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Finding aid for the Seven family glass plate negatives Collection 341

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Department

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Summary Information

Repository:	Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department
Title:	Seven family glass plate negatives
ID:	Collection 341
Date [inclusive]:	circa 1900-1912
Physical Description:	1.1 Linear Feet Nine boxes
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	The Seven family immigrated from the Netherlands to Grand Rapids, Michigan circa 1880. Family members operated several businesses, including the John Seven Paint & Wallpaper Co. (later Seven's Paint & Wallpaper). The collection includes 66 4x5 glass plate negatives depicting Grand Rapids, Michigan area views, Grand River flood views and images of Seven family members, homes and businesses, primarily on the West Side.

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Biographical / Historical

Around 1880, four brothers immigrated to the United States from Holland (Netherlands), settling in Grand Rapids. The exact date(s) of immigration and other family members coming with them are currently unverified. However, their parents are believed to have been John (Jan, or Johanna, b. ca. 1829) and Mensie Seven (b. ca. 1836) [unconfirmed]. The four brothers were: Peter Seven b. ca. 1861-d. 1952; John Seven b. ca. 1864-d. 1935; Cornelius Seven b. ca. 1867-d. 1939; Miner (Myner) Seven b. ca. 1874-d. 1935

No mention of a "Seven" family is given in the Grand Rapids City Directory until 1882/83, when Jan and Jan, Jr. (John?) are listed as laborers and Peter is listed as a painter, all at 102 Third St. SW. By 1885/86, the household at 420 Turner SW lists Albert, John and John A. as laborers, Peter as a painter, and Cornelius a cabinetmaker for Kent Furniture Company. By 1890, seven Sevens are listed in the directory, most living at 152 W. Leonard. Several are employed at J. Seven & Sons, grocers, including John, Cornelius and Meindert. This John is presumed to be the father, John. The other John, his son, appears to be a wall paperer, living and working at 662 Wealthy. Son Peter is also a wall paperer, at 126 W. Leonard. Another Peter, a laborer, boards at 122 Quarry.

Of the four brothers listed above, an obituary for the brother John Seven (ca. 1864-1935) states that he established a paint and wallpaper business in 1889 and continued his association there for 46 years, until his retirement. This is presumed to be the John listed in the 1890 City Directory at 662 Wealthy. He passed this business on to his sons, George, Carroll and John H. It is believed to be this Seven Wallpaper & Paint Co. establishment, still operating in Grand Rapids, Michigan in 2005, with which most residents associate the Seven family. However, the images in this collection appear to document the various early businesses operated by the other Seven family members, who settled and worked on the West Side of the Grand River. The primary focus of the images is on the family of Peter Seven, including his children John P., Henrietta and Martin. Early images of another wallpaper establishment run by Peter on Leonard St. are included. Other images show a dry goods and grocery run by Cornelius, also on W. Leonard, which appears to have evolved from the J. Seven & Sons grocery.

The years between 1890 and 1912 shows Peter apparently already independent from this father, while Cornelius and Miner are first living at home, and then establish their own residences and businesses. In the 1890s Cornelius and Meindart (Miner, Myner) are at the establishment on 153 Leonard then including dry goods, as well as the family grocery. By 1900, Miner Seven, listed in the City Directory for the first time under that name, now has a grocery at 120 W. Leonard, apparently in competition with the old family business. On March 22, 1902, the John believed to be the father of the original four sons dies, leaving his widow, Mensie (per the City Directory), at 151 W. Leonard. Cornelius continues operating the family grocery and dry goods on Leonard first under the name of the family business, then in his own name. Peter continues to do wall papering.

One of the major events in Grand Rapids which appears to be documented in the images in the collection, was the Grand River flood of 1904. As evidenced by the images, this effected the Seven businesses, and their nearby homes, on the West Side of the Grand River. The 1904 City Directory has Peter and his son John P. at home at 135 W. Leonard, across the street from the wall paper shop. The wallpaper establishment of Peter Seven, shown in the flood images in this collection, is at 130 West Leonard, next to Peter Klute's dry goods, which in 1904 was at 132 W. Leonard in 1904.

By 1912, after the city wide address changes that year, Miner, the youngest of the original four sons is operating his grocery at 500 Leonard NW, and living at 1055 Scribner. Cornelius has a dry goods establishment at 537-539 Leonard, apparently no longer running a grocery. He lives at 1239 Quarry. Two of his four daughters, Lena and Gertrude, now young adults, are listed as boarders at that address at that time. Two additional younger daughters are not listed. Peter is living with wife Francis (Francina) at 1031 Leonard NW, along with adult children John P. and daughter Henrietta, and young Martin (not listed).

In 1910, the original brother John Seven is said to have built the home at 649 Union SE, then known as 425 Union, which between 1923 and 1930 would become the boyhood home of U.S. President Gerald R. Ford. In the 1912 City Directory, the next generation of brother John's family lists the sons John H. Seven (also sometimes called John, Jr. d. 1965) as a clerk at the wallpaper company, along with brother George as a bookkeeper. Brother Carroll (d. 1943) is at this time working as a clerk for the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railway. George is killed in WWI, and not mentioned in the later family obituaries. Carroll is listed in his obituary as a President and Traveling Representative of the wallpaper company, dying at age 49 in 1943. His son Phillip at that time was a private in the military, but also a medical student at the University of Michigan. John H. retired as President of the John Seven Paint & Wallpaper Co. after 51 years with the company, and died a year after his retirement. After John H.'s retirement/death, his son

Charles K. Seven became chief owner and officer of the company, ca. 1965. Charles Seven continued to head the firm until his death in 2004. No images of the original brother John, and his descendants, are known to be in this collection.

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Scope and Contents

The images included here document a portion of the Seven family who immigrated to Grand Rapids ca. 1880. The circa 1904 flood images are mostly unidentified, but are believed to show properties on the West side of the Grand River, including those of the Seven family. One view shows Peter Seven's wall paper establishment at 130 Leonard NW, next to Peter Klute's Dry goods at 132 W. Leonard. Images of individuals at a farm are not currently identified. Scenes from the east side of the Grand River include the Ryerson Library building in construction ca, 1902/1903. Views taken from the Lookout Park show the houses and businesses along the river, mainly on the East side. The West Leonard St. schoolhouse is included, as well as other area businesses and institutions.

Seven family businesses shown include Peter Seven's wallpaper store at 130 Leonard. One view is said to include his son, John P. Seven, seated in an automobile in front of the store. Another view shows Cornelius Seven's dry goods and grocery at 153 W. Leonard, at Quarry St., near Fire Station #9. Individuals shown in these views may be family members.

Family photos have been kept together as provided, but are mostly unidentified, and may not represent the original order as taken. Several images of Peter's son, John P. Seven, as a student, or as young man picnicking with a group, are included. Peter's mother in law, Hendrika Straayer, is shown seated near a painting of a woman. Peter's wife, Francina Straayer Seven may be included in the images, but is not identified. One image identified as Henrietta, daughter of Peter, is found. Several children are shown, mostly unidentified. Some views are identified as Martin, son of Peter, and brother of John P. and Henrietta. The home of Peter Seven at 135 Leonard NW is shown, as is that of his brother Cornelius on Quarry Ave. at 153 Leonard.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Related Materials

Related Materials

Additional Seven family negatives depicting Holland area views have been given to the Joint Archives of Holland at Hope College.

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Controlled Access Headings

- photographs
- Floods -- Michigan -- Grand Rapids
- West Side (Grand Rapids, Mich.)
- Grand Rapids (Mich.) -- History
- Immigrants -- Michigan -- Grand Rapids -- History
- Business Enterprises -- Michigan -- Grand Rapids Region
- Seven

Collection Inventory

Series I. Photocopies of Contact Prints

Scope and Contents

A. Positive Images. Currently, the only positive views of the images in this collection are photocopies of the contact prints retained by the Seven family. Contact prints from the glass negatives or other higher quality positive versions of the images are desired.

B. Research on the Seven Family Included here is Census information, obituaries, notes on information in City Directories or Cemetery files, used to compile the history, scope, and genealogy section of this finding aid. Also included is brief information on the John Seven house on Union, which later became the boyhood home of President Gerald R. Ford, taken from the Heritage Hill website.

Title/Description	Instances	
Neg. #1-#13 [Set 1] Flood #1-#13	Box 1	
Neg. #14-#22 [Set 2] Farm #1-#9	Box 1	
Neg. #23-#33 [Set 3] Grand Rapids Scenes	Box 1	
Neg. #34-#42 [Set 4] Store Building images	Box 1	
Neg. #43-#57 [Set 5] People/Houses	Box 1	
Neg. #58-#66 [Set 6] People, Part 2	Box 1	
Biographical Research data on Seven Family	Box 1	Folder 8
Heritage Hill website data on 649 Union SE, built in 1910 by John Seven, and from 1923-1930 it was the home of former President Gerald R. Ford.	Box 1	Folder 9

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Series II. Glass Negatives

Scope and Contents

Currently, the only negative images in the collection are the original glass negatives given by the family donors. Most of these are in tact, with one broken, and a few others with flaws. 4x5 copy negatives are desired for higher quality long-term preservation of the images, but now difficult to obtain, due to the migration to digital.

Set 1. Floods

Title/Description	Instances	
Flood #1. Flooded street with two 2-story storefront buildings, believed to be 128 W. Leonard, Millinery; 130 W. Leonard, Peter Seven Wallpaper store; 132 W. Leonard, Peter Klute Dry Goods	Box 2	Folder Neg. #1
Flood #2. West Leonard St. ca. 1900. Back of an original print has: "Flood of 1900. Leonard at Hamilton, James Mol, former alderman."	Box 2	Folder Neg. #2
Flood #3. Flooded landscape, factory in background	Box 2	Folder Neg. #3
Flood #4. Bird's eye view of houses and businesses surrounded by flood waters. Includes a building center left marked for Jacob Mol, and another center right marked by Van Bree? Hardware, 90 W. Leonard.	Box 2	Folder Neg. #4

Flood #5. View of houses on near side of river and factory in the left background on the other side of the river.	Box 2	Folder Neg. #5
Flood #6. Unidentified streetscape showing the water upon to the window sill on the first floor of the houses.	Box 2	Folder Neg. #6
Flood #7. Back yards of flooded area with houses, barns and other out buildings.	Box 2	Folder Neg. #7
Flood #8. Dark image depicting area homes. No water visible.	Box 2	Folder Neg. #8
Flood #9. A landscape with various structures seen behind the water in the foreground.	Box 2	Folder Neg. #9
Flood #10. Flooded streetscape with a light colored house center left.	Box 2	Folder Neg. #10
Flood #11. Houses in the water. A factory in the left background See Flood #3 above, which appears to be a related view of this site.	Box 3	Folder Neg. #11
Flood #12. View from the rear of two houses standing in the water, with other houses behind.	Box 3	Folder Neg. #12
Flood #13. View of a streetscape of houses from the rear, sitting in the water.	Box 3	Folder Neg. #13

Set 2. Farm images.

Title/Description	Instances	
Farm #1 Unidentified rural landscape	Box 3	Folder Neg. #14
Farm #2 Field with cows. Shadow of the photographer bottom center.	Box 3	Folder Neg. #15
Farm #3 Hilly field with cows behind a fence, tree at left.	Box 3	Folder Neg. #16
Farm #4 Man seated at a plow drawn by two horses, working a field, barn and house in background	Box 3	Folder Neg. #17
Farm #5 Wagon of hay pulled by two horses.	Box 3	Folder Neg. #18
Farm #6 Young man in floppy hat, standing in a hay barn with a tool in his right hand.	Box 4	Folder Neg. #19
Farm #7 Young man in floppy hat, holding a horse that has a boy seated on it. A lane and fences behind.	Box 4	Folder Neg. #20
Farm #8 Enclosed vehicle (wagon or surrey?), with four people seated in it.	Box 4	Folder Neg. #21
Farm #9 A family of seven people standing in the yard near a house. Fruit trees? Two adults carry buckets.	Box 4	Folder Neg. #22

Set 3. Grand Rapids Scenes

Title/Description	Instances	
Scenes #1. Ryerson Library Building in construction, ca. 1903-1904. Grand Rapids Public Library. Front façade view.	Box 4	Folder Neg. #23
Scenes #2. West Leonard St. Schoolhouse. Corner view, people sitting or standing in the yard.	Box 4	Folder Neg. #24
Scenes #3. Veterans Home	Box 4	Folder Neg. #25
Scenes #4. Street view into the horizon, with utility poles and wires. Van Bree Hardware?	Box 4	Folder Neg. #26
Scenes #5. Bird's eye view of houses and factories on both sides of the Grand River, taken from a hill.	Box 5	Folder Neg. #27
Scenes #6. Bird's eye view down a hill, possibly Lookout Hill, to houses and factories on the East side of the Grand River.	Box 5	Folder Neg. #28
Scenes #7. Bird's eye view of houses and factory, perhaps Berkey & Gay.	Box 5	Folder Neg. #29
Scenes #8 Unidentified rural scene.	Box 5	Folder Neg. #30
Scenes #9 River or lake view, with factories on the shore at left.	Box 5	Folder Neg. #31
Scenes #10 Picnic? Factory building in background at end of a road.	Box 5	Folder Neg. #32
Scenes #11 Gardens, with buildings and a smoke stack in the background.	Box 5	Folder Neg. #33

Set 4. Store Buildings

Title/Description	Instances	
Store image #1. Peter Seven Wallpaper Store, 130 Leonard N.W., ca. 1904. Man on the left may be Peter Seven. –ID by donor.	Box 6	Folder Neg. #34
Store image #2. Peter Seven Wallpaper Store, 130 Leonard N.W., ca. 1904. Man on the left may be Peter Seven. –ID by donor.	Box 6	Folder Neg. #35
Store image #3. Perspective street view, with the Seven Wallpaper Store center right.	Box 6	Folder Neg. #36
Store image #4. Peter Seven Wallpaper Store, with new sign "130 Peter Seven 130." Shows Klute Dry Goods store in the same building at right.	Box 6	Folder Neg. #37
Store image #5. Another fuzzier version of this same image.		

	Box 6	Folder Neg. #38
Store image #6. Peter Seven Wallpaper Store, 130 Leonard N.W. with the "130 Peter Sever 130" sign, and an early automobile with driver in front of the store. Ca. 1910? Description per donor, who identifies the driver as John P. Seven, b. 1886-xxxx.	Box 6	Folder Neg. #39
Store image #7. Cornelius Seven Dry Good store, 153 W. Leonard, at Quarry St., with a fire station on the other side of Quarry. Description by donor.	Box 6	Folder Neg. #40
Store image #8. Cornelius Seven Dry Good Store, 153 Leonard St. N.W., ca. 1904. View down Quarry street at right.	Box 6	Folder Neg. #41
Store image #9. Interior. Wallpaper store. Peter Seven sitting, Paul Klute standing per donor, ca. 1905.	Box 6	Folder Neg. #42

Set 5. People / Houses.

Title/Description	Instances	
People #1. 135 Leonard NW (521 Leonard, post 1912), at Wieland (right). Home of Peter Seven, ca. 1904? Wallpaper store across the St. at 130 Leonard NW.	Box 7	Folder Neg. #43
People #2. Two Couples seated on the grass under trees. John P. Seven in the hat, near right. Ca. 1904-1910.	Box 7	Folder Neg. #44
People #3. Blurred image. Person lying on ground near river bank?	Box 7	Folder Neg. #45
People #4. Picnic. People seated on the grass, John P. Seven in the hat center right. Ca. 1904-1910.	Box 7	Folder Neg. #46
People #5. People seated, one standing, under trees, similar view of that in Neg. #44 above.	Box 7	Folder Neg. #47
People #6. Picnic. People seated on the grass. Man center front may be John Seven, or the same man center front in neg #46, wearing John Seven's hat.	Box 7	Folder Neg. #48
People #7. Five Children.	Box 7	Folder Neg. #49
People #8. Woman in chair and girl standing on the porch of a house.	Box 8	Folder Neg. #50
People #9. Multiple images on one glass negative plate, depicting people.	Box 8	Folder Neg. #51
People 10. Multiple images on one glass negative plate, depicting people. Images not very legible in the contact print.	Box 8	Folder Neg. #52
People. #11. Kids standing near or on porch.	Box 8	Folder Neg. #53
People. #12. John P. Seven(?), ca. 1900-1904.		

	Box 8	Folder Neg. #54
People #13. Several people seated under a tree. No contact print photocopy available.	Box 8	Folder Neg. #55
People #14. People standing on the front porch of house on Quarry Ave., behind the dry goods store at 153 Leonard NW.	Box 8	Folder Neg. #56
People #15. Interior view, John P. Seven, ca. 1904, seated at a desk.	Box 8	Folder Neg. #57

Set 6. People, Part 2

Title/Description	Instances	
People #1. Hendrika Straayer, mother-in-law of Peter Seven, mother of Peter's wife Francina Straaper Seven.	Box 9	Folder Neg. #58
People #2. Another unidentified elderly woman, seated in the same chair before the same framed image.	Box 9	Folder Neg. #59
People #3. Unidentified woman wearing a hat.	Box 9	Folder Neg. #60
People #4. Male child in a straw hat. Believed to be Martin Seven, youngest son of Peter and Francina Seven.	Box 9	Folder Neg. #61
People #5. Male child, leaning against an unidentified house/structure. Identified as Martin Seven, son of Peter.	Box 9	Folder Neg. #62
People #6. Young woman, believed to be Henrietta Seven, daughter of Peter Seven.	Box 9	Folder Neg. #63
People #7. Unidentified woman and child with dog.	Box 9	Folder Neg. #64
People #8. Infant, unidentified, in a wicker(?) baby buggy.	Box 9	Folder Neg. #65
People #9. Two boys on bicycles in the yard of a house. The boy on the right, in a straw hat, is identified as John P. Seven, son of Peter Severn, ca. 1900. Negative broken upon receipt.	Box 9	Folder Neg. #66

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