Famed journalist and war correspondent Ernie Pyle was a year out of high school when he came to Indiana University (IU) in September 1919. He appears not yet to have been outside the states of Indiana and Illinois. Four years later he had become a world traveler, holding a position with an up-and-coming daily newspaper in Washington, D.C., where his assignments included covering a speech by the president of the United States. During his student years, “[Pyle] became a part of the University life—interested, loyal and friendly,” as Herman B Wells, his classmate and later president of the university, recalled a short time after the journalist’s death. “We feel that his years at Indiana prepared him for his active newspaper career which reached such a climax of acclaim and of tragedy.”¹ But as Lawrence Wheeler, executive director of the IU Foundation, told Lee Miller, Pyle’s first biographer, “There has been a good deal of misinformation used in connection with Ernie’s time [at IU].”²

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Editor’s Note: The author has lightly edited Pyle’s letters for spelling and punctuation to promote clarity.

¹Remarks at dinner preceding world premiere of the movie, The Story of G.I. Joe, Indianapolis, July 6, 1945, Herman B Wells Speeches, box 6, collection C137, Indiana University Archives, Bloomington, Indiana.

²Lawrence Wheeler to Lee Miller, September 4, 1945, box 453, collection 213, Indiana University Archives.
Pyle entered IU as a farm boy who spoke in an easy rural Indiana dialect, and emerged as someone who loved to write in a polished, but everyday style. Arriving at IU as a country hick and blackballed by a fraternity his freshman year, he would a year later pledge another fraternity and become a well-known and much-loved “big man on campus.”

Like many freshmen even today, Pyle acclimated slowly to the more challenging academic environment in college. In fact, during his first two years he garnered mostly Bs and Cs, with an English class and a journalism class drawing his best grades. In his junior and senior years he received all Bs and As, an impressive accomplishment given the multiplicity of his campus activities.³

Pyle’s surviving correspondence with his family back home in Dana offers us some insight into his IU experiences and provides evidence of his intellectual and social growth at IU. As would be the case in most of his voluminous correspondence later in life, he saw his letters from Bloomington as a kind of conversation with people. He wrote mostly about things which he knew would interest his family members. None of them—father Will, mother Maria, and Aunt Mary—had gone past eighth grade.⁴ In the dozen surviving letters we see almost nothing about the intellectual climate of the campus and only passing references to his classes, factors that may have been very influential in his life. All of Pyle’s letters to his family are signed Ernest, which is what he was always called by family members.⁵

This article introduces and reproduces the surviving Pyle letters, looks at Indiana University in the early 1920s, and considers Pyle’s time there in an effort to understand how his Bloomington days contributed to his development as a reporter and writer.⁶ Also included are one letter

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³The author has been provided access to Pyle’s transcript by the registrar, but, in accordance with current privacy law, with the proviso that specific grades for specific courses cannot be indicated. Student transcripts, Office of the Registrar, Indiana University (copy in possession of the author).

⁴Pyle wrote sympathetic portraits of all three in September 1935. See David Nichols, ed., Ernie’s America: The Best of Ernie Pyle’s 1930s Travel Dispatches (New York, 1989), 12-17.

⁵Pyle did not date many of his letters. Based on postmarks and/or context, the author has added dates to many letters. These dates will appear in square brackets. The first letter reproduced here is in the IU Archives. The other remaining letters from these years are in the collection of the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites and in the Lilly Library at Indiana University.

⁶Pyle’s life at IU is summarized by Ruth P. Albright, “Ernie Pyle at Indiana University,” Traces of Indiana and Midwestern History 12 (Spring 2000), 4-13. Pyle probably wrote his parents weekly. It is impossible to determine how often he wrote his aunt, who was the recipient of several of the letters that survive and are included here.
from his summer with the navy reserves after his sophomore year, and another sent from Asia at the end of his junior year.

John Stempel, Pyle’s classmate who later served for three decades as chair of the Department of Journalism, thought Pyle’s IU days were important. “I have often pointed out that Ernie exemplifies the fact that we frequently can predict a youngster’s future from his college record, not so much in terms of what he will do specifically but in terms of the kind of job he will do,” he wrote thirty years later.7

Pyle’s first contact with IU was a letter of inquiry, written more than a year after he was graduated from Helt Township High School and shortly after his return from a brief volunteer stint in the Navy. The university to which Pyle was requesting admission comprised only fifteen buildings, but it was on the threshold of significant change. “Indiana

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7 John E. Stempel to Mrs. Harry L. Potter, December 12, 1950, student files, School of Journalism, Indiana University.
University had never rated very high academically among the Big Ten
universities of the upper Midwest,” historian Howard H. Peckham
writes. “It seemed parochial in that, until after World War I, it was full of
native students and native faculty.” That had begun to change with the
arrival of World War I veterans who had seen more of the world than
their cohorts of earlier years. The university hired new faculty members
as enrollment surged above 2,300 by 1919. With rooming houses, frater-
nities, and sororities providing the chief source of local housing, IU
faced a challenge accommodating its new students.

Pyle’s two letters from his freshman year (1919-20) show that he still
belonged to the country, both in speech and interests. He was blackballed
that year by the Kappa Sigma fraternity, perhaps because of his country
roots. By the end of the first semester of his sophomore year, however, Pyle
had pledged Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity and moved into the fraternity
house. Fraternity life provided him an entrée to such campus social rituals
as dating and “boress” sessions. As Wells wrote in his memoirs,

At night with studies completed, “boress” sessions, the rap ses-
sions of today, formed around the den fireplace at the fraternity
house, at the Book Nook, or elsewhere, frequently running until
the small hours of the morning. On the spur of the moment a
safari was launched: a trip to Indianapolis, to a home-brew
speakeasy cabin on the banks of White River beyond Bedford, or
even to Chicago for a weekend to listen to great jazz in the South
side night spots. Football weekends were regularly observed,
oftentimes to back the team whether the game was played at home
or away, and the score little altered the ritual of the occasion.9

Pyle’s letters at the time give no hint of such boress sessions. Did
he believe his family would not be interested? Did he not participate in
them? We do not know, but it is hard to believe that as an active young
man on campus he did not have some association with them.10 Pyle had,

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10Herman B Wells, Being Lucky (Bloomington, Ind., 1980), 41-42.
10Many years later, Pyle would write to his friend Stempel that he looked forward to “our bull
session, which I’d enjoy immensely.” Ernie Pyle to John Stempel, September 4, 1940, accn.
1216, Ernie Pyle Originals, D-Day Folder, Indiana University Archives.
among other things, joined the staff of the student newspaper, where he was assigned the bookstore beat, which covered many campus activities.\textsuperscript{11} His letters make clear that his social life was developing, even as he strived to keep up with hometown news. For such an involved student, the “glittering, swirling atmosphere of ideas” that Wells found in his “nightly boresses” would seem likely to have offered a powerful attraction.\textsuperscript{12}

One letter dated May 22, 1921, written near the end of his sophomore year, provides interesting evidence of Pyle’s intellectual and social growth at IU. It also offers the first hint of his desire to travel. But for the bulk of our evidence of Pyle’s college days, we turn to the letters written in his junior year, when his grades improved and he took on leadership positions in campus activities. Pyle had served as city editor of the \textit{Daily Student} during the fall semester of 1921. “It seems to me that Ernie had misgivings about his ability or capacity to be City Editor,” \textit{Daily Student} editor Wilbur Cogshall remembered, “but he was talked into it and did a good job.”\textsuperscript{13} In that role he wrote his first known bylined article, which ironically was published on the front page of the \textit{Purdue Exponent}. “Football is King in Bloomington today,” Pyle wrote. “Everything else gave way last night at the annual Homecoming Pow-wow, while the gridiron sport ascended the throne of popular favor which will not be relinquished until Saturday night.”\textsuperscript{14}

The \textit{Daily Student} staff that year included some of the most distinguished names in the newspaper’s history: Nelson Poynter, who later bought and shepherded the \textit{St. Petersburg Times} to national fame and established the \textit{Congressional Quarterly} and the Poynter Center for Media Studies; Cogshall, who later edited the \textit{Louisville Courier-Journal}; and Stempel, who served as the chair of IU’s journalism department from 1938 to 1968. In addition to Wells, other outstanding IU students at the time included composer Hoagy Carmichael and Charles Halleck, later the minority leader of the U.S. House of Representatives.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{12}Wells, \textit{Being Lucky}, 42.
\item \textsuperscript{13}Wilbur Cogshall to Lee Miller, October 2, 1945, accn. 68.993.015.1360.1 & 2, collection of the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites, Indianapolis.
\item \textsuperscript{14}Ernest T. Pyle, “Indiana Completes Plans for Purdue Rooters’ Reception,” \textit{Purdue Exponent}, November 19, 1921, p. 1.
\end{itemize}
An important clue to Pyle’s development appears in his reference to a “geology” class he was taking—in fact a geography class taught by Professor Stephen S. Visher. Pyle clearly was much taken with Visher’s wide travel experience and with the enthusiasm he conveyed in talking about his travels during class. One day after class Visher gave Pyle one of his articles—we cannot know which one, because Visher published six articles in 1921 and sixteen in 1922 (in addition to co-authoring a book). Visher’s enthusiasm for travel is evident in an article he wrote for IU’s Alumni Quarterly describing his journey to Hawaii, Fiji, Australia, the Philippines, China, and Japan. Only four weeks after its publication, Pyle left Bloomington to accompany the IU baseball team on its trip to Japan, and one could easily conclude that Visher provided him with his inspiration to make that trip.

A short time before his departure, Pyle served on the all-campus committee that spearheaded a memorial campaign to honor those who fought and died in World War I through the construction of a Memorial Stadium and Memorial Hall (both completed in 1925), and a Memorial Union (finished in 1932). An address by Indiana governor Warren T. McCray helped draw a record crowd to the kickoff rally. The commitment of Pyle and the Daily Student to the successful $1.5 million fund drive exemplified students’ devotion to the public good. “We shared unquestioning pride in our university and a firm faith in its future,” Wells wrote. “Student publications reflected this loyal stance, praising student activities when possible and, when not, revealing improvements in the future.”

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16 “Crimson Baseball Journey to Japan Goes to Faculty,” Indiana Daily Student, February 24, 1922, pp. 1, 4. Further evidence in support of this theory is that IU department heads discussed final arrangements for the Japan trip the day Pyle wrote this letter.


18 Wells, Being Lucky, 41. Pyle wrote a two-part series on Wells for Scripps-Howard. See his “Hoosier Vagabond” columns in the Indianapolis Times, August 30, 1940, p. 17; and August 31, 1940, p. 7.
Late Friday night, March 24, 1922, Pyle and three fraternity brothers left Bloomington by train for the first leg of their journey to Japan, planning to accompany the IU baseball team for its series of games against Waseda University. Pyle wrote several letters to his family on that trip, one of which is included here because it provides an early example of his descriptive travel observations.

No letters survive from Pyle’s final full semester at IU (September 1922-January 1923), when he enrolled in seven classes totaling seventeen hours of credit. Perhaps the most interesting to us is Philosophy 43a, “Life Views of Great Men of Letters,” taught by a team of prominent professors—including IU president William Lowe Bryan, as well as the chairs of the departments of Fine Arts, Romance Languages, Government, English, Latin, German, and Economics and Sociology. It seems likely that the course was designed for campus leaders such as Pyle, who in the same semester would earn a football letter (for his service as student manager) and would garner the Daily Student’s distinction as “the most versatile man on campus.”

Pyle left IU a semester short of graduation to take a job with the LaPorte, Indiana, Herald. As the story is traditionally told, he wanted to distance himself from a shattered romance with fellow student Harriett Davidson. Alumni secretary George F. “Dixie” Heighway, in a 1944 letter, offered an alternative explanation: “He left school after some sort of row with the Journalism Department. . . . I am unable to find out just what this was all about but, probably the less said about it the better anyway.” On several occasions Pyle talked about coming

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19 “Two Students To Work Way To Japan With Team,” Indiana Daily Student, March 23, 1922, pp. 1, 4.
20 Bob Hammel and Kit Klingelhoffer, Glory of Old IU: 100 Years of Indiana Athletics (Champaign, Ill., 1999), 48. The manager filled the functions of both equipment manager and publicist. “Peddler Pyle Rivals Bazaars for Bargains,” Indiana Daily Student, December 20, 1922, p. 3.
21 In this version, Pyle left IU in January 1923 because Davidson, with whom he had been in love, had returned his pin. In fact, the pin did not come back until he had already left the university. Davidson received a degree in psychology with highest distinction and married Dr. Frank Martin of Bedford, Indiana, in 1924. She died in 1994. James Tobin, Ernie Pyle’s War: America’s Eyewitness to World War II (New York, 1997), 13-14; “Harriett D. Martin,” Bedford Times-Mail, January 7, 1994, p. A2.
Ernie Pyle and Harriett Davidson as they appeared in their 1923 yearbook pictures. Although the couple dated regularly at IU, they went their separate ways after Pyle left the university before graduating.

1923 Arbutus, courtesy Indiana University Archives
back in the spring 1924 semester to finish his degree.\textsuperscript{23} He seems to have indicated an interest in taking over as adviser for the \textit{Daily Student}.\textsuperscript{24}

In the end, Pyle's surviving IU letters only hint at his experience and development in Bloomington. He evidently judged that much of what happened there would not interest his family. Almost never did he comment on the content of his courses. He wrote almost nothing about his many travels with athletic teams, perhaps not wanting to worry the folks at home. On the other hand, he was confident that they would appreciate his status as a big man on campus, participating actively in the Greek system, supporting the memorial fund drive, and working at the student newspaper. The way in which Pyle continued to respond to and talk about people and events in Dana suggests that when he sat down to write he had a picture in his mind of his parents or aunt sitting around the kitchen table. It is an image that may have served him well when he became a columnist and war correspondent. The letters also show his gradually improving ability to tell a story, although they were not the single-subject accounts that his columns would be. Instead the letters took shape as vignettes in which Pyle played a role.

Perhaps Pyle himself did not consciously think about how his maturation at IU changed both him and his writing. He did recognize when the opportunity came to take a job and leave IU, and he did not hesitate. He was confident in his ability to survive in the outside world.

Pyle's college letters betray no sense of unhappiness with his Bloomington experience. This makes his May 21, 1937, column about his first return to Bloomington something of a mystery. It has often been read as reflecting the heartbreak that supposedly came from the failure of his romance. In fact, a closer reading of that column suggests that Pyle knew that his time in Bloomington was special, but that it

\textsuperscript{23}“Pyle Visits Panama, To Re-Enter University,” \textit{Indiana Alumnus} 3, no. 12 (January 5, 1924), 3. He wrote Dean Clarence E. “Pat” Edmondson in spring 1924 that he decided not to come back because the managing editor of the \textit{Washington Daily News} wanted him back on the paper and “I was a little afraid to come back with Harriett still in school.” Pyle to Edmondson, undated, box LMC 2676, Pyle Miss. VI, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

\textsuperscript{24}Norman J. Radder [journalism professor] to John Stempel, April 18, 1924C142.1, Correspondence: Radder, Norman J., 1923-1938, Indiana University School of Journalism Records, collection C142.1, Indiana University Archives.
could never be recaptured. “I didn't want to see all the changes,” he wrote.\textsuperscript{25}

IU opened to the world while Pyle was a student there. Stimulated by some of the best minds at the university, Pyle rode his own wave out into the world and never looked back.

\begin{flushright}
Dana, Ind.,
July 31st - 1919
\end{flushright}

Dear Sir: -

I desire to enter Indiana University this fall, and am writing for information. I graduated from Helt Township High School (Vermillion Co.) in 1918. Must I have a certificate filled out by the High School Supt.?

The Supt. at the time of my graduation is gone and I don't know where he is.\textsuperscript{26} I desire to take the L. A. and S. course.\textsuperscript{27} Please send me some circulars.

Yours Respectfully
Ernest T. Pyle\textsuperscript{28}

\begin{flushright}
Bloomington, Ind.
522 E. Kirkwood Ave.\textsuperscript{29}
2 P.M. [mailed September 21, 1919]
\end{flushright}

Dear Auntie:—

I got a letter from the folks yesterday, but will write you and you can tell them you heard from me. It has been raining here all day,

\textsuperscript{25}“A Sentimental Renunciation Violated by Chance,” Nichols, \textit{Ernie's America}, 83-88. This view is supported by Pyle's comments in a 1940 letter to John Stempel in which he recounts a dinner with Herman B Wells: “I told [Wells] I had kind of a complex about not wanting to come back to Bloomington and seeing how everything had changed.” Pyle to Stempel, August 3, 1940, accn. 1216, Ernie Pyle Originals, D-Day Folder, Indiana University Archives.

\textsuperscript{26}The superintendent was Ralph C. Shields, a 1913 graduate of Indiana State University, where he had served as editor of the college yearbook.

\textsuperscript{27}Literature, Arts, and Science.

\textsuperscript{28}Pyle to Indiana University, July 31, 1919, accn. 6056, Indiana University Archives.

\textsuperscript{29}This house stood on the south side of the block just west of today's Sample Gates.
started some time last night. It rained about all day Thurs. too. They have surely had rain down here all summer, for everything is just as green and nice. The pastures are good, and the corn hasn’t begun to get brown. Bloomington is a nice place although it isn’t as big nor as modern as Champaign. The University is a nice place, not out-of-date like I had always heard. I have a room about a hundred feet from the campus. My room-mate is a fellow from Tipton, Ind. Aki is in the same house and has been sleeping in our room the last three or four

30 Pyle knew Champaign from having done his Navy basic training there in 1918.
31 We know almost nothing about Pyle’s roommates throughout his time at IU. Alexander Louis Zivich, who was a year behind Pyle, claims to have been his roommate. “Class Notes,” Indiana Alumni Magazine 70, no. 4 (January/February 2008), 62.
nights. One of the kids in his room has been sick and he didn’t want to sleep with him. He has been in France eighteen months and has been gassed, and his lungs are weak. The doctor pronounced it pneumonia [sic] this morning. I helped the doctor put some bandages on him [a] while ago. They are going to take him to the hospital tomorrow. The kid that sleeps with me just now got up. They had a big Freshman Stag last night, but Aki advised me to stay at home, and I guess it’s a good thing I did. This kid went to a dance, and as he was coming home the Sophomores caught him and clipped his hair. He is a terrible looking thing. I went and got a watermelon about dark and Aki and I ate it in our room last night. Has papa got your fender straightened up yet? There is [sic] a lot of big fine machines down here. I have all my classes in the morning. I am taking French, I like it fine. Mamma said Rema was coming home in October. Indiana plays Wabash College in football here next Saturday. I may get to see Carl and Harold Bales if they come down. Well, I’ve wrote about all I can think of, so I will quit for this time.

Ernest

522 East Kirkwood Ave.
Bloomington, Indiana
Monday Morning [January 26, 1920]

Dear Auntie:-

I received your good letter several days ago, but have never got started to writing since. We are having final Examinations now, and I

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32 Aki was Staats Aikman Foncannon, a member of Pyle’s high school graduating class, who lived on a farm adjacent to the Pyle farm. After receiving his law degree from IU in 1923, he practiced law with his brother in Bicknell, Indiana, for three years, then set up his own practice in Vincennes, Indiana. Later he joined the legal department of Allis Chalmers Tractor Company, later moving into sales. He retired in the early 1960s and moved to Pennsylvania, where he died in 1975. Horace A. Foncannon Jr. [Aki’s nephew] to author, February 1, 2011.

33 It was not uncommon at the time—especially in rooming houses—for men to sleep two to a bed.

34 Pyle’s other classes included Freshman Composition, Industrial Society (taught by Professor J.B. Phillips), and Physical Geography (taught by Visher, then a newly hired assistant professor).

35 Indiana beat Wabash, 20-7, in the season opener. The Hoosiers finished the season with a 3-4 record.

36 Carl was probably Carl Crane, a friend from Dana, who worked on the railroad. Harry Bales owned a nearby farm.

37 Pyle to Mary Bales, n.d., accn. 68.980.002.0019a-c, collection of the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites.
don't have any more till Wednesday, so I have all day today and tomorrow to study and answer my letters in. It has been awfully slick here for the last week. Last Friday morning a person could hardly walk. Several fell and hurt themselves pretty badly. Yesterday the sun came out and melted almost all the ice, but I stepped on a little patch this morning, and fell for the first time.

I got a letter from Beany Miller Saturday saying that he was coming down next Saturday, so I guess I will not leave here between semesters.\footnote{Presumably a friend from Dana.}

We have from Thursday till Monday, with nothing to do.

[The] Purdue basket-ball team played here Friday night and beat us 17 to 9. Spencer Groves and Dwight Thompson were down and they came up to my room a while after the game. Paul Sturm didn't come.\footnote{Paul B. Sturm was a friend from Dana (Dana High School Class of 1919) who studied engineering at Purdue. His father, Doctor John Sturm, who held a doctor of veterinary medicine degree from Purdue, owned the land south of the farm on which Pyle grew up. The younger Sturm served three terms (1933-39) as a Democrat in the Indiana General Assembly and was a member of the Purdue Board of Trustees for eight years. Justin E. Walsh, ed., Biographical Directory of the Indiana General Assembly, vol. 2, 1900-1984 (Indianapolis, Ind., 1984), 405.}

To[o] bad about Alvin getting hurt. I suppose you are all three butchering now. It'\textquotesingle]s been a long time since I saw anyone butcher.

How is Uncle Jim now?\footnote{Neither Pyle's father or mother had a brother named Jim.} I'm glad too, that we went when we did, for he probably won't last till I get home again. Mama said they had sent for Ada.

It's too bad Thad don't get away from Dana, for his health and for his own good too.\footnote{Thad K. Hooker was Pyle's best friend in high school. He left school a year in 1917 to join the Army, although he was included in Pyle's graduating class in 1918. Pyle recalled their friendship in his column, dated March 2, 1936, “Nothing Left to Giggle About,” Nichols, Ernie's America, 19-21.} He ought to go West and stay a year or two. I guess he is mad at me, I haven't heard from him since November. I guess he is going to get a raise in his [military] pension, so he could go all over the west and not have to work any either.

Glad your hogs did so well. That will help out a right smart on your machine. Wish Will would sell his mules and get a Ford. If I was Beatrice, I would make him. I'll bet Jack is cute. Can he talk any yet?

I had my pictures taken the other day, and am sending you one. Tell Mama I intended to send theirs in the letter last night but forgot it, so will send it the next time.
The sun is shining and the birds are singing this morning like it might be spring coming on. I hope it is. I haven’t been bothered with the cold this winter though like I generally have.

Well, I better quit and get to studying for my examinations. Write soon.

Ernest.

Σ.A.E. House.
Thurs. Noon [December 1920]

Dear Auntie,

Received your letter this morning and will answer before I lay it away and forget it. Also got one from Thad. He is still going to school and is taking Spanish. I guess he likes it fine down at El Paso. I don’t know whether he is going to stay there after he finishes school or not.

It was too bad about Frank Randolph getting killed. He always was rather reckless anyway. He turned their Ford over the first week they had it. I suppose you did hear a lot about the boys last week-end. Mary Alice and Catherine each wrote me a letter, and that was all they talked about. They will get over that foolishness when they get a little older. Mary Alice ought to get a pretty nice fellow, she’s pretty and seems to have a right smart of sense.

I guess papa is having a high time at Los Angeles. He wrote to me that he didn’t know whether he would be back by Christmas or not. I hope he is for Mama’s sake. Too bad Bobby is sick. Hope there’s nothing serious the matter with him. I guess Fred Bales is the only one of the boys in school as Carl is working in Indianapolis. I met a girl at our dance the other night that used to go with Carl. She lives at Indianapolis. Too bad the boys can’t come over Christmas.

I suppose mama told you about our dance Saturday night. We had a wonderful time and everybody was carried away with the music. I am invited to two sorority dances this week-end. Have never seen Harold’s girl since that day we met her here.

It is trying to rain this morning. It is lots warmer and I expect it will rain and then start to snowing or something. I dread to see the bad
weather come. Well, I must close for this time. Will be home two weeks from tomorrow.

      Ernest.  

Sun[da]y Afternoon [May 22, 1921]  

Dear Auntie:-  

I am over at the Student office as usual this afternoon and am taking advantage of the presence of the typewriters and writing a few

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43 Pyle to Bales, n.d., accn. 68.980.002.0021, collection of the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites.
44 The letter is written on Indiana Daily Student letterhead.
I am writing to the folks, Thad and a buddy of mine in Tennessee.

I just now heard that Dorothy Lauer broke out with the scarlet fever this morning and the Tri-Dels are all quarantined. I had a date over at their house last night but don't suppose there is any danger of me getting anything as I didn't talk to Dorothy. If she really has got the scarlet fever as they think she has, the Tri Dels will all be in quarantine until after school is out.

I went to church again this morning and almost melted. This is the hottest day we have had I think. This hot weather reminds me of some of the terrible hot weather I went thru with last summer. I hate to work a day like this but always have to work on Wednesday night and Sunday afternoons. I won't lose anything by it tho I don't suppose.

I got your letter the other day with the $2 bill in it and I sure appreciated it. Thanks ever so much. Anything like that sure comes in handy now too. It has taken more money for me to go thru school this year than last but I believe it has been worth it. I know I wouldn't take $400 for the experiences I have had and the associations I have made this winter.

"Shorty" is one of the catchers on the ball team and they went to Iowa last Thursday to play a double header. They won both games and

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45 Pyle joined the staff of the student newspaper during the second semester of his sophomore year, after completing a first semester journalism course, "Forms and Kinds of Newspaper Stories," with Professor Norman Radder. Although today the paper is known as the IDS, during Pyle's time it was known as The Student, or The Daily Student.

46 Dorothy Lauer was a pre-med student from Dana (member of the Dana High School Class of 1920). Her older sister (Mary) Ruth was also a member of Delta Delta Delta and a member of the staff of the Indiana Daily Student. Pyle's girlfriend Harriet was a fellow Tri-Delt. Ruth might have had some influence on Pyle becoming interested in the newspaper. She was women's editor during the 1919-20 school year and the following year served on the board of editors of the Arbutus yearbook.

47 Having attended a Methodist church in Bono, he most likely attended the First United Methodist Church in Bloomington, located not far from what was then fraternity row.

48 This appears to refer to the additional social obligations necessitated by being a member of a fraternity.

49 Walter B. Lang, known as "Shorty," was a friend from Dana (1914 Dana High School graduate) who volunteered for the French ambulance service during World War I. Lee G. Miller, The Story of Ernie Pyle (New York, 1950), 14. Miller reports (p. 15) that it was Lang who got Pyle a bid to join the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity. Not only did Lang play on the baseball team, he was a good enough golfer to win the 1920 IU student summer match-play tournament. American Golfer 23 (September 1920), 28. It is possible that his friendship with Lang helped Pyle develop his golfing abilities.
are coming back as far as Chicago today and watch the Chicago Cubs play. I wish I was a good ball player so I could get to make some of those trips. They went all thru the south this spring on their training trips, and went to Ohio the other day and got to go all thru the state penitentiary.

Two weeks from today I will be on my way home. We have classes all this week and examinations the next week. Next Monday is Memorial Day and we don’t have any classes on the following Tuesday either so I won’t have much to do the last week of school. Our dance is the night before I come home. My buddy from Chicago won’t be able to come as they are covered up with work in the offices up there. There are lots of dances now that the warm weather has come. I am going to two sorority dances this week and one next week end besides ours.

The campus is as pretty as can be now. Everything is in bloom. I wish you and the folks could get some one to do the chores for you for one even[ing] and drive down on Saturday June 4th, and then we could drive back home the next day. I expect you will all be too busy or won’t want to leave your chickens. I know that it is pretty hard to get away this time of the year.

I am glad that the sore on your head didn’t prove to be a cancer. How is it getting by this time[?] Well I must close and get to work. Goodbye,

Ernest.50

Ashland, Wisconsin
Tuesday Noon
[Summer 1921]

Dear Folks,

I will try and write you a line while I have a little time. We are lying in the harbor at Ashland, Wis, on Lake Superior. About half of the crew went ashore on liberty this morning, but I didn’t get to go because I have to go to work at 1 o’clock & work till 1 o’clock tomorrow. Seems like I always have the toughest luck. The citizens had autos to take them riding & had a big celebration for them. Maybe I will be lucky enough to get off in Duluth, though.

It is awfully cold up here, have to wear sweaters & pea-coats. I don't have to be on deck in the cold tho, because it is warm in the galley where I work, & when I am off duty I loaf below. I go to work at 1 p.m., work till 9:30 that night, get up at 3:30 and work till 1 the next day without a stop, then I have 24 hrs. with nothing to do.

They put me to firing the next day after we left Chi. I fired 2 days and accidentally dropped a slice bar on my foot & almost broke it, so I wasn't able to fire any more, & they put me on this galley job. Talk about this being a vacation, I will need one when I get out.

Was in Canada Sunday morning. We went thru the locks at Sue Saint Marie – I went on the Canadian shore to help with the lines. I wrote you a card Sat. thinking we would dock at Mackinack, but we only stopped in the harbor about a half hour, & they didn't take mail off, so I suppose it was mailed at the Sue the next morning.

This kid that was at Champaign with me and I hang together as much as possible as we are about the only two of the same type on the ship. Most of the rest are rough-necks, typical sailors. Don't know when I will be home but I expect about a week from Sunday. We will get to Duluth about Thursday, & not start back till about Sat. Then we will get in Chicago about Friday & they will probably hold us a day or two to clean up the ship.

I am getting plenty of good stuff to eat, that's one consolation. We met four other battleships at the Sue, and they are still with us, sailing in fleet formation. We had an awful storm Sunday night, lightning, wind & rain. My razor was stolen last night, I'm glad I didn't bring my watch. I will have to write Mr. Davis that it is impossible to write anything while on board this wagon, but will try & write him a little when I get home. Maybe you had better call him then. If I don't find time to drop him a line he won't be looking for it.

They called for painters the other day and I painted the hammock nettings, the booms & part of the stacks. It is time for me to go to work, so I must close. Tell Auntie hello. How is the painting coming, about to run out of anything to do?

Ernest51

Dear Auntie,

It is raining tonight so I am reading magazines and writing a few letters. I have gotten so I like to write letters when I have time. It has been very warm all week and began raining last night, so I presume it will turn good and cold about tomorrow. My cold is almost well, altho’ I am a little hoarse at times.

Things have been very dull this week, as it is hard for everyone to get settled down to studying again after vacation days. We have just two more weeks until final examinations, then the semester will be over. It ends Jan. 29th I believe, on Friday. The second semester starts on Monday. I haven’t been able to get much news for the “[Indiana Daily] Student” this week as campus activities have not yet gotten back into full swing. From now on tho’ I expect news will be more abundant, I am working in my spare time on a bulletin which the fraternity is putting out the first of Feb.

I suppose you would like to hear a little about my trip, so I will tell you about it. I went to Clinton Friday afternoon with Paul and his girl, and had to wait there until 2 o’clock the next morning. It was an awfully long wait, but finally passed away. I slept all the way from there to Chicago, and got into Englewood at 7 o’clock. On the way to Jack’s house I passed University Ave. on 55th St. and saw Mary and Anna’s house, but didn’t go see them. I got to Jack’s just as he was getting up and he had to work, so I went to bed and slept till noon. In the afternoon his two sisters and I went to a picture show downtown, and after that I went to Jack’s office and the girls went on home.

In the evening, Jack and I went to a musical show - “Cinderella on Broadway” - which was very good. I called Sullivan up Sunday noon - tried to get him Sat. and couldn’t - and learned that his wife had taken pneumonia [sic] fever and that they had gone home. Jack and I took a walk Sunday afternoon and in the evening we stayed at home and visited with his folks and looked at some pictures he had.

Σ.A.E. House.
Friday Night [January 6, 1922]32

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32Editor’s Note: “Probably Jan. 10, 1921” is handwritten in pencil near the top of the letter. It is not Pyle’s handwriting, but is probably the hand of a staff member who worked on the letters many years ago. The postmark on the envelope looks to be January 9, 1921, but the 1 in 21 is faded. Based on his research, the author has set the year at 1922.
His father and mother are very nice, as well as his sisters. They are very refined and cultured people, but not the least bit "stuck-up." His sisters, I would judge are about thirty years old. One of them works in a bank and the other stays at home. They are only about 4 blocks from Aunt Nancy’s house.

I left Chicago at 8:30 Monday morning, and got in here about 4 in the evening. Our train killed a woman just north of here. She was a deaf woman walking along the track and didn't hear the train coming. I had a very pleasant trip and do not regret having gone. I think Jack will spend a week-end with me here in the spring.

I think I will make all my work this semester, altho' there's one short course in Economics I'm a little doubtful of. However I'm carrying enough extra work tho', that it doesn't matter if I should drop a little.

I wonder if papa is able to be out all the time now. He said his cold didn't seem to improve much. Well, I must close as it is getting late. Tell Uncle George hello.

Ernest.53

Sunday P.M. [January 22, 1922]54

Dear Folks:-

I finished my notebooks this morning, and I am pretty proud of them.55 I am confident I will get “A” on both of them. When my professors excused me from final exams, they all said my work had been very satisfactory. This week will be the hardest that I have had this year. Twelve of us have been picked to do the work of the regular staff of fifty, which means that we will have to work continuously from 11 in the morning until 1 o’clock at night.56

I am mighty proud of my muffler, thanks ever so much for it. The boys all think it is pretty fine. The new hats are in and I will go down before long and get me one. I went to a dance at the Student Building last

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53Pyle to Bales, n.d., accn. 68.980.002.0022a-c, collection of the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites.

54Letter written on Indiana Daily Student letterhead.

55He is referring here to course notebooks. A few of Pyle’s freshman course notebooks survive, copies of which are in the author’s possession.

56These select students were excused from their finals by university policy.
night, but couldn’t get a pass for it. I think it is only the second dance I have had to pay for this year. I ran onto some girls coasting down Indiana avenue yesterday afternoon, and coasted with them for about an hour. I sleep with one of the boys now, and he is just like a furnace, I never get the least bit cold.

Buck is going to Indianapolis this week-end and I think Johnny is coming home. Johnny made “A” on his French exam yesterday, but I don’t know whether Buck got thru Spanish or not.

I read in The News the other night about Mr. Hopewell getting killed. It is too bad. —“Tol’able David” was here but I didn’t get to see it as I always have to work.\(^{57}\) No, I have never seen “Molly O” either.\(^{58}\) I am going to learn my Masonry work as soon as the semester is over with, and perhaps will take my second degree sometime next month. Ruble, the Shriner, who is a Phi Psi is going to teach it to me.\(^{59}\)

I am feeling fine, so you needn’t worry about me. Hope you are both allright. Wilbur [Cogshall] just called up so I will have to go to the [Indiana Daily] Student Office.

Ernest.\(^{60}\)

Wednesday [January 25, 1922] 10:30 a.m.

Dear Folks:-

I just now got your letter and will answer it as I have nothing to do before noon. We work from noon until midnight, and then have nothing to do during the forenoon. I make 8 hours A and 7 hours B out of my work, which makes me feel pretty good.\(^{61}\)

We don’t have to work as hard to get the Student out as I thought we would. We have filled the paper up easily so far, but it may be harder

\(^{57}\) *Tol’able David*, dir. Henry King (Inspiration Pictures, 1921), was a silent film classic starring Richard Barthelmess and Gladys Hulette.

\(^{58}\) *Molly O*, dir. F. Richard Jones (Mack Sennett-Mabel Normand Productions, 1921), was a comedy-drama starring Albert Hackett and Eddie Gribbon.

\(^{59}\) Pyle is referring here to the Freemasons, a fraternal organization whose membership has shared moral and metaphysical ideals. The second degree is the middle one in the organization.

\(^{60}\) Pyle to William and Maria Pyle, n.d. accn. 68.980.002.0023a-b, collection of the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites.

\(^{61}\) These are the grades he received for the fall semester, when he was taking Political Economy, Economic Geology, Practical Newspaper Work, and Editing.
Thurs. and Friday. All the other boys are worrying thru examinations, while I don't have to bother a bit about them.

This letter will be short, because not a thing has happened since I last wrote. I have a little cold, that is, my nose runs a lot, but it doesn't make me feel bad and is better now. I got a letter from Auntie yesterday. The organization Ruth Bourne belongs to is Phi Beta Kappa, honorary educational, and isn't in The Arbutus. 62 I will write again Sunday and maybe there will be more to write.

Ernest. 63

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62 In addition to his newspaper work, Pyle was a member of the yearbook staff as a junior.
63 Pyle to William and Maria Pyle, n.d., accn. 68.980.002.0024a-b, collection of the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites.
Dear Folks:-

I will write you a few lines to let you know that I am all right, but haven’t much time right now to write because I just got back from the office. It is 7 o’clock and I worked thru the dinner hour because we had so much copy piled up, and I am going to see my girl tonight. This week is the first time that I haven’t worked every week night for about three months. I have been promoted to News Editor and just have to work at night every other week now. I work all afternoon until about 6 o’clock usually, then next week I will have to work till about 1 o’clock at night but not in the afternoon. I am going to work hard and I think I can be editor next year but don’t say anything about it.

It has been pouring down rain all day today and is still raining. We started classes today and I have to carry some extra work because I couldn’t get any 2-hour courses unless I would take them at 8 o’clock and I couldn’t get up for an 8 o’clock course after working till midnight, so I took a three hour course at eleven instead, which makes me carry an hour extra work, but that won’t be much. My courses are harder this semester than they were last and I don’t expect I will make as good grades as I did last, but I am going to work hard anyway. I didn’t have to buy any books at all last semester but I had to cut loose for $7 worth of books today and am not thru yet.

The whole Phi Delt fraternity invited me to the dance as S.A.E. representative. I know every one of them but my best friend is Dale Cox, a boy who lives here in town and is a good reporter on the Student. I have been learning my Masonry work in my spare moments and am learned down almost to the obligation. I will send some Indiana Daily Students tomorrow. John made all his work, but Buck flunked 5 hours, conditioned 5 hours and made D on 5 hours. I would be ashamed if I were he.

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64 Harriett Davidson.
65 Pyle’s courses included Community Organization, an economics course taught by Professor Shelley D. Watts; University Geography, taught by Professor Visher; Principles of Sociology, taught by Professor Ulysses G. Weatherly; and The Small City Daily, taught by Professor Radder. Pyle was an economics and sociology major. (One could not major in journalism at Indiana until the early 1930s, although a journalism department had existed there since 1910.)
I got my hat the other day. It is a brown one. The gray ones we[re] all too light so I didn’t get one of them. It cost $5.

I must close. Will write more Sunday when I have more time.

Ernest.

Tuesday Afternoon [February 7, 1922]

Dear Folks:-

I got your letter yesterday morning and was glad to hear from you, of course. I got a letter from Klink this morning and he is coming down either this week-end or next.

I also got a letter from Paul Sturm this morning and he is all worked up. He said Doc called him home and accused he and the rest of us of being drunk when they were down here for the Purdue game. It’s an outrage, and makes me so mad I can’t see straight. It’s just like someone said once, no matter how hard you may work to get to the top, there’s always someone waiting there to kick you down.

I don’t know who started such a story, but Paul thinks Earl Thomasmyer did it over jealously over Opal. Paul said Earl told that Paul wouldn’t hardly associate with his dad while they were down here. I can account for every minute the boys spent here, and if he still insists that Paul and I were drunk, I can prove it to him.

Some day he’s going to pop off to me and I’m going to tell him what I think of him. I wonder how he thinks I could spend 8 hours a day working on the Student, make the highest grades in the fraternity, and go with one of the most highly respected girls in school if I was a drunkard?

There are three forms of dissipation that I absolutely do not participate in, and those are gambling, drinking and running with wild women, and I defy anyone to say they ever saw me do any of them. I guess papa ought to know whether I acted like I was drunk or not. You can tell Doc Sturm where to go, and if you don’t, I will.

How is Glen Sexton? The epidemic of sickness is about over here. Shorty came in Sunday night and went back this morning. It was a quar-
ter till two when I got home from the office this morning. This is my week to work at nights and I study in the afternoon. I have Sweeney set me out a bowl of cornflakes so I can eat every night before I go to bed. Well I must close as there isn’t much news and I have to write to Klink.

Ernest.68

Sunday Afternoon [February 19, 1922]69

Dear Folks:-

We have just had dinner and I am pretty full so I will write a little before I start studying. I put on my blue suit today for the first time in about a month and I had fallen off so much I could hardly keep my pants on. I hadn’t noticed it before.

Yesterday morning I wrote over a thousand words of “dope” on the Memorial drive for the downtown papers.70 Yesterday I had a couple of passes to “The Merchant of Venice” which is playing here this week-end, so Wilbur Cogshall and I went to that.71 Last night I went to the Sigma Kappa house dance and had an awfully nice time. It rained all day yesterday and is warm and misty today.

John wrote to his dad about Doc Sturm’s affair and here is his answer, in his exact words: “As regards the question you ask, it is too silly and nonsensical to dwell upon. Remember that a dirty lie doesn’t do much harm, it is the truth that counts. I know, and so do all the rest that were down to I.U. that day that this is a lie pure and simple, but be care-

68Pyle to William and Maria Pyle, n.d., accn. 68.980.002.0027a-b, collection of the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites.

69Letter written on Indiana University Memorial Fund letterhead.

70It appears likely that two articles on the front page of the Bloomington Evening World resulted from Pyle’s efforts, and may have been his work. Neither is bylined, not unusual for the time. The first, “Alumni To Be Canvassed After Big Drive,” appeared Monday, February 20, and the second, “Big Auditorium To Be Built Out [sic] Memorial Fund,” was published Tuesday, February 21. Neither the Bloomington Weekly Courier nor the Bloomington Daily Telephone carried special advance articles about the drive. The World had had a close association with the Indiana Daily Student for a number of years, resulting from the Student being printed on World presses.

71Pyle’s ability to get free passes and transportation was legendary. “Declaring that he has ‘bummed’ his way 35,000 miles with Indiana athletic teams, Ernie Pyle, manager of the Indiana football squad and formerly editor of The Indiana Daily Student, claims that making one’s way without money is the easiest thing in the world, so long as a person uses his head,” reported the Madison, Wisconsin Capital Times, “Champion Student Bum Travels With Hoosiers,” October 24, 1922. Also see W.R. Emslie, “Ernie Pyle’s Colorful Efforts at I.U. Recalled by Classmate,” Richmond Palladium-Item, April 11, 1943, p. 6.
ful that no tales are told on you that are hard to clear up. Write soon and pay no attention to the gossip. This comes from someone that is no friend of ours, just keep your forethought all the time and let your conscience be your guide. When a fellow is out in the world he must have some horse sense to keep in the clear track at all times.” - So I am going to forget all about it and let Doc Sturm go on with his low-down “sleuthing.”

I wrote a thesis last week on “Fatalism, or Predestination.” It is interesting but a pretty deep subject for me to be writing on. Next week I have to write on “Socialism.” I am going to make 50 cents this afternoon by writing a song for a Pi Phi pledge that has to have a sorority song for initiation. Klink didn’t come this week-end or last either. I haven’t heard from him since he wrote that he was coming.

John is feeling all right now. He passed all his work & will be initiated. I think initiation is March 9. Yes, Buck is still pledged, I hope he will make his work this semester, if he does he will be initiated about the time school is out. How is papa feeling by this time? You must be careful for there is a lot of sickness now. A girl died at Residence Hall Friday night. Paul wrote me that Spence quit school. I guess he flunked out in some of his work.

Glad your chickens and lambs are doing well. Did you get the [Indiana Daily] Students I sent the first of the week? Well, I don’t think of anymore to write so will close. Ward Gilbert, an S.A.E. that is married and lives here in town, invited Harriett and I up to spend the evening with them, so we are going up there this evening.72

Ernest

PS. - I didn’t send my laundry this week.73

Student Office
Thursday Afternoon [February 23, 1922]74

Dear Folks:–

I didn’t write to you yesterday because there wasn’t any mail delivery and no mail went out so I knew it was no use to write. I got

72 Gilbert lettered in basketball, baseball, and track at IU in a career that extended from 1913 to 1922.

73 Pyle to William and Maria Pyle, n.d., accn. 68.980.002.0025, collection of the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites.

74 Letter written on Indiana Daily Student letterhead.
your letter this morning and will answer it now while I have a little time. It was awfully warm yesterday and started raining last night and is turning colder today. I suppose we will have quite a bit of winter weather yet before spring comes.

Yesterday, being George Washington’s birthday was a holiday, so there were no classes. I wrote stuff for the Memorial drive all forenoon and then had a date and went to the show in the afternoon. The Tri Deltas had initiation yesterday and Harriett was initiated. She was awfully proud of her pin and kept looking at it last night but she will get over that before long. She wanted me to go to Indianapolis to the Tri Delta State dance the 11th of next month with her but I told her that I didn’t have enough money so wouldn’t go. I expect I could make the trip on six or seven dollars but I didn’t care much about going anyway.

Our cook hurt her knee Sunday and we didn’t serve any meals at the house till yesterday so we had to eat around. I was invited out to dinner most of the time so didn’t have to buy much stuff. Yesterday was so warm some of the boys went hiking out in the country. I think I will go some of these times when it gets warm and I have time. Buck’s girl is a Tri Delt and she was initiated yesterday too.

Glad you have lots of lambs and that they are doing well. Are you going to raise as many chickens this year as usual[?]. Wish you wouldn’t work so hard with them. I haven’t written to Thad since Xmas so I don’t know what he is doing. I suppose if he did do anything wrong though Sturm’s would make the most of it. I get so mad all the time I think of their names. It’s a wonder to me that Paul is as good a boy as he is the way they nag at him. If he was brought up right in the first place he is old enough now to know what is right and what is wrong without them constantly nagging at him. I expect it will do him lots of good to go to church when they write and tell him he has to go. I very seldom go to church, but I’ll bet that I do more thinking on the church and religious subjects than Doc Sturm does in a year.

That dance where they tried to dance by wireless music was last Saturday night at the Student Building. I wasn’t there as that was the night that I went to the Sigma Kappa house dance. I heard all about it [th]o. They had their wires all strung and were going to catch some music from Pittsburgh, but the air was so damp that they couldn’t do it so they wound up a phonograph over in Science Hall and played into the amplifier and no one ever knew the differ-
ence. Too bad Auntie is mad at you, maybe she will get over it all-right. I wrote her a long time ago but I don’t think she has ever written to me.

I have a test the first of the week in Geology. I was in this man’s class two years ago and I think he likes me pretty well. The other day he gave me an autographed copy of a booklet he wrote. He has been in every country in the world and he talks about his travels quite a lot in class which of course interests me very much. Easter vacation is the 13th of April, almost two months away, but I expect I will stay here and work and save some money.

Ernest. (signature)

Student Office
Thursday Morning [March 2, 1922]

Dear Folks:-

I didn’t get to write to you yesterday so I will peck you off a few lines now. I got papa’s letter and yours Tuesday. We have been working pretty hard this week getting out a seven column paper and I have to write five themes for my sociology teacher. It is an awfully deep course but if I get thru it will be lots of help to me.

The weather has been real cold here for several days but it is beginning to warm up now. Maybe spring will be here in a few days. I am going to the Men’s Panhellenic formal dance Saturday night. Each fraternity was entitled to ten tickets and only one person in the house bought one as they were $5. Finally the fraternity bought the other nine, each

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75 Plans for the dance were discussed in “Wireless Rigged for Union Radio Hop,” Indiana Daily Student, February 18, 1922, p. 1, but the paper never reported what actually happened.

76 The reference here is to Professor Visher.

77 Pyle to William and Maria Pyle, n.d., accn. 68.980.002.0028a-b, collection of the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites.

78 The Daily Student normally appeared in a six-column format. Professor Ulysses Weatherly, who taught the sociology course, was a founder of the American Sociological Society (later Association) and served as the organization’s president in 1923. Having received his Ph.D. from Cornell in History and Political Science, he was originally hired by IU’s history department. See http://www.asanet.org/cs/root/lefnav/governancepast_officers/presidents/ulysses_g_weatherly for a summary of his career. Edwin H. Sutherland called Weatherly, who served as department chair for thirty-five years and taught mostly undergraduates, a “stimulating and enlightening teacher,” American Sociological Review 6 (April 1941), 275.
man paying $1.25, and they put all the names in a hat and drew out nine, the first nine getting to go to the dance. I happened to be the ninth one so I get to go to a $5 dance for $1.25. A week from Saturday night a girl invited me to the Pi Phi formal.

I forgot to bring your letters with me and I want to get this out this afternoon so I will have to send it without answering some of your questions, perhaps. I was over to the Sigma Chi house for lunch today and had a nice time. There isn’t a fraternity on the campus that I haven’t been invited out to. Well I must close as there is lots of copy lying around here that must be worked out. I will write more Sunday when I have your letters with me. I am feeling fine.

Ernest.79

Thursday Morning [March 9, 1922]

Dear Folks:-

Well, the drive went over at midnight last night and I am sure not a bit sorry, for it means that most of our hard work is over. The drive opened at 5 o’clock Tuesday evening after a wonderful mass meeting in the Men’s Gymnasium. We put out an extra at [?] p.m. that evening and another at midnight besides the regular morning edition. I worked almost all night that night and was up and at it again early the next morning. The campaign officials worked all night soliciting subscriptions and tabulating results. Our fraternity was one of the first to pledge 100 percent, that is, everybody in the fraternity pledged to the drive. I pledged $200, payable within ten years.80

Yesterday was a holiday and now since the drive has gone over the goal there will be no more school the rest of the week. I will send you a bunch of papers, including the extras, this morning. We put out an extra yesterday at noon and then the drive went over the top at about midnight and we put out another extra then. They had an all night celebration on the campus but I was so nearly worn out that I went home and

79Pyle to William and Maria Pyle, n.d., accn. 68.980.002.0029a-b, collection of the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites.
80This was an enormous pledge, equal to more than two months’ salary. According to Historical Statistics of the United States: Millennial Edition Online at http://hsus.cambridge.org/HSUSWeb/HSUSEntryServlet, table Ba4280-4282, the annual earnings of farm and non-farm employees for 1922 were $1,190; for non-farm employees, $1,289.
went to bed about 2 o’clock. We are not putting out a regular paper today but are working on a big one for the campaign director to send to all of the Alumni.\textsuperscript{81} We will get it off the press about 5 o’clock this evening and then they are going to have a big dance in the Gymnasium tonight to celebrate the success of the campaign. I think everybody in school will be there and as I have a pass I guess I will go too. Our regular paper starts again tomorrow. This little vacation will give me a chance to get caught up on my work altho I don’t have much back work to do.

No I have never given my pin to any girl nor have never gotten another one.\textsuperscript{82} I haven’t had a pin on since last October.\textsuperscript{83} I don’t know what fraternity Mariam’s fellow belongs to.\textsuperscript{84} Nothing in particular that I know of is going on when Marjory comes over. I think Johnny went home last night as soon as he heard that the drive had gone over and that there would be no school the rest of the week. Buck is going to Indianapolis tomorrow to the Tri Delt state dance. I had a chance to go but turned it down. I don’t know who Harriett is going to take now, I forgot to ask her. It is warm again today, I hope spring is here for good.

Johnny and Buck pledged $100 apiece, I think. Lots of fellows pledged $200 that didn’t have a cent to their name and are working their way thru school, and then a lot of rich people were Bolshevics [sic] and wouldn’t pledge a thing. Those that could pledge and didn’t are sure going to be disgraced around here. It’s funny that the roads are so bad around home, they are pretty good around here.

I got your letter yesterday morning but didn’t find time to answer it yesterday. I saw Aki for a minute yesterday for the first time in about six weeks. “Stuke” Gorrell, my Kappa Sig buddy who worked on the Student and had to quit school on account of a nervous breakdown, is coming back to visit this weekend and is going to stay most of the time.

\textsuperscript{81} For more information about that special, see “Daily Student to Print 8-Page Memorial Extra,” \textit{Indiana Daily Student}, March 11, 1922, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{82} Pyle probably gave his Sigma Delta Chi (today known as the Society of Professional Journalists) pin to Davidson, rather than his fraternity pin.

\textsuperscript{83} According to “Where Ernie Pyle Came From,” an unpublished manuscript by George C. Bales, Pyle became disenchanted with his fraternity when it blackballed his pledge nominee in the fall of 1921. Copy in author’s possession.

\textsuperscript{84} Mariam Bales was Pyle’s girlfriend in first grade. After graduating from the University of Illinois, she taught school in Clinton, Indiana. She married Ed Goforth, who bought the Pyle farm after the death of Ernie Pyle’s father.
with me. I would like to go into the newspaper business with him sometime because he sure is good but his health isn’t very good. I hear from Doris about every week. I think she must be getting to the crazy stage, the way some of her letters sound. She talks a right smart about men now and that makes me sick. I still like the women and like to play around but I guess I have gotten old enough not to lose my head over every one I see. How are your lambs and chickens getting along? Is Auntie still mad at you? I think she owes me a letter but I would write to her some of these days anyway if I could find time.

Well, I don’t think of anything to write so will close. If you are in town Saturday you might go around and see Johnny. Is Shorty still at home, I haven’t heard from him since he was down here.

Ernest.

On the Pacific Saturday April 1 [1922]

Dear Folks,

Well, we are on our way to Japan at last so I will start you a long letter now and write a little each day and mail it when we reach Yokohama. We sailed today at 11:30 and reached Vancouver, Canada at 4 o’clock and are now well out into the Pacific. Cooper and Benham, the other two boys, got on at the last minute so we are all going to get to take the trip.

\[85\] Stu Gorrell, who roomed with Hoagy Carmichael, is responsible for at least some of the lyrics to Carmichael’s “Georgia on My Mind.” Some authorities also give him credit for suggesting to Carmichael the title “Stardust” for that composition. Richard Sudhalter, Stardust Melody: The Life & Music of Hoagy Carmichael (New York, 2002), 373n36.

\[86\] Pyle to William and Maria Pyle, n.d., accn. 68.980.002.0030a-b, collection of the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites.

\[87\] Joel Benham and Warren Cooper joined Harold Kaiser and Pyle on the trip. In the fall after the group returned from Japan, Benham was rooming with Gene Uebelhardt, a Filipino who had been a steward on the ship and whom the four men smuggled back into the States. When Pyle elected to move out of his fraternity house because his brothers had turned down his nomination of a man from Dana, he moved into the room with Benham and Uebelhardt. Miller, The Story of Ernie Pyle, 22-24. Benham did not complete his studies, however. Instead he farmed near Bloomfield, Indiana. He died in October 1978. Bloomington, Indiana Herald-Telephone, October 20, 1978. Cooper (Class of 1924) and Kaiser (Class of 1925) both received degrees in Commerce (Business). According to IU alumni records, five years after graduation Cooper was a field representative for the treasurer’s office at General Motors. No information was available on Kaiser.
I will now start and tell you all the events that happened since we left Bloomington, for yours and Lou's benefit. We left there at midnight on Friday night and arrived in Chicago the next morning. While the other boys were seeing the town, I went around and got me an identification card at the Western Union office and then went to the Herald-Examiner office and got a Job writing for the Hearst papers while I was in Japan. I then went to Jack's office and in the afternoon he went out with me and we bummed around together all afternoon. I had lost Sullivan's address so I didn't know where to find him. Our train left for St Paul at 6 o'clock so we left and went right to sleep as soon as we got on the train. We got into St. Paul at 7 o'clock the next morning and stayed there until 11 o'clock when our train left for Seattle. St. Paul is a nice place, about the size of Indianapolis and a real clean little place. It was pretty cold when we got there and the Mississippi River was frozen over in places. We crossed the river and went thru Minneapolis and then started west thru Minnesota, The land in Minnesota is fairly level, with long sweeping rolling places. You seldom see a fence there besides what the railroad has put up, and you can hardly see a road. What few there are are right flat with the ground, have no elevation nor no ditches at the side and have no fences along them. It kept getting colder all the time and by the time we woke up in North Dakota the next morning it was awfully cold.

The ride was pretty monotonous from central Minn. to central Montana because everything looked the same, there were few houses and everything looked deserted. We got to Livingston, Montana at 5 p.m. Monday and then were in the foothills of the Rockies. It is just 30 miles north of Yellowstone park and we saw the railroad that led down to the park and could also see the top of a mountain that was in the park. It got dark before we got into the highest mountains, but we woke up in Idaho the next morning in the midst of them. The scenery is wonderful, I cannot attempt to describe it. Papa can tell you how wonderful the mountain scenery is better than I can in a letter. We soon were in Washington and in the midst of the fir tree district. Of all the places I saw on the way out I would rather live in this district than any other. After passing thru these we came into a desert and rode for about five hours without seeing a living thing. It is a disheartening sight, part of the

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*A search of copies of the Herald-Examiner during this period did not produce any articles by Pyle.*
land is dry and the other is covered with sage brush, which is a little tree about two feet tall and looks like it is about burned up. We began coming into the mountains about dark and then we put on two engines and went thru some awfully big ones before we got to Seattle at ten o’clock on Tuesday night. We went from Chicago to St. Paul on the C. B. and Q. [Chicago, Burlington and Quincy] and from there to Seattle on the Northern Pacific. We slept in our seats all of the time and were not a bit worn out when we got here. I got more sleep on the trip than I had any night for the last three months. We went to a hotel and stayed all night and the next morning I went to the post office and had a letter from Harriett. We then went to see if our passports were here and they were not but they issued us special series passports. Benham and Cooper then went to get something to eat and Kaiser and I went and looked Mr. Hammond up. He directed us to Captain Smith of the United States shipping board and we went to see him and told him what we wanted. He said he didn’t have the authority to do anything for us but he called up Captain Payne of the Sea Service Bureau and made an appointment with him for us and told him that he would like to see us get on. Captain Payne was awfully nice to us and told us he would do all he could for us but said that there was no hopes for the other two boys because they would be lucky if they found room for we two. On that afternoon we went out to the ship and reported to the chief steward and he told us we could come on the next morning at 8 o’clock, and told us to go to the second steward and get a pass to come on board the ship whenever we wanted to. So we went to the second steward, who does the hiring of the crew and he said that he couldn’t use us at all[,] that he had a full crew. So we were pretty downhearted but we went out the next morning and went on board the ship anyway in the hopes that something would turn up. We hung around in the way and finally I guess he got tired of us and told us to get to work. So we worked till one o’clock when they signed the articles to take the voyage. Captain Payne came out and told us that if we would sign up to make the entire round trip that he would get us on, so we did. We worked then for two days on the ship before we sailed. In the meantime the other boys went to Captain Payne and he said he would do all he could for them but that he didn’t think there was any hopes. But yesterday they went to see him and at 10 o’clock this morning, just an hour before the vessel sailed. They have jobs as mess boys and we are on as bell boys. Kaiser and I are the only two bell boys on the ship and it keeps us pretty bus[yl] running errands but I expect we will get a lot of good tips before we leave the ship.
I was interrupted there by a severe case of sea-sickness. This is four days later, but I was only sick half a day. I have been feeling fine ever since but the sea has been so rough that it was impossible to write any. Yesterday we had an awfully heavy sea and about half of the passengers were sick. Ward Gilbert has been sick ever since we left Seattle. I feel sorry for him because he isn't enjoying the trip as much as he would otherwise. We are just off the coast of Alaska today and if it was a clear day we could see the mountains in Alaska. The sea is getting smoother today and they say that we will have a nice trip from here on in. We four boys sleep in the “glory hole” and have a nice clean bunk. I usually go to bed about 8:30 and get up about 6:30 so you see I am getting about twice as much sleep as I got at school. And then besides I quit work at noon and have all afternoon off and then work from 6 till 8 in the evening so I have all afternoon off and I usually sleep there because there is nothing else to do. Now that the sea is smoother I think I will write a few letters and mail them when I get to Japan. I am keeping a diary and am going to take a lot of pictures in China and the Phillipine [sic] Islands and I think maybe I will write a book or something when I get back. We will be in Yokohama two days, in Kobe 1 day, in Shanghai 3 days, in Hong Kong two days and in Manila 5 days, so you see we will get to see a right smart of the Orient.

The baggageman on here, one of the officers, took a liking to us and invited Kaiser and I up in his stateroom last night. He fed us candy and showed us pictures and treated us like we were his own boys. He used to go to the University of Minnesota. Everyone on the ship knows where we are from and the circumstances under which we are here, and everyone treats us fine. Even the tougher gang that have been to sea all their lives do not pick on us because I guess they admire our nerve to start so far,

The last letter I got from you was on Friday night before we sailed. It was the one that had the dollar bill and the stamps in it. You said you would write one the next day but if you did I had gone before it got there.

Later.

Today is Sunday but it is Saturday at Dana, because we crossed the 180th meridian last night and set the calendar up a day. Yesterday was Friday. We are due in Yokohama next Thursday, and after about a day there will go to Kobe, then to Shanghai, then to Hong Kong and then to Manila. We will be in Manila about 5 days. We will pick the team up at
Yokohama on the way back. We are due in Seattle May 23, and I will come home direct from Seattle on the Canadian Pacific. I will get home about the 30th of May and we are having a dance at the house on June 3. I wonder if Auntie would let me take her car and drive down to Bloomington the day before the dance and then drive back the day after the dance. If she would I would like to have Harriett come home with me and then we could go back on the train the next day. I would like for you to meet her and it would be nice if I could drive down and back. The sea is pretty rough today and it is all I can do to keep this typewriter on the table. We passed thru a pretty bad storm the other night and the old boat sure did do some rocking. We have an awfully soft job. Kaiser and I work together and we get up in the morning and scrub our stairway and then one of us stays on the bell for a half day. We have a chair and sit there until a bell rings and then we go to the room that is calling. We make about fifty cents a day on tips. I felt pretty good this morning. I asked the chief steward if Kaiser and I were doing our work satisfactorily and he said, “Yes, I have said it to your back so I will tell you, if every body on the ship did their work as well as you two boys, everything would get along fine.” And it's very seldom that any of these sailors ever say anything like that. I had a long talk with Dean Edmondson yesterday and said he certainly admired us for this trip and he wants me to write a book about it when I get back. If I don't get the editorship of the Student next fall on account of taking the trip, I think I will not work on the Student at all and will devote all my time to writing a book. I will have a lot of pictures in it and I think I can make a right smart amount of money out of it besides the experience. It is getting so rough I can’t keep the typewriter on the table so will have to finish this later.

[Handwritten] Wednesday April 12

We are due in Yokohama tomorrow, so I will scribble a little more, and seal this up. I am actually gaining back my flesh again, could you believe it? I eat all the time, and sleep about 11 hours a day, so I guess I am getting a much needed rest. Of all the trips I have made, and knocking around I have done, this jaunt is the easiest yet. We are due back in Seattle May 23, and you can write me a few letters and have them waiting there for me when I get there. It will be no use to write me before then, because the letters will not reach me. I will send you a telegram when I get there, so don’t be alarmed when you get a wire. I will write
you a letter when we get to Shanghai. Hope you are all well. Tell Lou, Babro, Planks and everybody hello.

Love,
Ernest

An editorial that appeared in a 1922 State Fair edition of the Daily Student captures the way in which Indiana University contributed to the

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89 Pyle to William and Maria Pyle, April 1, 12 [1922], box LMC 1879, 1884-1925, Pyle Mss. II, Lilly Library.
Nearly everyone who has ever attended Indiana University will tell you there is no place in the world like Indiana. They sometimes attempt to explain that statement but they cannot.

Strangely enough, in their attempt to explain, they fail to mention the assets of the school usually mentioned by its boosters. They have nothing to say about the remarkable professors whose fame seems so much greater in the outside world than it does to the students who work under them. They do not mention the buildings or equipment or the many advantages carefully compiled in the school catalog. They do not gather together and present facts which a logical speaker would use in convincing folk that this is a great school.

Ex-students recognize the value of all these things, recognize their argumentative value. But when they ejaculate that there is no place in all the world like Indiana, they are thinking about something else. They are thinking of spring days when the campus is bursting with fragrance, vivid with the color of blossoms and new leaves, and when the moon is bright—it is undeniable that spring is nowhere in the world as it is at Indiana. They are thinking about the autumn evenings when dusk has settled and the last cheers have died out over Jordan Field and another football game has become a memory, another football game which may or may not have been a victory but which was a courageous fight by Indiana men whom everyone in school knew and liked. They are thinking of “pep” meetings and mass meetings and pow-wows in which Indiana men sounded the ancient battle cry, where sheepish football captains tried to make speeches before a howling crowd of students and equally wild old grads, and where

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*The State Fair edition, which began in 1922, continued more than thirty years. The first year’s publication is described in “Student Paper to Be Published During State Fair: Hoosier to Direct College Enterprise—Special Staff to Assist,” *Indianapolis Sunday Star*, September 3, 1922, p. 10. Pyle and his staff are pictured in “Edit Paper at State Fair,” *Indianapolis Star*, September 5, 1922, p. 2.*
the old songs gave at the same time a sudden impulse to tears and an electric thrill down the backbone. They are thinking about hundreds of wholesome, pleasant people, who were their friends. They are thinking something about Indiana which none of them could ever express in words.

These persons who make such broad unqualified statements about Indiana say that they have since tried out living in many other places but that somehow the tang is missing. Other schools can contain nothing after such moments. Other schools seem to lack the facilities to produce those thrills which certainly can come within but four years of a lifetime.

These are the feelings of those who have been here and have left. Perhaps it is foolish and sentimental but they will affirm it is the truth.91

91Indiana Daily Student, September 5, 1922, p. 4.