

Illinois State University

ISU ReD: Research and eData

---

Serving Students: The Legacy of Milner's Library

Milner Library Exhibits

---

2018

## Serving Students: The Legacy of Milner's Library 01: Old Main (3 panels)

Angela L. Bonnell

*Illinois State University*, [abonne@ilstu.edu](mailto:abonne@ilstu.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.library.illinoisstate.edu/servingstudents>



Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

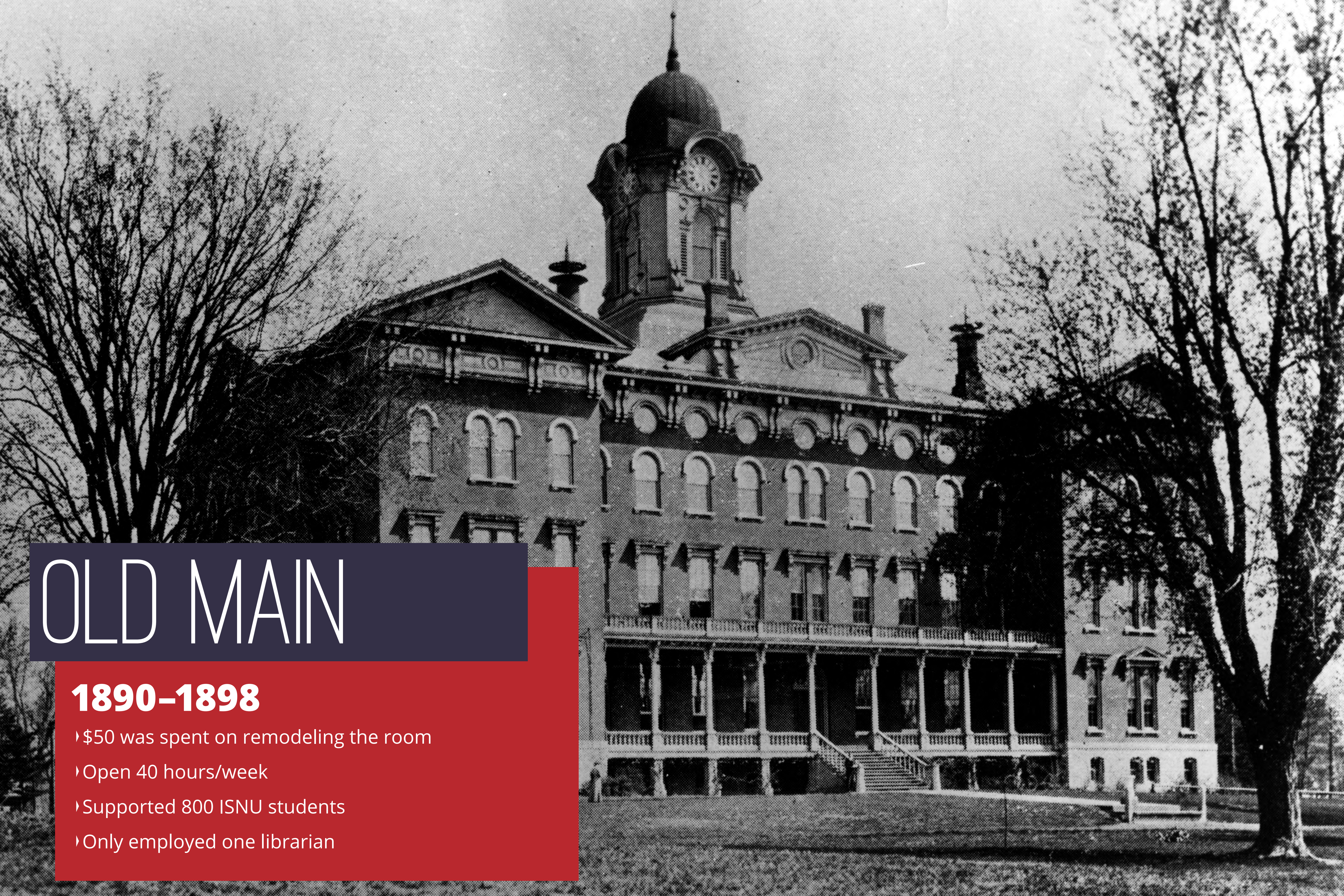
---

### Recommended Citation

Bonnell, Angela L., "Serving Students: The Legacy of Milner's Library 01: Old Main (3 panels)" (2018).  
*Serving Students: The Legacy of Milner's Library*. 14.  
<https://ir.library.illinoisstate.edu/servingstudents/14>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Milner Library Exhibits at ISU ReD: Research and eData. It has been accepted for inclusion in Serving Students: The Legacy of Milner's Library by an authorized administrator of ISU ReD: Research and eData. For more information, please contact [ISURed@ilstu.edu](mailto:ISURed@ilstu.edu).





# OLD MAIN

**1890-1898**

- › \$50 was spent on remodeling the room
- › Open 40 hours/week
- › Supported 800 ISNU students
- › Only employed one librarian



## Open, Accessible, Available

As the first fulltime librarian, Ange. V. Milner had gone above and beyond her charged duties to “rearrange, classify, and catalogue” the collections. She created a library space conducive to study and expanded library hours from one day a week to Monday through Friday, eight hours a day. The course catalog indicated that a “librarian is always in attendance” in a “well-chosen library, carefully adapted to the needs of the school.” To better help students in their coursework she created 400 individual “reference sheets,” now better known as annotated bibliographies, to guide students in the use of the collection. The article she wrote on this in *Public Libraries* became recommended reading for librarians in Alice B. Kroeger’s seminal *Guide to the Study and Use of Reference Books: A Manual for Librarians, Teachers, and Students* (1902).



The library as it appeared in 1892 on the second floor of Old Main.

*Photo from the 1932 Index.*

## “Libraries and How to Use Them”

To further serve the needs of 800 students, Milner began offering “instruction on the use of the library, in a set of informal sessions.” Course catalogs note the evolution and expansion of her instruction from informal talks to teaching a three-week course on “Libraries and How to Use Them” at the summer institute for visiting teachers.

## Student Use

Just two years after her appointment she successfully advocated for larger library quarters for a reading room to help accommodate increased student use and also additional space for her instruction. To satisfy Milner’s demands, President John Cook sacrificed his own two-room office space on the second floor of Old Main. This library eventually became too small and Milner complained of “overcrowding.”





## Humble Beginnings

During the first 30 years of the University's existence, the duties of a librarian were covered by assorted individuals including the President, his staff, or students. By 1889, students and faculty agreed the library needed a permanent librarian, someone "competent" to organize the five separate collections of books into one.

The Board of Education authorized an appropriation of \$250 to catalog the books into one library and another \$50 to transform the reception room in Old Main into its new library space. In February 1890, ISNU hired Ange. V. Milner to integrate into a single location five collections of books. She "painstaking" worked over the summer so that when students returned for fall classes in September 1890 they beheld the University's first "modern library." The Board praised Milner's work and permanently appointed her as university librarian with an annual salary of \$500.

Old Main was the first building of Illinois State (Normal) University. It was constructed between 1857 and 1861. The cost of the building and its furnishings totaled \$187,000. It served many purposes in its 98-year life, but mainly as space for classrooms and administrative offices. It was razed in 1958 because of advanced deterioration. A monument honoring Old Main resides on the Quad where it once stood.

*Photo from the 1941 Index.*