

# Memorial Swinging Bridge Project

Lighting Our Legacy

## Pulaski County, Indiana Military History [Civil War]: Part 4

*From Counties of White and Pulaski, Indiana: Historical and biographical By Weston Arthur Goodspeed, F.A. Battey & Co., 1883.*

### Disloyalty

About this time a sentiment in opposition to the war began to be manifested. The editor of the Pulaski County Democrat, a young attorney named Rufus Magee, adopted ultra measures in espousing the cause of his party. His paper had much to do with the feeling in the county hostile to the war. The Knights of the Golden Circle also made their appearance, and added their influence to the general ill-will. I

t was nothing unusual to hear men publicly state that they would not assist, by a solitary dollar, a continuance of the most unjust war. The names, "Copperhead" and "Abolitionist" began to have a sting, and more than one black eye and bloody nose resulted from an injudicious use of them.

Butternut breastpins became fashionable. The "nigger" and all his sympathizers were made the objects of suggestive ridicule. "Secessionist" was the word that was flaunted in the face of many, but nothing good was thereby accomplished. It only served to array, unnecessarily, neighbor against neighbor.

The Democratic Convention of the Ninth Congressional District was held at Winamac on the 7th of August, 1862, on which occasion several thousand people assembled. W. J. Walker, of La Porte, presided; Maj. Gardner and W. J. Gridley were

two of the Vice Presidents. The delegates of Pulaski County were H. P. Rowan, W. S. Huddleston, F. B. Thomas, W. C. Barnett, G. E. Wickersham, J. B. Agnew, Samuel Decker, A. Starr and T. H. Keys.

The President of the convention, in his opening remarks, stated that two important subjects were before the citizens present for consideration. To put down the rebels of the South by the bayonet and the Abolitionists of the North by the ballot.

Hon. David Turpie, of White County, was nominated for Congress after an exciting contest. A long series of resolutions was then adopted. The political acts of Schuyler Colfax, then in Congress from the Ninth District (now the Tenth), were severely denounced. The Convention declared that the rebellion must be put down; that no money should be paid out of the public fund to the negroes that had been freed in the District of Columbia; that the established institutions of the South (meaning slavery) should not be interfered with ; that they were in favor of the "Constitution as it is and the Union as it was;" that the doctrines of secession and abolition were alike inconsistent with the Constitution; that all secret organizations which favored a resistance to the execution of the laws should be disbanded; that the soil of Indiana belonged to the white man, and the State Constitutional clause inhibiting free negroes and mulattoes from coming into the State, there to live and compete with the labor of the white man, should be enforced, and that the valor of the Indiana troops in the field was a source of universal pride.

The result of the convention in the county greatly increased the opposition to the war, if any interference with slavery was contemplated. The strong position that secession was inconsistent with the Constitution did much to mollify the ultra Democrats of the county, and encourage enlistments as long as the slavery question was overlooked.

## **The Draft**

As the time that was fixed for the draft approached, it was apparent that the county would not wholly succeed in clearing herself. The draft was announced at first to take place on the 15th of September, 1862; but, at the last moment, the date was

postponed to October 6, to give all townships abundant opportunity to free themselves.

This draft was not levied because Indiana was behind with her quota, or because any county was behind; but was ordered to compel some townships in each of the greater number of counties (all but fifteen) to furnish their allotted quotas of men. There were townships in some counties so hostile to the war that, up to the autumn of 1862, scarcely a man had been furnished, and the object of the draft was to compel such localities to come to time, and thus equalize the burden of providing men and means.

All the townships of Pulaski County except three had furnished their quotas. These three were Tippecanoe, Rich Grove and Franklin. On the 15th of September, the date first fixed for the draft, there were due from the first 9, from the second 2, and from the third 5; total 16. Between the 15th of September and the 6th of October, when the draft was levied, how many of the sixteen men required were furnished by volunteering cannot be stated, though doubtless a few.

The Draft Commissioner was J. W. Eldridge; Provost Marshal, R. M. Gill; Surgeon, F. B. Thomas. The draft was conducted in the Odd Fellows building, Maj. Gardner, blindfolded, being the drawer. Considerable feeling in opposition to the draft was manifested, though the proceedings were not interrupted. The facts upon which the draft was based were as follows: Total county militia 957; total volunteers already furnished 494; total volunteers now in the service 467; total exempts 101; total subject to draft 856. The drafted men were taken to Indianapolis, and they who did not furnish substitutes entered the service.

## **Suppression Of The Democrat**

During the year 1863—the darkest for the Union cause while the war continued, owing to the fact that the doom of slavery was publicly announced, and to the further fact that a great many throughout the county were bitterly opposed to a continuation of the war in the interests of an abolition of slavery—the enlistment of volunteers was almost at a standstill.

It was publicly stated that the abolition war must cease, and that no more men ought to be furnished. Public speakers, at home and from abroad, violently attacked the administration, and some of them went so far as to council a resistance to drafts and enlistments.

The Democrat was very bitter and outspoken. It denounced the suspension of the habeas corpus by the President as a most unjust and unwarranted proceeding; declared that Valladigham was a martyr; violently assailed the military order of Gen. Burnside requiring newspapers and public speakers to cease encouraging and counseling a resistance to the war measures of the administration; and even went so far as to attack Gen. Hascall for his connection with an order curtailing the privileges of the public press and the liberty of free speech.

The result of this procedure on the part of the Democrat provoked Gen. Hascall to issue an order suppressing the paper, and requiring its editor to appear before the military authorities at Indianapolis to answer for his rebellious conduct. Satisfactory assurance having been given of better conduct in the future, the editor was permitted to resume the issue of his paper. This was in May (about), 1863.

The feeling in the county at this time was severe and vindictive; but it was seen that the Government was terribly in earnest, and open resistance was avoided. This state of affairs led to a great falling off in the number of men furnished for the service. Various recruiting officers appeared, however, and secured small detachments of volunteers. Several recruits were secured for the old companies already in the field.

