



## Summary Information

**Title:** Magcobar Photograph Collection

**Collection Number:** 2012:009

**Creator:** Richard Donovan and Evan Berry Farley, as collectors

**Collection Dates:** c. 1940s-1970s, bulk 1940s-1962

**Extent:** .25 cubic feet (1 box)

**Language:** English

## Collection Abstract:

The Magcobar Photograph Collection consists of photographs and records relating to the Donovan family and the Magcobar clay plant in Zavalla, Texas. The photographs depict Allen T. Donovan, Bonnie Donovan, Richard Donovan, Vina Donovan, and Eva Berry Farley working at the plant or posing near digging equipment or clay pits. The non-pictorial materials document Zavalla plant history and other Magcobar facilities in Texas, Louisiana, and Canada.

## Repository:

The History Center  
102 N. Temple  
Diboll, TX 75941  
936-829-3543  
[www.thehistorycenteronline.com](http://www.thehistorycenteronline.com)

**Author/Processing Information:** Processed by Matt Gorzalski and Tony Rosales in March 2012.

## Biographical/Historical Note:

Allen T. Donovan, his wife Vina Donovan, and their son Richard Donovan moved to the Zavalla, Texas area in 1939 when Allen Donovan began working at the XACT Clays plant south of Zavalla. The clay plant was called XACT Clays until c. 1943 when it was purchased by the Magnet Cove Barium Corporation, which later went by Magcobar. Magcobar operated clay plants in Texas, Louisiana, and Canada. The Zavalla plant produced oil well drilling mud using a combination of East Texas and Wyoming bentonite. Allen Donovan was plant manager and J. P. Haskins was day foreman. Donovan retired in 1959, but his son Richard continued working at the plant where he met his future wife Bonnie who worked as the plant's clerk-typist. Magcobar eventually became Dresser Industries on an unknown date.

## Collection Scope and Content:

The Magcobar Photograph Collection consists of photographs and records relating to the Donovan family and the Magcobar clay plant south of Zavalla. The forty photographs depict Allen T. Donovan, Richard Donovan, Vina Donovan, Bonnie Donovan, and Bonnie's sister Eva Berry Farley working at the plant or posing near digging equipment or clay pits. The bulk of the images date from the 1940s-1962 while color aerials of the plant date in the early 1970s. The History Center retained original photographs donated in February 2012, but made scans and reference prints of photographs loaned in May 2012, returning the originals to the donor.

The non-pictorial records include two 1959 *Magco Scene* newsletters highlighting company news and employees, a copy of a *Magco Scene* scrapbook compiled by Bonnie Donovan's sister Eva Berry Farley, and a copy of *Magcobar Minerals Grinding Plants*, an early 1970s public relations booklet. The scrapbook provides information on the newly built Zavalla plant, plant employees, and the town of Zavalla. *Magcobar Minerals Grinding Plants* contains photographs of all company plants in Texas, Louisiana, and Canada as well as providing a description of each facility with manager names and employee numbers, and general comments.

**Arrangement:** Arranged and described at the collection level.

## Subject Terms

### Topics

- Bentonite deposits
- Drilling muds

### Corporate Names

- Magnet Cove Barium Corporation
- Magcobar
- XACT Clays

### Personal Names

- Donovan, Allen T.
- Donovan, Bonnie
- Donovan, Richard M.
- Farley, Eva Berry
- Talbot, Charlie

### Family Names

- Donovan family

### Genres

- Photographs

### Locations

- Alberta
- Brownsville (Tex.)
- Galveston (Tex.)
- New Orleans (La.)
- Westlake (La.)
- Zavalla (Tex.)

## Access and Use

**Access Restrictions:** There are no access restrictions on this collection.

**Acquisition Information:** Donated by Eva Berry Farley and Richard Donovan in two parts on February 23, 2012 and May 10, 2012.

**Custodial History:** The photographs and newsletters were kept by Richard Donovan prior to his donation. The History Center made a copy of the original *Magco Scene* scrapbook and returned the original to the donor. The History Center also copied the *Magcobar Minerals Grinding Plants* and returned the original to the donor because this was property of the Magcobar plant. The History Center scanned the photographs loaned in May and returned the originals to the donor.

**Citation:** Magcobar Photograph Collection, c. 1940s-1970s, 2012:009, The History Center, Diboll, TX

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**Bibliography:**

- Megan Biesele, "ZAVALLA, TX," *Handbook of Texas Online* (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hlz02>), accessed March 22, 2012. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

## Collection Inventory

### Box 1

Folder 1	Magcobar Plants, Clay Pits, and Donovan Family, 13 photographs, c. 1943-1956
Folder 2	Donovan Family, 15 photographs, c. 1940s-1959
Folder 3	Magcobar Employees, 12 photographs, 1958, 1962
Folder 4	<i>Magco Scene</i> Scrapbook, 1956
Folder 5	<i>Magcobar Minerals and Grinding Plants</i> , 1970s
Folder 6	<i>Magco Scene</i> Newsletters, 1959