

Accidental death of IU student in 1911 recounted

"Minneman was found totally disrobed, lying on his right side in the tub with his left arm over the side. The scalding hot water was still running and had already blistered and cooked his body." *Bloomington Weekly Courier*, May 24, 1911.

Of all of the duties that fell to Indiana University President William Lowe Bryan the one he probably most dreaded was to inform parents



Looking back

By Rose McIlveen

that their student at IU had died. It could not have been easy for the rather straightlaced but compassio-

nate man. The occurrence that May surely was no exception.

At first, it was a perfectly ordinary day in the lives of those who lived at the home of Mrs. George V. Munson on East Fourth Street. The one exception was Irvin Minneman, 18, a boarder, who had a severe cold and stayed home from his university classes.

In fact, Minneman's cold was so bad that he asked his roommate,

Bernice Hutchins, to go out and buy some medicine. (It is unlikely that Bernice was a female, despite the fact that today it is considered a female name.)

Besides the medicine, Minneman prescribed for himself a hot bath (to sweat out the cold) and bed rest. According to the *Courier*, "He entered the bathroom about 11 o'clock and at 12, fumes of gas were detected by carpenters who were

working at the rear of the Munson residence."

When Mrs. Munson tapped on the door, there was no answer. She enlisted the help of one of the carpenters, William Downing, who was horrified to find Minneman not only dead, but badly burned by the water from a gas heater.

Explained the newspaper, "The **see Looking, page C5**