



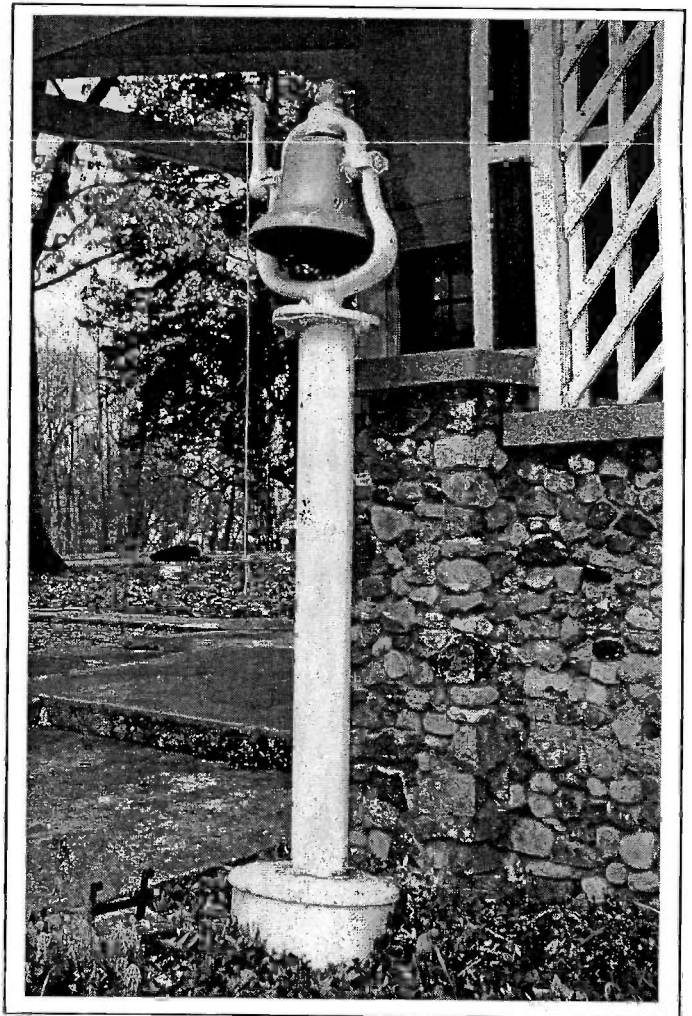
THE MUELLER RECORD

WINTER 2005/06 NEWSLETTER

RINGING OUT THE END OF AN ERA AT MUELLER LODGE

The bell has called its last event at the Lodge with the demolition of that structure in December. Built in the days before television and air conditioning, the Lodge was an idyllic retreat for Mueller Co. employees, families and guests. How many happy family hours must have been spent at the Lodge and grounds? How many children ran across the lawns? How many softball games were played? How many picnic blankets laid out? How many fish were pulled from the pond? Anyone ready for a game of cards? What will appear at the potluck supper? What are the prizes to be won at game night? What songs will be sung at the campfire?

The Lodge will be missed...



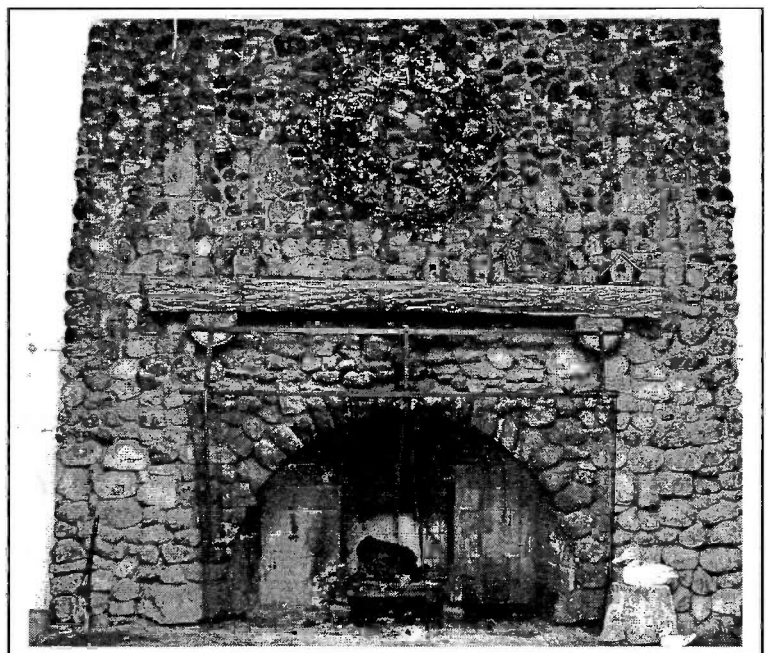
SAYING GOODBYE TO MUELLER LODGE

Mueller Lodge, home to many company events from 1920 to 1986, was razed in December. When Mueller Co. was sold by the family in 1986, the Lodge with its 19 acres was donated to Millikin University. Millikin maintained the Lodge, holding various events there and renting the facility for meetings, wedding receptions and parties. However, in recent years, Millikin felt the expense of keeping the facility was not something they could continue and sold the property in January, 2005. The lodge property was acquired by John Scot Mueller, great-grandson of Heironymus Mueller, who plans to develop the site for 16 homes. Certain features of the property will be retained such as the pond and dam.

The tract has historical significance as the site of the first permanent home in the Decatur area. Nothing remains of that structure which was built in 1820 by William Downing. Mueller Co. acquired the property as a part of a plan to develop a large area on the south side of the Sangamon River (Lake Decatur) as a model housing community for its employees and a site for a new plant. With the death of William E. Mueller (President of Mueller Co.) in 1947, this plan was dropped and the land gradually sold off. The Lodge tract was the last of 1500 acres once held by the company.

The Lodge structure was originally a WWI training barracks located at Millikin University and was purchased by Mueller Co. in 1920. The building was moved to the lakeshore site joining the already existing Athletic Club building and becoming the focus of the continued development of a company recreational complex. The Lodge building was placed on a basement providing showers, restrooms, and mechanical space. A massive stone fireplace was added to the main floor along with a well-equipped kitchen. Overlooking the lake was a large veranda – first open and later enclosed. The second floor contained sleeping quarters for visitors and a caretaker's apartment. The area around the Lodge provided for many outdoor activities including horseshoes, softball, croquet, fishing, boating and an open-air amphitheater for concerts and skits. The rustic but comfortable setting was a perfect retreat for company activities, meetings and recreation in days when the pace of life allowed for such enjoyment.

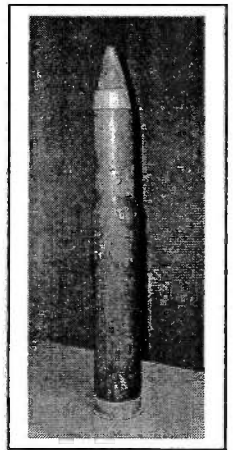
The Museum expressed an interest in acquiring items from the Lodge and John Mueller graciously had those items transported to the Museum prior to demolition. Many mementos of the Lodge are now safely in the Museum collection including the large bell which stood just outside, a great variety of plumbing fixtures made by Mueller Co., old kitchen utensils, an original cupboard from the kitchen, windows, the posted fishing rules, tables, chairs and much more. Sadly, plans to move the entire fireplace to the museum had to be abandoned as impractical. It will take some time and planning before these items find their way into the exhibits but they will eventually find a place in telling the Mueller story – part of a charming and memorable chapter of Mueller history.



ARTICLES DONATED TO THE MUSEUM

The opening of our new building continues to generate interest and that interest has led to the contribution of many new items to the Museum collection. The addition of new material is important to the vitality of the Museum and is central to our purpose of preserving history and its artifacts.

Some of the items require a bit of research to identify exactly what we have. Bob Nelson brought in a mock-up of a piece of WWII ordinance that was made in the Mueller Co. pattern shop – a large wooden shell with a couple of metal bands. The task for the Museum is the identification of the size and type of ordinance the mock-up represents and determining if Mueller Co. actually produced the shell during the war. Incidentally, Bob said that he retrieved this item from the trash a number of years ago with the idea of making a lamp – we're thankful he never got around to that although it would have been an impressive piece!



An intriguing puzzle was handed to us by Sarah (Sally) Juntune whose father, Hugh Baker, worked many years in sales for Mueller Co. Sally has loaned us a small model of a fire hydrant which her father had from his days with the Chatanooga division. The model is of a **Herron hydrant** made in Chattanooga. The challenge is to learn if there is a connection between the Herron hydrant and the Columbia Iron Works which was the hydrant manufacturer acquired by Mueller Co. Perhaps a reader knows?

Betty Ann Roe, a 25-year Mueller Co. veteran who retired in 1987, brought in a number of interesting items including a rough casting of a small hydrant about 8" tall. The casting is marked "Mueller Co., Chatt. Tenn" and was to have been finished into a lamp. Unfortunately, the project was never completed due to the intrusion of actual work... Betty says that other lamps were made and we would love to see a photo of the finished product if one can be found.



Fortunately, most of the items donated are more easily identified. Bill Horve brought in an old office machine (a calculator in a travel case) used by the company in the 1940's and '50's. It will be an eye-opener for the computer generation to see a mechanical calculator.

Dean Ater and Sidney Duffer each contributed a number of old Mueller Co. catalogs. The Museum has a good collection of catalogs – we assume we don't have them all since we don't know how many there were. We are happy to obtain multiple copies of catalogs and Mueller Records because copies used for research and reference in the Museum will inevitably wear out and need to be replaced.

Gloria Moran brought in many items that had belonged to Edna Rybolt, a 45-year Mueller Co. retiree who died in 2001. Edna's collection included hundreds of snapshots taken at work over the years as well as advertising pieces, service pins, and a Mueller vase.

The items mentioned are only a small portion of our recent acquisitions. We thank all donors of items and encourage our readers to think of the Museum as an appropriate place to preserve their items of Mueller history.

HIERONYMUS MUELLER MUSEUM

420 West Eldorado Street
Decatur, Illinois, 62522
(217) 423-6161

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