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Winter 2002

Review of *The Frontiers and Catholic Identities* Edited by Anne M. Butler, Michael E. Engh, and Thomas W. Spalding

Robert C. Carriker

Gonzaga University, carriker@gonzaga.edu

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Carriker, Robert C., "Review of *The Frontiers and Catholic Identities* Edited by Anne M. Butler, Michael E. Engh, and Thomas W. Spalding" (2002). *Great Plains Quarterly*. 2330.
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one of nine proposed or already issued titles in the American Catholic Identities Series, each a documentary sampling on specific topics. As such, it is a sort of proposal, or suggestion, about where to locate sources that will increase one's knowledge in two areas: the role of the frontier in the making of American Catholicism, and the significance of the Catholic imprint upon the American frontier. To guide the reader, the editors offer seven substantial introductions, fifteen topical segments, and a photographic essay and afterword. All of this is contained in a modest-looking paperback volume.

The breadth of issues considered is quite remarkable. More remarkable still is the depth to which the editors have gone to locate long-forgotten passages. Quotes from documents are short, usually no more than a couple of pages of text, but lead the reader to seldom-considered sources that beg for longer consultation. Indians speak to missionaries, priests complain about bishops, and laymen write to each other. Jesuits and Dominicans have their say, but so too do army chaplains, nuns, brothers, Hispanics, converts, and Protestants—in other words, the book represents exactly the mix of people who inhabited the frontier. There are official reports and personal reminiscences from New France, Kentucky, Minnesota, Utah, Oregon, and other settings, a total of ninety-eight voices in all, each followed by a complete bibliographic citation. For the dedicated reader whose eyes have been opened wide about the variety of Catholic interplay on the frontier, or for the professor up-grading a “New Western History” course on the American frontier, the book offers two additional possibilities: a list of suggested readings, and the names of the Catholic archives in the “Acknowledgments” where additional documents can be found.

Butler, Engh and Spalding are to be congratulated for their exhaustive research.

The Frontiers and Catholic Identities. Edited by Anne M. Butler, Michael E. Engh, and Thomas W. Spalding. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999. Illustrations, additional suggested readings. xxxii + 221 pp. \$25.00 paper.

Sometimes small books can have a large impact. This is one of those publications. It might be likened to a bale of cotton which, in appearance, seems compact and contained, but, when opened, expands to generous proportions. *The Frontiers and Catholic Identities* is

ROBERT C. CARRIKER
Department of History
Gonzaga University