

# McCalla family left its mark

Among the books that reveal the details of the history of this area in the Indiana Room of the Monroe County Public Library are the volumes of the *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Indiana, 1861-1865*. In them are recorded the Civil War state military rosters and brief descriptions of their engagements with the "enemy."

Among the names of the 31st Regiment, Indiana Volunteers, is name of Capt. Henry L. McCalla of Bloomington. Opposite his name is printed: "Dishonorably discharged Nov. 24, 1862."

Students of Monroe County history may recall that the name "McCalla" can be found among the God-fearing county pioneers — persons whose lives were made up of the values of hard work, honesty and the best possible education for their children.

How, then, could a member of such a family have left a blot on the



## Looking back

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family escutcheon? It is a story worth the telling — a story that has a happy, if unexpected, ending.

Henry McCalla, like his older siblings, was born in Kershaw County, S.C. The McCalla family move to the Midwest was prompted by religious doctrinal differences and a conviction that slavery was immoral. The father of the family, Samuel, settled his brood on 160 acres that straddled the line between University (now Perry) and Salt Creek Townships.

A recital of the McCalla children indicates their standing in the community: Margaret, the scholar,

taught in the Indiana University Preparatory School and became the first female superintendent of schools in Indiana; Christopher was apprenticed to a cabinet maker and eventually owned his own planing mill; Agnes married Robert C. Foster, a local attorney; and John married Elizabeth, the daughter of IU's first president, Andrew Wyllie.

In the *Histories of Morgan, Monroe and Brown Counties, Indiana*, can be found other details about the family. Thomas was a merchant between 1840 and 1850. When the county commissioners were thinking of constructing a poor asylum, McCalla and Hooper bid \$6,300 on the proposed brick building.

Admittedly, not every member of the McCalla family was strictly orthodox in behavior. Thomas, for example, was hauled before the "Session" of his church to explain why he had broken the Sabbath by  
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