

THE HOMESTEAD FAMILY

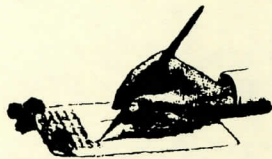
G A Z E T T E

Vol. XXVIII, No. 3

JAMES MILLIKIN HOMESTEAD, INC., 125 N. PINE, DECATUR, ILLINOIS

March, 2004

A Note from Your President...



Whan that Aprill with his shoures soote
The droghte of march hath perced to the roote,
And bathed every veyne in swich licour
Of which vertu engendred is the flour;
Whan Zephirus eek with his sweete breeth
Inspired hath in every holt and heath
Te tender croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram his halve cours yronne,
And smale foweles maken melodey,
That slegen at the nyght with open ye
(So priketh hem nature in hir corages) –
Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages.

If your Chaucer is a tad rusty, he's saying that Spring is here, get off the couch, and move!! So, take Chaucer's immortal words to heart and make the Millikin Homestead one of your spring destinations. Week-end tours will begin after Easter. Become a docent! Hundreds of Macon County third graders will make their annual pilgrimage the week of April 19th for Mr. and Mrs. Millikin Days. Volunteer! The Homestead Annual Meeting will be April 29th. Come hear a wonderful speaker, nosh, and chat with old friends (or make new ones!) Spring is here...see you at the Homestead!

Sherri Arnold
President

Mr. "M" and Mr. "O"

James Millikin and Richard Oglesby - were they friends, acquaintances, competitors - or just two men whose amazing lives coincided in Decatur's history?

Richard Oglesby was born in Floyd'sburg, Kentucky on July 25, 1824 into a farm family of seven children. On August 2, 1826 or 27 (authorities disagree on the year) in Ten Mile Pennsylvania, James Millikin was born to Abel and Nancy Van Dyke Millikin, moderately wealthy farmers, parents of eight children.

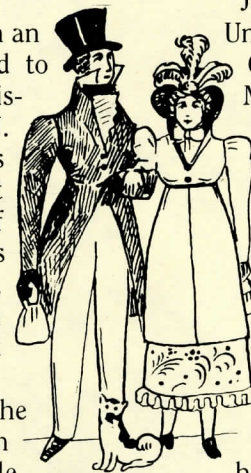
Almost nothing is known of James Millikin's childhood but Richard's is pretty much an open book. He came to Decatur in 1836, an orphan from a family decimated by a cholera epidemic. He lived here briefly, then in Indiana with an uncle, Willis Oglesby, until he returned to Decatur six years later to live with two sisters, Mrs. Henry Prather and Mrs. J.J. Peddecord. His formal education was extremely limited though in 1844 he went to Springfield to read law in the office of Judge Silas W. Robbins and ultimately was admitted to the Illinois Bar. By contrast, James Millikin attended both Washington College in Pennsylvania and, for a short time, Wabash College in Indiana.

Both were touched by the "lure of the West" - James Millikin to drive herds from his home in Pennsylvania to Danville, Illinois where he became known as "the cattle king of the prairie state." At the same time, Richard Oglesby was "lured" to California in the fever of the

Senator from Illinois. James Millikin showed little interest in politics though he ran for state senator but did not win. He was an inherent businessman - building his fortune and using it wisely for the benefit of the community. From his first job as drover and herder to land speculator, banker, philanthropist, and major endower of Millikin University he was a true citizen of Decatur. Each has left tangible marks on the city - - Oglesby with the Mansion and the street names reminiscent of his exploits in the Mexican War and the gold rush: Cerro Gordo and Eldorado. The former Oglesby School was named for him and note is made that a tulip tree was planted on the grounds in 1924 in honor of his 100th birthday.

James Millikin's greatest legacy is the University which has been of such benefit to the City. He and Anna established the Anna B. Millikin Home and built our beautiful Homestead. The Millikin Bank, though no longer an entity was ours through his efforts. Millikin Place was named in his honor and he in turn honored his mother by naming a street, Van Dyke, for her family.

James Millikin and Anna joined First Presbyterian Church in 1860 and Millikin University was established with a strong Presbyterian attachment. Mr. Oglesby's religious affiliation is listed as Episcopal though no membership is noted. He reported however that when he toured the Holy Land his interest in the Bible became rekindled to the point that on the peak of Mt. Sinai he committed the Ten Commandments to memory.



The 2004 Annual Meeting

will be held

Thursday, April 29, 2004

at 7:00 p.m.

James Millikin Homestead

125 North Pine

Decatur, Illinois

Light refreshments will be served

at 6:30 p.m.

Program

Decatur's History

and the Millikins

presented by

Mr. Rene Corcoran

Hear all about it – Rene Corcoran will share with us some interesting stories of early times in Decatur at our Annual Meeting on April 29, 2004. He has spent time reading and researching in the history room at the Decatur Public Library. While studying one topic, he finds another interesting story. You will be entertained as he shares facts and folks around the times the Millikins were in Decatur.

Oglesby was "lured" to California in the fever of the gold rush and after two years returned to Decatur with \$4500 marking him as a rich young man. Both he and James Millikin invested their money in land in the same general area in Decatur.

Anna White and Richard Oglesby were married in 1859, James and Anna Aston in 1857, a marriage which lasted until James' death in 1909. Anna Oglesby died in 1868 during her husband's first term as governor. She and two of their children are buried in Greenwood Cemetery as are Anna and James Millikin. Oglesby married Emma Gillett Keyes in 1873. Oglesby had children from both marriages while the Millikins had none.

From the time James Millikin arrived in Decatur in 1856 until he died in 1909 he remained here though he and Anna traveled, including trips to Europe. Richard Oglesby was here and there, serving as an officer in both the Mexican and Civil Wars, going west during the gold rush years and in 1856 left to travel abroad for almost two years. He lived in Springfield while Governor and had a residence in Washington during his term there.

Politically, both men were Whigs, later Republicans. Oglesby, an officer in two wars, an outstanding orator who entertained regularly with stories from his foreign travels was perceived to have the leadership qualities to make him a natural for governor, a post to which he was elected three times, resigning his second term to become United States

Ten Commandments to memory.

Though their homes were only blocks apart, did their times in the city coincide enough to allow them to interact socially? Were their personalities so opposite - the taciturn Mr. Millikin and the outgoing, story telling Mr. Oglesby - that they had not that much common ground?

Perhaps their membership at the Decatur Club which Mr. Oglesby helped establish gave them a relaxed atmosphere in which to have a game of cards or a meal - we don't know.

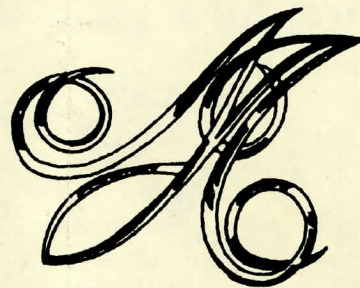
Perhaps they knew each other as members of the same political party in a town with a population of just over 20,000 especially at a time when Abraham Lincoln was becoming a prominent figure in that arena.

Were they friends?? Certainly men of this stature must have crossed paths - would that we knew where and when.

Information provided by Jason Butterick, Barbara Redford, *History of Macon County, Centennial History of Decatur and Macon County, Biographical Directory of the Governors of the United States* and Millikin University's Web page "Moments in History" was of great help in preparing this article. Special thanks to Bill McGaughey for suggesting the topic.

Lou Snelson
Historian

Mr. and Mrs. Millikin Days



If Spring is in the air, then so is our annual Mr. and Mrs. Millikin Days, an event held at the Homestead every year since 1979. Twenty-five years! The dates for 2004 are April 19-22, at which time a volunteer cast will enact a living history lesson. The program depicts a day in the life of a well-to-do couple living in a beautiful Italianate house in a style typical of the

late 19th century. All third graders in Macon County are invited.

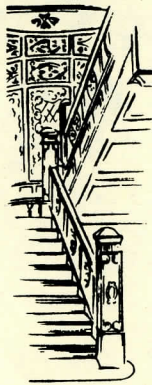
Features of the house tour are a musician playing Mrs. Millikin's pump organ in the parlor and a visit with Mr. and Mrs. Millikin, the later being not too happy as she was not informed that James had invited several hundred 3rd graders as guests that day.

The kitchen is the last stop where the kitchen maid distributes cookies to one and all. This year we owe thanks to the Kroger Co. for donating the cookies. This program is a great favorite of 3rd grade teachers in this area. If you would like to be one of the 40 or so volunteers who present this program – and remember that we are all volunteers – we would welcome your participation. Call Rosemary Idleman at 428-4031 or Donna Manuell at 428-5226 to join in the fun.

Wonderful Window News

Thank you very much to all who have given so generously for the restoration of the central panel of the stained glass oriel window. The response to our November letter requesting financial aid has been overwhelming. The Board has received \$10,000.00 in response to our request for funds to restore the central panel of the oriel window. The Board of Directors wishes to extend its sincere appreciation to all who have helped to restore this beautiful stained glass window to its former magnificence.

This spring, thanks to you, the restored central panel will join its two companion panels, which have already been restored, as they glow with vivid hues of gold, green, brown and red. We hope you will visit the Homestead to see all three of the restored panels of this Wonderful Window.



Christmas Magic at the Millikin Homestead!



In December the Millikin Homestead was open for three weekends following the Traditional Christmas Tea. Every year the Homestead is beautifully decorated for Christmas, and has been open only the first Sunday in December for the Tea. This past year, for the first time, the Homestead was open Saturdays and Sundays in December from 2 to 4 PM, to allow as many people as possible to see this elegantly decorated Victorian home. Many visitors from all over Illinois as well as other States visited the Homestead in December, and enjoyed the charm and splendor of the Christmas decorations by Board members and Donna Bland of Merchant Street Antiques and Design. One of the highlights was a special exhibit of Antique Christmas Ornaments by Brigitta Kapp. If you missed the display this past year, we would like to encourage you to plan for your visit next December.

Anne Pondelick
Volunteer Chairman

Christmas Tea, 2003

The Victorian Christmas Tea was once again a huge success. The lower level of the home was "decked out" by Merchant Street Antiques and Design while the upstairs was decorated in traditional and antique items that belong to the Homestead. Accompanying the Christmas Tea was our annual Christmas Boutique at which time lovely inexpensive gifts and edibles were available for purchase. Many thanks to those who provided items for sale. Thanks to all who attended and made purchases. We look forward to seeing you again next year!

Alice Brock
Jodie Powell
Co-Chairmen



Favorite Things

A large number of guests enjoyed their "favorite things" at the Annual Christmas Victorian Tea which took place at the Homestead on December 7th. Several music groups definitely helped to put everyone in a holiday mood. The Baum School Susuki Strings under the direction of Martha Chiligris performed, as did Christine Shields, Lyn Mallard, Leo Pondelick, Larry Oseland, and the MacArthur Madrigal Group, complete with beautiful costumes, under the direction of Elizabeth Barnabe. A hearty thanks go to all those musicians who helped to make it one of our "favorite things" during the Christmas Season.

Membership

Once again, thanks to all of you who so generously support the James Millikin Homestead. Please note that the date on your address label indicates the expiration of your membership. All donations, dues or otherwise, are greatly needed and appreciated.

Penny Honnold
Membership Chairman

Jumble

We're in study session —

The committee for the English Jumble is busy re-defining the rummage part of the sale. We have some new ideas and will report more to you in the July Newsletter. The date for the Jumble is September 25, 2004.

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JAMES MILLIKIN HOMESTEAD, INC.
P.O. Box 1501
Decatur, Illinois 62525

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2003 - 2004
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- Secretary Susan Siefferman
- Treasurer Brigitta Kapp

- Historian Lou Snelson
- Restoration Lucien Kapp
- Grounds Bill McGaughey



**Please consider the Millikin Homestead
in your estate plannings.**

Mission Statement

The Mission of the James Millikin Homestead, Inc. is to restore and preserve the interior of this irreplaceable Decatur landmark, thereby raising community awareness of our historical heritage, and promoting preservation for future generations.

James Millikin Homestead, Inc.

- Regular Member – \$25.00
- Friend – \$50.00
- Patron – \$100.00
- Life – \$1,000.00
(May be paid in four annual installments)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

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*Please make checks payable to
James Millikin Homestead, Inc.
and mail to:*

**James Millikin Homestead, Inc.
P.O. Box 1501
Decatur, Illinois 62525**

(Membership is tax deductible)

Check Our Website for Upcoming Events: <http://www.millikin.edu/millikinhomestead>