

Baylor University . The Texas Collection

De Cordova Family. Inclusive: 1845-1956, Bulk: 1845-1863

Summary Information

Creator	De Cordova, Jacob, 1808 - 1868 Conger, Roger N.
Language	English
Abstract	This collection includes correspondence, legal documents, financial receipts, and newspaper clippings pertaining to Jacob de Cordova and members of his extended family.

Subjects

Conger, Roger Norman. / De Cordova, Jacob, 1808 - 1868. / Jews -- Texas. / Texas -- Colonization. / Texas -- History. / Waco (Tex.) -- History.

Administrative Information

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Preferred Citation When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is:

De Cordova Family Papers, Accession #543, Box#, Folder#, The Texas Collection, Baylor University.

Processing Information Described by Julie Holcomb and released on 2012-12-20.

Scope and Content

This collection was originally known as the Jacob de Cordova Papers, but the title was changed to the De Cordova Family Papers to reflect the merger of the De Cordova Family Papers #2311 and the Jacob de Cordova Papers #543.

The De Cordova Family Papers includes correspondence, legal documents, financial receipts, and newspaper clippings pertaining to Jacob de Cordova and members of his extended family. It came to The Texas Collection through one internal transfer and one gift from Roger Conger. The chronology of the collection ranges from 1845 to 1956, but the bulk of the materials originated from 1845 to 1863 when Jacob de Cordova was most active as a land agent in Texas. Most materials are correspondence or legal documents related to land sales in central Texas, particularly Bosque and McLennan counties. The collection also includes financial documents and literary productions.

Administrative/Biographical History

Jacob de Cordova was born in 1808 near Kingston, Jamaica, the youngest son of Raphael and Judith de Cordova. Jacob's mother died at his birth so he was raised by an aunt in England. Jacob de Cordova was proficient in English, French, Spanish, German, and Hebrew. Raphael de Cordova, a prominent coffee grower in Jamaica, relocated to Philadelphia where he became president of the Congregation Mikveh Israel in 1820. Jacob joined his father in Philadelphia, marrying Rebecca Sterling in 1826.

In 1834 Jacob de Cordova returned to Jamaica, where he and his brother Joshua started a newspaper. The *Daily Gleaner* still exists as the *Gleaner*, the longest-running English-language newspaper in the Caribbean. In early 1836 Jacob moved to New Orleans, where he served as Grand Master of the Odd Fellows.

After the battle of San Jacinto, Jacob de Cordova visited the Republic of Texas to install members in the Odd Fellows lodges, the first established outside the United States. De Cordova settled in Texas in 1839, living in Galveston and Houston. In Houston he served as one of the founders of Beth Israel. De Cordova was elected to the Second Texas Legislature in 1847. He served one term as representative for Harris County. He was not re-elected in 1849. In 1852 he moved his family to Guadalupe County, near Seguin, where he built his home, "Wanderer's Retreat."

Jacob de Cordova traveled extensively throughout Texas, acquiring large amounts of land through scrip and direct purchase for resale to settlers. He was involved in laying out the town of Waco in 1848 and 1849. Despite severe financial problems in the 1850s, de Cordova had by 1859 acquired one million acres of Texas land. De Cordova promoted Texas settlement, traveling to New York, Philadelphia, and England delivering speeches about Texas, particularly its suitability for cotton production. De Cordova's speeches were published and read widely on both sides of the Atlantic. As a result of de Cordova's efforts, his land company, which he co-owned with his brother Phineas, became one of the largest ever operated in the southwestern United States. In 1866, de Cordova conceived a plan for harnessing the Brazos River, a project he was about to start when he died in 1868.

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 president of the Texas State Historical Association from 1972-1973. Conger was a historian of Waco, and was vital in the development of 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.)

Related Resources

Summary of related Archive materials
#2209,

#2225,
Waco Village Collection

De, Cordova, Jacob and Robert
Creuzbaur. *J. de Cordova's Map of the State of Texas: Compiled from the Records of the General Land Office of the State.* Houston: J. de Cordova, 1854.

De, Cordova, Jacob and Robert
Creuzbaur. *J. de Cordova's Map of the State of Texas: Compiled from the Records of the General Land Office of the State.* Austin: [s.n.], 1867.

De, Cordova, Jacob, Robert
Creuzbaur, and J. M. Atwood. *J. de Cordova's Map of the State of Texas: Compiled from the Records of the General Land Office of the State.* Austin: [s.n.], 1871.

De Cordova, Jacob. *Texas: Her Resources and Her Public Men. A Companion for J. De Cordova's New and Correct Map of the State of Texas.* Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1858.

Related citations

Cohen, Henry. "Settlement of Jews in Texas."
Day, James N. Jacob de Cordova, *Land Merchant of Texas.* Waco: Texian Press, 1962.
De Cordova, Jacob [vertical file], Biographical Information, The Texas Collection, Baylor University.
Ornish, Natalie. "De Cordova, Jacob Raphael," *Handbook of Texas Online.* Accessed 2012 November 12. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.
The Philosophical Society of Texas. "Roger Conger" under "Memorials." Accessed 2012 December 5.
Zasimowich, Donald Archie. "Roger Norman Conger", 2004 November 7. Accessed 2012 December 5.

Archival Arrangement

Prior to this finding aid, the collection had been divided into two collections: Jacob De Cordova and De Cordova Family Papers. The current arrangement reconstitutes the two collections into a single collection. The Papers are arranged into three series: I. Jacob De Cordova, II. Thomas G. De Cordova, and III. Family. Series I comprises the bulk of the collection.

Series 1: Jacob De Cordova. 1845-1956

Administrative/Biographical History

Series includes a variety of correspondence from Jacob de Cordova regarding land deals in Texas, specifically McLennan County and Waco. Series also includes legal documents related to the transfer of lots in Waco as well as Bosque County. Literary productions are biographical materials about de Cordova. Materials are in fair to good condition.

Item List

Box 1. Folder 1. Correspondence, 1845-1863
Box 1. Folder 2. Legal Documents, 1849-1855
Box 1. Folder 3. Literary Productions, 1927, 1956

Series 2: Thomas G. De Cordova. 1886-1916

Administrative/Biographical History

Series includes legal documents related to the transfer of land in Texas. Found in those legal documents are several fragments of legal documents with no apparent connection to Thomas G. de Cordova, great-grandson of Jacob de Cordova, or the de Cordova Family. These fragments were originally part of the Thomas De Cordova Papers and have been kept with this series. The financial documents are receipts for Thomas de Cordova's funeral expenses. Literary productions include newspaper clippings and a tribute to Thomas G. de Cordova written by Waco Council No. 52, United Commercial Travelers. Materials are in fair to good condition.

Item List

Box 1. Folder 4. Legal Documents, 1886-1901, undated
Box 1. Folder 5. Financial Documents, 1916
Box 1. Folder 6. Literary Productions, 1916

Series 3: Family. 1882-1956

Administrative/Biographical History

Series includes a variety of materials related to the extended de Cordova family. Included is documentation related to a lawsuit filed by family members against the City of Waco, newspaper clippings about family members, and undated genealogical notes.

Item List

