

Victorian Bloomington ghost story had no ending

In the winter of November, 1895, *The Courier* shared a ghost story with its readers. But the tale — told on the front page of the Nov. 22 edition — had little more substance than the specter, itself.

Began *The Courier* account, "The residents on North College Avenue not far from the post office are all stirred up over a ghost's pranks, which it is claimed inhabits a room in an aristocratic residence." (But apparently, the owners of the house weren't so well off financially that they were above renting a room to an Indiana University student.)

It would be interesting to know



Looking back

By Rose McIlveen

why the student was changing lodgings in mid-semester. That detail of the story does not come with the article. Commented *The Courier*, "A young student took up his abode in this room a few days ago, but his stay was of short duration."

It was the voice of a young lady

that awakened him one night. "... as the room was darkened and locked, he was considerably surprised to know how she had gained entrance."

Naturally anxious to know who else was in the room with him, the student struck a match and lit the coal oil lamp. His examination of the room revealed that he was entirely alone.

Possibly, he decided he had dreamed that someone was in his room, and felt sheepish about being so alarmed. In any case, according to the newspaper, the student blew out the lamp and "again retired to

his couch," (as the newspaper quaintly put it), "but had hardly entered the land of nod, ere he was awakened by an unearthly scream that seemed to come from a woman in distress."

Well, according to *The Courier*, by this time the student's eyes were bulging out and his hair was standing on his head. (How the reporter could have known those details is a mystery in itself.) "Almost scared out of his wits he made another search of the room, but found nothing."

He was not alone in his fright. The racket had come to the atten-

tion of the "lady of the house," who was climbing the stairs to see what was what. There she found the terrified student clad only in his night-shirt.

He must have had a hard time explaining to his landlady that indeed he had not sneaked a woman into his room. Although *The Courier* account does not include her search of his room, no doubt she felt the need to see for herself that there wasn't one more guest than he had bargained for.

In fact, "He stated to the landlady

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