

The  
**James Millikin  
Homestead Gazette**

Volume XLIV, Issue 4

125 N. Pine Street, Decatur, IL 62522

November 2019

*James Millikin Homestead*  
**Christmas Open House &  
Sweet Treats Bakery**  
Sunday, December 8th  
from 12:30pm - 4:30pm

*Stop by to enjoy home baked cookies, mulled cider and the Homestead's festive holiday décor. Keeping with tradition, the Sweet Treats Bakery will be open for business in the South Parlor, too. Cookie trays, breads, candies, cakes and other delectable goodies will be available for purchase during the Open House hours. This event is free and open to the public.*



## Mr. & Mrs. Millikin Days

James and Anna Millikin recently hosted Professor Kathy Barringer's Social Studies Methods class from Millikin University. These sophomore elementary education majors were introduced to the art of bringing history to life. Mr. & Mrs. Millikin and their staff presented a modified version of the **Mr. & Mrs. Millikin Days** program that is offered each spring to area third graders. Professor Barringer writes, "It was so special for our Social Studies class to experience the art of role playing as related to the historical past and the founder of Millikin University. Thanks for making this wonderful educational experience a reality for our Millikin students." Their visit coincided with Homecoming week activities and was the first time that these guests had visited the Homestead. We hope that they will come again and bring their friends and family.



## A Visit from James Millikin



At our August open house, we had the pleasure of a visit from James R. and Helen Millikin from Rockford, IL. James ("Jim") is descended from James Millikin's uncle and is the first cousin four times removed of the James Millikin of Decatur history.

The Millikins said that the home exceeded their expectations as they enjoy the tour. They had been wanting to see the home for years and decided that the August open house was the day to do it.

We are thrilled they enjoyed their visit and hope to see them again in the future.

## President's Letter

Approximately one thousand people have visited the Homestead since the last newsletter. Many of those individuals commented, "I have never been here before!" When we can entice the community to visit the Homestead and to hear the stories of the Millikins and Decatur, the building becomes more than just old bricks and mortar; it comes to life. As a strong thread in the fabric of Central Illinois history, the James Millikin Homestead must provide connections between this beautiful, stately home and its visitors. Whether that relationship is ce-

mented with a fascinating story about the Millikins or with a serving of ice cream, the results are the same, the Homestead becomes relevant to another individual! Please help to build the Homestead's connections by sharing your experiences with the people you encounter and encouraging them to visit this magnificent home. I hope to see you at the Homestead!

With Warm Regards,

Linda Ostrander

President, James Millikin Homestead, Inc.

## Taste of History

Taste of History 2019 was a rousing success. Guests had the opportunity to visit five historic Decatur venues in one evening; the Millikin Homestead, the Staley Museum, the Oglesby Mansion, the Mueller Museum and the Culver House where guests were served an adult beverage and hors d'oeuvres.

More than 225 guests were greeted at the front door of the Homestead and were invited in to sample a delicious array of hors d'oeuvres elegantly displayed and served in the dining room. The wonderful food, prepared by Homestead Board members and volunteers, was accompanied by wine recommended by The Decanter.

Homestead guests were entertained with live music played on the antique South Parlor piano by Board

member and jazz aficionado Jason Butterick.

By popular demand, plans are already underway for the Taste of History 2020, so please stay tuned for details in future issues of the Homestead's newsletter!



## The Homestead Receives a Spa Day

On August 23, 2019 twenty (20) Millikin University freshmen committed to personal growth as they broke into teams to tackle chores in and around the James Millikin Homestead. Their work was under the guidance of the University's Campus Involvement, AmeriCorps Vista program and members from the Homestead Board of Directors.

Indoor groups took on vacuuming, dusting, waxing, polishing and general spit shine of the interior rooms, hallways, shutters, stairways and Anna Millikin's beautiful Dining Room. Windowsills, nooks and crannies were discovered and cleaned.

An outdoor team took on a portion of the northeast landscaping beginning at the front porch and proceeding around the North Parlor corner. The task

was to pull back the heavy vegetation that tends to trap moisture which, over time, seeps into the basement. The work was tough, but the youth were up to the task.

A tip of the hat to Delphine Iragena from AmeriCorps and to the MU Campus Initiatives program for sharing your passion and commitment with the Homestead.



# Millikin Homecoming

On a drizzly morning in late September, it seemed a time portal had opened up on the west end of Decatur. Millikin University President, Patrick White, was shaking hands with University Founder, James Millikin, (Doug Warren) as Mrs. Anna Millikin, (Donna Williams), looked on from her seat in the family's horse drawn carriage. The James Millikin Homestead's Homecoming Parade entry was a charming horse and carriage that conveyed the founding couple around the streets that were once their home.

Following the parade, alumni and their families converged on the Homestead for ice cream, cookies, tours, and photo ops with visitors from the past. Mr. Millikin took de-

light in showing visitors the many beautiful features of his home. Over 150 visitors packed the Homestead resulting in tour group gridlock at one point! All the tour guides certainly had to be on their toes, fielding the wide array of questions from the excited visitors. The day was a wonderful opportunity to see old friends and to make a multitude of new ones! Thanks to Prairie Farms Ice Cream and Refreshment Services Pepsi for their support of this event.



# In Memoriam

The James Millikin Homestead extends heartfelt sympathy to the family of Lilly Eckert.

Lilly Eckert passed away on October 4 at the age of 82. She was a board member from 2010-2016 and generously gave of her time and talents. One of her favorite activities at the Homestead was playing the role of Mrs. Millikin in our annual "history comes alive" program for third graders. Lilly's soft voice and big smile made her an especially appealing Mrs. Millikin. She will be missed!

# Teacher Appreciation Night at the Children's Museum of Illinois

The James Millikin Homestead was represented at the inaugural Teacher Appreciation Night at the Children's Museum of Illinois. Mrs. Millikin's Maids Julie Carter and Linda Ostrander shared the educational opportunities available at the Homestead with the approximately 100 attendees and encouraged the educators to include a field trip to the Homestead as part of their classroom plans.



# Appeals Letter

As a supporter of the James Millikin Homestead, you will receive a letter in the next few weeks requesting a financial contribution over and above your annual membership. We hope you will thoughtfully consider this request will make a donation to the Homestead.

Your contributions not only support repairs and restoration projects at the Homestead but also fund community outreach including programs for school age children, a youth band concert on the lawn and ice cream for Millikin University students, families and alumni. This outreach is vitally important in building the Homestead's viability and relevance within our community and with future generations. Your continuing generosity to the James Millikin Homestead is immensely appreciated!



Thanks to our Millikin Place neighbors, Susan Wade, Chris White and doggie helper, Rob Roy, for their daily walks and trash pick up. We are very grateful to these women for their stewardship of our near Westend neighborhood and the Homestead grounds.

**THE JAMES MILLIKIN HOMESTEAD, INC.**



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Website: jamesmillikinhomestead.com  
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and follow us on Instagram!

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## Membership Renewal

Watch your mailbox at the end of January for an invitation to renew your membership to the James Millikin Homestead. While there was some confusion over the last year about the new renewal structure which collects dues at one time rather than a rolling system, receiving all of the membership payments at one time of the year has made the Homestead's financial planning much more efficient. Thank you for your understanding and acceptance of the new system. As always, please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Linda Ostrander 217-454-5827

Our members are the lifeblood of the James Millikin Homestead. The Homestead offers annual and lifetime memberships. The annual membership covers the period from March 1 thru February 28 each year. If you are currently an annual member, you will receive a membership renewal letter during the month of January. Donations are gratefully accepted year-round. If you would like to donate to the Homestead or would like to join the Homestead as a **NEW** member, please return the form below to: The James Millikin Homestead, 125 North Pine Street, Decatur, IL 62522

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to join the James Millikin Homestead.  
A representative will contact you.

Please accept my donation to the James Millikin Homestead.

Donation Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_