

Finding Aid
to the
John Lydgate Corstorphine Collection

Kaua`i Historical Society
Lihue, Kauai, Hawaii

MS 52

Abstract

This collection contains an autobiography, photographs and memorabilia from the estate of John Lydgate Corstorphine (1928 – 2006) and some items from the estate of Dora Ludgate Lidgate (Corstorphine's aunt).

The Autobiography of John L. Corstorphine – Memories of a Hawaiian Childhood relates the author's childhood experiences and perceptions of life, family, and society while growing up on Kaua'i in the 1930's. The account references Kealia, Kapa`a, Lihu`e and other towns and local events, and is illustrated with black and white photographs.

The majority of the photographs ranges from Corstorphine's infancy through his teens on Kauai, and include members of his extended family, including Lidgate relatives, and Kauai Society. Some pictures are identified and/or annotated. One album, from the estate of Dora Lidgate contains annotated images of her family, friends and home in Laupahoehoe on the island of Hawaii from c. 1913, and scenes from international travels in 1914.

Included in this collection is a booklet entitled, As I Remember It, by Selma Kruse Ralston, printed December 1985, and includes a chapter entitled, "Plantation Life at Kekaha Sugar Co."

The memorabilia include an assortment of color postcards and pamphlets from Kauai, Oahu and Hawaii, souvenir-type black and white slides and undated photos of Hawaii,

Lastly, the collection contains a reel-to-reel tape recording of Hawaiian music by various performers.

Evan and Alisa Corstorphine donated this material in 2006.

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Biographical SketchJohn Lydgate [Lidgate] Corstorphine

John Lydgate Corstorphine was born March 25, 1928 in Kealia, Kaua`i, in the territory of Hawaii. Preceded by brother David, followed by Kimo (James, Jr.), John was the second of three sons born to James and Elsie Corstorphine. “Lydgate” is the long-accepted spelling of Corstorphine’s middle name, although “Lidgate” is typed on the birth certificate. It is believed that Corstorphine’s parents’ changed the spelling to honor Rev. John Mortimer Lydgate, Corstorphine’s great-uncle.

At the time of John’s birth, James Barron Corstorphine, Sr. was employed by Bank of Hawaii on Kaua`i, managed the Lihu`e, Kapa`a and Hanapepe branches, and later become vice-president. Prior to Bank of Hawaii, James worked for the Makee Sugar Plantation in Kealia. During the 1930’s, James was actively involved with the Kaua`i Polo Team, the Kaua`i Yacht Club and other community organizations.

His mother Elsie Ludgate Lidgate was born October 15, 1891 on the island of Hawaii, the daughter of Anthony Lidgate and Florence (Flora) Augusta Ludgate, and sibling to Kenneth, William, and Dora. Elsie was active in the All Saints Episcopal Church in Kapa`a and was a past president of the Mokihana Club.

As a child, John L. Corstorphine moved from Kealia to Lihue, and lived in an area known as Kupolo. The family also owned a beach home at Poipu, at “High Tides Beach,” known today as Brennecke’s Beach. His autobiography details dozens of childhood experiences, many of which relate his love of swimming, surfing and fishing.

John L. Corstorphine lived on Kaua`i until he moved to California during his teens. He married Katherine Lee Langley at age 21; their marriage lasted 56 years. They had seven children: John Lydgate, Jr., Deborah Leigh, Joan Leslie, James England, Cecily Ann, Heather Elizabeth, and Evan Barron.

Corstorphine lived the last two decades of his life in Sunnyvale, California where he served for 30 years as an officer with the Los Altos Police Department. He passed away on February 2, 2006 at the age of 77.

Dora Lidgate

John L. Corstorphine collected portions of Dora Ludgate Lidgate’s memorabilia after her death. Some items are included in this collection. Dora, sister of Elsie Lidgate Corstorphine, was born on the island of Hawaii in the Territory of Hawaii, September 10, 1895. She never married, and was active in the communities where she lived in Honolulu, Hawaii, Palo Alto, California, and Medford, Oregon.

Scope and Content

Autobiography of John L. Corstorphine - Memories of a Hawaiian Childhood

This book is a proof copy, which John Corstorphine and his family were editing for publication at the time this collection was donated. Corstorphine's chronicle of family life, childhood experiences and relationships also includes his personal observations of island life and social attitudes at the time. The author describes his associations with several individuals and families, some of which were prominent in business and the community in the 1930's. Named in this account are Charlie Fern, editor of the Garden Island; Bill Alexander, manager of Grove Farm Plantation; Albert "Jack" Horner, manager of Hawaiian Canneries in Kapa`a; Mr. and Mrs. Eric (Iki) Moir, Dr. J. Kuhn, and more. In addition to the Corstorphine and Lidgate [Lydgate, Ludgate] families, he references (among many others) the Isenberg, Wilcox, Rice, Alexander, Coney, Boyden, Knudsen, and Garlinghouse families .

Added to this autobiography are additional essays: "Reminiscences of an Amateur Collector" by J. M. Lydgate; "In Memoriam," a tribute to J. M. Lydgate, from the *Hawaiian Annual*, published 1920 – 1922; "Lydgate State Park Bears Name of Founder of Lihue Union Church," from *The Garden Island*, Feb. 26, 1969; and a copy of Corstorphine's obituary.

At the time of this writing, an edited version of this autobiography, in hard copy and electronic format, is available through www.lulu.com.

Booklet entitled, *As I Remember It* by Selma Kruse Ralston

A copy of this short autobiography, dated December 1985, was included with the collection. Selma Kruse Ralston was born in Kekaha July 1909, on the island of Kaua`i. Her mother was Clara Putzge and her father, William J. Kruse, who was employed by Kekaha Sugar Plantation Company. The booklet contains the author's reflections on plantation life and the social customs she experienced on Kaua`i during the early 1900's. This personal history also refers to the author's daughters, Lois and Sue, their marriages and families.

Punahou Alumni Notes

A clipping from "Punahou Alumni Notes," *Punahou Bulletin*, Autumn 1973, about Dora Lidgate. It refers to the dedication ceremonies for "Lidgate Hall," a building dedicated in her honor by the Medford (Oregon) Congregational Church.

Memorabilia

This is a collection of assorted pamphlets and scenic postcards of Kauai, Oahu, and Hawaii.

Photographs

These include loose and album-bound photographs. John L. Corstorphine acquired some of the prints from his aunt Dora Lidgate's estate. One 5 x 7 black and white photograph, dated September 1, 1924, shows the Lydgate Brothers and handwritten notes by Dora Lidgate.

Scope and ContentPhotographs (continued)

An assortment of B & W and color prints, dated from 1949 to the 1970's featuring Dora Lidgate, Elsie Lidgate Corstorphine, and several of Dora's friends in Hawaii and Florida locations.

Miscellaneous photographic images include (3) stock souvenir slides of early 1920's scenes of Hawaii from Bernice P. Bishop Museum; undated b&w photographs of Oahu scenes.

Four photograph albums contain assorted black and white family pictures.

One album contains pictures taken c. 1913 - 1914 of Dora Lidgate, her sister Elsie Lidgate Corstorphine, and several of their family members and friends. Most of the photographs appear to have been taken at the Lydgate home at Laupahoehoe, island of Hawaii. Other photos indicate Kaneohe Bay and various foreign cities.

Three of the albums contain photographs of John L. Corstorphine (from infancy to teens), his siblings David Corstorphine and Kimo (James) Corstorphine, his father James B. Corstorphine, Sr., mother Elsie Lidgate Corstorphine, his aunt Dora Lidgate, grandmother Flora Lidgate, cousin Lois Lidgate, and several other family members.

Reel-to-reel tape recording

This is a single reel of tape and includes handwritten notes listing the names of all the songs contained on the tape recording. The songs are from Kamehameha Alumni Glee Club, "Songs of Hawai'i" by Charles K.L. Davis, and a collection of songs by Gabriel I for the Kaua'i Canoe & Racing Association.

Container ListFolders

- 1 Book proof, Autobiography of John L. Corstorphine – Memories of a Hawaiian Childhood
- 2 Booklet As I Remember It by Selma K. Ralston, December 1985
A short autobiography by Selma Kruse Ralston who was born and raised in Kekaha during the early 1900's.
- 3 Punahou Alumni Notes
Clipping from Punahou Bulletin, Autumn 1973, showing Dora Lidgate and describing the dedication of Lidgate Hall in Medford, Oregon.
- 4 Memorabilia – Pamphlets and booklets
 - Small booklet, “Island of Kauai – Scenic & Historic Sites”, by Robert Boom & Chris Christensen, 1974
 - Small booklet, “A Special Invitation from Lihue United Church,” with a historical introduction by Rev. Stanley Bain, and writings by Gabriel I, Alice Wedermeyer, and Jacintho Runes.
 - Pamphlet, “Chapel in the Palms” from the Coco Palms Resort
 - Card entitled “The [print erased] Greetings from Merry’ell & Charlie Fern,” with color photos of the Ferns and a 1968 Kaua`I helicopter trip.
 - “Kaua`i Tour Map,” from Watase’s U-Drive & Tours
 - Pamphlet, “Iolani Palace”
 - Pamphlet, “Aloha Airs” from Aloha Airlines, with lyrics to popular songs of the islands.
- 5 Memorabilia - Postcards
 - 4 x 6 color postcards of Kaua`i in the 1970's: Sheraton Kauai, Poipu Beach, Coco Palms, Kilauea Light Station, Waimea Canyon, Kipukai Coast (aerial), Sleeping Giant, Opaikaa Falls, Kauai Resort, Napali Cliffs. Some of these are produced by William J. Senda. One postcard for Poipu is dated “10/25/74” and sent by Judy Dan to the Corstorphines in Sunnysvale, CA. It is annotated, “Everything including your house—is as I remember it” and indicates the former Corstorphine beach house.
 - 6 x 9 color Nu Nui postcards, produced in 1949, depict various scenes from Kauai, Oahu, and Hawaii.
- 6 Photographs, loose
 - 5” x 7” b&w photograph of the Lydgate brothers – Mortimer, Homer, Percy and William, dated September 1, 1924. Annotated by Dora Lidgate.

Container ListFolders

- 6 Photographs, loose (continued)
- 1949, photos of Aileen Gibb and her father at West Palm Beach, Florida.
 - 1950, photos of Dora Lidgate with friends; Bess and Sam Colegrove, West Palm Beach, Florida.
 - 1960's – 1970's, includes scenes of Ala Moana Center, Halekulani Hotel, Hilo Airport, Hawaiian Airlines. Notes on photos indicate Dora Lidgate, Elsie Lidgate Corstorphine, Bess Colegrove, Aileen Gibbs, Edith Robb, Betty townsley, and Mildred (no last name).
 - Undated set of b&w prints with scenes of Oahu that include lei sellers, pineapples, sugar cane field, coastal view of Chinaman's Hat.
 - (3) stock souvenir slides of early 1920's scenes of Hawaii from Bernice P. Bishop Museum, noted as follows: Waikiki Beach (1915), Jack London & wife (1907), Inter-island Airways (1929).

Photographs, albums

[1] Black leather album, 7.75"x6"

- From Dora Lidgate Estate, contains 84 black/white prints of the following: Lydgate home at Lapahoehoe, Kaneohe Bay, "Tramping Party, May 30, 1913"; 1914 travel photographs taken in Kobe and Nagasaki, Japan; Manila, Philippines; Hong Kong and Moji, China; India. The India photo is annotated, "Cookie in India," referring to "Margaret Montague Cooke".

- Photographs of individuals are noted as follows:

Mr. Barker, Alice Bond, Grace Cleghorn, Juliette Annis Cooke, Doris & Ran, Duchess, Flossie, Hazel & Garri, Lyle Holmes, Hoppie, Margaret Lennox, Dora Lidgate, Lillian, Olive Lindsey, Mary, Margaret (Cooke), Baby Morgan Randolph, Ruth & Edwin, Mr. Renton, Marian Shapiro, Stafford & Lyle, Doris Taylor, Mrs. Taylor, Beatrice White, Ellen Williams, Miss Williamson.

[2] Red leather album, 7.25" x 11"

- 176 b&w photos taken by John L. Corstorphine at ages 13 & 14. Scenes of the Corstorphine homes in Kupolo (Lihue area) and Poipu, All Saints Episcopal Church in Kapaa, Nawiliwili Bay, Niumalu, Lawai Pineapple Cannery, Lihue town, Poipu Beach, Grove Farm Plantation Manager's home (Alexander pool and grounds), (undated) May Day Celebration photos, a 1942 photo of barbed-wire on the beach, numerous sailing scenes.

Container ListPhotographs, albums (continued)

- Photographs of individuals are noted as follows:

Ernest Almeida , Bill Alexander, Blaine Boyden, Eleanor Brun, Choy Hup Ching, Rev. Ford and Mrs. Coffman, James Corstorphine, Sr., Kimo (James) Corstorphine, Diamond [no last name]. Winona Ellis, Fred Frizelle, Grant Garlinghouse, Spalding Garlinghouse, Hiram [no last name], Fumiko Hirokawa, Muriel Hopwood, Lordy Kauliu, Keli (throw net fisherman), Dora Lidgate, Domingo Los Banos, Lois Lydgate, Dolores Monroid, Dulcie Morton, Hugh Opperman, Maria Ponce, Wallace Raposo, Johnny Ruiz, Carl Schimmelfennig Jeanette Schumacher, Priscilla Schumacher, Leilani Souza, Richard Tracy, Howard Westlake, Edward T. White, Estrellita Yadao.

[3] Black clothbound album with gold lettering, 8.5” x 5.75” (several loose, torn pages)

- 65 undated, b&w photos of David Corstorphine, John Corstorphine, Kimo Corstorphine, David and Christina (Barron) Corstorphine (grandparents), James B. Corstorphine, Flora Lidgate, Elsie Lidgate Corstorphine, Dora Lidgate.

[4] Black leatherbound album, 8.25” x 10.25” (laces broken, pages loose)

- 20 b&w prints, mostly infancy and toddler years of John L. Corstorphine, his brothers David and Kimo; includes James Corstorphine, Sr., Elsie Lidgate Corstorphine, Leilani Pratt, Doug Pratt, Fumiko Hirakawa, and scenes of the family home in Kapaa.

Reel to Reel Tape Recordings

A single reel in a box, this undated item includes a handwritten note listing the recorded songs as follows:

- Kamemeha Alumni Glee Club, “Na Mele O Hawai`i”: Hanohano Hanalei, Kaiulani Alii, Nolokai Nui Ahina, Aia Hiki Mai, Puuwaawaa, Pupu O Ewa, Nai Aupuni, Nai Aupuni aia kuulei, Haili po ika, Hanalei Bay, Kamakani Kaili Aloha, Na Lei O Hawaii, Aloha Oe.

- Kauai Canoe & Racing Association, “Musical Memories of Your Stay on Kaua`i,” Gabriel I: Kauai Canoe Club Song, Molokai Nui Ahina, Ke Kai Nei Au, Roselani, Imi au ia oe, Nani wale Lihue, Ekolu Mea Nui, Pulupe nei ili ike anu, Canoe Club Hula, Pupu ao ewa.

- “Songs of Hawai`i,” Charles K. L. Davis: Hanohano Hanalei, Hawaiian Paradise, Malia, Na Alii, Nalani, Kolupe, My Magic Island, Hukilau, Blue Hawaii, Old Plantation, Ka Ulua, Aloha Oe.