

" THE FOUNDING OF THE HOLLAND CLUB INC. "

by : Dick ZANDWYK. sr.

1960, the year it finally came about, that a HOLLAND CLUB was founded in HOUSTON, TEXAS., after several endeavours to accomplish this fact by various "Dutchmen", of which Dr. Albert van WIJK, was a dedicated pioneer, during the late 40's and thru the 50's. During this time, he was Vice Consul of the Netherlands, this being an Honorary position, bestowed on him, by the late Queen WILHELMINA.

The Consulate General of the Netherlands was located in New Orleans, La. at the time and not in Houston, Texas., as now is the case.

Unfortunately, Dr van Wijk, passed on, a couple of month before the founding date, on June 9th, 1960., of the HOLLAND CLUB, which he had visioned already many years before, and always being jealous of the Germans, French, Greeks which had accomplished such a fact, already for many, many years and are still growing.

There were not too many Dutch people around in Houston, a 30 years ago.

The few, who were, as the van Wijk's, Muller's, Frank's, Verheul's, Schumacher's, Boll's, even Adams and Graves's of Victoria, Texas., knew each other and met sometimes socially. Others were here to, as I found out later.

I had arrived here with my Family, in Houston, Tx. in February 1955 and was friends already with the Muller's (Frank & Irmgard), as well as Captain and Betty Johnson of Galveston, Texas., from whom we received a lot of morale support, during our first months, which we very much appreciated, since we arrived as Immigrants, not knowing anybody else or anything about life and Customs in general in the United States of America, our new home for the future.

After a couple of years, having my feet solid on the floor, I got to know more and more Dutch people, some of them, who had come here, already many years ago and others, being sent over from Holland by SHELL OIL CO and other Companies, as well as more and more Dutch Immigrant families (also from Indonesia).

Having learned, in the meantime, about the German Club's (two of them) the Alliance Francaise and the Greek's, I thought that it was just about time that a Club for the DUTCH, would be very nice indeed, as well.

Thru Frank Muller, I learned about Dr. van Wijk, who had meanwhile resigned, as Honorary Consul, which position in the late 50's was filled by Peter Cramerus, an other Dutchman, and later by Sweeney Doehring, who was an American.

I learned that Dr. van Wijk had tried many times in the past, to tie the Dutch together, and others also, but in vain.

However, I was determined to try to accomplish, where others had failed. I had in the meantime met and made friends with, quite a few Dutch people and talked about my idea, in as much as we had social get togethers, with quite a few of them. They also thought, it was a good idea and in turn were promoting the possibility.

Frank Muller, Jack van Caspel, Ding Dingemanse and myself decided to have an informal meeting to try to establish a base to work from, in order to get the HOLLAND CLUB of the ground.

This informal meeting took place on MARCH 5th. 1960.

Quite a few of the Dutch people, after being notified and learning about our intentions, attended.

We stretched the point, that our goal was to further fellowship and friendship among the persons of Dutch Ancestry and persons interested in Dutch Customs and the Dutch language.

The above was and still is, as amended, the most important part of the Club's By -Laws.

During that informal meeting a Board was selected, consisting of :

Dick Zandwyk	-	President
Frank Muller	-	Vice President
Jack van Caspel	-	Treasurer
Ruth Kopperslag	-	Secretary.

The ground work was laid, but a lot of hard and sometimes frustrating work, was still ahead for the presiding officers.

The first social events were planned and consisted of outdoor activities in various Parks around town, so that the whole family could take part. These get togethers, were especially morale builders for the many Immigrant families, who had rather difficult times, to get established, and could, during these events, which did not require much money, forget for a while about their struggles and be among their own Dutch Countrymen and talk their own language, when and where they could.

Those early members of the Club, I can not name them all, but they know, who they are, formed the nucleus for all those years of the still existing Club and it is due to their support and dedication and the leadership of the past Presidents, listed below, that the "Holland Club Inc" can celebrate, its 25th Anniversary, this June 1985.

List of Presidents :

Dick Zandwyk Sr.	1960, 1961, 1963
J. van Caspel	1962
H.W. van Voorthuysen	1964
D. Schoemaker	1965
G. Schuabag	1966
W. van Lochuizen	1967
R.R. Dijkstra	1968
C. Hoogendam	1969
C. Herben	1970, 1971
P. Staats	1972, 1973
H. Vogel	1974
H.F. Hemmi	1975
J. Jansen	1976
W. Schuur	1977
M. Bense	1978
H. Stokvis	1979
H. Hemmi	1980
W.A. Wijnberg	1981
L. Helwig	1982, 1983
H. Stokvis	1984

In those early years even before the founding of the HOLLAND CLUB, HOLLAND "The Netherlands", was very much in the Picture here, especially due to the fact that the K.L.M. (Royal Dutch Airlines) were negotiating about landing rights in Houston. Texas., for its Route to Mexico City , Mexico, which they obtained in 1957. The Dutch Community at that time, was instrumental in signing a petition, which was presented to the U.S. Authorities in WASHINGTON. D.C. relating to the efforts of the K.L.M. in obtaining their goal.

Also, on behalf of the Dutch Community, a letter was written to the " Ministry van Buitenlandse Zaken " in the Hague, Holland, about the re-locating of the Consulate General of the Netherlands, from New Orleans. La. to Houston. Tx. having regard for the fact that Houston was a booming city compared to New Orleans. La.

The re-location became History, and the Dutch community, can be proud to have been a part, may be very small, but nevertheless instrumental just the same.

The fact that Houston was and is a booming City, proved to be very true indeed, in part of the establishing here of many large and small DUTCH enterprises which in fact are still growing, along with the " HOLLAND CLUB INC. "
