A Guide to the Carl Christensen photograph collection

P83-057a

San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park, National Park Service

2013, National Park Service

Title: Carl Christensen photograph collection
Date: circa 1908-1920
Identifier/Call Number: P83-057a (SAFR 311)
Creator: Christensen, Carl M. (Carl Mobius)
Physical Description: 3 items.
Repository: San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park, Historic Documents Department
Building E, Fort Mason
San Francisco, CA 94123
Abstract: The Carl Christensen photograph collection, circa 1908-1920, (SAFR 00311, P83-057a) is comprised of two photographs: one of the San Pedro Waterfront and one of the steam schooner GEORGE W. FENWICK (built 1908). The collection has been processed to the collection level and is open for use.
Physical Location: San Francisco Maritime NHP, Historic Documents Department
Language(s): In English.
Access
This collection is open for use unless otherwise noted.
Publication and Use Rights
Some material may be copyrighted or restricted. It is the researcher's obligation to determine and satisfy copyright or other case restrictions when publishing or otherwise distributing materials found in the collections.
Processing Note
The descriptions in this collection guide were compiled using the best available sources of information. Such sources include the creator's annotations or descriptions, collection accession files, primary and secondary source material and subject matter experts. While every effort was made to provide accurate information, in the event that you find any errors in this guide please contact the reference staff in order for us to evaluate and make corrections to this guide.
Please cite the title and collection number in any correspondence with our staff.
Preferred Citation
[Item description], [Location within collection organization identified by Collection Number/Series Number/File Unit Number/Item Number], P83-057a (SAFR 311), Carl Christensen photograph collection, San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park
Acquisition Information
SAFR-00001
GOGA-00789
On April 24, 1962, Carl Christensen donated the following photographs to the San Francisco Maritime Museum: Panorama of the San Pedro Waterfront; GEORGE W. FENWICK photograph; FRANCIS H. LEGGETT photograph (16 x 30 in.). He also donated a set of plans from the Bendixsen yard in Eureka, California, which have been cataloged separately as the "Carl Christensen collection of naval architectural drawings" (SAFR 23561, HDC 1202). See SFMM Accession Ledger 313/9 - 313/12.
The photographs of the San Pedro Waterfront and GEORGE W. FENWICK were formally accessioned on July 7, 1983 as P83-057a. It is unclear why the FRANCIS H. LEGGETT photograph was not accessioned, but it could not be located in February 2013.
There is a very strong possibility that the missing photograph of FRANCIS H. LEGGETT is in P79-079 (SAFR 15218), which is an artificial collection created by SAFR staff of items from unknown donors. There is a black-and-white photographic print of FRANCIS H. LEGGETT (steamer) underway with lumber cargo, in P79-079, but its measurements are only 10.5 x 24 inches. It is possible that it was originally received matted and framed and that is where the 16 x 30 in. measurement in the
accession paperwork came from. However, since it could not be confirmed that this item was the one from Carl Christensen, the print has been left in P79-079 for the time being.

SAFR-00001 is a blanket accession that was transferred from the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) to the San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park in September 1988. GGNRA had previously acquired the collection from the San Francisco Maritime Museum when it became a unit of the National Park Service in 1977.

GOGA-00789 was transferred from the J. Porter Shaw Library to the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) in February 1985.

**Historical or Biographical Note**

Carl Christensen (1906-1986) lived in Eureka, California for many years, and was a photographer, photograph collector, and a maritime historian specializing in steam schooners of the Pacific Coast.

Carl Mobius Christensen was born May 28, 1906. He was a native of Humboldt County, California and was born and raised on the Samoa Peninsula near the U.S. Coast Guard Station. Christensen lived in Eureka for many years before moving to Grove City and then to Arroyo Grande. He was a photographer, photograph collector, and a maritime historian specializing in steam schooners of the Pacific Coast. He was a member of the Humboldt County Historical Society and the Humboldt Maritime Museum. Christensen was a member of the Eureka Firefighters Local No. 652 and his father worked for years at the Humboldt Bar life-saving station.

During the 1930s-1940s, Carl and his brother Art Christensen both piloted the launch MADAKET (ex NELLIE C.), ferrying passengers and freight from Samoa to Eureka. MADAKET was built in Fairhaven in 1909, launched in 1910 and refurbished in 1989. She is the oldest continuously operating passenger vessel in the United States, celebrated her 100th birthday on June 6, 2010, and is the last survivor of seven original ferries that transported mill workers and families around Humboldt Bay. The completion of the Eureka-Samoa bridge in 1971 put the ferry service out of business. Ironically, the second span of the California 255 Samoa Bridge is named in honor of Carl L. Christensen Jr., a democratic District Attorney and Justice in Humboldt County who died in September 1976.

Carl Christensen was very knowledgeable about steam schooners and corresponded with both Karl Kortum and Harold Huycke, among other maritime historians. In a letter that Harold Huycke wrote to Carl's brother Art in 2004, Huycke says that "upon reflecting on the numerous people I have known who have been very important in the accumulation of the entire steam schooner history, as far as I know, Carl is close to the top of the list of preservers and historians . . . I think it is very important that some space be dedicated to the biographies of those people, like Carl, who did so much in the very earliest years of this research."

Carl Christensen died on January 6, 1986, in Arroyo Grande, California at the age of 79. He was survived by his wife Frankie B. Christensen, daughter and son-in law Beth and Isam Zamamiri, son David R. Christensen, brothers Arthur E. Christensen and George Christensen, and sister Anna McGrew.

Written by Amy Croft, December 2011.

**References:**


**Collection Scope and Content**
The Carl Christensen photograph collection, circa 1908-1920, (SAFR 00311, P83-057a) is comprised of two photographs: one of the San Pedro Waterfront and one of the steam schooner GEORGE W. FENWICK (built 1908). The collection has been processed to the collection level and is open for use.

There are 2 unique photographic images, in 3 physical forms (2 black-and-white photographic prints, 1 copy negative).
Item 1: GEORGE W. FENWICK (built 1908; steam schooner) underway with lumber cargo, starboard broadside view, circa 1908-1920. Photograph likely taken in Astoria, Oregon. "Woodfield photo, Astoria, OR" written on lower right corner of the print. 1 black and white photographic print, 25.25 x 15.75 in. 1 copy negative, 4 x 5 in. Copy negative made by SAFR staff. Original print and copy negative located in oversized drawer, Range 8, Bay 4, Drawer 6.

Item 2: Panorama of the San Pedro Waterfront, circa 1910. 1 black-and-white photographic print, 50.5 x 11.5 in. View of San Pedro, California lumber companies and docks with various vessels in view, including: HARVARD (passenger vessel), YALE (passenger vessel), M.S. DOLLAR (freighter), OLSON & MAHONEY (steam schooner), 3 unidentified steam schooners (possibly ALCATRAZ or ALAZAR, SANTA ROSA ISLAND, W.H. KRUGER) and additional vessels. "Copyright 1910" written on the lower left hand corner of the print. "West Coast Art Co. (Inc.) 115 East Jefferson St. Los Angeles. Phone 22049. Photo No. 827" stamped on the back of the print. Located in oversize drawer D1.3

Collection Arrangement
Not arranged due to small size of collection.

Related Materials

Carl Christensen photograph collections:
- Carl Christensen photographs (SAFR 18548, P78-085a)
- Carl Christensen photographs (SAFR 23357, P78-319a)
- Carl Christensen photograph albums (SAFR 19519, P78-478a) (Previously SCR 9 a-vv)
- Carl Christensen photograph collection (SAFR 19543, P79-093a)
- Carl Christensen photograph collection (SAFR 14390, P85-035)

Harold Huycke collection (SAFR 22224, HDC 1600), Subseries 12.1.03: Carl Christensen photograph collection, circa 1880s-1965, 2002 (bulk 1934-1955). Contains Carl Christensen photographic prints and negatives of a variety of American and foreign vessels (schooners, steamships, etc.).

This material is located at San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Steam schooners
Merchant ships
Lumber trade--Pacific Coast (U.S.)
Christensen, Carl M. (Carl Mobius)
George W. Fenwick (built 1908; steam schooner)
San Pedro (Los Angeles, Calif.)--Harbor
Harbors--California
Black-and-white prints (photographs)
Black-and-white negatives