

THE HOMESTEAD FAMILY

GAZETTE

Vol. XXIV, No.1

JAMES MILLIKIN HOMESTEAD, INC., DECATUR, ILLINOIS

July 1999



Fifth Victorian Doll Tea



June 19 was a beautiful day at our James Millikin Homestead, ideally suited for the fifth annual Victorian Doll Tea!! Little girls and grownups (including a grandpa or two) came to drink pink lemonade or tea, dine on very specially prepared confections, and look at dolls and doll houses.

Tables were centered with delightful floral arrangements made by Garden Club of Decatur. Every year these generous members donate flowers and skill to fill teacups with perfect nosegays. We are so grateful to them.

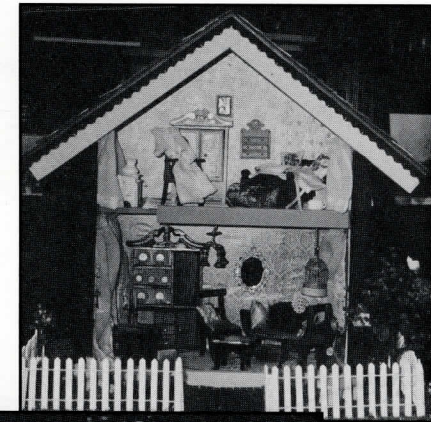
Bill McGaughey, Peggy Miller and Erin Jacoby made parasol-carrying hollyhock ladies - favors for our little girl guests.

Doll and tea cup door prizes generously donated by Haines & Essicks, Red Geranium, Jane Jurgens and The China House were distributed at each seating.

Dolls and doll houses were exhibited by Susan Strahle, Marny Elliott, Barbara Rowe, Anna Gerstner, Anne Pondelick and Susan Phillips, who also talked with the guests about the dolls they had brought along.



Victorian Doll Cottage
by Ann Seidman



Tea Guests



brought along.

BJJ of Champaign donated "Rebecca" a porcelain doll with a wicker carriage as a silent auction item, and a true love was the exquisite Victorian Doll Cottage decorated and furnished by Ann Seidman and her daughter and son-in-law, Margaret and Chuck Kransberger. Complete with painted furniture embroidered rug, velvet sofa and a tiny crazy patch coverlet, it is a doll house collector's dream.

Joan Jack won the "Tea for Twenty"; Brigitta Kapp entered the high bid for the porcelain doll, and Sarah Gemlo is the lucky winner of the doll cottage.

Once again our members outdid themselves in donating sandwiches and cookies and most of all, hours of their time to welcome our guests to the Homestead.

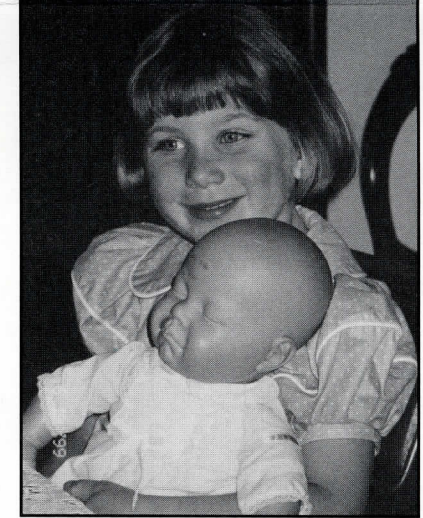
Lou Snelson
Marilyn Shroyer
Co-Chairman



Tea Guests



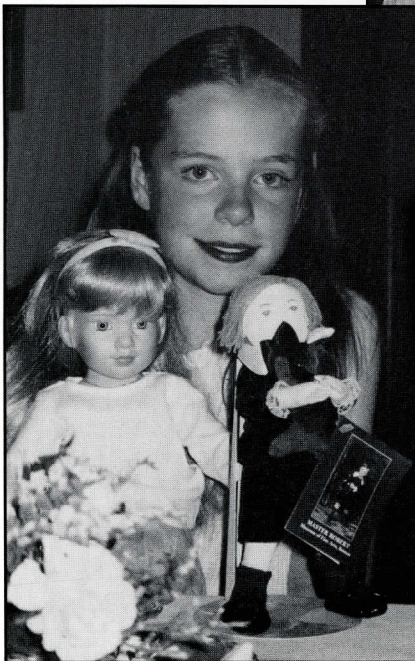
Bill McGaughey and "helpers" making hollyhock dolls for guests.



Tea Guests



Dining Room



Heather Hackel
Winner of Door Prize

A Note From Your President.



The first annual meeting of the Homestead Board was held 23 years ago, April 22, 1976. Since then many volunteers have served on the board; some several terms. This year we welcome back a member of the original board, Ann Seidman, and with her, four additional new members: Penny Honnold, Julie Jacoby, Millie Gonzalez, and Heather Stoa.

The Homestead has enjoyed solid community support over the years; the willingness of people to serve on the board is evidence to that. We thank the board members who retired this May after 6 (or more) years of continuous service: Jeannette Bradley, Lucien Kapp, Donna Meinhold, and Jim Williams.

As you all know, the restoration of the Homestead is an ongoing project. This year we are restoring the oriel window on the staircase landing. Melotte-Morse, a well-established glass repair/restoration firm from Springfield has been hired to begin the process with one of the three large adjoining panels. The estimated cost for the complete restoration of the oriel window could run as much as \$45,000!!! So, you see, as always your moral, financial and/or "physical" support is what enables us to consider and commence such projects. Without your help we can neither dream nor do!

Sincerely,
Brigitta Kapp President

History: On With the Machan-Millikin Story

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In continuing the story of Ethel Machan, the little girl whom James and Anna Millikin hoped to adopt, we digress a bit to show the Machan family home and to describe Ethel's brothers and sisters, particularly, Dr. George Stover Machan, who sketched the house soon after it was built in 1884.

All of the six children of James Millikin's stepbrother, Robert M. Machan, including Ethel and George, lived for a part of their years in this Victorian farm home, near Argenta which is still standing today. Robert resided in the house until the death of his first wife Sarah, after which he eventually married again and moved to Decatur. The farm house was re-discovered in 1998 on a trip to Macon County by Eleanora (Betsy) Ross of Coralville, Iowa, Ethel's granddaughter, who was following a trail of family history and who, as indicated before, has opened her family papers and recollections to the Millikin Homestead.

Betsy met the present owners of the house and said that they were already in the process of researching their home and were very pleased to see this early drawing of it. Leora, another of the Machan children, had recorded that "the first load of sand was hauled for our new house on October 27, 1883" and "we moved in February 7, 1884." Except for the eldest, the Machan children were actually born in a much smaller and older house which stood on the same farm as where Robert Machan had the Victorian home built. It is supposed that the Millikins would have been visitors to both houses.

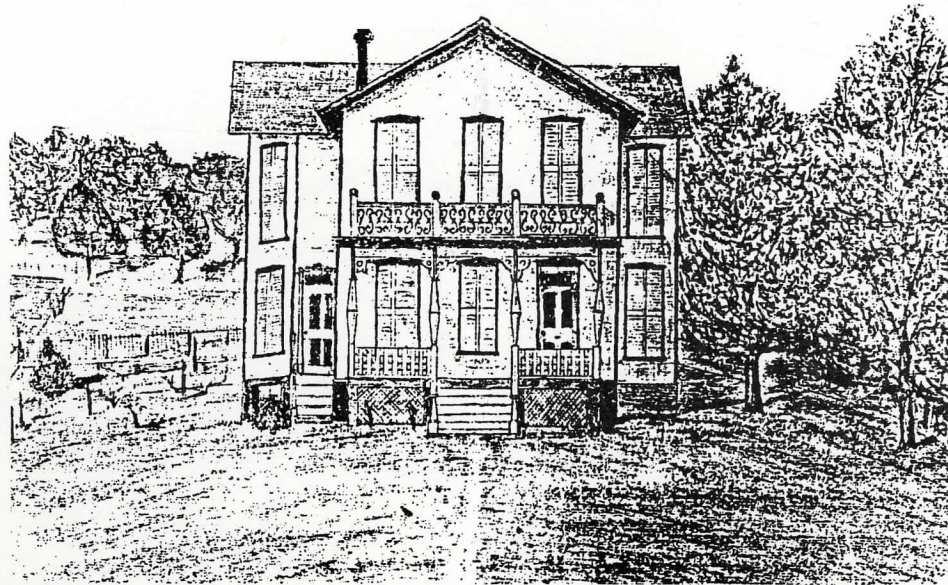
The artist for the sketch, George, was born in 1868. He is of special interest because of his wife's connection with Millikin University. He received the most

extensive education of the Machan children, by earning his way through college and continuing on to become a practicing physician. He attended the University of Illinois one year, then taught three terms in Macon County schools, at least one term in Oak Ridge School, Long Creek Township. Perhaps because of relatives in

ary praised him. In 1898 he moved to take up practice as a private physician at Providence.

In this year also, he married Isabella Dunning Thompson of Topsham, Maine, the daughter of Humphrey and Anna Thompson. The marriage took place in Topsham. Tragically, after a time, George

Machan Family Home



Shown above is farm house of Robert Machan family in mid-1880's. Robert was stepbrother and second cousin once removed of James Millikin. House was sketched by Robert's son, Dr. George S. Machan.

Maine, he transferred to Bowdoin College at Brunswick, Maine, in 1891 and graduated in 1893. He earned his medical degree from the Medical School of Maine. He interned and served as a pathologist and physician at Rhode Island State Institutions at Cranston. There he designed a laboratory for which his obitu-

ary contracted typhoid fever and died in 1901 of complications. He left one child from the marriage, a daughter Helen, born in 1900.

His wife herself was a well-educated young woman. She graduated from Wellesley and then taught at a preparatory school in Maine. When James Millikin

and his colleague, Dr. Albert Taylor, were planning the soon-to-be-designated "James Millikin University," they arranged for Isabella to come to Decatur to be the first faculty member hired. The Herald and Review reported that due to shifting sands affecting the school's foundation, its opening was delayed one year, until 1903. For that year Isabella actually served as secretary to Dr. Taylor until the university could open. They worked from a temporary office in the Millikin Bank building. Isabella, it was said, later could recall each faculty member as he or she was hired after her, including long-time members, Eugenia Allin, librarian, and Professor A. T. Mills, who would head the history department. For a time Isabella's home was at 854 W. William, close to the home of the Millikins and the university. Her daughter and her mother, Anna Thompson, moved to Decatur with her. (Oddly, Anna's obituary states that an oil portrait of her was done by Healey in Chicago in 1860 and was to hang in the Decatur Art Institute, with a group of paintings, shortly after her death ca. 1938. It is not clear whether the portrait remained with the Institute.)

Isabella's field was classical languages, and she went on to teach Greek and Latin, courses in the history of Greece and Rome and even a course in classical sculpture. She traveled extensively and earned her master's degree at Wellesley. She also took some doctoral work at Columbia University. She was popular with her students, and when she retired in 1938, it was after a valued career as professor and head of the ancient language department. She died in 1939, prior to which she had

(Continued)

History: On With the Machan-Millikin Story (continued)

been serving as president of the Decatur Art Class, the study group founded by Anna Millikin. It is not known when Ann's step-niece Isabella became a member, but her background and professional interests would have made her a fitting part of the group, who were considered Anna Millikin's close friends in Anna's lifetime.

Helen, the only child of Isabella and George Machan, followed in her mother's footsteps, as a university professor. She graduated from Millikin University and received her Ph.D. from the University of Illinois. Among her posts, she taught at Blackburn College in Illinois, and her last reported position, a long one, was as a professor of modern languages at Kent State University, Ohio. She did not marry but lived into relative old age.

Based on information from an early Millikin yearbook and a few other items, an article about Dr. George and Isabella, with photographs, appeared several years ago in the "Homestead Family Gazette," but the Machan family papers have offered considerably more detail now.

Less is known of the other Machan children, except, of course, for Ethel. The eldest son was Walter Wintrobe (1863-1920), reputedly a quiet man who did not marry. He worked for a railroad which passed through Decatur and traveled aboard the trains, perhaps as a conductor; later he worked in an office. Next in line came Clara Margarete (1865-1939). She taught in rural Macon County schools for ten years before marrying James W. Edwards, a farmer. They lived on a farm for some time before moving into Decatur where they spent their remaining years. They had only one child, who died at birth.

From autograph books that belonged to Walter and Clara, it appears that the two

spent a semester or more in school in Main ca. 1883 with relatives named Smith. The Smith cousins who signed their autograph book referred to shared memories special to the era, such as "Do you remember when we learned to waltz?"

An old family letter refers to a stay Clara made with the Millikins. On another occasion a clipping shows that she was part of a lively, large gathering who attended a "picnic-excursion." They took along a little German band, went by "special coach" to Pastime Grove near Kenney, divided into teams for a complete baseball game, enjoyed a "fine picnic supper," then staged an impromptu dance on the railway platform when the train was delayed.

George, already described, was the third child in line. Then came Leora Belle (1869-1898). Tall and willowly, she was perhaps the beauty of the family. She was noted for her sewing and needlework. A sampler of her making exists which exhibits many types of stitches and fabrics. An old family letter speaks of her also staying for a time with the Millikins. Judging from the books she left, she was devout and loved to read. She was engaged to be married to a man named John Eyman when she became ill with tuberculosis. While ill, she spent some time with her brother George in Main but wrote of her waning strength. She died at age 29.

Her obituary spoke of the loss to her many friends and said that her funeral "was one of the most largely ever attended in the village (Argenta)...A special train came from Decatur bearing a party of friends and relatives of the afflicted family. Among those who came up on the train were Mr. and Mrs. James Millikin..." Others named were Joseph Miller, J. M. Dodd, M. F. Kanan, W. C. Johns, T. C. Hardy, Mrs. W. E. Myers,

Mrs. C. F. Cook and W. W. Foster and family." Leora's father Robert had become somewhat involved in county politics and served on the board of review. Dodd was known to have been the county clerk and Foster, county assessor.

After Leora, came Robert Franklin (1876-1896), fifth child and the third of the Machan children to succumb to an untimely death. He was still in school when he came down with pneumonia and died after a week's illness. His death was actually the first of the three, and his mother never recovered. Her health went down, and she herself died in a few years when youngest daughter Ethel was 19.

A sidelight to the story of the Machan daughters is that at least two of them, Clara and Ethel, played the piano, and it is believed that Anna Millikin arranged for their lessons. She thought the girls should have music, it is said. There was no piano in the Machan farm house, and there is a vague recollection that Clara and Ethel went to the Millikins' to practice.

The more information that has been discovered, the more it appears that there was considerable interaction between the Millikins and the Machan family. There is now a broader dimension to the Millikins' lives to think of them in association with this active group of young people and their parents. The story of Ethel, who probably spent the most time with Anna and James, will be related in a future edition.

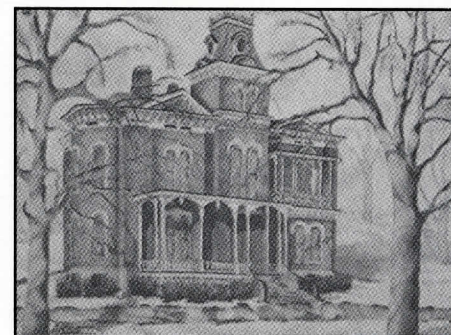
Marilyn Loofbourrow
Historian

Scheduling

The James Millikin Homestead has been used by many for weddings, anniversaries, showers, teas and dinners. It is a lovely setting for any occasion.

If you are interested in using the Homestead for your next special event, please call 422-4395.

Alice Brock
Chairman



Decatur artist, Pat Clements, recently won two awards for her watercolor entitled "Millikin Homestead". This watercolor placed 1st in the Local Scenes Category of the Barn Colony Artists Spring Show. It also won 1st in the Popular Vote Category.

Her painting was done from photos as well as numerous trips to the Homestead, where she sketched details that did not show in the photos.

This painting will be on exhibit in the stairwell of the Decatur Public Library for the month of July. This will be the last show in the present library so take time to go see this painting as well as others.



Mr. and Mrs. Millikin Days

“It’s Elementary, My Dear James,”

Anna Millikin might have remarked as 900 plus children, with accompanying teachers and parents, from the greater Decatur area visited the Homestead during our 21st year of offering this program to third graders.

38 volunteers, 1000 donated cookies, and limitless enthusiasm from all involved made this another successful run!

We gratefully acknowledge Cub Food’s donation of yummy sugar cookies (we had 900+ third graders attest to that!!!), and thank Robbie’s restaurant for providing free sack lunches to the volunteers who worked all day (verdict on those: unanimously “delicious”!)

As in past years, the children were encouraged to write a letter to Mrs. Millikin after their visit. Three letters are chosen to receive book prizes which are awarded at the Christmas Tea. It is great fun to read all the letters and very difficult to pick just three winners. This year’s awards go to the following students:

- Rachel West, Dennis School
- Rachel Carder, Lutheran School Association
- Nanze Zamira Manns, Southeast School

Budding artists among the students embellished their letters with original drawings, we offer a sampling below.

Again, many thanks to all the volunteers! You helped bring history to life and left a positive and lasting impression with all the children!



Beth Kent as Mrs. Millikin and Mary Lou Brown as Betsy the Maid



Ruth Prust as Mrs. Millikin



Barbara Keagle as the Organist



Brittany Maxedon
Miss Reed’s Third Grade Class
Argenta-Oreana Grade School

Mary Hill
Brigitta Kapp
Co-Chairmen

Non-Profit
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James Millikin Homestead, Inc.

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Student Member — \$5.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Patron — \$100.00 |
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ments) |
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(Membership is tax deductible)