

Grand Rapids History & Special Collections

Archives

GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC LIBRARY

Finding Aid for the

Grand Rapids Industrial Corporation. Records

Collection # 047

September 2009 version

Abstract

The Grand Rapids Industrial Corporation (GRIC) Records include minutes, by-laws, tax and financial records, ledgers, *Raabe et. al. vs. City of Walker* court records and journals, maps and subject files of the organization from (GRIC), 1935-1980. GRIC was a not-for-profit corporation with the mission to make loans, secured by real estate and/or chattel mortgages, accounts files for receivable, life insurance or other collateral, to local business unable to secure loans from banks or other lending institutions. The purpose of the GRIC was to support manufacturing jobs in the Grand Rapids community. Records especially pertain to companies which were granted loans, and to the Walker land and court cases.

Collection #: 047

Accession #: 1986.162

Donor: Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce

Span dates: 1935-1980

Processor: William C. Black, July, 1987; finding aid edited by Richard H. Harms, December 1996. Box Summary, Marcella Beck, August 31, 2000.

Size: 7 linear ft. (84 inches)

Related Collections

Box Summary

Box No.	Description of Contents	Box Description
<hr/>		
Box Inventory 9/2009		
1	untitled	blue slim
2	ledgers/realia	full lid 3x12x15.5
3	financial reports	blue standard legal
4	tax records	slim legal
5	stock ledgers	blue standard
6	stock ledgers	blue standard
7	subject files	blue standard
8	subject files	blue standard
9	companies petitioning assistance	blue standard
10	companies petitioning assistance	blue standard
11	companies petitioning assistance	blue standard
12	companies petitioning assistance	blue standard
13	Walker properties	blue slim
14	Raabe et al v. Walker	standard legal
15	Raabe et al v. Walker	blue slim
FF.XV.B	Maps	6/7/2004

## History

The Grand Rapids Industrial Corporation (GRIC) was organized by the Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce as a not-for-profit corporation in 1935 with an authorized capital of \$125,000 with \$50,000 subscribed and paid in. Shares sold for \$50 and half shares sold for \$25. The purpose of the corporation was to make loans secured by real estate mortgages, chattel mortgages, or accounts receivable, life insurance or other collateral or combinations of these, for the purpose of increasing or maintaining industrial employment. Its by-laws provided that not more than ten percent of the authorized capital could be loaned to any one borrower. The amount of the authorized capital, the amount paid in, and the limit on loans were determined after a survey of the experiences of similar organizations throughout the country. The GRIC acted as a model for other similar endeavors.

The corporation concentrated on taking loans which could not be handled by the banks because of the term of the loan or because collateral available would not justify a loan. The directors of GRIC were willing to look to the character and reputation of the borrower if the loan was to be dedicated to increasing or maintaining industrial employment. A large number of loans were made between 1935 and 1950, loans affecting the jobs of reportedly more than 4,000 workmen. Loans were made for as little as \$500 and, in two instances, such borrowers were by the 1980s capitalized for over a million dollars. While the employment was, in each case, less than ten persons at the time of the loan from GRIC, each employed more than 400 persons by 1980. In only one case was there a loss from a loan and in that case a strike and Reconstruction Finance Corporation action were contributing factors.

After World War II there was a considerable reduction in the loan activity of the GRIC because of the greater availability of credit from the government and from banks themselves. Many of the requests to the GRIC during the 1950s and 1960s were from industries that would have been so seriously under-capitalized that even a GRIC loan would not have justified the continuation of the business. In the decades of the 1950s and 1960s Michigan, in particular, experienced economic peaks and valleys that created many dislocations in the employment market. Demands on the unemployment compensation funds and rising taxes gave special emphasis to the exodus of manufacturing plants from the northeast and Great Lakes region to the Sunbelt to take advantage of lower operating costs.

History continued ...

The GRIC responded by looking for low cost land in the Grand Rapids area that could be developed as an industrial park. The land would be offered to industry at a total cost, including utilities, services and site preparation, that would encourage existing industry to expand and attract new industry to the area. To achieve this in 1965 the GRIC acted to obtain a 160 acre tract of land in Walker (the Wagemaker and Kennedy properties) and the City of Walker rezoned the land from agricultural to industrial. The project foundered when 22 families residing in the vicinity of the proposed park brought suit to contest the legality of the rezoning. In the court case and subsequent appeals, the Michigan Supreme Court ruled that the zoning changes could not be effected on the basis that it was proposed prior to the adoption of a master plan by the City of Walker.

With the greater part of its funds committed to the Walker properties, and being unable to sell the properties, the GRIC was unable to meet its original purpose of making loans to small manufacturers. With the decline in the value of agricultural land in the 1970s, the GRIC found itself absorbing losses monthly. Unable to fill the intended purpose of the GRIC, and indeed with little demand for the original services, the Board of Directors determined, when a buyer was located, to sell the land and dissolve the organization. The Greater Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce offered to buy the outstanding stock at \$1.00 per share, allowing stockholders to take a loss of \$49.

On June 30, 1980, at the annual meeting of shareholders, on the recommendation of the Board of Directors, action was taken to dissolve the company. After the last of the land contracts had been paid to the GRIC on the Walker properties, and payment made on the amounts owed for borrowed funds and interest thereon, there remained \$2,079.40. These funds were paid over to the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce as compensation for services rendered in connection with the dissolution of the GRIC, and with the understanding that the Chamber, which was owner of 70% of the stock, would pay any fees and disbursements connected with the dissolution of the GRIC.

Scope and Content

The collection documents, through the GRIC's minutes, subject files, financial reports, and tax records reflects the operation of the Grand Rapids Industrial Corporation, 1935-1980. The Walker properties files and the court records and briefs portray the downfall of the corporation. The collection, especially in the companies petitioning assistance files, portray the business climate in Grand Rapids for the smaller industrialist and entrepreneur. The collection consists of the following eleven series: Articles of Incorporation and By-laws, Minutes of the Board of Directors 1970-1980, Ledgers, Financial Reports, Tax Records, Stock ledgers, Subject files, Companies Petitioning assistance files, Walker Properties, *Raabe et. al. vs. City of Walker*, and Artifacts.

Series Descriptions

**Series I. Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws.**

Arranged Chronologically.

Consists of application for incorporation, articles, by-laws and amendments to above. 1935-1964.

**Series II. Minutes. Board of Directors.**

Arranged chronologically.

Consists of minutes, 1970 to 1980 during the period of the GRIC's economic and legal problems.

**Series III. Ledgers.**

No arrangement.

Consists of a cash journal and check register, 1951 to 1976 inclusive; a balance sheet for June, 1957 to December 31, 1974; a general ledger, 1966 to 1978, with various entries covering various time spans without in general dates; and a journal entries ledger, 1960 to 1980, inclusive. The ledgers reflect the transition stage of the GRIC during its crisis and decline.

**Series IV. Financial Reports.**

Arranged chronologically.

Consists of the yearly financial reports to the Board of Directors and shareholders, 1936 to 1974, inclusive. Reflects the overview of the GRIC's loans as well as operating procedures.

**Series V. Tax Records.**

Arranged alphabetically, chronologically.

Consists of tax records for the GRIC, 1936 to 1979.

**Series VI. Stock Ledgers.**

Arranged numerically.

Consists of the stock ledgers, 1935 to 1979, reflecting the supporters of the GRIC, amounts of stock purchased, ec.

**Series VII. Subject Files.**

Arranged alphabetically, chronologically.

Consists of the general operating subject files of the GRIC. Pertains to notices of meetings, general correspondence, Kent County Airport, Correspondence of the Board of Directors, 1935-1963, stock proxies, transfers, and transfer lists. The general subject files reflect the differing enterprises with which the GRIC was involved.

**Series VIII. Companies Petitioning Assistance Files**

Arranged alphabetically, chronologically.

Consists of files on companies that applied for loans from the GRIC. Generally information includes economic surveys and other information on companies, payment schedules if loan was granted, reasons for loans and in some cases accounts receivable. Series reflects the small business atmosphere in Grand Rapids from 1935 to the 1960s. Includes several firms that went under as well as several that became very successful.

**Series IX. Walker Properties**

Arranged alphabetically, chronologically.

Consists of subject files on Walker land, including deeds, payment schedules, loans, options, and efforts to dispose of land after loss in court on re-zoning issue.

**Series X. Maps & Plans Associated with the Walker Properties series above. .**

**Series XI. Raabe et. al. v. City of Walker**

Arranged numerically.

Consists of the trial records for the appeal in the Michigan Court of Appeals, and the appeal in the Michigan Supreme Court. Evidence records include maps, photographs of surrounding houses, and photos of the land in its agricultural usage. Also includes various court briefs.

**Series XII. Artifacts**

Consists of the official seal imprinter of the GRIC, enclosed in original protective fabric case.

Contents

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Description</u>
<b>Series I. Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws</b>		
1	1	Articles of Incorporation, 1935.
1	2	Bylaws, 1943, 1946, 1954, 1963.
<b>Series II. Minutes. Board of Directors.</b>		
1	3	Minutes, 1970-1980.
<b>Series III. Ledgers.</b>		
2	v. I	Cash journal, 1951-1976, inclusive; Check register, 1951-1976.
2	v. II	Balance sheet, 1957-1974,
2	v. III	General ledger, 1966-1978.
2	v. IV	Journal entries ledger, 1960-1980.
<b>Series IV. Financial Reports</b>		
3	4-10	1936-1974.
<b>Series V. Tax Records</b>		
4	11	Capital stock tax, 1935-1943.
4	12	IRS, Organization Exempt, 1943-1979.
4	13	Michigan Annual Report: non-profit corporation, 1935-1979.
4	14	Michigan annual securities report, 1935-1943.
4	15	Michigan Intangible tax, 1944-1967.
4	16	Tax exemptions, claims: correspondence and data, 1935-1962.
4	17	IRS Corporate Income and Declared Value Excess Profits Tax, 1935-1943.
<b>Series VI. Stock Ledgers</b>		
5	v. V	101-200.
5	v. VI	201-300.
5	v. VII	301-400.
5	v. VIII	401-500.
5	v. IX	501-600.
5	v. X	601-700.

**Series VII. Subject Files**

7	18	Annual meeting notices, 1936-1996.
7	19	Application data & polices.
7	20-2	Board of Directors' correspondence, 1935-1963.
7	23	Correspondence, miscellaneous, 1945-1979.
7	24-5	Kent County Airport.
7	26	History of the GRIC.
7	27	Minutes of shareholders, 1969, 1972-1973, 1976-1980.
8	28	Prospect lists.
8	29	Publicity & Press Releases.
8	30	Sheboygan, Wisconsin.
8	31	Seidman & Seidman billings.
8	32	Seidman & Seidman correspondence, 1965-1975 Stocks.
8	33	Stockholders, 1958, 1971-1973.
8	34-5	Proxies; 1959-1961, 1963-1973.
8	36	Purchases; 1957-1972.
8	37	Purchases; receipts.
8	38	Stockholders unable to locate
8	39	Transfers, 1936-1964.

**Series VIII. Companies Petitioning Assistance**

9	40-2	Abrado Corp., 1959-1961.
9	43	Adair-Burton, 1948-1949.
9	44	Aluminum Permanent Mold, 1953-1954.
9	45	Art Craft Novelty, 1938.
9	45a	Automatic Packaging Machinery, 1938.
9	46	Bliss Mfg., 1935-1943.
9	47	Blockcraft Mfg., 1936.
9	48-9	Bond Welding, 1956-1960.
9	50	Brower Furniture, 1935-1936.
9	51	Carbonneau Industries, 1948-1956.
9	52	Chicky Candies, 1938-1944.
10	53	Clare Mfg., 1956.
10	54	Clark Mfg., 1942.
10	55	Commercial Grinding, 1948-1956.
10	56	Conical Tool, 1950, 1953.
10	57	Connor Foundry, 1937-1939.
10	58	Davidson Furniture, 1937-1942.
10	59	Davis Storage Battery, 1936.
10	60	Down, Inc., 1946-1951.

**Series VIII. Companies Petitioning Assistance**

10	61	Edwin I. Guthman & Co., 1937-1938.
10	62	Fleming Mfg., 1936.
10	63	Fuller Millwork, 1936-1938.
10	64	Grand Rapids Electrotpe, 1941-1946.
10	65	Grand Rapids Exterminating, 1945.
10	66	Grand Rapids Knitting, 1958.
10	67	Grand Rapids Woodcraft, 1939-1941.
10	68-9	Gunn Co., 1954-1958.
10	70	H.L. Hubbell Mfg., 1938.
10	71	Hallwood Inc., 1964-1967.
10	72	Haney School Furniture, 1940-1945.
10	73	Herold-Bertsch Shoe Co., 1937-1938.
10	74	Home Acres Block, 1939.
10	75	Home Service Bakers, 1953.
11	76	J.A. Brewer Products, 1948.
11	77	Kuchins Furniture Mfg., 1934-1941.
11	78	Luce Furniture Corp., 1935-1938.
11	79	Metal Portable Fire Escape Co., 1948.
11	80	Michigan Natural Storage, 1960.
11	81	Michigan Wheel Co., 1932-1936.
11	82	Moore & Clayson, 1939.
11	83	Myers Foundry, 1947-1948.
11	84	National Die & Engraving, 1938.
11	85	Paragon Die & Engineering, 1958.
11	86	Precision Extrusion Die, 1963-1965.
11	87	Proos Mfg., 1941.
11	90	Puffy Pops Corp., 1935-1940.
11	91	Pyramid Tool, 1952-1958.
11	92	Quality Tool, 1937-1940.
12	93	Rapids Manufacturing, 1936-1939.
12	94	Rapid-Standard Manufacturing, 1938-1940.
12	95	Redlin-Monsma.
12	96	Rupert S. Cain Co., 1954-1961.

**Series VIII. Companies Petitioning Assistance**

12	97	Seacraft Boat, 1947.
12	98	Sheboygan Woodcraft, 1939-1940.
12	99	SnoboB, 1953.
12	100	Spartan Extrusion Tool & Die, 1958-1959.
12	101	Standard Press, 1937.
12	102	Standard Electric Motor.
12	103	Sterling Brush, 1936-1938.
12	104	Superior Tailors, 1944-1947.
12	105	United Machine Tool, 1955.
12	106	Wolf, Joseph, 1938.
12	107	Wolverine Wood Specialties.
12	108	Wood Products Corp. of Grand Rapids, 1938.
12	109	Wyoming Manufactured Products, 1958.
12	110	Zoerner Brass Works, 1936.
12	111	Misc.: Beasecker Excavating; G.W. Clements; Cherokee Tool; Dechro Brass & Mfg. Co.; Economy Die & Stamping; Grand Rapids Mfg. Co.; Lacer Ceramic Products; Metal Carrier Corp.; Pasko Mfg. Corp.; Pennsylvania R.R. Co., Potchen Panels, Inc.; Resistance Welder Service; Royal Upholstering; Stedman Mfg. Co.

**Series IX. Walker Properties.**

13	112	Bank loan.
13	113-16	Correspondence, 1965-1978.
13	117	Costs of land, etc..
13	118	Forms for sale of stock.
13	119	GRIC land option data.
13	120	Maps.
13	121	Miscellaneous.
13	122	Wagemaker, Henrietta.
13	123	Deeds.

FF.XV.B

**Series X. Maps**

Oversized Maps

1. City of Walker, Kent County, Mi. Zoning Map (2 photocopied sheets)
2. General Development Plan, City of Walker, Kent Co., Mich. [Plan in effect Feb. 1, 1973; color, poster type]
3. Walker Twp., Sec. 5 & 8 T.7N. R.12 W. 13-B Kent Co., c. 1968. [aerial, blackline print]
4. Topographic map of an area in Section 8, T.7N., R.12W., Kent Co., for Medema, Van Kooten & Assoc., Lansing, mi. : Abrams Aerial Survey Co., Photography, Mar. 1963, Mapping Feb. 9166. [3 copies, blackline, with various annotations + 2 accompanying documents = 5 total]
  - penciled chart
  - letter
5. William & Works letterhead, Aug. 14, 1968.
6. Map of section 8, T.7N. R.12 W., City of Walker for Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce / Williams and Works, no. 5-66130. oct. 1965. [blackline]
7. [Unidentified sketch in red & black pencil, with “swamp” near center, folded]

**Series XI. Raabe, et. al., v. City of Walker**

- |    |             |                                  |
|----|-------------|----------------------------------|
| 14 | 124-5       | Court Briefs.                    |
|    | v. XI-XIII  | In the Michigan Court of Appeals |
| 15 | v. XIV-XVII | In the Michigan Supreme Court.   |

**Series XII. Realia / Artifact.**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 2 | Official seal imprinter of the GRIC in original fabric case. |
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