

THE BEGINNINGS OF IRVINGTON.

FROM NOTES BY SYLVESTER JOHNSON.

By Request.

IN Sulgrove's History of Indianapolis and Marion County, pp. 620-1, a brief history is given of Irvington, until recently a suburb, now a part of the city of Indianapolis.

One of the original promoters of the town, Mr. Sylvester Johnson, is now living at an advanced age in Irvington, and it may not be superfluous to complete the account there given by facts recited by Mr. Johnson or gleaned from the records.

Much of the land now occupied by Irvington, about four and a half miles east of the center of Indianapolis, was entered from the government by John Hendricks, January 14th, 1826. The central quarter section, lying along the National Road, belonged in 1870 to the Sanduskys, then living in Louisville, Ky., and was used as a dairy farm. In that year, on June 30th, it was bought by Jacob Julian and Sylvester Johnson, both of Centerville, Ind., for \$100 an acre, or a total of \$32,000. The tract is now bounded by Michigan street on the north, Arlington avenue on the east, Ritter avenue on the west and a line from 300 to 400 feet north of the Brookville pike on the south. It was bought with the purpose of laying out a suburban town.

The town was laid out November 7th, 1870, with the name Irvington, given by Mr. Julian, at the suggestion of his daughter, Mary Julian Downey, in honor of Washington Irving. In the meanwhile Mr. Johnson had visited Glendale (near Cincinnati), perhaps the best known suburban town in this part of the country at that time, and had got the idea of winding streets, which has become the best known characteristic of Irvington. The tract was laid out with the plan of having the streets run along the low places, leaving the higher locations for building lots. Julian and Johnson avenues were run along one of the pronounced lines of drainage. A provision, copied by Mr. Johnson from Colorado Springs, Colo., was inserted in the deeds prohibiting the location of any distillery, brewery or other offensive es-

tablishment, and the selling or permitting the sale of intoxicating liquors except for medicinal or industrial purposes on any of the property on penalty of reversion of the ground to the original owner or his heirs. This provision had been attacked in Colorado and had been upheld by the State and the United States courts. Another provision forbade the location of stables, hogpens, etc., within fifty feet of any street, not an unimportant provision, as the plan of the town left no place for alleys. Two circles, one at the intersection of University avenue and Audubon Road and the other just north of the National Road, were set aside for public purposes, the former under the title Irving Circle and the latter College Circle.

Mr. James Downey, a son-in-law of Mr. Jacob Julian, moved to the proposed town and built there in 1871. Mr. Julian and Mr. Johnson also began to build in 1871 and moved to their new residences in 1872. Dr. Levi Ritter bought the land to the west of the new town and laid out an addition shortly after. The town was soon incorporated. The present railroad station was secured in 1872, and with that the new town was fairly launched.

INDIANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY CIRCULAR.

[The following is the first circular issued by the Indiana Historical Society, a copy of which is now in the possession of Vincennes University.]

INDIANAPOLIS, ———, 1831.

MY DEAR SIR: The preceding abstract from the Constitution and Proceedings of the "Indiana Historical Society" exhibits an index of its character and will, it is hoped, attract your favorable regard. In pursuance of the general objects of the society and in obedience to its resolutions, the corresponding secretary has the honor to address you, respectfully soliciting such aid, information and patronage as it may be in your power to afford. All communications addressed to the undersigned at Salem, Washington county, Indiana, will be gratefully received, and whenever necessary, promptly acknowledged.

I have the honor to remain, with sentiments of respect, your obedient servant,

JOHN H. FARNHAM.
Corresponding Secretary.