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History of Indiana University: The Seminary Period (1820-1828)

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CHAPTER I
THE SEMINARY PERIOD
(1820 - 1828)¹

Federal and state legislation for the support of education—early settlements and settlers—Bloomington in 1820—Dr. Maxwell sent unofficially to the legislature—act establishing Indiana Seminary—choice of site—Baynard R. Hall—opening of Seminary—John H. Harney—students of the day—board of visitors—Indiana College.

IN THE ACT of Congress of April 19, 1816, providing for the admission of Indiana into the Union, is found the germ of the Indiana University. Certain proposals were tendered by that act to the people of the proposed new state for "their free acceptance or rejection," two of which related to education; and one was the offer on the part of the federal government to donate to the new state a township of land "for the use of a seminary of learning."

The constitutional convention met at Corydon on June 10 following, and in nineteen days framed an organic law under which Indiana was admitted and her people prospered for thirty-five years. To the lasting honor of the members of that convention be it spoken, they accepted the proposals of Congress relating to learning in a spirit as broad and liberal as that in which they had been tendered. I need not read the splendid tribute paid to liberal learning, nor the pledge made to execute faithfully the trusts imposed by the liberality of Congress. It is enough to present in their own words a summing up of the duties the people of the new state assumed in behalf of their schools. In the second section of the ninth article it is declared that

It shall be the duty of the General Assembly, as soon as circumstances will permit, to provide by law for a general system of education ascending in a regular gradation from township schools to a State University, wherein tuition shall be gratis, and equally open to all.

¹ David Demaree Banta, author of Chapters I-VI, was born in Johnson county, Indiana, May 23, 1833. Chapter I is Judge Banta's Foundation Day address, delivered on January 21, 1889, in the Old College chapel. His life is sketched in Chapter VII.

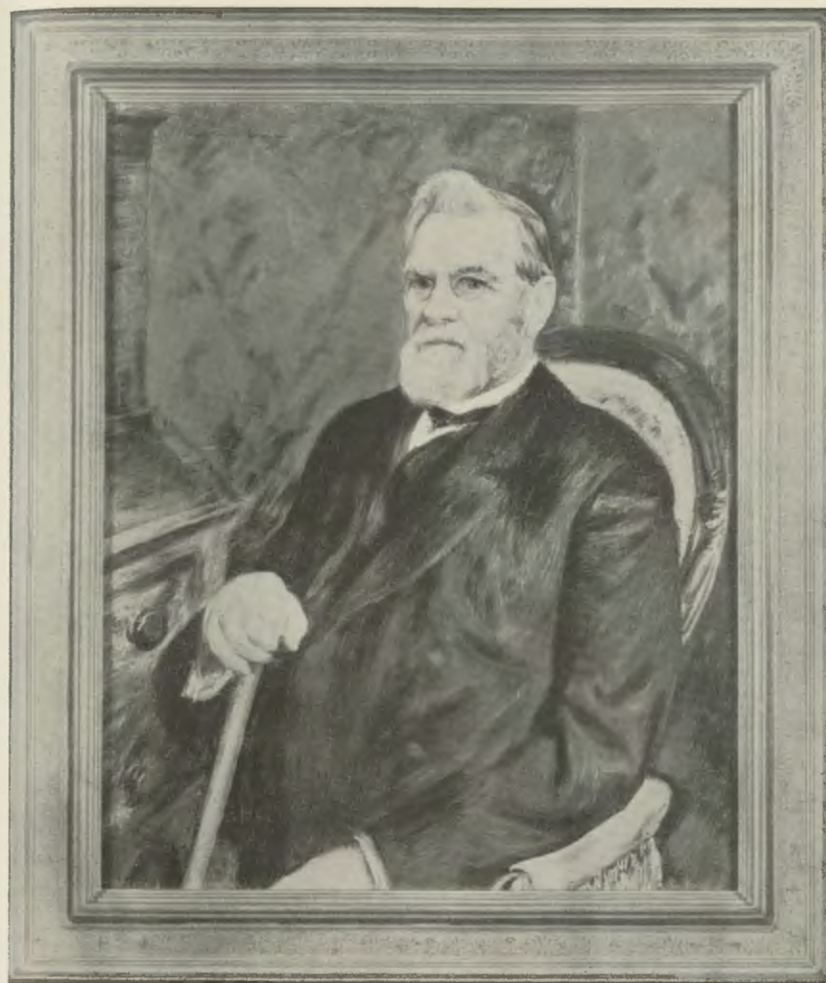
Whatever may be said as to the subsequent performance, the pledge given by the new state was as liberal as the most zealous friend of learning in all the land could have wished. The state stood committed by her organic law to a free school system that should begin in the district school and end in the University.

On July 10, eleven days after the convention had adjourned, President Madison designated the Seminary township. This township, which in the subsequent organization of Monroe county became a part thereof, had been surveyed under the laws of the United States as early as 1812, and the notes of the surveyors were doubtless before the president when the selection was made, for it is apparent that a better selection could not have been made within the then surveyed limits as near to the geographical center of the state. The township chosen was well timbered and well watered, and its many productive farms of today attest the native fertility of its soil.

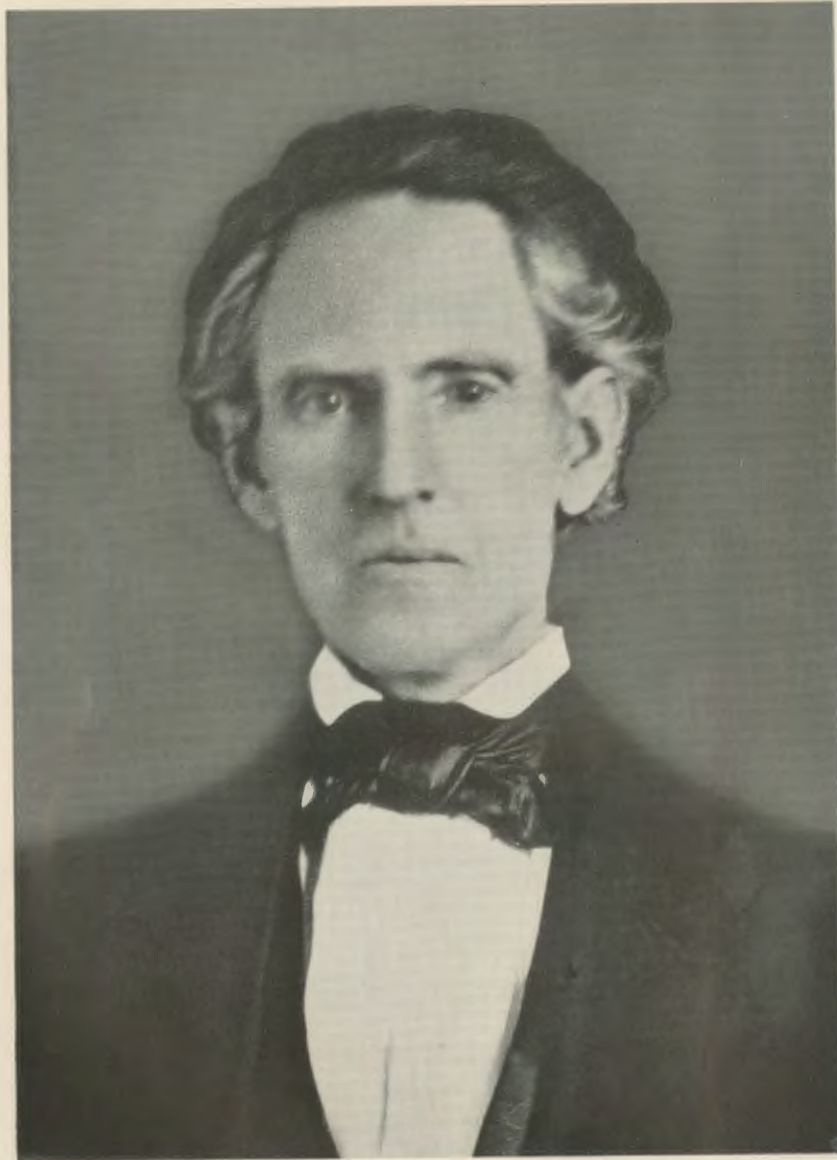
To the framers of the constitution it was evident that the sale of any of the school lands at that time would be imprudent, so they provided in the organic law that none should be sold before 1820.

The settled parts of Indiana at the time of the admission were confined to a narrow fringe of territory extending down the Ohio state line from Wayne county to the Ohio river, and thence down that river to the Wabash, and up that to Vincennes. The larger parts of what are now known as eastern, southern, and western Indiana, and all of central and northern Indiana, were a wilderness. Less than a fourth part of the lands within the state had been surveyed, and to nearly all the unsurveyed parts the Indians claimed title. The southern Indian boundary line crossed the Wabash a few miles south of the present site of Newport in Vermillion county; and thence it ran southeasterly, crossing the west fork of White river at Gosport, and through the territory now known as Monroe county, leaving fully a fourth of it on the Indian side, and struck the east fork of White river about midway between Seymour and Brownstown, whence it ran in a general northeast course till it cut the Ohio line east of the present site of Portland in Jay county. The white population of the state verged upon 64,000, and delegates from thirteen border counties sat in the constitutional convention.

By a treaty made with the Delawares and some other Indians, in the



DAVID DEMAREE BANTA



DAVID HERVEY MAXWELL

fall of 1818, the southern Indian boundary line was set back well up towards the sources of the Wabash river; and two years thereafter the door to all of central Indiana, then and long after known as the New Purchase, was thrown open to an anxious throng of hardy pioneer home-hunters.

In spite of the manifold hindrances in the way of a speedy colonization of the New Purchase, the settlers came in. It is a difficult matter for us of today to gain an adequate idea of all these settlers had to encounter; and yet without something of this, no one can rate at its true value the founding and maintenance of our beloved school here in the woods. Before the Indians had ceased to occupy, the advance guard began to invade the New Purchase; and by the fall of 1820 the sound of the pioneer's ax was heard in every county watered by White river and its tributaries, from the "Forks" to its sources. The immigrants came by the way of the Indian trails or cut "traces" through the woods. Some came in wagons and some in sleds. Many packed in on horseback, and a few came on foot. In 1820 the census showed a population of a little more than 147,000 as against 64,000 of five years before; and by 1825 it had mounted up to a quarter of a million.

These were all poor men—poor even for their own day. Most were able to buy 40, 80, or 160 acres of land at "Congress price," but there were comparatively few who could do more.

What had they undertaken? To subdue the wilderness; to wrest from reluctant Nature a livelihood for themselves and their families; to construct highways; to build towns; to establish churches and schools;—in a word, to make a state.

What had they to encounter? Who can tell! The story of their hardships never has been and never can be fully told. We have not time to dwell upon it here. Let us be content with a bare recital of some of the topics that would enter into the story. There was the forest—dense, damp, and gloomy, unexcelled in its magnitude on this forest continent of ours; swamps interminable where now are fruitful fields; wild beasts waiting to devour the products of labor; the late and early frosts; the annual floods; the want of markets; a financial revulsion more disastrous in its consequences than has ever cursed the people of Indiana since; and the almost universal preva-

lence of the autumnal and other sicknesses peculiar to a new country. From 1820 to 1825 the mortality in the state was appalling. In the fall of 1820 the sickness in the Blue river settlements was so great that there were not enough well persons left to nurse the sick ones. In 1822 an epidemic of fever broke out in the new town of Indianapolis and carried off seventy-two persons, one-eighth of the population. In 1820 over one hundred out of the population of six hundred died in Vevay, Palestine, then the seat of justice in Lawrence county, was nearly depopulated; and in "most neighborhoods," says an early historian, "there were but few persons who escaped without one or more severe attacks of fever." "Death numbered his victims by hundreds. The land was filled with mourning and the graveyards filled with the pioneer dead."

Notwithstanding the United States surveyors had established the "lines and corners" throughout the greater part of Monroe county as early as 1812, the first pioneer's cabin seems not to have been built within the present county boundaries till some time in 1815—a backwardness to take advantage of the public surveys that can be accounted for by the nearness of the Indian country. In that year David McHolland, a famous hunter and a "jovial fiddler," settled on Clear creek close up to the south boundary of the Seminary donation. Others followed, a few the same year, more the next, and so on. In 1816, according to the local historian, the first white men's cabins were built on the after-site of Bloomington. Early in 1818 Monroe county was organized, and in April of the same year Bloomington was staked out adjoining the Seminary township on the north.

The new town seems to have outstripped all of its inland competitors, a circumstance due mainly to the nearness of the Seminary township. At the close of the year it contained 140 inhabitants, living in thirty hastily constructed cabins; and the number was doubled the year following. By 1820 the public square was cleared of the last of its native forest trees, the log courthouse was outgrown, and Colonel John Ketcham was at work on a brick structure which, when completed four years later,² was esteemed so highly for its great beauty of

²The courthouse was not entirely completed, inside and outside, until 1826. It was painted bright red, penciled with white, and was surmounted with a cupola containing a public clock. In 1856-1858 it was remodeled by the addition of two brick wings. It stood in this form until its demolition in 1906, to make room for the present building of white limestone.

design and excellence of finish that the county commissioners ordered that it should not be opened to the gaze of profane eyes save for certain specified purposes, one of which was "when any person shall want admittance for the purpose of acquiring architectural knowledge." Thus early was Bloomington vaunting herself on account of her educational facilities.

The constitution, as we have seen, inhibited the sale of any lands granted for school purposes before 1820. That time was now at hand, and whatever the sentiment elsewhere might be, Bloomington was ready for the new State Seminary. The legislature was to meet in December and would last about six weeks. Monroe county was attached to other counties for representative and senatorial purposes, and it so happened that her people were not represented in either house by a citizen from their midst. In the lower house, Samuel Milroy and Samuel Lindley answered for them, and in the upper, Alexander Little, all from the same county, Washington. The men of Bloomington were not satisfied with the posture of affairs, and it is little wonder. There is no record—there is not even a tradition—remaining of any meeting held by them to take counsel concerning the matter; but I have no doubt the meeting was held. At any rate the people determined to have an agent from Bloomington on the ground—a member of the Third House, if you will.

Whom should they send? Dr. David H. Maxwell. He had some legislative experience, having been a member of the constitutional convention from Jefferson county. He had a general acquaintance with public affairs and with the public men of the state, and above all he was plausible, conciliatory, level-headed, and a good judge of human nature. This was the first service he was called upon to render an institution to the furthering of whose interests he was ever after devoted. For nearly forty years, of all men outside the circle of those engaged as teachers, he gave the most of time in its service, and to better purpose. So unremitting was he in his labors in its behalf, and to such good purpose were they directed, that it can better be said of him than of any other, "He was the Father of the Indiana University."

The General Assembly was to meet on the first Monday in December, and, mounting his horse, the Bloomington agent rode over the hills the long and weary road to Corydon. No record, no tradition

even, remains to tell the story of what he did to secure legislative action in behalf of a state school. But was not the Bloomington member charmed as he listened to the reading of Governor Jennings' message? Said the governor:

The Constitution has made it "the duty of the General Assembly, as soon as circumstances will permit, to provide by law for a general system of education." The lands reserved for the use of the Seminary of Learning are vested in the Legislature, to be appropriated solely to that purpose, and it is submitted for your consideration whether the location of such institution upon or near such lands, would not greatly enhance their value, and enlarge the funds for a purpose so important. It is believed that the Seminary Township, situated in Monroe county, would afford a site combining the advantages of fertility of soil with a healthy climate, as well as a position sufficiently central to the various sections of the State. To authorise the sale of a portion of these lands, under judicious regulations, would increase the value of the residue, and the sooner enable us to lay the foundation of an institution so desirable.

This part of the message was, on December 11, referred by the House to a committee of seven, of which Mr. Ross of Clark was chairman, with leave to report by bill or otherwise. On December 31, twenty days after the reference, Mr. Ross on behalf of his committee reported a bill to establish a seminary, which was read a first and a second time and then referred to a committee of the whole House and made a special order for the following day.

But the following day came and passed and nothing was done with the bill. It was not till January 11 that we again hear of it. There was just then a pressure of the multifarious business that found its way into the legislative halls of the state under the constitution of 1816. There was an administrator clamoring for some sort of relief in the matter of his trust. The sheriff of Wayne county had a grievance concerning the public accounts which only a legislative act could set right. Sally Griffiths wanted a divorce from her husband and there was no other tribunal to which she could go. Someone prayed to be encouraged in the manufacture of salt, and the legislature was in duty bound to encourage him. The clerk of the Washington circuit court having been charged with a misfeasance in office, the House of Representatives preferred charges against him, and the Senate had to sit as a court to try the cause. A highway being wanted to connect a

new town in the New Purchase with an old one outside, only the law-making power of the state could authorize it to be cut out. A commission to locate the new capital of the state had to be appointed, and the toll to be taken by millers for grinding the farmers' corn must be regulated by law. So you see a good excuse can be made by the House for the delay in acting upon the bill. On January 11, however, the bill was taken up and passed with "sundry amendments."

Four days after, we find it in the Senate in committee of the whole, when "some amendments were made thereto," one of which was to vest in the trustees of the State Seminary the Seminary lands in Gibson and Monroe counties,³ and the other was to strike from the bill the following: "Provided that two thousand acres of land in Monroe county, above vested in the trustees, be forever reserved by said trustees as a glebe for the said Seminary and the use of the professors thereof."

This was on Saturday, but the final vote was not reached till Monday; and when it did come, how nearly the Seminary bill failed becoming a law will be known when it is stated that on the call of the yeas and nays, five of the ten senators voted in the affirmative and five in the negative. The president of the Senate, Lieutenant-Governor Ratliff Boon, gave the casting vote in its favor, and so the bill as amended was passed.

The same day it was back in the House, and the amendment striking out the proviso concerning the "glebe" was concurred in, while the one vesting title to the Gibson and Monroe county lands in the trustees was rejected. Forthwith it was returned to the Senate. The celerity with which it was sent from chamber to chamber reminds us that there was a man on the ground especially interested in its final success. Immediately on its return to the Senate, Mr. Drew of Franklin moved that the Senate adhere to their amendments; which, says the record, "was decided in the negative" and the bill was then passed. On January 20, 1820, the day we celebrate, it was signed by the governor and became a law of the land.

The act which so narrowly escaped defeat provided for the organization of a State Seminary at Bloomington. The first section named

³Reserved by act of Congress approved March 26, 1804; located by Albert Gallatin as Secretary of the Treasury, October 10, 1806.

for its trustees Charles Dewey, Jonathan Lindley, David H. Maxwell, John M. Jenkins, Jonathan Nichols, and William Lowe—"they and their successors in office to have perpetual succession." They were authorized to meet in Bloomington on the first Monday of the following June, and select "an eligible and convenient site for a state seminary." It was made their duty to appoint an agent to lay off and sell under their sanction any parcels of land contiguous to Bloomington, not exceeding 640 acres. As soon as the trustees should deem it expedient, they were to "proceed to the erection of a suitable building for a state seminary, as also a suitable and commodious house for a Professor." They were to report to the next General Assembly their proceedings, together with "a plan of buildings by them erected."

This law is more remarkable for what it does not contain than for what it does. Its projectors evidently had little conception of the real nature of the work in hand. It left the future committed almost entirely to the wisdom of the trustees. The duties it imposed upon them looking to the real purposes of a seminary were to select a site, sell a section of land, and erect suitable buildings. Not a word in it about a school.

And yet, I believe it was the very best law the legislature could have framed at that time.

On the first Monday in June, 1820, which was the fifth day of the month, four of the six trustees met at Bloomington, in accordance with the requirements of the law, to select a site for the State Seminary. On that day the commissioners to locate a site for the state capital were traversing the wilderness between Conner's Prairie and the Bluffs on White river in search of a suitable place. On the seventh the future site of Indianapolis was chosen. The Seminary commissioners were less fortunate. Two of the members, Charles Dewey and Jonathan Lindley, were absent; and as both were men of some consequence, Dewey especially, it was thought best to adjourn over to the "next month." "Accordingly on the —— day of July" the board met, every member present save Jonathan Lindley, and proceeded at once to select a section of land on the reserved Seminary township for sale, and to locate a site for a seminary. In their report made to the next legislature they say: "The site chosen is . . . about one-quarter of a mile due south from Bloomington, on a beautiful

eminence, and convenient to an excellent spring of water, the only one on the section selected that could with convenience answer the purposes of a seminary."

Not to exceed three hundred souls lived in Bloomington at the time. Into the open doors of their cabins, clustering around the square, the early morning and late evening shadows fell from the native beeches and maples and oaks and poplars, still growing close around. One square south of the public square was the boundary of the town in that direction. Beyond that lay the thirty-six square miles of Seminary land, on which not a tree had lawfully been cut down. Hunters from the town and the scattered settlements around killed deer along its water courses, and bears and wolves prowled amidst its thickets. In any other direction the outlook was but little better. Here and there a little field had been chopped out around a settler's cabin, it is true, but in the main the wilderness still held sway. It was in July, and every green thing was thick with leaves. Those contrasting views of upland and lowland which please the eye of the Bloomington visitor today were enveloped in shaggy thickets of green, and to this cause more than to any other, doubtless, is due the fact that the trustees, overlooking the slightly highlands to the east and the west, found a "beautiful eminence" in the narrow plateau next the Clear creek bottom. True, the "excellent spring of water" must not be forgotten in this calculation, though its fountain has long since dried up. It was the only spring on the section, they naïvely said, "that could with convenience answer the purposes of the Seminary"—as if the art of digging wells was not yet known!

A plan of a building was agreed upon at this meeting of the board and reported to the legislature, and, although it has long since been lost, the board tells us in its report that it was "on the plan of Princeton College in New Jersey"—the historic Nassau Hall.

I dare not in this presence enter upon any discussion of the financial history of the Indiana Seminary. My time is too short for that. Nor can I make more than the briefest reference to the buildings that were ultimately constructed for the accommodation of students and a professor.

Over twenty months passed away after the location was made before the work of building was actually begun. Two houses were

agreed upon, one for the "reception of students" and the other for a professor's dwelling. This last, according to the old record, was to "be of the size of W. D. McCullough's house which he had rented to Thomas Allen of Kentucky, except that it was to be four feet longer," a statement by no means calculated to improve the temper of the searcher after historical facts. In a report made to the legislature at a subsequent time, by Dr. David H. Maxwell, he tells us that it was thirty-one feet long and eighteen feet in width, and cost \$891.

The Seminary edifice proper, we learn from the same report, was sixty feet long and thirty-one feet wide. It was two stories high, and when new was considered quite a pretentious building. It faced to the east, had a chapel and two recitation rooms on the first floor, and I know not how many rooms on the second. It cost \$2,400.

While the General Assembly was legislating the State Seminary into existence, a young man, destined to be its first professor and to stay with it through its Seminary life, and to be with it when it passed up into Indiana College, and finally to leave that college a disappointed and embittered man and write a book maligning his enemies and making sport of his friends,⁴ was taking his last year's course of lectures at Union College, under the celebrated Dr. Nott. This young man was Baynard R. Hall. After receiving his first degree at the commencement of 1820 at Union, he went to Princeton where he studied theology, after which he was ordained a minister of the Presbyterian church. Returning to Philadelphia,⁵ his natal city, at the close of his theological studies, he married and soon after set out with his bride for the New Purchase.

This must have been some time in 1823.⁶ He had relatives in the

⁴*The New Purchase, or Seven and a Half Years in the Far West.* By Robert Carlton, Esq. (Baynard R. Hall). The first edition, in two volumes, was published by Appleton, Philadelphia, 1843; the second edition, in one volume, New Albany, Indiana, 1855, by Mr. John R. Nunemacher; the third edition was edited by Professor James A. Woodburn, '76, of Indiana University, and published by the Princeton University Press in 1916 as an Indiana state centennial edition. For some account of this book see an article, "Local Life and Color in the New Purchase," by James A. Woodburn, in the *Indiana Magazine of History* for December, 1913. For a sketch of Hall, see the article in the *Dictionary of American Biography* contributed by Professor Woodburn.

⁵A more detailed account of Hall's life before he came to Indiana is found in the Introduction to *The New Purchase* (Princeton edition, 1916), where it is stated that he was married in Danville, Kentucky, returned to Philadelphia with his bride, and, after the loss of two children, came to Indiana.

⁶See notes on pages 70, 259, and 319 of the 1916 edition of *The New Purchase* concerning the uncertainty of the date of Hall's coming to the New Purchase.

New Purchase and out of it, one of the latter being Rev. Isaac Reed, a brother-in-law, who lived in Bloomington.⁷ Another brother-in-law, John Young, besides other relatives, lived in the New Purchase a short distance above Gosport.

I do not certainly know, but I have reasons to believe, that it was the new State Seminary that led Hall into the Indiana wilderness. He was scholarly, and his brother-in-law, Isaac Reed, must have seen that if he were only on the ground when the time for the election of a professor came he would surely be the chosen one.

At any rate Hall came, and on reaching the state he went to his Gosport relatives, where he remained until the Seminary apple ripened and was ready to fall into his open mouth. During his sojourn there he assisted his brother-in-law in a tanyard and in a country store. He hunted a good deal and became an expert marksman; preached some, went to log-rollings, house-raising, quiltings, camp meetings, political speakings, and was, he himself says, "the very first man since the creation of the world that read Greek in the New Purchase."⁸

In November, 1823, the Seminary building had progressed so far toward completion that it was thought advisable to elect a teacher, and take such other steps looking to the commencement of educational work as should be deemed proper. Accordingly, on November 20, the board being in session, Rev. Baynard R. Hall was elected such teacher "for the term of one year, the school to commence as early as practicable the next spring." Two terms per year of five months each were provided for, and the tuition fixed at five dollars per term, but was subsequently raised to ten. The teacher's salary was fixed at \$250 per annum, the trustees reserving to themselves the right to pay more should the income admit of it—a right that we believe was not exercised.

One of the curious chapters of those times would narrate the low wages paid for all kinds of intellectual labor. The governor of the state received \$1,000 per annum; a supreme judge and a judge of the circuit court each \$700; a member of the General Assembly drew \$2 per day, and legislated on Christmas and on New Year's Days the same as on any other, except when they happened to fall on Sunday.

⁷Reed was a zealous Presbyterian missionary, a graduate of Middlebury College, Vermont. His wife was a sister of Mrs. Hall.

⁸See note 5 in Chapter XVII, page 332.

Ministers, well educated and of excellent natural abilities, who received salaries of \$300 were deemed well paid. The great majority were paid much less than this. Rev. Joseph Tarkington and Joseph Evans, who rode the circuit in the Indiana district in the twenties, each received \$63 for the year's labor. During the ministerial year of 1823-1824, Rev. Aaron Wood traveled, according to his diary, 2,250 miles, preaching 288 times, for a salary of \$50. The author⁹ of *Early Methodism in Indiana* says:

Our presiding elder, Rev. Allen Wiley, a man of varied learning, deep in theology, strong in faith and full of the Holy Ghost, received that year [1830] as his portion of the sum total \$20. My colleague, Rev. Amos Sparks, a most unique man, full of good common sense, of marked eloquence and power in the pulpit, and popular with the people, received for his portion, being a married man with several children, \$175, a part of which was paid in *dicker*.

Two years after the election of Baynard R. Hall, Lucius Alden, a Presbyterian clergyman of Boston, was elected principal of the Aurora Seminary at a salary of \$300 per year and accepted. His assistant, Stephen Harding, afterwards the governor of Utah Territory, was paid, says one authority, \$5 per month, and \$13 says another. Probably both are correct, the references being to different periods during his term as assistant.

The simplicity of these times can be presented in no stronger light than through the methods then in vogue in carrying on the ordinary business transactions of life. Money was seldom seen in the cabins of the people. Nearly all the business was done on a basis of exchange or barter. Ginseng came nearer taking the place of money among the early settlers of western Pennsylvania and of West Virginia than any other article. Up to about 1787 it was a medium of exchange in use by all, more or less, but a sudden collapse of the Chinese market, in 1788, let the bottom out of it. In the beginning of Indiana's history, peltries, and especially coon skins, were the most common medium of exchange. I have authority for saying that the coon skin "was often forced upon tax collectors and postmasters in payment of the law's demands." But the coon-skin era was about over when the first State Seminary professor was elected. His salary it was expected would be

⁹J. C. Smith.

paid, a little of it perhaps in good silver coins, mostly Spanish, brought in by the White river flat-boatmen—fips, bits, pistareens, quarters, half-dollars, and maybe a few dollars. Perhaps a part in "sharp shins,"—that is, triangular pieces cut out of the larger coins by the country blacksmiths, and circulating among the people; but the greater part of the salary was to be paid in a paper currency, not much less fluctuating in value, if any, than a coon-skin currency would have been.

But there was another salary paid to the professor, which it was not pretended was to be in money, true or false. The Presbyterian congregation of Bloomington engaged him at least a part of his time to preach for them at \$150 per year, to be paid in "articles of trade." That meant the same as the Methodist circuit rider's "dicker"—corn, bacon, beef, venison, butter, potatoes, leather, feathers, buckwheat flour, labor, anything the subscriber had to give, and some things the preacher could not use. At this very time, and for a good many years thereafter, the schoolmasters of Indiana were quite generally paid, in part at least, in articles of traffic. Ah! the stuff that has been doled out to the old Indiana schoolmasters! When I read—and remember, too,—how most of them would thrash their scholars; how others would sleep during school hours; how one played the fiddle between recitations "for his own amusement"; how another kept his bottle hid in a hollow stump hard by the schoolhouse; and how still another made his scholars work in his clearing during the noon hour—I have it in my heart to forgive them, when I further remember the compensation many of them received. Think of it! One dollar, or one and one-half, per scholar per quarter, and "board around"—one-half and sometimes more to be paid in such articles of "trade" as the patrons could spare. I read of one old-time schoolmaster who took part of his pay in dried pumpkin, and of another in whiskey. Corn, flour, buckwheat flour, bacon, turnips, and so on, were constantly dealt out as the price of learning. Young as I am, I can remember seeing a dripping side of bacon go out of my mother's smokehouse to the master who had been doing his utmost to *lick* me into shape during the preceding winter.

I have heard it said that the Fathers were overhasty in setting the machinery of the State Seminary in motion. "Oh, if they had only waited till the land was worth \$30 or \$40 an acre, then sold it, what a munificent endowment it would have made!" was an exclamation I

once heard. True enough. But what would have become of Indiana in the meantime? Never in the history of the state was there such a pressing demand for a school of higher learning than when the trustees determined to open the doors of the State Seminary. The majority were doubtless unconscious of that demand. The people of the district who thought the sound-bodied man that applied for their school "a lazy, trifling, good-for-nothing, who wanted to make his living without work," preferring to him a lame schoolmaster or one who was disabled by fits for manual labor, were no doubt on the side of that majority. But there was a minority that stood out in the light—a minority that saw and heard and knew and acted; and let us thank God for it, and not carp at them nor criticize them because they may not have done away back there the thing we might have done away up here.

The time had now come for the opening of the State Seminary. What, if any, steps were taken to advertise the new school to the general public is not now known. There were not less than twelve or fifteen newspapers printed in the state at the time, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that notice was given through the columns of some or all of them.¹⁰

¹⁰Explanation must be made concerning the uncertainty of the date of the opening of the Indiana Seminary. The late John W. Cravens once said, after his work on the history of the buildings of the University, that he had found seemingly good authority for two dates—1824 and 1825, and such has been the case in this study of the early days. For the benefit of future historians, the evidence for both dates is presented here.

In the Banta manuscripts, written in longhand, 1824 appears in some places and 1825 in Chapter IV in two instances. But after using 1825 in these two places, Banta again used 1824, so the use of 1825 would seem to be a slip of the pen and to have been so interpreted by Samuel B. Harding, under whose editorship of the *Indiana University Alumni Quarterly* these manuscripts were first printed in 1914-1915. In one other place, however, Banta implied that the date was 1825 (page 32, where his "two" years has been changed to "three" in this printing, to conform with the 1824 date).

Another historical article by Banta, published during his lifetime in the 1892 catalogue of Indiana University, said 1824. In an article by Banta on the Indiana Seminary, included in Theophilus A. Wylie's *Indiana University, Its History from 1820, When Founded, to 1890*, also published during the lifetime of Banta, the date of the opening is given as May 1, 1824, and of Hall's election as November 20, 1823. So it seems that the weight of evidence, as far as his usage is concerned, favors 1824 as the opening date.¹¹

On the other hand, advertisements appeared in several newspapers of March, 1825 (but not in March, 1824), saying that the trustees of the Indiana Seminary announce 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; at which time the first session will commence under the superintendence of the Rev'd. Bainard R. Hall, whom the trustees have engaged as a teacher," etc. In weighing this evidence consideration may be given to the fact that a goodly majority of the trustees at this time were Monroe County men (Governor Ray in his message on December 3, 1825, said, "It has been suggested, that it would be serviceable to the Seminary,

Be this as it may, on "the first day of May, at half-past nine a.m. *anno domini* 1824," the State Seminary doors were opened for the reception of students. On this May morning of the last year¹¹ of the first quarter of a century now nearing its close, a fire was kindled upon this altar of learning that has never been extinguished. During

to place it under a directory remote from the place of its location") and perhaps they had not yet in 1824 caught the idea of advertising the opening outside of the community. Baynard Hall says in *The New Purchase* that notice of books had been given "at meeting and in several other ways." Again, the advertisement might be interpreted to mean the opening of that particular first session, not necessarily the first year. (There were two sessions each year.) In *The New Purchase* Hall says that the Seminary was opened, the "floors being unlaid, sashes all being without glass."

The use of *The New Purchase* in settling this matter of the date of opening is unsatisfactory. Hall says, "The institution was opened the first day of May, at 9½ o'clock, A.M., *anno Domini* 1800, and so forth." These words were quoted by Banta without, however, giving the source, and with the year changed to 1824. Hall divides his book into "Years" and the opening of the Seminary is described as happening in "our fourth year," yet the subtitle of the book is "Seven and a Half Years in the Far West," and it is known from official records that Hall left in the summer of 1832. Again in his "Sixth Year," he speaks of the election of the president, which occurred in 1828.

In some manuscript notes on *The New Purchase*, in the archives of the University, presumably written by Hall, are included some notes from the "old record," which is not available now. In these notes he says that on "Nov. 20, 1824, B. R. Hall employed for one year as teacher in Seminary school to commence as early as practicable next spring May 1825." (Banta gives this date of appointment as November 20, 1823.) This might possibly refer to his second-year appointment. It should be remembered here that the 1825 newspaper advertisements said "the first Monday of April next."

Another manuscript note reads: "February 24, 1826, Hall appointed to teach. This certainly ought to be 1827." If Hall wrote these notes, he must not have had implicit confidence in the "old record." Again, in these notes we read "made a trustee of the State College," an office which Hall never held. He says in *The New Purchase* that Robert Carlton, Esq. (who in the "Key" is designated as Hall himself) was appointed one of the trustees of the College at Woodville.

A letter written by William McKee Dunn, A.B., 1832, mentions a board action of April 15, 1826, directing Hall to teach several subjects in addition to Greek and Latin (see page 19), and says that Hall "was the only teacher in this institution this year, as he had been the previous year, which was the first year of instruction in the Indiana State Seminary." Does "this year" refer to the school year just closed or about to close, or to the year ahead? Banta evidently thought it referred to the year just closing.

Governor Ray in December, 1825, said in his message that the "Seminary is in as flourishing a condition as could have been anticipated." No mention of the Seminary is found in the message to the previous session, January, 1825.

The most conclusive evidence for considering 1824 as the correct date is the report of Dr. David H. Maxwell, president of the board of trustees, made to the legislature on January 2, 1828 (printed in the *House Journal* for 12th session, page 284), in which he says, "The Seminary has now been in existence for three years and an half, and the present session which will end against the first of May next, will complete four years." He gives the number of students for each of the first three years, for the first session "of present year," and for the "present session," which commenced the first Monday in December, 1827. Also, "during the first three years one teacher only was employed by the trustees" but that "at the beginning of the present year the trustees connected with the institution an English scientific department and allowed the teacher," etc. The report of the board of visitors made on December 10, 1827, approved the appointment of the "last professor," meaning Harney.

Perhaps on this evidence we can rest our case.

¹¹This seems to contradict the preceding sentence, for 1825 would be "the last year of the first quarter of a century now [1889] nearing its close."

all the years that have come and gone since that May Day opening, every school day of each year has stood witness to the coming together of professors and students, and to recitation and drill in the classroom.

That opening morning a heterogeneous crowd of youthful candidates for seminary learning greeted the young professor at the "new college," as the building seems to have been called from the beginning. It is remembered that many of the village schoolmaster's boys forsook his unpretentious school that May Day, and with spelling-book and reader and ink-bottle and copy-book applied for admission at the "new college." But it was Greek and Latin only at the "college," and the boys with spelling-books and readers, ink-bottles and copy-books soon returned to their drowsy hum of lessons in the town schoolhouse.

Ten boys were left in the Seminary after the weeding-out process was over, on that May morning, to begin at the beginning of a preparatory course of the Greek and Latin languages. These, the first to drink at the fountain of learning opened by the bounty of the state, were Findlay Dodds, James F. Dodds, Aaron Ferguson, Hamilton Stockwell, John Todd, Michael Hummer, Samuel C. Dunn, James W. Dunn, James A. Maxwell, and Joseph A. Wright.

An interest attaches to these pioneer students, because they were pioneers, greater than to any who have come after them. They were the first students of Indiana's school to feel the pangs of failure and to know the joys of success. They were the first to dream dreams of those lofty achievements among men that so inflame the youthful mind with a desire to excel. What of the ten? All lived to reach manhood's prime, and a few went down into a ripe old age. All are now dead. Each in his chosen sphere rendered faithful and efficient service to society. Findlay Dodds was a tanner. James F. Dodds, Aaron Ferguson, and Hamilton Stockwell were physicians. John Todd and Michael Hummer were ministers of the gospel. Samuel C. Dunn was first a merchant, next followed railroading, then banking, and in his old age held public office by the suffrages of his neighbors. James W. Dunn, James A. Maxwell, Joseph A. Wright were lawyers, one of whom, Joseph A. Wright, attained the honorable position of governor of Indiana, and subsequently served his country faithfully and well in a diplomatic position in a foreign land.

For a period of three years—from 1824 to 1827—Baynard R. Hall was the sole professor in the Indiana Seminary. No catalogues were printed during the Seminary period, and the trustees' records have been destroyed by fire; and our knowledge of the history of this period is limited by that much. In 1828 a legislative resolution called out a report from Dr. Maxwell which, fortunately for this history, has been preserved in the *House Journal* for that year. From that report we learn that thirteen students attended the Seminary the first year; fifteen the second; twenty-one the third. The professor's salary of \$250, as originally made, was continued at that sum for two and a half years, during which period he preached to the Presbyterian church of this town, for which service they paid him "\$150 in articles of trade." At the end of the two and a half years, the trustees forbade the preaching, and advanced his salary to \$400.

It was resolved by the board, sometime during the second year,¹² "that, in addition to the Greek and Latin languages heretofore taught in the State Seminary, there shall be taught by the said Hall . . . English Grammar, Logic, Rhetoric, Geography, Moral and Natural Philosophy, and Euclid's Elements of Geometry." But for some reason now unknown, it seems the requirement was not complied with; for in Dr. Maxwell's report, above referred to, occur these words: "During the first three years one teacher only was employed by the trustees, and the Greek and Latin languages alone were taught during that time." As the third academic year drew to its close, it became evident that the advancement of the old students required the introduction of branches of learning other than Greek and Latin. More than half of those enrolled contemplated a full collegiate course, and preparation must be made for that, else there would be an hegira to other schools. So the trustees resolved to elect a professor of mathematics, pure and applied.

If there was a dearth of candidates when the first professor was elected, it was not to be so when it came to the election of the second. What notice was given of the proposed election is not now known; but some notice must have been given that, at the May meeting of the board for 1827, a mathematics professor would be elected, for one

¹²April 15, 1826, according to a letter written by William McKee Dunn, who says that he attended both the Seminary and the College and was here six and one-half years before his graduation in 1832.

candidate dated his letter of notification to the board "April 20," which was twenty days before the election was held. Much uncertainty seems to have existed in the minds of some of the applicants for the place as to the real work to be required of the new professor, and the qualifications requisite for doing it. One of the candidates informed the board that he was "educated in England, and would accept the situation at a salary of \$250 and find his own family." Another hinted that while he might be a "little rusty" he was confident that by hard study he could easily keep ahead of his students.

The names of only a few of the candidates have come down to us. Mr. Beverly W. James, the village schoolmaster whose scholars forsook him for the "new college" on that May Day morning of three years before, gave notice that he would accept the place if tendered. And so did a young lawyer, then recently come to the state, Delana R. Eckels, who subsequently, after serving for many years on the circuit bench, was for a time professor of law in the University. Another applicant was a "Mr. Pharis," Rev. James Faris of South Carolina, who about that time was organizing a Reformed Presbyterian church in the neighborhood.

One more name remains to be mentioned—John H. Harney's, the successful applicant's. Mr. Harney was a young man, fresh from the Miami University, where he had recently graduated. In truth he came from Oxford to Bloomington walking all the way, accompanied by a young friend, Robert Caldwell, who subsequently achieved reputation as chief of the United States Marine Corps, with whom he had formed a college friendship. No one knows the road or roads these youthful knights in pursuit of a college professorship traveled; but as Harney had relatives living in the neighborhood of Greensburg, whom he is remembered to have visited a few years later, it is reasonable to suppose that he traveled the road leading from Oxford to Greensburg; and if so, the young men came by the way of Columbus, a town lately planted on the Driftwood, and thence by the way of the new road through the wilderness of Brown county.

It was in the spring of the year, a season when the roads were always bad in the new state of Indiana. What a toilsome journey theirs must have been, and how the discomforts must have multiplied on the way. The weather was warm, and they could hardly have ended their

journey without encountering one or more showers of rain. But they reached Bloomington in time for the election. It is related of them that shortly before attaining their journey's end—wearied, footsore, and travel-stained—they halted at a creek, bathed, and washed their shirts and dried them in the sun, and were thus enabled to make their entrance into Bloomington in clean linen.

On his arrival, Harney addressed a letter to the trustees which was so different in its tone and spirit from any of the other letters before them, to judge from the few that have survived the ravages of time, that it must have engaged their serious attention at once. Time has dealt hardly by this letter, but enough of it remains for us to see that a man possessed of a courageous, self-reliant, self-confident spirit composed it. And more than that, its author had ideas concerning the branches of learning that ought to be taught from the chair to which he aspired; and, next to money, ideas were what the trustees most wanted to enable them to carry on the work of the Seminary.

As the day of the election drew nigh, a thunderstorm arose in the Bloomington sky. Want of time forbids our stopping to consider the causes that led to its appearance at this particular juncture. Ever since that May Day, when the Bloomington youths with spelling-book and reader were forbidden to enroll their names as students in the State Seminary, that cloud had been gathering. It took the election of a mathematics professor to set the elements in commotion and bring the storm to a head. There were rival candidates in the field, most of whom had a personal following. Each set of partisans talked up its man, and it would be strange if some partisans did not talk down all others. Harney, being a stranger, was without backers; nevertheless, the trustees had not been long in session in the Seminary building, when it was made apparent that Harney was their favorite. The news flew to the town, and at once an uproar began. The late partisans of different candidates coalesced and made common cause. Harney was understood to be a Presbyterian, and at once the cry of sectarianism arose. Next followed the old and, in that day, all-potent shout of Aristocrat! It was evident to the malcontents that a crisis had arisen; and something, in their judgment, must be done and done quickly to save the Seminary to the people. General Jacob B. Lowe, the clerk of the circuit court and a politician of that period, is found at the head

of a deputation who go to remonstrate with the trustees. As they go, some one huzzas, and the trustees hear and know what it means. News seems to have flown as rapidly from the town to the Seminary as from the Seminary to the town. At once the trustees proceed to the election of a professor; and lo! John H. Harney is elected. Barely is this done, when the burly form of General Lowe enters the door, with his friends at his heels. Patiently the trustees listen to his speech, after which the diplomatic Dr. Maxwell makes a soothing speech in reply, and the thundercloud disappears.

Harney entered at once upon his duties, at a salary of \$250 per year. At the end of six months, on the recommendation of the board of visitors, the salaries of the two professors were raised to \$400 each.¹³

The increase of students after the election of the new professor justified the action of the board in bringing him in. During the spring and summer term of 1827, the number in attendance was twenty-six. At the opening of the following fall and winter session, "about forty students" were present, which number so materially increased during the term that Dr. Maxwell wrote, in January, "there is a probability there will be fifty or sixty students" in attendance before the close of the session.

Would that we knew more than we do of the students and of student life at the Indiana State Seminary! All the students, as far as I know, came from Indiana homes. Nearly or quite every county on the border, and a good many inland counties, were represented during the period. And what toilsome journeys most of the boys had to make to reach here! Young Austin Shipp of Johnson county walked. He went by way of Columbus, a more direct road not yet having been cut out. It is in memory still¹⁴ how matrons from cabin doors kindly greeted the lad who passed by on his way to college, with his bundle swung on a stick over his shoulder. College! None of those old Seminary boys went to a seminary. No, indeed! With them it was *college* from the start.

Doubtless there were others who went to "college" on foot in those early days; but the majority traveled on horseback, most of whom would "ride and tie." This was a favorite mode of travel, and was well

¹³By November, 1828, these salaries were increased by the addition of one-third (to each professor) of the tuition fees until the "salaries should amount to \$650." See letter from Dr. Maxwell to Andrew Wylie in Chapter XI.

¹⁴Referring to 1889.

adapted to the necessities of the college student. By it two would travel with one horse, and "ride and tie" time about, which means that one would ride in advance a given distance, and tie the horse and walk on, leaving his companion to come up to the horse and mount and ride on past the foot-man a proper distance, when he in turn would dismount, tie, and walk on.

I am glad to be able to present to you the late General Dunn's account of his coming to the State Seminary:

A few days before the opening of the session, May 1, 1826, if you had been here to look, you might have seen emerging from the green woods North of Bloomington, "a man on horseback," and as his horse veered from one side of the road to another to avoid a stump or mud-hole, you might have seen that there was riding behind the man on the same horse a little speck of a boy about eleven years of age. They were father and son, but the son was so small that it was considered a useless waste of horse-power to furnish him with a horse all to himself for this journey. They had thus ridden all the way from Crawfordsville, then a two-days' journey on horseback. Between Crawfordsville and Green Castle, it was then an almost unbroken wilderness, and these travelers had made part of their way through the woods along an Indian trace. The boy enjoyed the ride, for sweet was the breath of spring in the green wild woods, the aroma of the spice-bush perfumed the air, and the bloom of the dogwood and the red bud with blended beauty adorned the green-leafed forest. . . .

That little boy was my father—in the sense of saying, "The boy is the father of the man." In a few days, he (I) was admitted as a student in the State Seminary, then regarded as the highest and best school in the State; was introduced to Ross' *Latin Grammar*, and was soon nearly worrying the life out of poor "*Stella*, a star," in putting her through the cases of the first declension of nouns.

According to my recollection there were but nine students at the Seminary that session, of whom I was the smallest but Dr. Darwin Maxwell was the youngest. Perhaps I might as well say now that I was a student here in the Seminary and in the College six and a half years, and was the first graduate of Indiana College who commenced, continued, and completed his entire preparatory and collegiate course in this institution. At the first organization of the students into regular college classes, I constituted the Sophomore Class, and for an entire session I had a bench all to myself at college prayers, by virtue of my being all the Sophomores.

How did the students get their trunks here? They had no trunks. Those who walked carried their clothes with them, tied up in a handkerchief. In 1835 Robert Dulaney of Clark county, Illinois, attended college here. He says:

I went by the way of Terre Haute, Bowling Green, and Spencer to Bloomington, a distance of about eighty miles. A boy went along to take the horse back. There were two terms a year, and I carried all my clothes necessary for a term in saddle bags. This was the practice of all who went to college on horseback in that day.

The students, when they reached Bloomington in those far-off primitive times, found rooms and board with the citizens of the town, in much the same manner as students have done ever since. In a majority of the counties represented here, old forts, built as a protection against the Indians during the troublesome times of 1811 to 1814, were still standing, and were, as we may well suppose, objects of romantic interest to the youth of the land. What more natural than to designate a house, where two or more roomed, a "fort"? Hawthorne tells us that the grim Puritan children played at hanging witches and making Indian campaigns. Our own Seminary boys brought with them the memory of border-war times in Indiana, and lived in "forts," and (what is more to the purpose) the practice thus inaugurated has been handed down unbroken to the present.

The fame of the Indiana Seminary was spreading abroad. Its professors were men of learning, full of zeal, and greatly beloved by their students. It had no competition within the state, and it was receiving a liberal patronage for the times. Its students were beginning to assume college airs. They had organized a literary society—the Henodelphisterian Society, they called it—which was so exceedingly classical that every student on joining was compelled while within its hall to take, in lieu of his own plain name, one once current in the streets of Greece or Rome. Here young Pericles sat down with Solon and Cicero and Ajax and Timoleon, and began the very serious business of essay reading, declamation, and debating. And at stated intervals these young classicists gave public exhibitions, wherein they displayed their literary skill. The first one of these "feasts of reason" was in the new brick courthouse and has the merit of having been embalmed in *The New Purchase*, Professor Hall's book. William McKee Dunn was the "little speck of a boy" in that exhibition, and delighted the audience with—

You'd scarce expect one of my age
To speak in public on the stage.

General Dunn, in a conversation not long before his death, paid a glowing tribute to the memory of Professor Hall. "Little as I was," said he, "Hall took the utmost pains to drill me well in my part, and I got hints from him which have stood me in good turn all through my life."

But we must hasten on. The end of the Seminary period is close at hand. On November 1, 1827, a board of visitors made its appearance on the Seminary grounds. Two of those visitors were prominent men in their day, one being no less a personage than James B. Ray, the governor of the state, and the other James Scott, a judge of the supreme court. The law required a good deal at the hands of the board. It was made their duty to examine each student in all branches he had gone over, and, after everything else was done, one of the board was to make a speech to the boys. The law seems to have been obeyed to the letter, and the visitors went away charmed with what they had seen and heard. The governor made his report through his annual message. Judge Scott wrote the report for the board of visitors, and Dr. Maxwell followed by a report as president of the board of trustees. Message and reports all made proclamation that the time had come when the Indiana Seminary should be raised to the dignity of a college.

A bill was prepared having that end in view; and notwithstanding that a serious effort was made to move the institution to another town, it was finally passed and signed by the governor. Thus by legislative enactment, on January 24, 1828, the Indiana State Seminary was merged in Indiana College.