

# The Delaware Indians once inhabited area

In his account of the Indian troubles of 1811-13 on the Indiana frontier, early Monroe County settler John Ketcham mentioned the hostility of the Delawares after the Battle of Tippecanoe.

**WHEN KETCHAM AND** James Bigger came to the territory that became Monroe County they were already familiar with the Delawares, whom they found in the area of Clear Creek. The two white men had spent a fair amount of time chasing Indians from that tribe after the latter had been on one of their periodic horse-stealing or homestead-raiding forays.

On the frontier, it behooved Ketcham and other rangers to know the customs and habits of their adversaries, the Indians. As an example, the Delaware shook hands left-handed, because that was the hand closer to the heart.

**UNLIKE OTHER TRIBES** having a more casual legal structure, the Delawares had fairly rigid rules for the succession of chiefs, division of tribes

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## Looking Back

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within the nation, punishment for crimes and collection of debts. For example, if a debtor refused to pay, the person to whom he owed the debt simply collected it from the debtor's friends, who rarely refused to pay.

First offense thefts were resolved by restitution. Punishment for unresolved debts, theft and rape was meted out by the chief in the form of public whippings, as follows: first offense, 25 lashes; second offense, 50 lashes; and third offense, up to 100 lashes.

Murder, according to an *Indiana Historical Society* publication, was

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