



# THE MUELLER RECORD

Fall 1999

## **“Ham & Bacon”** **& sometimes a goose”**



Mueller Co. employees at a 1950s Christmas party included (front row, left to right): **Vera Poe Eschbaugh, Babe Ballard, Lucille Turner, Joann Koshinski, Betty Shively**; back row: **Charles Moore, Wilma Knorr, Barb Diehl, Carolyn Duncan, Marilyn Davis, Harley Himstead**. This is just one of over 50 photos which will be on display during the holiday exhibit: “Ham & Bacon & Sometimes a Goose,” which will run December 3 through January. In most of our exhibits, we feature very old photographs. This exhibit will include many photographs from the 1950s. So, stop by. You may see someone you know!

## For the Record . . .

by Nancy Jo Batman, Manager

We just finished our temporary exhibit called "Mueller Picnics," which featured these huge events which started in 1989.

Now, we are getting ready for our winter exhibit entitled: "Ham & Bacon & Sometimes a Goose."

Hardly any family which worked at the Mueller Co. needs an explanation of the first part of the title: "Ham & Bacon..."

But the goose part of the title may be puzzling to many.

In 1917, the Company decided to give a live goose to its employees, as Uncle Sam wanted to save the pork for the soldier boys.

A Mr. Firke, who owned a farm near Mansfield, Illinois, raised geese--40 acres-worth of them. The Mueller Co. joined other companies in Decatur and placed a mass order for geese.

Mr. Firke "shooed" the geese by driving them first through tar, and then through sand--so the geese's feet could withstand the journey by railcar. (It supposedly toughened them up!)

The geese arrived in 1917 at the local train station--over a thousand of them--and employees went down to the railroad station, got a goose and then carried it home. Some took the geese home via streetcar, which probably didn't do much towards putting the other riders in a festive holiday spirit.

Ruth Zetterlind Davis, who is 91, and whose grandfather was one of Hieronymus's first employees, remembers the day: "The goose tried to eat the buttons off of Dad and Uncle Harry's shirt."

The geese were usually put in the chicken pen in the backyard--and then killed and cleaned and cooked for Christmas dinner. This gift-giving lasted several years until a Mueller woman suggested the Company go back to ham & bacon.

The employees had their choice between 1) a ham and slab of bacon; 2) \$2 worth of magazine subscriptions; 3) a box of cigars; and 4) a box of handkerchiefs. (Image the poor husband who came home with a box of cigars under his arm! Or hankies?)

Please come by. It may be our most fun exhibit yet!

## New Members

### Sponsor - \$100

Mrs. Heidi Mueller-Hayes  
Ms. Judith Kaiser  
Mr. and Mrs. Merrill Lindsay  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert C. Smith

### Support - \$50

Mrs. Beatrice A. Joynt

### Family - \$25

Mrs. Vivian Doolen  
Mr. & Mrs. Theodore Miller  
Mr. Lavern Ramsey

### Regular - \$20

Ms. Evelyn B. Cox

### Senior - \$15

Mr. Carl M. Dodwell  
Ms. Mary Easterling  
Mr. Wm. Marshall Foster  
Mr. and Mrs. Stan Metz  
Mrs. Evelyn R. Potts  
Mr. & Mrs. W.C. Rohman  
Mr. & Mrs. Rex B. Smith  
Mr. & Mrs. Raymond Mounts

## Christmas at Mueller Co.



Mary Floyd of Mueller Co. hands out Christmas treats to children. Can you identify any of them?

## Tenacity pays off

*Hieronimus Mueller and his direct descendents held a total of 501 patents, including the spark plug, Crown roller skates, bicycle kick stand, first sanitary drinking fountain, tapping machine and on and on.*

*We recently asked for and received correspondence about the patent Hieronimus received on the water-cooled radiator and variable speed transmission for his motor carriage. Richard McKinley, former employee of Mueller Co. and a Museum volunteer, did some research. We think you'll be interested in his results.*

On April 29, 1896, an application for a patent was filed with the United States patent office by Hieronimus Mueller. This application consisted of 7 claims and \$15 for the first fee.

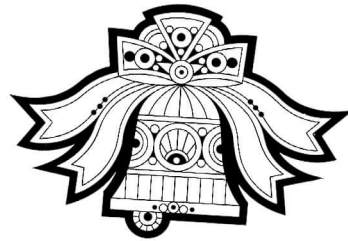
The role players for this account were: L.P. Graham, attorney for Hieronimus, to whom he gave full Power of Attorney to transact all business with the patent office; and H.P. Sanders, examiner in charge of this application and attorney from the patent office.

By the way, then as now, lawyers seem to have a language known only unto themselves. Sequence of events:

- Claims 1,2,3,4, and 6 rejected June 9, 1896, by H.P. Sanders
- Amended June 25, 1896, by L.P. Graham
- All claims except 5 and 7 rejected by H.P. Sanders on July 28, 1896
- Case in Review under Rule 28 (Revised Edition) for examination
- All claims except 5 and 7 finally rejected February 17, 1897, per letter from H.P. Sanders
- All claims amended February 24, 1897, by L.P. Graham
- Patent allowed March 29, 1897
- Letter to Commission of Patents from L.P. Graham sending \$20 final fee for patent allowed dated April 20, 1897. Yep, that's right. Patent cost \$15 first fee plus \$20 final fee.
- Patent issued May 11, 1897 (Patent #583539) consisting of new steering device and early form of radiator. This application for a patent took from April 20, 1896, to May 11, 1897.

Patent #583500 (gears) with same role players, took from July 22, 1896, to June 1, 1897, which included 3 rejections and 12 amendments.

--Richard A. McKinley



### 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 guests, museum newsletter subscription, 10% discount on gift items.

**\*Support Membership:** \$50

Free admission for member and up to four guests, museum newsletter subscription, 10% discount on gift items.

**\*Sponsor Membership:** \$100

Free admission for member and up to four guests, museum newsletter subscription, 10% discount on gift items.

**\*Patron Membership:** \$500

Free admission for member and guests, museum newsletter subscription, 10% discount on gift items, recognition on museum donor board.

**\*Benefactor Membership:** \$1000

Free admission for member and guests, museum newsletter subscription, 10% discount on gift items, recognition on museum donor board.

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, 62521

(217) 423-6161

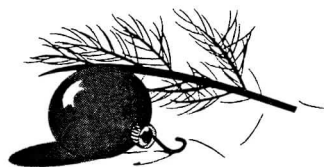
Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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



# Do You Remember?



Christmas parties at the Mueller Co. were a huge affair, complete with children's parties, entertainment, treats via Santa, and gifts to and from the employees. Pictured are some well-known men from the Mueller Co. in 1957: Charles Moore, Pete Duncan, Archie Sefton, Jim Cussins, Cec Coffin, Tom Harding, Harley Himstead, Cal McQuality and Clifford Carter. This picture and many others will be included in the winter exhibit at the Hieronymus Mueller Museum.

---

## HIERONYMUS MUELLER MUSEUM

---

61 SOUTH COUNTRY CLUB ROAD, DECATUR, IL 62521

HMMF

Address Correction Requested

### 1924 New Year's Resolutions:

*Mid Verner is going to write Congress a letter, suggesting that they pass a law that we eat five times a day instead of three. Marie Eagleton is going to keep on pulling funny boners and getting into embarrassing predicaments, thereby furnishing stories for the Record. Betty Bennett is going to study up on Greek history and naturalization laws. Ollie Marmor is going to keep on buzzing around the office like a busy bee. Carl Draper resolves that he is going to get to work on time at least one morning a week.*

Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Decatur, IL  
Permit No. 529