

(Collection 189)

# Bronx Parkway Commission

A Finding Aid for  
Photographs, 1912-1917,  
in

The Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania

## Archival Description

### Descriptive Summary

Title: Photographs, 1912-1917

Coll. ID: 189

Origin: Bronx Parkway Commission.

Extent: 1 volume containing 88 photoprints.

Repository: The Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania  
102 Meyerson Hall  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104-6311  
(215) 898-8323

Abstract: The collection comprises eighty-eight black and white photographs, housed in one volume, a report prepared by the Bronx Parkway Commission, “show[ing] the conditions which existed before the lands were acquired, in contrast to the appearance of the same lands after they had been treated and restored by the Commission.”

Indexes: This collection is included in the Philadelphia Architects and Buildings Project, a searchable database of architectural research materials related to architects and architecture in Philadelphia and surrounding regions:  
<http://www.philadelphiabuildings.org>

Cataloging: Collection-level records for materials in the Architectural Archives may be found in RLIN Eureka, the union catalogue of members of the Research Libraries Group. The record number for this collection is PAUP01-A31.

## **Biographical/Historical Sketch**

The Bronx Parkway Commission was established in 1906 to oversee the land acquisition and construction of the Bronx River Parkway. Gilmore D. Clarke (1892-1982), who would later become a close associate of Robert Moses at the New York City Parks Department, designed and supervised the construction of the Parkway, completed in 1923, with the assistance of landscape architect Hermann Merkel. The Parkway is 15 miles long, running north and south between the Kensico Dam (in Westchester County) and Bronx Park (in New York City). It is considered to be one of the first modern highways. Built for continuous, high-speed driving, the Parkway's many innovations included the elimination of intersections, separations of grades, limited access, a protected view corridor, median separation, lighting and a generous 40 foot road width. In addition, environmental management and "community enhancement" were central to the mandate of the Parkway Commission. In the effort to enhance the beauty of the roadside and its use as a recreational park the Commission demolished buildings, cleaned the river bed, planted 30,000 trees and 140,000 shrubs, and built pedestrian paths set among the trees and lakes. The Parkway's popularity led not only to more parkway construction in New York City, Westchester County and New York State, but also throughout the country.

## **Scope and Content Note**

The collection comprises eighty-eight black and white photographs, housed in one album. Many are dated (1912-1917) and include descriptive annotations. The volume appears to be a report prepared by the Bronx Parkway Commission (the commission's name appears on the title page) and titled "The Bronx River Parkway." The text of the report (written in manuscript) describes the photographs as "show[ing] the conditions which existed before the lands were acquired, in contrast to the appearance of the same lands after they had been treated and restored by the Commission." The volume begins with photographs of the Bronx Park (including both Zoological Gardens and Botanical Gardens) at the Parkway's southern terminus and ends with photographs of Kensico Lake and Dam at the northern terminus. Other locations along the parkway proper include: Williamsbridge, Woodlawn, Wakefield, Mt. Vernon, Bronxville, Tuckahoe, Crestwood, Scarsdale, Fox Meadow, Hartsdale, and White Plains. Some views include structures which were demolished during the construction of the parkway.

**Access Points for Indexing (Controlled Vocabulary)**

New York (State). Bronx Parkway Commission.  
Architects--Archives.  
Architectural design--History--20th century--Sources.  
Landscape architecture--20th century--United States--Pictorial works.  
Parkways--New York (State)  
Dams--New York (State)  
Bronx River Parkway (N.Y.)--History--Sources.  
Bronx River Parkway (N.Y.)--Pictorial works.  
Kensico Dam (Westchester County, N.Y.)--Pictorial works.  
Bronx (New York, N.Y.)--Buildings, structures, etc--History--Sources.  
White Plains (N.Y.)--Buildings, structures, etc--History--Sources.  
Clarke, Gilmore D., 1892-  
Merkel, Hermann.  
Form/Genre: Photographs.

**Administrative Information**

Restrictions on access: This collection is available for research by appointment only.

Preferred citation: Bronx Parkway Commission Collection, The Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania.

Acquisition: Gift of David Wallace, 1996.

Processing: The collection was processed and the finding aid prepared by William Whitaker, Emily Cooperman, Laura Stroffolino and Nancy Thorne with the research assistance of Brett Fusco. Work was substantially completed in 2001, with additions and corrections in 2003.

**Container list**

Call #	Descriptive Title
[189.1]	1 volume containing 88 photographs as listed below:
[189.1.1]	“The Bronx River in the New York Zoological Park.” Photograph, dated 7/10/1917 (negative #1323).
[189.1.2]	“On of the Lakes in Zoological Park, New York City.” Photograph, dated 7/10/1917 (negative # 1321)
[189.1.3]	“Bridge over Bronx River in New York Botanical Gardens.” Photograph, dated 2/15/1917 (negative #1085).
[189.1.4]	“The Bronx River in Botanical Gardens, New York City.” Photograph, dated 7/10/1917 (negative #1315).
[189.1.5]	“Drives in Bronx Park – The one turning to the right connects immediately with the southerly end of the Bronx River Parkway Drive.” Photograph, dated 7/25/1917 (negative #1160).
[189.1.6]	“Just north of Bronx Park, New York City, before acquisition.” Photograph, dated 3/10/1915 (negative #439).
[189.1.7]	“The same view - land acquired and houses removed.” Photograph, dated 10/1/1917 (negative #1300).
[189.1.8]	“The river obstructed and reeking with filth at Williamsport Bridge.” Photograph, dated 3/19/12 (negative # obscured).
[189.1.9]	“The same view. The land bought, houses removed and river cleaned.” Photograph, dated 8/19/1917 (negative #1223).
[189.1.10]	“Bronx "Boulevard." Near East 210th St.” Photograph, dated 6/14/1914 (negative #195).
[189.1.11]	“Almost the same view after removal of building and surface treatment.” Photograph, dated 7/25/1917 (negative #1155).
[189.1.12]	“Sources of pollution along the Bronx River near 210th Street being removed.” Photograph, dated 3/19/1912 (negative #22).
[189.1.13]	“The same view - river banks restored.” Photograph, dated 9/3/1917 (negative #1245).

- [189.1.14] “The Williamsbridge New York section of the parkway, after removal of houses and during surface treatment.” Photograph, dated 4/27/1916 (negative #790).
- [189.1.15] “The same view showing the result of topsoil replacement and a little grading and planting.” Photograph, dated 7/25/1917 (negative #1162).
- [189.1.16] “A depressing view of the river just above Bronx Park, New York City.” Photograph, dated 4/30/1913 (negative #68).
- [189.1.17] “The same view - obstructions and billboards removed.” Photograph, dated 9/3/1917 (negative #1240).
- [189.1.18] “Along the river near Williamsbridge New York City.” Photograph, dated 3/19/1912 (negative #23).
- [189.1.19] “The same view - land cleared and treated.” Photograph, dated 9/3/1917 (negative #1243).
- [189.1.20] “River obstruction near Williamsbridge New York showing stable overhanging the river.” Photograph, dated 1/19/1915 (negative #328).
- [189.1.21] “Same view after the land was acquired and the stable demolished.” Photograph, dated 8/12/1916 (negative #933).
- [189.1.22] “Lands acquired on Newell Avenue, New York City, surface treatment commencing.” Photograph, dated 6/14/1914 (negative #178).
- [189.1.23] “The same view after surface treatment.” Photograph, dated 7/25/1917 (negative #1159).
- [189.1.24] “Billboards on land adjoining Bronx Park.” Photograph, dated 4/30/1913 (negative # obscured).
- [189.1.25] “Practically the same view - the billboards gone forever.” Photograph, dated 11/3/1914 (negative #266).
- [189.1.26] “A completed walk in the Parkway abutting Botanical Gardens.” Photograph, date obscured (negative #1222).
- [189.1.27] “Near Woodlawn, New York City.” Photograph, dated 9/6/1917 (negative #1260).
- [189.1.28] [Untitled – view of the Bronx River.] Photograph, dated 9/6/1917 (negative #1259).
- [189.1.29] “Almost the only part of the river in the parkway within the city limits which had not been despoiled of its natural beauty.” Photograph, dated 9/6/1917 (negative #1276).

- [189.1.30] "Digging new and deeper river channel thru Wakefield." Photograph, dated 9/6/1917 (negative #1258).
- [189.1.31] "To drain swamp and divert river from railroad embankment." Photograph, dated 10/1/1917 (negative #1310).
- [189.1.32] "The Parkway above Mt Vernon. These beautiful trees have been preserved." Photograph, undated (negative # obscured).
- [189.1.33] "In the parkway above Mt Vernon." Photograph, dated 8/5/1917 (negative #1209).
- [189.1.34] "Girls swimming pool." Photograph, undated (negative #1213).
- [189.1.35] "Swimming 'hole' above Mt Vernon." Photograph, dated 7/25/1917 (negative #1153).
- [189.1.36] "Along the river." Photograph, dated 9/16 (negative #1075).
- [189.1.37] "Above Mt Vernon." Photograph, dated 8/19/1917 (negative #1219).
- [189.1.38] [Untitled – view of the Parkway.] Photograph, dated 10/7/1917 (negative #1336).
- [189.1.39] [Untitled – view of the Bronx River.] Photograph, dated 9/16 (negative #1077).
- [189.1.40] "Footbridge before cleaning river." Photograph, undated (negative #172).
- [189.1.41] "Footbridge after cleaning river." Photograph, dated 7/8/1914 (negative #230).
- [189.1.42] [Untitled – view of the Bronx River.] Photograph, dated 7/22/1917 (negative #1152).
- [189.1.43] "The Bronx River - Bronxville." Photograph, dated 7/5/1915 (negative #569).
- [189.1.44] "Buildings in the Parkway. Pondfield Road, Bronxville." Photograph, dated 5/12/1916 (negative #806).
- [189.1.45] "Same view - the buildings removed." Photograph, dated 7/28/1917 (negative #1174).
- [189.1.46] "Old stone office building in the Parkway at Bronxville." Photograph, dated 3/19/1912 (negative #15).
- [189.1.47] "View of the same old building after it had been renovated and adapted for use as the Parkway office and construction headquarters." Photograph, dated 10/5/1917 (negative #1330).
- [189.1.48] "The parkway at Swain St. and Railroad Ave. Bronxville." Photograph, dated 3/25/1915 (negative #475).
- [189.1.49] "Same view after buildings and shacks had been removed." Photograph, dated 10/5/1917 (negative #1329).

- [189.1.50] “Skating at Bronxville.” Photograph, date cropped (negative #1416).
- [189.1.51] “Play fields at Tuckahoe.” Photograph, dated 9/6/1915 (negative #619).
- [189.1.52] “Water sports.” Photograph, dated 8/4/1916 (negative #903).
- [189.1.53] “Near Crestwood.” Photograph, dated 8/4/1916 (negative #908).
- [189.1.54] “In Station Park Scarsdale.” Photograph, dated 9/3/1917 (negative #1249).
- [189.1.55] “Lake in the Bronx River Parkway at Scarsdale.” Photograph, dated 9/3/1917 (negative #1252).
- [189.1.56] “In the Parkway.” Photograph, dated 7/4/1916 (negative #842).
- [189.1.57] “near Scarsdale Station.” Photograph, dated 9/3/1917 (negative #1232).
- [189.1.58] [Untitled – view of the Bronx River] Photograph, dated 9/3/1917 (negative #1254).
- [189.1.59] “Falls at Scarsdale.” Photograph, dated 9/3/1917 (negative #1233).
- [189.1.60] “Two Views.” Photograph, dated 9/6/1916 (negative #930).
- [189.1.61] “In Fox Meadow.” Photograph, dated 8/5/1916 (negative #915).
- [189.1.62] [Untitled – view of the Bronx Parkway.] Photograph, dated 9/3/1917 (negative #1244).
- [189.1.63] “Falls in Fox Meadow Brook.” Photograph, dated 9/16 (negative #1074).
- [189.1.64] “Formal Garden opposite Hartsdale Station.” Photograph, dated 8/15/1916 (negative #959).
- [189.1.65] “Looking north from Greenacres Avenue Hartsdale.” Photograph, dated 8/15/1916 (negative #960).
- [189.1.66] [Untitled.] Photograph, dated 9/17/1913 (negative #159).
- [189.1.67] “Wooded path along river north of Hartsdale.” Photograph, dated 9/6/1917 (negative #1255).
- [189.1.68] “Buildings in the Parkway at White Plains.” Photograph, dated 4/3/1916 (negative #697).
- [189.1.69] “The same view after removal of the buildings, grading and planting.” Photograph, dated 7/30/1917 (negative #1187).



- [189.1.70] “Two tenement buildings in the Parkway at White Plains.” Photograph, dated 4/9/1916 (negative #711).
- [189.1.71] “The same view - buildings removed and natural slope restored.” Photograph, dated 7/30/1917 (negative #1184).
- [189.1.72] “Buildings and shacks at White Plains.” Photograph, dated 4/3/1916 (negative #670).
- [189.1.73] “Same view. Buildings gone and river diverted from the railroad.” Photograph, dated 7/30/1917 (negative #1188).
- [189.1.74] “Conditions in the Parkway at White Plains before the land was acquired.” Photograph, dated 4/9/1916 (negative #713).
- [189.1.75] “Same view - the land acquired, buildings and rubbish removed the ground graded and planted.” Photograph, dated 7/26/1917 (negative #1163).
- [189.1.76] “A scene of desolation along the Bronx River at White Plains.” Photograph, dated 3/24/1915 (negative #491).
- [189.1.77] “The same view. The river cleaned and the rubbish and filth on the banks removed.” Photograph, dated 8/5/1916 (negative #919).
- [189.1.78] “A typical assortment of refuse taken from the Bronx River.” Photograph, dated 1914 (negative #412a).
- [189.1.79] “An unspoiled tract near North White Plains.” Photograph, dated 7/19/1917 (negative #1137).
- [189.1.80] “Meadow land in the Parkway above North White Plains.” Photograph, dated 7/19/1917 (negative #1132).
- [189.1.81] “View of the great Dam at Kensico.” Photograph, undated (negative #1043).
- [189.1.82] “The Kensico Lake. One of the City's reservoirs.” Photograph, dated 11/3/1917 (negative #1366).
- [189.1.83] “The Kensico Lake and Watershed lands.” Photograph, dated 10/28/1917 (negative #1353).
- [189.1.84] “Near the Junction of the northern end of the Parkway and the City's lands at Kensico.” Photograph, dated 10/14/1917 (negative #1343).
- [189.1.85] “Improved road and bridge Kensico Lake.” Photograph, dated 11/3/1917 (negative #1368).
- [189.1.86] “View of the Kensico Lake..” Photograph, dated 11/3/1917 (negative #1371).

- [189.1.87] “Facade of the great Dam, with pool, plaza and winding roads on either side to the top of Dam.” Photograph (3 Sections), undated (negative # obscured).
- [189.1.88] “General view of Plaza below Kensico Dam.” Photograph (3 Sections), undated (negative # obscured).