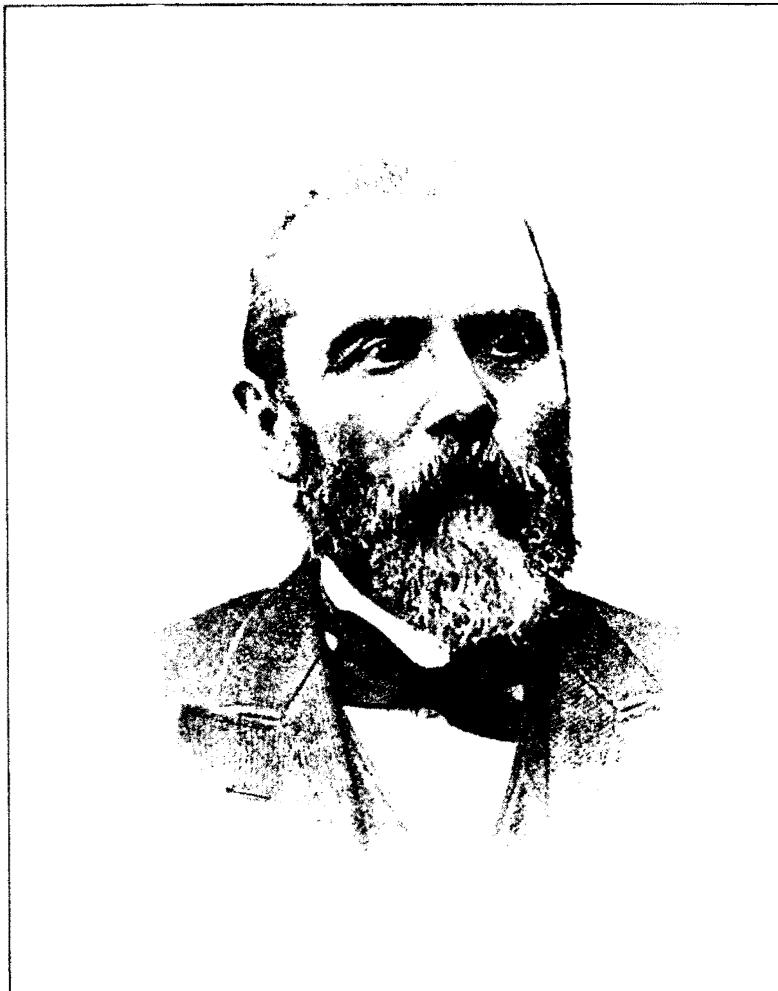


Barquilla del Santa Maria

BULLETIN of the Catholic Record Society- Diocese of Columbus

Volume X, Number 7

July 1985



Captain Joseph Christian Wehrle
(1836-1890)

In 1865, Philomena Morath, daughter of Elizabeth Jacobs Morath and granddaughter of Barbara Spindler Jacobs Cronenberger, married Joseph C. Wehrle of Newark. The above photograph is taken from the Memorial Record of Licking County, Ohio (Chicago: Record Publishing Company, 1894), courtesy of the State Library of Ohio. Unfortunately, no photograph of Mrs. Wehrle has been found at this time. The story of the Spindler descendants continues in this issue of the BULLETIN.

THE SPINDLER DESCENDANTS
AND THE CHURCH IN THE DIOCESE OF COLUMBUS
by Donald M. Schlegel

(Continued from Vol. X, No. 6.)

Captain and Mrs. Wehrle

On Sunday September 27, 1840 the sixteen-day-old first-born child of Michael and Elizabeth Morath was baptized in the tiny stone church of St. Remigius on the eastern edge of Columbus. Father Josue M. Young poured the water over her forehead as little Philomena Veronica Morath was re-born in the name of the Holy Trinity. (51) While still a small child, her family moved to Newark, where she grew up in the home next to the sights and smells and hard work of her father's brewery on Walnut street and later in the more spacious house on the west side of Newark. Her formative years were blessed by the presence of the Catholic Church for which her parents, aunts and uncles were so concerned, as previously described, but she could hardly have remained untouched by the movements of the times, the abolitionists, the Know-Nothings, and finally the Civil War which convulsed the nation.

One of Newark's leading soldiers in that war, one well-known to Miss Morath, was Joseph Christian Wehrle. Joseph was born in Rheinberg in Germany on March 3, 1836, son of a Catholic family whose head was Martin Wehrle, a blacksmith and merchant. The Wehrles immigrated to this country and settled in Newark in 1849. Martin (died 1876) and his wife Elizabeth (died 1861) had ten children, of whom only four lived to adulthood; these were Joseph, Catherine who married John McCarthy of Newark; Elizabeth; and Anna who married William Sex of Newark. Joseph followed interests similar to his father's, first learning and following the moulder's trade and then in 1859 opening a grocery on Fifth street. (52)

After the opening battles of the Civil War, when it had become clear that the conflict would not be quickly resolved, Joseph Wehrle enlisted and on October 17, 1861 was appointed Second Lieutenant of Company E, Seventy-sixth Ohio Volunteer Infantry. He went about recruiting and organizing this company at his own expense and on December 16 was commissioned its Captain. Captain Wehrle was a Republican, an unusual affiliation for a Catholic then, and so was a supporter of President Lincoln. We do not know what Captain Wehrle's own thoughts were concerning slavery, but we can be certain that with all of his comrades-in-arms he shared one purpose in going to war, a purpose now not often remembered or taught, that of preserving the Federal Union and the Constitution. Father B. M. O'Boylan, pastor at Newark, explained this purpose nearly fifty years later: "for the preservation of the union without which our country might now be at the mercy of every daring adventurer at home, and the diplomatic center of every foreign power that might wish to use it for their ambitions." (53)

Captain Wehrle's unit served in the western army in the Mississippi Valley, which from the start was victorious. It took part in the battles of Fort Donelson, Shiloh, and Corinth (Pea Ridge) and then moved on down the Mississippi. At Millikens Bend the regiment captured the rebel steam boat Fair Play, having on board six thousand stand of arms, and pursued the Confederate troops for nine miles. Then a volunteer detail of one hundred men

from the 76th and 58th Ohio regiments, under command of Captain Wehrle, was sent up the Yazoo River (in Mississippi) on board two rams and accompanied by two ironclads. At Haines Bluffs they drove out a garrison of Confederates and captured some ammunition and a number of guns. They proceeded up the Yazoo and Big Sunflower rivers until their rams could go no further and then returned to camp. The regiment was under fire at the battle of Chickasaw Bayou and took part in the battle at Arkansas Post, on January 11, 1863, where Captain Wehrle was wounded. The unit served in Louisiana, then in the Vicksburg campaign, and later in northern Alabama and Tennessee, the battles of Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge, and heavy hand-to-hand combat at Taylor Ridge and Ringgold Ridge in Georgia. It moved on to the Atlanta campaign under General Sherman, after which Captain Wehrle was discharged, on October 28, 1864. (54) On March 13, 1865 he was brevetted Major and Lieutenant-Colonel of United States Volunteers for gallant and meritorious services during the war. (55) He was commonly called Captain or Colonel Wehrle for the rest of his life.

Immediately upon returning to Ohio, Captain Wehrle put the war behind him. On February 9, 1865 he and "one of the sweetest girls in Licking County," (56) Philomena Morath, were married at St. Francis de Sales Church in Newark. Joseph returned to the grocery business, now the wholesale end of the trade, with T. J. Davis as his partner; he soon turned to the wholesale liquor business but by 1875 was again selling groceries at a store on Granville street in partnership with John McCarthy. (57)

In 1872, Captain Wehrle became embroiled in a controversy at St. Francis de Sales parish. Compared with his service in the war, this must have seemed a true "tempest in a teapot," though on the spiritual plane dire consequences could have resulted from it. It does also illustrate the Wehrles' leading place in the congregation.

The pastor at the time was an aging and ill man, Rev. Louis Cartuyvels. Father Cartuyvels had been born in Belgium in 1811 and ordained there in 1839. He came to this country in 1841 and served as a Redemptorist and later a diocesan priest in Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Orleans, and Illinois before the Archbishop of Cincinnati sent him to Newark as pastor late in 1863. (58) In Newark, Father Cartuyvels is credited with obtaining the services of the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati to staff the parish school, beginning in 1864. Unfortunately, financial problems arose, "views of Superiors and Pastor did not agree," and the sisters left in 1870, much to the dismay of the parents of the students. As explained by a later pastor, "The sisters were expected to support themselves from payments of the parents and students, but Father Cartuyvels seems to have been given some of the money which he applied to the costs of operating the parish. The parish was also expected to pay \$1,000 a year to the Sisters, but did not do it. The Sisters had bought a house and lot from Edward Brennan and could not pay for it. This misunderstanding could not be resolved and the sisters withdrew." (59)

After the departure of the sisters, the pastor and the sisters disagreed over ownership of the house and correspondence on the subject circulated among Newark, Columbus, Cincinnati, and Rome as late as 1872, but the financial record kept by the parish was so poor that no sure judgement could be reached. Cardinal Barrato (of the Propaganda) could only suggest that the bishops try to reach some amicable compromise. (60)

The above account illustrates the confused state of the finances of the parish which still existed when Father Cartuyvels' retirement was announced in the summer of 1872. Records are scanty, but it appears that the pastor claimed that the parish was in debt to him; many in the congregation did not believe the parish could be in debt; nothing could be proven from the account books, which were in a shambles; and charges of embezzlement began to be levelled against the parish treasurer. At this juncture the St. Francis de Sales Society and the St. Patrick's Society of the parish, under the leadership of Captain Wehrle and Mr. O'Hare, requested that Bishop Rosecrans lend "his advice and assistance in investigating the financial matters of the Congregation, stopping scandals and restoring harmony."

The Bishop sent as his representative Rev. Louis DeCailly, who arrived in Newark on June 4 to meet with the pastor and the committees of the two parish societies. That afternoon the books of the treasurer were examined and, these showing "nothing to blame," any question of embezzlement of parish funds was put to rest. In the evening, Father DeCailly "having ascertained from Rev. L. Cartuyvels that these Committees were not friendly to him, although elected by the Societies' votes which represent the majority of the Congregation," several of the pastor's friends were asked to attend when the meeting would resume on the next morning.

When the meeting resumed, Father Cartuyvels' books were procured and an attempt was made to determine the parish's debt. The parish books were found to be a fresh copy of an older book and receipts. Another old book "was found to be blotted, erased, changed and torn." In the heat of the argument Captain Wehrle "made a heavy charge against the Pastor for not keeping his books better." To this the chairman, in the same mood, answered that the Captain's own accounts were not very clear and accused him besides of being not a Catholic but a member of some secret society, "which however the Captain disproved afterwards."

It became clear that nothing could be made of the books and Father DeCailly proposed that the parish accept as its debts \$2,000 due to Father Pursell, \$2,000 on the school house just built, and an unspecified amount "to enable their old Pastor to depart in peace and pay his servants their wages during a period of 9 years." However, the committees refused to go before the people as having acknowledged such a debt. Father DeCailly then took another tack, pointing out to the committees that a new pastor could not be sent to them until they had peace and were willing to pay the debts in accord with his decision, if the Bishop approved it. Asked, "Are you willing to support a Priest in carrying out the Bishop's decision before the people?" one by one the committee members conceded that there was no other way of having peace. Two resolutions were then passed, first, in order to make peace among the congregation, that the next pastor publicly exonerate the former treasurers of the charges made against them and, second, that those present would support the next pastor and assist him in carrying out the decision of the Bishop regarding the debt of the parish. (61) This seems to have ended the matter. Father Nicholas Pilger was sent to Newark as pastor on July 1, 1872 and "was a soothing influence on the parish." (62)

In these years the Wehrles' children were born, five daughters and six sons, welcomed into the world with open arms: Joseph, born October 26, 1865, baptized Michael Martin Joseph on Nov. 11; Mary Elizabeth Philomena, born May

1, 1867 and baptized May 12; Louis Edward, born Aug. 29, 1868, baptized Sept. 6 (died at age ten); William Willard Frederick, born Feb. 25, 1870, baptized on March 6; Matilda, born April 15, 1872, baptized Maria Anna Matilda on June 23 (died in childhood); John Patrick Thomas, born March 17, 1874, baptized March 22 (died at age nine); Clara, born Aug. 23, 1875, baptized Mary Susanna Clara on Aug. 29 (died in childhood); Augustine Theodore, born Oct. 18, 1876, baptized Oct. 21; Catherine, born April 9, 1878, baptized Mary Magdalena Catherine on April 21 (died in childhood); Cecilia, born Oct. 31, 1879, baptized Mary Ellen Cecilia on Nov. 9; and Leo Roman, born Sept. 6, 1883, baptized on Sept. 16 (died in childhood). (63)

Captain Wehrle stayed active in Newark's public and business life. He was the first Secretary of the Home Building Association of Newark, incorporated in February of 1880. (64) On December 5, 1881 he and twenty-eight others founded the German Maennerchor, now the Newark Maennerchor, of which he was the first president. It met on the third floor of his building on the public square. (65) In 1883 (or 1885) he took his greatest step in business by forming a partnership with John Moser and purchasing an interest in Moser's foundry. The small Moser & Wehrle foundry, located in east Newark and operated at first by just eight men, manufactured stoves. In January of 1890 Captain Wehrle purchased Mr. Moser's share of the business and conducted it under the name of Moser, Wehrle & Co. (66) His sons William and August were interested in this business, while his eldest son, Joseph, had completed seminary training and was ordained to the priesthood on August 15, 1889.

After a short illness with pneumonia, Captain Wehrle died at his home on the evening of March 31, 1890, at the age of fifty-four years. According to the Catholic Columbian, "He had the special grace to receive the sacraments from his son, the Rev. Father Wehrle, in whose arms he peacefully expired." (67)

Philomena (Morath) Wehrle survived her husband Captain Wehrle for seventeen years. She died at St. Joseph's sanitarium, Mt. Clemens (Michigan?) on October 9, 1907 after an illness of two years. The Columbian described her: "A woman of strong character and marked religious sentiment, she devoted the energies of heart and mind to her children, and to the husband whom she has now joined in a better land. She was a fine example of the perfect Christian wife, mother and friend. Charitable in the extreme, her beneficence is known only to the many she has helped and comforted."

As was the case with her mother and aunts previously mentioned, her life and works remain to a great extent hidden in the home. However, due partly to the fact that her son was a priest of the diocese and her daughter a nun, and partly to her own unique character, we are allowed a better glimpse of her in the "able and touching" eulogy spoken at her funeral by Rev. B. M. O'Boylan and printed in part in the Columbian. Bishop Hartley was present at the solemn requiem Mass, which was celebrated by her son. Taking as his text Ecclesiasticus 26:21-24 (Sirach 26:16-18), Father O'Boylan described Mrs. Wehrle's virtues:

And if I say now what I have said on other occasions, that many have been buried from this church whose simple and holy lives deserve a place for them in the roster of the Saints of God's church, the same may be said of the beloved woman for whom this

parish and city are in mourning today.

Among the wives and daughters of the great ones of the world who were her contemporaries I doubt if there were many whose life-work was rounded out with more beneficial results.

I know not if any great number of their fellow beings will be inspired by nobler acts to do great things for God and man; but I have no doubt of the good effects already produced in the souls of those with whom she was associated in her own sphere and how lasting in good results will be the memory of her gentle and holy life. She lived among the plain people to whom every nation owes its true greatness. She came from the same honest and God-fearing stock that is at once the bulwark and the glory of civilized society. She went about doing good like her Divine Master in the ways of charity and truth; she devoted her heart and mind and hands to all the works that enoble our race; and she did all in harmony with the laws of humility, obedience, courage and self-denial which constitute the essential elements and basic virtues of all that are truly great and useful.

The trend of her thoughts is shown in her works on canvass, where you will find such subjects as the agony and crucifixion of our Lord (which this church holds among its treasures), the Sacred Heart, angelic figures, simple peasants, and such like. (68)

The beauties of Mrs. Wehrle which shone outside her home were her children, brief sketches of whom will conclude this story.

(To be concluded.)

NOTES

- (51) Baptismal Register of Columbus St. Remigius Church, published in the BULLETIN, Vol. VII, page 31.
- (52) Memorial Record of Licking County, Ohio; Chicago: Record Publishing Co., 1894; pp 257-258. Joseph's birthplace is listed on the permanent record card of his daughter, Sr. M. Eulalia, O.P. at the Motherhouse at St. Mary's of the Springs.
- (53) Catholic Columbian, Oct. 14, 1907, page 8.
- (54) The Military History of Ohio... (Licking County Edition); New York, Toledo & Chicago: H. H. Hardesty, 1886; pp. 311, 315, 317.
- (55) Memorial Record, op. cit.
- (56) See the letter to Captain Wehrle from Col. W. B. Woods, published in the BULLETIN, Vol. IV, page 316.
- (57) Memorial Record, op. cit. Everts, L.H., Combination Atlas Map of Licking County; Philadelphia: Thomas Hunter, 1875; p. 131.
- (58) Kappes, Rev. William, St. Francis de Sales Parish, Newark, Ohio: 1844-1977, pages 20-21.
- (59) ibid, page 5, citing: (1) Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati, Minutes of Meetings of Sisters' Council; (2) Licking County Deed Book 92, page 615; and (3) Letters of Mother Regina to Bishop Sylvester Rosecrans, Nov. 3, 1870.
- (60) Archives, Diocese of Columbus, three letters from Cardinal Barrato to Bishop Rosecrans, 16 Aug. and 18 Nov., 1871 and 9 March, 1872.
- (61) Archives, Diocese of Columbus, "Report and Decision on the Newark investigation of Church Accounts" made by Father DeCailly to Bishop Rosecrans.

- (62) Kappes, op. cit., page 21.
- (63) Records of St. Francis de Sales Parish.
- (64) Brister, E.M.P., Centennial History of the City of Newark and Licking County, Ohio; Chicago & Columbus: S.J. Clarke, 1909; vol. 1, page 528.
- (65) The Licking County Genealogical Society, Licking County, Ohio 1982, page 80.
- (66) Memorial Record, op. cit., pages 257, 258, and 350.
- (67) Catholic Columbian, Apr. 5, 1890, page 8.
- (68) ibid., Oct. 14, 1907, page 8.

ST. MARY'S PARISH, MINERTON, VINTON COUNTY
BAPTISMAL REGISTER, 1868-1873
(Continued from Volume X, Number 6)

John, of James QUINN and Isabella Keenan, b. 7 Apr. 1870, bapt. 10 Apr. 1870;
spons. James Doherty and Martha Doherty. M. Ahern

John, of Edward SIMONS and Ellen Fagan, b. 28 Mar. 1870, bapt. 10 Apr. 1870;
spons. John McCartney and Catherine Lawler. M. Ahern

Thomas, of James MAHAFFEY and Jane Buck, b. 24 Feb. 1870, bapt. 3 May 1870;
spons. Francis Lawler and Elizabeth Mahaffey. M. Ahern

Joseph V., of Andrew KECK and Sarah Sweeny, b. 13 Apr. 1870, bapt. 8 May 1870;
spons. Joseph Keenan and Agnes Duffy. M. Ahern

James Nelson, of James McCAFFERTY and Sarah Ellen Whetstone, b. 17 July 1865,
bapt. 22 May 1870; spons. Daniel Fagan and Margaret McClory. M. Ahern

Sarah Ellen, of same, b. 13 Mar. 1867, bapt. 22 May 1870; spons. Charles
McCafferty and Margaret Fagan. M. Ahern

Ann Elizabeth, of same, b. 19 July 1868, bapt. 22 May 1870; spons. John
McCafferty and Mary Fagan. M. Ahern

Patrick Henry, of Patrick MAHAFFEY and Elizabeth Allen, b. 10 Mar. 1870, bapt.
12 June 1870; spons. Jerome Mahaffey and Mary Ferry. M. Ahern

Grace, of Daniel McDERMOTT and Louisa Spouse, b. 30 June 1870, bapt. 10 July
1870; spons. Richard McCartney and Sarah Buck. M. Ahern

James, of William LUNDY and Catherine Sweeney, b. 12 July 1870, bapt. 16 July
1870; spons. Patrick Henry Quinn and Ellen O'Reilly. M. Ahern

Jane, of Owen MARTIN and Elizabeth Carpenter, b. 29 May 1870, bapt. 17 July
1870; spons. Lawrence Boyle and Henrietta Simmons. M. Ahern

Elizabeth, of Andrew MOORE and Mary Cooney, b. 8 Aug. 1870, bapt. 21 Aug.
1870; spons. Joseph Cooney and Bridget Cooney. M. Ahern

Samuel J., of Redmond MCKENZIE and Sarah McKenzie, b. 11 Sept. 1870, bapt. 22
Sept. 1870; spons. Aloysius Stanton and Lydia A. McKenzie. M. Ahern

Susan, of James RYAN and Catherine McPeck, b. 9 July 1870, bapt. 26 Sept. 1870; spons. Patrick Dooley and Julia Dooley. M. Ahern

Joseph, of James O'ROURKE and Caroline Spenser, b. 18 Sept. 1870, bapt. 26 Sept. 1870; spons. Michael Hickey and Mary Hickey. M. Ahern

Honora, of William RING and Ellen Whelan, b. 27 Sept. 1870, bapt. 10 Oct. 1870; spons. William Ring and Jane Riardan. M. Ahern

Elizabeth, of Patrick H. QUINN and Sarah Shelton, b. 5 Oct. 1870, bapt. 10 Oct. 1870; spons. Cornelius Glackin and Mary Shelton. M. Ahern

Elizabeth, of Michael MURPHY and Emily Harman, b. 4 Nov. 1870, bapt. 13 Nov. 1870; spons. Patrick Cooney and Catherine Doherty. M. Ahern

Elizabeth E., of George E. COOKE and Sarah Hawk, b. 2 Nov. 1870, bapt. 21 Nov. 1870; spons. Catherine Duffy. M. Ahern

David, of Patrick KELLY and Ann Moran, b. 24 Nov. 1870, bapt. 27 Nov. 1870; spons. Charles McCartney and Sarah Doherty. M. Ahern

Patrick H., of James SIMONS and Isabella Sweeney, b. 30 Nov. 1870, bapt. 8 Dec. 1870; spons. Francis Rafferty and Mary Murray. M. Ahern

Elizabeth M., of Andrew ALLEN and Matilda Tomlinson, b. 27 Feb. 1837, conditionally baptized 25 Dec. 1870; spons. George E. Cooke and Ann O'Brien. M. Ahern

Alicia E., of Andrew ALLEN and Elizabeth Mahaffey, b. 15 Feb. 1857, bapt. 25 Dec. 1870; spons. James Stanton and Rachel Stanton. M. Ahern

Valerie Ann, of Joseph BLACK and Mary J. Thomas, b. 4 Mar. 1855, bapt. 25 Dec. 1870; spons. Andrew Keck and Ann McCormick. M. Ahern

Joseph James, of Joseph BLACK and Mary J. Thomas, b. 21 Apr. 1859, bapt. 25 Dec. 1870; spons. James Morgan and Ann McClarnin. M. Ahern

Maria, of David JOHNSON and L. MacCumber, b. 28 Dec. 1850, bapt. 25 Dec. 1870; spons. John McCormick and Mary McCormick. M. Ahern

Electa Helen, of same, b. 17 Aug. 1859, bapt. 25 Dec. 1870; spons. Michael Ahern and Sarah Buck. M. Ahern

Sarah, of Henry HAWK and Hannah Brown, b. 21 Sept. 1845, bapt. 25 Dec. 1870; spons. James O'Brien and Susan Keenan. M. Ahern

(To be continued)

197 E. Gay Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215

Donald M. Schlegel, Editor

