

Nineteenth-Century Dutch Migrants Extraordinaire on the Prairie-Plains

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Most nineteenth-century Dutch immigrants settled into close-knit communities and were committed to family life, local communal activities, and geographic place. Studies of Grand Rapids and Holland, Michigan, as well as Marion and Sioux Counties, Iowa all reveal persistence rates ranging from 51 to 77 percent for the middle decades of the last century, which is indicative of significant population stability among the Dutch.¹ Nonetheless, a minority did relocate, and some repeatedly. My purpose here is to provide a case study of a group of rural Dutch migrants to show the forces at work driving their fluidity, to detail their migratory trail, and to determine the outcomes for their lives and communities that that restlessness produced. Their migration proved historically important because as this family network moved from one location to another across the trans-Mississippi West, new Dutch enclaves emerged on the prairie-plains that endure to this day.

The migration pattern of the Van der Meers and Van den Boses began against the backdrop of group emigration from the Netherlands in the late 1840s to Lake Prairie Township in Marion County, Iowa.² In 1849 the Pella colony received a reinforcement of about 250 immigrants, and among the families were Izaak Van der Meer, a fisherman from Overschie, Zuid Holland, and his wife Alida Van den Bos, both 47 years old, with ten children. Their oldest daughter Jannetje was married to Isaac de Vries, and they had two children, but the youngest, an infant daughter, died while crossing the Atlantic.¹² In addition, Cornelius Van den Bos, a 59-year-old farmer, and his wife Otterazlina, 39, with four children, came from Geervliet, Zuid Holland, about eleven kilometers from Overschie. Cornelius must have been related to Izaak's wife Alida, but distantly; they presumably were not brother and sister since children of the two subsequently married.³

Sincerely devout, the heads of this family network were all Seceders from the Hervormde Kerk, and their emigration bore witness to their deep-seated pietistic convictions and a strong desire for religious freedom. In turn, their destination on the Iowa prairie testified to the power of The Reverend Hendrik Pieter Scholte's public relations efforts to attract more immigrants to the Pella colony. The New World pulled at emigrants, and persuasive communication triggered the dynamics of chain migration. Settling in among the farmers and villagers of the Dutch enclave, by 1850 Cornelius Van den Bos had \$400 worth of real estate, but Izaak Van der Meer as yet claimed none. The erstwhile fisherman perhaps lacked resources to adapt readily from harvesting the sea to cultivating the land. By 1860 his real estate value still came to only \$120.⁴

Maturing children in these two families quickly established their own households in the Pella colony and married endogamously into other Dutch families. During the 1850s four Van der Meer daughters, Merte, Neeltje, Cornelia and Antje married, respectively, Pieter Noteboom, Christian Nieuwendorp, Johannes Klein and Wopke de Haan. Meanwhile, the Van der Meer's oldest son Dirk married the oldest Van den Bos daughter, Cornelia, and Dirk's brother Leendert married Cornelia's sister Antje, forming a double union between the families. Finally, Dirk Van den Bos, brother of Cornelia and Antje, married Johanna de Velder. She died during child birth,

but the child lived, and Dirk soon remarried a woman named Christina.⁵

Establishment of so many marriage unions and new family households implied more than a transient involvement in the newly settled ethnic community. Intermarriage entwined the two subject families and drew other in-laws as well into a consanguine and affinal network that created a clannish group bonded by mutual familial, economic and cultural interests that offered greater security, prosperity, and identity. At the same time, the colony and the clan experienced outside pressures that stirred an early restlessness and underscored that the settlement was never an insular community immune from larger developments affecting the region and nation.

Beginning in 1849 numerous gold seekers streamed through Marion County on the way to California. Most Dutch colonists, committed as they were to their rural ethnic enclave, did not catch Gold Fever, but a rare few, perhaps eight, succumbed to the heady enthusiasm. Among these were Leendert Van der Meer and Cornelius Jongewaard. Both single young men were eager for adventure and an opportunity to strike it rich. Both traveled the Oregon Trail in 1852 to the gold fields near the Rogue River in Oregon, and both returned to Pella with the benefit of trail experience if not wealth. Before they were twenty-five they had crossed the Atlantic, traversed the continent and half-way back, and in all probability viewed the Pacific.⁶

A companion wanderer was Leendert's brother-in-law Isaac de Vries, who left behind his wife Jannetje and a son. If Isaac also dreamed of an easy fortune, his spouse may have viewed his leaving differently. Family folklore does not speak of abandonment; it does say that Isaac was murdered in Portland. As for Jannetje -- concerned with her own and her son's survival, within only a few months of Isaac's departure she remarried a widower, Gerrit Ellerbroek, who had a son, and together the couple had two more children. In 1859, however, Gerrit died after "unbelievable hardships," and Jannetje, again promptly, married a third time -- to Luitje Mars. They eventually had three children and lived on a farm which descendants affirmed belonged to Jannetje.⁷ Clearly, a woman of endurance and practicality, her travails in life were not yet done.

The family network participated in the rhythms of rural life in Marion County -- establishing new homes and livelihoods, turning the prairie sod and cropping fertile new land for the first time ever, worshipping in the community Christian Church that was doctrinally Calvinistic, but not affiliated with the Reformed Church in America until 1856, and schooling children to ensure literacy for the next generation.⁸ The Van der Meers and Van den Boses evolved with all these circumstances and more; unfortunately, precious little evidence remains to document their participation in the contextual events. We do know that by 1860 Wopke de Haan, the carpenter -- an important craftsman in a new settlement -- owned \$650 worth of real estate. He and Anjte had a son. Leendert Van der Meer and his brother Dirk and brother-in-law Dirk Van Den Bos operated a sawmill, another critical service for the community. Leendert and Dirk each valued their real estate at \$1400. Brother-in-law Dirk claimed his real estate to be worth \$1000. Leendert and Antje had two children as well as two boarders as part of their augmented family. Brother Dirk and Cornelia had four children. Brother-in-law Dirk, recently widowed, had one son.⁹

Pieter Noteboom farmed 90 acres in Lake Prairie Township, 60 of which was improved. The farm lay along the South Skunk River that flows though northeastern Lake Prairie Township, and in 1860 its cash value was \$1200. Pieter owned three horses, five cows, fifteen other cattle, and twenty hogs. His crops of the previous year yielded 40 bushels of wheat, 40

of rye, and 2000 of corn. Pieter needed to operate a successful farm operation; he and Merte had six children by 1860 with another on the way that fall. Luitje Mars and Jannetje with their family of four lived on a 230-acre farm, 90 of which was under improvement, valued at nearly \$2000. Christian Nieuwendorp and Neeltje had one infant and real estate worth only \$275, but Johannes Klein, a laborer, claimed no real estate at all. He and Cornelia were still childless.¹⁰

In sum, the members of the clan were folks of modest means, some further along than others in the process of accumulating property. All were part of growing family units, some experienced the loss of a spouse and some knew the pain of infant deaths. By 1860 they were established residents in the Dutch enclave, part of a close-knit rural community of farmers and villagers sharing ethnoreligious values and common experiences. These immigrants were among those who contributed to the persistence rate of 77 percent after ten years of settlement.¹¹ They were still primarily Dutch-speaking, but they were Dutch-Americans, immersing themselves in wide-open landed and communal opportunities. Just as commercial agriculture and providing crucial rural services offered the best options to capitalize on economic freedom in the New World, so a vibrant ethnoreligious life testified to the freedom of a congregated group to worship according to their own ideals in the United States. Nonetheless, the next decade witnessed encroachments on the exercise of liberty for some of the Van der Meers and Van den Boses and others among the Pella Dutch.

Crisis came when national developments degenerating into Civil War changed the near bucolic life of some of these settlers, infringed on their freedom, and forced a migratory response. Some of the Dutch, independent thinkers by historical tradition and not fully acculturated into the American political culture, were unconvinced of the compelling urgency of Lincoln's call to arms for the sake of unionism.¹² Particularly did this make sense to those who were not yet citizens of the United States -- why fight in a foreign nation's internal dispute? These abstractions took on intensity when Lincoln, early in the war effort, made pleas for volunteers. Despite some ambivalence, however, a total of sixty-three young men among the Pella Dutch ultimately joined Iowa brigades and performed honorable service.¹³

One of those soldiers was Isaac Van der Meer, then in his early 20s and son of Izaak the fisherman. His legacy, however, became a cherished memory for, according to family records, he died of sickness in a Confederate prison camp on April 20, 1863. Another relative by marriage, Leendert Ver Hoef, was wounded during the war.¹⁴ The Van der Meers reeled from these blows: would other young men in that family become wounded or have to die? How many more must be put in harm's way?

Further political developments complicated matters, and others too were required to face ultimatums. By 1863 Lincoln's army needed more manpower than voluntary service provided, and the President instituted a wartime draft that made all able-bodied single and married male citizens between ages 20 and 45 eligible for conscription.¹⁵ Although high volunteerism in Lake Prairie Township exempted residents there from the draft and although purchase of substitutes or payment of a \$300 commutation fee was allowed, permitting some of the more prosperous to avoid conscription, other Dutch of more limited means or outside Lake Prairie Township were under the threat of the draft. Moreover, since conscription legally applied only to citizens of the United States, some Dutch settlers who had never bothered with naturalization were exempt from military duty. This accidental convenience eventually engendered public resentment -- should not those enjoying the landed bounty of Iowa as well as national freedoms also share in

the maintenance and security of the central government amid the threat of disunion? On the other hand, some immigrants whose grandfathers and great-uncles had been impressed by Napoleon into his armies of conquest, some to die in Russia, had a different perspective on coercive recruitment and on the "glory" of war. The question became a political issue of serious dimension, and Governor Samuel Kirkwood simplistically but calculatingly resolved the divisiveness by proclaiming that all aliens in Iowa were to become citizens -- and thus be eligible for the draft -- or leave the state.¹⁶

Was this not a restraint on freedom? Someone such as Cornelius Jongewaard may have thought so. He was now a married man of 35 with a wife and three children and farming in Black Oak Township, but Cornelius had never seen the need to become a citizen. And he did worry about the draft, for in August 1863 he wrote to a friend in the Netherlands, "Since the North as well as the South has already lost so many men and cannot readily get volunteers anymore, we daily expect the draft." He noted that Frederick Lakeman, who had immigrated with him, "sold his property and went to Canada....He was afraid of the draft because he is not married."¹⁷

Others had reason to share these concerns. In 1863 Cornelius Jongewaard's younger brother Arie was a farmer with a family in Lake Prairie Township, and like Cornelius, remained unnaturalized. Arie's brother-in-law John Van Rossum was also draftable. In early 1864 he married Ellen Rijsdam, and with that became part of a matrilineal family network in which the Civil War loomed large. Ellen came to this marriage to John with a child born in 1862 whose father was Virgil Earp of the famous Earp family that lived in Marion County. Whether Ellen and Virgil ever married remains questionable, but he assumed no permanent family responsibility, for in 1862 he signed up as a Union volunteer for the duration of the war. Meanwhile, Ellen's sister Adriana married Jan Van Blokland, and they farmed in Lake Prairie Township. But Jan was still unnaturalized. Moreover, Jan's brother Teunis died in the Civil War. Finally, Ellen and Adriana's brother Egidius Rijsdam volunteered for military duty, but soon came to loathe the war. He deserted the army in late 1862 and again in 1863, each time returning to Pella only to be arrested and sent back into service.¹⁸

These collective wartime experiences and pressures created tensions for the Rijsdams, Jongewaards, and Van der Meers. Living within a cultural milieu that grew intolerant of non-conforming non-citizens as well as those seeking to escape military service, all these families and others needed to make decisions.¹⁹ No single cause can explain the complex motivations underlying the decision to migrate, but many of these Pella Dutch had reasons to put distance between themselves and the men filling military quotas, rather than accept the obligations of citizenship or attempt to exercise the costly options of hiring a substitute or paying the commutation fee. Perhaps the lure of land was at work for some as well, especially those with small property holdings, those who were tenants or laborers, or others who generally perceived meager opportunities in the Pella community.

In time-honored fashion, if the West offered escape for some, it promised opportunity for others. Whatever the push and pull factors, during the winter of 1863-64 at least fifteen families, the great majority comprising family networks, decided to leave Marion County and follow the Overland Trail to Oregon.²⁰ With that choice they became a mobile and transient community. They were not abandoning their home community, where for most, relatives continued to reside. Rather, they were hiving from it as a group of kinsfolk and neighbors,

homogeneous and cohesive, sharing ethnocultural ties and bound by unique issues of the Civil War.

They selected Cornelius Jongewaard, veteran of the trail, as the captain of their wagon train. Other male household heads of the caravan included Leendert Van der Meer, another trail veteran, Dirk Van der Meer, Luitje Mars, Pieter Noteboom, Christian Nieuwendorp, Johannes Klein, Arie Jongewaard, John Van Rossum, Jan Van Blokland, Gerrit Rijdsdam, Gerrit Jot, Alexander Stoutenberg, Teunis Burgraaf, and Cornelius Lakeman. These men averaged 36 years old. Their wives and children numbered 53. The women averaged 30, and the children 6. Of the latter, 13 were three or younger. Two mothers were nursing babies three months old or younger, and Cornelia Van der Meer, wife of Dirk, gave birth to a child two weeks into the trip. Ellen Jongewaard, wife of Cornelius, had five children, ages eight to infancy, and since the Jongewaards outfitted two wagons for the journey, Ellen drove one of them to Oregon. Pieter and Merte Noteboom had nine children; of these one was three, another one, and a baby two months old. Alida Van der Meer, 18 and unmarried, accompanied her siblings; some of her sisters could certainly use her help.²¹

On May 1, 1864, the hegira began with the potential for transplanting another Dutch enclave on American soil, this one in the Pacific Northwest. It was not to be. Every journey on that nearly two-thousand-mile trip was fraught with infinite hazards, even if two men in the party were retracing a route of twelve years earlier and even if over a quarter of a million people over the last two decades had made the Oregon Trail a virtual highway.²²

Already at Omaha an inspection of Luitje Mars' wagon, pulled by five yoke of oxen, judged it structurally unreliable for the long haul, and he had to buy a new one for \$140. Nearing Fort Laramie the Dutch regularly saw Indians -- some friendly, some not. Warriors managed an early morning strike a short time later near Deer Creek Station on the North Platte River and scattered horses, mules and oxen, leaving only five mounts. Five riders pursued the Indians and others followed on foot. Shots were exchanged. One horse on which Arie Jongewaard was riding was wounded in the leg and another killed. One Indian sustained a bullet injury in the cross fire and fell from his pony, but his comrades rescued him. With that the Indians departed, abandoning the livestock. Except for a few horses, including the best team belonging to Captain Jongewaard, the emigrants recovered most of their animals.

Three of the Dutch, one of whom was Isaac de Vries, son of Jannetje, headed for a military post to report on their run-in with the Indians. But while on the way they ran afoul of a patrol of soldiers, who mistook them for horse thieves. Pursuers now became the pursued and drew fire. Isaac's horse was shot, but Isaac managed to escape and hide. The other two, when captured at a river crossing, successfully explained their innocence and were freed to return to their wagon train on foot. Isaac, alone and horseless, wandered for two more days before finding his way back to camp, where the rest of the party, having waited suitably long, was about to "give him up for lost" and depart. Isaac, dazed and sore, got a hero's welcome.²³ Jannetje surely prayed thankfully that her firstborn had been spared.

Isaac's half-brother John Ellerbroek, ten years old, also came close to never getting to Oregon. While seated in the wagon and attempting to crack the whip over the oxen, he lost his balance, fell to the ground, and both front and back wheels of the big vehicle carrying two and a half tons of freight rolled over his body. Alive but unconscious, his mother tended to him unceasingly until he regained consciousness. As John later wrote:

My mother [Jannetje] was a true Christian woman and I heard her pray that I might get well and her prayers were answered. I said, "I will get well," and I did. And the strange thing was that when I lay in the wagon, the same thing happened on a wagon train that was ahead of us. A boy also fell out of a wagon and under the wheels and he was instantly killed. We passed them when they were burying him. His intestines were crushed and he lived but a few minutes. It is a wonder that I pulled through. I therefore positively believe that there is a God, and that He answers prayer if we have faith in Him, but without faith there is no answer.²⁴

On October 28, after six months on the trek, the party reached Oregon City in Yamhill County. The hegira was over, but Oregon was not Canaan. It was also nothing like the fertile, arable land of Marion County, Iowa, where a nineteenth-century midwestern farmer did not have to contend with trees of gigantic proportions and sometimes rocky soil nor cope with an overabundance of rain. Environmental adjustment was most demanding, perhaps overwhelming. But far more devastatingly, during the course of the next year and a half, several members of the group died. Some may have become mortally sick with a fever or suffered accidental death. The exact causes or number of deaths are unknown, but among those to die were Pieter and Merte Noteboom and a child, leaving behind a family of eight orphans. A child of Dirk and Cornelia Van der Meer died, as did Arie Jongewaard and two of his children and Mrs. Lakeman as well. Amid this crisis, character and resourcefulness were tested. Leendert Van der Meer, in particular, faced his responsibilities as a family man and assumed legal guardianship of the Noteboom minors -- Arie, 14, Issac, 12, Gerrit, 10, Alida, 9, twins Pieter and Johannes, 7, Neeltje, 5, and Maria, 2.²⁵

This catastrophe placed such stress on the support capability of the clan, a group too small to possess deep resources, that Leendert's family, including at least five of the Noteboom children, and the Jongewaards, Kleins, and Mars summarily returned to Marion County and the security of that larger and more settled ethnic enclave where other kinfolk continued to live. Their route back, out of necessity the most efficient and quickest, was by ship, not by wagon over that long trail of two years earlier. They sailed down the west coast of the continent, crossed the Isthmus of Panama, and went by steamer to New Orleans and on up the Mississippi to Iowa. On such journeys, it was not unusual for children to take care of other children. One participant recalled that Isaac Noteboom, 12, was given a mature responsibility: he was put in charge of his five-year-old sister Neeltje on the return trip. Once in Marion County again, several relatives of Leendert took the Noteboom children into their respective families. Leendert kept the twins, his brother-in-law Dirk Van den Bos eventually cared for Gerrit and Alida, and grandfather Izaak welcomed little Neeltje.²⁶

Others of the Oregon group, including three more Noteboom offspring, stayed a few more years in the Pacific Northwest, perhaps to accumulate resources to fund their planned return to Iowa. Whether pushed by desperation or pulled by communication from relatives in the Midwest that new opportunities loomed remains speculative, but without question this group did not lack fortitude. By October 1869 the families of Dirk Van der Meer, Christian Nieuwendorp, and Cornelis Lakeman had returned to Pella by ox-drawn wagons traveling eastward on the Oregon Trail. Arie Noteboom, now 18 and a sawmill worker, accompanied them as far as Utah Territory, and then, still eager for a new experience, he boarded an eastbound train on the transcontinental railroad, newly completed on May 10, 1869, for the rest of the journey to Iowa.²⁷

These Dutch families had responded to two sets of demanding circumstances in rapid succession that carried them from the Midwest to the Pacific and back again -- in effect, migration under duress. Although the experience caused hardships in the extreme, including the loss of several lives, it did not make them rootless nor adrift from kinship and cultural connections. And it did not destroy their spirit nor their faith. Once back in the ethnic hearth in Marion County among family and community, they resiliently made the best of their circumstances, however daunting.

Some of them immediately organized a new church. The signatures of Leendert Van der Meer, Izaak Van der Meer, Johannes Klein, Wopke de Haan, Dirk Van den Bos, and their respective spouses as well as Jannetje Mars appear on a document dated August 2, 1866, and entitled the Secession Act from the First Reformed Church of Pella. They were some of the 42 persons who comprised a charter organizational meeting to establish De Ware Hollandsch Gereformeerde Kerk (The True Dutch Reformed Church), and they elected Leendert Van der Meer as a deacon for the new congregation.²⁸ For some of the Pella Dutch this was the culmination of a year-long dissention from the Reformed Church, but for the returning Oregonians it may have been something even more meaningful.

For them this action may well have been a spontaneous and pietistic expression of a renewed spiritual thanksgiving by a group that had "walked through the valley of the shadow of death." Perhaps some of them were so bonded by the searing experience of that interlude in their lives that they needed their separate congregational circle in which to share intimate prayers whose intense petitions only a select few could appreciate. More secular speculation could suggest that some of this group, having left Marion County while the Civil War still raged, were not so easily re-integrated into the ethnoreligious life of other community members who had had sons conscripted into the military, although only the most churlish would have abused the Van der Meers, whose brother had paid the supreme sacrifice. At any rate, a kinship group of the Van der Meers and Van den Boses, all formerly Netherlandic Seceders, and a few neighbors were the core of the new Christian Reformed Church of Pella and were thus rebuilding a sense of community for themselves within the enclave, even while they healed their souls.

The history of this family network, if ended here, would be remarkable enough, but this is only half of their tale. Time and space allows only the barest outline of the "rest of the story."

By the late 1860s a search for new farm-making possibilities spawned another group migration from Marion County, this time 300 miles away to northwest Iowa. Among the movers were the Van der Meers and Van den Boses whose network now included the returned Oregonians and other Pella relatives and associates. The group numbered 77 persons, or 30 percent of the total of 253 occupying eighty-acre homesteads in 29 sections of southeastern Sioux County in the spring of 1870.²⁹

These families subscribed fully to the promise of new beginnings in the rural economy of the new colony and participated actively in establishing the social infrastructure essential for a complete community. They initially clustered on the alternate, even-numbered sections of the public domain for community affinity, thus creating unique, checkerboard neighborhoods that were bonded by ties of blood and marriage. In 1871 members of the clan -- including Leendert Van der Meer, Dirk Vander Meer, Luitje Mars, Johannes Klein, Christian Nieuwendorp, Wopke

de Haan, Dirk Van den Bos, Izaak Van der Meer, and young adults of the Noteboom family -- were among the 24 charter organizers of the Holland Christian Reformed Church in Orange City. Their children accounted for about one-third of the names on the new settlement's school roster that listed 66 pupils. Ten years after the founding of the Sioux County Dutch enclave the persistence rate for the original pioneers of 1870 was 77 percent. Except for three persons, every other household name associated with the Van der Meer and Van den Bos network was present in the manuscript census of 1880.³⁰ Some of the clan were finally "at home" in northwest Iowa, but others chose to look for that in yet another place.

In the early 1880s propaganda promoting Dakota Territory convinced some of the Sioux County Dutch that good weather and fertile prairie-plains in an area about 150 miles west offered all the qualifications for a new booming agricultural frontier. By 1882 another mass migration of Dutch farm families, perhaps as many as 500 persons, was underway to the four western townships of Douglas County. Among the movers once again were the multi-generational, extended families of Leendert Van der Meer and Dirk Van den Bos as well as the families of Issac, Gerrit, Peter, and John Noteboom -- the former Oregon orphans all now married. Other Sioux County transplants were next-generation representatives of the Jongewaard, Nieuwendorp, De Haan, and DeVries\Ellerbroek\Mars families.³¹

Leendert Van der Meer immediately built "a neat house for himself near a small body of water named Lake Pleasant" a mile south of the village of Harrison. Taking advantage of the Homestead Act and the Timber Culture Act of 1873, he occupied a half section of land. As the patriarch of the clan that moved with him to Douglas County, his farm formed the hub for other places belonging to kinfolk, most of whom also settled on 320-acre tracts within three to four miles or less of Leendert. Some of the family network resided in the village.³²

Up until mid-1883 when the Dutch established their first two churches -- a Reformed Church and a Christian Reformed Church -- Leendert Van der Meer and Johannes Klein led informal worship services for the community. As in the two earlier-founded enclaves in Iowa, social life was anchored in church association, and continued reinforcement of ethnoreligious values was essential for community well-being. The pietistic Dutch settlers also began rural schools, and the teacher, usually a recruit from the ethnic rank-and-file whom the local school boards carefully screened, imparted Calvinist instruction to the children.³³

In Douglas County age finally rooted some of the Dutch migrants extraordinaire. A cemetery in Harrison, South Dakota, on a sea of grass was the final resting place for the Netherlandic fisherman Izaak Van der Meer and his wife as well as a son and two daughters and their respective spouses. Brother-in-law Dirk Van den Bos and his wife were also buried there. Consider that the latter four couples, all Dutch-born immigrants, had thrice pioneered in new western settlements during their lifetimes, excluding their relocation to Oregon. Through those endeavors they helped transform nature's space into ethnic place, giving the land a unique cultural identity that was part of their immigrant legacy. Numerous offspring of the family network lived on into the twentieth century in Iowa and South Dakota. Indeed, in 1910 a few families from Douglas County, third and fourth generation migrants, transplanted yet another Dutch ethnic enclave centered on a Christian Reformed Church to Lakeview in Todd County, South Dakota, on newly-opened reservation land of the Brule Sioux. The founders included four brothers -- Neal, Dick, John and Frank -- all sons of Leendert Van der Meer. In 1917 a family of Noteboom cousins and others enlarged this settlement.³⁴ The cyclical pattern of cultural

replication and securing property with a favorable man-land ratio for the next generation continued.

The saga of the Van der Meer and Van den Bos clan exemplifies not only mobility from one continent to another but also internal migration from east to west and back again in search of a place of stable residency. Despite their roving, however, they contributed in their own way to the process of community development; and despite hardships and interventions beyond their control, they prevailed through family strategies always focused on economic survival and cultural endurance. They were hardly, as one historian has labeled such folk, "failures who moved on."³⁵ Not for want of trying nor intention did the clan members leave a material, cultural and familial legacy in terms of Dutch places, people, and institutions in the Midwest -- all because of, rather than despite, their mobility. Their relocations in Iowa and South Dakota resulted in community transplantations of Dutch ethnic enclaves that endure to the present. Indeed, Sioux County ranks first in the nation for persons of Dutch descent, Douglas County is second, and Marion County holds fifth place.³⁶ The Van der Meers and Van den Boses, among others, were, in short, vanguards present at the beginnings of three ethnocultural islands on the prairie-plains, and they truly earned their place in the history of those locales.

Endnotes

1. David Gordon Vanderstel, "The Dutch of Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1848-1900: Immigrant Neighborhood and Community Development in a Nineteenth Century City," (Ph.D. Dissertation, Kent State University, 1983), Table 8.1 at 416; Gordon W. Kirk, *The Promise of American Life: Social Mobility in a Nineteenth Century Immigrant Community, Holland, Michigan, 1847-1894* (Philadelphia, 1978), 51-54; Richard Doyle, "The Socio-Economic Mobility of the Dutch Immigrants to Pella, Iowa, 1847-1925," (Ph.D. Dissertation, Kent State University, 1982), 107-109, at 128 Doyle concludes, "stability was the hallmark of the Dutch colony of Pella"; Brian W. Beltman, "Ethnic Territoriality and the Persistence of Identity: Dutch Settlers in Northwest Iowa, 1869-1880," *The Annals of Iowa* 55(Spring, 1996): 101-37.
2. Jacob Van der Zee, *The Hollanders in Iowa* (Iowa City, 1912), 30-41, 44-53, 61-63, 66-69, 71-66; Jacob van Hinte, *Netherlanders in America: A Study of Emigration and Settlement in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries in the United States of America*, ed. by Robert P. Swierenga (Grand Rapids, 1985 [1928]), 82-85, 89-93, 138-43, 150; Henry S. Lucas, *Netherlanders in America, Dutch Immigration to the United States and Canada, 1789-1950* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1955), 44-55, 151-58, 162, 169-78; K[ommer] Van Stigt, *History of Pella, Iowa and Vicinity*, trans. by Elisabeth Kempkes (Pella, 1897), 29-31.; Cyrenus Cole, *Souvenir History of Pella, Iowa* (Pella, 1922), 7-10, 46-49; Ronald D. Rietveld, "Hendrick Peter Scholte and the Land of Promise," *The Annals of Iowa* 48 (Winter/Spring 1986): 135-54; Doyle, "Socio-Economic Mobility," 29-31, 34-42.
3. Family biographical information derives from Swierenga, *Dutch Emigrants to the United States, South Africa, South America, and Southeast Asia, 1835-1880* (Wilmington, DE, 1982); idem, *Dutch Immigrants in U.S. Ship Passenger Manifests, 1820-1880* (Wilmington, DE, 1982);

idem, *Dutch Households in U.S. Population Censuses 1850, 1860, 1870*, 3 vols. (Wilmington, DE, 1987). I have also made use of a very thoroughly researched family history and genealogy given to me by the author, Hester Vande Garde, *History and Genealogy of the Arie Noteboom Family, 1750-1986* (Orange City, IA, 1986), 185-187. See also Van Stigt, *History*, 74-75 and Cole, *Souvenir*, 55-57, for the 1849 ship list.

4. Vande Garde, *Genealogy*, 185-187; Swierenga, *Dutch Households*.

5. *Ibid.*

6. Van der Zee, *Hollanders*, 84-85; Van Hinte, *Netherlanders in America*, 274; Doyle, "Socio-Economic Mobility," 55-57; Lucas, *Netherlanders*, 193-94; Cole, *Souvenir*, 61-62; Van Stigt, *History*, 78-79. Van Stigt identifies other Dutch Argonauts who went to California: Hendrik Slot and Geert Dykstra, who left Pella in 1850 and returned in 1852, and Jan de Moor, Dirk Van Zee and Engle Verploegh, who departed in 1853. Jan died in California, Dirk took up permanent residence there, and Engle stayed five years before returning to Pella, reportedly \$5000 richer. For more on Engle, see *History of Pella, Iowa, 1847-1987*, 2 vols. (Pella Historical Society, 1988), I: 645-47.

7. Charles L. Dyke, *The Story of Sioux County* (Orange City, IA, 1942), 403; Vande Garde, *Genealogy*, 181.

8. Much descriptive detail is available in Van Hinte, *Netherlanders in America*, Chapters 9, 11, 12; Van der Zee, *Hollanders*, Chapters 11, 13, 16, 30, 31, 36, 37; Lucas, *Netherlanders*, 180-86, 194-95; Van Stigt, *History*, 82-86, 92-99, 104-106, 121; Cole, *Souvenir*, 63-4, 66-7, 73, 82, 98, 109; Doyle, "Socio-Economic Mobility," 57-58, 61, 67-71, 86-89.

9. Swierenga, *Dutch Households*. For comparison, the average taxable wealth, real estate plus personal property, for Pella Dutch taxpayers in 1860 was \$1,106. See Doyle, "Socio-Economic Mobility," table 9 at 97.

10. Pieter Noteboom's farm was among the 183 in Marion County in 1860 that averaged 122 acres with 56 acres under improvement. See Doyle, "Socio-Economic Mobility," table 2 at 72; *Federal Manuscript Agricultural Census for 1860 for Marion County, Iowa*; Swierenga, *Dutch Households*.

11. Doyle, "Socio-Economic Mobility," 107-109. The first-born of Leendert and Antje Van der Meer and Christian and Neeltje Nieuwendorp died in infancy. Vande Garde, *Genealogy*, 186-87.

12. The most thorough examination of the Pella Dutch and their antebellum political culture is Swierenga, "The Ethnic Vote and the First Lincoln Election," *Civil War History* (March 1965): 27-43.

13. Van Hinte, *Netherlanders in America*, 421-23, 426-37; Lucas, *Netherlanders*, 547-51, 556, 559, 561-64; Van Stigt, *History*, 115-120 and Cole, *Souvenir*, 131-35, both give the list of Pella area Civil War participants. Doyle, "Socio-Economic Mobility," 121 notes that after 1850 never more than 8 percent of the male household heads held alien status in the Pella colony. For 1860, 15 of 219 household heads, or 7 percent were unnaturalized. See table 16 at 122. For a recent sophisticated analysis of race-related politics in Iowa, see Robert Dykstra, *Bright Radical Star: Black Freedom and White Supremacy on the Hawkeye Frontier* (Cambridge and London, 1993).
14. Vande Garde, *Genealogy*, 181, 12; Van Stigt, *History*, 119-120; Cole, *Souvenir*, 134.
15. On the Enrolment Act of March 3, 1863, see James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York & Oxford, 1988), 600-603. Married men between 35 and 45 were to be drafted only after other enrollment pools were exhausted. After the first draft in July, three more followed the next year.
16. Van Hinte, *Netherlanders in America*, 432-33; Vander Zee, *Hollanders*, 230; Dyke, *Story*, 402. The only draft in Iowa occurred in the fall of 1864 and involved 1,862 men. See Hubert H. Wubben, *Civil War Iowa and the Copperhead Movement* (Ames, 1980), 63; Eugene C. Murdock, *One Million Men: The Civil War Draft in the North* (Madison, 1971), 352. The exemption provisions stirred controversy generally and helped to provoke draft riots in New York City, Milwaukee, and other places.
17. Swierenga, *Dutch Households*; Van Stigt, *History*, 37; Cole, *Souvenir*, 35. The quote from the Jongewaard correspondence of August 3, 1863, is found in H. J. Brinks, "Dutch American Reactions," and Christine Jacobs, "Avoiding the War," *Origins* VI, No. 1(1988): 6, 23. Frederick Lakeman returned to Pella by 1870 and farmed property valued at \$2800.
18. Toni Rysdam-Shorre, *Gerrit....A Dutchman in Oregon* (Bend, OR, 1985), 44, 47, 51-56, 64, 71-73, 138; Swierenga, *Dutch Households*; Van Stigt, *History*, 41, 43, 68, 91, 120; Cole, *Souvenir*, 39, 43, 49, 88, 134. In October 1864 Confederate troops captured Egidius Rijdsdam near Tilton, Georgia, and he remained a prisoner of war until 1865. Upon release he received his military discharge and returned to Iowa.
19. See Wubben, *Civil War Iowa*, passim and Olynthus B. Clark, *The Politics of Iowa during the Civil War and Reconstruction* (Iowa City, 1911), 138-42 on charges of "treason" against some Iowans for opposition generally to the war policy and Republican leadership. See also Robert E. Sterling, "Civil War Draft Resistance in the Middle West," (Ph.D. Dissertation: Northern Illinois University, 1974).
20. Vande Garde, *Genealogy*, 181-82; Dyke, *Story*, 402-3, 429-30; Rysdam-Shorre, *Gerrit*, 56, 67-82. Note that the families of Wopke de Haan, draft-exempt by age, and Dirk Van den Bos were not among the Oregon Trail group. Dirk may have been more resigned to the draft policy or its exemption options, or simply not interested in relocating.

21. Vande Garde, *Genealogy*, 181-85; Dyke, *Story*, 402-3, 429-30; Rysdam-Shorre, *Gerrit*, 56, 67-82; Swierenga, *Dutch Households*.
22. Dyke, *Story*, 402-12, provides the reminiscences of three children of the Dutch Oregonians: Cornelius Jongewaard's daughter Janna and Jannetje Mars' children John and Mary Ellerbroek, all who related their stories to Dyke in the 1920s and 1930s. I have supplemented their recollections with notes from Vande Garde, *Genealogy*, 181-84 and Rysdam-Shorre, *Gerrit*, 71-73. See generally, John Unruh, *The Plains Across: The Overland Emigrants and the Trans-Mississippi West, 1840-60* (Urbana, Chicago, London, 1979); Wallace Stegner, *The Gathering of Zion: The Story of the Mormon Trail* (Lincoln, 1964); John Mack Faragher, *Women and Men on the Oregon Trail* (New Haven & London, 1979).
23. The quote is John Ellerbroek's, who stated this in Dyke, *Story*, 405-8. Deer Creek Station is the site of modern Glenrock, Wyoming.
24. Quote of Ellerbroek at 409.
25. Vande Garde, *Genealogy*, 183, 224, 257; Rysdam-Shorre, *Gerrit*, 73; Swierenga, *Dutch Households*. If some died in Oregon, it should be noted that my count reveals 8 to 10 births among the Dutch Oregonians between May 1864 and October 1869.
26. Vande Garde, *Genealogy*, 183-85, 224; Dyke, *Story*, 411.
27. Vande Garde, *Genealogy* 183; Dyke, *Story*, 411.
28. Vande Garde, *Genealogy*, 187; Van der Zee, *Hollanders* 305, notes that 42 members of the First Dutch Reformed Church of Pella withdrew to form the Christian Reformed Church, but his brief statement fails to explain the dynamics of its formation involving the Van der Meers. See also *History of Pella*, I: 106; Van Stigt, *History*, 145, 151; Cole, *Souvenir*, 117.
29. Beltman, "Ethnic Territoriality," 108-10, 117, which derives from the *Federal Manuscript Population Census for 1870 for Sioux County, Iowa*. Luitje Mars' family was not among the 1870 pioneers, but did move to Sioux County in the course of the next year. See also Vande Garde, *Genealogy*, 141 on family network.
30. Vande Garde, *Genealogy*, 162, 175, 193, 185-88, 257; Dyke, *Story*, 113; Beltman, "Ethnic Territoriality," 131; *Federal Manuscript Population Census for 1880 for Sioux County, Iowa*.
31. For introductions to Dutch immigration in the Dakotas, see Gerald De Jong, "The Coming of the Dutch to the Dakotas," *South Dakota History* (Winter 1974): 20-50 and Nelson Nieuwenhuis, "A History of Dutch Settlement in South Dakota to 1900," (Master's Thesis, University of South Dakota, 1940); Henry Van der Pol, *On the Reservation Border -- Hollanders in Douglas and Charles Mix Counties* (Stickney, SD 1969); *Douglas County History and Centennial Observances, 1961* (Stickney, SD, nd); Lucas, *Netherlanders*, 377-78; Lucas, ed.,

Dutch Immigrant Memoirs and Related Writings, 2 vols. (Assen, Neth., 1955; Grand Rapids, MI, 1997 reprint), II: 318-25, for a descriptive account by Frank LeCocq on the founding of the Dutch colony in Douglas County in 1881-82. For another first-hand account by an early settler near Harrison, see the letters of Teunis and Arie Van den Hoek, in Herbert J. Brinks, ed., *Dutch American Voices: Letters from the United States, 1850-1930* (Ithaca, 1995). Vande Garde, *Genealogy*, 188.

32. Lucas, *Dutch Immigrant Memoirs*, quote at 326; *Federal Manuscript Population Census for 1900 for Douglas County, South Dakota; Douglas County Historical Atlas* (Lake Andes, S.D., 1980).

33. Vande Garde, *Genealogy*, 188, 224, 257; *Douglas County History*, 24-25; Van der Pol, *On the Border*, 94.

34. Vande Garde, *Genealogy*, 185-88, 102, 193, 257, 66b.

35. Quote from John Mack Faragher, "Open-Country Community: Sugar-Creek Illinois, 1820-1850," in Steven Hahn and Jonathan Prude, eds., *The Countryside in the Age of Capitalist Transformation* (Chapel Hill, 1985), 252.

36. James Paul Allen and Eugene James Turner, *We the People: An Atlas of America's Ethnic Diversity* (New York, 1988), 59. Based on the 1980 census, the Dutch concentration in Sioux County was 55.2 percent; for Douglas County it was 33.6 percent; for Marion County 21 percent. Ottawa County, Michigan was in third place with 33 percent and Lyon County, Iowa fourth with 22.6 percent.

