## New Wylie Acquisitions

Wylie House now boasts three more Andrew Wylie artifacts, thanks to Madelyn Wylie Clark, Andrew’s great grand-daughter. Mrs. Clark has donated a rocking chair, straight chair and day bed, all of which belonged to Andrew and Margaret Wylie. The straight chair has a rush seat and was highly decorated with grain painting and gold leaf. Much of the gold leaf has worn off but it is still a lovely chair. The rocker (see inside for photo) was described by the upholsterer as “one of the most interesting chairs I’ve ever worked on.” The frame is walnut, all hand

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## Major Bequest from Wylie Descendant

Morton C. Bradley, Jr., great-grandson of Theophilus and Rebecca Wylie, died last September 26, at the age of 92, in Boston. Having never married, Mr. Bradley had for years thought of himself as a Hoosier and IU as his family. Many of you may be aware of the Morton and Marie Bradley Memorial Collection at the IU Art Museum, given by Mr. Bradley, who was a paintings conservator by profession, in honor of his parents. He had also given small gifts of Wylie family artifacts to the Wylie House over the years, usually sent back to Bloomington with a representative of the IU Foundation who had been out to visit him. He left his entire estate to Indiana University and named Wylie House as one of three beneficiaries.

Wylie House will receive numerous Wylie family heirlooms including furniture and accessories, textiles, china, glassware, photographs, and letters….even a hundred year old Christmas cactus that Mr. Bradley’s grandmother, Lou Wylie Boisen, carried from Wylie House to Boston in 1913 following her mother’s death and the sale of the family home to Dr. Amos Hershey! Needless to say, the staff of the museum are thrilled at the prospect of receiving these Wylie family treasures. We expect that our portion of the estate will be used to create a new Education Center to replace the current Museum Annex.

A sampling of the family letters, written between 1850 and 1930, was brought back to Indiana following Mr. Bradley’s death, and the information contained in them has already begun to inform our interpretation of the house. When all is said and done, we will be able to give our visitors a much clearer picture of the Theophilus Wylie family, who lived here from 1859 until 1913, as well as more details about IU and Bloomington life in the second half of the nineteenth century.
From the Garden...

The magnolia tree in the front yard blossomed magnificently. The daffodils are still nodding in the breeze. The lilac buds are swelling, and daily we see more green on shrubs and in the flower beds. Before we know it, the garden will be green and full of vigorously growing vegetables and flowers. If you are looking for some additions to your own garden, come to our annual spring plant sale on Saturday, May 7 between the hours of 10:00 and 4:00. There will be starts of vegetables, herbs and flowers grown from Wylie House seed as well as house plants and hardy perennials.

From the Director

The Bradley bequest is every historic house museum director’s dream come true. And every historian’s as well! When I visited Mr. Bradley a year before his death, he told me that he had “a box of family letters.” I pictured a shoe box full, or maybe a hat box. Never in my wildest dreams did I envision seven wooden boxes, each approximately 10 X 16 X 10 inches, stuffed full to overflowing with bundles of letters written by and to family members. But that’s what I found when I returned to his home following his death.

I brought back what I could carry in my suitcase, a very small portion of the total, and that turned out to be over 300 letters! So my guess is that the total will be a couple thousand letters. Amazing! The earliest ones I’ve read date from the 1850s when Lou Wyilie, Mr. Bradley’s grandmother, was a young girl of 15 attending the Glendale Female Seminary near Cincinnati, OH.

The family wrote chatty letters filled with details of their daily lives: what they planted in the garden, when they had the first rhubarb pie of the season, what the weather was like, who was sick, who they had visited or entertained, the gossip of the town and news at the “college.” It makes for fascinating reading a century and a half later!

There will be further details about this tremendous gift in coming months. And visitors will be hearing more about this branch of the family as we continue to read the letters and learn more.

—Jo Burgess

Redesigned Parlor Draperies

Thanks to your donations, Wylie House now has beautifully redesigned parlor draperies. Beverly Hafemeister of Vintage Valances in Cincinnati, who fabricated period curtains for the dining room and master bedroom last summer, used the red silk from the drapes that had been donated by members of the Women’s Colloquium (which was still in great condition thanks to heavy linings) to fashion new window coverings. New trim was selected for the drapes, and that, plus the new design and new sheers, has given the room a totally new look. This black and white photo does not do them justice, so we hope you’ll stop by to see them in full color!
In addition to the family letters from the Bradley estate that were mentioned elsewhere in this issue, there were two diaries kept by Emma Dennis, sister of Rebecca Dennis Wylie (wife of Theophilus), during the years 1872-1876 while she was living here with Theophilus and Rebecca and their children. She noted many details of their daily life in her entries and these, along with the letters, have given us a much better idea of what life was like here at Wylie House in the second half of the 19th century. Some of the things that have made an impression on us are how often someone in the family was sick; how much the weather affected their life; how much visiting and entertaining went on; how much time was spent on household chores when there were no modern conveniences; how much they loved gardening; and how much they traveled. Here are some excerpts from those diaries for your reading enjoyment:

4/22/1872: In the evening Mr. Wylie [Theophilus] had his class here to look through the telescope. We saw the sun in the afternoon, the moon & Jupiter in the evening.

5/6/1872: Prof. Boisen had Allison here early this morning taking a photograph of the home. We all figured in the picture even to the cat. [at right]

4/22/1872: Still at work in the garden. We had the kitchen garden ploughed on Friday & planted on Saturday so now we will have time for the flowers or rather Sister will be able to assist me, as she attends to the vegetable department. This evening a box of roots came from West Chester [PA] in pretty good order. Sister & I put out a number of them by lamp light.

9/24/1872: Every appearance of a settled rain so although ironing day we spent considerable time in gathering fruit among which were some very fine sickle pears.

9/27/1872: Sister made ketchup while I preserved grapes

9/28/1872: We made peach marmalade, grape jelly & spiced grapes. All are pretty tired with our weeks work.

1/9/1873: Mr. Gay called this evening, a kind old man though his name does not apply

1/2/1875: Lou & Maggie started in the carriage for Mrs. Dunn’s but the horse slipped so much they were obliged to get out & walk.

1/15/1875: We did not get our clothes dried enough to iron until today. I ironed most of the morning. [Wash day was on Monday. This was a Friday]

4/17/1875: The pitcher in Toph’s room frozen solid. The plants in the clothes room frozen stiff

12/31/1875: Quite a lively New Years Eve. ...The young folks had fire crackers in abundance. At almost midnight they started to give Spicer a serranade but the bells all struck up & I expect diverted them from their intention. I returned & staid all night with Anna but the boys did not get back until the “small wee hours.” The bells rang until day-light & came near being the death of Dick.

1/28/1876: The creek so high Anna was afraid to go to College lest she should be prevented from returning.

7/27/1875: Raining all day and showers in the afternoon. They raised the branch [creek] so as to make it almost impassable. It stopped raining before tea & Anna went with Prof. Boisen to Mrs. Hoss’ & it came on to rain again so hard she was obliged to remain all night.

9/2/1876: Sister put up 12 cans of peaches & Lizzie finished 9 gallons of apple butter
Porch Repair

If you drove by the museum in mid-April, you may have noticed carpenters working on the two porches of the Wylie House. The poplar wood used for the decking of the porches during the 1960s restoration had deteriorated to the point that we felt we needed to replace them entirely rather than patch in the rotted places.

We have chosen to use white cedar for the new decking because it has a natural preservative. Left unpainted, it will weather to a lovely silver gray in keeping with what the Wylies might have done.

We hope in the near future to replace the back porch of the house that was removed during the sixties restoration as well. Historic preservation as a field has come a long way since then, and we now feel that the porch should not have been removed.

Volunteer Opportunities

- Do you like history and antiques? 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.

**Docents and Volunteers:**

Mary Emison, Jane Harnett, Rachel Kosmitis, Naomi Lawlis, Carol Lorenzen, Ann McEndarfer, Cindy Smith, Julie Smith, Carla Williams, Carol Wise

**Garden Volunteers:**

Gino Brancolini, Amanda Davis, Ross Hill, Lee Ridge, Floyd Richards, Eve Schultes-Ridge, Carol Wise

**Quilters:**

Marj Clayton, Diamond Mather, Virginia Miller, Ellen Pittman