Guide to the Douglas Giddings Mission Bay Collection MS 260

Finding aid prepared by Sandra Kirkwood
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
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**Title:** Douglas Giddings Mission Bay Collection  
**Identifier/Call Number:** MS 260  
**Contributing Institution:** San Diego History Center Document Collection  
**Language of Material:** English  
**Physical Description:** 0.5 Linear feet (1 box)  
**Date (inclusive):** 1957-1993  
**Abstract:** The collection details the planning, development, and public use of Mission Bay Park.  
**creator:** Giddings, Douglas Roy  

**Arrangement**  
Items in the collection are arranged by subject.  

**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The San Diego History Center (SDHC) holds the copyright to any unpublished materials.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.  

**Processing Information**  
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**Preferred Citation**  
Douglas Giddings Mission Bay Collection, MS 260, San Diego History Center Document Collection, San Diego, CA.  

**Biographical / Historical Notes**  
Douglas Roy Giddings, a San Diego native, was born April 15, 1917. After graduating from San Diego High School in 1935, Giddings attended Arizona University followed by the Stanford University School of Law. He served as a naval officer in the United States Navy from 1942-1946, during World War II. Giddings commanded the U.S.S. Ramona (IX-76), patrolling the California coast, and a minesweeper, serving the Western Pacific. Following his military service, he passed the California Bar exam and worked at several law firms in San Diego. Giddings married Mary Poag in June 1947, and together they raised three daughters. He was involved in various organizations in San Diego, including the San Diego Yacht Club, Wild Animal Park Board, San Diego Zoo, Children's Hospital, and the San Diego Kiwanas. In the 1950s, Giddings was appointed by the San Diego City Council to the Mission Bay Park Commission where he served as Chairman for several years starting in 1957. After retirement, Giddings purchased an avocado grove and packing house, eventually turning it into a ranch. Douglas R. Giddings passed away on June 2, 2009, due to complications from a broken hip.  
Mission Bay Park has not always been an aquatic destination for water enthusiasts. The area was originally a vast marsh area full of mud and silt, dubbed “False Bay” by explorer Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo in 1542. From 1852-1929, the Army Core of Engineers built a dike in order to permanently route the San Diego River into Mission Bay, thereby avoiding further dumping of river silt into the San Diego Bay. In 1945, the City of San Diego was granted a deed to the Mission Bay land from the State of California, on the condition that the all land and water remain open for public use. Only limited leases were allowed for commercial enterprises. Due to lack of funds, development of the area into an aquatic recreational park did not begin until the mid-1960s. Post-war funds and bonds were set aside for development, and in the 1970s the public started to use the area for recreation. By 1978, Mission Bay Park was operating with profit and solidified itself as a local recreational gem and tourist attraction, garnering recognition even from the New York Times. An update to the master plan for the Mission Bay Park in 1993 focused efforts on environmental preservation in order to protect the delicate ecosystem and to guarantee the park’s safe use in future generations.  

**Scope and Content**  
Douglas Giddings’ collection on Mission Bay Park’s planning, development, and public use includes published reports, annual financial reports, Giddings’ research notes, and newspaper articles on the Park’s history. Topics covered in the published reports include Park development, policies for land and water use, council resolutions, design concepts, sign policies, event planning, and environmental considerations. Reports also include conceptual drawings, maps, and aerial photographs. Annual financial reports to the State of California outline funds allocated to the operation and development of the Park from 1971-1978. Of particular interest are memorandums and newspaper articles which highlight a 1978 proposed parking fee for Mission Bay Park. Additionally the collection includes a school report on Mission Bay Park written by Douglas Giddings’ granddaughter.  

**Immediate Source of Acquisition**
Accession number 2003.100.

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**

Giddings, Douglas Roy
Patterson, John K.
Rick, Glenn A.
San Diego (Calif.), Engineering Dept.
San Diego (Calif.), Park and Recreation Dept.
San Diego (Calif.), Planning Dept.
San Diego Convention and Visitors Bureau.
Aquatic sports
Boats and boating
Dredging
Fishing
Local history
Maps
Mission Bay Park (San Diego, Calif.)
Recreation areas
Sailing
San Diego (Calif.)
Wetland conservation

Box-folder 1:1  

Box-folder 1:2  

Box-folder 1:3  

Box-folder 1:4  

Box-folder 1:5  
Letter regarding “Signs: Mission Bay Park,” 1964

Box-folder 1:6  

Box-folder 1:7  

Box-folder Oversize Collections D4  

Box-folder 1:8  

Box-folder 1:9  

Box-folder 1:10  
Annual financial reports, 1971-1978

Box-folder 1:11  
Mission Bay parking fee issue, 1978

Box-folder 1:12  
"Tentative Development Plan for Mission Bay State Park Map 2 1939" (photo print), 1939

Box-folder 1:13  
"Mission Bay Park Events and Promotion: Summary of Research and Specific Recommendations" (press release), 1961-1962

Box-folder 1:14  
Newspaper clippings, 1960-1981 and undated

Box-folder 1:15  
Miscellanea, 1956, 1999

Includes:

- Mission Bay bonds brochure, undated
- Recreation Agreement, City of San Diego and San Diego Unified School District, 1956
- "It's All About Money" by Jessica Siemer (Giddings' granddaughter), 1999

Box-folder 1:16  
Douglas Giddings’ research notes, undated