

Introduced courses in 1836

IU can claim engineering

"... the salaries of competent engineers are from two to seven thousand dollars per annum. A more promising field both for profit and distinction cannot be opened to the aspiring mind of the youth of our country," wrote Indiana College board-of-trustees President David Maxwell in 1836.

IN THOSE DAYS such salaries were an exciting prospect for any college graduate, and they were part of the rationale Maxwell used for announcing the addition of engineering instruction to the college curriculum. (IU was to be elevated to the status of a university in 1838.) In introducing courses in civil engineering at the college, the trustee, and Maxwell in particular, were ahead of their time.

As settlers poured into the relatively new State of Indiana, log cabin villages were expanding into towns. Visionaries were beginning to talk in terms of connecting roads and canals and eventually railroads. Bloomington's population, for example, kept predictably doubling — 1818, 140; 1820, 300; 1830, 700; and 1847, 1,200.

THE INITIAL OBJECTIVE of the Indiana Seminary/College had been

Looking Back

By Rose H. McIlveen

to provide the state with badly-needed teachers, lawyers, and ministers, and that was being done in ever-increasing numbers. But Maxwell's vision was bigger than the state's immediate needs, and the board's action was even more phenomenal in that engineering training was available only at West Point and at the young Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute founded at Troy, N.Y., in 1824.

IU grounded its fledgling engineering training in the mathematics department and stipulated that candidates for its civil engineering certificate begin their studies with a foreknowledge of algebra, geometry, trigonometry and conic sections. IU's first civil engineering professor, E.N. Elliott, reported in the *Bloomington Star* of June 6, 1838, that, "The class is

already respectable, and a number more of young gentlemen are making arrangements to connect themselves with it."

THE 1835 INDIANA COLLEGE catalogue listed "Cambridge Mechanics, Hydrostatics, Hydrodynamics and Hydraulics" as part of the curriculum for the second session of the junior year. The "hydro" courses were to become increasingly important as Americans turned more and more to steam power to replace manpower and horsepower.

Maxwell had pointed out the impracticality of importing engineers from Europe, where reliable instruction had gotten underway a few years earlier. Apart from Rensselaer and West Point curricula to copy, the Indiana College utilized textbooks written by professors at such places as Cambridge University and the University of Dublin. (Bear in mind that Harvard and Yale Universities didn't get into the engineering teaching business until 1847 and that the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Purdue University