

**Collection #  
M 1415**

**JOHN OTT, SR. FAMILY  
MATERIALS, 1852–1970**

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Processed by

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## **COLLECTION INFORMATION**

**VOLUME OF COLLECTION:** 1 half-size manuscript box, 4 black and white photograph folders, 1 cold storage color photograph folder, 1 OVA photographs folder, 1 OVB graphics folder

**COLLECTION DATES:** 1852–1970

**PROVENANCE:** Constance Zeller, Indianapolis, IN

**RESTRICTIONS:** Color photos in cold storage need at least 4 hours to acclimate, so patrons should call ahead if they wish to view materials that are in cold storage.

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**ALTERNATE FORMATS:**

**RELATED HOLDINGS:**

**ACCESSION NUMBER:** 1996.0279

**NOTES:**

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

John Ott Sr. (1825–1914) was born in Bavaria to John and Barbara Ott. He married Julia Reproth (1835–1895). Together they had ten children: Maria (b.1828–died in infancy), William (b. 1850), Louis (b. 1852–died in infancy), Lewis W. (1854–1885), John C. Fremont (b. 1856–died in infancy), John C. Fremont (b. 1858–died in infancy), Emma (1861–1935), Anna (1862–1951), John C. Fremont (1864–1947), Fritz Neptune (1866–1890), and Elizabeth (1868–1930).

John Ott and his parents moved to the United States in 1845, settling in Cincinnati, Ohio. There he began work in the cabinet-making industry. A few years later, he moved to Indianapolis. He continued designing furniture and eventually patented a sofa bedstead. Along with August Hoffmeister, Jacob Metzger, Alex Metzger, Karl Hill, and Clemens Vonnegut, he founded the Indianapolis Turngemeinde, a German club, in 1851. Ott was a furniture manufacturer, establishing the Ott Lounge Company in 1850. Meetings of the Turngemeinde were initially held at Ott's furniture store, which was a one-story building located opposite of the State House. Around 1877, Ott moved to Illinois and took up cattle-farming. He also returned to school and began working as a physician.

Ott Lounge was eventually passed on to John's son, Lewis W. Upon Lewis' death in 1885, the company was incorporated under the title L.W. Ott Manufacturing Company with W.F. Kuhn serving as president of the company. Francis P. Bailey, son-in-law to John Ott, served as vice-president. By 1908, the company was located at 133 and 135 West 23<sup>rd</sup> Street.

Emma Ott married Francis Patrick Bailey in 1883. Bailey (1857–1910) was born to Michael and Marcella in Cincinnati, Ohio. In 1871, the Bailey and his parents moved to Indianapolis. Together Emma and Francis had five children: Francis P. Jr. (1884–1951), John J. (1887–1923), August Louis "Gussie" (1888–1959), Julia Anna Marie (1892–1970), and Emma Catherine (1893–1979).

Francis Jr., John, and August continued in a similar field as their father and grandfather, establishing Crown Manufacturing Company. Crown manufactured Bailey's Crown Silver and Metal Polishers and Crown Furniture Polish. The business was located at 2037-2039-2041 North Senate Avenue, with an office location at 237 West 21<sup>st</sup> Street, and main office and warehouse at 407 South Illinois Street. The sons also had additional business endeavors, with Francis Jr. at The Best Printing Co., located at 1506 North Illinois Street. and August at Public Improvement Bond Service (Barrett Law Bonds), located on 219 North Pennsylvania Street. August also served as Chief Clerk to City Civil Engineer, B. J. T. Jeup. John co-owned Grose Laboratories, located at 2040 North Capitol Avenue, where August served as Director of Sales.

Sources:

*Ancestry, Library Edition*. Accessed 26 July 2018.

Information in collection.

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

This collection contains materials related to John Ott Sr.'s family and furniture manufacturing business as well as family photographs, including photos of Ott's great-granddaughter Constance Zeller. Ott's furniture drawings and designs (some of which have photocopies located at the Smithsonian), include a bedstead patent, and an Ott furniture poster.

Also within the collection are other Indianapolis related documents, such as the Turngemeinde constitution and bylaws, an invitation from the Young Women's Democratic Club, Republican tickets for Rutherford B. Hayes, a Paul McNutt inauguration program (which contained dried flowers), and a program from the Annual Dinner of the Indiana Society of New York.

Additionally, the collection has materials related to Indianapolis businesses owned and/or operated by Ott's son-in-law and grandsons, such as L.W. Ott Manufacturing Company, Crown Manufacturing Company, The Best Printing Co., Public Improvement Bond Service (Barrett Law Bonds), and Grose Laboratories, as well as photocopied documents of Ott and Bailey family histories.

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John Ott, sofa bedsteads patent, 1874

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L.W. Ott Manufacturing Co. materials, 1908

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Paul McNutt inauguration program, 1933

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