

FERGUS MOORHEAD, one of the pioneers of Indiana county, was a man of honor, honesty and great courage.

'In the month of May, 1772, Fergus Moorhead, his wife and three children, his two brothers, Samuel and Joseph, James Kelly, James Thompson and few others bid farewell to their friends and relatives in Franklin county, and set out on their journey to the 'Indian country' west of the Allegheny. Though the prospects of acquiring extensive possessions and wealth for themselves and posterity might buoy up the adventurous spirits of the three brothers, it may well be imagined that Mrs. Moorhead left home and all its endearments with a heavy heart. But, being a woman possessing great energy of character, as is shown in the sequel, and touched, perhaps with that romantic spirit peculiar to that period of which we are writing, she pressed forward with a firm step and a resolute heart, determined to share with her devoted husband the dangers and trials of the wilderness.

"At length, at the end of four weeks from the time they had left Franklin county, the party reached the point of their destination. Where the town of Indiana is now built was the spot that had been selected for a settlement by Fergus Moorhead, who had made an excursion into this section in 1770. For reasons which to them were obvious, the party changed their determination, and located a few miles further west. Though they were now relieved from the fatigue incident to their journey, our pioneers were far from living at their ease.

"The land now owned by Isaac A. Moorhead was that which they selected for their future residence."

In July, 1776, he took command of the frontier fort at Kittanning, while his brother Samuel, the commandant, was recovering from an attack of small-pox. Upon Samuel's recovery, Fergus started for home, accompanied by a soldier named Simpson; and when they arrived at "Blanket Hill," on the Kittanning path, they were waylaid by Indians, who shot both their horses and killed Simpson. Moorhead was taken prisoner, dressed in Indian costume, and, after arriving at his captors' camp, was compelled to run the gauntlet. He was then taken to Quebec, and sold to the British, who kept him in close confinement and on miserable for eleven months. At the end of this time he was exchanged and set to New York, from which he set out on foot for his former home in Franklin county, which he reached after enduring great hardships. He there found his wife and three children, who had given him up for dead and returned to that county. In 1781 he and his family returned to their border home, and in a few years became comfortably situated. Mr. Moorhead lived to the ripe old age of eighty-nine years, and has left a numerous and respectable progeny, many of whom are yet residents of the county. Of his sons one was William Moorhead, and another was Fergus Moorhead, Jr., who was the first white child born in Indiana county.