

McClain, David

To: Bertrand Venard
Subject: RE: Venard Road?

Dear Professor Venard:

Thank you for writing to request information about Venard Road. You are correct in assuming that the road was named for Theophane Venard. Our college (Baptist Bible College & Seminary) in 1968 purchased this property from the Maryknoll Fathers. From 1919 to 1967 the property was owned and operated by the Maryknoll Fathers as a Catholic minor seminary.

I quote from the Maryknoll publication "The Field Afar" for April 1929: "The college in Pennsylvania had its beginning in a private house on Clay Avenue, Scranton. It was then known as the Venard Apostolic School or simply as "the Venard", in honor of the young martyr of the Paris Foreign Mission Society, Theophane Venard, who died for the Faith in Tongking on February 2, 1861...In the fall of 1916 the present fine site was found in Clarks Summit, eight miles from Scranton."

I have quoted only a portion of the article to indicate the origin of the name Venard for this property. The road in front of the Venard property soon became known as Venard Road, and it continues to use that name even though there is no longer any Venard College located here.

Since 1968, when we moved to this property, the Baptist Bible College & Seminary has owned and operated an institution for the training of Christian workers. Currently we have a student body of about 1,000. You may view our website at this address:
<http://www.bbc.edu/>

I would be very interested to know if you are related to Theophane Venard, and I will welcome further communication with you.

In case you may not have easy access to it, I will copy below an article from the online version of the Catholic Encyclopedia (English version) about Bl. Theophane Venard.

Sincerely,

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Bl. Théophane Vénard
(JEAN-THÉOPHANE V&Eaucte;NARD.)

French missionary, born at St-Loup, Diocese of Poitiers, 1829; martyred in Tonkin, 2 February, 1861. He studied at the College of Doue-la-Fontaine, Montmorillon, Poitiers, and at the Paris Seminary for Foreign Missions which he entered as a sub-deacon. Ordained priest 5 June, 1852, he departed for the Far East, 19 Sept. After fifteen months at Hong Kong he arrived at his mission in West Tonkin, where the Christians had recently been tried by a series of persecutions under Minh-Menh, a monster of cruelty. Shortly after Father Vénard's arrival a new royal edict was issued against Christians, and bishops and priests were obliged to seek refuge in caves, dense woods, and elsewhere. Father Vénard,

whose constitution had always been delicate, suffered almost constantly, but continued to exercise his ministry at night, and, more boldly, in broad day. On 30 November, 1860, he was betrayed and captured. Tried before a mandarin, he refused to apostatize and was sentenced to be beheaded. He remained a captive until 2 February, and during this interval lived in a cage, from which he wrote to his family beautiful and consoling letters, joyful in anticipation of his crown. His bishop, Mgr Retord, wrote of him at this time: "Though in chains, he is as gay as a little bird".

On the way to martyrdom Father Vénard chanted psalms and hymns. To his executioner, who coveted his clothing and asked what he would give to be killed promptly, he answered: "The longer it lasts the better it will be". His head, after exposure at the top of a pole, was secured by the Christians and is now venerated in Tonkin. The body rests in the crypt at the Missions Etrangères, Paris. Other precious relics are in the hands of the martyr's brother, Canon Eusebius Vénard, curé of Assais Deux Sèvres, France, who possesses, also, most of the martyr's letters, including those written from the cage. In a letter addressed to his father, Théophile refers thus to his approaching sacrifice: "A slight sabre-cut will separate my head from my body, like the spring flower which the Master of the garden gathers for His pleasure. We are all flowers planted on this earth, which God plucks in His own good time: some a little sooner, some a little later . . . Father and son may we meet in Paradise. I, poor little moth, go first. Adieu". The cause of his beatification was introduced at Rome in 1879, and he was declared Blessed, 2 May, 1909. The beatification ceremony brought a large delegation from France, including the Bishop of Poitiers and the martyr's only surviving brother. Théophile Vénard was beatified in company with thirty-three other martyrs, most of whom were natives of Tonkin, Cochinchina, or China.

[Note: With nineteen other martyrs of Vietnam, Théophile Vénard was canonized by Pope John Paul II in 1988.]

HERBERT, Théophile Vénard (London); WALSH, A Modern Martyr; Thoughts from Modern Martyrs; The Field Afar; Vie et Correspondence de J. Théophile Vénard (Poitiers, 1865); Le Bienheureux Théophile Vénard (Paris, 1911); Lettres Choisis du Bienheureux Théophile Vénard (Paris, 1909); CATTANEO, Un Martire Moderno (Milan, 1910).

JAMES ANTHONY WALSH

Transcribed by Herman F. Holbrook

Dilectissimo Fratris Ambrosio Bettencourt, O.S.B., praeceptoris meo.

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-----Original Message-----

From: Bertrand Venard [mailto:bvenard@london.edu]

Sent: Thursday, August 23, 2001 5:31 AM

To: dmcclain@bbc.edu

Subject: Venard Road?

Dear Sir,

Could you tell me why the road where is the library is called Venard Road?

Is it after Saint Theophane Venard (holly catholic priest)?

Best regards,

Prof. Bertrand Venard

France

PS: sorry for my poor english.

August 23, 2001

Dear Mc Clain,

There are actually around 1000 persons with the name "Venard" in France. It is a rare name. In such a case, we should be (or we are) all related.

We have never looked at the direct relations with Saint Theophane. Nevertheless, his brother was a Priest and his sister a "Sister" (a nun?). Therefore, no grandchild is born from his parents. I went in february 2001 in Vietnam in the village nearby where his body and his head were discovered (after his death, his body and his head were throw away in the river). There is a church and a school in this tiny village near Hanoi, both of them having the name Theophane Venard. I may go back there next year, in 2002. The school needs to be rebuilt and the local people need some money to do it. There were supposed to send to me a project and I haven't received any thing since february. I will let you know the next step in the process.

Prof. Bertrand Venard