

**BERNICE LIGHTFOOT COLLECTION**  
Finding Aid

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

2015



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**SUMMARY**

<b>Size</b>	3 folders
<b>Geographic Locations</b>	Hidalgo County and Cameron County, Texas; Brownsville, Texas
<b>Inclusive Dates</b>	Undated photocopies
<b>Languages</b>	English
<b>Summary</b>	Three undated photocopies of documents (two letters and one will) from the late 1800s pertaining to porciones in Hidalgo County, Texas are found in this collection.
<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.
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<b>Related Collections</b>	
<b>Citation</b>	Bernice Lightfoot collection. Margaret H. McAllen Memorial Archives, Museum of South Texas History, Edinburg, TX.
<b>Stack Location(s)</b>	SMC 73, RGDOC 2, B:1

## **BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE**

The collection contains information about porciones (land grants) in Hidalgo County, Texas. The *Handbook of Texas Online* relates the following about those porciones:

Private land grants in what is now South Texas did not begin until the mid-eighteenth century. Settlers in the colonies founded by José de Escandón in South Texas requested individual land allocations as early as 1753, but not until 1767 did a Spanish royal commission begin the work of surveying and granting possession of land to individual colonists at the Rio Grande *villas* of Laredo, Mier, Camargo, Revilla (later Guerrero), and Reynosa. The commissioners, Juan Armando de Palacio and José de Ossorio y Llamas, were instructed to survey the various settlements and jurisdictions, to distribute the land to individual settlers, and record all transactions. The land was to be divided on the basis of merit and seniority, with the colonists divided into three categories: original, old, and recent settlers. Due to the shortage of water and the importance of irrigation for agriculture in the region, the commissioners surveyed long, thin strips of land, each with narrow frontage on a water course. These elongated quadrangles were known as *porciones*. The *porciones* in each of the five settlements was assigned a number. Many of the grants, especially the larger ones, also acquired names, usually derived from saints' names, physical or natural characteristics of the region, or events. The grants were finalized by an act of juridical possession several months later. The transactions were recorded in documents known as *Acts of the Visit of the Royal Commissioners (Autos de la general visita)*.

Aldon S. Lang and Christopher Long, "LAND GRANTS," *Handbook of Texas Online* (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/mpl01>), accessed March 16, 2015. Uploaded on June 15, 2010. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

Three undated photocopies of documents (two letters and one will) from the late 1800s pertaining to porciones in Hidalgo County, Texas are found in this collection. The first letter was written by J.L. Haynes on June 6, 1877 to the Land Office in Austin, Texas. It pertains to the land survey made by Andres Salinas in Hidalgo County in 1877.

The second letter was written by J.J. Cocke, the Deputy Surveyor of Hidalgo County. He wrote the letter on September 4, 1878 to W.C. Walsh of the Land Office in Austin, Texas. Cocke protested the measurements of Porciones 61-65 made by Andres Salinas. He also discussed Porciones 58-59, 66-69, and 71-72.

The third document is the last will and testament of L.H. Box of Hidalgo County, Texas. Box's estate included Porcione 72 and the El Sanz Rancho. He wrote the will on June 16, 1881.