

Fall 1994

# The Joint Archives Quarterly, Volume 05.04: Fall 1994

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# The Joint Archives Quarterly

Volume 5 Number 4

Fall 1994

## Ten Special People: Volunteers in the Archives

by  
Chad A. Boorsma  
Head Research Assistant

Many people wonder how we manage to accomplish so much work at the Joint Archives with such a small staff. The answer: ten devoted volunteers, each of whom we are very grateful for. The 850 hours the volunteers have contributed from January to September of this year show their dedication. However, there is more to our volunteers than just the work they do. From their time spent at the archives, the volunteers contribute their personalities, their knowledge, and even their friendship. Frankly speaking, working at the archives is more enjoyable when the volunteers are there. Let me take a few moments to introduce them to you.

The volunteer who has been with us the longest is **Lee Witteveen**. Lee, who retired from Holland Christian Schools, is one of our most proficient processors. The organizational and computer skills that he acquired at Holland Christian have allowed him to organize more collections than any other volunteer. If you cannot find Lee at the archives, that's because he is probably out golfing, attending a HASP event, or substitute teaching at one of the Christian schools.

Another longtime volunteer is **Rev. Russ Norden**. Russ retired in 1991 after spending nearly forty years as a Reformed Church in America (RCA) missionary in Japan. He brings with him knowledge of RCA missions, his good sense of humor, and a keen eye for detail. Russ does a variety of tasks for us, including processing of Hope department collections, organizing the Hope vertical files, and organizing our Hope object collection. When not involved in archival work, Russ spends time calling on First Reformed Church (Holland) members and attending HASP meetings.

**Carolyn Nienhuis**, former librarian at the Haworth Corporation here in Holland, brings to the archives her

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**Joint Archives Volunteer Staff**  
Seated: Jean Postma, Lee Witteveen, Carolyn Nienhuis  
Lois Kayes, Sue Brandsen, Russ Norden, Randy Vande Water

## New Status of Joint Archives

Over the course of the summer there was a major change in the relationships of the member institutions of the Joint Archives of Holland. On July 1st the Joint Archives became a department of Hope College which now provides services to the Holland Historical Trust (Holland Museum) and Western Theological Seminary.

From our inception in 1988 until this July, the archives was a program administered by a Council representing the three member institutions (Holland Historical Trust, Hope College, and Western Theological Seminary). In place of the joint governance of the archival program, Hope College now maintains a contractual agreement with the Holland Historical Trust and Western Theological Seminary for care and advancement of their archival collections.

This change has not materially affected how we do our work at the archives or the historical collections we care for, but it has changed some of the responsibilities for the professional staff. Both archivists are now a part of the Hope

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## From the Director

When I became Director of the Joint Archives of Holland in the summer of 1988 the operation was just me and a daunting volume of boxes. Admittedly these boxes contained some fascinating items - like the diaries of Isaac Fairbanks and photos of Macatawa beach - but it was overwhelming to think that I could get a good handle on this mass of material. This was especially true given the fact that we were beginning to add interesting new materials to the collection.

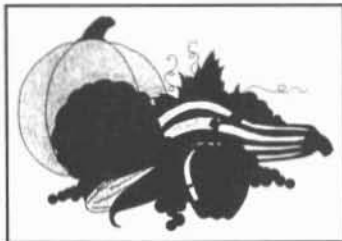
The first help came in the form of our student staff. In 1990, Craig Wright joined our group as Collections Manager. After Craig's departure in 1993, Jenifer Smith took over his responsibilities, keeping us all on the course towards full access to the public. It would have been impossible to manage the Joint archives' unique historical materials without these key people. But another, very important aspect of our staff developed as our staff slowly grew: very valuable volunteers.

Lee Witteveen stopped in one day in 1990 and asked if there was something he could do as a volunteer for the Joint Archives. He was interested in historical things and he liked the prospect of working with the actual letters, diaries and photographs of our past. Craig and I talked a little about it and we soon had our first volunteer.

Since that time quite a number of people have come to spend time with us as volunteers and we have enjoyed every one. Nearly every volunteer that has joined our staff is still with us. I cannot overstate enough the exceptional job each one of these people has done for us. From the involved task of processing material from a jumbled mess to an organized (and usable) collection to the critical task of keeping our newspaper clipping process up to date, it would be hard to imagine where we would be without the help of these important people.

This issue is dedicated to our volunteers. They are VERY important people for us and we want to share with you some of the work that they do here. If you are interested in joining our volunteer staff I would encourage you to call me at 395-7798 and we can discuss the possibilities.

Larry J. Wagenaar

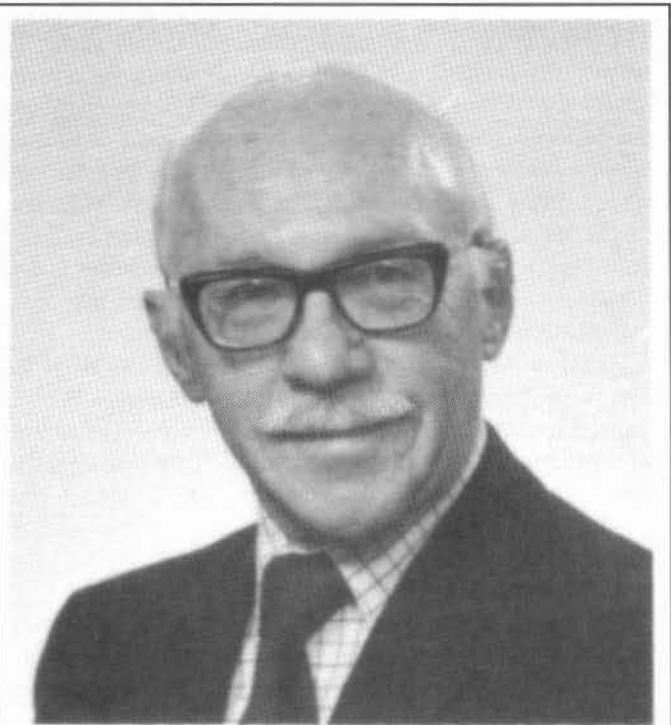


## Archives Loses a Friend

Dr. John P. Luidens, who worked for a number of years with the archives of the Netherlands Museum and Western Theological Seminary, passed away on August 14, 1994. He was a wonderful asset as he answered research questions and provided supervision for the storage and use of the collections on a part-time basis before the formation of the Joint Archives of Holland in 1988. Dr. Luidens stayed on as a volunteer at the Archives, helping the new archivist become acclimated to the collections.

Before retiring to the Holland area, Dr. Luidens was a history professor at Central Oklahoma University. A 1940 graduate of Hope College and a veteran of World War II, Dr. Luidens was also a part of the Luidens clan that has such a long association with the Holland community, the Reformed Church in America, and Hope College. We will miss his presence at the archives.

We would like to extend our heartfelt sympathy to Mrs. Marcelle Luidens and to the rest of the Luidens family.



**John P. Luidens**

1917-1994

## My Perspective on Volunteering

by Lee Witteveen

When I retired from teaching at Holland Christian Middle School, I discovered that I was beginning a whole new phase in my life. Now it became necessary to plan my days myself instead of having them planned for me by my job. At first this was not too difficult, since many things needed doing around the house that had been put off for a long time. Before long, however, it became obvious that I would need more than that in order to lead a full, satisfying life.

I tried a number of things, both paid and volunteer. I worked part time as a delivery person, I delivered meals on wheels for Evergreen Commons, I began substitute teaching at Holland Christian High and Middle Schools, I worked as a volunteer income tax preparer at Evergreen Commons, I became a Tulip Time Tour Guide, and because of my interest in history I began to work as a volunteer at the Joint Archives.

When I began my work at the Archives, I had only a vague idea what went on there, but under the instruction of Larry Wagenaar and Craig Wright, I began to find my way around and learn about the various kinds of work that needed doing. They were very patient with me, helping me learn how to use the computer, how to find materials needed by patrons, how to process materials, and generally helping me to feel useful

In the three years I have worked at the Archives, I have been kept busy with a variety of tasks. In fact, that has been one of the things that I have enjoyed the most about my work here. The variety keeps the work interesting, and every new challenge is a learning experience.

-- Lee Witteveen

around the Archives.

In the three years I have worked at the Archives, I have been kept busy with a variety of tasks. In fact, that has been one of the things that I have enjoyed the most about my work here. The variety keeps the work interesting, and every new challenge is a learning experience.

The flexibility permitted by my work at the Archives is another big advantage for me. At the Archives, if I can't make it on Tuesday, I come in on Wednesday or Thursday. I try to put in between six and eight hours a week, but if vacation time or other fun things intervene, those come first, and I try to make up the time later. All in all, I have found working at the Archives a very interesting, challenging, and satisfying experience, and heartily recommend it to others.

## Volunteers (Continued from Page 1)

excellent library skills, which she put to good use when she revamped the massive Western Theological Seminary pamphlet collection. Since Carolyn is the historian at her own church, Grace Reformed, she also spends time processing RCA church collections for the archives. When not at the archives, Carolyn enjoys vacationing at various places across the country, volunteering at the Family Research Council, and helping out in her church's office.

Another talented volunteer is **Lois Kayes**, who is also a serious postcard collector. Lois' skills in this area enabled her to organize the Holland Historical Trust postcard collection, as well as keeping it updated with new additions. She also spends her archives hours processing all of our photographs. Besides archival work, Lois enjoys playing tennis, working in her yard, and walking her German Shepherd, Lady Sasha.

**Randy Vande Water**, who is a former editor of the *Holland Sentinel*, also volunteers his time at the archives. Due to his experience with our local paper for many years, he has been an invaluable resource identifying and inventorying the large number of *Holland Sentinel* negatives housed at the archives. Randy is also a great source for information on Holland's history. When not at the archives, he spends time speaking on WHTC radio and writing books on Holland's history.

**Sue Brandsen**, although retired from her secretarial duties at Holland Christian High, School, has not let her office skills go to waste. Sue spends her archives time photocopying and filing articles from the *Holland Sentinel* and *Lakeshore Press*. While at the archives, Sue is also learning how to use the computer. In her spare time, she volunteers at the Bibles for Mexico store and Evergreen Commons.

Also volunteering at the archives is **Jean Postma**, a retired public health nurse. One of Jean's main tasks is to enter our large *Anchor* (Hope's student newspaper) index into the computer. Besides volunteering at the archives, Jean enjoys golfing, attending HASP meetings, and volunteering at the Holland Museum.

Our director's parents, **Neal & Mary Wagenaar**, also volunteer for the archives. The Wagenaars translate historical documents from Dutch to English. Recently they just completed translating a large amount of letters from the Riepma collection. They enjoy traveling to various places in Michigan and are active in the Holland Area Historical Society.

Our newest volunteer is **Rev. John Maassen**. John is a retired RCA minister who served churches in Michigan, New York, Wisconsin, California, and Iowa. In the short time he has been here, John has begun to master the skill of processing, spending most of his time on Western Seminary collections.

If one word could describe our volunteers, it would probably be diversity. With their various talents and interests, each volunteer forms a unique part of the archives. If they did not give of their dedicated time and effort, the Joint Archives would not be as productive as it is today.

## Professional Activities

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The Archives is located on the lower level of the Van Wylen Library at 10th Street and College Avenue.

### Hours

1-5 pm Monday-Friday  
10 am-2 pm Saturday  
Mornings by appointment

The Archives will be closed Saturdays  
November 26 & December 17 - January 7

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### New Status (continued from page 1)

College faculty as Archivists with the Rank of Assistant Professor and are working more closely with college administration, faculty, and students.

In addition to our support of the educational mission of Hope College, the Joint Archives of Holland will continue to be a community focused program, providing research opportunities and educational programs for the area. Use of the collections by the public will continue to be a strong part of the mission of the Joint Archives of Holland.

We hope that this change will continue to enhance our ability to provide you with a unique resource as our community's History Research Center.

### *Luidens Memorial Map Collection*

As a memorial to Dr. John P. Luidens, Dr. and Mrs. James and Iris Prins have donated a copy of the Sanborn Insurance Maps for the city of Holland. This map is an essential tool for researching the history of Holland. The map details nearly every structure in the city for the year it was published, showing an outline of the structures, where doors and porches are, and the type of construction. For businesses, it gives a detailed look at what each building was used for.

These maps are an invaluable look into our past and an essential resource for research. Our current set of Sanborn maps - which did not include this new addition - are used frequently. This new addition is a wonderful tribute to the life and work of Dr. Luidens.

Governor John Engler has announced the appointment of Larry J. Wagenaar to the Michigan State Historical Records Advisory Board (MSHRAB) for a three year term.

The MSHRAB is committed to designing a strategy for dealing with the state's historical resources that are in crisis. The goals of the board include establishing a statewide collections database, developing statewide collecting strategies, working on a regrant program to benefit small, local organizations, examining options for dealing with electronic records, creating a

statewide local government records program, and look at other issues related to preserving our historical resources.

The Board is made up of leaders in the Michigan historical community including the directors of the Bureau of History, Bentley Historical Library, and the State Archives of Michigan.

"I hope to be able to bring a unique perspective to the Board" commented Wagenaar. "There are many examples right here in western Michigan where we need to address historical collections in crisis. The Joint Archives has made impressive strides in preservation of Holland's history and I hope to be able to bring some of that experience to the board."

In addition to his service on the MSHRAB, Wagenaar is the current president of the Michigan Archival Association.

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Collections Manager Jenifer Smith attended a workshop, held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists, which focused on the acquisition and processing of Congressional Papers.

She expects to use her newly acquired knowledge about these collections when processing the six hundred linear feet of papers from former Michigan Congressman Guy A. Vander Jagt.

In addition to attending conferences and workshops, Smith is serving on the Program Committee for the Michigan Archival Association.

## The Processor's Table

by Jenifer A. Smith  
Collections Manager

Although I have many projects to keep me busy at the archives, I cannot help but think of the many historically significant collections that I would like to see added to our holdings. Sometimes potential donors do not see themselves in that role. Only last month a visitor to the archives shared with me that she had in her basement what I believe to be a very important collection; she just did not think that we would be interested in the material. In the hopes of encouraging other potential donors to share their treasures with the archives, I'd like to highlight an area of our community's history that the archives would like to begin actively collecting material from: the Hispanic community.

Hispanic immigrants in the 1930s came to Holland for the agricultural work and usually went back home during the winter months. In the 1940s, however, new jobs in Holland industry expanded and these agricultural workers became factory workers. With the factory jobs they could now afford to live in Holland for the entire year. Much like the Dutch immigrants to Holland in 1847, the Hispanic immigrants came to Holland "...seeking a better life and employment."<sup>1</sup> The Hispanic Community, containing in itself a diverse group of cultures, has grown tremendously since the 1940s. The Hispanic community has added their rich culture to the traditionally Dutch flavor of Holland. In order to ensure an accurate historical record of Holland's history, the Joint Archives wishes to document the contributions and achievements of all Holland's residents.

Oral history is one technique that the archives has been using to document the personal histories of many Holland residents. For example, one interview features Lupita Reyes, Manager for Patient and family counseling at Holland Community Hospital, a woman who contributes a great deal of her time to organizing the Hispanic community. She was one of the founders of Latin Americans United for Progress (LAUP) and currently serves as a board member of that organization. In her interview she discusses her life, and how she became successful and also her experiences growing up in Holland.

The corporate history of the Hispanic Community is harder to capture. Presently, most of the

This year for the first time . . . , I saw many non-hispanics coming through. That's good because it's beginning to breakdown that fear that we have of each other, and we're finding out that we're not so different.

-- Lupita Reyes

*Wanted:  
Photographs to fill this space!!*

### *Holland Residents Celebrate Cinco de Mayo*

information the archives holds about community wide events come from newspaper articles. While the newspaper is a good source for information, original sources such as organization minutes and newsletters, photographs, diaries, and correspondence capture the complexity of these events.

One of these important events that the archives hopes to document is the annual Fiesta celebration held each May in conjunction with the Mexican celebration of Cinco de Mayo. (Cinco de Mayo celebrates Mexico's independence won by the defeat of the French in 1862.) An integral part of the Fiesta is the Latin American Queen Contest which strives to provide role-models for young girls. Far from being a beauty contest, the young women attend seminars and research and report on their cultural heritage.<sup>2</sup> The Fiesta continues to grow in popularity, and according to Lupita Reyes, "This year for the first time..., I saw many non-hispanics coming through. That's good because it's beginning to breakdown that fear that we have of each other, and we're finding out that we're not so different."<sup>3</sup>

By the time this festival celebrates its 29th year this spring, the archives hopes to have more records which document its role in the Holland community.

<sup>1</sup>Jose and Lela Puente, Oral History Interview, June 25, 1993, conducted and transcribed by Andrea Peschiera, Hope College Collection, The Joint Archives of Holland.

<sup>2</sup>Chris Murphy, "Latin American queen contest helps girls reach their potential," in the *Grand Rapids Press*, April 25, 1991.

<sup>3</sup>Oral History Interview with Lupita Reyes, July 6, 1993, conducted and transcribed by Andrea Peschiera, in the Hope College Collection, The Joint Archives of Holland.



A Winter Scene in the Pine Grove at Hope College  
Van Raalte Hall can be seen in the distance

Hope College Collection of the Joint Archives

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## The Joint Archives of Holland

HISTORY RESEARCH CENTER

Holland Historical Trust • Hope College • Western Theological Seminary

Hope College Campus • Holland, MI 49423

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