

Faculty life at IU 150 years ago

"Two weeks ago my class commenced chemistry, and to prepare experiments, this includes making a good deal of the apparatus, has taken up all the time." Diary of Indiana University Professor Theophilus Wylie, Feb. 3, 1849.

Ample evidence that teaching at the university was very different from what it is like now can be found in the pages of the diary of Theophilus Wylie. In the early days of the university, scientific equipment did not magically appear at the beginning of the term.

In fact, it was in February 1838 that the professor wrote in his diary, "My class at college is now engaged in chemistry, reading over the lesson and preparing the experi-



Looking back

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ments when practicable (which by the way has not been often this week, as an old cooper who was to make or repair a tub for me, disappointed me). . .

Wylie's trips back to his birthplace in Pennsylvania were buying trips as well as social visits. Inserted in the pages for the fall of 1843, there is a list of chemicals he was planning to look for in Philadelphia.

Engaged to be married, Wylie rented a house which didn't seem very much to his liking. On Sept. 29, 1839, he noted, "... about the first of May moved from Mr. Orchard's to a mean two story brick house, with four rooms & 3 fireplaces, roaches without number and mice by the score, holes in the roof to let in the water and chinks at the junction of every two boards to let in the air. . ."

Although Wylie was not entirely ignorant on the subject of chemistry, one gets the sense that there were times when he was either having to refresh his memory or was reading a chapter or two ahead of his students. In January 1841 he seemed to be suffering from the
see Looking back, Back page