

# 1816 land auction yielded part of county

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Sharp, John Storm, Jesse Tarkington, John Thompson and Henry Wampler.

The county histories give only sketchy accounts of the earliest settlers who bought land in 1816, but the accounts do yield some extra bits and pieces of information about a fourth group of settlers.

John Allen, who settled in Van Buren Township, was one of the founders of a rural Methodist church. He also appears on the poll tax role for the county.

An early Bloomington resident, James Clark, can be found on the 1840 roster of the Masonic Lodge. He came to the area from Kentucky.

**THE BUILDER OF** the very first Monroe County log courthouse was Samuel Elliott. He was also hired by the county to clear the land around the new courthouse. Earliest county records show that he received two payments of \$43.42 for his work.

Abner Evans, said to be the earliest settler in Bean Blossom Township, built a saw mill on Jack's Defeat Creek in 1818. (Richland did not become a separate township until several years later.)

Another early settler in the Richland Township area of Bean Blossom was John Fullen. He is said to have operated a horse mill and made a small quantity of whiskey in a little copper still.

John Griffith was a founder of the Baptist class in the Stanford area of Van Buren Township. He was also on the list of the first buyers of land in Perry Township.

One name of the Bloomington Township buyers, George Hedrick, turned up in the records of the first Monroe County Circuit Court. He was, however, not in trouble with the law. He had turned in the lowest bid for the maintenance of the orphaned child, William Dorsey.

Henry Speed of Kentucky had the distinction of buying land in Indian Creek and represented in absentia in circuit court in 1818. The proposed dam on a neighbor's creek threatened the value of Speed's property. Though he never lived in Monroe County, Henry Speed sent three of his sons to Indiana University. The Speed Museum in Louisville is a legacy to the city from his family.

**Next week: The 18 men who bought land in 1816 and shaped the destiny of the county.**