David Van Buskirk among county's largest legends

Early Monroe County certainly had its heroes and community-builders, but there was one particular man who was the most "looked up to" man in the area.

In his book, *Historic Treasures*, Pop Hall described David Van Buskirk of Bean Blossom Township as the largest man in Monroe County "and probably in the whole State of Indiana." It is not known whether Van Buskirk was regarded by his neighbors as a "freak," but at 6 feet, 10 inches "in his stocking feet" and weighing some 390 pounds, he certainly must have attracted a lot of attention on the occasions when he came to Bloomington on business.

ACCORDING TO HALL, Van Buskirk was born on the Buskirk homestead in Bean Blossom Township in November of 1826. He was the oldest of 10 children of James Van Buskirk, who came to Indiana from Ohio.

By the time his son, David, got around to going to school, there were several log schoolhouses in the township, and the town of Mt. Tabor was growing up around a saw mill and grist mill. Van Buskirk was reported to have received a "fair" education, considering the primitive schools of that era.

Married at 23, he settled down on land in

Looking back

By Rose McIlveen

Bean Blossom Township, which has come to be known as the "David Buskirk farm" and contains a family cemetery. There he started his family and had no particular reason to think he would not spend the rest of his life making a living for them on the farm.

FATE AND AMERICAN history had other plans for him. In 1861, when Union Army recruiters were working their way through the county, Van Buskirk joined up in company "F" of the 27th Indiana Infantry.

The Bloomington *Republican* of July 13, 1861, reported: "Peter Kop and several other gentlemen of this place are raising a company of grenadiers for the United States service. They admit no recruits