

Collection #
SC 3428

**BAKER BROTHERS TENT SHOW
COLLECTION, 1924**

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 2 manuscript folders
1 photograph album

COLLECTION DATES: 1924

PROVENANCE: Elizabeth Swank Frazier, 2010

RESTRICTIONS: None

COPYRIGHT:

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS: A genealogical book titled "The Bakker and Zondervan families" by Elizabeth Swank Frazier and Lewis R. Swank was accessioned with the Baker Bros. materials.

An additional copy of the illustrated transcript of Annie Baker's diary was donated in 2006 and is cataloged as pamphlet F CT274 .B33 B34 2006 (2006.0176).

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2010.0165

NOTES:

HISTORICAL SKETCH

Touring dramatic companies began gaining popularity during the 1880s. While many permanent theatres were closed in the summer months due to stifling heat and little ventilation, theatrical troupes “took their show on the road,” showing under a tent and appearing in small, provincial areas where entertainment was scarce. These shows began to attract mainstream attention around the turn of the century. *Billboard*, then a trade journal for the entertainment industry, devoted a full page to tent repertoire beginning in 1914. In 1926 it reported more than 300 of these shows currently touring under canvas.

Dutch immigrant George Baker, his children Leonard, Bennett, and Annie, along with Leonard’s wife Ruth, operated the Baker Brothers’ Show out of Muncie, Indiana. The 1920 Federal Census lists George Baker as a carpenter and Leonard and Bennett as musicians in a Vaudeville show. Between May 26 and September 20, 1924, the show toured rural areas in southwestern Ohio. The content of the show appears to have been of a variety type, presenting musical numbers and Vaudeville sketches rather than full plays.

Sources:

Slout, William. *Theatre in a Tent* (Bowling Green University Popular Press: Bowling Green, OH; 1972)

Materials in the collection

1920 United States Federal Census, *Ancestry* library edition.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The materials in the collection consist of Annie Baker's travel diary kept during the Baker Brothers' Show summer tour of 1924. In it, she writes about the towns in which the troupe was performing, the people there, and describes any significant events from the stand (a stand lasting about a week before the troupe moved to the next place). The diary also includes bookkeeping entries from each stand.

The photo album contains photographs from the Baker family, including several of the show's tents, equipment, and employees. Other family photos show Annie Baker at home in Muncie, Leonard Baker in military uniform, and Leonard's daughter Jean as a toddler.

CONTENTS

CONTENTS

Annie Baker travel diary

Annie Baker travel diary transcript with illustrations
from photo album

Photo album

CONTAINER

Folder 1

Folder 2

Album Storage PAA