

## Collection Summary

**ID Number:** CS 065

**Title:** Branch Davidians

**Extent:** 3 Folder(s)

**Span Dates:** 1993-1999

**Language:** English

**Geographic Location:** Waco, Texas

**Abstract:** This collection consists of clippings and articles about the group and raid on the compound.

**Historical Notes:** Davidian Seventh-Day Adventists broke off from the main Seventh-Day Adventist body in 1934 under the leadership of Victor Houteff, who believed that the Kingdom of David would soon be restored in Palestine. Portending millennial events made it necessary for members to live communally, and by 1940 a community with over 60 residents had been established near Waco, Texas. In 1955 Houteff died, and various splinter groups emerged. One of them, led by Benjamin and Lois Roden, was sometimes informally called the Branch. Benjamin Roden died in 1978, and in 1981 a new member, Vernon Howell, joined and quickly became close to Lois Roden. Taking the millennial spiritual name David Koresh (Koresh is the Hebrew name of Cyrus the Great of Persia, who is portrayed as a messianic figure in the Bible), he became the leader of the commune, known as Mt. Carmel, in 1988. Allegations that the group was amassing an arsenal (some local adversaries took to calling the communal home by the inflammatory name "Ranch Apocalypse") led to a raid by the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms on February 28, 1993. After a 51-day siege federal authorities injected gas into the Mt. Carmel building to force the defenders out; somehow a fire started, and most of those still on the premises were burned to death. **Sources:** Miller, Timothy. *The encyclopedic guide to American intentional communities*. 2nd ed. Clinton, New York: Richard W. Couper Press, 2015, pg. 50.

## Selected Search Terms

**Subjects:** Communal living; Collective settlements; Housing, Cooperative; Collective farms; Commune; Cults

## Administrative Information

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