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***“The Will to Win”:
How the Athletic Program of a Small Christian College
Has Been Shaped by Its Most Notorious Fraternity***

By Joseph Williams

In 1863, Rev. Philip Phelps, the president of the Holland Academy, recommended that his students form a literary society to “perpetuate the belief in God, cultivate higher moral standards, establish noble friendships, and promote intellectual attainments.”¹ As a former member of the Fraternal Society at his alma mater, Union College, Phelps advised Hope’s first student group to continue the Fraternal Society’s legacy of “scholarship and moral worth” on the campus of what would later become Hope College.² Despite these respectable origins, the reputation of the Fraternal Society would soon deteriorate as a result of the “unseemly” behavior, mostly centered around parties, of the group from the late nineteenth through the twenty-first century.³



Fraternal Society, ca. 1903

Around the time of Phelps’s endorsement of the Fraternal Society, athletics began to grow in popularity on Hope’s campus. As early as 1872, groups of students began challenging the college’s travel ban on intercollegiate athletics, which existed in some form until 1917, by traveling beyond Holland, Michigan, to play sports against outside opponents.⁴ Early student-athletes resorted to a variety of protests, including petitioning the Reformed Church in America, which endorsed the ban at

Hope, playing secret games against rival colleges, and satirizing the policy in cartoons in the school yearbook.⁵ However, as the twentieth century progressed, athletics at Hope ripened into the premier campus activity, while the Fraternal Society drew increasing skepticism from the Hope community.

Although the founder of the college brought it to campus, the Fraternal Society never gained full acceptance on Hope College’s campus among faculty and other students, largely as a result of the fraternity’s willingness to challenge college policy. Conflict began as early as the 1880s, when the group was briefly suspended from campus.⁶ The tension between the Fraternal Society, or Fraters, and the college

faculty persisted well into the twentieth century. In 1905, the Fraters clashed with college administration over a policy that prevented joint Bible studies with sororities.⁷ During the 1940s, the Fraters hosted secret dance parties with coeds, in spite of the administration’s restrictions on dancing. The 1940s also saw the beginning of an annual variety show called the “Frater Frolics,” which lampooned college faculty publically and humorously.⁸

(continued on page 2)

From the Director



In this issue we are pleased to offer articles written by two senior history majors at Hope College. Joseph Williams was a frequent visitor to the Archives when researching his article on the connection of the Fraternal Society and athletics at Hope College.

Natalie Fulk's article on the treatment of German Americans in the Holland area continues our year-long series concerning the many aspects of World War I and its effect on the Holland community. I hope you enjoy both as much as we enjoyed working with these two fine young scholars.

Geoffrey D. Reynolds

"The Will to Win" (continued from page 1)

The Fraternal Society became increasingly bold as the twentieth century progressed. Several members of the fraternity faced disciplinary action when the college administration discovered in 1956 that the group's meetings tended to degenerate into beer drinking parties.⁹ In 1987, the Fraters served a one-year suspension for violating multiple school policies, and in the 1990s, Hope College president, John Jacobson, launched an investigation into whether Greek Life was necessary at Hope.¹⁰ The results of the investigations were inconclusive, and the Fraternal Society is still active on campus today; however, the actions of the Fraters during the twentieth century created the perception on campus that the group is a detriment to campus life.¹¹

James Kennedy and Caroline Simon illustrate the complicated dynamic between the Fraternal Society and the Hope College administration in their book, *Can Hope Endure?* According to the book, the faculty and students originally accepted the Fraternal Society as a legitimate student group, because of the endorsement by Rev. Philip Phelps, the first president of Hope College, and the fact that it was not a nationally chartered Greek letter fraternity.¹² By 1965, however, the "unseemly behavior of the Fraters" had attracted criticism of the whole Greek system at Hope.¹³ By the 1990s, President Jacobson viewed Greek life, specifically the Fraters, as such a source of indecency that he requested multiple faculty investigations into the role and necessity of Greek life on Hope's campus.¹⁴ Kennedy and Simon articulate concisely how the Fraternal Society gained an unscrupulous reputation on campus. Then professors at Hope, their book provides insight into the attitudes of the faculty towards the Fraternal Society. The book fails to

explicitly acknowledge any positive roles that Fraters have played in other areas of campus life. This omission is consistent with the contemporary narrative of many faculty and students that the Fraternal Society does not contribute to the college experience of non-members.

FOOT BALL



Milestone editorial regarding travel ban, 1916

popularity of sports like football and basketball increased, students became more outspoken against a directive from the faculty that forbade athletic teams from leaving the city of Holland to compete with outside opponents.¹⁷ Students took to the college newspaper, *The Anchor*, as early as the 1890s to voice their dismay and criticized the ban for stifling college spirit, campus life, and causing a rift between faculty and students.¹⁸ Although these restrictions tended to be enforced inconsistently and focused primarily on football, they reflected the position of the college faculty towards athletics until 1917, when the College Council, later known as the Board of Trustees, lifted the ban.¹⁹ By the twenty-first century, however, athletics evolved into an important part of campus life at Hope.²⁰

Historian Gordon Brewer, former athletic director at Hope and author of two volumes on the history of Hope

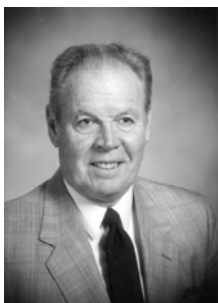
Not unlike the Fraternal Society, athletics at Hope faced an uphill battle for acceptance on campus. Athletics were popular among students from the early days of the college, thanks in large part to the national popularity of baseball in the 1860s-70s.¹⁵ To the displeasure of the conservative faculty at the time, who viewed athletics as a distraction from academics, students founded the Hope College Athletic Association in 1889; and football, baseball, and basketball became athletic staples at Hope.¹⁶ As the

FOOTBALL



HOW LONG?

Milestone 1917



*Gordon Brewer,
1988*

athletics, leaves no uncertainty as to the importance of athletics on Hope College's campus. Brewer's writing indicates a reverent, if not quasi-religious, view of athletics at Hope. In the dedication of his book *"...But How You Played The Game!"*, Brewer thanks his wife for allowing him to "worship at the shrine of sport."²¹

Brewer goes on to describe how Hope's commencement ceremonies, the penultimate rite of the collegiate experience, are intimately intertwined with the college's athletic program.²² Brewer argues that athletics at Hope overcame adversity before becoming the benchmark of campus activity, and recognizes key people and moments that helped build the prowess of Hope athletics. However, Brewer fails to acknowledge that many of the athletes highlighted in his books shared a common thread: membership in the Fraternal Society. This omission could be an attempt on Brewer's part to avoid favoritism, considering he pledged a different fraternity during his time as a student at Hope.²³ Regardless, Brewer's chronicle of Hope athletics, with its reverent tone and, whether intentional or not, no mention of the Fraternal Society, is consistent with the contemporary narrative that the Fraters made no contributions to campus life, including athletics.

The divergence between a group like the Fraternal Society and athletics might appear natural. Athletics at Hope College seemingly have no room for young men who spend their time at parties and hazing rituals. However, by examining the historical relationship between the Fraternal Society and Hope College athletic program, it becomes clear that there was significant membership overlap between the Fraters and Hope athletics. In fact, members of the Fraternal Society made some of the most notable contributions to Hope athletics throughout its history. The two most popular sports at Hope, football and basketball, are archetypes of this pattern. Athletics at Hope College were fundamentally shaped by members of the Fraternal Society during the twentieth century, because Fraters were consistently the most distinguished student-athletes and the most supportive college administrators. While many individuals who were not Fraters made contributions to Hope athletics, no other student organization has contributed student-athletes and administrators with the same consistency, both during the origins and later success of, athletics at Hope. The history of the Fraternal Society and athletics at Hope College challenges cultural assumptions about the effects of fraternities on the campuses of small schools, and allows historians to reflect on why student-athletes join fraternities. This can be accomplished by first examining



Hope College basketball team, 1901-02

the extent of the success of Frater-athletes in the sports of basketball and football, Hope's two most popular sports, during the twentieth century.²⁴

The most popular sports program at Hope, basketball, featured many standout players during the twentieth century.²⁵ Star players like John Vruwink (Hope's "first superstar" athlete), Watson Spoelstra (Hope's first all-MIAA basketball player), and Clare Van Wieren (1965-66 MIAA MVP) contributed immensely to the success of Hope basketball during their respective eras, and none of them were Fraters.²⁶ The collegiate careers of these exceptional basketball players, however, typically occurred alongside other successful athletes, many of whom were Fraters.

In fact, out of the six players on the 1901-02 team, the first season a team represented Hope against outside competition, in defiance of the ban, four were members of the Fraternal Society.²⁷ Not long after that first season, Hope basketball began to gain statewide prominence. The 1905 season saw one of the "greatest triumphs" in the brief history of the program with Hope defeating Michigan Agricultural College, later known as Michigan State University, for the state championship.²⁸ Of the seven players on Hope's most successful season up to that point, six were Fraters, including captain A. J. Muste, who would be known later in life as a



*Hope basketball team,
1905-06 (A. J. Muste
holding basketball)*

peace activist and friend of Martin Luther King, Jr.²⁹ Following the 1905 season,

Hope basketball would win two subsequent championships in 1906-07 and 1907-08, both teams featuring a minimum of six Fraters.³⁰



Floyd Brady makes the winning shot, 1968

Frater-led basketball teams were not only successful at the turn of the century. Howard Dalman co-captained the 1931-32 basketball team alongside non-Frater Watson Spoelstra.³¹ The 1942-43 team was the first to go undefeated in Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association competition and featured the three “Blitz Kids”: Don Mulder, Russ DeVette, and Gabby Van Dis, all of whom were Fraters.³² Ron Bos, league MVP and “one of the most versatile and talented athletes to grace Hope’s campus,” and Bob Hendrickson, “one of the all-time greats of Hope basketball,” were both Fraters and helped lead the 1951-52 team to an MIAA title.³³ The 1957-58 MIAA championship team featured five Fraters, including the captain, the coach, and the MIAA MVP, Ray Ritsema.³⁴ The 1960s featured several standout Frater-players: Ekdal Buys, Jr. (league MVP), Cal Poppink and Chris Buys (members of the 1962-63 undefeated team), and Don Kronemeyer, who hit the game winning basket against rival Calvin College in double-overtime.³⁵ However, the contributions of one Frater, Floyd Brady, to Hope basketball would stand above the rest.

Considered to be the best basketball player in the history of Hope College, Floyd Brady was such an iconic figure

that Brewer titled his entire chapter on the late 1960s: “The Best of Brady.”³⁶ Brady was a member of the 1964-65 MIAA championship team alongside six other Fraters, and he co-captained the 1966-67 and 1967-68 MIAA championship teams with fellow Fraters Carl Walters and Gary Rypma, respectively.³⁷ Brady set multiple school records during his playing career at Hope, including most points in a season, most career points, highest average per game, and most free throws.³⁸ A testament to Brady’s status on campus came on April 5, 1968, when Hope College president, Calvin Vander Werf, called on Brady, a senior at the time, to address the student body following the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.³⁹ The first African American to join the Fraternal Society, Brady became president of the organization in the first semester of 1968.⁴⁰ While Floyd Brady was exceptional in his own right, it is evident that the common thread of exceptional Hope basketball teams, from the turn of the twentieth century to the golden age in the 1960s, was the presence of Fraters. No other student organization contributed successful basketball players as consistently as the Fraternal Society, and none contributed athletes of the caliber of Floyd Brady and Ray Ritsema. What is even more exceptional is that this pattern was emulated on the gridiron.



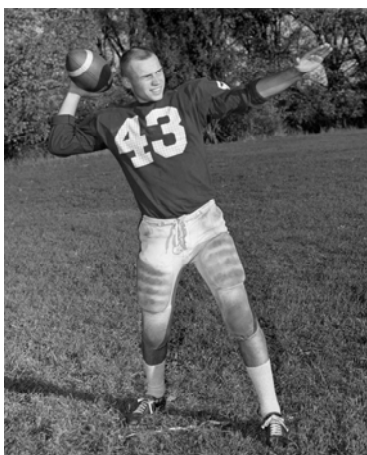
Hope College football team, 1908-09

The football program at Hope is another example of a perennially popular sport that featured standout athletes. John Vruwink (a standout football player), Robert Collins (1949 all-MIAA), and Fred Van Tatenhove (1960 all-MIAA) all made contributions to the Hope football programs during their time, despite not being Fraters.⁴¹ However, from the beginning of the twentieth century, Hope football benefited consistently and significantly from members of the Fraternal Society. The fall of 1908 saw the first Hope football team to compete against an outside opponent despite the ban, and

of the twelve players on that team, nine were Fraters.⁴²

Hope's first big win came a year later against Kalamazoo Normal College, now known as Western Michigan University, and was thanks in large part to quarterback John Lavan and receiver Ernest Brooks, both Fraters.⁴³ This victory emboldened efforts to lift the travel ban.⁴⁴

In 1914, the football program called on another pair of Fraters, George Steininger and Miner Stegenga, to represent the interests of the football program to the College Council.⁴⁵ Despite being unsuccessful in 1914, the Council lifted the ban in time for the 1918 season, and seven Fraters stepped up to contribute their talents to that team.⁴⁶ Both the captain and the first team All-MIAA selection for the 1931 season, Hope's inaugural season in the Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association, were Fraters, as well as the captain and a star lineman for Hope's first MIAA championship team in 1934.⁴⁷ Bob Powers, a Frater and the first Hope athlete to be named MIAA MVP, captained the successful 1939 team.⁴⁸ World War II stifled football at Hope during the 1940s, but the Fraternal Society still contributed two MIAA MVPs during that decade.⁴⁹



Jim Bultman, ca. 1961

Hope saw more success on the gridiron during the 1950s. The team MVP of the 1951 MIAA championship and five of the starters on Hope's 1953 championship team were members of the Fraternal Society.⁵⁰ Larry Ter Molen, Hope's captain and first All-American, along with six other Fraters, helped Hope earn the 1958 MIAA championship.⁵¹ Fraters even shined bright on less successful Hope teams. Hope's winless 1961 season featured seven Fraters, including MIAA MVP Sharkey Vanderwoude.⁵² Jim Bultman, another member of that team, would go on to serve as the president of Hope College, an example of how Fraters have also supported athletics at Hope as administrators.

As an administrator, Bultman helped usher athletics at Hope into the twenty-first century. President of the college from 1999 to 2013, Bultman helped fundraise to build some of the premier venues in Division III athletics.⁵³ Bultman recognized the important role of quality athletic facilities in both developing student-athletes and recruiting top talent.⁵⁴ Specifically, the building of the DeVos Fieldhouse in 2005 and the

renovation and purchase of Holland Municipal Stadium in 2012 were beneficial to the development of not only the basketball and football programs but also other athletic programs, such as volleyball, which won the Division III national championship in 2014.⁵⁵ While Bultman was notable in his support for Hope athletics, he was certainly not the first Frater-president to nurture athletics on Hope's campus.



Carnegie Gymnasium, ca. 1919

Hope College presidents Ame Vennema, Gerrit Kollen, and Philip Phelps all played their part in supporting Hope athletics, and all of them were members of the oft-scrutinized Fraternal Society.⁵⁶ In the spring of 1914, when the College Council met to discuss the athletic travel ban, president Ame Vennema, a Frater from the class of 1879, questioned the necessity of the ban, citing its practical shortcomings, as well as the growing popularity of sports among students.⁵⁷ President Gerrit Kollen, a Frater from the class of 1868, personally solicited industrialist Andrew Carnegie for the \$30,000 donation necessary to build what was at that time a state-of-the-art basketball facility, the only athletic facility in the country that bore the name of the steel baron.⁵⁸ Carnegie Gymnasium replaced the first gym, which was built with the help of Rev. Phelps by hand in 1862 and also doubled as the college's first chapel.⁵⁹ This image of a Frater helping to construct, by hand, a literal chapel that would house Hope athletics attests to the role of both organizations in the lives of their members, as well as Hope College.

Brewer's chronicle of the history of Hope athletics ends at the year 1970, despite the fact that Hope athletics continued to thrive during the latter half of the twentieth century. Similarly, Fraters continued to contribute to Hope athletics well into the twenty-first century. As recent as 2014, the Hope football team was captained by a Frater, and currently a Frater is the captain of the Hope basketball team.⁶⁰ Further research is required to fully

analyze the relationship between the Fraters and Hope athletics during this period; however, based on the recent contributions of Bultman and the athletic success Fraters like the Droppers brothers (Jacob, Josh and Joey, all three of whom were all-MIAA football players) and Dante Hawkins (2017 captain of the basketball team), it is evident that Hope athletics is still impacted by the Fraternal Society in the twenty-first century.⁶¹ Additionally, based on athletic overlap and the growing popularity of new sports, this researcher is confident a similar study that focused on the contributions of Fraters to Hope's baseball, track, soccer, and lacrosse programs would support this conclusion.

While the Fraternal Society has helped build Hope athletics by contributing athletes and administrators, Hope athletics has supplied members of the Fraternal Society with opportunities to sharpen their grit and polish their character. Admirable men like Muste, Brady, and Bultman have come out of two groups who have been known to challenge the status quo.⁶² Historians can rule out the keg parties and hazing rituals as a likely source of the athletic success of these men; however, the boldness and passion that members of the Fraternal Society have displayed for almost two centuries prompts one to reflect on their success in the athletic arena. An alumnus Frater-athlete has cited "the will to win" as a defining characteristic of members of the fraternity.⁶³ It appears that members of the Fraternal Society, and fraternities like it, possess this trait. This spirit is possibly what attracts talented young men to associate with groups that are otherwise known for ill-repute. It is equally possible, however, that these fraternities instill a passion for success into these young men that translates onto the athletic field and court.

About the author:



Joseph Williams is a history and economics double major from Farmington Hills, Michigan. He is currently a member of the Hope College men's lacrosse team, and serves as the president of the Fraternal Society. Following graduation in May 2018, he plans on training to qualify for the 2020 Olympics as a member of the USA

handball team. After that, he plans on pursuing a joint Juris Doctorate and Masters in Urban and Regional Planning.

Endnotes

- ¹"Omicron Kappa Epsilon History," 1866, Box 1, H92-1156, Fraternal Society Collection, Joint Archives of Holland, Hope College.
- ²*Ibid.*
- ³James Kennedy and Caroline Simon, *Can Hope Endure?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans: 2005), 50.
- ⁴Gordon Brewer, "...But How You Played the Game!" (Holland, MI: Hope College, 1991), 18.
- ⁵*Ibid.*; Hope College, "Milestone 1917" (1917). *Milestone*, 95.
- ⁶Wynand Wichers, *Anchor of Hope* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966), 119.
- ⁷"Minutes," Minutes of the Fraternal Society, 1903-07, Box 2, H92-1156, Fraternal Society Collection, Joint Archives of Holland, Hope College.
- ⁸George Zuidema, and Eileen Nordstrom, editors. *Hope At The Crossroads: The War Years* (2008), 2.
- ⁹"Letter to Milton Hinga, dean of men," Correspondence, May 31, 1956, Correspondence 1935-1993, Box 1, H92-1156, Fraternal Society Collection, Joint Archives of Holland, Hope College.
- ¹⁰Kennedy and Simon, 143.; "Omicron Kappa Epsilon re-organization document fall 1987," 1987, Box 1, H92-1156, Fraternal Society Collection, Joint Archives of Holland, Hope College.
- ¹¹*Ibid.*
- ¹²Kennedy and Simon, 43.
- ¹³*Ibid.*, 143.
- ¹⁴*Ibid.*, 183.
- ¹⁵Brewer, 15.
- ¹⁶Brewer, 4.
- ¹⁷Brewer, 18.
- ¹⁸Brewer, 18-20.
- ¹⁹Brewer, 49.
- ²⁰Gordon Brewer, *Journey of Hope* (Holland, MI: Hope College, 2002), 7.
- ²¹Brewer, "But How You Played The Game!", 9.
- ²²*Ibid.*
- ²³"Milestone 1949" (1949). *Milestone*, 168.
- ²⁴Brewer, *Ibid.*, 23.
- ²⁵*Ibid.*
- ²⁶Brewer, *Ibid.*, 43 and 82; *Journey of Hope*, 209.
- ²⁷Brewer, "...But How You Played The Game!". 24; "Minutes," Minutes of the Fraternal Society, 1898-1900, Box 2, H92-1156, Fraternal Society Collection, Joint Archives of Holland, Hope College. (Pages 136 and 158. Cornelius Vandermel, Hessel Yntema, Evert Kruisinga. Pleune joined later).
- ²⁸Brewer, *Ibid.*, 28.
- ²⁹Minutes of the Fraternal Society, 1903-07, Box 2, H92-1156, Fraternal Society Collection, Joint Archives of Holland, Hope College. (Page 86, 136, 180, 216. Muste, Hoekje, Nichols, Veenker, Kolyn, Henry Vruwink)
- ³⁰Brewer, *Ibid.*, 32-33. *Ibid.* (Page 216. Abe Van Houten, Peter Pleune, Manley Stegeman, Peter Pleune, Henry Heusinkveld, August Veenker, Henry Rottschaefer).
- ³¹Brewer, *Ibid.*, 81
- ³²*Ibid.*, 119. *Hope At The Crossroads: The War Years*, 15.

Answering Negativity with Support: The German American Experience in Holland, Michigan, During World War I

By Natalie Fulk

During World War I, German Americans living in the United States felt pressure from many sides about who to support and how to act. On the one hand, their homeland of Germany was at war and it would have been reasonable that they would support it. On the other hand, their chosen country of the United States favored the Allies, even though it proclaimed neutrality, and eventually went to war against Germany in 1917. During the war, suspicion fell on German Americans as “enemy aliens” and many changes were made in the United States to promote Americanization. Holland, Michigan and the surrounding area followed this national trend and tended to reject German-associated attributes and support the American cause wholeheartedly. In response, German Americans rose to the challenge of supporting their chosen country in any way that they could to show their loyalty to the United States.

Germans made up ten percent of the United States population in 1910, and before the United States involvement in World War I, many German Americans openly supported the German side of the European Conflict.¹ In 1915, one man in West Olive near Holland was reported on by the *Holland City News* because he was very pro-Germany in the then-European war. He used to be a lieutenant in Germany and the paper reported that “whenever he reads of a German victory chronicled in the newspapers that he gets from the ‘old country’ he raises the German flag to the top of the pole and gives three for the Fatherland.”² Germans throughout the United States wanted to keep the country out of the war, because it was clear that the United States favored the Allies. This effort was led by the National German-American Alliance, a national organization that worked to push forward German interests by promoting German language, newspapers, and schools.³ German Americans thought that it would be best both for the ‘fatherland’ and for the United States to discourage American involvement in the conflict.

As the war progressed, the neutrality of the United States began to waver, and it became abundantly clear that the United States favored the Allies. German Americans believed that English-language press in the United States was pro-English, and England sent a steady stream of pro-Allies propaganda to the United States spouting the worthiness of the English cause and the atrocities and brutality of the Germans. In response, the German

- ³³Brewer, *Ibid.*, 178 and 198. “Fraternal’s Roll of Membership, Winter Term 1952-53,” Box 2, H92-1156, Fraternal Society Collection, Joint Archives of Holland, Hope College.
- ³⁴Brewer, *Ibid.*, 67 and 117. “Milestone 1958” (1958), *Milestone*, 133.
- ³⁵*Ibid.*, 147, 164, and 197.
- ³⁶*Ibid.*, 221.
- ³⁷*Ibid.*, 198 and 227
- ³⁸Hope College Athletics, “Hope College Basketball All-Time Records,” 2017.
- ³⁹Brewer, *Ibid.*, 246.
- ⁴⁰*Fraternal Society Composite Photograph 1968*, 1968, “Composite Photos,” Box 1, H92-1156, Fraternal Society Collection, Joint Archives of Holland, Hope College.
- ⁴¹Brewer, *Ibid.*, 43 and 149. *Journey of Hope*, 174.
- ⁴²Brewer, “...But How You Played The Game!”, 33. “Minutes of the Fraternal Society 1908-1912,” 1908-1912, Box 3, H92-1156, Fraternal Society Collection, Joint Archives of Holland, Hope College.
- ⁴³Brewer, *Ibid.*, 36 and 82. “Minutes of the Fraternal Society 1908-1912,” *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁴Brewer, *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁵Brewer, *Ibid.*, 49. “Minutes of the Fraternal Society 1912-15,” 1912-15, Box 3, H92-1156, Fraternal Society Collection, Joint Archives of Holland, Hope College. (Page 22)
- ⁴⁶Brewer, *Ibid.*, 52. “Minutes of the Fraternal Society 1918-20,” 1918-20, Box 3, H92-1156, Fraternal Society Collection, Joint Archives of Holland, Hope College. (Pages 1, 3, and 59).
- ⁴⁷Brewer, *Ibid.*, 81 and 89. “Milestone 1935” (1935), *Milestone*, 18 (captain Gerald Bonnette and star tackle Ekdal Buys). “Milestone 1930” (1930), *Milestone*, 221. (Louis Japinga Dalman, Damson, and Captain Fox.)
- ⁴⁸Brewer, *Ibid.*, 104. “Milestone 1939” (1939), *Milestone*, 21. (Page 74).
- ⁴⁹Brewer, *Ibid.*, 157. “Milestone 1950” (1950), *Milestone*, 131. (Nick Yonker and Tom Van Wingen).
- ⁵⁰Brewer, *Ibid.*, 165 and 185. “Milestone 1954” (1954), *Milestone*, 47. “Milestone 1950” (1950), *Milestone*, 131. (Ron Schipper)
- ⁵¹Brewer, *Ibid.*, 87. “Milestone 1959” (1959), *Milestone*, 128.
- ⁵²Brewer, *Ibid.*, 143. “Milestone 1962” (1962), *Milestone*, 150.
- ⁵³Brian Vanochten, “Q&A: President James Bultman discusses his tenure at Hope College,” *Holland Sentinel*, June 22, 2013.
- ⁵⁴*Ibid.*
- ⁵⁵*Ibid.* Hope College Athletics, “Hope College Volleyball History,” June 22, 2013.
- ⁵⁶“Fraternal Minutes, 1863-1883,” 1863-1883, Box 3, F.S. Archives 101, H92-1156, Fraternal Society Collection, Joint Archives of Holland, Hope College. (Gerrit Kollen, page 88).
- ⁵⁷“Fraternal Minutes, 1863-1883,” *Ibid.*, 419. (Ame Vennema). Brewer, *Ibid.*, 49.
- ⁵⁸“Fraternal Minutes, 1863-1883,” *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁹Brewer, *Ibid.*, 13.
- ⁶⁰Corey Olsen, “Family football tradition at Hope College keeps Droppers family tight,” *MLive*, September 6, 2012. Dan D’addona, “Hope’s Dante Hawkins, Luke Dreyer poised for strong senior seasons,” *Holland Sentinel*, October 21, 2017.
- ⁶¹*Ibid.*
- ⁶²“Letter to Milton Hinga, dean of men,” *Ibid.*, et.al.
- ⁶³“President Bultman Keynote Address” 2017, Digital Archives, H92-1156, Fraternal Society Collection, Joint Archives of Holland, Hope College.

American press tried to give the German perspective and “obtain ‘fair play’ for Germany.”⁴ However, the English-language press was larger and more affluent and accounts of German brutality abounded across the nation.

This was true even in Holland, where people in the newspapers talked about Germany and their actions in the war in a disapproving way. One was about a man named W. H. Dykhuis from Holland, who was in the Netherlands for a few months in 1914, and when he returned, he described the tensions in Europe. He said that the Netherlands was gearing up for the possibility of war (even though in the end it remained neutral), and of the Dutch people he said, “Their feeling against Germany however is very bitter, and they blame that country for the war.”⁵ Another article written at the time is about Dr. G. J. Kollen, an influential member of the Holland community and the third president of Hope College (1893 to 1911), and his opinion of the war. In December 1914, he sent a letter from New England back to Holland to urge people to support the Allies and save Belgium from the atrocities of Germany. He said:

I wish that the neutral nations would unitedly demand of the nation [Germany] that started this wicked war... that it must support the people ruined and devastated. If neutrality means that in such a catastrophe that seriously affects the whole world, we must stand by quietly and shut our eyes to the abominations of an arrogant, hypocritical nation, without expressing at least our condemnation, then I for one will protest.⁶

This view that Germany was responsible for the war and that it was a bully to other countries, especially Belgium, was prominent throughout the United States before American involvement in the war, and this was true of Holland, also.

The United States joined the war on April 6, 1917, on the side of the Allies. Once war was declared on the Central Powers, which were led by Germany, Americans focused on nationalism and defining what it meant to be an American. The United States has a long history of welcoming immigrants and having people of many different origins in its borders. During World War I, this came to be seen as a threat to the American people, who thought that some immigrant groups could be working for their mother countries. In an effort to unify the country and mobilize the home front for war, the American government and leaders urged people to “Americanize” and pledge total allegiance to the United States.⁷ The American government began to define loyalty by characteristics such as language, American citizenship, beliefs, ideas, and personal identity.⁸ This played out in many different ways and most deeply

affected German Americans, who were especially viewed with suspicion. Organizations formed to promote Americanization, such as the American Protective League, the National Security League, and the American Defense Society. These groups and other parties worked to eliminate the use of German language in schools and churches, put an end to German newspapers, encourage naturalization, and demand pledges of loyalty to the United States.⁹

This anti-German sentiment of the United States was reflected in Holland. Propaganda and advertisements focused on German aggression and criticized Germany and the Kaiser. These were especially prominent in advertisements encouraging the purchase of Liberty Bonds to support the war effort. One such advertisement from April 1918 was about the Peace Palace, a structure in The Hague in the Netherlands, and the lack of German agreement in a peace conference there that took place in 1907. The advertisement argued:

It does not need proof to show that the United States stands for liberty, freedom, democracy, and humanity, while Germany stands for the rule of Kaisers, the sword, power, and greed.... Germany’s conduct since the war in Belgium, later in Poland, and now in Russia, and yes, even this very morning in little Netherlands should convince the most skeptical pro-German, and ‘German-Hollander’ what to expect should the Hun win.¹⁰

Advertisement from the Holland City News, April 25, 1918

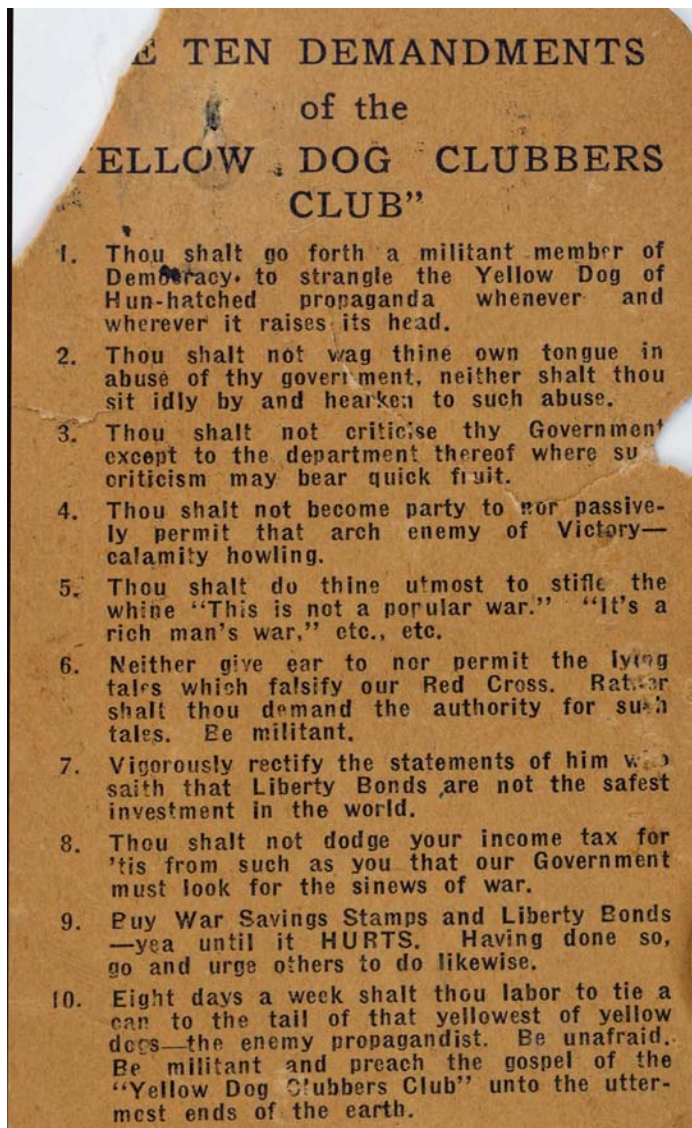
Many other such advertisements tried to convince Hollanders to support the United States by focusing on the brutality of the Germans. This image on the previous page shows another advertisement in the *Holland City News* entitled "The Destruction of Civilization" and equates defeating "German savagery" with saving civilization for the world.

Anti-German feelings manifested themselves in other ways besides advertisements in Holland. At a Boosters Day meeting to promote Holland schools and Liberty Bonds, the speaker said that "The Kaiser should be placed across the lap of the Statue of Liberty and spanked until he sees the stars and we see the stripes."¹¹ Furthermore, a nationally popular practice started in Holland where people would paint Germany-sympathizers' houses or stores yellow to show that they were not loyal to the United States. An example of this is when "vigilantes," as the *Holland City News* called them, painted J. Y. Huizenga's storefront and house with yellow paint as a way to call him out for perceived disloyalty to country. On the door of the store they had written, "'Be loyal to some one; choose' and 'Buy Bonds or Go.'"¹² Citizens took matters into their own hands to try to push people to choose sides in the war and be loyal to the United States.

Additionally, a Yellow Dog Clubbers Club formed in Holland in July of 1918. This was one of the national organizations started during the war with the purpose "to counteract German propaganda, to refuse to spread unconfirmed Hun reports of disasters to American troops, to do all they can to discourage any rumors that are spread to hurt America and the Allies."¹³ This fear that Germans were spreading false propaganda was very real to Americans and Hollanders. The *Holland City News* published a chain letter in June of 1918 that was meant to counteract German propaganda and lies by exposing them. It said, "The false rumors and malicious stories constantly being circulated... are German propaganda intended to create distrust and discontent among our people... We have resolved to close our ears to all such stories and so discourage their circulation. Will you do the same?"¹⁴ It went on to describe the stories put forward by the Germans that specifically targeted and criticized the American Red Cross.

Other patriotic groups were active in Holland besides the Yellow Dog Clubbers Club. One was the Home Protection League. This formed after the United States declared war in April 1917, with the intention of stationing guards at industrial plants in Holland who were "constantly watching... as a precautionary measure to prevent any depredations, brought about by these turbulent war times."¹⁵ Their goal was to guard the industrial areas of Holland that could be used towards the

war effort from people who might want to sabotage them.



The Ten Demandments of the Yellow Dog Clubbers Club from membership card, ca. 1918

Another patriotic group was the American Protective League, a chapter of a national organization supported by the Department of Justice, and it focused on ousting German sympathizers. An article in the *Holland City News* about the league was entitled "Be Careful About What You Say About the War These Days: For If You Talk or Even Think Pro-German the A.P.L. Will Get You."¹⁶ The article described the Holland chapter of the league and that most Hollanders did not know about its existence or who its members were so members could listen in on conversations and observe actions under the cover of secrecy. The author said, "But seriously it is about time that such an organization is making itself felt in every city in the nation. These traitors and back biters of our boys at the front must be shown a thing or two and little consideration will be given to these disloyal creatures in the future by the local league." The



American Protective League badge, ca. 1918

organization was supported by the Holland community and had considerable influence. In one instance, the A.P.L. called for the resignation of Alderman Jacob DeWitt from the City Common Council because he voted against an act that would have allotted city money from the city's Sinking Fund to buying War Savings Stamps. The A.P.L. called for his resignation because they found when they were interviewing him that he did not participate

in or know about any patriotic events or groups in Holland and was not informed on the war conditions in Europe.¹⁷ The A.P.L. was very powerful in the city of Holland to have been able to force the resignation of an alderman.

Besides patriotic organizations, Holland used other methods to reject German-associated things and promote Americanization. For one, Holland schools stopped teaching the German language in their school districts. Many schools in the area made large events and demonstrations to show them dropping German language from the curriculum. The schools of Spring Lake burned their German language books on Liberty Day as a way to show that the village was "through with German."¹⁸ The Holland school district decided that "the language of the land of the Kaiser will be known no more in the curriculum of the local school."¹⁹ The Zeeland school district also chose to discontinue teaching German in its classrooms, and it even had a parade to carry its German books in a coffin down the street to be burned in a bonfire. The newspaper declared that "the students, faculty and citizens of Zeeland will see the end of German propaganda and Prussian *kultur* in that city."²⁰ This was seen as an important step in showing loyalty to the American cause because it was against something inherently German, the German language.

The suspicion of German Americans culminated when "enemy aliens," or people residing in the United States who were not American citizens and who came from countries with which the United States was at war, were made to register with the American government. Registration for men occurred between November 1917 and April 1918. The law especially focused on German Americans. In Holland, German American men had to register between February 4-9, 1918. The *Holland City News* entitled its article on the subject "The Germans of This City Cannot Escape," and announced, "The law is mighty strict on this point and any German born person

not holding full citizenship papers is included in the list that must register or be considered a traitor or spy."²¹ Later, German American women in Holland had to register also, with registration starting for them on June 17, 1918.²² Registration was taken very seriously as a way to safeguard against possible German sabotage. However, the authors of the *Holland City News* did acknowledge that even though German Americans were called "enemy aliens," it did not mean that they were personally enemies of the United States. In an article about the number of German Americans in Ottawa County, the author said, "For the most part however, the technically "alien enemies," they are not enemies at all, but loyal Americans who have not yet become naturalized."²³ The authors might have made this clarification because of the many ways the German Americans in Holland proved themselves devoted to the American cause.

As the United States entered the war and American patriotic fervor ran rampant, many German Americans in the area worked to prove themselves as being supportive, patriotic Americans. The way many of them did this was to buy Liberty Bonds and participate in the Liberty Loan drives. The pastor of the German Lutheran church in Holland, for instance, preached on the importance of buying Liberty Bonds from the pulpit. He said that almost the entire congregation had purchased them and that "our record shows that this congregation is pro-American thru and thru."²⁴ Georgetown, a mostly German-populated township near Holland, showed its patriotism by having 29 of its 31 German families buy Liberty Bonds. The *Holland City News* said of this news that "Their actions speak louder than words could."²⁵ One man in Muskegon was a German citizen and his family still lived in Germany, but he was the largest buyer of Liberty Bonds in the area during the fourth Liberty Loan campaign.²⁶

Germans in Holland also sent their sons off to war, such as a man named Henry Teusink in Jenison Park near Holland. The newspaper described him as "a German, just as German as they make them, but Uncle Sam means more to him than the kaiser."²⁷ He had one son who enlisted as soon as the United States declared war on Germany and another who wanted to but was too young. Other Germans proved their loyalty to the American side by not joining Germany in its fight. One Holland man of German heritage was born on a boat crossing the Atlantic Ocean to the United States. It was judged that he was an American citizen and not a German citizen, and therefore did not have to answer the German call for its nationals to return to the homeland and fight for its cause. The *Holland City News* said "Though a German by ancestry Johnson is not in sympathy with the course the Fatherland is pursuing in the present war."²⁸ He made

clear that he did not support Germany and would not fight for it.

German Americans in Holland showed their allegiance to the United States in other ways as well. For example, many decided to become citizens of the United States. One example of this is when fourteen men, three of whom were German, had their naturalization ceremony in 1916. The *Holland City News* said that it was “impressed upon them the fact that no American citizen owed allegiance to any sovereign of any land.”²⁹ By becoming American citizens, those men were expected to be solely loyal to the United States. Another way that German Americans showed their support was by supporting patriotic groups. One newspaper article describes an event at the Holland Sugar Factory where men could subscribe to the Ottawa Red Cross. Two of the men who subscribed were German, and the newspaper described them as “subjects of Germany, their homes being in one of the provinces that comes under German rule. But they are more bitter against Germany than the people who are at war with the Kaiser and they were eager to help the Red Cross.”³⁰ They wanted to help their new country by contributing to the Red Cross and the American war effort.

Throughout the *Holland City News* during the years of World War I, the authors commended the German Americans in the area for supporting the American cause. It was a difficult time for German Americans living in Holland and the United States at the time due to anti-German feelings, patriotic groups, registration, and the rejection of German aspects. However, German Americans worked to counteract these negative feelings and actions by showing their loyalty to their chosen country. They demonstrated their support for the United States in many ways, such as buying bonds, sending their sons to war, and becoming citizens. German Americans in Holland showed their city that they wanted to help the American cause.



About the author:

Natalie Fulk is a senior from Mahomet, Illinois. She is majoring in history, Spanish, and political science. After graduation, she plans to go to law school.

Endnotes

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¹¹“Spank the Kaiser Till He Sees Stars,” *Holland City News*, April 25, 1918, 12.

¹²“Vigilantes’ Paint Yellow Local Store,” *Holland City News*, April 25, 1918, 5.

¹³“Yellow Dog Clubbers Club Formed Here,” *Holland City News*, July 11, 1918, 6.

¹⁴“Now the Chain Letter to Stop Hun,” *Holland City News*, June 20, 1918, 7.

¹⁵“Are Talking Home Guards Now,” *Holland City News*, April 19, 2017, 6.

¹⁶“Be Careful About What You Say About the War These Days,” *Holland City News*, March 28, 1918, 1.

¹⁷“Ends Career as Alderman from Second,” *Holland City News*, June 13, 1918, 5.

¹⁸“Liberty Day to See End of German Books,” *Holland City News*, April 25, 1918, 1.

¹⁹“German is Thrown Out of High School,” *Holland City News*, April 11, 1918, 8.

²⁰“Plan to Burn German Books at the Stake,” *Holland City News*, June 20, 1918, 2.

²¹“The Germans of This City Cannot Escape,” *Holland City News*, January 17, 1918, 1.

²²“Alien Females Must Register” *Holland City News*, June 20, 1918, 3.

²³“How Those Germans Do Pair Off,” *Holland City News*, July 4, 1918, 4.

²⁴“Local German Church is Pro-American,” *Holland City News*, April 11, 1918, 7.

²⁵“German Lutherans Do Business in Liberty Bonds,” *Holland City News*, May 2, 1918, 6.

²⁶“Wife and Family in Germany Buys Liberty Bond,” *Holland City News*, October 3, 1918, 8.

²⁷“Jenison Park has Patriotic German,” *Holland City News*, April 12, 1917, 2.

²⁸“News from the County,” *Holland City News*, August 13, 1914, 2.

²⁹“Fourteen New Citizens are Received,” *Holland City News*, April 13, 1916, 5.

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Correction: In the Fall 2017 issue, a reference to Gerald R. Ford’s position as the Disaster Chair of the Kent County Red Cross in late 1948 should have read 1947.



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Membership card for the Yellow Dog Clubbers Club, ca. 1918

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