

# Five early circuit judges also were IU trustees

Five of the early Circuit Court judges who traveled on horseback to cover their time on the bench in the Monroe County Courthouse wore another hat on their visits here — that of Indiana University Trustee.

BETHUEL MORRIS, who was every bit as much a newspaperman as a lawyer, was a Pennsylvanian turned Hoosier, who founded the Brookville *Plain Dealer*, which he edited for several years before turning his full attention to the law. Appointed an IU Trustee in 1825, Morris was such a many-faceted man that it is a wonder he had time to sit on the bench during his circuits here.

By 1821 Morris had already become editor of another newspaper, the *Indianapolis Gazette*. He also served as agent for the State of Indiana "to sell certain lands granted for the capital." At the same time he conducted a law practice in Indianapolis with Calvin Fletcher. He is best remembered for his bench decision that slave owners could not transport their slaves across the state. Another claim to fame was his relationship to a president of the United States. His son, Samuel, was married to the sister of Benjamin Harrison.

OF ALL THE JUDGES who served on the

## Looking back

By Rose McIlveen

Monroe Circuit John Law was the one with the most appropriate name. Born into a Connecticut family with a long history of government service, Law was the grandson of a member of the first Continental Congress and the son of another Congressman. After his graduation from Yale University at the age of 18, he studied law in his father's office and gained bar admission in 1817.

Traveling west and settling in Vincennes, he took on oral exam for Indiana bar admission. According to an account in B.D. Myers' *Officers of Indiana University*, "His examination was brilliant and excited commendation of the judges".

LAW, WHOSE DIGNIFIED photograph can be seen hanging on the wall in the law library of the Courthouse among his colleagues, was already

(Page 2, col. 1, this sec.)