



German immigrants Franz Edward Beissel (Francis Beissel) and Caroline Wilhelmina Gohring were married at St Pauls Church, Dunedin, in 1863.

In 1868 Franz took over the Melbourne Hairdressing Saloon and City Baths in Rattray Street, which had been founded by his father, and a few years later he moved the business, which catered for both ladies and gentlemen, to Princes Street, which was then the main street of Dunedin.

Franz's father, Gottlieb, is also remembered as a glue manufacturer, winning an honorary certificate for his glue at the 1865 New Zealand Exhibition in Dunedin, and establishing the New Zealand Glue Company Limited in Dunedin in 1871.

A reporter in the Otago Witness, Issue 1191, 26 September 1874, Page 13, relates –

I have just seen a neatly got-up pamphlet entitled "A Treatise on the Human Hair," by Mr F Beissel. The information contained in this little work goes to prove that the public cannot do better than use Catharides Cream. I will give one extract from the pamphlet which I think will be of especial interest to children:- "When the functions of the excretory pores and sebaceous glands are interrupted, the skin becomes dry, and the cuticle may be said partially to perish; the dead particles are thrown off by cuticular exfoliation."

Again in the Otago Witness, Issue 1339, 28 July 1877, Page 18 is a report on Mr Beissel's new saloon -

Dunedin can fairly boast of her fine buildings, many of them remarkable for their architectural beauty, others for their usefulness, but not one has been erected more suited for the purposes, for which it is intended, than Mr. Beissel's new saloon in Princes Street. Immediately after the fire, which consumed, the old building about six months ago, Mr Beissel decided upon erecting a haircutting saloon as well fitted at all points as possible, and that he has succeeded will be patent to all who may visit this building. The plans, as drawn out by the architect, Mr Lawson, provided for a two storey premises, the lower portion to be allotted to the business, while the upper portion was divided into four offices. The builders were Messrs Hall and Son, and they have faithfully carried out their contract. In the front is

the shop, very elegantly fitted up. It is flanked on either side with glass cases in cedar framing. In the centre is a counter having a cedar top and framing, kauri panelling with cedar nulling, red pine raised panels and black walnut moulding and trusses, the whole forming a very handsome piece of furniture. Behind the shop is a ladies' saloon; surrounded with figured glass margin light windows, which give the room a very airy appearance. The appointments here are perfect, comprising large mirrors, marble-top washstands, fitted with, hot and cold water supply pipes, and other necessaries. To the right is a waiting room, in which is a black marble fire place. This is a cosy little place, and will be supplied with newspapers and periodicals. It opens on the gentlemen's saloon, a spacious apartment, well lighted from the top of a panelled ceiling tastefully painted in French grey and peach blossom. The sides are dadoed polished kauri, white and red pine being used with very pleasing effect. These timbers contrast well, and are fully equal in appearance, when properly treated, to any imported woods. The bath rooms, eight in number, are at the rear of the building. They are complete in every respect, and are provided with shower baths, with a copious supply of either hot or cold water. One feature here is a spray bath by means of which jets of water can be thrown horizontally, as well as vertically. The plumber work was entrusted to Messrs Burt Brothers, who have acquitted themselves well. The premises will be opened to-day, and doubtless Mr Beissel's enterprise will meet with a fitting reward.

Franz Beissel died on 13 April 1907, aged 66, and is buried in the family grave in Dunedin's Southern Cemetery, where unfortunately the headstone has been pushed over and broken.

Prepared by the Historic Cemeteries Conservation Trust of New Zealand (www.cemeteries.org.nz) from information supplied by the Otago Settlers Museum, and from PapersPast website.