



Indiana Historical Bureau

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NEWS

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“James Frederick Hanley” State Historical Marker Installed in Rensselaer, Indiana

A new state historical marker commemorating the life and work of James Frederick Hanley is now installed in Rensselaer. Hanley, born in Rensselaer, became famous for his musical compositions; many of which were featured on Broadway and in Hollywood films. Hanley is best known in Indiana for his tribute to the Hoosier state, “[Back Home Again in] Indiana,” which is sung every year before the Indianapolis 500.

The text follows for the state marker entitled “James Frederick Hanley”:

Born February 17, 1892 in Rensselaer; became part of New York Tin Pan Alley music scene. Wrote for Broadway musicals such hits as “Second Hand Rose” (Grant Clarke, lyrics) for Fanny Brice (1921 *Ziegfeld Follies*) and “Zing! Went the Strings of My Heart” (1934), popularized by Judy Garland 1938. Wrote scores for many Hollywood musicals in early 1930s. “[Back Home Again in] Indiana,” by Hanley and Ballard MacDonald (lyrics), was hit in 1917, 1920s jazz classic recorded by Louis Armstrong, and a 1930s swing tune by Benny Goodman. Song has remained popular and has been performed at every Indianapolis 500 since 1946. Hanley died February 8, 1942 in New York; buried there in Gate of Heaven Cemetery.

Historical markers commemorate significant Indiana individuals, places, and events, and they help communities throughout Indiana promote, preserve, and present their history for the education and enjoyment of residents and tourists of all ages. Via the Internet, that history reaches a worldwide audience. For more than 90 years, the Indiana Historical Bureau, an agency of the State of Indiana, has been marking Indiana history. Since 1947, the marker format has been the large roadside marker, which has the familiar dark blue background with gold lettering and the outline of the state of Indiana at the top. There are approximately 500 of these markers across the state.

For a digital version of this release and further information about this marker, the state Historical Marker Program, and other resources about Indiana, visit the Indiana Historical Bureau’s website at www.IN.gov/history or call 317-232-2537.

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