

Hetfield Family Papers, 1894-2007



William and Lisa Hetfield with son Will and father George, from "Plainfield, 300 Years," 1980s

Overview of the Collection

- Title:** Hetfield Family Papers, 1894-2007
- Creator:** William Harmon Hetfield (1940-2010); Hetfield family
- Accession(s):** PPL-2016-017
PPL-2022-030
- Size:** Approximately 3 linear feet, consisting of:
One (1) legal-size document box
One (1) oversize box
- Repository:** Plainfield Public Library, Local History Department, 800 Park Avenue, Plainfield, NJ 07060
- Abstract:** The Hetfield Family Papers document the activities and careers of a Plainfield family: William H. Hetfield, a real estate appraiser and historic preservation consultant; William's grandfather, Wallace L. Hetfield Jr., a Plainfield lawyer and judge; and William's mother-in-law, Ruth Mitchell, an active member of the F.W. Cook School PTA. This collection includes documents, reports, correspondence, memos, newsletters, clippings, a lawyer's diary, publicity scrapbooks, posters, maps, and plans.
- Language:** The records are in English.

Biographical Information

William Harmon Hetfield (1940-2010), a direct descendant of Matthias Hatfield, who settled Elizabeth in 1660, was the son of George F. Hetfield, Plainfield mayor from 1967 to 1968, and Jane Harmon Hetfield. He was a real estate appraiser and leading figure in Plainfield's historic preservation movement. Born in Plainfield on July 17, 1940, William graduated from the Pingry School and the University of Miami. After spending a year traveling the world, he returned to Plainfield in 1964 and founded his real estate appraisal and consulting business in 1971. As a member of the Plainfield Planning Board, William drafted the first Historic District Ordinance in 1979. He was a member of the Historic Review Commission and coordinated the preparation of two National Historic District applications for Crescent Area (1980) and North Avenue (1984). In

1977, William founded Plainfield CAN (Crescent Area Neighborhood Association), a grass roots neighborhood preservation organization. He was also part of the all-volunteer editorial staff of the Plainfield Tercentennial yearbook, *Plainfield, 300 Years, 1684-1984*, contributing an entry on architectural preservation.

William's grandfather was Judge Walter L. Hetfield Jr. (1879-1940). Judge Hetfield was admitted to the bar as an attorney in 1900 and as a counselor in 1906. At the time of his death, he was a senior member of the Court of Errors and Appeals, the highest tribunal in New Jersey, as well as a practicing lawyer in the Plainfield firm of Hetfield and Hetfield, with his three sons, George, Walter III, and Bertram.

William Hetfield married Elizabeth T. Mitchell, known as Lisa, on June 13, 1972. Lisa Mitchell attended the F.W. Cook School; her mother, Ruth Mitchell, was an active member of the school's PTA.

Sources: material found in the collection, Courier News obituaries and articles

Scope and Contents

The Hetfield Family Papers document the activities and careers of William H. Hetfield, Wallace L. Hetfield Jr., and Ruth Mitchell. Record types include: documents, reports, correspondence, memos, newsletters, clippings, a lawyer's diary, publicity scrapbooks, posters, maps, and plans.

The original donation also included eight publications, almost all Plainfield-related. Duplicate books that are already in the library catalog were removed. This includes the 1923 Plainfield High School yearbook with Walter L. Hetfield III, William Hetfield's great-uncle. Two original publications were added to the library catalog and are shelved with the Plainfield Reference collection. A book on architectural restoration that does not have a specific connection to Plainfield is kept with this collection.

Citizens' Plan for the Revitalization of Plainfield, 1995 - duplicate

The Oracle (Plainfield High School yearbook), 1923 - duplicate

Plainfield, 300 Years, 1684-1984: Historical Highlights, 1987 - duplicate

Plainfield Area, New Jersey, 1969 - duplicate

The Plainfields in New Jersey, 1963 - duplicate

Revitalization of Downtown Plainfield, 1995 - new book

Urban Core Design Study, 1967 - new book

New Uses for Old Buildings, 1975 - with collection

Arrangement

The Hetfield Family Papers are arranged into four series:

Series 1: William H. Hetfield

Series 2: Plainfield Maps and Plans
Series 3: Walter L. Hetfield Jr.
Series 4: F.W. Cook School (Ruth Mitchell)

Index Terms

People:

Hetfield, Walter L., Jr.
Hetfield, William H.
Mitchell, Ruth

Organizations:

Crescent Area Historic District (Plainfield, N.J.)
F.W. Cook School (Plainfield, N.J.)
North Avenue Historic District (Plainfield, N.J.)
Plainfield CAN, Inc. (Plainfield, N.J.)

Places:

Plainfield (N.J.)

Subjects:

City planning--New Jersey--Plainfield
Plainfield (N.J.)--History
Urban renewal--New Jersey--Plainfield

Related Items

Please note that almost all of the following items are non-circulating and not digitized; they must be viewed on site. The yearbook is available to view on Internet Archive.

Citizens' Plan for the Revitalization of Plainfield, 1995

Plainfield, 300 Years, 1684-1984: Historical Highlights, 1987

Revitalization of Downtown Plainfield, 1995

Urban Core Design Study, 1965

Historic Districts - Collection box and vertical files

[Plainfield High School yearbook, 1923](#) (Walter L. Hetfield III)

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements

This collection consists of paper documents that do not require any additional technology for access.

Series Description

Series 1: William H. Hetfield [1970-2007, undated]

Series Description

Series 1 contains materials related to William H. Hetfield and his involvement in city planning and the historic preservation movement. Items include his resume; reports, memos, correspondence, clippings, newsletters, and posters about the Historic District Ordinance and creation of Historic Districts; an entry for the All-America City Award; financial records and certificate of incorporation for Plainfield CAN, Inc.; Abraham Lincoln quotes; and a book on architectural restoration.

Arrangement

Series 1 is arranged chronologically by subject and fills seven folders in a document box. Historic District posters are housed in an oversize box.

Series 2: Plainfield Maps and Plans [1894-1966, undated]

Series Description

Series 2 contains maps of Plainfield properties and sections of Plainfield, such as Sleepy Hollow and Central Park, an area between Prospect Avenue and Park Avenue. Many have notations and sketches of properties and streets penciled in. This series also includes a typed list of maps that were in a "conference room closet." Two of the numbered maps on the list are in the collection. A typed list of real estate searches corresponds to a copy of the 1894 Dunham atlas; the numbered properties are penciled in on the atlas pages. Finally, this series contains hand-colored, revised plans for the Park Madison Urban Renewal project.

Arrangement

Series 2 maps are housed in map drawers and boxes; they share space with maps from other collections. The plans for Park Madison are housed in this collection's oversize box. The typed lists of maps and property searches are housed in two folders in a document box.

Series 3: Walter L. Hetfield Jr. [1906]

Series Description

Series 1 contains the New Jersey Lawyers' Diary and Bar Directory for 1906. This book belonged to Walter L. Hetfield Jr. when he was a counselor working in Plainfield; it includes his professional appointments and notes on cases.

Arrangement

Series 3 is housed in one folder in a document box.

Series 4: F.W. Cook School (Ruth Mitchell) [1957-1959]

Series Description

Series 4 contains two publicity scrapbooks for the F.W. Cook School PTA. The books are filled with clippings, ephemera, photos, and handwritten labels. Both books were examined and received certificates at the New Jersey Congress of Parents and Teachers in 1958 and again in 1959. The 1957-1958 publicity book won a Convention Award from the Union County Council of Parent-Teacher Associations and was considered “exceptional.” The word “outstanding” was written in the 1958-1959 scrapbook.

Arrangement

Series 4 is housed in an oversize box.

Administrative Information

Access & Restrictions

The Hetfield Family Papers are available for research.

Access is restricted to materials prepared by the Local History department staff. All materials must be viewed in the Plainfield Room and may not be removed to another area of the library without permission of the Library Director or designee. Materials must be handled carefully and kept in order. Materials must not be leaned upon, altered, folded, ripped, or traced upon. Marks may not be added or erased from materials. Materials must be returned directly to Local History department staff and inspected before the researcher leaves the Plainfield Room.

One photocopy may be made (by Plainfield Public Library staff) of each document for the purpose of research; official Local History departmental reproduction fees may apply. Permission to publish must be obtained by the Plainfield Public Library Board of Trustees as delegated to the Library Director. Permission to publish does not constitute a copyright clearance. The researcher is responsible for further copyright restrictions. The Plainfield Public Library is not responsible for the misuse of copyrighted material.

Preferred Citation

Identification of item; Date (if noted); “Hetfield Family Papers”, Box and Folder Number, Local History Department, Plainfield Public Library, Plainfield, New Jersey.

Acquisition Information

The majority of the collection was donated in 2016 by Lamont Blowe. Wallace L. Hetfield Jr.'s diary was donated in 2022 by Trenton Public Library, via Laura Poll.

Processing Information

This collection was inventoried and processed at the time it was received in 2016. It was further processed and the finding aid written by Sally Weiner in May 2025. Finding aid content follows the guidelines suggested by *Describing Archives: A Content Standard*.

Collection Inventory

Series 1: William H. Hetfield [1970-2007, undated]

Box	Folder	Title/Description	Date(s)
1	1	William H. Hetfield resume and qualifications	1990s
	2	Historic District Ordinance	1978-1988
	3	Clippings - Historic District Ordinance	1984-1985
	4	Crescent Area and North Avenue Historic Districts	1970-1984
	5	Plainfield CAN, Inc. - financial records and certificate of incorporation	1979-2007
	6	Clippings - property maintenance code and politics	1976-1994
	7	All-America City Award entry for Plainfield	1980
2	8	Abraham Lincoln quotes	undated
		North Avenue Historic District poster/booklet	1980s
		Hillside Avenue Historic District posters, signed by Rosemary Haness	1987

Series 2: Plainfield Maps and Plans [1894-1966, undated]

Box	Folder	Title/Description	Date(s)
1	9	Key to maps in conference room closet SEE Map Box 2 for maps #2 and #34	undated
	10	Real estate searches SEE 1894 Dunham atlas for corresponding numbered properties	undated
2		Park Madison Urban Renewal Proposed-Revised Study (rolled)	1966
A		Atlas of the City of Plainfield and North Plainfield (Dunham)	1894
B		Sketch of John Taylor Johnston Property	undated
C		Perfected Map of Central Park, City of Plainfield, New Jersey	1904
		Map of Property of Ella Hartley Mellick (map #34)	undated
		Map of Sleepy Hollow Situated in the City of Plainfield, Union County, N.J.	1930
D		Map of Belvidere, Compiled from the Deeds of Sale and Sharing the Various Tracts as Purchased by F. Schetter - Nancy Hand Tract (map #2)	undated
E		Map of Elizabeth Town, N.J. at the Time of the Revolutionary War, 1775-1783	© 1964 (1878)

A Atlas shelf

B Map Box 1

C Map Box 2

D Map Drawer C5

E Map Drawer D2

Series 3: Walter L. Hetfield Jr. [1906]

Box	Folder	Title/Description	Date(s)
1	11	Wallace L. Hetfield Jr. lawyer's diary	1906

Series 4: F.W. Cook School (Ruth Mitchell) [1957-1959]

Box	Folder	Title/Description	Date(s)
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F.W. Cook PTA publicity scrapbook
F.W. Cook PTA publicity scrapbook

Plainfield Public Library NJ
1957-1958
1958-1959