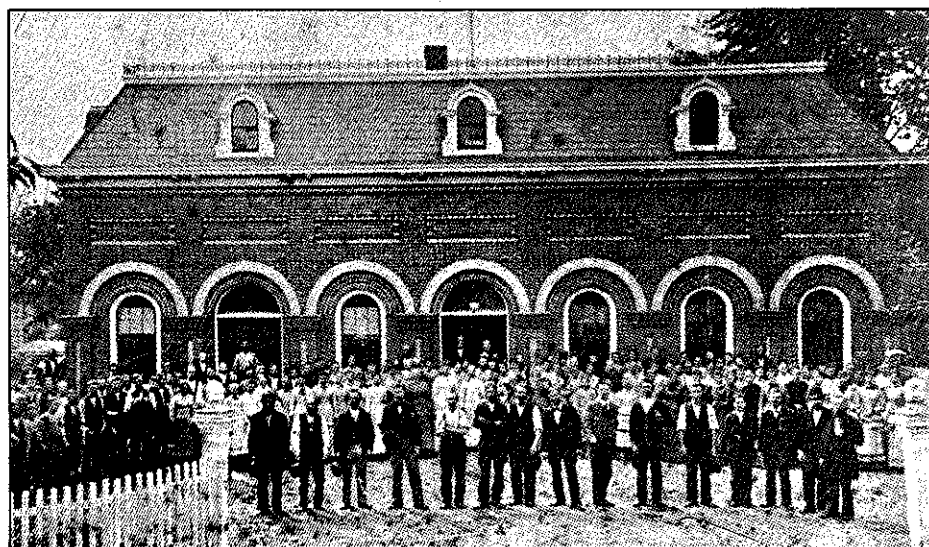


ORIGINS

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"At present there is plenty of work in Paterson and anyone who wants work can find it in the cotton mills. The old, the young, and even young girls are working because all the shops are in full operation." (For more on Paterson, NJ, see page 17.)

—from J. W. Jongste in a Sept. 9, 1859 letter to Paulus Den Bleyker of Kalamazoo, Michigan.

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.

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Midland Park, Through the Years: 1—p. 50.

Chicago Public Library, Neighborhood Historical Assoc.: 11 (bottom).

100 Years, First Reformed Church, South Holland, Illinois: 13 (bottom)—p. 31.

Siouxland: A History of Sioux County, Iowa: 15—This photograph of the Orange City street scene (undated) is one of many from this well-written book by G. Nelson Nieuwenhuis. The author has devoted much of his life to this subject, and *Siouxland's* publication in 1983 was a significant contribution to local history.

Seventy-Fifth Anniversary: First Reformed Church, Paterson, New Jersey, 18, 19, 20.

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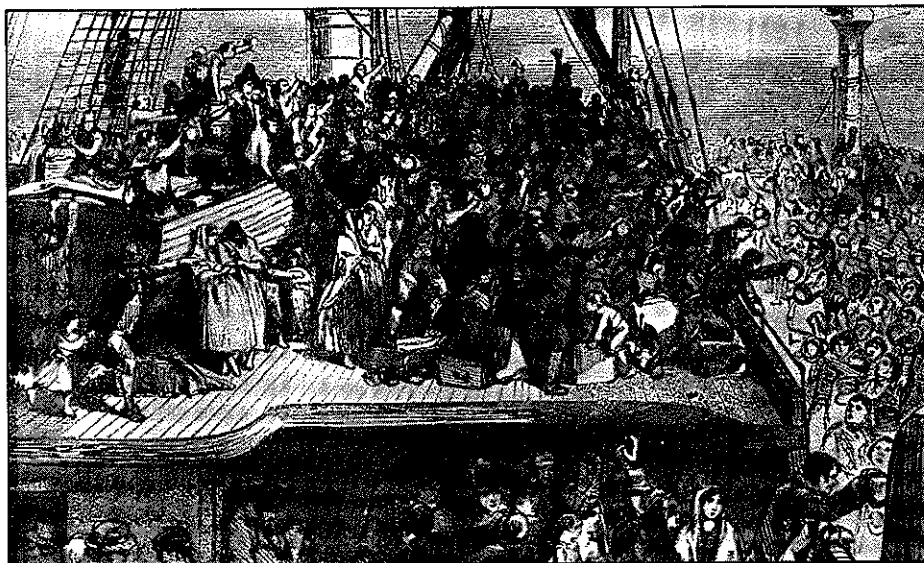
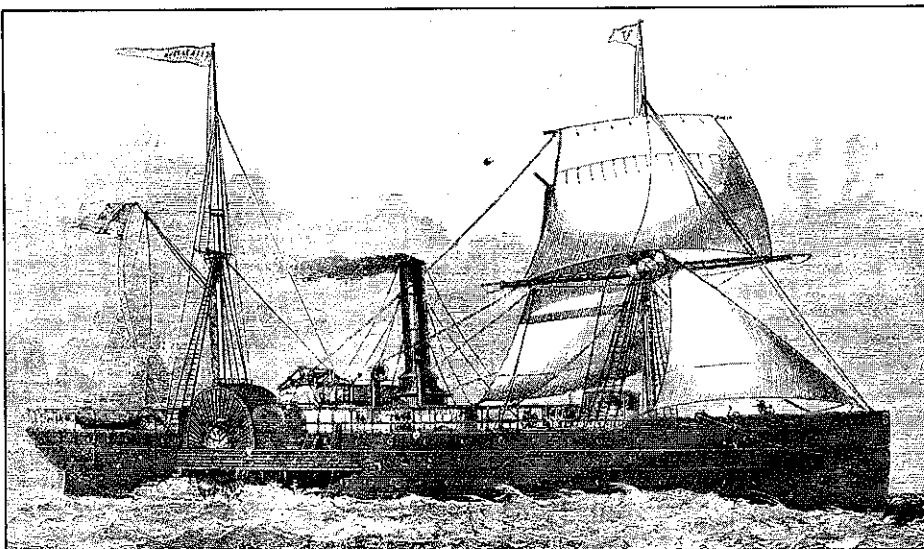
crossing the

Immigrants crossing the Atlantic before the 1860's experienced conditions much like imprisonment. The sailing ships which they boarded carried an average cargo of about one thousand tons, and the Atlantic crossing usually required four weeks' time. Laden fully with bulky products such as cotton and grain, the packet ships unloaded at Liverpool and returned to the states with manufactured products requiring less space. Before departure, the ships' carpenters transformed the leftover space into passenger quarters, or steerage compartments, which housed thousands of immigrants during the nineteenth century.

Compressed in these dark, damp, and poorly ventilated compartments, nearly every passenger suffered from sea sickness, and the foul odor of vomit permeated sleeping quarters. Before 1848 open deck hatches provided the only source of ventilation, but with rough seas, the trap doors were closed to prevent waves from cascading into the passenger area. In 1848 both the US and the United Kingdom passed laws which required additional ventilators, and these same passenger acts mandated at least twelve square feet of deck space for each passenger. The new regulations also attempted

to segregate unmarried men from single women and families. Still, there were no partitions between the six-foot-square sleeping berths, and four persons were assigned to each berth. Families might huddle

together and drape bedding around their particular berth to gain some degree of privacy, but when every space was booked, and they were often overbooked, families and single persons were forced to live in



The "Champion," a sidewheel steamship with sails—typical of ocean vessels during the 1860-1880 period (top right). Packet ship getting ready to sail from the Liverpool docks (bottom right).

NTIC

mingled company during their four-week voyage. Furthermore, the ships' food was tasteless and its water stale. Worse still, the ration of biscuits and oatmeal were frequently wormy. It is obvious that even on the best of these sail-driven ships, the immigrants enjoyed neither comfort nor privacy.

Travelers who experienced these crude conditions hastened to counsel those who followed. In 1850 G. Heerspink advised his brother, "To

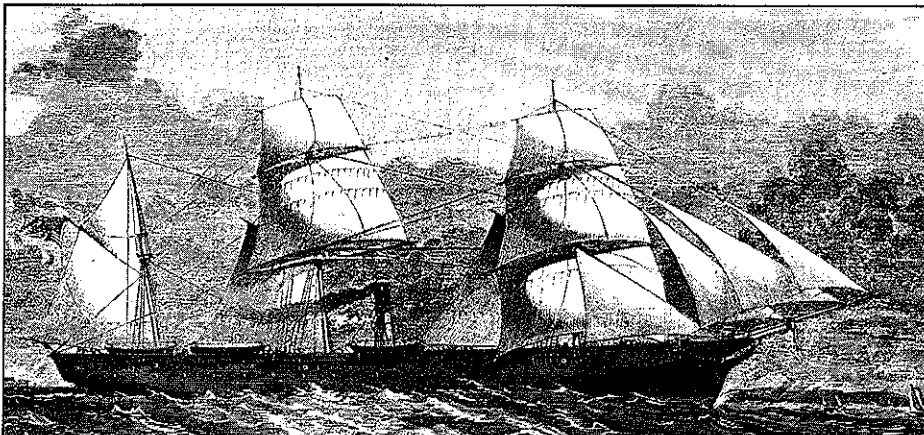
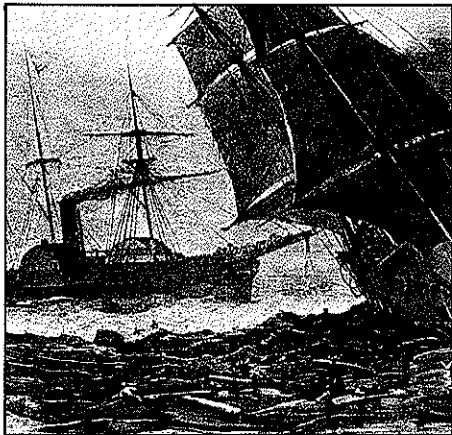
get ready for ocean travel, prepare yourselves with potatoes, buckwheat flour, beans, dried meat, bacon, pepper, salt, vinegar, coffee, and especially tea. You have many difficulties to attend to on the trip. In the city from which you depart, buy a small vat of salted fish. Make sure you buy another vat with a spigot which you must use to get your daily supply of water—and fill it before you leave."

These instructions were entirely necessary because the immigrants were responsible for supplying their own food if they did not wish to subsist on oatmeal, rice, and sea biscuits from the ship's store. Preparing his mother for the voyage, Roelof Brinks urged her to pack a long list of food items but also yard goods for skirts and coats. Instructing his younger brother, Roelof declared, "Don't wander away in the cities and get lost. Look after your luggage and your money—wrap it around your body. And brother, when you are in

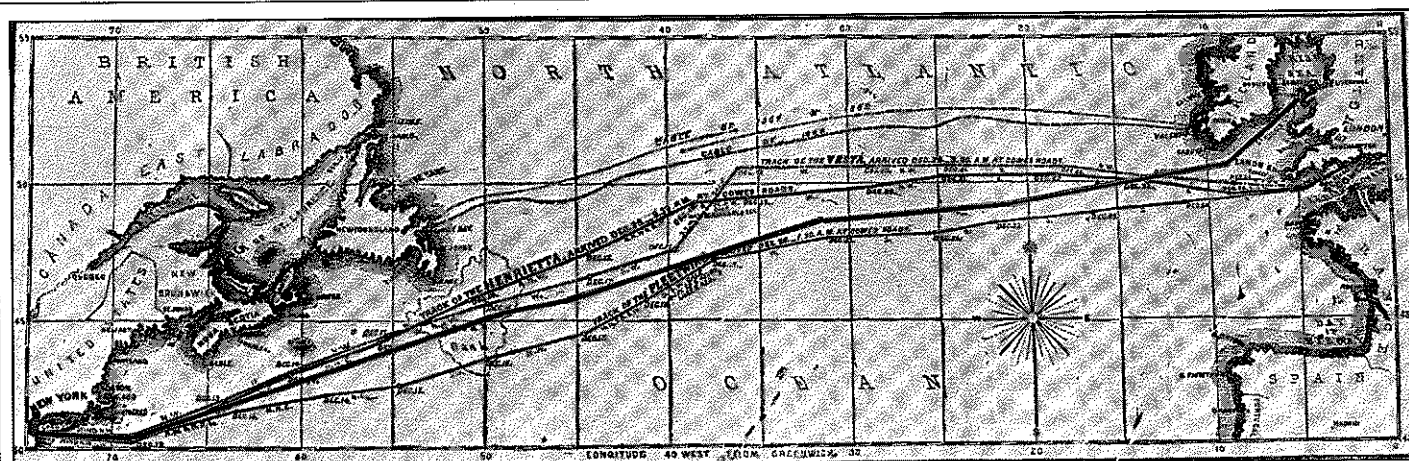
the train, don't put your head out of the window."

Even after the advent of steam-powered ships the immigrants continued to provide some of their own foodstuffs. In 1873 W. A. De Lang reported that someone had stolen his food chest from the wharf at Rotterdam. Thus, he and his family had to rely entirely on ship's fare consisting of "moldy bread, potatoes with sauerkraut," or pea soup tainted with "spoiled American bacon." "We experienced total poverty," he wrote, "and could do nothing but bite the sour apple and hope for better. We were at sea for twenty-seven days, and it was a happy moment when the Jersey coast came into view."

In general the best immigrant ships were built in the US. One of these, the *Anglo Saxon*, carried 894 tons of cargo, and it was constructed with special regard for immigrants. Its passenger compartment, with dimensions of about 35 x 45 feet, contained four ventilating portholes with two hatches which could be open in all but the worst weather. With ninety-six berths, the *Anglo Saxon* was licensed to transport 384 steerage passengers. Thus, even in this relatively commodious ship, some four hundred passengers were crammed into quarters with space about equal to a medium-sized basement—for voyages which lasted



A floundering sail ship with a rescue vessel at hand (top left). The "Iroquios," a steam propeller ship with sails (bottom left).



A Typical route between Liverpool and New York.

from four to six weeks.

The packet ships, which carried the largest percentage of immigrants between 1820 and 1860, were similar to the *Anglo Saxon*, and these American-built packets were far superior to the British ships. It was, in fact, American packet lines such as the *Red Star*, the *White Diamond*, the *Black Ball*, and others which drew immigrants to Liverpool, because these shippers offered the most reliable schedules of departure at competitive rates. Then, as the US packet ships were further modified to attract passengers during the 1850s, nearly two-thirds of that business went to the US lines. Thus, immigrants from all over Europe boarded these ships to sail the Atlantic Ocean.

Most Dutch immigrants also traveled via Liverpool, and reports of their experiences contain some of the most fascinating tales in immigrant correspondence. The normal path took them by train and canal from their isolated villages to Rotterdam, where they boarded ships which crossed the English Channel to debark at Hull. From that port city, they traveled by rail to Liverpool where they booked passage to New York. Teunis Vanden Hoek's

account of that trip is fairly representative, but since he sailed on a steamship, his 1866 voyage was relatively swift.

The Vanden Hoeks left Rotterdam on April 21, 1866, and Teunis reported, "We left Rotterdam at 3:00 P.M. and we passed through the Hellevoet locks at 7:00. The weather was exceptionally favorable, and we had ample room from Rotterdam to Hull because I was called onto the ship first, and we could get the best places. There were several Zeelanders on board, and they could sing psalms very well. We sang with them (Psalms 25, 42, 68, etc.), and we slept very little that night. At 12:00 I went up on deck, and it was a beautiful sight on the calm water. Here and there we could see light houses and castles from the sea. The water was as calm as the pond in Noordeloos [his home village].

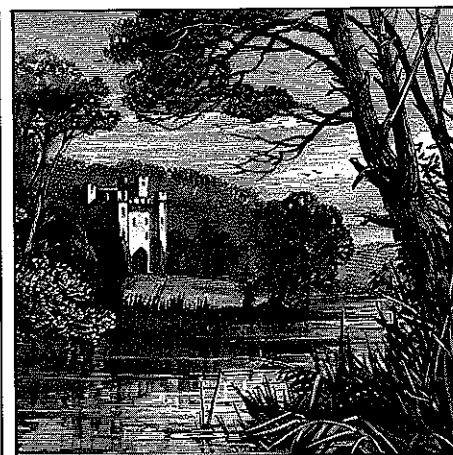
"On Sunday we spent a few hours in the first-class cabin with Rev. H. R. Koopman, and we discussed various religious and ecclesiastical matters.... We enjoyed talking together about the Lord's ways and dealings. Rev. Koopman is interested in all our affairs, and he associates with us in a very friendly manner.

"At 6:30 A.M. we landed at Hull,

A castle visible from the route between Hull and Liverpool.

but we waited until 10:00 A.M. for the high tide to take us ashore. At our lodging we were served rice soup, and though some people did not like it, we did. The regular beds were all occupied, and while we were looking all over for a place, someone took us to a separate room. It was a bedroom with fine bedding, a porcelain wash basin, and everything besides. We slept well.

"At 9:30 on Monday morning we took the train. Before leaving we were served bread, butter, and coffee. What we have seen in England from the train is indescribable. We saw hundreds of palaces of hewn stone. They were plowing with steam engines—without horses. We rode between huge mounds of clay and limestone and beside huge quarries. We traveled between sky-high



mountains, some with beautiful churches, castles, estates, and other buildings. Sometimes four or five trains passed us in succession. Sometimes we passed through tunnels, and on two occasions another train passed us overhead. We passed through one tunnel which was as long as the distance from Goudriaan to Gorinchem [about four miles], and it was pitch dark inside. Because of the smog from thousands of machines some areas were as dark as sunset even at mid-day.

"We reached Liverpool at 4:00 P.M., and we were taken to a hotel where the table was already set. They served us a bowl of soup and, after that, potatoes, a good piece of meat, and a thick slice of white bread. At 8 P.M. we again had two slices of white bread with butter and coffee. We went to bed at 9:00 and had a good night's sleep. The innkeeper here was better than the innkeeper at Hull.



Sighting land from an immigrant ship.

"It is now Tuesday A.M., and we will go aboard the large ocean steamer either this afternoon or tomorrow. It is six times larger than the boat on which we crossed the

Channel."

The Vanden Hoek's ocean voyage, April 24–May 8, passed with little difficulty. Of the 1,350 passengers and ship's crew, only two died. The Vanden Hoeks enjoyed an exceptionally trouble-free crossing, whereas Gerrit De Groot, one of Vanden Hoek's friends, suffered a far different lot. When they met in Illinois, De Groot reported that four hundred passengers had died of the cholera during his voyage and on one day forty-five were buried at sea. Upon their arrival they were quarantined on an island without shelter or beds. Then, on the train trip to Illinois, De Groot's wife, Marrisje, gave birth to a baby boy.

The De Groot account rings true because 1866 was the last year during which cholera epidemics claimed large numbers of immigrants at sea. That year three of the National Lines' packets, the *England*, the *Virginian*, and the *Helvetia* were afflicted with major outbreaks of cholera. But, because De Groot's account does not identify his specific ship, the details of that disaster cannot be augmented from other sources. It seems likely though, that De Groot entered North America through the St. Lawrence River, because ships infected with cholera were regularly quarantined there on Grosse Isle, near Quebec.

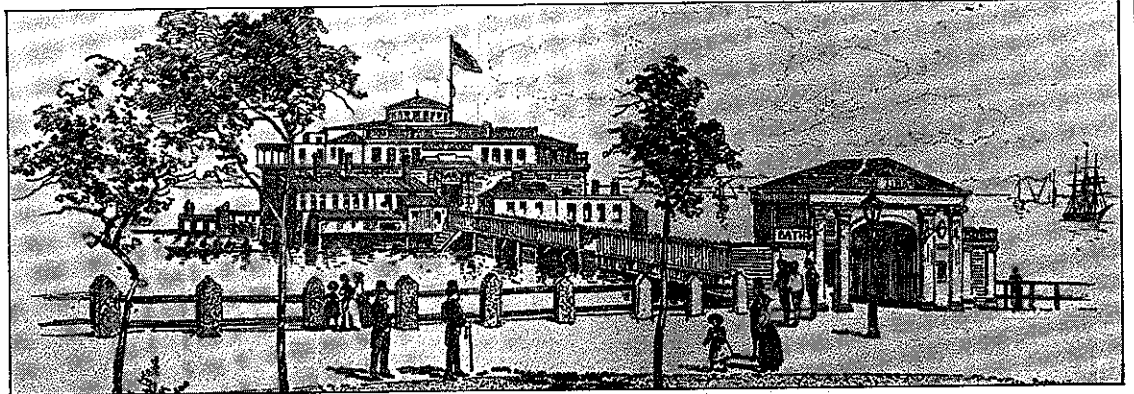
It would be difficult to underestimate the fears with which most Dutch immigrants viewed the Atlantic voyage during the nineteenth century. They were rural people, for the most part, and though the Netherlands is surrounded by seas, few of the back-country folk had ever boarded any vessel larger than a canal barge. Thus, potential disasters from shipwreck, fire, and disease haunted nearly every passenger, and the sea itself was profoundly mysterious.

Travelers who survived storms at sea described their experiences in fearfully reverential terms: "The sea was so furious that it was frightening to behold".... "We were tossed about like a nut shell." In 1868 one young man wrote, "No one could stand up without holding on to something. The waves rose up like towers, and our ship was thrown up and down like a nut shell—first to the top of a wave and then down into the deep abyss of the sea. It was so terrible that the ropes, sails, and everything attached to the masts were torn away, and even the lifeboats were lost. The bridge where the Captain stood and the top part of the ship's cabin were splintered to shreds. The ship itself cracked and thundered.

"There were three hundred passengers aboard, and the cries of anguish echoed through every corner of the ship. Young children from 4-10 years of age clung to their parents in fear. Grown-ups were running about in confusion and cries went up, 'We are lost—we are lost!' Others were singing Psalms and hymns each according to their own language and custom. The storm raged from 11:00 P.M. on Thursday until 7:00 P.M. on Friday. Then all was calm, but from within and without the ship reminded me of the destruction of Jerusalem."

Travel conditions improved steadily throughout the nineteenth century, and by 1867 over ninety percent of the immigrants traveled in steamers rather than sail ships. Usually, though, the steamers were also rigged with sails to back up their occasionally faulty propellers. Under steam power the voyage was shortened to an average of fifteen days, and those who booked second-class cabins rather than third-class steerage began to complain of boredom rather than hazards and hardships. —H. J. B.

CASTLE GARDEN



Immigrants who debarked at New York between 1855 and 1892 entered the New World through the gates and turnstiles of Castle Garden.* The "Castle" had been constructed to protect New York from a possible British invasion during the War of 1812, and thereafter the fortress became a concert hall and gathering place for official receptions and dignified ceremonies. In 1855 the New York Immigration Commission acquired the old fort to transform it into the

Emigrant Landing Depot, for at that time and until 1892, the various states and cities supervised immigration procedures. Because the vast majority of immigrants entered the US through New York, that city bore the brunt of danger from communicable diseases which the newcomers could carry into the city. Furthermore, many immigrants arrived as paupers who had spent their last coins to purchase tickets, and Castle Garden officials attempted to direct such folk toward

employers. By funneling the immigrants through Castle Garden the commissioners were able to identify and solve the most crucial problems which accompanied the immigrant process.

Castle Garden also protected the newcomers from thieves and cheats who regularly preyed upon their ignorance. The experience of Jelle Jans Pelmulder,** who arrived in New York just prior to Castle Garden's opening, provides a vivid example of the confusion which surrounded immigrants' arrivals during the first decades of the last century.

Pelmulder wrote, "We arrived at New York on Friday, the 15th of June, and early the next morning a doctor came aboard to examine the health of the passengers. For that purpose everyone had to go to the upper deck and then to an office. Everyone passed between two doctors*** and the ships' captain—and that's all there was to it."

"Soon after that a tug boat arrived and towed us to the city's wharf, and then the excitement began. Agents from several railroad companies



The Golden Horn and the Scheldt

Dutch boy lost among the crowds at Castle Garden.

*The more famous Ellis Island terminal did not open until 1892.

**The letter is dated June, 1855.

***The doctors were probably both the ship's doctor and the New York doctor.

"The Officer must speak and understand nearly every language under the sun."

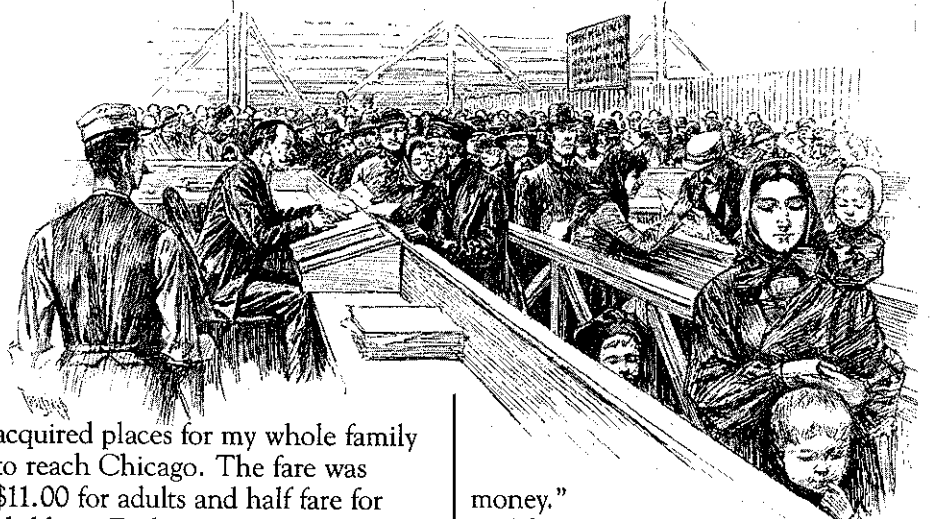
stormed aboard together with sellers of fresh food such as apples and bread. Our Captain soon put an end to this as he ordered all uninvited visitors off of the ship, and the ship's mate did not treat them very gently. The Captain was protecting us from the high price which these peddlers charged.

"That same day, railway agents came alongside our ship in tug boats and repeatedly tried to come aboard, but our Captain ordered them off without mercy. There was quite a commotion—name calling, swearing, and ranting in English, German, and Dutch. It was beyond describing. Finally the First Mate boxed one of the agents and no one dared to come aboard again.

"A poor immigrant is quite helpless under such circumstances. Each agent claimed that no one could provide cheaper or safer transportation than he, but the agents were all looking out for themselves. It seemed to me that the agents from the Erie Railroad were the worst scum of all nations.... Everyone should keep his money in his pocket as long as possible or it will be spent uselessly—anyway that is the only way to preserve your freedom.

"By noon we were so close to the docks that passengers could come aboard from nearby ships. At that point a police officer came aboard together with an agent from the American Central Railroad who had received permission from the Captain. The agent was seated in a cabin. Those who wished, could deal with him for overland transportation. Most of the passengers made arrangements with this man and I

Travellers from Holland.



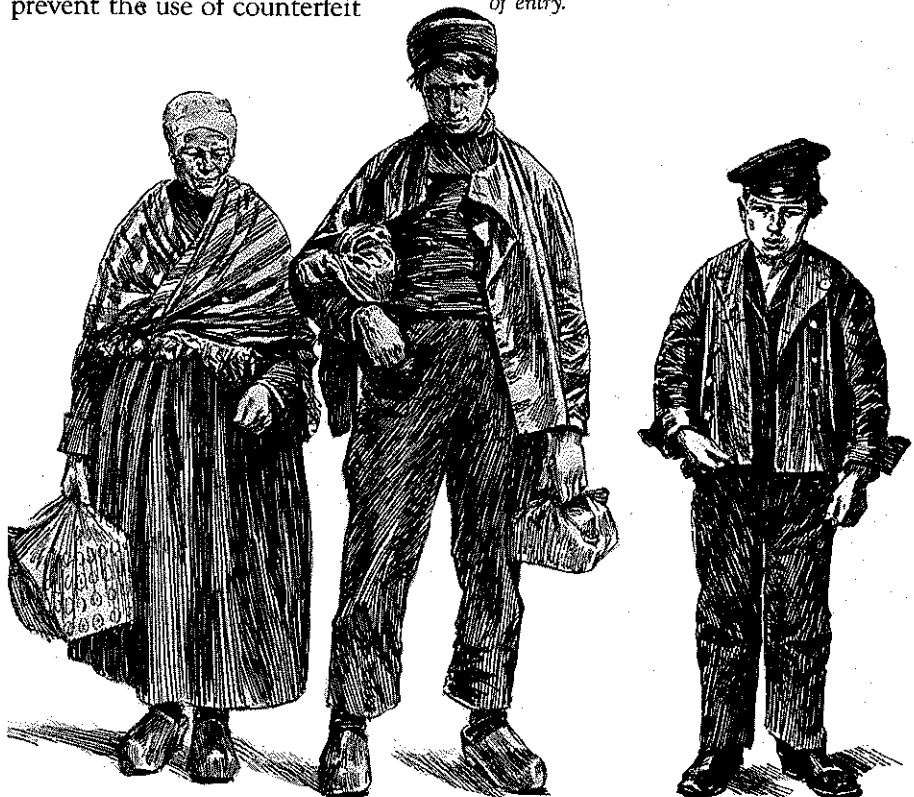
acquired places for my whole family to reach Chicago. The fare was \$11.00 for adults and half fare for children. Each person was allowed 100 lbs. of luggage without extra charge. The agent gave the children a fresh piece of wheat bread which tasted good after eating the hard and tasteless ship's bread for so long.

"People also came aboard to purchase the remainder of our provisions,* and the police watched them carefully. They also stood by to prevent the use of counterfeit

money."

After visiting the city, Pelmulder and his wife returned to the ship for their final night's lodging at sea. "We had already packed most of our things," he reported, "and we literally had to sleep on the floor.

**Passengers carried their own food to augment the ship's supplies, and they sometimes sold the unused portion of their larder at the port of entry.*



But that was not so bad as we were somewhat used to that....Quite soon a steamship came to bring us to the railroad and at that time our trunks had to be inspected. Everything was done so rapidly that smuggled goods would never have been discovered. In fact not one of our trunks was opened."

The contrasting experience of Albert Kruissink, who immigrated in 1872, readily illustrates the benefits which Castle Garden provided. "It was," he wrote, "very well organized for the protection of travelers...and there is not one least bit of danger here, because the general public is not even admitted into this place."

An 1871 article from *Harper's Magazine* contains detailed descriptions of the various procedures through which the immigrants passed. The first of these, registration, required the inscription of "every immigrant's name, birthplace, and destination in large folios—a work that is often more difficult than it appears to be as...the officer in charge must be able to speak and understand nearly every language under the sun."

The successive stations on the path to admittance included assistance from a Railway

Association agent who provided directions in obtaining tickets to specific destinations together with currency exchange at legitimate rates.

Before Castle Garden was instituted, one of the most flagrant abuses to which the immigrants fell prey involved the excessive and fraudulent rates at which they exchanged their various currencies. Consequently, Castle Garden also provided a currency exchange office which changed money according to official market quotations. This was an extremely crucial service because immigrants who took their savings into the shops of New York were frequently swindled.

Immigrants also found a post office in Castle Garden which permitted them to send news of a safe arrival to their anxious families in Europe. Some newcomers received mail at Castle Garden from acquaintances in the states who provided directions to inland destinations as well as financial assistance and advice. For those whose connections were delayed, the "Castle" also provided crude sleeping facilities on benches or the floor. Kruissink reported that "food could also be purchased and milk, but no beer or strong drinks."

For travelers of all times the handling of luggage and its possible misdirection can cause a host of anxieties. Thus, Castle Garden's management of trunks and bundles was, from the immigrants' perspective, probably the most comforting service provided. Kruissink reported, "Before our goods left the ship they were identified with numbered copper tags and the owner of the luggage received duplicates of these tags. The luggage itself is carefully guarded in a warehouse until it is claimed by rightful owners."

The luggage was transported from the warehouse to specific railway stations where it was loaded for transport to the destination of the immigrant's choice. The whole process was exceedingly expeditious and Kruissink complained that he was whisked through Castle Garden and on to the train with such speed that he could gain only a fleeting impression of New York. "I am enormously disappointed," he wrote, "that I could not gain more knowledge of this Giant of the West."

—H. J. B.

Travel Literature

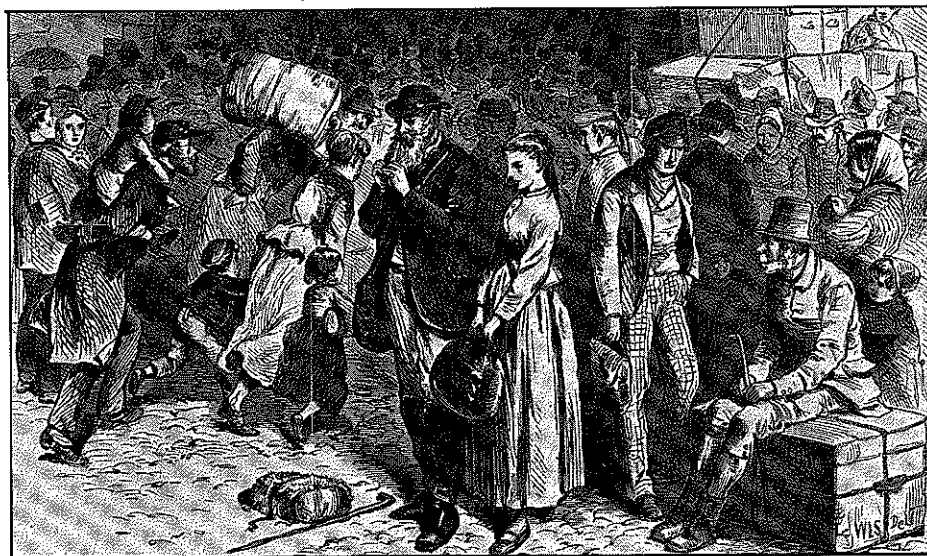
Charlotte Erickson. *Emigration from Europe, 1815-1914* (Adams & Black: London), 1976, pp. 242-303.

Richard C. McKay. *Some Famous Sailing Ships and their Builder: Donald McKay* (G. P. Putnam's Sons: New York), 1928, pp. 42-46.

Terry Coleman. *Going to America* (Pantheon Books: New York), pp. 13-188, 287-298.

Maldwyn A. Jones. *Destination America* (Holt, Rineholt and Winston: New York), 1976, pp. 22-66.

Oscar Handlin. *A Pictorial History of Immigration* (Crown Publishers Inc: New York), pp. 94-110.



Misc.

Background

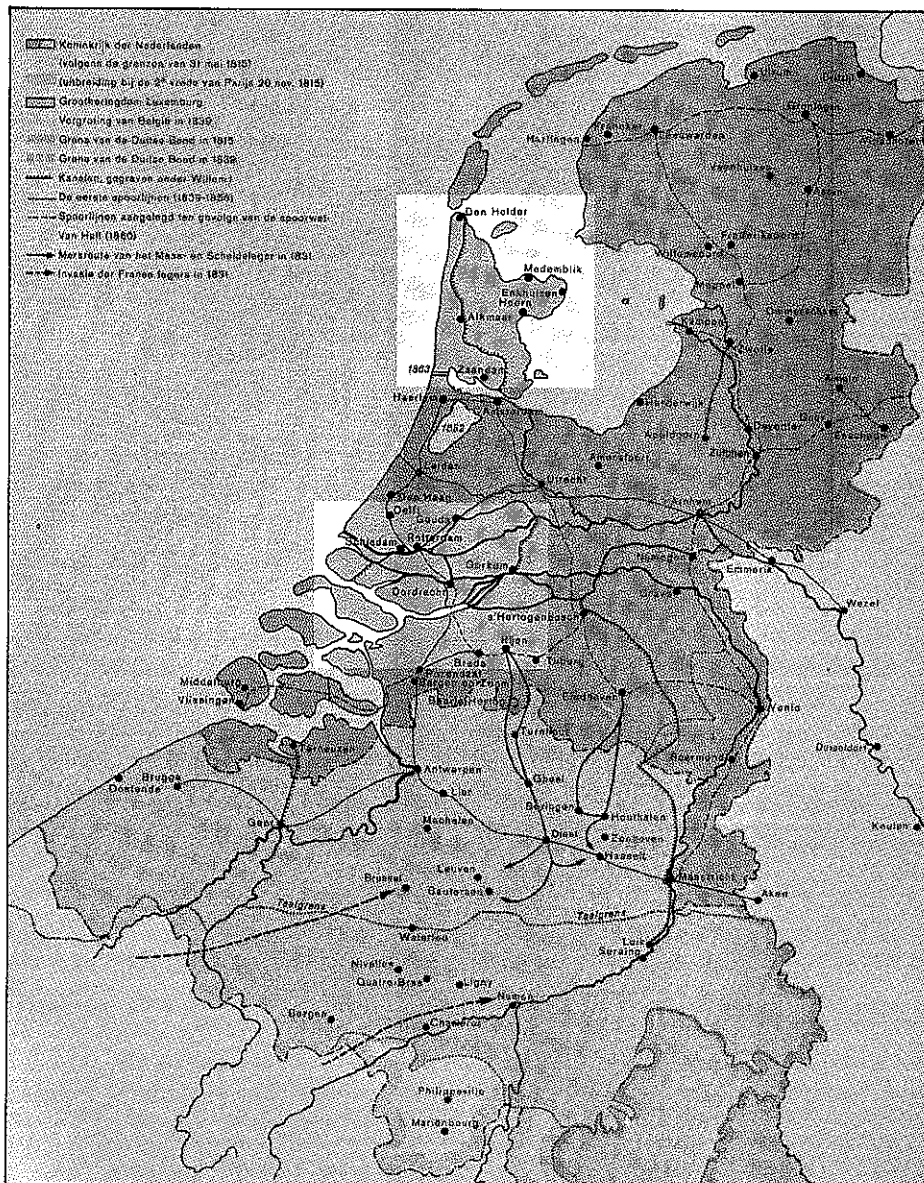
Notes on Chicago's South- Side Dutch

The first Dutch immigrants to settle in the Calumet area have been identified with two distinct provinces in the Netherlands. Many South Hollanders were natives of Zuid Holland's eastern agricultural villages and particularly places such as Noordeloos, Giessendam, and Lek (Leksmond). Roselanders migrated from the province of Noord

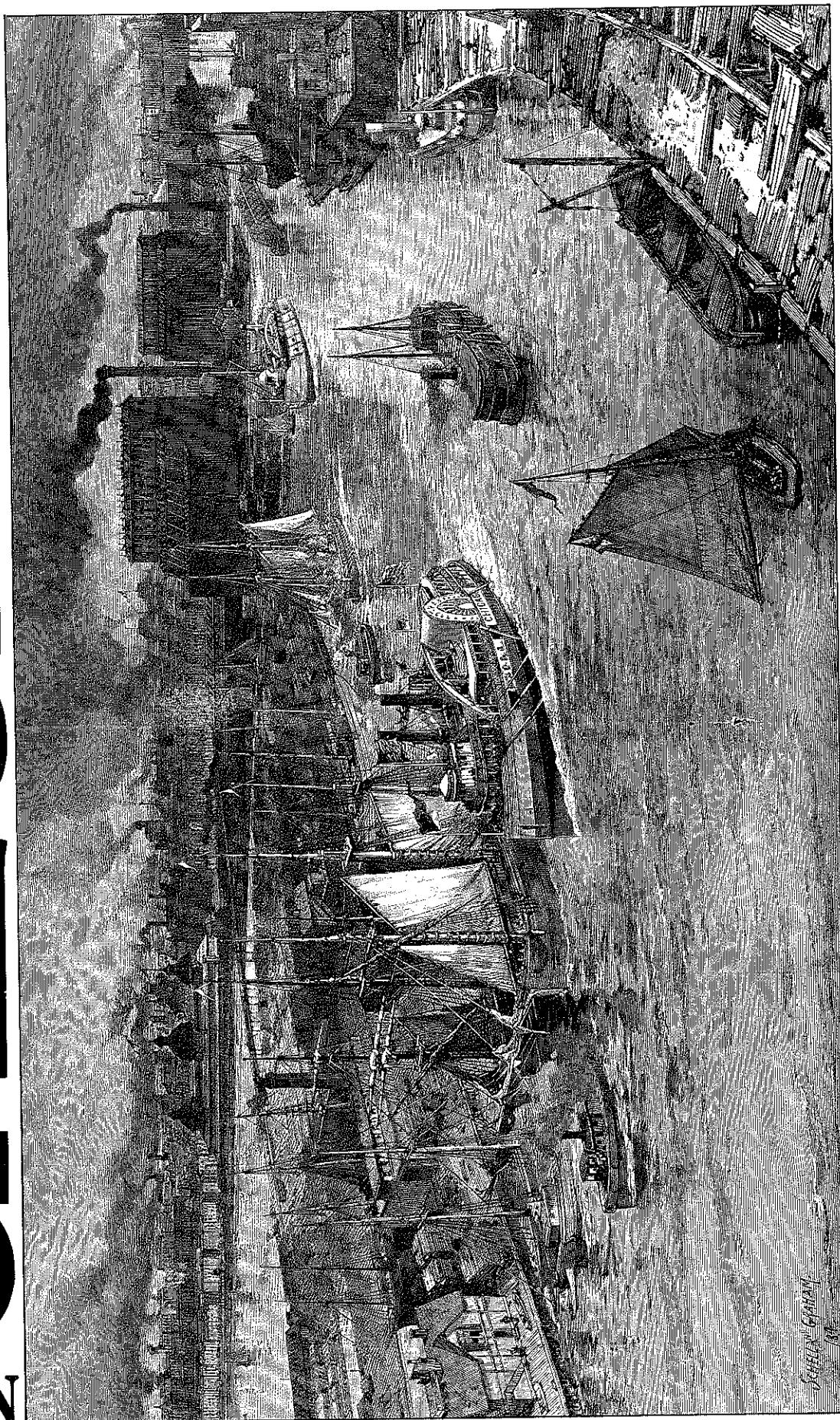
Holland with concentrated representations from hamlets like Schoorl and Warmenhuizen. Nonetheless both South Holland and Roseland contained immigrants from other Dutch provinces. After their initial immigration to the south side, several prominent Roselanders resettled in nearby areas which then became the sites for new clusters of Dutch-American immigrants. For example, Gerrit Eenigenburg moved to Lansing (Oak Glen) in 1853 and thereafter several immigrants joined him to organize a Dutch Reformed Church in 1861. The whole Ridge Road area (Oak Glen, Lansing, Munster, and Highland) was settled in this manner.

South Hollanders were less motivated to sell and move than their neighboring countrymen in Roseland because, while land values skyrocketed on the western fringes of Lake Calumet, the value of South Holland's farms increased more gradually. Fluctuating land values and changing economic patterns certainly accounted for migrations in and out of the original settlements. And immigrants with eyes fixed on farming kept careful watch on land prices with hopes of gaining a profit which could be reinvested in larger farms. The migrations of Teunis Bos Vanden Hoek clearly illustrate that pattern.

The largest city near Noordeloos was Dordrecht, while for Schoorl, Alkmaar was the major urban center.



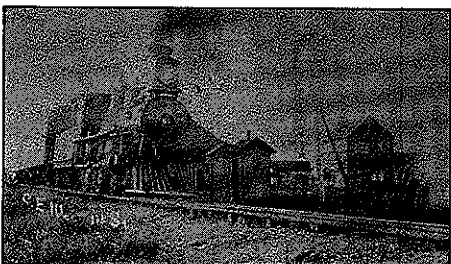
CALCUTTA REGION



SCOTT & BROWN

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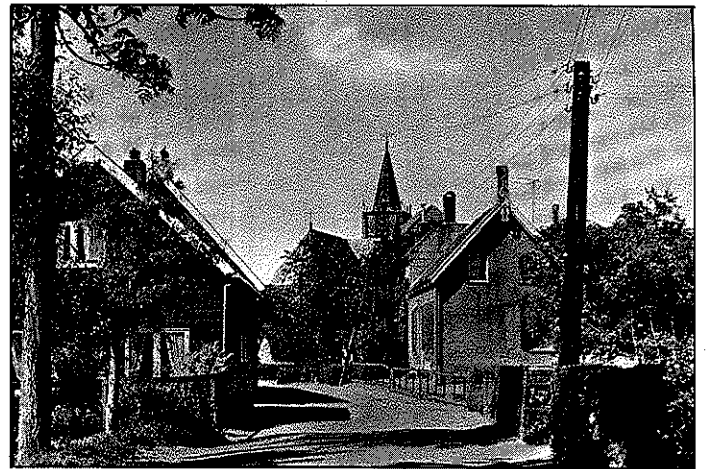
leunis Bos Vanden Hoek: Life in the Calumet Region, 1866-1882



In 1866 Teunis and Dirkje Vanden Hoek immigrated to South Holland, Illinois. They left the village of Noordeloos in the Netherlands to join family members and acquaintances who had preceded them in the Calumet region. Teunis and his wife, Dirkje Vogel, traveled to the New World with about thirty companions who were also destined for South Holland, and all of them had probably delayed their migration plans due to the American Civil War which ended in 1865. During that conflict (1861-1865), immigration from Europe had decreased, but in 1866 the tide of migration resumed, and Vanden Hoek reported that 1,350 travelers from Europe, England, and Ireland had boarded the steamer which took them from Liverpool to New York. During the journey, some of the Dutch contingent gathered together for psalm

Illinois. After reaching the railroad depot, Paarlburg raced on ahead of the immigrants to ring the South Holland church bells, a signal which beckoned a number of farmers to assemble a wagon caravan to transport the immigrants from the station. About fifteen wagons were strung out on the two-hour trip to the station called Calumet where Rev. Koopman and his companions waited expectantly. The wagons arrived in the early morning and the immigrants clambered aboard with their baggage and children. "There was joy on all sides," Vanden Hoek reported, "and Uncle Willem [Vogel] and Willem Vander Aa came with a wagon and two horses."

The arrival of so many new immigrants created a stir in the Roseland area also, and Vanden Hoek noted, "The aged Peter Prins together with his son, Cornelius,



A Main Street in Noordeloos, the Netherlands, Vanden Hoek's home village.

singing, and they also enjoyed the companionship of Rev. Hendrik R. Koopman who had accepted the call of the South Holland (Low Prairie)* Dutch Reformed Church.

Willem Paarlberg,** who had immigrated in 1847, met the new arrivals at the port of entry, and he guided them during their overland travels from New York City to the Calumet Station near Roseland in

*South Holland was identified variously as the Low Prairie, Thornton, and Thornton Township. Though the town acquired an official post office designated as South Holland in 1869, Vanden Hoek posted his return address as Calumet, Calumet Creek, North Creek, and South Holland while living at the same address.

**Paarlberg was the 29-year-old son of South Holland's famed "Widow" Paarlberg.

A river flows past the house with good water and lots of fish, and a good boat comes with the house.



who live near the depot, heard about our coming. And before we left for Thornton, they welcomed us enthusiastically." Teunis continued, "All the friends and acquaintances we met were well and in fine shape. If I were to write everything to you, you would not believe me."

After reaching South Holland, the immigrants were parceled out to receive temporary shelter among the area's residents. Teunis and Dirkje lived with Willem Vander Aa and were quickly at work on the farm. Along with room and board, they earned about 30¢ each per day. Vanden Hoek's first impressions of the settlement were entirely favorable. "Uncle Willem [Vogel]," he wrote, "is one of the poorest Hollanders around here, but he has four oxen for plowing, two milk cows, and two calves. He has a sow with a litter and twenty chickens together with some Dutch pigeons. He eats and drinks like the richest farmer in Goudriaan.* What do you think of that?"

Within a few weeks Teunis and Dirkje Vanden Hoek rented an apartment which included some land for farming. Describing his first residence in Illinois, Vanden Hoek wrote, "It has a room upstairs and a cellar with twenty rods of garden already spaded over. There is a cow barn made of straw and a board pig sty. It is a newly built wooden house located on two acres of cultivated land. A river [the Little Calumet] flows past the house with good water and lots of fish, and a good boat comes with the house. Another parcel of uncultivated land is located alongside the river. A number of oak trees have been cut down nearby, and we can use as much of them for fuel as we wish. The woods nearby are filled with wild apple trees and gooseberries. The two-acre plot alongside the house will be plowed

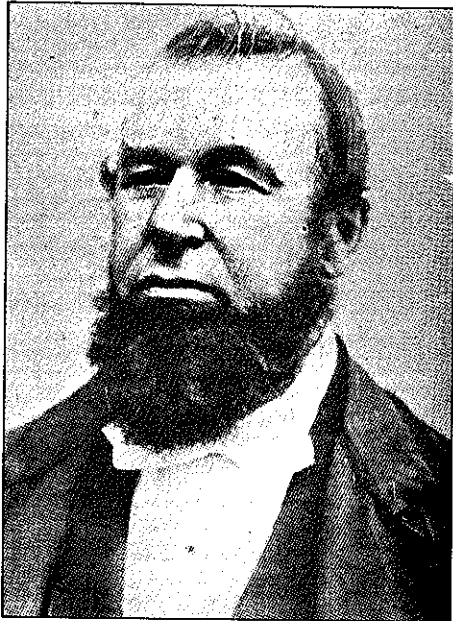
next week, and we have already rented another two-acre parcel for three dollars per acre. The total rent for the house is 23 dollars per year.

"We moved into our home on Friday, and I have a fine bedstead, a table, and a cookstove with an oven—so we have good bread and baked goods. I bought a table for \$4.50, and it is as good and large as our table in Noordeloos. Saturday H. Huisman gave us four hens and a rooster, and Willem Vander Aa gave us three hens. I bought six others and now we have fourteen chickens altogether. The mercies of the Lord are abundant each day and also the generosity of friends and acquaintances."

Concerning religious matters, Vanden Hoek noted that there was "much confusion" in 1866. The background to that observation concerned a division within the South Holland Dutch Reformed Church which had fragmented in 1862.** That year marked the arrival of Seine Bolks, who was unable to satisfy the expectations of a segment

*Goudriaan is located a short distance from Noordeloos in the province of South Holland. Jacob Vanden Hoek, Teunis's father, lived there, and in his first letter from South Holland (May 16, 1866), Teunis instructed his father to copy all of his forthcoming correspondence for distribution among their family and friends in the Netherlands. Subsequently, nearly a hundred of Teunis Vanden Hoek's letters were transcribed in a notebook. In 1903, when Teunis visited his relatives in Goudriaan, he took the letter book back to the United States. Then, in 1983, this book of letters was deposited in the Calvin College Archives by Mr. A. J. Bajema. Mr. E. R. Post has translated these letters and, after careful editing, the Calvin College Archives will seek the means to publish them in a book.

**It is possible to date the organization of the first Christian Reformed Church in South Holland from this event. But "house churches" were common both before and after the organization of this group.



within the congregation. These folk banded together to form an independent church. Rev. H. R. Koopman probably came to South Holland in 1866 with hopes of healing the 1862 breach because he had been a highly regarded pastor for many of the South Hollanders before they immigrated. And, in fact, after Koopman was installed, most of the dissidents did rejoin the Dutch Reformed Church, to remain with the congregation until Koopman left in 1868. At that time the church fractured a second time, and the minority group eventually acquired the service of Rev. Ede L. Meinders in 1874.

When Rev. H. Koopman was installed in 1866, T. Vanden Hoek reported, "The aged Rev. Hendrik G. Klijn installed Rev. Koopman

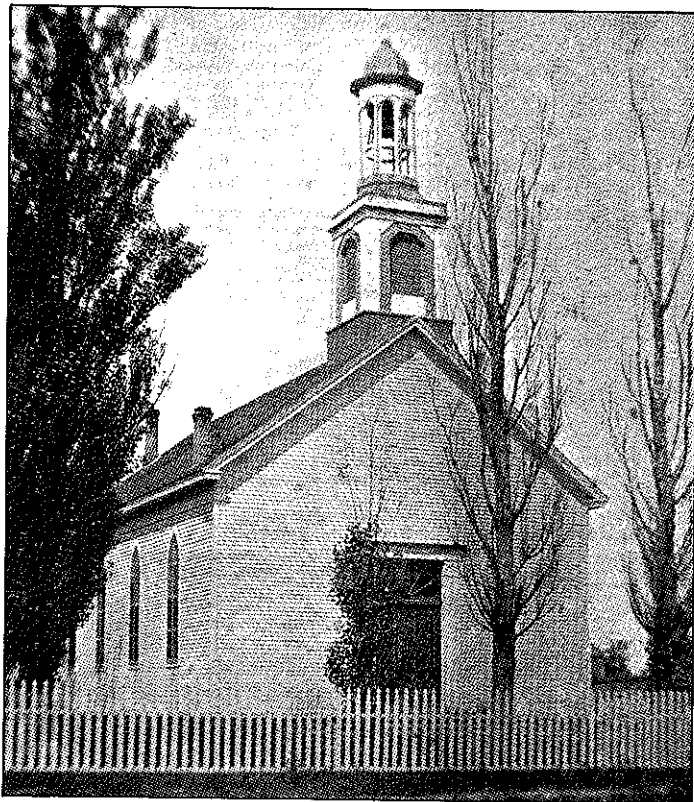
God would open the door to the Word so that the mysteries of Christ would be spoken." Teunis continued, "Our church is larger and more attractive than the church in Noordeloos, and the people welcomed Koopman with unusual joy. The people bring all sorts of gifts to him. He lives a half-hour's distance away from us. We are thankful that the Lord has brought us to this country, and we wish that all our friends were here too."

Despite his early enthusiasm for South Holland, Vanden Hoek did not remain there for very long. By August of 1866 he had already moved to Junction Station [Englewood]* where he managed a farm for a widow whom he identified simply as a "Frisian."** "I am treated like her own child," Vanden Hoek reported, "and she is very eager to have me stay with her this year.... This widow is a Christian who lives a very godly life.... I have earned \$40.00 from her during the past two months [July and August], and I will earn \$15.00 per month until November. During the winter months, November through February, I will earn \$36.00. She also promised that if I came to live here, my two cows would be pastured free of charge."

Describing his new home and surroundings, Vanden Hoek continued, "A German farmer

*The manuscript copy of this letter contains a note indicating that Junction Station was later Englewood.

**From subsequent letters, it becomes clear that this "Frisian Widow" was a Mrs. Meeter whose husband died in 1866. One of her sons, Joseph Meeter, later married Dirkje Vogel's younger sister. Additional data on the Meeter family comes from Ross Ettema, who writes, "This Frisian Widow could be Mrs. Jan Meeter (Cornelia Diemolte), Jan's second wife. His first wife was Maria Tien, the daughter of Harman Tien.... The Meeters lived first in Chicago, then in Pullman and finally in Lansing, near Ridge Road and Lange Street."

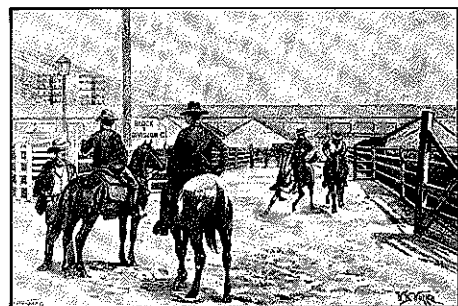
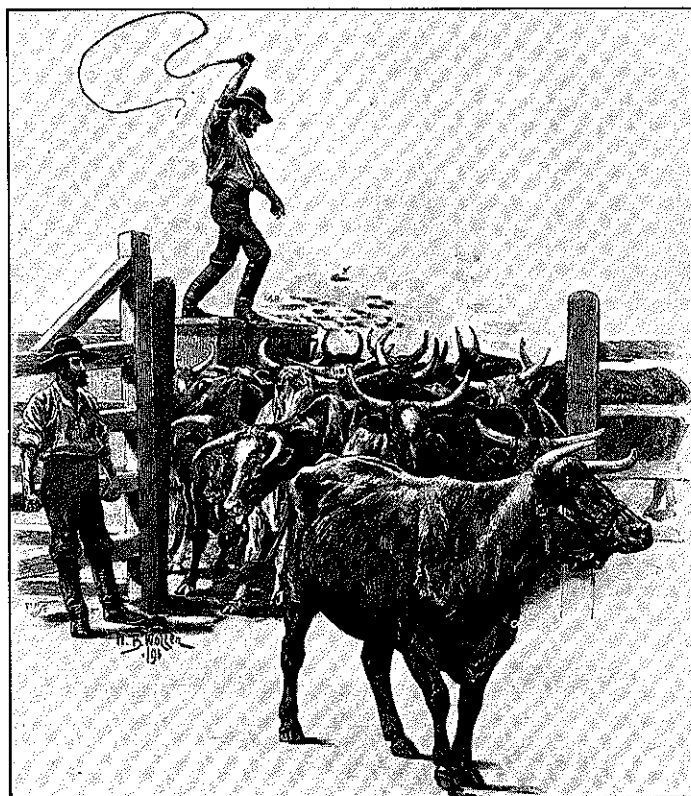


Rev. Hendrik R. Koopman (top left). "Our church is larger and more attractive than the church in Noordeloos" (bottom left).

yesterday morning. Koopman preached his inaugural sermon from Colossians 4:3, and he prayed that

The cattle market [the Union Stock Yards] is located outside of the city, and it took a whole year to build it with 400 men.

nearby has both a large and small house on his property, and he has given us the use of his small house without cost. For that Dirkje must milk his five cows twice each week on the days when the German and his wife take produce to the Chicago market. So now I have settled up with my former landlord [in South Holland], and we have moved here. I have bought three cows—two for thirty dollars and one for forty.... They are good milk producers. Here in America two cows only give as much milk as one in the Netherlands, but here there is



more cream in the milk. The cream is churned into butter which, at 12¢ per pound, is very expensive.

"I live near a railroad and every day 25 trains go past our house. I live three hours away from Chicago which is growing rapidly. Last year 1,100 homes were built in the city, and more will be built this year.

They hold markets every day there [in the Netherlands market days occurred once each week]. The cattle market [the Union Stock Yards] is located outside of the city, and it took a whole year to build it with 400 men. More than 100 trains arrive there every day, and some trains are a mile long. Every day between 1000 and 1200 farmers from the surrounding areas bring wagonloads of produce to the city market, and the harbor is filled with sea-going ships."

By 1867 Vanden Hoek reported that he had built a house in Englewood and that he was gradually acquiring more livestock. "I had a small house built with two rooms," he wrote. "It cost one hundred dollars.... In early November I added a good stable for the cows and room for my horse. That cost me \$16.00. I work full time for the Frisian widow, and I have four cows worth \$200—at present milk cows are very expensive. For next year I have rented six acres of farm land and 12 acres of hay for \$50. The land is located alongside my house, and the railroad which goes from Chicago to Pella, Iowa is as close to my house as the west dune at your place [Goudriaan] is from the Canal.

"It has been an exceptionally fine Fall. In many places there was drought, but we had plenty of rain and unusually mild weather. I did not put my cows and horse in the stable until November 29, and I did not put on my heavy underwear until November 28.

"I am now preparing wood for fuel and I bought some from the railroad—old wood from the tracks. I have also dug out some old oak stumps with nearly rotted roots. This is very good firewood for the stove, but digging the stumps is hard work. We also purchased a ton (2000 lbs.)

of coal for \$6.00.

"The land around the city is very expensive, selling for between one hundred and one thousand dollars per acre, but millions and millions of acres lie idle farther away, and that land is being sold for between one and twenty dollars per acre. I wish I could spend a month with you as I could then tell you all about America."

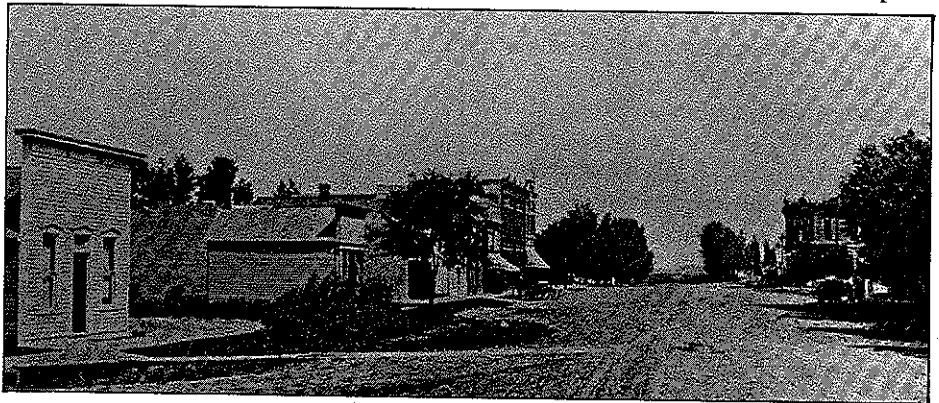
Although Vanden Hoek seemed well satisfied with his progress in Englewood, he left that area in 1869 to rent a farm from Willem Vander Aa in South Holland.* He leased that homestead until 1871 when he purchased it for three thousand dollars. Vanden Hoek's detailed description of his newly acquired house, outbuildings, livestock, and acreage provides a precise index to the circumstances under which he lived in the 1870s, and his description can also serve in a comparative capacity to approximate the settings of his neighbors.

"My lease ran out in May, 1871," Vanden Hoek explained, "and after Vander Aa sold ten acres of the farm to his brother-in-law, I bought the remaining thirty acres. It comes with a house, barn, and stalls for cows and horses. I am paying 6% interest on my debt, and that is the lowest rate paid here in America. The price of land goes up here year after year. In this region land sells for between fifty and one hundred dollars per acre. Land located three hours from Chicago [Englewood, for example], sells for five or six hundred dollars, and on the edge of Chicago it can cost between one and ten thousand dollars per acre. Expensive land such as that is divided into parcels for large houses, castles, and factories. We live seven hours away from the city, but even this area [South Holland] is becoming so thickly populated that it is difficult to rent or

purchase land. Many people are moving to uninhabited and uncultivated parts of the country.

"Since you are no doubt curious to hear about my house, barn, and the rest, I will give you a description. The farmhouse is 28 feet long and 16 feet wide—this is the living area. Attached to that is the kitchen or summer house which is 12 x 16 feet. In addition, we have an 8 x 10 cooking room because it is too hot in the summer to have a fire in the kitchen or living rooms. Most of the houses in the village are constructed of wood—a few are made of stone. My house is also built of wood, except for the chimney and fireplace. We also have a 17 x 14 foot cellar under the living quarters."

Vanden Hoek described the construction of his house in minute detail—the size of the wall studs and roof rafters; the plaster and lath interior walls and the number of windows and doors. He devoted equal attention to his description of the barn and other buildings.



Of his land Teunis wrote, "On the west side of the house we have a 40 x 40 foot garden. We have grapes, two pear trees, and ten apple trees—both sweet and sour. My cultivated land is square-shaped with a railroad running diagonally through the field, and the tracks are fenced on both sides. They take up two and a half acres. For this loss of land [right of

way] I have the right to stop the trains by raising a small red flag which gives me permission to board the train or place my goods on it. But I must pay the regular freight charges. There is a river which borders the east side of my land, and we have a ten-acre wood lot with pine, cedar, fir, and oak trees. I have ten acres in pasture and ten acres of land under cultivation."

Teunis and Dirkje remained on their South Holland farm until 1882, and though they lived well, they had difficulty reducing their debts. To his original \$3,000 mortgage in 1871, Vanden Hoek acquired another \$1,500 debt with the purchase of an additional fifteen acres. In 1878 he wrote that his debts still totalled \$3,775, and for that amount he only had 45 acres. It is no wonder then, that he was enticed to sell the South Holland farm and move to Orange City, Iowa where good land sold for \$25.00 per acre. Of that transaction Vanden Hoek reported, "I have sold my farm to Adam Ooms for \$110 per

"Iowa is known as the 'American grain bin' and Orange City is known as the 'American Garden.'"

*Local historian Ross Ettema has located the site of the Vander Aa/Vanden Hoek farm in an area known then as "Oer de Kriek" (i.e., over the Thorn Creek). More specifically the land is west of Torrence Ave. and north of Bernice Road south of the river—near the former Globe Rendering Company.

acre. Last March A. Van Driel and I traveled to Orange City in order to visit friends and examine the agricultural potentialities of that area. In the last few years, hundreds of families have moved there and they have already founded four Dutch villages....In short," he continued, "I have bought an 80-acre farm with a three-year-old house." "Iowa," he declared, "is known as the 'American grain bin' and Orange City is known as the 'Holland Garden.'" After describing every aspect of his new farmstead Teunis concluded, "It cost me a total of \$2000."

The Vanden Hoeks' migration did not end in Iowa, for two years later they resettled in Harrison, South Dakota. He left Iowa in 1884 and transferred his cattle, machinery, and household goods by train to South Dakota. Vanden Hoek's repeated migrations were aimed at acquiring sufficient land to keep his family at work and eventually to provide land for his children. Though the story of his life is not a rags-to-riches drama, Vanden Hoek did become an independent farmer, and that was a status he could hardly have achieved in his native village.

In many detailed letters which we will use in some future issue of *Origins*, Vanden Hoek described his adventures in Orange City 1882-1883 and in Harrison, South Dakota 1884-1895. Much of his writing also described the churches he attended and the religious character of the times and places he inhabited. Since little is known about the Christian Reformed Church's ordinary life during this era 1866-1895, we will also use Vanden Hoek's letters to flesh out a description of the church in Roseland, South Holland, and Iowa during the early years of its history. That, though, is a task for the future.

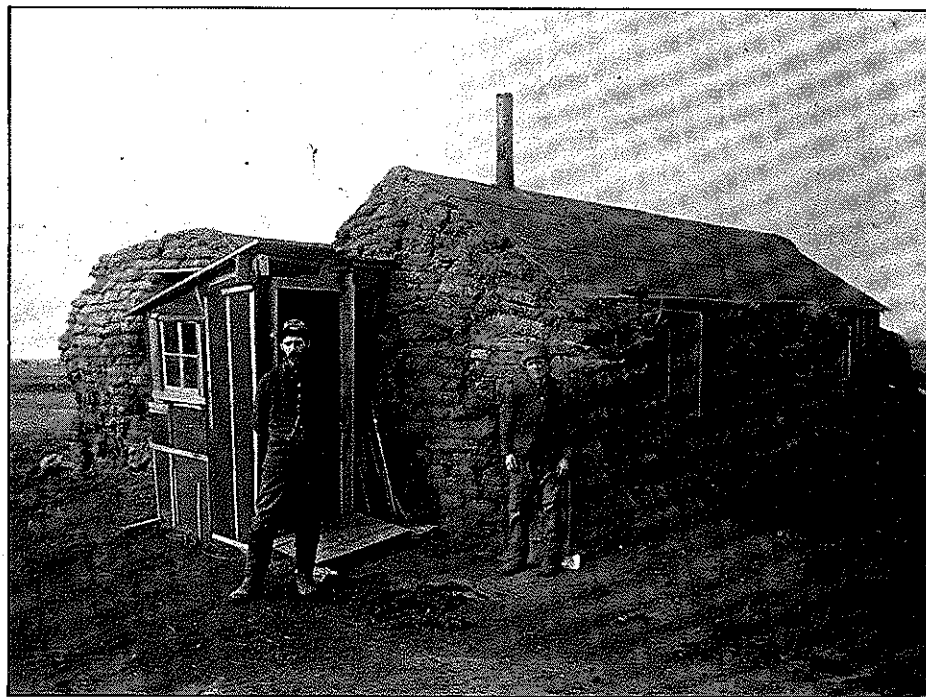
—H. J. B.

NEXT TIME AROUND:

Prospective Contents for Volume II, Number 2

Commemoration — "De Afscheiding" 1834-1984.

Henry Avink: Notes on California 1915-1943.



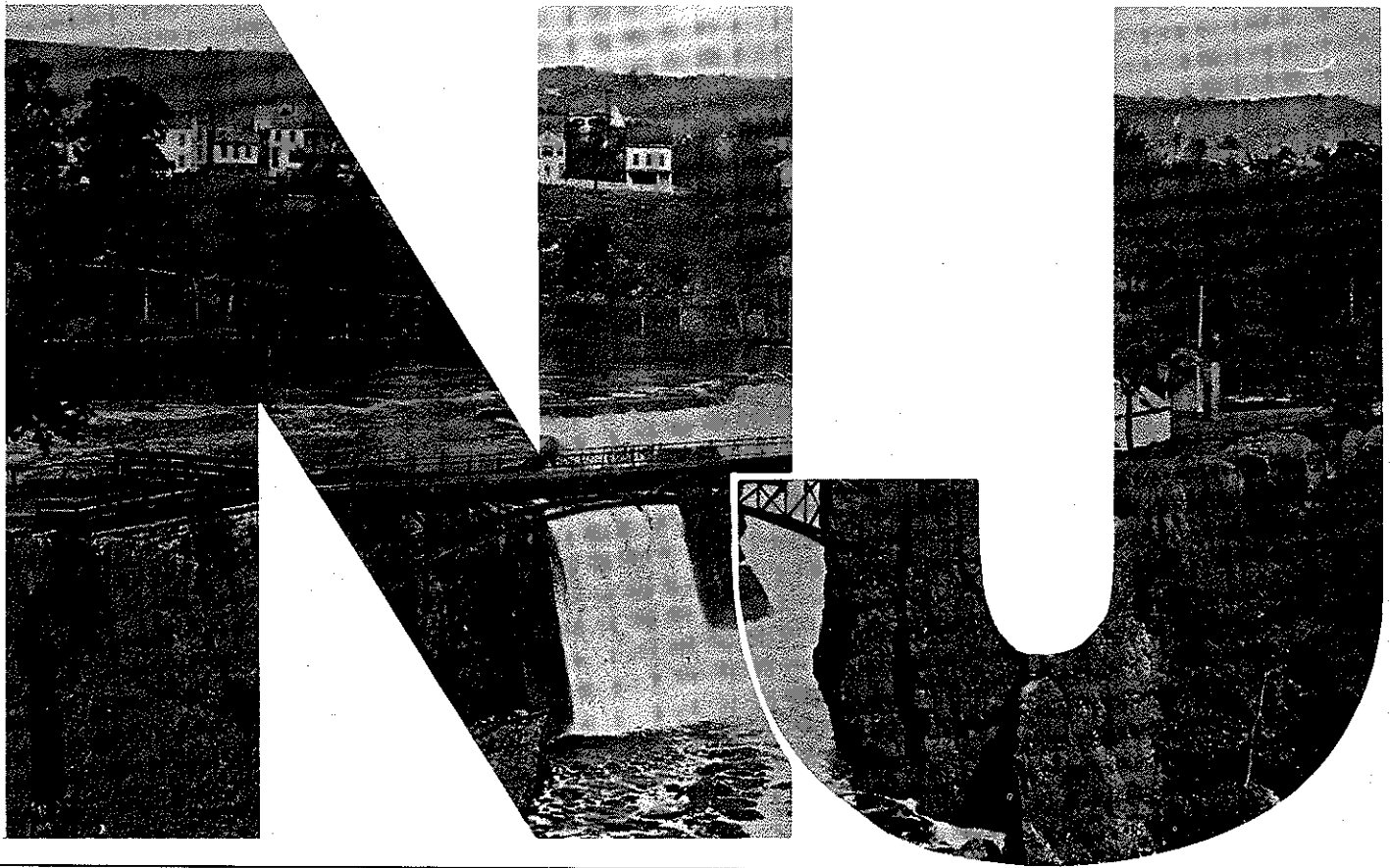
Journey to Despair: the story of James and Clara Douma in South Dakota and Saskatchewan.

Jacobus De Rooy in Wisconsin.

The burning of the "Phoenix": a sailing disaster on Lake Michigan.

The "West Enders": a Dutch neighborhood in Grand Rapids.

Pilgrim Fathers of the West: Experts from D. Versteeg's 1886 history of Dutch settlements in Michigan.



W

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE CRC IN NEW JERSEY 1855-1866

When Pastor Jacobus De Rooy (1812-1884) moved to Paterson, New Jersey in 1855 he encountered a growing community of Dutch-speaking immigrants. Already in 1853 the town of Wortendyke (known today as Midland Park), contained a readily identifiable Dutch neighborhood, and during the 1860s the regional Netherlandic population quadrupled as about one thousand newcomers settled in Passaic, Bergen, and Hudson counties. The primary attraction there was the employment provided by an expanding industrial sector and that feature became even more significant in the 1870s when the Wortendyke Manufacturing Company offered housing and jobs to attract prospective immigrants from the Netherlands.

Most immigrants, the Dutch included, debarked in New York, and

those with limited resources were forced to seek immediate employment. For Netherlanders the Paterson area was especially attractive because it offered employment among a Dutch-speaking populace. The "Jersey Dutch" which persisted among the descendants of New Jersey's colonial founders, enabled the immigrants of the 1850s to make themselves understood in some of the area's shops and stores. Then, too, several local pastors such as Jan Berdan could preach in Dutch. Thus, with work, Dutch-language



church services, and a recognizable Dutch dialect, New Jersey attracted a growing community of immigrants. And, as they prospered, the first immigrants encouraged their relatives and friends in the Netherlands to join them in the "Garden State." Between 1856 and 1869 the Dutch ethnic community grew so rapidly that its members organized five churches.¹

The Paterson church was the first of these immigrant congregations, and its organization stemmed primarily from the availability of its first pastor, Jacobus De Rooy. Until he arrived in 1855, the Paterson folk had been meeting informally in homes where they read sermons, sang psalms, and discussed the meaning of the catechism and Bible. Though poorly educated and barely literate, these folk were nonetheless certain of their religious beliefs, and

they were particularly committed to a predestinarian view of life. They asserted further that the Synod of Dordrecht 1618-19 had explained God's dealings with mankind in unquestionable clarity. No doubt, it was the intensity of their Dordracian Calvinism which led them to suspect the orthodoxy of nearly all American churches. Thus, until Jacobus De Rooy became their pastor, the Paterson Dutch remained independent of organized churches.

De Rooy's compatability with his followers was rooted in their intimate knowledge of each other, for both De Rooy and his parishioners had immigrated from the small South Holland island of Goeree-Overflakke. De Rooy had been a well-regarded lay leader throughout that region of the Netherlands, and his barber shop in Hellevoetsluis had been a gathering place for religious dissidents for two decades. It also seems clear that De Rooy had but slight interest in denominational connections, for although he was religiously quickened amid the revivals of the 1830s in Holland, he did not join the 1834 seceders (*afschieding*), and apparently he did not even sever his membership in the Netherlands Reformed Church.* Ignoring all

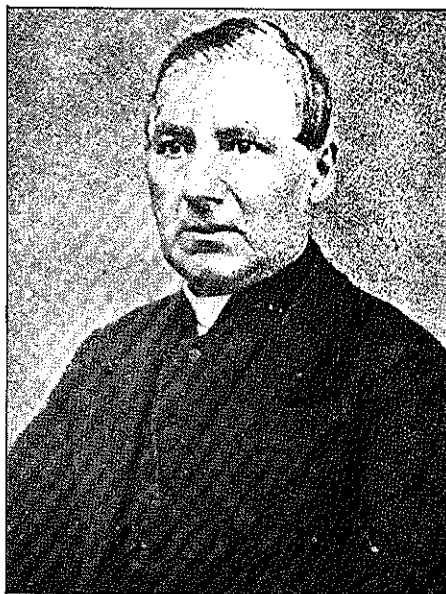
*De Rooy's ecclesiastical preference was with the Gereformeerde Kerk Onder Het Kruis. This group organized in 1844 as a splinter from the 1834 seceders. They emphasized particularly the idea that they were the orthodox remnant of the state church and thus they would not seek recognition as a separate denomination. Their name, Church Under the Cross, symbolized the persecution which they experienced because of their witness within the state church. In this respect they shared the views of L. G. C. Ledeboer, the founder of the Netherlands Reformed Church. The name, Church Under the Cross, stems from the era of the Eighty Years War (1568-1648), when Dutch Calvinists fled into exile during the Spanish Catholic persecution in the Netherlands. The persecuted exiles of that era called themselves The Church Under the Cross.

The following list of 21 founding members indicates that they all immigrated from the Goeree-Overflakke region. Furthermore, none of them were identified with the 1834 seceders (*Afgescheidenen*) of the Netherlands. Like their pastor, they had little interest in organized denominations and they were most at home among informal 'house' churches. They occupied the pious fringes of religious discontent and were more conservative than the 1834 seceders. In spiritual direction they were more like today's Netherlands Reformed Church than either the CRC or RCA.

Vermeulen, Simon	Nederlandsch Hervormd	Nieuwshier, Zeeland
Vermeulen, Izaak	Nederlandsch Hervormd	Schoondijke, Zeeland
De Vogel, Jacob	Nederlandsch Hervormd	Oudorp, Zuid Holland
Prol, Aart	Nederlandsch Hervormd	Hellevoet, Zuid Holland
Jongste, Cornelis	Gereformeerd	Hellevoet, Zuid Holland
Pijl, P.	Nederlandsch Hervormd	Oudorp, Zuid Holland
Breen, Aart	Nederlandsch Hervormd	Oudorp, Zuid Holland
De Ruiter, Johannes	Nederlandsch Hervormd	Oudorp, Zuid Holland
Kwik, Tamas	Nederlandsch Hervormd	Stellendam, Zuid Holland
Van Der Vliet, Maarten	Nederlandsch Hervormd	Oudorp, Zuid Holland
Van Der Vliet, Adrianus	Nederlandsch Hervormd	Oudorp, Zuid Holland
Witte, Jan	Nederlandsch Hervormd	Oudorp, Zuid Holland
Venneman, Leendert	Nederlandsch Hervormd	Oudorp, Zuid Holland
Pikaard, Johannes	Nederlandsch Hervormd	Oudorp, Zuid Holland
Westhoeve, Krijn	Nederlandsch Hervormd	Oudorp, Zuid Holland
Westhoeve, Bart	Nederlandsch Hervormd	Oudorp, Zuid Holland
Vermeulen, Abraham	Nederlandsch Hervormd	Nieuwshier, Zeeland
Sandford, Jacob	Nederlandsch Hervormd	Stellendam, Zuid Holland
Prol, Aart	Nederlandsch Hervormd	Goedereede, Zuid Holland
Witte, Cornelis	unknown	Oudorp, Zuid Holland
Prol, Pieter	Protestant	Goedereede, Zuid Holland

denominations, De Rooy preached and led devotional exercises for those who found too little spiritual vitality in the state-supported Netherlands Reformed Church. And he served those folk until he immigrated in 1851.

After arriving in the US, De Rooy



Rev. Jacobus De Rooy

accepted the invitation of several friends to conduct worship services in Cincinnati. It seems that the Cincinnati group adopted Baptist views, and when De Rooy disagreed with that development he left the congregation. Influenced by invitations from his friends in Paterson, De Rooy began to preach there in 1855. Since a majority of his followers had been his neighbors in Goeree-Overflakke, his reputation as the preaching "Hellevoets Barbier" was well established in Paterson. And his parishioners also knew that the self-trained De Rooy did not qualify for ordination in the Dutch Reformed Church (RCA) but they were determined that he should be their pastor.

On May 8, 1856, Paterson's eighty-five member congregation held an organizational meeting to acquire official status in the Dutch Reformed Church and they also requested that De Rooy be installed as their pastor. The Paramus Classis supported the organization of the



local church and approved the construction of a building. But De Rooy received only a provisional six month appointment. Shortly thereafter he declared that he would not affiliate with the Dutch Reformed Church and his loyal followers joined him to organize an independent congregation on December 17, 1856. With that, De Rooy's ministerial status was in limbo, and there is no record of his official installation. Nonetheless, he preached, administered the Lord's Supper, and baptized children—as many as thirty-eight in 1857. The congregation continued to seek a denominational affiliation, and after rejecting connections with the then newly organized Christian Reformed Church (CRC) of Michigan, De Rooy convinced his parishioners to join hands with a Netherlandic church group known as the *Church Under the Cross* (Gereformeerde Kerk Onder Het Kruis). This denomination had always permitted the ordination of lay leaders, and, for

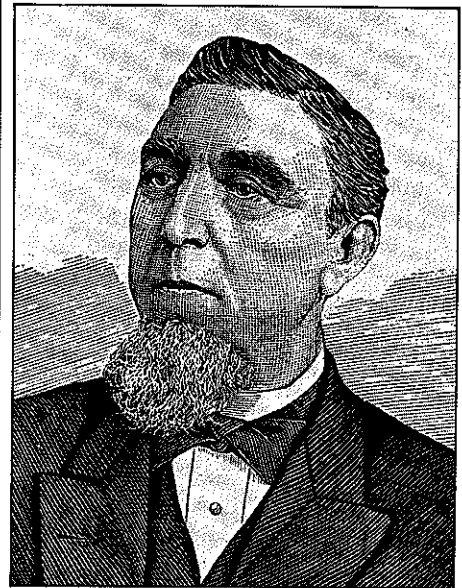
De Rooy, that feature was most attractive.²

De Rooy's success in Paterson was nearly instantaneous. In January 1857 one parishioner reported, "De Rooy is so well liked and he attracts so many people that he is now permanently appointed according to the requirements of the church order of Dordrecht."³ Another of De Rooy's flock, who had moved to Paterson from Michigan, wrote to his friends in the Midwest, "I have attended De Rooy's church for three Sundays and this minister preaches orthodox truths.... The people of his church are poor in spirit and they fear God. Thus, I attend church twice each Sunday because I don't dare to stay home." The orthodoxy which so pleased these folk emphasized God's absolutely free elective grace together with mankind's total dependence on God's will and election. While explaining his adherence to these doctrines in 1857, De Rooy wrote, "Since there is not one group in America with whom I can unite without doing injustice to the honor of God and my own conscience, I will stand alone.... Jesus and his blood are the only means of salvation, and the doctrines of Dordt 1618-19 contain the only true explanation of the free grace which becomes the portion of the elect."

In a subsequent letter De Rooy described the character of his sermonizing and his sense of inadequacy. "Sundays are my hardest days," he wrote, "my body and soul are being worn down by preaching, by the summer heat and indigestion. I am often exhausted from fear and doubt before entering the pulpit because I am unfortunate and wretched, without education or Knowledge.... When I enter the pulpit I begin to tremble and I wait for the words which the Lord gives

me to preach. Then, when all the eyes of the people are upon me, I feel the enlightening power of God's spirit and before I know it, the people are in tears—but not from words that flatter them."³

The emotional zeal with which he preached probably explains De Rooy's popularity, and, thus, in 1862, when he requested a leave of absence to visit his aged mother in Hellevoetsluis, the Paterson congregation granted the leave with the full expectation that De Rooy would return after a reasonable period of absence. But, some time



Rev. Arend Bechthold

after arriving in the Netherlands, De Rooy accepted a call from a church in Woerden. Both the Woerden and Paterson congregations were affiliated with the Church Under the Cross and, since De Rooy had never been officially ordained, he probably took the Woerden assignment to gain his

²This refers, no doubt, to the Dordracian church rules (Article 8), which provide for the ordination of extraordinary lay leaders, but in this case the elders probably conducted the ordination ceremony.

ministerial credentials, and that would also have legitimized his status in Paterson after his return to New Jersey. But De Rooy remained in Woerden until 1865 and since his absence far exceeded all reasonable expectations, his New Jersey church acquired a new pastor.*

Paterson's second pastor, A. H. Bechthold, came from Boston in 1864. He was a native of Amsterdam who had become well acquainted with Paterson's deacon, Abraham Vermeulen. The deacon, in turn, introduced Bechthold to De Rooy and the two pastors carried on a regular correspondence between 1860 and 1865. These letters reveal a growing and intimate friendship, but also a mutual concern for the spiritual welfare of America's Dutch immigrants. Doubtless, then, Paterson learned of Bechthold's availability through A. Vermeulen and J. De Rooy.

Long before his arrival in New Jersey Bechthold had declared his unyielding opposition to the congregation's affiliation with the Church Under the Cross. He wrote to De Rooy in 1864, "I will not work in a denomination that is headquartered in the Netherlands, and certainly not in the so-called 'Cross Church.' I belong to the Hervormde Kerk which is known in America as the Dutch Reformed Church (RCA), and I take no pleasure in the thought of leaving that church.... I will not join any church which is not based in America."

To accommodate their new pastor, the Paterson congregation agreed to

*It is probable that De Rooy feared sailing to the US during these years because of the naval blockades which were erected during the Civil War, 1861-1865. Still, he does not seem to have expressed any intention of returning to Paterson while corresponding with his successor, A. H. Bechthold, between 1862-1865.

sever its connections with the Church Under the Cross, and after corresponding with the Christian Reformed Church in Michigan, both the Paterson congregation and its new pastor joined that denomination in 1865. Of these events Bechthold reported, "I left Boston on April 4, 1865 and preached my first sermon here on my birthday. Meanwhile the congregation had joined the Christian seceder denomination



The first building of the Paterson CRC.

(CRC) in the West and although I did not entirely agree with that decision because of the great distance [between New Jersey and Michigan], I could do nothing about it. The people here are so completely opposed to all other denominations that all my efforts to change their decision were fruitless.

"Rev. Douwe Vander Werp, who recently came from the Netherlands, and Elder J. De Jonge were appointed as a committee to organize the congregation and install me as its pastor. Thus, on Sunday morning, the fourteenth of May, brother Vander Werp installed me. In the afternoon I united with the congregation by preaching on I Cor. 2:2."

Bechthold's "uniting" with the Paterson church was a short-lived union, and his resignation after fourteen months resulted from a growing estrangement born of

differing ecclesiastical and doctrinal views, together with conflicting ideas about Christian conduct. By 1866 Bechthold's early suspicion of the CRC developed into deep and public antagonism, and he alienated his local congregation by fostering the "American" Sunday School. He complained to De Rooy that the people were not only ignorant but unwilling to be instructed.

By August of 1865 Bechthold had already begun to realize that his ministry in Paterson faced insurmountable barriers. To De Rooy he wrote, "Now that I have become better acquainted with the congregation, I have discovered a spirit which is very strange to me.... It seems that they believe that the more they doubt their eternal destination, the better Christians they are.... They make a great emphasis here on their total powerlessness before God. The people will not listen to instruction about their Christian duties but talk rather of the complete power of providence in all things."⁴

Eleven months later Bechthold resigned. He left the CRC and organized an independent group which survived until he returned to Boston in 1867. The Paterson congregation staggered through the turmoil and acquired a new pastor from Grand Rapids in September of 1866. Paterson's new minister, W. H. Van Leeuwen, had immigrated into the CRC from the Church Under the Cross in 1863, and he had served the Grand Rapids congregation for about two years before coming to New Jersey. Thus, the Paterson church steadfastly retained its affiliation with the distant denomination in Michigan.⁵

Amid all the difficulties of 1866, Paterson's first pastor came back from the Netherlands. De Rooy could hardly have expected to regain his pulpit because he knew that Bech-

TO THE VOORZINGER

thold occupied that position. These two pastors had corresponded regularly during De Rooy's four-year absence and De Rooy was informed of Paterson's affiliation with the CRC—a connection which he had already rejected in 1861. The correspondence suggests that De Rooy returned in order to settle legal complications in Paterson. Apparently this first pastor had a claim on the church property, and although he had been instructed to invest deacon A. Vermeulen with legal authority to settle the account, De Rooy would not comply.⁶ Instead he sailed back to the states and, after a brief stay in New Jersey, he traveled on to Milwaukee, Wisconsin. From there, he became an itinerant pastor among Wisconsin's Dutch immigrants where his popularity soared much as it had during his first years in Paterson. —H. J. B.

¹Gerald F. De Jong, "Dutch Immigrants in New Jersey before World War I," *New Jersey History*, 1976, vol. 94, pp. 69-88.

²M. Borduin, "Ds. Jacobus De Rooy," *Gereformeerde Amerikaan*, 1901, vol. V, pp. 194-202; *Seventy-Fifth Anniversary: First Christian Reformed Church, Paterson, New Jersey* (privately printed booklet).

³Correspondence in *Paulus Den Bleyker Papers*, J. W. Jongste to Den Bleyker, Sept. 1, 1859; J. De Rooy to Den Bleyker, Dec. 21, 1857 and May 24, 1859; Den Bleyker to Den Bleyker, 1855, in the *Archives of the Calvin College Library*.

⁴Correspondence in *Jacobus De Rooy Papers*, A. H. Bechthold to Jacobus De Rooy, 26 letters from 1860-65.

⁵Minutes of the synod of the CRC, September 5-6, 1866 in the *Archives of the Calvin College Library*.

⁶*Jacobus De Rooy Papers*, A. H. Bechthold to De Rooy, 1865.

To the Frisians, you were known as foarsjonger,
It was the Dutch who called you voorzinger.
The English would designate you, song leader,
But you were more than that in leading congregational singing!

In my mind I can still see you on Sunday afternoons,
Walking alone down the right aisle of Northside church.
Your wife was waiting for you in pew #21,
Since you had tarried outside to talk with the men.

As you walk, you swing your arms,
Causing me to notice large gnarled hands.
You were bowlegged and your shoulders were rounded
From years of heavy work as a local ice and coal man.

You smiled at old friends and young acquaintances,
Nodding your head left and right as you moved forward.
Showing the same smile you gave to boys during the week
Who came for 10¢, 15¢ or 25¢ worth of ice.

I don't believe you were ever an elder or deacon,
Your brother served the church in those capacities.
But you served God and the church with your voice,
As you naturally led the singing with or without the organ.

You had a healing confidence in your ability to sing,
With perfect pitch you knew where to begin.
Seemingly always a half note ahead,
To make it easier for less gifted singers to follow.

Your bass voice was deep and clear,
But you could easily reach the baritone range too.
You held the psalmbook high, reading with wire rimmed glasses,
Though you seemed to know most psalms from memory.

I noticed that the great familiar psalms of David
Called forth your best efforts as well as that of others—
"Hijgend hert der jagt ontkomen" (42:1),
(As the hart about to falter).

Singing the psalms was a way of triumphing over opposition,
Transcending disappointment, failure and sorrow, as in
"God heb ik lief want die getrouwe HEER" (116:1),
(I love the Lord who is faithful and true).

I noticed all this from pew #25,
Seated between grandparents your contemporaries.
I am sure that you would think it very strange,
That a man of 63 remembers you since he was only 8!

The voorzinger—one of God's faithful witnesses!

—Dr. William L. Hiemstra

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



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

At the time of the first Federal enumeration of the new city of Grand Rapids in June 1850, there were fifty-three Dutch households residing within the corporate boundaries. They arrived in the United States during the preceding three years and migrated to Grand Rapids by way of the *Holland Kolonie*. Attracted by the promises of employment and the hope of community with fellow countrymen, streams of Hollanders entered the city, many of whom approached F. Van Driele, cofounder of the Dutch-speaking Second Reformed Church, with letters of membership or desires to make profession of faith. These individuals constituted the initial core of the Grand Rapids Dutch population and successfully persuaded their fellow countrymen to leave the farm for the workshop.

The earliest Dutch inhabitants of Grand Rapids did not share common provincial origins, as one would expect of a new immigrant settlement. Instead, seven provinces were represented, with Zuid Hollanders and Zeelanders most numerous. Furthermore, few Dutchmen emigrated from common *gemeenten*,* though Zeelanders came primarily from municipalities in the central and northern regions of the province. Despite their minority status in the city, the first Netherlands did not cluster together. They resided throughout the young city, inhabiting the vicinity of the Grand River, manufacturing districts, and the rural farmlands. Therefore, Grand Rapids did not possess a "Dutch ghetto" or even a Dutch neighborhood at the time of the 1850 headcount. Rather, the immigrants relied upon their commonly-held "Dutchness" as a bond of community. Van Driele also noted that a common Christian faith, a "deep inner piety," and a familiarity with Reformed theology united the immigrant population. "We were all of one heart and one mind," claimed Van Driele. "We recognized each other as truly being of the faithful." Thus, the Dutch established a foundation of religious beliefs and a cultural identity which drew fellow countrymen to Grand Rapids and helped them to organize their neighborhoods. Before long the unity which Van Driele proclaimed began to fracture because the new influxes of Netherlands did not cluster in a single segment of the city. Instead they formed several enclaves with characteristics drawn from their old-world backgrounds. These subgroupings can be identified by their specific geographic origins in the Netherlands and also by their religious and educational preferences. For example, the *Wealthy-Franklin Street* enclave exhibited an essentially Groninger population

*a municipal region something like a township.

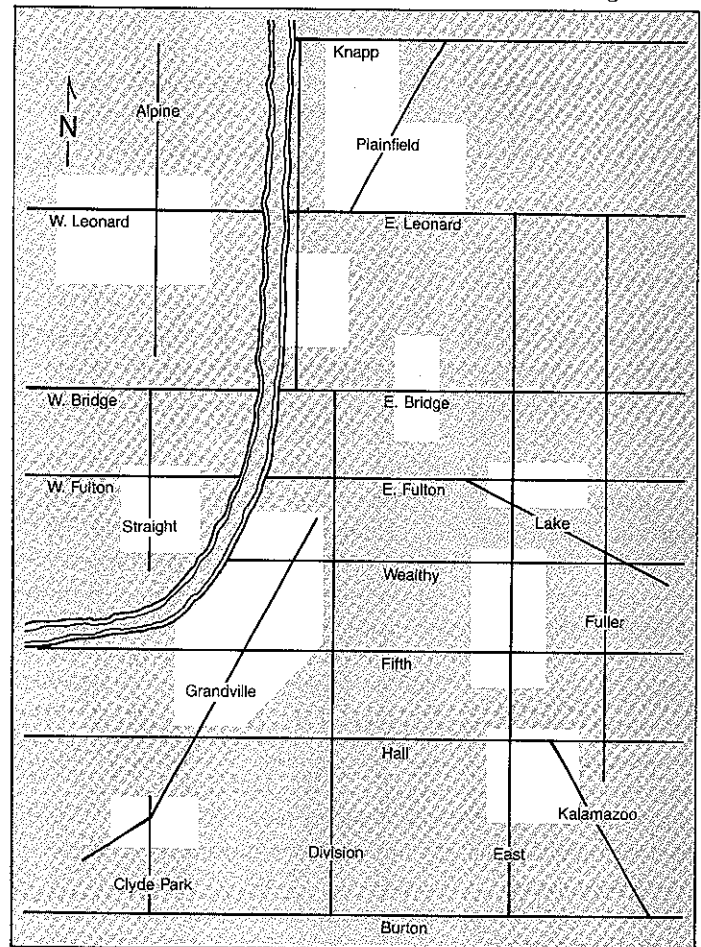
with both the Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church and Christian School as the institutions which drew and retained the loyalty of the neighborhood's populace. In this manner, the immigrants restored those affiliations and relationships with which they were most comfortable and through which they would be able to maintain their community as they adjusted to the new life in an American city.

Twelve distinct clusters of Dutch immigrants can be defined in Grand Rapids for the last half of the nineteenth century. Each concentration possessed unique characteristics which distinguished it from the other urban enclaves.

The *Fulton-Grandville* area embraced the initial settlement of immigrants. Located in the vicinity of assorted mills, river-oriented trades, and the central business district, this neighborhood eventually became the home for several Dutch grocers, a *klompenmaker*, and the first Christian Reformed congregation in the city. Over the decades, the Dutch presence became much more obvious here as the population increased from nearly one-third of the total household population to roughly 46 percent in 1900. The provincial origins of these Dutchmen fluctuated for fifty years, reflecting the changing emigration from the Netherlands. Zeelanders, primarily from the *gemeenten* of Oud Vossemeer, Sint Philipsland, Dreischor, Zieriksee, Goes, and Kloetinge were most prevalent and constituted nearly one-third of the population through 1880. Groningers from the municipalities of Grijpskerk, Middelstum, Winschoten, Groningen, and Usquert grew in number to comprise one-third of the neighborhood's Dutch households by 1900. Gelderland represented roughly one-fourth of the 1900 population. Blue-collar laborers formed the core of the neighborhood's work force. The jobs secured by the Dutch in later years, however, represented the changing urban demand for labor skills and the continued assimilation of the Dutch into the occupational structure of the city. After 1860 there was a steady growth in Dutch skilled labor, particularly in the furniture industry. During the same period, an increasing number of Dutchmen secured white-collar or proprietary positions, which could be attributed to the rapid development of the neighborhood and the city around it.

The *Grandville-Clyde Park* neighborhood was a densely populated settlement which arose immediately south of the *Fulton-Grandville* enclave during the 1890s. Of the nearly 600 households residing here at the turn of the century, the Dutch constituted over three-fourths of the population, far surpassing the 8 percent of German birth and 6 percent of American-born parents. This

neighborhood possessed two distinct characteristics. First, it was a distinctly Groninger enclave with 64 percent of the households originating in that province; only 15 percent came from Zeeland. Second, nearly 80 percent of the residents emigrated after 1880 with 46 percent arriving between the years of 1888 and 1900, thereby corresponding with the increased Groninger



Grand River Dutch Neighborhoods of Grand Rapids, circa 1900

migration of the latter decades. Among the resident households of 1900, only one had relocated from another neighborhood in the city, indicating that this settlement consisted predominantly of new immigrant families. Most of the Dutch workers here found employment in skilled jobs within the furniture and wood-related industries, although 13 percent of the Dutch occupied the position of proprietor, clerk, or salesman.

The *West Fulton-Straight* settlement consisted of a small, scattered Dutch population possessing common provincial and *gemeente* origins. Emigrants from the eastern province of Overijssel and its municipality of

Staphorst represented the dominant provincial group until Zeelanders emerged as the primary group of 1900. Immigrant laborers adapted their skills and experiences from the homeland to the new demands of American industry by finding menial jobs and factory positions, though they did not advance into proprietary positions to the degree of fellow Netherlands. In essence, this neighborhood was an anomaly because of the large contingent of Overijsselaars and their failure to establish a strong local identity. Clearly, this neighborhood was seriously underdeveloped and lacking in the essential immigrant institutions, thereby hindering its growth in later years.

The *West Leonard-Alpine* neighborhood was another rapidly growing settlement. In 1880 seventy-three Dutch households resided along West Leonard and Crosby streets. Twenty years later, the district along West Leonard and Alpine was the home for over one thousand Dutch households, comprising nearly 85 percent of the total household population of that precinct. Zeelanders from the *gemeenten* of Zonnemaire, Sint Philipsland, and Zieriksee were predominant among them. Frisians originating in the municipalities of Ferwerderadeel and Barradeel were the second largest group in the area. By 1900 this northwest neighborhood covered the largest amount of territory and included a greater concentration of immigrants and their children than any other Dutch neighborhood. General manual labor was the most common employment of the Dutch. However, as the furniture industry grew, more of the Dutch workers became involved in the skilled trades of carver, finisher, and turner. Furthermore, by 1900, over one hundred miscellaneous proprietors resided here, thereby indicating a flourishing immigrant community in the northwest sector of the city.

The *Canal-North Division* concentration was located in the heart of the emerging industrial district along the Grand River. Residing in the vicinity of Coldbrook Street, Zeelanders were the primary provincial group, comprising one-half to two-thirds of the inhabitants between 1860 and 1880. With the decline in the Zeeland emigration after 1880, Frisians and Groningers became more numerous. During their early years of residence in the city, the Dutch were able to secure unskilled jobs, performing menial tasks or assisting craftsmen in various capacities. The increase in skilled employment followed the emergence of modern factories and the growth of the furniture industry. Likewise, a growing segment of the populace became involved in clerical, sales, and proprietary services in response to the needs of the local residents and the industrial-business sector. Despite the

extensive employment offered by the local factories, the expanding industrial district disrupted this neighborhood and caused many families to seek housing in newer sections of the northeast side, thereby diminishing the sense of neighborhood stability and unity.

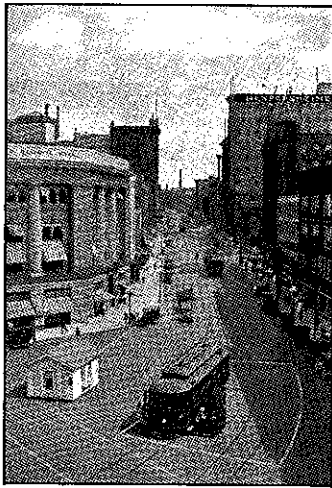
The *North College-East Bridge* neighborhood was a small settlement of Zeelanders, Groningers, and Gelderlandaars. Among the population cluster of 1900, three-fourths had emigrated prior to 1879 while only 20 percent did so between 1847 and 1859. Consequently, this neighborhood consisted of an older Dutch population and was not the site in which recent immigrants tended to settle. The greatest proportion of the local workers were employed in skilled crafts or assorted semiskilled jobs. However, a growing segment became involved in proprietary, clerical, and sales occupations, thereby comprising the largest proportion of nonmanual workers among the Dutch neighborhoods in 1900. Furthermore, this neighborhood and its fringe areas included the homes of numerous successful Dutch-American families, such as the Steketees, Hodenpijls, Idemas, Doskers, among others. These Dutchmen also exhibited the highest rate of home ownership (58 percent) among all neighborhoods in 1900.

The vicinity of *Plainfield-East Leonard* became the home for over three hundred Dutch households by the 1900 census. Zeelanders, representing the *gemeenten* of Dreischor and Zieriksee, contributed at least two-thirds of the area's Dutch population. Zuid Hollanders from Goedereede, Oudorp, and Zuid Beijerland comprised one-fourth of the population in 1880. The neighborhood was indicative of a settlement of new immigrants since 87 percent of the 1880 population arrived during the preceding decade and two-thirds of the 1900 enclave emigrated after 1880. The initial cluster of families included a large number of blue-collar workers who gradually moved into skilled positions. In addition, rapid population growth stimulated the opening of stores, markets, saloons, and professional offices to provide goods, services, and employment for the local residents.

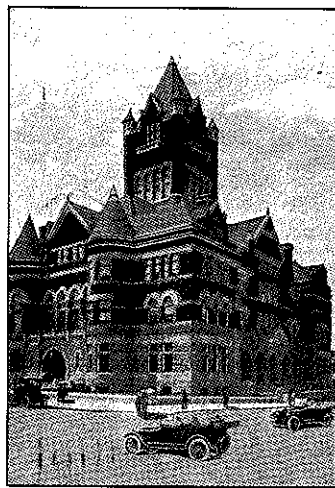
The *Knapp-Wartrous* neighborhood arose north of the Plainfield-East Leonard concentration along the city limits of Knapp Street. The forty-one Dutch households that resided here in 1900 emigrated from Zeeland, Friesland, and Zuid Holland during the late 1880s and early 1890s. These immigrants were day laborers who secured similar kinds of unskilled employment in the city and comprised the only all blue-collar Dutch neighborhood in the city. Despite their low skill level, over one-half of the households owned their homes in 1900, which was second only to the more successful

residents of the North College area. This could be attributed to the cheaper prices of workers' cottages at the city's periphery, savings brought by the immigrants from the homeland, or simply their ability to scrimp and save from their wages which averaged \$1.25 per day.

At the time of the 1880 census, nearly three-fourths of the southeast side Dutch households resided in the *South Division-Lafayette* neighborhood. The majority of the residents of this district emigrated from Zeeland, though Groningers and Overijsselaars gained a wider representation by the end of the century. The year of emigration also affected the character of the settlement. During the latter decades of the century, most of the households residing here emigrated in the period surrounding the peak years of 1865 to 1869. Even at the census of 1900, over one-half of the Dutch had emigrated between 1860 and 1879 with only a slight proportion (19 percent) leaving the homeland in the most recent decades. Thus, the neighborhood included one of the older, more established, and residentially stable populations of the city. The predominance of unskilled labor among the immigrants did not hinder their



Campau Square



Court House Grand Rapids, 1909

movement into better occupations as increasing numbers of Dutch laborers found work in skilled crafts and nonmanual positions.

The *Wealthy-East Fifth (Franklin)* neighborhood emerged as increasing numbers of new Dutch immigrants arrived in the city during the latter years of the century. Groningers comprised nearly 85 percent of the 1880 settlement and 53 percent of the 1900 concentration, thereby lending the title of the "Groninger buurt" to the vicinity. Those households settling in this part of the city were fairly recent immigrants; two-thirds of the 1900 neighborhood emigrated after 1880. As in other areas,

the Dutch workers generally possessed unskilled labor backgrounds from the Netherlands and found comparable work in the city. However, a growing number left menial labor to work as skilled craftsmen, machine operators, and petty proprietors. A central point of reference for the neighborhood was the East Street Christian Reformed Church, founded in 1879, which reflected the particular Reformed doctrines and cultural perspectives of the immigrant constituents. For the 1880 and 1900 censuses, at least one-half of the neighborhood's households could be linked with the *Afgeschieden* [Secession] in the Netherlands, thereby comprising the largest concentration of such Dutch Reformed believers in the city.

The *East Fulton-Lake Avenue* area was commonly known as "the brick-yard," due to the presence of numerous brick and tile manufacturers. The Dutch residing nearby were primarily concentrated within the boundaries of Fountain, Orchard, Hermitage, and Dennis streets and the Fulton Cemetery to the west. This cluster of Netherlands constituted nearly three-fourths of the household population and all but 10 percent of the foreign-born households. The neighborhood possessed an overwhelmingly *Zeelandsche* character with emigrants originating in *Ouwerkerk* and *Dreischor*, although seven other provinces were also represented. At the time of the 1900 enumeration, over 60 percent of the resident Dutch households had emigrated during the preceding twenty years, compared with only 7 percent from the initial phase (1845-1857) of the migration. White blue-collar laborers were predominant, petty proprietors comprised a significant segment of the local labor force. As a further means of neighborhood identification, there were three Dutch Reformed churches in the vicinity.

The *Oakdale Park* settlement arose at the southeastern corner of the city in a section of Paris Township, which was annexed in 1891. Over one hundred Dutch immigrant households concentrated in an area between Alexander and Oakdale, East and Kalamazoo streets. They were primarily from the province of Groningen, though families from Overijssel, Drenthe, and Zeeland were also present. At least three-fourths of the households emigrated during the last period of migration (1880-1900) with 63 percent of them arriving in the United States between 1885 and 1894. The Dutch quickly secured a variety of occupations. By 1900 one-fifth of them worked in coal and lumber yards or other menial jobs; nearly one-half held skilled jobs, two-thirds of which were furniture related; and one-third were proprietors who served the local residents in assorted enterprises.

Characteristics of the Immigrant Neighborhoods

Even though each neighborhood could easily be characterized as a "little Holland," it would be more accurate to identify each residential cluster as a "little Zeeland," "little Groningen," or "little Friesland," thereby affirming the provinciality of the particular settlements. The names of towns established within the West Michigan *Kolonie* suggested the exclusive and intentional clustering of provincial and *gemeente* populations. As these Netherlands moved into the growing urban center of Grand Rapids, they carried their local-provincial identities with them.

The city's Dutch population could be traced primarily to two provinces. Zeelanders constituted nearly 40 percent of all Dutch households in the city between 1850 and 1900. For each census period, they were the predominant group in most of the city's Dutch areas. Zeelanders tended to emigrate from Dreischor, Oud Vossemeer, Goes, Zieriksee, Oosterland, and Sint Philipsland. Groningers who increased their representation from 10 percent in 1850 to 25 percent by 1900 originated mainly in the *gemeenten* of Grijpskerk, Ulrum, and Groningen. The sudden appearance of the Groninger population in Grand Rapids coincided with their increased emigration from the homeland between 1880 and 1900 and culminated in the formation of such outlying neighborhoods as Clyde Park, Oakdale Park, and the Wealthy-East Street communities. Finally, while the Dutch demonstrated a tendency for emigrating by their home *gemeenten*, their settlement patterns in Grand Rapids did not indicate an attempt or the ability to recreate their home villages along the streets of the city.

The periods of Dutch migration also affected the location of Dutch settlements in Grand Rapids. Immigrants from the earlier migrations tended to reside in and remain a part of the older central city neighborhoods of Fulton-Grandville, Division-Lafayette, and North College. On the contrary, more recent immigrants settled toward the outlying areas and participated in the development of those newly annexed regions. Not only was it convenient to seek new housing in the developing wards rather than in the crowded central city, but it also became a cultural necessity for many immigrants. Some new Dutch residents were hesitant to settle with their fellow countrymen of earlier migrations since they perceived a potential threat to their traditions and values by the Americanized Dutch population. Finally the residential behavior of the Dutch in Grand Rapids was contrary to the typical historical assumptions that immigrants resided within the central city and gradually moved to the suburbs, thereby leaving

their former residences to be occupied by incoming lower-class countrymen. By their relatively sedentary behavior in Grand Rapids, the Dutch demonstrated the importance of their neighborhood relationships.

The Dutch entered the city with predominantly unskilled labor backgrounds (day labor, general labor, farm labor) from the Netherlands. Manual labor prevailed in all neighborhoods during the nineteenth century but the degree of skilled, unskilled, and white-collar employment fluctuated constantly. In 1850 nearly two-thirds of the Dutch laborers held unskilled menial jobs; by 1900 the proportion had dropped to only one-fourth. In contrast, skilled labor increased from 30 percent in 1850 to 41 percent by 1900 and white-collar employment rose from 4 percent to 22 percent. While the North College and Division-Lafayette settlements were the sites of the largest concentrations of Dutch white-collar workers, each settlement possessed great occupational diversity, thereby demonstrating the ability to reside together despite one's occupational or economic status.

Neighborhoods were clearly important in the lives of the immigrants. For those households that remained through subsequent censuses ("persisters"), roughly two-thirds of them remained in the same sector of the city, while nearly one-fourth of the households moved across town. Despite the overall appearance of stability, many of the immigrant families changed residential locations during their stay in Grand Rapids, though a majority of such moves occurred *within* the same sector of the city. This meant that families sought new housing in the immediate vicinity in order to accommodate changes in the family status or to consolidate the Dutch enclave on the basis of common provincial, municipal, or denominational affiliations.

Scholars of years past have argued that immigrants settled in urban areas on the basis of their economic aspirations as well as the convenience of local employment opportunities. While the Dutch were initially attracted to Grand Rapids for economic reasons, they exhibited a "congregational instinct" in their residential patterns, relying on the bonds of provincial or municipal origins, year of emigration and settlement in the community, and, in many cases, denominational affiliations. The neighborhoods and communities best reflected their constituents' desired position in American society—whether to participate in the total life of the city and its people or to remain somewhat separate and isolated in order to preserve the old and familiar ways. Despite the increased industrialization of Grand Rapids, Dutch neighborhoods did not disintegrate but became

more pronounced and more densely populated.

In 1847 Dominie Van Raalte called for his followers to "live together" for in their unity they could experience strength. Over the last half of the nineteenth century, the Dutch made great strides in Grand Rapids—growing to comprise nearly one-third of the population, becoming a major part of the skilled labor force in the local furniture industry, and creating a diverse network of cultural and religious institutions. Nevertheless, it was the assurance that the Dutch could reside together and experience fellowship among familiar people and institutions that inspired them to come and live in

Grand Rapids. By seeking out their fellow Netherlands, establishing their neighborhoods, and maintaining distinct communities in the city, the Dutch of Grand Rapids confirmed the words of Van Raalte that "in everything we need each other."

Note: This study is based on an alphabetical computer listing of all Dutch households residing in Grand Rapids between 1850 and 1900. This list incorporates data from Federal manuscript census records, city records and directories, and the *Landverhuizers lijsten* [Emigrants' Lists] of the Netherlands government.

TRANSLATORS

Origins and the Archives have benefited enormously from the translation work which a number of retired folk have contributed. We wish here to offer public notice and gratitude for their important work. Most of the documents in the Archives which originated prior to the 1920s were written in Dutch or German, and until they are translated they will be useless to a great majority of those who may wish to read them. Thus we invite those who wish a part in this ongoing task to write us.

E. R. Post
D. F. Van Vliet
J. J. Dahm, Sr.
G. Kamp
Rev. W. K. Reinsma
Dr. G. Dragt
Rev. J. C. Verbrugge
Rev. C. Witt
Dr. H. Ten Hoor
Mr. W. J. Kogeler
Mrs. P. Slenk
Rev. I. Couwenhoven
Rev. J. Geels
Rev. J. Guichelaar
Rev. J. Hanenburg
Mr. & Mrs. H. D. Helling
Rev. D. Mellema
Mrs. F. Ourensma
Rev. G. Van der Ziel
Rev. F. Van Houten

BOOKS

The Strength of Their Years: The Story of a Pioneer Community. By Tymen E. Hofman. Knight Publishing Limited, 1983. \$7.95.

Tymen E. Hofman is a Christian Reformed minister who grew up in the Nobleford-Monarch-Granum area in southern Alberta. For many years his maternal and paternal grandparents and his parents were important members of this settlement. He writes "...not as a scientific, objective historian, but as someone who drew his life-blood and personal heritage from that community." Essential elements in the history of this part of Canada prior to the arrival of the first Dutch immigrants in 1903 were, in the author's view: first, the solution of the rancher-v.-homesteader problem in 1885 which gave the ranchers the lands close to the mountains and streams and the homesteaders the area near Calgary and the northern plains, and second, the new lines of Canadian Pacific Railway tracks.

According to Hofman, the first Dutch homesteader (Herman Emmelkamp) arrived in 1903, and soon many immigrants followed him from Nijverdal in the province of Overijssel. Appropriately, the area where they settled became known as Nieuw Nijverdal—a name little remembered after the town of Noble, now Nobleford, appeared on the new Canadian Pacific line between Lethbridge and Calgary.

Much is said by Hofman about the religious life of the immigrants. He does not believe the common ethnic background of the immigrants can be used to completely explain their desire to build a church, which in the mind of the immigrant, the author maintains, was essential for the worship of God by the individual and necessary for the realization of a community where all activities,

personal and corporate, were meant to reveal the will of God in doctrine and day-to-day life. Many new arrivals, according to Hofman, were unwilling to talk about their faith, but they certainly did desire spiritual nourishment for their children both at home and in the church. The Nijverdal Christian Reformed Church, formed in 1905, served those who lived in both the Monarch and Granum settlements. Separate church services were held by each group, and by 1911 each was an independent Christian Reformed Church. The name *Nobleford Christian Reformed Church* reflects the 1947 relocation of the Monarch church. The Granum and Nobleford churches share the honor of being the first Christian Reformed Church in Canada. By 1909, a Reformed Church congregation had been established, and its members, including the author's paternal grandfather, worshiped in a structure located very near the Monarch Christian Reformed sanctuary.

Those who came to Canada in the early years of this century are portrayed by Hofman as pioneers who faced a bewildering array of challenges. Finding enough food and a place to live were problems more than enough for these adventuresome souls. For the first year, the diet of one family was bread and pancakes fried in cow fat with only the children's portions sweetened with a bit of sugar or syrup. Another family of eleven existed for an entire winter in a partially underground dwelling measuring sixteen by sixteen feet. The author reflects the reader's thoughts about these matters with the words, "At this distance we can only marvel at the physical and psychological resources that must have been present to survive such strain and stress."

Although emphasizing the

economic and physical hardships the immigrants endured, the author dwells at length on the various aspects of religious stress and strain experienced by the community. Fraternization between Reformed and Christian Reformed folk was not encouraged, but did occur at weddings, funerals, and church picnics. Of more consequence were church discipline matters, particularly those items concerning John Postman, the author's maternal grandfather and a member of the Christian Reformed Church. Influenced by the ideas of Abraham Kuyper and concerned about the future of his children in their Canadian environment, Postman found his own ideas were not those of most of his neighbors, who were more concerned about personal piety and tried and tested old ways. Catechizing children in English was Postman's hope and when the consistory failed to act on his suggestion, he began teaching his children at home, using the English as best he could while not allowing them to attend the regular Dutch-language church-catechism classes. Inevitably, the result was Postman's excommunication at the November 24, 1912, service. Excommunicated, yes, but at the annual congregational meeting the next day, he was, ironically enough, allotted a stall for his horse in the new church barn.

Postman's trek northward in 1913, a true pioneer saga, is the subject of the chapter "Going It Alone." His goal was new farmland in the Peace River district located on the northwestern frontier of Alberta. With grit and almost superhuman determination, he, his wife, and several of their children walked or rode in horse-drawn wagons over the Edson trail described as "infamous" by the author and which stretched in a northwest direction the 250 miles

between Edson and Grand Prairie. Muddy roads, a wagon with wheels which did not fit the ruts, hordes of flies and mosquitos, lost horses, and many river crossings were but a few of the dangers and other unpredictable situations which tested the mettle of this courageous group. Anyone reading this chapter will both experience vicariously what the Postmans endured and develop an understanding sympathy for Postman's wife, Janna, who initially had no desire to come to Canada and had little fondness for this second move. Immigrant pioneer women such as she bore large families, nursed the sick, did all domestic chores and, if there were no sons, much of the farm work. John Postman had a strong faith, resolute will, and a marriage partner who either willingly or unwillingly for his sake made many mental and emotional sacrifices. Although she was a reluctant immigrant and unenthusiastic pioneer, Janna Postman contributed greatly to the success of her husband's ventures.

Hofman's book is a blend of Canadian history, the experiences of Dutch immigrant pioneers, recollections and revelations about his ancestors, and a chronicle of the development of the Christian Reformed Churches in the Nobleford-Monarch-Granum area. At times the author attempts to incorporate all these varied aspects in a single chapter or in a few paragraphs, and this characteristic of his style often frustrates the reader who is constantly forced to absorb many and varied details about widely diverse situations.

The Dutch immigrant pioneers come alive in this book. We learn about both their heroism and their faults which the author does not in any way gloss over. All who left the Netherlands did not have a strong

faith in God or an ardent love for the Christian Reformed Church. As Hofman points out, the immigrants in these small rural settlements knew one another very well. Each knew the good and bad traits of the other and, moreover, recognized how these personal traits exhibited themselves in the social and religious life of the community. Refreshingly candid about the immigrant and his church life, Hofman includes material on catechism cheating, evaluates ministers, and often analyzes the personal religious beliefs of various early immigrants.

Hofman is proud of his Canadian immigrant heritage, and he has reason to be. His ancestors and others like them, though far from perfect, knew what faith in God meant both for their lives and the communities they established. The Christian faith of the immigrant as it unfolded in Canadian rural situations is the central theme of this book.

—C. J. B.



Dutchmen on the Bay: The Ethnohistory of a Contractual Community. By Lawrence J. Taylor. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983. \$30.00. Paperback, \$12.95.

Dutchmen on the Bay is about West Sayville, New York, a fishing community located on the southern shore of Long Island, fifty miles east of New York City. An anthropologist

with an interest in maritime communities, Lawrence J. Taylor has written a volume containing his theories about the development of West Sayville and his explanations of the behavior of its citizens. Also he presents the reader with much information about oyster fishing, the longtime financial base of this small town which presently has a population of about 5,000. Most of the immigrants who first settled in the Sayville-Oakland area came from the province of Zeeland, and in particular from Bruinisse, Yerseke and neighboring towns where shellfishing was their trade. A few Dutch immigrants with names such as Broere, Hage, Verweys, Hiddink, and DeWaal had settled in the Oakdale-Sayville area in the late 1840s and early 1850. By 1860 Dutch people in the area numbered about 92. West Sayville had a population of about 500 in 1890, and by 1910 about 1200. For Sunday services, the residents attended either the Reformed Church, established in 1867, or the Christian Reformed Church, established in 1876 by a group who left the Reformed Church.

For the author, West Sayville can best be described as a "contractual community," and in this "contractual community" there is a tension between the rights of the individual and the demands of the community in which he finds himself. The Dutch immigrants, the author believes, searched for a settlement where the life-style was similar to what they had known in their homeland. In this new setting they hoped to make their way financially and practice their religious beliefs with others who held similar views. Taylor contends that the debate concerning whether or not the primary motivation for immigrating was economic or religious is an

artificial one, since it implies that the immigrant's motivation was either distinctly religious or economic. Most immigrants who arrived in West Sayville probably viewed whatever they did as the will of God. Taylor thinks the immigrants and the Puritans were much alike. Worldly success was a sign that you were one of God's elect, and for this reason God bestowed his blessings on you. This idea was first posed by Max Weber in his book *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.

Oyster fishing and shipping became increasingly lucrative for the West Sayville Dutch during the last third of the nineteenth century. Men with names such as Jacob Ockers, Wolfer Van Popering, Dirk Van Wynen, Edward Westerbeke, and Nicholas Vander Borgh each not only leased many acres of oyster beds but also were involved in shipping oysters to market. Many immigrants who arrived in West Sayville during the years 1880-1910 worked in oyster houses owned by these men culling, opening, and packing bivalves. A few of these oyster house workers participated in a 1902 strike, but most were not fond of labor agitation.

Lack of class consciousness and a belief in the dream that personal financial success was available to all in America are factors contributing to the immigrant's attitude here. Also significant is the immigrant's first loyalty to his church where he found class lines blurred or, in his own eyes at least, insignificant.

Taylor's chapter "The Honest War" is devoted to the religious schism and the establishment of the Christian Reformed Church in 1876, nine years after the founding of the Reformed Church. The Reformed Church, these seceders believed, allowed those in the Masonic Lodge to be members, sang hymns and not

exclusively psalms, lacked concern about Heidelberg Catechism preaching, and did little to catechize the young. For Taylor, none of these reasons, nor the notion that immigrants preferring the Christian Reformed Church had originally come from less urbanized and provincial areas in the Netherlands while Reformed Church members came from locations more subject to cosmopolitan influences, adequately suffice to explain this religious division. The twofold question for the author is: Was religion the "moral glue" of the community or are the religious views of those in West Sayville better characterized by the old Dutch proverb as quoted by the author, "One Dutchman—a theologian. Two Dutchmen—a church. Three Dutchmen—a schism"? For the author then, there is a strain between how a person runs his own life and the moral demands of the society in which he finds himself. To put the matter another way, whatever the resident of West Sayville does is not only his own business, but is the concern of the community and, above all, his church, be it Reformed or Christian Reformed, where the boundaries of his religious, social, and economic behavior are set forth and where infractions are disciplined.

Early consistory records of the Christian Reformed reveal that much attention was given to the personal behavior of members. On the other hand, doctrinal questions, the private life of the minister and his preaching capabilities occupied the time of the Reformed Church consistory. Schism came about, Taylor thinks, because the immigrants saw all of life as religious and consequently all confrontations were fought in the religious arena—that is, in the local church, the final arbiter of right and wrong in the

community. Also, the author observes, the schism served to make the community more cohesive since each participant knew well the ideas of his antagonist and also was aware that those not sharing the generally accepted mores and religious views of the community were essentially outsiders and would regard the struggles as no more than tempests in teapots.

Taylor's book is not narrative history. It is his attempt to understand and explain the economic, social, and particularly religious conduct and activities of the past and present citizens of West Sayville. Along with history, we find much material on social theory, anthropology, immigrant recollections, and many pages about the shellfish industry.

At times the reader wishes for more history and less theory and a little less information about the way in which oysters were taken from the bay. Also, although the author does make very plain the Calvinistic outlook of the immigrants and their descendents, what he has to say lacks emphasis on the depth of the religious faith held by many of those who immigrated from the Netherlands to the West Sayville area. He attempts to explain their actions first of all by outside influences and not by what took place in the immigrant's heart and mind. The faith of the immigrants and their descendents is not to be romanticized and can possibly be best characterized by a statement attributed by the author to a West Sayville bayman who remarked, "God took away the oyster, but he gave us the clam."

—C. J. B.

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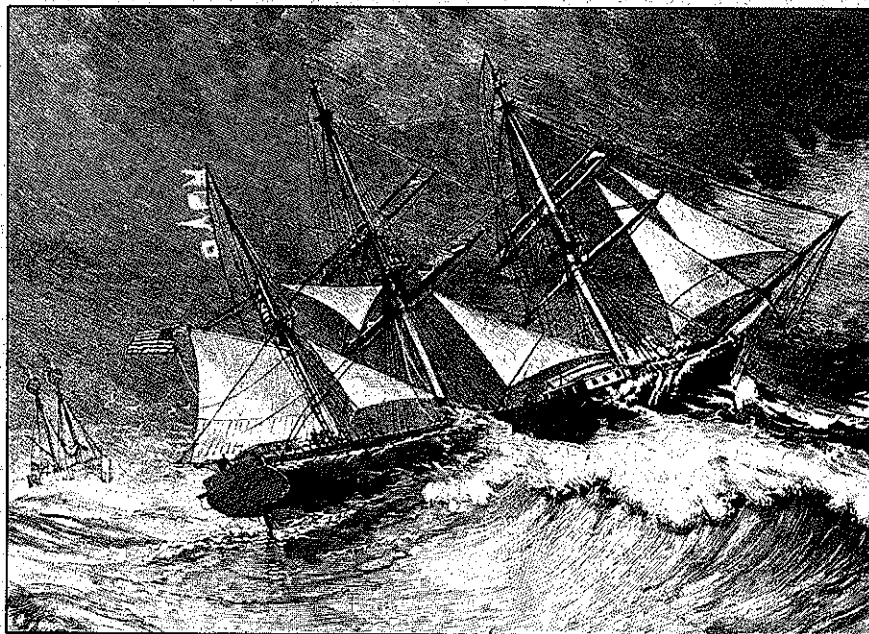
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