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The Joint Archives Quarterly

Summer 1989

Volume 1 Number 2

The Joint Archives of Holland



GUIDE TO THE COLLECTIONS

Holland Historical Trust
Hope College
Western Theological Seminary

IN THIS ISSUE

- *From the Archivist*
- *Guide to the Collections*
- *Summer Intern Blues*
- *Collection Guide on computer*
- *Recent additions to our collections*

Guide to the Collections

It is with great pleasure that we are able to announce that *The Joint Archives of Holland: Guide to the Collections* is available for purchase. The *Guide* is a list with description of all the archival material held in the three collections of the Joint Archives.

By using our new *Guide to the Collections* you will be able to access 2,000 cubic feet of archival materials in 1,500 separate collections which are part of the archival holdings of the Holland Historical Trust, Hope College and Western Theological Seminary. The *Guide* is over 250 pages in length and is fully indexed for ease of use.

Through the use of computer technology available here in the Van Wylen and Beardslee libraries the *Guide* is also "on-line". This means that any patron can look at the guide on a computer terminal whether in the library or using a computer and modem at home. It will allow for key word searching (eg. list all collections that refer to Van Raalte) which will help researchers to quickly access our materials. The computer version will be updated every 30 days.

The printed version, available at the archives for \$15.95, is an attractively bound volume which describes in detail each collection which makes up

the Joint Archive's holdings. It describes the subject of the material, date range, volume and related individuals.

The *Guide* will replace separate guides to the three collections, two of which were last published in 1978. It is completely updated to reflect hundreds of additions and is fully indexed. It will serve as an indispensable bibliographical tool for immigration research, individuals studying the history of the Dutch in America, genealogists, and local historians.

Revenue from the sale of the *Guide* will be used to support the ongoing activities of the Joint Archives.

SUMMER INTERN BLUES

Kori Levos

From the Archivist

Summer is upon us and it is time to release the second number of the *Joint Archives Quarterly*. It is my pleasure to focus this issue around the new *Guide to the Collections* which is now available at the Archives or can be ordered using the form in this newsletter.

The *Guide* is exciting for us as it represents the culmination of a years worth of work, a year of bringing the three collections of the Joint Archives into one location and the even bigger task of documenting all the material we have. It is over 250 pages in length and provides information on every processed collection in our holdings. It is also exciting for us because the staff has put so much time and effort into it. More than any other informational material which bears the Joint Archive's name this embodies what we've been up to.

Currently the Joint Archives has over 2,000 cubic feet of material in over 1,500 individual collections. The *Guide* is indispensable in locating material and has the added benefit of being fully indexed.

I would encourage you to order the *Guide to the Collections* as a reference volume. Your order will help to support our efforts here as proceeds from the sale of the *Guide* will be used in the ongoing operation of the Joint Archives.

Larry J. Wagenaar

As the new summer intern at the Joint Archives, I came in on the final phase of preparation for the *Guide to the Collections*, so my first archival assignment was to create an index. This was an ingenious way for me to get familiar with the items in each of the three collections as the initial step involved reading the current *Guide* and highlighting potential terms to be indexed. Including everything from Gerrit Diekema to the Emersonian Fraternity to the *Westerns*, I soon had a pretty competent grasp of the sorts of materials the Joint Archives had available for researcher and patron use.

That first period of marking items was the simplest part of the indexing project, for after getting the archivist's approval of the terms, I was off to work with the Zenith computer. The program we use, WordPerfect 5.0, did have an index option in its miraculous mechanical menu, so my hopes of ease and expediency sprouted like Michigan mosquitoes only to be squashed as the magnitude of work to be done continued to increase.

The indexing took longer than I anticipated because not only did I have to generate a unique index for each of the three collections, but I also had to double-check the accuracy of every term. In order for the computer to locate all the instances of a particular item, the index entries needed to be distinctive, but as concise as possible. For

example, a term like Albertus Christiaan Van Raalte had to be entered as Van Raalte then I sifted through all the page number locations the computer sited to be certain they referred to A. C. Van Raalte and not to something else like Van Raalte Hall. With all of that to do, the completion date seemed as hazy as the humid summer days I plunged into from my climate-controlled computer cubicle.

But at long last, when the Historical Trust, Hope and Western collections had all been indexed and terms integrated, the job was done...almost. The final step was simply to marry the three indexes together, alphabetize the terms and move the items into columns. Although those tasks didn't sound overwhelming, the computer slowed them down because the snazzy index option was heavily coded in computer hieroglyphic jargon that prevented it from being columnized. Only with the aid of professional translation were we able to overcome that obstacle and truly finish the assignment.

Well, the *Guide* is going to publication which means that the combined index of all three collections is satisfactorily completed. In spite of the difficulty and duration involved in producing it, I am proud of the index because I know that it will serve patrons for as long as the *Guide* remains and in the archives that could be a really long time.



THE COLLECTIONS COMPUTERIZED

Computers can be befuddling. That is what the staff of the Joint Archives has found out as we have worked on the task of making our holdings accessible on a computer so that you can step into the Van Wylen or Beardslee libraries and walk up to any screen and access the *Guide to the Collections*. The Joint Archives will be the first archive in Michigan to make its collections available to the public via computer access.

Last month the card catalog was removed from the Van Wylen library. Although the Joint Archives is separate due to its joint nature we are affected by the activities of the building we are located in. Removal of the card catalog means that searching for a library book now can be done much faster with a couple of keystrokes at one of the many terminals in the library. The same quick access is available at any library terminal at Western Seminary. We wanted the same to be true for locating materials at the Joint Archives.

Our challenge was to create a computer program that would operate simply and be able to become a part of the library's automated network. With the help of the College's computer services department we have been able to create easy to follow menus on the screen which will allow any patron in the Archives, at any terminal in the two libraries or anyone with a computer and phone modem to look at an up to date version of the *Guide* as well as search for any word, name or phrase that appears anywhere in the 250 page document.

The search function is the largest benefit of the automated version. You can input any word - say your father's last name - and it will tell you if that name appears in any description in the *Guide*. A search for "Van Raalte" will come up with numerous references while one for "Van Dyke" will reveal only a few. This feature will enhance the speed with which any researcher can access our materials.

If you would like to see the automated version or have any questions please stop by the Archives, we would be happy to show you. For those of you with computers please take a moment to modem in! The numbers to dial are: 394-7677 and 394-7678 for 1200 baud modems (8 bits, 1 stop bit, no parity). Type "LIB" at the enter system prompt and "PAC" at the password prompt then simply follow the menu.

Through the use of computer technology the Joint Archives is attempting to become as "user friendly" as possible.

New Collections

Holland Historical Trust:

- Civil War photos
- Scrapbooks of Lavina Cappon
- Various City Directories
- Footprints
- Grand River Valley Review

Hope College:

- 1911 Prep School Photo
- Memory book photo album c1930.
- Class Song 1906
- Departmental papers

Western Theological Seminary:

- Jeanette Veldman papers (avail. 1990)
- Pioneer Christian Monthly
- Ethio-Echo missionary newsletter
- Jean Vis Sermons
- China missions photos

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The Joint Archives of Holland Guide to the Collections

Order Form

Please send _____ copies of the *Guide to the Collections*
of the *Joint Archives of Holland* \$15.95 ea.

Shipping & Handling (\$3.00 per copy) _____

Sales Tax (Michigan orders only) _____

Total _____

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Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Institutions may be billed, however, prepayment is recommended.

Return to: The Joint Archives of Holland, Hope College Campus, Holland, MI 49423

Pick up your copy at the Joint Archives and avoid the shipping charge!