

**HENRY A. GRIFFIN, JR. COLLECTION OF JOHN CLOSNER SUGAR  
PLANTATION MATERIALS**  
Finding Aid

Compiled by  
Phyllis Kinnison

Museum of South Texas History  
Margaret H. McAllen Memorial Archives  
Edinburg, Texas

2014



## CONTENTS OF INVENTORY

Summary	# 3
Biographical/Historical Note	# 4
Scope and Content Note	# 4

**Use of manuscript materials.** If you wish to examine items in the manuscript group, please contact the Archivist at 956-383-6911 to make an appointment to visit the Margaret H. McAllen Memorial Archives (MHMMA) reading room.

**Photocopying.** Should you wish to request photocopies, please consult a staff member. Do not remove items to be photocopied. The existing order and arrangement of unbound materials must be maintained. Reproductions must be made from surrogates (microfilm, digital scan, photocopy of original held by the Museum of South Texas History), when available.

**Publication.** Readers assume full responsibility for compliance with laws regarding copyright, literary property rights, and libel.

Permission to examine archival materials does not constitute permission to publish or display. Any publication or display of such materials beyond the limits of fair use requires specific prior written permission. An “Authorization to Publish or Display” must be completed and submitted to the Executive Director of the Museum to obtain permission. When permission to publish is granted, two copies of the publication will be requested for the MHMMA.

Proper acknowledgement of MHMMA materials must be made in any resulting writing or publications. The correct form of citation for this manuscript group is given on the summary page.

**SUMMARY**

<b>Size</b>	1 folder, artifacts
<b>Geographic Locations</b>	Hidalgo County, Texas
<b>Inclusive Dates</b>	1904-1906
<b>Languages</b>	English
<b>Summary</b>	In addition to several artifacts, this collection contains the booklet, "Texas the Land of Opportunity" published about 1906 by the Homeville Association of Hidalgo County.
<b>Access Restrictions</b>	The collection is open for research. If you wish to examine items in the manuscript group, please contact the Archivist at 956-383-6911 to make an appointment to visit the Margaret H. McAllen Memorial Archives (MHMMA) reading room.
<b>Reproduction Note</b>	Reproductions must be made from surrogates (microfilm, digital scan, photocopy of the original held by the Museum of South Texas History), when available. Only archives staff may photocopy collection documents.
<b>Copyright</b>	Researchers assume full responsibility for compliance with laws regarding copyright, literary property rights, and libel.  Permission to examine archival materials does not constitute permission to publish or display. Any publication or display of such materials beyond the limits of fair use requires specific prior written permission. Contact the Archivist at 956-383-6911 for instructions to obtain permission to publish or display.
<b>Related Collections</b>	
<b>Citation</b>	Henry A. Griffin, Jr. collection of John Closner sugar plantation materials Margaret H. McAllen Memorial Archives, Museum of South Texas History, Edinburg, TX.
<b>Stack Location(s)</b>	SMC 47, RGDOC 41, B:1; Artifact Collection

## **BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE**

John Closner was born on March 24, 1853 in Wisconsin. His parents were John and Elizabeth (Blumer) Closner. The family moved to Texas in 1870.

In 1883, Closner moved to Rio Grande City and eventually became the sheriff of Hidalgo County, Texas and a land developer along the Rio Grande. As a land developer, he helped create the canal system in the Lower Rio Grande Valley in Texas, which opened the area for growing many crops including sugar cane.

Closner established the San Juan Plantation where he experimented with tobacco, food crops, and sugar cane. To develop a new sugar cane, he cross planted hybrid seed from Mexico with seed from Louisiana. That sugar cane won the gold medal awarded by the Louisiana Purchase Exposition at St. Louis, Missouri in 1904.

Henry A. Griffin, Jr. was the son of Maime Closner Griffin, a daughter of John Closner.

Verna J. McKenna, "CLOSNER, JOHN," *Handbook of Texas Online* (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fcl33>), accessed September 03, 2014. Uploaded on June 12, 2010. Modified on October 28, 2013. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

In addition to several artifacts, this collection contains the booklet, "Texas the Land of Opportunity" published about 1906 by the Homeville Association of Hidalgo County. The booklet describes the Rio Grande Valley of that time and encourages investment in the land. Topics covered include the climate, truck farming, the railroad, soil, and artesian water. A copy of the "Hub of Prosperity" is in the booklet. The Hub of Prosperity is a circle that has been divided into twelve sections – one for each month of the year. Under the name of each month is listed the fruits and vegetables that can be grown in the Valley at that time. The booklet also contains a map of the Texas counties Nueces, Zapata, Starr, Hidalgo, and Cameron. Photographs show a reproduction of the Exposition Gold Medal Closner won for his sugar cane in 1904, Closner and two other men standing near a field of sugar cane, and a view of San Juan Plantation.

One of the artifacts included in the collection is the Gold Medal John Closner won at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition at St. Louis in 1904. Closner's sugar cane competed against that from Cuba, Hawaii and Louisiana. For more information about the artifacts in the collection contact Lisa Adam, Curator of Collections and Registrar, by calling 956-383-6911.