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## The Joint Archives Quarterly, Volume 06.01: Winter 1995

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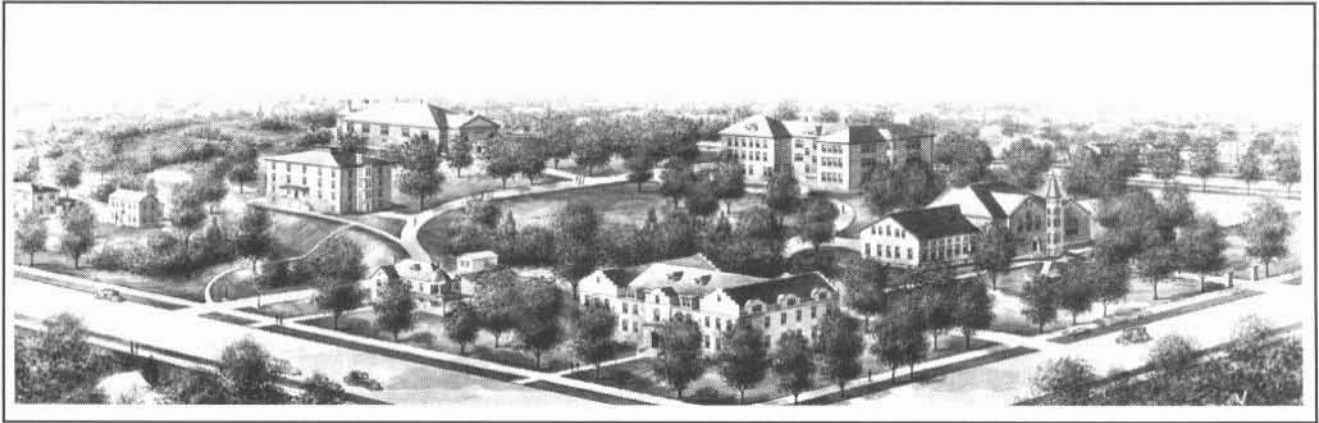
# The Joint Archives Quarterly

Volume 6 Number 1

Winter/Spring 1995

## The Presidents of Hope College

Hope College Collection of the Joint Archives



*Aerial View of Hope College Campus, c. 1925*

by Jenifer A. Smith

For nearly one hundred thirty years, a diverse group of men have led Hope College through success and failure, prosperity and poverty.<sup>1</sup> Since I recently finished processing the records of the President's Office, I thought I'd share some interesting facts and achievements about the men who helped make Hope the proud institution it is today.

Hope's first president was Philip Phelps, Jr., who was appointed to that office in 1866, the same year the college gained its charter. Dr. Phelps originally came to Hope as Principal of the Holland Academy in 1859. Hailing from the East, Phelps brought Hope a bit of the culture of Union College (Skenectady, New York) in the form of the Fraternal Society. This first literary society at Hope "...furnishe[d] the means of social, mental and moral improvement to those admitted to its fellowship."<sup>2</sup> Another one of Phelps' achievements was the beginning of education for women. While the Hope College Council was not particularly progressive on the subject of education for women, they agreed that such an education was a good idea, and in 1868 stated that the reason for not moving further in providing this education was simply due to the many problems of getting the college on its feet.<sup>3</sup> President Phelps was strongly behind women's education and encouraged his daughter, Frances Phelps Otte,

to attend Hope. Otte and a classmate, Sarah Gertrude Alcott, were the first two women to graduate from Hope; both in the class of 1882. Even with the addition of female students, Hope continued to struggle both financially and spiritually; a casualty of that struggle, Phelps resigned in 1878.

The Hope College Council named Rev. G. Henry Mandeville, pastor of the Harlem Reformed Church in New York City, as provisional President of the financially struggling college after Phelps' dismissal. Mandeville continued to live and work in New York, however, and many of the administrative duties fell to the Executive Vice President, Professor Charles Scott. This rather precarious administration lasted until 1882, when Scott took over as provisional president. After six years as provisional president, Scott began his presidency in 1886. Despite difficult economic times and wavering support from the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, students seemed content as literary societies formed, *The Anchor* started churning out stories of student life at Hope, and an organized sports program began.

The Gerrit J. Kollen (class of 1868) administration faced a surge in campus growth. Four major facilities were constructed during Kollen's term: Graves Library and Winants Chapel, Van Raalte Memorial Hall, Carnegie Gym-

*(continued on page 3)*

## From the Director

The months of February and March were ones of transition. Our community lost four leading citizens - Matt Urban, Chuck Conrad, Ed Prince, and Jay Weener. Each of these men influenced our town in ways we can only begin to appreciate.

The same day that we heard of the loss of Prince and Weener, my wife and I experienced the joy of the birth of our first child. Amy Imogene Wagenaar joined our family in the early morning hours of March 2. The events of that day impressed on me the phrase from last summer's popular Disney film, *The Lion King*: "The Circle of Life" continues on.

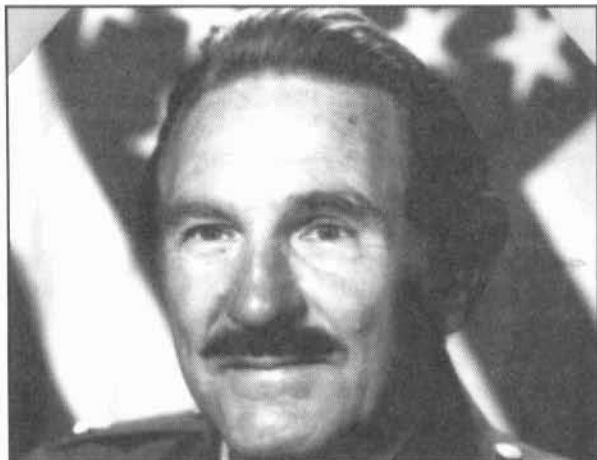
At the Joint Archives of Holland we deal daily with the circle of life. Our work involves preserving the times and experiences of many who have lived before us. In addition, the decisions we make today will determine how the future sees us. Preserving photographs of downtown, collecting the letters of World War II veterans, recording the oral histories of community members are just a few of the ways we contribute to an understanding of the circle in our times.

When someone I know passes away I often wish that we had taken more time to talk. Maybe I could have taken some notes of important impressions or set up the time for a recorded interview. A great deal of history is lost because we do not take the time to stop and listen.

I encourage you to take time to share with your children the stories of *your* past. Put together a scrapbook or a photo album and share it with them as they grow up. Maybe take time to record a few memories on a high quality tape.

My wife and I have started a scrapbook for Amy. We hope that our impressions, photographs, and various other memorable items will serve as a keepsake for her for a lifetime. Please take the time to share your memories with your family. You, too, are caretakers of archives.

### Larry J. Wagenaar



*Lt. Col. Matt L. Urban, 1919-1995*

Holland Historical Trust Collection



Hope College Collection of the Joint Archives

*Hope College Vespers, Dimnent Chapel, c.1950*

## Behind the Scenes

At the end of an aisle in the archives' stacks sits a large gray filing cabinet with unusually narrow drawers. While most of our cabinets contain things such as photographs, topical files, and biographical files, this one contains something special: the Hope College audio cassette collection. In its drawers you will find hundreds of cassettes for events such as concerts, commencements, critical issues symposiums, Christmas Vespers services, Women's Week speakers, Danforth Lecturers, baccalaureate services, and much, much more.

Currently, I am involved in on-going reorganization project for the Hope cassette collection. This worthwhile task involves sorting out duplicates, discarding blank tapes, adding new tapes, and alphabetizing the entire collection. Once the project is completed, the cassettes will be organized into two separate inventories. One inventory will contain a listing of all the musical events and the other will list non-musical college recordings. The main goal of this reorganization is to make the audio cassettes more accessible. In the past, we have had difficulty in locating certain tapes because of the lack of efficient organization. After this effort is complete, we hope the cassette collection will be both more visible and more accessible to patrons.

**Chad A. Boorsma**  
Head Research Assistant



*Hope's First President: Dr. Philip Phelps, Jr.*

**Presidents...** (continued from page 1)

nasium, and Voorhees Hall. Both Graves Hall and Voorhees Hall have become campus landmarks. Change was evident in more than just the physical campus, however; as the first Hope president not to be an ordained minister, Kollen was a symbol of the changing times.

During the Ame Vennema (class of 1879) administration a continuing emphasis on scholarly achievement led to the 1916 accreditation of Hope College by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. Although Vennema's term is also marked by change, he was not fully comfortable with this progress (when Vennema attended Hope all but one of his classmates became ordained ministers.) A Hope alumnus recalls Vennema's distaste that this particular student was studying the sciences in preparation for medical school instead of focusing on the more traditional curriculum with its emphasis on training young men for further theological study.<sup>4</sup>

As with Vennema's administration, Edward D. Dimnent (class of 1898) saw Hope's enrollment continue to increase significantly. Curriculum changes continued to place a greater emphasis on liberal arts learning as well. During his administration Hope changed to a two semester academic year. Another highlight was the separation of the Hope Preparatory School Program (of which he was a graduate) from that of the college. The culmination of years of fund-raising, Hope Memorial Chapel was dedicated in 1929. This beautiful chapel is now named in honor of President Dimnent.

Wynand Wichers (class of 1903) provided leadership to the college during both the Great Depression and the years leading up to World War II. The arts flourished at Hope during this period with the organization of the first Nykerk Cup competition, May Day festivities, and the All-College Sing. A dramatic society, *Palette and Masque*, also formed during this era and became the foundation for the theatre department. One of Dr. Wichers' most lasting con-

tributions was the construction of the Science Building (now Lubbers Hall). Even after his retirement, Wichers' continued dedication to and knowledge of the college was evident in his history of his alma mater entitled *A Century of Hope*.

Irwin J. Lubbers (class of 1917) took office in 1945, amidst the turbulent years of the second World War. Due to the sudden increase in the number of students attending Hope after the war, three new residence halls were built. From 1945-1947 enrollment tripled. During Lubbers' eighteen year presidency, the college built the Nykerk Hall of Music, the Van Zoeren Library, and the Physics Math Building. The Vienna Summer School, a popular program at Hope, was founded during this era as well. In 1960, President Lubbers helped to form the Great Lakes Colleges Association (GLCA). Hope College still remains a member of this twelve-college consortium.

Calvin A. VanderWerf (class of 1937), an administrator remembered for his love of teaching, invested much of his energy into strengthening the science departments and furthering international education. During his administration an exchange program with Meiji Gakuin University of Tokyo, Japan, and a May Term in Yugoslavia were established. In 1982, the Physics Math Building was renamed VanderWerf Hall in recognition of his considerable contributions to the college and its students.

Gordon J. Van Wylen concentrated his tremendous energy and fund raising skills on campus development. During his administration, Hope saw the construction of the DePree Art Center and Gallery, the Dow Physical Education and Health Center, the Maas Conference Center, and the Van Wylen Library. The Critical Issues Symposium, an annual event which draws the college and community together in thinking about current events, also found its beginnings during Van Wylen's presidency.

John H. Jacobson has shown a strong commitment to strengthening Hope's endowment, now upwards of \$45 million. By 1994, successful fund raising campaigns had helped

(continued on page 4)

**Hope's Presidents**

- 1866-1878: The Rev. Philip Phelps, Jr., D.D.
- 1880-1893: The Rev. Charles Scott, D.D.
- 1893-1911: Gerrit J. Kollen, L.L.D.
- 1911-1918: The Rev. Ame Vennema, D.D.
- 1918-1931: Edward D. Dimnent, Litt.D.
- 1931-1945: Wynand Wichers, Litt.D.
- 1945-1963: Irwin J. Lubbers, Ph.D.
- 1963-1970: Calvin A. VanderWerf, Ph.D.
- 1972-1987: Gordon J. Van Wylen, Sc.D.
- 1987- : John H. Jacobson, Jr., Ph.D.

**Presidents...** (continued from page 3)

build the De Witt Tennis Center. Plans for the 1995 ground-breaking of the Haworth Conference Center continue to move forward. Dr. Jacobson has focused his energies on increasing multi-cultural diversity, renewing and fulfilling Hope's mission, and utilizing strategic planning to chart the course of the college during the 1990s.

The achievements of each new administration continue to build on the successes of the old. The determination and diligence of these men has helped ensure that a strong Hope College will be ready to embrace a new century of students.

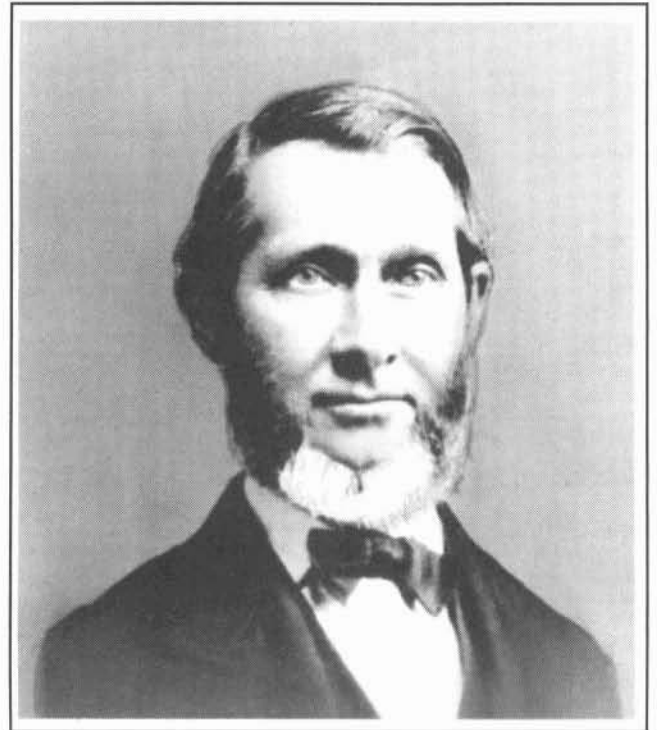
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1 The source for much of the information presented here is the inauguration program of John H. Jacobson, Jr., H90-1088. Office of the President, Box 11.

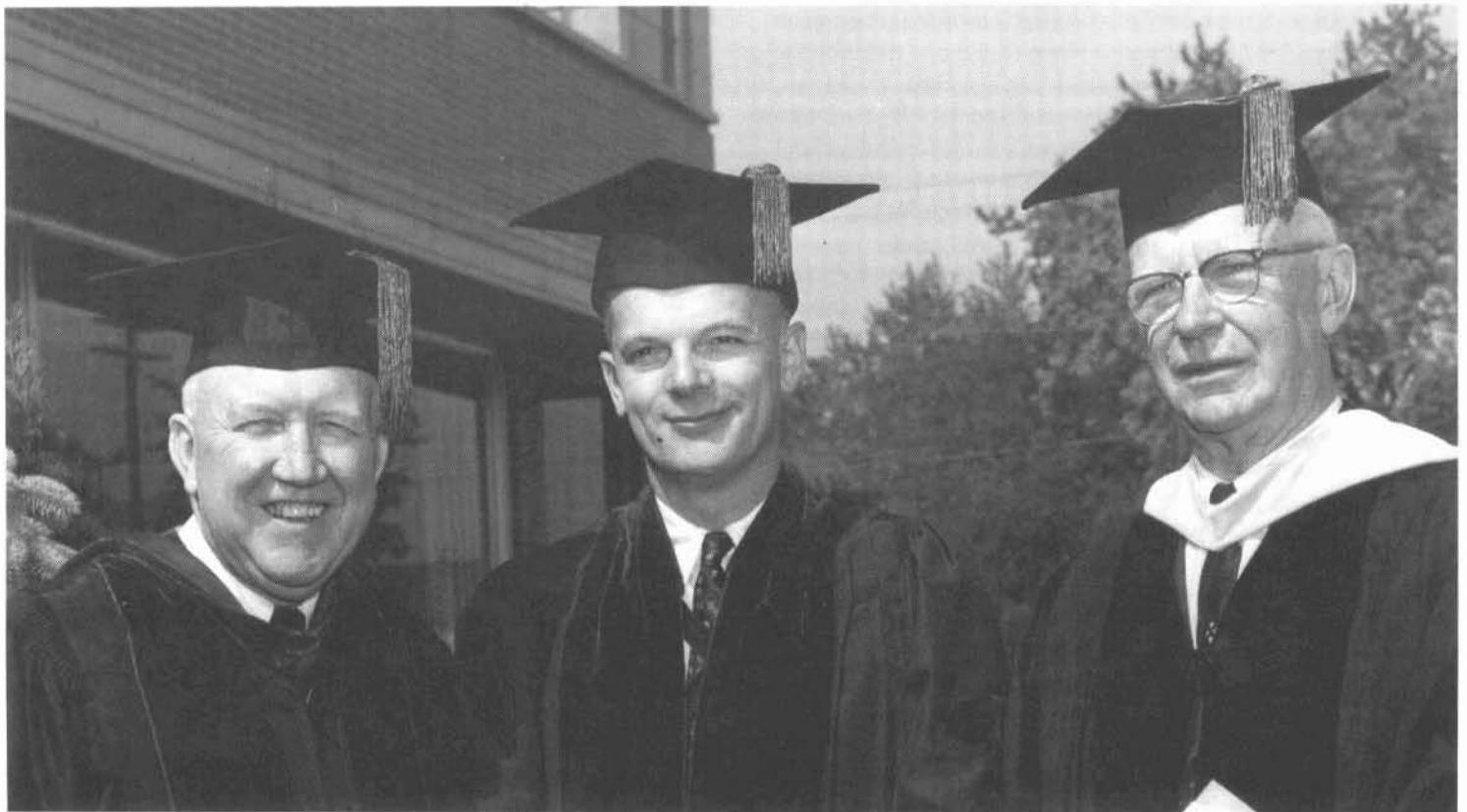
2 General Circular, 1873, p.29 (bound with Hope College Bulletin, 1865-1885).

3 "Centennial" University Circular, 1876, p.91 (bound with Hope College Bulletin, 1865-1885).

4 M. Jay Flipse Papers, 1982. H88-0053a.



*Rev. Charles Scott, c. 1885*



*Irwin J. Lubbers, Calvin A. VanderWerf, and Wynand Wichers, Commencement 1963*

## *In the News*

### **Immigrant Women Focus of Archives Program**

The Joint Archives of Holland announces the 7th annual Spring Speaker Program. The event this year will feature Dr. Suzanne Sinke of Clemson University. Her illustrated presentation, entitled "Wijf is not Wife: Dutch Immigrant Women Around the Turn of the Century," will be given in Winants Auditorium of Graves Hall, Tuesday, April 4th, at 7:30 p.m..

History has often neglected to recognize the role women have played, and the intent of this program is to highlight the contributions of women as the Dutch immigrated to the United States. Sinke will illustrate her talk with photographs from the period.

Sinke is an assistant professor of history at Clemson University, in Clemson, SC. She received her PhD from the University of Minnesota with a dissertation entitled "Home is Where You Build It: Dutch Immigrant Women in the United States, 1880-1920." She also holds degrees from Kent State University and the University of Northern Colorado.

Fluent in both Dutch and German, Sinke brings a broad understanding to this important topic.

Admission is free and the public is invited to attend. A reception will be held after the program in the reading room of the Joint Archives.



*Mr. and Mrs. Gerrit Brouwer on their wedding day, 1894*

Holland Historical Trust Collection of the Joint Archives

### **Archives Director Promoted**

The Hope College Board of Trustees approved the promotion of Joint Archives Director Larry J. Wagenaar to the rank of Associate Professor at its meeting in January. The promotion from Assistant Professor becomes effective in August.

Wagenaar has served as director of the joint archival program since its inception in 1988. The archives brings together the collections of Hope, the Holland Historical Trust, and Western Theological Seminary into one research location on the lower level of the Van Wylen Library. Over the past seven years the archives has more than doubled in size and seen a tri-fold increase in the number of patrons using the collections.

Wagenaar is a graduate of Holland Christian High School, Hope College, and Kent State University. He is currently serving as president of the Michigan Archival Association, as a board member of the Historical Society of Michigan, and as Public Information Officer for the Midwest Archives Conference.

### **Jenifer Smith on State Program Committee**

Collections Archivist Jenifer Smith has been working on the program and local arrangements committees for the 1995 annual meeting of the Michigan Archival Association. The Joint Archives will be hosting the meeting on the campus of Hope College June 16 & 17. Archivists from across Michigan will be in attendance.

Working with other committee members, Smith has assembled an outstanding program that will feature a keynote address by Dr. Robert M. Warner, former Archivist of the United States. A variety of other sessions will discuss new issues and trends in archival theory and practice and explore the history of the greater Holland area.

She is also working on developing a records management program for Hope College that will provide a more efficient record-keeping system for the college and that will streamline records transfers to the archives.



Hope College Collection of the Joint Archives

*Hope College Basketball Champions, 1908-1909.*

The Joint Archives of Holland  
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