

Scotch-Irish Presbyterians left their mark on Monroe

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their help where their faith was. Once transplanted in Monroe County, at considerable risk to themselves, they operated a reliable underground railway to pass runaway slaves along on their route to freedom in Canada.

ACCORDING TO Indiana University history Professor James A. Woodburn, himself a Presbyterian, doctrinal hair-splitting continued to plague the Presbyterians after they had settled in the county. Of their differences, Woodburn described the "Old Light," "New Light," "Associate" and "Seceders," all claiming to be closest to the original spirit of the denomination. He wrote:

"And these divisions and contentions continued to exist long years after the causes that gave rise to them, and in America, too, where the conditions were such that the causes of division never could have existed. All this seems like a dreary record of controversy, representing hardly more than opinionated obstinacy . . ."

Professor Woodburn, whose father came to the county with the Covenanter Presbyterians, good-naturedly quoted IU President David Starr Jordan as having said, "There are three kinds of Presbyterians in Bloomington: Reformed Presbyterians, United Presbyterians, and Presbyterians that are neither united nor reformed."

PRONE TO controversy or not, it was the "obstinacy" of the Irish Presbyterians that came to Monroe County that helped them to survive on the frontier and made them good neighbors. God-fearing and scrupulously honest, they came to Monroe County to stay and bought farms to support their families.

Apart from their numerous charitable

acts, another reason why the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians were an asset to the county was that few, if any, necessitated the services of the sheriff. In his *Scotch-Irish Presbyterians in Monroe County, Indiana*, Woodburn explained that "psalm-singing Presbyterians believed that the church was responsible for the conduct of its members, and the church discipline was the principal means by which the members were to be kept within the straight and narrow way."

His book contains numerous specific cases of church trials, the most common of which was the violation of the fourth commandment or keeping of the Sabbath. One member was chastised for taking some hogs to Cincinnati to meet an appointment to sell them early on Monday.

JOHN FEE, Thomas McCalla, Samuel Kirk and William Hunter were at other times tried for merely traveling on Sunday without any commercial intent. The latter two were excused with warnings not to repeat the offense. Fee and McCalla were ordered to appear and admit their error. McCalla refused to do so and was suspended from the congregation for a year.

Slander, failure to attend church services and drinking were other cases considered by the church elders. In describing the latter cases, Woodburn tactfully omitted the names of persons whose indulgence in alcoholic beverages earned them the necessity of explaining their behavior. The only exception was "intoxicating liquors . . . prescribed . . . for medicine in case of Bodily Infirmary."

Among the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians who left their names on Monroe County streets, roads and schools, in addition to the Fees, McCallas and Hunters, were the Hendersons, Gourleys, Fullertons and the Gettys.