

Counties' histories recorded

(Continued from page 1)

have thought that Monroe Countians were either backward in record-keeping or difficult to talk to. Not so. Actually, Battey published lots of Indiana county histories and, except for the publication date at the bottom of the preface page, and preface was exactly the same.

THE GENERIC preface continued, "Members of the same families disagree as to the spelling of the family name, contradict each other's statements as to dates of birth, on settlement in the counties, nativity and other matters of fact." Such factual vagueness must have been very tedious for the professionals from the big city.

Meanwhile, they invaded the courthouse to record the facts of Monroe County's founding. Their data included such colorful details as the amount of whiskey served by the county commissioners to prospective buyers at the first city lot sale.

In their travels about the town of Bloomington, the researchers discovered how much the carpenters and masons who put up Indiana

University's first buildings were paid and details of the county's first agricultural fair.

The history of each township received its share of attention, including Marion Township, which was later merged with its neighbor, Benton. Readers of the history can find the little-known facts of the founding of country churches and poll taxes paid by individual residents of the townships.

NEARLY HALF of that 1884 history was made up of biographies of prominent men of the county. (Presumably Monroe County had no prominent women.)

Most of the men whose lives were described by the Battey "historians" were indeed prominent. But it should be noted that their selection was based upon whether the subject (or his family) paid a "subscription fee" to underwrite the edition.

Today's readers of those 1884 biographical sketches will find them written in a flowery style, typical of that period.

Monroe County's next history was not written until 1914.

HARRIS BAIL BONDING

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