

The Filson Historical Society

**Hess, Justin, 1921-2006
Papers, 1941-1999**

For information regarding literary and copyright interest for these papers, contact the Collections Department.

Size of Collection:
1 cu. ft.

Location Number:
Mss. A H586

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Scope and Content Note

This collection consists mainly of correspondence, both to and from Justin Hess (1921-2006), a Jewish German immigrant to Louisville. The bulk of this collection relates to Hess's hobby of stamp collecting.

Folder 1, 1941-1981, contains notebooks relating to Hess's army service during World War II. The two Basic Field Manuals include the Soldier's Handbook (1941) and the Engineer Soldier's Handbook (1943). This folder also includes bookkeeping notebooks related to Hess's roofing business.

Folder 2, 1979-1986, contains correspondence related to the Justin Hess Roofing Co.

Folder 3, 1970-1993, contains letters written in German.

Folder 4, 1979-1999, contains letters related to Keneseth Israel and other synagogues.

Folders 5-14, 1946-1999, contain letters mostly related to Hess's stamp collection and the buying and selling of stamps. Folders 6-8, 1970-1979, also include several letters related to the death of Joan, Hess's romantic partner.

Folders 15-16, 1970-1998, contain newsletters of the Louisville Stamp Society.

Folder 17, undated, contains miscellaneous papers including an old life insurance policy, correspondence, and a written argument by Hess arguing that he is not responsible for other people littering his property.

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Biographical Note

Justin Hess (1921-2006) was born in Edelfingen, Germany to Bernard Hess (1883-1956) and Meta Adler Hess (1897-1984), a Jewish couple. Due to rising anti-Semitism in Germany, Justin Hess immigrated to the United States with his parents and younger brother, Adolf Hess (ca. 1931-1999). They travelled on the S.S. Manhattan and arrived in New York, NY in 1938. By 1939, Hess was resettled in Louisville, KY. In 1943, Hess enlisted in the U.S. Army and served until he was discharged in 1946.

Hess worked for Universal Roofing and Siding Co. before opening his own roofing business in Louisville, the Justin Hess Roofing Co., which he retired from in the 1980s. His main hobby was stamp collecting and he was a member of the Louisville Stamp Society. In the late 1960s/early 1970s, Hess's romantic partner, Joan, committed suicide and left Hess grieving for many years. In 1980, Hess married Mary Pearl Coots Flener (ca. 1923-2011), a fellow stamp collector.

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Folder List

Box 1

- Folder 1: Army and Work Notebooks, 1941-1981
- Folder 2: Roofing Business, 1979-1986
- Folder 3: German Letters, 1970-1993
- Folder 4: Jewish Organizations/Congregation Keneseth Israel Letters, 1979-1999
- Folder 5: Correspondence, 1946-1965
- Folder 6: Correspondence, ca. 1970-1971
- Folder 7: Correspondence, 1972
- Folder 8: Correspondence, 1973-1979
- Folder 9: Correspondence, 1980-1984
- Folder 10: Correspondence, 1985
- Folder 11: Correspondence, 1986
- Folder 12: Correspondence, 1987-1989
- Folder 13: Correspondence, 1990-1994
- Folder 14: Correspondence, 1995-1999
- Folder 15: Stamp Chatter Newsletters 1970-1988
- Folder 16: Stamp Chatter Newsletters 1993-1998
- Folder 17: Miscellaneous, undated

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Subject Headings

Business enterprises – Kentucky – Louisville.
Emigration and immigration.
Germany.
Grief.
Jewish businesspeople – Kentucky – Louisville.
Jews – Kentucky – Louisville.
Roofing.
Stamp collecting.
Stamp collectors.
Suicide.
United States. Army.
World War, 1939-1945.