A guide to the Pacific Queen (built 1886; ship, 3m) scrapbooks, Circa 1858, 1909, 1933-1957 and 1966

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A Guide to the Pacific Queen (built 1886; ship, 3m) scrapbooks

HDC1295

San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park, National Park Service

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Title: Pacific Queen (built 1886; ship, 3m) scrapbooks

Date: Circa 1858, 1909, 1933-1957 and 1966

Date (bulk): 1933-1955

Identifier/Call Number: HDC1295 (SAFR 21354)

Creator: Kissinger, Rose

Physical Description: 2 items.

Repository: San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park, Historic Documents Department

Building E, Fort Mason

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Abstract: The Pacific Queen scrapbooks (SAFR 21354, HDC1295) were compiled by Rose Kissinger. They document more than 20 years of history of one of the San Francisco Maritime National Historic Park's premier exhibits, the BALCLUTHA. The BALCLUTHA is one of the last surviving steel-hulled, square-rigged sailing ships from the 19th Century. The scrapbooks provide a detailed record of the years 1933-1954, when Rose and her husband, Frank, owned, lived on and exhibited the ship, which they had named the PACIFIC QUEEN. This collection is available for use.

Physical Location: San Francisco Maritime NHP, Historic Documents Department

Language(s): In English.

Access

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Processing Note

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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], HDC1295 (SAFR 21354), Pacific Queen (built 1886; ship, 3m) scrapbooks, San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park

Acquisition Information

SAFR-00693

The scrapbooks were donated by Rose Kissinger's nephew on May 18, 1993.

Historical or Biographical Note

The original name of the PACIFIC QUEEN was the BALCLUTHA. Built in 1886 in Glasgow, Scotland, the BALCLUTHA was one of hundreds of ships that carried grain from California's San Joaquin and Sacramento Valleys to Europe. The ship also carried European goods, such as pig iron and scotch whiskey, to San Francisco. In the mid-1890s, it traveled around the world, bringing goods from other ports, such as wool from New Zealand, back to England.

In 1899 the vessel was transferred to the Hawaiian registry and BALCLUTHA became part of the prosperous Pacific Coast lumber trade, sailing north to Puget Sound, then onto Australia. It was the last ship to fly the flag of the Hawaiian Kingdom. In 1901, a special act of Congress admitted BALCLUTHA to the American registry so it could engage in trade between
Subsequently, the Alaska Packers Association, a San Francisco-based firm that harvested and canned salmon, chartered the BALCLUTHA to carry supplies and men north to Alaska. After the ship ran aground in 1904, the Packers Association purchased the ship for $500. The firm did extensive repairs and renamed the vessel STAR OF ALASKA. It regularly carried supplies and cannery workers to Alaska in the spring and returned to San Francisco with cases of canned salmon in September. In 1930, STAR OF ALASKA was the only sailing ship the Packers Association sent to the salmon fishing fields (they once had a fleet of 35). The firm retired the vessel when it returned in September.

Attracted by the knowledge that genuine full-rigged sailing ships were fast becoming obsolete, Frank and Rose Kissinger purchased the STAR from the Packers Association in 1933 for $5,000 and renamed it the PACIFIC QUEEN. The couple, who were married in 1932, lived on board, making it their home as well as their livelihood. They exhibited it as a "pirate ship" up and down the West Coast and leased it for use in films, the most famous being Mutiny on the Bounty. The International Exposition at Treasure Island in 1939 proved especially lucrative for the Kissingers, as the ship earned enough for them to pay off their debts.

However, during World War II, with pier space at San Francisco's Embarcadero dedicated to the war effort, the ship was relegated to a mud flat in Sausalito. There, the PACIFIC QUEEN deteriorated and was nearly reduced to scrap metal for the war effort. After the war ended, the Kissingers were denied a berth on the Embarcadero, so they had the ship towed to Long Beach, where they displayed her as the last of a dying breed of sailing ships. In the early fifties, they moved the ship back north, to Sausalito, and began restoring it to its former glory. Frank Kissinger died of a heart attack while working on the ship in November 1952. He left the PACIFIC QUEEN to Rose, who was one of the few women sailing ship masters licensed in the U.S. Kissinger, who was born around 1902 on a small farm in Michigan, taught navigation to Navy personnel during World War II and to Merchant Marines preparing for exams to earn their mates' or masters' papers. She developed a celestial navigation aid, which she patented in 1944, and which the Navy adopted in its instruction courses. In 1954, the San Francisco Maritime Museum bought the ship from Rose Kissinger for $25,000. With help from the local community, which donated labor, materials and money, the museum restored the vessel, rechristened her BALCLUTHA and put her on public display. BALCLUTHA became part of the National Park Service in 1978 and, in 1985, it was designated a National Historic Landmark. The vessel is truly a national treasure. The BALCLUTHA was one of the last deep-water, full rigged sailing ships to fly the American flag, and the last square rigger of the hundreds that called San Francisco its home port. Only five or six remain in the world, and most of those are floating museums in European ports. (taken, primarily, from "Balclutha History" http://www.nps.gov/safr/historyculture/balclutha-history.htm and scrapbook articles)

Collection Scope and Content
The Pacific Queen scrapbooks (SAFR 21354, HDC1295) were compiled by Rose Kissinger. They document more than 20 years of history of one of the San Francisco Maritime National Historic Park's premier exhibits, the BALCLUTHA. The BALCLUTHA is one of the last surviving steel-hulled, square-rigged sailing ships from the 19th Century. The scrapbooks provide a detailed record of the years 1933-1954, when Rose and her husband, Frank, owned, lived on and exhibited the ship, which they had named the PACIFIC QUEEN. This collection is available for use.

Scrapbook 1 is predominantly composed of clippings from California newspapers and maritime periodicals from 1933-1946. There are a few photos, some personal correspondence and a copy of Rose Kissinger's Navigator's Time Indicator, a visual training aid for navigators that she patented in 1944. There are also copies of other materials, such as reproductions of Lyle Galloway pen and ink sketches of whaling voyages (dated 1966), a passenger ticket from the CHIEFTAN (dated 1858) and maps.

Scrapbook 2 is a continuation of the first book and is predominantly composed of clippings from 1946-1955. It also includes a copy of a radio script from an interview Rose Kissinger gave in 1946, a copy of her agreement with the San Francisco Maritime Museum and a museum press release regarding purchase and restoration of the ship.

There is also one folder of clippings that had not been placed in a scrapbook. Many of these may be duplicates.

Collection Arrangement
Original order was maintained.

1. Volume 1, circa 1858, 1909, 1933-1946, 1966 (folders 1 & 2)
2. Volume 2, 1946-1955 (folders 3 & 4)
3. Loose Pages, 1933-1957 (folder 5)
4. Primary Documents from Scrapbooks 1 & 2, 1933-1955 (folders 6 & 7)

Related Materials
Kissinger, Rose (Donor) “Collection, 1908-1950 (HDC0528, SAFR 9556); Rose Kissinger Photo Collection, ca. 1950 (P88-033, SAFR 17730); Charles Watt Photograph, 1933 (P78-283a, SAFR 19227); Karl Kortum collection (HDC1084 SAFR 18350); Karl Kortum photographs (P78-493, SAFR 19532); MARIPOSA (passenger liner), MONTEREY (passenger liner) press kit and PACIFIC QUEEN (built 1886, ship, 3m) correspondence, 1956-1957, undated (HDC1220, SAFR 20030); BALCLUTHA Records, 1953-1955 (HDC0271, SAFR 17383); BALCLUTHA (1886, ship, 3m) (HDC01167, SAFR 19584); Ship PACIFIC QUEEN document collection, 1935-1936, (HDC0385, SAFR 17646)

This material is located at San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park

Subjects and Indexing Terms
Navigation
Square-riggers
Kissinger, Frank G. Captain
Kissinger, Rose
Balclutha (built 1886; ship, 3m)
Star of Alaska (built 1886; ship, 3m)
San Francisco Bay (Calif.)
Gelatin silver prints
Scrapbooks
Memorabilia
Nautical training-schools
Articles
Maritime history