



From the Editor...

ARCHIVAL CONNECTIONS

Working in an archival environment is exciting and informative as well intriguing and rewarding. One thing for certain, each day is different! Here in Albany County, preserving the Archival Collection is of utmost importance: accomplished through microfilming the records and storing the originals and the master microfilms in our fire proof climate controlled vault. Secondly, it is crucial to make the records available for our researchers. Lastly, it is essential that records are turned over to archives for the use by present and future generations. We are the stewards of the past and need to protect our County's history and we are committed to doing so!

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Long-Time Albany County Clerk Thomas G. Clingan to Retire

Albany County Clerk Thomas G. Clingan announced on April 2 that he will not be seeking re-election this fall and will retire at the end of 2013 completing 25 years as Albany County Clerk. The 6-term County Clerk began his County career in 1976 as County Budget Director, then as Assistant County Executive, and lastly, in 1988 became the Albany County Clerk.

Mr. Clingan is the chief records officer of the County, responsible for all mortgages, deeds and related records. He is Clerk of the Court for both Supreme and County Courts. Mr. Clingan is also the Records Management Officer for all Albany County records and is the County's Public Information Officer. Among his accomplishments are the construction of the present Albany County Hall of Records, a joint County-City program managing over 91,000 cubic feet of records in a state-of-the-art facility; the relocation of the County Clerk's office during the reconstruction of the County Court House (2005 to 2011.) His was the first Albany County office to have a web site, and in 2002 the Clerk's office implemented digital imaging of deeds and mortgages.

Among his many volunteer activities, Tom served as President of the New York State Association of County Clerks, and was appointed by the State Education Commissioner as Chair of the Regional Advisory Committee on Records Management. Tom has been a member of the Board of Directors and an officer of the New York Council of Nonprofits since 1980.

Mr. Clingan is a graduate of State University at Albany, Where he received both his Bachelor's degree in History in 1973 and his Master's degree in Public Administration in 1975. Tom and his wife Carol live in Cohoes and the parents of four daughters.

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Over the course of my career at the Hall of Records, I have enjoyed locating records from our Archival Collection in helping our researchers. Additionally, I've been proud to have assisted authors with the following great books: Paul Grondahl's *I Rose like a Rocket*, about Teddy Roosevelt, Marguerite Holloway's *The Measure of Manhattan* about Albany surveyor John Randel Jr. and Frankie Bailey and Alice Green's *Wicked Albany* about prohibition. Other amazing topics have included: searching in our Albany Penitentiary volumes for President Abraham Lincoln's pardon of a federal prisoner and a search for another federal prisoner arrested in 1895 for moonshining.

Assisting is not limited to authors, researchers or genealogists; for instance, it is rewarding to help our local schools, teachers and students with their curriculum from our archival records. A prime example was in 2007 when I partnered with Southgate Elementary School Lynne Minderman's 4th grade class. The students were researching children who died at the Albany Orphan Asylum from the mid-1880s to the 1900s. I brought original Almshouse and orphan asylum records to their classroom and the students came to the Hall of Records for further research. My final assistance came when we all went to Albany Rural Cemetery to do field research. The story was captured by Paul Grondahl in the *Times Union* on June 5, 2007.

In 2006, excavation work was being done in Albany when a barrel with human remains was found. They proved be to those of a woman who disappeared in 1946. Albany Police Department Sergeant Fred Alberti asked me to check for anything pertaining to her disappearance in the Albany Police Department Blotters stored in the Hall of Records Archives. I did find the long-hand written police report regarding her disappearance in 1946 and gave it to Sergeant Alberti for their perusal.

In October, Dutch researcher Anja Adriaans came to the Hall of Records to research local history vis-à-vis the World War II relationship between Albany and Nijmegen, Netherlands. Additionally, she wanted information about the soldiers of the 82nd Airborne Division and hoped to generate interest in starting an exchange program with University of Albany and Siena College and Radboud University. *Tivoli Times* will feature in Carlson's Corner a Q & A with Anja Adriaans on pages 5-8.

Finally, congratulations on the retirement of my boss, Albany County Clerk Tom Clingan and Albany Mayor Jerry Jennings. Tom had the vision and the perseverance for the creation of the much needed Hall of Records that opened in 2001 and is our home today. Mayor Jennings has always been a great supporter of the Hall of Records. His emphasis on improving the North Pearl Street corridor, and in particular, the refurbishing of the Palace Theatre is much appreciated by your columnist. Recently, my wife Sue and I enjoyed an excellent concert by Brian Wilson and Jeff Beck at the Palace. I personally would like to wish the best to Tom and Jerry in their retirement.

Craig Carlson, *Editor*

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Albany County Hall of Records Open House October 31, 2013



County Clerk Thomas G. Clingan and County Executive Dan McCoy at ACHOR'S Open House on October 31, 2013. Albany County Hall of Records photo collection.



County Clerk Thomas G. Clingan at ACHOR'S Open House on October 31, 2013. Albany County Hall of Records photo collection.

Members of the Nigerian National Assembly visit on July 15, 2013



A tour group examines Albany's 1686 Dongan Charter and an early Albany Common Council volume with researcher John Wolcott.

Albany Mayor to Retire

By Tom Clingan, Albany County Clerk

Albany Mayor Gerald D. Jennings surprised the local political world this past May with his decision not to seek re-election this fall. When he leaves office on December 31, Mayor Jennings will have worked 21 years as a public school teacher and administrator – the last 13 coinciding with serving as the elected Common Council member in the 11th ward – followed then by a full twenty years as the chief executive of his native city. None of it came easily; Jennings regularly faced opponents in both his primary and his general elections, but never lost in November.

A lifetime in education framed many of his actions as Mayor; he chose to hold his first inauguration in the auditorium of Albany High School, among his students, colleagues and friends. Improved communication has been another constant, with the Mayor holding a weekly call-in radio program for most of his tenure. His greatest governmental challenge was unquestionably finding the revenues to keep his city's services operating, and his repeated successes in securing increased state assistance from officials of both major political parties impressed both fans and critics. Another Jennings hallmark has been his appearance at almost every public event and emergency.

Mayor Jennings's support for Albany's documentary heritage can be seen in the city's increased financial assistance for the Hall of Records, a rare surviving example of city and county cooperation. Two city employees work full time here, and the city annually funds records storage and related expenses. City government has also provided considerable in-kind aid over the years; our first home was a city-owned building at 27 Western Avenue. The city's valuable older records, such as the plans for many buildings within the city, have been transferred to ACHOR for care, indexing and better public access. Our staff is currently working with the Mayor's office to organize the records of his administration for preservation at ACHOR.

We thank Mayor Jennings for his support of the Hall of Records, and wish him all the best.



2001 Hall of Records Ribbon Cutting L-R. Albany County Clerk Thomas G. Clingan, Albany County Executive Michael Breslin, Albany Mayor Gerald Jennings, Albany County Legislature Chairman Charles Houghtaling and Albany County Comptroller Michael Connors. Albany County Hall of Records photo collection.

Carlson's Corner-Anja Adriaans

Dutch researcher Anja Adriaans came to the Hall of Records this October 2013, to research local history vis-à-vis the World War II relationship between Albany and Nijmegen, Netherlands. Additionally, she wanted information about the soldiers of the 82nd Airborne Division and hoped to generate interest in starting an exchange program with University of Albany and Siena College and Radboud University. The following Q & A are from an interview between Hall of Records Archivist/Deputy Director Craig Carlson and Anja Adriaans.

1. Can you tell us what brings you to the Hall of Records and what are you researching?

Hi Craig, I was at the Hall of Records in search for a missing historical film, '*This is Nijmegen*.' I do not even know if it still exists but it was made for Albany and it was here in Albany, definitely. Some 50,000 movie-goers supposedly have seen this film in 1949 or the early weeks of 1950 in one of these movie theaters: the Strand, Ritz, Madison, Delaware, Paramount, Eagle and Royal. The film was commissioned by the Nijmegen city government and shown as an advertorial or short propaganda film to both thank Albany for its help in rebuilding Nijmegen and to show how Nijmegen was recovering from the destructive war years.

This film is so interesting because it informs us about a phase in the shared WW II history between Albany and Nijmegen, my hometown in the Netherlands. This is quite an elaborate story but I hope you'll find it worthwhile to read. The Dutch and the people of New York State share a 17th Century settlers' history that is well known, I've noticed that while being in Albany region. Many Dutch families found their way to Albany region and N.Y. State in the early decades of America. Names such as Stuyvesant, Beverwijck and Kinderhook refer to this past as well as it explains the existence of several Historical Societies and the New Netherland Research Center.

Yet, we share another period in history that seems to have become a forgotten page in our history book, on both sides of the Atlantic. This shared history is the Second World War. The WW II was devastating for the Netherlands but even more traumatic for Nijmegen. On 22 February 1944, American bombers targeted Nijmegen, leaving the inner city of Nijmegen in ruins. On 20 September, 1944, American paratroopers liberated Nijmegen from the Nazi's in an heroic action: under the command of General Gavin troops of the 82nd Airborne Division crossed the River Waal in small boats and they went for the bridges, crucial in the warfare. This action was part of Operation Market Garden and our Nijmegen region is the "A Bridge Too Far" area. Due to this action Nijmegen was liberated in September 1944 but the Northern part of the Netherlands was not. Nijmegen was thus situated in the middle of the frontline area and another 800 civilians lost their lives. The end of the war left the city in ruins; 2,200 citizens killed, 5,500 critically wounded, 2,260 houses destroyed and many more damaged, 400 streets ruined, the City Hall, railroad station and 7 churches destroyed, the University buildings heavily damaged, forests burned down etc. After the war, General Gavin, who knew firsthand about the devastated state Nijmegen was in, initiated a committee to help Nijmegen. General Gavin, mayor Corning of Albany, Jan Vieweg from Albany but originated from Nijmegen and Mr. Hatch, the later director of the Albany Institute of History and Art spearheaded a humanitarian aid campaign that was unprecedented.

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2. Describe the City of Nijmegen: Pre-World War II and how has it been rebuilt since the war including the archives?

The Romans founded Nijmegen, some 2000 years ago. Situated on a range of hills near the River Waal, and close to the German border, Nijmegen is the oldest city in the Netherlands. In the 1940s, before the Second World War, Nijmegen was thriving fairly well with a population of 120,000. It was a well-to-do city with strong historical roots and awareness and proud of its University. Nowadays, Nijmegen has 160,000 inhabitants, with Radboud University and HAN (Higher vocational Education) Nijmegen is a lively city with lots of young people. The city-heart, Plein 1944 (translates as Square 1944) has been rebuilt in the reconstruction years but has always felt as inadequate. This year, the city heart ends a total renewal and can finally serve as the hub of downtown Nijmegen.

3. Can you tell us the role Albany Mayor Erastus Corning 2nd and the City of Albany played in 1947 with donations of 300 tons of relief supplies to rebuild Nijmegen?

Times Union reporter Paul Grondahl's book on Mayor Erastus Corning 2nd was the starting point of my search. I knew that Mr. Corning had played a decisive role in the Albany drive to the Aid of Nijmegen and I asked Paul Grondahl's advice where to best start my search. Paul was interested in my research and this resulted in an interview, published in Times Union of 2 October, 2013. Several interesting reactions followed the publication but none resulted in the actual finding of the film, yet. The Albany Institute of History and Art had many documents (Boxes full actually) on the Corning years as well as newspaper clippings and Mr. Prentiss Carnell from The Albany Institute and I searched several boxes. We found interesting documents but no film.

4. Tell us about the film "This is Nijmegen," that you are seeking which the Netherlands produced to thank Albany, New York for its help after World War II?

This film was commissioned by the Nijmegen city government after the war and after the aid from Albany, it was a kind of propaganda film. It is supposedly a 10-11 minutes film that was meant as a 'thank-you' to Albany. The script is known and we know that it was sent to and shown in Albany.

5. Did Albany's relief supplies lead to warm relations between the two cities? Some happenstances on Albany's side have been: a sister city between Albany and Nijmegen, Albany's popular Tulip Festival bloomed in 1949, Princess Beatrix visited in 1959 and her son Willem, Crown Prince of Orange and wife Princess Maxima visited in 2009.

The Committee to the Aid of Nijmegen organized a drive so successful that a cargo ship, the Westerdam was filled with 300 tons of relief supplies to rebuild Nijmegen. It left the Albany harbor on July 9, 1947. On it loads of food, clothes, shoes, window glass, medical supplies, toys, building materials, household goods etc. The goods were received in the harbor of Nijmegen by Mayor Hustinx of Nijmegen, Jan Vieweg, a former inhabitant of Nijmegen, now from Albany and the population of Nijmegen.

How the relationship between the two cities evolved afterwards is part of my future research. I do know that several service clubs were active in establishing international contacts and that contacts between families and schools in both Albany and Nijmegen were actively promoted and enjoyed. On a personal level there have definitely been established bonds between Albany and Nijmegen that lasted life times.

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6. Can you tell us about the research you're doing in particular about the 48 paratroopers from United States 82nd Airborne Division who made the ultimate sacrifice in the liberation of the Netherlands? Are they buried in the Netherlands?

I am indeed also assisting in the research and production of a commemorative book related to the opening and dedication of the new city bridge over the river Waal in Nijmegen on 23 November 2013. The name of the bridge is 'de Oversteek' which translates as 'the Crossing.' This is a reference to the 20 September 1944 assault in which 48 US paratroopers were killed, leading to the liberation of Nijmegen. The bridge will feature as a war memorial and will carry 48 lampposts that will be lighted each day in pairs before the city lighting is switched on. Four of the 48 fallen soldiers came from New York State: Nicholas Esposito of Rome, Oneida County; Edward Wisniewski, Nassau County; and Harry Bushby and Anthony Bei, both from New York. We have found Esposito's relatives and they will attend the dedication of the Nijmegen bridge in November. I just wanted to name the others as often as possible because I still hope to find relatives of the three others. For information please check our newspaper de Gelderlander's website: <http://www.gelderlander.nl/extra/blogs/the-crossing-engels> and the Facebook page The Crossing. Most soldiers were first buried in the vicinity of Nijmegen and later re-buried at the request of their families. Nicholas Esposito was brought home to Rome, N.Y, Bushby and Bei are buried at the American War Cemetery in Margraten, the Netherlands., Wisniewski is reburied at Long Island National Cemetery, New York. We want the families to know that their soldiers are not forgotten in Nijmegen, their sacrifice is recognized and their names will live on in this monument.

7. Please discuss the upcoming Oversteek Bridge dedication scheduled for November 23, 2013 in Nijmegen.

The relatives of many of the 48 soldiers have been traced and they have been invited to tell the soldier's life story in the book in order to give him "a face" again. The families have been invited to the opening and the dedication of the bridge in a 3-day program, including ceremonies but also trips to the National Liberation Museum and the American War cemetery in Margraten. We are now busy with organizing the festivities.

8. You also visited University of Albany and Siena College with plans to develop a students' exchange program between our local schools and Radboud University located in Nijmegen. Please elaborate?

The American Studies Department of Radboud University Nijmegen and both Siena College in Loudonville and UAlbany already have longstanding bi-lateral international exchange programs for their undergraduate students. I visited both universities to talk with responsible exchange coordinators about possible interesting history programs.

9. Is the special relationship between Albany and Nijmegen still a strong bond? Are current students still aware of the Albany role in post World War II and the importance of Dutch history and tulips to Albany, New York?

Students on both sides seem not actively aware of the historic bonds between our cities. They do know about the 17th Century ties but the post World War II years are not part of their historical consciousness. I regret that because I think that it is important.

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Carlson's Corner-Anja Adriaans

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10. Can you tell us a little about yourself/background?

I was raised the oldest of seven children on a dairy farm in a very small village in the province of Brabant, the Netherlands. I attended a teacher's college because that was the highest possible education then available to me. I worked as a teacher and program coordinator at community colleges and later received my Master's Degree in American Studies in 2010 (cum laude). I am 56 years old, married to Walter, and we have a student daughter, Simone (22) whose aspiration it is to study and work abroad, preferably in the United States. She is currently seeking an internship in marketing communications. We live in Nijmegen since 6 years and I enjoy this city very much. My identical twin sister lives in the US, she and her husband live in San Francisco area, California. This of course is also a reason for my interest in the US.

11. What part of your research interests you the most?

My main interest in my academic field is transatlantic ties and cultural exchange. I have been in Albany before for studying the influence of the Hudson River School painters, on the forming of American identity. I love the region and the State of New York.

12. How did you like researching at the Hall of Records?

I liked researching at the HOR very much. The staff is very professional and accurate. I really think the subject interested them a lot too. Also they are friendly people, it was fun being there!

13. Will you continue to communicate with our local archival staff?

Yes, absolutely. I am confident that the film or film-related documents will turn up some day and I plan to come back and work on this fascinating and joy-giving project, not only in Nijmegen but also in Albany.

14. Hobbies or interests?

I used to like reading and cooking but I am so busy with the 'Oversteek' book and this research project that I cannot find pleasure in doing that. I love traveling and art! Thank you, Craig.



Dutch researcher Anja Adriaans and Deputy Director Craig Carlson at the Hall of Records on October 4, 2013.



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County Clerk Thomas G. Clingan and County Executive Dan McCoy at ACHOR'S open house on October 31, 2013. Albany County Hall of Records photo collection.

The Albany County Hall of Records is a capital resource for the agencies of the local government it serves and to the citizens of the City and County of Albany. The Hall of Records is jointly funded by the City and County of Albany and is under the jurisdiction of Albany County Clerk, Thomas G. Clingan. Our purpose is to preserve, promote and make available the recorded history of Albany County to its citizens in the most efficient and cost effective way possible. We want to say thank you to all the people, past and present, who have made the Hall of Records an invaluable asset to our county.



County Clerk Thomas G. Clingan. Albany County Hall of Records photo collection.