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Flynntown and Its Namesake, Coach Ed Flynn

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A home was built on the north shore of the Watab (now often referred to as Stumpf Lake) for Coach Edward Flynn. Around this house arose the famous hamlet of Flynnville – later called *Flynntown*.



From the Brother Linus Ascheman OSB Heritage Photo Collection

The original Sesquicentennial photo was developed in error – reversed!



The original photo as it should be, looking to the northwest to Flyntown.



Flyntown in 2009

590, Johns St.
St. Paul, Minn.
March 22, 1909.

Rev. Director
St. Johns College
Collegeville, Minn.
Rev. Father,

I wrote to you some time ago
at Milwaukee in regard to securing
a position as Physical Director at
St. Johns College.

I have learned later from Mr. Cassidy
that you do not need a Director for
the remainder of this season.

I have stated some fact to you in
my previous letter in regard to my
ability. Am safe in stating that
I am capable of handling the position
in college work such as coaching
Basket Ball and track Athletics
also teach gymnastic and give
Calisthenic and Physical examinations.

1909 letter from Ed Flynn

Have made a careful study of
anatomy, Physiology, Diet, Physical
diagnosis, Anthropometry, Massage and
First Aid to the injured.

Have been born and raised a
Catholic and therefore would
like a position in a Catholic Institution.
If necessary I can call on you
at college will and talk it over.
Awaiting an early reply I
remain.

Yours truly,
Edward, M. Flynn,
592 Johns St.
St. Paul, Minn

1909 letter from Ed Flynn

Came to St. John's Aug. 21st 09
Not taken because
non-catholic. —

YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

PUBLIC CORRESPONDENCE ROOM

434 Arundel St.
St. Paul, Minn. Aug 18 1909

- Physical Department**
- - Largest and Best Equipped Gymnasium in the Northwest
 - Large and Well Kept Swimming Pool
 - Three Shower Rooms
 - Three Locker Rooms
 - Large Annex Gymnasium
 - Rowing Machines
 - Chest Weights
 - Horizontal and Parallel Bars
 - Flying Rings
 - Punching Bag
 - Basket Ball
 - Indoor Baseball

Rev. Alvin Denton
Collegeville
Minn.

Dear Reverend
Having heard through Mr Cassidy that you had an opening in your Institution for a Physical Director I would like to put in my application for the position.
I have been under Prof Rothfus.

- Educational Department**
- - Will Open Monday, September 27th
 -
 - Excellent Courses in Advertising
 - Arithmetic
 - Automobiling
 - Banking
 - Bookkeeping
 - Business English
 - Architectural, Mechanical and Free Hand Drawing
 - Electrical Engineering (two years' course)
 - English for the Non-English Speaking
 - Extemporaneous

Someone else also applied.

I. It is agreed that Edward Flynn shall have supervision of the gymnasium and of all gymnasium classes; that he shall, if requested, coach the basket-ball, base-ball and track teams; that he shall conduct such indoor and outdoor meets as the Rev. Rector shall specify, and at the time and in the manner specified by said Rector; and that he shall take care of any gymnasium work that may come up and is not herein specified.

II. That in consideration of said service the Rev. Rector on the part of St. John's University shall pay said Edward Flynn the sum of \$800 per annum of eight months with room and board, payment to be made at the rate of \$75 per month.

III. In the event of unsatisfactory work the Rev. Rector reserves the right to cancel this engagement and to pay only for work actually done.

Signed: *Alvin Deutsch* Rector St. John's U.
Edward M. Flynn

The above articles of agreement to hold also for the years 1911-1912, 1912-1913, 1913-1914.
 Signed April 7, 1911. *Alvin Deutsch*
E. M. Flynn

1911 agreement with Ed Flynn

From the
very first
yearbook,
1919,
entitled
*The
Sagatagan:
A Review of
Athletics at
St. John's
University*



Weber, Leisen, Capt. A. Kapsner, Coach Flynn, Michel, O'Donnell, Rooney,
G. Brown, Spahn, Kuehne, Kiess, Schoenbechler, Nierling,
J. Hilger, Rischard

Coach Flynn in the first St. John's yearbook

First mention of “Flynnville”

October 1917

468 ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY RECORD

they (the alligators) eat per day. A terrarium and aquarium is under construction in the Science Hall to serve as winter-quarters for the new acquisition.

A new duty has been placed on the capable shoulders of our Coach Mr. Flynn of Flynnville. The scope of his work has been somewhat extended. Besides continuing in his old position he will also assume the Moderatorship of Athletics. This, indeed, lays a new burden on Mr. Flynn, but it will result in a greater unity of effort and add to the honor and credit of our Coach.

1917: First mention in print of “Flynnville”

**The
Record
December
1918:
Armistice
Day
is
celebrated**

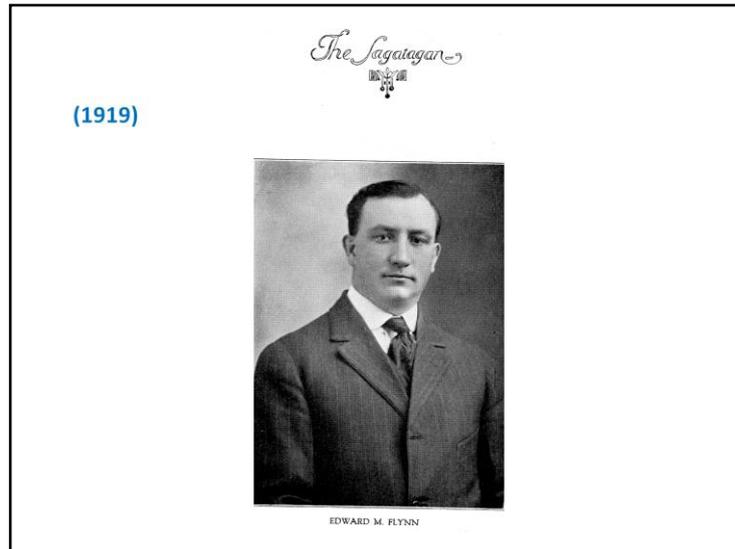
Nov. 11, we rung out the war and rung in peace like all good Americans. After dinner, a chorus of church bells flung the good news far and wide across the lands and waters of Collegeville. We were somewhat handicapped in our demonstration of joy, not being in possession of so many noise-producing instruments as some towns we read of, but we did the best we could. We were too happy to study and the event too momentous; so we gamboled outdoors,—with Fr. Rector's permission, of course. After supper the community and student body assembled in the chapel where a solemn *Te Deum* was sung, and we can safely say that no *Te Deum* was ever sung at St. John's with greater and sincerer joy. The Chaplain, Fr. Prior, concluded the services with a short "peace" talk, in which

LOCAL NEWS

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he fittingly gave expression to the sentiments of all. After the church service, the students, with patriotism surging high in the hearts of all, formed a torch-light procession, with the Stars and Stripes in the lead; and, after marching around the campus to the beat of drum, the procession headed for Flynnville. Here Coach Flynn and his family was serenaded, the Coach responding with a toast to Uncle Sam and the Allies, which was received with nine rousing cheers, that shook the pillars of heaven. Everybody then paraded back to the gym where the remaining part of the evening was spent in singing and dancing. In the course of the frolic, Fr. David made an appeal to our loyalty and generosity in behalf of the United War Workers Campaign. It was here that he first

Armistice Day procession to Flynnville



Flynn in 1919 yearbook

From the
1920
Sagatagan
yearbook

The Sagatagan



COACH EDWARD M. FLYNN



This is the eleventh season of Coach Flynn's activities at St. John's, and the third year that he has had complete charge of athletics. While here Mr. Flynn won the love and respect of students and faculty. Always a booster for clean athletics and good sportsmanship, he has succeeded in putting out one of the finest appearing teams in the country, and making St. John's the home of true sportsmanship. He has also developed some of the greatest athletes that the Minnesota Conference has known.

However, it is our misfortune to lose Coach Flynn this year. Next season will find him employed as director of the Fargo K. of C. Gymnasium. Though we are very sorry to lose the Coach's genial and energetic personality, our heartiest wishes for unlimited success go forth with him.

Flynn in 1920 yearbook



March 22, 1924.

Rev. Alphonse Sausen O. S. B.
Rector St. John's University.
Collegeville, Minn.

Rev. dear Father:-

Receive your letter of March 19th with contracts enclosed. I am holding the contracts for a few days because there are a few further details I wish to take up with you.

I told you during our conversation while at St. John's recently that I would try and make arrangements to live at St. Joe on account of the boys going to school but after giving it a great deal of consideration and having talked it over with Mrs. Flynn on several occasions I have come to the conclusion that if arrangements can be made for a house it would be a great deal better for me to live near the College. In that way I would always be there to take charge of any unexpected work that would come up; such as, a free day etc., also to be there to take charge of the summer camp. As for the boys I could take them to St. Joe in the morning and get them again in the afternoon. I think if this can be arranged it would be more satisfactory to all concerned.

Regarding my taking charge of the summer camp this year I am under contract with the Knights of Columbus till Fall. If however Mr. Sanborn is not going to take charge and I can possibly accommodate Father Abbot I will do my best to get away during that time. I presume Father Abbot wishes to start the Camp about June 15th and discontinue it about Aug. 1st.

Awaiting a reply at your earliest convenience, I am with kind personal regards and best wishes,

Moving to St. Joe, or to St. John's?

(1925)



Mr. Edward Flynn

ATHLETIC
MODERATOR

The beginning of the 1924-25 school year was at the same time the beginning of a new era in the athletic life of that school. It set in motion a program which has as its aim the attainment of the University's old time prominence in the athletic circles of Minnesota. With this end in mind a new athletic regime was inaugurated and at the end of that system stands Mr. Edward Flynn.

Mr. Flynn is not a stranger at St. John's; on the contrary, his friends at the University and among its alumni are legion. This is not his first connection with the school, for, during the years from 1909 to 1920, he was coach of all variety sports at St. John's. Under his tutelage the teams representing St. John's ranked with the best in the state and they proved it by "copping" championships in basketball, baseball, and gymnastics.

At present Mr. Flynn is athletic moderator at St. John's, a position formerly held by one of the Fathers. It is he who supervises the activities of the Athletic Fraternity, thru the medium of which every student participates in some competitive sport. He also has direction of the gym classes and at the same time of the representative gymnastic teams of the school. Great things are expected of him as a gymnastic coach, since his experience and a long line of winners establish him as a more than competent coach of this type of athletics.

When the authorities of St. John's tendered the position of athletic moderator to Mr. Flynn they had no doubt that he possessed that most important of all qualifications—that he was a builder of character. Their confidence is justified, for Mr. Flynn has proved to be a man who can come into contact with boys and leave the impression of his quiet personality upon them to their own betterment.

Flynn in 1925 yearbook

Now that the time has come to re-name Flynnville, the growing hamlet at the dam on the Watab, the question arises whether or not Damtown would be too reproachful a title.

Feb. 1923

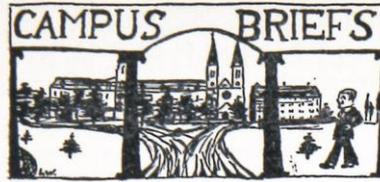
p. 89

**Dec. 16,
1926**
p. 7
**[First
mention of
Flynn**town**]**

Flynnville is becoming quite a borough. Because of its marvelous growth during the past weeks, its citizens are seriously considering a division into two entirely separate cities. The north end would be known as Flynntown, and the south end as Damtown. Commonly they would be referred to as the Twin Cities of the Watab. The wonderful increase of its population—from fifty-two to fifty-five net—was caused by a little boy arriving in Matt's family, and Mr. and Mrs. Wilfred Houle moving into their new home.

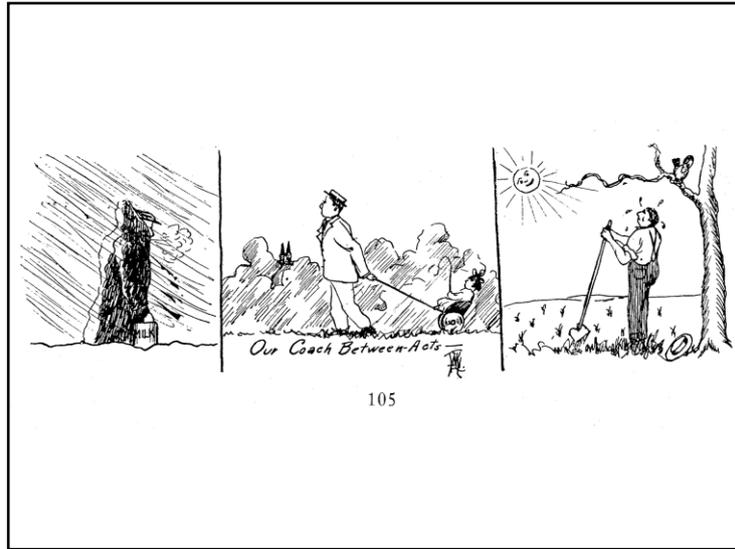
1926: first mention of Flynntown

Thursday, March 31, 1927



In the issue of January 16, we made a remark concerning the marvelous growth of Flynnville. At that time the population made a sudden jump from fifty-two to fifty-five, caused by a little boy arriving in Matt's family and Mr. and Mrs. Houle moving to their new home. We also remarked that it would soon be necessary to divide the city into two entirely separate cities. Well, this necessity has become imminent, for the population is now fifty-six. Yes, on March 24, a little girl arrived in the family of Coach Flynn.

1927: An addition to Flynnville's population



Coach Flynn and his daughter

(1927)

THE SAGATAGAN



E. M. Flynn

MR. EDWARD FLYNN
Moderator of Athletics

Visitors have often wondered concerning the identity of a certain plain, middle-aged gentleman who is daily to be seen on the campus, in the gymnasium, or wherever his many duties might require him to be. He is Mr. Flynn, Moderator of Athletics at St. John's. With athletics yearly assuming greater importance, and becoming more extensive in the college curriculum, St. John's has indeed been fortunate in retaining the services of this man, whose experience and ideals make him a fit foundation on which to build the all-important structure of sport.

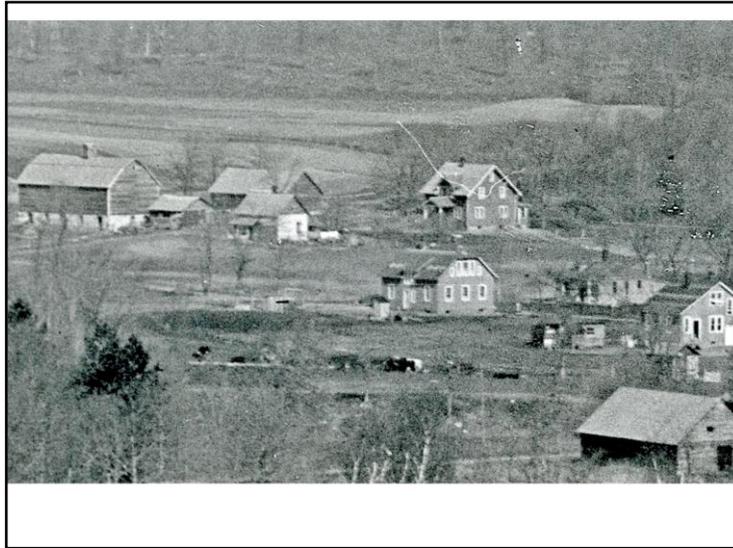
Flynn in 1927 yearbook

On July 15, Flynnville was startled by a large fire which razed to the ground the white barn of Mr. John Roske. The owner had hauled in about twenty tons of alfalfa, which, it is believed, caused spontaneous combustion. Since the barn was doomed, the workmen, neighbors, and members of the community rescued the rest of the buildings and other property which was threatened. A truck from the St. Cloud Fire Department was also summoned.

Mr. Roske had built the barn about four years ago.

August 25, 1932, p. 2

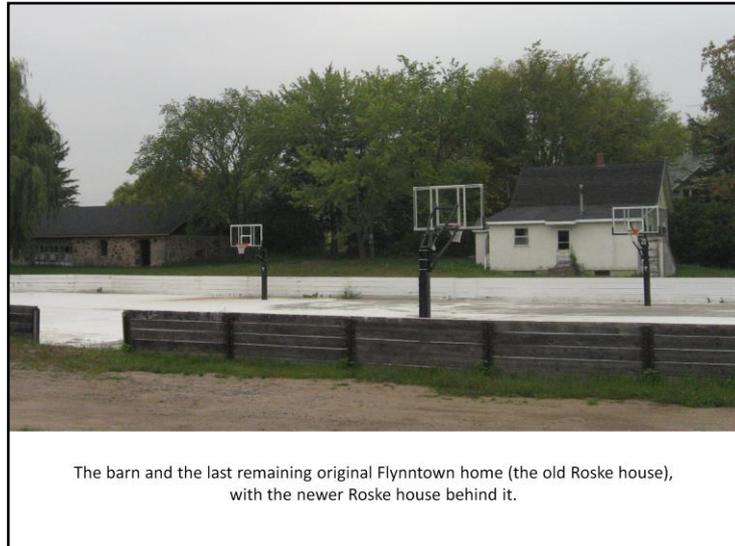
1932 Roske barn fire in Flynnville



Flynnville/Flyntown neighborhood
showing Roske farmstead



What remains of the Roske barn



The barn and the last remaining original Flyntown home, 2009

November 9, 1933, p. 7:

Mr. and Mrs. George Durenberger entertained the Prep lettermen at Durenburg, Minnesota, last week. The boys were treated to a pheasant dinner and all the details. Lucky Stiffs!

Did you know the folks down Flynnville way had changed the name of the town to Durenburg? Others call it Georgetown.

“Flynnville” vs. “Durenburg”

Feb. 12, 1948:
Last use of
"Flynnville"
in *The Record*

Classroom space and the dental office in the auditorium basement were made available for student occupation, as was the boxing room in the gymnasium. "Flynnville" residents made room for 15 students and 10 more took up residence in St. Joseph's Hall (the bunkhouse). A few students were temporarily established in the hospital during the first weeks of the fall term.

A student directory published in the Sept. 25, 1947 *Record* lists students squeezed in all over campus, including the five army barracks, the hospital (i.e. Greg House), the auditorium, the gym, and the "Workmen's Residence."

1948: last use of "Flynnville" in The Record



Flyntown houses 4A and 4B were demolished early this week to make way for new student housing. (photo by Peter Raib)

1996: Flyntown houses are demolished



The last remaining original Flynttown home (the old Roske house) is torn down in July, 2012; the newer Roske house behind it remains.

Addendum: The original Roske house is torn down on July 23, 2012; the newer Roske house behind it remains, as does the old barn, located just to the west (left, but not pictured).



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