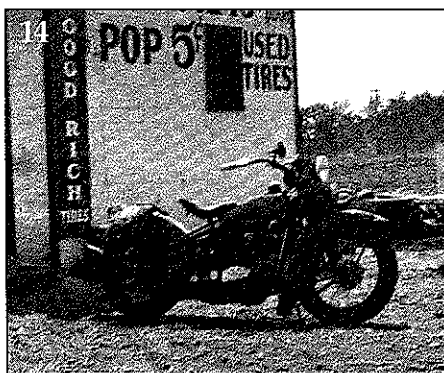


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Cover: Minuteman illustration from
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Prism, p. 143

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PATRIOTIC PRESS

The Dutch Experience in Southwest Minnesota During World War I

by Robert Schoone-Jongen*

The United States declared war on Germany on April 6, 1917. In requesting the congressional declaration, President Woodrow Wilson warned, "It is a fearful thing to lead this great peaceful people into war, into this most terrible and disastrous of all

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Leota Christian Reformed Church and parsonage, 1907

wars, civilization itself seeming to be in the balance."

The U.S. entry into the Great War did indeed unleash many "fearful" forces in this country. Idealism and patriotic fervor were twisted by some into hate, fear, and intolerance. While the President called for a noble crusade to defend democracy, others used the war as a pretext to attack the foundations of the democracy the country was supposed to be defending.

Immigrants were faced with painful choices. Those who had come to America to escape military service now faced conscription. Those who came to be left alone felt government intervention in their lives on an unprecedented scale. Even the churches of the land were not immune to government scrutiny. Precious ties with their European past were severed by the war.

The immigrants had to prove their loyalty to the satisfaction of their native-born neighbors; if they failed, they could face serious consequences. For many recent arrivals the choices were easy. They served in the armed forces, worked in the defense plants, bought Liberty Bonds, and did all that the government asked of them, but for many others the



SURES

WW I

pressure to be "American" demanded more than they were willing to give.

The Minnesota Case

Settlement of southwest Minnesota began around 1870. Veterans of the Union Army and their families were lured to the area by the promise of cheap land. Though there were pockets of Irish, Germans, and Swedes, most of the white population was native born and Yankee. Then, beginning around 1891, the Dutch began to settle in the region where Pipestone, Murray, Rock, and Nobles counties converge. Most of the Dutch came from northwest Iowa or the border areas between Germany and the Netherlands. To many of them the Germans were not "Huns"; they were neighbors and relatives.

The newcomers appeared to be a

clannish lot. They kept to themselves on their farms, attended their own churches, and spoke their own language. Although they had internal religious divisions, these distinctions were largely lost on the other settlers of the area. The English speakers expected immigrants to assimilate, to become a part of the homogenized American culture. But these immigrants did not mix very well.

The early years of the twentieth century were difficult ones in southwest Minnesota. Money was scarce. The Dutch settlers struggled to build their homes and churches. Despite repeated urgings from Classis Orange City, the Christian Reformed congregations failed to open Christian day schools for their children. But as the economic situation improved, schools were finally established. Edgerton

Christian School opened in September 1917. Leota opened one year later.

To the non-Christian Reformed of the community this separatism was excessive. The local newspaper editor, John S. Randolph, attacked the Christian school as expensive, a threat to the public school, and engendering "a class spirit that is bad for the community."¹ Rev. Abraham Blik, pastor of the Christian Reformed congregation, tried to quell these fears, but the best he could do was to persuade Randolph to say that if the school *had* to exist, the community should "try to look upon it with sympathy and friendliness."²

During the month of April 1917, as the Christian school building was rising on a lot donated by the Christian Reformed congregation, the Minnesota legislature was doing its part to

WE HAVE SUBSCRIBED

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mobilize the state to fight the recently declared war. With the cooperation of the governor, a Commission of Public Safety (CPS) was created to do whatever was "necessary and proper" within constitutional limits to expedite prosecution of the war. The five-member commission was specifically empowered to require all those suspected of "disloyalty" to appear and to explain their actions.³ The CPS was to serve as prosecutor, judge, and jury in such cases, and, because the law did not define "disloyalty," this was also left to the CPS.

For almost two years this committee of zealots ruled the state of Minnesota. Each county organized local committees to investigate suspicious activities. The identities of informants were kept secret. Any rumor this spy network heard was passed on to the authorities in St. Paul. These local commissions also took steps to ensure the cooperation of the local courts by screening juror lists and intimidating lenient judges.⁴

For any immigrant community, especially for one in which the immigrants had ties to Germany, the situation in Minnesota became very dangerous. Statewide, 70 percent of the population was composed of immigrants or the children of immigrants. The native-born Minnesotans were not about to take any chances with potential subversives.

The Edgerton-Leota area experienced ethnic tensions from the opening days of the war. As the first local volunteers were clambering onto the troop trains for boot camp, the *Edgerton Enterprise* was warning its readers to avoid being unpatriotic by using foreign languages in public.⁵

Newspapers regularly printed extensive lists of who had volunteered for the Red Cross, who had subscribed to the Liberty Loan, and who was volunteering for the armed forces. In a small town these lists also made it obvious who were not being

cooperative. In nearby Pipestone the newspaper began to print lists of those who refused to buy Liberty Bonds. Slowly these "voluntary acts" became compulsory tests of loyalty. Rev. E. N. Prentice of the Pipestone Presbyterian Church went so far as to warn those who "showed resentment" at the Liberty Loan appeals that they were opposing a presidential "order" and were asking to be invited to leave the country.⁶ These tactics enabled Nobles, Murray, and Pipestone to boast that they were three of the top four counties in the state in the per capita purchasing of bonds.⁷

By August 1917, the Commission of Public Safety was organized throughout the state and ready to exercise its influence. In Edgerton the local newspaper warned,

There are numerous reports of disloyal talk in this community, and such matters are going to be dealt with. This country cannot furnish homes, wealth, protection, and opportunities for those who do not support it in every possible way. Our soldier boys will come home some day, perhaps unable to work; they can use some disloyal citizen's farm, residence, or bank account to a very good advantage.⁸

The antagonisms within Edgerton were exposed in print when school opened in September. Principal A. S. De Jong of the Christian school objected to editor Randolph's habit of calling the new institution the "Christian Reformed School." The editor replied,

All schools are supposed to be Christian schools for we have no heathen institutions of learning; therefore the authorities of our public schools might feel that the adoption of such a name by one particular sect or society is an unwarranted and selfish assumption of virtues which all possess.⁹

Throughout the fall and winter, Minnesota was inundated with the

CPS's blandishments about use of foreign languages in classrooms. Such classes were deemed an "insult to the flag." In the state's newspaper appeared slogans such as "One Country, One Flag, One People, and One Speech" or "The first business of the American school is Americanism. The finest product of our educational system is an informed, inspired, and well-rounded patriotism." To emphasize the point, the CPS ordered all teachers to submit to a loyalty oath.¹⁰

The pressure to conform began to



Four posters via Minnesota Historical Society
Northern Pacific Railway Company
Records, Minnesota Historical Society

take its toll on the Dutch community. During the spring of 1918 the Edgerton Christian Reformed congregation placed a flag in the sanctuary. This

religion. The piety that some people can assume when it suits their own dirty, selfish, pin-headed, disloyal purposes is something astonishing to behold. The teacher, editor, preacher, church organization or society that does not give every particle of its influence toward helping this country and her allies should be banished or dispersed, as the case may be. The man who is too *pure* and holy to interest himself in the present war is too good to live in our country and, in fact, we don't know of any place on this sphere that is good enough.¹⁴

These suspicions of religious motives appear to be aimed at the situation in the Leota Christian Reformed Church. This town, isolated by its distance from the railroad, was almost exclusively Dutch. There were only two churches in town, Reformed and Christian Reformed. In 1918 the town underwent several weeks of intense scrutiny as a possible nest of disloyalty.

Burt I. Weld, the director of the Murray County Commission of Public Safety, began to investigate allegations of sedition in the Dutch community. His agents fanned out in Murray and Nobles counties to gather evidence. His sources brought to his attention remarks made by an immigrant named Bastian Van Eck, about whom Weld said,

... he [Van Eck] would much prefer to go back to Holland than he would to fight for the United States ... as well as many other serious [sic] remarks.

We had him before the Commission and the County Commissioners stood by us and were willing to appropriate the money for his return if it could be done legally. Since that time Mr. Van Eck has been making other statements to the effect that we could not send him back and he still holds to the

same views he had already expressed that "he would never fight for the d_____ French or the United States either. . . ."

He is a Hollander and while he has not much influence in his neighborhood, yet there are many other Hollanders who are thinking along the same line but not doing so out loud. If there is any way by which we can take care of this, it would have an extremely wholesome effect in his neighborhood.¹⁵ The matter was referred to immigration officials in St. Paul. Van Eck was not deported.

Two weeks after Van Eck was summoned, Adrianus Lolkus and Henry Masselink were hauled before the commission to explain their failures to purchase enough Liberty Bonds. While there are no records of what happened to Masselink, Lolkus left the meeting promising to mend his ways, having signed an apology for his lack of patriotic zeal.¹⁶

Simultaneously, the minister of the Christian Reformed church in Leota, N. Jansen, came under the scrutiny of Weld's agents. A contemporary news account related,

During the past few weeks matters of great consequence came to the surface and as a result grave suspicions were held by the commissions of both counties as to the loyalty of the pastor of the Christian Reformed church and also a number of his flock.

Specifically, Jansen had refused to cooperate in publicizing a loyalty meeting to be held in town. His refusal led to a second meeting with agents from both counties, during which the minister

... made statements of a very serious and seditious nature.

Being further requested, Pastor Jansen called a meeting of the trustees of the church and the matter of the request [for cooperation] was considered. At that meeting of the

trustees that board refused to permit their pastor to make any announcements of any kind, patriotic or otherwise.

Jansen was visited a third time. During this confrontation Jansen was once more asked to cooperate. Furthermore, he was asked to host the rally, since the intended site would not hold the anticipated crowd. Jansen and the consistory backed down from their previous stand. The minister, "undoubtedly having become aware of the seriousness of his former statement, delivered a splendid patriotic address."¹⁷ During the same week as Jansen's third visit a group of vigilantes rode into Leota and painted the home of Simon Prins yellow. Apparently he had made some statements considered "disloyal" and was made to pay the price.

The Murray County CPS was satisfied that "staunch loyalty beats in the hearts of the great majority of the people of southwestern Murray County and the northwest portion of Nobles County" and that "a certain Holland preacher who has been doing considerable talking" had been "straightened out."¹⁸

In Pipestone County suspicions about the Dutch lingered. When the Prins house was painted, the *Enterprise* announced that it "did not uphold these painting stunts, but has no sympathy for those who bring such punishment upon themselves by wilful [sic] disloyalty."¹⁹

The loyalty question exploded in Edgerton on May 23. Rev. Prentice of Pipestone, one of the state CPS's approved public speakers, gave an address at the opera house. In his remarks he denounced what he considered the two most subversive influences in the southern part of the county—the saloon in Trosky and the Edgerton Christian School. He said the school was un-American and undemocratic "since it separates young and impressionable children into dif-

ferent religious, social, or political classes at an age when they do not understand."²⁰

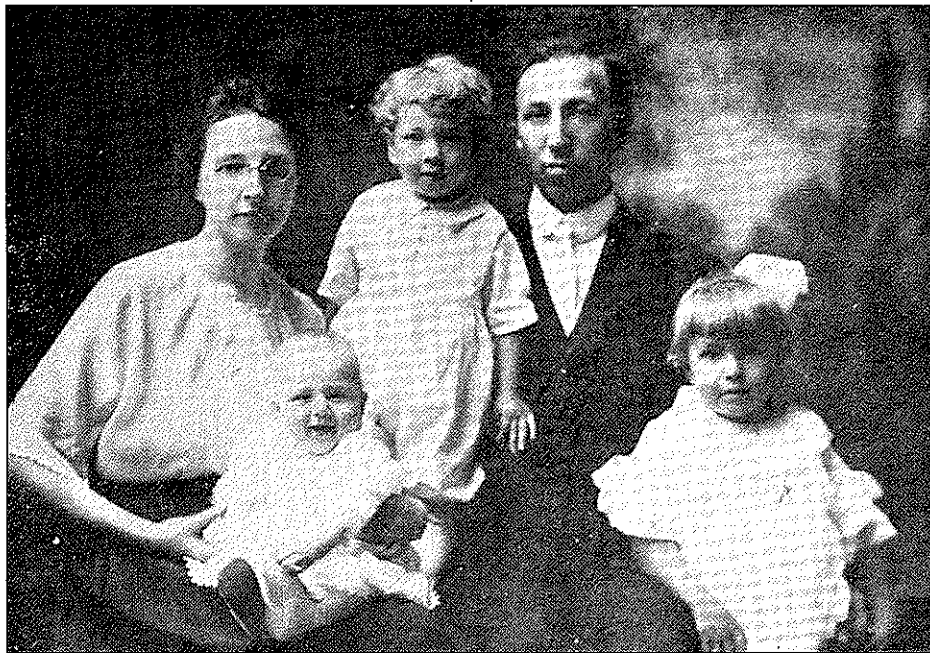
A. S. De Jong wrote a long article defending the school. He stated,

But what of this religious separation? Is it not rather our Country's boast and pride that within its wide embrace, as well as in its warm heart, big and generous, there is ample room for every creed, and every conscience, prompted to worship God in his own peculiar way, upon that broad expanse of its almost boundless territory? That religious liberty, that mutual toleration, is one of the indispensable foundation stones upon which the edifice of our glorious Republic rests. . . .²¹

Editor Randolph fired back his response:

The members of all the other churches in the community were bitterly opposed to the establishing of the school. . . . The plan and hope of the promoters is to make it a universal Christian school; but locally this appears impossible. . . .

Rev. N. J. Jansen and family, Leota CRC, 1916-1920



Any school which removes support or attendance from the public school, which differs in its system or sentiments or influence, which decreases the respect or veneration of any number of children for the public school, is UN-AMERICAN, whether it be better or worse. Our public school is an outgrowth of various systems. . . . Those who do not like or respect it do not accept the full meaning of Americanism.²²

De Jong responded to these charges:

What our government allows [e.g., private schools] should not be descied by any citizen as UN-AMERICAN. No one should set himself up as a judge over his fellow citizens who are law abiding and faithful to the Constitution . . . because these fellow citizens do not think the same way he does . . . , so long as they train their children to be God-fearing and loyal citizens of the great Commonwealth. . . .

This stand of the "better-American-than-thou" attitude smacks too much of the old heresy-hunting inquisitors of the Seventeenth Cen-

tury. . . . We claim as citizens of FREE AMERICA the right to educate our children in schools controlled neither by the state nor by the church but by the parents themselves, provided that we are also in our teaching loyal and true to the Stars and Stripes.²³

Randolph gave himself the final word in this exchange. He maintained that the separate school made those who attended "usually imagine that they are of a little finer clay" than their public-school counterparts; ". . . proof of this is so obvious in this community that argument is useless." He further asserted that "a church so thoroughly organized . . . as Mr. De Jong's, should exert sufficient religious influence to hold its children in line from one service to the next . . ." without resorting to a separate school.

As to what our government allows, we have generously allowed many things which will probably never be allowed again; as our generosity has almost been our undoing as a nation. . . . Too long have people of foreign birth and instincts been allowed to go to dangerous limits in demanding their "rights" in "Free America." In too many cases have there been small replicas of foreign communities allowed to spring up here. All this has appeared innocent and harmless, until sometimes the pet lion has grown into a devouring beast. . . .²⁴

Although the amount of documented vitriol declined in the final months of the war, there were still signs of animosity. The Edgerton postmaster filed an affidavit with the CPS denouncing Nick De Boer, Leota's postmaster, and several others for playing a role in publicizing an abortive Nonpartisan League rally in Leota. How the information was obtained cannot be established. De Boer and his brother, it was alleged, "are rank in condemning the Government when talking to their own country-

men. . . . The Postmaster is not as outspoken as the rest of the bunch but if a Hollander dropped in there on some other mission, he could hear all kinds of pro-German propaganda."²⁵

Even as the end of the war approached, the language issue would not die. In October 1918, every store in Edgerton (except two) agreed to display placards which read, "A good way to show our loyalty to Uncle Sam is to speak his language on the street and in public places, and also patronize the public schools of your state and nation."²⁶

On November 11, 1918, the Armistice was signed. Within two months the Minnesota Commission of Public Safety filed its last report to the governor and disappeared. The legacy of hate, fear, suspicion, and intolerance it fostered lived on much longer. Its ugly head appeared in various guises and in various places at various times in subsequent years.

Southwest Minnesota's Dutch community continued to thrive. However, even today it remains a group slightly apart from its neighbors. Although it has been assimilated into the American culture, it has not been com-

pletely absorbed. The Christian schools survived the threats and grew. So did the public schools. But some of the animosities fueled by Minnesota's sad experiment in rule by edict and trial by innuendo linger just below the surface, even three-quarters of a century later.

Endnotes

¹Edgerton Enterprise 19 Jan. 1917:1.

²Edgerton Enterprise 26 Jan. 1917:1.

³Ora A. Hilton, "The Minnesota Commission of Public Safety in World War I, 1917-19, Bulletin of the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College 15 May 1951:1-2.

⁴John S. Pardee, letter to John Gray, 6 Aug. 1917, and John Gray, letter to Charles W. Henke, 10 Jan. 1918,

Commission of Public Safety Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

⁵Edgerton Enterprise 27 Apr. 1917:1 and 4 May 1917:1.

⁶Pipestone Star 1 June 1917:8 and 29 June 1917:1.

⁷Commission of Public Safety, Minnesota in the War 26 June 1918, University of Minnesota Library.

⁸Edgerton Enterprise 17 Aug. 1917:1.

⁹Edgerton Enterprise 31 Aug. 1917:1,4.

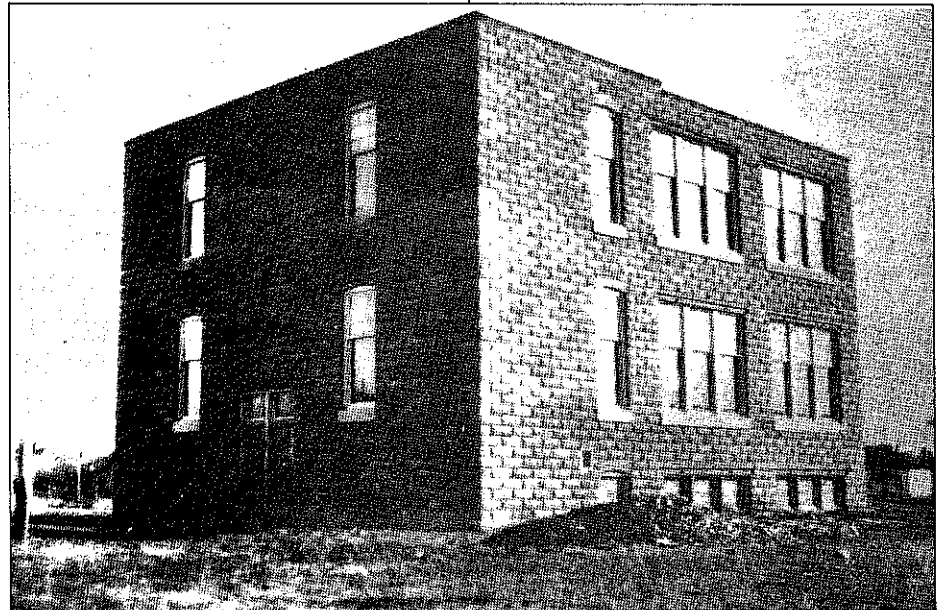
¹⁰Commission of Public Safety, Minnesota in War 1 Dec. 1917:1.

¹¹Commission of Public Safety, Minnesota in War 6 Apr. 1918:1.

¹²Commission of Public Safety, Minnesota in War 11 May 1918:1; Murray County Herald 2 May 1918:1.

¹³Alien Registration Forms, Commission of Public Safety Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

¹⁴Edgerton Enterprise 26 Apr. 1918:1. In this same period Theodore Roosevelt is quoted as saying, "The clergyman who does not put the flag above the church had better close his church and keep it closed" (quoted in



Edgerton Christian School, 1919

(Below) Class of 1919, Edgerton Christian School.



Peoria, Iowa The War Years 1917-18

by Garret Pothoven*

Charles S. Ward, The Minnesota Commission of Public Safety in World War I: Its Formation and Activities).

¹⁵Burt I. Weld, letter to Henry W. Libby, 19 Apr. 1918, Commission of Public Safety, Minnesota Historical Society.

¹⁶Murray County Herald 2 May 1918:1.

¹⁷Murray County Herald 9 May 1918:4. Reprinted in Edgerton Enterprise 17 May 1918.

¹⁸Burt I. Weld, letter to S. W. Fraser, 6 May 1918, Commission of Public Safety Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

¹⁹Edgerton Enterprise 10 May 1918:4.

²⁰Edgerton Enterprise 31 May 1918:1.

²¹Edgerton Enterprise 7 June 1918:1.

²²Edgerton Enterprise 7 June 1918:4.

²³Edgerton Enterprise 21 June 1918:1.

²⁴Edgerton Enterprise 21 June 1918:8.

²⁵Fred H. Baldwin, letter to Henry W. Libby, 1 July 1918, Commission of Public Safety Papers, Minnesota Historical Society. The Nonpartisan League was a farmer protest group which asked for state-owned grain elevators, stockyards, packing houses, and state-financed crop insurance. The Commission of Public Safety regarded this group as a dire threat to the war effort and went to great lengths to suppress its activities during the primary election campaign of 1918. The NPL supported the unsuccessful candidacy of Charles A. Lindbergh, Sr., Republican, for governor. (Cf. Carol Jensen, "Loyalty as a Political Weapon: The 1918 Campaign in Minnesota." Minnesota History, Summer 1972, pp. 43-57). While many Dutch residents of southwest Minnesota joined the NPL, Nick De Boer did not. His brother did. Of the six men cited in the letter, only two of them were actual members of the NPL. (Cf. Nonpartisan League Membership Lists, Nonpartisan League Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.)

²⁶Edgerton Enterprise 4 Oct. 1918:1. Two of Edgerton's storekeepers were Dutch.

Credits

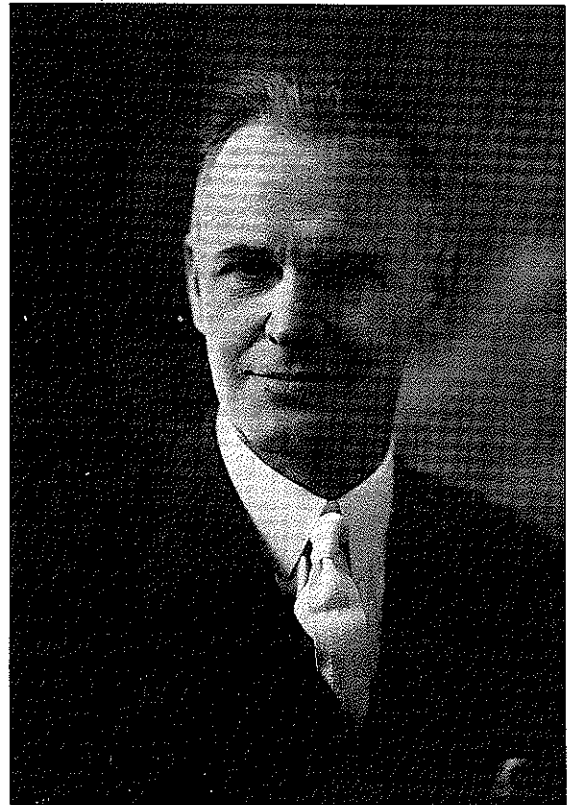
50th Anniversary: Ebenezer Christian Reformed Church of Leota, Minnesota (Privately printed, 1945)

50th Anniversary: Ebenezer Christian Reformed Church of Leota, Minnesota (Privately printed, 1945)

50th Anniversary, Edgerton Christian School (Privately printed, 1967)

The war years were difficult for many people in the Peoria church. To begin with, all the Dutch people were suspected of being pro-German. At least they were called that. Being of Dutch ancestry and speaking the Dutch language very likely brought on this label. However, there was no basis for it. All our people were loyal, patriotic Americans. Of course, our young men who were subject to the draft did use every legal means available to avoid being drafted. Rev. Weersing, our pastor during that era, assisted them in every possible way and, I presume, was successful in some cases. Who likes to go into the army? But this was not to the liking of our American neighbors (*Amerikane* we called them). Consequently, a lot of ill will developed, especially toward Rev. Weersing. When it came to buying war bonds, Rev. Weersing encouraged our people to do their part, and, as a result, our people did better in that regard than the other members of the community. For this our people should have been commended, but instead it brought on further jealousy. At this time there were still many American people in the Peoria community. I can recall the names of many of these who lived within three or four miles of Peoria: Appel, Rice, Gosnell, McKissick,

Lunt, Strong, Wehile, Castner, Timbrel, Fleming, Lundy, Sheesley, Johnson, Spain, Allen, Swank, Keller, Dunwoody, Engel, Jackson, Boyd.



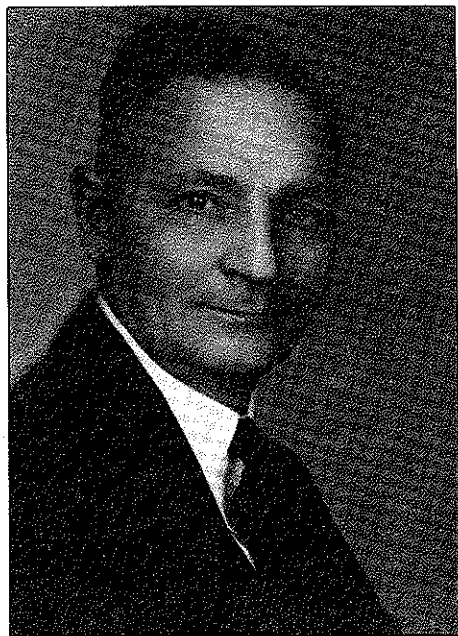
Rev. J. J. Weersing

There were more, but I can recall only these right now. All of them gradually sold their farms to the Dutch people, who, on the whole, were better farmers than the Americans, and most of them prospered. This fact, too, I be-

*Mr. Pothoven, a retired Christian school teacher living in Jenison, Michigan, wrote this piece as a letter to his niece.

lieve, was a source of jealousy.

Gradually real hostility developed. Rev. Weersing's life was threatened, and county authorities advised him to leave the community. My father took him to the train in Oskaloosa. He related later that he was glad when Rev. Weersing was safe on the train. They had some anxious moments while waiting for the train. Apparently there were some hostile people hanging around the depot. To my knowledge, Rev. Weersing never returned to Peoria, unless he did so in secret. Certainly he never returned as a preacher.



Rev. C. De Leeuw

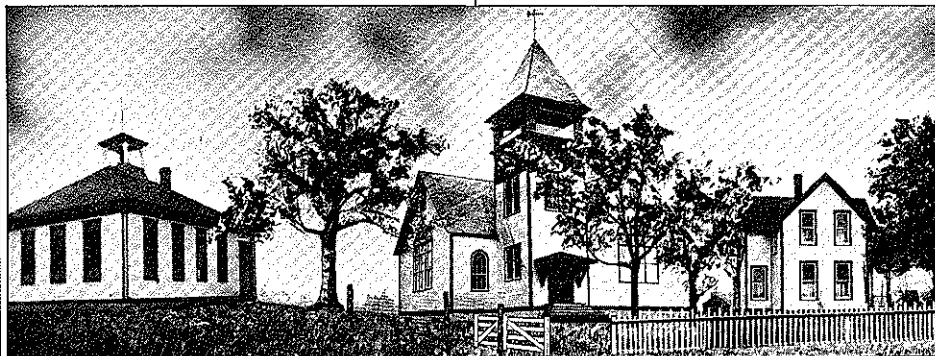
Soon after Weersing left, the services on Sunday had to be in English. What the source of this order was, I do not know, nor how long it was in force—very likely for the duration of the war. Mr. Hietbrink, our school principal, was called upon to lead in the first English service. The consistory must have decided just before the service that this change should be made; Mr. Hietbrink was already sitting in church when he was asked to lead the service. Few elders could use the English language well. Later on

my dad and Jake Rus alternately took over this responsibility. He and Rus could speak and read the English language better than the others, but I am sure that they, too, felt their inadequacies. I might add that later, when Dutch services were again held and reading services had to be resorted to, it was usually K. Stuursma and Charles Stuursma who took turns in reading. Both were very capable of that.

Another evidence of community hostility was that our church properties were threatened. The Reformed church in New Sharon was the first to go up in flames. This church was never rebuilt. Then the Christian

school in Sully. Thus alerted, the Peoria people decided to protect their properties by having a few men stand guard at night. In this they took turns. How long they did this I do not know. When things appeared to be calming down, they discontinued the guard, but one night soon after that both the school and the church were burned to the ground. When the news reached us, my dad and others went down there, but nothing could be done. I was too young and was not allowed to go along, so my mother and I watched

Peoria, Iowa, Christian Reformed Church and Christian School, destroyed by American nativists



School group at Peoria Christian School, c. 1910



the flames from our front yard.

I am sure these were anxious weeks and months for the Peoria people, especially for my father, as he was active in church affairs and was close to Rev. Weersing. In later years I have heard some people discredit the seriousness of the situation. Maybe they had a point, but then it is always easy to criticize after it is all over and if you were not too involved in the matter and did not assume any responsibility. That there was hostility toward the Dutch people is evident from what happened not only in

Peoria Christian Reformed Church, rebuilt after the fire



Peoria but in New Sharon and Sully as well. One day Mr. Hietbrink was physically assaulted on his way to the store by a young punk living in the neighborhood.

After the school burned, the children of the church had to go to the public school until the Christian school was rebuilt. Church services and all other church meetings were held in one of the horse barns at the bottom of the hill. Partitions were removed, boards were used for seats, and the building was insulated in the best way possible so that it would be somewhat comfortable. This was the

place of meeting for the congregation until a new church could be built. Incidentally, the architect for the new church was a Verhey of Pella. Shortly after we began meeting in the barn, Rev. Weersing sent his farewell sermon to the congregation. My father read the sermon. I do not know the exact dates or years when all of the above took place.

The war ended on November 11, 1918. Some of the Peoria boys had been drafted and had served in the armed forces. Two of them went over to France—Walt Vander Hart and William Den Hartog. One fellow had

Comments on Garrett Pothoven's "The War Years"

The article on Peoria by Mr. Pothoven brought back many memories to me. When Rev. Weersing (1879–1976) was in Peoria, my father, Rev. C. De Leeuw (1876–1963), was minister of nearby First CRC of Pella, and they were close friends.

During the time of Rev. Weersing's danger, they had an agreement that whenever he felt it necessary, he would come to our home at night. They had arranged a secret knock that he would make at our door, which my parents would answer without using any light. On one occasion he stayed about three days, and my parents told us not to tell anyone that he was visiting us. Rev. Weersing would come on horseback, and my brother, Case De Leeuw, remembers that Mr. A. Van Duren, who lived nearby, would hide the horse in his barn.

During the time of harassment in Peoria there were rumors that the Ku Klux Klan was responsible. My

brother does not recall that and believes it was a vigilante group who believed the Dutch people were "pro-German." Another rumor was that a group of men on horseback rode through various towns where they hung up the effigy of Kaiser Wilhelm and then burned it. Whoever the group was, they let it be known that Rev. Weersing would be "tarred and feathered" if he remained in Peoria!

The friendship between my parents and the Weersings continued throughout their lifetime. Later, when we lived in Sioux Center, Iowa, Rev. Weersing was minister in nearby Hull. While we lived in Lansing, he was minister of First Cicero for many years. I remember him as a kind, friendly, courteous gentleman, and my parents admired him.

Hermine De Leeuw Terpstra
Lansing, Illinois

taken his physical and was to be inducted the very day the Armistice was signed. My father took him in that day, but with the signing of the Armistice, all inductions were stopped, and he could return home. We were all happy about that. When the news of the Armistice reached the various communities, there were great celebrations. I did not have the privilege of participating in them, but I could hear the booming of the cannons where I was. And where was that? In the cornfield, picking corn all by myself. I think many people stopped work that day and joined the celebrations. For me it was a day of mixed emotions.

Eventually everything in the community came back to normal. Both the church and the school were rebuilt. These had been trying years for the church and especially for those who held positions of responsibility. From the church *Yearbook* I learned that Rev. Weersing officially left Peoria in 1918, but I believe he left the community before that. Rev. P. Van Dyk followed him in 1919.

Thus ended a turbulent period for the Peoria church. If there had been news media at that time as we have today, all of this might have received a lot of publicity. But as it was, it received practically none. I believe there was one reference to it in a Des Moines paper, the *Iowa Homestead*. Our people received little, if any, support from local authorities, because these were not sympathetic to their cause.

I have given you some details which you did not ask for, but somehow I could not avoid it. And in reading the above, please remember that this news reporter was only a teenager at the time all this happened and that he is now writing from memory after sixty years. Hence, there may be, and very likely are, many inaccuracies and some exaggerations due to the impressionable years of youth and lapse of memory due to old age.

A Letter from France

By H. Holstege

Weis, Germany
January 3, 1919

Dear Parents:

I just wrote a letter on January 1, but this evening I received permission from the captain to write you a letter in Dutch. So I thought I had better do it right away. I will now tell you what has happened to us here in France. To write all about it is impossible because that would fill a book.

When we first arrived in France, we had to work unloading the ships. We did that for about a month. Then they sent us to central France, where we received further training to prepare for meeting the enemy. Then they sent us to a quiet area of the front where there was not much fighting. This place was Alsace Lorraine.

We were there for a couple of months. There was not much combat there, but cannonballs passed overhead now and then, and the machine

guns were sometimes very active. That did not bother us, because we were in the trenches where no gunfire can harm you. It is not easy for a cannon fired from a couple miles away to strike you. The trenches are no more than three feet wide, so, if a shot is to harm you, it must drop into the trenches. We lost almost no one, but we learned to act like soldiers under enemy fire.

Then we received orders to move. We did not know where we were going, but after a couple days we knew, for we passed through Paris. That meant we were going to a place called Chateau Thierry. It was there that the Americans had done the hardest fighting up to that time. Believe me, many a soldier asked himself, "How will I get out of here?" Soon we met the enemy. On August 1 we charged the Germans. The enemy was in a

"Over the top"



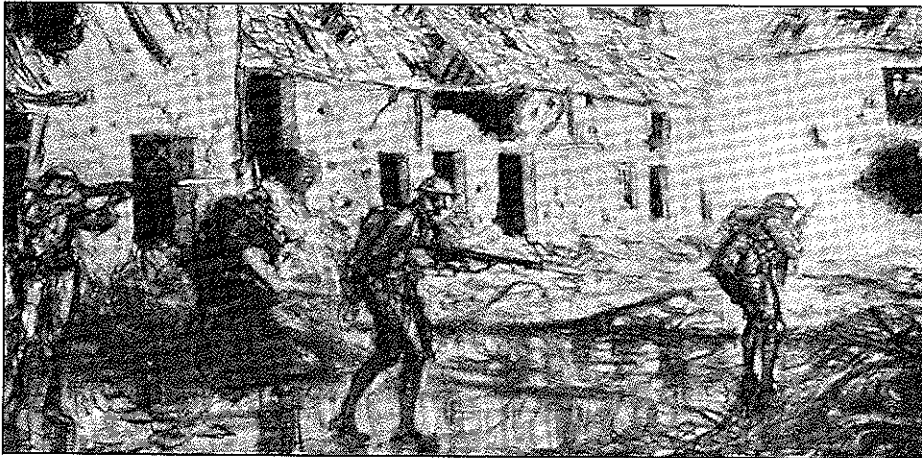
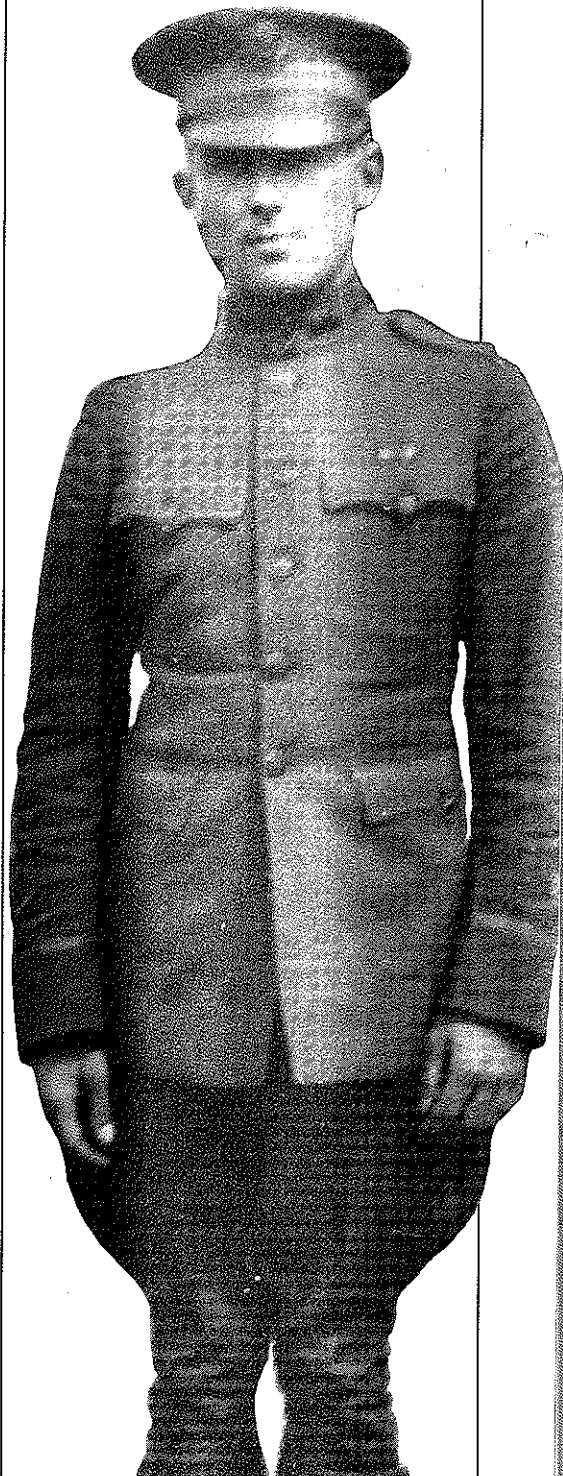
large woods, and our battalion was to drive them out. That was not a pleasant prospect, because another regiment had tried to do so for three days, but they could not get them out. The ground there was covered by dead bodies.

Well, we started out. As soon as we were near the woods we met heavy cannon and machine-gun fire. Many fell there never to rise again. Others were severely wounded. It was terrible, but we continued to advance. We were about halfway through the woods but could go no farther. The

eight days we had only small meals twice each day. And from early morning to late at night we had to go after the enemy and then always under cannon and machine-gun fire. Tired? Yes, but we were soldiers and would not give up. Under normal circumstances we would not have been able to do it. Then, after eight days, other soldiers replaced us, and we marched to the rear. We were almost dead from fatigue.

We were allowed to rest for two weeks, and then we had to go to another front. There everything was the

1st Lt. Henry Holstege



"Clearing out a village"

enemy fire was too heavy.

It was here that Gilbert Karsten was shot. He was hit in the head and died instantly. Here Rozema was shot through his hand and Buikema through his shoulder. Well, we had to move back. We could not remain there, and in good order we returned to our own line. That night more of our artillery joined us and fired shots into the woods all night. On the morning of August 2 we charged the woods again. This time the Germans had to give way. And we would not leave the woods, because the position had cost so many lives. And then came the hard work. The enemy fled, and we had to pursue them.

Do you know what it is to be tired? Or to be hungry? I do not think so. For

same as it had been at the first place we camped. And so it went. How I came through so well I do not know.

It was God's will. If I get back home, I will tell you more. . . . Now I must go to bed. I have no more news. I hope to be on my way home very soon, but I don't know when that will be.

With love and kisses,
Your son Hendrik

Sgt. Henry Holstege
Colm 126 Inf.
A.P.O. 734
A.E.F.
Via N.Y.

Credits

Frank Simonds, *A History of the World War* (New York: Doubleday, 1920), 64 ff., 114 ff.

PEASE, MINN

Saga of One Hun

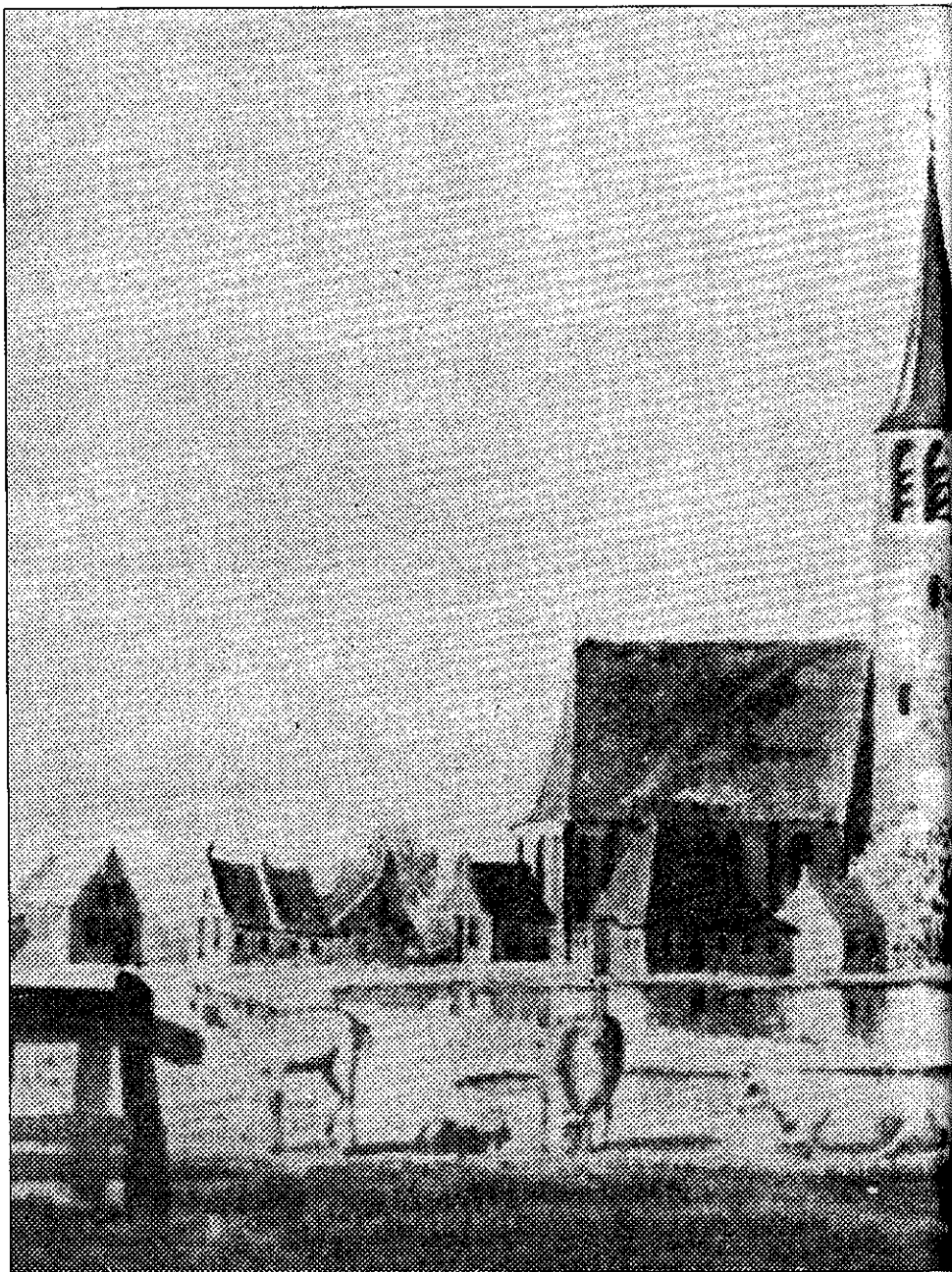
*by Fannie Smith**

North of Minneapolis and due east of St. Cloud, Minnesota, three small Christian Reformed churches were founded between 1886 and 1915. The second of these, Pease, dates from 1895. The congregation's founding elder, Sam Droogsma, responding to a survey conducted by Rev. Henry Beets in 1924, penned the following account of the region's early history.

Embarrassed by having to use his own name so frequently, Droogsma declared, "Now you will notice that I mention myself often, but that's the way it was in the early days. Someone had to take the initiative to get the ball rolling. I hope you will understand this."

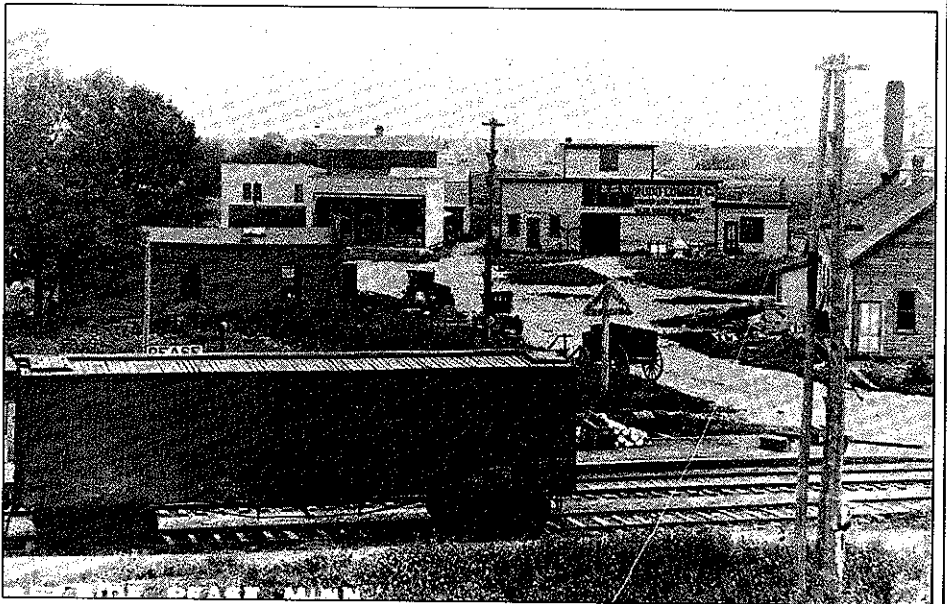
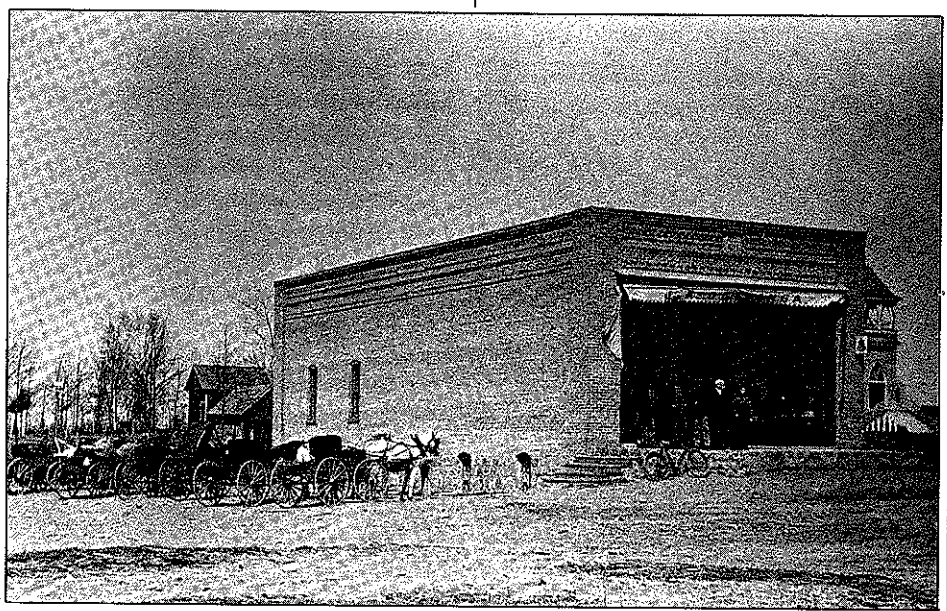
Droogsma came to the woodlands of Pease from Lemars, Iowa, believing that his move was a response to God's direction. He knew in advance, however, that Pease had no church, and, he wrote, "The first two or three Sundays passed with no sabbath meetings, and I could not endure this. So I immediately tried to make arrangements for meetings around God's Word. At our first Sunday, Klaas Sjaarde read a sermon in the morning, and in the afternoon we discussed the Gospel of John My training in the Christian Schools of the Netherlands was very useful to me in those days, and I think others benefitted from this too.

**Mrs. Smith is a free-lance author of local history.*



ESOTA

red Years



*Droogsma's native village, Witmarsen, Friesland, c. 1850.
(Above) Pease Village scenes (2), c. 1910*

"Then quite unexpectedly we received a message from Rev. Johannes Vander Werp, who was a home missionary for Classis Orange City. I well remember picking him up at Foreston Station and driving down impossible roads—over stumps, through holes, and finally down the river bank. Rev. Vander Werp cried out: 'Is it possible to cross here!' and I said, 'Just hold tight, Dominee.' We reached our destination safely, and after visiting some folks, preaching on Sunday, and investigating the situation thoroughly, he returned home.

"Then in June, as if he dropped from the sky, Cornelius Bode ("Uncle C") came and wished to organize a congregation. I didn't think that was possible. Who would lead the congregation in preaching, teaching, and all the rest? But the people were eager to do it, and, of course, Uncle C was too. When the congregation began, it was part of the newly organized Classis East Friesland.

"Although I was only a young man, I became useful and was busy from the outset. Soon my fellow elder, Sjaarde, left to earn some cash by working on the prairie (Iowa), and I

had to read both sermons each Sunday. Then, in the fall, when more people arrived, I went through the woods on horseback to teach the children in various places with the little catechism books (Borstius). After reading two sermons, I conducted a Sunday school and an evening catechism for the older folk. Sjaarda also taught a catechism class for older people . . . I must testify that the Lord sustained us and did not allow the work to be done without his blessing. And I must honestly admit that I enjoyed being engaged in the Lord's work.

"Later, I also had a singing school, because the congregation had to be built up and a foundation had to be laid for the future. I also began a fourth of July festival, which has continued to this day.

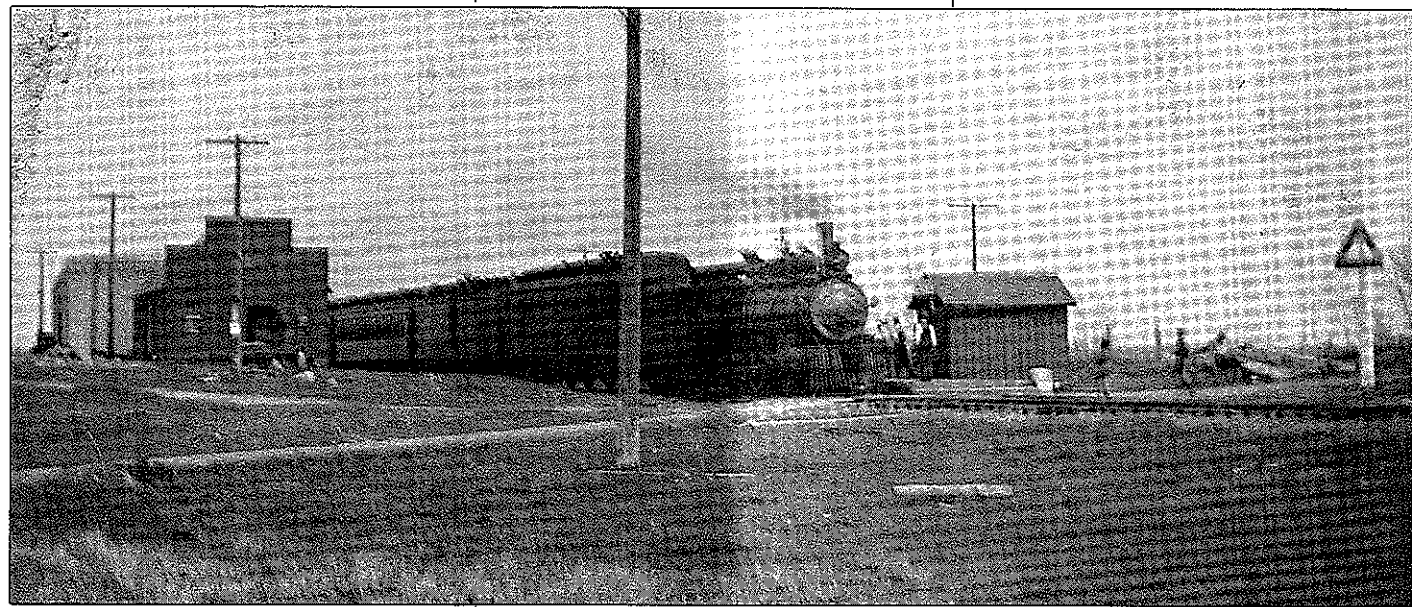
"When the congregation was organized, it had no building and no

land. But Uncle C had a solution. He talked to Mr. E. Bont, who owned much of the timberland in the area, and we acquired a donation of ten acres. Later several people went door to door in the neighborhood and collected money for the building. The Lord blessed these efforts, and soon we had the land, lumber, and nails. So in the summer of 1896 everyone

Droogsma family: (L-R) Hein, Simon, Hein, Agnes



Village scene, c. 1910



joined hands to build the church.

"Meanwhile, several new families arrived from South Dakota, and they wanted a different location—in Soul Siding, now called Pease.* That resulted in a hard era for the Pease congregation. The first Dutch settlers did not want the church moved to Pease, where it now stands on the hill. (It was only a small shack compared to the present building.) That was a difficult time for me because some of my own family opposed the move.



Rev. and Mrs. Arend Meyer, c. 1915

"But the congregation began to grow steadily. More and more people arrived, and since I had served as elder for five years, I thought it was time for me to step aside in favor of the old graybeards who had come in our midst. I cannot say that the Pease church passed through very sad times, and at times I think the present times are sadder than the past. In those days people worked for the progress of the church with hearts

filled with devotion.

"After our new church was completed and then nearly out of debt, I made an effort to get the people to begin thinking about a Christian school. I had attended a Christian school in Friesland, in the village of Witmarsen, and, since the Lord had given children to me, I wished to have them taught in such a school. At first the people said, 'What's this new idea that Sam has now?' which revealed the ignorance some people had regarding Christian education. The task was heavy and difficult, but with the Lord's blessing we proceeded. And eventually, even with the consistory's opposition, we won out."

"The first settlers faced difficult times. The first year they had good crops, but prices were low—potatoes were eight cents a bushel; butter, six cents a pound. Even the low interest could not be paid. The second year was the same. Landowners threatened to take the land back. The people wondered what they should do. I went to Wisconsin to investigate another settlement, and many said, 'If you go, we'll go with you.' It gave me inner joy to know that the people trusted me. At a meeting held at my home we decided to leave, but not before talking to the local bankers. Prayerfully I set out on the task, and soon we received a letter from the bankers telling us to stay. That satisfied the people, and everyone went back to work.

"We suffered much in the early years—much flooding from heavy rains, potatoes rotting, little income from butter or lumber. The roads were impassable, and we had to make all of the roads leading out of Pease usable. They passed through swamps, and at times the creeks flooded the roads. Everyone was poverty stricken, but hearts were filled with courage, and I believe the congregation was more

spiritually alive than it is now.

"Things improved after we built the creamery, though it was difficult getting the people to do that. But at the meeting called together, the people finally reached an agreement and that proved very beneficial. Thereafter the situation improved. The land was drained, too, after I spent eight years to arrange it. But the Lord prospered me in all these efforts. Now, I could write much more, but when you have read this, you [Rev. Beets] will probably dump it in the wastebasket. I feel like doing that myself."

"Greetings,"

S. Droogsma

Pease Village History

More about Pease was reported by Mrs. Fannie Smith in *Pease Minnesota: Saga of One Hundred Years*. Quoting the Mille Lacs County Times of May 27, 1927, she said, "The period from about 1910–1930 was the best time for Pease. By then business was booming and the farmer's co-op creamery turned out more wealth in a month than the sawmill produced in a year Pease was colonized by Hollanders and is a successful outcome of early colonization. The village is located on rich farm lands which were selected because of the nearby railroad and sawmill. It is an important livestock and dairy center in the county" (quoted, Smith, "Village of Pease").

The village developed around the Christian Reformed Church which is the center of the social life. The village became almost totally Dutch before 1920 and had remained so until about 1980 when the population began to change. From 1923–1941 twenty-seven children were born in the village and twenty-five of these were from Dutch parentage. The town has always had less than 200 residents—the population was 34 in 1913 and the 1980 census

*officially named Pease in 1894

recorded their numbers as 172.

The general store opened in the spring of 1895, when Jacob and Henrietta Van Rhee arrived from South Dakota with nine children. Jacob began to provide the area with goods and services immediately, and he also purchased a large tract of land which, when cleared of stumps, was sold to Dutch immigrants in parcels of forty and eighty acres. The Van Rhees' farm

produced potatoes, hay, grain, and dairy products, and within a year Jacob had constructed a large building with a freight scale to facilitate wholesale agricultural brokering.

By 1898 the general store contained every imaginable product, "from a card of pins to a farm." Local residents provided cordwood, railroad ties, and basswood bolts, which Van Rhee sold in the markets of Duluth, Minneapolis and St. Cloud. He also brokered local farm products such as butter, cream, eggs, hay, small grains, and vegetables. For local demands he ordered goods from across the nation

and even from the Netherlands. As the singular source of goods and services, Van Rhee was crucial to the community. But in 1901 he sold his business and moved to Milaca, where he became a banker with extensive interests in lumbering.

Van Rhee's successor in Pease, W. J. Jetsinga, came from Holland, Minnesota, and the general store remained with his family until 1917, when E. S. Starkenberg purchased the business. But he sold out within three years, when George Alderink acquired the general store. Alderink came from Reeman, Michigan, and when joined

*Alderink's General Store, 1920:
(Right, front) George Alderink;
(Left, behind counter) Kate Kuperus
Ruis*

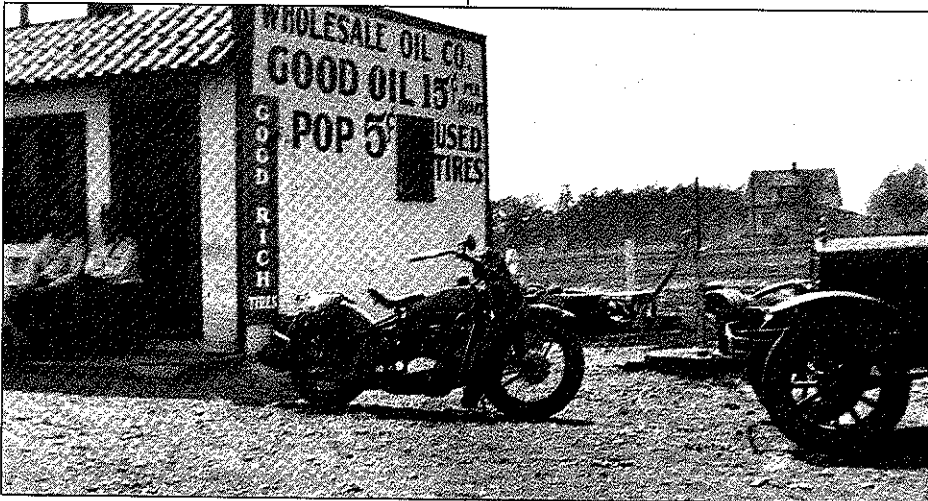


by his brothers Henry, Fred, Garret, and Ben, they invested heavily in the Pease area. They constructed a lumberyard, a potato warehouse, a grain mill, and various retail outlets. By then the village of Pease encompassed a large and varied business strip with several general stores, a bank, and an automobile dealership. Although the agricultural depression of the Twenties and the subsequent general depression of the Thirties strained the local economy and some businesses failed, the community remained vital. More than the Depression, prosperity

similarly.

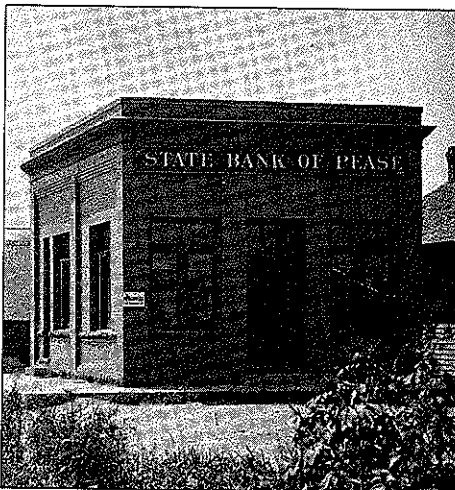
THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

The following brief history of the Pease Christian School also comes from F. Smith's 250-page manuscript. "In 1908 some members of the Pease CRC promoted the organization of a Christian school, and they formed a society whose members contributed annual dues of \$5.00. In 1914 the society's 40 members constructed a two-room school and hired Herman Lankeet to teach students who paid fees of \$1.25 per month.



Alderink gas station, 1935

Pease State Bank



diminished the significance of Pease. Supermarkets and shopping malls, easily reached by automobile, destroyed the viability of small towns across the nation, and Pease suffered

"As was often the case with the first rural Christian schools, the pupils spoke little or no English, but they learned rapidly. To spur them on, Lankeet declared that anyone caught speaking anything but English would be confined to the classroom during recess. Then the language difficulty ended quickly.

"By 1918 a branch school, Riverside, was established to serve students located 3 miles east of Pease. And after some early confusion about finances the two schools were governed by a single board. . . . Still others, living 5 miles southeast of Pease, solved their transportation problem with wooden

box-like wagons. Horses pulled these 'vans' on wagon wheels or, in winter, on runners. They were equipped with side benches and blankets for warmth. The driver sat inside the box and used a 12-inch-square opening to guide the horses. They, in turn, were sheltered by local residents during school hours.

"In 1934 a serious fire threatened Pease and its Christian School. A barn and two houses, including the principal's dwelling, were consumed. Every available person joined the effort to fight the fire. Volunteers responded from Milaca, because Pease had no water system and most of the local wells were dry. The fire fighters were seriously handicapped by the lack of equipment and water. Strong winds whipped up the fire and made it impossible to contain the fire for any length of time. The residents of Pease were terror stricken, and most of them hastily removed their furniture and belongings to a safe place. It was expected that most of the town on the east side of the railroad would be destroyed. No one thought about the school children. The school principal, William VanSloten, was pre-occupied with his wife and new baby because his residence and furniture were ablaze. Meanwhile, the school children were playing games—running back and forth through the heavy clouds of smoke that crossed the school grounds. Some children were afraid and stayed inside the classroom. The school roof caught fire several times from blazing sparks, and some of the children watched the volunteers climb on the roof. When the concerned parents arrived, they were shocked but also relieved to find all the children. Quickly, they gathered the children in a group and moved down the road ditch. The children walked north along the new highway and waited for their parents beyond the blowing smoke and ashes. No one was injured seriously, but there was

extensive property damage.

"The Great Northern Railroad brought a crew of 50 men to control the fire, and a work train hauled water from Milaca to fill the ditches that had been dug into a burning 40 acre peat bog. Ditches were also dug around the burning area to contain the fire. The smoke enveloped the village for several days, almost suffocating those who tried to return. Other peat bogs in the fire line were also burning, and the village remained in danger from high winds. Ashes were everywhere. Over a week later the fire was finally



Local musicians: (standing L-R) Roy Hanenburg, Oppie Flietstra (seated L-R) Nick Pluimer, Gradus Brink. (Right) Dick Baas (7), Ann Baas Kromminga (3)

contained.

"The years of the great Depression were days of real testing. Families could barely eke out an existence. The school was reduced to one teacher, with only 38 pupils. But by 1936 the

second room was reopened with a second teacher; and in 1943 the third room was in use. In 1945 bus service was provided for children living more than two miles from school, and then the enrollment included the Riverside school children.

"One of the school's faithful teachers, Henrietta Strating, describes her experiences.

"I wanted to become a nurse, but

my father thought I should follow in the footsteps of my sisters and become a teacher. I then enrolled at the St. Cloud state teacher's college. As a teacher at that time I was expected to teach all subjects, so I took courses in how to teach art, industrial arts, music, and first aid along with all the basic subjects.

"My first teaching position began in September, 1939, in a one-room



country school in Kandiyohi County, Minnesota. There I had 17 pupils in seven grades and received \$70 a month for nine months. I paid \$16 a month for my room and board. Besides teaching "to the best of my ability," the contract said I was to sweep, keep the classroom clean and build the fires, for the two coldest months. But there were more than two cold months in Minnesota. I returned for a second year and had to stay in school overnight with two students during the Armistice Day snowstorm of 1940. By then I'd had enough of prairie

you will receive \$5.00 per month more. Hoping you will accept this appointment, we remain. Sincerely Yours, the Pease Christian School Board, Fred J. Geurkink, sec'y." Conditions did permit me to receive the \$585, although payment was often several weeks late.

"The first morning 42 pupils in the first four grades greeted me. The principal was a man, so there were no stoves to start. However, WW II came along, and men teachers were scarce. The school increased to three rooms, and we women teachers had three

these, and often board members frowned on them—calling them "busy work." We had no copy machines or ditto machines. So, the seat-work was all "handmade." Nevertheless, these children learned. The retarded and the learning disabled were mixed with those who could learn. We had to teach each child at his own level.

"The school was also responsible for distributing rationing stamps during the war. I especially remember issuing sugar stamps. The people came to the school. People were not diet



Pease Christian School, lower grades, 1941 Henrietta Strating, teacher

teaching.

"In 1941 I applied for a job in my home school, and received the reply, "I'm happy to inform you that the board has appointed you as teacher in the lower grades for the school year, 1941-1942. The salary for your services will be \$60.00 per month for nine months. However, if conditions permit so that it is financially possible,

fires to light. Usually by the time we had the third fire going, the first one went out and we had to start over again.

"Toilets were outdoors. The kids carried water from the neighbor's barn. Often there was straw in the water, and after questioning, I learned that a calf had stuck his head in the pail. Again there were floors to sweep—usually with one good broom and two poor ones. We had no workbooks. No money was allotted for

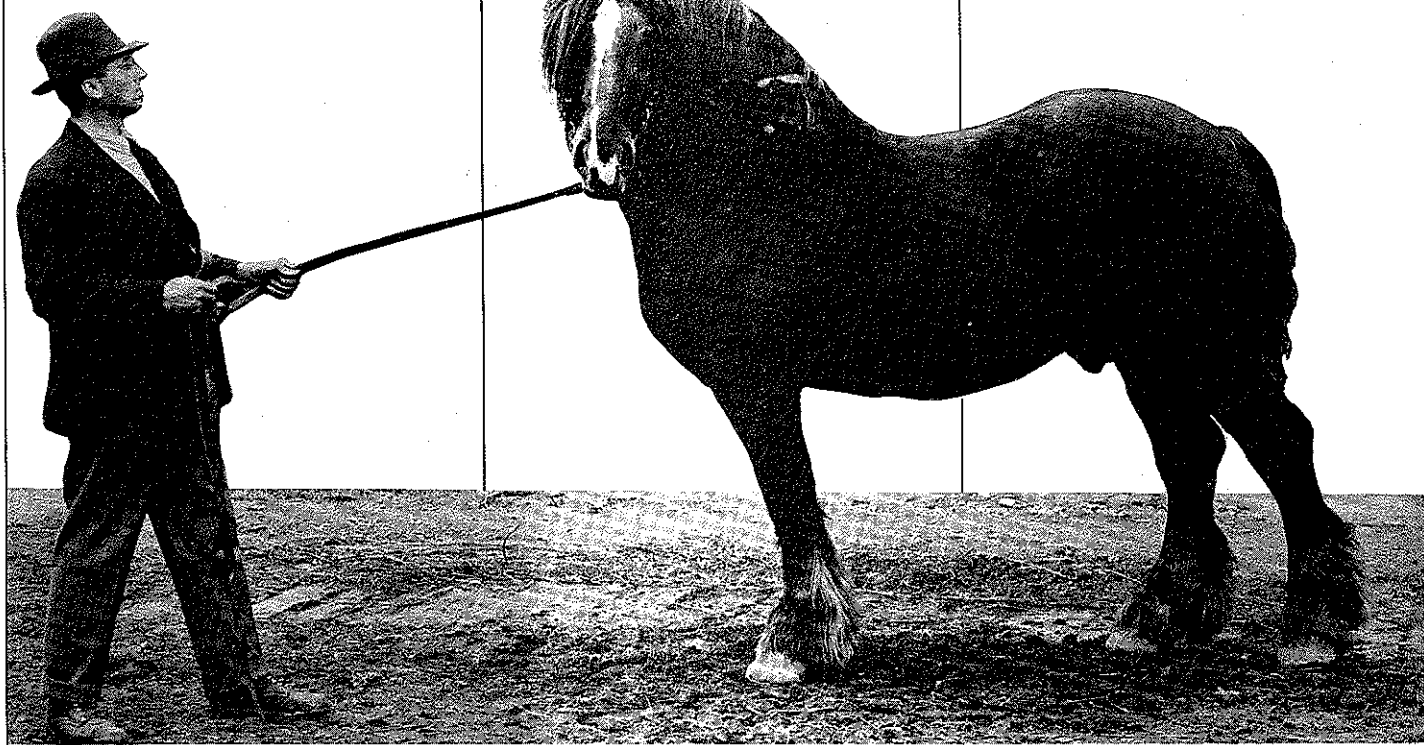
conscious and often two or three spoonfuls of sugar went into a cup of coffee, and home canning was almost universal. So, people were very eager to get as much sugar as possible. One young father came in and wanted stamps for his newborn son. I asked the name of the baby, and the father said, "Oh, we haven't decided. My wife wants to call him Douglas, and I want to call him Curtis." I said, "He has to have a name on this application. Baby boy will not suffice." The

father said, "Just call him Curtis." So sugar stamps helped name a baby.

"One year, about six weeks before the end of the term, when I was teaching the first and second grades, a committee of the board approached me. In Minnesota the 7th graders had to pass a state test in geography, and the 8th graders were tested in math, English, social studies, and science before they could enter high school.

"The committee wanted me to take these 8th graders into a vacant house across the street and teach them for the rest of the year. Well, I felt sorry for the kids, and so I consented. We studied six days a week, and we crammed with booklets of former exams. I didn't want the kids to say, "Holsteins and Guernseys" when asked to name two kinds of stock (common and preferred). Well, all nine of them passed their exams but only by a few points.

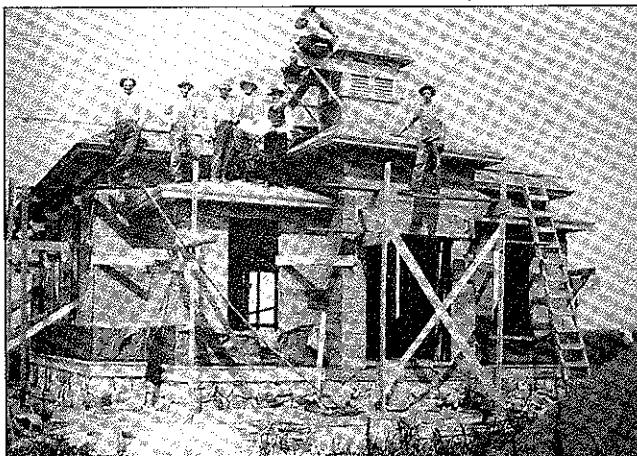
Fred Greenfield with Belgian horse "Cap"



"During my years at the Pease Christian School my four grades became three, then two, and finally I was down to one, the first. The salary was \$2,100 for nine months. During Christmas vacation we moved into our new classroom with no tile on the floor, but we did have indoor toilets, running water, and privacy. Prior to

that we had shared a room with the second grade, separated by a curtain.

"In 1956 my 23 years (8 as a student, 15 as a teacher) suddenly came to an end. My mother passed away, and I resigned to care for my invalid father. I will always cherish the years that I spent at this school' " (quoted, Smith, Pease Christian School, 6-9).



Pease Christian School under construction, 1914



Sour Milk & Bitter Honey

The Quincy Flood of 1929

by Henry Ippel*

*In 1927 Quincy
was a
prosperous,
growing
manufacturing
city.*

The hopes and dreams of over twenty-five Dutch families were drowned in the flood waters of the Mississippi River in April 1929. Impressed by high-pressure advertising, convincing arguments of land speculators, and the endorsement of the Home Missions Committee of Classis Illinois of the Christian Reformed Church, these families had recently settled in Quincy, Illinois, only to experience the disappointment and disaster of a historic spring flood.

The mobility of America is proverbial. Again and again, the advice "Go west, young man" was heeded by settlers who pulled up stakes to take up new land as new territory opened up in the West, new settlements sprouted out of the wilderness, and land developers exploited the urge for a better or more prosperous life. Following the First World War, Dutch immigration to the United States steadily declined and eventually was reduced drastically by the new immigration restrictions passed by the United States Congress. Nevertheless, the mobility continued as bona fide Americans and new immigrants alike seized opportunities to achieve that better life by putting down new roots in new places. Advertisements appearing in *The Banner* and *De Wachter* in the mid-twenties encouraged readers to seek out the enticements of Lynden, Washington; Crookston and Pease, Minnesota; and Imlay City, Michigan.¹ Most of these advertisements were modest in size and low key. However, with no evidence of modesty or subtlety, full-page advertisements appeared in *De Wachter* of October 12 and

(Previous page) David Hoekstra home; foreground: Herman Hoekstra and Mildred Mossel

¹Henry Ippel is Professor of History, Emeritus, at Calvin College and Field Agent for The Historical Committee of the C.R.C.

19, 1927, and *The Banner* of October 14 and 21, 1927, inviting "good Christian families of Holland descent" to come to South Quincy Gardens in Adams County, Illinois.

The city of Quincy stands on the east bluff of the Mississippi at the point where the river swings farthest west. The county and town, which was incorporated in 1834, were named for President John Quincy Adams. Its strategic location and industrial activity in a prosperous farm area gave the city a second-place ranking in the

boasted beautiful parks, attractive homes, excellent schools, many churches, and substantial manufacturing enterprises. Besides having a prominent place in river transportation, it was a hub for railroad overnight shipping to Chicago, St. Louis, and Kansas City. But the area's main appeal, according to the advertisements, was the potential for rich harvest in the lands lying south of the city along the banks of the Mississippi River, the section called South Quincy Gardens. The advertisements did not



Home of David Hoekstra family

state by the mid-nineteenth century. At one time the city, as a port of entry for foreign goods into Illinois, harbored as many as 2,500 steamboats a year. It became an important part of the Underground Railroad. Slaves were taken by boat from the banks of Missouri (a slave state) across the river to Illinois (a free state). Stephen Douglas and Abraham Lincoln held their famous sixth debate in John's Square (also called Washington Park) in the city center.

In 1927 Quincy was a prosperous, growing manufacturing city of more than forty thousand inhabitants. It

alert readers to the proximity of the "gardens" to the ever-present and potentially dangerous Father of Waters on the other side of the levees. No mention was made of a devastating down-river flood in 1927 which was "regarded as a \$400,000,000 disaster—the greatest peacetime catastrophe in the history of the United States."² It could be argued that mention of that disaster was unnecessary because the devastation was largely confined to the river valley south of Illinois. Nonetheless, the issue of flood control had recurred too frequently to be lightly passed over or ignored. The age-old battle between man and nature was phrased well in a question

*It was the
potential for a
rich harvest of
onions.*

posed to the American Society of Civil Engineers in 1927 at a symposium on flood control on the Mississippi River: "Must some part of [the Mississippi River Valley] be permanently dedicated to the service of the River?"³ Quite obviously, the South Quincy Gardens had been taken out of the service of the river and were now to be dedicated to the service of Dutch farmers. Presumably, Dutch farmers would be well served by an area which possessed "a deep alluvial loam, containing the concentrated

pecially adapted to the production of vegetables and small fruits."⁴

The first full-page advertisement hawked "Onions and South Quincy Gardens." It was the potential for a rich harvest of onions that was meant to be the major appeal to the "steady industrious Hollanders" who read *De Wachter* and *The Banner*. In 1925 United States farmers produced 979 million pounds of onions from onion sets produced on the flat black lands surrounding Chicago, Illinois.⁵ But the growth of the metropolitan area was

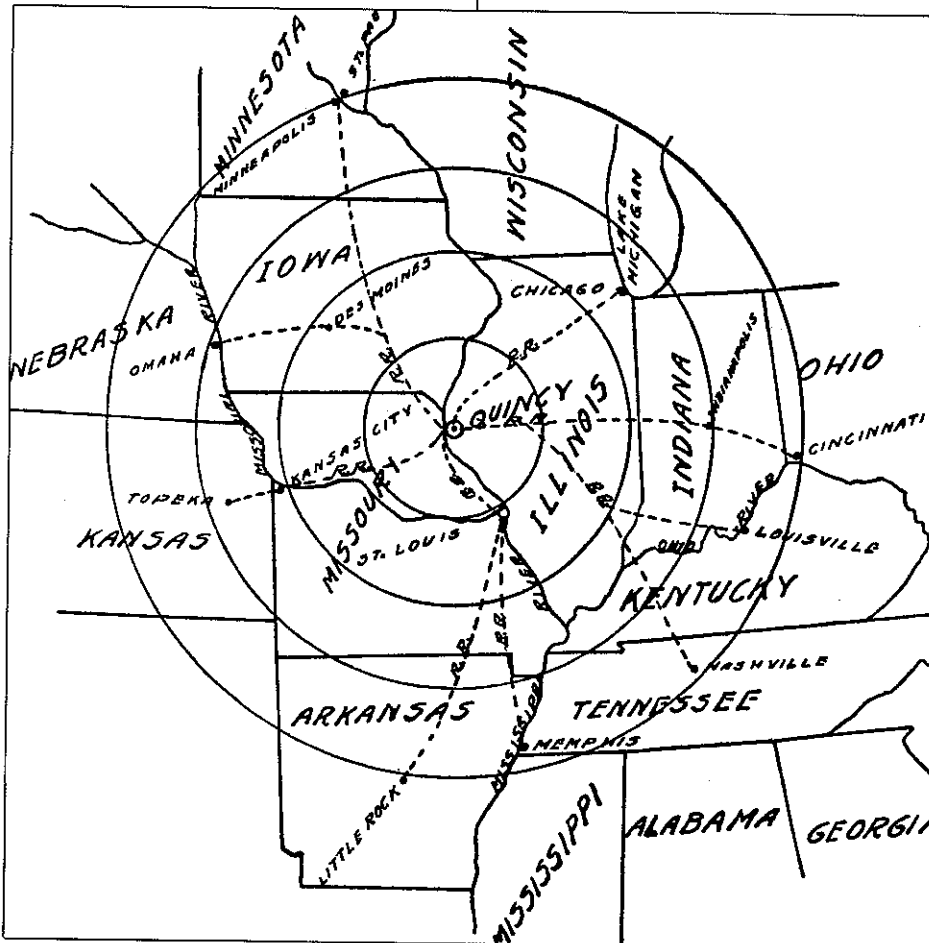
in America, anticipated a new onion-growing area in South Quincy. Indeed, it was claimed that one plot of five acres planted in onions yielded a net profit of \$620.00 per acre.

Perhaps the most amazing feature of the early full-page announcement was the assertion that "this proposition is endorsed by your Committee for Home Missions, which has investigated it fully." Surprisingly, the October 12 and 14 advertisements contained a direct quotation from a report made by the Home Missions Committee of Classis Illinois of the Christian Reformed Church even though the report did not appear until the following week's issue of *De Wachter* and not until two weeks later in *The Banner*. Curiously, the report by the secretary of the Home Missions Committee refers to the "big advertisement" which included the quotation from a paragraph appearing in the report. Apparently the advertisers had access to the report before it appeared in the church periodicals.

Why did this committee make this report? What was the basis for the report? The report speaks for itself:

The Committee for Domestic Missions of Classis Illinois has, upon request of the manager of *The Banner* and *De Wachter*, investigated this land. Rev. F. Doezema could not go because of illness in the family, but two other members of the committee, Rev. A. A. Bratt and the undersigned [Rev. E. Kooistra] did go and were accompanied by Mr. T. L. Van Der Aa, who, by his experience as farmer near South Holland, understands the soil and the raising of onion sets.

We investigated the land, soil, drainage, etc. and found things as represented in the circular. The company desires good Christian families of Holland descent, because they are regarded by the company as the best onion set raisers and gardeners and also because such families will soon desire to organize a church. The company has promised the land and also its cooperation to the Home Mission Committee for



The Banner 21 Oct. 1927: 752

richness of the mineral and humus elements of the top soil of thousands of farms washed down and deposited as silt from Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois, forming a soil many feet thick of wonderful fertility, es-

forcing onion growers to go out of business or to seek new fields of operation. A new field of operation had been found and was now being developed by the Burton D. Hurd and Son Company. Hurd, with the Peter Peerbolte Company of South Holland, the largest onion-set distributor

**Why did this
committee
make this
report? What
was the basis
for the report?**

the erection of the church or chapel as soon as this is necessary.

Our findings are that this is a safe and sound proposition. Furthermore, this is not a land promotion project, but the company is vitally interested to sell this land for onion set raising and will contract with the farmers for their onions, because its extensive onion business and onion factory will depend in the future to a large extent upon these lands. There is room for over two hundred families. Perhaps some families will go if they know that a sufficient number is going, enough to form a congregation. In answer to that question we can say that we think there will be a large number there soon. All indications are that there will be. For further information write Burton D. Hurd and Son . . . or the undersigned. We do not encourage single Christian families or very small groups to move to different places away from their churches; but on the other hand, when a new colony is to be settled on a good basis, we believe it our duty to cooperate and move the church along with them.⁶

What prompted the manager of *De Wachter* and *The Banner* to request this investigation or what prompted the Home Missions Committee to publicly endorse a private land-development venture is difficult to determine.

The initial full-page advertisements in October were followed by six more promotional pieces in *The Banner* and *De Wachter* before the end of the year. Published to entice readers at the end of a harvest season and in sufficient time to prepare for investigation, moving, and beginning a new growing season in the spring of 1928, the advertisements of the South Quincy Gardens were, according to a correspondent in *The Banner* column headed "Chicago Breezes," designed to draw the attention of many in and around Chicago. And not only in the Chicago area, but also in Montana, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Indiana. Many of the prospective colonists were given a free trip to the western Illinois site, winced and dined by a representative of the Hurd Company, and given opportunity to see the area set aside for settlement. I recall the

impact the Quincy promoters had on my family in Wisconsin. A large automobile appeared in the driveway with Illinois license plates. In my eight-year-old innocence I thought, "It must be a Pierce Arrow!" An animated conversation took place between the stranger from Chicago and my father, followed by family discussion around the dinner table. Finally my brother

was delegated to join one of the free rides to Quincy to get the lay of the land. There was more excitement when he returned with his report and then the difficult (but providential?) decision not to join the venture.

Although my family remained in Wisconsin, others like the C. H.

The Banner 14 Oct. 1927: 732

ONIONS

and

South Quincy Gardens



The Onion is mentioned in the earliest ages of authentic history and has always been recognized as a nutritious and healthful food. In medicine it is a stimulating expectorant and valuable in diseases of children. It also contains approximately 100 units of Vitamin B, valuable in nerve disorders, 100 units of Vitamin C, valuable in blood and skin disorders and also Vitamin D, valuable for its tonic properties.

In 1925 the United States devoted 56,950 acres to the growing of onions for market, producing thereon 978,861,000 pounds, having a value of \$19,711,000. We also imported during this same year 75,504,594 pounds. These figures do not include the vast quantity of onions grown in family and farm gardens.

Most of the onion sets from which the immense onion crop of the United States is grown each year have been produced on the flat black lands surrounding Chicago, Illinois. The city's growth is now demanding this land and is forcing the onion set growers to go out of business or to seek new fields of operations.

THE PETER PEERBOLTE COMPANY of South Holland, Illinois, has developed with the growth of this important industry and is now the largest onion set distributor in America. It has extensive warehouses, milling and trade facilities that during recent years has enabled it to market approximately seventy-five per cent of the total onion set crop of the country.

Supplementing its own onion set production, the Peter Peerbolte Company contracts each year with a large number of growers, putting the onion seed out to them on a basis of cost and contracting for the crop on a fixed price basis per bushel delivered to its warehouses.

In order to maintain an adequate supply of onion sets to meet the demands of its expanding business, it has been compelled to find new lands for the profitable production of onion sets and to establish a new crop growing district. This company must also have new growers as many of the farmers who are now selling out are enabled to live on the income from their accumulations and are now retiring.

After exhaustive investigation, land having the requisite conditions of soil and climate, with adequate shipping and marketing facilities was found in Adams County, Illinois, adjoining the City of Quincy, known as SOUTH QUINCY GARDENS.

RECOMMENDED BY YOUR HOME MISSIONS COMMITTEE

The following paragraph is taken from a report made by the Home Missions Committee of Classis Illinois:

"We investigated the land, soil, drainage, etc., and found things as represented by the company in its present circular. The company desires good Christian families of Holland descent because they are regarded as the best onion set raisers and gardeners and also because such families will soon desire to organize a church. The company has promised the land and also its cooperation to the Home Missions Committee for the erection of a church or chapels as soon as this is necessary."

For further information about these gardens, plan of operation, sale of the land, profits, etc., write to

Burton D. Hurd & Son

SUITE 476 FIRST NATIONAL BANK BUILDING, 38 SOUTH DEARBORN ST., CHICAGO, ILL.

*On the surface
the move to
Quincy
appeared to be
a success.*

Meyering family from Holland, Michigan, did move to the South Quincy Gardens "to make our future living." By May of 1928, sixteen families, including sixty-five children, indicated they were taking up "permanent residence" in South Quincy Gardens. One family came from Montana; seven from Holland, Michigan; three from Sheboygan, Wisconsin; four from South Holland, Illinois; one from Lansing, Illinois; and two families from places unknown. The total number of families who settled in South Quincy is uncertain. Newspaper accounts, which erroneously identified all the families as originating in South Holland, gave a total of twenty-five families.⁷

The Dutch families wasted no time in preparing for a growing season. At once they put in their crops. The plots under cultivation averaged about twenty acres each in a drainage basin south of the city of Quincy, an area lying between the river bluffs on the east and the river levee on the west. The truck-gardening business for which these farmers grew a wide variety of vegetables was largely meant to satisfy the Chicago markets.

The main crop, however, was onion sets. Approximately sixty to seventy pounds of seed were sown per acre. The harvest produced four to five bushels of sets per pound or 250-300 bushels per acre.⁸ Raising onion sets was a hard task, but as the *Quincy Herald-Whig* reported, "These Hollanders have grown onion sets all their lives. They are willing to give the back breaking toil, the infinite care, the laborious days that spell success."⁹ The seed was planted in rows, and the cultivation of the space between the rows was done by cultivators pulled by horses or small tractors. But the seed was sown so thickly that no machine cultivator or hoe could eradicate the weeds that sprang up with the onion stalks. This weeding had to be done by hand, done so carefully that a knife could not even be used. Nimble fingers alone pulled the weeds, while the little onion stalks were left to flourish. Here the big families of the Dutch settlers were an advantage.

(The Van Doeselaar and Zylman families arrived in Quincy with eight children each, the Leep and Dam families had six children, the Jacobusse and Meyering families had five, and the Derks and Den Boer families each had four children.) Evidently the settlers were well coached and knew the demands of the project. So the nimble fingers and aching backs of father, mother, and children had to contend with the weeds—the curse of sin. Nick Zylman recounted that weeds would grow shoulder high if not attacked early in the season. Another youthful worker insisted that the weeds grew so rapidly that by the time a row had been completely weeded, it was necessary to begin all over again.

The first year of settlement boded well for the future; at least that is the information given to readers of *The Banner* and *De Wachter* in the issues they received from July to December of 1928. Although the Dutch families had arrived in Quincy in the early spring, the development company was already reporting great success on their first year's venture:

"Mr. Henry Waterkamp, formerly of Holland, Michigan, has 20 acres of choice garden land, with a set of nice improvements, his crops are doing fine and he has every prospect of success." *The Banner*, July 27, 1928

"The Vander Vliet brothers, William and Milton, from Holland, Michigan, did not get onto their land until pretty late in the spring, but as they are experienced and energetic young men, they have made excellent progress during the season and are sure to make money." *The Banner*, August 10, 1928

"Mr. George Mossel, from South Holland, Illinois, is one of the young men who are laying the foundation for future independence in their new homes in South Quincy Gardens. Onion sets are now being harvested in this New Holland community. The crop is excellent, both as to quality and yield" *The Banner*, August 24, 1928

"Mr. Andrew Leep came to Illinois from Shepherd, Montana. He is a skilled gardener of wide experience. He has made an impressive showing for the first year in a new location. He used a great deal of care in selecting his location and from the way he has started in there is no question but that he is going to be very successful and prosperous."

The Banner, September 7, 1928

"Mr. C. H. Meyering moved into his new farm early last spring and has shown a lot of energy and enterprise. He has gotten his property into splendid shape, has handled his crops with skill and is now beginning to reap the benefits."

The Banner, September 28, 1928

"Mr. M. Jacobusse is one of the new owners who is making good and who has started out with every prospect of good profits from year to year." *The Banner*, October 12, 1928

Proof that the harvest was indeed abundant was also indicated by the erection of a large warehouse to accommodate forty-two thousand bushels of onion sets.

According to a newspaper account, the Hurd Company expended thousands of dollars to prepare houses, barns, outbuildings, and roads for the Dutch colony.¹⁰ But those settlers who did not find buildings on their plot faced the added task of erecting their homes and farm buildings. Because many of the families were large (or expected additional children), most of the homes in the area were built with eight or nine rooms. This can be well documented from pictures which appeared in the church periodicals from July 27 to December 7, 1928. These pictures were inserted in advertisements encouraging more Dutch families to join the colony. The homes usually had high basements, two stories, a sizable porch, and a comfortable though modest appearance.

The first year's activities in Quincy gave every indication that the exciting

expectations of the twentieth-century venture were going to be reached. Homes and harvest were evidence that the Dutch settlers had made a wise exodus to a "land of milk and honey." Their exodus had been planned with more than material prosperity and success in mind. These families from various parts of the Midwest and Montana came with a common goal, a desire to unite around and establish a Christian Reformed Church. So eager were they to have a church that Classis Illinois of the Christian Reformed Church was petitioned to consider such an ecclesiastical venture even before families had actually moved to the new settlement. Indeed, the first public advertisements had promised the establishment of a Christian Reformed congregation and the erection of a church building as part of the appeal. The public report of the January meeting of Classis Illinois noted that "several families and individuals who signified their intention to move to the new settlement of South Quincy Gardens petitioned Classis to be organized into a congregation." However, classis decided not to grant the request "because the petitioners are not yet residing at Quincy."¹¹ Such eagerness was exemplary but hardly in accordance with Church Order. Nonetheless, the petitions eloquently testified to the hopes and dreams of the colonists. The Meyering family asked that classis provide for "preaching of the Word every Sabbath as soon as we move there" and "to be organized into a Christian Reformed Congregation as soon as possible," because while they were moving to Quincy to "make our future living," they were also "mindful of our spiritual needs, for us and our children." Similarly, the petitions signed by the Jan Dam, Andrew Leep, Peter Slager, and Jacob Van Doeselaar families made the same request in order "that we and our children may receive the preaching of the

Gospel from our own preachers."

In response to these requests, classis agreed to provide preaching for the settlers whenever feasible. The families met for worship in the local schoolhouse. At the very outset they decided to have two services per Sunday, one in the Dutch language and the other in English. If a preacher did not arrive, David Hoekstra led the service and read the sermon in the English language and Jan Dam in the Dutch language. A Young People's Society met on Sunday evening, and catechism was taught on Saturday morning by Leonard Den Boer, who spoke "with a heavy Dutch accent." To assist the fledgling group, the Second Christian Reformed Church (now Bethany CRC) of South Holland donated a new English pulpit Bible and the Home Missions Committee of classis gave a dozen *Psalms*.

Not to be put off, the recent settlers formally petitioned Classis Illinois at its May 22, 1928, meeting for permission to organize a Christian Reformed church. This time the classis acquiesced because the signators argued that "the undersigned have definitely moved to and are now living and locally residing, as a permanent resident, on what is known as the South Quincy Gardens." Moreover, the petition continued, "we feel the need of organizing and have every reason to believe we have a definite right to at this time since we are now located here and are strong enough in numbers, and are at present practically all members in good and regular standing of the Christian Reformed or Reformed Churches."¹²

Nine days later, a classical committee consisting of Rev. A. Bratt, Rev. E. Kooistra, and Mr. Herman Triesenberg met with the various families desiring organization. Rev. Bratt preached an "appropriate sermon," after which the First Christian Reformed Church of Quincy, Illinois, was formally organized, with three el-

ders and three deacons elected and immediately installed. The elders requested that the classical committee obtain a student to preach and provide leadership for the ten weeks of the summer months. A seminarian student, Adam Persenaire, was obtained for four weeks, but the committee found it difficult to provide ministers for all the other Sundays, "since the travelling expenses are so high." Classis Illinois, however, agreed to supply ministers on a regular basis to the Quincy church, meeting in the Leroy School. Among the ministers remembered fondly by some of the Dutch settlers were Rev. A. Blik from Fulton, Illinois, Rev. A. Jabaay, and, of course, the classical home missionary, Rev. J. R. Brink.

On the surface the move to Quincy appeared to be a success. The enthusiastic reception of the colony of Hollanders in Adams county by the *Quincy Herald-Whig* was apparently not misguided. On March 6, 1928, a columnist predicted, "They will demonstrate what can be done with the soil and how a family can earn a living and lay something aside on twenty acres of ground. With them it is not an experiment, but an accomplishment. . . . While the new invaders may be more or less clannish, yet they pay their way, ask no special favors and will add not only to the population but the wealth of the county." The first year of settlement had shown that the predictions were true; homes had been built, crops had been harvested, a church organized, a plot of land chosen for a church building, and building material already acquired. Moreover, a warehouse for the storage of anticipated harvests had also been erected. The children were in school, and some of the teenagers were employed in local factories.

Beneath the surface, conditions were not as rosy. Kathryn Zylman recalls, "My mother hated Quincy from the time we got there, and so did al-

*Beneath the
surface,
conditions
were not as
rosy.*

most all the women, most of whom were used to city life . . . " Nor were all the homes as attractive and habitable as *The Banner* advertisements represented them to be. "Ours was a very small, dirty little place at first, but it was soon remodeled and made twice as big."¹³ Even reports on the first harvest were not universally good. Joan Dam remembers, "Crops were good. My family fortunately did not invest in land or a new house. We bought a shiny new car!"¹⁴ But an interview reported in the newspaper stated, "They made no money from

their onions. For some reason there was not the market they anticipated. Cabbage rotted on the ground."¹⁵

In spite of another blitz advertising campaign in *The Banner* running from July 27 through December 7, 1928, few if any, families joined the original settlement. The newspaper's prediction that "before the year is out there will be ten times more" certainly did not come true. Indeed, although details are rather sketchy, a report to Classis Illinois by its home missionary, J. R. Brink, alluded to "dissatisfaction with existing conditions in Quincy Gar-

everyone, and "five of the families left while others were contemplating leaving."

Some of the glamour and romance of the new settlement was challenged by one of the features which made the bottom lands so attractive to the onion growers. In searching for an area to be adapted to the culture of onion sets, the Hurd Company and the Peerbolte Company sought out the muck land lying behind the levees of the Mississippi River. The best soil was that which had an adequate water table beneath it. This of course was sup-

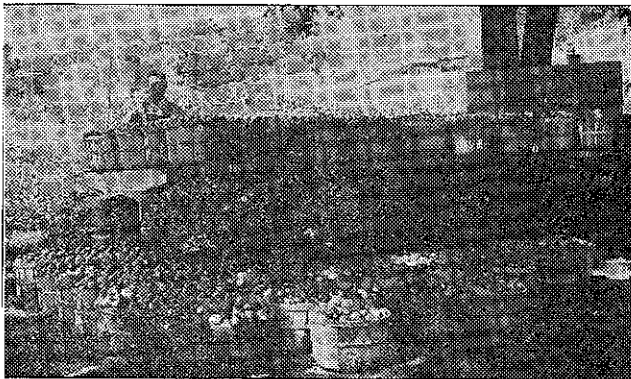
South Quincy Gardens

As a variation from the pictures of the houses of the new land owners in SOUTH QUINCY GARDENS which we have been showing, we present this week a picture of a part of the crop of one of the growers. This picture shows a load of tomatoes raised by Mr. C. H. Meyering.

Mr. Meyering moved onto his new farm early last spring and has shown a lot of energy and enterprise. He has gotten his property in splendid shape, has handled his crops with skill and is now beginning to reap the benefits.

The tomatoes shown in this one picture were marketed about August first and brought the grower considerably over one hundred dollars.

Mr. Meyering also has a splendid crop of onions and onion sets on which he will make a large profit this year.



Mr. Meyering and His Tomatoes

Every day now we are getting applications from those interested in looking over this property. If you are interested, fill out the coupon below and let us know when it will be convenient for you to go and look at the property.

BURTON D. HURD & SON,
753 First National Bank Building,
Chicago, Ill.

Gentlemen:

Please send me full particulars about South Quincy Gardens and explain about the free trip to see this land.

Name.....Street or R. F. D.....
City.....State.....

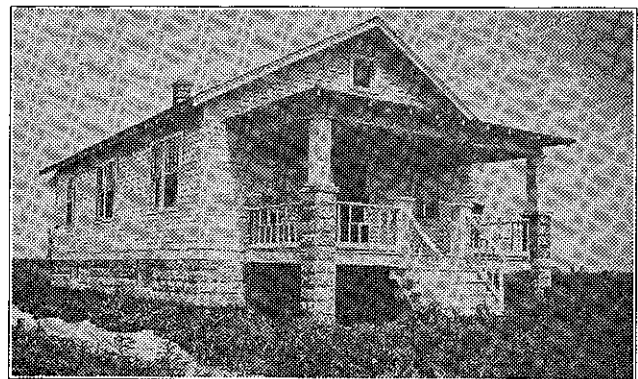
South Quincy Gardens

We are showing this week the picture of the house of George Mossel, formerly of South Holland, Illinois. Mr. Mossel is one of the young men who are laying the foundation for future independence in their new homes in South Quincy Gardens.

Onion sets are now being harvested in this new Holland community. The crop is excellent, both as to quality and yield.

We are now receiving inquiries from a great many who are interested, and trips are being arranged. We hope that any who are interested will not delay too long as many did last year, but will advise us in time so that they may be taken care of.

Use the coupon below.



Home of George Mossel in South Quincy Gardens

BURTON D. HURD & SON,
476 First National Bank Building,
Chicago, Ill.

Gentlemen:

Please send me full particulars about South Quincy Gardens and explain about the free trip to see this land.

Name.....Street or R. F. D.....
City.....State.....

The Banner 28 Sept. 1928: 734.
(Right) George Mossel home, The
Banner 24 Aug. 1928: 636

dens." The report made reference to a compromise made between the Hurd Company and the tenants, but evidently that was not sufficient to satisfy

plied by the river on the other side of the levee. But also the land must be porous enough to allow capillary action to feed water to the growing

*On March 25,
the river had
risen to 20.5
feet.*

crops. The water table thus provided subirrigation. On these points the land behind the levees could not be faulted. However, the creeks and canals running through the bottom were insufficient to drain off the water when the water table rose. Consequently, seepage water from the river and from rains flooded basements, causing much annoyance and inconvenience. This "subirrigation" of basements occurred primarily in the homes of the Dutch settlers whose property lay close to the levee. Earlier settlements nearer the bluffs east of the river were not inconvenienced, but where new land near the levee had been set aside for farming, the excessive humidity and high water table gave reason for second thoughts to some of the Dutch onion farmers.

To these Dutch Reformed farmers it was commonplace to say "De mens wikt, maar God beschikt" (Man proposes, but God disposes). And so it was in the winter of 1928 and spring of 1929. The Mississippi River watershed consisting of portions of the states of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, and Missouri experienced the potentially dangerous combination of heavy snowfall, rapid thawing, and persistent rain. Concern about high water along the river was normal, but the distance of the main stream from the levee, the height and strength of the earthwork, and the fact that the area had not experienced a major disaster since 1851 all helped to alleviate excessive worry among the new settlers in the bottom lands.

Nonetheless, by March 14 the river had reached the official flood stage of fourteen feet. A week later the levee broke north of the city of Quincy. An area of eighteen thousand acres was flooded. By this time the South Quincy Garden tenants were patrolling the levee day and night, and National Guardsmen were ordered to relieve the onion growers. On March 25, the river had risen to 20.5 feet, the

highest stage at Quincy in seventy-eight years. The following days, the danger appeared to be reduced, but an Easter storm on March 31 brought an unexpected comeback to the river. Heavy rains throughout the region (Green Bay, Wisconsin, recorded fourteen inches of rain in the day, gale winds and disastrous erosion on Lake Michigan beaches, rising rivers throughout the Midwest) precipitated what the Quincy newspaper called an "April Fool's joke," and again danger threatened. Easter Sunday found the Dutch colonists guarding the levees and watching for weakened spots. All roads within forty miles of the city were reported to be blocked by high waters. But the levees in South Quincy district held in spite of the constant pressure of the raging torrents. As the river receded once more, the levees were inspected for muskrat and crawfish holes, into which higher water could enter and subsequently produce a crevasse that could not be repaired. The water-soaked earth barriers needed constant watching because the river had remained at this high stage longer than at any other previously recorded time.

The wet spring had retarded the early planting and seeding for which the farmers had hoped. Nonetheless, as evidence of their great desire for a profitable year as well as their belief that the levees would hold, several farmers proceeded with their spring plans. The Hoekstras, for example, sowed a thousand pounds of onion seed, and the Meyerings sowed six hundred pounds of onion seed, \$200.00 worth of flower seed, and an acre of gladiola bulbs. Others used their times away from the levee patrol to plant onion sets.

But the high waters did not recede. Instead, heavy rains in Iowa, feeding water into the Mississippi, brought the river on the 22nd of April to a level higher than in 1851 or the previous March. The danger was imminent; the

patrols of Illinois National Guardsmen and farmers persisted; weak places were reinforced and carefully watched. Powerful flashlights assisted at night, and a plan to raise the alarm with rifle fire was devised.

At 6:15 a.m. on Wednesday, April 24, 1929, the levee broke in the South Quincy district at a place where trouble was least expected. In a short time, a narrow opening became a broad expanse through which the water raged with an ominous sound. All the families in the bottom land were imme-



Mr. David Hoekstra

*That night was
eerie and noisy
as fruit jars
and firewood
banged against
the furnace.*

diately notified to gather their household possessions and livestock and to move to higher ground. Within an hour an exodus began. An example of the rapidity with which the flood came was recorded in the newspaper. At 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday afternoon, a neighbor lady walked dryshod to the Meyering home, wearing only slippers. Two hours later the path she had taken was covered with three feet of Mississippi water.

But not all the families left their homes. Perhaps it was difficult for

children were more excited than afraid as we watched from upstairs windows as bales of hay with animals on them, outbuildings from neighboring farms, snakes, turtles and other objects were swept by.

That night was eerie and noisy as fruit jars and firewood banged against the furnace in the basement and outside the constant sound of rushing water. My parents, six children and a dog with a litter of pups stayed the night upstairs.

In the morning a red dress was hung out of one of the upstairs windows to show we needed help. Late

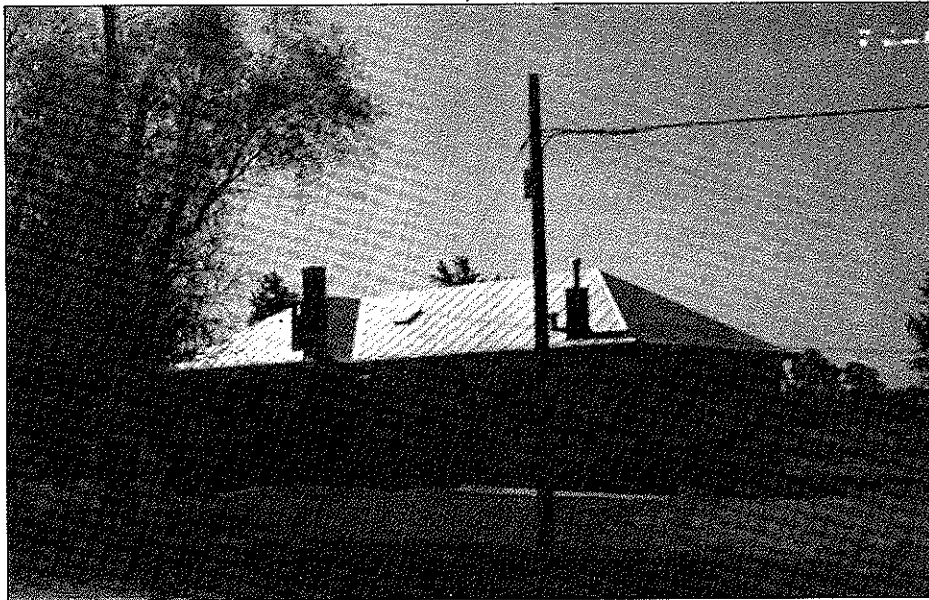
Mrs. Jacobusse, her three daughters and two sons, were taken from their home in boats . . . Mrs. Peter Wierda and her son, Donald, had to climb to the second story of their home to get out to the boats and Mrs. Richard Zylman and six children were rescued by relief workers.

Not until her home started to crumble did Mrs. James Van Doeselaar and her nine children leave. The youngest is three weeks old and the oldest is twelve. Unable to speak English, Mrs. Van Doeselaar's plight was sad. Desiring to keep her brood together in their home she wanted to stay despite the rapidly rising water. When guardsmen saw its weakened condition, boats were rushed to the place and one by one, members of the family were handed out of the windows. The baby apparently suffered no ill effects and slept in its mothers arms . . .¹⁷

As the evacuees were carried to safety, they observed, among the debris floating around their boats, the onion sets in which they had placed their hope and future. The mighty Mississippi had swept away their dream of a new home and new-found prosperity. Not milk and honey, but bitter fruit was the harvest of these Dutch colonists.

Food and shelter were provided for the victims of the flood in the cottages of a local Soldiers and Sailors Home by the American Red Cross. Boats and barges were used to salvage household possessions which had not been completely inundated or swept away. The original crevasse in the levee had widened to a block in width, and in several other places the levee had given way. The river had reclaimed the bottom lands.

Unable to return to their homes, the evacuees spent their time pondering the future. Before the end of the week they received an invitation from the Morrison Produce Company of Morrison, Illinois, to farm for its cannery. A meeting of the colonists with representatives of the Hurd Company and the local Association of Commerce



School house, Quincy, Illinois, 1928

some to abandon their "ship." A daughter of the Zylman family remembers,

"My father turned the livestock loose, turned them toward the bluffs, slapped them on their rumps and sent them up the road. He then ran into the house to try to get as much of our household goods as possible to the upper floor. When he couldn't get the dining table apart he tried to run to the barn for some tools but the current of the water was so strong it knocked him over. The dining room table ended up standing on the kitchen table. Soon the water was gushing up the furnace register unto the first floor. We

in the morning two National Guard soldiers came in a motorboat to rescue us. We climbed out of an upper window over the roof of our front porch. The weather was still stormy and the current very strong. Several times it seemed the boat would tip and we would still drown. The motor on the boat was not working properly and it was hard for the men to keep the boat from being swept away."¹⁶

The *Quincy Herald-Whig* reported that the day following the levee break the National Guard officers discovered that the foundations of the homes were beginning to crumble, and therefore the families were ordered to evacuate.

eventually
none of the
colony of
Dutch onion
farmers
remained.

gave no promise of immediate relief. It seemed all too obvious that even if the waters would recede, a good crop could not be harvested that year, and their losses were so great and their resources so limited, the farmers needed instant relief and a quick solution to their problem.

The Sunday following the disaster the Quincy newspaper reported that the day would "take on special significance for the Hollanders of South Quincy Gardens. The settlers who are intensely devout will ask God to assist them in the difficulties caused them by the swollen Mississippi."¹⁸

By this time, the Wierda and Derks families had returned to Holland, Michigan, and Mrs. David Hoekstra and her son had gone back to South Holland. Meanwhile, a committee was formed to investigate the Morrison offer, which the newspaper reported on May 8, was accepted by twelve families. Consequently, exactly three weeks after the river had swept away their farms and homes, these twelve families loaded on freight cars whatever household goods and possessions they had salvaged and shipped them to Morrison, Illinois, where they hoped to make a new beginning. Five families resisted the temptation to move, hoping to recoup their losses, but eventually none of the colony of Dutch onion farmers remained.

After the flood, a Hollander gave a news reporter this advice: "They do not know how to build levees in this country. It's no wonder the river comes through. Back home we know how to build them and even the ocean can't wash through them. Americans will have to learn from Hollanders how to conquer the water." Even in their tragedy in Quincy, the Dutch seemed to have had the last word.

Endnotes

¹Examples of advertisements appearing in Dutch-language periodicals can be found in Jacob Van Hinte, *Netherlanders in America* (Baker: 1985), pp. 930-31.

²*Losses and Damages Resulting from the Flood of 1927* (Memphis: Mississippi River Flood Control Association), p. 3.

³American Society of Civil Engineers, *Transactions* 93 (Paper 1709):657.

⁴Advertisement in *The Banner*, 21 Oct. 1927:752.

⁵David Zandstra, "The Calumet Region," *Origins*, 4.1:16-21; 4.2:48-54.

⁶*The Banner*, 28 Oct. 1927:770.

⁷Signatures on a petition to Classis Illinois, May, 1928, requesting permission to organize a Christian Reformed church in Quincy, Illinois:

Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Leep with six children
Mr. and Mrs. M. Jacobusse with five children

Mr. and Mrs. Henry J. Derks with four children

Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Meyering with five children

Mr. and Mrs. L. Den Boer with four children
Mr. and Mrs. G. Sloothook with three children

Mr. and Mrs. D. Zylman with eight children
Mr. and Mrs. J. De Boer with three children

Mr. and Mrs. J. Van Doeselaar with eight children

Mr. and Mrs. J. J. Dam with six children
Mr. and Mrs. D. Hoekstra with two children

Mr. and Mrs. Peter Slager with three children

Mr. J. Maaskant

Mr. and Mrs. Milton Vander Vliet with one child

Mr. and Mrs. Peter Wierda with one child
Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Vander Vliet with two children

Mr. and Mrs. G. Mossel

Mr. and Mrs. H. Waterkamp with three children

The petitions of January 7, 1928, also included the names of Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Van Den Berg and Johannes Geelhoedt.

The following names also appear in the records:

Mr. and Mrs. Franz Berkhorst

Mr. and Mrs. Joe Koenes

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Venhuizen

Mr. and Mrs. Peter Venhuizen

Mr. Gerrit Waterkamp

Mr. Sy Vander Kooij

⁸An advertisement in *The Banner*, October 12, 1928, claimed "yields of eight bushels and better for every pound of seed planted. This means a yield of 560 bushels per acre and a return of \$560 per acre or more."

⁹*Quincy Herald-Whig*, 4 Mar. 1928:20.

¹⁰*Quincy Herald-Whig*, 4 Mar. 1928:20.

¹¹*The Banner*, 10 Feb. 1928:110

¹²see note 7 above.

¹³Letter from Mrs. Kathryn (Zylman) Vander Lugt to Henry Ippel, 24 Jan. 1987.

¹⁴Letter from Mrs. Joan (Dahm) Stob to Henry Ippel, 25 Jan. 1988.

¹⁵*Quincy Herald-Whig*, 26 Apr. 1929:16.

¹⁶Letter, Vander Lugt to Ippel, 24 Jan. 1987.

¹⁷*Quincy Herald-Whig*, 4 Mar. 1928:20.

¹⁸*Quincy Herald-Whig*, 28 Apr. 1929:15.



School group at Quincy Public School, 1928

The CRC and World War II

*Chapters from the History of the
Christian Reformed Church*

by H. J. Brinks



Five years after V.J. Day the remains of Staff Sergeant Nicholas J. Cook came home. This nineteen-year-old flyer had died during a bombing run over Germany, and he was buried near Memmingen. He was discovered there in 1950 and returned to his father, for whom the war never did end. In a solemn grave-side ceremony taps and rifle reports combined with softly intoned promises from God's Word to signal the end of a five-year wake. Nicholas was home. After the memorial service, his father went home, too—with a flag in his arms. It became, along with a guitar, roller skates, and assorted pictures, another memento of a life.¹

Cemeteries all over Europe, Asia, and North America are seeded with the bones of the so-called "good" war, because the only invariable result of war is death. World War II was exactly that—a worldwide war. From the Orient to Sweden and Alaska's Aleutian Islands, the conflict ruptured the routines of life. But the war touched each region differently. Today the CRC embodies the memory of that experience in two contrasting forms—among North Americans who crossed oceans to engage the enemy and among European and Asian immigrants whose homes and shops were battlefields. But, when the battles began in Europe, the CRC was little more than a distant observer of what seemed to be yet one more European conflict.

When Hitler invaded Poland and then turned westward to occupy France and the Netherlands, the pages of *The Banner* and *De Wachter* registered outrage. Long before that, however, fascism of both the Italian and German strains had been roundly condemned by the denomination's pastors and teachers. Nonetheless,

the CRC's official publications favored neutrality and isolation. And, as national policies progressively edged toward an alliance with Great Britain, denominational spokespersons warned that President Roosevelt's gift of destroyers and war material to England made a mockery of neutrality.²

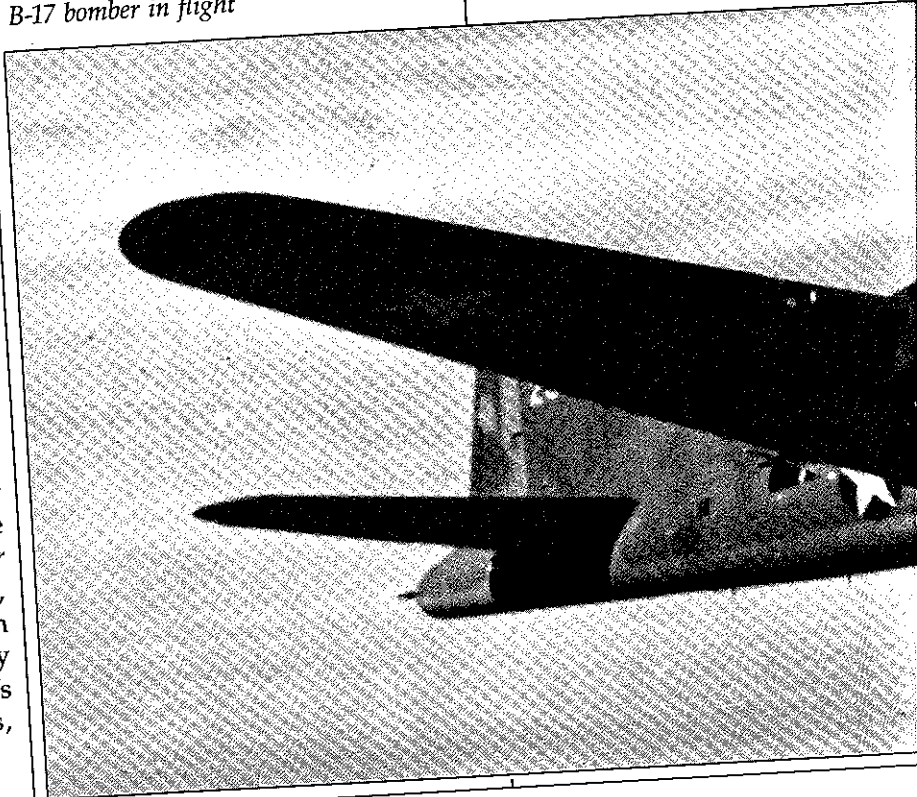
No one defended the fascists, but even the invasion of Holland did not convince H. J. Kuiper, editor of *The Banner*, that the United States should join the fray. "We hate Hitlerism," he wrote, "but we have no reason in national self-interest to go to war." Others, Rev. Wm. V. Muller among them, disagreed and argued that the U.S. had "the moral right to go to war" because "Hitlerism . . . is more than an attack on certain European countries. It is an avowed attempt to wipe out all democratic institutions."³ Still, both Kuiper and E. J. Tanis, editor of *The Banner's* "The World Today" column, did favor defensive preparations such as military conscription.

Kuiper declared, "It is foolish to trust in the Lord if we do not keep our powder dry."⁴

The debate about preparedness and neutrality evaporated when Japan bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. The loss of about 2,400 lives and the destruction of the Pacific fleet galvanized the nation in a unified surge of patriotism. Debate ceased, and the nation mobilized for war. Germany and Italy declared war on the United States, and four days later, December 15, Congress extended military conscription laws for men between the ages of twenty and forty-four. The CRC also responded to the crisis with a single voice. H. J. Kuiper quoted the President: "We need God's guidance that this people be humble in spirit, but strong in the conviction of the right: steadfast to endure sacrifice and brave to achieve a victory of liberty and peace."⁵

The Young Calvinist, written especially for young people in the church, had been addressing its readers

B-17 bomber in flight



(Previous page) Nicholas J. Cook

ers in military training camps long before Pearl Harbor, but after that event the magazine devoted much of its space to "The Boys in Service." In the opening issue of 1942 Earl Strikwerda counseled the draft-age generation on the ironies of history with its recurring cycles of war and human self-deception.⁶ Richard Post editorialized, "The United States enters the conflict with clean hands and a noble purpose. Fully aware of the magnitude of the task awaiting us, conscious of the sacrifice we must make, we enter the fray courageously and with the determination to bring the war to a successful end."⁷

There was no need, as there had been in the First World War, to justify or encourage patriotism. Quite the contrary. After Pearl Harbor the inclination was toward excessive patriotism. Thus, while Henry Beets wrote editorials extolling national loyalty in 1917, E. J. Tanis, H. J. Kuiper, and others sounded a cautious note after the outbreak of World War II. They, and the church with them, were

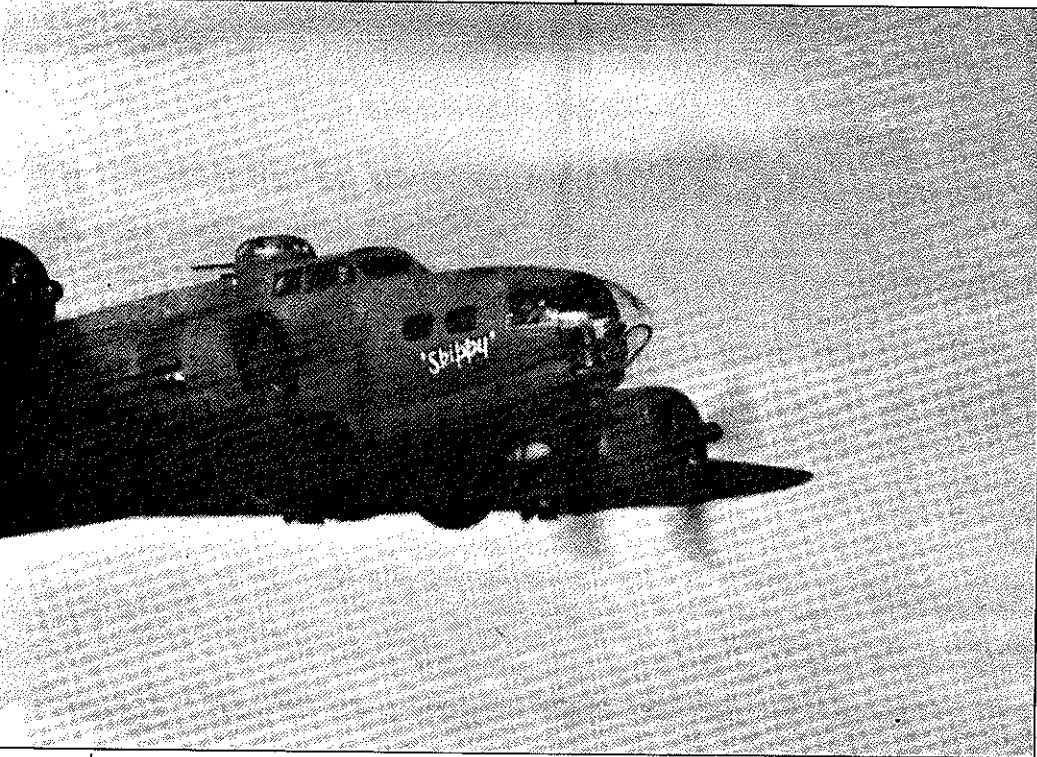
fully committed to the nation's war policy, but early on Kuiper offered a careful analysis of the situation. "Love for one's country is a real virtue," he wrote. "It is the fruit not of special grace, but of common grace. We should add, though, that the purest patriotism has a Christian root, namely, love for God, and it is cured of excesses and directed . . . by the influence of the Word and Spirit of God."⁸ In *The Calvin Forum* Clarence Bouma called for "a new patriotism, one that is neither militarist nor pacifist."⁹

What H. J. Kuiper called the "mighty passion of patriotism"—was not easily directed, and it could never justify personal hatreds. When the governmentally approved film *Hate the Enemy* was distributed, *The Banner* declared, "We should hate sin, not the sinner," and the editor argued that governmental authorities would do better to elevate a sense of justice rather than feed the thirst for revenge.¹⁰ In 1943 Kuiper quoted a military publication which asserted, "War

is the business of killing and being killed—an eye for an eye, says the old Mosaic law, a tooth for a tooth. The . . . with that! Two eyes for one. A whole jaw for a tooth. Our enemy taught the world a savagery that most of us thought had died with Attila, the Hun. They must be paid for it." Kuiper's response noted, "The spirit revealed in the above article is precisely the spirit of devilish hatred which accounts for Japanese atrocities. If we retaliate in their own spirit, in what respects are we better than they?"¹¹

Throughout the war the CRC's printed media persisted with efforts to separate legitimate from illegitimate objects of hate. In *The Young Calvinist* Earl Strikwerda noted, "Too many of our cartoons picture the Japanese soldier as a partially toothless monster We refuse to believe that human nature is as fundamentally different as sensational journalists would lead us to believe," and, furthermore, "Public morale is better served by a healthy respect for the enemy than by a blind senseless rage."¹²

The obvious dangers of war—to the country and the branches of the military—dominated the nation's attention, but also that of its churches. And, in the conflict's heat, religious groups were easily tempted to subject their independent voices to the goals of the state. Along that line E. J. Tanis noted the appearance of an advertisement in the *Baptist Watchman Examiner* which urged, TO KEEP THE BIBLE OPEN BUY WAR BONDS. "Let us not," Tanis warned, "belittle the Bible to win the war." God did not need the aid of the U.S. to preserve his eternal Word.¹³ General Arthur Mac Arthur was also cited for misleading sentiments when he comforted grieving civilians after the Bataan invasion by declaring, "I only say that the sacrifice and halo of Jesus of Nazareth has descended upon these [dead heroes]



and that God will take them unto himself." *The Banner* commented, "MacArthur is undoubtedly a military genius, but that does not make him a safe guide in the field of religion."¹⁴

Whatever its excesses, the war did create a more unified sense of purpose among religious bodies and, for the war's duration at least, many distinctions and animosities were shelved. Commonly held beliefs from sources so diverse as Karl Barth, General MacArthur, and Fulton J. Sheen found favorable notice in *The Banner*. In 1943 the CRC joined the National Association of Evangelicals and thereby proclaimed compatibility with Arminians, perfectionists, and even pacifists like the Mennonites. The NAE's opposition to modernism kept the CRC aboard until 1951, when fundamentalist influences from the NAE were cited as the major reason for disaffiliation. But during the war the church was inclined to emphasize areas of agreement within the evangelical community.¹⁵

As victory came nearer, E. J. Tanis reported that even in Russia religious freedom had gained a measure of respect. And he recommended a more tolerant attitude toward the U.S.S.R. because the Russian people "have been in bondage to a corrupt church and a despotic state for hundreds of years. It was only thirty years ago," he noted, "that Russia moved out of despotism into communism, and Russian communism is a mixture of totalitarianism and democracy." Though communism remained corrupt, Russia was our ally, and Henry Schultze argued that, because Hitler was a greater danger than Russia, we were fully justified in joining the communists to destroy the Nazis.¹⁶

The columns of *The Calvin Forum* and *The Banner* repeatedly declared that our enemies were not the German, Italian, and Japanese people, but their demonic beliefs. And on that level the Allies were also tainted.

Kuiper detailed the problem: "There is a difference between fighting Nazism and the Nazi . . . We must fight the Nazis with modern armaments, but Nazism can only be fought with intellectual and spiritual weapons. This means that we have to wage war against many in our own borders—not aliens, but 'good Americans' who have not recognized the fundamental falsehood of the Nazi philosophy and are themselves tainted with the pernicious doctrine of an omnipotent State." He added that the doctrine of racial superiority could also be found in the U.S.A., where "Some preach white supremacy because they are alarmed by the progress of the negroes among us. Many others would be all too ready for Jew-baiting campaigns. Still others cherish contempt for foreigners in general; they would welcome stern measures for the suppression of our entire alien population. The Germans have no monopoly on intolerance, hatred, and cruelty. The worst of human vices are latent in all human beings. War unleashes the wild beasts in the human heart."¹⁷

Such "wild beasts" could also find lodging among the CRC's young people, and that motivated urgent calls for more chaplains and service pastors, together with solemn warnings about spiritual dangers. And, indeed, the commonly recognized moral pitfalls of military life—alcohol abuse, sexual promiscuity, and grossly obscene language—demanded attention. In clear but tender exhortations the pages of *The Young Calvinist* urged its readers, in J. M. Ghysel's words, "that there be no Pearl Harbors in their lives." Dr. John Mulder of Pine Rest Hospital wrote authoritatively of "many ex-soldiers who were hospitalized due to venereal diseases contracted in a state of alcoholic confusion."¹⁸

The Young Calvinist, with over 5,500 subscribers, reached into every CRC

community, and it was mailed to nearly every young woman and man in the services. Regular columns by Editor Richard Post, by Earl Strikwerda ("Current Events"), and by service pastors offered advice, information, and encouragement. Peter Eldersveld and other gifted ministers crafted well-written homilies. Perhaps the many letters from service personnel and the regular reports of service pastors like Harry Dykstra provided the most attractive features of *The Young Calvinist*.¹⁹ In these columns some parents discovered words



Rev. H. J. Kuiper

from or about their own children. By publishing the location of its members the magazine often brought CRC young people together in military training camps. "Gold Stars" reports, numbering at least 294 by the end of 1945, symbolized the war's deepest and most enduring wounds. For everyone, though—parents, wives, and friends—*The Young Calvinist* forged a link between the denomination and its distant loved ones.²⁰

The war dictated much of the de

nomination's agenda as issues ranging from Sunday labor to the practice of open communion in the military forced the church to adjust its views on such matters during the emergency. The justification of Sunday defense work required immediate attention because the overwhelming demand for ammunition and war machinery had launched the industrial sector into seven-day weeks with double and even triple shifts. The church regarded this a "work of necessity" but warned that the emergency could become a cover for abuse.



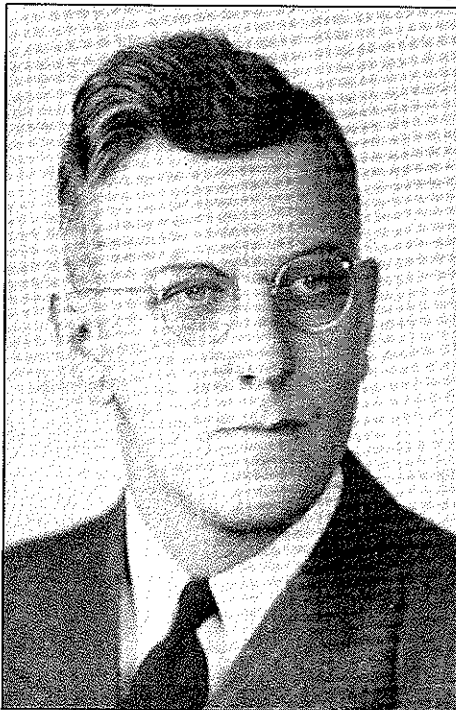
E. J. Tanis

Surely, H. J. Kuiper argued, not everyone was required to work seven days each week, and among those who did, none should do so consistently.²¹

Classis Hudson issued a declaration on the matter which acknowledged the necessity of Sunday labor but warned of the pitfalls which accompanied its continued practice. The classis cautioned its members about the potential of losing their sensitivity to "the sanctity of the Lord's Day" and succumbing to "the desire of the love

of money." To assist those who sought relief from excessive Sunday labor, Classis Hudson formed a committee which was pledged to intercede with factory managers for parishioners seeking release from Sunday labor.²²

During the war the CRC's longtime (since 1926) association with the Lord's Day Alliance gained increasing support and interest. Affiliation with the alliance bound the CRC with twenty-two denominations representing some thirty million parishioners. Together they petitioned national authorities to minimize Sunday



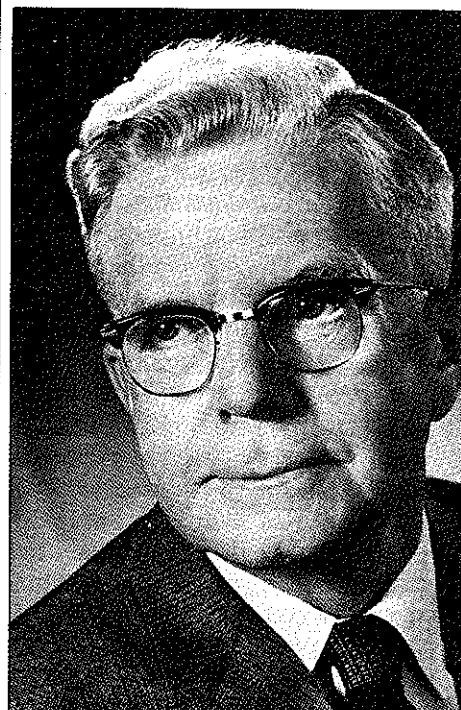
Dr. Earl Strikwerda

labor for the military and encourage Sunday observations throughout the nation.²³

Other ecclesiastical concerns focused on maintaining proper church order for the denomination's members in military service. The general practice of open communion troubled both the church and its chaplains. Even though the War Department manual asserted, "Chaplains will conform to the requirements and practices of the particular denomination to

which they belong,"²⁴ everyone acknowledged that there could be no close communion on the battlefield.

Though often discussed, synod did not provide precise rules of behavior for its chaplains. They, in turn, attempted to maintain the spirit of true communion. Dr. Harry Boer, a chaplain during the war, recalls that he always announced the availability of special communion services for those who truly loved the Lord and sought to serve him. Boer also conducted classes in Bible history and doctrine which attracted clusters of students to



Mr. Richard Postma

this tent five nights of the week.

It was probably Boer's orthodoxy which made him attractive in times of crisis. Before the Gilbert Island invasion of 1943 the ship's chaplain conducted a communion service. Participation was nearly universal, but the sacrament provided little more than a benign grandfatherly blessing. Following the four-day battle, when the haggard and depleted ranks returned, Boer was singled out to provide words of comfort and counsel.

His liberal cohorts in the chaplaincy were not inclined to speak to the bitter realities of death.²⁵

War created a wide range of new questions. May service people make profession of faith without consistorial participation? To chaplains of unknown religious convictions? The answer was yes. *The Banner* warned repeatedly that alcohol abuse threatened lives and morals. Both at home and in training camps the dangers of mixed marriages loomed larger than ever. With potential husbands at war (some never to return), young women were tempted to marry unbelievers while servicemen could be similarly attracted into unchristian marriages. For such the advice was simple. Don't do it!²⁶

The inclination to join neutral labor unions also gained renewed concern during the conflict. Obligatory employment in defense plants brought additional church members into the A.F. of L. and the C.I.O., and John Gritter urged the denomination to clarify its opposition to such union memberships. The 1943 synod reviewed its history of deliberations on neutral labor-union membership and concluded that church discipline could not be leveled against neutral organizations. Parishioners and churches were instructed to follow the advice of the 1930 synod, which required thoughtful examination of the various unions and discipline for those members who spread Marxist notions such as the materialistic basis of society or an adversarial definition of economic life. In short, synod refused to condemn the A.F. of L. or the C.I.O. and referred the disciplinary question to local congregations.²⁷

None of the wartime issues resulted in momentous changes in church policies, and on the home front at least, the church sailed peaceful seas. Reviewing the events of 1943, H. J. Kuiper concluded, "This year has been one of denominational peace and of

financial well-being for our churches, schools, and denominational projects. Not a few of our institutions have canceled their debts or are laying up funds for future expansion." He added, "Much attention is being given by the denomination and . . . individual congregations to the spiritual welfare of their men and women in military service."²⁸

The church in the Netherlands, though, experienced neither peace nor financial well-being.* Faithful Christians there could only express themselves truthfully in private gatherings. Those who openly op-

tribute clandestine news to offset the propaganda of German-controlled news services.³⁰

Describing these events in 1945, a Christian school teacher wrote, "We have now had almost four years of German occupation, and the terror which has been leveled against the populace in some segments of the country has been exceedingly bad. Thousands were shot to death because they tried to serve their country by illegal activity . . . and a large number of Gereformeerde pastors were among the victims. Tomorrow eleven young men will be buried in

ARTICLE 162

The Budget Committee presents a list of all quotas:

1. Calvin College and Seminary.....	\$4.00 per family
2. Ministers' Pension Fund.....	1.75 per family
3. Synodical Expense75 per family
4. Indian, China, and Sudan Mission	4.92 per family
5. Church Extension Fund.....	1.75 per family
6. Fund for Needy Churches.....	2.00 per family
7. Church Help Fund.....	.75 per family
8. South America35 per family
9. Jewish Missions57 per family
10. Radio Broadcasting	1.00 per family

Quota list for 1944

posed Nazi policies were imprisoned, and many of these paid with their lives. From the Gereformeerde Kerk alone, 106 pastors were imprisoned, and twenty of these died. Nonetheless, many members of the Gereformeerde Kerk defied the Nazis and helped to protect and hide about three thousand Jews. At the same time, at least 109,000 Dutch Jews were transported to death camps, and their annihilation reduced the Jewish populace of Holland by about 80 percent.²⁹

The whole Kuyperian institutional structure—Christian schools, the Free University of Amsterdam, political parties, the press, unions, and the Christian radio station—was dismantled. An underground press (*Trouw* and *Vrij Nederland*) did, however, dis-

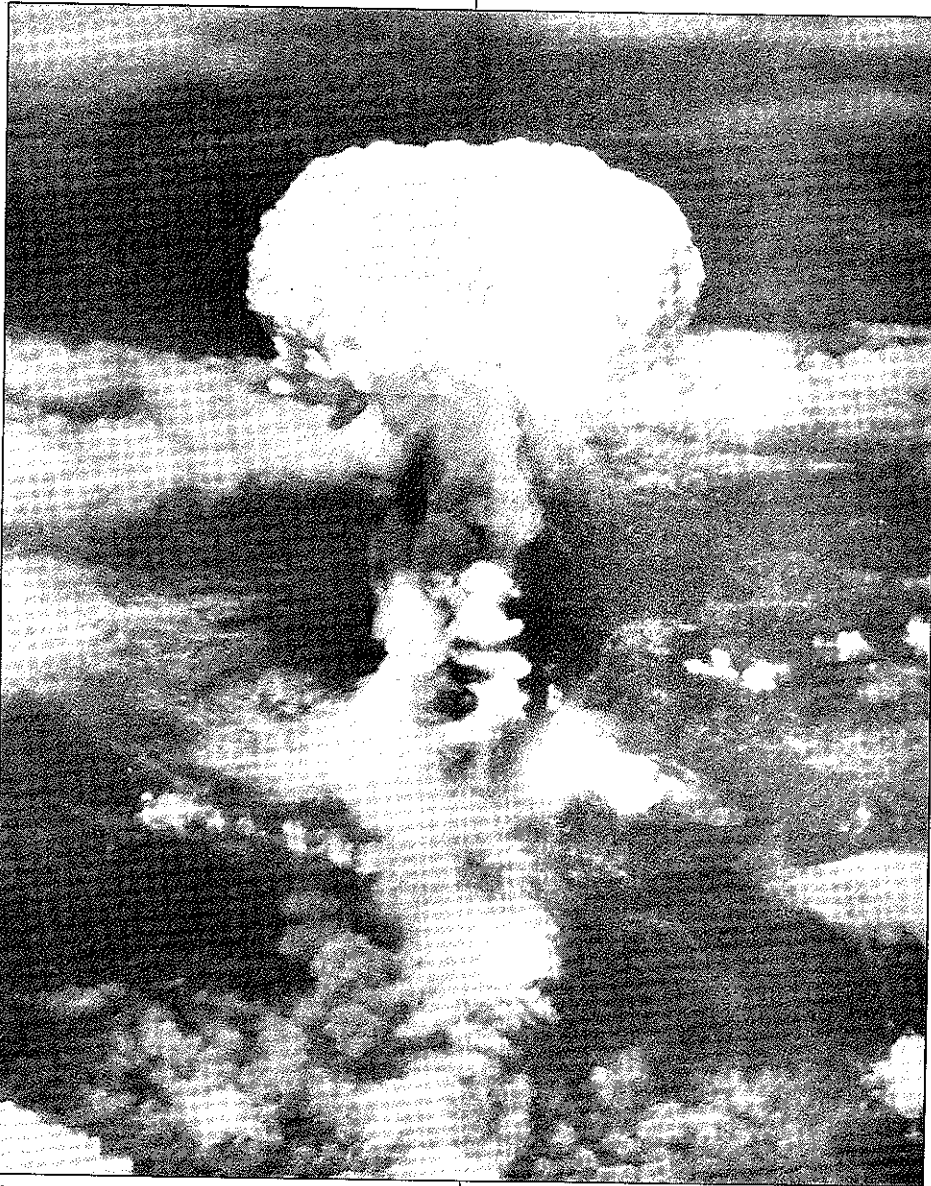
Burgentheim, and four of them are former students of our school. They were taken as hostages a few months ago and then shot to death. Tens and even hundreds of thousands of Netherlanders have been transported to Germany to work in war industry, and who knows how many of those will ever return. Virtually all the Jews have been transported from Holland—most of them to work in the mercury mines of Poland where, by now, the greatest portion has probably been buried. Here in Holland almost every farm family has hidden some young folk who refused to work for the Germans."³¹

World War II began nearly a year earlier for the Netherlands than for the U.S.A. The May 10 invasion of

*See page 42 in this *Origins* for an account of the "Article 31" debate in the Gereformeerde Kerk.

Holland in 1940 forced capitulation in just four days, but not before the heart of Rotterdam was obliterated by an air raid. Queen Wilhelmina escaped to England with little more than her life, and there she established a government in exile. Her countryfolk, meanwhile, suffered under a police state which enforced progressively greater restrictions on every facet of life. During the last hard winter of occupation thousands of civilians died from hunger, cold, and exposure. Finally, when

Nagasaki and atomic bomb explosion



the Canadian and other Allied troops captured the last German stragglers in 1945, the Netherlands was a bankrupt wasteland. Flooded fields, gutted factories, and crumpled churches peppered the landscape.³² Soon the initial euphoria of liberation gave way to the hard reality of reconstruction. But by then a new and even more terrifying reality altered the globe.

One event, the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, ended the war, but it opened the curtain on the Atomic Age. First reactions included both joy and fear. No war would ever

be the same, and even the dreary images of World War II paled before the potential annihilation which this new force exhibited. Debate about the wisdom of its use sprang up immediately. In August the *New York Times* declared that we had "sown a whirlwind," and H. J. Kuiper agreed. "Suppose," he wrote, "that within twenty years this frightful weapon will be used against New York, Chicago, . . . and other fair cities of our land." History gives us "no reason to believe that the most frightful weapon ever devised will restrain nations from declaring war. As long as men hate they will fight."³³ In that same *Banner* E. J. Tanis declared, "We must not be so naive as to think that these bombs will not be dropped on American cities in future warfare. We are fortunate in living one or possibly two generations too soon to see American cities bombed to pieces."³⁴

The bomb also had defenders, and the main lines of debate were quickly established. The enemy had used criminal tactics—the bombing of non-combatants in Rotterdam, suicide missions, and concentration camps. Did that not justify the bombing of Hiroshima—a single blow to stop further bloodshed and destruction? If so, then the indiscriminate slaughter of civilians could be justified in every war. H. J. Kuiper, while disagreeing with Rev. Ring Star's defense of the bombing, proposed that the atomic bomb, as well as flame throwers, poison gas, and germ warfare, "be outlawed forever by the United Nations." He concluded, "Why should humanity destroy itself in the name of war?"³⁵ As every reader knows, these fundamental questions remain hauntingly current.

But the war did end, and with that the world observed the true nature of Nazism's depravity. Europe was a charnel house. The crematoriums of Dachau and elsewhere were thrown open, and General D. D. Eisenhower declared, "The things I saw beggar

description . . . The visual evidence and the verbal testimony of starvation, cruelty, and bestiality were so overpowering as to leave me a bit sick."³⁶ A vast displaced populace trekked the roads and fields. Their eyes were glazed from hunger and grief.

North America responded. From the U.S.A. and Canada a huge voluntary relief effort took shape. Several agencies—the Red Cross, the National War Fund, and the United Jewish Appeal—poured aid into Europe. The United Jewish Appeal alone distributed over \$122 million in aid between 1946 and 1947. Two committees of the CRC gathered about \$430,000 to assist sister churches in the Netherlands, and many Dutch-Americans sent "care packages" to Holland.³⁷

Private aid, mailed across the ocean from cousin to cousin, established family bonds which had been neglected. The gratitude and good will which such assistance provided lingers even now. After receiving a gift package from George Brinkerhof in 1945, the Kor Kee family wrote, "You have surprised us enormously! What delicious food and what beautiful dresses . . . My wife danced around the room with the face soap because we had nearly forgotten that it existed. Again and again we had to sniff the aroma of the coffee beans. You have done very much for us. We don't know how to thank you."³⁸

For the Netherlands, however, the privations of the war were only the worst of many difficulties. That country had had no significant reprieve from the worldwide depression of the Thirties, and shortly after the war (1949), the Dutch colony of Indonesia revolted and gained independence. Dutch Indonesians and their sympathizers, who lost the war, were permitted to resettle in the Netherlands. Some 300,000 of these joined a rapidly growing postwar populace in the homeland. With inadequate housing

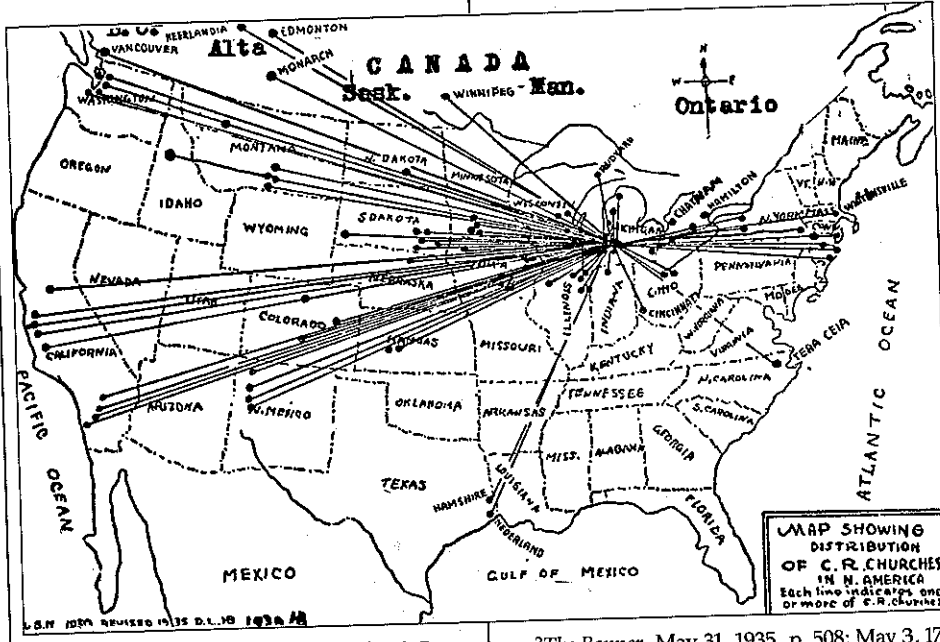
and limited opportunities for economic growth, the future of the Netherlands seemed dismal, and a full third of the populace considered emigration. Ultimately 425,000 Dutch nationals left the Netherlands to resettle in Canada, Australia, the U.S.A., South Africa, and New Zealand. The Canadian and U.S. contingents (140 and 80 thousand, respectively) arrived between 1946 and 1952. About 20 percent of these were orthodox Calvinists who sought similar churches in the U.S.A. and Canada.³⁹

In 1947 the CRC claimed only fif-

immigrants rolled into Canada after the war, the CRC was able to expand existing services and to offer Dutch-speaking pastors and some financial assistance to newly organizing churches. Between 1947 and 1957 these congregations multiplied from 15 to 107. By then, the postwar immigrants accounted for about 25 percent of the CRC's total membership.⁴⁰ The denomination faced a new era.

Endnotes

¹U.S. War Dept. to Mr. Peter Cook, Nov. 17, 1944; Oct. 11, 1949. Peter Cook Papers, Calvin College and Seminary Archives.



Map illustrating distribution of CRC congregations in 1944.

teen congregations in Canada. Their origins dated from the first quarter of the century, when both Dutch immigrants and Dutch-American migrants settled in Winnipeg, Vancouver, and Monarch. The denomination's home missions program had provided services for these fledgling congregations throughout that era; already by 1926 Henry Beets had established ties with the Canadian immigration office to link the CRC with newly arriving immigrants from the Netherlands. Thus, when the flood tide of Dutch

²The Banner, May 31, 1935, p. 508; May 3, 17, 24, and 31, 1940; Aug. 9 and 16, 1940; Sept. 13, 1940.

³The Banner, Jan. 31, 1941, p. 100; Feb. 14, 1941, pp. 148 and 158; Calvin Forum, Aug. 1941, pp. 7-9.

⁴The Banner, May 31, 1940, p. 509.

⁵The Banner, Jan. 2, 1942, pp. 4-5.

⁶The Young Calvinist, Jan. 1942, pp. 3-4.

⁷The Young Calvinist, Jan. 1942, p. 10.

⁸The Banner, Feb. 13, 1942, pp. 148-49.

⁹Calvin Forum, Dec. 1941, p. 85.

¹⁰The Banner, June 5, 1942, p. 533.

¹¹The Banner, June 4, 1943, p. 508.

¹²The Young Calvinist, March 1943, p. 9.

¹³The Banner, July 10, 1942, p. 638.

¹⁴The Banner, May 22, 1942, p. 486.

¹⁵The Banner, March 27, 1942, p. 292; June 5, 1942, p. 533; March 5, 1943, p. 223; June 4, 1943, p. 506; Acts of Synod, 1943, pp. 132-38.

¹⁶The Banner, June 16, 1944, p. 559; Calvin

The name is pronounced "Skill-der," and it was familiar to every Reformed emigrant who left the Netherlands after World War II and settled in North America.

In many respects, the story of Klaas Schilder and the so-called "Churches of the 1944 Liberation" parallel for Canadians the story of Herman Hoeksema and the Protestant Reformed Church in the United States.

Abraham Kuyper's son, Professor H. H. Kuyper, was a defender of the principle that major church assemblies (for example, synods) have major authority. That principle was applied in 1926 at the Dutch Synod of Assen when a reputedly liberal professor, Geelkerken, had his views condemned. The conservatives in the church applauded the condemnation. But they were appalled when the synod followed its condemnation by suspending Geelkerken and his followers from their offices. Synods can't suspend, the conservatives argued; only the consistory—theoretically the "highest" body in Reformed polity, but not the "broadest"—may suspend.

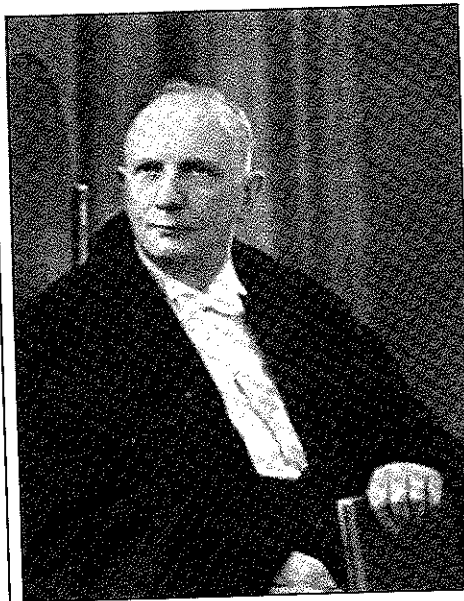
By the 1930s the matter had become a roaring debate about church authority, with Schilder defending local church autonomy and Kuyper giving authority to the synods.

Schilder was a powerful man, dead set in his convictions and afraid of nothing. When Hitler's forces moved into the Netherlands (1939), Schilder was among the first Reformed preachers arrested for his strident defense of the House of Orange and biting attacks on the Nazi machine.

During the war, arguments about

A Man Named Schilder

by A. J. Heynen



"presumptive regeneration" (at issue: may we *presume* at an infant's baptism that she will be *regenerated*?) forced the issue of church order. Schilder answered the basic question with a resounding no. When the 1944 Synod said yes, Schilder and his friends refused to give in.

Article 31 of the Church Order of Dort says that a decision of synod is "considered settled and binding, unless it be proved to conflict with the Word of God. . . ." Schilder claimed that, because the synod's decision was in conflict with the Word of God (as Schilder interpreted it), synod's decision was not binding.

For his attacks on synod, Schilder was finally suspended on March 23, 1944. On August 11 of that year, followers of Schilder met in The Hague for a rally. In an electric moment, Schilder—who'd been in hiding from the Nazi SS—ap-

peared with the popular, aging Professor Greijdanus, who shared his views. The two men gave defiant speeches. When the night was over, a new church was beginning to take shape. The names of that church are all drawn from its history: The Churches of the 1944 Liberation (from synodical domination), the Article 31 Churches, or simply the "Vrijgemaakten" (Dutch for "liberated").

In 1938 Schilder had visited the United States and had given considerable support to Herman Hoeksema's Protestant Reformed group. After the war, in 1947, Schilder returned to the States. He was convinced during that tour that, according to Alexander De Jong's thesis (*The Well-Meant Gospel*), "the Protestant Reformed Church was the only one in which 'liberated' emigrants would feel at home, and therefore he advised many Dutch emigrants to seek affiliation with that church."

In Canada, Schilder's followers formed the Free Reformed Church, with an attachment to the Protestant Reformed Church across the border.

For many Christian Reformed people in Canada, this is not mere history but "my history." Some endured congregational and familial splits in both the Netherlands and Canada. Some CRC clergy in Canada have been members in Schilder's groups as well as in the CRC. And some are simply rankled by the fact that in the darkest days of the war, when the survival of both the Dutch nation and the Reformed people was literally, physically, at stake, when unity was needed above all else, Schilder split the church over something as abstruse as "presumptive regeneration" and a line from Dort's Church Order.



A Call to Arms

*Recruitment of Dutch Nationals in the United States for the Netherlands Armed Forces in the Second World War**

by Gerlof D. Homan**

Unlike the French government, which withdrew from further participation in the war after signing an armistice with Hitler, the Netherlands decided to continue the struggle after its May 15 surrender. However, the London-based government in exile had only limited military resources to fight the Axis powers. In 1940 only a few men escaped to England, where they formed the small Princess Irene Fighting Brigade. They

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*A slightly different version of this article appeared in *Medeligen van de Sectie Militaire Geschiedenis Landmacht 9* (1986): 31-42, whose editorial committee graciously consented to grant permission to publish this article in *Origins*.

***Note: To acquire information for this article, the author sought contacts with Dutch nationals who were immigrants in the United States and who served in the Princess Irene Brigade. Although more than four hundred Dutch-Americans served in the Netherlands armed forces during World War II, I did not have much of a response. It is difficult to believe that all or most of them are no longer living. I hope that this article will stimulate them to contact me.

were supported by various naval vessels and ships of the Dutch merchant marine which also joined the war effort.

In order to enlarge its fighting unit in England and arouse interest in the war effort among Netherlands abroad (as well as to impress its allies), the Dutch government recruited among its citizens living in several lands. Special efforts were made to attract men in South America, South Africa, Canada, and the United States. In the United States the Dutch government could draw upon a small number of employees attached to international businesses, a few refugees, and the immigrants. It was particularly from this latter group that Dutch officials hoped to recruit many young men. This article discusses especially the recruitment of such permanent Dutch residents in the United States and is based on unpublished Dutch and American archival sources.^{1***}

Already in May 1940, shortly after the defeat of the Dutch armed forces by the Nazi juggernaut, some efforts

Dutch soldiers training in Guelph, Ontario

were made to recruit Netherlands in the United States.² As will be seen below, these efforts did not produce the expected results. On August 8, 1940, by royal decree, all Netherlands in the United Kingdom, United States, and Canada who were born between January 1, 1904, and January 1, 1921, were ordered to register for military duty with Dutch officials in those countries. Later in the war, the decree was expanded to include Netherlands in other parts of the world as well and those born between January 1, 1900, and December 31, 1924. During the latter part of the war, those born between January 1, 1904, and January 1, 1927, were declared eligible for military conscription. Furthermore, the decree of August 1940 made it possible for men between the ages of eighteen and fifty-five to enlist in the Netherlands armed forces.³

The task of registering Netherlands in the United States was initially undertaken by the Netherlands Consulate General in New York. In December 1940 a special registration bureau was established in New York.⁴

Later, in March and May 1941, registration bureaus were established in Chicago, San Francisco, and Los Angeles, close to the major centers of Dutch settlements in the United States. The entire recruitment system in the United States as well as in Canada was under the supervision and direction of Lieutenant Colonel G. J. Sas, the head of the Netherlands military mission in Canada. Sas seems to have spent much of his time and energy on recruitment efforts in the United States. Much to his chagrin he was replaced in early 1942 by the former minister of war, Major General A. Q. H. Dijkhoorn.⁵

One of the major problems Dutch officials faced from the very beginning was how to obtain names and addresses of Nederlanders residing in the United States and how to inform them of their military duty without violating American laws. According to American officials, neutrality legislation forbade recruitment of foreign nationals residing in the United States.⁶ Although that was incorrect, recruitment did violate Section 10 of the 1917 Criminal Code, which stipulated that it was illegal

... to go beyond the limits of the jurisdiction of the United States with intent to be enlisted or entered in the service of any foreign prince, State, colony, district, or people as a soldier or as a marine or seaman on board any vessel of war

However, Article 10 also provided that the law would not apply to "any citizens or subjects of any country engaged in war with a . . . country with which the United States is at war" ⁷ Until December 1941 the United States was a neutral power and not a co-belligerent or ally of the Netherlands. Thus, during much of this period American officials insisted that the law be respected. Officially, the United States did not approve con-

scripting Dutch nationals residing as permanent residents in the United States and even warned Netherlands officials not to make any recruitment propaganda. At the same time, the American government acknowledged that the "liability of any such persons for service in the Dutch Armed Forces was a matter for the decision of the Dutch government."⁸ This kind of ambiguity made it difficult for Netherlands authorities to determine how much freedom they would have in recruiting Dutch nationals. They simply would have to test the waters.

In the summer of 1940 they placed an announcement in the *Knickerbocker*, posted a call for military service in Netherlands consulates, and informed various Dutch organizations. In July 1940, A. Hartog, the Netherlands consul general in Los Angeles, placed an announcement in local papers and in store windows and informed local ministers.⁹ Apparently American officials considered this a violation of the law, and in August of that year Hartog was instructed by A. Loudon, the Netherlands minister to Washington, to try to persuade local editors to refer to the royal decree in their editorial pages.¹⁰ Dutch officials also contacted various American businesses such as Shell Oil Corporation of Texas and the National Brass Company of Grand Rapids, Michigan, to provide them with names of Dutch employees.¹¹

Once names and addresses were obtained, circulars were sent requesting the men to register for military service. American officials objected to this type of communication, however, and in January 1941, they instructed Dutch authorities to cease all recruitment propaganda. Loudon promised to discontinue the use of the circular, but apparently the practice was soon resumed.¹²

However, obtaining the names of eligible men was a difficult task. Thus, in the summer of 1941 and again in

December of that year, Dutch officials sought to resolve their problem by requesting American authorities to allow them to inspect all alien registration cards of Dutch citizens born between 1904 and 1924.¹³ (Until very recently, all aliens residing in the United States were required by law to make annual reports of their status.) Initially, the State Department seemed sympathetic to the request, which came at a time when the United States was no longer strictly observing its neutrality. However, the Immigration and Naturalization Service took a dim view of the request and rejected it with the observation that study of millions of registration cards would simply involve too much work and making them available to a foreign power would create "an embarrassing precedent."¹⁴

After the United States' entry into the war, the Netherlands expected to secure much more cooperation from American officials. It was some time, however, before a new agreement was negotiated, and even then Dutch officials were not entirely satisfied. In January 1942 they obtained a major concession when the United States agreed to transfer all names and addresses of Nederlanders registered under the American Selective Training and Service Act.¹⁵ This concession resolved one of the major problems Dutch officials had encountered in the preceding months. However, in late March the United States informed Dutch officials that only Dutch subjects who were non-declarant aliens (those not expressing intentions to become U.S. citizens) could be accepted for military service in the Netherlands armed forces; so-called "declarant aliens" could no longer be drafted. Dutch officials were quick to point out that this new regulation reduced the pool of potential draftees since, in their opinion, the number of declarant aliens was larger than that of the non-declarants.¹⁶ As will be

shown below, they were mistaken in their estimate; the number of non-declarants was larger than that of declarants.

In spite of the Netherlands' protest, the United States refused to alter its policy. On May 6, 1942, the Department of State informed Loudon that the old policy had been instituted before the United States entered the war. The new policy constituted "the most liberal regime from a practicable point of view which can be placed in effect for all the various belligerent countries."¹⁷ Most likely, the new



Sentry of Juliana Brigade barracks in Stratford, Ontario

American policy was motivated in part by a desire to secure as much manpower as possible for American armed forces.

Further protests by Dutch officials brought no changes, and finally, on July 8, 1942, the Netherlands and the United States reached an agreement that confirmed previous understandings. It stipulated that the Netherlands should not use "any threats or compulsion of any nature to induce any person in the United States to enlist in its armed forces" and should not accept enlistments of aliens who had declared their intent of becoming American citizens and who were subject to registration under the Selective Service Act.¹⁸

Apparently there were no further major problems between Dutch and American officials. State Selective Service Boards were especially cooperative in providing names and addresses. After the names had been secured, circulars were sent to the men requesting them to register. If no reply had been obtained within eight days, a new letter would be sent. If again no reply was received, a staff member would visit the young man, trying to persuade him to comply. Subsequently, the local draft board was notified of his decision. In spite of the restriction against drawing upon declarant aliens, Dutch officials were still able to enlist them if the local draft board was willing to grant a release. However, it appears that such releases were seldom granted.¹⁹

After July 1942, the only major problem between American and Dutch officials concerning recruitment was the de Vogel affair. While American officials had rendered their "valued assistance"²⁰ in returning a few deserters to Netherlands authorities, they stubbornly refused to comply with Dutch requests to hand de Vogel over to them. Even Minister Loudon was unable to secure American compliance and cooperation.

Charles Emil de Vogel was born in the Netherlands around 1908. In 1927 he served for a short time in a Dutch officers-training school and later went

to the Netherlands Indies, where he became a corporal in the colonial army. From 1938 to 1940 he visited California, where he married an American citizen. In 1940 he returned to the Indies and in early 1941 was admitted as an immigrant to the United States. In July of that year he registered for American military service and was given 4-C, or alien, status by the Selective Service Board of Glendale, California. In October 1941 he applied for his first papers, declaring his intention to become an American citizen.

However, Gerard J. Droste, head of the Netherlands registration bureau and consul general in Los Angeles, informed de Vogel of his military duty under the royal decree of August 1940. De Vogel complied and, after his medical examination, was ordered to proceed to Stratford, Ontario, for military training. In February 1942 his local draft board released him from any military obligation under the Selective Service Act, and in the same month de Vogel proceeded to Canada. After he had achieved the rank of corporal, de Vogel was sent to Curacao, where he remained until April 1943. Subsequently, he was ordered to return to Canada via Los Angeles, where he was permitted to settle some personal affairs. However, upon his arrival in Los Angeles, he informed officials of the Netherlands registration bureau that he was unwilling to proceed to Canada. Instead, he re-registered with his local draft board in Glendale, where they classified him 1-A and ordered his induction.²¹

Dutch authorities informed American officials of de Vogel's desertion and requested his arrest. The Department of War complied, and on June 21 de Vogel was arrested in Los Angeles. The Inspector General of the Ninth Service Command of the U.S. Army investigated the matter and recommended on July 27 to the Inspector General of Washington, D.C. to deter-

mine if de Vogel's enlistment had not been in violation of Section 10 of the U.S. Criminal Code or "otherwise unlawful." The investigating officer of the Ninth Service Command also questioned Droste, who defended his decision to induct de Vogel by correctly pointing out that at the time of the latter's induction "no agreement had been reached between the United States Government and the Netherlands Government for enlisting of Netherlands nationals in the United States."²² However, on October 5, 1943, the American Judge Advocate General agreed with the Ninth Service Command's conclusion that de Vogel had been inducted in violation of the U.S. Criminal Code. Furthermore, he recommended possible criminal action against Droste.²³ Subsequently, in October Secretary of War Henry Stimson ordered de Vogel's release and induction into the U.S. Army.²⁴ However, Stimson decided not to instigate legal proceedings against Droste by exercising his prerogatives under a provision of the same Article 10 of the Criminal Code that supposedly had been violated. The provision on which Stimson based his decision not to prosecute stipulated that the law would not apply to citizens of nations who were engaged in a war against a country with which the United States was also at war.²⁵

In April and May 1944, Minister Loudon filed his protests with American authorities by contending that at the same time of de Vogel's registration with the Selective Service he was an "enrolled member of the Armed Forces of the Netherlands." Therefore, the Netherlands minister contended, de Vogel's registration could not have been accepted.²⁶ The State Department replied that on the basis of all the available evidence, de Vogel had been inducted as a result of "threats and other improper representations by Dutch officials."²⁷ Dutch of-

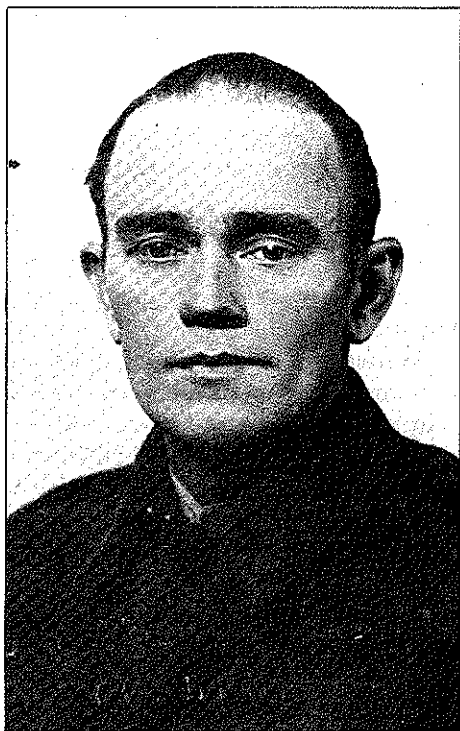
ficials denied such allegations and contended that de Vogel's induction had occurred at a time when there was no agreement between the Netherlands and the United States. Furthermore, on June 24 and October 13, 1944, Loudon informed Secretary of State Cordell Hull that the provisions of the Criminal Code were not applicable because de Vogel was not an American citizen at the time of his induction into the Netherlands armed forces. Finally, the Netherlands minister concluded that "no matter whatever the merits of the case may be, the unilateral induction of a soldier into the army of the United States who is in the active service of the Armed Forces of a country which is allied with the United States in the present war, is an action which is not furthering the close cooperation and harmony which should exist between the armed forces of countries fighting the same enemy."²⁸ However, Hull and Stimson refused to budge, and de Vogel remained in the U.S. Army.

What were the merits of the case? Unfortunately, we do not know if Droste used "improper representations" to persuade de Vogel to join the Netherlands armed forces. Perhaps he told him and other Netherlands nationals of possible "dire consequences" if they would not comply. In fact, this empty threat had been used by other Dutch officials since 1940, but it had never led to any kind of confrontation with American authorities. Nor had the agreement of July 8, 1942, been violated, since de Vogel had been inducted into the Netherlands armed forces in February 1942. One could argue, although American officials did not press this point, that de Vogel should not have been drafted because he was a so-called declarant alien. As will be recalled, American authorities stipulated in March 1942 that such individuals were not to be inducted into the Netherlands armed forces. However,

de Vogel's Selective Service Board had released him from any American military obligation. Thus, de Vogel's induction seems to have been proper and not in violation of any agreements or understandings. American officials overreacted and misjudged the case. Perhaps even Stimson finally realized that the American case was not very persuasive when, in November 1944, he declared the case closed, not because de Vogel had been improperly inducted but because he had become an American citizen and was now serving in the American armed forces.²⁹ Apparently de Vogel had quickly completed his naturalization process while serving in the U.S. Army. He was then completely safe from any kind of prosecution by Dutch authorities.

How did Dutch nationals living in the United States respond to the call for military service in the armed forces of the land of their birth? Recipients of the Dutch circular requesting them to register with a Netherlands registration bureau raised a great variety of concerns and questions. They wanted to know if Dutch authorities had the power to conscript them and what the penalty for refusal would be. They also wanted to know if declarant aliens could be conscripted. Some were concerned that a person who had taken out first papers might no longer qualify for American citizenship if he would serve with the Netherlands armed forces. Others wondered if they could serve while they were registered under the Selective Service Act. A few individuals were concerned about the problem of reentry into the United States after they had completed their military service with the Netherlands armed forces. One person even wanted to know what would happen to him if he refused to serve but would some day return to the Netherlands for a visit. Finally, there were questions about family allowance and maintenance.³⁰

Perhaps one of the most typical inquiries came from Roy Broersma of Bellflower, California.³¹ Broersma had arrived in the United States in 1926 and had settled in Bellflower, where he became a dairy farmer. In August 1941 he received a summons to join the Netherlands armed forces in Canada. This call prompted his inquiry with the State Department, which had received similar inquiries in previous months from other anxious Dutch nationals. Broersma wrote on August 20, 1941,



Jon Cnossen

I have been informed by an agent of the Holland Government that I have to go to Canada to join the Dutch Forces there and have to leave from Los Angeles Wednesday August 27, 1941. I have been a resident alien of this country for 15 years and I am married and have dairy business of my own. And I also have filed for my first citizen papers. Has the Holland Government

authority to make me join the Dutch Military Forces in Canada. Or will the American Government force me to leave this country. I have never been in [the] Dutch army before. I would greatly appreciate [an] answer before Wednesday Aug. 27, 1941. I am enclosing a [sic] envelope [sic] with stamp.³²

To these and other inquiries the State Department tried to reply as well as it could. Thus it reassured the inquirers that Dutch authorities had no power to force them to comply with Dutch draft laws.³³ The problem of reentry permits was not fully resolved until after Pearl Harbor. Until that time recruits were able to obtain reentry permits as long as they would not divulge the reasons for their departure from the United States.³⁴ Many inquiries of Dutch nationals were probably attempts to find legitimate excuses to evade induction into the Netherlands armed forces. Netherlands officials soon complained and during the entire war continued to feel a sense of frustration over the failure of Dutch nationals to rally to the support of the fatherland in time of need. Already in the summer of 1940, shortly after the Nazi assault on the Netherlands, when one would have expected a considerable amount of enthusiasm and patriotism, Dutch officials voiced their disappointment. They complained that while a few hundred volunteered in May 1940,³⁵ few joined them in the months following. In late 1940 Hartog lamented that he was "at a loss to know what to do about it"³⁶ In October 1942 Loudon expressed his dismay that some 907 Netherlands had not responded to the call to register,³⁷ and in August 1943 Dijkhoorn charged there were at least 703 "deserters."³⁸ In December 1941 Sas complained about the "indolence and unwillingness to make sacrifices" and even "ob-

struction" on the part of his countrymen.³⁹ W. F. Kroon, head of the registration bureau in Chicago, voiced his anger and frustration at W. J. van Wagtendonk, who refused to respond to the draft call. Van Wagtendonk was born in Java, had graduated from the University of Utrecht, and had come to the United States in 1939. He studied at Stanford University and later taught chemistry at Oregon State College.⁴⁰ Since he refused to register with the Chicago bureau, Kroon accused him of being a draft evader and expressed his anger by saying it was "beyond his imagination" to understand why a "learned man" would refuse to do his duty to the Netherlands without "sound reason."⁴¹

Apparently one of the legitimate means of escaping conscription was to change one's status from non-declarant to declarant alien. Pastor Jacob Van Dyke of the First Christian Reformed Church of Ireton, Iowa, noticed that many young men in his congregation rather suddenly decided to take out their first papers.⁴² On the other hand, there were also some who, in order to escape American military service, changed their status from declarant to non-declarant alien. Furthermore, fifty-three men obtained a legitimate escape by receiving a deferment.⁴³ Some Dutch shipping firms in New York were able to persuade Netherlands authorities to grant some fifty of their employees special status which required them to perform weekly military exercises while they were permitted to keep their regular employment. This was the so-called "fountain-pen brigade," whose members would now also be protected against a possible American draft call.⁴⁴

D. Hudig, president of the Netherlands Shipping and Trade Commission in New York, even charged that young men who wanted to serve were persuaded not to enlist because they were told their office work was more

important than military service. Hudig also contended that Loudon had approved of this policy. This accusation brought a quick response from the Netherlands minister, who informed his foreign minister in London that they were doing "everything possible" to persuade Netherlands to register.⁴⁵ Yet a special advisory commission established in 1941 to hear and decide requests of deferment resigned in 1942 because Dijkhoorn granted exemptions to one or two individuals.⁴⁶

The lack of response about which Dutch officials complained can be explained in part by the attitude of many Dutch immigrants in the United States. Most of them had left their native land because of frustration and failure over their station in life in the Netherlands. Many had done much better in their adopted land, and the country of their birth often reminded them of less pleasant experiences. Furthermore, they had emotionally and mentally identified themselves with the United States and had gradually loosened their ties with the Old World. There might also have been materialistic reasons, since many immigrants expected to receive more pay and benefits in the American forces. However, the pay of a soldier in the Dutch and American forces was about the same—twenty-one dollars per month.⁴⁷

The famous Servicemen's Readjustment Act, which granted considerable benefits to American veterans, was not passed until June 1944, and by then the effort to recruit Netherlands in the United States had virtually stopped. In any event, some two hundred Netherlands did serve in the American armed forces. Perhaps most of these were declarant aliens, and all of these were given an option to enlist in Dutch military service. Apparently, few did.⁴⁸ Finally, there undoubtedly were many so-called "tepid" Netherlands, as Loudon called them, who

simply were not eager to serve either in the Netherlands or the American armed forces and who could think of many excuses for their failure to respond.⁴⁹

What could Dutch officials do to persuade these tepid countrymen who refused to serve? They had little if any power of coercion. American authorities would most certainly not follow the South African example⁵⁰ of rounding up recalcitrant Netherlands. Nor would they emulate the Belgians, who threatened to confiscate properties of Dutch nationals in their native land if they had any.⁵¹ At best they could refuse to issue new passports or provide consular services,⁵² and of course they could always threaten "dire consequences." Thus, a Dutch official in New York warned N. Van Leeuwen that he would have greater difficulty becoming an American citizen if he refused going to Canada. Van Leeuwen was not impressed and considered the threats only vague efforts to scare him.⁵³

Still, the response of Netherlands in the United States to military duty in the Dutch armed forces was not as negative as we have been led to believe. Dutch officials estimated that in 1940 there were some 32,000 Netherlands in the United States, of whom some 10 percent, or 3,200, were eligible for military service.⁵⁴ Other sources estimated the number of eligible men to be 8,000 or 10,000.⁵⁵ Neither one of these estimates is correct. The census of 1940 shows that the total number of Netherlands in the United States at that time was 108,640. Of these, 78,000 were naturalized, 8,560 had obtained their first papers, 13,000 were non-declarant aliens, and 8,200, many of whom might have been illegal residents, had not provided any information on their citizenship. The figures for the Dutch male population in the United States were 47,360 naturalized, 6,080 declarant, 6,140 non-declarant aliens,

and 4,440 having reported no information.⁵⁶ Thus the principal pool upon which the Netherlands could draw was that of the non-declarant aliens, to which one could add, but with a high degree of uncertainty, the 4,440 who had not reported their citizenship status. Of the possible total of 10,580 men perhaps only one-fourth, or some 2,645, were of military age, but in reality this figure is much lower.

It is not easy to determine how many men were notified of their military duty by Dutch registration bureaus. The available figures may not be completely reliable because some men were notified more than once. Furthermore, some of the data is incomplete. We do know that at least 1,943 were notified by mid-January 1941 and that by the end of 1941, 2,600 had been notified.⁵⁷ Let us assume that 2,645 were sent a circular requesting them to register. We know that 1,548 men responded to this notification and that some 1,200 were medically examined; furthermore, 640 indicated either before or after the medical examination that they did not want to serve. Of the remainder, 53 were granted a deferment or exemption, and 475 were rejected for medical reasons. (The percentage of rejectees was so high because Dutch military authorities expected all the men to do combat duty.) Finally, 420 men were accepted for service and sent to Canada and England.⁵⁸ Thus, of a possible total of 2,645 men, 420, or 16 percent, served. Many of those rejected for Dutch military service were eventually drafted by the United States. Considering the various circumstances discussed above and the mentality of many immigrants, this response to the call to arms to help their fatherland in time of great need was not as negative as was often alleged. The figure also compares well with percentages given for South Africa, Argentina, and Canada, which

⁵Enquete Commissie, *Verslag*, 8 A and B: 55; G. J. Sas to Minister of War, January 9, 1942. Gezantschap Washington, P-8.1/41.1. Recruitering in de Verenigde Staten. Archief BZ.

⁶Memo to Ray Atherton, January 22, 1941. Records of the Department of State, 856.2222/25. Record Group 59. National Archives, Washington, D.C.; Sas to Minister of War, December 1, 1941. Gezantschap Washington, P-8.1/41.1. Recruitering in de Verenigde Staten. Archief BZ. Hereafter Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59, is cited as RG 59 with appropriate decimal file number.

⁷*The Statutes at Large of the United States of America* . . . (Washington, D.C., 1918), 40:39-40.

⁸Green H. Hackworth to Rene Lord, March 15, 1941. 856.2222/24. RG 59.

⁹Consul General J. A. Schuurman to Loudon, June 21, 1940. Gezantschap Washington, P-1.8. Recruitering van Nederlanders in de Verenigde Staten. Instructies New York. Archief BZ; A. Hartog to Loudon, July 6, 1940. Gezantschap Washington, P-1.8. Recruitering van Nederlanders in de Verenigde Staten. Instructies Los Angeles. Archief BZ.

¹⁰Loudon to Hartog, June 28, 1940. Gezantschap Washington, P-1.8. Recruitering van Nederlanders in de Verenigde Staten. Instructies Los Angeles. Archief BZ.

¹¹E. A. Bunge, Netherlands Consul in Port Arthur, to Texas Shell Oil Corporation, April 7, 1941. Gezantschap Washington, P-1.8/41.1. Recruitering in de Verenigde Staten. Archief BZ; State Department to F.B.I., August 6, 1943. 856.2222/58. RG 59.

¹²Atherton memo January 22, 1941. 856.2222/25. RG 59.

¹³Memo to Hugh S. Cumming, August 4, 1941. 856.2222/23. RG 59; memo Netherlands Legation, December 12, 1941, and Cordell Hull to Henry Stimson, January 21, 1941. 856.2222/37 and 856.2222/38. RG 59.

¹⁴Department of State to Netherlands Legation, August 7, 1941, and Department of Justice to Secretary of State, January 14, 1942. 856.2222/33 and 856.2222/42. Dijkhoorn even tried to obtain the census data but was told that such information was secret. Enquete Commissie, *Verslag*, 8 A and B: 70.

¹⁵Loudon to Hull, April 17, 1942. 811.2222/712. RG 59.

¹⁶Loudon to Hull, April 17, 1942. 811.2222/712. RG 59.

¹⁷Hull to Loudon, May 6, 1942. 811.2222/712. RG 59.

¹⁸Charles I. Bevans, ed. *Treaties and Other International Agreements of the United States of America, 1776-1949* (Washington, D.C. 1972), 10:149-53. Apparently the stipulation that Netherlands who were declarant aliens could not enlist in the Netherlands armed forces was not rigidly adhered to. See Kerkhoven to Loudon, February 11, 1944. Gezantschap Washington, P-8.1/41.1. Recruitering in de Verenigde Staten. Archief BZ.

¹⁹Report on recruitment by Consul General T. Elink Schuurman to BZ, March 8, 1944. Londons Archief, AZ/JZ. Reg. 7A. Reorganisatie en opheffing van het Nederlandse Detachement in Canada en van de rekruteringsbureaux . . . Archief BZ.; Recruitment Rules for Use in the United States of North America . . . February 3, 1944. Gezantschap Washington, P-8.1/41.1. Recruitering in de Verenigde Staten. Archief BZ.

²⁰Loudon to Department of State, April 25, 1944. 251.2 Netherlands. Records of the Army Staff. Record Group 319. National Archives, Washington, D.C.

²¹Most of the information on the de Vogel case was obtained from a report by Major William J. Wynn to the commanding general Western Defense Command and Fourth Army, June 21, 1943, and Report to the Inspector General, September 1, 1943. Records of the Office of the Adjutant General, AG 091.713. Record Group 407. National Archives, Washington, D.C.; Charles de Vogel to State Department, May 18, 1943. 856.2222/51. RG 59.

²²Report to Inspector General, September 1, 1943. Records of the Office of the Adjutant General, AG 091.713. RG 407.

²³Major General Myron C. Cramer, Judge Advocate General, to Adjutant General, October 5, 1943. RG 407.

²⁴War Department to Adjutant General, October 11, 1943. RG 407.

²⁵War Department to Inspector General, November 30, 1943. RG 407.

²⁶Memo Netherlands Legation, April 25, 1944. 251.2. Netherlands. RG 319.

²⁷Memo Raymond T. Yingling, May 22, 1944. 856.2222/4. RG 59.

²⁸Loudon to Hull, June 24, 1944, and October 13, 1944. 856.2222/G-2444, 856.2222/10-1344. RG 59.

²⁹Stimson to Hull, November 16, 1944. 856.2222/11-1644. RG 59. Droste could be rather persistent. See the case of Olof T. C. C. Janssen. 356.117/43. RG 59.

³⁰See 856.2221-2222 and 356.117. RG 59.

³¹On Dutch settlement in the Los Angeles area see Jacob van Hinte, *Nederlanders in America*, trans. Adriaan de Wit (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985) pp. 808-9 and Gerald F. De Jong, *The Dutch in America, 1609-1974* (Boston: Twayne, 1975), p. 165.

³²856.2222/31. RG 59.

³³856.2222. RG 59.

³⁴Enquete Commissie, *Verslag*, 8 A and B: 69.

³⁵Loudon to Government in London, May 15, 1940. Gezantschap Washington, P-1.8. Recruitering in de Verenigde Staten. Archief BZ.

³⁶Hartog to Loudon, July 6, 1940. Gezantschap Washington, P-1.8. Recruitering van Nederlanders in de Verenigde Staten. Instructies Los Angeles. Archief BZ.

³⁷Loudon to Buitenlandse Zaken, October 12, 1942. Gezantschap Washington, P-8/41.1. Recruitering in de Verenigde Staten. Archief BZ.

³⁸Dijkhoorn to Buitenlandse Zaken, August 27, 1943. Londons Archief AZ/JZ Reg. 7A. Reorganisatie en opheffing van het Nederlandse Detachement in Canada en de Rekruteringsbureaux . . . Archief BZ.

³⁹Sas to Minister of War, December 1, 1941. Gezantschap Washington, P-8/41.1. Recruitering in de Verenigde Staten. Archief BZ.

⁴⁰F. A. Gilfillan, Acting President Oregon State College, to State Department, January 12, 1942. 356.117/46. RG 59.

⁴¹Kroon to Van Wagendonk, December 31, 1941. RG 59.

⁴²Dr. Louis Y. Van Dyke to author, October 27, 1987.

⁴³Enquete Commissie, *Verslag*, 8 A and B: 72.

⁴⁴Enquete Commissie, *Verslag*, pp. 71 and 83 and bijlage 1, p. 10.

⁴⁵Hudig to Minister M. P. L. Steenberghe, May 29, 1941. Gezantschap Washington, P-1.3. Rapporten aan BZ van Hare Majesteits Gezant te Washington. Archief BZ; Loudon to BZ, July 16, 1941. Archief BZ.

⁴⁶Enquete Commissie, *Verslag*, 8 A and B: 72 and bijlage 1, pp. 13-14.

⁴⁷Enquete Commissie, *Verslag*, bijlage 1, p. 6; *Statutes at Large of the United States of America* . . . (Washington, D.C., 1941), 54:895. On benefits see also Kerkhoven to H. N. Boon, June 6, 1944, and extract of *Handbook for Servicemen and Servicewomen . . . of World War II and Their Dependents*. Gezantschap Washington. P-8.1/41.2. Registratie Bureau New York. Archief BZ.

⁴⁸Kort overzicht betreffende de recruitering in Canada, U.S.A. en Argentinië. London, March 27, 1944. Londons Archief, AZ/JZ Reg. Alg. E. Verslag van rekrutering in Canada, U.S.A., en Argentinië. Archief BZ.

⁴⁹Loudon to BZ, May 29, 1941. Gezantschap Washington, P-1.3. Rapporten aan BZ van Hare Majesteits Gezant te Washington. Archief BZ.

⁵⁰On this see Enquete Commissie, *Verslag*, 8 A and B: 73-80.

⁵¹Enquete Commissie, *Verslag*, p. 69.

⁵²Loudon to Buitenlandse Zaken, October 12, 1942, Kerkhoven to Loudon, February 11, 1944. Gezantschap Washington, P-8.1/41.1. Recruitering in de Verenigde Staten. Archief BZ.

⁵³N. van Leeuwen to State Department, December 29, 1940. 856.2222/22. RG 59.

⁵⁴Enquete Commissie, *Verslag*, 8 A and B: 72.

⁵⁵Kort overzicht betreffende de recruitering in Canada, U.S.A. en Argentinië. London, March 27, 1944. Londons Archief, AZ/JZ Reg. Alg. E. Verslag van rekrutering in Canada, U.S.A., en Argentinië. Archief BZ; memo to Cumming, August 4, 1941. 856.2222/33. RG 59.

⁵⁶United States Department of Commerce. Bureau of the Census. *Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1920. Population* (Washington, D.C., 1943), p. 81.

⁵⁷Kort overzicht betreffende de recruitering in Canada, U.S.A., en Argentinië. London, March 27, 1944. Londons Archief AZ/JZ Reg. Alg. E. Verslag van rekrutering in Canada, U.S.A., en Argentinië. Archief BZ.

⁵⁸Enquete Commissie, *Verslag*, 8 A and B, bijlage 1, pp. 15-16.

⁵⁹Kort overzicht betreffende de recruitering in Canada, U.S.A., en Argentinië. London, March 27, 1944. Londons Archief AZ/JZ Reg. Alg. E. Verslag van rekrutering in Canada, U.S.A., en Argentinië. Archief BZ.

⁶⁰Enquete Commissie, *Verslag*, 8 A and B, bijlage 1, p. 15.

⁶¹Already in July 1942 Van Schreven concluded that after the U.N. Declaration, Netherlands recruitment organization had lost all "viability" and considered curtailing its task after August 1 of that year. Van Schreven to Loudon, July 27, 1942. Gezantschap Washington, P-8.1/41.2. Rekruteringsbureau New York. Archief BZ.

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⁶³Elink Schuurman to Buitenlandse Zaken, October 29, 1943.

⁶⁴Elink Schuurman to Buitenlandse Zaken, June 5, 1945.

⁶⁵O.C.A. Lidth de Jude to Buitendlandse Zaken, August 28, 1944, to Minister of Colonies, September 13, 1944, to Van Kleffens, September 13 and 29, 1944; Van Kleffens to Van Lidth, September 25, 1944, and to Loudon, October 2, 1944. Londons Archief AZ/JZ A III. Reg. Alg., doos 396. Archief BZ.

⁶⁶Enquete Commissie, *Verslag*, 8 A and B, bijlage 1, p. 15.

⁶⁷Enquete Commissie, *Verslag*, 8 A and B, bijlage 1, p. 15.

⁶⁸Enquete Commissie, *Verslag*, 8 A and B, bijlage 1, p. 15.

⁶⁹Enquete Commissie, *Verslag*, 8 A and B, bijlage 1, p. 15.

⁷⁰Enquete Commissie, *Verslag*, 8 A and B, bijlage 1, p. 15.

⁷¹Enquete Commissie, *Verslag*, 8 A and B, bijlage 1, p. 15.

⁷²Enquete Commissie, *Verslag*, 8 A and B, bijlage 1, p. 15.

⁷³Enquete Commissie, *Verslag*, 8 A and B, bijlage 1, p. 15.

⁷⁴Enquete Commissie, *Verslag*, 8 A and B, bijlage 1, p. 15.

⁷⁵Enquete Commissie, *Verslag*, 8 A and B, bijlage 1, p. 15.

⁷⁶Enquete Commissie, *Verslag*, 8 A and B, bijlage 1, p. 15.

⁷⁷Enquete Commissie, *Verslag*, 8 A and B, bijlage 1, p. 15.

⁷⁸Enquete Commissie, *Verslag*, 8 A and B, bijlage 1, p. 15.

⁷⁹Enquete Commissie, *Verslag*, 8 A and B, bijlage 1, p. 15.

⁸⁰Enquete Commissie, *Verslag*, 8 A and B, bijlage 1, p. 15.

⁸¹Enquete Commissie, *Verslag*, 8 A and B, bijlage 1, p. 15.

⁸²Enquete Commissie, *Verslag*, 8 A and B, bijlage 1, p. 15.

⁸³Enquete Commissie, *Verslag*, 8 A and B, bijlage 1, p. 15.

⁸⁴Enquete Commissie, *Verslag*, 8 A and B, bijlage 1, p. 15.

⁸⁵Enquete Commissie, *Verslag*, 8 A and B, bijlage 1, p. 15.

⁸⁶Enquete Commissie, *Verslag*, 8 A and B, bijlage 1, p. 15.

⁸⁷Enquete Commissie, *Verslag*, 8 A and B, bijlage 1, p. 15.

⁸⁸Enquete Commissie, *Verslag*, 8 A and B, bijlage 1, p. 15.

⁸⁹Enquete Commissie, *Verslag*, 8 A and B, bijlage 1, p. 15.

⁹⁰Enquete Commissie, *Verslag*, 8 A and B, bijlage 1, p. 15.

BOOKS

by C. J. Bult

Netherlanders in America. By Henry S. Lucas. 1955. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1989. \$29.95.

When *Netherlanders in America* first appeared about a generation ago, it was warmly welcomed by Calvin Theological Seminary Professor of Historical Theology John H. Kromminga, who began his *Banner* review with these words:

This is a book to rejoice the heart of the student of Christian Reformed history—and that number ought to include just about all of us. (1560)

Echoing the remarks of Kromminga were comments by Reformed Church in America minister Elton Bruins in the *Reformed Review*:

... this work by Lucas is the first comprehensive study of the Dutch immigrant after the Revolutionary War. (60)

Not quite so complimentary, Arnold Mulder, author of *Americans from Holland* (1947), criticized Lucas in *Michigan History* for "his somewhat worshipful admiration for the people he describes . . ." (240), a characteristic certainly not found in Mulder's own early novels about the Holland, Michigan-area Dutch enclaves. In Mulder's *Dominie of Harlem* (1913) and *Bram of Five Corners* (1915) the Dutch exhibit many less than admirable traits.

Also noted by Mulder and by Purdue University Professor Walter O.

Forster in his review in the *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* was Lucas's penchant for minute bits of information when writing about the Dutch settlements sprinkled throughout the Midwest, Far West, and Canada (110-11). For these reviewers, this constant procession of detail did little to entice a person to read the book. In other words, *Netherlanders in America* serves the reader best as a reference book and not, first of all, as a volume meant to be read from beginning to end.

Yet Lucas's decision to meticulously chronicle the development of almost all Dutch-American settlements known to exist west of the Appalachians produced a book of enduring value for research today and tomorrow. Furthermore, the author, a native of Graafschap, Michigan, whose parents were from Graafschap-Bentheim across the water, knew many of the immigrant pioneers himself and based his book, written during his years as Professor of History at Washington University, primarily on the letters and published recollections of these and other folk which he found in either Dutch-language newspapers or published in pamphlet form.

Lucas's intended audience is Dutch American; Jacob Van Hinte, the Dutch social geographer who also wrote a book entitled *Netherlanders in America*,* wrote primarily for the Dutch in the Netherlands. Consequently, in Van Hinte's volume we encounter a somewhat detached sociological analysis of the Dutch-American, whereas in Lucas we find a person writing with

warm affection about his immigrant ancestors and those of many of us. Though a bit unkind to Lucas, Bertus H. Wabeke, author of *Dutch Emigration to North America 1624-1860* (1944) succinctly compared Van Hinte and Lucas as follows:

As a Netherlander addressing himself to a Dutch audience, Van Hinte views the immigrants primarily as transplanted fellow countrymen and shows little sympathetic understanding of their progressive Americanization. Professor Lucas writes as an American for Americans. Being himself a descendant of the Michigan Dutch and having grown up among them, he approaches his task in a spirit of filial piety, if not outright ancestor worship. (986)

In the first eight of eleven chapters, Lucas sketches the history of each settlement, mentions the founders, and comments on the religious and economic environment of each enclave. Not neglected are the Catholics in Little Chute, Wisconsin; the Mennonites in New Paris, Indiana; the Dutch in Whitinsville, Massachusetts; and unsuccessful communities such as Amelia County in Virginia. Lucas closes his study with three chapters—"Trials and Faith," "Press and Politics," and "Education and Character"—which help the reader comprehend the religious, social, and cultural behavior of the immigrants who in their native land rarely left their towns or villages. In America they clustered together in ethnic communities or in city ghettos

**Netherlanders in America* is the English title of Jacob Van Hinte's *Nederlanders in Amerika*, first published in 1928 and later published in English translation by Baker Book House (1985).

where they found their fellow countrymen from the Netherlands working and worshipping.

Although present-day scholars consider economic and not religious motives as the primary reason for nineteenth-century Dutch immigration to America, Lucas, writing in 1955, held the notion that those who left the Netherlands and came to Michigan and Iowa before 1860 did so for religious reasons. For the author, those who arrived in America after the Civil War, though motivated first of all by economic considerations, often selected places to live where a familiar religious and denominational environment served as a source of strength and security for themselves and their families. Lucas's great appreciation for the value of a strong religious heritage can best be gained by noting his words about the church life of our ancestors:

To the Hollander of the Reformed faith the church was his only social outlet. It provided companionship, intellectual development through the study of theology, the solace of a firmly instilled faith, and, when need came, the help of friends who thought as he did about the main problems of life. (622)

The Dutch-American's worship activities, domestic mores, fondness for poetry, lack of enthusiasm for Prohibition or women's rights, theological disputes, newspapers, struggles to learn English, and conservative economic outlook do not escape the author's attention. Not appealing to Lucas are the crude, uncultured, self-

righteous Dutch-Americans found in the fiction of David Cornel De Jong and Arnold Mulder and in Feike Feikema's** *The Primitive*. Though often criticizing these writers, Lucas does admit that "A Dutch rural community was, in fact, morally austere, but this was the natural consequence of serious religious convictions." (628)

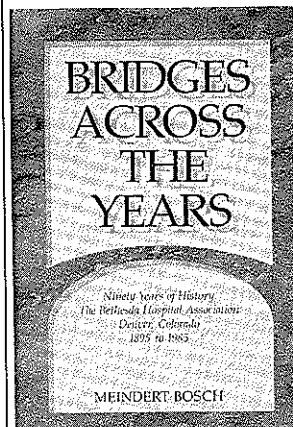
The original 1955 edition of *Netherlanders in America* has been out of print for many years and has for years been available only in the antiquarian book market at a price of about sixty dollars. This reprinted edition was published under the auspices of the Dutch-American Historical Commission and contains a brief foreword by Peter De Klerk, president of the commission. After reading this monumental book, you will have vicariously visited every Dutch settlement known to Lucas, you will have met those who founded each enclave, and you will have derived great benefit from the thoughts of a man who cherished the cultural heritage of his immigrant ancestors. Although you may not always agree with Lucas, after perusing his book you will better appreciate aspects of both the author's and your own Dutch-American background.

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Bridges Across the Years: Ninety Years of History—the Bethesda Hospital Association, Denver Colorado, 1895 to 1985. By Meindert Bosch. Denver, Colorado: Bethesda PsychHealth System, Inc., 1988. \$12.50.

Bethesda, past and present, is depicted in this illustrated history of more than three hundred pages.

In My Grandfather's House. By Rein Poortvliet. New York: Harry N. Abrams. 1988. \$39.95.

This coffee table book, written and illustrated by Rein Poortvliet, is a warm-hearted, unromantic narrative about his common-folk ancestors. Poortvliet's art work is a treat for the eyes.

**Presently Feike Feikema writes under the name Frederick Feikema Manfred.

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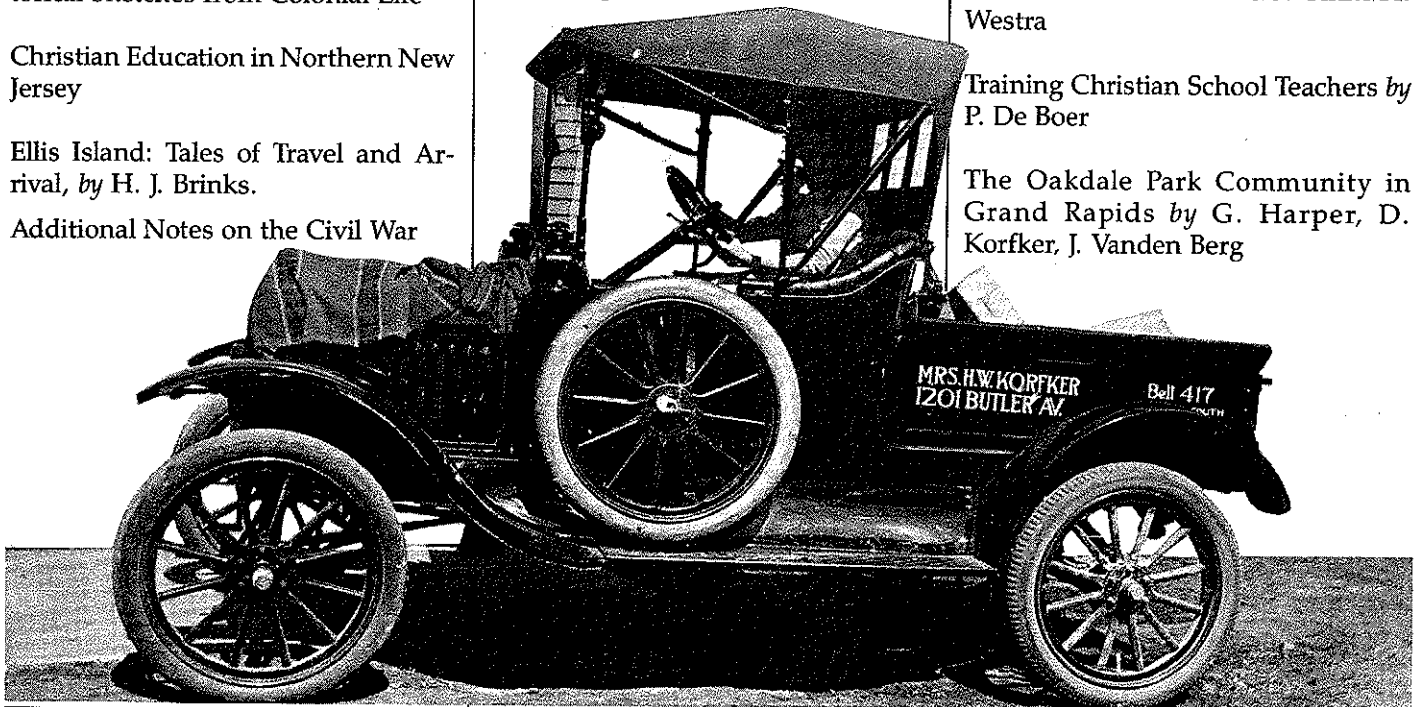
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