

Besalke Family Collection

Collection # 2017.13

Finding Aid prepared by Rebecca Damptz, CA



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COLLECTION SUMMARY

Collection Number: 2017.13

Collection Title: Besalke Family Collection

Dates: c. 1880-1973

Size: 1 box (.5 linear ft.)

Creator/Collector: William and Augusta Besalke, Herman W. "Swede" Besalke, Laecilia "Lucille" (Wittke) Besalke

Acquisition Information: Gift of David and Karen Frahlman

Accruals: No accruals are expected

Custodial History: Materials were acquired by donor from auction.

Languages: Collection materials are in English.

Repository: Local History Room, Archives and Special Collections Department, Decatur Public Library, Decatur, Illinois.

Processed By: Rebecca Damptz, CA, 2017

Conservation Notes: Not Applicable

RIGHTS AND ACCESS

Physical Access Restrictions

None

Technical Access Restrictions

None

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INFORMATION FOR RESEARCHERS

Preferred Citation

[item identification], [collection title], [collection number], Decatur Public Library, Department of Archives and Special Collections, Decatur, Illinois.

Related Collections

None.

Separated Material

None.

Published Descriptions

Not applicable

Location of Originals

Not applicable

Location of Copies

Photos scanned and placed on Omeka.

Publication Note

Not applicable

Subject Headings

Besalke family, Bomball family, Wittke family, Decatur IL

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

This collection features materials from the Besalke family.

William Besalke was born in Europe in 1879 to Daniel and Caroline Besalke, and came to the United States in 1894. He married Augusta Bomball on February 8, 1900 in Decatur. Mr. Besalke worked as a coal miner at the Decatur Coal Company until he was seriously injured in an accident in 1923. He was one of five men on a mine elevator cage the plummeted 100 feet to the bottom of No. 2 mine shaft. The men were trapped in the elevator for 6 hours before machinery was repaired, and the men could be brought back to the surface. Mr. Besalke suffered a broken leg. William Besalke retired from the Wabash Railroad in 1945 after working for 46 years as a blacksmith welder. He passed away on April 11, 1954 at the age of 74.

William and Augusta had 6 children: Carl W., Arthur H., Herman (Swede) W., Ruth, Margaret, and an unknown daughter. Herman W. "Swede" Besalke was born on March 17, 1907 in Decatur. He married Laecilia (Lucille) Wittke on July 14, 1926. Together, they had two children: Edward A. Besalke and Dorothy Besalke Hale. Herman worked as the building superintendent for the Decatur Herald and Review for 19 years. Before that, he worked as a boilermaker at the Wabash Railroad. He passed away on July 18, 1968.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection contains photographs, letters, news articles, Christmas cards, and memorial cards from the Besalke family. The collection is .5 linear foot, and includes biographical information on the family.

The collection was donated by David and Karen Frahlman. There was no apparent order to the collection, so it was organized with the researcher in mind.

COLLECTION INVENTORY

I. Biographical Information, c. 1880-1973

Besalke Family Collection (2017.13)

This series contains information on the Besalke family.

Folder Name	Box #	Folder #
Biography	Box 1	FF1

II. Photograph, c. 1880-1973

This series contains photographs and negatives of the Besalke, Bomball, and Wittke families.

Folder Name	Box #	Folder #
Family Gatherings		FF2
Family Photographs #1		FF3
Family Photographs #2		FF4
Family Photographs #3		FF5
Herman "Swede" Besalke		FF6
Mr. & Mrs. William Besalke – 52 nd Wedding Anniversary 2/8/1952		FF7
Negatives		FF8

III. Documents

This series contains letters, Christmas cards, memorial cards, news articles about the Besalke family, and information about the Curfman murder.

Folder Name	Box #	Folder #
Curfman Murder		FF9
Documents		FF10