

Guide to  
MS 369  
The Kohlberg Family Papers

Inclusive dates, 1875 - 1995

Bulk dates, 1875 - 1949

6 feet, 6.5 inches

Prepared by Anna Hernandez  
September 1999

Donated by Eleanor Kohlberg Goodman

Citation: The Kohlberg Family Papers, MS 369, C. L. Sonnichson Special Collections Department, University of Texas at El Paso Library

C. L. Sonnichson Special Collections Department  
University of Texas at El Paso

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

The Kohlbergs were successful business entrepreneurs who made valuable and memorable civic contributions to the development of El Paso and West Texas. Historical information about them was recorded and preserved through the foresight and commitment of family members.

### Family Origins

The Kohlberg family roots can be traced back through the history of the Bassevi family to the patriarch Abraham Basch of Prague who lived from 1545 to 1590.

### Ernst Kohlberg

Ernst Kohlberg was from Beverungen in Westphalia, then a province of Prussia. Born May 24, 1857 to Rosa Bernstein and Siegmund Kohlberg, he belonged to a family of seven sons and one daughter. In 1875, Ernst left Beverungen to work for Solomon C. Schultz, and moved to the El Paso region.

Over the next three years, Ernst Kohlberg wrote letters back to family and loved ones in Germany, describing his experiences. His son, Walter Lionel Kohlberg, later translated the letters into English. In 1973, the Texas Western Press at the University of Texas at El Paso published *Letters of Ernst Kohlberg, 1875-1877*.

### The International Cigar Factory

In 1881, Ernst opened a store for the wholesale and retail distribution of cigars. Joined by his brother Moritz, he operated the business under the name of Kohlberg Brothers Tobacco Company. Five years later, the young businessmen opened the International Cigar Factory. As the first cigar manufacturers in the Southwest area, the Kohlbergs' signature product became the popular *La Internacional* cigar.

### Taft-Díaz Meeting

When the meeting between presidents Taft and Díaz took place in 1909, Ernst Kohlberg was proprietor and manager of the Regis Hotel where the state ceremonial banquet was held.

## Death of Ernst Kohlberg

Ernst Kohlberg died an untimely death at the hands of a gunman on June 17, 1910. This scrapbook contains newspaper coverage of Ernst Kohlberg's murder and the subsequent trial of his assailant.

Only fifty-three years old at the time of his murder, Ernst Kohlberg had already established his legacy in El Paso. Married for almost twenty-six years, Olga and Ernst Kohlberg had three sons and one daughter—Walter Lionel Kohlberg, Herbert Sidney Kohlberg, Leo Jacob Kohlberg, and Else Betty Kohlberg.

## Olga Kohlberg

Olga Bernstein was born in Eberfeld, Prussia. She was twenty years old when she married Ernst Kohlberg on June 22, 1884 and moved to the United States. Married for almost twenty-six years, Ernst and Olga had three sons and one daughter. Olga Kohlberg was an important contributor to El Paso's burgeoning frontier civic community. With dedication she served her Southwestern home until her death in 1935. Olga Kohlberg helped to establish El Paso's first free kindergarten school (the first free kindergarten in Texas) and was a primary influence behind the development of the city's first public library and hospital.

A dynamic community member, she helped to organize and lead various organizations. She was a founding member of the Ladies Benevolent Association, the Kindergarten Association, and the Mount Sinai Jewish Congregation. She was a founding member and President of the El Paso Woman's Club and the El Paso Library Association. She was also a recognized member of the Jewish Welfare Association and the local chapter of the American Association of University Women.

For her many accomplishments, Olga Bernstein Kohlberg was elected to the Hall of Honor by the El Paso County Historical Society in November of 1972. Also, two schools in the El Paso Independent School District have been dedicated to Mrs. Kohlberg. The former Zach White Elementary School, originally built in 1927, was proudly renamed the Olga Bernstein Kohlberg Prekindergarten/ Kindergarten in May of 1992. The second school honoring Mrs. Kohlberg was a new building designated the Olga B. Kohlberg Elementary School. Dedicated in November of 1997, the school's motto is - dream, believe, achieve... Kohlberg's keys to success!

**Descendents** - See attached chart

## SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

The Kohlberg Family Papers are arranged in four series:

**Series I.** Ernst Kohlberg, b. 1857 d. 1910, 1 foot, 9.7 inches linear.

Arranged topically, this series contains correspondence, personal documentation, copies of the book *Letters of Ernst Kohlberg 1875-1877*, photos, newspaper clippings, periodicals, advertisements, and ephemera. Typescripts and scrapbooks are in their original bindings.

**Series II.** Olga Bernstein Kohlberg, b 1864 - d. 1935. 2 linear inches

Arranged topically, series II contains correspondence, newspaper articles, manuscripts, brochures, ephemera, and two copies of *Land Where We Live El Paso Del Norte*.

**Series III.** Walter Lionel Kohlberg, b. 1885 d. 1949 4 feet, 4.3 inches linear

Series III contains four sub-series. They are: Research files, Scrapbooks, Newspaper Clippings, and *KTSM Builders of El Paso* Radio Scripts. The research files are arranged topically and contain genealogical documentation, correspondence, family photographs, ephemera, historical postcards, and photographs of the Mexican Revolution. The two scrapbooks were dis-bound and the pages placed in folders in the original order. The newspaper clippings are arranged chronologically. The radio scripts were removed from post binder and arranged in reverse chronological order.

**Series IV.** Eleanor Francis Kohlberg Goodman, 1 linear inch

Arranged topically this series contains genealogical data, ephemera, and newspaper clippings.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTES

The Kohlberg Family Papers collection is primarily composed of newspaper clippings and ephemera related to family members and to the historical development of the El Paso region. There are some family documents and genealogical references, including several family trees. *The Letters of Ernst Kohlberg 1875-1877*, translated by Walter Kohlberg and published by Texas Western Press in 1973, is a central component of the collection. Also prevalent is information on the International Cigar Factory. A small amount of correspondence, postcards, and family photographs can be found in each of the

four series, but is mostly located in the Walter Kohlberg series. Most of the photographs are of the El Paso region and events including the Mexican Revolution.

The Ernst Kohlberg series contains correspondence dated 1876 to 1906, materials related to the family tobacco business and the Taft-Díaz meeting in 1909. It also includes naturalization papers, commercial agent appointment papers, ephemera such as the announcement of his wedding to Olga Bernstein in 1884. There is also a scrapbook about his murder in 1910 and the trial of his assailant, John Leech. Materials about the International Cigar Factory include advertisements, labels, and photographs. Also included here is an article that Leonard A. Goodman III wrote at the age of seven about the family tobacco business that was published in *Password*, the journal of the El Paso County Historical Society. Materials on the Taft-Díaz meeting include invitations, souvenirs, and a menu. Also in this series are issues of *Jewish Texan* and *El Paso Magazine* containing articles about Ernst and Olga Kohlberg.

The Olga Bernstein Kohlberg series contains correspondence dated 1930-1931, a manuscript titled *Some of the Papers of Olga Kohlberg*, which includes a paper titled "History of Charity Organization, El Paso, Texas", newspaper clippings, and ephemera. There is a copy of her memorial services program, nomination papers for the Hall of Honor program, the "Texas Women's History Project", the school dedication programs, and other tributes.

The Walter Lionel Kohlberg series contains materials he collected during the course of his research into the Kohlberg family and El Paso histories. The genealogical documentation includes several family trees. The research files contain many of the photographs of the Kohlberg family and the El Paso region.

The three scrapbooks contain newspaper clippings and ephemera. The first scrapbook is dated 1915-1944. It contains information about family members Leo Jacob Kohlberg, Olga Bernstein Kohlberg, Herbert Sidney Kohlberg, Eleanor Francis Kohlberg, and Walter Lionel Kohlberg. It also has pictures of El Paso mayors from 1873-1944 and a booklet titled *El Paso and the New Southwest*, published by the Gateway Club of El Paso. The second scrapbook is dated 1922-1944 it contains several items of note. They are: *El Paso*, an illustrated booklet; *The Jockey Club Juárez and El Paso*, a souvenir booklet; and the *El Paso Police Department Souvenir 1918*, a commemorative booklet. It also includes an El Paso Times special edition titled "Texas College of Mines and Arts" from 1934. The third scrapbook dated 1935-1945 contains information about Bessie Kohlberg Owen and Branch Craige Jr. It also contains a collection of charcoal drawings signed "W. Kohlberg" and "H. Kohlberg".

The newspaper clippings date from 1909 to 1949. They contain many items about family members, such as the birth of Betty Jean Craige, the first daughter of Branch Craige Jr. and his wife Jean Mohler McCracken. There are also two

issues of *Israelitisches Gemeindeblatt*, with articles on the Bassevi family. They are written in German. Partial translations of these articles are included. The translations were provided by Thomas F. Burdett, curator of the S.L.A. Marshall Military History Collection at the University of Texas at El Paso Library. Local topics covered in the newspaper clippings series include Fort Bliss, Mount Cristo Rey, and Elephant Butte Dam.

The Eleanor Francis Kohlberg Goodman series contains more current information on the Kohlberg family and El Paso events. The item titled *Who Begets?* is a family tree of the descendents of Else Betty Kohlberg and (Lawrence) Branch Craige. There is a copy of the news column "Ask Aunt Carol" from 1973. The column reprints a letter written by Hermann Kohlberg to his brother Ernst, in which he describes his family's experience during the San Francisco earthquake of April 6, 1906. Local topics cover include a file on the Hotel Paso Del Norte and the Cortez building, listing important dates of purchase and construction, and a file on the Rita Moreno benefit concert of 1987.

## **PROVENANCE**

Eleanor Kohlberg Goodman donated the Kohlberg Family papers to the University of Texas at El Paso Library by in 1998.

## **LITERARY RIGHTS**

Permission to publish material from the Kohlberg Family Papers, MS 369, must be obtained from the C. L. Sonnichson Special Collections Department, University of Texas at El Paso Library.

# Container List

Series I—Ernst Kohlberg		
Box #	File #	
1	1	Correspondence
1	2	Naturalization and commercial agent appointment papers [See also Oversize file, box 9]
1	3	The International Cigar Factory [See also Oversize box 8, file 4]
1	4	Taft-Díaz meeting [See also Oversize box 8, files 1&2]
1	5	Ephemera
1	6	Ernst Kohlberg murder scrapbook
1	7	Letters of Ernst Kohlberg 1875-1877
1	8	Letters of Ernst Kohlberg 1875-1877
1	9	Jewish Texans
1	10	El Paso Magazine
Oversize Box		
8	1	Cigar with <i>Victorias Del General Porfirio Díaz</i>
	2	Taft-Díaz commemorative committee invitation medal
	3	Bound typescript <i>volume A Translation of the Letters written by Ernst Kohlberg 1875-1876-1877</i>
	4	Scrapbook <i>A Translation of the The Letters written by Ernst Kohlberg 1875-1876-1877</i>
	5	Photo album of the International Cigar Factory (35)
Oversize File		
9	1	Ephemera (Final Naturalization and Legation of the United States of America to the German Empire)
Series II—Olga Bernstein Kohlberg		
1	11	Correspondence (2 postcards included)
	12	Handwritten manuscript <i>Our Southwest since American Settlement</i>
	13	Typed manuscript <i>Some of the Papers of Olga Kohlberg</i>
	14	Ephemera [See Oversize box 9, file 2]
	15	<i>Memorial Services</i> program and other articles
	16	El Paso County Historical Society
	17	<i>Land Where We Live El Paso Del Norte</i> (2 copies)
	18	Texas Women's History Project
	19	School dedication programs and ephemera
Series III—Walter Lionel Kohlberg		
Sub-series 1. Files		
2	1	Genealogy—family trees of Bassevi, Kohlberg, and Aronstein families (2 copies)
	2	Genealogy documentation (includes Aronstein family) [See Oversize file in map case, drawer 9]
	3	Genealogy—German

	4	Jacob Bassevi Von Treuenberg [See <i>Israelitisches Gemeindeblatt</i> , box 9, file 5]
	5	Correspondence
	6	Ephemera
	7	Kohlberg family photos (7)
	8	Copies of historical prints of El Paso, Juárez, and others (16)
	9	Historical pictures of El Paso and the surrounding area (15)
	10	Historical photographs and pictures of the El Paso area (21)
	11	Historical postcards of El Paso, the Mexican revolution, and others (15)
	12	Peter Edward Kern (includes pictures)
	13	Historical data of El Paso and Juárez
	14	Photographs of the Mexican revolution (25)

### **Oversize file**

Map Case Drawer 9	Ephemera (2 family tree documents)
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### **Sub-series 2. Scrapbooks**

3	1	Newsclippings, ephemera, and photos (2)
	2	Newspaper clippings and ephemera
	3	Newspaper clippings and ephemera
	4	Newspaper clippings
	5	Newspaper clippings
	6	Newspaper clippings and ephemera
	7	Newspaper clippings, ephemera, and photos (4)
	8	Newspaper clippings and ephemera
	9	Newspaper clippings and ephemera
	10	Newspaper clippings, ephemera, and photos (3)
	11	Newspaper clippings and ephemera
	12	Newspaper clippings and ephemera
	13	Newspaper clippings
	14	Newspaper clippings
4	1	Newspaper clippings
	2	Newspaper clippings and ephemera
	3	Newspaper clippings
	4	Newspaper clippings
	5	Newspaper clippings
	6	Newspaper clippings
	7	Newspaper clippings and ephemera
	8	Ephemera
	9	Typed manuscript <i>Our Southwest since American Settlement</i>
	10	Ephemera and newsletter
	11	<i>El Paso and the New Southwest</i> booklet

### **1922-1944 Scrapbook**

5	1	<i>The El Paso Times</i> , Texas College of Mines and Arts edition
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	2	Newspaper clippings and ephemera
	3	Newspaper clippings and ephemera
	4	Newspaper clippings and ephemera
	5	Newspaper clippings and ephemera
	6	Newspaper clippings
	7	Newspaper clippings
	8	<i>El Paso</i> "illustrated" booklet
	9	<i>The Jockey Club Juárez and El Paso</i> souvenir booklet
	10	<i>El Paso Police Department Souvenir 1918</i> booklet

### **1935-1945 Scrapbook**

5	11	Newspaper clippings and ephemera
	12	Newspaper clippings
	13	Newspaper clippings
	14	Newspaper clippings
	15	Newspaper clippings
	16	Newspaper clippings and ephemera
	17	Newspaper clippings and ephemera
	18	Newspaper clippings and ephemera
	19	Charcoal drawings signed "W. Kohlberg" and "H. Kohlberg"
	20	Newspaper clippings and ephemera

### **Sub-series 3. Newspaper clippings**

#### **1909-1949 Newspaper clippings**

6	1	Newspaper clippings 1909
	2	Newspaper clippings 1920
	3	Newspaper clippings 1921
	4	Newspaper clippings 1922
	5	Newspaper clippings 1923
	6	Newspaper clippings 1928
	7	Newspaper clippings 1932
	8	Newspaper clippings 1934
	9	Newspaper clippings 1935
	10	Newspaper clippings and ephemera 1936
	11	Newspaper clippings 1938
	12	Newspaper clippings 1939
	13	Newspaper clippings 1940
	14	Newspaper clippings 1941
	15	Newspaper clippings 1942
	16	Newspaper clippings and ephemera 1943
	17	Newspaper clippings 1944
	18	Newspaper clippings and ephemera 1945
	19	Newspaper clippings and ephemera 1946
	20	Newspaper clippings 1947
	21	Newspaper clippings 1948
	22	Newspaper clippings 1949

	23	Newspaper clippings and ephemera [undated]
<b>Oversize file</b>		
9	3	Newspaper clippings 1909-1941
	4	Newspaper clippings 1921-1934
	5	<i>Israelitisches Gemeindeblatt</i> 1935 (May and June issues)
	6	<i>The El Paso Times</i> (fragile newspaper clippings from scrapbooks)
	7	Newspaper clippings (fragile newspaper clippings from scrapbooks)
<b>Sub-series 4. 1939 <i>KTSM Builders of El Paso Radio</i> Scripts</b>		
7	1	Mary I. Stanton December 3rd
	2	Major W. J. Fewel November 25th
	3	James A. Smith November 19th
	4	W. W. Turney November 12th
	5	Father R. Ortiz November 5th
	6	James A. White October 29th
	7	S. H. Newman October 22nd
	8	C. R. Morehead October 15th
	9	Will E. Keller October 8th
	10	William S. Hills October 1st
	11	Carl Leonardt September 24th
	12	C. B. Eddy September 17th
	13	Dr. Walter N. Vilas September 10th
	14	J. R. Nations September 3rd
	15	J. S. Reynolds August 27th
	16	Dr. E. W. Alexander August 20th
	17	Wyndham Kemp August 13th
	18	George D. Flory August 6th
	19	Henry Kelly July 30th
	20	John Butterfield July 23rd
	21	Dr. W. M. Yandell July 16th
	22	Alfred Courchesne July 9th
	23	Olga Kohlberg July 2nd
	24	Captain Charles Davis June 25th
	25	Adolf Krakauer, Gus Zork, and Edward Moye June 18th
	26	Harwood J. Simmons June 11th
	27	Benjamin F. Hammett June 4th
	28	James Douglas May 28th
	29	Zach White May 21st
	30	Felix Martinez May 14th
	31	Peter E. Kern May 7th
	32	James P. Hague April 30th
	33	AOY April 23rd
	34	Josiah F. Crosby April 16th
	35	Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca April 9th

	36	Samuel Schutz April 2nd
	37	James B. Gillette March 26th
	38	Oscar T. Bassett March 18th
	39	Juan Hart March 12th
	40	Simeon Hart March 5th
	41	James Marr February 26th
	42	Joseph Magoffin February February 19th
	43	James Wiley Magoffin February 12th
	44	Anson Mills February 5th
	45	Ben Dowell January 29th
	46	Gaylord Judd Clarke January 22nd
	47	Joseph Wilkins Tays November 23rd

### **Series IV—Eleanor Francis Kohlberg Goodman**

7	48	Genealogy—family trees of Bassevi, Kohlberg and Aronstein families
	49	Manuscript of family tree— <i>Who Begat?</i> —1970
	50	Ephemera
	51	Newspaper clippings 1964-1995
	52	Listing of information on the Hotel Del Norte Cortez Building— Chronology of important dates involving purchase and construction 1984
	53	Rita Moreno benefit concert—1987

### **Oversize File**

9	8	Ephemera
	9	Newspaper clippings 1964-1990