A guide to the Hicks family and Hicks Engine Works photograph albums, 1895-1925

San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park
Building E, Fort Mason
San Francisco, CA 94123
Phone: 415-561-7030
Fax: 415-556-3540
SAFR_Historic_Documents@nps.gov
URL: http://www.nps.gov/safr
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A Guide to the Hicks family and Hicks Engine Works photograph albums

P16-013

San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park, National Park Service

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Title: Hicks family and Hicks Engine Works photograph albums
Date: 1895-1925
Identifier/Call Number: P16-013 (SAFR 24849)
Creator: Hicks family
Physical Description: 3 items.
Repository: San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park, Historic Documents Department
Building E, Fort Mason
San Francisco, CA 94123
Abstract: The Hicks engines and family photograph albums, circa 1895-1925, (SAFR 24849, P16-013) are comprised of albums containing photographs related to the production and use of Hicks engines. The collection has been processed to the File Unit 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.

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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], P16-013 (SAFR 24849), Hicks family and Hicks Engine Works photograph albums, San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park

Acquisition Information
SAFR-02523

Frank A. Hicks (1880-1927) gave the collection to his son, James William Hicks (1903-1983). James passed the collection on to his own son, Robert Hicks, who donated it to San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park in December 2016. Robert's son, Greg Hicks, was also involved in the donation process.

Historical or Biographical Note
James L. Hicks, an Irish immigrant, was a machinist in San Francisco, California. His business focused on sewing machines early in his career, and later he shifted to gas engines and machine tools.
Hicks' refinements to the single cylinder four-stroke engine led to it becoming the engine of choice with San Francisco Bay Area fisherman due to its reliability and durability at a fair price. The company was sold circa 1918 and renamed the Hicks Iron Works, later Hicks Engine Works. In 1927, the Yuba Manufacturing Company took over the production of Hicks engines until the 1940s. Frank A. Hicks, James L. Hicks' son, was also a machinist. He operated a shop in Los Angeles, California.
Collection Scope and Content
The Hicks engines and family photograph albums, circa 1895-1925, (SAFR 24849, P16-013) are comprised of albums containing photographs related to the production and use of Hicks engines. The collection has been processed to the File Unit level and is open for use.

Contains albums with photographs of Hicks engines and the San Francisco, California, shops where they were manufactured as well as photographs of fishing boats and Hicks family members, circa 1895-1925. There are 2 photograph albums containing a total of 218 items (primarily black-and-white photographic prints) and 1 mounted photographic print. Some of the same images appear in both albums.

The albums include photographs of various Hicks engine models. There are views of Hicks’ shops located at 108 Main Street and 967-969 Howard Street in San Francisco, California, some of which show staff at work. There are also photographs of the Frank A. Hicks Machinery shop at 242-244 Central Avenue in Los Angeles, California.

The albums also include photographs of power yachts and fishing boats, from feluccas to the gas-engine powered boats that replaced them. This shows the progression in West Coast maritime technology as fisherman came to rely less on sails and more on marine engines which led to the development of Monterey clippers. There are photographs of fishing boats at San Francisco’s Fisherman’s Wharf, and other fishing fleets and fish processing activities in unidentified locations.

The collection also includes photographs of company founder James L. Hicks, his sons Robert and Frank A., and Frank’s children James W., Mary, and Edward. Some of the photographs show Hicks family members vacationing in Lake County, California.

Collection Arrangement
The collections is arranged into 1 series with 3 file units by album and physical form.

Related Materials

This material is located at San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park

Hicks Engine plans and marketing materials, 1918-1950. SFMNHP, (SAFR 17336, HDC1092). Contains primarily fabrication drawings for Hicks engines and parts as well as assembly lists for Hicks engines produced between 1918 to 1950.

This material is located at San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park

Subjects and Indexing Terms
Marine engines
Marine machinery
Fishing boats
Hicks Iron Works
San Francisco (Calif.)
Los Angeles (Calif.)
Photograph albums
Black-and-white prints (photographs)

Box 1-2; Oversize storage
Series 1. Hicks engines and family photographs, circa 1895-1925
Extent: 3 items (2 photograph albums and 1 mounted print)
Arrangement
Arranged into 3 file units by album and physical form.
Box 1  A Photographic History of the Hicks Gas Engine photograph album, circa 1895-1920

Extent: 1 photograph album.

Physical Description: 1 photograph album, 8.25 x 11.5 in., with 63 pages containing 90 black-and-white photographic prints, 1 advertising card, 3 non-photographic images, and 1 newspaper clipping; loose items found inside the album: 1 business card, 5 black-and-white photographic prints, 1 set of forms (13 sheets).

Scope and Content Note

Consists of an album containing photographs related to the manufacture and use of Hicks engines. Embossed on the cover are "A Photographic History of the Hicks Gas Engine" and "F. A. Hicks." Includes photographs of San Francisco Bay Area fishing boats, both sail (feluccas) and engine-powered, as well as power yachts. There are photographs of Hicks' San Francisco shops located at 108 Main Street and 967-969 Howard Street, both exterior building shots and views of men assembling engines inside. Also includes photographs of Hicks family members (James L., his sons Frank and Robert, and Frank's daughter Mary). Some of the photographs are hand-colored, and some photographs are embossed or stamped with the logo of Morton Photographs, San Francisco.

Photographs by page:

Page 1: Golden Gate, San Francisco Bay.
Page 2: Portrait of James L. Hicks; two men inside a shop; engine; advertising card for "Hicks' Gas or Gasoline Engines" at 677 Mission Street (office) and 108 Main Street (works) in San Francisco.
Page 3: Horseless carriages; men assembling a carriage inside a shop.
Page 4: Men inside Hicks' works at 108 Main Street, circa 1898; boat hauled out; engine.
Page 5: Engines.
Page 6: Men inside Hicks' works at 108 Main Street, circa 1898; GARIBALDI (power fishing boat) tied up; Mary Hicks (daughter of Frank A. Hicks) posing with an engine.
Page 7: Mechanic's Institute Industrial Exhibition coins. One is dated 1877.
Pages 8-9: Feluccas and fishermen at Fisherman's Wharf, San Francisco.
Pages 10-13: Engines.
Page 14: Three panoramic views of San Francisco showing the city burning after the April 1906 earthquake, May 1906 ruins, and reconstruction as seen in 1911.
Page 15: Portraits (right to left) of Robert Hicks, James L. Hicks, and Frank A. Hicks; exterior of J.L. Hicks shop at 967-969 Howard Street, San Francisco.
Page 16: Advertisement for Hicks Engines, circa 1915; power boats NEW PRESIDENT, MYRTLE, and unidentified (with Al Nelson on board?).
Page 17: Engine; P. & C. Cutlery & Saw Works truck, circa 1911; power boat underway; power fishing boats docked along a wharf (includes TON, MARU, SISTER, TAIYO and others. An American Tuna Co. sign is visible on one of the buildings.).
Page 18: Combine harvester; engine.
Page 19: Interior view of Hicks' Gas Engine Works machine shop in San Francisco. James L. Hicks is on the right, wearing a vest.
Pages 20-21: Engines.
Page 22: Trophy engraved with "Presented by Cav. J. F. Fugazi to the North Beach Thanksgiving Carnival Nov. 24th 1910 Frank A. Hicks." (Cavalier John F. Fugazi was a prominent San Francisco travel agent, banker and philanthropist).
Page 23: Trophy engraved with "Presented by Castagnetto & Matteucci to the North Beach Thanksgiving Carnival Assoc'n. Nov. 24th 1910 Won By: Frank A. Hicks." (Castagnetto & Matteucci were San Francisco jewelers or watchmakers).
Pages 24-25: Engines.
Page 26: Mary Hicks (daughter of Frank A. Hicks) with an engine.
Page 27: PILOT (launch); NONE SUCH (schooner, 2m); newspaper clipping about PILOT of San Diego.
Page 28: INDEPENDENT (power fishing boat) with men, women, and a child on board.
Page 29: OHIO, SAN DIEGO(?), and an unidentified power fishing boat; engine.
Pages 30-32: Fishing fleets moored and hauled out.
Page 33: Engine installed aboard a vessel.
Page 34: Boats hauled out in front of Genoa Boat Builders boatyard, San Francisco; Captain San [Fuleppo?] and boat at Monterey, California.
Page 35: Fishing fleet docked at Fisherman's Wharf, San Francisco.
Pages 36-37: ROSALINA (schooner, 2m) on the ways at B. Caviglia Boat Builders boatyard, San Francisco.
Page 38: ISABEL (cruiser yacht) underway.
File Unit 2. **Untitled photograph album, circa 1900-1925**

Extent: 1 photograph album.

Physical Description: 1 photograph album, 8.25 x 11.5 in., with 58 pages containing 91 black-and-white photographic prints; 25 loose black-and-white photographic prints

Scope and Content Note

Consists of an album containing photographs related to Hicks engines, Frank A. Hicks' machinery business in Los Angeles, and the Hicks family. Includes photographs of fishing boats, both sail (feluccas) and engine-powered, as well as power yachts. Some photographs were taken in Oregon and Washington. There are also photographs of the Hicks family vacationing in Lake County, California. Some of the photographs appear more than once inside this album.

Photographs by page:

Page 1: Feluccas docked at Fisherman's Wharf, San Francisco.

Page 2: SKALU and other power boats docked; power boats CROFTON, DEFIANCE, MOLLUSK II, and MADELEINE docked (Grand Trunk Pacific sign is on a building in the background).

Page 3: Fishing fleets in various locations. (The photo in the lower right has a building with "I Wharf Fish Market" and "B.S. Snow & Co." painted on it.)

Page 4: DIVER (built 1917; power boat) hauled out at Astoria, Oregon (built by Wickstrom and Nyman); docked power boats including ADRIATIC, PROSPERITY, MAGNET, TACOMA, NOME, VEGA, and OJOA.

Page 5: MAINE (power fishing boat) underway with men, women, and children aboard.

Page 6: Lifeboats built by Wickstrom and Nyman, Astoria, Oregon.

Page 7: Unidentified power yacht underway; MAINE (power fishing boat) ready to launch.

Page 8: ROSALINA (schooner, 2m) on the ways at B. Caviglia Boat Builders boatyard, San Francisco; MARINICE (power boat) underway, flying a "Jos. Ullmann" flag.

Page 9: NEW PRESIDENT (fishing boat?) in the stream; MAINE (power fishing boat) ready to launch.

Page 10: Unidentified power yacht underway; MAINE (power fishing boat) ready to launch.

Page 11: Boat on a marine railway (engine visible); unidentified power yacht underway.

Page 12: MARIA (fishing boat?); MAINE (power fishing boat).

Page 13: MAINE (power fishing boat); OHIO, SAN DIEGO(?), and an unidentified power fishing boat.

Pages 14-15: Unidentified power boat underway; crowd of people aboard a power boat; MAINE (power fishing boat) ready to launch.

Page 16: Monterey clippers docked; SKALU and other power fishing boats docked.

Page 17: MAINE (power fishing boat) ready to launch.

Page 18: MAINE (power fishing boat) ready to launch; two unidentified men; view aboard a fishing boat.

Page 19: MAINE (power fishing boat) underway with men, women, and children aboard; unidentified street scene.

Page 20: Interior of a machine shop.

Page 21: Engines.

Page 22: Men working outside of Frank A. Hicks Machinery shop at 242-244 Central Avenue, Los Angeles, California; Atlas Auto Repair Co. building.

Page 23: Salvador posing with an engine; machinery close-up.

Page 24: Machinery loaded on a truck and flatbed train car in Los Angeles.

Page 25: Mary Hicks (daughter of Frank A. Hicks) with an engine; shop interior.

Pages 26-30: Engines. One photograph on Page 30 was taken in Walla Walla, Washington, of an engine on a combine harvester.

Page 31: Exterior of Frank A. Hicks Machinery shop at 242-244 Central Avenue, Los Angeles.

Page 32: Engines.


Pages 34-36: Engines.

Pages 37-38: Exterior of Frank A. Hicks Machinery shop at 242-244 Central Avenue, Los Angeles.

Page 39: Machinery loaded on a flatbed train car in Los Angeles; Atlas Auto Repair Co. building.

Pages 40-41: Engines.

Page 42: Machine shop interior; window of Frank A. Hicks Machinery shop with trophies in view.

Page 43-44: Engines.

File Unit 3. Mounted print, circa 1920

Extent: 1 photograph.

Physical Description: 1 black-and-white photographic print, 11 x 14 in., mounted on 16 x 17 in. mat.

Scope and Content Note
Consists of a photograph of men at work in the engine assembly area of Hicks Iron Works, San Francisco, California. The image is captioned: "Engine Assembly Area circa 1920. Expanded production facilities as a result of the business expansion efforts during the Demarest era (1918-1924) is revealed in this orderly engine assembly scene. Courtesy of the Hicks Family and Harcourt Hervey III."

The same image appears in the photograph album in File Unit 1, page 46.