

McLean County Museum of History

Steak n Shake Collection

Processed by
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Collection Information

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	One Box
COLLECTION DATES:	1929-1970
PROVENANCE:	Corporate Papers donated by Suzie Zeigler
RESTRICTIONS:	None
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:	None

Brief History

Steak n Shake was founded by Gus Belt in Normal in 1934. He converted a gas station / chicken restaurant into the first Steak n Shake with counter seating. The restaurant was so popular, the chain expanded around Central Illinois and eventually into other Midwestern states throughout the 1930s. Gus Belt died in 1954 and his wife Edith continued to run the business until she sold the company in 1969 to Longchamps, Inc, which sold its interests in 1971 to the Franklin Corporation under the direction of Robert Cronin. Cronin and the Franklin Corporation sold the company to E.W. Kelly and Associates in 1981. Steak n Shake is still a functioning company under the direction of Kelly and Associates with 475 restaurants in 22 states.

Scope Note

This collection contains newspaper clippings, menus, newsletters, and a book containing business records from

Folder 1: Newspaper clippings (*Pantagraph* unless noted)

- 1.1 Advertisement for Belt's tire service, May 31, 1929
- 1.2 Advertisement for Belt's Better Tire Service, ("The Spare Tire" vol 1, no. 7), October 7, 1929.
- 1.3 Advertisement for Belt's Better Tire Service Inc. ("The Spare Tire" vol. 1, no. 8), October 14, 1929
- 1.4 Advertisement for "Another big fish fry" May 18, 1934
- 1.5 Advert for fish fry, Mary 1, 1935
- 1.2 "Hamburger Stand Grows Into Big Business," December 3, 1940
- 1.3 Advertisement, meat shortage due to World War II, June 6, 1945
- 1.4 Advertisement for reopening of Main and Virginia Ave., Normal, restaurant, February 6, 1946
- 1.5 Advertisement, June 19, 1947
- 1.6 Double-page advertisement (locations of restaurants in Illinois and Indiana), 1953? (original and photocopy)
- 1.7 "Steak n Shake President Dies," August 21, 1954, p. 3
- 1.8 Advertisement (restaurants closed due to death of Gus Belt), August 23, 1954, p. 3
- 1.9 "Belt Leaves Half Of 1.5 Million Estate to Wife," *Pantagraph?*, no date
- 1.10 Founder's Day celebration advertisement, February 23, 1955 (original and photocopy)
- 1.11 "Steak n Shake Meat Grinding Now Entirely Centered Here," August 25, 1957
- 1.12 Advertisement for silver anniversary of company, December 1959 (original and photocopy)
- 1.13 "Campbell's take on Steak 'n Shake," San Jose Mercury News, October 11, 2015.

Folder 2: Miscellaneous

- 2.1 Menu, 1940s.
- 2.2 Menu, undated.
- 2.3 Letter (with envelope), detailing reopening of Main / Virginia restaurant, Feb. 22, 1955
- 2.4 2 mileage charts, Bloomington and principal cities of North America (undated)
- 2.5 Placemat, American Bicentennial, 1776.
- 2.6 Foldout pocket menus, 1980
- 2.7 2 paper hats (undated)
- 2.8 2 order forms (undated)
- 2.9 Business cards (2): Publicity director Mel Callahan (includes photo) and purchasing agent Warren Miller.
- 2.10 City Directory workup for Augustus H. Belt, compiled by Museum Library volunteer Milan Jackson, August 2012.
- 2.11 City Directory workup for Steak-N-Shake (Bloomington-Normal), compiled by Museum Library volunteer Milan Jackson, August 2012.
- 2.12 Advert for Steak n Shake in The Community Players program for "Time for Elizabeth", December 1949
- 2.13 Gift Certificate Card (undated)
- 2.14 Card to redeem for Steakburger and Milk Shake (undated)

Folder 3: Newsletters

- 3.1 *Food for Thought* newsletter, August 1955

- 3.2 *Food for Thought* newsletter, July 1956
- 3.3 *Food for Thought* newsletter, September 1956
- 3.4 Steak n Shake News, July-August 1976, vol. 1, no. 1

Folder 4: Items from Scrapbook

- 4.1 1969 Annual Report
- 4.2 Handwritten draft of letter to Mr. Chester Thomson from Ray Smith (franchise operator of the Second Street Steak n Shake (Rockford, Illinois) complaining of the failure of Steak n Shake to aid the franchise, no date
- 4.3 Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive Committee of Steak n Shake, Inc, October 15, 1968; concerning the franchise agreement made with Ray M. Smith of Second Street Steak n Shake, Rockford, Illinois
- 4.4 Steak n Shake, Inc. Notice of Annual meeting of Stockholders, January 15, 1970

Folder 5: Journal Article

- 5.1 "Learning To Eat Out: The Origins Of Steak 'N Shake," by Keith A. Sculle, article in *MID-AMERICA, An Historical Review*, Vol. 81, No. 2, Summer, 1999.

Scrapbook 1954-1969

Contains records of the Second Street Steak n Shake franchise, including by laws, records of minutes, incorporation and organization papers, franchise agreements, assignments of lease, articles of incorporation, stock information, merger papers, and stock certificate