

Frontier feud played out in 'Post' ads

Despite the august presence of the Indiana Seminary in Bloomington in the 1830s, the town exhibited some of the rough characteristics of the frontier.

One of the earliest cases on the court docket here was typical of the many slander and "affray" disputes. Seth Goodwin had been charged in 1818 with assault on Jacob Lebo. When the circuit judge, "The Honorable General Washington Johnston" got around to hearing the case, he fined Lebo \$9.50 and Goodwin 5¢.

Goodwin, who came to Indiana from Pennsylvania "when Indians were as thick as wild turkeys," had prospered at some stage of his life. According to the 1856 *Atlas of Monroe County*, he had purchased half of a section and a quarter of another in Van Buren Township. In fact, he was listed in the *Histories of Morgan, Monroe and Brown Counties, Indiana* as being the second highest taxpayer in the township.



Looking back

By Rose McIlveen

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In 1836 Goodwin got wind of some disturbing gossip, which he traced to Solomon Wooden. Settlers in the Salt Creek area were saying that Goodwin had abused his wife before her death.

Instead of shrugging his shoulders, Goodwin ran an ad in the *Bloomington Post*. It said, "Take Notice, I am sorry to begin with the fragments of the world (whatever that means). I would inform the public that Solomon Wooden reported that I should have abused my wife before her death. I found the report on Salt Creek and traced it back to Solomon Wooden and he refused to give his author. I now

inform the public that Solomon Wooden and his author is a LIAR and I can make it appear by many. I would wish Solomon Wooden to bring suit against me and then we will know the certainty."

Well, barely had the ink dried on Goodwin's salvo, when the subject replied via another *Post* ad, "Seth Goodwin. This man published me a liar in the *Post* and in reply I have only to say that I can prove by many respectable and honorable men and women that this self same Seth Goodwin did abuse and ill treat one of his former wives, from her own assertions, and I now pronounce this self same Seth Goodwin a LIAR, a paltroon, and a scoundrel, and I dare him to sue me or to seek any kind of satisfaction of me."

In the midst of all of the bridge-burning rhetoric, one would expect to find a news item in the *Post* that see **Looking back, Back page**