
Summary Information

Creator
Branch Davidians (Creator)
Waco Tribune-Herald (Creator)
Mayborn Museum (Compiler)

Extent (quantity/size)
Two document boxes.

Language
English

Abstract
This collection contains materials collected by various groups and individuals (including Calvin Smith of the Strecker Museum) to organize an exhibit about the history of the Waco Branch Davidians. The exhibit, entitled "The Facts About Mt. Carmel," was featured at the Helen Marie Taylor Museum in Waco, Texas, in February 1994.

Subjects

Administrative Information

Restrictions on Access and Use
The collection is open for research.

Use/Reproduction Restrictions: All requests for copying of materials must be submitted to The Texas Collection in writing. Please use the Request Form for Copying Materials sheet.

Originals/Copies
Mix of some originals and some copies

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

[Waco] Branch Davidians: "The Facts About Mt. Carmel" Exhibit Collection, Accession #3811, Box#, Folder #, The Texas Collection, Baylor University.

Processing Information
Described by Thomas DeShong and released on 2012-09-26.

Scope and Content
The [Waco] Branch Davidians: "The Facts About Mt. Carmel" Exhibit Collection was acquired in a single accession from Calvin Smith and the Strecker Museum. It is unknown when the collection was received. The materials in the collection range in date from 1961 to 2004. The largest series is the Literary Productions Series. Calvin Smith and his museum studies students collected a wide array of primary and secondary materials in order to create a fair history of the Branch Davidian sect.

Administrative/Biographical History
The religious sect known as the Branch Davidians was the product of a reform movement within the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. Problems began when a group of Adventists, led by Bulgarian immigrant Victor Houteff, began to challenge the traditional hierarchy of the denomination. Houteff claimed to have received personal revelations from God and published his controversial views in a book entitled The Shepherd's Rod (1932). Houteff and his followers, the Davidians, believed that the spiritual gift of prophecy was necessary for effective leadership so that King David's earthly kingdom could be re-established on earth prior to the second coming of Jesus Christ. After the leaders of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church excommunicated his sect, Houteff moved to Waco, Texas, and continued to preach until his death in 1955. Leadership among the Davidians fragmented afterwards, with Victor's widow Florence Houteff and Benjamin Roden vying for control. The group that followed Benjamin Roden would later be known as the Branch Davidians. The 1980s brought about further division within the Branch Davidian sect. An eccentric named Vernon Howell had joined the Branch Davidians in 1981. Three years later, a schism occurred within the Branch Davidians, with Howell leading his own group of followers to a new site in Palestine, Texas. Through a series of confrontations between Howell and George Roden, the son of Benjamin and Lois Roden, control of the Branch Davidians' headquarters in Waco passed to Howell, who legally changed his name to David Koresh in 1990. Rumors concerning polygamy; abuse, and arms-dealing within the Branch Davidian group aroused the suspicions of the federal government. Thus, federal agencies such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives began to monitor the group.

In response to a stockpiling of illegal weapons, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives secured a search warrant for the investigation of the Branch Davidians' compound near Waco, Texas. From 1993 February 28 until April 19, Branch Davidians under the leadership of David Koresh resisted federal agents' attempts to storm their Mount Carmel Center. The fifty-day siege ended when the compound erupted in flames, killing David Koresh and most of his followers.

Due to the negative publicity that Waco was receiving, Mayor Robert Sheehy appointed the Image Task Force to study and interpret the Siege. Calvin Smith, director of the Strecker Museum and professor of Museum Studies at Baylor University, was appointed chair of the Exhibit Committee. Smith and his Museum Studies students collected primary and secondary materials and constructed an exhibit entitled "The Facts About Mt. Carmel." It was scheduled to go on display at the Taylor Museum of Waco History on the one year anniversary of the Siege in February 1994.

Related Resources
Summary of related Archive materials
This collection is closely tied with the [Waco] Branch Davidians: Mount Carmel Seventh Day Adventist Collection. The latter deals with an earlier stage of Branch Davidian history, but it explains how the Branch Davidians came to the Mount Carmel compound.

Related records in other Archive collections

Related citations


Archival Arrangement
Collection manuscripts were in a single banker box with no organization and no supporting documentation. It was thus necessary to create an accession number, title, and preliminary processing plan prior to the processing stage. The [Waco] Branch Davidians: "The Facts About Mt. Carmel" Exhibit Collection is organized into five series: I. Correspondence, II. Legal Documents, III. Literary Productions, IV. Photographic Materials, and V. Maps.

### Series 1. Correspondence. 1982-1996

**Administrative/Biographical History**
This series contains correspondence pertaining to the history of the Branch Davidians, the Museum Association of Waco, and an exhibit created by the Strecker Museum that was displayed at the Helen Marie Taylor Museum. The materials are in excellent condition.

**Inventory**
- Box 1. Folder 1. Correspondence: Branch Davidians, 1982-1993
- Box 1. Folder 2. Correspondence: Museum Association of Waco, 1993-1994
- Box 1. Folder 3. Correspondence: Exhibit, 1995-1996

### Series 2. Legal Documents. 1985-1986

**Administrative/Biographical History**
This series contains materials concerning an internal power struggle among the Waco Branch Davidians, particularly between Lois Roden and her son George Roden. Materials include the proposed will of George Roden and documentation surrounding a trial involving the Roden and other high-ranking Branch Davidians. The materials are in excellent condition.

**Inventory**
- Box 1. Folder 4. Legal Documents: Will: George Roden, 1985 September 13

### Series 3. Literary Productions. 1961-2004, undated

**Administrative/Biographical History**
This series contains the primary and secondary research materials used to create the exhibit "The Facts About Mt. Carmel." Articles from periodicals and essays figure prominently within the series. These materials are in excellent condition.

**Inventory**
- Box 1. Folder 15. Literary Productions: Article: The Bill of Rights in Action, 1995 Fall
- Box 1. Folder 20. Literary Productions: Article: USA Confidential: "Wacko in Waco", undated
- Box 1. Folder 21. Literary Productions: Book: Bible Biographies, undated
- Box 2. Folder 1. Literary Productions: Brochures: Lecture: William L. Pitts, Jr., 1995 February 9
- Box 2. Folder 4. Literary Productions: Clippings: Leo Pallit, undated

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Administrative/Biographical History
This series comprises the photographs and copies that were incorporated into the exhibit. There are some fascinating images of the compound that were used to construct the model. The materials are in good condition.

Inventory
Box 2. Folder 22. Photographic Materials: Photographs: Branch Davidians, undated
Box 2. Folder 27. Photographic Materials: Photographs: Photocopies: Exhibit Material, undated


Administrative/Biographical History
This series contains maps of the larger Waco area as well as a basic outline of the Branch Davidian Compound. The materials are in good condition.

Inventory
Box 2. Folder 28. Maps: Branch Davidian Compound, undated