



### **Bishop Dunne's Residence (built: 1904-1905)**

This is photograph was taken in about 1940 of Bishop Dunne's old residence at the top of the ridge along West Davis. The Bishop Dunne orphanage was started in the home before Bishop Dunne's death, brick wing behind the older house was added about 1917. Everything in this photograph is now gone except the cedar trees along the old driveway and Davis Street, the edge of which is just barely visible in the lower right hand corner. Saint Cecilia Church is located to the right of this view.

*Image provided by the Archives of the Dallas Roman Catholic Archdiocese*

## **Bishop Dunne and St. Cecilia**

by Jim Barnes -- 18th December 2008

At the very highest crest of the hilltop on West Davis Street, just above the shrouded sanctuary of St. Cecilia Church (devastated by a 5-alarm fire on the 17<sup>th</sup> of August 2007) stands of an abandoned semicircular driveway lined with big old junipers. This is all that remains of what was once the official residence of the Roman Catholic bishop of Dallas presiding over a diocese covering more than 100,000 square miles, the northern half of Texas, spanning from Texarkana to El Paso.

Edward Joseph Dunne was born in the hamlet Gortnahoe, County Tipperary, Ireland on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April 1848; but grew up in Chicago. There, he was chosen bishop of Dallas and his formal consecration service was held on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 1893 in the All Saints Church he had founded and ministered for the previous 19 years. Technically, Dunne was the second bishop of Dallas (which had been sub-divided from the Diocese of Galveston) but his predecessor had resided here little more than one year before being relieved of office. Bishop Dunne ruled for more than sixteen years.

In December of 1903, ten years after being consecrated bishop, and after long rooming in a small rectory near the new Dallas cathedral construction site, Dunne purchased the West Davis hilltop for his new home. Presumably construction started soon thereafter. In 1906 he purchased 35 additional acres to the north, giving his Church ownership of an 80 acre parcel (the E. ½ of the S.W. ¼ of the William Myers Section), running ¼ mile west from modern Mary Cliff Road to a ravine and ½ mile north from Davis Street to the tree-line separating Stevens Park Golf Course's "front" and "back" nine. Dunne's accomplishments included expansion of his diocese from 28 to 90 churches, building the Sacred Heart Cathedral on Ross Avenue (now the Cathedral Santuario de Guadalupe), starting the St. Paul's Sanitarium (now St. Paul's Medical Center), and founding Holy Trinity College (now the University of Dallas). He died from a heart attack at age 62 while convalescing in Green Bay, Wisconsin on the 5<sup>th</sup> of August, 1910; and, at his family's request, was buried in Chicago's Calvary Cemetery.

Dunne's successor, Joseph Lynch, selected Swiss Avenue for a new bishop's residence. One account is that the Davis Street house sheltered orphan boys when Dunne was still alive, another version suggests that the orphans arrived in 1917 when a brick addition doubled its size and it was officially named the Dunne Memorial Home for Boys. The original wooden residence was demolished first (apparently in the 1940s) and the brick addition was later razed, shortly after the orphanage closed in 1971.

In 1933 a new St. Cecilia parish congregated on the land. Sanctuary construction began in 1948. Dallas County once labeled the site a "Catholic School", and indeed the St. Cecilia School continues to operate (pre-K thru 8<sup>th</sup> grade). But when construction of the new Bishop Dunne High School was initiated in 1960, its site was shifted farther south, and at that point the large amount of extra acreage on West Davis (other than 11 acres previously transferred to the Stevens Park Golf Course) was sold for private developments. Today this land is occupied by: Timbergrove circle, Twelve Hills Nature Center, the Chris V. Semos campus, the eastern addition to trendy Kessler Woods, the sites of 4 recently demolished apartments, Country Green Apartments, a One Stop Food Store strip shopping center, and the Casa Treviño seniors housing notched into the hillside just below the old cedar lined driveway.



### **Bishop Edward J. Dunne**

Bishop Edward Dunne came to Dallas from Chicago in 1894, as the second bishop of the Roman Catholic diocese. In 1903 he purchased 40 acres in the southwest quarter of the William Myers Section, where Saint Cecilia Church is now located. There he built a new residence for himself. He died in 1910 and the bishop's residence was soon relocated by Bishop Lynch to a new house on Swiss Avenue.

*Image provided by the Archives of the Dallas Roman Catholic Archdiocese*



**The Sanctuary of the St. Cecilia Church—May 2005**

Located on the northwest corner of Davis and Mary Cliff  
This building was damaged by fire in 2007 and demolished in March 2009.



**The entrance to the sanctuary of the St. Cecilia R.C. Church—May 2005**

Located on the northwest corner of Davis and Mary Cliff

This building was damaged by fire in 2007 and demolished in March 2009.