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PMM 49

Nickels Family Estate Papers

1850 – 1977

1 box
.5 linear feet
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PMM 49

Nickels Family Estate Papers

Nickels Family

Papers, 1850-1977

1 box (.5 linear feet)

Family of sea captains from Searsport, Maine

Wills, inventories, deeds, and probate records for three generations of the Nickels family of Searsport, Maine. The earliest documents are from Jonathan C., Albert V., and Edward D.P. Nickels, all sea captains in the late nineteenth century. Their estates, including vessels and real estate, were inherited by David W. Nickels and, later, his daughter Elizabeth C. Nickels. The collection provides a multi-generational look at the various investments of a seagoing family in a maritime town.

In English

Mark Smith; Gift; 2017; LB2017.21

Finding aid available; folder level control

Subject Headings:

Nickels family

McGilvery family

Nickels, Albert V., 1838-1902

Nickels, David W, 1862-1938

Nickels, Edward Dyer Peters, 1845-1909

Nickels, Elizabeth C., 1888-

Nickels, Elizabeth McGilvery, 1843-1927

Nickels, Henrietta Thompson, 1830-1913

Nickels, Jonathan C., 1827-1889

Hichborn, Frederick O., 1852-1921

Searsport (Me.)

Investments

Probate records

Ship owners

Shipping

Wills

Acquisition:

This collection was donated to the Penobscot Marine Museum by Mark Smith in memory of his mother, Katherine Nickels Smith. Katherine Nickels Smith was the daughter of Albert W. Nickels and the great-granddaughter of Albert Vinal Nickels. This was part of a larger gift of manuscript material that included papers from Gamaliel Pendleton of Islesboro (PMM 78), Lieutenant David Cate of Dresden, Maine, and William McGilvery of Searsport (PMM 76).

Restrictions

This collection is open for research. There are no special restrictions.

Condition:

This collection is mostly in good condition. Some larger documents, particularly those on tissue paper, are deeply creased and occasionally torn. Metal fasteners have been left in place and may continue to degrade.

Related Materials:

PMM 77 contains accounts kept by Captain Albert Vinal Nickels for his ships and his later investments, including an investment book very similar to the fragment in this collection. PMM 76 contains accounts and other papers from William McGilvery, a ship builder and merchant in Searsport. Parts of McGilvery's estate were managed and inherited by his daughter, Elizabeth McGilvery Nickels, and therefore reflected in this collection.

Historical Note:

The Nickels (sometimes, Nichols) family were prominent citizens of Searsport, Maine, and deeply involved with the town and maritime world. This collection contains material from the descendants of David Nickels (1799-1851), a ship captain, and his wife, Catharine (Clifford) Nickels. Three of their twelve children, Jonathan Clifford Nickels, Albert Vinal Nickels, and Edward Dyer Peters Nickels, are represented in this collection.

Jonathan Clifford Nickels (1827-1889) was a sea captain whose commands included the brigantine CATHERINE NICKELS, bark SARAH A. NICKELS, ship RESOLUTE, and ship HENRIETTA. After retiring from the sea in the 1870s, he served in the state legislature as a representative and senator from Searsport. Like much of his family, Jonathan C. Nickels invested in shares of Searsport ships; he also apparently took a leading role in managing vessels where the family was a major owner. He was married twice, to Sarah Ann Pendleton (1831-1852) and, after her death, to Henrietta K. Thompson (1830-1913), but had no children.

Albert Vinal Nickels (1838-1902) was also a sea captain. His first command was the bark SARAH A. NICKELS, followed by the ships ODESSA, S.F. HERSEY, and WM. MCGILVERY. The latter three were owned and managed by Albert V. Nickels's father-in-law, William McGilvery, with whom Nickels worked closely until McGilvery's death in 1876. His final command was the ship IROQUOIS of Bath. Nickels and his wife, Elizabeth McGilvery Nickels, had eight children.

Edward Dyer Peters Nickels (1845-1909) was, like his brothers, a sea captain. His first command was the bark CZARINA in 1866, followed by the ships RESOLUTE, STATE OF MAINE, IROQUOIS, and MAY FLINT. In 1900, he transitioned to commanding steam colliers for the U.S. Navy. He married Emma A. Curtis (1846-1930), but had no children.

Because Jonathan C. and Edward D.P. Nickels had no children, their estates descended, in part, to their nephews. The material in this collection comes from David W. Nickels (1862-1938), the eldest son of Albert V. and Elizabeth McGilvery Nickels, who became a well driller in Bangor and Portland. He married Sarah Elizabeth Hussey (b. 1867). They had two children: Elizabeth C. Nickels (b. 1888), who never married; and Albert W. Nickels (b. 1890), an excavation contractor in Portland. These later generations were connected to Searsport by property inherited from the family, even as they lived elsewhere.

Scope and Content:

This collection contains wills, inventories, deeds, and probate documents from the estates of three generations of the Nickels family of Searsport. The earliest documents are from Captains Jonathan C., Albert V., and Edward D.P. Nickels, together with their wives. Since two of the brothers were childless, the children of Albert V. Nickels inherited and managed substantial portions of their estates. The estates of these three captains reflect their extensive involvement and investment in ships and maritime affairs, as well as other investments and connections in the maritime town of Searsport. The collection also includes estate documents from Elizabeth McGilvery Nickels's father, shipbuilder William McGilvery, and some papers from her cousin, Frederick O. Hichborn.

The estates of later generations of the Nickels family have no direct investments in shipping. However, David W. and Elizabeth C. Nickels did inherit property and buildings in

Searsport, and so the documents from these estates record the family's ongoing involvement with Searsport's development. These also include occasional deeds from the nineteenth century documenting historic ownership of inherited properties.

While probate records make up the bulk of this collection, there are a few letters and some ephemera from the Nickels family, largely related to estates and domestic matters, from the mid-twentieth century.

Box and Folder List:

Box	Folder	
1	1	David Nickels estate papers, bark J.C. NICKELS
	2	Jonathan C. Nickels estate papers, ship HENRIETTA
	3	Jonathan C. Nickels, funeral programs
	4	Henrietta T. Nickels, estate papers
	5	Albert V. Nickels, investment daybook (see also PMM 77)
	6	Edward D.P. and Emma C. Nickels, estate papers
	7	Estate papers, Henrietta T. Nickels, Albert V. Nickels, and Elizabeth McGilvery Nickels, in connection with the estate of David W. Nickels
	8	Estate papers, David W. Nickels, in connection with the estate of Albert W. Nickels
	9	Elizabeth C. Nickels, estate papers
	10	Frederick O. Hichborn, employment references