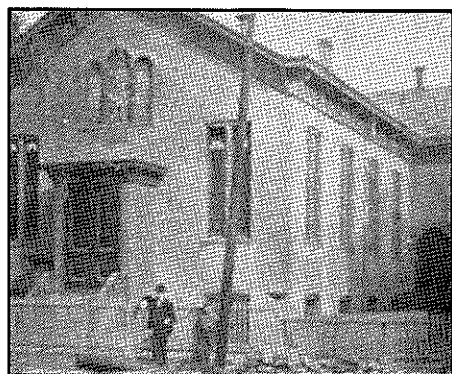
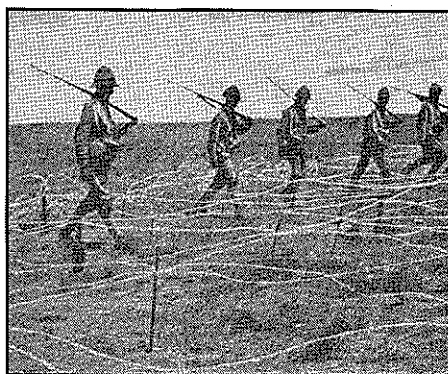


ORIGINS



page 9

- 2 **Silk City: News from Paterson's Mill Workers**
by H.J. Brinks
- 12 **Dirk Nieland's Funny Business**
by George Harper
- 17 **A Footnote on Columbus, Montana**



page 30

- 18 **The Anglo-Boer War Dutch-American Reaction, 1889-1903**
by Henry Ippel
- 32 **Theodore F. Koch, Dutch-American Land Promoter**
by Robert Schoone-Jongen



page 39

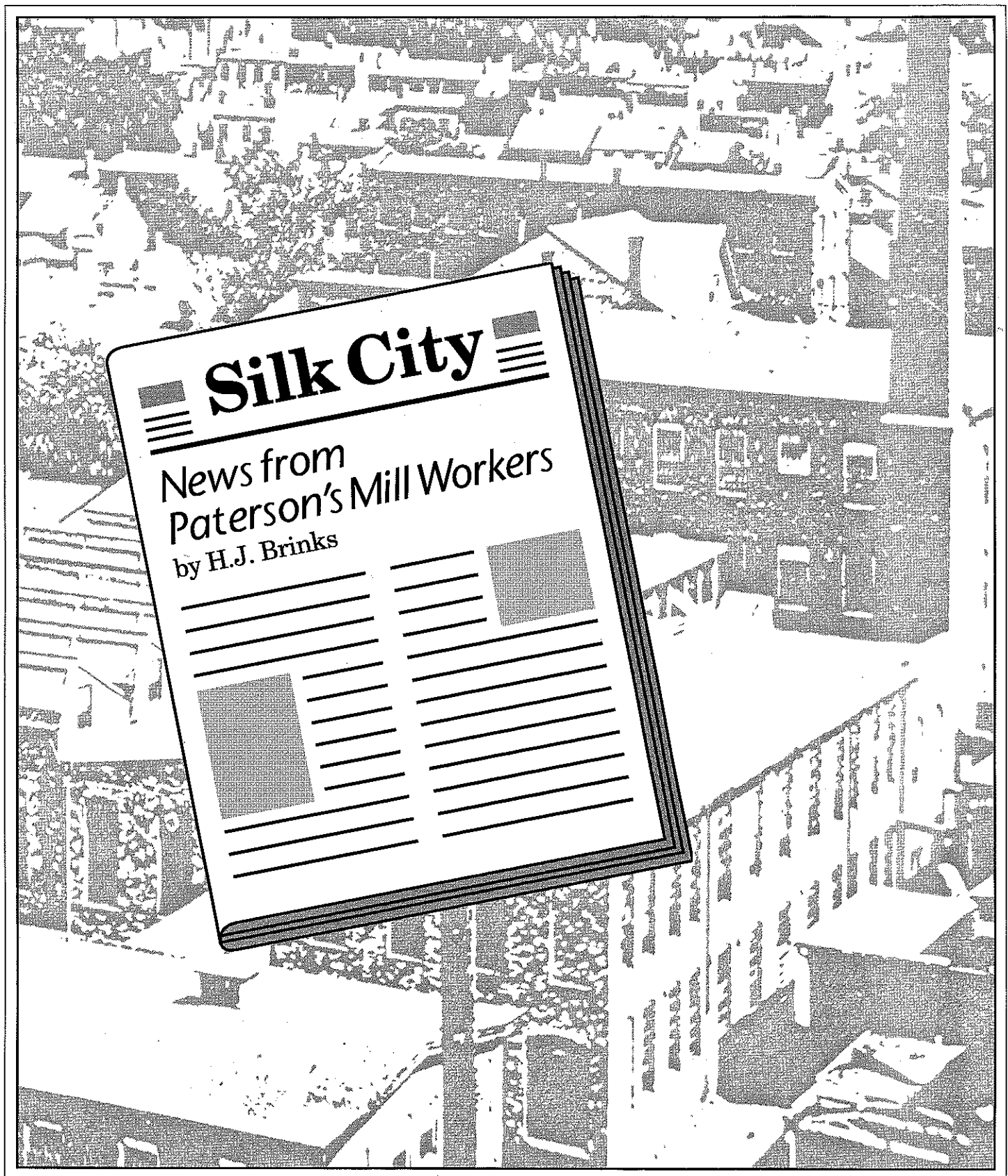
- 45 **Books**
by Conrad J. Bult
- 46 **For the Future**
- 47 **Contributors**

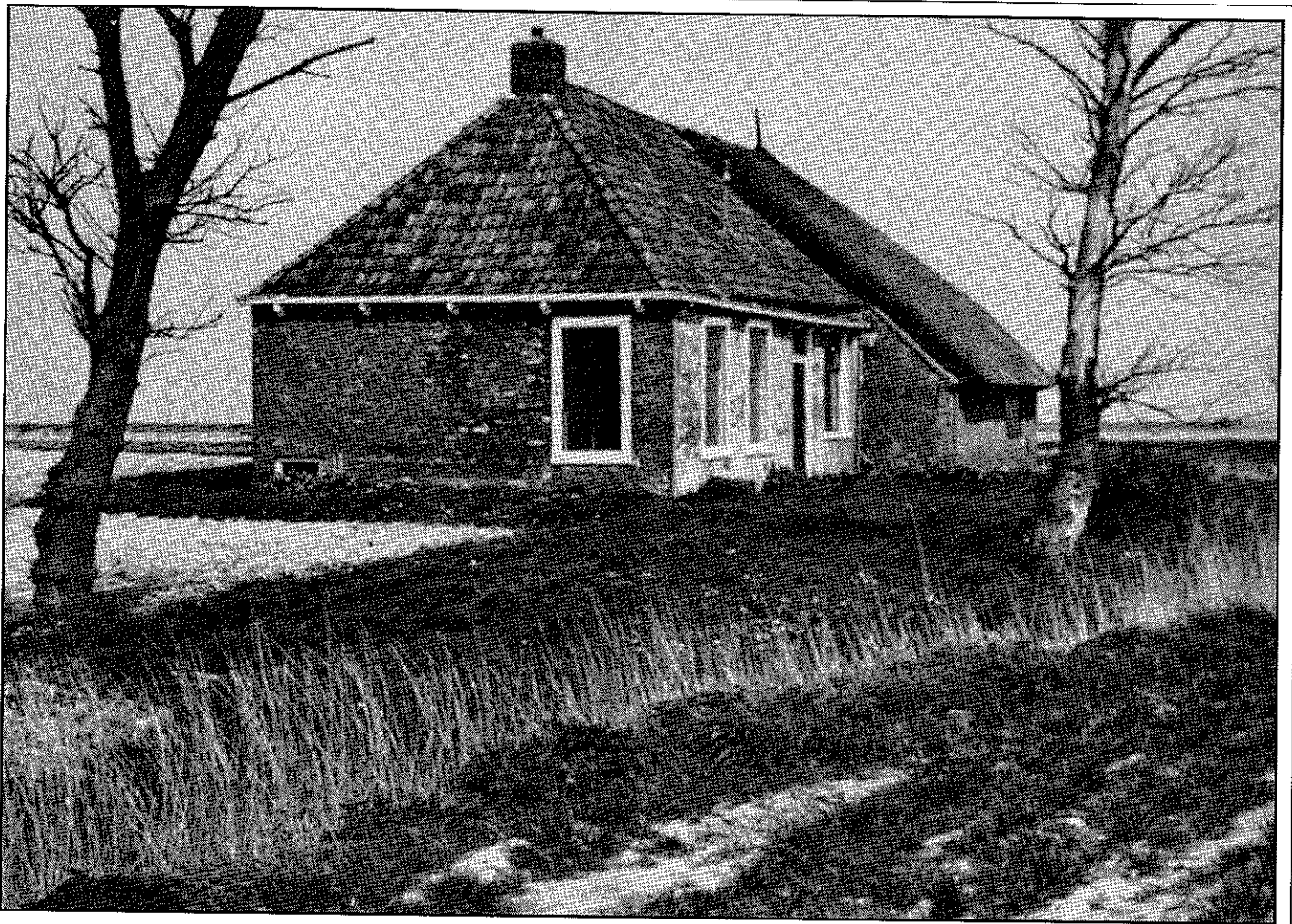
Cover: Main Street view of Paterson, New Jersey.

Origins, Volume XI, Number 2
Calvin College & Seminary Library,
The Archives, 3207 Burton SE, Grand
Rapids, Michigan 49546. Phone (616)
957-6313

Origins is designed to publicize and advance the objectives of the Archives. These goals include the gathering, organization, and study of historical materials produced by the day-to-day activities of the Christian Reformed Church, its institutions, communities, and people.

H.J. Brinks, Editor
Zwanet C. Janssens, Circulation
Manager
Conrad J. Bult, Book Review
Tracey L. Gebbia, Layout
Eerdmans Printing Company,
Printing
Henny Van Spronsen, Membership
Secretary





"Farm laborer's house" in Pieter Terpstra's Honderd Jaar Friese Landbouw, p. 276.

In 1889, the eleventh year of their marriage, Tjerk and Maartje Sondervan* immigrated to Paterson, New Jersey, where Tjerk found employment in factories, the building trades, and general cartage. Like his father, Tjerk had been a farm hand with little formal education, and, following local practices, he had probably hired out at about twelve years of age to labor on one of Friesland's large farmsteads. Since he was thirty-six upon his arrival in New Jersey, Tjerk had already worked for over twenty years on several dairy farms. Following his marriage in 1878, he and Maartje (nee Lautenbach), lived in Minnertsgea (1878-1886) and Firdgum (1887-1889). The last of these, a tiny hamlet linked for religious and educational services with Tzummarum, was also Maartje's home village. Nearby cities included the port of

Harlingen, five miles to the south, and Leeuwarden, the provincial capital, ten miles eastward.¹

These cities and villages, including Tjerk's native Marrum, were located in Friesland's fertile northwest quarter which had provided farm hands with agricultural employment on dairy farms over many centuries. Both the Sondervans and Lautenbachs originated from this productive clay-soil region, which contributed heavily to the general emigration peaking in the last decades of the nineteenth century.

Three years before emigrating, Maartje wrote to her brother Sijds and reported their expected move to Firdgum, where Tjerk and his father would be employed by a farmer named A. Wierda. Of their general circumstances Maartje declared, "You asked how many children we have, and I answered herewith, two. Thus we live with five of us [including her father-in-law]. We have,

*Although originally spelled *Zondervan*, the family nows uses *Sondervan*.

considering the general condition of working people, a goodly supply of life's needs because there are also those, although not too many, who have no work at all and thus no food either. When they do find work, they earn only a little, and so their poverty persists. For ourselves—we have it good and cannot, at present, complain about very many disappointments. We are always healthy and have ample food. It is true that our path is not always strewn with roses—thorns are also evident. But people can endure these easily enough. When we look at people who have much less but are just as worthy as we, it is a blessing that we do not know the future. Otherwise our burdens would be greater still. The paths to the future are hidden; only parts are known, and the rest will be revealed soon enough. Only one thing is certain—the end is death. Then whatever concerns this life will be gone.”²

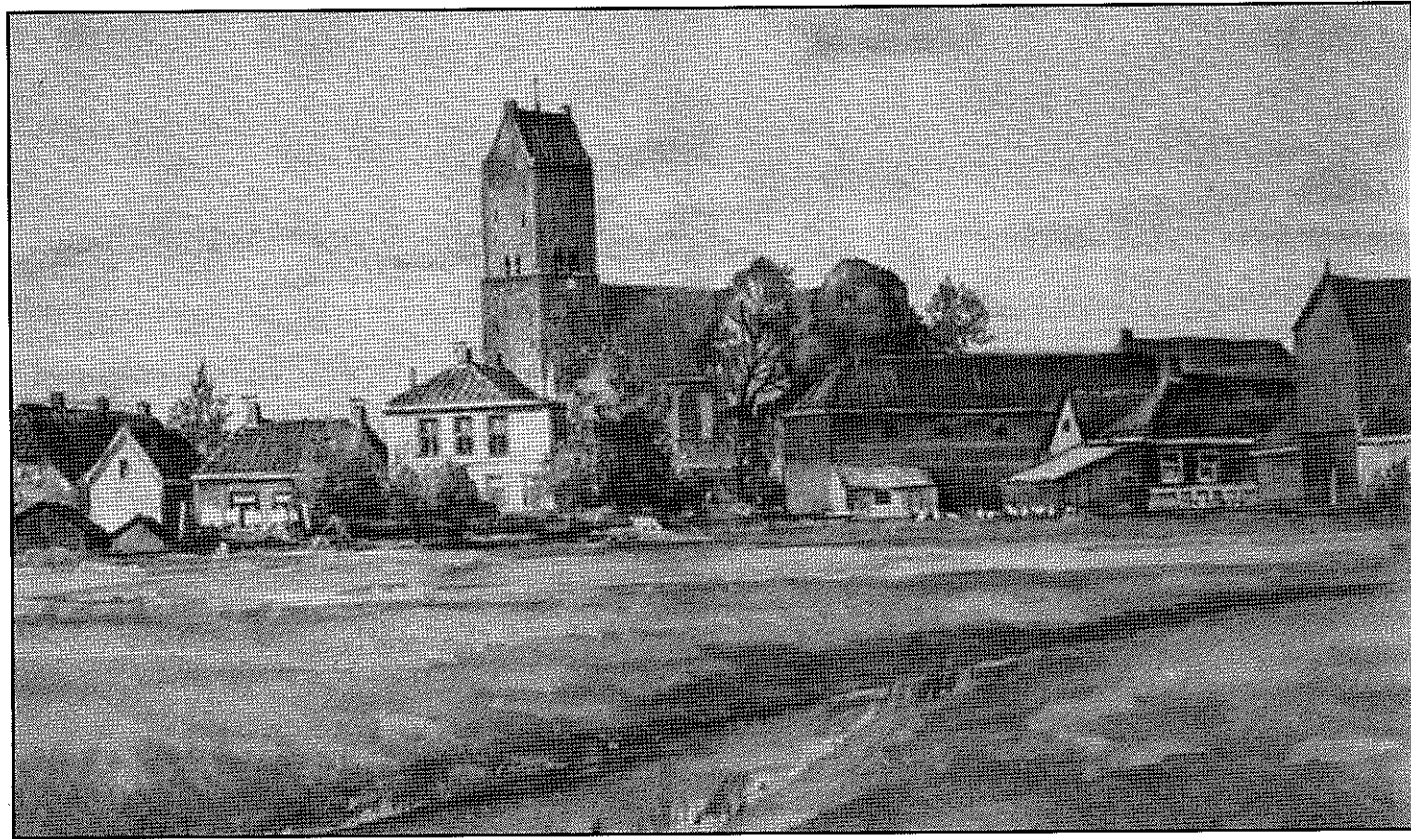
When the Sondervans immigrated to Paterson in 1889, they settled among other Frisians, and together they noted many differences between their new and ancestral surroundings. Already in 1881, Peter Westerhuis had reported, “People who live in Holland cannot imagine what it looks like here because instead of canals and ditches we have high mountains from which water runs down into a river. Otherwise one does not see water here. Owners of land put posts around it—not ditches as

in Holland. Land that is being cultivated has big rocks around it. In Holland they would say that nothing could grow on it, but here they grow everything on it. But some places are not usable, as you can easily imagine with all those rocks One can look out across the fields here, but not as far as in Friesland because here there are mountains in the way We do not have peat here. We have to make do with wood and coal. I only wish that that was the worst problem; we also have to pay awfully high rent here—even for a room. One does not find brick houses here. They are all made of wood, but they are just as beautiful as in Friesland. We have to pay eleven dollars a month for rent. That's quite a lot in a year's time, and you have to pay before you move in.”³

Similarly, J.G. Boekhout wrote, “Friends, the soil here is not very good because there are lots of forests here and mountains of rock. Here they have fences around the land because there are no ditches. Thus, friends, agriculture is not much here.”

The observations of Boekhout, Westerhuis, and Tjerk Sondervan clearly reflect their rural Frisian backgrounds, which, however different from Paterson's urban indus-

*“View of Pingjum, village in Westergo”
in Honderd Jaar Friese Landbouw, p. 208.*



trial character, did not greatly hinder their economic adaptation. They found work in the silk mills, road construction, and other blue-collar pursuits, and, as in Friesland, their pre-teen children obtained full-time employment.

J.G. Boekhout reported, "We all work together in the same factory now, and we all come home to eat. That is at twelve o'clock in the afternoon. We like that a lot better than last year."⁴ Similarly, Tjerk Sondervan's daughters, Antje (13) and Jeltje (11), worked in a silk mill, about which their father reported, "There are about five hundred people working there, and I have an easy job. Sometimes we have nothing to do. We have more work here in silk than you in Holland have in flax. I earn four dollars for fifty-five hours. Antje and Jeltje also work in the silk factory, and they work through the whole summer, too."⁵

Walking home for noontime meals was a benefit that may have influenced residential patterns in the community. At any rate, as they grew accustomed to the city, the immigrants moved frequently to acquire more convenient or economically suitable quarters. The Sondervan family changed addresses four times between 1893 and 1911. The last of these, 52 Shady Street, housed both Maartje and her married daughter's family from 1902 through 1926. It probably represents the setting which the family identified as "the old home place."⁶

When the Sondervans entered Paterson in 1889, the city had already achieved its reputation as the "silk city," but its identity as a manufacturing center had long predated the construction of the silk mills. The city's 1792 organization followed Governor William Paterson's approval of legislation which created the Society for Establishing Useful Manufacturing. S.U.M. in turn had been inspired by Alexander Hamilton's nationally distributed "Report on Manufacturers"; under Hamilton's personal direction, Paterson became a model manufacturing center. Water power, provided by the Great Falls of the Passaic River, drove the mills, which produced cotton textiles between 1794 and 1880. From about 1824 until the Civil War, Paterson was known as "Cotton City," but the war disrupted both raw-material supplies and markets.

Silk production replaced cotton after the war, and by the 1870s a flourishing hand-loom silk industry had created a foundation for industrial modernization, which was fully established by 1890. The common features of industrialization—crowded ethnic neighborhoods, labor strife, and at least one "great fire"—marked Paterson's history. The famous six-month strike of 1913 was reported to have cost 26 million in lost business revenues

and 5.5 million in wages. By then silk production and the production of textile-machine tools dominated the urban economy. In 1927, the year in which the Sondervan correspondence terminates, Paterson contained 823 factories, which produced 75 percent of the nation's silk products.

The city also attracted thousands of blue-collar immigrants. But, although Dutch families had acquired the area's first land patents in 1684, they were a small minority of Paterson's 145,000 residents in 1927. Rhine Valley Germans, northern and southern Italians and Jews from Poland, Russia, and Lithuania far outstripped Paterson's Dutch immigrant populace in the early twentieth century.⁷

Following typical acculturation patterns, the Dutch clustered around their churches and schools, which were located on the north side of the Passaic River near the intersection of Haledon Avenue and East Main Street. By the middle of the twentieth century the Dutch had organized eight urban churches and three private schools, which, in 1946, served about four thousand parishioners and eight hundred students. The original enclave dispersed after World War II as the entire community drifted northward into Haledon and Prospect Park or eastward into Hawthorne and Fairlawn.⁸

The following selection of Sondervan family letters provides intimate and detailed views of blue-collar life in Paterson's Dutch neighborhood around the turn of the century.

Endnotes

1. A.J. van der Aa, *Aardrijkskundig Woordenboek Der Nederlanden* (Gorinchem: Jacobus Noorduyt, 1840-1848), Vol. III, p. 33; Vol. VII, pp. 379-82; Vol. XI, pp. 272-74.

2. Letter, M. Lautenbach to brother Sijds Lautenbach, March 18, 1886, in T. Sondervan Papers in the Immigrant Letter Collection of the Calvin College and Seminary Archives (cited hereafter as Im. Let. Col.).

3. Letter, Peter Westerhuis to Dear Friends, June 6, 1881, in the Im. Let. Col.

4. Letter, J.G. Boekhout to Dear Friends, December 1, 1881, in the Im. Let. Col.

5. Letter, Tjerk Sondervan to Dear Brother, November 13, 1893, in the Im. Let. Col.

6. See entire collection of Sondervan/Lautenbach correspondence, 1893-1926.

7. David Goldberg, *A Tale of Three Cities* (New Brunswick, Rutgers UP, 1989), pp. 19-82; *Paterson News*, 175th anniversary edition, featuring the writings of local historian D. Stanton Hammond, pp. 47-69.

8. *Yearbook of the Christian Reformed Church* (Grand Rapids: CRC Publications, 1946; 1990). *Christian School Statistics* (Chicago: National Union of Christian Schools, 1946), pp. 1-9.

T. Sondervan to S. Lautenbach

*Paterson, New Jersey to Tzummarum,
Friesland November 13, 1893**

Dear Brother,

I let you know that we are healthy and wish the same for you. If I could write easily, I would write sooner, but I am just now learning to write, Brother, and have in fact begun. I no longer work outside. I work now in a factory. It is very busy there this summer. There are about five hundred men working, and I have an easy job. Sometimes we do nothing. We have more work here in silk than you in Holland have in flax. I earn four dollars for fifty-five hours. Antje and Jeltje** also work in the silk factory, and they work through the whole summer too. Dear Brother, we had a good summer here, and we are doing well.

I also talked to Epke Enga. He lives here with a farmer. We had quite a number of warm days here. We had a heavy storm. Big trees were torn out of the soil and houses from their foundations and also a church,** and wagons were thrown aside.

*Original translator, Maria De Groot. Donor of letters, J. Lautenbach, 1990.

**Children, Antje, 13; Jeltje, 11.

***This was the Christian Reformed church building located at River and Bridge Street.

One could see hundreds of people [standing] in the water there. Peter Feddema visited us too when he picked up his mother from the boat.****

But I did not talk to him. I was at work. Lammert visited us once too and said that they were all healthy. But after that we had a letter telling us that Peter's mother was quite sick.

Well, Brother, if you need money, just tell us, and we will send some. But, if I had a hundred thousand guilders, there would not be a penny for [that] shoemaker. Now, Brother, write back soon, 114 East Main Street.

Greetings from all of us. And we will send you the pictures and please

****The Holland-American Steamship Terminal in Hoboken.

send one to K. Jelgerhuis and one to Baaj and Jaabik and Jerr de Vries. Also write once how it is with Auntie.



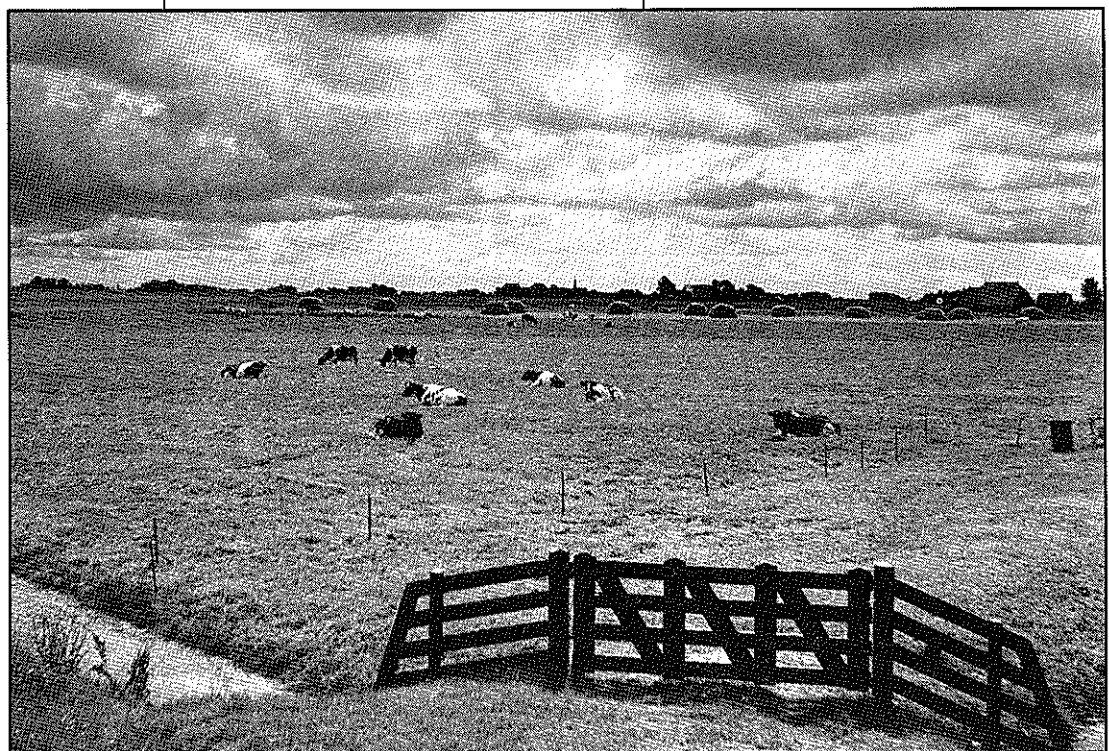
M. (Lautenbach) Sondervan to Family

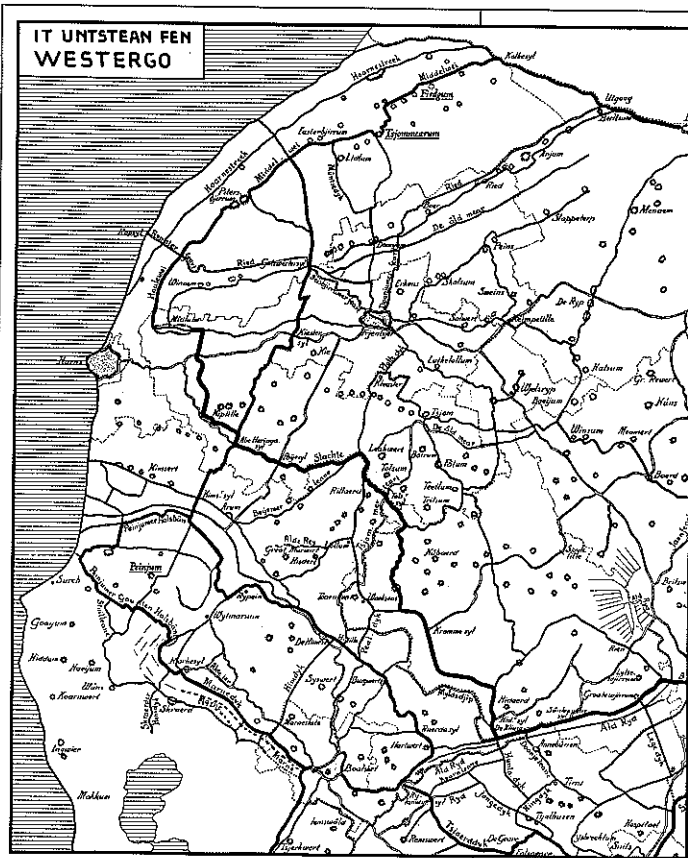
*Paterson, New Jersey to Tzummarum,
Friesland February 25, 1894*

Dear Brother, Aunt, Niece and Nephew,

With this I am letting you know that we are still healthy, and we hope the same for you. We read here in the newspaper the name of my brother, that he died. But we are not certain

Typical Frisian landscape.





"Map of Westergo" in D. Alta, Friesland, Tuen . . . Nu . . . Straks (Lewwarden, Publiciteitskantoor, 1952), p. 64.

that it was actually so. The paper said it was Sieds Lautenbach, thirty-six years old. We want to know if that was my brother. We are very anxious to have you write about that. And also we would like the address of my brother Jan,* so we can write to him. Our address is Tjerk Sondervan, 114 East Main Street, Paterson, New Jersey, America.

There is much unemployment here. Thousands of people are walking the streets because they have nothing to do. And this has gone on for ten months already. Our daughter Antje works in the silk factory; Jeltje has had a throat infection but now feels better. My husband does not have anything to do either.

It is a bad winter here. A lot of snow has fallen, and for a few days now it has been colder than any time this winter. It is a double winter for a

will be the same here as in the Netherlands.

Lambert Hoogenhuis visited with us and sends greetings. Greetings also from all of us.

Write back soon.



Tjerk Sondervan to S. Lautenbach

Paterson, New Jersey to Tzummarum, Friesland
February 27, [1894]

Dear Brother,

We are letting you know that we are healthy and wish the same for you. It is a long winter here. A lot of snow has fallen, and it is freezing hard, so it is a real winter here. I have not earned a cent for eight

lot of people—winter inside and outside. There is quite a bit of charity here, and if that was not the case, thousands would perish from hunger and poverty. Those who are still working have small wages, so almost every day there are strikes.* So now you can understand how things are here these days. We hope that it will change soon. Otherwise it

weeks, but Antje is working and earns five dollars a week. She works in a silk factory. We have been waiting a long time for a letter from you, Brother.

I sent a pipe to you with Dirk Kasma with my address, and I thought that you would write me. I sent the new address because I was going to move. Well, that has happened. Now we are living at No. 114 East Main Street. When you write back, tell us if Aunt Grietje is still living and also your mother and Aunt Trien in Franeker.

Poverty we do not see here because Dutchmen go to church with cigars in their mouths. Girls should be happy to be here because it is not such a poor land as yours. That makes a big difference. I bought a quarter of a cow, and, if we are healthy, we will eat well. We are thankful that we are in this country. I think we will never come back—only if land would be as cheap there as here. Maybe you should come over here, Brother. Not so many people are coming as last year. Maybe they will stop altogether. But there is still room enough here. Please write us the address of Brother Jan and Ans.

The potatoes are not so good here, and now most of them are frozen too because of the hard winter. Brother, you would be very surprised if you saw Jeltje and Antje. They look very good. If we stay healthy, we will send you a photograph of them. Then you will see for yourself.

It has been quite busy for the girls in the factory because the silk factories are full of silk, and that means

*An immigrant living in Michigan.

*This, doubtless, refers to the major silk-industry strike of 1893-94.

work for the girls. I do not know when I will be working again.

Hessel Bakker died. One day he was healthy, and the next dead. He was a farmer not too far from here.

Greetings from us—from me and my wife and children.

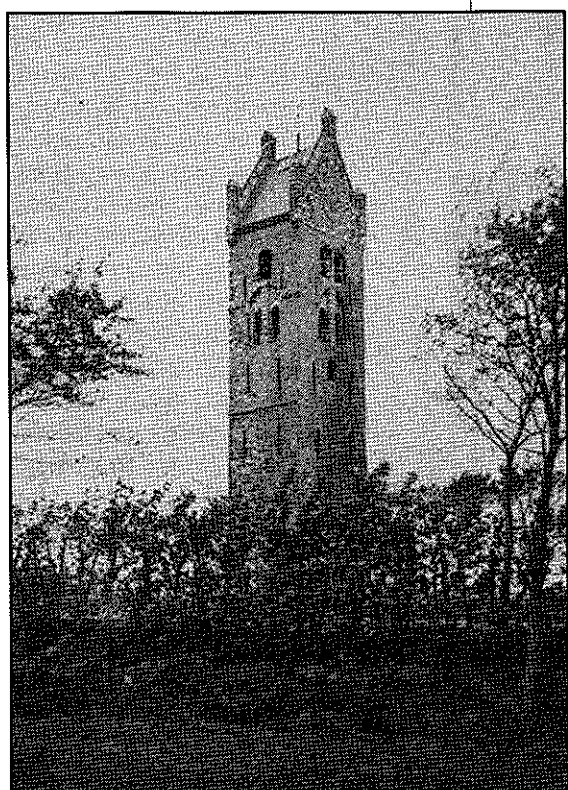


T. Sondervan to S. Lautenbach

Paterson, New Jersey to Tzummarum,
Friesland June 9, [1895]

Dear Brother,

We let you know that we are in good health and wish the same for you.



We sent the money to you, but it came back; we will send it again if we are in good health, but we will first send you this letter.

We have moved again, and I have rented this place for a year at four and a half dollars [per month]. We have had warm weather here for two days—and then a heavy thunderstorm. But now the weather is beautiful. We already have lots of fresh vegetables, and in May we had some new potatoes. We ate them, and they were great. We also got a new cabinet with mahogany veneer and copper handles, and also a few new rugs.

Now I am riding on the wagon with Krelis Meyers and earn \$8.00 a week—steady. That is pretty good. People working in the steel factory earn \$1.10 a day. My father works at a race track for \$1.25 a day. I never get a reply to the letters I write. I begin to think that the letters do not get to you at all.

How are you people doing concerning work in the Netherlands? I think it must be hard work for hard poverty. I am always happy to be in America. Bricklayers earn \$4.00 per day here. I received a letter from John Dovers. He gets my letters; they do not come back.

Please put [brother] Jan's address in your letters to us. The children learn English very well—better than we. We are too old. Soon it will

Firdgum church tower. The church was taken down in 1794.

be crowded here. Lots of people are arriving. Please send us a reply. Greetings from us all.

*Tjerk Sondervan
Maartje Lautenbach and children
63 Montgomery Street*



Tjerk Sondervan to S. Lautenbach

Paterson, New Jersey to Tzummarum,
Friesland [1896]



The work is slack here these days, even in the factories, but I cannot complain. I have not had one day that I did not work. We had a terrible thing happen here in Paterson. Seven children went out into the country to look for wild berries, and when they came back in the evening and crossed a railroad bridge, a train caught them. One boy jumped into the river, and another hung to the bridge. Three were dead, and two seriously injured. Four of the children were from one family, and two of them died instantly. One was badly injured, and one escaped injury. The only daughter of a family died instantly too. Last week a train from far away in America came into Paterson and smashed into some empty cars. You can imagine that everything was smashed. The train was on its side, and the stoker [coal shoveler] broke his leg—that was all. Not too bad. Lots of accidents happen here in this land—someone loses a hand, another a foot. Someone is killed or

burned. That's how it goes here.

My father does not like it here. He said that he regrets coming to this land. I am glad that I did not recommend it to him. I would never recommend it to anyone. Some like it here, and others don't. But I would never go back.

Last Saturday night a big factory burned down. It was a lumber company. Lots of wood burned there at a great loss of money. People said, "Just let it burn. That gives more work in construction. There is plenty of money in this country."

My wife and I bought a new lamp last night for \$4.25 We had a beautiful summer here. Not much rain and not many thunderstorms but very hot. On many days it was over 100 degrees.

Last night we were at Krelis Meyers's when there was another fire—in a silk mill this time.

Greetings . . .

Tjerk Sondervan
63 Montgomery Street



**Tjerk Sondervan to
S. Lautenbach**

Paterson, New Jersey to Tzummarum,
Friesland October 12, [1897]

Dear Brother,

I am able to announce that my wife gave birth to a baby girl and all is well. She is not very strong yet, but that will come soon.



I earned good money this summer, and I stay healthy, and the weather is good. I can work with the bricklayers until the new year. Antje just started working in the factory too, but I don't know what she earns yet. The name of the baby is Ulkje.

Employment is good here this year. This summer there was lots of work.

Some time ago they were looking for laborers as there was much work in bricklaying and much digging for sewers and pipes to get water and gas into houses, also much work on streets and roads.

If a household has grown-up children, they can earn good money if they are careful. Then they can have a good life. But we do have many bad people here who do not live right. It is the same here as with you people—everybody is different.

I wrote this letter on October 12—my birthday. Greetings from all of us.

63 Montgomery Street



**Tjerk Sondervan to
S. Lautenbach**

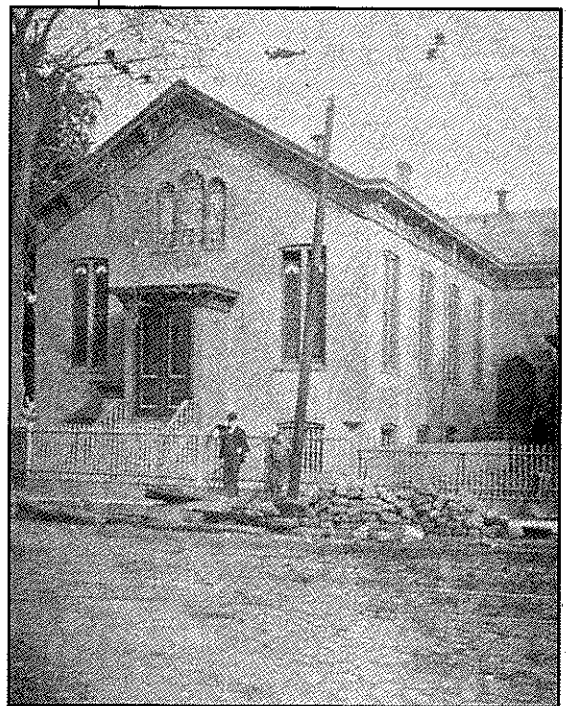
Paterson, New Jersey to Tzummarum,
Friesland December 16, 1898

Dear Brother,

I have to write you again, Brother, but the news is not so good this time. We have lost Ulkje; she was eight

Regarding Maartje Sondervan's church, First Paterson Christian Reformed Church, the 1906 anniversary booklet, Eben-Haezer, reports, "The location of our sanctuary on River and Bridge Streets became less attractive due to the noise of the streetcars. In addition the building was undermined and damaged by the flood of 1902."

The new sanctuary was dedicated in 1903.
Page 1 in Eben-Haezer.



months and eight days old when she died. We are very sad about that, but we have to go on living and hoping. A working man always has to do that.

Sjerk [Charlie, born 1896] is good and healthy—fat and heavy.

We have had a bad year. There was nothing to do, and there still isn't much. I do not know when it will get better. Many people are walking around without a job, but I have always had a little bit of



work, and the girls also. This year America is almost as bad as Holland.

Ulkje was sick for fifteen weeks—first stomach trouble and then a sickness of the intestines and consumption of the lymphs, the kidneys and the lungs. That was too much for her.

We have rented another house—a house all to ourselves—for which we pay \$9.00 per month.

Greetings,

Tjerk Sondervan
45 Hilman Street



**Maartje Sondervan
to S. Lautenbach**

Paterson, New Jersey to
Tzummarum, Friesland
March 25, 1902

Dear Brother and Sister,

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

I will tell you something about our circumstances. We had a great fire here in town—farther in the city one hundred houses burned down, churches, and more. But on March 1 we had so much rain that a dam burst and the cellar, barn, and chicken coop were all flooded.

Twenty of our chickens drowned. Bridges were washed out, and streets flooded. The water has gone down now.

(both photos above) Main Street views of Paterson, n.p.

(opposite) "Paterson factory district viewed from Soldiers' Monument Heights."

My daughter Jeltje is twenty now, good and healthy, and works in a silk mill. There is lots of work in Paterson. My little Charlie was six years old on March 17. He is a nice boy and goes to the Christian school, which costs twenty cents a week.

Please send us the address of our brother who is out west [Grand Rapids, Michigan]. We would like to write him. Tell us how old Aunt Trijntje in Franeker is doing. Is she still alive?

Our address is 52 Shady Street, and our oldest daughter, Antje,

lives downstairs from us. They have two children, both healthy and well.



**Maartje Sondervan to
S. Lautenbach**

*Paterson, New Jersey to Tzummarum,
Friesland*

April 27, 1903

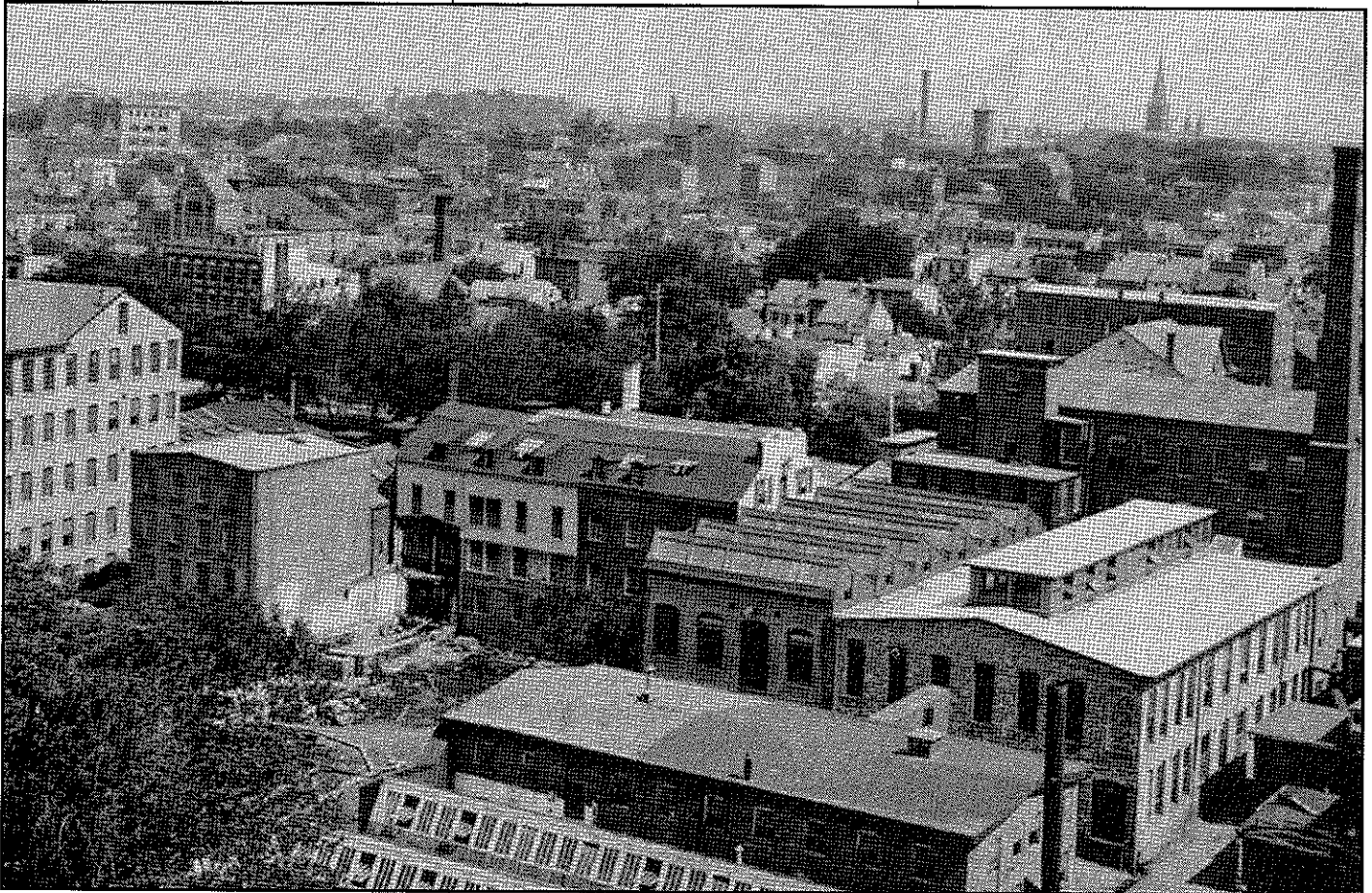
Dear Brother,

I want to remind you about our wedding anniversary.* On May 17 it will be twenty-five years since we were married. Three children were

left us from our marriage. One, Antje, is married. She has three children, and they are doing well—making a good living, the same as we.

I think a lot about Holland and would like to visit you sometime. But the long journey has stopped me so far. Maybe the time will come someday when I will come to visit you.

*Shortly after this anniversary Tjerk Sondervan injured a young man in a fight, which resulted in Sondervan's fleeing to the Midwest. Indications are that he never contacted his family again.





Dirk Nieland.

Dirk Nieland's Funny Business

by George Harper

In 1929 William B. Eerdmans published *'n fonnie bisniss*, a book of episodes in the life of a Dutch immigrant painter and decorator named Loe Verlak. Loe lives in the southeast side of "Granrappis," in an area of small houses and shops inhabited mostly by Loe's fellow immigrants, some from an earlier wave of immigration. Most of Loe's friends and neighbors are members of the same church, and many are related to each other. In Granrappis these stalwart people duplicated some of the social and religious features of the land they left behind, and they generated a new language based on their native Dutch dialects.*

Loe's language is a rich and curious blend of American English and Dutch, in the ratio of two Dutch words to one English word; most of the nominally English words, however, are transliterated into Dutch spellings (for example: *sjurts* = church; *senwisjes* = sandwiches). Often whole phrases are rendered as one word in Loe's language: "I don't care" becomes *aidonkeer* in the new lan-

G.G. Harper is Professor of English, Emeritus, at Calvin College and a volunteer staff member of the Calvin College Library Archives.

* Most of Loe's people speak the dialect of the northern Dutch province of Groningen, but farther to the north of Loe's American neighborhood the dialect is mainly that of the Dutch province of Zeeland.

guage, which became known as Yankee-Dutch (YD).

The author of the book, Dirk Nieland, who was born in 1886 in Sauwerd, Groningen, the Netherlands, emigrated to the United States (*Yoenait Steets* in YD) with his parents, Piet and Leifke Nieland. He had no siblings. The membership records of Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids list the family's reception into the church in 1905, Leifke as a member by confession, Piet and Dirk as members by baptism only (*doopslid*). It may be this fact about Piet's status that made Dirk a rebel in the church and community, though not a violent or mean rebel. Fathers in this Dutch immigrant community were expected to be full, confessing members, eligible to become elders (*ellers* in YD) or deacons (*diekens*). Non-confessors of advanced age were made to feel less than equal members of church and community—which in fact they were.

In any event, by his later teens Dirk had taken a stance outside the structure of the church, but immersed as he was in the culture of the church and its society, surrounded as he was by almost exclusively Dutch-American neighbors (with a sprinkling of black people, descendants of escaped slaves who had settled in Michigan in the middle 1800s), Dirk was both a part of the culture and a rock standing separately in its stream and roiling its waters. At least that is the way he was viewed and how he viewed himself. His own situation, then, was the basis for much of his writing, with its subtle satire on not the *people* of the Reformed culture but the *institutions* that, in his view and the view of many others, constricted and deadened the humanity (*yoomanity* in YD) of the people. But in Nieland's view this

Text sample.

IV.

SONNIESCHOEL PIKKENIK

MAAI, maai, wat kun je toch 'n latse fon hebben als je met 'n nais bonze piepel uitgaat.

Onze sjurts had gisteren Sonnieschoel pikkenik, en omdat de peent bisnis toch wat slek is, zeg ik toe mijn wijf: "Nou, ma, wij gaan toedee eens afleggen en naar de Fifteveen woeds om te zien wat daar goon aan is." Wel, mijn wijf is alletaim reddie voor 'n goed taim en zoo pekten wij 'n besker met senwisjes en bons met hem en sjies en benennes en piekels en zoo, en wat koffie in 'n froetken en toen zijn we in ons delivver trukje er heen gereden.

Wij konden 't iezie wokken, joeno, maar mijn wijf is nogal poedie fet en aan top of dat, waai, evverboddie raid noudees in 'n kar en dan wil je, als diesent piepel, ook niet zoo poer ekten. Wel, wij waren er dan ook poedie kwiek en er zaten al latse ander piepel. Bik Nik, de boetser, en Sikke Pit, de teeler, miete ik raidewee. Nou, dat was al 'n nais bons, ook voor mijn wijf, want dan had die ook kompanie. En zij lijkt die woemens toch poediegoed, want Nik en Sikke hebben goed gedaan in dit kontrie, joeno, en zijn latse monnie wurt. En aan top of dat is Sikke ook nog eller

humanity, or perhaps humaneness, was so strong, so resilient, that it could not be snuffed out by the strictures and the hypocrisies that the institutions demanded and fostered.

Loe Verlak, Nieland's main character and protagonist in *'n fonnie bisniss*, is the point of contact with the culture, yet he retains his essential humanity. Even though he fails to gain the office of deacon in the church, "Ik heb voor dieken gerunt" ("I let myself be nominated for the office of deacon") and he is victimized by character assassination, "Ze zeggen dat ik ondiecent ben" ("They say that I am indecent"), Loe remains in the church. His soliloquy records the ways and manners and beliefs of his fellow church people; in his narrative he discloses not the rottenness of his culture but its foibles, its laughable and hence reparable hypocrisies and occasional cruelties, meanwhile disclosing also his own endearing humanness and character and charity. The charm of the book and especially the accurate rendering of the dialect of the region, Yankee Dutch, won for it a brief fame (and good sales; it went into a second printing shortly following the first) which has smoldered to this day. It breaks out into small flame among circles of readers who can still construe the dialect or teach themselves enough to follow the text and gain an appreciation of Loe Verlak and his kind. This is, of course, a dwindling group, although many older people in Granrappis can still recite bits and pieces of the book. A few church suppers here and there still feature readings from the book, the favorite chapter being "Sonnieschöl Pikkenik," which displays a balancing act of the rival claims of piety and humanness.

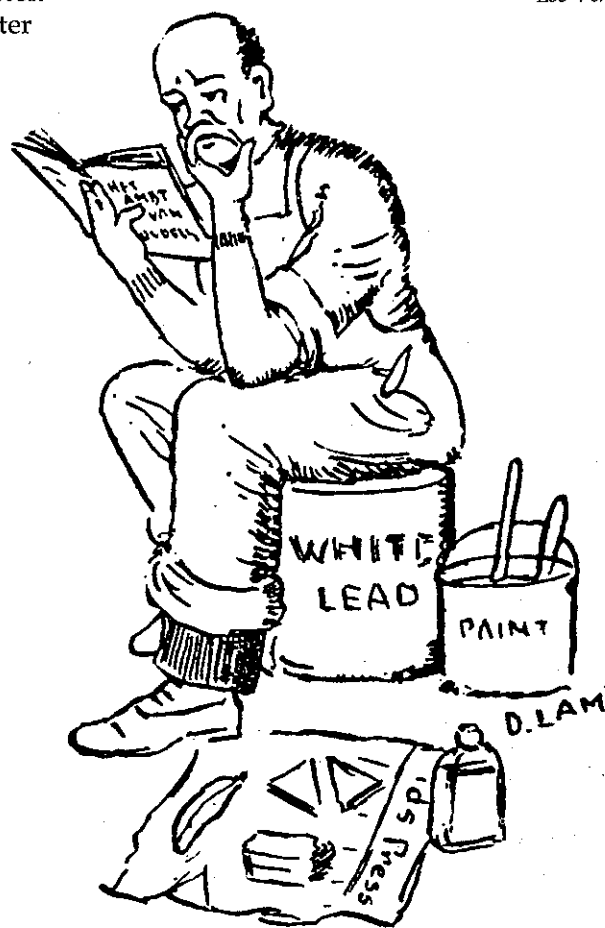
Nieland was a member of a loosely organized but lively group

of writers and artists who met informally at Perch Lake, a small lake on the northeast border of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Some of the group owned property on the lake; Dirk Nieland himself bought a lot and built a rustic lodge of massive stones and timber high on the bluff to the east of the lake. Others who lived at the lake included Fred ten Hoor (son of a professor at Calvin Theological Seminary), a poet and critic; Peter Kleynenberg, a musician; and Stanley V'Soske, a rug designer and weaver, who later moved to Puerto Rico. The Perch Lake group included others—notably a musical clan composed of Kleynenbergs and Maleks. The Kleynenbergs had the distinction of entertaining Benjamin Britten and his companion, Peter Pears, when they took part in a musical event in Grand Rapids in 1939. There were, indeed, rumors of bohemian life being lived at Perch Lake: nude bathing, heavy drinking, and, some whispered, Socialism; but there is no proof. The writer of this sketch recalls several pleasant autumn Saturdays in his childhood when Nieland opened his lodge to his relatives, the Tornga family, for a day-long family reunion. Beer flowed; a few became tipsy, but most of Nieland's neighbors, who dropped in to greet

his kinfolk and drink his beer, seemed normal enough—and there was no sign of nude bathing in the little lake. The only really exotic creature about was Fred ten Hoor's dog, a huge shepherd which obeyed only German commands, for some reason. The children present learned soon enough to say "Ruhe!" to keep the dog from jumping on them.

Nieland's own life is clearly reflected in the life and opinions of his hero, Loe Verlak; but Loe is more than his creator: he is a man in his own right, independent, courageous, sometimes silly, shrewd (but not crassly), and at times pious, but with a sharp eye for false piety in others

Loe Verlak.



and a sharp way of expressing his disappointment at finding hypocrites in his world. Members of his family play supporting roles in his drama, as do many of Loe's friends, especially Sikke Piet the *eller* (elder) and Bik Nik the *boetser* (butcher). Loe's relationship to the church is especially interesting in the light of Nieland's own defection, for Loe remains a member, though he is never able to achieve the distinction of being voted in as elder or deacon. He knows his theology as expressed in the catechism* and is able to lard his discourse with biblical references, but he is not intimidated by self-appointed scribes and pharisees such as some of his friends become when the elder's mantle descends on their shoulders. He even wins over the dominee to his point of view, after a harrowing experience of being investigated by his old companions, now elders, who bring charges against him for misbehavior. Loe lives out his religion on the plane of ethics and is a shrewd judge of pretension and pseudo-learning.

The titles of the chapters tell much about Loe and his world: "n Bik Jaap (i.e., "A Big Job"), "Henkie Moet'n Treed Leeren" ("Hank, [Loe's son] Must Learn a Trade"), "n Durdie Trik," "Sonnieschoel Pikkenik," "Hainie Koopt Funnesjes Aan Tain" ("Heine [Loe's younger son] Buys Furniture on the Installment Plan"), "Vijf-en-twintig Jaar Gemerried" ("Twenty-fifth Anniversary"), "De Gooie Taims Van Vroeger" ("The Good Times of Long Ago"),

*In one of the stories Loe says, "Ik weet wel dat onze neetsje gespoiled is, dat heb ik al op kettegism geleerd" ("I know that we are totally depraved; I learned that in catechism").



"Ik lijk die leplonsen niet, . . ."

"I don't like lap lunches."

"Femmie Troebels," "Nog Worser Femmelie Troebels," "Ons Dominie Heeft'n Kol Declained" ("Our Minister Has Declined a Call to Another Church"), "Ze Zeggen Dat Ik Ondiesent Ben" ("They Say I Am Indecent"), "n Middag in de Kontrie" ("An Afternoon in the Countryside"), "Ik Heb Latse Wurries," "Ik Heb Voor Dieken Gerund" ("I Let Myself Be Nominated for the Office of Deacon"). These episodes disclose events both in and around the world he knew well enough to write about—family, work, church, and now and then a glimpse at the world outside, but no politics, no culture but his own, rich and aesthetic in his eyes if in no others. After all, we learn, Loe is a poet, and his doggerel is in demand among his fellow church members. His is a rich life, expressed richly.

What did Nieland accomplish? First he invented a language which is

an amalgam of actual sounds and carefully reconstructed syntax, with subtle assignments of character so that the language is always proper to the character speaking it. Loe Verlak's language is spare, with a few adventuresome big words or phrases thrown in at precise intervals as if to display his warrant to use them. His wife's quoted speech, by the way, is always in a syntax that indicates that she thinks she is speaking American; Loe's speech, by contrast, is always in Dutch syntax except when he is quoting someone else—the English impinges only in the mixture of sounds, most of them a product of misheard English rendered in the closest Dutch equivalent (e.g., *piezelmeatje* for "pleased to meet you").* The languages—actually YD is more

than one language if one considers the variety of speakers in Nieland's book, although we hear mainly Loe's version, of course—accumulate to provide a picture in sound and syntax of a society now largely dead but once lively and in its way evolutionary. Nieland's book is a great tool for the archeology of a culture now known to few and knowable only from bits and pieces left behind. Nieland recreated a language, living and vibrant, from which to construct a society already passing away in his time. No one else has done it better.

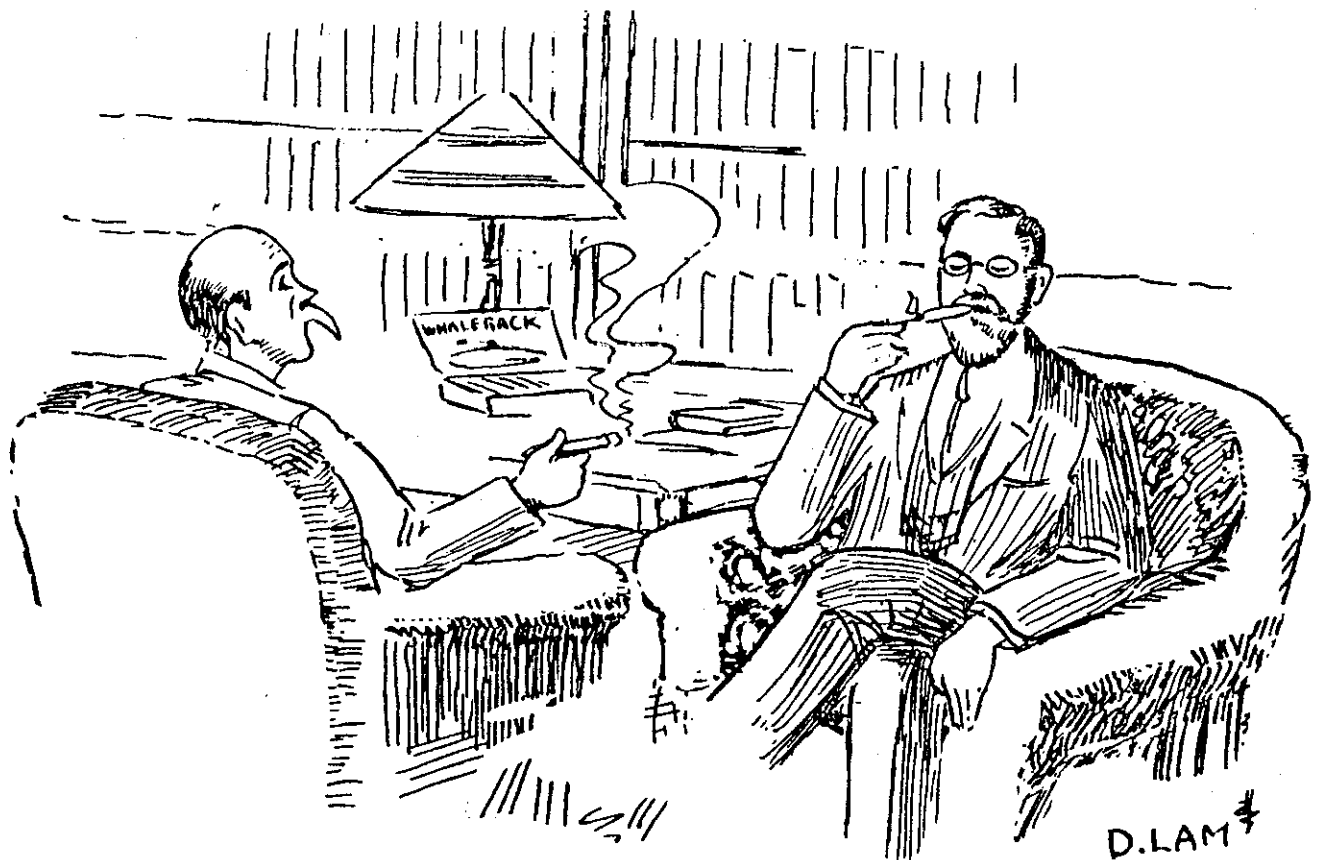
Second, Nieland created a society remarkably like that of the neighborhood in which he lived from the time he was a young immigrant. There the reader sees a hierarchy of types, at

* In this case what is intended as self-consciously absorbed English turns out to be two other things—a botched English phrase and an echo of a splendid pun: piece of meat[je].

the top the earlier-immigrant entrepreneurs with economic and social power and the attendant "standing" in the community; there is the class of professionals, including the preacher, the doctor, and the *luijer* (lawyer); and there is Loe's class, the little tradesmen and skilled workers starting out on their own, cutting themselves each a piece of the rich American pie; and then there are the next generation, impatient to become fully American in speech and behavior, a bit ashamed of their elders and their "funny ways," yet destined to replicate some of their parents' behavior and peculiar

speech after all. It will be a long time before they are fully at ease in the rapidly evolving American groups. Nieland's little world was about to pass away even while he wrote, but he caught it at a moment of ripeness, both linguistically and socially. And religiously too: Loe is the first real representative of the humanizers of the rigid immigrant mix of Dutch pietist and principled Kuyperian Calvinist that flowered briefly in the period from 1930 to the late 1960s. Thereafter the sudden onset of material prosperity and access to greater education raised up a large body of Dutch-American bour-

geoisie who fled their old ethnic neighborhoods and clustered in new, strongly Dutch-American suburbs, where for the most part their churches will follow them. Dutch-Americans, in the western part of Michigan at least, continued to move farther west until they were stopped by the shores of Lake Michigan. Some turned the dunes into tightly-packed colonies of neo-Victorian mansions with facades dominated by multistall garages; their lawns, impeccably weed-free, hid and still hide the white sands of the dunes. There is no haven for Loe and his kind there.



"... rielaiade ik eerst wat 'n fain feller hij was."

Loe and the pastor, "I realized then that he was a good fellow."

A Footnote on Columbus, Montana

The last issue of Origins (p. 43) incorrectly identified the family migrating from Columbus, Montana to Sumas, Washington in 1937. The travelers were the Sam Staal family and not the Hiemstras. The account of that trek, written by Cecil Staal Triemstra in 1980, follows.

The Move to Sumas Washington from Columbus, Montana

Not many people attended our auction sale on that cold January day in 1937. I remember Mama calling attention to the ice hanging from the auctioneer's chin. This was on a Wednesday and we must have left home one or two days later (not without mixed feelings of anticipation and sadness). Seven of us rode in a Dodge sedan pulling a four-wheeled trailer and the other three were in the 1928 Chevrolet truck with canvas-covered beds and boxes, pulling a homemade two-wheeled trailer. Grandpa and Grandma Staal and Uncle Bob and family lived together in the town of Manhattan, having moved from our area the year before. We spent Sunday there visiting with them. Some of us slept at an older couple's house who were friends of Uncle Bob's (Joe and Mae Zilliox). She kept asking us if we had enough "kivers" on the bed. It was very cold.

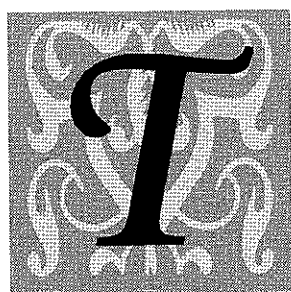
Early in the week we started out for Lynden expecting to get there in two or three days. About eighty miles later, nearing the top of the Homestake Pass, the car quit. Something was wrong with the water pump. Now what? No houses near, no people, no help. Just rocks and hills and snow and very cold. Papa and Anton were walking back and forth between truck and car, discussing what to do. After a while a highway patrol car with two men came along and stopped. Did we need help? Where were we going? What! Almost 1,000 miles. This time of year? Must be crazy. Do you know how cold it is up here right now? Fifty-one degrees below zero! I don't remember if they towed us in, but anyway with their help we stopped at the first garage on the south edge of Butte. It was 5:00 PM and the mechanics were going home from work, so car fixing would have to wait until morning. Nearby was

a drafty little cabin with two beds where we spent the night. Mama brought in blankets, which had been packed away in the truck, for the ones who slept on the floor. All the next day we waited around hoping the car would soon be fixed. Papa and Anton spent some of the time at the garage. About all I remember of that day and night is the cold. By the time the car was fixed it was too late to go on, so we spent a second night there. The next day we got as far as Superior, a tiny burg, still in the mountains of Western Montana. The only lodging was an old hotel. It had warm cozy rooms. Traveling over Lookout Pass on the Montana-Idaho line we thought never again would we see so much snow piled on each side of the road, higher than the car; but Friday going over the Cascades it was piled up even higher. After reaching Lynden we heard they had had a major storm the week before. Going down the other side of the Cascades toward Seattle, we began to see patches of green grass. In the middle of winter? Incredible! Reaching the outskirts of Everett toward evening green lawns and bushes were everywhere. It looked like a paradise. In the morning a light rain was falling as we started on our last lap of the journey. The John Cook family of Lynden, former neighbors near Rapelje, welcomed us with open arms. Taking in a family of ten surely says something for Christian hospitality. They had found a couple of farms for sale and after about a month of waiting we bought a forty-acre farm two miles east of Sumas.



(above) Chevy truck and two-wheeled trailer.

Dodge sedan, left to right — Anton Staal, Sam Staal, and young Harold with a road map showing from his pocket.



The Anglo-Boer War Dutch-American Reaction 1889-1903

by Henry Ippel

Tn 1889 the rural residents of Emdon, South Dakota, scrapped the name of their village and rechristened it "Joubert" to honor the heroic South African General Piet Joubert. Although separated from South Africa by some ten thousand miles, these and other Dutch immigrants were so intensely involved in the South African Boer War that they gathered in telegraph offices to gain immediate news about the war's battles and some voted against President William McKinley because he would not intervene on behalf of the Boers in their fight with the English. In all of nineteenth-century Dutch-American experience, no other international issue gained so much attention.

Begun in October 1899, the Anglo-Boer War in South Africa was actually the final skirmish in the century-long march of British imperial interest and expansion in that

part of the world. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the British had established a foothold in the Cape of Good Hope, where the Dutch and Huguenots had settled as early as 1652. Their descendants and the other Dutch who followed them were reluctant to accept British control, so in 1835 they began the Great Trek northward to areas surrounding the Vaal River. Here the Boers, or Afrikaners, felt secure enough to establish two republics, the Orange Free State and Transvaal (also called the South African Republic). Their greater distance from Capetown, however, did not deter the imperial grasp of Britain, which claimed authority over this territory as well.

When Great Britain attempted to annex the Orange Free State and Transvaal in the 1880s, a war broke out which ended quickly with the defeat and humiliation of the British army at Majuba Hill by forces commanded by General Piet Joubert. For a time, then, the Boers maintained their highly prized independence. But in 1887, when the world's largest

gold fields were discovered in the Transvaal, that republic's president, Paul Kruger, noted perceptively, "Instead of rejoicing you would do better to weep, for this gold will cause our country to be soaked with blood."



Rev. John A. Kett, 1863-1914, Boer War veteran who became a CRC pastor, 1908-1914.

Henry Ippel is Professor of History, Emeritus, at Calvin College and Field Agent for The Historical Committee of the Christian Reformed Church.

The gold rush brought in a flood of outlandish and unwelcome foreigners (*uitlanders*) who carried strange English laws and customs with them. Although the Boers were determined to maintain their own cultural patterns, the *uitlanders* fast became a majority clamoring for the right to vote in the Transvaal elections. And the home government in London supported that objective. Kruger and his people stubbornly resisted even though an American cartoonist provided a solution in which the comic character, Mr. Dooley, says, "I if I had been President Kruger, I'd have given the vote to the Uitlanders, but I would have done the counting!" Efforts at negotiation and compromise between Kruger and the British High Commissioner for South Africa failed. Mutually exasperated and constantly threatened, both sides finally decided on war, which began at five o'clock on October 11, 1899.

Today it is difficult to understand the strength of the ethnic ties which in 1889 bound the Dutch-speaking people of the world together. Those who emigrated from the Netherlands to South Africa, the United States, Canada, Java, the Caribbean, Argentina, and Brazil shared a cultural heritage which included Holland's mythic struggles against the threatening North Sea and the heroic defeat of Spain in the Eighty Years War (1568-1648). Immigrants scattered across the globe also maintained a vibrant interest in the lives of friends and relatives who were located in these widely separated lands. In many of these places, the Dutch named their settlements after their native places. There are, for example, several Amsterdams in the U.S.A., and place names like Friesland, Overijssel, and Drenthe are common. But Joubert, South Dakota, and Pretoria, Georgia, require a more his-

torically detailed explanation.

Although it is true that immigrants from Dutch provinces and villages often clustered together in family groups and used familiar names for their settlements, other patterns are also evident. The children of H. Ribbens, for example, were separated by several oceans, but even then their familial bonds were strong enough to maintain enduring interests in both their rela-

tives and the countries in which they were located. In the Ribbenses' case, Martinus, son of Huibrecht Ribbens and Christian Adriana Formenooy, emigrated from Terneuzen, Zeeland, to South Africa in 1888 in response to President Kruger's call for teachers. He was followed shortly by a brother, John Karel, and in 1897 by another brother, Adrianus Johannes Ribbens, and his family. Adrianus was employed by the South African



Looting and burning a Boer farm.

This picture from the *March*, 1901, *Banner*, p. 138, was that periodical's first photo illustration. Similar illustrations were not used again until 1905.

Railway Company, which was constructing a railway from Pretoria to Lourenco Marques, a Portuguese port in Delagoa Bay. The rest of the Ribbens family remained in the Netherlands until after the war, but other residents of Terneuzen followed the larger emigration of Zeelanders to the United States, settling, for instance, in Zeeland, Michigan, or in the "Zeeuws" colony in Grand Rapids, Michigan. While it is apparent that these relatives and former neighbors may not have corresponded with each other on a regular basis and did not have access to today's media coverage, Dutch-language periodicals and the secular press made them aware of events which touched the lives of the Dutch in various parts of the world. Jacob Vander Zee writes in *The Hollanders of Iowa* that farmers gathered at telegraph offices for news of victories and defeats in South Africa.

These farmers had not gathered simply because they possessed ethnic and historic ties with their brothers and sisters in South Africa. Many of them considered their valiant attempt to build homes in Michigan, Iowa, Illinois, or Wisconsin to be much like that of the Boers in South Africa. Together they also shared recollections of the heroic Eighty Years War, the war of Dutch independence from Spain. The Dutch in America, however, had become heirs of 1776, and they readily embraced American pride in its War for Independence. How natural then to develop empathy with their kin in Transvaal and the Orange Free State who were also fighting for political independence. J.C. Voorhis wrote in the *Banner of Truth*, "We see the spirit of 1776 animating those religious people to stand for their rights and their liberties." And the *Holland City News* asserted, "It is Bunker Hill, Saratoga and Yorktown repeated by the brav-

est and coolest band of patriots the world ever saw."

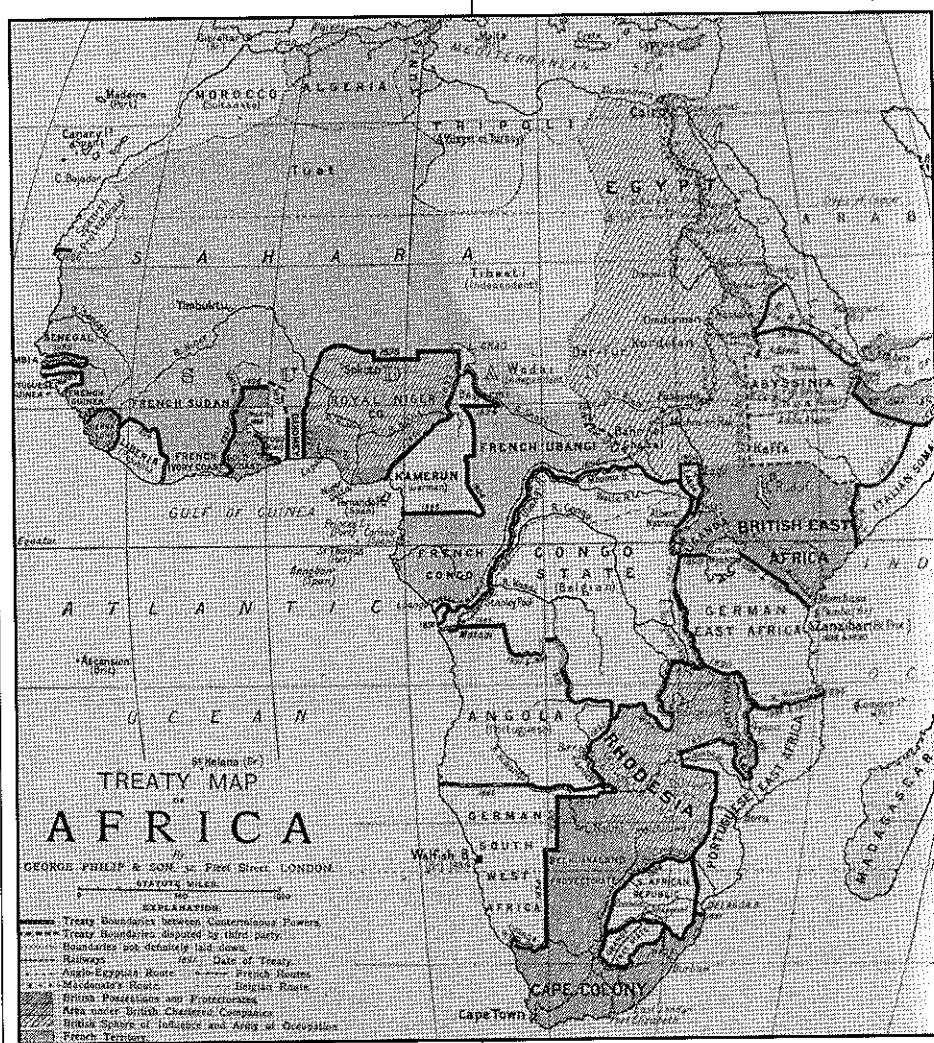
Rev. Henry Beets, moreover, tied a final knot which bound many of the Dutch in America to the Boers when he said, "They are *our* brethren in the faith. They march to battle with *our* psalms on their lips and in their hearts." President Kruger, "Oom Paul," typified the piety and orthodoxy of many of his fellow citizens who were members of the Reformed and Christian Reformed Churches. His biographers identify him as the "strictest of Calvinists," reading nothing but the Bible, with the words of the Old Testament constantly on his lips.

Yoked with their brothers and sis-

ters in South Africa by ethnic, historic, and religious ties, the Dutch communities in America responded to the plight of the Boers in various ways. They gathered together in mass meetings and rallies, they formed organizations and passed formal resolutions, they collected funds, they kept the cause alive through the printed page, and, finally, they entered the political arena.

All of these responses were motivated by a common goal: to express sympathy and support for the Boers

Map of South Africa, 1898. Illustrated London News, 1898, Vol. 23, p. 520.



at war in South Africa. Despite Winston Churchill's generally accurate comment that "No people in the world received so much verbal sympathy and so little support," the Dutch community in America was an exception and must be credited with offering both sympathy and considerable support to the Boers.

Two weeks after the outbreak of hostilities in South Africa, a mass meeting attended by 2,300 Hollanders was held in Fountain Street Baptist Church in downtown Grand Rapids, Michigan. Although this was the first of numerous gatherings, its format and style were repeated again and again throughout the Midwest. In Grand Rapids, "twenty-three hundred pairs of Holland-American lungs trumpeted forth." A choir "treated us to a beautiful rendering of the 'Wilhelmus' [the Dutch national anthem]." Psalm 83, Paul Kruger's favorite, was read. Speeches were given by Dr. Henry Hulst, a prominent local physician, and several leading clergymen—Rev. J.W. Warmhuis, of Fourth Reformed Church; Rev. Henry Beets, of LaGrave Avenue Christian Reformed Church; and Rev. James Ossewaarde, of Bethany Reformed Church. The four speakers, all excellent orators, received thunderous applause for speeches flavored with such pungent assertions as "The large crowd here present testifies to the fact that Dutch blood has not grown cold and Hollanders have not Anglicized." "The true cause of this war is gold; if there were no gold fields in Transvaal, there would be no war." "England hates Hollanders and the Dutch race." "England is mighty. It speaks of weapons and horses, armies and victory—but we and our South African kinsmen know God is almighty, and they will win in the name of the Lord."

This early meeting prefigured

many others. On December 11, the people of Zeeland held an evening meeting in the Reformed church. The news report indicated that "all day it had rained, the wind blew a gale and the church windows were pelted, but the spacious Reformed church was filled." Rev. J. Van Houten from Holland, Professor Henry Dosker from Hope College, and Rev. Henry Beets addressed the audience. According to Van Houten, "God's hand is in this war to humiliate haughty, insolent England; God wants to show that He is still the God of Israel who answers prayers and can make a thousand flee before a hundred." Beets reminded his hearers that the Boers were fighting for freedom, independence, and their own government. "They preferred men of their own tongue and blood and God-fearing men like Kruger and Joubert rather than a blustering, Sir Alfred Milner or a bullying Chamberlain." Beets concluded his oration by reciting a verse written by the eighty-five-year-old poet Nicholas Beets, which called upon God to help the Boers and declared, "May the free United States of South Africa live." Dosker credited the English with bringing not only their presumptuous and boastful civilization to South Africa, but syphilis too. He predicted "eternal hatred" against the English, who had hunted the Boers like deer and treated them like dogs.

On the 18th of December, the United American Transvaal League sponsored a meeting in the Grand Rapids Auditorium—"one of the most remarkable and enthusiastic demonstrations held in this country." A vigorous protest against English tyranny was raised not only by the Dutch but also by other ethnic groups. The Honorable G.J. Diekema, a Michigan state representative, orated,

This splendid mass meeting, representing the witty and patriotic Irishman, the industrious and God-fearing Polander, the sturdy and liberty loving German, the Heroic Norseman and the indomitable, unconquerable and fighting Dutchman all standing shoulder to shoulder, and hand in hand, have gathered for the purpose of expressing our sympathy with the struggling South African republics in their conflict with Great Britain.

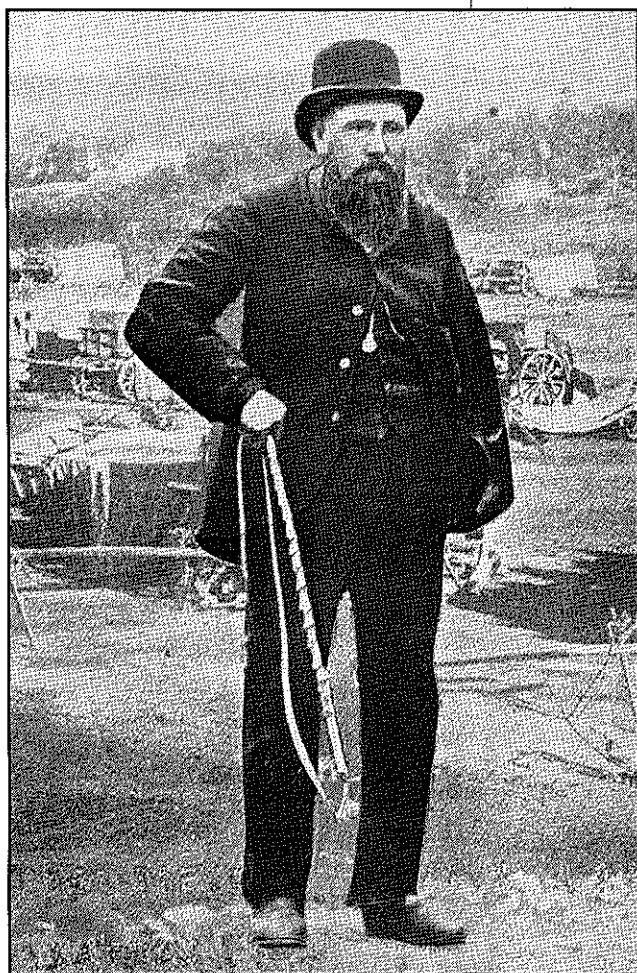
Similar meetings were held in large Dutch communities located in Holland, Michigan; Milwaukee; Chicago; Cleveland; and St. Paul, Minnesota; but also in small towns like Cedar Grove, Wisconsin; Orange City, Iowa; and New Era, Michigan. Public buildings such as opera houses and the Bricklayers' Hall in Chicago joined Winant Chapel at Hope College and many small local churches as gathering places for the enthusiastic crowds.

And there was no lack of speakers. In western Michigan, for example, Rev. Beets and Professor Henry Dosker were always in demand. William Van Eyck, city clerk of Holland, Michigan, and Abraham Keizer, editor of *De Wachter*, spoke in small community churches. Rev. Peter Moerdyke, pastor of a Reformed church, took the podium in the Chicago area.

In great demand too was one of the foremost orators in the country, Webster Davis, a former Republican Assistant Secretary of the Interior under McKinley, who became a convert to the Boer cause and to the Democratic Party after a brief trip to South Africa. In spite of his Democratic affiliation, he was enthusiastically welcomed at a May 1900 meeting in Central Avenue Christian Reformed Church, in Holland, Michigan. The reporter for the *Holland City News* noted, "No sooner had Mr. Davis ut-

tered a dozen words than the immense audience knew that he was a speaker of unusual ability. Never did an audience listen to a more inspiring address on the Boer cause."

Local and national speakers could be upstaged by visitors from abroad, as, for example, when Montague White, a former consul general from Transvaal to London, came to the



Piet Cronje, Boer War hero after whom North Holland, Michigan was renamed "Cronje" during the Boer War. L. Penning, *Verdedigers en Verdrukkers der Afrikaansche Vrijheid*, ('s Gravenhage, J.N. Voorhoeve, 1902), p. 49.

United States to encourage American intervention in the war. Equally popular, special commissioner P. Louter Wessel, a South African millionaire mine owner, arrived in western Michigan in October 1900 to make

an extensive speaking tour. He appeared at meetings in Grand Rapids, Holland, Zeeland, Grand Haven, Muskegon, Kalamazoo, Hudsonville, Zutphen, Vriesland, Drenthe, and Overisel before leaving for Indiana and California. Emotions were intensified by the visits of two young Boer refugees, Adjutant Gerhardus Snyman and Captain Hercules Viljean. They brought firsthand accounts of British atrocities and stories of concentration-camp conditions and the plight of widows and orphans of Boer soldiers.

These and many other speakers deeply stirred their vast audiences with sympathy for the Boers' terrible plight. Never before had the Dutch in America joined together so enthusiastically around a common cause. They rallied to the Boer cause in three tangible ways: through joint resolutions, political petitions, and the collection of funds. In fact, no mass meeting was considered successful unless it concluded with the approval of a resolution drawn up by the committee in charge. One of these, held in Grand Rapids on October 27, 1899, concludes,

"Therefore . . . in warm sympathy for the Africaners, [we] express a hearty desire that proud Albion may be humbled and that the Boers may win a decided victory, and not because they are kinfolk,

but because they are in the right, in opposition to the most evil injustice of England; that they would gladly support their African kinfolk with supplies and blood, if the opportunity presents itself, but because of the fact that there is no opportunity at present, they direct their prayers to the Almighty God of heaven and earth that He may intervene, and that He might show England and through this goliath to the whole world, that mighty and proud as England may be,—*God alone is almighty.**

Although they were unable to support their "kinfolk with supplies and blood," other resolutions called upon the government of the United States to offer its services to the belligerent parties in the promotion of peace. The Common Council of Holland, Michigan, resolved that

we demand of Congressman William Alden Smith his best endeavors to procure the passage by Congress, in accordance with the choicest of American traditions, proper resolutions of sympathy with the struggling heroic patriots of the South African Republic and Orange Free State in their battle to make right might against a government now ruled by Militarism and the Stock Exchange [just] as it was in 1776 and 1812.

Ultimately, expressions of verbal sympathy were declared insufficient. More involvement was demanded. An editorial in *De Wachter* challenged the Dutch in America to do more than "send useless telegrams to Queen Victoria [of England] or President Kruger [of Transvaal]." Nice words urging those in need to "go and warm yourself" did not help. The editor proposed that all Dutch publications challenge their readers to establish committees to collect funds and encourage generous contributions in their communities.

* See full text in Appendix I.

From then on all meetings included the gathering of audience contributions.

The collection of funds became a large venture. The Grand Rapids committee was chaired by the Honorable John Steketee, Vice Consul of the Netherlands, with J.B. Hulst, a local book dealer, as secretary. By mid-November of 1899, the Grand Rapids group had collected \$1000 for transfer to the Netherlands Red Cross for ambulances in South Africa. However, a synodical committee of the Christian Reformed Church, which had urged its congregations to take collections for "our struggling compatriots in South Africa," publicly protested in *De Wachter* that the Red Cross, which receives "thousands upon thousands of dollars for its work," did not need funds collected from the Dutch community. Instead the plight of the widows and orphans of Boer soldiers should be recognized. Subsequently, the reports in *De Wachter*, submitted by Steketee and Hulst, indicated that the funds were being collected for the latter purpose. These reports reveal an outpouring of contributions from individuals, churches and organizations throughout the United States.**

Organizations to direct the pro-Boer campaign sprouted up throughout the country. The National Boer Relief Fund Association, the American Council for the Assistance of the South African Republics, and the American Boer Relief Fund Committee were located in New York City. In Grand Rapids the American Transvaal League established its headquarters with Myron H. Walker as chairman, George Roelofs as secretary, and J.A.S. Verdier as treasurer. The purposes of the league were (1) to promote and procure peace for the Boer republics, (2) to spread informa-

tion and to create sentiment against the continuation of the war, (3) to aid the Boers in preserving their independence, (4) to raise funds to support the cause and to aid the widows and orphans and the Red Cross, and (5) to induce the American government to mediate. Branch offices of the league were established throughout Michigan and the nation.

In September 1900, the American Transvaal League sent out invitations to six hundred prominent pro-Boer sympathizers throughout the country to gather in Chicago to organize a national league. Although this national league was successfully launched, the local branch in Grand Rapids suffered a serious blow due primarily to unfortunate timing because the national league's formation occurred amid a turbulent presidential election.

Partisan politics had not affected the early phase of the pro-Boer campaign. Membership in the Transvaal League, for instance, included members of all parties, nationalities, and churches. It was well known and taken for granted that the Dutch in western Michigan, and to a large degree in all western states, were sympathetic to the Republican administration

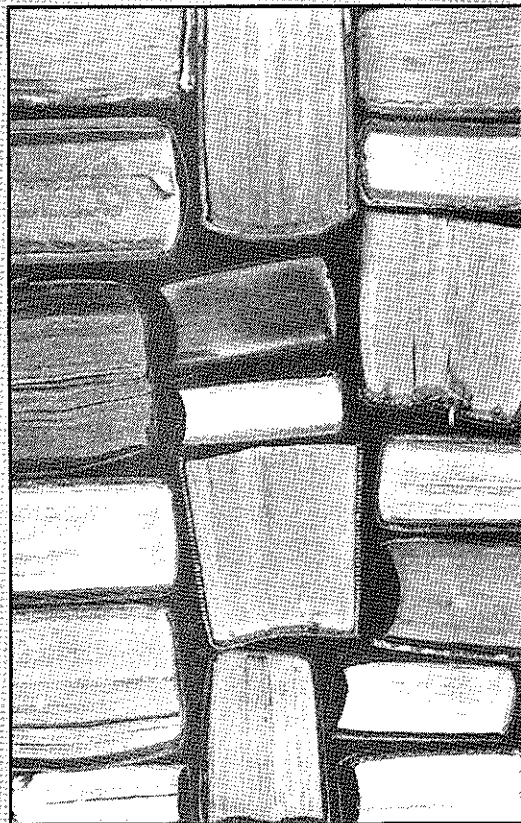
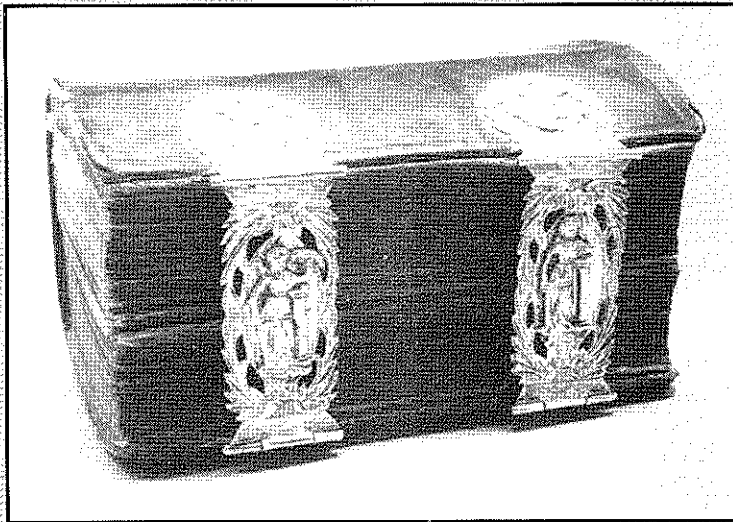
of President William McKinley, though not to McKinley's policy of neutrality. But the resolutions and petitions designed to gain U.S. intervention in the South African conflict failed. The first attempt to intervene was spurned by the British, and the McKinley administration decided it could not act until it was invited to participate in peace negotiations. Nevertheless, the government permitted Americans to sell mules to the English for their army and to ship hay from New York. Nor did the U.S. protest the British seizure of two flour cargos destined for the Boer republics. Pro-Boers considered this behavior to be decidedly pro-British. A suspicion was current

continued on page 26



Piet Joubert,
Boer War hero after
whom Emdon, South
Dakota was renamed
"Joubert" in 1898.
Ibid., p. 32.

**See Appendix II for a sample of contributors.

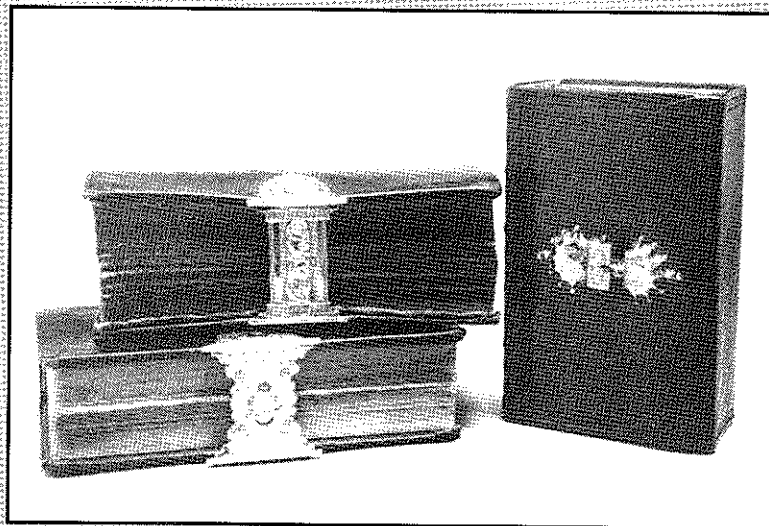
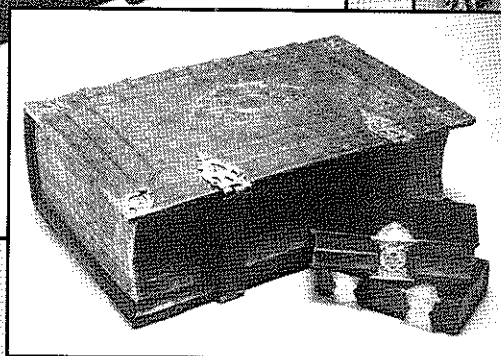
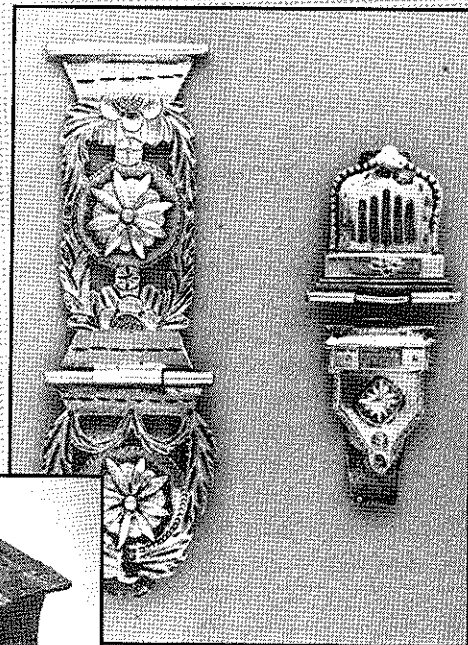
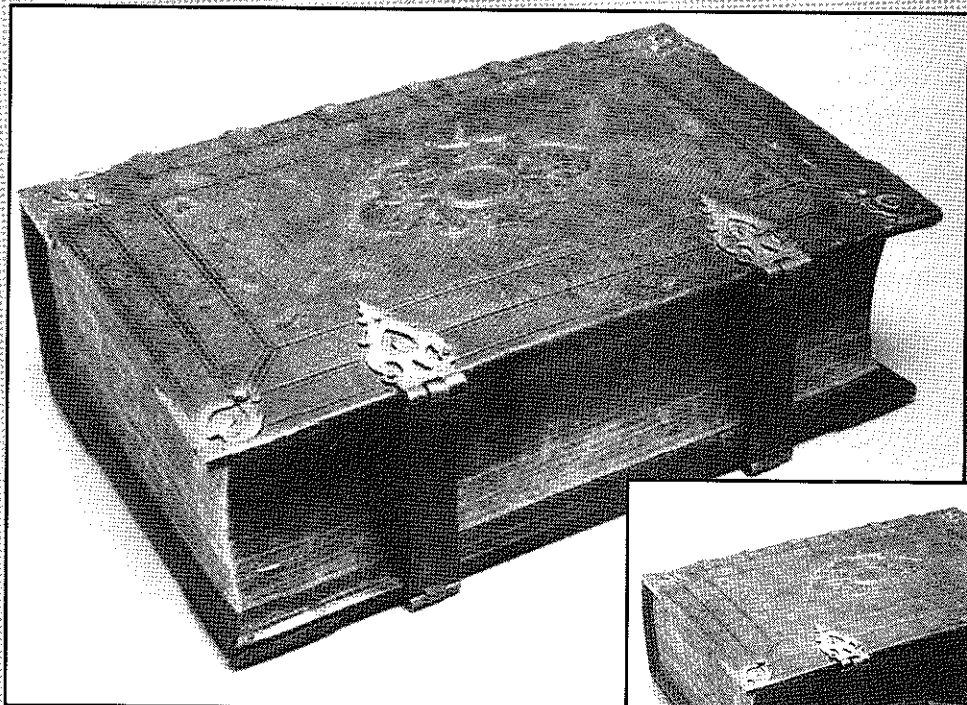


Staten Bijbels

If you have a large or small old Dutch Bible you may find the following facts interesting. Printed books as we know them were first published more than five-hundred years ago. Printed Bibles first appeared in the late 1450s. The Dutch translation of the Bible we are most familiar with is the Staten Bijbel (State Bible) authorized by the States-General. The first edition though dated 1636 was published in 1637. Many subsequent editions have appeared. This version came about as a result of action taken by the Synod of Dort (1618-1619) and had a significance for our Dutch ancestors equal to that of the King James Version for English folk and Luther's translation for German Protestants.

Small Staten Bijbels which include psalms for singing (ca. 3.5 x 6 in.) often have silver or gold clasps. Larger Staten Bijbels (ca. 16 x 10 in.) exist with both brass clasps and corner pieces. Illustrations of biblical scenes as well as maps can often be found in these Bibles.

A Staten Bijbel dated before 1800 may have a bit of value as an antique. To have any significant antique value, the Staten Bijbel must be in good to fine condition and have all the clasps and corner pieces. Large Staten Bijbels with colored illustrations and silver clasps are museum pieces and not often found. Leaf through your Staten Bijbel and, while looking for family records, remember that you hold in your hands the tangible evidence of a religious heritage which deserves to be cherished and nurtured. *C.J. Bult*

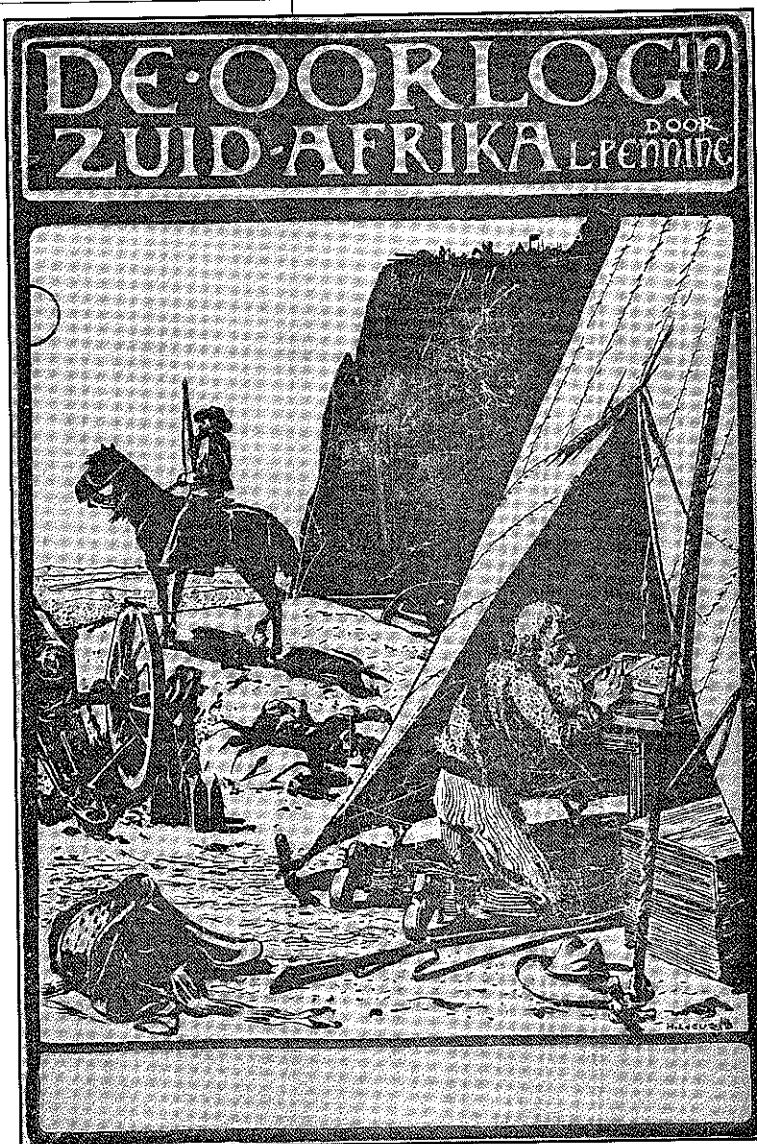


that a secret alliance or understanding had been formed between England and the United States. Great Britain, it was alleged, would not interfere with the United States annexation of the Philippines if the United States would not interfere with the British annexation of the Boer republics. In Iowa, horse and mule dealers suspected that their inability to acquire stock was due to the high prices paid by the British. In a pro-Boer meeting in Grand Rapids on May 1, 1900, Rev. Henry Beets complained that "while our government with one hand liberated Cuba, it is placing our yoke upon the Philippines with the other." Other speakers compared the benevolent attitude of our government toward Armenia and Greece with its failure to help the Boers.

Anticipating state and national political conventions in the summer of 1900, Transvaal League branches demanded that these conventions draft planks pledging to exert pressure upon Great Britain for a cessation of hostilities. The Republican *Holland City News* was quick to point out that the Democratic Party was attempting to convince the Dutch people that the McKinley administration was hostile to the Boers. The editor complained perceptively that in western Michigan, with its large Holland population, the McKinley policy was "worked for all it is worth," while in the eastern part of the state, where the population was largely English and Canadian, the issue was carefully avoided.

The American Transvaal League did not avoid the issue. In its calls for a national league it mentioned the failure of the United States government to remain true to its history and tradition. In the announcement of the organization of this national league, the *Grand Rapids Evening Press* headlined its column "Dip into Politics—

The War in
South Africa,
1899 bookcover
of book by
L. Penning.



Speakers severely denounce the administration for its attitude toward South Africa." The editorial "Slain by Politics" argued that the explosion occurring in the local Transvaal League was inevitable. From the outset, the editor wrote, the organization had been seized by politicians of both parties to further their partisan ambitions. And now it appeared that the Democrats had gained the upper hand. In fact, they had appointed William F. McKnight, the local Democratic candidate for Congress, as an accredited delegate to the organizational meeting in Chi-

cago, and, moreover, they had openly expressed their disapproval of the Republican presidential candidate. The records do not indicate the severity of the Grand Rapids league's conflict, but at least two staunch Republicans were dismissed for their unwillingness to retract charges against the league's majority faction.

If the members of the league had difficulty leaving their political preferences out of the pro-Boer campaign, the newspapers circulated among the Dutch had the same problem. In spite of some of the strong

sentiment against McKinley's neutrality on the Boer issue, *De Standaard*, the leading Democratic newspaper in Grand Rapids, was reported to have thrown its support to McKinley, Roosevelt, and the entire Republican ticket. Obviously, domestic issues had overridden the concern over foreign policy. The editor of *De Standaard* asserted that "it was impossible to support the Democratic-Populist ticket weighed down by William Jennings Bryan and his heresies." Bryan's heresies—his monetary policy and his ties with corrupt political machines in New York City and with racism in the South—carried more weight than his views on the Boer war.

A letter received by John B. Mulder, the editor of *De Grondwet*, published in Holland, Michigan, expressed an opposite view. "I thought," the correspondent wrote, "that in 1900 there were no Hollanders on earth bearing the name 'Republican.'" After accusing President McKinley of a blatant pro-British policy and failure to aid the Boers, he concluded, "Mr. Editor, I am sad to see your paper support the Republicans this year." The response to this charge appeared a week later in an exhaustive article. The object of the *De Grondwet* piece was to give a "full, fair and truthful statement of the attitude of the administration in so far as it has been confronted with the war in South Africa and also to refute the ridiculous charges which have appeared recently." These charges were of course being made by Democratic partisans in an effort to erode the Dutch support of the Republican ticket.

One of these efforts was an anonymously printed pamphlet entitled the *Boer Boekje* (*Boer Booklet*). Published just before the November 1900 national and state elections, its sixteen pages contained excerpts of articles

and speeches, some of which were highly critical of the McKinley administration. For instance, a reprint of a letter which had appeared in *De Wachter* asserted, "If it is true what is said and written about the Republican Party, I feel ashamed as a Hollander and full brother of the Boers to have my name associated any longer with that political party." The booklet was properly identified as a political ploy, about which *The Banner of Truth* reported, "Some of our ministers [in western Michigan] nearly got entangled in the net of American politics lately. The *Boer Boekje* [was published] at the time when our zeal for the South African brethren was at its highest point . . . and it created quite a commotion for a few days." The entangled ministers were those quoted in the pamphlet, namely, Rev. Henry Beets; Rev. Peter Moerdyke of Chicago; Professor Dosker from Holland, Michigan; Rev. L.J. Hulst of Grand Rapids; and Rev. H. Vander Werp from Cincinnati, Ohio.

The commotion was caused less by the pastors' well-known pro-Boer statements than by their disclaimers regarding quoted material in the booklet. One of these, Professor Dosker, inserted the following statement in the *Holland City News*:

I have been creditably informed that a folder has been prepared for political purposes containing among other things opinions expressed by me on the Boer question. Since I at present belong to neither of the great political parties and take no special interest in the campaign and since no one asked for my permission to print this matter in this way and for this purpose; and since I have publicly and repeatedly expressed my sorrow that the holy cause of the Boer war should be dragged down to the level of an issue in our American politics, I hereby express my

disapproval and regret that my name should be thus associated with the political issues of the day and deny all responsibility for the same.

Dosker was an influential citizen of his community and a respected member of the Hope College faculty. Dosker's disclaimer probably diverted the booklet's potential influence, but in addition the publication was too transparently irresponsible to gain serious support.

Rev. Peter Moerdyke, the pastor of a Reformed church in Chicago, similarly dissociated himself from the sentiments of the *Boer Boekje*. He too had been quoted as questioning McKinley's attitude, but he did not wish to leave the impression that therefore he was abandoning the Republican Party. "I have since my fourteenth year been, and still remain, an ardent Republican, for reasons which to me are sacred convictions. I was, and today am, an ardent pro-Boer man. My views of England's wicked war are unchanged. I still hold that the United States administration appears too warm of heart for English monarchy and too cold toward the republics of South Africa." However, Moerdyke admitted that it was too late to rescue or aid the Boers, and therefore he could not abandon his party on that account. Indeed, he concluded his letter, published in the *Holland City News*, with this question: "Why turn your backs, Republican brethren, upon great principles so dear and so near to you, just to express your disapproval of one or two things of less weight?" Evidently the number of voters who considered the Boer issue of sufficient weight to vote for the Democratic party were very few indeed. Election statistics reveal that Bryan received 23,000 fewer popular votes in 1900 than in 1896, even though some gains were reported in New York City, Michigan, and

Chicago. The sympathy for the Boers by the Dutch in America was insufficient to alter their greater sympathy for the Republican Party.

The *Boer Boekje*, seeking material far afield, quoted Dr. Abraham Kuyper, a leading political and church figure in the Netherlands. He had written an editorial in *De Standaard* (Amsterdam), a newspaper he had founded in 1872, which contained these statements: "McKinley's reelection could extinguish the small spark of hope for intervention for our fellow-countrymen in Africa . . . If you do not expect Bryan to win, then it would be better to remain at home; but by no means should you cast a single vote for McKinley." This unsolicited advice was decidedly unwelcome. The *Christian Intelligencer* reported that "Dutch papers in the West abound in reference to Dr. Kuyper's ill-advised participation in our political campaign. Kuyper has stooped to meddle in our politics!" In a Republican Party torchlight parade through the streets of Holland, Michigan, a McKinley supporter carried a sign proclaiming, "Dr. Kuyper advises American intervention in the Boer War. Uncle Sam knows his business."

For those Republicans who might have accepted Kuyper's advice, the presence of Governor Theodore Roosevelt on the Republican ticket helped keep them loyal. Rev. Moerkyke, who pastored the Reformed church in Chicago which Roosevelt frequently visited, publicly announced his support of "that able, strong, incorruptible New York Dutchman." Although Roosevelt did not publicly oppose his running mate, it was generally assumed that his sympathies lay with the Boers. When President McKinley was assassinated in September 1901, the pro-Boer forces became more hopeful that a change in administration

policy would follow. After all, the *Grand Rapids Herald* noted, "the Transvaal League expects more from Roosevelt . . . The Dutch blood which tingles in his veins will sooner or later assert itself." Consequently, at a mass meeting in December 1901 in Holland, Michigan, a petition was sent to the new President urging him to mediate the deplorable conflict between the South African republics and Great Britain. Not all were hopeful. A correspondent to *De Grondwet* had a more pessimistic view of the new President: "Roosevelt is an Englishman at heart, but bears a Dutch name."

Unfortunately, all the energy the Dutch expended brought little success. By the end of 1900 it had become apparent, as Rev. Moerdyke had written, that it was too late to rescue the Boers. In October British politicians were already declaring that the war was officially over, but the Boers had not been conquered, because they resorted to guerilla war, which was not finally concluded until May 1902 with the Peace of Vereeniging. Although the Boers had fought for three and a half years, they nonetheless became subjects of the British Empire. Throughout that time, the Dutch Americans closely followed events in South Africa in the columns of their Dutch-language papers. In March 1901, *The Banner of Truth* printed its first photograph—the looting and burning of a Boer farm by British soldiers. Only three months after the war began, local bookstores in Dutch communities were advertising *Transvaal Music*, histories of Transvaal and the Orange Free State, and especially *De Oorlog in Zuid Afrika* (*The War in South Africa*) by L. Penning, a popular Dutch author. This 408-page book, published after only eight weeks of conflict, contained an ex-

cellent map of the region, hundreds of dramatic sketches illustrating battle scenes, massacres, soldiers and officers, and, an extensive account of the first weeks of the war. The tone of the book can be judged from some of its introductory words:

We pray to an Almighty God, that he may be a strong shield for these weak people and we shall cry out, no we shall scream a cry of anger and pain of our soul, so that the sound shall be heard from land to land and ocean to ocean and wherever the Dutch flag is flown with honor: "England is a murderer."

Penning's book was immensely popular, and its propaganda value can hardly be overstated. Henry Beets's 1901 biography of William McKinley also reviewed the late President's attitude and inaction. Here Beets repeated the comment he had made in his many speeches. McKinley, he asserted, gave no official evidence of taking the matter to heart. Instead the president was "a silent observer" who did not actively seek to help the Boers or stop the war. Beets concluded, "We cannot agree with those who considered McKinley a sinner above other rulers. But we still cannot rid ourselves of the opinion, with all due respect to the head of our country, that he was also . . . responsible for the spilling of so much blood of the chosen people of God, spattered on the rocks of South Africa." These words from a respected minister made a strong impact on their readers.

While pro-Boer literature fanned the flames which encouraged meetings and generous contributions it also led to children being named Paul after Paul Kruger and Piet after Piet Joubert. It led to the changing the name of the North Holland p-

office, which became Cronje in honor of General Piet Cronje. It led to a false report in the *Sioux City (Iowa) Journal* that a hundred men, drilling after dark outside of the town of Orange City, were preparing to go to Transvaal if federal authorities would permit them. It led to merchants declaring "Transvaal Days," during which 10 percent of sales would go to the Boer cause.

But if all of this pro-Boer effort did not bring victory to the Boers, what good did it do? United States neutrality was unchanged, and all the criticism of President McKinley, whose apathy was said to be "a sin before God," did not bring a mass exodus of Dutch voters out

of the Republican Party.

The fervent prayers to almighty God and a sincere belief that God would not forsake a righteous cause availed nothing. The Boers were defeated; the English were victorious. The English, who were characterized as unspeakably cruel, incarcerating women and children in concentration camps, shipping Boer prisoners of war to desolate islands or holding them in "stinking hole" prison ships, and engaging in wholesale slaughter of Boer soldiers, had shown that horses and chariots and guns and bullets could indeed defeat the psalm-singing Boers.

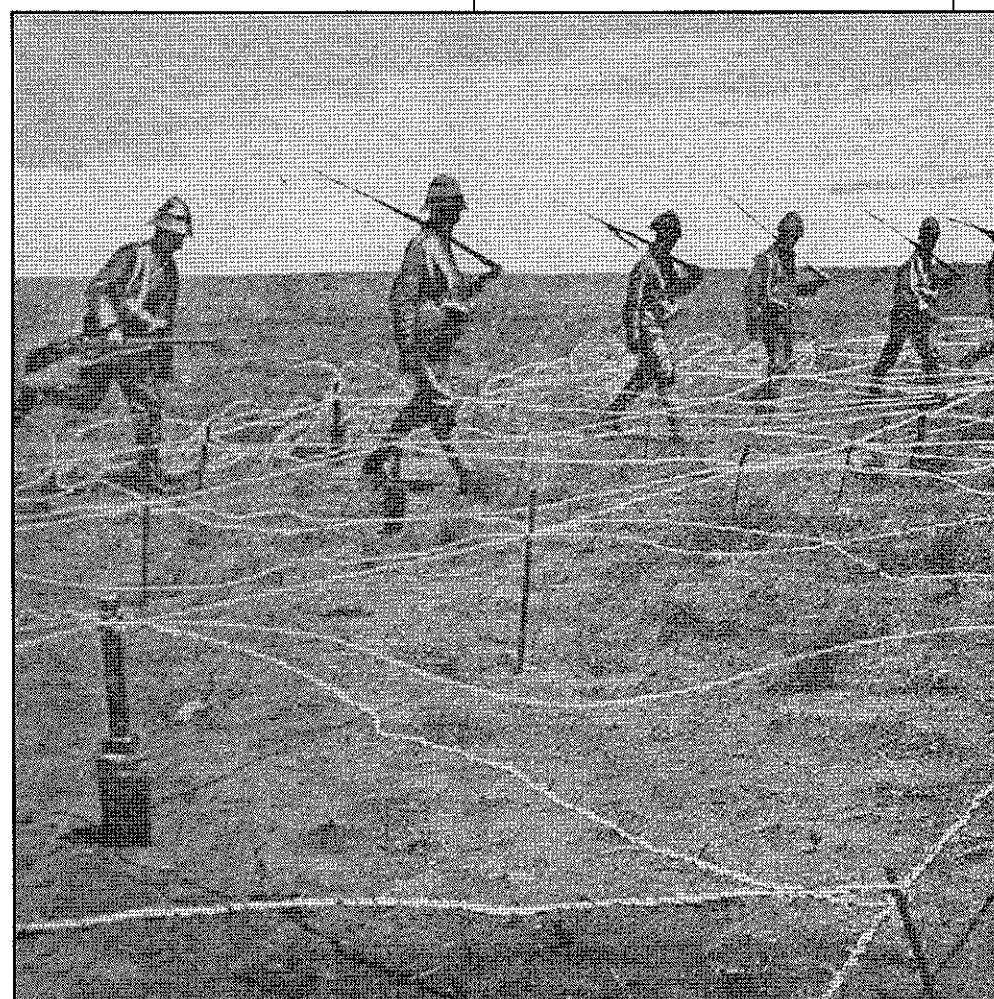
Nevertheless, the outpouring of contributions brought a measure of

relief to the suffering widows and orphans of Boer soldiers. The Dutch-American community, which had not yet established a strong economic base in this country, expressed tremendous generosity with contributions to the Transvaal funds. Unfortunately, because the funds were collected in so many different places by diverse agencies, it is impossible to determine the exact amounts collected. Nevertheless, a modest estimate would indicate a sum of about of \$50,000.

The cup of cold war given to

Boer soldiers in bivouac. L. Penning, De Oorlog in Zuid-Africa, (Rotterdam, D.A. Daamen, 1899), p. 223.





Barbed wire, much used in World War I, was used first in the Boer War. Similarly, concentration camps, associated with World War II Germany, were used earlier by the British in the Boer War and the Americans during their occupation of the Philippine Islands. Penning, Ibid., p. 389.

dispersed members of the Dutch household did, however, strengthen the ties of the worldwide Dutch community. These links and the memory of the pro-Boer campaign were strongly influential when some Dutch South Africans decided that to emigrate rather than live under British rule. While it is difficult to determine how many Boers made that decision, some examples can be given.

John Kett left the Netherlands in 1896 to teach school in South Africa. He was one of the first to offer his services when war broke out. He was captured by the British and became a prisoner of war. At the war's end, he emigrated to the United States to teach in Paterson, New Jersey. Eventually he

enrolled in the Calvin Theological Seminary and became a minister in the Christian Reformed Church.

Adrianus Ribbens, who with his family had gone to South Africa to work on the railway, also served with the Boers, but the depressed economic and political conditions in the post-war period prompted him to return to the Netherlands and later to join his brother in Wisconsin. Undoubtedly Kett, Ribbens, and others kept alive the memory of the war and their disappointing defeat at the hands of the British.

Perhaps the most significant result of Dutch-American involvement in the Boer cause was the strengthening of anti-British sentiments. Pro-Boer sentiments fed upon opposition to the

British, a posture which was deeply embedded in the Dutch nationalism arising from international trade disputes and subsequent Anglo-Dutch naval warfare during much of the eighteenth century. In the Netherlands as well as among the Dutch in America, the conflict between the South African republics and Great Britain intensified historic antagonisms. This attitude was so strong and persistent that anti-British sentiments came to expression among Dutch-Americans again with the outbreak of the First World War in 1917. The Dutch, some Americans claimed, were pro-German, but they were mainly anti-British, preferring the cause of almost anyone who opposed England.

Appendix I

"The Hollanders, meeting in Grand Rapids, Michigan, North America, on October 27, 1899, to express their sympathy for the Boers of South Africa their kinsmen, hereby resolve:

Whereas the South Africans have sent an ultimatum to the British Parliament which in fact declared war against England, they did not do this because they wanted war, but because they have been informed that England had assembled a large army in order to annex Transvaal and the Orange Free State.

Whereas England from the beginning has oppressed, abused, envied, angered, despised and slandered our kinsmen—that its selfish financiers and proud statesmen, especially of late have cast greedy eyes upon the rich gold fields of Transvaal, of which the shameful invasion of Jameson-Rhodes (1895-6) provides ample proof—that England, especially beginning this year (1899) has interfered with the domestic affairs of Transvaal, with increasing threats of war if they do not yield to its wishes.

Whereas since there were no just reasons why England should attack Transvaal, it looked for provocation

to give the appearance of justification to an unjust annexation.

Whereas England with its superior might, armed with time bombs and dum-dum bullets attacked the two African republics and has assigned the command of the English army in South Africa to Gen Buller—called the greatest tyrant of the present century, and the most bitter enemy of the Boers.

Whereas it is not only an everlasting shame for England with its overpowering might to violate the rights of two defenseless states (at least from a human point of view) because of a lust for money, lust for power, desire for revenge and desire to destroy; but also that it would be a shame for us to allow such unjust violence without protest"

Appendix II

The listing of Transvaal Fund contributors provides a clearer indication of sympathy for the Boers than reports of nameless masses gathered in auditoriums and churches shouting approval for unsigned resolutions. A sample of the identified contributors includes the following:

Collection: Dennis Street Christian

Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Collection: Prinsburg, Minnesota, Christian Reformed Church

Collection: Reformed Church, Albany, New York

Collection: Maxwell City, New Mexico, Christian Reformed Church Zangverein "Hallelujah,"

Sheboygan, Wisconsin

Mrs. L.M.J. Ball's Sewing School, Diamond Street, Grand Rapids

Holland citizens, West Sayville, New York

Holland Aid Society, Muskegon, Michigan

A Friend, Baldwin, Wisconsin

Crozier Shoe Company, 10 percent of one week's sales

Sale of "Boer Buttons," Chicago, Illinois

Boer Aid Society of Buffalo, New York

Hollanders of Hamilton, Montana Citizens of Zeeland, Michigan

Employees of Sligh Furniture Company, Grand Rapids

Branches of the Transvaal League in Wisconsin, Chicago, New York, Ohio, and Iowa also established collecting agencies to channel local funds for the benefit of the Boers.

Theodore F. Koch

Dutch-American Land Promoter

by Robert Schoone-Jongen



Robert Schoone-Jongen, Edgerton, Minnesota, holds degrees in history from Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan, and the University of Kentucky. He teaches social studies at Southwest Minnesota Christian High School and continues to research Theodore F. Koch and Dutch settlements in Minnesota.

The time: September 1884. The place: the lines of the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railroad. The conveyance: the company president's private car, generously provisioned. The passengers: two young Dutch entrepreneurs on the lookout for real-estate investments. The host: the immigration agent of the railroad. The destination: Dakota Territory and Minnesota.

Detraining at Yankton, Dakota Territory, the explorers proceeded west along the banks of the Missouri River. They visited settlements which one of the Dutch travelers had helped promote and organize. Recently arrived settlers still lived in sod huts and dugouts. The three travelers spent the night in one of the shelters.

After a few days in the area, they resumed the rail journey, heading north to Aberdeen and east into Minnesota, eventually stopping at a little station named Olivia. Again they took to a buggy, inspecting trackless prairie which the railroad hoped to sell to these Dutch travelers. The apparent fertility of the soil greatly impressed the entrepreneurs. Two days later they were on the train back to St. Paul, convinced that they had found the place for a sound investment, a tidy profit and a substantial new Dutch settlement.¹

In St. Paul preliminary agreements were drawn up. Bankers in

the Netherlands cabled their approval of the purchase of 34,000 acres of land for \$4.00 per acre. A third partner joined in the venture, a man expert in prairie land sales. The signatures on the final document read, "Nils C. Frederiksen, Martin W. Prins Jr., Theodore F. Koch."²

Theodore F. Koch was in America for the first time. Thirty years old, Koch was the oldest son of a well-to-do family which lived in a Crusader castle along the Rhine River. He was the master of four languages. Beginning in 1875, he had traveled throughout Germany, the Netherlands, Great Britain, Belgium, and France, dealing in straw, flax, potatoes, and cattle—purebred Frisian Holsteins, to be precise. He had contracted to escort fifty registered animals and deliver them to a California buyer. While waiting for the cattle to pass quarantine, he traveled to the plains with Prins to survey lands for potential Dutch investors.³

Martin W. Prins, Jr., was the American agent for his father's investment firm of Prins and Zwanenburg of Groningen, the Netherlands. As immigration agents for several railroad companies, Prins and Zwanenburg actively recruited immigrants throughout Europe to settle on the vast lands the United States government had granted to the railroads.

Hollandsche Kolonie

{ — — — }

MINNESOTA

Doet U voordeel terwijl het nog Tijd is.

Geen droogte, overvloedig en prachtig water op elke farm; plenty voedsaam gras, in de nabijheid van drie concurrende spoorwegen; een geringe afstand der groote steden St. Paul en Minneapolis, enz., enz., makende de nieuwe kolonie in Minnesota zoo zeer geschikt voor Hollanders.

De steeds sterkere aandrang van Hollandsche koopers, tergevolge van de dagelijks meer erkende waarheid van bovenstaande. Het feit dat men die land de voorkeur geeft boven alle andere settlementen, was oorzaak, dat de prijs met

50 CENT PER AKKER

verhoogd is, terwijl dezen herfst de prijs voor diverse der beste stukken nogmaals met 50 CENT VERHOOGD zal worden en dan NEGEN DOLLARS bedraagt. De betalings-conditien stellen we thans zoo, dat nagenoeg iedereen daaraan vol doen kan. Wie geld verdienen wil, wachte niet langer. Hollandsche koopers komen uit alle oorden van Amerika naar Olivia, Minnesota, en dagelijks worden er koopen geloten. Zelfs uit Douglas County, Dakota, kwamen farmers en kochten bij Prinsburg, in Minnesota, elk een kwart sectie. Wij waarborgen minstens 5 cent per bushel vruchtbesparing op corn, tarwe, enz., vergeleken bij streken in Dakota. Eene Hollandsche kerk wordt in het begin van 1886 te Prinsburg gebouwd, waarvan de Classis van Iowa eene commissie benoemd heeft.

Ds. J. W. Warn-huis, van Alton, Sioux Co., Iowa, schreef in "De Hope", van 4 Aug., over de nieuwe Hollandsche kolonie in Minnesota:

"Wij hebben edaar gevonden uitmuntend vet r ten grond, zoo vruchtbaar als wij nog nooit gezien hebben. Ik heb nooit zulke tarwe, haver en gerst op het land gezien als ik daar gevonden heb. Het corn stond daar juist zoo mooi als in Noordwestelijk Iowa."

Voor nadere informatie, goedkope spoorkaarten, enz., wende men zich aan onze agenten of men schrijve aan of ver voege zich ten kantore van

PRINS & ZWANENBURG,
FREDERIKSEN & CO.,
51 S. CLARK STREET,
CHICAGO. - - ILL.

(above) De Wachter, September 16, 1885.

(opposite) T.F. Koch and his bride, Clara D. Hoeborn, 1887. Minnesota History, Vol. 53, no. 3, 1993, p. 219.



Prinsburg, Minnesota, 1890s. 100th Anniversary of the Prinsburg CRC (Privately printed, 1986).

For several months Koch divided his time between the land business and cattle sales. After agreeing to join the Frederiksen and Prins partnership, he accompanied a carload of cattle on a transcontinental journey to California. He crossed America during the late afternoon of the "wild West" era. At Dodge City, Kansas, his overnight stay was interrupted by frequent gunfire. He returned to the East via the northerly route through Washington Territory, Montana, and northern Dakota.⁴

Back in the Netherlands Koch finalized his personal stake in the land venture by securing the ap-

proval of his commodity-business partner, Fritz Hesse. Koch returned to the United States with another shipment of cattle and the financial resources to enter the real-estate business.

Initially Nils Frederiksen drew the traveling-promoter assignment while Theodore Koch was to keep the books at the office in Chicago. Together the partners recruited agents from various ethnic groups, who fanned out among their compatriots in search of potential buyers. The first Dutch agent was Jacob Berghuis of Chicago. He was soon joined by Pieter Haan, an immigrant from Groningen. Together they es-

corted prospective buyers on excursion trains to Olivia, Minnesota, and then by buggy to the site of the new colony on trackless prairies twelve miles to the north.⁵

During the summer of 1885 Koch improved his sales prospects by expanding his holdings in central Minnesota. He purchased options on lands held by another railroad company. He and his partners started buying state school lands and homestead claims from disappointed Norwegian settlers. When still another Dutch syndicate wished to plunge in to Minnesota land, Koch arranged to act as their agent. Within a year Frederiksen, Prins,

and Koch controlled two whole townships as well as large holdings in several more.

The sales concluded during the summer of 1885 served to justify Koch's optimism. The first actual settlers arrived early in 1886. By design, Ostfrisian buyers were sent to the western part of the colony; Dutch buyers moved in to the eastern areas. William D. Ammermann from Pecatonica, Illinois, moved his family in to the Ostfrisian zone during March. To the east Albert Kleinhuizen moved in from the outskirts of Chicago. The Ostfrisians organized Rheiderland Township in Chippewa County, and the Dutch named their Kandiyohi County township Holland.

In 1886 Prins and Koch donated land and cash toward the establishment of churches for both Germans and Dutch. The Dutch congregation was organized that same year, erecting a building on a lot in the town site the partners called "Prinsburg" in honor of the Prins and Zwanenburg banking house. A year later the First Combined German Holland Christian Reformed Church was organized, its building erected in a hamlet called Bunde. Altogether, over two hundred Dutch buyers heeded Prins and Koch's promises and bought land, most of them moving into the colony in 1886.⁶

The partners expanded their holdings through more purchases of state school and internal-improvement lands. A twenty-four-page

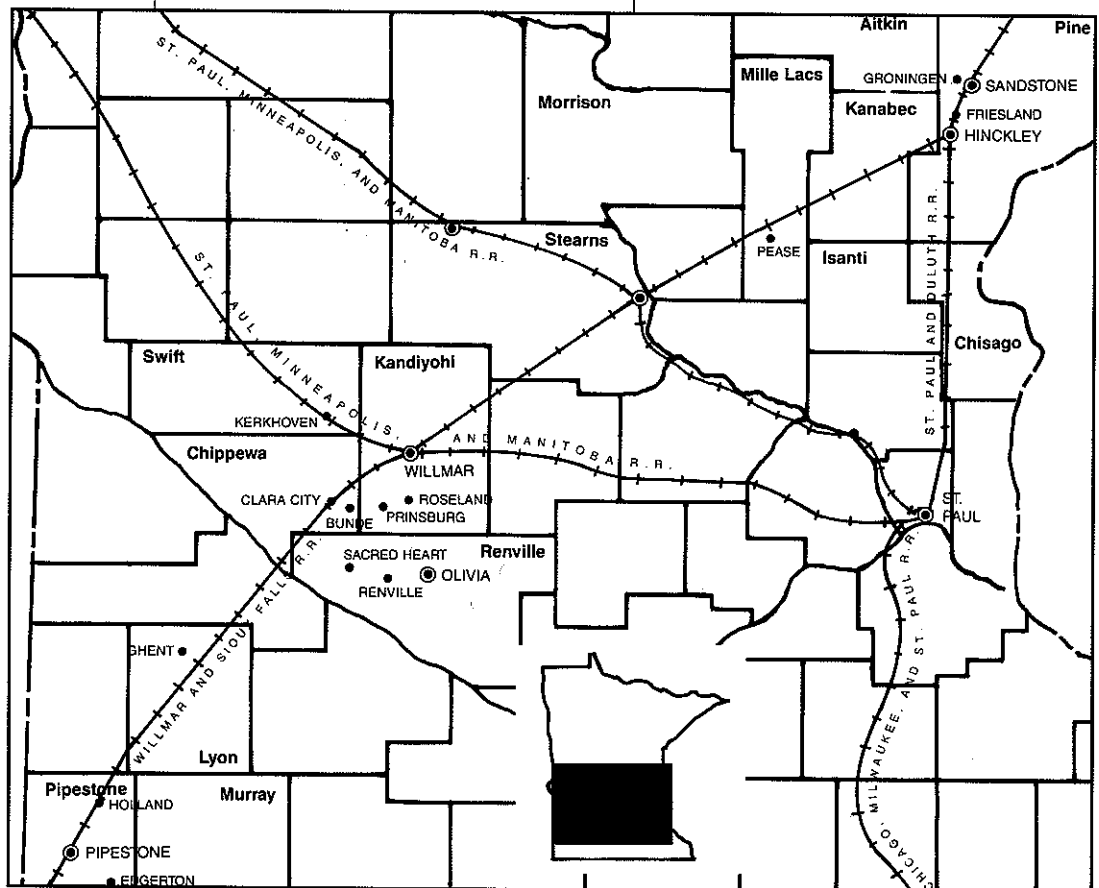
pamphlet appeared in Dutch to promote the colony, as did advertisements in periodicals. The ads all promised low land prices, convenient credit terms, secure titles, and easy access to Twin Cities markets.⁷

That same year the partners arranged to improve rail service to the colony. James J. Hill, Minnesota's "empire builder," was projecting his rail network west from St. Paul. He decided to build a feeder line which would link Willmar, Minnesota, on his main line with Duluth to the northeast and Sioux Falls, Dakota

construction of the Willmar and Sioux Falls Railroad started immediately.⁸

As business expanded and sales continued, Prins and Koch became very nervous about Nils Frederiksen's outside interests. Concluding that his free-lance operations in Minnesota and Dakota would jeopardize the Prinsburg project, the Dutch partners bought his interest. The partnership dissolved on November 15, 1886.⁹

Koch returned to Holland for another visit. Again he visited his parents and business associates both in



Territory, to the southwest. Koch arranged a land exchange whereby Hill received a right of way across Frederiksen, Prins, and Koch's land free of charge. The partners received a town site along the line, as well as the right to act as land agents for Hill in west central Minnesota. Con-

Map of Dutch Settlements in Minnesota, ca. 1880-1900. Minnesota History, p. 217.

Groningen and in Germany. During his stay in Germany he became engaged to Clara D. Hoeborn, the daughter of a paper maker who bought straw from Koch's commodity

Clara City, ca. 1895. Minnesota History, p. 220.



firm. On April 12, 1887, Theodore and Clara were married in Hemer, Westphalia.¹⁰

When Koch returned to the United States, he and Prins opened a new office in downtown St. Paul. Koch spent most of his time supervising his colony. He was now managing the development of

eighty-two tracts of land for the Netherlands-American Land Company. Each site included a house, granary, barn, well, and several cleared acres. The sites were rented out to Ostfrisian and Dutch farmers.

That same summer Koch helped select a town site for the colony's new railroad center. He named the

new town Clara City in honor of his new bride. An elevator, hotel, depot, and a few houses were raised. The Dutch settlers then had an outlet no more than ten miles away, a major improvement over the twenty-mile trek to Willmar or fifteen miles to Olivia.¹¹ Land sales in 1887 amounted to 72,000 acres and



gross receipts of \$650,000.¹²

As the colony grew and settlers bought up the original holdings, Prins and Koch began looking for new opportunities. To the northeast they gained control over timber lands in Mille Lacs County. To the west and south they bought more prairie land. In Illinois they looked at lands near Centralia. While prospecting in that state, Martin Prins contracted malaria and died on November 17, 1887, from a stroke caused by an overdose of quinine.¹³

In the spring Theodore and Clara Koch and their infant daughter, Elfrieda, moved to Clara City. Years later Koch looked back at his residency there with both a shudder and a glow. The Kochs had helped save the little village from a prairie fire, beating the flames back with gunny sacks. Mrs. Koch had helped decorate the altar for the first Catholic Mass held in the village. But the bleak, treeless horizon, the stifling heat of summer, and the cold spring gales drove the immigrant couple away, first to Willmar and finally back to St. Paul. Theodore Koch became a commuter.¹⁴

Following the untimely death of Prins, the Dutch investors sent Nicolaus Jungeblut to St. Paul to act as Koch's partner. Jungeblut became the bookkeeper and office manager while Koch continued as salesman and rental agent around Clara City. For several years land sales remained brisk, and values slowly rose. The land firm boosted sales through recruiting Germans, Swedes, and Bohemians to settle areas surrounding the Dutch colony.

Koch tried to satisfy his need for cash by selling his mortgages to other investors. He needed cash both for his own expenses and to pay his European backers. He found the rental business too time consuming, especially at harvest, when he

had to calculate his crop shares, so he hired other agents to supervise the rental farms, and he and his brothers concentrated on sales.

The search for more land never seemed to end. Koch traveled along the lines of the Northern Pacific Railway. He explored Montana and Washington, Oregon and northern California. Even New Mexico and Colorado caught his attention. He bought some land in Montana, but back in southwestern Minnesota he enlarged his holdings with purchases from the heirs of Chicago haberdashers who had soured on the prospects for quick profits as cattle ranchers. Minnesota was what Koch knew, and it remained his base.¹⁵

In 1893 a panic convulsed the American economy. The flow of European investment which sustained Koch evaporated. American banks began to close as credit contracted. Commodity prices plummeted, exacerbating the situation. Theodore Koch found much of his own cash locked away in three failed St. Paul banks. He wrote that for four years his only sales were small tracts turned over to local owners who wanted to expand their holdings. The land boom was over.¹⁶

Koch's frenetic pace and financial worries finally broke him. During the summer of 1894 he suffered a nervous breakdown and placed himself under a doctor's care. With Clara and their two children he traveled to Germany. Upon return he placed the St. Paul office in the hands of a lieutenant and traveled for several months in the far West. When he tried to work, the strain was too much. He finally shut himself up in a private home in St. Paul. With Clara serving as his nurse, he began to recover. The next year they returned to Europe, and the crisis finally passed.¹⁷

With new European backing Koch returned to Minnesota. The Duluth and St. Paul Railway wanted to sell timber lands in Pine County seventy miles north of St. Paul. This was not just another piece of cut-over land. The area surrounding the town of Hinckley had made national headlines on September 1, 1894. A summer-long drought had converted heaps of trash left behind by logging operators into explosive materials. The man-made bomb exploded and caused a firestorm which roared through the countryside, enveloping scattered farmsteads, logging camps, and the village of Hinckley. Hundreds died in the inferno. Collections were taken throughout the nation to aid the survivors.

The railroad company contracted with Koch to sell these lands to prospective farmers. According to experts, the fire had served to make this an ideal farming region. Koch appeared to be just the man to successfully promote the sale. He had a proven record and a network of sales agents already in place. St. Paul and Duluth officials were so convinced of his ability they offered him a 20 percent commission on sales, when the going rate for other agents was half that figure or even less.¹⁸

Reorganized as the Theodore F. Koch Land Company, the Dutch salesmen revived the tested recipe which had worked so well in Prinsburg. Dutch newspapers announced the establishment of a new colony at Friesland, Minnesota, halfway between Duluth and St. Paul. The ads promised low prices for land in an area free from the incessant winds, heat, cyclones, and blizzards of the prairies, a region of the purest drinking water and of abundant trees for fences and cordwood, fertile soil and jobs at either the Sandstone quarries or on carpenter



T.F. Koch family, 1905.

crews and road-construction gangs. For the cash poor there was the offer of sweat equity; for those with funds, the chance to expand. For the devout, the promise was new churches; for the parched Kansan, rain; for the frozen North Dakotan, a more temperate climate; for the homesick, a place that resembled the old sod; and for the skeptic, Koch's own record of successful colonization.¹⁹

After five stagnant years the land business revived. Each week many people made the trek to Friesland to inspect Koch's new colony. As instructed in the advertisements, the Dutch buyers pulled into the station at St. Paul waving the Dutch tricolor to identify themselves for Koch or one of his agents. After staying in a nearby hotel, they would leave the next morning for the north. The bustling platoon of carpenters Koch hired to build a combination hotel, office, and store near the station and two barracks-like apartment houses on Koch's demonstration farm a mile to the west convinced many that there was a real future in this venture.²⁰

By February eight buyers were willing to publicly state their intention to settle in the new colony. One month later twenty-five families had moved in, and another twenty-eight individuals had purchased land without arranging to move in just yet. By spring a post office opened, two Dutch congregations organized, roads were being built, farm land was being cleared. Six trains a day paused at the Friesland station. A whole new town was taking form in the middle of the once-burned-over wastes—a town with streets named Leiden, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Groningen, Arnhem, Elfrieda, and Front.²¹

As the first growing season progressed, problems began to surface.

De Nieuwe Hollandsche Kolonie Winnie

Ligt in het Zuid-oosten van den enorm grooten Staat Texas.
1000 mijlen van de Panhandle verwijderd.

Aldaar valt er het gehele jaar d or voldoende regen, zoodat irrigatie overvloedig en verdroogen onmogelijk is. —De zachte windjes die meestal van den twintig mijlen verwijderden Golf van Mexico waaien, maken de temperatuur in den zomer aangenaam, zoodat het te Winnie zelden heeter dan 95 graden wordt en 's nachts meestal niet boven 70 tot 75 graden is. —In den winter is het klimaat hoogst aangenaam.

De Farmer in de Winnie Country heeft een oogst elke maand in 't jaar en steeds wat te verkoopen, en behoeft niet zooals de farmer in de Noordelijke Staten gedurende 5 of 6 wintermaanden te verteeren, wat hij in de zomermaanden verdiend heeft.

In den Winter worden daar alle soorten groenten, haver, en andere gewassen verbouwd. De groenten in die streken vinden gereede markt tot hooge prijzen, en worden gedurende alle winter- en voorjaarsmaanden bij waggonladingen naar 't Noorden verzonden.

In April, Mei en Juni verzendt men menige waggonlading aardappelen, watermelons en Rocky Ford mush melons van Stowell en Winnie.

In den Zomer verbouwt men te Winnie, corn, cotton, sugar cane, alfalfa, grashooi, rijst, enz.

Vee, Paarden en Varkens kunnen het gehele jaar door buiten zijn, en zijn daarvoor ho- genaamd geen stallingen noodig. Melkerij en boter maken betaalt hier best.

2. Crops van \$100 tot \$300 per akker, zijn gemakkelijk te maken, en dat op land dat van \$25 tot \$50, meestal van \$35 tot \$40 per akker kost, op afbetaling verkocht wordt, en op een afstand van een tot vier mijlen van een der drie spoorwegstations ligt.

Farms van 20 akkers brengen bij Winnie evenzoveel op als 200 akker-farms in Illinois of Iowa. Cotton, corn, sugar cane, broom corn en rijst worden in Februari en Maart geplant.

Oranges en Figs (Vijgen) groeien alhier uitstekend, en tien jaar oude boommen beladen met vruchten zijn daar te vinden.

Overstromingen door Rivier of Zeewater zijn totaal onmogelijk. De ondergeteekenden bezitten ruim 25,000 akkers vruchtbaar en mooi gelegen prairie-land bij Winnie, Stowell and Hampshire en hebben circa 60 mijlen „graded roads” en 50 mijlen afwateringssloten door hun land aangelegd. Lumber en brandhout zijn er goedkoop.

Beaumont is een stad van 35,000 inwoners, ligt 25 mijlen ten noorden van Winnie, en Houston met 100,000 inwoners, ongeveer 50 mijlen ten westen.

Op 25 Augustus hadden reeds 10 Hollanders van Chicago bij Winnie land gekocht. Zoodra zich twintig Hollandsche families aldaar gevestigd hebben, wordt met den bouw der Hollandsche kerk een aanvang gemaakt. Gezond klimaat en drinkwater.

Als gij uw financieele toestand wilt verbeteren, of in een heerlijk klimaat wilt wonen, waar gij met een klein stuk land een rijk bestaan kunt vinden, schrijf dan aan de oude, soliede, Hollandsche kolonizatie firma om kosteloze beschrijvingen en kaarten, of ga er op een der maandelijksche excursies zelf eens kijken. Retour kaarten vanuit Chicago of Iowa kosten \$30.

Vertrouwbare agenten gevraagd.

Theo. F. Koch & Company,

1025 Unity building, Chicago, Ill.,

of Globe building, St. Paul: Minn.

26-17

The New Hollands Colony at Winnie

(translation of advertisement at left in *De Wachter*, 11/10/1909)

Lying in the Southeast of the enormously large state of Texas. separated from the Panhandle by 1,000 miles

Throughout the entire year enough rain falls so that irrigation is plentiful and drought impossible. The soft winds which usually blow over the twenty miles from the Gulf of Mexico, make the temperature in the summer pleasant so that in Winnie it is seldom hotter than ninety-five degrees with the evenings usually not above seventy to seventy-five degrees. In the winter the climate is exceptionally pleasant.

In Winnie County the farmer has a harvest every month of the year and always something to sell, and does not have to consume during the five or six winter months what he has earned in the summer as the farmer in the Northern States.

All kinds of vegetables, oats, and other vegetation, are grown in the winter. In this area vegetables find a ready market with high prices, and are sent to the North during all the winter and spring months by the wagon loads.

In April, May, and June many cart loads of potatoes, watermelons, and Rocky Ford muskmelons are sent from Stowell and Winnie.

In the Summer people in Winnie grow corn, cotton, sugar cane, alfalfa, hay-grass, rice, etc.

Cattle, horses, and pigs can be outdoors the entire year and do not require a special building. Dairying and butter making pays well here.

One can easily make from \$100 to \$300 per acre with crops and that on land that costs from twenty-five dollars to fifty dollars, mostly from thirty-five dollars to forty dollars, sold by installment payment, laying at a distance of one to four miles from one of the three railroad stations.

Farms of twenty acres in Winnie produce as much as two hundred-acre farms in Illinois or Iowa. Cotton, corn, sugar cane and rice are planted in February and March.

Oranges and figs do exceptionally well here and ten year old trees laden with fruit are found there.

Floods from the river or seawater are absolutely impossible. The undersigned own some 25,000 acres of fruitful and well situated prairie land at Winnie, Stowell, and Hampshire, and have made about sixty miles of "graded roads" and fifty miles of drainage ditches for their land. Lumber and firewood are cheap.

Beaumont, a city with a population of 35,000, lies twenty-five miles north of Winnie, and Houston with a population of 100,000 is about fifty miles west.

Already by the 25th of August ten Hollanders from Chicago had bought land at Winnie. As soon as twenty Holland families are established there, a beginning will be made on the building of a Holland Church. Healthy climate and drinking water.

If you wish to improve your financial condition or would like to live in a wonderful climate where, with a small piece of land, you can have a rich existence, then write to the old, solid, Holland colonization firm for free brochures and maps, or go there to see for yourself with a monthly excursion. Return tickets from Chicago or Iowa cost thirty dollars.

Reliable agents requested.

Theo. J. Koch & Company

1025 Unity Building, Chicago, Illinois
or, Globe Building, St. Paul, Minn.

The land was not at all fertile, at least not for row crops. The soil was far rockier than anyone anticipated. Much of the low-lying ground was swampy. When it rained, the "roads" turned into mud troughs. Settlers who cleared two or three acres and left to work in the Sandstone quarries returned in the fall to find the land reclaimed by large stands of poplars. Several of the early buyers signed contracts, left, and were never seen again. The non-Dutch saw the newcomers not as thrifty developers but as a group with too many shiftless bachelors and too few substantial family men.²²

Koch continued to pour thousands of dollars into the colony. His corporation was capitalized at \$400,000. Much of the money came from a German investor named Wilhelm Funcke. With these funds Koch bought hundreds of acres for himself as well as for relatives and associates. He extended credit to many of his colonists. He gave them dairy cows and helped finance the building of a creamery at Hinckley. He donated money for the construction of two Dutch churches in Friesland and a Catholic church in Hinckley.

His centerpiece in the colony was a demonstration farm. This farm included apartment buildings in which newcomers could live rent free while building homes of their own. Koch also used the farm to show his buyers how they should work their fields and what crops could be raised successfully in the soils of Pine County.

During the summer of 1896 Koch assumed control over a town site called Miller Station, five miles north of Friesland. He had the railroad change the name to Groningen and advertised the place as additional proof that there definitely was

a major Dutch settlement in the making midway between Duluth and the Twin Cities.

Two years after the colony started, even Koch realized that this project would never repeat the success he had enjoyed in Prinsburg. Yet he kept trying. He invested in building lots in Sandstone, platted a new town near the quarries, promoted a Danish colony at nearby Askov. As an inducement for the lumber business, he built a turpentine-processing plant and installed a portable sawmill in the middle of the Dutch area. He tried to interest Swedes in his venture, calling a section of the Groningen town site Svithiod. Among the Germans he promoted the same area under the name of Waldwiese.²³

All the effort and activity could not disguise the truth that Koch was not selling prime farm land. Many left in disgust and disappointment after a few years. Though the total number of Dutch settlers remained constant at around three hundred, the turnover also was constant. The Christian Reformed congregation at Friesland disbanded during 1900. Those that stayed complained of nearly third-world hardships, such as months of eating ground-up corn boiled in swamp water. One person who never left said years later that her family simply could not afford to move anywhere else.²⁴

Koch bitterly denounced the railroad's role in his failure. He said the company had failed to finance an adequate road system for his colonists. Nor had the company done anything to improve the drainage of the bottom lands. When the St. Paul and Duluth was absorbed by the Northern Pacific, Koch offered to buy all that remained of the land in the Hinckley area for \$2.00 per acre, less than half of what the railroad charged the other Holland-

ers. The company accepted the offer.²⁵

Once he had total control, Koch spent thousands more cutting ditches throughout the area, trying to improve the soil conditions. He built good gravel roads which would be passable year round. But even outright ownership could not spur the colony to greater vitality. As farming proved to be unprofitable, more settlers came to rely on the Sandstone quarries as their source of income. The Reformed Church organized a congregation in Sandstone which slowly supplanted the Friesland church. Twenty years after Koch left Minnesota, the Sandstone congregation, the last visible Dutch institution, faded away. Only a few dozen Dutch surnames in the local telephone directory and on many tombstones remained.²⁶

By 1905 Theodore Koch and dozens of other land dealers had worked themselves out of jobs by successfully selling the Minnesota prairies and woodlands to new settlers. Koch had also held land in other states. Montana, South Dakota, Illinois, North Carolina—all had commanded some of his attention. But now he started looking for large tracts in new areas. He sensed that American migration was shifting to the South, and he followed the trend to Texas.

Koch had avoided the South for many years. He believed that Dutch settlers were ill suited to the climate, that the type of agriculture which predominated in the South was not right for his customers. His own advertisements of the 1890s had actively discouraged Hollanders from considering the region of swamps, hurricanes, and diseases.²⁷

In a startling turnabout Koch convinced himself that he had been wrong. He explored the Texas panhandle, then the central region. In

January 1907 he reached Corpus Christi. Armed with letters of introduction from San Antonio and Wichita Falls businessmen, Koch met Robert Kleberg and his mother-in-law, Henrietta King. Koch saw his opportunity in lands located along the Gulf Coast. He convinced Clara and his European backers that Texas was the new land of opportunity. He bought 55,000 acres from three different holders in the Brownsville, Palacios and Victoria areas.²⁸

Winter 1907-08 marked Koch's real transfer to Texas. From an office in Palacios he supervised construction of roads and drainage ditches in the various tracts he owned. He gathered his lieutenants from Minnesota and Chicago to help in the development. When his own needs abated, Koch hired out his ditching machines to other developers.²⁹

With the land now ready for sale Koch opened an office in downtown Houston and secured a private railroad car (named "Riviera, Texas") to transport prospects to this new colony. He developed Riviera as a seaside resort while he sold farm land to his more traditional clientele.

Wilhelm Funcke II arrived in St. Paul in 1908. He had financed Koch's operations for twelve years. Koch escorted his partner to the Minnesota colonies and the new Texas holdings. With Funcke in tow, he paid his respects to Mrs. King and bought more land from her. That same year Koch began a separate venture with Herbert Rhodenbeck, one of his salesmen, to purchase additional lands in the east Texas counties of Jefferson and Chambers. After constructing roads and ditches, they started promoting a new Dutch settlement at Winnie.³⁰

The Winnie colony proved to be Koch's greatest failure. He convinced approximately one hundred

householders to throw their lot in with the new colony. The area required more ditching than Koch could afford, so he convinced the first settlers to sell bonds by organizing themselves into a drainage district. Confusion over Texas land titles helped retard sales. Titles were insecure due to shoddy record keeping and conflicting grants issued by four jurisdictions: Spain, Mexico, the Texas Republic, and the State of Texas. However, debt and titles alone did not seal Winnie's fate. The weather killed it. A hurricane swept along the Gulf Coast in September 1915. High winds and thirteen inches of rain destroyed the crops. Koch's personal pleas could not convince the Dutch settlers to stay. By January 1916 only three families remained, leaving Koch with heavily indebted, unsecured, unsalable lands. When the vandalism done to the abandoned farms was factored in, Koch estimated his losses at \$100,000.³¹

On August 16, 1916, Koch's southern-most lands were devastated by another hurricane. He was tending to his deteriorating Winnie colony when the storm struck. Mrs. Koch and their two sons rode the storm out huddled in an open field. Again Koch's settlers deserted in droves despite his pleadings. The local Catholic priest prevented a total abandonment by the Germans of the area. Koch's beach-front hotel and the railroad which connected it to the mainland were largely destroyed.³²

Not only did the weather conspire against him, but also world events. When Congress declared war on Germany on April 6, 1917, Theodore F. Koch and Company found three-quarters of its assets seized by the federal government as alien property. His business was hobbled for several years, until his

son, Theodore William, a veteran combat pilot and Harvard graduate, negotiated the way through the bureaucratic maze and corruption of the Harding administration. Finally, in October 1922 Koch repurchased his assets for \$75,000. He mortgaged much of his personal holdings in Minnesota to buy back his Texas lands.³³

In 1922 Koch tried to revive the Winnie development. He had the ditches cleaned and sent agents into several states looking for new settlers. Figs would be the economic foundation of the area. Koch organized the Beaumont-Hamshire Fig Company to process and market the produce. Koch maintained his fig factory for five years, until low prices and a saturated market forced him to lease and eventually sell the company to a bigger concern. The buyer failed in the early Depression years, and Koch absorbed still another loss when the payments due him did not materialize.³⁴

During the 1920s Koch moved into the banking business and resumed dealing in cattle, particularly dairy cows. He continued his efforts to rekindle Dutch interest in Texas. In 1929 with his son Walter he visited all the old colonies to find new buyers. But the old methods would not work. *The Banner* and *De Wachter* refused to carry his advertisements. Although some Dutch settlers returned to Winnie, they were unable to attract a permanent minister for the church. The Depression and the uninviting climate stopped resettlement. Summarizing his futile efforts Koch wrote in 1930, "In spite of my advertisements in one Holland paper, 'Onze Toekomst' in Chicago and another 'De Volksvriend' issued in Orange City, Iowa, which are read a great deal among dairy-men of California, I have not received one single letter from any of

the dairymen in the State of California during my sojourn in this State."³⁵ The man who once moved hundreds now could move no one.

Theodore F. Koch and his wife lived out their lives in comfortable circumstances at Riviera, Texas. They returned to Minnesota one final time during 1937 to join in Clara City's fiftieth anniversary celebration. Theodore died at New Braunfels, Texas, on September 19, 1940. His family believed the news of the German conquest of his homeland was more than the old man could stand. Clara died in 1958. They were both buried in St. Paul.³⁶

During his retirement years Koch gave an interview which was preserved by the Minnesota Historical Society. In it he gave what could serve as his epitaph: "My work was to bring people from high priced land to lower priced land where farmers could buy one or two farms for their sons."³⁷

Endnotes

1. Theodore H. Koch, *Journal of Theodore F. Koch*. Typescript in the collection of the Clara City Public Library, pp. 3-12.
2. Original contract in Northern Pacific Railway Papers, Minnesota Historical Society Collection.
3. Theodore F. Koch, "My Life," typescript in the collection of the Minnesota Historical Society, p. 4.
4. "My Life," pp. 10-11.
5. *Journal*, pp. 16-17.
6. Plat map of Prinsburg, Minnesota, original in files of Recorder of Deeds, Kandiyohi County Court House, Willmar, Minnesota; Koch, *Journal*, p. 22; Mrs. Albert Prekker and Mrs. Henry J. Frikke, eds., *The Clara City Community Story: A History of the Clara City Community, including the Townships of Crate, Lone Tree, Louriston, Rheiderland, Stoneham, and Woods and the Village of Maynard*. Clara City, 1963, pp. 46-48.
7. "Beschrijving en Inlichtingen over de Nieuwe Hollandsche Kolonie Prinsburg in Renville, Kandiyohi, en Chippewa Counties, Minnesota." Chicago: 1886(?). Original held by Heritage Hall, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan; *De Volksvriend*, April 15, 1886.
8. Henry D. Minot to Frederiksen and Prins, 12-22-'86; Minot to James J. Hill, 4-1-'87. Henry D. Minot Correspondence, Louis W. Hill Papers, James J. Hill Reference Library Collection; Prekker and Frikke, p. 69.
9. "My Life," p. 20.
10. "My Life," p. 20.
11. "My Life," p. 21.
12. *Clara City Herald*, July 25, 1958.
13. *Clara City Herald*, August 1, 1958.
14. *Clara City Herald*, August 1, 1958; "My Life," p. 24.
15. "My Life," pp. 26-27.
16. *Clara City Herald*, August 22, 1958; "My Life," p. 30.
17. "My Life," p. 30; *Clara City Herald*, August 22, 1958.
18. Notations of the amount of commission awarded by the company on land sales are

hand written on most of the contracts of the St. Paul and Duluth Railway Company. Northern Pacific Railway papers. Minnesota Historical Society Collection.

19. Various issues of *De Volksvriend* and *De Wachter* issued during the period January-June 1896, especially a full-page insert in *De Volksvriend*, January 30, 1896.

20. *De Volksvriend*, January 30, 1896.

21. *De Volksvriend*, February 13, 1896, and March 12, 1896; plat map of Friesland, Minnesota, in files of Recorder of Deeds, Pine County, Minnesota.

22. Van Helten to Hopewell Clarke, 9-24-'99. Also land-examiner reports on individual tracts of land by D.T. McKercher and Thomas Fitzgerald. St. Paul and Duluth Railway Land Sales, Northern Pacific Railroad Papers, Minnesota Historical Society Collection.

23. *Clara City Herald*, August 29, 1958; plat map of Groningen, Minnesota, in files of Recorder of Deeds, Pine County, Minnesota.

24. Alida Nieboer Bjerke, "Town of Friesland," in Lee Guptil et al., *A History of Hinckley*, pp. 39-41. Privately published and held in the files of the Hinckley Fire Museum, Hinckley, Minnesota.

25. Koch to Trowbridge, 4-20-'00. Northern Pacific Railway Papers, Minnesota Historical Society Collection.

26. "Dutch Reformed Church," in Muriel Langseth, ed., *Sandstone, The Quarry City*. Sandstone History Club, 1989, p. 143.

27. *De Volksvriend*, January 30, 1896.

28. "My Life," pp. 39-41.

29. "My Life," pp. 45.

30. "My Life," pp. 48-49.

31. "My Life," pp. 52-54.

32. "My Life," pp. 55-57.

33. "My Life," p. 64.

34. "My Life," p. 70.

35. "My Life," p. 78.

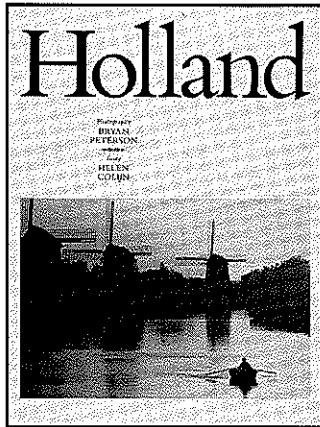
36. *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, September 20, 1940, p. 9; *Austin Statesman-American*, February 23, 1958.

37. Interview, p. 3. Minnesota Historical Society Collection.

BOOKS

Review by Conrad J. Bult

Holland. Photography, Bryan Peterson. Essay, Helen Colijn. Portland, Oregon: Graphic Arts Center Publishing Company, 1992. \$37.95.



Spectacular is the word for this coffee table book containing a brief sketch about Holland by well known author Helen Colijn and Bryan Peterson's colored photography. Peterson's pictures have appeared in *National Audubon*, *Popular Photography* and *Outdoor Photography*. Here you have Holland close up in living color. Lace curtains, diamonds, wooden shoes and Heineken beer bottles catch the photographer's attention as do farmhouses, busy streets, windmills, herring, tulips, cows, super highways and bicycles. Not neglected are children, cheese, pets and Delft pottery. If you plan to visit Holland you may wish to buy this book instead of taking your camera along. If photography is your hobby, leaf through this volume and take lessons from Peterson's technique and choice of subjects.

Sometimes and Sometimes Not. Marinus M. Swets. Grand Rapids: Christian's Library Press, 1992. \$8.50

Swets' varied experiences include teaching at all levels, World War II service as an infantryman and re-treading tires. In 1991 he retired from his position as Dean of Arts and Sciences at Grand Rapids Community College. This volume contains his previously published poems, short stories, recollections about his parents and opinions pieces which appeared in *The Banner*, *The Church Herald*, *The Reformed Journal* and various Calvin College student publications. Nostalgia, sometimes bitter-sweet, characterizes many of his early memories and those of us who were raised in strict homes during the Depression era will remember events such as those he portrays in "Ah, the Fourth!" and "Where Did That Innocence Go? or Closer to Heaven on East Leonard Street." Not nostalgic but thought provoking are his essays on human imagination, juvenile misbehavior and the needs of the less fortunate who, according to Swets, often speak to us in ways we fail to hear or comprehend.

A third of the book, "Ma and Pa" contains thirteen vignettes about the author's parents and it is here where Swets is at his best. Poignant and often intensely personal memories only a son could know are found on these pages. Retrospective writing about one's parents is a hazardous venture but Swets handles it well. He has a

great fondness for his parents and is not ashamed of their foibles and fancies religious or otherwise. What looms large are the Christian values cherished by his parents and the refreshing humanness exhibited in their worldly wisdom, Dutch eccentricities and self-serving cleverness. We learn from the following succinct paragraph what Swets has known for a long time about his mother and father.

Well, they did all that: pray, sigh, sacrifice, and give all they had for their children. But thousands of parents do that. And although they might be remembered for those certainties, they are often remembered for more than just those certainties. There are other sweet and sour characteristics that they harbored as God's creatures. While they had parts of the godlike, they also had parts of the impish.

Page 56

After reading about Ma and Pa Swets, your thoughts will wander back to a time when your parents tried their best to provide for your needs as a child and teenager. You will find food for thought in both the author's past experiences and his ideas about what makes life worthwhile.

FOR THE FUTURE

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

The "Brickyard": Zeelanders in Grand Rapids *by* Henry Ippel

Memoirs of Rev. Arnold Brink

Christian Education in Northern New Jersey

M. Schoonbeek—Hard Times in Grand Rapids, 1873 - 1890 *by* H.J. Brinks

Roelof T. Kuiper: Developer of Church and Settlement *by* Hans Krabbendam

Frontier Women: A Different View of Immigration

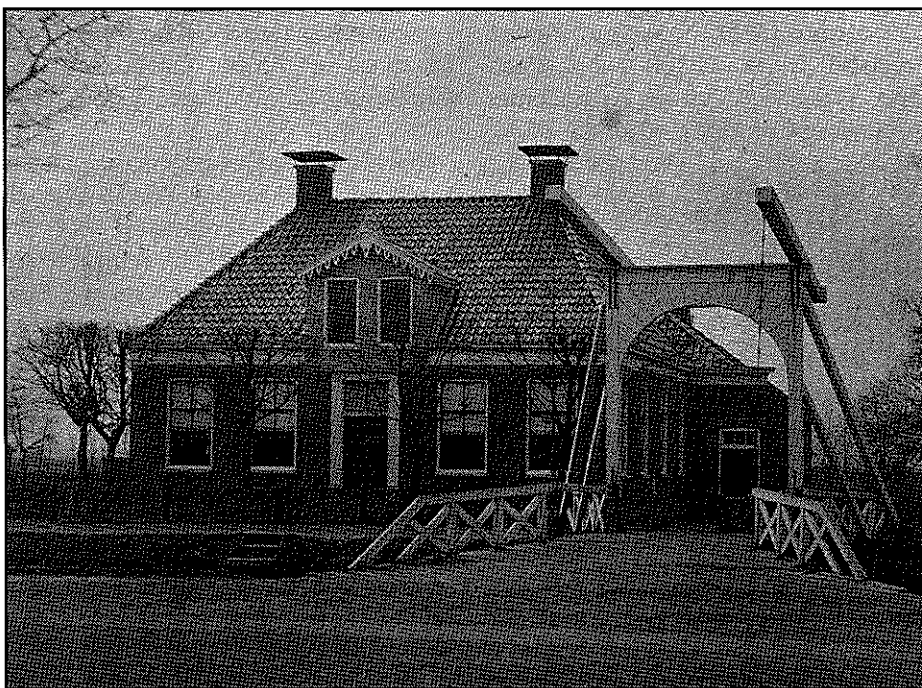
Another Look at Grand Rapids' West-Side Dutch *by* H.J. Brinks, *et al.*

Comparison: The Dutch and Their Neighbors in Grand Rapids *by* James Bratt

Ministering on the Canadian Prairies: Menzo Dornbush, 1950-1962 *by* David Zandstra

Dutch Muck Gardeners: Two Views of Holland Marsh, Ontario *by* Rem Kooistra

More About Pella *by* Muriel Kooi



Roelof T. Kuiper's 1853-79 parsonage. Wildervank, Groningen.

☐ Yes, I wish to join the "Friends of the Archives."

Name _____

Address _____

☐ Subscriber \$10.00

☐ Contributing Member \$50.00

☐ Contributing Sponsor \$100.00

☐ Contributing Founder \$500.00

Send to *Origins*, Heritage Hall, Calvin College,
3207 Burton SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546.

☐ Yes, I would also like a gift subscription for:

Name _____

Address _____

My Name _____

Address _____

Send to *Origins*, Heritage Hall, Calvin College,
3207 Burton SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546.

CONTRIBUTORS

Origins is designed to publicize and advance the objectives of the Calvin College and Seminary Archives. These goals include the gathering, organization and study of historical materials produced by the day-to-day activities of the Christian Reformed Church, its institutions, communities and people.

We invite you to support the continued publication of *Origins* by becoming "Friends of the Archives."

Member	\$10.00
Contributing Member	\$50.00
Contributing Sponsor	\$100.00
Contributing Founder	\$500.00

All contributions are tax deductible.

PUBLICATION SPONSORS

AEGON Insurance Group, Cedar Rapids, IA

In the Footsteps Foundation, the Netherlands

Meijer, Inc., Grand Rapids, MI

Mr. and Mrs. John Meyer, Palos Park, IL

Jay and Betty Van Andel Foundation, Grand Rapids, MI

CONTRIBUTING FOUNDERS

Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth J. Baas, Grand Rapids, MI

Holland American Wafer Company, Grand Rapids, MI

Dr. William Huizingh, Scottsdale, AZ

Peters Import Marketplace, Grand Rapids, MI

Mr. and Mrs. Leo Peters, Grand Rapids, MI

Mr. and Mrs. John Zonneveld Sr., Laton, CA

CONTRIBUTING SPONSORS

Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Anema, Seattle, WA

Mrs. Gertrude Bardolph, Bradenton, FL

Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Berkompas, Walnut Creek, CA

Mr. and Mrs. Donald E. Boerema, Laguna Hills, CA

Dr. and Mrs. David B. Bosscher, Midland, MI

Mr. and Mrs. John Bouterse, Caledonia, MI

Mr. and Mrs. Conrad J. Bult, Grand Rapids, MI

Mr. and Mrs. Peter De Boer, Calgary, AB

Mr. and Mrs. Richard De Boer, Westchester, IL

Mr. and Mrs. Richard K. De Boer, Westchester, IL

Mr. Peter De Klerk, Kentwood, MI

Dr. and Mrs. Jan De Vries, Berkeley, CA

Mr. and Mrs. Gordon De Young, Ada, MI

Dutch International Society, Kentwood, MI

Mr. and Mrs. John H. Evenhouse, Westmont, IL

Mr. and Mrs. John H. Feenstra, Allendale, MI

The Johnson's Wax Fund, Inc., Racine, WI

Mr. and Mrs. John Kamp, Holland, MI

Mr. Gerald W. Meyering, Denver, CO

Mr. and Mrs. William Monsma, Hawthorne, NJ

Dr. and Mrs. Donald W. Mulder, Rochester, MN

Mr. and Mrs. Gerard W. Mulder, Milton, WI

Mr. Martin Ozinga Jr., Evergreen Park, IL

Dr. and Mrs. Leonard Sweetman Jr., Kentwood, MI

Mr. Edward J. Talen, Chino, CA

Mr. and Mrs. Ronald J. Talsma, Bellflower, CA

Mrs. Wilma Zondervan Teggelaar, Grand Rapids, MI

Mrs. Harm te Velde, Chino, CA

Mr. and Mrs. Jim Van Andel, Lynden, WA

Mr. George Vander Laan Jr., Grand Rapids, MI

Mr. Albert D. Vander Molen, West Olive, MI

Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Van Til, Schererville, IN

Dr. and Mrs. Calvin J. Verbrugge, Racine, WI

Mrs. Frank Verbrugge, St. Paul, MN

Mr. and Mrs. Gary Vermeer, Pella, IA

Mr. and Mrs. Marinus Westrate, Grand Rapids, MI

Mr. and Mrs. Wilbert Wichers, Bradenton, FL

Mr. and Mrs. Teunis Witte, Byron Center, MI

Mr. and Mrs. Jay L. Zandstra, Highland, IN

CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS

Mr. and Mrs. Gerald N. Battjes, Grand Rapids, MI

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Boersma, Marne, MI

Mr. Harvey L. Bolkema, Wyoming, MI

Mr. and Mrs. Clarence B. Bouws, Grand Rapids, MI

Dr. Harvey J. Bratt, Grand Rapids, MI	Mr. and Mrs. John Kapteyn, Phelpsston, ON	Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Vander Molen, South Holland, IL
Miss Edith Brill, Grand Rapids, MI	Mr. and Mrs. Dick Kootstra, Pitt-Meadows, BC	Mr. and Mrs. David L. Van Duyn, South Holland, IL
Dr. and Mrs. H. J. Brinks, Grand Rapids, MI	Dr. and Mrs. John H. Kromminga, Grand Rapids, MI	Mr. and Mrs. Allan J. Van Popering, Byron Center, MI
Mr. and Mrs. James P. Brussee, Sarasota, FL	Mr. John W. Lamain, the Netherlands	Mr. Carl J. Van't Hof, Tinley Park, IL
Mr. and Mrs. Conrad D. Bult, Northport, MI	Mr. and Mrs. John Leegwater, Highland, IN	Ms. Mildred M. Ver Meulen, Grand Rapids, MI
Miss Joanne S. Bultman, Grand Rapids, MI	Mr. Howard Lenderink, Denver, CO	Dr. and Mrs. Richard Wevers, Grand Rapids, MI
Mr. and Mrs. Gary Byker, Hudsonville, MI	Ms. Bonnie Nijenhuis-Simmelink, Denver, CO	Mr. and Mrs. Marvin G. Wissink, Sioux Center, IA
Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Chambery, Rochester, NY	Mr. and Mrs. Roger Ondersma, Sr., Kentwood, MI	Ms. Elaine Obbink Zimmerman, Woodstock, MD
Dr. and Mrs. James A. Cook, Bloomingdale, IL	Mr. and Mrs. William W. Pastoor, Grand Rapids, MI	Mr. and Mrs. Henry Zuiderveen, Hudsonville, MI
Mrs. Jacoba Dahm, Grand Rapids, MI	Dr. and Mrs. Alan D. Pauw, Riverside, CA	
Mrs. Dorothy Daling, Grand Rapids, MI	Dr. and Mrs. Myron N. Plooster, Boulder, CO	
Dr. Benjamin De Boer, Grand Forks, ND	Mr. and Mrs. John L. Poel, Hudsonville, MI	
Mr. and Mrs. James J. De Jonge, Grand Rapids, MI	Mr. and Mrs. Allan A. Ramerman, Bellingham, WA	
Mr. and Mrs. Fred De Vries, Kalamazoo, MI	Hon. and Mrs. Jon H. Ringelberg, Clare, MI	
Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Draayer, Grand Rapids, MI	Mr. and Mrs. Sybrant J. Schaafsma, Grosse Pointe Park, MI	
Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth L. Duthler, Spring Lake, MI	Mr. and Mrs. Leon A. Schaddelee, Green Valley, AZ	
Ms. Judy Eldrenkamp, Oak Lawn, IL	Mr. and Mrs. Ben Senneker, Vauxhall, AB	
Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Engel, Ripon, CA	Mr. and Mrs. Donald H. Smalligan, Grand Rapids, MI	
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Essenburg, Grandville, MI	Dr. and Mrs. Lewis B. Smedes, Sierra Madre, CA	
Mr. and Mrs. Roger H. Feikema, Bradenton, FL	Ms. Ann Steenwyk, Oak Lawn, IL	
Mr. and Mrs. Harold E. Heemstra, West Des Moines, IA	Mr. and Mrs. Clarence E. Stehouwer, Grand Rapids, MI	
Mr. and Mrs. Richard C. Hoekstra, West Olive, MI	Ms. Elizabeth Strikwerda, Grand Rapids, MI	
Mrs. Elizabeth Hofstra, Grand Haven, MI	Mrs. Ralph Swierenga, Elmhurst, IL	
Mr. and Mrs. Henry Holtvliwer, Grand Rapids, MI	Mr. and Mrs. Paul H. Taneling, Hudsonville, MI	
Mr. and Mrs. Robert W. Houskamp, Grand Rapids, MI	Mr. Henri Theil, St. Augustine, FL	
Mr. Richard A. Huibregtse, Silver Spring, MD	Mr. and Mrs. Jack Vanden Born, Whitinsville, MA	
Mr. and Mrs. Harold Huizenga, Grand Rapids, MI	Dr. and Mrs. Jerrien Van Dellen, Ellsworth, MI	
Mr. and Mrs. Simon K. Kamminga, East Lansing, MI	Mr. John Vander Burgh, Zeeland, MI	
Ms. Anne F. Kamstra, Arlington, VA		

ORIGINS

The Archives
Calvin College & Seminary Library
3207 Burton St. SE
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49546

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Grand Rapids, Michigan
Permit 248

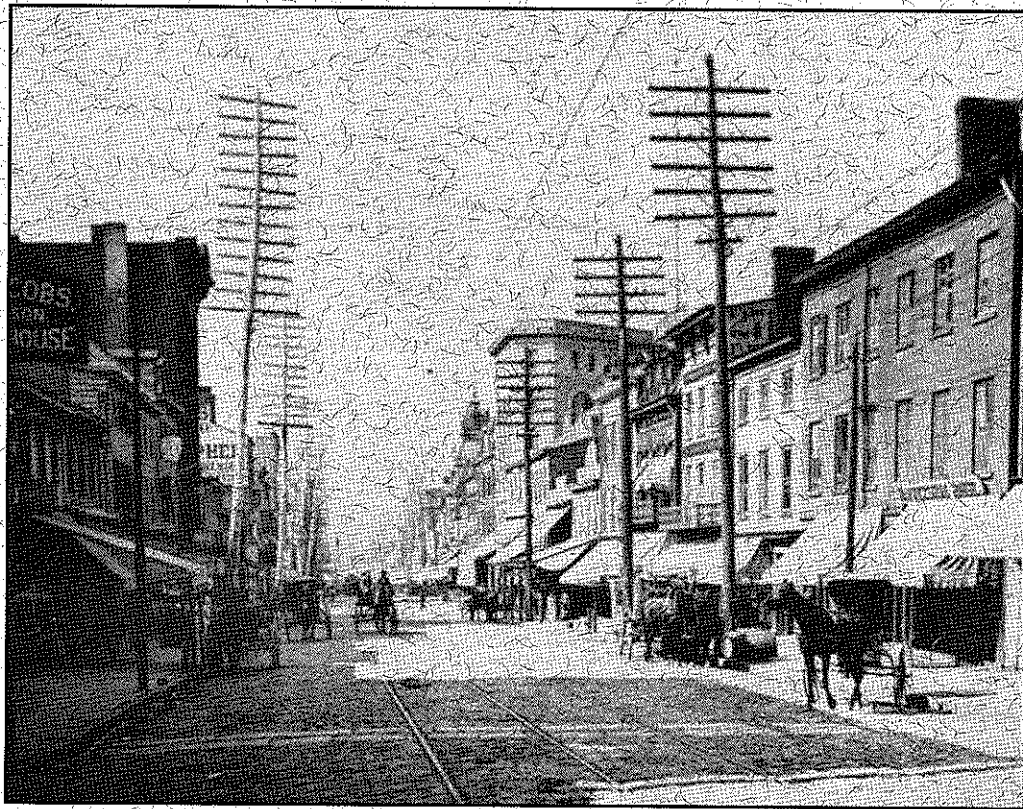
The Calvin College & Seminary Archives is a division of the school's library which contains the historical records of the Christian Reformed Church, Calvin College & Seminary, and other institutions related to the Reformed tradition in the Netherlands and North America. The Archives also contains a wide range of personal and family manuscripts.

ORIGINS

Volume XI

Number 2

1993



Historical Magazine of Calvin College and Seminary Archives