



Finding Aid for the Helena Pfanstiehl Van Duren papers collection 533

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Description is written in: English.

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Prepared by Jennifer Andrew

Grand Rapids History Center

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Summary Information

Repository:	Grand Rapids History Center
Title:	Helena Pfanstiehl Van Duren papers
ID:	collection 533
Date [inclusive]:	1879-1900
Physical Description:	.25 Linear Feet
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	This collection of photographs and papers originally belonged to Helena Pfanstiehl Van Duren (1861-1918), who taught school for thirty years, much of those while raising her four children on her own after the untimely death of her husband, Albertus Van Duren. Those researching teaching at the turn of the 20th century in West Michigan or the Pfanstiehl and Van Duren families themselves may find this collection of interest. It is believed this collection was donated by Cleo Wood, also a long time teacher in the Grand Rapids Public Schools, before her death in the 1980s.

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Biographical / Historical

Helena Frederika Pfanstiehl was born in 1861, in Holland, Michigan to Peter (1839-1913) and Cornelia Pfanstiehl (1841-1909), who had eight known children. In 1887 she married Albertus Van Duren (1857-1897). Together they had four children; Albertus Theodore (1888-1937), Helene (1890-1955), Charles (1893-1943), and Louise (1897-1963). The family relocated to Grand Rapids around 1890. After Albertus's death at age 40, Helena was left to raise them as a single mother. She taught sewing in the Grand Rapids Public Schools until her death in 1918. She is buried in Holland, Michigan.

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Content Description

The collection includes letters of recommendations for school teacher, Helena Pfanstiehl, related to her experience as a teacher in Holland, Michigan, along with portraits of the Pfanstiehl family and group photographs of school classes.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open and available for researcher use.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Donated by Cleo Wood; accession 2025.018

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Related Materials

Related Materials

Also see East Bridge Street School images in box 44.5 of the Grand Rapids Public Library photograph collection 054.

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Collection Inventory

Papers

Title/Description	Instances	
Story written by Helena Pfanstiehl, 1879	Box 1	Folder 1
Letters of recommendation for teacher, Helena Pfanstiehl, 1885	Box 1	Folder 2

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Photographs

Title/Description	Instances	
Nella Pfanstiehl	Box 1	Folder 3
Bessie Pfanstiehl, graduation	Box 1	Folder 3
Leiden Observatory at Leiden University, Netherlands	Box 1	Folder 4
Unidentified women, two portraits	Box 1	Folder 5
Class photo, Helene written on reverse	Box 1	Folder 6
Class photo, Theo written on reverse	Box 1	Folder 6
Class photo, Chas. Van Duren, 155 Coit Ave, Grand Rap. Mich. on reverse	Box 1	Folder 7

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