

# This Was Irish Hill, Just A Wee Bit Of Ould Sod

## Brogue Replaced By a Twang But Memory Lives On

By DON BAKER

Irish Hill is mostly a memory now.

But for the more than 1000 sons and daughters of the Ould Sod who once called it home, it shines brightly.

For the most part, the Irish are gone, and so is the Hill.

The brogue has been replaced by a twang.

But tales of other days abound.

Unlike some old Indianapolis neighborhoods, Irish Hill had specific boundaries. It was bounded on the east by Dillon St. (now Shelby) and on the west by Noble (now College), and on the north by the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks, and on the south by the Big Four (New York Central) tracks.

The railroads were chiefly responsible for the Irish settlement, and also for its demise.

IRISH IMMIGRANTS first settled the nine square-block area about the time of the Civil War.

Timothy Francis Sullivan, who lives in an artificial-brick house at 1019 E. Maryland (Meek St.) where he was born 75 years ago, recalled the old days.

"My father came over from County Kerry, Ireland, about 1865 and went to work as a hostler for the Big Four. I was born in this house, and have lived here ever since," Sullivan said.

HE RECALLED his 45 years as a holmaker for the Big Four. Looking out the back window of his house at the corner of Maryland and Shelby, he pointed to the old Big Four yards. "There's one man over there now. When I worked there, we had 300 to 400 men, mostly Irish."

Tim Sullivan never married, although "if I hadn't been such a stubborn Irishman, I'd have married a little girl I met in France during World War I." Tim lives with his sister, who is past 80 years old, and gets out at least once a week, when he drives his 1950 Chevrolet to Sunday mass at Holy Cross Catholic Church.

### Daily Ritual

REGULAR PASSENGERS in Tim's car each Sunday are his lifelong friend and neighbor, John Walsh, and Walsh's nearly blind sister.

Walsh, who is 78, has lived next door to his friend Tim Sullivan since the two were born more than three-quarters of a century ago. Both men are bachelors.

Walsh was willing to talk about the old days, but only if the reporter "won't keep me back from my appointment." Walsh has a daily "appointment" at Blackie's Tavern, 1012 E. Washington, where he goes to while away the hours "because you can't spend all your time at church."

HE RECALLED when he and Tim were schoolmates at School 7 at 745 Bates, until Holy Cross opened its parochial school in 1895.

Another schoolmate from those pre-20th century days was "Mame" O'Connor, who now lives at 537 E. 42d. Miss O'Connor, a native of County Kerry, who was chief operator for Indiana Bell, for several years had the Hill's only telephone in her house at 942 E. Georgia, where she lived for "only 68" years. She moved from "the Hill" two years ago.

A next-door neighbor to Miss O'Connor is Mrs. Anna Dean, an aunt of former Police Chief Mike Morrissey. Morrissey left Irish Hill to become chief at the age of 27, and served the city for 10 years as its top cop. Mike, now lives in Chicago where he is an executive with General Electric.

### 'Youngsters'

BUT MRS. DEAN, Miss O'Connor, Sullivan and Walsh are comparative "youngsters" when it comes to remembering the early days on "the Hill." The Rev. Fr. Patrick Griffin was born on the hill "more than 80 years ago," the son of an Irish railroad worker. Father Griffin, now chaplain of St. Paul's Hermitage, 501 N. 17th Ave., Beech Grove, has an acute recollection of the old days.

Chatting with a fellow-resident of the Hermitage and native of "the Hill," 81-year-old John T. Burke, who grew up at 1105 Bates, Father Griffin recalled a few of the highlights:

"Remember the day in 1892 when August Hook (who later founded the drug chain) opened the Home Brewery?" Father Griffin asked.

"DO I remember?" answered the squat little man named Burke. "I was just a kid, but I had to run all the way to St. Pat's (at Fountain Square) to get a priest."

Father Griffin explained that "the attraction of free beer brought out the entire popu-

lation of Irish Hill. The boys drank more beer than was anticipated, and before dusk, all the beer which had been brewed was gone. So rather than break up the party, the brewery broke open some 'green' beer. It was terrible. Seven or eight Irishmen died as a result of it," he recalled.

The brewery workers were mostly Germans, and some of them lived in Irish Hill.

"Things were different in those days. Folks from the old country stuck together," recalled beer-drinker Walsh. "Many of the Germans were Lutherans, but that didn't make any difference. We all worked hard, and we all drank hard."

ONE OF THE favorite drinking places was Jim Reilly's Saloon, long-since razed from its location at Georgia and Pine.

A youngster during World War I was the Right Rev. Msgr. James Hickey, now pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church, 5333 E. Washington.

Father Hickey remembers "the crap games every Sunday afternoon on the sidewalk in front of Reilly's Tavern."

Father Griffin doubted that, saying "the crap game was further down the street," adding that the cop on the beat, Tim MacKessy, chased them away every day—but not for long.

### 'Irish Cry'

MANY OF THE old-line Irish resisted modern-day conveniences, and one of the best examples was a funeral "for a shanty Irishman," said Father Hickey. Long after automobiles were popular, the Irish insisted on horse-drawn hearses; "The Irish weren't too much for praying, but they all turned out for the wake," he said.

"Because of that, there was always one woman in the neighborhood who could put on the 'Irish cry,'" the pastor explained. "Even if she didn't know the deceased, she'd come to the home and wail, and cry, and moan, and tear her hair. That satisfied the friends of the deceased, many of whom were in the back room eating and drinking up a storm."

One of the few German Catholic residents of Irish Hill was the Kehrers family, some of whom still live at 1001 E. Georgia. Miss Lona Kehr, who lives there with her sister, Miss Agnes Kehr, recalls that her mother "always washed the corpse at Irish funerals."

ST. PATRICK'S DAY, of course, was a green-letter day on "the Hill." The Big Four yards managed to stay open with the aid of a few Orangemen, while the sons of Ireland paraded downtown in the afternoon, and danced at night at Tomlinson Hall.

Old-timers recall Irish Hill when it had Scanlon's Saloon on Meek St., Reilly's at Pine and Georgia, Tom Kinney's at Georgia and Noble, and Lahey's at Bates and Dillon.

Grocery stores were operated by one-armed John Hickey



The Boys at Reilly's Saloon

A regular Sunday afternoon pastime on Irish Hill in the early 1900s (after mass and dinner) was to gather in front of Reilly's Saloon for a few hours of conversation and crap shooting. Several of the men in this picture, taken about 1916, now are deceased. They are (left to right): Front row, Harold Milam, James (The Rt. Rev. Msgr.) Hickey, John Healy,

(father of the priest), and Frank Pittman, Richards and Schmutter's Meats.

### Cops, Craps

IRISH COPS were as common as crap games, with Frank Gibbs, Denny Reilly, Mike Griffin, Mike Morrissey, John Sheehan and John Burke among the better-known.

St. Patrick's at Fountain Square was the local parish until 1895, when Holy Cross was built at Oriental and Ohio. Father Quigley was the first pastor, followed by Father Dennis McCabe, Father James Wade and Msgr. Joseph Byrnes.

When the Irish got sick (and they did occasionally, despite themselves), they called doctors Morrison, Laycock and Hedges. The real old-timers remember Doctor Bobbs, who owned the orchard in the center of "the Hill."

"The Hill" has produced its share of greats and near-greats. One of the most beloved former residents of that sports-loving community was Eddie Ash, the late sports editor of The Times.

Mention Eddie's name and someone's bound to recall the time one-armed Eddie hit a home run for Washburn College "without hitting the ball out of the infield." Eddie slashed a grounder down the first base line, and as Irish luck would have it, the ball jumped in a gopher hole while Eddie spammed around the bases.

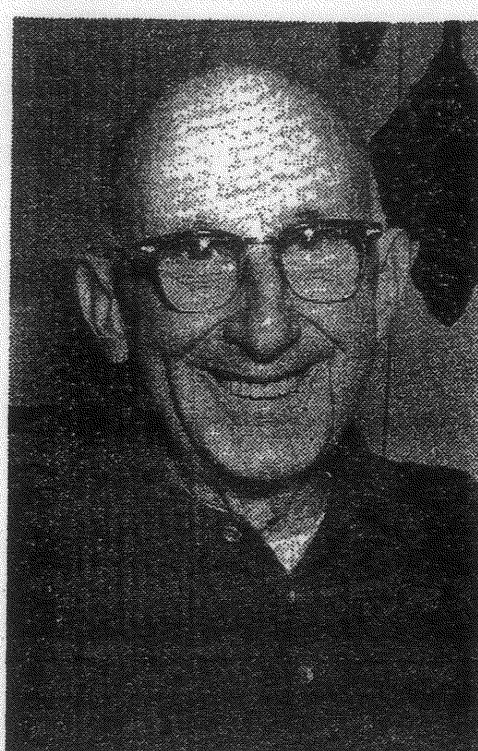
One of Eddie's best friends, during and after their days on the Hill, was Owen (Donnie) Bush, now president of the Indianapolis Indians baseball club.

The Irish Hill boys played at the ball park at Oriental and Ohio until 1900, and then the park moved to E. Washington, near the present P. R. Mallory plant. Among the better-remembered names is Ted McGrew, former Association slugger and major league umpire who is now a scout for the Milwaukee Braves.

AND FIGHT FANS will argue that one of the greatest telegraphers of all time was "Irish Tim" Sullivan, whose verbal reports of the Corbett-



Miss Mame O'Connor



Timothy Francis Sullivan

Sullivan heavyweight match filled the streets outside Jay's Saloon in 1892.

Pick an Irish name, and you could find it on "the Hill." Father Griffin recalled most of them: Harrigan, Bennett, Lahey, O'Connor, Shea, Slattery, Sullivan, Donahue, McCarty, Moran, Burke, Griffin, Casey, Grane, Kennedy, Reilly, Sheehan, McGee, White, Lynch, Fitzgerald, Holoran, O'Neal, Barrett, Walsh, Welch, Foley, Connor, Flynn, Manley, Sayre, Graham, Morrissey, Smith, Callahan, Hickey, DeLawn, Boyd, Giblin, Wall, O'Leary, Lamb, Currin, McCabe and Murphy.

And some Germans too: Hauppert, Kleinschmidt, Fisch, Hibner, Stroele, Rafer, Gale and Kehr.

IN ITS heyday, the Hill was Irish, Catholic and Democratic.

Saloon keeper Jim Reilly was all three, and as City Councilman, dispensed patronage and kept the old Ninth Ward in line. Reilly also was banker (with personal loans at low



John Walsh

interest), confidant and advisor.

School 7 pupils were "scared to death" of Principal Nelson Yoke, who "used tree twigs cut by old man Wallace, the janitor, to force discipline" on the Irish. Miss O'Connor recalled.

The Hill itself was a loose description of the topography. "There was a pretty fair grade running south from Washington," said Walsh. "The kids used to sled on boards there." Sullivan, Walsh's neighbor, said with a grin that he

guessed it was called Irish Hill "just like that hill in San Francisco is called Knob Hill." "The Hill" boomed until shortly after World War I, when the Pennsy built an elevated track through the center of the community. Many homes were razed, and many Irishmen moved east, to St. Philip's and Lady of Lourdes parishes.

### Not a Shot

A FEW REMAIN today, but one former resident noted that "The Kentucks took over the Hill without firing a shot."

MRS. MATZ keeps busy by cooking for "the Sullivan boys" across the street and watching the non-Irish children play in the tunnel which passes beneath the railroad tracks next to her house.

The tales of Irish Hill are legion, and though most of its glamor is gone, there are those who still contend you can find a leprechaun there—if you look hard and believe in "the luck of the Irish."



A Modern Day Colleen

Miss Ann Sheehan, 23, lives with her aunt in Irish Hill today. She came to the U. S. three years ago from County Kerry, Ireland, and works at the William H. Block Co. as a seamstress.

### No Dice or Cards

## A Prisoner Could Become an Expert At Tiddlywinks

Times State Service

PENDLETON, Jan. 13—A man with a few years to serve at the Indiana Reformatory here could become an expert at tiddlywinks.

That game is one of a number that inmates are now playing as part of the Reformatory's group-therapy program.

Other games include Anagrams, Civil War Game, Concentration, Gung Ho, Racko, Scrabble and Stadium Checkers.

ABOUT 100 GAMES were purchased and made available to the prisoners in the cellhouses for the first time Dec. 28.

"The initial response was quite good," said C. E. Guard, group therapist, "but it is too early to tell just how successful the idea will be."

Guard said the use of the games, suggested by a prisoner at a group-therapy session, is a pilot project. Its purpose is to offer those inmates who must spend a large portion of their day in their cells a new and interesting form of recreation usable in a small space.

"If acceptance continues to grow," Guard said, "more games and a wider variety will be made available."

But although the inmates have plenty of time for a good Monopoly game, that is one game they can't have.

Games using dice or playing cards are not permitted.

## 'Cold War Strategy' Seminar Set Here



A seminar on "Cold War Strategy" will be held at Murat Temple on Feb. 22. It is being sponsored by 19 professional, civic and business organizations.

Speakers for the day-long public meeting will be:

FRANK R. BARNETT, research director of The Richardson Foundation of New York City; Allan B. Kline, former president of the American Farm Bureau Federation; Frank S. Meyer, an editor of "National Review"; Dr. Gerhart Niemeyer, professor of political science at Notre Dame University; Bishop Richard C. Raines, Indiana Area, Methodist Church; J. C. Rodriguez, former vice president of Sears, Roebuck & Co.'s Cuban operations, and John C. Satterfield, president of the American Bar Association.

In addition to the speakers, pupils from Indianapolis public high schools, led by Lewis W. Gilroy, director of instruction for secondary schools in the city, will demonstrate how communism and its evils are taught in the schools here.

THE FULL-DAY registration fee of \$10 includes a noon luncheon at which Satterfield will speak. Teachers and members of the clergy will be admitted at half-price, and invited college and high school students will be guests of the sponsors.

Richard R. McGinnis, former

managing director of Lilly Endowment, is chairman of the seminar.

Among the sponsoring organizations are the city and state Chambers of Commerce, Jaycees, and veterans' banking, medical, bar and farm groups.

## Norm Isaacs Named Editor in Louisville

Special to The Times

LOUISVILLE, Jan. 13—Norm E. Isaacs, former managing editor of The Indianapolis Times, was named today to succeed James S. Pope Sr., as executive editor of the Louisville Courier-Journal and the Louisville Times.

Isaacs, 53, had been managing editor of the Louisville Times, an afternoon paper.

His promotion was announced by Barry Bingham, editor and publisher of the two Louisville papers.

In his new capacity, Isaacs will have supervision over the news departments of both Louisville papers.

ROBERT P. CLARK, 40, a Courier-Journal writer, was named managing editor of The Times to succeed Isaacs. Albert A. Allen, 38, news editor of The Times, was appointed assistant managing editor.

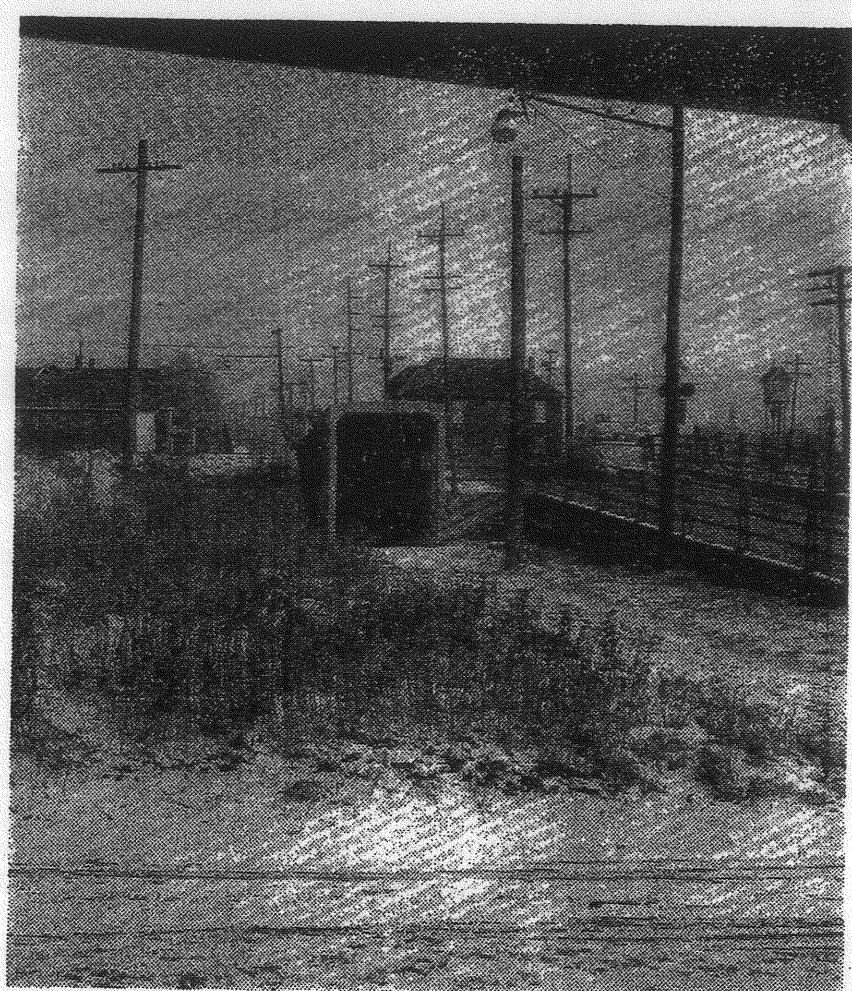
Isaacs attended Manual

High School in Indianapolis. His formal education ended when he had to go to work for a living. He never made college until he started to lecture on journalism. Isaacs was much in demand at colleges and universities.

AT THE TIMES in Indianapolis, Isaacs was known as a crusader, particularly in the fields of mental health, civil rights and social responsibility. He had been an editorial writer on the News and managing editor of the St. Louis Star-Times. He also worked as a sports reporter on The Indianapolis Star.

When the Star-Times discontinued publication, Isaacs made a nationwide reputation by organizing his own job placement bureau for his staffers. He did not accept a position for himself until he found a job for every editorial employee on the Star-Times.

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2 Lines, 4 Days for ONLY \$2  
Use TIMES TREASURE CHEST



Bates St. tunnel, built in 1918, as seen today from porch of Mrs. Mary Matz's house, 924 Bates.