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A CATHOLIC HISTORY OF THE HEARTLAND: THE RISE AND FALL OF *MID-AMERICA*: *A HISTORICAL REVIEW*

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In many ways it was an inauspicious moment to organize a new historical enterprise. In 1918 the United States was deeply engaged in a conflict so monstrously all-consuming it was simply referred to as “the Great War.” The population of the nation, even in the heavily ethnic and foreign-born Midwest, was mobilized for war. From Illinois alone, more than 350,000 men were in the military. The public sphere from newspapers to magazines to posters and lecture halls were under the whip hand of the Committee on Public Information, which was censoring dissent and pushing pro-war propaganda. Yet it was also a compelling time to address the history of the heartland. Nineteen eighteen was also the centennial of the entrance of the state of Illinois into the union. Long before President Woodrow Wilson had asked Congress for a declaration of war preparations had been underway in Illinois to document, reassess, and present to the public a history of the state’s hundred years of progress. “And despite war conditions,” Joseph T. Thompson wrote, “we are this year living over again the experiences of the past.”²

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² *Illinois in the World War: An Illustrated History of the Thirty-Third Division*, Volume 1, (Chicago: States Publication Society, 1921), 3.

Thompson was the inaugural editor of the *Illinois Catholic Historical Review*. This publication was one of a number of Catholic historical publications that emerged in the early twentieth century and which played a role in the development of outlets for a self-consciously Midwestern, yet also distinctly Catholic, approach to history. In time the *Illinois Catholic Historical Review* would evolve into *Mid-America: A Historical Review*, slowly losing both its Midwestern and Catholic orientation. This essay seeks to provide a brief overview of the rise and fall of *Mid-America* and outline its place within the arc of what Jon Lauck has called the school of “Prairie Historians.”³

By the beginning of the twentieth century Catholic America was entering a newly confident and assertive phase of its long relationship with the mainstream of American society. Protestant cultural elites in the nation could still assert, as the Supreme Court did in 1892, that America “is a Christian nation,” and in so saying exclude Catholicism as part of American Christianity. The convent burnings of the antebellum era had been left in the past, but prejudice against Catholics was still alive and indeed had been rekindled under the banner of the Ku Klux Klan, which revived in strength in the wake of the 1915 release of the landmark film *Birth of a Nation*. Catholic assertiveness was evident in both the laity’s willingness to challenge mainstream cultural hegemony and their energy in creating a vibrant social, educational, and professional sphere for Catholics. By 1920 there were 6,651 Catholic primary schools in the nation and more than 130 Catholic colleges and universities. Catholic physicians, lawyers, and nurses all were organized into separate professional organizations. Catholic historians were part of this movement. In 1919 the American Catholic Historical Association was founded. While there was a certain defensiveness and insularity in these developments, there was also considerable self-confidence in the Church and among the laity. Historian William M. Halsey has documented the optimism prevalent in Catholic intellectual circles during the years 1920-1940, a distinct contrast to what was happening in the larger society, which he saw as living through “an era of disillusionment.”⁴

Interest in Catholic history was sparked in 1883 by the decision of Pope Leo XIII to open the Vatican archives to scholars and an encyclical he issued on that occasion encouraging historical

³ Jon K. Lauck, “The Prairie Historians and the Foundations of Midwestern History,” *Annals of Iowa: A Quarterly Journal of History* vol. 71 (Spring 2012), 137-173.

⁴ *Church of the Holy Trinity v. United States*, United States Supreme Court, No. 143, Argued and submitted January 7, 1892, Decided February 29, 1892, 143 U.S. 457; David P. Baker, “Schooling All the Masses: Reconsidering the Origins of American Schooling in the Postbellum Era,” *Sociology of Education* vol. 72, no. 4 (1999), 197-215; Philip Gleason, *Contending With Modernity: Catholic Higher Education in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 168; William M. Halsey, *The Survival of American Innocence: Catholicism in an Era of Disillusionment, 1920-1940* (South Bend, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1980).

studies. Short-lived Catholic history publications were born in Brooklyn and New England. More successful were the New York Catholic Historical Society and the American Catholic Historical Society based in Philadelphia. In 1884 a short-lived Ohio Valley Catholic Historical Society was born. The Ohio Valley society based in Pittsburgh published a journal for three years before encountering financial difficulties. Articles tended to focus on French activities in the colonial era and the early history of the Pittsburgh diocese. Two more societies with historical publications joined these in 1918, the Illinois Catholic Historical Association and the St. Louis Catholic Historical Association. The former was inspired by the Illinois Centennial and the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago. The St. Louis society was created as part of the celebration of the centennial of the diocese in that city.⁵

The St. Louis and Illinois societies launched the *St. Louis Catholic Historical Review* and the *Illinois Catholic Historical Review*, which embraced the broad sweep of Catholic history in the interior of North America. Charles L. Souvay, editor of the *St. Louis Catholic Historical Review*, staked out his scope of interest in the inaugural issue as stretching from Indiana to the Rocky Mountains and “from Canada to the Gulf—for all that territory was once in the same ecclesiastical subdivision with St. Louis.” At the core of the St. Louis society’s interest, however, was “the history of the Middle West.” The same was true of the *Illinois Catholic Historical Review*. The editor justified the new publication by noting that save for Francis Parkman the “history of the Middle West and North West was for many years a lost chapter to the chroniclers of American history,” and that the Catholic portion of that early history was the most neglected part. Related to this commitment to regional and religious history was a desire to ensure that historians of the Catholic faith took the lead in writing and publicizing this history. The founding of the Illinois Catholic Historical Society followed the creation of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association only a few years before.⁶ It was a formative and fruitful time in the early twentieth-century emergence of the

⁵ “The Story of a Failure: The Ohio Valley Catholic Historical Society,” *The Catholic Historical Review* vol. 1, no. 4 (Jan., 1916), 435-438; Frederic Siedenburgh, S.J., “Forward—A Catholic Historical Society,” *Illinois Catholic Historical Review*, vol. 1, no. 1 (July, 1918), 5; Lawrence F. Flick, M.D., “Annual Address of the President,” *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia* vol. 5, no. 1 (January, 1894), 1-6.

⁶ On the formation of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association in Lincoln, Nebraska in 1907, see Jon K. Lauck, *The Lost Region: Toward a Revival of Midwestern History* (University of Iowa Press, 2013), 31-32. The MVHA’s journal the *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* was launched in 1914.

“Prairie Historians,” or the men and women committed to the reinterpretation of American history from the interior outward.⁷

The articles published by the *Illinois Catholic Historical Review* paid particular attention to the earliest period of European expansion into the Great Lakes and Mississippi Valley region. This fit the core mission of establishing that the Catholic Church was a foundational institution of European-American society in the region. The heavy immigration of eastern and southern European Catholics to heartland cities and their establishment of ethnic parishes, with schools teaching the languages and traditions of the old country, conveyed the impression that the Church was a foreign institution. Catholic leaders such as George Cardinal Mundelein of Chicago were committed to blurring the ethnic distinctions of his immigrant congregations and gradually forming them into a laity with a strong American-Catholic identity. The new historical society and journal fit that agenda. At the same time the editors of the *Review* sought to celebrate and publicize the role of Catholics in bringing Christian civilization to the region. For example, the first article in the first issue of the *Review* was “Early Catholicity in Chicago, 1673-1843.” While hardly original research, the piece narrated the role of Catholic pioneers like Jacques Marquette, S.J. and Robert Cavalier Sieur de la LaSalle as constituting the “dawn of the city’s history,” countering the then popular belief that Anglo fur trader John Kinzie was “father of Chicago” or that the city’s founding could be traced on back to 1803 when the federal government established Fort Dearborn. In a similar vein, another piece in that first issue celebrated “Illinois’ First Citizen—Pierre Gibault,” whom the author argued “America owes more to” than any individual residing in Illinois during the revolutionary period for “the acquisition of the territory northwest of the Ohio River.” While these articles were replete with special denominational pleading the authors supplied long excerpts from primary documents. This was in keeping with the goal of the Illinois Catholic Historical Society to gather and make available to laity the documents left by Catholic pioneers in the heartland.⁸

The President of the Illinois Catholic Historical Society and the longtime editor of the *Review* was a remarkably energetic Jesuit priest, Frederic Siedenburgh. The son of German immigrants, Siedenburgh joined the Jesuits after graduating from Xavier College at the age of twenty-one and

⁷ The *St. Louis Catholic Historical Review* was published quarterly from 1918 to 1923. Rev. Charles L. Souvay, “Forward,” *St. Louis Catholic Historical Review* vol. 1, no. 1 (October, 1918), 7; Siedenburgh, “Forward,” *Illinois Catholic Historical Review*, vol. 1, no. 1 (July, 1918), 5-6.

⁸ Edward R. Kantowicz, *Corporation Sole: Cardinal Mundelein and Chicago Catholicism* (South Bend, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983), 71-83; Gilbert Garraghan, S.J. “Early Catholicity in Chicago, 1673-1843,” *Illinois Catholic Historical Review* vol. 1, no. 1 (July, 1918), 8-28. Joseph J. Thompson, “Illinois’ First Citizen—Pierre Gibault,” *Illinois Catholic Historical Review* vol. 1, no. 1 (July, 1918), 79-90.

was sent to the University of Berlin for advanced study. Trained as a sociologist, Siedenburg returned to the United States and eventually joined Loyola University Chicago, where he established the first Catholic School of Social Work in 1914. He was an early and sometimes lonely proponent of gendered co-education at Catholic schools, part-time college programs, and adult education. The latter reflected his deep engagement with the city's working class as well as its intellectuals, who ranged from labor leaders and rabbis to agnostics such as Clarence Darrow. In 1917 this prominence led him to be appointed a member of the Illinois Centennial Commission. He served as editor of the *Illinois Catholic Historical Review* from shortly after its founding—which was largely the result of his energy—until 1932, when his liberalism on a host of issues clashed with Cardinal Mundelein and Siedenburg was unceremoniously transferred to the University of Detroit. Siedenburg's departure as editor coincided with financial difficulties faced by the historical society triggered in large part by the Great Depression.⁹

Another important change at the Illinois Catholic Historical Society was a new name for their journal, which became the more inclusive *Mid-America: A Historical Review*. The title change was made by Siedenburg in 1929 to better reflect the range of articles being published by the journal. In his final act as editor Siedenburg explained the name change. He and writers contributing to the journal “were hampered by the limitations imposed by the name ‘Illinois’ in the title of our *Review* and a more comprehensive name was desired.” While Illinois topics still dominated, more and more articles appeared related to Missouri, Indiana, Wisconsin, Michigan, and occasionally as far afield as Kansas. The emphasis remained, however, on the early period of the region's history, especially the French Regime. While the historical society seems to have been losing steam and it increasingly leaned on Loyola University for funding, it did briefly rally in 1933. In that year Chicago hosted the Century of Progress World's Fair to celebrate the centennial of the city's incorporation. The Illinois Catholic Historical Society sponsored a reproduction of the cabin occupied by Father Jacques Marquette at Chicago during the winter of 1674. While the fair honored the 1833 beginnings of municipal government as the birth of Chicago, there was a fierce rivalry among various contending groups to claim priority as city founders. In 1928 the Chicago Urban League successfully petitioned the fair managers to include a memorial of Jean Baptiste Point Du Sable, the African-French fur trader who operated a trading post at Chicago for twenty years in the late

⁹ Edward Gumz, “Frederic Siedenburg, S.J.: The Journey of a Social Activist,” paper presented at the North American Association of Christians in Social Work, October, 2011, Pittsburgh, PA, 1-11.

eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The City Council then voted to fund a reconstruction of Du Sable's cabin to be erected on the fair grounds. This in turn aroused the Illinois Catholic Historical Society whose journal had so long focused on establishing the priority of the Catholic Church in the settling of the region. The society raised funds to build the "Marquette Cabin," even though historical records left no indication of its size or style. In their exhibits in the cabin they made the point that Du Sable, the "Catholic mulatto," is "rightly considered the first permanent settler of modern Chicago," although Chicago launched its recorded career in "the winter of 1674-75." After the fair the Illinois Catholic Historical Society was a spent force. The man who had been the energy behind its creation and operation had been removed to Detroit and *Mid-America* was "failing financially."¹⁰

While the society died, the journal lived on under the sponsorship of the Institute of Jesuit History. For several years Jesuit historians at Loyola University had been planning an institute that would gather, publish, and synthesize the records of the Society of Jesus in the western hemisphere. They were somewhat anticipated in this endeavor by Herbert Eugene Bolton of the University of California, Berkeley, who was just completing his history *The Black Robes of New Spain* (1935). A native of Wisconsin and a student of Frederick Jackson Turner, Bolton pioneered the study of the Spanish American Borderlands. During his research he had come across many records related to Spanish Jesuits and he conceived of organizing and publishing these through an Institute of Jesuit History of the Pacific Coast.

At the same time the new president of Loyola University was the historian Samuel Knox Wilson, S.J., who envisioned an institute devoted to the "work of the Jesuits in the Mississippi Valley." While Wilson had charge of a university budget to launch his center, Bolton was counting on "money begged by him and his friends." A move from competition to collaboration was facilitated when Jerome V. Jacobson, S.J. joined the Loyola history faculty. Jacobson completed his Ph.D. in borderland history under Bolton's direction in 1934. Knox appointed him as director of the Loyola

¹⁰ Frederic Siedenburgh, S.J., "Mid-America—Our New Name," *Mid-America: An Historical Review* vol. 1, no. 1 (July, 1929), 3; Context and Index, *Illinois Catholic Historical Review* vol. 11, (1928), 2; August Meier and Elliott M. Rudwick, "Negro Protest at the Chicago World's Fair, 1933-1934," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* vol. 59 (1966), 161-71; Gilbert J. Garraghan, S.J. "The Marquette Cabin at the Century of Progress Fair," *Mid-America: A Historical Review* vol. 16, no. 1 (July, 1933), 30-32; Samuel Knox Wilson, S.J. to Jean Delanglez, S.J. 16 April 1934, Samuel Knox Wilson Papers, Loyola University Chicago Archives, Box 16, file 4.

Institute of Jesuit History and when the Institute held an inaugural dedication, Herbert Bolton delivered the keynote address.¹¹

Jacobson was not particularly keen to take on *Mid-America* as the journal of the new Jesuit institute. In keeping with his training in Latin American history and Bolton's thesis regarding the common history of the Americas, he insisted that the Institute expand its outlook to Spanish as well as Franco and Anglo America. Jacobson proposed several possible changes in the title of the journal, including *Jesuit Institute of History Review*, *Jesuit Americana*, and *Black Robe Americana*. Father Wilson, however, was unconvinced. "*Mid-America* may still have application," he wrote, "since the field of our study and research, lying between Canada and Mexico, may be signified by the old name of the publication." For Wilson, sponsoring research in other countries was at best "far in the future." Jacobson in the end came to see the advantage of keeping the name Jesuit out of the journal's title. "I conceive *Mid-America* as an outlet for historical talents of our various Mid-west Catholic students," he wrote, "whose interests are at times other than the Jesuit deeds."¹²

While Jacobson deferred to his boss over the title of the journal he remained at heart a borderland historian. During the early years of his long tenure as editor Jacobson published many articles related to Spanish America including "The Expulsion of the Jesuits from New Spain, 1767," "Jesuit Travel to New Spain," and the "Virgin of the Reconquest of New Mexico." The influence of Herbert Bolton was noticeable in the regular essays submitted by the Jesuits Peter M. Dunne and W. Eugene Shiels, both of whom were, like Jacobson, Bolton students. In the second issue of *Mid-America* published after the founding of the Institute, Bolton himself contributed an essay on the importance of Jesuit history. Yet the American heartland remained a focus of the publication with articles ranging from "The Cartography of the Mississippi," to "An Appraisal of Shelburne's Western Policy," to a biography of the *Metis* Jesuit James Bouchard. Throughout the 1930s and into the 1940s most articles were written by Jesuits, with a smattering of contributions by women of religious orders serving on the faculties of Catholic women's colleges. A remarkable contribution came from the pen of Sister M. Inez Hilger, O.S.B. In 1943 *Mid-America* published her pioneering oral history of Ashahwaince, an Ojibwe elder whose experience reached back to the 1840s. An

¹¹ Herbert Bolton did eventually have his own informal Jesuit research center largely through the work of young Jesuit trained historians who were recommended to him by Jesuit provincials. For more on Bolton see, Albert Hurtado, *Herbert Eugene Bolton: Historian of American Borderlands* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012); Samuel Knox Wilson, S.J. to Eugene Shiels, S.J. 16 January 1934, Wilson Papers, Box 16, File 4; W. Eugene Shiels, S.J. "The Institute of Jesuit History," *Mid-America* vol. 18, no. 3 (July, 1936), 153-55.

¹² Samuel Know Wilson, S.J. to Gilbert J. Garraghan, S.J. 8 August 1935, Wilson Papers, Box 16, File 4; Jerome V. Jacobson, S.J. to Wilson, 24 November 1936, Wilson Papers, Box 16, File 4.

important part of each of the three issues published each year was a “Documents” section which featured edited and translated primary sources. Texts featured in this section ranged from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries and included “La Salle’s Occupation of Texas,” “Selections from the Diary and Gazette of Father Peter Potier, S.J. (1708-1781),” “The Discovery of the Mississippi Primary Sources,” and “German Missionary Writers.”¹³

The Midwestern historians most consistently published in *Mid-America* were the Jesuits Jean Delanglez and Gilbert Garraghan. Delanglez was born in Mouscron, Belgium, in 1896. He joined the Society of Jesus in 1921 and received a Ph.D. in history from Catholic University of America in 1935. That year he was assigned to the Loyola Institute of Jesuit History and the editorial board of *Mid-America*. His dissertation, which became his first book, was *The French Jesuits in Lower Louisiana, 1700-1763*. He went on to write four other books, all about New France and its exploration of the Great Lakes and Mississippi Valley. Garraghan was born in Chicago in 1871 and became a Jesuit in 1890. After serving as the head of the St. Louis University History Department, he came to Loyola in 1932 as a key member of the Institute’s faculty. Even before coming to Loyola Garraghan had served as editor of *Mid-America* for three years after Siedenburg was removed to Detroit, and he had long been a regular contributor to its’ pages. He penned five monographs, the best known of which was *Jesuits of the Middle United States*, published in 1938 through the Institute. This three volume work detailed the story of the Jesuits from the restoration of the order in 1814 through their work with Indian missions, the creation of academies to educate the urban poor, and finally the establishment of a series of universities in cities across the Midwest region.¹⁴

The publication of books and articles, while done prolifically by Jacobson, Garraghan, and Delanglez, was not the sole goal of their research. They devoted considerable time and money toward collecting the historical sources that would sustain scholarship in future generations. When they returned from research trips to Quebec City, Montreal, Ottawa, Paris, and London they brought with them microfilms of the collections they had consulted. These collections were the capital reserve that would insure the vitality of the Institute as a research center.¹⁵

¹³ “Contents,” *Mid-America* vol. 19 (1937), 301; “Contents,” *Mid-America*, vol. 18 (1936), 289. Sister Hilger was the first woman to receive a Ph.D. from the Catholic University of America and she became a distinguished ethnographer with a particular interest in the lives of Native American children.

¹⁴ Michael Grace and Kathy Young, “Biographical Sketch,” Jean Delanglez Papers, Loyola University Chicago Archives; Grace and Young, “Biographical Sketch,” Gilbert J. Garraghan Papers, Loyola University Chicago Archives; Gilbert J. Garraghan, *The Jesuits of the Middle United States* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1983).

¹⁵ Midwest Jesuit Archives: Missouri Collection, Institute of Jesuit History Microfilm, <http://jesuitarchives.org/institute-of-jesuit-history-series/>, accessed December, 2015.

Jerome Jacobson remained editor of *Mid-America* for more than thirty years and during that time he adapted to the changing nature of Catholic higher education and the broadening of the historical profession. The strongly Catholic and Jesuit nature of the journal's content ebbed over time as the principals behind the Institute died, Wilson and Garraghan in 1942 and Delanglez in 1949. By the mid-1950s articles in the journal reflect a gradual move toward general American history topics. In 1956, for example, such articles included "Mississippi State Aid For Indigent Soldiers, 1861-1865," "John Bright and the British Attitude Toward the American Civil War," and "Rival Urban Communication Schemes For Possession of the Northwest Fur Trade." The only Catholic-oriented article published that year was "Orestes A. Brownson and the Irish." During these years, it is clear that *Mid-America* was following the trajectory that turned the *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* from a regional to a national publication. Many of the nation's up-and-coming and leading historians published in *Mid-America*: Martin Ridge on the Populists, Monroe Billington on southern politics, and Gerald Grob on the Knights of Labor.¹⁶

By the 1960s, with Jacobson still at the helm, the journal completely lost any connection to the editor's earlier focus on Catholic history and the borderlands approach. Between 1968 and 1969 not a single Catholic related article was published. Some of the best pieces related to Midwestern history, such as Ronald Formisano's analysis of political party formation in antebellum Michigan or Frederick Luebke's essay on German Immigrants in Nebraska, but the majority of the articles dealt with the broad range of American history, with an emphasis on diplomatic and political history.¹⁷

When Jacobson passed away in August 1970 after devoting thirty-years to *Mid-America*, the journal was still being published by the Institute of Jesuit History at Loyola. The Institute, however, had lost all momentum. Its founders had all passed away. The surviving Jesuit scholars at the university were not active contributors to the journal. The approach to Catholic Midwestern history pioneered by Gilbert Garraghan and Jean Delanglez was still being carried out by a new generation of Jesuit historians, but they were at other universities and were not brought into the Institute. At St. Louis University John Francis Bannon, S.J. was another former Bolton student who became a leading borderland scholar and one of the founders of the Western History Association.

¹⁶ "Contents," *Mid-America* vol. 38 (1956); "Contents," *Mid-America* vol. 39 (1957).

¹⁷ "Contents," *Mid-America* vol. 50 (1968); "Contents," *Mid-America* vol. 51 (1969).

At Marquette University Joseph P. Donnelly, S.J. specialized in the history of the Catholic missions. His 1967 book *Wilderness Kingdom: Indian Life in the Rocky Mountains, 1844-1847, The Journals and Paintings of Father Nicholas Point, S.J.* was a work of translation and publication similar to what the Institute had done in the 1930s. Donnelly later followed directly in the footsteps of Delanglez with a detailed biography *Jacques Marquette* in 1985. Many of his books were published by Loyola University Press, but he was not part of the Institute. In spite of its long track record of scholarship and the impressive microfilm collection of sources that had been gathered, the Institute of Jesuit History at Loyola University was not able to sustain itself.¹⁸

John Mentag, S.J. maintained a Jesuit presence at *Mid-America* by serving as editor from 1970 to 1981. All association with the nearly-defunct Institute of Jesuit History ended in 1981, however, when the editorship passed to the lay faculty at Loyola University. Louise A. Kerr, a historian of Chicano Chicago, and William Galush, a historian of Poles in the urban Midwest, took over as editors of the journal. The sponsorship of *Mid-America* at that point rested solely in the Department of History. Gradually Galush formed a national editorial board made up of experts in a diverse range of American history fields. There was some discussion of having the journal specialize in Midwestern history but this was tabled in favor of staying with the format that had evolved since the 1950s. The *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* had already lost its regional identity and in 1964 had become the *Journal of American History*. Instead of attempting to fill the Midwestern regional history void left by the demise of the *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, the Loyola editors of *Mid-America* felt that their publication would better fill a niche by serving as a second general American history publication.

In spite of new leadership *Mid-America* faced a number of challenges in the 1990s. Changes in academic history gradually cut out the ground from under the journal. The field became increasingly more specialized with the development of scholarly communities focused on social history, cultural history, gender history, and even public history. Each chronological period in the American past created their own affinity organizations. In 1974 the Urban History Association was founded and soon had their own journal. Three years later the Society of Historians of the Early Republic was formed and sponsored the *Journal of the Early Republic*. In keeping with this trend in 1988, late nineteenth and early twentieth century historians joined in their own organization and

¹⁸ Laurie Arnold, "John Francis Bannon, S. J. (1905-1986)," Western History Association website, <http://westernhistoryassociation.wildapricot.org/Resources/Documents/President%20Profiles/bannon.pdf>, accessed December 2015; Joseph P. Donnelly, S.J. *Jacques Marquette, S.J., 1637-1675* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1985)

sponsored the *Journal of the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era*. Quality contributions that in the past were submitted to *Mid-America* increasingly went to these special affinity journals where they were guaranteed to reach fellow specialists in that era. Each of these new journals were sustained by a blend of individual and institutional subscriptions. *Mid-America* in contrast was not supported by a membership organization and relied largely on institutional subscriptions, of which it had a solid base in the 1970s and into the 1980s. Yet the proliferation of history publications and a gradual tightening of library budgets inexorably ate away at that base. In the face of this, *Mid-America's* editors attempted to respond creatively. Under Galush the journal improved its format and the quality of its content. From 1999 to 2002 Eileen M. McMahon served as editor. She was an historian of the Irish-American experience in the urban Midwest and under her direction the journal expanded into review essays and theme issues, while its scope continued to be United States history broadly defined.

Mid-America faced an internal challenge as well. In the mid-1990s Loyola University Chicago went through a financial crisis triggered by a change in the relationship between the school's health care divisions and the academic units. At the same time student enrollment began to decline. The response to these issues was bungled and the economic pressures on all sectors of the institution increased. While this was happening, declining library subscriptions required the university to offer greater financial support for the journal. In 2000 the budget for *Mid-America* was reduced and finally after the release of the Volume 84 in 2002 the university ceased publication.

In its eighty-four years of existence, *Mid-America* had evolved from a local Catholic historical publication to a specialized journal of Jesuit and borderlands history to finally a general publication of United States history. In the course of its first half century of existence it made a distinct contribution the study of the Midwestern region through publication of articles and documents related to French and Spanish colonial endeavors. The gradual turn away from Midwestern content that occurred in the pages of *Mid-America* during the 1950s and 1960s took place at time when the historical profession failed to exhibit a focused interest in the Midwest region. While a "Southern" and "Western" historiography flourished, Midwestern scholarship lacked self-consciousness as well as a professional organization to promote its endeavors.

Echoes of *Mid-America* and the Institute for Jesuit History are still heard at Loyola University. From 1980 to 1993 Loyola hosted the Mid-American Research Center, a public history consulting division that conducted historic preservation, archaeology, and corporate history projects across

the Midwestern region. In 1992 the University sponsored an international symposium entitled “Agents of Change: Jesuit Encounters in Two Worlds” that included a traveling exhibit and the publication of a collection of research contributions. In 2014 a major exhibit and conference honored the bicentennial of the end of the suppression of the Society of Jesus. The “Crossings and Dwellings” exhibit in-turn led to the Ramonat Seminar in American Catholic History and Culture which offers undergraduate students the experience of a year-long in-depth experience studying Catholic history. These projects together with the Hank Center for Catholic Intellectual Heritage at Loyola indicates a sustaining interest in the history that first brought the Illinois Catholic Historical Society into existence in 1918. In that sense the memory of Frederic Siedenbug and Jerome Jacobson endures as an example, a useable past, for the current generation of scholars and students.