

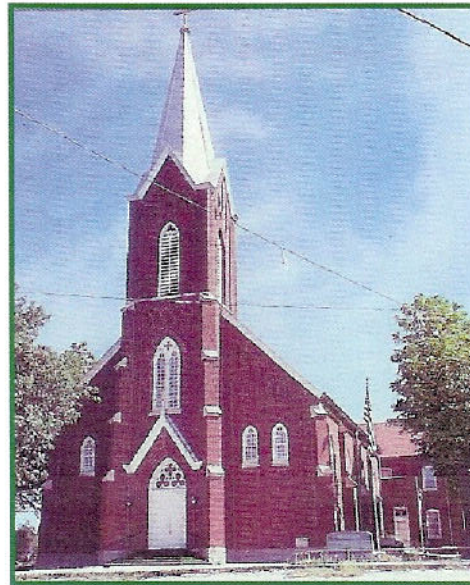
DEMARA WIEN, MO

In November 1965 Demara arrived in the small German Catholic village of Wien, MO. After years of posing as various professional people (usually one step ahead of the law), Demara had written to Catholic Priest Joseph Starrman and expressed interest in joining an experimental Brotherhood of Christian Unity at Wien which was comprised of men from various religions (an ecumenical group) but working under the rules and regulations of the Catholic Church. He did not conceal his identity from Fr. Starrman but expressed that he was tired of running and wanted to live peacefully doing God's work. Fr. Starrman accepted him into the group, and Demara used his own name while in Wien and was affectionately called Bro. Frederick by those who worked with him.

Demara worked with the religious order and taught classes at the school across from St. Mary of the Angels Church. He was a popular teacher and well liked by his students as well as the parishioners in the community. Unfortunately for him, his desire to live quietly in the bucolic community of Wien was not to be. One evening a newspaper reporter from the nearby town of Brookfield attended a PTA meeting and thought Demara somehow "looked familiar". The reporter snapped a photo which caused Demara to become very angry. With this photo, the reporter checked newspaper files and determined that Demara was indeed the Great Impostor. The headlines of the KC Star as well as other more local

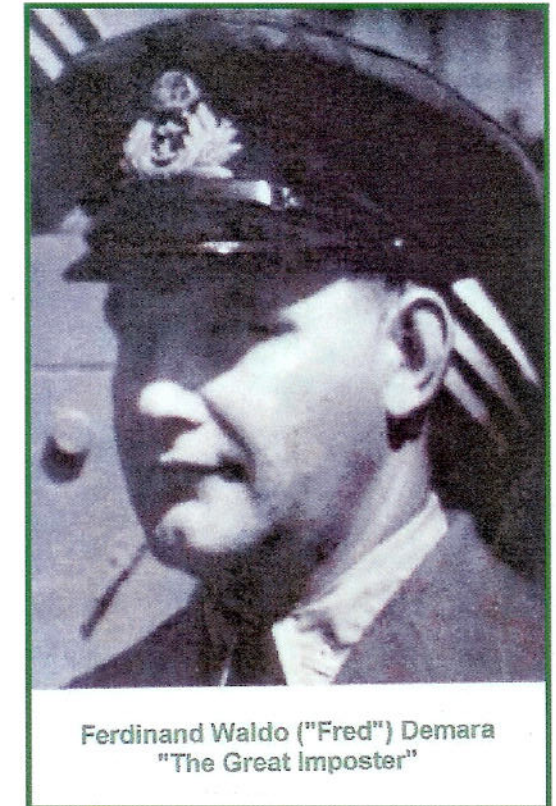
papers shouted the news: The Great Impostor at Wien, MO!

Shortly after this incident, news came from the Vatican that the experimental order was being disbanded, and Brother Frederick left Wien never to return. Information is sketchy on the remaining 16 years of Demara's life but this much is known: he spent some time in the Seattle area, he attended the 25th reunion of the Canadian Naval Veterans who had been on the ship Cayuga (where he had posed as Dr. Joseph Cyr) and he ultimately died in California at age 60 where he was working as a preacher. His body was cremated and his ashes scattered at sea.



St. Mary of the Angels
Church and Monastery
Wien, Missouri

THE GREAT IMPOSTOR



Ferdinand Waldo ("Fred") Demara
"The Great Impostor"

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"I always find a home. I'm always just belonging when someone comes and takes me away and I'm a stranger again. I'm very tired of that."

These poignant words were spoken by Ferdinand Waldo Demara, a man known in the mid-20th century as The Great Impostor. Before the end of his life in 1982, Demara had impersonated people from many professions including a college professor, a prison warden, a teacher, a preacher, a cancer researcher, and perhaps his most famous persona that of Dr. Joseph Cyr, doctor and surgeon in the Royal Canadian Navy.

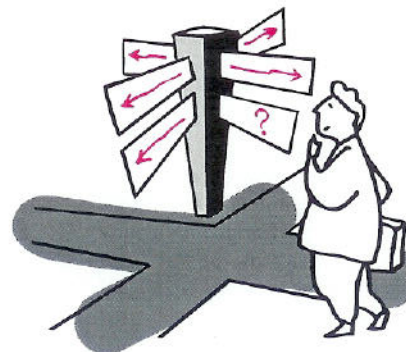
As one investigator said about him, "He (Demara) is not your average cheater. The guy doesn't just assume the names or titles, he lives the lives and does the jobs!"

Why did this man, born in Lawrence, MA December 12, 1921, seem to never find satisfaction with just being himself?

(Psychological Explanation)

The possible psychological explanation would include the fact his father, an affluent businessman, lost the family's fine home and his lucrative theater business during the Great Depression. Young Demara, at an impressionable age, was forced to go to a public school with the children of blue collar workers and wear hand-me down clothing. His more refined manners and demeanor were ridiculed by the street-smart ruffians with whom he now was forced to associate. In time the only way Demara could feel good about himself was to NOT BE himself - but someone else - someone more wealthy, more refined, more educated, someone esteemed by the community.

Perhaps these feelings of inadequacy on his part led him to assume - when the opportunities arose - all the different characters he ultimately portrayed.



Demara's Rules for Success

Demara was so successful at portraying different professional people, he formulated a number of rules he used to insure that he could maintain the facade.

[At least for a while]

1. **"Always paper your arrival"** - Send fake letters of reference in advance from the biggest names in the profession you can think of. People do not often check up on a letter from a big name thinking they wouldn't want to "bother" an important person or it would be "unlikely" an important person would not tell the truth.
2. **"Always attack - never defend"** - If anyone called his credentials into question, he would assume the air of being hurt and/or angry that anyone would dare question him or his qualifications.
3. **"A man with a good mind who trusts it, can learn anything he needs to know in a few months"** - One job he held required him to take six college courses: rational psychology, metaphysics cosmology, epistemology, ethics, and natural theology. Demara enrolled in all six and despite not having but two years in high school, made A's in all of them.
4. **"In a debate with someone more educated, always manage to lose the debate"** - Ask them why they think the way they do, then say you have been convinced they are right and you now agree with them!
5. **"Never encroach on anyone else's domain; make your own committee, head it up and then expand into the power vacuum"** - In any organization there is a lot of loose unused power lying around which can be picked up without alienating anyone.