



Pinging History Home

Wylie House Museum

Part of Indiana University Libraries

From the Director

This year's exciting summer programming at Wylie House helped us further strengthen our ties to the community and increase the visibility of the museum.

Among our activities were workshops on heirloom gardening and seed saving, as well as group tours with the Red Hat Ladies and Green County Extension Homemakers Club. Our staff also gave presentations at the Simply Living Fair and Monroe County Fair, as well as to the Master Gardeners and the Bloomington Rotary Club. In August, we hosted a lecture in our Education Center by Dixie Kline Richardson, author of the recently published *Baynard Rush Hall: His Story*, and held an open house in conjunction with the historic marker dedication and tree planting at Seminary Square Park, the site of the original IU campus, just two blocks west of Wylie House.

It was particularly gratifying to see the eyes of our young visitors light up when telling them stories about how people lived 100 or more years ago. From June through August, we hosted students from the Prep School Academy and Binford Elementary School, Bloomington Montessori summer campers, Bloomington's Youth Services Bureau, the Hilltop garden campers, the Kid City campers, a children's book group, and the Junior Historians from the Monroe County History Center.

Throughout July and August, I transcribed four years' worth of Wylie family letters, close to 500 pages. This work uncovered some interesting and hitherto unknown information. The personal letters bring the 19th and early 20th centuries alive, offer-

ing a glimpse into private lives of long ago, how people lived before automobiles and airplanes and other modern conveniences. I'm grateful to have this opportunity to read, transcribe, and make available this fascinating collection.

I also recently completed revisions on Volume I of *Affectionately Yours: The Andrew Wylie Family Letters, 1828-1859*, which incorporates some 20 letters acquired since the last edition was printed. To view the PDF, visit our website at www.iub.edu/~libwylie and click on the "About" tab.

Through our ongoing work with the collections, we have maintained a strong personal connection with members of the Wylie family. Over the summer, I was contacted by one of Theophilus A. Wylie's great-great-grandsons after his mother passed away. Through ongoing correspondence with him and his siblings, I have been able to share the genealogical information we have, plus letters written by and photographs taken of or by their grandfather, Laurence Seabrook Wylie.

A particularly special treat was a daylong visit by three of Andrew Wylie's great-great-grandchildren. During their visit, I was able to share two recent discoveries made as I was transcribing the letters. First, in 1908, their great-grandparents commissioned the T. C. Steele portrait of Andrew that today hangs in the Indiana Memorial Union. Second, we now know that Rebecca Wylie, widow of Theophilus Wylie, gave a portrait of Andrew to their great-grandmother; today that portrait is owned by one of those descendants who visited.

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Wylie House

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Guided Tours

March through November
Tuesday - Saturday
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
or by appointment

Click "Give Now" to donate to Wylie House Museum





Remembrance

Virginia (Hacker) Chitwood Miller, a long-time Wylie House volunteer quilter, passed away July 15, 2011, at the age of 90. Virginia, born Dec. 18, 1920 in Morgan County, Indiana, lived most of her life in Monroe County and raised two daughters and a son here. She worked for the U.S. Post Office, R.C.A., and Sarkes Tarzian. She and her second husband, Robert Miller, owned Bloomington Professional Carpet Cleaning. A community minded woman, Virginia was president of the Unionville P.T.A., served as a precinct volunteer for the Monroe County Republicans, and was active in the North Central Church of Christ.

Virginia joined the Wylie House quilters in the 1990s and helped make ten quilts for the museum that are displayed in the house. She had learned to quilt as a young girl and was noted for her tiny and even stitches. In 2007, Virginia told us, "I sewed all my children's clothes, and I've made many

things for my grand-children, too. Last year I made twelve afghans for my family before I came back here to quilt last spring." She was raised on a farm in northeast Monroe County and married farmer Albert G. Chitwood later in life. She recalled, "We'd sew and quilt on cloudy or rainy days because we didn't have to be out in the fields. To this day, I love a good thunderstorm. You feel free to do whatever you want to do." We miss Virginia, her talent, her quiet voice and gentle manner. We especially miss her on Tuesdays when her fellow quilters gather in our barn to stitch at the quilting frame.

Through donations made to the museum in her memory, three large photographic display panels were purchased for the barn. These include a photograph of the barn's namesake Morton C. Bradley, Jr., a collage of photos documenting the barn's dismantling and reassembly, and a collage of Wylie family photographs.

Projects around the house

Two crimson IU signs were recently installed and now welcome visitors to the Wylie House and the Morton C. Bradley, Jr. Education Center.

Some exciting improvements will soon take shape around the property, made possible by donations to the museum.

The property will be graced with new landscaping – a large white oak tree, an evergreen, and about thirty shrubs. At the back of the barn, small shrubs and native plantings will be placed around the window wells, and native grasses and other perennials planted near the retaining wall. To protect the grounds from damage, parking near the barn

will be restricted. Small boulders will be placed behind the barn, and two limestone pillars with a chain between them will be installed near 2nd Street.

UV blocking film will also be installed on windows in the house and barn to protect fabrics, antique rugs, and furniture in the house and barn from the damaging effects of ultraviolet light.



Student projects

The Wylie House welcomes new graduate assistant Rachel Santose, a first-year graduate student in the IU School of Library and Information Science (SLIS), and intern Carey Beam, a second-year SLIS graduate student. Rachel will continue work on our internal finding aids, assist with the new edition of Vol. II of *Affectionately Yours: Letters of the Andrew Wylie Family*, and help create some new PowerPoint presentations, amongst other things. Carey completed a course on Encoded Archival Description (EAD) this past summer and has been helping with three new EAD finding aids for Archives Online at IU.

We also extend a "thank you" to four SLIS student volunteers – Molly Biehn (MLS '09), Rieta Drinkwine (MLS '10), Eric Heim, and Kristin Milks. They are scanning images of the letters and working on transcriptions. Student volunteers are also doing preservation quality scanning of our historic photograph collection as part of the IU Digital Library Program's [Photo Cataloging and Access Service](#). Once completed, researchers will be able to access our photo collection online.

Esther Roth-Katz, our 2010-2011 graduate assistant, will use our Southwestern Native American basket collection to create a digital exhibit for a course on Digital Libraries. Theophilus A. Wylie's two grandchildren, who grew up in Wylie House and then moved to the Tucson area in the early 20th century, collected the baskets. The exhibit will feature photos and transcriptions of letters that reference those baskets. Once completed, James R. Rodgers, our volunteer Webmaster, will transfer the exhibit to the Wylie House Web site.



Students at Wylie House

- Carey Beam
- Rieta Drinkwine
- Eric Heim
- Kristin Milks
- Esther Roth-Katz
- Rachel Santose

News from the Garden

As a result of the hard work of our staff and volunteers, the Wylie House grounds saw many improvements this spring. Organic compost provided by Earl's Lawn and Landscaping Service was added to the existing planting beds, and a new garden with Brandywine tomatoes and Corni Di Toro Rosso peppers was created in a sunny location near the Education Center.

In July, Rebecca Quon, a history major from California with an interest in gardening, came to volunteer at Wylie House. She wanted to learn more about Indiana history and heirloom gardening. During the month she worked at the museum, she gained experience harvesting seeds and weeding.

And, mark your calendar for the Wylie House heirloom seed sale on Saturday, March 3, 2012. There are several varieties of heirloom seed new this season: Blonde Du Cazard lettuce, Corni Di Toro Rosso pepper and Brandywine tomato, just to name a few.

Current Exhibits

Looking for Andrew Wylie: Portraits and Their Paths

This exhibit includes images of the eight known portraits of Andrew Wylie with accompanying information about the research undertaken to learn about the portraits.

A Slice of Life: Artifacts Found on the Grounds at Wylie House Museum

The exhibit features early to mid-nineteenth century artifacts found at the excavation site of the Education Center. Among them are several household items – Staffordshire transferware china, medicine bottles, and even a bone toothbrush – that help tell the story of domestic life in early Bloomington.

Photographic Displays in the Morton C. Bradley, Jr. Education Center

One photographic display depicts the dismantling and reassembly of the barn, and the other features photographs taken by Anton Boisen, a grandson of Theophilus A. Wylie who grew up at Wylie House. Between 1905 and 1915 while working for the U.S. Forestry Department and subsequently as a minister, Anton traveled a good deal and sent photographs home. Although we cannot say with certainty where they were taken, based on evidence from his letters, we believe they mostly depict rural life in Tennessee, Missouri, and Kansas, with a few from New Hampshire and Idaho. The selected photographs show scenes of rural villages and farms in the early 20th century.



Volunteering

- ☞ Do you like history, antiques and a pleasant, tranquil setting? Learn to be a docent at the Wylie House.
- ☞ Have limited time? Help with special events at the museum.
- ☞ Do you prefer to spend your time in the garden? Lend a hand in our heirloom garden.

If you live in the Bloomington area and would like to become more actively involved with the museum, please call and chat with us about the opportunities.



Thanks to current volunteers!

- Susan Baker, docent
- Molly Biehn, volunteer
- Jane Clay, docent
- Marjorie Clayton, quilter
- Roseann Dodds, docent
- Anthony Eller, docent
- Ann Fierst, docent
- Catherine Haralovich, docent
- Jane Harnett, docent
- Ross Hill, garden volunteer
- Barbara Lechner, garden volunteer
- Terry McCall, docent
- Diamond Mather, quilter
- Mary Anne Miller, docent
- Kylene Parobek, docent
- Ellen Pittman, quilter
- Lee Ridge, garden volunteer
- Eve Schultes-Ridge, garden volunteer
- Barbara Seal, garden volunteer
- Cindy Smith, docent
- Martha Tarbah, garden volunteer
- Kathie Wallskog, garden volunteer
- Carla Williams, docent