

# Professor makes a claim for back pay in 1880s

When a bolt of lightning set fire to the College Building on Indiana University's campus in July 1883, the students and faculty were not the only "victims" of atmospheric conditions.

It is likely that the fire took with it the last faint hope of one of the university's most faithful and versatile teachers of being compensated for work above and beyond the normal teaching load. The man was Matthew M. Campbell, and his contribution to the university was, to say the least, extraordinary.

Campbell, born near the Cumberland Gap in Tennessee in 1810, was drawn to Bloomington because of the reputation of IU's first presi-



## Looking back

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2-21-1987

dent, Andrew Wylie. When he (Campbell) was only 11 years old, he aspired to be a Presbyterian minister.

Granted an IU degree at the age of 18, Campbell had by that time already taught some of the younger students and assisted as a tutor in the IU Preparatory School. Had that

been the need of his association with his alma mater, his life would have differed only a little from that of other early IU graduates — that of finding a niche in some community and re-cycling his college education there.

For a time it looked as though Campbell had found that niche. He married a Bloomington girl, Martha McPheeters, and took a teaching job at a salary of \$1,200 a year in Mississippi. But when Wylie called him back to IU at a \$700 reduction in salary, he willingly came.

Once returned to the university to take charge of the Preparatory School, he found not the full complement of university teachers (six),

but only two! His years of service at the university in those days included a remarkable willingness to "switch hit," teaching different subjects, wherever needed. In addition, he was obliged to supervise the student Boarding House, including its garden and fences.

When the Civil War began, Campbell was requested by the governor of Indiana to serve as chaplain to the 82nd Indiana regiment, a position he (Campbell) filled until the end of the war. Though he was a Presbyterian, it was the Methodist Church that ordained him officially, so that he could serve with

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