

IRVINGTON

INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

Irvington is a historical district five miles east of downtown Indianapolis founded in 1870 by prominent abolitionist lawyers, Jacob Julian and Sylvester Johnson. Named for writer Washington Irving and straddling the Historic National Road, the carefully planned neighborhood was originally platted as an independent suburban town but annexed by the city of Indianapolis in 1902.

1. Ellenberger Park

Master landscape architect and urban planner George Edward Kessler developed Ellenberger Park in early 1909. In 1930, the first swimming pool opened and park developers installed an ice rink in 1962. In more recent years, the city has held summer concerts on the site and the Irvington Garden Club has sponsored a monthly Farmer's Market in the summer.

2. Irvington United Methodist Church

Irvington United Methodist Church, in the middle of North Audubon Road just north of Washington, is an excellent example of Tudor Revival designed by local architect Herbert Foltz in 1925. As part of the office complex, the congregation saved the south-facing 1911 Tudor Revival house of Jacob Forest and later Thomas Carr Howe.

3. Irving Circle

This small community park on South Audubon Road, with its beautiful fountain and bust of the famous author, is lovingly maintained by the Friends of Irving Circle.

4. Irvington Presbyterian Church

After the first one was destroyed, Presbyterians rebuilt their church at 55 South Johnson Avenue in 1928, turning it into a grand limestone Tudor Revival designed by congregation member Merritt Harrison.

5. Kin Hubbard Memorial

In the early 1900s, Irvington became a favorite haunt of the city's best fine artists and writers including Kin Hubbard, creator of the nationally syndicated cartoon Abe Martin, who resided on Pleasant Run Parkway North Drive from 1909 to 1928. Hubbard's comic strip, which he first introduced in 1904 in the Indianapolis News, became nationally syndicated in more than 300 newspapers prior to his death in 1930.

6. Our Lady of Lourdes

After Bishop Chatard discovered the property at 5317 E. Washington Street, the church paid \$2,600 and in 1909 built a small chapel on the site called Our Lady of Lourdes. "There are, no doubt, many here today who will live to see a great edifice erected and a great congregation worshipping on this site where this little chapel now marks the beginning," said Bishop Chatard, speaking at the dedication.

7. The Benton House

Built in 1873 on a beautifully wooded lot at 312 S. Downey Ave., The Benton House is a charming example of the Second Empire style of architecture. For twenty years, it was the home of Allen R. Benton, twice president of Butler University in Irvington.

8. The Bona Thompson Memorial Center

The Irvington Historical Society gave the east side a historic showplace in which to gather and exhibit art and history when it restored the 1903 Bona Thompson Memorial Library at 5350 University Ave., once part of the original Butler University campus.

9. The Irving Theater

Built in 1913 as a nickelodeon, the Irving Theater on East Washington Street has had quite a past. You could view Hollywood's finest talkies in the 1920s and 1930s. And in the 1970s, like the Vogue and Rivoli, it was an "art house" showing movies that you can't see in public anymore. The theater sat empty from 1994 until opening as an all-ages music venue in 2006. Since then, it's been quietly building a reputation as one of the best places in town to catch a show.

10. The Irvington (Masonic) Lodge

The flat-ironed shaped temple remains as testament to Washington Street's longtime commercial significance. Designed by architect Henry Bacon in 1921, it once housed the local post office as well as lodge spaces on the second floor.

11. The Kile Oak

This 400-year-old tree on Beechwood Avenue, thought to be the oldest Bur Oak in the country, has a limb spread of at least 125 feet and a trunk circumference of 16 feet.

