
Guide to the

Sam Akins Collection 1965-2000

2 linear ft.

Accession numbers: 9899-22, 0304-71, 0405-169, 0506-95

Collection Number: 53

Prepared by Kevin Kendro April 2007

CITATION: The Sam Akins Collection, Collection 53, Box number, Folder number, Irving Archives, Irving Public Library.

Biographical and Historical Sketch

United State Bicentennial

The United States celebrated its 200th anniversary, its Bicentennial, on July 4, 1976. As part of the celebration, committees were set up at national, state, and municipal levels to plan Bicentennial celebration events across the country.

The American Revolution Irving Bicentennial Commission consisted of a 31-member board and approximately 150 volunteers. The Irving city council created the commission in 1974 to plan and carry out events for the celebration of the U. S. Bicentennial in Irving. Neill English, Jr., was appointed chairman of the Irving commission, with O. D. and Estelle Bates as co-chairs. The donor of this collection, Sam Akins, served as the chairman of the Public Relations Committee. The commission operated from 1974 until December 1976. Events were held throughout 1975 and 1976, culminating on July 4, 1976.

The Irving commission undertook 47 projects; among them were an oral history program to record the memories of pioneer Irving citizens, creation of an index of all burials in cemeteries in Irving, painting fire hydrants as American Revolutionary War era characters, a Bicentennial flower show, presentation of an original play, creation of a municipal history museum, the opening of Heritage House, July 4th parades and picnics, lecture series, a play-writing contest, a tree-planting program, and school pageants.

Sam V. Akins and Dallas Federal Savings & Loan

Sam Akins spent most of his professional life working in the banking business, a large portion of the time for Dallas Federal Savings & Loan. Mr. Akins graduated from Jacksboro High School in Jacksboro, Texas. He attended North Texas State University (today the University of North Texas) and graduated with a degree in Business Administration. He began his professional career at Southwestern Bell Telephone Company in 1957. After three

years with the phone company, Mr. Akins went to work for Dallas Federal Savings & Loan Association. Dallas Federal Savings & Loan Association was founded in Dallas, Texas, in 1919. Mr. Akins was with Dallas Federal for 26 years.

While at Dallas Federal, he served in many capacities. He was a Senior Vice President in Deposit Administration, established the Human Resources Department, worked in corporate relations, marketing, advertising, and retail banking. Germane to this collection, he opened the Irving branch of Dallas Federal Saving & Loan on January 3, 1966. He served as the branch manager until he was promoted to senior vice president in charge of the Savings Division of Dallas Federal in early 1967. At that time, he was transferred to the home office in downtown Dallas.

In 1986, Mr. Akin left Dallas Federal and became the founding officer of First American Savings Bank of Bedford, Texas. Over ten years, the bank grew to have four locations and 80 employees. In 1996, Mr. Akin joined United Bank and Trust out of Abilene, Texas, as the founding branch president of the Grapevine, Texas, location. He also served as executive vice president of United Bank and Trust.

Mr. Akins moved to Irving in 1960 where he and his wife, Malta Evans Akins, raised three daughters. The Akins lived in Irving until 2005.

In his private life, Mr. Akins was a student of Texas history and genealogy. His interest in history led him to collect material on the Kennedy assassinations so his young daughters could study the historic events when they got older. Mr. Akin worked in downtown Dallas and saw the Kennedy motorcade passing prior to the assassination.

Sources: The Sam Akins Collection and correspondence with Mr. Akins.

Scope and Content Note

The Sam Akins Collection is arranged in four series and is housed in one oversize record box and one manuscript box.

The collection provides an overview of Bicentennial activities in the city of Irving during 1975 and 1976. It also gives a glimpse into the workings of the Public Relations Committee of the Irving Bicentennial Commission through its press releases.

The collection also documents the history of the opening and early days of the Irving branch of Dallas Federal Savings & Loan Association. At the time of the opening of the Irving branch in 1966, Dallas Federal was Texas's largest federal savings institution. The Irving branch was the association's seventh office in the Dallas area. During the mid-1980s, Bright Banc acquired Dallas Federal.

A third area of interest documented in the collection is the John F. Kennedy and Robert F. Kennedy assassinations and the Kennedy family in general. The donor had an interest in the events and compiled a comprehensive set of Dallas and Fort Worth newspapers and national news magazines documenting the assassinations, their investigations, and retrospectives through the years.

Series I consists of documents and photographs relating to the activities undertaken by the

American Revolution Irving Bicentennial Commission from 1974-1976. Notable in the series is a file of newspaper clippings, which cover the Bicentennial-related events held in Irving. For preservation purposes, the newspaper clippings were photocopied on acid-free paper. Only the photocopies were retained. Also of note are a number of news releases produced by the Public Relations Committee about various Bicentennial matters. The photographs in the series are black and white and cover a July 4th parade, fire hydrant painting, picnics, the Heritage House, and other, unidentified, events.

Series II consists of material relating to the grand opening of the Irving branch of Dallas Federal Savings & Loan Association in 1966. The donor served as a vice president of Dallas Federal and as the first manager of the Irving branch. The newspaper clippings and photos focus on the events held by the institution during its opening week. The photos also document events held at the Irving branch in 1969 celebrating the 50th anniversary of the founding of Dallas Federal Savings & Loan.

Series III is made up of local newspapers and national news magazines documenting the assassinations of John F. Kennedy and Robert F. Kennedy. Most of the material concentrates on the John F. Kennedy assassination, its investigation, and retrospectives through the years.

Series IV consists of three bottles that the donor collected. One of the bottles is a nineteenth-century ceramic pharmaceutical bottle. The other two are ink bottles: a "Sheaffer Scrip" ink bottle and a Bates machine ink bottle.

As a genealogist, Mr. Akin wrote articles about his ancestors the McCommas family, and his wife's ancestors, the Beeler family, for the Dallas County Pioneer Association publication. Photocopies of the articles can be found in the collection's holding file.

Provenance Statement

The Sam Akins Collection was donated to the Irving Archives in four accessions: accession number 9899-22 was donated December 9, 1998; accession number 0304-71 was donated on January 22, 2004; accession number 0405-16 was donated on November 5, 2004; and accession number 0506-95 was donated on February 11, 2006. All of the donations were made by Sam Akins. Prior to its donation to the Irving Archives, the material was in the possession of Sam Akins.

Literary Rights Statement

Permission to publish from the Sam Akins Collection must be obtained from the Irving Archives, Irving Public Library.

Note to Researcher

See accession number 78-01B, for additional material on the celebration of the Bicentennial in Irving.

Container List

Series I. American Revolution Bicentennial Commission of Irving, Texas, 1974-1977

Box 1

Folder

1 Public Relations Material, 1974-1975

Contains press releases regarding upcoming Bicentennial events, list of projects, list of projects completed, fund-raising campaign information, guidelines for volunteers, parade float information.

2 Event Programs and Artifacts, 1974-1976

Contains programs, invitations, and tickets to Bicentennial-related events such as: renaming of Northwest Park; opening of the municipal history museum; a flower show; pageants; and a map pointing out the Heritage Tour points of interest. Also included are "Happy Birthday America" decals, Bicentennial lapel pins, and a piece of ribbon, perhaps from the ribbon cutting at the municipal museum.

3 Local Bicentennial Publications, 1975-1976

Contains City of Irving newsletters, Irving Bicentennial Commission newsletters, and two issues of the Northgate Post containing articles about Bicentennial events.

4 Letterhead

Contains Bicentennial letterhead and envelopes. The letterhead does not have the Irving organization's address on it.

5 General Bicentennial Publications, 1974-1976

Contains publications from the national, state, and City of Dallas Bicentennial organizations.

6 Texas Bicentennial City Pamphlets and Folders

Contains Bicentennial pamphlets from San Antonio, Dallas, and Austin, Texas, and three Bicentennial-themed file folders.

7 Newspaper Clippings, 1974-1975

Contains newspaper clippings relating to Bicentennial events in Irving.

8 Newspaper Clippings, 1976-1977

Contains newspaper clippings relating to Bicentennial events in Irving.

9 Photographs, 1974-1976

Contains photographs of Bicentennial events: primarily the parade and picnic on July 4. Also included are photos of fire hydrant painting, the Heritage House, and unidentified events.

10 Telephone Book, 1976

Contains a Bicentennial-themed Irving telephone directory from 1976.

Series II. Dallas Federal Savings & Loan Association, 1965-1969

11 Correspondence and Publications, 1964-1966

Contains a program of events from the grand opening of the Irving Branch of Dallas Federal Savings, 1966; a "Brief for Applicant" to open a branch in Irving, 1964; an invitation letter to the grand opening, 1965; and information on an antique car show held as part of the grand

opening week activities.

12 Newspaper Clippings, 1965-1969

Contains clippings relating to the construction of the building; the grand opening of the savings and loan; grand opening week events; Dallas Federal Savings & Loan's 50th anniversary, 1969; and advertisements for Dallas Federal Savings & Loan.

13 Photographs, 1966

Contains photographs of the grand opening ceremonies, January 3, 1966; from Dallas Federal's 50th anniversary celebration at the Irving branch, 1969; and a color picture postcard of the exterior of the building.

14 Artifact

Contains a Dallas Federal Savings shopping bag decorated for the Christmas season. This is an oversize object and is housed in Box 2.

Series III. Kennedy Family, 1963-2000

Box 2

Newspapers and Magazines, 1960s-1990s

Contains Dallas and Fort Worth newspapers, and national magazines containing articles relating to the assassinations of John Kennedy and Robert Kennedy and their investigations, also to Jackie Kennedy Onassis and John Kennedy Jr., and assassination retrospectives, 1960s-1990s.

Series IV. Bottles

Box 2

Contains three bottles. Included are a nineteenth-century ceramic pharmaceutical bottle with pouring spout from Denby Pottery near Derby, England; a "Sheaffer's Scrip" 2 oz. ink bottle with filling well, date unknown; and a 1 oz. Bates numbering machine ink bottle, date unknown.