

Today's Presentation

Program: Visiting Col. Eli Lilly's Start-up! The making of an exhibit in the "You Are There" series.

Speaker: Angela Wolfgram

Introduced by: Alison Brown

Attendance: 98

Guests: Todd Stockwell

Scribe: Hank Wolfla

Editor: Joe Abella

Angela Giacomelli Wolfgram, a frequent presenter to our club, gave us a review of the new "You Are There" exhibit *Eli Lilly at the Beginning*, now being shown at the Indiana Historical Society. Angela, a graduate of the University of Illinois and IUPUI, has been with the Historical Society for six years.

Colonel Eli Lilly began a new business at 15 West Pearl Street in Indianapolis on May 10, 1876 manufacturing drugs for wholesale distribution. This location no longer exists, but the Oceanaire Restaurant is very near to where Lilly's initial building was. The building that Lilly occupied was located on an alley and was two stories high. The first floor included his office and some manufacturing and the second floor had additional manufacturing. This business became Indiana's most successful startup. Col. Lilly was a Civil War veteran who saw fierce combat and overcame many deep personal losses. He applied his past experience in pharmacy and his entrepreneurial abilities to successfully establish Eli Lilly and Company with his son Josiah K. Lilly.

Visitors to "You Are There" *Eli Lilly at the Beginning* step back in time to the Colonel's original laboratory, then a small, locally owned business just getting off the ground. There you will learn about the life and past experiences of the Colonel and the philanthropic values that would go on to shape today's multinational corporation with more than 100 years of transformative charitable giving. You will experience the Indianapolis wholesale district in the late 1800s and interact with actors portraying Lilly's first employees as they toil in the drug making business.

Inside the space, meet Colonel Lilly himself, and possibly J. K. Lilly Sr., then a teenager helping at his father's store. Also, you will meet Augustus Kiefer, an Indianapolis drug wholesaler who originally encouraged the Colonel to go into business for himself. You will also get to meet Caroline Krueger, one of the company's first employees, who will be rolling pills in the upstairs part of the building. You will get to watch the actual process used originally by Lilly to make pills, see the diffusers/percolators and explore the shelves containing the many materials used in manufacturing. As you meet these

people, newspaper reporters will be interviewing Colonel Lilly, and through this process you will learn more about the life of Colonel Lilly.

You will see artifacts on loan from Eli Lilly and Company and gain a greater knowledge about the advances in the pharmaceutical industry. Colonel Lilly overcame many personal setbacks along his path to success. The Content Room covers topics ranging from biographical information to family artifacts, the company's leadership and its great philanthropy to Indianapolis and the world.

Part of the above information was obtained from *We Do History* on the web page of the Indiana

Historical Society. After Angela's presentation, it's clear that many members will be going to the Historical Society to learn firsthand how Colonel Lilly made his first drugs for mass distribution.



Angela Giacomelli Wolfgram