

Moral principles held high

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Indiana University was built on the south edge of a growing Bloomington, and there were farms nearby. Playful students milked the range cows when the owners weren't looking. They also stole a couple of President Wylie's prize turkeys. For a time there was a running skirmish between residents and "town college students" that eventually ran its course, but left a lot of bad blood.

As annoying as they were, the cow-milking and poultry-stealing pranks were nothing compared to the trouble students got into when they dropped into one of Bloomington's saloons. Called "doggeries," they were mighty tempting to students with a little extra change in their pockets.

In those days almost every store had free, home-brewed whiskey on the counter for the customers. A man by the name of Jordan manufactured and sold it, and a Mr. Thacker also distilled a good grade of whiskey and "wild cherry bounce." Bloomington liquor

keepers Asher Labertow, Aquilla Rogers, Daniel Deekard, S.P. Snel, and W. Monehan.

A faculty committee exercised control over the students' behavior. One time they had to deal with the case of a W. Barkman, who took time out from his studies to wet his whistle in a saloon. While there he met a Julia Hughes, who invited him over to her house to watch some "interesting dancing." Highly diverted that night, Barkman returned a few nights later with some of his friends. Word got around.

Unamused by the extra-curricular activities of Barkman and his friends, the faculty committee dismissed one from the college, suspended another, and dealt with Barkman in absentia. He wasn't in town when the committee met, owing to sudden urgent business in Gosport.

Exasperating as the behavior of the students was to Wylie and the faculty, he took their part in a back-handed way. He told state legislators that besides

vantage of "his" students. That included boardinghouse owners, mainly women, who were widows or wives trying to supplement their family income.

The College Board of Trustees ok'd the construction of a boardinghouse in 1838. It was located on the southwest corner of the Seminary Square property and faced on First Street. The cost of the building was \$3,147, and its weekly fees undercut local boardinghouse rates by 50 cents to a dollar, a considerable sum in those days. It was the forerunner of the IU dormitory system.

Well meaning, Wylie and the Board of Trustees didn't really understand that frontier boys will be boys. The rules of the college boardinghouse were: no swearing, drinking, gambling, or cutting up — real burdens on the frontier boys scholar.

As for town and gown relations, the lines weren't necessarily drawn then, but you might say it was "round one."

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