



## Robert Hicks Family Papers UA.28.13

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

University Archives and Historical Collections

Conrad Hall

943 Conrad Road, Room 101

East Lansing , MI 48824

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## Summary Information

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|----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Repository:</b>               | University Archives and Historical Collections |
| <b>Creator:</b>                  | Hicks family (Robert E. Hicks, 1892-1986)      |
| <b>Title:</b>                    | Robert Hicks family papers                     |
| <b>ID:</b>                       | UA.28.13                                       |
| <b>Date [inclusive]:</b>         | 1836-2008                                      |
| <b>Date [bulk]:</b>              | 1836-1986                                      |
| <b>Physical Description:</b>     | 0.33 Cubic Feet                                |
| <b>Language of the Material:</b> | English .                                      |

### Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: "Item title, Collection title, Collection Identifier, Michigan State University Archives & Historical Collections, East Lansing, Michigan."

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## Biographical Note

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Robert E. Hicks (1892-1986), and his father, Stephen H. Hicks (1855-1952), were instrumental in the development of the "Flowerpot" subdivision of East Lansing, Michigan. In 1912, Stephen Hicks bought a 160 acre farm in Ingham County, starting a dairy business and family-run farm called "Lilac Farm Dairy." The property was located on the west side of Harrison Road, extending south to Trowbridge Road.

In 1919, the Hicks family decided to sell some of their land to the Michigan State Police to use for housing for new recruits. This venture proved to be profitable, and since the family was finding the dairy business too demanding they dissolved the "Lilac Farm Dairy" and formed "S. H. Hicks and Sons Inc." Eighty acres of the farm were divided into building lots, and Robert Hicks built houses on a majority of the lots. Soon roads, sidewalks, and street names appeared.

The subdivision became known as the "Flowerpot" neighborhood because all of the streets were named from flowering plants. The back eighty acres remained farmland.

In 1948, Michigan State University wanted to buy twenty acres of the Hicks farm for a new disposal plant for the university and for the City of East Lansing. Robert Hicks refused to sell only twenty acres. He agreed to sell to MSU only if the entire eighty acres were purchased at a price of \$75,000 to which MSU agreed. That same year, the state Highway Department took over these eighty acres which eventually became part of U.S. 127 and I-496.

The life of Robert Hicks spanned nearly a century, and Hicks remained active his entire life. He built roads, swimming pools, a boat, and more than twenty-five houses. Hicks was also skilled in floriculture and landscaping.

Robert Hicks was born in St. Johns, Michigan and married Zoe Thurber of Lansing in 1916 and had seven children. Married fifty-six years, they lived in the "Flowerpot" area until they died. Zoe died in 1972 at the age of 77, and Robert was 93 when he died in 1986. During East Lansing's 75th birthday in 1982 Hicks was honored as the city's oldest resident.

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## Scope and Content

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The Robert Hicks family papers consists of family documents, oral history interviews, memorabilia, and two published family histories.

The bulk of the collection is contained in an album and three folders consisting of photographs, news articles, documents, family histories, and a history of the development of the "Flowerpot" subdivision in East Lansing, Michigan. The album's arrangement is based on subject content, the first part detailing the history of the Hicks family and their involvement in the "Flowerpot" subdivision. This is followed by an outline of the Thurber family history, and account of Robert Hicks' life from 1972 to 1986 and minutes from the annual Hicks Family Reunion. A letter written by Moses Fieldhouse of Lockport, New York, in 1836 tells about his trip to Canada to visit his brothers, discusses the activities of relatives, and mentions farming and the price of food.

A letter dated 1847 from I. Kedwell of Terre Haute Indiana, discusses the finances of encyclopedia book sales.

In ten oral interviews recorded on cassette tapes, Robert Hicks discusses his early life in Clinton County, his parents, and the development of "Flowerpot" neighborhood. A recording of the memorial service for Robert Hicks is also included in the collection.

*A History of the Van Sickel Family*, published in 1880, originally belonged to Martha Jane Finch Sickles, grandmother of Zoe Thurber Hicks. The book also contains a handwritten

genealogy of the family and newspaper clippings (early 1900's reporting marriages and deaths in the Finch and Sickles family.

"Hicks-Thurber Family History: Robert and Zoe", by Helen Hicks Kilfoy, records the Hicks family history from 1811, a Thurber family history traced back to 1652, and Michigan history from the 1600s to the early 1800's.

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Statement

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### Conditions Governing Access

Collection is open for research.

### Conditions Governing Use

Permission to publish material from this collection must be obtained from University Archives & Historical Collections, Michigan State University.

### Conditions Governing Access

**Legal Status:** Donor(s) have transferred any applicable copyright to Michigan State University but the collection may contain third-party materials for which copyright was not transferred. Copyright restrictions may apply. Property Rights: Michigan State University.

### Custodial History

Gift of Helen Hicks Kilfoy.

## Processing Information

Record group changed from c.00538 to UA 28.13 to reflect the collection's connection to Michigan State University. -M. Badgley-Malone, December 2021.

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## Controlled Access Headings

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- Agriculture -- Canada
- City planning -- Michigan -- East Lansing
- Land subdivision -- Michigan
- Neighborhoods -- Michigan -- East Lansing
- East Lansing (Mich.)
- Saint Johns (Mich.)
- Family histories
- Letters (correspondence)
- Sound recordings
- Hicks, Zoe Gladys Thurber, -1972
- Hicks, Robert E., 1892-1986
- Thurber family (Robert E. Hicks, 1892-1986)
- Van Sickly family (Robert E. Hicks, 1892-1986)

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## Collection Inventory

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### Papers

| Title/Description   | Instances |          |
|---|-----------|----------|
| Letters, 1836-1847  | box 6514  | folder 1 |
| Document: <i>Discharge of Executor of the Estate of William Baines</i> , 1911 | box 6514  | folder 1 |
| " <i>Life Story of Stephen Hicks</i> ", 1940                                  | box 6514  | folder 2 |
| " <i>The Life Story of Stephen Henry Hicks</i> ", undated                     | box 6514  | folder 2 |
| <i>What I Remember</i> , 1968   | box 6514  | folder 2 |
| <i>Hicks Family Histories: Zoe Gladys Thurber Hicks</i> , 1971                | box 6514  | folder 2 |
| Letter to Wally Robertson, 1972   | box 6514  | folder 2 |
| The Van Sickly Family, undated  | box 6514  | folder 2 |

|  |          |          |
|--|----------|----------|
| Plat of Lilac Farm No. 1, Lansing Twp., 1951                           | box 6514 | folder 3 |
| Addendum to Hicks - Thurber Family History by Helen Hicks Kilfoy, 2008 | box 6514 | folder 6 |

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## Volumes

| Title/Description   | Instances |          |
|---|-----------|----------|
| Hicks-Thurber Scrapbook, 1892-1986  | box 6514  | folder 8 |
| <i>A History of the Van Sikle Family</i> , 1880   | box 6514  | folder 4 |
| <i>Hick-Thurber Family History: Robert Zoe</i> , 1982   | box 6514  | folder 5 |
| "A History of the Red Cedar Neighborhood in East Lansing, Michigan," by Janet Hicks Ronk, 2007-2010 | box 6514  | folder 7 |

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## Audio Cassettes

### Oral Interviews/Family History

| Title/Description  | Instances    |
|--|--------------|
| Clinton County, 1892-1912, 1975<br><u>Digital Object: <a href="#">No. 948: Clinton County: 1975-</a></u>                     | cassette 948 |
| Dad and Mom, 1977<br><u>Digital Object: <a href="#">No. 949: Dad and Mom: 1977</a></u>                                       | cassette 949 |
| Early Memories, 1977   | cassette 950 |
| Various Things, 1977   | cassette 951 |
| St. Johns and the Subdivision, 1981  | cassette 952 |
| Trip to Elsie, Michigan (damaged), 1981  | cassette 953 |
| The Family and the Subdivision, 1981<br><u>Digital Object: <a href="#">No. 954: The Family and the Subdivision: 1981</a></u> | cassette 954 |
| Interview, Side 1 and 3, 1981  | cassette 955 |
| Interview, Side 2, 1981  | cassette 956 |
| Memorial Service, 1986<br><u>Digital Object: <a href="#">No. 957: Memorial Service: 1986</a></u>                             | cassette 957 |
| Trowbridge and East Lansing  |              |

Digital Object: [No. 958: Trowbridge and East Lansing](#)      cassette 958

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