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'First families' recognized as early as 1852 in county

Names of the descendants of Monroe County's early settlers can be found in the Genealogy Room of the Old Library.

HONOR ROLLS of the descendants in two time categories — 100 and 150 years residence — are kept in the room along with documentation of the early settlers' arrivals in the county.

As early as 1852 Monroe Countians started giving some recognition to its "first families." Though an organization meeting was planned for that year, there is no further existing record of any group activity. Five years later the Bloomington *Republican* informed its readers that an organizational meeting of the Old Settlers had been in the courthouse on April 26.

According to the *Republican*, "a large number of the old gray-headed fathers and pioneers . . . met in mass," which would indicate that a lot of Monroe Countians thought that recognition of first families was a good idea.

Looking Back

By Rose McIlveen

THE FIRST ORDER of business for the organization which called itself the "Old Settlers' Society," was election of a chairman. The *Republican* reported that on a motion of Indiana University languages Professor Matthew M. Campbell, Jacob B. Lowe, an early county clerk, was elected chairman. Attorney Morton C. Hunter was given the responsibility of taking the minutes.

Getting down to business, the people attending the meeting voted to appoint one representative from each township as a steering committee. They were—Col. Campbell, Washington; John Hubbard, Marion (later merged with Benton); David

Barrow, Benton; James P. Ellis, Salt Creek; John Hanson, Polk; Col. John Ketcham, Clear Creek; Joseph S. Walker, Indian Creek; M.M. Campbell, Perry; Elias Stone, Van Buren; Jude Reeves, Richland; James V. Buskirk, Bean Blossom, and Elias Abel, Bloomington. For good measure, Paris Dunning and Austin Seward were also added to the committee.

IT WAS Eli P. Farmer of Richland Township who moved that 25 years of residence be required for membership, but his motion was amended to read at least 50 years of age and 30 years in the county. The latter was suggested by George A. Buskirk, Esq., according to the *Republican*.

The immediate objective of the new organization was to plan a Fourth of July celebration, which was recommended by Samuel H. Buskirk, Esq., who was nominated for the planning committee, along with F.T. Butler, P.L.D. Mitchell, Jesse Cox, William