History of Indiana University: The "Faculty War" of 1832

David Demaree Banta

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CHAPTER IV

THE "FACULTY WAR" OF 1832

There was a time when the historians disagreed as to whether Daniel Boone ever visited the east Tennessee country prior to the time of its first settlement. The evidence was not conclusive either way, and so some thought he had and some thought he had not. At last this inscription was found cut in the bark of a beech tree growing on the banks of a tributary of the Watauga:

"D. Boone CilleD A BAR on Tree in THE YEAR 1760."

And notwithstanding the fact that D. Boone spelled "killed" with a c and "bear" without an e, the historians accepted the legend as conclusive of the fact that Daniel Boone had visited the country at the time indicated.

The inscriptions found on the trees, on the rocks, monuments, walls, and so on are usually received in the courts of history as satisfactory evidence of the truth of the facts to which they bear witness, but not always. Sometimes we happen to know better. There is one inscription very close to us that falsifies the truth of history. It is over the east front entrance of this College building. It states that the Indiana University was founded in 1830, and for the benefit of those who may not happen to know better, let me say that there is not a word of truth in that statement. The Inscription was cut in the stone over the College door, and I know not whether it was the result of ignorance or of mistake. There was nothing connected with this institution which was founded in 1830. The Indiana Seminary was chartered in 1820.

The story of the institution has been told on preceding Foundation Days, after a fashion, from the beginning down to the close of the collegiate year of 1831-1832, all save the story of a certain faculty controversy which, beginning not long after Dr. Wylie's coming, was waged with unprecedented bitterness to the close of that year, when it ended in a complete disruption of the faculty and threatened the integrity of the College itself.

Anyone who has followed, with even slight attention, the story thus far told, must have perceived how surely difficulty had followed difficulty, and discouragement discouragement, all the way along. Before that May Day in 1824, when the schoolboy rabble with horn-book and spelling-book, English reader and Western Calculator, was thinned out to ten lads with Ross's Latin Grammar or Cheeves's Accidence, down to the day in 1831 when the thread of the story is again taken up, it is not too much to say that the institution had never known a day's peace. There was always something to threaten its continued existence, or to mar the harmony of its surroundings.

There was never a day, nor an hour, when war was not in active preparation or actually waging, against it or against those having it in charge.

There was, however, during all that time one shaft of light piercing the gloom. The utmost harmony prevailed between teacher and teacher, teachers and students, and teachers and trustees. But that harmony is now about to be broken in all of its relations, and a succession of events to take place of such calamitous consequence as to
cause the friends of the institution to despair of its life. It has been a question with me whether I ought or ought not to tell the story of that baleful time. All who were actors in those wretched scenes are dead, and of each I can say:

The good knight's sword is rust
The good knight's bones are dust
And his soul is with the saints, I trust.

But the story cannot be told and not told. The events to which allusion is made left a deep scar upon the history of the institution, and a presentation of that history without showing the scar would by that much be an untrue presentation.

President Wylie, as has already been stated, began his labors here in the fall of 1829. With him were associated Rev. Baynard R. Hall, professor of Greek and Latin, and John H. Harney, professor of natural philosophy and of mathematics.

How long the faculty as thus constituted worked together in harmony is not now certainly known. If we accept The New Purchase, Professor Hall's book, as authority, it would seem that it could not have been for long. But in the absence of corroborating circumstances, The New Purchase cannot be accepted as conclusive evidence of the truth of any matter connected with the subject under discussion, except as to admissions of bad conduct made by the writer, and sometimes of bad conduct by his colleague, Professor Harney. I refer in this connection to the first edition published in 1843.

There are, however, circumstances that tend to support the New Purchase statement in this particular.

It has always seemed reasonable to me that Professor Hall should himself have aspired to the presidency of the Indiana College. He

In the second edition of The New Purchase (published in one volume, at New Albany, Indiana, in 1855, by John R. Nunemacher), the treatment of this matter is very much curtailed and considerably softened. The motives underlying the alterations are indicated in a series of manuscript letters from Hall to Nunemacher, which came into the possession of the University by gift from Nunemacher's daughter. Under date of March 13, 1855, Hall writes: "In the work are here and there certain words and expressions that have caused me much sorrow in remembrance, and I would have given many dollars if they could have been blotted out. And more especially there would be so manifest an unkindliness in reprinting a vast amount of what pertains to the late President of a certain college, that I would as soon consent to have a finger taken off as to continue it." Later he reminds Mr. Nunemacher that "all the chapters and passages in the second volume relative to Dr. Bloduplex (President Wylie) are by all means to be discarded." Professor Hall adds, however: "This gentleman richly deserved all that was done to him some years ago, but he is now in the other world, and I hope in a better one."

The "Faculty War" of 1832 was a man of talent and learning, he was an able and eloquent preacher, and as principal of the Seminary he had acquired himself well. Why not he, of all men, have indulged the aspiration?

We have his own statement to the effect that his name had been mentioned in that connection, "Distant and learned gentlemen" to whom, he says, he had written inquiring after presidential candidates, had replied earnestly recommending himself, but he declined the nomination, "unwisely," however, as he seems afterwards to have thought. It is very true that his name seems never to have been considered in that connection by the trustees, and the evidence is more conclusive that both himself and Harney joined in presenting Wylie's name to the board; but, for all that, Professor Hall was not the man to press his own claims. He was the man, however, to think that if he had any claims his friends ought to know it and push them for him without waiting to be set in motion by him. He was a man of lofty ambition, and he had come to the West five years before, as he tells us, to become a leader in its higher educational work. And so it is certainly quite reasonable to believe that he himself aspired to the position of president, and I think the circumstances warrant us in thinking that he did so aspire—a fact to be kept in mind in following the discussion of the subject before us.

Dr. Wylie was in many respects a remarkable man. He was born to lead, not to follow. The painting of him in the Library shows that he had the elongated Andrew Jackson type of face and head. He possessed many qualifications that go to make the leader of men. He usually saw his way clearly and he went straight to his goal. The greater the difficulty, the more determined and the more certain he was to surmount it. What he lacked was in tact. He was not given to persuasion but to command. He never masqueraded. He might, indeed, admit that he was in the wrong. I find one instance when he seems to have done that, but he never sniveled over it. If he was right, those who followed him were sure to go right, for when once on the right track, he was sure to stay there. There was nothing vacillating or uncertain about him. After a fight was over, he never spoke ill of his enemy, but he was a good hater nevertheless. Taken all in all, he was rigid, masterful, and uncompromising.
Baynard R. Hall was in many respects the very opposite of Andrew Wylie. He was genial, jovial, and merry-hearted. He attended the frontier shooting matches and quilting frolics, and laughed with the loudest. He was a tactician and went around things. When the storm came, like the turtle in his shell, he drew his head in and waited for the storm to blow over. He was emotional, poetic, light-hearted, and took things easy. He never forgot nor forgave. He, too, was a good hater. Eleven years after he left the Indiana College a defeated, humiliated man, he wrote of the causes of his defeat and humiliation, with a pen dipped in gall.

John H. Harney, young and inexperienced as he was, already shadowed those qualities and characteristics that were to make him the great editor that he was destined to become. He was a silent man, an exacting man, a combative man, a patient man, a strong man, an invincible man. Wylie and Hall were so unlike that they could never fight a pitched battle, for Hall would draw off his forces and treat for peace or abandon the contest entirely. But between Wylie and Harney there was great similarity. Both were pugnacious, and if there was any compromise in either it certainly never manifested itself in the great faculty fight of 1831-1832.

Men admired the tall, graceful, grave, stately-stepping, and dignified Wylie. Men loved the blue-eyed, jolly, laughing, easy-going Hall. Men feared the erect, precise, nervous, heavy-jawed, firmly-stepping, neatly dressed, military-looking Harney.

I am slow to accept Professor Hall's statement that the trouble began quite soon after Dr. Wylie's coming. Still, the character of the three men and the complexion of the times in which they lived corroborate the New Purchase version.

But there is other and perhaps better corroborative evidence. The first catalogue of which we have any knowledge was printed for the collegiate year 1830-1831, and it was not written by a committee of the faculty, nor under the supervision of a committee. From language used in that first catalogue it is quite evident that the faculty as such had little or nothing to do with the domestic management of the institution; and the fact must, no doubt, have been a cause of irritation to the two professors, and especially so to Professor Hall, who had for so long a time been at its head and, as we have seen, probably been an aspirant for the presidency himself. In truth, Hall in connection with his statement that the trouble soon began suggests as a cause that, from the first, the president treated him and Harney as if they were no more than ushers in the school.

This view is corroborated by Dr. E. N. Elliott who, succeeding Wylie to the chair of mathematics, was here from 1832 to 1836, and of course had excellent opportunity to learn all the facts. Indeed, he says that Dr. Wylie gave him a full account of these very troublesome times, and therefore, when I quote him, I do it with the understanding that I am giving Dr. Wylie's version through Dr. Elliott's memory. This you will see is but hearsay evidence, but it is deemed relevant in the courts of history, if not in the courts of law. Dr. Elliott says:

As the trustees knew nothing about the management of Colleges . . . Dr. Wylie had extensive experience in Washington and Jefferson colleges, and considered himself entitled to have a controlling voice in the management of the Institution. This the professors resented, as it not only diminished their power but also the esteem in which they were held in the community.

In view of all the circumstances, I think it very probable that trouble began in the faculty very soon after its organization, and both Hall and Elliott agree that it arose over the question of where the power of local government lay.

But there is another material fact to be considered in this place. A number of students followed Dr. Wylie from his Pennsylvania college, and between these and the students already on the ground there soon sprang up an intensely sectional ill feeling. Professor Hall in his book hints at this, and all who were students here at the time with whom I have talked concerning it have proved it to be true. One man, now a venerable ex-judge of the state, said to me that, to add to the ill feeling existing between the two factions, the "foreigners" were better dressed and had more money than the "natives," and wished they were perhaps a little wickeder; and that the girls of the village, attracted by these glittering parts, gave their smiles more freely to the former than to the latter. Some of you will perhaps remember that the statement was made last year, that in the beginning and up to 1830 there was but one literary society, the Henodelphisterian, connected with the institution; but in that year there was a withdrawal...
of members, who were mainly "foreigners," who founded the Athenian Society. The cause of this withdrawal may be seen in the jealousies between the "native" and "foreign" students.

It is remembered that the "foreign" faction began, shortly after their arrival, to find fault with Professor Hall. Their charge was that he was "indolent," "neglectful," "unaccommodating," and "incompetent." In the making of the charge, there seems to have been an assumption of superiority on the one side which was peculiarly galling to the other. At any rate, the other side most earnestly and indignantly denied that there was any ground at all for the charge. They, the old students of the institution, had learned to look with love and reverence upon their first professor, and we can readily imagine the bitter length to which such a controversy could be carried by the contending factions.

Professor Hall, no doubt, suspected from the first that Dr. Wylie inspired this student criticism, nor can there be much doubt that it tended to promote ill feeling in the faculty at an early day, as claimed in The New Purchase, though no open outbreak immediately came of it.

Out of this student factiousness came that which ultimately led to the first difficulty of which the public could get a glimpse. I refer to the anonymous letter. Some time toward the close of the collegiate year of 1830–1831, probably in September—which was nearly two years after Dr. Wylie came—Professor Hall found in his "pocket Virgil, left as usual on the mantel of his recitation room," an anonymous letter, which taxed him in very plain language with the same charges current among the "foreign" students—"incompetency and neglect of duty—and demanded his resignation.6

Hall and Harney both promptly came to the conclusion that Dr. Wylie was the author of that letter. The evidence of that fact was wholly circumstantial, it is true; nevertheless it appeared to be flawless, and was convincing to a moral certainty. "It was," says Matthew M. Campbell, who for so long a time was the worthy head of the Preparatory Department of both the College and the University, and who was a student here at the time the letter was written, and who for forty years kept the secret of the writer—"It was strong enough to hang a saint." The letter was written on Dr. Wylie's own paper, with his own ink, and in a well-simulated hand. "The style, the words, the expressions," the "grammatical peculiarities," were believed to be the Doctor's. But, as to "make assurance double sure," the wafer or sealing wax bore the impress of Dr. Wylie's desk key! No wonder that Professor Campbell exclaimed that the evidence that Dr. Wylie wrote it was "strong enough to hang a saint!"

And yet Dr. Wylie did not write that letter. It was written by a Pennsylvania student, "without," as he himself says, "the knowledge, suggestion, remotest hint or suspicion" on the part of Dr. Wylie. I do not know that the Doctor ever knew who was its author, but I do know that he solemnly and indignantly denied its authorship to Professor Hall; and it would seem that Hall, at the time, must have believed him. But on the breaking out of fresh troubles, the solemn and indignant denial went for naught, and eleven years afterwards he painstakingly set himself to the task of proving that the Doctor was its author.

The letter led to Hall's resignation. "That very week," he says, he sent in his resignation, "offering however to remain till the meeting of the board." A partial copy of that letter, taken from the old record which was destroyed by the fire of July 12, 1883, still remains; and it is curious to note that he writes, "The sole reason for this offer is my dissatisfaction with the present salary attached to my office, and which, if it desires to retain me in its employ," allow me to say, is a reason to be remedied by your honorable board if it desires to retain me in its employ.

This was certainly strange language to be used in the face of the anonymous letter; and I am unable to explain it upon any other hypothesis, save that Hall was, for the time being, satisfied with the Doctor's denial.

The board accepted Hall's resignation, but made the mistake usual in such cases of requesting him to remain a year longer at a salary of $750, to which he agreed, "unless an offer of employment came from elsewhere which he could not afford to neglect."

No further trouble is heard of for a period of about nine months. The fires were smouldering, however, and at the coming of the first breeze were liable to leap into flame. The breeze came in May or...
June of the following year (1828). The occasion was a spring exhibition. Exhibitions were important affairs in college life in those days. Orations, declamations, debates, essays, and dramatical performances were the exercises usually given. Whole days would sometimes be appropriated to an exhibition. I found an account not long ago of one given by the students of Franklin College, during the early period of its history, which occupied the better part of two days, and they did not charge an admission fee either.

Alas! Alas! One by one the cherished customs of the Fathers take their flight and come back to us no more, forever. The old-time spring exhibition, with its odor of cedar browse, its thunder of the bass drum, its marchings in of the College societies, its warm and fervid oratory—who that ever spoke his "piece" at a spring exhibition and received heartier applause and more of it than ever afterwards he received, can forget the occasion of his greatest victory!

The Indiana College spring exhibition was a less elaborate affair than the Franklin one of later date. It consisted of orations only, and probably it was put by in half a day. At any rate, it was held in the then newly-built Presbyterian church on the corner of Fourth and Washington streets. It is now occupied by the Baptists and has been rebuilt on the old foundation. Portions of the old walls have been built in with the new as is plain to be seen by any passer-by. The new church was then unfinished, and it may serve as a bit of local coloring to the history of the times to state that the carpenters were at work on the inside finishing, and that all save one abandoned their planes and saws for the exhibition. Their benches were pushed to one side and the floor was swept clean. One grim old carpenter engaged upon the work, who was a Presbyterian as well and held that the fiddle in the church was an abomination, declared his unwillingness to lose his day's work. The exhibition could go on if it served the promoters chose, but he was going on also; and so he planed away. His bench stood next the north wall; and as the auditors came in, the first things that caught their eyes were the long ribbons of wood curling from Carpenter Clark's sharp plane.

Presently the procession from the College, composed of musicians, faculty, officers, students, and citizens came filing in. There was a triangle, a fiddle, a bass viol, a drum, and a clarinet. James Whitcomb, a brilliant young lawyer of the town and subsequently a governor, a United States senator, and commissioner of the General Land Office at Washington, played the fiddle. John Orchard, one of the proprietors of the Orchard House and a pillar in the church, played the bass viol; and Austin Seward blew on the wind instrument. Who struck the triangle and who the drum, the muse of history does not record.

The boys applauded the carpenter, of course, but he kept planing away. As the house filled up, the last to come in found seats in the rear, where the curling shavings and the dust and slivers alighted on the gowns and spring bonnets of the Bloomington matrons and maidens. At once a vigorous dusting of gowns began, accompanied by remarks that doubtless made the carpenter's ears tingle. Meanwhile the boys kept on applauding. The commotion catching the president's attention, he arose, and looking in the carpenter's direction, and assuming an air of amazement, he exclaimed: "What does this mean? I wouldn't be more surprised at the sight of a wild bear from the woods!" The carpenter could stand it no longer. A proposition had been made by Mr. Orchard and others to pay him his day's wages, which he now gladly accepted; and dropping his plane he left the house and the exhibition went on.

There was a students' temperance society in existence here at the time, the members of which elected one of their number, Samuel Givens, a fiery Kentuckian, to represent them on the occasion. Givens requested that he be permitted to speak either first or last, and Dr. Wylie agreed to his request; but when the program was made out the Doctor, forgetting the request and his promise, assigned to the temperance orator an intermediate place. Because of this, Givens declined to appear, and when his name was reached Dr. Wylie rising said, "I see that the gentleman is absent for reasons which I suppose he may deem satisfactory"; and he called the next speaker.

It was the rule then that students were called upon in chapel Saturday mornings to give in public their excuses for any absences or failures in duty that had occurred during the week. Accordingly, Givens was called upon to account for his absence at the spring
students, I cannot believe, in the absence of the actual statement of someone present in faculty meeting, that such an appeal was the result of an agreement made beforehand.

But we are not entirely left in the dark as to the Doctor's motive and purpose. According to Dr. Elliott, Dr. Wylie proposed some measure affecting the College government—he does not state what, but it was probably the expulsion of Givens—"which was openly opposed by the professors and their party," their party consisting of all citizens and students who sided with them. "Anxious to enlighten the community and the students, he was discussing it in the chapel," when the circumstances as hereinafter stated took place.

Be all this as it may, sometime between the day of the spring exhibition and July 16, 1832, came "the celebrated Saturday." Mr. Bollman—who came to Bloomington from Pennsylvania with Dr. Wylie and took his course in the College, and was ever Dr. Wylie's fast friend and not the friend of Professor Hall, for he spoke bitterly of the latter to the very last—said on one occasion that on the morning of "the celebrated Saturday," he was sent for by the president to meet him at his house before the ringing of the bell; that he did so, and there met a number of other students. The ringing of the bell was begun about the time he got there, and before or at its close Dr. Wylie said, "Well, it is time we go to College."

Hall makes the charge in his book that the president came to chapel that morning with a "bodyguard," and Bollman understood that he and others had been invited to assemble for some such purpose. The evidence is conclusive that both sides met that morning in the chapel that morning with a "bodyguard," and Bollman understood that he and others had been invited to assemble for some such purpose. The evidence is conclusive that both sides met that morning in the belief that something unusual was about to take place; and the inference is very strong that shortly before that the feelings of both Wylie and Harney had been wrought up to the highest point of malignity toward each other.

As to the cause for the particular enmity now existing between these two, I am not certain. Harney had from the beginning of the quarrel espoused Hall's side; and now that Hall's days as a professor were numbered, it may be that Wylie and Harney had mutually...
entered the lists for a death struggle. In *The New Purchase* it is stated that the president on his own motion expelled Givens, but that Harney advised the student to disregard the president's act on the ground that the faculty alone could expel, not a member of the faculty. Be this as it may, on assembling that Saturday morning the faculty took their places on the rostrum, the president in the middle and a professor on each side as usual. The president read a chapter and offered the usual morning prayer, after which the unusual scene began.

It began by the president making a speech. Two versions of that speech are before me. One is the *New Purchase* version, which is too extravagant for credence. The other is Matthew M. Campbell's version. After the lapse of fifty years, he undertook, as he says, "to give something like it." In one thing both agree—the president assailed Professor Harney. The *New Purchase* statement is that he charged him, by innuendo, with spitting in his face. But from no other source comes even a hint of this, and so we discard it entirely. Whatever ground that speech may have covered, of this we may feel assured, Dr. Wylie did not spare his enemies—the professors. During its delivery we may well suppose that, as Hall, says the "professors sat as in a dream." Presently the one thing occurred which everyone present no doubt remembered to the day of his death. Harney was sitting with a penknife in his hand—a "little pen-knife" said McPheeters; an "old pocket-knife" with a "round-ended blade," says the *New Purchase*; a "new knife with a very glittering blade," says Dr. Elliot, who got his information from Dr. Wylie; and simply a "penknife," says Campbell. He was "whistling a stick as was his custom," says McPheeters; "he was opening and shutting it just that its click, as I think, might somewhat divert his own riveted attention," says Campbell; "he was snapping it open and shut," says Dr. Elliot; "as was his habit, when having nothing to do, he began strapping a round-ended blade of an old pocket-knife on his boot—said boot tastefully reposining on the knee of the other leg," reads the *New Purchase*.

Here you see is a disagreement among the witnesses, but it is as to a minor matter. As to the essential facts that there was a knife displayed by Harney, and that it was not a deadly weapon, there is entire agreement.

But the president saw that knife, and actually fearing or feigning to fear an evil intention on the part of Harney, he exclaimed against it. "What! Does he mean to stab me in the back while I explain to you his late conduct with me?" is Campbell's statement; while McPheeters' is, "I see a knife behind me here, but I hope it is for no evil purpose!"

A commotion followed. Harney sprang to his feet, but Hall seizing him by the skirt of his coat pulled him back into his seat, at the same time telling him he would speak in answer. The president went on with his speech and no quarreling, as such, ensued. Campbell even thinks there was no great excitement evinced by the students. Doubtless they kept their seats and certainly they did not applaud.

When the president was through, Hall arose and began his answer. What he said no one has assumed to repeat, but there is evidence that he began the making of a very exasperating speech. McPheeters says that Hall was a brilliant orator and in the language of the boys he 'ripped the Doctor up the back.' At any rate, his words greatly enraged the president, who called upon him to curb the temper of his speech or he would dismiss the College. But Hall, paying no attention to the threat, kept right on, when Wylie, advancing to the front, cried: "College is dismissed. My friends will follow me!"

With that there seems to have been a rush for the door, and when outside, the president's friends followed him, and the professors' them. Some who held aloof from either faction, lolling on the grass in the shade, talked the extraordinary occurrence over.

This is the story of "the celebrated Saturday," as I have been enabled to weave it out of the tangled skeins that have come down to our time. In *The New Purchase*, Harney is represented as denying in the most positive of terms any wrong purpose with reference to his knife, and I have no doubt he did so, for it was most natural he should; yet while everyone whose statement regarding the matter I have taken hastens to acquire Harney on that score, not one remembers him as saying a word at the time.

Events now followed in quick succession. On July 16 we find the board convened in extraordinary session. Professor Hall, as we have
seen, had already resigned but was teaching under a special agreement. He no longer appears as an actor in these disgraceful scenes. Henceforth the battle was waged between the president and the mathematics professor. Each went before the board, and each presented his side of the case and demanded an investigation.

What was the board to do? There was no precedent. The like had never been known before. For three days the board doubted, and on the third it straddled. By resolution it declared that the "conduct of each member of the faculty has not been free from censure," and wound up by recommending the members "to make every consistent effort to arrive at perfect harmony among themselves"; and then the trustees adjourned and went to their homes.

The advice was good, very good; but the time for advice was passed. What the parties wanted was a trial; what the board could not afford to give was a trial. There is but one step that can be taken with absolute safety to an institution in such an emergency, and that is to cut off somebody. No management can with safety to its college sit as a tribunal to condemn or to vindicate its quarreling professors. Other tribunals, lay and ecclesiastical, have been specially ordained for that purpose.

Certainly no darker hour was ever struck in the history of our beloved institution. The factional differences between the students had become so intensified as alone to be a sufficient cause from which to apprehend a disruption. Hall, it is true, says the students "generally remained neutral," but he charges that all the "flourishing and ornamental trees set out by him years before" were girdled; that the beautiful woodbines shading his doors and windows were cut down, and that the swine were turned into his kitchen garden—all of which he lays to the door of the adverse student faction.

That the students were wrought to a high pitch of excitement cannot be doubted; for when the time came, as it shortly did, that the professors had to go, the number of students that turned their backs on Indiana College was so great that Dr. Maxwell, the president of the board of trustees, in his next annual report (December 1, 1832) to the legislature, felt it his duty to call attention to the fact.

In addition to these agencies of disturbance, we must not overlook the fact that the people of Bloomington took sides and helped carry on the war. Fortunately, however, with them there was division—a division which goes far towards sustaining that deliverance of the board that the "conduct of each member of the faculty has not been free from censure." To such a pitch was the contention carried among the citizens of the town that, according to Dr. Elliott, who succeeded Professor Harney in the chair of mathematics, the social life of the people for the time being was made to hinge upon the faculty controversy. The friends of the one side held no social intercourse with the friends of the other side. The social parties were either Wylie parties or Hall and Harney parties.

And yet, to the credit of president and professors, be it said that after the board had given its bit of good advice and gone home, the College work went on as if all were peace and harmony in that little College world. For about two months president and professors met in the chapel each morning, when there was reading of the Scriptures and prayer, after which followed lectures and recitations—all as of old. Everything was done in decency and in order, and a stranger would never have dreamed of the tempests of ill feeling raging beneath the surface.

It is quite evident, however, that the disagreeing faculty were not taking the good advice of the board. They never do in such cases. Out of doors all was discord and confusion. Sometime during the interval between the July meeting and the September commencement, the president and the mathematics professor had a personal collision, and the event had more of the farcical than the tragical in it. The story is about as follows: That stream which crosses the city school lot and is so nicely concealed beneath College avenue by an arch of masonry was at the time in question an open stream from street boundary to street boundary, save that it was spanned on the west side by a foot-log. One Sunday morning the president and the professor met at that foot-log. The president fancied, and doubtless his fancy was the fact, that the professor was measuring his steps so that the meeting should take place midway of that log, and if the truth were known, it would doubtless appear that the president was not just then caring whether the inevitable meeting took place on the log or off it. At any rate it is certain that he did not change his gait. He left it to the mathematics professor to do the necessary fast walking and slow
walking, in order to bring about the meeting in the most desirable place. And the mathematics professor was a very capable and practical mathematician, and he so managed it that each stepped upon his end of the log at the same time. But the president had been thinking as well as the professor. "I made up my mind," said he sometime afterward to our Dr. Wylie (Professor Theophilus A. Wylie), "that I would push him off if I could"; and it was characteristic of the old Doctor that when he once made up his mind to do a given thing, he was very apt to do it. At any rate the parties met in the middle of the log, as the mathematics man had calculated they would; and "just as we came together," said the old Doctor to the young Doctor, "I drew my arms close around me and gave him a hunch with one shoulder, and off he went sprawling."

Had the mathematics man seized his antagonist by the leg and dragged him down into the mud and mire, we might have had more respect for him.

Commencement fell this year on the last Wednesday in September. There were two terms a year, of five months each, with two vacations of a month each, one covering the month of October and the other the month of April. From the beginning up to this year of 1832, the collegiate years closed in the last of October, and the vacation months were November and May.

Whether the trustees were astonished at the continued hostility of the main actors in this drama, on their assembling at the September commencement, is nowhere stated. We learn from Dr. Maxwell's report to the General Assembly that Hall had withdrawn two weeks before commencement, but no reason for this is given. We can only suppose that the position he occupied had become so intolerable to him that he sought relief by abandoning the field. He was a man of peace, who took no pleasure in war.

Another effort was made to effect a reconciliation between Wylie and Harney, but with no better effect than the one of six weeks before. What would the trustees now do? The entries in the old record are in general brief and often unsatisfactory. Enough, however, was written to show the great strait in which the trustees now found themselves. They were evidently doubting. In July they had declared both parties in the wrong; and as nothing had taken place to warrant a reversal of that opinion they must have still considered both parties in the wrong. This is evident, or else they would not have again counseled a compromise.

Again, professors were harder to come at in those days than they are now. Let one drop out today, and tomorrow twenty will be found ready to take his place. It was otherwise sixty years ago. Men competent to fill presidents' chairs, and to teach Greek and Latin and the higher mathematics, generally lived on the other side of the Alleghanies. If either Wylie or Harney went, who could be found to supply his place? Hall was already out, and a Greek and Latin man had to be found; and the board shrank from the task of finding still another. One at a time was enough. Moreover, as neither the president nor the professor would resign, and the board had declared both in fault, how could one be taken and the other left?

To this, add the clamor from the outside. The president had his friends, and the professor his. The town was in a tumult. Everywhere was confusion. When the pinch finally came, the trustees themselves could not agree. Tradition says that scarce two thought alike. The matter was talked over and over, and proposition after proposition was made, but nothing could be agreed upon. At last the keynote was struck by the humblest member of the board. He is represented as saying:

I am not a lawyer, nor a doctor, nor a preacher, and I know next to nothing about public business; but if I had two good hands employed on my farm and they should quarrel and fight, I would do my best to have them make it up; but if after a fair trial I found they would not have peace, I would consider which one I could get on the better without, and would dismiss him at once.

And Harney was dismissed.

The black cloud which uprose with the beginning of this faculty fight now hung like a pall over what many thought was a dead College. No other calamity, whether from fire, or adverse litigation, or political or sectarian ascendancy, or what not, ever proved so great

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94 HISTORY OF INDIANA UNIVERSITY

95 THE "FACULTY WAR" OF 1832

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83The first catalogue, published in 1831, says that the first session began the first of November and ended the last of April; the second session was from the first of June to the last of September; May and October were vacation months; and commencement came on the last Thursday of September.

8Referring to the 1830's.
a calamity to the institution as did this wretched personal difficulty. It had done more in the short space of twelve months to chill the ardor of state effort in the cause of collegiate education than all the assaults made by politicians or sectaries from the outside were ever able to accomplish. The unseemly and disgraceful squabble was carried on, in spite of official admonition, until it became a state scandal, and until it put an effectual end, during that generation at least, to any thought of state aid to the Indiana College. I think it safe to say that never at any time since the culmination of that petty quarrel has the institution had as many active and cooperating friends throughout the state, in proportion to the whole number of people, as it had before. Up to that time it had been the hope of Dr. Maxwell and other far-seeing men that the Indiana College should be to Indiana what the Michigan University has since become to Michigan; but it was soon seen, after the close of that deplorable dispute, that whatever the future might have in store for the scion of their planting, that hope could not become a reality during their generation.

I realized in the outset the gravity of the task I had undertaken. We are not so far from the actors and their times that a matter of such a personal nature as the one presented can be probed without danger of hurting somebody. It may be said that the matter presented in this paper is but an episode that ought to be forgotten. But history is largely made up of episodes, and especially is this true of the history of our institution. And it is true, moreover, that every single episode has in its composition more or less of the unpleasant because of personal matters; and so if we were to leave out all that is unpleasant, we would have left very little that would be worth recording as history.

I have not felt that it was any part of my duty to find which side took the initiatory wrong step, nor which went to the greater length in the wrong. A review of the evidence at hand warrants me in believing, as the board of trustees believed at the time, that neither side was without fault. As to the relative degrees of wrong the board expressed no opinion, and neither do I.

But looking beyond all that—whether Dr. Wylie was to blame or not to blame; whether Hall and Harney, or Hall or Harney, were to blame or not to blame—one fact stares us in the face, and that is that their personal controversy worked a grievous wrong to the institution. In everything a man does, he may be said to appeal to history and certainly this is true of every man who engenders or wages a faculty war. It is a war out of which no soldier ever comes unhurt, and for which hurt no soldier ever receives a pension.

The board proceeded at once to the reorganization of the faculty by the election of Beaumont Parks, who was at the time at the head of a classical school in Madison, in this state, to the chair of languages; and Ebenezer N. Elliott, who was at the head of a similar school at Rising Sun on the same side of the river, to the chair vacated by Professor Harney. And then the board adjourned, in the belief that the College was dead. Nor did it again meet for two years. That was the period known as the interregnum.