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### Dominies and Their Flocks

In The Pilgrim Fathers of the West (1886) by D. Versteeg, we are told that "bickering or discourteous treatment, envy, and dispute were virtually unknown in the early days of the colony (p. 169). He writes that in Zeeland, Michigan, elders A. Van Pree and J.G. Van Hees were also justices of the peace. If a lawsuit was brought before them, they treated it as elders, and the partners involved in the lawsuit acquiesced in the decision" (168).

Now it may be true that some pioneers disputed little. After all they had common predicaments, isolated out on the prairie, and common goals--to battle time and nature in order to make a living. And frankly, I doubt if they had as much time as we do today for getting embroiled in arguments.

However, neither time nor circumstance will seriously handicap people prone by nature to bicker. No prairie was so harsh that dispute seemed incomprehensible nor so barren that some antagonist could not be found. My paper will focus on a few of these antagonists who happened to be dominies, on a few people who bated dominies, and on a few other dominies whose relationship with their congregations seemed worth noting.

VAN RAALTE, Holland, Michigan: The Michigan colony had town meetings, first held in Van Raalte's house and later in the church. A man who sold liquor wished to get the approval of the citizens, so he was told to come to the meeting for approval. At the meeting, objections were raised and the man shouted, "I have liquor in my own house," apparently trying to prove it was okay to drink alcohol. Van Raalte's reply was, "Then pull the plug and let the liquor run out."

"I'll watch out that doesn't happen," the man yelled, and walked out. The Assembly made a rule that no liquor be sold in the colony, but the man continued to sell it, saying, "I'm not bound by your laws. I'm under American law." Well the Dutch people of the colony did not agree and they molested the man in various ways until he finally agreed to stop selling liquor if only the people would stop pestering him. Apparently the marriage of church and state was still in its honeymoon stage in Van Raalte's colony.

Already in 1852, some eighteen months after the Rev. Roelof Smit had been installed as pastor of the colonial church at Drenthe, Michigan, five of its members preferred charges against him, namely that "he promoted faction within the church, that he was arbitrary in his actions, that he thrust aside and opposed former leaders of the church, and that he tried to make the church secede from the Reformed

Church on the pretext that 'we were sold to the Old Dutch Church by Rev. Van Raalte for a good purse of money.'" The Rev. Smit's church at Drenthe probably experienced more internal trouble than any colonial church because the community was composed of two distinct groups of people, one group from the village of Staphorst in Overisel, and the other from the province of Drenthe. Place in that setting a contankerous man like Rev. Smit, and you've got trouble.

But laymen could be equally contankerous.

I'm sure some of you have heard of Rev. Lammert J. Hulst, pioneer preacher for the Reformed Church of Danforth, Illinois, from 1874-1876. Rev. Hulst in his memoirs tells us first of all that the people of Danforth "were interested only in a person bearing the name of 'Dominie' to influence immigrants to their area rather than in someone to give them food for their souls. "There were some people who feared the Lord," he writes, "but for most, their earthly possessions, as a rule, received the most emphasis."

Well, that's seeing the pioneers through the preacher's eyes, and Danforth, Illinois, was a pioneer town. When the Rev. Hulst arrived there, his wife asked where the town was, and discovered she was in it. But perhaps one particularly obnoxious man had a lot to do with coloring Rev. Hulst's views of his flock. This man was put under censure by Rev. Hulst and his consistory because as church treasurer, he "borrowed" \$750 from the building fund to build his own house. Then because he experienced a crop failure, he couldn't pay it back. The consistory lifted the censure after the man had paid the money back in installments.

The next year, this man, the debt having been paid and the censure lifted, was again elected elder. No sooner was he back in the elders' bench than he started proceedings against a fellow consistory member, planning to "put the black cap on him" (put him under censure) because he had not paid back \$40 which he had borrowed a few years before. The man had forgotten, so when he heard of this plan to put him under censure, he immediately agreed to pay back the \$40. But the first man insisted that he also pay \$136 interest on the \$40. The man was forced to pay \$60 per year to the church until his debt was cleared.

The next trouble with the first elder came after Hulst had taken a call to Grand Rapids. When Hulst had arrived in Danforth, Illinois, six half-worn out chairs had been left in the parsonage. When he was about to leave, he was uncertain what to do with the six chairs. It was not clear to him whether the chairs had been intended as the church's gift to him or as parsonage furniture to remain with the parsonage. Not wanting to offend the congregation by leaving its gift behind, nor wanting to take what didn't belong to him, Hulst

asked another elder to find out for him the status of the chairs and let him know. The elder never got back to him, so Rev. Hulst took the six chairs to Grand Rapids.

A couple weeks after he had arrived in Grand Rapids he got a letter from this obnoxious elder asking if he knew what had happened to the six chairs that belonged in the parsonage. The elder also had informed classis that Rev. Hulst had stolen the chairs which belonged in the parsonage. So Hulst sent the chairs back to Danforth.

Shortly afterward, he heard that when the congregation of Danforth learned of the elder's doings, it was very angry at this elder and the consistory. A year or so later the Danforth consistory called Rev. Hulst to return as their preacher. Hulst concluded that they sent him the call just to prove they weren't angry at him. He didn't accept, but did say the congregation and he had "made up."

Coldbrook RCA, Grand Rapids, 1874-17=880; CRC, 1881 and following

Of his relationship with this church, Rev. Hulst said, "We trusted each other and harmonized with each other, perhaps better than any congregation in Grand Rapids." But he did mention some disagreements. Apparently some of the church members wanted stronger punishment for public sin, but Hulst disagreed. He said the church should emphasize love which seeks to save.

With such a view held by a man before 1880, one can't help but wonder how the practice of demanding public professions continued so long into the 20th century.

First Sioux Center RCA, 1880-1910

The Rev. James De Pree was minister in the First Reformed Church in Sioux Center for 30 years, but even so, he did not gain the advantage some ministers had over their consistory, namely they had more experience in consistory matters. Rev. De Pree had a consistory in a church where they did not believe in the "rotation system." As a result, some elders served as long as 37 years, and elders with so much experience began to exude a certain confidence, perhaps even some stubbornness at times.

The story is told that at one point the Rev. De Pree became so exasperated at what he regarded as the "stubbornness of his consistory" that he got up and walked out of the consistory meeting. When he came home, his good wife said something like, "James, why are you home so early?"

Rev. De Pree replied, "Those men are so stubborn and set in their ways that I can't deal with them." But his wife, a

cooler head at this point, talked the good dominie into going back into the consistory meeting and apologizing for his abrupt departure.

But don't feel sorry for Rev. De Pree. He was apparently well-liked for he stayed in Sioux Center for thirty years. He was at the center of both church and community activities from the start, plotting out the town in the early 1880's and later supervising every aspect of church life, once stopping a baseball game which he considered an inappropriate recreation at Zendingfeest (Mission Feast). He supervised all programs and all the singing at all the programs, and even led the Sunday School parade, carrying a banner, "Het Zaad Zal u dienen." His consistory may have had reason to assert themselves at times.

Eastern Avenue, CRC, 1881-Candidate John Post

When Candidate Post came to Eastern Avenue as its first pastor, he was very uncertain of his own ability to preach. He began by preaching his first sermon on II Thessalonians 3:1, "Brethren, pray for us that the work of the Lord may have free course and be glorified." His modesty led him to be very surprised when people returned for the afternoon sermon. He was heard to say, "They're actually coming back," when he saw people return for the second service.

Perhaps his modesty also led him to work very hard at visiting every family in the congregation. It was said that he wanted to know the strong points but also the weak points of each member of the congregation. His effort to get to know his people led them to call on him a number of times to act as peacemaker between squabbling neighbors or to settle differences of opinion.

Ireton, Iowa, Rev. J.R. Van Dyke (1929-1945)

When Rev. Van Dyke of Ireton went to the farm of one couple to see them about their frequent absence from the church service, he was run off the farm by the wife with a shot gun. She was apparently a mental case, for she was in and out of institutions in later years. But the hard-nosed attitude of the church regarding skipping church may have triggered this radical response. Churches disciplined slackers who in turn either accepted the discipline and mended their ways or left the church. Membership rolls were not padded with the names of inactive members.

Eastern Avenue CRC, 1900-19, Rev. Johannes Groen

Groen was a great orator whose sermons attracted large numbers of people; but all who attended were not equally interested in his sermons, apparently, for he had to reprimand

some for making too much noise and threaten to call the names of others if they did not behave.

Groen was described as having a certain mystique about him. Perhaps this was due not just to his oratorical gifts, but also to his physical appearance. Bald and very tall, Groen wore a skull cap to protect himself from catching a cold and preached in a long coat, no doubt presenting an imposing figure.

Groen's views were apparently not popular with everyone, for he made some enemies in spite of his efforts to get to know all 350 families of his church. In fact, someone shot at him at the corner of Wealthy Street and Eastern Avenue one night. Though the culprit was not apprehended, it was thought the gunman might have taken issue with Groen's support of Women's Suffrage, for Groen was known as a "Liberal," in contrast to the man who followed him at Eastern Avenue, the Rev. Herman Hoeksema.

Eastern Avenue CRC, 1920-24, Rev. Herman Hoeksema.

The history of the relationship between Rev. Herman Hoeksema and his congregation at Eastern Avenue in Grand Rapids has been written about in chapter 13 of the book 100 Years in the Covenant, a history of the Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church. Although the entire chapter is really germane to my topic because it traces the relationship between a pastor and his congregation, I want to summarize it for the purpose of brevity.

The Rev. Johannes Groen, pastor of Eastern Avenue from 1900-1919, believed in adjusting to the times. Societies, services, and Sunday school were all conducted in English as well as Dutch. On the issue of movies, he taught that the evil was in the improper use of film, not in film itself. He taught his flock to join secular labor unions in order to be a leavening influence on their secular brethren.

Groen was followed in 1920 by Rev. Herman Hoeksema who resisted an Americanization of the church, who opposed all movies as "vehicles of sensuality drawing Christians into the evil world," and who taught his people to form separate Christian labor unions. The opposing views of these two men were later judged to stem from their opposing view of common grace. As the centennial book of Eastern Avenue states it, "Whereas Groen sent the church into the midst of the world to minister side by side with the non-Christian, Hoeksema favored withdrawal from a world perceived as totally evil . . . . Such a radical turnabout in the direction of the church's ministry caused confusion and division within the congregation" (p. 32).

Of course, the controversy between these opposing views was being discussed in print a great deal from 1920-24. But in January, 1924, three members of his congregation men visited the Rev. Hoeksema at his home to protest his views on common grace.

Because the men had really prepared their protest for the Eastern Avenue consistory, Rev. Hoeksema rejected it at first, but eventually the protest got to the consistory. It turned the protest over to a committee which rejected it on a technicality, and the three men who brought the protest were told to confess their sin in handling their protest. They wouldn't, so they were placed under censure, though the merits of their protest had never been discussed, only the procedure.

The three men protested to the Classis Grand Rapids East. Classis declared that the Eastern Avenue Consistory had misconceived the Church Rules and should have studied the validity of the men's protest against Hoeksema. At this point Hoeksema protested and walked out of the classis meeting. Classis told Eastern Avenue consistory they had to deal with the issue. The three protesters, feeling they could not get a fair treatment with the Eastern Avenue Consistory, protested the decision and appealed to Synod.

The Synod of 1924, after three weeks of discussion, basically came down on the side of the three protesters, articulating the Three Points of Common Grace. But the Eastern Avenue Consistory refused to lift the censure of the three protesters. Instead it overtured classis to rescind its previous decision on the ground that the three men had accused their pastor of a public sin. Classis told the consistory to lift the censure of the three men because the consistory had never dealt with the validity and content of their protest.

On Sept. 2, the consistory called a congregational meeting to inform the people, and distributed ballots on which people could mark an X if they opposed the decision of classis. But no one was allowed to speak in favor of the decision of classis. On Sept. 11, the three protested that the consistory had in effect allowed the congregation to advise it. Meanwhile, the consistory would not lift the censure unless the three men retracted their accusation against Hoeksema.

Then the consistory received a petition signed by fifty members asking that Hoeksema hold to the three points of Common Grace as defined by Synod, and that the consistory submit to the decision of Classis and Synod. The consistory agreed to meet individually with each of the fifty but would not deal with them as a group and told them they lived in "open rebellion to the church and therefore ought not to partake of the Lord's Supper."

This action of the consistory resulted in a request from 86 members that Classis hold a special meeting. In fact, 92 members signed a protest against their consistory. Classis recommended that Hoeksema be challenged as to whether he was in full accord with the "Three Points of Common Grace" as defined by Synod. They asked for a written reply by Dec. 9.

On Dec. 9, Hoeksema read a lengthy reply. The consistory again refused to lift censure and in fact removed from membership the 92 members who had protested to Classis.

Again Hoeksema was asked about the Three Points. He replied that he would neither submit to Classis nor keep silent about his objections. Then Classis on Dec. 12, 1924, found him guilty of insubordination and suspended him from office. At the same time classis ruled that the consistory had broken ecclesiastical relationship with the denomination and thereafter classis denied the consistory the rights normally due a consistory.

Then the group of 92 protesters withdrew from fellowship and began holding services elsewhere. They soon elected their own consistory and became the only legal body governing the Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church. Synod of 1925 rejected the appeal of the Hoeksema consistory because his consistory no longer had any standing in the church, having been suspended by Classis. The break between Hoeksema and a large segment of his congregation was complete, and thus began the Protestant Reformed Church.

#### First Sioux Center CRC, 1919-1928 (c.)

Eastern Avenue CRC was not the only church which experienced controversy over Americanization. Nor was it the only church which had to appeal to a civil court to settle an internal dispute. In First Sioux Center CRC about 1919-1920, the Sunday School teachers wanted to use the English language in their Sunday School classes and use materials printed in English, because that was the language most Sunday School students understood the best. At first they asked the consistory, but when the consistory said "no," the Sunday School teachers said flatly, "Then we quit. We won't teach if we have to teach with Dutch books."

Well, the consistory viewed this as insubordination and put the striking teachers under censure, saying they had to confess their sin publicly. But the preacher, Rev. C.C. De Leeuw, supported the Sunday School teachers against the consistory. It is difficult to determine the exact sequence of events in what followed, but the consistory actually left the church and began meeting elsewhere with the members of the congregation that supported them. At first they met in the town hall, and then in a wooden building one block from the original church. But after they began to see what it was

going to cost to build another church, like the prodigal son they said, "What fools we've been. Let's return to our father's house where we'll have room enough and to spare." So they sued the preacher and his group for the church building. The litigation took several years, but when the judge finally made a ruling, he said the church building belonged to the ruling body, so the consistory and its supporters were in, and the preacher and his supporters were ordered to vacate the building.

Old timers still tell stories, some sad, some humorous, about the effects of that court decision. Apparently the janitor thought that as a doorman in the house of the Lord, the court didn't have much authority over him, because he refused to give up the keys to the church building. So a couple of the new owners of the church building had to go over to his house and physically wrestle the keys from the man. Other representatives, the story goes, sneaked into the church building and stole the pulpit, defending their action to all who would hear them by saying that the pulpit should logically go with the preacher, not with the building.

Lebanon CRC, (about 1910)

In the horse and buggy days, Lebanon was and is still basically a country church, ten miles from Sioux center and about that far from Rock Valley and Hawarden as well. So if you went to the Lebanon CRC, you did so because it was closer than others. But it so happened that Lebanon got a minister who was not a very effective preacher. Well, when you're ten miles from another CRC, you don't switch churches. But one anecdote that came to me by way of my father suggests what could be done. It seems the preacher had a call from some church, and when the time came for him to accept or decline the call, he asked elder Adolf Van Duyn to drive him with his buggy to Sioux Center to mail his reply to the calling church. Van Duyn obliged, but as they were on the way to Sioux Center, he asked the dominie how he had replied to the call. The minister informed Van Duyn that he had decided to decline the call, and that was the gist of his letter. Upon hearing this, Van Duyn stopped the buggy, looked at the dominie, and said, "I suggest you change your letter and accept the call. I think your work in Lebanon is finished."

The dominie was so stunned he changed his letter and when they got to Sioux Center mailed his letter of acceptance. The elder was apparently more certain than the dominie that the call had come from God.

Rev. Foppe Fortuin, 1903-07, 1st Hull CRC

Rev. Fortuin had been a minister for 19 years in the Netherlands and there he was viewed as being of the higher class of people with servants to do their menial tasks for

them. So he always projected the image of the dominie, aloof from the common affairs of the average person. Thus he preached dressed in knee-length cloak and came to house-visitation with a little black book of prepared questions. During the service his wife sat on a fancy chair, not on a regular church bench with the other parishoners. Fortuin would not take care of his own horses nor do any manual labor. Although I'm sure not all pastors in the Netherlands projected this image, another elderly person, Nancy Blom, recalled that her family was very surprised when they immigrated to Doon, Iowa, in 1915, that the minister in Doon would speak to them if they met on the street. In the Netherlands such casual visiting with the dominie was not possible for them.

Rev. Henry J. Heynen, 1908-11

First Hull, however, got quite a different dominie in 1908 when they got the Rev. Henry J. Heynen. Heynen was much younger, and not only took care of his own horse but had his own cow which he milked himself. He was considered down-to-earth, but also slightly modern by some because he allowed the young people to canvass the congregation for money for a church organ to replace the voorsinger. He once settled a dispute in the Ladies Aid Society by sending all the ladies home to cool off.

The other ministers of 1st Hull should be mentioned. The Rev. J.J. Weersing came to Hull in 1919 from Peoria, Iowa, where his church had been burned down because of his anti-German sentiments. (There were many recent German immigrants near there.) So when he came to Hull, he believed in the need for knowing how to defend oneself. Hence he taught the young men of his church not only the five points of Calvinism but the fine points of boxing. He even relieved the night watchman on his beat when he needed relief occasionally, no doubt humming "Onward Christian Soldiers" as he walked his beat.

But even after Weersing, the 1st Hull congregation of 1925 was not prepared for Young Chris Huissen. When he admitted to being a baseball fan, the older elders wondered how this man could possibly be orthodox.

Doon CRC (1912-1917)

A Rev. De Boer of Doon had a man in his church who appeared at every consistory meeting with complaints about one thing or another. After several months, the preacher got tired of the complaints of this man who could never be satisfied. So one night when the man knocked on the door just as consistory meeting was about to begin, the minister invited him in, offered him a chair, and then opened with prayer. In his prayer, he prayed, "Lord, if it be thy will, take this man

to be with you where he'll be rid of all these problems that daily beset him."

The man never again came to the consistory with a problem.

Rock Valley, CRC

Dr. Herman Kuiper, who first came to Rock Valley in 1915, was a prime example of a dominie who came from and perceived himself as upper class. This was evident in his bearing and in his relationships with parishioners. He would condescend to socialize with only a handful of the families in his church. When he drove his car down the street, he looked neither right nor left, apparently assuming secular traffic laws did not apply to men of God. In fact, he looked out of place anywhere except behind a pulpit, so it was a mild shock to see him driving the same sort of vehicle that young folks necked in.

His wife Josie was equally exclusive. She told one of the very few ladies she visited with that neither she or her husband could ever think of mowing their lawn, for people of their class just could not condescend to such menial tasks. This lady, a Mrs. Gerrit Van't Hul, said Mrs. Kuiper always kept a distance between herself and even her closest friends. At times she would seem to be letting her guard down, but then suddenly she would re-establish the formality that characterized all her social relationships.

When Dr. Kuiper received a call to come back to Rock Valley for a second charge, he came to look, but told the consistory that though he was looking favorably at this call of the Lord, one thing stood in his way from accepting it.

"Well, what is that, Dominie?" the consistory asked.

"Well," he replied, "I could not bring Josie to live in your parsonage. If a more suitable parsonage were available, I would look more favorably upon this call."

Upon hearing this (the church had been vacant for over two years) one elder offered his house as parsonage if the preacher would come. Dr. Kuiper immediately accepted the call and the elder moved his family into the old parsonage. It probably never occurred to Kuiper that a common parishoner's family could harbor feelings much like his own about moving into old houses.

I remember Dr. Kuiper as a stern, but effective preacher. But one incident led me to regard him as slightly vain. Once during closing prayer in catechism class, I peaked. Imagine my shock as a twelve-year-old to see Dr. Kuiper staring straight at me with wide-open eyes as he prayed in typical

dominie tones. I was so upset that I gathered up all my nerve and went up to him after class to ask if he wasn't supposed to close his eyes when he prayed. Now, of course, I was hardly in a position to accuse anyone, but after all, I thought, my guarded peaking showed at least more sense of priority than his unguarded staring. But imagine my surprise when he said he did not have to close his eyes because the purpose of closing the eyes during prayer was merely to keep the mind from wandering, and he could keep his mind on what he was praying without this crutch for concentration that common folk had to use. In retrospect, it made some sense, but to my twelve-year-old mind, it sounded a lot like boasting.

Orange City, CRC, Rev. R. Bronkema (1929-1946)

According to his daughters, Dr. Bronkema experienced tension between himself and his congregation regarding at least three matters: money, lifestyle, and traditions in the worship service. Bronkema was not from an aristocratic background, like Dr. Herman Kuiper, so he did much of the maintenance work on the parsonage, thus saving the church both time and money. Yet the consistory was very begrudging of any improvements he asked for in the parsonage. Once when he asked for new carpet in the living room, two consistory members came to look and the one said, "Hier is het veel beter dan big ons," (It's much nicer here than at my house.), and they denied him his request.

On another occasion, though the man probably did not mean it as bad as it sounds, a parishoner came to the parsonage with some liver for the dominie. He explained to Dr. Bronkema, "De vrouw and kinderen lijken het niet; de hond wil het ook niet eten; dan moet hiet maar naar do Dominie toe." (His wife and dog wouldn't eat it so he thought it might as well bring it to the dominie.)

Regarding his lifestyle, Bronkema at one point wished to join a few other men of the community at volleyball once a week. He played once, dressed in gym shorts. At the next consistory meeting his consistory told him they did not approve of their dominie running around a gym with other half-naked men. So Bronkema never played volleyball again in Orange City.

When he took his family to the World's Fair in Chicago in 1933, Bronkema was severely reprimanded by his consistory, so much so that forever after, he dared not allow his children to go even to the county fair held in Orange City annually.

Bronkema met with opposition in the church on such matters as individual communion cups, flowers in church, and the use of English in the services, but he yielded on these issues rather than pressing his point of view on the church.

Like Dr. Kuiper of Rock Valley, Bronkema seldom socialized with members of his congregation though in Bronkema's case, it was more because he feared that to socialize with some families might lead to cries of favoritism. So he sought close companionship with other ministers in the area.

Bronkema was under much tension during his last years. The consistory seemed to get increasingly bold in airing the complaints which they heard. At consistory meetings, while supposedly merely reporting on family visiting, they openly shared all the complaints they had received about the preacher from the various parishoners. After a monthly diet of such reports, Bronkema understandably began to dread consistory meetings. The consistory probably did not realize the devastating effect these reports had on their dominie.

CONCLUSION: What might we conclude from these random examples of how preachers related to their parishoners? First, we should not over-generalize on the basis of these anecdotes. They are too few and too haphazardly selected to be the basis for any grand conclusions. Nevertheless, let me suggest a few modest generalizations:

1. Neither dominies nor parishoners seem immune to the disease of stiff-headedness.
2. The fear of worldliness, often translated into a fear of Americanization, was a recurring source of friction between congregations and their dominies.
3. Although a minister's self-perceived social status affected his relationship to his flock, his character, personality, and effectiveness as a pulpiteer also affected greatly how a dominie was perceived and treated by his parishoners. A minister's advanced degree and office were not sufficient reason for uneducated parishoners to grant respect to their dominie.
4. The minister's status as often the only formally educated man in his congregation must have inclined him to impose his will on his consistory, but consistories, relying on common sense and feeling the weight of tradition, often resisted a dominie's attempts to sway them to his way of thinking.
5. Preaching was often a very lonely profession, especially in the Midwest where other churches were often many miles away. The late Rev. Bajema once said of one of his consistory members, "I saw the devil looking out of that man's eyes."
6. And finally--though we must be very tentative here--perhaps we could conclude that when a Reformed Dutchman was convinced that he was making his stand on a fine point of theology, he was as hard to move as the Rock of Gibraltar.

Lynden - A Home Far Away from Home  
The Rev. Arnold Brink.

Documentary material about the Dutch colony in Lynden and others in the far Northwest is not abundant. Heritage Hall at Calvin College in Grand Rapids has gathered a number of informative clippings from De Wachter, De Grondwet, Volkvriend, and The Banner. Dorothy Koert, herself a descendant of early settlers in the Lynden area, has compiled A Portrait of Lynden, a paper-bound book, replete with family histories, and filled with pictures. Jacob Van Hinte writes briefly about Lynden in his Netherlanders in America and Henry S. Lucas, similarly, in his volume bearing the same title. Henry Beets, really the pioneer historian of the Christian Reformed Church, De Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk in Noord Amerika, touches on the Northwest very briefly but chiefly as something incidental to his treatment of the Home Mission efforts of the Christian Reformed Church. For the rest, I have drawn freely on personal and family recollections. My father and mother came to Lynden as a Home Missionary couple in 1899 and later returned to make their home in Lynden in 1914, when I was a year and a half old, and there I spent my formative years until 1931 when I came Grand Rapids to attend Calvin College. My mother lived to a venerable 92 years and her mind was clear to the last and her reminiscences extremely interesting and informative.

Whatcom County is the most northwesterly county in the United States. Its northern border is the Canadian border. Its western shores are washed by the tides of the Pacific Ocean, specifically Puget Sound; almost miraculously warmed by the Japan current. Its eastern border climbs into the heights of the Cascade Mountains. To the north, just beyond the Canadian border, rise the Selkirks; the Twin Sisters lie to the Southeast. The peaks of the Canadian Rockies to the Northeast are commonly known in that area as "The King Brothers." Whatcom County contains within its borders and as its singular possession, the Nooksack River, which is totally contained within the county.

As Dorothy Koert writes, Nooksack is the name of an Indian tribe, a river, a town, a valley, a river boat. The rise and fall of this little river spells the wealth and disaster of many homes built in its fertile valley. Thousands of families, ours among them, feasted on huge Chinook Salmon dip-netted out of its waters.

On the plateau above the Nooksack the first house in the Lynden area was built by a squatter named Patterson. It was a rude but sturdy log cabin and later served as the temporary home of the Judsons, the first family to truly establish the reality of Lynden. Later still it served as the first school in the area. Phoebe Judson gave Lynden its name. As she and