

[Free] Metairie: A Tongue of Land to Pasture

## Metairie: A Tongue of Land to Pasture

*Henry C. Bezou*

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**Henry C. Bezou : Metairie: A Tongue of Land to Pasture** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Metairie: A Tongue of Land to Pasture:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. History In the Service of StoryBy OtterMonsignor Bezou's history is predominately interested in the formation of the Catholic Community in East Jefferson Parish, and in the development of St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church on Metairie Road in particular. Bezou gradually focuses in on the very small community of Old Metairie, excluding most of East Jefferson. The book is open to the criticism that it lacks focus as a whole, though, starting off as a history of the area generally and then becoming a history of one Catholic congregation there. But his very readable history starts with a much wider lens that should be of general interest. Bezou gives a cogent and generally accurate account of European settlement of the area. He traces the natural features of the land and how the Native American and European settlers interacted with them, tracing the ebb and flow of property lines, the rise and fall of colonial figures, and of course the gradual emergence of a stable religious community in Jefferson Parish. (Readers should bear in mind that "Jefferson Parish" once extended all the way from Kenner in the west to the border of what is now the Central Business District in the East. It's useful to have a good local map handy while reading.) As a local historian Bezou is quite competent, and as a story-teller he has strong gifts, particularly in the earlier chapters as he lays out the colonization of Jefferson Parish and the small early dramas that made it what it is. In my opinion, the first third of the book is the best. Bezou's perspective leaves a great deal out: the role of religion in the subjugation of the Native Americans, for instance, as well as role of religion in both oppressing and liberating African Americans. The story of the integration of Jefferson Parish is not a bucolic one, and Catholicism has played a part for

both good and evil in it, but this is not a book anxious to broach that thorny bit of history. For some that will never be a forgivable sin, and in my opinion it does weaken the book considerably: not to notice racial and class issues in a history such as this is tough to justify. In his defense, Bezou is not writing a critical social history or even an academic history so much as he is bringing history to the service of telling a specific story to people who have inherited it. He intends to strengthen the community around St. Francis Xavier, and he does so (as religious people have always done) through wrapping history and story together. The earlier part of the book is informative and incisive, while the latter part is an extraordinary contribution to local history, taken on its own terms. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Good, but limited to St. Francis. By Regmar Hanemann I really enjoyed this book - at least the first half. It includes detailed information about the first European settlers of Metairie as well as its history from "Cannes Brulee" up through Alfred Bonnabel. Sadly Monsigneur Bazoo, who was pastor of St. Francis for as long as I can recall, turns the book into a history of St. Francis about midway through the book. He neglects to cover Hog Alley, the Papworth Family, the Bonnabels involvement with education, their "plantation house", Kenner, Harahan, Lakeview, etc. I love St. Francis, don't get me wrong - but a history of Metairie includes more than just St. Francis Parish. Thank you Monsigneur Bazoo for a fascinating book. I wish you had written more. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Father Bezou's book is one of the greatest books written about New Orleans and its environs. By Josee Father Bezou's book is one of the greatest books written about New Orleans and its environs. Certainly the best book written about Metairie. Fascinating history that is extremely well documented using the French source materials, much of which the Catholic Church has, and to which Father Bezou had easy access.

Metairie does have a rich history all its own. What was once described two centuries ago as "a tongue of land to lend pasturage" has become the second largest unincorporated city in the nation.