Bower Family Papers  
(C4055)

Collection Number: C4055

Collection Title: Bower Family Papers

Dates: c. 1865-1974

Creator: Bower family

Abstract: The papers of the Bower family, who settled in Bethel, Missouri, around 1850, consist of correspondence, photographs, and miscellaneous material.

Collection Size: 0.7 cubic feet  
(12 folders)

Language: Collection materials are mostly in English. Some material is in German.

Repository: The State Historical Society of Missouri

Restrictions on Access: Collection is open for research. This collection is available at The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Columbia. If you would like more information, please contact us at columbia@shs.mo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

Restrictions on Use: The donor has given and assigned to the University all rights of copyright, which the donor has in the Materials and in such of the Donor’s works as may be found among any collections of Materials received by the University from others.

Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] Bower Family Papers (C4055); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Columbia [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-Columbia].

Donor Information: The papers were donated to the University of Missouri by Milton Perry on July 22, 1991 (Accession No. CA5067). The papers are part of the German Heritage Archives.

Biographical Note:

John and Christina Bower were German immigrants who settled in Pennsylvania. From Pennsylvania they moved to Missouri and settled in Bethel by 1850. Bethel was a German communal colony founded in 1844.

The Bower family soon grew quite large and prominent over the following decades. Members of the Bower family had a diverse range of occupations over the years such as wheelwrights, farmers, cabinet makers, businessmen, and store owners in and around Bethel. Several Bowers ran a very successful general store during the late 1800s and early 1900s.

Eventually, the township of Bethel declined, and many Bower family members began to settle elsewhere. In 1855, Bethel had 650 residents while today it has only 117. Although they moved to various locations all over the United States, many Bower relatives kept correspondence with Nora Bower, who, by the 1970s, was one of the oldest and few remaining Bowers in Bethel.

Arrangement:

The collection has been arranged into the following three series:

Correspondence
Photographs
Miscellaneous

Scope and Content Note:

The papers primarily document the personal affairs of members of the Bower family of Bethel, Missouri.

The Correspondence series is comprised of letters, postcards, and greeting cards arranged chronologically. The bulk of the series consists of correspondence of Bower relatives and friends to Nora Bower from 1950 through 1974. Nora Bower is often addressed with the last name of Bowers due to her marriage to Robert Bowers.

The Photographs series consists of photographs of the Bower family arranged by type of material. Included is an Allegheny, Pennsylvania, photo book, given as a gift within the family.

The Miscellaneous series consists of various keepsake items collected by the Bower family, arranged by type of material. They include an essay by Clarence Bower, school materials, newspaper clippings, certificates, and other miscellaneous items such as financial receipts, funeral announcements, and an E.W. Biggs and Company catalogue and newsletter. E.W. Biggs and Company was a successful fur trading business based in Kansas City, Missouri.

The family’s German influence is reflected throughout the collection. The school materials contain a notebook written in German. The newspaper articles reference the Bower family’s German heritage, and there are three baptism records in German.
Container List:

**Correspondence** Series

f. 1  1916-1948
f. 2  1950-1963
f. 3  1968
f. 4  1969-1974, n.d.

**Photographs** Series

f. 5  Allegheny photo book, 1904
f. 6-8  Bower family, 1870s-1970s

**Miscellaneous** Series

f. 10  School materials, 1912, n.d.
f. 11  Newspaper clippings, certificates, and miscellaneous, c. 1865-1973, n.d.
f. 12  E.W. Biggs and Company catalogue and newsletter, 1916

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