

Monroe Countians had mixed feelings about war

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In and the war had lost some of its glamour, the southerners or "Seceshes" held their own meeting at the courthouse. Judge Eckles of Greencastle came down to speak. He damned the war, Lincoln, and the Republican Party. At the meeting several bloody fights broke out.

AREAS OF THE COUNTY where the southern sympathizers lived were sneeringly called "Secessias" by others who supported the Union cause. When a trainload of Confederate Army prisoners stopped here on its way north, some of the "Secesses" tried to persuade them to escape. One southerner was beaten with a cane for being too outspoken. Another left the county abruptly one night to escape a lynch mob. He had been foolish enough to praise Confederate President Jeff Davis in front of the wrong people.

An army recruiter, W.F. Hensley, was threatened by an angry mob in Indian Creek Township and forced to turn over his papers. Col. John McCrea, the army provost marshal for

Monroe County, went to the township with a troop of cavalry and arrested 15 leaders of the mob. They were tried in U.S. District Court in Indianapolis.

THE "SECESHES" were also called "Butternuts". The Indian Creek group was told to stop their military drills and all activity in the county. Col. McCrea didn't have any trouble getting his point across. He was backed up by the 71st Company, some 3rd Cavalrymen, and the 23rd Artillery with two 12-pound cannons.

As the South's cause was gradually lost, the "Seceshes" became less vocal in public. When news of each succeeding Union victory came into Bloomington over the telegraph wire, citizens turned out into the streets to celebrate with torchlight parades, band music, musket volleys, and bonfires.

Lee's surrender at Appomatox in April 1865 marked the end of Monroe County's private Civil War, too.