

Winter 1996

# The Joint Archives Quarterly, Volume 07.01: Winter 1996

Jeanne Jacobson

Larry J. Wagenaar

Jessica Owens

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# The Joint Archives Quarterly

Volume 7 Numbers 1 & 2

Winter/Spring 1996

## Remembering The Early Days

By Dr. Jeanne Jacobson

Among the treasures of the Joint Archives are copies of Hope College's first alumni publication, a small gray-covered booklet, the *Hope College Remembrancer*, published in 1867 to commemorate the inauguration of Hope's first president and the College's first commencement. An introductory Historical Summary sets these events in context: the establishment of a Latin class and general school in 1851 which became the Holland Academy in 1855, from among whose graduates the first class of Hope College was formed in 1862.

*Successive classes were added until in 1865, the four classes were complete; and the endowment work had begun and was favorably progressing.*

*The first catalogue and circular was issued in December 1865 - the College was incorporated May 14th, 1866 - the first President was inaugurated July 12th, 1866 - and the first class was graduated July 17th, 1866.*

The founders of Hope College, we see, were prudent. Far from proclaiming the founding of a new institution and advertising it at its very beginning, four years passed while the first freshmen became sophomores, juniors, and finally seniors, before an informational catalog was prepared. Only after the College had proved itself as a college was Dr. Phelps, who had led the Holland Academy and then the College,

*(Continued on page 3)*



*The Seal of Hope College, 1867*

### Joint Archives Announces Extended Hours

Since Tuesday, January 2, 1996, the Joint Archives of Holland has been open in the morning for general research. The new hours are 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Previously, the Joint Archives was open only in the afternoons, with appointments required in the morning.

"We found an increasing need to service researchers in the morning," said Director Larry Wagenaar. "Our usage has increased dramatically in recent years with everyone from business people to high school students using the unique historical materials. Usage of the collections has tripled since the archives opened nearly eight years ago, and the collection of historical materials has more than doubled.

## From the Director

It seems as if January through March can be some of the longest months with snow piling up, chilling cold temperatures, and growing cabin fever as we wait for spring to begin. Here at the Joint Archives these months have been exciting - and the time seems to have flown by.

You will notice that we now have new hours of operation. With additional staffing we have been able to open in the morning for research and our new hours are 9-5 Monday-Friday. As a result of this change we have seen a remarkable increase in the number of patrons who are visiting the Joint Archives and using the collections for research. In January - the first month of our new hours - nearly 130 patrons visited the Archives. That is a 30% increase in usage from our average in 1995!

One of our regular researchers, who is also a fellow with the A. C. Van Raalte Institute for Historical Studies here at Hope, has agreed to contribute to this issue. Dr. Jeanne Jacobson is a recently retired faculty member from Western Michigan University and is a familiar face on the Hope campus. We are excited to feature her article on the *Remembrancer* in this issue of the *Joint Archives Quarterly*.

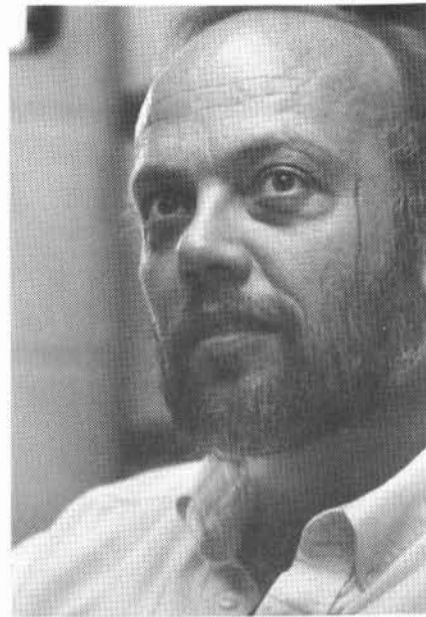
Also in this issue you will read about the exciting work we have been doing at city hall. As various departments get ready to move in anticipation of the new renovations to city hall, we have been working to ensure that critical historical records are preserved. They will be housed at the Joint Archives of Holland in the Holland Historical Trust Collection and will be readily available for public research.

Finally, I would draw your attention to the Spring Speaker Program, slated for April 11. Dr. James Schaap, an award winning storyteller, will share with us a tale about the Phoenix disaster in which a ship carrying Dutch immigrants burned and sank in Lake Michigan. It is sure to be a fascinating evening.

If you have questions or comments about the *Quarterly* or the Joint Archives of Holland please do not hesitate to call us as (616) 395-7798.

Larry J. Wagenaar

## Spring Speaker Program '96



Dr. James C. Schaap

### The Phoenix Disaster

The Joint Archives of Holland's 8th Annual Spring Speaker program will feature Dr. James Calvin Schaap of Dordt College. Dr. Schaap's presentation will focus on the burning of the steamer *Phoenix* -- the largest Great Lakes disaster of the 19th century.

Schaap, Professor of English at Dordt College since 1982, received his Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee. He has authored many novels, collections of short stories, and meditations including *Signs of Promise and Other Stories*, *Home Free*, *Still Life*, *Things We Couldn't Say*, and a short story on the Phoenix disaster entitled *The Heritage of These Many Years*.

The devastating fire and frigid waters of Lake Michigan claimed the lives of over 250 people (the majority of which were Dutch immigrants) who drowned off the shores of Sheboygan, Wisconsin. The tragedy sent shock waves through the Dutch settlements in Holland, Michigan, and Pella, Iowa, and had such far ranging effects as to temporarily slow the influx of immigrants from the Netherlands.

For those wishing to expand their knowledge of this legendary disaster before Dr. Schaap's presentation, the Joint Archives has several resources avail-

(continued on page 3)



Lori Trethewey

### Joining the Archives Staff...

In this issue of the *Joint Archives Quarterly* we are pleased to introduce you to Lori Trethewey (pronounced Tre-THU-y) as our new secretary/receptionist. As you come to use our materials at the Archives or call us on the phone, Lori will be the first staff member that you encounter. She comes to us from the president's office here at Hope College where she worked for two years. Prior to that time Lori was with Calvary Reformed Church. We are excited to have Lori on the staff; she brings a high level of skill and professionalism to this new position.

### *Disaster* (continued from page 2)

able. Martin Dekker's unpublished manuscript "Trial by Fire: The Story of the Phoenix," includes rich detail of the events surrounding the sinking of the steamer. A recently acquired pamphlet written by descendants of the Phoenix survivors' includes eye witness accounts of the incident, William O. VanEyck's "Story of Propellor Phoenix," a listing of passengers and a bibliography.

The program will be held in Winants Auditorium in Graves Hall, across from Van Wylen Library, at 7:30 p.m., on Thursday, April 11. Admission is free and all are invited to attend. A reception will be held in the Archives reading room following the presentation.

### **Remembrancer** (continued from p. 1)

inaugurated as president and the inaugural ceremonies preceded by only five days the commencement ceremonies in which all eight members of the first graduating class took active roles.

The *Hope College Remembrancer* is, in fact, two publications collected in a single booklet: the Inaugural Number and the First Commencement Number. Wynand Wichers, in his history in *A Century of Hope*, notes that only a single issue of the *Remembrancer* was published; clearly, however, President Phelps had intended it to be ongoing. An introductory page begins with an allusion to different aspects and purposes of memory: "The *Hope College Remembrancer* is intended, as its name denotes, partly for the graduates of Hope College, as a *memorial* of their student days, and partly for other friends of the Institution as an occasional *reminder* of its work and wants." Noting that the *Remembrancer* is meant to be a memento of their college years to be given to graduates, Dr. Phelps foresaw that larger graduation classes might necessitate a departure from this issue in which the commencement addresses of each of the graduates are printed in full. "[A]ny considerable increase of volume here might perhaps so far modify the theory of the First Commencement Number, as to require a selection for honorary insertion..." And the president had other intentions for the publication as well:

*But to others who may be interested in the Institution, the Remembrancer expects to make occasional visits, in order to strengthen the bonds that unite them; and should it by chance meet strangers, it trusts that it will receive, not criticism, but sympathy. It solicits the prayers and liberalities of all upon whose affection and generosity it may be supposed to have any proper claim.*

*Hope College is doing a work which, she has every reason to believe, is the work of the Lord;*

(continued on page 4)



**Remembrancer** (continued from page 3)

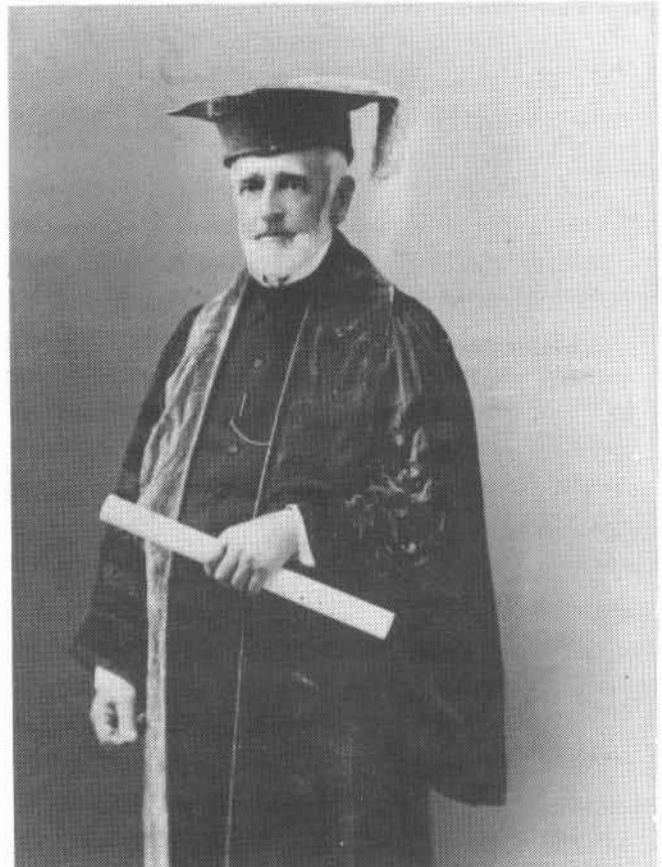
*and to her influences the language of the prophet may in some degree be literally adapted: "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose." Feeling this, she does not hesitate to ask and receive, even as she needs, the free-will offerings of the poor and the larger gifts of the rich. At least, she seeks to be cherished by those who would continually extend the blessings of Christian education."*

The necessity of support for the College by both religious leaders and secular donors is demonstrated in the Inaugural Number, most respectfully dedicated "to Thomas De Witt, D.D., *clarum et venerabile nomen*," and the First Commencement Number, most gratefully dedicated "to Samuel B. Schieffelin, Esq., whose sympathies and liberalities have been enlisted in behalf of Hope College, from its germinal to its present position."

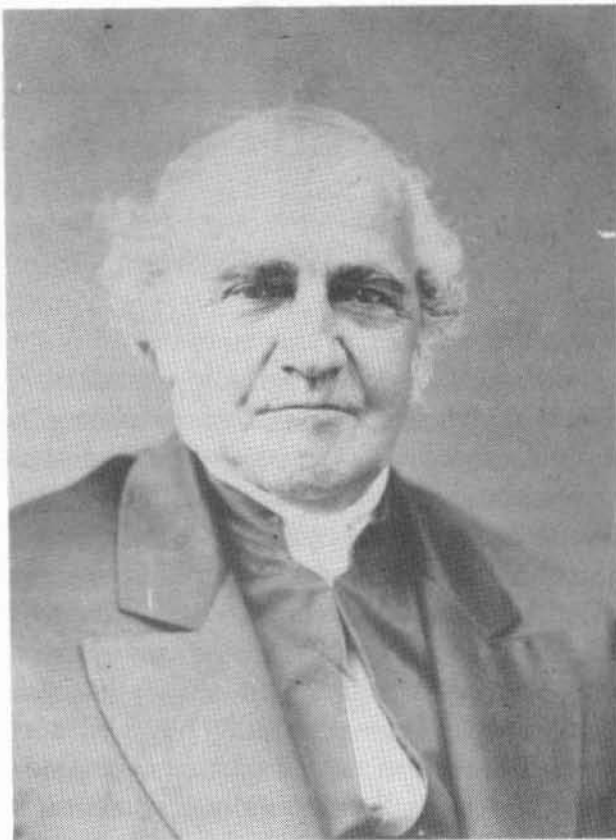
Wichers' *A Century of Hope*, and Jacob van Hinte's *Netherlanders in America* give further information about these men. De Witt and Schieffelin were both residents of New York, where the Reverend De Witt was notable for welcoming and helping emigrants from the Netherlands to the United States. It was he who met Albertus Van Raalte, his family and their companions, when they arrived in this country after a 55 day voyage. When groups of emigrants led by Jan Steketee and Jannes Van De Luyster traveled to New York on separate ships, "they could not come to an agreement [before leaving] about where to settle or whom to join. Therefore they made an arrangement that the leader of the first ship to arrive in New York would have to choose and leave a message behind with Dr. Thomas De Witt in New York" (Van Hinte, p. 146). Schieffelin, a business leader, entrepreneur and church elder, is described by Van Hinte as "an admirer of education in the Van Raalte colony." He was an early and generous supporter of Hope College, contributing \$7000 which was the basis for a permanent operating fund.

The *Christian Intelligencer* was a publication of the Reformed Church in America from 1830 to 1933. An excerpt from that newspaper included in the *Remembrancer* details the many events of July 12-17. Thursday was the inauguration. On Friday there were speeches, including "the delivery of original addresses by the members of the junior, sophomore and freshman classes of the College, with the recitation of selected pieces by members of the preparatory classes." In intervals between speeches and recitations, the College choir sang. On Saturday there was, by invitation, "an excursion to the mouth of the harbor." Sunday morning, the Reverend M. S. Hutton and the Reverend I. N. Wyckoff, who had given the inaugural oration and charge to the new president, preached at, respectively, Second Reformed Church of Holland and First Reformed Church of Grand Rapids. In the evening, President Phelps preached the baccalaureate sermon in the First Reformed Church of Holland on a text from Job, "Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil, is understanding."

(continued on page 5)



Dr. Philip Phelps



Western Seminary Collection of the Joint Archives of Holland

The Rev. Cornelis Van Der Meulen

**Remembrancer** (continued from page 4)

Tuesday evening, July 17, graduation ceremonies were held in the College gymnasium. (Photographs of the graduates appear on page 71 of Wynant Wichers' book, *A Century of Hope*.) The *Christian Remembrancer* reports that "commencement music was instrumental, and chiefly rendered by some of the graduating class. The students had very tastefully decorated the building - one of the features being a chandelier of ninety brilliant kerosene burners so arranged as to form in large letters the word HOPE." The *Remembrancer* includes the music and the text with its allusions annotated, of the Commencement Ode, with words by Dr. Phelps and music by William B. Gilmore, tutor in Music at Hope College.

Of the eight orations, six were given in English. The salutatory address was delivered in Latin, and one oration - "De Pen is Magtiger dan het Zwaard" - was given in Dutch. President Phelps, the unacknowledged editor of the *Remembrancer*, is careful to note that inauguration ceremonies included "the singing of an English hymn and a Hollandish psalm," and that "by invitation of the President elect, Rev. Cornelis Van Der Meulen of Grand Rapids, Mich., one of the oldest of

the Hollandish pastors and leaders, opened the exercises with prayer in the Hollandish language."

The College's position that English would be the primary language accorded with Albertus Van Raalte's earlier urging that the colonists should learn and speak English. That this position remained controversial is evidenced by a portion of Dr. Phelps's inaugural address:

*...if our church has such traditional regard for education, why have New England influence and New England reputation extended throughout this continent, while the Dutch progress has been kept within so narrow limits? Simply or chiefly because the Hollanders refused to use the English language until it was a century too late to retrieve their almost fatal mistake! What! is the English language so much better than the Hollandish? No, but whatever God chooses for anything is best!*

This booklet is all there is, or will be, of *The Remembrancer*. It is fortunate that there are multiple copies, for the booklets are growing old. Through the pressure of close contact over nearly 130 years, the text of the final page has been copied, in reverse, onto the inner cover. The plain gray paper of the covers is beginning to crumble. Yet the modestly prepared booklet remains a treasurehouse of interest, information and inspiration.

The Joint Archives is located on the lower level of the Van Wylen Library at 10th St. and College Ave.

**New Hours**

9-5 p.m.  
Monday - Friday



Ruth Keppel, c. 1909

Holland Historical Trust Collection of the Joint Archives of Holland

## Open for Research

### Keppel Family Papers

The personal papers of the Keppel family, 1862-1993, are now fully processed and open for research. Descendants of early Holland settler Teunis Keppel, Albert and Kate DeVries Keppel raised five daughters: Evelyn, Ruth, Lois, Kathryn, and Vera Jane. The Keppels gave much to the Holland community, including a forest preserve given to the Holland Public Schools in 1933.

The house Albert Keppel built for his family at 85 E. 10th St. was given to Hope College in 1986 by his daughter Ruth. A former violinist, Ruth Keppel began writing after a health problem ended her musical career. Many of Ruth's stories of Holland's early days, including her history of the early Dutch settlers, *Trees to Tulips*, are now preserved at the Archives. She and her mother were the historians of the family and created and preserved many scrapbooks which chronicle the lives of their families as well as the Holland community.

## New Accessions

### City Records

With city offices moving from city hall to temporary office space while the historic government building is renovated to fit the needs of city government in the 1990s, it seemed a perfect time for the Archives to transfer inactive/historical records from city offices to the Archives.

On paper, the transfer was an easy one, as city offices have, for the most part, already established holdings in the Archives. In reality, however, moving over 130 linear ft. of records involved some good old fashioned work. Hours of re-boxing records and moving boxes up and down sometimes perilous staircases filled the schedules of Archives' staff. The most thrilling part of the records transfer were various expeditions into the basement at city hall. Steep narrow stone steps led the way to records stored in dark and musty caverns. We owe many thanks to the Hope College Physical Plant staff and City personnel for making the transition an easy one.

New record groups which will be added to the Holland Historical Trust Collection of The Joint Archives include: City Council Proceedings, 1955-1976; Holland City Plat Maps, 1848-1950; Human Rights Commission Minutes/Annual Reports, 1966-1995; and City Managers Files, 1970-1989.

These records will be available for research soon.

### Holland Furnace Company

Larry Wagenaar recently met with William H. Boer, former Secretary and Assistant Treasurer at the Holland Furnace Company. Mr. Boer donated to the Archives a copy of his recent publication, *The Holland Furnace Company Tragedy: An Insider's Lament*, along with annual reports, court records, and correspondence which support his claims about P.T. Cheff's role in the unfortunate downfall of the Holland Furnace Company.



## Displays Highlight Women and African-Americans at Hope

by Jessica Owens

The month of February serves to recognize the histories, progress, and accomplishments of African Americans and women. While the entire month is national Black History Month, the last week serves as Hope's Women's Week. To mark these events, The Joint Archives is running a display entitled "Celebrating Women and African Americans at Hope." The exhibit consists of three display cases featuring photographs and articles which highlight various moments in the histories of these two groups at Hope.

Some of the topics covered in the Women's Week displays, both photographically and through other memorabilia, include: the Association of Women Students, the Women's Issues Organization, and the Women's Activity League. All of these organizations



Hope College Collection of the Joint Archives of Holland

*Black Coalition Members , 1972*



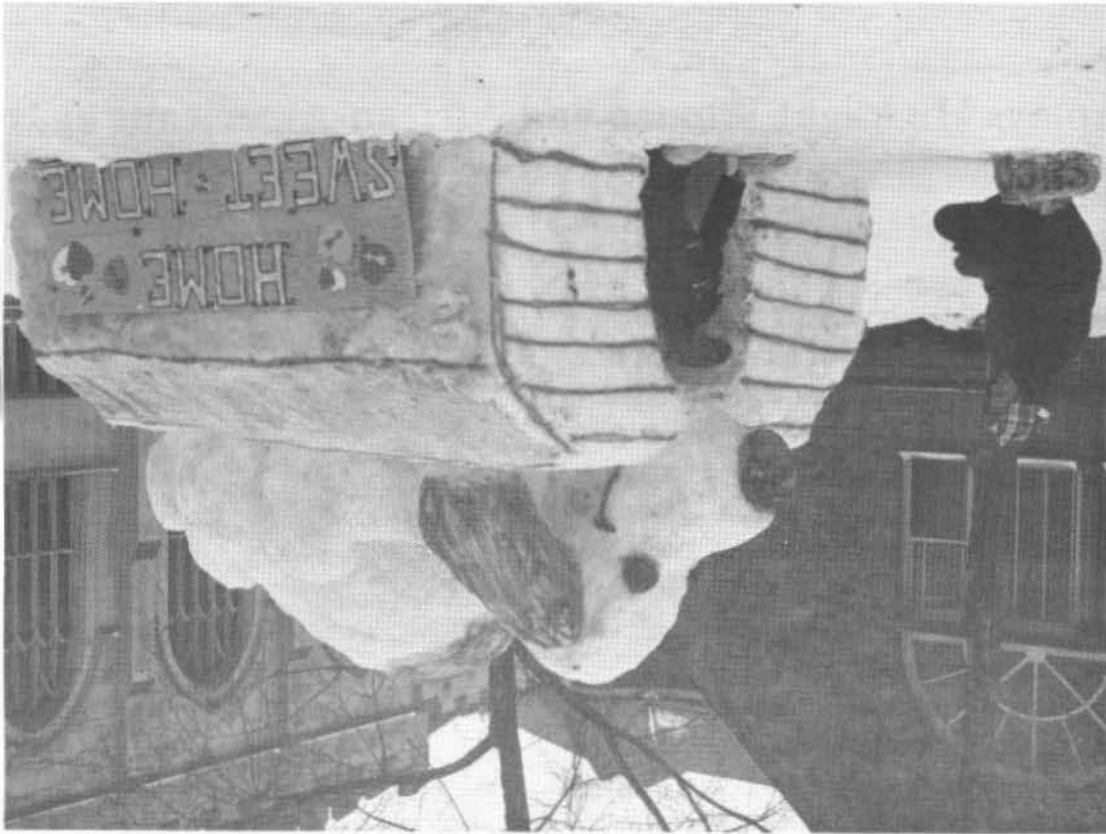
Hope College Collection of the Joint Archives of Holland

*Hope students enjoy an afternoon tea, c. 1950*

have played an integral role in the representation of women on Hope's campus. The exhibit also recognizes both the Nykerk Cup Competition and sororities as women's traditions at Hope. The display on African Americans includes photographs and information on the Black Coalition, which has served to represent African American students on Hope's campus since 1968. In addition, this display case includes a variety of *Anchor* articles written by African American students during the 1960's and 70's. In the display it is evident that *The Anchor* played an important role in expressing the voice of African American students with regards to various local and national racial issues. These displays, created by Archives research assistant Jessica Owens, will run through April -- please pay us a visit at your convenience!



Hope College Collection of the Joint Archives



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