

IU's birth was touch and go

The birth of Indiana University was definitely one of those touch and go affairs from its very beginning.

No matter what the attitude of the early Hoosiers may have been toward education, there was

Looking back

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certainly no doubt about what the federal government expected.

The act of Congress of 1816 granting statehood to the Indiana Territory contained a mandate directed at the new state legislature to guarantee a system of education for its citizens. The wishes of the federal government were further underscored by the provision of a township-sized parcel of land for a "seminary of learning."

Considering what was expected of them, the Indiana legislators certainly took their time getting around to complying with the federal mandate regarding higher education. Admittedly the legislature had some other priorities besides schools, but it was nearly four long years before it got around to the matter of a seminary.

THE "FATHER" OF Indiana University, David Maxwell, was on hand as a legislator in Corydon when the issue finally came up for consideration by his colleagues. As patient and tactful as he was known to be, it must have