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Finding aid for the Vandercook family papers Collection 329

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Grand Rapids History Center

Grand Rapids Public Library

111 Library Street NE

Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503

Business Number: 616-988-5497

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URL: <https://www.grpl.org/history/>

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Summary Information

Repository:	Grand Rapids History Center
Title:	Vandercook Family Papers
ID:	Collection 329
Date:	1822-2017
Physical Description:	8 Linear Feet 10 boxes
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	This collection contains records from five generations of the Vandercook family, who lived in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The family members include Henry B. Vandercook, a Michigan State Legislator who is credited as the "Father of Western Michigan University." There are records related other family members, including Wayne Vandercook who was an artist. This collection has also information about the Grand Rapids Monument Co., a family owned business from 1891 to 1971. Researchers interested in this family line as well as local artists of Grand Rapids could find this collection beneficial.

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Biographical / Historical

The Vandercook family paternal line descended from Michiel Van Der Koeck of the Netherlands, who emigrated to the United States in 1699. His descendents lived in the New York and New Jersey area until Michael Vandercook (1822-1884) moved to Michigan in the 1840s. Michael Vandercook was in the business of monuments and gravestones, listed as a "Sgt. of Marble Works" in the 1860 and 1870 census and as "Salesman of Monuments" in the 1880 census. Michael Vandercook had 11 children including Henry Beecher Vandercook (1861-1942) and Michael C. Vandercook (1852-1880).

Michael C. Vandercook was a poet and songwriter. He died at the age of 27 and entrusted his books and writings to his brother Henry Beecher Vandercook. Henry Vandercook worked in the monument and gravestone industry in Allegan, Michigan. In 1891, he established the Grand Rapids Monument Company. Henry Vandercook began his career in politics in 1902 serving in the Michigan of House of Representatives. He served in two sessions. In 1903, Henry

Vandercook introduced legislation to establish the Western State Normal College, now Western Michigan University. A dormitory building was named in his honor in 1939.

Henry Vandercook had four children including Faye Vandercook (1881-1948). In 1922, Faye Vandercook purchased the Grand Rapids Monument Company from his father and worked there until his retirement in the mid 1940s. Faye Vandercook served as the president of Michigan Retail Monument Dealers Association. He was married to Katherine Lewis in 1904 and had four children including Wayne Vandercook.

Wayne Vandercook (1905-1995) graduated from South High School in 1923. In 1925, he attended the Bliss Design School of Rockford, Illinois and then the Michigan State College for Landscape Architecture. In 1931, Vandercook married his wife Mildred Bott (Todie) and returned to work at the Grand Rapids Monument Company.

During World War II, the Grand Rapids Monument company ceased production on monuments and memorials to assist with the war efforts. Vandercook and his employees worked on creating armored plates parts, utilizing the sandblasting techniques used in monument creation.

After the war, The Grand Rapids Monument Company returned to their normal operations. In 1961, Vandercook sold the Grand Rapids Monument Company. In 1971, his wife passed away and he officially retired in 1972.

During retirement, Vandercook focused on his artistic interests, taking art classes from the Grand Rapids Board of Education for Senior Citizens. He began drawing and painting wood covered bridges in the area and his art work was exhibited in local galleries and churches. The Kent County Road Commission also displayed his artwork, including the old wood bridge in Ada that was destroyed by fire in 1979. Vandercook began receive commissions from local historical societies to paint local landscapes and parks and sold his art at many local art festivals.

Wayne Vandercook passed away on December 16, 1995.

This Historical/Biographical note was written using materials from the collection itself, census records, Michigan Legislative Representative Biographies from the Library of Michigan, Western Michigan University Archives Campus Buildings Tour, and the Grand Rapids Press Obituary for Wayne Vandercook.

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Scope and Contents

This collection contains correspondence, photos, genealogical records, and artwork related to the Vandercook Family. The majority of papers relate to Wayne Vandercook, his grandfather Henry B. Vandercook, and his great uncle Michael C. Vandercook.

This collection would be helpful to researchers interested in the Vandercook family specifically, as well those researching middle class families of the early to mid twentieth century.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Immediate Source of Acquisition

Michael J. Cronk, accession numbers 2003.054, 2003.092 and Keith D. Vandercook, 2019.041

Processing Information

This collection came to the library primarily in two accessions from an antiques dealer. There was very little original order to the collection and the library staff created an arrangement schema of the materials by subject.

In 2023, processing staff made the decision to reprocess this collection to address clarity within the finding aid. After inspecting the materials during reprocessing, some negatives were identified as having long term preservation issues and were scanned and discarded.

An inventory of the original boxes and the mapping of new containers instances, as well as the original finding aid, and the scans of the negatives are documented and available to view upon request.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Grand Rapids (Mich.) -- History
- family papers
- Artists -- Michigan -- Grand Rapids
- Vandercook, Wayne L
- Vandercook
- Vandercook, Henry B

Collection Inventory

Series I. Biographical and Genealogical Information

Scope and Contents

Genealogical Charts; bible genealogies; primary records; vital records; news clippings; and biographical information relating to the Vandercook family. Earliest records from 1822

Subseries A. Genealogical Materials

Title/Description	Instances	
Bible Genealogy Extracted Sheets, 1822-1944	Box 1	Folder 1
Vandercook Bible Genealogy Copies and Compiled Genealogical Research, 1822-1995	Box 1	Folder 2
Ida Holton Vandercook Attendance Records, 1874	Box 1	Folder 23
Henry and Ida Marriage Materials, 1880-1905	Box 1	Folder 4
Vandercook Family Genealogy Charts, Illustrated Tree, Mary Earl Branch and Folded Blueprints, 1914	Box 10	Folder 1
Copies of Stylized Family Trees	Box 10	Folder 2
Deeds relating to Simon Vandercook, John D. Vandercook, Michael Vandercook, and Clarissa Vandercook, 1864-1874	Box 1	Folder 3

Annotated Copy of Davis, Turner and Carroll Plat Map , 1889	Box 10	Folder 7
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Subseries B. Individual Vandercook Family Member Materials

Scope and Contents

Clippings and other secondary resources about individual family members.

Title/Description	Instances	
Correspondence between M. Fillmore Vandercook and the Lyceum Organization, 1871	Box 2	Folder 54
J. Michael Vandercook Biography , 1882	Box 1	Folder 6
Lutie Vandercook, 1903-1923	Box 1	Folder 7
Faye Vandercook, 1948	Box 1	Folder 9
Hale Vandercook, 1949	Box 1	Folder 10
Keith Vandercook, 1954-1955	Box 1	Folder 11

Subseries C. Michael C. Vandercook Papers

Scope and Contents

Materials relating to Michael C. Vandercook, also known as M.C. or Mina C. Vandercook.

Title/Description	Instances	
Copy of The Subjection of Women by John Stuart Mill owned by Michael C. Vandercook and Annotated by Henry B. Vandercook, 1870	Box 2	Folder 55
Phrenological Chart and character of M.C. Vandercook by I.S. Palmer	Box 8	Folder 3
Journal of Songs and Poems written by Michael C. Vandercook, 1872-1876	Box 2	Folder 56
"Roll on Kalamazoo" Sheet Music by Michael C. Vandercook	Box 1	Folder 24
Handwritten Will and Funeral Instruction by Michael C. Vandercook, 1876	Box 2	Folder 57
The Poetical Works of M. C. Vandercook Written by Henry B. Vandercook, 1880	Box 8	Folder 2
In Memoriam Collection of Poems and Ballads by Michael C. Vandercook, 1882	Box 2	Folder 58

Subseries D. Henry B. Vandercook Papers

Scope and Contents

Materials relating to Henry B. Vandercook as a politician, his work for the Allegan Marble Works Company and Michigan Retail Monument Dealers Association, and Henry B. Vandercook Hall at Western Michigan University

Title/Description	Instances	
Henry Beecher Vandercook Fireman Certificate , 1889	Box 1	Folder 5
Michigan Retail Monument Dealers Association Stationary	Box 1	Folder 13
Henry B. Vandercook State Representative Reelection Materials, 1901-1904	Box 1	Folder 14
Correspondance to Henry B. Vandercook from D.B Waldo, Western State Teachers College, 1934	Box 1	Folder 15
Henry B. Vandercook Hall at Western Michigan University Information	Box 1	Folder 16

Subseries E. Wayne Vandercook Papers

Title/Description	Instances	
Wayne Vandercook School Materials	Box 1	Folder 17
	Box 1	Folder 20
Wayne Vandercook Golf Memorabilia	Box 1	Folder 21
Wayne Vandercook Funeral Service Book , 1995	Box 1	Folder 8

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Series II. Grand Rapids Monument Co.

Title/Description	Instances	
Draft typescript, perhaps for a newspaper article. 2 sheets.	Box 1	Folder 18
Grand Rapids Monument Co. letterhead with illustrations on the back	Box 1	Folder 19
Gravestone and Monument Lithographs and Blueprints	Drawer FF.IX.E	
Stone.This small item may be a token example of the stone carving done by the family at the monument works.	Box 7	
Marble Carving Mallet used by Henry Vandercook	Box 5	

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Series III. Photographs

Subseries A. Family Photo Albums

Title/Description	Instances	
Photo Album #1 "Art Album"--cover	Box 7	Object 1
Photo Album #2 "H.B. Vandercook ... Photographs"—cover.	Box 7	Object 2
Photo Album #3 Gold embossed & raised figure of a pirate on the cover.	Box 6	Object 1

Subseries B. Loose Photographs

Title/Description	Instances	
Vandercook Hall, October 19, 1940	Box 1	Folder 26
Loose Photographs from Scrapbook No. 1	Box 4	Folder 1-10, 54-57
Loose Photographs from Scrapbook No. 2	Box 4	Folder 11-15

Subseries C. Photos of the Extended Vandercook Family

Title/Description	Instances	
Photos of Katharine Vandercook nee Lewis	Box 1	Folder 25
Henry B. Vandercook & Ida Laura Jamison Vandercook. (2) Portrait photos by Porter of Allegan, MI	Box 1	Folder 28
Michael C. Vandercook (1 tintype)	Box 1	Folder 29
Littel Family. Log House Built in 1866-1867 at Marcellus, Michigan by Michael Vandercook and his son M. Fillmore Vandercook.	Box 1	Folder 30
Holton Family, 1878-1879	Box 1	Folder 34
Faye Seated with chair leaning against the wall, large cabinet radio in the corner	Box 1	Folder 35
Peace Rose. In memory of Todie (Mildred) Vandercook at the Rose Garden at Unity Church of Chicago	Box 1	Folder 36
Color snapshots showing homes the Vandercook family homes on Griggs street, and key family members, 1967-1971	Box 1	Folder 38
Keith and Betsy Vandercook Wedding Photos including Wayne and Todie	Box 1	Folder 14
Six color photographs including Keith Vandercook on his 85th birthday with Suzin Vandercook-Clauer, and a photograph of a letter to the student body and faculty of Western State Teachers College from Henry B. Vandercook.	Box 2	Folder 53

Wedding photos, LeClear-Dykhuisen	Box 8	Folder 9
Portrait of bride and bridesmaids taken by Maurice Carnes LaClaire , 1930	Box 10	Folder 11
Vandercook vacation and group family photos	Box 4	Folder 16-53

Subseries D. Photos of Wayne Vandercook

Title/Description	Instances	
Photographs of Wayne Vandercook with Todie Vandercook, The McNeal Family, and Keith Vandercook	Box 1	Folder 6-8
Wayne Vandercook F.C. Noble Studio Portrait	Box 8	Folder 6
Unidentified group of men, with Wayne second from right on second row. Photocopy only.	Box 8	Folder 11

Subseries E. Grand Rapids Monument Co. Photographs

Title/Description	Instances	
Monument company images	Box 1	Folder 3
Grand Rapids Monument Co. Building located at 1254 Division	Box 8	Folder 10

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Series IV. Wayne Vandercook Art

Scope and Contents

This series has art work created by Wayne Vandercook. There are several different art mediums including paintings, collages, and ink drawings.

Title/Description	Instances	
Printed Sketches by Wayne Vandercook	Box 1	Folder 22
Old Wooden Covered Bridge over Thornapple River at Ada, Mich. by Wayne Vandercook, June 1976	Box 9	Object 2
Silhouette of Keith Vandercook likely by Wayne Vandercook	Box 8	Folder 7
Fawnskin Valley at Big Bear Lake, San Bernardino Mountains / painted by Lutte, July 1930. To Wayne from Grandparents, The Vandercooks, July 6, 1931.	Box 9	Object 1
Oil Painting of Michael Vandercook by Wayne Vandercook , 1974	Box 10	Folder 8
Ink Drawing of Timoleauge Abbey by Wayne Vandercook , July 20, 1993	Box 10	Folder 9

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Series V. Scrapbooks & Clippings

Scope and Contents

This series is made up of scrapbooks from Wayne Vandercook and other family members. While the majority of the scrapbooks contain photographs, the amount of captioning and other memorabilia differentiates these materials from the family photo albums. Loose items and oversized items found the scrapbooks were put into folders and labeled for continuity. One scrapbook was in poor condition therefore the scrapbook was disassemble with the pages cleaned and placed into archival folders.

Subseries A. Loose Items from Scrapbooks

Title/Description	Instances	
Loose items from Scrapbook No. 1 pg. 1-70	Box 2	Folder 1-17
Oversized loose items from Scrapbook No. 1 pgs 14-15 and 26-27	Box 8	Folder 4-5
Oversized loose items from Scrapbook No. 1 pgs 38-39, 60-61, 64-65, 70	Box 10	Folder 3-6
Scrapbook No. 1. Spiral ringed, with blue printed cover.	Box 6	Object 2
Scrapbook No. 2 pg 2-76	Box 2	Folder 18-52
"My Memory Book" Scrapbook with childhood memorabilia collected by Wayne Vandercook	Box 3	Folder 1-37
Michael Cass (M.C.) Vandercook Scrapbook, 1852-1880	Box 8	Folder 1
Collected News Clippings about Reynold Weidnaar	Box 10	Folder 10

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