

From IU to U.S. secretary of state

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ment exercises."

It should be noted that during the 1850s IU was an all-male university, and that the students took a keen interest in the progress of their counterparts in the seminary. Still, it is unlikely that young Foster — in attendance at the seminary's exercises — would have taken any special notice of little Mary.

Meanwhile, Foster had a temporary change of heart regarding

his schooling in Bloomington. He wrote: "During the latter part of last session I did not think I would return again, but when I got home I found that I could do nothing at home, and came to the lazy conclusion that it was too hot to work in the summer, though I could have got a good situation on the railroad with the Corps of Engineers."

Foster returned instead to Bloomington, completing his degree in 1855, when Mary was 12 years old. Two years later her

mother was no longer principal of the female seminary. Mary, however, must have made an impression on young Foster, for after he studied law at Harvard University, he married her.

In later years, the Pike County farm boy and the little girl from Bloomington may have thought occasionally about their years here. But then their lives were full. Foster was to become U.S. ambassador to Mexico, Russia and Spain and in 1892, U.S. secretary of state.