



# CENTER FOR BELGIAN CULTURE of Western Illinois, Inc.

1608 Seventh Street, Moline, Illinois 61265

(309) 762-0167

[www.belgianmuseumquadcities.org](http://www.belgianmuseumquadcities.org)



*April, 2020*

## EXECUTIVE BOARD

**President**  
Kevin DeRoo

**Vice President**  
Bill Cornelis

**Secretary**  
Linda Polich

**Treasurer**  
Ann Noyce

**Member at Large**  
Steve Slininger

**Scholarship Committee**  
Steve Slininger

**Honorary Consul**  
Patrick Van Nevel  
[pvannevel@msn.com](mailto:pvannevel@msn.com)

**Membership**  
Bill Coopman

**Waffle Chairman**  
Steve Slininger  
(309) 792-2790

**Flemings in the World**  
Marlene Shattuck

**Genealogy**  
Linda Polich  
[fredlinda1985@gmail.com](mailto:fredlinda1985@gmail.com)

**Archivist**  
Millie Kale

**Marketing**  
Karen VandeKerckhove

**Rolle Bolle**  
Rich Bassier

**Newsletter Editor**  
Dave Coopman  
[d.coopman@mchsi.com](mailto:d.coopman@mchsi.com)

**Gift Shop**  
Diana Slininger

## Calendar of Upcoming Events

|            |                     |                   |
|------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| April 4th  | NO Waffle Breakfast |                   |
| April 4th  | Belgian Lacemakers  | 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. |
| April 13th | Board Meeting       | 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. |

Visit the Center for more information and to stay updated on current events.

### Please Note

Because of the coronavirus, the Center is closed through March. We will update during April, when more is known and to be in compliance with any governmental ruling. We want everyone, especially our volunteers, to stay healthy. Please take care!!

### NO APRIL WAFFLES

Due to the coronavirus, we are forced to cancel the waffle breakfast on April 4th. We hope to see you on our next waffle breakfast on May 2nd.

### Annual Meeting

As noted in several previous newsletters, the CBC is holding its annual meeting on April 13th at the Center, beginning at 5:30 p.m. With the usual monthly business will be the election of officers for the next two years. All positions are open. If you are interested in the future of the CBC and feel you have something to offer as a board member, please contact one of the current officers and let them know of your interest, or come to the meeting that evening.



**OPEN Wednesday & Saturday 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.**

**Waffle Breakfast 1st Sat. of each month**

## A Life Story

*The following was submitted by Linda Polich, the genealogy researcher for the Center. Thank you, Linda, for providing this interesting background. There are many familiar names noted.*

### The Life Story of My Maternal Grandfather, Fred Coopman

Fred was born on February 12, 1894, in Moline, Illinois, the eldest child of August and Augusta Schatteman Coopman. Fred was baptized on February 18, 1894, at St. Mary's Catholic Church on 10th Street and 4th Avenue in Moline, Illinois. His name shown on the church baptism certificate is Alphonse Frederick Coopman. He made his First Communion on July 1, 1906, also at St. Mary's Church.

Fred had three siblings: Frank Coopman (who ran Frank and Clara's Tavern in Moline), Mary Coopman DeSleer, and Clara Coopman Veroeven.

In 1901, his mother passed away. His father left the four young children with friends and traveled back to Belgium, where he married Ursula De Martelaere. They returned to Rock Island County and had ten children (Fred's half-siblings), seven who reached adulthood: Minnie Coopman Renne, Maurice Coopman, Alice Coopman DeSmith, Elizabeth Coopman Anderley, Arthur Coopman, Edna Coopman DeKezel, and Lillian Coopman Whitmer.

Fred spent most of his childhood in Rock Island County, Illinois, and Walnut Grove, Minnesota.

On December 5, 1923, after NINE years of engagement, Fred and Matilda Van Hecke (Tillie) were married in Walnut Grove, Minnesota.

They farmed in Minnesota and Illinois. As the story goes . . . while living in Minnesota, they sold their farm during the Depression. They had an auction during very cold weather. They put all their money in the bank on a Saturday, and on the following Monday, the bank crashed due to the Depression. They lost all the money they had made from the auction.

Being strong and resilient Belgians, they moved back to Illinois where Fred worked for a short time as chauffeur at the Velie Mansion in Moline (no documentation found to-date).

Fred and Tillie farmed on Big Island (near Milan, Illinois), then later built a house on 31st Street "A" in Moline (near the Hiland area).

Betty Coopman Bergren (my mother) remembers while living in the 31st Street "A" home, her father was working

in the yard on a tractor, when the tractor rolled over pinning him to the fence. He would have died had it not been for two neighbor men who saw the accident and came over to pull him out. This story was recently confirmed when I found a *Daily Dispatch* newspaper article dated April 9, 1945, describing the accident.

Fred and Tillie later bought a quarter-acre of land from Carl Coopman, Sr. (son of Henri Coopman) near the Quad-City Airport (known as Coopman's Addition) in Milan, Illinois. Many other Coopman family members lived in the same neighborhood – Freddy and Mary Gelande Coopman (Freddy is Henri Coopman's son), and Gene and Lucille Coopman (Gene is Henri's grandson). Part of the time, Camiel and Mary Coopman VanTieghem (Mary is Henri's daughter) also lived in the same area. Fred and Tillie built a small home where they lived for several years. Both daughters, Marie Coopman Lamb and Betty Coopman Bergren were married in this house. Then Fred and Tillie built another home on the lot next door, and rented out the first house.

After their daughters were married, both families settled in the same small neighborhood as Fred and Tillie.

The last occupation Fred had was working for the Illinois Highway Division, where he drove a road grader.

Fred liked to "tinker," and was always building things. One of his creations was a small riding tractor that he built from scratch. Fred liked to hook up a wagon to this tractor and take the grandkids for numerous rides around the neighborhood. Fred's grandchildren have several fond memories of him – one of which is his advice every time we left his house: "Don't take any wooden nickels!" Fred and Tillie both played very important roles in their grandchildren's lives, forming many lasting childhood memories.

In their later years, both Fred and Tillie moved to Roosevelt Square Nursing Home in Silvis, Illinois. Tillie passed away on July 9, 1979. Fred passed away on January 8, 1981. Both are buried at St. Mary's Mausoleum in East Moline, Illinois.

## Scholarship Time Running Out

Forms for this year's CBC and Ruth Lambrick Van Tieghem scholarships are now available at the Center and through area high school and college counselors. But note, time is running out. Applications must be returned by April 15th to be considered.

## Looking Back

How many of you recognize this area? It has changed a bit since this photo was taken in the mid-1930s by Dr. Warren Streed. You are looking north at the former John Deere Field. How it got that name, I'm not sure, but that is what it was called back in the 1950s, when I was but a lad. And yes, it's part of the Olde Towne area.

Perhaps if you imagine Heartland Healthcare and the former Metro Lab building, the photo will make more sense. On the left side, you will note 7th Street. Near the top of the photo is 12th Avenue. Towards the bottom is 16th Avenue, and on the right side is 9th Street. In the lower left-hand corner, you can see the roof of the building where the CBC is currently located. Many of the homes you see were occupied by Belgians.

As you have traveled around Moline, no doubt you've noticed many of the ravines and gullies that make up some of the city's landscape. John Deere Field had some great ravines for playing Cowboys and Indians, War, and Hide-and-Seek. The Lincoln School Dad's Club baseball teams played their games on the flat, northeast corner of the field. Do they even have Dad's Club baseball anymore? Things certainly change, don't they?

I'd love to see more photos of Olde Towne in days past, and I know you would, too. If you have any – they needn't be aerial shots – please send them to us. They can be scanned and emailed, or dropped off at the Center and we'll scan and return them to you.



**CENTER FOR BELGIAN CULTURE  
of Western Illinois, Inc.**  
1608 Seventh Street, Moline, IL 61265

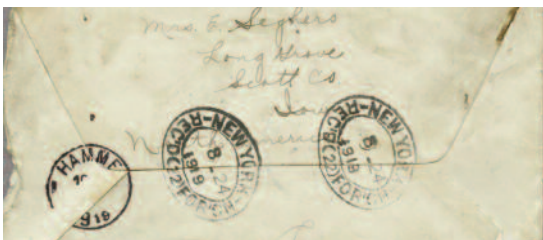
## CENTER FOR BELGIAN CULTURE

*April, 2020*

### Researching Language

The Red Star Museum in Antwerp is looking for letters, postcards, diaries, or other written documents sent from the United States by Flemish immigrants. It is working with the Vrij Universiteit Brussel on a project to identify how the Flemish language was influenced by American English following the migration. The researchers are looking for letters or other written items the new Americans might have sent back home to family and friends in Flanders.

While the emigrants didn't have to have sailed on a Red Star Line ship, the researchers are focused on the written material from the period in which the ship operated, which was between 1873 and 1934. For more information, check [redstarline@antwerpen.be](mailto:redstarline@antwerpen.be).



### Improving Response

The city of Ghent has begun a trial program to improve response times in emergency situations involving the elderly: a yellow plastic box kept in the refrigerator. The box contains personal and medical information, as well as contact details of next of kin. It is intended to be used by those over 65 years of age, and those who have a chronic illness. By storing the box in the door of the fridge, emergency services will know where to find crucial information during an emergency or if a person with dementia goes missing.

The yellow box contains a folder that can list personal medical information, next of kin contacts, and even what to do with pets if their owner is taken to a hospital. All of this will save time and is an efficient method that can save lives.

Moline had a free program called Vial-of-Life that did the same thing. If interested, you might contact your doctor or pharmacy to see if the vials are still available. The program worked just as the yellow box program in Ghent does.

*(Thanks to FlandersToday)*