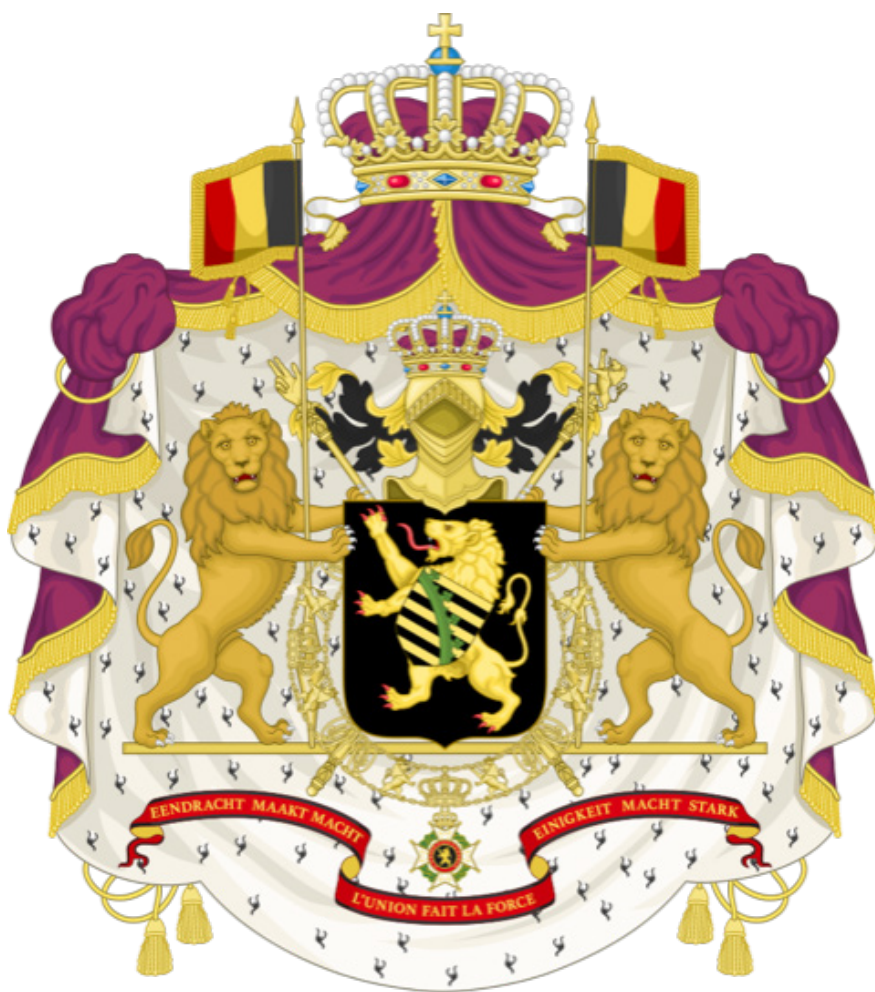


# KINGDOM OF BELGIUM

## HONORARY CONSULATE OF BELGIUM IN MOLINE 1919-2019



Code of Arms HRH King Philippe



King Philippe & Queen Mathilde

# Honorary Consulate of the Kingdom of Belgium in Moline 1919-2019 - Anniversary Dinner

Social Hour – Harpist **James VanSpeybroeck**

Call to be seated  
**John DeDoncker**, CEO TBK Bank  
Blessing by **Father Mark DeSutter** – Sacred Heart

Buffet Dinner

## Program

**Patrick Van Nevel**  
Honorary Consul

**Stephanie Acri**  
Mayor of Moline

**Paul Rumler**  
President and CEO Quad Cities Chamber of Commerce - 2018 EUVP participant.

**His Excellency Dirk Wouters**  
Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium

**Joy Boruff**  
President and CEO of the Moline Foundation.

## Closing Remarks

Saturday 10/19 - 1:00-3:00 PM open house at Center for Belgian Culture - with Belgian guests  
Sunday 10/20 – 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM – Sacred Heart Mass and Cornerstone Celebration.

The organizing committee thanks you for your presence:  
Dave Coopman, Marlene Gelaude, Ann Noyce,  
Linda Polich, Patrick Van Nevel



## **H.E. DIRK WOUTERS**

### **AMBASSADOR OF BELGIUM To The UNITED STATES**

The Ambassador represents His Majesty, The King of the Belgians and Belgium's federal government in the United States and in the Commonwealth of the Bahamas. He is responsible for the direction and work of the Embassy and its Consulates, including bilateral political and economic relations, and visa and consular services.



Ambassador Dirk Wouters was born in 1955. He obtained a B.A. in Law and a B.A. in Economics from the University of Antwerp in 1975. He also holds an M.S. in Economics and Political Science, as well as a Master of Law degree.

Ambassador Wouters joined the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1980. His career started in the consular and disarmament departments, and he went on to dealing with economic and technology issues at the Belgian Embassy in Rome. In 1986, he was appointed to several important functions in European Affairs, including within the Permanent Representation of Belgium to the EU. He was also directly involved with negotiations on revision of the European Treaties. In 1992, Mr. Wouters received a second assignment in Rome, dealing with political and economic issues. From 1995 to 2000, he was the Deputy Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations. While in this position, he was involved in the creation of the International Criminal Court. In 2001, he was appointed coordinator of the Belgian Presidency and for several years headed the Department of European Coordination and Integration in the Foreign Affairs Ministry in Brussels. He then assisted Jean Luc Dehaene as Vice President of the Convention on the future of the European Union.

From 2003 to 2009, Mr. Wouters was the permanent Representative of Belgium to the Political and Security Committee of the European Union. He was called to the office of Prime Minister Herman Van Rompuy as his diplomatic advisor and Sherpa in 2009. Following that, as Chief of Staff to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Wouters was one of the main architects of the successful Belgian EU-Presidency and key foreign policy decisions on Afghanistan and Libya. He was the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the European Union from 2011 to 2016. In 2016, Dirk Wouters was appointed Ambassador of Belgium to the United States.

The Ambassador is married to Katrin Van Bragt and has one daughter and three grandsons. He speaks Dutch, French, English, Italian, and German. He is also an accomplished long-distance runner and an Italian culture enthusiast.

## WHY A CONSULATE IN MOLINE

According to a chart published by the Moline Dispatch in March of 1982, a small number of Belgians began arriving in the Moline area between 1840 and 1860. It is thought those who arrived first were drawn to the area's lumber industry's need for laborers and by the land, as it was similar to land in the homeland and was relatively inexpensive.

By 1890, substantial numbers began to arrive due to the growth of industry, particularly the agricultural companies like the John Deere, Rock Island Plow, and Moline Plow companies. Additional opportunities existed with other implement firms, carriage, furniture, glass, foundries, and machinery manufacturing, and even later, ordnance, automobiles, and railroad equipment.

Belgians settled in Rock Island and East Moline in good numbers, but with Deere being the largest employer by 1910, the majority of Belgians settled in Moline, being convenient to Deere's factories. According to John Deere's Company, by Wayne Broehl, Jr., of Deere's nearly 2,300 employees, 456 workers, or 18.6% of its workforce, were Belgians. A.H. Head, superintendent of Deere's plow department noted, "The first and probably the most dependable of other nationalities have been the Belgians. They are found desirous of making good money and willing to return its equivalent in amount of work performed."

Many more Belgians arrived prior to World War I due to worsening conditions in the homeland, chain migration, and, no doubt, the catch-all heading of "wanting a better life." There is no doubt that Moline and the area did offer a better life with plenty of jobs for both the skilled and unskilled worker.

By the early 1900s, a substantial middle class was forming in Moline. Some of the immigrants began to form their own businesses, especially in the bluff area that today is referred to as Olde Towne. Those businesses included clothing stores, butchers and grocers, shoe repairing and retailing, hardware outlets, and printing.

One of the more successful Belgian businessmen and most prominent was Edward Coryn. After immigrating from Lotenhulle, he initially worked in the shops but prospered in banking and real estate investing. He also served as a city councilman and the U.S. postmaster at Moline.

Perhaps Coryn, besides employment in Deere's factories, was most influential for the numbers of Belgians coming to Moline. He helped immigrating Belgians find homes and places to work; organized a worker's union that provided financial help when the worker became ill; founded a club for Belgians that provided not only social activities, but also offered classes to help them become US citizens; was one of the founders of a Flemish-language newspaper; pushed for a Belgian church; and was first president of the Belgian-American Alliance.

The area's Belgian population was substantial. Dr. W.E. Taylor, a soil expert with Deere, noted in 1919 that Moline had about 8,000 Belgians, East Moline nearly 3,500, and Rock Island about 1,500. Henry, Bureau, Mercer, and Whiteside counties accounted for another 3,950, mostly engaged in farming.

With nearly 18,000 Belgians in the area and most residing in Moline, it became logical for the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to open an Honorary Consulate in Moline to assist the Belgian immigrants. And it did just that in June 1919, naming Edward Coryn as the first Honorary Consul. It became official in October that year when Coryn's resignation as postmaster was finally accepted.

## EDWARD CORYN

Born in Lotenhulle, East Flanders, Belgium in 1857, Edward Coryn immigrated to Moline with his parents in 1880. Already skilled in the Flemish and French languages, he became fluent in English as well. He worked as a factory laborer, and then opened a grocery store. After fourteen years at the grocery, Coryn sold it to his employees and became the manager of the Moline Trust Savings Bank. Within a month, he was named a vice president of the bank. He was also an officer of the Moline Incandescent Lamp Company, and part owner of an office building and a popular department store.



While he was certainly a prosperous businessman, Coryn was most noted for his public service. In the late 1800s to early 1900s, Moline had the largest population of Belgians of any area in the United States. Coryn aided many of those arriving Belgians in finding places to live and work. He was the main organizer of the Belgian Working Men's Union, which offered working families with benefits when they became ill. He founded the Belgian-American Club to provide a social outlet for his countrymen. The club also arranged for English-language and civics classes to help the immigrants in their efforts towards becoming American citizens. Coryn was one of the founders of the weekly Flemish-language newspaper *Gazette Van Moline* that covered news of the homeland and other Belgian settlements. He was successful in petitioning the Peoria Diocese for the establishment of a Belgian church in Moline. Coryn was the first president of the National Belgian-American Alliance, a federation of Belgian-American organizations,

to help assist not only immigrants, but their family members in occupied Belgium during World War I. For his service and contributions to his countrymen, Coryn was awarded the Knight's Cross of the Order of Leopold and was appointed Moline's first Honorary Consul of Belgium in 1919.

With a deep interest in his adopted country, Coryn entered politics and was elected as an alderman. He held that position for eight years. From 1914-1919, Coryn served as Moline postmaster. In 1971, on the 50th anniversary of his death, a memorial plaque was placed at the municipal school of Lotenhulle to honor native son Edward Coryn for his life's work and service to the Belgian community in Moline.

## CYRIEL DE VOGHELAERE

Born in Ruysselede, Belgium in 1875, Cyriel De Voghelaere taught school before settling in Moline in 1904. In the first few years here, he sold imported lace. He became one of the organizers of Lundt & Company, a popular Moline department store, and was later an agent for a number of steamship lines. Following the death of brother-in-law Edward Coryn, De Voghelaere was appointed as Moline's Honorary Belgian Consul in November, 1921.

As a lover of horses, he spent many hours caring for a group he owned. Unfortunately, a fall from a horse during a Labor Day parade in 1915 made it impossible for him to ride again. His left leg was severely fractured, and his right leg was amputated due to infection while he was in the hospital. Since he could no longer take part in riding, he turned to raising pigeons and maintained a large flock.

De Voghelaere was a talented organist and played for many years at Sacred Heart Church. He was also an honorary member of Note's Band.

De Voghelaere was one of the founders of the Belgian-American Club of Moline. He directed the "dramatic department" of the club for years, and his choice of plays brought large audiences to the performances.

Just three months prior to his death in 1929, the Belgian government honored De Voghelaere with the Cross of Knight Leopold II for his service as consul in Moline and to Belgians in America.



## EDWARD ANDRIES

Edward Andries was born near Ruiselede, West Flanders, Belgium, in 1884. He received his formal education in Belgium and apprenticed in a cabinet shop. He came to America in 1905, and was employed as a cabinet maker at the Moline Furniture Works, later becoming a general foreman at that company.

In 1910, Andries started a building contracting firm. His company was a contractor for the First National Bank, Sacred Heart Church, a large warehouse, and several family homes. He became a director of the First National Bank of Moline in 1921 and became a vice-president of that bank in 1931. He served as the manager of the real estate mortgage loan department from the time he became connected with the bank until his retirement in 1952.

He was instrumental in organizing the United Belgian-American Societies in the area. He served many years as a trustee in Sacred Heart Church and as treasurer of the local chapter of Disabled American Veterans. Andries was also very active in the Belgian-American Club of Moline, Friends Circle Club, Belgian-American Brotherhood of Rock Island, and the East End Bolders.

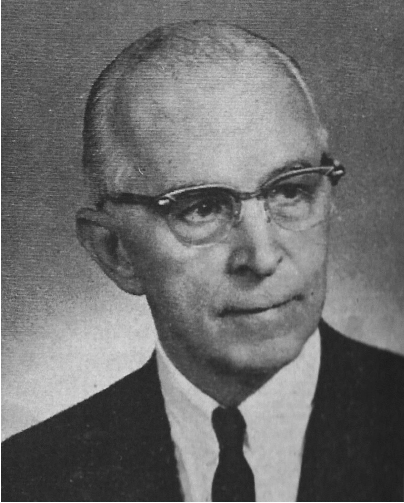
Andries served as Honorary Belgian Consul for Iowa and Western Illinois for 25 years, following the death of Cyriel DeVoghelaere in 1929, before retiring from that position in 1953. In 1949, he was made a Knight of the Order of the Crown, the first person ever from Moline to receive such an honor. He also received the Order of Leopold in 1953, for distinguished service as consul for the Belgian government.



## RALPH DEPORTER

Born in Moline, Ralph DePorter spent 24 years as a reporter for the Davenport Daily Times before retiring as that paper's Moline City Editor. Upon that retirement, he established a real estate and insurance business. In 1952, he created the first travel agency in the Illinois Quad-Cities. He was a partner in the DePorter-Cornelis Agency and was president of DePorter-Butterworth Tours.

DePorter was a seasoned traveler. He visited Europe over 30 times and acted as tour escort for his travel agency. Beginning in 1953, he instituted Flanders Homecoming Flights, which were very popular with former immigrants and their family members.



Active in the Catholic Order of Foresters, DePorter served that organization as a national director for 32 years, and retired from the Foresters in 1976 as dean of its high court. As part of a Foresters' pilgrimage to Rome, he received a private audience with Pope Paul VI in 1967. He was a long-time treasurer of the Belgian-American Club, a director of the Moline YMCA, and director of the Moline Association of Commerce. Together with other prominent Belgians, he founded the Center for Belgian Culture.

DePorter was appointed Honorary Consul of Belgium in 1953 and served in that position for the next 20 years. He was awarded the Chevalier of the Order of the Crown in 1967, and the Medal of Knights of the Order of Leopold when he retired as consul in 1973.

Ralph DePorter passed away in 1980.

## DOLORES BULTINCK

On the 10th anniversary of the Center for Belgian Culture in 1973, Prof. Dolores Bultinck was formally appointed the fifth Honorary Consul of Belgium at Moline. The appointment was also notable, as she was the first female in the United States to be named to that position.

Bultinck was a professor at Black Hawk College in Moline. She was the president of the Center for Belgian Culture from 1965-1967 and served as the Center's executive secretary from 1967-1972. She was responsible for the development of the Belgian historical collection at the college. Through the adult education division of Black Hawk, she arranged for the teaching of Flemish language classes. Prof. Bultinck also organized Flemish Art and Belgian Culture workshops and presented many programs on Belgian lacemaking across the Midwest.

Dolores Bultinck received her Master of Education degree from the University of Illinois, and her Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Iowa. She served a secretary of the Moline Citizens Advisory Council, section chairman of the United Way, a member of the Illinois Business Education Association, and member of Beta Gamma Sigma scholastic honor society in business and administration.

For her years of service to the Belgian government, Prof. Bultinck was named a Knight in the Order of the Crown, and Knight in the Order of Leopold I.





## PATRICK VAN NEVEL

Patrick Van Nevel was born in Deinze in 1955 and grew up on a farm in Vinkt, on the border between East and West Flanders. Receiving a good school report, his parents awarded him with a trip to the United States. His first and subsequent visits to farms caused him to apply for a work permit and immigrant visa in 1978. Earning that approval, Van Nevel immigrated in 1981 and worked as a farm manager for a farm brokerage and management company. His language skills and farming background qualified him for work with a firm specializing in handling large farm properties for European owners.

In 1984, he started a career in banking. Beginning as a loan review officer, he progressed through several banking positions and became Market President in the Quad Cities for a regional bank in 2011. A “Quad-Citizen” and US citizen by choice, he remains committed to serving the community since retiring from banking in August, 2018.

In 2000, Van Nevel worked with Foreign Flanders Investment to familiarize US companies in the Illinois-Iowa region with the European Union and introduction of the Euro. The presentations he helped organize were noted by the Belgian officials, and he was the logical successor to retiring Honorary Consul Dr. Dolores Bultinck. He was sworn in June 13th, 2003, by Ambassador Frans Baron van Daele.



Active in the Quad-Cities Chamber of Commerce, Van Nevel has participated in annual lobbying journeys to Washington, has introduced numerous Quad-Cities public and private leaders to Belgian diplomats in Washington, and hosted visits by Belgian dignitaries to the Quad-Cities. This past September 14th, he organized and coordinated the visit by Belgian Consul Hajdu and Consular Officer Kelfkens to renew expiring passports for Belgian citizen residing in the Midwest at Butterworth Center in Moline.

Patrick promotes Belgium in the jurisdiction and promotes the jurisdiction in Belgium. He maintains close contacts with Belgian officials and since his retirement, has expanded his activities with historical organizations in Belgium, particularly those regions from where most of the Quad-Cities' ancestries originated.

# Guests from Belgium

## The Callens Family from the Tielt (West Flanders) Region

Hilde Vannieuwenhuyze  
Mauro Callens and friend Audrey Magniette

Members for the Center for Belgian Culture have corresponded with Mr. Paul Callens since the mid 1990's. Mr. Callens and Familiekunde Vlaanderen – Regio Tielt have provided the Center numerous publications such as death cards, genealogy research books, individual research services and multiple other publications. On the occasion of the Annual Heritage Fair held in Tielt on September 1st, Paul organized a special display on the Belgian immigrants to the Moline area and on this occasion prepared a publication (two books) on the Belgian immigration to Illinois and Iowa. Paul had to cancel his travel arrangements due to a medical issue, since resolved via placement of a stent. We thank Paul and the Fv – Regio Tielt for all research and publications provided over the years. We send a special thanks to Paul for encouraging his family to come and join us: Mrs. Hilde Vannieuwenhuyze and their son Mauro and his friend Audrey. Welcome and thank you!

## Het Land van Nevele (East Flanders)

Andre Bollaert  
Paul and Marleen Blanckaert-Van De Gehuchte

Mr. Andre Bollaert is President of Het Land van Nevele Historical Society. He has made numerous contributions in the quarterly newsletter . The very active Historical Society just increased the all-time record high membership to 645 – an increase of 9 members from 2018. We have corresponded with Andre and Het Land van Nevele over the past 20+ years and we thank him for joining us and bringing with him Mr. and Mrs. Paul and Marleen Blanckaert-Van De Gehuchte who while here are visiting our CBC board member and volunteer Mildred Kale (Lievens). Andre published a document recounting a story similar to what every community in Flanders experienced in the late 1800's, early 1900's: the story of a family seeking a better life in the New World. It is this family from Poesele represented by Paul and Marleen who honor us with their presence here. Welcome and thank you!

## The town of Aalter, Belgium

Deputy Mayor Dirk De Smul

Our first honorary consul Edward Coryn grew up in Lotenhulle (now Aalter), home of Mr. De Smul. In 1971, a memorial was unveiled in the wall of the school building commemorating the 50th anniversary of the passing of consul Coryn. Since the school building had been sold to make room for a housing development, Patrick Van Nevel contacted Mr. De Smul to learn about its location as he wished to view the memorial while in the area at the end of August. At the time, the memorial was in the town warehouse and Patrick was able to view the memorial at the Aalter town hall. The insert shows a picture of the newly re-installed memorial. We thank the town of Aalter and Deputy Mayor De Smul for honoring its outstanding native Consul Edward Coryn and the town of Aalter for delegating Deputy Mayor De Smul to join us in our celebration.



left to right: Patrick, Mayor De Crem,  
Deputy Mayor De Smul, Barbara Van Nevel

## A look through early Belgian news in Moline from headlines and bulletins

**1857** Several emigrant families from Belgium have moved on the island in the Mississippi to farm and work in the saw mills in Moline. A few of the new residents are Karel Goethals, Francis Rommelaere, and Leo Schatteman and others.

**1860** John Verhetsel and wife who came to the U.S. in 1847 and have been living in St. Louis have moved to Moline to escape the War of Rebellion which has broken out in the South.

**1875** Father H. Grene, recently of Germany, will offer a mass at the new St. Anthony's church, located at 1624 Ninth Avenue, Moline on June 15, 1875. The exact hour is not known at this time. Father Grene speaks Flemish and this is an unusual opportunity for the Moline Belgians to hear a sermon in their mother tongue, according to our correspondent, Bernard Kerkhove, of this new parish.

**1891** An insurance group, Belgische Ziekenmaatschappij, a sick benefit society has been organized by Edward Coryn to relieve the burdens caused by sickness to the heads of laboring men's families in the Belgian community.

**1901** Father Joseph Kelly, pastor of St. Mary's Parish, Moline, has announced his purchase of 23 acres of land in East Moline at \$100 per acre. Father Kelly stated the property is to be used as a cemetery and has been named St. Mary's Catholic Cemetery.

**1906** Bishop Spalding of Peoria has transferred the Rev. John B. Culemans, a Belgian-born priest to Moline from St. Paul's in Rock Island. Father Culemans has been given the responsibility for establishing a new parish. The bishop has been concerned for the welfare of the Flemish-speaking Catholics of Moline for some time and the new parish will give them their own church with a priest speaking their native tongue.

**1907** R.L. Polk's new City Directory for this year lists 28,449 names, the Federal census counted 17,248 people in Moline. There are 4,000 Belgians living in Moline today. If this rate of growth continues, Moline will become a Belgian City!

The Gazette van Moline, the first Flemish language paper printed in the U.S, mailed out its first issue November 16th. The cost, \$2.00 per year. The Gazette, altho printed in the Belgian's Flemish language, will feature news about the new homeland and Moline in particular.

**1912** The Moline National Bank is now paying 4% on deposits. Flemish is spoken by the cashiers and the Bank will attend to details of sending money to Belgium.

**On January 13, 1914** The American Ambassador in England wrote the following to President Woodrow Wilson:  
"Life is worth more, too, for knowing Herbert Hoover. But for him Belgium would now be starved... a stone would weep to hear what Hoover has seen in Belgium

### 1915

Edward Coryn called a meeting of 20 Belgians, members of Sacred Heart parish, to discuss the need for an organization which could combine social benefits and offer life insurance protection to the parish members. Father Culemans expressed his approval of the plan and Sacred Heart Court 1691 of the Catholic Order of Foresters was established. The first president was Edward Andries.

**November 2, 1916** Do you know where these people are?

The DeWinters family, possibly in Moline, is being sought by Petrus Brakeveld of Ruysselede, now in Belgian Army campaigning in France. Ameye, Georgina, 11, Auguste, age 9, Leona, age 6 last heard living at Thielt, W. Flanders is being sought by their father, Isadore Ameye Shoe Shop, Midland, N.Y.

Barbara Oosterlinck (aged 70), widow, and daughter Marie being sought by her son Theophiel Oosterlinck, 716 – 3rd St. Rock Island. In Vilvoorde when last heard of.

Elodie DeWaele is searching for her mother, Melanie, age 63 yrs, and Leonie, 23, Marie, 19, Remi, 22. Were in Worteghem.

### November 1, 1917

The Belgian-American National Societies have been most successful in bringing many women and children from war-torn Belgium and reuniting them with the husbands and fathers who have come on ahead to the U.S. These refugees were met in New York by members of the societies and found safe havens for them. Large sums of money have been collected for their relief.

### November 14, 1918

The schools, churches and stores may now keep regular business hours. The cases of the deadly influenza are decreasing steadily but the Health Commission asks that no gatherings be held.

**1919** Father John B. Culemans, pastor of Sacred Heart, Moline, has made public the news that Cardinal Mercier of Belgium will be in Moline for the laying of the cornerstone of the Gothic style church now under construction.

**Feb. 19, 1920** Stephanie, wife of Leonard Dhaenens, died today after a very brief illness with influenza. She leaves her husband and four young children.

**February 22, 1920** Alois Staut, wife and children, Julia, Leona, Mary and Victor arrived in Moline today from New York. They travelled from Belgium on the ship Lapland, one of the first boats to sail out of post-war Belgium.



Princess Eléonore, Prince Gabriel, Her Majesty Queen Mathilde, His Majesty King Philippe, Princess Elisabeth, Duchess of Brabant, Prince Emmanuel