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## Archival Collection Finding Aid

<b>Name/Title:</b>	Campau Family Collection
<b>Subject(s)</b>	early Grand Rapids family
<b>Archival Collection #:</b>	158
<b>Accession #:</b>	various
<b>Source:</b>	Unknown, Kent County Probate Court
<b>Date Acquired:</b>	Unknown, 1959
<b>Span Dates:</b>	1824 - 1874
<b>Processor(s):</b>	Stacy Burns, Paul Christians

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### Abstract:

This collection contains the estate papers of both Louis and Antoine Campau, as well as a few other personal papers of each person. The former summarize the estate proceedings of each man through probate court judgments, receipts, and other related documents. Also present is an 1824 indenture transferring ownership of certain land and property from Louis to Antoine.

### History:

Brothers Louis and Antoine Campau were two of the earliest pioneers to West Michigan. Louis Campau was born in Detroit, Michigan, in 1791, and was taken prisoner by the British while fighting in the War of 1812. After the war he became one of the first French fur traders to explore and trade in the Upper Northwest. He first came to Grand Rapids in November 1826, when he set up a trading post under government license to do business Native Americans of the area. By the end of 1827 he finished building two log cabins—one for his dwelling and one for his shop. In that year his brother Toussaint Campau also arrived and settled in Grand Rapids. Louis was married twice: after his first wife's death in Saginaw, Michigan, he remarried and remained so until his second wife's death in 1869. In about 1833 Antoine and George Campau, brothers of Louis and Toussaint, joined the latter in Grand Rapids. The following year Antoine's family followed. All of the brothers continued trading in furs and other materials, and were well known among Native Americans and settlers of the northern Lower Peninsula. As Grand Rapids grew, they became prominent citizens; Louis and Antoine passed away in 1871 and 1874, respectively. For extensive details on the four brothers, and their families, see Baxter's *History of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan*.

The estate papers for both Louis and Antoine Campau were donated by the Kent County Probate Court, the last group of which was transferred in 1959. (See accessions 200689-200749 and 201800-201810.) Most of the personal papers were accessioned in several stages at unknown times and dates.

### Scope and Content:

The primary focus of this collection is the estates and final financial affairs of Louis and Antoine Campau. As such, they are useful in two main respects: as both specific inquiries into the final assets of the two pioneers; and as general outlines of procedure of probate courts in the late 1800s. To a lesser degree, the collection may corroborate or further illuminate other material on the Campau brothers and their families.

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### Series Descriptions:

No.	Series Name	Description
I.	Louis Campau Papers, 1836-1873	Personal and estate papers of Louis Campau. Included are a few deeds and other personal documents, as well as a range of papers pertaining to his estate, such as: legal documents, probate judgments, and various bills and receipts.

II. Antoine Campau Papers,  
1824-1874

Personal and estate papers of Antoine Campau. An 1824 indenture from Louis Campau transferring ownership of property and belongings formerly owned by Toussaint, Nicholas, and Denis Campau to Antoine Campau. Estate documents including probate judgments, bills, receipts, and Antoine Campau's last will and testament.

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**Container List:**

<b>Container</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Series</b>	<b>Description of Contents</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Count</b>
1	1	I.	Personal papers of Louis Campau	1836-1871	6
1	2	I.	Estate papers of Louis Campau	1871-1873	66
1	3	II.	Deed from Louis to Antoine Campau	1824	2
1	4	II.	Estate papers of Antoine Campau	1874	6