

COLLECTION TITLE

RHC-210

Ruth Nellie Veenstra Photograph Collection

Accession 2021-40

DATES OF CREATION

1920-1935 (bulk 1926-1932)

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

0.42 linear feet (1 box)

BIOGRAPHICAL OR HISTORICAL NOTE

Ruth Nellie Veenstra was born in Grand Rapids, Kent County, Michigan on 9 October 1908. Her parents were Gerrett Veenstra (1877-1956), a painting and decorating contractor, and Lena Ruster Veenstra (1880-1941) who were married in 1901. Gerrett emigrated to the U.S. in 1887, and Lena was the daughter of Dutch immigrants. Ruth was the third of their ten children: Ray Melvin Veenstra (1902-1992), Louis Simon Veenstra (1905-1976), Arthur Gerrett Veenstra (1910-1989), Leslie Charles Veenstra (1912-1997), Robert James Veenstra (1914-2005), Marian Alta Veenstra Rebentisch (1916-1993), Charlotte C. Veenstra Beimers (1918-2013), Ernest Philip Veenstra (1921-1993), and Willard Edwin Veenstra (1925-2018). It appears that the family had a small 5-acre farm at what is now 1345 Covell Avenue NW, Walker Township, Kent County. Ruth attended Oakleigh School for primary and middle grades, and graduated from high school, probably Union High School. It does not appear that she was ever employed.

Ruth married Henry James Vanden Berg (1909-1982), a pattern maker for General Motors, on 24 November 1938. They had one child, James Henry Vandenberg (1942-2019). Ruth died on 4 July 1990 and is buried at Rosedale Memorial Park, Tallmadge Township, Ottawa County, Michigan with her husband, mother, and some of her siblings.

SCOPE AND CONTENTS NOTE

Photograph album, 184 x 283 mm. Two-post binding with 62 black leaves. Black stamped faux-leather boards with "Photographs" stamped in gold in upper left corner of cover. The album contains 375 black-and-white photographs glued or attached with corner mounts to the front and back of the leaves; most have captions and dates on the photographs themselves in black ink. At some point 18 photographs had been removed from the album. There are 16 additional loose photographs, most with captions written in black in like those in the album, and 22 thumbnail-size images of Ruth and friends, possibly taken in a photobooth. Additionally, there are 227 negatives, mostly 116 format (2.5 x 4.5 inches). Of these, 173 can be matched to prints mounted in the album; the remaining 54 appear to have come from either family members or friends.

The collection of photographs and negatives document parts of Ruth Veenstra's family and social lives. Images of her parents and siblings from the 1920s into the 1930s show her maturation and various aspects of her circle of friends, travels, family and family home.

Places represented in the photographs are mostly in west Michigan, including Grand Rapids, Pierson, Whitefish Lake, Casnovia, White Cloud, Grand Haven, Newaygo, Hess Lake, and others that emphasize beaches and lakes. Some photos document an August 1926 visit to the state capitol in Lansing. Another group of photos record an

excursion by family and friends to Washington, D.C., Arlington, Annapolis, Mount Vernon, and other nearby attractions in June 1931.

A number of people make frequent appearances in the photographs, aside from the Veenstra family. Gertrude Anna VanderVeen (1908-2007) seems to have been Ruth Veenstra's best friend, judging from the number of images of the two together. A close-knit group of female friends (called in one caption, "the eight bandanas" because of their blouses made from that material) spent a few summer vacations together at Whitefish Lake. The young women (including Gertrude VanderVeen), all Grand Rapids residents, are identified as: Theresa Idsinga (1910-1998), Phyllis Idsinga (1910-1991), Lillian VanderVeen (1911-2011), Pearl Zoet (1910-2003), and Jeanette VanderWerf (1910-1986).

IMMEDIATE SOURCE OF ACQUISITION NOTE

The scrapbook was purchased on an internet auction from Lenny Padilla [Mitten State Treasures], (Grand Rapids, Michigan) on 27 January 2019.

CONDITIONS GOVERNING ACCESS NOTE

None.

CONDITIONS GOVERNING USE NOTE

The collection is the physical property of Grand Valley State University, but all literary rights are retained by the original creators of materials, their estates, heirs, or third parties. It is the responsibility of the researcher to secure appropriate permissions for publication beyond the bounds of fair use.

BOX LIST

- A Photograph Album
- B Folders
 - 1. Loose photographic prints
 - 2. Photographic negatives, nos. 1-112
 - 3. Photographic negatives, nos. 113-227
 - 4. Digitized prints from negatives not in album
 - 5. Original negative envelopes
 - 6. Miscellaneous
 - 7. Provenance, purchase information, finding aid

SUBJECT HEADINGS

Veenstra Family	Grand Rapids, Mich.	Summer camps
VanderVeen Family	Grand Haven, Mich.	Washington, D.C.
Kent County (Mich.)	Whitefish Lake (Kent Co.)	
Ottawa County (Mich.)	Hess Lake (Newaygo Co.)	
Newaygo County (Mich.)	Walker Twp., Kent Co.	