

After county organized, the system took shape

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he came round to Monroe County again, Blake heard the case of the State of Indiana vs. James Greene for stealing a "rifled" gun from John W. Lee. As a result Lee and the Indiana Seminary (IU) each got \$30 from the defendant. It was customary for fines to go directly to help get the struggling seminary off the ground financially.

Meanwhile, Joseph Berry presided over a probate court in August of 1818 and bound out William Dorsey, 7 years of age and orphaned, to Eli and Sarah Lee "until he arrives at the age of 21 years, to learn the art of agriculture," and his sister, Dorcas, to George Hendrick.

BLAKE WAS REPLACED on the circuit by a Jonathan W. Doty, a native of Summerville, N. J., and a graduate of Princeton University. He died in office in 1821 and was succeeded by William Watson Wick, who resigned because of what he called his "starvation" salary. His political career was far from over, however, since he

later served as secretary of the state of Indiana, U.S. representative, prosecuting attorney, and postmaster for Indianapolis.

Wick was followed by John F. Ross of Vincennes, who had already served in the legislature before he assumed his duties on the circuit bench. It was Ross who represented Nicholson in the slander case during Blake's first circuit.

Our next judge, B.F. Morris, had already tried his hand at the newspaper business, having founded the state's third publication, the Brookville *Plain Dealer*. He also served as an Indiana University trustee. One of his most notable legal decisions was one of denying slave owners the right to transport slaves across the state.

PERHAPS THE MOST COLORFUL man who served on the bench in Monroe County's early days was General Washington Johnston. Born in Culpepper County, Va., he was the first man admitted to the bar west of the state of Ohio.

There is some confusion about the gentleman's name since one county history states flatly that his mother named him "General." Another source indicates that he came by his title after serving with General Harrison at the Battle of Tippecanoe.

Known to be hot-headed at times, Johnston was required to fore swear engaging in duels when serving on the bench in Lawrence County. He also married a Vincennes woman whose husband had been killed in a duel.

Considering his long record of public service to the state of Indiana, it is no wonder that he presided on the bench here only during October, 1831. He is most remembered perhaps for his legislative report, which condemned slavery and was unanimously adopted by that body, thus marking the beginning of the end of that trading in the state.

