

McCalla famous family

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Sam, the patriarch, must have placed a premium on higher education, since he sent three of his sons to Indiana University — Henry and William as part-time students and young Samuel to the Preparatory School.

But it was young Margaret, born just after their arrival here, that brought home the academic honors for the McCalla clan. She was enrolled in the Monroe County Female Seminary, where she graduated to the post of teacher, herself. Her career there attracted enough notice to get her another teaching job in the Evansville schools.

Meanwhile, the differences between the North and South erupted into war. Perhaps no other family in Monroe County can match the McCalla family's contribution to the Union cause, since three of Sam's sons were in the army at various times.

He must have viewed his sons' devotion to the Union cause with mixed emotions, but he most certainly made

the ultimate sacrifice. The *History of Lawrence and Monroe Counties, Indiana* lists young Joseph McCalla as an early casualty in 1861. His unit had been through some of the bloodiest battles fought in Virginia.

Henry McCalla, the sometime IU student managed to get himself a commission as captain in a kind of minuteman unit and was hastily packed off to North Vernon, when Confederate Col. Morgan made his foolhardy lightening raid into southern Indiana.

Henry and Sam McCalla were luckier than their brother, Joseph. They returned to Monroe County

and lived to the ripe old ages of 83 and 72, respectively.

Margaret McCalla's most important contribution to the life of Monroe County was in the post of superintendent of schools for more than 10 years.

John McCalla left his own kind of monument in Bloomington. In 1881 he built the house known as the Topolpus Building on the northwest corner of Eighth and Walnut Streets.

Sister Margaret's "monument" was, of course, the elementary school not far away at the corner of Ninth and Dunn Streets.

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