

Student's 1836 diary recalls 'Belles of Bloomington'

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ing of love for her. Well, thus let it be. I'll hang myself for no girl."

DESPITE his reservations, Holman continued to see his two favorites. "I fulfilled my promise, and spent a remarkably pleasant evening with Misses Howe and Tupman, not as pleasant, however, as it would have been had one of them been in the vacative."

He did manage to be "alone" with Sarah. There is a diary entry for the 19th of August, which says, "I visited Miss S.A. Tupman last evening, and promised to attend her to an astronomical lecture this evening."

Holman's roving eye and diary give us little portraits of a couple of other Bloomington girls. One brief entry indicates that he was a bit of a snob.

"I have to day visited Miss Lydia Ann Grant, a niece of Mrs. Elliott's. She is a lovely, interesting girl, and one with whom it would not be difficult for me to fall in love — She lacks, however, the shiners, and is connected with a family destitute of the influence, which my wife's family must possess."

MORE PROMISING (in family influence) was the sister of a Bloomington attorney, W.A. Gorman. Wrote the IU

junior, "Shall I attempt a description of a creature — worthy of being the Heroine of one of the inimitable productions of the Author of Waverly — I must. My duty calls upon me: Posterity requires it of me. Their hopes and expectations shall not be blasted. 'Some angel guide my pencil, while I draw the picture of Miss Catharine Gorman.'"

Apparently, she was "an older woman." In the above entry Holman also wrote, "She is now about 21 years of age. A very romantic age."

It is the only reference to Miss Gorman. Her brother married Martha Stope of Bloomington, and his career included the governorship of the Minnesota Territory and a Union Army generalship won for his bravery at the Battle of Bull Run.

Holman's diary entry for Aug. 7, 1836, proved to be an unwitting prophecy. "No young lady shall take hold of my affections, that, their being unreturned, my after years will, from that cause, be unhappy and miserable. Neither will I ever take the lovers leap."

IU historian, Theophilus Wylie, provided an ironic postscript to the life of Richard H. Holman. Wrote Wylie, "By his incessant labor he brought on the disease of which he died, in the 24th year of his age."