}

These reports of the agent mentioned the continued settlement of the Bitterroot valley by the whites which was to have a great effect on the mission and the Indians of the area.

As hundreds of settlers poured into the Bitterroot valley, the agent began clamoring for the removal of the Flatheads to the general reservation on the Jocko River. Under such a move, the Indians would be compensated for their improvements on their farms in the Bitterroot or else would be given land in as good a condition on the Jocko reservation. Charles Jones, the agent at this time, recommended the former, stating the total cost of repaying the

\textsuperscript{23}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 81.
Indians for their improvements would not exceed five thousand dollars.

He emphasized the removal was "one of vital interest to the Indians, themselves and the citizens of this territory." By 1871, there were about a thousand white settlers in the valley and they were busily improving and hoping to enlarge their farms. As the numbers of whites increased, so did their complaints against the red man. One of the outstanding complaints was that the Indians did not remain on their farms the year around, but went on buffalo hunts in the spring and the fall. Before starting on the hunt, the Indians would steal the horses of the whites and then trade them off to the Indians on the east side of the mountains.24

Here is noted that no matter how much the church attendance of the Indians increased and how great the changes in the Indians habits seemed to be, there was always the tendency of the Indian to revert to his old ways.

Such a return to their habits of their ancestors made the agent side in with the white settlers of the area in demanding that the Indians be removed from the Bitterroot. The Indians, on the other hand, were quite stubborn in their insistence to remain in their ancient homes. Some of them feared the government would not protect them any better from the encroaching whites on the Jocko.

24By 1871 there were about 1800 Indians living on the reservation. (Report of J. A. Viall, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior, 1871, p. 413.)
As the whites continued to press the Indian to such a degree that their settlement "hedged these people in so closely there is scarcely grazing room for their cattle and horses," according to the agent's report, the government found it necessary to act in support of the whites.

Basing its decision largely on the reports of the agents and the whites, the government acted in February of 1872, when an executive order was issued for the removal of the Flatheads to the general reservation on the Jocko River. An act of Congress followed which allowed those Indians who had farms in the Bitterroot and chose to remain in the valley to do so. If, however, they decided to move, a moderate sum had been set aside for their improvements. Some of the Indians still felt distrust for the government and they refused to move. A considerable band, however, left the Bitterroot for the Jocko reservation.

The promises of the government in the year 1872 went unfulfilled as had those of 1855. Father Palladino wrote in 1872 complaining of the government's failure to keep its word:

".. . one of the stipulations was that they would have houses built for them on the Jocko, not a single house has been built at government expense. .. . those who live in houses, the missionary has built them. .. . the hospital, provided for in the treaty, has not been built yet.

The agent, although he had been one of the loudest in favor of removal, complained of the government's

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... of the twenty houses ordered built... August 27, 1872, not one has been finished, nor did the work on the four which had been commenced amount to as much as the completion of one.

Cooperation of Agent and Missionary in Reducing Crime

Thus finding themselves both on the same side in their denunciation of the government, the agent and the missionary gradually drew closer together until they had reached a fine degree of cooperation in their dealings with the Indians. Through such cooperation the liquor traffic in the vicinity of the mission was reduced to such a degree that the agent was able to report in 1873:

I take pleasure in stating that I have never seen an Indian of this Confederation under the influence of liquor or evince a spirit of hostility to the whites.

Five years later, he was able to report:

... very little crime of any description can be charged to the Indians of this reservation. The missionary work performed by the fathers... has its salutary effect upon the Indians, keeping

26 Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1873, p. 249.

27 "... at the last term of the U.S. District Court held at Deer Lodge, two white men, convicted of selling whiskey to Indians under my charge, were sentenced to the penitentiary, one for eighteen months, the other six months." (Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1871, p. 424.)


them in wholesome restraint, guarding their morals, and gradually leading them to the pursuit of happiness, through sturdy toil, morality and self-dependence. The tribal laws and the laws of religion forbid polygamy and adultery and it would be hard to find a community of the same number, even among Christian civilization, where as few of these crimes are in practice... there are of course, some uncontrollable characters of both sexes, who visit the neighboring town and through the demoralizing effects of whisky cause disgrace to themselves and scandal to the tribes.

Again, the next year, he stated: 30

... the marriage rite, which in every case is performed by the missionaries, is respected and enforced.

Such cooperation between the government and the missionary like that at St. Ignatius Mission led the officials at Washington, D.C., to comment: 31

... when an Indian becomes a Christian, he abandons all the cherished customs and traditions of his nation, cuts off his scalp lock, adopts civilized garments, and goes to work for a living. The material, as well as the moral change is far greater than in the case of the white man, and there is ample proof that he is usually as consistent a Christian, in his simple way, as the average white man.

The best behaved group of the Confederation were the Pend d'Oreilles, who made up the majority, but the Kootenais marred the record as they still had an ardor for gambling, which led the agent to remark: 32 "prevented them from accumulating property."

30 Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1879, p. 94.
31 Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1872, p. 5.
32 Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1875, p. 304.
This cooperation between the agent and the missionary did not end with the problem of crime. Realizing the needs of the school, Jones, in 1872 recommended an increase in the appropriation for the school to the sum of three thousand dollars. Although the yearly cost of the school exceeded four thousand dollars, the government paid only eighteen hundred dollars, while the Fathers and the Sisters had to make up the balance.

An increased amount of governmental aid was also needed to help the priests in raising of crops at the mission. As crickets had destroyed the crops of the Pend d'Oreilles in 1871, and seriously damaged those of the Flatheads, the Superintendent recommended that twelve thousand dollars for relief be granted and asked for an additional five thousand dollars for much needed agricultural implements.

Progress in Spite of Broken Promises

The government aid did not increase, although the enrollment at the school did. By 1873, there were twenty-seven pupils at the boarding school and fifty on the rolls of the day school. The pupils were taught spelling, reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, grammar and history. The girls received not only these subjects, but also additional instruction in household duties. As was to be evident all the time, the boarding students were making good progress, while the day students very little. The post-school environment of those attending the day school undermined all the
works which the Fathers tried to do for the boys.

Realizing the necessity of educating both sexes under the same conditions, the agent made a special plea to the government for a boarding school for boys, too. His words had the desired effect and, in 1876, an industrial and agricultural school for boys was opened. As usual the government failed to provide adequate funds for the feeding and clothing of the students. In spite of this, the missionary, together with qualified teachers, began to teach field work, milling, shop work, and printing, as well as academic subjects. The priests were especially successful with the boys in the field of printing. Even before the opening of this boarding school for boys, the missionaries had been working with some of the day students in training them in this work.

Special priests were sent from Italy to instruct the boys in setting type and Fathers Van Gorp and Diomedi arrived in the fall of 1874 to set up the printing establishment. A press was ordered from St. Louis at a cost of five hundred dollars, although its final cost was twice that amount due to shipping charges. This press arrived at the mission in 1876. "Silver Dick" Butler, an old-time Montana newspaperman, helped install it and even worked with the Fathers in the type setting for some of their products.33

During the years 1876 to 1886 many books were published

from the press at the mission. Father Joseph Giorda worked with Father Mengarini from 1860 on. These two men prepared a modern grammar and syntax from the Kalispel language closely resembling Salish, and by 1874 had a dictionary in shape for printing. Narratives from the scriptures, a catechism, a dictionary in the Nez Perce language, plus other stories concerning the Coeur d’Alenes were printed by the press at the mission. There were also some job printing, such as programs for graduation and entertainments, cards, booklets of prayers and hymns in the Flathead and Kalispel language.

While the Indian boys of the missionary area were engaged in the peaceful pursuits of learning, other tribes

34 A bibliography prepared by Philip P. Callaghan, S. J. of the books printed:

1. Mengarini, Gregory and Jos. Giorda. Dictionary of the Kalispel or Flathead Indian Language. 2 vols. and appendix, 1876; 1879.


6. Our Friends, the Coeur d’Alenes. 21 pp. 1886.

7. The Coeur d’Alene Reservation. 26 pp. 1886. often bound with Our Friends, the Coeur d’Alenes.

from ms. of Father Davis, S.J., "Brief History of St. Ignatius Mission."
in what is now western Montana were engaged in war. The year, 1878, brought another war scare to the Mission. This was the year of the Bannack war and the murder of several whites by the Nez Perces. The agent on the Jocko reservation feared for those Indians in his jurisdiction as they were in so close a proximity to the conflicts and he feared that the military and the settlers might mistake the friendly Indians for the hostiles.

The Mission in the '80's

In spite of the fear of the agent, all went comparatively well in the mission area. The mission at St. Ignatius showed considerable progress in the development of the Indians, although there was noted at this time, somewhat of an increase in their death rate. This was attributed to the changing life of the red man imposed by the adoption of the ways of the white. The Indian, in this transition, had to move from his own lodges to the houses of the white, and found himself changing his simple diet to a more complicated cookery. The results of the change-over took its toll on the tribes. Another reason for the ill health of the Indians was the difficulty of securing and retaining a resident physician at the post, due to the low salary offered for such a position.

The settlers feared that Chief Joseph of the Nez Perces on his march east would turn north at Missoula, but their fears were not realized.
Coupled with this was the fear of smallpox. It was rumored that such an epidemic had hit Missoula and the missionaries worried that this dreaded disease would strike those tribes of the mountains. As no mention is found in the diaries of the missionaries at the mission, it can be assumed that their fears were not realized.

In the meantime, the work of the mission went on. Visitors to the St. Ignatius Mission were astounded by the progress being made. When His Excellency, Bishop Charles John Seaghers made a visit, late in 1879, he was overwhelmed by the greeting he received from the faithful of the mission area. Over fourteen hundred Indians turned out for his visit to welcome him and to receive his blessing. Confirmation was bestowed on one hundred and eight persons, also.

This period of the '80's was one of ever increasing enrollment at the mission school. This was due to the increased allotment of the government to one hundred and fifty dollars annually for the board, tuition, and clothing of each student, both boys and girls, enrolled at the mission.

36 A letter of E. V. Smalley who visited in 1882: "... agent Major Rowan, with the aid of the Jesuit fathers, has been remarkably successful in educating the Indians to the point of living in log houses, fencing fields, cultivating little patches of grain and potatoes and keeping horses. The government supplies plows and wagons and runs a saw mill, grist mill, blacksmith shop and threshing machine for their free use. There is no regular issue of food and clothing; but the old and the sick receive blankets, sugar and flour." The Great Northwest, a guidebook to the N. P. Ry., St. Paul, Northern News Co., 1888, pp. 291-92.

37 Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1882, p. 103.
schools. The total enrollment by 1885 at the school was one hundred seventy-one. As the government had not built this school on the reservation, all educational facilities of the agency were under the supervision of the Catholic Church.\(^{38}\)

School soon became a full-time job for the Indian children who attended the mission schools. They were allowed only a short vacation, although a busy one, in August, because, the agent explained:\(^{39}\)

As it is the policy of the faculty to keep the children from going to their homes, where in a short time, the former teaching is forgotten and in many cases, the parents encourage the children to remain away from school. The vacation is made attractive by camping out, under the charge of teachers, while hunting, fishing, and outside sports are indulged in.

Such an intensified course of study brought about a great change at the school and, by 1889, the boys' progress in academic learning had been noted as satisfactory. The full-bloods still had not fully accepted the idea of education and even the agent began to argue for compulsory education for Indian children, a policy long advocated by the missionaries.

The agent also mentioned, in his report, the clean, comfortable, roomy and well-ventilated quarters at the school.

\(^{38}\)The new ruling of the Secretary of Interior in 1881, allowing all reservations to be thrown open to all denominations did not affect St. Ignatius Mission as, by this time, the Jesuits were deeply entrenched and had the reservation been opened to all denominations, the treaty of 1855 would have been violated.

\(^{39}\)Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1889, p. 225.
and the resulting good health of the children in attendance. By this time, there were new and commodious buildings, containing class rooms, large dining halls, bath rooms, a chapel and other conveniences at the mission.

As this decade drew to a close, the missionary could look back to many accomplishments at St. Ignatius Mission. The faith of the tribes was increasing and being solidified by the missionary work of the Fathers. The increasing enrollment and expanded physical plant of the school stood out as the results of the labors of the missionary. The mission was growing spiritually and materially as it approached the last decade of the century, which was to be the beginning of what was termed the "Golden Age" of the mission.
CHAPTER III

THE INDIANS, THE GOVERNMENT, AND THE MISSION

St. Ignatius was located in the center of the reservation carved out for the Flatheads, Pend d'Oreilles and Kootenai in 1855. The Flatheads, however, remained in the Bitterroot Valley; their ancient home. With the building of the Mullan Road in 1859, the white movement into the valley began. Spurred on by the gold rush of the '60's, the whites flocked into the area. Others drifted in and took up farming in the rich Bitterroot Valley where vast wheat ranches and orchards sprung up. Irrigation added much to the agricultural development of the area and more and more whites moved in. This rapid increase in population hedged in the remaining Indians so much that they were on the point of starvation. Coupled with this was the added clamor of the whites for the complete removal of the Indians to the Jocko reservation. In 1872, the Honorable James A. Garfield was sent out by the Secretary of the Interior to make arrangements for this removal. He succeeded only in inducing some of the sub-chiefs: Arlee, Moisee, and others, to go to the Jocko. Chief Charlo and his band remained in their ancestral home. Although he had been a party to the Garfield treaty, Charlo refused to sign it.

-43-
He continued to stay in the Bitterroot until 1891, when the condition of his band became so poor that he, too, left for the Jocko. This movement into the mission area meant more work for the missionaries and the growing influx of whites continued to alarm them and add to their increasing troubles.

With the expansion of the Northern Pacific Railroad across the Jocko reservation in 1883, more whites came in. Soon, small railroad stations as Arlee, named after the Flathead war chief, and Ravalli, named after the good father of St. Mary's, sprung up and whites took up settlement. Even though the railroad treated the Indians well, paying them for the right of way and any cattle killed by their trains, the priests at the mission were opposed to the rapid development that the railroad brought on.

In 1891, the Great Northern had made its way across Montana and in the western part of the state, north of the mission, other towns sprung up, as Kalispell and Columbia Falls. With this increase of the whites, the Indians near the mission were affected with drunkenness, fighting, and gambling, adding more to the worries of the missionaries.

The opening of the reservation to white settlers appeared inevitable and was long anticipated by the missionaries of St. Ignatius. In 1896, Father Van Corp, who had been stationed at the mission and was on his way to Europe, stopped

1As the Indians left the Bitterroot, St. Mary's which had reopened in 1866 by Father Ravalli, suffered a loss of parishioners, until 1891, it was forced to close, permanently.
off at Washington, D.C., and found the following allowances of land had been made for the mission:

(a) 60 acres for school purposes, which belonged to the Sisters.

(b) 160 to 170 acres for school purposes which should cover the houses, church, mills, stables and orchard and field across the creek in the heart of the mission area.

(c) 470 acres of grazing land which covered the fields of the Fathers.

A copy of his findings was forwarded to St. Ignatius Mission and were used in the final negotiations with the government when the Jocko reservation was made available for the settlement of the whites. A meeting had been held at the mission in 1906 for the purposes of appraising the land to be sold. This meeting lasted only one day due to the stubbornness of Chief Charlot of the Flatheads, who thought he could prevent the sale of any part of the reservation.

In spite of the protests of the great chief, the government went ahead with its program. By order of President Taft in 1908, the Indians were allotted certain lands with the balance made available to the homesteaders. Confusion resulted when the land was parcelled out as there was no law dealing with heirs of the Indians who had owned the land and the result of this confusion, some of the Indians

2Letterhead, St. Ignatius Mission, Missoula County, Montana, Information from Father George De La Motte, S. J., memo, 1896, Archives.

3St. Ignatius Mission, House Diary, September 7, 1906 entry, Archives.
lost their lands.

A law was later passed which forbade the selling of Indian land to outsiders. This was to insure that the land would remain where it rightfully belonged, but other laws soon changed this. Now, under the patent system, the whites are able to secure a good deal of the land which heretofore belonged to the Indians. Even today, the missionary at St. Ignatius is alarmed at the encroaching whites and the growing numbers of landless Indians. The priest fears the extermination of the native race through this method.

Aside from the influx of whites onto the reservation, other worries began to burden the missionary. The Creeks, a tribe addicted to idleness, began drifting into the mission from the east. Their bad example to the other tribes troubled the priests, until a special agent, by the name of Mr. Cory, arrived from Washington to alleviate the problem. He made the Creeks pay a $1 a head tax on their horses kept on the reservation, thus discouraging them from staying.

Thus Mr. Cory seemed to bring back the old spirit of cooperation between the agent and the missionary which had existed at the time of Peter Ronan and Charles Jones. Besides aiding in the problem of the Creeks, Mr. Cory had helped the priests by issuing many wise regulations dealing with marriage. The Fathers spoke highly of Mr. Cory, stating:

"He had acquired an influence over here which no U. S. agent..."

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4House Diary, January 31, 1896 entry, Archives.
ever had."

A few months later, however, news reached the mission that the outstanding Mr. Cory was a fraud. He had introduced himself as a secret service agent on a forged letter. When he turned over $600 to the agent as a result of selling some stray horses, his masquerade was discovered. The agent, in writing for instructions as to the use of the money, learned that no such person as Mr. Cory existed according to official records. Another agent, this time bona fide, was sent out to the mission and in spite of all his good trouble, Cory received three years in the penitentiary.

Other governmental officials began to irritate the missionaries, too. One of these was the county assessor. In May, 1897, he had sent out blanks to the missionaries for their county taxes. This was in accordance with the Supreme Court decision ruling that all white residents on any reservation were subject to the civil authorities. The priests regarded this new duty of paying taxes to the county as "bothersome and costly" as they were engaged in charitable work. Another tax was levied on their cattle over five hundred head. A delegation was sent to Washington to present the views of the Fathers, but the delegation returned after failing in its purpose of changing the ruling. It seems the Indian Commissioner was absent at the time, the Secretary of the Interior was "showing himself very mean," and the President was busy electioneering, so no appeal could be had. The result was that the priests paid the taxes until 1903,
at which time a declaration was received from a Helena judge in favor of the missionaries. The county was then forced to refund all the money paid in during the ten years.

Other minor tribulations appeared at the mission at this time. It seems someone had stolen the boards which enclosed the water at the dam which had been erected for the irrigation of the gardens, and used this wood for kindling. Another minor difficulty was encountered when Father D'Aste had to preach one Sunday without his teeth. In spite of this, he was fairly well understood by the parishioners.

Coupled with this minor disaster were other tragedies. One of the teams ran away and the blacksmith fell off the roof which he was shingling and died as a result.

Other employees at the mission presented additional problems. These workers were of many nationalities and each presented a unique problem. Two Germans were on the verge of brawling, when Father Taelman intervened and pacified them, by a good bottle of beer. The Irish caused some concern too, as the entry from the House Diary testifies:  

"Today an Irishman after working faithfully for several months astonished the Superior, by his determined will to go to Missoula and to spend in a spree all his money, such said he, having been his custom for years!"

The greatest problem of nationalities was the cooks. It seems they lasted only about a month, due to their transient nature. Some of the Oriental customs shocked the

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5House Diary, November 11, 1904 entry, Archives.
missionary. The Chinese cooks had their own way of celebrating their New Year's in the first part of February with fireworks and "even performed some superstitions." Two of the Japanese cooks quit their jobs and enrolled at the school. At another time, one of the cooks got drunk and left raw meat for the students to eat. He was dismissed and replaced by an Italian. All the workers at the mission threatened to quit unless this fellow was either dismissed or would quit cooking. In the fall of 1910 the Fathers hired a Frenchman and in their diary is noted: "Will he stay?". He lasted not quite a month.

There were also noted in their diary some amusing incidents presented by the transportation problem. Often in visiting other missions or making sick calls by horse and buggy, the priest found himself thrown off by a balky horse on the rough terrain. In 1904, the Fathers purchased an automobile, but this caused them no end of troubles as it was constantly sick or ailing.

The Indian police on the mission also had their share of minor upheavals, too. One Easter Sunday the soldiers in charge of keeping order in the church tried to prevent a white lady from coming out of the church at the same time as the men, in violation of an old Indian custom. She resisted them and insulted them, so they took her to the chief's house, but she was rescued a half hour later. Her escort

6House Diary, November 17, 1902 entry, Archives.
then proceeded to pick a quarrel with the police and tried to fight and he was arrested and put in jail for the remainder of the day.  

The police were busily occupied with taking care of the killings and knifings which resulted from the drinking sprees of the Indian. As time went on, matrimonial disorders increased, too, and strict measures were taken against the violators. One Indian was given one hundred and fifteen days in jail for running away with another man's wife.

There were also numerous thefts at the mission. Twenty liters of cider were stolen from the agent and the culprit was caught and given seventy-five days in jail but was soon let out. One brave stole a cow, sold it to a butcher in town and went to Plains to buy whiskey, but was soon arrested. The Fathers were missing one of their best breeding mares for ten days, but it was finally returned and

7House Diary, April 18, 1897 entry, Archives.

8The Indian police were not always on duty, as one brave rode naked through the streets shaking his bottle. At another time one Indian fell off the balcony at a dance, drunk, and another sat on the railroad track, was shoved off by the train, hurt.

9Such disorders as this made the task of carrying out a governmental request impossible. The Department of Indian affairs had asked the Fathers to collect information on the age, date of marriage, children's births, deaths, so as to aid the special agent's decision on questions of heredity and others. (House Diary, September 3, 1913 entry, Archives.)

10House Diary, October 3, 1910 entry, Archives.

11House Diary, November 17, 1910 entry, Archives.
a reward was paid to the finder although the priests noticed "something suspicious in the man's face when he claimed the money."

To combat this increase in crime, special police were set up and were doing good work. Doubtful characters, ex-runaways, were carefully excluded from the other prisoners. Unruly breeds were told in no uncertain language not to station themselves at the gate of the church and leer at the girls. These men grumbled against Captain White of the special police, but seemed to respect and obey him. ¹²

In the first decade of the new century, many of the Indians were not getting along too well. Two blind Indians were discovered by the missionary in his rounds who had been living on nothing but potatoes for over a week. They were immediately sent to the hospital where they were helped on the road to recovery.

During this time, a number of auction sales were noted near the mission. This spoke badly for the vaunted prosperity of the Indians and showed that they were steadily losing in their fight for survival in the neighborhood of surrounding white communities.

Thus, the missionary and the Indians faced many problems after the beginning of 1900. Many of the trials were minor ones; many, no doubt, happened to others of the period, but all showed that the missionary's life was

¹²House Diary, May 10, 1910 entry, Archives.
certainly not a dull one and the period in which these problems arose was an interesting era in which to live.

With the increasing settlement of whites at St. Ignatius and the bad example of some of their members, the job of the missionary was made more difficult. As the century approached the quarter and half-way mark the influence of the mission had greatly waned from its earlier period. There were many elements at work to tear down and almost destroy this influence over the Indians, which the missionary had once manifested.

After the reservation was opened, the Church of the Latter Day Saints through its missionaries and encouragement by Superintendent Wright was also gaining a foothold among the Indians of the area. Their numbers continued to grow and hence much of the religious influence the Catholic missionaries had once had was lost. This together with the Mormons' ability in acquiring Indian land greatly alarmed the Jesuits of St. Ignatius.

The school was also undergoing its cycle of greatly increased enrollment in the late '90's, but beset by government policies, the changing agents, it, too, would suffer a decline in influence.
CHAPTER IV

THE "GOLDEN AGE" AND THE DECLINE
OF THE MISSION SCHOOL

During the years in which the mission was undergoing its many increased problems, the school at St. Ignatius was greatly increasing its enrollment. By 1890 there were two hundred and sixty-five pupils in attendance and by 1892, the figure had reached three hundred and twenty-five. Because of this added growth, these years were labeled the "Golden Age" of the mission school.

Since the mission school administered not only to the Confederation Indians, but to many other tribes and reservations as well, the composition of the students at the school was greatly mixed. The Confederation tribes made up the majority, the Blackfeet were next, followed by the Piegan, and others including the Colville, Coeur d'Alene, Gros

1In 1890, those present at the mission were: "at St. Ignatius Mission. . . were Frs. Joseph Carnana, Caliphonio, Urbanus Grassi, Joseph Giorda, Joseph Menetrey, Magri, Louis Vercripaen, and Aloysius Vanzini; also the following persons: Frank Bison, William Claessens, Joseph Coture, Louis Corville, Peter Irvin, Louis Pelon, Charles Reidt, Joseph Specht, and Charles Schafft." Hubert Howe Bancroft, History of Washington, Idaho and Montana 1845-1889, San Francisco, The History Company Publishers, 1890, p. 626, ft. nt. 12.

According to the missionary's report to the government, two-thirds of these enrolled were mixed bloods. Even at this early date, the pure-blood was fast disappearing. This is significant since the mixed bloods always constituted a greater trial to the teachers than did the pure-bloods due to the lack of moral restraint on the part of the parents.

Another important point in this enrollment was that most of the boys were of the grade level as the 'teen-agers did not take well to schooling. In fact only fourteen boys and thirty-four girls of the total enrollment were above fifteen years of age. Something in the culture of the Indian seemed to frown on the schooling, especially the boys, after they had reached puberty. Evidently, they were to be the warriors and thus school subjects, of no help to their status as a brave, should be reserved for the women.

3St. Ignatius Mission was not the only school in the area at the time. Others included St. Xavier's Mission school at Crow Agency, Montana; St. Paul's Mission at Ft. Belknap Agency, Montana; St. Peter's Industrial School at St. Peter's Mission, Montana; Boys and Girls Industrial Schools, Colville Agency, Washington; and the Boys and Girls Industrial School on the Coeur d'Alene Reservation, Idaho; St. Francis Xavier's school located at North Yakima Valley, Washington. All these were supervised and controlled by Fr. Joseph M. Cataldo, Superior of the Rocky Mountain Missions, who was located at Spokane at a central point to the missions of the area. (Circular of the Bureau of Catholic Missions, August 25, 1890, Jesuit Historical Archives, Spokane.)

4Letter dated December 23, 1892, from Father Rebman to Daniel Dorchester, Superintendent of Indian Schools, Department of Interior, Jesuit Historical Archives, Spokane.
Even some of the non-academic subjects offered met with little success. These included carpentry, blacksmithing, saddlery, shoemaking. The failure of these subjects to arouse much interest in the Indian boys was attributed to the "fickleness of the Indian character," and the Jesuits had to discontinue them in all their schools, even those of South Dakota where the lay brothers taught. Experience brought home this hard lesson: That boys given industrial training became "regular loafers and unfit for the more advantageous work as farming, gardening and stock raising." As the girls continued to excel in the branches of housekeeping, the Fathers were somewhat compensated for the poor performance of the boys.

While the enrollment soared, the missionary strived to get more and more of the Indian youths in the area to attend the mission school. The parents, however, were not very cooperative and no means were available to enforce compulsory attendance as neither the missionary nor the government.

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5 Minutes of Consultation "On the Indian Mission Schools" held at St. Ignatius Mission, January 9 and 10, 1907, Jesuit Historical Archives, Spokane.

6 "The Commissioner of Indian Affairs, subject to the direction of the Secretary of Interior, was authorized and directed to make and enforce by proper means such rules and regulations as will secure the attendance of Indian children of suitable age and health at schools established and maintained for their benefit." (Letter of March 14, 1891 to Fr. Van Gorp from the Catholic Bureau, from Fr. Johan A. German, Jesuit Historical Archives, Spokane.) The supervisors of education over the Rocky Mountain area, four in number, were instructed to report on the subject of increasing and enforcing attendance of their pupils. Other duties included reporting on the condition of the school, teachers, need for repairs and
could make any rule in conflict with the right of the parent or the treaty. The children who remained away from this much-needed education "became ignorant and lazy" and did not learn the ways of the white man, so essential to the program of civilizing the Indian. The Kootenais stood out as the ones who could have benefited the most from schooling and who attended the least. Father D'Aste minced no words in speaking of them:

Living almost on the boundaries of this reservation, far from the influence of Christian civilization, are mostly gamblers, lazy fellows and worthless.

With the others, however, the agent was able to report the education of the Fathers had achieved its desired results as he mentioned:

The Indian inhabitants of this reservation are steadily gaining an advance over all the other tribes in Montana in religion, civilization, farming and pastoral pursuits.

As the enrollment reached new heights, and the work of the Fathers was making progress, there were forces at work which would tarnish the gold of the "Golden Age."

One of these was the growing hostility between the government and the mission in the person of the Indian enlargement. (Letter from The Department of Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, Washington, D.C., August 10, 1891, from R. V. Belt, Acting Commissioner, Jesuit Historical Archives, Spokane.)

7Letter of Father D'Aste, March, 1890, to the Catholic Bureau, Archives.

8Report of the Agent, Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1890, p. 126.
Commissioner Morgan. One of his oft-repeated criticisms concerned the method of instruction employed at the school. In their reading, the students read too loud, thus "sacrificing expression." They were not taught to be methodical in their arithmetic work. There didn't seem to be "enough reasoning, not enough practical work in numbers, and too much questioning and defining parts of speech." In the field of agriculture, the boys "didn't seem to have too much to do with the stock."9

Father D'Aste had this to say in the defense of the school:10

I should think that the unanimous reports of the numerous legislators who have visited our schools these last years should be sufficiently evident to the government of the quality of the institution though none of these were Catholic.

... the teachers who have daily intercourse with the pupils being more able to judge talents and progress of the pupils than any inspector who may happen to visit our school once or twice a year.

The government had also questioned the quality of the instructors employed at the mission and the text books used.11 The main complaint was that the teachers were foreigners and unable to converse in English.

Realizing this, the priests tried to get personnel

9Letter of Morgan to the St. Ignatius Mission, June 11, 1892, Archives.

10Letter of Father D'Aste to the Catholic Bureau, March, 1890, Archives.

11Letter of March 14, 1891 to Father Van Gorp from the Catholic Bureau, Father John A. Gorman, Director, Archives.
"fit to teach the children entrusted to them, agreeable to the standards of the institution intended by the government." In the case of industrial teachers, they were men skilled in their trades and although not all were Americans, they had been teaching in English schools for many years. These laymen were hired as teachers as the missionaries were unable to fill all the teaching posts with the clergy and they even had to resort to high salaries to secure fit instructors.

The Fathers became quite concerned when the government ordered a change in the books, as heretofore, they, and not the government, had furnished the texts which had been "prepared by men of talent who are as good patriots as those who prepare texts in public schools."

The missionaries felt the government's intent behind all the criticism was to abolish all religious instruction from the curriculum, in accordance with the interpretation of the doctrine of separation of Church and State, adhered to in our present day.

Besides this, the missionary felt that these policies were aimed at relegating the mission schools to the position of feeders for the government institutions. Father D'Aste labeled the government's attitude as unreasonable and one which certainly would not contribute to enhancing the morals of the Indian.

12 Letter of May 20, 1890, from Father D'Aste to Father Stephan, Director of Catholic Bureau, Archives.

13 They even feared the introduction of the King James Version of the Bible. (Letter of May 14, 1891 to Father Van Gorp from the Catholic Bureau, Archives.)
As the fight grew in proportion, Mr. Morgan continued to criticize even the smallest details: 14

There is one feature in particular in this school that is quite common to all contract schools, thus far visited by me and that I consider a serious defect. I refer to the fact that the boys and girls are taught in separate classes, and have distinct dining rooms. This separation of the sexes in an Indian school defeats one of the important ends of Indian education, viz., the training of Indian boys to be polite and respectful in the presence of the Indian girls; and the training of girls in self-respect and true womanhood in classes composed of both sexes.

He also contended that the difficulty of retaining Indian boys after the age of fourteen was due to "this isolation from all social influences and the attendant gloom of these monastic schools are distasteful and repulsive to them." 15

The missionaries, on the other hand, attributed the runaways to the wild nature of the Indian youth and their reason for separation of sexes in the classroom can, no doubt, be attributed to the European background of those who taught at the school.

Another irritating factor in the struggle between the

14 Letter dated March 22, 1892, to Father Rebman, Archives.

15 Commissioner Morgan hit upon an idea of having "suitable Indians to act as school visitors" for the purpose of making surveys of the schools, and addressing the pupils so that the "Indians should become personally interested in the management and prosperity of the schools established for their benefit." They were to work without pay, but would receive, "the honorable distinction of being United States Officers and would be recognized and respected accordingly." For obvious reasons, the program was never carried out. (Letter of Commissioner Morgan, March 12, 1892, Archives.)
missionary and the government was the government's insistence on the correct form and strict compliance to the instructions given them as is witnessed by the following notation:  

... you will please sign the contract on the line opposite the lower red seal, being sure to have your signature identical with that in the body of the contract in lines 8 to 10 inclusive. Your signature must be witnessed by two persons in the lines provided therefore. When you have executed the contract according to these directions, you will please return the five copies to this office for completion and approval.

More red tape was encountered when the Fathers desired to have wine on the reservation for use on the altar. Their request was finally approved, but only after they had gone through the Adjutant General of the Army and had obtained an order from the Secretary of War.

Additional friction between the government and the mission developed over the method of contract exchange and correspondence. Heretofore, these were sent to the Superior of the respective missions and thence to the Catholic Bureau of Indian Missions, which acted as a liaison between the Indian Commissioner at Washington, D.C., and the school. Beginning in 1890, however, all contracts were to be made directly with the Superintendents of the various schools. Father Chapelle from the Catholic Bureau asked the mission Superintendents, pending an appeal and final determination

16 Letter of July 21, 1892, from Commissioner Morgan to the Mission, Archives.

of the question, not to sign the contract sent to them by the Commissioner.

Father Van Gorp mentioned the favoritism of the government toward their own schools and goes on to express his opinion of Morgan:

Heretofore we have been obliged to wait until the Commissioner of Indian Affairs settled upon his government schools all the money needed for their support before we could press our claim upon his consideration. While friends were in the Indian office we did not suffer much; but with the present head running wild on his system and avowedly opposed to contract schools we could only hope to get what was left, and this amount would be just what the commissioner cared to make it.

This, of course, could not go on, so pressure was applied at the "right places" and the result was that a special fund was set up for the exclusive use of the contract schools and thus they were assured of their money even though the Commissioner opposed it.

The Commissioner, in a letter to the Director of the Catholic Bureau, gave his side of the story outlining his reasons for a preference of government schools:

... as being in harmony with the American idea of education by means of public schools, ... schools maintained by government for the education of the Indian should be strictly non-sectarian and non-partisan and appropriation of government funds to sectarian institutions, was, in my opinion, contrary to the spirit, if not the letter

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18 Letter dated March 14, 1891, to Father Van Gorp from the Catholic Bureau, John A. Gorman, Director, Archives.

19 Letter from Commissioner Morgan to Father Chapelle, July 18, 1891 appearing in a news clipping, paper unknown (probably Great Falls or Missoula), dateline Washington, Archives.
of the Constitution and opposed to public policy.

He then went on to assail as false, the charges of the Catholic Bureau and their efforts to remove him and states that the Bureau has grown in power on government funds.

Father Chapelle, the Director, replied that he had had no knowledge of any articles reflecting on the Commissioner. It was later discovered, however, that certain news articles had been printed and circulated. Father Gorman, who had inspired them, submitted his resignation. Father Chapelle went on in his reply to point out that the policy of the Catholic Bureau and Congress was in harmony and accordance with President Grant's peace policy. Cardinal Gibbons, one of the Catholic hierarchy, also deplored the attack of Morgan.

The bitterness finally reached such a state that a group of bishops laid their case before the President. The Commissioner insisted he had no antipathy towards Catholics and felt he had been maliciously misrepresented and misunderstood and was willing to have his office investigated, but that he could "not be expected to maintain harmonious relations with a great bureau subsisting upon the bounty of the government, whose work it antagonizes and misrepresents and whose officers it defames."20

20The Catholic Bureau of Indian Missions sent to the Board of Indian Commissioners, dated December 14, 1893 this report:

Total Compensation for 39 boarding schools and 13 day schools* (accommodating a total of 3,557 pupils)....$369,535.

In addition the Bureau supports 5 Indian schools at
The Catholic Bureau answered Mr. Morgan’s charges in a circular sent out by the then Director, Father Stephan. I think the idea that any important element of American society really desires the withdrawal of all religious influence from the Indians may be dismissed without discussion.

He goes on to denounce the narrow class sectarians:

No man need be expected to obey either law or constituted authority who does not know and feel his responsibility to a higher and extra-human power. Thus it will be admitted on all sides that some sort of religious education becomes necessary to the Indian, as a basis upon which to rear a fabric of general knowledge, sufficiently to qualify him as civilized society.

... how opposes to this secular hypocrisy were the words and the policy of the noble President Grant. The denominational contract schools are not only good, but economical. While the government pays on most of the contracts from $108 to $125 and in only a few cases $150 per annum, and it is strictly for those children who actually attend the schools, the Government schools, as the records show, cost at least $300 per capita per annum, in addition to salaries of teachers, which form a fixed charge whether the attendance of pupils be one or one hundred.

... I am sorry that I have to call attention to a cry raised by certain religious anarchists sic who call upon the country to behold how much public money the Catholic Bureau is drawing from the...

its own expense and about $50,000 is expended for teachers and scholars by the Catholics, themselves. (Archives.)

*The government preferred the Industrial boarding school and denounced the day school on the ground that the influence of its surroundings could not be counteracted by even the best efforts of the teachers. (Adams, p. 51.)

21Bureau of Catholic Missions, December 14, 1893, Archives

22"Indian agencies being civil offices, I determined to give all agencies to such religious as had heretofore established missionaries among the Indians, perhaps to some other denominations who could undertake the work on the same terms--i.e. as missionary work." (Excerpt from President Grant, Quoted in the Catholic Bureau circular, December 14, 1893, Archives.)
national treasury for the support of sectarian Indian schools. The professed enemies of religious Indian education were careful to conceal the fact that the money is not public money, but is Indian money, the little all of a tangible nature that the poor red men have left of all their once vast possessions.

So this upheaval between the two agencies, the government and the mission, which were to aid the Indian in his orientation concerning the ways of the white man, caused the Indian to be the loser of the fight, even though not one of the participants. For the government soon cut off funds from the mission, thus greatly weakening the influence it once had had.

The Declining Years of the School (1896-1954)

This action on the part of the government came in 1896 when all aid to Indian sectarian schools was cut off. The appropriations were to be diminished by one-fourth each successive year until 1900, at which time no more help was to be extended. Luckily for the mission, the Catholic Bureau came to the rescue and St. Ignatius Mission school was allowed a total of eighty pupils at the rate of eight thousand, six hundred and forty dollars per year. However, the Bureau was unable to pay this amount until 1901, and in order to get support, Father Cataldo travelled through the country lecturing and giving sermons in behalf of the Indian schools.

23 The Catholics, themselves, had expended over one and a half million dollars in buildings, plant and facilities. Ibid., Archives.
His efforts collected more than three thousand dollars, which sum had to be divided among the other missions of the area.

The result of the government's drastic step led to the closing of the Jocko branch school,24 which had been established by Father Canistrelli and conducted by the Ursuline Sisters since 1891. The following year saw them giving up their residence, although they still visited the district twice a month. At St. Ignatius Mission itself, the policy of the government had a damaging effect on the achievements of the Jesuits. The "shops" had to be closed and the number of pupils considerably reduced so that by March 1901, there were only forty-seven boys at the school. In spite of this, however, the missionaries and Sisters continued in their struggle and the noble work went on. The priests managed to keep the average attendance at two hundred, even though the appropriation covered less than half the number. By 1913, the enrollment had dropped to fifty.25

Other schools were hit, too. St. Peter's Mission, among the Blackfeet, was forced to shut down and some of the children from there came over to St. Ignatius.26

24Bishop Brondel dedicated a church, named St. Hohn Berchmons in August, 1889, which still serves the Indians of the area.


26House Diary, August 2, 1890 entry, Archives.
The agent was quite different from those of years before when there had been so much cooperation with the missionaries. Peter Ronan, who had held the post of agent from 1878 to 1893 had not only aided the missionaries at St. Ignatius, but had greatly aided the cause of all mission schools through his reports to the Commissioner. Charles Jones, who preceded Ronan was also another spokesman for the Catholic cause. Joseph Carter who followed Ronan and served until 1896 was a great exponent of the work done at St. Ignatius. In 1898 this spirit of friendliness ceased with the election of McKinley to the Presidency. As was often the case, a new President meant a new agent as the post of agent was filled by presidential appointment. Joseph Carter, an appointee of Cleveland was replaced by E. H. Smead, a loyal Republican, and definitely anti-Catholic in his thinking. Smead held the post as agent until Teddy Roosevelt came to be President at which time, good feelings with the missionaries were somewhat bettered with Samuel Bellow occupying the post.

It was during the period in which Smead was agent that most of the troubles and irritation disturbed the fathers at St. Ignatius. Smead blamed the missionaries for poisoning the minds of the young Indians when he found some difficulty in getting the Indian children to attend the Government school which had been opened at the agency. The priests answered his charges in a letter and felt they had done so "satisfactorily".
Another thing the agent tried to do was to force the priests to stop thrashing grain for the Indians, a practice they had engaged in for years. The missionaries even kept some of the grain in storage for the Indians. This too, the agent wished to stop. His behavior is explained by one of the priests: 27

The agent is at open war with me, and tries his best to crush the mission... because we threshed some crops with our machine and we paid the Indians working for us with goods (the agent's nephew is storekeeper of a store at the Mission) he set his mind to take all the children he can so as to prevent us to have them.

The feud between the two reached a new high when the agent apprehended two wagon loads of children from the upper valley, bound for the mission school and sent them to the agency school at Fort Shaw.

Besides these difficulties, the priests began to be troubled by runaways at the mission school. Some of the boys ran away, but returned by supper time. Others just did not return to St. Ignatius after their vacations or their visits home. Such behavior so discouraged the priests that one remarked: 28

... a very consoling reward for all the cares and kindness shown him during the year! Poor Indians. Savages they were, savages they are, savages they will be till the end. Even their dogs could teach them gratitude.

The parents, in most cases, were to blame: 29

27House Diary, October 7, 1901 entry, Archives.
28House Diary, May 29, 1910, Archives.
29House Diary, September 25, 1913 entry, Archives.
When Indian boys reach fourteen, they cannot brook restraint. The only thing Almighty God demands of us is to have a good school, well-ordered attractive, good food and good clothes. If the boys refuse to stay, it is their own look-out. Their parents are unable to assert their authority and the boys, of course, do as they please.

Another example of despair is found in the entry of 1914:  

Another boy disappeared. Homesick I suppose. Unable to control this feeling any more than the growth of his hair. He will probably serve his father a hot dish of lies against the school to excuse himself. Another impulse which he cannot control any more than the growing of his fingernails.

It became so bad that strict measures were adopted to bring an end to the problem. The boys who were caught running away found themselves confronted by harsh punishments. Some were put in jail, others expelled from school, and some were whipped by the chiefs, who set themselves up as disciplinarians. When the whippings became too severe, the parents came to the school and themselves took the boys away. During the winter, one had been whipped on his legs and the reason, Alexander the chief, had given was "he was afraid he might run away and get frozen."  

In some cases, the agent cooperated with the priests in scaring the youngsters. Two of the runaways were captured by a policeman in Arlee and sent to the jail on the agency. They were then tried by Indian judges and sentenced to four months at hard labor and given a diet of bread and water. A

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30 House Diary, January 2, 1914 entry, Archives.

31 House Diary, February 6, 1908 entry, Archives.
few hours later, they were rescued by the priests and returned to the mission school. The missionaries felt the boys had learned their lesson and would not run away again. One youth ran away after being "treated too liberally with whiskey." He later turned up at the Holy Family Mission.

Among the reasons often given for behavior were that they "found school too lonesome, too much study and too strict discipline." A few of the parents cooperated with the harsh disciplining of their youngsters:

Two half-breeds ran away and were brought back by their parents. One showed so much stubbornness, the mother was told to keep him and not bring him back until he had been whipped by a policeman. Brought back the next day, a marvelously subdued boy after the severe whipping he received last night at the hands of his mother. . . . the whipping was so generous that the lad begged to be whipped rather by the teacher and he will bear the traces of it for two weeks at least.

This was one of the few times that such cooperation was received and especially from the parent of a breed and it led the Fathers to comment if all were like that, "we could raise a better generation of breeds."

Another problem which had to be faced at times was disease. It was reported in 1896 that many kindergarten children were dying of a typhoid epidemic. Other diseases such as measles, small pox, and whooping cough also took their toll among the pupils. A grippe epidemic happened in

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32 House Diary, October 9, 1913 entry, Archives.
33 House Diary, September 25, 1910 entry, Archives.
34 House Diary, November 17, 1913 entry, Archives.
1907 and because of this the old church was turned over to
the Sisters of Providence for use as a hospital. It was
swung around to its present position parallel to the present
church and facing the mill. This greatly aided the Sisters
in checking the spread of disease among those enrolled at
the school.

Examiners sent out by the Indian Department often
commented on the good care the Sisters gave to their charges.
Dr. White, one of these examiners, remarked the boys at the
St. Ignatius school were the cleanest he had seen yet in his
tour through the Indian schools of the west. He did, how­
ever, find three cases of trachoma and devised a long and
painful, but very effective cure.\textsuperscript{35} It consisted of cocain­
izing the eyes thoroughly and scraping the inside of the
upper lid. This meant drawing considerable blood, but was
deemed necessary. Then for weeks or months, a special
medicine was put into the eye.

Fires at the Mission

One of the ever-reoccurring problems which the mis­sionaries had to face was fire. Fire seemed to be breaking
out every few months at the mission and leaving vast damage
as a result. The first of these happened in 1896 when the
boys' school and dorm were completely destroyed by fire of
an "incendiary origin." It seemed that one of the boys had

\textsuperscript{35}\textit{House Diary, October 7, 1910 entry, Archives.}
deliberately set fire to a mattress in the dorm. The suspect was brought to trial, but was acquitted for want of evidence, a "grave injustice of God's will." School was not interrupted, however, in spite of the fact that everything was lost, including a beautiful museum which the missionaries had maintained.

In November, 1902, a fire broke out on the roof of an Indian house in front of the missionary's house, but it was soon put out.

Four years later, a girl got very lonesome and in order to get out of school, set fire to the closet where the drapes were kept. A Sister saw the smoke in time and put out the blaze.

The next month saw a fire which destroyed the saw mill, and in December, the cabin of the men who were working for the nuns was consumed by fire and the men lost everything.

Realizing the danger, even though trusting in the saints, a fire escape was built at the school due to the many small boys in attendance. The comment was:

St. Joseph is doubtless protecting us; but duty recognizes we should do all in our power to

36 House Diary, April 18, 1896 entry, Archives.
37 House Diary, October 2, 1906 entry, Archives.
38 House Diary, November 3, 1906 entry, Archives.
39 House Diary, December 5, 1906 entry, Archives.
40 House Diary, February 6, 1908 entry, Archives.
prevent a catastrophe. 

Forest fires raged near by, too, thus endangering the mission. In the fall of 1910, the weather around the mission was described as "hot and foggy" as the mission was located directly between two big fires—one at Dixon and the other near St. Mary's Lake. Two companies of soldiers from Missoula had been sent out to help fight these. The entry in the diary of August 21 is interesting:

Very smoky. This afternoon and evening the sky had a lurid appearance. . . . a glaring light over the sky, ashes falling all over. Several mining towns swept by the fire. The sisters moved with the patients from the hospital to Missoula Hospital and the few girls and the Sisters of the Academy went to Spokane. The men at the mission even interrupted their thrashing to go help put out the fire.

On the ninth of December, 1919, the whole establishment of the Sisters of Providence was lost by fire in less than two hours. News came in from the headquarters that the school was not to be rebuilt and so the work of the Sisters came to an end after forty-five years. From this time on the educational work had to be carried on by the Fathers and the Ursuline Sisters. The cry for help went out and the Sisters of Providence continued to teach and for the next few years the day school was conducted in connection with the Fathers while the Sisters did the teaching. This did not work out very satisfactorily, so the day school was

41House Diary, May 29, 1910 entry, Archives.
discontinued. Hereafter all the boys attended the Fathers' school as boarders and day scholars, while the girls attended the Ursuline school in the same manner.

Three years later, fire also destroyed the school and home of the Ursulines. After this blow, the Fathers and Sisters, convinced that the work must go on, decided to turn the third floor of the priest's residence into a school and dormitory. This arrangement continued until the new building, called the Villa Ursula, was completed at a cost of over one hundred and thirty-five thousand dollars. Even though much help poured in from gracious contributors, a debt remains today.

Decreasing Enrollment

By 1929, enrollment at both the schools had so dropped that there were only 70 boys in attendance at the school of the Fathers and 160 girls at the Ursulines' school. This meant that over eight hundred children of school age, near the mission were either attending public schools or government non-reservation schools "with the resulting danger of a great loss of faith and morals,"42 the missionaries felt.

In 1941, the Fathers turned over all schooling to the Ursulines and this arrangement continues today. The enrollment in 194543 had dropped to seventy-four at this school.


Thus the years from 1896 on have not been prosperous for the St. Ignatius schools. With the government cutting off the aid in this year, followed by the decreasing enrollment and the devastating effect of the numerous fires, the schools have greatly suffered. The work of the Sisters goes on but all that remains of the "Golden Age" of the schools is a memory.
CHAPTER V

THE INFLUENCE OF THE MISSION ON THE INDIAN

The Religious Influence

With all the disturbances brought about by the changing government policies, and the corrupting contact with the whites, plus the many trials the missionaries were subject to, the influence of the missionary and his faith over the Indian became less and less with the passage of time.

In the beginning, the Indians delighted in their newfound religion and became practicing Catholics. On the great feast days, like Christmas, Eastern, and the feast day of St. Ignatius, the Indians flocked to the mission from all over the reservation, gaily attired to add cheerfulness to the occasion. Some travelled as much as fifty miles and all came regardless of the weather. The number receiving communion on these days ranged from eight hundred to a thousand.

\[1\] Once, in order to foster the fervor and devotion of his flock, Father Giorda set before them an Infant Jesus, which moved its arms and eyes, while a concealed music box played "Adeste Fideles". The result was the opposite of that expected. The artificial movements of the doll made the Indians look upon it as "a trick of the white man" and actually shocked and scandalized these simple people. (Palladino, p. 102.)

\[2\] Report of Father Taelman, St. Ignatius Mission, 1929, m.s., Archives.
Father Palladino mentions unusual activities which preceded these feast day celebrations. Some two or three days before the feast, a kind of open court was held by the chiefs and head men with the whole tribe present. Lawbreakers and offenders against good morals were brought before the assembly and in a great solemn manner the trial began.

At a signal given by the great chief, the whole crowd fell on their knees, all praying aloud for a time. Then the culprits were examined, some having been accused, others confessing on their own and the guilty were sentenced and punished on the spot. A blanket or buffalo robe, having been spread on the ground, the prisoner came forward and stretched himself flat upon it. At a signal given by the chief, all again fell upon their knees, praying for the reformation of the offender. During all this the punishment inflicted by horse-whip or raw hide upon the back of the accused, was carried out. The number of lashes was proportioned to the nature of the offense and the back of the offender. Women and young people usually received a much lighter sentence than the others.

An example of the belief in whipping to wipe out guilt and giving an insight into the moral thinking of the Indian is evidenced by the following story:

A Kalispel had been married by Father Menetrey to one

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3Palladino, p. 99.

4Ibid., p. 100.
of his tribe and at their wedding dinner, the bride acted insincerely to her husband, making faces at him and bellowing that had she not married the man, no woman in the camp would have taken him. This so angered the groom that he left the dinner, mounted a horse, rode off to his people and picked himself up another woman to prove his first wife a liar. Three years later, feeling that he had convinced his first wife that another woman would have him, he returned to St. Ignatius and presented himself to the chiefs for chastisement. He was told to go to his first wife and all would be forgiven. The Indian insisted, however, on being whipped because he said, "unless you give me my whipping, I go back to the other woman." He was then obliged and returned to his first wife and the two lived in great happiness thereafter.

Before the overflow of the white into the vicinity of the reservation, the simple faith of the Indian was most edifying to the missionary. Every day, the Indians attended Mass and instructions in the morning and returned again at night for additional instruction and night prayers.

Some of their ancient customs were incorporated into the religious ceremonies. On the night before a funeral, a "wake" was held. This consisted of prayer, speeches and a meal. From time to time, friends would uncover the head of the corpse and look upon it and then return to the party. It was also their custom to visit the sick and dying often and especially to be present at the moment of death. They
always called in a priest to administer the last sacrament, but some insisted in calling in the medicine man after the priest had gone. This pagan practice was very difficult to stamp out and it still persists, to some extent. To combat this custom, the missionary adopted a method which seemed to achieve the desired results. Those who called in the medicine man were threatened with a refusal to bury them in the church graveyard.⁵

On the day of a funeral, every member of the tribe, in or near the village, accompanied the deceased to his final resting place. One of the funeral dirges which they sang was adapted from an old war song of theirs, a stirring wail of lamentation they used to sing over their braves fallen in battle. It had been set to music by Father Mengarini, but at the time of Father Palladino, the rendering of the song was not correct as the original setting was extinct, even though the words remained the same.

The singing of the Indian was encouraged by the missionary, but outsiders were quite astonished by some of the renditions. Father Menetrey had taught them to sing in Latin the Ordinary of the Mass, as well as several of the Latin hymns usually sung at Benediction. Bishop O'Connor, who visited the mission in June, 1877, had this to say:⁶

It sounded as if a dozen, at least, of

⁵House Diary, July 21, 1913 entry, Archives.
⁶Palladino, p. 99.
harmonious wolves were scattered among the congregation.

In praise of their faith and simple zeal, he goes on to say:

As the Angelus bell rings, I am struck by the suddenness with which they cease conversation, assume devotional postures and retain them, statue-like, until the prayer is ended. On Sunday morning I said early Mass at the church. A great number went to communion. It was a novel sight to see the Indian mothers approach the altar-rail with their papooses on their backs.

Some of the faithful had an unusual way to go to Confession. Father Grassi tells of an Indian who waited patiently for him to finish his conversation with another priest. When Father Grassi was finished, he drew up a chair next to the Indian and the penitent reached under his blanket and produced a bunch of little sticks, which were of different lengths and sizes and placed them, one by one, on the floor beside the priest. These sticks represented his sins and the confession was conducted mostly by sign language.

Another use of sticks was to keep track of their feasts. On a wooden stick, from twelve to eighteen inches long and about a half an inch thick, the Indian would cut a number of notches, one for each day with Sundays receiving a double notch cut in the form of an X. At the end of each day the proper cut would be whittled smooth. Father Palladino remarks this device could be used by the surrounding tribes as Father Giorda visited the Coeur d'Alene mission

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\textsuperscript{7}Ibid., p. 155.
after Easter and found the people still observing Lent. To cap the climax, they had Easter placed on a weekday. He broke the spell by throwing up his arms and saying: "He is risen; Alleluia."

The Indian had his own sense of right and wrong and in some instances the missionary had to change this. At one of the last councils held at Arlee, one of the chiefs was opposed to the dance of the half-breeds. Upon learning he could not forbid the dance, he set about to suppress at least the fiddles. He maintained these were immoral instruments, but he was soon informed otherwise by one who had seen the lantern slides of the priests showing the Christmas crib with the angels playing such instruments as the fiddle.8

On May 1, the children came in procession to the church and presented candles. The squaws came in separate groups waving banners different from the men in the tribe. This separation of the sexes permeated the whole way of life of the Indian. Even in the church itself, the chiefs and men of the parish occupied the front pews, while the women were left to the rear of the church, sometimes standing. An amusing example of this custom can be found in the disagreement which arose during one of the Biblical lessons. The priest was explaining the Flight Into Egypt and told the Indians that Mary rode upon the ass, while Joseph walked along side. They refused to accept this and on this minor

8House Diary, January 24, 1896 entry, Archives.
point the Father was forced to give in, so the modified version showed Mary, in accordance with their traditions, walking, while Joseph rode.

Superstition still remained with the tribes to a certain degree. In 1910, when Halley's comet was approaching, the Indians became terrified and feared the worst catastrophe. Adding to their terror was a total eclipse of the moon which occurred two weeks later, while the comet was still visible.\(^9\)

Another of their superstitions concerned their ability to predict the weather. They forecasted an approaching storm because they could hear distinctly the trains that rolled and whistled past the station at Ravalli, their hogs carried straw in their mouths and wandered about aimlessly; and because the mountains were tinted with blue clouds. Their prophecy proved to be incorrect for mild weather followed.\(^10\)

Some of the practices of the Church were not very well understood by the savage. Ugly rumors floated about concerning the practice of giving alms. It was thought that one had to pay to pray and as one of the priests remarked: "Generosity is surely not one of their virtues."\(^11\)

Another story illustrates the lack of the full appreciation of the reception of the sacraments. On the visit of Archbishop Charles J. Seghers in the summer of 1879, while

\(^9\)House Diary, May 10, 1913 entry, Archives.
\(^10\)House Diary, February 9, 1913 entry, Archives.
\(^11\)House Diary, September 28, 1913 entry, Archives.
His Excellency was administering Confirmation to a group of Indians, he noted one brave whom he was positive he had confirmed before. "But you, my son, have received the Holy Ghost already," said the Archbishop. "Yes, great Black Robe," answered the Indian, "but I lost Him; He got drowned crossing the river." It seems His Grace had given each Indian a little medal upon confirmation as a remembrance of the occasion and this particular person had lost his while swimming.\(^{12}\)

The priests often made use of the fantasies of the Indian in preaching their doctrines, as is evidenced by the strange story that took place in the early part of 1913. A brave called Antoine Hammer came to the Fathers to tell this tale. It seems, sometime ago, he was passing by the house of a friend who had died three years previously and whose body was buried at the mission. Antoine heard his name mentioned twice and so he stopped and seeing nothing, continued on. A third time he heard a long whistle and going to the spot from where he had heard the sound, he crossed himself and said, "Who are you?" The reply came, "I am Gabriel Nata."

"What do you want?"

"I suffer, I burn, why--because I had unpaid debts to so and so (He named three or four persons) when I died. Have pity on me--"

Antoine spoke: "I wish I could help you, but I am

\(^{12}\)Palladino, p. 172.
poor."

The answer, "But you have many relatives who could pay."

Then followed a period of silence. Antoine proceeded, but the dead man followed him and touching him on the head, said, "Try and get my relatives to pay these debts." The appearance of a dead one so staggered Antoine, he fell into the snow in a swoon. The priests encouraged his telling of the story to all he saw, for they felt it would stir the consciences of many.13 On Easter Sunday the relatives of Gabriel decided to pay the debts of their departed one and they found the sums mentioned by Antoine to be correct.

In this field of religious training the missionary was confronted with the additional problem of translation. Like all aliens to a foreign area, bent on teaching the novice Christianity, the missionary had to first learn and understand the language14 to gain an understanding of the people with whom he was dealing. This meant untold hours of study until the priest was competent not only in the speaking of the Indian tongue, but also in being able to think in the same way the Indian does.

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13House Diary, March 19, 1913 entry, Archives.

14It is interesting to note that the Salish language is a perfect language, rich in its own grammar, and not gutteral as one would imagine. According to Father Taelman, the only remaining Jesuit priest at St. Ignatius, who still speaks the language, the grammar is similar to Latin and its vowel sounds are like those of the Italian. It is filled with accented words as are found in the French tongue and possesses the reflexive form of the verb.
His task of indoctrination was even more difficult by the fact that very little mythology existed in the lore of these western Montana tribes. Another difficulty was that often no corresponding word in the Salish language existed for the doctrines and lessons of the church. For instance the closest the Salish language comes in translating the word "God" is self-made, while in theology, "God" refers to self-existing. Often times no word at all existed in the Indian language so French words were used or new words were invented by the priests. The Jesuit training the missionary had in discipline and devotion and theology greatly fitted him for this task.

By incorporating whenever possible the customs of the Indian into the teachings of the Church, the missionary succeeded in bringing his faith to the red man. The faith thus presented to the Indian still remains strong with most of the Indians of the area. On the great Feast days of the Church such as Christmas, Good Friday, and Easter, the Indians attend in good numbers. True, many of the mixed bloods have fallen away from the Church through the avenues of drunkenness and bad marriages, but the seed of Christianity which the early Jesuit Fathers planted has taken root in many Indian families of today.

Not only was St. Ignatius Mission responsible for the establishment of the Catholic faith among the Indians in the vicinity, but it was also responsible for the first church for whites in Montana. In fact the first priestly duty
performed by the priests among the whites were the sick-calls by the Fathers at the mission. One such call meant a five hundred mile round trip for the priest, Father U. Grassi, when called in to administer to a white at Bannack.

With the opening of the Mullan Road, two white settlements sprung up, one called Hellgate, located about five miles from the present Hellgate Canyon mouth. In the summer of 1863 a church was erected there, known as St. Michael's and this was the first church for whites in what is now Montana. This station was for many years a dependency of the St. Ignatius Mission. The chapel there proved, later on, to be at too great a distance for the growing number of Catholics who settled in the lower end of the valley, so another structure was built near the present Frenchtown. This chapel was given the name of St. Louis and later changed to St. John the Baptist, and it, too, was a dependency of St. Ignatius Mission for many years.15

So the religious influence of St. Ignatius Mission has been great for Indian and white man alike. The concentration of the modern world on things of this world has permeated the domain of St. Ignatius and the result has been a weakening of the faith among some of the former members of the Church, but this feeling is counterbalanced, to a certain extent, by the deep-seated faith that remains among many people in Northwestern Montana.

15 Palladino, p. 297.
The Cultural Influence of the Mission

Besides this fair degree of success in the field of religion, the missionary has been busy transforming the early savages into citizens capable of existing in the more complex society of the white man. In this area, too, the missionary has been successful. Here the Jesuit training helped the missionary in his performance of this task.

One thing which the Jesuits advocated very strongly was the emphasis on activities which fit into the environment of the Indian. Carpentry, blacksmithing, leather work, agriculture, and husbandry were subjects necessary for the Indian to learn if he was to get along in his new way of life. The doctrine of the dignity of labor was a difficult lesson for the red man as he had always believed manual labor to be the job of squaws. ¹⁶ Once this obstacle in Indian thinking was overcome, the pupils took readily to their work and many excelled in the handicrafts. St. Ignatius Mission became, in its day, one of the outstanding trade schools in the Northwest, even though the priests were always disappointed in the progress of many of the boys. One of the fields in which the missionary can still be proud of and one in which the missionary was very successful was the art of printing. By helping in the preparation of dictionaries, the Indians learned not only the printing trade, but also

¹⁶Ibid., p. 113.
they were able to increase their knowledge of their own tongue.

Two languages were taught at the St. Ignatius school—English and Salish. By this method the missionary could ascertain if the students were actually learning and it in turn gave the Indian pupils a chance to understand the civilization of the white man through this process of learning his language.

By insisting that both the boys and girls be taught alike and as much as possible, away from the parents, the missionary did a great service to the future of the Indians. This similarity of education and the encouragement of the boy and girl products of such a system to marry one another, so trained, advanced both the husband and wife in civilization. Often the agent and the priest would furnish a house and a bit of ground for the newly married couple to get them off to a good start. Not only was this system of insisting that the young marry one of their own who had been likewise trained in the Jesuit schools, good for the young couple, but gave the resulting offspring from such a union an added advantage over the other Indians who did not follow the system.

So the imposition of the new culture over that old one of the Indian was accomplished also by the missionary and his helpers, the Sisters. This transformation of the Indian into the ways of the white still goes on although there are instances where the Indian has reverted to the ways of his ancestors.

17Ibid., p. 168.
CHAPTER VI

EPILOGUE

In its hundred years of existence, St. Ignatius Mission can look back to many accomplishments. The savage has been civilized to a certain extent, although as with Indians all over the United States, there are evidences that the culture of the white man is merely veneer covering that of the red man. The Indian has adopted the trappings of the white man's way of life, but sometimes he will revert to his old ways, but most of the old superstitions, barbaric customs and pagan beliefs are gone.

The Christianizing of the pagan has been a difficult task. The missionary has succeeded in giving the Roman faith to the Indian. In most cases, he has kept that faith. The missionary can report today that very few of his people die without the Last Sacrament. Most of his parishioners still abide by the laws of the Church regarding marriage although the priests sometimes blame the bad example on the part of the white for those who do go astray. Attendance at the religious feasts has fallen off, it is true, and the religious nature of the old celebrations has been supplanted by wild parties, a gift of the white brethren. Wrestling matches and movies have often taken the place of Midnight Mass.

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Other religions have displaced Catholicism at St. Ignatius. The problem of drinking has grown, in spite of the efforts of the missionary. This interest in the world is not only prevalent among the Indians, however, but the whites of our times have adopted this attitude, too. The great problem facing the Jesuit at the mission today is no longer one of increasing missionary activity, but rather one of keeping the faith.

The Indian has adopted the language of his subtle conqueror. Few of the young people near the mission speak the language of their fathers. Only two Jesuits remain at the mission who are able to converse in the Salish language. The young priests have no need of learning the language of the Indian members of his parish now as it is no longer in use and most of the parishioners are mixed bloods possessing more of the white than red. Many whites now are citizens of the area and members of the church, so the "old days", truly, are gone. The hospital first set up by the Ursuline nuns to administer to the sick ones near the mission is now heavily patronized by the whites. Those Indians who avail themselves of the service pay nothing for their care as the Tribal Council pays the bill.

The boarding school, now in its ninetieth year, has lost much of the enrollment to the public schools.1 It is

1In the year 1945, there were only seventy-four enrolled in the boarding school on the Flathead Agency according to the School Census Report of the United States Indian Service to the Department of Interior.
still run by the Ursulines and those that attend prove themselves to be products in the old tradition of scholarship and citizenship so greatly praised in the past.

As one recaptures the colorful past of the mission and reflects on the numerous problems of government fights, fires, sickness, savagery, the reader cannot help but have a profound respect for those ministers of God who came to this land of the heathen to help change the old ways of the Indian for the more civilized ones of the white.

Certain of the accomplishments of St. Ignatius Mission stand out over the others. The work of the school in making ladies out of the "daughters of the forest" was an enviable record. The boys who learned the trade of printing can thank the Fathers for their sacrifice and teaching, as the school became known as one of the finest trade schools in the Northwest.

Much of the glory of the mission is gone, many of the accomplishments have been lost in the dust of our changing civilization. The task of the missionary has been fulfilled. Whether his efforts made a lasting impression must wait the passage of many more years. So ends the story of St. Ignatius Mission, Montana.
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