



All About Michigan

Tulips in Michigan

One of the first signs of springtime is the emergence of the tulip. Did you know that the Netherlands was not the first place to grow the tulip. As early as 1,000 AD, the Turks were cultivating tulips. It is believed that the tulip flower was named for its resemblance to turbans worn in the Middle East. "Turban" in Latin becomes "tulipa." When the botanist, Carolus Clusius discovered tulips in 1593 growing in Vienna, he began cultivating them in the Netherlands. Once they blossomed out of his small planted garden, they attracted a lot of attention!

He wouldn't sell the bulbs which created a demand for them. So one night, his garden was broken into and the bulbs were stolen. The thieves were bold enough to create the Dutch Tulip Trade. The bulbs were sold and grown to multiply. In the beginning, tulips were very rare and only the wealthy could afford them. The people were going bankrupt in order to buy the bulbs! They weren't even planting them for fear of them being stolen! Because of the inability of growers to produce enough to meet the demand, tulips lost their value. People began to plant them again.

Now with the demand equal to production, over half the farmland

in Holland is set aside to grow tulip bulbs. The Netherlands produces three billion tulip bulbs each year. The U.S. is the top importer of tulip bulbs. There are now over 3,000 different registered varieties of cultivated tulips.

In 1927, a Woman's Literary Club meeting was held in Holland, Michigan. Lida Rogers, a biology teacher at Holland High School suggested that Holland adopt the tulip as its official flower and celebrate it with a festival. The next year, the City Council purchased 100,000 tulip bulbs from the Netherlands to plant in city parks and other areas. They were also available for Holland residents to purchase for one cent each. By the spring of 1929, thousands of tulips bloomed and so did the annual festival. By the mid 1930's, Tulip Time was internationally known. Tulip Time has continued to thrive in Holland Michigan boasting over a half million visitors during their festival. Holland's annual celebration of Dutch heritage and culture is a multi-generational event that has something for everyone. Three amazing parades, traditional Dutch Dance performances, concerts, theatre, Dutch attractions, Dutch food, children's events, Tulip City Tours and so much more! This year it starts on May 5th.

