

Finding aid for the Michigan Department of Transportation photographs Collection 177

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Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections
Department

111 Library Street NE
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503

localhis@grpl.org

URL: <http://www.grpl.org>

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Summary Information

Repository:	Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department
Creator:	Michigan. Dept. of Transportation
Title:	Michigan Department of Transportation photographs
ID:	Collection 177
Date [inclusive]:	1960-1962
Physical Description:	0.71 Linear Feet Two boxes
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) photograph collection contains photographs of buildings in Grand Rapids, Michigan shortly before they were demolished for the construction of US 131 and I 196 expressways (1960-1962). This is only a sampling of the buildings that were razed, not a complete documentation. The images in the collection are copies taken from original negatives held by the Michigan Department of Transportation. Accompanying the images are photocopies of maps which act as keys to the location of the buildings razed.

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Biographical / Historical

In 1951, Charles M. Ziegler, State Highway Commissioner, announced that the proposed north-south US-131 state highway would be routed directly through downtown Grand Rapids and that planning for its construction would begin in the next year. It was suggested that a route west of the Grand River was chosen in order to avoid the costly acquisition of valuable property on the east bank of the Grand River. The State Highway Commission responded that the West Side routing between Turner/Mt. Vernon and Scribner Ave. was chosen because traffic studies had concluded that the greatest amount of traffic was in the flow between Northwest and South.

In August, 1957, Keith M. Honey, Grand Rapids City Planning Director pointed out that many families might be hurt by the demolition necessitated by this routing. In an exhaustive study of the possible effects of the expressway route, Honey showed that around 800 dwellings would need to be razed and an additional 600 would be isolated between the expressway and the river. Honey sought federal aid in an urban renewal project to assist these people and gave the work a high priority.

In September 1957, in response to comments by 1st ward City Commissioners Bernard S. Barto and Stanley J. Davis, Honey requested that the route be shifted further east, between Scribner and Front Ave. This routing would have a smaller negative impact on community. John C. Mackie, City Highway Commissioner, and Paul Goebel, Mayor, had determined that Honey's proposed routing would make the construction of the interchange with the proposed US 16 (now I 196) far too costly because it would be too near the river. The east-west routing of US 16 expressway was still tentative at this time, but would most likely be built through the center of residential, industrial and commercial areas on both sides of the river. As a result of Honey's efforts, however, a large number of West Side residents and property owners were able to get more equitable assessments and hence better prices for their homes.

By 1960, all property needed for the construction of US-131 through Grand Rapids had been condemned. By 1962, all necessary property for I-196 through Grand Rapids had been condemned. Construction began shortly afterward.

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Scope and Contents

The collection contains photographs of the exteriors and occasionally interiors of 44 buildings or sets of buildings removed for the construction of US-131 and I-196 expressways. The buildings photographed were mostly located on the West Side of the Grand River in the area bounded by Mt. Vernon, Turner and Scribner Ave. (removed for US-131), but there are photos of several other buildings on either side of the river (removed for I-196).

The photographs depict the buildings abandoned or nearly abandoned, shortly before they were razed. Many buildings already leveled can be seen in the background of some of the photographs. The collection is arranged geographically by address and alphabetically by street name.

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Arrangement

Also included is a system of maps that can be used to precisely locate the buildings pictured in the collection. If you are looking for the location of a building included in the collection, refer to the map that corresponds to the number indicated on the folder or in the finding aid. The number is written in green in the upper-right corner of the map. On the appropriate map, the buildings depicted are highlighted and their folder number is written in the highlighted area. Also included are three primary maps to demonstrate broader location. A current map of the area is also included with the pictured areas highlighted.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Immediate Source of Acquisition

Michigan Department of Transportation, accession number 00.000

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Related Materials

Related Materials

Collection 240 has some maps, drawings or guides regarding the construction and access to US 131 and I 196. Included are those from the Michigan State Highway Department.

Collection 132 has Michigan Department of Transportation reports on bridge/street constructions over the Grand River.

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Controlled Access Headings

- photographs
- West Side (Grand Rapids, Mich.)
- Express highways -- Michigan -- History -- 20th century

- Highway planning -- Michigan -- Grand Rapids
- Urban renewal -- Michigan -- Grand Rapids
- Michigan. Dept. of Transportation
- Michigan. Dept. of Transportation

Collection Inventory

Series I. Photographs

Title/Description	Instances
1053 First St. NW [Wallin Congregational Church], 1962.; Map number 6; Print 498	Box 1 Folder 1
1055 First St. NW, 1962.; Map number 1; Print 498	Box 1 Folder 2
338 Fifth St. NW, 1960.; Map number 10; Print 494	Box 1 Folder 3
336 Eighth St. NW, 1960.; Map number 2; Print 488	Box 1 Folder 4
301 Ann St. NW [Dry-Mix Crete+Supply Co.], 1960; Map number 2; Print n/a	Box 1 Folder 5
343-345-347 Blumrich St. NW, 1960.; Map number 3; Print 520	Box 1 Folder 6
1215 Bridge St. NW, 1962.; Map number 1; Print 496	Box 1 Folder 7
508 521 Front Ave. NW, 1960.; Map number 12; Print 496	Box 1 Folder 8
2 Hastings St. NE [Hastings St. Christian School]1, 1961; Map number 2; Print 34	Box 1 Folder 9
10 Hastings St. NE, 1961.; Map number 2; Print 34	Box 1 Folder 10
328-330-332-334 Leonard St. NW, 1960.; Map number 7; Print 483	Box 1 Folder 11
338-340 Leonard St. NW, 1960.; Map number 5; Print 483	Box 1

	Folder 12
501-505 Monroe Ave. NW [Michigan Express Inc.], 1961.; Map number 4; Print 33	Box 1 Folder 13
300-304 Mount Vernon NW, 1960.; Map number 5; Print 520	Box 1 Folder 14
412 Ottawa Ave. NW [Arctic Ponce De Leon Water Co.], 1961.; Map number 2; Print 34	Box 1 Folder 15
414 Scribner Ave. NW, 1960. [10 fnd. 4/2000]; Map number 11; Print 508	Box 1 Folder 16
416 Scribner Ave. NW [Merchants Business], 1960. ; Map number 44; Print 508	Box 1 Folder 17
418 Scribner Ave. NW [Viola Apts.], 1960.; Map number 54; Print 508	Box 1 Folder 18
420 Scribner Ave. NW [Universal Tool and Cutter Grinding Co.], 1960.; Map number 34; Print 508	Box 1 Folder 19
518 Scribner Ave. NW [West Side Ladies Literary Club], 1960.; Map number 5; Print 508	Box 1 Folder 20
529 Scribner Ave. NW [Rauschenberger-Walcott Funeral Home], 1960. ; Map number 5; Print 508	Box 1 Folder 21
661 Scribner Ave. NW, 1960.; Map number 2; Print 494	Box 1 Folder 22
665 Scribner Ave. NW, 1960.; Map number 2; Print 494	Box 1 Folder 23
669 Scribner Ave. NW, 1960.; Map number 2; Print 494	Box 1 Folder 24
707 Scribner Ave. NW, 1960.; Map number 2; Print 494	Box 1 Folder 25
709 Scribner Ave. NW, 1960.; Map number 2; Print 494	Box 1 Folder 26
729-731 Scribner Ave. NW, 1960.; Map number 2; Print 494	Box 1 Folder 27
1345+1351 Scribner Ave. NW, 1960.; Map number 2; Print 570	Box 1

	Folder 28
543 Stocking Ave. NW [State Theatre], 1962.; Map number 4; Print 501	Box 1 Folder 29
600+606 Turner Ave./335 Third St. NW, 1960; Map number 2; Print 504	Box 1 Folder 30
610 Turner Ave. NW [St. Paul's Memorial Episcopal Church], 1960.; Map number 2; Print 504	Box 1 Folder 31
624+626 Turner Ave. NW, 1960.; Map number 2; Print 504	Box 1 Folder 32
650-52 Turner Ave./341 Fourth St. NW, 1960.; Map number 12; Print 504	Box 1 Folder 33
846-848 Turner Ave. NW, 1960.; Map number 2; Print 504	Box 1 Folder 34
902+906 Turner Ave. NW, 1960.; Map number 2; Print 487	Box 1 Folder 35
1010 Turner Ave. NW, 1960.; Map number 2; Print 484	Box 1 Folder 36
1034, 1040, 1044-8 Turner Ave. NW [Netherlands Reformed Church], 1960.; Map number 3; Print 484	Box 1 Folder 37
1326-1328-1336-1338 Turner Ave. NW, 1960.; Map number 4; Print 570	Box 1 Folder 38
1536-1538 Turner Ave. NW, 1960.; Map number 6; Print 559	Box 1 Folder 39
1572 Turner Ave. NW [Quality Lumber and Fuel Co.], 1960.; Map number 3; Print 554	Box 1 Folder 40
1600 Turner Ave. NW [Grand Rapids Gravel Co. Turner Concrete Plant], 1960.; Map number 2; Print 554	Box 1 Folder 41
1620 Turner Ave. NW [Decker Steel Co.], 1960.; Map number 2; Print 554	Box 1 Folder 42
1700 Turner Ave. NW [Morris Zuckerman Metal Co.], 1960.; Map number 2; Print 553	Box 1 Folder 43
402-404-406-408 Valley Ave. NW [Lincoln Cleaners], 1962.; Map number 1; Print 496	Box 1

Folder 44

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Series II. Maps

Title/Description	Instances
Current map; 3 Primary maps; 18 Secondary maps	Box 2 Folder 1

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