

Origins

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

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Cover photo:

Marrigje Hendriks Rook Vanden Bosch



page 4

- 2 From the Editor
- 4 Marrigje Hendriks Rook Vanden Bosch
Janet Sjaarda Sheeres



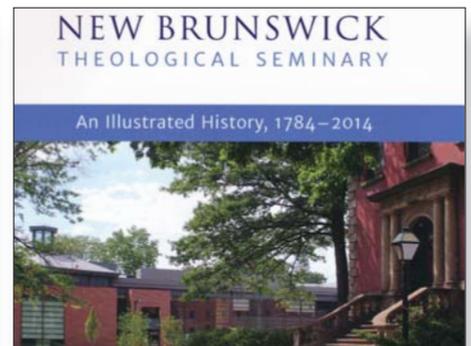
page 38

- 31 The Dexter, New Mexico,
Christian Reformed Church:
A Sprout of God's Planting
Paula Vander Hoven
- 43 Book Review
Robert Swierenga



page 19

- 14 Edward John Wolters: A
Glimpse into the Life of a Young
Teacher in the 1920s
*Lloyd Wolters with
Robert P. Swierenga*
- 25 Migration in 1848: A Case Study
Jan van Bolhuis



page 45

- 45 Book Note
- 46 For the Future
upcoming Origins articles
- 47 Contributors

from the editor . . .



This Issue

This issue begins with the story of Marrisje Rook, who married Koene Vanden Bosch, the first minister of the Christian Reformed Church. Her story of a pioneer Dutch immigrant settling in West Michigan and marrying a particularly single-minded person is ably told by Janet S. Sheeres. Lloyd Wolters took his father's diary and, with Robert Swierenga, the leading scholar in Dutch-American studies, edited this diary into an account of the beginning of Edward J. Wolters's remarkable career in education during the 1920s. We have published a number of articles by Paula Vander Hoven on short-lived Dutch communities; in this issue we present her findings on the families that lived in Dexter, New Mexico, about a century

ago. Although there has been much work on the Dutch Reformed emigrants who settled in North America, Jan van Bolhuis details the story of a Dutch Mennonite who settled amid this larger group.

News from the Archives

We processed and opened for research thirteen additional cubic feet of the research files of Dr. Quentin Schulze, professor of communication arts and sciences at Calvin College and holder of the Arthur H. DeKruyter Chair. The additional material details Schultze's work on the Bible and communications and on St. Augustine and communications. We also opened the papers of Jack Kuipers, professor of mathematics emeritus and renowned scholar of quaternions, a number system defined as the quotient of two vectors in three dimensional space, used in guidance systems as well as virtual reality software. The papers of Dr. Fred Klooster focus on his lifelong work on the Heidelberg Catechism.

The records from four discontinued congregations were received and organized: Good Shepherd CRC of Flushing, Michigan; Crookston (Minnesota) CRC; First CRC (Muskegon, Michigan); and Maranatha CRC of St. Catharines, Ontario. We processed records of the CRC's Faith Formation Committee, 2007-2009; the Council of the CRC in Canada, 1971-2003; and an addition of seven cubic feet to the records of the Christian Reformed World Missions. Additions to existing collections also included records of Classis California South, 1915-2015; and records from Classis Toronto, 1956-1971 (both are classes in the Christian Reformed Church).

Much of our processing time in recent months has been devoted to a single collection. In the fall of 2014, Shirley Hoogstra left her position as Vice President for Student Life at Calvin College to become president of the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities. As part of the transition that followed, seventy-seven cubic feet of records from her fifteen years

at Calvin were transferred to Heritage Hall. Organizing this volume of material and removing materials duplicated in other college collections is one of our largest processing efforts in recent years and should be completed by summer 2015.

Christian Reformed Home Missions transferred 12.5 cubic feet of files dealing with its outreach work, 1962-1980. With the installation of a new provost at Calvin College we received eight cubic feet of records (2005-2012) from that office. Another eight cubic feet (2008-2013) was sent from the College President's office. The initial transfer of records from West Park CRC of Cleveland, Ohio, a discontinued congregation, was delivered. We added newly received material, consisting primarily of research files for Robert P. Swierenga's Elim Christian School project.

The family of Leonard Sweetman, professor of religion emeritus at Calvin College, also donated an addition to his papers.

In January four indices of approximately 75,000 birth, marriage, anniversary, and obituary notices from the Banner, 1965-1984, were added to our online resources at <http://www.calvin.edu/hh/Banner/Banner.htm>. Currently we have notices from 1965 through 2014 indexed and available via this site. We are currently working on the 1955-1964 entries.

Endowment

Currently our endowment fund and operating fund have a total value of \$488,858. Thanks to the generosity of so many donors and investment returns, this is a 5.8 percent increase from last year. The monies in our operating fund cover the various

expenses for *Origins*, programs in Heritage Hall, and our book publication projects.

Staff

Richard Harms is the curator of the Archives and editor of *Origins*; Hendrina VanSpronsen is the office coordinator and business manager of *Origins*; Laurie Haan is the department assistant; Bethany Seeley joined us as a temporary department assistant; Robert Bolt is field agent and assistant archivist; and Chloe Selles is our student assistant. Our volunteers include Phil Erffmeyer, Ed Gerritsen, Ralph Haan, Helen Meulink, Gerrit W. Sheeres, Janet Sheeres, and Jeannette Smith. 🐦



Richard H. Harms

Marrigje Hendriks Rook Vanden Bosch

Janet Sjaarda Sheeres

The distinction of being the wife of the first Christian Reformed Church pastor belongs to Marrigje Rook Vanden Bosch. Not that she strove for that honor; in fact, she would gladly have exchanged it for a life with less stress and more financial security. Already as a young girl she knew the value of bringing in a wage to stave off hunger. At age twelve she left school to work as an arbeister, or laboress. Female laborers in the Netherlands in the nineteenth century worked long hours at hard, menial tasks.¹ Many worked on farms or in the peat fields in close proximity with their male counterparts. Whatever she had learned about man's depravity in catechism class she experienced firsthand in her work environment.² In all likelihood she met the



A frequent contributor to Origins, Janet Sheeres has lived in the Netherlands, Canada, and now the United States. An accomplished and published historian, she continues detailing the Dutch emigration to North America. She is also an accomplished genealogist. Her most recent book is the annotated Minutes of the Christian Reformed Church, 1857-1880 (Eerdmans, 2013).

Vanden Bosch while working in the fields. His life mirrored hers—hard work and little education. That was the pattern of life for people in their social class, where, because it was believed that God had ordained the

(above left) Marrigje (nee Rook) Vanden Bosch (1817-1887), in a photo taken in Michigan. Image courtesy of Heritage Hall, Calvin College.

social classes, none were encouraged to rise above their station in life. In this stratum of society Marrigje was born on 22 May 1817, near Ambt Vollenhove,³ in the province of Overijssel, the Netherlands.

When Vanden Bosch first came courting, there was not a hint of clerical aspiration. At the time of their marriage, he was registered as a peat worker. Her parents, Hendrik and Geesje Rook, soon discovered that her young man held firm opinions and insisted that these opinions were the only ones that mattered. On the other hand, he was a hard worker, and he gave every indication that he would support their daughter and eventually their grandchildren in a proper manner. His religious views also played in his favor. The Rook family belonged to the small Seceder congregation near Ambt Vollenhove that had formed in the mid-1830s as a result of an exodus from the Dutch Reformed Church (*Hervormde Kerk*).⁴ Her parents consented to the marriage, the civil part of which took place two days before Christmas, 1840, in Ruinerwold, Drenthe, and the ecclesiastical solemnization the day after Christmas in the Hooegeveen Christian Seceder Church.⁵

As Marrigje's and Koene's relationship deepened, he shared with her how he had been spiritually awakened when he heard de Cock preach in Ruinerwold and that over time this spiritual renewal had grown into a desire to preach the Word.⁶ He did not share his aspiration to attain clergy status with Marrigje, but she knew from

experience that once he had decided on something, his mind was set. She knew he could be stubborn. Becoming a lay preacher without the commitment of formal training was not an option. The young denomination had ruled at its first synod in 1836 that anyone wanting to become a pastor had to follow a course of rigid studies in order to be ordained.⁷ And Koene had set his heart on ordination.

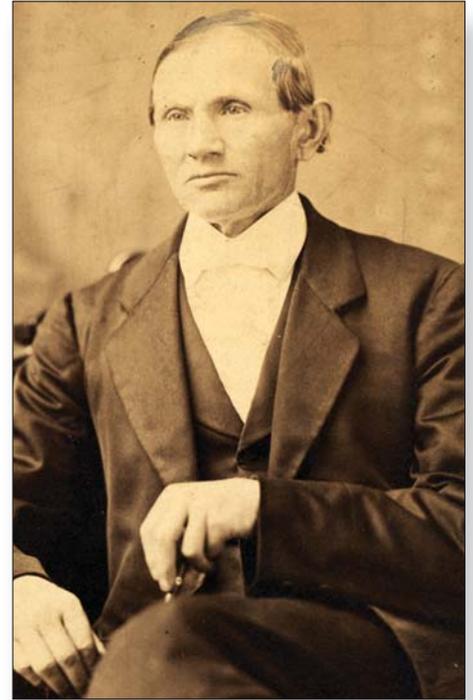
To follow this conviction, the couple moved to Weerwille, a small village between Koekange and Ruinerwold in Drenthe, within walking distance of where the Reverends Frederik and Willem Kok trained theology students in their home in Weerwille. At first Koene farmed but gave that up in 1842 when he began studying for the ministry. For MARRIGJE, used to hard work for a meager income, this meant an even greater struggle to make ends meet. When her first son, Tamme, was born in the fall of 1841, and working out-of-doors became difficult, she took

in theological student as boarders. Among them were Roelof Smit and Willem Frieling, who would become lifelong acquaintances. But for all of that, the couple was still hard pressed financially. After the birth of another son, Hendrik, in January 1844, and MARRIGJE's physical capacity for field-work became even more limited, she took in sewing to augment their income. She comforted herself by trusting that better times were ahead once her husband had completed his studies and would be properly paid by a congregation as its ordained pastor. Support from either set of parents was not likely. The Vanden Boschés needed all their income for their growing family; her parents, deprived of her income as well as that of her older sister, HILLETJE, who had married in 1836, also struggled.

In March 1847, Koene finished his studies, and the small congregation of Elburg, Gelderland, extended a call. They had already moved to

Elburg earlier, as Koene had been working there with the Seceders. That year, 1847, the year in which he was ordained, was a fateful year for the family and the country. In January MARRIGJE gave birth to a son, but the child died in September. Even though it did not lessen her heartache, MARRIGJE, until the death of this child, had not suffered this fate as had many mothers.

In the Netherlands in the middle of the 1800s, one out of four children reached its first birthday, and a quarter of those that remained did not reach their sixth birthday. Burying a child was a frequent occurrence



Rev. Koene Vanden Bosch, the first and for six years the only minister in the Christian Reformed Church. Image courtesy of Heritage Hall, Calvin College.

and the sight of mourners bringing a small casket to the cemetery a common sight.⁸ That same year, 1847, the potato blight caused massive hunger and poverty in the nation. The small congregation in Elburg, made up of only six families, could barely pay their pastor, and sometimes MARRIGJE stared at an empty table.⁹

It was also the year that many of the Seceders began emigrating to America. A year later MARRIGJE's in-laws, and eight of their children along with their spouses and children, decided to emigrate. Koene dearly wanted to join them. His mother held off the emigration plans until Koene and MARRIGJE could see their way clear to come along. This time, though, Koene discovered that MARRIGJE could



During MARRIGJE's early life the city of Vollenhove and the municipality of Vollenhove were separate. Much of the community's prosperity resulted from the shipping of peat for heating via canal boat.



Koene and Marrigje were married 23 December 1840 in Ruinerwold, about 15 miles east of Vollenhove. Image courtesy of Heritage Hall, Calvin College.

be stubborn. She refused to emigrate. Her recently widowed father, she reminded him, had only her sister and herself, while the Vanden Bosch parents had eight children besides Koene. In the end, Koene's mother relented, stating that the Lord had given her freedom to go, and the family left on *Scandia*, arriving in Michigan in May 1848.¹⁰ Besides not wanting to leave her father, poverty also factored in Marrigje's decision. Poverty in her own country was something that Marrigje could barely endure; poverty in a country she knew nothing about was not something she wanted for her children. And in this, the members of the Elburg congregation supported her

built, adding to the region's prosperity. The Apeldoorn congregation had been organized in November 1835 and after thirteen years was situated well enough to take care of the needs of their pastor's family. Two more sons were born during this period—Marinus in 1849 and Gerhardus in 1851. The two oldest boys were enrolled in school and did well. Marrigje may well have felt vindicated by her refusal to emigrate, for these trouble-free years allowed her to come into her own as a proper *juffrouw*, or minister's wife.

Just as all was going well for her, America came calling again. In the fall of 1854 her husband received a call from the small Reformed Church (RCA) congregation in Drenthe, Mich-

because they did not give their pastor permission to leave. But as much as they loved Marrigje and Koene, they could not support the family, and in 1848 the Vanden Bosch family moved to Apeldoorn, Gelderland.¹¹

Apeldoorn began as a small agricultural village, with only Het Loo, one of the royal palaces, as a landmark. But in the second half of the nineteenth century when the Vanden Bosch family lived there, industry came and the city grew exponentially.¹² Large villas were

igan.¹³ This call was much discussed, and, as much as he wanted to emigrate, Koene was hesitant to commit himself because in 1851 their former boarder and his former fellow student, Roelof Smit, who had gone to Drenthe to be their minister, had taken a large group of members out of the RCA in 1853.¹⁴ It would mean that he and Smit would be serving congregations with opposing views in a small community. This seemed unwise and he declined. Marrigje was spared the prospect of emigration again, that is, for the time being.

Instead Koene accepted another call, and in 1854 the family moved from Apeldoorn to Noordeloos, South Holland. Like Apeldoorn, the Noordeloos congregation had also been founded in 1835 and attracted members from a wide area. Even after a large group had emigrated to Pella, Iowa, in 1847, the congregation continued to grow and by 1854 had regained its original numbers. Nevertheless, interest in emigration remained high; in 1855 the Diepenhorst and Verduin families emigrated to North Holland, Michigan, and in 1856 another group planned to leave, some for Ottawa County, Michigan, and some to join relatives in Pella. This time Marrigje's argument against emigration could not withstand the persistent and positive reports coming from the Vanden Bosch family in America. The first difficult years had passed, and the Dutch colonies in Michigan were flourishing. A group living in a settlement called Noordeloos, northwest of Zeeland, Michigan, invited Vanden Bosch to become their pastor.¹⁵ Although this was not an official call, he, still eager to emigrate, accepted it, and Marrigje's arguments against emigration totally eroded when a church member gave her husband one thousand guilders to use if and when he wanted to emigrate. It seemed that the Lord had opened the

way, and even she dared not resist the Lord.

The American Years

Facing the inevitable—that by emigrating she would never see her father and her sister again in this life—she and Vanden Bosch traveled to Ambt Vollenhove to bid farewell to her loved ones. On the return trip they visited the cemetery in Elburg to grieve at the grave of their little child. When all their goods had been packed and all the goodbyes had been said, Marrigje and Koene and their five sons boarded *Fairfield* (Peter had been born in Noordeloos in 1855). Traveling with them was their twenty-year-old maid, Dingena Versteeg, as well as sixty-four other people from the Noordeloos area. With this many fellow travelers, the trip should have been enjoyable. Instead it became a forty-four-day ordeal. Seasickness was minor compared to a fierce storm in mid-ocean that threatened to sink the ship. At one point so much water came through the hatches that the passengers were knee-deep in water. When the mast broke and came crashing down, Marrigje's fears that they would all drown almost came true. She had had her reservations about emigrating all along, but even now Koene had no such doubts. Calmly he assured her, "The Lord let me know that I will preach the gospel in America."¹⁶ Shivering in her seawater-soaked woolen skirt, she prayed that it might be so.¹⁷

Marrigje had seen some impressive buildings in the Netherlands, but even she had to admit that once they had arrived in New York everything was larger and even more impressive. Koene preached two Sundays while in Chicago and on 16 March 1856 was in Graafschap, Michigan, for a meeting that considered leaving the RCA and joining the True Protestant Dutch Church in New Jersey. The entire party crossed Lake Michigan with a brief

stopover in Grand Haven and arrived in the Holland colony on 21 May.¹⁸

Holland had grown into a fair-sized town by 1856. The Vanden Bosch met Rev. and Mrs. Albertus Van Raalte and other town notables. Van Raalte had organized the eleven Dutch congregations in western Michigan into one classis called Classis of Holland. With only three ordained pastors in the classis, the arrival of another clergyman was well received.¹⁹ Marrigje was impressed with the number of shops along River Street, while Koene couldn't get over the large new church structure with imposing pillars on Ninth Street.²⁰ The Pioneer Schools (later Hope College), the Van Raaltes assured the Vanden Bosch, would be an excellent place for their sons to study. Mrs. Van Raalte's hospitality and gracious large home put Marrigje's fears to rest about ending up in the wilderness. After a few days' rest in Holland, teamster Pieter Vyn transported the family to Noordeloos.²¹ There, under the summer foliage of the Michigan forest, they were reunited with their Vanden Bosch relatives. And what a clan it had become! Of her five brothers-in-law—Melle, Pieter, Jacob, Anne, and Johannes—four were married. Of her three sisters-in-law—Annegien, Talligje, and Grietje, only Annegien was married. Marrigje's children met their numerous American cousins for the first time. Thus enveloped by this large and boisterous clan, she began a new phase in her life at the age of thirty-nine. Still, she found her new home, although adequate, a letdown compared to Van Raalte's. Additionally, there was not a shop in sight in Noordeloos. When she asked about that, she was told that goods and mail would arrive every now and then by ox cart from Zeeland.²² And worse, there was not a school either. The nearest one was in North Holland, too far for the children to walk to.²³ Pieter Heyboer, baker and teacher in

the Netherlands, and one in the party traveling with the Vanden Bosch, assured Marrigje that he would teach the children for the time being, and Koene promised her that at the next classis meeting he would ask about a school for the children.²⁴ For Marrigje, coming from well-established towns in the Netherlands, Noordeloos, Michigan, seemed primitive indeed.

Vanden Bosch's installation the Sunday after their arrival drew so many people that the service had to be



Rev. Roelof H. Smit served the congregation in Drenthe, Michigan, that left the RCA and joined the Scottish Presbyterians. When studying for the ministry in the Netherlands, he had boarded with the Vanden Bosch. Image courtesy of Heritage Hall, Calvin College.

held outside. Rev. Cornelius Van der Meulen of the Zeeland congregation conducted the installation, after which Vanden Bosch preached his inaugural sermon in the afternoon, standing in a wagon. A glorious service it was, and seeing her husband so happy understandably comforted Marrigje in her new surroundings.

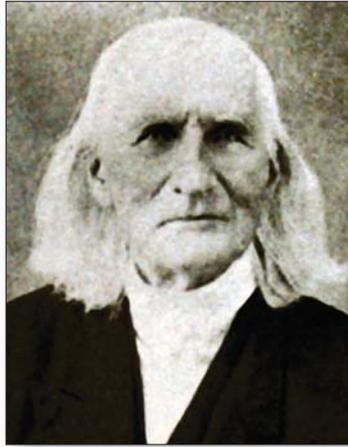
That summer Marrigje, who up until then only had to walk to the town bakery for bread, had to learn to bake her own. While Holland had several bakeries, there were none in the Noordeloos settlement. Her sisters-in-law taught her how to knead

the dough, and how long to set it to rise, and how to save a bit of the dough for the next batch. This was time-consuming work, and with a husband and growing sons it seemed there was never enough time. When her maid, Dingena, left to marry Pieter Verduin, MARRIGJE's workload increased to include doing the laundry and all the other household chores. Shade provided by the forest of trees sheltered the family from the worst of the summer heat, but the ever-present black flies and mosquitoes created plenty of misery. In spite of the harsh conditions, she once again showed her true mettle and rose to the challenge of making a home for her husband and sons in the Michigan wilderness.

At first all seemed well as far as the congregation was concerned. Each Sunday the log cabin filled with enthusiastic worshippers. The Reformed Church in America, the old established RCA, looked after their physical needs, paying Koene's salary and sending clothes and other necessities from their wealthier congregations in the East.

As the summer and fall progressed, however, visitors with disturbing messages filled the parsonage. MARRIGJE could not help but overhear the increasingly strident voices of men like Gijsbert Haan, who warned Vanden Bosch about Van Raalte and his association with the Reformed Church. He warned that he had lived in the East among the Reformed Church people who adhered to all kinds of things that the Seceders had fought so hard against in the Netherlands. Haan bemoaned his own run-ins with the elders at Second Reformed in Grand Rapids, and plainly stated that he wanted to withdraw from the RCA. The discussions troubled MARRIGJE. What would happen to them if they left the RCA? Who would provide for them? She pleaded with Koene not to be too hasty. But the meetings

continued. Elders from Graafschap and Vriesland came to call. These men all seemed to have their reservations about Van Raalte's union with the RCA several years earlier. They showed Vanden Bosch letters written by Rev. John Berdan, a pastor who had seceded from the RCA in the East in 1822



Rev. John D. Berdan (1797-1889), minister of the True Reformed Church of Acquackanonk (now Passaic), New Jersey; he was the minister of that church for fifty-one years. Image courtesy of Heritage Hall, Calvin College.

because of the RCA's supposedly unreformed ways. Their former boarder, Roelof Smit, now a pastor in Drenthe, also apprised Koene of the many flaws in the RCA. Smit had already left the RCA in 1853, taking nearly two-thirds of the congregation with him.²⁵ Then there was Jacob Duim, a lay preacher who lived only a few miles away in Olive Township and who was drawing many away from the RCA because of his differences with Van Raalte. Koene recited all these irregularities in the RCA to MARRIGJE. The way he explained it to her, the RCA was not only lax in doctrine, but it also had not aligned itself with the established Church Order of Dort.

That fall at the October meeting of the Classis of Holland, Vanden Bosch raised his objections to allowing Rev. Hendrik Scholte, who was on a politi-

cal trip through the Holland colonies, to preach in the Zeeland church. Scholte, he argued, had been suspended from the Seceder church and had gone his own way. After a lengthy discussion, Vanden Bosch was outvoted.²⁶ His inability to compromise left a sour taste, and he fumed to MARRIGJE about Van Raalte's power in the colony.

As MARRIGJE faced her first winter in Michigan, she noticed that the cold and snow gave the farmers a respite from working their farms, and whenever possible they met to discuss the church situation and a possible secession from the RCA. Seceding was not to be taken lightly, yet her father-in-law, Tamme, and brother-in-law Pieter were willing to do so. Her other brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law were not so sure. Their loyalty to Rev. Van der Meulen of Zeeland, who had done much for them when they first arrived in the colony, remained strong.²⁷ Koene's sister Grietje refused to believe anything negative about Rev. Vander Meulen.²⁸ "When we were first in this county," she explained, "Rev. Van der Meulen frequently visited us. To us he was doctor, *dominee*, and father. I shall never forget how kind he was."²⁹ Peter Heyboer, who had traveled with the Vanden Bosch and who had been elected elder in the Noordeloos congregation, also chose to remain with the RCA. He reminded Koene and MARRIGJE that their emigration travel expense had to be repaid and that if Koene left the RCA he would have no income from which to repay. Annoyed at Heyboer's remarks, Koene pulled rank and dismissed him as an elder.³⁰ MARRIGJE, ever aware of finances, deeply regretted this rift with their friends the Heyboers. She feared her husband's insistence on leaving the RCA would cause more rifts with friends and family. The hurts ran deep, and the Heyboers remained with the RCA for the following six years, only joining the Noordeloos CRC in 1863

when the RCA in Noordeloos disbanded.

Diepenhorst and Verduin, who had been instrumental in bringing Vanden Bosch to Noordeloos, did support him. Johannes Vander Werp, previously a Secession leader in the Netherlands and now living near Polkton, stated he could persuade some folks in Polkton to join him. By early spring a considerable number of communicant members were aligned with Vanden Bosch and were prepared to withdraw their membership from the RCA.³¹

After having been less than a year in the new country, Vanden Bosch wrote a letter to Rev. Van der Meulen of the Zeeland congregation stating that he could no longer in good conscience be part of the RCA community. A few weeks later in April 1857 members from Graafschap, Polkton, and Grand Rapids, including their pastor Rev. Klijn, joined Vanden Bosch and averred the firm belief that they too could no longer be part of the RCA and formed their own ecclesiastical community.³²

By the fall of 1857 about nine families of the Vriesland RCA also joined the fledgling denomination, but the Polkton group had fallen apart, to be replaced by the group in Vriesland, and Rev. Klijn returned to the RCA, leaving Vanden Bosch the only pastor responsible for four congregations. This meant continual travel to these congregations in order to serve them by preaching and administering the sacraments. While her husband spanned the ox team and loaded his wagon with shovel and ax, Bible, sermons and psalter, and an oiled canvas in case of rain, MARRIGJE packed his preaching suit and a clean white shirt in his satchel.³³ At such times she, no doubt, recalled the time when he, dressed like a gentleman, rode in a fine coach to the nearest railway station for his trip to Amsterdam to attend synod.³⁴ Here in America she

sometimes would not see him for days and often worried that he had perished in the Michigan wilderness. Looking after the family by herself during his absences, she relied heavily on church members and neighbors. But always her fears were proven unwarranted, and Koene, none the worse for wear, would return home. He would remind MARRIGJE that God was with him on those journeys as He had been on that harrowing ocean voyage.

For MARRIGJE this secession meant a return to worrying about poverty because, by severing his ties with the RCA, he no longer received a salary. For the next six years, as he served as the sole shepherd of the Seceders, even collectively they were often unable to meet his promised salary. Money was constantly in short supply, and MARRIGJE continually had to scrape to get by. It was demeaning for this proper Dutch minister's wife to see her husband preach in threadbare clothing. To augment his meager salary, Koene decided to secure some farmland and together with his oldest son, TAMME, started farming on the side.³⁵ Young Henry went to work in Grand Haven, leaving Martin, Gerhardus, and little Pieter at home.

In *A Dutch Settlement in Michigan*, Aleida J. Pieters wrote: "The period of 1855 to 1859 was one of great financial hardship in the Dutch settlement. The meager salary of the parochial school teachers was reduced and it was almost impossible to pay the salary of the minister."³⁶ In 1858, due to a hard June frost and drought in the summer, the crops in the Holland colony were complete failures and, when in 1859 drought again led to crop failure, Van Raalte turned to the RCA Mission Board for help. But those who had left in 1857 did not have access to the RCA funds. The thousand guilders Vanden Bosch had received upon emigration, which amounted to four hundred American dollars,

stretched only so far. After the trip had been paid for, there were additional expenses. In 1856 a team of pulling oxen cost about one hundred and forty dollars, not counting the harnesses and the wagon. For someone earning only \$400 annually, such expenses cut deeply into the household budget.³⁷

Fortunately the three older boys loved their new-found freedom in the woods and often brought home a pheasant, rabbit, or fish from the creek for the table. Wild berries were plentiful and free for the picking. Even so, much to MARRIGJE's disappointment, there would be no higher education for the boys, not only because they could not afford it, but also because the RCA's Academy was out of favor with the Seceders.

Besides losing all financial support from the RCA, the small group of Seceders in Noordeloos had to surrender the church building to the members who had chosen to stay with the RCA. As a result, they erected a crude log cabin. For MARRIGJE, who remembered the Pillar Church in the town of Holland, this was all very primitive. Until the "church" was built, services were held in the Vanden Bosch home, making MARRIGJE's Sundays very busy. People who had walked a long distance to attend had to be fed between services. Many took food along, but still, it was left to MARRIGJE to make room for them.³⁸

The periodic illnesses that plagued the colony affected the family as well. In the fall of 1856 an outbreak of bloody dysentery caused many deaths among the young and the elderly, and in the summer of 1857 an influenza outbreak raged in the colony. Three-year-old Pieter also fell ill and died that September. Earlier, her father-in-law, TAMME, had set aside a small area on his farm to serve as a cemetery for several of the infants who had died, and this is where MARRIGJE parted with her youngest child.³⁹ No doubt

thoughts of an earlier September burial far away came flooding back. Grief for her missing children tore at her own well-being, and later that year she too fell ill. During January and February of 1858 she battled for her life. Concerned, Koene asked the elders at the January council meeting that they not sing the customary opening psalm, due to his wife's illness. With no improvement in sight, he did not attend the scheduled February classis meeting in Grand Rapids because he dared not leave her. Finally in the spring she regained her health and was able to take up her household duties again.⁴⁰

Then, a year later, on a wintry February day in 1859, as if God wanted to comfort her, MARRIGJE gave birth to a daughter.⁴¹ The baby was named Grietje, after Vanden Bosch's mother (but growing up would be called the Americanized Margaret).⁴² Since coming to America MARRIGJE's name had also been Anglicized to Maria, a name that took her years to get used to.

The dire financial situation, the failed crops, and periodic outbreaks of disease all led to frayed tempers. In the summer of 1859 Verduin and Diepenhorst were embroiled in a harsh boundary dispute with Vanden Bosch and his brother Anne about fence rails. The case came up at classis, and Pieter, Koene's younger brother who was an elder delegate at classis, entered the fray. Accusations flew back and forth, revealing that Pieter had a temper equal to his brother.⁴³ Time and again, Vanden Bosch's inability to overcome minor slights blew up into major disputes, leaving it to MARRIGJE to reprimand and calm him.⁴⁴ The strained relationship with the Diepenhorsts hurt her especially, since Hermanus and Maaïke were close friends who had supported them all along, even financially. Their alienation and resignation from the congregation caused her much pain,

all the more knowing that Vanden Bosch shared some blame.⁴⁵

In 1863 MARRIGJE was happy to learn that Wilhelmus Van Leeuwen had accepted a call to Grand Rapids, thus lightening her husband's load. The year after that another pastor, Douwe Van der Werp, came to Graafschap, and in October 1869 Willem and Geertje Frieling arrived in Vriesland.⁴⁶ The latter two were especially welcome, since Willem had been a former boarder and fellow student. He had married Geertje Bennink in Ruinerwold when the Vanden Bosches lived there. Geertje's mother ran a small store in Weerwille, and Geertje, like MARRIGJE, had been a seamstress. By this time Koene had exchanged his ox team and wagon for a pair of "Texas ponies" and a buckboard, the roads had improved, and travel became easier, allowing MARRIGJE to go along from time to time and visit with



Rev. Wilhelmus Van Leeuwen was the second minister in the Christian Reformed Church, arriving in 1863 to serve the Grand Rapids congregation. Image courtesy of Heritage Hall, Calvin College.

Geertje while their husbands attended classical meetings.

Nevertheless, in Noordeloos quarrels continued to mar the relationship between her husband and his broth-

ers. In the fall of 1865 Vanden Bosch became incensed because his father had sold his farm to Pieter for a low price—not at all what the farm was worth.⁴⁷ Against MARRIGJE's advice, Vanden Bosch brought the matter to classis and accused his father of not being able to rule his own household. At age sixty-seven, Father Tamme wanted to retire and Pieter apparently had the finances to purchase the farm, something that Koene did not. Although she did not condone it, MARRIGJE understood Koene's irritation with his father. Koene had been born three years before his parents were married and had been left in the care of his grandparents until a young teen when his parents ordered him home to help augment the family income. The relationship between her husband and his family was usually only tenuous at best, but there was little she could do about it, and she was more than ready to leave Noordeloos when Koene accepted a call to Grand Haven.⁴⁸

For MARRIGJE, after thirteen years in Noordeloos, the move meant living in a town again and away from all the squabbles with family and church members. The ongoing power struggle between her husband and the members of the Noordeloos-Zeeland congregation took its toll on her, and many times she had begged Koene to let it go.

Grand Haven, at the mouth of the Grand River, was a bustling, growing community, outpacing the town of Holland. Growing up, her sons, realizing that the ministry was fraught with strife and little pay, turned to business for their livelihood. Hendrik and Gerhardus began a profitable dry goods store in Grand Haven. Marinus became a skilled carpenter. Although the family's financial status improved considerably, her husband had not yet learned to control his temper, and there were periodic flare-ups with members of the Grand Haven church

council. These were also good years, in which she witnessed the marriages of their sons, and daughter—Tamme in 1863, Hendrik in 1866, Marinus in 1869, and Gerhardus in 1871, and Margaret in 1878—and as she welcomed the birth of many grandchildren.

Tamme continued farming in Noordeloos and kept them

up-to-date on the Noordeloos congregation.⁴⁹ Even after building a new church and parsonage in 1875, the congregation remained without a pastor, and extended a call to Vanden Bosch to become their pastor again. However, the Grand Haven congregation prevailed on her husband to stay, and, for the time being, MARRIGJE'S life remained tranquil.

In 1878 Vanden Bosch accepted a call to First CRC in Chicago, and the two traveled across Lake Michigan in the opposite direction from when



During Vanden Bosch's ministry at First Grand Haven, the original 1867 sanctuary could no longer accommodate the growing congregation, and this building was erected in 1872 at 418 Fulton. Image courtesy of Heritage Hall, Calvin College.

they arrived in the colony. No doubt they remarked on the great number of changes that had happened since their arrival in America two decades earlier. This time the parsonage was a spacious two-story home in the middle of a great city, rather than a cabin in the woods, and getting around in Chicago was fairly easy compared to travel by ox cart. With an annual salary of \$700, free housing, and no large family to provide for, MARRIGJE'S financial worries were finally over. Her husband had mel-

lowed with age, and temper flare-ups were less frequent.⁵⁰

Although physically strong all of his life, Vanden Bosch at sixty-three developed a chronic bronchial infection. They had arrived in Chicago in November 1879, and by July 1881, less than two years later, this health issue forced him to retire from the ministry.⁵¹ They moved back to Grand Haven in 1881 to be near their sons. But, while Vanden Bosch had the health problems, it was MARRIGJE who died first, ten years before he did.⁵² During the last years of her life she suffered from a nervous condition; the strain of years of poverty and conflict had apparently taken its toll on her emotional state.

At the time of her death, at almost seventy, on 11 May 1887, she left behind her husband, four sons and wives, one daughter and husband, and twenty-eight grandchildren, ranging in age from less than a year to twenty-three. She was buried in the Lake Forest Cemetery in Grand Haven. In her obituary, published in *De Wachter*, Koene mentioned her steadfast faith.

MARRIGJE had been the type of clergy wife who worked and prayed in the background. When Vanden Bosch died ten years later, *De Wachter* devoted half of the front page to his memory, without any reference to MARRIGJE, the woman who had stood beside him for forty-seven years. ❧

Endnotes

1. Paping, Richard F. J. Voor een handvol stuivers (Groningen, Nederlands Agronomisch-Historisch Inst. REGIO-Project, 1995) 101. A laboress differed from a maid, in that she worked outside, in the fields.

2. Jeanette Dorsman and Monique Stavenutter, *Nooit gehuwd, maar niet alleen; Vrijgezelle vrouwen uit de arbeidende klasse in de tweede helft van de negentiende eeuw* (Hilversum, Verloren, 1993) 40.

3. Ambt Vollenhoven is the municipi-

pality excluding the city of Vollenhoven.

4. Much is available on the 1834 Secession begun by young Rev. Hendrik de Cock, who led the majority of his congregation out of the Dutch Reformed Church in Ulrum, Groningen, resulting in a new denomination, the Christian Seceders. The Rook family joined the new denomination, as did the Vanden Bosch clan of Witten, near Havelte, in Drenthe.

5. Officiating minister was Koene S. Vander Schuur, who immigrated to the

USA in 1849 upon receiving a call from a group of worshippers living south of Holland, Michigan, in Allegan County, assuming it was from the Graafschap congregation. Upon arriving there, he found that Rev. Klijn had received a formal call from Graafschap. Klijn left for Milwaukee a year after arriving, and Vander Schuur went to Oostburg, Wisconsin, in 1850.

6. H. Veldman, *Hendrik de Cock* (Kampen: Kok, 2009) 114. De Cock had come to Ruinerwold on a Sunday

in June of 1835, to organize a congregation there. He preached on 2 Cor. 6:17 “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.”

7. *Handelingen en Verslagen van de Algemene Synoden van de Christelijk Afgescheidene Gereformeerde Kerk* (1836-1869) (Utrecht: Den Hertog, 1984) 45.

8. “Gezondheidsrisico's in het Nederland van 150 jaar geleden” (Health risks in the Netherlands of 150 years ago). http://ocw.tudelft.nl/fileadmin/ocw/courses/PublicHygieneandEpidemiology/res00058/0316a_Gezondheid_1850.pdf, Jan 20, 2014.

9. Jacob G. Vanden Bosch, “Koene Vanden Bosch” in *The Reformed Journal* (September 1954), 13-15.

10. Henry S. Lucas, *Dutch Immigrant Memoirs and Related Writings* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 257.

11. *Handelingen en Verslagen*, 629. In 1854 the Elburg congregation was still struggling financially and asked that year's synod for financial assistance.

12. Although the royal family did not use Het Loo as their residence during Vanden Bosch's years in Apeldoorn, family lore holds that palace servants attended services periodically.

13. *Sheboygan Nieuwsbode*, 28 November 1854.

14. In 1847 Dutch settlers in Western Michigan founded several Reformed congregations which Van Raalte incorporated into Classis of Holland. In 1850 Classis of Holland joined the RCA. Drenthe was one of the congregations, but when Roelof Smit came in 1851, he found the RCA wanting and seceded with a large group.

15. It is popularly assumed that because Vanden Bosch came from Noordeloos, the settlement was named such in his honor; this is not the case. Classis of Holland Minutes (2-3 April 1856) already refer to the settlement as Noordeloos. The Zierikzeesche Nieuwsbode of 12 April 1856 stated that in February 1856 Verduin and Diepenhorst had bought 850 acres in North Holland, and named the area Noordeloos. Also the *Sheboygan Nieuwsbode* of 20 Feb 1856 quotes a news item about Noordeloos, Michigan. According to Huug van den Dool, “It is at least somewhat noteworthy and anomalous that a group

of Groningers would be willing to call their community ‘Noordeloos’ when they had been comfortable with North Holland until that time. This may have been through forceful lobbying by new arrivals Diepenhorst and Verduin combined with the expected acceptance of the call to Van den Bosch.” See: “Noordeloos on Two Continents” 13th Biannual Conference, The Dutch Adapting in North America (Calvin College, Grand Rapids Michigan, 2001) at <http://www.aadas.nl/conferences/proceedings/noordeloos-two-continents>.

16. A. Horden, “De uittocht. Beknopte geschiedenis van de afgescheidenen die naar Amerika zijn gegaan, in het bijzonder Noordeloose ingezetenen” (1973 manuscript in Archives, Heritage Hall, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan). The Exodus: A brief history of the Seceders who went to America, especially those from Noordeloos.

17. While the Vanden Bosch family was spared, one man and two children of their party died.

18. The Graafschap meeting minutes are available in the Archives, Heritage Hall, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan. *Sheboygan Nieuwsbode* 3 June 1856, 2 report: The Vanden Bosch party, numbering 29 person arrived in Holland, MI, on Friday 21 May 1856. Even though it was possible to travel inland by railroad to Chicago in 1853, many immigrants chose to go via the inland water route because it was cheaper.

19. Rev. Albertus C. Van Raalte founded Holland, Michigan, in 1847, and organized the churches in the surrounding Dutch settlements into Classis of Holland. In May 1856 Classis of Holland consisted of congregations in Holland, Zeeland, Drenthe, Vriesland, Overisel, Grand Rapids, Grand Haven, Graafschap, North Holland, Polkton, and Kalamazoo, Michigan.

20. Adrian Van Koevinger, *Legends of the Dutch* (Zeeland, MI: Zeeland Record Company, 1960) 429. Before the 1871 fire, River Street was the main business street, after the fire Eighth Street became more important.

21. *Sheboygan Nieuwsbode*, 3 June 1856.

22. It would be another nine years after their arrival in 1856 when Adriaan Wagenaar opened the first general store in Noordeloos in 1865.

23. Henry S. Lucas, *Dutch Immigrant Memoirs and Related Writings*, revised Edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997) v1, 313. The first public school was built in North Holland in 1856; the first teacher was Herman Grebel.

24. *Ibid*, 316. Pieter Heyboer did teach for a while; however in the 1860 United States Federal Census he is listed as farmer. According to Aleida J. Pieters, *A Dutch Settlement in Michigan* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans-Sevensma, 1923), the period of 1855 to 1859 was one of great financial hardship and people were not able to pay a teacher, so Pieter Heyboer may have had no choice but to go into farming. When Koene asked at the October meeting about the possibility of a school, he was tersely told to go to the school supervisors for this.

25. Roelf Smit arrived in 1851 to pastor the Drenthe, Michigan, congregation. Shortly after his arrival he began slandering Van Raalte about the latter's joining the RCA. Complaints about Smit were brought to the 1853 Classis of Holland meeting. Rather than face the rebuke, Smith seceded from Classis of Holland in May 1853 and formed an independent congregation called the “Scotse Kerk” because they joined the Associated Reformed Presbyterians.

26. *Handelingen en Verslagen*, 246-248. Van Raalte had been a delegate to the 1840 Synod in Amsterdam at which Scholte had been reprimanded and deposed; therefore he was aware of Scholte's deposed standing. In fact, it was Van Raalte and his three brothers-in-law who voted against Scholte, nevertheless he did not support Vanden Bosch in this matter.

27. Although Koene's brothers Anne, Jacob, and Melle are not on the list of charter members, they do join the Seceder congregations in Noordeloos and Zeeland later on, perhaps because the RCA in Noordeloos folded in 1863.

28. Grietje was engaged to Jan Hendrik Boone and lived near Zeeland.

29. Antonia Van Koevinger, “Thumbnails,” a series of articles in the *Zeeland Record*.

30. *Classis Holland Minutes 1848-1858*, 8 April 1857 (Art. 17) reads “Elder Heyboer, of Noordeloos, informs the assembly that Rev. Bosch, on the first Sunday after his secession [March 15], suspended him [Heyboer], and that

without the regular warning and hearing. With regard to this he asks for the judgment of the assembly, which judges that the acts and decisions of a minister who has left us have no binding power for the church. Further, Brother Heyboer states that Rev. Bosch had taken occasion for the suspension out of a dispute that had arisen about the payment of the expenses of Rev. Bosch in coming over (from the Netherlands) which, it was thought, ought at least partially to be paid by him, now that he so irregularly withdraws from the congregation. The assembly judges that loss and injustice should rather be borne, in order that he who advanced the money shall incur no loss.”

31. Elton J. Bruins and Robert P. Swierenga, *Family Quarrels in the Dutch Reformed Churches in the 19th Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999) 89. Total number seceding was approximately 250 communicant members made up of Grand Rapids about 100, Graafschap 113, Vriesland about 15, and about 20 each from Polkton and Noordeloos.

32. *Classis Holland Minutes 1848-1858*, 241-243.

33. Lucas, *Memoirs*, v 1, 444. “The ox played an important role in those early days. A horse was considered beyond the reach of common people. Besides, the slow, patient ox was admirably adapted to the bad roads and stumpy fields. The ox was the locomotive of those days and was only gradually displaced by the horse when roads improved and the woods were removed.”

34. Vanden Bosch was a delegate to the 1851 Christian Seceder Synod in Amsterdam.

35. *CRC Minutes*, 8-9 June 1868, Art. 24. Apparently Koene and his children were involved in a partnership with Diepenhorst and Anne Vanden Bosch to purchase land which resulted in all sorts of misery. Koene probably did not have the funds to purchase land, but the records indicate that he farmed and that his oldest son Tamme did as well, so he must have looked to Diepenhorst and his brother Anne for help with the pur-

chase. <http://library.calvin.edu/content/downloads/4902>

36. Pieters, *A Dutch Settlement in Michigan*, 139. Additionally there was a nationwide financial recession in 1857 when the New York branch of the Ohio Life Insurance and Trust Company failed.

37. C. (sic), “Holland Colony Michigan,” *Christian Intelligencer*, 9 Sept. 1858. “Crops here are a complete failure (due to drought) and there is a request to the Board of Domestic Missions for a monetary sum to prevent many in the Holland colony from starving.”

38. *CRC Classical Minutes* 8 June 1859, Art. 5. Apparently services were still held in the “parsonage” until June 1859. The article deals with a dispute over boards that Diepenhorst states Koene’s sons took, but Koene said they were needed for seating. <http://library.calvin.edu/content/downloads/4894>

39. Both Tamme and Grietje are buried in the plot; Tamme died in 1874 and Grietje in 1865. Tamme had settled on land north of the current Roosevelt School located on 100th Avenue, or Franklin Street. The little cemetery was situated toward the rear of his property.

40. Noordeloos *CRC minutes* 28 January 1858, Art. 1; 3 February 1858, Art. 6. Archives, Heritage Hall, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

41. Jan Peter Verhave, *Disease and Death among the Early Settlers in Holland, Michigan* (Holland, MI: Hope College, 2006) 43. Marrigje was fortunate in that the Noordeloos area did have the services of an excellent midwife. Mrs. Maatje Aling traveled by horse and buggy up to twenty miles distance from her home in Zeeland, Michigan. Her fee for a delivery was \$3.00. In the winter, depending on the weather, she either took a sleigh or traveled by horseback.

42. Grietje is the diminutive of the name Margareta or Margreet.

43. *CRC Classical Minutes* 8 June 1859, Arts. 9 & 10. <http://library.calvin.edu/content/downloads/4894>

44. Marrigje’s obituary in *De Wachter*

states she was a vermaanster (reprimander or admonisher), suggesting she had a mind and opinion of her own.

45. When Koene moved to Grand Haven, Diepenhorst was reinstated as member, and again elected elder.

46. Vanden Bosch, Vander Werp, and Frieling were delegates at the 1851 Synod of the Christian Seceders held in Amsterdam from 23 April to 1 May. They shared similar views on church matters, especially that of adhering strictly to the Church Order of Dort. It is interesting to note that while Vander Werp was often a delegate, Vanden Bosch and Frieling were so only once.

47. *CRC Classical Minutes*, 4 October 1865, Art. 15. <http://library.calvin.edu/content/downloads/4900>

48. Koene’s contentious relationship with his parents and siblings has often been attributed to his growing up years. Koene was born to Tamme Vanden Bosch and Grietje Bont on 20 February 1818. His parents married on 7 March 1821, at which time Koene was legally acknowledged to be their son. Koene was raised by his Bont grandparents until he was twelve, when his parents called him home to work to contribute to the family’s economic support. Huug van den Dool, “Noordeloos on two Continents.”

49. In 1884 Tamme also moved to Grand Haven to join his brothers in business.

50. Robert Swieringa, *Dutch Chicago: A History of the Hollanders in the Windy City* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002) 116.

51. Installation date was 3 November 1879; back to Grand Haven 10 July 1881.

52. Perhaps Vanden Bosch developed an allergy to something in the city of Chicago causing his bronchitis—smoke from too many chimneys—since he lived another sixteen years after returning to Grand Haven.

Edward John Wolters: A Glimpse into the Life of a Young Teacher in the 1920s

Lloyd Wolters with Robert P. Swierenga



Edward J. Wolters in 1926 became a celebrated teacher in Holland. Image courtesy of the Lloyd Wolters.

Lloyd J. Wolters is a retired minister in the Christian Reformed Church. After attending Hope College, Calvin College, and Calvin Theological Seminary, he served congregations in Indiana, Wisconsin, Illinois, and Michigan. In addition to parish ministry, he has been active in teaching and producing study material on the Bible.

A prolific author and contributor to *Origins*, Robert P. Swierenga is the A. C. Van Raalte Research Professor of History at the A. C. Van Raalte Institute, Hope College. His career has included secondary and higher education. He has surpassed his acclaimed Dutch Chicago with a three-volume *Holland, Michigan: From Dutch Colony to Dynamic City* (Eerdmans, 2014).

Edward John Wolters had witnessed travel by horse and buggy, a new Ford cost \$390, a Justice brand tire was \$7.95 and you put it on yourself, gas cost 16½ cents per gallon, a Lynamite spark plug to juice up your Model T Ford, as did a Whirlwind Automatic Airburner.¹ Wolters (named Evert) was born 26 December 1898 in the farmhouse at A6239 147th Avenue, Holland, Michigan.

His father, Benjamin Wolters, later sold the home and bought a forty-acre farm a mile south of Graafschap. Edward attended Pioneer School in Laketown Township, Allegan County, Michigan. The family was part of the Christian Reformed Church and, after graduating from the eighth grade, could not afford to send him to the preparatory school (now Calvin College) in Grand Rapids, so Wolters took horse and buggy to the Hope Prep School, a distance of four and



Wolters in 1917 in his army uniform. Image courtesy of Lloyd Wolters.

half miles. Graduating in 1916, he continued at Hope College. The horse knew the way, so Ed could do as he pleased while going back and forth. During school hours, Ed kept his horse for a nickel a day at Hermanes “Hub” Boone’s Livery, located on

Central Avenue between 8th and 9th streets. Wolters graduated from Hope College with an AB degree in 1920.

Wolters began his career teaching Latin, German, and English at Holland Christian High School from 1920 to 1926. He then taught Latin at Hope Prep School from 1926 to 1930, and German at Hope College from 1930 to 1943. Germany being the adversary during the Second World War, there was less demand to learn German, so he switched to English until 1945. In 1945 and 1946, he taught Latin and was the Director of the Veterans Institute, helping orient many returning veterans to life at Hope College. When Wolters retired in 1966, President Calvin VanderWerf wrote: “The name of Edward J. Wolters is indelibly etched in the history of Hope College because of the magnificent contribution you have made over many years.” He died 18 January 1986.

From 1921 to 1925 Wolters often wrote a page a day in small date-books. Because the pages are so small, most of his sentences are incomplete. What follows is a sampling from those pages.

1921

His first entry about school (Holland Christian High School) is dated . . .

Tue Jan 4

School starts again.

Fri Jan 7

Went with Case [Cornelius Van Andel, a fellow teacher] to see basketball

game at Carnegie Gym. Hope vs. Grand Haven Co. F. Score: Hope 44, Co. F. 11.

Fri Jan 21

Went with Laura [Lemmen, who became his wife] to basketball game at [Hope College] Carnegie Gym. Large crowd. Result of game: Hope 36, Grand Rapids Y [YMCA] 17.

Jan 31

New semester began. New pupils.

Feb 1

No classes yet because of lack of room. We get the third room on the second floor of High School building [Fifteenth Street School for Advanced Christian Instruction] and used chairs from 14th Street [Christian Reformed Church] in place of seats.

Feb 5

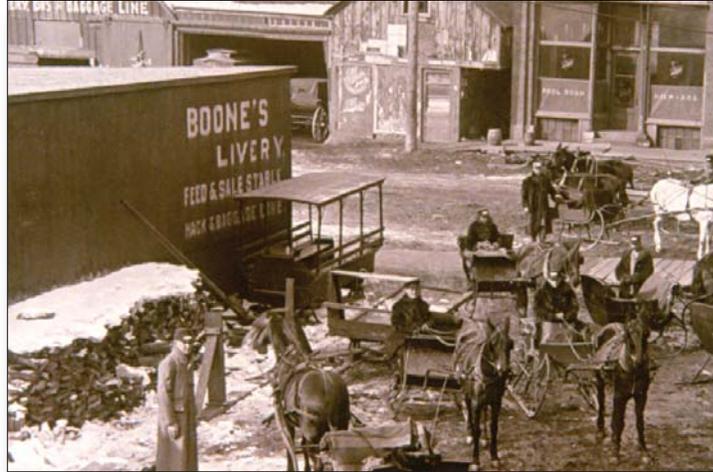
Big sale at J. J. Rutgers Co. \$100 in bonds thrown from top of store to street.

Feb 24

Attended meeting of Christian High School Association in 14th St. Church. Land bought between 19th and 20th streets, State St. and Michigan Ave. Board authorized to go ahead with plans for new [high school] building.

Mar 4

Inauguration Day. President Harding.



Boone's Livery, on Central Avenue in Holland, just north of the current Holland Museum, where Wolters stabled his horse while taking classes at Hope College. Image courtesy of the Joint Archives of Holland, Hope College, Holland, Michigan.

Vice President Coolidge. School dismissed at noon.

Jul 5

Took train to Ann Arbor. Registration. Looked for rooms. Secure them at 425 South Division St. [He began work toward a Master's degree at the University of Michigan.]

Jul 7

Attended 3 classes. Took a bath in Huron River.

Jul 11

Schedule all fixed up: German, Shakespeare, Latin Comedy, and Caesar.

Aug 17

Had my exam in "Roman Comedy" course.

Aug 18

Went to depot before dinner and saw the "DeWitt Clinton Train"² on way back from Pageant of Progress³ at Chicago.

Aug 19

Exam in "Shakespeare." Left for home at 10:48. Missed car in GR but

got to Laura's place [in Holland] about 6:20.

Sep 11

At Graafschap Church in morning and afternoon. Went with Laura to Al Bieleveld's for supper.

Heard Dr. Samuel Zwemer⁴ at Trinity [Reformed Church in Holland] in evening. Spoke especially about Constantinople, Mecca, and Cairo as centers of Mohammedanism. Mecca: the center. Constant: the out-stretched hand. Cairo: the brain center.

Oct 15

Went hunting with Father, Uncle John [Wolters], and Uncle Albert [Wolters]. Got two rabbits.

Oct 16

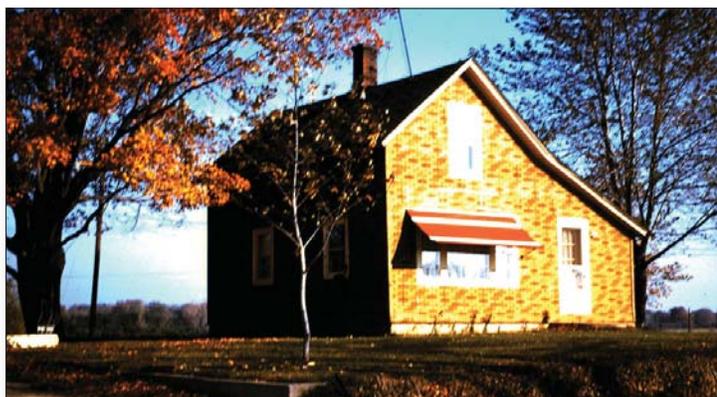
Had rabbit supper at Uncle Albert's.

Nov 8

First storm of season—about 8-10 inches of snow. Got stuck in drift about block from home near the bridge. Pulled machine [his father's car] out with team [of horses].

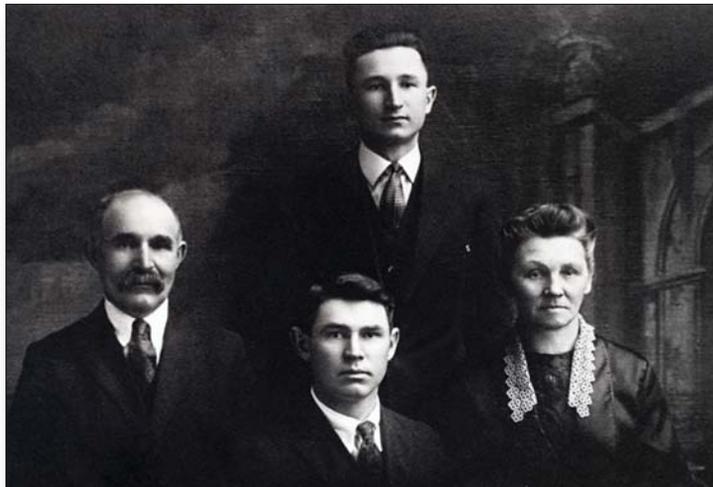
Dec 2

Clarence [De Graaf] and I went to Brink's Book Store [on Eighth Street] for books. I got Harper's Dictionary, Frounde's Caesar: Rambles in Rome; Abbot's Roman Political Institutions; and Mommsen's History of R[ome] @\$4.75.



Edward Wolters was born in this farm house on 147th Avenue, near the northern boundary of Allegan County and southwest Holland. Image courtesy of Lloyd Wolters.

The Wolters family in 1923, Edward behind his brother Steve. Image courtesy of the Lloyd Wolters.



Dec 16

Holland dedicated its boulevard light system.⁵

Dec 19

Heard Prof. Southwick of Emerson School of Oratory at Boston give Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar." Interpretation very good. Antony's speech impressive—impersonation of rabble realistic. Fine appearance and excellent orator.

Dec 28

Went to mill with Father by auto. Came back and stopped at Teusink's [farm on west 32nd Street] and bought two cows (a Guernsey and a Jersey) for \$100. [Brother] Steve and I got them during the afternoon.



The farm house where Wolters grew up, several miles east and then south of where he was born. Image courtesy of Lloyd Wolters.

1922

Sun Jan 1

Stormy day. Went to church at Graafschap twice. Did not take the machine because it was quite cold. After I got home from church I got the machine ready and went to town to get Laura. Snow drifting but not deep yet.

Tue Jan 3

Went to town with auto after dinner to do several errands.

Thu Jan 5

Spent most of forenoon in study. After dinner I packed up my belongings to take back to my room at Mersen's

[boarding house] (10th and Central). Went with Laura to singing school at Maple Avenue [Christian Reformed Church] and spent the evening with her.

Sun Jan 8

Weather mild again with sunshine. Attended Maple Avenue Church with Laura and also stayed in Sunday school with Mr. [John] Lemmen [his future father-in-law] Had dinner at Lemmen's.

Walked back home early in evening.

Mon Jan 9

Weather sunshiny. Started school in the old Prospect Park [Christian Reformed] Church which had been divided into three rooms besides the small consistory room at the rear. Our staff at present consists of Mr. Muyskens, Mr. De Graaf, Mr. Van Anandel, and myself. Conditions better than they were on 15th Street. Clarence [De Graaf] and I have a nice long walk every day from our rooms at corner of 10th and Central at Mersen's. My program has the following: Latin (1b), 5 hours per week; German, 4 hours per week; Latin (1a), 5 hours per week; German (1b) 5 hours per week; Latin (2b) 5 hours per week; German (1b) 5 hours per week; Latin (2b) 5 hours per week. [Mr. Wolters does not explain what the numbers and letters stand for.]

Tue Jan 17

My turn to lead chapel in morning.

Fri Jan 20

Weather very cold. School closed at noon. After dinner Muyskens and I went fishing. Walked over ice from boat dock to Pine Creek Bay. Took a long time to find the shanty of Peter Venhuizen where we were to fish. Fished with three of us till about 5:15 when M[uyksens] and I each had 9. Walked back over ice, took fish to Lemmen's and stayed for supper.

Fri Jan 27

Weather cold. School in forenoon. Father came to get me with machine at about 4:00. Roads good for auto, buggy, sleigh, or any other method of locomotion.

Sun Jan 29

Spent evening with Laura. I had found out that U of M started its summer session on June 26, and so we could not go on with our plan of getting married during the week between the close of high school and the beginning of the summer session. We talked over the possibility of having wedding during spring vacation. Reached no definite decision.

Thu Feb 2

Weather stormy. Streets and walks treacherous. Spent most of day in room correcting papers, with little table next to radiator and feet on top at times. Room quite cold.

Thu Feb 9

Clarence and I sent in order for books to Sears, Roebuck, & Co. as nucleus for a school library.

Fri Feb 17

Clarence and I fix up another order for books from Sears, Roebuck & Co. since the others proved very satisfactory. Most of them at 49 cents and 58 cents.

Fri Feb 24

Played basketball with rest of faculty against first team at Holland High gym. Had not played since about ten years ago. Played at guard. Spent about two hours at Laura's place in evening.

Sat Feb 25

Pretty sore all over as a result of yesterday's basketball. Received package from Sears,

Roebuck & Co. containing books for school library. Quo Vadis for my-



Edward and Laura (née Lemmen) in their wedding photo, 1922. Image courtesy of Lloyd Wolters.

self. . . . The books are of very good quality. I intend to give Quo Vadis to Laura.

Feb 28

Revs. [Daniel] Zwier of Maple Avenue Christian Reformed Church], [James] Ghysels, and [Bernard] Einink visited school in afternoon [as observers for the school board]. Were in my Church History class.

Mar 9

Laura and I decide quite definitely to be married on Decoration Day.

Mar 10

School in forenoon. To Holland High Gym for games with Grand Rapids Christian High. Large crowd. Plenty of pep. Girls game first. Our girls put up stiff fight and surprise all. Would have been ahead if referee (Miss Connor) had not counted overhead shots of GR forward for two points, which should be one. Faculty game: Al, Clarence, John, myself, with Tunis Prins first half and John Tuls second half. GR only three faculty members and two men eligible for first team.

Results: 1:6-8, 2:7-9, 3:10-16, all favor of GR. Floor burns on each knee.

Mar 15

Weather fair. Sunshine all day.

Clarence called Dr. [Rudolph] Nichols for me in morning. Felt miserable. System poisoned. Doctor came at about 11:00. Ripped off the bandages and cleaned the wounds with alcohol! Oh boy—that tickled! Put new bandages and told me to keep them soaked with extract of witch hazel. Ordered to say in bed today and Thursday. Mrs. Merson brought up some dinner, but appetite entirely gone. Relief soon after I got witch hazel.

Apr 18

AM School. Led chapel exercises. PM School. Gave special examination on conditional sentences to some members of German class. Very strong wind blowing. Slept downstairs during night because of it.

May 30

Weather ideal. THE BIG DAY. Finished decorating [the Lemmen home at 56 West 17th Street].

Rev. Zwier came and told us a few things about the ceremony. Married at 6:30 with only the two families present. Grandpa not there because of Aunt Gertie's death. Showered with rice and confetti. Serenaded by a bunch of neighbor kids who were quieted by some ice cream and cake.

May 31

AM School. Congratulations from quite a few students and also the instructors.

Jun 15

AM Exam in "Caesar." Received silver sugar bowl and creamer as present from faculty. Real surprise. PM Exam in German 1a. Corrected papers.

Jul 2

Attended Presbyterian Church [in Ann Arbor since he is taking summer classes again]. Rev. Barrett preached sermon. Remained after service to hear talk on "Incidents from the Life

of St. Paul” by Prof. Kelsey.⁶ Mr. and Mrs. John Jellema spent evening with us.

Jul 14

Took interurban at 2:05 for Detroit. Fare to Detroit \$1.44. Got tickets for boat to Buffalo \$21.50.

We had previously paid \$8.40 to reserve stateroom. Got aboard immediately, our boat being the City of Cleveland III. Left at 5:30. Our first experience on large boat. Lake very calm. Took pictures at sunset. Read and explored inside of boat which was richly furnished.

Jul 15

Had slept quite well but was awake quite frequently. Got up at about 7:15 and ate oranges and chocolate bars. Land already in sight. Arrived at Buffalo 8:30. Walked to NY Central Station, got tickets for Niagara, \$1.60. By rail to Niagara. Room at Temperance House. Left for the Gorge by auto at 1:00 PM. Caught glimpse of Falls as we passed over bridge to Canadian side. Paid toll.

Stopped at whirlpool where cable car crosses over it. By auto around whirlpool and left machine. Went into gorge and along water for quite a distance. Walked

along gorge to Brock Monument (Queenston) from where there is beautiful view of Lake Ontario. Farther down to bridge and back to Niagara. Supper. To Luna Island to see Falls illuminated. Awe-inspiring sight.

Jul 16

On the trail at

9:00 AM. Rocks. Spray. Rainbow. Out on point to see Horseshoe Falls. Back across bridge. Down elevator for Maid of the Mist [boat] trip. Back to town. Salt and pepper shakers as souvenirs. Got ready to go. Hotel bill \$4.00. By auto to Buffalo. Erie Canal. Curtiss airplane field. McKinley Monument—place where [James] McKinley was shot at Exposition—Delaware Park—house of McKinley’s sister where he died—large marble cathedral with bronze doors—boat dock—on the Detroit III—song service by Michigan people on deck—lake calm—sat by ourselves for a while before retiring.

Jul 17

Had a thunder storm during night and boat was rocking a little when we got up. Laura slightly seasick.

Aug 5

Went on University excursion to Jackson. Visited state prison. Men and women of our crowd of 130 separated. Went thru in groups of 20. Along solitary cells, five tiers above each other. Each cell contained a cot, chair, washstand (a bowl, that is), and a kind of dresser. Next cells occupied by 7 or 8 men. These had hot and cold water. Each had a tin plate, cup,

and fork, also 2 onions by each plate. Dinner was to be pork and beans with syrup and onions. Chair factory.

Tin shop where auto license plates were being made. Thru three gates and out again.

Sep 5

School opens at 9:00. Opening services at Prospect Park Church. Enrolled the students.

1923

Tue Jan 2

Weather cold, snow flurries. Got ready to go to Holland and have family picture taken. Called up Lacey. Stopped at our place (135 W. 12th St.) since [brother] Steve and I must shave yet. Go to Lacey studio.⁷ Pa and I get auto license (\$11). Go to post office to have two War Savings Stamps of series 1918 redeemed (\$5 each).

Wed Jan 3

School begins again. Surprised by some new paint and general repair work in the old school.

Early dinner since I am on duty during noon hour today. PM School.

Fri Jan 19

Weather snow. AM School. Took bicycle again. Began to snow during forenoon making it rather treacherous riding when I went home. PM Dinner. Walked to school. Tried out some quartet pieces I got from Meyer’s [Music House] to find suitable one for boys in literary society. Also played a couple of pieces with the violin and piano.

Mon Jan 29

AM School. Went to Pieper’s [optometrist on 8th Street] to have eyes tested. I need new lenses.

PM All teachers had promised to go [ice] fishing so we left a little after 1:00 for Pine Creek Bay.

Whole village of shanties is really a scene. No success.



The Christian school that was housed in the former Prospect Park Christian Reformed Church that had been divided into three classrooms, 1922. Image courtesy of Lloyd Wolters.

Mon Feb 5

AM Cold riding. Left bicycle half way at the folks. School. PM Jellema out all day because of grippe [influenza]. Large number of students out.

Thu Feb 8

City nurse called during forenoon and because there were so many out and so many with colds she advised closing the school the rest of the week. Closed at noon and will make up on Washington's birthday. Evening meeting at 14th Street Church in preparation for drive of next week for the \$75,000 school. More than \$10,000 was subscribed here. All of us teachers pledged \$150. The way the pledge cards are made out means that they prefer to have 25% paid on May 1, 25% by July 1, and the balance distributed over the next five years.

Mon Feb 12

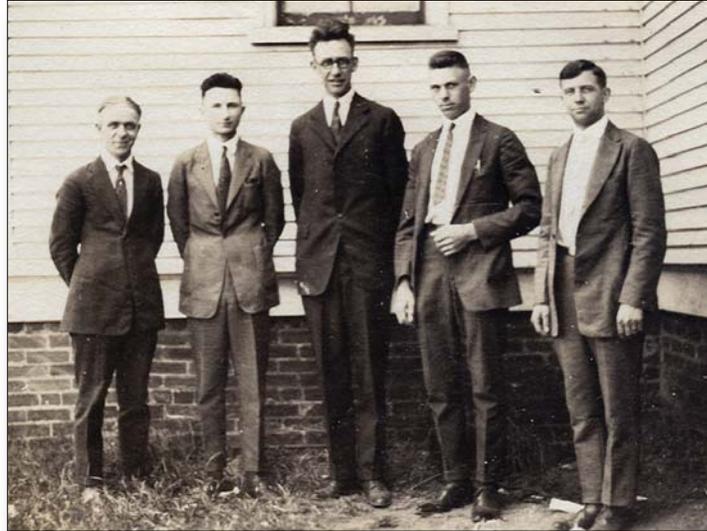
Organized school orchestra. Was chosen president and business manager! Ha! Ha! [Cornelius] Van Anandel came at 7:00 and Van and I started canvassing for the building campaign.

Wed Feb 14

School. Cold. Many absentees. Trains blocked (because of storm). No mail from south all day.

Thu Mar 1

Laura came back from shopping and bought and E-string for her guitar. Put it on and tuned it up. Mr. [John] Van Nieweland⁸ came to ask whether I could go along to call on a few people that had not yet been approached as to the school campaign. Promised to go tomorrow night or next Monday. Learned that he had had primary and high school education in Netherlands. Also speaks German and French. Must engage in German conversation when we go out.



The faculty of Holland Christian High School, left to right: John Jellema, Edward Wolters, Albert Muyskens, Clarence DeGraaf, and Cornelius Van Anandel. Image courtesy of the Archives, Holland Historical Trust, Holland, Michigan.

Sat Mar 3

Heard sparrows and a robin singing when we woke up.

Fri Mar 9

AM Cleaned furnace. Breakfast. Regular period of devotions. School. PM School. Much interest in the newspapers and periodicals as to the discoveries in Tutankhamen's Tomb in Egypt. His mummy has now been found. Gold and jewels in abundance.

Sat Mar 10

Hiked to Macatawa Park to see icebergs. Large this year. Ice extends as far as one can see [on Lake Michigan]. Took interurban back home.

Sun Mar 11

Walked to Graafschap Church. Home with folks, four of us in the buggy. Mud around church!

Wed Mar 14

Went to attend the service at Winants Chapel [on campus of Hope College] where we heard Dr. Paul Harrison, medical missionary to Arabia. He told of the tremendous difficulty in working amongst Mohammedans. A man with a message.

Fri Mar 16

Heard about Board meeting of last

night: that John, Clarence, and I had been reappointed @ \$1700.

Sun Mar 18

AM Church and Sunday school. PM Went to C. De Koster's house to practice a few selections with male quartet for Thursday evening. Other members: C. De Koster [member and song leader at Maple Avenue church], P[eter] Veltman, and P[eter] Slagh.

Sat Mar 31

Cleaned spark plugs and timer of auto. Laura and I went with Pa to take eggs to hatchery of M. Knoll. Their flock of about 97 barred rocks laid 36 dozen last week. Knoll's hatchery has capacity of 60,000. Uncle Albert called up to have one of us come to start machine for him. When I came I found batteries refused to respond. Tried to crank it but "Lizzie" wouldn't run. But we would not be put out so we hitched the horse to it and so started the motor.

Mon Apr 9

Went to see Professor [Wynand] Wichers⁹ as to going to the University next year. Advised me to go within next year or so.

Wed Apr 18

Pa came to get us. Had flat tire when

he got here. Put in other inner tube, pumped it up, another leak. Tire poor and no other tube so we rode home with flat tire.

Fri Apr 20

Went to school for first time this year without overcoat. Sent for textbooks of American Book

Company: Moser—Der Bibliothekar. I offered to help Pa sow oats tomorrow and he wanted us to go along tonight altho they only had one machine. Pa wouldn't let me take the bicycle. All went well with eight in a Ford!

Sat Apr 28

Took bicycle and went to help Pa. Helped load manure while Pa brought the loads away. I gave the stables a good cleaning, split wood, cleaned spark plugs, and greased the auto and bicycle.

Sun May 13

Walked to Jennie and Case [Van Andel] and we all went to Trinity Ref. Church to hear Dr. S. M. Zwemer again. He spoke on "The Miracle of the Bible." Instructive and inspirational as usual.

Thu May 17

Large machine began today at River Ave. and 17th Street to dig out the dirt in preparation for paving. Large steam shovel loads it right on the trucks.

Fri Jun 1

Orchestra practice at Fourteenth Street Church. Prepared a few jokes for tonight. Banquet at about 7:25. More than 100 students there. Our school orchestra made its "debut."

Wed Jun 13

Last day of teaching this spring!

Mon Jun 18

Met with the school board after supper. Al had sent a note in the forenoon to notify me and saying it was

in regard to what appeared on the programs at the banquet: "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we diet." Tunis Prins, chairman of the program committee, and Neal Keegstra, president of the junior class also there. Board wanted to know where to place responsibility for it. Al [Muyskens] took it saying that he had been asked about something on the program and had a chance to look it over, but that he had not seen the expression.

Tue Jun 19

AM Exam in German 1a. PM Exam in German 2a. This finishes my examinations. Corrected papers and got out marks. Went to school where we all entered our marks. Supper. Graduation exercises in 14th St. Church.

Thu Jun 21

Were to be at school by 8 o'clock where there were trucks to take us to Tennessee Beach.¹⁰ Sat on the beach first and then went swimming. Went to Heeringa's beach toward evening and had a wienie roast. Think that all around it was a fine school picnic.

Sat Jun 23

Woke up several times last night because of heat.

Mon Jun 25

If we leave all our furniture here at 135 W. 12th Street, Mrs. [Grietje] Mokma wants \$15 a month this summer, so we expect to move most of it to my folks in the country. Pa has the horses trained so that while unloading he can just stay on the load and tend to the harpoon¹¹ while the horses go out and turn around alone.

Thu Jul 5

Received a card from Betty and John Jellema saying that the stork had brought them a baby girl, Bonnie June.

Sun Jul 8

What a change one notices at church within the last few years; then there were only a few automobiles and now there is hardly a buggy to be seen in the line-up.

Fri Aug 3

Heard the sad news that President Harding had died at 7:30 last night.¹²

Sat Aug 4

Laura and I took auto to Green Mt. Beach to bathe. Machine was stuck in the sand road so Laura got out and gave a little 'lift.' That helped and it shot right ahead!

Tue Aug 7

Cleaned magneto contact point and timer of machine since it started hard.

Sat Aug 25

Today we heard about the terrible accident of last night on the Pike at Van Dyke's corner.¹³ A party of young folks was going to a wienie roast. John Tymes, Rena De Pree, Egbert Brink, and Tena Gebben in a machine tried to pass L. Knoll in his machine at a crossroad. It seems that they were going at a terrific speed so that somehow they struck first L. Knoll's auto and then the ditch, the machine turning turtle more than once. Rena De Pree is very serious; they feared at first that her back was broken. Tena is also serious. The boys were not hurt much. The girl claimed she was to blame more than John.

Wed Sep 5

My schedule now is as follows: 1. Latin 2b — Room 1; 2. Latin 1b — Room 3; 3. Latin 1b — Room 2; 4. Study — Room 1; 5. German 1b — Room 4; 6. German 2b — Room 4; 7. Study with Roelofs — Room 1.

Sat Sep 15

AM Machine had not run properly for a few days, so Pa and I cleaned the

spark plugs and located trouble in the coil box.

Tue Oct 9

AM Small pox epidemic is becoming such that the Board of Health has required that no pupils be allowed at school tomorrow unless they have been vaccinated. In order to give opportunity there was no school in the afternoon. PM Called up Dr. De Haan to find out if I ought to be vaccinated again or whether the vaccinations of the army still hold. Do not need to do it again.

Tue Oct 16

Many students out again today, vaccination undoubtedly.

Sat Oct 27

Greased auto.

Mon Oct 29

Got Lynamite plug of Clarence Mulder to try whether that will make the no.1 cylinder fire regularly even tho' it sucks oil. John Klingenberg and I sent out by Maple Ave. to distribute budget envelopes for HCHS. Made six calls.

Tue Nov 6

Big fire toward northwest. Telephone busy. Found out later that it is the Ottawa Beach Hotel.¹⁴

Sat Nov 10

Greased auto.

Mon Nov 12

Stopped at post office today to have address changed from R.R.12 to 508 First [now Washington] Ave.

Fri Nov 16

First issue of HCHS Echoes today, very respectable school paper. "If the posters that have been appearing in our school recently are any serious indication of the trend of thought and the desire of the student body, it is evident that there is a growing

realization that what is usually termed school spirit is something more than a collection of yells and a subject for bombastic stump speeches exploded just before some athletic contest. It must become a habit of thinking.

And this habit of thinking will determine our attitude not only at outside contests, but also toward our comrades (instructors included, for they are comrades), towards our work, and even towards the building and institutions as such. We sincerely hope that this movement may help stimulate a healthy school spirit."

Wed Nov 21

Heard that Harold Dekker¹⁵ had been thrown from his bicycle by an auto last night, taken to the hospital unconscious, then home. Severely bruised, but apparently not serious. Harry [Vork] and I went to see Harold.

Mon Nov 26

To dentist and had one more cavity filled. Bill for the three, \$8.00.

Thu Dec 13

After school we met with the Educational Committee at the home of Rev. J. W. Ghysels. Our Bible courses have been changed so that instead of being

given once a week during the whole year, they are to be given five times a week for one semester of each year, thus giving them the same dignity as a regular high school subject.

Fri Dec 14

The afternoon all the boys are to help at leveling the dirt around our new building. The girls are talking about cleaning the old building a little. PM Dinner. Took shovel. All worked with a will.

Two teams with scrapers, the rest of us worked with wheelbarrows and shovels. Laura and I acted as chaperons at the freshman class party in primary school building.¹⁶ Spent a pleasant evening with the pupils.

Fri Dec 21

To school where we looked over papers students wrote on the subject, "Why every citizen of Holland should buy stock in the Warm Friend Tavern." Best ones to be sent in to contest.

Mon Dec 31

Went to garage to look for roadster or coupe. Ford garage had two coupes, one at \$325 and other at \$335 which needed repair first. Stopped at several garages but found nothing except at



A later photo of the Central Christian School building that opened in 1902. The structure was originally clad in wood siding. Image courtesy of Lloyd Wolters.

Main Street garage where there was a 1922 sedan well kept up and with many extras at \$400.

Decided not to take it. New roadster is at present \$390.

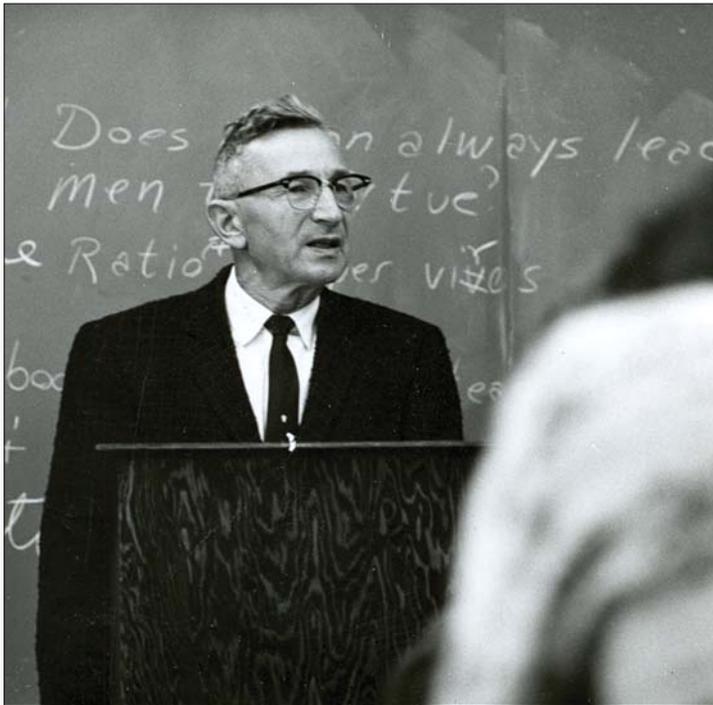
1924

Tue Jan 1

Weather very cold. Not much snow yet. Pa, Laura, and I went to church with auto.

Thu Jan 3

Finished reading *A Far Country* by Winston Churchill.



Wolters teaching a class at Hope College. Image courtesy of Lloyd Wolters.

Mon Jan 7

Lanning came with coupe to show us. Rode to 32nd Street. Car is 1922 (August) model—3 cord tires, extra poor—heater, dash lamp, windshield wiper, carburetor adjustor, motometer, radiator cover. Asked \$350, \$345 cash. Offered \$340 and got it.

Tue Jan 8

Took machine to school. Then paid

for auto. Laura and I drove home to surprise the folks.

Stopped at Wayside Garage and bought pair of chains @ \$2.65. Gas at present is 16 and a half cents. Did surprise the folks.

Sat Jan 12

Stopped at garage and got deed for the auto. Then to the City Hall where I applied for license and transfer of deed. License: \$11.45. Transfer of deed \$1.00. Took spare rim and tire off and painted rim.

Fri Jan 25

Gave examination to Bible 2a class. Read Kipling's *Namgay Doola*.

Sat Jan 26

Received copy of Papini's *Life of Christ*. Papini is the brilliant Italian man of letters who used to be an atheist. Read in Ben Hur.

Mon Jan 28

Examination in Latin 2b. Read *A Message to Garcia*, *Get Out or Get in Line*,

and *A Hundred-Point Man* by Elbert Hubbard.

Mon Feb 4

Ex-President [Woodrow] Wilson passed away yesterday after a prolonged illness.¹⁷

Mon Feb 18

Mother [Edward's mother-in-law, Jennie Haveman Lemmen] passed away quietly at 7:15.

Sat Feb 23

Studied. Uncle Gerrit, Pa, and I looked thru new HCHS building. Woodwork upstairs almost finished. Bought *Tanglewood Tales* and *Jane Eyre* at the ten-cent store.

Sun Feb 24

Enormous drifts in places. Pa's auto shed all closed in.

Tue Mar 4

Not feeling well. Did not go to school. On couch. Laura went to Van Faasen's to call Dr. De Haan. He could not come until after 5:00. Diagnosed it as bronchitis. Ordered me to bed. Sweat. Hot drink. Mustard plaster. Medicine and pills. Don't believe I ever sweat so much in such a little time!

Thu Mar 20

To Grand Rapids where we met the faculty of Calvin College to discuss courses of study.

Principals of GR High School and Hull Academy [in Hull, Iowa] there too.

Fri Mar 28

Last day in old school building. To town to attend first basketball game in the new school. The gym looks fine. Big crowd. Alumni played against the team. Boys won.

Sun Mar 30

Church. Communion. Used the individual communion cups for first time today.

Mon Mar 31

Spring vacation this week so we can move school furnishings to new building.

Took seats out of old building [the former Prospect Park Church building]. Truck with gang of boys moved seats. Helped them carry them into rooms.

Tue Apr 1

AM Set up seats in one room. PM Placed seats in one more room and started another. The teachers have turned carpenters and we get along fine. [Christian School teachers had to do physical work, unlike public school teachers.] Heard little radio. Serious fire today in fumigator part of DePree Chemical Company.¹⁸

Mon Apr 7

AM School in new building. Students met in their respective rooms and we made assignments.

My room is s[outh] w[est] room upstairs. All upstairs devoted to high school. Lower floor to junior high. PM Study. Laura and I to school. Cleaned my new desk and put hook in closet.

Thu Apr 10

Dedication service at the school. Auditorium filled.

Fri Apr 18

Received notice of reappointment with leave of absence the first semester.

Sat Apr 19

Wrote to the University to inquire about courses I should take next fall.

Wed Apr 30

During last period Dr. Dahlwani of Bombay, India, and a graduate of Columbia [University] talked to us about his native country.

Sun May 25

To Carnegie Gym to hear WJ. [William Jennings] Bryan speak on "Is the Bible True?"

Scheduled to speak at 3:00 and we were inside at 1:55 and sat in the second row from the front.

He spoke to the "overflow" before he came inside. Stirring address interspersed with quips, wit, humor, and ridicule. He does know how to

"manage" an audience. "Danger today is that education is being substituted for religion." Two reasons why people cling to evolution: egotism, it is a lazy hypothesis." "Theistic evolution is more dangerous than atheistic. It is the anesthetic administered to man while his Christianity is being taken from him."

Tue Jun 17

Went to school picnic at Tennessee Beach.

Wed Jun 18

Commencement exercises, first in our new school. Building packed. Played with orchestra.

Thirty graduates from the high school, fifty from junior high.

Sept 22

To school (University of Michigan) to confer with Dean [Alfred Henry] Lloyd [Dean of the Graduate School], Prof. [Robert Mark] Wenley, and Prof. Sanderson. I attended the opening assembly at Hill Auditorium at which President [Marion Leroy] Burton gave an address on "The Fighter." Renewed subscription to The Banner.

Fri Sep 26

Received letter from home. The folks threshed. They have 333 bushels of wheat this year from twelve acres averaging 28 bushels to the acre.

Sat Oct 4

Went to see part of football game with Miami. Stayed till score was 28-0, favor of U of M.

Wed Oct 8

Attended the international debate between Oxford University [of Ohio] and U of M at Hill

Auditorium. Question for debate - Resolved: That this house is opposed to the principle of prohibition.

Sun Oct 12

AM Congregational Church. Rev.

[Herbert] Jump preached on Harry E. Fosdick, Heretic.¹⁹ Of course, according to Mr. Jump, he is not a heretic.

Sat Oct 18

Received notice from University School of Music that we have both been admitted to membership in the Choral Union. The annual fee is \$2.50 and deposit for music is \$2.50. This, however, gives one a pass to all concerts in Choral Union and in Extra Concert Series.

Sat Nov 1

Went to sort of Republican rally at the Whitney Theater where Mrs. Roosevelt Robinson (sister of Theodore Roosevelt) was the main speaker. Good orator.

Tue Nov 4

Election Day. Have been reading Up from Slavery by Booker T. Washington.

Wed Nov 5

President [Calvin] Coolidge and Dawes in the lead. School amendment (to abolish parochial schools) apparently defeated. [Alex J.] Groesbeck leading for Governor [1921-1927]. [James J.] Couzens for Senator [Michigan US Senator, 1922-1936].

Sat Nov 8

AM Finished essay for Philosophy on the subject: Being versus Becoming. PM Attended football game between Northwestern University and U of M. It is an impressive sight to see such an immense crowd of people and the University bands in full uniform. Score 27-0 in favor of U of M.

Thur Nov 13

Heard John Philip Sousa's Band at Hill Auditorium.

Sat Nov 15

Woke up at about 5:00 and realized that there was fire nearby. Proved to be the Coliseum building in same

block. Almost all aflame. Skeleton of front part saved.

Friday, Nov 21

Worked on essay, Infinite versus Finite Pluralism. Dr. [Henry] Beets answered our inquiry as to number of pupils and address of Rehoboth Mission.

Sun Nov 23

About twenty Reformed and Christian Reformed students met at Lane Hall and we intend to meet every two weeks from now on and have a leading preacher or professor from either denomination address us. Attended Presbyterian Church.

Wed Nov 26

Bought outline map of Gaul for Caesar course. Worked on paper for Caesar.

Sat Nov 29

Met Dr. F[rancis] W[illey] Kelsey on the campus today. He has just returned from the Near East where a U of M archaeological expedition has been excavating at Antioch in Pisidia [now part of Turkey].

Mon Dec 1

Began work on large outline map of Gaul for Caesar course. Attended meeting of Classical Journal Club where Dr. Kelsey gave brief talk on work of excavation and showed pictures and illustrations.

Fri Dec 19

Got the 8:41 train (9:41 Ann Arbor time). In Grand Rapids at 12:05. Took 1 o'clock interurban for home. Got off at First [now Washington] Avenue. ✂

Endnotes

1. A supercharger that increases the pressure or density of air supplied to the motor. With the increased oxygen, more fuel is burned increasing the power produced.
2. A locomotive named in honor of De Witt Clinton, the governor of New York State. It began operation in 1831. Its first run was from Albany to Schenectady, a distance of sixteen miles.
3. In 1921 and 1922 the Municipal (now Navy) Pier in Chicago hosted "the greatest collection of business and industrial exhibits this city has ever seen" since the 1893 World's Columbian Exhibition. The two-week summer pageants drew hundreds of thousands of visitors.
4. Dr. Samuel Marinus Zwemer (1867-1952) was a missionary in Arabia. Roger S. Greenway edited the writings of Zwemer in *Islam and the Cross* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing Co., 2002).
5. "Holland in 1921 at last had boulevard lighting and now matched neighboring cities, at least aesthetically. It had come from 'utter darkness' and was now a brightly lit city, declared editor Ben Mulder proudly. Passengers on trains passing through Holland could

- finally see that it was a city and those disembarking could find their way to hotels without stumbling in the dark." from Robert P. Swierenga, *Holland Michigan: From Dutch Colony to Dynamic City*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2014) 1,799.
6. Francis Willey Kelse was professor of Latin and Classical Studies at the University of Michigan.
7. 17-19 East 8th Street, Robert P. Swierenga, *Holland Michigan, From Dutch Colony to Dynamic City*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids and Cambridge, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2014) 2, 335.
8. *Ibid*, 1924-1925.
9. President of Hope College.
10. Tennessee Beach was on the shore of Lake Michigan at the west end of Lakewood Boulevard.
11. Harpoon fork—a hayfork consisting of an iron shank having a rope attached to one end and one or two tines to the other, with barbs that close when the tines are driven into the hay.
12. Warren Gamaliel Harding, 29th President of the United States, collapsed and died in California on 2 August 1923.
13. *Holland Sentinel* of 25 August

- 1923 has a headline: HOLLAND GIRL IS BADLY INJURED IN ACCIDENT.
14. Another fire on 6 November 1923 destroyed the Ottawa Beach Hotel.
15. This Harold Dekker of Holland is likely the son of former Holland Christian High School Principal Harry G. Dekker, the future Calvin College registrar.
16. A wooden building on Central Avenue between 15th and 16th streets. Lloyd Wolters and his siblings were educated here in the 1930s and 1940s. The vacant building was set on fire by an arsonist in 1977.
17. On 25 September 1919, President Wilson collapsed, suffered a serious stroke, leaving his left side paralyzed and with only partial vision. He was confined to bed for weeks.
18. Swierenga, *Holland Michigan*, 1843.
19. Harry Emerson Fosdick was born in 1878 in Buffalo, NY, and ordained a Baptist minister. He was a prominent liberal minister of the early twentieth century who viewed the Bible as a record of the unfolding of God's will, not as the literal Word of God.

Migration in 1848: A Case Study¹

Jan van Bolhuis

Among the Dutch emigrants to North America during the years following 1847 were Elle Jacobs Bolhuis, a Mennonite, his wife, and six children, from Uithuizen, Groningen. Born in 1792 in Uithuizen, Bolhuis married Bouke Willems Boerema,

four years his junior, in 1819. They had ten children—three died young, six emigrated, the seventh and oldest, Pieterke, had married in 1846 and emigrated with her husband.

Bolhuis grew up on a farm near Uithuizen owned by his family since 1685² and was the second youngest of the surviving four sons and three daughters. When he was thirteen, his father, Jacob Eisses, died. His

mother, Dieuwerke Jans, continued to farm until 1818. Perhaps she was forced to sell as a result of the drop in grain prices that began in 1815 (and led to significant economic dislocation in the northern Netherlands) and because Dutch inheritance law required her to divide up her late husband's estate among all their children, since the youngest became of legal age

that year. All the sons eventually became farmers, and the daughters married farmers or middle class citizens; none became laborers working for day wages (such laborers were considered to be the lowest economic category in the Netherlands). All remained in the Netherlands, with the exception of Elle.

Before the eighteenth century there were few barriers to beginning farming. To start his own farm or assume his parents' farm, a young man could work as a laborer for another farmer to learn the profession and earn some capital. In the province of Groningen the "beklemrecht" facilitated the process of a laborer starting a farm. Via this right, someone could lease land and erect buildings on it. If the landlord terminated the lease, the former tenant had to be reimbursed the market value of the buildings. If the tenant ended the lease, he had to pay the cost of removing the buildings. Consequently, terminating the lease almost never was to the advantage of the landlord. The annual rent could be renegotiated every sixth year, but start-up costs were minimal.

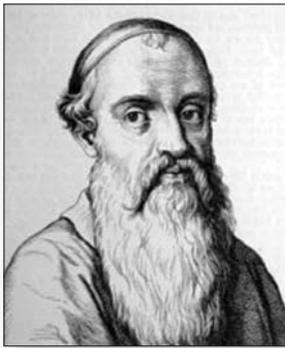
The largest landowners in the province were the city of Groningen and the provincial government. Both always sought immediate revenue and so offered non-changeable lease rates if there was a cash down payment at the beginning of the lease. Later, another fee allowed the lease to be transferred from father to son, and still later also to daughters. And with yet another fee, the lease could be transferred to a third party. Through these transfers, the lease rates remained the same. Even today some large farms



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still pay the original lease fee, and it may be as little as \$50 for the entire farm.

By the time Bolhuis and Bouwke married, he had left farming and was working as a merchant. When his children were born, his occupation is listed as shopkeeper or a freighter of corn on a canal boat.³ Elsewhere his occupation is also listed on occasion as innkeeper. The frequent changes in occupation may have been the



Menno Simons, 1496-1561, was an early leader in the Protestant Reformation, and joined the Anabaptist movement. Since his name meant Menno the son of Simon, his followers are called Mennonites. Public domain image.

result of depressed economic conditions. The decades following the re-establishment of the Dutch monarchy in 1815 were years of economic hardship in the new kingdom. Agricultural prices throughout Europe dropped following the Napoleonic wars, and the cost of the monarchy's unsuccessful but expensive efforts to prevent Belgian independence in the 1830s resulted in rising taxes.

In 1848 the municipality of Uithuizen had 2,700 residents. By 1889, six hundred of these had emigrated.⁴ In 1848, twenty-nine people are recorded as emigrating: twelve men, five women, and twelve children. Elle Bolhuis and his immediate family were the largest single group. The ages of

the heads of family ranged from 24 to 65, with an average age of 36. At 56 years, Elle was the second oldest.

Elle, Bouke, and their six children left Uithuizen and arrived in New York in May 1848. They settled in Holland, Michigan, founded the previous year. Bolhuis was not a typical representative of the 1848 migrants, or of the settlers in Holland, in that he was not Afscheiden, but Mennonite.⁵

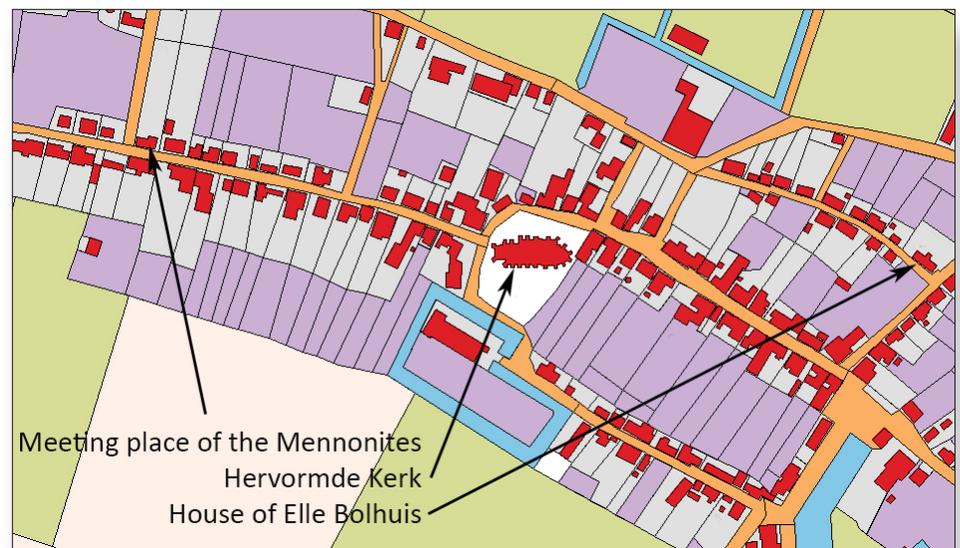
The Reasons for Leaving

Economic factors triggered the emigration wave of 1847-1857. To compete with dropping prices, agriculture modernized with increasing mechanization and could no longer absorb the growing labor population. The work, concentrated on the summer months, left the laborers unemployed the rest of the year. All of this was exacerbated in the middle 1840s when the potato blight struck northern Europe, resulting in significant declines in annual potato yields, estimated to have been 70 percent in 1845 in the Netherlands alone.⁶ Farmers lost a major part of their income and even faced bankruptcy. But hardest hit were laborers for whom the potato was the principal source of carbohydrate energy; the

blight resulted in hunger for many and starvation for some. Emigration soared as a result.

Not surprisingly, the reasons recorded by Elle and the remainder of the group from Uithuizen was “fear of poverty and longing for freedom.” It may be that the civil servant who recorded the information simply used ditto marks for their reasons to save some time, but the migration was certainly induced at least in significant part by the economy. Not until arrival in the United States was “joining family and friends” listed as a reason for emigrating. Even though Dutch records do not classify Bolhuis as “less well-to-do”—the lowest tax category—he was not required to pay the “*hoofdelijke omslag*,”⁷ and he bought the lowest-cost passage across the Atlantic.

Most of those who emigrated were religious Seceders (*Afscheidenen*) from the national church and had been subjected to discrimination and harrassment (including fines and jail for the leaders) by the government and cited the desire for religious freedom as a reason for leaving. In 1840, however, the king abdicated and his successor son, Willem II, ended this campaign against the Seceders. But



The Village of Uithuizen. Map courtesy of the author.

the Seceders were still prevented from operating their own schools, and in the public schools children were taught the doctrines of the national church—the Hervormde Kerk. And the Seceders still were discriminated against economically, neglected by local governments, often even by their own families. For Seceder emigrants there was the hope that in the new country they could live in religious freedom. Elle was not a Seceder, but a Mennonite, and may have felt the impact of religious discrimination, but his wife was a member of the Hervormde Kerk.

Also emigrating with the Bolhuis family were brothers Marten, Anes, and Michel Pieters, and their mother, Martjen Visser. Anes Visser was a son-in-law of the Bolhuises, married to their daughter Pieterke. The Visser-Bolhuis family group were twenty of the twenty-nine who left that year. This suggests that familial ties also may have contributed to the reason to leave.

The New Land

In Holland, Bolhuis immediately bought property for \$90. Life in the new colony was hard: clearing the forest, living in log huts, sleeping on boughs scarcely covered with sheets, in a climate with heavy rains during the spring and summer and bitter cold during the winter. Food was often scarce and, due to lack of roads, difficult to procure from elsewhere during those early years. Swamps, breeding places for mosquitoes, added fevers and malaria (then called ague); typhoid and dysentery resulted from the lack of sanitary systems, and typhus from fleas. Newly arriving immigrants brought smallpox. With almost no medical help available, loss of lives became appalling. Even Rev. Van Raalte cried out during a sermon, “O, Lord, must we all die?”

Bolhuis survived those difficult



This illustration, from the 25 June 1842 Illustrated London Times, depicts a riot in Galway, Ireland, when hunger drove the residents to attack a potato store.

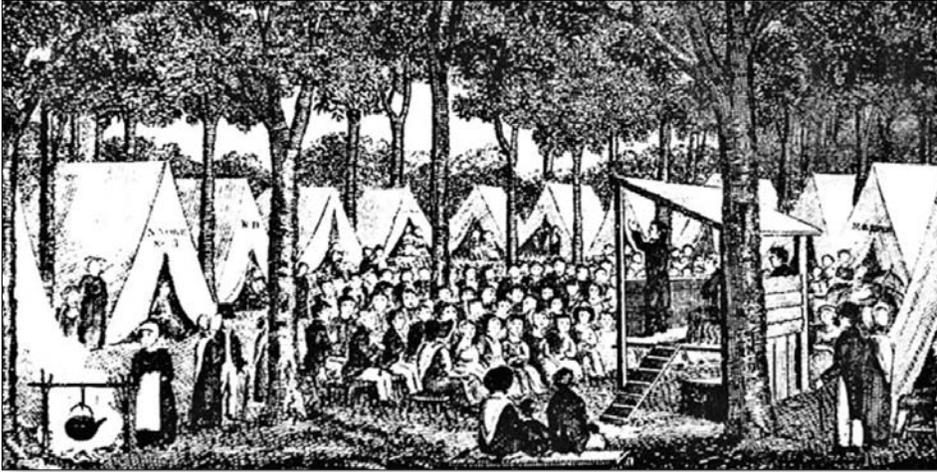
early years and according to census records did well economically. The 1850 and the 1860 census indicate he owned \$100 in real estate, while his personal belongings were estimated to be \$200. The 1870 census reports a remarkable increase in real estate value to \$1,000. The farm had fifteen improved and two unimproved acres (probably not yet cleared of trees), one horse, two milk cows, and it produced eighty bushels of winter wheat, eighty-four bushels of Indian corn, eight bushels of Irish potatoes, one hundred pounds of butter, and

two tons of hay. Bolhuis died in 1879 and was survived by his widow for two years.

The Bolhuis family came to a strict religious community. As advocated by Van Raalte, the churches in the “Kolonie” joined the Reformed Church in America (RCA) in 1850, a denomination founded in the seventeenth century by Dutch immigrants in the New York area. But this union was controversial, and during 1850 several groups left the RCA, culminating in 1857 with four congregations leaving the RCA.⁸ The seceding group formed



The artist romanticizes the early years in Holland, when in reality conditions were harsh and death was ever present. Image from a drawing in Heritage Hall, Calvin College.



A drawing of a revival meeting in America's Midwest. Clapper was part of a revival movement that followed from the Second Great Awakening that peaked during the 1840s. Public domain image.

the Christian Reformed denomination, whose Graafschap congregation called Rev. Douwe Van der Werp in 1864. Van der Werp served Graafschap and also preached in Holland. He was apparently successful because he soon needed a larger place for his meetings. Van der Werp had started as a minister in Uithuizen. However, there is no indication that Bolhuis connected with Van der Werp. In fact, there is no church affiliation for the Bolhuis family known until the mid-1860s.

In 1859 Michael J. Clapper,⁹ a Methodist by religion and a stonemason by profession, arrived in Holland. He began preaching “to save Holland in 1866.” He was physically unattractive, and his loud voice was abrupt and snappy. Not surprisingly, he initially received little respect, with both young and old attending his meetings in order to mock him. Initially these meetings were held in a vacant room over a saloon. But after a few gatherings the mocking turned to attention; when the room could no longer hold all attendees, the meeting was moved to the town hall. Eventually this space also proved to be too small, and a request was made to use Pillar Church. Van Raalte had long prayed for a

revival in his congregation, and so supported Clapper's evangelistic services, though his consistory did not. The consistory's refusal to allow him to speak met with such resistance that the decision had to be reconsidered. Quite unexpectedly, “practically the entire congregation”¹⁰ came to hear the eccentric Clapper, who preached with deep devotion in shirt sleeves and no collar. Night after night the staid Dutch immigrants stood up to give their testimonies and join in the emotional singing. To accommodate attendance, shops closed early, and during the evening meetings the saloons were empty and the streets deserted.

In spite of the consistory's hesitancy, Van Raalte supported the movement with, “Are you blind? Don't you see the hand of God? Shall we resist the Spirit of God? When will the consistory of Holland learn to understand its duty? I should have had another consistory long ago!” Van Raalte's frustration became even more evident when he said at the communion table, “Twenty years I have worked among this people. But where are the fruits? And now, God sends to us a Methodist to reap where we have sown. And such a Methodist! But I lay

my hand on my mouth and worship!” The baptism of Bolhuis and his wife, now called Bouwina, was the talk of the town.¹¹ Bolhuis, as a Mennonite, may not have been baptized; his wife had been a member of the Herformde Kerk and, if baptized, she would have been rebaptized.¹²

Except for this baptismal event, there is no record of their religious life from their arrival in 1848 until 1866. That year, however, the 13 March minutes of the Pillar Church report that two elders visited Bolhuis and his wife as requested: “They desire to be received as members of the congregation. In the judgment of the elders, they should be granted admission to the sacrament.” The minutes are not entirely consistent in the use of the word member which could mean one baptized, or one both



Pieterke Bolhuis, 1822-1878, the daughter of Elle and Bouke, married Ane Visser and, after he died in Michigan, she married Cornelius Vander Veere. Image courtesy of the author.

baptized and confessing, giving access to the Lord's Supper. Since both were elderly without children in the home, it can be presumed that the sacrament to which they were admitted was Holy Communion.

Several of their children joined the Pillar Church at the same time. Jan Bolhuis and Sietske van der Wal requested membership in the church



Cornelius Vander Veere, 1811-1899, in an image made by hand-coloring a photograph made a few years before he died. Image courtesy of the author.

on 20 February, and on 3 November Jan was baptized; Jacob Bolhuis and Anje Westink asked to be admitted on 6 March, and they with their four children were baptized five days later. Trijntje van Alsburg (née Bolhouse, the Americanized version of Bolhuis)

had joined in 1856, and her husband, Hendrik van Alsburg, joined ten years later. Pieter and Antje (née Bolhuis) Winter joined in 1857; Willem Bolhuis asked to join in 1859 and was accepted contingent upon his attending catechism classes due to the minimal knowledge of faith, which he acknowledged.

The two remaining children are not listed in the extant membership records of Pillar Church. The children of Pieterke Bolhuis and Cornelius Vander Veere are listed as members. Vander Veere was prominent in the community, having been one of four asked to build a shelter for new immigrants upon their arrival; he later owned one of the three hotels in the city. Stuart Bolhuis married Gijsje van Alsburg in 1857 and farmed in Coopersville.

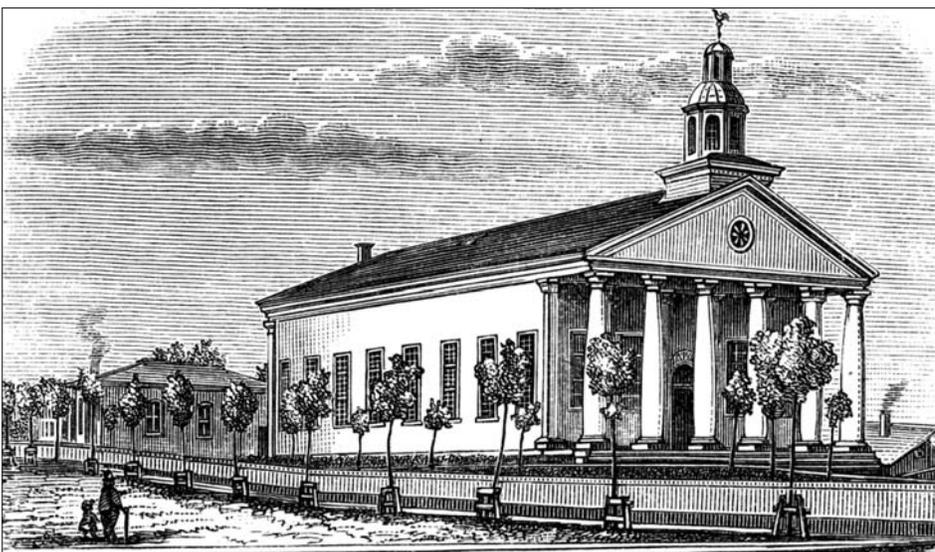
Conclusion

After Elle and Bouke Bolhuis died, their descendants continued to be members of the community. The Great Fire of 1871 destroyed 75 percent of Holland, including 210 houses, five churches, and all three hotels, and left 1,300 people without

shelter. This had a direct impact on Pieterke (1822-1878) and her second husband, Cornelius Vander Veere, since they owned the Grand Hotel in Holland, on 6th and Maple streets.¹³ Apart from the hotel, he owned a farm supplying products to the hotel. In 1870 his estate was estimated to be worth \$4,000, of which \$300 was real estate. He remarried in 1879 with Cornelia Nieuwold.

Jacob Bolhuis (1824-1871) was a farmer, and in 1854 married Anje [Anna] Westink. According to the census of 1860, their real estate value amounted to \$175, personal belongings to \$110. In 1870 these figures increased to \$1,000 and \$300. Both are buried in Pilgrim Home Cemetery, Holland. Trijntje Bolhuis (1829-1851) married Hendrik [Henry] van Alsburg, also a farmer in Holland. The 1870 census estimates the value of his real estate at \$400, the non-real estate possessions were valued at \$750. Willem Bolhuis (1829-1884) was employed at a sawmill in 1880 and was a foreman and a firefighter. In 1863 he married Pieterella Vander Haven in Grand Haven, who had been born in the Netherlands in 1840. His estate in 1870 was valued at \$400. As noted, Siewert [Stewart] Bolhuis (1832-1906) also was a farmer, and in 1857 he married Gijsbertje [Augusta] van Allsburg. In 1870 his total estate was valued at \$3,190, of which \$2,500 was real estate. Anje Bolhuis (1835-1923) married Pieter Jurrien Winter in 1854; he was a blacksmith. Jan Elle [John] Bolhuis (1839-1917) was a farmer and married Antje [Anna] Kameraad in Holland in 1867. The 1870 census gives no value to his estate. Bolhuis farmed in Coopersville for twenty-five years, and then returned to Holland, Michigan, where he spent his last eight years.

Of the Bolhuis grandchildren there is only scattered information.¹⁴ The stories of the offspring of Jan Bol-



An early drawing of Pillar Church in Holland. The RCA congregation was founded by Rev. A. C. Van Raalte but during the 1880s the majority of the congregation and their edifice became Christian Reformed. Since 2012 it has been a union church in both the CRC and RCA.

huis and Anje Kammeraad are best documented. They established the Bolhuis Lumber and Manufacturing Company, which is still in existence. Some descendants are still members of the Third Reformed Church in Holland. 

Endnotes

1. Some of the data are derived from research by a descendant whose name I lost when my computer crashed. This article would never have been written without the stimulation and research in Grand Rapids on Holland, Michigan, by Paula Vander Hoven (helped by Janet Sjaarda Sheeres when knowledge of the Dutch language was required), who collected among many other things the information regarding the Clapper revival. I am greatly indebted to them.

2. P.J. Zandt, *De boerderijen in het gebied van de Noorder Afdeling en de Afdeling Uithuizen en Omstreken van de Groninger Mij. Van Landbouw* (Uithuizen, 1977) 306-307; T. B. Bierma, J. de Boer, R. van der Tuuk, ed. *Boerderijen op het Hogeland* (Oudeschip: Profiel, 2002) 384. Some genealogical notes about this family and its relation to namesakes from J. van Bolhuis, “Doopsgezinde leden van het geslacht Bolhuis” in: *Gruoninga* (1992) 148-155.

3. <http://www.allegroningers.nl>.

4. A. Bolt, *Geschiedenis van Uithuizen* (Uithuizen: Bakker, 1982) 121.

5. Not to be confused with Baptists. Baptism was introduced in Groningen about 1845. Mennonites are named after Menno Simons (1496-1561) and existed in rich variety. Originally they were very strict, similar to Amish. The orthodox group was strongly influenced by the pietistic movement. When membership dwindled, most of these joined the Afscheidenen. Others, far less strict, ended as liberal.

6. Cormac Ó Gráda, Richard Paping, and Eric Vanaute, eds. *The European Subsistence Crisis of 1845-1850: A Comparative Perspective* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2007).

7. This was akin to a tax on real estate.

8. Janet Sjaarda Sheeres, *Son of Secession, Douwe J. Vander Werp* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2006), chapter 14.

9. He was also known as Martin Clapper. The Clapper revival is mentioned in several publications, including Seth Vander Werf, “A Revival in the Holland Colony in 1865 & Dr. Albertus Van Raalte’s Comments Thereon” (<http://www.calltoworship.org/calltoworship/>

<http://www.calltoworship.org/calltoworship/revival/holland.html>); the article must have been written about 1940; Michael De Vries and Harry Boonstra, *Pillar Church in the Van Raalte Era* (Holland, Pillar Church, 2003), 91-92; Robert P. Swierenga, *Holland Michigan, From Dutch Colony to Dynamic City*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids and Cambridge, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2014), 209-212; the first and second and to a lesser extent the third seem to be based on Gerrit Van Schelven, “Historische Schetsen uit het Koloniale Leven” *Grondwet* (23-30 December 1913).

10. Minutes, 13 February 1866, Pillar Church, Holland, Michigan: “. . . an unexpected turn in which the situation has gone. Practically the entire congregation has participated, and we do not want to entrust them to the leadership of Klipper” (translation from the original minutes by William and Althea Buursma, 2000). Pillar Church, Holland, Michigan.

11. Swierenga, *Holland Michigan*, 210; citing *De Hope*, 3 May 1866.

12. Swierenga, *Holland Michigan*, p. 210. Bouwina already had been baptized in the Netherlands. Most of those who joined seem to have done so as individuals, not as couples. Also most of them were younger. So perhaps the people were surprised that an older couple “stood up” and possibly even more so since it seems that they were not regular church attendees.

13. They married two years after she arrived in Holland, so her first husband, Ane Visser, must have died shortly after arrival. Vander Veere, a sailor, was born in the province of Zeeland (the Netherlands), a widower who had lost his first wife in childbirth. According to family tradition, the family of his deceased wife insisted that he would not see his daughter because he was always at sea, and so unable to care for her. He emigrated in 1847. His obituary notes that he was the last survivor in this city of the settlers who came in 1847.

14. Again, additional information is most welcome! Perhaps some readers know namesakes. The author can be contacted via j.van.bolhuis@wxs.nl.

The Dexter, New Mexico, Christian Reformed Church: A Sprout of God's Planting

Paula Vander Hoven

There wasn't much in Dexter, New Mexico, when Cornelius and Gerdina Hamel Vanden Bout¹ arrived with their three small children. They had been charter members of the short-lived Christian Reformed Church in Nederland, Texas. Cornelius had been one of the first elders and had served as its clerk for all but the very last months of its existence, and their three children had been born in Nederland. They left there as the church was dissolving in December 1904,² bound for Dexter, in southeastern New Mexico. They arrived to find a few houses, a post office, a general store, a drug store, a railroad depot, and a rooming house.³

Things began to change in Dexter a few years later, when the United States Congress passed the Enlarged Homestead Act in 1909. Targeted

specifically for dry-land farming, as its predecessor the Homestead Act of 1862 had not been, the 1909 Act opened up vast areas of the western United States for homesteading. A man or woman, twenty-one years or older, was eligible for 320 acres of free land, provided that he or she lived on the land for five years, built a structure there, and made improvements to it.

Dexter was incorporated as a town in 1910, as it had grown significantly. The discovery of artesian water (after several attempts to secure good drinking water), the arrival of the railroad, and the persistence of a few visionaries had resulted in the establishment of twenty-two businesses in the newly platted town. Two organizations, C.L. Tallmadge Southwestern Lands and the Pecos Valley Immigration



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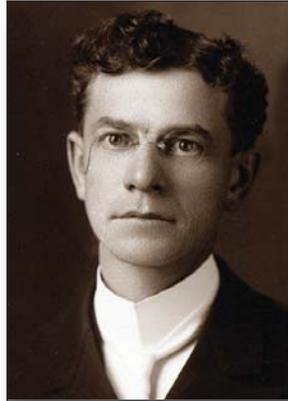
Company, sponsored weekly “home seekers excursions” to Dexter. As was often the case in those years and in areas ripe for settlement, prospective settlers were brought to the area by train to view potential land for homesteading. One additional factor made Dexter attractive to settlers: it was reputed to be a healthy place for people suffering from lung disorders.

By September 1910, six other Dutch families (one with adult children) and one single man had joined the Vanden Bouts: Nellie Braschler and her five children, John and Grace Braschler with one child, Teunis and Henrietta Braschler with two children, William and Carrie Braschler, Henry and Jannetje/Annie Swets and one child, Huibert and Elizabeth Vander Plas, and George Toeset. One other couple had come and gone: in 1897 George Rienstra had been the first settler in Nederland, Texas. He and his wife, Kate Koelemay, had lived in Dexter briefly in about 1906 but returned to Nederland, where their descendants remain to this day.

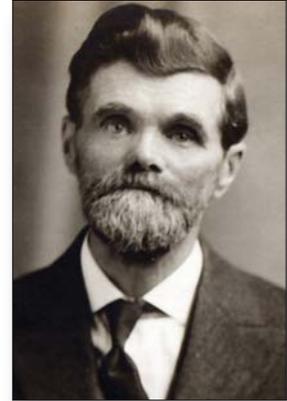
The Vander Plases left by 1913 and joined his brothers Peter and Adrian in Prairie View, Kansas. They were replaced that year by the William and Alice Swets family, with their six children.

Cornelius Vanden Bout also was active in recruiting new Dutch residents. With only one exception (George Toeset) all the Dutch who settled in and near Dexter were either former residents of Nederland or had their roots in Hardinxveld, Vanden Bout’s home village in the Netherlands. Toeset came from South Holland, Illinois, which was also the home of Nellie Braschler and her family and the William and Alice Swets family.

The remaining families wasted no time in beginning to form a Christian Reformed church.⁴ They wrote a letter asking for support from Classis



Rev. Jacob Bolt, 1875-1967, worked as a home missionary in Colorado and New Mexico, 1910-1911. In 1914 he began twenty-six years of work as a missionary to the native people in New Mexico. Image courtesy of Heritage Hall, Calvin College.



Rev. Abel J. Brink, 1865-1930, served variously as a home missionary and pastor for the CRC in the Pacific Northwest, as well as from South Dakota to New Mexico. He succeeded Bolt in Colorado and New Mexico. Image courtesy of Heritage Hall, Calvin College.

Pella, a letter which was received and discussed at the March 1910 meeting of the classis.⁵ Classis replied by forwarding their request to the appropriate denominational committee. By the September 1910 meeting of classis, it was noted that in Dexter there were seven families who gathered to worship on the Sabbath. They were advised to place their membership papers with the newly organized Kuner, Colorado, church, making the Dexter church a branch of the Kuner church. At that meeting it was also noted that Rev. Jacob Bolt, who had become the pastor of the Kuner church, would also serve the churches in Dexter and Palco, Kansas, as well as the Siebert⁶ and Alamosa, Colorado, churches. Bolt must have been a busy man tending to this flock, as Kuner is 600 miles from Dexter, 300 miles from Palco and Alamosa, and 150 miles from Siebert.

Bolt’s tenure at Kuner was short, however, and in December 1911 Rev. Abel Brink began his ministry as home missionary pastor in Kuner, serving the Dexter church as well. His ministry there was also brief. He retired in 1913 due to physical weak-

ness and lamented in his farewell comments that “externally there is no progress” in the churches he had served.

Although Bolt and Brink had led worship in Dexter, the little band there was missing the regular celebration of the sacraments, and in March 1912 they brought that to the attention of classis. In response, Classis Pella advised that a deacon and an elder be elected at Dexter so that the sacraments could be administered. That happened with the Kuner church council appropriately approving the election.

But, two years later at the March 1914 meeting, the Dexter church had another request: that it be allowed to organize as an independent congregation of the Christian Reformed Church. They cited their reasons: they would be “better able to maintain ourselves against the stream of American church life, that everything will then be done more orderly and interest in our church will be promoted, and that the Kuner church may cease to exist and then the branch would disappear with the tree.”

A committee of classis deliberated and recommended that, though their expectations for the future of the church were not very positive, the brothers and sisters in Dexter should be allowed to celebrate the sacraments. Perhaps they also anticipated the demise of the Kuner church⁷ and agreed that it would be hard for the little band of seven families at Dexter to become a branch of any other church. They authorized Rev. Albert H. Bratt, serving in Otley, Iowa, to carry out the organization. The church was officially organized on 6 June 1914. Elders William Braschler, 27, and William Swets, 45, and Deacon John Braschler, 29, were elected, and William Swets was designated clerk. The new clerk wrote eloquently that the congregation numbered eight families, five single individuals, and twenty-six members by baptism and prayed that “the King of the church richly bless the activity of that evening, in order that the future may provide evidence that this small, youthful congregation is a sprout of His planting and the work of his hands by which He is glorified.”⁸

For the next several years, the classis sent pastors from Nebraska, Iowa, and Kansas to preach and to assess the life of the church. They reported that worship services were held regularly and were well attended, that there were two catechism classes that Sunday school participation ranged between fifteen and twenty, with Mrs. Annie Swets as superintendent, that the books were kept in an orderly fashion, and that the spiritual condition “gives reason for gratitude.”

The only time a member of the Dexter church attended a classical meeting was in September 1915, when William Swets was present. It had been reported that a member of the church had “Baptist leanings,” but Swets assured the gathered pastors and elders that “the brother” had all

the gifts and character to be faithfully Reformed, and at a subsequent meeting it was reported that “everything regarding this issue has been settled.”

In March 1917 the little band at Dexter petitioned Classis Pella for \$50 to engage a student pastor for the summer. It was their only recorded attempt to have anything like a “permanent” pastor, even for a short time, but the request was denied. By September of that year it was reported that there were five families in Dexter and that things were going well. But two years later the picture was very different. By September 1919, there were only two families left, one of which was the William and Alice Swets family, and classis advised the church to disband. In a series of letters back and forth, Swets indicated that he had plans to leave as well, and at the March 1920 meeting Classis Pella observed that the church had dissolved. Only the Vanden Bout family remained, and some of them still live in Dexter. In an intriguing twist of history, during the last fifteen years, Dutch dairy farmers from California have begun to move back into Dexter and many of them attend the Presbyterian Church.⁹

There were other churches in Dexter. The newcomers being brought on “home seeker excursions” were from a variety of faiths. There were



The Presbyterian Church building was home to several congregations in Dexter. Image courtesy of Rev. Stephen Deutch.

small groups of Baptists, Dunkards,¹⁰ Presbyterians, and Methodists. These all intended to erect a single community church building where all could worship with circuit-riding pastors from their individual denominations. But in 1906 when funds for this project ran low, the Presbyterian Church contributed the final \$700, with the stipulation that it become a Presbyterian church. The Dexter folk were happy to acquiesce. They kept their distinctive faiths and worshiped separately in that building but held union Sunday schools and met together for fellowship, until eventually each denomination could build its own sanctuary. No mention is made of the Christian Reformed Church in the accounts of the time, but in all likelihood they used the building also.

Life in Dexter was not easy, even aside from the struggle for safe and sweet water and the normal privations of life in the unsettled West of those years.¹¹ In February 1905, just as the Vanden Bouts were arriving, the temperature dipped to 29 degrees below zero, and in November of the next year the mercury tumbled to 6 degrees below. Eighteen inches of snow fell, with drifts five or six feet deep. Newly planted apple orchards were killed, and ranchers lost cattle. In the summer of 1911 a flood covered the town, and people waded in water up to their waists. At about that time also there was a dangerous storm with hail the size of baseballs. It damaged the roofs of homes and barns, tore holes in the tops of buggies, killed chickens, and injured livestock. Another very heavy snowfall occurred in 1917. The lack of rain was always an issue in southeast New Mexico. For a time, artesian wells compensated, but when they dried up, there was also a lack of ground water—and this at just the time the Dutch settlers were doing their best to make a living.¹²

Existing accounts of the day give



Farming near Dexter, probably the William and Carrie Braschler farm. Image courtesy of Lenore Brashler.

slight mention of the Dexter Christian Reformed Church and there is no physical evidence of it now. No church or parsonage was built; the consistory records have never been found. In fact, none of the living descendants of the members contacted for this article recalled ever hearing about a Christian Reformed church in Dexter or their ancestors' participation in it. Yet it is important to note that from that small congregation came four full-time church workers: Rev. Carl Toeset, a Christian Reformed Church pastor; John W. Swets, who served the Christian Reformed church at Rehoboth, New Mexico, and later the Presbyterian church in Sitka and Haines, Alaska; Jeannette Swets Romeyn, who served with her husband in the Christian Reformed mission in Zuni, New Mexico; and Rev. Peter Brashler, missionary with Africa Inland Mission in Belgian Congo (now Zaire). What remains of the congregation is the stories of the families.

The Members in Approximate Order of Arrival¹³

*Cornelius and Gerdina Vanden Bout family*¹⁴

As noted, Cornelius and Gerdina (nee Hamel) had been active members of the Christian Reformed church in Nederland, Texas. At the very first meeting of the congregation in 1898,

as a newlywed aged about twenty-four, he had been elected to the office of elder and clerk, a position he held for virtually the entire existence of the church. He later also served as a deacon and Sunday school teacher.

They left Texas shortly before the Nederland church dissolved and arrived by train in Dexter on a snowy, icy cold day with their three small children—Cora, Edward, and Teuntje (Tony), ages three and under. Gerdina reported later that she was tempted to take the next train back to Texas where it never snowed. Instead, the family moved into an abandoned one-room adobe schoolhouse where five more children—Ann, Jeannette, Roe, Theodore, and Henry—were born. That little house was crowded with ten people, and eventually they built a two-story, ten-room home and welcomed three additional children—Geraldine, Elizabeth, and Theodora (Dora).

Almost immediately, Cornelius and

Gerdina started farming and setting out apple trees, as their neighbors were doing, and for a time their efforts were successful. But one year they shipped boxcars loaded with apples north in the hope of receiving payment, but it never arrived. Much later they learned that their apples



Left to right: Cora, Tony (Teuntje), and Ann Vanden Bout. The family arrived in Dexter when the oldest of the sisters was three years old. The smaller children are not identified. Image courtesy of Leeann Sandoval.

had been sidetracked in Kansas and when discovered were rotten. For some years thereafter the entire family spent their spare time uprooting apple trees by hand, and Cornelius turned to beekeeping and honey-making, which also seemed profitable for a time. When the nearby markets for honey were saturated, they contracted with an agent to peddle it more widely. He and his truckload of the

Vanden Bout's entire summer's supply of honey drove off one day and were never seen again. Thankfully the family grew most of what they ate: vegetables from the garden and fruit from some remaining trees. They traded dairy products and eggs for staples. They raised cattle, hogs, and chickens and they felt as though they lived in a land flowing with milk and honey.

They were a large, happy, loving family and laughed a lot together. Gerdina was kind, gentle, patient, and well-appreciated by her children; Cornelius was more the authoritarian. Their son Henry remained in Dexter, and his descendants still live in the area, but one by one most of the other ten Vanden Bout children made their way to California. By 1950 Cornelius and Gerdina joined them there and lived to celebrate their fifty-eighth anniversary together.

The Henry and Annie Swets family¹⁵

Along with George and Kate Rienstra, who did not stay in Dexter, Henry and Annie (née Jannetje Vanden Bout) Swets were the first to come on the recommendation of Cornelius Vanden Bout. Annie was a sister of Cornelius, born in Hardinxveld, Zuid Holland, in the Netherlands in 1870. She and Henry were married there in August

1892 and came to this country in 1897.

By the time they reached Dexter, they had already been a part of two small, short-lived Dutch communities here. They lived first in the Dutch enclave in Maxwell, New Mexico. In the 1890s a Dutch physician¹⁶ in the province of Groningen in the Netherlands was referring his tubercular patients not to Davos, Switzerland, which would have been considerably closer and easier to travel to, but to Maxwell. As a result, a Christian Reformed church of mostly tubercular patients and their families was founded there in 1893, and the Bethesda Consumptive Relief Sanitarium¹⁷ accepted its first patients in 1898. It is very likely that either Henry or Annie was suffering from some lung disorder.

But farming in arid New Mexico was very different from farming in the Netherlands, and water rights in Maxwell were always an issue. And besides all that, Henry was no farmer; he'd been a merchant in the Netherlands. So by December of 1898 the pair had moved to Nederland, Texas, near Galveston, where Cornelius and Gerdina Vanden Bout had been living for a year, and they joined the brand new Christian Reformed Church in

Nederland. Their stay in Nederland was even shorter, however, and after three months the couple returned to the Netherlands.

But the new land, and especially Cornelius Vanden Bout, continued to call them. They returned to Nederland in October 1904 and in all likelihood moved with the Vanden Bouts to Dexter two months later, perhaps once again seeking a climate favorable for those with lung ailments. Certainly, by Christmas 1906, they were living in Dexter where the "old timers" there remember that Henry and Annie sang a duet at the Christmas celebrations that year. They adopted a daughter, Edith, and welcomed other Dutch neighbors as they arrived and settled into life among their kinfolk. Henry again farmed. Annie became the superintendent of the Sunday school, and, along with William Swets, they surely must have lent their musical abilities to the worship services. Their adopted daughter Ellen was born in 1917, when Henry was in his early fifties and Annie in her late forties.

The family was one of the last that left the dying church in Dexter. In August 1919 they followed others of the Dexter church to Everett, Washington, where Henry raised chickens. There they became members of the Christian Reformed church and he served in the consistory. As they were leaving Dexter, Henry and Annie sold their home to the Vanden Bouts for one dollar. Henry died in Everett in 1934 at the age of seventy, and Annie at the age of seventy also, in 1941. Ellen married Delbert Hoeye and lived in Everett; Edith married Ben Glaser, and they also lived in Everett.

Huibert and Elizabeth Vander Plas¹⁸

Huibert Vander Plas was also a native of Hardinxveld, born there in 1877. He had followed his brother Peter



The Vanden Bout family in their buggy. Image courtesy of Gelmer Romeyn.



Elizabeth Vander Plas holding child. Image courtesy of the Terry Vander Plas.

to Nederland, Texas, and had joined the church there in 1904 just as it was closing. The Vander Plas brothers were not happy in Nederland. Oil had recently been discovered nearby, a discovery that resulted in an influx of unsavory characters. So they, along with other Dutch, left. Huibert returned to Hardinxveld and married Elizabeth Kamsteeg in 1909, and the couple came to Dexter as newlyweds, quite likely at the invitation of his distant relative, Cornelius Vanden Bout. They lived adjacent to the Henry Swets and Vanden Bout families, and Huibert worked as a farm hand. But before long they left Dexter and headed north, slowly working their way in fruit orchards and potato fields, often living in a tent wherever work was available. By 1913 they had made their way to Kansas, once again near his brothers Peter and Adrian. They farmed a small eighty-acre farm near Long Island, Kansas, and lived very simply in a three-room home. They were faithful members of the Luctor Christian Reformed Church; Huibert was an elder there, and Elizabeth was very active in the women's groups. Huibert died in 1946 at the age of sixty-nine. Elizabeth had been disabled from birth, and the couple never had children. After Huibert's death, she was well cared for by oth-

ers of the congregation and by family members, who remember that she prepared tea and sugar cookies for them after church on Sundays. She died in 1981 at the age of ninety-six.

Nellie Braschler family¹⁹

Nellie Braschler (née Pieterella Swets) was by all accounts a strong, courageous woman, as the events of her life indicate and her family members bear out. Her family called her Pietje, and they tell how in early 1910 she packed up her five children, Henry, Mary, Jennie (also called Janet), James, and Cornelia and two married sons and their wives (an eighth son and his wife came soon thereafter) and left South Holland, Illinois, at the age of forty-nine.²⁰ Nellie's father had been a charter member of the First Christian Reformed Church there, and she and her siblings had grown up in the church.

Her husband, Cornelius, had been a farmer in the summer, but in the winter he had been employed chopping ice from the Calumet River. He covered the blocks of ice with straw and sold them to people whose homes had ice boxes. That work made him susceptible to lung ailments, and he died in 1901 at the age of forty-two when their youngest child was a baby and their seven other children ranged in age from four to nineteen. Nellie was determined to find a healthier climate for her children, some of whom also were threatened by tuberculosis. Her brother, William Swets, had visited Dexter and the Vanden Bouts in 1909 and apparently brought back a positive report. Though the William Swets family didn't make the move until years later, that and the vague connection to Hardinxveld must have been enough to convince Nellie to seek a better life for her family there. (Some of the family also sug-

gest that Nellie was happy to leave the "gangsters" in Chicago.) Nellie's father, Hendrik, had left Hardinxveld in 1856, married, and settled to raise his family in the South Holland area, only to return, alone, to the Netherlands in about 1873, leaving his wife and several children to fend for themselves on their farm. He died in the Netherlands. Her mother, Jannigje, reportedly "managed just fine without him" and may have been the model for Nellie when her own husband died and she was left with eight children.²¹

In New Mexico, Nellie and her sons Henry, John, William, and probably Teunis all filed claims for 160 acres adjoining one another soon after arriving, so that the family owned a total of 640 acres, or one square mile. Nellie also opened her home as an informal sanitarium to boarders who came (some from the South Holland area) suffering with lung-related illnesses. She caught, butchered, and cooked chickens and milked her own cows to provide nourishing meals for her patients. Despite her care, some died and Nellie prepared them for burial. The family grew most of what they ate, and the men shot the very plentiful rabbits. Once a year a box of absolute necessities would come from Sears Roebuck or Montgomery Ward stores.

Nellie presided over her household and those of her children with efficient energy and compassion, and their homes were happy. She was a storyteller with a keen sense of humor; she was a godly woman who read her Bible often. As a mid-wife, she also presided over the births of her grandchildren and their baptisms when visiting pastors were present. During the school year, some of them lived with her since her home was closer to the school than their own.

But for the Braschlers, as for others, things were hard. They had planned to farm using the Pecos

River for irrigation, but it dried up. They dug an artesian well, but it dried up. The alfalfa crop failed two years in a row, and Nellie's sons began to work as farm hands for others, and she and her daughters-in-law took in washing, heating their irons on cook stoves. Mary and Jennie worked for wealthy families nearby. They came home on occasion and sometimes brought leftovers from elegant parties. Carrie and Grace joined their husbands, William and John, harvesting hay. The children went out on the claims picking up cow chips for fuel.

But in the end, the Braschlers stayed just about long enough to satisfy the conditions of their claims. In March 1917 they moved on to Everett, Washington, where friends from the church in South Holland had settled a few years earlier and where there were plentiful opportunities for work in the thriving lumber industry. Nellie's daughter, Cornelia, died at the age of eighteen in 1920 in Washington, but all of her other children, except Henry, married partners whom they had known at the church in South Holland. At a time when it was common for Dutch Christian Reformed young people to marry Dutch Christian Reformed spouses, the only such candidates for marriage in Dexter had been their Swets cousins.

In Washington, Nellie lived with her children William, James, and Mary in rotation. She died in April 1950, at the age of eighty-nine, at the home of her daughter, Mary Braschler Kazen.

In Everett, Henry Braschler worked as a millworker at Robinson Manufacturing Company, which in those years manufactured doors and door panels. He was also employed at the William Hulbert Mill, which made caskets. Henry was married twice, first to Bernice Burley and, after her death, to Olive Pittman.

In 1921 James Braschler married



Nellie Braschler (center, front row) with her children as adults. (Back: left to right: Jim, Will, John, Teunis, and Henry; front: Mary and Janet. Image courtesy of Lenore Braschler.

Lydia Kazen, sister of Carrie and Garrett. He worked most of his professional life as a millwright at Robinson Manufacturing Company in Everett. James and Lydia had three children: James, Clarence, and Eugene. The Braschlers were faithful members of the First Baptist Church in Everett. He died in 1986 at the age of eighty-eight. Lydia preceded him in death in 1980.

In 1919, in Washington, Mary married Garrett Kazen, from South Holland. Garret was a life-long dairy



Mary Braschler and Garrett Kazen on their wedding day in 1919; only Mary had lived in Dexter. Image courtesy of Betty Moser.

farmer in Arlington. Along with others in their families, the Kazens were

members of the Gospel Hall Church in Arlington. They had four surviving children: Robert, Patricia, Wesley, and Virginia. Garrett died in 1957 and Mary in 1991, at the age of ninety-eight.

Jennie Braschler married Nicholas Kramer in Chicago on 19 March 1917. The Kramers had also lived in South Holland. The couple lived in that Dutch enclave for about two years, and their daughter Nelouise was born there. Her brother John was born shortly thereafter in Washington, followed by Kenneth. Nicholas Kramer was a mail carrier, and the family lived in Everett. Jennie died in 1991 in Marysville, Washington, at the age of ninety-five. Her husband had died twenty years earlier.

Teunis and Henrietta Braschler family

Teunis (Tunis) and Henrietta (Etta Bottema) had grown up to together in the First Christian Reformed Church in South Holland, where her parents operated a Christian bookstore. They had been married in Illinois, and their daughter, Cornelia, was born there. Son John was born very soon after they arrived in Dexter, and Lewis and Nellie followed during the time they lived there. Teunis and

Henrietta may have been the first in the Braschler family to leave Dexter for Everett. He began work immediately in the lumber industry, spending most of his career at the Robinson Manufacturing Company. Teunis and Henrietta were members of the First Christian Reformed Church, which had been organized a few years earlier in 1911. He was a deacon and an elder there, and she was active in the women's circles. A daughter, Helen, was born to the couple in 1920 in Washington. Henrietta died in 1948 in Everett. After her death, Teunis remarried, and he died in 1976 at the age of ninety-two.

John and Grace Braschler family

John and Grace (née Van Driel, or Van Dreal) had grown up knowing each other at church. The Van Driels had also been charter members of the First Christian Reformed Church in South Holland, and her parents operated a grocery and dry goods store there. They married in 1907, and their daughter, Pearl, was born the following year. George was born in 1913, and Bessie in 1915. When the Dexter church was founded in 1914,



John and Grace Braschler and their children George, Pearl (in back), Clarence, and Betty. Image courtesy of Lenore Brashler.

John was elected to the office of deacon at the age of twenty-nine.

When farming became difficult for the Braschlers, John went to work for Henry Swets on his fruit farm and later for a man named Paddock, and the family lived in a small cottage on that farm. But in the spring of 1917, about the time the other Braschlers were leaving for Washington, John bought a used Studebaker touring car and the family set out for Illinois. The journey took twelve days, over mud roads, with flat tires and no hotels, and with two sick children, but the joyous end was in sight—a reunion with Grace's family. They rejoined the Christian Reformed Church in South Holland. Nellie came often on the train, and so did others of the Braschler family. A son, Clarence, was born in Illinois. John attended Greer College and opened his own business, later working as a salesman for Spooner Chevrolet. Still later, John and Grace relocated to South Haven, Michigan, near their adult children, and he died there in 1970 and Grace ten years later.

William and Carrie Braschler family

William and Carrie (née Kazen) had come to Dexter as almost newlyweds in early 1910. They had married in South Holland in October of the year before. Both were twenty-three and had known each other at the First Christian Reformed Church of South Holland, where their families were members. Upon arriving, William filed a claim adjacent to those of his mother and brothers. Their first child, Clarence, was born there, followed by Peter, Pauline, and Willis (William), all during the time the family lived in Dexter. A daughter, Jeanette (Jean), was born in Washington. When the church was officially founded in 1914, William was elected an elder at the age of twenty-seven.



William and Carrie Braschler with Clarence M. and Peter. Image courtesy of Lenore Brashler.

In Washington he operated a dairy farm in Arlington until about 1929, when they moved to Everett and he began work in the lumber industry along with his brothers.

There was no Christian Reformed church in Arlington, and the nearest was in Everett, some twenty miles south and inconvenient in the days when people traveled by horse and buggy. So William and Carrie joined others of her family and others from South Holland²² in worshipping at the Arlington Gospel Hall, a Plymouth Brethren church. They were faithful and devout members. William died in 1968 and Carrie in 1979, both in Everett.

William and Alice Swets family²³

William and Alice (née De Ruiter) and their children were the last family to arrive in Dexter. They left their farm in South Holland, Illinois, and arrived in 1913 with their children, Henrietta, Jeannette, John, Henry (Dex), Frances, and Antoinette,²⁴ who ranged in age from eighteen to two.

William had a roving spirit, and his daughter Henrietta was prone to lung ailments. Hoping to take advantage of the Enlarged Homestead Act, William had gone on an extended tour of places in the Dakotas, Nebraska, and New Mexico. He had been to Dexter in 1909, and Cornelius Vanden Bout encouraged him to return permanently. He may have settled in Dexter for that reason and because of his family's health issues, but it may also have influenced him that his sister Nellie Braschler and her children were well settled there.

In November 1913 William and Alice loaded their household possessions and farm equipment into a railroad boxcar and made the trip south in two days and nights. Not knowing what building materials they would find in New Mexico, William also loaded into that boxcar everything he would need to build his new home. He recorded this event in the family Bible: "Moved to New Mexico November 18, 1913. Homesteaded nine miles S.W. of Dexter. Bought a ranch and went into stock raising."²⁵ They called that ranch the Pleasant View Ranch (notwithstanding that the view from the hill was largely of rattlesnakes, which abounded). To maximize their use of the Homestead Act, they actually built two dwellings on adjacent land: a home where the women lived and a ranch house for the men.²⁶

At first the children attended a one-room school in Hagerman, New Mexico, ten miles from the ranch. They left home every morning in a horse and buggy at six to arrive at school at ten—a full hour late. The next year they boarded with their aunt, Nellie Braschler, who lived only four miles from school, and they walked. Still later, they attended a new school four miles from home, and they rode on horseback.

The Swets family owned several

hundred head of cattle and twenty saddle horses and did very well. After the Braschlers left in 1917, the Swetses rented their farm in the valley. During the war years, William and his son John also worked the Braschler farm, and thirteen-year-old Frances Swets managed the Pleasant View Ranch. She won a citation from the governor for doing her part during the war.

But in the end, natural disasters took their toll. Prairie fires were frequent and damaging, even though the Swetses had plowed a wide strip of ground around their buildings for protection. They and others kept a wagon full of fire-fighting tools ready: several barrels of water, mops, brooms, and burlap sacks. The family remembers that William Swets's hair and eyebrows were often singed from firefighting. Extremely dry conditions meant that cattle needed to be herded to wherever there was water and grass—often several miles from home. Drought (or, more specifically, lack of water from any source) eventually drove them out.²⁷ There was also at least one belligerent neighbor who wanted the Swets' land and would have shot William had William

carried his "six-shooter." Finally, the only thing living on their ranches was William's black stallion, and, rather than sell him, he shot him.

When their son Henry (Dex) was about eighteen, he left the ranch to attend Calvin College, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He arrived dressed like a cowboy, and the nickname "Dex" stuck for the rest of his life. He sent back glowing reports of the city; the family followed him there, and William became a home builder. He recorded this also in the family Bible also: "Sold out in May, 1920 and moved to Grand Rapids."

William Swets was a gentle, jovial gentleman. He was also a man of many talents. In addition to being a rancher and a cowboy with a six-shooter, he was an eloquent writer, clerk of the congregation, and a musician. Beginning in 1889, when the first reed pipe organ was installed and for twenty years thereafter, he had been the organist at the First Christian Reformed Church of South Holland, Illinois. He may have played the reed organ when the congregation in Dexter met for worship in the community Presbyterian church. But for twenty years he also played the



William and Alice Swets with John, Jeannette (inset by photographer), and Henry in the back; and Henrietta, Antoinette, and Frances in the front. Image courtesy of Gelmer Romeyn.

organ and directed the choir at the Neland Avenue Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids after the family moved there.

Alice Swets was a gentle homebody, quiet and discreet. She loved flowers and being with her children and relatives who lived nearby. They have been described by their grandchildren as sweet, humble Christians, faithful in prayer and Scripture reading. She died in Grand Rapids in 1955 at the age of eighty-two, and William followed five years later, at ninety.

Henrietta became a practical nurse in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Jeannette married John Romeyn, a builder by trade, and he supervised the building of mission structures at Zuni Christian Reformed Mission in New Mexico. Jeannette died in the mission hospital at Rehoboth, New Mexico, following the birth of their third child. Son John Swets had been a teacher at Rehoboth Christian School and after his marriage to Gertrude they served as missionaries with the Presbyterian Church in Sitka and later in Haines, Alaska, for twenty-six years before settling on a farm in

Colorado. Like his father, Dex was also musical and sang in a men's quartet—the first such group to sing Christian music on a radio station in Chicago. He died at age thirty-six. Frances was the family historian and wrote the saga of their years in New Mexico. She was married first to Edward Smitter and after his death to Clarence Koster. She died in 1989 in the Grand Rapids area. Antoinette married Peter Van Wienen, a house painter by trade. They lived first in Grand Rapids and then moved to a small farm near Zeeland, Michigan. Later they settled in Lakeland, Florida, where she died in 1995 at the age of eighty-three.

George Carel and Wilhelmina Toeset family²⁸

George (also called George Karel and Charles George) was born in 1885 in the shadow of the imposing St. Bavo Church in Haarlem, Zuid Holland. His family delivered vegetables throughout the city with horse and cart. George suffered from a lung condition, and he emigrated in 1908 when he was twenty-three, the first of his family to do so.²⁹ He

lived in South Holland, Illinois, and worshiped at the First Christian Reformed Church there along with the Braschler family. By May 1910 he had settled in Dexter as a farm laborer, boarding at the home of Teunis and Henrietta Braschler. In July 1910 his first cousin, Wilhelmina De Bra-



Wilhelmina and George Toeset. Image courtesy of Ed Kuiper.

ber, came from Haarlem. She traveled alone from Ellis Island to New Mexico and married George the day after her arrival in Dexter.

The couple had two children in Dexter: Andrew (also called George Andrew), born in 1911, and Gertrude, born three years later. In 1914, shortly after the birth of Gertrude, acting on a doctor's prediction that her death was imminent, George and Wilhelmina took their children back to the Netherlands for a visit. George returned that same year, but Wilhelmina and the children were delayed by the outbreak of the First World War, and finally returned to Dexter a full year later in July 1915. There the couple had another son, Carl, born in 1918.

In late 1918 or 1919 when the few remaining members of the congregation were leaving, the Toeset family moved briefly to Redlands, California, where George raised goats



William Swets (far right) and sons John and Frank (center) tending the cattle at well. Image courtesy of Gelmer Romeyn.

and worked as a gardener for a family. A daughter, Angenita, was born there. By 1925, the family settled permanently in Denver, Colorado, seeking a healthier environment for George and for some of the children who also suffered from lung diseases. There George was a fruit and vegetable salesman, delivering his produce

door-to-door, much as his family had in Haarlem years earlier, but now with a station wagon. A daughter, Wilma, was born in those years. Still the farmer, George grew flowers and grapes in his backyard.

George Toeset was an engaging man. He liked people and enjoyed his children and grandchildren. He

died in Denver in 1967 at the age of eighty-two. The doctor's prediction that death was imminent in 1914 proved to be an error, and Wilhelmina died at the age of ninety-seven in 1980. She was never well, however, and lived a sedentary life. ❧

Public Sale
Tuesday, Mch. 2, 1920
 Beginning Promptly at 10 A. M.

On the above date we will sell at the Mrs. C. Braschler place, located 2 1-2 miles west of Greenfield and 3 1-2 miles southwest of Dexter, the following property, to-wit:

Livestock	Farm Implements, etc.
1 team black mare, 5 yrs. old, both in foal, wt. 2800 lbs.	1 wagon with hay frame, 1 farm truck with bed and springs, 1 hay rack to fit truck, 1 top buggy, 1 open buggy, 1 buck board, 3 sets leather work harness, 1 set double buggy harness, 1 extra large hand made single buggy harness, 1 set fly mane, 1 heavy stock saddle, 1 boy's saddle, 3
1 grey mare, 9 yrs. old, in foal, wt. 1200	1 pair 12-in. mowing machine, 1 16-in. walking plow, 1 disk, 1 2-section harrow, 1 two-cow corn planter, 1 sulky cultivator, 1 single cultivator, 1 shovel plow, 1 Planet Jr. drill, 1 garden cultivator, 1 V ditcher, 1 grindstone
1 dapple grey gelding 7 yrs. old, wt. 1350	1 cream separator, 1 Queen incubator, hoes, shovels, forks, etc., about 1500 lbs. galv. barbed wire, 150 fence posts, 1 8x10 shed
1 grey gelding, 9 yrs. old, wt. 1250 lbs.	1 set horse, 1 100 lb. corn, some hard shell bay, set of square nails, 1 trundle, all saws, hammers, chisels, lockwash, etc., 1 iron spring, 1 glass saw, 1 saw, and many other articles too numerous to mention.
1 cow pony, 8 yrs. old	
1 cow pony, 5 yrs. old	
1 sorrel horse colt coming 2 yrs. old	
2 black horse colts, coming 2 yrs. old	
1 brown horse colt, coming 2 yrs. old	
1 brown filly, coming 2 yrs. old	
1 sorrel horse colt, coming yearling	
1 black horse colt, coming yearling	
1 brown horse colt 8 months old	
1 Holstein cow giving milk	
1 white face bull calf 2 months old	
2 brood sows, 15 shoats, 30 to 40 lbs.	

TERMS OF SALE
 All sums of \$10 or less, cash. On sums above \$10 six months time will be given on approved notes bearing 10 per cent. interest. 5 per cent. discount for cash on sums above \$10.

WILLIAM SWETS, JOHN SWETS, Owners.
McKINSTRY & HOLLOMAN, Auctioneers
W. A. LOSEY, Clerk
 3,840 Acme

The sale of the Braschler farm and assets marked the end of the Dutch immigrant community in Dexter. Image courtesy of Tress Smitter.

Endnotes

1. Since it is very difficult to discover when families adopted the more "American" spellings of their names, the current spellings are used in this article.

2. This date is from the Nederland Church records; however, Cora Vanden Bout Payne remembers that the family arrived in Dexter in March 1906.

3. Information about the history of Dexter was gained with the gracious assistance of John LeMay and the Historical Society for Southeast New Mexico. LeMay's book, *Images of America: Chaves County*, was very helpful. LeMay also provided photocopied pages of a book no longer available for purchase: *As We Remembered It*, by Dexter Old Timers. LeeAnn Sandoval at the Dexter Historical Society generously also gave assistance.

4. William Swets was clerk of the congregation for its entire existence. The minutes of the council and congregation have not been found, despite careful research by Rev. Ryan Faber, Gelmer Swets, and Betty Jo Swets.

5. The Classis Pella minutes of March 1910 and September 1910 were translated by Richard H. Harms. Subsequent minutes of the classis were translated by Gerrit W. Sheeres. The information on the status of the congregation over the years comes from the classical minutes.

6. Also called Vona and Elpis.

7. The Kuner Christian Reformed Church closed in 1918.

8. William Swets wrote a brief history for the *Banner*, which published part of his history (10 September 1914, 598). The history and its translation into English are in the Dexter files of the CRC Archives, Heritage Hall, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

9. Rev. Stephen Deutsch, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Dexter, in an e-mail to the author dated 15

November 2013.

10. Also known as the Brethren.

11. Descriptions of climate and living conditions in early Dexter are taken from stories of descendants, from *As We Remembered It*, published by the Dexter Old-Timers, and from John LeMay's *Chaves County: Images of America*.

12. John LeMay, in an e-mail to the author dated 16 October 2013.

13. The membership records of the Dexter Christian Reformed Church have not been found. Included is an approximate list of those who were members based on information from such sources as US federal and state census records, www.familysearch.org, www.wiewaswie.nl, and accounts from family members and friends. When personal recollections differed, either this is noted or the version that fit best and matched data in the public records is used.

14. Information regarding the Vanden Bout family was provided by Pam Richardson, Cathy Cobos, and Cora Vandenbout Payne through her article in *As We Remembered It*.

15. Information about the Henry Swets family has been provided by Ellen Sedell, Jonathan Hoeye, and James Stavinga.

16. A Dr. Kooij.

17. Bethesda Sanitarium. Its successor sanitarium, also named Bethesda, was founded in Denver in 1910.

18. Information regarding Huibert and Elizabeth Vander Plas has been provided by Henrietta Van Kooten, Bill Vander Plas, Rev. James Wiersum, and Terry Vander Plas.

19. The family has also spelled their name Brashler. Both John and William dropped the "c" in later years. Special thanks are due to Lenore Vanden Bout Brashler who provided a wealth of information about the Braschler family in numerous e-mails. She provided her

“Short History of the Cornelius and Pietertje Brashler Family” and “Beginnings,” written by Pearl Brashler Shilling, an unpublished family memoir written in 1985. Information was also provided by Evelyn Hoy and her “The Kazen Family: 1825-1892,” and Ross K. Ettema, “A Prairie Village: South Holland—Members at First Christian Reformed Church, South Holland.” Others of the Brashler family offered information: Keith Brashler, Bill Wells, Lee Brashler, Doug and Peggy Brashler, Larry Brashler, Pat Moser, and Betty Moser.

20. A son, James Martin, had been born in 1891 but did not survive childhood.

21. Lenore Vanden Bout Brashler.

22. The Klein, Koeze, and Kazen families were all members.

23. Information about the William and Alice Swets family was provided by Theresa Smitter, Gelmer Romeyn (including an unpublished family history by Frances Swets Smitter Koster), Don Van Wienen, Angie Swets (including an unpublished family history by Don Swets), Gary Swets, William Swets and Henrietta Swets, “Pioneer Struggles and First CRC, South Holland, Illinois.”

24. A son, Teunis, died at the age of two in 1909.

25. This family Bible is now in the possession of Theresa Smitter.

26. Perhaps it was in later years that the Swets family purchased a large tent and moved it from parcel to parcel of land, living on each for three days every summer to satisfy the requirements of the Homestead Act. Theresa Smitter related this story.

27. John LeMay e-mail.

28. Information regarding the Toeset family was provided by Gary Kuiper, Ed Kuiper, and Tim Toeset.

29. His brother Ted joined him a year later in South Holland.

book review

Marvin Kamps,
*1834: Hendrik de Cock's
Return to the True Church*

Jenison, MI:
Reformed Free Publishing
Association, 2014

The year 1834 is one most Dutch Reformed folks recognize, although many cannot tell its true significance. It is the year that the Act of Secession or Return was signed by 137 bold members of Hendrik de Cock's congregation in Ulrum, Groningen (on 13 October). Think of this as a sequel to Martin Luther's nailing on the chapel door at the University of Wittenberg his ninety-five theses disputing the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. The 1834 Afscheiding (Secession) is less well known but just as crucial in the history of Reformed churches in North America. "All true Reformed believers," the late Marvin Kamps asserts, "are the heirs of the saints of the Secession of 1834." The Ulrum signers and thousands of others who joined the movement paid a high price for breaking with the national church and the royal House of Orange, its patron. They were criticized, ostracized, blacklisted, boycotted, fined, and even jailed for their religious convictions. Thousands emigrated to the United States in the years 1846 to 1849 for freedom to practice their faith and found Christian schools. Although Seceders comprised only 1 percent of the Netherlands population in 1849, they made up half of all the emigrants in the 1840s.

Kamps's 1834: Hendrik de Cock's Return to the True Church is the clearest and most nearly complete history of this reform movement available in English. Gerrit ten Zythoff's Sources of the Secession: The Netherlands Hervormde Kerk on the Eve of the Immigration to the Midwest (1987) provides the larger context. Ten Zythoff's work superseded the standard but outdated book of C. J. Rullman, *De Afscheiding in de Nederlands Hervormde Kerk in der negenteende eeuw* (1916). Kamps drew on Harm Veldman's 2004 biography, *Hendrik de Cock, Afscheiden en toch Betrokken* [Hendrik de Cock: seceded and nonetheless concerned], but he did not consult the completed dissertation, published in 2009 as "Hendrik de Cock (1801-1842) op de breuklijnen in theologie en kerk in Nederland" [Hendrik de Cock (1801-1842) on the divide between theology and church in the Netherlands].

Kamps's 1834 rests on original sources in the Netherlands that few in North America have ever read. The value of the book for students of the Reformed faith is the translation of most of these key documents in a lengthy appendix. This includes the actual Act of Secession and Return (the word "Return" signaled de Cock's desire to return to the True Church, as the book's subtitle suggests). The context for 1834 is provided by two lengthy sets of letters exchanged between de Cock and his professor, Petrus Hofstede de Groot, and with Dirk Molenaar, state church leader *extraordinaire*.

De Cock's pamphlet *A Defense of the True Reformed Doctrine . . . , Fought against and falsely exposed by two so-called Reformed Pastors . . . The sheepfold of Christ attacked by two wolves . . .* is the fullest expression of his defense of the faith. This pamphlet refuted inflammatory pamphlets by state church clerics Brouwer and Redingius against de Cock and his teachings. Church authorities used de Cock's sharp rebuttal as grounds for his suspension and deposition from office.

The book also includes three pro-de Cock writings: by the elderly pastor Cornelius Baron van Zuylen van Nyevelt, lawyer Carel van der Kamp, and Seceder cleric Simon van Velzen, the latter a brother-in-law of Anthony Brummelkamp and Albertus Van Raalte. Together, these documents allow readers to determine for themselves the basis for de Cock's charge that the state church had become a "false church."

Scholars will note that Kamps criticizes Réveil leaders Bilderdijk and da Costa for not openly condemning heterodoxy in the state church (22-25), and he downplays the role of Hendrik P. Scholte in de Cock's decision to baptize children not belonging to his congregation. Scholte's visit with de Cock in 1834 is mentioned in passing but not the close relationship between the two. Scholte had a following in the south and east, while de Cock appealed to *kleine luyden* (little people) in conventicles under *oefenaars* (lay preachers). The main street in Ulrum is named Hendrik Scholte Pad because of

his salient role in de Cock's secession. Albertus Van Raalte makes a cameo appearance, when as a graduating theology student at Leiden University he refused to accept the offer to "preach what you want and allow us to preach what we want, but obey the regulations." Van Raalte refused the offer and joined the Seceders (62).

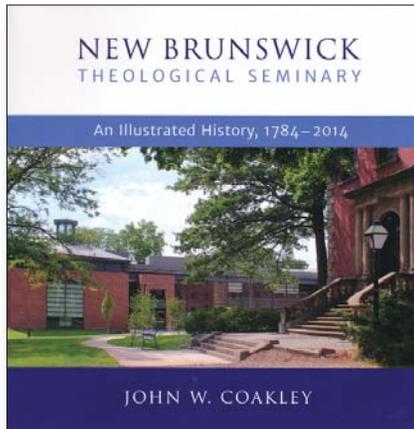
Kamps's ultimate goal is didactic, to challenge readers to ask themselves the question: "Am I truly a spiritual son of Hendrik de Cock?"

A "yes" answer demands that one treasure de Cock's legacy and seek to preserve the true church among Reformed believers.

This book is a must-read for those wanting to know the theological issues at stake in the Netherlands State Church in the first half of the nineteenth century and the religious roots of the emigration movement set off in the 1840s. 🍷

Robert P. Swierenga

book note



**New Brunswick
Theological Seminary:
An Illustrated History,
1784-2014**

John W. Coakley

Grand Rapids:
Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing
Co., 2014

ISBN: 978-0-8028-7296-8
\$20.00 paperback, 122 pages

for the future

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

Ken Fles details the life of Rev. John Isaac Fles and the Christian Reformed Church outreach efforts to Jewish residents and the impact of premillennialism during the early decades of the twentieth century.



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