

Origins

Origins

Volume XXXIV • Number 2 • 2016

Historical Magazine
of The Archives

Calvin College and
Calvin Theological Seminary
1855 Knollcrest Circle SE
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49546
(616) 526-6313

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

Richard H. Harms
Editor

Hendrina Van Spronsen
Circulation Manager

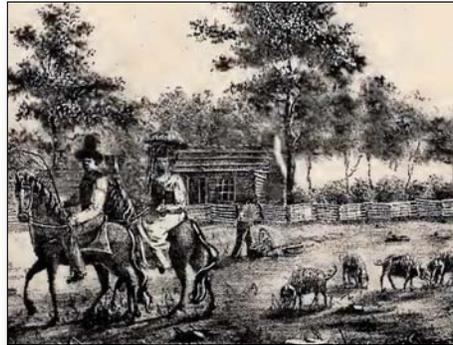
Tracey L. Gebbia
Designer

Janet Sheeres
Associate Editor

James C. Schaap
Robert P. Swierenga
Contributing Editors

InnerWorkings
Printer

Cover photo:
A drawing of the farmstead's
two log structures, by Willem Beukma.



page 10



page 17

2 From the Editor

4 Two Prosperous Dutch
Emigrants to North America
by Richard H. Harms

15 Pioneering in Northern
Michigan
by Cornelia Feringa Vanderhoven



page 28

25 “It will always be my honor,
to say that I am an orphan from
Neerbosch”
The emigration of one hundred
orphans to the United States
1886–1903
by Anton van Renssen



page 38

35 Retrospective at Eighty on
a Scholar's Life and Calvin's
Shaping Influence
by Robert P. Swierenga

45 Book Note

46 For the Future
upcoming *Origins* articles

47 Contributors

from the editor . . .



This Issue

The current issue focuses on Dutch immigrants to North America and on the dean of the scholarship of the Dutch in North America. Unlike most Dutch immigrants, both Klaas Beukma and Worp Van Peyma came to the New World with significant financial resources. *Origins* editor Richard Harms investigates why they left the Netherlands and their experiences in the United States. Paula Vander Hoven and her granddaughter Rosa Pedriana edited Cornelia Feringa Vanderhoven's account of her family's experiences during immigration and converting northern Michigan forest land into a farm. During the nineteenth century, the increasing number of orphaned and abandoned children became a problem for urban areas and industrializing economies. Anton van Renssen details the work of one effort to deal with this development in the Netherlands that even fed a small

number of people into the emigrant stream toward North America. Lastly, Robert Swierenga was asked by the alumni of his alma mater to review his career in history. A somewhat revised version of his presentation presents insight into the historiography of Dutch-American studies.

News from the Archives

During the past six months, Heritage Hall staff (volunteers and paid) have organized a number of smaller collections of personal papers. The Peter Ipema Papers (2½ cubic feet) detail the work of a Christian missionary for four decades in West Africa and with Muslim people, beginning in the late 1940s. In 2005, Muriel Zandstra and Jennifer Dornbush produced a video document on the life of West Michigan artist Armand Merizon. The Merizon Collection (1 cubic foot) has the raw video stock for this documentary. The Gerrit B. Boerfyn Papers (3½ cubic feet) detail the career of a minister and home missionary via scrapbooks, photo albums, photographs, letters, and bulletins for the period 1940-1985. The one cubic foot of research files for Dr. Roger Greenway focus on his career as a theological scholar

and educator during the last two decades of the twentieth century. Lastly, another cubic foot of papers contains the correspondence and research papers of Dr. Clifton Orlebeke on Eastern philosophies and the response to Christian philosophy in Asia.

We received a sizable addition, 1973-2010, to our collection of the Reformed Ecumenical Council (which closed in 2010). More than half of the 30 cubic feet were financial records that were far past audit and therefore sent to recycling. The twelve cubic feet retained include correspondence, synodical acts, reports, and bulletins. More than 26 cubic feet of sports and general information about Calvin College were received and processed. A goodly portion of this volume duplicated items already held, but we were able to add to the college archives three cubic feet of images of students, faculty, staff, and sporting events, in addition to programs, media guides, and correspondence. We also processed six cubic feet of records from the college's Kinesiology Department, one and a half cubic feet of state and national associations from the President's office from the first decade

of the current century, and one cubic foot of Board of Trustees files.

The records, 1915-2014, of the Ogilvie, Minnesota, Christian Reformed Church were received and processed. The five cubic feet of materials contain minutes, membership records, historical accounts, and supporting documentation from a church in a small community about seventy miles north of Minneapolis. The Christian Reformed Church's Faith Alive office, which is transitioning toward closure, began the process of transferring their files to the archives. Six cubic feet of reports and studies from the last three decades of the twentieth century were received and processed. Several large transfers from the denominational offices produced about 21 cubic feet of records on church planting activity throughout the United States and Canada, 1973-2000. These records detail financial costs, but, more important, the reasons for successes and failures in planting churches.

Publications

Origins has agreed to fund the publication of Rev. Christopher Meehan's study of the Timothy-Lawndale

controversy of the late 1960s when black parents asked for their children to be admitted to a Christian school located in a highly racially charged community. Staff has added the *Banner* birthday, anniversary, and obituary announcements index for 1955-1964 to our web page at <http://www.calvin.edu/hh/Banner/Banner.htm>.

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 and Holly Waldenmeyer are the department assistants; Robert Bolt is the field agent and assistant archivist; and Jessica Vos is our student assistant. Our volunteers include Phil Erffmeyer, Ed Gerritsen, Ralph Haan, Helen Meulink, Janet Sheeres, and Jeannette Smith. 🙏



Richard H. Harms

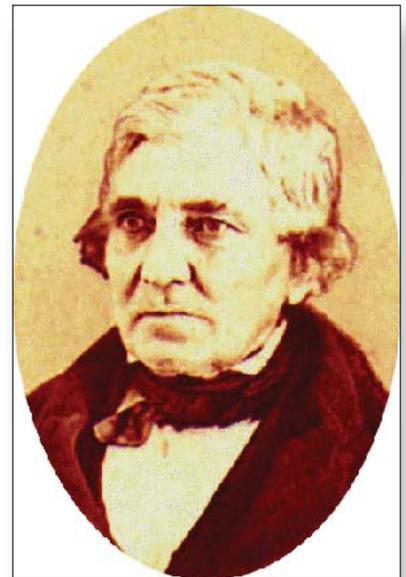
Two Prosperous Dutch Emigrants to North America

Richard H. Harms

The evidence is clear that nineteenth-century Dutch emigration to North America was prompted by religious dissent, economic hardship, and famine of the 1840s, particularly for the vast majority of working-class Dutch that formed this migration. Studies have tended to focus on which of these factors, or combination of factors, formed the more significant push factor for leaving. These discussions have been both productive and instructive in understanding that the reason for many to migrate was to seek a better economic and religious experience. But there were also immigrants who had been prosperous in the Netherlands, who had expressed no religious discontent before leaving, and had not experienced privation during the decade of the 1840s. What follows are case studies of two such prosperous individuals, to enlarge the understanding of the Dutch emigration to North America.

By the end of the eighteenth century, the Netherlands had experienced a loss in international status, an economic decline from the country's "Golden Age" of the previous century. Political leadership, focused on the past rather than the future, provided almost no solution to conditions. Wealth and political power were concentrated in the western section of the country, particularly in the cities, with much of this wealth invested abroad, factors that severely limited the nation's ability to modernize as other western European nations were doing. Until the 1890s, most of the Dutch national government's revenue came

from the long-established practice of taxing land, which had long been the primary depository of wealth, rather than the new and growing source of wealth from financial investment. Consequently, rural areas paid the bulk of the government's expenses



Klaas Jans Beukma (1789-1860) was an educated, well-to-do farmer in the Netherlands who emigrated to Indiana's forest frontier near Lafayette in 1835. Image from a print of unknown provenance in Heritage Hall, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

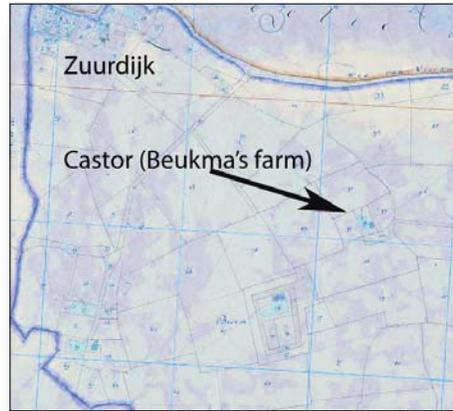
while investors in the large cities paid nothing. In the northern and eastern sections of the country, succeeding generations of gentlemen farmers began to bridle at these government policies viewed as working contrary to the welfare of the majority to benefit a well-to-do minority.¹

By 1800, the economic prosperity of the Dutch Golden Age was a distant memory in the hinterland. The lack

Richard H. Harms is Curator of the Archives in Heritage Hall and the editor of Origins. He is currently lecturing in the Calvin Academy for Lifelong Learning on Russian history. He has numerous articles and five books to his credit and is currently researching the experiences of relatively well-to-do immigrants.

of an effective governmental response to the economic situation led many to investigate alternatives. The ideals of a democratic government that came from the American Revolution seemed attractive to some who saw the Dutch monarchy as a moribund relic responsible for an outdated governmental structure and unjust taxation system. Briefly, at the end of the eighteenth century some thought a better future for the Netherlands would result from becoming part of France, whose economy, along with that of Great Britain, was growing and where democratic ideals were also currently following the French Revolution. In 1795 the Dutch formed the Batavian Republic with the military support of the French Republic and became a client state of France and remained so when the French Empire under Napoleon who in 1806 accepted the Dutch crown.

Klaas Jans Beukma² (1789-1860) and Worp Van Peyma (1796-1881) were born into well-to-do families and received their education during this period. Both were excited by new political thought and scientific discoveries coming out of the Enlightenment and, like others in their circles, were able to read and write in several languages. Both became gentlemen farmers, the former in the province of Groningen, and the latter in the province of Friesland. They knew each other before and after immigration. Both were members of the national Hervormde Kerk and did not join the Dutch religious secession of the 1830s that split the national church, this in spite of the fact that the secession began where Beukma lived. Van Peyma's friend, confidant, and brother-in-law, Rinse Posthumus, remained a minister of the Hervormde Kerk. Neither Beukma nor Van Peyma cited religion as a reason for leaving the Netherlands. Beukema emigrated in 1835 before the potato blight struck Europe; Van



The location of Castor, Beukma's farm in De Marne section of Groningen, the Netherlands, south and east of Zuurdijk.

Peyma owned considerable real and personal property, and there is no report that the famine of the 1840s prompted him to leave at the end of that decade.

Beukma was the son of Jan Mennes Beukema and Geertruida Luies Dijkhuis, living on a large farm near Midhuizen, Groningen. Beukma was the fifth generation of prosperous farmers living in that region called De Marne,³ along the Wadden Sea, north and west of the city of Groningen that included the municipalities of Ulrum, Kloosterburen, Leens, and Eenrum. These approximately ninety-five square miles of land that had been an island for four centuries beginning about 800 CE. Although no longer an island by the seventeenth century, De Marne was still geographically isolated when Beukma was born.⁴ But the large, land-owning families of the area were not isolated from the cultural, political, academic, and scientific developments of the larger world. Aedsges Teenstra, Beukma's great uncle, was one of several ministers in the Hervormde Kerk who brought their parishioners into contact with the ideas of the Enlightenment, particularly the cultural, political, and social obligations of economically "successful and reasoned" individuals. The writings of Thomas Jefferson,

John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Paine circulated among these landowners through their study and reading groups, which facilitated the circulation of new books that were still relatively expansive.⁵ This resulted in the growth of the *Maatschaap tot Nut van 't Algemeen* (*Society to Benefit the General Welfare*) that had begun in the city of Groningen in 1791, with a chapter organized in De Marne in 1800.

E. W. Hofstede posits that the new cultural farmer-elites that emerged about the turn of the eighteenth century in the northern Netherlands were interested in modernization,⁶ which led to a shift in the dominant nature of agriculture in the northern Netherlands from raising livestock to crop farming. Hofstede's thesis has been criticized by those who argue that this agricultural change occurred in response to rising grain prices of the mid-eighteenth century and a Rinderpest outbreak in the Netherlands during the years 1768-1773.⁷ Both these developments made arable land more valuable than grassland. Whatever the cause, the years of Beukma's youth and adolescence saw significant economic change.

In 1814, when Beukma was in his mid-twenties, he bought the 146-acre Castor estate from his aunt for the sizable amount f38,000 (about \$18,000), and set about the life of a gentleman farmer.⁸ Two years later he married Aafke Willems Smit. Four children were born—Jan (1817), Willem (1819), Kornelis (1821), and Geertruida (1823)—before Smit died in 1826. During this period Beukma became well known in De Marne and was active in social and political matters; and his views and insights into problems were sought after, and his passion for the problems of the day were admired. It is clear that his was a restless spirit not much interested in agriculture.⁹

The year that Beukma married saw some political change in Groningen: an effort to expand provincial representation, which had consisted of the old nobility and representatives from the city of Groningen. Under the new arrangement, representation was divided equally among the old nobility, the city, and landowners, each selecting twelve representatives to provincial government. However, as Bras notes, this was hardly a democratically equitable arrangement, since the twenty-eight nobles in the province had the same representation as the 128,000 landowners.¹⁰

That same decade witnessed a steady decline in grain revenues in the Netherlands. In 1818, wheat from the Russian Steppe, where labor costs were far lower, began entering the European market, pushing prices lower. During the six years ending in 1824, wheat prices in the Netherlands were down 60 percent.¹¹ Bad crop years in the Northern Netherlands in 1826, 1828, and 1830 further worsened conditions there.

At the same time national tensions began to have an impact in the rural areas. In August 1830 nationalistic protests became riots and led to the Belgian Declaration of Independence. William I immediately led troops to suppress this movement and for a few days had some success. But the French threat to intervene on behalf of the largely Catholic and French-speaking Belgians forced William I to pull back. The rest of Europe quickly recognized Belgian independence the next year, but the Dutch king refused. Although there was some support for the House of Orange in the northern portion of Belgium, the Dutch never regained control. Yet William I continued the war for eight years.

To meet the significantly increased military costs, taxes on land and on commercial activity by a slowly emerging middle class were



Castor was a Kop-hals-rompboerderij (head-neck-rump farmhouse) consisting of three sections, the kop containing the family's living quarters, the hals a small linking section, and the romp consisting of the barn. Image from a print of unknown provenance in Heritage Hall, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

increased. Throughout the eight years, reports of military and financial mismanagement (some real, some perceived) circulated through the country. North of the city of Groningen, protests against a new requirement to lend the government money, which fundamentally was an additional land tax, led to the formation of the *Maatschappij ter Bevordering van het Algemeen Welzijn* (Society for Promoting the General Welfare), to organize local political discussion groups, to foster reading groups, write petitions, and keep other groups informed about their activities, akin to what the Committees of Correspondence had done in the British colonies during the American Revolution. Beukma was the president and driving force of the group in nearby Leens.¹²

Although the society always acted within the law, the Dutch government considered it a secret and

suspicious organization that required monitoring. Spies were planted to send reports of the society's activities, although the government failed to note the existence of the Leens group with its twenty-six members. Meetings and attendees were documented, including Beukma's attendance at the four regional meetings in 1831. But reports indicated that the society attracted few new members, and none who were established leaders in communities, and concluded these leaders posed no serious threat to the government.

As enthusiastic as Beukma was about the goals of the society, he was forced to pay attention to more immediate matters such as his farm income, already lower due to wheat prices; he now had to pay the increased taxes. Fellow landowners, likewise, had to deal with increased taxation as wheat prices dropped. Interest in and support for the society

began to wane. Beukma held the king and his government responsible for the difficulties¹³ and began to think about emigration. Emigrants from nearby Germany had begun leaving as early as 1815, including the Aapkens family from Lanschaapolder just across the German border in 1834, whom Beukma knew and whose son would marry Beukma's daughter later in Indiana, in 1834. Beukma



Image of the ship that brought the family to the United States, drawn by Willem Beukma. From back cover of "Brieven van K. Jz. Beikma; Bevorden Landbouwer op de Boerderij Castor, in het Kerspel Zuurdijk, Gemeente Leens, doch Verhuisd (sic) naar de Vereenigde Staten van Noord-Amerika, in den Jare 1835" (Groningen: W. Zuidema, 1835).

began reading about North America. He began with *Hertog Bernhard von Saksen-Weimar-Eisenach's Reize naar en door Noord-Amerika 1825-1826*¹⁴ (published 1829) in Dutch translation, *Views of Society and Manners in America* (published 1822) by Scottish writer Frances Wright, in English, and later Heinrich Christian Gerke's *Der Nordamerikanische Rathgeber* (published 1834), in German.¹⁵

Wheat prices were at the lowest level in memory in the fall of 1834 when Beukma decided to emigrate.

In the spring of 1835 he sold his farm (Castor) for f18,000, less than half of what he had paid in 1814. On Monday, 27 April, with his family he left via canal boat from the city of Groningen. The editor of the *Groninger Courant* regretted the departure and noted that this would be the start of emigration from the northern Netherlands.¹⁶ Beukema, his three sons (Jan, Willem, and Cornelis), daughter (Geertruida), and a nephew (Michiel E. van Kampen) arrived in the United States in July aboard the brig *Syren*.

Beukma seems to have viewed himself as a pioneer of emigration and sent detailed letters to family members which were subsequently published for wider distribution.¹⁷ Filled with vivid descriptions of the trip, with such specifics as the number of locks in the Erie Canal, Beukma recounts the trip from New York to the interior of Indiana, six miles northeast of Lafayette, between the post road and the Wabash River. There he bought 181 acres of mostly bottomland through which both a canal and later a railroad were planned. The canal was to connect the Wabash River at Terra Haute to the Great Lakes at Toledo, promising the potential for extensive commercial traffic. The high ground of Beukma's purchase contained a modest log cabin and two sheds, one to serve as a barn for feed storage and the other to house cows. About sixteen of the acres had been cleared of trees and were planted in corn, oats, and vegetables. In addition, he bought four horses, one foal, two milk cows with calves, and seven hogs. These purchases came to \$955.¹⁸

The location, near a road and river and planned canal, promised ready access to Lafayette and Americus, a



village being platted five miles to the northeast. But development of the region was years in the future, and the Beukma family was ill-prepared for the demands of clearing land and farming on the American frontier. While the father, three sons, and nephew began clearing land, Truida became the housekeeper and cook in the cabin, which measured 16 feet by 16 feet.

The next spring, they learned that the bottomland flooded when the still-frozen ground could not absorb the spring rains. Planting had to be delayed until the ground was sufficiently dry. Their first efforts at planting failed when birds and vermin consumed most of the seed. But Beukma had the resources to replant, and the five men set to clearing more land. The densely forested land proved a challenge, but at the end of a year three more acres were ready for planting. The largest crop was corn and then oats, as feed for the animals, with vegetables, primarily potatoes and beans, for the table. Fortunately, traffic passing by on the state road made it possible to sell some of the garden produce as well, so that during the second year the garden was expanded to produce more for the

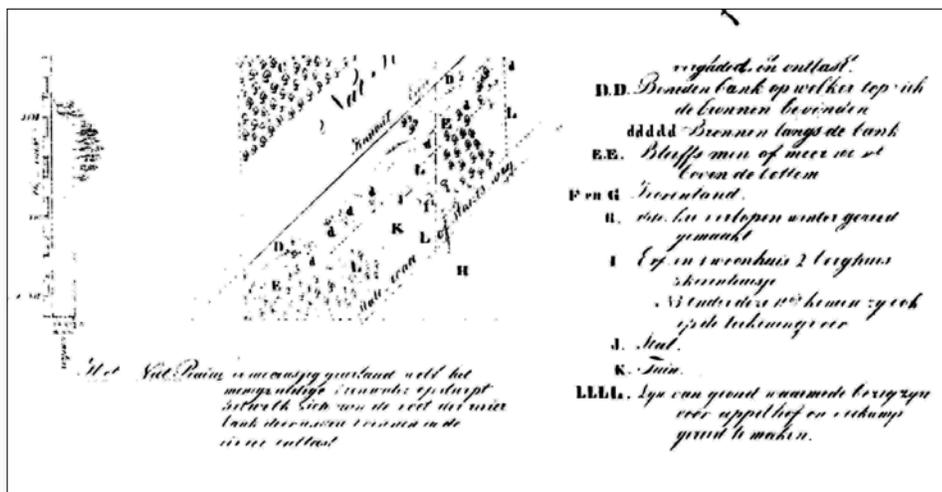
marketplace. Four inns in Lafayette, where many ate their meals, were seen as the prime customers, and Cornelius hauled produce the eight miles to town via horse and wagon.¹⁹

But problems continued to beset the Groninger pioneers. Heavy rains in January 1837 caused the Wabash to rise to flood stage, quickly reaching a level not seen during the previous ten years. A sow and five piglets were lost in the flooding.²⁰ Later that year two horses, worth an estimated \$120, broke free and were lost in spite of eight days of diligent searching.

Further, the monetary policies of the Jackson administration depressed cotton prices and rising interest rates in England, to which the economy of the United States was closely linked via the cotton trade. This led to an economic depression that quickly became a financial panic, as the nation dealt with a shortage of hard currency. Prices, wages, and profits declined, and during one month 40 percent of the nation's 850 banks had failed.²¹ The economic depression would last into the mid-1840s. But Klaas Beukma was not to be dissuaded from his decision; the United States was the land of opportunity. Although his letters note that money was tight, with almost all business being done on credit, and that wages were lower, distilleries were still buying rye, and breweries were still buying barley, so farmers had opportunities.

According to United States records during the worst of these economic times, Beukma became a citizen in 1837; sons Jan and Willem did so five years later. In all likelihood Beukma's financial resources allowed him to tolerate these years of economic difficulties better than others, but he did admit to his sister that the planned return trip to visit the Netherlands in 1838 would probably be delayed a year.²²

By 1842, the American economy



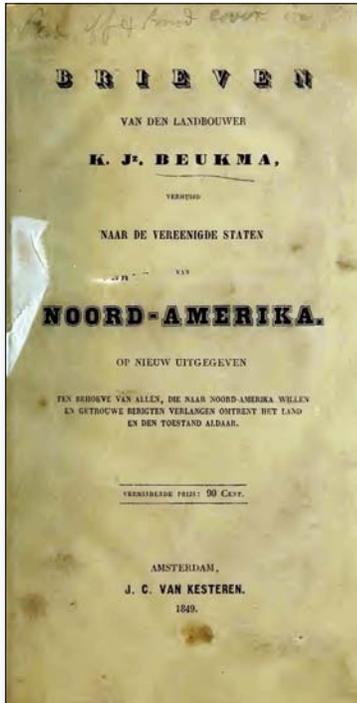
Map drawn by Willem Beukma of the land on the Wabash River. 'T' indicates the two log structures, the broken line indicates the planned fence rows. From "Brieven van K. Jz. Beikma; Bevorden Landbouwer op de Boerderij Castor, in het Kerspel Zuurdijk, Gemeente Leens, doch Verhuisd (sic) naar de Vereenigde Staten van Noord-Amerika, in den Jare 1835" (Groningen: W. Zuidema, 1838), between 56 and 57.

had recovered somewhat and overcame the five-year depression, but Beukma noted in letters to his uncle that the shortage of specie continued making land hard to sell. Their labor was by then producing good harvests; but as was the case for farmers of the era, good harvests led to lower prices. Yet the future looked bright as construction was underway on the canal from Terra Haute.²³ As always, the spring floods continued, and in 1844 Beukma decided to join others who were suing the State of Indiana for flood losses. He reported that his attorney was confident he could get as much as \$750 as a settlement but admitted that legal expenses had already totaled half of this amount.²⁴ There is no record if a settlement was reached.

During the intervening years, Beukma had continued to look for other opportunities for growth. In 1838 he and his nephew Michiel van Kampen bought a 16 $\frac{3}{4}$ -acre parcel about two miles from Lafayette and fifteen miles from the river.²⁵ This was prairie land without trees or stumps, about half of it was fenced, to prevent animals from wandering in and destroying the crops. The cost had

been \$500, but the promise was that the land could quickly be cultivated for market farming and, unlike the bottomland, was not subject to flooding. Beukma, his sons, and nephew set about cutting down trees from the first parcel, splitting and cutting the logs into rails and posts and floating and then hauling them to the new location to finish fencing the entire parcel.²⁶

Throughout, Beukma encouraged his children and nephew to explore opportunities and seek their future and fortune. Even though he had benefited from having a relatively well-to-do family that helped him begin his career, he believed young people had to follow their own paths without interference or input from others, as he noted, "I have freedom and bread no worries for children, they can achieve if they wish."²⁷ He encouraged his sons to work for others to both earn money and learn different farming practices. Given gender roles of the time, he admitted that he would have to make some special consideration for his daughter. Since educational options were negligible on the Indian frontier, in 1838 he did what



Beukma's three letters were published in 1835 and 1838. In 1849 the three were republished in a single booklet.

was common in the Netherlands: he placed Truida in the home of a medical doctor in Lafayette to learn the skills of running a proper household. After only six months he ended the effort, when it became clear the woman of the household was bad tempered and only interested in exploiting the labor potential of his daughter.²⁸

After the new land had been fenced, Michiel van Kampen went to look for other opportunities along the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, on which steamboat travel was frequent and inexpensive. In September, near St. Louis, he fell off a steamboat and drowned. Word slowly filtered back to Lafayette, and Beukma's letter with news of the death reached Van Kampen's father in Baflo, Groningen, in late January 1839.²⁹

In 1843, one hundred and twenty-eight immigrants from Groningen arrived in Indiana, with many settling in the Lafayette area near the Beukmas. Others settled in Ohio near the Aapkens families which

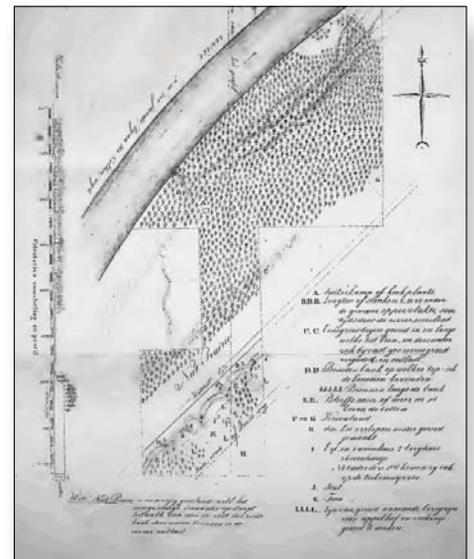
had arrived from polder land just across Germany from Groningen in 1837. Over time the two Beukma and Aapkens families developed close contacts.³⁰ In November 1846 Truida married Tjakko Aapkens.

By the time of this marriage, economic conditions were beginning to improve, and Beukma began to write about the quality of United States farm equipment, particularly the much more efficient steel plows. In 1847 Beukma and his son Willem returned to the Netherlands for a visit, taking along a more efficient American plow and a horse-powered treadle threshing machine which were immediately adopted in De Marne region of Groningen. Beukma returned to the United States, but Willem remained in the Netherlands for two years working as a daguerreotypier, returning to the United States in 1849. There is no record of Beukma's reaction to his son remaining in the Netherlands; given the support he would express for his other sons later, he almost certainly did not object to the decision, in spite of his own views of the Netherlands.

The trip marked the end of Beukma's active efforts to own a farm. He sold the land he had bought with his nephew, the 181-acre plot of land went to his sons Jan and Kornelis and to his daughter and son-in-law. When son Willem returned in 1849, with a cousin, Evert Borgman, he bought 92½ acres near Plainfield, New Jersey, where the land was better and closer to a sizable market—New York, two and a half hours away by wagon and boat. Later Willem sold his share in this land to his cousin for \$2,000, bought thirty acres, and had a house built, where he lived with his father and worked as carpenter, while the elder Beukma saw to the farming.³¹

In 1848, Kornelis joined the army during the war with Mexico. After he was discharged in early 1849, he sold his share of the Indiana land to his

brother-in-law and headed to the California gold fields. The overland trip took several months, during which he injured his hand while learning to fire a revolver. During the summer he unsuccessfully dug for gold near San Francisco and later near the Yuba River. On 1 April 1850, while panning for gold, he was killed during a robbery. His brother Jan had followed him to California but remained in San Francisco, where he died in 1851, probably from typhus. Beukma had encouraged both sons to go west since they were hoping to find a better



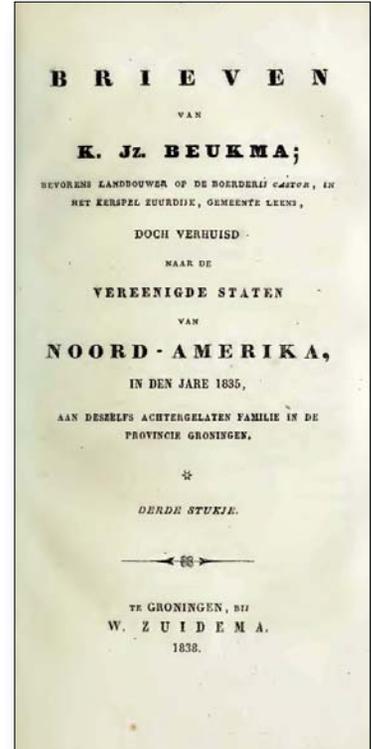
Beukma's entire farmstead on the Wabash River, most of which was heavily forested bottomland. From "Brieven van K. Jz. Beikma; Bevorden Landbouwer op de Boerderij Castor, in het Kerspel Zuurdiijk, Gemeente Leens, doch Verhuisd (sic) naar de Vereenigde Staten van Noord-Amerika, in den Jare 1835" (Groningen: W. Zuidema, 1838), between 56 and 57.

future and not out of wanderlust, and there certainly was the promise of financial success in the gold fields.³²

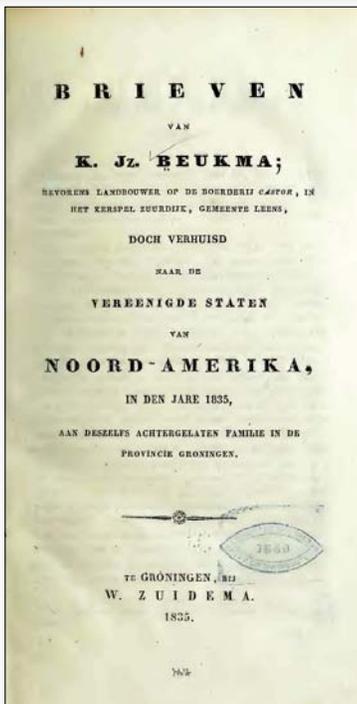
In 1852 Willem returned to the Netherlands a second time to bring his cousin, Hillechien Tonkens, back to America. The two married the day they arrived in Plainfield. At this point Klaas Beukma retired, often visiting his friend Worp Van Peyma, who had settled near Lancaster, New



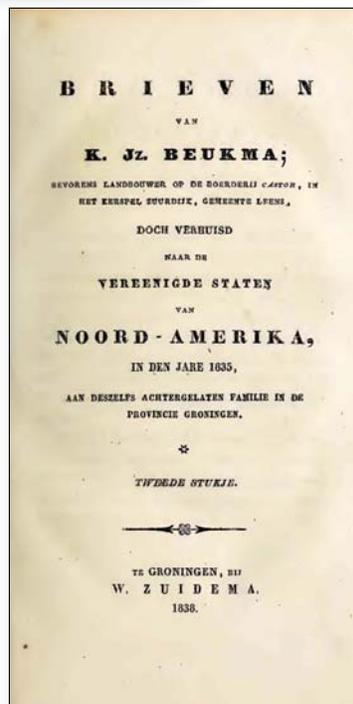
A drawing of the farmstead's two log structures, by Willem Beukma. From "Brieven van K. Jz. Beikma; Bevorden Landbouwer op de Boerderij Castor, in het Kerspel Zuurdijk, Gemeente Leens, doch Verhuisd (sic) naar de Vereenigde Staten van Noord-Amerika, in den Jare 1835" (Groningen: W. Zuidema, 1838), between 56 and 57.



The cover of Beukma's third published letter (1838), further describing his view of life in the United States. Copy available in Heritage Hall, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan.



The cover of Beukma's first published letter (1835), describing the trip to Indiana. Copy available in Heritage Hall, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan.



The cover of Beukma's second published letter (1838), describing early experiences on the Indiana frontier. Copy available in Heritage Hall, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

York, in 1849. In 1855 Beukma married Johanna Vander Berg, who had just arrived from the Netherlands, and they settled in Lancaster, where he died in 1860.³³

Throughout the extant letters it is clear that, in addition to economic conditions, Beukma was unhappy with the political conditions in the

Netherlands, particularly the system that was skewed to benefit the wealthy at the expense of everyone else. He complained often about high and frequent taxes in the Netherlands, compared to the United States, and the excessive Dutch regulations that limited opportunity. He realized that

one of the reasons for high taxes in the Netherlands was the cost of the unsuccessful fight against Belgian independence, an independence movement that he supported. He blamed King Wilhelm for this, that even with the independence achieved in Belgium, "official tyranny" in the Netherlands would continue. When Wilhelm abdicated, he expressed his faint hope that the son would be a better monarch.³⁴

Beukma had long planned the 1846 return trip to the Netherlands. The father and son arrived two years after the devastating potato blight swept Europe, causing hunger in addition to economic privation for the Dutch day laborers in rural areas. Beukma had no trouble recruiting a group of thirty who left for Indiana at the end of March 1847. The editor of the *Prov. Friesche Courant* concluded his

account of their departure with, “We hope you find better conditions in America’s free states.”³⁵ Beukma returned to the United States later that year after spending time with friends and relatives in Groningen and placing a stone marker on the exterior of the family church commemorating his family and his deceased wife.

Willem, apparently with his own financial resources, remained in the Netherlands working in a new and growing profession of making daguerreotypes, having brought supplies for this from the United States.³⁶ An announcement in the *Groninger Courant*, June 1847, notes that he was taking daguerreotypes during a period of three to four weeks in Altena.³⁷ From Willem’s two-year stay comes the first confirmation that the Beukmas knew the Van Peymas. In addition to making daguerreotype images of Van Peyma family members, Willem travelled through the Netherlands and to London, sightseeing with Worp Van Peyma and Van Peyma’s brother-in-law, Rev. Rinse Posthumus. The trip began at Van Peyma’s estate just outside Ternaard in Friesland.³⁸

Van Peyma (1796-1881) was the scion of a family that had owned an estate in Friesland probably during the sixteenth century. Records indicate the family’s holdings began with an earlier Worp van Peyma (died 1624), and by 1697 the family’s standing among Dutch nobility was such that the name passed through both the male and female lines to facilitate inheritance. By the end of the seventeenth century the Van Peyma estate totaled about one hundred acres, a holding that subsequent families increased.³⁹

Although very little is known about his youth, as an adult it is clear that Van Peyma received a well-rounded education, since later in life he was able to read Frisian, Dutch, German, French, and some English, and was



Worp Van Peyma (1796-1881), another educated, well-to-do farmer in the Netherlands and associate of Beukma, who emigrated. Image from a print of unknown provenance in Heritage Hall, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

accomplished in mathematics, astronomy, hydraulic engineering, and land reclamation. When Van Peyma was fifteen, his father died, and the estate transferred entirely to his mother. Four years later Van Peyma bought his own estate, the Nutma Zathe, just south of Ternaard in Friesland. Now self-supporting, he married Sijke Rinzes Posthumus that same year in August. The next June their first child, Reinou, was born, but died nine months later. The couple would have seven children, four of whom survived into adulthood.

As a gentleman farmer, Van Peyma had time to join a group of contemporaries who owned farms and shared his intellectual interests in various subjects. This circle of friends included Roelof Hessels Hommema (1791-1854), a skilled carpenter and mechanic, lens grinder, and clock and watchmaker, who worked at improving agricultural implements and invented and sold lightning rods. Bente Willems Wassenaar (1796-1999) also worked at improving agricultural implements and was the first farmer in Friesland to acquire a

mechanical mower. Rinse Posthumus (1790-1858) was a minister in the Hervormed Kerk, a classicist and linguist who translated three of Shakespeare’s plays into Frisian. All were influenced by Hommema’s uncle, Arjen Roelofs. Roelofs, a farmer, mathematician, mechanic, and astronomer who was known as the “Farmer-Professor” since students came to his farm near Hyum for instruction.⁴⁰

In 1827 Van Peyma published an essay on land reclamation and two years later a biography of Roelofs. He also worked with Hommema on improving Roelofs’s telescope. With Van Peyma’s mathematics and Hommema’s lens-grinding, they developed better optics that allowed the length of the telescope to be reduced by two and a half feet. They were invited to Paris to present this new telescope to the scientific community there.⁴¹ Van Peyma, serving as the commissioner of and assessor for dykes in Westdongeradeel, wrote a treatise proposing linking the island of Ameland to the mainland by poldering a section of the Wadden Sea. During the 1840s he conducted his own microscopic investigation into the potato blight. For these various efforts he was inducted into the Order of the Netherlands Lion.

When Van Peyma’s wife, Sijke, died (12 October 1847), he was convinced by his research that the potato blight would be devastating and that the Dutch economy offered little promise, and in early 1849 he decided in rapid order to emigrate.⁴² On 6 and 28 April 1849 he had his non-real estate holdings in Ternaard auctioned, sold his farm, and on 8 May, with his four children, their families, and several employees, left for Bremerhaven, Germany, where they would board ship for the United States. The departure of the relatively well-to-do Van Peyma caused a stir in the region.⁴³ Van Peyma stayed behind and the next day

married Yttje Jacobs van der Meer, the twenty-nine-year-old daughter of a farmer from south of Leeuwarden.⁴⁴ The marriage was a surprise to his family when the couple arrived in Bremerhaven. Because Yttje was the age of Van Peyma's oldest children, initially the marriage was not well received by his children. The entourage crossed the Atlantic in two groups, the first, including the Van Peyma family members and Willem Beukma, went via steamer *Hermann*; the second group, mainly staff and most of the baggage, went by sailing ship.

Hermaan arrived first, and the Van Peymas stayed on Long Island waiting for the second group and their shipment of possessions. Klaas Beukma visited Van Peyma on Long Island, and Van Peyma visited Plainfield, New Jersey. He concluded that farmland was too expensive there and decided to move to the western portion of New York. From that time forward, the two families remained in close contact, writing frequent letters and visiting one another during summers. In 1855, Klaas Beukma and his new wife, Johanna, moved to Lancaster, New York, near Van Peyma.

Unlike Beukma, Van Peyma arrived with sufficient funds that he could establish himself comfortably in New York and retire from active work. He bought an operating farm outside Lancaster on the plank road into town. He was a six- or seven-minute walk from the railroad station and then fifteen minutes by train to Buffalo (or thirty minutes by wagon and plank road). His purchase included a main house, two other houses, two brick barns, sixteen acres of pasture, riding horses, a dairy to provide the family with butter and cheese, furniture, a covered wagon, a horse, and a few cows, for 7 to 8 thousand guilders (about \$5,000).⁴⁵ He compared Buffalo favorably to Amsterdam, and Lancaster was growing with shops, providing most

of what was needed, in addition to a combination glass factory, tannery, and sawmill, and other mills, forges, carriage and furniture makers, a post office, and six churches.

Daughter Nieske stopped wearing her olden cap, as had been the custom in Friesland, and immediately adopted American clothing styles. The younger family members learned English quickly, although Van Peyma preferred Dutch, which he could little use during his remaining years,



The Van Peyma family grave marker in Lancaster Rural Cemetery, Erie County, New York. Image courtesy of Heritage Hall, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

since his immigrant neighbors spoke Frisian on a daily basis. Initially Van Peyma found that his German and French helped him in communication and he sent his children and grandchildren to school to learn English. Van Peyma acknowledged that the family acculturated slowly, but within a year the relationship between his second wife and children from his first marriage improved, and his daughter and wife had become close friends.⁴⁶

The family's arrival was noted by the community in an article in the *Buffalo Republic*, which noted Van Peyma's accomplishments and honors in the Netherlands. The article reports

that the reasons given for immigration were the significantly better economy in the new land and a political and social structure in the old country that stifled initiative and opportunity.⁴⁷ But given that Van Peyma purchased significant property upon arrival and with one son purchased a tannery while another son continued a medical practice, it is difficult to conclude that the family had not been doing well in the Netherlands.

Van Peyma lived in comfortable retirement until 1881, when he died at eighty-six. He and Yttje had had two children, Pieter and Eska. Pieter was a physician and Eska did not marry. Of the four children from his first marriage who survived to adulthood and emigrated, two sons and two daughters—Jacob had trained as a physician in the Netherlands and continued to practice in Buffalo; Renze became a successful hardware dealer in Kansas City, Kansas. Daughter Reniou's first husband, Evert Borgman, died in 1862, and she married Hendrikus Van Houten, who had immigrated with the Van Peymas in 1849. The Van Houtens moved to Mahaska County, Iowa, and did well in farming. Shortly after his estate was settled in 1856, Nieske died.

In the last extant letter to the Netherlands to Wopke Eekhoff in 1877, Van Peyma reflects on his life. He notes that he was healthy and still able to read without glasses. His children and grandchildren were all doing well and had Americanized, although he had not. He noted that he missed speaking Dutch and the ready contact with other Dutch intellectuals he had enjoyed before immigrating. But he did not regret the move.⁴⁸ Interestingly, while Beukma returned to the Netherlands at least twice, Van Peyma never did.

Although Beukma did not regret leaving the Netherlands, his children did not share their father's positive

view for emigrating; his daughter reported that he had spent half his fortune on the emigration effort and left the other half to his second wife.⁴⁹ The wife is last reported in the 1860 federal census with a daughter born about the time Beukma died. Unlike Van Peyma's six children, the four Beukma offspring did not do well in the United States. Jan and Kornelis died in the California gold fields, and Geertruida married Tjakko Aapkens, and the two worked hard all their lives to survive. She died in Illinois, he in Texas a few years later, leaving nothing for their children to divide. Willem and his cousin Hillichien Tonkens had three children in New Jersey, and the daughter died young. Hillichien became ill and, in 1863 when doctors offered little hope for her survival, wanted to return to the Netherlands one last time. She died en route, a day's journey from Groningen. Her body was placed in the casket that was part of the family's baggage and was buried in Groningen. Willem returned to the United States long enough to sell his property and returned to the Netherlands, where he again became a Dutch citizen in 1873.

Although both Beukma and Van Peyma gave similar reasons for leaving the Netherlands—unhappiness with the Dutch economy, society, and political structure—neither experienced the hardships of most of the others who emigrated during the 1840s. Van Peyma came with sufficient financial resources and lived comfortably, and his children did well. But this probably would also have been the case had they remained in Friesland. Beukma worked hard but also benefitted from the financial resources he brought from Groningen. His notions that his children should seek their own futures and fortunes resulted with them not faring nearly as well as the Van Peyma descendants. ❧

Endnotes

1. Michael Wintle, *An Economic and Social History of the Netherlands, 1800-1920: Demographic, Economic and Social Transition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 100-101.
2. Beukma was part of the larger Beukema, also spelled Beuckema, family; but when his surname was registered in 1812, the clerk recorded it without the second "e."
3. J. O. Beukema and R. J. Beukema, *Four centuries (sic) Boijkema, Beukema, Buikema* (privately published, 1998; and Jan Beukema to B. Dijkhuis, 12 January 1838, K. Jz. Beukema to Sister and other Relatives, 7 August 1838, Dutch Immigrant Letters Collection (box 4, folders 27 and 29), Heritage Hall, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan; hereafter cited as Heritage Hall.
4. Hilde Bras, "Tussen twee werelden: De migratiemotieven van Klaas Jans Beukma (1789-1860) een Groningse pionier in Amerika," Thesis Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, 1993: 4.
5. Hilde Bras, "Tussen twee werelden," 10-12.
6. Hilde Bras, "Tussen twee werelden," 1993: 3.
7. A viral infection of even-toed ungulates with often a mortality rate of 100 percent. This outbreak in the Netherlands led to studies that resulted in inoculations against the plague.
8. Richard Paping, "Boerderijen in de Marne vóór 1830," at <http://www.rug.nl/staff/rf.j.paping/zuurdijkbeschrijvingen.pdf>, visited 15 December 2015, 1:45 pm. This consisted of about 146-147 *juk*, or yoke—the amount of land a span of oxen can plow in one day, which was the original definition of an acre.
9. Ijnte Botke, *Boer en Heer 'de Groninger boer'* (Assen: Koninklijke Van Gorcum, 2002), 291.
10. Hilde Bras, "Tussen twee werelden," 21.
11. Hilde Bras, "Tussen twee werelden," 21.
12. Hilde Bras, "Tussen twee werelden," 296-297.
13. Klaas J. Beukema to a cousin, 22 Jun 1838, Dutch Immigrant Letters, Heritage Hall, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, MI, box 4, folder 30.
14. The author, Bernhard Karl, included his name and title in the book's title.
15. Hilde Bras, "Tussen twee werelden," 30-33.
16. *Leeuwarder Courant*, 5 May 1835 p 1, reprinted from *Groninger Courant*, 1 May 1835
17. *Brieven van K. Jz. Keukma; Bevoorens Landbouwer op de Boerderij Castor, in het Kerspel Zuurdijk, Gemeente Leens, doch Verhuisd naar de Vereenigde Staten van Noord-America, in den Jare 1835, aan deszelfs achtergelaten Family in the Province Groningen* (W. Zuidema: Groningen, 1835, tweede stukje 1838, derde stukje 1838).
18. K. Jz. Beukema to M. Beukema (his brother), 4 July 1836, Dutch Immigrant Letters Collection (box 4, folder 28), Heritage Hall.
19. O. Beukema and R. J. Beukema, *Four centuries (sic) Boijkema, Beukema, Buikema* (privately published, 1998, copy available in Heritage Hall); abbreviated history, 23
20. Jan Beukema to B. Dijkhuis, 12 January 1838, K. Jz. Beukema to Sister and other Relatives, 7 August 1838, Dutch Immigrant Letters Collection (box 4, folders 27 and 29), Heritage Hall.
21. Ironically, weeks after the Beukemas left the Netherlands, the Dutch government began imposing an import tax that led to better economic conditions in the Netherlands with rising agricultural prices.
22. Jan Beukema to B. Dijkhuis, 12 January 1838, K. Jz. Beukema to Sister and other Relatives, 7 August 1838, Dutch Immigrant Letters Collection (box 4, folder 27), Heritage Hall.
23. Klaas Jan Beukema to I. Dijkhuis 8 September 1842, Dutch Immigrant Letters Collection (box 4, folder 28), Heritage Hall.
24. K. Jz. Beukema to W. L. Dijkhuis, 5 Feb 1844, Dutch Immigrant Letters Collection (box 4, folder 29), Heritage Hall.
25. Van Kampen had earned \$140 the previous year by working for a farmer.
26. Jan Beukema to B. Dijkhuis, 12 January 1838, Dutch Immigrant Letters Collection (box 4, folders 27), Heritage Hall.
27. *Onze Tijd: Merkwaardige Gebeurtenissen Onzer Dagen op het Gebied van Staatskunde, Geschiedenis, Land- en Volkenkunde, Kunsten, Wetenschappen, Nijverheid, Enz.*, Volume 2 (Amsterdam Gebroeders Dierichs, 1849) 168. K. Jz. Beukema to M. Beukema, 4 July 1836 and K. Jz. Beukema to Jan P. Vork, 1 August

1840, Dutch Immigrant Letters Collections (box 4, folders 29 and 31), Heritage Hall.

28. K. Jz. Beukma to M. Beukma, 4 July 1836 and K. Jz. Beukma to Jan P. Vork, 1 August 1840, Dutch Immigrant Letters Collection (box 4, folders 29 and 31), Heritage Hall.

29. *Groninger Courant*, 5 February 1839

30. J.O. Beukema & R.J. Beukema *Four centuries*” (sic) *Boijkema, Beukema, Buikema*, 54.

31. J.O. Beukema & R.J. Beukema *Four centuries*” (sic) *Boijkema, Beukema, Buikema*, abbreviated history, 24.

32. [Klaas Jan Beukma] to W. Dijkhuis, 14 December 1849, Dutch Immigrant Letters Collection (box 4, folders 30 and 30), Heritage Hall.

33. According to the 1860 census, Beukma and his second wife had a child, but no record was found of either mother or daughter after 1860s.

34. *Onze Tijd: Merkwaaardige Gebeurtenissen Onzer Dagen op het Gebied van Staatskunde, Geschiedenis, Land- en Volkenkunde, Kunsten, Wetenschappen, Nijverheid, Enz.*, Volume 2 (Amsterdam Gebroeders Dierichs, 1849) 168. Klas J., Beukma to a cousin, 22 June 1838; K. Jz. Beukma to Sister and Other Relatives, 7 August 1838, and [Klaas Jan Beukma] to W. Dijkhuis, 14 December 1849, Dutch Immigrant Letters Collection (box 4, folders 29 and 30), Heritage Hall.

35. *Prov. Friesche Courant*, 28 Mar 1847.

36. In the Regionaal Historisch

Centrum, Groninger Archieven are several daguerreotypes by Beukma, including one of Nieske van Peyma, to note the plates were manufactured by Edward White of New York. <http://www.daguerreobase.org/en/type/a504d921-54d9-777d-1fa7-7057e279a4ad#object> visited 12 December 2015, 15:30 UTC. His exact dates are not known; he is listed in the New York City business directory in 1843, 1844 and 1850; in New Orleans 1846-1848; and Newark, NJ, 1848-1849.

37. <http://www.hetverhaalvangroningen.nl/verhalen/de-oudste-fotos> visited 12 December 2015, 15:00 UTC.

38. Willem Beukma, “Opmerkingen op mijn reis naar Holland en terug naar de Vereenigde Staten” [1849] 19-20; Dutch Immigrant Letters Collection, box 5, folder 1, Heritage Hall, Calvin College.

39. Jan Leenburg, “Peyma State te Ternaard,” <http://www.stinseninfriesland.nl/PeymaStateTernaard.htm> visited 12 April 2016, 20:00 UTC. Van Peyma’s mother’s (Reinou) estate was sold in 1832 and then divided into smaller farms.

40. Petrus Johannes Blok and Philipp Christiaan Molhuysen, *Nieuw Nederlandsch Biografisch Woordenboek* (Leiden: A.W. Sijthoff’s Uitgevers Maatschappij, 1911), 606, 987-989, 970-971, 1436, and 1800-1801; digital version at http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/molh-003nieu00_01/.

41. G. A. Wumkes, “Worp van Peyma en zijn Vrienden. Een bladzijde

Friesche cultuurgeschiedenis.” *Vrije Fries* (1914), 150-177.

42. Sieger Rodenhuis, *Friese pioniers in Amerika: O, ik ben zoo verblijd, dat wij in Amerika zijn* (Ljouwert: Friese Pers Boekerij, 1998) 41.

43. J. Swart, “Emigraasje as útwei foar drûgjend ûnk, de lânferhuzer Woarp van Peyma,” (I, deel 64, 1984), 79-83; and <http://sneuperdokkum.blogspot.com/2011/12/worp-van-peyma-zag-spoken-en-emigreerde.html>, visited 18 April 2016, 23:45 UTC; and *Leeuwarder Courant*, 16 May 1849.

44. <http://sneuperdokkum.blogspot.com/2011/12/worp-van-peyma-zag-spoken-en-emigreerde.html>, visited 18 April 2016, 23:45 UTC.

45. Sieger Rodenhuis, *Friese pioniers in Amerika: O, ik ben zoo verblijd, dat wij in Amerika zijn* (Ljouwert: Friese Pers Boekerij, 1998), 45-51.

46. Sieger Rodenhuis, *Friese pioniers in Amerika*, 45.

47. From the *Schenectady Cabinet*, 20 September 1850; Reprinted in *Sheboygan Nieuwsbode*, 3 October 1850, 2.

48. G. A. Wumkes, “Worp van Peyma en zijn Vrienden. Een bladzijde Friesche cultuurgeschiedenis.” *Vrije Fries* (1914), 150-177.

49. Hans Krabbendam, *Freedom on the Horizon: Dutch Immigration to America, 1940-1940* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2009), 170.

Pioneering in Northern Michigan

Cornelia Feringa Vanderhoven¹

Like so many, my parents, Louwe Feringa² and Sepke Leekstra, were poor in the Netherlands. There were rich landowners who lived on estates, but the poor lived in small villages and, from childhood on, worked for these wealthy farmers with little or no chance to better their situations. Sepke was the youngest of four children, living with her family in the small village of Ezinge, Groningen. Her father had died when she was nine months old during a cholera epidemic. There was a welfare system for the poor widows who could live at no cost in houses owned by the village. Kornelia Haan³ and her four children moved into one room of such a house. She sold notions and baked goods which provided a very meager income, and the children had to work for farmers. When my mother was seven years old, the *burgemeester* (mayor) came and told my grandma that he had found a job for Sepke. A farmer's wife wanted her to take care of her children. All my grandma's pleading that Sepke was too young was to no avail, and so my mother was practically torn away from her mother. And from then on she never lived at home again.

Only on Saturday night the children could go home to their mother—and what a celebration it was. My grandma, poor as she was, would save up during the week, going without for herself so she would have a little treat in store for her children when they came. Sometimes she would hide it and all four of them would search

until they found whatever it was that their mother (“*Moeke*”) had saved for them.

My father's circumstances were a little better, although he also had very little schooling and went to work for farmers when young. He later served in the army and was with the cavalry, grooming horses. He took great pride in currying and brushing these



Kornelia was born in 1829 and married Simon Annes Leekstra in 1853; twelve years later she was a widow with four young children. Image courtesy of Paula Vander Hoven.

beautiful animals. This love for horses and pride in a beautiful team always stayed with him.

The Feringa family joined the church in Ezinge, when Louwe's oldest sister, Boukje, was led to Christ as a young girl, through the preaching of the gospel and hymn singing on one of the street corners of their village by the Salvation Army. She committed

Paula Vander Hoven is a retired Presbyterian pastor living in Michigan and the granddaughter of Cornelia Feringa Vanderhoven. At Paula's request, her grandmother Cornelia wrote the story of the early years of her life. Rosa Pedriana is Paula's granddaughter, and together they have edited Cornelia's story for Origins. Rosa is an eighth-grade student in Minnesota.

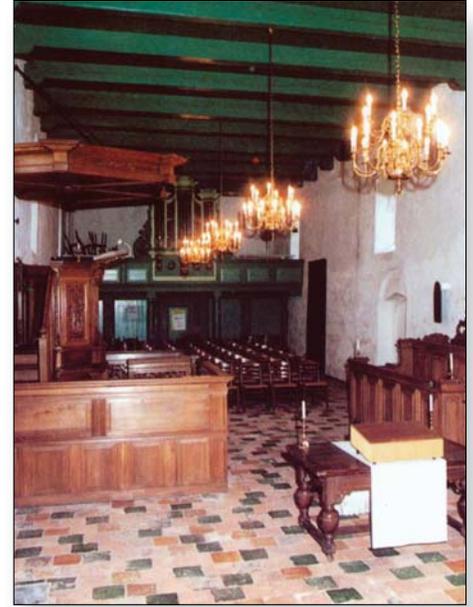


The deacons house in Ezinge, the Netherlands, that was home to the Leekstra family after Simon Annes Leekstra died in 1865 at the age of forty-four. Image courtesy of Paula Vander Hoven.

herself to Christ and led her mother, two sisters, and young brother Arend to Christ. Louwe, in the army and courting Sepke, was not with his family very much and so continued completely indifferent toward religion.

After completing his military service, Louwe and Sepke were married on 17 May 1890 in Ezinge, and he returned to being a day laborer on a farm, work with which he was very unhappy. He wanted a farm of his own and a beautiful team of horses; that was his dream. At that time many people were leaving the Netherlands to better their lot. Sepke had relatives

in the New World, and the young couple began corresponding with them; in 1893 they made plans to go to America with their two children, Menstje (3) and Simon (1).⁴ The children had been baptized in the Hervormde Kerk, but they did not attend church at all, and the sacrament had absolutely no meaning for them. While they were making preparations for the trip and packing their big wooden chest with their possessions, Louwe's young brother Arend came to visit and bid them goodbye. He had brought a Bible for them, but, knowing that they would only laugh at him



The church in Ezinge with the elevated pulpit to the left. Image courtesy of Paula Vander Hoven.

and would not take the Bible along, when left alone for a moment he managed to slip this Bible in the bottom of their trunk.

When they arrived in Grand Rapids, my mother's relatives had prepared everything for them. They had rented a small house on Logan Street right across from East Street (now Eastern Avenue) Christian Reformed Church, where they were all faithful members. Their landlord and his wife were very pious Christians. The first months went by quickly and, I believe, rather well for them. But then it happened. In August 1893 young Simon became very sick and died, common in those days of high infant mortality rates.

My father was a very composed person and perhaps bore his grief a little better than mother did. She was overwhelmed with grief and tried to find an answer. She seemed to feel that death was a result of sin, but what had this dear innocent child done that he should die? For days she lived in gloom and despair. And now in desperation she began reading the Bible that Arend had hidden in their



A street scene from Ezinge, typical of villages in the northern Netherlands. Image courtesy of Paula Vander Hoven.

belongings. She did not understand it all, but the people from the church came to comfort and began teaching her. Finally, the light broke through, and she was as much overwhelmed with joy as she had been with grief and remorse. There were times when she became so absorbed in reading the Bible that she would forget everything, and, when my father came home, it often happened that the fire in the stove was out (it was winter) and no supper was ready. But he was kind and gentle; he never said anything.

I was born in the winter of 1894. Now the covenant and God's promises had new meaning for them, and I am sure that I was presented for baptism with greater dedication than my two older siblings had been. A nationwide economic depression had begun during the summer of 1894. There was little work; my father did whatever his hands could find to do. One of these was herding cattle for a dairyman named Ezinga. The dairy was on Sigsbee Street near Diamond Avenue, and the cows had to be brought out into the country to pasture on East Paris Avenue, at least five miles away. But my father was restless and unhappy with these temporary jobs. He had come to America with the expectation of being a farmer.

At this time some families from Grand Rapids settled in LeRoy, ninety miles north of Grand Rapids. About five of these families were from East Street Christian Reformed Church. As my folks heard about this, they also became interested. One of the men of the church, an elder with whom they were well acquainted (his wife was my mother's friend), told them that he had a piece of land in LeRoy with buildings, house, and barn that he would sell to them on very easy terms. My father was to cut stove wood and ship it to him. A certain amount would be applied to the

mortgage on the farm, and the balance would be paid to him. This was too good an offer to turn down; happy with the unexpected prospect of getting a farm, the Feringas gladly accepted his offer.

So, in November of 1896, once again they packed all their possessions (which consisted of a table, a few chairs, one rocker and two beds, one cradle, plus a few dishes and pots and pans) and shipped them by train to LeRoy. With Bertha, six weeks old; Minnie, age five; me, almost two; and high hopes and fresh courage, they set out for the north. One of the families already there picked them up from the depot and brought them to their new home, a little two-room log cabin. My mother had never seen a log house before.

Our home was a happy one. Family devotions were never neglected; we had Scripture reading and prayer at meal time. And, in the evening when the chores were done and it was time for the children to go to bed, Father would lead us in evening prayer. Then we always kissed one another and went to bed.

My father began cutting wood at once, but this was something he had



The Feringa family in a photo taken in Michigan, l-r: Sepke, Cornelia (the author), Bertha, Minnie, and Louwe. Image courtesy of Heritage Hall, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

never done before. He could not do this alone, so he hired one of the young boys, Fred Frieswyk, to help him. They shipped wood to Grand Rapids but received no payment. This went on all winter until finally my father felt that he could not keep Fred waiting any longer. So he gave him his watch instead of cash—it was all he had to give—and he did the best he could by cutting alone. One day, as my father walked about two miles to LeRoy to see if there might possibly be a check for him, a stranger overtook him, and they walked on together. My father was a very congenial person and made conversation easily. This man told him that he had heard

that one of the new families in the area was having trouble, and asked if my father knew anything about these people. So my father told him he was this person, and told him about the rough time they were having, with hardly enough to eat, and that from one day to the other they were hoping for payment from Grand Rapids but that so far nothing had come. Finally, the two travelers came to the store. They both went in as the mail also came to the store. But again there was nothing for Feringa. Meanwhile, his

Louwe, you got the check.” He said, “No, nothing at all.” Then he told her the events of the evening. This was indeed a gift from heaven.⁵

Soon after that they received a letter from the business partner of the good friend who had sold them the farm. I do not know the details, but he did tell them that the land did not belong to their friend, and advised them not to send any more wood at that time. He must have made an agreement with them that they could continue to live there for a while and

picked huge blackberries and red raspberries which they brought to the store and exchanged for a few necessities. There were times when all we had to eat was potatoes. And in the fall of the second year, our shoes had worn out, and we were still barefooted when the snow was on the ground. Minnie had to go to school and she remembered that our father had some wood that he took to the store and traded for a pair of shoes for her.

Meanwhile that little group of Hollanders had organized a church congregation.⁶ There were thirteen families, and on Sunday they met for worship in the little log schoolhouse. As all these people were from Grand Rapids, they had much in common, and they had wonderful Christian fellowship. One of the men would read a sermon, and my father also took part in leading these Christians in worship. Although he had very little education, he was a good reader, and the people liked to have him read.

Though they mostly had reading services, occasionally a visiting minister came to preach. Some of them stayed at our house, and my mother felt honored that a servant of the Lord would lodge in their humble little log cabin. There was only one bedroom, but we did have two beds. So, when a minister came, he would sleep in my folks’ bed where there was a good Dutch feather mattress over the straw tick. Bertha slept in the cradle, Father and Mother slept in our bed with me between them and Minnie at the foot end. At these times a sheet was hung between the two beds for privacy. My mother scrubbed and cleaned more than usual, so everything was spotless. My parents enjoyed the company of these ministers.

There was Rev. Peter Ekster, six feet tall, pastor of Alpine Avenue Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids—a very humble and friendly man who did his best to set them at ease. And,



LeRoy, Michigan, about the turn of the twentieth century. Image courtesy of Heritage Hall, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

companion from the road was ordering an assortment of groceries as my father wistfully looked on, wishing he could buy just a little for his family. This man paid for his order, asked the storekeeper to put it in a burlap bag, and then handed it to my father and said, “Take this to your wife.” My father was speechless, and when he wanted to thank the man, he was gone and never saw him again or found out who he was. When he got home and my mother saw the bag, she was so happy and exclaimed, “Oh,

use the land. At least we stayed there. We lived in LeRoy for two years.

They knew there would be no money for all their hard work. But it was summer once again so my father planted some potatoes and sometimes worked by the day for farmers, mostly Americans who had been there for many years and seemingly were prosperous. My father also acquired an old horse and a cow at this time. This was a big help; at least we had milk. This was good berry country. They grew wild in the woods, and my parents

when he was in bed, he called to my mother and said, “Don’t worry, *Vrouwtje* (little lady), I have slept in worse beds than this.” My father took him to the train by horse and wagon. After he was back home, he sent them a letter thanking them for all they had done for that “*lange vent*” (tall fellow) from Grand Rapids. He also said he had never had better potatoes than at their house and asked them to send him a sack and included was money for the same. How pleased they were! They always held Rev. Ekster in high regard.

It was a difficult and trying life. There was no water near the house, and my father and mother carried water from Perch Lake, more than a mile away. The one big disappointment for all these new settlers was that the land was very poor and with all their hard work they could not raise good crops. They felt there just was no future there for them, and one after the other left and went back to Grand Rapids. But my father had no desire to go back to the city. He had come to America with the purpose of becoming a farmer, and he wanted to achieve this more than anything.

When there were four families left they had to decide what to do next. I think it was Rev. Ekster who suggested the possibility of going a little further north. In Lucas and Vogel Center

there were well-established Christian Reformed churches, the land was good, and especially Lucas was a fast-growing community. So, after much deliberation, my father and our neighbor Mr. Oostindie started out together. Their first destination was to a farmer by the name of Kleinheselink, who had come from the Alpine Avenue Christian Reformed Church. They had two grown sons and three girls. They were doing very well and were very optimistic. The men were warmly received wherever they went and were encouraged to settle there. Mr. Oostindie bought a farm near McBain already under cultivation with a pretty good house and barn. My father bought eighty acres of woods without a clearing, not even space to build a house. But my mother’s last instructions to him had been to be sure if he did buy, that it be near a church and school. So here were eighty acres of virgin woods located one-half mile south of the church and one-half mile west of the school. He paid \$10 an acre for his woods and was happy. Men from the church had offered to help him build a house and barn.

The first thing to be done on the new land was to cut down trees to open a place to build. Then the trees were cut into logs the right size and finally construction of the log cabin

and log barn. This was also a two-room log cabin with a potbelly stove, but the rooms were large, and we had two beds in one room. My mother got busy and whitewashed the whole inside and scrubbed the floor. It looked clean and livable.

But it was a cold and hard winter with a number of snowstorms, and my father had to work in the woods. Logging was the main industry there, with logs taken to a sawmill in the village of Lucas. Father had to hire one of the boys from the Abe Lucas family to help him cut the trees down and saw them into lengths. When they had several piles of logs, called decks, he would haul the logs to Lucas. He could make two trips a day but those were long days of hard work. He often came home with icicles in his mustache and eyelids almost frozen shut. Farmers wore felt boots and insulated waterproof boots called arctics. But we had no money to buy such things. Mr. Eppink, who owned the general store in Lucas, was a member of the Lucas Christian Reformed Church. He told my father to buy warm clothing, underwear, and boots and to pay for them in the spring when he received payment for the logs.

The sawmill was owned by a man named George Kelly, a very wealthy man by the standards of that time who lived in a beautiful home in



The Feringa’s log cabin and barn that was built entirely with boards sawn and beams hewn from trees on the farm. Feringa was proud of the big barn that replaced the original log barn. Image courtesy of Paula Vander Hoven.



The log cabin, too, was replaced by a frame house that Sepke planned herself; also built with the farm’s own lumber. Image courtesy of Paula Vander Hoven.

Cadillac. He drove the eleven miles to Lucas by horse and cutter and had his office in one part of the sawmill. My father soon became acquainted with him. Mr. Kelly also took to him and called him Louie. One cold day he said, "Louie, why don't you wear an overcoat? You'll get sick." My father told him he didn't have an overcoat. He said, "Go into my office. There is an overcoat hanging there. It's yours." So that night he came home with an overcoat. Mother was amazed. "Where did you get that?" "Mr. Kelly gave it to me." He wore it several years, but he always called it Kelly's overcoat. He was thankful to have it, and I think a little proud too that Mr. Kelly would think of him.

I remember well how much my father thought of his horses.⁷ When he came home at night, no matter how cold it was, he would never come in the house before he had tended to his horses. Mother would have a kettle of water boiling on the stove and when he arrived she would quickly stir up a hot mash for the horses. Father would bring the horses into the barn, give them their hot mash, and then come in for a cup of coffee. Mother always put a teaspoon of liniment in his coffee. That was supposed to warm up his insides. After this the chores had to be done.

Our big problem was that there was no water. In the winter my mother melted snow for household use. There were a few farmers who already had windmills, and father would stop there sometimes to water the horses. There also was a spring about three miles from our place, and Father would put two or three barrels on the sleigh and fill them at the spring for the cows and for our drinking water. This all had to be done after his day's work. He must have often been very tired, but he always had time for his family. The water problem was not too bad during spring and summer;

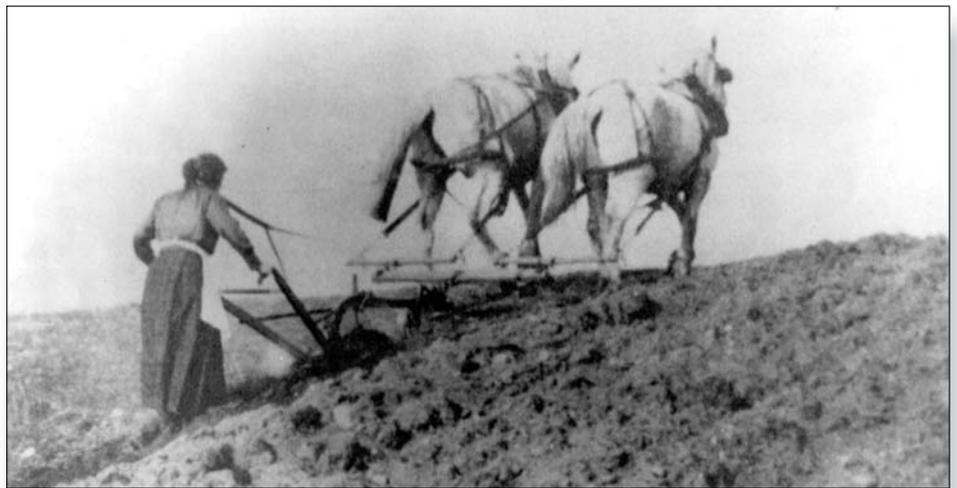
at some point we had a cistern by the house and had troughs around the roof so the rainwater would run into the cistern. But often there was not enough for the cows. Minnie and I would drive the cows to a pond about a mile to the east and let them drink there. When we were a little older we also did this in the wintertime. Then the pond was frozen over and Minnie would carry a hatchet and chop a hole in the ice so the cows could drink.

There were no modern conveniences at all, and everything had to be done the hard way. The laundry was all done by hand on a washboard. In the winter we had to melt snow in order to get water for the washing. And in the summer we carried it by pail once we had a cistern to catch rainwater.

There were no cream separators, and the milk was put in stone bowls and carried into the cellar. The next day the cream was skimmed off; the skimmed milk—to be fed to the calves—went back into the bowls. The cream was churned into butter, which was a big job; sometimes we had to turn that old churn by the hour before we had good butter. But then we also had delicious fresh buttermilk to drink. As time went on,

things did get a little better for us. Mother got a washing machine; it had to be turned by hand but it was easier than rubbing on the washboard. When Minnie was twelve years old, we got a Singer sewing machine, and from then on she did all the family sewing. And one year we got a windmill. Was that ever a big step forward! Our well was over 200 feet deep and the windmill brought the best tasting water you could get right into the house. We had a tank in the kitchen and what a joy it was to sit by that tank and see the water come bubbling up like a fountain.

We didn't have any toys, but we didn't miss them either. There was a broomstick factory in Lucas in connection with the sawmill. There were always lots of short pieces. Father would take a bundle of these sticks home; they were free. We would tie some pieces of cloth (old or new, made no difference) around them and then we had dolls and would play school. There were lots of tree stumps around the house, in the summer Father would just lay a big board across a stump and we had a teeter totter. He would tie a rope in a nearby tree and we had a swing. Our nearest neighbors were the Abe Lucas family.



Sepke plowing near Highland, Michigan. In the Netherlands it would not have been acceptable for a woman to work the land. The "new land" held no such restrictions. Image courtesy of Heritage Hall, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

They were a large family, and the oldest boys often helped my father. The younger ones were our age and would come over to play. So we had much fun with very little.

The first years in Lucas were very difficult, but my folks were happy. There was a nice group of people, and they helped each other, and then of course there was the church—which was all and all to them. It was a new church. The congregation spread out over many miles. The original church was built just outside the village of Lucas, but as more people came, they settled farther out in Highland and McBain. Soon there was a little log church about three miles south of Lucas and also one in McBain. They held reading services, and the minister would alternate from one place to the other. Catechism classes were conducted in the three meeting places. Just before we arrived, they built a new church and parsonage.

Services in the Lucas Christian Reformed Church lasted two hours. All would stand talking to one another until the minister and the consistory came in. Then we took our seats and the minister gave the salutation. One of the elders came forward and would stand behind a little desk in front of the congregation and announce the first psalm, read the law or Apostles' Creed, read the Scripture lesson, and announce another psalm. Then he took his seat with the elders and the minister began with the pastoral prayer. The offering would be taken while we sang the second stanza of one of the psalms.

There was no budget system in those days. At the annual congregational meeting, a sheet of paper was passed around and each man would put down his name with the amount he could give. Some would also donate wood. This was collected quarterly by the deacons going from house to house. And so that the



The remains of the original log Christian Reformed Church in Lucas. Image courtesy of Heritage Hall, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

people would be prepared for this, the Sunday before the elder would rise and with a loud voice announce, “This week the deacons will gather in the minister’s salary.”

Many would find themselves without “church pennies” on Sunday morning, but the deacons were prepared. They sat on a side pew next to the pulpit and on the pew in front of them they had two metal boxes with the previous collections. During the first singing, mothers would send one of their children to the deacons with a dime or a quarter and the deacons would exchange it for pennies. There was a regular parade of kids up and down the aisle. The offering was

taken up by the deacons who went up and down the aisle with a velvet bag attached to a long pole.

The women and children sat in the center of the church, the men on either side of the aisle and the young boys would sit in the last two pews behind the women. They would often cause a disturbance, so that the minister would pause and look at them. On rare occasions he might mention their names. Many went to sleep during the long service, especially in the summertime when it was hot. As we walked out of church, the congregation would sing the Dutch version of Psalm 133:3 instead of an organ postlude.



The log church was replaced by this simple frame church building. Image courtesy of Heritage Hall, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

A few things changed when Rev. Ralph Bolt came in 1906. First, the announcement, “After today there will be no money exchange made by the deacons.” Before, when the minister ended the sermon with an “Amen” and announced a closing song, some men would walk out to hitch up their teams to a buggy, or wagon, so they would be ready when the women came out. Rev. Bolt announced that the benediction was for the entire congregation and all were asked to stay until the end. He also asked the families to sit together. He also decided he did not need an elder to start the service so he led the whole service himself. Rev. Bolt was a very wise and tactful man, and everybody loved him. His pastorate was a very blessed one. He loved children and young people. There was a great change in the attitude of the young people: many came to make confession of faith, the boys no longer congregated in the back, and things were more orderly.

One year we had a killing frost in the middle of August, and the corn and potato crops were almost a total loss. There was gloom and almost despair in the congregation. Thanksgiving Day came, but what was there to be thankful for? Our minister chose for his text the verses of Habakkuk 3:17-19, “Even though the fig tree shall not flourish, yet I will rejoice in Jehovah. I will joy in the God of my salvation. Jehovah the Lord is my strength.” And we could go home and eat our chicken dinner knowing that God was still good and would care for His people.

In the summertime, when it was hot and many people walked and others came several miles by horse and buggy or wagon, they all wanted a drink. The church janitor brought water from the parsonage and put a pail with a dipper by each back door. In the winter people came by sleigh,



Cornelia and her older sister Minnie (on the right). Image courtesy of Paula Vander Hoven.

some from three or four miles away. Then everyone gathered around the stove in the back of the church to warm up before the service.

Many people brought lunch along to church and would stay between the morning and the afternoon services. There was one finished room in the basement for catechism and Young People’s Society, and here these people would spend the time. While they ate their lunches, one of the women would make coffee which she served for a penny a cup. Coffee was cheap; Arbuckle’s coffee was twelve cents a pound. As we lived near the church, my mother would sometimes ask someone if they would like to come and have dinner with us. Of course this was a lot better than sitting in the basement with a piece of bread, and soon we always had uninvited company for Sunday dinner. There might be two or three or four or five. We never knew how many, but we always planned on some extra guests. I had to grind the coffee on Saturday. This was

a job I hated, so I would ask my mother if I had ground enough. She would almost always say, “You better grind a little more.” We also had to peel a huge pan full of potatoes because, as Mother would say, “You never know how many are coming.” The meal usually consisted of potatoes, fried pork, a vegetable from our garden—cabbage or carrots—and rice for dessert, once in a while prunes.

Christmas was a wonderful day in that little church. There was a program, and we children all learned a recitation. After the program, we went to the basement. There were tables made of rough boards on sawhorses and benches made of rough boards on blocks of wood. Farmers donated milk, and the minister’s wife made chocolate milk in her wash boiler. The mothers all brought cake, and what a feast it was! All the children got a sack of netting filled with candy, peanuts, and an orange. The orange was very special. I am sure we kids had never eaten an orange, or even seen one, until that first Christmas.

For us, school was one room with maybe forty children from age five and up. My younger sister Bertha and I went to school quite regularly, but Minnie had to sometimes stay home because Mother was often sick and needed her help.

Inside the school were low benches and desks for the little ones along one side, and on the other side were larger seats for the older children; all were double seats so we sat two by two. We carried a lunch in a tobacco or syrup pail, just a piece of bread with some butter and sugar, sometimes a cookie. In the wintertime our lunch was often frozen since we had to leave it in the cloakroom where there was no heat. There was a stove in the middle of the classroom and sometimes, on extremely cold days, the teacher would allow us to set our pails around the stove. There were

no laws about school attendance, and most children came very irregularly, so no one ever graduated, and older boys and girls would come only in the winter months. I remember boys up to twenty and twenty-one coming for a few months in the winter.

Water came from a nearby farmer, and we all were eager to help with this task. The teacher would give the job to the best behaved kids and those who had finished their work. We always went by twos to carry the big bucket together. Some of it spilled on the way back. There was a big dipper, and all the kids drank from the same dipper. The pail was soon empty.

Our house was roughly half way on the route that people walked to Cadillac in those days. They would stop at our house to rest for a while and, of course, always got a cup of coffee. So, on the way home they would stop in again. I don't believe there were any people in the whole area south and east of us who were not in our house at one time or another. But my folks were very hospitable, and they loved it. We all helped each other, and we had many true friends. This spirit of helping each other was common, and my folks, even though they were poor themselves, always helped newcomers, maybe with a piece of meat if they had butchered, or some groceries, or even a few chickens, but *always* something.

I'll never forget a day at the fair. Our neighbor was taking his children to the fair in Lake City, and my sisters and I were invited to go along. Our folks were always glad if we could have something special, so we were allowed to go, but it depended on the weather. In case of rain the plans were off, as we had to travel at least fifteen miles one way in an open wagon. Well, I prayed fervently that it would not rain, and it didn't. After we were washed and our long hair combed and in beautiful braids and our Sunday dresses and hats on, we were all set to go. Then, to our great surprise, Mother gave us each fifteen cents. Minnie had a coin purse or "pocket-book" as it was called. Of course there were no handbags, but every woman and girl had a pocket sewn into the side seam of her dress for a hanky and pocketbook. So Minnie, being the oldest, had charge of our spending money. When we arrived at the fairgrounds we were simply bewildered at all the noise and all the colorful booths and everybody shouting at the top of their lungs. "This way ladies and gentlemen, see the heaviest man, see the strongest man, see this, and see that." We just didn't know what to make of it, but we stuck close together and walked around. There was so much to buy too. Booths just filled with everything that caught

the eye. There was the merry-go-round with a music box in the center with, to us, all kinds of weird music, horses, and other animals on which kids were riding—all for five cents a ride. That we surely wanted to do, but we were really afraid to sit on top of a horse or other animal so we let it go by several times just watching. Finally, when it stopped once again we got up enough nerve to get on. We had seen kids walking around eating ice-cream cones. That was something else new to us. We had never tasted ice cream, but that also was to be had for five cents, so we bought an ice-cream cone. When we ate the top off we didn't know whether we could eat the cone but we saw others eating the cone, so we did too. Then we topped it off with a box of Cracker Jacks. Our money was gone, and we still had time left, so we just walked around stopping in front of booths to watch what was going on. Finally, we were back by the merry-go-round but had no more money. We just stood there watching it all when a kindly elderly man asked me if I would like a ride. I said, "Yes, but my money is all gone." So he dug in his pocket and gave me a nickel. Then I got real brave and told him that my sisters would like a ride too. So they both got a nickel, and we could all have one more ride. When we got home that night we just couldn't get talked out about the events of the day. And we certainly did not forget to tell about the old man who was so kind to us.

I also remember very vividly when the first theater opened in Cadillac. Mr. Kelly donated it to the city. One of our neighbors had been in it and told Father all about this wonderful thing. "You just must see it!" So the next time we were in Cadillac, my father and I went in that theater. It was a comedy they were showing. There was no voice but the words were shown on the screen, and it



The school that the Feringa sisters attended, although Minnie, the oldest, often stayed home to help her mother. Image courtesy of Heritage Hall, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

was all very amazing to us. When we got home, we had to tell Mother all about it. She was amazed, too, at such wonderful inventions. But maybe the next week, at least very soon afterwards, there appeared an article in *De Wachter*, our Dutch paper, calling it a den of wickedness and warning people to keep their children from such worldly things. Mother read that and oh, what a disgrace had befallen our family! And my father an elder too yet! And we were strictly forbidden to talk about it or tell anybody that he and I had been in that theater. I don't believe it bothered my father too much; he didn't seem to feel great remorse that he had been inside that wicked place.

Halley's comet passing in 1910 was something. The whole community was talking about it; some were on the verge of hysteria. Mother made us get out of bed one night when it was especially bright. I don't remember much of the comet but the tail was terrific, a long, long fan-like tail, sort of narrow at the top and spreading out to a terrific width. It was so plain that night it looked as if it was almost overhead. It was visible for several nights.

But I was more impressed with the aurora borealis I witnessed one night. Minnie and I had gone out to the woods to bring the cows home. There it was, such an awe-inspiring sight as I have never seen again—brilliant colors, green, blue, crimson, purple, orange—zigzagging, flashing through the sky. And I, who was always impulsive, said, "It's the end of the world! Let's run home!" Amidst such glory, I expected Jesus to appear at any moment. But, when we got home, there was Mother, standing in the front yard with Bertha, beholding it in awesome wonder. "Is it the end of the world, Ma?" I said. She calmly said, "Why no, child. That's the northern lights;

isn't it beautiful?" Well, with Mother so calm, we were not afraid anymore either. We stood there watching it with her until it faded out.

This story is mostly in memory of our dear parents, simple God-fearing folk. They had come to America with high hopes of material welfare and gain. But God had much richer gifts in store for them. I am often amazed that though they knew next to nothing about spiritual matters when they arrived, in so short a time were so well-versed in Scripture and in the doctrines of the church. Mother was a woman of genuine faith, too, and was always ready to testify of the wonderful providence of God in their lives. Almost from the time of his conversion, my father was active in Kingdom work. Father pledged \$20 for the new Calvin College to be built in Grand Rapids. My mother felt this was a little more than they could afford and that they would never have any benefit from this because their children would not go there. He said, "If not our children, then maybe our grandchildren." Forty-one of their descendants have now attended Calvin College.⁸ Already in LeRoy my father led that little group in worship services. In Lucas he was always in the consistory—first as deacon and many, many years as elder. He also was the first Sunday school teacher there, and with his tact and love for children was the right person for the job. I can still see him standing in front of that big class of boys and girls of all ages, telling the Bible lessons and asking questions with never any problem of discipline. How he loved to sing, "How shall the young direct their way?" from Psalm 119, or Psalm 25, "Who is he that fears Jehovah, walking in His way?" from Psalm 16. This was a source of great joy to him. ❧

Endnotes

1. This article is extracted from a letter written by Cornelia Feringa Vanderhoven to her granddaughter Paula Vander Hoven in about 1972. This edited version was prepared by Paula Vander Hoven and her granddaughter Rosa Pedriana.

2. Also spelled Feeringa.

3. In the Netherlands, married women continued to use their original surnames. Her name was Kornelia Hindriks Haan, the daughter of Hindrik Jans Haan and Eelje Jans Cleveringa.

4. When the family registered to emigrate, they indicated that their destination was Chicago but must have changed to Grand Rapids, Michigan, at some point. See: Alle Groningers at http://www.allegroningers.nl/personen/q/persoon_achternaam_t_0/feeringa/q/persoon_voornaam_t_0/louwe/q/persoon_rol_s_0/0/q/persoon_rol_s_1/0?sort=datum_i&direction=asc. editor.

5. In the Vander Hoven family this story is called "Louwe's Encounter with the Angel."

6. The Perch Lake Christian Reformed Church existed 1896-1899. For more on this congregation see Paula Vander Hoven, et al., "The Short-Lived Perch Lake Christian Reformed Church," *Origins* (number 2, 2005), 26-31; available at http://www.calvin.edu/hh/origins/Fall05_23_2.pdf.

7. Louwe Feringa had several teams of horses over the years. They were always called "Rock" and "Prince."

8. As of 2014.

“It will always be my honor, to say that I am an orphan from Neerbosch”¹

The emigration of one hundred orphans to the United States 1886–1903

Anton van Renssen

Between 1886 and 1903 more than one hundred Dutch emigrants from the orphanage of Neerbosch in the Netherlands emigrated to the United States. Their way was paved by Johannes van ‘t Lindenhout (1836-1918), an evangelist who founded the orphanage and was its first director; he had been invited by Dutch-American friends to visit the US in 1886. The orphans who emigrated during the decades following 1886, mainly to the Midwest, had



Johannes van ‘t Lindenhout (1836-1918). Image provided by the author.

names like Bazuin, Van der Horst, De Jong, Roorda, and De Ruiter.

Jan, or Johannes, as he later called himself, van ‘t Lindenhout was a farmer’s son from Beuningen, a village near Nijmegen, in the province

of Gelderland. His father had hoped his oldest son would take over the farm. But after converting to orthodox Protestantism when he was eighteen, Johannes chose to become an evangelist instead. As an itinerant missionary and Bible-seller in the Netherlands, he met orphans being exploited by farmers. He also met Seceder (*Afgescheiden*) minister Huibert Jacobus Budding (1810-1870), living in Goes, Zeeland. In Budding’s congregation, he became acquainted with new friends in Seceder communities, including baker Johannes (John) Otte, who had moved from Goes to Middelburg in 1857, and after that to Vlissingen, until emigrating to the United States in 1867.² And through Budding, van ‘t Lindenhout became aware of German-British minister George Muller, who cared for thousands of orphans in Bristol, England.

Encouraged by friends, van ‘t Lindenhout opened an orphanage in the center of Nijmegen in 1863. The orphanage was in a former inn with nineteen rooms. Within three years it became too small, and van ‘t Lindenhout then led the effort to build a larger orphanage in the polders near the village of Neerbosch, about an hour’s walk west of Nijmegen. This was the beginning of an orphans’ village that would grow to cover fifty acres of land. At its peak in 1892,

Anton van Renssen is from the Netherlands and has a PhD from the Vrije Universiteit (Free University) of Amsterdam. He is a journalist and public historian and began *Historytelling* in 2015 and currently serves as the president of the Nederlandse Vereniging van Historische Onderzoeksbureaus (Dutch Association of Historical Research Companies).

An early drawing of the facility at Neerbosch to serve orphans. The village was located on the canal that linked the Maas and Wall rivers. Image courtesy of Heritage Hall, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan.



there were about 1,100 people, of whom 1,062 were orphans, living in Neerbosch. By then it had become the largest residential institution for children in the Netherlands. Almost all of its buildings were built by orphan boys themselves, learning trades like carpentry and bricklaying through the experiences. Other trades taught at Neerbosch were tailoring, wooden shoe making, farming, gardening, and, at the printing company of the orphanage, printing, book compositing, and binding. Because they also received schooling at the orphanage, van 't Lindenhout managed to find work for most of his boys.

Finding jobs for the orphans became harder in the years after 1880 as the Netherlands went through an economic crisis. At the same time, the number of requests for orphans to be adopted overseas increased. As a result, van 't Lindenhout decided to accept an invitation from Johannes Otte to visit the United States, wanting to meet the American supporters (*weezenvrienden*—orphans friends) who long had donated money to his orphanage, according his 1888 autobiography.³

During the six-week trip he not only thanked his supporters but also raised funds for the construction of



Among the vocational trades taught at Weezeninrichting Neerbosch was furniture making. Image courtesy of Heritage Hall, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

additional housing at Neerbosch and investigated whether there was work for his boys in the United States. He met many emigrated acquaintances from Seceder churches all over the Netherlands, especially from Zeeland.⁴ The first community he visited was in Paterson, New Jersey. There he met Rev. Helenus E. Nies, who arranged two meetings in a local Reformed church. The same happened in Albany, New York, where he stayed with a Mr. Donner.⁵ In Grand Rapids he stayed with Johannes Otte and met old acquaintances from Budding's congregation.⁶ Through his Seceder friends, he had good ties to emigrant communities in the United States and the southern part of Canada. He spoke to large groups of Dutch-Americans, telling them about his orphanage.

The news of van 't Lindenhout's journey soon spread through the communities of Dutch immigrants in the Midwest. In 1886 Dutch-American newspapers reported on his travels and lectures about Neerbosch. "Speeches by Mr. van 't Lindenhout and what a friend says," was a headline in the 5 August 1886 *Volksvriend*, a weekly newspaper for Dutch immigrants published in Sioux County, Iowa, founded by Henry Hospers, who became acquainted with van 't Lindenhout during this trip. The widely-read church magazine *Hope* and the weekly *Grondwet* wrote about van 't Lindenhout's speeches and his work at the orphanage.⁸

The trip to the US was a success. He gave thirty-eight speeches for "smaller and larger meetings, sometimes for more than 2,000 people" and collected 5,000 guilders for his orphanage (\$67,000 in 2016 purchasing power).⁹ The trip to America also provided financial support for the orphanage when van 't Lindenhout's published travel experiences became a bestseller.¹⁰ Almost seven hundred

copies were ordered by the Grand Rapids-based Dutch-American bookseller Derk Jan Doornink in January 1887, whom van 't Lindenhout had met during the trip.¹¹

On this trip, van 't Lindenhout was accompanied by Johannes Otte's twenty-five-year-old son John, born



John Abraham Otte (1861-1910) who supported van 't Lindenhout during the investigation of the 1890s. Otte was a medical missionary in China and died a few days after treating a patient with pneumonic plague, after demonstrating symptoms of having contracted the illness. From an image in the Hope College Archives provided by the author.

Johannes Abraham. The younger Otte had just graduated as a medical doctor from the University of Michigan, and after the tour he traveled with van 't Lindenhout to the Netherlands. He attended lectures at the medical faculties of the universities of Amsterdam and Utrecht and worked at the hospital of the Neerbosch orphanage.¹²

Emigration to America

After returning, van 't Lindenhout first tried to raise funds to buy a couple of acres of land near Pipestone, Minnesota (van 't Lindenhout thought the town was in Iowa). One way he tried to raise money was by offering packages in *De Standaard*¹³



Children in the courtyard at Neerbosch, which also served as the children's outdoor play area. From a photograph by Wilhelm Ivens provided by the author.

with books from the publishing house of the orphanage. Although the Minnesota plan failed to develop, the effort opened opportunities for many orphans, mainly boys, to find work in the United States.

Between 1887 and 1903 more than a hundred orphans went to America, mainly to the Midwest, thanks to their training in various trades, particularly in carpentry and agriculture. The first left Neerbosch at the end of September 1886. Within three months, Johannes Albertus Bazuin, Hendrik Willem de Ruiter, Arie van Staveren, and Anne Gerrit Wagenaar left, followed soon after by Steven Evert Kluvers and Emile Remges. Thanks to the connections van 't Lindenhout had established with the close-knit Dutch-American Protestant communities, the young immigrants settled in places like Paterson, New Jersey; Holland, Vriesland, Overisel, and Grand Rapids, Michigan; Chicago; and Orange City and Pella, Iowa.¹⁴

In the decades that followed, the Neerbosch emigrants kept in touch with van 't Lindenhout. Letters were published in *Het Oosten*, the weekly magazine of the orphanage. Gerrit

Dutler, who had come from Windesheim near Zwolle and had gone to Grand Rapids in August 1888, wrote, "Here people are still talking about your journey, and the newspapers write continually about Neerbosch."¹⁵ All the while van 't Lindenhout continued to receive support from the Dutch-American emigrant communities: "Friends in America continue to support us in getting jobs. We are really grateful for it. Especially our heartfelt thanks for the help for our orphans, who went to America, to Mr. Henry Hospers at Orange City and Mr. John Otte at Grand Rapids."¹⁶ Even children in the Dutch-American communities collected money for the orphanage, like the two young Kriekard cousins in Grand Rapids.¹⁷

In addition to the religious affinity, a further possible explanation for the continued interest in Neerbosch is that Dutch emigrants had relatives in the orphanage. The editor of *De Volksvriend* in 1886 reports this after reading the lists of orphans learning a trade at Neerbosch in the yearly *Neerbosch Almanak*, distributed in the United States by Doornink: "It is noticeable that very many names of the

orphans learning a trade are found in our colony. In its list we read the names of: Peters, Schut, Van den Berg, Blom, Van Rooijen, Veldhuizen, Van Olst, Ter Braak, Roozeboom, De Zeeuw, Van Donselaar, Van Dijk, Van der Sluis, De Jong, Den Hartog, Van Tricht, Van Wijk, Van den Bosch, Van der Ploeg, Kooiman etc. Perhaps research would show that this similarity of names implies to family relations.”¹⁸

The first three emigrants from Neerbosch had not gone to America; instead they went to South Africa; but two of the three returned. Bart Scholten, for example, left Neerbosch in 1880 as a mason, emigrated in 1884 as a carpenter to South Africa, but returned to the Netherlands in 1886 and left

for America in 1887.¹⁹ After returning from South Africa, Scholten had married Ida Schwartz, who had been born in Germany and had lived with her parents in Rotterdam, but also lived in Neerbosch after her parents died. The Scholtens

moved to Orange City, where Scholten, trained as a mason, became a painter and decorator and caretaker at the elementary school in Orange City for twenty-four years as well as city appraiser for eight years.²⁰ The second, Petronella van der Wal, after a brief stay in South Africa, married Steven Kluvers in 1888 in America. Their experiences convinced van ‘t Lindenhout that North America was the better destination for the orphans.

His optimism was strengthened by



The cover of the 1888 almanac published by Weezeninrichting Neerbosch to promote its works and generate financial support. Image courtesy of Heritage Hall, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan.



The base of the 1888 tear-off calendar produced by Weezeninrichting Neerbosch. Image courtesy of Heritage Hall, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

the positive letters he received from his former pupils in 1887 and 1888. In 1887 he reported that those working in shops and factories earned five to seven guilders per week more than room and board, and that the food was better than in Europe.²¹ In 1888 he recalled meeting Dutch masons in Chicago whose workers earned ten guilders a day.²² These were



Image courtesy of Heritage Hall, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

wages about which the average Dutch worker could only dream. Those who did emigrate usually were able to repay the money received from Neerbosch to pay for passage. But van ‘t Lindenhout did observe that work in the United States was much

harder than what was common in the Netherlands.²³

Former orphan Hendrik de Ruiter heartily thanked van 't Lindenhout for the opportunities offered to him. "Your Honor,"²⁴ began his letter to van 't Lindenhout and wife in the spring of 1887, "I cannot thank you enough for sending us here, and for the good upbringing received from Your Honor and Mrs. It will always be an honor for me, to say that I am an orphan from Neerbosch."²⁵ Likewise bookbinder Christiaan Brocke wrote after arriving in America, "I cannot thank Your Honor enough you opened that way for me and with God I now see that the future is not as dark and I hope in Him to do the work that is given to me."²⁶

Upon arrival in Castle Garden in 1887, the entrance to America for European emigrants, the boys were met by J. W. Warnshuis, pastor of the Passaic First Reformed congregation, according to Brocke. Warnshuis saw some of them to the station for the three-day train trip to Orange City, where they were met by Henry Hospers. The next day Brocke was working for a farmer.²⁷ Those traveling to Grand Rapids were met by Otte's father. In February 1887, the senior Otte wrote to van 't Lindenhout, "Well! We can and must thank the Lord, not only for a safe arrival, but above all, that I can report to you that they are already all set."²⁸ The emigrants had to be flexible because jobs were not always available in the trade they had learned in Neerbosch. Bart Scholten worked as a painter and decorator instead of a mason, and Gerrit Dutler worked in a factory rather than in carpentry.²⁹

In the years that followed, dozens of orphans left for the States. In 1894, ninety-seven of them were spread across America, with thirty-eight in Grand Rapids.³⁰ Not all crossed the Atlantic immediately after they



An aerial view of the Neerbosch complex in the 1950s, when that operation had grown to its largest extent. Image courtesy of Heritage Hall, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

had completed their training at Neerbosch. As noted, two had first gone to South Africa. Others worked in Europe for some years before leaving, like Pieter Donselaar, who moved to Brussels in January 1886 and emigrated to the US in 1894. Such intermediate stops prevent the tracking of all the emigrants from the orphanage in its archives, or the archives of Nijmegen.

The flow of emigrants from the Netherlands to America decreased after 1893 as the Dutch economy grew, while the US economy began a seven-year downturn that would become second only to the Great Depression in economic severity.³¹ Between 1895 and 1903, the year van 't Lindenhout retired as director of the orphanage, the Neerbosch archives record the names of only seven emigrants. Consequently at least 105 orphans can be confirmed as emigrating to the US between 1886 and 1903. The Dutch-American communities and the emigrants themselves kept one another informed about each other's lives. Gerrit Dutler in Grand Rapids told van 't Lindenhout that he had heard from Hospers's daughter that al-

most all of those who went to Orange City had become farmers, including Cornelis (sic) Brocke.³²

The practical training in the trades at the orphanage contributed to the potential for success after emigrating. Van 't Lindenhout had noted in 1886 that masons, carpenters, copper-smiths, typesetters, and printers could find good jobs.³³ The skills of many young men fit well with the specialized needs that had emerged after the Civil War, such as construction, transport, furniture making, and horticulture. Moreover, skills in these areas paid well in America. Around 1900, the Dutch colonies counted many truck farms that produced for the growing city of Chicago.³⁴ Those from Neerbosch who had been taught farming and market gardening by Baas (boss, as instructors at Neerbosch were known) Geerdes and Baas Broekhuizen migrated to the Chicagoland area.³⁵

Once settled in America, others began their own companies—two had established their own printing businesses, one in Sioux Center and another in Chicago.³⁶ Hendrik Lodewijk van der Horst (later Vander Horst),



Children and staff in the courtyard in front of the Neerbosch chapel. Image courtesy of the author.

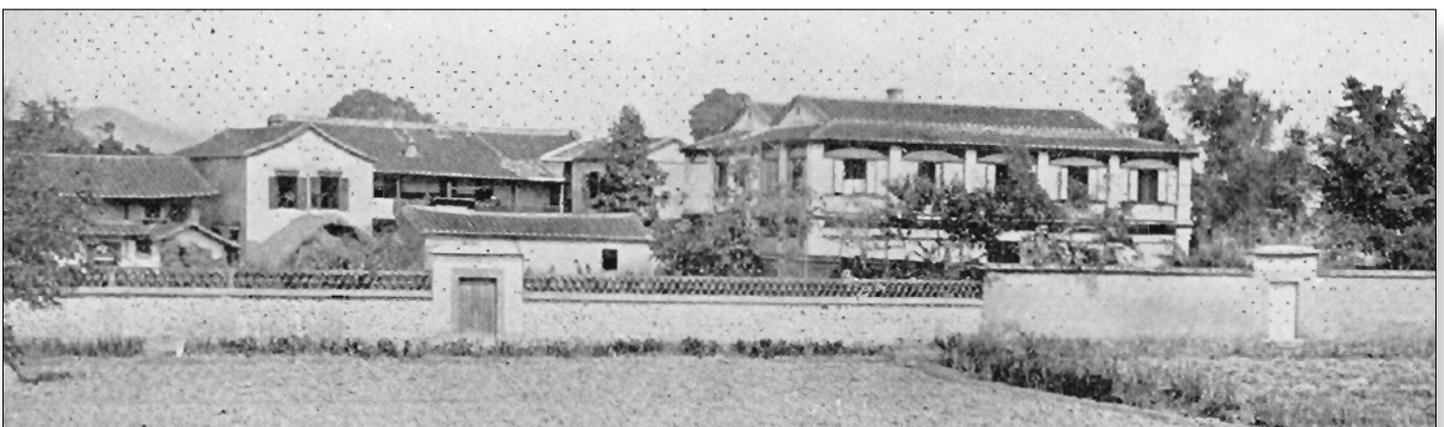
born in 1873 in Leiden, the son of a single mother, had entered Neerbosch in 1886 after his mother had died. In April 1891 the seventeen-year-old van der Horst emigrated and in 1898 founded a building contracting firm. His work contributed to the skyline of Kalamazoo by erecting the Kalamazoo National Bank Building, the State Theater, and the Marlborough Building at 471 W. South Street. Among his other projects were the Thomas Henry Simpson Memorial Institute for Medical Research and Clements Library at the University of Michigan

and a large hotel on South Main Street in Elkhart, Indiana. His 1923 home in Kalamazoo was used as a bed and breakfast until recently.³⁷

Neerbosch trainees continued to express their satisfaction in letters to van 't Lindenhout, which he published in *Het Oosten*. "From America we receive very good news from our orphan boys and some girls who went there. I have not received a letter in which one of them complained."³⁸ *Het Oosten* was a propaganda tool for the orphanage, so it is possible that those who had negative memories about

their upbringing at Neerbosch had not written to van 't Lindenhout. And if they did, he may not have published them in *Het Oosten*.

The connection between Neerbosch and Dutch-American emigrants also worked to benefit those in America. After van 't Lindenhout returned from his trip to America in 1886, he committed to collecting books in English for the libraries of two colleges.³⁹ In *Het Oosten* he made several requests for Dutch Christian literature, requests which resulted in two large boxes of books collected from around the country and shipped to Hope College in Holland, Michigan, and Northwestern College in Orange City, Iowa. Information about the Fatherland was more than welcomed by the immigrants as is also clear from the articles on the Netherlands and on Neerbosch published in several Dutch-language newspapers.⁴⁰ Van 't Lindenhout did not hesitate to help fill this need by selling publications about the orphanage. In 1889 *Het Oosten* was sent to subscribers in forty-seven cities in North America, mainly in the US. This subscriber list counts cities with large Dutch-American communities like Grand Rapids and Chicago, but also smaller ones like Sheldon, Iowa; East Williamson, New York; and Newkirk, Oklahoma.⁴¹ It is very likely that Neerbosch-illustrated magazines



The Neerbosch Hospital in China. From an image provided by the author from A. L. Warnshuis, *A Brief Sketch of the Life and Work of Dr. John A. Otte* (New York, Board of Missions RCA, 1911), 8.

like *De Vriend des Huizes* were among those sent abroad.⁴² We know that *Weezen-Almanak* (Orphans' Almanac) was for sale at Doornink's bookshop in Grand Rapids.⁴³

Van 't Lindenhout also sought Dutch support for the work of John Otte, who became a medical missionary in China, cooperation which strengthened the bond between Neerbosch and the emigrant communities. In his letters to van 't Lindenhout, Otte wrote about his experiences in China. Van 't Lindenhout quoted the letters in *Het Oosten*. Other publications from the orphanage raised funds for Otte's work in China. In 1891 alone, \$852 was donated for the work in China.⁴⁴ Otte responded by naming the mission hospital after the orphanage.⁴⁵

Although he was excited about the future opportunities the US offered, van 't Lindenhout could be critical of America, especially of its ecclesiastical developments. He criticized the frequency with which new denominations were established. He had always remained a member of the Hervormde Kerk in the Netherlands, in spite of the many contacts in many Seceder denominations. He was enthusiastic about the work and writings of American evangelicals Charles Finney and Dwight Moody from the Second and Third Great Awakening. But in America, according to van 't Lindenhout, too many new churches began because of "very small differences of opinion about holy truth of Scripture."⁴⁶ The risk of so many small churches in America, according to van 't Lindenhout, was the diminution of the total impact of missionary effort.⁴⁷

Meanwhile, van 't Lindenhout hoped for an influential man like Dwight Moody to call for the founding of nursing homes and other institutions of mercy in towns like Chicago or Grand Rapids, a development which would demonstrate

practical Christian philanthropy to immigrants from various European countries. He argued that the Protestant deaconess homes, and in some way the Neerbosch orphanage itself, were influenced by the Dutch *Reveil* (Awakening) that emerged after the 1820s.

Although van 't Lindenhout was critical about America on some points, he remained enthusiastic about the potential the nation provided for his students. The relationship between Neerbosch and the Dutch-American communities in the Midwest continued long after he retired as director in 1903. Emigration from the orphanage continued. Now and then former orphans visited Neerbosch. In the first week of July 1909, Orange City-based printer Pieter van Donselaar and his wife, both reared at Neerbosch, paid a visit to their former home.⁴⁸ Two weeks later, Jan Bazuin, one of the first orphans to emigrate in 1887, came by with two of his sons.⁴⁹ Even after WW II there were still warm contacts. On 10 January 1946 the board of the orphanage received a message from Williard C. Wichers, director of the Netherlands Museum in Holland, Michigan, via the *Stichting Nederlands Volksherstel* (Foundation of Dutch National Restoration), that the Netherlands War Service Com-

mittee of the Christian Reformed Churches of America wished to adopt the institution.⁵⁰

The level of appreciation for the Neerbosch orphanage by its former students is evident in the involvement of some of them during the so-called "Neerbosch Matter" of 1893 and 1894, when the orphanage and its founder came under intense criticism following the publication of a pamphlet describing life in Neerbosch in very negative terms. The authors were former sea captain Gerard van Deth and teacher Amos Johannes van Houten. Van Deth had placed two children in Neerbosch after his wife died, but they were mistreated. Van Houten became teacher at the primary school at the orphanage in the spring of 1892, but was dismissed nine months later when his work was unsatisfactory. In their pamphlet both authors questioned van 't Lindenhout's intentions and competence. Van Deth accused him of sexual abuse of orphan girls and self-enrichment, while Van Houten criticized, among other things, the unsanitary conditions in the orphanage.

Emigrated orphans learned of these developments in the pamphlet from *Het Oosten*, as did John Otte in China. Both emigrants and Otte sent letters in support of van 't Lindenhout.



Of the original complex, only the chapel remains. It is now a museum dedicated to telling the story of assistance provided to children. Image from <http://www.kinderdorpneerbosch.nl>.

Eleven former orphans sent a letter to the Commission of Inquiry that invested the accusations:⁵¹

“We, undersigned, former residents of the Neerbosch orphanage, Netherlands, having heard about a pamphlet against this institution by Mr. van Deth and Mr. Van Houten arguing that Mr. van ‘t Lindenhout sent us to America, being afraid that we would debunk him in the Netherlands, hereby declare that this is nothing but vile calumny.

1st We not only have nothing to debunk, but declare that we esteem Mr. van ‘t Lindenhout; holding him as one of the noblest and most beneficent people.

2nd We declare, that not the slightest pressure was been put on us to go to

America, but that we entirely of our own accord have come hither.

3rd We declare, that during our stay in the aforementioned institution there was never a lack of anything necessary, and even if we sometimes then, might have felt ourselves unsatisfied, now we recognize we had no reason to do so, but that we have enjoyed an excellent education there.

In witness whereof, we sign it with our names at this eighth of August 1893.

C. H. van der Meulen,
Sioux Center (Iowa)

A. J. Sneltsjes, Sioux Center (Iowa)

G. J. Meij, Sioux Center (Iowa)

C. E. Schwartz, Orange City (Iowa)

K. Wemmenhove,

Orange City (Iowa)

Mr. Schilt, Tréton (Iowa)

C. Elbers, Middleburg (Iowa)

J. G. Grooij, Orange City (Iowa)

F. Willemsen, Orange City (Iowa)

G. Nortier, Orange City (Iowa)

J. Loo, Orange City (Iowa)

One of the criticisms was the very high mortality rate in Neerbosch. The 9 February 1894 letter from Otte published in the *Algemeen Handelsblad*, a newspaper for the Dutch elite, described his experiences in Neerbosch from December 1886 to January 1887 as a medical student, working as an assistant to Neerbosch doctor Jan Johannes de Blécourt (1860-1925). This was during a measles epidemic in Neerbosch. Otte recalled that during his stay ten children died from measles; at least a third of these had been in Neerbosch less than a year and so had not had sufficient time to recover from their malnourishment in spite of the abundant and nutritious food at the orphanage.⁵² Otte concluded that the mortality rate in Neerbosch was not as high as some critics claimed.

Van ‘t Lindenhout was exonerated of all blame with the publication of the report by the Commission of Inquiry in 1894. The report demonstrates that Otte’s recollections were largely correct. Most of the children who died at Neerbosch had lived there less than three years and arrived ill or weak. Few of Van Deth’s charges were supported, and the former sea captain left for America in July 1894, to convince Dutch-Americans that his charges had merit. He spoke on 19 August and 23 September 1894 in Paterson, New Jersey.⁵³ After the latter gathering, Van Deth was denounced by an indignant listener,⁵⁴ who was charged and found guilty for the comments about Van Deth. A story in later years circulated at Neerbosch that, although found guilty, a US judge pronounced a symbolic fine of one cent.⁵⁵ Van Deth and his son and daughter

In zake Neerbosch.

Zaterdag 10 Febr. stonden voor de Rechtbank te Arnhem terecht: L. Sies 21 j. oud, opzichter in de Weesinrichting te Neerbosch, F. van Geelen, 21 j., C. de Bruin, 27 j., beiden nog onderwijzer aldaar, thans te Almkerk, allen ter zake van mishandeling.

De vier zaken werden afzonderlijk behandeld. L. Sies wordt beklaagd van in Mei 1892 een 9 jarigen knaap (Willem van Deth) te hebben mishandeld door hem met een stok op zijn achterste te slaan, terwijl vier andere jongens den knaap vasthielden.

De officier van justitie, Jbr. M. r. Nahuys, nam zelf het O. M. waar.

Elke zaak werd afzonderlijk behandeld. Bij het getuigenverhoor in de

eerste zaak bleek, dat Willem v. Deth tegen verbod over de kalkput geloopt en er ingevallen was, waardoor zijn nieuw pak was bedorven. Door de vier jongens vastgehouden omdat Van Deth zich zoozeer verweerde, dat Sies bang was hem op gevaarlijker plekken te slaan.

De officier, alvorens zijn requisitoir te nemen, sprak over de brochures van Van Deth, inzonderheid de laatste, omdat de feiten verjaard zijn, maar gebleken dat Van Deth zeer veel overdreven, zelfs onwaarheden meegeleed heeft. Hij wist bij de instructie niet alle namen te noemen van de initialen, die hij bezigt; van andere getuigen wil hij den naam niet noemen. Van het verhoor bij den Officier zelf geeft Van Deth in openbare lezing fantasieverhalen, zoo weinig betrouwbaar is hij.

Omtrent onzedelijke handelingen is niets waarschijnlijk gebleken, nog minder gestaafd.

Verdediger was Mr. Korthals Altec, uit Amsterdam.

Tegen den opzichter Leendert Sies werd wegens mishandeling van den 9-jarigen Willem van Deth, f 20 boete en subsidiair 7 dagen hechtenis geëischt. Dezelfde straf vorderde het O. M. tegen den onderwijzer Frans van Geelen, wegens mishandeling der 11jarige Marie van Deth.

De eisch tegen Cornelis de Bruin, onderwijzer, beschuldigd van mishandeling van Gerrit Leeuwenhoek, luidde 14 dagen gevangenisstraf, terwijl tegen Amos Joh. van Houten, onderwijzer, terzake van mishandeling van Heubergen, f 20 boete subs. 7 dagen hechtenis werd geëischt.

The 3 March 1893
(page 7) story in
De Volksvriend
about the
investigation
following the
criticism of the
Neerbosch by
Gerard van Deth
and Amos Johannes
van Houten.

eventually permanently settled in the US.

Emigration from Neerbosch continued. For instance, Jan Osterop, reared at Neerbosch, worked as a bookbinder and served in the Dutch Marine Corps and emigrated to America in 1956. Family ties continued to be important. Osterop left for America and lived with an uncle in Michigan; later Osterop moved to Indiana. Instead of bookbinding, he worked in factories, ending as a manager reorganizing a friend's business.⁵⁶

At the end of the twentieth century, the services provided at Neerbosch had been combined with or absorbed by other agencies, and the operations closed. During the institution's history, 20,000 children had been served. The site was sold in 2001 for redevelopment, and only the 1882 chapel remains, converted into a museum to tell the stories of the children who spent part of their childhood in what began as a nineteenth-century program of Christian charity. ☞

Endnotes

1. W. H. de Ruiter to "Zeer geachte mijnheer en mevrouw!" in J. van 't Lindenhout, "Kroniek der weesinrichting" *Het Oosten*, 2 May 1887. This article is partly based on my PhD thesis: *De protestants-christelijke weesinrichting Neerbosch en haar stichter Johannes van 't Lindenhout (1863-1903)* (Nijkerk, 2015), defended at the Free University of Amsterdam on 17 November 2015.
2. C. Dekker, *Gereformeerd en evangelisch. Ontstaan en geschiedenis van de Buddinggemeente te Goes en haar plaats in het Nederlandse Protestantisme in de periode 1839-1991* (Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1992), 369 n.117.
3. J. van 't Lindenhout, *Na vijf-entwintig Jaren*, third edition (Nijmegen: P. J. Milborn, 1888) 336.
4. Even though van 't Lindenhout knew and worked with many in Seceder congregations, he remained a member of Hervormde Kerk.
5. J. van 't Lindenhout, *Zes weken tusschen de wielen* (Nijmegen: P. J. Milborn, 1886), 50, 109.
6. *Ibid*, 144, 248-249; Dekker, *Gereformeerd en evangelisch*, 369, n. 117.
7. *Ibid*, 248; H. Krabbendam, *Vrijheid in het verschiet. Nederlandse emigratie naar Amerika 1840-1940* (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 2006), 19, 303-304.
8. Van 't Lindenhout, *Zes weken tusschen de wielen*, 277. "De komst van Johs. Van 't Lindenhout," in *De Volksvriend*, 5 August 1886; "Spreekbeurten van den heer Van 't Lindenhout en wat een vriend zegt," in *De Volksvriend*, 5 August 1886; *De Hope: Weekblad in het belang van maatschappij, staat en kerk*, 29 April 1886, 28 July 1886, 11 August 1886, 8 September 1886, and 20 October 1886.
9. J. van 't Lindenhout, "Verslag van de weesinrichting over 1886/1887," in *Weezen-Almanak voor het schrikkeljaar 1888* (Nijmegen, 1887), 57.
10. J. van 't Lindenhout, "Kroniek der weesinrichting," *Het Oosten*, 31 May 1893.
11. *Ibid*, 5 January 1887.
12. A.L. Warnshuis, *A Brief Sketch of the Life and Work of Dr. John A. Otte* (New York: Board of Foreign Missions, RCA, 1911), 8.
13. Advertisement in *De Standaard*, 18 November 1886. *De Standaard* was the daily newspaper of journalist and politician Abraham Kuyper.
14. Bijlage VI in *Verslag van de Commissie van Onderzoek in zake de Weesinrichting te Neerbosch* (Rotterdam: M. Wyt & Zonen, 1894) 197; Krabbendam, *Vrijheid in het verschiet*, 14, 16, 303.
15. G. Dutler to Zeer geachte vader Van 't Lindenhout *Het Oosten*, 29 August 1888.
16. J. van 't Lindenhout, "Kroniek der weesinrichting," *Het Oosten*, 13 June 1886.
17. *Ibid*, 5 January 1887.
18. "Johs. Van 't Lindenhout, IX Hoe men de weezen bezig houdt," in *De Volksvriend*, 22 July 1886.
19. "Naamlijst der weezen aanwezig in de weesinrichting te Neerbosch en Nijmegen benevens opgave hunner laatste woonplaats en datum van aankomst," *Het Oosten*, 29 November 1876; Jac. de Vries and K. Wessels, *Wording en Groei van de Weesinrichting Neerbosch 1867-1942* (Neerbosch, 194[9]) 40.
20. *De Volksvriend*, 4 March 1937.
21. J. van 't Lindenhout, "Verslag der weesinrichting over 1886/1887," in *Weezen-Almanak voor het schrikkeljaar 1888* (Nijmegen, 1887), 55.
22. J. van 't Lindenhout, *Na vijf-entwintig jaren*, 345.
23. *Ibid*.
24. "Your Honor," was a typical honorific greeting in nineteenth-century Dutch, comparable to the English "Esteemed Sir."
25. W. H. de Ruiter to Zeer geachte mijnheer en mevrouw!, in J. van 't Lindenhout, "Kroniek der weesinrichting," *Het Oosten*, 2 March 1887.
26. C. Brocke to Geachte mijnheer en mevrouw in J. van 't Lindenhout, "Kroniek der weesinrichting," *Het oosten*, 13 July 1887. Information about Christiaan Brocke in "Naamlijst der weezen," in *Bijvoegsel, behoorende bij Het Oosten*, 22 March 1882 and "Weezen, die een handwerk leeren," in *Weezen-Almanak voor het jaar 1894* (Nijmegen, 1893) 48.
27. C. Brocke to J. van 't Lindenhout in "Kroniek der weesinrichting," *Het Oosten*, 13 July 1887.
28. J. Otte en gade to Zeer geliefde broeder in onzen dierbaren Heiland, in J. van 't Lindenhout, "Kroniek der weesinrichting," *Het Oosten*, 2 March 1887.
29. J. Scholten en echtgenoot to Zeer waarde heer en mevrouw," *Het*

Oosten, 4 May 1887 and G. Dutler to J. van 't Lindenhout, in Van 't Lindenhout, "Kroniek van de weesinrichting," *Het Oosten*, 29 August 1888.

30. Harry J. Thomas, 'De Neerbosch Quaestie', *Twee brieven aan De Telegraaf van Paterson, N.J., over de Weesinrichting en het hierzijn van den heer G. Van Deth*, I, in *De Volksvriend*, 30 August 1894.

31. E. Koops, *De dynamiek van een emigratiecultuur. De emigratie van gereformeerden, hervormden en katholieken naar Noord-Amerika in vergelijkend perspectief (1947-1963)* (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 2010) 43.

32. G. Dutler to J. van 't Lindenhout, in Van 't Lindenhout, "Kroniek der weesinrichting," *Het Oosten*, 29 August 1888.

33. Van 't Lindenhout, *Na vijf-en-twintig jaren*, 345.

34. H. Krabbendam, *Vrijheid in het verschiep*, 93, 307.

35. J. van 't Lindenhout, "Verslag der weesinrichting over 1886/1887," in: *Weezen-Almanak voor het schrikkeljaar 1888* (Nijmegen, 1887), 64.

36. J. van 't Lindenhout, *Lichtstralen aan mijn levensavond* (Neerbosch," Weesinrichting Neerbosch, 1915), 176.

37. *Kalamazoo Gazette*, 24 May 1927 and 16 February 1940. Thanks to Wayne Loney, research volunteer in the Kalamazoo County Clerk's Office for providing data.

38. J. van 't Lindenhout, "Verslag der weesinrichting over 1888/1889," in *Weezen-Almanak voor het jaar 1890* (Nijmegen, 1889), 62.

39. J. van 't Lindenhout, "Kroniek der weesinrichting," *Het Oosten*, 19 January 1887.

40. A. Zwemer, "Op reis door Nederland. Van Zuid naar Noord VIII," in *De Volksvriend*, 19 April 1891.

41. 'Plaatsen waar abonnees op dit Blad worden gevonden," *Het Oosten*, 27 March 1889.

42. Krabbendam, *Vrijheid in het verschiep*, 236-237.

43. *De Hope*, 21 November 1882 and 4 December 1883.

44. *Ibid*, 18 March 1891.

45. See, among others: *Het Oosten*, 19 January 1887, 4 May 1887, 13 July 1887, and 31 May 1893.

46. J. van 't Lindenhout, "Eenige gedachten over Amerika en Amerikaansche toestanden. VIII. De Vrije kerk en de Volkskerk," in *Het Oosten*, 5 January 1887.

47. *Ibid*.

48. J. Schrijver, "Kroniek der Weesinrichting," in *Het Oosten*, 14 July 1909.

49. *Ibid*.

50. Archive Weesinrichting Neerbosch, Doos VA 3, map 1486, letter from the foundation to Weesinrichting Neerbosch, 10 January 1946.

51. Bijlage V, in *Verslag van de Commissie van Onderzoek in zake de Weesinrichting te Neerbosch*, 197.

52. *Algemeen Handelsblad*, evening edition, 9 February 1894.

53. *De Volksvriend*, 23 August 1894, 16 September 1894, *Neerlandia*, (October 1896), 3, and *De Volksvriend*, 18 October 1894.

54. *De Volksvriend*, 18 October 1894.

55. De Vries en Wessels, *Wording en groei*, 58.

56. Jan and Ruth Osterop, "Een brief uit Amerika," in: C.J. Stolk, J. Bakker, and J. Moerman, J. (eds.), *Neerbosch en . . . de (sic) 20.000 kinderen van Johannes van 't Lindenhout* (Hillegom: Genava, 1988), 106.

Retrospective at Eighty on a Scholar's Life and Calvin's Shaping Influence¹

Robert P. Swierenga

Two themes in my life are God's guiding ways and Calvin's remarkable influences. Professors here² fostered a love for history, my Dutch immigration research began at Calvin archives, and Calvin students became research collaborators,



A photo of Robert Swierenga while a member of the Calvin College faculty in the mid to late 1960s. Image courtesy of Heritage Hall, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

graduate students at Kent State, and lifelong friends. I give God the praise and thanksgiving for my Christian upbringing, good health, and guiding hand at key steps along the way. Looking back, I can clearly see how God's plan for my life unfolded.

My love for history began as a sophomore under Professor Charles Miller. Miller was in his first year at Calvin, having come from the American University in Beirut, Lebanon, a prestigious international university

with high academic standards. Miller's classes caught Calvin students unprepared; in the first few weeks they dropped in droves. I joined the throng at Dean Henry Ryskamp's office to get my drop slip signed. But he sat me down and convinced me to stick it out. "Give the new prof a chance," he said, "and you won't regret it." I stayed and was hooked. I signed up for the second semester and the next year as well. I changed my major from business administration to history, and I never looked back.

Before my senior year I married my high school sweetheart, Joan Boomer. In March we had a son, born prematurely at Blodgett Hospital, who lived only three days. The Millers helped us deal with the loss, and then Charlie recommended that I enroll in the graduate program in history at Northwestern University, his alma mater. He made a few calls, and I was admitted far after the admissions deadline had passed.

Out of tragedy came an opportunity that changed the course of my life. It opened the door to teaching at Calvin. After I taught for three years at Pella Christian High, Calvin College President William Spoelhof offered me a one-year appointment. I agreed, on his pledge to hold a tenure-track position open while I completed doctoral work at the University of Iowa.

Clio and Computers

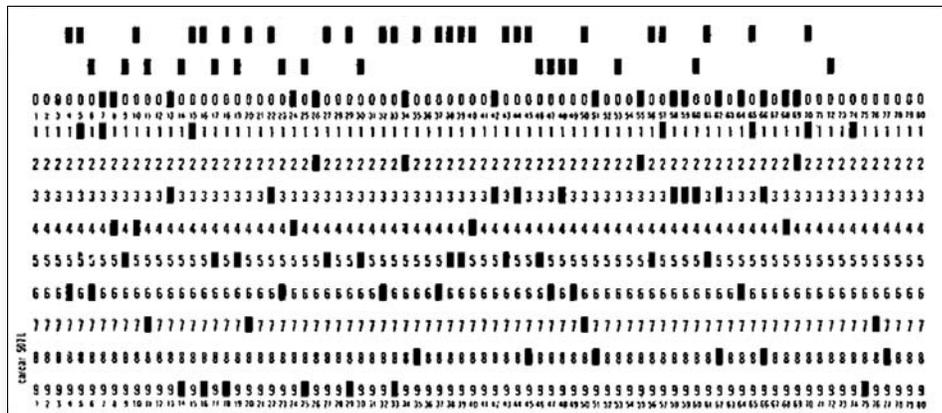
My first seminar paper was a study of Pella's early political history, including

As the essay makes clear, Robert P. Swierenga is the internationally recognized dean of scholarship in Dutch-American Studies. A consummate researcher, who used cutting-edge investigative tools, he is a teacher, lecturer, and prolific author, and at the age of eighty he continues to pursue his passion and calling.

the Lincoln elections. The Pella Dutch were (and remain) staunch Democrats; they spurned Lincoln and the new Republican Party. The eminent journal *Civil War History* published my seminar paper. I had tasted blood and liked it. Publishing one's research makes it available worldwide and justifies the blood, sweat, and tears.

In the second year of graduate study, my supervising professor selected me to work under his direction on an Indian Claims case involving the Sac and Fox tribes. The federal government in 1842 had forced the tribes to cede their thirteen million acres in southcentral Iowa for ten cents an acre. My task was to assist the Native Peoples' legal teams in Chicago and Detroit to determine the fair value of the land as of the treaty date. Since there was no land market before white settlement, the government allowed early land records to be used to determine that value.

My work focused on non-resident land investors who swarmed the land offices to buy virgin tracts at wholesale and sell them at retail to farmers. A major question was: did the inves-



A now obsolete punch card that held digital information based on the presence or absence of holes in predefined positions. On stiff paper stock, the cards measured 7.375 by 3.25 inches.

tors make any money? The math to determine rates of return on several thousand properties was too complex for hand-tabulating, so I turned to the new mainframe computer on campus. I was the first history graduate student at the university (and possibly the first anywhere) to use computers to analyze historical records. The year was 1963.

I punched my data into 80-column IBM cards. Computer staffers fed the cards into the computer at night and, after cranking for hours, printouts of compiled or analyzed data were ready for me the next morning. I studied the programming language Fortran to instruct the computer on what tabulations and calculations I needed. From this we learned that half the land went into the hands of investors; forty-one men bought 10,000 to 60,000 acres each, one million acres in all. Henry P. Scholte of the Pella got 12,500 acres. They paid \$1.25 per acre and doubled and tripled their money.

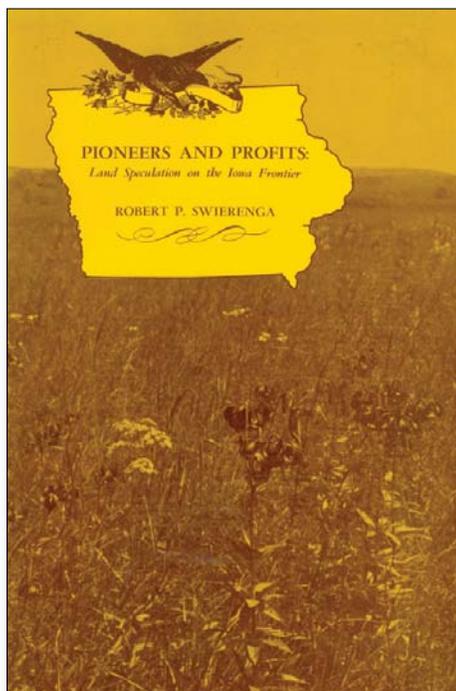
The standard historical interpretation of these investors was very negative—they were viewed as speculators who distorted the land market and forced settlers to pay a premium for their farms. I offered a more positive view. The investors performed a valuable service—the government required specie—gold

or silver coins—for the full amount. Most settlers lacked specie for the full purchase price and these middlemen offered credit terms for 4-5 years on land mortgages.³

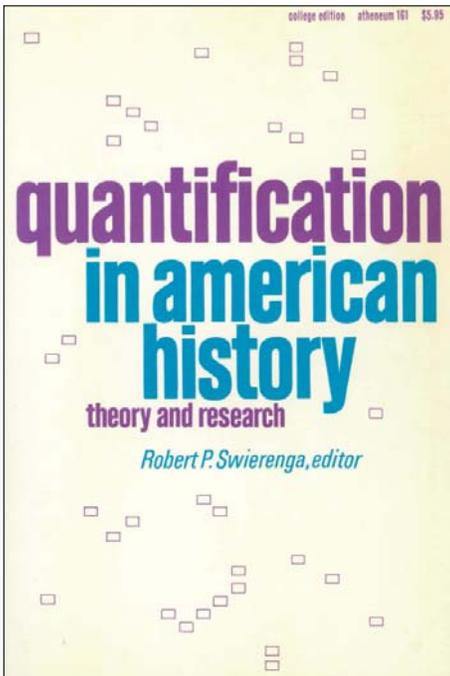
Working for the lawyers meant that I was paid to write my dissertation. And the pressing timetable of the legal case shaved a full year off completing my doctoral studies. Within weeks of defending my dissertation, I testified for three days before the US Indian Claims Commission in Washington. The court concluded that the market value of the lands at the treaty date was \$2.56 per acre—far more than the ten cents paid. The Sac and Fox Nation received a payment of more than \$30 million as a consequence. I revised my dissertation while teaching at Calvin, and Iowa State University published it in 1968 under the title *Pioneers and Profits: Land Speculation on the Iowa Frontier*.

First books often lead to follow-up books. My second was another Iowa land study, *Acres for Cents: Delinquent Tax Auctions on the Iowa Frontier*.⁴ When landowners failed to pay their realty taxes, county officials sold these liens for back taxes to investors. Owners had three years to redeem these liens on the property or lose the land to those who had purchased the liens.

I became intrigued by the



experience of two Virginians, business partners, who had been the largest buyers at the Iowa land offices before the Civil War (100,000 acres). During the war they were unable to send money across Union lines to pay their taxes. Iowa county officials happily sold liens against rebel properties;



these liens ripened into tax deeds after three years that wiped out the original deeds. After the war, the Virginians decided to invest in Iowa tax liens to rebuild their fortunes. The liens paid 30 percent penalty and 10 percent interest per year. The business papers of the two Virginians at the University of Virginia Library in Monticello gave me an inside look at the tax-buying process.

I studied delinquent tax auctions across Iowa, again using computers to analyze some 1,660 liens. I reinterpreted the role of tax buyers. The standard view was that they were “sharks” who, in times of economic distress, seized farms for cents on the dollars since annual taxes were only a fraction of the value of the farm. This was certainly the case during the Great Depression, when whole

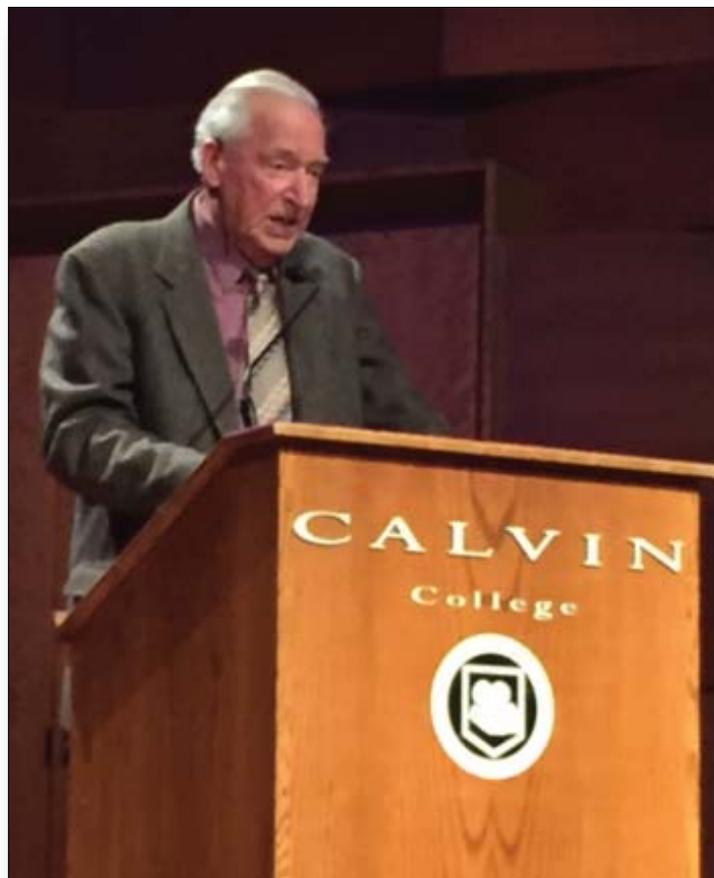
counties were sold for back taxes. But this was NOT the case on the frontier. Money was always in short supply, and credit was hard to come by. Farmers bought land with mortgages, and cattle and machinery with chattel mortgages. They also borrowed against their taxes by deliberately letting them go delinquent. It appeared that money in frontier Iowa was worth more than the penalty and interest on back taxes. How could I prove this? My analysis revealed two phenomena. First, the volume of delinquent taxes went **up** in good times and **down** in hard times, rather than the opposite. Second, most of the land was redeemed within the three-year grace period.

Dutch Immigration Research

While I was at Calvin in 1965, my colleague Herb Brinks, who established the Archives in Heritage Hall,

called my attention to Dutch immigration lists in the archives. *This turned my focus from land to people.* The records, all in Dutch, gave names, age, occupation, religion, social class, and other information on 21,000 immigrant households for all eleven provinces from the 1840s to 1880. It was a goldmine, and my knowledge of computers allowed me to mine it. Thankfully, I had studied Dutch for four years under Walter Lagerwey. I had coding help from Calvin student Lois Ackerman (later married to Peter Raap), who knew a little Dutch. (Lois and her husband Peter Raap were honored as distinguished alumni in 2004.)⁵

In 1968 I became convinced that it was God’s will for me to leave Calvin for Kent State University. But to tell my folks and especially President William Spoelhof of Calvin, who treated me so graciously over the



The author speaking to the Calvin College Alumni Heritage Class in 2016. Image courtesy of the author.

Swierenga receiving the medal indicating his membership in the Order of the Netherlands Lion from Consul General of the Netherlands in Chicago, Gilbert H. A. Monod de Froideville. Image courtesy of the author.



years, was indeed difficult. Years later, I wrote about this conversation with President Spoelhof for the Calvin Alumni Association book, *Forever Faithful*.⁶ Few could understand why I would leave a Christian college for a secular one, with all the attendant challenges to my faith. But I found the secular campus to be stimulating, and I learned what the Apostle Paul meant when he said that Christians must be ready always to make a defense of their faith. I became the faculty advisor, in turn, for a number of Christian student groups—InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, Campus Crusade for Christ, Baptist Student Union, and the Coalition for Christian Outreach. And Calvin alumni were already at Kent State. There were Ken and Adele Hoving (Ken was dean of the graduate school) and Jack and Dorie Kremers (Jack was professor of architecture). I served as an elder in the Akron CRC and as classical representative on the Calvin Board of Trustees for six years.

Shortly after moving there, I became an eyewitness to the Kent State shootings on 4 May 1970. This tragedy radicalized me for a few years,

until I saw how the political “left” exploited it for political and propaganda purposes at every anniversary commemoration. It was twenty years before the commemoration was truly a commemoration of those killed and wounded, when the University Chorale sang a specially commissioned piece in memoriam. This was the first real memorial since the very first commemoration in 1971, when Roger Shaw came from Atlanta to direct a university/community chorus to present Verdi’s Requiem mass.

In response to student demands for more “relevant” courses, the university instituted a Free University, the hip thing in the 1970s. This gave me the opportunity to team-teach credit courses on Christian world view (modeled after the CPOL course material from Calvin, written by Nick Wolterstorff, Rich Mouw, Al Plantinga, and other key faculty) with Cliff Bajema and Ben Becksvoort, pastors at Akron CRC. Cliff and I taught a Christian ethics class for several years, and Ben and I screened Francis Schaeffer’s film series on modern European history since the Reformation, and Schaeffer’s film series with US

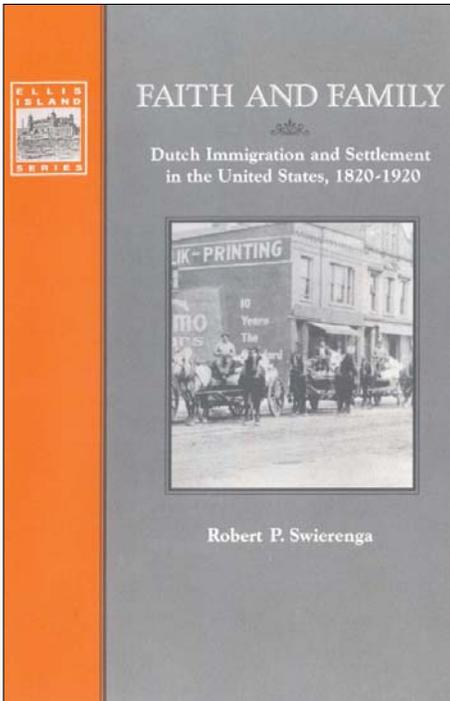
Surgeon General [C. Everett] Koops on the issue of abortion.

At Kent State University, Harry “Skip” Stout, a prized doctoral student who had followed me from Calvin after two years at Princeton Seminary, joined me in publishing the first results of my Dutch data in the *Indiana Social Studies Quarterly*,⁷ a small-circulation journal. The title was “Dutch Immigration in the Nineteenth Century, 1820-1877: A Quantitative Overview.” It was not easy finding a publishing outlet in a history journal, because a piece full of tables was still strange to historians. But this article broke the ice and led directly to my securing a Fulbright Fellowship at Leiden University to continue my study of Dutch immigration.

My timing was impeccable in another respect. It coincided with the publication of Alex Haley’s book, *Roots* (1976) and the TV mini-series that followed. I found myself in the forefront of the rising field of immigration studies in the history profession. The Fulbright office sent me on a lecture tour of major European universities, including the London School of Economics and the Sorbonne in Paris. All were interested in how immigrant groups were melded into American society—an uncommon process in Europe.

In 1982, I gave a paper on my research at a conference in Amsterdam marking two hundred years of US-Netherlands diplomatic relations, for which Queen Beatrix held a reception at the royal palace on the Dam. When I walked down the red carpet to be formally introduced, she remarked: “Oh, you’re the specialist in immigration research.” I was impressed that she had read the conference program.

A second Fulbright at Leiden gave me time to begin writing the book *Faith and Family: Dutch Immigration and Settlement in the United States*,



1820-1920, which was published in 2000, my sixty-fifth year.⁸ That was quite a year! At a conference at Hope College, my former students presented me with a *festschrift*, a celebratory book of essays by students and colleagues—*The Dutch-American Experience: Essays in Honor of yours truly*,⁹ published by the Free University Press. A *festschrift* is the highest compliment in the German tradition that students can pay to a professor. I was knighted that same day. That was some birthday!

My immigration research continued. Kent State's membership in the Council of Research Libraries (CRL) had given me access to US Ship Passenger lists and US Population Census lists on microfilm. During the course of fifteen years I borrowed more than 1500 rolls of 35mm microfilm from CRL. With student assistants, including my daughters Sarah (Calvin '82), Celia (Calvin '84), and Suzanna (Calvin '92), we scanned 250,000 ship lists (1820-1880) and found 55,000 Dutch immigrants. Then we scanned thousands of pages

of US population census records (1850, 1860, and 1870) and located 105,000 Dutch-born persons and their children. I'm grateful to key-punch operators at the KSU Computer Center for keying the tens of thousands of records into IBM cards, and later onto magnetic tape.

My next step was to link the three lists, name by name, in order to trace the immigrants from their villages in the Netherlands to their American settlements. I was able to link 4,000 household heads and single adults—25 percent. The most important finding was that immigration was not random but highly focused. Families from the same village settled together in America in a kind of chain migration, with other family members following the first to go. Relying on family and friends was a rational response to a risky transoceanic migration when one had little knowledge of the new country. I also found that the Dutch immigrated in families until the early twentieth century; then singles became more common, including single women.

Given my interest in computer-aided historical research, I taught this methodology in graduate methods seminars at Kent State for many years. My textbook, *Quantification in American History*,¹⁰ a compilation of articles that used numerical data for historical analysis, was read in many graduate seminars around the country.

Genealogists learned about my Dutch immigrant computer files and asked me to look up information on their families. To avoid being bogged down, I published the lists—one volume for the emigration lists, two volumes for the ship lists, and three volumes for the census records. The 11x14 size book had blue covers and became known as the "Swierenga Blue Books." Ancestry.com later added the lists to their vast digital collection.

Happily, geography professor Henk Aay, now my associate in the Van Raalte Institute at Hope College, had one of his Calvin students, Matt Raybaud, convert my data in punch card format into Excel spreadsheets that are plugged into Calvin's Geographic Information Systems software. Henk's forthcoming *Atlas of Dutch American History and Culture* will include maps based on my records. I'm grateful to Henk and Matt for giving my immigration files a new lease on life.

Students

During my teaching career I was surrounded by gifted students. With some I formed lifelong relationships, especially those at Pella Christian High, Calvin, and Kent State graduate students from Calvin. At Pella, my students in social studies classes included James De Jong, future professor and president of Calvin Theological Seminary; Peter Schakel, head of Hope College's English Department; Leland Ryken, English professor at Wheaton College; Iowa attorney Loren Veldhuizen, whom I also taught at Calvin; Case Hoogenboom, partner in a distinguished Chicago law firm; Marvin and Arvin Vos; Roger De Kock, chemistry professor at Calvin, and his sister Lois, who married James De Jong; Glenn Andreas, CEO in an agricultural conglomerate; and Stanley Vermeer, executive in his father Gary's multinational machinery company, Vermeer Corporation.

At Calvin the list of former students and dear friends is longer, including Harry "Skip" Stout, who later earned MA and PhD degrees at Kent State and is now the Jonathan Edwards Professor of American History at Yale University; Ken Bratt, Calvin professor of classics (now retired); David Diephouse, history professor and dean of Liberal Arts at Calvin (also retired); Philip Vandermeer,

history professor at Arizona State University; William “Bill” Doezema, who also followed me to Kent State and earned MA and PhD degrees and is history professor at Houghton College (NY).

During my twenty-eight years at KSU, other Calvin history majors received graduate assistantships and fellowships in my department, and their excellent academic records almost guaranteed them a graduate assistantship or fellowship. These included Sue Helder Goliber, history professor at Mount St. Mary College (MD); David G. Vanderstel, executive director for years of the National Council on Public History; Kenneth L. Joling, a California social studies teacher; William E. Van Vugt, Calvin professor and History Department chair; Paul Van Harn; Russ Van Wyk, a public historian and former member of Calvin’s Alumni Board; and David De Vries. Obviously, I had no trouble selling the KSU graduate program committee on the virtues of Calvin students. It was quite a pipeline. From Hope College came Ronald Kronemeyer, a professor at Cornerstone University, and Larry Wagenaar—the “Herb Brinks” of Hope College as its first fulltime archivist. Wagenaar is now the executive director of the State Historical Society of Michigan.

Jewish Immigrants

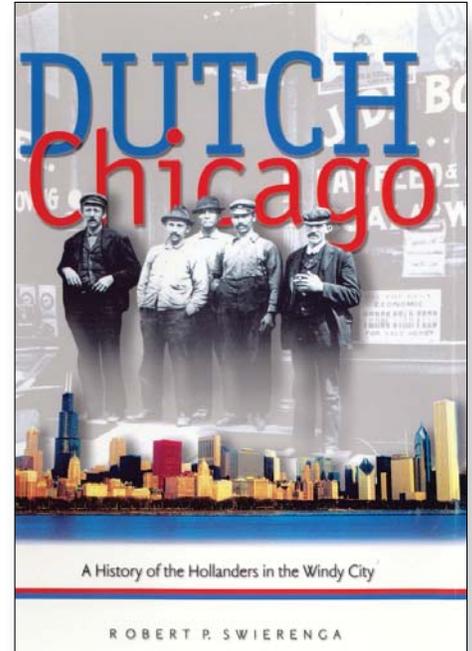
Dutch Jewish immigrants always intrigued me, even though they made up less than 2 percent of the total. They had never been studied. Dutch Jews are significant because they preceded the large waves of German and Russian Jews. Dutch Jews settled in New Amsterdam after fleeing from Brazil to escape the Inquisition. The nineteenth-century immigrants provided the religious and intellectual leadership for the Jewish communities in America. I named my book

*The Forerunners*¹¹ to highlight that fact.

The Dutch Jewish immigration was entirely different from that of Protestants for a number of reasons. First, they immigrated in two stages—from Amsterdam and Rotterdam to London, where many had done business for years, and then to the United States. Second, they were fluent in English. Third, they were urban to urban, rather than rural to rural, coming from European cities to New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Chicago, and other urban centers. And fourth, they held menial jobs—peddlers, clothiers, and cigar makers. Some specialized in cutting and polishing diamonds. New York became the diamond capital, thanks to Dutch and Belgian craftsmen.

In New York, Rabbi Samuel Myer Isaacs from Leeuwarden was the “father” of the American Jewish clergy. He founded Shaarey Tefila Synagogue in Manhattan. Isaacs was renowned as the leader of Conservative Judaism. He stood against the Reform Judaism brought from Germany. After his death, however, his synagogue joined the progressive Reform movement. Shaarey Tefila celebrated its 150th anniversary in 1996.¹² At the culmination of their year-long celebration, they asked me come to tell them about the life and ministry of their founding rabbi.

Had the synagogue remained in the conservative wing of Judaism, I would never have been invited to sit on the bema (pulpit) with their rabbis, a male and a female, and deliver the “sermon” that night. I commented that Rabbi Isaacs was probably turning over in his grave that a goy (gentile) was standing in his pulpit. I summarized Isaacs’s life and ideas, especially his life-long contest in America with Reform Judaism. Everyone caught the irony of honoring a founder whose teachings they had



repudiated. I was well received. That Friday evening “high holy day” service is an unforgettable experience.

Dutch Chicago

In 1994 I was contacted by the Van Raalte Institute (VRI) about becoming a research professor. The opportunity for writing books and lecturing for public venues and professional societies led to my early retirement from teaching in 1996 and to a new, now twenty-year post-teaching career. I had planned for many years to tell the story of the Westside “Groninger Hoek,” where my great grandfather Jan Swierenga had settled in 1893. When I left the classroom, I made this my priority. Deep into the project, I realized that this was the last opportunity to tell the story of all Chicago-area Dutch, including the communities of Englewood and Roseland. I could still interview people with living memories reaching back into the nineteenth century, such as my father, John R. Swierenga, who was born in 1911 and recalled stories from his parents and grandparents.

Most readers of *Dutch Chicago* talk about the garbage chapter (“Business

is Picking Up”) and the story of the “Dutch Mafia” who came to control the Chicago garbage business. The Dutch called them “garbios,” a seemingly negative variant of the Italian Mafioso. The haulers thought otherwise and used the term proudly. I can’t think of a better word.

I compiled a list of more than 450 Dutch garbage companies by scouring city directories, telephone book Yellow Pages, and garbage magazines. Several families came to dominate the trade—Huizenga, Evenhouse, and De Boer, among others. Picking up ashes and garbage was a natural for the poor farm laborers. For a few hundred dollars they could buy a horse and wagon and be their own boss. They didn’t have to speak much English, or work on Sunday, or join teamsters’ unions, which would have gone against their religious principles.

In the 1920s the garbios formed the Chicago & Suburban Scavengers Association, which allowed them to control the industry by collusion. I learned the inner workings of the Association by happenstance. Over food in the church basement after the funeral service of my brother-in-law, James A. De Boer, I mentioned my interest in the garbios to his close friend Calvin Iwema (Calvin ’50). Cal told me his father, Bonne Iwema, was the first president of the association, and that he (Cal) had the minute books. He gave them to me (now in Calvin Archives), and it was like reading consistory minutes, except they closed with a keg of beer instead of prayer. The cardinal rule was “Once your stop, always your stop,” unless you failed to pay your dues. Then it was open season on your stops. This rule eliminated competition and created an oligopoly.

Over the years, garbios faced three major threats—the teamsters’ union, the real Italian Mafia, and the Illinois Attorney General.

In the 1930s union goons demanded that the Dutch sign up. Except for old man Evenhouse, who had socialist leanings and was pro-union already in Groningen, most refused to join, and some paid a high price. Tom Huiner’s barn was torched, killing his horses and destroying his wagons. Goons met Peter TerMaat’s truck at the Cicero dump in 1933, as he was getting ready to dump his load into the garbage pit. They jerked him out of the cab, put the gear in reverse, and let the truck slide into the pit. It sunk in the morass, never to be seen again. But the garbios stood firm.

In the 1950s the Italian Mafia decided there was money to be made in garbage to augment their other nefarious activities. They formed the American Garbage Company (the name was an obvious swipe at the Dutch) and took stops away from the Dutch by intimidating restaurant and tavern owners. It came to be known as Chicago’s “garbage war.” But the Dutch had the upper hand since they controlled the dumps. The Mafia had to dump illegally and the police went after them. The Mafia also did not maintain their trucks or run their routes efficiently. They soon tired of the garbage business and sold out to a Dutchman. The Dutch mafia proved more resilient than the Italian Mafia!

In the 1970s the Illinois Attorney General went after the Dutch scavengers for price-fixing and levied stiff fines. One barely escaped jail time. The days of the Association were over. But no matter. In 1971 the Huizengas—H. Wayne, cousin Peter, and Peter’s brother-in-law Wayne Buntrock—put their companies together to form Waste Management and listed their stock on the Big Board. The offerings raised \$430 million, money that Wayne Huizenga used to buy one company after another—\$1 million per truck and its stops. Most owners sold for Waste stock and a little cash.

The stock was golden. It split eleven times, with one share becoming seventy-two. The shares also increased sharply in price, like Microsoft in the 1980s. Millionaires were made overnight, much to the enrichment of Christian institutions.

Elim and Old Wing Indian Mission

My next books were a history of Elim Christian School, written at the request of school leaders, and the story of Chief Wakazoo’s Ottawa Indian mission (Old Wing) in what became Holland on Black Lake.¹³ Rev. A. C. Van Raalte stayed at the mission when he first explored the area in January 1847. Congregational minister Rev. George Smith was the



The author during one of his numerous book signings, this one for his work on the Dutch in Chicago. Image courtesy of the author.

teacher and preacher of the mission. He and his wife kept daily diaries of life in and around the mission, which I found literally under my feet in the Joint Archives of Holland. Bill Van Appledorn (Calvin '60), a retired engineer at Prince Corp., worked with me on the book. He had published a biography of Chief Wakazoo and was familiar with the diaries.

Van Raalte and Smith became friends, but Van Raalte had little appreciation for the Ottawa Indian band and its unique culture. Van Raalte decided to locate his colony near the mission, and within two years several thousand Hollanders were cutting down trees and running cattle through the woods. To preserve their way of life, the Ottawa band decided to move to Northport in the Leelanau Peninsula.

Albertus C. Van Raalte as a Businessman

When my VRI colleague Elton Bruins reached eighty years, academic friends published a festschrift, and I contributed a chapter on Van Raalte as a businessman.¹⁴ He was first

and foremost a pastor, but he had to wear many hats—doctor, school board leader, political tutor, business promoter, newspaperman—and, most important, land developer. To keep Americans from buying virgin land and pushing up the price for the Hollanders, Van Raalte had to move quickly to control as much land as possible around Lake Macatawa and the village of Holland. He bought 12,000 acres in the first three years and 20,000 acres altogether, and platted a thousand town lots in the village of Holland. Throughout his active ministry, he squeezed sales, legal work, and tax payments in between his pastoral duties. He also invested as a silent partner in grain and lumber mills and went bankrupt when a mill venture failed in 1852.

His real estate dealings made him wealthy. Land in and around Holland gained value while he slept, due to the rapid and steady development of the community. His city lot prices increased from \$40 in 1847 to \$800 in 1868. He got in “on the ground floor” and parlayed his land dealings into a portfolio worth several million in

today’s dollars. Of course, the dominion bore the risks and had to scramble every year to pay his real estate taxes in “hard money” (no bank notes).

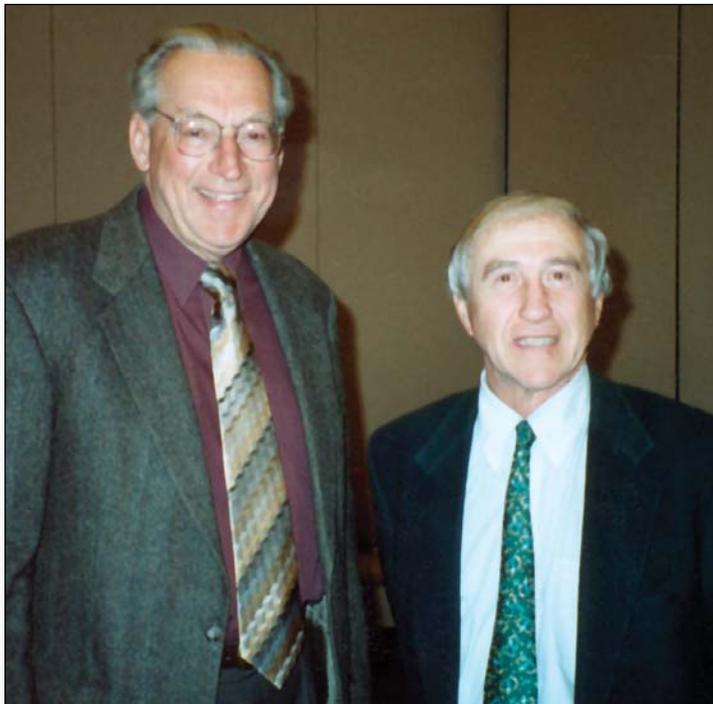
He was often torn between serving two masters—God and Mammon. Van Raalte expressed his angst about wealth in a letter to Anthony Brummelkamp, his brother-in-law in the Netherlands:

I came here naked, but . . . I find myself placed with possessions, which if it pleased God could make me a capitalist. And yet, they were thrown around my neck for my lack of trust and to kill me. They are possessions that the worldling by turns praises . . . Often I ask, Why? Why? Yet I have the root of all devilish evil in me and also the root of the desire to become rich. . . . Sometimes I say in impatience, let everything break up and go to pieces as it will. However, in a calmer moment, I see it is not without God’s providence that I was placed in this important position.

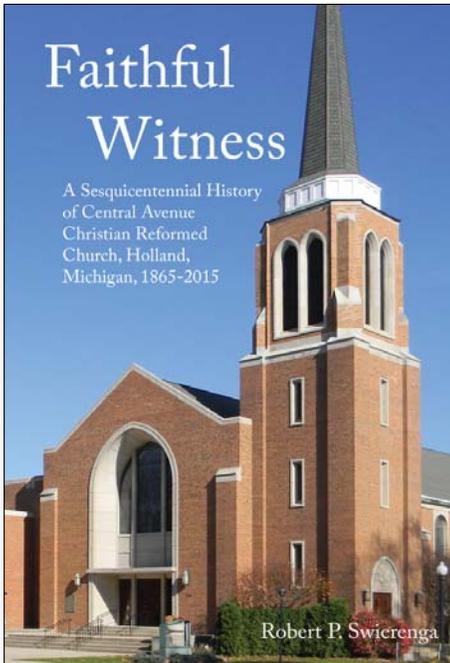
Clearly Van Raalte wrestled with his calling as a minister of the Gospel and his desire to enjoy a standard of living above that of most of his parishioners. Yet, he was the only university-educated man among thousands of immigrants, and this alone justified an upper-middle-class lifestyle, according to his Old World standards. At his death in 1876, Van Raalte deserved the title of “Wealthiest Hollander in Michigan.” His funeral suited a prince. The seventy-six carriages made his the largest funeral cortège until that of Gerrit J. Diekema, seventy-five years later. Diekema was the city’s most famous lawyer, politician, and public speaker, who had died in the Netherlands while serving as the country’s foreign minister there.

Holland Michigan

After publishing *Dutch Chicago*, I decided to grow where I was planted.



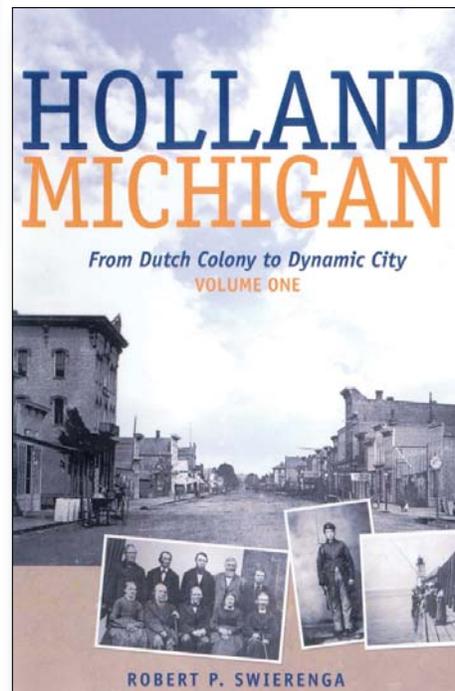
A 2004 image of the author and Peter Huizenga, who has been a strong supporter of Dutch-American scholarship, including the production of *Dutch Chicago*. Image courtesy of the author.



The Van Raalte Institute is dedicated to preserving the Dutch Reformed heritage in America, and to keep alive the history of the city and region. A comprehensive history of Holland seemed like a good topic. The Institute shares a building with the Joint Archives of Holland, and the Holland Museum Archives, the city archives, are one block away. Why not write a history of a city with a flourishing downtown, Tulip Time festivals, and, of course, Hope College?

The three-volume Holland history published in 2014 was a ten-year project.¹⁵ It far exceeds my Chicago book in length and is my *magnum opus*, although some have given that label to *Dutch Chicago*. My ultimate goal was to explain what made Holland “Holland.” Every city is unique, with its own history and culture. In recent years, Holland was named an All-American City, one of five best US cities in which to retire, number two on the top ten “Well-Being” list, and near the top of the national happiness index. In 2016 Holland was named among the top ten for creating new businesses. My question became, what makes Holland tick?

Culture is everything. The immigrants brought their Dutch Reformed faith and cultural values—strong on religion, education, hard work, home ownership, entrepreneurship, penny-pinching thrift, and cooperative instincts, and respectful of those in authority. Holland was known as a *city of churches*. The rhythms of life revolved around worship services, catechetical instruction, and church societies. Home ownership was very



high, 64 percent in 1940—almost twice the national rate; over half were free of mortgages.

Van Raalte had a heart for *Christian* schools. He founded the Pioneer School in 1851, which evolved into the Holland Academy in 1857 and into Hope College in 1866. Western Theological Seminary began in 1884. These institutions provided secondary and professional education in the classical tradition for preachers and teachers, but they did not serve elementary-age children. Van Raalte lamented the failure of his congregation’s parochial grade school that ran

from 1857 to 1862. It took two CRC congregations—Pillar (9th Street) and Central Avenue to found Holland Christian School in 1901.

There was geography. The city’s Lake Macatawa harbor is not as good as Grand Haven’s, but far better than Allegan’s access via the Kalamazoo River. Already in the 1850s, before Holland harbor was improved, \$1 million worth of wood products was shipped out. Freighters still carry millions of tons of bulk products annually.

Van Raalte envisioned a homogeneous Dutch colony that was open to Americans with money and business acumen. By 1880 one-third of the population was non-Dutch (Germans, Norwegians, English, and Irish). They brought business acumen, doctors, lawyers, photographers, and other skilled professions. The Dutch provided grunt labor, and their work ethic was legendary. Some Dutch had entrepreneurial talents and founded family-owned businesses, many that lasted for four and five generations.

Benevolence was another hallmark. Diaconal ministries nurtured many social service agencies. Thanksgiving Day offerings were legendary—\$250,000 in 1923. Newspaper reports of each congregation’s offerings sparked a sort of competition in generosity. Third Reformed was the “banner giver” until 1927, when Ninth Street and Fourteenth Street CRCs gave more. Thanksgiving Day offerings in some congregations still run in six figures.

Corporations are also generous. Ed Prince tithed 5 percent of pretax earnings at Prince Corporation. He gave the money with no strings attached. “If God’s given me this money,” he said, “then he’s going to make sure that it’s used in the right way. . . . And if it isn’t, then they don’t get any more money.” Lumir Corporation, Ed and Elsa’s real estate arm, restored one

downtown building after another, some seventy in all, a project that made the dying city center vital again.

All these factors, and many more, help explain why Holland quickly surpassed its sister cities of Grand Haven and Allegan in population, wealth, industries, churches, and schools. Of these three, only Holland has a college and seminary. These cities were founded a decade before Holland and had every advantage as county seat towns. But Holland quickly outstripped them. Culture is the key.

Congregational and Township Memorials

In 2015, to mark two important commemorations, I wrote a sesquicentennial history of Holland's oldest Christian Reformed Church, Central Avenue, dating from 1865, and a centennial history of Park Township, which separated in 1915 from Holland Township. Central Avenue, with 1,830 souls at its apogee in 1910, was the largest congregation in the denomination and in the city of Holland. With its younger sister, Ninth Street, which joined the denomination in 1884, a half dozen daughter churches were given birth. Central Avenue prided itself on being the "Dutch church," and held to the mother tongue the longest—until 1955, when the afternoon service ended for lack of worshipers. Park Township boasts six miles of Lake Michigan shoreline and six miles on Lake Macatawa (formerly Black Lake), an oblong-shaped inland lake. Given the plethora of parks and resorts, the township is aptly named.¹⁶

In conclusion, as I reflected on my career,¹⁷ I can clearly see God's hand "moving in mysterious ways, His wonders to perform." Coming to Calvin was the beginning of a full life, with the Lord opening and closing doors according to His will. I give him the glory. Praise God! ☩

Endnotes

1. A goodly portion of the paper was first presented as Calvin College Alumni Heritage Class Lecture in 2016—*ed.*
2. At Calvin College—*ed.*
3. Fortran (formerly FORTRAN, from "Formula Translation") was developed by IBM during the 1950s for numeric and scientific computing.
4. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1976).
5. The author was named a Calvin College Distinguished Alumnus in 2003—*ed.*
6. *Forever Faithful: Stores of William Spoelhof and Calvin College* (Grand Rapids: 2004) 119.
7. (Autumn 1975) 7-34.
8. New York: Holmes & Meier.
9. Edited by Hans Krabbendam and Larry J. Wagenaar.
10. New York: Atheneum, 1970.
11. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1994.
12. "Samuel Myer Isaacs: The Dutch Rabbi of New York City," *Origins* 10 No. 1 (1992), 16-21.
13. *Elim: A Chicago Christian School and Life Training Center for the Disabled* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005); and *Old Wing Mission: Cultural Interchange*

as Chronicled by George and Arvilla Smith in Their Work with Chief Wakazoo's Ottawa Band on the West Michigan Frontier (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008).

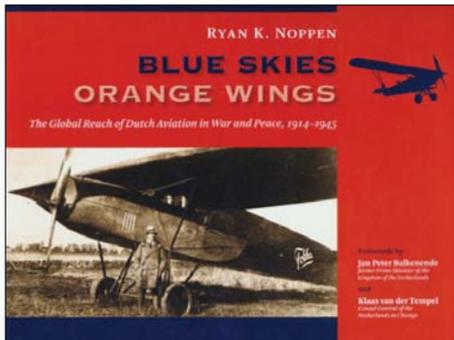
14. "Albertus C. Van Raalte as a Businessman," 281-317, in *A Goodly Heritage: Essays in Honor of the Reverend Dr. Elton J. Bruins at Eighty*, ed. Jacob E. Nyenhuis (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007).

15. *Holland Michigan: From Dutch Colony to Dynamic City*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, and Holland, MI: Van Raalte Press, 2014).

16. *Faithful Witness: A Sesquicentennial History of Central Avenue Christian Reformed Church, Holland, Michigan, 1865-2015* (Holland, Michigan: Van Raalte Press, 2015); and *Park Township Centennial History, Ottawa County, Michigan, 1915-2015: Holland's Water Playground* (Holland, Michigan: Van Raalte Press, 2015). "Macatawa" is the Ottawa word for "black water" which aptly still describes the color of the water.

17. A career that includes ten authored books, twenty edited books (alone or with others), and four compiled books—*ed.*

book note



Blue Skies Orange Wings
*The Global Reach of Dutch
Aviation in War and Peace,*
1914–1945

Ryan K. Noppen

Grand Rapids:
Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2016

ISBN: 978-0-8028-4870-3

\$45.00, hardcover, 352 pages

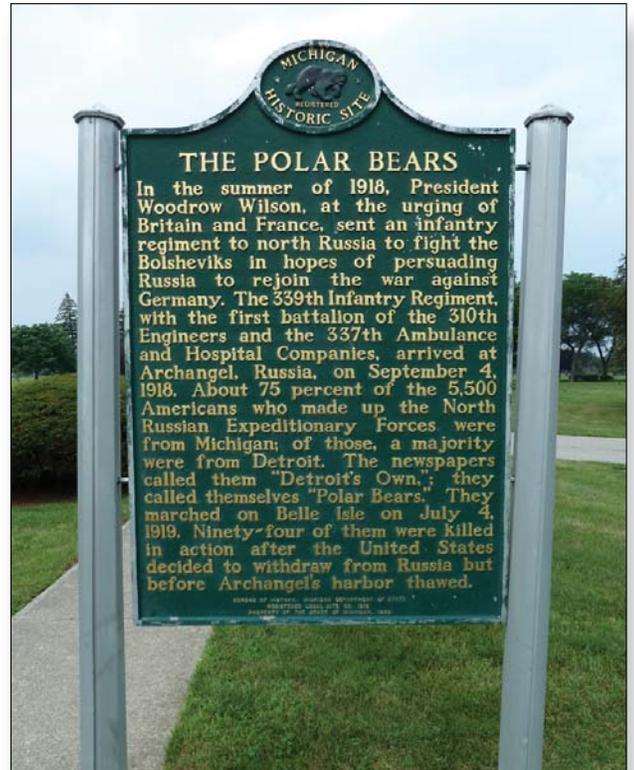
ISBN: 978-0-8028-4870-3.

With copious photographs, color illustrations (done by the author), and narrative, Noppen details the influential role of Dutch aircraft, designers, airlines, and pilots in the first half of the twentieth century. Included are the development of the Fokker airliners and KLM (the Dutch national airline), and their impact during the first five decades of aviation.

for the future

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

Paula Vander Hoven moves away from her research into the history of little known Dutch immigrant communities to detail the experience of her paternal grandfather, John Vander Hoven, who served as part of the Allied forces in northern Russia—the Polar Bears—at the end of WW I.



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

Name _____

Address _____

Subscriber \$10.00

Contributing Member \$50.00

Contributing Sponsor \$100.00

Contributing Founder \$500.00

Send to: *Origins*, Heritage Hall, Calvin College,
1855 Knollcrest Circle SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546

Yes, I would also like a gift subscription for:

Name _____

Address _____

My Name _____

Address _____

Send to: *Origins*, Heritage Hall, Calvin College,
1855 Knollcrest Circle SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546

contributors

Origins is designed to publicize and advance the objectives of the Calvin College and Seminary Archives. These goals include the gathering, organization and study of historical materials produced by the day-to-day activities of the Christian Reformed Church, its institutions, communities and people. We invite you to support the continued publication of *Origins* by becoming “Friends of the Archives.”

Enabling Contributor

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

Friends of the Archives Endowment Fund Builders

AEGON Insurance Group, Cedar Rapids, IA

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

Robert and Jane Baker Foundation, Kalamazoo, MI

Mr. Duane D. Binns, Oak Park, IL

Mr. and Mrs. Roger W. Boer, Grand Rapids, MI

Dr. and Mrs. Richard H. Harms, Grand Rapids, MI

Holland American Wafer Company,
Grand Rapids, MI

Mr. and Mrs. Peter Huizenga, Oak Brook, IL

Dr. William Huizingh, Scottsdale, AZ

Estate of Dick and Dena Kortenhoeven,
Highland, IN

Meijer, Inc., Grand Rapids, MI

Mr. Gerald W. Meyering, Denver, CO

Drs. Kornelis J. Storm, Aerdenhout, the Netherlands

Jay and Betty Van Andel Foundation,
Grand Rapids, MI

Mr. and Mrs. Claude J. Venema, Jackson, MI

Mr. and Mrs. Gary J. Vermeer, Pella, IA

Contributing Founders

Mr. and Mrs. Richard T. Dykema, Laurel, MD

Mr. and Mrs. Bastian A. Knoppers, Oak Brook, IL

Peters Import Marketplace, Grandville, MI

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

Clara and Leonard Sweetman, Kentwood, MI

Mr. and Mrs. Max B. Van Wyk, Grand Rapids, MI

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

Contributing Sponsors

Walter and Carol Ackerman, Superior, CO

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Alles, Byron Center, MI

David and Rene Baatenburg, Jenison, MI

Dr. Kenneth J. Betten, Kalamazoo, MI

James H. and Diane Bloem, Louisville, KY

Dr. Robert Bolt, Grand Rapids, MI

Dr. and Mrs. Peter Borgdorff, Kentwood, MI

David and Mary Bosscher, Zeeland, MI

John and Sharon Bouma Sr., Holland, MI

John and Beth Bouws, Holland, MI

Mrs. Ruth E. Brinks, Grand Rapids, MI

Connie and Roger Brummel, Holland, MI

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

Mr. and Mrs. John Buursma, Holland, MI

Dr. and Mrs. James A. De Jong, Grand Rapids, MI

Jan and Jeannie de Vries, Berkeley, CA

Mr. Robert Dirkse, Corona, CA

Mark and Ginny Dykstra, South Holland, IL

Rev. and Mrs. Randall D. Engle, Troy, MI

Phil and Trudy Erffmeyer, Grand Rapids, MI

John H. and Marcia R. Evenhouse, Westmont, IL

James Evenhuis, Novi, MI

David and Connie Fennema, Durham, NC

Gordon and Ginny Geldof, Grand Rapids, MI

Kay Hoitenga, Grand Rapids, MI

Les and Viv Hoogland, Zeeland, MI

Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth A. Hoving, Oak Brook, IL

Rich and Carla Huizenga, Seattle, WA

Randall and Catherine Kraker, Grandville, MI

Ms. Annette LaMaire, South Holland, IL

Mr. and Mrs. Graydon M. Meints, Mesa, AZ

Dr. and Mrs. Richard Mouw, La Canada, CA

Tom and Greta Newhof, Ada, MI

Ms. Evelyn A. Pastoor, Grand Rapids, MI

Mr. Roger Riewald, Thousand Oaks, CA

Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Scheeres, Grand Rapids, MI

Mr. and Mrs. P. John Shooks, Grand Rapids, MI

Bernie and Melinda Smit, Lafayette, IN

Mr. and Mrs. John Stegink, Grand Rapids, MI

LeRoy and Anjean Stegink, Grand Rapids, MI

Dr. and Mrs. Robert P. Swierenga, Holland, MI

Mr. and Mrs. Ronald T. Vanden Bosch, Lakewood, CA

Mr. and Mrs. John C. Vander Haag, Sanborn, IA

Benjamin and Debrah Vander Kooi, Luverne, MN

Jan and Gary Vander Meer, DeKalb, IL

David and Sheryl Vander Ploeg, St. Joseph, MI

Mr. and Mrs. Allan J. Van Popering,
Grand Rapids, MI

Sam and Judy Van Til, Crown Point, IN

Max and Carol Van Wyk, Grand Rapids, MI

Dr. and Mrs. Daniel R. Vellenga, Waco, TX

Wilbert and Berendina Wichers, Bradenton, FL

Dave and Brenda Wiersma, Tucson, AZ

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

Mr. and Mrs. F. A. Wybenga, Tallmadge, OH

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

Mary Zwaanstra, Grand Rapids, MI

Mr. and Mrs. David B. Zylstra, Grand Rapids, MI

Contributing Members

Mr. Floyd J. Antonides, Central Point, OR

Mrs. Phyllis Baarman, Grand Rapids, MI

John and Maria Bajema, Rockford, MI

Ms. Jennifer Baker, Grandville, MI

Ron and Wendy Blankespoor, Grand Rapids, MI

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Boersma, Marne, MI

Dr. Harmon S. Boertien, Houston, TX

Mr. and Mrs. Richard Boonstra, Escondido, CA

Carl and Elizabeth Botting, Ada, MI

Mr. and Mrs. Lester Brouwer, Holland, MI

Elaine and Ralph Bruxvoort, Bloomer, WI

Mr. and Mrs. Conrad D. Bult, Jenison, MI

Milly and Peter Buma, Grand Rapids, MI

Wayne and Greta Clousing, Shoreline, WA

Mr. Stuart E. Cok, Sparta, MI

Ron and Cathie Corstange, Hudsonville, MI

Ms. Mary Cremer, Grand Rapids, MI

Mrs. W. P. De Boer, Grand Rapids, MI

Robert L. and Frances De Bruin, Grand Rapids, MI

Mr. Ronald De Valois, Lynden, WA

Lucas and Ann De Vries, Grand Rapids, MI

Henry and Shirley De Witt, Chino, CA

Mr. Richard Dykstra, St. John, IN

Robert and Marilyn Dykstra, Holland, MI

- Jake and Frances Engel, Ripon, CA
 Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth D. Engelsman, Centennial, CO
 Mr. and Mrs. Robert Essenburg, Grandville, MI
 Harold and Nancy Gazan, Holland, MI
 Mr. Albert J. Griede, La Mesa, CA
 Carl and Sandy Gronsmann, Grand Rapids, MI
 Andrew and Jane Haagsma, Grandville, MI
 Ulrich and Elizabeth Haasdyk, Calgary, AB
 Dr. and Mrs. Dewey Heetderks, Grand Rapids, MI
 Mr. and Mrs. Fred Hekstra, Byron Center, MI
 Caroline and Henry J. Hoeks, Ada, MI
 Mr. and Mrs. Gerrit Hoeksema, Jenison, MI
 Ralph and Jane Hoekstra, Huntington Beach, CA
 Bill and Caroline Hoekstra, Oakdale, CA
 Ms. Grace Anne Hoffa, Kalamazoo, MI
 Dr. and Mrs. Harvey D. Huiner, Lynchburg, VA
 Harold and Esther Huizenga, Grand Rapids, MI
 Mrs. Joan Huizenga, Grand Rapids, MI
 Rich and Jane Iwema, Grand Rapids, MI
 Miss Rita Jager, Edmonton, AB
 Glenn R. Jasperse, Sheboygan, WI
 Mrs. Mary E. Jellema, Holland, MI
 Rev. Harvey A. Kiekover, Grand Rapids, MI
 Donald and Elizabeth Kiel, Carlsbad, CA
 Mr. John E. King, Wyckoff, NJ
 Chaplain Louis and Frances Kok, Lynden, WA
 Kenneth and Linda Kolk, Zeeland, MI
 Rev. John M. V. Koole, Strathroy, ON
 Ms. Ardene Lambers, Grand Rapids, MI
 Mr. and Mrs. Peter Land, Lowell, MI
 Mr. Pierre R. Lettenga, Conrad, MT
 Mr. and Mrs. Charles A. Mast, Jenison, MI
 Mr. Harold Mast, Kentwood, MI
 Mrs. Ria Medendorp, Kalamazoo, MI
 Mr. Gerald Meyer, Holland, MI
 Andy Miedema, Orange City, IA
 Mrs. Tena Minnema, Grand Rapids, MI
 James E. and Janice S. Monsma, Medford, MA
 Bruce Mulder, Grand Rapids, MI
 Robert and Faith Ottenhoff, Shady Side, MD
 Mrs. Alice Otter, Grand Rapids, MI
 Miss Janice Overzet, Fremont, MI
 Mr. and Mrs. Neal Peters, Hudsonville, MI
 Mr. and Mrs. Hendrik Porte, Byron Center, MI
 Mrs. Mins Reinsma, Shoreline, WA
 Dr. Joan Ringerwole, Hudsonville, MI
 Mr. Gerhard F. Ritsema, Laguna Woods, CA
 Al and Rika Scheenstra, Chino Hills, CA
 Dr. Jake and Dot Scheeres, Venice, FL
 Robert and Francine Schippers, Wayland, MI
 William and Shirley Scholten, Lynden, WA
 Ben and Henny Senneker, Lethbridge, AB
 Dr. Gradus L. Shoemaker, Louisville, KY
 Cora Mae Sinke, Grand Rapids, MI
 Dr. and Mrs. Richard D. Sjoerdsma, Racine, WI
 Mrs. Freda Snippe, Belwood, ON
 Ms. Ann Steenwyk, Oak Lawn, IL
 Mrs. Florence J. Sterk, Colorado Springs, CO
 Richard and Joyce Stienstra, Okemos, MI
 Dr. and Mrs. Ryan Tolsma, Redlands, CA
 Mr. Hugo M. van den Dool, University Park, MD
 Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Vander Ark, Grand Rapids, MI
 John and Donna Vander Meer, Grand Rapids, MI
 Ron and Phyllis Vander Molen, Modesto, CA
 Dr. Steve J. Van Der Weele, Grand Rapids, MI
 Mr. and Mrs. Henry Vander Weide, Ontario, CA
 Mr. and Mrs. Wilbur Van Dokkenburg,
 West Lafayette, IN
 Dr. John Van Domelen, College Station, TX
 Dr. and Mrs. James Y. Van Dyk, Comstock Park, MI
 Ruth and Martin Van Dyke, Denver, CO
 Catherine Van Eck, Lansing, IL
 Dr. and Mrs. Larry Van Genderen, Jackson, WY
 Mrs. Thea B. Van Halsema, Grand Rapids, MI
 Mr. Daniel Van Meurs, Grand Rapids, MI
 Mr. and Mrs. Richard J. Van Tuinen, Longmont, CO
 Peter and Audrey Van Vliet, Grand Rapids, MI
 Mr. and Mrs. Arie Verkaik, Jenison, MI
 Evert Volkersz, Stony Brook, NY
 Mr. and Mrs. Alvin P. Vos, Endwell, NY
 Bill and Pat Waanders, Grand Rapids, MI
 Jane Warners, Kentwood, MI
 Dave and Brenda Wiersma, Tucson, AZ
 Rev. and Mrs. Homer J. Wigboldy, Lynden, WA
 Rev. and Mrs. Donald Wisse, Wyckoff, NJ
 Mr. and Mrs. Henry I. Witte, Ada, MI
 Glenn and Marjorie Wyngarden, Zeeland, MI
 Mr. and Mrs. Bernard H. Zandstra, Holt, MI
 Kenneth and Elaine Zimmerman, Woodstock, MD
 Mr. and Mrs. Case M. Zwart, Ontario, CA

Origins

The Archives

Calvin College and Theological Seminary

1855 Knollcrest Circle SE

Grand Rapids, Michigan 49546

The Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary Archives contains the historical records of the Christian Reformed Church, its College, its Theological Seminary, and other institutions related to the Reformed tradition in the Netherlands and North America. The Archives also contains a wide range of personal and family manuscripts.

Origins

Historical Magazine of The Archives
Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary
Volume XXXIV • Number 2 • 2016

