



# THE MUELLER RECORD

SPRING 2009 NEWSLETTER



*Photo donated by Ruth Austin*

Spring turns a young man's fancy ... to baseball, of course. The Mueller Co. team pictured above was fielded by the company around 1917. The "Rapidac" logo on the shirts referred to a line of plumbing goods manufactured by Mueller at that time. Only two individuals are identified – Robert Mueller is standing at top right and the player standing 2<sup>nd</sup> row left is Tom Black.

## MUELLER CO. BASEBALL

Our records don't show when the company first fielded a baseball team but the *Mueller Record* for May, 1914 contains a photo of the Mueller Indoor Baseball team which had just won the city championship having defeated Decatur Bridge Company in a playoff series. How and where "indoor baseball" was played is a bit of a mystery but it seems to have been popular in these days. Baseball teams were likely sponsored by the company before 1914 but no records were kept. Over the years, reports appear of both indoor and outdoor baseball teams competing for Mueller Co. in various city leagues.

Baseball seems to have fallen victim to World War II, as employee-players left for the service. The company did field a team in 1942 competing against teams such as the Decatur Indees, Century Wall Paper, Young Democrats, Casner, and Staley. The June, 1942, *Mueller Record* describes an impressive 14-6 victory for the Mueller All Stars. Apparently, winning teams had been rewarded with pop and candy, but, as a sign of the times, prizes now took the form of U.S. War Bond Savings Stamps.

After the war, baseball was replaced by softball which lasted only a couple of years. There was one final appearance of the Mueller name on a baseball jersey – in 1948, the Decatur Union League was formed by the U.A.W. – A.F.L. and Local 838 of Mueller Co. formed a team to compete. The league appears to have lasted only one season and baseball became a part of the Mueller past.

Mueller Co. has had a long and deep connection with other sports as well. Over the years, employees have participated in company sponsored golf, bowling, swimming, hockey and cricket (the Sarnia plant is in Canada). Today's lifestyle has taken its toll on all these activities – we prefer to watch others compete on television – and there are no "Mueller" teams to join. Times don't get better, they just change.

## VOLUNTEER CHRISTMAS PARTY

The volunteers who assist in the operation of the museum will be enjoying the annual Christmas Party on Sunday, May 3 from 3:00 to 5:00. Mueller Co. under family ownership had a long tradition of hosting a Christmas party for employees and families as a means of thanking them for their service to the company. The museum sought to continue that tradition but found that many retired employees prefer to spend winter (and Christmas) in warmer places, hence the party now takes place in May. No matter what the time of year might be, we are grateful for the help of our volunteers!

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Decatur Area Convention and Visitors Bureau

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