

Fun-loving IU editor had vivid imagination

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of Ambrose Wilkins. Thompson wrote the colorful student's obituary, which appeared in the *Student*.

Thompson's next literary venture was a story about a new club on campus. It was limited to persons who had served time in prison.

Had Thompson's story gone no farther afield than Bloomington, no great harm would have been done. Unfortunately the Indianapolis newspapers picked up the hoax and reprinted it. University officials were not amused, since they feared that the legislature might choose to reconsider the IU budget.

Thompson received a warning, which he should have heeded. Since the *Student* was a "low budget" operation and didn't subscribe to a wire service to supplement local news, there were some empty spaces on the pages.

Thompson next filled one of those empty spaces with a story about a scandalous sorority party. Said the *Student*, the Panthygatric dance — limited to coeds — turned into a fiasco. The affair included a Spanish dance performed by girls in abbreviated costumes. Other coeds in attendance were dressed as men and

indulged in wine and cigarettes.

Thompson wrote that at one point a window blind suddenly rolled up to reveal several male spectators happily watching the spectacle. One female calmly arose from a "throne" and re-closed the blind, after which "pandemonium reigned for a half an hour."

Thompson's previous literary efforts had only annoyed some university officials. The sorority-party story outraged the dean of women. A letter to the editor from another quarter went so far as to say that university officials were lax in enforcing discipline on the campus.

On April 20 Thompson admitted editorially that the account of the party might have been exaggerated a bit for the sake of journalistic license. Faculty members insisted that Thompson's retraction wasn't as honest as they

would wish, but the young editor wouldn't back down. Instead, he was obliged to step down from his position. He had even gone so far as to say that he didn't write the sorority story and didn't know it was going to be printed.

As a result, Thompson and the *Student's* business manager, W.C. Mattox, were suspended from the university. However, after a student petition supporting the two had been circulated, the university officials relented and permitted Thompson and Mattox to finish the semester sans editorial positions.

Did the fertile imagination of Thompson carry him on to distinction in the literary world? It did not. After graduation from the University of Michigan Law School, he took that imagination into the courtrooms of Northern Indiana. On a clear night you might see Ambrose Wilkins, 107, strolling across Dunn Meadow.

