

**AUSTIN LeROY “ROY” CRAMER COLLECTION**  
Finding Aid

Compiled by  
Phyllis Kinnison

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

2013



*Founded in 1967 as the  
Hidalgo County Historical Museum*

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SUMMARY

<b>Size</b>	7.14 cubic feet
<b>Geographic Locations</b>	Hidalgo County, Texas; Lower Rio Grande Valley;
<b>Inclusive Dates</b>	1925-1965
<b>Bulk Dates</b>	1940-1959
<b>Languages</b>	English and Spanish
<b>Summary</b>	Austin LeRoy “Roy” Cramer’s work in the citrus industry in the Lower Rio Grande Valley in Texas and his interest in education, migrant workers, water conservation, and the 1944 Treaty between the United States and Mexico concerning the source and use of water are documented 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 (MHMA) reading room.
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<b>Copyright</b>	Readers assume full responsibility for compliance with laws regarding copyright, literary property rights, and libel.
<b>Related Collections</b>	Clarence Johnstone collection of Engleman Gardens materials and photographs (in house); George S. Wright Engleman Gardens project collection (in house); Oscar Cromwell Dancy papers, 1917-1965 at Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin
<b>Preferred Citation</b>	Austin LeRoy “Roy” Cramer collection. Margaret H. McAllen Memorial Archives, Museum of South Texas History, Edinburg, TX.
<b>Stack Location(s)</b>	<b>RGDOC 262 E:2; RGDOC 263 E:2; RGDOC 263A E:24; RGDOC 264-264E E:3; RGDOC 265-265B E:3; RGDOC 265C E:9; Over Size, Range M</b>

## **BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE**

A.L. (Austin LeRoy – aka: Roy) Cramer was born to Isaiah Thomas and Amanda Josephine Bengston Cramer on March 1, 1892, in Willmar, Minnesota. Cramer graduated from Willmar High School in 1910 and attended Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota, from 1910 to 1912. He married Clara Foss from Grafton, North Dakota, on December 25, 1916, in Shelby, Montana.

The Cramers moved to the Lower Rio Grande Valley in 1918 where Cramer worked for the J.C. Engleman Company, also known as the Engleman Products Company and Engleman Gardens. John Clodo Engleman, Jr. established the company in 1926 when he dedicated 11,000 acres to the citrus industry. Cramer became the manager of the company in 1927 and worked in that capacity until 1968.

Water for the agriculture industry was a problem in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Cramer worked to help resolve it by serving as president of the Hidalgo County Water Improvement District 6 in Elsa, Texas; president of the Valley Water Conservation Association; and chairman of the Rio Grande Valley Water Committee. In 1957 Governor Price Daniel appointed Cramer to the Water Planning Committee for Texas. Cramer represented Texas, Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming when he worked on the treaty between the United States and Mexico. Cramer appeared before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee as the head of the Valley delegation in support of the treaty. Ratification of the treaty by the United States in 1945 led to the construction of Falcon Dam, Amistad Dam and Anzalduas Dam on the Rio Grande.

Engleman Gardens employed thousands of Mexican workers during Cramer’s tenure as manager. As a result Cramer worked with Ciudad Reynosa authorities to establish guidelines for Mexican workers in South Texas. The guidelines provided legal protection for the workers by stipulating number of hours, salary, and length of work contacts.

Other professional organizations to which Cramer belonged were the South Texas Cannery Association (president 1943-1944) and the Texas Cannery Association (president in 1945).

Cramer’s other civic duties included serving as president and member of the board of trustees of the Edinburg Consolidated School District; as a member (1944-1945) of the board of directors of the College of Arts and Industries in Kingsville, Texas; and as president (1952-1957) of the board of regents for the four-year Pan American Regional College. In addition he was a member of the Edinburg Rotary Club for 28 years; an advocate for the Knapp Memorial Methodist Hospital in Weslaco, Texas; and a member of the board of stewards of the First Methodist Church of Edinburg.

The Cramers had four daughters: Carolyn Hope who married Robert H. Kern of McAllen, Texas; Phyllis Elaine who married George Smith Wright of Albuquerque, New

Mexico; Janet who married H. Sam Jones of McAllen, Texas; and Alice Lee who married Francis E. Knapp of Brownsville, Texas. A.L. Cramer died in Elsa, Texas, on February 17, 1969.

**Bibliography:**

Trueba, Enrique T. “Austin LeRoy Cramer: A Leader in the Citrus Industry” in *The New Americans: Immigrants and Transnationals at Work*.  
[http://books.google.com/books?id=ozAti10L2IIC&pg=PA19&lpg=PA19&dq=a.+l.+cramer+engleman+gardens&source=bl&ots=BQHJb8pBDF&sig=7\\_WCtfcTvA8UVh\\_yZNmwF9\\_12ME&hl=en&sa=X&ei=n5\\_NUeeVKYGHyAHBg4HgDQ&ved=0CCwQ6AEwA#v=onepage&q=a.%20l.%20cramer%20engleman%20gardens&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=ozAti10L2IIC&pg=PA19&lpg=PA19&dq=a.+l.+cramer+engleman+gardens&source=bl&ots=BQHJb8pBDF&sig=7_WCtfcTvA8UVh_yZNmwF9_12ME&hl=en&sa=X&ei=n5_NUeeVKYGHyAHBg4HgDQ&ved=0CCwQ6AEwA#v=onepage&q=a.%20l.%20cramer%20engleman%20gardens&f=false). Accessed June 28, 2013.

Gabe 1. “Universidad de la Vida.” *RGV Academic*. RGVISION.  
<http://www.rgvacademic.com/?p=3294>. Accessed July 3, 2013.

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

Austin LeRoy “Roy” Cramer’s work in the citrus industry in the Lower Rio Grande Valley in Texas and his interest in education, migrant workers, water conservation, and the 1944 Treaty between the United States and Mexico concerning the source and use of water are documented in this collection. Types of materials included in the collection are correspondence such as letters, telegrams, and post cards; educational reports, policies, meeting minutes, and agendas; conference programs; handwritten notes; financial reports; brands and trademarks; court decisions; commission and committee reports; international, national, and state legislation; and maps and charts. Items of special interest include a photocopy of a plat for Las Mesteñas Ranch Lot 15, a Pan American catalog (1952-1953) in Spanish, the statement of Charles G. Woodbury to the U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations, “Aviso Importante al Comité Consejero con Relación al Programa Agrícola para los Trabajadores Migratorios,” and a 1941 newspaper advertisement describing the new innovation of buying produce by the pound at retail stores. Materials pertaining to the Treaty Between the United States of America and Mexico for the Utilization of Waters of the Colorado and Tijuana Rivers and of the Rio Grande are also found in the collection.

The series of the collection include correspondence; speeches; Rotary Club of Edinburg, Texas; academic institutions, citrus operations; Bracero/migration/labor; projects; water control; climatological data; and ephemera. Original order was maintained.

**LIST OF SUB-GROUPS, SERIES, AND SUBSERIES**

- I. Correspondence**
- II. Speeches**
- III. Rotary Club of Edinburg, Texas**
- IV. Academic institutions**
- V. Citrus operations**
- VI. Bracero/Migration/Labor**
- VII. Projects**
  - a. Minerals (sulfur and tin)**
  - b. WPA**
  - c. IBW**
- VIII. Water control**
  - a. Water studies**
  - b. Texas Water Conservation Association**
  - c. Bills, treaties, reports**
- IX. Climatological Data**
- X. Ephemera**

## **SERIES DESCRIPTIONS**

### **I. Correspondence**

The correspondence series includes letters, reports, telegrams, news clippings, and postcards. The major subjects addressed by the documents are water conservation, commission and association business, water related state and federal legislation, irrigation, conference reports, Mexican agricultural workers, Engleman Products Company business, dam construction, tidewater barriers, development of Mexico just south of the Rio Grande, the water treaty with Mexico, frost damage to crops, ledger for Donna (Texas) Irrigation District, citrus industry concerns, and fundraising for Valley Medical Center. Personal correspondence addressed the value of a tract of land in Hidalgo County, Texas.

### **II. Speeches**

The speeches contained in this series include a radio address on water conservation by Cramer and a report on rights on impounded water by John D. McCall.

### **III. Rotary Club of Edinburg, Texas**

This series contains programs for meetings, correspondence, a constitution template, and bulletins.

### **IV. Academic institutions**

The academic institutions with which Cramer was involved include Edinburg Consolidated Independent School District, Edinburg Regional College (later known as Pan American College and now called The University of Texas Pan American), and Texas A&M. The documents found in the series include policies, correspondence, board meeting agendas, financial reports, copies of state legislation, campus publications, Pan American College's "Working Together" project, Pan American College board of regents documents, education proposals, and Pan American Catalog (1952-1953) in Spanish.

### **V. Citrus operations**

The citrus operations series contains correspondence, citrus related organization documents, conference programs and agendas, letters of recommendation, handwritten notes, meeting notices, Florida citrus fruit grades, transportation fee rate sheet, financial reports, Mexican fruitfly quarantine documents, news clips, and a statistical bulletin from Florida. The folder containing Safeway Stores Incorporated documents includes 1944 and 1947 policies, bulletins, news clips, an employees' monthly magazine, and a 1941 newspaper advertisement describing the new innovation of buying produce by the pound at retail stores. Items of note in the series

are a copy of the statement of Charles G. Woodbury to the U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations and a copy of the Office of Price Administration Revised Price Regulation 13.

## **VI. Bracero, migration and labor**

Mexican agricultural workers are the focus of this series. Materials found here include court decisions, a Mexican prepared contract template, commission and committee reports, correspondence, information about meetings for agricultural employers, handwritten notes, Congressional bills, meeting reports, application forms to import agricultural workers from Mexico, membership lists of committees, meeting minutes, work contracts, and steps for employers wishing to hire Mexican agricultural workers. Items of interest include a list of Mexicans under contract; a list of Mexican labor recruiters; and correspondence pertaining to workers who died, became ill, or left employment. Topics covered in the materials are wages, agricultural labor recruitment, wetback labor, Mexican immigration quotas, contracts, and the Mexican Agriculture Labor Program.

## **VII. Projects**

The topics covered in this series include the minerals sulphur and tin, irrigation and canals, and work projects. The documents contained here are reports, analyses of Congressional hearings, memorandums, maps, a project proposal and application, and a project cost estimate work sheet.

## **VIII. Water control**

This series pertains to water studies as well as water legislation on international, national, and state levels. Items documenting the actions of water related organizations are also found here. Other subjects covered by these materials include water storage, dams, water problems, water reclamation, water conservation, Indian Pueblo water rights, Texas legislative activities, and irrigation. Types of materials include maps and charts, correspondence, financial reports, minutes and meeting notices, releases and distribution compacts, an appointment book, reports, resolutions, drafts of legislative bills, acts of Congress including the water treaty with Mexico, statements to the public by Judge Oscar C. Dancy, and newspaper clippings. The March 16, 1944, issue of the *Congressional Record* is in this series.

## **IX. Climatological Data (1925-1948)**

This series contains "Climatological Data" produced by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Weather Bureau for 1925-1947 along with the Annual Summary for 1948.

**X. Ephemera**

The items in this series include a 1959 game bird guide, an unused temporary crossing card, a photocopy of the biography of John C. Engleman, Jr., a sale ad for a house on Monte Cristo Road, a photocopy of the plat for Las Mesteñas Ranch Lot 15, the Texas Legislative Service for May 18, 1960, a list of water districts for several Texas counties for 1949, and “Programs to Effectuate a Long-range Policy of Abundance” by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

**INDEX TERMS**

Bentsen, Lloyd Millard, Jr., 1921-2006  
Dancy, Oscar Cromwell, 1879-1971  
Shivers, Robert Allan, 1907-1985  
Swallow, C. H., 1868-1957

Engleman Products Company  
International Boundary and Water Commission  
Lower Rio Grande Water Committee  
National Reclamation Association  
Processed Citrus Fruit Industry Advisory Committee  
Safeway Stores  
Six States Committee  
Texas Water Conservation Association  
Water Conservation Association of the Lower Rio Grande Valley  
Work Projects Administration (WPA)

Dams  
Falcon Reservoir (Mexico and Tex.)  
Mexican fruitfly regulations  
Presa Falcón (Mexico and Tex.)  
Water districts—Texas—Lower Rio Grande Valley.