

The Association for the Advancement of Dutch American Studies

11th Biennial Conference Proceedings

**The Sesquicentennial of Dutch Immigration:
150 Years of Ethnic Heritage**



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The Joint Archives of Holland
and the A. C. Van Raalte Institute
Hope College
Holland, Michigan

The Sesquicentennial of Dutch Immigration: 150 Years of Ethnic Heritage

Proceedings of the 11th Biennial Conference

of the

Association for the Advancement of Dutch American Studies

Compiled and Edited
by
Larry J. Wagenaar
and Robert P. Swierenga

Hosted by

The Joint Archives of Holland
and the A. C. Van Raalte Institute
Hope College
Holland, Michigan

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Conference Participants	i
Introduction	
<i>Larry J. Wagenaar</i>	iii
"First Bride"	
<i>James C. Schaap</i>	1
A. C. Van Raalte/Holland, Michigan	
"Albertus C. Van Raalte: Leader of the Emigration, 1844-1867"	
<i>Elton J. Bruins</i>	13
"Van Raalte and Scholte: A Soured Relationship and Personal Rivalry"	
<i>Robert P. Swierenga</i>	29
"Van Raalte's Primary Purpose in Coming to America"	
<i>Sander de Haan</i>	47
Western Michigan	
"Cornelius Vander Meulen: Founder or Follower?"	
<i>Hans Krabbendam</i>	53
"The Search for a Family Legend: The Frisian Background of Marten Annes Ypma, the Founder of Vriesland"	
<i>Albert Ypma</i>	65
"Baptism of Fire: Holland's Company I and the Battle of Tebbs Bend, July 4, 1863"	
<i>Jack D. Elenbaas</i>	71
"Holland Home Beginnings: A Gendered Perspective"	
<i>Suzanne M. Sinke</i>	79
H. P. Scholte/Pella	
"Reassessing the Visionary Thinking of H. P. Scholte"	
<i>Philip E. Webber</i>	89
"A. J. Betten: The Other Pioneer Pella Dominie"	
<i>Earl Wm. Kennedy</i>	97

"Henry Peter Scholte and the 1853 Founding of Central College"	
<i>James E. McMillan</i>	113
"Nineteenth-Century Dutch Migrants Extraordinaire on the Prairie-Plains"	
<i>Brian W. Beltman</i>	123
"A. E. Dudok Bousquet - Prairie Patrician"	
<i>Cornelia B. Kennedy</i>	137

Culture/Language

"Calvinism Isn't the Only Truth: Herman Bavinck's Impressions of the USA"	
<i>George Harinck</i>	151
"Dutch Immigrant Language: Maintaining One's Cultural Identity"	
<i>Margriet B. Lacy</i>	161

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Introduction

In 1997, the Dutch American communities of western Michigan and Iowa celebrated their Sesquicentennial. Several groups of Dutch pioneers led by Albertus C. Van Raalte, Hendrik P. Scholte, Cornelius Vander Meulen and others led a major migration of Dutch to the United States in the middle of the 19th Century. The conference entitled *The Sesquicentennial of Dutch Immigration: 150 Years of Ethnic Heritage*, held on the campus of Hope College in Holland, Michigan, was designed to celebrate this anniversary by inviting scholars and laypeople from across the United States and the Netherlands to offer historical perspectives and analysis on the migration and their descendants.

This two day meeting was the 11th biennial conference of the Association for the Advancement of Dutch American Studies and was hosted by the Joint Archives of Holland and the A.C. Van Raalte Institute for Historical Studies. Significant financial assistance came from the Michigan Humanities Council and Hope College making this event a success.

It was a pleasure to host over 150 people who attended the conference. One of the meeting highlights was a kickoff by noted author and storyteller James P. Schaap who told an original story written just for this conference entitled *First Bride*. Other scholars participating in the conference included Elton Bruins, Hans Krabbendam, George Harinck, Philip Webber, Earl Kennedy, Cornelia Kennedy, Suzanne Sinke, Jack Elenbaas, Robert Swierenga, Albert Ypma, Brian Beltman Jaap van Marle, Margriet Lacy, Larry Wagenaar, Sander de Haan, and James McMillan. Michael De Vries gave some final informal thoughts at the concluding dinner. Audio recordings of the presentations are available from the Joint Archives of Holland as are additional copies of these proceedings.

There are many individuals who need to be thanked for the success of *The Sesquicentennial of Dutch Immigration: 150 Years of Ethnic Heritage*. Joint Archives secretary Lori Trethewey with assistance from Collections Archivist Geoffrey Reynolds provided much of the logistical support for the conference including reservations, on-site registration, and help with publication of these proceedings. Success was a direct result of their fine handling of conference details. Elton Bruins, Robert Swierenga and the Van Raalte Institute provided additional financial and planning assistance which enabled us to provide significant travel funds to our scholars from the Netherlands. Finally, many thanks to the Michigan Humanities Council for a grant to support travel expenses and speaker honoraria, and the Joint Archives of Holland and Hope College for significant in-kind contributions.

It is my hope that this conference and these proceedings will be a continuing contribution to our understanding of Dutch American life and serve as a lasting legacy commemorating our collective Sesquicentennial.

Larry J. Wagenaar
Conference Coordinator
January, 1998