

Get schooled on Milton College's rich history

Submitted by the Milton College Preservation Society

"Oh, I hear the echoes ringing from the belfry 'neath the hill."

The Song of Bell, a traditional Milton College tune written by Rev. L.C. Randolph, a 1881 graduate of Milton College, is still sung today at Main Hall.

Thirty five years after its closing, the legacy of Milton College is still present in the community. The Milton College Preservation Society owns and operates the Main Hall as a museum of Milton College history (1844-1982) and maintains its archives.

The original bell from the 1855 building was sold at auction in 1982; however, it was rescued and returned to Main Hall in 2015. A duplicate bell was hung in the building after the society purchased the building in 1984 and can be rung. The original is



Milton College's original bell from 1855 was sold at auction in 1982; however, it was rescued and returned to Main Hall in 2015. (Photo courtesy of the Milton College Preservation Society)

now on display.

Joseph Goodrich, the founder of Milton, opened Milton Academy in 1844 to provide more advanced education than offered in the area. Instruction in the school was designed to aid young men in preparing for business pursuits and young men and women for teaching in public schools.

The success of the academy eventually led the board of trustees to seek a college charter and in 1867 the charter was granted by the state legislature. Academy classes and college classes were both held in Main Hall with the academy being a preparatory for the college classes. This arrangement was discontinued in 1916.

For many longtime Milton residents the campus was a fixture as it grew to more than 17 buildings on 45 acres, drew students from around the world and was known for its drama and music graduates.

During World War I the campus became an Army training center and prior to World War II the college had an aviation course which trained airplane and glider pilots. Many flew missions during the war.

The Great Depression was a challenge for the college, but with WPA projects where the students worked off their tuitions and professors taking major cuts in salary, it survived.



Prior to World War II, Milton College had an aviation course which trained airplane and glider pilots. (Photo courtesy of the Milton College Preservation Society)



A World War I-era Student Army Training Corps (SATC) class at Milton College. (Photo courtesy of the Milton College Preservation Society)

Notables appeared regularly on campus. Duke Ellington, a friend of the drama professor, played a concert and wrote two scores for Milton College dramas. Actor Paul Newman was on campus campaigning for Eugene McCarthy, while Cass Elliott of the musical group Mamas & Papas and The Kingston Trio also appeared.

The Milwaukee Bucks held their training camp on campus and Kareem Abdul Jabbar (Lew Alcindor at the time) walked the campus and dined with students in the cafeteria.

During the late 1960s and into the 1970s, the administrators felt the enrollment would eventually reach 1,000 students and expanded campus with ambitious building projects that strained the budget and put the school in long-term debt.

After the baby boom spike and the Vietnam War ended, enrollment continued to drop and with mounting debt the trustees decided to close the college in 1982. The alumni and the community were shocked and saddened.

After the campus could not be sold as a whole, buildings were sold individually and the three major buildings – Main Hall, Whitford Hall

and Goodrich Hall – were deemed unsalvageable and slated to be razed. Main Hall was rescued by a small group of alumni and eventually the Milton College Preservation Society was formed and took control of Main Hall as a repository of history and reunion center for the remaining alumni.

Milton College Main Hall Museum, 513 College St., is open June-August from 1-4 p.m. on Sundays, Mondays and Tuesdays. Exhibits there take visitors through 138 years of Milton College history, celebrating the graduates, dedicated faculty and little known facts.

"For the bell is ringing, ringing, ringing still."



Notables appeared regularly on the Milton College campus, including musician Duke Ellington and actor Paul Newman. (Photos courtesy of the Milton College Preservation Society)



Museum Hours

1 to 4 p.m.
Sunday, Monday,
Tuesday
June thru August

Visit
Main Hall
and feel
the spirit of
138 years
of Milton
College
History.

milton-college.org

Find us on
Facebook -
Milton College
Preservation
Society

513 College Street
Milton College
Historic District
Milton, WI 53563

(608) 868-2354

The Corner Closet

Consignment Resale Shop

Tuesday 10:00-6:00

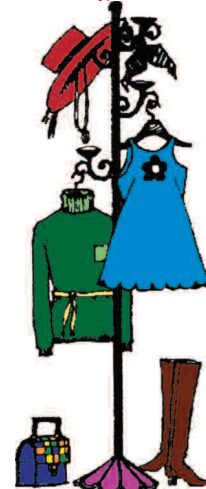
Wednesday, Thursday, Friday
10:00-5:00

Saturday 10:00-4:00

Closed Sunday & Monday

Serving Rock County for over 37 Years

THIS IS FUN SHOPPING



- CLOTHES
- SHOES
- JEWELRY
- FURNITURE
- BOOKS
- HOUSEHOLD
- KNICK-KNACKS
- CDS
- PURSES
- LAMPS
- PICTURES

251 PARKVIEW DR
MILTON, WI 53563
608-868-3035

Goodrich Hall Antiques

Located in Historic College District

Open: Tues-Sat 10 to 5, Sun 12 to 5

Collectibles • Furniture
Cottage, Vintage

501 College St., Milton, WI • 608-868-3651
www.goodrichhall.com

See us at our second location:

742 E. Madison Ave., Milton

Hours: Thurs-Sat 10-5, Sundays 12-5



Olin's AUTO SERVICE

AUTO/TRUCK REPAIR & CAR CARE
FOREIGN & DOMESTIC

342 S. John Paul Rd.
Milton, WI 53563

(608) 868-1661

Safety inspections and alignment checks are always free!