

# **Finding aid for the Christian Meyer (Meijer) postcards Collection 313**

**Finding aid prepared by R. Mayne**

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository</b>	Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department
<b>Creator</b>	Kuiper, Jurien
<b>Creator</b>	Meyer, Christian, b. 1887
<b>Title</b>	Christian Meyer (Meijer) postcards
<b>Date [inclusive]</b>	1912-1913
<b>Extent</b>	0.42 Linear feet Two boxes
<b>Language</b>	Dutch
<b>Abstract</b>	<p>The Christian Meyer (Meijer) postcards is a small collection of 65 postcards, most of which were sent in 1912/1913 by Chris Meyer, along with his traveling companion Jurien Kuiper, back to the Meijer family in Leiden, Netherlands. The postcards document the immigration of these two young men to the United States and to Grand Rapids, Michigan. They provide a glimpse into the life changing experience of immigrating to a new country and a new life. The cards depict scenes from Hoboken, New Jersey, where they landed, but mostly talk about Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo and Muskegon, Michigan. The postcards are written in Dutch; English translations are available.</p>

## Biographical/Historical note

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Christian (Meijer) Meyer was born in 1887 in the Netherlands. He came to America in 1912 with a man named Jurien Kuiper, whom he know quite well. They boarded an ocean liner in the Netherlands, which stopped first in Boulogne, France before arriving in Hoboken, New Jersey on February 8. After clearing customs, they pushed westward, settling in Grand Rapids, Michigan. They first settled at 335 Grand St. with an elderly lady, but were subsequently forced to move to 323 Goodrich St. when she fell ill during the early spring.

Their first year in Michigan was a rough one as the two tried to acclimate to conditions in the new area. They were intiailly surprised at how cold the weather was during the winter months and how rainy the spring was. Soon after their move to Goodrich St., the two parted ways following a dispute over how the rent was being shared. It is unclear whether Kuiper moved back to the Netherlands or stayed around the Grand Rapids area. The two of them had no further contact (Kuiper treats the situation calmly not harboring a brudge, while Meyer seems better over the situation, repeatedly stating how happy he is without Kuiper around).

During the summer months of 1912, Meyer took a long vacation to Chicago with the landlord and his wife. He sent many postcards depicting famous sights of the city back to the the Netherlands. When he returned home Meyer took a job at a paper factory in Kalamazoo, Michigan and was apparently laid off in the fall. In September of that year, he took a new job at a hearse factory back in Grand Rapids that his immigration sponsor got him, which he enjoyed very much. He attended an animal exhibition with his landlady, who raised chickens and dovers in the backyard on Goodrich, in the fall of 1912.

He stops sending postcards home to the Netherlands in January of 1913 and disappears from the record until 1915. That year Polk's Grand Rapids City Directory lists him as boarding at the Goodrich St. address and being employed as a painter. The next year he was employed as a painter for the Great Northern Ice Company. From 1917-1920 he lived at the same address and worked as a painter with H.E. Barkley Co. He disappears from the record again from 1912-1922, reappearing in 1923 as the owner of the Goodrich St. house and working as an auto painter. He married his wife Frances in 1926 and the two of them stayed in that house until 1927 when they moved to 915 Fairmount near the Heritage Hill neighborhood. Meyer changed jobs in 1913, moving to O.J. Arnold and Sons. The last clear record of him shows him as being single, still living at the Fairmount address. It is likely he died somewhere in Michigan in 1963.

Meyer's and Kuiper's postcards are an excellent record of immigrant's impressions of Grand Rapids and what their lives were like. The postcards chronicle their journey to America and the things they encountered here for the first year. They show lives that changed while living in American and a friendship that was torn apart under the pressure of assimilating to a new culture.

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## Scope and Contents note

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Thanks to the translation of the cards from the Dutch by Dr. George G. Harper, retired faculty member of the History Department, Calvin College, a brief glimpse of the progress of this life changing experience of immigration to a new country and new life, is captured here. The cards depict scenes from Hoboken, N.J., where they landed, but mostly of Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo and Muskegon, Michigan, where they lived and worked.

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## **Administrative Information**

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### **Publication Information**

Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department

### **Immediate Source of Acquisition note**

Purchase, accession number P200.008A, B, C.

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## **Controlled Access Headings**

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### **Genre(s)**

- letters (correspondence)
- postcards

### **Geographic Name(s)**

- Grand Rapids (Mich.) -- History

### **Subject(s)**

- Dutch Americans -- Michigan -- Grand Rapids
- Immigrants -- Michigan -- Grand Rapids -- History

## Series I. Postcards

## Collection Inventory

### Series I. Postcards January 27, 1912 to August 10, 1913

#### Scope and Contents note

The bulk of the postcards are arranged chronologically, with the dates provided in most cases by Chris Meyer. Where his date is not present, there is usually a postal mark, although these are often hard to read. Most of the cards were mailed from Grand Rapids. Some also carry a Leidens postal mark from their receipt in the Netherlands.

#### Dated cards

	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
1. Jan. 27, 1912. T.S.S. Rotterdam. Holland, American Line.	1	1
2. Feb. 7, 1912. Elysian Park, 10th & Hudson Sts., Hoboken, N.J.	1	1
3. Feb. 9, 1912. No. 151, Moonlight on Lake Michigan, Macatawa Park, Mich.	1	1
4. Feb. 14, 1912. 180. West Bridge Street, G.R.	1	1
5. March 3, 1912. 6906 Water Front at North Park, GR.	1	1
6. March 4, 1912. Thomas D. Gilbert Monument, Fulton Park, GR	1	2

## Dated cards

7. March 4, 1912 6929 Center Walk, Lincoln Park, GR	1	2
8. March 19 (29?), 1912. Animal Cages, John Ball Park.	1	2
9. March 24, 1912. 6941. Voulevard, John Ball Park, GR	1	2
10. March 26, 1912. 6905. Pavilion, North Park, GR	1	2
11. March 31, 1912. U.S.N. Group of Officers and Crew	1	2
12. March 31, 1912. No. 110. Dringin Grotte, John Ball Park, GR	1	2
13. April 2, 1912. Christian Church, Decatur, Mich.	1	3
14. April 11, 1912. 6928. Boat and Canoe Club, GR.	1	3
15. April 12, 1912. 6899. Water Front and Board Landing, Reeds Lake, GR.	1	3
16. April 16, 1912. No. 18, Jefferson St., Muskegon, Mich.	1	3
17. April 21, 1912. No. 120 Pearl Street., showing Post office, YMCA and Michigan Trust Buildings, GR.	1	3
18. May 1, 1912. Plowing Virgin Soil in the West	1	4
19. May 1, 1912. Plowing, the 20th Century Way	1	4

## Dated cards

20. May 12, 1912. Hotel Rickman (Fire-proof), Kalamazoo, Mich.	1	4
21. May 12, 1912. 6908, Stone Bridge, GR	1	4
22. May 13, 1912. 6921. Scene in John Ball Park, GR.	1	4
23. May 19/21, 1912. Weeping Willow, John Ball Park, GR. 6903.	1	4
24. May 27, 1912. State Street, Chicago, Il.	1	4
25. June 9, 1912. City Hall, as seen from Wisconsin 7 East Water Sts., Milwaukee.	1	5
26. June 22[?], 1912. P67252. John Ball Park Scene, GR	1	5
27. June 23, 1912. Scene near Lovers' Lane, Kalamazoo, Mich.	1	5
28. June 24, 1912. No. 158, Union Station, GR	1	5
29. July 1, 1912, 225. Michigan Soldiers Home.	1	6
30. July 1, 1912, 6942 Flower Beds, Soldiers' Home, GR	1	6
31. July 6, 1912 . 517 State Street North from Madison, Chicago.	1	6
32. July [6, 1912] 603. Masonic Temple, Chicago.	1	6



## Dated cards

33. July [14?], 1912 Duck Pone, Washington Park Chicago.	1	6
34. July 17, 1912. Washington Park, Chicago	1	6
35. July 20, 1912, Coliseum Building, Chicago.	1	6
36. July 28, 1912. 511. School of Law and Divinity, Univ. of Chicago.	1	6
37. Aug. 1, 1912. 552. Mrs. August Lehman's Home on Lake Park Ave., Chicago.	1	7
38. Aug. 1, 1912. Mrs. Potter Palmer's Home on Lake Shore Drive, Chicago.	1	7
39. Aug. 2, 1912, Main Entrance to State Asylum, Kalamazoo, Mich.	1	7
40. Aug. 8, 1912. 559. Manhattan Beach, Chicago.	1	7
41. Aug. 20, 1912. Male Dept., Michigan Insane Asylum, Kalamazoo, Mich.	1	7
42. Sept. 2, 1912, County Court House, Kalamazoo, Mich.	1	8
43. Sept. 3, 1912, Michigan Central depot, Kalamazoo, Mich.	1	8
44. Sept. 22, 1912. Hotel Rickman, Kalamazoo, Mich.	1	8
45. Sept. 22, 1912. Bronson Hospital, Kalamazoo, Mich.	1	8

## Undated

46. Sept. 29, 1912, Grand Circuit Meet, Exposition Park, Kalamazoo, Mich.	1	8
47. Oct. 13, 1912. Sigsbee Street School, GR.	1	9
48. Oct. 13, 1912, Gymnasium, adjoining High School, GR.	1	9
49. Nov. 17, 1912 Paper Mills, Kalamazoo, Mich.	1	9
50. Dec. 3, 1912 524. Dearborn Street Bridge, Chicago.	1	9
51. Dec. 22, 1912 Public Library, Kalamazoo, Mich.	1	9
52. Jan. 13, 1913. Butterworth Hospital, GR	1	10
53. Jan. 13, 1913. Dormitory, Soldiers' Home, GR	1	10
54. March 8, 1913. St. Adalberts Church, GR	1	10
55. Aug. 10, 1913. 201 City Market, GR.	1	10
<b>Undated</b>		
	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
56. 584. Lincoln Park, Chicago. Miss Meijer. Congratulations on her birthday?	1	11

**Partial Address, never mailed**

57. 219. North Park Pavilion from Bridge, GR. Berte Rie (Dear Rie) Oom Chris (Uncle Chris)	1	11
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58. Pantlind Hotel, Future Home of our Monroe Avenue Office, Kent Bank, GR. Berte Rie (Dear Rie) Oom Chris (Uncle Chris)	1	11
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**Partial Address, never mailed**

	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
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59. No. 149, View in John Ball Park, GR.	1	12
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60. 6919 Flower Beds, Lincoln Park, GR	1	12
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**No Message**

	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
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61. Grand Circuit Meet, Exposition park, Kalamazoo, Mich.	1	13
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62. West Michigan State Fair, GR.	1	13
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63. Central High School, GR	1	13
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64. -65. North Park Pavilion and Waterfront P67273 (2)	1	13
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**Series II. Historical Information and Translations from Dr. George Harper, 2002.**

	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
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**Series II. Historical Information and Translations from Dr. George Harper,...**

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Translations of postcard messages	2	1
Biographical information on Chris Meyer, with reference to Kuiper.	2	2