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# The Joint Archives Quarterly, Volume 08.04: Spring 1998

Jeanne Jacobson

Larry J. Wagenaar

Geoffrey D. Reynolds

Hope College, reynoldsg@hope.edu

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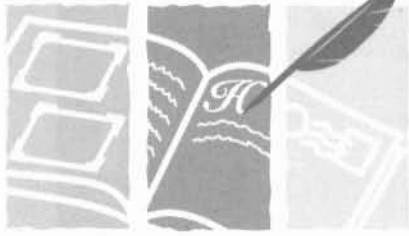
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# The Joint Archives *Quarterly*

Volume 8 Number 4

Spring 1998

## *Tulip Times*

by *Jeanne Jacobson*

*I scrap-booked these reports during several months.*

Mark Twain, writing about his travels, in 1881

Scrapbooks are treasuries of memories, lovingly collected to be returned to in later years by the compiler. A few are preserved and pored over by researchers who find history illuminated by a record of daily events. Scrapbooks are included in the treasures of the Joint Archives of Holland - among them, elaborate scrapbooks of memorabilia collected by Philip Phelps, Sr., the proud father of Hope College's first president, recording his son's career beginning with boyhood successes.



BARBARA TIMMER COLLECTION

*Showing off the new 1941 Dodge at Tulip Time*

### **Sunshine**

A far more recent scrapbook, not yet archived but generously shared by its owner, provides a personal history of college events, scrap-booked over her four years as a student at Hope. In the midst of Anchor clippings, notes, photographs and programs, there is a bright glimpse of Tulip Time in May of 1941. Sunshine beamed then on three young women: sophomore Barbara Dee Folensbee, seniors Marthene Van Dyke and Margaret Bilkert. Marthene and Margaret were close friends, and members of the college choir; Barbara had met them as a high school student, when they stayed at her home in New York while the choir was on a tour of several eastern states.

*(Continued on page 3)*

## From the Director

Spring is always a busy time at the Joint Archives, and this year is no exception. Tulip Time, Hope College's commencement, end of the year papers, and visiting scholars demand our attention.

Another main focus of our time is the continuing work to upgrade our public interface, allowing you to search the collection more easily. The Joint Archives of Holland World Wide Web page is one of the best in the archival field, allowing you to search abstracts of all our processed collections, and inventories of photographic, biographical, topical, church, and genealogical files. We also have the *Anchor* and *News From Hope College* indexes on file.

Beginning this month we are adding a new, more comprehensive layer to our web page. You will soon be able to move from the abstract paragraph which describes a collection to the detailed "collection register" which is a full inventory of a particular collection. For example, currently the Albertus C. Van Raalte materials are described in one paragraph in the Guide to the Collections on our webpage. Soon, you will be able to survey all of the 5.00 linear feet that are contained in the collection - down to the folder level. You will get a brief history and a description of the collection's strengths and weaknesses too!

Searches on the Archives webpage will maximize your time when visiting and even help you determine if a trip to the Joint Archives would be worthwhile.

Come visit us and see the work as it evolves. We will soon be adding a new, graphically driven entry page along with our more detailed finding aids. We also have a Holland History Timeline.

If you need to research in Holland area history, the Dutch American experience, the history of Hope College or Western Seminary, or are just interested in the past, please stop by. Our web address is [www.hope.edu/jointarchives](http://www.hope.edu/jointarchives).

I hope you enjoy this edition of the *Quarterly*. Please feel free to contact me with your comments or suggestions.

Larry J. Wagenaar



### Archives Director Interviews President Ford

On April 3, Joint Archives director Larry Wagenaar conducted an oral history interview with former President Gerald R. Ford in his California office near Palm Springs.

"This oral history opportunity emerged from the cooperative work we are doing with the Amway Corporation and the recently completed Sesquicentennial Oral History Project," commented Wagenaar. "I was able to explore with President Ford his long term relationship with western Michigan, early years representing the area (which at one time included Holland where he maintained a cottage), and his friendships with Richard De Vos and Jay Van Andel."

The Joint Archives and Wagenaar are assisting Amway in the formation of a Corporate Archives, while at the same time placing selective materials documenting the formation and growth of this major American corporation in the Hope College collection at the Joint Archives.

"While I've conducted many oral history interviews, this one was a unique opportunity to speak with someone who has been a major player on the world stage. He has many fond memories of his home in western Michigan, his many friends here, and his ties over the years to the community of Holland."

Oral history interviews are some of the best historical tools we have to gain first hand memories and impressions. More than 250 interviews are a part of the Joint Archives' collections.

## New World Wide Web Address

The Joint Archives has introduced a revised address for its World Wide Web page. The new, easier to remember web location is [www.hope.edu/jointarchives](http://www.hope.edu/jointarchives). The staff felt this was a more intuitive address for electronic visitors to use. The old address ([www.hope.edu/resources/arc](http://www.hope.edu/resources/arc)) will continue to work as well.

Other upgrades coming to the Joint Archives of Holland webpage are aimed at providing enhanced access to our finding aids which help you locate archival materials to use in your research.

Over the next few months we will be adding our collection registers to the system. Electronic visitors will click from our paragraph abstracts right into the detailed inventory of a particular collection. The entire system employs an easy to use keyword search engine allowing nearly every visitor to find collections that they will want to see at the archives.

The Archives has also added a Holland History Timeline which sketches the history of the community in which the Joint Archives is located. Illustrated timelines of Hope College, the Reformed Church in America, and Western Seminary are also planned.

### *Tulip Times* (continued from page 1)

As Barbara Folensbee Timmer recalls, she and her friends participated in a pre-Tulip Time event which was also a publicity stunt devised to advertise the 1941 Dodge car. Scrap-booked photographs show the three young women, dressed in Dutch costume. In one picture they are accepting a pot of tulips from Henry Geerlings, Mayor of Holland.<sup>1</sup> In another, after a car trip across the state in the newest model Dodge, they are shown presenting the tulips to the mayor of Detroit. "We stayed at the then-famous Book-Cadillac Hotel," Barbara wrote later, annotating the photographs, "and attended a Tigers baseball game."

### Shadow

*It's tulip time in Holland -  
The blossoms, row by row,  
Embroider quiet acres  
Where peace and beauty grow;  
Petals which never bloomed in hate  
Are trampled by a foe.*

*It's tulip time in Holland -  
The shadowed sunlight falls  
On gardens of the lowland towns,  
On Rotterdam's sea walls;  
As guns across the Zuyder Zee  
Deafen the sea gulls' calls...<sup>2</sup>*

In the city of Holland, the thirteenth annual Tulip Time festival opened on Saturday, May 17. Masses of tulips bloomed; costumed high school students performed authentic Dutch dances. Hollywood stars, including actor Pat O'Brien (*Knute Rockne: All American*, 1941; *Angels with Dirty Faces*, 1938; *The Front Page*, 1931) and French expatriate actress Simone Simon (*La Bête Humaine*, 1938), swept into the city with their entourages, to entertain thousands of visitors attending the festival and to reach national audiences via radio.



BARBARA TIMMER COLLECTION

*Presenting tulips in Detroit, 1941*

America was at peace, but Europe was at war. In 1940, after conquests in the east, Hitler's armies invaded and overran the Netherlands. Queen Wilhelmina and the royal family escaped to Canada to maintain a government in exile.

In June of 1941, during the celebration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of Hope College, Crown Princess Juliana was awarded an honorary degree by President Wynand Wichers. Many American institutions had sought to honor her; after deliberation, the royal family chose three: "an outstanding Dutch college, ...a representative women's college, and ...a representative university in the United States. Thus it came about that the Princess honored Hope, Mt. Holyoke, and Princeton with her presence."<sup>3</sup> In her remarks, the princess spoke of the shadowed present, and her hopes for the future.

*"I have been received by you and your countrymen with the greatest kindness and hospitality, for which no words of mine can ever express my gratitude. In Europe the foundations of society are crumbling and the most brutal conqueror the world has known is trying to force upon its nations a modern slavery. The present habitation and life are threatened but a new world will arise, and, I may say this in the darkness of the hour, a permanent union of goodwill among nations shall be the outcome of the present struggle.*

*"I speak as a friend from Holland in Holland, and I would like to end these few words in my own language which is so familiar to you. Lang leve and bloie Hope College!"<sup>4</sup>*

Her visit was the subject of an extensive article in the Reformed Church's *Intelligencer-Leader* (successor to the *Christian Intelligencer*, source of many records of Albertus Van Raalte's emigration to America and the early days of the Holland Colony), which devoted a special issue to Hope's seventy-fifth anniversary. There Edgar Romig wrote movingly of the European war, and of hopes for an honorable and peaceful future:

*...when the red chronicle of this present struggle shall have come to its point of climax, and when the world again knows something of hope; when tyranny shall have been brought to an end, and the days of armistice are at hand, there will be some few rulers left qualified to take their part with the statesmen in the shaping of a just and durable peace. Let us hope that the good Queen Wilhelmina will be among them; for no one is more competent for such tasks. But we know, too, that her worthy daughter has the gifts qualifying her to take her place in such councils. The character, the power, the leadership of the House of Orange have their continuance in the person of the gracious lady whom Hope College is privileged to honor.<sup>5</sup>*

In the spring of 1941, clouds were gathering over Holland and all of the United States. Before the end of the year, the country was at war with Germany and Japan. Young men in Holland and throughout the nation joined the armed forces. The country's resources and attention no longer were given to festivity. There was no Tulip Time in 1942, and as the long war continued, so did the years in which it was acknowledged only locally, with small flower shows arranged during the days the festival would have been held.

## Sunshine

*"Het is van 't jaar weer Tulpenfeest van de 15de tot en met de 18de Mei! Wij verwachten U." <sup>6</sup>*

On Wednesday, August 15, 1945, headlines were blazoned across the *Holland Sentinel's* front page: "Holiday, Parade in Holland Today. PEACE! PEACE!" In May, 1946, Holland celebrated Tulip Time for the first time since 1941.

Organizing the festival after a lapse of four years, Willard C. Wichers faced a daunting task. Foremost among his problems was a shortage of the essential element: tulips. Through the war years, tulips had not been planted in the city of Holland, and bulbs could no longer be imported from the Netherlands; during their years of deprivation, tulip bulbs had been used for food. Lanes and lanes of tulips which had greeted visitors in the years before the war could not quickly be restored. Wichers and his committee settled for beautiful massed plantings placed strategically throughout the city, and saw to it that eight miles of lanes were replanted to bloom in time for the Tulip Time festival in the following year.



*Willard Wichers and Clarissa Poppen Yager*

After flowers, the food, transportation, and housing for visitors were the next necessities. It is difficult today to imagine the vexations Wichers encountered. There was a shortage of flour, and for a time Holland's bakeries feared they would be unable to produce enough bread. Railroad travel was curtailed because of a coal strike. Worst of all, wartime housing regulations were still in force, and Holland was classified as a "defense area." This meant that in order for Holland citizens to open their homes to guests, it would be necessary for them to fill out complicated forms and submit them for approval. Moreover, the maximum charge for a room would be \$1.50. "Wichers appealed earnestly, urgently, and then

frantically," *The Grand Rapids Herald* reported, "to have this ceiling moderately raised during the Festival."

The incongruity of the situation was pointed out. The OPA [Office of Price Administration] edict, Wichers said, would send Festival guests 10, 15, 20 and even 30 miles from Holland into towns outside the "defense area" where they would have to pay rates of from \$2.50 to \$5.00 and upwards. "If OPA is really trying to guard the interests of the visiting public, its officials should be able to discern." Wichers said, "that this edict is accomplishing quite the opposite purpose."<sup>7</sup>

"Wizard Wichers," the newspaper called him. And the Festival was held, with new events added to traditional pageantry. A sports contest, sponsored by the Holland Horsemen's Association, was introduced in this year, with riders in Dutch Costume demonstrating "feats performed by horsemen in the Netherlands"<sup>8</sup> such as Sparring the Ring. Friday was Veteran's Day, and there were parades and a memorial service for the Holland men who died in four wars: the Civil War, Spanish-American War, and World Wars I and II.

Norman Timmer, Hope College class of 1938, was one of those veterans of the war who chose to continue a military career. He had enlisted in the Air Force shortly after America entered the war. Early in 1942, while he was home for a visit, his sister decided he should be introduced to her friend and classmate Barbara. As he watched her come down the staircase in Voorhees Hall, he said, "That's the girl I'm going to marry" - a prophecy fulfilled shortly after Barbara's graduation. In June of 1980 Colonel and Mrs. Timmer were honored with Distinguished Alumni Awards. While Barbara's response was musical ("Thanks for the Memories"), Norm paid tribute to his family and to Hope, commenting "I have learned that a Hope woman makes the perfect wife."<sup>9</sup>

In May this year, the Dutch costumes will be similar to those Barbara Folensbee and her friends wore in 1941. Holland will be abloom and ablaze with tulips; visitors will "ooh!" and "aah!" As the friend Willard Wichers invited to Tulip Time in 1946 wrote, "when saintly Dr. Van Raalet and his followers arrived in Michigan a century ago they brought with them the deep conviction that through love of God and the fellowship of man there is happiness and good, and they also brought with them the Hollander's willingness to work hard and long and honestly."<sup>10</sup>

Barbara's scrapbook, its pages filled many years ago, evokes sunshine and shadow memories. The sunshine is more enduring.



*Klompen dancers stage a pose, 1944*

HOLLAND MUSEUM COLLECTION-JOINT ARCHIVES

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#### Endnotes

1. Henry Geerlings had an interesting career, serving one term as Holland's mayor from 1904-1906, then elected and reelected to serve from 1936-1944. Following his service as mayor, at the age of 76 he ran successfully for election to the Michigan State House of Representatives, where he served until he was 85, at which time he quit to campaign, successfully, for his son Clyde (Hope, class of 1927) who was elected to the Michigan State Senate in a special election in 1951 and served for six more terms.
2. Excerpt from a poem by Adin Ballou, quoted in Romig, page 6.
3. Ross, page 3.
4. "May Hope College long endure and prosper!"
5. Romig, pages 6 and 26.
6. "Tulip Time again this year, May 13 through May 18. We are expecting you." *The Old AAA Traveler...*, p. 18. The quotation is a message sent by Willard Wichers to the author of the article.
7. Clapp, "Tulip Time in Holland Starts"
8. "Tulip Time in Holland (Michigan)..." pages 5-6.
9. "News from Hope College"
10. *The Old AAA Traveler...*, p. 25.

## From the Collections Archivist

A brief description of three new collections ready for use by our researchers:

**Simon L. Sprietsema (T88-0179.1)**  
0.50 linear ft.

An immigrant from the province of Friesland, the Netherlands, Simon Sprietsema arrived in Holland, Michigan, on July 4, 1857. Sprietsma was elected first ward Alderman for the City of Holland on April 2, 1877, and operated a shoe store in Holland. Collection includes an invitation (handwritten) to the wedding of A. C. Van Raalte's daughter to G. Keppel, correspondence, family documents, photographs and various legal documents.

**John Vennema, Sr. (H89-1041)**  
0.25 linear ft.

Papers date from 1901-1961. Vennema attended Hope Preparatory School (1888-1889) and Hope College (1889-1891). He was appointed non-career consul-general of the Netherlands in Chicago from 1914-1940. He was honored with a special convocation by Hope College in 1928 and received an honorary L.L.D. in 1930. He also was a lawyer and pharmacist in the Chicago, Illinois, and Menominee, Michigan, areas. Collection contains biographical material, international and domestic correspondence, speeches given, clippings and programs of events attended by and given in honor of Vennema, and photographs of his international and professional associates.

**Christ Community Church, Peoria, Illinois**  
(W94-1188) 8.00 linear ft.

The records of Christ Community Church of Peoria, Illinois, include records of the consistory, elders meetings, Ladies Aid, Sunday School, Euodia Club, Fidelis Club, Womens Guild, Mission Band, and the Young Peoples Club, among others. It covers the time period from 1871, the start of the church, to 1994, which marks the end. Several documents from the earlier years are in German and/or Dutch.

Geoffrey D. Reynolds



*Helen Baer Joins Summer Staff*

## Vander Jagt Papers Project Begins

Helen Baer, an archives graduate student in the Master of Library and Information Science program at the University of Texas, will be joining the Joint Archives of Holland summer staff on May 18. Ms. Baer will be working on the Guy A. Vander Jagt Papers project aimed at processing and making available the papers of this long term congressman who represented western Michigan.

Former Congressman Vander Jagt, a 1953 graduate of Hope College, gave his congressional papers to the Hope College Collection at the Joint Archives in 1992. Since that time, Archives staff have been able to complete a preliminary inventory of this 1,000 linear foot collection, the first step in preparing for professional organization of the collection.

In addition to her graduate studies, Baer comes to us with valuable archival processing experience gained at the Robert E. Kennedy Library at California Polytechnic University and working with the City of San Luis Obispo in California. She holds a B.S. in Political Science from California Polytechnic.

Baer will be working with the Vander Jagt collection until the end of August. The full collection is expected to be processed and opened to the public by the end of the summer 2000.

## Pre-Synod Workshop Planned

Elton Bruins, Larry Wagenaar, and a number of guests will be conducting a special pre-Synod workshop entitled, "Why Holland? The Influence of Western Michigan on the RCA" for delegates attending the 1998 General Synod of the Reformed Church in America.

The focus of the workshop is to explore the relationship between the Classis of Holland and the evolution of RCA church in the "West." In many ways, this group of churches is the "mother classis," serving as progenitor to other churches and classis as far away as California.

Synod delegates will be treated to a unique program that blends Dr. Bruins' historical commentary with first person readings and discussion of rare archival materials that tell the story of the denomination's past in the midwest and western United States.

### New Brochure Released

A new brochure describing the Joint Archives is now available. Unlike our old "general" brochure, this edition better describes the operation of the Archives, the member institutions which are a part of the Joint Archives, the foci of its collections, how to donate materials, and our hours and services.



## Tulip Time Programs

The Joint Archives of Holland will again be presenting the *Story of Holland* at the Knickerbocker Theatre during Tulip Time. This program, professionally narrated by Tom Beyer, tells the tale of Holland's past in about 20 minutes using images from the Archives' collection. The show runs every half hour throughout Tulip Time from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., except Sunday. *The Story of Holland* closes Saturday, May 16 at 1 p.m. for the Saturday parade. No reservations are required.

Joint Archives director Larry Wagenaar will be discussing the movement of Dutch immigrants to western Michigan and the struggles of these pioneers in the newly revised breakfast program, *A Taste of Holland*, held in the Maas Center. Reservations can be made by calling the Tulip Time office at 396-4221.

## Van Raalte Statue/Centennial Park Book

- Special Price -

A new book chronicles the 75-year dream of installing a monumental statue in honor of Holland's founder, the Rev. Albertus C. Van Raalte.

The book, *A Dream Fulfilled: The Van Raalte Sculpture in Centennial Park*, was released in conjunction with last fall's visit of Princess Margriet of the Netherlands and her husband, Pieter van Vollenhoven.

The 122-page monograph was written by Jacob E. Nyenhuis and Jeanne M. Jacobson of the Hope College faculty. It includes background on the project, the story of the casting of the statue, a brief biography of Van Raalte, and historical information concerning Centennial Park.



"So many people have asked for information about the sculpture that it seemed to us important to make available added resources for the community to consult and enjoy," said Nyenhuis.

Copies of *A Dream Fulfilled: The Van Raalte Sculpture in Centennial Park* are available at the Joint Archives of Holland for \$15.95 plus \$3.00 for postage and handling.

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Upcoming Event at the Holland Museum:

**Caring for Photos & Paper**  
Thursday, May 28 - 7:00 p.m.

Archivists Larry Wagenaar and Geoffrey Reynolds will give practical advice on how to best care for old family photos and documents. Admission \$3.00. For more information call the Holland Museum at 616-392-9084.

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## Archives Celebrates Project

On January 27, the Joint Archives celebrated the official conclusion of the Sesquicentennial Oral History Project *150 Stories for 150 Years* by hosting a reception for interviewers, interviewees, transcribers, and staff who helped make the program a success. Because of their efforts, the Archives exceeded expectations by completing nearly 170 interviews.

The reception reflected the diversity of those who attended. "It was an honor to be a part of the project," commented Buddhist monk Khamphan Pradith, one of some 125 people who attended the event.

Hope College Provost Jacob E. Nyenhuis, City Councilman Robert Vande Vusse, Sesquicentennial Director Lisa Soeters, and Joint Archives Director Larry Wagenaar offered their remarks. "This project will be a major resource for information on the late 20th century of the Holland area," remarked Provost Nyenhuis. "These transcripts, preserved at the Joint Archives, will tell the story of our time to many future generations."

Those who were a part of the project but not able to attend are welcome to stop by the Joint Archives and pick up a commemorative coffee mug while supplies last.



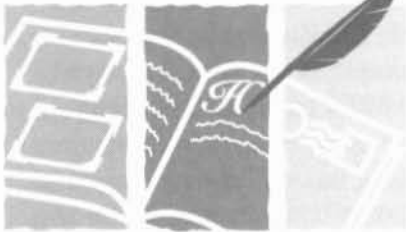
*Khamphan Pradith speaks with  
Bob Vande Vusse and Larry Wagenaar*

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The Joint Archives of Holland



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Hope College | Holland Historical Trust | Western Theological Seminary

P.O. Box 9000 | Hope College | Holland, MI 49422-9000

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