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# **Finding aid for the The Arleigh C. Hitchcock Homestyle Center collection Collection 354**

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

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

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Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503

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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>Title:</b>	The Arleigh C. Hitchcock Homestyle Center collection
<b>ID:</b>	Collection 354
<b>Date [inclusive]:</b>	1950s
<b>Physical Description:</b>	1.2 Linear Feet Two boxes
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English
<b>Abstract:</b>	This a devised reference collection containing material related to the 1950s proposed Homestyle Center project in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The collection is named for Arleigh (Bud) C. Hitchcock, the executive director of the project. The Homestyle Center would have included demonstration houses created by notable architects and furnished with modern or traditional furniture and appliances, matched together as a complete interior design. The houses would act as showrooms and would be changed on a regular basis. Ultimately, the project failed to find the necessary financial backing and never got off the ground. The collection includes newsletters, brochures, ephemera and news clippings.

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## Biographical / Historical

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Arleigh (Bud) C. Hitchcock, Jr. was born Sept. 1, 1924 in Owosso, Michigan, the only son of Arlie Hitchcock and Hazel Mann Hitchcock, both of Michigan. Bud Hitchcock served as a pilot in the Air Force during World War II, from June 1944 to Dec. 1945 (B-26; 9th AF321st Medium Bomber Group 574th Bomb Squadron). He continued in the Air Force reserves until August 1955, with the rank of 1st Lieutenant. After WWII, he studied architecture at the University of Michigan, receiving his BS degree in 1949. During this time period he married Patricia Knappen Matheson; they later divorced. Their son Scott Matheson Hitchcock is a current spokesperson for his father's work on the Homestyle Center.

By 1951 Arleigh Hitchcock was a sales manager for Herman Miller, the well known furniture manufacturer in Zeeland, Michigan near Grand Rapids. His resume in this collection also lists positions as Director of Marketing with other Grand Rapids furniture manufacturers, including Shaw-Walker, Irwin Seating Co. and Steelcase Corp., though no dates are given. Hitchcock is believed to have held the position at Herman Miller until some time in 1954. It is perhaps through his sales contacts for Herman

Miller that he met Jason L. Honigman, a Detroit lawyer and vice president of Market Realty Company. It is Honigman who is credited with conceiving the Home Research Foundation and Home Style Center, and hiring Hitchcock as the Executive Director for the Foundation. From 1954 to May 10, 1957, when the Home Research Foundation was disbanded due to lack of funds, Hitchcock worked tirelessly to promote the project.

Hitchcock's later employment includes positions as Executive VP with Precision Manufacturing; President V. B. Actuators, Inc. (space research); VP, V. B. Research & Development Inc. (consultants, space research); Chairman, CSI Environmental Sciences Intl., Montreal. He is said to have 40 inventions to his credit. His resume also lists near death experiences at the ages of 8, 12, 20 and 49 years. It is perhaps these experiences which turned his life direction, to become an ordained minister, obtain a Masters in Psychology, and a PhD in Parapsychology. He became a public speaker in these fields. Hitchcock died June 20, 1999 at St. Augustine, Florida.

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## History

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As one periodical article of the era called it, the Homestyle Center was conceived as an "outdoor museum for houses," to be located in Grand Rapids, Michigan. These designer houses were to be examples of the work of leading American architects of the era. Experts in interior design and landscape design would also contribute to the exhibits. It was expected that the Center would be a leading tourist attraction for Grand Rapids, complimented by the city's links to the furniture industry. In fact, the origin of the idea for the Center was said to have come from an earlier idea for a "Furniture Village" to demonstrate and exhibit local and national furniture products. The much more elaborate Homestyle Center is a version of today's home shows and Model homes, and was expected to provide the viewers with access to new information on designs and well as new home and construction products. The plan was to renovate the homes each year, to bring in new design ideas and project lines.

The project was conceived by Detroit realtor Jason L. Honigman, and promoted by the young University of Michigan trained architecture Arleigh "Bud" C. Hitchcock, from 1954 through 1957. The Home Research Foundation and the Homestyle Center were widely reported by the professional design community and in the professional design literature during this time. Named as participating architects were such notables of the era such as Buckminster Fuller, Paul Rudolph, Kazumi Adachi and others, though Frank Lloyd Wright is reported to have said he would have to be in charge of the entire project in order to participate.

For such an elaborate project, however, an investment of 2.5 million dollars was originally anticipated and the first of the planned structures was never actually built, for the want of the necessary funds. The project promoters, with Hitchcock as the spokesman, asked in 1957 for a \$3,200,000 bond issue to be put on the ballot for a June 4 special election. The Greater Grand Rapids Civic Study Committee advised the City Commission against this. And, when further bids for financial support were made to the local Chamber of Commerce, there was no strong positive support. So, in May of 1957, the offices of the Foundation were closed in Grand Rapids, with post mortem articles now putting the necessary project

costs at \$4,000,000. While it was suggested by Hitchcock that the idea for a Home Style Center would be offered to several other American cities, it is unknown if any further efforts to develop such as project were made.

The site planned at that time for the project buildings is now the site of Frederik Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park. The architects listed in the Prospectus for the project included: Kazumi Adachi; John E. Dinwiddle; Alden B. Dow; R. Buckminster Fuller; Harwell H. Harris; Jones & Emmons; Robert Little; George Nelson; Eliot Noyes; Painter, Weeks & McCarty; Ralph Rapson; Paul Rudolph; the University of Illinois, Champaign, Urbana; Royal Barry Wills; Clifford B. Wright; Wurster, Bernardi & Emmons; and Gene Zema. This prospectus also names the interior designers and landscape architects associated with the project. The Design and Standards Committee for the Home Research Center included Peitro Bellushi, L. Morgan Yost, Rodney M. Lockwood, David C. Shipher, Martin L. Bartling, Sidney N. Shurcliff, Arleigh Hitchcock, and two other Grand Rapids representative, architect Kenneth C. Welch, and James P. Erdman, of the Grand Rapids Furniture Makers Guild.

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## Scope and Contents

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The materials in this collection were previously located in the department's Vertical Files.

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Statement

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

111 Library Street NE  
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503

[localhis@grpl.org](mailto:localhis@grpl.org)

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

### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Grand Rapids Public Library, accession number 00.[4064].1-39

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## Related Materials

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### Related Materials

Coll. 151, Kenneth C. Welch

See also the national art, architecture and design literature.

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## Controlled Access Headings

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- Grand Rapids (Mich.) -- History
- Interior decoration -- Michigan -- Grand Rapids
- Architecture -- Michigan -- Grand Rapids
- Model houses -- Michigan -- Grand Rapids -- History

## Collection Inventory

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### Biographical & Historical Information / Project documents & description.

#### Biographical folder on Hitchcock

Title/Description	Instances	
1. Website print. In Memorium 2001/1 lists Arleigh C. Hitchcock, Jr. B. Arch. A. '40, Jan 20, 1999, Kewadin, Michigan. Univ. of Michigan. Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning.	Box 1	Folder 1
2. Resumes and biographical notes supplied by Scott Hitchcock.	Box 1	Folder 1
3. Lost in the Grand Design / by Curt Wozniak. Grand Rapids Magazine. Aug. 2005. pg. 26-27.	Box 1	Folder 1
4. Research from Ancestry Plus RE Hitchcock.	Box 1	Folder 1
Prospectus. Homestyle Center Project of Home Research Foundation, Inc. ca. May 1956. 00.[3529].1	Box 1	Folder 2

## General

Interior Designers listed in the Prospectus included: Norman Hansen, Eleanor Whaley, Margaret Sedwick, Harry Saunders, Garth Andrews, Esztra Haraszty, Hugh Smallens, James Clevelan, Meg Torbert, Phillip Hall, Benjamin Cook, Henry Demant, Knorr Interior Planning, Inc., and Walt L. Kerr; Landscape Architects listed in the Prospectus included: Francis Dean, Robert Wreich, Edward Laird, Richard Myrick, Garnett Eckbo, Henry Pree, James Rose, Even Harding, John Scruggs, E.J. Phelps, Fredric Stresau, Olmsted Brothers, H.F. Klein, Lawrence Halprin, and William G. Teufel.

Opening the unique Homestyle Center of the Home Research Foundation Incorporated, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Technical Advisors, National Association of Home Builders, Washington, D.C. Summer 1957 00.[4064].2	Box 1	Folder 3
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## General

36 sheets including examples of work by: Kazumi Adachi, Alden Dow, Harwell H. Harris, Jones and Emmons, Robert A. Little, Painter, Weeks and McCarty, Ralph Rapson, Paul Rudolph, Royal Barry Wills, Clifford N. Wright, Wurster, Bernardi and Emmons, Zema and Bumgardner, Map includes sites for works by the architects above, plus: R. Buckminster Fuller, John E. Dinwiddie, Eliot F. Noyes, George Nelson, Members of the Design and Standards Committee from Grand Rapids were:, James P. Erdman, Arleigh C. Hitchcock, Kenneth C. Welch.

Arleigh (Bud) C. Hitchcock, Jr. and the Homestyle Center Project. Sept. 7, 2005 Scott Matheson Hitchcock Website data. 00.[4064].4	Box 1	Folder 4
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## Homestyle Reporter [newsletter] / Home Research Foundation, Inc., The Pantlind, Grand Rapids. 00.[4064].6-10

Title/Description	Instances
July 2, 1956	Box 2
No. 2, Aug. 6, 1956	Box 2
No. 3, Sept. 10, 1956	Box 2
No. 4, Oct. 8, 1956	Box 2
No. 5, Nov. 5, 1956	Box 2
No. 7, Mar. 27, 1957	Box 2

## Reference materials

Title/Description	Instances
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Design Today for Tomorrow's Better Living : Homestyle Center to make State Key for U.S. / Will Hardy. Detroit Times Pictorial Living, July 29, 1956. pg. 4-5 00.[4064].11	Box 2	
Homestyle Center Foundation, Inc. pgs. 5-25. Source unknown. [ca. 1955] Advertising from Grand Rapids and other Michigan communities share that printed pages with with information on the Foundation. 00.[4064].12	Box 1	Folder 5
Home Style Center : National Building Project in Grand Rapids Expected to Attract a Million Visitors Annually. Peninsular Club Magazine. Oct. [1956] 00.[4064].13	Box 1	Folder 6
Homestyle Center: New forms, new plans, new details. House & Home, Nov. 1956, pg. 156. 00.[4064].14 Photocopy.	Box 2	
Housing Project : the Homestyle Center. Arts & Architecture. v. 73, no. 9, Sept. 1956, pg. 28. 00.[4064].15 c. 1. Original periodical issue	Box 2	
Huge ground-breaking in Grand Rapids. Interiors, Sept. 1956. Photocopy. 00.[4064].17	Box 2	

### **News and Views from the Homestyle Center. In Grand Rapids Visitor. (8 clippings/articles) 00.[4064].18-24**

<b>Title/Description</b>	<b>Instances</b>	
Oct. 15-Oct. 31, [1956?]	Box 1	Folder 7
Oct. 31-Nov. 15, 1956	Box 1	Folder 7
Nov. 30-Dec. 15, 1956	Box 1	Folder 7
Jan.15-Jan.31, 1957	Box 1	Folder 7
Feb. 15-Feb. 28, [1957?]	Box 1	Folder 7
Mar.31-Apr. 15, 1957	Box 1	Folder 7
Apr 15-Apr 30, [1957?]	Box 1	Folder 7
Outdoor Museum for Houses. Architectural Record. Sept. 1956 00.[4064].25	Box 1	Folder 8
Permanent Home Research Center Launched. P/A News Survey. Progressive Architecture, Sept. 1956. Reprint. 00.[4064].26	Box 1	Folder 9

### **Something Wonderful is Happening in Grand Rapids ...Grand Rapids Visitor. (5 articles) Originals + packet of photocopies 00.[4064].27-31**

<b>Title/Description</b>	<b>Instances</b>	
January 30, 1956	Box 1	Folder 10
June 1, 1956	Box 1	Folder 10
Aug.16-21, 1956	Box 1	Folder 10
Sept. 15-30, 1956		



	Box 1	Folder 10
Sept. 30-oct. 15, 1956	Box 1	Folder 10
Tomorrow's House. American Building, Nov. 1956. 00. [4064].32	Box 1	Folder 11

## Newspaper clippings

Title/Description	Instances	
Letter. To Ruth Abrams from Dorothy Esler of the Home Research Foundation, Inc. Nov., 8, 1956. Lists citations for articles on the Homestyle Center in the Grand Rapids Herald newspaper. 00.[4064].33	Box 1	Folder 12

## Grand Rapids Herald clippings.

Title/Description	Instances	
"Land Bill introduced for 'Furniture Village," Feb. 4, 1955. 00. [4064].34	Box 1	Folder 13

## Grand Rapids Press clippings.

Title/Description	Instances	
"CC Studies Home Center." Apr. 16, 1957.	Box 1	Folder 14
"Furniture Village 'Dream' Drows to Homestyle Center for Million..." Sept. 22, 1956.	Box 1	Folder 14
"Local Construction Pac..." July 14, 1956, pg. 7. 00. [4064].35-37	Box 1	Folder 14

## Unidentified clippings.

Title/Description	Instances	
"Drop Homestle Plans : Center officials cite lack of fund backing." 00.[4064].38	Box 1	Folder 15

## Internet Sources

Title/Description	Instances	
Eichler, Jones & Drummond: when National TV Put Eichler Homes at Center Stage with the Ambitious "house that 'Home Built' Program. <a href="http://www.eichlernetwork.com/ENStory.html">http://www.eichlernetwork.com/ENStory.html</a> <a href="http://www.eichlernetwork.com/ENStry25.html">http://www.eichlernetwork.com/ENStry25.html</a> 00.[4064].39	Box 1	Folder 16

## Homestyle Center Images.

Title/Description	Instances	
Images from the "Homestyle Center" website created by Scott Hitchcock, Nov. 2005	Box 1	Folder 17

## Prints from Related Websites

Title/Description	Instances	
List of Google hits for "Homestyle Center." Accessed on 1/14/2006.	Box 1	Folder 18
Wikipedia entry <a href="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homestyle_Center">http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homestyle_Center</a>	Box 1	Folder 18
Free Dictionary <a href="http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/Homestyle+Center">http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/Homestyle+Center</a>	Box 1	Folder 18
Utopia Neighborhoods <a href="http://www.squidoo.com/Utopian_Neighborhoods/">http://www.squidoo.com/Utopian_Neighborhoods/</a> <a href="http://homestylecenter.grsculpture.com/">http://homestylecenter.grsculpture.com/</a>	Box 1	Folder 18
Harwell Hamilton Harris website <a href="http://www.lib.utexas.edu/taro/utaaa/00001/aaa-00001.html">http://www.lib.utexas.edu/taro/utaaa/00001/aaa-00001.html</a>	Box 1	Folder 18
Buckminster Fuller bibliography. Includes articles on the Homestyle Center. <a href="http://www.buckminster.info/Biblio/About/About-Articles-1956.htm">http://www.buckminster.info/Biblio/About/About-Articles-1956.htm</a> . Print from website Accessed on 1/30/2006.	Box 1	Folder 19

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