

## Scenes from Princeton's Past Event – Dr. Gustav G. Mueller & Edith (Schonberg) Mueller

Over the years there has been a lot of changes in the medical field, but for those who can remember the small town doctor of the 1930's-1950's, Princeton's Dr. Mueller was a prime example of a caring Doctor committed to the medical field and his patients.

Gustave G. Mueller was born in 1898 the son of Erich & Wilhelmine Luedtke Mueller. Erich was Princeton's Mayor for many years. Gustave decided on a medical career and attended the University of Wisconsin Medical School where he received his Bachelor of Science and Master's Degree. His thesis was published in the Journal of Bone and Joint Surgery and for a time he taught anatomy in the Medical School. Gustave completed his education at the Medical School at the University of Minnesota and graduated from there in 1924.

At that time Gustave was ready to begin his medical practice and did so in Windom Minnesota. It was that same year that he married Edith Schoenberg who was from Muskegon Michigan. While living in Minnesota, Dr. Mueller served 2 years as the coroner of Cottonwood County, was active in community affairs and their two daughters, Nancy and Helen, were born there. After relocating and a short stay in Muskegon, the family returned to Princeton in 1930 to continue his medical practice. Once returning to Princeton, their two sons were born, Robert and Gustav.

The Mueller family took up residence on Harvard Street and later relocated to a large two story home on the corner of Water & Howard Street. The medical office upstairs at 501 W. Water Street which is now the location of the Riverbank Dry Goods store, which after the bank relocated, Mueller purchased the building, relocated his office to the first floor and shared space with a local Attorney L.I. Krieser.

Doctoring in the 1930 to 1950 era was very different. A General Practitioner was on call day and night and had to be available in all weather conditions, sometimes in the office or sometimes out on a house call. It was said that "Dr. Mueller's lined and wrinkled hands were as tender and soothing to his devoted patients as his heartfelt concern in each and every one of them", regardless of their ability to pay. His interest in his patients often resulted in a phone call to the patient's home as a follow-up after an exam or medicine prescribed. He also gave his patients a suggestion to go enjoy the outdoors and relax. One of his favorite expressions was "Why aren't you out fishing on this nice day", as the Doctor was an avid fisherman. His office was decorated with fishing memorabilia and taxidermy of his catches. There were specimens of Blue fin tuna, Amber jack, a Muskie and Sea robin on display which were from his family vacations in Florida or Canada.

Gustave's wife Edith worked in the office in addition to caring for the family. She was also very involved in the community. Edith was one of the founding members of the Garden Club, involved with the Friends of the Library, and part of the Band Mothers. The Band Mothers were a group of women who were interested in bring music to the community and raised money to buy uniforms, purchase equipment and hire a band director. Edith was also an avid baker.

Having a large home also had its advantages as one day the Doctor called her at home and said, "Edith, put some water on to boil and have the bed in the den ready as I have a mother in my car who is about to give birth and we won't make it to Ripon Hospital in time", and the baby was delivered at their house.

Another story from that era include a wintery night and a house call that came in from near Lake Puckaway. Another baby was on the way, however the roads were nearing impassable from an

ensuing snowstorm. Driving as far as he felt he safely could, Dr. Mueller did a nearly three mile cross-country journey over the marshland on skis to deliver the baby. He figured rather than risking a nine-mile trip on drifted, unplowed roads, cross-country was a better route.

Gustave was also very involved in the community as was his wife. Being a three term President of the Green Lake-Waushara County Medical Society, the Green Lake County Coroner from 1945 until about 1970, a founder of the Princeton Rotary and also serving as clerk of the Princeton School Board for six years in the 1940's occupied his spare time

Edith passed away on October 11, 1992 and Dr. Mueller died November 8, 1975, after serving the Princeton community for over a half century of his life as the local physician. It was said at Gustave's funeral visitation there were several people who came forward and said he delivered their children at no cost. In 1979 a memorial was erected by the Knights of Columbus in his honor, a poem entitled "The Tallest Man". A local Poet, Ambrose Mackowski, wrote "The Tall Man" as a tribute to Dr. Mueller. The memorial is erected in the northeast corner of the triangle parking lot (the site of the former school. One part of the story is as follows.

"In our City there was a man, who, though he laid no claim.

To this distinction nonetheless, deserves the rightful name.

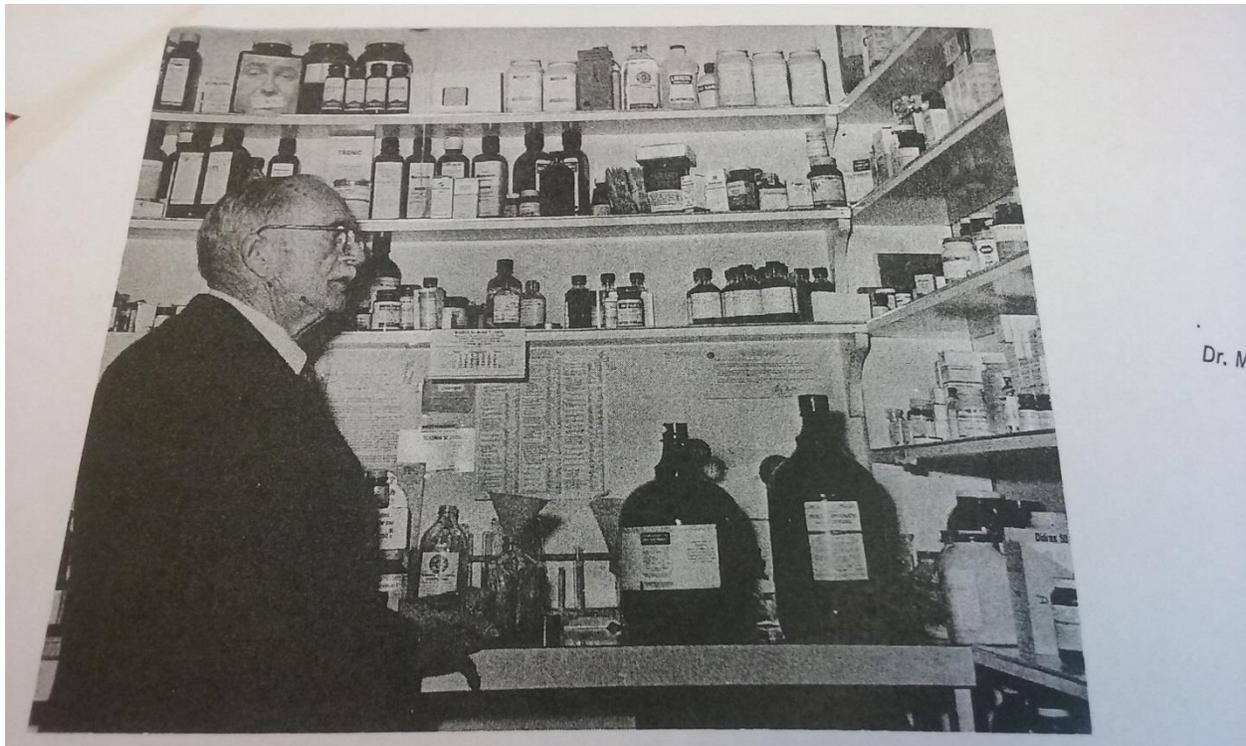
We seldom saw his name in print though he should head the list.

For of them all, since he has gone, he's been the one most missed."

You can read the entire poem on the memorial erected in the City Parking Lot. The next article on October 12<sup>th</sup> will continue the story on the Mueller family.

To share information on those buried in the City of Princeton Cemetery contact City Hall at 920-295-6612 or email [mneubauer@cityofprincetonwi.com](mailto:mneubauer@cityofprincetonwi.com) or [cnickel@cityofprincetonwi.com](mailto:cnickel@cityofprincetonwi.com). We are also looking for a copy of the Band Mothers Cookbook which we could potentially reproduce.

Information for this article came from the Quas Qui Centennial Anniversary Book along with other documents from the Princeton Historical Society. From time to time we find slightly conflicting information on a date or name however always strive for accuracy.



Dr. M

- 1) Dr. Mueller in his office (picture attached above)
- 2) The Tallest Man Memorial (Picture attached below)

