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The Joint Archives *Quarterly*

Volume 23 Number 4

Winter 2014

Nick Goutziers: A Life of Blessings from Pain

By Charlyn Pelter

As time goes on, it is easy to forget the innately human aspects of such an atrocity as World War II. It is natural to want to forget that real people lived under oppressive governments and frightening circumstances. However, this human connection must be maintained. Most people would agree recording history is an important, if not crucial, part of understanding and improving society. If the history of a society is not recorded, there is no way for its new population to learn from their predecessors' mistakes. Few people are still alive who fully remember the horrors of the Second World War. Eventually, there will be no living connections to this event, which forever changed the human experience. The individual stories must be recorded so this visceral understanding will continue. There is a unique power in having oral histories to supplement the official reports of history. According to Donna DeBlasio, author of *Catching Stories: A Practical Guide to Oral History*, "Oral history provides sources beyond the traditional kinds of information... It illuminates environments, perceptions, and feelings of individuals able to paint verbal pictures of all sorts of experiences...". Recording the first-person accounts of these events will become an invaluable resource to future generations.

One man who insists that his story be shared is Nikolaas Goutziers, or Nick, a local Michigan resident, who experienced Nazi control as a teenager living in Rotterdam. Nick Goutziers knew that his story was important and wanted it to be shared. He contacted the

Joint Archives of Holland on the campus of Hope College in Holland, Michigan, to see if they were interested in recording his story. The Joint Archives has several series of oral histories in their collection, ranging from local area residents to theologians to former Hope College faculty members. Director Geoffrey Reynolds



was enthralled by Goutziers' story and wanted it recorded and preserved in the archives. I volunteered to take on the task of recording this story in writing and in a video interview. Over the next couple of months I was able to interview Goutziers in person, as well as correspond via email. Right from the beginning of our interaction, Goutziers was enthusiastic about having his story heard. Despite being in his eighties, Goutziers is lively, animated, and a delightful person to have a conversation with. When I met him for the first time, he greeted me in the driveway of his home in Arcadia, Michigan, with a huge smile and a tray of cookies. He had laid out every document and picture that he could find,

including pictures of family, pictures of the Netherlands, and all of his old passports. We sat in his cozy living room with his daughter Suzanne, and he told me his life story.

Nick Goutziers was born in Rotterdam, Netherlands, in 1929. He was an only child with a loving mother and father. He describes his childhood as "...normal, like any little Dutch kid." He went to school, tended to his family's garden, and spent a lot of time outside with

(continued on page 2)

From the Director



Every working day I have the professional privilege of accepting and finding collections and connecting with historical figures that future researchers will find valuable to their work. The two articles in this issue, presented by two Hope College students, illustrate how traditional paper-based and newly-created digital oral history collections continue to aid our researchers in their work and help them grow as students at Hope College.

This issue also brings with it the sad news of the passing of two long-time volunteers: Sue Brandsen in August and just recently Carolyn Nienhuis. Sue clipped newspaper articles, photocopied and filed them in our collections. Carolyn was key to processing many of our church congregation collections. Both of them are missed.

Lastly, in January we welcomed graduate student intern Justine Bailey from Wayne State University's Library and Information Science Program. Justine has added greatly to our service to researchers and gained real world experience in an archive.

Geoffrey D. Reynolds

A Life of Blessings from Pain (continued from page 1)

friends. He loved swimming, fishing, and going to the beach with other young people in the neighborhood. One of his favorite activities was ice skating on the rivers and canals that flowed through Rotterdam. Another favorite was a game that was especially common among the children of Rotterdam. Groups of kids would buy two clay pipes and attach them to their coats. Then they would skate, holding on to a broomstick to stay together, from Rotterdam to Gouda along the frozen canals. If they managed to return with their pipes unbroken, they won a prize. Other times they would just skate in the town. "There was an organ on the ice where they played music, you know, you turn the wheel and it plays organ music," Goutziers recalls. He, as well as many of the Rotterdam residents, especially enjoyed time skating to the organ music with family and friends. Such a picturesque image of childhood play in a peaceful community was sharply contradicted by rumblings of the start of the Second World War.

On May 10, 1940, World War II began. The Dutch government had hoped to stay neutral during this war, as they had in World War I, but all hope was lost when Hitler decided to conquer the Netherlands. The aerial bombing of the city by the *Luftwaffe* (German Air Force)

in May 1940 preceded the occupation of Rotterdam. This attack killed close to nine hundred civilians and left another thirty thousand, including the Goutziers family, without homes. When the Goutziers' home was bombed, the walls buckled in; Goutziers and his parents were trapped inside the demolished home. Luckily for the family, a neighbor dug through the rubble to rescue them, and amazingly no one was harmed. The family left the remnants of their home and moved into a small cabin near the Goutziers' farm, about two miles outside of the city. The cabin had space for the family to sleep, as well as some minimal cooking supplies, but was not meant for long-term living. However, with nowhere else to go, the Goutziers family stayed there for over a month until they were able to return to the city to find a new place to live.



The aftermath of the bombardment of Rotterdam, May 1940 (Google image)

Germany threatened to bomb other Dutch cities if the Netherlands did not surrender. Seeing no other option, the Dutch surrendered on May 14, 1940, after enduring the German *blitzkrieg*. The Dutch queen and her advisors sought refuge in London. A civil administration was put in place by Hitler to supervise the Netherlands. The German occupation of the Netherlands created many hardships for the Dutch people.

The Germans invaded Rotterdam shortly thereafter. Goutziers recalls that, at first, the Germans were not a serious imposition to their daily lives. "The Germans, you had to take them, but...they were not nasty to us at all," says Goutziers. By 1943, the climate was significantly worse in Rotterdam. Food became scarce for the families living there; a majority of the resources, crops, and livestock were sent to feed and clothe the German troops around Europe. Goutziers' father, a surveyor by trade, was sent to survey land for an airfield in Gdansk, Poland. He was taken by the Germans and sent in a boxcar, with about sixty other people, to Poland. The family knew nothing about where the father was being sent or if they would ever see him again.

By 1944, food supplies across Europe were diminishing rapidly. Despite the success of D-Day and the liberation of Southern Netherlands by Allied forces, conditions in the occupied parts of the country were horrific. The Germans established a blockade to cut off food and fuel shipments as a way of punishing the Dutch for their lack of support towards the Nazi government. Almost five million Dutch civilians were affected and over 20,000 died from the famine. The Dutch people survived largely on the consumption of tulip bulbs, sugar beets, and bread and flour from the Swedish Red Cross. This time became known as the *Hongerwinter*. People became so desperate for food that they ate grass and tree bark. Furniture was broken up and used for firewood. At this time, Nick Goutziers and his mother moved in with her parents in a small apartment in Rotterdam. The Goutziers family was once again at a loss for how they would get enough food to survive. Nick Goutziers decided he only had one choice left.

In 1943, when Nick Goutziers was just 14 years old, he gave his rations card to his mother and started searching for somewhere to work and find food. He traveled from farm to farm across the Dutch countryside. He offered labor in exchange for a meal, but most families had nothing to give. After a few weeks of walking, Goutziers collapsed, starving and malnourished. The next thing he remembered was waking up in a hospital. The hospital staff informed Goutziers that a German soldier had found him unconscious in a field and carried him to the hospital. Goutziers was lucky to have survived, and would most likely have died in that field if this soldier had not had the heart to bring him to safety. This man saved his life.

After being released from the hospital, Goutziers finally arrived at a farm that had a place for him. The woman who owned the farm had recently lost her husband and needed some help managing the farm. "I was skin and bones at the time," says Goutziers. "When you came into the farm house, they had hams and sausages hanging from the ceiling." As a starving child, Goutziers felt like he had walked into a dream. The woman fed him small meals at first, helping him regain his strength until she felt he was ready to start working. The farm was small with about ten acres of land, some cows, a couple of pigs, and a flock of chickens.

Despite being away from his family, Goutziers says he has many good memories of his time on the farm. Goutziers especially cherishes memories of a gentleman named Thÿs VanZomerén, who lived on the neighboring farm. He was a middle-aged bachelor with a friendly and caring demeanor, who took young Goutziers under his care. They used to sit on a hill near the farms and watch the American planes fly over on their way to

Germany. VanZomerén took Goutziers to church and taught him a great deal about life on a farm.

In 1945, the war ended, so Goutziers left VanZomerén and the farm that he had called home for two years to return to Rotterdam. Goutziers got a ride on a milk truck back to Rotterdam. He had no idea if his parents and grandparents had survived the war or what would be there for him when he returned. Goutziers described his homecoming as "...a joy you have never known before. Everyone was so happy." His mother was beside herself when he finally returned home. His father was not in Rotterdam and neither Goutziers nor his family had any idea about whether his father had survived the war. To their amazement, Goutziers' father returned home to Holland just two months later after being liberated by the Russians. The soldiers had taken his shoes because they were better than the shoes they were wearing. Despite not having any shoes, he was able to return to his family.

Even after the war ended, the Netherlands was still in grave condition. There was very little food, and a great deal of destruction was left from the Germans. Goutziers decided that he would join the Dutch merchant marines, rather than staying in Rotterdam. After being home for less than a month, Goutziers, at age 16, left his family once again.



*Goutziers (2nd from left) and friends
the day before he left for America, April 1947*

Goutziers hoped the merchant marines would give him the opportunity to get away from the starvation in Rotterdam and see new parts of the world. He boarded the *S.S. Lekhaven* in Antwerp, Belgium, and sailed to Baltimore, Maryland. Upon arriving in America he was given some money, which he spent on food, some clothing, and a tablecloth to give to his mother when he returned to the Netherlands. He never imagined that he would be staying in America. He was approached by a

man at a restaurant who suggested that, since he was Dutch, he go to Holland, Michigan, because that is where all the Dutch immigrants were. Goutziers decided that he might as well. He felt that he had nothing to lose, since he would only be sent back to the Netherlands if he were caught. In 1947, Goutziers jumped ship in America to begin his life in a new country with a new culture, and more importantly, a completely new language.

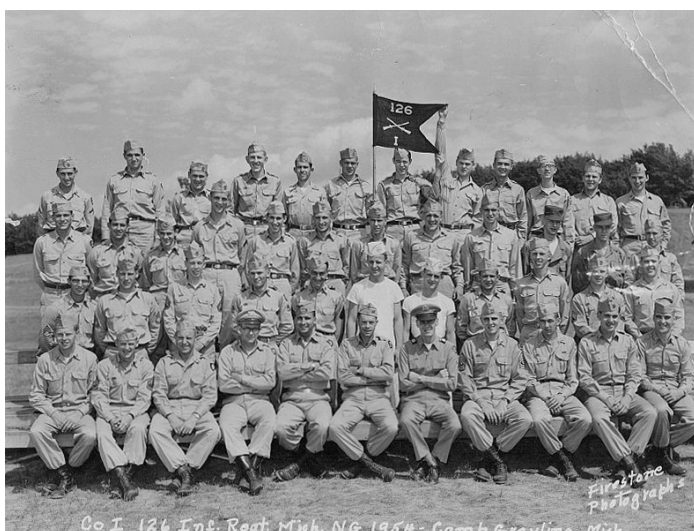
When Goutziers first arrived in America, the first thing that struck him was the utopian-like atmosphere of America, compared to the Netherlands at that time. America seemed to be a country of everything. Despite the war, everyone still had enough food and basic necessities. The people were thriving, unlike the people in Europe who were, at that time, recovering. There was a multitude of opportunities for a young adult. Goutziers struggled some with the language barrier, but for the most part was able to communicate well enough to function in America. One of the challenges was trying to order in restaurants. Goutziers typically just ordered whatever the person next to him ordered. Soon the only thing he knew how to order was a hamburger. Once he tried to order eggs and bacon, but he was confused when they asked how he wanted his eggs, so he ordered a hamburger instead.

The man who told Goutziers about Holland, Michigan, also told him that he would need a social security card so that he would be able to work in America. Goutziers had no idea what the man was talking about, since he spoke no English and the man did not speak Dutch, but he trusted the man anyway. He took Goutziers to an office and somehow got him a card. "All I know is he must have given his address for I received my card," Goutziers says. With his new social security number, Goutziers set out for Holland.

Goutziers had no resources to travel so he was forced to hitchhike across the country. A young man picked him up and said that he could take Goutziers as far as Indianapolis. When they arrived, the man left Goutziers on the side of the highway so that he could catch a ride the rest of the way to Holland. Goutziers waited for a while, but was unable to find a ride. To his surprise the same man came back. He said that his mother had been upset with him for leaving Goutziers, and demanded that he bring him back to the house for a hot meal and a place to stay the night. The next morning the family gave Goutziers some money and wished him a safe trip. He hitched a ride on a Holland Motor Express truck and rode it all the way to Michigan.

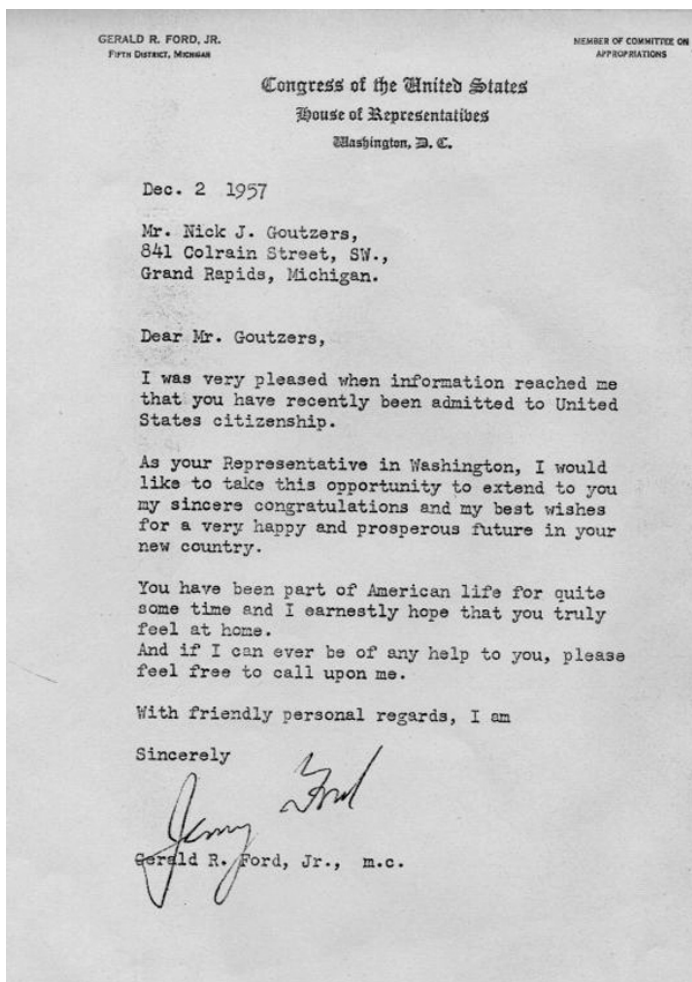
Goutziers felt right at home in Holland. The first people he met helped him find a job. About eight months later, Goutziers met some men who suggested he go to Grand Rapids, Michigan, to work at Postma Baking Company. He worked there for a while before getting a printing job at the American Coating Mills. While working at the mills, Goutziers often ate lunch near a blue bridge that crossed the Grand River. He noticed a woman who would often eat lunch at the same place. She worked at the nearby Bissell plant. Eventually they became friends, went on a few dates, and got married in 1951. Later the same year, Goutziers decided he wanted to become a citizen. It was common at the time to join the National Guard as a way of attaining citizenship, so that is exactly what Goutziers did. He was very successful; he received the Best Soldier of the Month award and achieved the rank of Master Sergeant.

Soon after joining the National Guard, Goutziers contacted Willard Wichers at the Netherlands Information Service. He asked Wichers what the consequences would be if he turned himself in, in order to apply for citizenship. Wichers assured him that he would most likely not be deported; however, he would have to be arrested and paroled on paper. Sure enough, when Goutziers surrendered to the immigration authorities in January 1952, he was first arrested for violation of the immigration laws and was immediately paroled. He then applied for suspension of his deportation. His application was accepted. His deportation was suspended and he was released from his parole agreement. Goutziers had to have a special order of congress to become a citizen because he entered the country illegally and was not included in the immigration quota. Once his application was accepted, his case was referred to congress. Wichers felt confident that this would pass, but congress rejected the application. Goutziers was given ninety days to voluntarily return to the Netherlands. Originally, he would have been accepting of returning to the Netherlands. However, the Netherlands was at war with Indonesia and Goutziers



*Company I, 126th Infantry Regiment,
Michigan National Guard, 1954, Camp Grayling*

would be required to serve in the Dutch army. Goutziers had a wife and a family in Michigan. He was not willing to accept defeat, so he tried another method.



Congratulations letter sent to Goutziers from Rep. Gerald R. Ford when Goutziers received U.S. citizenship, 1957

Following Wichers suggestion, Goutziers went to Windsor, Canada, and applied for an U.S. work visa. In January 1954, Goutziers was interviewed and his visa was granted. Once Goutziers' visa was granted, there was a three-year waiting period before he was able to apply for naturalization. During this time, Goutziers' was honorably discharged from the National Guard and started a new job at Bishop Motor Express as a truck driver. Once the waiting period was over, Goutziers filed his petition for naturalization and was called before an examination board. He was told to bring two witnesses who could attest to his good moral character. One of the witnesses Goutziers brought was his minister Reverend Borsht. Unfortunately, in the process of examination, the board learned that Rev. Borsht was not a legal citizen. Goutziers felt badly that his minister was in trouble, but fortunately his deportation was suspended and his petition was passed on to congress. His minister was also able to get his papers. Goutziers' petition was approved and signed by Representative Gerald R. Ford.

Nick Goutziers became an American citizen on January 10, 1958, at Fountain Street Baptist Church.

After achieving his dream of becoming an American citizen, Goutziers, his wife, and their four children lived happily in West Michigan. He worked as a truck driver for many years, and was very satisfied by his livelihood. In spite of his abrupt plunge into American life, Goutziers found people who helped him establish a great life. He had a career, a home, and a loving family, but he missed the family that he left behind so many years ago. He had been able to write to his family many times over the years, but he still had not seen his mother or father in almost three decades. Fortunately in 1969, Goutziers was able to take his oldest daughter, Suzanne, to the Netherlands during her senior year of high school.

While in the Netherlands, Goutziers visited many places he remembered from his childhood. He was even able to find the farm in Oudleuzen where he stayed during the war. There was a new family living there, but his daughter was still able to see where he had stayed. He went next door to VanZomeren's house, and an old man answered the door. They stared at each other for a moment before the man pulled an old passport picture of Goutziers out of his wallet. Goutziers was overcome with joy when he realized not only was he staring at the man who had taken such care of him as a child, but also that the man had kept a picture of him in his wallet for twenty-five years.

A recurring theme in Goutziers' story is the grace that he was shown by other people. Over and over again, he found himself in a tough spot, but was blessed over and over by perfect strangers. "I could have died so many times, but someone was always there to help me," Goutziers says. When he was a young man, starving and far from home, an enemy soldier found him and brought him to safety. "People say, 'Why would a German soldier do that?' Well, he was probably a regular army soldier like the Americans. They were forced. They were drafted. He probably had a couple of boys back home," Goutziers replies. His life easily could have ended there without the help of this stranger. Again, when he arrived in America, there was the young man who gave him a ride all the way from Baltimore to Indianapolis and then provided him with the money to get to Holland. Once in Michigan, everyone was extremely kind to him; he was able to find a job and start a life. Goutziers is especially thankful for Willard Wichers, who took a personal interest in helping him become a citizen. He is also thankful to Gerald Ford for granting him citizenship, even though he had every right to send him back to the Netherlands. Goutziers is ultimately grateful for the kindness that he has been shown throughout his life.

The most overwhelming example of this kindness was reconnecting with VanZomerén. It is easy to see how much of an impact VanZomerén had on Goutziers' life, but Goutziers was unaware of how deeply he had impacted VanZomerén's life. VanZomerén remained a bachelor his entire life, so Goutziers was the closest thing he had to a son. It is clear from the fact that VanZomerén still carried a picture of Goutziers after so long, that he deeply cared for him. This is also clear from Goutziers' more recent interactions with VanZomerén's nephew. "I received an e-mail from Herman VanZomerén asking if I was the person who lived in Oudleuzen in the war years. You could have knocked me over after 64 years; someone made contact with me like a ghost from the past. Since then we have been corresponding," Goutziers says. Goutziers was also able to visit Herman during a later trip to the Netherlands. The fact that Herman was compelled to find and contact Goutziers after so long speaks volumes to how important Goutziers was to his dear friend Thÿs VanZomerén.

Oral historian Ronald J. Grele states, "Oral history is a way to get a better history, a more critical history, a more conscious history which involves members of the public in the creation of their own history." In other words, oral history provides a more complete description of events because it allows for members of society to partake in its construction. It allows for a deeper and more personal understanding of history. Even though oral history is someone's subjective description of a historical event, and therefore may be slightly inaccurate, oral history should constitute a larger portion of historical writing. Most people's understanding of history is clouded by detached, objective scholarly images of history and dramatized, inaccurate stories from popular culture. This misses some of the most important aspects of past events. Only oral history can fully encompass the intersection of history and humanity.

People, for the most part, are forced to draw their conclusions about history from either dusty old textbooks or romanticized war movies. These sources represent two very opposite and incomplete ends of the spectrum. They cause historical events to either feel like abstract, far off stories or fictitious exaggerations. War in popular culture is portrayed through dry political maneuvers or heroic incarnations of good battling evil in a drastic attempt to find love while simultaneously saving all of mankind. Oral history lies directly in the center of this spectrum. It combines the factual reality of events as they happened with the visceral emotions and complexity as real people experienced them. Oral history is an important method of understanding events as they were experienced. The feeling attached to the events and the way they unfolded is key to really comprehending

their significance. History, especially in the case of war, usually focuses on the most obvious components. In the case of World War II, a vast majority of reports describe the experience from the perspective of the generals, the political leaders, the Holocaust victims, or the soldiers. There is rarely an image of what life was like for the average citizen who sat on the sidelines and watched their society crumble. With such an emotional, personal experience, an oral history is the best tool for understanding what these events felt like, and how they shaped the people who lived through them.

The key piece of this story is the human connection to the events that occurred. Goutziers' emotions, thoughts, and decisions, as well as those of the people he interacted with, directly affected what he experienced. Oral history can communicate the humanity and the emotion that are intimately tied to historical events. As Grele remarked, oral history is "a more conscious history." Without these distinctly human elements, each version of the events would be exactly the same. Each person's story is valuable to society. The recording of oral histories is the best way to communicate these stories to the rest of society and to preserve them for the betterment of future generations.

About the author: Charlyn Pelter is a junior at Hope College with a double major in psychology and sociology with an emphasis in criminal justice. As a Mellon Scholar, she has had the opportunity to conduct research on a variety of topics outside her own discipline, including interviewing Nick Goutziers. In the future, she hopes to work in counseling with juveniles in the criminal justice system.

**Jean Nienhuis and her
Mission to Amoy, China, 1920-1952**
by Jillian Nichols



Medical missionary work often presents healthcare professionals with the harsh realities of ill-equipped hospitals, cultural and language barriers, and the emotional toll of being beyond the comforts of home. Despite these challenges, the inspiring account of Jean Nienhuis' service as a missionary nurse in early twentieth-century China, accessible through her journals, correspondence, and scrapbooks that are stored at the Joint Archives of Holland, suggest that these obstacles are worth overcoming. Through the Reformed Church of America,

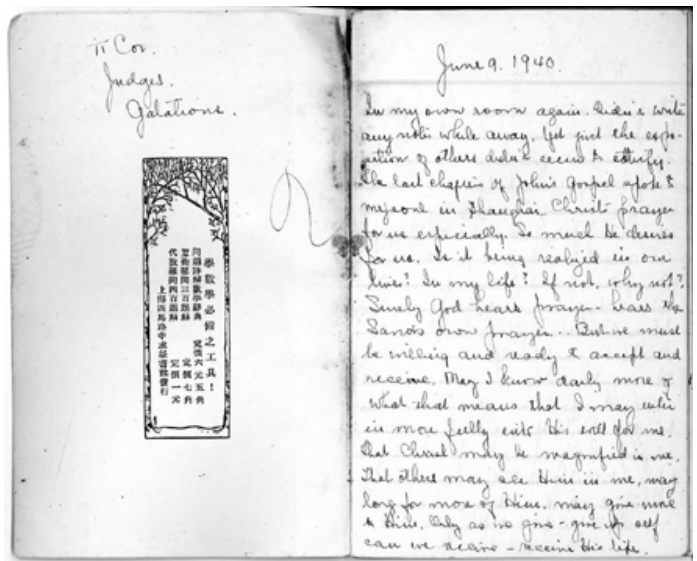


Hope and Wilhemina hospitals in Gulangyu, China, 1948

Nienhuis, a registered nurse who received her training at Blodgett training school in Grand Rapids, Michigan, was summoned to a place where medical care was limited and nursing was seen as an unnecessary profession. From 1920 to 1952, Nienhuis established a nursing training school consisting of fifteen nursing courses at the Hope and Wilhemina hospitals in Gulangyu, China. Over the years, Nienhuis saw the school grow from fourteen students in her first class to fifty graduates in the class of 1937.

For my nursing research practicum course, I worked alongside Professor Jonathan Hagood from Hope College's History Department, to undertake a historical research project utilizing Western Theological Seminary's Jean Nienhuis Collection at the Joint Archives of Holland. As part of the nursing curriculum at Hope College, a research practicum course is required. This course is a practical experience with the nursing research process through collaborative participation in ongoing nursing research. Students in the nursing program choose from a variety of healthcare research studies and are assigned to a specific project. This historical project was unusual to the other projects that were available to the students because it took more of a historical viewpoint; other projects to choose from related to cardiovascular disease, intravenous use in the hospital, and cardiac rehabilitation. These research studies also differed from my particular study because of their quantitative design. Quantitative research's purpose is to utilize statistics to quantify data and generalize results from a sample to a population. In qualitative research, the objective is not to statistically analyze cases, but to gain more understanding and insight into specific trends through thoughts and opinions. Nienhuis' documents were examined with more of an exploratory aspect to investigate specific trends from her missionary work in China, which is why this project is classified as a qualitative research study.

As a nursing student, I read through Nienhuis' personal diaries and scripture notes with the perspective of a healthcare professional, aspiring to find aspects of her words that contribute to nursing practice today. Because I was the first nursing student to examine the collection, themes had not been previously developed; therefore, I made many trips to the Joint Archives of Holland in order to read over the material. At first I struggled to articulate Nienhuis' handwriting, and this made results seem unobtainable. However, by spending time reviewing the material, I came across three grand themes in Nienhuis' account of her time in China: God's faithfulness, God's providences, and the concept of "sowing the seed."



One of Nienhuis' journals, 1940

Like every theme, Nienhuis supported the idea of "His faithfulness" with a verse written down in her diary. Chapter 36, verse 5 from the book of Psalms states, "Your love, O Lord, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies (NIV)." Nienhuis went through many difficult challenges during her time in China, but was able to experience God's presence and loyalty throughout her mission. "Sometimes the task seemed too big," stated Nienhuis, "but through His faithfulness, He enabled and sustained, gave joy, and provided help." An interesting reference that Nienhuis made in her diary was "The Prayer of Faith" by Hannah More Kohaus, an English writer and philanthropist from the 1800s. This prayer reads:

*God is my help in every need;
God does my every hunger feed;
God walks beside me, guides my way
Through every moment of this day.*

*I now am wise, I now am true,
Patient and kind, and loving, too;
All things I am, can do, and be,
Through Christ the Truth, that is in me.*

*God is my health, I can't be sick;
 God is my strength, unfailing, quick;
 God is my all, I know no fear,
 Since God and Love and Truth are here.*

The verse 2 Corinthians 12:9 strengthens the second theme of “God’s providences”: “But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me (NIV).” Nienhuis describes her first encounters with Amoy, China, when she wrote in her journal: “I found a big hospital, full of needy patients, poor equipment, no conveniences, no system, and no nurses. The public knew nothing about the nursing profession and felt no need of it in their lives and in the city.” Later in her diary she wrote that, over time, Jesus provided a nursing school that supplied China with nurses to offer care to all people. Not only was this care provided, but the Chinese people accepted and recognized it as helpful. God’s abundant provision met Nienhuis in the most difficult of times. “In the second term we lacked everything, God provided strength, wisdom, love for people and work.” Even during the war in China, Nienhuis mentions that God gave peace, wisdom, and guidance.

Thirdly, Nienhuis spoke many times of “sowing the seed” of Christ around the world. In her journal, a verse that she repeatedly wrote down was Isaiah 32:30: “How blessed you will be, sowing your seed by every stream, and letting your cattle and donkeys range free (NIV).” As a missionary, Nienhuis had many opportunities to share the love of Christ and was able to reach, along with her students, 80,000 Chinese patients. By listening to Christ’s call and sacrificing her life to China, Nienhuis believed that she found pure joy. “And we’ll not know real joy in doing [missions] until we learn to sacrifice to God’s own appointed way.”

By giving herself to China, Nienhuis faced many challenges, but through these challenges, she was able to experience God’s faithfulness and provision. This, in turn, led to a deeper desire and passion to provide a therapeutic and caring environment for patients in China and to live the way Christ lived. The advantages from Nienhuis’ own medical mission trip suggest many benefits to healthcare professionals today. With burn-out rates increasing, nurses, doctors, and other health providers are losing their desire and passion to care for patients and love each one the way Christ would love them. Although the story of Jean Nienhuis proposes these benefits, there are a few limitations to looking at the experience of one medical missionary that prevent them from being generalized to all medical mission trips. This small sample size makes it difficult to say that all medical mission trips will provide the healthcare



*1936 nursing graduates with teachers
 Jean Nienhuis and Jeannette Veldman (front, left to right)*

professional with a greater desire to return to work with a passionate heart. A second limitation is that Nienhuis’ trip was considered a long-term medical mission trip of 32 years. This can be compared to the short-term mission trips that are more commonly taken today. Because Nienhuis’ service was a long-term journey, she was able to establish a rapport with the people of China and create lifetime friendships. Therefore, Nienhuis’ story might not relate to the trips that healthcare professionals typically take today. The third limitation is the advancement in the medical world since the first half of the twentieth century. Nienhuis had no supplies, which, again, helped her engage with the Chinese culture and build relationships.

Nienhuis’ service in China is inspirational and because of her service to China, she is known as a pioneer of nursing. Her journey has made many contributions to the profession of nursing along with the medical world in China. This one account of a medical missionary trip suggests benefits for healthcare professionals to participate in such a mission and also contributes to further research regarding historical medical missionaries and their perspectives. These perspectives and accounts of historical healthcare providers may adjust the mindset of current healthcare professionals when they realize the hardships and challenges that their profession had to fight through. Going back to the foundations and understanding how one doctor or nurse utilized their vocation brings a new appreciation to one’s own work. Because of their challenges so long ago, we are now able to practice in such a well-advanced and well-profound profession.

About the author: Jillian Nichols, from Brighton, Michigan, is a nursing major at Hope College and will graduate in May. She has enjoyed playing basketball and soccer at Hope.



16th Annual

Saturday March 22, 2014

BENEATH THE INLAND SEAS

Presented by The Joint Archives of Holland and The Michigan Shipwreck Research Association

The Knickerbocker Theatre

86 East Eighth St. Holland

7:00 PM - 9:30 PM

DEEP VISIONS

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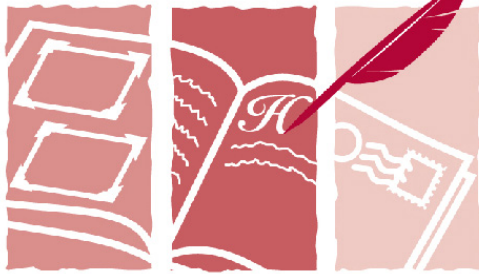
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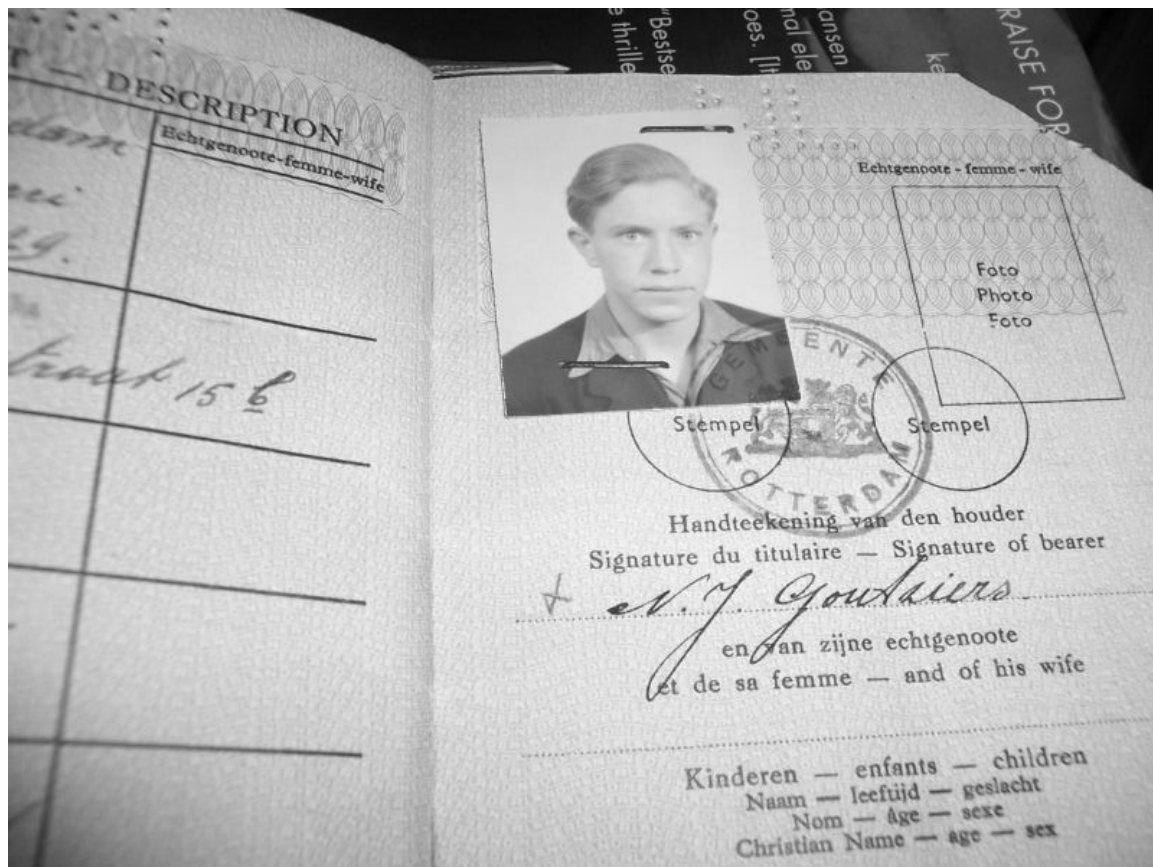
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Nick Goutziers' passport after the war, ca. 1945