

# **Finding aid for the John W. Squier collection**

## **Collection 189**

**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

May 1996

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository</b>	Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department
<b>Creator</b>	Squier, John W, 1799-1874
<b>Title</b>	John W. Squier collection
<b>Date [inclusive]</b>	1817-1879
<b>Extent</b>	0.88 Linear feet Three boxes
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Abstract</b>	<p>John W. Squier (1799-1872) was a businessman and real estate investor in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He owned a flour mill and in 1859 he built the first opera house in the city, Squier's Opera House. The collection documents the affairs of this successful businessman in the growing, frontier village of Grand Rapids, Michigan during the mid 19th century. Included are various legal, financial and property documents. Also included are the Mackinac Agency payroll of 1849, data on building and maintaining the dam and canal in the Grand River, two medical prescriptions and an 1855 passport.</p>

## Biographical/Historical note

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John W. Squier (1799-1874), a native of New Jersey, came to Grand Rapids in 1842, after having lived in Seneca and Yates Counties, New York and Washtenaw County, Michigan. He built a flour mill near the present-day southwest corner of Michigan and Monroe, then on the east side power canal. The mill machinery was brought to Grand Rapids from Jackson on the Grand River on a scow.

A reputable businessman, Squier's flour milling provided sufficient revenue for him to invest in real estate and other business opportunities. One of his most noticeable investments was building the first opera house in the city in 1859, adjacent to his mill. Both Squier's Opera House and mill were destroyed by fire in 1872. The Index of Fire Service of Grand Rapids (1899), lists the Squier's Opera House as a subscriber. Squier also owned the Western Hotel in the same area, at the corner of Canal (later Monroe) and Crescent Ave., which he opened in 1855 with Charles P. Babcock.

Squier and his wife, Mary L. (d.1876) already had six children (three sons and three daughters) when they came to Grand Rapids in 1842.

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## Scope and Contents note

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Documents the affairs of a successful business person in the growing, frontier village of Grand Rapids, Michigan during the mid 19th century. Contains example of various legal, financial and property documents. Among the noteworthy items are certificates from the Alert (volunteer) Firefighting Company, the Mackinac Agency Payroll of 1849, data on building and maintaining the dam and canal in the Grand River, Union school building specifications and two medical prescriptions.

Note: The Squier's Opera House, 83-91 Canal St (later Monroe), has often been given as "Squire's Opera House" in later years, evidently a mistaken spelling of the name.

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Information

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

## **Immediate Source of Acquisition note**

Donor unknown, 1922. Accession numbers 00.000; 1986.294 (Added 8/20/2008); S1:A1 (Added 8/20/2008)

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## **Related Materials**

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### **Related Archival Materials note**

Collection 018, Fitch Photo Collection, Photo #063 Squier's Opera House Collection 054, GRPL Photo Collection. 054-10-31. Old Settlers, including J.W. Squier

See also Baxter's History of Grand Rapids for more information on the Squier's family and their establishments.

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## **Controlled Access Headings**

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### **Genre(s)**

- office files
- personal papers

### **Geographic Name(s)**

- Grand Rapids (Mich.) -- History -- 19th Century

### **Personal Name(s)**

- Squier, John W, 1799-1874

### **Subject(s)**

- **Business records -- Michigan -- Grand Rapids**

## Series I. Subject files, 1819-1976

## Collection Inventory

Series I. Subject files, 1819-1976		
	Box	Folder
Assignments, 1860, 1876.	1	1
Awards/Certificates, 1819, 1865, 1868, 1869.	1	2
Bank Books/Deposit Slips, 1872-1876.	1	3
Bills of sales, 1835-1876.	1	4
Bonds, 1835-1869.	1	5
Boston & North American Co. Articles of Agreement, 1846.	1	6
Circuit Courts Orders/Writs, 1859-1874.	1	7
City of Grand Rapids Annual Report, 1866.	1	8
Commodity Reports, 1859, 1866.	1	9
Contracts, 1833-1872.	1	10

**General Correspondence.**

Article of Agreement, Apr. 21, 1843, between Lucius Lyon and Charles H. Carroll of Livingston County, N.Y.	3	1
<b>Scope and Contents note</b>		
With DeWitt C. Lawrence and John W. Squires (Squiers). Lawrence and Squires to acquire land, rights to water from the Canal, to build a Culvert diverting water from the Canal to a woolen factory and flouring mill. The Culvert to be constructed by Daniel Ball, under supervision of John Alma, Engineer. S1:A5.42. 1986.294. Note: Item found with the John Squiers papers. Location Note: This oversized item is physically housed with the Lucius Lyon's papers, to accommodate its larger size.		
Cooperative Labor Union Publishing Co. agreement, 1870.	1	11
Dam/canal maintenance agreements, 1843, 1853.	1	12
Firefighting Co. - Alert, 1864-1869.	1	13
<b>General Correspondence.</b>		
	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
W.D. Foster letter to Edwin G. Squiers, San Francisco, Cal. Introducing J.T. Fainey of Grand Rapids, Apr. 14, 1859. S1:A1.111. 1986.294. Note: This item found with unaccessioned John Squiers papers, Squiers of Grand Rapids.	1	13.5
Insurance policies, 1853-1873.	1	14

## General Correspondence.

Polly Lawrence will, 1850.	1	15
Leases, 1854-1879.	1	16
Legal correspondence, 1872-1876.	1	17
Licenses. Hay Scale License. John W. Squier & Son. Sept. 10, 1853. 1986.294	1	17.5
Mackinac Agency Payroll, 1849.	1	18
Medical prescriptions, c.1870.	1	19
Passport, 1855.	1	20
Power of attorney, 1846.	1	21
Redemption (property taxes) certificates, 1843-1861.	1	22
John W. Squier estates, 1876.	1	23
Tax payment receipts, 1858-1873.	1	24
Union School specification variations, 1866.	1	25
Biographical. Added by staff 3/2008	1	31

**Series II. Business Documents.**

<b>Series II. Business Documents.</b>		
	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Invoices, 1872-1874.	1	26-28
Promissory notes, 1817-1872.	1	29-30
<b>Deeds, 1826-1879</b>		
	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Deeds, 1826-1855.	2	1
Quit Claim Deeds, 1848-1873.	2	2
Sheriff's Deed, 1873.	2	3
Trust deed, 1871.	2	4
Tax deeds, 1866-1868.	2	5
Warranty deeds, 1849-1879.	2	6
<b>Mortgages, 1844-1876.</b>		
	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Mortgages, 1844-1876.	2	7

## Series III. John W. Squier Correspondence. Old Collection S1:A1 and S1A6

Chattel mortgages, 1859-1869.	2	8
	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Title Abstracts, 1855-1871.	2	9
<b>Series III. John W. Squier Correspondence. Old Collection S1:A1 and S1A6</b>		
<b>S1:A1</b>		
	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
.1-10, 1846-1876 (13 items, including envelopes)	3	2
.11-20, 1848-1877. (10)	3	3
.21-30, 1856-1874. (10)	3	4
.31-40, 1856-1872. (14. Three items marked “.32”, and three marked “.35”)	3	5
.41-50, 1856-1872. (11, two items marked “.44”)	3	6
.51-60, 1856-1859,n.d. (11, two different items called “.51”)	3	7
.61-70, 1851-1876, n.d. (11, two different items called “.65”)	3	8
.71-80, 1856-1876. (10)	3	9

**S1:A6**

.81-90, 1846-1875. (10) Oversized	3	14
.91-100, 1856-1875. (12, three items marked “.99”)	3	15
.101-110, 1838-1874. (12, two items marked “.107” and two items marked “.110”).	3	10
<b>S1:A6</b>		
	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
63-64 John W. Squier, 2 leases, 1868, 1867, poor condition cannot be unfolded.	3	11
.65 and .68 John W. Squier, loan correspondence, 1858 and 1874.	3	12
No accession number. John W. Squier, bearer bond coupons, numbered 1-12, 1871. In an envelop marked “Amt. \$540.00. “Due” Oct. 6 ... [small items]	3	13