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Researching the Priests in the Family

BY RICHARD A. YEHLE

Would you become a priest if you had a large family and ended up officiating at each of their deaths? In the case of my closest priestly relative, my granduncle, that was indeed the case, as is documented later in this article. My hope is that my experience in researching Fred's life will help in your efforts.

Many of us have relatives that have entered the clergy in connection with various religions. In the case of my family, there are several who have become Catholic priests, the closest being Fred Jacob Yehle, who was born 9 December 1899 in St. Joseph, Buchanan, Missouri.



Fred is shown in the 1910 U.S. Federal Census living with his parents, Lambert and Catherine and five siblings (Ollie, Isabelle, Francis, Dora, Victor) at 1010 S. 10th Street, St. Joseph, Missouri. He was 9 years old and born in Missouri. Fred was baptized as Fridolin in St. Joseph, Buchanan, Missouri. Date unknown.^{1,2}

He was employed in a variety of jobs, while continuing to live with his parents and eventually studying for the clergy.

City Directories

Besides the U.S. Federal Census, the St. Joseph City Directories provided occupation related information. The following job and residence information was noted in the indicated year's St. Joseph City Directories:

- 1915: Helper, Jewel Tea Co., residence 2722 Locust.
- 1917: Clerk, Ford Motor Co., residence 2722 Locust.
- 1918-1919: Clerk, Wheeler & Motter Merc Co., residence 727 S. 15th.

- The 1920 Census shows family living at 724 South Fifteenth Street. Frederick J. is 20 years old. Occupation is shown as being a Bookkeeper—wholesale clothing.
- 1928: Clerk, Brown Transf & Stg Co., residence 727 S. 15th.
- 1935 and 1937: Student, 727 S. 15th Street.

Religious Education³

Much of the information I got concerning seminary training was obtained from the Archivist for the Catholic Diocese in St. Joseph Missouri.

Conception Seminary, Missouri

What would later become known as Conception Seminary College was founded on July 2, 1886, under the name College of New Engelberg. The school building was dedicated on January 27, 1887, and classes were offered at the high school and junior college levels, with a choice between a "classical" and "commercial" curriculum. Four years later the college began

granting degrees. During the subsequent years, class sizes grew rapidly, faculty credentials improved and science labs, sports teams, and honor societies were developed. By 1915 the college enrolled 118 students. See: www.conception.edu/history.htm.

This facility was within travel distance of St. Joseph, Missouri where Fred lived. During the years 1935-1937, when he was living at home and listed as a student, he likely attended this seminary.

St. Thomas Seminary, dates unknown, Denver, Colorado⁴

The library of the Our Lady of the New Advent Theological Institute began with St. Thomas Seminary in 1907 and has grown through the years to become one of the premier theological libraries in the country, with a collection of over 130,000 volumes. The library is named after Urban J. Vehr, archbishop of Denver for 36 years (1931-1967), who actively promoted the seminary and library, and left to it his substantial personal collection. In 1956 Archbishop Vehr dedicated new seminary buildings, matching the old Lombardian style, which now houses both the library and Catholic Pastoral Center. See: www.archden.org/institute/.

Kenrick Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri

In 1893, Archbishop John Kain presided at the reopening of the philosophy and theology departments of the Archdiocesan Seminary. The new Seminary, located at 19th Street and Cass Avenue in St. Louis, was the first to bear the name Kenrick Seminary. By 1915 a new seminary was needed, and Archbishop John Glennon (in 1946, Cardinal Glennon) opened a new Kenrick Seminary on Kenrick Road in what is now called the city of Shrewsbury. The College Seminary moved to a location on Washington Avenue.

In 1931, the first St. Louis Preparatory Seminary opened at 5200 Glennon Drive at the present site of Kenrick-Glennon Seminary. The facility housed the last two years of high school and four years of college. (The first two years of high school were at Cathedral Latin School on Washington Avenue.) In 1947, Archbishop Joseph Ritter (in 1961, Cardinal Ritter) closed Cathedral Latin School and established six-year programs in two Archdiocesan seminaries. St. Louis Preparatory Seminary thus comprised four years of high school and two years of college, while Kenrick comprised two years of college and four years of theology. See: www.kenrick.edu/cgc/history.htm.

Fred spoke German and English. He spoke German because his father was an immigrant from Baden, Germany, while his mother was born in Illinois. His history was obtained from the diocese archivist and Internet searches which sometimes resulted in church histories.

Ordination/Assignments

Fred was ordained as a Catholic Priest on 11 Jun 1938 at St. Joseph Cathedral.

Associate pastor, Immaculate Conception Church, St. Joseph, Missouri, 25 June 1938

1939-1940: Rev. Fred Yehle was assigned as assistant pastor at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, 507 South 10th Street, Saint Joseph, Buchanan, Missouri.

Pastor: Blessed Sacrament, Hannibal, Missouri, 26 July 1941

Pastor: St. Paul Parish, Tarkio, Missouri, 25 Jan 1947

Pastor: Blessed Sacramento, Hannibal, Missouri, 17 Sep 1954

The Last Will and Testament of Ollie Herman, sister, dated 20 Sept 1955, and attached to the Affidavit as to Death and Application for Probate of Will for Ollie Herman, states the following as Ollie bequeaths her assets upon her death (10 Feb 1971): "To my brother, Reverend Father Fred Yehle, Hannibal, Missouri."

In 1956, State of Missouri diocese reconfigured and Fred was transferred to the Jefferson City Diocese in August.

* The Codicil to Ollie Herman's last will and testament, dated 20 April 1959, states: "To my brother, Reverend Father Fred Yehle of Kirksville Missouri." Ollie Herman was Fred's sister, originally Ollie Yehle, born in 1883."

* The Official Catholic Directory Anno Domini 1960 shows Rev. Fred J. Yehle at Kirksville, Adair, Missouri at the Mary Immaculate Catholic Church. His residence was 716 E Washington St., Kirksville, Missouri, 63501, the same as the church. There was a school and missions. [CEM] shown on church and missions.

A History of Mary Immaculate Parish, Kirksville lists Fred Yehle as having been at the church in 1964.⁵

1970-1971: The Application of Letters of Administration for the probate court of Ollie Yehle shows that Reverend Fred J. Yehle, brother, resided in Edina, Missouri 63537. The Application of Letters of Testimony

for Frances Y. Englemann's [another of Fred's sisters] estate shows same address, dated 5 Jan 1971.

The Official Catholic Directory Anno Domini is available for a variety of years. I found copies at the local Family History Center (FHC). If several are available, the various assignments for the priests can be tracked into retirement.

The Official Catholic Directory Anno Domini 1975: Rev. Fred J. Yehle at St. Patrick, Clark Co., Missouri. St. Patrick Catholic Church. [CEM] indicates that there is a cemetery on the grounds.

Retirement and Beyond

Fred J. Yehle retired in 1979.

The Official Catholic Directory Anno Domini 1983: Fred J. Yehle was retired and residing at 312-A Fulkerson Street, Jefferson City, MO 65101.

The Official Catholic Directory Anno Domini 1987: Fred J. Yehle was retired and residing at the St. Joseph's Home for the Aged, 1306 W. Main St., Jefferson City, MO 65101.

Died: 4 Aug 1989, Jefferson City, Cole County, Missouri.

Buried: 7 Aug 1989, Resurrection Cemetery, 3015 W Truman Blvd, Jefferson City, Cole County, Missouri.

Church Bulletins

These are sometimes available, and can assist with information concerning your relative as well. In my case the citation was obtained from the diocese archivist.

*Obituary, 13 August 1989— from the church bulletin:*⁶

"Father Fred Jacob Yehle, former priest in the Diocese of St. Joseph, died Aug. 4 at St. Joseph Home in Jefferson City where he had been living in retirement since 1979.

"Fr. Yehle was born Dec. 8, 1899, in St. Joseph. He attended Immaculate Conception Seminary in Conception and Kenrick Seminary in St. Louis and was ordained June 11, 1938, in the Cathedral of St. Joseph in St. Joseph by the late bishop Charles LeBlond, Bishop of St. Joseph.

"Fr. Yehle's pastoral assignments in the St. Joseph diocese included assistant at Immaculate Conception in St. Joseph, assistant at Blessed Sacrament in

Hannibal, pastor of St. Paul in Tarkio and pastor of Blessed Sacrament in Hannibal.

"He became a priest of the Diocese of Jefferson City when it was established as a diocese in 1956.

"He is survived by one sister, Isabel Herman, Liberty, and nieces and nephews.

"Fr. Yehle's funeral was Aug. 7 at 11 a.m. at the St. Joseph Home with Bishop Michael F. McAuliffe as the principal celebrant. Burial was in Resurrection Cemetery in Jefferson City.

Newspapers

Newspapers are a natural source of additional information, especially when the local priest is present for death-related events, events being held in the town; births, baptisms, etc. Many of these are officiating duties. In the case of Fred Yehle, he was in attendance (often as the officiating priest) at most of his direct relatives (siblings, parents, etc.) as noted below.

St. Joseph News-Press 11 August 1989

Rev. Fred Yehle

The Rev. Fred J. Yehle, 89, a retired Catholic priest who was a native of St. Joseph, died Friday, Aug. 4, 1989, at Jefferson City, Mo.

Father Yehle, who at one time had been pastor of Immaculate Conception parish in Jefferson City, had been assistant pastor at Immaculate Conception—now Queen of the Apostles—Church in St. Joseph some 50 years ago.

Ordained in St. Joseph June 11, 1938, he had also been pastor of churches at Tarkio, Kirksville, Edina, Brunswick, Hannibal, and St. Patrick, all in Missouri. Seminary at Conception, Mo., and Kenrick Seminary, St. Louis.

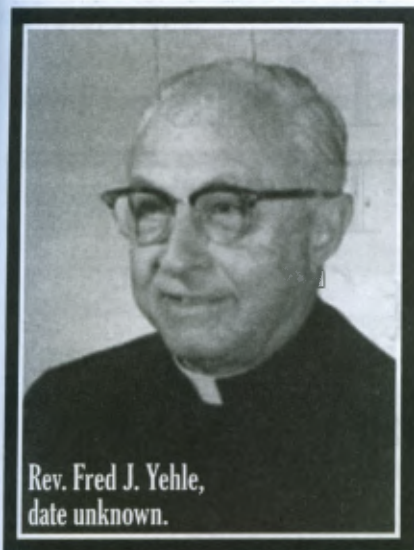
He observed his golden anniversary as a priest in June 1988.

Surviving: A sister, Isabel Herman, Liberty, Mo.

Services were held Monday in the chapel of St. Joseph's Home, Jefferson City. Burial was in

Name:	Fred J. Yehle
SSN:	497-42-6994
Last Residence:	65109 Jefferson City, Cole, Missouri, United States of America
Born:	9 Dec 1899
Died:	4 Aug 1989
State (Year) SSN issued:	Missouri (1956)

Social Security-Death information
from AncestryLibrary.proquest.com.



Rev. Fred J. Yehle,
date unknown.

Mary Immaculate Parish (1888)
is a parish in the Diocese of
Jefferson City MO.,
716 E Washington,
Kirksville, Missouri 63501.
See: www.miparish.org



Resurrection Cemetery, Jefferson City. Arrangements: Dulle Funeral Home, Jefferson City.

Officiating Duties

Fred officiated at the memorial service/burials of many in his immediate family:

11 Feb 1971: Ollie Yehle-Herman, sister. I don't have information on Anthony J. Herman who died 25 Oct 1949.

28 Dec 1970: Frances A. Yehle-Engelmann, sister. Another priest officiated for his brother-in-law, Ludwig J. Engelmann who died 1 Mar 1964.

31 Oct 1969: Victor B. Yehle, brother, obituary mentions Fred as survivor but doesn't list officiating priest.

26 Jan 1968: Alice L. Morris-Yehle, sister-in-law.

9 Apr 1958: Frank F. Herman, brother-in-law (wife was Isabelle Yehle-Herman).

9 Aug 1957: Casimir T. Yehle, brother, who died in St. Paul, Minnesota.

19 April 1952: Katherine Germing-Yehle, mother.

Only one sister, Isabel, outlived him, dying in 1993 at age 104.

His father, Lambert Yehle, died on 8 Jun 1938 and was buried 10 June 1938, the day before Fred was ordained OR Lambert may have died some time later, as a Maryville Missouri newspaper article mentions a 55-year anniversary in 1945. By 1952, Katherine was a widow.

U.S. Social Security Death Index

The U.S. Social Security Death Index listing is useful if your relative died in the mid-1960s or later. It is available from a variety of sources.

Photographs

These are available either from private/family sources or if you, for example, know the name of a church, via images.google.com or a normal Internet search.

Endnotes

- 1 Reference to a missionary, founder of the Monastery of Säckingen, Baden (sixth century). In accordance with a later tradition, St. Fridolin is venerated as the first Irish missionary who laboured among the Alamanni on the Upper Rhine, in the time of the Merovingians. The earliest documentary information we possess concerning him is the biography written by Balthar, a Säckingen monk, at the beginning of the eleventh century.
- 2 Information provided by Reverend Michael Cole, Archivist Diocese St. Joseph Missouri, via email Feb. 2005.
- 3 Information provided by Reverend Michael Cole, Archivist Diocese St. Joseph Missouri, via email Feb. 2005. Years of attendance are unknown.
- 4 Information provided by Reverend Michael Cole, Archivist Diocese St. Joseph Missouri, via email Feb. 2005.
- 5 www2.truman.edu/~adavis/mipages/MaryImaculate%5B1%5D.htm
- 6 Information provided by Reverend Michael Cole, Archivist Diocese St. Joseph Missouri, via email Feb. 2005.



Richard A. Yehle was spent his entire life in Sacramento CA. Upon retirement in January 2005, after 37 years with the US Postal Service, he spent many hours attending local genealogical classes and seminars. He has also spent uncountable hours on the Internet augmenting a barebones start made by his sister twenty-five years earlier. Thanks to genealogical libraries locally and in Northwest Missouri, along with a wealth of on-line sources provided by distant libraries, he now knows that even with 5000 names there is more to find out than there was three years ago. Richard is a member of a half dozen genealogical societies, including two in Missouri.