

Summer 1992

The Joint Archives Quarterly, Volume 04.02: Summer 1992

Larry J. Wagenaar

Chad A. Boorsma

Craig G. Wright

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The Joint Archives Quarterly

Volume 4 Number 2

The Last Great Lakes Cruise Ships

On Saturday, November 14 the Joint Archives of Holland will be hosting a program entitled "The Last Cruise Ships: The Georgian Bay Line." This multi-media presentation will be conducted by Jack Gruber of New Baltimore, Michigan.

Many in Holland will remember the stately cruise ships that wintered each year in Holland. They included the North American, South American, and Alabama and were the last major cruise/passenger ships to run on the Great Lakes. They left service in the late 1960s.

The program on November 14 will complement a similar event hosted by the Archives two years ago. His new program will trace the history of the Georgian Bay Line and include pictures and audio sounds of the Alabama, the North American and the South American. He will be covering new ground, building on what he presented before.

Gruber is personally involved with the history of the Georgian Bay Line. He worked on the South American during his college years. The ship was 321 feet long and played host to over 500,000 people throughout its half-century on the water.

We encourage you to come and enjoy this fascinating multi-media production. It will be held in the Winants auditorium of Graves Hall, which is located across



Holland Historical Trust Collection of the Joint Archives

The Alabama underway, sailing for the Chicago, Duluth and Georgian Bay Transit Company.

from the Van Wylen Library (behind the college anchor). Admission will be \$2 and the building is barrier free.

Titles Change

As an organization grows, so do the job descriptions of those associated with it. In order to better reflect the ongoing work of the staff of the Archives, the Joint Archives Council, our governing board, has named Larry Wagenaar *Director* of the Joint Archives of Holland and Craig G. Wright *Collections Manager*. These were changed from Archivist and Associate Archivist.

Wagenaar's duties include directing the day-to-day operations as well as planning for future growth and activities for the staff, is involved in reference assist-

ance with visiting patrons, works with collections, conducts outreach and is involved in bringing new materials and researchers to the archives facility.

Wright is involved in managing the archival collections themselves, taking leadership on how to intellectually and bibliographically control the materials so that researchers can find what they are looking for, is involved with reference assistance for patrons, supervises the work of part-time and volunteer staff, and is in charge of archives automation.

The Joint Archives Quarterly

From the Director

What an exciting and challenging time at the Joint Archives of Holland!! This time of year is especially rewarding as activity rises and we see more students at the archives, requests for research assistance from the new museum, college and the seminary rise and, quite frankly, the reading room starts to hum (as do the phones!).



To give you an idea of who has been here in the past month we have had a scholar from Italy undertaking research on ethnic demographics, members of the press community who wanted to know about past presidents that visited Holland, a couple delving into the history of their house, and the Chamber of Commerce's Leadership Holland group who were learning about the history of Holland and the role the Joint Archives of Holland plays in preserving that heritage.

For us at the Joint Archives it is always an educational project to get the word out. What is an archives, anyway? We are a research center - a place where "documentary heritage" is stored.

This complements the new museum opening in Holland in December. There the past is interpreted through permanent and changing exhibits, programs and special events. The background research needed to undertake the museum's exhibits is much like the research done by many other researchers at the archives. You are able to handle the letters, diaries, ledgers and photographs that can tell the particular story you are trying to learn.

There are fewer things closer to my heart than the process of both preserving our heritage and - more importantly - making the information that tells the story of that heritage - as accessible as possible.

Stop by or call next time you have an historical question!

Larry J. Wagenaar
Director

Staff

Director	Larry J. Wagenaar
Collections Manager	Craig G. Wright
Research Assistants	Chad A. Boorsma
	Brandie L. Benedict
	Monica L. Green
	Frances A. Johnson

The Lost and Found Department

Chad A. Boorsma

Perhaps you think from the title of this article that I am going to inform you of an umbrella, coat, gloves, or hat that someone may have left behind on a visit to the Archives. However, this is not my intention at all. Instead, I wish to tell you about an incident that our Collections Manager Craig Wright and I were involved in over the summer.

While working forty hours a week during the summer, rather than the ten hours I work during school terms, I am able to accomplish much more work and many more projects. One of the projects Craig and I wanted to accomplish over the summer was to clean out a backlog of "odds and ends" that had accumulated on our back counter over the past months. We realized it would be a tedious job, but we were determined to get it done.

One of the first things we did was to move it to a more convenient location: the reading room. Yes, our beautiful reading room turned into a Pearl Harbor bombing raid. Regular visitors like Elton Bruins were quite amazed at the appearance. Dr. Bruins remarked on his visit, "Did the back room explode?" Well, not quite, but it sure looked like it. Uncovered amidst the piles were a number of things we could add to the main collections, duplicates of things we already had, and of course, items that belonged in the waste basket. After two days of work, the reading room was able to return to normal.

While doing your fall cleaning around the house, or perhaps sorting through things as you prepare to move to a new residence, look at what you about to throw away. It may be something worth giving to the archives. This was the case almost twenty-five years ago when Third Reformed Church in Grand Rapids was about to move to their new location. The Rev. Stuart J. Blauw, pastor of Third Church at the time, uncovered in the basement of the old building the minutes of the Classis of Grand River of the RCA, which had been missing for many years. Perhaps something you find may not be that major, but it is still worth bringing it by the Archives to have Larry or Craig look at it. Things that were once lost and forgotten, can be found and given valuable use in the Joint Archives of Holland.

Hours Through Memorial Day

Mon. - Sat. 1 - 5pm
Mornings by appointment.
Closed Sat. Dec. 12 - Jan. 9

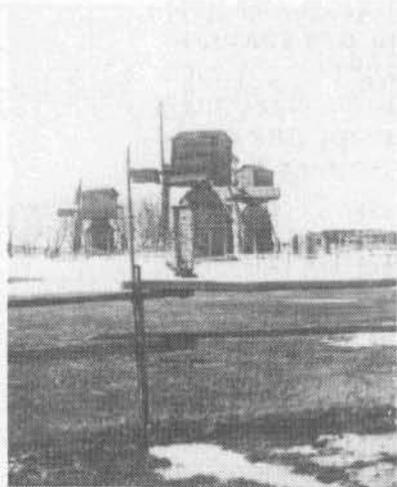
The Joint Archives Quarterly

The Processor's Table

by Craig Wright
Collections Manager

Donation Every Two Days

In the past few issues of the *Quarterly* I have given recognition to our students, volunteers and researchers. Recognition to the community which supports our efforts at the Archives is long overdue. So far in 1992 we have received over 110 separate dona-



Hope College Collection of the Joint Archives

Russian windmills as seen by Holland's Polar Bears.

tions which averages out to a donation every two days. This is phenomenal support from the Holland, Hope College and Western Theological Seminary communities.

Of these donations, 77 have been given to the Holland Historical Trust collection, 33 have been earmarked for the Hope College collection and 13 will be added to the Western Theological Seminary collection. Betty Cook donated one of these collections which contains 133 photographs of U.S. 'polar bear' troops who fought in Russia at the end of the First World War. Many of these photos are not war related but show market days, plowing, and a toboggan run built right in the middle of a city. The photo above is from this collection and shows us some Russian windmills by the village of Bakharitza.

As one might expect, there is quite a diversity of materials contained in these donations. There are photographs, diaries, correspondence, sermons, scrapbooks, 16mm films, postcards, pamphlets, reports, maps, furniture catalogs, citizenship papers, slides, cassette tapes, books, videocassettes, and programs from many events. All of these materials help us document the heritage of our member institutions (museum, college and seminary), the Holland area, and the Reformed Church in America.

The number of subjects covered in these donations is amazing: Civil War veterans of the Grand Army of the Republic, Gerrit Diekema, railroads, Tulip Time, the American Legion Band, the Holland Furnace Company, migrant workers, World War I polar bears,

Memorial Day activities, and Alex Haley. This is only the tip of the iceberg.

Although it will take some time to assimilate all this into our collections, the information contained in this material is now being preserved for future generations. Most of the donations are available for research when necessary even before processing, which involves professionally arranging and describing a collection. This just means that researchers have to dig deeper on their own. Both the Hope Reformed Church records and the Fraternal Society records have been used quite a bit in their unprocessed state.

Thanks again to this wonderful community for thinking of us and helping us as we work in the preservation of our heritage.

Over 1,000 Patrons Served!

From August first of last year through this past August the Joint Archives of Holland assisted over 1,000 researchers. In the past year the Archives staff has been tracking the numbers and types of people using the collections and, with the



Collections Manager Craig Wright working with a patron.

help of our own staff statistician, Craig Wright, we are able to better understand the needs of those who use our facility.

Although we have had months where over 100 people have used the collections, our average is nearly 80. That can be compared with the first year of Joint Archives operation when approximately 25 people researched in the archives each month.

The heavy use by students, businesses, scholars, educators, museum, college and seminary staff as well as other community members underscores the success of this unique undertaking. For the first time a central location has been established where anyone can go to check historical information.

The Joint Archives of Holland is a History Research Center that is open to all. The staff is ready to assist you in locating maps, photographs, letters and diaries that might help you learn about your interest.

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HISTORY RESEARCH CENTER

The Joint Archives of Holland

1992-93 Educational Programming

November
14

The Georgian Bay Ships - Jack Gruber

Complementing a program we held a couple of years ago, this session will look into the unique history of the North American and Alabama that sailed for this cruise line. The ships wintered in the Holland area each year into the late 1960s. Admission: \$2.

February
20

Fading Photos:

Care and Identification of Historical Photographs - Mark Coir

The purpose of this program is to help participants understand how to care for and preserve photographs either in a professional setting like an archives and historical societies, or in a private or business situation. Half day workshop. Fee: \$25.

April

Spring Speaker - To be arranged.

June
19

Archives 101: Basic Skills Workshop - Richard Harms

This workshop, which runs a full day, has been very popular. It is designed to introduce individuals to the many facets of setting up and running an archives. Aimed at those who do not have professional training, this workshop has been highly rated by former participants for its content. Fee: \$25.