

George and Sylvia Wells Collection
Finding Aid

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

2022



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SUMMARY

Size	3 linear feet
Geographic Locations	South Texas, Pacific theater
Inclusive Dates	1907-1970s
Bulk Dates	1940s
Languages	English and Spanish
Summary	The collection contains personal documents and photographs pertaining to the family of Enemecio Cortina Sr.
Access Restrictions	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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Related Collections	
Citation	George and Sylvia Wells Collection. Margaret H. McAllen Memorial Archives, Museum of South Texas History, Edinburg, TX.
Display Credit Line	Courtesy of Museum of South Texas History.
Stack Location(s)	B:31 RGDOC 822, B:10 RGDOC 939, 940, 941

BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE

The Wells had memorabilia pertaining to the first courthouse and first jail in Edinburg because of their association with the Cortina family. Enemecio Cortina was the jailer in the 1910 jail. His wife Marcela cooked for the prisoners. She used the metate and mano being donated to grind corn to make tortillas for the prisoners.

Marcela and Enemecio Sr. had several children, including Nemesio “Mencho” and his sister Tomasita. Mencho became a photographer. He took photographs during his service in World War II and afterwards as a commercial photographer with Cortina Studios.

When Mencho was dying of cancer he asked for his friend George Wells, and asked him to look after his unmarried sister Tomasita. Mr. and Mrs. Wells looked after Tomasita for about twenty years, until her death. Upon Tomasita’s death, the Wells found out that Tomasita had willed them her house and its contents, some of which belonged to her brother Mencho.

Mr. and Mrs. Wells were teachers, working first at Monte Alto for 18 years, where they lived in the teacherage. Later they moved to Edinburg and taught at the Sam Houston and Lamar schools. George Wells passed away in 2018.

For more information about this collection, please watch the Museum of South Texas History’s Collection Series video at:

<https://m.facebook.com/MOSTHistory/videos/mosthistory-collection-series-wells-family/323872959265098/>

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The collection contains personal documents and photographs pertaining to the family of Enemecio Cortina Sr.

CONTAINER LIST

(B:10) RGDOC 940 Sylvia Wells Collection

2020.053.020-.027 Newspapers covering news around World War II circa 1940s

(B:10) RGSOC 941 Sylvia Wells Collection

2020.053.028-.044 Newspapers from general news around the Rio Grande Valley circa 1950-70s

(B:10) RGDOC 939 Sylvia Wells Collection

2020.053.002 Nemesio Cortina Jr's Discharge Papers

2020.053.003 Nemesio Cortina's Gurney School/ Lawry Field Passes

2020.053.004 USA Citizenship booklet

2020.053.005 Tomasita Cortina's Naturalization Identification

2020.053.006 Naturalization Papers for Marcela Cortina and Geronimo Perez

2020.053.007 Blueprint of House

2020.053.008 Map of World

2020.053.009 Newspaper Clipping "As I Go Sees It"

2020.053.010 Mortgage Contract of Tomasita Cortina

2020.053.011 Tomasita Cortina's Deed of Trust

2020.053.012 Nemesio Cortina Jr's Insurance Policy

2020.053.013 Nemesio Cortina Jr's Life Insurance Policy

2020.053.014 Illustration Cards

2020.053.015 Postcards

2020.053.016 Women Pin-Up Illustrations from WWII Airforce

2020.053.017 "Andromeda Ka-15"

2020.053.018 LIFE Magazine Vol.65 No. 26 December 27, 1968 Issue: Picasso

2020.053.019 'Mexico 1940' Scrapbook belonged to Nemesio Cortina Jr

(B:31) RGDOC 822 Sylvia Wells Collection of Enemecio Cortina, Sr. family papers (oversize)

2016.011.005a 1907 marriage certificate of Enemecio Cortina and Marcela Perez

2016.011.005b The 1946 honorable discharge for Nemesio P. Cortina, Jr. from the US Army

2016.011.005c The 1950 Resident Alien's Border Crossing Identification Card for Marcela Perez Cortina (with photograph)

2016.011.005d Undated mail order catalog from Walter Field Co.

RGPHO 182
2016.011.004.01.01-032 [S.&G. Wells]
Enemecio Cortina photos

RGPHO 203
2020.053.001.001-274 [S. Wells]
Photographs taken Nemesio (Mencho) Cortina Jr. during his military service as a
photographer.