

Keeping IU in Bloomington a tough job in early years

Hundreds of pages of words have been written about the financial troubles of the young Indiana University. The frustrations and really difficult decisions faced by its trustees and presidents have been well documented by such historians as James Woodburn and Thomas Clark.

Perhaps not enough has been written about the courage and plain stubborn perseverance of the men who were determined that Indiana should have a state university and that it would be located in Bloomington.

HAVING FINALLY passed the act of Jan. 22, 1820, to establish a seminary in Monroe County, with a few exceptions the legislators operated under the assumption that nothing else need be done for the school. Baynard Hall, the first faculty member hired by the trustees, and that body certainly did more than their part to get

Looking back

By Rose McIlveen

buildings constructed and literally open the doors for classes to begin.

And, for a time, the little seminary envisioned by the Monroe County physician and trustee David Maxwell, did make steady progress, despite the narrow, sectarian attitudes of its first presidents and some petty squabbles among the faculty. On the positive side, the school began to produce some graduates of creditable university caliber.

The two main problems that plagued the young seminary had roots in the state legislature. In the early years legislators from the Indianapolis area had kept their eyes on the small school down in Monroe County and had begun to feel that it should be moved to the state capital.

AS EARLY AS 1829, Maxwell wrote to his nephew, James Maxwell, a gloomy letter that expressed his forebodings:

"An attempt was made by Gregory in the Senate to have the College charter overhauled, with an open avowal to me that the object was to get the College moved to Indianapolis. He said he had received letters on the subject. He failed. Be silent on this subject until I return and I can tell you all about it. The College has narrowly escaped being blown sky high. I am now done,

(Back page, col. 4, this sec.)