Register of Old Buildings Macon County Historical Coordinating Council

Address: #4 Millikin Place
Legal description:
Adolph Mueller's First Resurvey
In City of Decatur (Plat 745/101)
(Exc. W25' of N 1/2 Lot 1)

Date of original construction: 1911 (Assessor's office)

Name of original owner: Adolph Mueller

History:

1. Data from available city directories:

1912-1944 Adolph and Minnie B. Mueller,
Adolph - chm. board, Mueller Co.

1945-1946 Vacant
1947-1962 Richard E. Reeser (Maxine S.)
Contractor
1963-1964 Vacant
1965-1966 Harold R. Hamilton (Ruth M.), clinical coordinator,
Neisler Laboratories
1967-1975 K. George Tietz (Margaret G., physician
1976- Raymond H. Gregg (Barbara), Marketing Emp., Cash Co.

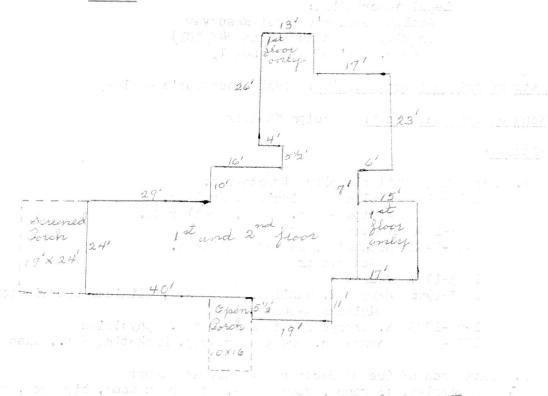
2. Data from office of Decatur Township Assessor:
 2 stories, ll rooms, wood frame, stucco on wood, hip roof, medium
 pitch, tile roof
 Front porch 10xll
 Side porch 19x24 (screened)
 50% basement
 Pine floor (softwood) - l room (kitchen)
 Hardwood floors - 10 rooms
 Hot water heat (community heating plant !!!out of date!!)
4 bathrooms
 Garage - cement floor 35x25 100 sq. ft. of concrete for turn
 around for cars asphalt drive 300'

(See sketch on next page)

Estory Contider

2. Data Cont'd.:

Sketch:



not drawn to scale

112-20 | the 111 | refgree 22 | 3. See following attachments:

- a. Write-up of visit to #4 Millikin Place on February 8, 1976 by Margaret M. Meyer.
- b. Olsen, Gail, Plates 38 and 39, 42, 43, 44, 47, 49, 50, Adolph Mueller House.
- c. Decatur Herald, Oct. 27, 1912, p. 9, Adolph Mueller's Residence and Novel Macadam Driveway.
- d. Decatur Herald, May 14, 1944, obit. Adolph Mueller.
- e. Architectural Record, October, 1916, p. 300, House of Adolph Mueller, Esq., Decatur, Illinois, Von Holst and Fyfe, architects, Marion M. Griffin, Associate.
- f. Decatur Review, June 4, 1915, p. 2, Wading Pool at Mueller Home Designed by Griffin.
- g. Sunday Review, Nov. 19, 1911, views of Adolph and Robert Mueller homes.



Tisit to #4 Millikin Place February 8, 1976

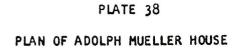
The entrance hall is wide and welcoming; the den at the To the left is the litting room, which is stunning. The ceiling is ridged, following the roof line: on either side of this ridge, slanted down, are stained glass panels which can belit two and quite long rectangles; and the other four are smaller, on either side of the central ones. On the right is a fireplace, the opening a rectangle; the wall above is brick, with rows of tiles which trimmed it originally. Immediately above the opening is a broad bend of stone across the full width. This has all been meinted white: the tiles were a mustard shade which did mot fit in with Mrs. Gregg's color scheme: the furniture is upholstered in sunny yellow, and the rug is light, perhaps an off white. Walls are white, so that the fireplacewall blands in. There are window trios either side of the fireblace, with low closed bookcases below. At the west end of the living room is the glass-doored entrance to the closed porch. Above the doors is atriangle of glass, which follows the ceiling shape. All windows have a distinctive pattern, repeated in combinations, leaded and with colored glass insets. Radiators are concelled by wood screens, with square uprights; one to the Xx right of the porch door has a decorative design above and the sowere uprights below; the radiator is in the wall at this position.

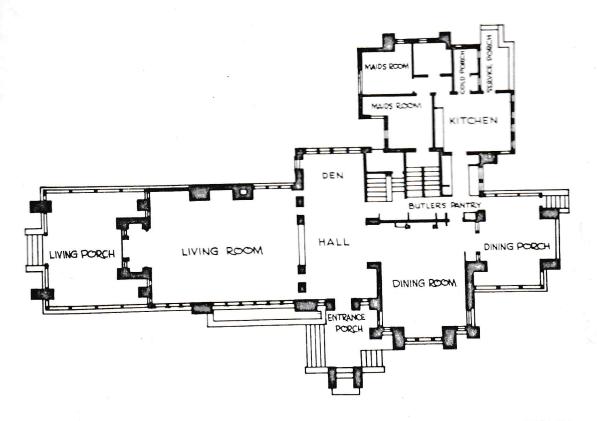
On the right is the dining room. The original light fixture, of cast brass, Mr. Gregg said, is still in place. Beyond it, to the east is the "dining porch" of the original floor plan: this is now a garden room. The floor has multi-colored small octagonal tiles; the walls are covered with small random shaped tiles, and the radiators are covered with wrought iron and tile. There is a wrought iron gate into the room.

A door to the north of the grilled gate leads into the marrow hall; from this to the north was the butler's pantry, which Mrs. Gregg has remodeled for use as a breakfast room. North of this is the kitchen, which has been completely modernized. The original cold porch has laudnry equipment. The rooms for maids, west of the kitchen, have been made into one large room, with two game tables; Mrs. Gregg said these rooms appeared not to have been used and were in poor condition; paneling has been put on the walls.

A wood screen about five feet wide shields the stairs from the front entrance. A long window, floor to ceiling almost, lights the landing of the stairwell. Upstairs, the hallways are narrow. They are lined with a series of built-in cupboards, the linen cupboard having shelves which bull out. Themaster bedroom has a fireplace with a low Roman arch, an adjacent sleeping borch, and built-in closets and drawers. Their son's bedroom also has an adjacent sleeping borch. Bedrooms at the back, over the kitchen wing, posed a problem in decorating, Mrs. Gregg said, because of the windows which leave little wall space. All woodwork upstairs has been painted.

mysethery





The plan of this house is similar to number one on a larger scale. It is L-shaped with the living area in the stem and the service area in the foot. Three large porches stand out from three sides to take advantage of the magnificent view present at the time the houses were built.

(Millikin University campus was to the west.) The only problem was that the railroad ran between the campus and his house. Mr. Mueller tried many times to have the railroad re-routed around the city. Perhaps his efforts were motivated selfishly since the view from his west porch was marred by a passing train.

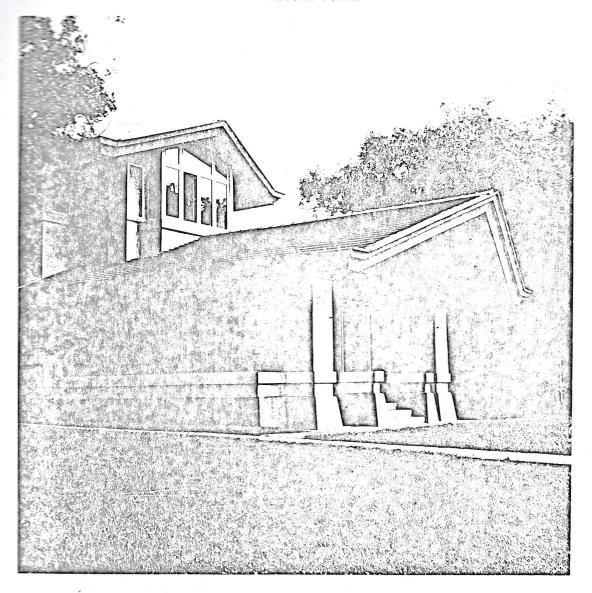
PLATE 39
ADOLPH MUELLER HOUSE



The gabled roof, freely used by both Wright and Griffin, gives this big house a light, birdlike quality. At first glance the house appears to be other than Wrightian; the author urges that one look further. There is much here that comes from Wright's last great houses in the Prairie style.

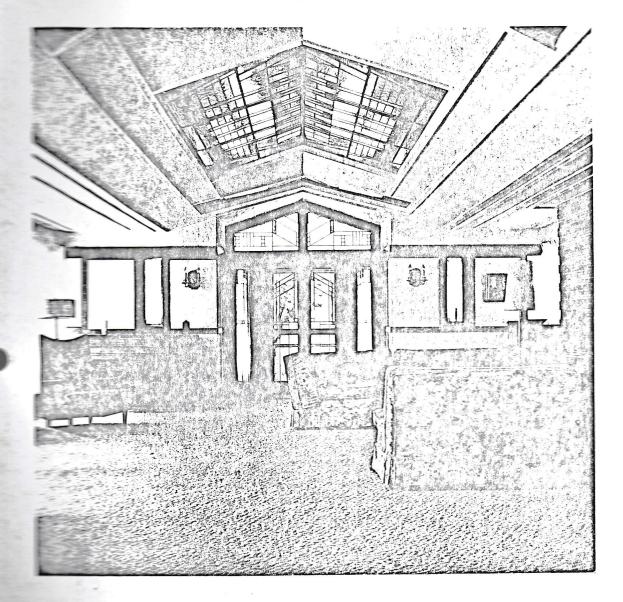
Compare it to the Boynton, Evans, and Coonley houses in Hitchcock, figures

PLATE 42 LIVING PORCH



The large sitting porch of the Adolph Mueller house facing west has an extremely deep overhang to protect people from the evening sun. Similar structures can be found in Wright's Dana house in Springfield, Illinois, and in Griffith's William H. Emery house in Elmhurst. The design-motif established here is repeated in the leaded glass ceiling light and in the windows.

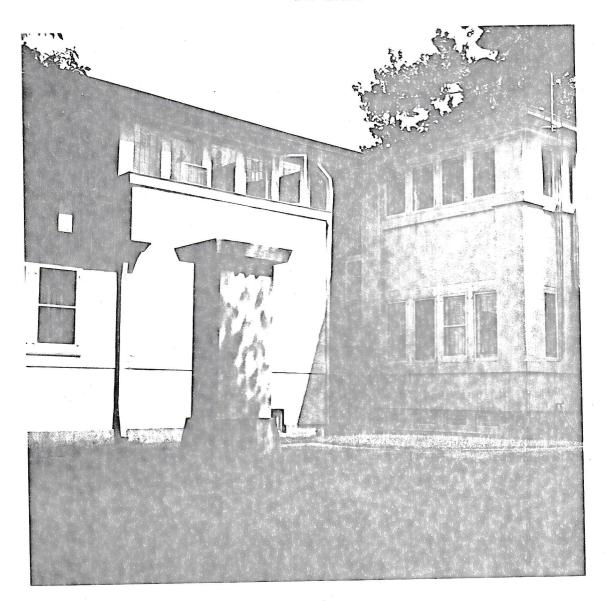
95



It light -- a prime criteria of Wright's Prairie house style.

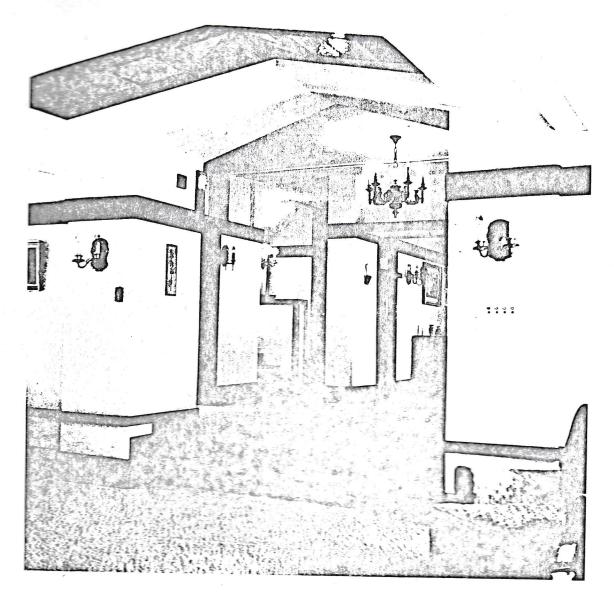
The decorative glass ceiling has additional panels at each and somewhat undistinguished.

PLATE 43
BAT HOUSE



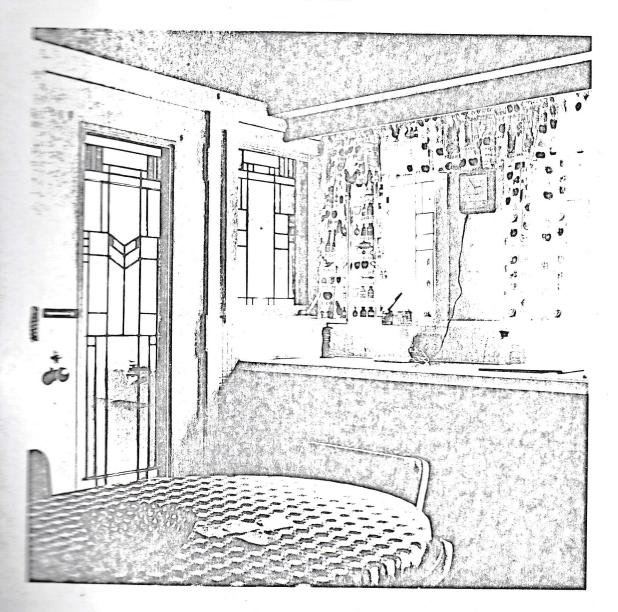
This view of the back of Adolph Mueller's house gives an excellent view of the long stairwell window from roof to basement. Notice the small overhang on this part of the house. The free-standing structure in the center foreground is a bat house. European bats were imported in the hope that the bats would eat the mosquitoes. No information is available to relate success or failure. There are no bats living here at the present time.

PLATE 47 STAIRWAY



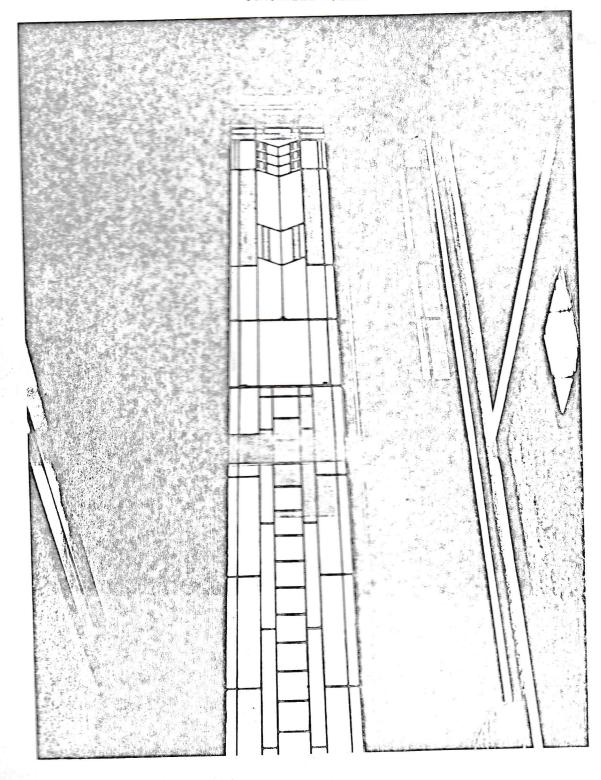
Wright made early use of the split level, the hall is two steps up from the living room. The stair hall is separated from the dining room by a wooden screen. One can see into the dining room as he descends the stair.

PLATE 40 KITCHEN



This view shows the charm of

PLATE 50 STATRWELL WINDOW



rta gt. Mation Mahony, A<u>dolph Mucller house, 4 Millikin Place, Decat</u>ur, Illinob, 1910, Photo by H.A. Brooks

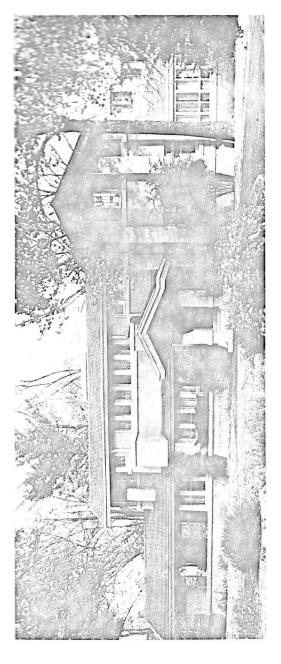
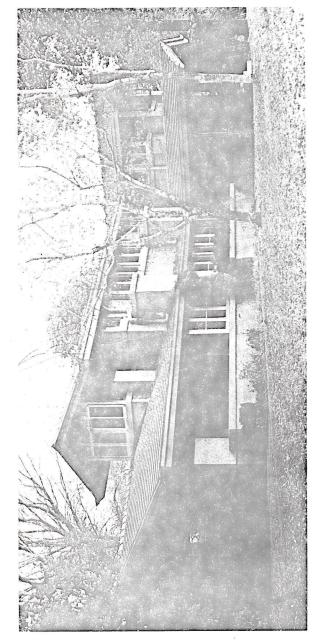


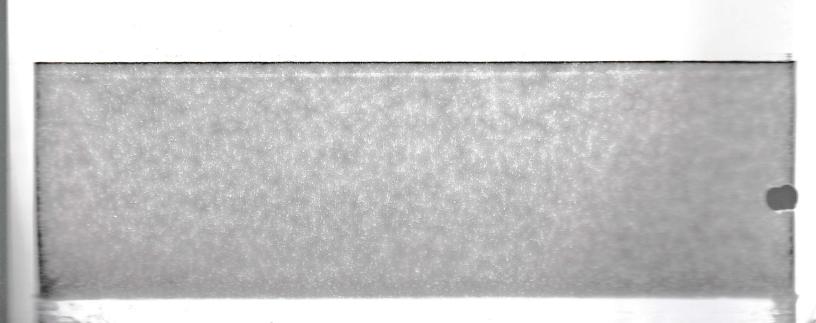
FIG. 92 Marion Mahony. Adolph Mueller house. Side view. Photo by H.A. Brooks



wheel, is modified in its axial scheme with the right terminal not on with, and the central axis passing behind the chimney rather than through the living room (fig. 90). This results in a more intricate and interesting spatial experience, but it is inconsistent with the other four plans. Perhaps the reason for this is that Wright left behind some elevation drawings which Mahony utilized, and in so doing was forced to accept certain pre-conditions regarding the plan. A change in level does occur, this in the corridor behind the chimney so that the entrance hall, den, and living room are three steps lower than the dining room, breakfast porch, and service wing. The way the various rooms open off the changing level corridor is very

FIG. 93 Marion Mahony. Adolph Mueller house. Interior: living room with view through hall and dining room to porch. Architectural Record 1916

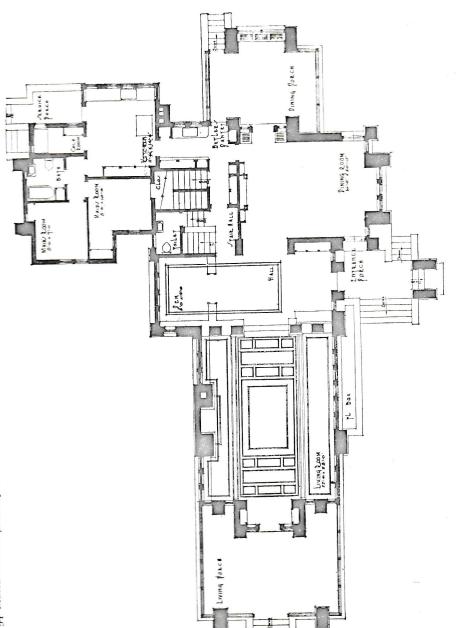


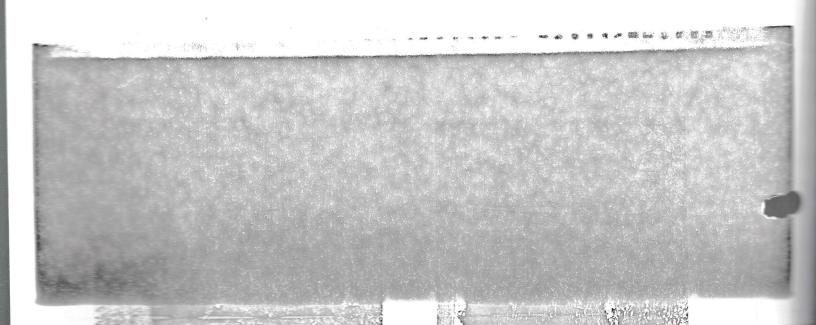


pleasant, as a maximum amount of spatial variety and interest is thus achieved.

Common brick, a cool gray color, and stained casements with leaded glass, are combined with a red tile roof. Small balcony-like projections at the sides are surfaced with plaster, as are the soffits of the roof. Colored tile set in plaster panels decorates the area between the front piers, the design being a stylized flower pattern which recalls the tulip motif at the Coonley house. But here it is placed as at the Ford project (fig. 95) or as at Griffin's Ricker or Blythe houses (figs. 102 and 179). Roman brick, plaster, wood,

FIG. 94 Marion Mahony. Adolph Mueller house. Plan. Architectural Record 1916

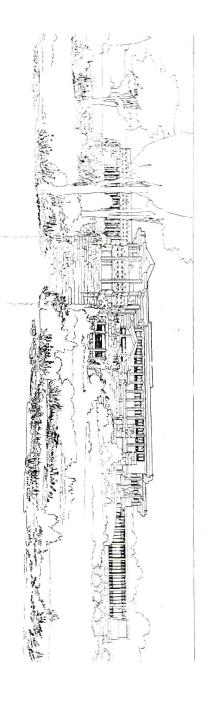




and the are the materials of the interior, the bright, verging on gaidy, the of the breakfast porch recalling the not always subtle colors at the Amberg house. The blueprints for the Robert Mueller house are dated at September 1911, and the architect is given as von Holst. Apparently the formal recognition of Mahony as 'associate' began only after von Holst and Fyfe entered partnership—an event post-dating her marriage to Griffin in June 1911.

The Adolph Mueller house exemplifies all the characteristics thus associated with Mahony: exterior massing like that of the Thomas house, long, restful horizontals combined with rather tight, narrow verticals, foundations that are high and heavy, and crisp, sharp (gable) roofs (figs. 91-2). The interior has the same sharp, angular quality in the details, and the inevitable low tent-like ceiling (fig. 93). The plan has a central axis passing through the major rooms with the two terminal spaces (porches) centered on this axis (fig. 94). Certain intermediary rooms are set at 90° to this axis; the plan is not bilaterally symmetrical and in outline suggests a pinwheel shape. Plaster rather than masonry was the exterior material. The blueprints are dated 30 November 1910, with all revisions in April and May 1911. Although Mahony was not given credit for the Adolph Mueller drawings, it may safely be considered the most complete, authentic house ever built to her designs.

1912. Courtesy Northwestern University



Decatur

Died May 14, 1944

Long Career Of Industrial Leader Ends

Adolph Mueller, dean of Decatur industrialists and one of the community's leading civic benefactors, died at 8 a. m. Sunday at Miami Beach, Fla, after an illness of 10 days.

The 78-year-old chairman of the board of the Mueller Co, had been in good health until his last illness, and had continued to take his usual active part in management of the firm.

officers of the firm as final authority in important matters. continued to be looked to by other man of the board, Mr. Mueller had of the company to become chairhad retired in 1939 from presidency in American industry had kept so alert to the details of operation of president of the enterprise that had their business. the harness." Few men of his age onymous Mueller, in 1860, died as he would have wished to do, "in been started by his father, Mr. Mueller, who in 1902 became For although he Hier-

At Mr. Mueller's bedside at the time of his death was his only son, William Everett, who for the last five years has been company president.

Funeral arrangements have not been completed. Services, in charge of Dawson & Wikoff, probably will be held Saturday.

Canceled Trip Home

First word of Mr. Mueller's illness came when it was announced that his train reservations for return to Decatur May 5 had been canceled. He had gone to his Florida home, at 4950 Pine Tree drive, Miami Beach, in December, as had been his annual custom. He returned here for his usual spring visit in March, and was planning to come home again last week to spend the summer at his Decatur residence, 4 Millikin place.

Decatur residence, 4 Millikin place. Besides his son, William E., Mr. Mueller is survived by his wife, a daughter, Mrs. Frederic Schluter of Princeton, N. J.; seven grand-children, William Everett, Jr., Henry Adolph, and Jane Mueller, all of Decatur, and Frederic E., Jr., William, John Adolph, and Peter Mueller Schluter, all of Princeton, N. J., and a sister, Leda, Decatur, widow of the late Frank W. Cruikshank.

Mr. Mueller was the last of his generation of the Mueller brothers. The others, who preceded him in death, were Henry, Philip, Fred, Robert, and Oscar.

The passing of Adolph Mueller removes from the ranks of Decatur's business and industrial leaders one of the most outstanding men in the city's history. His career has ranked him with James Millikin and A. E. Staley, Sr.

Genius in Family

The founding and early development of the firm that now bears the family name was due almost wholly to the inventive genius of Hieronymous Mueller. The first of the Muellers here started in business with a little gun shop that was only 20 by 40 feet in size.

His inventions ranged through an amazing list of successful machines and devises until he turned out the world-famous device for tapping water mains for service and other connections without turning off the water in the mains. This is now used by 95 per cent of the waterworks in the United States and has had a very extensive distribution in foreign countries.

It has been the genius of Adolph Mueller that has expanded the business venture of his father into one of the three most important industries in this community and a leader nationally in its field of production.

In 1896, when Mr. Mueller's study in mechanical engineering at the University of Illinois was cut short after two years, he and four of his brothers were taken into his father's business as partners. Ten years later a sixth brother, Oscar, joined the other five to carry on the business.

Had Seven Plants

The firm's operations were expanded until there were seven plants, three in Decatur, and one each in Chattanoga, Tenn.; Los Angeles, Calif.; Sarnia, Ontario, and Port Huron, Mich. Some years ago Oscar sold out his Decatur holdings and bought out his brothers' interests in the Port Huron plant. Later that plant was sold to the Atlas Corp. The Mueller Co.'s six plants now employ 2,100 men in the manufacture of plumbing, water and brass goods. Of Of these, 500 are employed at the Sarnia plant. Under war contracts the firm for the present is heavily engaged in the manufacture of munitions.

Adolph Mueller was born in Decatur May 8, 1866. He attended

public school and high school in Decatur, and studied at the University of Illinois from 1894 to 1896. On June, 1893 he married Minnie Bachman of Decatur.

Mr. Miteller always had been

Mr. Mueller always had been proud of the fact he started at the bottom in his father's business, to work up to the important position which he later held.

At the age of 14 he began as plumber's helper, and one of the homes in which he remembered helping with some plumbing work was that of Mr. and Mrs. James Millikin, which is now the Decatur Art Center. His wage at that time was 75 cents a week.

Unusually Modest

Although prominent in a long list of civic activities, Mr. Mueller almost always insisted in remaining modestly in the background, and many of his philanthropies were handled anonymously. In 1930, when asked about his achievements, he said: "My inventions have been insignificant, although I have secured patents on a few plumbing and water fixtures."

Among his favorite interests at that time he listed hiking, raising quality tomatoes, and "endeavoring to play satisfactory golf."

His generosity extended to any worthy person whose need of help came to his attention. Always at Christmas time he made himself personally responsible for bringing cheer to many families who otherwise would have had a drab holiday. One example out of literally hundreds was the occasion when he completely outfitted as a Christmas gift a family of five with no one knowing who the benefactor was.

He used to buy bushels of candy, fruit and toys for distribution to needy children at Christmas. In the

depression days of 1931-1932, fore establishment of the WPA other federal agencies, Mr. Muw was a one-man relief agency. story is told of how he freque would hire men out of work to a thorough job of cleaning up s church. Since the congregation not know its church was be cleaned up, the generosity felt in both directions.

Mr. Mueller was always a boc of Decatur, and of home-owned dustry, and gave much attentio furthering the comforts and curity of his employes. He deeply the importance of induto the community, and did al his power to make his industry potent civic force in Decatur.

holding of an annual picnic fo firm's employes and their fan employes was known to all, this extended to their fam part of business and civic succ society. Although dependent both, Decatur as a city is potent civic force in Decatur. "Industry and agricultuer," once said, "are the foundation had presided ditions connected with war pro 36 years—up to last year, when their recreation and welfare. The friendly interest he took is put this philosophy into practi of the factories is an insepar tories, in the sense that the su Every business man and every izen has an interest in local Decatur's industries are really backbone of the city's prospe directly concerned with indu Mr. Mueller made every effc operation of the Mueller by his plants prevented presided personally over

See Caro

In recent years attendance at these outings, held at the Mueller lodge had attracted an attendance of 2,000 across the lake south from the city,

Considered Individuals

outside ownership. Back in 1916 he ownership of incustry rather than Mueller constantly advocate resident It was this human consideration his employes that made Mr.

count by resident owners." employed. These more or less senno willingness on the part of the between owner and employes, and that there is no cooperative spirit timental phases are taken into achis organization intact and the men plant for a period at a loss to keep "Outside ownership often means in slack times, to run his

sion years of the thirties he kept men employed on a 40-hour week. ment. In the midst of the depreshis plants in operation with 1,000 satisfactory and men in employjustments that would ever times were slack, he made adhis philosophy on this point. When-Mr. Mueller also put into practise keep wages

Honored Outside City

ciation of Brass Manufacturers. He also played a prominent part in and president of the National Asso-Chamber of Commerce. the affairs of the United States Illinois Manufacturers association, Mas at one time president of the Central Illinois as a director of the Decatur. ties in industry extended beyond Mr. Mueller's interests and activi-In 1924 he represented He

For 38 years, from 1906 to 1944

one who could be more active. place him on the board with somethought it would be better to remuch of the time henceforth, he planned to be out of the city by W. R. McGaufhey, bank presibank officials, it was said today bank. Last March he wrote to the of directors of the Millikin National Mr. Mueller served on the board explaining that since

branches of community life. The veteran industrialist's civic extended into many

which planned the construction of Lake Decatur, later turning the members of the Water Supply Co., lake over to the city of Decatur. He was one of the original nine

> Salvation Army, Boys' Opportunity Home, Girls' Welfare home, Boy Scouts, and James Millikin uniprojects in behalf of which he di-rected his civic efforts are the iversity. Decatur parks, Decatur airport, the Among Wher institutions and

Equipped Park Center

park facilities was his gift of \$12,000 toward equipping the Southstarted in 1938 as a WPA project. side Community Center building, His chief contribution to the city's

est and self-sacrificing to give time who are intensely interested, earnwork, he once said: "We need men in Buffalo, N. Y. vention of Boy Scout laymen held sentative at the 23d annual conto training boys and giving leader-In 1934 he was Decatur's repre-About Scout

ship to the Boy Scouts."
The Y. M. C. A., he also felt, is very valuable: "The Y. M. C. A.," he said, "is doing a work that is

got to support it." practical, necessary and in the broadest way Christian, and we've

help. given in recognition of his constant of the Salvation army, an honor member of the board of directors Mr. Mueller was an honorary life

the drive for funds during the lean responsible for the completion of tion Army citadel, but it was Mr. construction of the present Salvafirst set in motion the plan for the as president of the Mueller Co., who son and successor of Mr. going to be filled. looked as if many pledges were not years of the depression when it Mueller himself who was largely It was William Everett Mueller, Mueller

Army 'Godfather'

generosity, completely solved. Mr. pressing demands. Most problems are now, thanks to Mr. Mueller's \$32,000 was still due on the buildtown and county in order to prosums raised by contributions in bution" that largely took care of described as a "substantial contriing, Mr. Mueller made what was vide necessary funds for the Army. Mueller's habit was to watch any When in 1937 an indebtedness of

cal Army, according to Edward Buckner, has been the "godfather" of the lo-For the last 20 years Mr. Mueller prominent Decatur at-

> torney associated with the Salvato "just keep still about it." \$500 with the invariable injunction quently made donations of \$200 or of equipment and facilities. He freanonymously, countless needed bits tion Army, He provided, always

the lowly and unfortunate. associating with and helping along He took a great deal of pleasure in chatting with them before they left. breakfast with the transients and there as early as 6 a. m., eating early riser, he frequently appeared present at the Citadel. A lifelong the board Though not an active member of , Mr. Mueller was often

from Florida. oranges he had brought with him boys and girls their presents school and enjoyed giving to the pearing frequently at the Sunday He was in the habit also of ap-

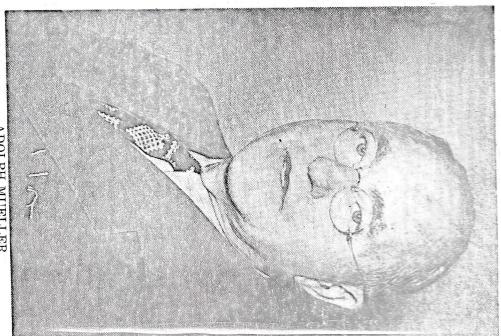
needs." dropped because of "pressing war dren. The project, benefit of needy mothers and chilcamp was to have been used for the catur opposite Faries park. cated on the east side of Lake De-\$50,000 fresh-air camp to be ed to the Army a 38-acre tract of land for the establishment of a In 1941 Mr. Mueller had presenthowever, 10-

appreciation of the many services 7, the Salvation army indicated its cial Mueller Day in his honor. of Mr. Mueller by holding a spe-Only a week ago on Sunday, May

Degree from Millikin

university, conferred the honorary kin university. On June 3, 1940, Dr. J. C. Hessler, president of the award of the honorary degree of Doctor of Science by James Millitwo industrialists, ever to have that either Mr. Mueller or Mr. Statwo most illustrious manufacturdegree upon both men, Decatur's their careers recognized That occasion was the first Mueller, together with the by the

many ways been a patron of Destrongest friends and supporters of and Millikin university have always ley had appeared in cap and gown. Relations between Mr. Mueller catur's institution of higher learnonce served as a member of the been of the closest. One of the Millikin board of trustees, had in the university, Mr. Mueller,



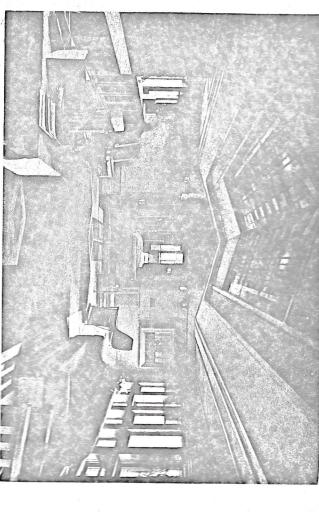
ADOLPH MUELLER

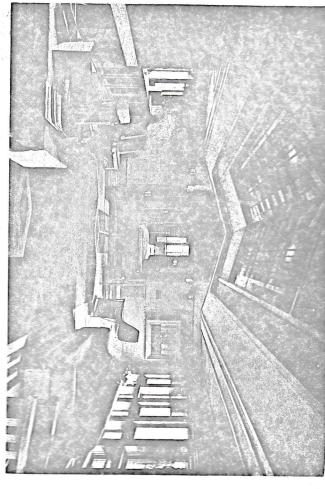
their father, Hieronymous firm founded 84 years ago by brothers who had operated the Adolph Mueller, last of six

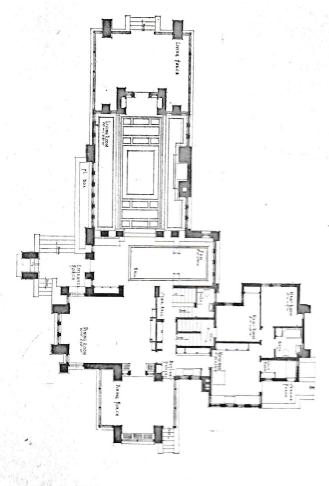
Mueller, died Sunday in Mian Beach, Fla., after an illness

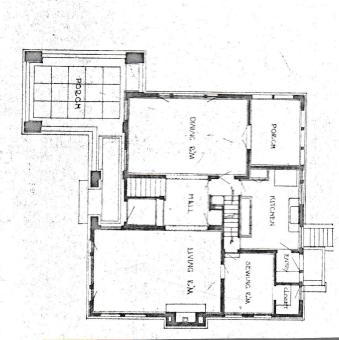
cient work being done by the detime Mr. Mueller praised the effihis friendship was the gift in Nodustrial arts department. At that vember 1941 of \$20,000 to the inable for doing the job properly. that sufficient funds were not availindustrially minded, but he felt its work and making the institution Prof. Richard Cole in modernizing partment under the leadership of His most recent demonstration of

THE ARCHITECTURAL RECORD.





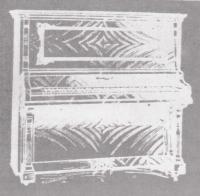




INTERIOR VIEW AND FIRST FLOOR PLAN-HOUSE
SHIPBUTS, MARION M. GRIPPIN, ABSOCIATE,

ADOLPH MUELLER'S RESIDENCE AND NOVELMACAD:AMDRIVEWAY

Set 27 1912 19



You Will Miss It

If You Don't Bu One of Those \$300.00 Kurtz Bros. Pianos

which we ar

selling for only \$212.00 on terms of only \$6.00 per month A stool, scarf, instruction book and term

of music lessons free.

A large size, oak case, \$450.00 Adam Schaaf piano, almost like new, only \$200—

PIANOS RENTED \$3.50 PER MONTH Several bargains in used pianos, \$145 to

Suffern Music House



IE MEN

LIEUTENANT

temant to Be in

GROTTO CIRCUS TO OPEN TONIGHT

Purpose of "Minute Men"

GOOD PICTURES

Review Contest to Close on

Ready-Mixed Paint

Waterproof Varnish Stains.

Ten fine shades—varnishes and stains at one time; dries hard with rich gloss—Quart

Floor and Woodwork Varnish.

High-grade, for all interior work; quick drying; has high gloss, very durable—Half-gallon

A Great Big

§2≝ and §3 Full Fashioned



Wome

Women's 50c Knit Union S

Good summer weight suits with all style tops and with A very popular Wednesday Bargain at Three Suits fo

Carter's \$1.50 Fine Lisle Suits

Men's Athletic Suits, Two for \$1

Ladies' \$1 Silk Hose

\$1.50 Hemstitched



to the Grounds.

PROVED A SURPRISE

For Mrs. Mueller; Designed by Griffin.

ARE MAKING PLANS FOR LABOR DAY

MRS. T. J. PRENTICE MEETING AT MRS. HUSTON'S HO

Wakes Handsome Addition E. A. Gastman Mothers Elect Officers.

New officers for the coming year vere elected by the Mothers' club of the E. A. Gastman school Thursday af-ternoon. They are as follows: President—Mrs. T. L. D.

up.
The mothers discussed the matter of ining the National Congress of Moth a, but decided not to do so this year.

Ogleshy school is planning for an ice eam accial to be held next Monday ening on the school grounds. The rounds will be illuminated with elec-ic lights. There will be plenty of thereasument during the evening, as

WHEN YOU WASH YOUR HAIR DON'T USE SOAI

Every Lady Should Read Our Special

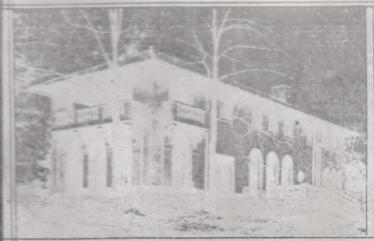
BASEN

SEASONABLE GIF

This is the season of a vacations, visits, outing etc... and about the fir any of these expediti trunk, such as we are s Public Ruch as we are a

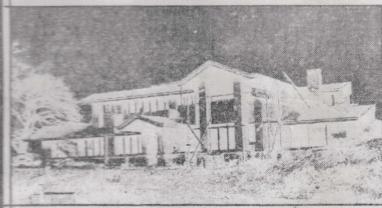
Well-made Steamer

our Special Fiber-cove Our Special Fiber-cove Zounk is extra well inches long and, item, is well protect hardware. It sells at each





Two Views of C. A. Ewing's Home.





Adolph Mueller.

Handsome Houses Under Way:

Robert Mueller

are not sear enough done to give an idea of the appearance of the buildings finished, but the picture shows the size and architectural importances.













