

Students in 1840s a worry for IU leader.

"The students are quiet now; but there is in some of them a bad spirit," Indiana University President Andrew Wylie in a letter to his son, Feb. 21, 1847.

Indiana University's first president, Andrew Wylie, was definitely not looking at the world of the campus through rose-colored glasses when he wrote to his son, Sam, a practicing lawyer in Cincinnati. To begin with, the elder Wylie's wife was suffering from very bad chills and fever, which had persisted for some time, and the household had scarcely any "help."

To add to his gloom in that February of 1847, two of the university's students had resigned in a huff and gone off to Greencastle to complete their education. Professor James A. Woodburn's father had made brief mention of the incident in his diary, but it was Wylie who unburdened the details to his son so far away in Cincinnati.

The controversy had its roots in one of the university's literary societies, the Philomatheans. Two of its members, D.H. Trimble (of Shelby County) and William E. Williams (of Bedford) had written some unflattering



Looking back

By Rose
McIlveen

9-12-1987

comments about Wylie — comments that found their way into print in the Bedford Sun. They had also before or after the publication invited a guest to a society meeting, an apparent violation of university rules.

Nor was the non-member violation the only irritation Wylie suffered at the hands of the two students. On New Year's Eve, the pair were ringleaders on an impromptu chivaree at the home of Wylie's daughter and son-in-law, the James Dodds. Called on the carpet by the president and disciplinary committee of the faculty, Trimble and Williams were accompanied to the hearing by the 20-some other students who had participated in the chivaree.

According to Wylie, the faculty demanded an apology and duly
see Students, Back page