

Grand Rapids History & Special Collections

Archives

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Finding Aids for the

Grand Rapids City Welfare Department
Scrip Labor Collection

Collection # 067

November 2007 version

Abstract

The Scrips Labor Collection consists of approximately 110 photographs of a public works relief program operated by the Grand Rapids City Welfare Department, 1929-1932. This program provided work for unemployed men & some women, as well as housing for single unemployed men in the Grand Rapids, Michigan and Kent County area. The photographs depict various projects undertaken by the workers, such as parks improvements, road construction, sewer and water main projects. Also depicted are programs to supply food & funds for the workers, including food preservation and distribution, and two drives to raise food at Thanksgiving ("Fill the Barrel") and Toys at Christmas ("For an Empty Stocking"). The city scrip, in lieu of U.S. Currency, which the workers earned, allowed the workers & their families to purchase food, supplies & services, while others working in the program supplied the services, such as canning, shoe repair, barbering, etc. The photos present a vivid depiction of local municipal welfare activities during the Great Depression (1929-1932), prior to any such federal action. Established by City Manager (later Mayor) George Welsh, the program won both he & Grand Rapids national recognition.

Collection #: 067

Accession #: 00.000 ; 00.[2666].1

Donor: Unknown & City of Grand Rapids

Span dates: 1930-1932

Original archival processing date: March 1988, with editing, expanded descriptions & corrections Jan. 2004.

Size: 0.5 cu. ft. ; x linear ft.

Related Collections

See also additional information at the Grand Rapids City Archives & Records Center.
Appointments Necessary, M-F, 8-5. 616-456-3114

Some images from the Scrips collection were used in the Grand Rapids Century Exhibit, 1930s era:

<http://www.grpl.org/perl/gallery/display.pl?decade=1930>

252-FF.IX.D 2007 Exhibit for Richmond Park Pool & Bath House 75th Anniversary.

Using mostly images from the Scrip Collection.

A Pool for the People : Building Richmond Park Pool and Bath House. Online version. Grand Rapids Historical Commission Websites.

<http://www.historygrandrapids.org/explore.php?cat=4&essay=17>

Box Summary

Box No.	Description of Contents	Box Description
1	Photos	old small print
2	Photos	small print
3	Ancillary documents	slim legal

Processing Notes

- A. Collection needs reboxing to upright boxes, to prevent damage to photos which currently slide around in the flat boxes.
- B. Collection needs some additional rearranging.

Arrangement

Most of these photos include an old set description on the back of the photos. That description appears to have been ignored when the collection was first processed, removing the items from their associated context. Some attempt to bring the photos back together in the sets per these descriptions has been done. This rearrangement means that some older location citations for box and folder may now be different.

Scope and Content

The collection contains approximately 500 photos of various projects undertaken by the program, such as parks improvements, road construction, sewer and water main projects, food preservation and distribution, and two drives to raise food at Thanksgiving ("Fill the Barrel") and Toys at Christmas ("For an Empty Stocking"). The photos present a vivid depiction of local municipal welfare activities during the Great Depression, prior to any such federal action.

Most of these photo prints are 8x10, with two sets of old numbers on the back. A set of handwritten descriptions is usually found at the top, including the numbers used in the descriptions below. Another set of "PBD" or "OBD" numbers was probably from early library file processing.

While this is basically a photo collection, ancillary documents are now being appended which are associated with the images, such as the "City Social Service Grocery Order" form, which would have been used by those making requests from the various food stores depicted in the photos.

History

In 1929, Grand Rapids City Manager, George Welsh, ordered the City Welfare Department to establish a public works relief program for the poor of the city and county. This program assisted both depression era families, along with the chronically poor. It won for Grand Rapids, as well as for Welsh, national recognition, though it was not without problems.

It is reported in "The Story of Grand Rapids" edited by Z.Z. Lydens, that some 20,000 men, women & children were cared for through the Scrip program, with as many as 60 projects underway at the same time.

To raise funds to pay for the project, the city bonded itself, and borrowed from banks. Other fund raising was done, and buildings, as well as real material goods, were supplied by Kent County & Grand Rapids businesses & individuals.

Pay was earned at a rate equivalent to up to fifty cents per hour, depending upon family size, and was issued in city scrip certificates. The scrip was redeemable at the City Scrip Store for food, clothing and other supplies. These items were said to be priced comparably to prices in other retail establishments.

The program undertook a number of public works improvements projects such as parks improvements, road construction, snow removal, firewood collection, shoe and clothing repair and distribution, and food preservation and distribution. At its peak, the program was employing up to 600 people, primarily men, but also some women.

Some of the photos here show the new Civic Auditorium in construction, where Scrip Labor workers were used to reclaim building materials from the cleared building site. The building was later called the Welsh Auditorium.

The program came under criticism for several reasons. The most outstanding complaint was that the program was being operated outside of the mandated city business procedures. Also, local merchants felt the scrip store presented unfair competition, since it accepted scrip instead of legal tender. Finally, the program also provided a shelter for homeless single men, whom many people felt were not as needy as unemployed married men. In spite of these criticisms, the program continued until it was supplanted by the much larger Federal Works Progress Administration.

Series Descriptions

Series I. Photographs

Series II. Ancillary documents

This new series was established in Jan. 2004, to accommodate miscellaneous manuscript items associated with this collection, including unpublished items associated with the project, published items from the era, and research documents based upon use of the collection.

Contents

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	1	Series I. Photographs. Belknap Park/Reservoir Hill Project, ca. 1931 (6) Belknap Park Set = 3 items 1. 11-18-31 [Men working the ground, with wheelbarrows in foreground] 2. 6-23-31. Belknap Memorial Park [View of men working at the base of the hill. Men in foreground left digging in a trench. 3. Scrip Labor sodding [putting down sod] at Belknap Park
1	1	Reservoir Hill Project set = 3 items 1. Spreading Fertilizer at Reservoir Hill [Smoke stacks in the background, men working in the rubble at right, small hills of other matter near the center] 2. Reservoir Hill, 1931. [Plymouth 1932, Floating Power billboard lower right. 3. 7-21-31 [A line of men standing in the background at the base of the hill. Men moving with full wheelbarrows to dump the dirt down into a meadow area.
1	2	City Canning [54 S. Division] (2) •Food Supplies #6. City Canning Operations. [Women seated at a table which has several large kettles on it. Woman standing at the back, with crates of produce behind them] •Food Supplies #13. 54 Division So. Canning Peaches and Tomato Juice. [Women in foreground, woman & men in background. Working at tables, with bottled stock on shelves & tables http://www.grpl.org/perl/gallery/display.pl?decade=1930&display=6
1	3.0	Misc. Food Supply & Social Center documents NOTE: These items have been moved to 3.2 & 3.3 below. 10/5/2004

1 3.1

Series I. Photographs.

City Social Welfare Dept. Office (9)

- #1. Shot from the interior office, shows a staff on the inside, interacting with a group of men on the other. A desk near the center with a phone, man seated talking to another man standing.
- #2. Group of men in hats & coats crowded into a basement(?) space. Man at window lower right, with boy in lower right corner.
- #3 11-8-35. Exterior view of men lined up near a shack on a direct road. "In Here" sign at head of the line. Sports park on the other side of the fence near the road. Houses & industry in background.
- #4 Campau N.W.—pencil on back of photo. "Grand Rapids butchers Supply Co." on the building, with a crowd of me outside & in the doorway. Truck with men in front. "For Rent" sign in the window.
- #5 Sears Building. 211 Bond Ave. – Emp. Office., Social Service Office and Social Center. [Shows a large 4 floor building with vehicles parked in front. Storefront offices on the lower level, with a baby carriage parked outside of one.
- #6 New Employment Office, Sears Bldg., 211 Bond Ave. [Shows a crowded office, with some people interacting with the public at windows, some at the office counter, some at tables.
- #7. 2-6-32. Social Welfare Office, Sears Bldg., 211 Bond Ave. [Shows a long office area with support beams. Desks & counters line the long space, with people working.
- #8. Social Welfare Employment Office. [Shot from the interior of the workspace behind a large counter. Several men on the other side of the counter. 4 staff at the counter, and others seated at tables.
- #9 Duplicate of #8 above, without the bottom label lettering.

1 3.2

Series I. Photographs.

City Welfare Dept. City Scrip Store (11) + Social Center (1)

- Social Center #13. [Interior, with 3 men, one facing the camera, writing. Food stuff around on shelves, in boxes, crates, etc.
- #1 Shoe & Clothing Dept., Bond Ave., Social Welfare. Interior with stock around the walls, men & women seated trying on shoes with staff, and others standing in the background.
- #2 Typical Daily Scene at Municipal Grocery Store Exchanging Scrip for Groceries. [Exterior view of crowded street, people in line to enter a building with a large awning. The graininess of the image suggests this is a copy image from a publication.
- #3 City Store “Waiting Room” [Shows people in line to a window along a rail. Staff behind window wearing hats & smocks or aprons. People seated on benches lower left.
- #4 “7-20-31”—blank ink in lower margin. Men seated trying on shoes with stock in background.
- #5 City Scrip Store “Office and shoe Dept.” Shows a counter in the foreground which has decorative detailing. Behind the counter is stock at left, a man at a desk with a calendar above, a stove?, a woman & a man seated at desks, a door with the “Open” sign, a man at a roll top desk center right.
- #6 Sugar in Stock Room of City Store. [Shows stacks of large bags with 2 men in aprons at the back left, and cartons along with back wall at right.
- #7 City Scrip Store. “Grocery dept.” [Shows men in aprons working at bins around the edge, and at tables at center.
- #8 City Scrip Store “Grocery Dept.” Clock on back wall, men in jackets or aprons, some working with customers at windows, others gathering goods and putting them in bags.
- #9 City Scrip Store “Stock Room” [Shows at basement type space, with men moving crated of stock on trolleys, hand carts, or in bushel baskets.
- #10 Typical Scene at Municipal Store. Exchanging Scrip for Groceries. Note Smiling faces. [Shows a larger group of me waiting for service at a window lower left. Man with a broom, lower right.
- #11. Men in jackets standing working at counters & tables. Man in suit lower right, near a table, with barrels underneath.

Series I. Photographs.

1 3.3

City Welfare Dept. Food Supply (3)

- Food Supplies #9. Giving out bread & milk at no. 5 Engine House. “Leonard & Monroe”, N.W. [Shows an officer handing out milk to children & men standing in a line. The officer is in front of a cabinet (refrigerator?) which has unidentified supplies at the top, and milk bottles showing at the bottom. The boy at the front of the line stands next to a wagon with another child seated there.

- Food Supplies #10. (Milk Service). William Slater, Engine House No. 10. Images shows 5 children in line. The officer is handing a boy a bottle of milk with his left hand and has another package in his right hand. Signed above the refrigerator(?) read [1] No Milk after ? M. 2) No Milk with out bottles. The milk crates seen in the image read “Modern Milk Co.”.

- Food Supplies #12. Duplicate of #10 above.

Items Nos. 10 & 12 may have previously been identified as Engineer House #5,

<http://www.grpl.org/perl/gallery/display.pl?decade=1930&display=5>

1 3.4

City Welfare Repair Dept. (2), including sewing & hat cleaning

- Repair Dept. #1. Hat Cleaning Dept. Social Center. [Shows a man ironing, with hat around on his counter, and on a shelf. A pot in on a hot plate in the foreground.

- Repair Dept. #2. Sewing Room Bond Ave. Social Welfare. [Shows two women seated at treadle sewing machines in the foreground, with tables of stuff in the background.

Series I. Photographs.

1 4

Streets, grading & widening. Division Avenue Construction, 1931/32 (6)

●#13. North Division Ave., Widening. [The first cross street is probably Lyon, running along the back of the old Post Office building, later the Art Museum]. The spire for St. Mark's is just visible above the top of the building with the "Parking" sign at lower level".

●#18. #900 N. Ionia Ave., Wrecking for N. Division Ave. opening. [Shows a stone wall along a side walk, with demolition going on at the properties above the stone walls.

●#19. #930 N. Ionia Ave., Wrecking for N. Division Ave. opening. [Shows houses in demolition with buildings, behind the trees, in the background

●#24. 10-12-31. North Division Ave. Widening. [A brick street shows vehicles parked along the curb in the background. At right is a brick building with an awning, an "Orange Crush" sign on the front and a Coca Cola ad on the side. Another building at the far right is probably a garage. Men are standing or working along the sidewalk. A City truck is parked at the curb.

●No Scrip numbering; probably a copy photo. 9-20-32. View of a hill with a large digger at work.

●No Scrip numbering; probably a copy photo. 6-28-32. View of a hill with the excavations of building structures, probably after the demolition of the homes.

1 5

"Fill the Barrel Campaign" (4)

●#1 [Storeroom. Shows Barrels stacked in the background, holding up table tops, and sitting around. Some barrels have signs "Help fill the Barrel, to help the unemployed". Men standing along the back table. Canned and other types of goods are on the tables]

●#2 [Storeroom. Another view. Same man in jacket & tie is seen without glasses, but was wearing glasses in #1 above. Shows the barrels stacked along the back wall, and the table stacked with cans. Crescent flour bags are on the floor.

●#3 [Dup. Of #2 above] Part of groceries, etc. received during "Fill the Barrel" campaign.

●#4 [Dup. Of #1 above] Just another corner of the "Fill the Barrel" store-room.

1 6

Series I. Photographs.

Firewood Distribution Project. Woodyard / Woodpile / Cannon Twp. (12)

- Woodyard #1. [Shows chopped wood being gathered by men and placed in a Golden Transfer co., truck. A box car is in the background.
- Woodyard #2. [Shows a mountain of chopped wood with 5 men standing at various levels in the pile.
- Woodyard #3. Wood cut on land in Cannon Twp. Ready to be hauled city wood pile. [Shows a dirt road, with long sticks or logs of wood piled at left.
- Woodyard #4 City Welfare Dept. Wood Yard. A truck in the foreground had logs chained to the truck bed. A man stands by the cab of the truck. Various men are seen standing in the mountain of chopped wood in the background. Men appear to be chopping wood at ground level.
- Woodyard #5 A truck filled with logs changed to the truck bed, has 3 men standing on top of the logs, and 6 men standing in front of the truck. The large mountain of chopped wood is behind.
- Woodyard #6. Shows the mountain of chopped wood, with the city in the background behind. A sign on a near building had "Grand Rapids Brooms". Men are climbing in the wood pile or working on the ground.
- Woodyard #7. Land in Cannon Twp. After timber was cut off. [Shows a hill, with a few small light colored logs center right.
- Woodyard #8.[Dup. Of #7.
- Woodpile #9. Wood cut on land in Cannon Twp. Ready to be hauled to city wood pile. [Shows a dirt road cutting through the center of the image, with the wood "logs" piled behind the road. A shack is at the left, and there are 3-4 vehicles around.
- Woodpile #10. [4x5 photo] [Shows a man in the shadows sawing a big log opposite a man in the sun facing the camera. Snow in background.
- Woodpile #11. [4x5 photo] [Shows a big tree root being dug up by woodmen, with other woodmen in the background.
- Woodpile #12. [4x5 photo] [Snowy scene with men chopping wood, with other bare trees standing in the background

1 7

Series I. Photographs.

“For an Empty Stocking” Campaign (5)

●#5. Man & woman placing packages in a container which is labeled “For an Empty Stocking” A Movietone sign for South High Auditorium is in the storefront window behind left. A sign on the glass of the entrance door has “Heart of Value”

●#6 Camera Shop #311084. Interior view of “booths”, with wrapped packages on tables. “Banner” signs give directions by name. Wood barricades keep visitors in a narrow walkway around the displays. A Christmas tree is in the background.

●#7 Camera Shop#311083. Perspective view of walkway between the wood barricades. Workers? Behind the barricades ar right near the loaded tables. A man standing in in front of a row of empty seats.

●#8. Camera Shop #311082. [Single story (mostly) building with flat roof has a “No 41” on left side. A long line of people are arranged along the sidewalk. “For an Empty Stocking” lettering is displayed in the corner windows on both streets of this corner building. Autos on the street.

●#9 [Shows a woman putting a package in the collection container, with lots of stuff on the tables & counters in the background.

Accompanied by a newspaper clipping, GR Press, Dec. 19, 1931, p. 1, Showing this image published in the newspaper. The caption identifies the woman at Mrs. R.D. Califf, 2016 Coit Ave. N.E., at Storz Department Store, 1722 Coit Ave., N.E. gift chimney. Margin notes: Carrie L Califf, Roy D. Califf.

1 8.1

Series I. Photographs.

Grand River Flood Relief & Control Project, 1930-1932, 1936-37 (24)

Note: Items 1-9 are labeled "Flood Relief".

Items 10-24 are labeled "Flood Control".

- #1 Winter scene with snow. Men working the ground, with wood "beams" placed on the ground at intervals.
- #2 "Lake Shore Bridge"—pencil on back of photo. Shows view in #1 from the opposite end.
- #3 2-3-37. Shows a dredger, with a smoke stack, at the shoreline.
- #4 2-3-37. Verso note: River dredge on Riverside Park, which had to be destroyed. Unable to move after filling in river. (R.A.)
- #5 Fulton St. Gauge 1.04—printed in black in on the image lower right. 2-7-30. Obstruction in river at Lake Shore Bridge. Winter scene with snow. "C.W. Darling"—cursive, stamp on verso.
- #6 Downstream at L.S. & M.S. Bridge. River + 6.0 1-20-30. Shows a watery landscape.
- #7 1-2-30. Shows iron trestle(?) lower right. Watery view, with snow. Stamp on verso: Order reprints by number XXX Public Service Lab. City of Grand Rapids. C.W. Darling—cursive stamp.
- #8 Obstructions in river at L.S. & M.S. Bridge. River +1.04. 2-7-30. [Date also recorded on the telephone pole at the left. Wintery scene with snow.
- #9. Upstream at L.S. & M.S. bridge. River +6.0. 1-20-30. Shows a bend in the river with snow/ice floating on it, and winter trees on the banks.
- #10. ½ mile above L.S. & M.S. bridge. River +2.7. 1-2-30. Shows a snowy scene, possible from a road, with a near and shore row of trees, and the river in the background. City labs stamp & Darling stamp on verso
- #11. Up stream from L.S. & M.S. Bridge. River +2.7. 1-2-30. Shows groups of poles sticking out of the water, with a winter, snowy landscape behind. A water tower is in the distance at top left. City labs stamp & Darling stamp on verso.
- #12 12-16-36. Shows the river at left, with a large crane at work. Men at work, probably in Riverside park. Cars parked at right.
- #13. Dup. Of #12
- #14. 12-16-36. Shows the scene from the opposite end, with hills of stuff along the bank, and an access road running along parallel to the river.

Series I. Photographs.

- 1 8.1 Grand River Flood Relief & Control Project, 1930-1932, 1936-37 (24)
Continued ...
- #15. Bissell Carpet Sweeper Co. factory along the river, with the tower of the Grand Truck station at the bridge in the background. Men placing stones along the riverbank in foreground.
 - #16. 4-14-31. Grand River at lake Shore Bridge. [A road at the right
 - #17. 11-4-31. Clearing River bank north of Wealthy St. Bridge [probably on the west side] Shows the trestle bridge, and the cityscape in the background.
 - #18. 8-1-31. Dredging river North of Lyon St. [Shows a concrete bridge, with Voigt Mill / Crescent flour among the building in the background behind the bridge. Men working in the river in the foreground.
 - #19 8-11-31. Scrip labor scalping, Grand River bottom. Bissell at right behind the concrete bridge. Men working on the shore in the foreground, under the bridge.
 - #20. [Men working on the river bank in the foreground, with river behind, and industrial building on the opposite river bank [West side?] Trestle bridge to the left.
 - #21. 10-8-30. Grand River near Lake Shore Bridge prior to flood relief work.
 - #22. 2-12-32. Flood Relief Project near sewage plant. [Shows the river with shore at right.
 - #23. River Grading at Wealthy St. Shows men working on the shore. "Public Service Garage" in the background, along with other buildings. Trestle bridge upper left.
 - #24. 12-16-36. [A big log in the foreground, men working on the shore in the background, with the river at the right.
- 1 8.2 Indian Mill Creek, 1930/31 (4)
- #1. 2-7-30. [Between G.R. & North Park]
 - #2. 8-24-31. Grading slopes at Indian Mill Creek west of Turner Avenue. [Imperial Furniture Co. factory in the background, train on the track, men working on the hill between the track above and the creek below.
 - #3. 1-30-30 Indian Mill Creek [woody winter scene, with factory in the distance background]
 - #4. 1-30-30 Indian Mill Creek [winter scene, with train just visible on the rise at left]

Series I. Photographs.

- 1 9 Ken-O-Sha Park Project, 1930/31 (3)
- #1. 2-21-30 or 31. Filling in the roadway [Deep ruts in the mud; path with vehicles cleared through the trees]
 - #2. [Men working on road bed, with dump truck at end of work track. Snowy scene.
 - #3 9-21-31. 1 man standing in center of image, framed by a truck loaded with dirt left and a moving vehicle right. Men in the distance, and an auto center right in background.
- 1 10 Lumber Salvaging, 1931 (2)
- #1 Salvage operations. 7-22-31. Piling salvaged lumber at pumping station. [Shows logs in right corner foreground, with lots of pipes & pipe joints behind, then men in trucks lifting lumber up or down to other men on top of a pile of lumber. A building is in the right background.
 - #4 Lumber at City wholesale market. 8-11-31. [Men working with cut lumber. Billboards in background. Golden Sales Co. large sign at right. Houses on hilltop behind.
- 1 11 Management Staff (1)
- Officials #1. Officials in charge of Scrip Labor [Exterior view, group of men standing, wearing coats, with hats in hand. Unidentified buildings behind.
- 1 12 North Park Project (4)
- North Park 1. "Park Offices"--pencil on back of photo. [Several small buildings, and a group of men near a truck in the center.
 - Scrip Labor #2. "Grand Rapids rented tourist cabins at North Park, during 1930's"--back of photo, [with Grand River in background.
 - No description. [Small building at left with "Office" on door. Buildings in the right background. Lumber pile, and Grand River just visible through the trees at the right.
 - No description. [Men working in a line, perhaps on fencing or other layout. Large building in the right background. Small buildings dotting the landscape.

Series I. Photographs.

- 1 13 People. Goebel, Frank H. (2)
- Officials 2. Frank H. Goebel Asst. City Engineer & Scrip labor Supervisor [standing at the open door of auto, with field behind, and a factory & water tower in the distant background]
 - Officials 3. Frank H. Goebel. Assistant City Eng. & Scrip Labor Supervisor. [Standing in foreground in hat & coat, with large pipe being lifted in the background. Truck to his right. Building with a Quaker Oats add on the side behind.
- 1 14 Pickling, food Supply (1)
- City Welfare Dept. Food Supplies #5 54 Division So. Making Pickles for next winters use. [Women with their hands in large tubs on a table in the background. Men standing in foreground near large barrels, or at the right, near large bags.
- 1 15 Potato Distribution, food supply (5)
- City Welfare Dept., Food Supply #3. 11-25-31. Loading potatoes for Welfare Dept. [Interior view toward an open door, where items are being loaded in a truck. Men carrying bags, bags stacked around on the floor, barrels of potatos, people standing at left near the door.
 - City Welfare Dept., Food Supply #4. 11-25-31. Loading potatoes for Welfare Dept. Exterior view of men with bags loading potatoes into a truck parked in front of the open front door.
 - City Welfare Dept., Food Supply #7. 11-25-31. Weighting potatoes at Sears Building. [Men in a basement space, with bags of potatoes. Loading at the scale from a bucket into a bag. Potatoes piled in the corner in the background.
 - City Welfare Dept., Food Supply #8. 10-28-31. 10,000 BU. Potatoes in City Welfare Store Room. [Basement setting, view length wise, with potatoes loaded on a slope.
 - City Welfare Dept., Food Supply #11. 11-4-31. Potatoes stored by City Welfare Department. "Part of 27,000 bu." [Basement setting, with large bins holdings lots of potatoes on either side of space

Series I. Photographs.

1 16

Repair Shops, stoves, shoes, furniture (4)

- City Welfare Dept., Repair Dept. #3 Stove Repair Dept. Bond Ave., Social Welfare. [Men in basement setting working at various devises, with Oak Laurel Stove in right corner.
- City Welfare Dept., Repair Dept. #4. "Furniture, baby carriages, etc."--pencil on back of photo [Men in basement setting, working. Man lower right with carriage, Man at left with overturned table. Man in back working on some kind of furniture, man in left background at unidentified tool, saws hanging on the wall, coats hanging on pegs.
- City Welfare Dept., Repair Dept. #5. Shoe Repair Dept. Bond Ave., Social Welfare. [Narrow space, with brick walls & windows at the far end. Men standing at machines by left wall, man working at a sewing devise in the right foreground with shoes on the floor in the lower right corner. Men working in the background near the windows.
- City Welfare Dept., Repair Dept. 6. Stove Repair Department. [Basement setting, large rooms with numerous stoves. Men at various stoves. Stairs just visible at the left. Chairs? Hanging upside down on the wall at the right, may have legs cut off to sit lower during work.

2 1

Richmond Park Project. Pool, bath house, Gerrit Folkring, (14)

- Richmond #1. Richmond Park Swimming Pool. 4. [Shows pool from a short end looking the length with a street stretching into the horizon from the far end of the pool. People are on or near the bleachers at left, and people are on the two sides. Pool appears to be dry on the near end, and perhaps is just being filled for the season.
- Richmond #2. Richmond Park Swimming Pool. 3. Near view of men working on the pool, construction using brick in the background, water flowing into the pool.
- Richmond #3. Richmond Pool and the bathhouse being built from salvaged brick. 12-31-31 [Pool is empty. Hill with bare trees is behind the construction, which is along a long side of the pool, and shows 5 arched portals in the center.
- Richmond #4. Richmond Park Bath House, 2-15-32. Fenced pool. Roof on bathhouse, with center poolside entrance covered with tarp. Bare trees, but no snow on near ground.
- Richmond #5. Richmond Pool & Bath House Construction, Gerrit Folkring, foreman. [Folkring in foreground. Camera man & camera on a tripod. Full pool, with crowd standing along the far end.
- Richmond #7. Richmond Park Bath House. 2-8-32. [Scaffolding in front of center poolside entrance. Winter scene. Pool not visible, but suggested by the fencing fainting visible in front of the pool house.

Series I. Photographs.

2 1

Richmond Park Project. Pool, bath house, Gerrit Folkring continued ...

- Richmond #8. Richmond Park Bath House. Scaffolding along most of the long pool side of the pool house. [Bare trees on the hill behind, but no snow. Road up the hill in the right background. Pool behind fence in the right foreground.
- Richmond #9. Bath House at Richmond Park Pool. [Bird's eye view of woodmen in center of pool house, early in the construction. View probably taken from the hill behind the pool house, with a view toward the pool & field, and road on the other side.
- Richmond #10. A corner of Richmond Pool and the Bathhouse being built of salvaged brick. 2-31-31. [Shows arches in center, no room, winter view, pool behind fence.
- Richmond #11. N.W. Corner, showing Bath House foundation of Richmond Pool. 12-3-31. [View from the base of the hill, toward the pool, with houses on the horizon.
- Richmond #12. n.d.[Pool full of kids, with adults standing around the outside, tents, autos & houses in the distance.
- Richmond #13. Richmond Pool. Bathhouse foundation in background. 12-3-31. [Shows the bottom of the empty pool, toward construction.
- Richmond #14. S.W. Corner, showing Bath House foundation of Richmond Pool, 12-3-31. [View from the base of the hill with the pool to the left of the photographer. Ben working on the foundation. Sunny date, with shadow of the photographer(?), and tripod, in the foreground.
- Streets, grading & widening #5. Tamarack Ave. grading at Richmond Park. Pavement crossing the view in the foreground, and apparent pavement at the left. Cleared ground stretching into the distance with utility polls stretch parallel to the ground. People in coats walking.

Series I. Photographs.

2 2

Riverside Park (8)

- Riverside #1. Riverside Park. 2-12-32. [Shows men with wheelbarrows. Cold weather, with turned up collars. Shed, with small square window at left.
- Riverside #2. Pond at Riverside Park. 6-4-31. [Shows river in the background, men working at something in the center, rough ground in foreground.
- Riverside #3. Riverside Park, near old hydraulic works. 5-20-31. River on the left. Possible construction between trees center right.
- Riverside #4. Riverside Park, old hydraulic works. 6-4-31. Men digging near an old foundation. River behind from the left.
- Riverside #5. Clearing in Riverside Park. [Winter, no leaves on tree, but no snow on ground. Swampy damp area.
- Riverside #6. Old Hydraulic works at Riverside Park. 5-29-31. [Shows road at left. A few men standing near the excavation of the old foundation.
- Riverside #7. Pool built by Scrip Labor at Riverside Park. [Pool is sunken, with a rocky border at the water line, and a rock island near the center.
- Riverside #8. Building slops at Riverside Park. 8-22-31. [Men working on the slops to the sunken pool.

2 3

Roosevelt Park, Community House Project, Jan. 1943 (2)

Near duplicate images, showing the single story building with basement & steep roof(attic?), with two sets of double doors near the chimney at right. Many multi pane windows along the vertical side. Winter flat ground.

- Roosevelt #1.
- Roosevelt #2

2 4

Scrip Facsimile (1)

Photo of a sheet of "Grand Rapids, Mich. Work Voucher No. C 76926-76930 = \$1.00 & D12881-102885, for \$.20, good for groceries ... at the City Store.

2 5

Series I. Photographs.

Sewage Plant Project, 1931, 1936-37 (12 images, 13 items due to split photo), Booster Station (1)

- Sewage Disposal #1. Sewage Disposal Plant before beautifying with scrip labor 1931. [Bird's eye view.
- Sewage Disposal #2. Sewage Disposal Plant after beautifying with scrip labor, 1931. [Bird's eye view, showing road cutting diagonally through the image. 3 smoke stacks in the background. [oversized, which has been folded & is now torn in center]
- Sewage Disposal #3. 2-11-36. [2 men on top of an unidentified construction in a snowy scene.
- Sewage Disposal #4. 3-1-37. Road to property with autos in foreground, one near an outhouse. Structures in the background. A little snow still on the ground.
- Sewage Disposal #5. City Scrip workers at the sewage disposal plant. Mr. J. Rumsey, Sept. 2nd from right on front row. [Men seated on a hill, in a triangle. Steel girders or bridge at top of hill, and a brick building in the background left.
- Sewage Disposal #6. Start of paving at sewage disposal plant. 7-18-31. [Men digging, working on a road bed, and a ditch at right. Building behind the trees background left. Street light at end of new road, near truck.
- Sewage Disposal #7. [ID cut off at bottom] 7-8-31. [Men working on a slope, top & bottom. Dump truck center right. Top of Steel construction & building, and tank just visible behind the hill in background.
- Sewage Disposal #8. New concrete road approach to Sewage Disposal Plant. [View with road running into the horizon, with river on the left. "closed" sign on a fence at right. Iron rail fencing along the road. Streetlights line the road.
- Sewage Disposal #10. 6-13-31. Front of auto just visible in lower left corner. River or sewage pool in the background. Men digging.
- Sewage Disposal #11. 30 Inch Filtration Plant Outlet. 7-18-31. [Appears to be dry ground in foreground. Men working near center of image, man with wheelbarrow moving toward center right. Wall in background, pool or river at right.
- Sewage Disposal unnumbered. Experimental farming at sewage treatment plant. 7-18-31. [Men, including African Americans, hoeing, levy? in background.
- No ID. 6-16-31. [Bird's eye view perhaps toward sewage plant pools in the background. Roof of "Round" building at right, has several smoke vents on top. Fence, shed & hilly constructions at left.

Series I. Photographs.

- 2 5 Sewage Plant Project, 1931, 1936-37 (12 images, 13 items due to split photo), Booster Station (1) continued ...
- Booster Station at Hall St. and Godfrey Ave. 8-12-31. [Appears to be construction on a street corner, with a hill in the background to fencing and other construction behind the hill. Men are working, primarily on the roof of the small brick structure at street level.
- 2 6 Snow Removal Project (6)
- Snow Removal #1. Snow removal with scrip labor. Winter 1931-1932. [Men with shovels]
 - Snow Removal #2. Snow removal with scrap lable, Winter 1931-1932. 3-23-31. [Perhaps taken at same time as #1 above, view is from the end of the snowbank, toward the conveyor, with several men standing on the sidewalk watching the process. Sign for "Kate's Cafeteria" behind watchers, known from City Directory to be at 159 Ottawa Ave., N.W., in the Water Klingman Building]
 - Snow Removal #3. Snow removal with scrip label Winter 1931-1932. 3-23-31. [Several men with shovels working between the sideway & the autos parked at the curb. Possible Bridge St. locale]
 - Snow Removal #4. Snow removal with scrip label. Winter 1931-1932. [246 Ionia, Mapes Nebelius Cadillac Co. Snow removal truck & conveyor with workers in from of the Cadillac Co., with view down the street]
 - Snow Removal #5. Snow removal with scrip label Winter 1931-32. [W. Fulton St., Mar. 23, 1932. Workers shoveling into several truck. A filling station is behind the trucks.
 - Snow Removal #6. Snow removal with scrip label, Winter, 1931-1932. [West Fulton?, Mar. 23, 1932]

2 7

Series I. Photographs.

Social Center (Spring Street C.R. Church? And other locations? (12)

- City Welfare Dept. Social Center #1. Old #15. [Caucasian man seated left with shoe off. African American man seated right, with hammer, working on a shoe. A table between them, a Christmas tree behind the table, and a crowd of people seated looking toward the left, behind the tree]
- City Welfare Dept., Social Center #2. Old #4 [Cooking. 4 men, 3 are wearing jackets or aprons. One stirring a pot on the stove.
- City Welfare Dept. Social Center #3. [Group of men seated a long tables at right, eating. Other men seated on benches at left, waiting(?), with possible sleeping facilities behind them. Coats & hats hung at lower & upper level along the walls.]
- City Welfare Dept. Social Center #4. [Image shows a church with lettering either side of door "City Social Center" Verso notes: Spring St. Christian Reformed Church?? "Thru the generosity of Ryskamp Bros, this building was donated to the city during the winter of 1930 and spring of 1931 for the housing of the single, unemployed men."
- City Welfare Dept., Social Center #5. [Bird's eye view of scene in #3 above. Two rows of men seated at tables eating. A row of men seated opposite, with bunk beds in 3 close rows behind. A Christmas Tree is at the left in this image.
- City Welfare Dept., Social Center #6. [City Social Center Church, winter scene, with 2 men standing at the entrance. Verso notes: Between Oaks & Cherry Street. "Building donated by Ryskamp Bros. Until June 1, 1931 to be used as a municipal clubhouse for the homeless & jobless single men."
- City Welfare Dept. Social Center #7. Dup. Of #3 above.
- City Welfare Dept. Social Center #8. [Sleeping Quarters] Shows a factory type building with upright supports in a large space. Cots are placed in several rows close together throughout the space. Numbers written on the floor mark the number of the cot.
- City Welfare Dept. Social Center #9. Reading Room at Social Center. Shows men seated at tables playing cards. Some men are seated on a bench near a wall at right, reading. Other men are standing, some with reading matter.
- City Welfare Dept. Social Center #10. Dining Room, Bond Ave., Social Center. [Shows a long narrow space filled with several long tables, full of men eating. Bird's eye view, with 3 arched windows a the other end of the space.
- City Welfare Dept., Social Center #11. [Barber at work on an older man with a mustache seated in the chair. Mirror behind.

Series I. Photographs.

- 2 7 Social Center (Spring Street C.R. Church? And other locations? (12)
Continued ...
- City Welfare Dept., Social Center #12. Old #13. [3 Showers with round overhead curtain rings. The ring at the left is occupied with the canvas(?) shower curtain covering the occupant. A man in a suit has opened the lid of a container marked "Water Line" on the end. A Western Electric container is at the right, with a wash devised on top.
- 2 8 Storm Sewer Construction, Godfrey & Broadway Aves. (4)
- Salvage Operations #2. Clearing steel sewer forms. 8-11-31. [Market S.W. ; Blue Valley Creamery Co. building in background.]
 - Sewage Disposal #9. Godfrey Ave. Sewer Job. [View down the street, with a factory at the right. Men working in the street near the factory.]
 - Sewage Disposal #12. Godfrey Ave., Sewr [Sewer] Job. 2-12-32. Same location as above, but the street has been opened up and wooden framing has been set up. A couple of cranes are at the left & other vehicles. The factory is at the right. The same water tanks & building with a curved front roof line as seen in #9, are at the end of the street.
 - Streets #35. Laying 30" storm sewer in Broadway Ave. [Broadway 30" sewer Webster to Richmond. Shows a large pipe above the framed trench in the street. Men are working with the pipe, hung from a wench, with a truck in the right foreground. Houses are seen down the street with a grocery nearest the workers.]

2 9

Series I. Photographs.

Streets Grading Project (24?)

- Streets, grading & widening #1. Aberdeen St. grading in front of school, 5-29-31. [School not visible in image, which shows a dirt street in a residential neighborhood, with autos.
- Streets, grading & widening #3. Grading Webster St. at Valley Ave. [Men working on a hilltop, with a view in the background to the houses & businesses below. There is a man-made rise at the right, with most of the men working below the rise at the left.
- Streets, grading & widening #4. Valley Ave. and Webster Sts., before making cut. [Rough ground in foreground with fall trees on hill in background. Autos at base of hill.
- Streets, grading & widening #6. Valley Ave. & Webster St. grading. [Men working ground, most on lowers ground, but some on the hill in the background. Hill has been cleared of most trees, as compared with #4 image.
- Streets, grading & widening #7. Arianna St. Grading. [Men working ground, several with wheelbarrows. Houses in the near background]
- Streets, grading & widening #8. Grading at Fuller Ave. & Coldbrook St. [Cutting down street grading. Men mostly working the lower ground, some with wheelbarrows. Some men on the rise at right. Houses visible.
- Streets, grading & widening #9. Grading of Eastern Ave. at Maybelle St. 11-21-31. Shows a long dirt road rough cut across the image up the hill into the horizon. Utility poles, a few buildings just visible on the hill at left. Men with wheelbarrows dumping soil down graded rise.
- Streets, grading & widening #10. Grading of Eastern Ave. at Maybelle Sts. 11-21-31. [View from the hill top down in opposite direction of #9 above. Men working in foreground, in 2 trenches, with some on the rise, near the higher graded hill at right. Houses at the base of the road in the background.

<http://www.grpl.org/perl/gallery/display.pl?decade=1930&display=12>

- Streets, grading & widening #11. Innes St. after grading. [Street sign has "Fuller N.W.". Image has a brick building at left, with dirt road between building & street sign up a rise into the background. Autos at the end of the street in the background.
- Streets, grading & widening #14. Grading of Denherder Ave. 7-23-31. [Men at the top of a graded rise across the center of the image (angled). Houses in the background. Rough ground at lower right.

2 9

Series I. Photographs.

Streets Grading Project (24?) Continued ...

- Streets, grading & widening #15. 6-23-31. [Aberdeen St. grading]
Several men in a row at left and crossing the center with wheelbarrows. Sidewalk & building barely visible at left. Houses at right. Street is dirt.
- Streets, grading & widening #16. Sylvan Ave., Grading job. 1-26-32.
[Men working in the foreground between hilly ground (higher rises) on either side. Vista into the background, with houses & factory in the far horizon.
- Streets, grading & widening #17. Sylvan Ave. grading job. 1-26-32.
[View from opposite end of work site shown in #16, with men working between the hilly rises on either side. Trees on the hill at the left.
- Streets, grading & widening #21. Den Herder St. grading at Aberdeen School 5-29-31. [Foreman (?) standing near center of image, pointing at rise or bolder near an auto. Houses in the background.
- Streets, grading & widening #22. Den Herder St. grading at Aberdeen School. 5-29-31. [School not visible. Foreman(?) on sidewalk measuring(?) grade. Houses at right into the background.
- Streets, widening & grading #23. Portland Ave. at Leonard St. [Street sign clearly shows the names of these N.E. Streets. Men working in front of a house at the left. Boy standing to the left of the street sign.
- Streets, grading & widening #25. [A line of trucks is seen across the image into the horizon. Men are on the trucks or working the ground behind the trucks. One man with a pole stands on the upper grade with trees & scrub in the background.
- Streets, grading & widening #26. Coldbrook St. at Spring Ave. 2-12-32. A line of men, many with wheelbarrows, are shown across the center of the image. Vehicles are in the background on the upper rise at left. A light hangs from a utility pole at the right.
- Streets, grading & widening #27. Union Ave. at Cedar St. (Cedar St.). 2-12-32. [Men working at the top of the hill in the foreground. Some walking on wood planks in the road, others working at upper & lower levels on the rise at the right. Houses in the background, with one visible center left.
- Streets, grading & widening #28. Eastern Ave. at Colbrook St. 2-12-32. View up hill, with men working on the lower portion of the rise at right. Several men with wheelbarrows in a line. Unidentified structure on the horizon left.

Series I. Photographs.

2 9

Streets Grading Project (24?) Continued ...

- Streets, grading & widening #29. Innes St. grading, from Fuller Ave. west. 6-1-31. Corner of brick building at left has plaque "Bosster A, 1929. Men are working the rough ground near the center of the image. Houses are visible behind the hill in the background. Manhole or drain lower right near the date.
- Streets, grading & widening #30. Adams St. grading at Rossman Ave. Bird's eye view down to men working the ground in the foreground. Men with wheelbarrows are following a planking circular track into the background and back to the site. Buildings are hidden behind the trees in the background.
- Streets, grading & widening #31. Calvary Ave. at 11th St. 2-12-32. Men with wheelbarrows at the base of a large hill. Building hidden at the rear of the hill in the background.
- Streets, grading & widening #32. Eastern Ave. at Coldbrook St. 2-12-32. [Men working the ground below a rise a right, in the background. Other men working near center left. Buildings at left in the background.

2 10

Transporting Supplies (5)

- Food supplies #1. Unloading carload of flour, ground at Portland, from American Red Cross Wheat Distribution 1932. [3 men at door of boxcar, loading onto a truck which is nearly full. Man standing near boxcar at right. Man in truck cab looking at photographer. Men in overhauls in front of truck. Building in background center left.
- Food supplies #2. Sugar for Social Welfare Dept. [Ottawa S.W. Building has "Social Welfare Store, at 21 23 [Ottawa]. Men standing in garage door entry of building. Man in cab of truck in front. Truck is hauling two additional wagons full of bags. Building at left has "G.R. Paper box Co." sign near roof line. Sign on truck door has "Clover Leaf Motor Truck Transportation Co., Michigan, Indiana"
- Food Supplies #14. Nov. 10, 1931. [Two Modern Milk Co. trucks parked on a brick street with a cemetery on the hill behind. There is a man in each cab, and another hanging on to the side of each truck.
- Food Supplies #15. ["Let Others Use What You Aren't Using" signs on 2 of 4 trucks shown in front of a building with a "W" on the upper window molding. Children, standing on the street in front of the trucks, eating. One man standing in each truck, with crates or baskets of food. People in one upper window.
- Transportation of #3. Berry Pickers Leaving Social Welfare 7-24-31 Truck with men, women & children with baskets, in front of Witters Motor building.

Series I. Photographs.

2 11

Transporting Workers (4)

- Transportation of #1. ID label at back: Trucks used in transporting men to and from work on the various jobs. [3 large flatbed trucks with wooden seating on either side, full of men, shown in middle of unidentified road. Buildings in background. “Consumers ...” sign, just barely visible on the side of a sign center right.
- Also a copy print of #1.
- Transportation of #2. ID label at back: All ready to be transported to the various city jobs to work for scrip. [4 large flatbed trucks shown on a dirt road stretching into the background. Truck nearest shows the faces of some men. A small building is in the background center right.
- 6-20-31. Unidentified image of men standing in line to read a hut, next to a construction site. Bissell factory in the background. Brick street with tracks in the foreground.

2 12

Water Main Construction (5)

- Streets, grading & widening #2. Laying 2 (or 12) miles of 24” water main on Hall Street. 7-18-31. [Possibly Hall at Jefferson St. School. Bolder on corner has written information. Men working on trench next to large brick building [Jefferson School?] Houses at right. A trolley is visible at the far end of the street, vehicles on the brick street.
- Streets, grading & widening #12. First St. Extension. Men working the rough ground on a hill between two buildings. A garage is in the background at left, and the steeple of a church is in the background right.
- Streets, grading & widening #20. Front Ave. 30” Main at 3rd St. 6-1-31. Near view of men working in a trench lined with wood supports. A heavy pipe hangs from a wench above the trench, with workmen, above & below ground, some looking at the camera. A sign for “Perkins(?) Machine Repair” hangs on the building at left. View down the city street in the background.
- Streets, grading & widening, water mains. #33. Laying watermain in Grandville Ave. Men working above & below a trench between the street & sidewalk. An unidentified restaurant is near by. Ferguson Supply Co. sign on the side of a building in the background right. The Pantlind can be identified from the barely visible roof siding & building structure in the right background.
- Streets #34. Installing water main in Preston Avenue. 8-27-31. [Men working at right, in and above a trench along a direct street. 3 men standing in the street. Truck at center left has “Grand Union Company”.

2 13

Series I. Photographs.

Welsh Auditorium Project (11)

- Salvage operations #3. Reclaiming brick from auditorium site. 6-22-31. [Image shows a field full of bricks piled up, with men working from the edge. A dump truck center right ads to the pile. A building is in the background at right.
- Salvage operations #5. Salvaging old pipe taken from buildings raised on new auditorium site. 7-20-31. [108-200 Market S.W.] Two African American men lifting a pipe from the pile. Men watching in the background. A Federal Motor Trucks building and other buildings in the background.
- Salvage operations #6. Loading salvaged lumber at auditorium site. 7-18-31. [Men standing on back of 2 short flatbed trucks, loading lumber. Two men on top of lumber pile. Part of a large building with smoke stacks at right.
- G.R.Herald, June 5, 1931. [[Brick salvaging at the auditorium site(?), a group of men at a roof line, with a view to Bissell's, and the Bissell tower in the background. Note on back gives time as 7 am.
- G.R. Hearld [sic Herald], June 5, 1931. Men with axes & foreman at left, looking at a piece of machinery on a roof line. A smokestack is at the left. The river is visible in the background right, as well as the buildings on the other side of the river. Note on back gives time as 7 am.
- June 18, 1931. [Men in a row between the trucks on the street at left, and the shack center right, as the construction site for the Civic Auditorium building. A building in demolition is behind them, with the stack still standing at the left. The stack in the background is Bissell. Owen Ames Kimball construction sign on the pole in front. [2 copies]
- June 19, 1931. Script workers on auditorium site. [Men seated & standing along the side of what is probably a theater building or hotel with a marquee.
- 6-20-31.[or 32] [Demolition of buildings on the site for the new Civic Auditorium. Building in foreground is demolished to the basement level, with piles of salvage around the sides. The smokestack still standing. Bridge with railroad tracks in center, with tracks ended at the remnants of a building with "Station" on the side. Bissell factory in the background, with the river and west side visible at the left.

2 13

Series I. Photographs.

Welsh Auditorium Project (11) Continued ...

- 7-21-32. [View of Civic Auditorium in construction from across the Grand Rapids (from a bridge?) Stone on facade in river side. Girders outlining roof. Bissell at left, unidentified [Pantlind?] building at the right. Signs for constructors along the river side of the building site include: Hall Electric Co., Phoenix Sprinkler & Heating Co., Jergens & Mieras Decorators
- 7-22-32. [Civic Auditorium in construction. Facade is readable, the roof is outlined in girders, and there is scaffolding around the building. Pieces of stone are scene on the ground in front.

<http://www.grpl.org/perl/gallery/display.pl?decade=1930&display=9>

Series II. Ancillary Documents

Documents of the Era

- 3 1 Original form.
Used to order groceries from the scrip store.
- 3 2 “Script Employment”
Typescript with note on first page “Return to Lew H. Boynton, Sec. To
City Manager, Grand Rapids, Mich.” [ca. 1931]
- 3 3 “How Grand Rapids Cares for its Jobless” Reprint.
Grand Rapids Spectator, v. 20, no. 15, July 25, 1931
- 3 4 “Grand Rapids, Michigan”. From: Emergency Work Relief : as carried
out in twenty-six American communities, 1930-1931, with suggestions for
setting up a program / Joanna C. Colcord, et al. N.Y. : Russell Sage
Foundation, 1932. pg. 85-91+
- 3 5 American City [Not yet supplied]

Research about the Program

- 3 5 The Scrip System in Grand Rapids, 1929-1933 / Larry Vander Wall, May
4, 1970. Calvin College History Seminar student paper.
- 3 6 “How Grand Rapids Cared for Its Jobless : the Scrip Labor Program,
1931-1933 : a packet of primary resources for secondary teachers”

This educational module was prepared at the Grand Rapids History &
Special Collections Centers, Grand Rapids Public Library, by City History
Gordon Olson & Local History staff member Marcie Beck, for use in the
Grand Rapids Public Schools, based upon the Scrip Labor Collection
(067) & other reference materials, ca. 2002, copyrighted 2003. It has not
yet for formally published.

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