

McLean County Museum of History

Biedermann Correspondence Collection

Processed
Summer 2018

Collection Information

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	1 Box
COLLECTION DATES:	1841-95; translations 2018.
RESTRICTIONS:	Originals are often exceedingly fragile. Please consult staff.
REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the McLean County Museum of History
ALTERNATIVE FORMATS:	None
OTHER FINDING AIDS:	None
LOCATION:	Archives
NOTES:	Gift of Julius and Sue Alexander, 2005.

Brief History

Originally from Altenberg, Saxony, Germany, (Christian) Philipp Biederman (18 Jan 1814- Apr 1890) immigrated to the United States. But his birth family remained in Germany. Biederman served in the Mexican War in 1847-48 and seems to appear in our earliest Bloomington City Directory in 1855. He variously worked in farming, general labor, and gardening.

His wife, Leah (1834-97), was Pennsylvania born. Together they raised six children.

The couple is buried at Scogin Hill Cemetery in Bloomington.

Scope

The collection includes letters written to Philipp Biederman from his family in Germany plus a few letters (or drafts or copies) Philipp wrote to them. Nearly all are written in an old German script. Correspondents include Philipp's father, mother, brother William and sisters Therese, Amalie, Agnes, and Auguste plus niece Agnes and cousin Elise.

About seventeen of the letters were transcribed, translated, and analyzed by Illinois State University professor Andrew Weeks and five of his students in 2018.

Box and Folder Inventory

Folder 1: Gift Agreement

- 1.1 19 Nov 2005.

Folder 2: Letters I

See translations in Folders 6 & 7 for more info.

- 2.1 From unknown to unknown, 8/1/1865.
- 2.2 From William at Zwickau 26 May 1868.
- 2.3 From William at Dresden to Philipp, 8 Feb 1870.
- 2.4 Unidentified.
- 2.5 From William Biederman(?) at Leipzig to Phillippe, 21 Jun 1882.
- 2.6 Unidentified, 7 July 1859. Apparently 2 sheets.
- 2.7 Unidentified.
- 2.8 Unidentified.
- 2.9 From unidentified at Leipzig to Philipp, 13 March 1879 and 16 Apr 1879.
- 2.10 From Philipp at Bloomington to William and Auguste, 24 & 28 Jan 1886.
- 2.11 Unidentified.
- 2.12 From William at Zwickau, March 1861.
- 2.13 From Agnes and from William, undated.
- 2.14 Unidentified, 7 month? 1857.
- 2.15 From Amalie at Naundorf, 5 Jul 1864.
- 2.16 From unidentified at Bloomington, 21 Jul 1888.
- 2.17 Unidentified.

- 2.18 Unidentified.
- 2.19 Unidentified.
- 2.20 Unidentified.
- 2.21 Unidentified.
- 2.22 Unidentified.
- 2.23 Unidentified, 1861.

Folder 3: Letters, etc. II

See translations in Folders 6 & 7 for more info.

- 3.1 3 small items or fragments:
 - “Money to be Collected” list, undated.
 - From Gustus? Biedermann at Dresden, 19/3/1870.
 - Fragment of letter.
- 3.2 3 small items:
 - Calling card, M/M Biedermann.
 - “Money to be Collected” list, undated and fragmentary.
 - Receipt Chas Bernzendahl & Christ Biederman \$125 rent for 1892 season, rec’d with mark by Laura Biederman, 28 Feb 1893.
- 3.3 Invoice from W. Klemm retailer at Bloomington to Mr. Beiderman, 31 Jan 1895.
- 3.4 Retailer receipt from L.E. Ling, groceries, for Christina Beiderman, 12 May 1894.
- 3.5 Letter or perhaps draft from unidentified to Hon. Captain Rowell at Washington DC regarding the Mexican Pension bill, written in English. Second half is written in a German script.
- 3.6 Amelia at Naundorf, Germany to Philipp, January 1856.
- 3.7 Unidentified at Leipzig to Philipp, 16 Aug 1880.
- 3.8 Unidentified.
- 3.9 Unidentified.
- 3.10 Unidentified.
- 3.11 Unidentified, but appears to be dated 18 June? 1814.
- 3.12 Unidentified fragment.
- 3.13 Unidentified, 7 Jan 1881.
- 3.14 Unidentified, 1883. Same author as prior item.
- 3.15 Unidentified, 1 March 1850.
- 3.16 Unidentified, June 1883.
- 3.17 Unidentified, 8 Oct 1870.

Folder 4: Bound Letters

Bound in paper from a bag of the McLean Co. Mills for “Fresh Ground Corn Meal.”
Forty-six sheets spanning 1841-55.

Folder 5: Translators’ summary & background research

- 5.1 “A German Prodigal Son in Mid 19th Century Bloomington,” by Andrew Weeks 4pp. Describes translation participants and process, overall conclusions, etc. Undated, but presumably 2018.
- 5.2 “Transcription and Translation of Alexander Family Collection Letters,” presumably from Andrew Weeks in 2018.

- 5.3 Photocopies of Scogin Hill Cemetery records, 2 pp.
- 5.4 Brief obituary of Philip Biederman, *Pantagraph*, 2 Apr 1890.
- 5.5 Printout of census for 1860, 1870, 1880. Total 8 pp.
- 5.6 Printout of Find A Grave photograph of Biederman's tombstone, accessed 2018. 2 pp.
- 5.7 Photocopy of 1893 Bloomington city directory. 2pp.
- 5.8 Printout from Ancestry.com of marriages, births, baptisms, etc., 10 pp.
- 5.9 Email from Heather Evert to Bill Kemp with German language transcriptions, 5 pp.

Folder 6: English Translations 1

Each item includes both German language transcription and English language translation.

- 6.1 #1a Therese at Altenburg to Philipp, 7 May 1854. 4 pp.
- 6.2 #1b Therese at Dippoldiswalde to Philipp, 8 Oct 1879. 5 pp.
- 6.3 #1c Therese at Eisenberg to Philipp, 1 Jan 1887. 3pp.
- 6.4 #1d Therese to Philipp, 2 Jan 1883. 3pp.
- 6.5 #2a Father at Altenburg to Philipp, 2 Jul 1859. 9 pp.
- 6.6 #2c Father at Altenburg to Philipp, 23 Feb 1861. 6 pp.
- 6.7 #2d Father, undated 4pp. Fragment.
- 6.8 #3a Amalie at Naundorf to Philipp, 26 Jan 1857. 4 pp.
- 6.9 #3b Amalie at Naundorf to Philipp, 5 Jul 1864. 3 pp.
- 6.10 #4 Therese at Dresden to Philipp, 8 Jan? 1865. 3 pp.

Folder 7: English Translations 2

Each item includes both German language transcription and English language translation.

- 7.1 #6a William at Zwickau to Philipp, 26 May 1868. 9 pp.
- 7.2 #6b William at Dresden to Philipp, 8 Feb 1870. 4 pp.
- 7.3 #6c William at Leipzig to Philipp, 13 Mar 1879. 2 pp.
- 7.4 #6d William at Leipzig to Philipp, 16 Aug 1880. Letter fragment. 4 pp.
- 7.5 #6e William at Leipzig to Philipp, 21 Jun 1882. 9 pp.
- 7.6 #6f William & children to Philipp, undated. Partial letter. 5 pp.
- 7.7 #6h William to Philipp, undated. Partial letter. 2pp.
- 7.8 #6i William at Zwickau to Philipp, Mar 1861. 8 pp.
- 7.9 #7a Auguste at Eisenberg to Philipp, 21 Jan 1883. 5 pp.
- 7.10 #7b Auguste to Philipp, undated. 3 pp.
- 7.11 #7c Auguste to Philipp, undated. 3 pp.
- 7.12 #7d Auguste to Philipp, undated. 3 pp.
- 7.13 #7e Auguste to Philipp, undated. 3 pp.
- 7.14 #7f Auguste to Philipp, undated. 6 pp.
- 7.15 #8 Draft from Philipp to William & Auguste, 24 Jan 1886. 2 pp.
- 7.16 #9a Agnes to Philipp, wife and child, undated. 2 pp.
- 7.17 #10a William/Agnes at Tlamen, 9 Feb 1857. 6 pp.