

# **Finding aid for the William A. Seeley Grand Rapids and Michigan graphics collection Collection 222**

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository:</b>	Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department
<b>Creator:</b>	Seeley, William A, 1910-1990
<b>Title:</b>	William A. Seeley Grand Rapids and Michigan graphics collection
<b>ID:</b>	Collection 222
<b>Date [inclusive]:</b>	circa 1967-1986
<b>Physical Description:</b>	3.0 Linear feet
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English
<b>Abstract:</b>	William A. Seeley (1910-1990) worked for the City of Grand Rapids (Michigan) and was an artist. This collection includes 13 original illustrations of Grand Rapids buildings, most of which were created by Seeley in 1967. Also included is art work collected by Seeley, mostly published calendars illustrated by Michigan artists Reynold Weidenaar, Armand Merizon and Frits Hoendervanger. The collection also includes photographs, newspaper clippings, blueprints and a key related to old Grand Rapids City Hall (1888), which was demolished in 1969. Seeley is believed to have had an office in the old City Hall and was involved in the transition of staff to their new spaces in the new 1969 City Building.

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## Biographical/Historical note

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William Seeley was born May 24th, 1910 in Detroit Michigan and died March 21st, 1990 in Mt. Clemens, Michigan. He was married on November 30th, 1939 to Artie Minnie Belle Ruyle. They had two children, Joyce Ann Seeley and William A. Seeley.

In 1954 William Seeley moved to Grand Rapids to work as a plant engineer for Lear Corporation, bringing his family with him. Some time after that he was with Panel-Matic as a design engineer. Later, he is know to have worked for the City of Grand Rapids as a sidewalk inspector and was also in charge of office assignments and other building management work when moving from the old City Hall to the new in 1969.

The sketches in this collection show that he was an artist interested in sketches historical structures of Grand Rapids. He also collected illustrations and architectural drawings of others. William A. Seeley is listed as an inspector with the City Engineer's office in the 1975 City Directory. In the later part of his life Seeley and his wife moved elsewhere in Michigan. The Seeley's disappeared from the Grand Rapids City Directories some time after 1985.

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## Historical Note

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After many years of planning, and acquisition of land for the site, construction began on the Grand Rapids City Hall, completed in 1888. There were other buildings previously used for city government, but this was the first formally planned to bring all of the functions under one roof. The site settled on was on Lyon Street from Ottawa Ave. to Ionia Ave. Elijah E. Myers of Detroit was the architect, with construction by W.D. Richardson of Springfield, Ill. The cost, including real estate, equipment and furnishings, totaled \$314,888.61. A copper box of souvenirs was enclosed in the cornerstone on September 9, 1885. The Hall was dedicated September 26, 1888, with tours for the citizenry. The building was three stories, with a full basement and a clock tower. Lighting was initially supplied by gas, until 1906 when Grand Rapids Electric Company installed that more modern utility. The elevator originally ran by waterpower, but was electrified in 1926. Many of the chambers had fireplaces.

As the government grew, various departments and operations were annexed to other buildings, with a return to the pre-City Hall problem of scattered city resources. Then in the 1950s and 1960s came urban renewal. Whole blocks of the structures shown in historical views of Grand Rapids were razed to make way for modern structures. Both the need for additional facilities and this new urban planning movement marked the end of what had now become known as Old City Hall. Historic preservationists and interested citizens lobbied to save the whole structure, and were prepared toward the end of the struggle to settle for the tower. But the destructors had their way and, in November 1969, after the dedication of the new City and County Buildings and the Alexander Calder stabile "La Grande Vitesse," the entire structure was razed.

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Statement

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111 Library Street NE

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

## Immediate Source of Acquisition note

Estate of Artie Seeley (Wm. Seeley, Jr.). Accession numbers 1986.001, 1998.068, 1999.093, 2001.036

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## Related Materials

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### Related Archival Materials note

Coll. 175. GRPL Moving Images Collection. An film taken by W.A. Seeley of 1956 tornado footage is awaiting migration to a usage format.

<http://www.artieseeleydolls.com> January 2011: Site no longer online, printed copy from archive.org is with the finding aid.

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## Controlled Access Headings

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- Artists -- Michigan -- Grand Rapids
- Drawing -- Michigan
- Grand Rapids (Mich.) -- History
- personal papers
- Urban renewal -- Michigan -- Grand Rapids
- Seeley, William A, 1910-1990
- Grand Rapids City Hall (Mich.).

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## Collection Inventory

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**Series I. Biographical materials Historical references.**

Title/Description	Instances
Caricature sketch possibly by Ray ?. Grand Rapids Press (verify), n.d. Mustache Gallery. William A. (Bill) Seeley.	Box 1
Biographical research, including possible SSDI record for William Seeley; City Directory research notes; "The Dolls of Artie Seeley (1915-1998)	Box 1
Vandenberg Center. Central Core Urban Renewal Project No. Mich. R-34 and Central Core – North Urban Renewal Project NO. Mich. R-60 (Vandenberg Center) ca. 1967/68	Box 1

### General

This publication includes historic images of Grand Rapids, many of which are in GRPL archival collections. Images of the demolition of old City Hall are included. Also, proposal sketches of various buildings planned for construction in the Vandenberg Plaza area are included: Union Bank and Trust Company; Daverman Associates, Michigan Consolidated Gas Company; Model of proposed State of Michigan Office Building; Proposed City/County Complex.

A Landmark in Cooperation

Box 2

### General

Centerfold includes the "City-County Complex Guide" which has floor plans for both structures; includes a list of Mayors of Grand Rapids, 1859-1969 and a list of Chairmen of the Kent County Board of Supervisors, 1918-1969; has a brief Chronological History of Grand Rapids from 1927 to 1969.

## Maps

### General

Copies of map segments, often without the actual description of the map from which the excerpt was taken.

Title/Description	Instances
1. Subdivision map which includes the 836 Lamberton lot where the Seeley's lived. Color annotations.	Box 2
2. Subdivision map, more distant view than above. Shows Lamberton St. off of Plainfield Ave., and side streets Cheney, Waterford, Brookfield, Fruitland, and Kensboro, plus others unidentified.	Box 2
3. Showing the title above	Box 2
Outline Street Map of the City of Grand rapids, 1907 by Geo. A. Ogle Co. Excerpts.	
4. Showing a portion of the ID title, and west to the River, railroad and Comstock Park	Box 2

5. North Park Grounds, Park Cemetery and Michigan Soldier's Home. Map unknown. Enlarged views including the Grand River to the West.	Box 2
6. Same including the Briggs property to the North.	Box 2
7. Variant view of 6	Box 2
8. Part of Township 7 North, Ranges 11 and 12 West of the Michigan Meridian. Excerpt. [Plat]	Box 2
9. Two pieces taped. Sanborn? Fragments [1952] Show Monroe to Crescent Park and Michigan to Lyon. This includes the area heavily raised during urban renewal to create the Vandenberg Center, and new surrounding structures.	Box 2

## Newspaper clippings

Title/Description	Instances
Clock Tower battle's at 11th Hour Feb. 22, 1969	Box 3
Wrecking Ball Hits City Hall [10/29/69]	Box 3
City Hall: Visiting an old acquaintance. GR Press. Wonderland Magazine Aug. 10, 1969. Excerpt.	Box 3
The Interpreter, v. 7, no. 44, July 17, 1975 [image only, story not saved here]	Box 2
-City Hall Echoes [n.d.] [Discusses what happened to the French imported tiles which used to be in the Hall]. [ca. 1978]	Box 2
-City Hall Cornerstone yields cache of 1885 treasures [12/18/69]	Box 2
-Moving Day --- Confusion. Talks about new furniture for new city hall. Verso: EGR complex – dream realized. July 15, 1969.	Box 2
Grand Rapids Press, May 16, 1965. Quick Tour of GR's Past.	Box 2
[Calkins Law Office] Oldest House lonely eyesore / by Liz Hyman. [8/11/69]	Box 2
-Sprites End Long Vigil at Old City Hall [10/8/69].	Box 1
-City Shifts, decides to raze tower / by Mike Lloyd. [11/1/69]	Box 1
-City Hall Clock is losing faces [11/10/69]	Box 1
-Where's the Sonneveldt Co.	Box 1
-Final step asked to preserve tower / by Mike Lloyd [10/28/69]	Box 1
-City Hall is dealt blow to oblivion [10/27/69]	Box 1
-[photo caption: The clock tower stands away from the demolition on the northeast corner of the building] [10/29/69]	Box 1
-Old City Hall receives 'Crowning blow' [12/2/69]	Box 1

-Mrs. W. Bickley, left and Mrs. W.O. Vandenberg save tiles. [10]13]69]	Box 1
-Proud, erect to the end [12/3/69]	Box 1
-Debate ends, clock tower fall begins [11/5/69]	Box 1
-Old City Hall Cornerstone will be treated gently / Mike Lloyd [10/10/69]	Box 1
-/ by Floyd Allbaugh. The fate of the City Hall clock tower is in the hands of Vandenberg Center property owners, not the City Commission, Mayor Sonneveldt siad Friday. [n.d.]	Box 1
-Like bronzed baby shoes, clock tower is nostalgic / by Ed Van Stee. G.R. Press, Mar. 9, 1969. P. 10.	Box 1
-Fight to save city h all may get rough / by Robert Alt. [Shows interior stairhall]	Box 1
-City Rejects new clock tower plea [3/69]	Box 1
-Group would keep historic building [3/69]	Box 1
-Editor of the Press: The axiom,, 'Truth is the Daughter of Time' may have some relevancy with the pending fate of the City Hall clock tower. / George A. Jackoboice. [4/9/69]	Box 1
-[photo caption: The Photographer, Mike Debakey, shot this picture of the ceiling in old City Hall from the fourth floor. See Collections 125 or 326 for a possible	Box 1
-City Hall savers sign 5,000, seek more names this week] n.d.	Box 1
-/ by Mike Lloyd [10/8/69] [Photo caption: After 81 years, it's 12th	Box 1
hour and farewell for Old Clock Tower]	Box 1
-Save clock tower, begs mystery banner / by Mike Niemann. [8/19/69].	Box 1
-Landmark will get a new grip on the future / by Dave Burhenn. N.d. Has to do with Old Schoolhouse, Front Ave. NW	Box 1
-An 11th hour tour of City Hall. G.R.P. Aug. 10, 1969.	Box 1
-Besides money, however, private business ...	Box 1
-Images of clock tower on card, unidentified]	Box 1

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## Series II. Original Illustrations by William Seeley (13 items)



## Scope and Contents

Accompanied reference materials, as available, are listed in the section following the description of the drawing, and also housed in Box 1.

Title/Description	Instances
[1] 605 Madison S.E. at Pleasant. [Victorian house] / WA   SEE   LEY   '67	Box 1
[2] St. H.R.C.B. Society [St. Hyacinth Roman Catholic Benevolent Society], Local 135 Amer. Seating, 734 4th N.W. / WA   SEE   LEY \ '67	Box 1
[3] a. [Drawing] Viking Hall, 418 Lk. Mich. Dr. [Italianate] / WE   SEE   LEY \ '67.	Box 1
[3] b. Grand Rapids Press newspaper clippings, 6/10/1986. "Group Hopes to Save Old Home on Burger King site / by Tracy L. Sypert. Brick. Owner at the time of demolition, Daniel Trierweiler. Old Anson N. Norton home, G.R. Sheriff 1861. Leonard Covell, early city settler.	Box 1
[3] c. A newspaper clipping with photo of the building being demolished. Date note 6/11/86.	Box 1
[4] a. [Drawing] West Leonard Christian Reformed [church] 1909 / WE   SEE   LEY \ '67	Box 1
[4] b. b/w photo in envelop attached to back of frame shows church, has date 11/69.	Box 1
[5] a. [Drawing] 1018 Ionia SW [Victorian house] / WA SEE LEY '67	Box 1
[5] b. b/w photo in pocket on back of frame shows house, date 9/68.	Box 1
[5] c. unidentified newspaper clipping shows house with caption "The Inner City, where blighted homes such as this stand, will be given a face lifting with model cities money".	Box 1
[6] a. Pleasant Hill Reformed Church, 527 Church Pl., S.W. / WA SEE LEY '68.	Box 3
[6] b. Original pencil sketch. Vyede Holl, Glereformeerde   Kerk   AD 1886. At bottom: Pleasant Hill Reformed   527 Church PL SW. Verso: Fifth Holland Reformed   now Pleasant Hill Reformed   Negro congregation   Rich Bakker, next door, pastor. Sponsored by present 5th   2012 Griggs SE   Ray Rewerts, pastor   221-3565.	Box 3
[6] c. Note in ink. Purchased '68 by Faith Missionary Baptist, a breakaway group from Pil-grim Rest Baptist / per Carl VerBeck.	Box 3
[6] d. b/w photo labeled on verso Faith Mission Bapt. N.d. showing house on corner and the church to the right.	Box 3
[6] e. partial street map including segment with 5th Reformed church at 527 Church Pl. S.W. [tape]	Box 3

[7] Spanish Church of God, 2051 Lafayette, N.E. / WA SEE LEY '67 Verso: Property of Wm. A. Seeley ...	Box 3
[7] b. attach note: Bienvenidos Todos   ALA   Iglesia de Dios   Welcome to   The Church of God   Grand Rapids, Mich.	Box 3
[8] Monarch Road Machinery Co., Front Douglas / WA SEE LEY '67	Box 3
<b>General</b>	
Verso: Property of Wm. A. Seeley ...Items attached to back of frame in envelop: [8] b. b/w photo of building with cards, dated 6/75. [8] c. several unidentified newspaper clippings with photos, including one that identified the Monarch building, 327 Front Ave., N.W. as an old German-English Schoolhouse and another of the schoolhouse being razed.	
[9] Former Interurban Stop, 4011 Remembrance NW / WA SEE LEY '67. Note on verso: Built, 1904. Abandoned, 1928. Items attached to verso in envelop:	Box 3
[10] St. John's Russian Orthodox Church, 40 National, N.W. / WA SEE LEY '67[this time the "tablet" is lying on the ground by the fire hydrant] Note on verso: Property of Wm. A. Seeley	Box 3
[11] Pentecostal Gospel Mission, 227 Bartlett, SW / WA SEE LEY '67. Note on verso: Property of Wm. A. Seeley ...	Box 3
[12] Fox Brewery Demolition / WA SEE LEY '67	Box 3
[13] a [Drawing] True Light Baptist Church, Wealthy at Finney / WA SEE LEY '67 [Damaged in transit]	Box 3
b. [Clipping, legal sized] 5-9-70 [Grand Rapids Press] Only the Dandelions Remain. Caption: Abandoned Church at Wealthy St. and Finney Ave., SW	Box 2

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### Series III. Photographic images

Title/Description	Instances
34 b/w snapshots of Old City Hall, near or at time of demolition.	Box 5
1 b/w snapshot of house. Verso: 1114 Ionia, N.W.   G.R.'s oldest house. 7/68. Calkin's Law Office.	Box 5

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### Series IV. Art by other artists, published works

Title/Description	Instances
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Prints by Reynold H. Weidenaar (11/17/1915- ).

These images were used in the 1967 Calendar. 1. Capitol Dome [Lansing, Michigan]; 2. Ski Lodge, Lifts and Slopes; 3. Pearl Street, Grand Rapids; 4. Woodbine in Grand Haven Harbor; 5. Windmill; 6. Lighthouse; 7. Barn; 8. Old Railroad Station; 9. Summer Cottages; 10. Big Mac (Bridge)

Box 1

Calendars illustrated by Michigan artist Reynold Weidenaar for Independent Liberty Life Insurance Company.

1 x 1966 Michigan Calendar Sketchbook

Box 1

1 x 1967 Michigan Calendar Sketchbook (2 copies)

Box 1

1 x 1968 Calendar Sketchbook

Box 1

Armand Merizon for Independent Liberty Life Insurance Company.

1 x '69 Calendar, paintings by Armand Merizon. [3 months per image, i.e. 4 images]

Box 1

Frits Hoendervanger

2 3 Frits '75 : Independent Liberty Life presents a new group of paintings by the distinguished Michigan painter ... Frits Hoendervanger. [calendar has 2 mos. Per image, i.e. 6 images.

Box 1

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## Series V. Architectural Drawings

### Scope and Contents

11 Architect's sketches (1884) of City Hall (1888-1969), Grand Rapids, Mi. / E.E. Myers, archt. Description: City Hall, Grand Rapids, Michigan / E.E. Myers, arch't., Detroit, Mich. ca. 1885. 11 blueline prints, rolled [11/30/98]. Imprint of original drawing sheet shown at varying sizes in these prints. Notes concerning the drawings: Drawings [5] [6] have contract data, incomplete: Witness hereto our hands and seals at Grand Rapids, Mich. This the [blank] day of [blank] 1885. Hereby acknowledging this plan no. 13 [no. 13 for drawing [5], and no. 12 for drawing [6]] to be one that is referred to in the contract for City Hall, Grand Rapids, Michigan. ...[Signed only] Geo. W. Thayer, Board of Public Works, Grand Rapids, Mich.

Title/Description	Instances
[1] Elevation on Lyon Street. Sketch elevation to shot tower.	Box RB3 NE RM.
[2] Elevation on Lyon Street.	Box RB3 NE RM.
[3] Elevation on Ionia Street.	Box RB3 NE RM.
[4] Elevation on Ottawa Street.	Box RB3 NE RM.
[5] Longitudinal section through center of building looking North.	

	Box RB3 NE RM.
[6] Transverse section through center of building looking East.	Box RB3 NE RM.
[7] Plan of Basement	Box RB3 NE RM.
[8] Plan of First Story	Box RB3 NE RM.
[9] Plan of Second Story	Box RB3 NE RM.
[10] Plan of Third Story	Box RB3 NE RM.
[11] Plan of Fourth Story	Box RB3 NE RM.

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## Series VI. Realia

Title/Description	Instances
Unidentified key. Old City Hall.	Box 2

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