

Finding Aid for the Benjamin Baum records on the Grand Rapids Metropolitan Area Study Collection 393

Finding aid prepared by Benjamin Boss

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

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December 2012
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Summary Information

Repository	Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department
Creator	Baum, Benjamin, 1913-1991
Title	Benjamin Baum records on the Grand Rapids Metropolitan Area Study
Date [bulk]	Bulk, 1957-1958
Date [inclusive]	1950-1959
Extent	1.25 Linear feet 3 boxes
Language	English
Abstract	<p>Benjamin Baum (1913-1991) served as the chairperson of the Grand Rapids Metropolitan Area Study committee from 1955 through 1959. The Grand Rapids Metropolitan Area Study was an independent committee formed by the Grand Rapids Community Council to study the needs and problems of public services in the Grand Rapids metropolitan area. The committee was assigned to compile reports and make recommendations for the consolidation of services between the city and surrounding suburbs. The collection primarily consists of the committee's records including consultants' reports, preliminary reports, and the twelve published fact finding reports. In addition, correspondence and newspaper clippings related to the committee's work makes up the remaining bulk of the collection.</p>

Biographical/Historical note

Benjamin Baum was born on September 27, 1913 in Toledo, Ohio. His parents, Moses and Minnie Baum, were Russian immigrants who came to America in 1906. His father was a clothing merchant. Benjamin graduated from Union High School in Grand Rapids in 1929. He was active in drama and debating. He graduated with an Associate of Arts degree from Grand Rapids Junior College in 1931 and obtained his Bachelors of Arts degree from the University of Michigan in 1933. He then attended the Law School at the University of Michigan where he received his Juris Doctor degree in 1935. While in law school he was the associate editor of the University of Michigan Law Review.

Upon graduation he entered private practice in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. In 1939 he returned to Grand Rapids where he continued his law practice for the rest of his career. In 1941 he entered the US Army as a private and in 1946 he discharged as a captain. He spent 31 months of his service in North Africa and Italy. He was married to his wife, Anne, in 1946. They had a son and two daughters. Both he and his wife were active members of Temple Emanuel and B'nai B'rith. He was also an active member of the American Legion and the VFW and was known as an advocate for veterans rights.

In 1955, he was appointed by the Grand Rapids Community Council to chair the Grand Rapids Metropolitan Area Study. The Grand Rapids Metropolitan Area Study was an independent committee formed to analyze the needs and problems of public services in the greater Grand Rapids area. The Study was assigned to publish twelve fact finding reports that presented their analyses and recommendations for consolidation of services and potential annexation. The areas covered by the Study were the City of Grand Rapids, City of East Grand Rapids, City of Grandville, Grand Rapids Township, Paris Township, Plainfield Township, Walker Township and Wyoming Township. The Study consisted of several subcommittees with over one hundred members representing the eight areas with proportionate representation to their populations. The Study also relied on the help of several consultants and the cooperation of local governments. During 1957 and 1958 the Study published their fact finding reports. These reports drew much attention from the local press. Consolidation and annexation were highly discussed topics among city planners, public officials, and the greater community.

Benjamin Baum passed away on November 11, 1991 and is buried at Ahavas Israel Cemetery in Grand Rapids. He was known for his long legal career and for his service in the community.

Scope and Contents note

The collection consists primarily of fact finding reports and related documents, correspondence, newspaper clippings, maps and publications. The materials span from 1950 through 1959 with the bulk being from 1957 through 1958.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department December 2012

Immediate Source of Acquisition note

Benjamin Baum estate; November 20, 1991; Accession number 1991.030a

Related Materials

Related Archival Materials note

Collection 46 - Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce records (Series X. Annexation files)

Collection 239 - GRPL Scrapbook collection (City planning scrapbooks, 1955-1956)

Collection 389 - Metropolitan Grand Rapids Planning Association minutes

Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

- Grand Rapids Metropolitan Area Study (Grand Rapids, Mich.).

Subject(s)

- Annexation (Municipal government) -- Michigan -- Grand Rapids
- City planning -- Michigan -- Grand Rapids
- Metropolitan areas -- Michigan -- Grand Rapids

- **Municipal services -- Michigan -- Grand Rapids**

Fact finding reports

Collection Inventory**Series I Fact finding reports****Scope and Contents note**

This series consists of the twelve published fact finding reports and the final report of the committee. In addition to the fact finding reports are preliminary reports and related documents. The majority of these reports and documents were originally kept together in folders labelled by categories. The series has been divided by subseries to reflect these categories and the original order.

Subseries A Planning, zoning and building codes

	Box	Folder
Letter and questionnaire July 31, 1956	1	1
Fact finding report: Planning, zoning and buildings April 1957	1	2
Consultants report circa 1957	1	3
Loose leaf items	1	4

Subseries B Law enforcement

	Box	Folder
Fact finding report: Law enforcement June 1957	1	9

Population estimates and projections

Preliminary fact finding report: Law enforcement circa 1957	1	10
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Subseries C Population estimates and projections

	Box	Folder
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Population estimates and projections / prepared by Walter D. DeVries January 1, 1956	1	11
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Subseries D Sewage and storm water disposal

	Box	Folder
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Fact finding report: Sanitary sewage and stormwater disposal March 1958	1	13
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Preliminary fact finding report: Sanitary sewage and water disposal circa 1957	1	14
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Subseries E Fire protection

	Box	Folder
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Fact finding report: Fire protection March 1958	2	1
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Subseries F Administration

	Box	Folder
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Fact finding report: Administration July 1957	2	2
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Taxation

Preliminary fact finding report: Administration circa 1957	2	3
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Subseries G Taxation

	Box	Folder
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Taxation report April 1957	2	4
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Fact finding report: Taxation July 1957	2	19
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Subseries H Libraries

	Box	Folder
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Preliminary fact finding report: Libraries; and letter circa 1957-1958	2	5
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Fact finding report: Libraries January 1958	2	22
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Subseries I Garbage and rubbish collection

	Box	Folder
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Fact finding report: Garbage and rubbish collection March 1958	2	6
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Preliminary fact finding report: Garbage and rubbish collection circa 1957	2	7
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Subseries J Traffic control and bus transportation

	Box	Folder
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Schools

Preliminary fact finding report: Traffic	2	9
Fact finding report: Traffic control and bus transportation April 1958	2	10
Preliminary fact finding report: Traffic Control circa 1957	2	11
Subseries K Schools		
	Box	Folder
Preliminary report: Educational study August 1, 1957	2	12
Educational study documents 1953-1956	2	13
Fact finding report: Schools February 1958	2	20
Report to the Board of Education circa 1959	2	21
Subseries L Streets and lighting		
	Box	Folder
Fact finding report: Streets and lighting April 1958	2	23
Subseries M Final report		
	Box	Folder
Final report documents circa 1958	2	15

General files

Final report of the G.R.M.A.S. circa 1958	2	18
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Series II General files**Scope and Contents note**

This series consists of a variety of documents related to the work and compilation of the fact finding reports. This series contains various planning documents, member lists, financial documents, meeting minutes and agendas, drafts and notes, biographical information, and various loose leaf items.

	Box	Folder
Metropolitan Grand Rapids / prepared by Charles Press, consultant 1956	1	5
Reports on other metropolitan areas	1	6
Loose leaf items	1	7
General policies; loose leaf items	1	8
Metropolitan cooperation	2	14
Planning documents	2	24
Miscellaneous loose leaf items	2	25
Biographical notes	3	1
Notes and drafts	3	2

Correspondence

Member lists and contact lists	3	3
Financial documents 1957-1958	3	4
Meeting minutes and agendas 1955-1959	3	5
Reports, summaries and drafts	3	6
Facts and figures on "New City Plan"	3	7
Articles of incorporation of Kent-Ottawa Metropolitan Water Authority	3	8
Miscellaneous loose leaf items	3	9

Series III Correspondence**Scope and Contents note**

This series consists of letters between Benjamin Baum and other members of the committee as well as correspondence between the committee and its consultants. The bulk of the series had been arranged in reverse chronological order.

	Box	Folder
Correspondence 1958	1	17
Correspondence March-April 1959	3	10
Correspondence January-February 1959	3	11

Newspaper clippings

Correspondence August-December 1958	3	12
Correspondence June-July 1958	3	13
Correspondence March-May 1958	3	14
Correspondence January-February 1958	3	15
Correspondence May-December 1957	3	16
Correspondence April 1957	3	17
Correspondence March 1957	3	18
Correspondence January-February 1957	3	19
Correspondence July-December 1956	3	20
Correspondence January-June 1956	3	21
Correspondence 1954-1955	3	22
Correspondence n.d.	3	23

Series IV Newspaper clippings**Scope and Contents note**

Newspaper clippings

This series consists of newspaper clippings highlighting the work of the Grand Rapids Metropolitan Area Study. The bulk of the clippings come from the Grand Rapids Press and the Grand Rapids Herald from 1957 through 1959. A portion of the clippings are interfiled in their original order and the remaining bulk had been arranged in reverse chronological order.

	Box	Folder
Newspaper clippings 1958	1	12
Newspaper clippings November 20, 1958	1	18
Newspaper clippings 1955-1959	2	8
Newspaper clippings 1958	2	16
Newspaper clippings 1958	2	17
Newspaper clippings 1959	3	24
Newspaper clippings 1958	3	25
Newspaper clippings 1957	3	26
Newspaper clippings 1957	3	27
Newspaper clippings 1956	3	28
Newspaper clippings 1954-1955	3	29

Maps

Series V Maps

Scope and Contents note

This series consists of a highway map from Allegan County, Michigan, and a set of aero-plat map samples of Allen County, Indiana.

	Box	Folder
Map of Allegan County, Michigan, highways 1950	1	15
Aero-plat map samples of Allen County, Indiana, and business card 1959	1	16

Series VI Publications

Scope and Contents note

This series consists of publications unrelated to the Grand Rapids Metropolitan Area Study. It contains several annual reports and area studies.

	Box	Folder
Annual reports, Grand Rapids Foundation 1956-1957	2	26
Annual report, Grand Rapids City Planning Commission 1957	2	27
Area surveys and studies, Flint and Saginaw	2	28