

# Courthouse has had previous facelifts

The imminent renaissance of the courthouse is a reminder of earlier efforts to "spruce up" the hub of Monroe County business and governmental affairs.

In its evolution from a sleepy county-seat town square — with a log courthouse — the four-block area has undergone considerable cosmetic surgery. Three old pictures dramatically reflect the growing pains of Bloomington.

**THE FIRST** — an oil painting — shows the square in the days when county business was conducted in a small brick courthouse, which had been built by pioneer Col. John Ketcham. Theophilus Wylie, whose main occupation was hammering some knowledge into the heads of frontier lads, painted the picture of a

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## Looking Back

*By Rose H. McIlveen*

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political meeting on the square around 1839.

From the earliest days the area had been the focal point of political activity. In the foreground of Wylie's painting is a speaker on a tree stump, surrounded by a crowd of locals, presumably a cross-section of Monroe Countians, including a dog. On either side of the picture may well be the notorious "grog" shops where,

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