

Register of Old Buildings  
Macon County Historical Coordinating Council

Address: 861 W. William

Legal description: Millikin Place Second Addition  
W 467/8' of Lot 2 and E 1317/8' of Lot 3

Date of original construction: 1915 - Assessor's office estimate.  
1917 - Newspaper item, June, 1966.

Name of original owner: Frank and Leda M. Cruikshank.

History:

1. An incomplete chain of title follows. (Source: Office of Macon County recorder of deeds.)

May 23, 1916 Edward P. Irving and wf to Leda M. Cruikshank  
W 46 7/8' of Lot 2  
April 4, 1951 Leda M. Cruikshank inventory.  
April 13, 1951 Phillip H. Cruikshank and Frances C. Cruikshank  
et al to Edith C. Ridgly.  
Aug. 23, 1960 Edith Curtiss Ridgly Inventory.  
July 28, 1965 Citizens National Bank of Decatur as trustee of  
Jessie P. Montgomery to Paul G. Mitchell and Mar-  
garet Mitchell, hus and wf.

2. Data from available city directories follows:

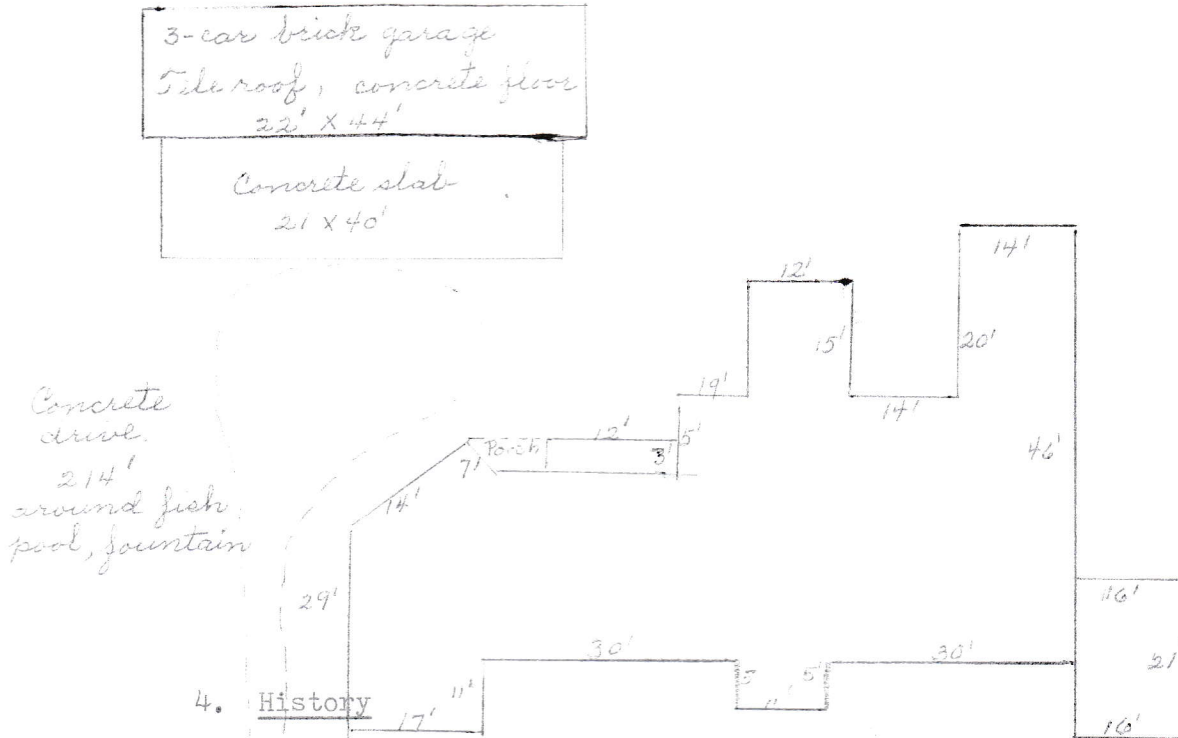
1919-1934 Cruikshank, Frank H. and Leda M.  
Ass't. Sec., H. Mueller Mfg. Co.  
1934-1950 Cruikshank, Leda M., Mary Lockamon, nurse  
Wm. F. Allen  
Albert F. Schultz  
1951-1960 Ridgly, Mrs. Edith  
1965- Montgomery, Mrs. Jessie F.  
1966- Apartment renters - Mrs. Conklin  
Nally  
1969-1971 Snyder, Wm. H., Mrs. Conklin, the Nally's.

3. Data from the Macon County assessor's office follows:

Bldg. class B.  
2-6 family apt.  
2-1/2 stories, 3 apts. 11 rooms, 3 baths (tile), 1 half bath.  
Masonry construction.  
Stucco on block or tile and brick exterior.  
Gable roof, medium pitch, tile roof.  
75% basement.  
9 rooms with hardwood floors, 2 with softwood.  
3 natural fireplaces (1 in each apt.)

Present owner's name: Richard E. and Carol Ferry. (Not yet on assessor's  
card)

3. Data Continued.



4. History

- a. It would appear that the house was built in 1917 as given in a newspaper item, and not in 1915, the assessor's estimate, for the Cruikshanks did not get title to all of the land required for building this house, until 1916.
- b. Its owner-occupants would have been:
  - 1917-1951 - The Frank Cruikshank family. (At some time between 1934 when Mr. Cruikshank died and 1951 when Mrs. Cruikshank died, she converted the one family dwelling to three apartments. She continued to live in the two floor, six-room apartment on the east until her death in 1951. At this time, some space was added at the rear center and rear right parts of the house. Although the buff brick is well-matched, it is possible to tell which is the newer.
  - 1951-1960 Mrs. Edith Ridgly.
  - 1960-1965 Mrs. Jessie Pluck Montgomery. Mrs. Montgomery installed the two-passenger electric elevator on the stairs.
  - 1965-1972 The Paul Mitchells who did much redecorating. removed paint from the large living room fireplace, getting down to the natural limestone. They papered some walls, and added carefully chosen draperies that are still in use.

4. History Continued:

b. Continued:

1972 - The Richard Ferry's.

In each case, the owner has occupied the east, six-room, two-story apartment, the first floor of which was the original living room, sunroom (now the dining room) and porch (behind the sunroom), now the kitchen.

c. See attached articles regarding:

- (1) The Mueller-Cruikshank families.
- (2) The Mitchell redecorating (June, 1966).
- (3) The Ferry's first Christmas in the house.

d. Tenants have for the most part remained for unusually long periods of time.

e. The Ferry's corrected the data given on the assessor's card. According to them (November 22, 1974) the house has 17 rooms, 8 full baths and 2 half-baths. Small art glass window panes set in the larger front windows, may be Tiffany glass, the Ferry's said. There is much ceramic tile in the bath off the master bedroom. The ceiling of the living room is molded plaster on canvas. Walls and floors (laid on 9 inches of concrete), are all unusually thick. The original three-car garage has a tile roof that matches that of the house. Where once there was a fish pond within a circle of the driveway, there is a rose garden set out by Mrs. Mitchell, with some pieces of statuary. There are two safes with combination locks, no longer usable, concealed in closets. It is a very well cared for house, much loved by its owners.

f. In a phone conversation with Mrs. Frances Cruikshank Moore on January 15, 1975, she said that C. J. Aschauer of Decatur was the architect who designed her parents' home at 861 West William. She recalled that there is a foot of concrete beneath each floor in the house, but could recall no other special features of its construction. Asked particularly about the small art glass panes in each of the windows along the front, she did not know its source or anything about it.

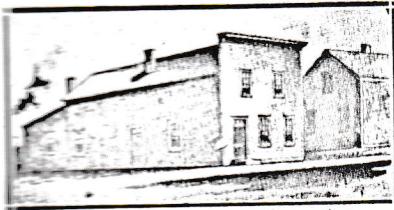
861 West William



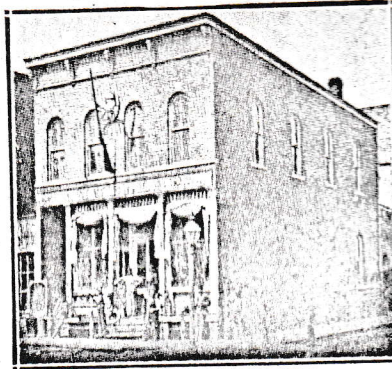
Hieronymus Mueller came to Decatur in the year 1857 and opened a gun repair shop on the south side of the 100 block on West Main street. That was the beginning of the business career in Decatur of the man who later started the H. Mueller Manufacturing Company plant, which has developed into one of the city's biggest industries.

In 1870 Mr. Mueller was appointed city water tapper by Mayor M. Forstmeyer. The crude method of making service connections with city water mains was not to his liking, and it was not long until he had invented a water tapping machine and begun its manufacture.

The machine was such an advantage that the demand for it continually increased. Other inventions in the way of waterworks goods were brought out by Mr. Mueller. The frame building he was then occupying at 222 East



H. MUELLER'S FIRST SHOP AND RESIDENCE, 1857



MUELLER FACTORY, 1872-1895

Main street became too small to accommodate the enlarging business and necessitated putting up a new building. By 1885 Mr. Mueller was employing twenty or twenty-five men in his factory. That year he separated the gun repair shop from the factory, establishing the gun shop on Merchant street.

In 1886 Mr. Mueller took five of his sons into partnership with him. They were Henry, Robert, Fred, Philip and Adolph. His other son, Oscar, became a member of the firm in 1896.

In 1891 Mr. Mueller organized the Mueller Plumbing and Heating company. He disposed of his interest in this business, however, in 1896, and then sold his gun store in 1897, leaving him free to devote his attention to the increasing business of the H. Mueller Manufacturing company, which was incorporated in 1893.

The first unit of the Mueller plant on Cerro Gordo street was erected in 1895. Since that time, many new buildings have been added at that site, factories have been established in Sarnia, Can., and Port Huron, Mich., an iron foundry has been put into operation on East



MUELLER FAMILY IN 1888

Left to right—Standing: Oscar, Adolph, Robert, Fred, Philip, Henry (three last now deceased). Seated: Mrs. Hieronymus Mueller (deceased), Leda Mueller (Cruikshank), Hieronymus Mueller (deceased).

Richmond, Mabel,  
Centennial History  
of Decatur and  
Macon County,  
Review Publishing Co.,  
1930

pp 228-229

**M**MUELLER, is one of Decatur's most prominent and enterprising men. He is at the head of three large industries, and by his business interests he has materially aided in the prosperity and upbuilding of his adopted country. The record of his life is as follows: He was born in the year 1832, in the city of Wertheim, in the Main, in the Grand Duchy of Baden. His education was begun in the common public schools, and on mastering the studies there he attended the gymnasium, or High School. When a youth of fourteen he began learning the locksmith's trade, and after following that business for two years he spent the two succeeding years in learning the machinist's trade in the city of Manheim, Grand Duchy of Baden. From there he went to another machine shop under instruction.

When he was twenty years of age, Mr. Mueller traveled in Germany (as all mechanics must do under the law of the land), through the Netherlands and Rhinelands, going as far as Rotterdam. Not finding the employment he wished, he determined to seek a home and fortune in America, and, carrying out this resolution, crossed the Atlantic and landed in Chicago in 1851. He had no capital, and being entirely dependent upon his own exertions at once began the search for work.

He secured employment in a machine shop in that city and there remained for four years, after which he went to Freeport, Ill., to establish business for himself as a gunsmith. Two years were there passed, and the year 1857 witnessed his arrival in Decatur, where he again embarked in the gunsmith business.

Attracted by the discovery of gold at Pike's Peak, Mr. Mueller journeyed Westward in 1859, but after a year returned to Decatur and worked at the gunsmithing trade until 1872 when, in connection with that enterprise, he began the manufacture of water-work supplies, such as water-tapping machines and brass goods, and also established a plumbing and heating department. At this time in one house were combined the three enterprises—the manufacture of water-work supplies, plumbing and heating and gun departments, but soon it was found necessary to move the gun department into a separate building. This was done in 1885, and in 1888 the plumbing and heating department was also moved into a separate building. All three businesses are incorporated as separate and independent concerns, and Mr. Mueller is President of each. He manufactures everything in the line of water-work supplies and in first-class style does all kinds of work connected with heating, plumbing and gunsmithing. Mr. Mueller is a man of unbounded enterprise, of fertile resources, possesses great perseverance and industry, and as the result of his own unaided efforts he has achieved the success which places him in the foremost rank among the business men of this thriving city.

than in any year since 1909.

The total this year of all permanent improvements, including buildings, paving and sewers by the city, and permanent improvements by the Railway & Light com-

was \$1,685,052. This was only \$31,000 less than the year before.

In 1906, the total was \$1,544,000. The highest year in that ten years was 1913, when the total was \$5,082,044. That was the year of the Wabash machinery shops, when the Staley Starch works were a big part of the improvements, and there were big expenditures in rebuilding the

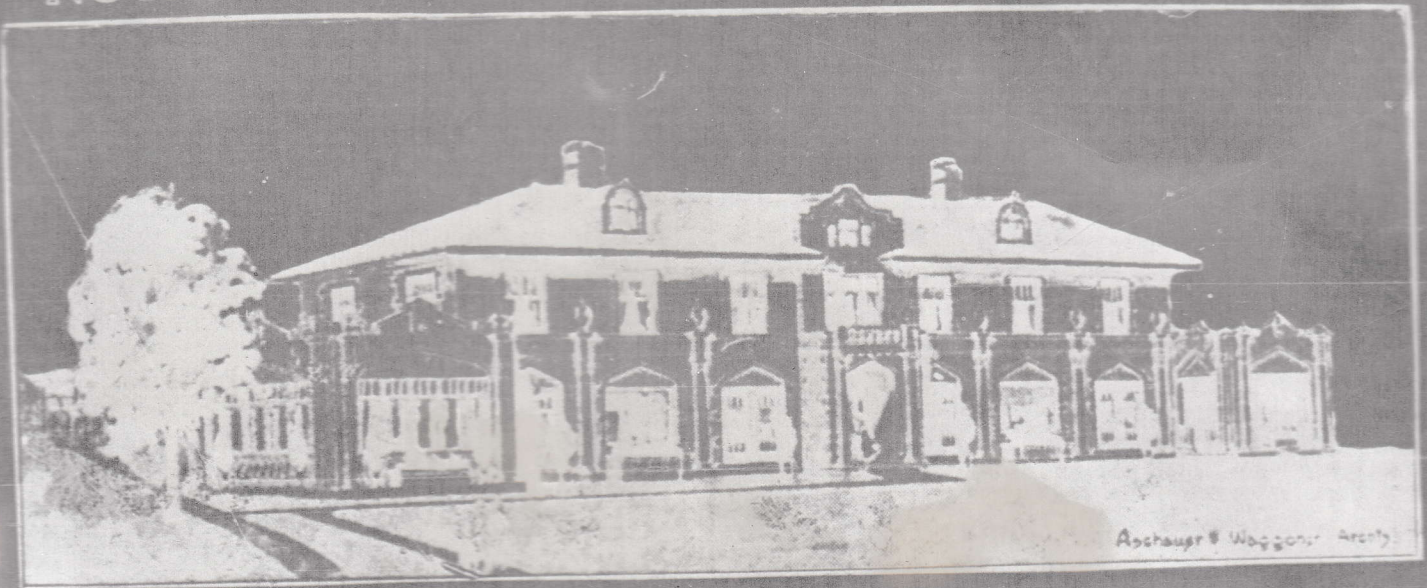
report is made of good development.

## 1916 Improvements of All Kinds.

Buildings .....	\$1,277,456
Railway & Light Co. ....	109,500
By the city .....	298,097
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>\$1,685,053</b>

*Decatur Review, Dec. 31, 1916*

## NOTABLE NEW RESIDENCE STARTED IN 1916



**Fireproof Home Being Erected by Mr. and Mrs. F. W. Cruikshank.**

**D**ECATUR has been getting some handsome homes every year. This year a number of large and expensive residences have been finished or started. The development of new residence sections has been a feature of the growth of Decatur in recent years. This year one of the best residences

designed and started is the home of Mr. and Mrs. F. W. Cruikshank in the 990 block West William street. It has been about a third finished. The design by Aschauer & Waggoner. It is an only exclusively fireproof residence in the city. The exterior will be of face brick and terra cotta base-

ment walls, floors, and practically all of the building. Not of brick and terra cotta will be of concrete.

The illustration tells of the beauty of the finished structure. The location is also favorable, being in the Millikin Place section, the neighborhood of handsome homes laid out in the ground

occupied for many years by the residence of the late H. W. Hill. On the west is the home of W. E. Surface. On the south are the homes of W. Brady, E. F. Irving, and Robert Mueller. While further west, and a part same handsome residence section, are the homes of J. T. Hobery and Adol Mueller.

## \$1,277,456 IN BUILDING IN YEAR

### BUILDING SUMMARY

	1915.	1916.
Public, fraternal and religious .....	\$ 204,400	\$ 183,200
New residences .....	461,550	591,716
Business and factory .....	598,200	562,420
Remodeling .....	54,000	64,440
Private garages (95) .....	8,930	25,680
<b>Totals of year .....</b>	<b>\$1,327,080</b>	<b>\$1,277,456</b>

Decatur's building operations in 1916 were highly satisfactory. There was much fine weather. There was perhaps never a year when there were so many days on which outside work could be carried on. Work kept up until Dec. 1 and most of the residences were built in the fall. Building work started off well in the spring but there was a lull during the fine weather of summer. Early in the fall, however, there was a fresh start.

The total amount spent for buildings during 1916 was \$1,277,456, which makes \$1,277,456 of equating the record for

### SEWER RESIDENCES

There were 154 new residences built during the year. This is twenty-two less than were built in 1915. But this year better residences were built. The 154 new houses this year cost \$1,277,456 as compared with \$1,277,456 for the 154 new residences of 1915.

So much residence building had been done in 1915 that the city was

many vacant houses. That condition no longer prevails. The city has caught up.

### REMODELING

The people have shown a remarkable tendency to fix up their properties during the past year. There were 121 remodeling jobs, for which permits were necessary, and countless small jobs of repairing for which no permits were required. The acquisition of automobiles is responsible for some of the remodeling jobs, for many permits were issued to people who wished to convert barns into garages. Remodeling jobs alone amounted to \$411,000 for the year.

### RESIDENCE GARAGES

The automobile is responsible for adding considerable to the total for new buildings in Decatur. Permits were issued for ninety-five garages and a few small shops, at a total cost of \$1,277,456. Some of the garages cost from \$50 to \$100, while others were

### FOR PUBLIC USE

Two first-class places of amusement were added to Decatur's list of public buildings during the year, the Lincoln Square theater and the Avon theater. One new church was built, a new fraternal building was erected and another extensively remodeled.

### BUSINESS AND FACTORY.

Many new business houses were erected, old ones were remodeled, showing that the merchants have prospered during the year. New factories have been erected or old ones added to. The A. E. Staley Manufacturing company spent \$165,000 on new factory buildings during the year.

This is the twelfth consecutive year that Decatur has spent more than \$1,000,000 a year on buildings alone. Most of them have been residences, the surest indication of the growth and prosperity of the city.

Among the most important improvements under this head are the follow-

### BUSINESS AND FACTORY.

All's garage Co. .... \$ 8,000  
American Ice Cream Co., 157-158 North Water street ..... 4,500  
American Homey Co., cooling tower, 700 block N. Union ..... 1,000  
Supplies Co., Water and Garro Garro streets ..... 3,000

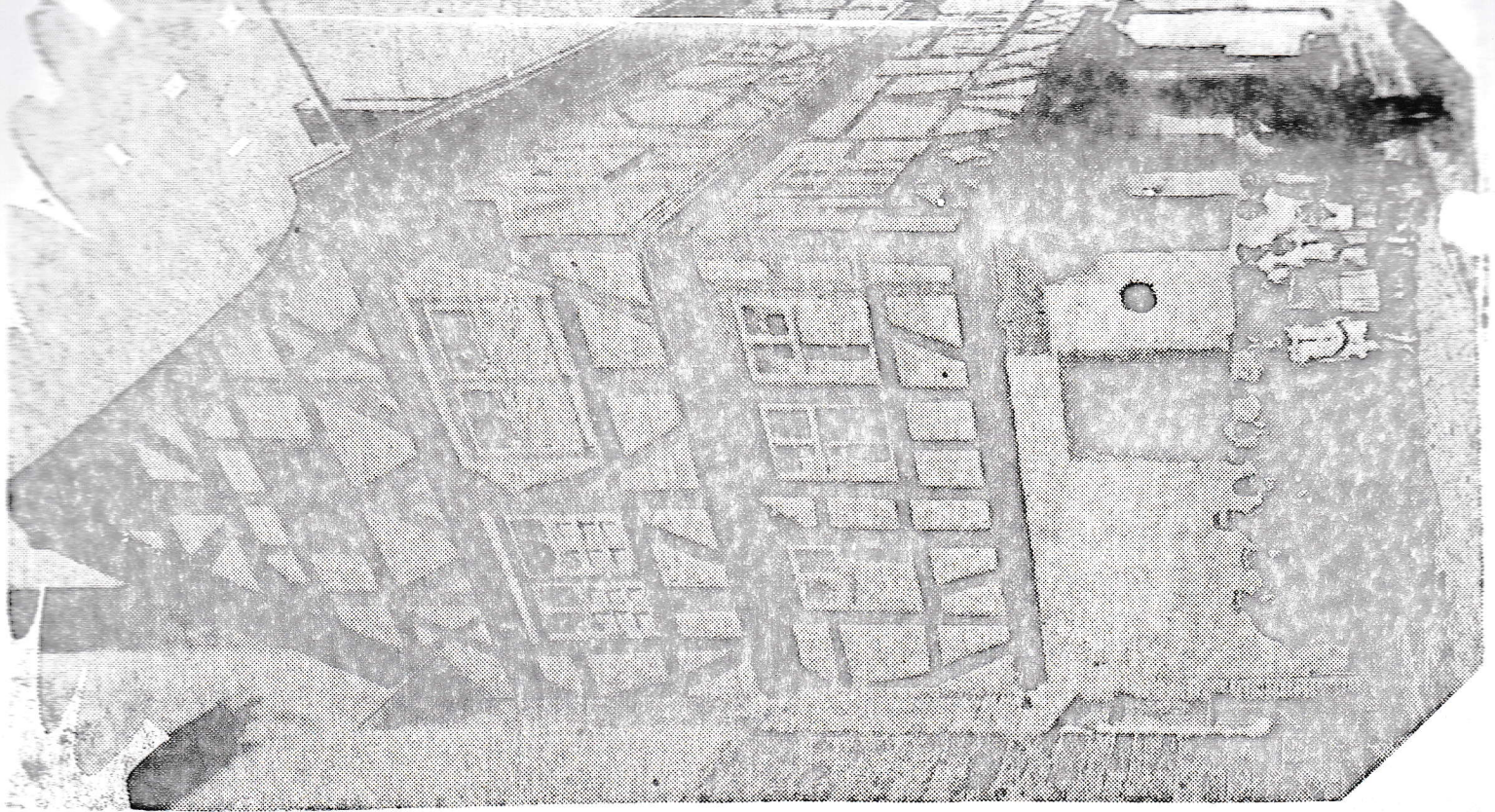
Elakency & Plum, remodel, 325-326 N. Water ..... 2,000  
Burstine, Simon, 541 Wabash avenue ..... 4,000  
Combination Fountain Co., addition, 702 East Division ..... 1,000  
Decatur Grocer Co., remodeling warehouse and office E. William ..... 15,000  
Daut Bros., greenhouses, end N. College St. .... 21,000  
Decatur Brick Co., dryer and wash house, N. Calhoun ..... 2,000  
Decatur Ice Cream Co., 724 N. Edward ..... 5,000  
Decatur and Macon County hospital, garage ..... 2,000  
Decatur Brass Works, Division and Broadway ..... 1,000  
Decatur Bridge Co., rivet shop, 2900 E. Eldorado ..... 2,000  
Decatur Malleable Iron Co., Co. of C. addition ..... 1,000  
Electric Sewage Disposal temporary plant ..... 1,000  
E-Z Opener Bag Co., Pine and Green, factory and office ..... 1,000  
Ernest, Robert, Decatur and Main store ..... 1,000  
Freeman estate, remodeling, 254-262 N. Main ..... 1,000  
Fenton estate, addition, Kaufman store ..... 1,000  
Fletcher, T. W., 1954 S. Franklin ..... 1,000  
Gebhart, A. F., heating plant, 1000 N. N. Water ..... 1,000

# Genealogy of the Decatur Branch of Mueller Family

Henry Mueller (Dec'd) Ora McClanahan	Henrietta Mueller (Dec'd) Lenore Mueller A. E. Staley, Jr.	A. E. Staley, III Henry Mueller Staley
Philip Mueller (Dec'd) Mary Shorb	Clara Mueller Fred W. Kaiser Robert H. Mueller	Fred W. Kaiser, Jr. Phyllis Kaiser Betty Kaiser
Fred E. Mueller (Dec'd)	Leda Mueller Vere Brownback	Mary Jane Brownback Joe Brownback Eloise Brownback
Robert Mueller Addie Ebert	Phyllis Mueller (Dec'd) Delos Cozad	Mueller Cozad Janet Cozad Delos Cozad Clarence Cozad
Adolph Mueller Minnie T. Bachman	Lucion W. Mueller Charbel Korick	
Leda Mueller Frank W. Cruikshank	Clarence Mueller Frank H. Mueller Isabell Pluck	Philip Mueller II
Oscar B. Mueller Beatrice Wetzel	Ebert B. Mueller Ruth Staley	Robert Eugene Mueller
	William Everett Mueller Pauline Verner	William Adolph Mueller
	Charles Philip Mueller (Dec'd) Charlotte Mueller Fredric E. Schluter	Fredric E. Schluter, Jr. William E. M. Schluter John Adolph Schluter
	Phillip H. Cruikshank Gertrude Parke	William Cruikshank Gertrude Cruikshank
	Frances Cruikshank Allan F. Moore	Allan F. Moore, III Patricia Moore
	William Cruikshank (Dec'd) Bernhardt Mueller Mayme McQueen	
	Florence Mueller (Dec'd) John Hamilton Irving	

Decatur Public Library  
Decatur, Illinois

In a quaint old house in the little village of Wertheim, Germany, Heironymous Mueller, founder of the Mueller Co., was born on July 16, 1832. The building still stands today, although it is centuries old, and shows no visible signs of wear. Members of the Mueller family made a pilgrimage to Wertheim three years ago to visit the birthplace of their ancestor.





# DECATUR'S FINEST 1917 RESIDENCE, RICH

## Cruikshank Home One Of Finest In State

### Magnificent Mansion in West William Now Complete in Furnishings, Remarkably Well Selected for Comfort, Convenience and Richness of Appearance

In exterior appearance, representative of the Italian Renaissance period, the Frank W. Cruikshank home in West William street unquestionably stands in every way a class as one of the finest private homes in the state.

It has taken many weeks after it had been completed, so far as the exterior and finish were concerned, to furnish the mansion in accordance with the ideas of its owners, and the effect gained from the moment of the first glance as one enters is delightful. Deep and glowing the hall with its old ivory walls, carpet of Pompeian red, and several maps is most pleasing.

#### Grand Dining Room.

Right opening immediately into the large dining room with its furniture of English oak. The soft blue and tannish gray scheme is used. The rug is of the same blue with a narrow gray border of the gray. Window

hangings are of tannish gray silk poplin and side hangings of Japanese linen, in the figured blue. The shades for the center lights are in the French colors. All fixtures are of silver, with blue tassels and cords to match the rugs.

#### Rich Living Room.

The roomy living room with its comfortable richness, is off the hall, to the left, and is furnished in furniture of the Tudor Gothic period. The colors used are taupe and amaranth, a soft, deep rose effect. Tapestry is of silk and damask. The long narrow table has a gorgeous Japanese cover and bears two lamps, one at either end, with shades of amaranth velvet and champagne silk. The center chandelier is in gold with the lights shaded with the French colors. A long window seat has a cushion of the amaranth velvet, and on either side is a book case. The walls are covered with a light silk tapestry. The large fireplace is of white

stone. In one end of the living room is a beautiful standing lamp, with gold standard and a rich shade of gold and amaranth, beside the Thonacker-Grand. The rug is of the taupe with wide amaranth border. Opening off the living room is the

cheery solarium, with a floor of red and white tiling, a gray and black rug, heavy wicker furniture with upholstery of cretonne in the pastel shades, and hangings at the windows to harmonize.

Directly off the hall is the den, with the soft blue used in the rug and hangings.

The breakfast room is in story, with furniture of dark gray enamel, on which is decorative painting. The curtains are of poplin and blue, with a touch of color. A small hand-painted border, to match the design in the curtains, is used on the walls.

#### Kitchen All in White.

The kitchen and both kitchen and butler's pantries are entirely in white. The gas range is in white, and the floor is of white tile. In the center is a white cabinet table with drawers and shelves. The large sink has hot and cold water, hot water, and a sprayer for cleaning dishes.

Stair carpeting is of the Pompeian red, to match the hall carpeting. Rooms in the front part of the upstairs are carpeted in the gray, blue and Mrs. Cruikshank's room has furnishings of mahogany, and a bed of blue is added to the scheme.

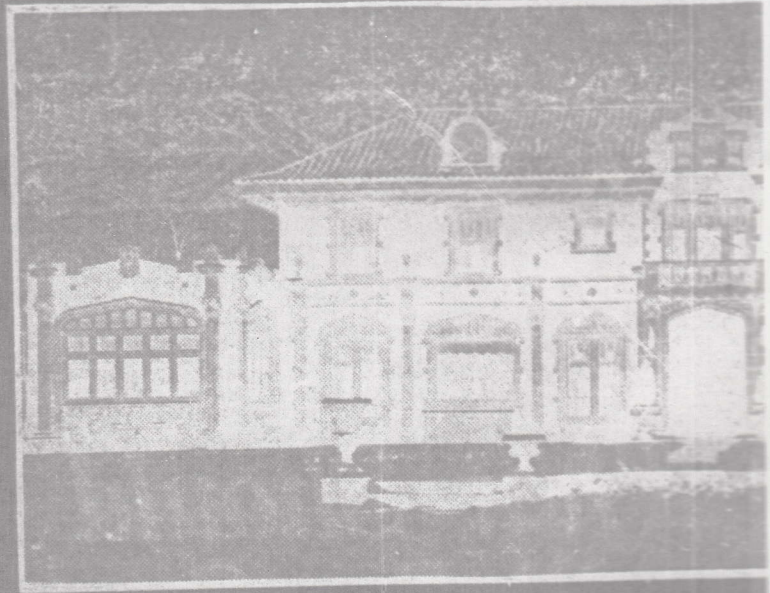
Special Collections in Bedrooms.

Mrs. Florence Cruikshank's room has heavy furniture, with a new rug in the jolly, walls and new pink and white gray window hangings. The walls have a hand painted design of a delicate pink.

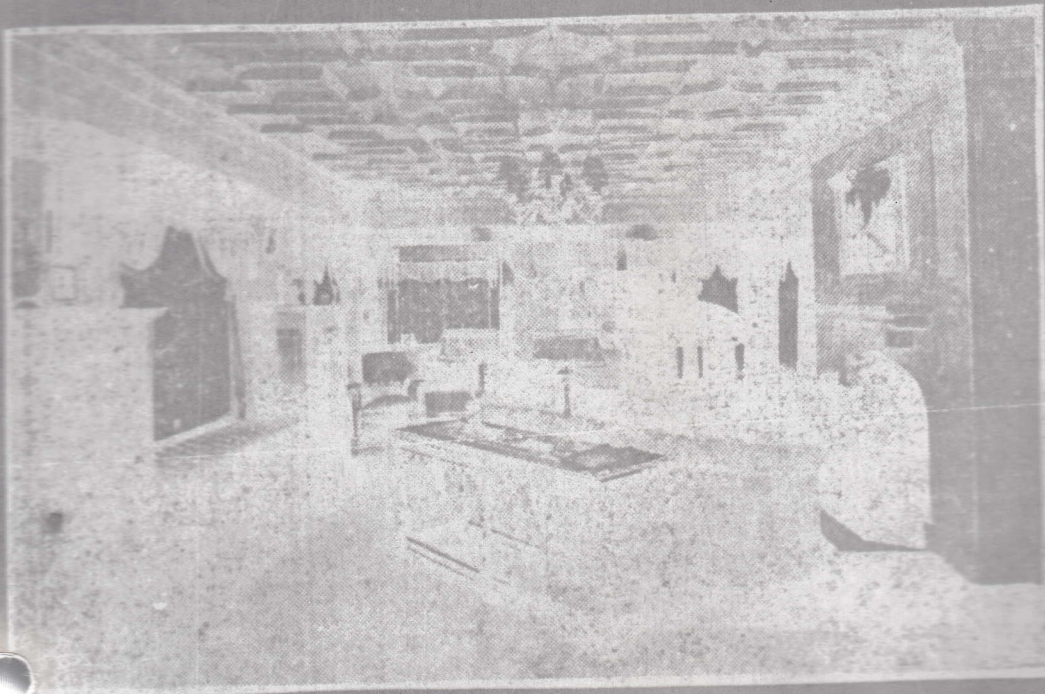
In Fred Fisher's room, the story walls are finished with green, and hangings are in gray and yellow.

The children's room, or study room, has draper of blue and gray, with Japanese effects, and is comfortably fitted with tables, book cases, chairs and lights. Opening off

study room is the sleeping porch for Philip and William Cruikshank, the two boys. The beds by the porch



Exterior view of the home of Frank W. Cruikshank in West William street.



—PHOTO BY WASSON FIELDS.

...ch in its deep, warm colorings of gray and amaranth, has furnishings of the Tudor and resital with its fireplace and book shelves.

# RESIDENCE, RICH, SPACIOUS AND COMFORT



—PHOTO BY WASSON STUDIOS.

Frank W. Cruikshank in West Willow Street, showing the Italian Venetian race style of architecture.

## Women In War Time

A call came to Mrs. Joseph T. Bowen, Chairman woman's committee for Illinois, last week from Washington for an expert stenographer who could speak Spanish to fill a Government position with the Navy Department at Madrid, Spain. The salary will be \$2400 to \$1500 per annum. Because of the registration cards Mrs. Bowen was able to reply to this call within 10 hours, giving the name of three Illinois girls who could fill such a position. One of these girls had translated an entire Spanish dictionary. Mrs. Bowen is now awaiting a reply from Washington giving the name of the girl who has been chosen. This will be sent as soon as the Navy Department has made a thorough investigation of the previous work of the three applicants.

One of the first tasks to be undertaken by the women of Illinois now that registration is nearly complete is an investigation of birth registration in the state.

The conservation committee of the Women's Committee of Illinois has secured a permit of \$10 for the Holiday Christmas Candy to be sold every year at the Sugar, Spice and Cocoa Co. This contest will be held at Mrs. Elizabeth Allen, 128 West Adams street, Chicago, not later than Wednesday, Dec. 11th. There w

cherry coloration, with a floor of red tile, a gray and black rug, heavy wicker furniture with upholstery of crelone in the period shades, and hangings at the windows in harmonious.

Directly off the hall is the den, with the soft blue used in the rug and hangings.

The breakfast room is in ivory, with furniture of dark gray stained, on which is decorative painting. The curtains are of poplin and blue, with a touch of color. A small hand-painted border, to match the design in the curtains, is used on the walls.

**Kitchen All in White.**  
The kitchen and both kitchen and butler's pantries are entirely in white. The gas ranges in white, and the floor is of white tiling. In the center is a white cabinet table with drawers and shelves. The large sink has hot and cold water, soft water, and a sprinkler for rinsing dishes.

Stair carpeting is of the Pompeian red, to match the hall covering. Rooms in the front part of the upstairs are carpeted in the gray. Mr. and Mrs. Cruikshank's room has furnishings of mahogany, and a tint of blue is added to the ivory walls and to the hangings. The lights are in the French colors.

**Beautiful Colorings in Bedrooms.**  
Mrs. Frances Cruikshank's room has ivory furniture, with a rose tint to the ivory walls and rose pink and light gray window hangings. The walls have a hand painted border in a delicate pink.

In Fred Mueller's room, the ivory walls are touched with green, and hangings are in green and yellow.

The children's room, or study room, has drapes of blue and gray, with Japanese effects, and is comfortably furnished with tables, book cases, chairs and lights. Opening off the study room is the sleeping porch for Philip and William Cruikshank, the two boys. The beds on the porch

are of light gray to match the woodwork. There is another sleeping porch with the same furnishings as the boys' and Mrs. Cruikshank's.

**The Color Chart.**  
This is the first thing seen as one enters the door to the color wardrobe closet. There is room to hang the garments, and deep drawers for bed clothing and boxes of drawers have half drawers, so they may easily be drawn out.

There are two bedrooms upstairs and a lavatory downstairs. Bathrooms are entirely in white, and in one is the shower bath. Every modern convenience is in them.

Throughout the house, by means of a special system, soft water may be had. Also there is hot water in addition to the usual hot and cold water faucets. The boiler is heated by vaporized steam, the plan being in the garage.

Windows may be raised upward, and the roller screens pulled down. These roller screens are an all-weather window. Throughout the large house, with its many windows, only nine windows have screens, which must be removed in the winter time. There are many closets and convenient places to store things in all parts of the house. The most modern conveniences tend to save greatly in the housework.

The first telephone has been attributed to various scientists and inventors of the early part of the seventeenth century, including Galileo, Jansen, Jacob Adrian and Zacarias Tausz, but documentary evidence points to a Dutch spectacle maker, Hans Lippershey, as the man who discovered the germ of the idea.

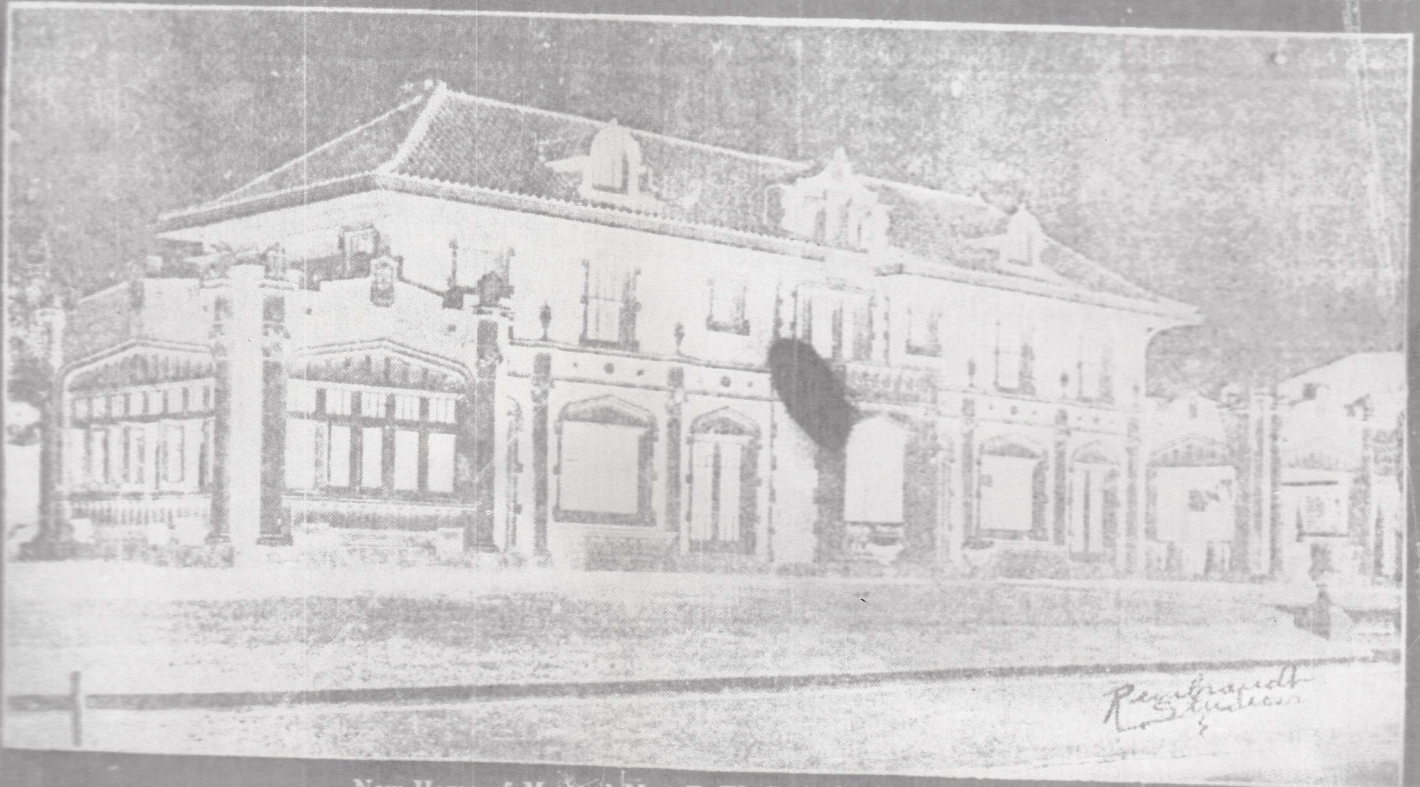
Mrs. William Nickerson, of Orwell, Vt., has a hen which in the last few weeks has laid two dozen eggs, each with a double yolk, the weight of the two dozen being six pounds.

John Fry, a workman of Bellingham, Wash., are in business and then went to a restaurant, where he ordered a double portion of omelet, a steak and all the extras. He says it is nothing for him to eat a dinner plus at one sitting.



A soft blue and gray color scheme is carried out in the spacious are of the English Georgian period.

# HANDSOME RESIDENCE ADDITION OF THE YEAR



New Home of Mrs. and Mrs. F. W. Cruikshank.

—PHOTO BY REMBRANDT.

## HANDSOMEST HOUSE OF THE YEAR

Beautiful Residence in Millikin Place Addition Has Artistic Interior.

The address of the handsome home is 1011 Millikin place, and it was built during the last year in the city by Dr. W. H. Cruikshank, of the Marine Manufacturing company, in the Millikin place addition.

The residence has been designed in the Georgian style and is a beautiful example of the art of the architect.

The house is a two-story building with a portico supported by columns. The interior is finished with oak and is very artistic.

The living room is a large room with a bay window and a fireplace. The dining room is also a large room with a bay window and a fireplace.

The kitchen is a small room with a bay window and a fireplace. The bathroom is a small room with a bay window and a fireplace.

The house is a beautiful example of the art of the architect and is a handsome residence.

black walnut of the Georgian style. It has the beamed ceiling effect and has a bay window fronting to the street.

The breakfast room is equipped with writing table and cabinet for glasses and breakfast dishes.

The house is furnished with oak and is very artistic. A bed of the bay window is a feature of the house. The house is a beautiful example of the art of the architect and is a handsome residence.



Dining Room.

F. W. Cruikshank residence.



### SOME OF THE



Breakfast Room.

—PHOTO BY WASSON STUDIOS

F. W. Crulshank residence.



Corridor.

—PHOTO BY WASSON STUDIOS

F. W. Crulshank residence.



Dining Room.

—PHOTO BY WASSON STUDIOS

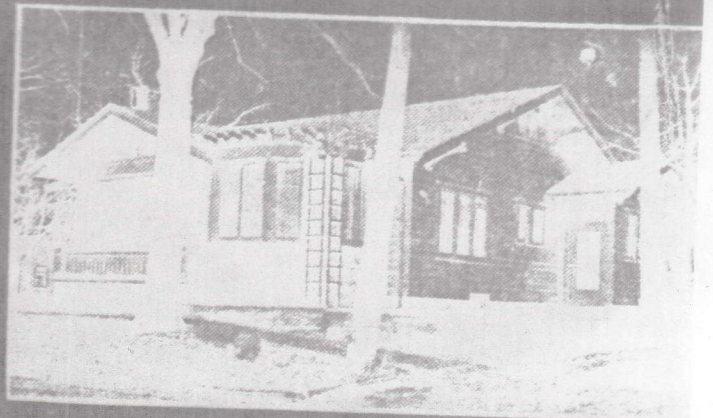
F. W. Crulshank residence.

*Leicester Herald*  
Dec. 30, 1917

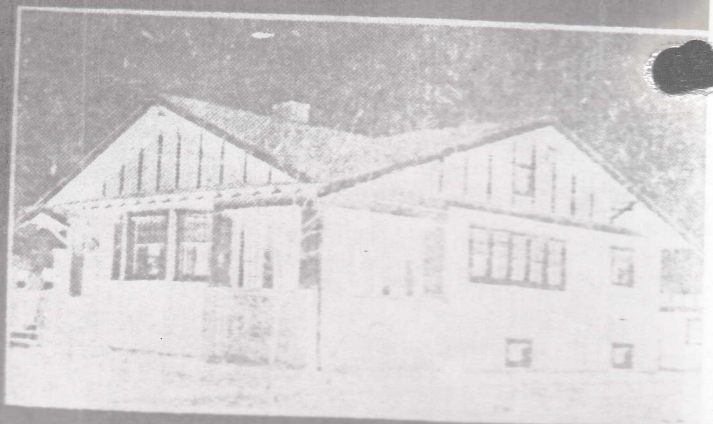
Dining Room.

F. W. Crulshank residence.

**SOME OF THE**



Edgar Bachrach.  
100 Block South Pine.



F. Needham.  
1000 West Prairie.

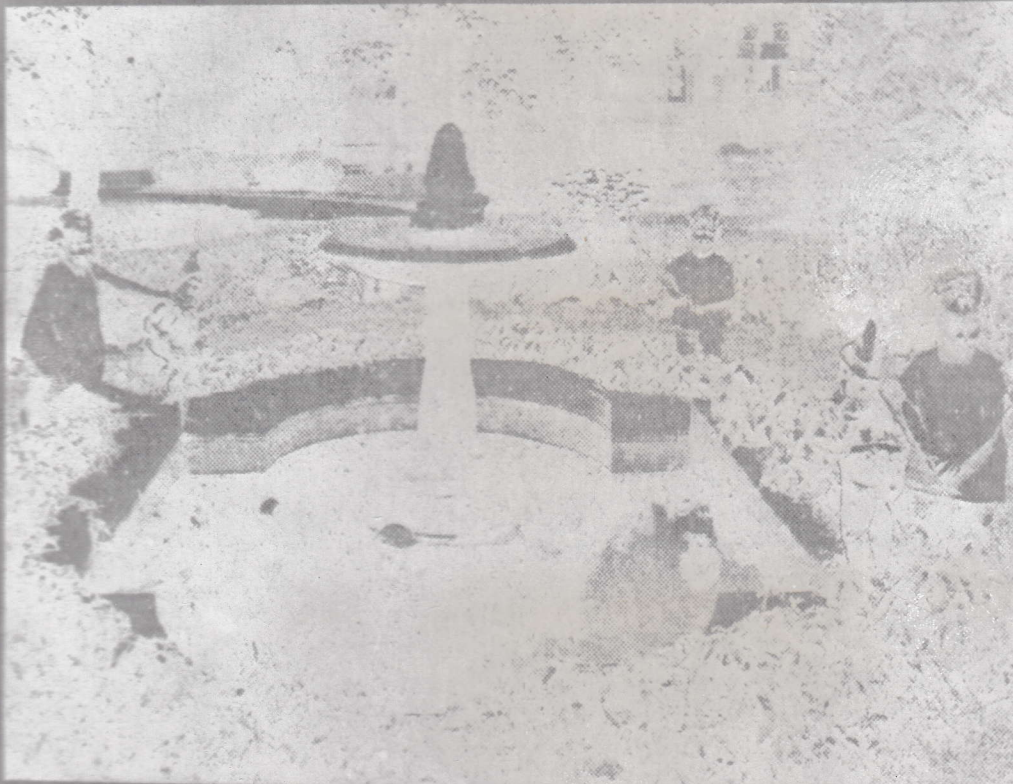


Frank Webber.  
227 Cobb Avenue.

# DECATUR HERALD ES AND GARDEN

SUNDAY, JULY 14, 1929

## Children Love Gnomes in Cruikshank Garden



The garden pool in the rear of the F. W. Cruikshank home in West William street is the delight of all children who know it. Little gnomes stand guard at each corner of the pool, and floating on the water are turtles, frogs and other fairyland folk, while a fat green frog sits in the middle of the fountain. The gnomes are of interest to adults

as well as children. They are of a type of garden decoration used extensively in Carlsbad, Czecho-Slovakia, where Mr. and Mrs. Cruikshank passed several weeks last year. Deer peeping from the shrubbery, groups of children playing games on the lawn, bearded old men chuckling over a game of cards on a mushroom table, little houses with families inside, and lovers stroll-

ing under umbrellas, were some of the pieces most often seen. The two little gnomes in the Cruikshank garden have remarkably lifelike coloring and expressions. The children with them are Gertrude Parke Cruikshank and William Montgomery Cruikshank, whose parents are Mr. and Mrs. Philip Cruikshank, and Edward Evans, son of Mr. and Mrs. E. B. Evans.

—Photo by Seitz

TYLAC COMPANY PLANS  
TO EXPAND FACTORY  
*Decatur Herald*  
Officers Re-Elected in Annual  
Meeting in Monticello

Monday  
2/5/1930 p. 9

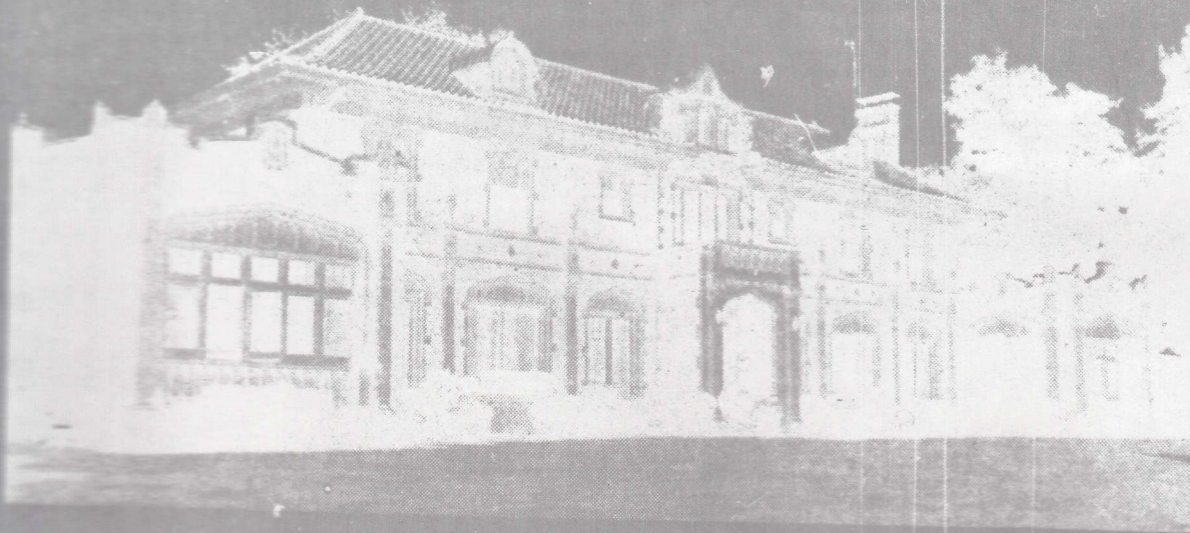
With business good in the first eight months of operation in Monticello, directors of the Tylac Co., organized by Allen F. Moore of Monticello, and Philip Cruikshank, Decatur, laid plans in their annual meeting Monday, for increasing their plant capacity.

Development of the industry since it opened the new plant in Monticello last summer, has been all that its promoters expected of it.

Allen F. Moore was re-elected president of the company. Philip Cruikshank, executive vice-president and secretary, and E. Van R. Moore, treasurer. These three with J. W. Gare and J. D. Leiper, both of Monticello, make up the board of directors.

Tylac is a fiber tile used in finishing the walls of bath rooms, kitchens, restaurants, and barber shops, or wherever a smooth, waterproof wall is desired. Reception of the tile by lumber dealers and the building trade has been good and has been a good business for the company.

August 8, 1965



### 861 W. William St.

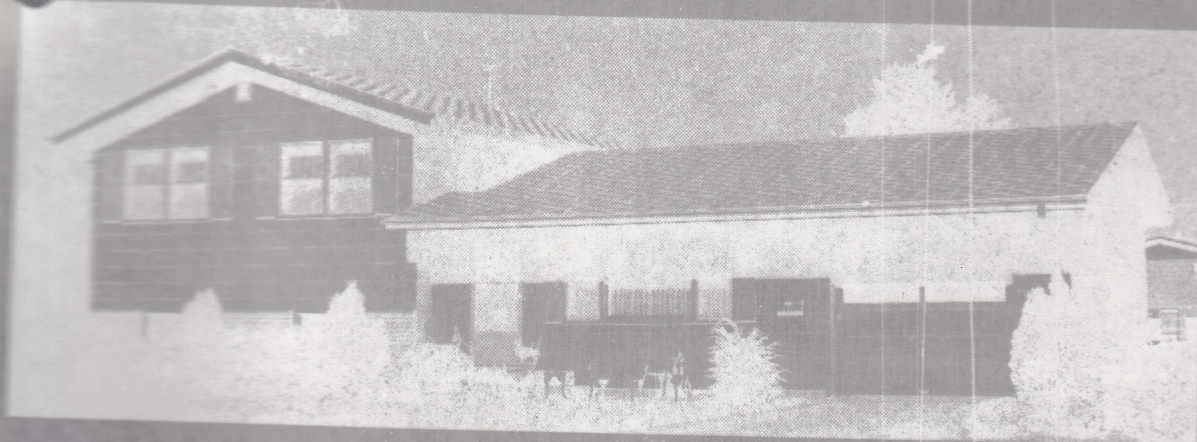
Paul and Margaret Mitchell, owners of the Surrey Restaurant, have purchased this sturdy brick apartment building from the Citizens National Bank under the will of Jessie P. Montgomery. The Mitchells plan to redecorate and remodel the apartments to suit a select clientele. Two of the three apartments contain three bedrooms and three

baths, fireplaces, large closets, separate heating systems, garages and spacious grounds. The third apartment provides two bedrooms and two baths. The building has

spacious rooms with French windows, beamed ceilings, upper balconies and tile roof. Gil Barry, realtor, handled the transaction.



James A. Clarke has sold his home to Lois Hays, a Decatur school teacher. The brick and frame ranch has a carpeted living room and dining "L" with fireplace. The roomy kitchen has built-in ap-



### 2623 Burgener Dr.

This is one of the Greenlake Addition lots, recently purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Agnes Williams for Keith Robinson. Williams is employed by A.E. Staley Mfg. Co. The house, located on a landscaped half-acre lot, has a 15- by 20

foot carpeted living room; kitchen with fruitwood cabinets, oven and range; three large bedrooms; paneled 15-

by 21-foot family room; 1 1/2 baths; attached garage and cement drive. Tom Brinkoetter & Co. handled the sale.

## Pest Control Need Studied

A study will be made at Longview Place to determine whether the services of a professional pest control company are needed in the public housing project.

Commissioner Marshall G. Braddix, a sanitarian for the County Health Department, believes an extermination service is needed.

Tenants will be asked whether they are troubled with pests. The DHA sprays for pest control now, if tenants request it.

## Real Estate Transactions

Following real estate sales reported in the Herald and Review:

1000 S. Highway Dr., S. William County to Richard S. Ross

1000 S. Highway Dr., S. William County to Richard S. Ross

1000 S. Highway Dr., S. William County to Richard S. Ross

## NEW...SW

OLD WORLD CH...



# FRANK W. CRUIKSHANK ACCIDENTALLY KILLED WHILE CLEANING GUN

## BODY FOUND IN BASEMENT OF MANSION

### Maid Hears Report of Shot; Polished Revolvers Found Nearby

Frank W. Cruikshank, 62, accidentally shot and killed himself at 10:45 p. m. Tuesday while cleaning a shotgun in the basement of his home at 551 West William street.

His body was found by Miss Margaret Eckl, maid in the Cruikshank home, who rushed to the basement upon hearing the report of the gun.

#### Find Empty Shell

Beside his body was an empty shotgun shell apparently ejected from the magazine of the gun with which he had been working. There were no other shells in the gun.

The charge from the shotgun shell pierced the chest and is believed to have killed him instantly.

#### Called Police

Finding the body, Miss Eckl summoned Freeman Musser, special police officer who patrols the grounds surrounding the home. Mr. Musser summoned Phillip Cruikshank and Dr. J. J. Hopkins, coroner, to the home. Police were called and an investigation of the shooting was launched.

Coroner Hopkins, although declining to make any definite statements, said the shooting undoubtedly was accidental.

Mr. Cruikshank had cleaned several revolvers before the accident occurred, Coroner Hopkins said. These guns were found, polished and cleaned, to one side. Several rifles and shotguns, still untouched, were standing near the body.

According to Dr. Hopkins, the lone shotgun shell found lying on the floor was the steel which ended Mr. Cruikshank's life. The gun was an automatic and when discharged the shell was kicked from the chamber. Coroner Hopkins said,

It was a habit of Mr. Cruikshank to take his guns to the basement for cleaning, it was said. Phillip Cruikshank said that it was not unusual for his father to be working with the particular gun which killed him. "He kept the gun in perfect working order, because of a series of robberies that have occurred within the neighborhood," Mr. Cruikshank said.

Members of the family were thoroughly convinced that Mr. Cruikshank's death was accidental. Since recovering from an operation for correction of sinus trouble a year ago, they said, he had never appeared in better spirits.

Mr. Cruikshank had passed the day at the Tylac factory at Monticello, and on the return home with his son, Phillip and other men from the factory. Tuesday evening, the subject of duck hunting came up.

#### "Hits the Ducks"

"This boy never cleans his guns," Mr. Cruikshank told the other men, with a jocular tone. "He can hit the ducks, all right, but I always have to clean the guns after him."

"Well, I clean the ducks," the son said, "so it's a fair trade, isn't it?"

"I guess it is," his father replied. "But that reminds me. Those guns haven't been cleaned since we came back from our last trip to the river. While I think of it, I'd better clean them tonight."

Several of his guns and pistols had been removed from their cases. That he already had cleaned several

(Continued on Page 3)

of the firearms was evidenced by the fact that there were lying nearby several ramrods with soiled rags in their loops.

#### Worked On Ironing Board

Mr. Cruikshank had been working at a tall ironing board. The 12-gauge automatic shotgun which inflicted the fatal wound was lying on the ironing board, pointed in the direction of the body. Its chamber was open, indicated that there had been but one cartridge in the piece.

From the cartridge lying nearby, and from the fact that the chamber was open, it was assumed that Mr. Cruikshank, when he prepared to clean the piece, took cartridges from the magazine and made the fatal mistake of thinking that he had removed them all.

Mr. Cruikshank apparently had laid the gun on the ironing board, its muzzle pointed toward himself, as he prepared to clean it.

#### Greatest Pleasure

Next to his family, Mr. Cruikshank's guns and his hunting were his greatest pleasure in life. He had for years been an inveterate duck hunter, and for years had never missed a season's shooting on the Illinois river. Some years ago he and his son were prime movers in the founding of the Francis gun club, organized for the enjoyment of sport in the duck lands in the vicinity of Beardstown.

He took a delight in handling a fine firearm, and had a collection of rare pieces that was the envy of many of his friends. Several of the guns were hand made, and a number of them were imported from European countries.

#### Born in 1872

Full name, Cruikshank was born in Chattanooga, Tenn., Jan. 2, 1872, the son of William Montgomery and Anne Stanley Cruikshank. His father was a tobacco manufacturer and salesman. Mr. Cruikshank was educated in private schools until 14 years of age. He was reared in Greenville, S. C., to the age of 13 years.

He was with the Atlanta water works in Atlanta, Ga., for ten years, and it was there he met and married Miss Leda Mueller. He returned to enter the sales force of the A. Mueller Mfg. Co. On July 11, 1908, he came to Decatur to live, and on Dec. 25, 1909, he entered the Maber factory. He was made a member of the company as assistant secretary about 1912, and remained Jan. 1, 1929.

For the last three years, with the exception of one year, Mr. Cruikshank has been active in the Tylac factory in Monticello of which his son Phillip is president. He was unable to continue his business interests there for a time, following a stroke illness and operation for a nose ailment a year ago in January.

Mr. Cruikshank organized and built the Francis Gun club on the Sargason river near Chanderville, Cass county in 1926, and passed much time there with hunting parties that he and members of his family arranged in season.

Of his hobbies Mr. Cruikshank himself wrote not so long ago for the library files of this newspaper.

"I always have loved the great outdoors and naturally as much time as I have been able to take away from my family and business has been spent hunting and fishing. My son also is fond of it, and I have always believed that I could best advise him away from others and out in the great open spaces or around the camp fires; for after all he is all that matters."

Mr. Cruikshank built and designed the community heating plant in 1922, and he was a member of the Citizens building corporation. He was a member of the Country Club of Decatur, Decatur lodge of the Elks, the Francis Gun club, and the First Presbyterian church.

Mr. Cruikshank was married Dec. 14, 1898 to Miss Leda Mueller of Decatur, daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. Hieronymus Mueller. His three brothers and parents preceded him in death. He leaves two children, Phillip H. Cruikshank of Decatur and Mrs. Allen F. Moore, Jr., of Ottawa. She is the former Frances Cruikshank. There are four grandchildren, Gertrude Parke Cruikshank and William Montgomery Cruikshank, of Decatur; Allen F. Moore III and Patricia Moore, of Ottawa.

Mrs. Moore was notified of the death immediately, and arrived in Decatur soon after midnight. There are no relatives on the Cruikshank side to arrive from out of town, but a boyhood friend of Mr. Cruikshank, J. E. Sistrine of Greenville, may come. Mrs. Sistrine is seriously ill, and will be unable to travel.

Time for holding an inquest to investigate circumstances of the accident had not been set by Dr. Hopkins late Tuesday night.

The body was removed to Dawson & Wikoff funeral home.

March 2, 1934

## DEATH HELD ACCIDENTAL

### Phillip Cruikshank Testifies as to Events Leading Up to Shooting

A verdict of accidental death was returned Thursday by coroner's jurors investigating the death of Frank W. Cruikshank who was found dead in the basement of his home late Tuesday night. Under the evidence presented by those persons close to Mr. Cruikshank and of several who had talked with him before the accident, any other verdict was not possible.

Giving minute details to cover the activities of his father throughout the day Tuesday, Phillip Cruikshank, son of the dead man, told jurors that he and his father had left the Cruikshank home at 861 West William street at 7:15 a. m., Tuesday for the factory in Monticello of which Mr. Cruikshank was vice-president.

#### Keep Up Schedule

"After arriving in Monticello and going to the factory, father talked with the superintendent and urged him to see that the production schedule was kept up," young Mr.

Cruikshank related.

"We went to the usual place for luncheon and father ate heartily. He seemed in better spirits than he had been for a long time, being unusually jovial. Later he said to me "Phil, honey, (he always called me that), you have a wonderful start on this Rex contract and by the end of the week we will have a lot of materials in the boxes.

#### Mentions Guns

"Returning we saw a lot of crows and father mentioned that we would have to go crow shooting again. We often had shot crows in that particular spot. I said that if I was to go crow shooting I would have to get my gun in working order and he said that he intended to give all of his guns a thorough cleaning that night. I said I would go over and help him but he joked and said I didn't know anything about cleaning a gun."

Miss Margaret Eckl, maid in the

Cruikshank home testified as to the good spirits of Mr. Cruikshank before the accident. She said that he took his guns to the basement for cleaning about 10:20 p. m. Fremont Musser, special police agent who patrols the vicinity of the Cruikshank home also testified. He was summoned to the Cruikshank home by the maid after she had found the body.

## Cruikshank Funeral Held

### Hundreds of Messages Are Received From Friends.

Funeral services were conducted Thursday afternoon at 2:30 at the home for Frank W. Cruikshank, accidentally killed Tuesday night while cleaning a shotgun in his home.

A deluge of telegrams and letters of condolence has been coming in to the family ever since the announcement of his tragic death. Mr. Cruikshank had friends in all parts of the United States who were shocked at the word of his death and those who could not attend the funeral sent messages.

Red roses were his favorite flowers and there were scores of floral pieces of the vividly colored blooms.

Rev. E. W. Clippinger, pastor of the First Presbyterian church of which Mr. Cruikshank was a member, officiated at the services and a string quartet played.

Active pall-bearers were selected from among friends who had hunted with Mr. Cruikshank and his son Phillip for many years. Many of them were younger men, but had been his chosen associates on hunting trips, which had been his favorite recreation. The active pall-bearers were: William Barnes, Jr., Cecil Abrams, Frank E. Walker, R. Van Arnpur, Monticello, H. L. Bohon and E. B. Evans.

Honorary pall-bearers were Guy Scovill, Frank Curtis, G. J. Parke, W. M. Wood, George Hess, Allen F. Moore, Sr., J. S. Baldwin, William Lodge, A. W. Eichman, C. C. LeForgee, Harry Haines and John McEvoy.



Nov. 16, 1962

Daughter  
of Frank  
Cruikshanks



Mrs. Frances Moore makes cookies with cutters made by her grandfather, Hieronymus Mueller.

Decatur

Herald

## Local Obituaries

August 22, 1962



Phillip H. Cruikshank

# Cruikshank Rites to Be Thursday

Funeral services for Phillip H. Cruikshank will be at 3 p.m. Thursday in St. John's Episcopal Church with burial in Greenwood Cemetery. Friends may call at the Dawson & Wikoff Funeral Home from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. today.

Mr. Cruikshank, 61, president of the Citizens Building Corp., and a director of the General Telephone Co. of Illinois died at 2:40 a.m. yesterday in Decatur and Macon County Hospital.

Mr. Cruikshank, who lived at 530 Fielding Ct., was a lifelong resident of the Decatur area.

He was the grandson of

Hieronymous Mueller, founder of the Mueller Co.

Mr. Cruikshank attended Decatur Public Schools and graduated with honors from the Hotchkiss School in Lakeville, Conn.

In 1923 he graduated with honors from Yale University.

At Yale, he was a guard on the varsity football squad for three years. He was also a star on the Yale track team.

He was manager of the ceramics division of Mueller Co. from 1923 to 1928.

### Founded Tylac

In 1929 he and Allen F. Moore, Sr. founded the Tylac Co., Monticello. He served as secretary of the company until 1936 and has been president and treasurer since then. In 1955 he leased the business facilities to Loxit Systems Inc., Chicago.

He was vice president and general manager of the Servisoft Soft Water Service from 1956 until his retirement in 1960.

He was a member of St. Johns Episcopal Church, Country Club of Decatur and the Decatur Club.

He also belonged to the Yale Football "Y" Association and the Decatur Association of Commerce.

### Director Since 1935

Mr. Cruikshank had been a director of the Citizens Building Corp. since 1935, a director of the General Telephone Co. of Illinois since 1946 and a director of the John and Mary E. Kirby Hospital, Monticello, since 1940.

He was chairman of the Piatt County Chapter of the American Red Cross in 1934 and chairman of the Piatt County Chapter of the

United War Fund from 1942 until 1944.

Mr. Cruikshank was born Jan. 24, 1901 in Decatur, the son of Frank and Leda Mueller Cruikshank.

He married Gertrude Parke May 24, 1924 in Decatur. She died in March, 1944.

He married Frances Cross Johnson March 1, 1947 in Monticello. She survives.

Other survivors include a daughter, Mrs. Harry G. Cook, Ottawa; a son, William M. Cruikshank, Monticello; a sister, Mrs. Frances C. Moore, Decatur, and nine grandchildren.

The family requests that donations be made to the Macon County Heart Fund.



Staff photo by Ken Kiley

The Mitchell living room is especially unique with its ribbed plaster ceiling.

## Interior Decorating Done

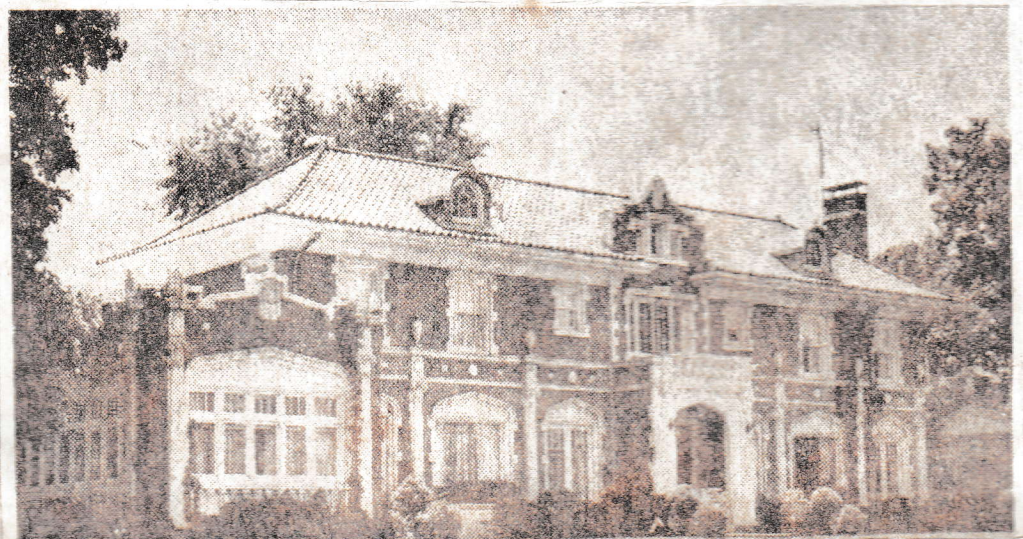
# Stately Old Home Adds Modern Touches

By Charlyn Brautigam  
Of the Herald

The exterior of the stately brick home at 861 W. William St. has not changed much since it was built 49 years ago, but the interior has adopted a more modern look since its new owners moved in.

Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mitchell, owners of the Surrey Restaurant, purchased the home last August and, with Mrs. Mitchell's flair for interior decoration, painted, carpeted and refurnished one of the three apartments which they moved in.

"There's not a crack in the ceiling," Mrs. Mitchell said of the residence built in 1917 by



Staff photo by Ken Kiley

the late Frank W. Cruikshank and called "one of the finest (homes) in the state" in that year.

Mr. Cruikshank was the son-in-law of the late Hieronymus Mueller founder of Decatur's Mueller Co.

The home was built in 1917 and called one of the finest in the state.

August 1966

Mrs. Mitchell selected the colors for the six-room apartment with three and one-half baths and sewed the drapes for all the of rooms except the living room. Their apartment is air-conditioned.

"My three weaknesses are sewing, gardening and interior decorating" Mrs. Mitchell, who still finds time to act as hostess and cashier at the Surrey, said of her interests.

A panorama of pink walls, carpeting and drapes in the master bedroom furnished in Victorian pieces was one of Mrs. Mitchell's decorating innovations. The pink Etruscan drapes feature rattail fringe and are highlighted by white Swiss curtains. An heirloom crystal chandelier hangs from the center of the ceiling.

A floral coverlet of pink and violet on the bed and chest at the foot of the bed adds accent to the monochromatic color scheme.

The second bedroom has French Provincial furniture with orange bedspreads and drapes. The third bedroom has been converted into a room of cabinets containing Mr. Mitchell's gun collection. He has collected guns for 30 years.

Downstairs the sun room has been converted into a dining room with glass cabinets containing portrait plates which Mrs. Mitchell collects.

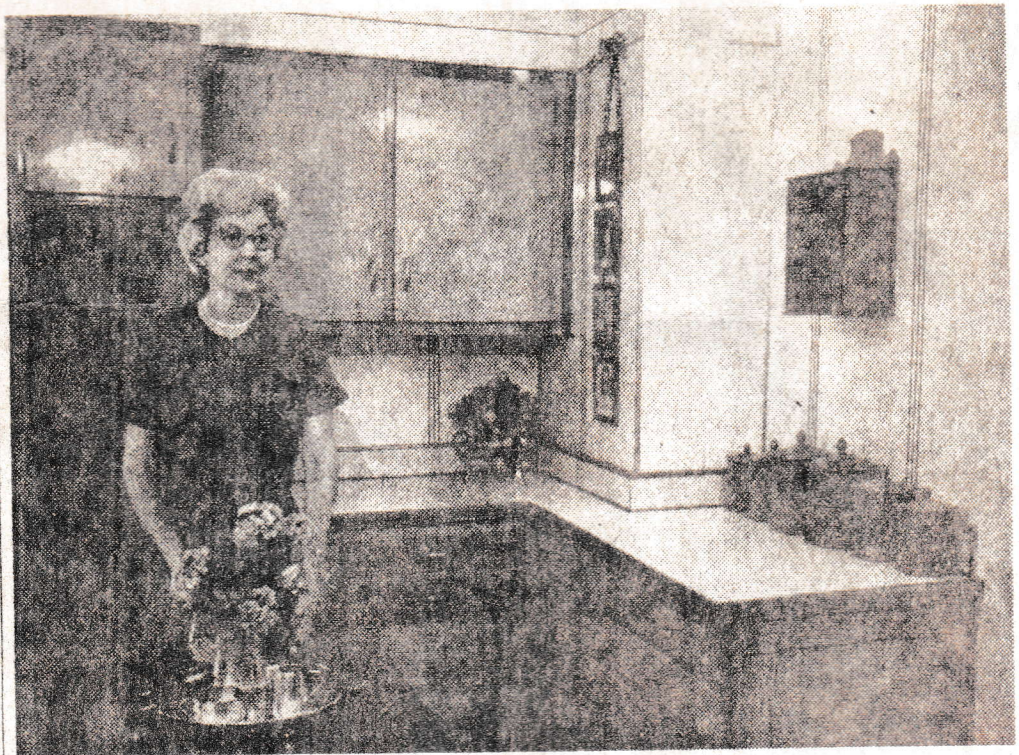
"I have to have something to collect while my husband is collecting guns," she commented.

Mrs. Mitchell made the pale yellow pleated curtains and the yellow and blue tie back drapes for the innumerable windows. The color of the drapes complement the gold brocade-covered dining chairs.

Mrs. Mitchell is especially proud of her kitchen with the birch cabinets which she spent countless hours refinishing. The cabinets were originally white until the true color was discovered.

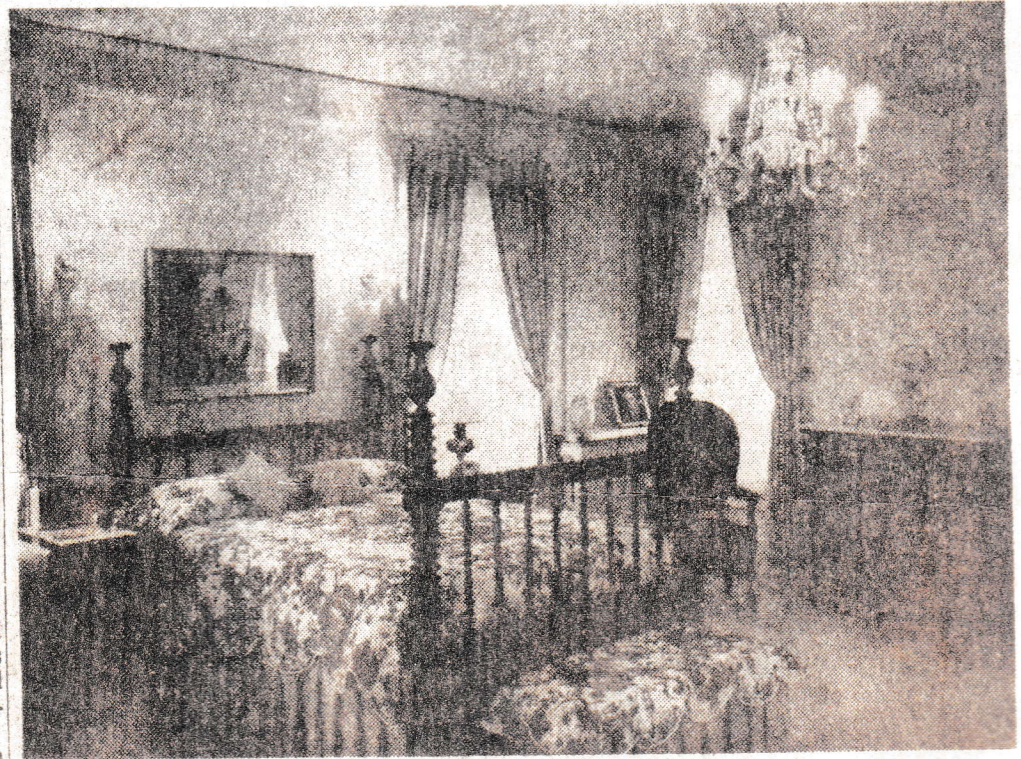
The living room is done in buff tones with blue drapes. A polished limestone fireplace was black until the Mitchells sanded it down and polished the accompanying copper hood.

"We bought the house as an investment, never dreaming that we would move here," Mrs. Mitchell said.



Staff photo by Ken Kiley

Owner Mrs. Mitchell, shown in kitchen, refinished birch cabinets.



Staff photo by Ken Kiley

Victorian furniture used in pink master bedroom

*Decatur Sunday Herald and Review* Sun, Dec. 10, 1972

# Holiday Worlds Opened in House Tour

By Jean Novotny

Five Decatur families will share their holiday worlds with the public during a "Holiday House Hopping" tour from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday.

Each of the homes on the tour, a benefit for Planned Parenthood of Decatur, Inc., will be decorated to the title of a song.

Tour-takers may start their travels at one of the two homes which are just west of downtown Decatur. Tour instructions will be given at the homes of Mr. and Mrs. Jay Holmes at 6 Millikin Place and of Dr. and Mrs. Richard Ferry of 861 W. William St.

Karen Holmes says she and her husband will be searching for "the biggest tree we can find" to reach all the way to the ceiling in their English Tudor home. Their three children have contributed many of the decorations for that "Old-fashioned" tree.

Their living room has several outstanding features — leaded glass windows, a whole wall of bookshelves and natural wood walls with a built-in antique clock. Two of the bookshelf panels are pretend ones — they hide a built-in bar and stereo system.

There will be a tiny Christmas tree especially for the three Holmes children in the family room in keeping with the theme "O Christmas Tree."

The Ferry family will be

spending their first Christmas in their brick home built in 1917 in the style of the Italian Renaissance. They reside in a six-room apartment which is one of three in the house.

Their decorating theme is "Silent Night." The focal point of their living room is a huge white tree decorated with blue balls to coordinate with the room's color scheme.

Over the copper-hooded limestone fireplace is a painting of the home which they commissioned. Paintings of other homes which the couple has lived in, which were done by Dr. Ferry, are hung in the upstairs guest bedroom.

The Ferrys have a two-passenger elevator to the upstairs where their three bedrooms are. They made creche figures for the landing there, and at the top of the stairs they've hung strings of lights and clear snowflakes across a window-divider.

Persons taking the tour will head north to visit the next two houses on the tour which belong to Mr. and Mrs. Carl Morris of 96 E. Court Dr. and Mr. and Mrs. Charles Wesley Hicks of 1 Griffith Park Dr., which is northeast of the city on the banks of the Sangamon River.

The Morris home, a story and one-half Cape Cod style, will be decorated in keeping with the theme of "Deck the Halls."

The table will be set with handpainted china in a Christmas holly pattern done by Mrs. Morris who has an arts and crafts school in the home. Ceramic figurines, which she also has done, of Santa Claus and his helpers will be relaxing in the family room. And in the living room there will be a nativity scene she finished to resemble porcelain.

Even the bathroom, which has hand-painted ceramic tiles, will be decorated for the holidays.

The family's Christmas tree in the French provincial living room will be decorated with mirrored ornaments.

The Hicks family will have two Christmas trees this year. They hope to plant the small one in the family room near their ranch-style home after the holidays.

Mrs. Hicks "insists" on an evergreen tree for the family's formal living room. It's traditionally decorated in silver and white to resemble snow and ice.

Another family tradition with the Hicks' is the absence of the baby from the manger until Christmas. Mrs. Hicks made the creche with "scraps and lots of time and lots of gold paint." It's situated in the living room as well.

That room has French and Thai accent pieces as well as several antiques.

Their furniture is an eclectic mixture. Mrs. Hicks says, "We did what was comfortable."

For their kitchen they chose country mood. The room looks out on their wood deck which they built around oak trees.

Off the kitchen is the library family room which has a 15-foot bay window looking out on the entry courtyard which features rear plantings surrounded by rocks.

The family room is done in an English country style and features a raised hearth fireplace and a 500-volume library. The bay window will be decorated with gold and red ornaments sent to the family from Germany.

Near the front entrance the Hicks will have a large wreath made with pine cones collected on the Maine coast and frosted by the salt air there.

Their home is named "Bellgrove" after an old dinner bell which is located off the back deck. Mrs. Hicks says, "It was our first acquisition when we were silly newlyweds and wherever we go the name will stay."

Mrs. Hicks is going to scent the air with spiced cider to bring tour-takers "Over the River and Through the Woods." That song is their decorating theme.

*Sunday Herald and Review*  
December 10, 1972



Mrs. Richard Ferry adjusts the strings of white lights and clear snowflakes which are a window decoration in her

upstairs hallway. Another holiday feature in the Ferry home is the huge white Christmas tree with blue balls, top left.

# Community Heating Plant Built To Escape Coal Inconvenience

In the fall of 1922, a group of Decatur neighbors joined together and formed an unusual system — a community heating plant.

The idea was born of mutual dislikes, such as firing a furnace, disposing of ashes, and coping with all the dirty conditions in general that accompany burning coal.

So the neighbors pooled their funds and set about to enjoy the ease and convenience of steam heat piped directly into their homes.

H.S. Gebhart and F. W. Cruikshank were the two men who headed up the group of neighbors living between Millikin Place and North Street west of Pine Street.

Construction on the plant was begun that same fall by W. E. Adams, a Decatur plumber, and the steam was turned on

for the first time on January 1, 1923.

There were 10 families in the heating pool when it began.

Each family unit paid \$1,000 at the outset of the plan to pay for building the plant. After the initial fee, each family received its heat at cost, paying for the proportion of the total heat they used.

An additional 10 per cent was charged each family, which went into a sinking fund for repairs. The original cost of the plant was about \$22,000.

When the plant was in operation, the twin boilers used about a ton and a half of coal a day to maintain the steam needed by the homes. At that time, coal cost \$1.65 a ton.

The families who owned the plant during the three decades of its operation expressed great satisfaction, both from the standpoint of economy and convenience.

Costs varied according to the size of the dwelling heated, but ranged between \$100 and \$200 each year per family.

Some of the small homes the plant serviced were heated for as little as \$68 a year. The costs included the salaries for a day and a night fireman, a meter

reader, a bookkeeper and a plant engineer.

The heat was transmitted from the plant to the nearby homes by a series of mains which ran up the alley between North and William streets to the center of Pine Street, then south to the alley between Prairie Avenue and William Street west through Millikin Place to Haworth Street.

A great deal of interest was expressed in the plant during its early days, and in 1925 an effort was made to organize a group to construct a similar plant in the area between Sunset Avenue and West Main Street and McClellan Street and Dennis Avenue.

However, the plan was abandoned because the homes in that area were too far apart and would have required excessively long steam mains.

Steadily rising costs during the 1940s and 1950s forced the owners of the community heating plant to turn to individual heating units. Gas heat became more readily available, was cheaper, cleaner and more individual.

So in 1952, the system was sold, along with the site the plant occupied at the dead end of West North Street and the Railroad intersection, to K. L. Scheffler, who converted the building into a four-room house.



A community heating plant provided steam to 25 homes from 1923 to 1952.

Cruikshank-Ferry house  
861 West William St.

Personal visit January 11, 1976

Dr. and Mrs. Ferry took me through their apartment. Living room is the original living room. Dining room now in the sun porch. Kitchen was formed from part of a rear porch. One large bedroom and one small one are upstairs, and a guest room-family room in an extension to the rear which was added later; Dr. Ferry did not mention when it was added, but possibly when the house was made into apartments.

Closets upstairs have cedar drawers below and a single deep shelf above.

The floors are concrete, basement to attic. Walls are quite thick, of four course brick.

There are separate furnaces for each apartment, and the Ferrys have central air conditioning.

Every bedroom has a bath. One bathroom still has the third faucet (for ice-water), set higher than the usual faucets for hot and cold water. The Ferrys did not know what this was previously.

The livingroom fireplace is said to be limestone, but it is smooth surfaced, not like the grained limestone with which I am familiar, the limestone of the Mississippi River bluffs.

A portrait of the house, commissioned by the Ferrys, hangs above the fireplace mantle.

The elevator on the stair in their apartment is in two parts, one above and one below the landing. It contains two seats.

At the top of the stairs is a glass wall, with French doors opening into the upper hall.

A rosegarden is now in the driveway, instead of the fountain and pool installed by the Cruikshanks.

Radiators have metal covers.

Rollup screens remaining in the windows still function.

Crystal chandeliers in the diningroom and master bedroom were installed by Mrs. Mitchell, who did extensive interior decorating, much of which remains intact.

*Margaret Meyer*