

Owen heritage rich

In 1825 a financial decision was made in Scotland - a decision that would have far-reaching effects on the State of Indiana and Indiana University.

IN THAT YEAR a man by the name of Robert Owen, a social reformer, agreed to buy the 30,000-acre Rappite community in Posey County, Indiana, for \$ 150,000. Renamed New Harmony, the experimental community failed, but Owen was to unwittingly leave four gifts to the state - namely his sons, Robert Dale, Richard Dale, David Dale, and William. (Dale was the maiden name of their mother.) Three of the sons ultimately made separate and unique contributions to IU in the school's early years.

To understand how one family could have such an impact on an educational institution it is necessary to know something about the father of the clan, Robert Owen. In an age when the English industrial revolution was underway, Owen was a maverick. He deplored the fact that children were chained to the

Looking back

By Rose McIlveen

machines in the factories and that their families lived in squalor.

OWEN'S OWN INDUSTRIAL complex in Scotland had such unique features as decent housing for the workers and schools for the younger children. For the older ones there were night schools. Understandably there was some prejudice against his "revolutionary" philosophy of ownership in an age when England was flexing its industrial muscles. For that reason Owen chose to buy the Posey County Rappite community so that he could avoid the prejudices of the old world. He could well have taken a clue from the failure of the Rappites, but he had \$150,000-worth of faith in his experiment.

More costly to Owen personally was the investment of his four sons, who chose to become Americans in an exciting time in the history of the nation and the State of Indiana.

ALL FOUR SONS HAD already been well educated during their early years at the family home in Scotland. Their father also shipped them off to Switzerland for additional schooling under the watchful eye of Emmanuel Fellenberg at his school in Hofwyl.

What became of Owen's sons and how did three of them leave their mark on Indiana University? Here is an account of their accomplishments:

Robert Dale was 27 when he arrived with his father at New Harmony. He was to have a distinguished career as a newspaper editor of the *New Harmony Gazette* and in 1827 published *Pocahantas - A Drama*, which is regarded as the very first distinctive literary work by an Indiana author.

ROBERT'S VERSATILE talents

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