

Adriane Pleune

Memories or Short Account of our Experiences or Encounters

July 29, 1848

Left St. Phillips and on July 29, 1848, the six of us, arriving at 8:30 in the evening, having left at 2:30 in the morning, and we were blessed in this situation that we had favorable weather and healthy bodies.

July 30

July 30 being my 25th birthday, we heard Rev. Los in the forenoon and in the afternoon Van Den Oever with pleasure. But in the evening we went to the ship, named Garone, and sang and prayed with more enjoyment.

Monday, July 31

We brought our baggage to the ship under difficult circumstances, because of the lock on my trunk, and the rain, and various other circumstances.

On the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th, being still in Rotterdam, we bought our provisions and helped to bring them on board.

Under all of these circumstances I could at times feel comforted in the Lord as Counsellor and the one who would provide in these matters, that He would grant me a clear mind in these matters and in these dealings, and that he might take care of us and our possessions, etc. Comfort to my soul was not in evidence but I was submissively surrendered to the dealings of the Lord, His way and work. I have peace in this situation. If I may only in all the future circumstances, in faith, have a refuge in the Lord. May He in mercy grant that to me and us for Jesus sake. Amen.

N.B.

I sincerely ask of the Lord that He be my mother's comfort, he who is a husband to the widow and a father for the orphans.

Sunday, August 6

Now, being on the ship, this morning we heard a sermon by H. J. Budding on the upper deck of the ship, on Exodus, Chapter 23:20-33 inclusive but not all covered. In the afternoon on Catechism Lord's Day 32. In the evening on Genesis Chapter 28 or 15, the first and last parts.

Monday, the 7th

We left Rotterdam at about nine o'clock. During the night we reached Nieuwe Sluis but had to experience discomfort of weather and wind. The ship encountered difficulty so that during the night, beside the sailors, many of the passengers were involved in the activities.

Tuesday, August 8

We lay, under the Lord's keeping, in Helvoet Sluis in good weather and the people in good health, but it did not please the Lord that we were to continue our trip out of the canal. With the Lord there is no time or matter of convenience. May he give us further a sign for good and be our Leader.

Wednesday, August 9

We still remain in Helvoet Sluis.

Thursday, August 10

Being still in the North Sea, we have an opportunity to wash up well. Also the relatives and friends who had come on Tuesday, Aug. 8, returned to St. Phillipsland.

N.B.

Also, a girl fell and sprained her knee. This occurred on August 9.

Friday, August 11, 1848

This morning my wife must stay in bed because of a sore throat.

And we are still in the Canal.

My wife is very seasick.

I had a nice conversation with J.

August 12

Saturday morning with God's blessing, my wife was much better.

Saturday noon at about 12 o'clock we left Helvoet Sluis in good weather and wind and then we sang Ps. 95, vs. 1, 2, 3, and on our knees called upon the Lord for His help and guidance and in which H. J. Budding led in prayer and then we sang Ps. 42, vs. 5.

The Lord be our Leader.

Sunday, August 13

Our trip is going as well as we had hoped. The Lord grants a good wind.

We have heard a sermon on Hebr. 12:2 the first part and in the afternoon on Lord's Day 34. In the evening for the Germans with prayer, singing and reading of Matt. 7.

#### Second Essay

One must not be surprised that the Israelites were so disbelieving and dissatisfied because I have myself had the experience when we bought the two small loaves in Helvoet because just as I had bought them, we got bread from the office so the bread had to be eaten even though spoiled. Many a time I testified that Lord, thou art good but I am evil.

He had many fond references to my mother and sisters in the flesh to ask the Lord for them that He would remember them according to His great mercy. May He be their comfort, their strength, and their hope. What a tender feeling concerning their salvation. How I lamented during this week because of my weak faith and lack of trust in the Lord. Even in my smallest difficulties may the Lord grant me more grace to live for Him, that His love may more completely fill my heart, that the power of sin within me be broken, and I attain a greater knowledge of Him.

The sea sickness was bad Saturday afternoon but Sunday morning was some better. The Lord is giving improvement until now.

Monday, August 14

We are sailing on smoothly, very quietly during the day but in the evening quite a bit of wind. I was affected by sea sickness until noon but was much better in the afternoon. Today I also, for the first time, received a provision and water. The captain gives complete liberty to go and to walk everywhere.

#### Description of the English Channel

When we entered the English Channel I could not see that we were in a channel. "Is this a channel?" I thought (thinking of the channel through which we passed into the Helvoet Sluis). That is certainly small. This is a sea if you see at the entrance on a clear evening, the lights on of the English coast on one side and of the French coast on the other but I have also seen on the one side here and there a part of England. Nor could I detect the outlet. But many ships could be seen; sometimes over 100.

Monday, August 14

At the end of Sunday we left the English Channel but man, during the night there was a heavy rain and by evening we were before the wind. We had too much wind. So we sailed 2½ days before we were in the English Channel. I could tell no difference between the sea and the English Channel.

Tuesday, August 15

We made little progress during the night until noon today. Shortly after noon we saw the English island which we cleared easily. My illness that day was severe until noon but in the afternoon the Lord granted me renewed health. We still got to see the peninsula Porte, and went to sleep as the ship sailed on smoothly.

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Wind from the southwest and the current is against us.

Wednesday, August 16

In the morning we see the peninsula island Porte pass by and sail before an east wind very smoothly. After noon we made more headway because a heavier wind came from the north. Today I and my wife feel fresh and well.

Thursday, August 17, 1845

We had a great deal of misery today because it was so terribly windy so that many were sea-sick, so that we could hardly eat--since our wives were all sick, but I was so well that I could slowly help my wife and there was improvement on Friday.

Friday, August 18

The morning wind blows southwest. We still see the coast of England but our progress is greater than yesterday with an overcast sky and rainy.

The majority of our sick people have recovered. The Lord be praised and thanked for His goodness shown to us.

This afternoon the wind became stronger, so that during the night. The wind blew things around and from one side of the ship to the other. Today we also sailed about 12 hours out of the Channel. So 4½ days spent in the Channel, which is a short time.

Saturday, August 19

At 3:30 in the morning our things were so badly mixed up that it was necessary for us to put on a light, which we did, but we found nothing was damaged. The wind has calmed down some but we find that our improved people are sick again but it has pleased the Lord to keep my wife in health to the present, and she is in better health than I am.

We are now on the Great Ocean, the Spanish Sea. It is hard to believe that the sea can cast so great a ship up and down. We think about 30 feet, so that the prow is higher than the rear.

Sunday, August 20

Smooth progress. W. N. west nice and pleasant weather. We heard again the word of the Lord presented to us for our salvation, on the basis of Ps. 103:2,3, and 4. Introduction Ps. 30:1, 2, 3. In the afternoon, as basis Luke 11:7-13; about prayer Lord's Day 43, questions 116, 117, 118. Continuing nice weather, with contrary wind, but toward evening the wind became stronger.

Third Essay

Monday evening I enjoyed the singing of a few psalms up on deck. May the Lord grant more peace. My soul's expressions and feelings do not result in activities during these two days. What a languishing life that is. But in the rest of this week my soul was able to go out to the Lord

in a quiet sigh, particularly this Sunday morning. I feared this evening with an inner fear while the people became sea-sick again and everywhere you could see people's nauseous condition. Besides, they have such a contempt for God's word and I found myself in the same situation, much to my sorrow. The Lord had often given His word that in my heart I felt that the Lord would afflict us as He did the past night.

Monday, August 21

This the saddest night we have had as some cried in fear and I too at times thought that the ship would capsize. It cannot continue because the water came over the side of the ship. The storm came out of the N.W. At around eight o'clock the wind calmed down somewhat but the rest of the day it was still stormy, but the Lord protected us.

Tuesday, August 22

We slept reasonably well last night but the wind is still blowing heavily, but it seems it is quieting down a little. In the afternoon the wind increased. It stormed so much that some folks stayed up the whole night but the Lord did not want us to perish but extended his mercy toward us.

Wednesday, August 23

In the morning, the weather was much calmer, although it is still blowing hard, but by evening it was more favorable as the wind turned to the north and now the sails are set again and we sail on reasonably well. During the night we were able to sleep peacefully and see the day break more favorably. Wind W.N.W.

Thursday, August 24

In the morning it is nice weather. Wind N.W., toward noon S.W. Also in the afternoon and evening.

Friday, August 25

Last night the wind blew hard again, and all day. Dark weather and heavy clouds in the air.

Saturday, August 26

Ditto. Cloudy weather and rain.

Sunday, August 27

This morning we heard a sermon on John 3:9.

In the afternoon on Lord's Day 46

In the evening on Matt. 11:23

Clear weather. Against the wind. Good progress. We also met a ship where we all went to see it.

Tuesday, August 29

Cloudy weather

Wednesday, August 30

Thursday, August 31

Friday, September 1

Exceptionally quiet and pleasant weather. All of these days progress is very smooth. A great deal of head-wind.

Saturday, Sept. 2, 1848

According to reports we have made much progress since yesterday morning. But with more wind and a lessening of sails the progress is slower and there are several sick people but the Lord has spared me and my wife.

#### Fourth Essay

The Lord gives me grace to describe what is right and true. Oh, how weak my faith is when I should trust in the Lord. How my soul has experienced this Monday night; what I learned much about having trusted in the Lord. Oh might my soul for once experience in time of need when it is necessary to trust in the Lord. It is a more important matter.



Tuesday evening and Wednesday night it stormed a great deal because if the sails are taken down and no one can keep standing, then I can think of nothing else.

This evening my heart was inclined to speak about the Lord's wonderful dealings and how destructive sin is for the redeemed soul, and how little or not at all. How we have experienced this in present circumstances. The Lord does not change but the sin causes a separation. A blessed life to be constantly in the presence of that God who rules over sea and land. Tonight my soul could experience a bit of this, and was able to rest in the Lord. The rest of this week I was quite ill. My wife is in much better health than I.

Monday, August 28

The wind is from the west. Poor progress.

#### Fifth Essay

I hardly know what I should write. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday evening, as we are accustomed to do, we sang a few hymns during which my soul could experience an emotional uplift by which my soul was also refreshed. Friday and Saturday my Lord prepared us for his holy day.

Sunday, Sept. 3

Wind S.W. The storm is worse than before but there is a nice clear sky. This is the third time we saw brown fish.

We heard a sermon on II Cor. 12:9 in the morning. In the afternoon he was not able to preach because of the bad storm, but we did pray to the Lord together and then the ropes broke from the trunks and we were obliged to end the evening by lantern light. We prayed together and in that way ended the Lord's day.

Monday, Sept. 4.

Wind is from the northwest. Last night and today there is still a heavy wind but now we make good progress. The waves are not as high. When a ship is 15 minutes away from us it can be seen and then it disappears. It is a wonderful sight.

Tuesday, Sept. 5, 1848

N. W. moderate wind

Wednesday, Sept. 6

The same.

Thursday, Sept. 7

In the evening at eleven o'clock we got an east wind and we sailed along well. May the Lord be with us further. At twelve o'clock noon we met a ship with a large leak with a sign at the rear: Isabella, Quebec.

Friday, Sept. 8

We still have a S.E. wind but calmer than yesterday, still one would say that the wind increased. Nice, warm sunshine, and sitting at the front deck reading John Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" and we practiced English and mending nets.

Saturday, Sept. 9

Nice quiet weather in the forenoon. Easterly wind. At noon the wind increased and the ship saäls on like a bird on a little board.

Sunday, Sept. 10

Strong east wind. We are again privileged to hear God's word. Forenoon text Chron. 13:11, the last part. Afternoon Lord's Day 47. In the evening prayer as usual.

Today the ship sailed the fastest so far. This is the 5th day we

have had an east wind.

May the Lord, who is good, give his people in answer to prayer a favorable east wind.

On Wednesday at eleven o'clock being the sixth day of September. Upon awakening on Thursday morning as I heard and believed the word, my soul was humbled before the Lord.

It is possible that with a prolonged west wind or a long drought, as if the Lord can give no east wind or rain. But I could repeatedly experience that which we did not receive.

The Lord in his time would prosper us and that we would arrive in New York, certainly we would be there at the appointed time set by Him. May this now tend to the Lord's honor and our welfare.

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I again feel more and more that I am in the Lord's way (namely, believing in Him) to trust Him, to call upon Him. May the Lord establish His work and prove to be the God of His people and my God.

Amen.

Monday, Sept. 11

Smoothly before the wind until noon but in the evening a storm, still before the wind.

Tuesday, Sept. 12

Bad storm. Head wind. West wind.

Wednesday, Sept. 13

The storm has quieted down. It is now calm. We have eaten a flying fish which fell on the ship during the night. The taste is like that of the fried herring, and the fish looked like it.

S.W. 32nd day.

Thursday, Sept. 14

Nice weather.

Friday, Sept. 15

Smooth progress. An east wind but soon afterwards a storm.

Saturday, Sept. 16

We heard this morning that there is a dead child, and it was solemnly buried with prayer and the singing of a psalm, and we were all asked by the captain to come on the deck to witness the burial, and so on Sept. 16, in the afternoon at four o'clock it was committed to its little grave in the sea during a storm in which it was difficult to remain standing.

My wife had a lot of pain in her stomach this week but is better again.

Sunday, Sept. 17

In quiet weather we hear God's word from Ps. 89:48 & 49. In the afternoon Lord's Day 49. In the evening Isaiah 61:1.

We have an east wind and are sailing right toward New York.

Monday, Sept. 18

Nice weather in the forenoon but in the afternoon the wind again became stronger.

Tuesday, Sept 19

We have had a restless night. Later in the day the wind became more calm and in the quiet of the evening I declined to lead the singing.

Wednesday, Sept. 20

S.W.

Lovely morning. Nice and pleasant weather. Smooth progress.

Thursday, Sept. 21

It rained hard this morning and until noon. The progress of the ship quite favorable. We see many fish, all young sharks and we caught one. They are the size of a small cod. In the evening we saw a large fish looking like a walrus.

Friday, Sept. 22

An east wind in the forenoon. A lot of rain.

Rapid progress for the ship.

At noon at about 12 o'clock we would have lost the ship and our lives suddenly, had not the Lord prevented it, for we sailed over a surf or shallow sandbar.

Learn from this, etc.

Saturday, Sept. 23

Last night the wind blew hard and is still out of the N.W.

Sunday, Sept. 24

Morning, the Word of the Lord from I Sam. 7:12.

Afternoon, Lord's Day 50 from the Heidelberg Catechism.

In the evening our usual prayers.

Sunday, Sept. 24, 1848

At 12 o'clock noon we got the pilot aboard. Unexpectedly and an hour or two later, we saw an island. This is the first we see of America. You can imagine what joy this caused. So with the arrival of the pilot we meanwhile on our knees prayed and thanked the Lord.

Monday, Sept. 25, 1848

Pleasant weather and also a good wind, and looking forward to being at our destination soon. In the course of four hours the bowsprit broke

and at about 4:30 I saw the coast of N. America and it was possible at 8 o'clock to anchor in the bay, as I called it.

Tuesday, Sept. 26, 1848

This morning the tug-boat came and brought us to New York Harbor at 12 o'clock.

So in all we were on the sea 45 full days from August 12, 12 o'clock, to Sept. 26, 12 o'clock, 1848.

A. Pleune

Sixth Essay

Should the Lord sometime enable me to write what I experienced in my heart and mind, I will write it.

During our stay in the city of New York.

From Tuesday, Sept. 26, to and including Oct. 6, being 10 days.

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Friday, Oct. 6

We left for Albany in the evening at 5 o'clock. Traveling in misty weather to Albany, we arrived at eleven o'clock on Saturday, Oct. 7.

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Saturday, Oct. 14

We were in Rochester in fine weather.

Sunday, Oct. 15, 1848

We were in Lockport on the Canal.

Monday, Oct. 16, 1848

We came to Buffalo in great difficulty because we were out of money, and when on this morning there were five dollars held for us by Vander Poel, he nor we knew what to do with it but upon the advice of Vander Poel we gave four dollars at the office for our passage to Milwaukee. But we thought that it was sent for us so we went on the same day to Milwaukee.

Adrian Pleune

Tuesday, Oct. 17

We docked at Lakeport at the shore.

Wednesday, Oct. 18

We docked at Cleveland, on the shore. In the evening a small child, twenty weeks old, died on board.

Thursday, Oct. 19

We set sail for Detroit.

Friday, Oct. 20, 1848

We arrive in Detroit and at night to a place I do not know the name of.

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Monday, Oct. 23, 1848

We arrived in Milwaukee and stay until the steamer comes in.

Adrian Pleune

Milwaukee

Oct. 23, 1848

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Tuesday, Oct. 24, 1848

We leave Milwaukee for Grand Haven.

Wednesday, Oct. 25

We leave Grand Haven for Steel Landing.

Thursday, Oct. 26

We went from Steel Landing to about halfway from Steel Landing to Crochery Creek, being a rough and difficult road.

Friday, Oct. 27, 1848

Tomorrow we leave from our camp to our destination.



## ADRIAN PLEUNE, Sr.

### THE LAST SURVIVING CHURCH OFFICER OF THE MOVEMENT OF 1857.

Standing solitarily, as a tall but lonely pine, in the midst of a Michigan landscape, surrounded by charred stumps and second growth timber, so in a way, is the subject of our sketch surviving among us. Adrian Pleune, so far as we know, is the last church officer of the Movement of 1857, which gave birth to the Christian Reformed Church of our land. Born as far back as July 30, 1823, nearly ninety summers have swept over his head and yet to this day, Brother Pleune is tall and erect, keen in mind, his eye still undimmed, and his natural force unabated; only his failing hearing is a proof that the ravages of time are not entirely escaped even by him.

It was a pleasure to the writer a few days ago, to call on Mr. Pleune in his little brick farmhouse a few miles north-east of Grand Rapids, where he has resided since the early 60's. The fact that he is the sole surviving office bearer of our Church of the days of '57, as well as the role he played in our early Church life, abundantly merit a brief description of his life as well as a presentation of his likeness.

Mr. Pleune was born on the Island of Tholen, in the Province of Zeeland. He obtained only an ordinary school education, but his natural ability enabled



Mr. and Mrs. Adrian Pleune

him to become a teacher of the children of Rev. P. Van Dijke, who at that time was minister of a congregation in St. Philipsland. Van Dijke refused to have his children vaccinated, and since he could not send them to the regular school, he engaged young Pleune as teacher. Mr. Pleune also became acquainted with Rev. H. J. Buddingh, and when that gifted but erratic preacher decided to leave his Christian Reformed congregation in Groningen and depart for the New World in 1848, Mr. Pleune and his wife Neeltje Slootmaker, whom he had married that same year, were

among the party of 27 people which Rev. Buddingh took along to America, paying all or practically all of their expenses. The party sailed from Hellevoetsluis, August 12th, 1848, with the sailship "Garone," of Baltimore. The Buddingh party numbered not alone Mr. and Mrs. Pleune, but also Mr. Aart Van Sliedrecht and Jacob Gouw, later on well known in our Grand Rapids church circles. It took 45 days before New York was reached, September 26th. Of these days Mr. Pleune has kept a little record, written at the suggestion of Rev. Buddingh. It shows that even during that ocean trip, that diligent servant of God, as a rule, preached three times every Sunday, only very rough weather and resulting sickness keeping him from it. At least at one of these times he preached to the German passengers of the sailship. Sunday afternoons he faithfully preached from the Heidelberg Catechism, expounding Lord's Days 32, 34, 45, 46, 47 and 50. At times furious storms threatened to send the boat and its lading to the bottom of the Atlantic. Time and again the Lord delivered from distress. The little diary from which we learnt these facts shows plainly that Brother Pleune was fearing God in those days and in fact had chosen Him as his portion before his marriage, and the way he had communion with his Lord and Savior while on the stormy ocean is pleasing to note.

From New York, Mr. Pleune and some others left October 6th by way of Albany, Rochester, Buffalo, Detroit and Milwaukee, going to Grand Haven, where they arrived October 24th, 1848. Friday, October 27th, 1848, they finished their last stage by way of Steel's Landing to their new home, near what is now Ravenna, in Muskegon County, but then still reckoned in Ottawa County.

But what a home that was for these poor immigrants. They evidently had been led astray by some self-seeking land agent, and days and months of sad disappointment and of bitter struggle against cold and poverty were passed through by the little band of settlers in the heart of the Michigan forest. Oh! for someone to tell in detail what these Holland people, these strangers, in a strange land went through during the years of their stay in Ravenna. Poverty and disappointment drove them to Grand Rapids after they had held out in Ravenna for about seven years. In Grand Rapids Mr. Pleune soon found a very useful employment, being requested to become teacher of the Holland school there, which had been started under the auspices of the consistory of the Holland Reformed Church. Mr. Pleune was not the first teacher. He had a predecessor, but is unable to tell his name, and his history seems to be wrapt up in mystery. The first pioneer teacher died forgotten and lonely. Mr. Pleune taught in a little house standing in the rear of the old Second Reformed church on Bostwick Street, now occupied by Van Driele's Feed Store. He began his labors in 1856. A little later room was

made for a school in the southeastern corner of the church. The first year Mr. Pleune received the magnificent salary of \$100.00 and afterward every scholar was supposed to pay one shilling per week. At times the number of school children ran as high as 100, so that Mr. Pleune was assisted by one of his sons. But he did not continue very long in that property of the Second Reformed church, for the next year the pastor, Rev. Klyn, and the greater part of his congregation separated from the Reformed Church to join themselves to the brethren G. Haan, J. Gelock, Jacobus De Jonge, and J. Gezon, who had already withdrawn themselves from this denomination, and who, together formed the nucleus of what is at present the Commerce Street Christian Reformed Church. Mr. Pleune followed his pastor. This, of course, terminated his relation to the Reformed consistory whose employe he was, but after some interruption the school was continued in a part of the new church building which the Seceders, if we may call them that, soon erected at the northwest corner of Ionia and Island Streets in Grand Rapids. In this church building, and later in a room added to the rear of the church, Mr. Pleune continued as teacher until 1863, when he resigned to retire to the farm of his father-in-law, the place where he is living now. Meanwhile on March 7th, 1857, he had been chosen deacon of the new congregation and of this original consistory, composed of the elders: Gysbert Haan, John Gelock and Johannes Gezon, and the deacons: Berend De Graaf, Hendrik Moerman, and Mr. A. Pleune, he today is the sole survivor. Every one of his colleagues of these early days, as well as all the early pastors of our denomination, have already gone to their long home.

In 1857 Mr. Pleune was chosen as elder, and as such he has served in the Commerce Street Church, formerly called Spring St., for many years, until old age as well as distance brought about retirement.

During some years Mr. Pleune has been administrator of "De Wachter." He is still keenly interested in our denomination, and was greatly pleased when sometime ago the Semi-Centennial Committee sent him a presentation copy of our "Gedenkboek." The accompanying picture shows him holding this much appreciated book in his hands.

Our aged brother is highly favored in it, that the wife of his youth is still spared at his side to be his helpmeet in these declining years. Mrs. Pleune was born June 13, 1828, in St. Philipsland, in Zeeland, and in every way is still as strong and lively as her husband, while her hearing is still perfect. Eleven children, of whom four are surviving, have blessed their home.

May God continue His favor from generation to generation, and may He fulfil to Mr. and Mrs. Pleune His own promise, even as He has been fulfilling it so plainly: "It shall come to pass at eventide that it shall be light."

May 11, 1911