

By Matt Ottinger



"Eli Lilly" tells Austin Dailey, a fourth grader at Greenwood Christian Academy, about the medical industry circa 1877.

# Early Days at Lilly

## HISTORICAL SOCIETY TAKES YOU THERE

"I like being able to get across that Col. Lilly wasn't always a success. In particular, in the time frame that we portray (1877), he'd only been in business about a year and a half. We were in a depression ... unemployment was double digits. It was unclear if he'd be successful or not. He had many jobs in the industry prior to this."

- Mark McNees, actor  
Indiana Historical Society

An actress portrays Caroline Krueger, one of Lilly's first employees, and educate visitors about the pill-making process and Lilly's dedication to perfection – a trait that gained him esteem in the profession.

### In store

- Exhibit runs until January 2018
- See replica of Lilly's original laboratory in 1877, located on Pearl Street in the heart of today's downtown Indianapolis
- Ties in with Lilly's 140th year in business

### A blooming Lilly

- Lilly's life was far from charmed: Ran a failed cotton plantation in Mississippi. First wife died of malaria and second son was stillborn. Returned to Indiana for a time and his business partner fled the plantation with their remaining money
- Lilly was a colonel in the Civil War
- Started with just three employees and his son; company now employs 41,000 people worldwide with \$20 billion in annual sales

### Pill popping

- Lilly built his reputation on consistency and quality
- Augustus Kiefer, a wholesaler, encouraged him to go into business, promising to be his customer
- In character, Mark McNees tells visitors Lilly discarded an entire batch of pills because three were misshapen

"I've heard that people are spending a lot of time in the 1877 space, and the pill-making process is captivating people. A couple of our actresses portray (Caroline Krueger); she was one of the first employees," explains Angela Wolfgram, exhibitions researcher. "It was cool that they had a female employee that early on."

### Family affair

- Features historical displays on Lilly, his family and the company itself
- Includes artifacts on loan from Eli Lilly and Company
- Lilly family members have traveled from across the country to see the exhibit

