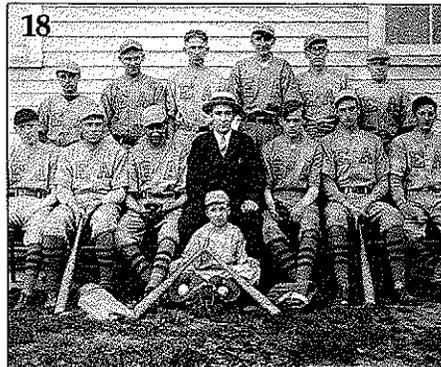


ORIGINS



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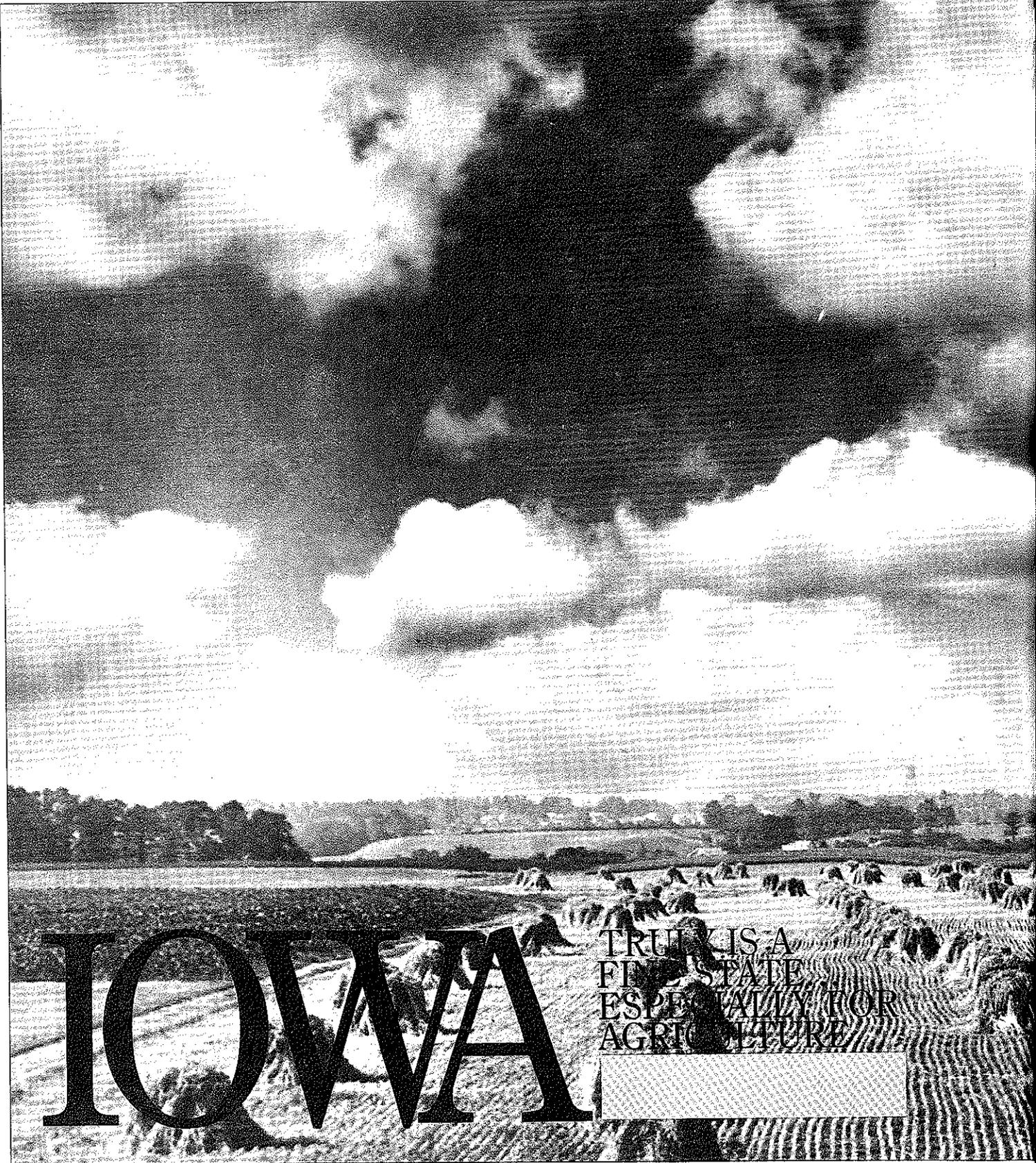
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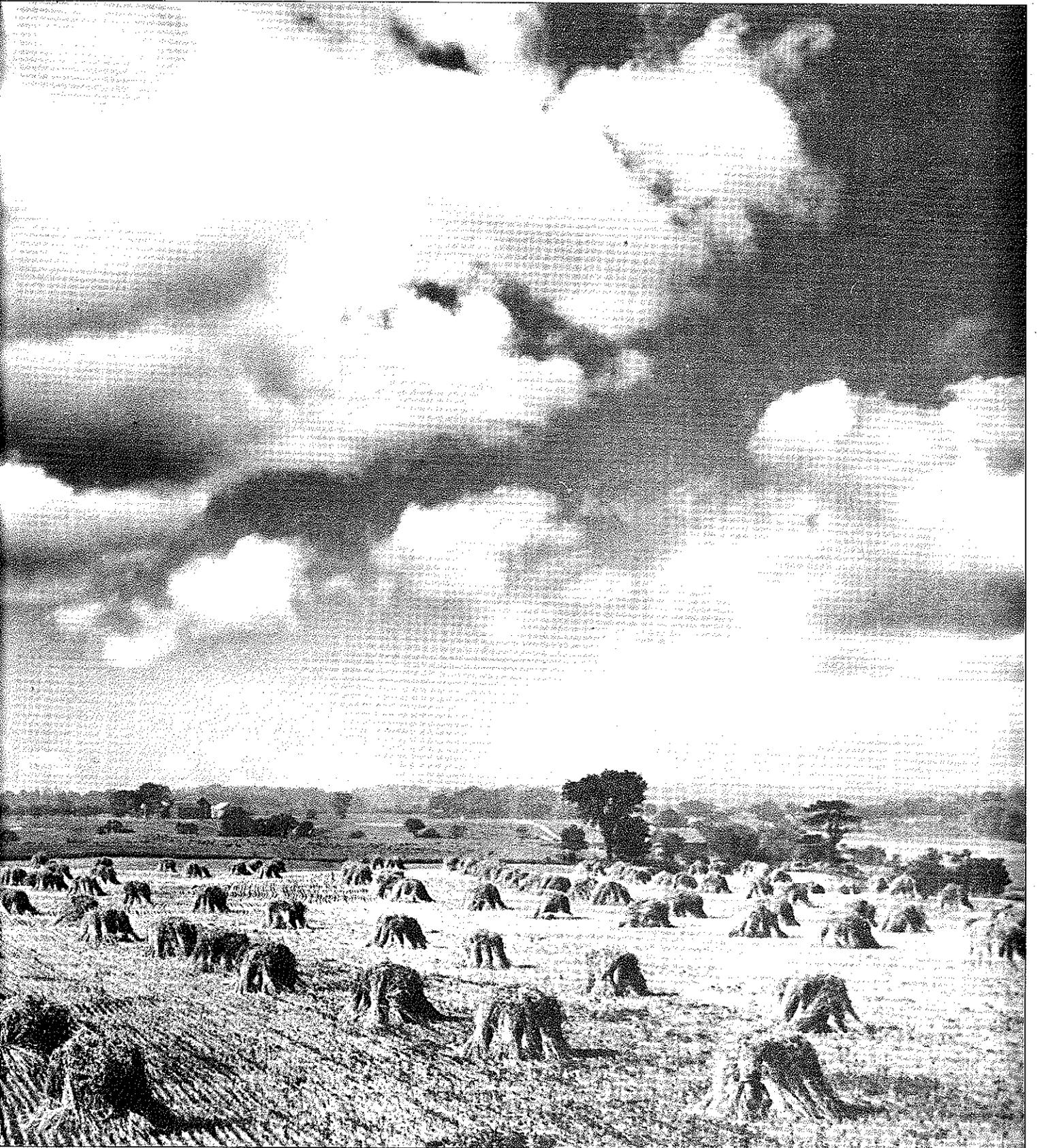
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IOWA

TRUE IS A
FINE STATE
ESPECIALLY FOR
AGRICULTURE







Iowa truly is a fine state, especially for agriculture. Land which thirty to forty years ago was still wild prairie has now been re-created into lovely farmlands. Other states, such as Michigan, for example, may have more trade and industry, but in the growing of grain, Iowa definitely is the leader. Some parts of Iowa probably are a bit better than others. I heard Sioux County and Grundy County being praised as the best of the best. I myself, however, was unable to detect much difference.

In Michigan we also have beautiful areas and outstanding farmlands, but one can't travel five miles in a stretch without running into much poorer areas. In Iowa this is not the case. Sometimes we traveled as many as twenty to twenty-five miles in one day without seeing any great variation in the fertility of the soil.

Even though I would not dare to call myself an expert on soil conditions, so as to know what is called good land or bad, nature itself aided me by showing consistently good crops in the fields. And the harvest is certainly the best witness of the condition of the ground. We certainly hit the best time of the year for riding in the country. It seemed as if all of nature had put on her bridal gown.

Report by Professor H. Beuker published in the October 1897 Gereformeerde Amerikaan. Translated by Jake Reedyk.

Among other things I saw a field of corn measuring 92 acres and across the road from it a stretch of rye of the same size. It seemed that both fields were competing to show us the strength of the soil and the greatness of the mighty Creator. Never did I see these words of the Psalm-writer confirmed as I did in Iowa:

The dales are clothed
With ears so full and ripe
Rewarding man's hard toil.

Miles upon miles around showed us this same majestic view. It was the beginning of July and already the corn reached above our heads. Wheat and barley, oats and flax—all stood there waving under the breath of the wind as if they were an endless ocean of dark green waves.

Farms of 180 acres—yes, of half a section of land—are no rarity. Since each lives on his own land, it follows that the farm homes are located a fair distance apart. One can recognize

them from a distance by the clumps of trees in which they are hidden. Every farmer has taken care of the planting of trees for shade and fruit around his house.

At first they experienced hard times. Most of them came from the Netherlands or East-Friesland without money. Some of them still owed the cost of their travels and other old debts. They bought their land on credit and had to struggle hard at first to pay principal and interest, besides purchasing cattle and farm equipment. But the Lord has blessed their diligent labors. Many of them may now call their place their own, while all of them have seen their burdens grow lighter as their incomes increased. Before long many of them will be comfortable, if not rich—if not in money just yet, then at least in lands and goods.

As far as I have been able to learn, the Hollanders and East-Frisians are



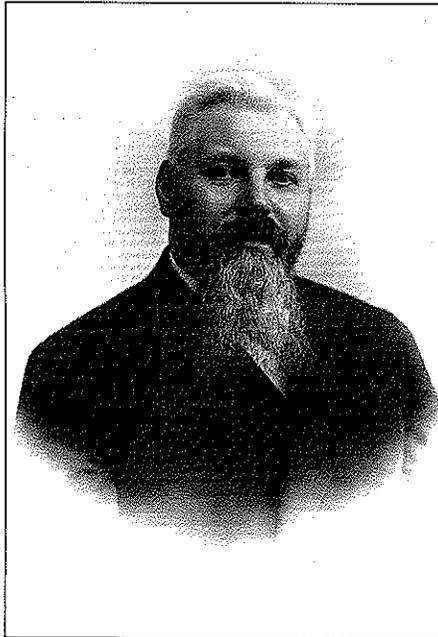
the very best among all farmers. One can ride along for hours and all he will ever see is Dutch and East-Frisians. In general their speech and manners have remained more Dutch than those of many of our people in Michigan. Still they thanked God for their citizenship in our United States and looked with pride on our flag with its stars and stripes. If my estimation is correct, Methodism in the area of religion has had less influence on them than on many of our people in the middle states.

The climate there is a bit warmer, but the heat is not as oppressive as in Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana. During the day there usually is a refreshing breeze, which nicely cools off the otherwise oppressive atmosphere. Their climate seems to be less tiring than ours. In general the people there have kept their fresh color. In the East and in the middle states this is different. Generally the American climate is



more severe and tiring than that of the Old Fatherland. Fortunately, we are generally fed better here, else our lives here would be somewhat shorter than there. As it is, it evens out very closely.

Many a blushing maiden upon coming here soon loses the rose color from her cheeks. She doesn't mourn that fact, because she desires to look like an American lady. She thinks that blushing color to be coarse and un-



desirable. Americans like pale skin and slim figures. I would say that as far as good manners, form of civilization, and tasteful clothing are concerned, in general the Americans are ahead of Dutch immigrants though not of the Dutch nation. In their character and bearing they are more like Frenchmen than like Hollanders and Germans. They have much that we may rightly envy, but they lack something that is more commonly found among the Hollanders, which would do them so much good.

Here I am wandering from the subject, for I was intending to tell you

(facing page) Grain harvest. (above) Rev. E. Breen. (right) Orange City Christian Reformed Church.

about Iowa. In large cities Iowa is not as rich as some of the middle states. Des Moines, the capital, is vital and in some parts also beautiful, but in my opinion it cannot compete in beauty with cities like Grand Rapids or Detroit. The two main cities of the Dutch colony, Pella and Orange City, are pleasant places to live in, especially for retired farmers. Yet, as cities they are not up to where other cities are, but when we remember that they are only forty to fifty years old, we should be amazed at their development and expansion. Both of them have, thanks to their abundance of trees, a most friendly and cozy appearance. They are cozy places to live in. In size and business, though, they cannot compete with a town like Holland, Mich., even though that is the same age. I stopped first at Orange City. "Well," I said to myself, "This is the city of Rev.



Bolks, Hoppers, and other well-known pioneers!" I must say that the layout is excellent and convenient, like that of almost all American cities. It was as if I felt at home from the moment I arrived. My hosts, Rev. E. Breen and his wife, did all things possible to make my stay easy and pleasant. The Reformed and Christian Reformed churches are both about the same size and, I was told, are flourishing. Rev. Breen's church, recently enlarged, seats about one thousand. The building looks downright beautiful. The Reformed Church also looked great, at least from the outside. I have not seen the inside, nor have I met the

minister. I noticed that the two congregations and their pastors live very peaceably side by side. I doubt very much, however, if there is much fellowship between the two. On Saturday, July 3, the "Fourth of July" was celebrated, since the people judged Sunday to be unsuited for such celebrations.

The Christian Reformed people held a celebration which emphasized the independence of our States as well

They had their own celebration on the same day in the middle of the city. There they entertained themselves with ball games, gunny-sack hopping, racing, pole climbing, etc. On their end they seem to think that mission fests are fine but should not be held on such a day. The other party judged that it is proper to celebrate a national holiday, but that it should bear a more serious and religious character, and ought to benefit the

With the carriage of brother Hulstein we were picked up from Orange City by my former student and friend, Rev. Henry Beets, who was accompanied by his wife and baby. It was good to see them again. With more than ordinary enjoyment I spent several days with them, and surveyed the area from there. Sioux Center is a most pleasant small city, which—thanks to the rich country which surrounds it—is developing very fast. The Reformed

Church there has a roomy church building, which is located somewhat outside the city because the town has spread out more in the direction of the depot. The buildings of the Christian Reformed and Presbyterian congregations lie more in the center. The Presbyterian minister was kind enough to come and welcome us at our arrival, and also to visit us repeatedly. Our Christian Reformed congregation has greatly expanded lately. God is obviously blessing the



as the work of missions. They met in a well-suited woods on a farm near the city. Quite a number of speakers addressed the multitude, directing their attention to the Declaration of Independence and to our missions to the heathen. One would have thought he was at one of the Mission Fests in the Netherlands. The platform and refreshment stand were arranged in the very same way. There were much cheerfulness and enthusiasm among the crowd. Truly such a day does one's Christian as well as American heart good. With emotion the Lord was given thanks for the deliverance from the violence of the greedy Englishmen, and for the blessing given to this great land through Washington and his heroes.

The people of the Reformed church did not participate in this celebration.

kingdom of God. I spent that holiday with real enjoyment. The mood was cheerful and glorifying to God.

From Orange City, the Rev. Breen, I, and two brothers from the church council made a little trip to my countrymen, the Rev. J. Gulker and his wife, in the town of George. We traveled about twenty-five miles among wonderful grain fields, past Boyden to George, where our brother serves a small congregation which consists mainly of Germans. With joy we spent a while in the new parsonage and spoke together of things both old and new. We returned to Orange City while it was late at night. It had been a hefty day especially for the two faithful "fourleggers," who returned us in brother Peter's comfortable carriage to the home of our host.

Our path next led to Sioux Center.

work of our hard-working brother Beets. The little old church of earlier days has been replaced by a new and very tasteful church of a more or less English style, which displays two towers. I had the pleasure of leading three services for a large and very attentive congregation.

It should surprise no one that I was particularly pleased to witness the Lord's obvious blessing upon this disciple.

That He who gave all good things can also take it away in a moment was again clearly illustrated for us in a small mishap. Rev. Breen and Elder Cupido also came to visit us that day

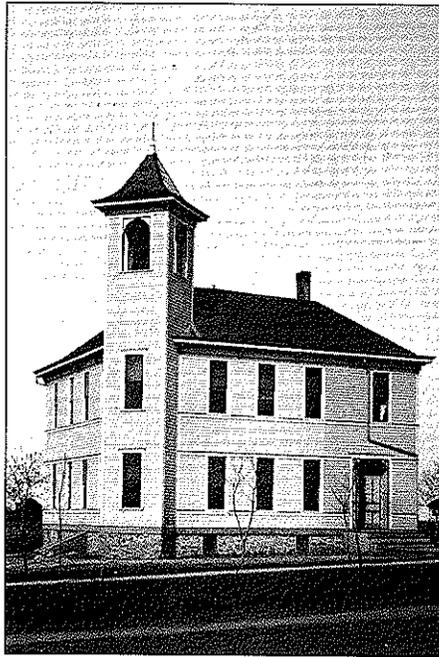
(above) Fourth of July celebration, Sioux County, (facing page, top) Sioux Center Christian School, (lower left) Dr. and Mrs. H. Beets, (lower right) Rock Valley Christian Reformed Church.

in Sioux Center. Talking and disputing, as preachers usually do when they are together, we had not a little fun together. Suddenly a messenger came to ask if the minister could briefly visit a sick woman, because her situation seemed very precarious. Brother Beets immediately readied his horse and went there with brother I. Adams, who was also present. On the way back, the three-year-old skittish horse took fright. It suddenly jumped aside, overturning the carriage, dumping Adams on the ground with Beets on top of him. Had they remained two seconds longer in the carriage, which slammed into a light pole, the results can well be imagined. As it was they came away with only a scare and a slight bruise. The shock, however, had so affected Rev. Beets that he was completely confused. For two days he was unaware of what had really transpired. Fortunately this problem as well as the black and blue spots on his head and foot, cleared up in a few days. Together we thanked the Lord for His obvious protection.

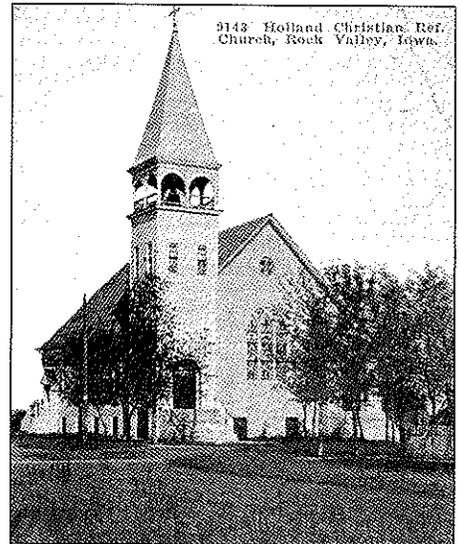
Out of Sioux Center on one hot day, I visited our friend and former student, Rev. Vanden Bok, at Rock Valley. The two white horses of brother Hulstein, which proved to be exceptionally strong, brought us both there and

back in a single day (a distance of 15 miles). Rock Valley is a nicely laid-out little city, in which our denomination has a sweet little church. For the parsonage they still use a rented house. Even though our visit there had to be short (for a two o'clock preaching service had been arranged), it was a heart-warming experience to meet there our esteemed brother, his faithful wife, and their helpful children.

After having preached several times in the church of Rev. Breen at



Orange City, on the next Sunday I was picked up by brother Visch of the Hull congregation to preach there for the evening service in the church of Rev. Greve. The fields in that area gave us almost the same marvelous appearance as the lands to which we had become accustomed during the last few days. Hull is a small but pleasantly situated city. Our church there was very pleased with the pastor which had come there only six weeks earlier. The Grandville Avenue Church in Grand Rapids had proven too large and demanding for the not-so-strong brother Greve. At Hull he certainly has just the right challenge, a small flock tailored to fit his strength. May God give Rev. Greve and his wife the privilege of working there for a long time to come. Being



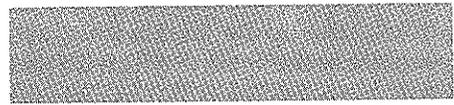
the countrymen* that we are, I had a pleasant time under his hospitable roof, until I could travel to Minnesota the next day. But more about that next time.

—H. Beuker

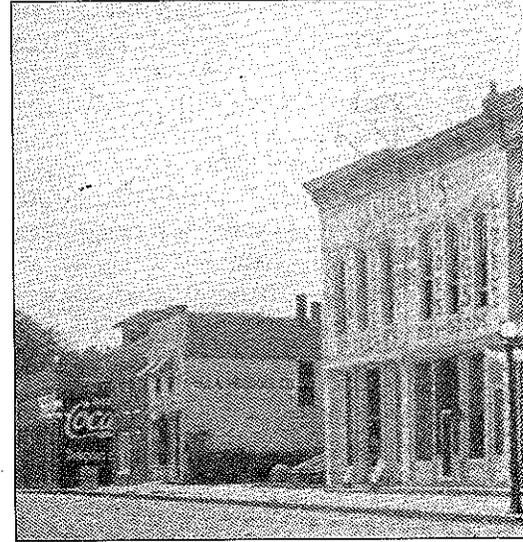


*Beuker and Greve originated from Graafschap Bentheim in West Germany.

PELLA

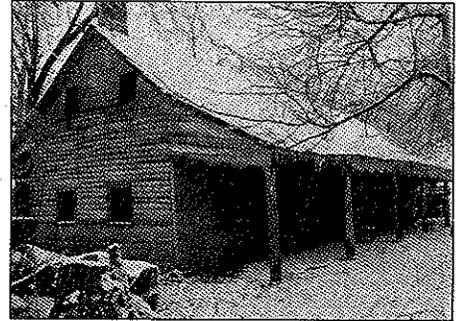
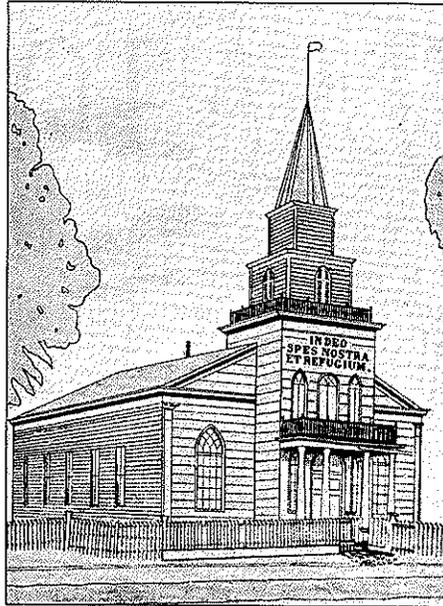


(from left to right) H. P. Scholte, West side of Pella city square (c. 1890), Scholte's Independence Church, the Viersen Farmstead. (below) Pella panorama.



PELLA





FROM PELLA TO ORANGE CITY

It is not unusual for any ethnic group to cluster together in a new homeland, and Dutch immigrants in the United States were no exception. Although greatly diminished in identity or number, there are still Dutch pockets in the old "New Netherland." Still strongly ethnic are the communities established by the 19th-century Dutch immigrants in the midwest. In the late 1840s two sizable groups of Dutch immigrants left the Netherlands for Michigan and Iowa. One group settled in Holland, Michigan (with an ever-widening circle of settlements around it), and the other in and around Pella. Although growing fast in the first few years, the latter colony could not expand in the immediate area and hence a group of Pella area residents moved to northwest Iowa.

The pre-Civil War land boom which had come to a halt in 1857 was revived after this war was over, when Americans took advantage of the momentous Homestead Act of 1862. In the environs of Pella, land had become expensive and scarce and there were stirrings among the colonists called "koloniale koorts" (colonization fever) by skeptics to move to the available and cheap lands in the West. In

Nella Kennedy is the Archivist at Northwestern College in Orange City, Iowa. This article was presented in 1983 to the Association for the Advancement of Dutch-American Studies during its conference in Holland, Michigan.

1867 one group went to Oregon from Pella, and another to Kansas to begin new settlements, both of which ended in failure.

About that same time, Jelle Pelmulder, a teacher at Pella, and H. J. VandeWaa, a farmer, began to inquire about acquiring land near Storm Lake and Cherokee.² Upon a favorable reply they went to Henry Hospers, mayor of Pella, for help. The three men decided to advertise the availability of land in northwest Iowa in *Pella's Weekblad* (a Dutch language weekly of which Hospers was the editor) and announced a date for a meeting. No doubt Hospers echoed the sentiments of the colonizers-to-be when he wrote five years later that "going to northwest Iowa was so that the young people would not have to go to some strange country but could live together under the shadow of the church and school."³ By "strange country" he probably implied Yankee-infested territory. The response was overwhelming, and the people decided to send a four-man exploratory team to northwest Iowa.

It took the committee, with VandeWaa leading, two weeks by mules

and wagon to reach Sioux City, traveling through the area in which they wished to settle. They told the land agent there that they wished to purchase or procure land in the Cherokee area and were informed that that area was still open as was land in Sioux, Lyon, and O'Brien counties farther west. After they arrived back in Pella, another ad was placed in *Pella's Weekblad*, and another meeting was held, at which time eighty-six people desired homesteads, and thirteen were willing to buy. Several thousands of dollars were deposited with the committee for the purchase of government lands at \$2.50 an acre for those who were not entitled to free land or wished to have more. Another team of four men, led again by the intrepid VandeWaa, left on another expedition. On the way to Sioux City they were told that the land near Cherokee had virtually been bought up, proof of the land hunger and perhaps also of speculators getting wind of a possible mass migration. In Sioux City, at the land office, they met Henry Hospers (he only traveled by train—just as in the past the prominent Pella pioneers had taken steamships instead of the more plebeian sailing vessels). They were informed that Sioux County was still available. The next day they left for that county with a surveyor and immediately liked what they saw.

They set the boundaries of the settlement, platted the city (called New Holland initially), and, after going to





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500,000 ACRES
of the finest and most desirable Farming Lands in
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offered for sale at low prices in the State. Prices will
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so as to suit all purchasers. Full warranty deeds given.

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entitling the purchaser of land to a credit of amount
paid for fare upon his land, are for sale at the principal
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the lands, address

**J. L. DREW, Land Commissioner,
Davenport, Iowa.**

Sioux City for the finalization of the land deal, returned to Pella. Already in October of 1869 several people went to Sioux County, but the majority waited until the spring of 1870. About fifty families settled in Sioux County; one family settled in Orange City. It was so named by Henry Hospers, who was the head of the town site company, which included his wife and friend Jelle Pelmulder. In appreciation for all his work, Henry Hospers was given one-third of the town site to sell at his pleasure, while proceeds from one-fifth were set aside for a college fund.

In 1871 Orange City had a one-room schoolhouse (used as church on Sunday), a blacksmith shop, a post office, a boarding house, and the beginning was made for a parsonage. In 1872 the English language newspaper, the *Sioux County Herald*, moved to Orange City from the county seat to the

(facing page) Breaking prairie sod. (left) Advertisement in *Harpers Weekly*, 1872. (above) First scouting party to Sioux County. (lower right) Henry Hospers.

west, Calliope. The Dutch settlement was doing well. In large measure success thus far was attributable to the leadership of Henry Hospers.

Hospers had come to Pella in 1847 as a boy of sixteen. Often described as a man of great learning, he was basically self-educated, although the training by his teacher-father in the Netherlands elevated him educationally above the average settler of Sioux County. In Pella he became a surveyor, assistant teacher and attorney (for the latter two jobs he had studied in Pella), notary public, real estate broker, first candidate for county office, owner and editor of *Pella's Weekblad*, mayor of Pella from 1867 to 1871.

In 1870 he was appointed by the Iowa State Board of Immigration to be its agent in the Netherlands. Already a promoter of the northwest Iowa community by then, his two-month visit to the Netherlands provided an enormous boost to the new colony. He wrote a Dutch language pamphlet while there, entitled "Shall I Emigrate to America?" He himself supplied the answer in the sub-title: "Practically answered by a Hollander who resided twenty-four years in one of the best States in the Union." Returning to Pella in May, he resigned as mayor, sold *Pella's Weekblad*, his real estate

business, and town properties (including his office, which reportedly was built to look like a miniature castle),⁴ and headed for Sioux County (by train, of course) in 1871. A house and store had already been built for him there. Although some called him "Prince of Orange" behind his back, he was esteemed on the whole. It is an indication of his leadership qualities that when he first set foot in his store, a pioneer remarked: "There is the father of the colony. From now on everything will go well."⁵ Since money was scarce, farm produce was exchanged initially for goods in the store, but later Henry Hospers invented "store orders," which obligated the buyer to break a specified number of acres of Hospers' own land for store goods. Perhaps by then Hospers had been up to his ears in eggs and butter.

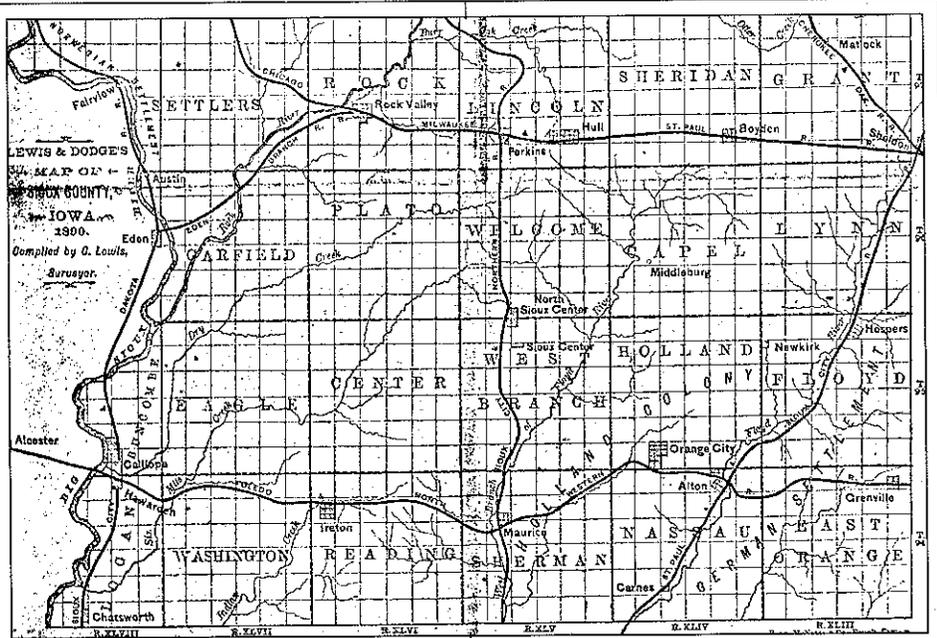
He was an able encourager when the colony, after a prosperous two-year stay, faced disaster after disaster until about the end of the 1870s. If squirrels had been bad for the early Michigan settlers, the recurring visits of the grasshoppers to Sioux County were worse. It began in the early summer of 1873, when much was eaten by the grasshoppers but some was left to harvest. They returned again in 1874, and although their destructive eating was selective, some farmers had been hit twice in a row. They could not pay off debts (often to unscrupulous implement dealers) and taxes or buy seed corn for the next spring, and



many were destitute. A state relief committee came to investigate their needs. Fifty-thousand dollars were appropriated during the winter of 1874-1875 for buying seed, grain, and vegetables, and from Pella (where *Pella's Weekblad* devoted four consecutive articles on Sioux County's plight) came thousands of bushels of corn and carloads of coal. Henry Hospers spearheaded the county campaign for provisions, clothing, and blankets, especially for the northern townships of Sioux County which were harder hit. Several abandoned their homesteads, but many were persuaded by Hospers to stay, and he extended them credit. People simply could not pay their bills—the newspapers were filled with pleas by storekeepers for payment.

The year 1875 provided relief from the grasshoppers, although the farmers were plagued by mice, too much rain, and too many prairie fires; but there were crops. The grasshoppers, however, returned every year after that until the end of the decade, again doing their destructive work selectively.

These voracious insects not only spoiled the crop but also the sunny prospects for the continuing influx of immigrants from Pella, other states in the Union, and the Netherlands. Until the grasshoppers came, people had streamed into the county. In 1871 a group of thirty-two persons had come from Fillmore County in Minnesota, who settled near present-day Sioux Center, west of Orange City. Since this represented the farthest settlement, someone placed a sign, reading "Hier houdt het mensdrom op" (humankind ceases to exist beyond this point). The *Sioux County Herald* reported on October 11, 1872, that "in the last seven days no less than 168 souls came, of which six families [were] from Wisconsin [probably Alto], three from the Netherlands, one from Pella, and five from Minnesota." In March 1873, the same pa-



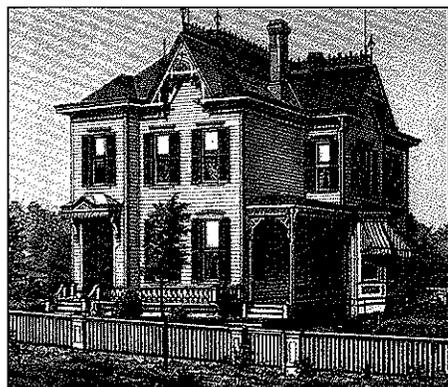
per mentioned that "several families arrived in the past week from the Netherlands, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan," and, somewhat unflatteringly, "two carloads of Hollanders." In April 1873, "another lot of Holland immigrants, about thirty in number," arrived, and, the report continued, "between 200 and 300 more are expected in a few days." Later that month the paper, somewhat hysterically, wrote that there were immigrants "on every train."

In the census of 1870 the population of Sioux County had been 575, but it had climbed to 2,872 by 1873 (or 3,000 or 3,500, depending on which source can be believed), of which 1,500 were of Dutch descent.⁶ But then the grasshoppers came and with this adversity the propaganda war began, waged in the papers and pamphlets printed in the Dutch-American settlements of the United States.

The *Sioux County Herald*, of which Henry Hospers's son John became the editor in 1873, did mention the coming of the grasshoppers but downplayed the damage. On June 13, 1873, the paper reported that the grasshoppers had "come and gone without

doing any serious damage . . . a little corn was eaten down but wheat and oats escaped uninjured." A week later the paper conceded that much was eaten, but that much was left, and refuted reports "about the crops of Northwest Iowa being eaten up by the grasshoppers . . . "They have all disappeared and did no damage worthy of mention." By August of 1873 the grasshoppers came again, but the *Sioux County Herald* made light of it: "It is said they are doing some damage on corn and oats (referring to an entry in the *Pella Blade*); wheat, though, is all safe." The following summer the paper was a bit more guarded: "Opinions vary about the damage."

On June 20, 1874, the first issue of the Dutch language weekly *De Volksvriend* (the People's Friend) entered the fray. This unabashed propaganda vehicle was published by Henry Hospers, who was also the editor. The first issues were sent to various Dutch newspapers with the plea to include the news of *De Volksvriend* in their papers to "help prospective immigrants interested in the United States."⁷ It contained news about the Netherlands, the U.S.A. and local items.



One hundred twenty subscribed initially and by 1895 there were 2000, and issues were sent to Michigan, New Jersey, California, Oregon, Washington, Texas, and the Netherlands.

De Volksvriend also reacted to the adverse publicity in other Dutch-American communities. In 1871 the father of the Michigan settlement, the Reverend Albertus Van Raalte, counseled his people not to settle in the Western states, for the land there was covered by deep snow in the winter months—Michigan, he felt, was better.⁸ Retaliating in 1873, Hospers compared Marion County's mild winter that year with the more severe cold and snow of West Michigan. That same year the editor of the *Sioux County Herald* exhorted his readers not to go to Michigan—"many Hollanders are not so foolish anymore . . . only fifty acres at most can be acquired with difficulty in Michigan whereas in Northwest Iowa sixty acres can be put under the plough in one or two years, and have better soil. . . ."

The Michigan papers continued to write about Northwest Iowa. One cautioned the Dutch in Michigan not to go to Sioux County, for people were moving out of that county.⁹ Another published a letter written by pastor Jan Stadt of the Orange City Christian Reformed Church in July 1879, in which he expressed compassion for the suffering of his congregation. The editor, in response, asked the readers

(facing page) Orange county map. (left) H. Hospers' house in Orange City. (below) Prairie fire.

for a contribution to be sent to the church. *De Volksvriend* did not take kindly to this kind of publicity and poured scorn on this well-meaning minister: "His Grace has profited from these collections and it improved his financial situation to such an extent that he is riding in such a nice new buggy, drawn by a new horse, which would not shame a congressman."¹⁰ Not all Michiganders discouraged moving; the papers also published articles or letters in which the good prospects of the Sioux County colony were recounted.

It is puzzling that Dr. Cohen Stuart, a prominent visitor from the Netherlands, described the Dutch colony in Northwest Iowa in such lyrical tones after his visit in November 1873,¹¹ for he was on the scene just a month before the Sioux County relief committee met to provide aid to various townships.

A contemporary of the Reverend Stadt was J. W. Warnshuis, a Reformed pastor in Alton, who wrote five articles for *De Volksvriend* in the same year of Stadt's letter. Although conceding that the pioneers faced hardships, Warnshuis claimed that there were always abundant crops. His major thrust, however, was not minimizing the extent of crop damage, but in using recent entomological



studies to make it a propaganda piece. A cure was at hand, he claimed, for the ever-growing extent of cultivated lands eradicates grasshoppers and there was therefore "no reason why man should avoid Sioux County."¹²

Probably Hospers was caught between acknowledging too publicly that all was not well and his desire to maintain his "empire." He seems to have been genuinely convinced that the prospects of the colony were good, and it turned out he was right. The grasshopper-free summer of 1875, notwithstanding excessive rain, was a boost and the county once again became desirable.

In 1875, Hospers put ads in newspapers in the Netherlands, promoting the colony with affidavits signed by two county officers, a minister, and a doctor. Inquiries came from over-populated colonies in Wisconsin and Michigan, from New Jersey, New York, and Illinois. Also, city folk in fast-filling Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, Chicago, Rochester, and Paterson wanted to come. Land by then was five to twenty dollars an acre—still cheap—and terms were easy. In that same year a commission from Michigan came, and land was sold to the commission in the northern tiers of the county and just beyond.¹³

The physician A. F. H. de Lespinasse, a recent Dutch immigrant living in middle Iowa with "low Germans, Irishmen, and Yankees," had written a pamphlet, printed in Holland, warning future immigrants to be cautious. Henry Hospers, characteristically, invited him to visit Sioux County, and the good doctor stayed. As a member of the Sioux County Immigrant Committee, he wrote a pamphlet once again, which was published in the Netherlands. In it he extolled the virtues of the Sioux County settlement: a healthy climate, good water, good and cheap land, proximity to markets and fellow

Dutchmen.¹⁴ As it turned out, the poor doctor, although busy, had to supplement his income by selling not only cholera drops, but also soda water, paints, and wines.

After a brief halt in immigration between 1873 and 1875, immigrants began to roll in again. By 1880 the county population was 5426, but it really began to soar in the 1880s, when the foreign population (of which the Dutch-born ratio was 2:1) constituted one-third of the population. This continued until the end of the century, by which time half of all the Dutch in Iowa were living in the northwestern portion of the state.¹⁵

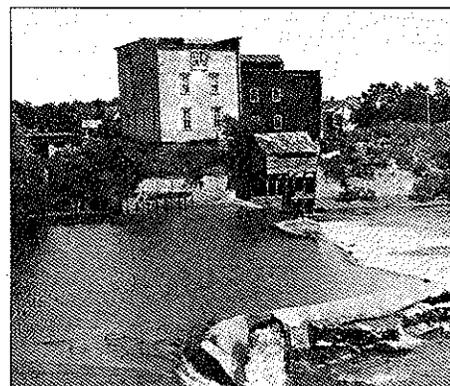
The influx of the land-lusting pioneers was accompanied by a similar influx of lawyers and/or land agents. The *Sioux County Herald* reported in April 1873 that "many lawyers and councillors settle in our midst," and in 1874 ten law/land offices advertised in the paper. It is not surprising that one of the streets in Orange City was called Lawyer Street. The lawyers and/or land agents offered to make collections, pay taxes, examine and perfect titles, furnish abstracts, and buy and sell land. The papers were full of litigation notices, with land-jumping being the most frequent.

Apart from the lure of free or cheap lands, the immigrants coming to Sioux County were attracted by the railroad network, which provided the farmer with markets in St. Paul, Sioux City, St. Louis, Milwaukee, and Chicago. A line was established at East Orange in the summer of 1872. The elated editor of the *Sioux County Herald* predicted in the February 1873 issue that Sioux County was "destined to be the geographical center of the world in railroading." In 1875 a line was completed in the western portion of the county, through the northern townships (east/west) in 1878, and finally one through Orange City on an east/west line in 1881. The Great

Northern was built in the 1890s and traversed the center of the county going north/south.

The railroads brought other towns into prominence, and that inspired their residents to seek designations as the county seat. This was not unusual; contests like these were common in all counties of Iowa. One of the fast-growing towns was Sioux Center—important commercially to the western townships. Because of its centrality and its position on an important railroad, Sioux Center tried to become the county seat twice in the 1890s, but the other townships rallied around Orange City. Although not geographically at the center of the county, Orange City was viewed by many as the colony's spiritual center, from which other settlements fanned out. It is not by accident that Alton, three miles away, was called East Orange at first, and Hospers (ten miles north) North Orange. Harrison, South Dakota, more than 100 miles away and settled by Orange City "expatriates," was called New Orange for a short while.¹⁶ Alton—the new name already implied treason—also tried to obtain the county seat in 1901, but to no avail.

Orange City held the county seat, but she herself had wrested it from Calliope in 1872. The hostility to Dutch power was very evident from the start. One Calliope resident declared "no wooden shoe Dutchman could run the county as long as they [the anglo-Americans] had anything to do with it."¹⁷ At the 1875 Republican County Convention the leaders refused to acknowledge the Dutch delegates and even adopted the slogan "down with the Dutch." The Hollanders, who represented two-fifths of the voters, withdrew but rallied their forces. *De Volksvriend* of September decried the action: "Will you allow this? Drop your threshing and come to the polls—let's vote as one man—



(above) Calliope on the Big Sioux river. (right) Abraham Lincoln.

don't let them win by your staying at home. Eendracht maakt macht!" (unity through strength). They succeeded, whereupon the editor exulted in October: "With Batavian and Frisian fist-blows their know-nothing designs were demolished." The resentment against the Dutch stemmed from good reasons, for non-Dutch settlers saw their towns and areas gradually settled or bought up by the Dutch.

Although a Sioux County Democrat insisted during the summer of 1874 that "hot weather makes good corn, corn makes whiskey, whiskey makes Democrats, and therefore we are bound to carry the election,"¹⁸ he was quite wrong. The Pella Dutch were Democrats, but when they came to Sioux County they changed their allegiance to the Republican Party. This cannot be wholly explained. The change was not unprecedented; the founder of the Pella settlement, the Reverend H. P. Scholte, had changed his party membership abruptly in 1859, and became a Lincoln Republican. Whether Henry Hospers' views influenced Sioux County to change cannot be proven. He had been a Whig in Pella before 1855 when he changed his membership to the Democratic party. No doubt the Republican administration was friendly to business and the railroads and was



homeland: Orange, Maurice, and Nassau, or Newkirk, Middleburg, and Cappel(le). Perhaps the Hollanders found the following synthesis acceptable when it appeared in the anniversary issue of *De Volksvriend* in 1895: "*De Volksvriend* has always been mindful of creating good faithful Americans," and "to make Dutch virtues, character, and courage indigenous in this country, beginning with Sioux County. And whatever becomes indigenous, becomes American." Not only was the county to become the center of the world in railroad-ing, but it was also perceived as the world's moral center.

Virtually all the immigrants who came to

Sioux County were Reformed religiously, and when they came that spring of 1870 they began to meet for worship in the sod-houses of lay preachers. A congregation was formed as a mission station under the auspices of the Classis Holland of the Reformed Church in America, in May 1871, with about 45 families. It was apparently not a totally homogeneous bunch, and, according to a letter to the editor in the *Sioux County Herald* of March 21, 1873, the Pella people, who were the majority, did not agree with each other religiously. The writer continued that the addition of people from Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, and the Netherlands (the latter subdivided into provincial entities) did not help. This probably accounts for the formation of the Christian Re-

formed Church two months after the Reformed Church was organized. But the letter writer finished by saying that the church unanimously extended a call to Reverend Seine Bolks, who, although declining the first call, accepted the second invitation in the early spring of 1872. The Christian Reformed Church had to wait six years before Reverend Jan Stadt arrived. What Henry Hospers did for Orange City materially, Reverend Bolks did spiritually. No intellectual, he was a fiery preacher. After leaving the farm as a young man, he had received his training under the Reverend Albertus Van Raalte in the Netherlands. At that time he also acquired some knowledge of medicine, and he was also the colony's physician in the early years. He, as well as Hospers, was a strong encourager in the grasshopper days.

The fact that Orange city wished to remain the center of all activities, and was reluctant to set up churches in outlying areas, prompted the founding of two Presbyterian churches, in East Orange and North Orange. This forced the hand of the clergy and consistory, and under Reverend Bolks' leadership two Reformed congregations were organized, resulting in instant depletion of the Presbyterian churches. From then on new Reformed churches, and eventually Christian Reformed churches, sprang up in community after community.

One of the reasons Bolks had accepted the call to Orange City was his desire to begin a Christian academy and university there. He had been an early proponent of the Holland Academy and of Hope College in Michigan, and he wished to establish a similar institution in Orange City. He said later that the grasshoppers had flown away with his hope in the early years, but by 1882 the Northwestern Classical Academy was incorporated, and classes began in 1883. The purpose was twofold: to prepare young

therefore good for the real estate business. Another likely factor, found in the writings of the pioneers, was the emotional issue of the preservation of the Union, which was associated with the Republican Party. Henry Hospers also, in setting forth the Republican principles of *De Volksvriend*, praised the faithfulness to the indivisibility of the Union. It is also significant that, although Hospers might have had no say in it, some townships in Sioux County were named Sherman, Grant, Sheridan, Garfield, and Lincoln.

The newspapers and settlers' accounts do reflect a desire to be good Americans (several were Civil War veterans), and Fourth of July celebrations were exuberant affairs. But the names given to the towns or townships still indicate nostalgia for the

Sioux County were Reformed religiously, and when they came that spring of 1870 they began to meet for worship in the sod-houses of lay preachers. A congregation was formed as a mission station under the auspices of the Classis Holland of the Reformed Church in America, in May 1871, with about 45 families. It was apparently not a totally homogeneous bunch, and, according to a letter to the editor in the *Sioux County Herald* of March 21, 1873, the Pella people, who were the majority, did not agree with each other religiously. The writer continued that the addition of people from Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, and the Netherlands (the latter subdivided into provincial entities) did not help. This probably accounts for the formation of the Christian Re-

men for seminary in order to fill the pulpits of the rapidly forming churches in the West, and to train teachers for the country schools. The school grew slowly but steadily. The student body came not only from Northwest Iowa, but also from the Dakotas, Minnesota, and Nebraska. Virtually all the teaching personnel were Hope College-trained and were Michiganders.

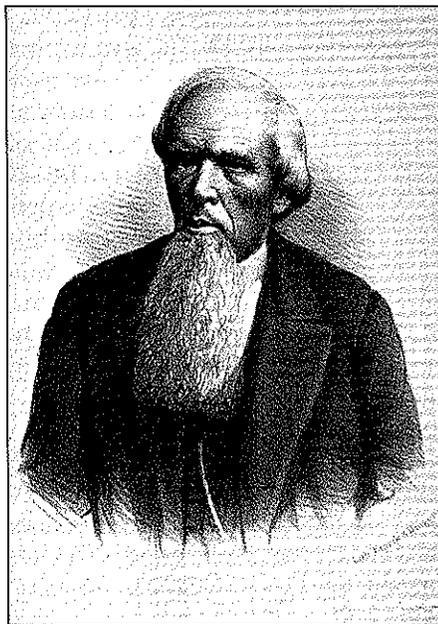
Despite the refining influences of the Academy, together with churches, a cornet band, a Glee Club, debating and literary societies, Orange City apparently also displayed characteristics of the typical frontier town, and alcohol was freely consumed. The Pella contingent probably was not anti-alcohol, since Pella's township had defeated the adoption of a prohibition law in 1855 by a vote of 250 to 31.¹⁹ Charles Dyke, in his folksy account *The Story of Sioux County*, described the existence of several saloons and the drunken behavior of various colonists, to whom he gave fictitious names. In this matter Hospers also protected Orange City's reputation by refuting the *Pella's Weekblad's* assertion that there were saloons in Orange City. "We cannot find one—all drink a glass of wine at home, if they have it." To give Hospers the benefit of the doubt, perhaps saloons sprang up with the tide of non-prohibitionist immigrants who came in the 80s. Dyke also mentioned bootlegging, which seems to be verified by the Ellerbroek ad in the local newspapers with the claim that he was the "only one in Orange City who can legally sell spirits."²⁰

By 1891 the situation had apparently grown out of hand, and anti-liquor factions worked toward enforcing the prohibition law. When the property of prohibitionists was vandalized, the mayor of Orange City publicly denounced the "demoralizing influence" of the three saloons.²¹ A chapter of the Women's Christian

Temperance Union was formed that same year as well as the Holland Township Temperance Alliance in 1891. Whatever the need for such organizations was, they also represented another step toward the Americanization of the colony.

The charges and counter-charges between the Pella and Orange City newspapers, such as mentioned above and in other places, were partly in jest, partly in real rivalry. But the connection remained close for many years. There was a Pella Street in Orange City, for example.

In order to see whether Sioux County was doing as well as it claimed, the *Pella Blade* organized an excursion in September 1873, and the



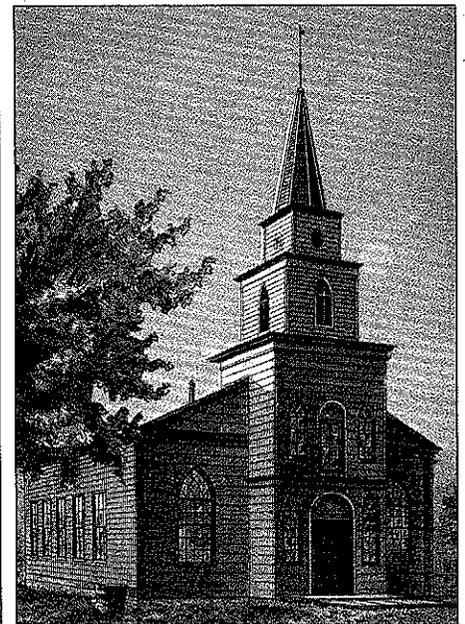
Sioux County Herald proclaimed: "Mother is coming." Over 150 people came, and 100 buggies picked them up at the East Orange station. The Pella Band played, the Orange City glee club sang, and they had gargantuan banquets. But most importantly, several visitors purchased Sioux County land!

Two years later, in September 1875, Pella residents again visited the colony, and the *Sioux County Herald*

urged readers to "get quartettes together, put your organs in shape, string your violins, get out your flags, and prepare garlands of flowers."

If the ties were so close, if so large a portion of the population of Sioux County was from Pella, can it therefore be said, "So mother, so daughter"? I don't think so. First of all, there were, and perhaps still are, real differences. Secondly, the Sioux County settlement with Orange City as nucleus was the pattern for subsequent settlements in the West, and Orange City has more in common with them than with the settlements in the East.

The colony in Sioux County had a different beginning than the Pella settlement. Most settlers of 1870 merely



relocated—they carried with them the habits and patterns formed and set in Pella during the twenty years since its formation. They carried with them the Yankee-Dutch tongue, the instruments for a future band, American agricultural know-how, gospel hymns, Sunday school material, a store of patriotic American sheet music, etc.

No doubt the Pella core was significant for the tone and ways of the com-

munity. Yet these migrants were a different breed of people from those who had founded Pella. These had been urban folk, mainly from the provinces of South Holland and Utrecht, and many from the large cities. Several of them were highly educated and some had been people of prominence in the Netherlands.

The group which trekked to Sioux County from Pella tended to be more heterogeneous (the first exploratory team represented the provinces of Gelderland, Friesland, and South Holland), less sophisticated, less educated, and definitely rural.

Although Hospers tended to behave in an aristocratic manner, the rest of the leadership of Orange City was not cast in the old-country, upper-class mold, but represented the American ideal of the self-made man and Yankee know-how. Comparing Reverend H. P. Scholte with the former farmer Seine Bolks suggests the difference. Further, *Harper's* magazine was sold in the bookstore in Pella in 1854 (and probably later as well), whereas in Orange City the Michigan book dealer Doornink advertised

(far left) Rev. Seine Bolks. (left) First Dutch Reformed Church (RCA and CRC). (below) Third Street, looking east, Orange City, Iowa.

mostly spiritual fare, and certainly not *Harper's* magazine.

This is not to say that Orange City did not have a share of Dutch intellectuals. They came because they were lured by the romance of the West, but they were never in leadership positions because they tended to be either liberal theologically and/or eccentric socially. They generally moved on farther West or returned to the Netherlands.

Although the first Sioux County settlers were often the offspring of the first settlers who had been involved in the early years of sectarian struggles in Pella, they were not schismatic. By 1870, when these settlers left Pella, the church situation had "normalized" and they went fully intending to form either a Reformed or a Christian Reformed church.

Added to this core, and ultimately dwarfing it, was the flow of migrants from other states and immigration directly from the Netherlands. In 1880, in Holland township (in which Orange City is located), the Pella Dutch outnumbered the out-of-state settlers 2:1; and in Orange City 3:1. By 1900 they still seemed to dominate, although many immigrants from the Netherlands had diluted their

strength. There were also a good number of people from Michigan, Wisconsin, and Illinois, and several returnees from the Dakotas.

In summary, the Dutch settlement in Sioux County developed into a society different from "Mother" Pella politically (the change from Democrat to Republican), socially (Sioux County was more rural, more heterogeneous, representing all provinces of the Netherlands and Dutch-Americans from various states), and religiously (more solidly Reformed and less pluralistic). And because of its heterogeneity, Orange City became a type for subsequent settlements in the West.

²The history of the settlement can be found in several books or papers. See, for example, Lucas, *Netherlanders in America*; Gerrit Draayom, *Herinneringen aan Vroeger Dagen in Sioux County* (Hospers, 1924); Jacob Van der Zee, *The Hollanders of Iowa* (The State Historical Society of Iowa, 1912); G. Nelson Nieuwenhuis, *Siouxland: A History of Sioux County, Iowa* (The Sioux County Historical Society, 1983); *De Volksvriend*, 19 September 1895 (anniversary issue).

³*De Volksvriend*, 25 June 1875. The underlinings are the author's.

⁴*De Volksvriend*, 19 September 1895, p. 17.

⁵Draayom, *Herinneringen aan Vroeger Dagen in Sioux County*, p. 16.

⁶Statistics do vary: see the *Sioux County Herald*, 7 February 1873; Van der Zee, *The Hollanders of Iowa*, pp. 179, 180; Lucas, *Netherlanders in America*, p. 348; and Draayom, *Herinneringen aan Vroeger Dagen in Sioux County*, p. 21.

⁷*De Volksvriend*, 20 June 1874.

⁸Lucas, *The Netherlanders in America*, p. 310.

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 347.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 348.

¹¹Jacob Van der Zee, "An Eminent Foreigner's Visit to the Dutch Colonies of Iowa in 1873" (based on the journal kept by Rev. M. Cohen Stuart), *Iowa Journal of History of Politics*, Vol. 11 (Jan./Oct. 1913).

¹²J. W. Warnshuis, "De Geschiedenis van Sioux County," *De Volksvriend*, 19 June 1879.

¹³Van der Zee, *The Hollanders of Iowa*, p. 157, 158.

¹⁴A. F. H. de Lespinasse, *De Nieuwe Nederlandsche Volksplanting in Sioux County, Iowa. In het belang van Landgenooten en Landverhuizers beschreven* (Amsterdam: C. L. Brinkman, 1875), p. 7.

¹⁵Van der Zee, *The Hollanders of Iowa*, p. 189.

¹⁶Lucas, *Netherlanders in America*, p. 379.

¹⁷Ken Hansen, *Calliope* (Dearborn, Missouri, 1982), p. 97.

¹⁸*Sioux County Herald*, 9 July 1874, Local News section.

¹⁹Van der Zee, *The Hollanders of Iowa*, p. 220.

²⁰*De Volksvriend*, 20 July 1876, Local News section.

²¹*Sioux County Herald*, 4 March 1891.



T

he roaring twenties did not roar very loudly in Paterson. Although New York City with its sheiks and shebas, jazzmen, follies, art colonies, and all that "Ain't We Got Fun," was only seventeen miles south of Paterson, it had little impact on its citizens. Fitzgerald's world of Gatsby was as foreign as Arabia. A silk worker at fifty-six cents an hour had little money for razzle-dazzle. The seven Christian Reformed churches in Paterson and Prospect Park with their solid homes,

conservative churches, and Christian schools augmented the isolation. The mercantile savvy of the Dutch profited from the transitory prosperity of the decade for Hollanders were growing comfortable through success in real estate, insurance, business, construction, and prominent positions in the mills. However, their strong religious commitments eschewed worldly amusements, and their most desperate moral struggle was over the propriety of bobbed hair. The fabu-



GROWING IN NEW JERSEY

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lous, semi-mythical, flaming twenties across the Hudson were not exported, and to write as if I had been involved in a dramatic clash of moralities would be fake. What strikes me now over sixty years later is the astounding innocence of our generation. I never saw a movie till I was a sophomore at Calvin, when in the company of a presem I saw *Uncle Tom's Cabin*—and that was forbidden! The one feature of the twenties that was real and decisive was the scar of the Great Depression,

which with its loss and fear changed permanently the relationship between the government and the governed.

I first saw Paterson from the Lackawanna Railroad station in August of 1920. On one side was the withering splendor of Lambert Castle; in the valley, on the other, lay the compact city of Paterson crossed and partially looped by the Passaic river, which two centuries ago, as W. C. Williams said

Comes plunging in above
the city
And crashes from the edge
of the gorge
In a recoil of spray and rain-
bow mists.

In 1920, however, the river wound sluggishly around the city, growing increasingly murky with the varied dyes that polluted it. Gone were the big bass and giant sturgeon. It was a slow river, and I lived within four blocks of it for fourteen years and crossed it thou-

sands of times but never on ice. Throwing a stone across it was the mark of a strong arm. To an eleven-year-old boy coming from a small town almost lost in the endless openness of Iowa, the city had a foreign, almost exotic, look. It turned out to be a city of many languages, one of which was Dutch.

In 1920 Paterson numbered about 100,000 citizens, of which 9,448 were of Dutch origin or descent. Although it was densely populated in two-story flats, it still abounded in empty lots, sandlots, and baseball diamonds, or ovals, as we called them, on which young boys and men played baseball with taped balls and bats and new Spalding balls and Louisville slug-gers. One heard only the solid sound of wooden bats rather than the tinny diminuendo of aluminum bats. The streets were narrow, some poorly

paved, often crowded and without traffic lights. As traffic approached the congested center of town, it was directed by policemen. The city had an extraordinarily effective system of buses which crisscrossed town. From our home I could board eight bus lines to the center and seldom waited more than a few minutes. The city was served by three railroads: the Erie; the New York, Susquehanna and Western, a big name with a short run to Scranton; and the Lackawanna, which ran at the edge of town. Walking to work and church, however, was as common as riding there, and our parking lot in the early twenties included horse-drawn vehicles. Our butcher, vegetable man, and milk man served us from wagons. The meat wagon was refrigerated but acquainted with flies. A few miles from home, in Hawthorne, Ridgewood and Fairlawn, were numerous ten- to twelve-acre truck farms that were ploughed by horses which also transported fruit and vegetables to Market Street in the early hours of the day. In the city and suburbs lived a polyglot population who were taught English in English.

Our family—father, mother, grandmother, and I—were greeted by two elders, who took us to the parsonage in two Model T Fords. The one was short, round, and red-faced; the other tall, gangling, and uncommon in speech and manner. When we arrived, our new home was a prize exhibit of ministerial perks: newly painted walls, beds made, furniture in place, larder equipped. The house was large and roomy, and I could still find my way in it in the dark. It was flanked by two lawns—one devoted to green grass and a bed of roses which my father tended and from which Tony Damato would beg me to pluck a red rose for a date. It was a risky business because my father had a phenomenal memory. The other



UP RSEY

(pictured) A portion of the fifth and sixth grade class of Riverside Christian School. John Timmerman is third from left.

side was flanked by grass devoted to croquet and guinea pigs which mowed it to the janitor's chagrin. The back of the lawn was fenced in. A large peach tree owned by a Swiss extended a branch into our yard. The peaches were large and luscious, and I took some from time to time. The Swiss cut the branch off. Pasquali lived next door; every fall he would tread grapes with his bare feet and every Christmas give us a bottle of powerful exhilaration. Across the street Jimmy d'Orio practiced piano and directed a jazz band, which on summer evenings would pour the marches and waltzes of Jean Paul through our windows late into the night. Across the other side was a large empty lot devoted to games and small fires at twilight, enlivened by mouth organs and song.

When I ventured out the first morning, all I heard was Italian, in the neighbor's yard and on the street. Parents ordered their children about in Italian. They were tough disciplinarians; if Tony disobeyed, his father ripped off his belt and beat him in public. In our home such discipline was almost unheard of. The people I saw and heard were volatile, gesticulative, given to laughter, quick temper, generosity on scant resources, and music. My new playmates were dark-haired, dark-eyed, tough little guys. I had to manufacture respect. Since they didn't know Iowa from Ohio, they readily believed that the Sioux were still riding their pintos bareback and raiding settle-

ments so that the horses in our church barns in western Iowa were still guarded by two of the fastest guns west of the Missouri, Cupido and Wiersma. Furthermore, as we played baseball, they realized the retributive power of my fastball. We became friends. I learned to admire them and their parents. When my father was ill, some of them visited him in the hospital; when my mother was ill there was real concern. I respected their pluck, industry, family loyalties, openness,

our family had significant advantages and disadvantages. Father, mother, and grandmother spoke Dutch, German, and English fluently. My father was a fount of German proverbs which were constantly quoted and applied. The house was filled with books and all of us read them. My mother was a saint who lived sacrificially for church and family. I never heard her say a mean thing. My father did not either, but the tensions of his work sometimes made him curt and irrita-



and gift of song. In the forties when my wife and I visited Paterson, we went to the Santo's store where I had bought so much lemon ice. To my wife's utter amazement, Mr. Santo not only shook my hand but also kissed me on both cheeks. My growing up in Paterson owed much to my Italian connection. I saw what it meant to live on the edge of poverty with grace and good humor. I never knew a whining Italian.

Growing up in a parsonage with

ble. No minister lives worry-free. He is caught in a tangle of sermonizing, house visiting, the ill and dying, the wayward and even the hostile. I remember when working with some Hollanders in the silk mill that one of them was commenting on the indolent lifestyle of the clergy, working one day a week and stealing sermons out of books. One crusty old man who belonged to our congregation said, "Our minister doesn't do that, he makes them up himself." Further-

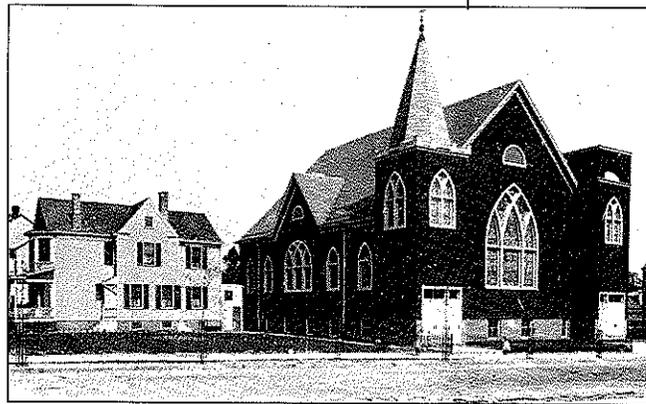
more, one had to endure the annoyance of the alleged necessity of setting an example with pressures from within and outside the home. I grew so weary of being set up as a stuffed shirt yearning to don the mail of Sir Galahad that I proved my humanity by getting C's in deportment. The church was served by a half-cocked janitor who detested my seventy-five guinea pigs and approached hysteria when for my father's relaxation the consistory built him a superb



chicken coop, populated by gorgeous Rhode Island Reds, master cluckers and crows. Now he had to put up with the detritus of two foul species. I enjoyed bouncing a ball against the step of the garage in a game called points. Once the ball crashed through a pane of the colored glass window. He told me I was bound for the penitentiary. Church members pointed out my lapses with unflinching devotion. On the other hand, some members of the church always helped me get a summer job and many others

were unusually kind. Lefty DeJong, a fine first baseman, gave me many valuable tips and transported me to many a game for teams on which we both played. It was a life altering between tips and taps.

A minister has many tasks, some of which have curious results. I remember a marriage in our home after which the bridegroom gave my father two dollars. He returned it with a year's subscription to *The Banner*. Once he had to preach at Goffle Hill



(facing page) Aerial view of Paterson. (left) Rev. John Timmerman. (right) Fourth Christian Reformed Church and parsonage.

Sanitarium. One old lady ate an apple during the service and then threw the core at him. Every fall he spent six straight weeks engaged in house visitation. After rebuking an errant husband, the wife arose, shook her fist in his face and said, "You leave my man alone." He had to feign appreciation at the Ladies' Aid banquets at which some sweet singer of Israel always read a long poem in doggerel. He had to endure an elder who was strongly and vocally opposed to Christian education in a church almost unanimously for it. It always puzzled him that such a man could have been elected. Those were also the days when a minister paid for his own coal, lights, and telephone. Once when everybody in the house was ill but me, I had to stoke the furnace, with the result that every radiator was steaming.

Ever since he had driven into a herd of cows in Iowa, my father dared not drive a car. For some years I owned a Model T Ford which I drove to Calvin and back, and which, after the brakes were shot, the horn gone, and lights lost, I sold to Henry Stob for \$5. He used it to haul ashes on Saturdays. During the summer I often drove father to the city hospitals. I still see him in immaculate elegance, hat firmly held on his head by his hand, sitting in the front seat as if he were in peril,

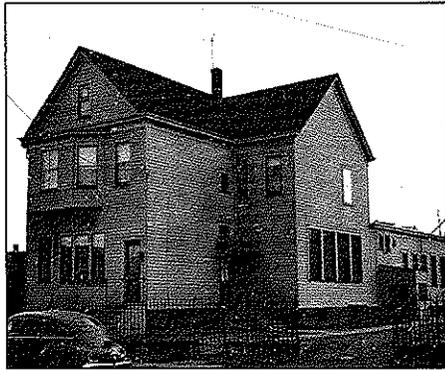
which he probably was. He was not proud of that car, and when I wanted to park it on the street for a few weeks because my brother-in-law's car would be in the garage, he insisted that I rent D'Orio's garage for that time. Unfortunately, in backing out

I chipped D'Orio's door, and he was in Italian anger—and that is something volcanic. We replaced the damage.

During the time between March 1926 and June 1927 my father and mother lay for eighteen weeks in the Paterson General Hospital. During Mother's hospitalization, and unaware of it, Grandmother died in the same hospital. For eighteen weeks I visited that hospital every day, vacillating between fear, despair, and hope. It was a time of prayer and testing. My mother had a cold which developed into pneumonia, followed by a stroke, which left her partially lame for the rest of her life. That she bore with amazing grace and without complaint "charging within the cavalry of woe." In her delirium she was grievously hurt by the fact that I did not bring the four kittens of her beloved cat to the hospital. It was a tragi-comedy, painful to father and me. My father needed gall bladder surgery, and

he was attended by one of the best surgeons in town; but he had to spend four weeks there in preparation for the operation and three in recovery. It is inconceivable today. My grandmother died of pneumonia. The last time I visited her she said with a shining face, "Ich hoere die Engelen singen" (I hear the angels singing). The afternoon of her burial occurred at the same time I was scheduled to pitch against Eastside High School. I will never forget the munificent charity of the congregation, Mrs. H. Schultz who walked to our house every day for three weeks until my sister arrived to make meals and help with housework, and the D. A. Kuiken family for their special kindnesses. Despite all the financial help, and much lower medical costs than today, the illnesses deferred my going to college for a year, but that was as nothing compared to the retentions of my parents.

In the fall of 1920, I was enrolled in



the Riverside Christian School located on the lower floor of a house on Third Avenue, backed up by a barn usually flanked by muddy water and less savory substances. Back of that was a large field on which we played baseball and a hill on which we used our sleds a few times. After going to school in Grundy Center, Iowa, flanked by Eels, Hummel, Dalglish, and Willoughby, it was a shock to be surrounded by Tilstra, Hutting, Kuiken, and Hulsebos. The adjustment was not easy. At Riverside, the

teachers were zealously committed to elaborate diagramming, and the blackboards were regularly filled with intricate patterns. I had no idea where to place a participle or gerund even if I had known what they were. The only thing that saved me from complete embarrassment was the fact that the teacher read some of my compositions as examples of good writing, innocent as they were of grammatical learning and the mystery of diagramming. This school believed in pad-

wrenching ordeal if one met the quota of ten bushels a day. The farmer's son did the plowing and took his frustrations out on the horse, which he would beat and vituperate in two languages. Images of beaten horses still arouse painful memories. I have seen wagons pulled by four horses up the steep incline of Madison Avenue. They were whipped without pity. The land which I worked on became increasingly valuable, and a friend told me recently that lots in that area now

GRADUATES		<hr/> Graduation & Closing Exercises <hr/>	
Jeaneke De Vries Herman Hutting Foen Kolo Ada Kuiken Trina Kuiken	Margeret Blomster Edith Sijp Gustave Tilstra John Thunneman	of the Riverside School for Christian Instruction Thursday Evening, July Sixth, Nineteen Hundred and twenty-two at 7:35 o'clock in the Fourth Christian Reformed Church, Anterson, N. J.	
Class Motto "The Lord is my Shepherd" - Ps. 23:1		<hr/> TEACHERS <hr/>	
Class Colors Black and Gold		Miss N. Van Rossum Miss W. Manath	
Class Flower Carnation		Miss J. Spoelhof, Principal	
SCHOOLBOARD :			
H. Hutting, President D. A. Kuiken, Vice Pres. N. A. Kuiken, Sec. P. S. Dykstra, Treas.	G. De Vries J. Dijk G. Sijp J. Stijnema W. Vogel		

ding. Some boys threw a neatly dressed boy into the water by the barn. They were called to the front of class, told to bend forward, and were soundly paddled in an awesome silence. What I appreciated in the teachers was their reading every day from an exciting story; what I squirmed under was the recurrent singing of "There is a Green Hill Far Away," during which I moved my lips. We also had regular Bible study at which I had to be meritorious. I was graduated without honors in 1922.

During the following summer I worked on a small truck farm, picking cherries, tomatoes, and beans. The farmer had half a dozen acres of beans, and he paid twenty cents a bushel for picking them, a back-

(left) Riverside Christian School. (above) Graduation Program, 1922. (facing pg.) Riverside Chris. Sch. students circa 1919. Grades 5 and 6.

sell for \$80,000 apiece, more than the farmer saw in his lifetime although he worked from dawn until dusk, and once a week went to the city market at 2 a.m. in addition.

Eastern Academy, now Eastern Christian High School, in which I was enrolled in the fall of 1922, had opened in 1920. Anyone who has read Cornelius Bontekoe's account of the first twenty-five years of its existence must have been poignantly moved by the initiative, courage, and generosity of its founders and early supporters. Christian higher education in that commercial milieu had to be fought for. Its beginnings were meager. In

1923 it numbered only forty-eight students. It was housed in cramped quarters on the third floor of the North Fourth Street grammar school. Physical education was conducted by a pretty lady in the basement between steel poles. There were four teachers and a principal who served both schools—he was a rigid disciplinarian, short on temper and long on misunderstanding high school students. The grammar students marched from class to class as if they

crowded with little children. There was nothing in the way of extracurricular activities.

All this changed in 1924 with the appointment of W. C. Rozeboom as principal, and the shift to a remodeled house on North Seventh Street. Rozeboom had an extraordinarily winning personality, uncommon ability as a teacher, outstanding musical talent, and the ability to attract students and charm their parents. He transformed indifference into esprit

History of English Literature was exactly that, a red book, with a lively style, good quotations, and a biographical emphasis that sparked a lifelong interest in me. John James Ahasuerus Ploos Van Amstel came from distinguished Dutch forbears. he taught English, German, Algebra, Geometry, and whatever else necessity demanded. He was a sprightly teacher with homiletical tendencies. He could get angry. He once said to an incessant whisperer in our third-floor

quarters, "Shut up or I'll throw you out of the window." I took a year of Biology with Mr. E. Kuizema. I remember two things: memorizing endless lists of the Latin names for insects, and the ringing laughter when he began an illustration by saying, "Take a pea, for example." In my senior year, I more or less wandered into an elective which he taught, Commercial Law. I still remember that course with real pleasure. It taught me accuracy and logical thinking.

We had Chapel every day and one I



were in a military youth corps. He had a ruler and used it. He was also a self-appointed linguist, who maintained that food should rhyme with good and pronounced food that way in the Lord's prayer. He expelled Frank Holwerda and me for a week for catching a golf ball which we bounced off the front steps. Frank was no pliable student. Once the principal attempted to hit him and he said, "You do that again and I'll nail you." We spent two years there with its playground

de corps and made the school a happy place and an indelible memory. He made history live; I remember him saying, "I could paint the colonies black," and then doing it with fervor and imagination. I remember with gratitude three of the other teachers. Miss Bell taught us Latin and English; she was a gentle, competent lady who suffered us Philistines with a smile and good humor. High School English teachers did not then have the excellent textbooks they do now. Halleck's

will never forget. One of our clergy had the habit of asking rhetorical questions and then waiting, waiting for the congregation to ponder it. He waited so long that several boys burst out laughing. He walked down from the platform and resoundingly slapped one of them and returned to the platform as if it were a part of the talk. It is a better school now, but it remains in my experience an age of innocence: no alcohol, drugs, pregnant girls, dancing, or even movies. The wildest

worldly entertainment was beamed from WOR featuring the Happiness Boys, Ernie Jones and Billie Hare. It was a world within a world, where baseball was our greatest diversion.

By the time I was graduated, Eastern Academy had almost tripled in size. The student body was well above average, since those who disdained further education procured "working papers" at the age of fourteen and went into the mills and commercial pursuits. Among the ablest students

ther Fortuin and his partner, Mr. Van Goor, to Brooklyn. The back seat caught fire from my pipe. We stopped in the tunnel and stamped the fire out. Mr. Fortuin said, "Never mind, it's covered by insurance." We played gin rummy on many occasions—once through a whole night. Henry Fortuin and I took many long walks together. John Hamersma was my friend from the time I met him until he was tragically stricken while leading an annual meeting for the Christian School As-

ingly dreary. I spent three summers and a period of almost a year working in these mills. I saw and felt the world of unskilled labor with its monotony, hazards, and low pay. There were no unions, no medical insurance, no unemployment compensation. There was no way to escape the tyranny of the boss, if that was his nature. I worked for an Italian with a flaming temper which sometimes resulted in cuffing. I saw an elder of our church kick a slow workman in the rump. I



there was Floyd Fortuin, who clamored for Virgil, whereas most of us were relieved to escape Caesar. He had a phenomenal memory and an inquiring, original mind. He was one of a distinguished and idiosyncratic family in whose presence dullness was non-existent. At one dinner there, the father trending into prolonged prayer was interrupted by "Time's Up!" Once I accompanied fa-

sociation to which he contributed well beyond the first mile. We took many rides in his car discussing trivial and profound subjects. He was a master storyteller and an unforgettable companion.

The Paterson silk mills were strikingly different from the well-appointed factories of our time. They were simply buildings to work in, wholly functional and correspond-

worked for a while for a kind man. I grabbed the ends of ninety feet of silk, pulled it out of a steaming tub, and fed it into a bag. Over and over from six to six, beside a murky window along which the greasy water of the Passaic inched by. For almost a year I worked for a Christian gentleman in a clean, well-lighted room, sewing together pieces of silk destined for the print shop where the aristocrats of the

silk industry worked. Some of these pieces were worth \$6 a yard, so the printing had to be meticulously accurate. Ahead of me worked Jimmy Iandoli, a born singer, who sang long parts of Italian operas while he worked. The workers there made from forty-six to fifty-six cents an hour. During one month we worked

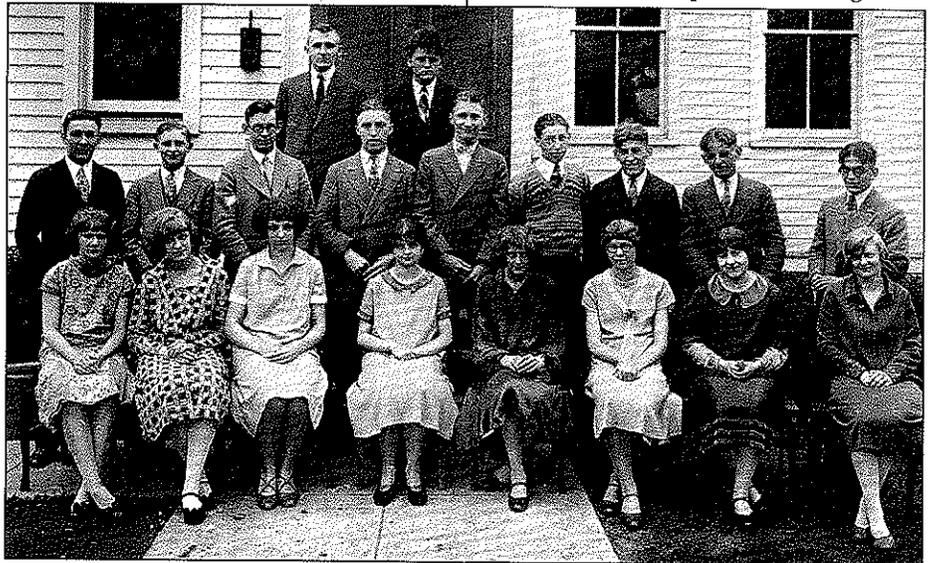


(facing page) Paterson silk millworkers. (above) Eastern Academy with part of the original building visible. (right) Eastern Academy seniors 1926, left to right. Bottom row: Josie Sijstma, Minnie Van Dyk, Johanna Clever, Luise Minnema, Sue Dykstra, Ada Kraken, Bertha Rozema, Clara Bosland. Row 2: John Zuidema, Leonard Van Olden, Andrew Bandstra, Milo Velsen, Floyd Josten, Richard Rozema, John Hakebos, John Van Dyk. Top row: Young, John Timmerman.

from 7:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. with a free lunch and a dollar-a-day bonus. The vast majority of workers were sometime immigrants; they had it better here than in Sicily or the Netherlands. They were being rooked, but were impotent. The prosperity of the twenties never trickled down to them and the great Depression plunged them into fear and misery.

Religion did not dominate Paterson as it did Orange City, Iowa, but it dominated the lives of the Christian Reformed churches in Paterson and neighboring areas. There was a remarkable consensus of faith and practice at that time. There were no liberals to fight, no bitter controversies; even the gradual transition from Dutch to English in the churches where this occurred was peacefully accom-

plished. Sunday services were rigidly structured and the sermons metro-nomically similar in a tripartite division. The church was a place of worship and instruction; every activity reinforced the nature of the heavenly country and its imperatives for living in ours. There was one notable difference between their church services and ours—the absence of loudspeakers. A clergyman had to have lung power and clear enunciation. Furthermore, the minister was



not riveted to electronic devices. This permitted the exercise of the dramatic instincts of some of the preachers. Organists were thanked at Christmastime for their contribution to the services. Ministers at that time had more authority and less salary than now. They were allowed less vacation. Parishioners were expected at both services and warned and visited if they did not come. Sermons were more threatening than today and more daring in criticism.

The seven churches in Paterson and Prospect Park numbered 4,210 souls in 1929; in 1985 the six Paterson and Prospect Park churches numbered 1683 souls. Churches and members have moved to other suburbs. Many of them have relocated to

faraway places and the homogeneity of these churches has diminished. In the twenties the seven churches were within walking distance of each other. Since for a large portion of the twenties our church had no evening services, I visited all of those which did. There was no television, few radios, only rook players, and relatively few readers; so young people from our church often attended, not primarily for spiritual growth but out of curiosity and the hope of meeting new

acquaintances, the parade of young people on Haledon Avenue and the streets of the borough. At home I always had to report the text. The problems arose with remembering the exegesis, which to me at least was sometimes murky. If one walked a young lady home, one was never invited in. When one was invited in, the acquaintance assumed serious dimensions. Surprisingly, I remember visiting a non-Christian Reformed church only once, not because it was forbidden, but never contemplated. We were a genuinely adhesive group. These evening services were well attended not only by the bald and greying but also by naturally blonde and brunette. A church of a hundred families would draw a much larger crowd

than one of three hundred today. *Optima dies—prima fugit.** Baseball and boxing were the national sports in the twenties. The sandlots were utilized from March to late September and the teams were numerous: junior teams, uniformed church teams, independent teams, teams supported by business enterprises, and two professional teams of uncommon competence—the Peerless Plush and the Paterson Silk Sox. At about fourteen I played with the Parkways,

afraid not only of being struck out but also of being struck, and the latter fear often caused the former. The games were largely financed by passing the hat and the crowds at many games were sizable.

Baseball was a fascination in itself; it also widened my associations with society outside our exclusivistic Dutch community. Without it I would never have had friends of diverse ethnic backgrounds with names like Schillinger, Wentink, Terry, Brewer,

nue on my heavy Ranger bicycle, walking in the picturesque woodland beside Squawbrook creek, standing outside the courthouse square watching the posting of the World Series scores. I remember hurrying home from a twelve-hour day in the mill and then pitching for seven innings:

What cared this body for wind and weather
When youth and I lived in it together.

I see and hear the sadness caused



(above) Eastern Academy Baseball team, c. 1925. Coach and School principal William G. Roozeboom is in the middle. (right) Tyrus Cobb.

whose catcher, Tony Presto, caught fastballs without equipment. Eastern Academy had its first team in 1925; the uniforms were furnished by Lambert Steen, whose family will always be associated with baseball for me. I pitched to Peter Steen, who died an early tragic death, John Steen was our coach in my senior year, I played on a team with Herman Steen, and Barney Steen played first base for the team I coached in 1938. John Steen organized a team he called the College All Stars. At least we were all college students. We played the Midland Park Rangers, who had a pitcher, Johnny Vander Meer, who pitched the only two successive no-hit games in professional baseball. He was a fearsome pitcher; he was fast and he was wild. You were

Granito, "Yankee" Renzo, "Porky" DeLucio and the like. I once played with a team almost wholly Italian. The game was umpired by a member of our church. He made a distressing decision and almost the whole team went for him and he went for Fairlawn. Baseball taught us the values of loyalty, sacrifice, and endurance. It is saddening to see professional baseball caving in to greed and substance abuse.

As one grows older and less engrossed by contemporary pressures, images of the past, often with startling clarity, flash through the mind. Time collapses and I am pumping up the long, hard slope of Haledon Ave-



by the death of little three-year-old Luigi, a favorite of the block. Mr. Giminetti rushes from the house while Mrs. Giminetti pours a bucket of soapy water over him. There he lies still, the drunken oculist that Bill Spoelhof and I carried home on Fifth Avenue. His wife gave us each a half-dollar and we looked for him again and again. The home we lived in was moved, the church burned down, my parents lie in Fairlawn Cemetery, but the ties to them all are unbro-

ken. In that home and church and in those schools I lived in two countries, both real today. George Bernard Shaw once said that it is too bad that youth is wasted on the young. It wasn't wasted on me. As far as a minister's son can have a hometown, mine was Paterson. In a stanza of Houseman lie my sentiments for that city.

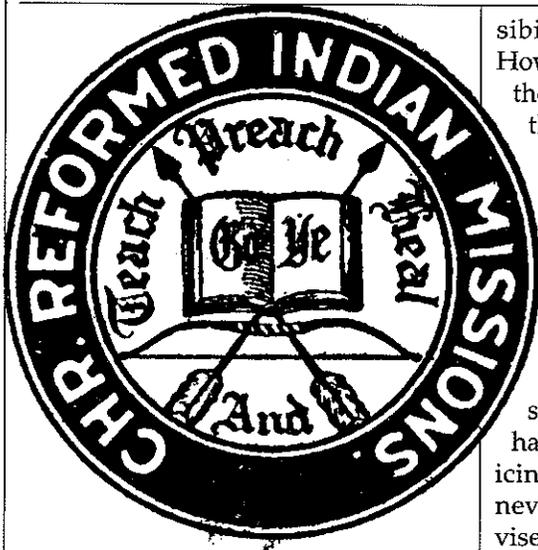
That is the land of lost content.
I see it shining plain.
The happy highways where I went
And cannot come again.

—John J. Timmerman

*The best days quickly depart.

Dear Mission Friends:

This letter, from the 1920s explains the work of a medical missionary among the Navajo Indians of New Mexico. The author, Dr. E. H. Beernink addressed the correspondence to father-in-law, Mr. Peter Bolhuis, in Coopersville, Michigan. In a subsequent issue of Origins we expect to publish more lengthy accounts of the Rehoboth mission. Mr. Stanley Pikaard, who teaches there, has begun to assemble a history of Classis Red Mesa.



In answer to your letter, asking for a letter from this field, I am gladly sending you this. I have tried to tell something of the medical problems here and how we try to solve them.

From the earliest times man has been afflicted with illnesses and troubles and has formulated theories as to their causes and made attempts to relieve them. The Navajo is a very primitive man. To him the cause of disease is in the supernatural and spiritual. He thinks the cause of disease is in the mountain, the lightning, the rattlesnake, the eagle, the coyote, the bear, or something which apparently can do him harm. The horse, dog, cat, rabbit, or prairie dog are not considered as causes of disease because he thinks that in them there is no pos-

sibility of them doing him harm. However, one must not think that it is the mountain itself or the coyote, but the spirit in the mountain. The Navajo world is full of spirits good and evil.

With this in mind the Navajo medicine man formulates his method of treatment. It is based on the homeopathic idea of fighting fire with fire.

A short time ago I was called to see a Navajo who was paralyzed. It had come on suddenly and the medicine man was perplexed. He had never seen one before and so he advised that they call the white medicine man. When I got there they said he was not ready to be seen as he was about to have a bath. I was surprised to hear them talk about a bath, but I learned that it meant that he had to have the paint scraped off that had been put on the night before for the sing that had been held over him.

When I was admitted there was a large crowd of men in the hogan with the medicine man and the patient. After I had asked some questions and examined the patient, the medicine man asked what the trouble was, and I explained briefly. He asked many questions which I tried to answer.

When he finished, I asked him if he were a medicine man. When he admitted I said, "You have asked me many questions about my medicine.

(right) Navajo Medicine Man, Mr. Joe Murphy.



Let me ask you some questions about your medicine." This he countered by a request for headache medicine. After I had given this I repeated my request. Then he said that since we were both doing the same work we should help each other, and he agreed to teach me some Navajo medicine.

He showed me about twenty small bags made of deerskin. These contained various colored powders. One contained some red sand from the sacred mountain, one contained some powdered flowers and one a stone all from the same place. Any disease caused by the mountain can be cured by these three provided the proper song goes with it.

Then he showed me two stones. Both were thin and flat oval in shape with a slight point at one end. One had a dark spot near the pointed end. These had come from the ends of the bolts of lightning. With these two stones, any disease caused by lightning can be cured provided it is accompanied by the proper song.

He also showed me a stone that would remove tumors under the same conditions. He had the foot and tail of a coyote, two teeth from a bear, a small cylindrical stone which with some imagination, might be thought to resemble a snake, and a bunch of eagle feathers. With each he gave an explanation of how they worked. At this point the audience showed that they were amused and since he would not have sport made of him he refused to make any more explanations. He said that he would come to the hospital and have me show him more of my medicine, and he would then show me some

more of his.

The things he showed me were of course very superficial. His real secrets he would not tell. They are the sings, and they are legion. The cure depends on the right sing since the evil spirits causing the disease are influenced only by the sings. So if one sing does not cure the patient, they must try another and another until the patient is well, dead, or his means for paying the medicine man are exhausted.

In case of death, there is much superstition. No Navajo will live in a hogan in which a person has died. It is called a "Cheentie" or Devil's hogan. When they see a person is about to die, they move him outside, throw some brush around to protect him from the wind, build a fire, and collect his ornaments for burial. In case a person dies before he can be moved, the



all patients who can move to leave after they find out someone has just died. We try to keep it quiet, but there seems to be a wireless in the hospital which tells them all at once.

There are many of the younger people who do not believe so firmly in the medicine men and their practices. Most of the older people—and I think we can say all the medicine men—are sincere in their belief that their way is right. If those people who teach that as long as one is sincere in what he believes and does, are right, I am sure that many of these medicine men will have an abundant entrance into the kingdom. However, I



hogan is burned. The men who do the burying are considered unclean and have many ceremonies to go through for cleansing. These require many days and all their lives they must avoid crossing the path they took on the funeral march. One can easily see that when they hold to superstitions like these it difficult to get them into the hospital where they know some people have died. It is quite usual for

fear those people are wrong.

The problem of trying to get them to adopt new methods is surely very hard. White man's medicine is a relative new comer. The Navajos consider that since they have lived so long a time with their methods, why change for something they are unacquainted with? Then there is the matter of religion so closely bound up with their medical practise as with all ignorant

people. To adopt our method of treatment means casting over their religion. There is also their respect for old age, which demands that they listen to the old people and these all hang to the old traditions.

These are some of the problems. How shall we solve them? As in all things that are new and have to be taught, our hope is in the youth. For the adult and old we do what we can for without much hope of great success. We teach the children in the

less since one has no reason to believe that they will follow directions, and if any good results come, the medicine man gets the credit. We have an out-patient department to which many come for cough medicine, liniment, eye medicine, earache medicine, and so on. Some come in to have a bad tooth extracted. In this line we have the medicine man badly beaten, since we have a local anesthetic and good forceps while their man has only a cold chisel. By coming in for minor

other. Often of course these are not surgical. They come asking, "Can you cure me with an operation?" If not, they go back out, but some stay on to see what we can do and often are improved.

But we must remember that the educational and medical work are not ends in themselves but only means to an end. The Navajo needs education and medical care, but he needs vastly more the Gospel. This we must bear constantly in mind. When we go into camps, the missionary goes along whenever possible. After the physical ills are taken care of, he is ready with the message for their souls. For the patients in the hospital there are four meetings a week. The minister takes his portable organ and his little audience sings Navajo Christian hymns. The people enjoy music very much and so we hope that they will take the Gospel home with them in the form of songs. The minister gives a short simple direct talk which is passed on to those who cannot understand through the interpreter. In this way the patients have something to think of during the long days and look forward to the next meeting. In this way we try to do them good in two ways, one which they ask for and see that they need and the other which they do not want and still need so much worse.

I am hopeful for the Navajo. They need much time and labor, and prayer, much prayer.

—Dr. E. H. Beernink



schools the principles of health and medicine simply and clearly hoping that as they go back to camp, they will remember and apply. After a number have gotten back they can withstand the medicine man and his methods.

I have already mentioned the difficulty in getting them in the hospital. Treating in the hogans is rather hope-

(facing page) Medicine Man, Joe Murphy and wife. (above) Rehoboth mission staff, 1925.

things, they see the hospital is not so bad. The patients here seem happy and contented, the devil has not gotten them. This makes it easier in case they are advised to stay.

Those who stay in the hospital we can do much more for if they will obey orders. Those who are helped the most are the surgical cases and these are our best advertisements. Almost every good surgical case sends in an-

GRAND RAPIDS AN IMMIGRANT'S FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Willem Hendrik de Lange was literally slaughtered by a band of Grand Rapids roughnecks racing down the Bridge Street Hill on a make-shift bob sled. Leaving a widow and four dependent children compounded the tragedy, but since this sorry episode occurred over a century ago, it might be reasonable to leave it interred in the fine print of the Grand Rapids *Daily Eagle*. And, indeed, if W. H. de Lange had not written two fascinating letters to the Netherlands before his death, his memory



Reporting in greater detail, the *Daily Eagle* explained, "The boys had constructed a set of 'bobs'—two sleds connected by a long plank—long enough to carry a dozen or more of them at once. On this vehicle they would come down Bridge Street with tremendous speed and force—running across Canal Street and far out onto the bridge. About 9 o'clock, a Hollander named de Lange, a schoolteacher residing on or near Spring Street, was crossing Bridge Street at the junction of Ottawa just as the boys on the

could be left undisturbed. It is also unfortunate such an interesting correspondent survived only six months as an immigrant. Had he lived another decade, this brief article might be more revealing. But, the boys on the sled cut him down, and they seemed to be having a field day of it on January 28, 1874.

The *Daily Morning Democrat*, reporting another sledding mishap that same day, wrote, "Last evening a party of ten boys were arrested on Fulton Street and taken to police

headquarters where Judge Shinkman admonished them and sent them home. The cause was that a lady who was walking down the street was severely injured." On Bridge Street, where the de Lange accident occurred, the city's youth carried their sport to the limit, "having the audacity to stop teams of horses until the crew going down on their sleds could get by."

Though somewhat altered and lengthened in this version, this article appeared earlier in the "Wonderland" section of the Grand Rapids Press of November 13, 1977.

above-mentioned sleigh were coming swiftly down. They ran upon him, striking his legs and breaking both of them we are informed. The services of Dr. Wood, whose offices are at that corner, were immediately secured. The wounded man was conveyed home with some difficulty in a hack, and all that was possible was done for him." But that "all" was not enough. De Lange died two days later, probably from a concussion.

This "Hollander" arrived in Grand Rapids during the summer of 1873. In the Netherlands he had been a poorly paid clerk in the Deventer Law Office of H. Houck. But, at 47 years of age de Lange left his birthplace to join his wife's family in Grand Rapids. While his descendants may have benefitted from that momentous decision, de Lange gained nothing but misery from it. His misfortunes began with his departure and continued throughout the trip with little relief.

Writing of these events he said, "I had imagined that the trip would be very difficult, but it turned out even worse because my wife was blind three quarters of the time [a temporary ailment]. Thus all the irritation of travel fell upon my shoulders. I would not make such a trip again with a blind wife for a thousand dollars. We came to Rotterdam at 12 midnight, and then I spent 45 minutes running around to take care of my baggage. After that I had to get my family moved from the train to the boat. The whole business nearly killed

me and from morning til night I was soaked through and through with sweat."

"On Saturday, June 28, we left Rotterdam and we enjoyed fine weather the first day, but for the remaining days we had heavy mists and storms

so that the passage held no charms for me. We also had an over supply of childish companionship because out of 263 passengers 113 were children almost all of whom were seasick. Fortunately I was not seasick, but on the other hand, being healthy, I became everyone else's servant. The food was also poor. For twelve days we ate moldy bread, and, in July,* we got only potatoes with sauerkraut or pea soup—both with spoiled American bacon. This was caused by the fact that

portunity to get more. We could do nothing but bite the sour apple and hope for better. We were at sea 27 days and it was a happy moment when the New Jersey shore came into sight. When we arrived in New York everything was busy again because we had to have our baggage inspected. We spent 24 hours there but with the tending of the baggage we saw very little. The first building we entered was Castle Garden. It is designed especially for immigrants. Fifteen thou-

sand people can sleep there at one time, but only on their own bedding. We made no use of it, but found a hotel, because we had already experienced enough misery. Finally we raced to Grand Rapids traveling through tunnels, mountains, and valleys. We tarried at Niagara Falls for ten minutes, and they were astounding. But, for the most part we had to watch for thieves and swindlers, including the officials of the railroad, one of whom drummed 10¢ from each of the passengers with the promise of breakfast, but he disappeared when we changed trains. Finally, after 48 hours on the trains, we were fortunate

to reach Grand Rapids. Happily, our needs were well provided at our arrival, and I took heart."

De Lange's letter to his former employer, H. Houck, was written on Oc-

*The season of fresh greens and vegetables in the Netherlands.

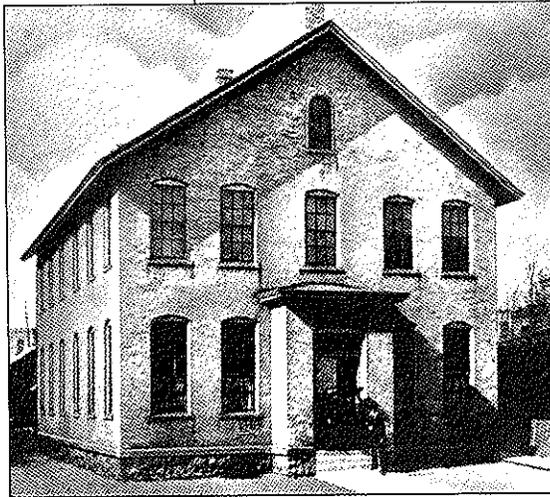


(above) Deventer. (below) Train travel.

someone stole some of my luggage in Rotterdam, and it contained all the food we had packed for the trip. We didn't discover the loss until after we were under way and there was no op-

tober 4, and only two months after his arrival, but in that short time the new immigrant had already acquired an assortment of firm prejudices and he expressed them with exceptional candor. Perhaps the difficulties he had encountered in travel reinforced his penchant for dark humor, but whatever the cause, de Lange peppered his account with barbed comments.

"There is still much uncultivated land between Grand Rapids and New York," he wrote, "and although the soil seems very fertile, I saw many scrawny cows. Nature does not produce much beauty here. You hardly see any flowers here except on Sunday when the church seems to be transformed into a flower garden carried into the sanctuary on the hats of the ladies.* There are few birds here, and those that are here don't sing;



they seem to be in mourning. There are many horses here, and they are often driven by women, but the horses seem more gentle and tame than in Holland."

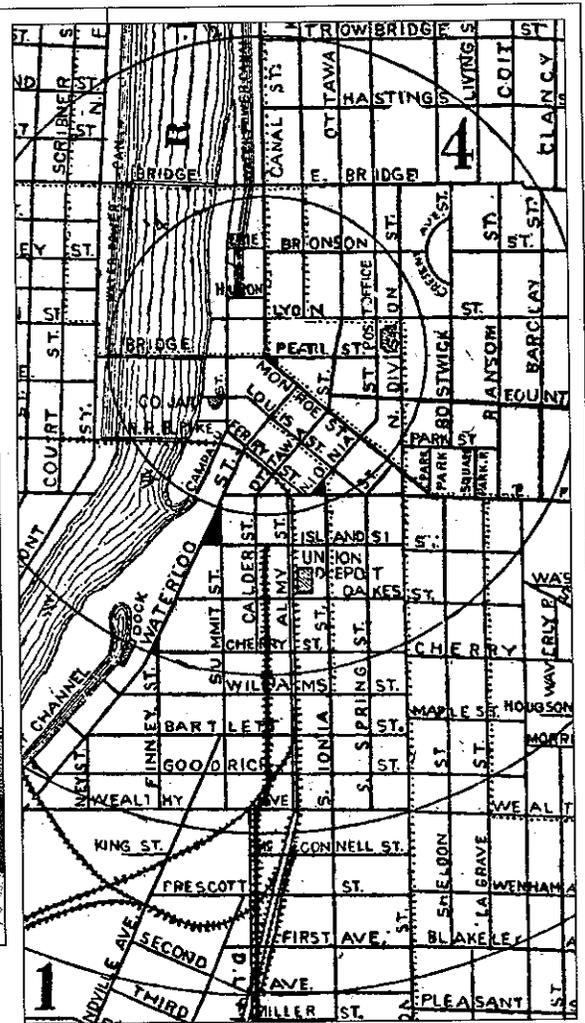
The Spring Street Christian Reformed Church employed de Lange as its Dutch-language teacher, but after his earlier career among ledgers and letter press books, a school filled with rollicking youngsters taxed his endurance. "I am required to teach the children enough to enable them to read and write in Dutch," he wrote, "so, on August 11, 1873, one day after my 48th birthday, I opened the school with about 100 children. It was a lot more peaceful in your office. It was rather lively here at first, and I doubted whether I could hold out. But, after 8 weeks, I am getting used to it. But even now I must admit that these 'Yankees' are un-

civilized rascals, and not easily controlled."

De Lange commented about his "American" neighbors with equal candor. Characterizing the lot of them, he wrote, "The English here are very wasteful and they seem to enjoy controversy and debate. That is apparent from the political posters and announcements they display. Sometimes

they are as large as a house gable. The Hollanders here are industrious and miserly. Most of the shopkeepers are German. The Irish are lazy and good-for-nothing. They illustrate the fact that poverty is not restricted to the blacks who were formerly slaves. They, however, are very industrious, and seem highly honored if you greet them. The idol of the American is the woman—to such an extent that the richest gentleman would not consider asking his house maid to polish his boots. The American woman is proud, lazy, dirty, and wasteful. If you acquired such a woman with a 50-thousand-dollar dowry she would still be too expensive."

This shotgun indictment of virtually everyone was not very typical among the immigrants. In the corres-



pondence of about 150 other Dutch-Americans, I have found no equally dispeptic growling. In fact, the vast majority of these new-comers were favorably impressed if not dazzled by both the New World and its populace. But de Lange's age, background, and training hindered his ability to adopt the new world's culture. He found his Dutch-American countrymen ignorant and narrow. American society was a bewildering conglomeration. His birthplace, Deventer, sparkled with the architectural variety of a thousand years, while Grand Rapids contained only a tentative promise of future significance.

*Note the photo on page 6 for an example of the "flowered" hats.

Curiously, the city fared better under de Lange's scrutiny than its people. "Grand Rapids," he explained, "is about equally divided, half on a hillside and half in the valley. Its area is larger than Amsterdam, but its buildings are not so compressed. It has a population of about 30 thousand from all nations. It has 42 churches, some of which cost \$150,000. The Americans place a great deal of value on worship. There are also many factories, large stores, and expensive buildings here,

including many wooden houses which are well furnished. I live in a second floor apartment and pay \$2.00 per week. It consists of two rooms, two windowless bedrooms, and many cupboards. It is located across the street from my school."

In December, after another two months in Grand Rapids, de Lange wrote again, and his mood seems to have mellowed during the interim. By then the recession of 1873-79 had begun to affect the area and de Lange

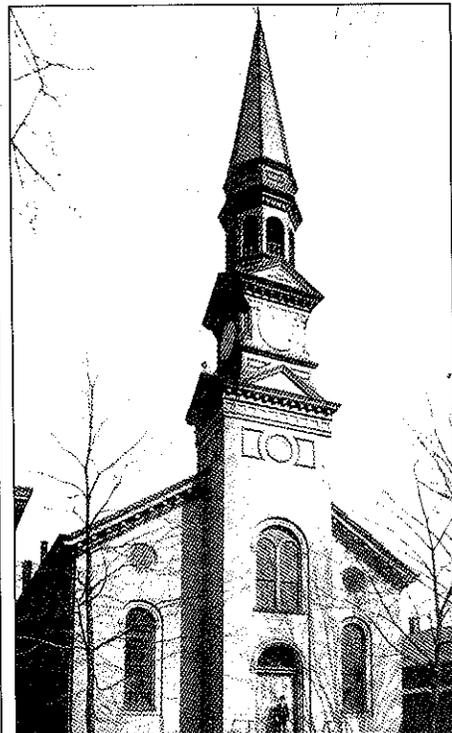
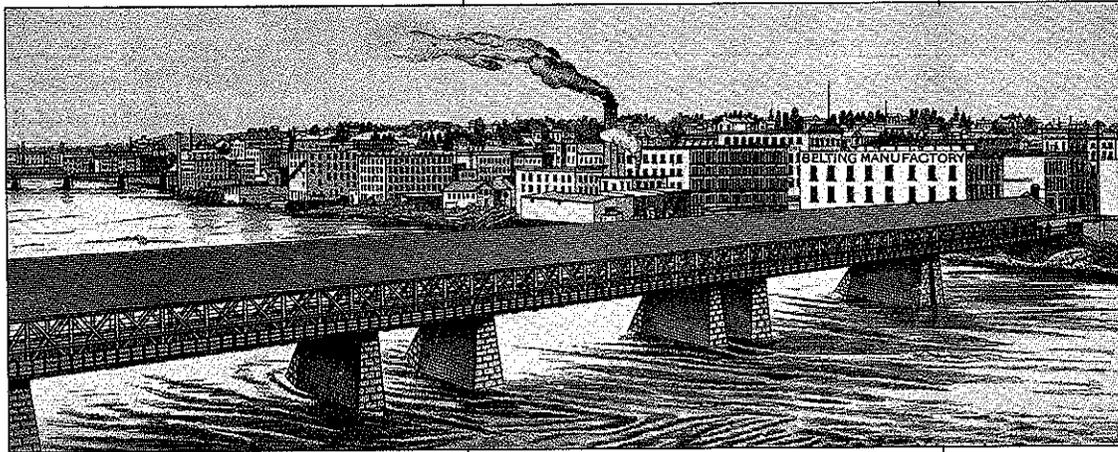
abundant food, de Lange also enjoyed the social mobility America offered. If he had remained in the Old Country he would have lived out his years as a clerk, but in Grand Rapids he became a professional and he was proud of his status. He instructed his old employer to direct any return mail to "W. H. de Lange: Teacher of Dutch." Further, in answering Houck's surprised inquiry as to how de Lange had become a school teacher, the immigrant answered,

"America is a free country, and everyone does exactly as he pleases. If I wished to declare myself a physician tomorrow no one would hinder me, but those with the best proof of training have the best reputations. In any case, teachers with diplomas are difficult to acquire here."

Unfortunately de

Lange's death destroyed what might have been an interesting example of further Americanization. His second letter was far less hostile to the New World, and aside from comments about the weather ("It is so cold here that sometimes you have to cover up your whole head—it seems like we have already had three winters here."), de Lange seemed pleased by his prospects and the progress which his family was making. His oldest son was attending the "English" school and "Karl (4) runs around with the English boys in the neighborhood and speaks half-baked English."

The teacher's death and the tragic circumstances of his family impressed the officials of the city and the Mayor urged the citizens to contribute to a relief fund supervised by John Steketee and John Benjamin. Both the church and the city as-



(facing page, left) Williams Street School. (above) Bridge Street Bridge. (facing page, right) Map showing site of accident and Spring and Williams streets. (left) First Christian Reformed church.

wrote, "Presently the situation is worse here than when I arrived. There is a great money crisis and little opportunity for employment. One after another is being dismissed from work and people are selling their possessions. Although people hope for a better time in the spring, I don't advise anyone to emigrate. Many immigrants, who have enough money, are returning to the Netherlands, but that will not help them very much because I have heard that life is no bowl of gravy in the Netherlands either. Meat is certainly cheap there according to your letters, but not such a good buy as it is here. We pay 6 American cents for a pound of good meat. Along with

sembled funds for the de Lange family and between them they collected about eight hundred dollars. Money also came from the Netherlands when Mr. H. Houck gave one hundred and fifty guilders, or about sixty dollars. W. G. T. Johnson, who appealed to Houck for support, wrote, "It is fortunate that they (the de Lange's) are here in America, where, under such circumstances, generosity is always evident. More than four hundred dollars has already been collected for the needy widow and it has been invested in the most profitable and safest manner possible." It appears that contributions from all sources amounted to nearly one thousand dollars—enough to support the family for about two years.

In a letter of appreciation addressed to H. Houck, de Lange's father-in-law, Willem Spanjer, provided a more personal account of the tragedy and its consequences. "Although I have not had the pleasure of meeting you face-to-face," he wrote, "it is an honor for me to thank you in behalf of my daughter for your liberal gift. It was like water to a thirsty soul. She will never forget the blessing that you and your family have been to her. She is in no position to repay your generosity, but has learned to trust in the Lord, the father of orphans and a husband to widows, who will repay you with blessings for your generosity.

"The loss is great—not only for the widow—but also for us as we enjoyed continuously pleasant association with our son-in-law. On the evening of this accident, he left our house in good spirits, but a half-hour later we

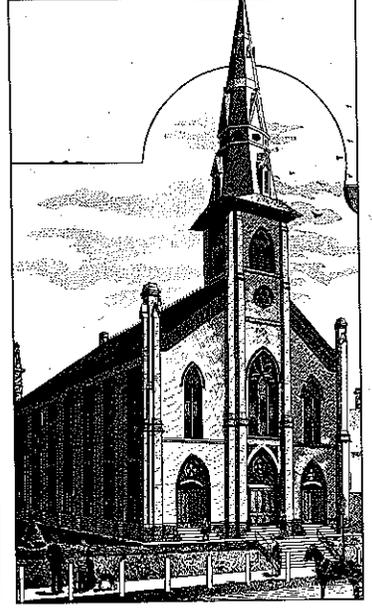
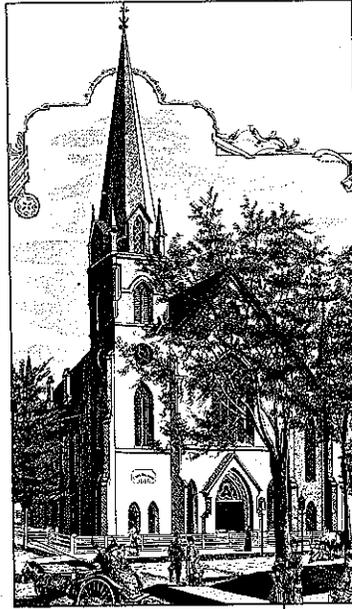
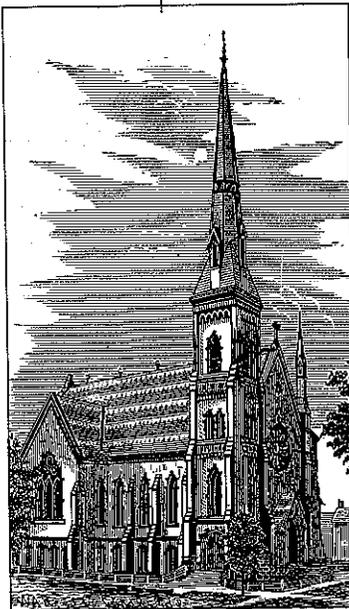
were cast into the deepest sorrow. The place where the disaster occurred is a five-minute walk from our house. A doctor lives close to that place and de Lange was brought there in an unconscious state.

"Three sleds with six or eight big boys came across the hill which is about 200 feet high and 1,000 feet in length. The sleds came down with amazing speed—faster than a locomotive at top speed. De Lange saw two sleds go past. He watched them

widow and children into our house, because it is better that she remain here rather than at her apartment where she must continually see the school where he worked. We will support her with advice and financial assistance. I am not a wealthy man and I must work to support myself, but I did have enough money to pay for their travel last year. . . .

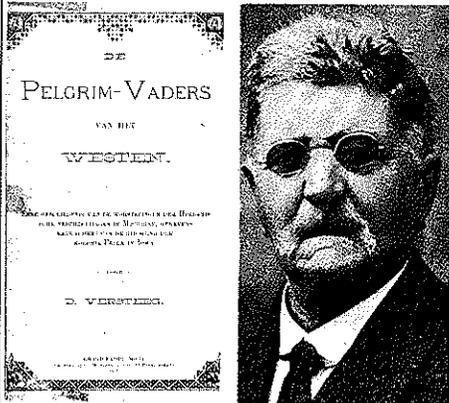
"I hope you receive this in good circumstances."

—HJB



(from left to right) Fountain Street Church, First Park Congregational Church, Second Reformed Church.

go by with surprise but did not imagine that a third was still coming. That sled shattered one of his legs and broke the other. The sled threw him at least eight feet into the air and he landed on the ground unconscious. By the time we arrived there, some people were taking him home in a covered wagon, but we arrived soon enough to speak to him in the wagon. Then, six men brought him into the house and some friends stayed with him until 4:00 a.m. He then fell into a coma and died without pain two days later on January 30. We have taken his



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

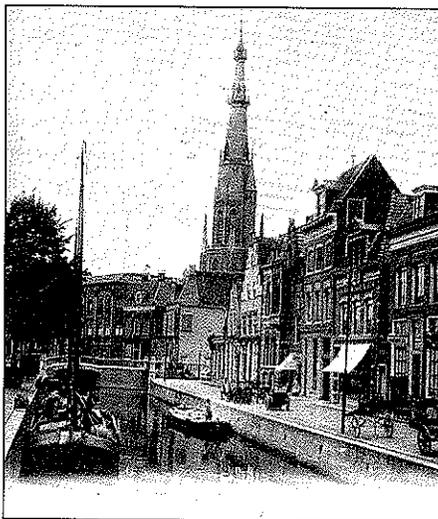
During the early 1970s Rev. William K. Reinsma translated and edited Versteeg's book and *Origins* will publish parts of that translation over the next few issues. Rev. Reinsma contributed a great deal to promote the Calvin College and Seminary Archives during his tenure here as archivist between 1965 and 1971. As an emeritated pastor, Reinsma now lives in Lynden, Washington, but continues to translate books and other documents from both Dutch and Latin. One of his ongoing projects is a translation of Dr. Abraham Kuyper's *The Angels of God*.

THE FARMING COMMUNITIES

FRIESLAND

On April 7, 1847, 43 adult Frisians, including the children, sailed from Rotterdam in the English ship "Vesta" and arrived in Holland, Michigan, on the last day of June, 1848. The group consisted of the following persons: Marten and Jetske Ypma; Gerrit and Maaïke De Groot; Johannes and Leentje Groen; Fokke and Kneeske Bakker; Uulke and Klaaske Heemstra; Fokke Kneeske Bakker; Fokke and Berber Heemstra; Douwe and Teetske Bouma; Eske and Okke Zylstra; Geert and Zijke Heemstra; Jan and Aaltje Elisma; Luwe and Joukje Dijkstra; Jan and Gelbrecht Fellenga; Wiebe and Hiske Ploegsma; Jan and Atte Wever; Albert and Trijntje Van Vliet; Jacob and Sitske

(below) Leeuwarden, FR.



Van Der Veen; Christ and Boontje Wever; Teerks and Geertje Berkenpas.

Unmarried men included Roelof Krootsma; Geert Van Der Schouw; Joltje Bijl; Sjoerd Schaaf; Dirk Willems; Douwe J. Wyngaarden, and Andries Toonstra. Also Pieter Schaaf and Jacob Buwalda. Unmarried women in the group were Jansje Hoekstra and Dirkje De Groot.

These Frisians found shelter in the shed which had been erected for housing the recently arrived Zeeland immigrants, and from that point various parties were sent out to scout the land. They wanted clay soil for their farms and found it twelve miles east of Holland in sections 16, 21, 22, and 23, where they eventually settled. The families of Jan Elisma and Jan Fellenga were the first to locate here and therefore may be called the pioneer settlers of Friesland.

The official record of the Frisian immigrants reads as follows: "A small number of church members of the Holland (Dutch) Reformed Church, known as the Christian Seceded Church, planning to migrate to the United States of North America, met at Leeuwarden, in the province Friesland, Netherlands, on November 19, 1846. At this meeting they extended a unanimous call to the Reverend Marten Ypma of Hallum, asking him to accompany them and be their pastor in whatever place the Lord might lead them. He accepted this

call, departed with the congregation on April 7, 1847, and arrived in Ottawa County on the last day of June. After spending a few weeks in scouting and purchasing suitable land, the



congregation settled in the current locality of Friesland and adopted the name Friesland for its new community."

The Frisians found only partial shelter in the sheds prepared for the Zeelanders and departed quickly to their own chosen area. The fertile soil attracted other Frisians and people from several other provinces. In a rather short time Friesland was a sizeable community with the Widow Tanis and W. Van Haitsma as the first storekeepers.

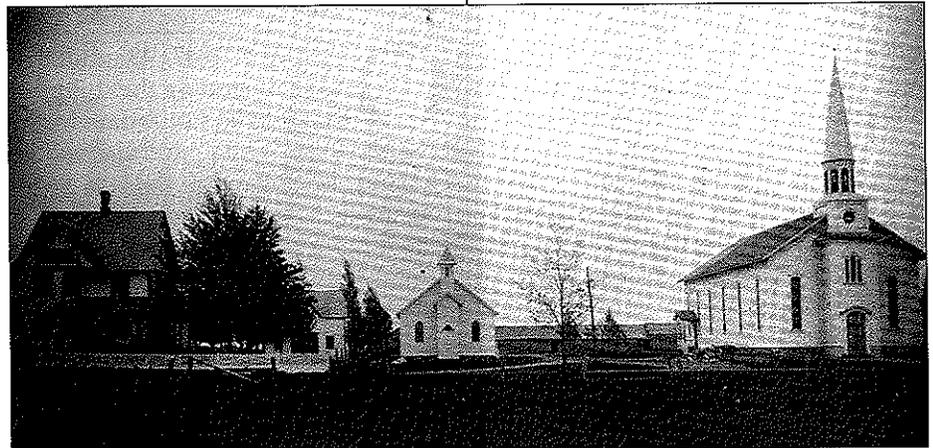
Between Friesland and Zeeland there was a large swamp which was virtually a road block between the two communities, making transportation impossible. W. White bought that marsh. He dredged and cleaned it and began to raise onions on it. His venture was eminently successful. For the first five years he had a good business going. Others followed his example. Soon the onion market was glutted by overproduction. The Frisians learned, however, that the marsh could be drained. At present it is tillable soil.

DRENTHE

Several families of Drenthe and a few families of Staphorst established themselves about a mile from Friesland (Mich.) and called their community Drenthe. Their fellow-compatriots had purchased land in the vicinity of the Black River with the hope that other Drenthers would follow suit and settle near them. But the Drenthers had had enough of sand in the Old Country and were not satis-

fences. In this way the Frisians earned enough for the supply of their daily needs and to keep their land clear of mortgages. Lanning purchased all of Section 36 and, as a benevolent deed, he hired workmen to split wooden rails and set them up for a fence that extended two miles.

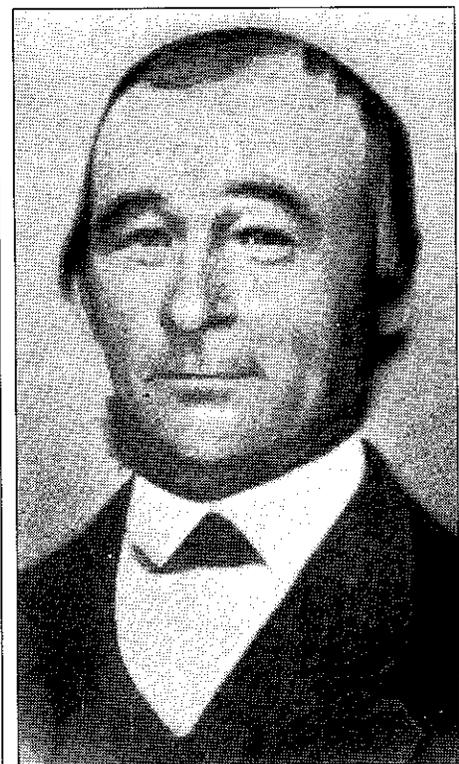
In the beginning of the Drenthe Colony the people had no church building of their own. Ecclesiastically, they were merged with Friesland Church, but



(above left) Going to church in Staphorst, The Netherlands. (above right) Drenthe, Michigan. (right) Rev. Roelaf Smit.

fied to try this kind of farming again. They wanted clay soil for their new farming venture here.

J. Hulst together with Herbert, Jan, and Hendrik Mast had settled some distance from present-day Drenthe. These men informed their fellow-farmers that good clay soil was available in their neighborhood. J. Hulst accompanied the land inspectors and the area pleased the Drenthers so well that all the immigrants decided to locate in that community. Riddering, Lanning, and Broekman were especially wealthy. They were the men who, when others had overspent their money, helped out by advancing the needed cash. These men also helped out the Frisians. If they were in need they went to Drenthe, where they cleared the forests and made



they built their own edifice for worship in September, 1848, and in 1849 they extended a call to R. Smit of Staphorst, Netherlands. He not only accepted the call, but he also persuaded several Staphorst families to move to America. This step increased the Drenthe membership by quite a number.

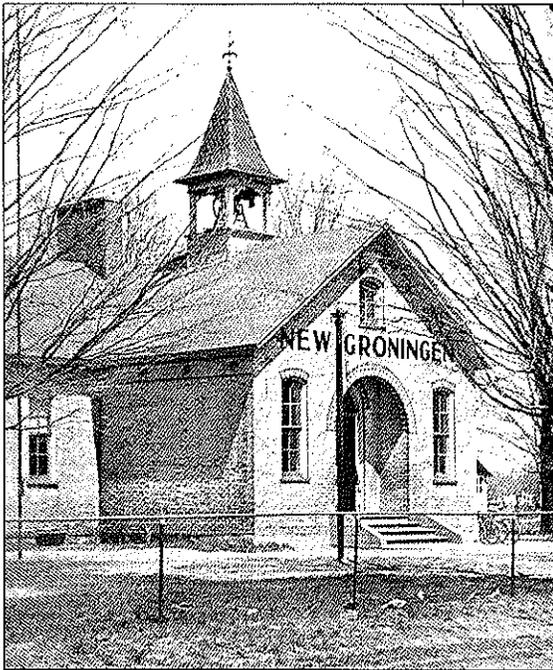
GRONINGEN

Mr. Jan Rabbers may be named the founder of Groningen, although Mr. A. J. Hillebrand gave the village its name. The village was situated four miles east of Holland on the Black River, which was navigable for flat boats. In the summer of 1847 several families had established residences there. The income of these residents was earned mainly in the Groningen saw mill. The saw mill of the village, the corn grinder of Kolvoort, and the store of Jan Rabbers, combined with the village's location on the Black River, to make the hamlet a very busy place.

Rabbers' store stood on the location where the cemetery is today. The cabin in which Rabbers conducted his business and in which his family lived became too small and too dilapidated. Hence Rabbers built a frame house just opposite the place where Stegeman's home stands at present [1886]. The first schoolhouse was erected here in Groningen, too, with a teacherage added to it.

Old Groningen did not in-

crease after this. At first the road to Zeeland led through Old Groningen. But the bridge Rabbers had built across the original stream was demolished by a flood. Therefore, it became necessary to change the road and build a new bridge across the large river in the place where it still is today. Old Groningen fell into disrepair and the old road became an unused trail. New Groningen thereafter became the center of population and activity. Such are the changes that occur in an area becoming newly developed from forest to land use or farming.



(left) Groningen Village school. (below) Scholten's Bridge.

GRAAFSCHAP

At about the same time the Frisians arrived in America a group of 75 Graafschappers came to Holland, Michigan. In reality, the Graafschappers were Germans from the Graafschap-Bentheim district, which adjoined the Netherlands. Through various ties and associations these

and Hendrick Zahlmink. Their original intention had been to follow the Old World plan, and have all the people live in the village. Land had been set aside for that purpose and several immigrants had bought an acre of land to erect their dwelling on that chosen spot. But a majority of



(left) Map of Graafschap. (above) Neuenhaus, a village in Grafschaft, Bentheim, West Germany.

Graafschappers had associated and affiliated with the Hollanders, especially in religious beliefs and practices, and had decided to settle near Van Raalte.

In June, 1847, some families and certain individuals of this group had settled near the shore of Black Lake, about five miles southwest of Holland, Michigan. The excellent clay soil and the favorable lay of the land prompted many others to settle here, too. Erelong other Graafschappers, Drenthers, Gelderlanders, Zeelanders, etc., joined the original colonists. This new establishment was called Graafschap. The original settlers were: G. Arends, G. Bouws, B. Brinkman, G. Heinveld, A. Klomparens, S. Lucas, A. Neerkerken, Lambert and Lukas Tinholt, Geert

the people preferred to live on their own land, so the original plan was abandoned. In the end, only the church, the school, a few stores, and some residences were erected in the village.

As a rule, the Hollanders began their New World activities by going

into the forest and chopping down the trees on their property to make a clearing for a log cabin and to make some space where they could plant some kind of edibles. But the Graafschappers went out to work for the Americans* in nearby pine woods. By doing this they earned money for necessities and avoided living under the primitive conditions the Hollanders endured in other parts of the colony. Later, when there was demand for bark, stoves, and firewood in the colony, the Graafschappers were able to dispose of their products at a handsome profit. Best of all, they could transport cheaply by using the waterways.

*The author uses the term "Americans." Doubtless he means the "whites" who had settled there previously;

Of course, the Indians antedated the "whites" in America.



Like Holland, Graafschap was well-situated geographically. It fared well financially, but this community also had some disadvantages, as it was very susceptible to diseases. It is surmised that the diseases were caused by

stagnant waters. During the colony's first period, many of the people became sick with virulent fevers. The sickness broke out in various forms such as fever, bleedings, gall bladder trouble, pox, scarlet fever, and it put

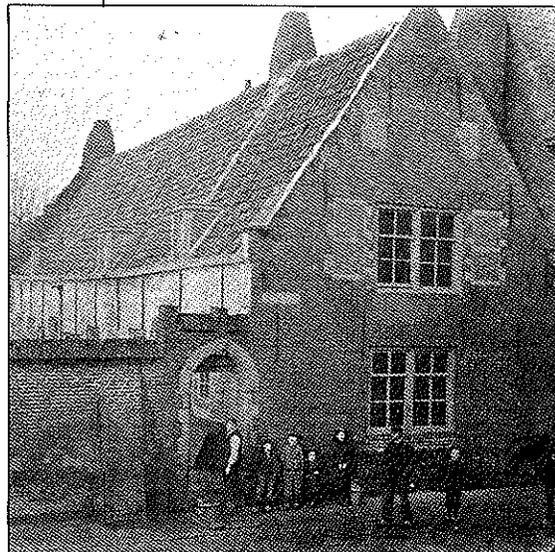
men, women, and children to bed, even before they became acquainted. The appearance was that of a colony of sick people. The contributing cause was not simply the change of climate and the general unhealthiness, but the drinking water was bad and the food in general was insufficient and unhealthful.

We should also know about the listlessness and despondency which then fell on the Graafschap people. At first when people began dying in large numbers the custom of regular burials was discontinued, but bodies were buried in helter-skelter fashion where they died. For instance, when one man had died, nearly everyone was too sick or too weak from illness to assist in the burial or to chop through tree roots to make a deep enough grave.



ZEELAND

Early in 1847 the rumor was circulated in the Dutch province of Zeeland that Mr. J. Van De Luyster, a wealthy farmer of Borselo, planned to migrate to America and was inviting the needy families of his congregation to come with him, and he offered to advance the money needed for the trip. After the report was confirmed, a meeting was called at Goes, Netherlands, where an emigration society



(above) Church in Vlissingen, The Netherlands.

was formed. The Rev. C. Vander Meulen, the "apostle" of Zeeland, was called to be their pastor and in early April this company of "Zeeuws" left their homes in three groups. The first group, led by the Rev. Van Der Meulen and Mr. J. Kabord, left Rotterdam on May 27, arriving at the mouth of Black Lake in early August. The second group, under Van De Luyster's leadership, arrived in Holland, Michigan, after a 38-day voyage. The third group, with John Steketee as leader, sailed from Antwerp. After 53 days of travel they came to Michigan in the middle of July.

Mr. Van De Luyster not only paid all the travel costs of 65 persons but the outstanding debts of his fellow trav-

elers as well. "Children," he said, "we may not depart from the Netherlands like bankrupt people. Whoever still has some unpaid bills, tell me. I will pay his debt."

After the group's arrival in Holland, Michigan, Mr. Van De Luyster purchased three sections of land seven miles east of Holland. Part of this land he set aside for a village. The rest he sold to his proteges, as much as they requested, making the terms of repayment as easy as possible. Each went to his piece of land to clear it for farming and for building log cabins for their families. The women and children stayed in Holland during this time. A log cabin was built along the Black River where the men slept at the close of their day's labor. This hut was called *Het Waterhuisje* (the little water house) and was used later by other immigrants. On Saturday afternoons the entire force returned to Holland for worship. On Monday mornings they went back to their respective pieces of land to continue their clearing. This process continued until some of the cabins were finished well enough to be occupied. J. De Hond's cabin was ready first and then those of Christian Den Herder and of Jan Steketee.

Initially, Groningen and the Zeeland Christians united to form one congregation. Believers from the various Netherlands provinces soon united with the Groningen and Zeeland group. It can be testified that this mixed group lived in peace and harmony. The Rev. Van Der Meulen wanted to call their heterogeneous congregation "Brothertown." However, a Mr. Young of Grand Rapids, an American of Dutch descent, dissuaded the group and his

advice prevailed so that the town was called Zeeland.

An 1848 letter by Mr. Stegink describes the physical appearance of Zeeland:

"The second house belonged to W. Van De Luyster. It was located in the northwest quarter of section 17 of the town Zeeland. Here we saw the first frame house belonging to Van De Putte and which is still standing today. From this point the road angled

fore we saw any more dwellings. The first cabin was that of De Kruif. The others we saw belonged to De Naaie, Van Der Vliet, and Vijn. The other log cabins were on the south side of the village. The people were busy building a church in the approximate vicinity where Dr. Baart's home stands today.* Prior to this, religious services were held in J. Wabeke's home."

Stegink comments on the condition of Zeeland's streets as being vir-



(above) Zeeland main street. (left) Celery farms.



through the land constituting the village. Then it turned north at the Reformed Church, again angling through the village and ending on the township line between Zeeland and Holland, an acre's length from the southwest corner of the village. Here stood thirty dwellings, all log cabins except two. And thence the road went back to Zeeland.

We were in the center of Zeeland be-

tually unfit for travel. Land east of the church had not been cleared. West of the church on the north side of the church no dwellings had as yet been built except just across from the church. Mr. Stegink is of the opinion that the church was dedicated on the second Sunday of May. Because of the great influx of colonists a new church was built in the fall of the year. It was made of cedar, oblique logs whose dimensions were forty by sixty feet. It was pleasant to walk Zeeland's streets, but one had to be very cautious lest he fall while walking. But a pilgrim walked his way joyfully in spite of the bumpy, uneven streets.

Two factors contributed to

*The reader should bear in mind that these time references are by the author who wrote his original pamphlet in 1886.



(above) Farm in Overisel.

Zeeland's development and growth. The first of these was N. Vijn's saw mill. The second was the steam-powered grinding mill of H. Keppel. Before Keppel's mill was on Main Street, the Reformed Church and the grinding mill, plus some five homes, were located on Main Street, making it truly the main street.

However, once Keppel's mill was located there everything seemed to change. Stores, workshops, and dwell-

ings were built soon afterwards on this suddenly popular street. The advent of the railroad livened up things still more in the way of industry and trade, even affecting the neighboring villages. It also deserves special mention that Van Eenenson erected the first and only hotel in 1849, and is, at the time of this historical account's publication, still in business.

OVERISEL

On August 18, 1847, a group of citizens of Hellendoorn, province Overisel, under the leadership of the Rev. Seine Bolks, left Zwolle for Rotterdam, arriving there on August 21. From there they sailed by steamship to London. On September 3 they boarded a steamship bound for the U.S.A. Sometime about the middle of October they landed in New York.

Since winter was in the offing and their destination had not as yet been determined, they decided to spend the winter in Syracuse, New York. While they were there they planned to scout for land to establish a colony site because unfavorable reports about Michigan were reaching them, and they had no intention of settling in that state, but planned to go to Wisconsin or to some other state. Therefore, a committee was appointed and was sent to explore a small island near Buffalo, New York. But the committee did not consider this location to be a favorable colony site.

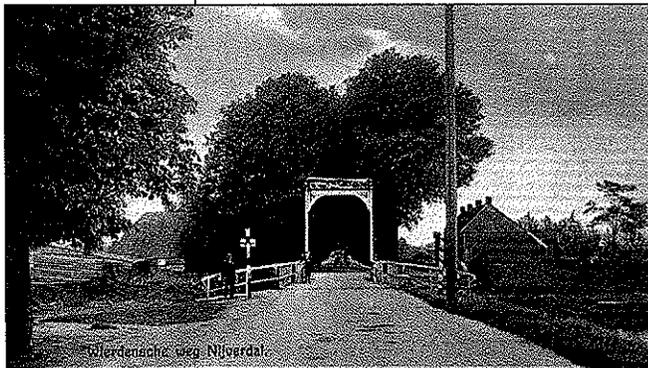
Meanwhile, the Rev. Bolks received the call to become pastor of Graafschap, Michigan. When he accepted the call, his entire group of followers decided to accompany their minister to this new field of labor. The entourage left Syracuse early in May. This band of followers arrived at the mouth of Black Lake about June 1, 1848.

The new colonists lodged in various homes. The next day the group went to Graafschap, thanking God for their safe journey. Erelong, it became clear that the Graafschappers and the Overisellers could not live harmoniously together as a unit, but would have various kinds of difficulty in trying to maintain peace as a congregation. Hence, the Overisellers sought a different community for their colonial site. They opted to live in an area nine miles southeast of Holland, in Allegan County.

After having selected this area, the men left the Village. Every male shouldered his axe and a sack of bread, heading for the forests to make the woods fit for habitation and to make paths fit for walking.

The women and the children re-

mained in Holland while the men spent the working week in the woods to clear the land of trees in order to plant seeds for crops. Once or twice a week they went home to replenish their food supplies. This process continued until the first log cabin was finished and the family of widow Slotman (for whom it was intended) could move in. The family lived on the first floor. The workmen slept upstairs. By this arrangement every workman could have a warm meal, so the workers no



Road near Hellendoorn in The Netherlands.

longer had to do their own cooking or be satisfied with a cold meal.

As new log cabins were finished, more families came into the community. They transported their belongings on ox-drawn carts. The village was named Hellendoorn at first, but later was called Overisel.* The district which the Overisellers had chosen consisted largely of clay, with some sandy soil. As in the other colonies, some of the land was "speculation" land. The rest was "state" land, which sold for \$1.25 per acre. "Speculation" land cost \$3.00 per acre. It had been commonly agreed to purchase all the land as a corporation and to determine by lot how to divide the land among the various colonists. Then if someone received "speculation" land he would not have to pay more per acre than the person who drew "state" land. A further stipulation included that some of the pur-

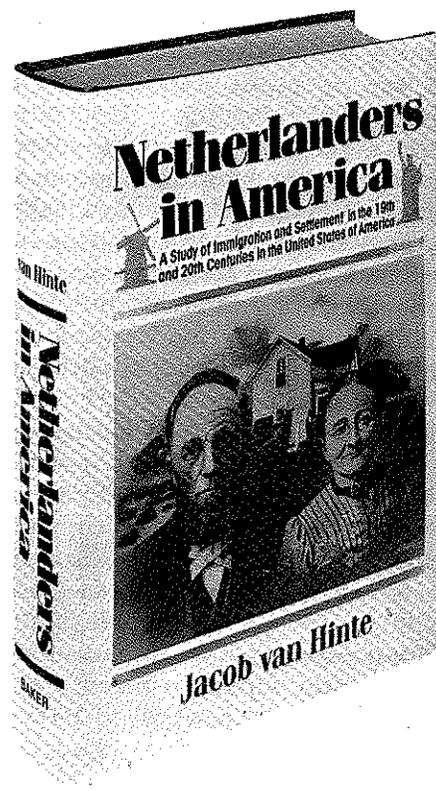
chased land be set aside as a village plat with the drawing of lots taking place after the village plat was determined. Another part of the agreement was that a buyer who drew forty acres of clay land would receive one acre of the village plat. It was also agreed that those who drew sandy soil in the lottery had the right to trade such land for clay soil. It was also agreed not to buy land for which the speculator demanded more than \$3.00 per acre. When the accounts were settled, it turned out that every colonist paid \$2.06 per acre, but the plan to have a village plat was discarded, because the Overisel farmers wanted to live on their own property.

**Among those who settled here were the Rev. Seine Bolks, H. Lankheet, J. Achteres, G. Nijenhuis, G. H. Veldhuis, J. Schippers, G. J. Emmink, A. Teeslink, E. Nijkerk, Widow L. Slotman, J. Schuurman, H. Kroeze, H. Klumper, H. Tolman, B. Telman, G. J. Fijnwever, G. Pieters, J. Mensing, M. Maartman, Wm. Hulsman, M. Hulsman, M. Kleinheksel, W. Ooldebekking, G. J. Haldér, H. J. Fijnwever, H. Heltman, H. Kleinheksel, C. J. Voorhorst. G. J. Wolterink was the first to be married here. Wm. Kleinheksel was the first baby to be born in Overisel.*

BOOKS

Netherlanders in America. Jacob Van Hinte. Robert Swierenga, General Editor. Adriaan de Wit, Chief Translator. Baker Book House, 1985. \$39.95.

In 1928 *Netherlanders in America* was published in two separate volumes. Although *Banner* editor Henry Beets did not think the twenty dollar price for this work was any too much, the average *Banner* reader, no doubt, found it was more than he could afford. Consequently, few copies were sold in America. For this reason, the



original Dutch language, two-volume set is rare and can be located only in either a few large research libraries or those collections concerned with the Dutch in America. Today, few people on this side of the water read Dutch and therefore have been unable to use this valuable resource. Now, those interested have a readily available English translation of this work.

Van Hinte spent six weeks in America during the summer of 1921, and while on this research trip, he gathered a copious amount of printed material and took notes on many conversations he had with older Dutch folk. The results of his prodigious labor during this month and a half can be found in his effort numbering more than one thousand pages. Van Hinte never returned to America and spent the years 1919-1948 as a member of the Geography faculty of the Public Commercial School in Amsterdam. History, Editor Swierenga states, was Van Hinte's "first love" and his original *Nederlanders in Amerika* resulted from his doctoral dissertation.

Often dissertations are both ponderous and filled with encyclopedic detail. Although Van Hinte's work fits this description, these characteristics also contribute to its value for the serious researcher or the person who desires to read about the Dutch in his or her hometown, be it Ogilvie, Minnesota; Whitinsville, Massachusetts; Nederland, Texas; Hoppers, Iowa; or

Bellflower, California. Not forgotten by Van Hinte are the Dutch colonies in Rochester, New York; Paterson, New Jersey; or those immigrants who chose to remain in such cities as Milwaukee and St. Louis. Also, Van Hinte devotes much space to the failure of settlements in Virginia, Texas, and Colorado. City Dutch, country Dutch, and those in the "colonies" such as Pella, Orange City, and Holland are minutely scrutinized by Van Hinte and from him we also learn, among a wide variety of diverse facts, about the willingness of husbands of Dutch ancestry to aid their wives in diaper changing and household chores, the fondness Dutch boys in Paterson have for "Italian beauties," Halloween rowdiness, and the wild violence of the shivaree which often accompanied wedding celebrations.

In addition to the constant flow of geographic, sociological, and historic data, the careful reader will note, now and then, in this English translation a few rather quaint expressions. Self-glorification is the "rut" of the Holland Society of New York, new arrivals in America were met by swindlers called "crimps," the progressive Christian Reformed minister, Johannes Groen, was "... rated as a white crow among his people . . .," and we are told that the Secession of 1857, which gave rise to the Christian Reformed Church, has over the years been chronicled in a "slew of literature."

Possibly the above examples would read better in Dutch than in English.

Of more significance than the minor Dutch-to-English translation difficulties is the fact that the Dutch portrayed by Van Hinte are those who were living in America approximately sixty years ago. In other words, when you read Van Hinte, time stops in the 1920s. Then and now, comparisons will be almost impossible to resist. In the author's view, the most conservative Dutch folk were found in cities such as Grand Rapids, Muskegon, and Paterson while the inhabitants of Pella, Hospers, and Holland were more liberal. Is this still true? Is South Holland, Illinois, still the "onion town *par excellence*" and does it remain "more typically Dutch than any other town?" Do American men of Dutch extraction still prefer mates of similar background, because American women are "terribly lazy" and ". . . are not willing to walk anywhere"? In 1920, as we are informed by Van Hinte, Dutch was the primary language in seven out of eight Christian Reformed churches and no less than nineteen Dutch-language periodicals vied for the attention of the Dutch-American. Today, except for occasional special church services, Dutch has vanished and presently only two Dutch language periodicals remain.

More than just an exchange of the Dutch language for the English, Americanization can be described as a process of adjustment which involved every aspect of the Dutch-American's day-to-day existence. Also greatly influenced and changed by the American way of life were organizations such as the family, school, church, and community, to which the immigrant belonged. For Van Hinte, as Editor Swierenga states, Americanization ". . . was as desirable as it was inevitable." Although Van Hinte does not find all in America fine and good and

has a keen awareness of the immigrants' unhappy experiences here, he emphasizes the benefits of adaptation and considers the mental anguish which accompanied this new way of life as similar to a butterfly's struggle to emerge from its cocoon. In other words, becoming Americanized is worth the effort. A developing sensitivity to social and political issues, Van Hinte thinks, goes hand in hand with continuing Americanization. To prove this point, Van Hinte mentions CRC minister E. J. Tanis' favorable comments about the 1920 Socialist presidential candidate, Eugene Debs, and the author also, in this regard, comments on the increasing acceptance among CRC members of the ideas of their own somewhat-radical (at least in 1920) dominie, Johannes Groen, who advocated moderation concerning such issues as labor union membership, women's suffrage, and also favored the formation of a Christian political party.

Essential for an understanding of Van Hinte's characterization of the Dutch in America is an awareness of the author's perception of the immigrants, their leaders, new settlements, and institutions. Van Hinte's remarks concerning the Dutch-Americans are tinged with ancestral pride. After reading a few pages, the reader will have encountered "our brethren in America," "our Groningers," or "our clan," and many other such descriptions for those who found America to be their new home. On the other hand, the author has little fondness for the English who "are haughty" and have "overwhelming conceit." Also, the author suggests that "The American lode star, dimmed by the English cloud, could not shine in its full splendor until after the War of Independence. . . ."

How Van Hinte perceives the *kleine luyden* (little people), those common poor folk who came to America after

1840, bears little similarity to his less-than-positive comments about the English. Both in the Netherlands and America, Van Hinte's *kleine luyden* had little money and still less culture. They were simple-minded, somewhat intolerant people who often quarreled about religious matters. Van Hinte relates with stark realism the sacrifices, trials, and tribulations they endured. Hard times did not always bring out the best in these early settlers. Faced with economic adversity in the 1870s, many Sioux County folk hounded by creditors, committed perjury or made false statements about their property. Random examples of Van Hinte's observations include the fact that by 1920 many of the Dutch were in business for themselves but few held supervisory positions or were active in politics. Also, the author "marvels" and is "amazed" by the zeal for Christian education exhibited in the 1920s by "the Christian Reformed people who were formerly so backward but are now so progressive in many respects. . . ." Emerging from Van Hinte's multitude of facts, firsthand observations, and thoughtful reflections are Dutch-Americans whose strong faith and everyday life are depicted in a manner best considered a blend of sympathy, understanding, careful observation, paternalism, and condescension.

Among the leaders of the early communities, Albertus Van Raalte is the author's hero. Holland, Michigan is "Van Raalte's colony," and Van Raalte ". . . remained the soul of the whole colony until his death" in 1876. Van Raalte and Zeeland's founder, Rev. Cornelius Vander Meulen, were able to bring out the best in the *kleine luyden* and were constantly in touch with the needs of their people. In the author's words, ". . . those attending Van Raalte's funeral realized that a great Hollander, as well as one of America's best citizens, had de-

parted." Although highly respected by Van Hinte, both Van Raalte and Scholte are portrayed as extremely self-confident, often domineering, and very desirous that their will be done without question. Scholte is pictured as a "top-notch businessman" and a person both "bold" and "arbitrary." In his characterization of Scholte, Van Hinte quotes with approval an Iowan he met who called Scholte "... a bolshevik in religion and politics." Another leader greatly praised by the author is the banker-businessman-publisher Henry Hospers, who played a vital role in the success of Orange City and the surrounding Sioux County Colony. Father Theodorus Van den Broek, founder of many Dutch Catholic settlements in Wisconsin, is highly thought of by the author. Often, these men "... put their stamp on the colonies," the author claims, and he also found they were well remembered by many in the settlements where they had functioned as spiritual and temporal leaders.

It is impossible to summarize Van Hinte's comments on every Dutch enclave he chooses to write about since few, if any, have escaped his scholarly vigilance. Beginning with the Dutch who came to New York in the early seventeenth century, he concludes with those who arrived in the first quarter of this century. The author has the most to say about Holland, Pella, and Pella's daughter colony, Orange City. Constant comparisons are drawn between Pella and Holland. Those who settled in Pella were richer and better educated than those who came to Holland; consequently, the author asserts, the Iowans were more tolerant and, therefore, became Americanized more quickly. Attachment to the land was greater among the followers of Van Raalte since they had to spend a great deal of time and effort clearing the land of trees and

stumps, a challenge not faced by the Iowa pioneers. About matters of faith, the author states: "The Iowans were religious as well as the Michigan people, but the most fanatical, although also idealistic, pioneers were found in Holland and vicinity."

For Van Hinte, "the wide horizons of the prairie seemed to promote broader life-views; the dense Michigan forests seemed to limit them." Without doubt, the Sioux County colony, including Orange City, can be considered Van Hinte's favorite. It is "Pella's creation *par excellence*." Here we "... are dealing with an exceptional class of people ... in the physical and in the psychological sense." Those who came to Sioux County in the 1880s were "an exceptional breed." Also, "... they exhibited great will power and vitality" and had a host of other admirable traits.

The glowing adjectives and positive phrases penned by the author to picture the Sioux County settlement disappear when he chronicles the history and growth of the Christian Reformed Church. Throughout his study he refers to the Christian Reformed Church or its members as "true brothers" or "true church," a parody on the words "True Holland Reformed Church" (*Ware Hollandsche Gereformeerde Kerk*), an early name of the Christian Reformed Church. The orthodox Christian Reformed Church membership had not attained the level of Americanization found among the more educated and cultured people who remained loyal to the Reformed Church. Therefore, in the author's view, the Christian Reformed Church can be considered less progressive than the Reformed Church. To illustrate the author's point, we note his use of the word "broadmindedness" when writing about the religious stance of the Reformed Church folk in Pella, Orange City, and Holland. On the other hand,

he uses such terms as "foci of orthodoxy" or "hyper-Calvinism" to clarify for the reader how those Christian Reformed Church members in Grand Rapids, Paterson, Chicago, and Muskegon conduct themselves when confronted with religious controversy.

Those in the Christian Reformed, Reformed, and kindred denominations, who desire to understand their immigrant heritage and comprehend the faith of their ancestors, will find *Netherlanders in America* an unexcelled resource. All church, school, and public libraries serving a Dutch constituency should purchase this book. For the library and the researcher, Van Hinte's *Netherlanders in America* and Henry S. Lucas' book *Netherlanders in America* (published in 1955 and now out of print) are the two studies considered indispensable. Oddly enough, both Van Hinte's work and the one by Lucas bear the same title. The appearance of the English translation of Van Hinte's book is a credit to Baker Book House, Editor Robert Swierenga, and the large number of translators who made this work possible. Those who read this book, peruse the footnotes, or consult the index will often find relatives and, better still, will learn more about an immigrant people who hoped to find a better life in America for themselves and their children. We are their children and will appreciate them more after we read Van Hinte's narrative.

—C. J. Bult

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- 4 (bottom), 10, 11 (lower right), 14, 17 G. Nelson Nieuwenhuis, *Siouxland: A History of Sioux County, Iowa*
- 5 (right) 75th Anniversary, First Christian Reformed Church, Orange City, Iowa
- 8 (full spread) *De Hollander in Iowa*
- 8, 9 (top) Cyrenus Cole, *Souvenir History of Pella, Iowa*
- 9 (center), 11 (top) Henry S. Lucas, *Dutch Immigrant Memoirs and Related Writings, Volume II*
- 12 Mike Vanden Bosch, *A Pocket of Civility: A History of Sioux Center*
- 13 (top), 16 (both) J. Van't Lindenhout, *Zes Weken Tisschen de Wielen of de Hollanders in Amerika*
- 13 (bottom) William M. Thayer, *Marvels of the New West*
- 15 *Harper's Weekly*, April 27, 1867
- 31 (bottom) *Harper's Weekly*, February 10, 1883
- 32 (map), 34 (all) Albert Baxter, *History of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan*
- 36 (lower right) H. J. Prakke, *Drenthe in Michigan*
- 37 (both) Henry S. Lucas, *Dutch Immigrant Memoirs and Related Writings, Volume I*
- 39 (center) Rev. Cornelius Vander Meulen, *Ter Nagedachtenis*
- 40 (both) Dr. J. Van Hinte, *Nederlanders in Amerika*
- 41 Aar van de Werfhorst, *Overijssel*

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