John Sutton Hall

Restoration Celebration

April 29, 1983
We Remember

"John Sutton Hall" - hallowed words which have meant many different things to Indiana students and faculty over the past century and which ressurect endless images of life at Indiana.

Did you know that ground was broken for John Sutton Hall on August 15, 1873; that no ground was removed from the campus site, and that some of the oak trees in the Oak Grove observed that historical event?

In the early years John Sutton Hall was the college. In this one building there were classrooms, "model school rooms", dormitory rooms, an infirmary, dining hall, offices, a gymnasium, everything needed for the smooth operation of a college.

As the years passed, John Sutton changed its uses and its purposes, but never lost its capacity to create lasting memories.

To some members of the Indiana family, John Sutton meant an administrative headquarters where VIP’s were housed.

To many women it was home for up to four years - limited closet space, many rooms too small, but oh so convenient on cold winter mornings.

To others it represented the social center of the college community - Rec Hall (the Blue Room) - weekly dances - full dress proms - parties - name bands - Pan Hel - Inter Frat - Senior Proms - Count Basie - Stan Kenton - with Hope Stewart or Flossie Kimball in regular attendance.

To some it stood for dramatic productions - Edna Lee Sprows’ extravaganzas in the old auditorium - symphony concerts - chorales - the Leonard Literary Society.

To many it represented thousands of meals in the old dining hall - Christmas banquets - Ma Folger - The Boar’s Head - dinner chimes - family service at assigned tables.

To others it was the Library in the North Wing - a cozy spot for a date on a winter evening; to others the Bookstore where books always seemed so expensive.

And to others it represented where the President lived and if you were fortunate, you were invited to spend a pleasant winter evening in the President’s apartment.

Today John Sutton Hall is at the heart of a great university campus with seventy-nine major buildings and seven athletic fields. In 1875 John Sutton Hall was the college; today it is only one of nearly one hundred buildings.

To the Indiana student of 1983, "John Sutton Hall" means major university offices, Gorell Recital Hall, the new University Museum, and the lovely placid Blue Room.

Over 40,000 students have graduated from Indiana - Normal School, State Teachers College, State College, University - and every one of those 40,000 have known and loved John Sutton Hall.

How many romances blossomed and bloomed in Rec Hall, in East Parlor, East Campus or on East Porch?
Recreation Hall, 1912, now the Blue Room

How many remember ------
- those pleasant sounding chimes from the old Bell Tower?
- that “first dance” in Rec Hall at a Saturday night fling?
- English Activities classed in the old Auditorium?
- picking up mail at the Post Office housed in at least three different locations in John Sutton Hall over the years?
- when Thomas Sutton Hall was a major wing of John Sutton and housed the entire music department of the college?
- when the college infirmary was located on the fourth floor on the southwest wing of John Sutton?
- when the fourth floor over the Blue Room was affectionately known as “Chapel Alley?”
- when the old Commuter’s Lounge was located beneath the Library and when its most distinguishing characteristic was a multi-colored mural depicting life at Indiana?
- when the football field was located where Stapleton Library now stands and how the large porches on the northwest wing of John Sutton were the favorite box seats for the football games?

Yes -- all these images and many more represent John Sutton Hall to members of the Indiana family. Its restoration will help keep these memories alive. Can you imagine returning to the Indiana campus without seeing the clean-cut lines of old John Sutton looming up from the highest spot on the campus? For over one hundred years it has played a significant role in the lives of Indiana students. May it continue to represent the ideals and standards of a great university.

The Chapel, 1911. Students were seated by sex
Activities Supporting the Committee to Save John Sutton Hall

July 1975
- Flea market booth at Lions Club Fourth of July Celebration

August 1975
- Booth at the Indiana County Fair
- Booth at the New Growth Arts Festival
- "Sutton Buttons" distributed by students and friends of John Sutton Hall
- Male Beauty Contest sponsored by the Residence Halls Association, benefit for The Committee to Save John Sutton Hall
- Save Sutton Flag
- Letter of support by the late Agnes Sligh Turnbull
- Solicitation letter to alumni and friends to defray the cost of The Landmarks Planning study of John Sutton Hall

Strategists For the Committee to Save John Sutton Hall

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First Floor

Key:
1. President's Apartment
2. East Parlor
3. Foundation for IUP Suite
4. University Museum
5. Blue Room
6. Kitchen
7. Campus Police
8. Men's Restroom
9. Women's Restroom
10. Institutional Research
11. Assistant to the President's Suite
12. Vice President of Administration's Suite
13. President's Suite
14. Board of Trustee's Suite
15. Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost's Suite
16. Vice President of Student Affairs Suite
17. Assistant to Vice President of Student Affairs
18. Assistant Provost
19. Conference Rooms
20. Gorell Recital Hall
21. Word Processing
The History of Sutton Hall

With the passage of the Normal School Act on May 20, 1857, the door was opened for the development in Indiana County, of one of the 13 proposed teacher training schools in Pennsylvania. This act proposed to divide the state into normal school districts. Each district would have a population of about 200,000 people who were somewhat homogenous in language, character and pursuit. Indiana was chosen over several surrounding counties because of the diligent and active interest of several prominent local citizens, and because it was well served by the developing railroad system.

In order to start plans for the school, it was necessary to recruit additional prominent citizens to carry forth the idea. The plans had been initiated by a group of men who had met in the office of the superintendent of schools, J. T. Gibson, in 1860. From this group, John Sutton, Silas M. Clark, A. W. Wilson, Harry White and others were chosen to begin the task of raising $50,000 from private investors. This was accomplished by 1870.

With the monies assured, 10 acres of land were purchased from John Sutton. The purchase created some resentment from other land owners in the district, and as a result of the controversy, Harry White “retired” from the Board. However, he continued to work for the new school at the state level and was instrumental in getting the legislature to award a grant of $15,000 to the new school. The state normal schools thus were private schools and largely funded from private sources. The Christian training of teachers was considered a high priority, and with private status it was possible to have a large chapel and to emphasize moral and Christian teachings in the education of teachers.

After exploring building designs of other normal schools, bids were requested from several architects and contractors. Upon reviewing the bids, an agreement was reached and the contract for designing the building was awarded to James W. Drum, lowest bidder for the work. Drum had designed the “old” Indiana County Court House, which is currently on the National Register of Historic Places, and the former St. Bernard Catholic Church, which was located on North Fifth Street. Drum’s bid indicated he would produce all drawings, specifications and general supervision of the work.

Final plans for the building were approved on October 10, 1872, and the building contract was awarded to Voris, Haigh and Gregg of Shippenburg. The projected building cost was $96,000. Because the contract was not awarded until very late in 1872, it was not possible to break ground until the spring of 1873.

After some excavation was made, an artesian well over 100 feet deep was dug on the construction site, which was to supply all of the water needs for the school population. The foundation of the building was made of stone. The walls were two feet thick and the wall portion under the chapel was made two feet thicker. The chapel floor rests on the top of the first story, and extends to the top of the third floor.

Bricks for the building were made on the construction site by Conrad Kuhns. The bricks were not the soft type which were widely used in construction during this period, but they were very hard brick, having been fired under extremely high temperatures. As a result, they are as sound today as they were when they were made. These bricks are also larger than the bricks in other Indiana County buildings.

The building was completed in the spring of 1875 at a final cost of $141,115. This figure included the cost of the land, the building itself, the plumbing, heating, and gas fixtures for lighting, and all of the furnishings. The bed linens, bedspreads and curtains were made by the women of Indiana. John Sutton Hall was formally dedicated in 1903, and named for the first president of the Board of Trustees of the Indiana State Normal School.

When the normal school at Indiana was opened on May 17, 1875, the tuition, room and board — including light, heat and washing — was $70 for the spring term, $75 for the fall term and $80 for the winter term. The initial enrollment was 150 students, and the school’s capacity was considered to be 400. Indiana State Normal School received no state funds for operation. All students intending to become teachers were paid 50 cents a week for the time they attended school; veterans, and children of disabled or deceased veterans were paid $1 a week. This money was supposed to be used to help defray the student’s expenses.

The building was centrally heated by steam. Boilers were fired by coal, and there was hot and cold water on every floor. There was even a primitive sprinkling system with the water tanks being housed in the corners of the attic. The building was considered energy efficient, even by today’s standards. The ceilings were high, the windows tall and the transoms over each door provided air circulation in the summer.

When Indiana State Normal School opened in 1875 there was no elevator. There were two beautiful staircases, similar to the one that still remains in the President’s Apartment. An elevator was then added in 1895. In those early days of the school, students climbed the stairs to reach their dormitory rooms on the third and fourth floors. These two floors originally contained 150 dormitory rooms. An interesting comment in the school’s catalogues of 1875-89 was: “Students had to furnish their own brooms, towels and napkins, and all articles to be washed must be distinctly marked with the full name of the owner. More than ten pieces in one week will be charged extra.” The catalogue further states that “students are required to sweep their own rooms daily, previous to the sweeping of the halls in the morning, and are not allowed to sweep the dust into the halls at any other time.”

The Principal’s (President’s) Office, 1912
The original dormitory rooms were furnished with a closet table, chairs, dressing bureau, bedstand, bed, bedding and all necessary "crockery." For the first six or seven years students slept on cotton ticks. It was not until 1882 that mattresses were provided for student beds. Both floors are now decorated with a Victorian color scheme, as is the entire building. The walls and woodwork have been kept in the light end of the color scale. The carpeting is a very regulation color and weave, determined by funds available.

The long corridor on the fourth floor was known to students as Chapel Alley because this area was indeed over the chapel area, which is now Gorell Recital Hall. The entrance to the balcony of Gorell Recital Hall is now on the third floor.

The original heat radiators, many of which are still in service, were made in Philadelphia by the Wood Company and were made of cast iron and were nickel-lined, making them non-corrosive. The design was such that the radiator gives the maximum heat possible.

Today the third and fourth floors are used exclusively for faculty and administrative offices.

The President's Office, the Board Room, administrative offices and Gorell Recital Hall are located on the second floor. When the Normal School first opened, the current president's office was known as the principal's office. The door that leads into the president's office is an original doorway from Thomas Sutton Hall. Thomas Sutton Hall was connected to John Sutton Hall, but was torn down when construction of Stapleton Library began.

Much of the furniture and decor on the second floor is either a reproduction of a Victorian style or an original Victorian piece of furniture. The radiator and chandelier in the foyer of the president's office were taken from Thomas Sutton Hall, and the lamp, lamp table, rosewood flip top tables and the rosewood love seat bench are all antiques. In the president's office there are leather wall coverings, a tufted leather couch and a marbled slate fireplace, now inoperable. The desk is an exact reproduction of the Richelieu desk made in France during the late 19th century.

The Board Room is also on this floor. The carpet is a reproduction of a Victorian design, and much of the other decor in this room and on the rest of the floor was planned by Mary Ann Cigich of Laurel Design Associates. Orval Kipp has restored nine portraits of the principals and presidents of this institution to hang in this room, including that of William Fairfield, the first principal of the institution. The table is solid mahogany, and it was designed and made by Chris Weiland. Funds are still being secured to acquire furniture and paintings, either authentic or accurate reproductions, to complete the decor in the Office of the Vice President for Administration and the Foundations Office and the Alumni Office of the University.

The chapel was restored as Gorell Recital Hall, and the restoration was made possible by a gift from Mary and Frank Gorell of Indiana. Mr. Gorell is on the Board of Trustees of the University. The chandeliers in this hall are from the Thomas Sutton dining hall. There is a floral stenciled pattern on the ceiling under the balcony. It was reproduced here after it was found when water damage from a fire in the spring of 1980 caused several layers of paint to peel off of the ceiling. A new Steinway grand piano was also purchased for this recital hall.

The most outstanding room on the first floor of John Sutton Hall is the Blue Room, known to many as Recreation Hall. This room was first used as a dining hall, then a dining hall-gymnasium, and finally only for social functions. In 1908 the building was redecorated and a more classical decor was decided upon. The Blue Room was modeled after a room in the Pitt Palace in Florence; therefore, the marbled columns. This room has been restored entirely with a gift from Nell and Sam Jack of Indiana. Mr. Jack is a member of the Board of Trustees. The doors that go into this room are solid mahogany and the ambulatory carpeting is almost identical to a pattern used in 1910. The use of leather and wicker furniture, and the addition of ferns all work to keep this room as authentic as possible.

Across the hall from the Blue Room there is a portrait of Miss Jane Leonard, the first preceptress of the school and a teacher of history and geography.

Another notable portion of the first floor is the University Museum. The Museum opened in October 1980 and it contains works of art that are owned by the University. There is also a replica of a dormitory room furnished as it would have been in the early 1900's. This room was given to the museum by a local chapter of the Questers, a national antique study group.

There is an entrance to the president's apartment on this floor, and the Campus Security department is also located on the first floor. Originally, offices and classrooms were located on this floor.

The building served as the center of the normal school and state college for 99 years, but as the institution expanded, offices were moved to other buildings. Eventually it was used entirely as a dormitory for women. It was last used during the 1972-73 academic year, when plans were formulated to tear it down and use the grounds for a new library. In 1974 a decision was made to demolish Sutton Hall.

The original Library, 1905
Many alumni, students and townspeople were upset by the decision to raze such a landmark. In January 1975 a group of about ten individuals met informally to discuss what, if anything, could be done to save John Sutton Hall. The group formed the nucleus of the Committee to Save John Sutton Hall, first headed by Mr. Clarence Stevenson. The committee engaged Landmarks Planning, Inc., a Pittsburgh firm specializing in the restoration of old buildings, to advise the committee and to do a thorough feasibility study of Sutton Hall. To support its activities a fundraising campaign was begun to finance its activities and petitions were circulated to enlist university and community support for its preservation. The support of the National Trust for Historic Preservation was sought and gained and John Sutton Hall was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The feasibility study proved that John Sutton Hall was in sound, if shabby, condition and that it could continue to serve IUP, and economically so, for generations to come. The committee worked closely with the Wilburn administration and the Board of Trustees, which in October 1975 voted to rescind its decision to demolish John Sutton Hall. With the recision of the Governor's executive order to raze this landmark, the path was cleared for its restoration.

Restoration of the building began in 1975. With the assistance of the Advisory Committee for the Restoration of John Sutton Hall, the restoration proceeded. Much of the carpentry, plumbing, heating and painting was completed by IUP crafts people and maintenance people and to date, over $350,000 worth of work and materials have been provided by the state, over $600,000 have been given by individuals and corporations to complete the restoration of John Sutton Hall, in areas where the state was unwilling to finance.

John Sutton Hall, a national landmark, is one of the finest examples of Victorian Collegiate architecture in the United States. Once again it has assumed its rightful place as the heart of our institution.

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Dr. Robert W. Wilburn
From the 1875 Indiana Normal School to today's multi-purpose University, IUP has enjoyed a history rich in tradition and accomplishment. In its first year, the Normal School enrolled 225 students. Today, the IUP student body includes more than 12,000 students who hail from every county in the Commonwealth, several other states, and more than 40 foreign countries.

IUP grew out of the need for a teacher-training institution in Pennsylvania and was created by an act of the General Assembly in 1871 which established the Indiana Normal School in the Ninth Pennsylvania District.

Since the first building was opened for students in 1875, IUP has matriculated approximately 100,000 students. Since becoming a degree-granting institution in 1927, it has conferred 85,053 degrees.

In December, 1965, Indiana State College was redesignated Indiana University of Pennsylvania with the right to grant degrees at the doctoral level and in several additional areas at the master's level.

Nine schools and colleges presently comprise the University - Business, Education, Fine Arts, Health Services, Home Economics, Humanities and Social Sciences, Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Graduate Studies, and Continuing and Non-resident Education. Twelve degrees are offered, including one associate, five baccalaureate, four master's, and four at the doctoral level. Within the 40 departments of the University, students may study any one of 100 majors.

While instruction continues to be the University's primary focus, IUP has combined a sound liberal arts education with effective job preparation. The University's internship program, which provides students with on-the-job training prior to graduation, is one of the most extensive in the country.

IUP has also entered into joint programs with other institutions of higher learning to increase and complement the academic programs of IUP students. These joint programs include one in family medicine with Thomas Jefferson University; two in engineering with Drexel University and the University of Pittsburgh; one in art with the Art Institute of Pittsburgh; one in optometry with Pennsylvania College of Optometry; one in podiatry with Pennsylvania School of Podiatry; and one in forestry with Duke University.

Throughout its first century, IUP has flourished as the largest of the 14 state-owned universities. The University looks forward to the challenges of the future with confidence in its tradition of excellence and with dedication to serving the needs of tomorrow's students.

Indiana University of Pennsylvania is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution. Please direct inquiries concerning equal opportunity to: Assistant Provost, 215A Sutton Hall, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, PA 15705.