A guide to the James L. Douthit photographs and oral histories, circa 1965-1975, 1989

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A Guide to the James L. Douthit photographs and oral histories

P91-058

San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park, National Park Service

2016, National Park Service

Title: James L. Douthit photographs and oral histories
Date: circa 1965-1975,
Date: 1989
Identifier/Call Number: P91-058 (SAFR 22588)
Creator: Douthit, James L.
Physical Description: 239 items. Some items available online.
Repository: San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park, Historic Documents Department
Building E, Fort Mason
San Francisco, CA 94123
Abstract: The James L. Douthit photographs and oral histories, circa 1965-1975, 1989 (SAFR 22588, P91-058) consist of 239 photographs and oral history interview transcripts about Monterey clippers, boat builders and fisherman of the San Francisco Bay Area in the 20th century. There are a few photographs of Northern California and Oregon vessels, lighthouses and cities in 1989. The collection is processed at the subseries level.
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
There is possibly a Jim Douthit photograph collection in Alaska. In Douthit’s obituary in the Oakland Tribune, his son Scott is quoted as saying that the family was packing up his father’s extensive collection of photographs of Alaska and sending them to a library in Juneau, Alaska. This fact has not been confirmed as information about a collection of Douthit photographs in Juneau, Alaska, could not be found online.
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], P91-058 (SAFR 22588), James L. Douthit photographs and oral histories, San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park
Acquisition Information
SAFR-00280
SAFR-01193
On February 7, 1991, James L. Douthit donated (SAFR-00280) eight black-and-white photographic prints (8 x 10 inches) to the San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park. The prints show scenes along the Pacific Coast in Northern California and Oregon in 1989. The prints were numbered by Douthit, who originally offered 19 prints to the San Francisco Maritime. However some were deemed out of scope and only eight prints were retained and accessioned; the rest were returned to Douthit. The following prints were retained (numbers refer to Douthit’s numbering scheme): 7/89-1, 7/89-3, 7/89-7, 7/89-12, 7/89-13, 7/89-15, 7/89-17, 7/89-18.
On October 23, 1997, James L. Douthit donated (SAFR-01193) 191 photographic prints and 13 typed transcripts of oral histories to the San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park. The materials were in three binders. The photographs show Monterey fishing boats and boat builders of the Bay Area, and the oral histories were conducted with boat builders in 1973. No audio versions of the oral histories were received in this accession, only transcripts. There are only 10 unique interviews; 3 of the transcripts are duplicate copies.

**Historical or Biographical Note**

James L. Douthit was a photographer and a reporter from the Pacific Northwest and spent many years writing for the Oakland Tribune. He was also a maritime historian and wrote articles on whaling and conducted oral histories of people involved with fishing vessels and steam schooners in California and Oregon.

James L. Douthit (who often went by the name of Jim Douthit) was born on April 16, 1924, in Portland, Oregon, to James Norman Douthit and Philomena (Kurath) Douthit. He had a younger brother named Franklin J. and a younger sister named Mary H. Jim grew up in Portland and in The Dalles, and attended the University of Oregon and the University of Portland. From 1942-1946, he served in the U.S. Air Corps during World War II, mostly in the Pacific Ocean Theater. He contracted malaria and returned to the United States, where he took courses from the Northwest School of Photography. These classes spurred his lifelong love of photography.

Douthit then began his journalism career in Fairbanks, Alaska, as a photographer and reporter. It was here that he met a fellow reporter named Florence Strand, and they were married in 1954. They had four children: Scott, Sally, Shelton, and Sean.

Over the next several years Jim worked as a photographer and a reporter in Long Beach, California; Boise, Idaho; Yakima, Washington; and Portland, Oregon. In 1959 he and his family moved to Berkeley, California, where he became a reporter for the Oakland Tribune and his wife became a reporter for the Berkeley Daily Gazette.

Douthit was interested in maritime history and in the 1960s he wrote articles on whaling. After he moved to Berkeley, he developed an interest in Bay Area maritime history. According to his son Scott, for many years Jim would travel local waterways on his Chinese junk and the family also lived on the vessel in the summers. In 1973, Douthit conducted interviews of men about Monterey fishing boats. From 1988 to the early 1990s, Jim conducted some more oral histories with people living in California and Oregon who had been involved with steam schooners in the early 20th century.

Douthit was an activist and volunteered for many years with Second Harvest Food Bank in South San Francisco and for the Sempervirens Fund, which protects and preserves redwood forests, wildlife habitats, watersheds, and other natural features of California’s Santa Cruz Mountains.

In 1988, Douthit retired to care for his ailing wife. Around 1994, Jim moved to South San Francisco to be closer to his family and he died there on August 12, 2004.

**Sources**

- Frommer, Katherine. 2004 August 21. "Former Tribune reporter Douthit dies; One-time Berkeley resident devoted life to journalism, research." Oakland Tribune [Oakland, Calif].

**Collection Scope and Content**

The James L. Douthit photographs and oral histories, circa 1965-1975, 1989 (SAFR 22588, P91-058) consist of 239 photographs and oral history interview transcripts about Monterey clippers, boat builders and fisherman of the San Francisco Bay Area in the 20th century. There are a few photographs of Northern California and Oregon vessels, lighthouses and cities in 1989. The collection is processed at the subseries level.

Contains photographs of Monterey clipper fishing boats, fishermen and the fishing trade, and boat shops, taken circa 1965-1975. The majority of the photographs are of vessels, some with operators on board. Some photographs depict on-deck scenes of fishing or fishing equipment: portraits of fishermen, views of preparing lines, hauling in fish, and weighing fish on the dock. The collection also includes transcripts of interviews with Monterey clipper boat builders and fishermen, and photographs of some of the interviewees. There are 8 photographs of Northern California and Oregon vessels, lighthouses and cities taken in 1989.

**Collection Arrangement**


**Related Materials**
James L. Douthit also donated 31 oral histories to the San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park in the 1990s. The oral histories were taken in the summer of 1989 in various cities in northern California (including Crescent City, Elk, Eureka, Fort Bragg, Greenwood, Smith River) and Oregon (including Bandon, Brookings, Coos Bay, Columbia City, North Bend).

**James L. Douthit Oral History Interviews in the San Francisco Maritime Museum Oral History collection (SAFR 21848)**

- OHCC261 Harold Del Ponte interviewed by Jim Douthit, Summer 1989. Del Ponte is from Requa, California.
- OHCC262 John McMillian interviewed by Jim Douthit, Summer 1989. McMillian is from Klamath, California.
- OHCC263 Bob Tickner interviewed by Jim Douthit, Summer 1989. Tickner is from Harbor, Oregon.
- OHCC265 Julia Richardson interviewed by Jim Douthit, June 1, 1989. Stewarts Point, CA, family schooners; Piano on the wire.
- OHCC266 Jim Douthit interview/notes to self, Summer 1989. Side A: Bandon, OR. ("Notes" written on label). Side B: Bob Tickner, Harbor, Oregon ("not on tape" is written on the case in pencil and pointing to side B)
- OHCC267 Bob Bolen and Ron Bolen interviewed by Jim Douthit, Summer 1989. Smith River; Crescent City, California.
- OHCC269 Dave Sverko interviewed by Jim Douthit, Summer 1989.
- OHCC272 Captain John Edlund interviewed by Jim Douthit, Summer 1989. North Bend, Oregon.
- OHCC279 Louie Kapiskie (Old Louie) interviewed by Jim Douthit, Summer 1989.

This material is located at San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**

- Fishing boats--California--San Francisco Bay Area
- Fishing boats--United States--Design and construction
- Fishing--California, Northern
- Monterey clippers
- Yukon Gang
Lighthouses--Oregon
Lighthouses--California
Douthit, James L. (1924-2004)
Beltrano, Peter (1909-1997)
Beviacqua, Joseph Charles (1910-2002)
Coleman, Mike
Cravello, Dan
Ghio, Dominic (1918-2000)
Ghio, Tony
Jerome, Joe
Maggi, Joe
Maniscalpo, Frank
Melendy, Vaughn
Morrison, David
Rafello, Carl "Gucchi"
Wetton, Edward (1891-1987)
endsen's Boat Works (Alameda, Calif.)
Genoa Boat Works (San Francisco, Calif.)
Monterey Boat Works (Monterey, Calif.)
Baby Sal (monterey clipper)
Cornucopia (monterey clipper)
Donna Maria (monterey clipper)
Florence (monterey clipper)
Gloria M. (monterey clipper)
Little Rose (monterey clipper)
Maria Sabina (monterey clipper)
Natalie (built 1941 or 1942; monterey clipper)
Virginia (monterey clipper)
Black-and-white prints
oral histories (document genres)
transcripts
Series 1. Monterey clippers, boat builders and fisherman, circa 1965-1975

Subseries 1.1. Photograph albums of Monterey clipper fishing boats, boat builders, and fishermen, c...
Subseries 1.1. Photograph albums of Monterey clipper fishing boats, boat builders, and fisherman, circa 1965-1975

Extent: 2 volumes (185 gelatin silver black-and-white photographic prints, sizes ranging from 3.5 x 10.5 in. to 8 x 10 in.)

Scope and Content Note

2 volumes of photographs of fishing boats and boat builders, some of which contain duplicate images. In both volumes, nearly half of the photographs are stamped with "Marine Photos; by 'Skipper Jake' Jacob Krurath."

Both binders that originally housed the photographs had labels inside the front cover:
James L. Douthit; 304 A St. Apt 3; S San Fran CA 94080-4438; (415) 952-4745.

Biography/Organization History

These photographs are most likely from either a personal or professional project that Douthit was working on regarding the history of Monterey clippers.

Arrangement

Photographs were left in Douthit's original order within each volume.

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File Unit 1. Volume 1, circa 1965-1975

Extent: 1 volume (3 folders).

Scope and Content Note

Photographs include numerous Monterey clippers on blocks at boat shops, at anchor and dock, and underway. Some photographs show numerous vessels in unidentified marinas. Several photographs depict on-deck scenes of fishing or fishing equipment. The majority of photographs are of vessels, some with operators on board. There are also photographs of Svendsen’s Boat Works, of Alameda, California; Genoa Boat Works, of San Francisco, California; and Monterey Boat Works, of Monterey, California. One photograph of a boat trolling for salmon is identified as being located off of Point Reyes, California. Most other locations are unknown. Identified vessels are ANNE, BABY SAL (Sal Balesteri’s boat), BETSY, CATHERINE, DAGON, DONNA MARIA (Ron Melendy’s boat), FOX, GINA MARIA, HELEN RUTH, IRENE, JACKIE BOY, JOHANNA, JOHN J., LITTLE ROSE, MARIA SABINA, MARIANA ANN, MIKE, NATALIE (“Doc” Cravello’s boat, built by Genoa Boat Shop in 1941 or 1942), and SEA HORNET.

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Box 1, folder 1

Item No. 001. Genoa Boat Works building exterior, circa 1965-1975

Extent: 1 photograph.

Physical Description: Black-and-white photographic print, 8 x 10 in.

Scope and Content Note

Photograph of the outside of Genoa Boat Works, San Francisco, California, where Monterey clippers were built. What appears to be the stem of a hull is in the foreground.

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Box 1, folder 1

Item No. 025. Little Rose (Monterey clipper) up on blocks, circa 1965-1975

Extent: 1 photograph.

Physical Description: Black-and-white photographic print, 8 x 10 in.

Scope and Content Note

Port view of the vessel out of the water. The vessel is in a boat lot, perhaps at a marina or boat shop, with other boats around it.
Baby Sal (Monterey clipper) in line with other Monterey clippers,
circa 1965-1975

Extent: 1 photograph.
Physical Description: Black-and-white photographic print, 8 x 10 in.
Scope and Content Note
BABY SAL was the boat of Sal Balesteri, fisherman. The vessel is one among seven
other vessels lined-up in an unidentified marina.

Unidentified fisherman working off his Monterey clipper,
circa 1965-1975

Extent: 1 photograph.
Physical Description: Black-and-white photographic print, 8 x 10 in.
Scope and Content Note
Starboard view of the vessel in the fog, with the fisherman standing and appears to
be working the lines.

Unidentified fisherman preparing lines on deck of a Monterey Clipper,
circa 1965-1975

Extent: 1 photograph.
Physical Description: Black-and-white photographic print, 8 x 10 in.
Scope and Content Note
Lures and spinners being prepared for casting, at the bow of the boat.

Josie M (Monterey clipper) along side an unidentified Monterey clipper,
circa 1965-1975

Extent: 1 photograph.
Physical Description: Black-and-white photographic print, 8 x 10 in.
Scope and Content Note
The two fishing boats are seen side-by-side in an unidentified marina. The JOSIE M
is on the left. The unidentified boat has a man visible on board and what appears
to be a young adult along side the unidentified boat in a small craft.
Subseries 1.1. Photograph albums of Monterey clipper fishing boats, boat builders, and fishermen, circa 1965-1975

Item No. 074. **Unidentified fisherman baiting lines, circa 1965-1975**

- **Extent:** 1 photograph.
- **Physical Description:** Black-and-white photographic print, 8 x 10 in.
- **Scope and Content Note**
  The man is baiting two large sets of line with bait fish on the deck of a Monterey clipper.

Item No. 079. **Fisherman holding up two of the day's catch, circa 1965-1975**

- **Extent:** 1 photograph.
- **Physical Description:** Black-and-white photographic print, 8 x 10 in.
- **Scope and Content Note**
  Unidentified man holding a fish in each hand as he stands on an unidentified fishing dock. The Monterey Clipper, SKIP-A-LOU, is seen in the background.

Item No. 088. **Five Monterey Clippers at dock outside of the A. Romeo Fish Co., circa 1965-1975**

- **Extent:** 1 photograph.
- **Physical Description:** Black-and-white photographic print, 8 x 10 in.
- **Scope and Content Note**
  There is a man standing on the deck of one of the unidentified ships. The ARIES and MARIA SABINA have names in view.

Subseries 1.2. **Oral Histories and photographs of the interviewees, 1973**

- **Extent:** 1 volume (46 items: 33 typed pages and 13 gelatin silver black-and-white photographic prints, 8 x 10 in.)
- **Scope and Content Note**
  10 interviews of Monterey clipper boat builders and fishermen, some are identified as members of the Yukon Gang. Includes 13 photographs of the interviewees.
  Transcripts of interviews with: Barber of the vessel FAITH (first name not given; possibly Wally Barber?), Joe Beviacqua (who was once chief shipwright for the GGNRA National Maritime Museum), Mike Coleman, Dan Cravello, Dominic Ghio and Tony Ghio (3 copies), Joe Jerome of the vessel LUCKY LADY, Joe Maggi of the vessel ANNA M., Frank Maniscalpo, Vaughn Melendy (also a member of the Yukon Gang), David Morrison (2 copies), Carl Rafello, Ed Wetton (2 copies). Includes photographs of Pete Beltrano, Joe Beviacqua, Joe Jerome, one unidentified man, and the vessel CORNUCOPIA. It appears that Pete Beltrano was not interviewed, but his photograph was in the volume with the other oral histories, so it was left in place.
  It is unknown where the original interview audio tapes or reels are; the San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park only holds these transcripts.

**Biography/Organization History**

These photographs and transcripts are most likely from either a personal or professional project that Douthit was working on regarding the history of Monterey clippers.

**Arrangement**

Interviews and photographs arranged alphabetically by last name of interviewee, in two separate folders.

**File Unit 1. Volume 3, 1973**

- **Extent:** 1 volume (2 folders).
Box 1, folder 11  
**Item No. 001. Portrait of Joe Beviacqua, 1973**  
Extent: 1 photograph.  
Physical Description: Black-and-white photographic print, 8 x 10 in.  
Scope and Content Note  
Beviacqua is wearing a hard hat and appears to have naval plans in front of him. Beviacqua was a shipwright foreman at the former San Francisco Maritime State Historical Park.

Box 1, folder 11  
**Item No. 002. Portrait of an unidentified Monterey Clipper fisherman, 1973**  
Extent: 1 photograph.  
Physical Description: Black-and-white photographic print, 8 x 10 in.  
Scope and Content Note  
The man is wearing an Alaska Independent Fishermen's Marketing Association (AIFMA) hat, and he is sitting on what appears to be a dock.

Box 1, folder 11  
**Item No. 003. Portrait of Joe Jerome, Monterey Clipper fisherman, 1973**  
Extent: 1 photograph.  
Physical Description: Black-and-white photographic print, 8 x 10 in.  
Scope and Content Note  
Jerome was the owner of the LUCKY LADY.

Box 1, folder 11  
**Item No. 007. Portrait of Pete Beltrano, operating his Monterey Clipper, Florence, 1973**  
Extent: 1 photograph.  
Physical Description: Black-and-white photographic print, 8 x 10 in.  
Scope and Content Note  
Beltrano, a San Francisco Bay fisherman, is seen in the cabin, operating his boat.

Box 1, folder 12  
**Series 2. Northern California and Oregon vessels, lighthouses and cities, 1989**  
Extent: 8 photographs (8 gelatin silver black-and-white photographic prints, 8 x 10 in.)  
Scope and Content Note  
Contains views of Fort Ross, California; Umpqua River lighthouse in Oregon; Battle Rock at Port Orford, Oregon; COLUMBIA (built 1950; lightship: museum ship) at Astoria, Oregon; Point Arena, California; MARY D. HUME (built 1881; steamer) at Gold Beach, Oregon; Point Cabrillo lighthouse, California; and Coquille River lighthouse at Bandon, Oregon.  
Arrangement  
Arranged in numerical order, using the photographer's numbers.  
Provenance  
These photographs were taken when Douthit was traveling through California and Oregon in 1989, conducting oral histories about steam schooners. The oral histories that he conducted on this trip are held in the San Francisco Maritime Museum Oral History collection (SAFR 21848). The list of oral histories that he conducted can be found in the "Related Materials" section of the front matter in this finding aid.