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# THE MUELLER RECORD

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Winter 2001

## “Hieronymus Hated Horses”

Hieronymus hated horses and thought there should be a better, more efficient way to get around. He ordered a Benz from Germany in 1895--the first automobile to hit the streets of Decatur and one of the first motor carriages in the country.

He wasn't overly fond of it either, so he and his two sons, Fred and Oscar, made improvements to the motor carriage, adding a variable speed transmission, a water-cooled radiator, three forward gears, a backward gear and a modified steering device.

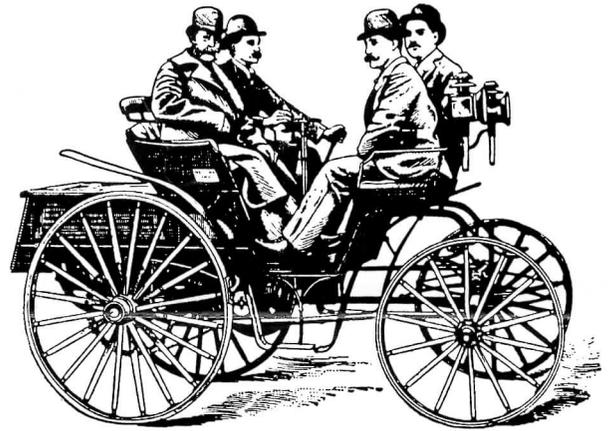
When the motor carriage was overhauled, they hauled it to Chicago November 3, 1895, for the first car race in the country. But only one other car made it to the starting line: the Duryea, manufactured by the Duryea brothers in Peoria.

The Mueller-Benz won that race, but other car owners petitioned the *Times Herald*, the sponsor of the race, for “do-overs.” About 40 “moto-cycles” (the name given to these first carriages) owners had indicated their plans to participate in the race, but couldn't get their vehicles to the starting point.

The official race was held Thanksgiving Day and Oscar Mueller was presented a check for \$1,000. The Duryea received a check for \$2,000. But the Gold Medal that was to be presented to the “clear winner” was not awarded since all the participants broke at least one of the very complicated rules.

Following that historic race, Hieronymus and his sons built at least seven more carriages, as we have blueprints in our storage area indicating “Mueller Motor Carriage #8.”

We do not know what happened to the original Mueller-Benz, but we do know there was only one with that name. After the first Benz was imported, the



Muellers built their own carriages “from scratch”--adding changes and modifications with each carriage.

We have located a motor carriage which *may*--or may not be--a Mueller-made vehicle. This beautiful, blue car belongs to Mr. James Renzulli of San Diego, CA, who is loaning it to the museum for three years.

We thank Mr. Renzulli, who has won several awards with this carriage under the name “Mueller Co. Decatur, Ill.,” for loaning us this attraction for the museum.

Meanwhile, a big door is being built to accommodate the almost 11-foot carriage, a display area is being constructed, and plans call for the car to be delivered before May 1.

We are also grateful to the Mueller Co. for its generous donation in helping defray the expenses for this exhibit.

You won't want to miss seeing this incredible motor carriage--which happens to have a leather #7 on the back! (The Mueller 7th?)

## For the Record . . .

by Nancy Jo Batman, Manager

It is hard to believe that the Hieronymus Mueller Museum will be five years old this Memorial Day. (What's even harder for me to believe is that I've been here about that long--the longest I've been at any job, and I'm pretty old.)

And I still love it (most of the time)!

It was a long winter, but I kept busy accessioning items from the Mueller Co. and from former employees and putting the information into our SNAP! computer program.

Guests? We had a few. (Too few to mention.)

But all of a sudden, Someone pushed the Speed Forward button, and life is anything but peaceful and quiet around here.

We are working on a new exhibit for April about the 380+ patents obtained by Mueller family members. Most of their inventions are underground and have to do with the transfer and pressure of water and gas, but they also received patents on a bicycle kick stand, Crown roller skates, the spark plug, the first sanitary drinking fountain and the tapping machine.

We are also planning our summer exhibit: "Hieronymus Hated Horses," which will be a major addition to the museum. (See page 1 for details.)

We will have a product exhibit from the Mueller Co. that will display several of the more well-known Mueller products, including the fire hydrant. (Next time you see a hydrant, take a close look. There is a 50 percent chance it will say "Mueller.")

We have a new gift shop area featuring our local favorite artist, Shirley Kramer, who is making tiles with fire hydrants on them and also the Mueller-Benz which is pictured on page one.

That picture, by the way, was from a clip-art book and shows the Mueller-Benz. (When you become a piece of "art" in a clip-art book, well...you've pretty much gotten there.)

We're also in the process of getting an intern from Millikin University to help us complete an oral history about the company and family from our volunteers and other retirees.

So, stop by this summer! There is plenty to see!

## New members since last newsletter

### Benefactor - \$1,000

Ms. Jane Mueller  
Mr. John Scot Mueller

### Sponsor - \$100

Mr. and Mrs. Dale R. Smith  
Mrs. Harlan White

### Support - \$50

Mr. and Mrs. James Fleckenstein  
Mrs. Janet C. Gates  
Mr. Claude S. Inman  
Mr. and Mrs. Aaron Norrie

### Family - \$25

Mr. and Mrs. J. William Coffey  
Mr. and Mrs. Dean Madden  
Mr. and Mrs. Orville Spencer

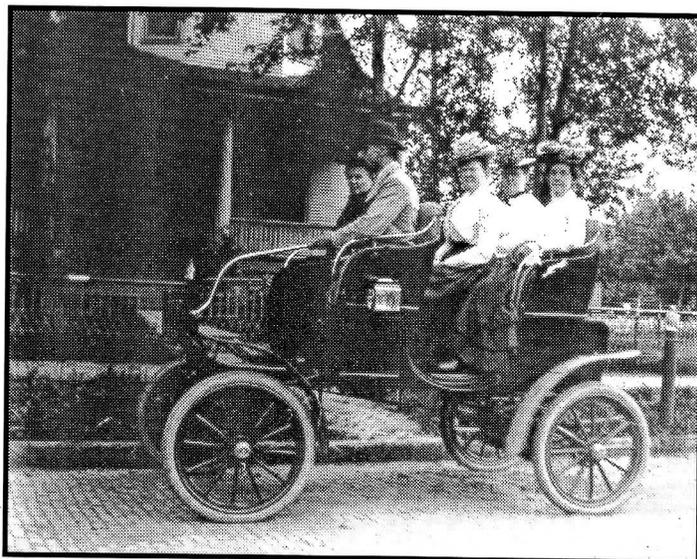
### Regular - \$20

Mr. Robert W. Mallow  
Mr. Robert J. Ott

### Senior/Student - \$15

Mr. Dwight Hodson  
Mr. and Mrs. Donald L. Matthews  
Mr. and Mrs. W.C. Rohman  
Mr. Edward Vogel  
Mrs. Genevieve H. Whitney

## Sunday in the Park . . .



*This photo was developed by Mike Isenberg of Paragon Graphics, Inc. According to Mike, this photo was taken c.1901 and was a Mueller motor carriage which was bought by Davis Livery to give Sunday-in-the-park drives. It has never been published before.*

## Core Room workers



*Reason #632 why people should write names on the backs of photographs. All we know is this was the Core Room Christmas Party in 1935. Know anyone? (We think Gladys Lloyd is 2nd from right in 2nd row; Thelma Coffman Ater, far right, 3rd row (next to Robert Mueller); and Erma Keller, 1st row, 3rd from right.)*

## 4 for the road . . .



*We believe these Mueller Co. employees are (from left): Dorothy O'Byrne, Nola Lowry, "Rulli" (?), Roarick, and Hildegard Jeschawitz.*

## Climbing your family tree?

We have boxes and boxes of photos--some labeled, more not. If you would like us to do a computer search for a photograph of a relative, co-worker or friend, come on in and we'll do our best. We hope eventually to be the "starting place" for any Mueller Co. employees climbing their family trees.

Every time we send out a newsletter, we get new members: former employees, family members or local historians. Do you know of someone who would like to receive this quarterly publication? It's a unique gift! Just fill this out and send us a check!

### 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?

◆ **Arthur W. Cash**, mechanical engineer engaged in the manufacture of special valve apparatus has become associated with the H. Mueller Mfg. Co. and will be in charge of the regulating-valve and engineering department.--*American Machinist*, May 5, 1910.

◆ Officers of the 49 Club in 1953 included: **W.L. DeWitt, F.V. Johnson, F.T. O'Dell, C.H. Martin** and **G.W. White**. The 49 Club was composed of Mueller salesmen and took its name from the Mueller stop and waste (6514) generally called the "49" cock.

◆ The Mueller Factory Band consisted of: **John Leish, Frank Allen, Harry H. Hunt, Oscar Schwarcz, E.J. Anderson, R.B. Pease, C.O. Tohill, E. Crowder, A. Eckhardt, Earle Bryan, J. Kafe, Charles Stoutenborough, H.J. Wehner, C.G. Reisch, Frank Hinkle, G. Eckhardt, Frank Zetterlind, E. Stoewsand, L. Stoddard, G. Jenkins, Russell Albright, A. Shirk, J. Lingle, R. Cox, and E. Dodds**.--*Mueller Record*, August 1916

◆ Officers for the 4-X Club for 1959-60 were: **Del Parks**, president; **Elwood Potts**, vice-president; **Marshall Foster**, secretary; **Charlie Johnson**, treasurer; and **Jim Milligan**, program chairman.

◆ The following Mueller Co. employees were pictured in the "Main Connections" newsletter August, 1959 as receiving Service Awards: **Frank Williams, Clinton Wright, E.J. Pasley, Hoyt Mounts, Jennie Kinney, James W. Workman, Oscar H. Stratman, Leslie I. Hopper, Harry M. Carter, Jack Bain, Elwood H. Potts, Gus F. Edwards** and **Hugh Henley**.

◆ Mueller Co. employees who are members of the Gallon Club of the Decatur Red Cross include: **William L. Adams, Delmar Baum, Iris Baum, William Boehm, William Brooks, Charles L. Brown, Carl Floren, Howard Gleespan, John Hackl, Opal Jackson, Leroy Kemper, Ray Larus, Stan Metz, Nelson Mitchell, William Mueller, James Mulvaney, Robert Salogga** and **Paul Talbert**.--*Main Connections*, February 1961

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## HIERONYMUS MUELLER MUSEUM

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

Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
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Decatur, IL  
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