

# Diary preserves flavor of life in the 1840s

Some of the flavor of life in Bloomington in the 1840s can be found in a diary segment left by James Woodburn, an early settler, school teacher and Indiana University professor. The segment is in his family history, written by his son, James A., who also became an IU professor.

One of the most interesting revelations of the diary is the sense of community in Bloomington. When Martha Hemphill Woodburn gave birth to a daughter, Laura, their household was visited with enough company to set her recovery back for several days.

Her husband noted in his diary of Jan. 16, 1847: "called during the day Mrs. (Margaret) Kirk, (Catherine) Corsaw, (Elizabeth) McGinnis, (Catherine, Eliza or Mary) Sluss, George Kirk, Thomas Kirk, Liza Skidmore, Sarah Skidmore, Nancy



## Looking back

By Rose  
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Rhorer, Father and Cynthia . . ."

During that January of 1847, Bloomington's social life included a party at Judge David McDonald's, a "singing" at Rev. (Andrew or Theophilus) Wylie's, a children's party at John Fee's, a "chopping" and quilting party at (George or John) Throop's and frequent dinner and overnight guests at the Woodburn's.

Because the teacher was an IU alumnus and Bloomington was little more than a village, news of what was going on at the university was bound to leak out into the community. On Wednes-

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