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Hope College and the Vietnam War Era: "We Only Started to Care When it Affected Us."

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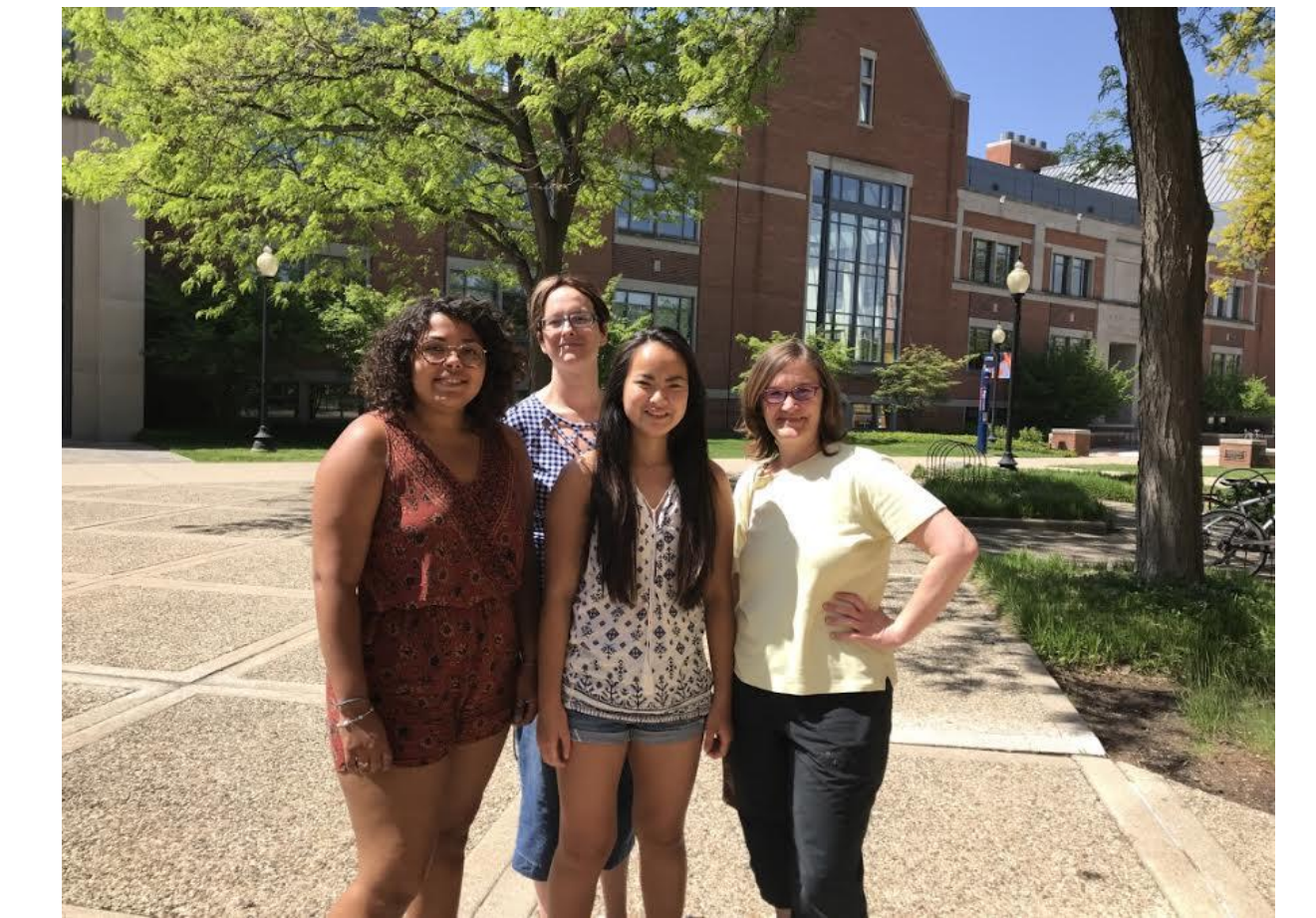
ABSTRACT

This project focuses on Hope College during the Vietnam War era. During this time, the draft created moral dilemmas for both students and faculty. When it started affecting themselves and people they knew, students felt that they needed to be educated about the war. The draft also meant that students sought deferments through such means as studying ministry, pre-med, and other sciences. Hope students noticed that young men who were able to avoid the draft were usually privileged and not a part of the minority class. This led many Hope students to protest the draft and the war. These protests often led to social justice because they compelled the larger community to reevaluate the United States’ participation in the war. But these protests only became in earnest once the war hit home through the draft. As Hope alumnus Don Luidens said, “We only started to care when it affected us.”

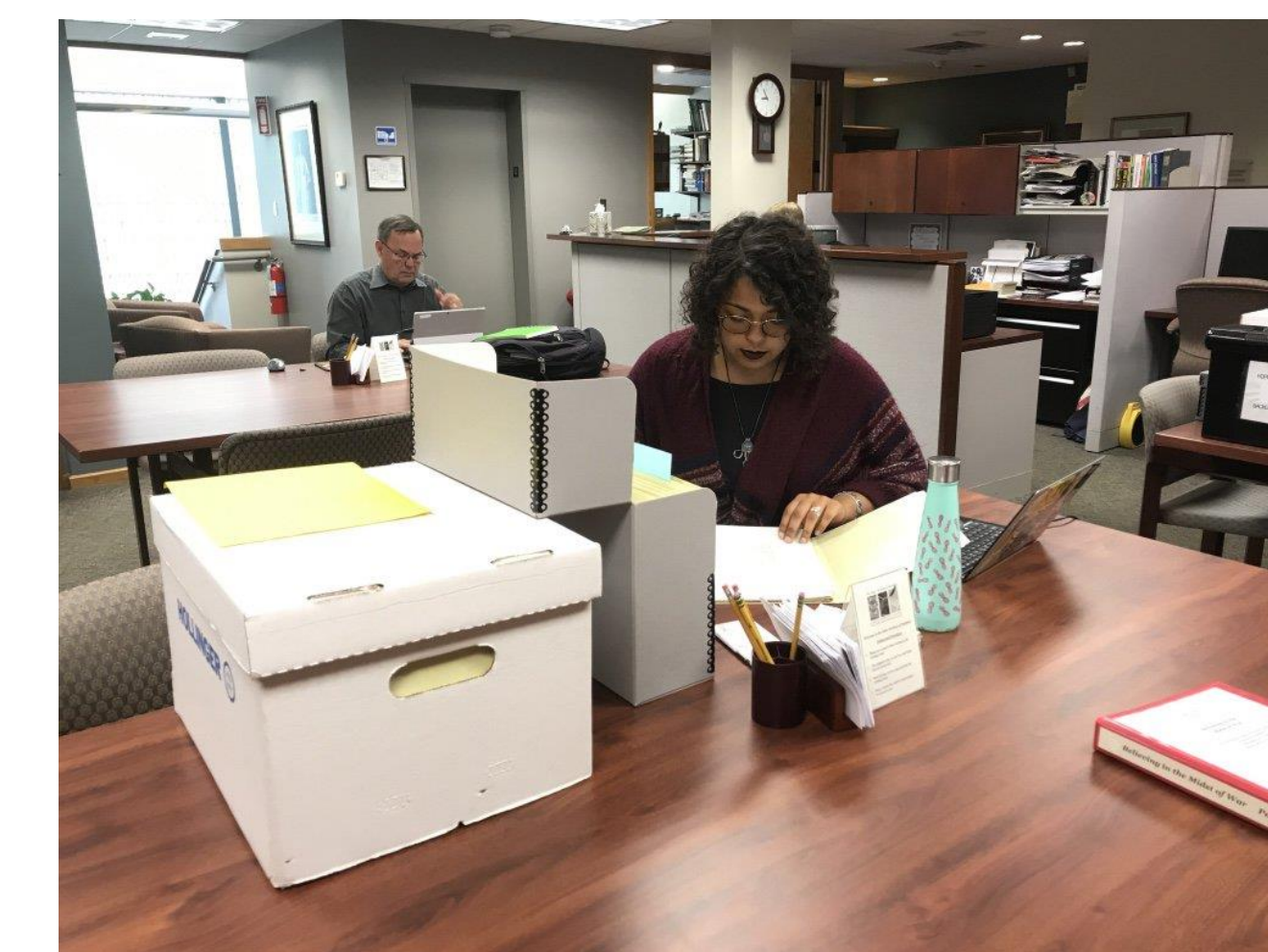


METHODS

Our research process entailed searching *The Anchor* archives from 1966-1973, and we also spent time at the Joint Archives of Holland digging through the files of President Vander Werf, the Black Coalition group, and the Dorians. We also used the *Milestone*, the Hope College yearbook, for pictures of students participating in protests. To conclude our research, we interviewed Don Luidens to get a view of what the campus was like while he was a student during the Vietnam War.



From left: Halla Maas, Professor Koch, Olivia Brickley, Professor Petit



Interview with Don Luidens

TULIP TIME PROTEST

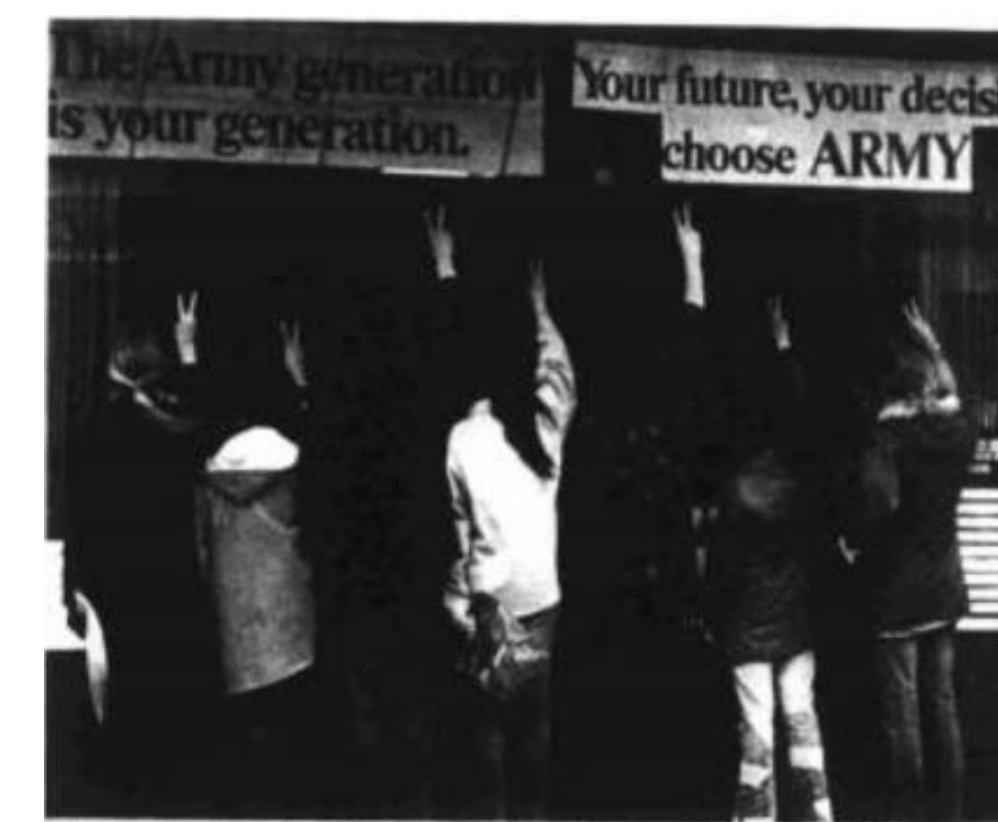
The Tulip Time Festival in Holland showcases the pride in the town’s Dutch history and roots. On Saturday, May 14, 1966, the parade was disrupted by a group of 10 Hope College students protesting the conflict in Vietnam and the Selective Service examination. This examination, at this point in time, was based on a system of intellectual ability; those with high GPAs and class ranks were safe, while those with lower GPAs and class ranks tended to be drafted. The Hope students broke into the Tulip Time Festival parade, without a permit, to voice their opposition to this practice and to the Vietnam War. This protest served as a platform for campus discussion and debate about what appropriate protests looked like in light of the Vietnam War and the draft.



In May, 1966 10 students broke into the annual Tulip Time Festival Parade, without a permit, in protest of the Vietnam War and the government’s handling of interactions with Viet Cong leadership. Image courtesy of the *Anchor* (1966).

STAMPEDING THE DRAFT CENTER

One form of protest that resonated with Hope students was the protesting of the draft center in Holland. In 1973, some Hope students decided to stampede the drafting center in Holland. This protest centered around promoting peace and justice to those who lost their lives in the war in Cambodia. An article in *The Anchor*, titled, “Decry Killing: Hopeites Stage Protest,” explained that students set up their protest in front of the Army-Navy recruiting center on West Eighth Street. While they were protesting to end the war, they succeeded in shutting down the recruitment center temporarily and collected 250 signatures for their petition, which they planed to send to the secretary-general of the United Nations. Their petition read, “We the undersigned believe that God our Father has given man life. He has asked man to prosper and grow, and above all to have faith in Him. What God has given life, let no man destroy. Let neither the leaders of North Vietnam, the U.S., Thailand, South Vietnam, the Philippines, Australia, the People's Republic of China, the U.S.S.R., New Zealand, or any other nation or person usurp the power of God.” These students believed that the war in Cambodia was killing God’s creation of man. Because of this, these students protested to end the war in order to save human life.



In 1972 in April, the army-navy recruiting center on West Eighth Street in Holland was closed down on Friday as a result of a small anti-war protest staged by Hope students. Image courtesy of the *Anchor* (1972)

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