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Stephens, Craig collection

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Havana History and Heritage Society

Table of Contents

Summary Information	3
Biographical / Historical	3
Scope and Contents	4
Administrative Information	4
Controlled Access Headings	5

Summary Information

Repository:	Havana History and Heritage Society
Title:	Craig Stephens collection
ID:	21.0011
Date [inclusive]:	1945-2021
Physical Description:	1 Files 1 file
Language of the Material:	English .
Mixed Materials [Box]:	Single Folder Collections - 2021 Box 1
[Folder]:	21.0011-Folder 1

Preferred Citation

Craig Stephens Collection, Havana History and Heritage Society, Havana, FL.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Biographical / Historical

Craig Stephens was born July 14, 1945, in Quincy, Florida. He has lived in Havana for the majority of his life and attended school in town from grades 1-12. While in school, Stephens was involved in sports, particularly basketball. Stephens' family lived on the city limits of the East side of Havana. His family, particularly his paternal grandmother, opened the Havana Canning Company, an incredibly active part of the Havana community.

Growing up in Havana's tight-knit community meant that everyone knew everyone. For Stephens, he was able to get a good education while still maintaining his interest in basketball as the high school's basketball team manager. Two of the coaches - Wallace Cox and Pete Spear - were major role models and father figures to Stephens in the 1950s.

Stephens' paternal grandmother, Eulalia Stephens Slappey, began her canning business in Leon County. She moved to Havana in 1934 and started her new cannery due to convincing from

the farmers and businessmen of the agricultural town. Slappey taught school before canning - having started with making jelly then branching into other aspects. She had two children, one daughter and a son. Her son was Stephens' father, who worked at the cannery through the 1940s and 1950s. He was the first person ever to can boiled peanuts.

The cannery's boom years were the war years. During World War II, they provided food to the military. The cannery they'd built in 1934 was no longer big enough and had to be rebuilt in 1940-1941. They also used the label LeCo, for Leon County. Canning was seasonal - at the peak of the season, they would have as many as 200-300 employees. Eventually, the family sold the cannery in 1962.

Stephens' father served in World War II, stationed in the Philippines from about 1943-1945. While stationed, he came across two prisoners of war from the Bataan Death March. He had heard one was from Havana and went to see him, discovering that they had known each other before the war. The POW was dating a schoolteacher in Havana and because he did not know where he was going to be next, he used Stephens' father's return address to send a proposal letter to her.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Scope and Contents

This collection relates to Craig Stephens, who was raised in Havana, Florida, and was born in Quincy, Florida. His grandmother founded and operated Havana Canning Company, his great-grandmother had a store, and his grandfather had a livery stable and was mayor. His father was in the Philippines during WWII. This collection contains an interview registration form and a digital video disc interview of Stephens.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative Information

Publication Statement

Havana History and Heritage Society

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open to all researchers.

Conditions Governing Use

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[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Controlled Access Headings

- Canning and preserving
- Havana (Fla.)
- Gadsden County (Fla.)
- war stories -- World War, 1939-1945