Hoornaar Feb, 1883

Friend W. Slob!

Monday morning, Jan. 15, last, C. Hakkesteeg stopped by and brought me your letter of Dec. 30, '82. I was ready to leave for Gorcum but could not resist to read it quickly and learned to my satisfaction that you were doing well, which I can also say of myself at this moment (with thanks to God), and that your Mother and other relatives are doing well, too. Your sister Maaike, as you probably know, has recuperated thus far, beyond expectation. Speaking about winter, this one is just like last winter: mild, with much rain, and snow a couple of times, and a night frost from time to time, which the boys
take advantage of by going ice-skating on the brook. We have
had high water twice on the river; the highest above the
standard level was 30 feet and 4 inches in Cologne, so that the
water of the Lek River from Lexmond to Vianen reached the
dike, but because of mild weather conditions we have been
spared from flooding because of God's goodness. Although
the fields here are almost all submersed because it stood 20
former "duimen" - now called Rijnlands "duimen" - (inches)
above the summer level of which 2 inches have been drained
while some polders along the Lek River are about a Dutch "el"
(yard) above their summer level. The result is that the public
road from Lexmond to Vianen is flooded in some places. As
always this excess polder water causes great concern and
oftentimes various discussions are held.
about improving the pumping station either by adding a new machine in the water district of Overwaarde, or in our polder bordering on the Wielmolen, which would save a lot of money and make people feel much more at ease.

In the evening I went to "the End" with the letter I had received that morning to share it with your brothers and other relatives, but Toon and Jan were at Mother's in Hoornaar and thus I could not share it with them. But Jan came to our place the next morning to read it which I did for him, and it is plain that the blood brothers though living far away from you have not forgotten you. Last Wednesday morning when I went with your Mother to the uncles in Hoornaar, your brother Govert and his wife and a couple of children met us with the intent to go the "the End," and

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1 "the End" seems to refer to a geographical part of town.
to come to our place in the afternoon to read the letter, which could not happen because we were gone, and the more so because I had the letter with me to read to the family in Hoornaar. I read it first and then Bastiaan and they listened to it with pleasure. Just like us, they are all doing very well. When we stopped briefly at your brother Govert’s place, he told us that he had one of your letters which had been written to Romijn in Meerkerk.

[There is no conclusion to this letter]

Translated from the Dutch by Gerrit W. Shoer, Grand Rapids, MI
Esteemed Sir and unknown Friend especially of our Father,

It was always such a pleasure in former days to receive your letters and especially your warm letter of October 30 of this year. After a lengthy period in which he grew weaker and weaker we saw that our Father was nearing the end; therefore he was no longer capable of reading your letter, but when we told him that he had received a letter from his old friend, and I asked if he wanted me to read it to him he listened very attentively and understood what was said,
even though he was extremely weak, and he was even able to say what a pleasure it was to have heard it read [illegible lines]. ... says to him, O man, put your house in order for you are going to die, of which we are reminded constantly [illegible lines] and which comforts us in our painful loss; for the rest we are doing well. Your brother-in-law Middelkoop, who visited us last Tuesday could not converse with Father anymore. I hope to be able to go into more detail about Father's suffering later, since at this time — [illegible lines] — and must close now, but wish you well for time and eternity by the grace of God [last line illegible].
Enclosed the sad news of my dear Father's death; this is also to let you know how much we appreciated, and Father especially, the letters which we used to receive in the past. Your last letter of October 30, which we received on the 15th of November, was especially appreciated. Since my Father had grown weaker and weaker for a long time and had deteriorated physically, and we could see that his final hour was at hand, he was not able to receive the letter himself. But when I told him that he had received a letter from his old friend J. Hospers and asked him if he wanted me to read it to him, he listened attentively, and he said what a pleasure it was to have heard it. What struck us especially in your letter was that as he was dying you spoke about having heaven in your head and Jesus in your heart and the world beneath your feet. I wondered if this was not a call from the All-wise and All-good God by way of his old friend from a faraway land.
In response to your letter of the 21st of this month I hereby inform you that 3 pigs of brother-in-law Hakkesteeeg will be delivered to you next Tuesday around 10 in the morning, while after having discussed it we decided that you can cut ??? in ???, although we are somewhat disappointed in the price, but we leave it entirely up to you. Father's death is very hard on my Mother, but we put our trust in the wise providence of the All-good God.

Kind regards from the one who calls himself your obedient friend,

D.K. Aanen

Translated from the Dutch by Gerrit W. Sheeres, Grand Rapids, MI
Hoornaar, the 25th of February 1884

Mr. J. Hospers,
Pella.

Esteemed Sir,

Having been prevented by various duties to tell my father's old and true friend, J. Hospers, about the final years of my dear, late Father, as I had promised in my letter of 26 November of last year, this letter is intended to inform you that his health (as I told you earlier) had been affected severely for a number of years (shaking) which caused him to grow increasingly weaker as he grew older, making it impossible for him to carry out his duties, so that he attended his final municipal and polder board meetings etc. in the year 1880.
Since every effort had a very harmful effect on his health he requested that when his terms ended in 1881 and in 1882 he not to be re-nominated; he only retained the position of secretary of the Hoornaar polder, which duties I took care of for him the last two years. Today I have assumed his former responsibilities which sometimes entail struggles but also pleasures, but I pray that the Lord will equip me for this work so that I may be found faithful.

In keeping with their annual custom Father and Mother together with the youngest daughter of my sister, Jannigie, visited your brother-in-law W. Middelkoop for the last time in the late summer of 1882 for an entire day. I brought them there with a spring equipped carriage and took them back again. That summer Father went out only once in a carriage, namely, on an afternoon to visit Govert and Adriaan Slob in Hoornaar, the youngest and only living brother of Mother.
while in the evening we visited the teacher in ‘t Veld to take a look at the new school. Father had never been in it; he thought it had been built on too grand a scale, just as you commented in your letter of October 30 1883. I myself agree that your comment was well taken: frugality in the Netherlands is being lost. For the rest, Father was in good health; he lived very moderately and quietly; he went to see my sister Jannigje nearly every day when the weather was good, a habit he kept up until about three weeks before his death. Then his appetite slowly diminished, and he realized, just as we did, that the end was near. And although he never spoke much about the condition of his immortal soul, he did tell us, as well as Mr. Dijns (an evangelist who works in our congregation and who came to see him four days before the end) that for thirty years he had bowed the knee before the Lord and that he had sought no other savior but Jesus and him crucified, and he had said that had would have liked to have told Mr. Dijns more, but that great weakness prevented him from doing so; after this Mr. Dijns expressed the wish
that he might experience an easy departure and a blessed entrance; thereupon Father thanked him kindly after which he hardly spoke, although he remained fully conscious until the end of his life and thus the first wish of Mr. Dijns was fulfilled by God's grace, since he died very quietly. Mr. Dijns, who has been appointed to teach catechism in our congregation every other week, conducted his funeral; before we went to the cemetery he read from Ecclesiastes 12 and gave a brief exposition of the passage, and after the body had been interred he read Psalm 1 from which he spoke for more than 1 ½ hours, saying that his hope was (just like yours) that he would meet him again in the presence of our Savior; after this I let him read your letter of the 30th of October last year, and it pleased him greatly to read there that you and Father during the days that he was mayor always honored God's Word, which convinced him even more that Father's testimony had been genuine. After this, Mr. Dijns asked me to remember him to you and to tell you of the pleasure he had received from reading your letter.
For the rest, all of us are in good health and doing well with thanks to God. Until now we have had an unusually light winter without any frost or snow to speak of. The water levels of the rivers have been low and the polders have been dry all winter long, which is exceptional since most winters they are flooded, which often makes life unpleasant for many. When this happens, may we only learn to bow before the All-wise and All-good God, so that He may make us wise for time and eternity. The farmers are now quite busy plowing their acreage so they can plant sugar beets, which we also intend to grow now for the second year since last summer they gave us a good return; we had planted about a half a morgen¹ and had a yield of f355, which was exceptional. The price of hemp, on the other hand, has been very low the last few years, and therefore it is not grown much anymore today. The quantity and quality of the potato crop was extraordinarily good last summer so that everyone did quite well. The price ranges between f1.75 and 2.50 per hectoliter.

¹ morgen: an area that could be plowed in one morning.
which is very low, but because of the good yield it was profitable. Cheese production, which is the main product here, is going very well, even to the point that some farmers produce cheese all winter long with the result that in wintertime generally very little of the milk is used for butter production. But it also means that their pride is running ahead of their prosperity while many crop farmers suffer.

The widow A.A. de Jager is doing well; she still has a son, who is a widower, and two unmarried daughters. They all live on a farm in Hoornaar and are making a good living. The teacher in 't Veld is a moral person but certainly the wrong person to teach the children the first principles of truth.

In the beginning of January, I was called, as chairman of the Larger Common Territory Board of Arkel, to inspect the clay road that runs from the church of Hoogblokland to the Haarweg; it had been upgraded last summer to a gravel road at the expense of the polders that make up the Common Territory of Arkel, with the relinquishment of property rights.

Afterwards I ate at Middelkoop's place, your brother-in-law, and had a very pleasant visit with him the rest of the day. He is doing well and lives, just like I do, a moderate and quiet life, and it seems that his housekeeper Mietje fits in very well with his lifestyle; I also informed him that I had been appointed executor of my Father's last will. I want to thank you yet for informing Overkamp etc. of Father's death. In closing, I remain, together with my beloved Mother, respectfully, your obedient servant, D.K. Aanen.

Translated from the Dutch by Gerrit W. Sheeers, Grand Rapids, MI
Hoornaar, 26 January 1885

Highly Esteemed Friend,

I have been suffering from a lower back pain the last few days and am spending most of my time near the stove. While there, the thought occurred to me to write you a few lines in answer to your letters of 12 April, 5 May, 30 June 1884, all of which we received in good health and from which we learned that all of you were well, and which also led us to admire your physical prowess at age 83, as indicated especially in your letter of 5 May last. But we realize that these are the Lord's ways, and He only has to speak and it appears and to command and it is created. I also want to thank you for your letter with information about the "Ambachtsheerlijke" system. etc.
Since by God's goodness all of us have entered a New Year again, I must not forget also on behalf of my Mother to wish all of you a blessed year as far as this temporal life is concerned, and may it lead to blessedness of your immortal souls.

With thanks to God all of us are healthy and well. I can say the same of Mrs. A. A. de Jager, to whom I read your letter of June 30 last, which contained the news about the death of Mr. H.R. Koopman; she appreciated very much that she was thus kept informed, although it saddened her, and she asked me to relay her greetings to you at the first possible occasion.

We had an exceptionally fruitful year last year; we were even able to put some of our milking cows out to pasture already in the beginning of March since there was sufficient grass for them;
and because of the favorable spring weather the pastures and hayfields produced a double harvest of grass; but in late summer we suffered some losses because of the many field mice. The fields produced good crops; however, the prices were low, with little demand. Good potatoes are sold these days for 2.00 per ½ hectoliter; cheese production, our mainstay, also experienced a considerable decrease in price. It is sold today for 21 - 23 per one hundred five ounces which is about 1/3 lower than in previous years (1882/1883), so that some farmers who are stuck with high rental payments are not doing too well. Raising cattle, on the other hand, has been very profitable - with stock being sold for exceptionally high prices.
The winter season has been mild until about the middle of January, but now we have a thin layer of snow with a solid frost and the ice-skaters leave for other places in droves.

Your brother-in-law Middelkoop is doing well as far as we know; last fall he visited us for a day with his housekeeper Mietje and after that Mother, sister Jannigje, and her youngest daughter, and I visited them on a nice day in October and had a very pleasant time talking freely with each other; he requested us not to break off the good relationship of a former day between Father and him which we indeed hope will remain so. The youngest brother-in-law of Mr. Overkamp, A de B, died in Noordeloos last summer, leaving a widow and three well-mannered children of whom the son and the oldest daughter are married, while she lives together with her youngest daughter in the house; the other brother-in-law, J de B., is a more agreeable person than his late brother-in-law, but his children cause him much sorrow. We have not received the *Pella Weekblad* for some time. My mother and I wish you and you wife all the best. Your obedient servant,

D.K. Aanen

Please convey my Mother's and my best wishes to Mr. Overkamp.

Translated from the Dutch by Gerrit W. Sheeres, Grand Rapids, MI
Hoornaar, 18 March 1887

Mr. J. Hospers
Pella

Highly Esteemed Friend,

It certainly was a pleasure to receive your letter of 16 December of last year on the 31st of December and to learn that all of you are doing well; by God's grace we can say the same, although when we received your letter Mother (Adriaantje Slob) was slightly indisposed due to a lung infection which grew worse and was accompanied by a fever that robbed her of her appetite and made her considerably weaker so that she was quite ill. But, thanks be to God, she has recuperated to the extent that she is able to sit in her usual place at the corner of the table, although because of her weakness she goes to bed twice a day for an hour or so.
Let us hope that this illness may remind her and us of our dependence on the All-wise and All-good God so that He only may receive the praise, thanks and honor. Mother and I live together in the front part of the house while brother Arie lives in the back part of the same house; he looks after the farm. Brother-in-law Middelkoop is doing very well; I visited him last week yet; he appears to have a good, pleasant relationship with his housekeeper. He lives a very quiet and moderate life which seems to agree with his housekeeper Mietje; she is an upstanding girl who usually sits by the stove in wintertime while in the summer she spends a lot of time in her beautiful garden. He goes out very seldom and has little fellowship with the people of Hoogblokland, except with A. den Ruiter, S. Kuipers and D. de Groot Bzn, grandson of the late P. Kuipers, who all belong to his circle of friends.
His neighbor, H. Vroom, died two weeks ago at quite an old age (87); also, in Hoornaar, the widow W.H. Slob, the near-sighted A. Slob and Jenneke van Beist, the widow F. Heikoop [all passed away], while your colleague, Mr. van der Heijden, former principal at Nieuwland, died last year in Gispen Nieuwkerk where he had made his home, but his mortal remains were brought back to the municipality of Nieuwland; the last brother-in-law of Mr. I. Overkamp, Mr. J. den Besten died this winter; he was a good man but throughout his life his eldest son, who was in prison multiple times, caused him a lot of grief.

As you have probably gathered from the writings in the Dutch newspapers, there is considerable ecclesiastical tension in this country; quite a number of ministers and church councils have indicated that they no longer wish to obey Synod. Our congregation (which remains vacant) continues to use lay evangelists for preaching, but we can notice some of this dissension here as well.
In view of the fact that the above-named evangelists have been called to serve as lay-preachers because there is a shortage of Reformed pastors; some here are not satisfied with this arrangement and are looking forward to having a Reformed minister [of our own], while some are quite satisfied with the status quo and have no desire to ever call an ordained minister; then again some are ready to break the synodical connection completely and would like to establish a dissenting [dolerende: literally: grieving] church, while a few (liberals) would like an ordained minister but are almost totally indifferent as to what his theological position might be; they are only interested in a formal religion. Sad, isn't it? May the Lord graciously grant light and wisdom so that his divided church may be brought under one Shepherd and be one flock to the honor and glory of His Name, which is beyond praise.

At this time it is terribly cold here. The thermometer shows 3 ½ degrees above zero Fahrenheit, although we have had a good winter, the polders are dry and the rivers are low. Cornelia Slob, widow [of A.] de Jager is still healthy and thriving. Since there is no more room on this sheet I will have to close. Please give Mr. I. Overkamp our best, and to you and your wife and children greetings.

Your affectionate friend, D.K. Aanen.

Translated from the Dutch by Gerrit W. Sheeres, Grand Rapids, MI
Hoornaar, 30 September 1887

Esteemed Friend J. Hospers,

We always received your previous letters with a great deal of interest, but your last letter of the 6th of September caught our eye in particular because of its black seal. We opened it immediately upon receipt and were truly sorry to learn that your esteemed spouse, Hendrica Middelkoop, had passed away. Yes, I say we were truly sorry having felt ourselves how painful it is to miss a faithful spouse and Father, and although your spouse, like Father had been in ill health for some years and had reached old age, her death certainly must have inflicted a deep wound in all of your hearts.
because in the time span of 58 years that you were married to her by the grace of God, you must have enjoyed a great deal of support from her in this earthly life which so often consists of struggle and difficulties as well as joys and happiness. But certainly, you must find great comfort in the hope that she has gone to a better country. May the Lord, in His grace, be near to you and fill the loss in your family with His comfort and strengthen you in accepting His wise rule.

On Sunday morning, August 21, I was surprised when, after arriving early at church, I found your grandson, G. H. Hoppers, all by himself looking to see what the old Hoornaar church was all about. Later
he attended the service with Rev. de Pecker from Gorinchem delivering the message; he is a person with very liberal views which we ourselves could not agree with. I invited your grandson afterwards for the second time to be our guest and, even though Mother was somewhat surprised at his sudden appearance, she nevertheless was not deterred from welcoming an American theological candidate, grandson of a dear old friend who lives afar. I read him your letters of last July 29 in which you suggested that I ask him to preach for our congregation (which had been approved by the church council) and he immediately consented. We decided on the service of Sunday evening, the 11th of September, at 6 o'clock (which also was the last time he visited our home), since he would preach for the Hoogblokland congregation in the morning, which he did for a full church.
For our congregation he preached on John 3: 36. People listened to his sermon with a great deal of interest and agreed with what he said but, seeing there are various viewpoints among the people of our congregation, some would have liked to have seen him elaborate more on man's miserable state. He drew people's attention especially when from the pulpit he mentioned that he had received a letter from you from which he read a few lines, and in that way your old friends in Hoornaar heard, as it were from your own mouth, you warmly wishing them all that is good for body and soul. After the service a number of gray-haired old men shook his hand and also asked him to relay their greetings to you. May the All-good God through His grace equip him further and grant him wisdom and light in his important calling so that he may live his life as a credit to his family and might it be as a means in God's hand for the conversion of many sinners and the glorification of God's great Name which cannot be praised enough.

Translated from the Dutch by Gerrit W. Sheeres, Grand Rapids, MI
Hoornaar, 20 Feb. 1888

Mr. G.H. Hospers
East Williamson.

Highly Esteemed Friend!

We received your letter of 20 October of last year in good health; it arrived on the following 7th of November, together with a letter from your Grandfather, Mr. J. Hospers, and although we had read in the newspaper about the arrival of the ship "Rotterdam", we were very pleased to receive your letter and the one of your Grandfather, and to read that you are blessed with good health. We learned from your Grandfather's letter that
that upon your arrival in America you were surprised with two
calls from Classes to serve as a Home Missionary, while a third
call followed to become the pastor of the congregation of East
Williamson, and we understand from your wedding
announcement that you will reside there as pastor. Dear
friend, I feel that you will have reason to thank the All-good
God for the blessings you have experienced so richly in your
youthful years and especially in the last year. May the Lord
grant that you will continue to experience his blessings also in
the bonds of marriage, this is the desire of my heart, and in His
grace may He grant you wisdom and light in the important
work of
proclaiming his precious Word so that you may serve as a means in His hand toward the conversion of many sinners to the glory and honor of his Name, which is never praised enough.

The ecclesiastical struggles here increase gradually, with more and more people seceding, so that now there are more than 150 congregations of dissenters. The result is that the Netherlands Reformed Church is gradually being destroyed for a lack of ministers, and in my judgment half of the congregations will be vacant within a few years. Rev. de Minjer of Hoogblokland has received a number of calls, but he is not leaving his congregation.

Your Uncle, Mr. W. Middelkoop, and his housekeeper Mietje

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1 D.K. makes reference here to the Secession from the Netherlands Reformed Church [de Hervormde Kerk] which took place in 1886 under Abraham Kuyper. This Secession was called De Doleantie – from the Latin dolere (to have grievances), and the members who seceded were called dissenters and also "dolerenden" or "those with grievances"; their grievance was that the official ecclesiastical organization stood in the way of reforming the church.
The winter weather in the Netherlands is very cold, and even the sea is frozen. People are conserve their warmth and only go out when absolutely necessary.

There is considerable apprehension here about the upcoming elections in the beginning of March for members of the Lower Chamber of Parliament; the revision of the Constitution has brought about a great change which means that the present Chamber has to be dissolved after which an entirely new Chamber has to be appointed with a few more members while the number of eligible voters will increase by approximately 2/3; it is my judgment that no one will be able to determine which party is to become the leading party.

The Lord reigns, and it is my prayer that many humble prayers may be offered to Him so that unbelief may come to naught and He only may receive the praise, thanksgiving and honor.

Dear friend, the sheet is full so I will have to close. Excuse me for waiting so long to respond to your letter. Best wishes to you and also to your dear spouse, from your affectionate friend,

D.K. Aanen

Translated from the Dutch by Gerrit W. Sheeres, Grand Rapids, MI
Hoornaar, June 25, 1888

Mr. N. Hospers
Pella

Esteemed Sir & Friend!

To begin with, I feel obligated to take up the pen and write you a few lines. Forgive me for waiting so long to respond to your letter of the 22nd of February of this year, which contained the sad news of the death of your esteemed Father, Mr. J. Hospers, the highly valued friend of all of us but especially of my late Father, Mr. E. Aanen, whose warm association which they enjoyed as Mayor and deputy-secretary of the Municipality of Hoornaar,
Mother clearly remembers, and although I never knew him personally, I learned to know him through his many letters as an upright, religious person who tried to live his life based on the Word of God, which will surely comfort you greatly for time and eternity. We received his last letter, written on January 18, 1888, on the following 7th of February, in which he portrayed the friendship between Father and him as that of David and Jonathan.

Upon re-reading your letter of last February 22nd, I feel a renewed sympathy in the loss of your esteemed Father and although he is no longer with us we will
never forget his name while we carefully save his many letters as well as the death notices of him and your late Mother, Hendrika Middelkoop, for which I thank you herewith most sincerely. I spoke with your Uncle, Mr. W. Middelkoop, a few days ago; he is doing fairly well, although he is also beginning to talk about old age, and how even though he lives very quietly he keeps on experiencing small setbacks.

S. Kuipers of Hoogblokland conveyed your greetings to me a few weeks ago. He is a respected man who gets along well with your Uncle Middelkoop. There is considerable tension in the churches here which I believe will
result in a second secession. A number of respected ministers and members of the Netherlands Reformed Church [de Nederlands Hervormde Kerk] are appealing the false measures introduced in the Netherlands Reformed Church by the higher authorities. Those who appeal want to reform the church in keeping with the Synod of Dordrecht of the years 1618/19, they constantly disobey the present Synod resulting in their membership being taken away from them, and in a number of municipalities we see the organization of a second church that calls itself the Netherlands Reformed Church [de Gereformeerde Kerk].

The Lord reigns; may unbelief come to naught, and may He show mercy to his people and bring reconciliation and restoration to his church in the soul-saving faith, and may He alone receive the praise, thanksgiving and honor.

The last few days here have been very nice, although with intermittent showers. Our spring has been cold and therefore the crops in the fields do not look too good as yet; we have just made a small beginning with haying. Our main product, cheese production, is going good; the sales price right now is 25 to 27 guilders per hundred pounds. Now receive warm greetings from me and Mother, and I remain, sincerely, your willing servant and friend,

D.K. Aanen

Translated from the Dutch by Gerrit W. Sheeres Grand Rapids, MI
Hoornaar, October 1889

It was certainly a pleasure to receive your letter of 16 August 1889 and the one of August 30, and to learn that you were doing well; at the same time, I am able to inform you that both Mother, the Widow E. Aanen, as well as I myself and my only brother and sister and their families all are in good health. Although, Mother was afflicted with a serious eye disease last winter which caused her to lose sight in her left eye, but because of God's goodness she has recuperated and is doing well. I visited your Uncle, Mr. W. Middelkoop, in Hoogblokland two weeks ago.
He was doing fairly well, although two weeks earlier he had been quite indisposed. He told me that one of those days he was expecting your nephew, young Mr. Hospers from Orange City; he felt quite honored that the young man lived up to his expectation last week, but since he stayed in Hoogblokland for only two days I did not have an opportunity to meet him and speak with him. I do hope to meet him on a subsequent occasion. Your Uncle, Mr. Middelkoop, leads a very simple and quiet life; we have not been able all summer long to persuade him to visit here; with the increase of years he becomes more and more tied to his home and lives a rather secluded life, together with his housekeeper, Mietje. He no longer attends church and very seldom interacts with the people of Hoogblokland, for the rest, he is a very respectable person.
and, as I suspect his capital increases considerably every year, for whom I have great deal of admiration.

I am ready, providing the good Lord enables me, to promote your interests as they may unfold, since no effort will be too much for me in view of the friendship of our late Fathers, to earnestly promote the interests of his children who live in faraway places.

Moreover I can also inform you that we, just as in the Pella area, have had a very good year, our lands have produced well, we had hay in abundance, the cattle are healthy and sold at a surprisingly high price; in fact, last week a cow which was about to calve was sold at the market in Gorinchem for f350.00
while brother Arie delivered a dry cow for $200, and ½ year old breeding calves sometimes were sold for $100.00 apiece. [the letter ends, obviously unfinished]

Translated from the Dutch by Gerrit W. Sheeres, Grand Rapids, MI
Mr. N. Hompers
Pella

Hoornaar, 13 July 1891
Esteemed Sir and Friend!

The wait may have been long, but you were not forgotten. Various matters kept me from taking the time to sit down quietly to respond to your appreciated letter of 14 April which we received in good health on April 28, and today we thank God for the same privilege [of good health]. Mother will be 77 on July 15, and after her eye surgery she is doing reasonably well, although slightly susceptible to cold weather. But her eye no longer causes her pain; it has healed completely, and now she has an artificial eye which I usually insert in the morning,
and take out at night which is an easy thing to do. And although she cannot see with it, it makes her feel better to have it for her eyelids to rest on while no one is able to see that she has only one real eye. As far as her ability to see is concerned, she is doing fairly well for her age; with the use of glasses she is still able to read a book; for the rest she is a little deaf but still has a sound mind. My only sister and brother and their spouses and their three children each, are quite blessed in temporal matters; the oldest daughter of my sister was married this spring to C.M. Houweling near Giessennieuwkerk and now lives on a big farm near Giessennieuwkerk. Concerning your Uncle
I can inform you that his health is fairly good; two weeks ago he visited us for a whole day together with his housekeeper Mietje. And although he remains lean, Mietje on the other hand is getting so heavy and fat that she can hardly walk any distance. He lives a very quiet and sober life, hardly leaves his house, often complains that the people of Hoogblokland are quite rude and has almost no contact with them, except A. den Ruiter and D. de Groot who are his only friends, as far as I know, so that he usually stays in his own quiet environment and enjoys his beautiful garden, while his capital (as I see it) annually increases considerably. As is generally known, we have had an exceptionally severe winter here; so severe in fact that in nearly all cellars and pits
potatoes, etc., froze, more or less. From November 29, 1890 until 2 March 1891 our inland waters had a thick layer of ice on average 40 to 50 inches thick; the result was that quite a few fields suffered, especially the ones that had been flooded and covered with heavy ice. Our spring also has been bleak and cold so that we did not have much grass for our cattle which causes the rent of many farms to go up considerably while the price of cattle has gone down quite a bit. Cheese, which is our main product, sells for f20 to f30 for 50 kilograms, which is pretty good. We started haying about a week ago but the weather for this time of year was quite bad, although since the middle of June we have had good growing weather; but right now it has changed again and we get a lot of intermittent showers and heavy rains, and therefore we do not have much hay in our barns. [conclusion missing]

Translated from the Dutch by Gerrit W. Sheevers, Grand Rapids, MI
Mr. J.J. van der Heijden
Orange City

Hoornaar, August 1892
Friend van der Heijden!

After the passing of a considerable amount of time and events, I finally sit down to respond to your letter of 29 April 1892. The matter of your brother-in-law Verspui has taken quite some time mainly because attorney van Roozendaal had almost no time to tackle it since he was extremely busy, and therefore I was not able to send you a satisfactory answer. But it pleases me to be able to inform you now that the matter has been fully settled. So that the house has been put in your brother-in-law's name for which Mr. du Croo of Gorrum has provided f1000 at 5% interest on a 1st mortgage, while I have
debited your account for renovation and other expenses which I paid, as follows:

Expenses postal money order  ƒ¹ 0.70
Redemption bond D.K. Aanen  47.50
Expenses of 1st transport and deed of weekly payments  88.00
Invoice de Ridder Bros  239.23
Invoice C.Wallaard Pzn  163.84 1/2
Expenses Att. Roozendaal  59.00
Total  ƒ598.27 1/2

Besides these expenditures an invoice from M. Roozendaal of Overslingeland needs to be paid as yet for drawing up specifications which will not amount to too much I believe, and the shortfall may be covered by the weekly repayments which Verspui has made to duCroo. So that I have drawn up a 2nd mortgage for you for ƒ600.00 at 5% interest annually for which I have paid the expenses to attorney Roozendaal last Monday, while I hope

¹ ƒ in front of financial numbers stands for the Dutch florin or guilder.
to receive the document from the registrar of mortgages next Monday. So that now I will be able to remit to you all expenses by check with a description of the 2nd mortgage, leaving a shortage in my account of about $50.00 for which I trust I will receive, as formerly, a postal money order from you. He has been charged for the borrowed monies of his Mother's inheritance about which I wrote you, which constitutes only the last $100.00, while I was able to persuade Mr. du Croo to eliminate the weekly payment completely, and instead of $2.00 your brother-in-law will have to pay only $1.50 weekly which is to cover only the interest of both mortgages, and in this way Mr. du Croo will receive the largest part of your interest weekly. The checks and mortgage I will keep in my possession for the time being, but I ask you politely to inform me
what to do with it. As far as the renovation of the house is concerned it has improved the house markedly so that they have a big room in which they put a billiard table while in the back they made satisfactory living quarters for a large family which continues to increase, but like me they are all in good health, and although Mother is more than 78 years old, and was rather sickly last winter, right now her health is excellent. We had a very nice summer with almost no thunderstorms, not much rain which means that there is not too much grass on the high lands right now, the potatoes are doing great and promise a good harvest, although the prices are low, they sell for less than f1.50 per hectoliter right now.

[conclusion of letter missing]
Due date 11 July 1892

Received from P.J.J van der Heijden per postal money order

f 550.00

Received from P. J.J. van der Heijden per postal money order

50.00
600.00

Expenses of the above funds:

Payment of bond D.K. Aanen

47.50

To G. Verspui for expenses mortgage

88.00

Invoice de Ridder Bros

239.23

id. C. Wallaard

163.84 1/2

id. Att. Roozendaal expenditures transporting mortgage

59.00

id. M. Roozendaal postage

1.05

599.53 ½

600.00

0.67 ½

Received from du Croo payment by C. Verspui

the above receipts paid to G. Verspui

6.47

Translated from the Dutch by Gerrit W. Sheeres, Grand Rapids, MI
Hoornaar, 19 October 1892

Mailed 24 Oct.

Friend v/d Heijden!

I received your letter of 12 September, last, with the enclosed money order for f50.00 in good order so that the matter with regard to your brother-in-law Verspui has been settled.

I hereby enclose the mortgage with receipts for expenditures which shows that I still have f1.42 ½ on hand, which I will use for postage, the amount of which I do not know at this time; if there remains a balance I may dispense it as a favor to your brother-in-law. All of us are doing well including your brother-in-law, sister and the various children
which certainly is a great blessing for which we cannot be thankful enough to the All-good God, in a time when we see how elsewhere God's judgments are shown in the death of many people as a result of cholera, which has taken a few lives close by in Schelluinen, Gorinchem, Molenaarsgraaf, and Grootammers. Our liberal government considers this to be an illness that results from uncleanness and dirty drinking water; therefore they sent a notice to all municipalities to purify everything and not to have people use water for drinking that has not been boiled, which many people oppose for conscience's sake since they consider it a judgment from God who sends
his blessings and judgments in his time through nature. Our government is also taking stern measures against the hoof-and-mouth disease among cattle which this fall has broken out in Giessendam, and because of which the district has been quarantined; nothing may be exported from there that pertains to farming, and some one hundred soldiers keep a strict eye on this, but the disease has spread though all of the Alblaswaard, and although our municipality has been spared it is approaching our area since it also has broken out in Overslingeland at T v/d Haven's and in Maasbroek at the Widow J. Verhoef. Now I have to stop writing since Uncle Govert, Klaartje and Gijsje Duizer just came here for a visit and a cup of tea; they are all in good health. The same holds for Mr. Kwant, who continues
to proclaim the Gospel in our church as a lay-preacher and, although he has to labor in a pasture full of thorns and thistles, he does not deviate one inch from his principles; recently he was tested by the church counselor, who lives in Hoogblokland (and who is a liberal), and two gentlemen from Classis Dordrecht who tried to force him to attend church services of all ministers in the district, which requirement came as a shock to him at first, but after having gotten over the shock he told me that he would sooner sit on the dyke with his wife and three children than violate his principles, which he does not have to do because two vacancies in Gorinchem have been filled by two very Reformed ministers who protect him and often ask him to preach.
in the district so that neighboring congregations as well as ours are beginning to appreciate him more and more; his work is not without results either since Gijsje Duizer told me that a 13 year old boy in Noordeloos took catechism instruction from him and as a result the boy changed his life-style and now attends the religious meetings at old man Bette's home in Noordeloos; in the same way the third daughter of H. Bikker of Oostslingerland and the youngest daughter of H. Dubbeldam of Schelluinen have left the world after regularly taking catechism instruction from Mr. Kwant. The "dolerenden" [literally the grieving ones] have joined the Secessionist congregations, although the Secessionist congregation in Noordeloos and a few other congregations remain independent and

1 In 1886 Kuyper led an exodus from the Dutch Reformed Church. He grieved the loss of Reformed distinctive teachings within this State Church, which no longer required office bearers to agree to the Reformed standards that had once been foundational. Kuyper and the consistory of Amsterdam insisted that both ministers and church members subscribe to the Reformed confessions. This was appealed to Classis, and Kuyper, along with about 80 members of the Amsterdam consistory, were suspended in Dec. 1885. This was appealed to the provincial synod, which upheld the ruling in a 1 July 1886 ruling. Refusing to accept his suspension, Kuyper preached to his followers in an auditorium on Sunday, 11 July 1886. Because of their deep sorrow at the state of the Dutch Reformed Church, the group called itself the Doleantie (grieving ones). By 1889 the Doleantie churches had over 200 congregations, 180,000 members, and about 80 ministers. Kuyper, (although at first antagonistic towards them), soon began to seek union with the churches of the Secession of 1834, the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken (Christian Reformed Church) which had earlier broken off from the Dutch Reformed Church. This union was effected in 1892, and the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (Reformed Church in the Netherlands) was formed. [quoted from Wikipedia with a few changes, trans.]
and are not ready to join yet. It is my opinion that this is a wise move after the efforts of Dr. Kuiper [sic] of Amsterdam to reform the Reformed Church [Hervormde Kerk] proved to be unsuccessful. Still I don't approve [of breaking away from the Reformed Church [Hervormde Kerk]]. I, like the party of the Grieving Ones [the so-called Dolerenden], admit that the pasture of the Reformed Church consists of nothing else but thorns and thistles, and that for God's people it is a very lean pasture, but it still provides sufficient sustenance when, with a steady hope and ardent love people will put their trust in Him alone who only has to speak and it is done and who only has to command and it stands, and who according to Isaiah 55:13 will grow a pine tree instead of a thorn bush, and instead of briers will cause a myrtle to grow.

Esteemed Friend, I think back of your last
letter and will now respond to your questions. They lead me to assume that you are inclined to return to the Netherlands. This appears to me, first of all, to be rather risky since the most flourishing business here is often totally smothered by competition; at any rate, my advice is that if you have a profitable business in America you should wait a few years with those plans. What the military draft is concerned for Frans, I spoke about this with the mayor and the clerk and they believe that if he is registered as an American citizen he would be free after 8 August 1893. The change in the law consists only in this that the lottery takes place now on 11 October rather than in the spring of the year.
Of Adv. Bikker And.z.,
Adv. Bikker And.z.
Corn. van der Steld Jz,
F. v de Bruyn Tzn,
Ding Rietveld Az,
Leend. Rietveld Uz,
G. de Jager Ant.,

Of the above the first two drew the low lottery number. To obtain a replacement or a "number exchanger" is just like in the old days; I believe you pay from f500 to f600 for a replacement, while the latter category might be available for possibly f400. I think I have answered your questions adequately, and now permit me to ask you a few questions. How is Henry Hospers doing? And your brother-in-law G. de Jong? and Cr. de Bruijn and P. Lemmens who, to judge by the portrait he mailed, is quite a different fellow from when he lived here in Hoornaar.

Translated from the Dutch by Gerrit W. Sheeres, Grand Rapids, MI
Mr. N. Hospers,
Pella

Hoornaar, 19 June 1893

Esteemed Sir and Friend!

This morning the thought occurred to me to sit down and answer your letter of 12 January 1893 which I had received in good health on the 28th of January. This thought to write you was occasioned by a sense of duty which was the result of the sincere friendship that existed between our late Fathers. When we received your letter, my brother Arie had a severe case of pneumonia, but because of the mercy of God he has recuperated fully. We were quite pleased to learn from your letter that all of you are in good health.

I notice that your previous letter was dated 14 April 1891 which I responded to on the following 13th of July, which shows that our correspondence is not very regular; and since
I did not have anything special to write you; I postponed writing this letter due to various duties such as polder, municipality and private matters.

Mother will be 79 years old on July 15; she is fairly healthy, her mind and judgment are still good; she is slightly deaf; her right eye that used to give her a lot of trouble has been healed completely, but since she has only one good eye now she does complain sometimes about poor eyesight. My only sister, Jannigje, is 50 years old, I follow with 49, and my only brother Arie is 48. They are doing quite well. My sister and brother are both married, each have three children; they live close by, each on a big farm.

As you requested in your previous letter I hereby send you a portrait of myself. I never did receive yours like I did of brothers Gelder and Cornelis; I would appreciate it if you would
send me a copy of your portrait.

Your Uncle Middelkoop in Hoogblokland is doing quite well according to his housekeeper Mietje whom I talked to in Gorcum last Monday. I visited him about three weeks ago which he seemed to enjoy very much, although he does not like being kept busy and having social contact and therefore he does not see many of his friends; I believe he is happiest when he can be by himself in his quiet environment with his housekeeper Mietje, who is a very respectable lady. If by any chance something should happen to you so that you are not able to write I promise you that I will take care of your interests as much as possible and to keep you informed; I do this because of the great respect I have for your family which is still the result of the sincere friendship that existed between our late Fathers. No effort will be too great for me.
Give my greetings to your entire family when you have the opportunity, and sincere greetings also from my Mother who seems to remember that you and brother de Gelder delivered a small printing press to our house which Father had bought at the old homestead in Hoogblokland, and which we still have. As far as your memories are concerned, they are correct, the two statues in the garden are still there, the old, angry Tuuk whom I remember quite well died in 1853. I believe that the World's Fair in Chicago will be a big affair, but I do not have any plans to visit it so that I won't make use of your kind invitation even though I would love to have visited with you. We have had a very dry summer thus far, so that the higher pastures are totally or partially withered or burnt. Haying with which people have now made a beginning will probably yield only half;
the price has increased considerably to more than f30 for 500 kilograms (Dutch pounds), an unheard of price which is mainly for export to France. The price of cattle has really gone down, in fact, to the point that you can hardly sell them; pigs which just as with you demanded high prices last year have gone down to 23 cents per half kilogram (or 5 ounces); piglets of 6 to 7 weeks old are still sold for f10 to f13 apiece. The price of grain is low: wheat f6.50 to f7.00; rye f5.00 to f5.50; oats f3.50 to f4.00; the price of cheese which we are most interested in is quite good; it sells right now for more than f28.00 per hundred 5 ounces.

[there is no formal conclusion to this letter]

Translated from the Dutch by Gerrit W. Sheeres, Grand Rapids, MI
Hoorn, June 1893

Friend van der Heyden!

I may have waited long, but I have not forgotten you. We received your letter of January 10 of this year in good health on Jan. 28. The good health did not include brother Arie who had a bad case of pneumonia, which became so serious in a few days that Dr. van Beckum and we lost all hope that he would recover, but once again we have seen that the All-good God is in control; He sends his blessings and judgments in His time; blessed the person who acknowledges this and seeks to live humbly, believing in the shed blood of Jesus Christ as a ransom for the salvation of his elect people.

We were pleased
to learn from your letter that all of you were in good health and also H. Hapers, your brother-in-law de Jong, C. de Bruyn and P. Lemmen. I was especially pleased to learn that he not only makes a living, but is able to put away a little every year for savings, as long as it is enough so that when he gets old he will come and spend it in the Netherlands. I hope that I may see that day.

Your brother-in-law Verspui and your sister with their numerous children are all good and healthy. It was a pleasure for me to visit them some time ago on a Saturday evening. Mother and the oldest daughter were busy giving their eleven children a bath and fixed up their hair etc. It was a pleasure to see
how clean and proper they all looked, and although their income still is not quite sufficient to meet their needs, they do receive some help from their oldest daughter and two of their older sons who are well-behaved and do a good job at earning some money to help their parents.

Widow H. Bikker of our church died last week at the age of 78. The oldest daughter (Teuntje) of A. van der Steld is in bad shape as a result of spitting up a lot of blood from which she has suffered for four months already; it has so weakened her that she is able to be out of bed only for about a half an hour once a day.

Your friend van Toor and his wife are doing quite well; they live very nicely in their new house.
He gets along very well with Teunis van Genderen and Pietje Herkouwer who farm on his former place. We have had an exceptionally dry summer thus far so that the grass of the higher pastures of our village is dried up and burned, and thus can not provide much hay for our animals. But, compared to some places, such as Noord Brabant and Gelderland\(^1\), we have no reason to complain. They have to use most of their hay fields temporarily to feed their cattle; this also means that hay is bought up for an exceptionally high price, even \$35 per thousand lbs., mostly for France. Agricultural yield is fairly good. Last year's potato crop was nearly double the usual, and thousands of sacks [hectoliters] were sold for 50 cents a sack.

[no concluding page]

Translated from the Dutch by Gerrit W. Sheeres, Grand Rapids, MI

\(^1\) Noord Brant and Gelderland are both provinces in the Netherlands.
Mr. N. Hospers
Pella.

Hoornaar, 15 February 1895

Esteemed Sir and Friend!

This morning I stayed close to the stove because of the severe frost we are having and the thought occurred to me to write my esteemed friend who lives in distant lands. We received your letter of 18 July 1893 in good health. Thank you so much also for the enclosed stereoscope picture of your house which looks pretty impressive; we have given the portrait a safe place in the photo album. Mother will be 81 on the 15th of July; she is in pretty good health yet.
her mind is quite good, she walks quite fast through her room, although she hardly ever leaves it in wintertime\(^1\); she is a little deaf, but if you speak loud enough it does not bother her; her eye hardly bothers her after her eye operation.

Well, my friend, may we all acknowledge those blessings and render thanksgiving to the All-good God alone; for it is not because we are worthy but only on the basis of Jesus' merits.

As far as I know, your uncle Middelkoop in Hoogblokland is doing quite well, just like us, although he was ill last fall as a result of chest —[last line illegible]

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\(^1\) In those days before central heating people usually heated only one room in the house with a wood stove.
has recuperated, is still of a sound mind which enables him to
look after his own affairs; lives very soberly, has cut down on
visiting friends, so that it is difficult to get him to our place, he
is quite content in his quiet home; I hope to pay him a visit
with sister Jannigje, who likes to go and have a cup of tea with
his housekeeper Mietje.

Since the beginning of January we have been having
real winter; the rivers are frozen solid, and everything is
covered with a thick layer of snow, and every day we can see
lovers of horse-sleighbing [last line illegible]
who can either use the roads or the ice to get to where they want to go, while lots of people enjoy ice-skating; to keep them occupied all kinds of contests are organized with occasional prizes of £100 either for speed skating or figure skating; and you see from 2,000 to 3,000 people gliding across the ice from Giesennieuwkerk to Noordeloos.

In a previous letter you asked me whether we use machinery for work in the fields like you do. I can tell you that a few years ago grass mowing machines and haymaking machines were imported, but today they have been relegated to the rear of our barns, since
we are able to pay our laborers very well from the increased yield of the farms. For the rest, everything is somewhat depressed here, prices for cheese are about 1/3 of what they were a few years ago, grain prices are very low, potato prices have been quite good and are fetching f4 per hectoliter; fattening pigs does not pay at all; prices for cattle are fairly good because of an export embargo to Belgium, France, and Germany resulting from the current hoof and mouth disease, which was quite prevalent here, but from which we were spared.

Still, in spite of the Government's involvement and no money being spared to counteract this disease by cordonning off areas, ordering ill cattle to be quarantined in certain pasturelands, and outlawing cattle markets in some cities, it was all in vain since the disease kept spreading in municipalities for 2 to 3 hours beyond the cordoned off areas; my view on the matter is that we must see it as
the rod of God, although certainly the measures taken on our behalf have caused more harm than the disease itself, and has spawned here, just as in America, a lot of socialists. This, I believe, is mainly the result of sin, since it is astonishing how pride is on the increase here and nearly everybody wants to live beyond their means. The paper is getting full again, so I will have to conclude this letter. May the Lord be near to you in life and in death. Mother asks me to relay sincere greetings to your wife and the rest of the family, since she has always enjoyed news from her true friend J. Hospers and from his children. Best wishes also from me to your wife and further kin and also to Gerrit Middelkoop. I remain sincerely,

Your obedient servant & friend,

D. K. Aanen

Translated from the Dutch by Gerrit W. Sheeres, Grand Rapids, MI
Hoornaar, 29 February 1896

Dear Sir and Friend,

We received your letter of last November 28 in good health. Mother caught a bad cold at the beginning of the year 1896 and did not feel too well as a result. And although her coughing, which was hard on her, became less, her strength nevertheless slowly faded and she died of physical weakness.

Your uncle Middelkoop also has not been feeling well for quite some time as a result of a heavy cold, which caused him to have to cough terribly; but he is recovering nicely at the moment. As far as your uncle's last will and testament is concerned,
it is being kept by the new attorney Mulder, who has custody of the entire archives and minutes that attorney Roosendaal left behind, but Dutch law requires that each person who has a last will and testament drawn up must receive a copy of his own testament so that your uncle Middelkoop has his own copy. As far as corresponding about it with attorney Mulder - it might be well on the one hand, but in case Mulder informs your uncle of this, your uncle may not take kindly to it, since he is somewhat peculiar. But I have learned, and am therefore able to inform you, that the junior attorney who was employed for a number of years by Roosendaal...
and now works for Mulder as he did for Roosendaal, has been appointed by your uncle in place of Roosendaal to be the executor of his last will, and if you would want to write, it would be better to address it to Mr. T. Anema, Junior Attorney at Gorinchem. He is acquainted with the entire matter. But I would counsel you not to be too intrusive.

Sincerely with greetings,
Your obedient servant & friend,

D. K. Aanen

Translated from the Dutch by Gerrit W. Sheeres, Grand Rapids, MI
Hoornaar, 22 January 1897

Dear Sir & Friend!

Various circumstances kept on distracting me from sitting down quietly to respond to your letter of 16/17 March of last year which I received in good health on March 30.

Great changes have taken place here as a result of the death of our much esteemed Mother. I lived with Mother and a maid in the front part of the old farm which is familiar to you because you visited it as a boy (and where, just like in those days, you will still find the [illegible word] and the monkey in the garden) while my only brother Arie lived in the back part of the house with his wife, three children, and servants; there he farmed mainly by making cheese from about 20 milking cows, while I myself kept some 12 to 14 beef cattle in summertime, and although...
we are very close as brothers it became difficult to stay together under one roof, and thus we built a new farm about three minutes west of the old one for some $8,000, which made for a very busy time; on October 8 of last year my brother and his family took up residence there. My only sister Jannigje, married to D. Hakkesteeg used to live about 5 minutes east of the old farm; just like brother Arie, they had 3 children of whom the last two were married last year; after that they decided to transfer the farm to their only son – their two daughters each live on a big farm – and they moved in with me although we all have our separate quarters. Thus the void created by the death of Mother has been filled partially and I find the new living arrangement very pleasant.

Another circumstance which has kept me quite busy resulted from a decree by the Members of the Provincial Executive of South Holland of
July 1896, approved by Royal Decree of 2 October 1896, which consisted in the retraction of the regulations pertaining to the communal interests of the polders which made up the Commonwealth of Arkel, of which I had the honor of being the president. These common interests were supported financially by seven Polders each of which had its own Board; I also had the honor of being the president of the Hoornaar polder; but now the Provincial Executives reduced these to three polders, namely Den Beemd Polder, Den Banne van Gorinchmen and surroundings Polder, and the remaining five have been fused into one polder that has been named Het Land der Zes Molens [the Land of the Six Mills]. As a result, a number of people have lost their jobs and thus on December 11 of last year the election of a President for the new polder took place; 821 valid votes were cast and to my amazement not a single blank vote [rest of the line is illegible]
so that I was accorded the honor of president of the new polder called Het Land der Zes Molens. Besides, last week I was appointed by the Provincial Executives to be a member of a committee which is to estimate the proceeds and disbursements of the Commonwealth of Arkel and to assign these to the three polders mentioned earlier so that as a result of this allocation the lands will be assessed equally per hectare. Well, enough said.

I informed your uncle in Hoogblokland that I intended to write you and I asked him a few questions at the same time and I received the enclosed answer which contains a small inaccuracy since I told him that G. Middelkoop had not received a reply on 16 March 1896 to his letter of '95; from this he inferred that G. Middelkoop had sent him another letter in March of 1896. For the rest, you will read about his health, although I believe he is starting to feel his age since we asked him repeatedly to come and visit us last summer with his housekeeper Mietje, to which I did not get a response. [the next line is difficult to read because of the script; it seems to say: but mentally he is still in good shape],

The sheet is full and thus I have to conclude this letter. May the Lord bless you for time and eternity in this New Year that we have entered.

Your obedient servant and friend, D.K. Aanen

Translated from the Dutch by Gerrit W. Sheeres, Grand Rapids, MI
Mr. N. Hospers,  
Pella  

Hoornaar, 2 April 1897  

Dear Sir and Friend,  

I received your letter of the 24th of February in good health, as well as the one of the 19th of January which most likely crossed my last letter, and therefore your daughters will understand, I am sure, why I did not mention the goose board game. I have taken care of that now by mailing you, as printed matter, two copies of it which I presume you will receive simultaneously with this letter; please consider them to be small presents for your daughters.  

Enclosed herewith I am sending a provisional power of attorney document which requires certain additions as indicated by pencil.
which either you or one of your brothers are asked to take care of in order to make the power of attorney legal. I also hereby wish to express my thanks for the trust you have placed in me, and I hope that with God's help I will be able to promote your interest to the best of my abilities as is the duty of a faithful friend.

Last week I made a quick visit to your uncle Middelkoop. Since I was traveling with two gentlemen to take care of some business (one of them was Mr. H. van Eeten, municipal clerk of Meerkerk, grandson of the late Mr. L.G. Be gram of Jaarsveld) time did not allow me to visit long. You uncle was doing fairly well but complained of a bad cough. I did not mention the power of attorney to him, since I believe...
that it was better not to. 
Life for farmers here in the Netherlands is just like it is where you live; we live in economically depressed times resulting in a lot of laborers being out of work, which among various layers of the population creates discontent which in my judgment is the result of sin, since today all social classes try to live beyond their means; the result is that, like in America, a number of farms had to be sold with the sales price being about ¼ less than in recent years. If only the Lord would grant us spiritual eyes so that we might know ourselves and live in humility and submission, and seek our salvation only by grace for the sake of the merits of Christ. This is my wish for all of you. After genial greetings to all of you - [last line missing] –
D.K.Aanen.

Translated from the Dutch by Gerrit W. Sheeres, Grand Rapids, MI
J.H. MÜLLER
Notary Public
GORINCHEM

25 May 1897

Esteemed Sir & Friend!

I have arranged the enclosed letter in such a way that – as far as I am concerned – you can send it to America with an accompanying letter from you.

Sincere greetings,
your friend,

J.H. Müller.
Hoomaar, May 31, 1897

Mr. N. Hapers
Pella

Esteemed Sir & Friend!

We received in good health your letter of April 21, last, on the 7th of May.

Having taken note of the contents of your letter, I thought it best to share it with Notary Müller, and I asked him to write you directly, which he objected to since, as a notary public, he is not allowed to reveal secret matters. Hence the suggestion to you to appoint a person with power of attorney in the Netherlands to represent your interests if necessary.
since the probability exists that you will be the main beneficiaries of the will. That was the reason he sent the enclosed letter to me which I now forward to you. I would counsel your family to appoint one or two persons – of your choosing – to look after your interests.

How quietly we are allowed to live here by the mercies of God, especially when we consider nations such as Greece and Turkey where so many young people have been slain on the battlefield. Although there is some apprehension here in our country since as a result of a revision of the electoral law we will have an election on the 5th of June for the States General which almost will be doubled in number; this means a probable realignment in the Lower Chamber; thus we have all sorts
of men giving speeches in public meetings to tell the voters what they stand for.

We are healthy and well at this time, and the same holds for your Uncle Middelkoop in Hoogblokland, at least as far as I know. Livestock here in the Netherlands suffers from hoof & mouth disease, although we have been spared. Cattle prices have plummeted, most likely primarily because the borders have been closed and livestock breeding has produced too many animals for our own consumption; besides I believe that there should be an import embargo on a number of articles.

Sincerely,

Greetings also to your wife and family,

Your obedient servant and friend,

D. K. Aanen

Translated from the Dutch by Gerrit W. Sheeres, Grand Rapids, MI
Mr. N. Hospers
Pella

Hoornaar, 13 December 1897

Esteemed Sir & Friend!

I feel it is high time and my duty to reply to your letter of June 2 of this year, which I received in good health on the 17th. I ask your forgiveness for having waited so long to reply.

As far as the power of attorney is concerned, this did not go according to what we had hoped for, but I do find that you have acted properly in this matter by not only having [illegible] for the Hospers family [line illegible] and to run ahead of the rest of the family, since it is very well possible that you would run the risk that when Mr. G. Middelkoop would whisper something of it into the ear of his brother in Hoogblokland it might not be well received. As far as the relationship between the Hospers family and
in Hoogblokland, I assure you that it is a very good one, and it is my judgment that it may be wisest to let him take care of his own business as long as possible, since until now he has been quite capable of looking after his own affairs, the more so because he lives very soberly. His health is fairly good, as far as I know; he does have some lung problems, especially in wintertime, which causes a bad cough, but he is still of sound mind and judgment. Beginning July he and Mietje visited us for a whole day which I believe did him a lot of good. When I took them home in the evening I made a detour to Giessennieuwkerk where both daughters of my sister Jannigje are living; we got out of the carriage for a while, and from there we rode back via the Peursum municipality, part of Noordeloos, Hoornaar and Z(?) from there
As far as assisting you, I assure you hereby that I will watch out for your interests, and if the All-good God enables me you can certainly count on my help.

Well friend, how quickly time marches on; here we are approaching the end of another year which we will remember with gratitude since we have enjoyed many blessings from the hand of the Lord, and also have experienced a beautiful summer which has resulted in a rich crops. [next line is illegible] ...hoof & mouth disease was all-pervasive so that in our province hardly a cow has remained untouched; for many farmers and cattle traders the disease has been very costly, while the restrictive measures imposed by the government intended to prevent the spread
are seen by many as having caused more damage instead.

The paper is slowly getting full, and thus I will have to conclude this letter. The Lord be with you and may he teach you to walk in his way. Give my greetings to your brothers and other family, in particular to your wife and children.

Cordial greetings from all of us,
I remain,
yours sincerely,
D. K. Aanen

Translated from the Dutch by Gerrit W. Sheeres, Grand Rapids, MI
Mr. N. Hospers
Pella

Hooornaar, 14 November 1898

Esteemed Sir and Friend!

We received your letter of 15 September last in good health. It was truly satisfying to learn from it that all of you are doing well. My last letter was dated, as you wrote, 13 Dec. '97, the one from you was dated the 17th of January '98 which I did not respond to, because I had shown Notary Muller your letter in order to, in the strictest secrecy, consult him concerning the power of attorney issue and he indicated to me that he would write you a letter, which, according to your latest letter, he did, and thus concluded, just as did I, that a power of attorney for your family cannot [be executed]
until your Uncle and Aunt Middelkoop are willing to participate in it, and we deem it most advisable not to bother them for the time being.

The notary believed that it would be best to sound out your Uncle in Hoogblokland at an opportune moment, which he quietly did, but immediately noticed that it would be futile [the meaning of the next few lines is difficult to determine, the gist seems to be that Uncle is wary of having the Hospers family appoint someone with power of attorney to look after their interests in the Netherlands and that he wants to keep the dispositions of his last will and testament secret.] A few weeks ago I received a letter from him asking me to stop by, which I did right away;
the reason for his request was first of all that the farmer behind him had notified him that he wanted to leave because he himself had obtained a farm, the result of an inheritance, and therefore various applicants had come and made life busy for him; among them was one person from our congregation/municipality\(^1\) whom he liked best, but before making any kind of decision he wanted to consult with me. Because they are very decent people and it seemed to be a good fit (the family consists of husband, a wife and their young son) he decided immediately to rent out the farm to them, which took place the next day. Furthermore, I can report to you that he has been very healthy and well this summer and that at age 80 he is the exception to the rule,

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\(^1\) The word "gemeente" is used here which in Dutch can either refer to a church congregation or to a municipality.
he is of sound mind and judgment and quite capable of looking after his own affairs; he lives very quietly and soberly with his well-regarded housekeeper, Mietje; he does not like excitement, and is beginning to loathe having to write letters.

This summer has been quite busy for us since I have demolished most of the old house and constructed a new place which has not been finished yet, which is the reason why I am writing in the attic right now because the painter is still busy at work in the front rooms; we also had to make do for a while in a scullery because first the back section and after that the front part was built; we are certainly beginning to look forward to being able to move into the front part of the house.

We are having a beautiful summer here which is quite good for farming; farmers are having a blessed year. The herds are healthy and although Belgium and Germany keep their borders almost totally closed to us, we find it difficult to understand how come our cattle in the Netherlands continue to keep their value. But the All-good God rules over all and blesses or chastises; may we only be mindful of his long-suffering. [last line illegible]

Translated from the Dutch by Gerrit W. Schoes, Grand Rapids, MI
N. Hopers
Pella

Hoornaar, 19 December 1899

Esteemed Sir and Friend,

Having had an exceptionally beautiful summer so that we hardly had any frost even in the first eight days of December; winter has now arrived, and after two days of frost people are walking on the ice while you can see ice-skaters in droves on the Kromme Giessen behind our house. While writing this letter I am told that Dr. C.J. van Beekum who lives in Noordeloos skates on the Giessen to visit his patients in our neighborhood. He is a youthful comrade of your brother Hendrik and I suppose that you may even have met him as a boy. Ice-skating is more a hobby for young people and contests are being held for them all the time.
to see who is best at figure skating or in speed skating. One newspaper lists twelve contests that are scheduled for this week with all kinds of prizes, one even up to $100 for first prize. On beautiful days it is so busy that it resembles bees coming out of the beehive.

Because the cold drives me to the stove, I think I should fulfill my obligation to respond to your letter of 16 October, last. After I had received it, I went to your uncle one afternoon in November; since they eat their lunch later than we do, I arrived there just at the time they were eating; each had a big plate of soup in front of them which seemed to taste very good. After this the stove in the big room was started up and there your uncle and I visited and talked about various things. I told him I had received a letter from you, and he asked if I would read it to him; when I read about the illness of your
brother he asked me to read that again; for the rest he was pleased to learn about your health. As far as his not writing, he asked me to tell you said that he felt himself to be too languid, or even too lazy, which I consider to be the result of his advanced age; for the rest, he remains quite spry, is still of sound mind and judgment, and although I found him in bed last September with a bad cold and fever, he had recuperated fairly well and asked me hereby to relay his cordial greetings to all of you.

The war which Great Britain has forced on our South African brothers is considered simply shameful by the Dutch people, and is seen as nothing else but the result of gold fever on the part of some of their men, and I am amazed that the entire population of the Netherlands, regardless of faith or conviction, sympathizes with the Boers. Many prayers are offered up to God in churches and homes on behalf of those who have gone.
to war, and thus far we hope to be able to discern God's hand since we have heard about great victories again. Much money has been collected as a result of a flyer from the Netherlands South African Association of October 16, 1899; in our small municipality f122.70 has been collected while the total amount raised nationwide thus far amounts to about f80,000.

All of us are doing well, and although I had some health problems last winter due to nerves, I am healthy again with thanks to God's goodness, although I must say that I am not one of the strongest people around.

Well my friend, the sheet is getting full and I will have to conclude this letter; a few words yet, seeing we have come to the end of another year, and one day we will come to the end of our life. May the Lord prepare us in His grace for eternity, this is my wish at the beginning of the new year and the beginning of the 19th century. Warm greetings to all of you, to your wife, children and other relatives, and also to your uncle Gerrit Middelkoop. D. K. Aanen

Translated from the Dutch by Gerrit W. Sheeres, Grand Rapids, MI
Mr. N. Hospers
Pella

Hoornaar, 20 August 1900

Esteemed Sir & Friend!

It was with a feeling of deep sadness that I learned from your last letter of July 22 of your sad experience resulting from the loss that befell you by the death of a beloved Spouse and Mother.

We realize that for you and your children this must be a very grievous loss and our hearts go out to you in this sore trial. Still, it must be a great comfort to you to have the hope that she has been taken to the region of the blessed where there are no sorrows and where death can no longer separate, but where eternal hallelujahs
are sung to the honor of the Lamb who gave himself so voluntarily and shed his last drop of blood for a people that were lost but which by grace have sought and found life.

Dear friend, this shows us again that everything is transitory and changes and that we do not have an enduring city here, but that our existence is only temporary and that it is often accompanied by sorrow and grief, which is caused by and is the result of our sin; may the Lord only make plain to us the error of our ways so that we may learn to be humble ourselves and to confess our sins in humility and learn to seek grace in that precious blood of Jesus Christ.

We are grateful to God that we are healthy and well; the same holds for your uncle Middelkoop in Hoogblokland whom I picked up on Thursday, the 16th in
the morning together with his housekeeper Mietje; we made good use of that day having visited my entire family in the area, and although it took some effort to persuade them to go [literally: to get them out of their stable] because of many protestations of being too old and because Mietje had health problems all spring long, they were genuinely pleased afterwards for this outing. And although Mietje is doing fairly well at this time, there is something wrong with her since she is troubled with swollen legs and feet. When I mentioned this to your uncle he said that he was quite concerned about that and that if he would lose her he would not know what to do; he would never be able to replace her since she has devoted her entire life to him, and what is more, she is such a very decent, honest and
good person. Your uncle remains quite bright, his mind and judgment are good, and he knows very well how to order his affairs with the help of notary Muller of Gorinchem.

What a terrible situation in South Africa as well as in China, where the sword is used by a civilized nation such as Great Britain, which is trying to rob a courageous people of its freedom and rights in an unjust manner. May the Lord intervene to redeem that humble and courageous nation [South Africa], and may it become plain that it was God's hand that did this so that the honor is not given to the Boers but to God.

May the Lord comfort and strengthen you in your sad circumstances and may he safeguard you from further trouble and may he give you the wisdom to continue to walk on life's pathway. I thank you for sending me the Pella Weekly, and I remain with the highest esteem after kind greetings to you, your children and further relatives, [line illegible]

Mr. G. Middelkoop. Your obedient servant,

D.K. Aanen.

Translated from the Dutch by Gerrit W. Sheeres, Grand Rapids, MI
Hoornaar, 15 June 1901

Highly Esteemed Friend!

Since I had to serve as a member of the voter registration board on Friday the 14th of this month for the election of a member of the Lower House of Parliament, I received your last letter at City Hall in Hoornaar. Your letter of the 21st of February 1901 I received on the following 6th of March, then, just like now, in good health.

I ask your forgiveness for waiting so long to reply, but now I feel compelled to answer your letter as soon as possible. First of all, the reason for waiting so long is that the condition of your uncle is still the same as mentioned in my previous letter, and secondly, various matters that kept me busy
distracted me from sitting down quietly to write. On May 31 and June 11 I visited your uncle briefly since I had called a meeting in Hoogblokland of landholders of the polder "het Land der Zes Molens" [the Land of the Six Mills] who had to elect a member of the Board of said polder, of which I have the honor to be president.

When I talked with him about your letter of last February 21 he informed me that he had written half a letter but had not finished it; I urged him to add a little to what he had written and to send it to you; I also told him that your family did not ask for many letters, but that it would love to receive a letter, however brief, written in his own handwriting. I also was invited to come with my family
for a cup of tea on Tuesday, the 18th of this month, which we hope to do, provided we are well. He is very healthy, in fact, he is better than he was last fall, although because of his advanced age he does have seizures sometimes which cause him to be unconscious for a few moments, but until now he always has come to; his mind and judgment are, in view of his advanced age, excellent; his hearing is very good and his eyesight is fairly good, and he is able to walk quite well.

Last week we had two important elections of which I mentioned the first one earlier, the other one was for members of the Provincial Executive which appoints members of the Upper House of Parliament. And although several re-elections have to take place as yet it is almost certain that
the Liberal Cabinet will have to surrender its office to the Anti-
Revolutionary and Catholic party which will mean big changes
in the existing legislature; in fact, it is not impossible that Dr.
A. Kuyper, the leader of the Anti-Revolutionary Party, will
become Minister of Internal Affairs. May the Lord continue to
work among us with his Spirit so that unbelief may be put to
shame and his laws will be re-introduced for the wellbeing of
our Dutch nation and to the glory of his great Name. May the
Lord be gracious to us only because of the merits of his only
begotten Son.

Translated from the Dutch by Gerrit W. Sheeres, Grand Rapids, MI
Hoornaar, 22 June 1901

Dear Sir and Friend

Once again I feel compelled, just as in my previous letter of June 15, to sit down and write you a few lines about the death of your beloved uncle. On Tuesday, the 18th of this month I visited him one afternoon with my sister Jannigje and the wife of my brother Arie; it was the last time that I saw him and spoke with him; he was very happy that we visited him and he kept saying, I am so happy to have all of you here with me, and although he spoke of a cold in his chest, he seemed to feel fairly well otherwise; while I read to him your last letter he told me that he had just received a letter from his brother Gerrit. [two lines illegible] But yesterday afternoon around 3 o'clock death ended his life of which I was informed right away and I immediately went to the house where he died to arrange a few things with Mietje. From there I went to notary Muller who acquainted me with the last will in which I was accorded the honor, together with Mr. T. Anema, assistant notary, to be executor and we have notified [the proper officials] to proceed to seal his real estate, which was done this morning. The main content of his last will is that, except for a few bequests that need to be paid to Maria Hoeijenbos, half of [the estate is to go to] [illegible] and the lawful children of his late half-sister Hendrika Middelkoop together and for identical shares [illegible]

Translated from the Dutch by Gerrit W. Sheeres, Grand Rapids, MI
[No Date but (by context) written in Late June 1901]

I hereby feel obligated to write you a letter in reference to your letter of the 24th which I received, and also to inform you that I have received in good order the power of attorney document you sent; for this I sincerely thank you and your family hereby and also for the confidence you placed in me. You write that your hope is that everything may turn out well; I promise hereby that, if the Lord gives me "life/health/strength" [the word is unreadable] and enables me, I will promote your interests in a correct, honest and reasonable manner.

I assume that you are fully aware of the contents of the last will and testament by the opening of the documents of notary Mulder in which the Hospers family, according to an earlier testament, was privileged because earlier they were granted only one third of his inheritance, but because of pangs of conscience he felt he had to change his will [granting???] the Hospers family one half of the inheritance of the Uncles and Aunt de Gelder. His inheritance consisted of two farms with a little more than 38 hectare - hay, agricultural, and gravel-land, of which a percentage has been given to Mietje, while according to notary Muller (who annually determined his financial worth) the entire legacy is estimated to amount to f75,000. [a big portion of this went] to Mietje, [and to whom as the last testament indicates he felt more obliged as time went on]
which is definitely higher than I had expected, but which I fully understand because she has sacrificed her entire life to him, to live with him and to look after him very faithfully, and he could not have asked for better care. The previous [illegible] informed me to tell you that he had said toward the end of his life that his golden watch and nickel chain should go as a present to brother Gerrit, provided he would survive him, and otherwise to one of his sons (in my judgment the watch had a value of about f60.00); in the last letter from N. Hoppers I recall that he as well as you would like to receive a memento from his inheritance which would be easy to find for you and for Mr. Hoppers in something like a [illegible] cigar case with ... but, as I see it, you would not be entitled to this until the family approves this in writing; I have notified Mr. Hoppers of this also (and after consulting you) for the time being the watch and [illegible]

In closing, a few words yet about the lifestyle of the deceased: He lived a very quiet and simple life; his greatest delight in his quiet environment was to walk in his beautiful garden on which he lost money financially speaking. He lived a moral and decent life, he was an enemy of modernism, having a good understanding of Reformed people, but in my opinion did not have the solid conviction that his sins had been forgiven but the last few years he never attended church anymore ... [illegible] because he often differed in principle with the minister and the church council. and although he knew very well that his soul needed redemption out of free grace through the shed blood of Jesus Christ, he did not dare to appropriate this faith as his own and was taken out of this life in a troubled condition; he suffered little physically and until the end of his life his mind remained clear.

Translated from the Dutch by Gerrit W. Sheeres, Grand Rapids, MI
Esteemed Sir and Friend

I have the honor to let you know that on the 29th of July I received in excellent order the power of attorney which you sent, which I immediately showed to notary Muller; I hereby want to thank you sincerely for the confidence placed in me and I intend to proceed to the unsealing. I am sure that you are fully acquainted with the contents of the last will from the documents that notary Muller has sent, in which the Hospers family since the annulment of an earlier last will has been favored considerably since in his earlier last will the Hospers family was only entitled to 1/3 of his inheritance but because of pangs of conscience he felt compelled to change his last will and the Hospers family was awarded half of the inheritance of the Uncles and Aunt de Gelder.
His legacy consists of [illegible word: possibly "two"] farm[s] of a little more than 35 hectare and a parcel of pasture land [illegible word follows] of a little over 3 hectare which has been given to Mietje while, according to a notice from notary Muller, who annually computed his income taxes, his entire legacy is estimated to be worth approximately f75,000, including the payment of the bequest to Maria Hoeijenbos.

Last week when I visited Mietje she told me that your uncle toward the end of his life had said to her that his golden watch should go to his brother Gerrit or, if the latter should die, to his sons, which certainly would be a nice memento of him; it is my judgment that it is worth about f60, while a second memento for you might be, for instance, a tortoise silver inlaid cigar case which I believe belongs to his legacy; I would very much like to send it to your children as a memento, but I believe that I am not entitled to do so until your family gives me permission for this in writing. If the auction should take place before I have received an answer I will, the Lord willing, buy the watch and a little something for you which will become your property in time, provided the rest of the family is willing to relinquish it to you.

Translated from the Dutch by Gerrit W. Sheeres, Grand Rapids, MI
Hoornaar, 17 September 1901

Mr. N. Hospers
Pella

Dear Sir and Friend,

I received in good health your letter of August 19 and also one from Mr. G. Middelhoop of August 21; the latter I received on 4 September as I was on my way to conduct the auction which turned out to be a very busy and exhausting day which included [accounting for] the monies received, and lasted until approximately 9 o'clock in the evening. The entire sale brought in a little over f1,180. The gold watch with the nickel chain is to be sent one way or another to Mr. Middelhoop; I thought I had found a convenient way since Mr. Renard was coming [implied: for a visit from America], but when I visited Mietje on Friday, the 13th, I was informed that a letter had been received from Mr. G. Middelhoop that his trip had been postponed.

Translated from the Dutch by Gerrit W. Sheeres, Grand Rapids, MI
Hoornaar, 1 November 1901

Mr. N. Hospers
Pella

Esteemed Sir and Friend,

I feel a strong obligation after the last sale of the real estate of your late Uncle Middelkoop to contact you as soon as possible. The documents that attorney Muller sent to you will have brought you up to date fully about the inheritance, while from the enclosed catalog you will have learned of the sale of the first farm, and I can inform you hereby that it (the farm behind the school) has been bought in its entirety by D. de Jager, grandson of A.A. de Jager, former school principal in Hoornaar, a colleague of your father.
for the sum of $24,575.00, while I also privately sold a small strip of land to the municipality of Hoogblokland for $40.00; the municipality very much needed it since it provided a path behind the school to the alley way. We will consider this money to be a fortuitous extra. The entire sale went extremely well to the great satisfaction of all of us, in fact, it exceeded my expectation, and it means that we will not have to pay 3 per cent interest for renting it out. We will draw up the settlement account as soon as possible and it will be sent to you as expeditiously as possible by the 1st of December together with a release which I would like to have all of you sign in the presence of a notary public whose signature will have to be legalized afterwards by the
Consul. As soon as we receive it back, signed, the funds will be forwarded; there is a slight obstacle because half of the rent of his farm is not due until May 1, 1902, but I am willing to advance this from my own funds, provided I will be allowed to charge 5% interest annually. I would appreciate it if you would be so kind as to let me know that this is agreeable and if so to whom, that is, in whose name the funds should be remitted. Mr. T. Aanen sent the golden watch with the nickel chain to your uncle Middelkoop around half October; I suspect that it has arrived in the meantime. I decided against sending anything else as a present to you or Aunt Sijgje.
With reference to your letter of 19 August which I had received right before the sale took place, we, just like you, did not want to pursue the matter any further. It is very likely that the headstone will be installed in a few days which Mietje very much wanted, but once she lives in Meerkerk she will probably never visit it, same as your family. After the sale of the last farm I went with her to Meerkerk to inspect the house which your uncle had bought for her two unmarried sisters with whom she is going to live, and which she will remodel most likely for f2,000.00, so that she can live all by herself. She realizes that she has to live sensibly since she is not very strong anymore. I understand that besides the sales price of the house the two sisters received about f4,000 in the hope and on the promise that Miet will not ask for it back after the death of Mr. Middelkoop.

Translated from the Dutch by Gerrit W. Sheeres, Grand Rapids, MI
Hoornaar 18 August 1902

Mr. N. Hospers
Pella

Esteemed Friend,

One afternoon last week when we were at Mietje Hoeijenbos' in Meerkerk for tea together with sister Jannigje and the wife of my brother, we soon got to talking about your family, which for me was a pleasant memory after I had been able last year to wrap up your interests in such an agreeable manner, after which I felt a certain obligation to write you a few letters, the more so because you had indicated in your letter of last 29 January that you would like our correspondence to continue which I would appreciate very much and which I hope to keep up as long as [missing line]
at her disposal, one downstairs, one upstairs and a bedroom, while her two sisters will occupy the rest of the house. These sisters, in contrast to Miet, are very trim and the two of them combined weigh the same or even less than Mietje, so that from outward appearance you would never say that they are sisters. Her health is good, but she did tell me that a few days ago when she was in the garden she became dizzy and fell to the ground resulting in a very bruised arm, which I think is cause for alarm.

All of us are doing fairly well although brother-in-law Hakkesteeg suffers from shortness of breath, while I myself am somewhat weak physically. I am sure that all of this is the result of our sinfulness which causes life to be involved in struggle and sorrows. May.
the Lord grant us to acknowledge our sins and confess them sincerely so that we may humbly flee to Jesus who came down from his heavenly throne to a sinful world in order to redeem sinful people through his precious blood from eternal ruin. May we only learn to understand that no one will be justified by the works of the law but only through pure grace on the basis of Jesus' merits so that only God in his thrice Holy Name may receive the praise, thanksgiving and honor.

Generally speaking, we had a cool summer here, and the month of May was especially cold, so that I thought it necessary to bring two cows (beef cattle) back inside, while a number of farmers just like I brought their cows back in the stable; I had just had my stables renovated; later on they were
Put out to pasture again. For the rest, farming is doing very well here. Cheese (our main product) is sold again (top quality) for £3.00 per 50 kilograms, formerly 100 lbs; farming for me is going very well, my farm is used only for fattening up cattle; I just delivered five cows of which three went for £250 apiece, and the rest altogether sold for £405. Raising pigs and producing fertilizer is getting to be profitable here and is being done on a great scale; quite a few barns are under construction, some big enough to fatten up a hundred pigs at once, they demand gross 25 cents per 5 ounces.

In closing, a few words yet about the sad outcome of the situation of the Boers in South Africa. We, Dutch people, were very much dismayed and could hardly believe that they had surrendered their independence to which they were driven no doubt by poverty and suffering. Insofar as the hope with which they fought was genuine, the Lord will certainly comfort them in their distress, as we also see in the Book of Job even though his ways are sometimes not easy.

Would you be so kind, please, to share this letter with your uncle Middelhoop, and I hereby send all of you my best wishes. Sincerely,

Translated from the Dutch by Gerrit W. Sheerds, Grand Rapids, Mi
Hoornaar, 18 January 1904

Mr. N. Hospers
Pella

Esteemed Friend!

Your last letter of 3 December 1903 I received on the 21st, while prior to that your last letter was dated 9 August 1902 which crossed mine. The reason why I have not written you earlier is that I did not feel well for quite some time; I was nervous and any effort was too much for me; it is something I have had to struggle with since childhood which is all the result of sin; may we confess our sins in sincerity before the Lord and
may He work in our hearts so that we may feel free to go to the throne of grace and find help at the appointed time. Apart from that, things go quite well here, although we had an especially wet fall; since the last days of July we had very few days when it did not rain.

As far as I know, Mietje Hoeijenbos is doing fairly well, although the two sisters who live with her have caused her much grief because of the many debts they made of Mietje's inheritance; these ran so high that Mietje was no longer able to pay them, and as a result she had to declare
bankruptcy so that everything was sold; but the house in which Mietje had put much more money than it was worth she was allowed to keep, since her creditors were convinced that at a public auction it would not have brought in much, so that they now continue to live together in the same house.

We are beginning to realize more and more how far the distance is between our countries as far as shipping products etc. is concerned; we are using a great deal of American linseed oil cakes for our cattle, but we cannot use them because they are too hard from being dried out so that we have to grind them into linseed meal first; this is sold for about £8.50 per 100 kilo or 200 lbs;
while the linseed cakes are sold here for f12.50, which is definitely too much, and hence the sale of American linseed meal is increasing significantly; in Gorcum they are even using a few American horses. Beef cattle also are imported, but they are not considered to be as good as our Dutch cattle because, on the whole, their fat content is too high. Well, enough about that.

I just read in the newspapers that it is very cold in America and that some people even froze to death; and also about the terrible incident in a theatre in Chicago which cost a number of people their lives.¹

The sheet is getting full so I will have to close my letter, but I want to ask you yet if you would be so kind to convey my best wishes to your family and in particular Mr. G. Middelkoop, and I wish you and your daughters many blessings for soul and body at the beginning of this New Year.

Transcribed from the Dutch by Gerrit W. Sheeres, Grand Rapids, MI

¹ The Iroquois Theatre fire occurred on December 30, 1903, in Chicago, Illinois. It was the deadliest theater fire and the deadliest single-building fire in United States history at the time. At least 605 people died as a result of the fire but not all the deaths were reported, as some of the bodies were removed from the scene. (Source: Wikipedia).
Mr. N. Hospers
Pella

Hoornaar, 12 May 1905

Esteemed Sir and Friend!

The thought occurred to me today to re-read your last letter of 27 February of this year, and as a result I immediately felt the obligation to respond to the same. We received your letter on the 11th of March, and although I did not feel too well (because of a touch of the flu), I can inform you now that we are quite well, although brother-in-law Hakkesteegt continues to suffer from shortness of breath which prevents him from going outside in wintertime. He and his wife (sister Jannigje) live in with me and we enjoy a very pleasant and loving relationship with each other. May we ever
accept such blessings with a thankful heart, and may the Lord strengthen us in this, then we will be thankful indeed, for by nature we always tend to rely on our own reason and will, which leads us astray constantly and makes us ever more aware that life is a struggle that so often is accompanied by trouble and sadness.

At this time a big battle is also being waged here politically because elections are scheduled for members of the Lower House of Parliament on the 16th of June with mainly two parties sharply challenging each other. The one side consists of the Anti-Revolutionary party supported by the Christian Historical Union and the Catholic Party, and the other is the Liberal party of liberal Democrats, Socialists etc., all of which
base life on human thinking, reason and will which is to be built up by way of scientific knowledge, while our party wishes to take the Bible into account in which God has revealed Himself as an Almighty, Sovereign Being. The liberal Party can no longer endure that politics is based on biblical dogma, and therefore they do their utmost to rob our Christian Cabinet of its right to govern. May many prayers be offered up to the Lord that He may come to our help, not because of our merits, but purely out of grace; may they be offered up for our beloved Fatherland, which in comparison to America is very small, but which certainly is prosperous; this is ignored by many because pride is often stronger than prosperity and hence there is so much
discontent, and I read in the newspapers that, just like in your country, people murder each other for a trifle, etc.

As far as I know, Mietje Hoeijjenbos is doing quite well, she is very much interested in news from America, especially about you and in particular about old Mr. G. Middelkoop, and she would love to stay in touch with the family by way of correspondence; she asked me if I would convey her greetings to your family and Mr. G. Middelkoop.

I would like it very much if one of these days you would make a trip to the Netherlands and stay at my place for a while, although I understand quite well that you don't like the idea of such travel, and besides it would be difficult for you to leave your young daughters behind. Please give my best to Mr. G. Middelkoop. Receive my cordial greetings and also give your daughters my greetings. I remain, sincerely,

Your obedient servant and friend,

D.K. Aanen

Translated from the Dutch by Gerrit W. Sheeres, Grand Rapids, MI
Mr. N. Hospers
Pella

Hoornaar, 19 August 1907

Esteemed Sir and Friend!

Right now I feel a need to write you a few lines. I received your last letter of 4 February of this year via Miss Mietje Hoeijenbos on the 22nd of February, and although I had in mind to respond sooner I kept on postponing it because of various matters that intervened. Let me begin by telling you that all of us are in fairly good health, for which we thank God, and which I value because with the increase of years my workload has not diminished since at present as the oldest city council man...
I am the deputy mayor because the mayor has requested a month's furlough; in addition I am involved in various polder and water district boards. Last year I also became a shareholder in two corporations because at the Giessen near Giessen – Nieuwerkerk a dairy factory was opened which processes the milk of our farms (of about 600 cows) turning it into various kinds of cheese and butter, while in Gorinchem a new Credit Bank was founded and I have the honor of being a commissioner of both.

We also experienced a lot of tension here for quite some time because of the election of members of the Provincial States; they are the people who elect the members of the Upper House of Parliament. Since in the Lower House
the liberal Democrats have a one seat majority and the majority of the members of the Upper House belong to the Christian parties, every effort was made to have this election change the Upper House which fortunately did not succeed since our Anti-Revolutionary party not only retained its majority but even made substantial gains; this means that our present Cabinet cannot do much, and it would be wonderful and many people hope that with the next election the Lower House will get a majority of people of the same [Christian] principles as the Upper House, so that both Houses can work together for the wellbeing of our nation and people. It is our prayer that many may seek the Lord and ask Him to bless our efforts in this regard. The hostility ran so high that the leader of the liberal party, Mr.
Goeman Borgesius, had the gall to say at a political rally that he would sooner have a monkey for a father than his Anti-Revolutionary opponent whom he characterized with the abusive term of spider monkey, which I believe was one of the reasons why they lost the election.

In your last letter you asked if S. Kuipers is still living; I am sorry to say that it must have been about ten years ago that he died. He was an honorable person who left behind a widow, and I believe six children of which one son went astray and is often found guilty of misusing strong drink. As far as I know, Mietje Hoeijenbos is doing well, and is quite interested in keeping in touch with your family by way of correspondence.

As far as our area is concerned, farming has been very good, products are expensive, new cheese sells right now for f34 per hundred lbs., butter f0.70, while I can also report that I sold two beef cattle for f300 apiece; together they weighed 1,456 lbs. Furthermore, we are having a very cool summer; in fact, we had an occasional night frost in June and July causing some crops to remain mediocre, unlike last year when we had a summer the likes of which we seldom see, so that the shortage of our hay crop this year is compensated amply by last year's surplus.

Please convey my greetings to your uncle, Mr. G. Middelkoop.

Translated from the Dutch by Gerrit W. Sheeres, Grand Rapids, MI
Mr. N. Hospers
Pella

Hoornaar, 28 June 1909

Esteemed Sir and Friend!

I feel a need to claim your attention for a few moments since I have wanted to respond to your last letter of 23 December 1908 for quite some time already, but each time I was distracted by other matters, including the ones that were heavily contested here because of the election for members of the Lower House of Parliament which during the Cabinet of Dr. A. Kuipers (sic)¹ from 1901-1905, had a Christian orientation; however, in 1905 the liberal party succeeded in deceiving the working classes with lies by proposing social legislation resulting in the fall of the Christian Cabinet; but it was apparent immediately that they were unable to govern;

¹ Abraham Kuypers (1837-1920)
this became quite obvious when Mr. Goeman Borgesius, the leader of the liberal party, was appointed by Her Majesty the Queen to form a new Cabinet, but was afraid to become part of it himself, and after a lot of struggle found it necessary after about 2½ years to resign from office because they were unable to pay for the social legislation; they simply did not know where to get the money from; so when one of their own introduced legislation which was voted down, the Government fell, and strange though it may sound, a new minority Cabinet was appointed which continued Dr. A. Kuipers' (sic) policies, which they were able to execute moderately until the four years were up. And now at the last held elections of 11 and 23 of June, it became apparent once again that however strong the lie may be, the truth will catch up with it, and it certainly helped...
to give the opposition the victory since the Lower House now numbers 60 members who favor Christian principles while 40 members belong to the liberal party. This means that we have a solid majority that will be able to govern. Besides, in the Upper House of Parliament which consists of 50 members, 31 belong to us, so that for the time being the liberal party has been defeated totally.

Apart from that, we are doing well, although brother-in-law Hakkesteegt continues to struggle with ill health, being short of breath, which means that, especially in wintertime, he is tied to his living room.

I visited Mietje Hoejenbos in Meerkerk on the 23rd of this month. She has struggled with ill health all winter long; she contracted pneumonia, but has recuperated sufficiently so that she can walk in her garden again. She complained however that she was so short-winded, which can be ascribed partly to her being heavily overweight. She asked me to make sure to convey her greetings to your family and she is looking forward very much.
to receive a letter from you.

In the spring of 1908 Corn. Wallaard and his wife left for America; via his father I received his greetings, and also the news that he had worked at Mr. Gerrit Middelkoop's, and that he had had a very nice conversation with him; they had talked about Hoornaar and Hoogblokland. If he lives in the Pella area I can recommend him as a good bricklayer; he is an agreeable and trustworthy person.

Greet your family and especially your uncle, Mr. G. Middelkoop. Best wishes also to your daughters. I remain sincerely,

Your obedient servant and friend,

D. K. Aanen

Translated from the Dutch by Gerrit W. Sheeres, Grand Rapids, MI
Hoornaar, 7 June 1911

Highly Esteemed Sir and Friend!

It has occurred to me for quite some time already to respond to your letter of the 27th of March which we received on the 9th of April and now I will do so. I enjoyed re-reading your last letter and I do feel, like you do, that there exists a bond of friendship between us which goes back most certainly to the esteem and sincere friendship our late fathers had for each other, and I do intend to continue our correspondence as long as I receive the strength and ability. My health is very good at this time for which I thank God; although I do sense that I should not exert myself too much which, by nature, I tend to do. The rest of my family is doing well, although brother-in-law Hakkestegg continues to struggle with ill health and stays indoors most of the time; his three children are all married and have
large farms. Brother Arie and his wife are doing equally well; they also have three children of which the eldest son is married, and so is their only daughter who was married last Wednesday to Mr. A. van Houweling; they intend to move to a large farm in Peursum near Giessen-Nieuwkerk.

Monday, May 22nd, I met Mietje Hoeijenbos and her sister in Gorcum; they are doing fairly well. As far as the string-beans and the snap-beans etc. that she sent (of which I was not aware) are concerned, she told me when I visited her in Meerkerk, that she took pleasure in providing your family with good beans for the garden. When I met her in Gorcum I told her that I intended to write you one of these days and she asked me to convey her best wishes to you and your family.

We have had an exceptionally mild winter, to the point that the meadows stayed green all winter long, and therefore our cows were put out to pasture early. Cattle prices have been quite high since last year, high enough that besides my milking cows I used 17 cows for beef.
I sold 16 of them with f1,640 grazing rental; some of them even sold for f800. I butchered the last one for our own family. Just for the fun of it I charged f60 grazing rental so I received on average f100 apiece for this. The result was that the year 1910 turned out to be an exceptionally blessed year, not only because the prices of cattle and pigs were especially high but also the prices for butter and cheese, although the farmlands produced only average because of too much rain. May we be thankful, since I do feel that by nature I am inclined to give myself the credit, while only the Lord of heaven and earth deserves the thanks and praise, and although our farms are still flourishing I am fearful that we are in for a disaster since hoof and mouth disease has broken out among the cattle, although not yet in our municipality. The Government is taking strong measures to prevent the spread.
of the disease; at the first instance after it is detected in a municipality, the sick and infected cattle are expropriated and butchered; the Government pays full value for them, and after that the Government itself sells it as butcher's meat; we oppose this most definitely and would prefer to have our cattle sick it out; a lot of petitions have been submitted to the Minister of Agriculture about this with good results, since with the disease spreading the farmers were given permission last week to keep their cattle.

Slowly on my paper is filling up, but I should not forget to offer my sincere congratulations, having received a communication from your daughter, etc., who planned to be married. May she make you and each other happy and may this be the result of love rather than duty, and I hope that not only your daughter but also your son-in-law may adorn your life's journey in the future ... [conclusion is missing]
Hoornaar, 19 January 1912

Mr. N. Hospers
Pella

Highly Esteemed Friend!

I enjoyed receiving your letter, the more so that whereas I learned of your serious illness, you now, through the goodness of God, are privileged again to continue your correspondence with me, and therefore I feel I may not wait any longer with responding to your letter of 28 November of last year, the more so since we also have had distressing circumstances; when we received your last letter our family was struggling with serious health problems.
brother Arie developed lung trouble accompanied with throwing up blood and a fever, and brother-in-law Hakkesteegt suffered a congestion attack which made breathing so difficult for him that we and he himself could only think that he was about to exchange this temporal life for eternal life, and at times he indicated that he was ready. The eldest daughter of Hakkesteegt and sister Jannigje had to submit to hernia surgery, while her youngest daughter who is 3 and who is crippled on both sides had to undergo a serious operation that same week;
both hip joints had to be set in place, so that she is in a cast right now. Together with her mother she was brought home in an automobile, and all have recuperated to such an extent that they have regained their former health, with the exception of our little niece who probably will have to be in a cast for the next three months to which she is getting used to by now. Thus we certainly have reasons to be thankful for the many blessing which we have received; may we receive hearts that will gratefully acknowledge and recognize the mercies of God. My health these days is fairly good, although I continue to suffer somewhat
from a nervous condition.

We enjoyed an exceptionally beautiful summer last year, even to the point that very old people would say from time to time that they did not remember such a summer; it was accompanied by a lengthy drought so that in some places much fruit perished; it did not affect our area much. Until last week we hardly had any frost, but now as I am writing we are having severe winter weather; it is very cold outside, although I do not expect it to last long since I see fine snow and sleet outside. When I was in Gorcum last Monday I ran into Mietje Hoeijenbos and her sister; they are doing well; I was pleased to see how the two sisters walked arm in arm; Mietje is heavily overweight while her sister Hansje (?) is very trim; I estimate she weighs no more than 80 lbs.

My paper is filling up, but I do want to wish all of you the best for body and soul as we begin a New Year. Please convey my greetings to your children. Also greet your uncle Middelkoop and his wife. Sincerely,

Your obedient servant and friend, D.K. Aanen

Translated from the Dutch by Gerrit W. Sheeres, Grand Rapids, MI
Hoornoor, 13 Dec. 1912

Highly Esteemed Friend Hospers!

I feel a definite obligation to respond to your letters of 20/22 October, last; please forgive me my inattentiveness and neglect of duty. As far as your first letter is concerned, I was taken aback by the serious illness of your beloved uncle G. Middelkoop, but no less by the fact that you mentioned that your health is declining and that you are starting to notice that you are getting old. As far as the second letter is concerned, I was saddened to learn of the death of your esteemed Uncle which undoubtedly must have been quite a painful blow to his aged wife and his children, but to you as well
because you will be missing an old uncle and sincere friend; I extend my heartfelt sympathy to all of you in this painful affliction; still, it must be of great comfort to you that toward the end of his days he was able to testify that he longed for the Lord to take him to Himself, where all the difficulties of this earthly life will cease. Immediately after having received your two letters with the information of your uncle's death I forwarded them to Mietje Hoeijenbos; she has returned them to me and informed me that she intended to write you soon; she is doing very well, although it seems to me that being heavily overweight causes her some problems. Your last letter of 27 November I also
received after I had visited, as is my custom, the market in Gorinchem. As we drove back home we had an unpleasant accident; the horse of the person who rode ahead of us tripped and the result was that the driver together with his horse and wagon landed in the Schilluimse stream which caused our horse to be startled so badly that I and cousin Hakkesteeget together with horse and tilbury\(^1\) almost joined them in said stream. Thanks be to God everything turned out alright; it might have been different since for a few moments I was caught underwater under the roof of the carriage because the carriage overturned, and thus we were for a few moments in danger of our lives.

\(^1\) Tilbury: A light, two-wheeled, open carriage with two seats, used in the 19th century.
For the rest we are doing well; in fact, I feel better now than I did two years ago when I had taken on too much work which caused me to push myself too hard; the result was that I had to slow down for the sake of my health. Brother-in-law Hakkesteegt spends most of his time at home because of his weak lungs. Dr. C. van Beekum of Noordeloos died this past summer; his two farms and beautiful mansion were sold a couple of weeks ago; three of his children who are married live elsewhere while two daughters who lived with him intend to move to the city. In closing, best wishes to you and also to your children, and, if you happen to see her, also to the widow G. Middelkoop.

Sincerely, your obed. servant & Friend,

D.K. Aanen

Translated from the Dutch by Gerrit W. Sheeres, Grand Rapids, MI
Hoornaar, 18 August 1913

Highly Esteemed Sir and Friend!

Having taken care of most of my business affairs pertaining to polder matters, administration and my farm, the thought occurs to me to respond to your letter of 22 May of this year (which I received on the 4th of June). I was pleased to learn from it that all of you are healthy, but you also indicated that you are beginning to feel old age creeping up on you and you require a little more rest; I myself also find that as I grow older it is necessary for me to slow down a bit. If I am granted the privilege, I hope to reach
70 years on the 7th of February, so that I am beginning to see myself as a member of the older generation. I had some serious health problems this spring, having bruised my leg to such an extent that I was forced to stay in an easy chair from the middle of March until the latter part of May, after which I needed two canes to get back to walking; I am now far enough along that I don't need a cane anymore, but walking is still difficult.

Unlike you, we have enjoyed an exceptionally beautiful spring such as we seldom see, which was quite favorable to growth; as a result we had plenty of grass early on and were able to cut enough hay for the winter, but afterwards we were not so fortunate because around the middle of June it started to rain, which continued almost
daily until the latter part of July, so that we had plenty of hay but the quality was inferior. Apart from that, farming here is a flourishing business these days, cattle prices are high, raising and fattening pigs is big business at the moment; a number of farmers have more than 100 pigs which will be very lucrative for them provided they give them good care.

I have not seen Mietje Hoeijenbos for quite a while, but as far as I know, she is doing well.

We have had a busy time here politically because of all the elections we had this year as a result of the Upper House of Parliament stepping down, and [we also had to vote for members of] the Provincial States and municipal councils; the partnership of the liberals and the social democrats caused
the downfall of the Christian Cabinet; but now it appears that, having obtained the responsibility to look after the interests of our beloved fatherland and people, the socialists have withdrawn from taking part in a Cabinet, and as a result Mr. Cort van der Linden has been assigned to form a new Government. I believe this will be very difficult for him since of the one hundred members of the Upper House only 37 represent the liberals.  

Cordial greetings also to your children and family. Sincerely,

Your obedient servant and Friend,

D.K. Aanen

Translated from the Dutch by Gerrit W. Sheeres, Grand Rapids, MI

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1 Cort van der Linden did succeed in forming a new Cabinet (Government) which consisted of left-wing and right-wing liberals; he himself became the prime-minister as a centrist liberal. [translator]
Hoornaar, 26/27 March 1914
Mr. N. Hospers
Pella

Esteemed friend,

I received your letter of the 20th of February on the 6th of March in which you mentioned that my last letter was dated 13 December 1912, which I do not think is correct since I mailed a letter to you on the morning of 18 August 1913, while I received that same day, in the evening, your letter of August 4, and therefore my last letter must have crossed yours, or my letter must have gotten lost.

Right now we are in fairly good health although I did have my health problems last year with a sore leg, which caused me to be tied to an easy chair for ten weeks. But the leg is doing fairly well, although when I walk too much it becomes sensitive.

I congratulate you with the birth of your grandchildren which is something that shows us that one generation goes and another comes. I will inform Mietje Hooijenbos. Mietje is doing well, as far as I know; she leads a quiet and proper life. We have had a boisterous month of March with much rain, strong winds and occasional thunderstorms. For the rest I have nothing special to write and will conclude this letter. May the All-good God be near you and give you the grace to continue life's journey in tranquility and patience as your years advance. Cordial greetings to all of you and also your elderly uncle.

Sincerely,
Your obedient servant and friend,

D.K. Aanen

Translated from the Dutch by Gerrit W. Sheeres, Grand Rapids, MI