

Theophilus Wylie writes of faculty life at IU 150 years ago

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mid-winter doldrums, a state of mind not helped by the weather. He wrote, "The day dull, it is now nearly two weeks since the sun has made its appearance, excepting once or twice when for a minute or so he peeked through the clouds proving himself to be at his post or rather in his circuit."

Wylie did not perceive his aca-

demic duties to be limited to the classroom. During the January cold spell he noted in the diary, "Went up to town, visited some sick students, got my iodine box from Mr. Batterton and stirred up Mr. Seward about making me a little iron cap for the mercury." Drowsiness and a smoking fireplace prevented him from reading about optics for his class.

One of the most brief diary entries of the young professor gives a

stark picture of what winter was like in Bloomington. On Jan. 17, 1841, he wrote, "Too cold to write. Temperature at zero. Ink frozen up. Thawed a pen full in the candle to write this."

Faculty meetings took up part of Wylie's time. He noted that they met to consider "changing the system." On another occasion, their purpose was to "determine to have some circulars printed respecting

the present state and future prospects of the university."

When Wylie's wife was offended by others in the community, he was not obliged to go to her defense. Recounting the occasion, he lapsed into Latin, which has been translated by former IU archivist Dolores Lahrman.

Wylie wrote, "I musn't forget, nevertheless, that a great quarrel occurred among the women. The mistress and the young lady, whose

tongues are perhaps too long, had said certain false and undeserved things about my wife, which came to her ears. She went directly to the home of the mistress and the young lady and said, very freely, what she thought of them."

No doubt he found time to think about such matters when he was sweeping his classroom, which had been "very dirty kept for some time past."