



## Summary Information

**Title:** Donovan and Frazier Families Collection

**Collection Number:** 2026:004

**Creator:** Donovan and Frazier Families

**Collection Dates:** 1881-2024, undated

**Extent:** 5.5 cubic feet (4 boxes, folder, and oversize artifact)

**Language:** English

**Collection Abstract:** This collection contains historical and conservation materials from Richard Donovan, Angelina County and Zavalla news articles photocopied from Betty Mingee's original collection, and family records/artifacts from the Frazier Family. All materials date from 1881-2001, undated.

## Repository:

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

**Author/Processing Information:** This collection was processed by Zach Tarrant in February 2026.

**Revision History:** This collection was revised by Zach Tarrant on July 6, 2026, to add additional Frazier Family materials for Boxes 2-4 and Folder 1.

**Biographical/Historical Note:** A life-long resident of Angelina County, Richard Donovan, has spent his life in the forests and river bottoms of East Texas. He spent his childhood and young adulthood hunting and fishing in the creeks and Neches River bottom, the beginning of a lifelong love for the natural world in general and East Texas's Neches River, specifically. Mr. Donovan was inspired by a 1997 newspaper article about future water needs in Texas that would necessitate three more dams on the Neches River, thus ruining forever the surrounding forests and their resident wildlife, and in 1999 he set off on a canoe trip down the length of the river. His trip was closely followed by media throughout the area and following the trip he adapted his diary into a book published by Texas A&M University Press entitled *Paddling the Wild Neches*, published in 2006. Mr. Donovan is a member of many conservation organizations, including the Sierra Club, Texas Conservation Alliance, Friends of the Neches River, and

Friends of the National Forests in Texas. He also collected historical materials from the area, including news articles from Betty Mingee.

Betty Massey Mingee was born at Manning, Texas on May 12, 1924, where her family lived until the sawmill burned in 1934. Her family moved to Zavalla, where she lived until she married Lee Mingee and followed his naval career around the world. Lee and Betty had two children, Patti and Michael. After retirement, the Mingees moved back to Zavalla, where she began writing for the Huntington Herald. She served as news editor of the Herald until September 1975. Mrs. Mingee died on May 26, 2006. Throughout her life, she remained connected to her southern Angelina County roots and collected news clippings about Zavalla and kept them as a resource for local history.

The Frazier's are a well-known African American Family who lived in southern Angelina County. They were residents of the Boykin Settlement and attended Vernon/County Line School near the Blue Hole. Many of its members went on to professions in education, nursing, real estate, and cosmetology.

**Collection Scope and Content:** This collection contains historical and conservation materials from Richard Donovan, Angelina County and Zavalla news articles photocopied from Betty Mingee's original collection, and family records/artifacts from the Frazier Family. All materials date from 1881-2001, undated.

**Arrangement:** This collection is arranged at the folder level.

## Subject Terms

### Topics

- Local History
- Conservation
- African American History
- World War II

### Corporate Names

- Magcobar
- Diboll Free Press
- Lufkin Daily News
- Huntington Herald
- United States Marine Corps
- Club La Jolla
- Citizens National Bank
- F-13 Club
- Rodeway Inn
- Crown Colony Country Club
- Rockwall Union Church
- New Life Church of Lufkin
- Joseph's Studio
- Henderson Daily News
- Natural Area Preservation Association
- Frazier-Runnels Wildlife Preserve

### Personal Names

- Harris, Herbert

- Mingee, Betty Massey
- Donovan, Richard M.
- Sowell, Dorothy D.
- Marshall, Lillie
- Massey, Betty Lou
- Cluck, Rebecca
- Buford, Yvonne
- Farley, Sambo
- Frazier, Harrison
- Harrison, Mary Runnels
- Frazier, Dessar/Dessor Ree
- Mosley, Averta Frazier
- Hardy, Wilhelmenia Frazier
- Robinson, Charlotte
- Carrethers, Martilla Frazier
- Runnels, Jim
- Corder, Rose Marie Frazier
- Donovan, Richard Martin
- Frazier Jr., Harrison
- Donovan, Bonnie Ruth Berry

#### **Family Names**

- Donovan Family
- Frazier Family
- Runnels Family
- Mosley Family

#### **Genres**

- Artifacts
- Digital Images
- Manuscripts
- Photographs
- Records

#### **Locations**

- Zavalla, Texas
- Huntington, Texas
- Lufkin, Texas
- Neches River, Texas
- Henderson, Texas
- Kilgore, Texas
- Houston, Texas

#### **Access and Use**

**Access Restrictions:** none

**Acquisition Information:** The collection was received by The History Center on January 21 and February 6, 2026.

**Custodial History:** The photocopies from this collection were created and collected by Richard Donovan from originals which belonged to Betty Mingee (see Betty Mingee Collection of Zavalla News Clippings). They, and the contents from Box 1, were in the possession of Richard Donovan's wife Bonnie Donovan and his daughter Gina.

The Frazier Family gave the Donovan's several family histories, photographs, poems, records, and DVDs from family gatherings and funerals. They also provided artifacts from service members. Sambo Farley, a Chief Cook in the Marines, took home several war trophies from the Pacific Theatre. Martilla Frazier gave the Donovan Family a Springfield Model 1873 breech-loading rifle. They claim the rifle was used by a Buffalo Soldier.

Bonnie Donovan and Gina donated the materials to the History Center on January 21 and February 6, 2026.

**Citation:** Donovan and Frazier Families Collection, 1881-2024, undated, 2026:004, The History Center, Diboll, Texas

**Separated Material:**

The collections' original Angelina County and Zavalla news article photocopies were digitized by decade and are available in Online Collections. The originals were returned to the donor.

The Springfield Model 1873 breech-loading rifle was placed on the oversized shelves.

Box 4 items relate to Box 2, Folder 1 contents, but were separated to conserve the artifacts.

**Related Material:** Betty Mingee Collection of Zavalla News Clippings (2015:035), The Richard Donovan Collection (2015:002)

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## Collection Inventory

### Box 1

- Folder 1 Herbert Harris Photograph, Magcobar Lab Tech, Zavalla, Texas, 1960
- Folder 2 Brief History of Zavalla, Texas, speech by Richard M. Donovan, July 6, 1963
- Folder 3 Huntington Clippings, Wilderness Town Given Lusty 1900 Birth and High School Integration, Diboll Free Press, June 24, 1965
- Folder 4 Image Correspondence and Dorothy D. Sowell Letter Photocopies, 1999, undated
- Folder 5 Saving Neches Manuscript Image Photocopies, ca. 2001
- Folder 6 Saving the Neches Manuscript, predecessor to his book, Paddling the Wild Neches, by Richard Donovan, ca. 2001

### Box 2

- Folder 1 Chief Cook Sambo Farley Military Records, United States Marine Corps, 1946
- Folder 2 Frazer-Runnels-Mosley Family Event Programs, 1961-2012, undated

Folder 3 Frazier Family Poems, Photographs, and Programs, 1961-2021, undated  
Folder 4 Neches River Canoe Expedition Travel Log, by Richard Donovan, 1999  
Folder 5 Frazier-Runnels Preserve Creation Photographs, 2001, 2003  
Folder 6 Richard Martin Donovan Funeral, Slideshow DVD and Speech, 2024  
Folder 7 Frazier and Runnels Family Histories, undated

**Box 3** History of Zavalla Scrapbook, by Betty Massey Mingee, 1997

**Box 4** Japanese Flag with red sun, 1943-1945  
Japanese Flag with yellow sun, 1943-1945  
Denim Head Caps, Ruth made in Honokaa, Hawaii, 1943  
Two china drinking cups, ca. 1940s

**Folder 1** Henderson Daily News, Henderson, Texas, December 24, 1954

**Artifact**

Springfield Model 1873 breech-loading rifle, from the Frazier Family, 1885

**Digital Images**

Angelina County and Zavalla News Article Photocopies, 1920s-1990s, undated