

Saturday speeches spawned rivalries

The differences of opinion started out innocently enough. On Saturday mornings on the old Indiana University campus at the foot of College Avenue in Bloomington in the 1850s, students were obliged to take their turn at demonstrating their speech-making abilities.

IT WAS THE BELIEF of the early faculty that the polished IU graduate should be able to handle himself anywhere, any time in a speech-making situation. Therefore the Saturday sessions not only gave the students practice, but indicated to the professors how much real learning was being stuffed into the heads of their frontier charges.

About the only social occasions sanctioned by the university were meetings of the literary society and the Saturday mornings once a month designated as "public." The Bloomington girls chaperoned by their mothers had a way of turning up on public days to see the young men of the university show off their speech-making prowess.

Apart from the bonus of young ladies in the audience, the male students had the bonus of a captive audience since attendance on Saturday was mandatory for everyone enrolled. Students were divided

Looking back

By Rose McIlveen

into sections under the watchful eyes of the faculty members.

IT IS AN UNDERSTATEMENT to say that keen rivalries developed among the various groups. According to IU historian James Woodburn, in the early part of December, 1853, one Madison Evans, a freshman from Warrick County, made some remarks that were offensive to senior Theodore Read, who happened to be the son of Professor Daniel Read.

On the evening of Dec. 2, young Read sought out Evans and grabbed him by the collar to make his point. Over the weekend Evans gave considerable thought to the "assault" and by Monday morning his resentment erupted into a genuine brawl.

The faculty report concluded: "The at-

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