

Descriptive Summary:

Creator:	Roger Conger
Title:	De la Vega Land Grant Papers
Inclusive Dates:	1850-1958, undated
Bulk Dates:	1850-1895
Abstract:	This collection includes original correspondence, court documents, financial receipts, and newspaper clippings pertaining to the De la Vega Land Grant and Roger Conger's research on the land grant.
Accession #:	2209
Extent:	2.5 linear feet (2 document boxes and 1 oversized box)
Language:	Collection is in English.
Repository:	The Texas Collection, Baylor University, Waco, Texas.

Biographical Note:

This collection includes materials produced in the 1800s in connection with the Tomás de la Vega land grant and manuscripts from the 1900s produced by Roger Conger during his research on Waco history.

Tomás de la Vega's land grant of 11 leagues along the Brazos River was granted to Rafael and José María de Aguirre and Tomás de la Vega of Saltillo, Coahuila, Mexico, in 1830. The grant was then purchased by Samuel May Williams in 1832, then sold to Mrs. Sophia St. John of Connecticut in 1833 for \$2,500. In 1850, St. John placed the land for sale with Jacob de Cordova of Galveston, Texas, who then sold tract of land to Thomas M. League for \$6,250. In order to invest in the land, Thomas League sold interest in the land to a joint venture of Alabaman citizens. The legal title was vested in Colonel John W. Lapsley of Selma, Alabama, who was charged with protecting the land in the name of owner Thomas League and a group of people who owned interest in the property.

With the confusing line of land grant owners who were not actually on the property, some people in Texas moved onto the land and illegally began to live there. Title holder John Lapsley filed suit against Elihas Spencer and 11 other squatters and won in 1856, a decision upheld by the Texas Supreme Court in 1856. However, in 1857, original owner Tomás de la Vega filed suit against Lapsley by claiming that the power of attorney by which he sold the land to Samuel Williams was forged. Lapsley won the suit in 1858, and in 1872, Colonel Lapsley employed Waco attorney William W. Kendall to rid the land of all squatters and uphold Lapsley's clear legal title to the land.

This collection was compiled by Roger Norman Conger. Conger was born on 1910 September 26 in China Springs, Texas. In 1926 Conger graduated from high school and began working for the Cooper Grocery Company while he took classes at Baylor University for the next two years. In 1931 Conger took a position at Southern Cotton Oil Company of New Orleans and married Lucy Hammond in 1933. The Congers had two daughters and a son together. Tragically, their son died in a car accident in 1960. In 1941 Conger started the Hammond Laundry-Cleaning Machinery Company of Waco. Conger was an active participant in the community, serving as Waco city commissioner from 1962-1965 and as mayor from 1964-1965. He also served as the president of the Texas State Historical Association from 1972-1973. Conger was a historian of Waco, and was vital in the development the Historic Waco Foundation and the Texas Ranger Hall of

Fame and Museum. Conger died on 1996 February 13 in Waco, Texas after a battle with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (Lou Gehrig's Disease).

Sources:

Conger, Roger N. "The Tomás de La Vega Eleven-League Grant On the Brazos." *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 61, no. 3 (1958 January 3): 371-82.

Kelley, Dayton, ed. "John Lapsley" in *The Handbook of Waco and McLennan County, Texas*. Waco, Texas: Texian Press, 1972.

The Philosophical Society of Texas. "Roger Conger" under "Memorials." http://www.pstx.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=27:memorials&catid=4:1996-what-price-designer-genes-the-genetic-revolution-&Itemid=7, Accessed 2012 May 10).

Zasimowich, Donald Archie. "Roger Norman Conger". 2004 November 7 <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=9770881>. Accessed 2012 May 10.

Scope and Content:

This collection contains materials regarding the De la Vega Land Grant in Waco, Texas, including original documents compiled by Roger Conger and materials that Conger created in his research.

The first six series contain original materials produced in the 1800s about the De la Vega land grant. Most of the correspondence in this collection is to William W. Kendall, attorney to Colonel John Lapsley. Additionally, there are court documents, such as testaments and exhibits lists. There are also financial receipts, mostly paid by the order of Colonel Lapsley in regards to the De la Vega Land Grant. Newspaper clippings are included along with two original newspapers, the *Waco Advance* and the *Weekly Advance*.

Roger Conger materials include correspondence regarding his article in *The Southwest Historical Quarterly*, copies of transcriptions and maps, and some documents regarding his visit to Selma, Alabama.

Organization and Arrangement:

The collection had little original order when it was processed. There are seven series: I. General Correspondence, II. Court Documents, III. Court Documents and Correspondence, IV. Financial Receipts, V. Business Cards, VI. Newspaper Clippings, VII. Roger Conger Material.

Restrictions: The collection is open for research.

Literary Rights Statement:

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Index Terms:

Conger, Roger Norman
Land grant--Texas--Waco--History
Waco (Tex.)--History

Related Materials: Jacob de Cordova Papers.

Separated Materials: None.

Custodial History:

Acquisition:	This collection was donated by Roger Conger, who compiled all original material and materials created by him into one collection. This collection was donated to The Texas Collection on 1981 February 11.
Citation:	De la Vega Land Grant, Accession #2209, Box #, Folder #, The Texas Collection, Baylor University.

Processing Information: Finding aid completed by Rachel Carson, 2012 May 10.

Container List:

Series I. General Correspondence, 1859-1906, undated, 0.45 linear feet (1 document box).

This series contains correspondence regarding the De la Vega Land Grant in Waco, Texas. Most correspondence is to William W. Kendall, the attorney for Colonel John Lapsley. This series is in average condition.

BOX NUMBER	FOLDER NUMBER	FOLDER TITLE	DATES
1	1	General Correspondence: General	1859-1860, 1862, 1866, 1872-1873
	2	General Correspondence: General	1873
	3	General Correspondence: General	1874
	4	General Correspondence: General	1875-1876
	5	General Correspondence: General	1879 January-February
	6	General Correspondence: General	1879 March
	7	General Correspondence: General	1879 March
	8	General Correspondence: General	1879 April-May

BOX NUMBER	FOLDER NUMBER	FOLDER TITLE	DATES
1	9	General Correspondence: General	1879 June-October
	10	General Correspondence: General	1879 November-December
	11	General Correspondence: General	1880
	12	General Correspondence: General	1881, 1888, 1891, 1906, undated

Series II. Court Documents, 1850-1891, undated, 0.45 linear feet (1 document box).

This series contains court documents regarding the De la Vega Land Grant. Most documents are from the state of Texas and Alabama and are handwritten. Also included are printed verdicts of other land grant cases, such as the printed United State Supreme Court verdict of the De la Vega Land Grant case, De la Vega v. J. W. Lapsley, from 1873. This series is in good condition.

BOX NUMBER	FOLDER NUMBER	FOLDER TITLE	DATES
1	13	Court Documents: General	1850, 1852-1854
	14	Court Documents: General	1857
	15	Court Documents: General	1863-1865
	16	Court Documents: General	1868, 1870
	17	Court Documents: General	1873-1874
2	1	Court Documents: General	1878
3OVZ	1	Court Documents: General	1878
2	2	Court Documents: General	1878-1879, 1886
	3	Court Documents: General	1887, undated
	4	Court Documents: Verdicts	1850, 1852-1854

Series III. Court Documents and Correspondence, 1889-1893, 2 Folders.

This series contains court documents and correspondence regarding the estate of Ann A. Lapsley. Court documents are from the state of Alabama, Georgia, and Florida and correspondence to William W. Kendall. Series is in good condition. This series is in good condition.

BOX NUMBER	FOLDER NUMBER	FOLDER TITLE	DATES
2	5	Court Documents and Correspondence: General	1889
	6	Court Documents and Correspondence: General	1889-1890, 1893

Series IV. Financial Receipts, 1855-1888, undated, 3 Folders.

This series contains financial receipts paid by William Kendall, by the order of Colonel Lapsley. Included in this series are receipts for payments for court fees, taxes, and other payments that pertained to the De la Vega Land Grant.

BOX NUMBER	FOLDER NUMBER	FOLDER TITLE	DATES
2	7	Financial Receipts: General	1855
	8	Financial Receipts: General	1874
	9	Financial Receipts: General	1880, 1887-1888, undated

Series V. Business Cards, undated, 1 Folder.

This series contains two business cards of attorneys, both including William Kendall and a business card of a pharmacist in St. Louis. Series is in excellent condition

BOX NUMBER	FOLDER NUMBER	FOLDER TITLE	DATES
2	10	Business Cards: General	undated

Series VI. Newspaper Clippings, 1874-1958, undated, 3 Folders.

This series contains copies of newspaper clippings. Some newspaper clippings from the 1870s and an article from 1958 regarding the De la Vega Land Grant based on Roger Conger's research. There are two originals of the 1874 June 4 *Waco Advance* and a circa 1873-1874 *Weekly Advance* which are both in the oversized box 3.

BOX NUMBER	FOLDER NUMBER	FOLDER TITLE	DATES
2	11	Newspaper Clippings: General	1874, 1876
3 OVZ	3	Newspaper Clippings: <i>Waco Advance</i>	1874 June 4
	4	Newspaper Clippings: <i>Weekly Advance</i>	circa 1873-1874
2	12	Newspaper Clippings: General	1895, 1958
	13	Newspaper Clippings: General	undated

Series VII. Roger Conger Material, 1957-1958, undated, 5 Folders.

This series contains material created by Roger Conger regarding his research into the De la Vega Land Grant. Included in this series is correspondence regarding the article that Roger Conger published in *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* on the De la Vega Land Grant and correspondence between Roger Conger and a descendent of Colonel John Lapsley. Additionally, there is a copy of the article that Roger Conger wrote in 1958.

There are also copies of transcriptions of court documents and maps that Roger Conger used for his research. Moreover, there are two photographs of what appears to be Selma, Alabama, a page of the Selma, Alabama phone book and a brief biography of Colonel John W. Lapsley. This series is in excellent condition.

BOX NUMBER	FOLDER NUMBER	FOLDER TITLE	DATES
2	14	Roger Conger Material: The Texas State Historical Association	1957-1958, undated
3 OVZ	2	Roger Conger Material: Transcriptions	1934
2	15	Roger Conger Material: Transcriptions	undated
	16	Roger Conger Material: Transcriptions	undated
	17	Roger Conger Material: Maps	undated
	18	Roger Conger Material: General	undated

Notes:

Throughout this finding aid, the spellings de la Vega and De la Vega have been used. The decision was made to refer to family members, such as Tomás de la Vega, as de la Vega. Historically, this collection has been called the De la Vega Land Grant, so when the collection is referred to, the wording De la Vega has been used.