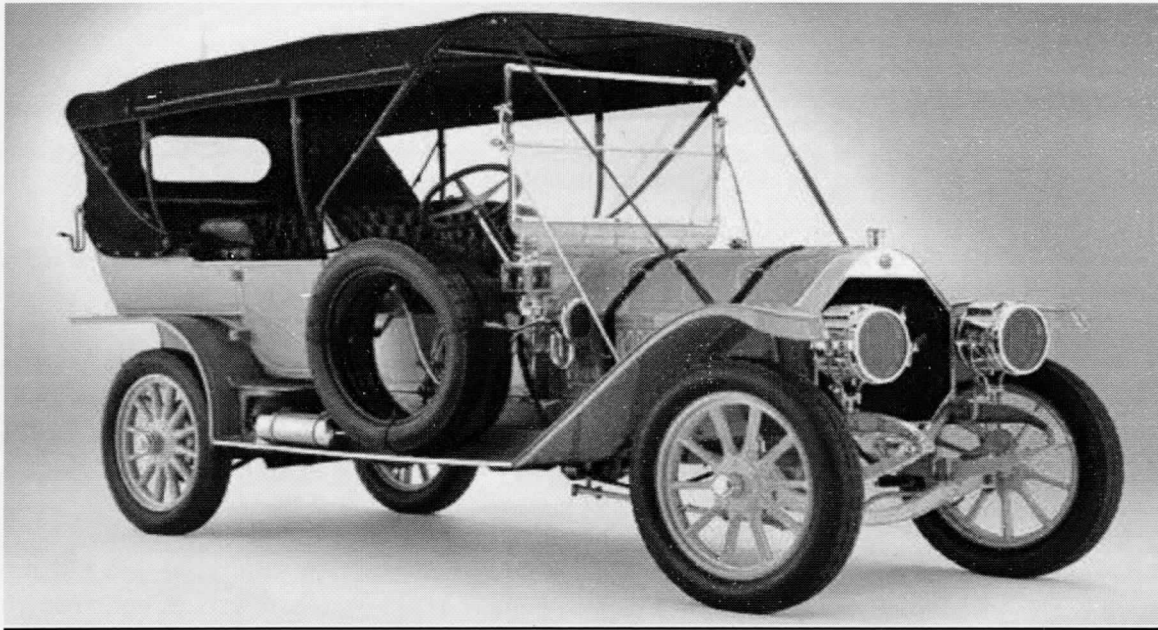




THE MUELLER RECORD

FALL 2010 NEWSLETTER



A 1910 Thomas Flyer of the type driven by Philip Mueller

The story of Hieronymus Mueller and his interest in automobiles is pretty well known by those of us with an interest in Mueller history. Hieronymus earned a spot in automotive history through this success in America's first auto race in 1895. Apparently, the Mueller urge to race cars didn't end with the tragic death of Hieronymus in 1900. Recently, a short feature titled "How Time Flies" by Jack O'Keefe appeared in the Bloomington, Illinois *Pantagraph* which mentioned a 1910 race that Philip Mueller, second eldest son of Hieronymus, had with the interurban travelling from Bloomington to Decatur. Mr. O'Keefe kindly took time to furnish the entire story as it originally appeared in the *Pantagraph* August 4, 1910.

Automobile Beats Electric Car in Race between Bloomington and Decatur

Mueller Family Machine Gets Home from Big Picnic Ahead of Mueller Interurban Special

Philip Mueller's Thomas Flyer raced the Mueller Special on the Interurban from Bloomington to Decatur last Saturday night, easily winning the heat, says the Decatur Review. The special Interurban train carried the members of the Mueller family on their return from the picnic and the Thomas Flyer contained Philip Mueller and family. The two left Bloomington at the same time, 7:25.

(Continued)

At the time of leaving there was no thought of a race, but when train and automobile found themselves clear of the city of Bloomington they were running parallel and at no great distance apart. Maybe the interurban crowd did not get excited about it but the temptation was greater than any automobilist could bear to try to beat that interurban car into Decatur.

First Advantage to the Trolley

For the first lap of the run the traction cars had the best of it. They had the best of it in track and also in distance. Where the automobile turned, it had to make a square turn while the interurban train had an easy curve carefully laid out by an engineer. The public highways for several miles south of Bloomington are not what a high class county like McLean should furnish. The road was rough and rutty to say nothing of a good many hills for which the highway commissioners are not responsible. The interurban car also had to make its schedule meeting points and stop occasionally for orders. The automobile was dispatched from the seat of the machine and its schedule was made to order. It was nip and tuck between the two from the edge of Bloomington to Clinton with the auto working its head off whenever it had a chance to work and the interurban having a shade the best of it all the time.

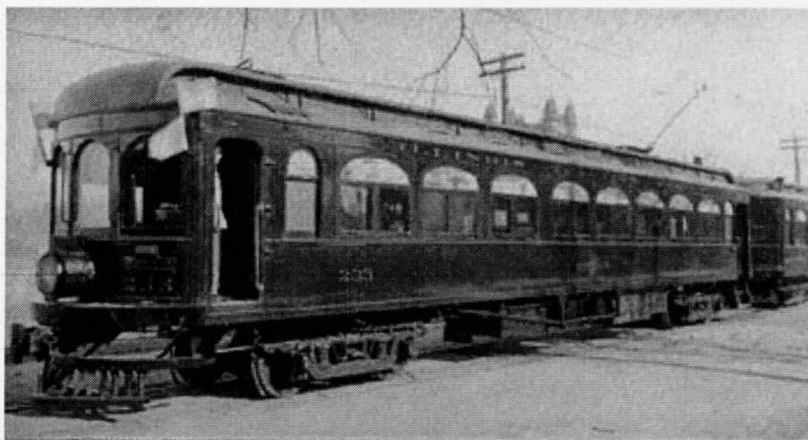
Where Machine Wins

From Clinton to Decatur, the roads were better and straighter. The Automobile really got into running on this stretch and the Flyer had no trouble keeping the lead. But at that the automobile had more miles to run, more turns to make, numerous turn-outs with occasional stops. For considerable distances the automobile was able to maintain a speed of forty-five miles an hour. The gasoline beat the electric train into Decatur. The automobile reached Division Street at 9:15, covering the distance from Bloomington in one hour and fifty minutes. The speedometer registered about forty-nine miles.

The annual Mueller Picnic typically was held in Decatur, but for a few years moved to Miller Park in Bloomington where it attracted huge crowds of locals as well as Mueller employees and their families. Crowds of 5000 or more attended the festivities and many more watched the Mueller parade accompanied by the Mueller Company Band and the Goodman Band as it moved through the city.

All those attending the picnic received free rides on special interurban cars. The interurban was a light rail trolley system which linked many communities in a region. Hundreds of interurban systems operated from the early 1900's into the 1950's. The Decatur – Bloomington line was built and operated by the Illinois Traction Company and served from 1906 to 1953.

The Thomas Flyer which Philip Mueller drove was state-of-the-art automotive technology in 1910. A Thomas Flyer had just won the first (and only) around the world car race in 1909 proving both its speed and durability. The Thomas Flyer was a \$4,000 car – that would be about \$60,000 in today's currency.



The Interurban - an Illinois Traction System car, circa 1910

ANNOUNCEMENT !

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**THE HIERONYMUS MUELLER MUSEUM NOW HAS A
WEBSITE**

muellermuseum.org

The museum's new website has been up and running for nearly a month now. Although there are many pieces still to be added, enough information has been processed to open the site to the public. Much of what is on the initial site pertains to basic museum information – who we are, where we are, and when we are here – but you will also find important research information. The most significant feature is the availability of 70 years of the *Mueller Record* with the ability to search for names or other text. Other users may find pleasure in simply browsing through these company magazines.

You can see for yourself what is currently on the site, so I will give you some idea of what is still to come. We have added a part-time employee who is working on bringing the collection catalog up to date by adding images to the descriptions as well as entering a backlog of previously uncataloged items. This is a huge undertaking and once a critical mass is achieved, the catalog will be placed on the website so that the entire collection of photos, archives, and objects can be viewed online.

Other missing components should start showing up in the near future and include the Mueller Family Tree featuring the descendents of Hieronymus Mueller; the Staley connection showing a bit of history of the Staley Company in Decatur and how that relates to the Mueller family; much more on the history of Mueller Co. and its products and philosophy; a private section open only to family members for the exchange of photos, stories, and events.

The Mueller Family Foundation Board feels that the future of the museum depends on reaching a broader audience than can be found in Decatur – the internet offers access to that audience and all who have an interest in the museum can help us. Since the site is still a work in progress, your reaction is very important in helping us to make it most effective. Please visit the site and take a look around. Email us through the site or at muellermuseum@aol.com to tell us what you think.

Laura Jahr Joins Our Staff

The size of the Museum staff has doubled in the past month. I am very happy to announce that Laura Jahr has agreed to work as our cataloger. Laura is a graduate of the University of Illinois with degrees in Spanish and Art History. She has lived in Spain most of the past 20 years with her family but has returned to her Decatur roots so that two of her three children may attend school in the U.S. Laura will be spending a great deal of her time hidden away in the basement working in the collection storage area but hopefully will be seen occasionally in the lobby and gallery where you may get the opportunity to meet her.