

Milton House Museum mural project on track

Submitted by Doug Welch

With the assist of a Jeffris Foundation challenge grant, the Milton House Museum is on track to realize its long-standing goal of an Underground Railroad-themed mural covering the walls of the three-story stairwell that transitions its tour from the museum's top floor to basement.

The mural will depict the journey of freedom seekers following their path from Missouri along the Mississippi and Rock rivers to their stay at the Milton House.

The Milton House is Rock County's only National Historic Landmark and stands as Wisconsin's lone authenticated Underground Railroad site that can be toured.

During a traditional tour, guests descend three flights of stairs from the second story of the hexagon inn to the building's root cellar where a 50-foot tunnel connects the hexagon's basement with a pioneer cabin.

Built by Joseph Goodrich in 1844, the inn's basement was a safe haven for freedom-seekers fleeing slavery from southern states. Freedom seekers were secretly brought into the cabin and then crawled the tunnel to access the inn's basement.

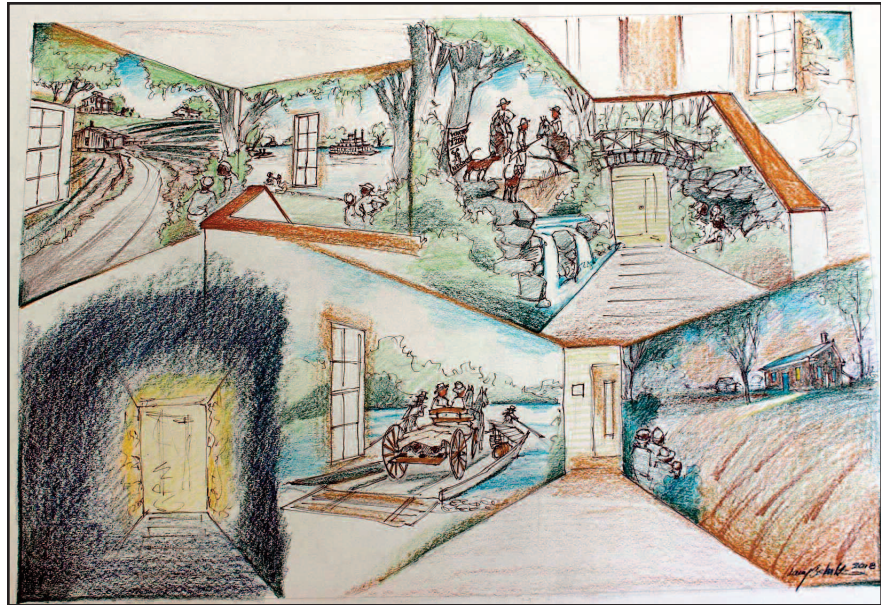
The tour provides narratives explaining pioneer

life and travel during the mid-1800s as well as contextualizing the issues of slavery, abolitionism and the Underground Railroad as they pertained to the founding of Milton by Goodrich. The latter portion of each tour takes people from the second-story of the inn down three flights of stairs where the root cellar and tunnel offer an immersive historical experience to guests. The stairwell and landing walls are bare. It has long been the vision of museum staff to transition the tour's themes by covering the walls with artwork consistent with the museum's Underground Railroad narrative.

Local artists Larry Schultz and Connie Bier will team to use the walls as a canvas to tell a story of men and women escaping bondage and finding their way to the inn's basement just as museum guests are also heading toward the cellar and tunnel.

Funding the estimated \$10,000 costs for the project has been initiated by a \$1,000 Jeffris Foundation challenge grant and a grant from the American Business Women's Association—Park City Chapter.

"I think this will make a wonderful addition to the museum and our local National Historic Landmark," said Tom Jeffris. "The Jeffris Foundation is excited to be a part of this



Shown here is a mock-up provided by local artist Larry Schultz of a mural project that will cover the stairwells at the Milton House Museum. The scenes will tell the story of men and women fleeing bondage in Missouri and making their way up rivers and plains to the Milton House. The top left panel shows the wall covering at the museum's second-story landing. The mid-canvas is of the stairs descending to the first floor and mid-bottom shows the first-story landing canvas. The bottom left panel is of the night scene descending the basement stairs. Anyone interested in supporting the project with monetary donations is urged to contact the Milton Historical Society at 608-868-7772. (Rendering submitted by Doug Welch)

project." An anonymous donor has responded to the challenge with a contribution of \$1,000 toward the project. Those wishing to contribute to the project can contact the Milton Historical society at 608-868-7772.

Schultz, widely known in the Milton area for his artistic contributions to the community, has provided a mock-up of the mural.

Milton Historical Society Director Kari Klebba

said she expects the mural will add to the tour another layer of understanding of the role the Milton House played in the regional movement of freedom seekers through Southern Wisconsin.

"This is a project that will be a significant addition to our narrative and at the same time provide what we anticipate to be a wonderful one-of-a-kind artistic contribution to the museum," Klebba said. "We are very encouraged by the early reaction and

community support we've received to help us move forward with this exciting project."

The mural is a portion of a larger project and vision of implementing the second story of museum's block space into the Underground Railroad narrative. The space known as the "gallery" served as the living quarters of Joseph and Nancy Goodrich but has not been a part of tours for approximately two years.

Storrs Lake near Milton offers intimate fishing

Adapted from past Lakes Edition and DNR website

Measuring out at a mere 20 acres, Storrs Lake offers fishermen a small, intimate waterscape upon which to work.

The Rock County lake located just north of Milton off Highway 26 has a maximum depth of 25 feet. Fish there include panfish, largemouth bass and northern pike. The lake's water clarity is low.

Regulations for Storrs Lake's offerings:

- Panfish: No minimum length, daily bag limit of 25.
- Largemouth bass: 14"

minimum length, daily bag limit of five.

•Northern pike: 26" minimum length, daily bag limit of two.

Visitors have access to the lake from a single public boat landing, a one-lane paved ramp deeper than three feet on northwest side of the lake.

DIRECTIONS: Take Highway 59 East out of Edgerton to Highway 26 in Milton, then turn right. Continue north on Highway 26 to East Storrs Lake Road and turn right. Follow East Storrs Lake Road east until it dead ends at the lake.

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