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# The Joint Archives Quarterly, Volume 10.01: Spring 2001

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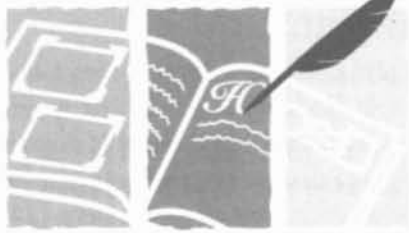
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# The Joint Archives *Quarterly*

Volume 10 Number 1

Spring 2001

## *Wagenaar to Take State Historical Position*

Joint Archives of Holland Director Larry J. Wagenaar has accepted the position of Executive Director for the Historical Society of Michigan and will be leaving his post with the archives in June.

Since the Joint Archives opened its doors in 1988, Wagenaar has been its director. While he started as a one-person office with a small number of researchers, the facility has now grown to a full-time staff of three, four part-time employees, and eight volunteers. It currently serves between 100 and 125 researchers every month.



"It was a difficult decision to leave the Joint Archives," commented Wagenaar. "The staff has been wonderful to work with, and I have enjoyed the challenges that the last dozen years have brought with it.

But it was also apparent to me that this new challenge was a wonderful opportunity to bring fresh leadership to Michigan's oldest cultural organization and have a broad impact on the preservation and advancement of our state's heritage."

Building the program was one of Wagenaar's most enjoyable tasks. As its first director, he brought many new initiatives to the Joint Archives. They included establishing methods to communicate with the public, such as the *Quarterly*, conducting innovative programs and conferences, and building staff resources. Early decisions, such as not moving forward with a traditional card catalog but using computer cataloging instead, were ground breaking and put the repository in the forefront of bibliographic control and access to the collection. The JAH was also on the forefront of web access. Its historical materials are now searchable from around the world.

"I can remember publishing the first *Guide to the Collections* in 1989. It was a landmark volume for finding historical material on Holland's history at that time," according to Wagenaar. "Now we look at that first effort and see how far we have come, with full World Wide Web searchable access. Three different collections archivists have also had a profound impact. It's been fun to be a part of that."

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*"As the founding Director of the Joint Archives of Holland in 1988, Larry Wagenaar took our vision and translated it into reality. He very effectively promoted the interests of all three cooperating institutions and thereby attracted significant new holdings for the Trust, the Seminary and the College. Through his writings, he demonstrated that archival records can be brought to life and made relevant to contemporary society. Through his leadership in professional organizations across the state, he helped to enhance public appreciation for preserving historical records and making them accessible both to scholars and to the general public. The Joint Archives of Holland is highly regarded by other professionals because of the high standards and professional excellence of Larry Wagenaar and his colleagues. Because he has recruited an excellent team, the JAH will continue to flourish. We will miss Larry's vision and energy, but we wish him well as he assumes the leadership of the Historical Society of Michigan." -- Jacob E. Nyenhuis, Provost, Hope College*

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Moving the Joint Archives to a "contract for services" model in 1994 was probably one of the most important events for the organization, although this was nearly transparent to the public. The facility was threatened with deep cuts in its already very limited staffing. By becoming a regular department of Hope College and offering services under contract to the Holland Museum and Western Seminary, the archives was able to preserve its services and continue to grow.

*(Continued on page 2)*

## News from the Archives

With this issue comes the sad news of Larry Wagenaar's departure for the Historical Society of Michigan to become its Executive Director. Since taking my position in January, 1997, I have been fortunate to learn many things from Larry concerning the directions archival agencies must take in order to flourish as repositories and providers of historical information to the public. I, with the rest of the staff, wish Larry luck with his new position and look forward to his leadership on a broader scale.

Unfortunately we will also be saying goodbye to two other employees. Abby Platt of Mt. Pleasant, Michigan, and Allyson Boggess of Walworth, New York, will be leaving at the end of this semester. Both joined us in the fall of 1997 and will be greatly missed. They have contributed much to our processed holdings and will be remembered fondly for their friendly demeanor and work ethic.

This spring we have some new faces processing and assisting in the many duties we so eagerly approach. Joining us are Michelle Smith from Olympia, Washington, and Erin Hoopes from Chestertown, Maryland. Both are actively engaged in processing collections for the winter semester, and Erin will stay for the summer to become the Oral History Coordinator. You can read more about the exciting topic that she and I have chosen for this summer in a related article.

Lastly, you will learn more about a new collection that our visiting archivist, David Andrews, processed. After processing the William Angus, Jr. papers, David thought that this man's story should be told, as well as an example of his quality poetry. David has also selected a few of our other missionary collections that might be of interest to you. Each tells a fascinating story of the Reformed Church in America's mission to spread the word of God, and the men and women who had a part in that mission.

Geoffrey D. Reynolds



*Allyson Boggess*



*Abby Platt*

*Wagenaar (continued from page 1)*

Since 1989 Wagenaar has also been the volunteer director of the Holland Area Historical Society, a group that meets monthly for lectures, tours, site visits, and other historical activities. Struggling just over a decade ago with less than 30 members, over 400 people are now part of the Society.

He has also held a number of other state, regional, and national professional posts. These include serving as president of the Michigan Archival Association, board member of the Midwest Archives Conference, and director of the Association for the Advancement of Dutch American Studies.

In addition to being familiar with historical matters in the state, Wagenaar also brings a unique knowledge of the Historical Society of Michigan. From 1992 until 1999 he served on its Board of Directors and was president of the board for two terms, 1996-1998.

Wagenaar will begin his duties at the Historical Society of Michigan on July 1.

### *2001 Oral History Project Parents of the Baby Boomers, 1941-2001*

This summer, Erin Hoopes, our Summer Oral History Coordinator, will begin a thoughtful examination of the lives of those parents of the boomer generation. Erin will examine this unique group's experiences during World War II and life after the war as they faced coming to grips with work, marriage, parenthood, and the boundaries of family relationships.

With this project, we hope to learn how this generation set the stage for the social change of the 1960s and beyond in the Holland area. Erin will investigate the drawing and redrawing of gender roles, renegotiated in family after family as children grew and income fluctuated.

With the completion of this project, we hope to add a previously uncollected resource to the already rich oral history holdings at the Joint Archives, initiated in 1977 with the help of Dr. Elton Bruins.

But before this project can begin, we will need volunteers. Candidates will include couples, married or divorced, who were at least 18 years of age at the beginning of the war and married either before, during, or after, but before 1950. I encourage you to volunteer or contact us concerning persons who might enjoy participating in this worthwhile project. Please contact Geoffrey Reynolds at 395-7798 or [archives@hope.edu](mailto:archives@hope.edu) to do so.

## *Pastor and Poet*

by David Andrews

The Joint Archives of Holland is the repository for several collections of RCA missionaries who ministered, often for career-length terms, in places as far-flung as Mexico, India, Arabia and Japan, the settlements of Native Americans and the farms of the American rural poor. Recently the archives opened the papers of William R. Angus, Jr., who with his wife served the Amoy region of China for 27 years, and the Philippine Islands for an additional fifteen. The papers not only represent the work of a man of God, but that of a poet whose humanity is conspicuous in his verse.



Hope College/Joint Archives

*William and Joyce Angus in the Philippines*

William Angus was born in New York City on October 4, 1901. His formal degrees were earned at Rutgers College (B.S., 1922), Hartford Theological Seminary (B.S.T., 1925), and Rutgers College again (D.D., 1947). He was licensed by the RCA Classis of Bergen in 1925. While studying the Amoy Chinese dialect to prepare for his applied-for ministry, he met his future bride, Agnes Joyce Buikema. Once commissioned by the Board of Foreign Missions, Angus departed for the Amoy district in 1925, where he ministered alike to the city dwellers and mountain folk of South Fukien province on the Formosa Strait.

Joyce Buikema was also sent to China to be an English instructor at mission-run Talmage College, officiated by two rather colorful spinster sisters, mementos of whom are in the Angus Collection. The Anguses married in 1927 and during their pre-war years in China the couple had three children: Margery Anne, David Robertson, and John Galen Angus.

Soon after the birth of their daughter in 1930, the city of Changchow in South Fukien was taken by the forces of Mao Tse-tung. The Anguses took an enforced furlough from China, following the

appropriation of their home and possessions by the Maoists. Recountings of this and a similar post-war incident in William Angus' papers and interviews, make the Communist takeovers seem almost comical, with Maoists fervently rubber-stamping each



Hope College/Joint Archives

*Gate at Changchow, China*

itemized bit of Angus and mission property before looting their home and redistributing its capitalist "wealth" among the Chinese. Angus' takeover accounts reveal his sense that a detached observer can envision the simple, even obvious, moral choices possible amid a turmoil of ideologies and human reactions to them – a sense that also informed his poetry.

China was dangerous for missionaries, and would be so again. The Anguses returned to South Fukien, where their two sons were born. Angus continued his missionary work in the provincial mountains, despite knowledge of the Japanese occupation of Manchuria and imperial advances made toward the Formosa Strait. After the Pearl Harbor attack in December 1941, Japanese troop movements cut off Angus, away in the mountains, from his family, who were interned as prisoners of war. While Joyce and the children were repatriated to the U. S. within weeks, Angus would be separated from them until 1946, after the war ended.

In 1947—after another furlough, during which Angus studied the Mandarin dialect at the Yale Language School—the couple returned to South Fukien. Together they extended their missionary outreach to the Lengna station in the interior, a responsibility shared with other RCA missionaries. But the Communists' post-war inroads into public acceptance led to their "liberation" of South Fukien province. With religious observance under increasing restriction—to the point that Angus could no longer preach or perform missionary travel—the Anguses applied to leave China, and were granted exit in 1952. After a furlough in Holland, Michigan, the couple was recommissioned to serve in the Philippines, where they worked at Legaspi, Cagayan de Oro and Manila. Retiring in 1967, the Anguses resided for a time near their son, David, in New Brunswick, New Jersey, and then moved to Orange City, Iowa, where they opened their home to Chinese and Filipino students at nearby Northwestern College.

*(Continued on page 4)*

## Holland's Boat Building Industry: Employees and Information Sought

Since coming to the Joint Archives in January of 1997, I have been mystified by the lack of published material on the Holland area's boat building industry—a history that began in 1835 with the construction of the A.C. Mitchell at what is now Waukazoo Woods. So, I decided to tackle that task last summer by interviewing the boat builders and others of the 1950s such as Jason Petroelje of Skipper-Craft, Clyde Poll of Wonder Craft, and Bill Parker of Slickcraft. But my research is far from done. I would like to interview many more men and women who worked with the following companies to assemble the best history of the industry as possible:

Alleenes Non-Capsizable Boats  
Beacon Boat Company  
Campbell Boat Company  
Chris-Craft  
Ensign Boats, Inc.  
Gil-Boat Company  
Kencraft  
Holland Launch and Engine Company  
Jesiek Boat Company  
Lovecraft  
Mac-Bay Boat Company  
North Star Marine Construction Company  
Roamer Boat Company  
Skipper-Craft  
Slickcraft  
Victory Shipbuilding Company  
Windquest (Zeeland)  
Wolverine Motor Works  
Wonder Craft

If you have information concerning any of Holland's many boat manufacturers, large or small, please contact me at the Joint Archives of Holland at 616-395-7798, [archives@hope.edu](mailto:archives@hope.edu), or by writing to me at the Joint Archives of Holland, Hope College, P.O. Box 9000, Holland, MI 49422-9000.

Geoffrey D. Reynolds



Skipper-Craft, c. late 1950s

## Pastor and Poet (continued from page 4)

In retirement, Angus found time to revise and reshape his two unpublished collections of poetry, *The Bible in Verse: A Metrical Paraphrase*, and *South Fukien: A Missionary's Miscellany*. Angus' biblical versification is considered and eloquent, with an austerity of language visibly imposed through Angus' several drafts. The decades of narrative poems assembled in *South Fukien*, however, are superlative at elevating personal observation to a work of universal appeal and historical significance. In the Fukien poems, scenes of missionary life are inseparable from scenes of community moral life. Angus shares Catholic novelist Graham Greene's gifts for spotting dramatic situations amid everyday life in a foreign land, and for pointing out the moral solution to controversial and dangerous events that eludes his characters. As shown in the reprinted poem below ("Illustration"), Angus was unafraid to portray that same capacity for enlightenment redounding upon himself in an unguarded moment.

After a long illness leavened by William's devoted care, Joyce Angus died in 1974. Angus set up a memorial scholarship in her name at Northwestern. Thanks to his son David's donation, the papers William Angus, Jr., left behind after his 1984 passing, are available to scholars as part of the Western Seminary collection at the Joint Archives. Researchers may view photographs and documents of the Amoy mission, hospital and schools, 1925-1952, Angus' publications and sermons as missionary in the Philippines, and editions of his poetry. Other RCA missions collections at the Joint Archives contain materials pertaining to the Anguses and Amoy Mission, most notably the Old China Hands Oral History Project Collection, which features a lengthy interview with Angus. A current exhibit of Angus photographs and documents may be viewed by visitors to the sixth floor conference room at Beardslee Library of the Western Theological Seminary.

### Illustration

He was trying to comfort a woman whose husband gambled.  
"Long ago in Chioh-be there was a woman whose husband  
Would keep her from going to church till she gave him money  
For gambling. He was a rascal and sponged on her,  
And she took in washing and mended clothes for a living.  
But she was patient and prayed."

"Did her husband reform?"

"No. He died. And she became a Bible woman.  
God opened a road for her that way." He caught himself.  
"I was just using that as an illustration," he said.

— William R. Angus, Jr.

Along with the newly opened William R. Angus, Jr., Collection, the Joint Archives holds several research collections of missionaries to other cultures. Here are just a few of the offerings:

**John R. Kempers (W00-1256)**

Papers, 1913-1995. 4.50 linear ft.

Kempers and his wife, Mabel, were the first RCA missionary-and-wife team in the impoverished Chiapas province of Mexico, 1925-1969. Kempers was a 1921 Hope College graduate, attended Princeton Theological Seminary, and received an honorary D.D. degree from Hope in 1950. After leaving Chiapas, Kempers taught for four years at the Mexico City seminary. This collection is rich with photographs of the *indio* groups of Mexico, photos of Kempers ministering by jeep, plane and on muleback, correspondence, and Kempers' biographical sketches of himself and his wife.



Western Seminary/Joint Archives

*Ch'ol Indian students, Chiapas Mission*

**Lois Marsilje (W94-1181)**

Papers, 1866-1987. 15.00 linear ft.

A Holland High School and Hope College graduate (1932), Marsilje trained as a nurse. She was assigned as a missionary to Arcot, India, in 1942. There she trained and supervised native nurses at Scudder Memorial Hospital in Ranipet. Her collection features copious photographs of her nursing charges and hospital facilities, correspondence with her mother in Michigan, and records of her training and service.

**Jeannette Veldman (W89-1012)**

Papers, 1912-1989. 10.50 linear ft.

This Grand Rapids native attended Hope College Preparatory School and graduated from Hope College (1926) before her nursing education. Veldman spent a year as a community nurse in Gray Hawk, Kentucky, for the RCA Women's Board of Domestic Missions. In 1930 she took a missionary nursing

position at Hope Hospital in Amoy, China, where she was a colleague of William and Joyce Angus. During World War II she was interned for two years as a Japanese prisoner of war. Veldman also served at Arcot, India, and in 1952 was assigned to the Arabian mission as Director of Nursing and in-service education. She began a school of nursing that served Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain and Oman. Her collection includes diaries, correspondence, speeches, and a charming photo album of Hope College life in the 1930s.

**Albertus Pieters (W88-1231)**

Papers, 1886-1985. 7.00 linear ft.

Pieters served as missionary to Japan from 1891-1923, until the debilitating illnesses of two of his children compelled him to return to the U.S. He accepted the Chair in Bible at Hope College, 1923-1926, and a professorship at the Western Theological Seminary, 1926-1939. He was an influential and fondly remembered educator. The Pieters collection includes typed course notes, addresses and sermons, and articles.

The Joint Archives also holds administrative collections for the RCA missions and missions boards below. Most feature annual reports, meeting minutes, photographs, and publications:

**Board of World Missions (W88-0301)**

Records, 1850-1989. 4.50 linear ft.

**Board of North American Missions (W88-0304)**

Records, 1849-1968. 4.50 linear ft.

**Women's Board of Foreign Missions (W88-0303)**

Records, 1875-1946. 2.50 linear ft.

**Women's Board of Domestic Missions (W88-0308)**

Records, 1884-1947. 2.00 linear ft.

**Arcot Mission (W88-0312)**

Records, 1886-1995. 0.75 linear ft.

**Brewton [Alabama] Mission (W88-0313)**

Records, 1921-1982. 0.50 linear ft.

**Chiapas Mission (W88-0314)**

Records, 1925-1985. 0.50 linear ft.

**China Mission (W88-0315)**

Records, 1888-1977. 1.00 linear ft.

**Appalachian Mission (W88-0316)**

Records, 1987-1989. 0.75 linear ft.

**Arabia Mission (W88-0316.1)**

Records, 1889-1989. 0.75 linear ft.

**Japan Mission (W88-0316.2)**

Records, 1901-1981. 0.50 linear ft.

**Kentucky Missions (W88-0317)**

Records, 1937-1958. 0.25 linear ft.

**Leprosy Mission (W88-0318)**

Records, 1937-1958. 0.50 linear ft.



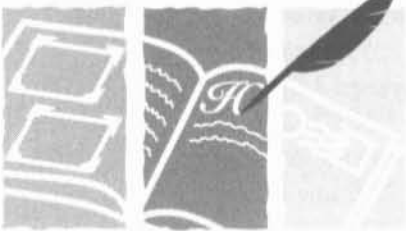
*Larry Wagenaar, c. 1994*

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