

Collection #
P 0887

**W. H. HEIGN BLACKSMITH SHOP PHOTOGRAPHS,
CA. 1915**

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 folder of photographs

COLLECTION DATES: Ca. 1915

PROVENANCE: Gift from Mr. Marion Becker of Kendallville, Indiana, September 2004

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2004.0477

NOTES:

HISTORICAL SKETCH

William Henry Heign founded his blacksmith company in Wolcottville, Indiana, in 1881. In June 1905 he moved his family to Kendallville, Noble County, Indiana, and relocated his blacksmith shop there at the end of North Main Street. The business adapted to changing times and eventually became Heign Welding Shop. After 125 years in business, the company received a Century Business Award from the Indiana Historical Society in 2006.

William Henry Heign (1862–1951) began his career by working in his father’s blacksmith shop in Waterloo, DeKalb County, Indiana. In 1881, at the age of nineteen, William bought the blacksmith shop belonging to Walter H. Rodgers in Wolcottville. After twenty years, the business employed eleven men. It also did woodworking and manufactured buggies in addition to blacksmithing.

After the move to Kendallville, the shop employed nine men. With the introduction of automobiles, the shop switched from making carriages and wagons to working on automobiles and then went into electric and acetylene welding.

William’s grandson, Paul Heign, joined the company in 1926. At that time, the business centered on farm machinery, spring repairs, and auto and garage work. In the 1930s they began doing radiator repairs.

Paul Heign took over the business by 1950 and expanded into construction work. A portable welder built by the Heigns during this period was the first such unit in the area. In 1952 the company moved to 701 N. Krueger Street in Kendallville and changed its name to Heign Welding Shop. Steel fabrication had become an important part of the business.

Paul Heign retired in 1985 at age 75. He sold the business to Marion Becker (1945–2024) and Bruce Coney. By then, Becker had been working for Heign for ten years. Becker bought Coney’s share of the business in 1992. Becker owned and operated the company for thirty years.

Sources:

Ancestrylibrary.com (Accessed 3 July 2024):

Find a Grave
United States Federal Census, 1880, 1900–1950

Braley, Bob. “Heign Welding to be honored for 100-plus years.” KPC News, 28 February 2006 [Heign Welding to be honored for 100-plus years | | kpcnews.com](https://www.kpcnews.com) Accessed 3 July 2024.

Obituary for Marion Becker [Marion Becker Obituary | April 15, 2024 | Kendallville, IN \(hitefuneralhome.com\)](https://www.hitefuneralhome.com) Accessed 3 July 2024.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of two 8x10 black-and-white reproductions of photographs taken ca. 1915 (no earlier than 1905) of William Henry Heign's blacksmith shop on N. Main Street in Kendallville, Noble County, Indiana. One photo shows the part of the building to the left of the shop's sign, the other photo shows a house to the right of the shop. Both photos are blurry. These were donated by Marion Becker, who became an owner of the business beginning in 1985, after it had become known as Heign Welding Shop.

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Reproduction of ca. 1915 photograph of front exterior of W. H. Heign's blacksmith shop with sign "W. H. Heign Horse Shoeing" shows men, a horse, carriages, and utility poles out front. At the top of the photo is printed: "MFG PLANT OF W H HEIGN / Kendallville Ind."

Reproduction of ca. 1915 photograph of front exterior of W. H. Heign's blacksmith shop with sign "W. H. Heign Horse Shoeing" and a large house with a porch next door. Utility poles can be seen also.

CONTAINER

Photographs,
Folder 1 of 1

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