

# THE HOMESTEAD FAMILY



## GAZETTE



Vol 1, No. 1

JAMES MILLIKIN HOMESTEAD, INC., DECATUR, ILLINOIS

July 1976

### NOTES FROM CORPORATION MEETING

A corporation was formed on October 16, 1975, to operate and promote interest in and support to the renovation of historical landmarks, including the renovation of the James Millikin Home by Millikin University; to give, promote and encourage financial assistance and support for the benefit of said James Millikin Home and any not-for-profit organization which is engaged in the renovation or preservation of historical landmarks; and to promote and encourage historical education and the appreciation of historical landmarks.

The first Board of Directors, to whom we are all grateful for spearheading this effort were: Jeanine Schaub, Marie Bennett, Margaret Graves, Valerie Grohne, Barbara M. Hostetler, Marilyn Madden, Linda May, Mary L. Mittelberg, Ellen L. Sheffer, Dolores B. Simon, Marianna W. Williams.

According to the By-laws any person interested in participating in the activities of the corporation may become a member upon the payment of dues. There are five classes of membership, for which annual dues are: Individual, \$15; Student, \$5; Family, \$25; Patron, \$100; Life, \$1,000.

The first Annual Meeting was set for the fourth Thursday of April to elect directors. There are to be eight directors representing Junior Welfare and seven General directors for the first ten years. In the eleventh year, Junior Welfare directors may be replaced by General directors.

#### First Annual Meeting

At the first Annual Meeting on April 22, the following officers were elected: Mrs. Robert C. Schaub, Jr., President, Mr. David Jack, Vice-President; Mrs. Walter Morey, Secretary; and Mrs. C. W. Hicks, Treasurer.

Junior Welfare Board members will be Mrs. Schaub, Mrs. Clarence Glenn, Mrs. Donald Sheffer,

### RESTORING THE LANDSCAPE

Mr. Charles Schroll, recent graduate in Landscape Architecture from Michigan State University, began his duties as a summer intern at the Homestead before his final exams were over in Lansing. Chosen from hundreds of applicants by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Mr. Schroll's interest in historic reconstruction began in college when he wrote two papers on the subject; his involvement with community government began when he worked twenty hours a week for the City of Lansing at the same time. (And his hopes for a future career would include a combination of both.)

"A landscape architect is a kind of 'go-between'," Mr. Schroll says. "He should speak for the integrity of the landscape, but he must also be sensitive to the present needs of the community. A parking lot was definitely not a part of the original landscape at the Homestead, but it's a necessity today!"

The parking lot which is not "distracting" is only one part of Mr. Schroll's vision of what the finished plan will include. All planting will be in keeping with the era—the restored landscape should look the way James Millikin planned it. Trees and other plantings of size will be placed at some distance from the house, to serve as a kind of backdrop. Foundation plantings will be low and minimal, because Victorian homes stood alone to be admired for their architectural beauty.

However, some areas that now look "over-planted" may be thinned out, and there could be optional, desirable additions such as a gazebo, sun dial, etc. The latter will be presented as a package, with approximate costs, available to civic groups or individuals who may wish to make such a gift.

The five-page outline of "Procedures for Restoration" reflect the sincerity, intelligence and dedication of the writer.

### A PROGRESS REPORT

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

If you have driven by the Millikin Homestead in the past few weeks, you may have noticed the flurry of activities in and around the Home, Carriage House, and lawn.

Kayhs Construction, under contract to Millikin University, is working on stabilization of the Carriage House, with special attention to roof, windows, doors, and tuckpointing. Millikin is also drawing plans and exploring estimates for installation of central air-conditioning in the home, and and improved heating system for the second floor.

#### Caretaker's apartment

Work has also begun on the creation of a caretaker's apartment on the second floor of the home. The project consultant, Dr. Paul Sprague, has submitted a plan for the apartment, which will maintain the integrity of the home, while affording privacy and convenience for the caretaker. The rooms to be used for the apartment are the two west rooms and the two small storage rooms adjacent to the rear hallway. Upon completion of the structural phases of the work, the walls will be replastered and painted and appliances will be purchased. It is hoped that the apartment will be ready for occupancy by the end of August.

#### Restoration of Parlors

Work on the restoration of the North and South parlors has been initiated with the removal of picture moldings, stripping of all canvas from the walls and ceilings, washing of the walls and ceilings, and the freeing of the windows in both. Being able to have the windows open may not sound terribly thrilling, but to the volunteers who are currently busy using solvents to strip or re-shellac woodwork, these open windows are a necessity. We would welcome your participation. Please call Mrs. Bruce Grohne (877-6948), Mrs. Donald

### THE FIRST YEAR

Dr. Roger Miller, President, Millikin University

One year has elapsed since Millikin University and the Junior Welfare Association formed a working partnership to renovate and refurbish the James Millikin Homestead, one-time residence of the University's founder. During this year, extensive work has been completed on the exterior of the house, and similar rehabilitation of the Carriage House is underway. The inside of this historic house is also undergoing a facelift in preparation for new community uses and activities.

The accomplishments of the first year of cooperative effort have been marked by the continuing commitment of Millikin's Board of Trustees to provide funds for the exterior preservation and the success of Junior Welfare Association to attract both gifts and grants to restore the interior.

It has been a pleasure working with Junior Welfare in this first year and watching our joint project move through research and planning stages toward authentic restoration. We believe that Mr. and Mrs. Millikin would approve of our goal and applaud the community's generous interest that encourages and sustains it. We are all grateful for that tangible support.

### "A FUTURE AS WELL AS A PAST"

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

"A house is infinitely communicative, and tells many things besides the figures of its master's income. There are houses that confess intellectual penury, and houses that reek of enlightenment," wrote R. W. Chapman.

I can't tell you anything about Mr. Chapman, other than he rated a couple of inches in Bartlett's **Familiar Quotations**, but I think he'd have joined James Millikin Homestead, Inc.

If any house has been successful in communicating, it is the James Millikin Homestead. I don't believe that I exaggerate when I say it's the most loved building in Decatur.

In the past two months, over 200 families have said they care about the Homestead. They care that the 100-year-old mansion have a future as well as a past. They care that it be returned to its former Victorian excellence, and they care that it again be useful to the community. Their memberships say that they want to preserve the past and enrich the future.

The Millikin Homestead is one of the most prominent buildings in the state. Fortunately, enough people in Decatur and Macon County realize that the structure that originally cost \$18,000 is priceless today and are taking the necessary steps to see that it—unlike so many other old buildings in Illinois—won't be lost.

You who are members are appreciated. You are a part of what can grow into a vital, exciting organization. The faith you have demonstrated in joining such an infant band will be justified.

Mrs. E. Frank Evans, Mrs. C. W. Hicks, Mrs. Bruce Grohne, Mrs. John May, Mrs. Thomas Hostetler.

#### First Meeting of Board

The first meeting of the Board was held on May 3 at the home of Mrs. Schaub. The first Monday of each month was selected as the regular meeting time of this Board.

Valerie Grohne, chairman of Junior Welfare's Millikin Homestead committee, explained its function as a coordinating committee to make plans for fund-raising and other projects related to restoration and refurbishing the Millikin Homestead. The Active and Patroness members of this committee are: Caroline Likins, Jane Welch, Ev Gehres, Luann Unks, Ellen Sheffer, Jo Coleman, Mary Ward, Donna Sullemer, Margaret Graves, Sherry Wiant, Roseanne Elston, Beth Ann Satterfield and Sue Shade.

Other committees will be:

Finance, Barb Hicks, David Jack, Margaret Graves.

Membership, Ann Seidman and Linda May

Standing rules, Jerald Jackson and Val Grohne.

Publication and Newsletter, Adele Glenn.

Documentation, Marv Evans.

Personnel, John Hall and Gale Benner.

Policies, Val Grohne.

Assistant secretary, Barb Hostetler.

#### Second Board meeting

On June 7, the Corporation Board held its second meeting.

The Membership Committee reported that membership had increased to 200.

This committee will also be responsible for programs, which will include an Annual meeting in the Spring and a Victorian Christmas party on December 5, with Mrs. Jeffrey Taylor as Chairman, for members of the Homestead Corporation.

The first phase, surveying the site, was completed on June 28. In measuring the contours of the five acre plot for the map he will present, Mr. Schroll not only found a five foot variation but also discovered evidence of a sunken garden and tennis courts. Some of the photographs taken by Mr. Schroll will be used in his final presentation.

Indeed, Mr. Schroll sees this work as a "picture project, showcasing the past." At the same time he is enthusiastic about the "reutilization of a functional structure, not as a museum only, but for practical purposes, like the Bell Pull shop and offices. We're recycling an old building!"

Also in Phase I, he has studied the surrounding neighborhood, observing how the open space is enjoyed by adults and children. (Like all of us who are involved with the Homestead, he is delighted with the community response, and impressed with Decatur's civic spirit.)

Phase II, site inventory and analysis, was to be completed in preliminary form on June 25.

Since then, Mr. Schroll has been researching history for clues to the original landscaping plans and subsequent changes. (He would be happy to have anyone with information on this aspect contact him at the office of Mr. Lyle DeWitt or at the home of Mrs. George Madden.)

Asked about his feelings about the Homestead and the Millikin family at this point, Mr. Schroll answered, "Mr. Millikin seems to have been a fairly conservative individual, one who planned ahead for his home here, to the extent that he planted trees long before the house was built—the cucumber magnolia may have been one of those. Both Mr. and Mrs. Millikin were aesthetic in their taste and must have taken great pride in the beauty they created."

By July 23, Mr. Schroll is requiring of himself fairly complete site and detail plans, including facilities for contemporary usage, planting programs, resources, and maintenance.

(Continued on next page)

on the writer.  
Sheffer (429-1104), or Mrs. Stephen Unks (429-3067).

Discovered hiding under layers of paint, which had been applied to the canvas covering the ceilings in both parlors were exquisite, hand-painted roses and leaves! The roses in the North parlor were yellow, shading to gold, while those in the South parlor were primarily shadings of pink to deep red. We hope to be able to have sample pieces of the canvas cleaned and displayed in the home.

Estimates are being secured for the reproduction of walnut shutters which were and will be used as window coverings in the rooms on the first floor.

The North parlor of the home will be an authentic reproduction of the original floor, and with all furnishings to be properties which belonged to the Millikins and which were in the North parlor at the time of Mrs. Millikin's death.

Several pieces of this furniture which were stored at Millikin University are now being reupholstered and refinished. Mr. Wayne Mosby is donating his time to recover a black horsehair settee.

Restoration of the North parlor is being funded through the generosity of Decatur Zonta Club, which pledged \$10,000 for this project. The money is being raised through the sale of their books "People and Places in Old Decatur."

#### Landscape Architect Interns Here

Upon driving by the Homestead, you may have seen a young man with surveyor's equipment stalking the lawn. That, no doubt, was Charles Schroll, our Summer Intern in Landscape Architecture, who is busily studying the property in preparation for a final report on placement of parking facilities, adequate screening plantings, etc. Mr. Schroll's services were made possible by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, sponsor of the twelve week summer program, which pays 1/3 of his salary, and by the City of Decatur, which is paying the remaining 2/3 of his salary. Mr. Schroll is staying at the home of Mrs. George P. Madden,

(Continued on next page)

## DECATUR'S FIRST NEWSPAPER

In our search for a name for this fledgling newsletter, we were led by Miss Charlotte Meyer to Mabel Richmond's **Centennial History of Decatur and Macon County**, published in 1930 by the Decatur Review in co-operation with the Decatur and Macon County Centennial Association.

In Chapter XXXVI, we read, "One spring day in the year 1851 a man boarded the stage in Bloomington and rode to Decatur to give the place the "once-over." He had heard about Decatur and decided to look it over before determining on a location to establish his business. He liked the town. He was encouraged by Decatur Citizens to locate here. In fact, he was told that Decatur needed a business of his kind, and he was urged to come.

"In a short time the man, whose name was James B. Schoaff, was back again with his 'plant' loaded on a wagon. It was soon set up. It turned out its first product June 26, 1831.

"Decatur had made another stride. The first product of that plant was Decatur's first newspaper issue, and nearly all Decatur turned out to get a copy of it as it came from the press... Schoaff's Family Gazette was the name of the first newspaper published in the city. James B. Schoaff was owner, managing editor, reporter, circulation manager, advertising force, printer, all in one... Mr. Schoaff was born in Williamsport, Md. When living in Charleston he had met and married Nancy Hanks, daughter of Dennis Hanks and niece of the mother of Abraham Lincoln.

## DRAMA FOR CHILDREN

Two theatrical events have been included in the Childrens' Activities for this summer. The first was the Premiere Performance of **Androcles and the Lion** by the Travelling Troupe of Richland Community College on June 28.

The second will be a childrens' matinee performance of **Carnival** to be presented at 2 p.m., July 25 at Kirkland Center. Admission is one dollar and adults may come if accompanied by a child.

We are most appreciative of the hard work done by Mrs. Roucher, Mrs. Michael Kehart and Mrs. Robert Kimmons and all the members of Junior Welfare and so many talented people in the community who helped with the workshops.

## THE BELL PULL

In the midst of the remodeling and refurbishing, Junior Welfare's Bell Pull Shop, tucked away in the Library of the Homestead, continues to be a popular spot for those looking for original and unusual Needlepoint, Crewel, counted cross-stich, or other needlework to buy.

For those who have not yet learned these skills, but are desirous of instruction, Needlepoint Classes, for both adults and children, are now being held, and will continue through the Summer and Fall. If you are interested, call Mrs. John M. Williams (423-3954), or leave your name at the shop. The class meets one day a week, three basic stitches are taught, and the cost is a mere \$12, which includes a pillow top to make.

(Some wise Mothers are purchasing latchook rugs for the entire family to work on during idle hours.)

If you would like to work in the shop, substitutes are always needed, and anyone with knowledge of finishing could be most helpful. The Bell Pull is open from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, Saturday mornings only. Call Mrs. Williams to volunteer!

Our thanks to Bil Larrick, Decatur Public Library Artist, who not only designed our logo and masthead, but helped us research our name!

#### Our New Historian

Thanks, too, to Mrs. William Simon, 2303 Western Drive, who has agreed to serve as Historian for the Homestead. She will appreciate receiving extra clippings that you may have about Homestead — especially early events.

#### Free Folding Chairs

We can foresee a need for folding chairs for meetings at the Homestead — and the A & P is now giving them away for \$200 in cash register tapes. Save them and turn them in for the folding chairs if you can accumulate that amount easily — if not, please send or give them to one of the members of the Homestead Board. Thanks!

#### RESTORING (Continued)

The final Phase is the Implementation Program, finished drawings phasing sequences with packages that will allow implementation over a period of time.

The final note on our Summer Intern's very complete plan adds a personal, wryly humorous insight into the personality of Charles Schroll.

It is a note on supervision, depicting on a graph, the "rather unique position" of the Summer Intern. At the top is John Q. Public, under that, the National Trust, then the City of Decatur, then Millikin University, then the Homestead Corporation, then Junior Welfare Association, then, to the left, Paul Sprague, consultant, and opposite, DeWitt, Amdal — and, at the bottom—cosponsored Summer Intern... and the following:

"These interest groups will collectively be known as the "Client." The needs and desires, hopes and aspirations of all those concerned citizens will, hopefully be examined and carefully considered. A synthesis is in order; but a synthesis that is painstakingly careful to uphold the overall integrity of the James Millikin Homestead. The subjective opinion of the artist will remain, necessarily, secondary to achieving this goal. However, his concepts will be considered on a par with those of the client!"

8 Powers Lane Place, and his office space is being provided by Mr. Lyle DeWitt in the offices of DeWitt, Amdal Associates. If you find that you have an extra morsel on your table, and would enjoy the company of a very nice, hard-working, and very interesting young man, Mr. Schroll **does** enjoy a home-cooked dinner!

#### Children's Activities

Also evident on the lawn recently have been groups of children from the community who have been enjoying the many and varied classes in the Arts and Sciences which have been sponsored and arranged by Mrs. Jerry Roucher and her committee of Junior Welfare Association. When work on the Carriage House is completed, these activities will move inside. Mrs. Roucher and her committee deserve a round of applause for a job well done and one which has brought much pleasure to many children.

#### Future Activities

Plans for fund-raising events to support the restoration of the interior are being finalized. On Sunday, October 3, Junior Welfare will sponsor the Second Annual Fall Festival on the lawn of the Homestead. In addition to a tour of the restored rooms of the Home, there will be a concert by the Municipal Band, Arts and Crafts instruction for children, a Booth with crafts, plants, the new Junior Welfare Cookbook, Zonta Books, and Homestead notepaper for sale, and an Antique and Collectibles Auction. (If you have an antique or collectible items that you would donate for the Auction, please contact Mrs. William Shade (422-1709).

Also available at the Fall Festival will be the 1976 Christmas Card with the Loren Weaver Snow Scene of the Home in color on the front. We think you will be very pleased with the appearance and quality of the card this year, and hope you will want to share the beauty of "Our Home" with your friends — and support the continuing restoration process.

We members of Junior Welfare are proud to be involved in this exciting project and are especially gratified to see the wide base of community support which the restoration of this beautiful home has received. We thank you for your support and interest.

JAMES MILLIKIN HOMESTEAD, INC.  
125 N. Pine St.  
Decatur, Illinois 62522

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 Miss Margaret C. Wood  
 Mrs. Floyd W. Zimmer

**MEMBERSHIP OPEN TO ALL**

A complete listing of all members of James Millikin Homestead, Inc., will be published in the future. If your name is not listed as you would like it above, or if you would like to become a member of this august group, please contact the Membership Chairman, Mrs. John F. May, or the Editor of this Gazette, Mrs. Clarence Glenn.

The Membership Committee is now in the process of planning programs for the coming year. They would be happy to have your suggestions for Special Events to be held at the Homestead.