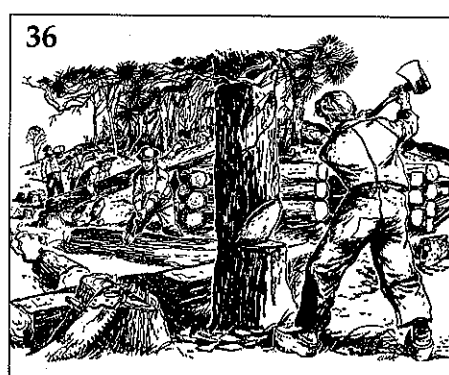
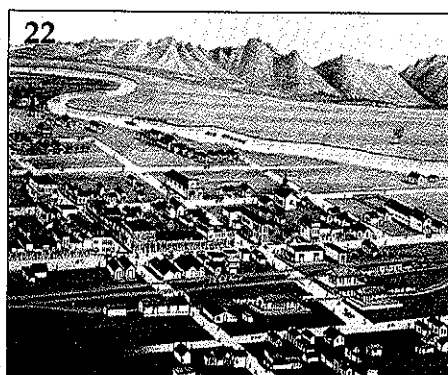
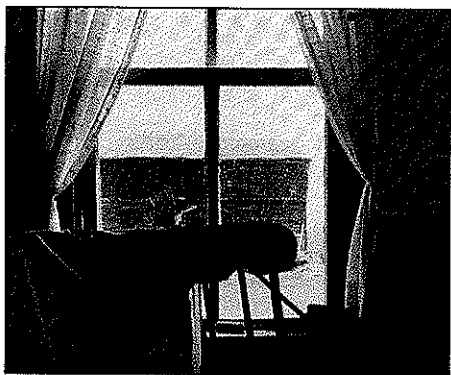


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A VIEW FROM THE PARSONAGE

KLAAS KUIPER AND HIS FAMILY

When Klaas Kuiper died in 1921, his ministerial career had spanned forty-five years. About half of his pastoral efforts were given for congregations in Grand Haven, Roseland, and Niekerk, but he was already a well-seasoned cleric when he came to the United States in 1891. By then he had pastored three churches in the Netherlands, and his large family (six boys and two girls) quite literally filled the parsonage of Grand Haven's First Christian Reformed Church. Klaas Kuiper's attachment to that lakeshore congregation remained strong until his death. Both he and his wife were buried there, and in 1908 his oldest son, Barend

Klaas (B.K.), married Cornelia van Zanten, a daughter of the Grand Haven church.

Nonetheless, the fifteen years (1896–1911) during which Kuiper pastored Roseland's Second CRC embodied the most mature pastorate of his career. From the Perry Avenue parsonage he supervised a rapidly growing congregation, the organization of Christian schools, and a family of boisterous teenagers. During those years the Second Roseland congregation grew from 620 to 1068 members, and the nearby 104th Street Christian School blossomed from an ungraded three-room effort to an accredited elementary school. The Kuiper children attended a variety of local schools—Christian school for the lower grades, Morgan Park for high school, and, at the college level, the University of Chicago.

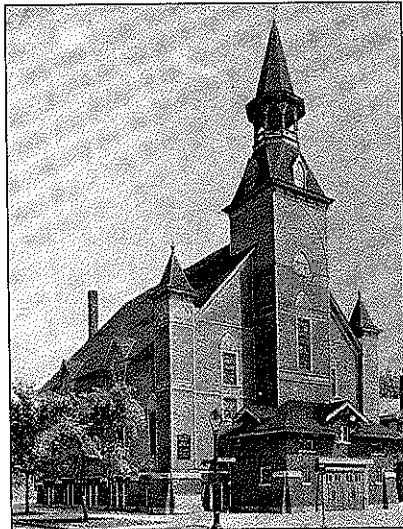
Though not yet graduated from the university in 1900, Klaas's oldest son, B.K., accepted an appointment to teach at the preparatory school of the Grand Rapids Theological Seminary. This institution, known today as Calvin College and Seminary, offered the young "professor" a six-hundred-dollar salary and a teaching assignment which ranged from mathematics to history and classical languages. While removed from his parents and siblings, B.K. received a weekly packet of correspondence from the Roseland parsonage, which kept him informed. Father Klaas, Mother, sister Dena, and the five younger brothers combed through each week's events and reported the moments of their days—deaths and births, baptisms and marriages, news from Michigan Avenue and from the narrow homes on tightly packed streets like Perry, Eggleston, and LaSalle. Father Klaas discussed broad denominational issues together with the more dramatic local news of his Roseland parish.

Known especially for his support of Christian schools, Klaas urged B.K. to champion the cause in Grand Rapids. Writing to his son in 1902, the minister declared,

Your views about education are much like my own, and this past week I have been thinking along lines similar to those contained in your last letter. It is unfortunate that we Hollanders are so divided on this matter and that we

cannot yet agree to establish a middle school here in Roseland. What we really need in our denomination is three or four academies, a college, and a seminary. At a recent school association meeting I said quite clearly, "We need a high school here."

I was happy to see that we may soon have a college in Grand Rapids. I have already written to Rev. Jacob Noordewier and Rev. Henry Beets about this matter. Mr. Postma informed me that Prof. Klaas Schoolland has been asked to write something about it in *De Wachter*, and Postma also requested about four hundred extra copies of the article for distribution in Grand Rapids. They expect to have meetings and speeches to present the idea. Why don't you ask



Schoolland when he expects to begin writing. If he takes too long, work up your own ideas for *De Wachter*. Talk about it with J. B. Hulst [a Michigan publisher], A. J. Rooks, and other Grand Rapids people. They should get going on this—and quickly. If they delay they will encounter opposition from all sides.

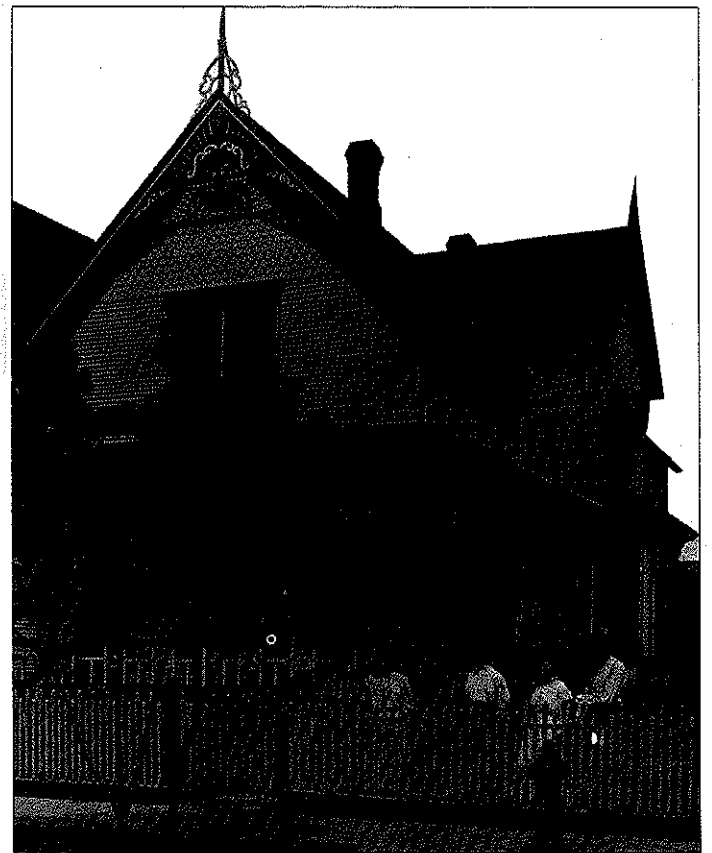
Turning to the affairs of local education, Klaas wrote,

... and now the 104th Street School—it certainly could use Mr. Vanden Berg. If, perchance, you know him, try to encourage his coming. We would like to have him. We need a good teacher who is Reformed—and especially one with certification. If we can't get Vanden Berg, keep your

eyes open for another candidate. The salary is forty to forty-five dollars per month.

I have just visited the school this morning, and there are forty-two children in its three rooms. We should have about fifty. The teaching is in English with two afternoons in Dutch. It is not actually a graded school, but we pay some attention to that idea. The children begin when they are about eight years old, and we estimate that, upon leaving, they are educated to about the fourth grade level.

Klaas did not consider the Roseland school's loose structure to be particularly detrimental. His own education in the Netherlands had been far less formal. He sketched that



experience in the denomination's 1898 *Yearbook* and recalled that in Dwingeloo, a small village in Drenthe, his local Christian school met in a cramped fourteen-by-twelve room under the church balcony. Taught in winter months by retired farmers, the larger children sat at tables while smaller pupils lined up on a bench along the back wall. After memorizing two ABC books, Klaas and his friends turned to the Bible, which was their only text. Arithmetic, along with printed and cursive writing exer-

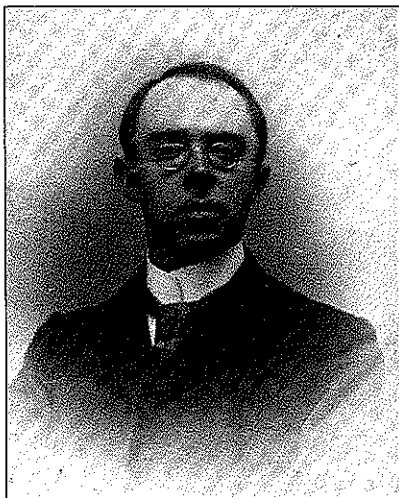
(left) Church; (center) Family; (right) Parsonage

cises, finished the educational objectives. During the summer months, Dwingeloo's pastor, Rev. Kerssies, taught catechism and Bible studies. "We had," Klaas declared, "little or no knowledge of geography, history, or higher math; but in reading and writing we learned as much then as my own children now acquire in far better schools."

More to the point, Kuiper did not urge his readers to elevate the Dwingeloo Christian School as an academic model, but he insisted that education would fail without "prayer and thanksgiving" and a recognition of the Bible's "high and honorable status." Accompanied by "teachers who feared God," a curriculum with prayer and Bible reading constituted the foundations of education. Understandably, then, he was not pleased with sending his children to the Morgan Park High School, and after Calvin College became available, his children no longer went to the University of Chicago.

Whatever their father's fears and misgivings, Klaas's children enjoyed the education they received at Morgan Park and at the university. Four of his sons, R.B., B.K., Herman, and Hendrik, took readily to schooling. Reporting in 1902 on his Morgan Park school days, Rienk (R.B.) wrote, "We have just received our first report card and I had all A's. German is pleasant and easy. Burgess is our Latin teacher. We are already in the fifth book of *Aeneid*, and we have just finished the first book of the *Iliad*. There are astounding numbers of new words in each lesson, but it goes easily for the most part. We have just finished *Macbeth* in English literature and have now begun the *history of English Literature* by Stopford Brooke. It is only a little book, but we must learn it from memory. Every week we write an essay, and yesterday I finished the eighth one this year."

Under stern direction from "Pa," the children wrote to "Professor" Barend exclusively in Dutch. Only Anton, the most completely Americanized member of the family, violated the language restriction frequently. Describing a University of Chicago football game in 1902, he lapsed into English. While he may have used English to disguise his interest in such frivolous matters from Pa, who read all the outgoing correspondence, it is also clear that a Dutch vocabulary was ill-suited to recounting such an American



sport accurately. At any rate, Anton followed the fortunes of the team enthusiastically. "Chicago's football team is alright this year," he reported. "They lost for the first time this season—to Michigan, 21-0. But they weren't beaten as badly as the score might indicate. Michigan couldn't break through Chicago's defense so they made their score with two good kicks and two touchdowns on trick plays."

References to events outside of the Roseland parish were exceptional in the correspondence, and thirteen-year-old Herman's letter of November 23 captures a typical view of life from the parsonage in 1902. "Rev. [W. R.] Smidt preached his final sermon this morning. Then, in the afternoon, Rev. Henry Beets and Prof. Alberda Rooks ar-



(left) Barend K. Kuiper; (center) Roseland Christian School; (right) John Kuiper's delivery wagon and store

rived—hoping to hear the sermon—but they were too late—a good joke on them. This morning the church was overflowing—and that was almost too much for Bandstra [the janitor]. He flew around the church and had to set out fourteen or fifteen chairs."

Of that same week, Rienke (R.B.) wrote, "Jacob Nieuw-dorp has been here often lately. Friday he came to return a book and to buy a Psalm book. Yesterday he came to pay for the Psalm book and today he is visiting."

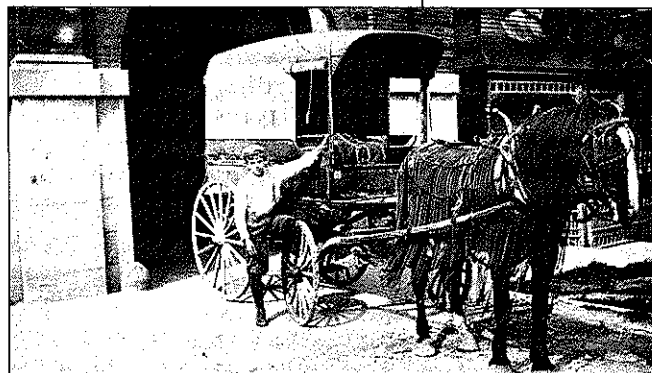
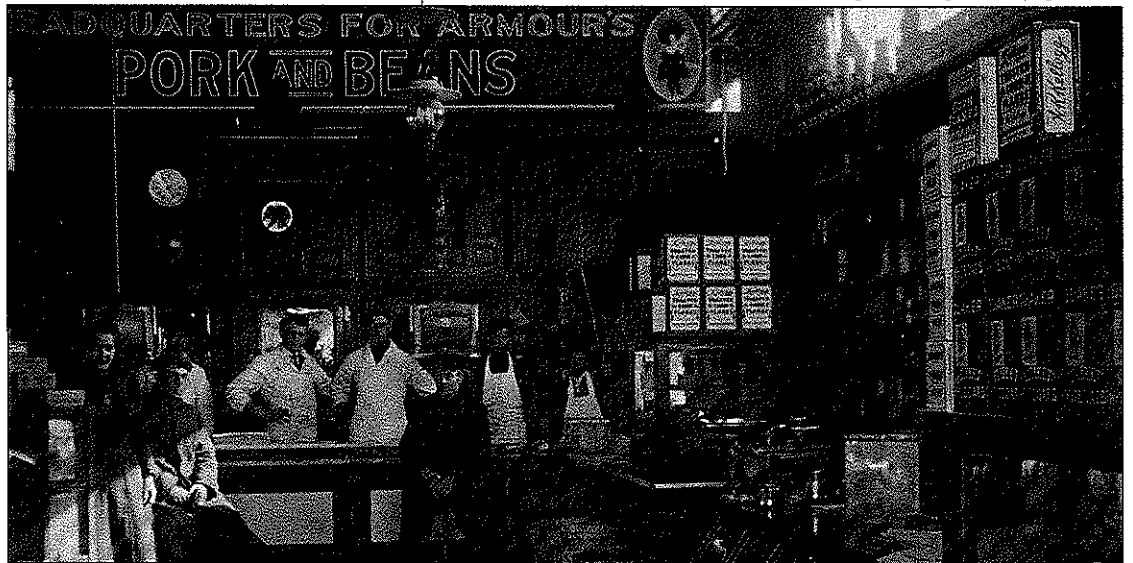
"We can lock the shed door now and it is full of coal. Next week the new furnace will be put in. We gave mother a new flower stand for her birthday. The chickens lay three or four eggs each day and Gracie [the cat] has caught another rat. They have been painting—the church name is printed on the church, but most of the people don't like the color

on our house."

Tragic news, two deaths in early November, engaged the attention of several Kuiper correspondents. Both Pa and R.B. wrote lengthily of Casper Rieve's passing. As the local barber, Rieve was well-known and a probable source of intimate news for Klaas. "Only this Tuesday," Pa wrote, "Anton was there for a haircut, but after beginning to cut, he could not finish and he would only trim up Anton's hair to make him presentable. He told Anton to come back later this week because he was so sick. The doctor feared that Casper had typhoid fever, and Saturday he slipped into unconsciousness. Sunday morning he

the children are back at their tasks. The weather is beautiful and it was so yesterday too. We had many people at the Lord's Supper. More, I think, than ever before. Nearly five tables were filled in the morning service and one in the evening. That makes six with fifty at each table, a total of three hundred. May it be that all were true servants of the Lord.

With but few exceptions all is going well here. That applies also to the Thanksgiving Day collection, which was \$237.19 for debt reduction and \$40.20 for missions. On Thanksgiving evening we had a public gathering. The



bled from his mouth and he died at about 10:30 a.m. It is said that the wound from his operation earlier this year broke open on the inside and he drowned in his own blood. How terribly sad. He was recovering from his operation and then in a few days, with no warning, died." That sad event, Rev. Kuiper noted, should testify to life's uncertainty.

The life of the church and particularly Sunday's worship services structured the rhythm of the parsonage, and, while every member of the family sketched several details of weekly worship, Klaas rarely failed to reflect on his Sabbath exercises:

It is Monday morning [he wrote on December 1], and all

church was full and many sat in the aisle. The collection for the Christian school was \$37.20. We have much to be thankful for.

Klaas Kuiper remained in Roseland until 1911. But by then, at seventy years of age, he had begun to notice his growing frailties. His preaching, though he spoke only in Dutch, continued to attract large crowds, but the duties of counseling, committees, and travel taxed his energies. He was ready for a smaller congregation and was happy to move to Niekerk, Michigan, with its 345 members. He retired there in 1919 but continued to preach until his death in 1921. During his last year, Klaas prepared a dozen sermons for publication in a book titled *Avondsterren* (Evening Stars). But the book also contained his reflections on the art of preaching, "The Preaching of the Word: Content and Form." Though written more than sixty years ago, this essay (page 8) remains pointed and vital.

THE PREACHING OF THE WORD: CONTENT AND FORM

In our day many pulpits are profaned as men treat all manner of topics related to politics and social conditions, but without subjecting their topics to the Word of God or even allowing the light of that Word to fall upon their subject. Then, of course, it does not become a sermon but a lecture. In a lecture a person can naturally express his views and thoughts about this or that subject, but a sermon must always bring a message from God to the children of men.

Therefore, preaching must have a personal character. In a lecture a person speaks for the people. In a sermon one must speak to the people, presenting the truth in general, but also in such a manner, that, either in separate application or in remarks throughout the sermon, he speaks so that every listener senses that the preacher has the hearer in mind. Professor Favins once said to me, "I recently heard a sermon on the sixth commandment, but after the sermon I said to the preacher, 'Yes, pastor, what you have said is surely true, but you did not preach in such a way that I left the church with the conviction that I am such a murderer.' "

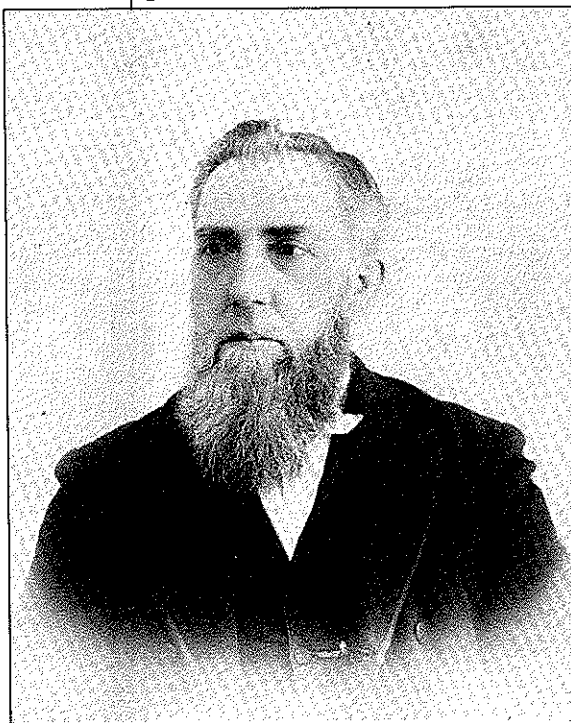
Then, the sermon must have precise distinctions, or the audience will be suspended in generalities. Congregations too frequently get the impression that all are born again, but the Word of God to Isaiah declares, "Say to the righteous that it will be well for they shall eat the fruit of their deeds. But woe to the wicked for it shall be ill with them, for what their hands have done shall be done to them" (Is. 3:10-11). Preaching must be and remain one of the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, by which heaven is opened for believers and closed for unbelievers. In a good sermon there must be two things: the text must be explained, and it must be clear that we are all individually involved.

The preacher must be aware of the fact that he stands between God and man. He must declare the counsel of God. He must expose the relationship of man toward God. He must always preach sin and grace. Christ must always be central in his preaching. He must be able to say with Paul, "But we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to the Jews and folly to the Gentiles but to those who are called Christ's, the power of God and the wisdom of God" and, again, "Him we proclaim, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom that we may present every man mature in Christ." The preacher is concerned

about the person, the whole person. That complete person he must attempt to make perfect in Christ. But that person has a mind and a will, he has a heart and a conscience, he has feelings and desires, and preaching must be directed toward all the gifts and powers of body and soul. He must try to win all of these for God and Christ, in order that the completely upright spirit and soul and body may be found blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But the preacher must not try to say everything, so that he takes a text, reads it, but then begins a discourse and goes through the whole Bible from Genesis 1 to Revelation 22. There are such preachers. At least they are called preachers, but they are not, for that is not preaching. No,

let the preacher confine himself to the text read. Let him make it plain, also explaining its context and its importance for our hearts and lives. Then the preacher will remain fresh in his presentation. In this way Scripture receives its due. In this way the needs of the listeners are satisfied. In this way we learn to know the riches of God's word. A series of sermons which treat the main idea from different angles and bring them to light,



chosen in keeping with the times, conditions, and needs of the congregation, can be helpful and fruitful.

In regard to the form of preaching, it can be said in general that it must be simple, natural, and appropriate. By simple, we are thinking especially of language and style. Language and style must be such that common folk, and, if possible, children, can understand and grasp what the preacher says. I once heard that father Brakel* sometimes read his sermons to the maid to hear her criticism and to learn whether she could understand them. No tricks or strange words are in place on the pulpit. In whatever language one speaks, let him speak the language as simply

*W. 'a Brakel, the author of *Redelijke Godsdienst* (first published in 1700), was among the most read and honored pastors in the Dutch Reformed tradition.

and purely as possible. Long sentences, with many parentheses, usually make the meaning unclear.

By *natural* I am referring to the use of the voice. There are preachers who seem to have an entirely different voice on the pulpit than they do in everyday life. A high-pitched, smug tone is sometimes assumed as soon as the person enters the pulpit. In the case of some it is more a matter of singing instead of speaking. At times the person pitches notes above words. Others speak too softly to be understood by everyone in the entire church, and some shout through the echo which there is in some churches, and they cannot be understood either. In other cases there is a monotone, which is tiresome and sometimes becomes like a lullaby, as if a person wants to put people to sleep. How often I have sighed with the lay-poet,

Deliver us from the sermonizing tone, Lord,
Return the natural and the real to us.

By *appropriate* we understand that the language, style, and delivery must in every way be in keeping with the contents. At all times, from beginning to end, a holy earnestness must inspire. Let one always consider himself a messenger of God who speaks in God's name. Let the voice always remain natural. But let one be careful about proper inflection in keeping with the content of the words. Let words be spoken calmly in the explanation of the text. Our words must be firm and with stress and emphasis in the announcement of God's judgments, while the tone of love must be sounded in our invitation to come to Christ. Joy, though, must also be detected in preaching about the blessedness which awaits the children of God. Coarse witticisms should be banished from the pulpit.

I once talked to an aged brother in the service, and said, "Some ministers always divide their text into three points and these in turn into three subdivisions." "Yes," he responded, "I always do that." I find that inappropriate and impractical. Texts differ. One text lends itself much better to a synthetic and another more to an analytic method of treatment. It is my opinion that we must not have set rules. We must not place texts into a straightjacket which we have established, but the text must reveal the way in which it should be treated.

Many of our older preachers knew of only the analytical method. But as a result they became long-winded and dry. Sometimes they got lost in the detailed explanation of every word, so that the main point did not receive due consideration. They usually gave a quite lengthy exegesis of the text with a separate application. That was most common in the days of my youth. Many listeners did not attach much

value to the exegesis, and it happened only too often that, during the explanation, many in the audience fell asleep. But when the application began, most of the people paid attention and exerted themselves to hear it, in order to take it home with them.

In the days during which I learned a little about preaching, it was the heyday of the famous pulpiteer Dr. J. J. Van Oosterzee. He could make exceptional synthetic sermons. Many of us made him our model. One of our men of that time once said to me, "When I was a student, I devoured all that came from Van Oosterzee, and now I am so used to his language, style, and form that I cannot get rid of it again." Many of our preachers tried to follow Van Oosterzee in the theme and points, but for many the result did not live up to the ideal of the great orator.

In Lange's book on the Bible, the Gospel of Luke is treated by Van Oosterzee, and in the homiletic portion one can find many beautiful outlines which are easy to follow. In his practical theology he gives many hints worthy of consideration. Although he knew how to make use of the synthetic method, he recommends using a more combined method, using the synthetic and the analytical. How misuse can be made of the strictly synthetic method is illustrated by the practice of a famous preacher. He was traveling at the end of a week, and he had to preach on Sunday. On the train he decided to preach on Acts 4:12. He mentally prepared his outline:

Theme:

Salvation only in the name of Jesus

Points:

- I. It says so much
- II. It is so certain
- III. It is opposed so violently
- IV. It is so gloriously believed

In that way he had prepared a wide coverage for himself and could preach on it easily. A person could apply the same points to a dozen texts, but the peculiarity of each text could not come into its own. A person in this way is in danger of preaching in a monotonous, superficial, and tiresome manner.

Another example from those days was our unforgettable Gispen.* He knew how to combine the synthetic and analytical in an exceptional manner, or to use them alternately, and he was always original and fresh. After hearing his sermons I often thought, Yes, now I also see what the text contains, but if Gispen had not told me, I would not have seen it. Gispen always knew what to provide for the mind and heart and life. That could really be called preaching. But, to give hard and fast rules to be followed at all

*W. H. Gispen (1835-1909) was among the most honored preachers of the Netherlandic Christian Reformed Church.

times, or to choose a model, to preach as so-and-so preaches or has preached, is not advisable.

In the choice of a text let one make sure it is worth the trouble to fix the attention of the congregation upon it for an hour and a half, or as long as the sermon may last. Whoever decides upon the words in Acts 12:15, "Thou art mad" (on which I once heard one of our old professors rave for more than an hour), is not preaching. He makes himself guilty of false wit, of profaning the pulpit, and he deprives for that hour souls hungering for the word, to which they are entitled. On the other hand, whoever includes so many truths in one text that one could make five or six sermons on it is guilty of superficiality and neglects the riches of the Word.

Finally, I would like to call attention to an unpardonable neglect. It existed in my time at Kampen and now still exists [1921] in Grand Rapids, and, for that matter, in almost all seminaries and universities. It is the lack of sufficient special training in the difficult and great art of preaching.

C H R I S T I A N

Mercy

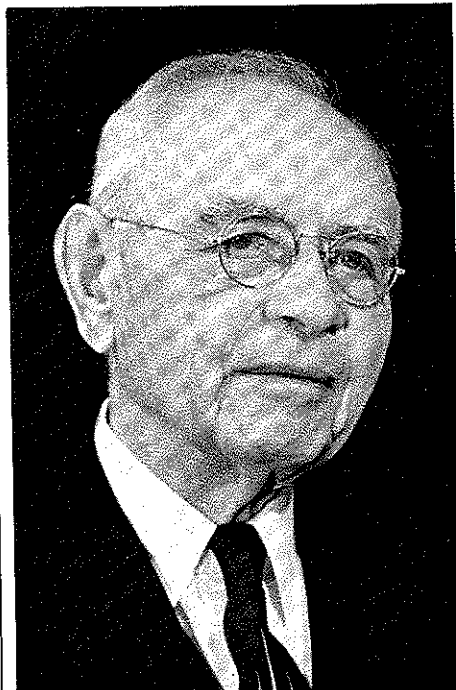
In 1985 two venerable institutions celebrated seventy-fifth anniversaries. Both the Pine Rest and Bethesda hospitals mark their beginnings in 1910 . . .



(above) Cutler homestead; (below) Newly constructed Bethesda hospital



and they share a common founding father in Rev. Idzerd Van Dellen (1871-1965). This pastor urged the churches to expand their programs of Christian charity in *De Gereformeerde Amerikaan* (The Reformed American), a prominent journal in the Reformed community. Van Dellen's article "Het Werk Der Barmhartigheid" (The Work



of Mercy) began in 1898 and continued through 1901 as a lengthy ten-part series which argued that Christian mercy was a clear diaconal obligation. He noted, too, that the diaconate had provided little or no leadership in caring for mental patients and other dependents, and, because congregations and classes had failed to provide these services, Van Dellen challenged the Reformed community to organize independent institutions of mercy which could attract financial support from a wide spectrum of Reformed Christians.

Such an interdenominational approach had already proven its potential, as both the Grand Rapids (1892) and Paterson (1895) Benevolent Unions had been successfully

launched by the larger Dutch-American community. In West Michigan the Reformed Church in America provided the initial impetus to care for aged dependents, and in New Jersey Rev. R. D. Drukker, of the Second Paterson CRC, teamed with Rev. H. E. Nies of the RCA to organize the Holland Home.

The diaconate in the New World was not unique in failing to organize institutions of mercy, for its counterpart in the Netherlands was similarly



fainthearted, and Reformed people there also resorted to the formation of private charitable societies. Idzerd Van Dellen cited the Netherlandic example repeatedly in his writing, and he quite properly credited Dr. Lucas Lindeboom as a major inspirational source. Lindeboom was a leading professor at the Kampen Theological School and the founding father of Christian mental-health care in the Netherlands. Along with hospitals, Lindeboom urged his Reformed cohorts to organize orphanages, labor groups, banks, hotels, and libraries.*

The Dutch-American community was also inclined to spread a wide net of Christian mercy, but, despite plans for a general hospital (1907) and an orphanage (1919)**, only mental hospitals and homes for the aged have survived with the passing decades. Denver's Bethesda Hospital tended tubercular patients until 1948, when



(far left) Rev. Idzerd Van Dellen; (left) Rev. Peter Jonker; (above) Mrs. Jacoba Roberts; (facing page) Bethesda Board of Trustees: Second Row: H. Hekman, R. Sytsma, Rev. G.J. Haan, C. Luyterdyk. First Row: W. Mellema, I. Ver Lee. Rev. I Van Dellen, E. Hekman Sr., M. Redeker, S. Tamminga.

the institution began to treat mental and emotional disabilities, and New Jersey's Goffle Hill Sanitarium opened its doors in 1918. Each of these hospi-

* It will be interesting for some readers to note that Lindeboom's ideas (1875) predated Abraham Kuyper's Sphere Sovereignty Lectures (1880) and that the "seceder" Lindeboom arrived at his notions of Christian social action quite apart from A. Kuyper's views.

** The Bethany Christian Home, founded in 1945, may be a delayed realization of the 1919 ideal, but Bethany has focused on adoption rather than long-term care for orphans.

tals serves a population with long-term disabilities, and that reality certainly attracted the special concern of the Reformed community. Since the clients of hospitals like Pine Rest and homes for the aged often live apart from their families for months and years, the Christian community was anxious to provide its absent members with the familiar routines of devotion, worship, and pastoral counseling.

These and kindred motivations which led to Pine Rest's organization

but her 1906 article received immediate support from a following of pastors and parishioners. Remembering her initial involvement in mental health, she wrote:

For those of us living in Kalamazoo who frequently visited the State Hospital, it became increasingly evident that there was a great need for a "Veldwijk"* in America! On the whole, our people were not ready for this matter. Often when my husband** or I re-

church." I answered, "Yes, just come in, and soon we will go to church together." She went along. There was no indication that she was a psychopathic patient. After the service she wanted to go to a restaurant for dinner. We said there was no need of that, especially on Sunday. Our home and our table were open for her. After a little talking, she went with us. Her mannerisms seemed strange to us, but we were not suspicious. During our conversation we found that she

had escaped from the state hospital. The strong desire for God's house, especially for a Dutch church, drove her to it. We kept her with us that day. In the afternoon we went to church, but by evening we wondered if we should keep her with us. She asked us to do so urgently. Our children begged equally hard, "Oh, let her stay here." This, however, was not possible.

We called up the hospital and asked if they missed anyone. "Yes," they answered, "Mrs. S." We gave them our address, and after a short wait Dr. O. came with a nurse. When the doctor arrived, Mrs. S. became so angry that she could not be handled without force, and the doctor called the hospital for more help. Then they brought Mrs. S. back, but truly she did not belong there. Dr. O.



were reviewed in the reminiscences of the hospital's founders, Jacoba Robbert, Rev. Peter Jonker, and Rev. John Keizer. Penned in 1928, their joint recollections provided information for B. K. Kuiper, who wrote a short history of Pine Rest in 1929, entitled *Souvenir: Christian Psychopathic Hospital*.

Jacoba Robbert was one of very few women to be published in *De Wachter*,

turned from a visit to the hospital, we discussed the need together. We prayed for the patients and visited them time and again, but little else.

On one particular morning a somewhat aged woman walked back and forth in front of the parsonage. After waiting a bit, I went out to meet her, and she asked, "Is that a Dutch church? I am looking for a Dutch

* *Veldwijk* was the first Christian mental-health hospital in the Netherlands, founded in 1884.

** Rev. Jan Robbert (1852-1922) pastored the First Kalamazoo Christian Reformed Church from 1901-1908.

stayed for awhile and said among other things, "I cannot imagine why and how Mrs. S. escaped. She is one of our best patients." I explained to him that "The Dutch patients miss especially two things: their language and their divine worship." Dr. O. answered, "Nothing can be done about the language, but you can do something about the religion with regular visits." I asked, "How often may we come?" He said, "Once every two weeks, in the afternoon." From that time on we visited the women every other week. A nurse helped me to locate the Hollanders. But before long, this became more difficult, as we had to get permission from relatives or church authorities in order to invite the patients to our meeting. But we continued the work. It was a pleasure for us when fifteen or more patients joined us to read God's Word, pray, and carry on discussion.

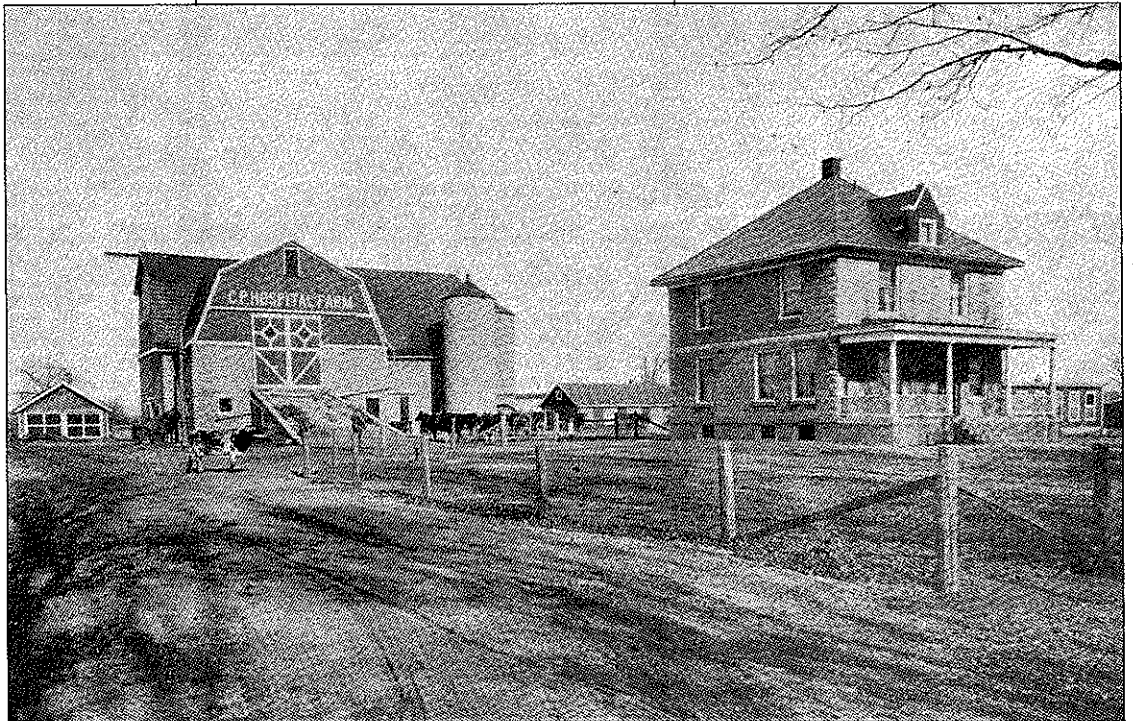
We saw and heard much at the Kalamazoo hospital which convinced us that Christian treatment was necessary for the patients. That was the first incentive for my writing about it in *De Wachter*. The necessity of Christian treatment became plainer to us from week to week. Body and soul are so closely related. The need of Christian love for those poor patients was so great. Therefore, we pleaded for this cause, and now the ball is rolling.

Before long there was support, and eyes were opened to see the need. We received many letters from family members, consistories, and others, and but little opposition. A few shrug-

ged their shoulders, suggesting that the idea was nothing more than a desire to bring Dutch notions from the Old Country into America. But, on the whole, the plan received love and support from our people, and Cutler-ville is a proof of this. We often discussed this with Rev. Keizer at that time. He also recognized the need. But I do not remember ever having talked to him or anyone else about the matter before writing my articles.

Rev. John Keizer arrived at the Sec-

tal, and he suggested an available site in Kalamazoo. "Frequently, in the spring of 1909," he recalled, "as I took my morning walk east of the Kalamazoo River and past the office of Mr. S. Buursma, I observed the vacant Presbyterian Young Ladies' Institute buildings. At these times I seemed to hear the words 'why do we stand here vacant all day?' It seemed obvious to me that this roomy stone building provided a place to house our own institution for the poor men-



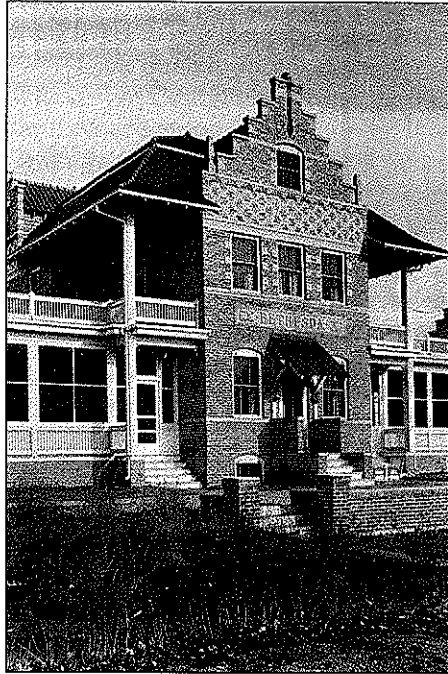
ond Kalamazoo CRC in 1902, and by 1904 he was already promoting the organization of a Christian mental hospital. His experience with CRC patients living at the state hospital indicated that many such folk suffered anxieties about having sinned beyond the power of God's grace. Keizer urged that these people required pastoral counseling by ministers and physicians who understood Reformed theology. Several years later, Keizer suggested that several larger congregations combine their diaconal resources to establish a mental hospi-

tally unbalanced."

Because he had repeatedly publicized the need for a Christian mental hospital in *De Wachter*, Keizer became the acknowledged leader of the movement, but he was reluctant to assume the organizational duties required for the effort. Meanwhile, several gifts arrived from supporters, but Keizer sent the money to Rev. Peter Jonker and declared Jonker the unofficial treasurer of the project. Then, after much prayer, Keizer called an organizational meeting to consider the establishment of a hospital. That gathering of June

10, 1909, in the LaGrave Avenue CRC, initiated the process which eventuated in the Pine Rest hospital. Keizer was elected as the Christian Psychopathic Hospital Association's president, and Peter Jonker assumed the duties of treasurer.

Jonker's recollections of Pine Rest's origins complement those of J. Rob-



(facing page) Pine Rest Hospital farm buildings; (above) another view of Bethesda

bert and J. Keizer, but Pastor Jonker contributed additional information about the first patient to receive care at Cutlerville. Of that occasion Jonker recalled:

I was in Hull, Iowa, and a young man came to our door. He said he knew my oldest son, for they both belonged to the Oakdale Park, Grand Rapids, congregation. But he acted strangely, and I could see immediately that something was wrong with him. He had been employed by a farmer in Iowa, near Wright, because there was no work to be had in Grand Rapids. But he was not used to farm work, and when hot weather came

on, he evidently became unbalanced. I thought that his unsettled nerves would probably quiet down after being with us for a time and associating with our boys, who were home for the summer vacation. But, alas, it was just the opposite. He became violently insane while he was with us. People wanted us to place him in the Hull jail. But I thought that, since the Lord had brought an unfortunate individual into my home, I could not put him in jail. We kept him at home, but he was so violent that we had to take all the furniture out of the parlor and have him sleep there on a sofa. He damaged everything. He did not sleep a wink that night, and naturally my wife and I did not either.

We had, however, sent a telegram to Rev. Van Wyk, the pastor of Oakdale Park, to ask about the boy's condition and what we should do about it. Van Wyk wired back, asking to return him to Grand Rapids. I got Mr. Wiersma, from Hull, a strong but kind man, to take him away. After a great deal of trouble (the young fellow broke a window in the Milwaukee train and pulled the signal cord on the Pere Marquette train to stop it twice), he finally reached Grand Rapids. Then they brought him to the institution in Ionia, where he was placed under observation. But he was so wild that they intended to send him at once to Kalamazoo. It was only at the urgent request of Rev. Van Wyk and the family that they kept him at Ionia.

Because the annual meeting was soon to be held, the family hoped to get him into Cutlerville. I visited him before I went to the meeting. The result was that I very strongly urged that treatment begin *at once*, because we now had a patient from among our own people and because I believed that contributions would come in to meet the need. In this I have not been put to shame, for within a year this first patient recovered and was dis-

charged. *Soli Deo Gloria.*

I thought I would relate the above to you so you would at least know the reason why they *then* began to take in patients.

The Cutler farm, in which Jonker's "young man" received treatment, consisted of little more than a house with farm buildings in 1911, but since that time Pine Rest has matured to become a multi-million-dollar hospital campus which serves thousands of clients every year.

—H.J.B.

THE CALUMMET REGION

**A LAND
FLOWING
WITH MILK
AND HONEY**

Dick Douma, aged ten, emigrated with his parents and their other children to the United States from Friesland in 1903. A small farm near the village of Minnertsga had been home. Life in Friesland was less than comfortable. Being frequently hungry best described Dick's daily condition. Not only was he short of calories, but the Dutch government also denied him schooling in his native Frisian language and culture. To supplement his parents' marginal farm income, Douma delivered packages from the canal barges to nearby stores, hoping to receive a tip. Spurred on by need, he also discovered a more lucrative activity.

Mounds in the surrounding fields, he learned in school,

were mass graves from bygone battles. Unearthing bones of war horses and other beasts proved profitable, for the button manufacturers in town paid two cents per pound for them. More than once young Douma fought over his claim to a certain pile of skeletons. To further and more directly supplement his meager diet, Dick occasionally would steal to the ledges of the Minnertsga church tower, where he relieved pigeons of their eggs. Immediately cracked and swallowed, the eggs provided a good though temporary source of nutrition for a hungry boy.

Dick's family was enticed with reports of abundant land and copious food by friends in Roseland who had emigrated earlier. The United States sounded like the patriarchal promised land, flowing with milk and honey.



BY DAVID ZANDSTRA

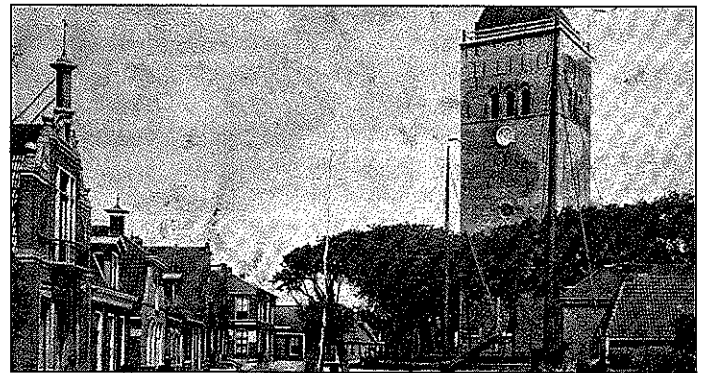
These same friends invited the Hien Douma family to come to Chicago in 1903 and offered them ship's fare. After a two-week voyage across the Atlantic and a trip by canal and lake steamer, they arrived at Kensington station near Chicago. To young Dick Douma the trip alone was proof positive that freedom was unlimited. He had never been allowed to go more than three miles from his farm home in Minnertsga. Tragically, just three months after his arrival in Chicago, Dick's mother died of "anemia." Her health had been broken during the transatlantic voyage, but she had lived to see the promised land.

Dick quickly found employment at the International Harvester Company, which manufactured farm wagons and other equipment. However, like so many other Dutch immigrants who initially took factory jobs, such employment seemed oppressive to him, so he rented a small parcel of land at 101st Street and Michigan Avenue in Roseland to raise onions.

When the Douma family arrived in 1903, Roseland was the garden basket of the city of Chicago. But a transition was already under way there. Farmland was being converted to home and business sites, and gardening was being relocated to several more distant areas around Chicago. The Calumet region, which included South Holland, an even older and more exclusive Dutch settlement than Roseland, became a gardening center, and Dutch gardeners were attracted to the string of Calumet region towns along Ridge Road—Lansing, in Illinois, Munster, Highland, and Ross Township in Indiana.

Although their Roseland acreage was progressively increased and other vegetable crops were added to onions during several seasons, the Doumas nevertheless moved to the Calumet area, where land was abundant and cheaper. They didn't yet know that much of the place was undrained and often water-logged. Dyer, the family's new location, was a four- to five-hour trip in the dry season by horseback from Roseland. Because the soil was heavy, dark clay, they were eagerly drawn to this new farm on the Sauk Trail.

As tenant farmers the Doumas raised tomatoes and pickles on contract to the Libby, McNeil, & Libby factory in Highland, Indiana, as well as sugar beets, corn, and wheat. Dairy cattle were pastured on the wettest ground, the milk going to the local dairy, the Dyer Creamery. The Libby factory paid seventy-five cents per bushel of tomatoes in 1907. When the tomatoes were capriciously rejected by the processing plant, a frustrated young Dick made a significant discovery: fresh tomatoes and other produce could be peddled at double profits in the surrounding steel mill towns of Chicago Heights, Hammond, and elsewhere.



Minnertsga village center—two views (including tower containing pigeon eggs mentioned in the story)

Dick's brother, Ralph, continued for the rest of his working life to raise vegetables in Lansing, Illinois, peddling them in the Hammond, Indiana, industrial neighborhoods. Dick, on the other hand, reluctantly left Dyer during the general agricultural depression following World War I and returned to his old employment at the International Harvester Company in Roseland.

Beginnings

Originally, the Calumet region was a far-from-encouraging area. It was the abandoned floor of a much younger Lake Michigan. Fertile, to be sure, but very damp. So damp that the early government surveyors described the various parts as "low prairie," "wet prairie," "swampland." Much of the region was the last taken from the American aborigine because its potential was not very apparent. Composed of a heavy, pure clay that often defied attempts to drain and farm it, the land had often been allowed to revert back to the government for nonpayment of taxes. Special practices had to be learned before the soil could be successfully wrestled from nature's grip. The clay was of such pure consistency that bricks could be made from it, and a brick manufacturing industry eventually developed. Evidence of this is found in the numerous abandoned pits,

where many Dutch farmers spent their winter months digging clay to pay for winter provisions and springtime seed. Interspersed throughout this flat water-logged plain were ridges of sand, vestiges of the beaches and sand bars of Lake Michigan in its geological youth.

Peter C. de Young, writing in *Onze Toekomst*, June 29, 1949, described life in early Roseland: "Yes there was mud! And it was bothersome. One estimable lady, pining for her Holland where everything was 'zoo netjes,'* simply could not get used to *de Hooge Prairie* and 'al dat modder.'** She pined away . . . from homesickness. But 'modder' was often black gold to our forty-niners, just as the yellow kind was to the forty-niners of the West." Gerrit Van Oostenbrugge, writing in 1897 concerning the natural condition of South Holland thirty years before, saw the land as "unimproved and almost without ditch or drain and the surface not rolling. . . ." The sand ridges served as the natural roads and eventually as sites for homes.

When the earliest Dutch immigrants arrived in the Chicago region during the late 1840s, the American frontier had only recently retreated westward. Chicago, not yet twenty-five years old, was the raw edge of the American West. Little more than a swampy flat, the site was selected only because of its strategic location. Its destiny as the American rail center, major manufacturing center, steel-smelting region, and commercial gateway to the West was hardly even a dream. But the stage unknowingly was set for the Dutch immigrants to become vegetable gardeners. Land was abundant and cheap—often about \$1.25 per acre.

Shortly after disembarking at this frontier town, the Dutch withdrew to two wilderness sites—South Holland and Roseland. Church life and subsistence frontier agriculture filled their entire life. The initial crops were corn, potatoes, oats, rye, wheat, buckwheat, and even tobacco. These were mostly consumed by the farmers themselves. However, any surplus was taken by ox teams to Chicago and sold for necessary supplies. After the railroads to Chicago were laid in the 1850s, farming saw a quick improvement. Milk trains to Chicago ran

* so neat

** all that mud

on a daily schedule.

The Industrial Revolution began making demands on Chicago's open lands in the 1880s. Stockyards, steel mills, refineries, rail car factories, and agricultural implement factories were established. This economic change offered immigrants and rural laborers an alternative to farming. Many of the Dutch immigrants, who were coming in greater numbers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, worked briefly at factories such as the Pullman Palace Car Company just east of Roseland. Although a few stayed with factory employment, most found such work unappealing. Domination by earlier immigrant groups in the factories, the violence of rising unionism (such as the



Munster, Indiana—CRC, Christian school, and parsonage—the mother church for the CRC of the Ridge Road area

1893 Pullman strike), and a desire to keep things "Dutch" pushed these immigrants to look for alternative employment. Many tried vegetable gardening. There was also a strong desire to own land, something a factory job, even if more secure, did not satisfy.

At the turn of the century vegetable gardening and peddling were indeed more strenuous than factory employment. E. K. Leep, who eagerly abandoned factory work for farming in 1899, described his experiences:

"The roads leading into Chicago were not paved. Where now there are four-lane concrete highways we then had mud roads, sometimes after a rain almost impassible in the dark, and to get stuck was not impossible. Leaving home at one or two o'clock in the morning, depending on the condition of the road, we finally would get into the city and get our load sold or delivered. Some days the whole load was ordered; in such a case we would put the stuff at the door of the store, and on the way back we would collect and gather up boxes and crates. We tried to get home at noon, and after dinner I would lie down for a while and then start out again, scouting for the load for the next day."

Some American vegetables were looked upon skeptically

by the Dutch. Sweet corn particularly did not find initial acceptance, since it was regarded as animal food. When sweet corn was first peddled by non Dutch farmers, several Dutch growers were given samples and told that it was good to eat. The Dutch farmers, thinking that they were the butt of a joke, thanked their Yankee counterparts and then laughingly fed it to their horses.

The Twenties

Vegetable gardening reached its most prominent position in the Calumet area during the 1920s. This was the setting Edna Ferber witnessed while researching her novel *So Big* in the South Holland area. Because the gardeners were reluctant to supply her with information, Miss Ferber came bearing gifts, cigars for the men and chocolate for the

women and children. Since the "land flowing with milk and honey" still provided at best an austere existence for the Dutch, such tokens gained her easy access to the information she sought. What she learned and described was a lifestyle all too familiar to the market gardeners.

The farmers followed a daily, unrelenting routine during the growing season from May to November. A constant feeling of tiredness dominated the life of each truck gardener during the summer. Each day began about midnight with a father or son arising to peddle the previous day's harvest.

Produce was marketed in four ways, each offering some advantage over the others. The earliest means to dispose of produce was by contract with commercial processors who had facilities in the local areas. Cabbage, tomatoes, pickles, and carrots were the primary crops which were contracted. National firms, such as Libby, had receiving and processing sheds in the area. Wagons piled high with cabbage, waiting in lines outside the Libby plant in Highland, were a common sight. Locally owned firms such as Meeter's which specialized in kraut, and Schrum's, which specialized in dill pickles, also accepted produce. Growers were able to handle these crops as raw products in bulk quantities rather than as finished produce fit for retail sales. Delivery was to a single location and usually faster than peddling. Wagons were simply weighed-in loaded and weighed-out empty. A small but guaranteed check awaited the farmer.

Peddling produce developed about the same time as the contracted sales did because production often exceeded contract totals. The Dutch growers also liked to raise sweet corn, red beets, squash, potatoes, radishes, asparagus, and leafy green vegetables—products seldom under contract—because these flourished. Peddling was done house to house in the various mill-town neighborhoods such as Sunnyside and Marktown in East Chicago, Indiana. Because most perishables were then purchased on a daily basis, sales were fairly assured, although there was keen competition among the peddlers. Orders were often taken from regular customers as well. These sales were direct and generally not too distant from the farm. One occasional problem was petty thievery by neighborhood children, some of whom were even coached by their parents.

In the city of Chicago open markets for both retail and wholesale trade had developed even before the Calumet growers began to participate. The best known were the Randolph Street Market and the 71st Street Market. There homemakers and neighborhood storekeepers came before daylight to purchase fresh vegetables. Farmers sold from the tailgates of their horse-drawn wagons and later their primitive trucks. Again, sales were direct and for cash, and competition among growers, who were often neighbors, was often keen if not vicious, particularly if there was abundant production. A certain vulgarity pervaded the atmosphere of these market places. Language, ethics, personal habits, and lifestyle were all affected. There was one rule, however, to which there was no compromise or exception. Bills had to be paid. Should someone falter in his obligations, he would be verbally black-listed by all until restitution was made.

The South Water Street Market was also a popular location to sell produce. There commission firms, called "houses,"



would receive the produce from the farmer and then wholesale it for a percentage of the profits. The farmer was relieved of the daily time-consuming business of arranging sales. The relationship of the grower and the commission house is best described as a "love-hate affair." They needed each other, but each was often unsettled by what the other did. This form of marketing has proved the most durable, for even today most fresh produce marketed in Chicagoland is done at the South Water Street Market.

In addition to produce, sugar beets became a popular but labor-intensive crop among the Dutch. Because a government price subsidy had been legislated to insure a domestic sugar supply, there was a guaranteed albeit small profit in raising them. Sowing beet seed and then thinning and weeding the seedlings—all by hand—were time-consuming. When the beets matured as large roots weighing about two pounds, they were lifted from the soil by a horse-drawn blade. Trimming the leaves and tap root with a special knife was a very tiring and slow process. Later the trimmed roots were loaded into wagons and delivered to a sugar company's receiving station. Great heaps of sugar beets ready to be shipped by rail to refining plants were an annual fall sight.

At first light of day, the farm family and hired hands would repair to the fields to harvest or weed. Breakfast was often served after several hours work. There were also breaks for noon lunch and supper, but no rest till the trucks were loaded for another early morning departure. This routine continued till the harsh effects of winter repelled their efforts to harvest anymore. During a particularly miserable November day—muddy, sleeting, thirty-five degrees Fahrenheit—one farmer, while trying to rescue the last few heads of cabbage, asked his fellow worker in jest whether he preferred cutting cabbage or perhaps working for a living. Humor helped to get through the day.

Summer in the farmhouse was equally demanding. Without electricity and natural gas, the basic duties of preparing food and washing clothes were time consuming and little more than drudgery. Food was prepared each day with the aid of wood- and coal-burning stoves. Baking on such unregulated appliances met with most uneven success. Water was generally available from a lift pump outside, near the kitchen door. When various berries and vegetables were in season, the women were expected to make preserves for the winter months. Even meat was canned. To avoid the heat from food preparation during the summer, an annex or summer kitchen was often used. The women, however, faced the heat daily.

Washing the large quantities of dirty clothing was a huge task. Copper tubs heated on wood-fired stoves were

later replaced by primitive washing machines—wooden tubs with motorized agitators. Ironing was done with heated cast irons. The children's catechism lessons were often checked by a mother while she ironed the shirts.

Fall, after crops were harvested, was a time of preparation for the winter. Root crops such as turnips and carrots had to be buried in a frost-free area for winter use. Bills had to be paid and debts collected. The most obvious duty was gathering enough firewood near the kitchen door to last the winter. Coal was used sparingly.

Winter was hardly an idle time, since many preparations for the coming season were necessary and seed and fertilizer salesmen needed to be entertained. The most



(above) Ben Kooi bunching radishes; (facing page) washing beans and a wagon loaded for market on the Zandstra farm

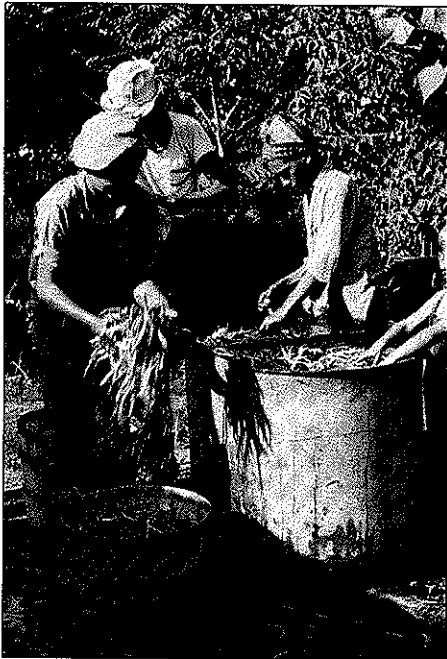
dreaded wintertime activity was transporting manure and spreading it on the fields. Delivered by rail to a nearby spur for about twenty-six dollars a carload, manure had to be removed in only a few days to avoid a penalty. If frozen solid, the removal of this natural fertilizer was a formidable job. One farmer, while attempting to remove such a load, remarked that had he killed both his mother and father he would still be too good for such work. But with no alternative except a penalty, he finished the job. If any boys could be spared from farm work, they were expected to find winter employment at a local steel mill, clay pit, or lumber yard. Ready cash, always in short supply, would be needed in the spring. Winter was a cruel season. Poor clothing, poor footwear, and uninsulated homes without central heating made it so.

Spring always came early on the farms, regardless of the weather. Seed had to be germinated early, some in February. Before hot beds and greenhouses, a germinating bed called a "cold frame" was used for that purpose. It was basically a glass-covered wood frame buried in soil that covered a thick layer of horse or sheep manure, which

generated heat. Seed was sown at such times that seedlings would be ready for field transplanting as soon as the weather was suitable.

Farmers purchased machinery, horses, and wagons in the spring, often at farm auctions, and they occasionally purchased or rented land at that time. If necessary, they visited the local banker to borrow start-up cash for such purchases. Debt was their constant companion. Spring gradually sped up to the routine of summer, as crops matured.

In those early immigrant days, a high degree of self-sufficiency thrift was required to conserve the small capital the farm generated. Many vegetable farmers had a dairy cow or two for milk, shoes and coats were handed down from



children walked to school, cold weather notwithstanding.

The role of the church in the lives of vegetable gardeners should not be minimized. With the tiring farm life fairly set by the 1920s, the only respite from the daily routine was the Sabbath. Church was very important. Besides being the social event of the week, services allowed the farmers to receive religious and theological education. Occasionally, tired farmers would stand up during the church service to avoid falling asleep. This desire to build their faith spilled over into their conversations with fellow farmers. If any books other than the Bible were found in rural homes, they were of a religious and theological nature. A remarkable number of unlettered farmers could discuss Bavink, Colijn, Calvin, and Kuyper.

For young people and children Sunday was a welcome day of rest, because they were relieved of weeding and household chores to attend services. Naturally, the church

community became the meeting place for couples. As a result, these Dutch communities became so inbred that a person was often related to at least half the fellow members of the church community.

Two national holidays, Independence Day and Labor Day, were given a strong religious tone. Independence Day was celebrated with games, orations, hot lunches, and fireworks, all for the advancement of Christian education. Some farmers questioned whether games with prizes were a legitimate method to raise money for Christian schools, but the games continued, and everybody enjoyed a day off from work. Labor Day was used by the Dutch communities to promote foreign missions of the church. Picnic

lunches and missionary speakers were the order of the day.

A number of Dutch gardeners organized into co-operatives. The exact purpose was always a bit nebulous, but the general idea was to increase their buying power and to share information. The Farmers' Co-operative of Highland, In-



diana, for example, employed one of its members to act as a purchasing agent for the group, but this arrangement caused more problems than advantages. The agent generally wanted more money for his services than he was receiving, and the farmers were reluctant to let others know what they were purchasing. There was an unspoken but real rivalry among the members. Each feared that one person might have some advantage over another. In the minutes the secretary lamented that he wished the Dutch could cooperate "like the Yankees do." When other farmer groups were approached for information, their requests, he added, "fell on deaf ears." Various salesmen of land, seed, fertilizers, and machinery found it convenient to address the co-op. A box of cigars was often the admission fee to speak. Occasionally tours of area farms and fertilizer plants were conducted. Debates were organized on such topics as whether a horse and wagon or an auto truck was better for delivering produce. Other non-agricultural subjects such as prohibition and women's suffrage were also discussed. Farmers also reported the results of raising new crops such as tomatoes. Perhaps the real value of these co-ops was that of a social club.

(to be continued)

18 **"THE BOLDEST T OF SWINDLES"** 93

THE ALAMOSA DISASTER

On November 30, 1892, a special train arrived at the Alamosa railroad station, and twenty-eight families emerged from six passenger cars. The parents, their 116 children, and another 31 single adults augmented Alamosa's population of 1,000 by nearly a quarter. Together with a welcoming crowd, the local mayor greeted the Dutch immigrants enthusiastically and led them to the Armory Hall for a lavish evening meal. After a five-day train ride from Hoboken, the tired immigrants thoroughly enjoyed their respite in Alamosa. Originating in Amsterdam, where they boarded the steamship *Dubbeldam*, their eighteen-day journey had been well publicized in Alamosa. Local residents expected the newcomers to enrich and benefit both the city and the thinly populated San Luis Valley.

Colorado, which in 1876 became the thirty-eighth state, publicized its advantages to gain settlers. The early residents were attracted by gold and silver deposits, while the area's agricultural potential was less evident. But the region's healthful climate quickly gained acclaim for tuberculosis patients, and that feature lured Albertus Zoutman from Rotterdam to Denver in 1891. After working

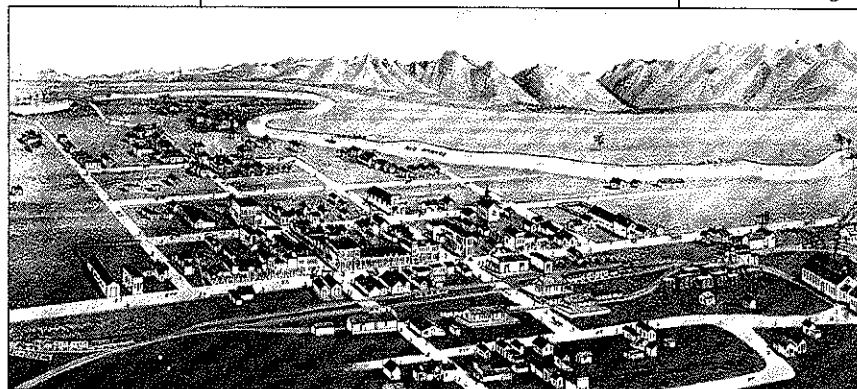
in a real estate office, Zoutman began to formulate plans for organizing a land company which could attract immigrants from the Netherlands.

Zoutman lost little time in implementing his scheme. In May of 1893 he joined forces with Willem C. Van Dusseldorp to purchase fifteen thousand acres from the Empire Land and Canal Company, and the purchase agreement included an option on an additional fifty thousand acres. Cash payments were to follow the formation of an Immigration Company in the Netherlands. Theodore C. Henry, president of the Empire Company, was to receive one thousand dollars when the Immigration Company was formed and an additional \$15,000 (later on reduced to \$5,000) when the immigrants arrived in Alamosa. Shares, valued at \$75,000, in a proposed Holland-American Land-and Immigration Company were expected

to cover the balance of Zoutman's obligations.

When these arrangements were concluded, Zoutman returned to the Netherlands with samples of wheat, oats, barley, peas, and sugar beets to be placed on display in the headquarters of the Immigration Company in the city of Utrecht. By August 18, 1892, the Holland-American Land-and Immigration Company was incorporated in the Netherlands with a capital stock of \$200,000. Zoutman is listed as having purchased 1,500 of the 1,526 shares for \$150,000. It is not clear where Zoutman acquired those funds, because he was not a rich man. Nonetheless, his persuasiveness enabled him to recruit some genteel persons as officers of the Immigration Company. These men had not the vaguest notion of what emigration demanded and knew even less about farming. But the names of these "well-known" officers served as an effective cover, and Zoutman made good use of them. Among

PETER DE KLERK



them was Maarten Noordtzi, professor of Semitic languages in the theological school at Kampen, who became the president of the Immigration Company and a member of the board of directors. Cornelis W. Vander Hoogt also joined

Zoutman as a company agent to direct its affairs in Colorado.

Already in July the Immigration Company was advertising the availability of its brochure entitled *De Emigratie van Landbouwers naar Noord-Amerika*. Depressed economic conditions in the Netherlands created a great interest in this booklet, which described the San Luis Valley as very fertile while also asserting that, with hard work, farmers could earn enough money to pay all their annual obligations and still have some cash left at the end of the year.

Not too long after their arrival in Alamosa, the immigrants discovered that the dazzling prospects described in the brochure were utterly false. First, the brochure described the region as "the Italy of western North America." The summers and winters were neither too warm nor too cold. The truth was otherwise. On December 17 the thermometer plunged to thirty degrees (Fahrenheit) below zero. The brochure also indicated that the Immigration Company had bought land in the San Luis Valley under the most favorable circumstances and only after a long, precise, and expert investigation. The truth was that the company had only an option on the land. Zoutman's contract called for a second payment, which had fallen due on December 1, 1892, the day the immi-

grants had arrived in the valley. That installment was never paid. The immigrants were also irritated when they learned that the company had bought the land for \$11.25 an acre and was offering it to them at \$26 an acre.

Zoutman's brochure claimed further that only cultivated land had

(below) cover of the brochure The Immigration of Farmers to North America, distributed by the Netherlands-American Land and Emigration Society of Utrecht. Under the auspices of the state of Colorado.

been bought and that farmers could expect a good crop in the first year. Actually many sections of land were still uncut prairie, and much of that was unsuitable for agriculture because of its hilly terrain. The company asserted that all the vegetables of Europe could be raised in the valley, but, in fact, a short growing season and cold nights prohibited the farming of many tender vegetables. Then, many families who had been privately assured by Zoutman and Vander Hoogt

that houses would be ready for immediate occupancy found instead two poorly constructed wooden buildings. Most families and all of the single persons stayed in these 36 x 60 two-story structures. Drafty and uncomfortable, they soon became known as the "Emigrant Houses." A few weeks after the settlers' arrival in late 1892, scarlet fever and diphtheria broke out among the children living in the Emigrant Houses. In such compact quarters it is understandable that contagious diseases spread rapidly. Finally the sick were quarantined in railroad cars, but eleven children succumbed by the middle of January.

Providing daily needs for about two hundred persons requires a good deal of planning and supervision. Such planning was absent. Meals were either late or not available, and drinking



water was also scarce. These deficiencies only aggravated the already tense situation brought on by the unhappy predicament in which the immigrants found themselves. Their lack of English language skills frustrated the immigrants even further, and the contrast between their real circumstances and the beautiful descriptions they had heard in Holland heightened their despair. They were certain that they had been swindled and betrayed.

It was not surprising, then, that *The Denver Republican* described the Alamosa venture as "The Boldest of Swindles." The newspaper's December 18, 1892, article accurately disclosed that Zoutman and his partner, Cornelis Vander Hoogt, had not made their payments and that the Holland-American Land- and Immigration Company had no land to sell. Further, since the company was not properly incorporated, it could not legally negotiate with the immigrants.

Upon discovering that the Immigration Company did not have one square inch of land to its name in the San Luis Valley, the colonists telegraphed the Immigration Company president, Maarten Noordtzij, and announced: "Through the neglect of our interests and of those of the company it is necessary to discharge Zoutman and Vander Hoogt. Liquidation and dispersal of the colony will follow." Zoutman and Vander Hoogt in turn urged Noordtzij "to come out and investigate the accounts of the company here." Noordtzij left Rotterdam for North America on December 24, 1892, and arrived in Alamosa with his secretary and interpreter, a student at the theological school in Kampen, on January 12, 1892.

Meanwhile, one group of colonists decided to buy land directly from the Empire Company before Noordtzij's arrival. These eleven immigrants contracted for Empire Farm acreage lo-

cated about five miles south of Alamosa at \$17.50 an acre. This land included several buildings with stables and a white schoolhouse, which cost another \$1,200. The schoolhouse, with its little steeple and slanted roof, became the center of the Empire Farm Colony. It served as a place of worship, for meetings, and later as the Christian school building. On January 4, 1893, a special train transported their goods from the Emigrant Houses to their homes on the Empire Farm.

Noordtzij the respect of the Empire Farm people.

About thirteen families and a number of single persons did stay in the Emigrant Houses and remained loyal to the Immigration Company. On their behalf Noordtzij conferred with the Immigration Company's attorney in Denver and also with Colorado's governor, David H. Waite. Waite was concerned about the plight of the colonists and suggested that the company investigate government



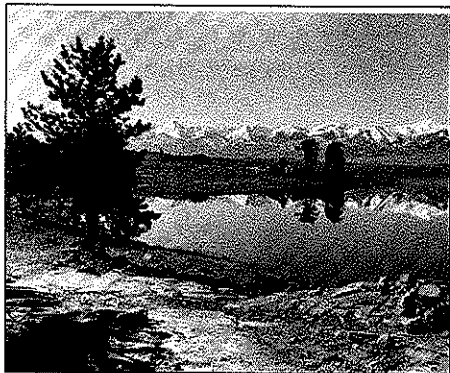
Noordtzij was not very successful in rectifying the damage which Zoutman and Vander Hoogt had inflicted. The professor's unsympathetic behavior only irritated the colonists further. The day following his arrival Noordtzij met with the people in the Empire Farm schoolhouse. There the colonists showed Noordtzij point by point the untruths of the brochure. They also tried to change Noordtzij's mind concerning his assessment of Zoutman and Vander Hoogt. It was not difficult for them to demonstrate that these men had caused all the difficulties. Noordtzij, however, turned a deaf ear to their pleas and would not dismiss Zoutman and Vander Hoogt. This "haughty" attitude cost

land available in the northwestern part of the state. Noordtzij, Zoutman, Vander Hoogt, and one of the colonists viewed the Platte Valley lands which Waite had suggested. The leaders decided that this location was more suitable for a colony than the San Luis Valley was. Thus, on January 26, 1893, the Immigration Company bought 32,000 acres of land for \$450,000 with rights of immediate possession. Five days later the remaining families and single persons left the Emigrant Houses and arrived at their new home, Crook.

With a population of about 175, Crook had little extra housing, and the colonists stayed in Union Pacific railroad cars until suitable homes

could be located or built. The dwellings were spread over a large area, some as far away as Iliff, sixteen miles to the southeast, and others eight miles northeast of Crook in Red Lion.

Again, Zoutman and Vander Hoogt held out dazzling prospects to the colonists. A new beginning was being made, they declared. Thus the colonists should look to the future and forget the past. For the first two months, however, no instructions were given either for working the land

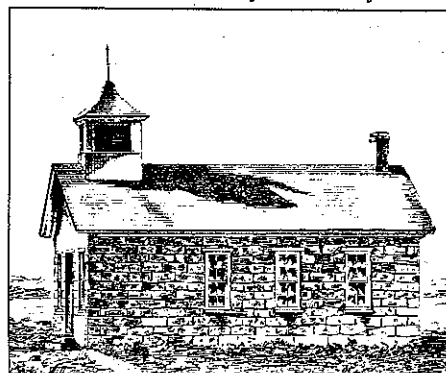


(facing page) Main street Alamosa; (above) Colorado vista near Alamosa; (right) schoolhouse

or improving the irrigation canals. Horses, agricultural implements, carriages, etc. were promised them within a week, but after more than a week, no tools arrived. One immigrant put his request for farm implements in writing and presented it to Zoutman. Zoutman tore up the request and publicly humiliated the inquiring immigrant. He was later expelled from the colony for writing about Zoutman's incompetence.

Eventually, agricultural implements, sugar beet seeds, and horses, along with lumber for buildings, arrived. But shortly thereafter the Zoutman-Vander Hoogt bubble of deceit burst again, when all that the Immigration Company possessed was seized for non-payment. This event marked the end of the Holland-American Land-and Immigration Company. Zoutman and Vander Hoogt

were finally given their leave. Whatever money the colonists had with them on their arrival was gone, and since the colonists were employed by the Immigration Company, wages would no longer be paid. Starvation lay at their doorsteps. With the assistance of the Christian Reformed Church in North America and the Reformed Church in America, the colonists were resettled in Iowa, and by August 1893, the colonists were gone from the Platte Valley. The only mem-



ory of the Dutch in the Crook area today is a rural road which local people call the "Dutch" road.

When the Crook settlement broke up, no one imagined that Empire Farm would also fail. In the late summer these colonists firmly believed that there was a future for them in the San Luis Valley. A colonization company entitled The Holland-San Luis Valley Colonization Company of Colorado was incorporated under the laws of the State of Colorado on October 3, 1893. The purpose of this colonization company was to assist the new immigrants in obtaining land and to provide them with social, spiritual, and educational services.

When the summer rains had drenched their fields and their crops showed new life, the Empire Farm colonists were enormously heartened, and their expectations for a good harvest improved. But the harvest did not yield as anticipated. Depressed wheat prices dashed their

hope for the future, and their discontent returned. They were convinced that they could not earn their bread in the San Luis Valley,* and after all that they had experienced, they were eager to leave the valley with its bitter and sorrowful memories.

The immigrants departed from Alamosa and, with assistance from the Christian Reformed Church, resettled in Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, and later on further west. No public gatherings attended their departures, but they picked up the pieces of their lives, and many prospered in new surroundings. They and their descendants have long since taken places in the social and cultural life in North America.

* * *

No complete record of the Dutch immigrants who were in Alamosa and Crook, Colorado, in 1892-93 is available. Nor is there a complete record of those who moved from Alamosa to Crook on January 31, 1893. Names of immigrants who were in the San Luis Valley and the Platte Valley have been gleaned from passenger lists of the ships of the Holland-American Line

*The colonists gave five reasons for leaving the valley:

1. The soil is too poor to expect a bounteous harvest, and, besides, the alkali in the soil spoils a good deal of the yield.
2. We are forced to sell our products to the Alamosa Milling & Elevator Company, the only market-place in town, and we are thus dependent on the arbitrariness of its management.
3. We live here among Americans who chase their horses, cows, and pigs into our fields so that these animals graze everything, even the fodder meant for our cattle, without our being able to do much about it.
4. There is some uncertainty as to whether we are able to get sufficient water for irrigation the following year, since a good share of the main water canal has been seized by others.
5. There is no industry here where we can find work for extra income. Our income is, therefore, totally dependent on the farm. The proceeds of the farm are not sufficient to pay our debts, interest, etc. and to provide us with our daily needs.

arriving in New York City from December 1892 through July 1893, from naturalization records and court records (such as land deeds and civil suits), from newspaper accounts, and from civil records in the city halls of the cities in the Netherlands from which the immigrants hailed. More research has yet to be done on the accuracy of the last and Christian names. The author would appreciate receiving any information which the reader might have concerning the immigrants who came under the auspices of Holland-American Land-and Immigration Company to the two valleys in Colorado in 1892-93.

Marinus Aalbers, wife, & 2 children
 Lijkele Markus Aardema
 Frederik Aué, wife, & 5 children**
 Dirk Ballast, wife, & 1 child*
 Johanna Alida Moritz Ballast
 Stephanus Bleijenberg, * wife**
 Thijs Oostenraad Boon
 Adriaan Boone
 Hendrik Pieter Bout**
 Theodoor Jurgen Boute (?)
 Harm & Jan Boxum
 C. J. L. Brem**
 Andries Bruintjes
 Evert Brune
 Johannes Cornelissen
 Kier Coster, wife, & 2 children**
 Salomon Davidse*
 Joost De Bondt, wife*
 Jacques Louis De Greeuw
 Roelof Jan De Jong, wife, & 7 children*
 Frederik Dekker
 Johannes De Kruijter, wife, & 8 children*
 Johannes Den Ouden**
 Frederik Willem Des Tombe**
 Hendrik Driesen
 Koop Drok, wife, & 2 children*
 Hendrik A. Evers, wife, & 2 children*
 Roelof Groen**
 Adriaan Gunst, wife, & 4 children*
 Samuel Hartog, wife, & 5 children
 Adolph Heersink, wife, & 7 children
 Gjal Heslinga
 Hendrik Willem Heusinkveld, wife, & 2 children**
 Andries Jacobus Hof, wife, & 1 child*
 Jantje De Haan Hof**
 Arend Jan Hoftijzer**
 Jacobs Hols, wife, & 9 children*
 Harm Hulst, wife, & 5 children*
 Gerrit Jongerius*

Pieter Kalkman**
 Frederik Willem Keijzer**
 Cornelis Kloosterman, wife, & 8 children
 Cornelis Kooiman, wife, & 3 children**
 Pieter Kragt, wife, & 6 children*
 Jan Louws, wife, & 2 children
 Cornelis Moerman, wife, & 3 children
 Aaltje Rookje Molenaar**
 Klaaske Molenaar
 Marten Jans Monsma
 Harm Mulder, wife***, & 1 + 2 children***
 (Last name of 2 oldest children: Stuart)
 Jacobus Oranje
 Johannes Oranje, & 3 children
 Neeltje Oranje
 Maaïke Porma Otten
 Abraham Penny*
 Albert Pluister (?)
 Imke Polderboer, wife, & 5 children
 Cornelis Schelling
 Johan Schipper, wife
 Derk Schütte, wife, & 8 children
 Douwe Sjaardema, wife, & 3 children
 Franke Sjaardema, wife, & 3 children
 Freerk Sjaardema, wife, & 2 children
 Cornelis Sluijs, wife, & 6 children*
 Dirk Swier, wife, & 6 children**
 Evert Ten Napel, wife, & 3 children**
 Teunis Teunissen, wife
 Hannes Uit den Boogaart*, wife**, & 2* + 6** children
 Gerrit Van Dalen, wife
 Gerrit Jan Van Dalen
 Jan Van Dalen
 Jan Van Dalen
 Jan Maas & Lubbertus Van de Kieft*
 Jan Van der Beek, wife, & 9 children
 Jan Van der Bij
 Dirk Van der Kaaij (?)
 Jacob Van der Klooster*
 Leendert Van der Linde, wife, & 5 children*

Akke Meinis Schoutema Van Dijk
 Meine Van Dijk
 Arnaud Johan Van Lummel, wife, & 5 children (Last name of 4 oldest children: Colenbrander)
 Willeminus Hendrikus Van Schooneveld, wife, & 2 children**
 Arie & Leendert Van Staalduin**
 Gerrit Nicolaas Van't Sant**
 Rijk Van Voorst, wife, & 5 children**
 Jan Van Wijk, wife, & 2 children**
 Lambertus Verburg, wife, & 4 children
 Willem Verhoef
 Peter Gerrit Vos, wife, & 3 children
 Jan Barend Walhof, & 2 children**

Gerrit Jan Westerveld, wife, & 5 children**
 Johan Wicherus
 Christiaan Wichhart, wife, & 8 children
 Derk Wichhart, wife, & 6 children*
 Evert Winter
 Hendrikus Zandbergen
 Jantje, Egbert, & Arendje Zomermaand**
 Jan Zwier, wife, & 5 children
 Pieter Zwier, wife, & 1 child***
 Simon Zwier
 Feike Zijlstra, wife, & 1 child
 Rein Tjeerdz Zijlstra

With the Holland-American Land-and Immigration Company:
 C. J. Heijblom
 Johanna Isaaca Roest
 Jan Van Boven
 Cornelis Willem Vander Hoogt, wife
 Willem Cornelis Van Dusseldorp, wife
 Albertus Zoutman

Peter De Klerk is theological librarian at Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Much of this article is based on Peter De Klerk's "The Ecclesiastical Struggles of the Rilland and Crook Christian Reformed Churches in Colorado in 1893: a History" in *Perspectives on the Christian Reformed Church, Studies in Its History, Theology, and Ecumenicity (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983)*, pp. 73-98. This book is a tribute to the career of John H. Kromminga. Peter De Klerk's paper "Maarten Noordtjij, the President of the Holland-American Land-and Immigration Company," read for the Association for the Advancement of Dutch-American Studies, meeting in Orange City, Iowa, in the fall of 1985, explores another aspect of the Alamosa case. That paper will also be published in the near future.

*moved from Alamosa to Crook

**to Crook only

***moved from Crook to Alamosa

—without asterisk to Alamosa only

ANOTHER LOOK AT 1857 THE BIRTH OF THE CRC

In 1857 the Dutch immigrants in Michigan experienced a religious division which led to the founding of the Christian Reformed Church. Several ecclesiastical distinctions, born during their European experience, continued to shape the religious ideals of members of this new church to such an extent that they isolated themselves from most Dutch-American churches and from other groups. Today these distinctions attract only slight loyalty and even some scorn. For example, the descendants of the CRC's founders no longer argue that psalm singing, regular catechism preaching, and rigidly closed communion tables mark all true churches. The most pressing concerns of 1857, however, focused on ecclesiastical affiliations: the CRC's founding congregations unanimously declared that they could join hands only with the Christian Seceded Churches of the Netherlands, and they were equally united in justifying that denomination's 1834 secession from the folk, or national, church of the Netherlands. Consequently, the Grand Rapids, Graafschap, Noordeloos, and Polkton dissenters were constrained to break relations with the Reformed Church in America, which exhibited only tenuous loyalties to the 1834 Netherlandic secession. More importantly, though, because the RCA was rooted in the colonial history of New York and, therefore, lacked the purifying experience of 1834, the CRC could not identify with its distant cousins on the East Coast.*

Merely reviewing the causes of the 1857 breach explains little, particularly when passing time and changing circumstances have largely blunted the significance of the old debate. We may, in fact, be mystified by the whole affair and wonder how such issues could have attained urgency

**As indicated in the April 8, 1857, notations on Classis Holland Minutes, 1848-1858 (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1950, pages 236-251), the dissatisfaction that pervaded, the protests of the 1857 seceders focused on the RCA's failure to elevate the necessity of the 1834 secession and its loosening the bonds of fellowship with the Netherlandic seceded church. The Graafschap consistory expressed this matter most directly, declaring, "What grieves our hearts most in all of this is that there are members among you who regard our secession in the Netherlands as not strictly necessary, or [think that] it was untimely" (p. 242). The Polkton, Michigan, consistory declared that they desired "... no longer to belong to your [RCA] denomination, and have betaken ourselves to the standpoint we had when we left the Netherlands, in order thus again to be in connection with the church of the Netherlands" (p. 243). Rev. H. G. Klijn made a similar appeal as he reminded his colleagues, "We are together, ministers of the secession, in so far as your overseers in the midst of you walked that same path with us in the Netherlands. Yea, we are separated from all Protestant denominations. Brethren, I exhort you in love not to lose this your character" (p. 241). Less diplomatic, Koene Vanden Bosch simply announced, "I can not hold all of you who have joined the Dutch Reformed Church to be the true church of Jesus Christ, and consequently I renounce all fellowship with you and declare myself no longer to belong to you" (p. 240). Apparently,*

This article continues the development of "1834-1984: De Afscheiding," which appeared in Origins, Volume II, No. 2, pages 24-26.

in 1857. The answers to such questions can be found only in the history of the 1834 secession; the story of one particular controversy in that movement is especially significant for understanding the origins of the Christian Reformed Church.

The troubled career of R. W. Duin, who initiated an orthodox secession from Germany's Reformed Church in East Friesland, has considerable significance for the Christian Reformed Church. For two years (1839-40) this German pastor served the Dutch seceders of Friesland. Though he arrived in Leeuwarden with sparkling credentials, he left the province after a bitter controversy which pitted Duin against the leaders of the Dutch secession in Friesland, Groningen, and Drenthe. Appearing repeatedly on the agendas at local and provincial ecclesiastical gatherings, the Duin case was a major issue in the northern regions of the Netherlands.

Duin came to the Netherlands after being ejected from the liberal German Reformed Church in 1837. His expulsion resulted from two of his publications which assaulted the German church. In the first, *East Friesland's* Spiritual Whoredom*, Duin urged his readers to gather for a book burning which was to feature a newly published catechism book. A second pamphlet enumerated twenty-eight corrupting errors within the German Reformed Church. These booklets were printed in Dutch** and distributed throughout East Friesland and the Dutch provinces.

Understandably, Duin attracted a sympathetic audience among the Dutch seceders, and even their founding father, Hendrik De Cock,

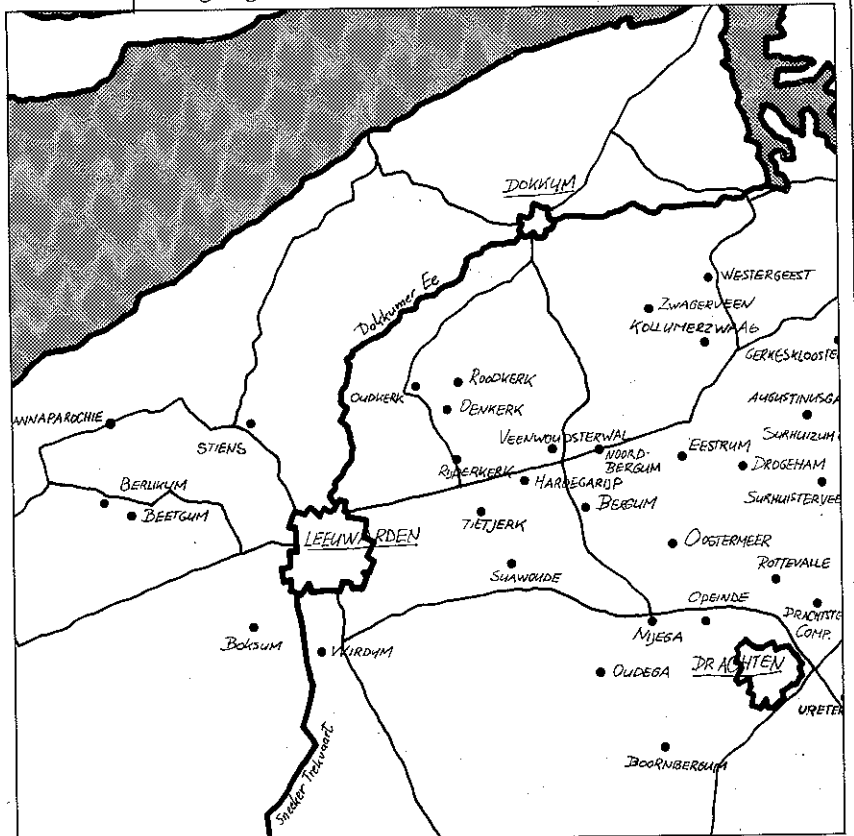
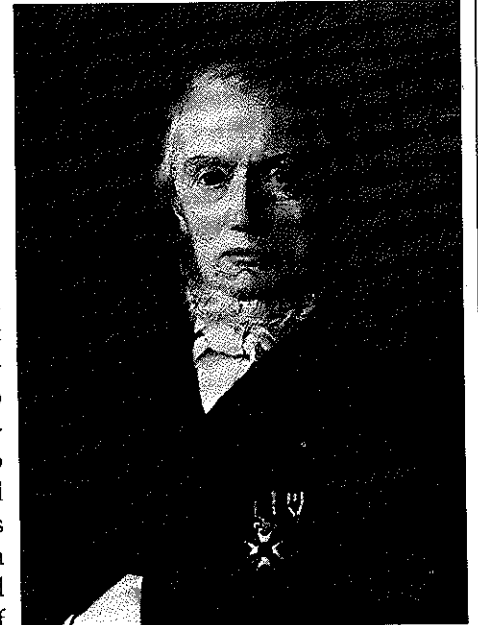
for Vanden Bosch, the only legitimate belonging was with the seceded church of the Netherlands.

Other issues raised in the 1857 declarations of secession included the use by the Dutch Reformed churches of 800 hymns in worship services, together with its alleged practice of inviting members of other Protestant groups to participate in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Complaints were also lodged over the Reformed denomination's fraternization with other churches whose doctrines conflicted with traditional Reformed confessions. These specific allegations of misconduct, including the denomination's inconsistent teaching and preaching from the Heidelberg Catechism, reflected the seceding group's attachment to the Dortian church rules of 1618-1619. In emphasizing these rules, together with the foundational character of the 1834 secession, the American seceders mirrored views which were unquestioned in the conservative segments of the seceded church in the Netherlands.

*East Friesland was a German, not Dutch, province.

**The German Reformed Church used the Dutch language until the 1870s, for the Dutch tongue was associated with the Reformed churches and the German tongue with the Lutheran Church.

came to Duin's defense. Though not classmates at the University of Groningen, both De Cock and Duin had studied there under the tutelage of Hermanus Muntingh, and, when Duin castigated Muntingh for his liberal views, De Cock agreed fully with Duin's accusations. Duin's orthodoxy also attracted attention from several vacant congregations in the province of Friesland, but the liberal provincial authorities would not approve calls to this radical from Germany. That policy only recommended Duin to the Dutch seceders, who were no longer governed by the province's officials. Thus, in 1839, the seceded congregation of



Leeuwarden acquired Duin as its pastor, and Rev. Simon Van Velzen installed his new colleague as co-pastor for the whole province. Together Duin and Van Velzen served about twenty congregations.

The initial good will with which Duin entered the pastorate in Friesland quickly fractured, because he did not defend the 1834 secession with unreserved ardor. His reservations about the secession became evident when Duin refused to discipline parishioners who occasionally attended the worship services of the state church. The most conservative seceders regarded that denomination as hopelessly corrupt, and Duin's disciplinary laxity led to lengthy debates during which local consistories and

and social ostracism which accompanied the 1834 secession's early years. Two additional conflicts stemmed from the differing religious traditions of Germany and the Netherlands. Duin's defense of hymn singing, which had never been an issue in the German secession, marked him as a liberal in Holland, because the Dutch Synod of 1816, which had demanded that each congregation sing hymns, was considered liberal by the seceders. Moreover, Duin's views about Sabbath observance were more Germanic and therefore less proscriptive than those of the Dutch seceders, and he refused to discipline parishioners who conducted necessary business on Sunday. He asserted that the Jewish Sabbath was not a model for the Christian

church. More substantial discontent developed when Duin's elders noted that he did not emphasize the doctrine of election and reprobation. That failing was coupled with his only partial support of the Canons of Dort. He did adhere to the five points of Calvinism, but not to Dort's pronouncements against the Arminians.

Then, to complicate matters even further, Duin joined forces with Hendrik



(facing page, top) Simon Van Velzen (1819–1896)—Duin's co-pastor in Friesland; (facing page, bottom) Location of seceded churches in Friesland; (above) Aerial view of typical village in Friesland/Groningen

provincial gatherings attempted to define the characteristics of a true visible church of Christ. Duin argued that all churches which preached the doctrine of salvation by grace were true churches, but he alone defended that position; the other pastors and nearly all the officeholders asserted that true churches maintained confessions which were compatible with the three forms of unity—the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, and the Canons of Dordrecht.

No doubt Duin's German background contributed to his difficulties, for since he did not participate in the early trials of the Dutch secession, his animosity toward the national church was not honed by the legal harassment

P. Scholte, who publicly castigated Simon Van Velzen, Duin's colleague. Together Duin and Scholte declared that Van Velzen's sermons exhibited a dead orthodoxy which emphasized the doctrine of reprobation and failed to declare the living Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. When this issue came before the provincial classis of Friesland, the delegates were asked to respond to Scholte's accusations. The officers unanimously upheld Van Velzen's preaching, but Duin declared that, while Van Velzen did preach the living Christ, he presented the message in a lifeless manner. And, Duin added, Van Velzen's sermons lacked evidence of the experiential power of the gospel. After dropping that bombshell, Duin left the meeting. Some months later, while defending his own views before a friendly gathering, Duin asserted, "In all humility and with great reluctance, I can only conclude

that Van Velzen is unconverted." It is evident, then, that Duin's problems in Friesland also stemmed from conflicts with Van Velzen, a founding father of the secession.

Duin's difficulties reached far beyond his personal relations with Simon Van Velzen: the agenda of the 1840 classis included an eight-point bill of particulars to insure his dismissal. The complaints alleged that he taught a false view of Sabbath observance, that his preaching avoided specific explanations of election and reprobation, and that he flaunted good order by slandering the church's office bearers. Duin promised to mend his ways, and the gathering disbanded with expressions of brotherhood and forgiveness. But shortly thereafter, Duin totally ignored proper procedures in dismissing the Leeuwarden consistory. That behavior initiated a special gathering of the provincial classis.

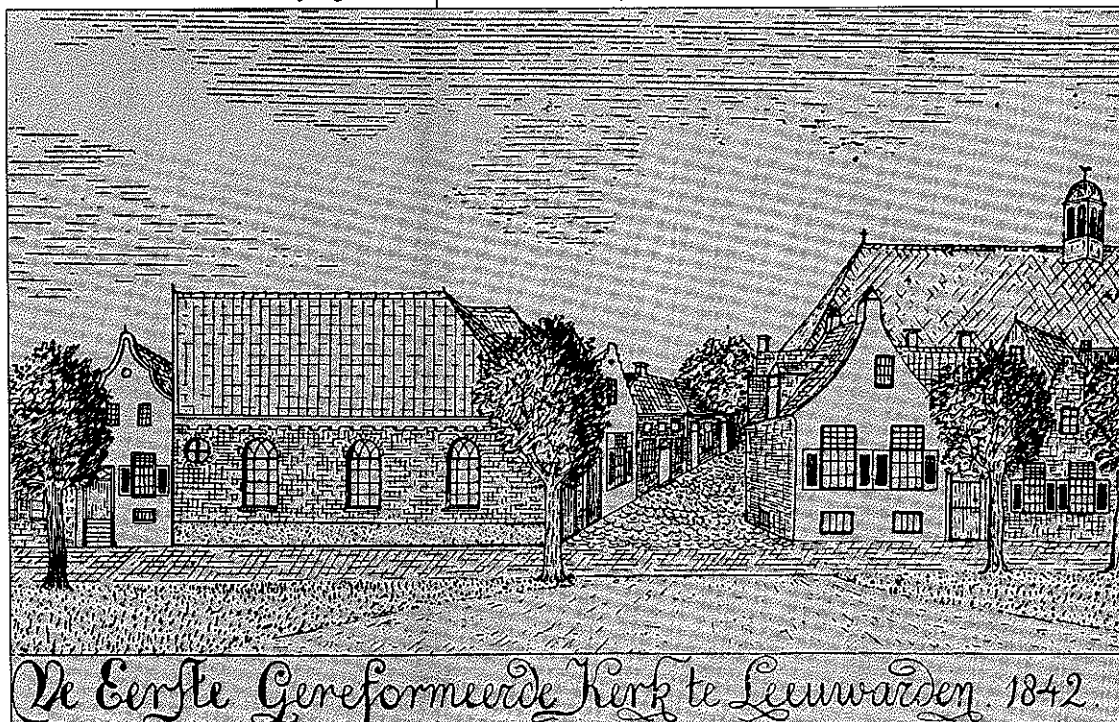
In a final effort to salvage his ministry among them, the Frisian seceders declared that they would dismiss all charges against Duin if he agreed to abide by the orderly procedures of church rule. When Duin requested a period for deliberation, the classis allotted him two weeks to reach a decision. Meanwhile, Duin himself brought his case to the general synod in 1840, but that body refused to change the judgments of Classis Friesland.

Finally, after six months, Duin responded to the provincial classis by proclaiming that church rules had no value, since the Bible gave sufficient directions in such matters. With that, after only two years in the Netherlands, Duin was dismissed. He lingered in the Netherlands for a time, preaching here and there, but finally he returned to Germany, where he died in 1843.

For the CRC, Duin's significance stems directly from the controversy which he inflamed among the conservative northern seceders, among whom the views of Hendrik De Cock and Simon Van Velzen predominated. Though their influence was spread throughout the Netherlands, sup-

port for De Cock and Van Velzen was most concentrated in Friesland, Groningen, Drenthe, and the German county of Bentheim. It was largely in these provinces and during the time of Duin's pastorate that the founders of the CRC were schooled to detect dangerous ecclesiastical behavior.* Duin's behavior, then, eventually functioned as a model for ecclesiastical deviation in Michigan as well as in the Netherlands.

For most Michigan seceders, the Duin case established the borders of toleration. It taught faithful Dutch Calvinists to avoid worship or cooperation with those who were ecclesiastically deviant, and, most importantly, it affirmed the essentiality of the 1834 secession. Furthermore, since



De Eerste Gereformeerde Kerk te Leeuwarden 1842

the path of theological liberalism in the Netherlands had been marked by the neglect and ultimate rejection of Dort's church rules, the seceders, as they made judgments upon Duin, re-entrenched the decisions of 1618-19 as a bulwark against future deviance and heresy.

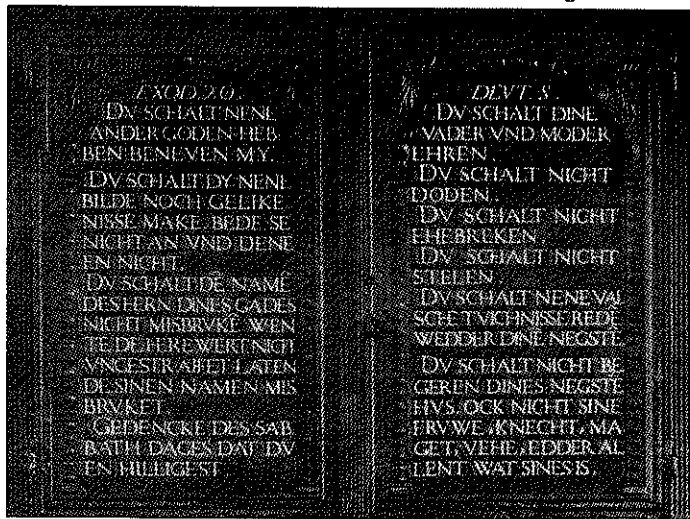
It is obvious that the Michigan seceders of 1857 were well aware of the Duin case. In separating from the RCA,

*Furthermore, the vast majority (83%) of the CRC's first hundred ministers were educated by Duin's opponents, i.e., H. De Cock, S. Van Velzen, T. F. Haan, and their students. Thus, long after 1857, the CRC's clerics were inclined to support and provide additional justification for the denomination's foundational assertions. For further information, see H. J. Brinks' "Religious Continuities in Europe and the New World" in *The Dutch in America* (New Brunswick: Rutgers, 1985), pages 209-223, edited by Robert P. Swierenga; *The Banner*, June 2, 1978, pages 16-18; and *Origins*, volume II, no. 2, pages 24-26.

the Graafschap consistory's list of accusations largely duplicated the charges brought against R. Duin in 1840. Still more revealing, all the dissenting Michigan churches proclaimed emphatically that their identity could not be transferred to the RCA but could remain only with the Christian Seceded Church of the Netherlands. Thus, loyalty to the 1834 secession and the denomination it founded bound the five seceding Michigan churches of 1857 together. They had but one ordained pastor, Koene Vanden Bosch, who was an ardent partisan of the Van Velzen/De Cock group. Furthermore, the leading agitator for the 1857 secession, Gijsbert Haan, had been catechized by Van Velzen in the Netherlands, and Haan had also been a delegate to the

Still, the general contours of ecclesiastical behavior in 1857 do provide continued guidance. For example, as in 1857, the CRC today remains keenly wary of interdenominational alliances and mergers, and its formal attachment to the Canons of Dort has sustained no successful challenge.** Church rules, though altered by changing circumstances, continue to structure the daily affairs of most CRC congregations. But CRC ecclesiastical roots bore even deeper into history than 1857: to the Dutch secession of 1834 and to the R. W. Duin case of 1840 which help explain the character of the CRC in 1986.

—H.J.B.



(facing page) First sanctuary of the seceded congregation in Leeuwarden; (above) Tablet with Ten Commandments from Reformed Church in Germany's East Friesland. Note the Dutch-language script.

1840 Synod, which upheld the judgment of Classis Friesland in the Duin case.

For Vanden Bosch, Haan, and their cohorts, the RCA's neglect of specific church rules* served mainly to illustrate the "American" denomination's disregard for Dordrecht's church rules. It was the same ecclesiastical fault that had caused the seceders of 1834 to leave what they considered to be the liberal Dutch Reformed Church and the same ecclesiastical fault for which Duin was dismissed from the Christian Seceded Church in 1840. Thus, in 1857, when the founders of the CRC drew outlines for orthodoxy in Michigan, they instinctively traced those outlines from the same stencil which had revealed Duin's ecclesiastical deviations seventeen years earlier: both Duin and the RCA were out of line with respect to the church rules established by the Synod of Dort.

Of the specific items cited in the CRC's 1857 allegations, few remain urgent throughout the denomination today.

*According to the seceders, the RCA's irregular catechism preaching, infrequent family visitation, and singing of hymns in the worship service were contrary to church order established at Dort.

**Some observers detect a drift toward Arminian language in the denomination's pulpits, but such expressions are considered by most to be legitimately censurable.

**ALLEGATIONS
AGAINST REEMT
WEERDS DUIN,
1840***

**ALLEGATIONS
AGAINST THE
RCA IN THE 1857
SECESSION OF
THE CRC***

1 Did not sufficiently honor the 1834 secession (Afscheiding).

1 Did not sufficiently honor the 1834 secession (Afscheiding).

2 Excessively tolerant definition of the true church.
a. Permitted worship in and cooperation with unorthodox church groups.
b. Participated in worship of unauthorized church groups.

2 Excessively tolerant definition of the true church.
a. Cooperated with unorthodox churches in printing educational materials.
b. Practiced partly open invitation to the Lord's Supper.

3 Mild Calvinism
a. Did not subscribe to the "rejection of errors" which accompanies the Canons of Dort.
b. Favored H.P.Scholte in his opposition to Van Velzen's emphasis on the doctrine of election.

3 Mild Calvinism
a. Did not subscribe to the "rejection of errors" which accompanies the Canons of Dort.
b. Invited H.P.Scholte to preach in the Zeeland church.
c. Distributed the somewhat Arminian book *Call to the Unconverted*, by Richard Baxter.

4 General disregard for church rules.
a. Encouraged hymn singing.
b. Failed to discipline Sabbath breakers.
c. Summarily dismissed church officers.
d. Finally, like Scholte, rejected all official church rules (congregationalism).

4 General disregard for church rules.
a. Encouraged hymn singing (800 hymns).
b. Irregular catechism preaching.
c. Irregular family visitation.
d. Terms of officeholders not properly regulated.

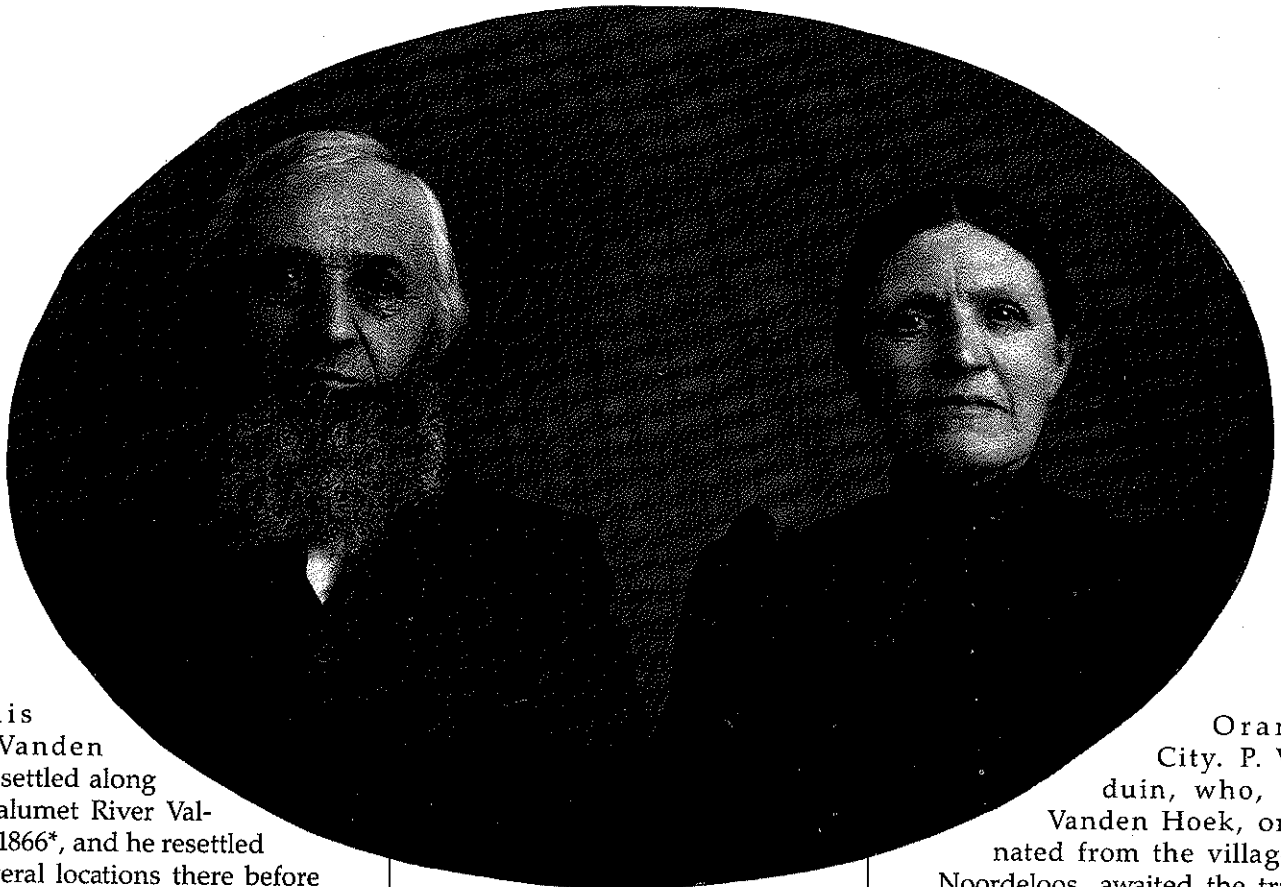
*From J. Wesseling, *De Afscheiding in Friesland* (Groningen: De Vuurbaak, 1981) pp. 200-254.

*From *Classis Holland Minutes 1848-1858* (Grand Rapids: Printing Co., 1943) pp. 58, 224, 235-251, and H. Beefs, *De Oe Geneef Kerke* (Grand Rapids: Printing Co., 1918) pp. 64-99.

FROM SOUTH HOLLAND TO ORANGE CITY

1882

T. B. VANDEN HOEK REPORTS



Teunis Bos Vanden Hoek settled along the Calumet River Valley in 1866*, and he resettled in several locations there before moving his family and possessions to Orange City, Iowa, in 1882. Though he remained in Iowa for a scant two years, his description of the transfer provides a detailed account of a process which he and many others experienced. Immigrants like Teunis frequently became migrants as they were caught up in the general search for more land or better economic circumstances in the New World. In fact, some immigrants cited their constant moving as evidence of their growing Americanization. Moving from place to place, they indicated, was an American characteristic.

Four of Vanden Hoek's letters written between 1882-84 contain the account of his moving and settling in Orange City, but this correspondence also describes the region's larger Dutch-American community. "On September twenty-five," Teunis wrote, "we had our auction in South Holland, and that same evening John and I left Illinois on a freight car in which we had loaded two cows, two horses, and five wagonloads of furniture and other items."

Five days later the train arrived at Alton, the nearest railroad station to

Orange City. P. Verduin, who, like Vanden Hoek, originated from the village of Noordeloos, awaited the train's coming with an empty wagon and a team of horses. Another acquaintance, J. Brinks, met the Vanden Hoeks with a carriage. Thus, when his wife, Dirkjè (Vogel), and the balance of the family arrived by passenger train, the whole group could be transported to their new home, which was an hour's ride from the Alton station.

Teunis wrote, "When my new neighbors knew that we had arrived, they hitched their horses to wagons

**For Vanden Hoek's background and early experiences in the Chicago area see Origins, Vol. II, No. 1, pp. 10-16.*

and brought our belongings from the station immediately. By Saturday evening—the same day we arrived—everything was in the house or stable.”

“We have a good new house, stables, a well with a new pump, and eighty acres of land. We are two miles away from the very prosperous little city called Orange City. We are five minutes away from the school and just two and a quarter miles from church.

“There is not much dairying here.

The chief crops are wheat, rye, flaxseed, barley, oats, and buckwheat. So I will be a grain farmer. The land here is like the land of Canaan, mostly rich black soil. Our church here—like our former church in South Holland—is part of the Holland Christian Reformed denomination, which is joined to the Christian Seceded Church of the Netherlands. Our large congregation has a good minister, Rev. John Stadt.

“At present I am busy hauling brick to build a cellar under the house. The kiln is a mile from my house, and the bricks

cost twelve dollars per thousand. Compared to Illinois, we are three thousand feet higher* above sea level here, so we have more wind, with a clear and healthful climate. People who suffer from lung and liver diseases are sent here for cures and have good results. In a large part of this area there are none but Hollanders—a situation that can only be found in a few places in America. My new ad-

dress is: T.B.Vanden Hoek, Orange City, Sioux County, State of Iowa, N. America.”

Three months later Vanden Hoek was able to relate more details about life in his new community. “Four of our children go to school,” he wrote, “and they are learning well. At 7 p.m. on Wednesday they go to singing school, and they have catechism on Fridays in the school at 3:30. There are two churches in the city. We belong to the Holland Christian Reformed

time. For warmth many people wear coats of buffalo skin and bearskin, which are lined with wool. Yesterday I bought a raccoon-skin cap, which cost three dollars. It looks like the skin of a rabbit, but it has fine black hair, and it is lined with a quilted lining of wool and blue silk. In the winter people wear elastic shoes and boots lined with wool. Mittens are made of sheep or buffalo skins. People burn coal for heat here, and it costs five dollars per ton.”

When spring came, Vanden Hoek



Church, which has a very godly minister, four elders, and three deacons. Last Sunday I was installed as an elder, and I must go on house visitation with the minister on one or two days each week. The congregation is large and widely scattered.

“It has been very cold here this winter. For six weeks the snow has maintained a depth of one and a half feet with no thaw during the whole

(above) Orange City, Iowa Christian Reformed Church; (facing page) Rev. & Mrs. John B. Vanden Hoek—CRC pastor (1905–1924)

wrote again: “We’re busy plowing and sowing wheat. The weather now [April 18] is fine. I have already sown five acres of summer wheat and eight and a half acres of oats. I’m hoping to sow fifteen acres of flaxseed next week.

*Actually, about seven hundred feet higher.

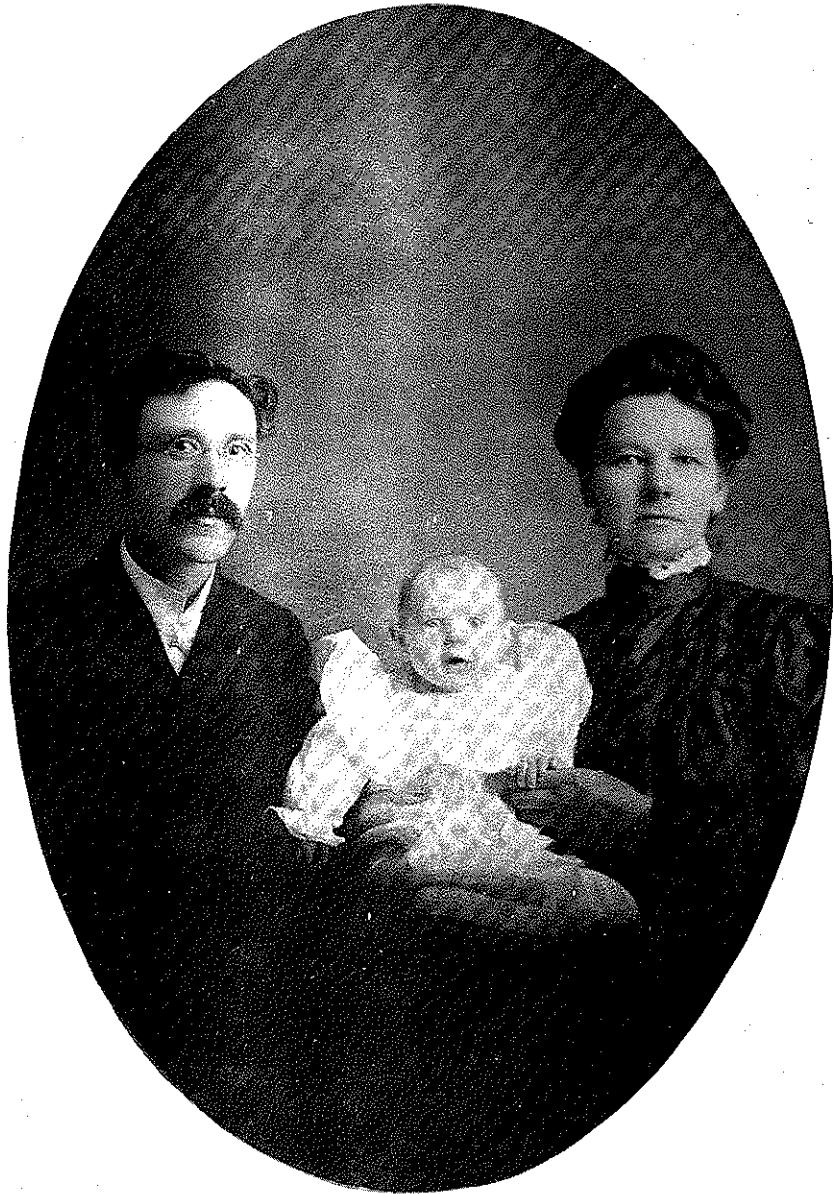
I bought a new mowing machine for fifty-five dollars which can mow five acres in one day. I'm sure you will agree, Mother, that we enjoy great blessings—I have my own land and work—we have our precious children at home, where we can guide them. When I think of all this, it makes me humbly thankful. . . . My nephew, Harber Huisman, from Illinois, came to visit us here last week, and he will probably move here, too. His daughter, Neeltje, moved here this spring after marrying a son of J. Vande Griend. Almost every week more Hollanders come to our congregation, many from Friesland, and last week two families came from Amsterdam.

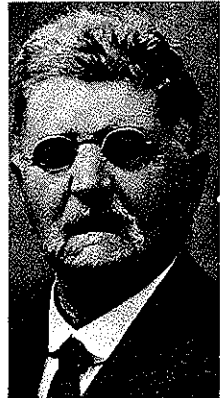
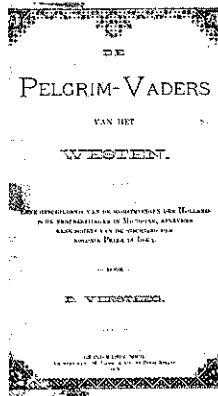
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"You asked me, brother, to send you some seeds, but that would be useless. Seed varieties which do well in the Netherlands do not do well here, and ours will not do well there. Instead, I urge you to come here and share the good things of this country. I will do all in my power to make your life pleasant here. If you decide that the Lord's will prevents your coming, then send Arie's son Teunis to us. If he is willing to obey us as our own child, we will treat him with affection. It is a shame that such a tender youth must work among strangers. If you can bring [the matter of your immigration] to the Lord and submit to his will—it would be a great joy to see our aged mother and all our dear relatives face to face once again."

The next letter in the Vanden Hoek collection was written by Teunis's sixteen-year-old son, John. It was postmarked April 15, Harrison, South Dakota, because the family had moved again. The remaining thirty letters in the Vanden Hoek family correspondence disclose much about daily life in Harrison, and *Origins* will return to these letters in the future.

Translation by E. R. Post





Published in 1886, Dingman Versteeg's *Pelgrimm Vaders van het Westen* was the first book-length account of nineteenth century immigration from the Netherlands to the U.S. Its two hundred pages contain many first-hand accounts of immigrant experiences and Versteeg was able to interview several original colonists. Many of his generalizations have been altered by more recent study, but the stories and personal accounts in Versteeg's book continue to be valuable and interesting.

During the early 1970s Rev. William K. Reinsema translated and edited Versteeg's book and *Origins* will publish parts of that translation over the next few issues. Rev. Reinsma contributed a great deal to promote the Calvin College and Seminary Archives during his tenure here as archivist between 1965 and 1971.

PELGRIM VADERS / PART FOUR

THE DWELLINGS

Except for some Indian huts scattered sparsely throughout the woods and the three or four log cabins of their American neighbors, there was nothing visible for miles around which even resembled a human dwelling.

Hence, if the immigrants desired a roof over their heads, they had to pitch in and construct a dwelling.

Some cut down young trees with branch ends on them resembling a fork. Then they placed one end in the ground and cradled a pole or heavy branch in the forked tops. Thereafter, pine branches or branches of some leafy trees were placed against the sides. The air holes were filled as well as possible with small twigs and leaves or other materials, and lo!—the family had a temporary shelter. Others pounded four poles into the earth and placed coverings such as bedsheets or other materials over them. Still others made huts of tree bark and bulrushes, shaping them into the form of a tepee. Cloths, sheets, etc. were used for doors. Enough opening was left to permit smoke to leave the tent and daylight to enter. It must be admitted, however, that this arrangement also allowed rain, snow, and cold free entry. Some of the tents were tastefully and artistically decorated.

These dwellings were pleasantly cool in the summer, but their protection against the elements was almost nil. If it rained during the night, one had either



to sit under an umbrella or park near a large fire, which constantly needed more fuel. If and when the sun came out the next morning, the bed linens had to be carried outside to dry in the sun. And if, as happened frequently during the summer of 1847, more rain fell the next night, the whole process of drying the bedding had to be repeated the next day. Nearly all the cooking, baking, and laundering had to be done outside because the dwellings were too small for such activities. Many persons had no opportunity to change their clothes while struggling with these adverse conditions. And they could not bathe properly. So they were often plagued by vermin on their bodies.

All these conditions demanded the erection of better dwellings as rapidly as possible. The colonists worked strenuously to begin and complete building operations as soon as they knew where they were to live. After it was determined where a cabin was to stand, the area was cleared of brush and trees. Then the builders looked for trees with branches suitable for building. These trees were then chopped down, cut to the desired lengths, and carried to the building site. Transportation was done by four men until oxen teams were available. In some cases a single man carried the logs to the building site. When all the logs had been gathered, the work of trimming them into usable pieces of lumber began. Gnarled knots had to be smoothed, and the ends of logs chipped so as to fit into the ends of cross logs, to prevent rolling and slipping loose from each other. Other logs were placed into a square which became the foundation of the cabin. Then logs were trimmed to fit into the floor joists. Some builders used different methods of laying the floor.

After the floors had been laid, the process of building the walls began. One log was placed on top of another in such a manner as to prevent rolling and sliding. This process continued until the desired height of the walls was reached. Then openings for doors and windows were made by sawing downward from the desired height. Heavy boards were then nailed or secured by a dowel above and beneath the openings. Thereafter more logs were laid on top of these boards until the wall was complete. Building the larger cabins required the services of four men. Two men on the ground lifted the logs to two men above, one on each corner, who fitted the logs together. When the walls became too high for two men to lift the logs, the wood was pulled up by ropes. Whenever an upstairs was desired in a cabin, special notches were cut into the beams of the existing structure. At the desired height huge spikes or dowels were driven into the logs to prevent the walls from bulging. This also gave the structure greater stability for the weight of the roof. Usually the

roof was slanted just enough to permit water and snow to run off. As much as was possible, roof beams and other sills were made of young trees of similar size.

One does not need a vivid imagination to see that the walls of such a dwelling were not air- or watertight, because all the logs were not always cut evenly. To eliminate the drafty openings, the builders stuffed the cracks with leaves and twigs. Then both the inside and outside of the cabin were plastered with moist clay. Walls so treated kept out rain and cold effectively, but the process had to be repeated annually, since the original clay soon dried and began crumbling and falling off. Building a cabin at first required a week's time. But as the men gained experience, construction took only four days, especially when oxen hauled the timbers out of the woods. Building a cabin often involved physical dangers—injuries and sometimes even death.

Many of the immigrants left their tents and moved into the cabins when they were only half finished. Door and window openings were covered with sheets until such time as glass for windows could be obtained. Thus, gradually, the hut presented a more livable appearance. Immigrants who had money or wealthy friends could afford to have materials shipped in from Allegan, Grand Haven, or Saugatuck to make roofs, stairs, and floors. Most colonists, however, because of their poverty, had to get along with materials they could personally cull from the forests. Some people simply placed boards on the ground and, having no bedsteads, slept on the bare boards. Sometimes the cracks and openings between the "floor boards" were so wide that hogs could crawl between to get inside the house. But in most cases the immigrants could deal effectively with the situation—a valuable trait under such circumstances.

In a certain home where parents slept downstairs and the boys upstairs, the concerned mother cautioned the boys each night, "Be sure you don't get out of bed tonight!" For, you see, the upstairs had so few boards that, if they got out of bed, the boys could easily miss the boards as they moved around sleepily and fall to the floor below.

Those who were too poor to obtain boards and shingles went to the forests, chopped some trees, removed the bark and used it for shingles. In a few cases, where ignorance predominated, people tried to debark a living tree. Sometimes hewn trees were split into boards. From these, smaller pieces of wood were cut and used to cover the cabin's roof. These were called "shakes." Unfortunately, however, neither the bark strips nor the "shakes" proved to be good coverings. At first, the undried bark strips and/or shakes were applied to the roof. When the weather warmed up and the summer sun beat upon them, the

materials began to shrink. This drying process made wide cracks in the roof, and as a result cold, rain, and snow entered the dwelling freely so that when it rained, beds and other furniture had to be piled on top of each other in a dry spot. This problem was soon overcome. Some immigrants dried the "shakes" before putting them on the roof. Others simply coated the "shakes" with a foot or two of clay. This treatment made the roof bulletproof, leading eventually to the practice of calling the cabin a "citadel." They also tried drying and flattening the bark by piling it on a heap and then placing heavy stones or some other weighty object on the heap. When the bark was considered fit for use, it was applied to the roof, but even so, in spite of all these efforts, the materials still shrank and were more warped than ever. Hence, this kind of material did not as yet afford sufficient protection against rain, snow, and cold.

It was also necessary to provide safe places for fires and adequate escape for smoke. The richer settlers had been able to provide fireplaces, chimneys, stoves, and the needed accessories. But the majority had to get along with makeshift arrangements. The earliest solution was to build a fire on the bare ground in the cabin and to let the smoke find its way out by whatever openings it

could find. Later the colonists collected large flat stones and made a platform by cementing them together with clay, thus forming a hearth or furnace. Then a chimney consisting of boards, branches, etc. was set up and lined with clay to prevent it from igniting. The walls against which chimneys were placed were also lined with clay.

Cabins were made stronger and larger later in the colony's history, when the immigrants could take their timber to the saw mills in the colony and have boards sawed. When this larger supply of lumber became available, the immigrants began adding bedrooms to their homes. The inside walls were papered, and the outside walls were painted. No longer did the builders place crude, unfinished logs atop each other,

but they shaped or squared them. Thus, eventually the dwellings assumed a "homier" appearance.

Rev. Ypma built his cabin after an entirely different pattern from the method described above. He placed the logs in an upright position next to one another. His method, however, was the exception rather than the rule. This kind of construction did not make the dwelling stronger, and it was more expensive because it took longer.

Some people built frame houses with lumber which had to be hauled in from some distance. Everything had to be finished by hand. This more than doubled the cost of building. Locks and bolts at first were unheard of. The only device to keep a door closed was a wooden latch inside the house. This



Log cabin still standing near Holland, Michigan in Dunningville

could be released by a cord on the outside of the cabin.

At a later stage of colonial development many of the original cabins were lined with boards inside and outside. Roofs and chimneys were changed to conform to present-day styles of building. Today many an old settler still points with justifiable pride to such remodeled cabins as the dwelling in which he spent the first years of his residence in these parts, or as the structure which he helped build. Only very few cabins of that pioneer period are still standing. They are reminders of the times which will soon have passed from memory unless the imperfect efforts of historians keep them alive.

PELGRIM VADERS / PART FIVE

FURNITURE AND IMPLEMENTS

Before emigrating to America, the majority of the emigrants had disposed of practically all their furniture, keeping only articles of sentimental value, though a few wealthier families came with complete household furnishings. Of the average family it was appropriate to say that a blind horse could walk all over in the house without doing any damage, simply because there was nothing to damage. All the immigrants could do was to endure the hardships and to hope, pray, and wait for more prosperous times. Decorative items such as paintings, prints, charts, mirrors, clocks, and whatever was considered essential to a well-decorated home were completely absent. Neither were there any flowers or house plants. The usual literary works and song books and religious books were absent from the library of the home. The standard theological and religious books which were taken along were the "Staten Bible" and the writings of Brakel and Smytegeld. Most homes also possessed a copy of the poems by Jacob Cats, better known as "Father Cats."

As for furniture, conditions were equally poor. In the forest of Michigan tree stumps often served as tables. In some cabins, tree stumps were left in the ground within the area of the cabin walls. A goodly number of the immigrants used the wood from boxes and crates in which they had shipped their belongings to make tables and closets. Various kinds of seating were employed. Some families whose cabins had no floors or only a partial floor used the exposed joists as chairs. Some used wooden blocks with sticks implanted in them which served as back rests. Nail kegs were used for chairs. Mr. De Pree made a lawn chair out of a hollowed-out tree stump. It was wide enough to seat three persons.

Reference was made earlier to the use of floor boards for bedsteads, both upstairs and down. A few people were affluent enough to purchase a bedframe. Since mattresses were scarce, many colonists filled large sacks with moss or leaves to serve as a mattress. Even young twigs or leaves on

Tools used in early settlements



the ground were stuffed into these bags to serve as insulation against the cold and dampness of the ground. Later in the colony's history, animal hides were used to serve the same purpose. Flour barrels or similar containers were used for cradles. If neither of these were available, the immigrants used wooden boxes with moon-shaped boards attached to the bottom to make them into cradles.

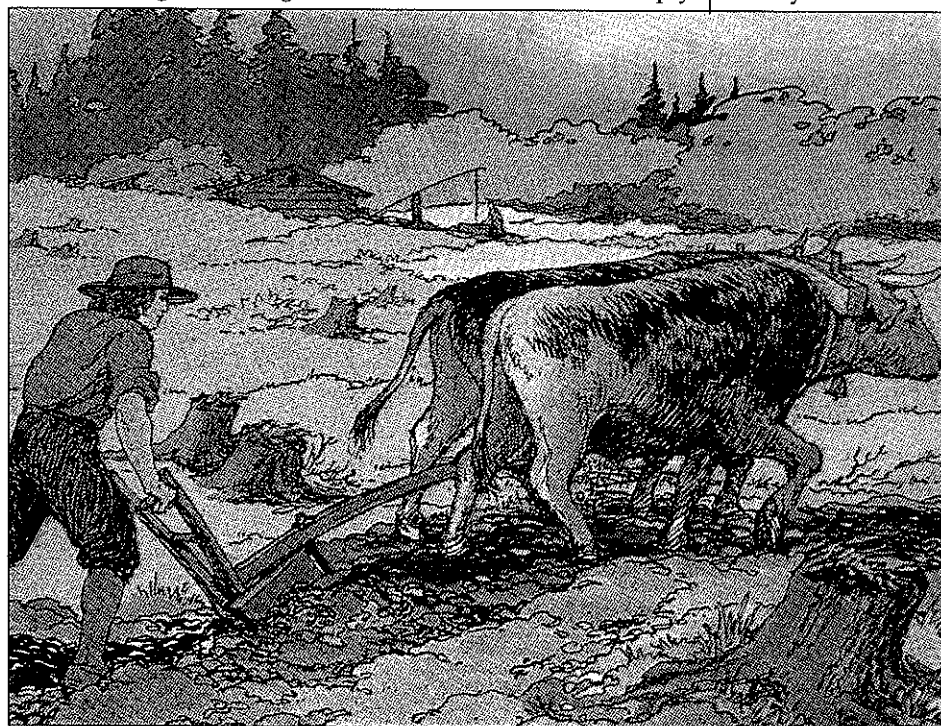
A few immigrants transported a real lamp from the Netherlands, but of course the oil and wicks were missing. In some homes candles were used. The immigrants obtained candles in Grand Haven and other neighboring cities. But the Dutch soon put their resourcefulness to work and began making their own candles. Others simply

but, most generally, churns were made out of flour vats.

Many immigrant wives had never seen a cook stove before coming to America. Consequently, they did not know how to operate one at first. Many Drenthe women, when they wished to bake, filled the oven with glowing charcoals. When the oven was glowing hot, the charcoal was removed and the dough placed in the oven. The bread did not bake thoroughly this way. As a result, the homemakers were not very pleased with their kitchen ranges. The tableware in most homes consisted of wooden knives, plates, forks, spoons, and bowls.

A grain grinder was unknown in the early days of the colony. On one occasion, four families banded together to

buy a large coffee grinder, large enough to grind coffee very fine, and used it to grind corn and grain, which were then used unboiled and unsifted for cooking. By using such a grinder, three families succeeded in grinding forty bushels of corn one winter. The flour was not sifted, so all the grits were intermingled with the ground material, which was called flour. From this mixture they baked their bread or other baked goods. Another person solved his grinding problem by placing a heavy stone on the bottom of a hollowed-out tree stump. He laid his corn on the stone, and then, taking a heavy steel bar, he pounded his corn as fine as he could. From this corn meal he baked his bread.



Farming between the stumps

put animal fat in a cup or bowl and inserted a cotton rag to serve as wick. In this way the colonists provided some sort of light for their dwellings.

Household utensils were also primitive. In the beginning of colonial life flour barrels sawed in half were used for washtubs. Lye did the work of soap. The immigrants found an abundance of twigs in the woods, from which they made brooms and scrubbing brushes. Bread was baked by placing the dough in an iron kettle and then covering the entire oven with glowing charcoals. This iron kettle was really a multi-purpose vessel. It was used to brew coffee, to blanch corn, to boil potatoes, and to fry meat when it was available. At times it was used as a churn,

FOR THE FUTURE

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- 1,22,24 Courtesy of the Colorado Historical Society
- 4 (left) *55th Anniversary, Second Christian Reformed Church of Roseland*
- 11 (top), 12 (center, right), 13 *Souvenir: Christian Psychopathic Hospital*
- 28 (top) *Nederland wat ben je nog mooi*
- 28 (bottom) Wesseling, Dr. J., *De Afscheiding Van 1834 in Friesland*
- 29 Algra, H., *Het Wonder van de 19e eeuw*
- 30 *Anderhalve eeuw Friesland*
- 31 Smid, Menno, *Ostfriesland Im Schutze des Deiches*
- 40 Photograph by Curt Door
- 41 Barker-Dodd-Webb, *The Story of Our Nation*

The topics listed below are being researched and articles about them will appear in future issues of *Origins*.

"Onion Sets" and more Garden Farming near Chicago, by David Zandstra.

Lynden, Washington—A Home Away from Home, by Rev. Arnold Brink.

Growing Up in Roseland, by Richard Tiemersma.

Montana "Boom and Bust."

Terra Ceia—A settlement in North Carolina by John Yzenbaard

Bastiaan Broere: Pioneer of "The East."

Growing up Dutch in Grand Rapids, by Walter Lagerwey.

Pelgrim Vaders (continued).

George Harper's Grand Rapids.

Ellis Island.

Y. P. De Jong: Patriarch of the Southwest Side.

Dutch-Americans in the Civil War, 1860-1864.

A History of Classis Red Mesa.

The First World War.

Leaving More Than a Country



Ruth Vander Stelt

Dutch emigration to Canada began around the turn of the twentieth century, when potential emigrants looked from America's filled agricultural frontier to the millions of acres of land in the Canadian West. By 1914, about 15,000 hardy Dutchmen were "carving a living out of the wilderness,"* and after World War I, with the encouragement of the Canadian government, 14,900 more emigrants put down roots before 1929. Of the latter group, a number went to British Columbia, while others scattered throughout all the western and eastern provinces. But the majority settled in the mixed farming areas of southern Ontario.

The Great Depression brought emigration to a virtual standstill, and

World War II saw only a handful of Dutch refugees claiming Canadian soil. Then, in 1947, one hundred years after the Van Raalte group arrived in Michigan, 2,361 Dutch men, women, and children poured into Canada, up from 9 the previous year. These were followed by more than 142,000 others between 1948 and 1960, all seeking new hope and new potential for growth against a background of disillusionment in the Netherlands.

The war that had raged around and among them for five years had left almost nothing but destruction. Dutch economy was in shambles, housing was in short supply, unemployment was becoming acute, and population was increasing with no signs of abating. Dissatisfaction with creeping socialism, distress with the growing prominence of people who had done nothing to help the Netherlands during the war, and fears that Russia would invade Western Europe all contributed to their leaving the country.

The more highly skilled workers, essential to the reconstruction of the Netherlands, were encouraged to remain there, and so it was that the common folk, mainly the farmers, set their sights on the shores of Australia, the United States, and Canada.

Emigration was spoken of in my

father's family already in 1929, when Opa had to do most of the talking to himself. Oma never did want to go: recently married and still struggling furiously with her new membership in the Gereformeerde Kerk rather than her own family's Hervormde Kerk affiliation, she had not the slightest urge to leave the people and the land she loved. In 1929, when all that was left to be arranged was a place on the boat, she refused to go, ending the matter at that time.

In 1947, when the matter was again discussed, her feelings hadn't changed. However, Opa no longer found himself engaged in solitary discussion. People in town (Niewendyk, Nord Brabant) were speaking of it more and more, and especially his older boys were "intrigued [with the idea] from the start."** Brought up in depression and war years, they couldn't help being affected by the excited talk of new lands where freedom and opportunity reigned, lands where the economy was expanding and where one had a chance of moving ahead, perhaps even of owning land or a business.

And so it began again. The talk was hushed, almost an "underground business," as described by my father.

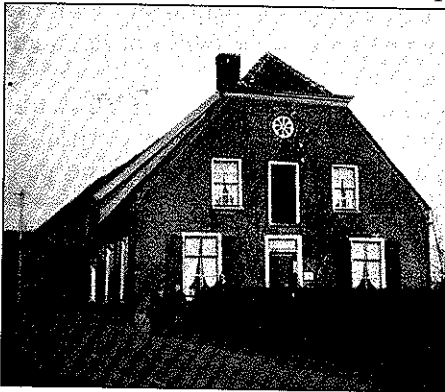
*Albert VanderMey, *To All Our Children* (Jordan Station, Ontario: Paideia Press, 1983), p. 45.

**Cornelius Vander Stelt, *Comments on his immigration*.

For a while the word *Canada* could not even be mentioned in the house for fear of maternal wrath pouring down on the speaker. Uncle Bill remembers lying in bed, a small boy of six or seven, starting to cry as he heard his mother "crying, talking, and arguing with my father about having to go to another country."* But with the seeds having been sown much earlier, watered and fed by years of talk and experience, it was almost inevitable that they would soon sprout into a final decision to leave.

Since he knew no one at all in Canada, Opa's only option was to apply for a sponsor, in late 1947. Unfortunately, he could find no one prepared to take his family of eight. Then, in 1948, my father, the eldest son, chose to go alone. Partly because he wanted to find them a place, partly because he would otherwise have had to go to war in Indonesia, and partly because he wanted to emigrate with or without his parents, he left, boarding the Dutch boat *Tabinta* on August 15, just after his nineteenth birthday. By 1950 he found a sponsor for the whole family. Mr. Harvey Marshall of Ancaster, Ontario, owned a farm that needed more hands, and he was willing to let the Vander Stelts live in a small house on his property.

Things bustled on the other side of the ocean. Oma, still hating the idea, nevertheless dressed up with her husband, four boys, and one girl in her best clothes to make the long fifty-mile trip



to the big city to get the medical examinations, TB shots, and x-rays required by Canadian Immigration. Belongings were either packed or sold, and a place was found on a Polish boat, *The Batory*, for February, 1950.

Then, before they knew it, the day had arrived. Everything was ready, and with hundreds of other immigrants, "koffers" in hand, they lined up and boarded *The Batory*. The trip included a three-day stopover in England, which required interminable hours spent waiting in train stations. After England, there were only the sights and sounds of ocean, sky, and boat engines to keep the passengers company—and, of course, the almost inevitable seasickness.

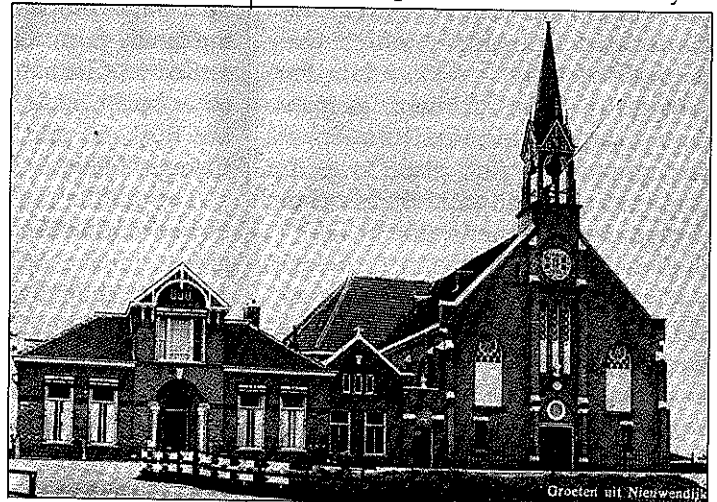
Self-doubt occupied unnumbered hours of everyone's time. Where are we going? What if the boat sinks? Will we perish here, or in the new land? What will it be like? What does this freedom entail? For adults and children alike, the concept must have been almost too much to handle until it materialized in accumulated experience.

The night they arrived was picture-perfect; the Statue of Liberty was reflected on the calm water of New York harbor under a full moon. Even Oma's crying and saying how bad it would be couldn't take away from the beauty of that one-night stopover. Of course, there was still the long, long train ride through Canada from the east coast. The snow outside and the frost on the windows of the train were a strange experience. After numerous snow-storm delays, they were hardly inclined to enjoy the winter, but the

boys amused themselves for a while breathing and licking on the windows to be able to see outside.

Finally, they arrived in southwestern Ontario. Definitely a different country, perhaps even hell, thought one of the boys, comparing the piles of snow and freezing temperatures to that beautiful night in New York. But how warm the house and how delicious the hot chocolate later that night at some welcoming household!

A week passed before the family of



(lower left) Vander Stelt farmstead in Nieuwendyk, North Brabant; (above) Church and school in Nieuwendyk

seven could move into the first house they were to occupy in the new land. When they did move, they found themselves confronted with a major cleaning job, including the removal of a smelly black and white pussycat from the basement and the gathering of straw to lay in the bedroom in place of mattresses. The carton with the furniture didn't arrive for another three months.

Meanwhile, life went on. Opa had taken some English lessons back in the Netherlands and continued to take a little in Canada, so he could get along reasonably well with his em-

*Bill Vander Stelt, *Comments on his immigration.*

ployer and in conversations with other English-speaking people. The boys began attending public school near Onondaga, thereby picking up the language rather quickly. There were the inevitable initial difficulties for them: getting through the stares and laughs from new classmates and learning how to play this sport called baseball that everyone was playing, but they got along—whoever hollered the loudest simply got the ball.

For the whole family there was also the church, the Christian Reformed Church in Brantford, which they helped create with Rev. Adam Persenaire. Religion for them, as for so many immigrant families, was a stronghold, the first place to go for comfort in difficulty and the last thing to change in the new land.

Slowly the family transformed itself from the frightened cluster of outsiders they had been into hard-working, determined, and successful individuals. In 1953 one of the old-world dreams took a step toward realization: they leased a farm in Jerseyville to cultivate horseradish, potatoes, corn, and wheat. By 1956 they had done well enough to buy that farm.

Meanwhile, my father worked first on a farm, then in various factories in the Brantford area. After taking a building course at night school, he worked for a house builder until 1955, when he went to Grand Rapids, Michigan, to get some college education. This proving rather difficult because he had had no high school education, he dropped out, and in 1960 he opened his own business, the Vander Stelt Construction Co. Ltd. That same year he married my mother. Never once did he regret having come to Canada. He says that although he occasionally longs to see the house of his nativity and to spend some time in his hometown, Holland never comes to his mind unless he hears the word.

One of his richest memories includes the day he left Holland, when his former minister, Rev. Gte. Hamming, came back from his holidays in northern Holland specifically to tell him, "GO WITH GOD!"

No one but Oma ever regretted the move, and although no one remembers her ever speaking much English, even she got used to it after a while. Opa simply loved the new land. Of the other children, two of the boys went on to become college professors, one opened up a crane company, and one operated the family farm. One girl married and settled in Chatham, Ontario, and the other, having emigrated to Canada with her husband and children, settled in Cayuga, Ontario.

The battles and even wars mentioned earlier involved these immigrants in one of the most dramatic crises of their lives. Uprooted from the only life they knew, each having a different idea of what "Canada!" was going to be like, no one could be sure of just how much of Holland he was going to keep inside of him. Each felt the pull and tug, the pressures and urges of the new land "forcing him either to change and adapt or to cling tenaciously to the old values and blunt the new forces which impinged on his way of life.* What they saw and heard compelled them all to react in ways consistent with what they wanted to do here and with what they wanted to become in their new land.

For some, this meant treading old footpaths and seeing beauty and truth in more familiar sights and ideas. For others it meant walking old paths with new insights to reinterpret their traditions. For still others, the change meant entirely new ways.

As a child and grandchild of these people, I too take a place in their tradition. As a Dutch person, I come from an ethnic minority in Canada: 1.6%. Further, within that minority, as a baptized member of the Christian Re-

formed Church, which represents 10.2% of the Dutch in Canada, I am one among approximately .0032% of the Canadian population, both Dutch and Christian Reformed. My 77,600 cohorts in Canada have established 115 Christian educational institutions since 1943, and I have attended four of these. During my lifetime I can also join a Christian labor union (The Christian Labour Association of Canada) or a Christian political group (Citizens for Public Justice); I can listen to Dutch music and news (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation: Radio Nederland) and watch Dutch TV (Dutch Magazine); I can help promote Netherlandic literature and culture (Canadian Association for the Advancement of Netherlandic Studies) and join a Dutch luncheon club (Netherlands Luncheon Club); I can promote Christian study in agriculture (the Christian Farmers Federation) and do my banking at one of two credit unions (DUCA and the Christian Credit Union); I can get counseling from one of two organizations (Salem, Cascade Christian Counseling), and when I finally retire, I can go to one of four retirement homes (Shalom Manor, Ebenezer Home, Emmanuel Home, and Holland Christian Homes), without ever going too far out of reach of my 77,600 cohorts.

According to Anthony Richmond in *Post-War Immigrants to Canada*, "the Benelux group of immigrants—mainly from the Netherlands, hold the record as the nationality with the largest proportion (40%) of its members belonging to ethnic clubs or associations."** I am convinced that this 40% contains a sizeable portion of CRC members in Canada. The path

*T. Heath, Leuba Bailey, et al., *The Immigrant Experience* (Toronto: Writer's Development Trust, 1970), p. 1.

**Anthony H. Richmond, *Post-War Immigrants in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), p. 147.

these folks have chosen is part of my tradition; others in my family have followed far different patterns of cultural adaptation. I honor and touch hands with both groups while searching still for my own path.

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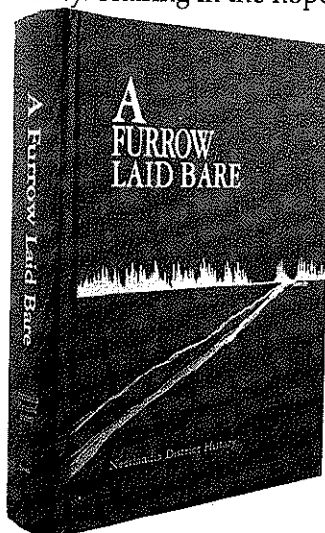
A Furrow Laid Bare. Edited by Elsie Navis and Joy Siebring-Wieringa. Friesen Printers, Edmonton, Alberta, 1985. \$78.00 Canadian currency.

Located about seventy miles northwest of Edmonton, Alberta, the hamlet of Neerlandia is the center of a Dutch agricultural community first settled in 1911 by immigrants who, as early as 1906, had arrived in Edmonton. In 1910, one of the original Neerlandia pioneers, immigrant Henry Kippers, who had made his home in Edmonton, played a pivotal role in the formation of a society which had as its purpose the establishment of a Dutch colony where each settler would own his own land and be surrounded by other Dutch folk who had similar views concerning religion and community. Sharing in the hope for a

Zuiver Nederlandse Kolonie (pure Dutch colony) with the Edmonton Dutch were a sprinkling of Dutch-Americans from Whitinsville, Massachusetts, and South Dakota, who, with their fellow Dutch-Canadians, helped make the Neerlandia dream a reality.

Using more than a thousand pages, the editors present the reader with an extremely detailed picture of every aspect of Neerlandia's history. Also included are extensive comments about the social, geographic, and religious environment of the community. As the editors see it, Neerlandia is a unique place which began and is to this day an exclusively Reformed, protestant, Dutch farming enclave. Here the immigrants' ancestral vision of a settlement apart from the world has become a reality. Serving God while subduing the earth was and remains the creed of Neerlandia's citizens.

After perusing "Part One: Historical Framework" and "Part Two: The Generations," the reader will think that he too is a Neerlandian who knows about the hard work and heroes of past times, and is able to remember and sort out the members, dead and alive, of each family. In these two sections, which comprise half of the book, we learn that most of the immigrants who arrived in Neerlandia came from the northern parts of Groningen and Friesland and that the primary reason for leaving the



Netherlands was economic. Farm ownership and providing opportunities for their children were the cherished goals of the early pioneers. To achieve these ends, they endured mosquitoes, terrible cold, primitive housing, abject poverty, repeated failure, loneliness, and a daily routine of farm chores and domestic toil which taxed the physical strength and faith of both parents and children.

By 1920, ten settlers had patented their land and the population in the community numbered thirty families. A generation later, in the late forties and early fifties, postwar immigrants found Neerlandia, as portrayed by the editors, to be "... a well-established Dutch community with close friendship and kinship ties and on its way to Canadianization." Neerlandia's war veterans, the editors observe, discovered their home community much as it was before the war. There worldly wise veterans and the postwar immigrants, who "... seemed a strange bunch to native Neerlandians," joined an enclave on the verge of continuing prosperity based in part on self-sacrifice, mechanized farm equipment (such as the caterpillar tractor), and rising prices for grain, hogs, poultry, and dairy products.

Neerlandia then and now is minutely scrutinized and recalled by those who live there in "Part Three: Community Growth." Reading here and elsewhere we learn about tobacco-chewing habits in church, the use of beautifully built and decorated outhouses as status symbols, ministerial warnings against high-heeled shoes for women, or worse still, covenant youth playing hockey with unbelievers. Those reading through this lengthy tome and gazing at the multitude of pictures cannot help but comprehend how Neerlandia became what it is today. After a close study for this book, you will be conversant about horses and their insect tormen-

tors the bull flies, cream separators, warm underwear, arrowheads, the Staten Bijbel, Edmonton, the cultural mandate, the Rev. Harm Van Der Woude saga, and the Tuininga clan. Also, you will understand the significance of each part of this rural area. Once finished, you will be an expert on Neerlandia's history from the turn of the century to the present. Vicariously, you will have played a role in the formation of Neerlandia and become acquainted with its pioneers and living citizens.

A Furrow Laid Bare and Albert VanderMey's *To All Our Children: The Story of Postwar Dutch Immigration to Canada* (Paideia Press, 1983, \$19.95 paperback, \$29.95 hardcover) can best be characterized as collections of parts of immigrant letters and diaries, personal reminiscences, and present-day observations by those who are aware of the change and challenge now facing the Dutch-Canadians wherever they live. *A Furrow Laid Bare* is nostalgic history and at times you will find wistful comments about the past. For example, words such as "fond" and "happy" are used to depict memories and those reflecting on bygone days state that "Helping was common in the pioneer days" or "... kids didn't demand as much in those days."

Often, those who remember the past find their vision blurred by a happy haziness. Little criticism is made of past action, what went right is emphasized, what went wrong is minimized. Without doubt, the early Neerlandia pioneers had a strong sense of purpose and a deep religious faith. How faith must become action often divided them, but all participated one way or another in the effort. We find reports of heartrending sacrifice scattered throughout the book. Wives and mothers, who often were not consulted when decisions to immigrate were made, suffered much.

Writing about his wife in 1919, one immigrant stated, "Those letters always make Tena cry as they remind her she will never see those relatives again," or, as another remembering parent put it, "Life in Canada was not kind to Mother. She died a little every day, one tear at a time." About remaining in Canada, another woman exhibited her resolve by stating, "even if we have to eat rabbits and potato peels, we're going to stay here."

Neerlandia's pioneers and early settlers were not unique. They join the line of those devout, hard-headed, squabbling, and, at times eccentric folk who, both in America and Canada, formed communities where they hoped for a better life for themselves and their children. *A Furrow Laid Bare* is Neerlandia's saga. With slight variations, what occurred there took place in every Dutch-Canadian or Dutch-American community. This volume and future publications like it will provide fine background materials for those studying Dutch immigration to Canada and the United States and will help these individuals draw conclusions about the similarities and differences exhibited by members of various Dutch enclaves. In *A Furrow Laid Bare*, we relive Neerlandia's past and participate in its present.

—C.J. Bult

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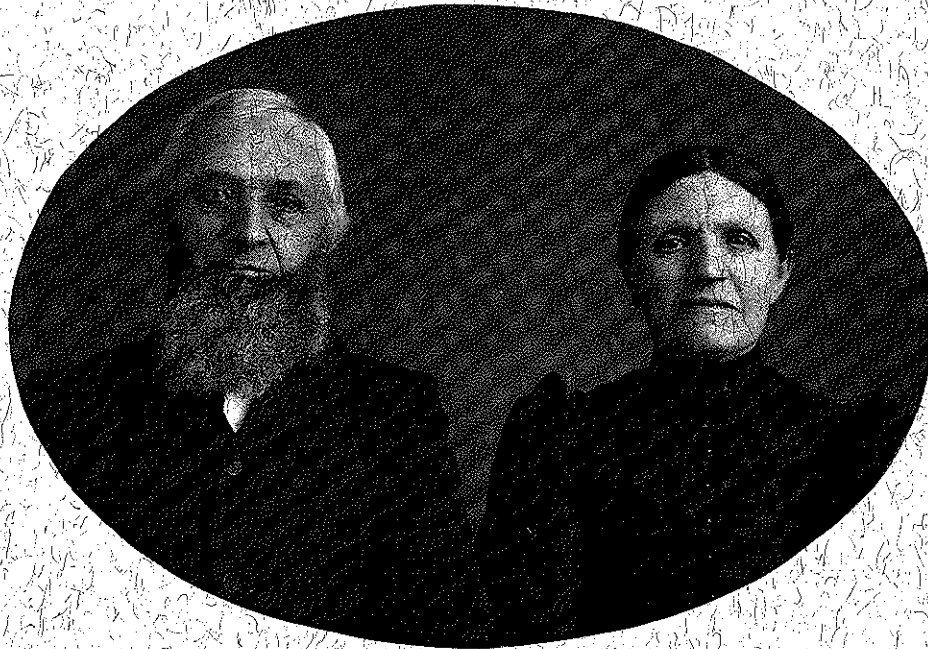
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