

SFMTA Photo Use & Search Tips

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SFMTA Photo Use & Search Tips

1 Using Images

SFMTA Staff, Other Gov. Agencies & Non-Profits:

SFMTA Photo images are available for use by any SFMTA staff member for work purposes. Employees of other SF City and County departments, government agencies, and non-profit organizations are also welcome to use images for their work. Please contact SFMTA Photo to inquire about signing up for a staff account to access photos.

General Public:

Free copies of digitized historic photos from the archives are available upon request for non-profit uses at a maximum file size of 1200 pixels along the long edge, at 300 pixel per inch resolution. Images are available for non-commercial use, and should not be sold, merchandised, or used for advertising or endorsement.

Not-for-profit use on personal or non-profit websites, blogs, and social media accounts is permitted with appropriate citation. Other non-commercial uses including researching local history, genealogy, educational projects or original scholarly research are all supported.

Non-Supported Uses: SFMTA Photo does not provide images for any for-profit purposes. Non-supported uses include merchandising, sales of photograph prints or posters, or publication or reproduction for commercial purposes.

Copyright Protections: Before using historic images please review the United States Code Title 17 Copyright notice in this document. Similar to most libraries and archives, the historic photo collections at SFMTA Photo have a variety of materials with differing copyright protections. Responsibility for observance of copyright protections rests with the user.

Exhibits & Displays: Proposed use of historic images for exhibits or displays will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Criteria for exhibits or displays is that they be free, educational and open to the public.

Media:

SFMTA Media Relations handles all media inquiries, including stories requesting to use SFMTA photographs. Visit the SFMTA Press Center: SFMTA.com/SFMTA-Press-Center to contact Media Relations.

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2 Crediting Images

Please always cite all images with:

> SFMTA Photo | SFMTA.com/Photo

The link in the citation should always be live in online contexts, including on social media, websites, online articles, and blogs.

Including credit lines when sharing images enables others to find images for their own projects and encourages open sharing of information.

You are also encouraged to include the name of the photographer and the image number (almost always the same as the file name). This is not a mandatory component of the citation but is certainly helpful to others who may be seeking to identify the original image source.

3 U.S. Copyright Law Title 17 Notice

Responsibility for observance of copyright protections rests with the user under U.S. copyright law. The SFMTA Photo Archive holds a variety of historic collections of photographic prints and negatives from different sources. Our collection sources include ancestor agencies of the SFMTA, such as the privately owned and operated United Railroads Company of 1902 to 1921, and the Market Street Railway Company of 1921 to 1944, as well as several different San Francisco government agencies. Copyright protections vary depending on the identity of the creator and the date of creation.

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction.

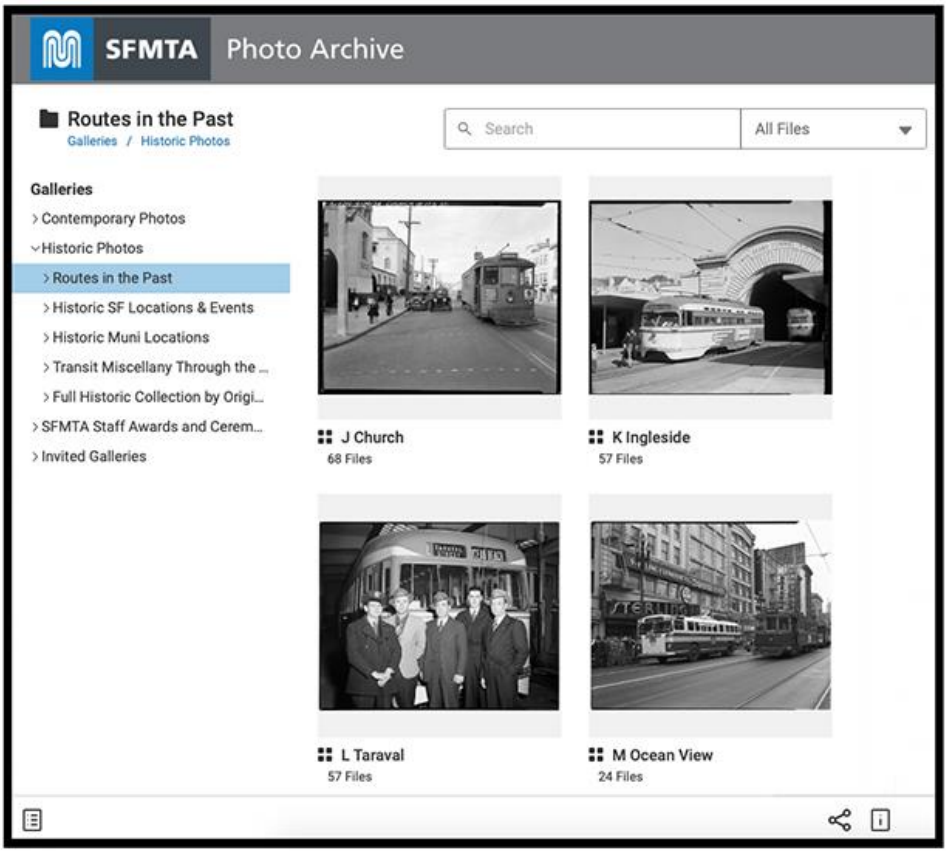
If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of “fair use,” that user may be liable for copyright infringement. This institution reserves the right to refuse a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve a violation of copyright.

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4 Search Tips

Searching by Browsing Galleries:

Images are organized in a variety of galleries to enable serendipitous searching and visual browsing. For historic images, there are galleries of historic routes and lines, landmarks, and transit specific subjects. Note that galleries of historic events and locations are not comprehensive but rather highlight the best images from the SFMTA Photo collections related to these topics. For modern images, there are stock galleries organized by subject matter and also galleries of photos organized by year and then by photo shoot.



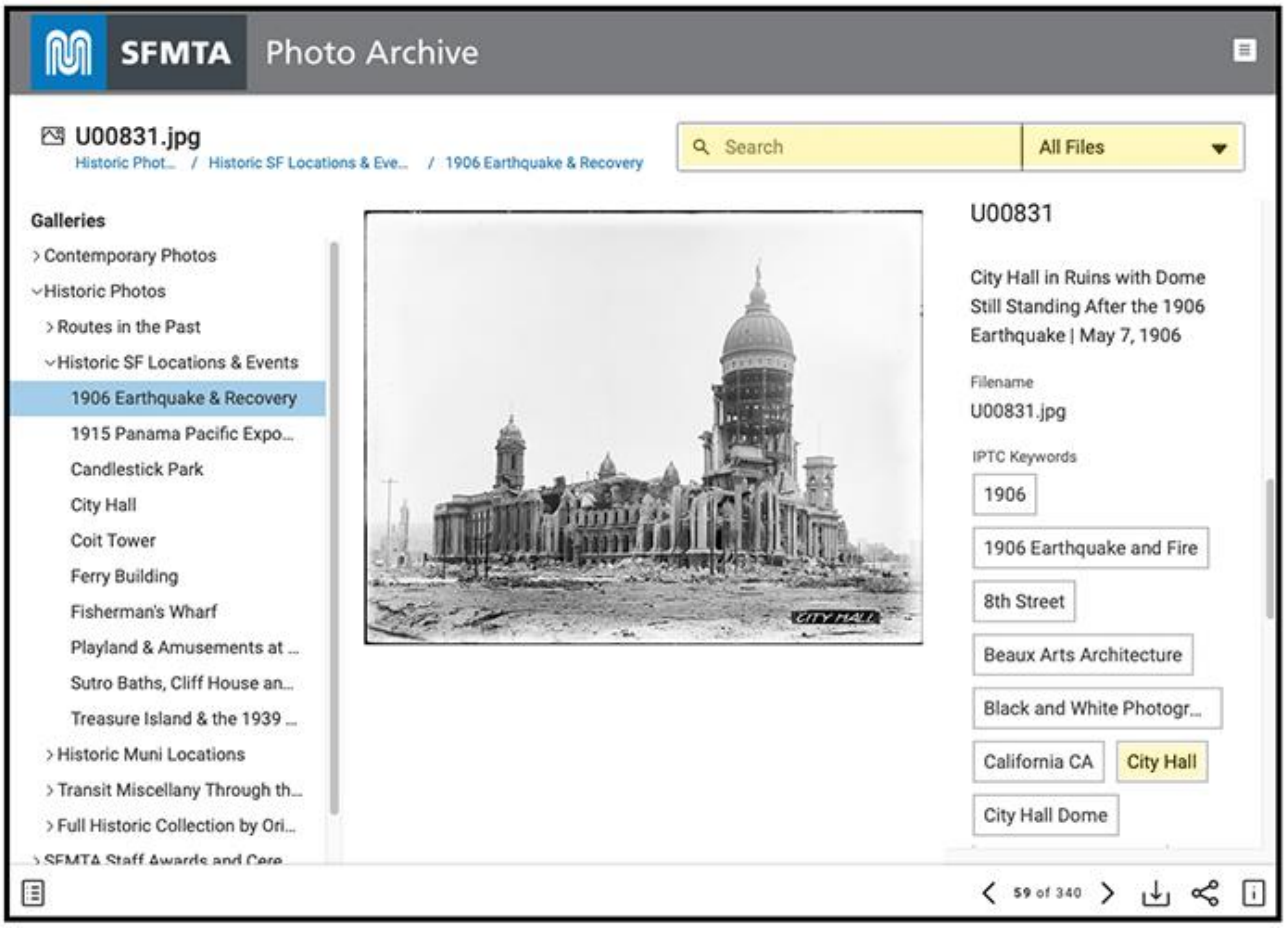
A view of the "Routes in the Past" browsing galleries in the Historic Photos section.

All browsing galleries for both Contemporary and Historic photographs can be found in the "Galleries" portion of the SFMTA Photo website.

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Searching by Keywords:

All images have searchable keywords and descriptive captions. These keywords are search-engine optimized, and along with other descriptive information, can be seen alongside the image in the information page view, marked by the [i] symbol. Search by keyword by going to “Search for Photos” while on the photo website or using the Search Bar at the top of the screen, marked with the magnifying glass symbol.



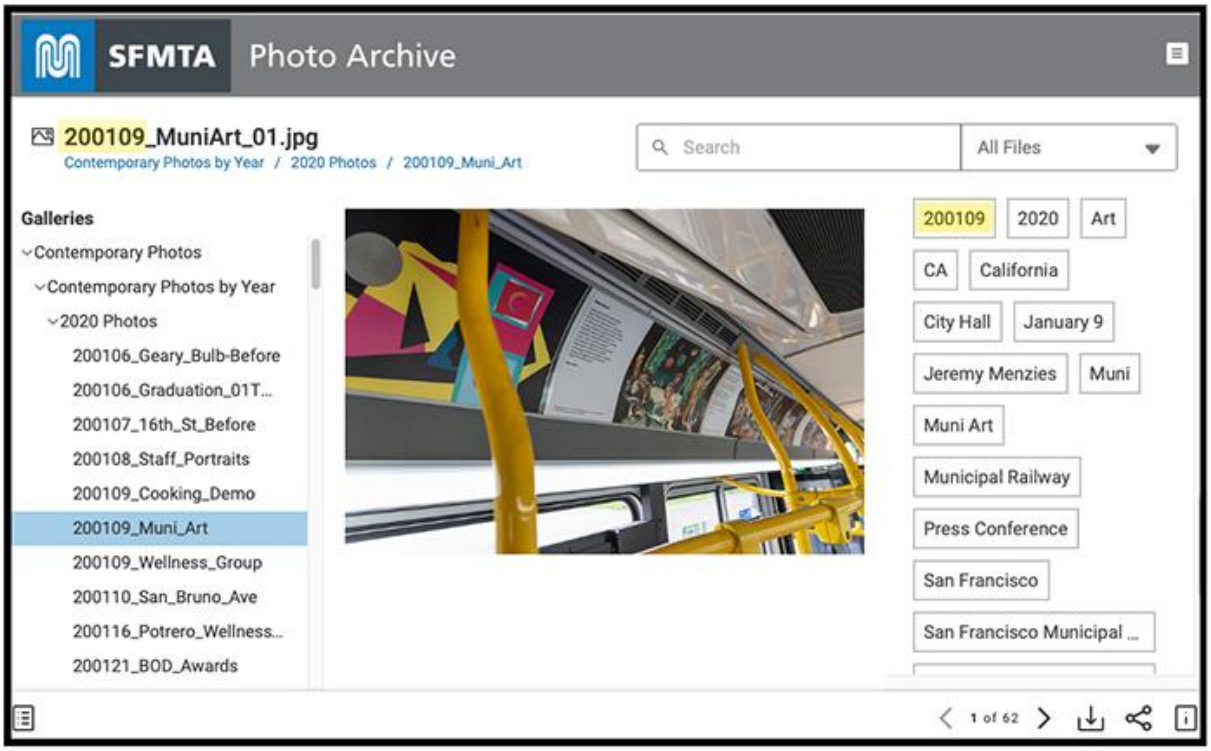
The page display for an historic image. Note the Search Bar, top right. Below the Search Bar, also on right, is descriptive information such as image number, caption and filename. Below that are the keywords. Here, the keyword “City Hall” is highlighted in yellow. To conduct a pivot search for a specific keyword, click on the keyword itself.

How to Conduct a Keyword Pivot Search:

Any keyword can be used to conduct a “pivot search” which allows the searcher to pull up all images sharing the same keyword. When a relevant keyword is identified, click on that keyword

itself to run a search for all other images with the same keyword. For example, selecting the keyword “City Hall,” as seen above, will pull up all other images also tagged with “City Hall.”

For modern images, all images from the same photo shoot can be summoned with a pivot search by identifying the shoot number in the keywords and selecting it. The shoot number is the same series of numbers contained in the image file name.



The page display for a contemporary SFMTA Photo image. At the top left of the page, the shoot number is highlighted within the image filename in yellow. On the right, the shoot number is also highlighted in yellow in the keywords. Click on the shoot number in the keywords to pull up all other images from this same photo shoot, or go to the gallery for the shoot (note the matching name) in the gallery list at middle-left.

Techniques for Keyword Searches:

The best way to conduct a keyword search is to start with general terms yielding a broad search that can be visually scanned. Note that when utilizing the Search Bar, a search can be selected to run for “All Files,” or specifically for the images within the gallery currently being viewed. A few more keyword search tips:

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- To yield **historic** images, include the word “archive” along with your other search terms
- To yield **modern** images, include the word “SFMTA”, or include a recent year (if “2020” does not turn up desired images try “2019”, “2018”, etc.)
- The keyword search will **not identify misspellings** or suggest synonyms
- Note that the keyword search **is not case sensitive**
- Most images have keywords for **street names**. It is okay to leave off the word “street” itself— for example to find the intersection of Haight Street and Shrader Street try searching: “Haight Shrader”

Certain symbols optimize keyword searches:

The | Symbol

To run a broad search with multiple search terms, use the **| symbol:** *streetcar* | *Haight***.** This technique will turn up any image that have either of the search terms. A recovered image could contain either the keyword “streetcar” or “Haight,” or both.

The & Symbol

To run a narrow search, use the **& symbol:** *streetcar & Haight*. This technique will turn up only images that contain all of the search terms. A file must contain both “streetcar” and “Haight” to come up. Additional search terms will further limit the search, for instance a search could be run for “streetcar & Haight & passenger.”

Quotations

To search for an exact phrase use **quotations:** *“7 Haight streetcar”.* The results will turn up only images with keywords that match the same phrase contained in the quotations, with the words in the exact order given.

For more symbols and other techniques that can enhance searches, check out the Advanced Search tips link which appears on any search run on the SFMTA Photo website.

5 Research in the Archives

This section of this document is designed to help people with history research projects navigate the materials that are available in the SFMTA Photo archival collection, and how best to locate historic materials which are not readily accessible in our online collections.

Please note that the SFMTA Photo Dept. & Archives is not open for walk-in research, but it is possible to conduct in-person research with an appointment and adequate scheduling notice. See Section 5.4, below.

5.1 Collection Overview

The SFMTA Photography Department traces its origins back to the hiring of a photographer by the SF United Railroads Company in 1903. Beginning at that moment, a lineage of photographers has been employed by San Francisco transit agencies which continues to present day.

The archival collection is comprised almost entirely of visual materials, primarily photographic negatives and prints in various formats created by photographers employed by San Francisco transit agencies and government entities. There are also small collections of maps, plans and drawings, as well as promotional and public relations ephemera, and a very limited selection of materials related to accident claims.

The main contributors to the SFMTA Photo archival collections are:

- **United Railroads Company / Market Street Railway** photographer John Henry Mentz. Approximately 5,000 original negatives spanning from 1903 to 1940. Over 95% of collection digitized and online. Views of San Francisco streets, transit lines, transit facilities, transit accidents and a significant set of images of the damage from the 1906 Earthquake.

  The online image collection at Open SF History also hosts many historic images taken by photographer John Henry Mentz for URR & MSRy (try a keyword search on OpenSFHistory for “Mentz”).

- **SF Board of Public Works** photographer Horace Chaffee, who photographed the SF Municipal Railway (Muni) as well as other city resources. Approximately 750 original negatives spanning from 1910 to 1942. 100% of collection digitized

and online. Covers the early years of Muni, as well as SF street views, Muni facilities, transit accidents, and occasionally water and power system images.

The online image collection at Open SF History also hosts many historic images taken by photographer Horace Chaffee for the SF Board of Public Works (try a keyword search on Open SF History for "Chaffee").

- **SF Public Utilities Commission / Municipal Railway (Muni)** photographers Marshall Moxom, Ken Snodgrass and Lester Teal, primarily photographing the SF Municipal Railway (Muni) and the Hetch Hetchy Water and Power System up until 1978. Approximately 12,000 original negatives from 1935 to 1978. 90% of collection digitized online; many non-digitized images are duplicates. Covers mid-century Muni with a growing emphasis on images taken for public relations including events like the Cable Car Bell Ringing Contest, operator of the month, as well as images for reports and the Muni internal newsletter *Trolley Topics*.

  Note that digital versions of *Trolley Topics* from 1945 to 1952, and 1973 to 1980, are available at the SF Public Library and on the Internet Archive. These issues of Trolley Topics provide much of context for SFMTA Photo historic images taken from this era.

The vast majority of SFMTA Photo historic images from the starting point of the collection in 1903, up through to 1978, are digitized and online. The archives also contain not-yet-digitized materials, some of which have written descriptions with overviews of content and inventories. See Section 5.4 below for more information on this portion of our archival collection.

5.2 Licensing for Publication or Obtaining Larger Image Files for Research

Publication: Images from the collection can be licensed for history publications like scholarly journals, history group printed newsletters, local history books, etc.

Larger Files for Research: The standard image size provided by SFMTA Photo is a 1200 pixel-length file at 300 pixels-per-inch. This image size works well for personal or non-profit online uses like blogs, social media or prints for personal enjoyment. Large-size versions of digital scans (2400 pixels) are available for researchers who need to see the full level of visual details in historic images in order to conduct research. If you would like to request access to larger file sizes for historic images, please contact us with the image

numbers in which you are interested and give a brief description of why you require a larger file size or access to high quality visual details for your research.

Exhibits & Displays: Proposed use of historic images for exhibits or displays will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Criteria for exhibits or displays is that they be free, educational and open to the public.

To contact us for any of the above inquiries, please use the Contact Us page at SFMTA.com/Photo.

5.3 In-Person Research at the Archives

The SFMTA Photo Dept. & Archives is not open to walk-in visitors, but an appointment can be scheduled for anyone undertaking a research project that is not served by the online historic resources available at SFMTA.com/Photo.

Visit the Contact Us link send a message to schedule an in-person visit. Please bear in mind that archives staff are available for research assistance on a part-time basis and allow lots of lead time when conducting a research project.

5.4 Descriptions of Not-Yet-Digitized Archives Collections

The SFMTA Photo Archive contains many collections resources that have not yet been digitized. The majority of our photographic negatives and prints from 1903 to 1978 have been digitized and are hosted online, but most photographs from 1978 through 2005, as well as collections of architectural and engineering plans, motion pictures, color slides from the 1970s through 1990s, and small collections of ephemera and memorabilia are not available online.

Many of these materials have descriptive overviews outlining their scope and date ranges. Some collections also have searchable inventories or spreadsheets, either at the level of individual item or photograph, or at the level of folder or photo shoot.

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Table of Currently Un-Digitized Collections:

Municipal Railway and SF Public Utilities Commission Negatives (Numbered Series), 1979 - 2005
Primarily 35mm and 120mm format film by Muni photographers; also includes many standard and oversized prints.

Inventory can be searched by archives staff. Photographs are described at the level of the photo shoot or roll.

Muni Claims Negatives and Prints (C Series), 1946 - 1976
Incomplete set of negatives of Muni Claims 1946 to 1958 and 1962 to 1967; none of the accompanying insurance paperwork is known to exist; also includes set of claims prints in envelopes organized by accident case 1946 to 1976.

For associated insurance claims material from this era, see the Inspector M. Irving Collection.

Muni Slides and Transparencies Collection (AB Series), 1960s - 1990s
Four boxes of transparent color slides from approximately 1960s to 1990s, some images are very similar to M Series negatives; also includes two drawers of slides and transparencies without an assigned series letter prefix.

Boxes 02 to 04 are digitized and online. Inventory of undigitized Box 01 is in progress.

Flat Files Oversized Drawings and Plans Collection, 1910s - 1990s
Engineering and architectural drawings, plans, maps and other large-size documents created by the SF Municipal Railway, United Railroads, and Market Street Railway.

No inventory currently exists. Materials are not organized nor labeled.

SF Public Utilities Commission and Municipal Railway Motion Picture Collection, 1930 - 1977
Motion picture films created by Muni / PUC photographers, or created for or sent to the Photography or Public Affairs Department in the 20th century.

Digitization in progress. First set of digitized films should be ready for viewing by September 2021.

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Table of Currently Un-Digitized Collections:

SF Public Utilities Commission Employee Pass Negatives, 1956 – 1973
Five boxes of employee pass photographs.

Inventories for each box inside the box, also original indexes.

Muni Newsletters and Ephemera Collection, 20th Century
Six boxes of Muni and SF PUC publications, brochures, maps and ephemera from the 20th century; includes two boxes of *Trolley Topics* and *Muni Memo* agency newsletters, one box Cable Car Bell Ringing Contest materials, and three boxes ephemera and memorabilia including maps, brochures, pins, buttons and patches.

Trolley Topics are digitized and available online from the Internet Archive.

Oversize Print Book: *San Francisco Views 1880 - 1915*, Published 1993
One print book published by Wingate Press in 1993, large-size prints of images by various photographers taken between 1880 and 1915.

Not digitized or inventoried.

Stereoscope and Panama Pacific International Exposition Collection, 1906 - 1915
One wooden box with a stereoscope viewing device, one box of stereoscope cards from approximately 1906 including views of the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake, and one book: *A Comprehensive Official Souvenir View Book Illustrating the Panama Pacific International Exposition, San Francisco*, published by Robert Reid in 1915.

Not digitized or inventoried.

United Railroads and Market Street Railway Accident Record Cards from 24th and Utah Car House Collection, 1907 - 1931
One box containing set of accident record / discipline cards maintained for streetcar operators from 1907 to 1931; cards list operator name, badge number and incidents in which operators were involved by date with brief description; in no particular order.

Incomplete. Not digitized or inventoried.

United Railroads and Municipal Railway Print Albums Collection, 1905 – 1944
Six albums of photograph prints, many of which are duplicates of original negatives scanned from the W Series, D Series and U Series; 1918 album of Market Street traffic contains unidentified and un-scanned prints by unknown photographer.

Not digitized or inventoried.

Table of Currently Un-Digitized Collections:

Svendsen Prints Collection, Date Unknown
One folder with a set of copy prints of photographs of various San Francisco transit scenes from approximately the 1870s to 1920s; source of prints was likely transit historian and collector Charles Smallwood; original photographers unknown; copy negatives created in the X Series and all have been scanned. Possibly connected to 1950s *Trolley Topics* editor Adeline Svendsen.

See X Series for copies of all images in this collection.

Muni Man of the Month Binder, 1950 – 1971
One binder of materials related to the Muni Man of the Month program including documents outlining procedure, mailing list.

Not digitized or inventoried.

Inspector M. Irving Claims Documents and Photos Collection, 1920 - 1963
Folders of items from Market Street Railway and Muni Claims Inspector Melbourne Irving, including photographs of transit accidents, copies of fraud investigation files and pamphlets on avoiding accidents and life insurance.

Not digitized or inventoried.