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DIETZEL TINSMITH EQUIPMENT RETURNS TO HERMANN

It is a rare opportunity when items of local historical significance are returned to a community after being gone for over a decade. In 1999, the entire contents of the A.W. Dietzel Tin Smith Shop on 4th Street in Hermann were sold at public auction to the highest bidder. Almost three dozen pieces of tin smith equipment, along with the old work bench, were sold to the Mark Twain Museum in Hannibal.

A few months ago, the Hermann Farm and Museum received a call from Henry Sweets, curator of the Mark Twain Historic Site, asking if the museum would be interested in purchasing the items back.

With the new venue of the Hermann Farm's Forge and Wagon Works building now open, it was an easy decision. There was room in the Wagon Works and the Dierberg Educational Foundation wanted to see the items back in Hermann being displayed and demonstrated less than a block from where Dietzel plied his trade in the early 1900s.

During the Hermann Farm Country Fair on September 12 visitors were able to see the old tin smith items back home again, as local historian Billy Grace was on hand to show off all the equipment and explain how the smithing items would have been used. More tin smith tools of the trade are being sought at local auctions to compliment what's already there.

Recently, John Wilding, blacksmith and owner of Red Barn Crafts and Antiques in Hermann, researched and experimented with old world tin smithing projects and patterns. Wilding's cookie cutters, made with a variety of the old Dietzel tools, are perfect replicas to those from the 1800s.

Joan Treis, program director for the Hermann Farm and Museum, has made sugar cookies using the cutters crafted by Wilding, and German cookie recipes along with the cookie cutters will be sold at the second weekend Kristkindl Markt on December 12-13 at the Hermannhof Festhalle.

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