

Established in Bloomington in 1824

Indiana Gazette first paper

Tucked away in a file drawer in the Indiana Room of the Monroe County Public Library is a microfilm of Bloomington's first newspaper, *The Indiana Gazette*.

Established in 1824, the publication was owned by Jesse Brandon of Corydon. The generally accepted story of his move to Monroe County is that, when the state capital moved from Corydon to Indianapolis, it was his intention to move his press there. He got as far as Bloomington and changed his mind about his destination.

IT IS LIKELY THAT newspaper editor/publisher Brandon was already acquainted with Bloomington physician and state

representative and Indiana Seminary trustee David Maxwell. Their paths undoubtedly crossed many times back in Corydon, while Maxwell was helping to write the state constitution and Brandon was reporting it in his newspaper.

Whatever his reason for settling in Bloomington, Brandon began publishing a local newspaper that looked anything like a local newspaper. The earliest editions were nothing more than reprints of news dispatches from such faraway places as Washington, D.C., Greece and London.

ONCE THE GAZETTE and the locals got acquainted with each other, however, the newspaper began to take on a local flavor. William Hardin and John Borland advertised rival "houses of entertainment."

In other ads 26 lots in Indianapolis were offered for sale, a clothing store proclaimed the quality of its wares, and a cabinet-maker was looking for a couple of moral and industrious

young men to serve as apprentices in his shop.

In the course of a county's history, tavern owners and cabinet makers come and go, but the ad with the longest range of significance for Bloomington and the county was the one which proudly announced the opening of the Indiana Seminary. Through the years there has been some debate about the date of the first classes at the seminary. The *Gazette* ad of Jan. 8, 1825 said:

"THE TRUSTEES OF THIS institution are authorized to inform the public that the Seminary buildings are now in a state of preparation, and will be ready for the reception of students by the first Monday of April next . . ."

Letters to the editor began to appear in Brandon's newspaper. Two of them are particularly interesting.

Apparently there was a rumor going around

(Page 2, col. 6, this sec.)

Looking
Back

By Rose H. McIlveen