

THE HOMESTEAD FAMILY

GAZETTE

Vol. XIV, No. 2 (XV/1)

JAMES MILLIKIN HOMESTEAD, INC., DECATUR, ILLINOIS

July 1990

A Note From Your President . . .

The 1990 Homestead annual meeting gave us the opportunity to welcome old and new friends and members to the Homestead for an enjoyable evening. We were especially happy to announce and welcome six new life members: Mrs. Williams Barnes III, Richard E. Burket, Mr. and Mrs. William Eichenauer, Stephen G. Graliker, Mr. and Mrs. Jerald Hoelting and Mr. and Mrs. Clarence E. Johnson, and two new board members: Denene Wilmeth and Shirley Johnson. After our short business meeting Mary Lou Malone, one of our volunteers and also actively involved in AAUW projects, gave a short introduction. We were pleasantly surprised with the production and recommend it for other groups to enjoy. The film gives fine coverage of women in Macon County through past decades.

We now have started our "new" year with a landscape project directed by Ann Yackel. Ann is in the Garden Club and knowledgeable about all facets of gardening. We plan to continue with more work outside since the Stephen Decatur statue is moving downtown and our focus remains on the out-of-doors. Please walk or drive around our plantings soon to see the flowers and shrubs in bloom! You will be glad you did!

Marilyn Loofbourrow and Bill McGaughey organized an ice cream social for the Illinois

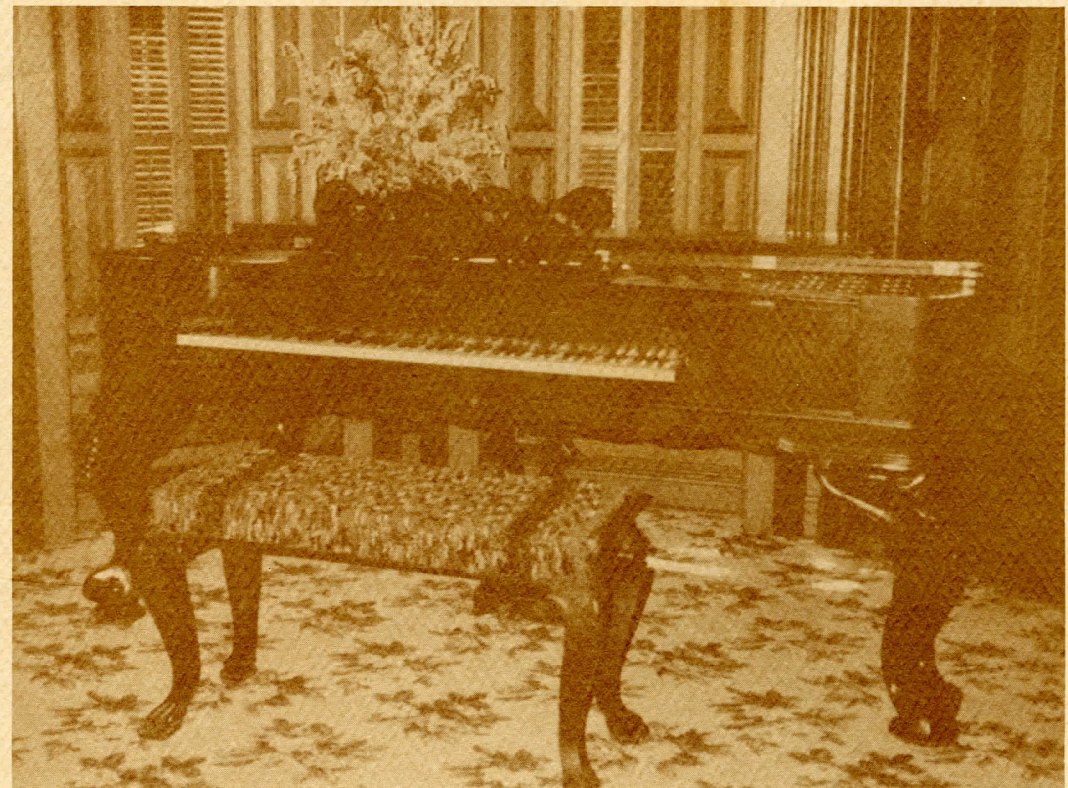
Our "New" Piano

The Homestead board is very pleased to present our latest acquisition - a 1882 Knabe rosewood square grand piano. As you can see, it is an elegant and appropriate addition to the south parlor.

Our thanks goes out to Homestead member Miriam Roszell, whose call in November of last year was instrumental in bringing this lovely piece to the Homestead. Through a friend of hers, Jean Scheffler, of Peoria, Miriam had learned of the piano, in storage for several months, which was in need of a good home. Both Miriam and Jean were on hand when Nancy and I travelled to Peopria where we immediately fell in love with the piano.

Contacting its owner, Mary Elizabeth Dalton of Brookfield, Wisconsin, I met a very nice lady. Not having been able to find a suitable home for her piano in the Peoria area, she offered it as a donation to the Homestead, and to my delight, related its history to me. Originally the piano belonged to Mrs. Dalton's grandmother who studied music, attending the Normal School in 1856. Through the generations, it remained in the Shureman family home, south of Pekin, near Delavin, Ill., where Mrs. Dalton's brother still resides.

Clark Hale, who tuned and made minor repairs felt that the piano was in excellent condition for its vintage. He found many marks



and dates of previous tuners through the years attesting to the loving care it had received from the Shureman family. It is our hope to con-

tinue to love and enjoy the piano at the Homestead for many years to come.

—Sid Shonkwiler

Stephen Decatur statue is moving downtown and our focus remains on the out-of-doors. Please walk or drive around our plantings soon to see the flowers and shrubs in bloom! You will be glad you did!

Marilyn Loofbourrow and Bill McGaughey organized an ice cream social for the Illinois Preservation Council held at Millikin University in June. Water, water, everywhere, but we ended the session with sunshine and absolutely fabulous desserts! Decatur warmed many hearts throughout the weekend and JMH contributed nicely!

Betsy Empen connected with lots of names, lists and time to create an enormous list for acquiring new members before her term on the board ended. Jane Welch, our new membership chairperson, is pleased to report that memberships have increased in every category. We hope you will take time to examine your membership status and respond accordingly!

Millikin students were found strolling the grounds and visiting during Open Houses this spring. Had they never realized our special proximity before? Whatever the reason, we always delight in new friendships and, of course, would like to see you too! Plan soon to meet a friend at the Homestead!

—Nancy Eichenauer, President

WHO DOES WHAT AT THE HOMESTEAD 1990

So that you might know who to call with a question or problem:

- President - Nancy Eichenauer
- Vice President - Gerald Redford
- Secretary - Sid Shonkwiler
- Treasurer - Jane Lawson
- Scheduling - Wyllene Griffy
- Grounds - Bill McGaughey
- House - Shirley Johnson
- Membership - Jane Welch
- Volunteers - Charlotte Dipper

Other board members who would be happy to help you:

- Marilyn Loofbourrow
- David Robertson
- Wilma Sanner
- Lois Wells
- Denene Wilmeth
- Ann Yackel

dition for its vintage. He found many marks

the Shureman family. It is our hope to con-

—Sid Shonkwiler

History—

Isabella Machan Joins Millikin Faculty, Millikin Clan

Among the relatives of James Millikin who came to make their home in Decatur there is at least one whom we have yet to meet: Isabella D. Thompson Machan. Connected to James only through ties of marriage, Mrs. Machan was possibly the first faculty member hired for Millikin University prior to its opening in 1903. Her husband was Dr. George Stover Machan, whose father, Robert M. Machan, was step-brother to James Millikin.

While teaching in the East, Isabella Machan was recruited by Dr. A. R. Taylor, Millikin's first president, to join the faculty which was then being organized. Her field was Greek and Latin. Eventually, she would head the ancient languages department at Millikin until her retirement in 1938. Her teaching career at the university was to span more than 30 years.

Mrs. Machan was also the first of the faculty to come to Decatur. When shifting sands delayed the laying of the foundations of the university buildings by a year, she served as secretary for the school while its educational program was being developed. A newspaper clipping about her commented that she often would recall seeing all the new members of the university staff as each arrived.

Mrs. Machan went on to teach a variety of related courses in the classics: Greek and Latin language, Greek and Latin literature, classical sculpture and Greek and Roman history. Her first assignment was as an assistant to Dr. James D. Rogers. She was elevated to the rank of full professor in 1915. When Dr. Rogers' position fell vacant, she was chosen to head the department. She retired as the Hawkins professor of ancient languages.

Mrs. Machan was not alone as a woman faculty member at Millikin. Her early colleagues included Eugenia Allin, librarian; Lucy Penhallegon and Harriet Crandell, instructors in English; M. Elizabeth Colgrove, modern languages; Mary Chambers and Helen Crooks, domestic science; and Ava Steele, vocal expression and physical culture.



Isabella T. Machan



Dr. George S. Machan

A 1939 Decatur Review column, "About Town," focused on Mrs. Machan's educational background and capability as a teacher. "To complete the picture obtained in study," explained the column, Mrs. Machan "traveled extensively in Europe, especially in Italy and Greece, where she walked in the footsteps of the authors who had written so entertainingly 3000 years before.

"With such a background it was not unnatural that we would hear her students say, 'She was always tolerant of our shortcomings and tried to make us understand that reading Greek was learning to see more than we would be able to if we only knew the English language.

"Many of us learned to read these old languages with pleasure and have kept books we studied 25 years ago just because of the memories they bring up. With Homer, Xenophon, Livy and Virgil we entered through the gateway into countries that we would never have visited with the English language alone. Those of us who "took Greek" felt we had something a little superior to anything to be found in the sciences.'"

Obviously, Mrs. Machan earned the respect of her students for herself and her subject matter. At her death in 1939, Millikin University President Dr. J. C. Hessler commented, "Her passing is a great loss to Millikin and to the friends of the college."

Mrs. Machan was born in New York City Nov. 29, 1866, the daughter of Humphrey P. and Anna (Sproull) Thompson. She received a bachelor's degree from Wellesley College in 1887 and subsequently taught at Hebron Academy, a preparatory school in Southern Maine, from 1889 to 1898. She did postgraduate work at Columbia University in 1902 and, while at Millikin, pursued additional studies in her spare time to earn a master's degree from Wellesley in 1905. She was married to Dr. George S. Machan in Topsham, Me., in 1898. Oddly, Homestead files contain
(continued on back page)

Thank You, Mary Lou Malone

The Board of the James Millikin Homestead is especially grateful for the group of volunteers we have who serve as "tour guides". At this printing we'd like to recognize Mary Lou Malone, who has been helping with tours for a long time. She has a cheerful voice and a way of describing things that makes those taking the tour listen with undivided attention.

Mary Lou says, "The most interesting thing about being a tour guide is the people you meet". She especially remembers the man and woman who just happened by while a tour was being conducted, came to the door and asked if they could see the Homestead. This was not your ordinary couple, as they rode into the parking lot on motorcycles and were well into their 70's! They had started from Northern California, and they were heading to the East Coast. Being interested in Victorian homes, they were impressed and delighted with the Homestead. They thanked Mary Lou for letting them look around, got back on their Hondas and rode off.

Mary Lou knows how to improvise. This is a wonderful asset since there are times when things don't go as planned. Once she arrived at the Homestead with a fellow volunteer to conduct a tour and found that the alarm had not been turned off. She sent the other volunteer to find someone to turn off the alarm, and took the visitors around the outside of the house, telling them what the inside was like. She also got locked in one time. We had a new Scheduling Chairman who had come by and turned off the alarm before the tour, then returned after the tour to turn it back on. The Scheduling Chairman didn't know Mary Lou was still inside closing shutters. Mary Lou didn't know that the Scheduling Chairman had been there to reactivate the alarm. So, when Mary Lou opened the door to leave, she was surprised to meet the security guards, neighborhood watch, and police who had been summoned. Interesting???

Mary Lou started her volunteer work when the Homestead board members, husbands, and volunteers prepared and served brunches, luncheons, and catered private parties. She says they usually brought a prepared dish from home, worked in the kitchen, and the husbands served the food. Some years later, Olive Langsdorf asked her to become a tour guide, and she's been conducting tours ever since.

Mary Lou graduated from Decatur High School and Millikin University. She met her husband, Melvin, at Millikin University. She has two sons, Patrick and Tim. Patrick lives in Rochester, Illinois, and is a Planner with the Conservation Department. Tim works in the lab at Staley's. Mary Lou has three grandchildren. When her children were young, Mary Lou's volunteer hours were spent at Decatur Memorial Hospital and the Red Cross Blood Bank. She's always been a loyal and supporting member of American Association of University Women, and more recently has given volunteer hours to Planned Parenthood. Both Mary Lou and Melvin enjoy golfing and their boat, which is on Lake Decatur.

Thank you, Mary Lou Malone. You do an outstanding job of conducting a tour, and we appreciate your willingness to serve whenever you are able.

—Jane Lawson
Volunteer Chairman '89-'90

The James Millikin Homestead
is open to the public
the last Sunday of each month
(March through October)

2 to 4 p.m.

History — Continued

an invitation to their wedding and a newspaper clipping describing it. Isabella was married in the white corded silk gown trimmed in lace, with demi-train, which her mother had worn 35 years earlier. The couple set up housekeeping in Providence, Rhode Island. They had one child, Helen W. Machan, who became a teacher of French at Kent State University in Ohio.

Dr. Machan was a physician, who earned his degree in 1893 from Bowdoin College at Brunswick, Me. He practiced at Providence. The Decatur Review reported that he died from an infection "which he received while working in pathology in the interests of mankind." His death apparently occurred in the East before his wife came to Millikin University. Dr. Machan, the eldest of six children, grew up in Macon County, Ill., where his father, Robert McFarland Machan, was a well-known farmer. Robert M. Machan had been born in Pennsylvania in 1840 to Robert and Joanna (McFarland) Machan. When Joanna Machan later married Abel Millikin, father of James, James and Robert M. Machan became step-brothers.

Robert M. Machan moved with his family to Ohio as a small boy. At age 19 he came to Macon County and assumed management of a farm belonging to his step-brother James. Later he bought a farm of his own southeast of Argenta. His obituary noted that he had

seen many changes and improvements in Illinois and could tell many interesting stories of life in Macon County, especially in country near Argenta. He was said to have been a good neighbor and friend, "always willing to favor a neighbor even at sacrifice to himself. His word was as good as his bond."

After the death of his first wife, Robert M. Machan married Laura Mayall and moved to Decatur about 1903, coincidentally with the opening of the new university. They lived at 1012 W. Wood St. When Isabella Machan arrived in Decatur as a new Millikin faculty member, she found her husband's family close by. She herself made her home at 155 Summit Ave., which she shared with her mother, Anna Thompson, who died in Decatur at age 96. Mrs. Thompson must have been a distinctive personality in her own right. It was said that she was a close follower of the news and spent most of her time reading. "She was an aviation enthusiast although she had never ridden in an airplane."

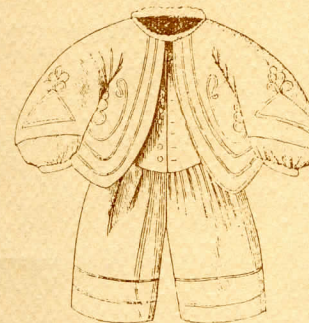
Such were the family connections of Isabella Machan, member of Millikin's original faculty, who joined also the cast of those in Decatur who very probably associated with James and Anna Millikin in their later years.

Marilyn Loofbourrow
Historian

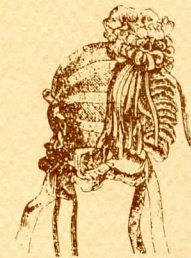


Novelties for August

—From Godey's Lady's Book



Full-suit for a little boy, suitable for any material.



An infant's cap, formed of embroidery, and trimmed with Valenciennes lace and a very large cherry velvet rosette.

SUMMER 1990

Despite a torrent of rain falling just beforehand, the James Millikin Homestead enjoyed its place in the sun as host for the closing reception of the Illinois Preservation Conference held in Decatur in late May-early June. Weather moved the event—planned in the form of an old-fashioned ice cream social—from the lawn to inside, but it did not dampen the enthusiasm of the approximately 100 preservationists from around the state who attended.

The Homestead, as well as many other historically and architecturally significant buildings of Decatur, won high praise from the knowledgeable visitors. Decatur, in general, earned top marks for its concern for preservation and history, its hospitality, friendliness and conference know-how. "Decatur is beautiful", one conference-goer exclaimed. And the words were music to the ears of Decatur preservationists who have been engaged in the long and arduous task of sweeping away the cobwebs and polishing up the very fine architectural assets that still remain to our city, then finding ways to make sure they are saved for the future.

At the Homestead, volunteers Lucien and Brigetta Kapp, Ann Shellabarger and Jean Best served as greeters and answered questions about the restoration. The ice cream social committee consisted of Marilyn Loofbourrow, chairman, ably assisted by Sid Shonkwiler and Bill McGaughey. Helping to serve were Nancy Eichenhauer, Wilma Sanner, Jane Lawson and Gail Travis. Jerald Merrick of the Heritage Network of Decatur and Macon County also provided a helping hand. And Homestead member Mary Bertram even pitched in temporarily at one busy moment in the kitchen. Ann Yackel donated potted begonias for a cheery touch on the back porch.

—Marilyn Loofbourrow



at the main st.



Summer 1990 has been a record year for lawn "happenings" at the Homestead. With several lawn parties and events scheduled throughout the summer months, the attention of our board has appropriately turned to several "outside" projects. While the work continues on moving the Stephen Decatur statue from the Homestead lawn, more excavation has been taking place around the residence proper. After much research and discussion, the JMH board approved a landscape plan for the Homestead and Carriage House. Green View Nursery of Springfield, Illinois was selected to implement the plan.

The final design incorporates several factors:
Use of native plants that were available at the turn of the century;

A somewhat eclectic collection of plants to reflect the horticultural interests of James and Anna Millikin;

Use of plant varieties which flower from Spring through Fall, thus providing color/interest for an extended period. There are eleven different species of trees and shrubs, with Daylilies and Roses in varying colors and sizes;

The existing memorial trees and shrubs were included in the new plantings.

With generous amounts of patience from Homestead members and an equally generous amount of assistance from Mother Nature, the new and diminutive plants will thrive and grow to full size in just a few years. We're excited about the fresh look of the landscape and are anxious to see the first blossoms of Spring 1991.

—Ann Yackel

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Here is a listing of our kind and generous current members, published with thanks to one and all. —Jane Welch, Membership

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Decatur, Illinois 62525
 P.O. Box 1501
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For your enlightenment and enjoyment here are some excerpts from *The Modern Domestic Cookery and Useful Receipt Book* by W. A. Henderson. Published in 1857, it is found in the Homestead library:

The Duchess of Marlborough's admirable Water for Thickening the Hair, and to prevent its falling off

This most excellent water for the hair is produced in the following manner: Distil, as cool and slowly as possible, two pounds of honey, a handful of rosemary, and twelve handfuls of the curlings or tendrils of grape vines, infused in a gallon of new milk, from which about two quarts of the water will be obtained.

Oil of Brown Paper, for Burns

Take a peice of the thickest coarse brown paper, and dip it in the best salad oil; then set the paper on the fire, and carefully preserve all the oil that drops for use. This is said to be an admirable remedy for all sorts of burns. Oil of writing paper, collected in a similar manner, is often recommended for the tooth-ache.

"Every lady who fills the situation of a mistress of a family, will, I am confident, upon mature reflection, be convinced, that much depends on the vigilance of her conduct, as far as respects good management and domestic economy; the most trifling events should claim her notice, for the keen eye of a superior can alone restrain sevants and dependants within proper bounds, and prevent that waste which would otherwise ensue. This is a line of conduct which the present price of every article of life renders still more imperative. No female should ever harbour a moment's doubt respecting her power to conduct and manage a family, even if previously unused to it, as many of her senior friends will freely give her their advice, and a short practical experience will soon render her able to estimate the best mode of management, and also teach her how to keep her family expenditure agreeable to her income, and how to lay out her money to the greatest advantage."

Please make checks payable to

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

Student Member Friend Member
 Individual Member Patron Member
 Family Member Business Member
 Life Member

Student Membership\$5.00 per year
 Individual Membership\$15.00 per year
 Family Membership\$25.00 per year
 Friend Membership\$50.00 per year
 Patron Membership\$100.00 per year
 Business Membership\$200.00 per year
 Life Membership\$1,000 (payable over four years)

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____
 Telephone _____ Zip Code _____

(Membership is tax deductible)