

# **Sumner Field Housing Project Collection**

## **M/A 2000.190.01-03**

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

James K. Hosmer Special Collections Library

October 2002

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository</b>	James K. Hosmer Special Collections Library
<b>Creator</b>	Sumner Field Homes Federal Housing Project. (Minneapolis, Minn.)
<b>Title</b>	Sumner Field Housing Project Collection
<b>Date [bulk]</b>	Bulk, 1936-1939
<b>Date [inclusive]</b>	1924-1945
<b>Extent</b>	0.83 Linear feet
<b>Language</b>	English

## History

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The first government built and operated housing development in Minneapolis was Sumner Field. Built in 1938, it consisted of 44 two-story row houses and four three-story apartment buildings in a municipal park-like setting. It was a government effort to clear slums, address a housing shortage and create construction jobs during the Great Depression. Private landlords opposed it.

Sumner Field was the oldest, largest, and second of four housing complexes demolished under the settlement of a lawsuit (1995 Hollman settlement) alleging that public agencies discriminated by concentrating minorities in inner-city public housing.

Sumner Field was razed in 1998. It was replaced by the Heritage Park Housing Development, built between 2002-2009. Heritage Park is roughly bounded by Lyndale, Emerson, Third and 10th Avenues North.

The early residents of Sumner Field were predominately Jewish along with some African-Americans. African-Americans and Southeast Asians made up the majority of residents immediately before Sumner Field was razed.

Sumner's most famous residents were the musician Prince Rogers Nelson and Richard Green who at one time led the Minneapolis and New York school systems.

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## Description of Collection

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This collection includes 3 boxes of materials from the Sumner Field Housing Project. Box one consists of scrapbooks of clippings dating from 1936-1939, 2 photo albums, additional photographs, newspaper clippings, and material on the Heritage Park Development that replaced Sumner Field Homes. Box two includes the copper cornerstone box that was opened the summer of 1998 when a new housing development was to begin on the land that was occupied by the Sumner Field Homes. Box 3 includes the contents from the cornerstone box. The cornerstone box and contents were given to Grace Belton, librarian at Sumner Library. In 2002 the Sumner Library staff under Dan Kelty and David McAloney turned the materials over to the Special Collections Department. Newspaper clippings and photographs from the Minneapolis History Collection were later added to the collection.

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## Administrative Information

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## **Publication Information**

James K. Hosmer Special Collections Library October 2002

## **Revision Description**

Newspaper clippings and photographs from the Minneapolis History Collection added. June 2015

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## **Related Materials**

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### **Related Material**

Film footage of the Sumner Field Housing Project is available online in the Hennepin County Library Digital Collections.

Additional photos can also be found in the digital collections: P12235, P12252, P12253, P12257, P12486

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## **Controlled Access Headings**

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### **Geographic Name(s)**

- Sumner-Glenwood Neighborhood (Minneapolis, Minn.) -- History.

### **Subject(s)**

- Public housing -- Minnesota -- Minneapolis -- History.
- Urban renewal -- Minnesota -- Minneapolis -- History.

## Newspaper Clippings

## Collection Inventory

	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
<i>History of the Sumner Field Homes 1936</i>	1	1
<b>Scope and Contents note</b>		
Report prepared by the City Planning Commission, 1936.		
<b>Newspaper Clippings</b>		
	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Clippings 1930-1936	1	2
Clippings 1937-1939	1	3
Clippings 1940-1949	1	4
Clippings 1950-1998	1	5
	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Miscellaneous 1931-1938	1	6
<b>Scope and Contents note</b>		
Includes program from the ground breaking (June 17, 1936), notes and descriptions about the housing project, Dwelling applicant registration forms, a map of the area of Sumner Field Homes, a portion of a property survey by the City Planning Commission (1931), and a plat map of the		

## Photographs

homes to be demolished prior to construction of the housing project (1936).

### Photographs

**Box**                      **Folder**

Photo Album October 1, 1938

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#### Scope and Contents note

Photos of various scenes and structures in the area now occupied by the Sumner Field Houses also a photograph of the model of the project being viewed by Minneapolis City Planning Commissioners and general views of the housing project prior to the time of occupying October 1st, 1938. Some of the photos are excellent views of the neighborhood. About 16 pages of photos and title page.

Photo Album 1939

1

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#### Scope and Contents note

Sumner Field Housing Project photo album, gold colored size 8.5 x 11 in., 10 pages. Small photographs (2.5 x 2.5 in.) of houses and businesses on the project site prior to the development of the Sumner Fields Housing Project. Houses are from the following streets: Emerson houses facing west, Jewett Place facing east, Jewett Place facing west, 6th Avenue North facing south, Lyndale Place, Aldrich Avenue North, and Basset Place. About 16 photos per page.

Photographs

1

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## Photographs

Photographs	1	10
Photographs: Buildings and houses to be torn down	1	11
	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Scrapbook I. Sumner Field Housing Project, orange colored ca. 8 ½" x 11", ca. 10 pages. 1936-1937	1	12
<b>Scope and Contents note</b>		
Scrapbook of clippings concerning federal funding, the work on clearing the site including the eviction and displacement of residents from the homes and businesses. Also included are clippings on prospective tenants of the new housing project.		
Scrapbook II, Sumner Field Housing Project, orange colored ca. 8 ½" x 11", ca. 10 pages long. 1937-1938	1	13
<b>Scope and Contents note</b>		
Scrapbook of clippings concerning the raising of the old buildings and rising of the housing project, includes progress chart map revised as of 5-24-37, the rent rates of the Sumner Field Apartments, clippings of the development of the Olson Highway and dislocating residents. Clippings cover Sumner Library's brick addition, improvements, the removing of a section of the library, and moving the library 100 feet for Olson Highway. Also includes clippings about Floyd Olson's birthplace at 1013 Eleventh Avenue North.		
Scrapbook III, Sumner Field Housing Project, green colored ca. 8 ½" x 11", ca. 10 pages long. 1937-1939	1	14



**Contents from Cornerstone Box**

**Scope and Contents note**

Scrapbook of clippings including articles about the construction of the apartments, wading pool, interior photos of apartments, rent prices, moving into apartments. Also includes eviction issues that delayed the construction of Olson Highway and some brochures and notices concerning Demonstration Apartments, and the Adult Education Center in the Sumner Community Library. Clippings are from the *Minneapolis Journal*, *Minneapolis Spokesman*, *Twin City Herald*, and *Council Commentator*.

Heritage Park

**Scope and Contents note**

Heritage Park community replaced Sumner Field Homes after they were torn down in 1998. Heritage Park opened in June, 2005. File includes clippings, an invitation to the grand opening, a timeline of the area's history, and an informational brochure.

**Box**

Cornerstone Box

2

**Scope and Contents note**

Copper box. 14 x 3.5 x 9 inches

**Contents from Cornerstone Box**

**Scope and Contents note**

The Sumner Field Housing cornerstone box was opened the summer of 1998 when a new housing development was to begin on the land that was occupied by the Sumner Field Homes. The cornerstone

## Contents from Cornerstone Box

box and contents were given to Grace Belton, librarian at Sumner Library. This series includes content removed from the cornerstone box.

	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Reports and Letters	3	1

**Scope and Contents note**

*History of the Sumner Field Federal Housing Project* as prepared by the City Planning Commission, 1936. Bound in brown/grey paper, 11 x 8.5 in., 35 pages.

*Letters of January 14, 1937: F.H. Stevens, Chairman, Advisory Committee, Sumner Field Homes: Re Capital Cost from the Sub-Committee.* Bound in brown/grey paper, 11 x 8.5 in., 4 pages.

*Charles Sumner: Memoir and Eulogies by Bishop Gilbert Haven and the Eulogies Pronounced by Eminent Men.* Edited by William M. Cornell, LL.D., 1874. Bound in brown/grey paper, 11 x 8.5 in., 20 pages.

January 1924 Plat map	3	2
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**Scope and Contents note**

Improvement plan of Sumner Field-Board of Park Commission. 18" x 24" (folded to ca. 8 ½" x 11" x 15").

Miscellaneous 1924-1938	3	3
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**Scope and Contents note**

Zoning ordinance of the city of Mpls, Dec 26, 1924. Paper folded size to 8.5 x 14 in.

**Contents from Cornerstone Box**

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Plat map of lands in the city recently annexed. Dated June 4, 1928. 7 x 17 in.

Ballot prepared by the Democratic State Central Committee for the general election November 8th. Size 3 x 6 in. blue color on back side.

Program from ground breaking dated Wednesday, June 17, 1936, size 5 x 7 in.

Memo from Walter Butler Company (St. Paul), November 8, 1938 to the cornerstone openers about why and when the Sumner Field Homes Housing Project was undertaken. Second page is a list of people from the Department of the Interior, US Housing Authority, November 8, 1938 and envelop.

Letter from the president of Walter Butler Company (St. Paul), October 26, 1937. Mr. Butler writes that this was the third project that the company had done for the Public Works Administration (first in MN) and that they commend the PWA for the erection of these demonstrative projects to prove to the various communities that it is possible to erect clean homes such as this for those that at present dwell in slums.

Letterhead stationary from the City Planning Commission, three copies.

Mansfield Theatre-playbill Sunday, July 22, 1945 3 4

**Scope and Contents note**

Production of Anna Lucaste, 8 x 6 in. 24 pages. Much of the booklet is advertising.

*Minneapolis Leader* February 19, 1938 3 5

**Scope and Contents note**

Contents from Cornerstone Box

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Full sized paper folded into quarters. Article "The Sumner Field Homes—  
A Partial Fulfillment." February 19, 1938, pg. 7.

*St. Paul Pioneer Press* November 8, 1938

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