

Harney, Wylie clash at IU in mid 1800s

In 1827, John Hopkins Harney and a companion stopped by a creek near Bloomington to bathe and wash their shirts. When the shirts were dry, they headed into town. Fortified with a degree from Miami University, Harney was headed for the Indiana Seminary, where a mathematics professor was needed. A Kentuckian, he was an orphan at an early age and was reared by a cousin, who was a judge and partner of Henry Clay.

UPON HIS ARRIVAL in Bloomington, Harney discovered that there were other candidates for the mathematics professorship. Though he was the most qualified for the position, his selection by the Board of Trustees of the Seminary caused considerable resentment.

Initially, the board had been divided about the candidates. Indiana University historian James A. Woodburn, wrote that

Looking back

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most of the applicants had a personal following of partisans who "talked up" their men. Harney, a stranger, who had no backers, was regarded as a "foreigner." In the end, it was his letter of application that impressed the trustees.

Followers of the unsuccessful candidates sent General Jacob B. Lowe, clerk of the Circuit Court, to protest. They grumbled that Harney was an aristocrat and that the seminary didn't need another
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