

# 'New science' to clients: It is all in your heads

Having encouraged his readers to commit their reactions to pen and paper, the editor of the *Bloomington Post* duly published a couple of the reader reactions to the "new science" of phrenology.

The first one — supposedly from a Monroe County man who was writing to his sister in a neighboring county — sounds very much like the writer has been convinced of the validity of discerning character by reading bumps on the skull.

The anonymous male writer related, "Phrenology is no longer a subject to be ridiculed, or laughed out of countenance by those who have never investigated it, but a beautiful and interesting science, and confessedly the most important which has ever engaged the attention of mankind."

Perhaps the writer was more easily convinced because he wanted to be at the outset. The field of psychology was waiting to be born even as the *Post* writer stated, "How easily does this science enable us to account for a thousand things in the natural and moral



## Looking back

By Rose McIlveen

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world, which were before totally inexplicable. . . . You see a difference of cerebral development makes it all plain."

The second letter published in the Feb. 9, 1838, edition of the *Post* was from a woman. Her modest education did not inhibit her when it came to extolling the virtues of the "itinerant professor of phrenology."

She related that first her attorney husband's head had been read. He, in turn, insisted that his wife go for a reading. "On the following day I went downtown, accompanied by a confidential female friend, submitted to the operation with some slight apprehension of the consequences. . . ."

Among her attributes, according  
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