

Collection #
P 0839

**BUNDSCHUH PHOTOGRAPH AND NOTES
CA. 1910, CA. 1980S**

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 OVC photograph folder (includes 3 pages of manuscript material)

COLLECTION DATES: Ca. 1910 (photograph), ca. 1980s (notes)

PROVENANCE: Gift from Gertrude S. Appel of Indianapolis, date unknown

RESTRICTIONS: None

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RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 0000.0607

NOTES:

HISTORICAL SKETCH

The Bundschuh in Indianapolis was an organization formed by German immigrants and sons of German immigrants as a social and mutual aid society. It established its first constitution on 30 March 1900. In the years 1900 to 1910, there were forty-six members, whose families were from the Württemberg area, many from the city of Stuttgart. The members helped new German immigrants find employment and housing and helped each other in times of need.

The name “Bundschuh” means “shoe alliance” and refers to the peasant uprisings in southwestern Germany in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. The peasants at that time wore tied shoes, versus the boots and spurs worn by nobility. The peasants used an emblem of a tied shoe on their banners. The depiction of the unlaced shoe in the photograph in this collection is symbolic of revolt. The shoe is surrounded by oak leaves, which signifies toughness and durability, characteristics that Bundschuh members tried to emulate. The families of these men had been free citizens in Germany, not servants to royalty. They were small landowners, tradesmen, and craftsmen. They came to the United States after the 1848–1849 revolution to escape what they felt was an oppressive government.

Of the forty-six Bundschuh members, twelve were relatives. For example, the donor of this collection, Gertrude Appel, was the daughter of Theodore C. Schuller and Bertha F. Jaus Schuller. Bertha was the daughter of William Jaus and Marie Louise Gunsser Jaus, and the sister of Fred D. Jaus. Bertha’s sister Marie S. Jaus married Otto Leonhardt. Marie Louise Gunsser Jaus was one of four sisters of the Gunsser family from Württemberg who came to Indianapolis at separate times. Paulina Gunsser married Jacob Roos, and Friederika Gunsser married David Merz. Katharina (Catherine) Gunsser was married to Philipp Reis; their daughter Melitta married Ernst Weyritter (Ernest Weyreter). Paul Gunsser was a nephew of the four sisters.

It is believed that David Merz was the chief organizer of the group. He built a large brick building at the corner of W. McCarty and S. Meridian streets. On the first floor was his butcher shop; living quarters were on the second floor, and a ballroom was on the third floor. He employed young men newly arrived from Germany and also boarded them.

The Bundschuh held monthly meetings. Dues contributed to a fund for financial assistance when it was needed by members. There was an annual party held for members’ families, with a banquet of German food and beer, German music, and dancing. The club disbanded during World War I, due to the prevalence of anti-German sentiment at that time. Funds from the group’s treasury continued to be used for its original intended purpose until they were depleted.

Sources:

Appel, Gertrude. Typed manuscript included in the collection, n.d.

Constitution des Bundschuh [ca. 1901]. Pamphlet collection: 2003.0511p0002

“The Bundschuh. A German Society Taking Its Name from Lutheran Times.” *The Indianapolis News*, 15 May 1900, page 12.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of one large, mounted, composite photograph of individual portraits of the forty-six members of the Bundschuh in Indianapolis. Members are identified by name and office held within the club. The design includes the symbolic peasant shoe and oak leaves. The photographs and design are by Charles Bretzman and were created ca. 1910. There are also three pages of notes provided by Gertrude Appel (1900–1998), a relative of some of the Bundschuh members, which tell of the history and activities of the club and some of its members. The date these notes were made is not known but would have been sometime between 1979 and 1986.

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Composite photograph with individual portraits of the following:

1st row (at top) – Eugen Schoellkopf, Paul Gunsser, George Hotz, Otto Deppermann, Edward J. Kappeler, Otto Leonhardt, Fred Jauss [Jaus], Jacob Roos, David Merz, Oscar Pflumm.

2nd row – Gottlieb Leukhardt, Louis Kosfeld, Gus Habich, Theodore C. Schuller, Henry Baron, Charles Meier, William Jauss [Jaus], Erich Schelski, Louis Coulon, Otto Roemler.

3rd row – George Lehman, Emil Elsner, Emil Zabel (Finanzkanzler [financial clerk, treasurer]), Albert Bernd (Kanzler [chancellor]), Fred Schlegel (Hauptman [captain]), John Geiger (Zugmeister [train master?]), Eduard Isenflamm (Beutemeister [lootmaster?]), Oscar H. Koster (Weibel [?]), Ernst Weyritter [Ernest Weyreter], Charles F. Mode.

4th row – Moritz Reutlinger, Julius Becherer, August Elsner (Kellermeister [cellar master]), C.A. Peters (Zeugmeister [stuff master?]), Louis J. Koster, Otto Graf.

5th row (at bottom) – Jacob Eckert, Emil Thiele, John Thooney (Quartiermeister [quartermaster]), George Mode (Verwaltungsrath [board of directors]), Henry Moesch (Verwaltungsrath [board of directors]), Karl Koster (Verwaltungsrath [board of directors]), [Louis] L.B. Doerschel (Gemeinderath [council]), Alfred Grummann (Gemeinderath [council]), Emrich Schmid, Henry Ellerbrock.

Three pages of typed notes provided by Gertrude Appel (date unknown), telling about the history and activities of Bundschuh and some of its members, occupations of some members, and listing the twelve members who were related to the Gunsser (Gunser) sisters.

CONTAINER

OVC Photographs,
Folder 1 of 1

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