

Once Upon A Time in North Park
75th Anniversary of Saint Patrick's Church

by Joan Campbell

The centennial of the founding of North Park (1996) leads us to noting other significant anniversaries in our community. By the time the settlement had been in existence for a quarter of a century, there were a sufficient number of inhabitants for the establishment of necessary cultural, social and religious institutions. One of the foremost pillars of the North Park community is just such an institution.

In September, Saint Patrick's Church on Thirtieth Street will be celebrating the seventy-fifth anniversary of its founding. A booklet describing the history of the church as well as special celebrations and masses are planned.

In the early days, Catholics in North Park had to travel to downtown San Diego for worship. Then, in 1921, Bishop John Cantwell of the Monterey-Los Angeles Dioceses assigned Father Gregory Ashe to minister to the needs of St. Patrick's parish, one of six Catholic parishes in San Diego. Father Ashe's first requirement was to find appropriate community property for a church.

A suitable site was found and approved in November, 1921 and construction of a temporary hall soon followed. That first church, a "frame building with composite roof" was constructed at 3620 Ray Street. Construction costs were estimated at \$2000 and the hall was planned for 150 parishioners. The first mass was held in the building on February 5, 1922. The present larger facility on Thirtieth Street was designed by Frank Hope Jr., and was built in 1929.

St. Patrick's is a landmark of North Park and has been a cherished part of our community for the first 75 years of its existence. We wish it "happy birthday", prosperity, and at least another 75 years of benevolent presence in our community.