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# THE BYRNES FAMILY

## Ireland to Rhode Island to Arkansas

The *O'Byrne* family goes back generations in County Wicklow, Ireland. County Wicklow lies just south of Dublin on the east coast. Where the O'Byrne or Byrnes family lived was a suburb of Dublin, Black Rock, County Wicklow, but has now been absorbed into the city itself.

Albert Michael Byrnes used to love the Opera, and he told of taking the trolley from his home into Dublin to see the performances; so Black Rock was very close to Dublin proper even at that time.

The name was changed from O'Byrne to Byrnes sometime in the 18th Century. The family came to America in the early 1850s to strike it rich in the California gold fields. The father, Michael, did not fare well, but his son, Albert Michael Byrnes my great grandfather, did as a builder. His daughter, Nell, married my grandfather, Leigh Reding Putman.

### MICHAEL BYRNES

Michael Byrnes father, Peter Byrnes was a farmer in Ireland in the early 1800s. His son, Michael Byrnes, was born near Dublin in about 1830 and he married Charlotte Hatton in Dublin in the late 1840s and they spent the early part of their lives in Ireland. Michael Byrnes was a skilled wagon maker in Ireland.

They had a son, Albert Michael Byrnes, born in Dublin on August 2, 1849.

Michael Byrnes left his family in Ireland, and in 1852 crossed the Atlantic to America and then on to California, hoping to strike it rich in the gold fields. He spent two years there and then went to New Orleans. While in New Orleans in 1855, he came down with yellow fever and died.

### ALBERT MICHAEL BYRNES

I believe Albert Michael Byrnes was an only child and was born about 1850 in the Black Rock section of Dublin, Ireland.

In 1864, when Albert Michael Byrnes was a teenager, he came with his mother to America. They spent a year in New York City and then he joined the expansion of the railroads and worked for four years in Springfield and other parts of southwest Missouri for the Frisco Railroad Offices.

His mother, Charlotte Byrnes, went ahead and settled in Fayetteville, Arkansas about 1866. Here she married her second husband, Joseph Zilleh and had two more children.

Albert Michael Byrnes left the railroad and came to Fayetteville in 1871. On January 14, 1872 he

married Mary Elizabeth McCoy in Fayetteville, Washington County, Arkansas.

Mary McCoy was the daughter of Philip and Bridget McCoy, both natives of Ireland. Her parents met and were married in Providence, Rhode Island. Mary was born on April 3, 1854. The family moved to Prairie Grove, Arkansas in 1857 and settled on a farm. See the [MCCOY FAMILY HISTORY](#).

A. M. Byrnes went first into the lumber business and then into the building construction field. In his career, he built over 300 buildings. These projects included buildings at the University of Arkansas, Banks, Offices and homes.

He built virtually all the buildings in the downtown business section of Fayetteville. A. M. Byrnes built all of the early school buildings, the first electric light plant, the Ozark Theater, the Washington County Jail and many buildings at the University of Arkansas.

He built the home he lived in for 63 years and the home of Leigh Reding Putman.

He founded the Northwest Arkansas Lumber Company that his grandson, Leigh Reding Putman, was later to join and then run. He was president of the very first Chamber of Commerce in 1892. He was a member of the first Board of Directors of the City Hospital and a director of the bank. He was indeed a leading citizen of Fayetteville.

Albert Michael Byrnes died on February 4, 1937. Mary Elizabeth Byrnes received a Papal Blessing on her 100th birthday in 1954. She lived to be 101 years old and died on August 7, 1955. Both are buried in Fayetteville, Arkansas.

The Byrnes had seven children:

**DOROTHY 'DORA' BYRNES** February 21, 1873. She married William Lincoln Benbrook October 19, 1892 in Washington County Arkansas. He was a son of John Quincy Benbrook and Mary Jane Campbell and was born in Washington County Arkansas in 1866 and died there March 16, 1897. Dora was widowed and died in Krebs, Oklahoma March 16, 1954.

**MARY 'MAYME' BYRNES** born March 17, 1875. She married Jacob Wythe Walker October 20, 1897. He was a son of James Daniel and Mary Walker, and was born in Todd County Kentucky January 26, 1866. He died in Kansas City, Missouri December 22, 1928. Mayme died in Atlanta, Georgia October 17, 1970. They had:

**John (James) Byrnes Walker** born in Fayetteville, Arkansas August 23, 1898 and died in Broward, Florida April 3, 1986. He married Virginia R. Keasey in 1923. She was a daughter of Adam B. and Lula R. Keasey and was born in Toledo, Ohio September 3, 1903 and died in St. Petersburg, Florida April 20, 2002. They divorced and he married Constance Marie Haslam April 6, 1938 in Kansas City, Missouri. This was her third marriage. She was a daughter of William Edward Haslam and Emily Sarah Richardson and was born November 6, 1902 in St. Thomas, Elgin Ontario Canada and died in Lecanto, Florida July 7, 2003.

**Jacob Wythe Walker junior** born in Fayetteville, Arkansas September 27, 1901 and died in Hillsborough County Florida April 11, 1978. He married Edythe Frances Stone in Jackson, Missouri May 16, 1936. She was born in Arkansas February 12, 1914 and died in Oldsmar, Pinellas County Florida June 30, 1981. They had:

**Prudence Walker** born July 28, 1937 in Evanston, Illinois. She first married John Martin Jr. and after he died she much later married Thomas Denton.

**Richard Courtney Walker** born in Fayetteville, Arkansas March 18, 1909 and died in Sebastopol, Sonoma County Florida August 3, 1994.

**HELEN THERESA 'NELL' BYRNES** born September 14, 1878. She married my grandfather Leigh Reding Putman in Fayetteville June 5, 1901. They are covered in the **PUTMAN FAMILY HISTORY**.

**ELIZABETH 'BESSIE' C. BYRNES** born in November 1882. She married Roy Dritt June 1, 1904 in Fayetteville. He was a son of Alfred M. Dritt and Nancy Jane Roark and was born in Pierce City, Missouri November 13, 1880 and died in Aurora, Lawrence County Kansas March 19, 1948. They did not have any children.

**EMMA GERTRUDE BYRNES** born in November 1884, and died in Atlanta, Georgia August 28, 1976. She married Bert H. Barnes June 28, 1916 in Fayetteville. He was born in Michigan about 1885 and died in the 1920s. They had a daughter:

**Elizabeth 'Betty' Barnes** born May 5, 1918 and died in Atlanta, Georgia September 17, 2009.

**ANNIE ALBERTA BYRNES** born in September 1886 and died at the age of twelve.

**ALBERT BERNARD BYRNES** born June 30, 1888 in Fayetteville, Arkansas and died in Duval County Florida September 22, 1940 in Jacksonville, Duval County Florida. He married Mabel E. Moore June 28, 1917 in Jackson County Missouri. She was a daughter of Thomas and Elizabeth Moore and was born in Finley, Christian County Missouri July 7, 1889 and died December 13, 1955 in Duval County Florida. They had two children:

**Martha Eleanor Byrnes** born in Springfield, Missouri January 26, 1921 and died in Melbourne, Brevard County Florida August 3, 2005. She married Hugo John Bock Jr. in Duval County Florida June 26, 1945. He was born in Missouri June 25, 1920 and died in Jacksonville, Duval County Florida May 3, 1995. They had a daughter:

**Linda Bock**

**Albert Michael Byrnes** born in St. Augustine, Florida August 25, 1927 and died in Charleston, South Carolina November 8, 2000. He married Anne Spencer. This is all the info I have.