Title: Frederic Hicks papers
Collection number: 2238
Contributing Institution: UCLA Library Special Collections
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 7.0 linear ft. (7 carton boxes)
Date (inclusive): 1955-2012
Abstract: This collection documents the activities and writings of Frederic Hicks. Hicks was a distinguished scholar of Mesoamerican ethnohistory and anthropology. The collection chronicles Hicks' work at Cerro Portezuelo, his editing of the Codex Vergara, and his professional life at the University of Louisville.
Language of Materials: Materials are primarily in English and Spanish, with some materials in German.
Physical Location: Stored off-site at SRLF. Advance notice is required for access to the collection. Please contact the UCLA Library Special Collections Reference Desk for paging information.
Creator: Hicks, Frederic, 1928-

Restrictions on Access
COLLECTION STORED OFF-SITE AT SRLF: Open for research. Advance notice required for access. Contact the UCLA Library Special Collections Reference Desk for paging information.

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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Frederic Hicks Papers (Collection 2238). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

UCLA Catalog Record ID
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Provenance/Source of Acquisition
Gift of Estate of Fred Hicks, 2014.

Processing Information
Processed by Melanie Jones in May 2016 under the supervision of Courtney Dean in the Center for Primary Research and Training (CFPRT).

Biography/History
Frederic Hicks was a distinguished scholar of Mesoamerican ethnohistory and anthropology. He was born in New Orleans on January 7, 1928, and was raised in Connecticut. After completing his Bachelors in Anthropology at the University of New Mexico, he earned his Ph.D. at UCLA, working on George Brainerd’s archaeological project at Cerro Portezuelo, Mexico and coauthoring “The Transition from Classic to Postclassic at Cerro Portezuelo” with H.B. Nicholson in 1962. He then received a Fulbright teaching grant to study and work in Paraguay for three years.

In 1965, Hicks began teaching at the University of Louisville, eventually becoming Chair of the Anthropology Department. He was very active in the local progressive social justice community, alongside his wife Dr. Judith Joel. Hicks made fundamental contributions to anthropological understandings of pre-Columbian Aztec society, including the nature of taxation, tribute, and labor organization, the political dynamics of local and imperial organizations, and the social organization and economic stratification of the empire. He served as President and Chair of the Robert F. Heizer Prize Committee for the American Society for Ethnohistory, as well as organizing numerous conference sessions and symposia on Anthropology and Ethnohistory.

After his retirement, Hicks returned to his research on Cerro Portezuelo, hoping to complete a book on the project. His most recent article about the site’s architecture was published in Ancient Mesoamerica shortly before his death. He also co-edited an annotated facsimile edition of the Codex Vergara, an Aztec cadastral document drawn up by the Spanish conquerors of Mexico. The project reflects his decades of experience in Mexican archives, his deep knowledge of anthropology and ethnohistorical literature, and extensive personal collection of source materials.

Frederic Hicks participated in trips to China, Cuba, Iran, Tibet, Nepal and Bhutan after his retirement, continuing to research and write academically almost until his last hour. He died July 9, 2013 in Louisville at age 85, after being diagnosed with lung cancer.
Scope and Content
The collection spans 1955 to 2012, with the bulk of materials coming from 1960 to 1990. The collection documents Hicks’ decades of experience in Mexican archives, his deep knowledge of anthropology and ethnohistorical literature, and his extensive personal collection of source materials, as well as his contributions to anthropological understandings of pre-Columbian Aztec society.

Materials are largely textual, comprising research files, correspondence, article manuscripts, and field notes. Among other formats are photographs and illustrations. Also included is a file from Hicks’ executrix, with local obituaries and Hicks’ most recent CV. Some of the significant organizations and topics represented in these files are: the American Society for Ethnohistory, the University of California, Los Angeles, the University of Louisville, the American Civil Liberties Union of Kentucky, Cerro Portezuelo, the Codex Vergara, and the Aztec Empire.

Organization and Arrangement
This collection has been arranged in the following series:

- **Series 1: Cerro Portezuelo (1960-2012)**
- **Series 2: Codex Vergara (2003-2012)**
- **Series 3: Personal and Professional Correspondence (1955-2012)**
- **Series 4: Field Notebooks and Journals (1958-2010)**

The collection has been organized at the box level.

Subjects and Indexing Terms
Hicks, Frederic, 1928-- Archives

### Boxes 1-2

**Cerro Portezuelo Research Files. 1960-2012.**

**Scope and Content**
Contains Hicks’ work at the Cerro Portezuelo excavations as a UCLA graduate student, and his work after his retirement to compile the results of those findings into further academic publications. Significant topics and persons include the Aztec empire, Central Mexican artifacts, Lake Texcoco, Teotihuacan, George Brainerd, and H.B. Nicholson.

### Box 3

**Codex Vergara Research Files. 2003-2012.**

**Scope and Content**
Contains Hicks’ work on the annotated facsimile edition of *El Códice Vergara: edición facsimilar con comentario: pintura indígena de casas, campos y organización social de Tepetlaoztoc a mediados del siglo XVI* with Barbara Williams, including research notes, manuscript drafts, and correspondence between the two co-editors. Significant topics include the Kingdom of Acolhuacan, the Aztec empire, the economic and social structures of Tepetlaoztoc, and El Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Anthropología Social.

### Boxes 4-6

**Personal and Professional Correspondence. 1955-2012.**

**Scope and Content**
Contains Hicks’ personal and professional correspondence, largely with colleagues in anthropology, ethnohistory, and archaeology, as well as letters of recommendation. Significant topics include Congreso International de Americanistas, the International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, Chiapa de Corzo, the Codex Vergara, Cerro Portezuelo, the University of Louisville Anthropology Department, the American Anthropological Association, Hicks’ service in the Korean War, and his Global Exchange trip to Iran.
Field Notebooks and Journals. 1958-2010.

Scope and Content
Contains Hicks’ personal journals, excavation field notes, artifact catalogues, and maps from his work in Mesoamerica, as well as language and pronunciation practice notes from his travels to Asia. Significant topics and areas include Cerro Portezuelo, Cacaxtla, Tlaxcala, Tepetlaaxtoc, Santa Catarina, UCLA Paipai Project, and the Codex Vergara.