

THE HOMESTEAD FAMILY

GAZETTE

Vol. XIV, No. 1 (XIV/3)

JAMES MILLIKIN HOMESTEAD, INC., DECATUR, ILLINOIS

March 1990

A Note From Your President . . .

It's that time again! Spring . . . and the end of our "year" at the Homestead. As I look back over the year, I realize that it's been a kind of inward, quiet year (never seems all that "quiet" at the time, when we're embroiled in the day-to-day workings of running the place!). The board has worked together smoothly and diligently to keep membership, rentals, tours and volunteers well in hand. We're in best-ever fiscal shape, and have a new cleaning lady, Linda Gagnon, who's keeping the house in good shape, too.

Our annual projects, Mr. and Mrs. Millikin Days and the Victorian Christmas Tea, have gone very well, and although we took a rest from the Whodunit fundraiser this year, I don't think we've seen the end of it. We ordered informal notecards to sell (still available in the store, \$4.00 for a box of ten), and I have a great sense of accomplishment from what I've done in our records closet-organizing and consolidating the files from over the years, arranging them so that they're easily accessible and can peacefully coexist there with the Christmas decorations.

Regretably, our April annual meeting will mark the end of the second term of long-time board member, Betsy Empen. Betsy came to the Homestead board originally from Junior Welfare and was involved with the Bell Pull, as well as the restoration of the Homestead

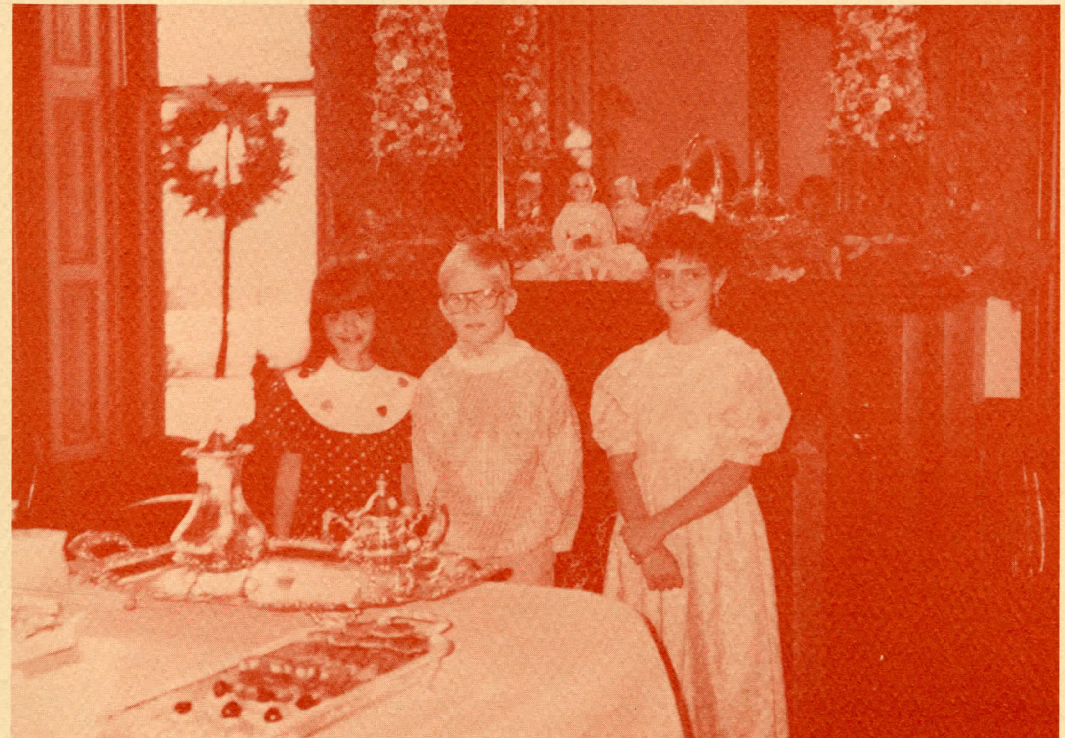
Christmas Tea

The Homestead board was pleased to receive many members, honored guests and community friends at the annual Victorian Christmas Tea. The house was resplendent in its holiday finery. Our lovely dried flower arrangements were augmented with evergreens, holly and pinecones under the direction of Ann Yackel and Marilyn Loofbourrow. The tree was decorated with old favorites and many new ornaments, carefully chosen by Betsy Empen, Jane Welch and Marilyn Loofbourrow. Our members enjoyed our traditional punch and cookies accompanied by the strains of classical guitar music. The boutique was readied by Nancy Eichenauer and Lois Wells and offered many treasures handmade by Homestead board members and alumna Dorothy Smethers.

Our honored guests, as has become our tradition, were the third graders who had written the three best "thank yous" after their visit to the Homestead during Mr. and Mrs. Millikin Days. They were: Cathy Cole, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Cole, from Washington School; Jennifer Rule, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Larry Rule, from Parsons School; and Ryan Stoa, son of Mr. and Mrs. Terry Stoa, from the Lutheran School. The children were also invited to appear on the WZ Breakfast Club, where they read their letters and talked about their visit to the Homestead.

Later in the afternoon, the doors were thrown open to the public so that they could enjoy the holiday decorations, especially our splendid Victorian fir Christmas tree, which they had glimpsed from Main Street.

Board Enjoys Entertaining



Cathy Cole, Ryan Stoa, Jennifer Rule at the Victorian Christmas Tea.

Christmas decorations.

Regretably, our April annual meeting will mark the end of the second term of long-time board member, Betsy Empen. Betsy came to the Homestead board originally from Junior Welfare and was involved with the Bell Pull, as well as the restoration of the Homestead. She has been a wonderful, devoted board member and supporter of the Homestead, serving four terms as treasurer and twice as boutique co-chairman. I have especially appreciated her insight, enthusiasm and willingness to do whatever needs to be done. We'll be missing Betsy for a long time.

We'll also be missing Sonja Rathje's capable, skillful organization of projects such as Mr. and Mrs. Millikin Days and the Christmas Tea. Sonja is moving on to other things after serving on our board for three years. Thanks so much and best of luck Sonja and Betsy!

I want to call your attention next to several up-coming events about which we are excited at the Homestead. One is the Illinois Preservation Council Conference reception to be held at the Homestead June 2. You'll find a detailed account of this in the "Gazette". Another is a professionally juried art show and sale, sponsored by the Decatur Area Arts Council and the Barn Colony, which will be held on the grounds of the Homestead June 30 and July 1. The last is our own annual meeting which is scheduled for Thursday, April 26, at 7:30 p.m. After our short business meeting, the program will be a showing of the AAUW's new video production, "Remember the Ladies". Shot "on location" at the Homestead and other Decatur sites, the program showcases the AAUW's vintage apparel collection and 18 Decatur women who "helped to settle Decatur and advance civic activities in Decatur and Central Illinois." We're looking forward to seeing this film which is the combined effort of approximately 60 local women and took over one year to produce. **Please** plan to attend!

In closing, let me say—corny but heartfelt—it has been my pleasure and privilege to serve the Homestead as President these past two years. I am pleased to be turning over the reigns to the capable hands of Nancy Eichenauer, and look forward to a great year at the James Millikin Homestead.

—Sid Shonkwiler, President



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Nominating Committee — 1990 Report

The 1990 Nominating Committee would like to submit the following slate of officers and board members for your approval:

President - Nancy Eichenauer
Vice-President - Gerald Redford
Secretary - Sid Shonkwiler
Treasurer - Jane Lawson

First three year board term:

Wilma Sanner
Denene Wilmeth

Second three year board term:

David Robertson
Sid Shonkwiler

Charlotte Dipper,
Nominating Chairman
Marilyn Loofbourrow
David Robertson

Heritage Network Formed

The Heritage Network of Decatur and Macon County was formed in 1988 and adopted by-laws toward the end of 1989 in order to guide and support individuals and groups in collecting, preserving and interpreting the heritage of Decatur, Macon County and Central Illinois. The Millikin Homestead is a member organization in the network, where it is represented by board member Marilyn Loofbourrow. Other member organizations are: The Governor Oglesby Mansion, Birks Museum of Millikin University, Decatur Historical and Architectural Sites Commission, Macon County Conservation District, Macon County Historical Society, Near West Side Restoration and Preservation Society, Decatur Geneological Society, Daughters of the American Revolution, Decatur Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, Civil War Round Table and Moweaqua Coal Mine Museum. Dan Sanner is currently chairman.

History—

Saltbox to Cabin to Homestead — Bartlett Family Moved West

In two generations Anna Millikin's maternal ancestors—the Bartletts—were transformed by the tide of history from a sea-faring family on the blustery New England shore to landlubbers in the rolling hills of Ohio.

As we have learned, Anna's great grandfather, Capt. William Bartlett, served the colonies in the American Revolution, and for his patriotism, suffered financial reverses that led him, with wife Joanna, to seek a new life on the western frontier, then centered in Ohio. Indian warfare, however, stopped them from going further than Pennsylvania, where they remained. Bartlett was one of the original shareholders of the Ohio Company, but it would be left to his son Henry to make the new territory home.

Henry Bartlett, grandfather to Anna, was born Feb. 3, 1771, at Beverly, Mass., in a house built by a great grandfather of another line. He was one of eight children. In 1788, his father, a shipmaster, relinquished his business in Massachusetts and brought his family, including Henry, by riverboat and wagon to Sumrell's Ferry, near West Newton, Pa. Henry, then 17, has received an education from Phillips Academy at Andover, Mass. For a few years he helped on the Pennsylvania family farm, then took up merchandising at Meritstown, Pa. He married Betsey Corey Jan. 24, 1792, in Fayette Co., Pa.

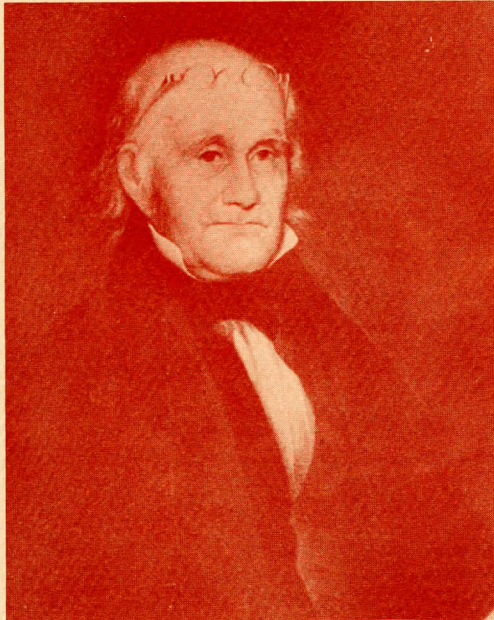
In the fall of 1796, Henry, his wife and three small daughters made the adventurous move from Pennsylvania to Marietta, Ohio. The family journeyed by pirogue from Sumrell's Ferry to Marietta, and spent the winter in the town's stockade, or wooden fort, at the house of a relative. With spring, they again went by pirogue down the Ohio and up the Hocking River, to Athens, Ohio, and then on to a farm where Henry built a home for his family—a

one-room log cabin, said to be large, but with one door, one window and a "good large fireplace." Instead of glass, which could not be had, the window sash was covered with oiled paper to let in light. The wall, with stakes driven into it, formed part of the support for a make-shift bed.

According to a descendant who recorded her grandmother's recollections, Betsey Bartlett came to Ohio well supplied with bedding, and she was the only one in the whole settlement that had any tea, having taken a ten pound chest of tea with her into the wilderness. Whenever anybody was sick, "they had to have some of Mrs. Bartlett's tea." When the tea supply was exhausted, the settlement sent 40 miles away for more. Betsey also had the only needle for sewing buckskin breeches, "which were altogether worn in those days," and the needle was used so much that it was worn off and ground down till it was so short "they could hardly sew with it." There was no doctor in the neighborhood, and when the birth of a child approached, Henry Bartlett wrote to invite an old midwife in Pennsylvania to the new country, promising to give her a farm and build her a cabin. "So what was their surprise and job one morning in 1798 to see the old lady and two boys trudging over the hill" without any advance notice of her coming.

The first settlers were annoyed by panthers, wolves and bears. Wolves came often to the cabin door. Betsey once went a few rods from the house to gather blackberries with a little child in arms. She set the child down and stepped over a log to reach some berries only to behold a panther lying beside it. She sprang for the child and reached the house without the panther following. Once two of her

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Henry Bartlett
Grandfather of
Anna Millikin

children were out playing when they saw what seemed to be a small panther. The spirited youngsters killed it with sticks and brought their trophy home. Surprised and amazed at its smell, they learned it was a polecat and that water could not cleanse them. They were stripped and their clothes buried until the earth had deodorized them.

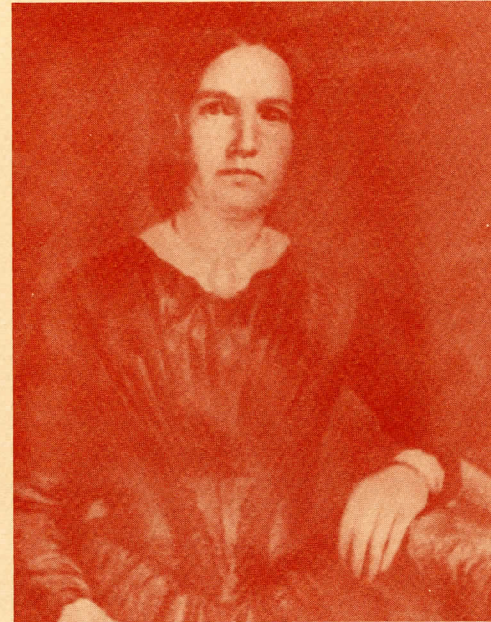
At the first sale of lots in the town of Athens in 1804, Henry brought property there and moved into a little cabin in the village. He later built one of the first brick residences erected at Athens. He entered into the political life of the burgeoning area and was County Clerk from the organization of Athens County in 1805 until 1836. He also was clerk of the Board of Commissioners, a job which paid \$30.00 annually. The penmanship he brought to his work was said to have been "as finished as copperplate." He served as a Justice of the Peace for 40 years until his death. It was reported that he invariably presented the marriage fees he earned as a gift to the bride in each case. He became a Councilman, then Mayor, of Athens as well as secretary and auditor of Ohio University. A member of the First Presbyterian Society of Athens, he was instrumental in building the second courthouse which also was put to use as a religious meeting place.

Henry was said to have been genial, pleasant, a sincere Christian of great purity of character, with a thoroughly judicial mind and excellent capacity for business. He was considered "almost indispensable in the management of county affairs." He also was remembered for his pleasure in telling or playing a joke. Soon after arrival in Ohio he taught school in a log schoolhouse from 1802 until 1806. A former pupil recalled how the scholars, according to a custom in frontier schools, on a pre-arranged day, shut themselves in the schoolhouse and barred the schoolmaster from the building. But Henry procured a roll of brimstone from a near-by house, climbed to the schoolhouse chimney, dropped the brimstone down into the fire below, covered the chimney and soon smoked the boys into "unconditional surrender."

Of his wife, it was said that Betsey was a woman of strong mind and great energy, a great reader and a woman of decided opinions and prejudices. She was very handsome and carried her beauty into old age. She was a member of the church and a faithful attendant, always at prayer meetings and often joining in singing even at an advanced age.

Henry and Betsey had twelve children: Joanna, Hannah, Theresa and Betsey (twins), Mary

Betsey (Corey) Bartlett
Grandmother of
Anna Millikin



Harriet, Hettie, Rebecca, John, Love Anna, William, Henry and Henrietta. Daughter Hettie, born Mar. 17, 1801, in Athens Co., was, of course, the mother of Anna Millikin. Daughter Joanna was the ancestor of Charles Gates Dawes, a Vice President of the United States. Another daughter, Betsey Baker, lived with her family in Paris, Ill., where it appears that Hettie often visited from her home in Macon Co.

While less is known of Hettie's tastes, it is said of her sister Joanna that she had an appreciation of beautiful things and that her gold-framed mirrors, lusterware and fine china, brought over the Allegheny Mountains in wagons, were still cherished by her great grandchildren.

It is interesting to note, as we follow the Bartlett family, that members moved, from a New England saltbox to frontier cabin, then early brick residence and, in the person of Anna Millikin, to a Victorian mansion on the prairie. This glimpse into Bartlett history is taken from the book, *Dawes-Gates Ancestral Lines Vol. II*, based on research by Anna's first cousin, Betsey Shipman Gates.

Marilyn Loofbourrow
Historian

State Preservation Conference

The James Millikin Homestead will serve as the setting for a reception planned for the 1990 Illinois Preservation Conference, to be held in Decatur May 31 through June 2. On June 2, the visitors will be entertained in the atmosphere of a Gay '90's ice cream social on our lawn. The house will be available for touring and visitors may stroll Millikin Place, where it is expected that one or more homes will also be open. A German band will provide music on the Homestead grounds.

This is the 10th annual Illinois Preservation Conference and Decatur's first time to be chosen as host city. The theme of the conference is: "Preserving Illinois: The State of the Future". Local sponsors of the conference are the Landmarks Preservation Council of Illinois and the Heritage Network of Decatur and Macon County, with Linda Arends as general chairman.

The conference will offer a variety of meetings and workshops for both professional and amateur preservationists from around the state. Most sessions will be held at Millikin University and will be open to the public by registration. Other special events of the three-day conference will include a reception at the Powers-Jarvis Mansion on May 31 and a 1920's theme dinner at the Masonic Temple June 1. The dinner will be followed by a gala social on Merchant Street, which will be blocked off for the occasion. A Dixieland band will perform on the street and guests may visit adjoining shops. Local committee members involved in planning various events are looking forward with pleasure to "showing off" Decatur's unique architectural and historical treasures and its preservation success stories.

