

# **Grand Rapids Railway Company Reorganization Collection**

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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>	Grand Rapids Railway Company Reorganization Collection
<b>Date</b>	October 1937
<b>Extent</b>	1.0 Linear feet
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Text [Box]</b>	1
<b>Abstract</b>	<p>The Grand Rapids Railway Co. offered public transport within the city of Grand Rapids, as well as operating recreation areas such as Ramona Park. Once at the forefront of the streetcar industry, Grand Rapids Railway Co fell as a result of the Great Depression and the growth of the automobile industry. By 1935, the once modern streetcar company was phased out in favor of more cost efficient buses. In the 1937 court case, Grand Rapids Railway Co. sold it's assets and reorganized as Grand Rapids Motor Coach Co. Under this new corporate body, it retained interest in Ramona Park, however streetcar service ceased to exist in Grand Rapids.</p>

## **Biographical/Historical note**

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Early railway transportation in Grand Rapids began in 1865, to connect with the Detroit-Milwaukee train station. Over time, several independent lines were opened and operated as well. The railways were combined into one company, Street and Railway Co., in 1883. Competition within the city soon sprang up. In February 1885, the Valley City Street and Cable Co was formalized and became operational in 1888. Valley City Street and Cable Co brought the first cable cars to Grand Rapids, in order to bring transportation service to Michigan and Lyon St. hills. The lack of a connection between the two companies caused confusion among riders. This led to the unifying of the two companies in 1890 under the name Consolidated Street Railway Co.

Under the Consolidated Street Railway Co, new electric lines were introduced. After struggling for ten years, Consolidated Street Railway Co. was bought out in 1900 by E. W. Clark Co. of Philadelphia and was renamed the Grand Rapids Railway Co. The change brought many improvements to the railway service, including heavier tracks, double cars and expanded service which bolstered a healthy ridership that would last for many years. In 1925, the Grand Rapids Railway Co. suffered a serious setback when a fire destroyed 57 streetcars. The process of rebuilding brought to light a lack of streetcar improvements within the industry. With Grand Rapids at the forefront, industry wide improvements were made to streetcar design and the new modern streetcars were introduced into the city in 1927.

The onset of the Great Depression in 1929 crippled the streetcar industry in Grand Rapids. Streetcars were phased out in favor of buses. The process was hastened by a city-wide street widening, which would have required a resetting of the tracks. By 1934 buses had taken over all of the systems, and in 1935 the last streetcar in Grand Rapids made it's final run. The Grand Rapids Railway Co. sold it's assets and re-consolidated as Grand Rapids Motor Coach Co in 1937 after declaring bankruptcy. It retained some interest in Ramona Park until their closure in 1950.

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## **Scope and Contents note**

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This collection consists of the October 1937 case for the reorganization of the Grand Rapids Railroad Co. It is comprised of 12 exhibits. These include; an Amended Plan of Reorganization, Proceedings for Reorganization, Trust Agreement, Summary, Real Estate in Grand Rapids, Ramona Park Property, Income Account, Franchise Ordinance, Transcript of City Commission, Stock Trust Agreement, Transcript of City Commission, and Transcript of Notice of hearing.

## **Administrative Information**

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### **Publication Information**

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

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## **Controlled Access Headings**

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### **Corporate Name(s)**

- Grand Rapids Railway Co.

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

- Grand Rapids (Mich.) -- History

### **Subject(s)**

- Street-railroads -- Michigan -- Grand Rapids

## Collection Inventory

	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Amended Plan of Reorganization	1	1
Proceedings for Reorganization	1	2
Trust Agreement	1	3
Summary	1	4
Real Estate in Grand Rapids	1	5
Ramona Park Property	1	6
Income Account	1	7
Franchise Ordinance	1	8
Transcript of City Commission	1	9
Stock Trust Agreement	1	10
Transcript of City Commission	1	11
Transcript of Notice of Hearing	1	12

Exhibits Contents

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