

Memories of the Village

May McCarthy

Upper Patrick Street

The earliest occupant of No. 1 - on left going towards Waterford Road - I remember was Mrs Fahy. Her daughter married Ned Sweeney, who acted as librarian in the city library, John's Quay. Whites lived in the first house on left in Chapel Avenue. The house was hidden from the road, a door in the wall giving admittance. Johnny White worked in Kilkenny Castle. (That house and Fahy's are Ormonde property). His brother Michael was a tailor in Bourke's of High Street, and another brother was bishop of Dunedin, in New Zealand. I remember that prelate coming home on holidays and confirming children in the parish church. The avenue led down to the old St. Patrick's chapel. Mr. M. Lanigan now lives here; his son, Senator Michael Lanigan, has also built a house close by. The De la Salle brothers took the place first, when the new church was built on the corner of New Street and College Road.

On the right hand side of the lane are five two-storey houses, all of which are occupied. The Kinsella family or their descendants are the longest resident.

No. 2 Patrick Street was occupied by the Miles family for a considerable number of years. In No. 3, the O'Carroll family lived. Miss Mary K. O'Carroll was organist in St. Patrick's Church for a good number of years. Mary, her niece, continued in occupation for some years after her aunt's death. Dick O'Carroll, father of Mary and Eileen (Mrs Flynn), took over the lower part of 103, on the opposite side of the street, and carried on a painting business there until his death. Byrne's Coach Building factory was previously functioning there.

The last house before the present parish hall was Pat Hoban's bakery. In my childhood, Pat did a roaring trade in what were known as cakes and twists, and provided them hot out of the oven for those who favoured them for breakfast. The shop is long since closed, but BAKERY still survives over the door, and it is said that the old oven is still intact in the bakehouse.

The parish hall was the old national school (boys and girls). It became solely a boy's school when the De la Salle brothers arrived in the parish. Tom Bourke was schooled here, John Coyle and the author's father. In the three-storey house next to it, John Hurley of Bamfort and his wife (K. Free) had a thriving

grocery and vegetable shop. They succeeded Susan O'Keeffe (aunt of Kitty O'Keeffe) and her brother John. John was an invalid, but was able to sit up in bed and play his violin. Between this house and the churchyard was a narrow laneway (right-of-way entrance to the De la Salle school). At the end of the laneway was a tiny house where Mary and Kitty Ivory lived. They were two very small women, who seldom venture out, even as far as the street. Mr R. Ryan has an electrical shop here now, with a gate erected at street front. We knew it as Ivory's Lane.

Pat Corcoran, born 1879, was a noted and sincere patriot who lived with his mother and two sisters just above the pump (which was re-erected in 1986). He was a carpenter by trade and had a workshop on the south corner of Jacob Street and New Street. He was arrested on 5th May 1916 after the Easter Rising. On the previous day, four men, including Joseph Mary Plunkett, had been executed in Kilmainham Jail. On the morning of Pat's arrest, Major John MacBride, father of Sean MacBride, was executed. A platoon of 250 soldiers stood outside Pat's house, with him under arrest, while a search was made of his house. Then, without a chance of saying good-bye to his mother or sisters, he was brought off to jail. He is mentioned in Florence Hackett's article in the 1984 *Old Kilkeny Review*. The present shop, owned by Mr. Brennan, is part of the Corcoran property, but Pat's workshop was nearer the road.

Jacob Street was narrower then, and there were two houses adjoining the workshop, facing into New Street. They were occupied by Miss Katie Cody, and Mrs MacDonald and her son, John, who was a salesman in the store owned by M. J. Potter, High Street (now the Arcade).

Opposite the parish hall, there were about five two-storey houses, demolished some years ago. In the two-storey part of Furniss's lived a Mr. Cunningham, an old professor. He had a string of qualifications to his name and a brass plate on his door.

Furniss, carpenters and undertakers, lived in No. 101. They were fine craftsmen; the mahogany staircase in Kilkeny Castle, made about 1855, is a beautiful example of their work. Where Furniss's gate is now, was a small house owned by Murphys. Bessie and Mary, two of the daughters, went to the United States. They came home on holidays many times and stayed in No. 3 with their cousins, the O'Carrolls.

No.102 was James Farrell, blacksmith in the brewery, and his wife, both Dublin people. They reared a large family, all of whom went to the States, except M.A. who had great musical talent.

No.103 was Byrne's Coach building factory, famous throughout the south of Ireland. In 104 a few generations of Griffins lived.

No. 105, now the Red Cross premises, was once the parish curate's residence. When the streets were not as smooth and clean as they are today, there was a pathway of paving stones across the street to Chapel Avenue, so that the curate could cross in comfort to say Mass in the old St. Patrick's. In this chapel, after the downfall of Parnell, Dr. J. B. Hackett, his loyal supporter, was denounced by Fr. O'Halloran, Adm.

Various families lived in 106. In 107, there was a Mr. Robinson, a bank official; his wife, known as Madam O.R.R. Robinson, was by way of being a classical singer. The O'Dwyers lived next door; Nellie taught in the Lake School, and her sister, Jo taught in Sheestown.