

IU's independent students formed own group in 1905

*"Take me back to old IU, Old IU, Old IU.
There's where I long to be, With the friends
So dear to me. Bloomington is the place to
be,
With the friends of old I.C. on the Square,
I don't care, anywhere! Old IU take me
there."*

— song by J.J. Galloway, member of the
Indiana Club.

Tucked away in the "Organizations" section of Indiana University yearbooks (the Arbutus) can be found a composite of photographs of a group that called itself the "Indiana Club." Those who browse through old editions of the Arbutus may be puzzled by the fact that the club was coeducational.

The 1917 yearbook does give some information about the organization. "The Indiana Club was organized in 1905. It combines with its social purpose, ideals of high scholarship, and ambition for proficiency in dramatic attainments. Literary and musical programs are given at the club hall down town where weekly meetings are held."

The 1917 version of the Indiana Club was equally divided between male and female stu-



LOOKING BACK

By Rose McIlveen

dents. Members were made up from those of the student body who did not belong to a fraternity or sorority.

To celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Indiana Club, several past members got together and produced a slim volume called, simply, "Indiana Club 1905-1915." In a history section, J.J. Galloway explained what gave rise to the club in the first place.

Politics was rampant on the campus. Members of the various organization had forgotten their original purpose and were blatantly playing political games with the organization as a base.

Galloway explained that the prime example was the Publishing Association, which produced the *Daily Student*. "It was owned by the students, each student being eligible to own one share, which cost 50 cents, and to

cast one vote in election of editor-in-chief and business manager."

Campaigning on the part of aspirants to those positions on the *Student* was frantic and unscrupulous. Galloway continued, "Weeks before the election candidates would call upon every student in college and urge them to buy shares and solicit their votes. If a student did not feel able to buy a share, the generous candidate would offer to buy the share for him in exchange for his vote."

When the votes had been counted, the share was transferred to the candidate or the organization that bought it. Added Galloway, "Nearly every student organization owned several times as many shares as it could itself vote."

The nickname for unorganized students on campus was the "barbs." Amid all of the frantic politicizing the barbs chose to organize themselves, not so much as a social organization — like fraternities and sororities — nor as one of the literary clubs of the past. In other words, the group took the best of other groups and formed a fellowship.

Yes, they did have social events, picnics, for example, but they also bonded together

while creating and performing plays and musicals. They also lived up to their ideal of scholarship, getting a greater percentage of A's and B's than non-members.

At first the Indiana Club met in Room 41 of Kirkwood Hall, but they soon found a room to rent over the Monroe County Bank. Dues were a dollar per term, with an additional 50 cents to help with the rent. They later moved to the Bradfute Building.

Meanwhile, the boys in the club took rooms at 331 S. Dunn St., so they could all be together. They later lived at 407 E. Kirkwood.

Among the members were students from Bloomington. They were Irene Howe, Glenn, Orval and Merle James, Addie Stipp, Mary Ethel Thornton and Ralph and Blanche Wellons (brother and sister). Charles Hire and Fernandus Payne, who later held academic appointments at the university, were also members of the club.

Many of the members became teachers after graduation. Among the alumni of the Indiana Club there were also lawyers, a geologist and an electrical engineer. Perhaps in their post-college years they remembered Galloway's song, "Take me back to Old IU."

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