PENOBSCOT MARINE MUSEUM

**Inventory for
Manuscript Collection**

PMM 54
Harold Gower Account Books

1938-1969

½ box
0.25 linear feet
Accession No. LB2015.9

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PMM 54
Harold Gower Account Books

Harold Gower, 1899-1972
  Account books, 1938-1969
  ½ box (.25 linear feet)
  Boatbuilder on Beals Island, Maine
  Account books listing specifications, materials, building costs, and employee time spent on boats built by Harold Gower on Beals Island, Maine in the mid-twentieth century. Gower built and designed wooden, powered lobster boats. The collection also contains a personal account book and two directories from the Maine Boat Builders and Repairers Association.
  In English
  Douglas Dodge; Gift; 2015; LB2015.9
  Finding aid available, folder level control

Subject Headings:
  Gower, Harold, 1899-1972
  Beals Island (Me.)
  Boatbuilders
  Boatbuilding
  Boatyards
  Lobster industry

Acquisition:
  This collection was given to the Penobscot Marine Museum by Douglas Dodge in 2015. Dodge was Harold Gower's nephew, who worked with Gower in the boatshop from a young age.

Restrictions:
  The boatshop account books (folders 1 and 2) are restricted and may not be viewed until 2047. It may be possible to obtain copies of pages related to boat specifications and construction; please consult with library staff.

Condition:
  All the bindings in this collection are fragile. The spines on the two boatshop account books are detached and the stitching is breaking. The cloth covers on these are worn and frayed. The cover on one of the directories for the Maine Boatbuilders and Repairers Association is torn and held together with Scotch Tape. Text blocks are legible and generally in good condition, though various papers stored between the pages may pose problems over time.

Related Materials:
  Several photographs of Gower's boats were donated with this collection; these are now in the PMM Photo Archives.
  The University of Maine Special Collections holds two recordings of interviews with Harold Gower, from 1970 and 1972, touching on his career, family, and boatbuilding techniques and philosophy. UMaine Special Collections, na2962 and na900.

Processing Note:
      Documents tucked between pages of the account books have been left in place.

Historical Note:
      Harold Gower (1899-1972) was a well-known lobster boat builder from Beals Island, Maine. He was born in Westport, Nova Scotia, where he began his career at age 13 fishing with his father and building cabins for local boats in the winter. About 1920, he moved to Grand Manan, New Brunswick, and went to work repairing boats, and in 1925 moved to Beals Island to work for boatbuilder William Frost.
      Harold Gower worked with Frost for about eight years, building lobster boats, rumrunners, and other wooden power boats, before starting his own shop in Beals in 1936. Gower credited Frost for some of the design elements that would become his signature, like building a reverse curve into boat bottoms for strength and speed, though he adapted the forms to the changing needs of the lobster industry. He built 110 wooden boats and one of fiberglass for customers in Beals and around the state.
      Gower married Nella Alley (1906-2001) of Beals Island in 1928. Nella handled many of the bookkeeping parts of the business. Nella's nephew, Douglas Dodge, grew up in the boatshop, and finished Gower's final boat in after Gower's death in 1972.

Scope and Content:
      This collection contains two account books that cover the business of Harold Gower's boatshop from 1938 to 1969. They include written specifications for new boats from customers, materials orders, records of the cost to build, and prices charged for each boat. They also contain detailed employee records, including hours worked and wages paid. Generally, employee information is at the front of the volumes, and boat records are in the back.
      The collection also contains a personal account book from Harold Gower, which records household and medical expenses, income calculations, and receipts for paint, timber, and other materials for the years 1957 and 1958. There are also two directories from the Maine Boat Builders and Repairers Association, which contain descriptions and photographs of Gower's business.

Box and Folder List:

Box	Folder	
1	1	Boatshop account book, 1938-1959
	2	Boatshop account book, 1965-1969
	3	Personal account book, 1957-1958
	4	Directories, Maine Boat Builders and Repairers Association