

Collection: BESSON AND LINEHAN FAMILY PAPERS

1849 - 1967

Raleigh, Wake County

Physical Description: 250 items; correspondence, photographs, certificates, reminiscences, obituaries, reports, invitations, newspaper clippings, minutes, pamphlets, magazines, speech.

Acquisition: Gift of Mrs. William Little Steele, Jr., ~~610 S. ...~~, Raleigh, 27605, October 18, 1974.

Description: On the eve of the Civil War, Edouard Besson (1835-1878), a Frenchman touring America, visiting Niagara Falls and the site of the prospective Panama Canal in which his parents had invested, was detained indefinitely in Richmond, Virginia, where he supported himself by becoming a tailor of Confederate Officers' uniforms and served as a sergeant in the State Reserve, CSA. In 1863 he married Babette Dorothea Zeigler, a native of Württemberg, Germany, who had immigrated to America in 1856 with a sister, and lived in Richmond with a Phillips family until her marriage. After the war Edouard Besson opened a tailor shop on Fayetteville Street in Raleigh. He, with his wife and five children, returned to France, living in Paris from 1874 to 1878, during which time Edouard's mother died (1875), a son was born (1877), and Edouard himself died (1878).

Mrs. Edouard Besson returned to Raleigh, becoming a milliner and clothier to support her family. In 1897 daughter Marie Dorothea married William Augustus Linehan, son of Patrick Gleason Linehan (1822-1896), a native of Waterford, Ireland, who came to America in 1848 to work on the Erie Canal. He later moved south to work on the construction of railroads, the locks for the Cape Fear Navigation Company, and the base for the Confederate monument on Capitol Square, etc.* In 1855 he married Susan Eugenia Wedding [Weddon] in Christ Church, Raleigh; their home was at 230 N. Person Street behind the Governor's Mansion. Their son William attended local schools and became a partner in the clothing firm of Cross and Linehan Co. on Fayetteville Street. William and Marie Besson Linehan built their home on the corner of Blount and E. Jones Street.

*Although documentation was not available, it is believed that Linehan was involved in the building of the Raleigh Water Tower in 1887.

Description (cont'd.)

Like his father Patrick, William A. remained a communicant at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart while his family attended Christ Episcopal Church.

One of the Linehan daughters, Susan Eugenia, married William Little Steele, Jr. of Richmond County in 1924. Steele (b. 1896), a graduate of N. C. State College and a textile mill executive, served as Lt. Col., European Theater, World War II, and was decorated for efficient movement of supplies at a vast saving to the U. S. government.

The papers include 2 items in German script: A brief farewell in verse dated 1849, signed "Katherina Sprechtel." A letter, 1854, signed "Egger," to an unidentified man who had immigrated to America, refers to the man's wife, her sister, and ? Huber who will go in the spring to bring his eldest daughter back to Germany. [Translations by Mrs. Prisca Crettier of the Division of Archives and History are in the folder.]

Correspondence from 1866 to 1898 is, with few exceptions, in French. Many of the 28 letters from this period were written by Edouard Besson's sister Marie Motet, wife of a police commissioner variously stationed in Dieppe, Gaillon, Nice, etc., who corresponded with her brother and his family, describing the health and changes in the lives of the immediate Besson family living in France. Two letters were written by (1) Edouard's mother who lived at Vernon in France, 1868, and (2) Edouard in Raleigh to his mother, 1873. The latter discusses plans for the family's trip to France. Two other letters, one in English and one in French, by Edouard at his father's house in Vernon, where he had gone in the fall of 1877 in a futile attempt to recover his health, are addressed to his wife in Paris.

In February, 1866, grandfather Besson died, and a few weeks later Babette sailed for France with her eldest son Louis who remained with his Aunt Marie Motet in Nice where he enrolled in school. Shortly after her mother's departure from Raleigh, Caroline wrote of her successful management of the family business. Later that year Louis, writing in French, reports from Nice in typical ten-year old fashion.

Most of the 43 family letters of the 20th century (1907-1954) were written to Marie Besson Linehan; several by her older sister Caroline Besson Neatherry (1865-1914) of Columbia, S. C. and her brother Louis (1870-1920) of the Chase Bag Company in New York City. Other letters include one to Cousin Emma Karrer, Mayodan, N. C., 1907, the daughter of

Description (cont'd.)

Jacob Anton Karrer and Katherina Dorothea Zeigler (1831-1887), who were grocers and confectioners in Raleigh; and two notes by the noted musician Mrs. Crosby Adams, "House in the Woods," Montreat, 1915 and 1949. An interesting letter from Maurice Besson, Paris, March, 1939, doubts that their families are closely related and discusses at some length the mobilization of the French, the expectation of the German offensive, and the eventual need for American aid.

Other documents include: Wills: Caroline Besson Neatherry, Columbia, S.C., 1912; Babette Zeigler Besson, Raleigh, 1920. Birth Certificate: George Edouard Besson, Paris, 1877. Baptismal Certificates/Affidavits: Patrick Gleason Linehan, Ireland, 1826, Edouard Besson, Caen, 1836; Besson children (5), St. Mary's Chapel, Raleigh, Mary, 1874. Confirmation Certificates: Marie D. Besson, Christ Church, Raleigh, 1887; George E. Besson, Church of the Good Shepherd, Columbia, S. C., 1895. Estates Papers (including official marriage and death certificates/affidavits): Marie Peudfroy Besson, Vernon, 1875; Edouard Besson, Paris, 1878; Charles Eugene Besson, Vernon, 1886. Obituaries: Marie Peudfroy, 1875; Juste Edouard Besson, 1878, Louis Charles Besson, 1920, and several newspaper clippings. Citizenship affidavit (French Consul), E. Besson, 1863. Reminiscence: An account of Babette Zeigler's journey to and marriage in America, n.d.. Rent Receipt: E. Besson, Paris, 1876. School Reports: Raleigh Academy, 1874; Raleigh Male Academy, 1878-1880; Institution de Madame Laffler a Vernon, 1874; Ecole Evangelique, Paris, 1875; St. Mary's School, Raleigh, 1892.

There are two volumes: a copy book of French exercises, 1878-1880, and an incomplete journal of the Besson-Linehan wedding trip with entries by the husband for about a week beginning June 23, 1897, covering the journey to New York City and Niagara Falls. A label on one of the pressed flowers indicates they were at Mt. Washington, N. H. on July 15. World War II papers of William L. Steele, Jr. include a commission, separation paper, photographs, citations, and correspondence with the French couple who acted as chauffeur and housekeeper for American officers at Reims, requesting attestation that a revolver and other goods were given to them by the Americans.

Also included among the family papers are two sheets of coupons of Panama Canal Stock, 1884; World War I Red Cross certificate (with service pin) of Babette Besson (age 82); newspaper obituaries for the Reverend

Description (cont'd.)

W. H. Moore of Richmond County, grandfather of W. L. Steele, Jr.; a commencement address, "Walter Leak Steele, sketch of his Life and Character," University of North Carolina, 1893; business card for E. Besson's tailor shop on Fayetteville St., [ca. 1865]; and an article by D. L. Corbitt in the News and Observer on the division of counties with photographs of men for whom the counties were named May 18, 1940.

Among the several photographs of the family are those of George Zeigler of Germany; Edouard and Louis Besson of France; Patrick and Susan Linehan of Raleigh, ca. 1855; four Besson children in Paris, December, 1874; the tailor shop of E. Besson on Fayetteville St., Raleigh, ca. 1865; the Linehan home on 203 N. Blount St.; Christ Church, Raleigh; scenes of Fayetteville Street during a parade, ca. 1900; as well as many family snapshots.

L'ALLIANCE FRANCAISE OF RALEIGH was organized in 1915 as one of the branches of La Federation de l'Alliance Francaise aux Etats-Unis et au Canada (Inc., 1902), an organization to encourage the study of the language, literature, art, and history of France. In this collection are a volume of the minutes of the Raleigh group from 1915 through 1919, (with an F.A.F. button) and two copies of the Bulletin Officiel de la Federation de l'Alliance Francaise, (June, 1917; May, 1918). Three letters to Mrs. W. A. Linehan, president from 1917 to 1919, are from Walter D. Foy, Chapel Hill, 1917, re an invitation to speak at a meeting; from Alexander T. Mason, a vice-president of the federation (Etats de l'Est), April, 1919, re the death of Louis Delamarre, secretaire general, and an invitation to visit him and his wife Susanne, a Raleigh native, in New York; and a letter of introduction for the French Mission from Josephus Daniels, secretary of the Navy, January 12, 1918.

The French Mission composed of Lt. Henri de Courtvion and Marquis de Polignac and their wives accompanied by Dr. Charles E. Russell, "distinguished Socialist and member of the U.S. Mission to Russia," spent two days in Raleigh while on a good will tour of several cities. The mission was entertained by visits to the Confederate Soldier's Home, the Hall of History, St. Augustine and Shaw colleges, the Pilot Cotton Mill, the Capitol, followed by a mass meeting in the auditorium with Governor Bickett presiding and Dr. Russell as principal speaker. The group was entertained at the Governor's Mansion and by the Alliance Francaise at the home of Mrs. Linehan. Accounts of the visit are found in the minutes of the Alliance Francaise and in newspaper clippings.

Besson and Linehan Family Papers
1849-1967
Raleigh, Wake County

P.C. 1568.1-1568.2
-5

Description (cont'd.)

Miscellaneous items include pamphlets and a magazine written in French on various topics of interest to members of the Alliance, some of whose members were on the faculty at Meredith and Peace colleges (Miles. Rudnicka and Estoppey).

Arrangement of Papers:

P. C. 1568.1	Besson-Linehan Family Papers
1568.2	1'Alliance Francaise Papers

Finding Aids:

Main Entry Card

Date Cards

1862-1869
1872-1879
1915-1919
1942-1946

Geographic Cards

France
Wake County - Raleigh

Autograph Cards

Adams, Juliette Graves [Mrs. Crosby]
Besson, E[douard]
Daniels, Josephus
Mason, Alex[ander] T.

Subject Cards

ALLIANCE FRANCAISE
ADAMS, CROSBY AND JULIETTE
RALEIGH
War - CIVIL WAR
- WORLD WAR I
- WORLD WAR II

Finding Aid completed March 12, 1975 by Ellen Z. McGrew

Collection: BESSON AND LINEHAN FAMILY PAPERS

P.C. 1568.3
[ADDITION]

1792-1955

Anson, Richmond, Wake counties

Physical Description: 29 items (including 5 volumes); genealogy, obituaries, deed, plats, Bible, magazine article, marriage bond, newspaper clippings, day books, administrator's bond, civil court action, etc.

Acquisition: Additional gift of Mrs. William L. Steele, Jr., ~~613-0-0000-01-100~~, Raleigh, 27605, April 26, 1975.

Description: These additional papers include a Lutheran Bible printed in Frankfurt und Leipzig, 1815, with C. D. H., 1817, on the cover. Inside is an inscription to Emma Jane [Karrer] born 1857 and confirmed in [Christ's] Episcopal Church in Raleigh, [1869]. The initials on the cover may be those of Emma's grandmother [C.?] D [orothea] H [ilpert] [Zeigler]. Other German items are farewell sentiments dated May 1, 1849, one printed and the other manuscript, and the street address of William Zeigler in Baltimore, Maryland.

Linehan Family Papers: Two plats dated 1874 (224 acres purchased by Patrick Linehan from H. W. DeBerry, Anson County, between a railroad track and the Pee Dee River) and 1919 (51.43 acres surveyed for W. A. Linehan and J. M. Linehan at Pee Dee, Anson County, on the Seaboard Air Line Railroad); a deed dated 1880 (57 acres on the Carolina Central Railroad purchased by Patrick Linehan, Wake County, from John C. and Wincy A. Liles of Anson County, excepting 1 acre for a graveyard where old Tabernacle Church formerly stood), with a certificate of examination for Wincy Liles, the wife.

Little, Steele, Leak, Moore and related families: A xerox copy of a two-page article in Antiques, June, 1955, describes the life of William Little, an English cabinetmaker who immigrated to Charleston, S. C. in 1799, moved to Sneedsborough, Anson County, 1801; married Elizabeth, daughter of Robert Johnson Steele, a Richmond County planter, 1806. By 1817 William Little had become a planter, and when he died in 1848 had accumulated 112 slaves, a tanyard, a great deal of land and bank stock. In this collection are two

Little, Steele, Leak, Moore, and related families: (cont'd.)

account books--day books from January 1, 1836, to December, 1847--apparently kept for William Little's tanyard in Wadesboro, which was willed (April, 1847) to his son Thomas Steele Little. Loose papers in the day books indicate that Thomas was managing the tannery at least by 1841.

A 6½" x 9½" ledger contains sparse entries of vital statistics for Steeles and related families (Covington, Wall, Crawford, Cole, Everett, Thomas, LeGrand, Gibson, Terry, etc.) and a spiral notebook of fairly detailed genealogical data for the families Steele, Little, and Leak.

Miscellaneous items include a Richmond County court order of 1804 granting the appeal of John Wall, Sr. in the appointment of Thomas Cash as guardian of Polly and Nancy Wall, orphans of William Wall; marriage bond for Neil Smith and Nancy McKay, Richmond County, April 11, 1792, with John Cole, bondsman; Bible page with marriage date of 1834 for William C. Moore and Elizabeth Simpson, and the birth dates of their children Frederic, William H., and Alexander (1835-1844); notes by a Methodist church official and a newspaper clipping on Methodist churches in the sandhills area; obituaries for Walter Leak Steele, Rockingham, Richmond County, 1891, and Dr. W. H. Lilly, ca. 1906, Concord, Cabarrus County; certificate appointing William L. Steele, Jr. administrator of the Maude M. Steele estate, Richmond County, 1936; and an analysis of dress goods for W. L. Steele, Jr. by the textile department of N. C. State College of Agriculture and Engineering, n. d.

ADDITIONAL FINDING AIDS

Date Cards
1836-1839
1840-1847

Geographic Cards

Anson County
Richmond County

Subject Cards

COMPILED GENEALOGIES

Steele, Little, Leak, Moore

GERMAN, Bible, 1815
LILLY, W. H. [Dr.], ca. 1906
LITTLE, WILLIAM, 1836-1847
SMITH, NEIL, 1792
TABERNACLE CHURCH, ANSON COUNTY
TEXTILE ANALYSIS, NCSU, n.d.
WALL, WILLIAM, 1804

Besson and Linehan Family Papers
1792-1955
Anson, Richmond, Wake counties

P.C. 1568.3
[ADDITION]
-3

Finding Aids (cont'd)

See Also:

North Carolina State Archives:

William Little Collection on Microfilm (P.20), 1798-1863, 20 feet.
Steele-Ledbetter Papers on Microfilm (P.29), 1756-1873, 30 feet.
May Steele Papers on Microfilm (P.28), 1783-1868, 10 feet.

University of North Carolina; Southern Historical Collection:

Patrick Linehan Account Books, 1866-1890, 11 volumes.
Walter Leak Steele Papers, 1803-1863, 6 items including 1 volume.
Leak and Wall Family Papers, 1785-1897, 200 items including 16 volumes.

Finding Aid Completed 13 June 1975 by Ellen Z. McGrew

Ireland

Timothy Linehan
Catherine Cavanaugh

m. 1855 - Raleigh

Patrick G. Linehan
1822-1896
Susan E. Wedding
1840-1894

m. 1897 - Raleigh

Wm. A. Linehan
1862-1931

Marie Dorothea
1868-1955

d. 1914
Caroline
J.K. Neatherr

d. 1908
SEANNETTE

d. 1920
Louis C.

Lucie

b. 1877 - FRANCE
G. Edouard

m. 1927

Marie D.
Geo R. Goodwin

JEANNE
d. 1907

m. 1924

Susan E.
Wm. L. Steele, Jr.

FRANCE

Juste Edouard Besson d. 1886
Marie-Caroline Peudfroy d. 1875

Marie Besson
— Motet

SISTER

Edouard J. Besson
1835-1878

(1831-1887)
KATHERINA D. ZEIGLER
JACOB ANTON KARRER

m.
1862
Richmond
VA.

EMMA J. KARRER

BABETTE D. ZEIGLER
ca. 1837-1924

GERMANY

GEO. ZEIGLER
DOROTHEA HILPERT

BESSON - LINEHAN PAPERS

Raleigh - P.C. 1568

NOTE: The given names of Besson pere et fils appear in different order on the various documents in the collection.

