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Finding aid for the Grand Rapids Public Library stereo card collection Collection 076

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Grand Rapids History Center

111 Library Street NE

Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503

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URL: <https://www.grpl.org/research/history/>

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Summary Information

Repository:	Grand Rapids History Center
Title:	Grand Rapids Public Library stereo card collection
ID:	Collection 076
Date [inclusive]:	circa 1880-1928
Physical Description:	1.6 Linear Feet Three boxes
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	The Grand Rapids Public Library Stereo Card Collection contains many early views of Grand Rapids, Michigan. The majority of these identify Schuyler C. Baldwin, Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo, Michigan, as the photographer. Included are views of late nineteenth century Grand Rapids, the United States Centennial celebration in Grand Rapids and the Historic Furniture Exhibit in 1928.

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Biographical / Historical

The stereo card or stereograph, as it is often referred to in photographic reference works (also stereo view or stereo window), was introduced to the World at the 1851 Crystal Palace Exhibition when Sir Charles Brewster's stereoscope, with a twin lens camera, was exhibited. Credit for the invention of the stereoscope is given to British physicist Charles Wheatstone in 1831, by Oliver Wendell Holmes*, who himself designed a more convenient handheld type of viewer that was widely marketed in the U.S. Stereographs contain two images, produced either by two cameras or a double lens camera, which are mounted side on side on a sturdy card. Thus, the images are either identical or nearly identical, and when viewed with the special viewer may present a three-dimensional effect. Interest in stereographs began to wane around 1910 and died out in the 1920s.

The images on the cards provided both recreational and informational content, but were rarely used for portrait photos. National production houses of stereographs sold sets of cards on specific topics. One such late example in this collection is the Keystone (Philadelphia) set of 1928 Grand Rapids furniture exhibit cards. The cards included in this collection provide exterior and interior views of Grand Rapids buildings, street scenes and other views of general

interest to the residents of the area. Some other geographies of Michigan area also represented, including Bay View, Petoskey and Mackinaw Island, Michigan.

*A copy of Holmes article from the Atlantic Monthly, June 1859 has been added to Box 3 of this collection.

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Scope and Contents

The stereographs in this collection have been collected by a succession of librarians, with about half of the collection a single donation by Ross DeWindt (1986.054). Where known, the accession number for the item has been recorded with the entry in the finding aid, though much of this information has been lost.

There is evidence the stereographs have been separated from the accession with which they were received, such as those found here which have "Lawrence Collection" on the back. These were probably received along with other material in the Lawrence collection (Collection 002).

The collection contains many of the closest to first generation prints of historic Grand Rapids, Michigan photographs (mounted on stereo cards). The images present original views of late nineteenth century Grand Rapids buildings, houses, street scenes, logging, panoramic views, the United States Centennial celebration in Grand Rapids and the Historic Furniture Exhibit.

Some cards have no source identification. Other cards list the photographer. Occasionally, the back of the card is used, for an information note on the images or for advertising. Occasionally, the name of the firm selling or providing the card is added, along with the photographer.

Most of the cards in this collection are from photographer Schuyler C. Baldwin of Grand Rapids or Kalamazoo, Michigan. He used a variety of colored card stock, but most often on a red/orange card or light green, but also pink. His photos are squarely cut, as compared with some from an unidentified source, which cut the top of both views in an arch. Several unidentified cards use the red/orange as well, which overall appears to be the primary color backing for the cards. Other mounting colors in the collection include a cream color or a golden yellow. Baldwin's cards are not all the same size.

There is one set of cards in the collection from a leading national stereography company, Keystone View Company. This set currently contains 50 cards, including #1, the title card, which has an extensive historical note. That card is titled "An Exposition of American Furniture-Making, from 1878-1928, on the occasion of the hundredth semi-annual furniture market at Grand Rapids. The other cards are labeled "Grand Rapids Historical Furniture Exhibit in connection with One Hundredth Furniture Market, Jan. 3-21, 1928." This set has two numbering systems, 1-50, or 4150-4199. This set has no. 5 or 4154, missing, but has two copies of no. 8, or 4157.

Photographers or producers listed on the various stereocards in this collection include: Child's Art Gallery, Marquette, Mich. L.V.Moulton (Grand Rapids) Northern Michigan Views / B.D. Jackson, photographer O.W. Horton, including a set of Centennial Views, and one item with a typed historical note on verso C.L. Merrill & Co. (Grand Rapids) Merrill, Bayne & Co. Schuyler C. Baldwin (Grand Rapids or Kalamazoo) Views of the Valley City / photographed by I.G. Tompkins.

As of September 2000, there were 361 items in the collection. One of several collections in the Grand Rapids History & Special Collections archives developed around physical format, this collection is occasionally added to as new accessions of a small number of stereo cards are received. Many of these original images have been reproduced by later photographers, and thus may be seen again in the archival collections for those photographers, including Hooper, Fitch, and Anderson and Winslow. Some historical viewers are also available in the department, though these are rarely used, and may not be fully intact.

Reproduction note Reproductions made as close to the original image as possible are generally considered of better quality content. Thus, reproductions made from these stereo cards may be of better quality than those made from one of the second or third generation prints copied by other photographers. However, some of these cards show their wear and tear, and the "original" presented in these well used versions may not now copy as well.

"L" = Item created to the Lawrence Collection "R" = A copy photo is in this collection, Box 3.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

Grand Rapids History Center

111 Library Street NE

Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503

localhis@grpl.org

URL: <https://www.grpl.org/research/history/>

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Numerous and various donors. Accession numbers 00.000, 1986.054, 1986.352, 1990.12, 1990.013, Jewett Collection, Lawrence Collection

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Related Materials

Related Materials

Collection 185 has occasional copy images which appear to be from stereocards, perhaps in this collection. Also, collection 185-3-43 has copy photos of circa 1880 images, with an unidentified man viewing stereographs using a viewer.

Collection 364, Thomas R. and Debra C. Dilley collection, includes a series of stereographic photographs and also a Dilley 2007 book on stereographs.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Stereographs
 - Grand Rapids (Mich.) -- History -- photographs
-

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Collection Inventory

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Aldrich Building (old) (1) L	Box 1	Folder 1
Ball House (2)	Box 1	Folder 2
Bay View (Mich.) (6)	Box 1	Folder 3
Berkey & Gay Furniture Company Cable Power (1) [86.054]	Box 1	Folder 4
Berkey & Gay Furniture Company Showroom (2)	Box 1	Folder 5
Bissell Sweeper Floral Arrangement (1) [Bissell Estate]	Box 1	Folder 6
Brownell Pharmacy (1)	Box 1	Folder 7
Campau Square Views (14) [L = 1, 1986.54 = 5, Jewett = 1]	Box 1	Folder 8
Centennial Cabin (2) [1986.54 = 1, Garfield = 1]	Box 1	Folder 9
Church. Interior (1) [1986.54]	Box 1	Folder 10
City Drug Store (2)	Box 1	Folder 11
City Drug Store. Interior (2)	Box 1	Folder 12

Deer Hunting (2) [1986.54-1]	Box 1	Folder 13
Eaton & Lyon Bookstore. Interior (2)[1986.54]	Box 1	Folder 14
Fife Lake Railroad Station (1) [00.[437].1, 9/5/2001]	Box 1	Folder 14.5
Fire. 1873 (5) [1986.54 = 2, Johnston = 1]	Box 1	Folder 15
Firefighters Review (1)[1986.54]	Box 1	Folder 16
First Methodist Church (1) [1986.54]	Box 1	Folder 17
First Methodist Church. Interior (1) [1986.54]	Box 1	Folder 18
Floods (2) [1986.054 = 1, 1990.012 = 1]	Box 1	Folder 19
Floral Arrangements (6) [1986.054]	Box 1	Folder 20
Fountain Street Baptist Church [1986.054]	Box 1	Folder 21
Fountain Street Baptist Church. Interior (4) [1986.054 = 2]	Box 1	Folder 22
Gardens (10)[1986.054] Note: See the Dudley Waters Estate images in Coll. 364, one of which duplicates an image of this set, which may mean that these are images of the Waters Estate.	Box 1	Folder 23
Gazebo (2)[1986.054]	Box 1	Folder 24
Gilbert House [1986.054]	Box 1	Folder 25
Grand Rapids & Indiana Railroad Building (1)[1986.054] R	Box 1	Folder 26
Grand Rapids & Indiana Railroad Depot (1) [1986.054]	Box 1	Folder 27
Grand Rapids Booming Company Grounds (1) [1986.054]	Box 1	Folder 28
Grand Rapids Public Library. Interior (Ledyard Bldg., sw cor. Pearl and Ottawa) (3) [1986.054 = 1]	Box 1	Folder 29
Grand Rapids Public Museum. Displays (5) [1986.054]	Box 1	Folder 30
Grand Rapids Views (24) [1986.054 = 13, Jewett = 1, Thompson = 1]	Box 1	Folder 31
Grand Rapids Water Pumping Station (1) [1986 = 054]	Box 1	Folder 32
Grand River Road (14) [1986.054 = 9]	Box 1	Folder 33
Grand River Views (8) [1986.054 = 4, Thompson = 1]	Box 1	Folder 34
Grand River Views. Log Jam (11 + 1 10/11/2004) [1986.054 = 7, including Bissell Est.]	Box 1	Folder 35
Grand River Views. Logging (9) [1986.054 = 8]	Box 1	Folder 36
Grand Trunk Railroad Bridge (1) [1986.054]	Box 1	Folder 37
Graves House. Rev. Dr. Samuel T. Graves and Mrs. Graves, plus two sons. (1) [1986.054]	Box 1	Folder 38
Graves House. Interior (1) [1986.054]	Box 1	Folder 39

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Gull Lake (Mich.) (1) [1986.054]	Box 1	Folder 40
Harbor Springs (Mich.) (1)	Box 1	Folder 41
Horton House. Interior (2) [1986.054 = 2]	Box 1	Folder 42
Grand Rapids Historic Furniture Exhibit, 100th Furniture Market, Jan. 3-21, 1928, commemorative box with 50 stereo cards [2019.051]	Box 1	
Houses (8.5) [1986.054 = 4] Including: Farm house on Ball's Farm Eagle Mills; George W. Allen; House, site of Ryerson	Box 2	Folder 44
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Jefferson Avenue Views (3) [1990.013 = 1, 1986.054 = 1, L = 1]	Box 2	Folder 47
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Morris House (3) [1986.054]	Box 2	Folder 60
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Ogden House of Chicago(1)	Box 2	Folder 62
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Pearl Street Bridge (2) [1986.054 = 1]	Box 2	Folder 64
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People. Rev. Henry Ward Beecher (1)	Box 2	Folder 66
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Petoskey (Mich.) (2)	Box 2	Folder 68

Phoenix Furniture Company (1) [1986.054]	Box 2	Folder 69
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Additions

Title/Description	Instances	
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Norton Indian Mounds (1)	Box 2	Folder 89
St. Andrews Cathedral (3) [1986.054 = 1]	Box 2	Folder 90
South Division School (1)	Box 2	Folder 91
Voigt, Herpolsheimer & Co. Interior (1, 7/1/2005)	Box 2	Folder 92
Circus Parade (2)	Box 2	Folder 93
L.J. Rindge & Co. (1)	Box 2	Folder 94
Store. Interior (1)	Box 2	Folder 95
Soldier's Home Grand Rapids, Mich. [2022.030]		

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Series II. Publications

Title/Description	Instances
Grand Rapids in Stereographs, 1860-1900 / Thomas R. Dilley. Charleston, S.C. : Arcadia, 2007. P2007.061.1	Box 3
"Stereograph book tells story of early GR" by Erin Albanese. East Grand Rapids Cadence, July 25, 2007. Photocopy.	Box 3

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