ORIGINS

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1881
SIX MONTHS IN AMERICA

Hallum, Friesland near Van Dyke's home village.

In 1881, Dirk Miedema returned to the Netherlands to visit his brother in their native Frisian village of Ferwerd. After immigrating in 1852, Miedema had become a successful farmer in Western Michigan, and, during his return trip to Holland in 1881, he sold tickets for a steamship line which transported immigrants. No doubt his status as a native son in Ferwerd increased the credibility of his reports while also increasing the number of tickets he sold. At any rate, fifty-four "Ferwerdians" joined the group of travelers which Miedema assembled. They had signed up at one of the several and well attended meetings which Miedema organized in Ferwerd and other nearby locations. The Ferwerdians and their neighbors were deeply interested in what Miedema could say about economic prospects in America.

Farming in the Netherlands was changing rapidly during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, for, as cheap American grain flooded European markets, Dutch farmers were forced to raise new crops and adopt more economical processes. Sugar beets replaced grain crops, and dairy cooperatives took over the task of cheese production which had earlier occurred on individual farms. These and other structural changes in Dutch agriculture released a large number of farm hands from their traditional employment, and many of the unemployed were attracted to the United States where expanding agriculture required a growing work force. Even better, the possibility of becoming farm owners was real in America during the 1880s, and Miedema was a living example of that potential. Farm folk in Friesland, who did not wish to become day laborers in the growing number of sugar beet refineries or dairy cooperatives, listened eagerly to Miedema's success story. Still, some of those who joined Miedema's group did not want to become farmers. Among these, Johannes Van Dyke planned only a temporary sojourn in America.

Frisian farm in Ferwerd, Van Dyke's home village. This farm, located on the north sea dike, was the original meeting house of the Ferwerd Christian Reformed Church. It was instituted there in 1835 by Hendrick De Cock.

At twenty-four years of age, Van Dyke had already become a successful building contractor in Friesland, but the economic difficulties in agriculture also affected the building trades, and Van Dyke reported that the contractors were underbidding each other so severely that no profits were possible. He expected the construction business to improve in due course, but during the slump, he decided to visit the U.S.A. and gain some experience living among the Dutch immigrants in West Michigan and Chicago. A. Gelders, who was Van Dyke's friend and fellow tradesman, also joined the cluster of immigrants. Together, then, Van Dyke and Gelders embarked on the adventure of their lives.

Johannes kept a careful record of that adventure, and his hand-written, eighty-four-page account has been preserved in the Ferwerd family's possession for the past century. Recently, Professor Walter Lagerwey presented a copy of Van Dyke's "Six Months in America" to the Calvin College Archives, and *Origins* has published the manuscript in two major segments, Michigan and Chicago. The Michigan episode begins with Van Dyke's impressions of Holland, Michigan, on May 23, 1881.

THE HOLLAND KOLONIE

We arrived in Allegan, Michigan, at 6:20 A.M., and at first it seemed that we would be delayed another day before reaching Holland, but fortunately Miedema located an engine with one passenger car destined for Holland that day. We rode then through forests and woods—(many of the trees were burned down)—until we reached cleared land around Hamilton. By 8:30 A.M. we arrived safely in Holland on May 23.

Miedema's family welcomed us warmly, and after traveling for nineteen days it was a great pleasure to sit at a family table for a meal. We were gratified that God had spared us from ill health and disasters.

After a long and refreshing night's rest, we joined Miedema to visit the city on Tuesday morning, and we met many acquaintances there who welcomed us warmly. The city of Holland is well built, and not very crowded. The streets run east and west or north and south so they divide the city into squares. The streets are forty feet wide and paved with wooden blocks set on end. Board sidewalks are ten feet wide. Wagons and carts use the wide area and the sidewalks are for pedestrians.

Most houses are constructed of wood, but they are not huts, in fact they are very neat—covered with half-inch siding and roofed with wooden shingles. The shingles are treated with creosote and the houses are painted white. The doors, windows, and shutters are green, while the interiors are plastered or papered. Everything is very neat. Stores cover the entire side of the main street and the merchants live in the back rooms of their businesses.

Two of the families who immigrated with us found work in a brickyard near Zeeland, and my friend A. Gelders went to work in Overijsel as a bricklayer. Jan Jansens remained with Miedema as a hired hand, while I went to live with H. Lusdam. He is a bricklayer who lives in New Groningen Michigan, and I worked with him. He picked up my trunk on Wednesday and I joined him in New Groningen, which is located about three miles from Holland. Lusdam lives in a fine house—it has two sitting rooms, a kitchen, and bedrooms downstairs. I have one of two small upper rooms for myself. The property also has a large shed or barn and an acre of garden. He raises potatoes, several kinds of vegetables, and Spanish clover. Lusdam also has two wagons, two horses, and a cow which roams loose along the road.

New Groningen is a farming area, or what we would call a hamlet in the Netherlands. It has a school, a small church, and a general store. Zeeland is about a half-mile away, so we are located between Holland and Zeeland. As a rule, Dutch is the spoken language in all these places.

The roads run over the hills and down the valleys and that frightened us at first, but there was no problem. When the wagons go downhill, they brake them and so they can be held back. On some hillsides water flows from a spring and runs to lower areas to join creeks which empty into the river. Those form the boundaries of some farms, while others are divided by zig-zag rail fences made from split logs.

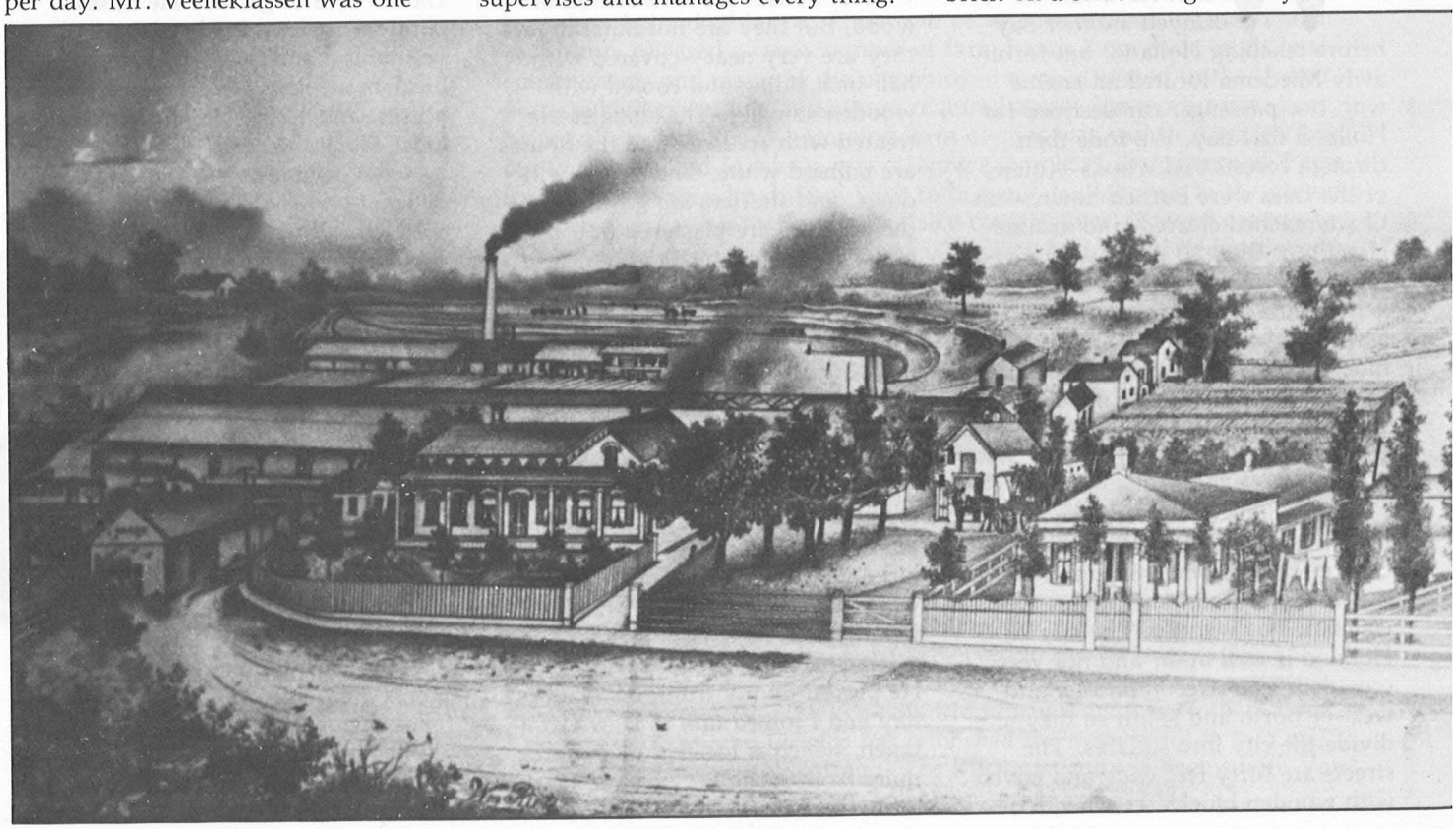
I began working on Thursday morning at the Veeneklassen brick factory located between New Gron-

Hamilton, Michigan

ingen and Zeeland. The factory is surrounded by a green area and operates with two steam driven machines. About fifty men work there making fifty thousand bricks each day. The bricks are kiln fired and the kiln is located near a railroad spur. The tracks run though the kiln so the bricks can be removed quickly and the manufacturing can go on continuously. Wages in the brick factory range from $1.10 to $1.40 per day. Mr. Veeneklassen was one of the first immigrants to come here and in the Netherlands he had worked in a tile factory. He also had some experience making chimney bricks by hand. Now he owns the flourishing business which I have described. Each of his sons has a position in the business—one supervises the clay diggers, another runs the machines, a third works with the firing crew, and a fourth runs the office. Veeneklassen himself supervises and manages every thing. He would not need to be ashamed of this business if it were in the Netherlands.

I was employed to finish the brickwork on a carriage house which Veeneklassen was building. He provided me with a laborer named Andries, and I soon observed that lunch and dinner came with the job. At 9:30 in the morning a steam whistle blew and Andries said to me, "That is lunch." Although I did not know what it meant, I went to the kitchen. There coffee, white bread, sugar, and butter were set. I joined Andries at his table and soon Veeneklassen joined us with some workers from another part of the factory. It was not long before the whistle blew again and everyone left the kitchen immediately. When the whistle sounded at twelve o'clock Andries said, "That is dinner time." We returned to the kitchen and enjoyed a fine dinner with the owner, his wife, a son, and a daughter. Others there included a bricklayer and his helper. All this proved to me that there was no differentiation here between the boss and his workman as was the case in the Netherlands.

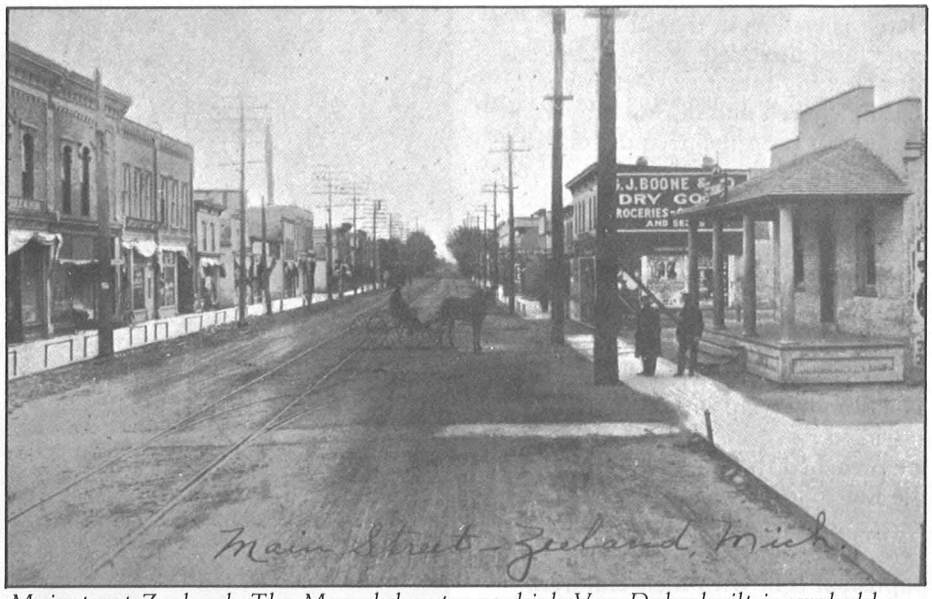
On Saturday morning we went to Zeeland, where we began laying brick on a store being built by a



Mr. Moerdyke. The building was to be thirty feet wide and eighty feet long, with the narrow side facing the street. The roof beam was laid higher on the street side than the rear wall. Over this they laid a deck covered with zinc plates. The wall extended above the deck to form a parapet so it could withstand a storm. In America they lay the bricks from the inside of the wall so one seldom sees a ladder outside the building. They lay the brick six courses one upon another with a top course between.

The cellar and foundations were constructed of field stones by stone masons who did the work with amazing neatness. For the rest we used bricks made by Veeneklassen. These bricks are good and durable—as good as the Frisian variety. Here, though, the bricks are all of the same size. The beams over the completed building are only half the thickness of those used in the Netherlands, but here they are separated by only a little more than one foot.

We worked steadily on the store in Zeeland for a whole week and I had a chance to observe everything. The carpenter work connected with the stairs, roof, floor, window frames, doors, moldings, etc. is all prefabricated in the factories, so carpentering is mostly a matter of installation.



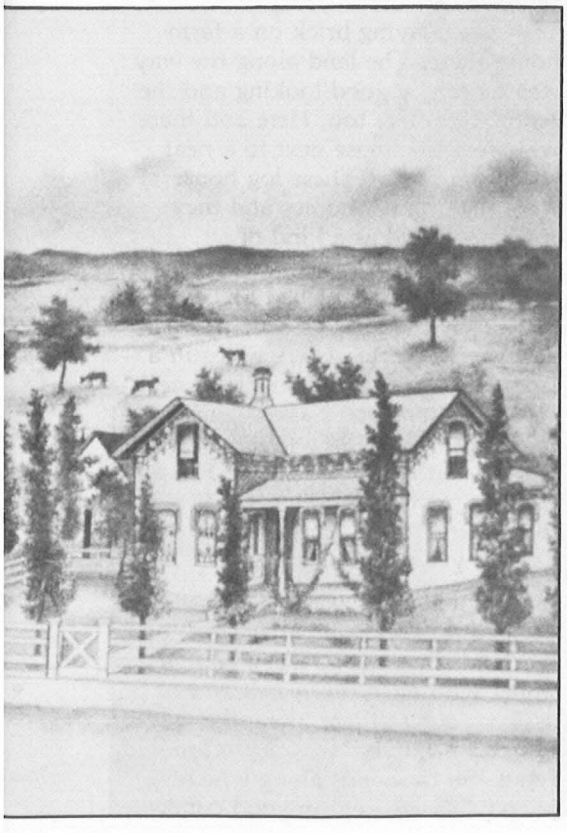
Mainstreet Zeeland. The Moerdyke store which Van Dyke built is probably on the left side of main street on the near side of the picture.

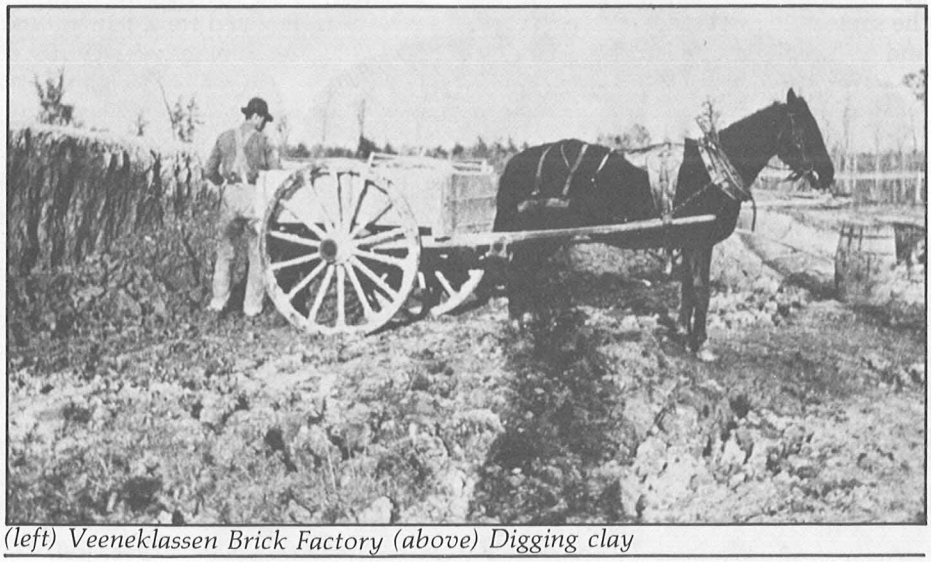
Zeeland is a busy and attractive place constructed primarily of wooden houses. The main street consists almost entirely of stores. All kinds of manufacturing can be found here—grain mills, woodsawing mills, and prefabricated wooden products—and they all operate with steam-driven power.

Zeeland has few saloons, and these have little room for sitting around. Beer is drunk standing at the bar for, as the Americans say, "Time is money." It is offensive to spend time in the saloons and especially to drink whiskey or brandy there. Hard liquor can be purchased in the drug stores, which do not have to buy an expensive license as do the saloons. Liquor is consumed primarily as medicine.

We see all kinds of wagons here; people are reluctant to walk. All the farmers ride into town with wagons. They let their horses stand untied while they do their shopping. Then they bring their goods to the wagons and drive off.

On Sunday I attended church for the first time, and though we live less than two miles from Zeeland, we still rode to church. They have a large stable in the village where everyone ties up their horses. The church—Dutch Reformed—is made of wood and can seat six to seven hundred people. Rev. Steffens preaches there and he stands on a platform which also has a settee.

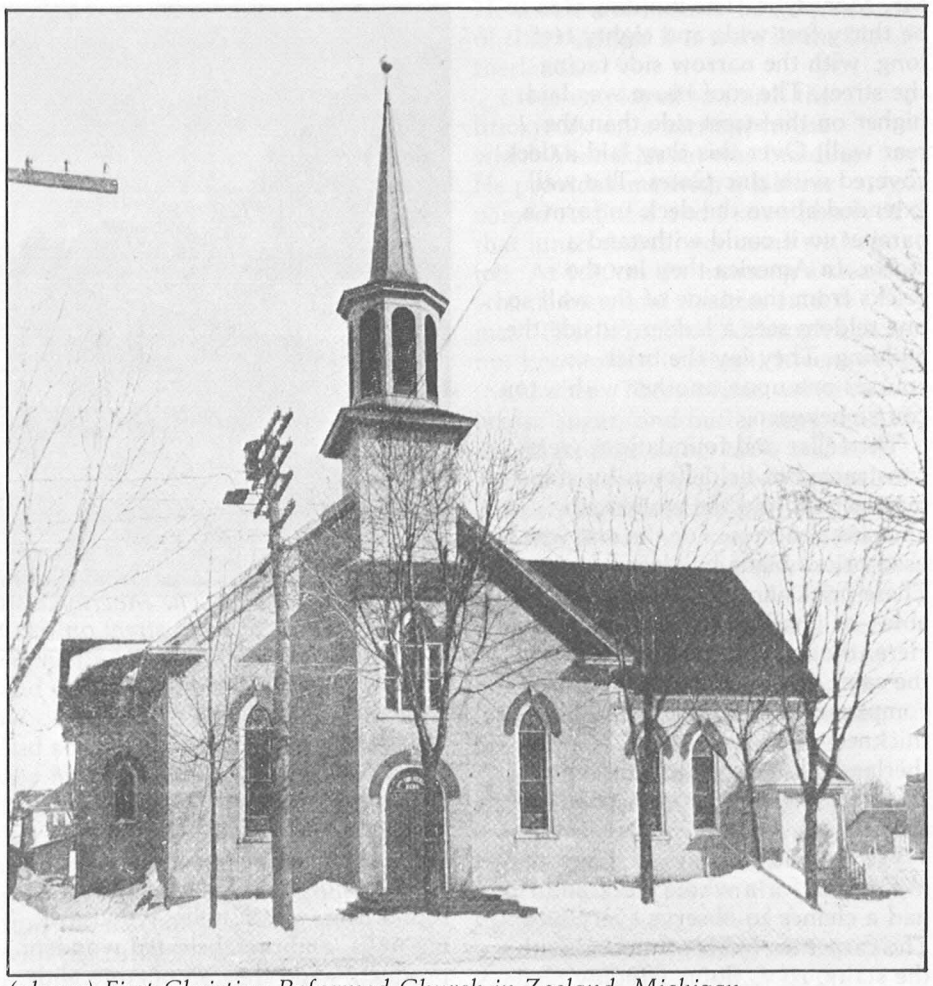



(left) Veeneklassen Brick Factory (above) Digging clay

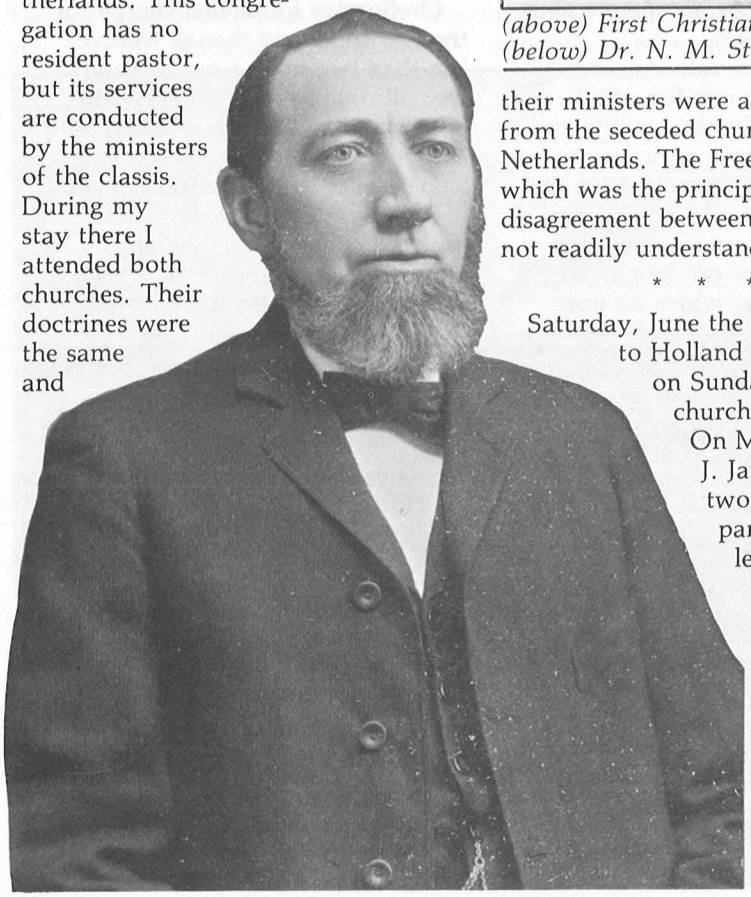
Here, as well as in the other churches I attended, strange customs attracted my attention. After entering the church and during prayers the people keep their hands folded. Women here do not use a snuff box, but a fan. Many men also use a fan and Rev. Steffens had one lying on the settee. He used it during the singing. It pleased me when someone allowed me to use their fan, but I could not manipulate it as rapidly as the people who were used to it. The fanning went on all the time.

I liked Rev. Steffens very much. He preached the truth according to the Reformed doctrines. I also witnessed the sacrament of baptism here. Ten couples stood around the baptismal font with their children. The minister then left the platform and stood with them to read the formula. Then the men held the children to be baptized. A deacon held the font and went around the circle with the minister as he baptized the children.

In Zeeland there is also a Holland Christian Reformed Church—constructed of brick with a seating capacity of about four hundred. It has a pulpit like those in the Netherlands. This congregation has no resident pastor, but its services are conducted by the ministers of the classis. During my stay there I attended both churches. Their doctrines were the same and their ministers were almost always from the seceded church in the Netherlands. The Free Mason issue, which was the principle point of disagreement between them, I could not readily understand.



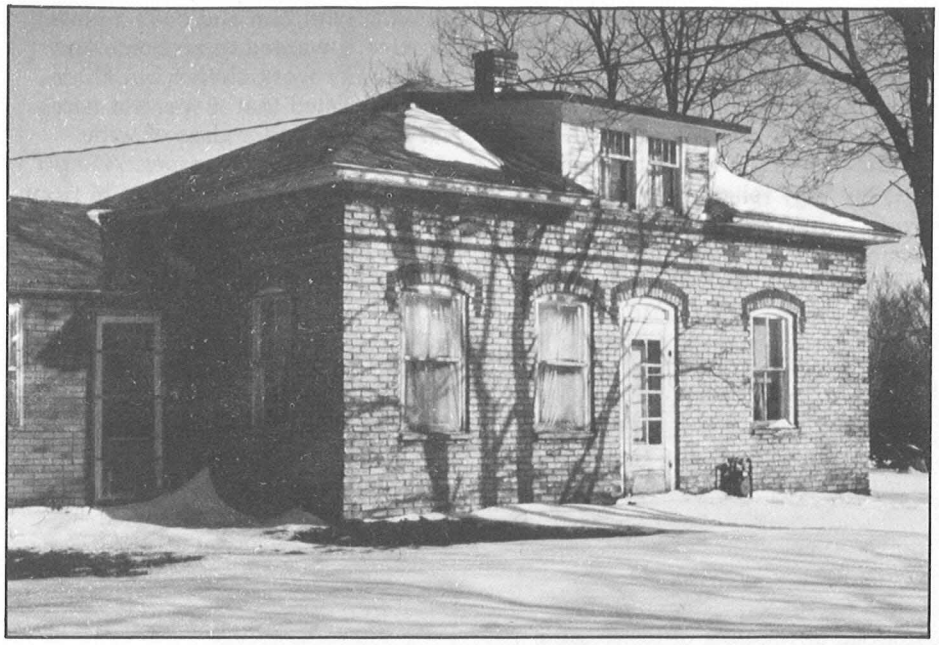
(above) First Christian Reformed Church in Zeeland, Michigan
(below) Dr. N. M. Steffens



* * *

Saturday, June the 4th, we went to Holland for a haircut and on Sunday we went to church in Zeeland. On Monday evening J. Jansens brought two letters from my parents and I learned that they were in good health. Then, because we had to wait for bricks on our job, we rode over to help F. De Groot and Gelders in Overijsel. They were laying brick on a farm house there. The land along the way was especially good-looking and the crops were fine, too. Here and there we saw a log house next to a neat new farm house. These log houses were the original homes and they were preserved as a kind of memorial. In Overijsel we layed brick for a farmer named Piet Verbijn, and by the look of his crops he had a fertile farm. There was still a six-mile-long tract of woodland near Verbijn's land, and I asked him if that land was left in wood because it was unfit for farming. "It's just as good as mine," he said. "It was all forest here at one time but that part has not yet been bought up.

It rained on Tuesday and Lusdam decided that we had better work on the road. Every road has a commissioner who must care for it and he assigns each resident along the way one day each year to work on the roads. So the roads along which people live are kept in good condi-



Both of these houses were constructed with Veeneklassen brick, and the house which was constructed for Piet Verbijn was probably designed like the Lincoln Street house. They exhibit a noticeable Dutch influence in the window and eave decorations.

tion without cost.

On the Sunday of June the 12th Gelders, Vander Ploeg, and I rode to Friesland together. We tied up our horse and went to the Holland Christian Reformed Church, where G. Hemkes preached. We had hoped to meet J. Hoekstra and his wife there, but we did not see them at church so we hitched up our horse. I wanted to know where they lived so I walked to the parsonage and learned that they had moved to Kalamazoo. Hoekstra had been appointed there as a teacher in a Dutch school. Rev. Hemkes wanted us to stay for coffee, but because we had already hitched up the horse, we could not.

As we rode to New Groningen we met people coming from the other church. One of them caught my attention. "That's Tom Houtsma," Vander Ploeg said. I couldn't believe it, and then Houtsma spoke to us, but he didn't know me. "I can believe that," I said. "You left Ferwerd thirteen years ago

when we were just small boys. Now I have changed more than you in that time." We became reacquainted and then accepted his invitation and turned around to spend the day with him. We talked all day about America and the Netherlands—the time went by too fast.

In the evening we all walked over to our neighbor, Mr. Hildebrand. He was one of the first settlers here and had been an assistant teacher in the Netherlands. He had become a notary and was the postmaster, but he did not deliver the mail; that was not done in places with populations of less than six thousand. Instead, people rent a numbered box with a glass door. One can tell at a glance if mail has come to his address. Hildebrand and his wife are already quite old and several of their children have died, but one whom we visited has survived. The old woman told me to tell my mother that I would be welcome at the Hildebrands as long as I lived. I kept up my contacts with the Hildebrands during my stay and received much good advice from them. Mr. Hildebrand was always ready to talk politics and he was a full-blooded Democrat. Most of the people here are Republicans. He also had a beautiful flower garden with gorgeous flowers. They were his special pride.

From June 13 to the 18th we worked continuously on the Moerdyk store building. On the eleventh De Groot and I figured out the wages I had earned during the fourteen days I had worked for him. He paid me $1.50 per day plus board and laundry. We had a good boarding house. The landlady was a Hollander but she was born and brought up in America. She had a completely American style of housekeeping. She baked not only delicious bread but also cake, tarts, and cookies which were so good that she could have served them to a pastry cook in the Netherlands.

People do not have much furniture here, but it is adequate. Furniture consists of beds, chairs, tables, and the indispensable stove. Eating utensils are like those in the Netherlands, but pails, wash basins, and saucers are all made of galvanized glass. Most people also have a wardrobe and I have seen organs in the homes of the wealthy. On the whole things look nice. The women usually sit in easy chairs or rockers. They wear neat dresses frequently of white or light colored material.

The people are modest in general and are very religious. In almost every home where I have had a meal, the head of the family offers prayers and gives thanks after reading a portion of Scripture. Anyone who behaves, goes to church, and works willingly is respected, but lazy folk, and those who are rude or drunkards, get little consideration. They are, as it were, set aside.

At the same time, there are clearly no differentiations here based on rank or profession. That became evident this past week. One day when I returned from work I stopped at the post office to see if I had any mail. Postmaster Hildebrand invited me in to spend the evening with him and have a glass of wine. I wanted to go home and change my work clothes but Hildebrand insisted that it was not necessary. So we had a glass of wine made from his own grapes. A short time later a carriage stopped in front of the house and a man walked across the garden. Hildebrand said, "That is Mr. *, a lawyer from Holland. We have a bit of business." I wanted to leave and give them privacy, but Hildebrand would not allow it. "We are not in the Netherlands," he said, "and what I have to discuss with him is no secret." Then Mr. Hildebrand introduced me, and there we sat—a lawyer, a notary, and a bricklayer—talking together pleasantly for almost an hour.★

*name omitted in original manuscript.

"Make sure you read the small print"

Carpenters and Joiners Contract (1883)

Articles of Agreements, made and entered into this fifteenth day of March, A.D. 1883 by and between Herman Zieleyn of the Township of Fillmore, County of Allegan, and State of Michigan, as the party of the First Part, and Mannes Veldhuis of the Township of Overisel, County of Allegan and State of Michigan, as the party of the Second Part.

Witnesseth: First—The said party of the first part does for himself, his heirs, executors, administrators, or assigns covenant, promise and agree to and with the said party of the second part, his heirs, executors, administrators, or assigns, shall and will for the consideration hereinafter mentioned, on or before the fifteenth day of Sept. A.D. 1883, well and sufficiently erect, finish and deliver all carpenter and joiner work in a true, perfect and thoroughly workmanlike manner, in and about the whole of the combined structure, to be used as a dwelling, for the party of the second part, on ground situated in the Township of Overisel, County of Allegan, and State of Michigan, agreeably to the plans, drawing, and specifications prepared for the said works by Geo. H. Sipp, of City of Holland, Ottawa County, Michigan, to the satisfaction and under the direction and personal supervision of the said Geo. H. Sipp, and will find and provide workmen necessary to complete the works in the time mentioned for the sum of three hundred and sixty dollars, lawful money of the United States of America in the following manner:

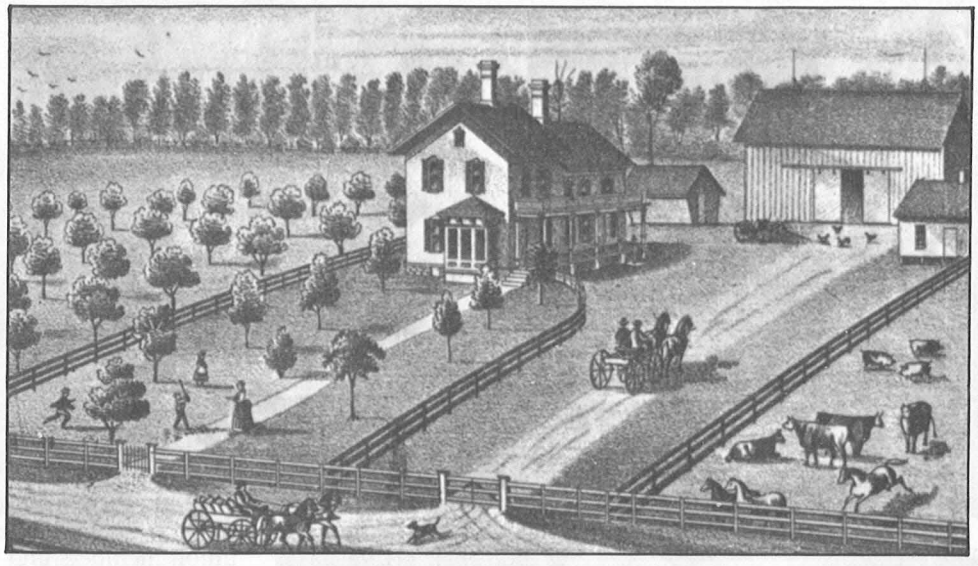
First payment of $100.00 when the whole of the foundation walls, underpinning and piers are completed and ready for the carpenters.

Second payment of $100.00 when the whole of the veneering and chimney work is completed.

Third payment of $160.00 when the plastering is done and the whole completed and receipts shown that all workmen have been paid and have no claim upon said buildings, and all drawings and specifications have been returned to the said party of the second part.

Provided, that in case of the said payments a certificate shall be obtained from and signed by the aforesaid Geo. H. Sipp, to the effect that the work is done in strict accordance will drawings and specifications, and that he considers the payment properly due, said certificate, however, in no way lessening the total and final responsibility of the party of the first part.

FARMING
THE WILDERNESS TAMED



Miedema drove us around to see a few things. His farm, located a half-mile from Holland, has good soil and fine crops. Then we drove to an area where they were still clearing the land. After cutting down the trees they haul them away with oxen to be burned. They cut the trees about three feet above ground and the stumps are left to rot. Corn can be planted between the stumps, and as they and their roots gradually disappear from rotting, the soil improves each year until it can be worked into rich farm land.

Miedema pointed to the fact that thirty-five years earlier, when Van Raalte planted the original colony here, the whole region was covered by thick forests. There were no roads, farms, houses, or any of life's necessities. Now we see a city with buildings and streets, together with villages in every direction and a multitude of fruitful farms and gardens. It is really amazing and one can only conclude that something great has been accomplished here.

Everything, but especially farming, is different here than in the Netherlands. Here the farmer cares for everything that he has to do on his land with one hired hand. Still, one seldom sees a single weed because potatoes and corn are planted so far apart that they can do the weeding with a horse-drawn cultivator. Planting, loading, reaping, mowing, threshing, binding and even the measuring of grain is done by machine.

It is my impression though, that the immigrants have made the wrong choices in recent years. The fact is that today a person arrives here and easily gets a good wage-paying job, and he enjoys a very satisfactory life. Consequently he lacks the incentive to begin the hard work of clearing the forests to begin farming. For those who do have the courage, the process is long and hard, but it follows a clear pattern.

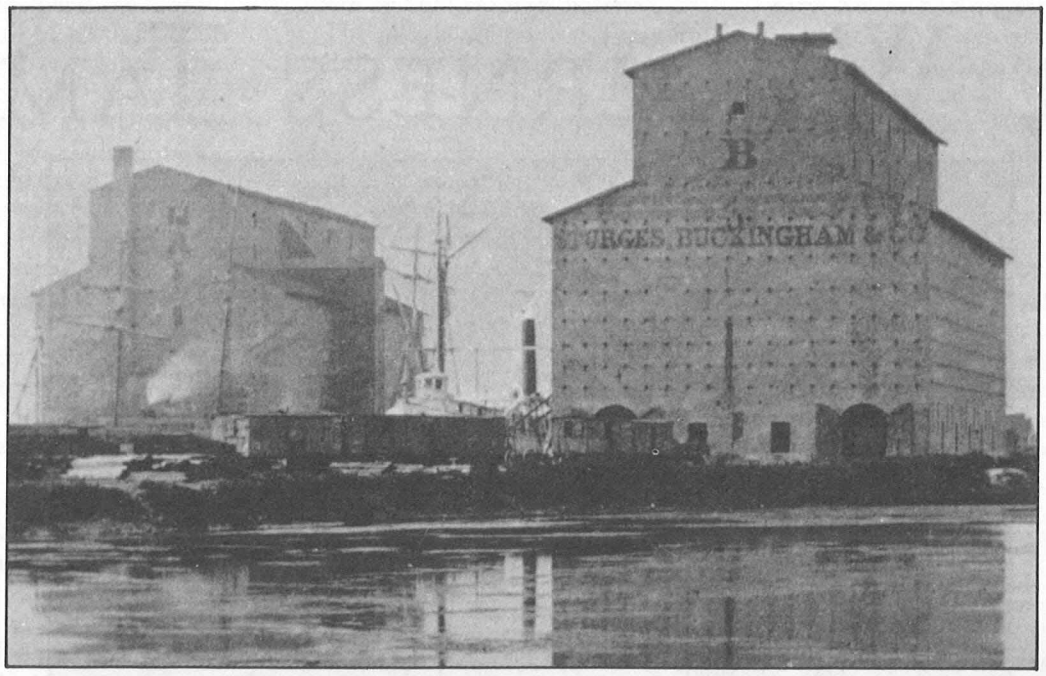
First, woodland can be purchased from either the government or a land company. Goverment land costs about $6.00 per acre, while the land company gets about $20.00 per acre. The first task is to cut down some trees and then cut them down into lumber for a house which must be built as soon as possible.

People who buy land on contract, making annual payments, usually work the land with their whole families. When winter sets in they cut as many trees as they can and take the best to the saw mill while the balance is used for fire wood. Then they plow between the stumps and plant corn. In the summer, the farmer works in a factory or somewhere else for good wages. Then at harvest time he takes care of his crops, stores them and lives on his own place for the winter.

During the winter he removes more trees from his land, and the fields which were cleared earlier are improved by plowing, becoming better each year. As the roots and stumps rot, potatoes can be planted and then the farmer has two crops on his own place.

In summer he again tries to earn money from other employment and this continues from year to year until he thinks he can earn his entire living from his own farm. Every year more stumps can be removed, and as more land is cleared and improved he can have a fruitful farm in about twenty years. As you can see, this is hard work and a person must have determination and endurance to begin and persist in such a business. ★

CHICAGO



Van Dyke and his friend A. Gelders took the train from Holland, Michigan, to Chicago on July 18. After working in the Holland area for about two months the travelers were ready to explore the greatest city of the Mid-West. By prior arrangement they planned to meet Simon De Vries at the Chicago train station, but they didn't immediately recognize each other. After a few anxious moments they made the connection and together they boarded streetcars which carried them to the boarding house at 669 South Halsted Street.

Van Dyke reported, "This house was near the center of the city and on one of its busiest streets. We didn't mind that very much because the house was located behind a drug store which fronted on Halsted Street. The house had just two small bedrooms and a large kitchen area which was very warm in the summer time. Gelders and I had one of the small bedrooms. The landlord and his wife had the other bedroom while their children set out beds on the kitchen floor each night. Except to eat and sleep we spent little time in the house, because we usually sat out on the porch after dinner."

Upon their arrival in Chicago Van Dyke and Gelders hoped to begin work at once, but their guide, Simon Van Gelders, informed them that the employment he had arranged would not begin for a week. Rather than wait that long the travelers found another guide who agreed to help them find work. Their first efforts were not encouraging. Van Dyke wrote:

> We soon began to notice that among the entire population, only a few were Hollanders and the language barrier would be a problem. When we came to a construction job, our guide, who spoke both English and Dutch, would ask if we could be hired. But the boss asked if we belonged to the union. Since we had just arrived we were, of course, not members. It was the same everywhere we went. The bricklayers union in Chicago had made an agreement to work for no less than $4.00 per day and they also agreed to strike if their employers hired non-union bricklayers. We could not join without the recommendations of two union members and since we could not speak English we could not find two members to recommend us.
>
> Our guide did his best by going from one construction job to another and we stopped at various taverns to get news of additional job possibilities. We soon discovered that on these stops the beer was always at our expense. Finally, we made contact with Henry Nieterink, who was a bricklayer's foreman. He invited us to work for him and promised that he would have us recommended for union membership. We eagerly accepted his offer and were happy to be freed from our guide and his expensive beer-drinking friends.
>
> Armed with our trowels, we left for work on Saturday morning, taking the streetcar down Indiana Avenue to the outskirts of the city. There we laid brick on a huge mansion with about ten other brick-layers, but we could not understand anyone except the foreman. We did not like working there very much, so when Simon De Vries stopped at our boarding house with news that we could get work with him building a grain elevator we ac-

cepted the offer, and Gelders was especially happy since he was a carpenter and did not like laying brick. But we faced a new problem. We had spent most of our money on train and streetcar fares and had too little left over to buy tools. Finally we arranged a loan from Simon De Vries and spent about $30.00 on tools. That was an expensive week.

On Tuesday morning we both went to the new job on 33rd Street by the river. There were about sixty-five men on the job there—we three Hollanders together with the English, Scots, Irish, German, Bohemian, and French-speaking Canadians. The wages varied from $2.50 to $3.00 per day. Unfortunately we were not able to work with Simon De Vries, but we were assigned to work with two Canadians. They were descendants of French immigrants who had come to Canada around the time of the French Revolution. They had learned English in school but they spoke French among themselves. Things did not go very well because we could neither understand our boss nor the French-Canadian carpenters. We had to learn our work by watching, and then hope that things would turn out well. Still, we had nice work—we were shaping up to a thousand pieces of wood to make up a pattern.

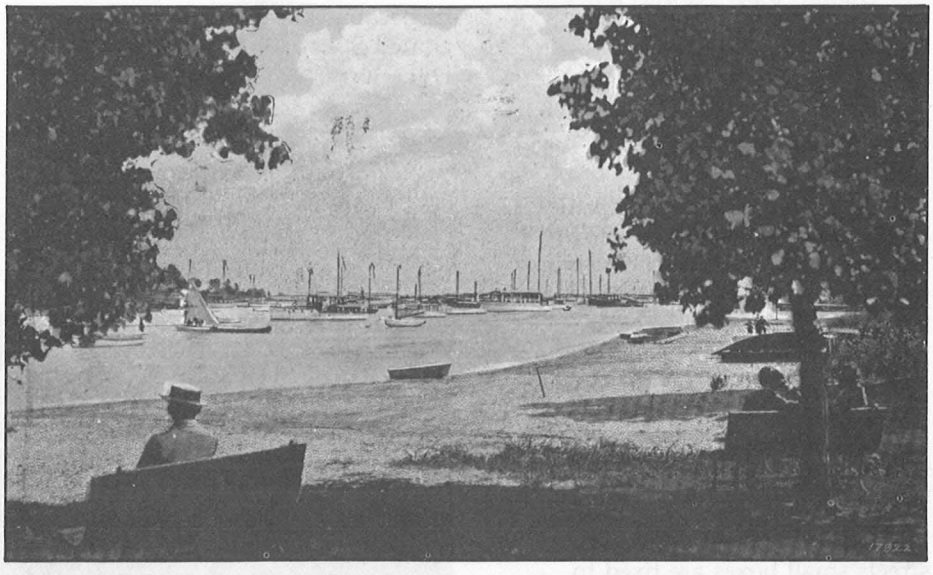
Usually we went to work by streetcar, carrying dinner pails with food and drink. We were on the job from 7 A.M. to noon and from 1 to 6 P.M. In the evening we had a warm meal at our boarding house and from 8 to 11 P.M. we went downtown or visited with friends.

During the first week in August the temperature was 99 degrees in the shade. We worked in the open with no protection and several men had to go home. Gelders went home at 10 A.M. and I planned to join him at noon, but a breeze came up and I stayed to finish the day. We were paid $2.00 per day. A timekeeper walked around the job so no one had to remember his own hours. We get paid every other Tuesday when everyone gets an envelope showing his name and hours with paper money and change inside.

On August 15 a large part of our crew went on strike, but we stayed on the job making wooden items needed in the building. Each piece was dowelled, notched, and dovetailed, and when it was finished the worker put his name on it. That Tuesday, payday, we found that we had received a raise—$2.75 per day. The boss said it was the result of our good work.

. . . We kept working zealously until Gelders' health gave out. He was not bed-ridden, but his strength failed. When he became stronger he was not rehired, so in September he went back to Michigan, where he worked for his former employer in New Groningen.

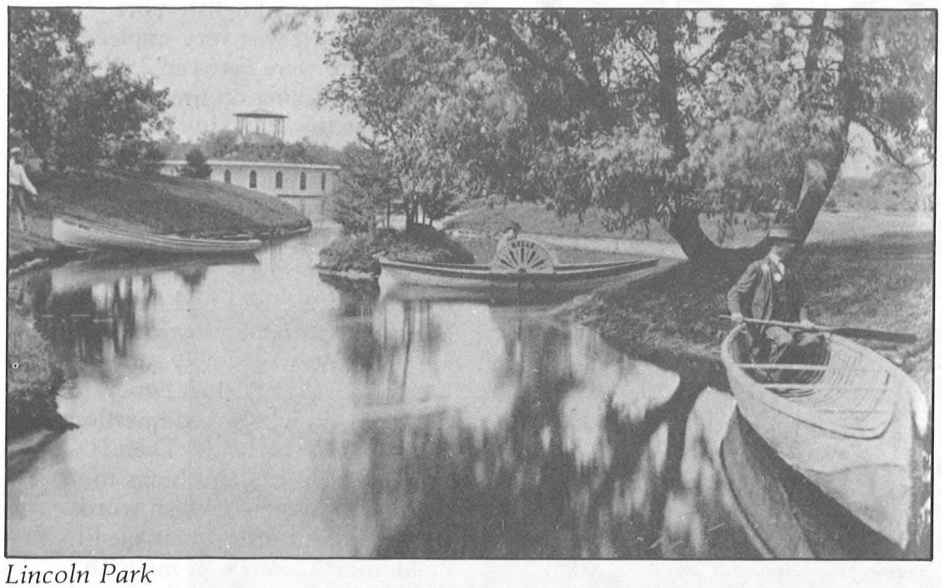
After that I had no companions on the job aside from those who spoke French, German, and English. Simon De Vries worked with another crew. That situation helped me learn English more rapidly, but it was very unpleasant. There were between 250 and 300 men working on the project and I was the only Hollander. Every other nationality was represented, but I was the only one who could not understand English. . . . Still, the work went well and the language problem improved more rapidly than I had dared to expect. My foreman instructed me to speak very slowly, and at lunch time I sat next to two English boys who asked questions about the Netherlands. Then I was forced to explain things to them with the few English words I knew. Once, after I managed to make them understand me with great difficulty, one of them said, "We understand you, but you do not use your words in the correct order." Then I asked them to show me how to improve and they helped me willingly. That short hour was very educational for me.



Touring Chicago

From their Halsted Street boarding house, which cost them $4.00 per week, Van Dyke and Gelders examined the city. Although they arrived on the 18th of July, they did not begin work until the 23rd and during that four day respite they gained their first impressions of Chicago. Van Dyke reported:

> We spent that first week getting a good look at the city, which is large and busy. We were told that only thirty five years ago there were but five houses and one store where a population of 773,000 has now settled. Except for a few places where a river runs through the city, everything is transported through the streets by wheel. Streetcars run along many streets on double tracks going both directions. They terminate near the center of the city by the courthouse. South Halsted Street also has streetcars and a person can board them to go either direction every six minutes from 6 A.M. until late at night.



Lincoln Park

Trains also run alongside busy streets in several places. At 16th and Halsted Streets, a short distance from where we live, I counted more than eighteen pairs of track from a viaduct. On streets where no viaduct crosses the tracks, one must cross over very cautiously. Still, every locomotive has a bell which rings steadily while the train is moving and you can always hear it approaching.

Most manufacturing companies use steam power here, so when the air is still, the city is covered with haze, and a person can hardly see down the street. In some places near the center of the city it is difficult to see the sky because of the large number of telephone and telegraph wires which form a network above the streets.

At various places along the streets small boxes are fixed to telephone poles for use by policemen and fireguards on patrol. There are always enough personnel on duty in the police and fire stations to respond both at night and day time. In the center of the city, which was burned in 1871, the buildings are all constructed of brick, but in the older sections they are mostly of wood. Today, permission is no longer given to build or rebuild with wood, and thus the number of wooden buildings is steadily decreasing.

Though they worked steadily, Van Dyke and Gelders found time to explore the parks, public buildings and great department stores of Chicago. On one occasion Van Dyke accompanied Simon Van Gelder to the Court House, where he became a legal citizen of the United States. Of that event Van Dyke wrote,

> We went to the Court House, which was constructed entirely of hewn stone and granite. It was large and beautiful. We entered and took the elevator to the third floor. Simon had been living in America for five years, and after two years he applied for citizenship. He took some papers with him which testified that he had lived a good moral life and had no criminal record. Then he took the oath declaring that he accepted America as his country and that he would honor her and defend her in time of need. After that he was granted American citizenship.

On another outing the two men set out to tour Chicago's parks and Van Dyke wrote,

> First we took the streetcar to South Park with its beautiful flowers, lawns, trees and shrubs. From there we went way across town by train to Lincoln Park with similar landscape arrangements, and then to the cemeteries. These also looked like flower gardens. We saw a person being buried. The body was brought in by a beautiful hearse which had two oval glass sides and a plate glass window in the rear. At the cemetery the body was carried to the grave which, to prevent a cave-in, was completely lined so that there was just enough room for the casket. At the top of the grave the cover of the casket was taken off for the last time so that the face of

the deceased could be seen through the glass and the relatives saw their beloved once more. The cover was replaced and the casket covered. A wooden cover was laid over the lining of the grave so that it became, as it were, a second rough casket and the earth hid it all from our eyes. Simon told us that the dead here in Chicago are dressed in their best suit of black clothes—the men with collar and dress shirt and the women adorned with necessary frills. We further noticed many children's graves on which formerly used toys lay as memorials. Beautiful flowers and shrubs were planted on the plots, and we saw many people visiting the graves of their departed one.

Chicago on Sunday

When Van Dyke first arrived in Chicago he feared that there were only a few Hollanders in the city, but after attending the First Christian Reformed Church he wrote,

> Judging from the church attendance I began to realize that there were at least some Hollanders here, but when I was told that the [RCA] church of Rev. Bernadus De Beij was even larger and also well attended, it was clear that many Hollanders lived here.

Attending both churches, Van Dyke heard Rev. John Post in the CRC and De Beij in the RCA. He made no comments on the sermons but was dismayed by the Sunday observances outside the Dutch community. He wrote,

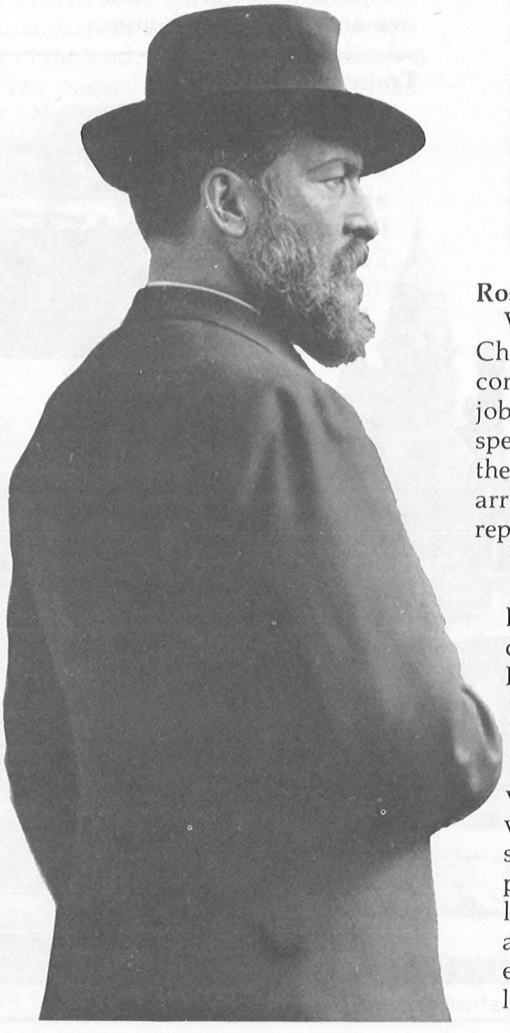
> We soon noticed that the Sabbath is not observed here as in the Holland, Michigan, area. Here the streets are busy, and parades march up and down the streets. Each group carries its own banners—the Free Masons, the trade unions, and other social organizations.

A Memorial Parade

On July 2, 1881, US President James A. Garfield was assassinated by a fanatical political opponent in the Washington, D.C., train station. The President lingered near death until the 19th of September and the nation memorialized his passing with funeral marches on September 26. Chicagoans also marked the occasion with a somber parade of which Van Dyke wrote:

> Although the President was buried in another place, it looked as if the funeral were held here. All the important public buildings were decked with mourning and in some buildings the windows were draped with black and white crepe up to the third floor.
>
> Many windows displayed the President's picture together with the last words he uttered—"Oh God—the people intrusted to my care."
>
> According to the newspapers about 55,000 people observed the parade which started with a band playing funeral marches. A mounted military unit preceded the hearse drawn by eight horses and a riderless horse followed the hearse. Next in line a battalion of marching soldiers led a number of groups with bands interspersed. All sorts of organizations were represented—the officials of the state of Illinois, the Chicago City Council, a group of negroes and many other groups. We stood on the crowded street for four hours to watch the parade go by.

(right) James A. Garfield



Roseland and the Pullman Factory

Van Dyke had planned to work in Chicago until Oct. 22, but when constant rain forced his crew off the job, he decided to quit early and spend a few days visiting friends in the Roseland community. He arrived there on the 19th and reported:

> I stayed at the home of W. Dykstra, who was married to a daughter of my Chicago landlord. Roseland is a little south of Chicago, near Kensington. It is a Dutch community situated across from the Pullman factory. I visited this factory and I am convinced that it would be worth a special trip to America for an expert to see. I found that it was larger and more wonderful than anything of the sort that I had ever seen, although I am definitely not an expert. Situated along

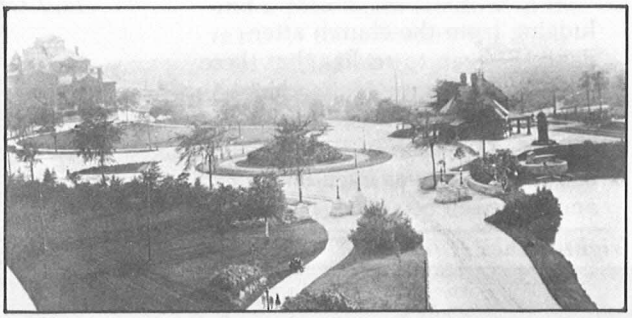
Working class homes at 108th and Perry Streets.

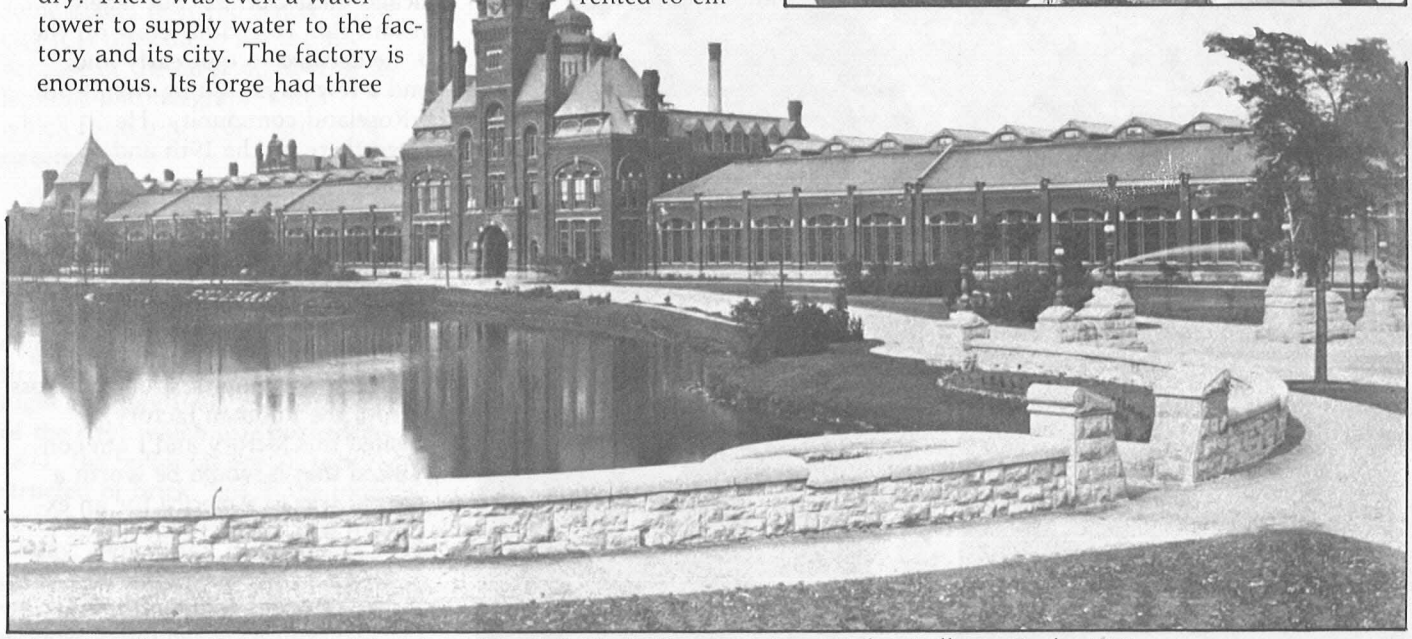
the railroad, it had its own station. A person can walk over a lawn, past flowering gardens, and along a pond to reach the factories, where there is a separate building for each process. An engine room in the rear was built almost entirely with glass, with a flat iron roof. The engine in that building won the prize at the World's Fair in Philadelphia. It was all so shiny. Behind this there was a building with twelve steam boilers, one next to the other. Only six were in use. There were buildings for many kinds of woodwork with the necessary machines. There were buildings for the painting of passenger cars, for elaborate wheels, and a forge, with its own foundry. There was even a water tower to supply water to the factory and its city. The factory is enormous. Its forge had three departments: the first was used for rough processing, i.e., cutting and bending, the second, for shaving and grinding, the third and smallest department contained eighty six blacksmiths working at forty three double forges.

Near this factory, an experimental city was being built with two and three-story houses, schools, and churches. Trains ran from Chicago to the factory both morning and evening. Employees also came from Roseland. When Pullman city is finished, the homes will be rented to employees, and the city will have its own doctors, merchants, etc. living there.

Homeward Bound!

Several of my acquaintances lived in Roseland, so time passed rapidly and seemed too short. But on Saturday morning I went to the railroad station again, and while I was standing there waiting, someone asked, in English, where I was going. I answered, "To Chicago," whereupon he said that we could share one another's company. I took a good look at him and said, "You probably understand Dutch and also Frisian," and he answered affirmatively. It was Christian Laskewitz, who had to see a doctor in Chicago. We rode together on the train and, since this was his first trip downtown, I stayed with him, and enjoyed showing him around. He asked me if I knew where to find a restaurant—he had overslept that morning and had boarded the train without break-





(above) Pullman Company, Administration and Clock Tower. (above right) Pullman Park, 1892.

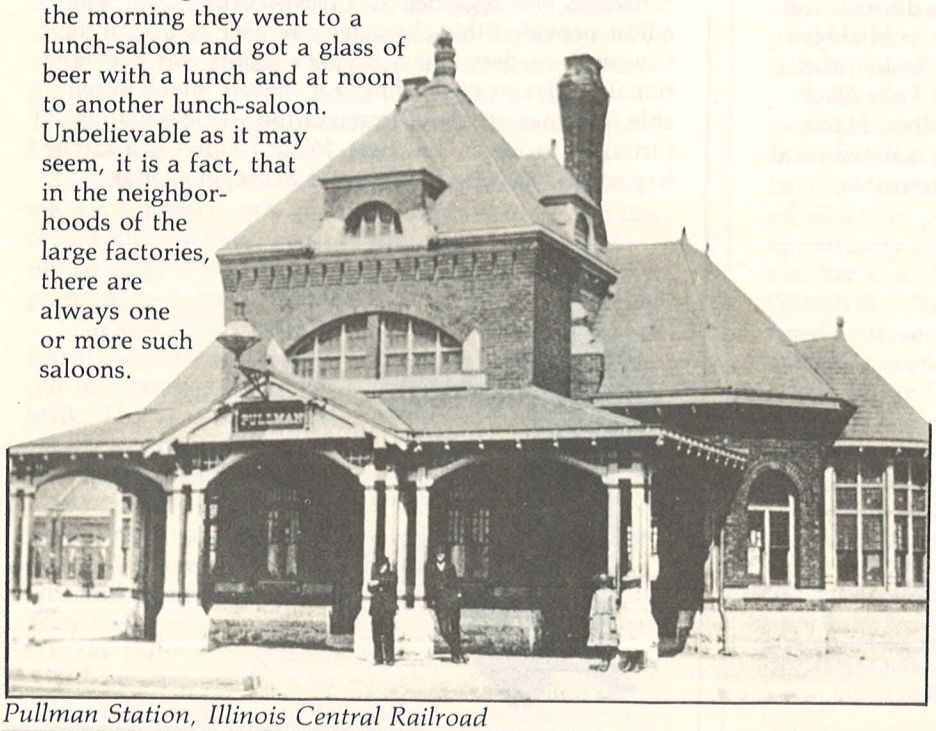
fast. I said, "Let's first drink a glass of beer here," which we did, and I showed him some food which was under a glass bell. "How much does this cost?" he asked, and I had trouble explaining to him that this little sandwich which we were eating did not cost anything here, and he insisted on asking the saloon keeper if he could pay for it. I discouraged him because the people would laugh and call him a green Dutchman. Sometime later we went to another saloon, but he still didn't understand. When the bartender brought our beer he asked Laskewitz, in English, "Do you also want warm lunch?" "Now it is still more strange," he said. "Doesn't it cost anything here either?" I told him it didn't. The bartender brought us each a delicious bowl of soup. I paid for our beer and we left, and Laskewitz, who had been in America for two years, just couldn't understand it at all. These lunch-saloons were found only in the large cities, where they could make a profit from a large volume of sales and the food was intended solely to get regular customers. I knew a young couple living near us—the man worked in one factory and his wife in a silk factory—who rented a single furnished room. In the morning they went to a lunch-saloon and got a glass of beer with a lunch and at noon to another lunch-saloon. Unbelievable as it may seem, it is a fact, that in the neighborhoods of the large factories, there are always one or more such saloons.

I spent my time after that bidding farewell to the Chicago acquaintances among whom I had lived. They all strongly advised me to return, because they thought I could earn good wages. Since many of them had had a business in the Netherlands which had failed, it was their opinion that I could never get started in the Netherlands.

* * *

On Tuesday morning, October 25, the expressman came to the door, we loaded my trunk on his wagon, I bade my landlord and his family farewell, and rode through town to the station. I left Chicago on the Michigan Central at 9:00 and arrived in Holland at 3:30 where Gelders was already waiting for me."

Van Dyke and Gelders remained in West Michigan for another nine days. There they paid parting visits to new-found friends and old acquaintances whom they had known in Friesland. Finally, on November 3 they packed their bags and returned to New York, where they boarded the *Coland* for their return trip to the Netherlands. ★



Pullman Station, Illinois Central Railroad

Harm Scheeper's LETTER

When Harm and Roelof Scheepers immigrated to Michigan in the 1840s, they had already passed the mid-point of their lives, and their children were maturing rapidly.* The most prominent motives which drove them to America were their desires for economic opportunities, and to escape the ridicule which their religious views engendered in Holland.

The Scheepers brothers were devoted Calvinists and members of the seceeded church in Hijken, Drenthe. Led by its lay-pastor, J. K. Timmerman, the Hijken congregation separated from the Reformed Church of the Netherlands in 1835, and the Scheepers clan remained loyal to Rev. Timmerman and the Hijken congregation even after they immigrated. Harm Scheepers' letter, quoted below, concludes with specific greetings to Rev. Timmerman, the consistory, and, then, the whole congregation.

Leaving the Hijken church in 1849 was difficult for Harm, but his brother had preceded him to Michigan one year earlier, and Roelof urged Harm to join the Dutch colony growing near the shores of Lake Michigan. With his wife Neeltje and four children, Harm traveled across the Netherlands from the isolated rural village of Hijken to the busy port of Amsterdam, where they boarded a sailing ship named the *Van Galen*.

Harm Scheepers wrote at least two letters describing his travels, but only the second letter has survived. This surviving report is especially valuable because it tells of overland travel in the U.S.A. Most Dutch immigrant reports deal with the ocean voyage in great detail, but after arriving in New York, the letters contain relatively little about the long overland trip to Illinois, Michigan, or Iowa.

Origins is not the first publication to print Harm Scheepers' letter. It was published 133 years ago by the *Drentsche Courant* in several installments during April of 1850. The *Courant* prefaced the letter with this introduction: "The following letter from the H. Scheepers family in North America has been given to us for publication. In Hijken, his former place of residence, Scheepers was regarded as a trustworthy man." The editor provided this character reference to assure the *Courant*'s readers that Scheeper's report was not intentionally false or misleading, for indeed, much unreliable information about immigration was circulating through Europe at that time. What follows is a rather free sense-for-sense rendition of Scheeper's letter.

*Roelof Scheepers (57) immigrated with his wife (51) and three children (29, 25, and 17). Harm (50) took his wife (44) and four children (15, 11, 8, and 3) to the colony of Drenthe in 1849.

Dear Friends

Drenthe, Michigan
November 10, 1849

Because you are still dear to me, I am constrained to write about our situation here in America. We are happy to be here, and by God's grace we are blessed with good health. At times we are astounded by the bounty of God's mercy in sparing and guiding us throughout our long and toilsome journey. I have already written you about our ocean voyage and will not report that story now.

We arrived in New York on June 13 and remained there for four days because our youngest son was detained at the Staten Island hospital. During that time we saw much of New York and its environs. I can't tell you exactly how many immigrants arrived here during those four days but they numbered in the thousands. This city is full of immigrants.

New York is a very large city with much business activity. We can hardly describe the beauty and size of its buildings. We were told that it has 335 churches, and all kinds of denominations can be found here. We even attended a seceder worship service there [immigrants from the 1834 seceders in the Netherlands]. There we enjoyed the preaching and fellowship of a Mr. Hofman from Gelderland.

On the evening of the 17th we left for Albany and we arrived there early the following morning. We saw only a little of that city as it was dark, but we did notice a number of beautiful houses being built to replace others which had been destroyed by a great fire.

That same day we boarded a canal boat [on the Erie Canal] which was drawn by two horses. For that trip our only acquaintances were the children of Frens Strik. The heat made us very uncomfortable and we could not cook on the boat. So we had to dine on bread, milk, and coffee.

We traveled from Albany to Buffalo, 400 miles, in seven and a half days. We saw much scenery on this trip—awesome works of God: beautiful fields, rocky hills and mountains, and great stretches of stony land. They were virtual gardens of stone, but it was reported that the soil was rich nonetheless.

The manner in which the canal passed through the hills, under bridges, and through rivers seemed miraculous to us. I don't know how many locks we passed through, but it was a large number, and they were neatly constructed with stone masonry, and each had a considerable drop.

With God's blessing we arrived in Buffalo on June 25. In this busy commercial center we found help from a Dutch Zeelander who treated us honestly. But we stayed there for only a short time, for after arriving at noon, we boarded a large steamboat in the evening. It looked like a floating palace, and it carried many passengers. Among them were several Lutherans from Hanover [in Germany] with whom we could talk about true religion.

It was often very cold on this boat, but it moved swiftly, and we could cook our own meals. The crew was exceptionally patient and friendly towards us. Within three days we arrived in Milwaukee, which is also a large and growing city. We stopped there for just one day, and we bought a stove there for twelve dollars. We also got a saw there for three dollars.

In the evening we boarded another steamboat to cross Lake Michigan, and after thirty hours we arrived in Grand Haven. There we met a large number of Hollanders, including Rev. H. Buddingh,* who was scheduled to preach there that day. We did not have an opportunity to hear him because we were transferred to another steamboat which went up the Grand River to Grandville. As we said goodbye, Rev. Buddingh advised us to settle in Drenthe, which he considered the best area available.

The trip to Grandville took five hours and then we debarked to continue our journey on land. In Grandville we met Koos Eleveld, who was very happy to meet us. Even though he was somewhat ill, he gave us all the help and consideration we needed. There were quite a number of Hollanders living there, including the

*Huibertus Buddingh, 1810-187?, was an early leader of the *Afscheiding* in the Netherlands. He came to America in 1848 and traveled from one Dutch settlement to another until 1851, when he returned to the Netherlands. Several immigrant churches called him to be their pastor, but he refused and remained an itinerant until his departure in 1851.

Vredeveld families—Lucas, Hendrik Albert, Barteld, and Hendrik. They were staying there temporarily because they were earning good wages.

We had hoped to continue on our journey immediately, but we could not because it was the fourth of July—the American holiday which celebrates the nation's independence. On the following day we left with two ox carts driven by farmers who were going to Zeeland—which is near to my brother's place. On this fifteen mile stretch, the roads were so poor that we could scarcely sit on the wagons. The whole route was through thick forests with many very tall trees. Occasionally we observed a house located amid the trees. Because we arrived in Zeeland at sundown, we could not continue our trip to my brother's house. We stayed over at Barend Kamp's house, and after two days he drove us by ox cart to my brother's place—a half hour's ride in the direction of the Vriesland settlement.

We were overjoyed to meet each other, and we certainly had a multitude of reasons for gratitude. Our Almighty God had blessed us with boundless mercy throughout the whole time of our travels. We could never be thankful enough.

In Vriesland we found a flourishing church with the well-known pastor, Martin Ypma. We were privileged to gather with the worshiping multitude on Sunday, and we would have been happy to settle in that community, but that was not God's plan for us.

I went out to look for land every day, but the good land near the church had been sold. Some folk urged us to stay anyway, but more informed people advised us to settle on state land in Drenthe. My wife and I went to Drenthe, visited with some of the people there, and then returned to my brother's house to search for land near his, but that was fruitless, and we became very discouraged. We didn't know what to do, and we sought guidance from the Lord. He gave us an answer.

We purchased 80 acres of state land in the Drenthe colony for 140 dollars—good clay soil with sandy stretches intermixed. A river crosses the land and it is heavily wooded. The trees are beauteous to behold.

We have built a house with a kitchen, living room, upper room, and basement. It serves us comfortably. Our neighbors are J. Van Ree and Van Dammen on the west (both from Zuid Laren), and to the east, Aaltien Vredeveld, Barteld Vredeveld, and Roelof Weurdinge.

We have sown six bushels of wheat and have two cows which give exceptionally good milk. Both the cows and a calf cost us $30.50. So we are pleased to be here. We work diligently and with pleasure under the watchful eye of God. The Lord rules all things and I believe he has been with us thus far.

The Lord has blessed the country, and it is a favored land. You simply would not believe how fruitful this land is. The settlers have been sowing and harvesting crops here for two years now, and the harvests have been amazing. Some folk have raised from three to four hundred bushels of potatoes and a similar amount of Indiana corn—a grain which you call East Indian wheat. They also raise large crops of beans and many kinds of fruits—some of these are not known in Holland. It is also a good place for beef cattle as they can be fattened by grazing in the woods. We can testify to that from our own experience because for 19 dollars we bought a fattened cow, which had grazed in our own woods. It dressed out at 750 pounds with 90 pounds of fat.

The cost of living here is not high because the crops are so abundant. Farmers are also beginning to raise wheat because that also grows well here. Soap, rice, coffee, and butter cost about the same here as in the Netherlands. Salt is very cheap here, but they do not have chicory.

Tools and shoes are expensive, so whoever has good tools and plans to immigrate should take their tools with them. Wages are high here, and if one is able and willing, he can earn money in order to purchase land.

The climate is warmer here than in the Netherlands. We have had an exceptionally dry and pleasant season and have been in good health at all times.

We live a mile and a half from the church, but we do not yet have a minister. I have been teaching sev-

eral people in the way of the truth and the hope of eternal life. We have called Rev. H. Buddingh, whom we heard with much enjoyment when he preached here. I believe that many of the people in our congregation are true Christians.

In Vriesland Rev. Ypma's preaching has resulted in the conversion of many sinners. I enjoy his preaching but have also been well satisfied with the views he expresses in private conversation. On the whole there is peace among God's people here, and the congregations are flourishing. Two new ministers have come here*—both to the Graafschap colony, which is three hours away from here. It is difficult to comprehend that so large a number of folk have already come to these settlements. They are all Hollanders or Graafschapers.

Now, to keep my promise, I will report on the folk hereabout who have immigrated from our home area [the area around Beilen in the province of Drenthe].

Our brother Roelof Scheepers and his family are in good health. His daughter Dina is married to a young man from Stadskanaal, and they live about a mile and a half from Roelof.

B. Kamps and family are also in good health, although his wife suffers from pain in the chest. Jacob and Geesien Kamps have a young daughter. Jantje is married to Harm Vredeveld, and Grietje is married to a young man from Graafschap whom she met during the trip on the ocean.

The Kruit family is also well. Harm is married, and both he and his wife work for the Americans. They earn about 16 dollars per month.

The sons of Ten Have are well, and they earn good wages. Hendrich Ten Have is married to a widow.

Hendrich Pijl is well and also making good wages.

Klaas Boer is well, too. He earns a lot of money. Carpenters earn 5 shillings or 31 stuivers per hour.

*Probably refers to K. Vander Schuur and H. G. Klijn or perhaps to his nephew J. R. Scheepers, who served a seceded segment of the Graafschap church known as the South Holland Associate Reformed Church from 1852-1864.

Koos Eleveld has been ailing for a long time—due, they say, to overworking last spring. Now he is improving. We don't know the exact circumstances of Ipe [Eleveld], but we have heard that he is doing well.

Wolter Schoenmaker and his wife live in the village of Drenthe and are also well.

The Albert Vredeveld family is also well. Anna is married to a young man from Emmen, and the family approves of that match.

Barteld Vredeveld and his family have been sickly but are now somewhat better. He lives in Grandville, about twenty one miles from us. The children are all well—Hendrick traveled with us and had no problems.

Roelof Weurding and his family are all well, except, of course, Riek, who, as you know, was buried at sea.

Both the wife and child of Albert Weurding died—the child in Buffalo from smallpox, and Jantien, who was ill for a very short time, died here.

There are so many Drenthe people in our community: Hunderman from Koevorden, the blacksmith Stokkins from Emmen, Opholt, Jan Wiggers, Willem Kremer, Albert Lubberts, Geerd Lubberts, and Lanning from Erm, also Jan Hendrick Kamps, Jan Heuring, Jacob and Roelof Neijenhuis. Besides the Hollanders and Friesians, many folk from Staphorst are here.

The Frisian community is three miles to the north of us, and the Siene Bolk's congregation, Overijsel, is an hour and a half away to the south. There are no Americans nearer to us than from five to seven hours away.

Now friends, I must close this letter. I hope all of you are well and I wish you the best. Seek God's grace and the welfare of your immortal souls. Do not live according to your own will but according to God's will. Fear God and keep his commandments. If you do not come here to join us, we will not see each other again in this life. But if we are true members of Christ's Kingdom, and if we follow our Leader, some day we will meet again to behold the glories of heaven and join all the redeemed in exalting our God.

Greet Rev. Timmerman and his wife. Greet also the whole church council together with the whole congregation.

THE TRIP

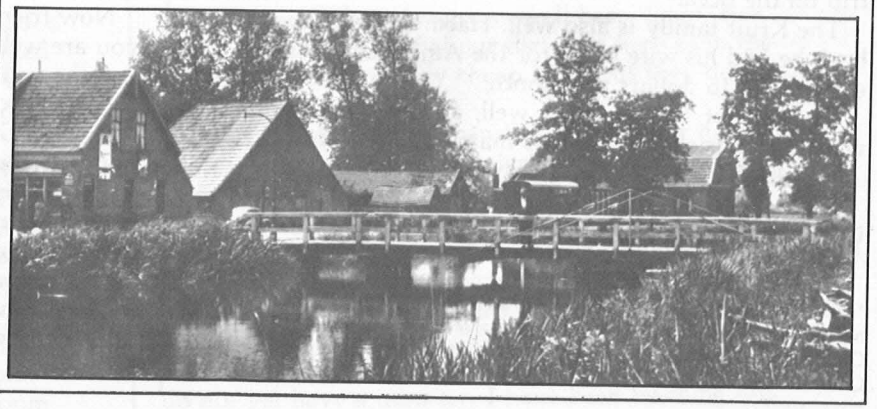
It is a long hard journey from Hijken in the Netherlands to the Drenthe colony in America. On the following pages, in pictures, we have traced the travels of the Scheeper's family in 1849.

1

Typical Drenthe farms in the village of Hijken.

2

Canal with bridge entering the village of Hijken. Both of the photographs on this page are from the early decades of the 20th Century.



3

Harbor view of Amsterdam as Scheepers would have seen it in the 1840's.

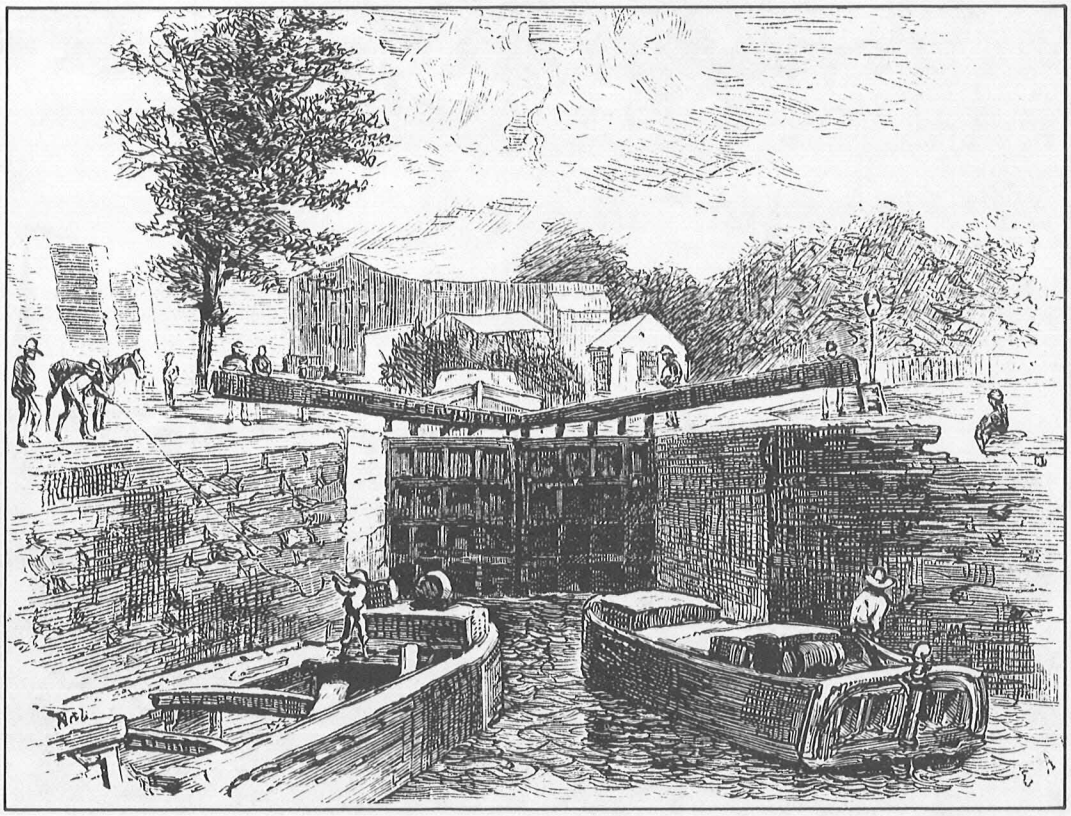
4

Erie Canal

"On the same day we boarded a canal boat which was drawn by two horses."

5

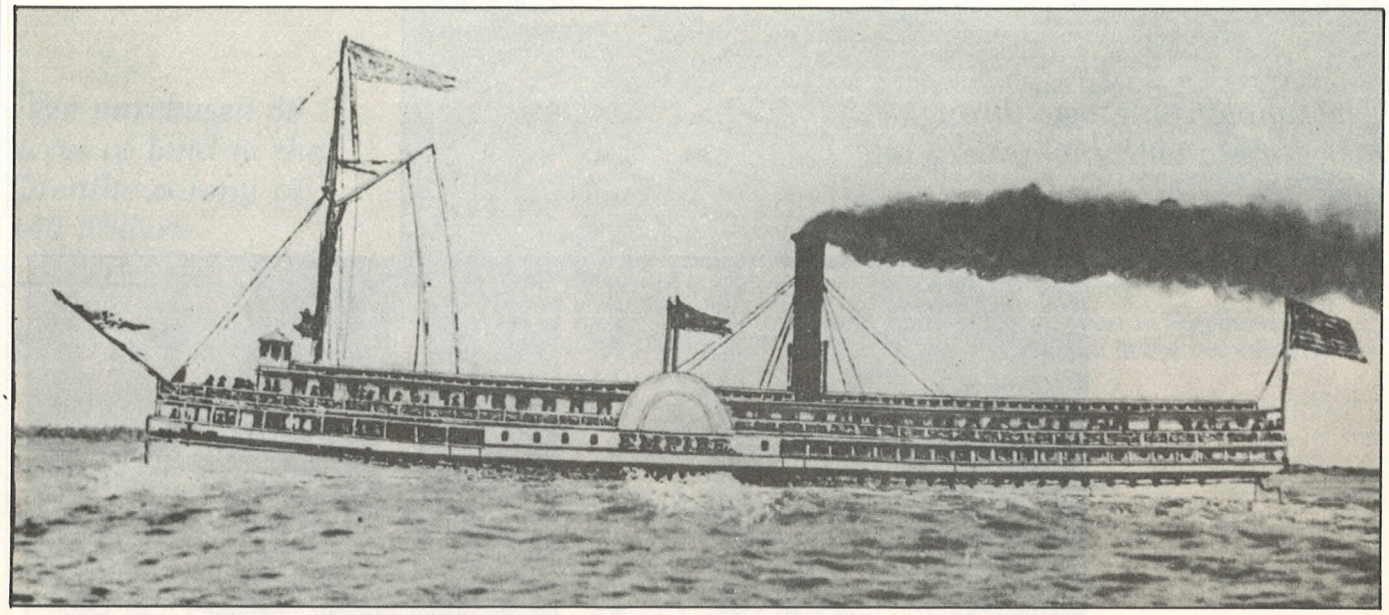
Erie Canal of Troy, New York.



"They were neatly constructed of stone masonry, and each had a considerable drop."

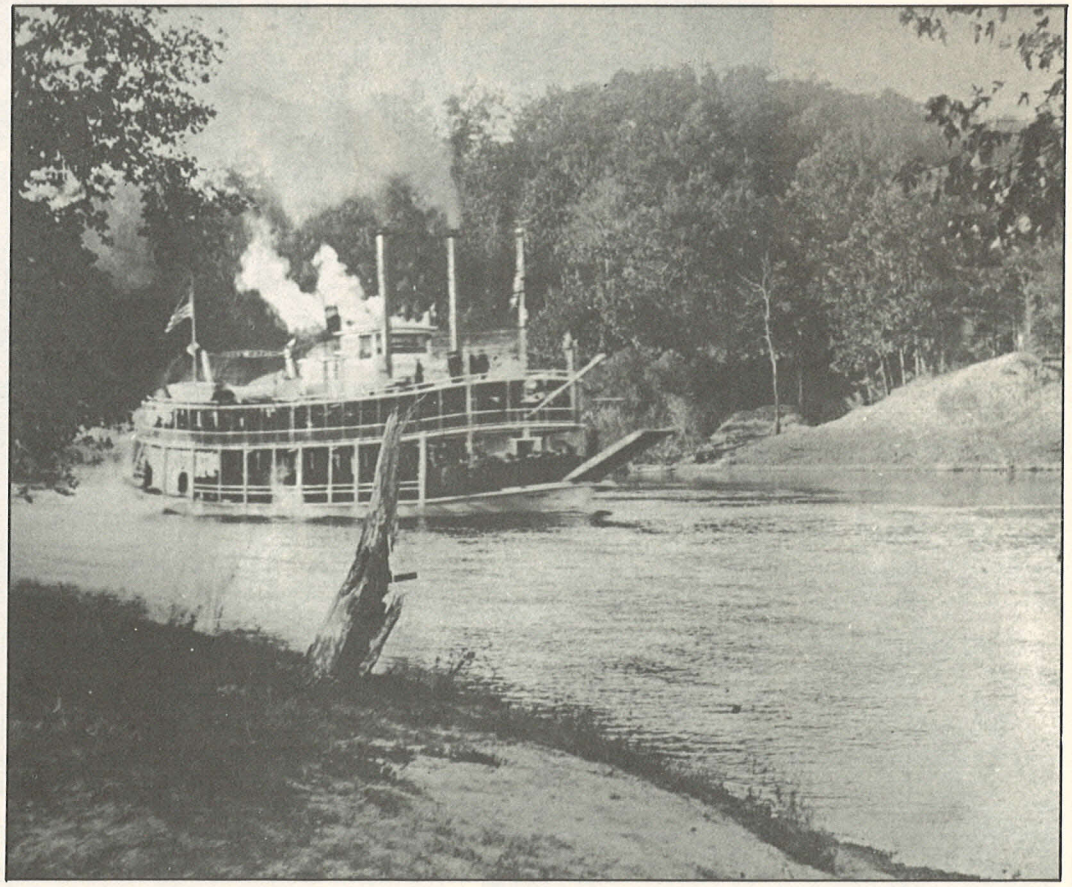
6

"We boarded a large steam boat [on Lake Erie]. It looked like a floating palace."



7

". . . we were transferred to another steam boat which went up the Grand River to Grandville."

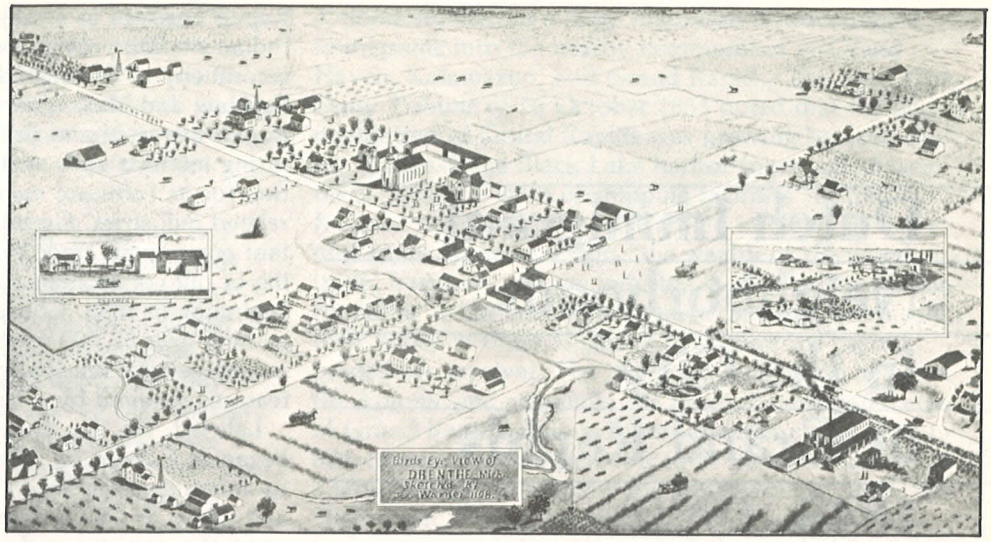


8

Virgin Forest scene
in Michigan

"The whole route was through thick forests with many very tall trees."

9 1908 Birdseye view of Drenthe.



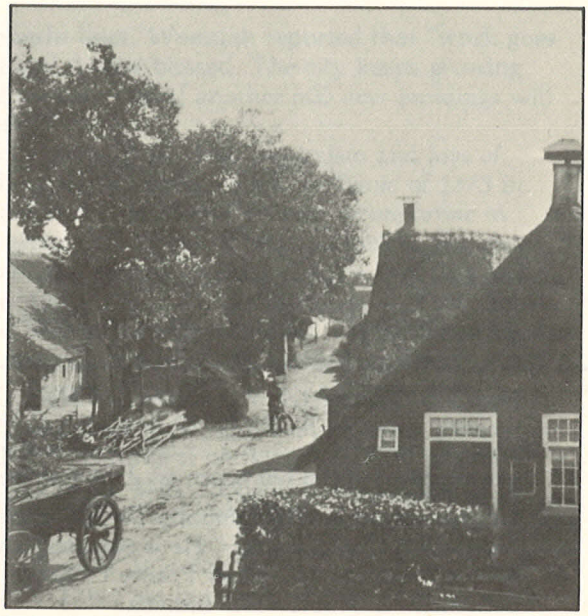
"We purchased 80 acres of land in the Drenthe colony of 140 dollars."

10 Log house with bark roof—decorated probably for Independence Day.

"We have built a house."

11 Mainstreet in Staphorst as it looked in the last century.

"Many folk from Staphorst are here."



Dutch Immigrant Neighborhoods in the City of Grand Rapids 1848–1900

David G. Vanderstel, a graduate of Calvin College, recently received his Ph.D. from Kent State University. His dissertation is entitled "The Dutch of Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1848–1900: Immigrant Neighborhood and Community Development in a Nineteenth Century City." He is currently the Senior Historian at Conner Prairie Pioneer Settlement in Noblesville, Indiana.

During the last half of the nineteenth century, Grand Rapids emerged as a major urban center, rising from an Indian trading post on the Grand River to become the second city of Michigan behind Detroit and ahead of Saginaw and Muskegon. As years passed, Grand Rapids attracted and developed a diversity of manufacturing interests and, as it earned a world wide reputation for its furniture manufactories and other wood-related industries, Grand Rapids also became an important commercial trade center, especially after the opening of rail connections to eastern and western markets beginning in 1858. Consequently, Grand Rapids grew, gaining over 85,000 people in its first fifty years as an incorporated municipality, which provided the essential features required by a heterogeneous population.

Labeled, the "Rochester of Michigan," Grand Rapids began as a distinctly New England settlement founded by migrants from New York, Vermont, Pennsylvania, and Ohio, as well as from Canada. But, the ensuing years the city attracted increasing numbers of the westward-moving immigrants who had already set their eyes on Michigan as an appealing place in which to settle. One-third of Grand Rapids' 1870 and 1880 populations consisted of foreign-born individuals. By 1900, roughly 27 percent of the city's residents were foreign born, but at the same time two-thirds of the residents claimed an identity with their foreign ancestries in the Federal census.

Between 1840 and 1900, Grand Rapids welcomed a variety of immigrants who chose to reside and work along the river. Irishmen settled here as a result of Irish relief efforts of the 1840s and the availability of work on the Grand River canal. Scandinavians who stopped on their journeys to Wisconsin and Minnesota remained in the city with the assistance of the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad. Germans arrived and contributed their varied skills to the city's work shops and fledgling industries. During the 1800s, large numbers of Poles entered the city becoming a significant part of the industrial labor force. The Dutch, however, comprised the largest group of foreigners in the city throughout the latter decades of the century. As a result, Grand Rapids held second place behind Chicago in the number of Dutch-born residents (18,555 to 11,137); yet, the Dutch-born segment of Grand Rapids' total population (13 percent), was the highest of any American city with a population exceeding 25,000. Judging from the rate and character of population growth, several groups, including the large contingent of Dutch immigrants, seemed to heed the call of publisher J. D. Dillenback to "come and see what Grand Rapids has to offer and judge for yourselves. The pleasure will compensate the experience may be profitable."

Settling in the Valley City

Michigan came highly recommended to Albertus C. Van Raalte as he searched for a home for his immigrant followers. The state's residents looked at "this Holland immigration with entirely different eyes and heart attitude than the mixed multitude in Wisconsin," commented Van Raalte. "In general the old Holland families have great influence and respect, which brings

some privileges upon us in this state." During the year 1847, Van Raalte established his colony of Holland in Ottawa County near Lake Michigan while other Netherlanders organized similar colonies in the surrounding rural areas with names like Drenthe, Zeeland, and Vriesland. Together, Holland, Michigan and its surrounding Dutch American settlements acquired the name, *Kolonie*.

As the Dutch *Kolonie* developed, the governor and legislature of Michigan recognized the particular needs of the new settlement and recommended the construction of roads to connect the colony with the principal settlements of Kent, Ottawa, and Allegan counties. People in the village of Grand Rapids applauded this action and considered it essential to do "all that we can constitutionally. . .for their encouragement and assistance." Local businessmen actively sought to attract the Dutch immigrants to the banks of the Grand River. However, prominent lawyer/land agent John Ball failed to convince the Dutch to reside in the village, recalling later that Van Raalte "wished to have his people settled by themselves [since] there were too many other settlers in Grand River."

Markets and employment opportunities were the primary motivations for contact with The *Kolonie's* Grand Rapids during these early years. Immigrants came to secure supplies that were either unavailable in their own community or substantially less expensive. Meanwhile, as a consequence of economic necessity many Dutch families, or their children and young adults traveled to Grand Rapids in search of jobs as laborers, domestics, and apprentices, thereby establishing themselves as the first Dutch residents of the village. These young workers returned home regularly with "ground meal, pork, meat, articles of clothing, pieces of furniture, or even money as wages or compensation" to supplement their families' incomes and to inject needed capital into the settlements near Lake Michigan.

Not only did the young Netherlanders contribute to the material sustenance of their own families but they also brought word of jobs in the growing community along the Grand River. Franz Van Driele arrived in Grand Rapids during 1848, began work as a laborer on the canal construction project, and later moved to the Sweet and Clements flour mill. Sietze Bos and two relatives also found work on the canal which attracted numerous Dutchmen to serve as general laborers. Consequently, the *Grand Rapids Enquirer* of 1 August 1849 reported:

> During the past week our streets have been "taken by the Dutch." The Hollanders have resorted here in uncommon numbers and their ox teams here made quite a caravan. Large supplies of provisions, stoves, tools, and goods are carried to their Colonies in Ottawa County, in preparation for the coming winter. They are a very stout, apparently healthy and frugal race, and will by patient industry, transform the wilderness they have broken into, from its unproductive solitude to a scene of fertility and busy life.

Economic and agricultural failures in the Holland *Kolonie* resulted in a large migration of discouraged immigrants into the nearby communities of Grand Haven, Kalamazoo, and Grand Rapids. The New York *Daily Tribune* of 26 October 1853 noted that the Dutch population of Grand Rapids was growing because of the failure of the Black Lake harbor (now Lake Macatawa) and "the want of shipping facilities" in the *Kolonie*. As conditions deteriorated in Holland, many immigrant laborers sought "the wealth of the woods, trade, business, and the industry of the settlements surrounding" while butchers, farmers, and craftsmen sold their goods in those locations to acquire the capital needed for survival. The increased interaction between the *Kolonie* and especially the newly incorporated city of Grand Rapids attracted more immigrants into the urban community and contributed to the development of a large immigrant community. In October of 1853, the Sheboygan, Wisconsin, paper *De Sheboygan Nieuwsbode* announced that "there are fully one hundred Dutch families and, in addition, a large number of young men and young women serving as hired help or as domestics, so that the total Holland population of the city may confidently be estimated at more than 600 people."

As the city experienced rapid growth in succeeding years, influenced in part by the attraction of wood-related and other industries, the new demand for skilled craftsmen, machine operators, and general laborers enticed the Dutch from surrounding rural regions and directly from the Netherlands. Immigrant letters reporting back to the homeland were the primary source of encouragement, as evidenced in Evert Wonnink's description of his experiences:

> America is a good land for a worker who wishes to provide a living by the industry of his hands in an honorable manner. This has been written many times, and it is the truth. . . . In our experience we were completely at home here from the first moment that we set up our households.

Six months later, Wonnink reported that "work goes as usual and we are blessed. The city keeps growing and this summer [1873] another 600 new buildings will be added."

Others expressed the deep pessimism and loss of hope which was precipitated by the Panic of 1873 in the United States. Jacobus Pietersen wrote home in 1876 to claim that "the economic outlook is not too profitable with respect to work. I hope that they will get better this year, but I do not know. . . . Times are very bad here in the United States. . . [and] many people here are out of work. The future looks very poor. . . . Sometimes I think about going back to the Netherlands but I can not yet do it."

Eight years later, Sjarel Timmerman penned a letter to a friend in which he presented a bleak yet grateful perspective on life in Grand Rapids:

> At the moment, it is not very pleasant here. Times are hard. There are hundreds of men without work.

We have not yet suffered from this but our wages are lower. I have worked in the factory for three years without unemployment. Thus, it is a blessing that we can earn our own bread.

These words of concern about the status of the American economy certainly affected the Netherlanders' decision to emigrate to the United States. While transatlantic migration diminished during hard times, the Dutch continued to relocate from the rural areas of western Michigan to the urban community of Grand Rapids. By the turn of the century, there were over 11,000 Dutch-born residents and more than 23,000 of Dutch ancestry in a city of 87,565 people. Proximity to the Holland *Kolonie* and the increasing economic and occupational incentives were partly responsible for the rapid growth of the Dutch community. It was, however, primarily the cultural affinity maintained through chain migration, the translation of immigrant institutions, and the communications with friends and families that united the Dutch in this location. By 1900 the Dutch had established twenty-three Reformed and Christian Reformed churches, twelve newspapers, several Dutch-Christian day schools, various institutional associations, and twelve distinct neighborhoods in the city. These factors provided the necessary incentives for the Dutch to move into the city and to perpetuate their community life in that new location.

David Vanderstel's article will be continued in the next issue of *Origins*. The conclusion of "Dutch Immigrant Neighborhoods" will describe the peculiar provincial composition of several regions in Grand Rapids—the West Side, the Grandville Avenue area, the South-East end and others.

Archive Receives More Material

Two more cardboard boxes arrived at Heritage Hall. The contents complete more fully the collection of **Dr. William Masselink** (1897-1973). There are sermon outlines, articles he used for reference, and manuscripts of his books and brochures. But why did the good pastor and teacher keep approximately fifty-five posters of John D. Karel? Was the mayoral candidate of 1932 a close friend? Did Dr. William Masselink promote his re-election to the Grand Rapids city office? No! They were kept because Dr. Masselink used the back of each poster for sermon outlines. Some of the outlines covered two posters. It would have been uncalvinistic to throw away fifty-five clean white writing surfaces. And we remember, too, that 1932 marked the mid-point of the Great Depression. All the posters, *i.e.* sermon notes have now been properly arranged.

Of vital importance to Calvin College, the Christian Reformed community, and the world of education is the **Dr. W. Harry Jellema** (1892-1982) collection. We have received more of his correspondence, class notes, lectures, and papers. We anticipate receiving more material before making a definitive inventory.

The systematic record of sermonic notes and outlines of the **Rev. Jan Robbert** (1857-1922) are now on the Archives shelves. All of the outlines were written in long-hand in numbered small notebooks. A few booklets are missing. Large notebooks, numbered I to XXXVII, contain "verzameling van verschillende onderwerpen bijeenverzameld uit onderscheidene werken van anderen." (collection of different subject-matters gathered together from distinguished works of others). All hand written.

Recently, Heritage Hall also received additional bound manuscripts of **Dr. Henricus Beuker** (1834-1900) who served in the Calvin Theological Seminary the last six years of his life. They include his lectures for several courses. The seminary professors in the early days sat on a number of Theological chairs.

Copies of **The American Daily Standard** are now in the Archives, thanks to Larry K. Monsma, son of the founder of that Christian daily, Dr. John Clover Monsma (1891-1970). Monsma's purpose was

THE AMERICAN DAILY STANDARD

VOL. 1—NO. 17 CHICAGO, ILL., FRIDAY, JANUARY

GENEROUS HAND AND HEARTNEED OF DYING CHINA

HELP SAVE CHINA!

GOLDEN HORN IS RED OBJECTIVE

Urges Protest M

CHRISTMAS EDITION

THE AMERICAN DAILY STANDARD

CHICAGO, ILL., WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 22, 1920

PRICE THREE CENTS

VOL. 1—NO. 1

PILGRIM ROCK ECHO STRIKES GOLDEN GATE

New Colosimo Inquest Looms; Arrest is Near

Murder Suspect Is Known; $175,000 Stolen from Safe Is Clue.

SIMONDS SEES ALLIES SPLIT AT BRUSSELS

France Right, Says Journalist; Glee in German Camp

Entente Deadlock to Continue on Issue of Reparation

HOUSE "NEW PARTY" PLANS TARIFF BILL TO PROTECT FARM

South, West Coalition Group Begins Jamming Emergency Measure Through

SUPPORT FOR HARDING PLAN IS UNCERTAIN

Senator Poindexter Unenthusiastic About European Discussion Idea as He Leaves Marion

Talk Leaves Much Uncertainty on Progressive Attitude; No Decision for Months

Industry Starts Nation-wide War On "Closed Shop"

Butterworth Serves Notice on Unions Throughout U. S. After Seeing Harding

LANDIS ISSUES 31 INJUNCTIONS TO SALOON KEEPERS

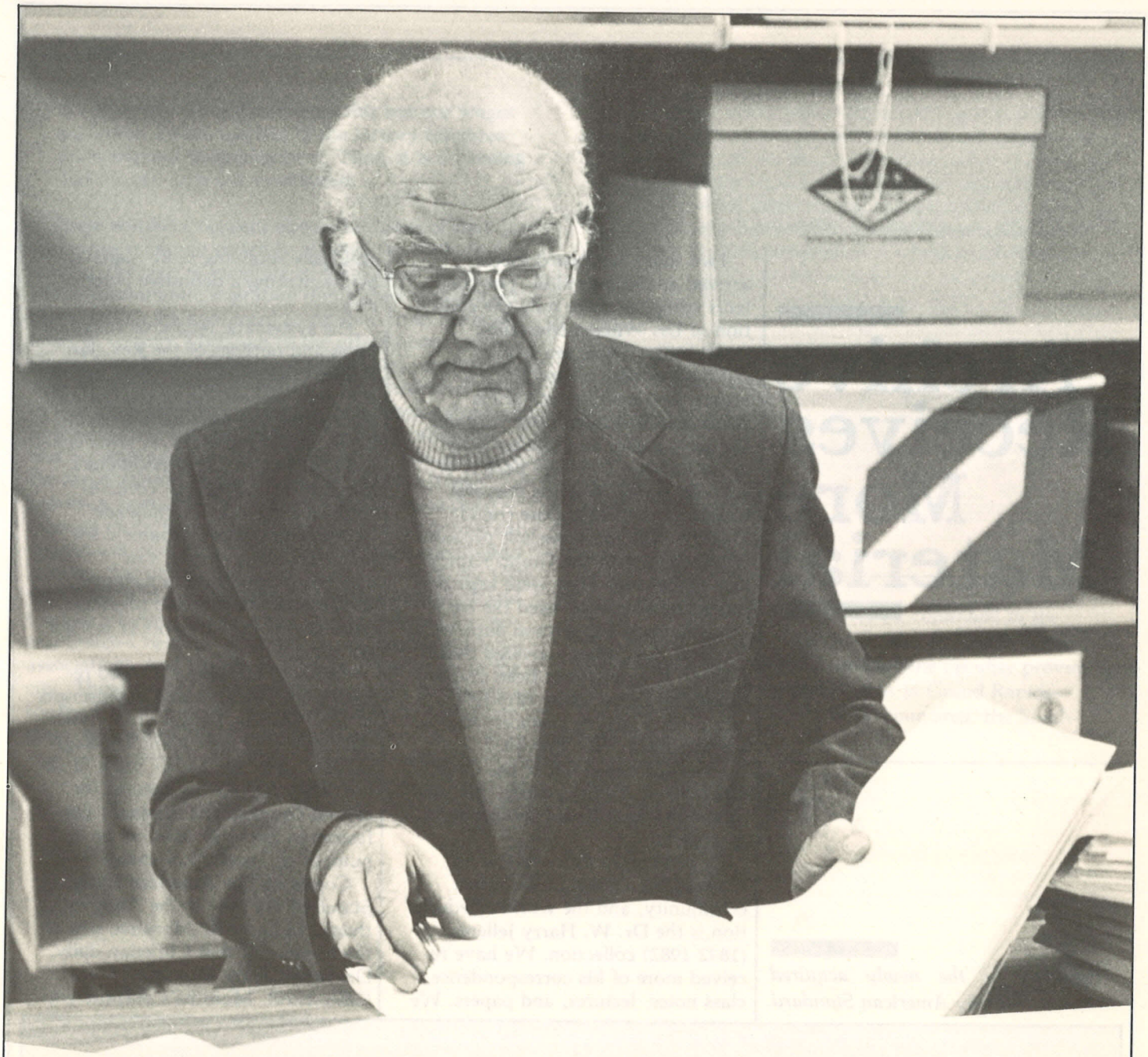
20 Days Allowed Alleged Dry Law Violators to Reply

SENATE MAY QUIZ PALMER IN COAL GRAFT

Widening of Inquiry Into Profiteering Forecast of Wholesalers

Scandal in High Government Circles on Charges of Fuel Dealers

Masthead of the newly acquired Daily American Standard.



Pictured is Rev. Marius Goote who is organizing the manuscript collections at the Archives. He is presently working on the Rev. William V. Muller correspondence and reports of his work in the Brazilian mission field.

to publish a daily newspaper which would be Christian in character. It was, however, a short-lived paper of less than three months. The first issue of the Chicago published newspaper reached the newstands December 22, 1920, and the final issue came off the press March 12, 1921. Another venture in journalism was a weekly publication, **The World an International Weekly**," founded on Christian principles." This news magazine was published by the World Publishing Company, organized in 1937 by J. C. Monsma and a group of ministers from various denominations. We have copies of the four issues of this Christian weekly (May 12—July 28, 1937).

The acquisition of **Rev. William V. Muller's** correspondence and reports provide valuable insights into his ministry in South America which began in 1935. His work among Dutch immigrants arriving in Brazil was rewarded with recognition by the governments of The Netherlands and Brazil. He served several Reformed Churches, promoting a home mission program and a radio ministry in the Portuguese language through the Back to God Hour. The Archives are pleased to preserve the materials for this important chapter in South American missions.

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ILLUSTRATION CREDITS

2	J. Wesseling's De Afscheiding Van 1834 in Friesland, Vol. 1; p. 111
5, 12-13, 25	Zeeland Historical Society
7	Fred Van Hartesveldt (Mr. Van Hartesveldt, a local historian and teacher, would appreciate contacts with persons who own Veeneklassen houses in the "Kolonie." He can be reached at (616)532-5781)
9	Lithograph from *Illustrated Historical Atlas. . . Ottawa and Kent Counties*, p. 24
10, 12	Chicago Historical Society
13	The Life and Letters of James Abram Garfield by Theodore Clarke Smith. (Yale University Press; new Haven) 1925. Vol. II
14, 15	Historic Pullman Collection, Neighborhood Historical Collections, Chicago Public Library
22	*Harper's Magazine*, Vol. 48. p. 10; p. 13
23	Grandville Historical Commission
24	*Schrift Spoedig Terug*, p. 26
25	Gerald Timmer
25	*Oud Staphorst in Woord en Beeld*, p. 16

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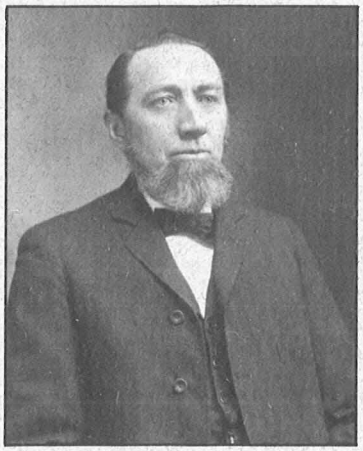

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