

Los Angeles Maritime Museum
Collection #3: Manuscript Collection Registers
Papers of Fellows and Stewart, Inc.
Compiled by Los Angeles Maritime Museum Research Library
Processed By, Date:
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Finding Aid finalized, Elizabeth Ruth-Abramian, 2012

Title: Papers of Fellows and Stewart, Inc.

Date(s): 1896-1966 (bulk: 1939-1966)

Extent: 75 cu. ft.

Scope and Content Note:

Joe Fellows, Sr. (1865-1942) was a designer of sailboats for yacht racing, sail and motor cruisers and speed boats. He opened a boat shop on Terminal Island, California, in 1896: it was to grow from a very small operation into a well-known boatbuilding, repair and refurbishing concern until 1967 when the company was sold to Harbor Boatbuilding. Of the boats designed by Joe Fellows, his prototypical racing sailboats, motor cruisers and speedboats became nationally recognized classic designs. In 1917 the company became known as Fellows and Stewart, Inc., incorporating business partner Victor Stewart's name. Stewart was to stay with the company until 1945. Joe Fellows' son Richard Joseph Fellows (1912-1962), known as Rusty or Joe, lead the corporation after his father's retirement in 1937.

Between 1937 and his death in 1962, Rusty Fellows was president, followed by his wife, Lois M. Fellows, until 1966, when the corporation dissolved due to its sale to Harbor Boatbuilding on Terminal Island.

Fellows and Stewart, Inc. was known locally by mariners, boat owners, and water transportation agencies. A small, family-owned firm, their business records consist of accounts, sales transactions, letters of agreement, ships plans, photographs, inquiries and day to day correspondence, stock certificates and legal documents. Many of the ships plans were kept as blueprint copies if not the original plans executed on tracing paper or linen. Most plans dated from the early to mid-20th century. These naval architectural plans constitute the bulk of the company's visual record.

Professional photographer's prints from the Long Beach studios of Kent Hitchcock and others are evidence of the work produced for the U.S. Military at launchings for World War II production. Snapshots were taken of the work produced by the company, a clear and distinctive record which improved with decades in business. The collection also contains professional photographic portraits of Fellows family members dating from the late 19th to the middle of the 20th century. These photographic prints constitute a documentary record of the company's work as it spans the almost 70 years of the company's existence.

Capturing the extent of and providing an inside look at the local yachting and boating scene in the 1920s to 1940s, journals and magazines often carried news and informational

articles on the Fellows and Stewart boatyard, as well as their many advertisements. Sources for the articles printed during the most heavily active decades are Yachting, Sea, Pacific Yachting and Boating, and Pacific Motor Boat. Fellows and Stewart, Inc. kept tear sheets and scrapbooks as part of their papers.

Creator: Lois Fellows

Access: Collection available for viewing by appointment.

Usage: Copyright restrictions may apply.

Catalog Record: Papers of Fellows and Stewart, Inc.

Biography:

Joseph Fellows, Sr. was born in England in 1878, and immigrated to the United States in the 1890s. He lived in Minnesota and later in California, starting a boat building concern in Los Angeles Harbor which thrived until the late 1960s. Early on, his trade apprenticeship consisted of several years working on ferryboats and lumber ships on the Northwest coast, but his enthusiasm for recreational boating helped direct the firm and he later sent his son, Rusty, to the University of Michigan for naval architecture. Throughout his business and family life, he took pleasure in photographing the firm's work, or commissioning photographs of it, as well as family and social occasions. He appears to have been a creative businessman, not only capable of building vessels, but also of promoting the firm.

Abstract:

The papers of the firm Fellows and Stewart, Inc., were donated to the Museum in 1999 and 2003. As a collection, they describe the robust growth of a local design and construction firm from early to mid-twentieth century. As most area firms were affected by the World Wars, the business of Fellows and Stewart, Inc. changed radically over the 70 years of its existence from recreational boating design and construction to constructing vessels from ships' plans produced by others such as the U.S. Navy, for auxiliary craft and work boats both during and after World War II. It was this shift in focus and a dependence on military contracts that could make or break a local shipbuilder. In late 1967, Fellows and Stewart, Inc. was sold to a larger firm, Harbor Boatworks. Lois Fellows (wife of Rusty) had become the firm's director for a short five years following her husband's death. Later an heir of the Fellows legacy, Richard Fellows who was the son of Rusty Fellows (1912-1962), set up a marina and repair shop on Terminal Island after the main company was sold. His doing-business name was Joe Fellows, Inc. and his firm lasted from 1968 to 1985 when he tragically drowned.

Arrangement and Description:

The papers of the firm Fellows and Stewart, Inc. are contained in 7 series. Series 1, 2 and 3 are the nonfinancial papers, financial records, and office and yacht correspondence files. These series cover the business of the firm with Series 3 holding many documents on vessels either built or repaired by Fellows and Stewart, Inc. In Series 4, Photographic prints, both snapshots and professional photographers provide documentary evidence of the shipyard. Series 5 represents the naval architectural drawings originating at the firm for recreational craft, yachts,

vessels for local government agencies, and fishing yachts and boats. The architectural plans for naval vessels under contract to various shipyards during and after World War II, design work by other firms, and proposed layouts for the shipyard itself are contained in Series 6. News-clippings in scrapbooks are contained in Series 7, while Series 8 is reserved for the listing of objects in the collection, artifacts that have been recorded in the Museum's catalog.

Series 1--- Non-financial Papers of the Corporation, with sub-series

FS01-S1: Box 1 of 1, Sub-series A and B, 36 folders: 1 cubic ft. (Please call the Library for information on this series.)

Sub-series A, folders # 1-18.

Contains papers of the corporation and legal documents, licenses, correspondence, memoranda, stock certificates, bank loans and manuscripts such as the firm's history, net worth analysis (1944 and 1960-64), press release statements, and dissolution of the company in 1967.

Sub-series B, folders # 1-18.

Contains certificates and vital records, hand-written letters, family history, wills, funeral service bulletins, and Wilmington High School Yearbooks, 1923 and 1924, University of Michigan, School of Engineering Commencement, 1929.

Series 2--- Financial Records

127 Volumes: 100 linear ft.

127 volumes dated 1896 to 1967 (bulk 1900-1967) Account ledgers, invoices, cash journals, check registers, inventory, wage accrual and other account ledgers for Fellows & Stewart, Fellows Co. and Joe Fellows Co.

Series 3--- Office, client, yacht files, correspondence

Boxes 1-13 Sub-series A: Correspondence, Materials lists, Estimates: 11 cubic ft.

FS01-S3 to FS13-3 contains documents dated between 1914 and 1917 to 1966 (bulk to 1947) relating to barges, cruisers, fishing boats, sailboats, yachts, motorboats, passenger boats, ketches, schooners, sloops, tenders, tugboats. These are documents such as specifications, bidding documents, cost estimates, quotations, design notes, repair estimates, correspondence, contracts, and agreements.

Series 4--- Photographic prints

Boxes 1-16, Sub-series A, B, C, D: 16 cubic ft.

FS01-S4 to FS16-S4; FS01- FS13 and FS15-FS16 contain photographic prints. Box FS14 contains glass negatives of mechanical images of construction plan views taken for possible publication as line drawings in *Yachting* magazine, etc.

FS01-S4 to FS03-S4 (Boxes 1, 2 and 3) contain images of yachts: motorboats, fishing boats, small craft, tenders and other vessels built for motion picture sets, army tugboats, and sailboats.

FS16-S4 contains one scrapbook of 4" x 5" and smaller black and white photographic prints in subseries d.

Series 5--- Naval architectural drawings (Ship's plans): Part 1

Drawings are original ink on linen or vellum with some blueprints or diazo prints. Most vessels in the collection are represented by incomplete plan sets. In most cases, there are individual plan drawings for one aspect or view of the vessel's design or construction. These consist of one or more of the following: lines and offsets, profiles (elevations), plan views, details, schedules, tables, and engine room diagrams or sail plans; plans are for Motor yachts, Sloops, Patrol boats, Cutters, Barkentines (movie), Submarines (movie), Powerboats, Launches, and Shipyard.

Series 5--- Naval architectural drawings (Ship's plans): Part 2

Blueprints or diazo prints only. See Part 1 for original drawings. Folded plans are stored in boxes 1-10. Most vessels in the collection are represented by incomplete plan sets. A summary provided below lists the types of vessels for which blueprint copies are available for viewing. For original plans see Series 5: Part 1.

FS01-S5	fishing boats, launches, rescue boats
FS02-S5	power cruisers, sailboats, yachts
FS03-S5	cutters, commuters, motorboats, rescue boats
FS04-S5	cruisers, patrol boats, gunboats
FS05-S5	cargo vessels, cruisers, personnel boats, fishing boats, barges, launches, tenders, sport fishing boats, taxi boats, tenders, tugs
FS06-S5	cruisers, fishing boats, ketches, patrol boats, 45' picket boats, ferry boats
FS07-S5	launches, cruisers, boatyards, boat shops, glass-bottomed boats
FS08-S5	sailboats, yachts, motor-yachts
FS09-S5	power cruisers, sailboats, yachts
FS10-S5	power cruisers, sailboats, yachts

Series 6 Contains remainders from office files unrelated to evidence of the firm's business files.
FS01-S6 Box 1 of 1

Series 7 Contains news-clippings and partial tear-sheets in scrapbooks.
Boxes 1 and 2: FS01-S7 and FS02-S7

Individually housed scrapbooks were created to collect articles and illustrations of vessels built by a variety of shipbuilders; news clippings are from a variety of sources. The front cover of one scrapbook is entitled "Magazine Designs", hand-painted in white on black ground, cloth-cover. The scrapbook has been laid out in sections to display vessels by overall length: 15-25 feet, 25 -30, 30-35, 35-40, 40-45, 45-50, 50-55, 55-60, 60-65, and 65 and up. Some sections are blank, most sections have incomplete paste-downs of cut-out illustrations. Most illustrations are line drawings from Pacific Motor Boat magazine. This scrapbook might have had use as a reference collection for design ideas. The news clipping scrapbook is incomplete and bears clippings from articles dated in early 1920s.

Series 8 is describes objects in the Museum collection; these artifacts are recorded in the Museum's objects catalog, not detailed in this finding aid. They include half-models of motor sailors, sailboats and raised deck cruisers, commemorative medals for "Long Beach to San Francisco Cruiser Race Contendent", 1936, a ship's clock, 1901, wooden plaque, industrial map of Los Angeles Harbor, awards.

Subject terms:

Barges
Boathouses
Cruisers
Cutters
Fishing Vessels
Floats
Scows
Ketches
Lighters
Motorboats
Office files
Sailboats
Tenders
Yawls

Container lists:

See the following files for each series:

FS Series 1 Corporate Papers
FS Series 2 Financial Records
FS Series 3 Office Client Yacht
FS Series 4 Photography
FS Series 5 Naval Arch 1
FS Series 5 Naval Arch 2
FS Series 6 Outside Consult
FS Series 7 Business Promotion
FS Series 8 Museum Artifacts