

# A FAMOUS IRISH-AMERICAN ATHLETE..

Missouri Athletic Club, Saint Louis.  
To the Editor "Western People."

Dear Sir—Mayo men resident in the United States are always interested in the success of the men who have left it to find a home in the Great Republic of the West. In the athletic world of the North American Continent the name of Martin Sheridan is a household word. It was chiefly through his prowess that this country gained first place in last year's Athletic Tournament at Athens; and Bohola, County Mayo, is the place where Sheridan was born and reared. For at least half a century Mayo has produced some of the most eminent men in athletic sports. Thirty years or so ago the late P. W. Nally, of Ballis, was one of the most famous athletes in Europe. Like Martin Sheridan, he was versatile and was almost invincible at long distance running, jumping and weight throwing. In all the great cities of America, Mayo men are today prominent in all branches of athletics. One of the most successful of these is Joseph Patrick Lydon, better known in his early days around Swinford as Pat Lydon. A brief sketch of his career may be of interest to some of the readers of the "Western People." Lydon was born in Kikelly, but at a very early age moved to Swinford, where he went to the National schools. The school which Lydon attended was on the banks of the River Moy, the place was named Cloongulane, and it is probable that some of his school mates live in that neighbourhood still. Lydon's favourite amusement as a boy was coursing. While still in his teens Lydon went to England and gained his first experience in Athletics at Bootle, Liverpool. He joined an Association football team at that city, and after a few games had his collar-bone broken. This accident caused him to return to Ireland, and after his recovery he was found playing in the ranks of the Swinford and Killasser teams against Ballina. He played in the memorable game of Charlestown against Ballymote, helping to win the cup for the former town. He was generally recognised as one of the best players in Mayo, and very often called upon to help other towns when a good game was on. After his arrival in this country he went direct to St. Louis, where he joined the First Regiment of the Missouri National Guard, in which his brother, Thomas, was a lieutenant, and afterwards became captain of Co. I., a famous Irish company which made a reputation for themselves in the Spanish-American War.

Lydon remained in the regiment five years, at the end of which time he resigned, after having become fairly proficient in boxing and general athletics. In 1903 Lydon carried to a successful issue an indoor athletic meet at the First Regiment armory, in which he took part himself. He was trained by Martin Delaney, the famous coach of the St. Louis University, one of the best known Catholic institutions in the United States. This was the first public meeting in which Lydon took part on this side of the Atlantic, and his races in the 50 yards, 220 yards and quarter mile were made in record time, winning all three. In the next year and a half he won 20 medals in track and field events. He now turned his attention to boxing, and in a tournament held here in 1904 he made his first appearance, and after soundly beating his opponents he was declared the loser on a foul. Two months later he took part in another tournament in two different classes. In the World's Fair boxing tournament he lost to two of the best men in America in the light-weight division, but he put up a splendid fight, and the St. Louis papers were unanimous in the opinion that Lydon should have had the decision, but luck was against him. In 1905 Lydon became a member of the Missouri Athletic Club, one of the most famous organisations of its kind in the world, having a membership list of over 5,000. His first appearance at the M. A. C. was on Jan. 14th, 1905, and he met a good scrapper named Carl Bollinger, whom he knocked out in three rounds. Lydon fought ten battles in 1905, losing only two, and one of these was by default. He fought two of these in the 145lb., or welter weight class, and won both contests. In 1905 he appeared in the squared circle seven times, losing twice and winning five times. Lydon has been in action only three times this year, and won by the knock-out route in two of the three. Besides being a boxer, Lydon is a long distance runner of no mean ability, and is quite an expert at the handball game, and winning one championship. Lydon and his brother are enthusiastic supporters of the Irish cause, as also are his uncles, who are prominent in national affairs. He has won medals for every branch of athletics from 50 yards to 25 miles, and is still one of the best 135lb. boxers in this country. He is a semi-pure amateur, never gets money for his services; always prizes. He boxed an exhibition three rounds with Battling Nelson at a local theatre.—Yours truly,

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