

Finding aid for the Charles W. Darling photographs Collection 184

Finding aid prepared by Richard Harms

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department
February 1996
111 Library Street NE
Grand Rapids, Michigan, 49503
616-988-5400
localhis@grpl.org

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Summary Information

Repository	Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department
Creator	Darling, Charles W, 1889-1971
Creator	Grand Rapids (Mich.). Engineering Department.
Title	Charles W. Darling photographs
Date [inclusive]	1922-1940
Extent	0.3 Linear feet One box
Language	English
Abstract	<p>Charles W. Darling (1889-1971) was the City Engineer and later Director of Public Services for Grand Rapids, Michigan. The images in this collection show some of the projects supervised by the city engineering department while Darling was on its staff. The photographs depict road improvement projects during the late 1920s and early 1930s, such as the widening of Division Avenue and the reconstruction of the Pearl Street and Fulton Street bridges. Also included are details of road construction, trestle and concrete arch bridges, the Grand River when almost dry and such construction equipment as cranes, trucks, scoops, street sweepers and paving machinery.</p>

Biographical/Historical note

Charles William Darling (1889-1971) was born in West Michigan and graduated from Central High School, Grand Rapids, Michigan. After attending courses at Northwestern University and the State Normal College at Ypsilanti (now Eastern Michigan University), he began working for the Holland Interurban Railroad Co. On June 1, 1912, he was employed in the Grand Rapids City Engineer's office as a blue print boy, tracer and errand boy.

Working his way up through the ranks, Darling was appointed chief surveyor in 1917 and assistant city engineer in 1920, the same year he became a registered civil engineer. As assistant engineer, he was in charge of all outside construction for the city.

In 1927 he was appointed city engineer. Some of the major city construction projects during his tenure were the construction of Lake Michigan Drive, widening Division Avenue from Fulton Street southward, replacing the Fulton Street Bridge and paving most of the city's streets to carry motorized traffic.

With Frank Goebel's promotion to city manager in 1946, Darling also became director of public service. He held that position until 1954 when city manager Milard M. Moore refused to approve Darlings request to work past mandatory retirement at age 65. Due to the political turmoil in city politics at the time, Darling was reappointed to the position when George Veldman was elected mayor.

Darling and Orchis Stanton were married 8 June 1910. They had three children: Russell, Richard and Laura Jean, who married Ernest F. Slagel. The Slagel's son, also named Ernest, allowed the Library to copy these images.

Scope and Contents note

Contains images of some of the projects supervised by the city engineering department while Darling was on its staff. Of note are the 1920s view of the bridges across the Grand River at: Ann Street, Leonard Street, Pearl Street and Sixth Street, as well as the Interurban Bridge, Southern Michigan Railway bridge and Railroad Bridge. Also details the widening of South Division Avenue in 1928, the reconstruction of the Pearl Street Bridge (1921-1922) and the Fulton Street Bridge (1927-1928) and the construction of Lake Michigan Drive (originally known as Shawmut Boulevard).

Other images detail the Grand River while almost dry, city garage construction, city engineer's office and staff, and such equipment as cranes, trucks, scoops, street sweepers and paving equipment. As a result, the images evidence road building technology of the time as well as bridge construction techniques. In addition, the images show the area north of the reservoir, leaf collecting and snow removal work.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department February 1996

Immediate Source of Acquisition note

Library purchase, 1995, accession number 00.000

Controlled Access Headings

Genre(s)

- photographs

Geographic Name(s)

- Grand Rapids (Mich.) -- History
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Added entries

Bridge Street Bridge, f.16 Busses, f.9

Camelback trestle bridge f.1 Concrete mixer, f.36 Cranes, f.9-10, f.14, f.18

Dams, f.16

Flour mills, f.16, f.21, f.25

Grand Trunk Railway station, f.16

Steam rollers, f.9-10, f.38 Streetcars, f.11

Trestle bridges, f.1, f.13, f.25-26, f.28, f.31 Trucks, f.19, f.32, f.34, f.36

Valley City Milling Co., f.21 Voigt Milling Co., f.16

Photographs

Collection Inventory

Photographs		
	Box	Folder
Ann Street Bridge, 1927. (1)	1	1
Automobile passing Kelly's truck, 1929. (1)	1	2
Brickyard, 1927. (1)	1	3
City garage construction, c.1928. (1)	1	4
City Engineer's Office and staff, 1927.(7)	1	5
Construction (Hall at Century), 1927.(1)	1	6
Division Avenue, S view, 1928.(4)	1	7
Division Avenue, S at Monroe/Fulton, c.1928.(1)	1	8
Division Avenue, S widening, c.1928.(15)	1	9
Division Avenue, S at Cherry, 1928.(2)	1	10
Division Avenue, S at Wealthy, 1928.(3)	1	11

Photographs

F.F. Wood Motor Co., c.1928.(1)	1	12
Fulton Street Bridge, 1927.(1)	1	13
Fulton Street Bridge reconstruction, 1927-28.(12)	1	14
Grand Rapids Asphalt Co., c.1927.(1)	1	15
Grand River views, 1928. (8)	1	16
Interurban Bridge, c.1927.(6)	1	17
Lake Michigan Drive views, 1928.(9)	1	18
Leaf Pickup, c.1930.(1)	1	19
Leonard Street Bridge, 1927.(1)	1	20
Michigan Street, west of Monroe, c.1925.(1)	1	21
Monroe Avenue view, 1929. (1)	1	22
Parking Ramp construction, n.d.(1)	1	23
Pearl Street Bridge, 1927. (2)	1	24
Pearl Street Bridge reconstruction, 1921-22.(6)	1	25

Photographs

Note for Pearl Street bridge reconstruction photographs

- .1 Dec. 21, 1921. Old trestle bridge
- .2 Feb. 25, 1922. Crane in river, one section of trestle bridge left.
- .3 Mar. 30, 1922. Crane in river, right, with old bridge almost gone. New construction on the left side.
- .4 June 25/26, 1922. New bridge in place, in construction
- .5 July 25, 1922. Not much change, scaffolding still in place under bridge.
- .6 Sept. 7, 1922. New bridge complete?

Pere Marquette Railroad Bridge, 1927.(1)	1	26
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Pumping Station interior, 1923.(1)	1	27
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G.R.&I./P.R.R. Railroad Bridge, 1920.(1)	1	28
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Reservoir Hill, c. 1925.(5)	1	29
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Road Construction, c.1930.(1)	1	30
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General note

NOTE: Shawmut Boulevard construction, c.1928, formerly called folder 31 in this finding aid, not found 3/23/1999, unless this is actually the road shown in Folder 30 image. Numbering found on folders as follows.

Sixth Street Bridge, 1927. (1)	1	31
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Snow Removal, c.1940.(1)	1	32
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Photographs

Southern Michigan Railway bridge, 1927.(1)	1	33
Street lights, c.1928.(2)	1	34
Street paving, c.1928.(9)	1	35
Street paving and sidewalk construction Fuller/Kalamazoo/Adams, c.1930. (4)	1	36
Street paving 701 W. Fulton, c.1928.(2) [Rylee's Hardware]	1	37
Street paving Hall SW, c.1928.(1)	1	38
Street paving Hamilton Road, c.1928.(1)	1	39
Street paving Temple at Ewing, c.1928. (1) [Hose hooked to fire hydrant]	1	40
Automotive Street sweepers, c.1940.(1)	1	41
Trucks, c.1928.(2)	1	42
Wealthy Street, SW at railroad (3) 1928-1932	1	44
Voigt Milling Co. mill (from river), 1928.(3) [Crescent Flour]	1	43