

Mount Clemens Public Library

Local History Sketches

A Bird's Eye View of Mount Clemens, 1881 by Betty Lou Morris

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In 1881 **J.J. Stoner** of Milwaukee prepared and published a panoramic map or bird's eye view of Mount Clemens. This was a drawing of the city and its surrounding landscape with the **Clinton River** in the foreground and the **Grand Trunk** railroad and depot off in the distance. The city as it looked then is shown in great detail with every house, business and public building drawn on the appropriate site and in recognizable detail. Inset drawings feature the **Avery House**, the **Palace Pharmacy**, the **Sherman House**, and the **Central Park House**. Lists of businesses and professional men, as well as churches, hotels, and public buildings are included.

This picture of Mount Clemens history is fun to look at. It is a challenge to identify the streets and buildings of 1881 that remain today and note where new streets, large commercial and public buildings, and another bridge across the Clinton River have been added. In 1881 there was only one bridge and no development east of the river. The panoramic map along with pictures of that time permit one to imagine how different daily life in Mount Clemens must have been in 1881.

Lithographic views of United States cities and other places of interest were popular in the latter part of the 19th century and hundreds of them were published and sold. The Library of Congress has 58 of them for Michigan alone. These views were created by artists who came to town and using street maps, walked the city while drawing in all of the buildings as if from an aerial perspective. Local sponsors were solicited and advanced sales were obtained. The completed maps were sold for approximately \$5. The drawings were engraved on stone and lithographed prints were made from them.

Originals of these lithographs are scarce but several are privately owned in Mount Clemens. The **Mount Clemens Public Library** and the **Macomb County Historical Society** each have one of the original lithographs on display for the public to view. Copies in a smaller size have been produced and may be purchased at the **Crocker House Museum** which also has post card size copies available.

For further information about panoramic view lithographs, we recommend:

- "Ancient Drawing Pictures Mt. Clemens of 45 Years Ago as a Burg of 3,000," *Mount Clemens Daily Leader*, January 22, 1925, p.1, col.2.
- Cumming, John, comp. *A Preliminary Check List of 19th Century Lithographs of Michigan Cities and Towns*. Mount Pleasant, Mich. : Clarke Historical Library, 1969.
- Reys, John William. *Views and Viewmakers of Urban America: Lithographs of Towns and Cities in the United States and Canada, Notes on the Artists and Publishers, and a Union Catalog of Their Work, 1825-1925*. Columbia, MO : University of Missouri Press, 1984.
- Herbert, John R. comp. *Panoramic Maps of Cities in the United States and Canada : A Checklist of Maps in the Collections of the Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division*. 2nd ed. Washington, D.C. : Library of Congress, 1984.
- Use this link to visit the digital version of the [Library of Congress collection of panoramic views](#) of U.S. cities