

Hunter legacy remains

Among the early Hoosiers who found their way to the educational mecca that was Bloomington was a Morton Craig Hunter, who left his hometown of Versailles to study law at Indiana University.

IT IS NOT KNOWN what kind of future young Hunter had mapped out for himself. Perhaps as he journeyed to Bloomington in 1846-47 his dreams included nothing more complicated than returning home and setting up a small law practice. It is unlikely, however, that he ever expected to experience the heady feelings of being a military hero and addressing his fellow congressmen in our nation's capital.

Most aspiring lawyers in Hunter's day were self-made in that they read borrowed law books and served their apprenticeship in a practicing attorney's office. But Indiana University had a law "department" consisting of one professor, circuit Judge David McDonald, and Hunter came to Bloomington to get enough legal knowledge to set up his own practice.

IN THOSE DAYS there were two

Looking Back

By Rose H. McIlveen

requirements for entry into the IU law department — enough common school education to be relatively literate and to be of "good moral character." Having satisfied both of those requirements and having been exposed to Judge McDonald's tutelage for a couple of years, Hunter received an LL.B. degree in law in 1848 or 1849, depending on whether you get the date from Theophilus Wylie's history of IU or from the sketch about Hunter in the *Biographical Directory of the American Congress*.

Whichever date is correct, 1850 found young attorney Hunter living in the home of his in-laws, the Labertews, whose daughter, Martha

Adeline, he had married. It was during the 1850s that Hunter was supposed to have built the spacious Hunter House which used to stand on the east side of the intersection of 11th and Walnut streets.

THE 1850S ALSO brought some other changes in the man's life, for he began to dabble in politics and was elected to the Indiana House of Representatives in 1858. Two years later he was a Republican presidential elector.

The Civil War interrupted Hunter's law and political careers, and the 37-year-old attorney took it upon himself to organize a company of volunteers from Monroe County.

This was the 82nd Indiana Regiment, and the local men who made up Company "F" saw some of the bloodiest fighting in the war. After the battles of Chicamauga, Kenesaw Mountain and Sherman's march to the sea, Hunter, who entered the army as a colonel, emerged as a brevet general of the First Brigade, Thirteenth Division of the Fourteenth