

Spring 1994

# The Joint Archives Quarterly, Volume 05.02: Spring 1994

Jodi McFarland

Larry J. Wagenaar

Larry Massie

Jenifer A. Smith

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.hope.edu/jaquarterly>



Part of the [Archival Science Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

**Repository citation:** McFarland, Jodi; Wagenaar, Larry J.; Massie, Larry; and Smith, Jenifer A., "The Joint Archives Quarterly, Volume 05.02: Spring 1994" (1994). *The Joint Archives Quarterly*. Paper 15.

<http://digitalcommons.hope.edu/jaquarterly/15>

**Published in:** *Joint Archives Quarterly*, Volume 05, Issue 02, Spring April 1, 1994. Copyright © 1994 Hope College, Holland, Michigan.

This Newsletter is brought to you for free and open access by the College Publications at Digital Commons @ Hope College. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Joint Archives Quarterly by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Hope College. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@hope.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@hope.edu).

# The Joint Archives Quarterly

Volume 5 Number 2

Spring 1994

## Holland's Great Bank Heist of '32

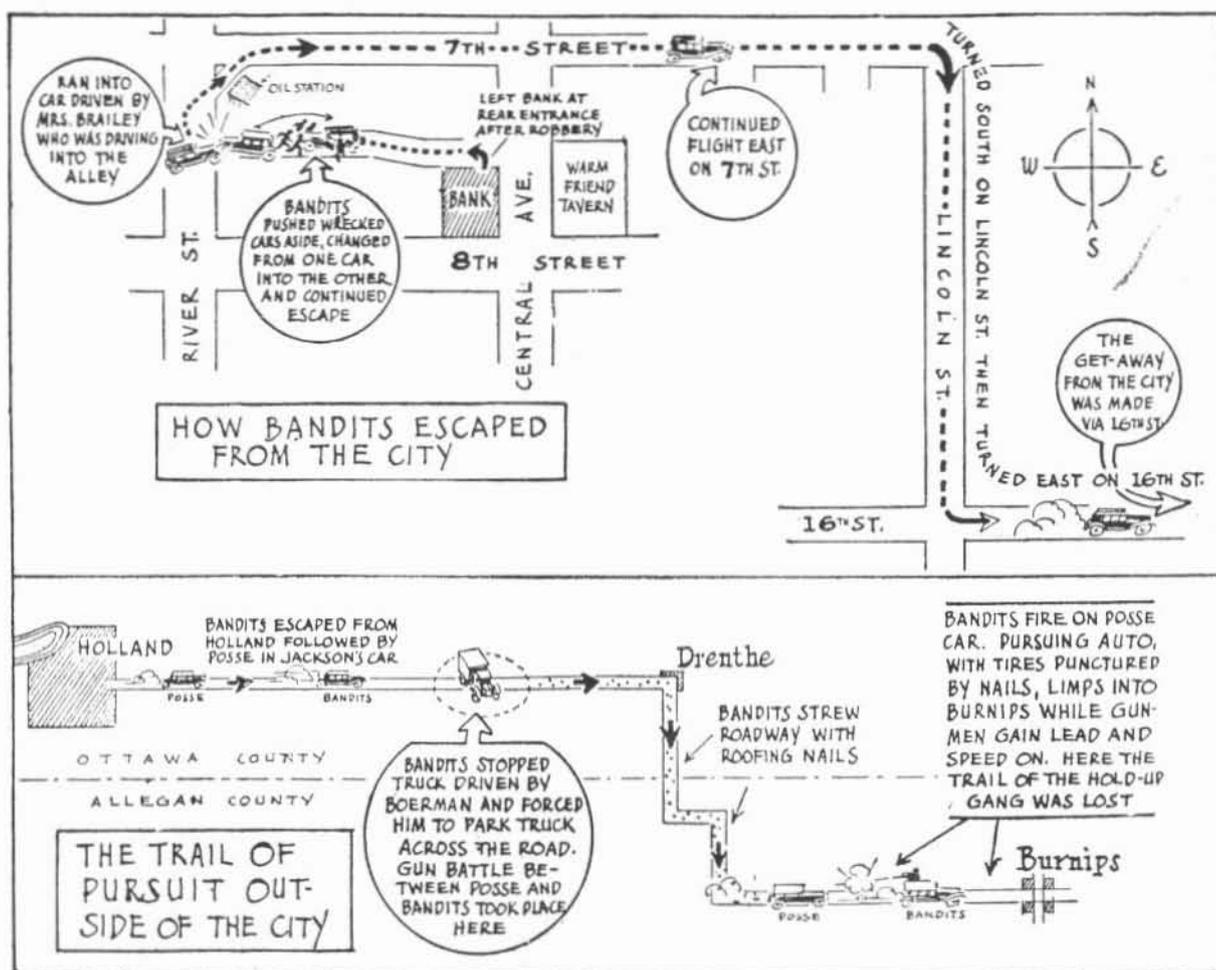
Jodi McFarland  
Baby-face Nelson, Al Capone, John Dillinger. Their very names call up the mafia of the 1930s, complete with the drama of gun battles and police chases.

Those notorious kingpins seem far removed from peaceful Holland, but in 1932 Holland experienced criminal excitement of its own when sub-machine gun toting bandits held up the First State Bank, now First of America, on Eighth Street.

At about 9:30 on the morning of Sept. 29, 1932, between five and seven bandits entered the bank, pronouncing the phrase bank tellers dread: "This is a

(Continued on page 2)

### Trail of Holland Bank Bandits and Gun Fight Victims



This diagram appeared in a special edition of *The Holland Sentinel*, Sept. 29, 1932.

## So You've Been Assigned the Archives...

So it's your job to care for the stuff in the church's closet — that forgotten room somewhere in the basement? It's full of a ton of old bulletins, funny looking ledgers and dusty photographs of people no one knows.

Maybe you're a volunteer for a small historical society museum and have been appointed the "archivist" and it has

left you looking for the dictionary to figure out what that means. Or you have an attic full of family memories and it's time to make sense of it all. What do you do?

Of course getting a handle on an "archives" is most often an involved process, but there are a few things you can do that

(Continued on page 4)

## From the Director

Since our last issue I have had the opportunity to process a number of new archival collections that are now available for use. These include the large collection of radio pastor Rev. Harry Hager, the WHTC archives, the records from one of Hope College's major governing boards, and the papers of RCA missionary Jeannette Veldman.

The Harry Hager Collection revealed the techniques of a man who served as a precursor to the major TV evangelists. The local radio station told me stories about the early days of this new medium — and what it took to get it off the ground in Holland. The Academic Affairs Board is currently telling the story of how the academic program is formulated, and constantly improved, at Hope College.

Each of these collections was an experience in learning about something new. But looking back on the last few months, it was Jeannette Veldman's papers that I enjoyed the most.

In processing the papers of individuals, it seems like each time I am getting to know someone personally. Over the past several years I have had the opportunity to speak with Miss Veldman on many occasions, including just a few days before she passed away earlier this year. We spoke about her experiences and it was a privilege to hear about all of her efforts in various RCA missions.

It was in the processing of her collection, though, that I really got to know her. Her voluminous correspondence told of her long-suffering in China in the years leading up to World War II, her internment by the Japanese, and persecution during the communist takeover. She shared the vision of missions during her work in Arabia in letters to friends and the chapters of a proposed book further revealed her deep faith and commitment.

In my work as director I end up doing many things. Some are mundane, like handling the budget or filling out paperwork. Other tasks, like helping people find things in their research, processing collections, or visiting with a donor are highlights of the day. My experience with Miss Veldman's collection was just that kind of highlight. Maybe a few rays of her sunshine will fall on others who use the collection and its legacy in the years to come.

Larry J. Wagenaar  
Director

## 1994 Spring Speaker

Larry Massie

Wednesday, April 13, 7:30 p.m.

The Joint Archives has announced its Spring Speaker for 1994. Dr. Larry Massie, a historian known for his storytelling ability and passion for Michigan History, will be joining us for his illustrated presentation, "Romance of Michigan's Past."

Massie has authored many books on Michigan history, including one on Holland which was published by the Holland Chamber of Commerce.

The Sixth Annual Spring Speaker this year will be the first held in the evening so that all will be able to attend. Massie's program will begin at 7:30 and will be followed by a reception in the Joint Archives reading room. This program is open to the public and there is no admission charge.

## Part of a Series

## Women in Holland's History

*By examining the many collections at the Joint Archives which highlight women and women's organizations one can clearly see the intellectual, social, and political ways in which these individuals and groups have shaped Holland's history. The Woman's Christian Temperance Union made lasting contributions to the character of Holland.*

Established in 1877, the Holland chapter of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union became very influential in state politics. During Prohibition, the Holland chapter became the largest in the state of Michigan. One of their goals in 1929, written in the organization's annual report, was to get Holland youth to sign the "Youth's Roll Call." The document read:



Emma Kollen Pieters  
President, WCTU, 1927

Our Nation stands upon the threshold of a new epoch of national life. With President Hoover I WANT PROHIBITION TO SUCCEED. I WANT TO GIVE PROHIBITION ITS CHANCE. That the constitution may be protected and orderly government preserved, I declare my purpose to abstain from the use of all alcoholic liquors as a beverage, to support and defend the Eighteenth Amendment and thus to contribute to the success of prohibition.<sup>1</sup>

With the repeal of prohibition in 1933, the WCTU ultimately failed to succeed at this mission. These women, however, did have a lasting impact on local and state politics. Perhaps their greatest legacy was giving women's ideas a public forum and a strong voice.

1. Annual Report, WCTU, 1929, in Woman's Christian Temperance Union Records, Holland Historical Trust Collection.

## Great Bank Heist

(Continued from page 1)

hold up." Just then a customer began to enter the bank, and, taking in the scene, turned on his heel and ran down Eighth Street, shouting the alarm. The bandits shot their way out of the bank with some \$70,000 in cash and bonds, in the process injuring bystander Peter DeJongh.

The bandits fled to their getaway car, spraying an estimated 100 bullets from pistols and sub-machine guns at storefronts along Eighth Street. Bullet scars may still be seen on the Central Avenue side of Resthaven's Warm Friend.

The bandits' Studebaker squealed away, with three of the bandits sustaining bullet injuries, and was pursued by a posse-filled car. As the bandits roared out of town on Sixteenth Street, a second gun battle occurred. Bandits stopped George Boerman, forcing him to park his truck across the road. The ensuing exchange of bullets whizzed over Boerman's head as he lay face down on the road. Police officers hastily retreated

(Continued on page 3)

# The Processor's Table Women Missionaries in the Reformed Church

by  
**Jenifer A. Smith**  
Collections Manager

One of my duties as Collections Manager is to create a coded record of each of our collections and send it to a national bibliographic database (OCLC). While creating these records for our Western Theological Seminary Collection I have discovered many collections that are especially noteworthy. One particularly significant group is the many collections we hold which document the role of women missionaries of the Reformed Church in America.

Women have been involved with mission work at least since 1875, when the Women's Board of Foreign Missions was established. These women originally supported missionary schools through prayer and monetary gifts and later began serving as missionaries themselves.

Frances Phelps Otte, a Hope College educated woman, travelled to Amoy, China with her medical missionary husband, John Otte. Although not a missionary herself, she served by writing about the tremendous strides of the medical missionaries and encouraging others to help:

*Surely great wonders have been performed in the hospitals in the Amoy Mission. Shall not the same love, sympathy and effort which started the medical work in our denomination inspire us all to greater faith and consequent results in the coming years in spite of all the present handicaps of war and trouble in the world today? It is for us to continue this ever-unfinished symphony of love and service.<sup>1</sup>*



**Jeannette Veldman**  
At Hope College

Inspired, perhaps, by the earlier work of women at foreign missions, Jeannette Veldman received a call to become missionary at the young age of 18. After graduating from Hope College, Ms. Veldman continued her training as a nurse and began her long career of missionary service in 1930 at Hope Hospital (built by none other than John Otte) in Amoy, China. After the communist government overtook Amoy in 1949, Veldman was forced to leave the country. Instead of returning to the United States, however, Veldman took on another assignment, this time at the Reformed Church in America's Arabian Mission. While there she

began a nursing school which served Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain, and Oman. Veldman served as a missionary for nearly 40 years (until 1967); her papers provide us with an inspiring example of a very courageous and intelligent woman who was called to dedicate her life to helping others.

The fascinating stories of these and many other women missionaries can be found in the Western Theological Seminary Collection of the Joint Archives of Holland.

1. Otte, Frances Phelps, in *The Intelligencer-Leader*, December 5, 1941, 15.

## Assigned to the Archives

(Continued from page 1)

will go a long way to preserve your collection. The first is to take a look at the physical surroundings of the materials. Is it in an attic or basement that has wide temperature and humidity fluctuations (a terrible place for archives)? Consider moving it to a "safer" place somewhere on the main floor of your building. Is the material exposed to harmful ultraviolet radiation from the sun? A move away from the windows would be a good idea.

Secondly, you need to take a look at exactly what you want to keep and decide how to organize it. There is little need to keep materials on St. Louis, even if it is from 1823, if you're located in western Michigan (consider sending it to an archives in Missouri).

If you run into a dozen copies of the same magazine issue probably one — or at the most two — will be enough. On the other hand organization can be a somewhat trickier issue, something where a little professional guidance can go a long way.

This summer at the Joint Archives of Holland you will have the opportunity to learn some of the basic tools of the trade professional archivists use every day. We will be hosting **Archives 101: Basic Archival Skills Workshop** Saturday, June 18. It is designed for those who find themselves caring for "archives" but do not have professional training. The workshop will be useful for the layperson — not just full of technical jargon and expensive procedures no one can use.

Dr. Richard "Dick" Harms will be our presenter for the day. Dick has done a number of our workshops and is consistently complimented on his easy-to-understand approach and dry wit. The fee is \$30 for this day-long workshop which includes lunch.

## Great Bank Heist of '32

(Continued from page 2)

when the bandits swept the street with sub-machine gun fire.

The bandits sped off again, leaving a trail of nails strewn in their wake, which flattened their pursuers' tires, and the trail was lost near Burnips.

No convictions were ever made in relation to the bank robbery of '32, although there were suspicions that the bandits hailed from Chicago. To this day it remains unsolved in the files of the Holland Police Department.

Holland's Great  
Bank Heist of '32

Address Correction Requested

Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Permit #392

The Joint Archives of Holland  
HISTORY RESEARCH CENTER  
Holland Historical Trust • Hope College • Western Theological Seminary  
Hope College Campus • Holland, MI 49423

### Archives 101 Schedule

June 18, 1994

- |       |   |
|-------|---|
| 8:30  | Registration and Coffee   |
| 9:00  | Session I: Collecting Archival Materials,<br>How Do I Do It?  |
| 10:30 | Break   |
| 10:45 | Session II: Accessioning New Materials,<br>Appraisal of Historical Value, and Conser-<br>vation of Deteriorating Paper Items              |
| 12:00 | Lunch (provided)  |
| 1:30  | Session III: Arrangement and Description<br>of Archival Materials, Providing Reference<br>Help, Security, and Dealing with<br>Photographs |
| 3:30  | Evaluation and Final Remarks  |

**Registration** **\$30.00**  
Includes Lunch, Refreshments and all materials

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Institutional Affiliation (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

Return to: **Archives 101 Workshop**  
The Joint Archives of Holland  
Hope College Campus  
Holland, MI 49423

For more information call (616) 394-7798

Please make checks payable to *The Joint Archives of Holland*. No cancellation after June 3.