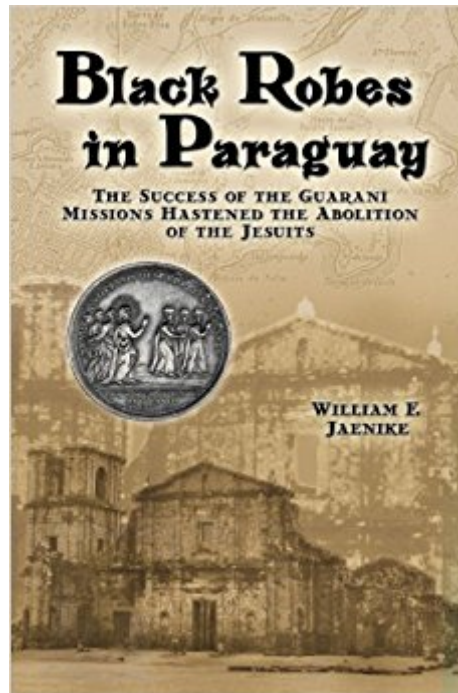




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Black Robes In Paraguay



Synopsis

This slice of 17th and 18th century western history is a saga of love, savage violence, and betrayal that reads like fiction. While it is centered on a famous Roman Catholic order, its international and religious scope makes it of interest to armchair historians of all beliefs including Protestants, Jews, agnostics and secular humanists. In colonial South America the Jesuits established missions among the Guaraní. As the Portuguese and Spanish slavers descended on Paraguay, the Jesuits sought to protect these stone-age Indians in their missions. Their resistance to the colonists' attacks contributed to the political problems of the church with Catholic monarchs back in Europe. As a consequence, the monarchs pressured a frightened pope to abolish the Jesuit order. In the long, tortured history of European colonization of the Americas, these Jesuit Black Robes in Paraguay stood out as a breed apart, even from their fellow Jesuits elsewhere. Leaders of the anti-Catholic, anti-Jesuit Enlightenment such as Voltaire and Raynal rallied to the side of these extraordinary Paraguay missionaries. Raynal wrote that never has so much good been done for mankind with so little evil. Ironically, the heretic monarchs of Russia and Prussia invited hundreds of the former Jesuits to run their colleges. In doing so, they inadvertently saved these outcasts to become the nucleus around which a reinvigorated papacy would re-establish the Jesuit order forty years after its abolition.

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Customer Reviews

This remarkable story of the 17th and 18th century Jesuit missions in Paraguay is set in the midst of

the religious rivalries between the cross and the crown in distant Europe. A great read for all Christians and others of good will. --William T. Dentzer, Jr., Former Deputy U.S. Ambassador to the Organization of American States

The Jesuit reductions in Paraguaría were probably the most successful missionary enterprise in history, a fact still very present in the region. However, this success contributed to the downfall of the founders, and for the general reader this book impressively tells that story, little known to the English-speaking world. --W. Michael Mathes, Professor Emeritus, University of San Francisco; El Colegio de Jalisco

This sweeping story of a barely known slice of history, solidly placed in the context of world events of the times, is well-researched and entertaining replete with colorful background events involving missionaries struggling with cannibals, slavers, man-eating jaguars, fire-ants, plagues and the machinations of monarchs, politicians and prelates. I learned a lot the primary purpose of good history. --Kenneth Veit, former President of Aetna International, Inc. and current chairman of the Phoenix Arizona History Book Club

William F. Jaenike, an electronics engineer, is a graduate of Manhattan College with a masters from Pace University. He is a retired CEO and chairman of The Depository Trust Company and is an amateur historian with a passion for telling the story of the Guaraní Republic in Paraguay.

One of the finest history volumes I've read. Inspired by the film "The Mission", this is about the very real use of the Jesuits to missionize the Guarni Indians of Brazil, Uruguay and other nations in South America. The Jesuits were among the most erudite missionaries to ever serve the Catholic Church. They were involved in some of the machinations of various kingdoms in Europe most seriously, Spain & Portugal. These two were among the nastiest slavers in all of Europe. They both exploited the Guani and various other Indians in South America. Also, of course, Central America and the Southwestern areas of the future United States. The Jesuits never actually got into combat with the Spanish or Portuguese slavers and soldiers who tried to close down the Guani missions. There were very definitely Guani mission Indians who fought against the Spanish and Portuguese. But, combinations of the Jesuits with Guani did not happen. The film "The Mission" is one of the finest films ever created. Jeremy Irons and Robert de Niro star as two men who come to God ... one to stay under the host and cross ... the other reverting to the weapon in "the name of God." This book is truly a fine read, but also well researched. I'd recommend it for anyone wanting to follow through with the threads established with the film. Also, a deep investigation into how the Jesuits were expelled from the church, then reinstated. A dark period in the history of the Roman Catholic

Church. Not the first, not the last. But, the dangers of weaving political power & religious power. America has somehow been able to avoid this swamp. I hope we continue.

The book was informative, interesting. I learned a lot about Latin American history and the formation of countries of Brazil, Paraguay, Bolivia and Uruguay. Became more knowledgeable about the Jesuits.

Great read

Jaenike gives the reader a real treat in this book. It's a tale well told in a book that's hard to put down. The author has a capacity to tell exactly the right story to bring home significant points, bringing into relief both saints and villains. He goes back and forth between what is happening in Paraguay between Jesuits and the Guarani on the one hand, but just as importantly, on the other hand, giving the story of events in Europe that will ultimately lead not just to the demise of the Guarani missions but of the Jesuit order itself.

I recently moved to Paraguay and wanted to obtain some historical context before venturing out to explore the reductions. In the first half of the book, I found the author's explanation on the origins of the Jesuit Society informative, details regarding the division of the New World between Spain and Portugal useful, and his vignettes regarding life in the missions illuminating- but I never felt he penetrated the psyche of the Jesuits themselves. Perhaps more extensive use of actual Jesuit correspondence would have helped better reveal their thoughts, struggles, and unvarnished sentiments regarding the Guarani. The second half of the book provided the necessary, but at times tedious, description of the political machinations that ultimately gave rise to the expulsion of the Jesuits from Europe and the Guarani Republic. No detail was spared in the author's vivid description of the horrific torture of "conspirators" and Jesuits at the hands of Portuguese Marquis Pombal. Overall, a very informative and entertaining read that is certain to sharpen the contrast when I finally make my way to the reductions strewn across the borders of Brazil, Argentina, and modern Paraguay.

It is refreshing to read a history written by someone who is not a professional historian that is so well researched. Here is a book on a little visited corner of the world that touches on a relatively obscure chapter in history, but manages to entertain and capture its reader's interest by relating it all to the

larger issues of the world stage over an extended period. While this is a book about the controversial Catholic order of Jesuits, it is not just for Catholic readers. In fact, the author bends over backward to present a balanced and nuanced narrative that should appeal to those who are more interested in historical machinations than grubby religious conflict.

I found this exciting history of early South America exceptionally well written and easy to follow. William Jaenike has done an outstanding job of bringing this period of time in the early history of the Jesuits and of the influences of various European countries into easy to understand writing. Those were bloody times and cruel times and are vividly brought to mind by this excellent author. I highly recommend this book to all.

I loved this book. It combined a very personal view of the people involved with a well researched history of the period. I thought it was both entertaining and educational.

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