

The day gypsies came through Monroe County

(Continued from page 1)

— "dilapidated and dirty specimens of humanity." Tales of their "depredations committed in the south part of the state" had preceded them, and their arrival prompted Sheriff Kinser to call in all off-duty deputies.

When a second report indicated that the band had halted to camp for the night just north of Harrodsburg, the sheriff and deputies had the leisure to plan their strategy for the next morning. Sure enough, about 10:30 a.m., "the group had reached the Gentry place."

Racing to the spot, Sheriff Kinser and his deputies delivered a simple, terse message. "Don't let the sun go down on you in Monroe County!"

To ensure the gypsies' cooperation, they were escorted through town up College Avenue "to the north pike." According to the *Telephone*, they were also warned that "swift justice would follow any trouble in this county."

APPARENTLY the warning was somewhat belated. Reported the *Telephone*, rumors were making the rounds in Smithville. Allowing for changes in reporting styles, it may be necessary to put a grain or two of salt on the *Telephone's* account of the gypsies' crime wave in that area of the county.

One rumor pertained to a 10-year-old boy. It seems that the gypsies grabbed him and threatened to kill him if he did not cooperate. He took their word for it and led them to his father's spring house. There they stole butter and milk.

In another incident reported in the *Telephone*, they seized a boy and began rifling his pockets for loose change. Their petty theft was foiled, however, by a couple of the boy's neighbors.

Were the Syrian gypsies planning to take over Monroe County? Apparently not. According to the newspaper, they were on their way to Indianapolis to get the body of their

queen. She had reportedly died suddenly there in the depot and was awaiting their arrival at an undertaker's.

THE GYPSY incident was a front page item in the *Telephone*, sandwiched between two divorce cases (one bi-racial) and a paternity suit that, upon reading, proves to be equally sensational to the story of the gypsies. After filing the suit, the female married another man. Meanwhile, the defendant had fled from the county. Later the female's husband, described as a Salt Creek farmer, was lynched by Whitecappers. The victim claimed that the defendant was among his midnight assailants, and the defendant ultimately confessed. "Thus came to an end one of the worst petty neighborhood quarrels in the history of the county," commented the *Telephone*.

All things considered, it was a busy news day in Monroe County.