

THE HOMESTEAD FAMILY

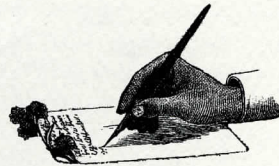
GAZETTE

Vol. XXIII, No.3

JAMES MILLIKIN HOMESTEAD, INC., DECATUR, ILLINOIS

March 1999

A Note From Your President...



ur Homestead Board enjoyed a festive Holiday Dinner on January 9th. It's a wonderful tradition for beginning the new year.

1999 promises to be another busy one for us. Once again we will offer Mr. and Mrs. Millikin Days for all the third graders in Macon County the first week of May. The following month we will host our third Doll Tea.

Presently we are making an attempt to obtain estimates for the repair of our Oriol Window. In December we received a bid from Melotte-Morse. The head of a Kirkland, Missouri, firm met with us on January 22 but declined to make an estimate. He said that they would be available for consultation and advice.

In February we expect a representative from a firm in Minnesota to visit the Homestead and provide a bid. Hopefully, the work will begin this year.

This will be my last paragraph as your President. My term will conclude in April. I have enjoyed my six years of Board activity. Thanks to all of you for your support.

Sincerely,
Jim Williams, President

History: Millikin, Machans, McFarlands — Scots Unite

Robert M. Machan Family



*The 1999 Annual Meeting
will be held*

Thursday, April 22, 1999

at 6:30 p.m.

James Millikin Homestead

125 North Pine, Decatur, Illinois



*Light Refreshments will be Served
Preceding the Business Meeting*



*All Members are
Encouraged to Attend*

James Millikin's step-brother, Robert McFarland Machan, and wife Sarah pose with their 6 children ca. 1888: Left to right, front row: Sarah (mother), youngest child Ethel, son Robert; and Robert (father). Back row, left to right, four older children, Walter, Leora, Dr. George and Clara.



t's time to keep a promise: to share more of the legendary story of Ethel Machan, whom, as a child, James and Anna Millikin often took into their home and whom, it is said, they wished to adopt.

Judging from her photographs, she was a charming little girl with the capacity to win the hearts of the childless couple. There were also other aspects to the situation. She was a blood relative of James, and the Millikins likely had the opportunity to grow fond of her early in her life or even from birth.

Born May 29, 1882, Ethel Mayflower Machan was the youngest child of six of Robert McFarland Machan and his wife Sarah who farmed for some years near Argenta, Illinois. Robert was a step-brother to James Millikin, but, more than that, he was James' second cousin once removed. The two men shared an ancestral line through the McFarland family. To tell of Ethel and her family, of her childhood relationship with the Millikins and of her ancestry is also to shed light on the personalities of the Millikins and on James' own ancestry. We will start a few generations back.

Dolly McFarland (born 1806), who married James Millikin II, was the grandmother of James of the Homestead. Dolly's niece, Joanna McFarland, married Robert Machan in 1832, and they were the parents of James' step-brother, Robert McFarland Machan. Robert and James became step-brothers after Robert Machan, the elder, died and his wife Joanna married Abel Millikin, father of James, in 1849. Oddly, James was from, perhaps, the wealthiest family in Washington Co., Pennsylvania, and Robert from very poor-circumstances, at least temporarily.

Beginning with the marriage of Dolly

McFarland and James Millikin II in 1778, the Millikins and McFarlands were joined together by other intermarriages so that the relationships were even more complex than might appear. At least seven marriages between the two families took place between 1778 and 1854. It was not unusual in an earlier day for cousin to marry cousin and this happened in the Millikin-McFarland line, too.

The Millikins, McFarlands and Machans would all have known each other at Ten Mile, Washington Co., Pennsylvania, where the respective forebears of James and Robert had settled and from where James and Robert had come to Illinois, albeit separately. The published Millikin history (1907) shows a pattern of Millikins and allied families following one another across the country as they migrated. This was typical of the descendants of the Scottish clans; they remained in close allegiance to one another. The Millikins and McFarlands were decidedly Scottish in origin and there is supposition that Robert McFarland Machan's father (Robert) may have come directly from Scotland. The Machan name is pronounced with a decided Scottish snap.

Only four generations of Robert Machan's family actually bearing the name Machan are known. The birth date of Robert, the elder, has not been found. He died an untimely death in 1841 from typhoid fever in Pennsylvania. His wife, Joanna McFarland, died in 1857 in Ohio. Robert's own story will help in understanding the twists of fate in the life of his granddaughter Ethel.

About the origin of the Machan family, Dr. George Stover Machan, a son of Robert McFarland Machan, wrote:

(Continued)

History: Millikins, Machan, McFarlands...continued

"My grandfather Robert Machan and two brothers . . . came from Scotland. Little is known of (them). One was a bachelor and the other was married and had a family . . . The name is pronounced Ma Han. Grandfather married a Miss Joanna McFarland and settled in the Western part of Pennsylvania on Ten Mile Creek in the county of Washington. They were married in 1833 [actually on October 25, 1832] . . . Robert was a man of good habits and started for himself without capital. He was a tanner by trade, and before his death, had earned enough, besides supporting his family, to enter a tract of 160 acres of land..."

"Robert and Joanna had four children, two boys and two girls. The older son died when an infant. His name was Thadeus John. The second child, Sarah E., was born in 1835. The third, Clara, . . . 1836, and the fourth child, Robert, was born August 27, 1840. After grandfather's death, his family removed to Ohio to Wayne Co., I believe, where two brothers of my grandmother lived . . . Grandfather's death left the family in very close circumstances and it was decided to let someone take the youngest child, Robert, to raise when he was six years old. He was accordingly given [bound out] to a Mr. Rohrer, who had a family of several boys and a girl. Mrs. Rohrer was a full cousin of my father. He was to live with them until he became sixteen years of age, when he was to be given the best of all possible fortunes, a chance to earn his own living."

There being a shortage of girls in the family, Robert was early taught all kinds of house work, washing dishes, churning, sweeping, carrying wood, etc. His first work in the fields was "hoeing corn and gathering stones. He was soon taught the use of the ax, too." He was sent to the district's log school for about three months in winter; if he was not needed to help in

clearing the land of wood. It was said he was not a boy who took naturally to books, but "about the time for him to leave school he began to see the need of an education and to apply himself more closely" to study. His grandson, who had gone on to earn a full medical degree, broke into philosophy, "This is often the case with boys, many of whom have mothers to teach them the great need of a knowledge of the common branches at least. This is, it seems to me, a hard world for orphan boys and it certainly was not an easy one for him."

George Machan then spoke of his father's two sisters, Sarah and Clara. Clara married twice and lived out her life in Iowa. Sarah also married twice. Her first husband was James Millikin's first cousin, William S. Millikin, a son of Abel Millikin's brother, William Scott Millikin. William, the son, and Sarah were married August 5, 1854. Oddly in view of the abbreviated education of Sarah's brother Robert as a boy bound-out, Sarah was able to go to school and teach. She graduated at age 16 from Washington Seminary, Washington Co., Pennsylvania where Anna Millikin also graduated and where Sarah's own mother Joanna McFarland Machan Millikin had attended. It appears that Sarah was enabled to finish school after her widowed mother remarried, to James' father. Sarah's brother Robert, on the other hand, had already been bound out for several years.

Continuing the story of his father, George Machan wrote, "In father's eighteenth year, he decided to go west and determined upon Illinois as his future home. For why should he remain in Ohio and be a common laborer by the month? Surely there were better things for the ambitious boy in the new state than that." Robert has become engaged in Ohio but "it rather spurred him on to seek his for-

tune in the west and then come back" to his bride.

"He landed in Decatur, Illinois, with his satchel of clothes and a five dollar bill. That was the extent of his worldly possessions. He hired out to a Mr. Millikin, his second cousin once removed, who owned a large stock farm. Here he worked one season as a common farm hand. "The next year he was made overseer of the entire farm and was taken into partnership with Mr. Millikin in the stock. At the end of this year he returned to Ohio and was married to Sarah C. Wintrode on the 26th of February 1861" at age 20. Soon after, "he and mother returned to Illinois. He rented a farm, bought a team of horses, dissolved the partnership with Mr. Millikin and began life on his own account." In a little over a year he bought a farm of 160 acres and house about 12 miles northeast of Decatur where he and Sarah proceeded to raise their family of six.

George Machan seemed to strive for the detached tone of a biographer so it is hard to discern his or his family's attitude towards James Millikin, but apparently George could hardly restrain his kindly feelings towards his father. George described briefly the struggle to make ends meet as his father took up the responsibilities of his own farm and a growing family, but the unfinished biography soon ceased. It is known from his father Robert's obituary that Robert did sometime manage farms again for step-brother James and did so until after James' death and the lands were sold.

Robert's first wife Sarah was born August 7, 1841, at Canal Fulton, Stark Co., Ohio, the daughter of David and Margaret Wintrobe, and died January 4, 1901 near Argenta. He subsequently married Laura Mayall of Maroa in June, 1903. No children were born to this union. After their marriage, Robert and Laura

moved into Decatur to "an elegant modern cottage at 1912 W. Wood," as it was described in Robert's obituary, not so far from the home of step-brother James. He died March 5, 1923, at his home in Decatur. He was a lifelong member of the Presbyterian church and, in Decatur, of First Presbyterian, as was James. At Robert's death, his obituary said he had been "a much respected citizen" of Argenta and that he later held "positions of trust" in Decatur. He was "held in high esteem by all who knew him," it concluded.

We must pause, but, in future, the "Homestead Family Gazette" will offer more stories of the Machan-McFarland-Millikin family and particularly the entertaining recollections handed down by youngest child, Ethel, of childhood days spent with Anna and James Millikin.

Sources: Collected family papers of Ethel (Machan) Spera, as supplemented and presented to the Millikin Homestead by her granddaughter, Eleanor (Betsy) Ross of Coralville, Iowa: The Life Story of James Millikin, Dr. Albert R. Taylor, first president of Millikin University, 1926; The Families Millinges and Millingas (Millikin family history), Rev. Gideon T. Ridlon, 1907.

This series of articles is dedicated to the memory of Harrilee Armstrong, (Mrs. J. George) of Decatur, a life-member of the James Millikin Homestead and a family friend, who died February 3, 1999. Long ago she encourage this writer to study journalism. In memoriam, thank you, Harrilee.

Marilyn Loofbourrow
Historian

Committee Reports

Grounds



outine grounds activity was performed (mowing, snow removal, and hauling off of trimmed branches from trees and bushes) by Millikin crews. Efforts for a better lawn were thwarted by a late summer invasion of weeds, quite common in our area this year. Dandelion control has improved. The garden inside the circle drive was not up to par so numerous new annuals and perennials are planned and ordered at this time. For this I have requested additional budget money. The three Rose of Sharon bushes at the south side of Home will have additional color as well.

In the area vacated by the big sugar maple we have a Japanese green maple with low *Pyrantha*, green/gold euonymous, potentilla, and moonbeam coreopsis - their growth will show this year.

Several young trees have been removed from the backyard tree nursery including a Golden Rain tree now planted north of the Carriage House. A successful group of old fashioned hollyhocks were planted in areas vacated by removal of trees from nursery and their abundant blossoms gave added excitement to the Doll Tea. Volunteers with good childhood memories made hollyhock dolls for each of the young ladies.

A revision of planting around the flag pole is in progress. Already planted are white phlox which will be a background for 100 red geraniums which are promised by Jim Kiefer of the University. We will do the planting and this should make things interesting from Main Street.

The University will repair deteriorated soffit and fascia wood in the front of the Home. New slats for the back porch floor have been ordered. It is possible this coming year that the University will remove the old sidewalk along the drive to Main Street. They are committed to be on the alert for old paving brick that our members and volunteers will set in sand in the sidewalk path, thus ending the sidewalk debate. Also possible this year is the resurfacing of the asphalt drive and parking area.

Perhaps the improved flag pole planting will be so attractive that it will discourage the depositing of murder evidence!

Bill McGaughey, Chairman

Volunteers



nnually, Volunteers show hundreds of visitors through the Millikin Homestead, either at the regular "Last Sunday of the Month Open House" or on scheduled tours. In addition, volunteers are called upon for Mr. and Mrs. Millikin Days, the Christmas Tea, the Victorian Doll Tea and Millikin University's receptions for new parents. Training/re-training sessions are conducted to keep information pertinent and interesting — children especially enjoy anecdotes surrounding the Millikins and their home. Volunteers keep the Homestead vital and are a valued and generous connection to the community. If anyone is interested in volunteering, call Lou Snelson at 429-1750 or Anne Pondelik at 423-3820.

Lou Snelson
Anne Pondelik
Co Chairmen



Mr. & Mrs. Millikin Days



ince 1979 the Millikin Homestead has been offering this program for third graders of the greater Decatur area. Volunteers re-enact life as it was in Decatur around 1880. The children tour the house and meet Mr. and Mrs. Millikin and their servant staff

We will be contacting those of you who graciously have volunteered in the past. Any "newcomers" interested in helping with this rewarding project, please contact either of the co-chairwomen. Try it, you'll like it!!!

Brigitta Kapp - 428-9527
Mary Hill - 872-6022
Co-Chairmen

Restoration

Framed in the Parlor A Put up Job



he Victorian Christmas Tea on December sixth provided a splendid seasonal foil for the eagerly awaited second Homestead appearance of Bartolome Esteban Murillo's street children of Madrid or more flippantly - the new kids on the wall.

You may recall the Gazette issue of March 1998 in which this picture's odyssey of acquisition, installation, removal, re-discovery and re-introduction was discussed. Since the Tea, James and Anna's 19th Century copy of the Spanish master's work can be viewed at the northwest corner of the south parlor.

The Alte Pinakothek of Munich, Germany, where the original resides, calls it "Beggar Boys Playing Dice" while Anna Millikin's "properization" gives us "Beggar Boys With Melons". Last March it could be more accurately described as beggar boys with dice and melons without frame. Sufficiently ostentatious frames of large format aren't easy to spot nowadays and most still confine their intended art. Dumb luck and skills honed at a hundred garage sales led us to John Ballog's little warehouse of wonders. John was the source for the Homestead's massive dining room chandelier armature and once again his promises yielded the gilt prize of our quest. What's more, it was crafted long ago on Chicago's Wabash Avenue and is stylistically suitable for our Victorian oil. An exacting modification to the frame was entrusted to restoration cabinetmaker John Huff. He flawlessly remitered one side and made a mahogany face molding to replace some unfortunate blue suede trim of recent origin. The result of mingling Murillo with Wabash Avenue may now be evaluated by the Homestead family and hopefully relished like a succulent melon or heaven forbid - something dicier!

Lucien Kapp
Chairman

Victorian Tea

A Bouquet of Thanks to Mr. Valentine!



Our Christmas decorations in the Homestead had a special flair this year. Tim Valentine from Valentine Antiques and Flowers in Monticello donated his talent, time, and a considerable amount of materials. In scarcely two hours he managed to give the Homestead an unusually festive and elegant look. Several of us watched him, and we were impressed with his quick and sure placement of decorations which optimally complimented the surroundings.

Mr. Valentine indicated that we could count on him again next Christmas, hinting we might expand the project to include the upstairs. The decorations will be different, but certainly equally exciting! We look forward to it!

Brigitta Kapp
Victorian Tea Chairman



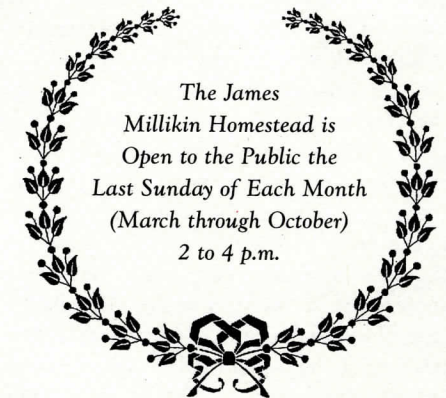
Thank You



To Ann Seidman for donating two lovely lace table clothes for use at the Homestead.



To Alice Brock, Lynn Potter and Carolyn Rau for stepping in to fill vacancies on the Board.



The James Millikin Homestead is Open to the Public the Last Sunday of Each Month (March through October) 2 to 4 p.m.