

Dunning rose to governor

(Continued from page 1)

James K. Polk presidential elector. Two years later Dunning teamed with his old mentor, Whitcomb, to get himself elected lieutenant governor. It is not known whether Whitcomb knew he was going to run for the U.S. Senate at the next available election, but run he did and turned the governorship over to pupil Dunning in 1848.

AT THE END OF HIS term as governor, Dunning returned to his Bloomington law practice and confined his political activity to behind-the-scene maneuvering. In 1856 his friends urged him to accept his nomination to run for Congress and were puzzled when he declined the nomination.

Dunning's selection as a delegate to the 1860 Democratic National Convention was more to his liking, and, according to B.D. Myers' *Trustees and Officers of Indiana University* delegate Dunning "took a very decided stand for Stephen A. Douglas . . . and continued to vote for Douglas until he was nominated".

AS THE CIVIL WAR CLOUDS were gathering, Monroe Countians were bitterly divided on the issue of whether the southern states should be kept in the Union by military force.

Stormy meetings were held in the courthouse. The angry Monroe Countians who had emigrated from the southern states, denounced Lincoln in four-letter-Anglo Saxon words and called those who would resort to war as "jingos."

At one meeting former southerner Dunning dramatically stormed out of the room saying he would have nothing to do with any of the participants until the north and south had resolved their differences. However, once Ft. Sumter had been fired on, Dunning took the cause of the Union to his heart and stumped the state urging Hoosiers to raise their quota of troops.

STEPPING BACK INTO the political arena in 1862, he was elected to the state senate and chosen as its president. It was to be Dunning's last hurrah, but from the vantage point of a seasoned politician the Bloomington lawyer maintained a keen interest in public affairs.

Widowed after 38 years of marriage, Dunning remarried at the age of 59 and fathered a second family, having 10 children by both marriages. His biographers state that for some reason in later years he was estranged from his children.

Death came for the former governor after he suffered a stroke in the Monroe County courtroom attending a trial. He was buried in Rose Hill close to the house he built, which is still standing at the west end of Third Street.