

Gunfire leads to reward

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McGinnis' blacksmith shop was located, but there was, indeed, such a man living in Monroe County at that time. Irish born, Archibald McGinnis had a wife and four children in 1850. Drysdale may have been the James Dragsdale, whose name appears in the 1870 census.

Hughes and son did manage to arrive safely at their home somewhere in Bloomington Township. The father's ad sought reliable information and legal evidence "as will identify the persons who fired at me from McGinnis' shop."

Research indicates that James Hughes was far from ordinary, and that in placing the classified ad in the *Progress* he may have received a political fringe benefit.

Hughes came to Monroe County at an early age with his mother. A biography of the man states that he was born in

Maryland in 1823, and that perhaps his parents were separated. In 1844 Hughes received an appointment to West Point, but left after only a few months because military training was not to his liking.

He spent a couple of years as an IU student, but went elsewhere for his legal training. Hughes regarded Bloomington as his home and returned here to set up his practice. He nudged a fellow Democrat off the Monroe Circuit Court bench, campaigning on the idea that judgeships should be above politics. He also moonlighted as a professor of law at IU.

Hughes' first bid for a Congressional seat was successful in 1856, but he failed in his re-election bid in 1858. Upon the death of Judge Isaac Blackford, Hughes was appointed by Democratic President James Buchanan to the bench of the United States Court of Claims.

Next week: Hughes has a change of heart