

REED FAMILY.

Reed family papers, 1867-1957

Emory University
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Collection Stored Off-Site

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Descriptive Summary

Creator: Reed family.
Title: Reed family papers, 1867-1957
Call Number: Manuscript Collection No. 884
Extent: 1 linear feet (2 boxes) and 1 oversized papers box (OP)
Abstract: Papers of the Reed family, an African American family in southeast Texas, from 1867-1957.
Language: Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Restrictions on access

Collection stored off-site. Researchers must contact the Rose Library in advance to access this collection.

Terms Governing Use and Reproduction

All requests subject to limitations noted in departmental policies on reproduction.

Source

Purchase, 2001.

Citation

[after identification of item(s)], Reed family papers, Manuscript, Archives and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

Processing

Processed by Elizabeth Russey, July 1, 2005.

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Collection Description

Biographical Note

The Reed family was an African American landowning family who lived in southeast Texas from Reconstruction through the oil boom. By 1876, the Reeds owned at least 50 acres in San Jacinto County. The property is often referred to as the Berry Beasley place. They farmed the land, growing everything from cotton to peanuts, and were involved in early oil drilling projects. The majority of the family lived in Evergreen, Texas, although Conroe, Cold Springs, Huntsville, and Shepherd also factor in the family history.

Scope and Content Note

The collection consists of the papers of the Reed family from 1867-1957. The papers include correspondence, financial records, legal documents and writings, documenting the agricultural, business, and religious lives of an African American family in Southeast Texas.

African Americans in Texas embraced religion and founded many of their own churches in the late 1800s. The collection contains a preacher's license and certificate of ordination for J.L. (John) Reed, who was called to serve at Spring Hill Baptist Church in 1891, received a preacher's license in 1900, and was ordained in 1902. The collection also contains a number of handwritten herbal remedies, giving detailed prescriptions for medicinal remedies, prayers, and bible verses to cure a variety of mental and physical ills.

The papers include a number of governmental records and financial receipts. An oath of citizenship dated 1871 and a registration to vote certificate for W.F. (Frank) Reed are among the earliest documents in the collection. The collection also contains records of the poll taxes paid by the Reed and Denson families from 1905-1956, military service records for Jimmie Reed and Comet Monie Reed, correspondence concerning Peter Denson's work with the Works Progress Administration (WPA), and correspondence with the United States Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Adjustment Agency during World War II. Of particular interest are a number of receipts and records concerning the family's involvement with the oil industry in Texas.

The correspondence files provide a detailed look at daily life, as well as documenting business relationships and courtship. Denson family records and correspondence are also included as the two families were related through marriage by 1908. Some variation of spelling exists with the two principle families: Reed (Reid) and Denson (Denison).

Arrangement Note

Arranged by document type.

Container List

Box	Folder	Content
OP1	1	Certificate of ordination, J.L. Reed, 1902
1	1	Contracts and legal orders, 1870-1889
1	2	Correspondence from government agencies: Public Welfare, USDA, War Department
1	3	Correspondence, to Densons, 1900-1942
1	4	Correspondence, to Reeds, 1889-1924
1	5	Correspondence, unknown date and origin
1	6	Discharge from army, Comet M. Reed, 1942
1	7	Insurance records, Reeds and Densons, 1907-1946
1	8	Leases and sales, oil and property, 1939-1957
1	9	Ministry records, J.L. Reed, 1891-1902
1	10	Mortgages, land and crops, 1885-1950
1	11	Oath of citizenship, Frank Reed, 1867
1	12	Poll taxes, 1905-1956 [some gaps]
OP1	2	Preacher's license, J.L. Reed, 1900
1	13	Printed materials, including advertisements and newsletters
2	1	Receipts, 1871-1896
2	2	Receipts, 1900-1958
2	3	Survey of property, 1941
2	4	Taxes, property, 1876-1951
2	5	Voting registration, Frank Reed, 1871
2	6	Will, W.F. (Frank) Reed, 1905
2	7	Writings, medical and religious
2	8	Pouches with hair, rocks, roots
2	9	Dogtags, button, bundle of hair
