

# THE HOMESTEAD FAMILY



## GAZETTE



Vol. II, No. 2

JAMES MILLIKIN HOMESTEAD, INC., DECATUR, ILLINOIS

November 1977

### VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS PARTY WILL BE DECEMBER 4

James Millikin Homestead will be ablaze with the holiday spirit on Sunday, December 4, 2-5 p.m. as we hold our first Victorian Christmas Party.

In keeping with the Victorian tradition, formal invitations have been mailed to members. This function is for members only, as a special thank-you event. Children are not to be included.

Greenery and pine will give the rooms a Christmas scent and candles will illuminate them. Original decorations, copied from the era will be used in the rooms and on the tree. Glass ornaments, decorated cookie shapes, and cornucopias filled with candies and nuts will be some of the ornaments which have been fashioned for the party which we hope will be an annual event. The crocheted snow flakes which will be on our trees are featured in the current issues of *The Smithsonian* magazine and *Gourmet*, as traditional Christmas decorations of America.



### COOKIES, NUTS, SUGAR-PLUMS, AND TINSEL

Reflections of Christmases past will transform Millikin Homestead this holiday season. Perhaps you would like to take your tree and decorations back to the Victorian era. In order to do so, your tree must be laden with ornaments, many of them homemade.

The Victorians always turned to their kitchens first for Christmas tree decor.

Cookies were used on trees for many years, but in the 1880's they were decorated with colorful pictures pasted on with egg white. Shiny embossed chromolithographic pictures were in vogue. There were Christmas motifs such as the Holy Family, angels, children carrying fir trees and Santa Claus. Poetic imagery was also caught in entwined hands or cooing doves. Of course gingerbread cakes, animals, and men were also hung on the tree.

were gilded with gold leaf or wrapped in tin foil or brightly painted.

Nuts, seeds, and tangerines were balanced in hanging paper cornucopias or suspended in net bags cut from circles of folded paper or woven from fine gold thread.

Prior to commercially made ornaments the hand-made paper and cardboard ornaments were popular. Embossed cardboard "Dresden" designs were beautifully done in a variety of shapes. They were so detailed that often individual strands of hair could be distinguished.

The 1870's brought ornaments of tin, wax, tinsel, glass, as well as cardboard.

From 1870-1900 tin ornaments were popular superseded with glass. Today these tin ornaments are dull, but when made they were

### TOUR GUIDES NEEDED AS HOME USE INCREASES

Barbara Hostetler, President of JMH, has also been chief tour guide for a variety of groups for approximately two years. Barbara needs a little help from us, friends of the Homestead.

Volunteer response to the appeal in the last newsletter was not overwhelming, therefore Barbara is making a specific request and hopes that at least ten of us will respond.

Volunteers of any age or sex are needed to lead tours. It is a fun way to learn more about the Homestead and share that knowledge with the community. Training will begin in January.

Please contact Barbara at 428-3268 if you are willing to give just a little time.

### CALHOUN'S POTTERY CLASS HIGHLIGHTS FALL AT THE CARRIAGE HOUSE

Jane Anderson, one of four co-chairpersons of the Carriage House Learning Center reports that Mrs. Millikin would have been surprised to see the over 500 children and adults in classes, learning skills and having a good time.

Cider Pressin' with Betty Moser was a new class this fall. A bushel of apples turned into a real treat for the children involved.

Field trips were also popular. Several geology students toured Rock Springs Center and Tom Daly took fifteen excited children to visit city offices.

Inside the Carriage House, finger paintings might be found drying on the floor, paper mache animals taking shape, or the aroma of pizza might be permeating from Linda Kehart's cooking class. There is usually a persistent buzz of saws from woodworking.

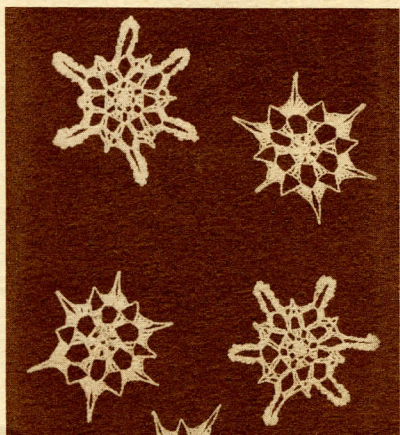
The major attraction was Larry Calhoun, artist-in-residence work-

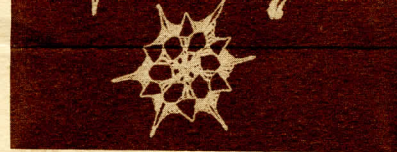
### RESTORATION COMMITTEE HAS SPECIAL NEED

Luanne Unks tells us that Mr. Gary Randall is reassembling the two brass chandeliers which will hang in the parlors. In order to complete the job approximately 100 glass prisms are needed. Reproductions are available, but the committee would prefer to have the "old" ones. If your attic holds an old fixture with glass treasurers or if you know someone who might have such prisms, please contact Luanne at 429-3067 or Ellen Sheffer at 429-1104. Let them know if you have seen prisms in an antique shop or sale.

Carolyn Likins, restoration chairperson, reports that no work has yet been done in the hallway. We are awaiting the workmen.

However, the Homestead Board and the committee have agreed that we should purchase wooden storm windows for the Bell Pull and the Caretaker's quarters. Millikin University is participating in efforts to cut winter utility expense by giving \$1200. to be applied to





Nut and pine cone candle holders and door hangings will be in various rooms.

Those who have assisted in making the decorations are Ellen Sheffer, Debbie Hennelly, Ruth Prust, Mary Hartley, Nancy Shoop, Lou Snelson, Ann Seidman, Lu White, Ruth Murphy, Sally Moore, and Helen Crawford.

Special thanks goes to Claudia Taylor, chairman of the event and Ruth Prust, her assistant.

Marilyn Madden is chairperson of the "treats," which will feature Victorian recipes from our cook book.

To accommodate those who are not members and would like to see the decorations or for members who have children who might enjoy the tree, the Homestead will be open from 2-4 p.m., December 11. There will be no refreshments at that time.

## COOKBOOKS MAKE NICE GIFTS

"Visions of Sugar Plums," the James Millikin Homestead Cookbook is still available in the Bell Pull or by calling Claudia Taylor at 429-7858. It is full of delicious recipes to serve holiday guests. Sample dessert recipes were featured in the last newsletter. The price is \$2.50.

## WELCOME TO NEW HOMESTEAD MEMBERS

Since our last newsletter four more names have been added, which you might like to add to your membership list. They are: Miss Martha Montgomery, Maroa, Ill. 61756; Miss Katherine Wagenseller, 1441 W. Wood, Decatur, 62522; Mr. and Mrs. Dale Elliott, 902 S. 33rd, Decatur 62521; and Dr. and Mrs. Robert Farrington, 2460 S. Taylor, Decatur 62521.

We welcome these new and renewal members.

males, and men were also hung on the tree.

The fragrant, a cookie made with the gum tragacanth, was hard and ideal for painting or bright sugar icings, though not very tasty.

As early as the 1860's there were references to popcorn being strung and hung drooping from the trees. Carmelized popcorn was a popular suggestion in the ladies' magazines at the turn of the century. By 1900 popcorn was also dyed green and red.

In addition to popcorn, dried apples and cranberries, there were chains of red haws, crabapples, and clusters of raisins. Even oranges were hung on the trees in the 1850's.

Hard candies and sugar, pearl-like strings of beads were popular, especially with children.

"Sugar plum" ornaments meant a multitude of sweets made primarily of sugar. However by boiling greenage plums in thick sugary syrup until they became preserved and were the real "sugarplums." Many fruits were sugar preserved.

Thus from the grocery and candy shop came many delightful tree decorations.

A profusion of fancy nuts were hung on trees. Sometimes they

## GROUPS ARE ENCOURAGED TO MEET AT HOMESTEAD

James Millikin Homestead could be the loveliest place in town for your club or group meeting.

So far several P.E.O. groups have met there, physicians' wives, the D.A.R. and Zonta. Numerous groups have toured.

Meetings are held in the South Parlor where chairs will be set up. The dining room can be used to serve refreshments. However, we still cannot supply your group with refreshments, china or glassware. It is hoped to do so in the future.

The cost for meeting in the home is: for up to 20 people, \$15; 21 to 30 people, \$20; 31 to 40 people, \$25; and 41 to 50, \$30.

The board meets at the Homestead monthly and Richland holds a weekly class in needlepoint there.

Please contact Debbie Hennelly if you have an interest, 429-6839.

are dull, and when they were shiny reflectors, sometimes with imbedded gems of colored glass.

Wax figures appeared in the late 1800's.

Typical was the floating angel with clasped hands and cardboard or spun glass wings and halos.

By 1890 F. W. Woolworth made glass ornaments and beads accessible to most families. Most were imported.

Tinsel products from Germany were imported in the 1870's. "Icicles" soon divided America into two camps; the "hangers" and the "throwers."

Yet another finishing touch came from Germany. "Angels hair" gave the tree a cobwebbed effect.

The Victorian tree might be topped with a five-inch star or a wax-headed angel with a pleated metallic skirt, or even the extravagance of a hand-blown glass bauble.

The information in this feature comes from one of the publications used by the committee in making decorations for our celebration. It is a lovely book called *The Christmas Tree Book* by Phillip Snyder.

## HAVILAND, THE VICTORIAN CHINA

Mrs. Jane Jurgens and Mrs. Ginny Cannon, antique dealers specializing in fine china and silver will speak on January 18 about Haviland China. It will be in the Homestead and reservations are limited. Please contact Mrs. Glenn if you know that you will want to attend.

The first program effort of JMH was "Antiques for Young Moderns" featuring an informal discussion with Mrs. Martha Sanders, Mrs. Kathy Farrington, and Mrs. Leslie Cardwell. A capacity audience enjoyed lunch and the individual preferences of these young women, who have found that the "old" mixes well and adds charm to the "new" in their homes.

The major attraction was Larry Calhoun, artist-in-residence, working with pottery. Classes have made mugs decorated with imprints, boxes with lids, jewelry, hollow elephants, baseballs, and even dragons.

South Shores School children from the sixth grade were first to accept a fall invitation for mini-courses. They came every week in October and split their time between pottery and chemistry with Betty Moser.

Betty introduced them to many chemicals and gave them an opportunity to experiment with combinations. They learned about water purification from a model of our own plant.

In November fifteen students from Dennis School were working on the pottery wheel with Mr. Calhoun. In the spring Lady of Lourdes, Holy Family and Garfield school will have workshops.

The Carriage House will close in mid-December to reopen in early March. There are always new adventures and new opportunities for all ages.

## CHRISTMAS HAS COME TO THE BELL PULL

While the Christmas room has been open for some time at the Bell Pull, there are still many beautiful things to make as gifts or to give for someone else to enjoy making.

There are small gifts such as scissors and cases, lucite key chains, porpourri sachets, ornaments, towels and small counted-cross stitch pictures. The small Imari canvases similar to imports of the mid-1800's will enchant the lover of the Oriental look.

Counted-cross stitch is the new rage in needlework. The shop features mini-bell pulls and lovely pillows with charted designs. This type of stitchery looks intricate but is actually enjoyable to do and does not take as much time as one might think.

Many new designs will be coming in soon, since two of the co-chairpersons have just attended a mini-market in Chicago and have many new ideas for spring.

by giving \$1200. to be applied to additional insulation or storm windows. It is hoped that storm windows can be put on the majority of the windows in the near future to keep out winter's blasts.

## SPRINGFIELD TOUR MEMORABLE EVENT

The Program Committee of JMH, chaired by Mrs. Adele Glenn planned a most successful bus tour of some of Springfield's historic homes. One member of the group reported that the tour was a "once in a lifetime experience."

The tour was guided by Dr. Floyd Barringer, who showed the group his own home first. It was the Freeman-Hughes home purchased intact by the Barringers. Visiting it was like "taking a step back in time" according to Mrs. Glenn. Mrs. Barringer served coffee to the group and then joined them.

They toured Eastnor Antique Galleries, a relatively new antique gallery, full of beautiful pieces of furniture.

Luncheon was at Maldaners' Restaurant, upstairs in a building that is being remodelled and restored. Mrs. Robert Oxtoby told of the revitalization of downtown Springfield and its restoration efforts.

A special tour of the beautiful and renovated Governor's Mansion completed the day.

## SHARE IDEAS WITH BOARD

Your JMH Board needs your ideas! What programs do you want? What trips do you want? What are your ideas for raising money? Please share with the board your suggestions by phone or at the Christmas Party.

The Board is Barbara Hostetler, President; John Hall, Vice President; Barbara Wolfe, Secretary; Barbara Hicks, Treasurer; Dean Madden, Jeff Taylor, David Jack, Ellen Sheffer, Linda May, Ruth Prust, Rita Jerger, Adele Glenn, Jeannine Schaub, Ann Seidman, and Dorothy Morey.