

Manlius, Mich
30 July 1847

Zeer geliefde Broeder en Kinderen:

Ik kan niet nalaten om myn toestand van wege myne betrekking die ik op uw hebbe. Ik ben veelo met myne gedagten by uw. Niet dat het my rout maar ik verlange naar uw om als broeders te zamen te wonen. Maar het lighaam ben ik nog goed gezont; ik ben nog niet ziek geweest, zoodat veile ontmoetinge my hatkunen treffen. Wy hebben 39 dagen op het schip geweest, en niet veel storm gehad maar de weg is ver en moujelyk ik ben in de kaloni ik hebbe my by Van Realte een maand bestaet voor dertien dalers en de kost. By Laermans miene mauie (tante Miens) wy zyn te zamen gezont zy heeft veel lant gekogt en i; heb ook veertig akker gekogt. De Grootte is vijftig mudden (akkers) lant naar het is alle vol met bomon maar de gront is goed het is alle kley dat ik gekocht hebbe; maar het is hier van beide, zant en kley.

Maar de lucht is hier vruchtbaar het is wel gezont maar door alle het hout zoo vries niet als by uw. Maar het is hier goet. Ik wenste well myn vrienden in den heere, dat gy hier waart. Hier is veelo vroomvolk van alle kant van Vriesland zyn met ons hier van Niew York wel 70 zielen met ons gegaan, hier is gedurig scheepen aankomen, zoodat my doet verblyden bloeden beeken, ligten sterren, ligt of ligt, zoodat my dunk dat de Heere hier zyn kerk wil bouwon. Ach vrienden het is hier wel hout maar gy kunt gaewe wat om hakken men house wel drie voet hoog van de gront en het maar op maalkaar om te verbranden. Ach vrienden, ik dagte eerst wel is dat kanaan toen ik het zag, maar toen ik met alles bekent toen a moest ik my beschamen. Dagt ik in de dagen van ouds op de voorvaderen hoe zy in de holen en de spilonken moesten verkeeren en hier zoo gezogent, zoodat het vee hier in de bosch van zelf vet woort of gy tien of twintig verken heb is hetzelfde, zy worden hier niet gevoert. Keoien (cows) desgelyk guste beesten worden hier vet. Toen ik dat alles aanschoude, toen dagte ik en moet my beschamen, omdat ik toen kon zien hoe gemakelyk dat de menschen hier zyn voedsel kon hebben. Dagt ik aan ons land aan armoede aan goddeloosheid, aan zonde, en ongerechtigheid, wat is het hier dan goed.

Een ieder kan hier zyn eigen broot eten gy behoef aan geen land wat op te brengen (tax) zoodat ik dat alles overdagte, zo kon de mensch hier zyn eigen broot eten. Zoo wensch ik wel dat alle vragers na den here, hier waren dat gy de godeloosheid niet langer behoefde te bouwen. Hier in de Kalonie kan een men persoon een half daler verdienen, maar die buiten gaan kunnen in de kost meer verdienen. Zoodat ik moet zeggen die hier gezont en will weken (work) die kan zyn brood hebben onder Gods zegen. Zoo duk my dat ervele zullen op verliet worden, maar ach de weg is mooielyk, brengt behoertigen mede, help ze uit de verdrukkinge, die zyn werk kan doen die kant wel meer verdienen wy hebben 15 weken onder weg geweest. Wy dukte die will komen moet in mei komen nu vrienden kost toch hier, goed niet volmaakt, dat moet hier aan dezyde niet verwaten naar streeft er allens voor timmer man is het hier goet, voor schoen maker is het hier goed.

Men draagt hier veel schoenen. De klompen maker, en dekker hebben hier niet veel werk. Huizen dekt met planken, huizen kan men gauwe bouwen met een man of vier in een dag of drie. Nu vrienden ik noodig uw alle die hier gezont is en wil werken die kan hier zyn broot wel hebben, en den zegen des heeren mag genieten, Nu vrienden komt, het is hier goed voor een ieder, denkt maar zelf die een paar zwynen heeft die worden hier van zelfvet. Gy behoeft aan geen lant wat op te brengen. Zoo kunt gy zelf wel reken dat gy hier wel kunt leven. Hier zyn van allen handen (zoort) van menschen van ambagt, maar geen koperslager. Nu vrienden komt Gods dients is hier Zondag en Dingsdag een bit uur dat is hier nog niet op het volmakste maar ik verblyd my dat ik hier ben, hoe wel myn gedagten zyn velle by uw dan denke ik nog wel eens van de dagen ouds, maar ik hebbe hier ook vele vele vrienden die my liefst en dicrbaar zyn het geld is hier zoo holants golt is hier net zoo hoog van vytyranken tegen zuvent vertig Hollandgeryks Dalers die zyn hier ook goed maar ik rade uw veel aan gout golt in vranken, en dan die wil komen moet van allen mede brengen, een ieder nazyn toestand, maar nieuw en ligt de vragt is duur hier is het ook duur.

Gy moet geen ekzen mee brengen, en kisten klein en sterk brengt liever een neet mede en die wil komen de schepp kost heeft ons gekost 21 gulden. Maar gy moet veel maal mede brengen en rys en gort, en bonen, en vlees, en een pan om te koken maar gy kook op op een kaggel, gy moetgeene groote hebben het scheeps broot lust Ons niet zoo rade ik uw liever dat gy wat laat bakken en dan gedrooged en als gy to New York aankomt verkoopt uw brood en als te rys, en gut want daar komt veel onkost op, beede moegtgy wel goet mee brengen. Het is hier in de kolonie duur in het schip is het liggen hart en luizen veel en gy moet van alle handen pruimen en rosynen apples ach lant lieden gy deezeniet. Op het schip zyn vyfkinderen gestorven en Gerrit Makken heeft de bil gebroken. Op het schip moet gy maar klein huis houding zyn daar heg gy voordel by net koken en anderedigen meer die ik alle niet wil noemen. Nu vrienden ik moet sluiten myne begeete west gy kont, maar ik zal uw zelf laten oordeelen hier koopt 50 akkers voor 53 dalars daar houd men bomon of. Daar poot men plannen oh men behoeft niet te messen aan geen lant wat op te brengen vyf zes varken koop die word vet.

Die moet en wil op dag huurgen een halfdaler dags nu laat ik het aan uw zelf over maararonrakt (dronkaards) en stellers en alle die Godeloos leuen leidca behoeft hier niet te komen. Nu vrienden ik moet sluiten, Zalcmink Zwennemeiu is dood en wy anderen zyn allen gezont in onstaan of zwakheid van de jongen zyy veole buiten de kolonie. Milligi, Poppon, Scholten wigter (girls) Brionnen wigter, en Gerrit Jan Speet en Gerrit Derks, Loeds, Hornina en Harm, en nog wel mar en Casper Lahuis is in de kolonie. Looka hebben 3 kolen en seven varends de anderen hebben ook also Nu vrienden het verblyd ons dat wy hier zyn daar is nog een gekomen die heeft nog 60 possessiers mee gebraght ik moet afbreken. De goednis aan alle vragers maar ook aan Rosel aan Voor en Wolte maar ook aan Koelink. Kont maar en dan alle het volk, om dat ik hoor van verre van oordeelen daaron bid ik veole tot den heere dat hy uw mag lyden naar zyn raad ik ben veel by uw if breeck off. Ik blyf uw gegroot.

Hanlius, Mich.
July 30, 1847

Gerrit Bouws
Mr. Harm Bouws te Emmeloukamp
ambt. lantman
Holland naar Bremen

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Manlius, Michigan
July 30, 1847

Very dear brother and children,

I can't begin to tell you about my situation since the beginning of my journey. I am often with you in my thoughts. Not that I regret it but I long for you, to live together as brothers. Physically I am doing well; I have not been sick yet so I managed to meet many people. We were on the ship for 39 days and didn't have much stormy weather, but the trip is long and difficult.

I am in the colony. I have spent a month at VanRaalte for thirteen dollars and the cost. At Laarman's (Aunt Miena) we are all healthy. She bought much land and I have also bought 40 acres. DeGroote bought fifty acres of land which is all full of trees, but the soil is good. What I bought is all clay, but here it is both sand and clay.

But the air here is fruitful and is healthy despite the cold. It doesn't freeze like this where you are, but it is good here. I wish, my friends in the Lord, that you were here. There are many pious people from all parts of Friesland here. About 70 souls came with us from New York. Ships arrive continually, so that it makes me rejoice blooming brooks, light stars, light of light. I thank the Lord that he wants to build his church here.

Oh, friend, it is cold here. I should chop some wood and stack it up against the house so I can burn it.

Oh, friends, when I first saw it I thought it was Canaan but when I became more familiar with everything then I was ashamed of myself. I thought of the olden days of our forefathers and how they had to explore in the caves and caverns. The cattle are fattened by themselves in the

woods; if you have ten or twenty pigs, it is the same. They are not fed here. Cows, even the barren beasts, become fat here. When I observed all of this then I thought I should be ashamed of myself. I could see how easy it is for a person to earn his bread. I thought about our land, about poverty, about ungodliness, about sin and unrighteousness; is it ever good here.

Everyone here can eat his own bread. You have no need to produce anything on the land. So I wish that all who seek the Lord could be here, so that they don't have to put up with ungodliness anymore. Here in the colony a man can earn a half dollar, but going outside one can earn more. So that I must say that those who are healthy and can work, can earn their keep with God's blessing. So I think that many will fall in love with it, but, oh the road is difficult, bringing unexpected problems with it, helping them out of their oppression. Those who can do their work can surely earn more. We have been on the road for 15 weeks.

I think that he who wants to come here should come in May. Now, friends, do come here; things are good but not perfect, so we shouldn't be arrogant. It is good for carpenters here and also for shoemakers; many people wear shoes. The clog maker and roofer do not have much work here. Houses are roofed with planks and can be built quickly in approximately three days if about four men work on it.

Now friends, I invite you all, whoever is healthy and wants to work, to earn his bread here and to benefit from God's blessing. Friends, come; it is good for everyone here. Just think that if you have a few pigs, they will fatten themselves. You don't need to grow anything on the land. So you can assume that you can live here quite nicely.

There are many kinds of people here, but there are no coppersmiths.

Now friends, come. God's service is on Sundays and on Tuesdays.

Prayer here isn't yet as it should be, but I am happy to be here. My thoughts are often of you and then I think of the olden days. But I also have many, many friends here who love me and are dear to me.

The Dutch gold coins here are as valuable as in the Netherlands. Dutch rijksdaalders are also good, but I suggest that you bring gold coins, especially francs. Everyone should bring as much as possible and only bring new wares because transportation is expensive.

Don't take any axes with you, and the travel chest should be strong and not too large. Whoever wants to come will have to pay twenty-one guilders to go by ship. You should take lots of meal along: rice, barley, beans and meat. Take a pan to cook with, but don't take a big one, because it will be used on a little stove. We did not like the ship's bread, so I advise you to bake some and dry it. When you arrive in New York, sell your bread and also your rice and barley, because you can get a lot of money for them.

On the ship the beds are hard and there are many lice. Whenever you can, you must take plums, raisins and apples.

Oh, these are not land people. Five children died on the ship and Gerrit Nakken broke his buttock.

It is best to be in a small household because then you can take advantage of the cooking and other regulations that I don't want to mention.

Now, friends, I should contain my eagerness, but I want to know if you are coming. I will let you be the judge of this. You can get fifty acres that you can get trees from for fifty-three dollars. There people make plans, but here people don't need to mess with growing anything on land. When you buy five or six pigs, they become fat.

Whoever must or wants to come here will earn a half-dollar a day.

Now I will leave it up to you. But drunkards and thieves and all those who live godlessly don't have to bother coming.

Now, friends, I must close this letter. Zalemink Zwennemeiu is dead but the rest of us are still healthy. Because of weaknesses in the young people, there are many outside of the colony. Millige, Poppen, the Scholten girls, the Briennen girls, and Gerrit Jan Speet, Gerrit Derks, Loed, Hermina and Harm, Casper Lahuis and still others are in the colony. Loeks has three cows and seven pigs; the others also have animals. Now, friends, it makes us happy to be here. Another ship has come and brought sixty passengers with it. I must end.

Greetings to all who ask about me and also to Rosel, to VoorWolte and to Koelink. Come only with these people, because I hear from afar of trying times. Therefore I pray to the Lord that he may lead you according to his wisdom. I am often with you. I now end. I remain yours; best wishes, Gerrit Bouws.

Beuker
family
+
religion

The Dutch letter post-marked Manlius, Michigan,
July 30, 1847, is of family interest to us because Gerrit Bouws
was so influential in the religious attitude of Berend Jan
Beuker and family. Mother related the circumstances and I
can now but write from memory what she told us. The Beuker
family, she said, was at one time not fervently religious.
Reading the Bible and saying prayers was not part of their
daily schedule. [Gerrit Bouws was then their farm hand. He was
sincere and personally serious in his faith. He read his Bible
daily. At mealtime he read the Bible and prayed, but in silence.
Grandfather Berend Jan Beuker was not for having such done
aloud. Grandmother Beuker was sympathetic but her husband
persistently said no. [Opa Beuker, mother's father, was then a
small boy. Gerrit Bouws took personal interest in him and in-
fluenced him spiritually. For a time a revivalist was conducting
meetings. Gerrit Bouws was permitted to take Grandma Beuker a
and her boy along, and she intine persuaded her husband who once
having made a donation said something to the effect that if it
was worth his money it was worth his time. If it had not been
for Gerrit Bouws, Opa Beuker, as we called him, might not have
entered the ministry.

he did
so
silently

is after
persistent
request

Dearest Brother and Children:

I cannot refrain about my state by reason of my con-
cern for you. I am often with you in my thoughts. Not that I
have regrets but that I long for you that we as brothers may
live together. As for my body I am still in good health; I
have not been sick yet, so that I have been spared many of the
ugly adversities that might have befallen me. We were aboard
ship 39 days and we did not have much storm but the journey
is long and difficult I am in the Kalonie. I have contract-
ed myself to Van Raalte one month for thirteen dollars and
board. By Laarmans miene meue (Tante Miena) we are both in
good health. She has bought much land and I also have bought
forty acres. (DeGroot) The large one is fifty acres but
it is all full of trees but the soil is good it is all clay
that I have bought; but it is here of both, sand and clay.

The climate here is fruitful. It is certainly health-
ful but owing to the abundance of woods it is not so fresh
(vries) as you have it. But it is good here. I do indeed
wish, my friends in the Lord, that you were here. Here are many
pious (religious) people from all sides from Vriesland some
70 souls accompanied us here from New York. Ships arrive here
frequently, so that blossoming streams, shining stars, light
upon light (ligt op ligt) fill my heart with joy, so that I
think the Lord wishes to build his church here. Ah, my friends,
it is indeed woods here, but you can soon chop them down. You
chop at least three feet above ground one on top of another
to be burned. Ah, friends, my thoughts when I first saw it were
this is Canaan, but when I became fully acquainted with it
all, I had to feel ashamed. [I thought of our forefathers of

the days of old how they had to find shelter in caves and
holes, and here there are so many blessings, so that here in
the woods the cattle fatten without being fed, whether you have
10 or 20 pigs, it's all the same, they do not have to be fed
here. Cows likewise (guste beesten grow fat here.

beleid

When I beheld all this then I stopped to think and I had to feel ashamed because I then could see how easily man could here obtain his food. And when I thought of our country, its poverty, its godlessness, its sin and unrighteousness, I realized how good it was to be here. (2)

Each and everybody can eat his own bread here. One does not have to pay tax on any land here, so considering all things, a man can here eat his own bread. And so I do wish that all those who seek the Lord might be here so that you no longer need to build the wicked world (de goddeloosheid). Here in the Kalonie one (men) person can earn a half dollar, but those who go outside can earn more in their board. So that I must say that any healthy person who is willing to work can with God's blessing supply his daily needs. So that it seems to me that many will take a liking to this place. But the trip is a trying one. Along those who are in need. Help them out of their state of oppression. Whoever is capable of his work can well earn more here. We have been 15 weeks under way. It seems to me that those who ~~#####~~ so desire should come in May. Now friends do come here, it is good, not perfect, that you must not expect on this side of the grave, but strive each and everyone thereunto. For a carpenter it is good here, for a shoemaker it is also good. Here one wears many shoes. A woodenshoemaker and a decker do not have much work here. Houses one decks with boards. A house is quickly built by three or four men in two or three days. Now friends I urge (invate) you all anyone here who is in good health and is willing to work can certainly have his daily bread here and may here enjoy the blessings of the Lord. Now friends do come. It is good for each of you. Think for yourself, if you have a couple of pigs they fatten themselves, you need pay no tax. So you can figure it out for yourself that you can well make a living here. Here are men of all sorts of trade, but no coppersmith (koperslager). Now friends come. Church services are here each Sunday and Tuesday an hour of prayer, not perfect by any means, but I rejoice that I am here, although my thoughts are often with you and then I think of the days gone by. But here too I have many many friends whom I love and are dear to me. Money here is like Holland (zoo Holants) gold and here just as high (van vytvranken tegen zuvent vertig Hollandgeryks Dalers) they are also good here but I advise you much gold money in Franks, and then whoever desires to come must take all kinds of things along, each according to his means, but new and light, the freight is high here it is also high.

You must not take along any (eksen) and boxes small and strong take along rather a (meet) measure and those who desire to come the boat fare (kost-meals?) cost us 21 gulden. But take along much flour and rice and (gort) barley and beans and a pan for cooking; but you will all be cooking on one stove, you must not have a large one. Ship's bread we did not like, so I suggest that you have some baked and then dried and when you arrive in New York sell your bread and "als te rys, en gut want daar komt veel onkost op, beede mogt gy wel goet mee brengen" (import duty is high bedding you may or should take along) It is expensive in the Kalonie and aboard ship lying is hard and there are many lice and you must "van alle handen pruimen an rosynen apples ach lant lieden gy deze niet" Aboard ship five children died en Gerrit Nakken broke his "bil" Aboard ship you had better form a small household, that will be to your advantage in cooking and other matters that I do not wish to name. Now friends, I must close. My desire you know, come.

but I shall let you decide for yourself. Here you can buy 50 acres for 53 dalars. You can clear the land of trees. You plant the crops, you do not have to fertilize any land. Five or six pigs you buy, they will fatten

Whoever must or wishes to work by the day, it is a half-daler a day. Now I must leave it to yourself, but thieves and all who lead godless lives need not come here. Now friends I must close. Zalemink Zwennemeiu is dead and the rest of us are in good health....."in omstaan of zwakheid van de jongen" many of the young ones are outside the Kolonie. Hilligi, Poppen, Scholten girls, Briennen girls, and Gerrit Jan Speet and Gerrit Derks, Leeds, Hersina and Harm and still others and Casper Lahuis is in the Kolonie. Loeks have 3 cows and seven pigs, the others also have. Now friends, we are happy that we are here another (ship) has come it has brought along 60 passengers now I have to break off.

Greetings to those who ask but also to Rosel ^{see} Voor Wolte but also to Koelink. Only come with all the people because I from afar hear of trying times therefore I pray much to the Lord that he may lead you according to his wisdom. I am much with you I break off, I remain yours with best wishes

Gerrit Bouws paid 10

Manlius, Mich.
July 30, 1847
England über Bremen

Mr. Harm Bouws te Emmelenkamp
ambt Nieuwenhuis Graafschap Benthem
Netherland in Europe

~~The punctuation and incoherence~~

The translation follows the original literally, so far as I was able to get it; hence, the punctuation and incoherence.

AN IMMIGRANT'S LETTER

(This letter was written July 30, 1847 by Geert Bouws to his brother, Harm, in Graafschap-Bentheim, West Germany. Geert was a recent immigrant to the Graafschap, Michigan area. The Harm Bouws, to whom this letter was written, later came with his family to the Dutch colony in Michigan. This is a translated version of the letter.)

To my dearly beloved brother and his children:

I can not forbear to write and tell you about my present circumstances because I think of you so often. I do not regret that I moved here but I long for you and wish we could live together. I am well, and have not been sick, although there have been many troubles. We were on the ship for 39 days. We did not have many storms but the journey was long and difficult. I am in the colony. I stayed with Van Raalte for a month for thirteen dalers (a Dutch coin). Our food was supplied by Aunt Minnie Laarman. She has bought much land. I have also bought forty acres. It is full of trees but the soil is good, it is all clay. The soil in this area is a mixture of sand and clay. The climate is good for the crops.

I sometimes wish that all my Christian friends were here with us. There are many religious people here. About seventy persons from Friesland, accompanied by a pastor from Zeeland have come here, intending to start their own church. They first landed in New York. (Ships also land here.) I believe God is beginning to build His church here and I rejoice!

Oh, friends, it is true, it is all work here, but you can quickly chop the trees down to within three feet of the ground and then haul it away and burn it. Friends, when I first saw it I thought, "Is this our Land of Canaan?" but after I saw more of it I was ashamed of my thoughts. I thought of the days of our ancestors--how they lived in dens and caves in the ground, while here we are so blessed. Here our cattle graze in the forest and we do not even have to feed them. It is the same with the pigs. You can have ten or twenty pigs and they are not even given grain. The same with the cows. When I saw all this happening I realized how plentifully we are supplied here with food. I thought of our homeland, our poverty there, but also our ungodliness, our sins, our unrighteousness. In comparison, how good we have it here. Everyone can eat his own bread. I wish that all who seek the Lord could come here where you no longer have to see wickedness all around you. Here in the colony a man can earn a half-daler in a day. Those who go out of the colony to the east can earn more, so that I must say, "Those who are healthy and willing to work can earn their own livelihood with the blessing of God." I think many of the immigrants love it here. But, oh, the way (the trip) is difficult and also costly--over 100 gulden (one gulden is 60¢ here). Those who are wealthy brought needy ones with them in order to bring them out from under oppression. Those who are competent to work can earn more here.

We were on our journey here for fifteen weeks. Those who plan to come should come in the month of May. My friends, come! It is good here, not perfect but we must not expect perfection this side of eternity, although we should strive for it. Carpenters do well here, also shoemakers. The people here wear leather shoes, not wooden shoes. The wooden-shoe makers and the roof thatchers will not find much work here. Roofs are built with planks. Four men can build a house in three days.

Now, my friends, I urge all of you who are well and able to work to come here. You can enjoy your own food with the Lord's blessing. If you have a couple of pigs they will get fat just roaming in the woods. You will not even have to own land and raise grain to feed them. So you see you can live here. There are many people here who are trained in various crafts (But no coppersmiths).

We have a religious service here on Sunday, and on Tuesday we have an hour of prayer. I am glad to be here although my thoughts are often with you and I remember old times. I have many friends here, too, that I love and are dear to me.

The money they use here is from Holland. Gold is not used much here. Five franks (a French gold coin) are worth about the same here as 47 Holland "dalers". I recommend that you bring gold franks. Those who come here should bring their own supplies, as much as they can afford, but keep them light in weight because of the freight cost. Do not bring an ax. The chests in which you pack your belongings should be strong but small in size, even if you have to bring an extra one. We paid 21 gulden for passage for each person. Bring a lot of meal, rice, barley, beans, and meat. Bring a pan for baking and a pot for boiling. You can cook on only one stove. (It is possible that the writer here refers to a stove on board the ship.) We do not like the bread on the ship. I advise you to bake your own bread (before you leave) and then when you get to New York sell the bread, rice, barley, and beans so you will not have to pay for the freight. You must bring enough bedding because on the ship you will lie on hard places and there are many lice. While we were on the way five children died. Also Gerrit Nakken fell and broke the bones in his buttocks. On the ship you must do some small housekeeping jobs. You do have the privilege of cooking and other benefits but I will not list them all.

Now my friends, I must close.

Zalmink Sweenemui has died. (This could mean Aunt Swenna Zalmink.) The rest of us are well. Due to circumstances or the illness of their children several of our group were not able to join us here in the colony.

The following are here with us: Hillige Poppen, Scholten Wigterink, Brunik Wigterink, Geert Jan Speet, Geert Derks, Harm and Hermina Loeks and Caspar Lahuis. (Because of the lack of punctuation we cannot be certain of the accuracy of this list.) The Loeks have three cows and seven pigs. The others have some livestock also.

Friends, we are glad we are here. Another ship arrived recently bringing sixty passengers.

I must break it off.

Greetings to all those who ask about us, especially Rosel, Voorwolte and Koelink. I have been hearing that some of those living in your area have been saying unpleasant (but untrue) things about our colony. Therefore, pray much to the Lord that He may guide you according to His will. I am much in prayer for you. Again, I greet you.

Geert Bouws

