

# History Buff Collects Swords

## Chicago Collector Visits Muncie in Search of Buys

By CAROL SINGER

Star Staff Reporter

Collector Jim Dryden is more interested in the craftsmanship of World War II memorabilia than in its military function.

"I'm a history buff, not a military buff," Dryden said this week. "I find fascination in the artwork."

The suburban Chicago man was in Muncie this week searching for items to add to his collection, which now occupies 4½ rooms of his home. A retail consultant, he goes on buying trips as many as five times a month.

Knives and swords, especially Japanese Samurai swords, are of special interest to Dryden, who set up shop in a local motel.

The Samurai were a feudal class, consisting of gentry or lesser nobility, which existed in Japan for centuries. Although the prominence of that group ended with the passing of Japan's feudal system in 1867, many families passed the ceremonial swords and daggers from generation to generation.

"Some Japanese soldiers carried authentic Samurai swords in World War II," Dryden said.

The businessman also collects Japanese and German uniforms, helmets, hats and documents. He will also buy German relics from World War I, but he will not buy artifacts from the Korean or Vietnam wars. He never buys military firearms.

Included in his collection are a silver tea set owned by Adolph Hitler and a piece presented to a German general by Heinrich Himmler, leader of the German SS.

He will pay up to \$5,000 for an authentic artifact. The most he has ever paid for one relic was \$10,000.



Star Photo by Kyle Evens

**SWORD COLLECTOR JIM DRYDEN**

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Dryden said he hoped to open a non-profit museum displaying his collection within 4 months. "It's in the planning stages," he said. "I'm looking for a location."