



ArchivesSpace
a community served by ✦ LYRASIS

Finding aid for the Guy Johnston photo collection Collection 066

This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on May 23, 2018.
Describing Archives: A Content Standard

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

111 Library Street NE
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503

localhis@grpl.org

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

Table of Contents

Summary Information	3
Biographical / Historical	3
Scope and Contents	4
Administrative Information	4
Related Materials	5
Controlled Access Headings	5
Series IV: Image Index	5
Collection Inventory	10
Series I. Summary of Folder Locations	10
A. Later copy prints, to be used first to protect Johnson "original" prints.	10
B. Original to Johnson photos	10
Series II. Brief general description with photo number & date.	10
Series III. Expanded Item Level Descriptions, processing incomplete.	14

Summary Information

Repository:	Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department
Title:	Guy Johnston photo collection
ID:	Collection 066
Date [inclusive]:	1855-1904, 1926
Physical Description:	0.63 Linear Feet Three boxes
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	This collection consists of 106 photographs made by Guy Johnston (1875-1947), a lifelong resident of Grand Rapids (Mich.). Johnston was an amateur photographer. Most or all of this work is believed to be copies of photographs or drawings originally created by others, though no documentation exists in many cases to verify the original source or photographer. The images depict Grand Rapids from the 1850s through the 1890s, as well as the flood of 1904 and a few photographs from 1926. Included are images of houses, churches and businesses. The collection is strong in panoramic views of the city in a number of directions from several locations. Included are photographs of original sketches by Miss Mary Cumings, circa 1850s, which provide some of the earliest views of Grand Rapids.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Biographical / Historical

Guy Johnston was a life-long resident of Grand Rapids (b. 12/31/1875 - d. 11/26/1947). Johnston graduated from Central High School and spent most of his working life (1884-1934) helping his family manage the Eagle Hotel on Market Street. He appears to have been an amateur photographer, acquainted with such other Grand Rapids photographers as James Hooper and George Fitch.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Scope and Contents

This collection consists of 106 images which, from the numbering given on the items themselves, appear to be only a small portion of some 600+ items that may have been originally created. If this presumption is correct, and these numbers are from Johnston, then perhaps the Library or an unknown donor only selected certain items of Johnston's total works. The existence of other sets of Johnston photos is unknown.

However, another explanation is that the photo numbers were assigned by the Library and for some reason the numbering sequence was interrupted after #95, with only irregular numbers available from 575-645.

The photo numbers listed in the box/folder summary are those items that existed at the time of the 1988 processing. If the other items for the missing numbers actually ever existed at the Library in the past, they seem to have disappeared over the years.

Duplications of the images in the first two folders were made at some point in the past, and patrons are encouraged to use those duplicates first, to protect the earlier photos.

The images of Grand Rapids that are depicted in the collection can be divided into the following time periods: pre-1860s, 1880s, 1890s, 1904 and circa 1926, with reference to earlier views.

Some of the most widely duplicated views of the 1904 flood are in this collection. The photos also provide a series of panoramic views of the city from several vantage points. It appears that many of the other photo collections, such as Hooper, Fitch, and Anderson copied some of their historic Grand Rapids views from Johnston, or from the same source as Johnston. However, some of the more distinct early views of the city are in the Johnston collection, suggesting that Johnson's images may be a generation or more closer to the original and/or that the quality of his photography was superior.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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

111 Library Street NE
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503

localhis@grpl.org

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

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Unknown, accession number 00.000

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Related Materials

Related Materials

Images in the Hooper, Fitch and Anderson photo collections, as well as other GRPL archival collections, such as Collection 54, the GRPL Photo Collection, may be copied from or duplicating Johnston.

Johnston, in turn, appears to have copied images from sources unidentified. The quality and amount of additional information about the image can vary from one of these collections to the next.

The Johnson Photo Collection is known to have some of the earliest images of Grand Rapids, but they may not be the original photographic form in which the image was first captured.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Controlled Access Headings

- Grand Rapids (Mich.) -- History -- Photographs
- Johnston, Guy

Series IV: Image Index

Ball House: 067

Blacks: 047, 053

Bridge Street Covered Bridge: 050

Bridge Street View: 004, 090, 582, 583, 589

Bridges: 011, 050, 057, 622

Broadway Street View: 584, 619, 634, 645

Calkins Law Office: 033

Campau Square View: 079, 080, 081, 082, 085, 086, 091

Catholic Church: 021, 025

Central High School: 037, 038

Chair Factory: 036

Churches: 013, 014, 015, 016, 024, 025, 027, 028, 093

City Gas Lighting Plant: 078

City Hall: 072, 074

City Light Tower: 086

Comstock's Factory: 012

Comstock's Row: 011, 047, 053

Congregational Church: 021, 025

Crescent Park: 075, 076

Curved Dam: 012

Dam: 012, 052

"Daniel Ball" 061

Derby Hotel: 594

Division Avenue School: 040

Eagle Hotel: 032, 063

Factories: 036, 041

Fire. 1873: 007

Flood. 1904: 575, 592

Flood. 1904. 4th Street: 613

Flood. 1904. Bridge Street: 582, 583, 589

Flood. 1904. Bridge Street Bridge: 591

Flood. 1904. Broadway Street: 584, 619, 634, 645

Flood. 1904. Front Street: 586

Flood. 1904. Fulton Street: 594

Flood. 1904. Gas Plant: 590

Flood. 1904. Leonard Street: 622

Flood. 1904. Turner Street: 577, 578, 612, 632

Fountain Street Baptist Church: 014, 015, 028

Fourth Street View: 613

Front Street View: 586

Fulton Street Park: 015, 021, 594

Grand Rapids Views: 001, 002, 006-009, 011-017, 019-021, 024, 074-076, 078

Grand Rapids Water Pumping Station: 031, 047, 056

Grand River Views: 003, 059

Grand River Views. Dam: 052

Grand River Views. Islands: 014

Grand River Views. Log Jam: 060

Grand River Views. Logging: 011, 012, 047-057

Haldane House: 069

Hotels: 063, 092, 594

Houses: 034, 035, 067, 068, 070, 094

Ionia Street School: 011

Island #2: 078

Kent County Building: 063, 073, 074

Kiln: 012

"L. Jenison": 061

Leavitt House: 018

Leonard Street Covered Bridge: 011, 622

Leonard Street View: 622

Lime Kiln: 012

Lumber Mills: 054

Lyon Street View: 017

Lyon Street View: 063

Market Street View: 063

Methodist Church: 014, 027

Miller's Landing. Reeds Lake: 043;044;045

Monroe Center View: 083, 089

O wash ta nong Club: 068

Section IV. Image Index

Parade of "Horribles": 065

Park Congregational Church: 015, 016

Pearl Street View: 013, 064, 067, 087, 092, 093

Pierce House: 035

Platt House: 094

Railroad Bridge: 057

Railroad Station: 009, 015, 022

Ransom Street View: 020

Rathbun House: 063

Reeds Lake: 058

Reservoir Hill: 005

Rink Building: 023

Rusche's Store: 095

Saengerfest Hall: 066

Schools: 011, 037, 038, 039, 040

Shanty Town: 024

Sheppard House: 070

St. Marks Church: 013

Steamboat Race: 061

Steamboats: 058, 061, 062

Store: 095

Summit Street View: 023

Sweets Hotel: 092

Tannery: 011

Taylor's Tannery: 011

Turner Street View: 577, 578, 612, 632

Union High School: 039

Union Railroad Station: 015, 022

United States Centennial Celebration: 083, 089, 090

United States Centennial Celebration Arch: 088

United States Post Office (1st): 030

Section IV. Image Index

Valley City Woolen Mills: 041

Veterans Park: 015, 021

"Victor": 058

"W. H. Barrett": 062

Williams House: 034

YMCA: 071

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Collection Inventory

Series I. Summary of Folder Locations

A. Later copy prints, to be used first to protect Johnson "original" prints.

Title/Description	Instances	
1979 copy prints of Nos. 1-9, 11-13, 15-17, 19-20 (17 items) <u>Physical Location</u> : Copies of nos. 14 & 18 are missing	Box 1	Folder 1
1979 copy prints of Nos. 22-25, 27-28, 30-36 (13 items)	Box 1	Folder 2

B. Original to Johnson photos

Title/Description	Instances	
Original to Johnson photos, Nos. 1-9, 11-20 (19 items) <u>Physical Location</u> : No. 10 missing, possibly since 1979	Box 1	Folder 1.5
Original photos, Nos. 21-28, 30-35, 35a, 36-45, 47-50. (29 photos) <u>Physical Location</u> : Nos. 29 & 46 missing for some time	Box 1	Folder 2.5
Photos, Nos. 51-76, 78-90 (39 original photos + 1 copy photo of #72)	Box 1	Folder 3
Nos. 91-95, Nos. 575, 577-578, 582-584, 586, 589-592, 594, 612-613, 619, 632, 634, 645. (23 photos) <u>Physical Location</u> : 622 missing	Box 1	Folder 4

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series II. Brief general description with photo number & date.

Title/Description	Instances	
1. Grand Rapids View (sketch), 1855	Box 1	Folder 1
2. Grand Rapids View (sketch), 1855		

	Box 1	Folder 1
3. Grand River View (sketch), 1855	Box 1	Folder 1
4. Bridge Street View, c.1870	Box 1	Folder 1
5. Reservoir Hill	Box 1	Folder 1
6. Grand Rapids after the fire, 1873	Box 1	Folder 1
7. Grand Rapids after the fire, 1873	Box 1	Folder 1
8. Grand Rapids View, 1880	Box 1	Folder 1
9. Grand Rapids View, 1880	Box 1	Folder 1
11. Grand Rapids View, 1880	Box 1	Folder 1
12. Grand Rapids View, 1880	Box 1	Folder 1
13. Grand Rapids View, 1880	Box 1	Folder 1
14. Grand Rapids View, 1872	Box 1	Folder 1
15. Grand Rapids View, 1872	Box 1	Folder 1
16. Grand Rapids View, 1872	Box 1	Folder 1
17. Grand Rapids View, 1872	Box 1	Folder 1
18. Grand Rapids View, 1872	Box 1	Folder 1
19. Grand Rapids View, 1872	Box 1	Folder 1
20. Grand Rapids View, 1872	Box 1	Folder 1
21. Grand Rapids View, 1865	Box 1	Folder 2
22. Union Station, c.1870	Box 1	Folder 2
23. Summit Street View, c.1870	Box 1	Folder 2
24. Grand Rapids View, c.1870	Box 1	Folder 2
25. Congregational Church (1st), c.1870	Box 1	Folder 2
26. St. Marks Episcopal Church, c.1870	Box 1	Folder 2
27. First Methodist Church, 1872	Box 1	Folder 2
28. Fountain Street Baptist Church (1st), c.1870	Box 1	Folder 2
30. United States Post Office (1st), c.1870	Box 1	Folder 2
31. Grand Rapids Water Pumping Station, c.1870	Box 1	Folder 2
32. Eagle Hotel, c.1870	Box 1	Folder 2
33. Calkins Law Office, c.1870	Box 1	Folder 2
34. Williams House, c.1870	Box 1	Folder 2
35. Pierce House, c.1870	Box 1	Folder 2

36. Chair Factory, c.1870	Box 1	Folder 2
37. Central High School, c.1865	Box 1	Folder 2
38. Central High School, c.1865	Box 1	Folder 2
39. Union High School, c.1870	Box 1	Folder 2
40. Division Avenue School, c.1870	Box 1	Folder 2
41. Valley City Woolen Mills, c.1870	Box 1	Folder 2
42. Voigt Mill, 1880	Box 1	Folder 2
43. Miller's Landing. Reeds Lake, c.1870	Box 1	Folder 2
44. Miller's Landing. Reeds Lake, c.1870	Box 1	Folder 2
45. Miller's Landing. Reeds Lake, c.1880	Box 1	Folder 2
47. Comstock's Row, c.1875	Box 1	Folder 2
48. Grand River View. Logging, c.1875	Box 1	Folder 2
49. Grand River View. Logging, c.1875	Box 1	Folder 2
50. Grand River View. Logging, c.1875	Box 1	Folder 2
51. Grand River View. Logging, c.1880	Box 1	Folder 3
52. Grand River View. Logging, c.1880	Box 1	Folder 3
53. Grand River View. Logging, c.1880	Box 1	Folder 3
54. Grand River View. Logging, c.1880	Box 1	Folder 3
55. Grand River View. Logging, c.1880	Box 1	Folder 3
56. Grand River View. Logging, c.1880	Box 1	Folder 3
57. Grand River View. Logging, c.1880	Box 1	Folder 3
58. Reeds Lake, c.1880	Box 1	Folder 3
59. Grand River View, c.1880	Box 1	Folder 3
60. Grand River View. Log Jam, 1883	Box 1	Folder 3
61. Steamboat Race, c.1880	Box 1	Folder 3
62. W.H. Barrett, 1873	Box 1	Folder 3
63. Market Street View, c.1880	Box 1	Folder 3
64. Pearl Street View, 1875	Box 1	Folder 3
65. Parade of "Horribles", 1871	Box 1	Folder 3
66. Saengerfest Hall, 1883	Box 1	Folder 3
67. Pearl Street View, c.1880	Box 1	Folder 3
68. O#wash#ta#nong Club, c.1880	Box 1	Folder 3

69. Haldane House, 1875	Box 1	Folder 3
70. Sheppard House, 1890	Box 1	Folder 3
71. YMCA, 1890	Box 1	Folder 3
72. City Hall, 1890	Box 1	Folder 3
73. Kent County Building, 1890	Box 1	Folder 3
74. Grand Rapids View, c.1890	Box 1	Folder 3
75. Grand Rapids View, c.1890	Box 1	Folder 3
76. Grand Rapids View, c.1890	Box 1	Folder 3
78. Grand Rapids View, c.1890	Box 1	Folder 3
79. Campau Square View, c.1890	Box 1	Folder 3
80. Campau Square View, 1873	Box 1	Folder 3
81. Campau Square View, 1873	Box 1	Folder 3
82. Campau Square View, c.1890	Box 1	Folder 3
83. United States Centennial Celebration, 1876	Box 1	Folder 3
84. Monroe Avenue View (north of Pearl), c.1890	Box 1	Folder 3
85. Campau Square View, 1875	Box 1	Folder 3
86. Campau Square View, 1875	Box 1	Folder 3
87. Pearl Street View, 1875	Box 1	Folder 3
88. United States Centennial Celebration Arch, 1876	Box 1	Folder 3
89. United States Centennial Celebration, 1876	Box 1	Folder 3
90. United States Centennial Celebration, 1876	Box 1	Folder 3
91. Campau Square View, 1852	Box 1	Folder 4
92. Pearl Street View, c.1870	Box 1	Folder 4
93. Pearl Street View, c.1870	Box 1	Folder 4
94. Platt House, c.1880	Box 1	Folder 4
95. Rusche's Store, c.1880	Box 1	Folder 4
575. Flood. 1904.	Box 1	Folder 4
577. Flood. 1904. Turner Street	Box 1	Folder 4
578. Flood. 1904. Turner Street	Box 1	Folder 4
582. Flood. 1904. Bridge Street	Box 1	Folder 4
583. Flood. 1904. Bridge Street	Box 1	Folder 4
584. Flood. 1904. Broadway Street	Box 1	Folder 4

586. Flood. 1904. Front Street	Box 1	Folder 4
589. Flood. 1904. Bridge Street	Box 1	Folder 4
590. Flood. 1904. Gas Plant	Box 1	Folder 4
591. Flood. 1904. Bridge Street Bridge	Box 1	Folder 4
592. Flood. 1904.	Box 1	Folder 4
594. Flood. 1904. Fulton Street	Box 1	Folder 4
612. Flood. 1904. Turner Street	Box 1	Folder 4
613. Flood. 1904. 4th Street	Box 1	Folder 4
619. Flood. 1904. Broadway Street	Box 1	Folder 4
622. Flood. 1904. Leonard Street <u>Physical Location</u> : Missing	Box 1	Folder 4
632. Flood. 1904. Turner Street	Box 1	Folder 4
634. Flood. 1904. Broadway Street	Box 1	Folder 4
Flood. 1904. Broadway Street	Box 1	Folder 4

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series III. Expanded Item Level Descriptions, processing incomplete.

Title/Description	Instances	
J1. Sketch. Foot of Lyon St. Hill, 1855.	Box 1	Folder 1
General		
Description: Judge Geo. Martin House. Creek bed in foreground later site of a city hall. Columns. [Sketch probably by M. Cuming]		
J2. Sketch. Top of Lyon St. Hill, 1855 by M. Cuming.	Box 1	Folder 1
General		
Description: St. Marks Church tower. Stone Catholic Church, Monroe St.		
J3. Sketch. Looking South from East end of Pearl St. Bridge, by Mary Cuming. Ca. 1861.	Box 1	Folder 1
General		
Description: Cows grazing. Grand River Island		
J4. Looking down west from W. Bridge St. Hill., ca. 1870.	Box 1	Folder 1

General

Description: Fencing. Split rail fence

J5. Reservoir Hill top Ca. 1926 possible site of stadium/ amphitheatre	Box 1	Folder 1
J6. Looking Southwest from 1926 location of stand pipe, about 1870, before a big fire burned almost everything shown.	Box 1	Folder 1

General

Description: Bird's eye view from hill. Grand River view,
with bridges, Houses. Pre-fire view

J7. From hill top above Livingston St., showing buildings put up after the big fire of July 1872 or 1873.	Box 1	Folder 1
--	-------	----------

General

Description: Berkey & Gay is largest building. Post-fire
view

J8. City from North end of Crescent Park, ca. 1880	Box 1	Folder 1
J9. View from Reservoir Hill looking N.	Box 1	Folder 1

General

Description: Windmill. Beginning of Plainfield Ave.,
foreground Parnell House at right near the old D & M Depot

J10. Missing since 1988	Box 1	Folder 1
J11. View from Reservoir Hill near Ionia St. School, ca. 1875	Box 1	Folder 1

General

Description: New waterworks pump house. Tanner Taylors
old Tannery, old station ca. 1926. Comstocks Row multiple
apartment dwelling for his colored laborers, just over the
tannery. [African Americans] Leonard St. Bridge

J12. Comstocks Old Factory, ca. 1880	Box 1	Folder 1
--------------------------------------	-------	----------

General

Description: Curved dam in river, just above the 6th St.
Bridge in ca. 1926. Old Lime Kiln near river bank.

J13. View west from High School, ca. 1880	Box 1	Folder 1
---	-------	----------

General

Description: St. Mark's Church. Pearl St. Universalist Church, middle of Pearl St. Grand River & Bridge in background. Bird's eye view

J14. View from school tower, 1872	Box 1	Folder 1
-----------------------------------	-------	----------

General

Description: Baptist & Methodist churches. Tower of stone Catholic church on Monroe St. Ruik Building in distance. National Hotel (Morton Hotel)

J15. View South from High School, 1872.	Box 1	Folder 1
---	-------	----------

General

Description: Fountain St. in foreground. Park Congregational Church left. Elias Matter large home on Fountain. D.D. Cody home above Matter's place. Baptist Church right. Union Depot shown in right upper distance

J16 View South from High School tower, 1872.	Box 1	Folder 1
--	-------	----------

General

Description: Elias matter Home lower right. Park Congregational Church. Dr. J.K. Johnson home on Sheldon St. over the church

J17 North west view from Old High School, 1872.	Box 1	Folder 1
---	-------	----------

General

Description: Lyon St. in foreground

J18 North west view from Old High School, 1872.	Box 1	Folder 1
---	-------	----------

General

Description: Lyon & Ransom. Levitt House center. Stone house.

J19 North view from Old High School Tower, 1872.	Box 1	Folder 1
--	-------	----------

General

Description: Houses. Church

J20 North view from Old High School, 1972.	Box 1	Folder 1
--	-------	----------

General

Description: Ransom St. in foreground. Camp home & Rev. Dr. Cumings, two large homes at left. Circular deer park in a backyard.

J21 View from John St. Hill, 1865.

Box 1

Folder 2

General

Description: Just back of what was the Masonic Temple in 1926. Henry house, Druggist, at extreme left, later site of old Grand Rapids Press Building. Judge Lovell Moore House, with snow on roof, later the Livingstone. Wooden Catholic Congregational Church, later Porter Block. Fulton St. Park with fence & flag pole in center. Park Congregational Church not yet built

J22 Old Union Station. GR&I from Ellsworth Ave. hill in left rear background behind railroad cars. c1870.

Box 1

Folder 2

General

Description: Houses. Fences. Dirt Streets. Wooden Board sidewalks. Restaurant / Saloon

J23 View down Ellsworth Ave. toward the old rink Building at Fulton St. c. 1870

Box 1

Folder 2

General

Description: Summit St. view. Rink Building removed to make way for Fulton St. Bridge. Barnard Hotel. Grocery. Wooden board sidewalks. Dirt streets.

J24 View overlooking Shanty Town from Summit St. Hill, 1872 or 1876.

Box 1

Folder 2

General

Description: Rear of old Stone Catholic Church shown on Monroe St. 2nd high school just built on the hill.

J25 Division Ave. and Monroe, ca. 1870.

Box 1

Folder 2

General

Description: Catholic Church. Church built by Louis Campau. Church lost building in panic of 1837-1840.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)