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## Book Reviews

*Hampton Court: Growing Up Catholic in Indianapolis Between the Wars.* By Lawrence S. Connor. (Indianapolis: Guild Press of Indiana, 1995. Pp. ix, [151]. Illustrations. \$19.95.)

In his sentimental journey back to the days of his youth, Lawrence S. Connor focuses on family, his Hampton Court neighborhood, and his Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral parish. Nicholas, his father, was secretary of Holcombe & Hake Manufacturing, effectively running the company, but the Great Depression reduced his salary by two-thirds. But while the 1930s were economically the worst of times, socially they were among the best of times, pulling an already tightly knit family even closer. In contrast to her stern, somewhat remote husband, Agnes Peelle Connor was a warm, caring focal point for the religiously Catholic, politically Democratic household. Its Hampton Court apartment was always full of friends and relatives enjoying generous hospitality. Nicholas died in 1939 at age fifty-one while watching his son Bob play football for Butler University. Agnes's brother, Bob, moved into the Hampton Court apartment and functioned as a surrogate father for the six younger Connor siblings.

In Indianapolis, like Chicago and some other American cities, Catholic ethnics, particularly the Irish, viewed the parish as the religious, social, and educational center of their lives. Connor pays tribute to the Sisters of Providence who taught him in parochial school and his sisters at St. Agnes Academy and to the Holy Cross brothers in charge of Cathedral High School. Nuns and brothers not only educated, they also instilled discipline and values that persisted over a lifetime.

Unlike most other midwestern cities, the antiblack, anti-Catholic, and anti-Jewish Ku Klux Klan flourished in Indianapolis. Connor indicates that it had little impact on his consciousness but suggests that the Klan might have instilled in his parents the notion that Catholic outsiders "in a Protestant world" had "better not get too pushy and vocal" (p. 90). Connor also suggests that this attitude might have delayed Catholic ethnic progress. The Connors, however, were exceptional among pre-World War II Irish-American Catholics in that their three eldest sons attended university: Nick had to drop out of Notre Dame during the depression; Bill and Bob earned degrees at Butler.

In World War II Nick and Bill Connor were army officers, Lawrence served as a radio operator in the Army Air Corps, and his sister, Sally, was a WAVE. Taking advantage of the G.I. Bill, in 1949 Lawrence earned a journalism degree at Notre Dame. He then joined the staff of the Indianapolis *Star* and after forty-one years retired as its managing editor.

Connor's well-written reminiscences, a useful addition to the bibliography of America's urban Catholics, evoke fond memories of a country unified by the crises of war and depression, nickle four-dip, twin-headed ice cream cones, dime movies with bank nights and free dishes, popular music with lovely melodies and lyrics that sometimes reached the quality of minor poetry sung by people with pleasant voices who could articulate the words, innocent romances, strong families, harmonious parish neighborhoods, and safe city streets. But *Hampton Court* contains little about the numerous disadvantaged African Americans in Indianapolis. Connor mentions his mother's kindness to a black woman who worked for the family but admits that blacks were almost invisible to his eyes, at the time a situation true for white middle-class people in most American cities.

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*From Needmore to Prosperity: Hoosier Place Names in Folklore and History.* By Ronald L. Baker. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995. Pp. 371. Notes, bibliography. Cloth-bound, \$29.95; paperbound, \$15.95.)

Building on previous works on Hoosier jokelore and folk legends, Ronald L. Baker continues to establish himself as a dean of Indiana folk culture. In his latest work, *From Needmore to Prosperity*, Baker argues that stories are as important as facts as he encyclopedically compiles Indiana's colorful assortment of place names. His aim, he writes, is not "merely the compilation of facts to discover a single vision of formal culture" but rather the presentation of "the diverse thoughts and feelings of a community" through interdisciplinary investigation. Folklore is joined with history (à la Richard Dorson) because the former "presents other voices and other visions and provides a context" for place-name research (p. 1). In short, Baker maintains, folklore humanizes place names.

In the introduction Baker points out that historically folklore has been of scant interest to place-name scholars largely because the popular usage of the term *folklore* (especially by historians) implies falsehood. Other scholars have taken interest in etymological approaches, leaving little room for folkloristic details. Folklore, in Baker's understanding, can reveal the function of place names: "Since names are so extremely important in human culture," he writes, "place-name researchers should examine what they mean to all people who know them and use them as well as what they meant at the time of naming" (p. 6).

H. L. Mencken notwithstanding, many Indiana place names are imaginative, and some are even more imaginatively enshroud-