

The image shows the interior of a brick tunnel. The walls and ceiling are constructed from red bricks, with some areas showing signs of wear and peeling mortar. A large, dark, cylindrical pipe runs along the right side of the tunnel. In the center, there are several wooden beams and a large, light-colored pipe. The lighting is dim, highlighting the texture of the brick and the industrial nature of the space.

# The Tunnels of Millersville

CREATED BY KAELYN CONSIDINE

# Origin of the tunnels

- Sections of the tunnels in existence today were originally built in order to transport the steam used to heat Old Main and other buildings on campus.”



- Eventually the tunnels became a way for students to walk back and forth to their classes to avoid the bad weather. That was not their only function, however, if one were to ask anyone attending Millersville in 1935 they would tell you the highlight of their year was the legendary Halloween party the faculty threw for the students.

- ◎ The “Tour of the Devil’s Kingdom” began in Old Main and ran the entire length of the tunnel to a party at the end for the students. The whole of the passage was decorated as a haunted house with the faculty dressed to play the roles of the terrifying scenes they were acting out for the students; one of the most notable being Miss Spencer (faculty member in English, 1923-1959) lying in a coffin at the end of the trail. The invitation printed in the Snapper read:

*All Students Welcome*

TO

FACULTY  
HALLOWE'EN  
PARTY

Gather in the Court Outside of Room R

*8:00 Next Thursday Night*

For a Tour of the Devil's Kingdom.

COME COSTUMED AND MASKED

Grand March Begins as Trip Ends.

PRIZES : ENTERTAINMENTS : EATS

Beware of Low Bridges and Pitfalls.

Good Clean Fun and its FREE.

Other Halloween parties were held in the tunnels over the next decade or so, but most of the students agreed that the subsequent ones never quite measured up to the one in 1935.

- ⦿ Today the tunnels are rarely used, unknown passages left over from another time. Because most of them ran to and from Old Main there is only one left that can take a traveler from one building to another, it runs from Dilworth to where Old Main used to be but also connects to Biemesderfer, the old library. The tunnels themselves are simply underground hallways. The ones that the students used to go from class to class are just concrete walls with series of pipes and tubes running their entire length.



- ⦿ There are no skeletons, ghosts, or spirits of lost students wandering the tunnels, rather one finds layers of cobwebs with fossilized spiders suspended in them.



- ① They are not small cramped passages, rather they are about 7 feet high and 5 feet wide; more than enough room for two people to walk comfortably side by side.



- ◎ Some of the tunnels have dripping ceilings, cracking walls, and floors that could best be described as “spongy.”



- ◎ With the destruction of Old Main, the tunnels of Millersville began to fade from the knowledge of the students and faculty. When Old Main was torn down and Ganser Library built, there was simply no where for the tunnels to go anymore. The place where they had entered Old Main was cut off with brick walls and the tunnels became a series of long corridors that conclude with dead ends. The tunnels now allow for the traverse of students in a different way; they carry phone lines and wiring for telecommunications. They are the unseen, unknown couriers of information, still connecting students with the campus and with each other.



# Sources

- ◎ “All Students Welcome,” *The Snapper*, October 25, 1935, p. 1.
- ◎ “Hades Hailed by Maskers,” *The Snapper*, November 8, 1935, p. 3.
- ◎ Millersville Board of Trustees Minutes, 1891-1923
- ◎ Touchstone Yearbook, 1936.
- ◎ Mr. Kenneth Brent, University Architect, provided essential background information and campus maps for this article.