

Winter 1991

# The Joint Archives Quarterly, Volume 02.04: Winter 1991

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# The Joint Archives Quarterly

Volume 2 Number 4

Winter 1991

## Tulip Time Memories Come Alive at Archives

Tulip Time in May. Before we know it the snows will pass from our streets and the flowers will be pushing up through the soil. As we gear up for spring the city looks toward the biggest event of the year, the "Festival."

Among the papers and photographs at the Joint Archives is the story of this event, a rather modern history given the origin of the festival was in 1927. That was the year high school biology teacher Lida Rogers suggested the planting of tulips to beautify Holland. The seeds — or bulbs if you will — had been sown.

In the fall of 1928 the city planted 100,000 bulbs in parks and along city streets. Although the city had no plans for a festival of any kind the public response to the resulting blooms of spring was overwhelming. Additional plantings took place that fall and the term "Tulip Time" came into existence in a press release in 1930.

From that point the festival took off. Encouraged by ever larger crowds the city continued to enlarge the plantings and attractions were added. Skilled wooden shoe carvers, high school students dancing traditional dances, parades and the development of the Netherlands Museum helped spur attendance. One commentator claimed "by the time 1938 rolled around, the festival attendance had reached one half million and the tulip plantings were over three million." Although it is difficult to verify such numbers it is clear that Tulip Time had become a great success.

World War II caused a brief hiatus in the festivities. From 1942 through 1945 the event was suspended,



Tulip Time 1931.

however, the ever popular Flower Show continued. Recently a 1946 16mm film of the Flower Show was uncovered. It is part of the Holland Historical Trust Collection at the Archives.

Many enhancements have been made to the festival including Windmill Island which opened in 1965 and the work of Holland Tulip Time Inc. to professionally coordinate all

aspects of the event.

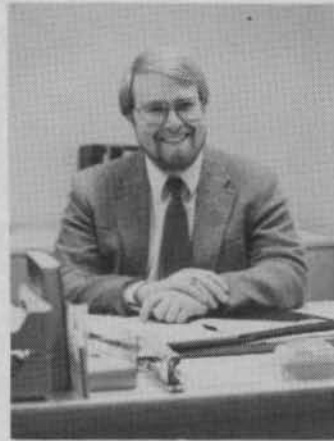
Beginning April 1 the Joint Archives will display a variety of materials from past Tulip Times. It will include photographs — perhaps of you — as well as programs, brochures and broadsides.

Plan a visit to the Archives. We are located on the ground floor of the Van Wylen Library at the corner of 10th and College.

# The Joint Archives Quarterly

## From the Archivist

In our last issue of the *Quarterly* we failed to properly introduce our new assistant archivist, Mr. Craig Wright. This issue will hopefully correct that oversight and also bring the readers of the *Quarterly* "up to speed" on what we are doing.



A great deal of work goes into pulling together the materials at the Archives so we can offer the public and the institutions which help fund the Archives a full service History Research Center. Boxes of papers, photographs and records come in and it is our job to sort through them, select those items that are historically significant, organize them and find a way to make it possible to locate the historical documents/photos/maps etc. that you may need.

In a number of the articles we talk about "processing" and "registers." In an upcoming issue we hope to show you exactly what that means and why it is important for us to arrange and describe papers as we do, one of the principal tasks of our assistant archivist, Mr. Wright.

In connection with our work there is a need at the Joint Archives which I would like to bring before you. The Archives receives generous support from the institutions which are members of the Joint Archives. We have found that our growing public and increasing usage have strained these resources. In our effort to provide as much service as possible on a limited budget we are including a coupon in this issue, asking you to consider assisting us.

Right now the critical needs revolve around paying for the publishing of the pages you are reading. The *Quarterly* has been so well received that we have expended both our printing and postage monies — with several months to go in this fiscal year. Other needs are pressing as well. These include the work Craig is doing in arranging and describing our collections to make them more accessible, acquiring new materials, and our educational programs. Next month we will be hosting our third annual Spring Speaker who will talk about the history of the automobile. We need your help in preserving our documentary heritage and making it as accessible and well used as possible. Will you consider becoming a partner with us in our efforts?

Soon we will be celebrating three years of outstanding success in preserving our documentary heritage. We have been able to gain control of more than 2,500 linear feet of archives and have assisted several thousand patrons in their research. We've enjoyed every minute — I hope it shows!

Larry J. Wagenaar

## Archives Opens New Collections

Fascinating paper items have been surfacing in the collections of the Joint Archives of Holland as the staff pursues its aggressive processing of new materials which have been donated to its three collections housed at the Archives on the ground floor of the Van Wylen library.

The Archives staff expects to have the Cappon family papers, part of the Historical Trust collection, organized and fully accessible by mid-March. Along with being accessible for research, selected items will be used in displays at the Cappon House and the new Museum as they are needed.

One of the more interesting components of the Cappon papers are the letters of Marvin De Vries, wife of Isaac Cappon's daughter Christine, written from the front during World War I (see accompanying article). The papers are full of rich historical stories that will assist research into this period for years.

Laura Bachelder has just completed the Macatawa Park Cottagers Association collection which was made part of the Archives last fall.

Recent collections opened in the Western Seminary materials include the papers of Anthony, Edith and Florence Walvoord (missionaries to Japan), the I. John Hesselink collection and the papers of Robert and Morrell Swart.

In the Hope College collection, the Irwin Lubbers papers will be reopened after they have been reprocessed with a full collection register that will help patrons get a handle on an important time in the life of Hope College. Staff member Reba O'Shesky is undertaking this project.

The papers of Sears F. Riepma, a prominent Hope College and Western Seminary graduate, have also been re-opened.

The Joint Archives cares for, documents and makes available for use the archival collections of the Holland Historical Trust, Hope College and Western Theological Seminary. It is open Monday-Saturday from 1-5 p.m., mornings by appointment.

### Introducing Craig Wright

In our last issue of the *Quarterly* we were remiss in introducing the newest addition to the staff at the Joint Archives of Holland. Mr. Craig Wright is our new assistant archivist.

Craig comes to us from the University of Michigan Library School where he obtained his master's degree, specializing in Archives. He worked in the Bentley Historical Library which is well known to many for both its collections and excellent training for new archivists.

Currently he is involved in a major processing push where we are working to arrange and describe the most important elements within the collections. Craig has also been invaluable in organizing our unprocessed materials, making items easy to locate even though we have not been able to professionally process them and make them part of the main collections.

His position is currently funded through a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.

In many ways the addition of an assistant archivist has put the Joint Archives in a position to run efficiently given the size of our collections, patron use and new material acquisition.

Next time you visit the Archives please take a moment to say hello. Welcome to the team, Craig!

# The Joint Archives Quarterly

## The Processor's Table

by  
Craig Wright  
Assistant Archivist

### World War I Comes Alive

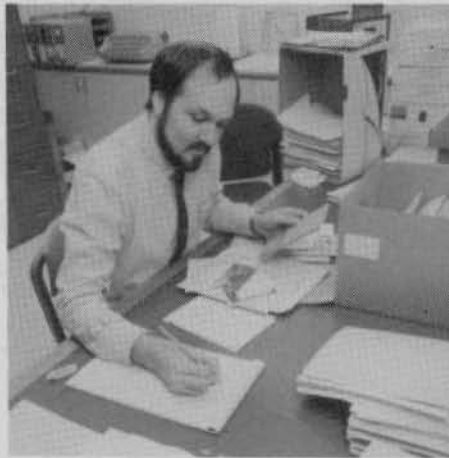
I have been working at the Joint Archives for over four months now, and I am still surprised almost every day by some new bit of history I come across. I have been interested in military history since I was a boy, so I am particularly fascinated by materials concerning the First World War that have been uncovered in several of the collections I have been processing.

In the Gerrit J. Diekema papers there are several speeches he delivered on this subject. The first speech was presented in 1915 and compares Kaiser Wilhelm II with the Emperor Napoleon. The second speech was probably delivered in 1917, and is an impassioned call for recruits and the personal sacrifices necessary for victory.

The Cappon family papers, part of the Holland Historical Trust collection, contain a variety of materials relating to World War I. This collection will be fully processed and open to public for research by the time you read these words.

Lavina Cappon, who taught home economics at Holland High School and was such a major figure in the Tulip Time festivities for so many years, had several home economics pamphlets. These pamphlets discuss the importance of food conservation and "Victory Gardens" to the war effort and the postwar period. A National War Garden Commission was set up which promoted gardening, food substitution, and canning. "Back Up the Cannon by Use of the Canner" is the title of one of the articles. A Manual of Wheatless Recipes was developed in order to save 75 million bushels of wheat to be sent to the armies overseas. The American troops alone consumed seven million pounds of food per week.

Franklin Cappon was a sports hero at the University of Michigan and later coached at Princeton. As a boy he collected several newspaper clippings about World War I. They contain an account of the first action by American troops in the war, and is preserved today in the family papers.



Marvin DeVries married Christine Cappon and was a prolific writer of pulp stories. The collection includes letters he wrote to his parents while in training as a Marine in naval aviation. What follows is a quote from a letter dated November 12, 1918, the day after World War I ended:

"I really am all in but must write or you might think I'd got lost in all the excitement and believe me there has been some. All we did yesterday is parade in dear old Boston town covering in all about ten miles of these nice soft cobblestones. To offset it all we had liberty last night until 10 o'clock and it was some wild night. 3 of us Marines went down the street, hat straps under our chin, carrying rattles, paper umbrellas, etc and covered from head to foot with talcum powder, hailing every officer we saw with a 'How d'ye do' and not saluting a single one. They took it good naturedly though, couldn't do anything else in fact. The little lake in Boston Common was covered with oil & they set fire to it & that was some blaze. All in all it was a wild & wooly & it will take a while to get things cleaned up again."

The Archives has also acquired copies of letters written from 1912 through 1919 by Floyd Hansen. In 1915 Mr. Hansen was detained by the French as a spy. After that was cleared up he eventually served in World War I as a cook. Mr. Hansen was also a cook at the Warm Friend Tavern.

The materials discussed in this article represent only some of the material about the First World War which will be found at the Joint Archives. The researcher may also refer to programs, correspondence and photographs.

## Spring Speaker Announced

Mr. Thomas Jones, executive director of the Historical Society of Michigan will be the annual spring lecturer for the Joint Archives of Holland on Wednesday, April 24. His illustrated address is titled "The Automobile in Michigan: 1896-1929."



Drawing on his own research on the development of the "horseless carriage" he will describe the early development, failures and successes of pioneers in the field. Jones will also touch on manufacturing enterprises in western Michigan.

The spring speaker has traditionally been one of the Joint Archives' most successful programs. It is our annual "big event" and all *Quarterly* readers are encouraged to attend.

The presentation will be at 3:45 p.m. at Graves Hall across from the Van Wylen Library. It will be followed by a reception in the reading room of the Joint Archives of Holland. Please plan to join us for this exciting annual event.

## Civil War Program Exhibit

"The Civil War and Our Hometown" was an outstanding success with more than 140 people attending the February program sponsored by the Joint Archives. Civil War historians Al McGeehan and John Noe brought home what life was like during this difficult period in our nation's history.

Using slides, artifacts and their own research, the two shared with the audience what it was like to enlist in 1862 and the joys and fears of the men and their families. We were even able to hear about the *Vivandiere*, a young woman who would follow the army and give fallen troops a bit of brandy!

The Civil War exhibit which accompanied the program is on display at the Joint Archives reading room on the ground floor of the Van Wylen Library on the corner of 10th and college in

(Continued on page 4)

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## Tulip Time Heats Up Thanks to Stars From Hollywood

In the late 1930s, as Tulip Time blossomed into a spectacle attracting national attention, Holland flirted with Hollywood, thanks to the Holland Furnace Co. In an effort to promote the flower festival and to sell their furnaces as well, the thriving company began booking the glamorous studio stars into the Tulip Time festivities. Exposure on nationwide network radio aided the world's largest installer of furnaces to place "warm friends" in the homes of millions of pre-World War II homes.

Dorothy Lamour, Pat O'Brien, Fay Wray, George Raft, Richard Arlen and Robert Cummings were among those stars who were transported from the world's glamour capital to a tiny provincial Dutch community near Lake Michigan. From 1938 through 1941, the Hollywood connection tied itself to tulip town through national radio broadcasts describing the events of the festival.

Sponsored by the furnace firm and originating on the festival's opening day, these broadcasts told the tulip story through the voices of screen and radio celebrities, including members of the National Barn Dance, and helped Holland's flower festival attain a national reputation.

Listeners heard matinee idols, character actors, glamorous actresses, lovely starlets and radio entertainers extoll the beauty of thousands of tulips in a town boasting the familiar slogan "Where It's Tulip Time in Holland Every Year in May." Broadcasting from the furnace company's administration building at 491 Columbia Avenue, or from the Warm Friend Tavern, 5 East Eighth Street, the personalities praised local hospitality and encouraged others to visit Holland.

A half century has passed since the Hollywood celebrities thrilled festival throngs. Only two of the best-known stars are still living. Lamour, who starred with Bob Hope and Bing Crosby in the now classic "Road" pictures, is 76. Fay Wray, held by King Kong in the chilling 1933 Empire State Building scene who later became a cult figure of the 60s and 70s, is 83.

Recently a collection of the *Holland Fire Pot*, the Holland Furnace Co.'s weekly publication, was received to be



Early Tulip Time programs, 1938 and 1948.

part of the Holland Historical Trust Collection at the Joint Archives.

BASF, which occupies the old Holland Furnace building, has donated four scrapbooks which include pictures of the Holland Furnace Co. in the 1920s and 30s as well as more than 80 years of documentation of the color pigment industry in Holland and Huntington, West Virginia.

## Tulip Time Inc. Donates Historical Papers

Tulip Time Inc. has placed its historical materials in the Holland Historical Trust archival collection housed at the Joint Archives of Holland. The Tulip Time collection contains a wide variety of historical materials including old programs, articles about the festival, historically significant materials which tell the "behind the scenes" story as well as other festival related papers.

The collection is more than three linear feet and the Joint Archives has decided to process it immediately to make it available to the public for research before this year's event as well as to assist in displays at the Archives in the month of May.

The Tulip Time board and Kristi Van Howe, director of Tulip Time Inc., decided to place the materials in the Archives in order to preserve them for research, better reference service for her



Holland Historical Trust Collection of the Joint Archives

Researchers can have access to this material at the Joint Archives where the Historical Trust houses its paper collection.

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Stories about the movie star years will be featured in this quarter's edition of the Holland Historical Trust Review.*

and her staff and to ensure the preservation of the materials.

Readers of the *Quarterly* who would like to see this rich collection of Tulip Time history as well as other festival items from other collections at the Joint Archives are encouraged to stop by after April 1. The staff will have the papers ready to see and a selection of the highlights on display!

## Civil War

(Continued from page 3)

Holland. On display are original guns, letters, photographs and other artifacts from the three collections at the Archives and from the personal collections of the presenters.

The exhibit will be up until March 22. The Van Wylen Library is barrier free and the reading room is open Monday-Saturday from 1-5. Come see — I am sure you will not be disappointed.

# The Joint Archives Quarterly

## Sentinel Negatives Recorded in Archives

More than 40 years of negatives, donated by the *Holland Sentinel*, are being recorded in the Joint Archives of Holland.

Through an arrangement between *Sentinel* publisher Clay W. Stauffer, immediate past president of the Holland Historical Trust, and archivist Larry J. Wagenaar, the negatives were transferred to the Van Wylen Library when the *Sentinel* began a major building and remodeling project.

Randall Vande Water, employed at the *Sentinel* from 1948 until June, 1989 and now retired, is currently listing the negatives by subject or name, the number of negatives on a particular subject and date, actual or estimated.

Thousands of negatives are 4" by 5" and were photographed by the Speed-Graphic cameras used in the 1940s, 50s and 60s. For more than 20 years the .35mm film has been used.

Vande Water, who worked as *Sentinel* news radio announcer on WHTC, reporter, sports editor, city editor, managing editor and editorial page

editor, has been aided in the research by *Sentinel* chronologies published December 31 of each year through 1985.

Included in the more than 1,000 negatives already processed have been many Tulip Time pictures, sports, committees, accidents and fires.

As an example of how these negatives may help in research, Vande Water discovered a series of negatives of a fire that destroyed the Red Brick Tourist home on the southwest corner of 12th Street and River Avenue. This became the site of Herrick Public Library in 1960. Persons seeking information on this subject could illustrate the story with a picture of the fire.

Some of the *Sentinel* photographers during the era included Al Bransdorfer, Peter Baker, Howard Holmes, Roger Snow, James De Pree, Linda Den Uyl, Mert Scholten, Dan Saul, Bob Steenwyk, Bob Jaehnig, Mark Copier, Drew Torres and Vande Water.

Many hours remain on the project and people interested in assisting may contact Wagenaar at 394-7798.

### Joint Archives

#### Educational Programming

March 16, 1991

"Fading Photos: The Care and Identification of Historical Photographs" by Mark Coir, Director of the Archives and Historical collections at the Cranbrook Educational Community. Fee: \$15

April 24, 1991

Annual Spring Speaker. Mr. Thomas Jones, Executive Director of the Historical Society of Michigan, will present an illustrated program "The Automobile in Michigan: 1896-1929." Graves Hall, 3:45 p.m. A reception will follow at the Joint Archives. Admission is free.

June 22, 1991

Basic Archival Skills Workshop for church librarians, businesses, historical societies and others. Dr. Richard Harms will give guidance on how archives are operated, providing practical skills and advice. Fee required.

Sept. 19-20, 1991

Conference Host for the Association of the Advancement of Dutch American Studies. It will focus on Dutch ethnic identity in the churches.

## Will You Help?

Will you consider assisting the Joint Archives in its efforts?

Right now one of our important needs is for help in publishing the *Quarterly*. The *Quarterly* has been so well received that we have expended both our printing and postage monies. The Archives has other pressing needs which include support for the work of our assistant archivist in sorting through new materials, deteriorating letters and maps in need of repair and our new collection of 100,000 negatives that require protective sleeves, organization and copy prints. Support is also needed for the educational programming we do for schools and for the public such as on the Civil War and the S. S. South American.

The Archives provides a wide variety of services from research assistance to photographic reproduction of historical photographs. Archivists from the Joint Archives visit schools, churches and service groups to educate and give advice on preserving their materials.

The Archives benefits from the generous support of its member institutions. Your gift will help supplement their efforts and assist the Joint Archives with a number of critical needs for which we lack resources.

Please consider supporting the Joint Archives of Holland with your tax-deductible gift and help us in our work as our community's History Research Center.

\_\_\_\_\_ \$15    \_\_\_\_\_ \$25    \_\_\_\_\_ \$50    \_\_\_\_\_ \$100    \_\_\_\_\_ \$\_\_\_\_\_

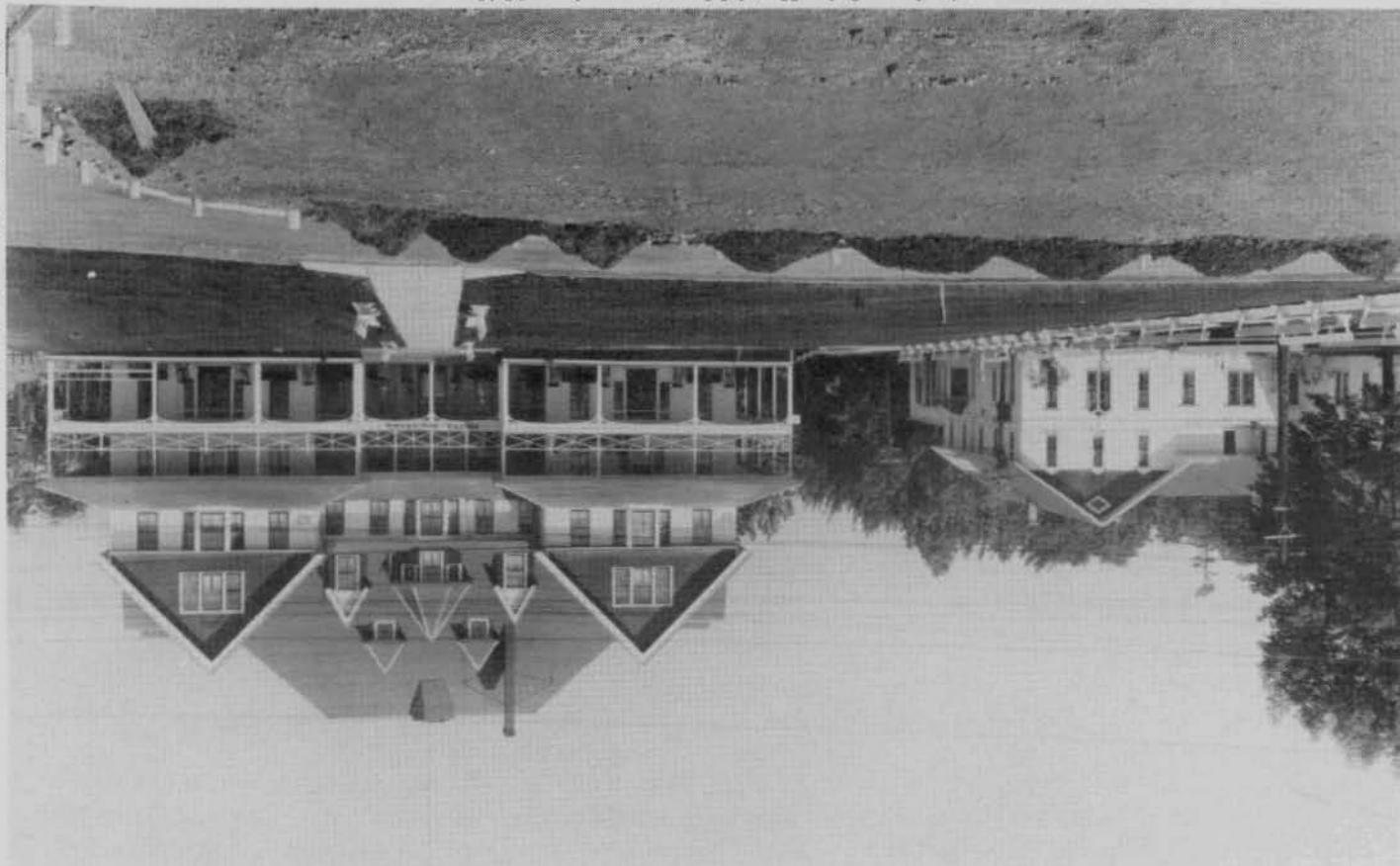
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A view of the Hotel Macatawa, circa 1940.

Holland Historical Trust Collection of the Joint Archives



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## The Joint Archives of Holland

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