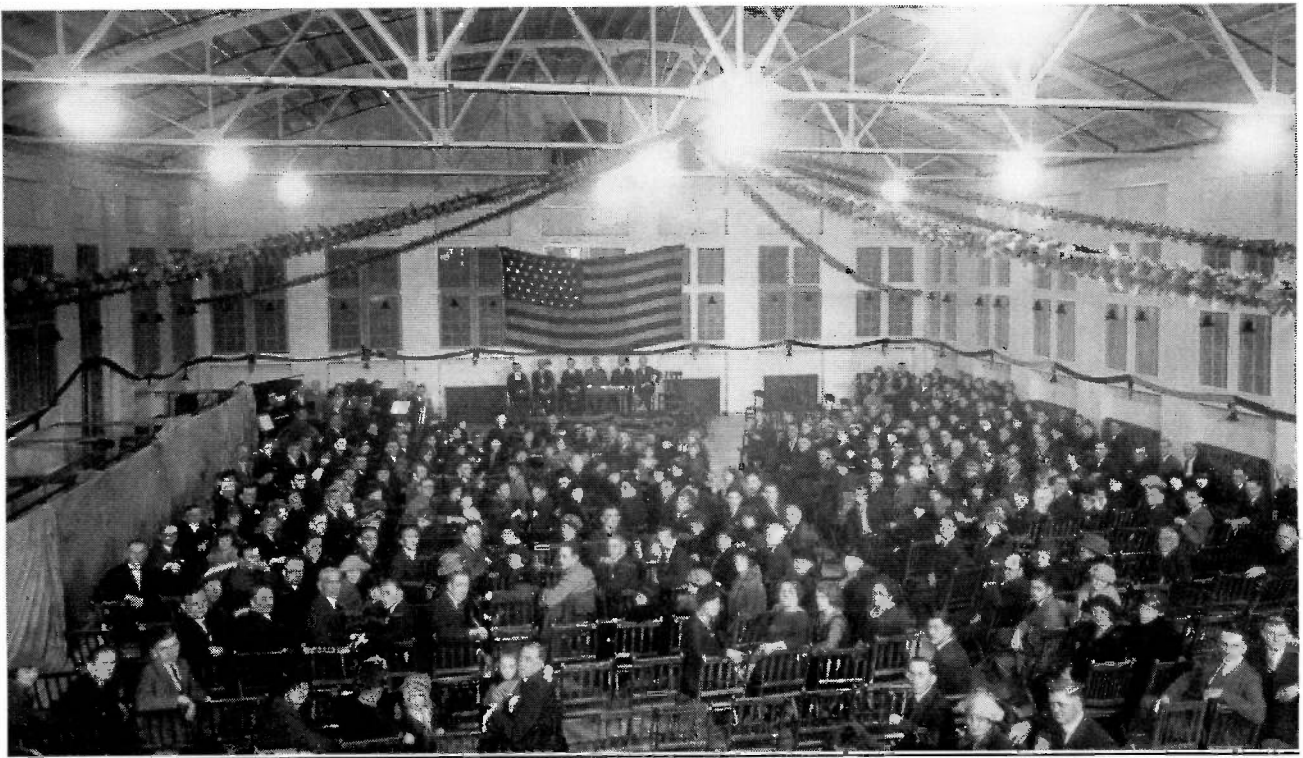




# THE MUELLER RECORD

WINTER 2009 NEWSLETTER



## DEDICATION OF MUELLER CO. RECREATION BUILDING

This was the scene inside the new Recreation Building on the evening of December 20, 1923. Seated on the platform are company executives A. G. Weber, Philip Mueller, Adolph Mueller, Duke Mueller, and Robert Mueller together with the company's physical director, W. G. Cranston. While the building was new, the flag certainly was not – note that it has 45 stars. Utah was the 45<sup>th</sup> state admitted in 1896 while Oklahoma added a 46<sup>th</sup> star in 1907. Other features of the building were very much up-to-date including a “motion picture machine” which was a rarity outside of the movie houses. This facility was In addition to the existing outdoor recreational area around Mueller Lodge which offered a wide variety of sporting and family events. Such investment by a company in the recreational activities of its employees was most unusual in the 1920's – indeed it is an rare thing to find even today. ~ ~

## RECREATION HALL DEDICATED DECEMBER 20, 1923

Mueller Co. was always interested in contributing to the well-being of its employees. At a time when many employers were still pushing workers into 12 or 14 hour workdays at subsistence wages, the Muellers were encouraging home ownership, savings accounts, and recreational activities. One very good example of this philosophy was the construction of a new Recreation Hall on the factory campus. I came across the story on the opening of this new building in the December of 1923 *Mueller Record* and am reprinting part of that article for your enjoyment.

### A BUILDING DEDICATED TO PLAY

This year Santa Claus has brought the Mueller employees a fine recreation building which was dedicated on the evening of December 20<sup>th</sup>. It will, in the future, be the center of our social activities.

For several years the company has had in mind a building of this character, but it was a somewhat difficult matter to get a proper location. Through a system of change in location of several buildings at the corner of Cerro Gordo and Monroe streets, ground space was secured and during the past summer construction work was commenced.

Today the plain but substantial concrete, brick and steel building stands completed and will be the theater of many social events throughout the holiday season.

The Recreation Building is 100x60 feet, well lighted and ventilated. It consists of a basement with a concrete floor and one story above. The high ceiling provides ample space for games such as basketball, volley ball and indoor baseball.

At the south end is a gallery seating about two hundred person and the moving picture machine is also located there.

The beautiful hardwood gymnasium floor is 60x85 feet. On this level is a small dining room for the Noon-Day Lunch Club composed of foremen and heads of departments who meet company officers each noon for lunch followed by a business conference.

In the basement is a kitchen and a large dining area where the employees may eat their lunches. Warm food will be served cafeteria style at actual cost.

The equipment in this building is modern to the last degree. It is steam heated, has numerous shower baths, and approved system of ventilation and a carefully devised lighting system.

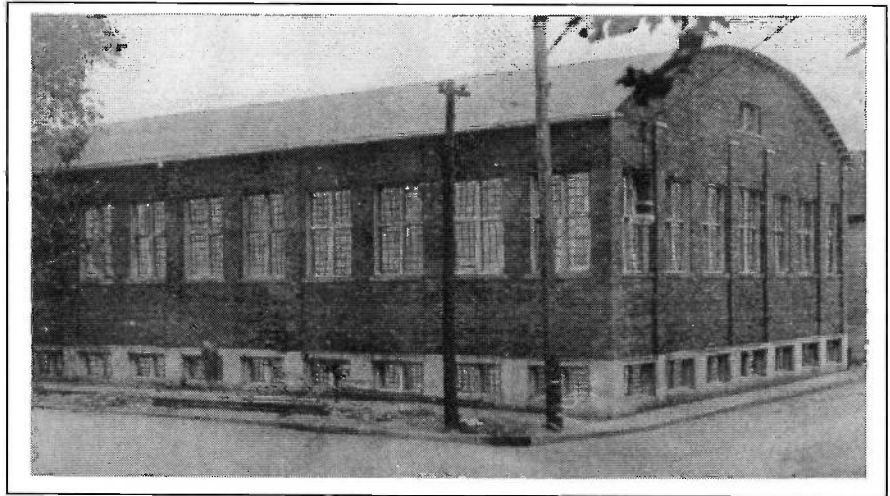
The completion of our Recreation building fulfills a plan the company has had in view for many years. The company officers are thoroughly sold on the idea that work must be seasoned with recreation. They practice it themselves and have now provided a place where all Mueller employees can have a convenient place for recreation at all seasons of the year and in all kinds of weather.

Many of the social activities which been centered at the Mueller Lodge will now be transferred to the Recreation building.

The article goes on to mention all the events occurring in the first week of operation – an orchestra performance, three large Christmas parties (two for employee's children), and a meeting of the Foreman's Club including games, dancing and cards. Committees consisting of both employees and managers were named to oversee the activities in the Recreation building. Those committees included Entertainment, Athletics, Games & Contests, Dancing, and Cafeteria. It is interesting to note that the time allocated for various uses of the facility included periods for both men's and women's use for physical fitness. W. G. Cranston was employed by the company to supervise the building, teach classes in physical fitness and generally encourage employee participation.

The Recreation building served its purpose for nearly 60 years. With chairs set up on the gym floor, it hosted massive Christmas parties, movies, and performances which were a great Mueller tradition. The dining hall was a huge success with a good meal and opportunity to gather in a social setting instead of carrying a cold lunch to a quiet corner. Changing times caught up with the facility and by the mid-1950's there was little activity other than a few other special events. The building was absorbed into other company activities with the gymnasium divided into work and office space while the cafeteria continued in use until the building was abandoned about 1960.

This is the exterior view of the Recreation Building taken just prior to its 1923 dedication. With its later incorporation into other plant buildings, the arched roof was removed and the windows replaced.



The gymnasium floor gets a new paint job. This photo was taken in 1932. Notice the set of gymnastics rings hanging near the worker? How many Mueller Co. employees could attempt a workout on the iron rings today?

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## PETER MUELLER JOINS FOUNDATION BOARD

**Peter A. Mueller** of San Francisco, California has been named to replace the late Kathryn Jane Mueller in representing the Adolph Mueller branch of the family on the Hieronymus Mueller Family Foundation Board of Directors. Peter is the son of Adolph Mueller, grandson of William Everett Mueller, great-grandson of Adolph Mueller and great-great-grandson of Hieronymus Mueller. Peter joins **John Scot Mueller** of Naples, Florida who will serve as President of the Board and represents the Robert Mueller branch of the family, **Michael R. Mueller** of Carson City, Nevada who will act as Vice-President while representing the Philip Mueller branch, **Mark Staley** of Springfield, Illinois who will be the treasurer and represent the Henry Mueller line, and **Betty Wheatley** of Decatur who has been named secretary and represents Mueller Co. active and retired employees. Additionally, the Board has approved a sixth position to be offered to an executive of Mueller Co. to strengthen our relationship with the company whose history we seek to preserve. The Board welcomes the participation and input of family members, museum members, and other interested individuals in shaping the future of the Foundation and the Hieronymus Mueller Museum. Always feel free to contact Board members or the Museum Director, **Mike Deatherage** with your suggestions, comments or questions.