

# Paris Dunning Bloomington's first governor

Ten years after the 1818 Monroe County government was established a southern teenager moved to Bloomington with his widowed mother and older brother. The Dunning family had made the long trek to Indiana from Greensboro, N.C., where 17-year-old Paris had been educated at the academy in preparation for attendance at the state university in Chapel Hill.

Despite the interruption in his education, Dunning's academy education qualified him to teach, which he did to support the family. Meanwhile, he was also reading medicine on the side and graduated from the Medical College at Louisville.

## Looking back

*By Rose McIlveen*

After a brief practice in Rockville, the teacher-turned-doctor shifted career gears again and began to read law in the office of James Whitcomb. It was while Dunning was rubbing elbows with the like of Whitcomb that he caught political fever and never went back to teaching or the practice of medicine.

**DUNNING'S STINT IN** Whitcomb's office proved to be of mutual benefit to both the frontier lawyers. After his admission to the bar in 1833, Dunning was elected to the State Legislature for three terms in the lower house, and moved up to the Senate in 1836.

Like many a prominent educated citizen of his day Dunning had a hand in helping to shape the future of Indiana University. In February of 1838 when the legislature passed an act to transform the then Indiana College into Indiana University, the name of Paris C. Dunning was included in the act as one of its appointed trustee. On the board he served as its president until 1841 when the General Assembly named a new board.

**TURNING HIS FULL ATTENTION** to the political arena in 1844, Dunning parlayed his connections with influential men into his selection as a