

THE HOMESTEAD FAMILY

GAZETTE

Vol. 1, No. 3

JAMES MILLIKIN HOMESTEAD, INC., DECATUR, ILLINOIS

January 1977

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE PLANS FIRST DRIVE

The Program and Membership Chairmen of the Millikin Homestead are making plans now for the first membership drive of our already exciting organization. You can help in two ways:

First, we are depending on our present members to renew their membership. At this time there are 234 members of the Homestead, in five categories; 82 Individual, 3 Student, 115 Family, 33 Patron, and one Life member. We are very grateful to all of you who have been willing to support us in our first year of organization.

Now we are asking your help in increasing our membership by recommending new members to us. If you know of someone who might be interested, please take a few minutes to talk to them about joining you in your support of the Homestead. Then call Ann Seidman (Mrs. Martin) or Linda May (Mrs. John), or send the blank provided below.

While this year has been primarily devoted to organization and the restoration of the home, our members did enjoy a trip to Bishop Hill and are looking forward to future trips, as well as other program offerings.

Several groups have used the South Parlor for their meetings.

SOUTH PARLOR DEDICATED AT RECEPTION FOR BICENTENNIAL COMMISSION

At an impressive private afternoon reception on December 12, the South Parlor of the James Millikin Homestead was dedicated. The restoration of the Parlor was made possible by a \$5000 grant from the Illinois Bicentennial Commission, which was matched by funds from the Junior Welfare association.

The ceremony was attended by members of the Macon County Bicentennial Commission, headed by Mr. Robert King and Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Redford of Millikin University, Miss Arlita Austin, representing the Illinois Bicentennial Commission, members of the Homestead Board, and members of Junior Welfare Association.

Mrs. Robert Schaub, President of the Homestead Board, introduced the speakers, Miss Austin, Mr. King, Dr. Roger Miller, Mrs. Larry Bear, President of Junior Welfare Association and Mrs. Bruce Grohne, Chairman of the Restoration project.

The successful efforts of Mrs. George Prust and her committee (Mrs. John Dunn, Mrs. John Thurston, Mrs. Vernon Talbott and Mrs. Earl Hasselbalch) in providing a beautiful setting and delicious refreshments for the cere-

NORTH, SOUTH PARLORS NEARLY COMPLETE — DINING ROOM STARTED

by Mrs. Bruce Grohne
Chairman, Jr. Welfare JMH Project

Much progress has been made on the interior work at the Homestead over the past two months.

The bulk of the restoration work in both the North and South Parlors has been completed. New muslin has been applied to the walls and ceilings and painted in lovely Victorian colors, the woodwork has been restored to its original, incredible beauty, the fireplaces have been cleaned and the bronze trim polished, and the floors have been covered with a pretty beige-background Axminster carpet. If you have not been in the home for a while, I would encourage you to pop in and see what changes have been wrought!

As has been reported before, the North Parlor is designated, "The Zonta Room" in recognition of that group's most generous gift of \$10,000 to facilitate the restoration of the room. This parlor will serve as the museum room, and will be furnished with pieces that belonged to the Millikins, and were in the home during their residence. The major pieces of furniture are currently being reupholstered after being refinished. Upon completion and hanging of the walnut shutters and rewiring and hanging of the



photo by Loren Weaver

DR. SPRAGUE'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR USE AND RESTORATION OF THE JAMES MILLIKIN HOMESTEAD

by Mrs. Robert C. Schaub, Jr.
President, James Millikin Homestead, Inc.

South Parlor for their meetings. Mrs. Vernon Talbott has agreed to be General Chairman of the Annual Membership meeting on April 28 and is planning the program.

Although most of us have barely finished putting away this year's Christmas decorations, some of our members are looking ahead, researching Victorian Christmas customs and decorations and planning an authentic Victorian Christmas in 1977.

Membership dues are: Individual, \$15; Student, \$5; Family, \$25; Patron, \$100; and Life, \$1000. (Life membership dues may be spread over four years if desired.) James Millikin Homestead, Inc., is classified as a charitable, not-for-profit organization, and membership payments are considered a tax deduction.

VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS PLANNED

The Victorian Christmas Committee wants to make many "natural" decorations, and we hope that you can help us in collecting pine cones, buckeyes, acorns, hickory nuts, etc.

If you cannot store them, contact Mrs. Martin Seidman, (428-0064) after 5 p.m., or Mrs. John May, (877-2989).

NEEDLEPOINT CLASSES AT BELL PULL

The Bell Pull, which was closed for Christmas vacation is now open again, and new stock is beginning to arrive. More bell pulls have been ordered, as well as quick point canvas and yarn and trays and trivets. Three new Needlepoint classes, taught by Lois Boyer for Richland college, are now in session, but Chris Williams will arrange classes through Junior Welfare — leave your name at the Bell Pull if you are interested.

and rewiring and hanging of the chandelier, the room will look much like it did when Mr. and Mrs. Millikin lived there. (I'm sure it will be a lovely room of which we can all be proud.)

BISHOP HILL TRIP FOLLOWED BY SPRING TRIP TO . . . ?

In October a bus-full of Homestead members and friends enjoyed a delightful trip to Bishop Hill "Utopia on the Plains," original Swedish settlement in this part of the country. With Dean and Marilyn Madden as guides, they visited several of the restored buildings, the museum, and the church, and enjoyed a delicious luncheon at the Red Oak Tea Room.

Claudia Taylor, who arranged the trip so well, says, "It was a lovely day — our thanks go to Dean and Marilyn — not only for guiding us at Bishop Hill, but for showing us what a small group of people can do in restoring not one home, but an entire village!"

In March or April, Claudia will plan another trip — perhaps to Nauvoo, St. Charles, Mo., Columbus, Ind.?? — your suggestions are welcome!

SPEAKERS BUREAU OFFERS PROGRAM

The Speakers Bureau is ready and willing to provide your group with a very interesting slide program on the James Millikin Homestead. The presentation takes about 15-20 minutes and is available upon request. Call Susan Shade (Mrs. William), Barbara Hostetler (Mrs. T. K.), Marg Evans (Mrs. Frank), Barbara Dunn (Mrs. John), Linda May (Mrs. John) or Valerie Grohne (Mrs. Bruce).

The South Parlor is designated "The Bicentennial Room," in recognition of the matching funds from the Illinois Bicentennial Commission, which greatly aided in the restoration of that room. The parlor, which will serve as the primary meeting room, was dedicated on Sunday, December 12. A bronze plaque will be ordered and installed noting the contribution made to "our home" by the State commission.

Work is currently being done on the restoration of the dining room, with a hopeful completion date of April.

Please drop in and see how pretty our house is — what a rare treasure we have!

SALE OF CARDS, NOTES AND CAPERS NETS \$1265

More than \$1265.81 was raised for the Homestead by the sale of Christmas cards, notepaper and Social Capers, according to a preliminary report of the Co-Chairman Donna Sullinberger (Mrs. R. E.) and Rose Ann Elston (Mrs. Frank).

Our thanks to these girls, Junior Welfare members, and patronesses who sold them and to all who bought them!

There is a limited supply of the notepaper on sale at the Bell Pull.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

I would like to recommend the following person(s) for membership. Please send information to:

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

President, James Millikin Homestead, Inc.

"Where do we begin?" had to be asked when the James Millikin Homestead project was initiated.

To help a well-meaning, but inexperienced, group struggle with the question, Dr. Paul E. Sprague was hired as a consultant. Dr. Sprague, who heads Historic Preservation Services in Chicago, produced a report on the physical history of the home (September, 1976 issue of the Homestead Family Gazette) and made some general recommendations for use of the building.

"Because of the way the house is arranged, there is not a great deal of choice about how to use it," he began.

"The one room that best lends itself to an authentic restoration is the North Parlor. Because it is accessible only from the hall through sliding doors, its use can be easily controlled. Also, because it is so isolated, using it as a museum room will not interfere with the possible uses of a connecting room . . . Enough furniture and furnishings from the Millikin's own collection appear to exist for furnishing it without having to purchase antiques."

He suggested that the dining room, hall and South Parlor be partially restored and used for meetings, lectures, and varied social and civic functions.

"In these rooms I would refurbish the surfaces and paint the walls in colors appropriate to the last quarter of the 19th century," he said. "The Millikin's large coat rack, now in storage, should be returned to its place in the hall, along with a few other pieces of Millikin furniture for other rooms," he said.

"Return of the Millikin table and chairs to the dining room and perhaps also the buffet, if it can be located, would make that room suitable for small meetings and similar gatherings. The South Parlor ought to be sparsely furnished so that it would lend itself to social gatherings where participants would mostly be standing. It could also serve nicely as a lecture or meeting room for 25-30 persons . . ."

"As long as there is to be a shop in the house, the Library is certainly the most suitable place. In being approached from the rear porch, it is accessible without having to pass through the two sets of formal doors at the front . . ."

Dr. Sprague suggested that the kitchen be used for catering and as a coffee room for persons working in the house.

He said the breakfast room was ideally situated for storage of folding chairs and tables, projection equipment, linen and items which cannot easily be carried back and forth from the basement or second floor. Except for "dead storage," the basement does not seem useful at all, he said. The basement and attic ought to be given the lowest of priorities in the present plans, he added.

Dr. Sprague recommended that the three main bedrooms on the second floor be considered as office space for not-for-profit agencies. These rooms ought to be refurbished to suit tenants, he said, with strict controls placed on decorating.

The only suitable place in the house for a caretaker's apartment is at the rear of the second floor, the report said.

(Continued on back page)

RESTORATION (Continued)

Regarding the Carriage House, he reported:

The only historically interesting parts of this building are its exteriors and some of the details of the horse stalls. Thus, so far as visual compatibility with the house is concerned, it is only necessary to put the exterior back the way it was originally and avoid such things as outside storm windows or doors . . .

"The building lends itself to all kinds of rough activities, such as studio art or nursery school . . . Elegant finishes should be avoided."

As many members have seen for themselves, much of Dr. Sprague's advice has been acted upon by now. The North and South Parlors are virtually finished, and work has begun on the dining room. The Library became the Bell Pull Needlework Shop in the Spring, and the caretaker's apartment was completed this fall. Exterior work on the Carriage House is completed, and the interior is nearly ready for the recommended "rough activities."

And so, at the end of our first year, we pause to look back at our beginnings — with a small degree of pride and a great amount of humility and gratitude for all who have supported us so generously with time, talent, hard work — and money. In the year ahead there will be more challenges — more progress — amid all the uncertainties of these times, we can be sure of one thing, we will continue to be dependent upon your support!

THINGS ARE HAPPENING AT THE CARRIAGE HOUSE

Things are happening at The Carriage House! . . . The walls have been painted sunshine yellow and the trim's barn red . . . the bathrooms work . . . the doors open the right way . . . bulletin boards are going up . . . the floor's going to be sealed . . . (of course there's still electrical and plumbing matters to resolve) . . . BUT, by the end of February, the downstairs area should be ready for a fantastic program of children's activities.

Even while the physical work is being completed, the Carriage House committee has been meeting to organize and plan a versatile program of arts and science workshops.

In addition to the children's workshops, some courses for adults may be offered. The Carriage House also hopes to have some cooperative programming with community groups, such as Neighborhood Arts Program, DOVE, Scouts, and North Fork Museum. A workshop on creativity sponsored by the Decatur Area Arts Council for school and community persons will be held Feb. 7 at The Carriage House, with Dr. Carol Holden, of the University of Illinois, as featured speaker.

Please watch for our announcements about the opening of The Carriage House. Brochures are going out to school children and will also be available at the library and The Bell Pull. Of course, there'll be promotion in the newspaper, radio and TV.

DOCUMENTATION COMMITTEE PREPARING RECORDS

A committee on Documentation has been formed and is in the process of preparing records on all items that will be placed in the Homestead. Starting on items in the Millikin University collection that will be loaned to the Homestead, they are completing a record sheet on each, including description, size, condition, date, etc.

A procedure concerning items offered to the Homestead has been established, as follows: when an item is offered, a loan form sheet will be filled out and signed by both the lender and JMH, Inc. authorized person. If ownership of

Meanwhile . . . we still need help! If you are interested in sharing your skills for a Carriage House course — as a teacher — or volunteer helper — let us know; if you want to work on any of the committees: program, public relations, equipment, finance, schedule and registration — we'd love to have you! If you have ideas for courses, let us know; if you want to give equipment, let us know. If you fit any of the above categories, call Linda Kehart, 422-0532; or Nancy Roucher, 428-7227. We need all the help we can get!

Thanks to all of the Homestead members who have been interested supporters of The Carriage House. After our initial programming in summer and fall, we're ready to open the doors with an exciting adventure for our community.

the item is being considered, papers will be forwarded to an Accession committee, which will determine if the item is suitable for accession; appropriate period, degree of usefulness, reasonable price if purchase is considered, etc. Upon approval of the accession committee and the lender, accession forms will be completed. Donors will receive a certificate signed by a qualified appraiser for their tax deduction records.

Under this system, items on display in the Homestead may either be on loan, in the process of accession, or the property of JMH, Inc., but all will be fully documented. Persons wishing to loan or donate items may contact a Homestead Board member or a member of the Documentation committee.

Margaret Evans (Mrs. Frank), is chairman of the committee. Members of the committee are Virginia Burner (Mrs. D. M.), Marilyn Madden (Mrs. Dean), Dorothy Morey (Mrs. Walter), Luanne Unks (Mrs. Stephen).

(The committee welcomes more assistance: call if you would like to help!)