



GAZETTE



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JAMES MILLIKIN HOMESTEAD, INC., DECATUR, ILLINOIS

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DR. SPRAGUE'S REPORT

by Mrs. Robert C. Schaub, Jr.
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A great many of us are "experts" when it comes to dealing with our own homes.

When it came to deciding on the future of the James Millikin Homestead, however, we agreed that we needed a professional consultant. Thus we hired Dr. Paul E. Sprague, who heads Historic Preservation Services in Chicago, and teaches Architectural History at the University of Illinois, Chicago Circle campus.

With help from local researchers, Dr. Sprague produced an invaluable report that we want to share with our members. In this issue I will try to present some of the highlights of the physical history of the Homestead. If any member is interested in reading the entire report, I will try to get a copy into his hands.

The report begins:

"From the physical evidence remaining in the Millikin house, and from research carried out by Linda May and her associates in Junior Welfare Association, it appears that the house was significantly remodeled twice. The first alterations were carried out about 1883 and the second about 1903.

"... the house was erected in 1875-76... according to contemporary reports, Michael Troutman, a mason, was in charge of the bricklaying, and William Harry, of Mills and Harry, contractors and

"Along with the change in the hall was the construction of a new kitchen wing. Indoor plumbing was probably introduced with this remodeling (1883). Electric light was installed before 1900.

"Enough documentary and physical evidence is available to make fairly certain the nature of the changes in 1903-4. The architect was Normand E. Patton of Oak Park, whose firm designed the Millikin Bank, Transfer House and Millikin University buildings," according to Dr. Sprague's research.

Patton's work consisted of adding the copper-clas oriel windows on the north, adding the wainscot of the hall, and renewing the woodwork of the fireplace and stairs in an early Renaissance style. It was then that oak floors were added to the hall. (All original floors were presumably pine.)

According to Mr. Millikin's records, the window with its stained glass cost \$1,000; the new woodwork, \$2,000 and the new fireplace front, \$400. At the same time, Patton added the smaller bay window in the breakfast room.

Changes to the house after 1904 were quite minor.

Dr. Sprague writes that the carriage house is probably contemporaneous with the house. "If so," he says, "it must have been added before 1894, as it shows in a photograph made in that year"

DR. & MRS. WILD MOVE INTO CARETAKER'S APARTMENT

It started with the decision that we must have a caretaker living in the Homestead as soon as there were restored rooms and furnishings in the home. A delightful small apartment was created at the west end of the second floor. There is a fireplace in the pale yellow living room, a modern kitchen, bath and one bedroom. The Personnel Committee, Gale Benner and John Hall reported, with obvious pleasure, that they had decided to invite Dr. and Mrs. James Wild to be the first residents of the new caretakers apartment.

"The Millikin Homestead is an admirable first home," says dark-haired Monique, with a twinkle in her eye. "We found some postcards downtown and sent them to our friends," adds Jim with a grin. "We are honored to live in this old and beautiful home," he adds seriously, "and we hope we can perform our duties as caretakers well."

"I was excited about the house," Monique confides, "but I was used to an older setting — my grandmother lives in a 400-year-old house."

Monique lived the first 18 years of her life in Paris, France. The daughter of an American mother and French father, she came to Western College for Women in Oxford, Ohio, where she earned her degree in German Literature. She received her Masters Degree in French at Columbia, and taught in French in New York and

COME TO OUR BIRTHDAY PARTY AND OPEN HOUSE

All members of the James Millikin Homestead corporation and their guests are invited to join the members of Junior Welfare in a One Hundredth Anniversary Open House at the Homestead on Sunday, October 3, from 2 to 6 p.m. (Rain date, October 10).

As a token of appreciation for the tremendous community support we have received from the community in our first restoration efforts, the public will be invited to a free guided tour of the downstairs parlors of the Homestead. Some of the original Millikin furniture may be on display at this time. The Bell Pull Needlepoint Shop in the Library will also be open, and antique cars will be shown on the grounds.

Homemade desserts and beverages will be available, and auction of antiques and collectibles will be held from 3 to 4:30 p.m. on the grounds.

A Junior Welfare Booth will offer for sale Christmas cards and note paper featuring a beautiful snow scene of the Homestead taken by Mr. Loren Weaver. Also available will be the new Junior Welfare Cookbook, **Samplings**, 185 colorful pages filled with delicious "tried and true" recipes, tempting menu ideas, metric information and recipes, and an index for easy reference (all for only \$5). The Zonta Books on historic Decatur will also be available. A Plant Shop will have a wide variety of plants for sale.

Continuous entertainment will be offered on the lawn; from 2 to 3 p.m. the Decatur Municipal Band will play; the Eisenhower Concert Band will perform from 4:30 to 5 p.m.; from 5 to 5:30 p.m., Dr. Clayton Henderson will play the piano; and from 5:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. the Ompah Band from Millikin University will entertain.

Children's activities at the Carriage House will include a glue-in, a craft table, and a Storybook Hour. A watercolor demonstration will be given by Hugh Skibbens, and Karen Holmes will demonstrate macrame techniques.

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

A devoted, talented and reliable committee and many equally talented, devoted and reliable volunteers have worked all summer and are continuing to teach such classes as Drawing and Painting,

BUS TRIP TO BISHOP HILL

A bus trip to historic Bishop Hill, Ill., is being offered by the Program and Membership Committee, Claudia Taylor, Ann Seidman, and Linda May on Thursday, October 21.

mason, was in charge of the bricklaying, and William Harry, of Mills and Harry, contractors and builders, was in charge of the carpentry.

"Later reports give the cost of the house at \$18,000, and indicate that its designer was a Chicago architect..."

Dr. Sprague determined that there was no side hall on the north in the original building. "The stairs began about three feet beyond the openings into the parlors at the front of the house and ran up the south side of the hall, turning north at the top to reach the level of the upper hall. Approximately 12 feet of the stringer from this staircase was found in the crawl space of the attic over the kitchen wing..."

"Opposite the staircase, perhaps in the recess in the wall, was probably the wooden coat and umbrella rack with mirror that is now stored at Millikin University.

"There is no question whatsoever that the present kitchen and room above it are additions. This is evident in the foundations and the roof.

"It is certain that the staircase was moved from the center hall into the newly created side hall before August, 1894. In that month James E. Bering made some photographs of the exterior of the house that show the chimney of the hall fireplace..."

"According to several reports, a remodeling, was carried out because Mrs. Millikin found the house too dark." Dr. Sprague suggests that the hall must have been cold and damp, as well.

The solution, he says, was a side stairway that could take light from the windows. With the stairs moved, it was possible to add a new chimney and fireplace to heat the lower hall.

says, "I must have added before 1894, as it shows in a photograph made in that year."

The architect who supervised the changes in 1903, Mr. Brooks, told Dr. Sprague that Mrs. Millikin stood over the workmen all the time so they wouldn't damage any of the wood while they took the stairway apart and put it together again, (presumably in 1883) — and this is substantiated by the nicely preserved triangular facing found in the attic!

Next issue: a continuation of the Sprague report with his recommendations for use and restoration-renovation of the Homestead.

YOU CAN HELP

We are in need of a good used stove and refrigerator for the Homestead kitchen... your A&P grocery tapes to turn in for card tables and chairs... your collectables and antiques for the Open House Auction... your help in staffing the Bell Pull, painting the Carriage House, suggesting classes for the Carriage House... your Friend's membership in the Homestead corporation...

MEMBERSHIP OPEN TO ALL

A complete listing of all members of James Millikin Homestead, Inc., will be published in the future. 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.

She received her Masters Degree in French at Columbia, and taught in Hackensack, N.J. high school for six months. Then she moved to Drew University in New Jersey, where she taught for eight years. This year, on her sabbatical leave, she is studying Iconography (interpretation of symbols in works of art) at the University of Illinois.

James Wild grew up in central Minnesota. He received his B.A. in Philosophy and Classical Language, his Masters in Old Testament and his M.Div. in Pastoral Theology from St. John's University. He taught two years in Puerto Rico, then returned to teach three years in the St. John's graduate school and college. At Drew University he received his Ph.D. in New Testament. At Millikin Dr. Wild teaches 20th century Religion, Bible, and other classes in the Religion department.

Monique's father made his first trip to the United States for their wedding in June — her one sister lives in Dallas.

Although they felt the difference in the pace of life when they returned to this country after a honeymoon in France, they are enthusiastic about the helpful, cordial, simpatico attitude of Decatur people.

"We haven't met an unkind person yet!" they agree. Even after a brief interview, we are confident that this is improbable for such a charming young couple.

OUR APOLOGIES

... to Chris Williams, (Mrs. John M.), whose name was not included in the Membership List — Chris has been Chairman of the Bell Pull Needlepoint Shop since the beginning — so we say "Thanks, Chris!" as well as "Sorry —"

teers have worked all summer and are continuing to teach such classes as Drawing and Painting, Creative Writing, Batik, Kite Flying, Percussion and Pottery — mostly on the lawn. Three hundred and fifty children were in the summer workshops — this fall, one hundred and fifty children — and adults — are involved.

Now the exterior of the Carriage House is finished, and all proceeds from the Junior Welfare Bargain Bazaar will be used to make the interior suitable for winter classes.

Construction has started down stairs on ceilings and walls: furnace repair should be finished in January. Junior Welfare members (other volunteers are welcome!) will be painting and working on the floors this fall.

Program Planning is also going on now. Nancy Roucher and Linda Kehart would be very happy to hear from people who have talent they are willing to share, or people who would like to learn a special skill. Classes in Pottery, Gourmet Cooking, Astronomy and Photography are now being planned.

THE BELL PULL

Did you know that there have been several Needlepoint classes held at the Homestead recently? Two adult classes, sponsored by Richland Community College, meet there during the week, and a Children's class meets on Saturdays. Junior Welfare will offer another four week class under Linda Robertson (Mrs. Jerry), on Wednesday mornings from 10 to 11 a.m., starting October 13. Register at the Bell Pull.

Chris would also like to invite you to see the "Christmas Room" at the shop, and to remind you that original canvasses are available to order.

man, and Linda May on Thursday, October 21.

The bus will leave the Homestead at 8:30 a.m. and return at about 6 p.m. (We urge you to "share a ride" since there is limited parking on Pine St.)

Luncheon will be served at the Red Oak Tea Room, and is included in the trip fee.

All reservations will be made on a first come, first served basis, and must be accompanied by a check to the James Millikin Homestead, and sent to that address, 125 N. Pine St., Decatur, 62522, c/o Claudia Taylor. Cost to members is \$13.50. Guests may be included, if space is available, at \$15.

Bishop Hill is a very interesting restored area with an emphasis on Scandanavian content.

MILLIKIN HOME STORY IN THE ILLINOIS TIMES

We were pleased to read a story of Two Great Houses: Dwight and Decatur, written by Mrs. William Knack for the Illinois Times.

She says, "In Decatur, a house with a marvelous setting and a very impressive ancestry, the James Millikin Homestead... almost went the way of many another fine Victorian home. Instead, it is being saved... the Millikin mansion is at the same time solid and whimsical. It is a composite of architectural styles: Italianate tower and French Second Empire mansard roof; gingerbread porches and unusual diamond patterned roof. Some of its features came directly from James and Anna Millikin, who collected architectural details during extensive travels..." (We have copies of the paper if you would like to read the article).