

Angeline “Ange” Milner

Classroom Resource Packet

1. Student Biography of Ange Milner
2. Vocabulary List
 - a. Vocabulary words are pulled from the student biography, the actors’ scripts, and the Character Information portion of our Guide Script. Words are organized alphabetically.
3. Supplemental Resources (pulled from The Pantagraph)
 - i. “ISU’s Old Main was dedicated 150 years ago” by Bill Kemp (March 6, 2011)
 - ii. “ISU homecoming over a century old,” by April Anderson-Zorn (October 15, 2023).

Angeline Vernon Milner (1856-1928), often referred to as “Ange,” made a significant impact on Illinois State University (ISU), then known as Illinois State Normal University (ISNU), as its first full-time librarian. Over 38 years, she helped organize and **transform** the library, providing **guidance** to students and helping establish a system that would benefit generations to come. Known for her kindness, **dedication**, and commitment to education, she became a **beloved** figure on campus.

Born on April 9, 1856, in Bloomington, Illinois, Ange was the oldest of six children in the Milner family. Her parents were John Vernon Milner (J.V.) and Angeline Baker Milner. Her mother, Angeline, originally from Boston, was musically talented and worked as a piano teacher and **governess** before moving to Illinois. Her father, J.V., faced **significant** challenges in his youth, losing both of his parents at an early age. Despite this, he worked hard, eventually co-owning a successful hardware store in Bloomington.

The Milner family became well-known in the community. Their home, located on an entire block at 700 North Center Street, was a popular gathering spot, and Ange grew up in an environment full of support and love, which would later shape her warm and **nurturing** personality.

Ange was naturally bright and had a love for learning from a young age. Her early education came from homeschooling, led by her mother, followed by private schooling. However, Ange struggled with health problems that caused her to take breaks from her studies. Despite this, her passion for knowledge never **wavered**. She learned French and German from tutors, and though she couldn't always attend school regularly, she educated herself through reading and personal study.

In 1880, Ange secured her first job at the Illinois State Laboratory of Natural History on the ISNU campus. This position involved **cataloging** scientific books and working with plant **specimens**, which helped her develop skills in organizing information—an ability that would become **crucial** when she later became the university's librarian.

In 1890, Illinois State Normal University's library was in **disarray**. Books were scattered across five different locations on campus, and the system for managing them was almost **nonexistent**. Ange was hired to solve this problem. She was so **effective** at organizing the collection and making the library more efficient that she was offered a full-time position as the school's librarian that same year.

Ange's contributions to the library were **transformative**. She developed a system to organize the books, created an **accessible** environment for students, and set up rules to keep the library running smoothly. While some might find rules **frustrating**, the students at ISNU respected her because they knew she was there to help. Ange didn't just run the library; she helped students succeed by teaching them how to use the library properly, and her guidance became **invaluable** to many.

The students admired her so much that they frequently wrote poems and stories about her in the school newspaper (*The Vidette*) and yearbook (*The Index*), highlighting her kindness and dedication.

Ange's role on campus went beyond her job as a librarian. She was a **mentor** and a leader who took part in many **aspects** of student life. Whether giving speeches at pep rallies, attending sporting events, or hosting social gatherings in the library and her home, she was a constant presence on campus. During Homecoming events, she organized special displays of student work in the library, making it a central **hub** for campus activity.

Ange's influence extended beyond ISNU. She wrote more than 80 articles and guides on how to create and run effective libraries, particularly for schools. Her work helped other educators and librarians around the country improve their library systems. She even taught courses on how to use the library, and eventually, her classes became a required part of the **curriculum** for all students at ISNU.

During **World War I**, many students, teachers, and alumni from ISNU went off to serve in the war. Wanting to recognize their **contributions**, Ange was appointed to the university's **War Service Committee**, where she played a critical role in creating the "War Roster." This document tracked the service of 821 individuals connected to ISNU who were involved in the war effort as soldiers, nurses, and volunteers.

Ange took this project very seriously, writing hundreds of letters to soldiers and collecting their stories. She even displayed their letters in the library for other students to read. One soldier, Lewis Millman, **corresponded** with her regularly and told her that if he didn't survive the war, he wanted her to keep his books at ISNU. Fortunately, he made it back safely and graduated in 1922.

In addition to her work with the War Roster, Ange also organized efforts to collect and send books and magazines to soldiers overseas. She knew that these materials would not only provide entertainment but also help the soldiers learn and prepare for life after the war. Her dedication to supporting the ISNU community during such a challenging time left a lasting impact.

Throughout her career, Ange remained committed to **professional development**. She attended her first American Library Association conference in 1893 and was a founding member of the Illinois State Library Association (ISLA). In 1907, she organized the ISLA conference at ISNU, which was a major success. In addition to her work with these organizations, she was also active in local groups such as the History and Art Club and the **Equal Suffrage Association**, which worked to gain voting rights for women.

Despite facing partial deafness later in life, Ange continued working tirelessly to expand the library and improve the services it offered to students. She oversaw two major expansions of the library, one in 1898 (with the library moving and expanding to Cook Hall) and another in 1914 (with the library moving and expanding to North Hall), ensuring that it could **accommodate** the growing student population.

After 38 years of service, Ange was forced to **retire** in 1927 due to illness. She passed away on January 13, 1928. Her death was felt deeply by the ISNU community, and her funeral was attended by a large number of students, faculty, and **alumni**. In honor of her **contributions**, the university canceled classes so everyone could attend. One editorial published at the time

described her as one of the most important figures in ISNU's history, praising her dedication and the lasting impact she had on the institution.

Ten years after her death, ISNU named its new library building "Milner Library" in her honor. In 1976, a larger, more modern library was built and kept the Milner name, ensuring that Ange's **legacy** would continue to inspire future generations of students. In 2006, on what would have been her 150th birthday, a **headstone** was finally placed on her grave to **commemorate** her life and work.

Angeline Vernon Milner's legacy goes far beyond her role as the first full-time librarian at Illinois State. She was a **trailblazer in library science**, a mentor to countless students, and a dedicated member of her community. Her passion for learning and her commitment to helping others shaped the university and its library system for the better. Today, Milner Library stands as a testament to her vision, reminding us of the **profound** impact one person can have on a community.

Vocabulary

Ability (noun): competence in doing something, skill; natural aptitude or acquired proficiency.

Accessible (adjective): capable of being reached, being within reach; capable of being understood or appreciated.

Accommodate (verb): to provide with something desired, needed, or suited; to give consideration to, to allow for.

Alumni (plural noun): a person who has attended or has graduated from a particular school, college, or university.

American Library Association (organization): association of libraries in the United States with the goal to provide leadership for the development, promotion, and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship in order to enhance learning and to ensure access to information for all.

Aspects (noun): a particular status or phrase in which something appears or may be regarded

Beloved (adjective): dearly loved, dear to the heart.

Bookbinder (noun): a person who physically constructs books

Botanical (adjective): relating to plants or botany; derived from plants.

Bound (adjective): secured to the covers by cords, tapes, or glue.

Bursting Shells: projectile that contains explosive material that is ignited by a fuse in the nose of the shell.

Cataloging: a complete record of items arranged systematically with descriptive details.

Charged (verb): to entrust someone with a task as a duty or responsibility.

Commemorate (verb): to call to remembrance; to mark by some ceremony or observation.

Contributions (noun): the giving or supplying of something (such as money or time) as a part or share; something that is contributed such as time or money; something that plays a significant part in making something happen.

Corresponded (verb): to communicate with a person by exchange of letters.

Curriculum (noun): a set of courses constituting an area of specialization; the courses offered by an educational institution.

Crucial (adjective): important or significant.

Dedication (noun): a devoting or setting aside for a particular purpose; self-sacrificing devotion and loyalty.

Disarray (noun): a lack of order or sequence; confusion.

Effective (adjective): producing a desired effect.

Equal Suffrage Association (organization): an association that lobbied for women's suffrage (ability to vote) through state and federal legislature. The group also held lectures and tours to raise funds, educate the public, and bring awareness to the suffrage cause.

Frail (adjective): easily broken or destroyed; fragile.

Frustrating (adjective): causing feelings of anger and annoyance.

Governess (noun): a woman who cares for and supervises a child especially in a private household.

Great War/World War I (conflict): A war waged between the Allies (United Kingdom, United States, Italy, Japan, France, Russia) and the Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Ottoman Empire, Bulgaria) from 1914 to 1918.

Guidance (noun): the act or process of helping or leading.

Headstone (noun): a memorial stone at the head of a grave.

Hub (noun): the center of activity; focal point.

Illinois Library Association (organization): a professional membership organization and chapter of the American Library Association that offers educational opportunities and resources to members.

Illinois State Normal University (I.S.N.U.) (organization): Founded in 1857, the State of Illinois' first public university, which was established to teach and prepare teachers. In 1964, the name was changed to Illinois State University when the university expanded to become a liberal arts college.

Invaluable (adjective): valued beyond estimation; priceless.

Legacy (noun): a reputation or impact transmitted from the past.

Library Science (noun): the study or the principles and practices of library care and administration.

Literary Digest (publication): a weekly newsmagazine founded in 1890 focusing on American, Canadian, and European publications.

Mentor (noun): a trusted counselor or guide.

Nonexistent (adjective): not in actual or present occurrence; not existing.

Nurturing (adjective): capable of training, mentoring, or supporting.

Professional Development (noun/verb): learning that leads to or emphasizes education in a professional field or builds applicable job skills.

Profound (adjective): extending far below the surface; deeply impactful.

Reading Room (noun): a quiet room in a library or museum where you can read and study.

Retire (verb): to withdraw from one's position or occupation; conclude one's working or professional career.

Rover Boys (book series): A series of juvenile books by Arthur M. Winfield published between 1899 to 1926. These books told the stories of Tom, Sam, and Dick Rover, three "typical" American boys and often included news events and modern technology.

Sentimental (adjective): marked or governed by feeling, sensibility, or emotional idealism; having an excess of sentiment or sensibility.

Significant (adjective): having meaning; important.

Skylight (noun): an opening in a roof that is covered with transparent material and is designed to admit light.

Skyrockets (verb): to cause to rise or increase abruptly and rapidly.

Specimens (noun): a portion or quantity of material for use in testing, examination, or study.

Supplemented (noun): something that completes or makes an addition; added to the existing amount.

Supportive (adjective): upholding or defending; assisting or helping.

Systematically (adverb): methodical and thorough in procedure or plan.

Trailblazer (noun): one who originates or takes part in the early development of something.

Transform (verb): to change in structure, function, or appearance.

Transformative (adjective): causing or able to cause an important and lasting change in someone or something.

Victor Hugo (person): French author of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *Les Misérables*. Hugo had a successful literary career, followed by time in politics as a French senator. Victor Hugo lived from 1802 to 1885.

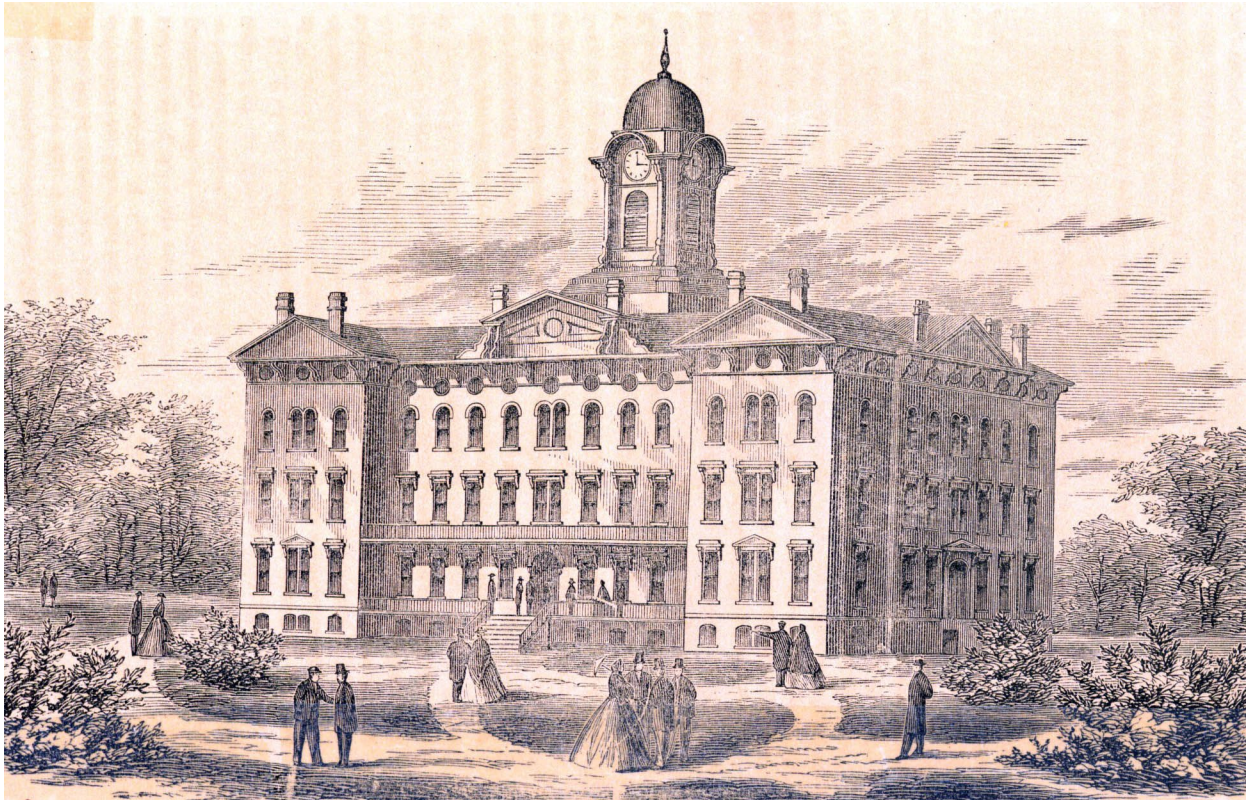
War Roster (noun): a document that kept track of the hundreds of students, staff, and faculty of ISNU who served in the Civil War as soldiers, nurses, or volunteers.

War Service Committee (organization): a committee at ISNU during World War I that kept a war roster, gathered sources that documented ISNU wartime contributions, wrote letters of support to ISNU soldiers, and collected data on the individuals' service after the war ended.

Wavered (verb): to hesitate or change one's mind.

“ISU’s Old Main was dedicated 150 years ago”

Bill Kemp, March 6, 2011



This widely disseminated image of Normal Hall, later known as Old Main, appeared in newspapers and other publications prior to the formal opening of the building.

For nearly a century, Illinois State University’s oldest and largest building loomed over the campus grounds and town environs. It was the Watterson Towers of its day, though instead of brutalist concrete, Old Main offered a more pleasing arrangement of brick and Italianate woodwork.

Dedicated in 1861, the administration and classroom building was originally known as Normal Hall because, back then, ISU was called Normal University (the word “normal” referred to an institution dedicated to teacher training).

The substantial 3 1/2 story brick building was topped with a tall dome / clock tower, and on a clear day it could be seen for miles. The architect, Gurdon P. Randall of Chicago, was to design school buildings throughout the Midwest, from Northwestern University in Evanston to Minnesota State Normal School in Winona.

Visible from the junction of two railroads—the St. Louis, Alton & Chicago (now Union Pacific / Amtrak) and the Illinois Central (now Constitution Trail)—Normal Hall served symbolic as well as pedagogical purposes. Educator William H. Powell envisioned the high-profile building as “a watch tower of liberty” and “an impregnable fortress, against which the wild waves of ignorance and tyranny might eternally beat in vain.”

Construction began in the summer of 1857, but before long work came to a halt due to a severe economic downturn (or “Panic,” as they were once called). In the meantime, under the leadership of Normal President Charles Hovey classes were held at Major’s Hall in downtown Bloomington.

Normal Hall was paid for by a convoluted scheme involving local residents guaranteeing McLean County’s pledge of \$70,000 from the sale of what were called “swamp lands,” the term for undrained prairie.

The university board held good promissory notes “in plenty,” reported *The Weekly Pantagraph*, though converting these into cold hard cash for wages and building materials “required infinite trading, off-setting and ‘fixing’ of all sorts.” ISU Professor Emeritus John Freed, who wrote the definitive history of the university, called the effort to raise funds “a story of such skullduggery that the perpetrators, most notably Hovey, would be indicted today on numerous counts.”

J.H. Burnham, an early student of “The Normal,” remembered visiting the abandoned construction site and the unfinished stone foundation in the spring of 1858. “All around us was nothing but an apparent wreck,” he wrote. “There were no workmen about, and we heard of no plans for finishing the structure.”

Construction eventually resumed, and on January 24, 1861, 3 1/2 years after ground was broken, Normal Hall was dedicated before a gathering of Springfield big shots and their families. In addition to celebrating the long-delayed completion of the building, university officials used the ceremony to woo Gov. Richard Yates and members of the state legislature into taking on the school’s burdensome debt.

Arriving via the St. Louis, Alton & Chicago Railroad, a delegation of lawmakers received a tour of the magnificent building. The first floor housed the model school (what are today Metcalf and University High), while the second included 8 classrooms, 2 lecture halls and a space that could accommodate 300 students. The top floor held an even larger assembly room, the library and space for music instruction.

In the early afternoon, the estimated 500 to 700 visitors “partook” of a cold lunch, and afterward, an even larger crowd gathered for dedicatory exercises, which included student recitations, mathematic drills and music performances.

Many in the audience then removed to downtown Bloomington for a banquet and ball. During the latter soiree, the crowd became so large “as to leave very little room for the dancers to express themselves; and the ‘Poetry of Motion’ was necessarily quite prose-like,” commented

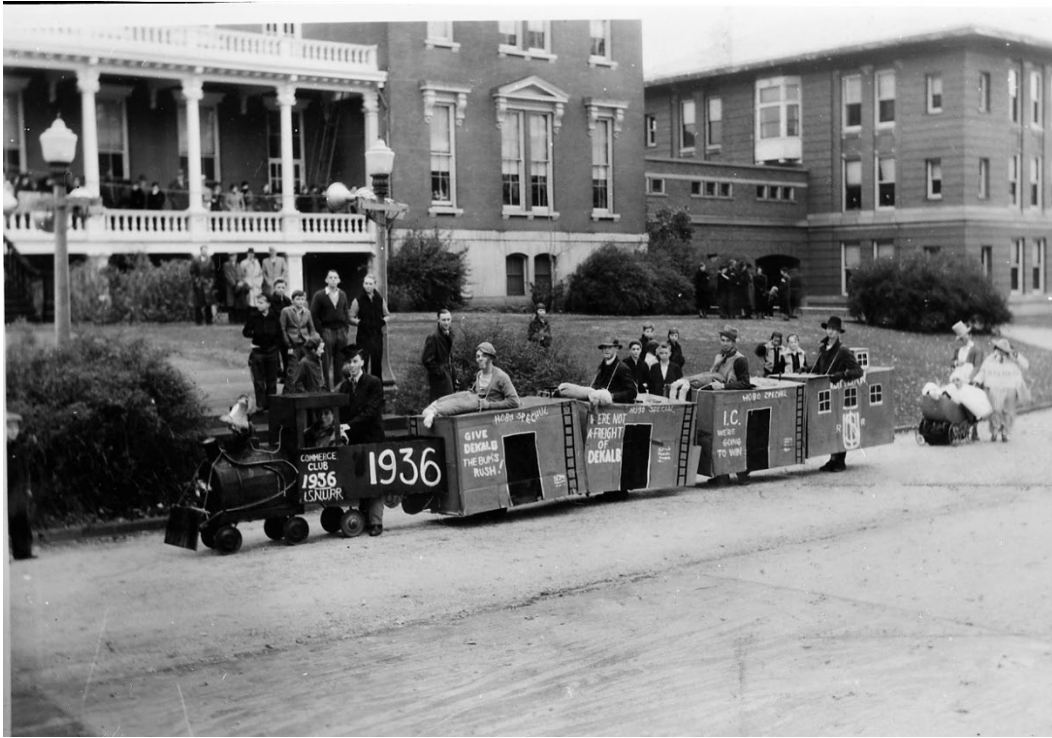
The Pantagraph. It was said that more than one tipsy lawmaker was unable to make the midnight special back to Springfield.

Naturally, this being Illinois, the wining and dining succeeded and the state legislature assumed responsibility for the school's \$65,000 in unpaid bills.

Old Main remained the center of campus life well into the 20th century. Yet by 1946, concerns of the structural integrity kind led to the removal of the dome and entire third floor. A new roof was then placed over the second story, and the building continued to welcome students, though in a somewhat diminished state.

On July 17, 1958, the wrecking ball took care of the rest. Today, a memorial to Old Main featuring a bell from the beloved building can be found on the north end of the ISU Quad.

“ISU homecoming over a century old,”
by April Anderson-Zorn, October 15, 2023



Hobo Parade- Members of the ISNU Commerce Club parade past Old Main on ISNU's campus during Homecoming, 1936. Photograph courtesy of the Dr. JoAnn Rayfield Archives, Illinois State University.



Decorating- Students decorate the streets of Bloomington for ISUs 1965 Homecoming celebration. Photograph courtesy of the Dr. JoAnn Rayfield Archives, Illinois State University.

It's Homecoming Week at Illinois State University! Officially started in 1921, this now 102-year-old event remains a fan-favorite tradition at ISU.

While 1921 is recognized as the first official year for the University's alumni homecoming, Illinois State Normal University (as it was then known before its first name change in 1964) celebrated variations of a "homecoming" in 1916 and 1919. In 1916, a small group of students planned an elaborate alumni dinner that would be, according to *The Vidette*, "the biggest thing of its kind in the history of the university." True to their word, the dinner expanded to planned dances, "stunts," a "Hobo" band, and a football game against Eastern Illinois University (ISNU lost 24-7). By all accounts, the event was a success with the promise of becoming an annual tradition. However, Homecoming did not occur the following year, likely due to the United States' entry into World War I in April 1917. The University would not hold another homecoming event until the end of the war.

On June 4, 1919, ISNU held a "Home-coming" for returning soldiers and volunteers from the frontlines of WWI. The celebration, held during graduation exercises, had been in the works soon after the war ended on November 11, 1918. Many soldiers returning home from the frontlines waited months for an ocean crossing as ships carried thousands of troops back from

Europe. The celebration centered on the revue titled, “And They Did Come Back,” with dances, dinners, and somber memorials. The Vidette reported: “From 3 o’clock in the afternoon until half after midnight we celebrated; Only those who have been on campus during the last two years can realize fully just what the sight of familiar faces meant and grasp the significance of seeing ‘our Own’ return to us.”

As the University entered the 1920s, attention again turned toward a homecoming, focusing exclusively on inviting alums back to campus. Early planning began in 1920, with preparations taking place in the summer and fall of 1921. On November 4 and 5, 1921, ISNU celebrated its first official Homecoming, complete with a waffle breakfast, alumni group luncheons, a play by the Jesters theatre troupe, dances, a parade, and a decisive victory over their 1916 rival, Eastern Illinois (42-3). While the tradition was off to a strong start, one event that weekend was unlike any other Homecoming tradition since – the digging up of a rediscovered fruitcake in the Quad.

As the story goes, four members of the Philadelphia Literary Society buried a fruitcake at midnight on July 16, 1917, on the grounds of the Quad. “Encased in a casserole, and preserved in brandy,” the students planned to dig up the fruitcake the following year. Due to WWI, two of the four men answered the call to service. Searches for the fruitcake commenced for the next four years without finding the secretive desert. When plans began for Homecoming in late 1921, one of the men who buried the cake asked if the group could dig it up as part of the celebration. Committee members agreed, and at 10:30am on November 5, 1921, a delegation walked to the South end of the Quad, shovel in hand, and began searching for the elusive cake. Searchers found the succulent sweet, returned to Old Main with their treasure and consumed the cake later in the day.

Now fully part of ISNU tradition, the yearly Homecoming event was not one to be missed. In 1923, planners organized a Hobo parade, a popular theme loosely tied to national economics and politics, that included student organizations. The best-themed groups who walked in the parade won prizes. In 1927, student and community houses began a contest for the best-decorated house. Area high school bands played on the football field in 1933 and competed for best band. The tradition of naming a Homecoming Queen and Court began in 1936. A long way from waffles and fruitcakes, the tradition of Homecoming faced changes as the country once again entered a war.

Enrollment at ISNU, like many academic institutions across the country, dropped during World War II. A once festive affair, Homecoming became a muted celebration. Homecoming football rivals such as Eastern Illinois or Southern Illinois University lacked team members and could not play. However, Illinois Wesleyan University emerged as a new contender, delighting fans on both sides of the gridiron. Rations affected luncheon and dinner menus. Relief drives to support the war effort were mixed in with celebrations. ISNU also created its first all-female marching band during WWII, which continued until the war ended in 1945.

After the war, Homecoming returned to campus in full force. Prior events, such as dances, decorating contests, parades, and other celebrations, became more boisterous. One unofficial

event, known as the "snake dance," occurred when students gathered in a group, held hands and shoulders, and danced throughout town. In 1950, the snake dance was no more when a particularly exuberant group of dancers trampled a local front yard.

In 1957, ISNU celebrated its 100th anniversary. This was also the first time Homecoming had a unified theme. All Homecoming events centered on the University's centennial celebration, including parades, dances, and other special events. The idea of a themed Homecoming didn't take hold until 1963 when planners embraced "A Century of Change." Traditional events also changed, including house decorating contests moved exclusively to campus, and rock concerts replaced dances. Some themes in later years included "Delightful Dreams of Disney" (1969), "The Roaring Twenties – or – Rum, Sin, and Bathtub Gin" (1972), "Celebrate!" (1986), "Traditions" (1995), "Spread the Red: 150 Years of Spirit" (2007), and "Get Your Groove On" (2012).

Current Homecoming traditions are a little different than earlier celebrations. An ISU Homecoming now includes the selection of Alumni Royalty, a 5K run on Homecoming morning, plentiful tailgating, a parade in Uptown Normal that celebrates all members of the ISU and local communities, and sightings of everyone's favorite mascot, Reggie Redbird. While events for Homecoming have changed in the last century, the door is always open for Redbirds to come home.