

The Johnson & Higgins Collection, 1891-1993
8.0 cubic feet



South Street Seaport Museum
12 Fulton Street
New York, N.Y. 10038

Telephone: 212-323-6962
collections@seany.org
www.seany.org

© South Street Seaport Museum, all rights reserved

Prepared by Lauren Perillo, under the supervision of Carol Clarke, Archivist, and Anne DiFabio,
Assistant Archivist
July, 2012

Descriptive Summary

Title: The Johnson & Higgins Collection

Dates: 1891-1993, bulk dates, 1891-1920

Abstract: Correspondence, business records, contracts, and publications of the Johnson & Higgins Company, a major marine insurance company.

Extent: 8.0 cubic feet, 8 oversized boxes and 2 document boxes

Language: English and Spanish

History

Johnson & Higgins is an insurance brokerage firm that was first established by Walter Restored Jones, Jr. and Henry W. Johnson in 1845, under the name Jones & Johnson. The name of the firm was changed to Johnson & Higgins in 1854, when Jones left the partnership and Johnson took on A. Foster Higgins as his new partner. The firm was incorporated in 1899.¹

In its first fifty years, Johnson & Higgins dealt primarily with marine insurance, but by the 20th century it expanded its business to other types of insurance, including fire and casualty insurance. Likewise, though Johnson & Higgins was established in New York City, it eventually opened branches throughout the United States, Canada, and Latin America. As of 1994, Johnson & Higgins was the world's largest privately-held insurance brokerage, with 70 offices in North America and 50 offices around the world.²

Scope and Content Notes

The Johnson & Higgins Collection includes correspondence, business records, publications, and memorabilia created by and related to the firm of Johnson & Higgins. Materials include records from Johnson & Higgins's main office in New York, as well as from its branch offices in Baltimore, San Francisco, and Havana.

Arrangement

The Johnson & Higgins Collection has been organized into four series based on general record type. Materials are arranged alphabetically by subject within each series. It is important to note that because of the varied sizes and storage needs of materials, the intellectual arrangement of materials does not necessarily reflect their physical arrangement.

Series 1: Correspondence

This series primarily consists of outgoing correspondence generated by employees of Johnson & Higgins and the board of directors. It also contains the correspondence from James B. Dickinson, which does not specifically reference Johnson & Higgins, but deals primarily with Dickinson's personal business matters. The majority of the correspondence series consists of bound volumes of typewritten correspondence and dates from 1891-1993, with the vast majority dating from 1891-1912.

¹ *Wall Street Revisited*, Johnson & Higgins, 1991.

² Hewson, David. "Manhattan Transfer of Information: case study" *The Sunday Times*, May 8 1994. (reproduced from *The Times*, London)

Series 2: Business Records

This series includes records created by employees of Johnson & Higgins in the course of conducting business. Policy forms, contracts and financial records are all represented. Additionally, there are the records of Willcox, Peck and Hughs, a marine adjuster firm that merged with Johnson & Higgins in 1924. The records of Johnson and Higgins' Committee on Security are also included. The primary function of this committee was to evaluate insurance companies for inclusion in the Johnson & Higgins list of approved companies. The records of this committee include committee minutes from 1902 to 1922, as well as a volume listing names of insurance companies, along with notes about whether or not the company was included on Johnson & Higgins' list of approved companies.

Series 3: Policy Holders

This series includes records specific to individual clients of Johnson & Higgins, including copies of insurance policies, insurance registers, and claims reports. Records for the steamer W. M. Irish, including an account of its collision with the S. S. Lake Hewes are included. Additional files relate to individual companies, such as Tiffany and Company, Pilot's Association for the Bay and River Delaware, and General Motors Corporation, amongst others. This material dates from 1899 through 1971.

Series 4: Memorabilia

This series consists of a variety of items related to Johnson & Higgins, including publications about the history of the company, press clippings, photographs, prints, stationary, and various other ephemeral material dating from 1865 to 1994.

Preferred Citation

The Johnson & Higgins Collection. South Street Seaport Museum.

Related Material

Business Collection, Isbrandsten Collection

Access Points

Corporate Names

Johnson & Higgins

Topical Subjects

Insurance companies

Shipping

Business enterprise
Geographical Subjects
New York (N.Y.)
Baltimore (Md.)
Argentina

Note

This collection contains several volumes whose leather bindings are deteriorating. In some cases the spine is separating from the text block, and in others the leather cover is exhibiting red rot. Part of this collection is associated with the accession numbers 1998.1, 1998.2.

Container List

Series 1: Business Records

Contracts	Box 1
Policy Forms (2 folders)	Box 1
Willcox, Peck and Hughes	Box 1
Willcox, Peck and Hughes, Checks (3 folders)	Box 1
Share Transfer Forms	Box 3 (oversized)
Committee on Security—Committee Minutes	Box 3 (oversized)
Committee on Security—Insurance Company Ledger	Box 3 (oversized)
Account Ledger	Box 4 (oversized)

Series 2: Policy Holders

The Pilots Association for the Bay and Delaware River	Box 2
General Motors Corporation (2 folders)	Box 2
General Motors Corporation, Motors Marine Policy, 1946	Box 2
Miscellaneous, 1899-1933	Box 2
W. M. Irish	Box 4 (oversized)
Tiffany and Company	Box 4 (oversized)

Series 3: Memorabilia

Miscellaneous	Box 2
Press Coverage	Box 2
Publications	Box 2
Fortune Magazine, January 1943	Box 5 (oversized)
The New York Times, March 10, 1865	Box 5 (oversized)
Diplome D'Agent, 1909	Box 5 (oversized)
Program, Johnson & Higgins 8 th Annual Dinner, February 5, 1910	Box 5 (oversized)
The Atlantic Charter Dinner "Rendezvous at Argentinia" invitation, 1912	Box 5 (oversized)

“Lloyd’s Subscription Room,” framed print, 1809	Box 6 (oversized)
Framed Photograph of Office at 90 Wall Street, 1901	Box 6 (oversized)
Law & Practice of General Average in the United States, by William R. Coe, 1912 (publication)	Box 7 (oversized)
History of Relations between Johnson & Higgins and Henry Willis & Co., 1945 (publication)	Box 7 (oversized)

Series 4: Correspondence

Board of Directors, Volume 1 of 2	Box 7 (oversized)
Board of Directors, Volume 2 of 2	Box 7 (oversized)
W. R. Coe, Volume 1 of 2	Box 8 (oversized)
W. R. Coe, Volume 2 of 2	Box 8 (oversized)
James B. Dickson	Box 8 (oversized)
Johnson & Higgins Baltimore Office	Box 8 (oversized)
Miscellaneous (2 folders)	Box 8 (oversized)