

Grand Rapids History & Special Collections

Archives

GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC LIBRARY

Finding Aid for the  
William F. Drueke Photographs  
Collection # 212

June 2008 version

Abstract

The Drueke Photographs Collection contains images taken by William F. Drueke, Jr. of various scenes in Grand Rapids from 1958 to 1979. Some images in the Drueke Collection document Grand Rapids urban renewal, including demolition of building either to make way for new building construction or for highway construction. A very large portion of the collection documents the construction of Interstate 96 through Grand Rapids. Also shown are many scenes of downtown Grand Rapids and the Grand River, including building projects and street scenes. A few photographs of people, identified and unidentified, are found, as well as photographs of a WLAV Raft Race and a March of Dimes fund-raiser. The Drueke name in Grand Rapids, Michigan is better known for its games company, which manufactured wooden games, including Chess sets. They were contracted with the military to provide these to soldiers during WWI. The game company is not the primary aspect of this collection, but is reflected in a catalog from Drueke Games, a family tree, and photos related to the Drueke family businesses.

Drueke Company site. History  
<http://www.drueke.com/history.asp>

William Peter and Elizabeth Berles Drueke Family family history site. William Peter was the grandfather of the donor, William F. Drueke, Jr.  
<http://www.peterspioneers.com/WEBD.htm>

Collection #: 212

Accession #: 1996.002

Donor: Drueke, William F., 1996

Span dates: 1958-1996

Processor: Brian Anderson, February 1997, edited by R. Mayne, Sept. 1998, June 2007. Finding aid update for Box Summary & rehoused graphic, 3/6/2002, R. Mayne.

Size: 1.5 cu.ft.

Related Collections

Coll. 084, Furniture Manufacturers Association Collection has nine 1959 photos of Drueke chess game pieces, perhaps carved by the same carvers who worked for the Grand Rapids furniture industry.

Coll. 263, GRPL Small Manuscript Collection, includes a biography of William Drueke. Another copy may also be located in the departmental biography files.

Coll. 273, Father Dennis Morrow Collection. Father Morrow has included images from the Drueke Coll. 212 in his slide presentations.

Coll. 319, GRPL Realia Collection. Box 16 of this collection includes a couple of Drueke games.

Jane Drueke Biggins website

<http://www.peterspioneers.com/JAJDB.htm>

Box Summary

Box No.	Description of Contents	Box Description
1	Freeway Construction photos	Standard
2	Photos, 1960-1974 Demolition, construction, views	Standard
3	Photos. Events, Drueke	Standard

Poster Graphic with 224, Box 16. 3/6/2002 Removed from FF.IX.1.

### Scope and Content

One third of the collection contains photographs of the construction of Interstate 96 in Grand Rapids between 1959 and 1966. Many stages of the construction process are shown. Approximately another third of the collection documents building construction and urban renewal in downtown Grand Rapids in the sixties and seventies. Most of the urban renewal is found in box 2. The third box contains photographs of people and events, however very few of the people are identified. The third box also contains information on the Drueke family and business.

A poster "Lakeside Club Bouquet", located in the flat files, is shown in a photo in Box 3, Folder 11 of this collection, but may not belong to this accession.

### Biography

William F. Drueke Jr.(1912-2000) was one of two sons of William F. Drueke Sr.(1884-1956). William Drueke Sr., from Grand Rapids, was a civic leader and a games manufacturer. His father, William Peter Drueke was in the wholesale liquor business until 1918. In 1914, Drueke Sr. founded the first American company to produce chess boards. The company expanded producing many types of game boards, using high quality Grand Rapids wood craftsmanship. In 1932, his children, Marian, Joe, and Bill(William Jr.), joined the company. During the Second World War, the Drueke Game Company received a war contract to produce games for soldiers. The company took the status of incorporated in 1954. Two years later William Sr. died unexpectedly in Kentucky at the age of 72 en route to Florida with his wife. William F. Drueke Jr. took over the family business, running it until it was sold to Low Tech in 1987. The Drueke name remained on the products even after the company was sold again in 1992 to Carrom based in Ludington. Bill Drueke married Doris E. McLaughlin on January 25, 1941. They had seven children: Elizabeth, William F.(3rd), Carole, David, Mary Kay, Richard, and Rose. Bill developed his photographic interests from Cresence Smith, his uncle. A May 3, 2000 obituary article in the Grand Rapids Press states that Drueke has his own darkroom, with one of his favorite images being a 1969 photo of the Calder sculpture, La Grande Vitesse, not part of this collection at this time.

Contents

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Description</u>
<b>Photographs</b>		
1	1	Freeway Construction 1959.
1	2	Freeway Construction 1960.
1	3	Freeway Construction 1962.
1	4	Freeway Construction 1963.
1	5	Freeway Construction 1964.
1	6	Completed Freeway 1965, 1969.
1	7	Completed Freeway 1966.
2	1	Demolition of MI Liquor Control 1960.
2	2	Post Office Construction 1961.
2	3	Post Office Construction 1962.
2	4	Building Construction 1965, 1967, 1969.
2	5	Building Construction Downtown 1966.
2	6	Building Repairs (Chase Bowling) 1967.
2	7	Urban Renewal: Various Scenes 1958-1969.
2	8	Views of Grand River from Bridge 1960.
2	9	Downtown: Church, Shops, River 1961.
2	10	Residential 1961.
2	11	Damaged Buildings- Urban Renewal 1961.
2	12	Aerial Photo (West Side) 1963.
2	13	Building Demolition for Freeway 1964.
2	14	Downtown and Grand River 1964.
2	15	Downtown and Grand River 1972.
2	16	Bubble Lens Photos 1973.
2	17	Razing of Wurzburg Building 1973.
2	18	Grand River-Winter 1974.
3	1	Bob Griffin 1960.
3	2	Kids Skating 1962.
3	3	March of Dimes at Mall 1963.
3	4	People-Unidentified, High School 1966.
3	5	Motorcycle Rally 1971.
3	6	Building Fire 1971.
3	7	WLAV Raft Race 1972.
3	8	WLAV Raft Race 1972.
3	9	Kids on a Tobagan n.d.
3	10	Old Car n.d.
3	11	Drueke Photos 1964, 1974, 1979.
3	12	Drueke Games Catalogs

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| 3 | 13 | Drueke Family Tree 1996.<br>Biographical & Historical Reference Information on the Drueke Family &<br>Company, added by staff. |
| 3 | 14 | William F. Drueke, Jr. Obituary  |
| 3 | 15 | Drueke family website prints.  |

**Graphics**

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| 224-16 X | Lakeside Club Bouquet : a whiskey of rare distillation, Wm. Drueke<br>Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Chicago : The Meyer Cord Co.<br>Vitrolite. N.d.<br>[Poster, encapsulated. Rehoused, 3/6/2002] |
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Pictorial Index

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Brewery- b.2, f.5  
Bridge Street(looking west)- b.2, f.15  
Bridge Street Bridge- b.2, f.8  
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City Hall- b.2, f.7  
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Flat Iron Building- b.2, f.16  
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Fulton St. Bridge- b.2, f.8  
Fulton St. West- b.2, f.8  
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Michigan National Weather-ball- b.2, f.15  
Michigan Street Hill- b.2, f.8  
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