

THE HOMESTEAD FAMILY

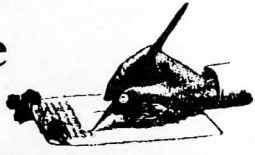
GAZETTE

Vol. XXVII, No. 3

JAMES MILLIKIN HOMESTEAD, INC., 125 N. PINE, DECATUR, ILLINOIS

March 2003

A Note From Your President...



On December 8, 2002 we entertained our community at our annual Christmas Tea. Our guests partook of traditional refreshments in our beautifully decorated Homestead. Our successful second Christmas Boutique featured enticing gifts at affordable prices. A new publication was also available.

At the Homestead we are now busily preparing for several events. One of the most important for our members is our Annual Meeting on April 24, 2003 at 6:30 P.M. Our guest speaker, Jason Butterick, archivist at Millikin University, promises us a surprise. This surprise is sending him on a scavenger hunt for Mr. Millikin's "scrapbook". Please join us to learn the outcome of his search. We look forward to seeing you.

During the week of April 28 - May 1, 2003 we open James and Anna's home to the third grade students of our schools. They will enjoy visits and conversation with Mr. and Mrs. Millikin. The children are delightful.

We are also beginning work on our biennial Doll Tea on June 7, 2003. Joyce Robinson will be the chairman of this lovely party. All are welcome. Grandmothers, daughters and granddaughters, in particular, find this a very special event. Plan to attend the Tea which features a Doll Authority, door prizes, raffle items, exhibits and a delicious tea menu.

Now is the time for me to thank all the JMH Board Members and volunteers who have helped me in my terms as president. Through your cooperation and support, we have accomplished many things. Thank you again.

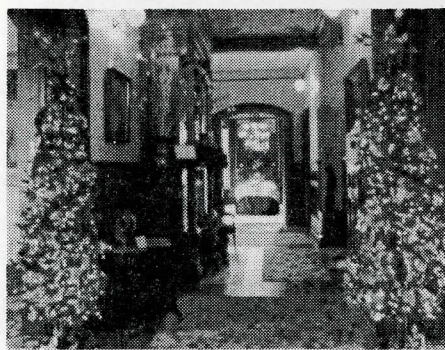
Ann Seidman
President

In 1736, the French coined the word "chandelier" a modification of the Latin *candelabrum* and defined it, according to the latest Merriam-Webster, as "a branched, often ornate lighting fixture suspended from a ceiling", describing exactly the lovely overhead lights which hang in the Homestead. Those in the North and South Parlors as well as the central hall are original to the house and when installed were gas illuminated - the tiny switches for turning on each jet still evident.

The streets as well were illuminated by gas light, the lamplighter, sometimes walking and in fine weather on bicycle coming by each evening with his ladder and stick to light the coal gas powered lamps which burned brighter than the alternative whale oil.

In 1880 the city was first introduced to electricity when the Barnum and Bailey Circus came to town and lighted its three rings with several arc lights - the most

Christmas Tea 2002



This is a panoramic view of the great hall from the front entrance of the Homestead at the Victorian Christmas Tea on December 8, 2002. It shows the incomparable decorations created by Donna Bland of Merchant Street Antiques and some of our Board members. Our guests at the Tea were thrilled with the gorgeous display throughout the Homestead.

Marilyn Shroyer

Our Chandeliers

brilliant artificial illumination Decatur residents had ever seen inspiring some businessmen to employ experts to provide generators for lighting their operations.

Eventually local entrepreneurs started small plants to supply electricity to several locations.

Among these was a J. McClokey whose house at 247 E. Wood became one of the first Decatur residences to be electrified after he bought one of these basic industries from Silas

Trowbridge. To surprise his wife when she entertained her cooking club he rigged forty bulbs in their home and though the ladies were startled and delighted, never having seen such a brightly lit home, everyone was convinced that electricity would "never go since bulbs cost nine dollars a dozen."



Despite the cost and complications, the Millikins in one of the Homestead remodelings had electricity installed, but the ever-cautious Anna insisted on keeping the gas power in operation since early electric generators were undependable.

However, powered the ceiling fixtures in the Homestead are still gorgeous, lit or unlit, and never more so than when they were entwined with roses, during our recent Victorian Christmas celebration. We are indeed "chandeliered" in the most ornate fashion

and while "electrified", dimmers can take us back to the ambience of the gas lit era made even more so if on one of our snowy evenings the lamplighter might climb his ladder to light the lamps on Main Street!

Lou Snelson
Historian

Open House 2003

After a very pleasant and refreshing rest during the past five months, the Volunteer Committee is again preparing for the Spring/Summer/Fall season of "Open House" at the Millikin Homestead. Starting Saturday and Sunday, April 5 & 6, the Homestead will be open every Saturday and Sunday from 2 P.M. to 4 P.M., and, as in the past three years, will be open until the last weekend in October, with an admission charge of \$2.00 for adults and 50 cents for children.

The Homestead has a dedicated group of volunteers who serve as docents two or three times per season, giving tours of James' and Anna's lovely home. However, we are always looking for additional docents and volunteers. If you would be interested in acting as a host/hostess and guiding guests through the Millikin Homestead, please contact me at 423-3820, or any other Board member. Remember to bring your friends and guests to visit the Homestead in 2003!

Anne Pondelick
Volunteer Committee

Victorian Doll Tea Alert

It is time to get out your dolls, hats, and gloves. The 7th Victorian Doll Tea will be held on Saturday, June 7, 2003. There will be two sittings at 11:30 A.M. and 1:30 P.M. The tickets will be \$8.00 for adults and \$3.00 for children. We invite you to join us for an enjoyable time surrounded by dolls, doll houses, other doll lovers, the beautiful Homestead, yummy food and of course, tea.

Door prizes are to be given away at each seating. We will hold two raffles. Raffle I will be a tea for 20 and Raffle II will be a brunch for 8 at the Homestead.

If you wish to make reservations, please call Rosemary Idleman at 428-4031.

We would love to see you there.

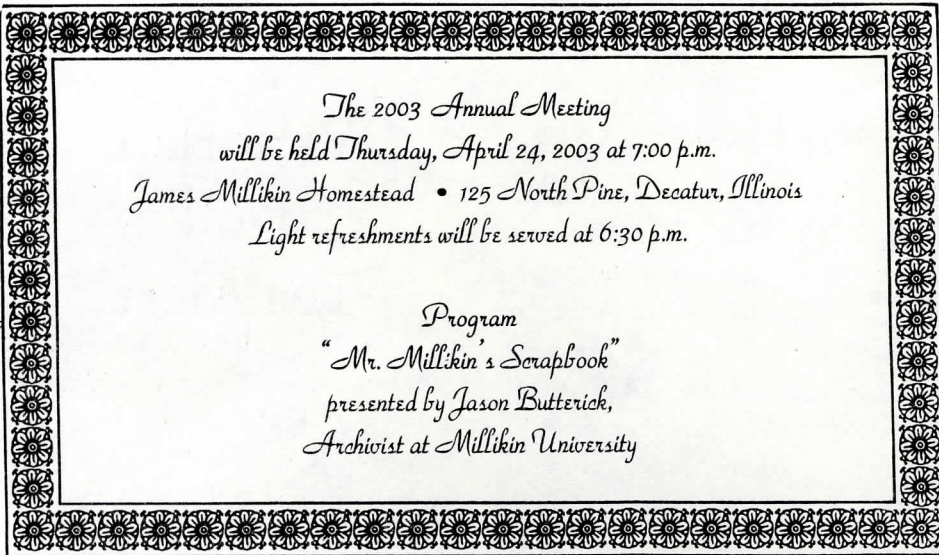
Joyce Robinson
Brigitta Kapp
Ann Seidman
Co-chairmen



Mr. & Mrs. Millikin Days

Help Bring the Millikin Homestead Alive!

Have you ever had a secret desire to be Mrs. Millikin? Mr. & Mrs. Millikin Days will be at the Homestead the week of April 28th - May 1st. We need volunteers for the following positions: indoor guide, outdoor guide, kitchen maid, dining room maid, organist, Mr. Millikin, and slightly cranky Mrs. Millikin. The premise is that Mrs. Millikin has a dinner party scheduled for the evening and Mr. Millikin has invited "all these children" to tour the house. All the parts are scripted, the shifts are about 2 1/2 hours, and third graders are a very appreciative audience. Interested?? Please call Sherri Arnold at 428-6053.

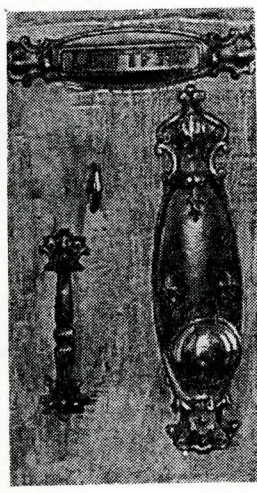


The 2003 Annual Meeting
 will be held Thursday, April 24, 2003 at 7:00 p.m.
 James Millikin Homestead • 125 North Pine, Decatur, Illinois
 Light refreshments will be served at 6:30 p.m.

Program
 "Mr. Millikin's Scrapbook"
 presented by Jason Butterick,
 Archivist at Millikin University

Own A Piece Of Decatur History

This hardware came from the Millikin Bank building at 100 North Water Street, completed in 1896 as the fifth location of the bank James Millikin started in 1860. The distinguished building was an architectural gem in Decatur before it was demolished in the 1980s. The doorknobs are dated April 7, 1881. This hardware (in storage since demolition) was given to the Homestead to be used as a means of raising money. Please call 422-8417 or 422-9003 if you would like to purchase one of these sets.



The doorknob set consists of two back plates and two doorknobs and can be adapted to fit the lock. The plates are beautifully decorated with raised ears of corn, edging and scrolls, and very fancy initials of JMH on the top of the plate. The set, \$75.00.

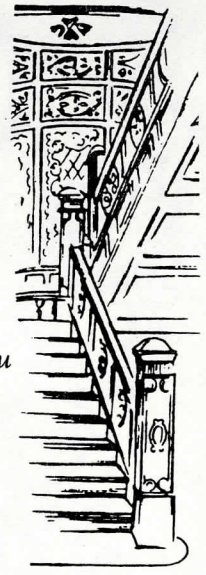
The 7" heavy bronze handles, with years of patina, would add an exquisite look to any cabinet or bookcase. These are available for \$10.00.

A letter slot would be a great addition to your office door. Consisting of a front and back plate, the few remaining letter slots sell for \$35.00.

Wyllene Griffy

Oriel Window Contributions

Thanks to the many members who responded to our December letter, we received gifts totaling approximately \$3,500.00 toward the restoration of the central panel of the oriel window. These contributions will be put toward the total project cost of \$28,000. Thank you to all members who contributed. We appreciate your generosity!



Ways & Means Committee
 Wyllene Griffy
 Ann McEvoy
 Anne Pondelick

Millikin Homestead 2002-2003 Board of Directors

- Sherri Arnold
- Alice Brock
- Millie Gonzalez
- Wyllene Griffy
- Penny Honnold
- Rosemary Idleman
- Brigitta Kapp
- John Kringbaum
- Ann McEvoy
- Donna Meinhold
- Anne Pondelick
- Joyce Robinson
- Ann Seidman
- Marilyn Shroyer
- Virgil (Bucky) Ward

Officers

- President.....Ann Seidman
- Vice President.....Alice Brock
- Secretary.....Marilyn Shroyer
- Treasurer.....John Kringbaum
- Grounds.....Bill McGaughey
- Restoration.....Lucien Kapp
- Historian.....Lou Snelson

LEAVE A LEGACY™
 Decatur, Illinois

Please consider the
 Millikin Homestead
 in your estate plannings.

The Homestead is reopening for rentals. Call now to reserve your date. Rates have changed, discounts available to Homestead members.

Alice Brock
 Scheduling Chairman
 422-4395