Guide to the Harrell Weaver Family Papers MS 223

Finding aid prepared by Jody Valente
Collection processed as part of grant project supported by the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) with generous funding from The Andrew Mellon Foundation.
San Diego History Center Document Collection
1649 El Prado, Suite 3
San Diego, CA, 92101
619-232-6203
October 24, 2011
Abstract: This collection documents Harrell Weaver and his extended family including the Weaver, Thing, Wells, and Snethen families. Family members played active roles in the military from the Revolutionary War to World War II as is documented in the collection's family biographies, records, certificates, and news articles.

creator: Weaver family

Conditions Governing Access
This collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use
The San Diego History Center (SDHC) holds the copyright to any unpublished materials. SDHC Library regulations do apply.

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Preferred Citation
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Separated Materials
Original photographs of Weaver and Thing families separated to SDHC Photograph Collection, Accession 2002/052.
Liberty War Map (1917) separated to SDHC Map Collection, located in unprocessed, early maps.

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements
Certificate of appointment for Leonard Wells (1865) is faded and discolored.

Biographical / Historical Notes
Harrell Lee Weaver was born on August 18, 1923 to David Franklin Weaver and Natella Thing Weaver. Harrell’s family was very active in the military; his great grandfather’s great uncle, Thomas Wells, served in the Revolutionary War and subsequent family members served in the Civil War, World War I and in World War II.

Harrell grew up in Logan Heights in Southeast San Diego and attended Logan Elementary School, the same school that his mother, Natella T. Weaver, attended. Harrell’s father, David Franklin Weaver, had been mustard gassed while serving in World I, which greatly affected his health. When Harrell was nine and half years old, his family moved to Tecate to live on the 240 acre ranch owned by his great grandfather, Damon Thing. When Harrell was twelve years old, his father passed away at the age of forty-two. Upon his father’s death, Harrell and his mother moved back to San Diego where he attended Woodrow Wilson Junior High and Herbert Hoover High School; while in high school he was a member of ROTC and was promoted to sergeant. He graduated early at fifteen years old. At age eighteen, he began working as an engineer with the U.S. Government Fire Department. Harrell L. Weaver was drafted into World War II in December 1942. He began as a private in Company D, 83rd infantry training battalion and took part in the Battle of Saipan of the North Mariana Islands, shortly after D-Day. After three days he was rendered unconscious by an exploding shell; the medics were forced to cut off his clothes, including his size 14-D shoes. He spent two months recovering at Guadalcanal Hospital. He was then assigned to a casual company, as all of his personal records had been abroad a ship that had sunk at sea. There were no 14-D shoes to be found on the islands, so he was provided with jobs that enabled him to go barefoot, from filling bags of drinking water, to stringing telephone lines to driving trucks that hauled aerial torpedoes, nitro glycerin and detonators. Harrell was discharged on November 11, 1945, Armistice Day.

After Harrell was discharged from World War II, he could not find employment in San Diego so he travelled to Los Angeles, where he met his future wife. On October 17, 1958 Harrell Weaver married Mary Schultz. Harrell Weaver passed away on November 20, 1994 at age 71.

Harrell’s father, David Franklin Weaver, was born in Colorado on November 30, 1892 to Franklin B. Heath and Mary Weaver Heath and was given the birth name of David Franklin Heath. He was adopted by his maternal grandparents and given the last name of Weaver. He was inducted into the service on September 18, 1917 and served in World War I with Company E, 364th infantry, 91st division. He took part in the following offensives of 1918: St. Mihiel, Meuse-Argonne Offensive (also
known as the Battle of the Argonne Forest), and Ypres-Lys. He served as a sniper for the intelligence section and was honorably discharged in April, 1919. He passed away on August 19, 1935.

Harrell Weaver’s paternal great grandfather and David Weaver’s grandfather, Thomas Foster Weaver, served in the Union Army during the Civil War. Thomas F. Weaver was born in 1835 and served in Company D, 2nd Regiment of Colorado Calvary. He entered the service in June 1862. He was discharged when the war ended on June 20, 1865, at age 30. His wife and Harrell’s great grandmother, Emma Josephine Rook Weaver, had two brothers who also served in the Union Army.

Harrell’s maternal great grandfather, Leonard Bates Wells, was born on January 29, 1827. He also served in the Union Army, along with his brother, Ferdinand, and was enlisted in the army on August 7, 1862, with Company A, 81st Illinois Regiment Volunteers. From 1863 - 1865, he served in the following battles: Thompson Hill; Champion Hill; Raymond, MS; Vicksburg, MS; Nashville, TN; Spanish Forts, AL; Jackson, MS; and Red River Expedition. His windpipe was badly wounded at the battle of Vicksburg, but he made a full recovery. He also suffered gunshot wounds in the hip, leg and had erysipelas. He was promoted to First Sergeant at Vicksburg in June, 1863, and was promoted to Second Lieutenant shortly before his discharge on August 5, 1865. Leonard B. Wells passed away on May 22, 1912. Family notes document that he was related to Zachary Taylor, the 12th President of the United States and that Mrs. Jefferson Davis, wife of the leader of the Confederacy during the Civil War, was a distant cousin.

Harrell’s mother, Natella Thing Weaver, and the women of her family were also engaged civically. Harrell’s great grandmother on his maternal side, Susan Harrell Wells, and his grandmother, Rezilia Wells Thing, were both members of the U.S. Grant Circle #26 Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic. His grandmother, Rezilia, held every office within the Circle and served as president twice. She was also a charter member of the Nancy Hanks Lincoln Tent #5, Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War, which was established in San Diego in March 1909. Harrell’s mother and his aunt, Lorietta, also joined the efforts of the Nancy Hanks Lincoln Tent #5.

Natella Thing Weaver served as the historian for Amaroc Auxiliary and also served as the family historian, providing family history to Dorothy Clark Schmid who was a historian for Dulzura, California, located northwest of Potrero and Tecate, where the Thing family settled. Her father, Charles Edward Thing and one of his brothers, Joseph Lucien Thing, were early pioneers in San Diego and had land claims and cattle ranches in an area they deemed “Thing Valley.” Together, they opened the Thing Brothers Store in Tecate, located forty-five miles south, just across the border in Mexico.

The Thing family had previously had the last name of Hogg, and ancestors were of English and Wales descent. As recounted by Natella Thing to Dorothy Clark Schmid, someone in the family desired that the name be changed and went to a judge in England to do so. When the judge asked what they would like the new last name to be, they replied, “change it to anything”, as they hadn’t decided upon a different last name. The judge designated the new last name to be “Thing.”

**Scope and Content**

This collection documents Harrell Weaver’s family tree and includes information about experiences the extended family had while serving in the military, from the Civil War to World War II. The collection contains biographical and genealogical information on the Weaver, Wells, Thing, and Snethen families, documenting their personal and military activities. This information was primarily documented by Harrell Weaver’s mother, Natella Thing Weaver, and his wife, Mary Weaver. Family records of births, deaths and marriages, as well as official marriage and birth certificates are included in the collection. Documentation of military involvement and service include the enlistment and discharge certificates for Leonard Wells from the Union Army during the Civil War, as well as Reserve Officer’s Training Course (ROTC) certificates for Harrell Weaver. Newspaper articles document family announcements, events, and war experiences.

**Arrangement**

Items in collection are arranged by subject.

**Immediate Source of Acquisition**

Accession number 970718.

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**

Schmid, Dorothy Clark, b. 1895

Snethen family

Thing family

Thing, Charles Edward

Thing, Damon

Thing, Joseph Lucian

Thing, Rezilia Wells

Weaver family
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Weaver, David Franklin
Weaver, Harrell Lee
Weaver, Natella Thing
Weaver, Thomas F.
Wells family
Wells, Leonard Bates
Armed Forces
Civil war
Genealogy
Guadalcanal (Solomon Islands)
San Diego (Calif.)
Tecate (Mexico)
World War, 1914-1918
World War, 1939-1945

Box-folder 1:1 Harrell Weaver family history, undated
Scope and Content
Biographical and genealogical information regarding Weaver, Wells, Thing and Snethen families. Includes family members' experiences and battles fought in the Civil War, World War I and World War II.

Box-folder 1:2 Family records and certificates, 1888 February 7-1961 September 11
Includes:
Marriage certificate of Charles E. Thing and Rezilia Wells, February 7, 1888
Marriage certificate of Willard L. Matthews and Loreitta Thing, July 1, 1920 (in Oversize Collections D3)
Family records of births, deaths, and marriages (in Oversize Collections D3)

Box-folder 1:3 Harrell Lee Weaver, 1940 September-1994 November 25
Includes:
Biography of Harrell L. Weaver
Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) Certificates dated September 1940 and September 1941

Box-folder 1:4 David Franklin Weaver, undated
Includes:
Newspaper article documenting his experiences in World War I.

Box-folder 1:5 Leonard Bates Wells, 1862 August 7-1945 January 25
Includes:
Civil War enlistment paper, August 7, 1862 (in Oversize Collections D3)
Certificate of appointment to First Sergeant, December 25, 1863 (in Oversize Collections D3)
Certificate of appointment to Second Lieutenant, July 20, 1865 (in Oversize Collections D3)

Box-folder 1:6 Newspaper clippings, 1925-1930
Includes:
Newspaper announcements regarding family births and deaths, birthday celebrations and other events.
Box-folder 1:7  Miscellanea, undated

Includes:
Postcard addressed to Susan Wells
Image of Logan Grammar School