



THE MUELLER RECORD

Fall, 1996

New Museum Up and Running . . .



What a memorable Memorial Day! Over 300 Mueller family members, retirees, Mueller Co. personnel, and guests toured the new Hieronymus Mueller Museum which is located at 61 S. Country Club Rd. Speakers for the event included Jane Mueller, president of the Board of Directors; John Mueller, secretary; Judy Locke, president of the Decatur Park District Board of Commissioners; and Dale Smith, president of Mueller Co.

Hieronymus Mueller Museum

61 S. Country Club Rd.

Decatur, IL 62521

(217) 423-6161

Hours: Thursday-Sunday, 12-5 p.m.

After October: 1-4 Friday-Sunday

\$1.50/adult admission

Batman named Museum Manager

Nancy Jo Batman, columnist of *Out & About* in the Decatur Herald & Review, has been named Museum Manager.

Nancy Jo, a native of the Decatur and Blue Mound area, is the author of three books and is currently the Editor of *DoveTales* for Dove, Inc. She has served as Public Relations Coordinator for the Decatur Area Arts Council and was Editor of their bimonthly newsletter. She is also the owner of Bingo Pajama Publications, a desktop publishing business in her home.

She is married to Ray Batman, chief financial officer of Dove, Inc. They have three grown children.



For the Record . . .

The hardest part was learning how to spell "Hieronymus."

But now that I've added it to the computer's SpellCheck, the job is easier.

I have had many "careers" in my life, starting with sacking potatoes for my dad's grocery store--Scotty's Market--in Blue Mound when I was 10, but this is my first time to be a Museum Manager.

I like the title. I like the job. And I *love* the place.

It's the only spot in town where, if you go outside, you can hear the whistle of a miniature train, the crow of a rooster, the laughter of children, and the roar of a jet skier. And once in a while, you can hear a peacock making whatever noise they make.

When people come out to the new Hieronymus Mueller Museum, they are amazed. "I never dreamed this was here," some say. Others comment on the beauty of the building--both the outside and inside--and say, "You never could have found a better place for this museum."

That's what Jane Mueller thought. She is the President of the Board of Directors of the Museum which was established to preserve the culture and inventions of the Mueller family and Mueller Co.

(Can you believe Hieronymus and his descendants held 501 patents at one time?)

What a great gift to the community of Decatur--its first industrial museum!

Until we have our signs up, here are the directions: Go to Scovill Park. If you want to, you can ride the little train or play on the monkey bars and smell the flowers by the gazebo and walk through the Oriental Gardens and even take a sashay through the new Children's Museum of Illinois.

Our building--the beautiful creme and rust-colored building with the high-pitched, pine green roof--is shared with the Charles Franklin Shilling Environmental Center and is located next to the Gift Shop.

There's been a whole lot of building going on! If you haven't been out this direction for awhile, do yourself a favor and come visit. You might even catch a glimpse of a wolf!

--Nancy Jo Batman, Manager



"Two Detroits": Almost a Reality



Cutline

In 1895, Hieronymus purchased a "Benz Motor Wagon" from Germany. Mr. Mueller began to improve this Benz car, and in 1897 two patents were granted him on the following: Variable Speed Transmission, Steering Gear and Body Suspension and Water Cooling Radiator. After these changes to the Motor Wagon, the car was renamed the Mueller-Benz.

Hieronymus' sons, Oscar and Phillip, also received patents on the Mueller-Benz car. Oscar received a patent on the earliest form of spark plug and Phillip, for the distribution head.

Then it happened!

While experimenting with high test gasoline and redesigning carburetors, an explosion occurred, and Mr. Mueller was so badly burned that he died a week later on March 1, 1900.

At the time of his death, Mr. Mueller had the parts of three different automobiles under construction. Oscar and Phillip sold their patents and the family's interest shifted from the automobile to brass groups. Thus, the "Second Detroit" came to an end.

--Richard A. McKinley, Mueller Co. Retiree

Museum receives awards!

The Hieronymus Mueller Museum received two awards recently from the Illinois Association of Museums. The Museum received an Award of Excellence for its Permanent Exhibits and an Award of Merit for its brochure. Mary Turner, coordinator of IAM, said, "The committee believed the exhibit was well-organized, the artifacts and photos were mounted following the best professional standards, and the evaluation process is excellent."

"Mueller Master" Megan

Megan Bryant, who has served as Project Curator of the Hieronymus Mueller Museum, will leave Decatur the end of September to take a full-time job as Registrar at The Sixth Floor Museum in Dallas, Texas.

If the show "Jeopardy" had a category entitled "Mueller Family History," Megan would win--hands down! She has spent the past year buried in the Mueller family and business history and has made our new Museum come to life.

Megan was responsible for the cataloging of approximately 5,000 articles for the Museum, including old newsletters, photographs and artifacts.

She was also responsible for the writing of the exhibit text on the walls as well as a comprehensive Collections Management Manual.

We hate to say good-bye to Megan and her enthusiasm for the project. She was the perfect person for this difficult endeavor.

Do you remember?

■ **R.K. (Pete) Duncan** was elected president of the Mueller supervisors' Club. Other officers were **G. Edgar Hartwig**, vice-president; **Wallace Gould**, secretary; **Melvin Coates**, treasurer; and **Ray Kileen**, program chairman. (*The Mueller Record*, March, 1949)

■ Suggestion Awards winners (August, 1943) were: **Carl Kraft**, **Karl Brimm**, **Isaac Gowan**, **Clarence Hays**, **Clark Curry**, **Stanley Ashby**, **H.L. Hansen**, **L. Hopper** and **M. Like**.

■ Kangaroo Jumping Race winners at August 1942 Mueller Co. Picnic: **Nelda Lorene Epperson**, **Alice Cash**, **Jacqueline Chepan**.

■ **August Schudziara** won the tub shower faucet and **Frank Tosh** the combination sink faucet during the 100th birthday Celebration of Hieronymus Mueller and the Company's 75th Anniversary held July 16, 1932. **Mildred Trimmer** won the 50-yard dash for girls under 10; **Edward Dyer** won the one-legged race for boys under 10; **Junior Murray** won the cracker eating contest, and **Esther Davis**, the egg race.

■ Camera Club prize winners for December, 1928 were: **Marie Eagleston**, **Eloise Dickenson**, and **Marian Richard**.

■ "John Moma of Dept. 9, and his father married sisters. John has four children. Figure Relationships." (*The Mueller Record*, Christmas, 1923)

■ "Carl Draper is going to quit grouching and do it with a smile."--New Year's Resolution, (*The Mueller Record*, Christmas, 1923)

Volunteer Corner

Betty Wheatley is serving as our Volunteer Coordinator and has made sure the Museum is staffed every day with tour guides. We can always tell when new volunteers show up: They don't bring something to read! Thanks to Ruth Wampler and Loren Hetzler, we have a couple of big boxes of old *Mueller Records* for the volunteers to read through while waiting for visitors. If you wish to volunteer, call Betty at 429-1234.

Annual Membership Information

Student/Senior Citizen **\$15**
Free admission for member and one guest, museum newsletter subscription, 10% discount on gift items.

Regular Membership **\$20**
Free admission for member and one guest, museum newsletter subscription, 10% discount on gift items.

Family Membership: **\$25**
Free admission for member and up to four family members, museum newsletter subscription, 10% discount on gift items.

***Support Membership:** **\$50**
Free admission for member and up to four family members, museum newsletter subscription, 10% discount on gift items, exhibit preview reception.

***Sponsor Membership:** **\$100**
Free admission for member and up to four family members, museum newsletter subscription, 10% discount on gift items, exhibit preview reception, museum notecards.

***Patron Membership:** **\$500**
Free admission for member and guests, museum newsletter subscription, 10% discount on gift items, exhibit preview reception, museum notecards, museum mug, recognition on museum donor board at Patron level.

***Benefactor Membership:** **\$1000**
Free admission for member and guests, museum newsletter subscription, 10% discount on gift items, exhibit preview reception, museum notecards, two museum mugs, museum t-shirt, recognition on museum donor board at Benefactor level.

Please circle the type of membership preferred

* A portion of these membership fees are tax deductible.

Please send this form and payment to

HIERONYMUS MUELLER MUSEUM

61 SOUTH COUNTRY CLUB ROAD
DECATUR, ILLINOIS
(217) 423-6161

Name _____

Address _____

Educational Institution
(if Student) _____


Check _____ Money order _____

The Hieronymus Mueller Museum is a privately funded non-profit museum and depends upon donations for its operations.

Mueller Museum Worksheet

We're working on a worksheet similiar to this one (only longer) for children who visit the Museum. We thought you might like to bring this with you next time you visit and see if you know the answers? (The worksheet is designed to make the children really look around.)

- 1) When did Hieronymus Mueller come to Decatur? _____ Where was he born? _____
- 2) How many children did Hieronymus and his wife Fredericka have? List their names:


- 3) When and how did Hieronymus die?
- 4) Who became president of the Mueller Co. after Hieronymus died? _____ Who was president of the Company from 1902-1939? _____
- 5) What award did the Mueller Co. receive in World War II? _____
- 6) Why is there a baby crib in the museum?

Bonus questions:

Who is in the photograph in Hieronymus' watch fob?

There is an upside-down photograph in the museum. Can you find it?



HIERONYMUS MUELLER MUSEUM

61 South Country Club Road
Decatur, IL 62521