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"The General Synod Visit to Holland," Published in the Holland City News

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June 14, 1884

"The General Synod Visit to Holland," published in the Holland City News of that date.

Several references to Van Raalte; the synod met on Hope's campus.

A xerox copy of the original in the Charles Scott file, Hope College Archives.

Chas. Scott file
ref to RCVR.

See Rev. Dr. Charles Scott's address - page 2
Vice-president - 1878-1880

Interim president - 1880-1885

President - 1885-1893

Inauguration - 1886, June 22 - Third Ref Church

The General Synod's Visit TO HOLLAND.

From the "Holland City News" of June 14, 1884.

Synod meetings in Grand Rapids Mich

June 7, 1884
The General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, having accepted the invitation presented to that body by Rev. Thomas Walker Jones, who invited them, in the name of Hope College and the surrounding churches, to pay the institution and our city a visit, arrived at ten o'clock last Saturday morning on a train by the Chicago & West Mich. R'y. They were received at the depot, by the committee on Reception, consisting of Messrs. R. Kanters, I. Cappon, and G. Van Schelven, and a large number of our citizens. Some 300 persons, delegates and a few ladies, headed by the officers of Synod and the committee of arrangements from Grand Rapids, consisting of Rev. P. Moerdyk and Messrs. J. A. S. Verdier, Jas. Van der Sluis, Wm. Maerdyke and Wm. Kotors, then marched by twos down Eighth street to Fish, and down Fish to Ninth, along the south side of this beautiful and shady street to Cedar and from Cedar to the College Campus. The august body was taken across the campus and approached Van Vleck Hall on the west side, getting a good view of the college buildings. They were then taken to the beautiful pine grove, which lies in the north-east corner of the campus. Arriving there everything was in readiness, the

college faculty and students standing in line; the procession passed between them, and was then immediately taken possession of by the floral committee, who presented each person with a beautiful buttonhole bouquet.

A platform had been erected in the grove, on the back of which were hung the flags of the Netherlands and of the United States, and on each side of the platform stood exquisitely arranged floral decorations. At the left of this platform was erected a stage for the choir. The seats for the delegates were constructed in a semi-circle, directly in front of the platform with a place for the students of the college at the right. After the officers of the Synod, President Scott, members of the Faculty, ministers of the Classis of Holland, and the committee of arrangements had taken their places on the platform, and the delegates had been seated, Rev. Dr. Ph. Phelps opened with prayer, after which Hope Church choir, together with the students of the college, sang a song of welcome which had been composed for the occasion by Rev. Henry E. Dosker, of Grand Haven. The following are the verses of the song:

One sound wells up from every lip;
From every tongue does start
A song of joy, a song of praise,

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A WELCOME from the heart,
 It beams in every glistening eye,
 It graces every wall;
 Its echoes tremble in the air—
 A "welcome" to you all.

HOPE, modest HOPE, extends her arms,
 And whispers words of love,
 Her aims, her toils, her very life
 She freely bids you prove.
 With confidence she meets your gaze,
 No terrors on her fall,
 As, from her smiling lips, she brings
 A "welcome" to you all.

We feel the tie, which binds our hearts,
 With mutual, lasting power.
 No shadow dims the glorious joys
 Of this blest meeting-hour.
 The storm brought peace; the earthquake, rest;
 Its throes no more appal.
 The loyal West with one accord,
 Brings "welcome" to you all.

Now may the banner of our Church,
 Raised on the Eastern hills,
 Wave—till the fluttering of its folds
 Our blessed country fills.
 Come, Holy Spirit, Power Divine,
 Make strong our Zion's wall.
 Speak Thou in words of matchless grace
 A "welcome" to us all.

As the last strains of music died away,
 Rev. Dr. CHAS. SCOTT arose from his place
 on the platform and advanced to the front
 addressing the assemblage as follows:

MR. PRESIDENT, FATHERS AND BRETHREN OF
 THE GENERAL SYNOD:—Somewhere from the
 misty domain of human language, has come to me
 a misty saying or proverb, which I never rightly
 understood; but, to-day, as I look upon this ec-
 clesiastical assembly, and consider what it is, and
 whence its members come, what they represent,
 and how they bear in blood, and speech, and wor-
 ship, and other like surroundings, the proud
 Knickerbocker insignia and history of 250 years, it
 seems as if the meaning flashed over us in its full
 import, like the light of yonder noon-day sun.
 "The Dutch have taken Holland." There is no
 mistake about it on this occasion. Here is a ver-
 itable Holland in waiting for the Dutch army.
 And yet, how welcome! They come in the name
 of the Lord—a name above every name in this
 Christian community, and among these academic
 groves—and if they blow the trumpet aloud, as we
 trust they do, the notes are not the bugle blasts
 of war, but the sweet harmonies of peace. So we
 lift up the gates in joy, and bid them enter as a
 host of welcomed friends. Yea, go through our
 streets, or visit our homes, and even if you hear
 the accents, and see the flag that come from
 across the seas, you will meet with warm hands
 and warm hearts, and greetings which you can
 never forget. So much must I say for the citizens
 of Holland.

Let me now say something of a special bearing.
 A dependent, weakly child, as you know, must
 crystallize around it a certain amount of parental
 devotion. The General Synod acknowledges such

a child in its nursery at the West, and have jour-
 neyed hitherward to see it. However trouble-
 some it may have been, they want to see it, and
 will surely look upon it with deep and most sin-
 cere affection. The city of Holland receives not
 one-half of the yearning which you will bestow
 upon Hope College; and here is *Hope College*.
 Here are its "classical groves" of sylvan beauty, and
 its shady walks, amid tree and swath, wooing back
 as it were the spirit of good old Plato. You have
 heard "by the hearing of the ear," and now let the
 eye behold it—not the fair print which some of
 you have hung up in study or drawing room, with
 its artistic surroundings of fancy, but *Hope College*
 as dame Nature has fitted it for a students' home.
 The classic memory will busy itself in this place
 "*sub tegmine fagi*," and catch the song of Virgil's
 muse, while the tongue can be inspired to speak
 with Attic ease and eloquence in such a forum.
 There is nothing of which we boast, at present,
 but what a manhood will be revealed to you, and
 to the world, when the Synod comes in 1884.

Moreover it is very grateful sometimes to visit
 an estate or manor house of our peculiar posses-
 sion. Be it known to you, therefore, brethren,
 that you have come into your own domain. Lift
 up the eyes and look: these pleasant grounds;
 that hill of science where the steps lead upward;
 those College buildings and adjuncts, and all up-
 on this Campus, belong in fee simple to the Re-
 formed Church. They have indeed, a hallowed
 use, and a noble consecration, but the future of
 them all is crowned with this halo alone, viz: that
 your signet is upon them, and they are devoted as
 a chaplet of jewels in the Kingdom of God. The
 possessions of Synod extend beyond this view.
 On the shores of yonder waters, over which you
 are to sail to-day, be they called Black Lake, or
 Macatawa Bay, on either side, are broad acres held
 in your name for the Church, and devoted to the
 high and holy cause of Christian education.

In 1858, the General Synod held its session in
 Philadelphia. Perhaps five or six persons in this
 body were then delegates, and there watched
 over the interests of Zion. For the first time, the
 leader of this Colony, the esteemed and noble
 Van Raalte, stood upon the floor of Synod and
 pleaded in somewhat broken accents, but with most
 manifest eloquence, for the moral and religious
 welfare of his people. The pioneer school of Mr.
 Taylor had been already started at Holland, and a
 proposition was made that this school should be
 received under the care of the Synod, and com-
 mitted to the charge and pecuniary aid of the
 Board of Education. As once in the wilderness,
 when the prayed for manna fell, the question was
 asked, "what is it?" What means this action and
 what is in the future? Dr. Van Raalte arose, and
 those who were present can never forget that ear-
 nest appeal to his brethren in the East. Let
 me simply say, it was most powerful and per-
 suasive. The proposition was accepted. Then

*Van Raalte
 1st time
 at Gen. Synod*

and there, thirty-one years ago, was opened that fountain of blessing, from which began a little rill of influence, the flowing of which has widened and deepened, until you come and meet it to-day, as a "river of God, full of water." A month before, I had stopped among the hills beyond Schoharie, and saw a spring gushing from beneath the rock, and now before the city where we met, that same spring had become the broad Delaware, bearing on its bosom the ships and commerce of the nation; so may this be an expanding stream in the moral world for ages. Below the city, I saw a noble ship of war, ready for its launching, that it might bear our country's flag in honor over the earth. Even thus, launch upon this river of yours and ours, a vessel of divine truth and power, which can battle for the Lord of Hosts, and float the banners of Jesus in every clime.

In 1864 a similar Synod met Schenectady. Only a few members of this body stood upon its roll. Two all vital questions marked its deliberations. Until that day Rutgers had been truly a denominational school—a "Theological College," as it was often called. Its property was vested in the General Synod, and its operations were ever watched over in faith and prayer, by the lovers of Zion. But, at that session, the relations of years were dissolved; the title transferred to the Board of Trustees, and the essential spirit of the Institution changed. Far be it from me to say that it thereby ceased to be a Christian school, or ecclesiastical in its character, for may such a thing never be true, but I simply state the fact, that Rutgers, my alma mater, ranked no longer as a "school of the Church."

But, by the same body, another foundation was laid, the basis of a College at the West, that should be of the Church, and for the Church—of a school to become, as soon as practicable, distinctly Theological. The idea of Hope College was endorsed, and its proposed endowment fully recommended. I knew what this meant, at the time, but I know it better now. Ponder the matter well. A wide door was opened to greet the settling sun, and from Schenectady, twenty years ago, our dear Reformed Church began her onward march toward the Western sea. He that runs can read, as God with his finger writes upon the horizon, "Go forward."

In the winter of 1854-5 I was asked if I could name a young man for the school at Holland. I referred to John Van Vleck, then in the Theological Seminary, and afterwards urged him to accept the call. He came, and "Holland Academy," with a number of these ministers of Christ, are the memorials of his service. He was a chosen one of God, but labor and the crosses of his position broke down his health, and at last I stood by his open grave in tears, and laid him to his earthly rest in the twilight hour of night. Victim he may have been to duty and his Church, but his memory is green, and his best monument you will

note hard by in the corridors and chambers of yonder Van Vleck Hall.

Twenty-five years ago another principal came to carry on the work. Under his assiduous care and earnest toil the Academy became a College, and the goodly trees spread fourth its branches in richer fruit. All the future will record the labors of Dr. Philip Phelps. You will visit a neat and appropriate chapel; this was built by the students in 1862. You will find six other buildings, plain to look upon and unadorned, and yet, to us, somewhat as Bethel was to Jacob; and all these are the erections of the nineteen years, in which Dr. Phelps was Principal and President. We have, no stately halls; no architectural adjuncts, with their cost of thousands and tens of thousands of dollars; but we have just those things which God has brought to us, as hidden jewels, and which will grow up under His shaping hand into an educational palace.

Permit me to introduce you, on the right, to a Faculty, whom you may trust to do a good and noble work in the cause of Christian education; and on the left to a body of students, who have joined in a chorus of welcome, who relate you with flowers without, and the fragrance of love within, because you have made for them a brighter path in life. Some of them, too, will be the peers of the best men and women of the West. They will soon greet you through a chosen fellow student.

Allow me now, a single personal allusion before I close. It was through Rutgers College that I entered into your Church—plain proof that a College sows the seed whence future harvests may come. I resolved that if I ever became a minister, it should be at your altars. And so has it happened. Sometimes have I doubted as to the wisdom of the choice, but now, toward the closing of that ministerial life, I feel that Jehovah has marked out my way as he deemed best. I have met the General Synod before—have been honored with its honors, but should this be, in Providence, our final meeting, I could not close my connection with you, in greater joy than by giving this welcome—than by seeing you in such a spot, where I can assure you in words that burn, that this school is "the rock of hope" for the Hollanders in our land, and the foremost "anchor of hope" for the Reformed Church in America.

After Dr. Scott had finished his address, he announced, as President of the College, that the students, through their chosen representative, desired to welcome the Synod.

G. J. Hekhuis, a member of the Junior class, thereupon stepped forward and expressed the gratitude of his fellow students for the fostering care the Synod had bestowed, for so long a period, upon the In-

stitution, which furnished them advantages such as they would not otherwise enjoy. He entered into the history of the college, and said that the students of Hope were mainly young men, who, were it not for her, would not receive the benefits of a collegiate course of education; and thus the usefulness and good, which she is now doing for the world through her graduates, would remain undone. His speech was decidedly a good one, and made a good impression.

An anthem, "Rock of Ages," was then beautifully rendered by the choir. The Rev. P. Lepeltak followed and spoke in behalf of the Classis of Holland, treating of the rise and development of the Holland colony since the emigration of 1847, under Revs. Dr. Van Raalte, Ypma, Van der Meulen and Bolks, and very philosophically and strikingly described the religious peculiarities of "our land"—spoke in words of warmest affection for the denomination, appealed to the Synod to forgive their follies and to aid them in every possible way in their endeavor to do the work God had, in the "peculiar way," committed to them, and mentioned the name of Elder Van Bree, of Zeeland, who thirty years ago brought back from the East the news, and the documents, which consummated the union of the Holland classis with the church we now love so dearly. The reverend gentleman's remarks were filled with good points, with wit, and with a degree of candor that is unusual in a minister addressing an ecclesiastical body of the character of the General synod.

Rev. Dr. David Cole, President of Synod, responded. His response although extemporaneous, was a rare and happy effort. We wish we could give our readers a verbatim report of his remarks. It abounded in love, power and wit. He stated that he was as big a Dutchman as anyone; Dutch blood coursed through his veins and he was proud of it; his children were Dutch and he was glad of it. To meet to-day with General Synod in the city of Holland, the home of so many

Dutchmen, was a happy moment in his existence. He touched, in a masterly manner, matters of great moment to the church and to Hope College. He said that prayers were not needed so much to build up Hope College as were the dollars, and he wished God would open the hearts and the pocket-books of some of the wealthy members of the church who were now among his hearers. He paid the students a compliment in stating that in his several visits to Holland he had observed with admiration their manly earnestness and earnest piety. He paid a warm hearted tribute to Prof. Scott, whom he had ever known and loved, who was among the most esteemed of his friends, and whose administration of the College for several years as acting President, had secured the approbation and thanks of the whole Church. He recalled with affection the fathers who had fallen asleep—Rev. Dr. Van Raalte, Rev. C. Van der Meulen, Rev. R. Pieters and others; he regretted the late secessions from the church, and persuasively pleaded for unity and loyalty, and closed by saying that the true way to take Holland was by "the canons of Dort."

Rev. Dr. Gordon then stepped upon the platform and called loudly for Dr. De Baun, of Fonda, N. Y., who recently was elected President of Hope College. Dr. De Baun stepped forward and was introduced and received with applause.

The exercises at the grove closed with the singing of the Doxology, and the delegates repaired to the City Hotel for dinner. The hosts, the Williams Bros., had prepared an excellent repast and all seemed to enjoy it. A few addresses were delivered during dinner, one of which was answered by Elder C. De Neuville, of Long Island, N. Y. who donated \$500 to Hope College.

After dinner the party took the Macatawa and visited the Park, where an hour was passed enjoying the lake breezes. They were cordially received at the Hotel by Messrs. Bertech & Ryder. The boat returned at 6 p. m., when the delegates all took the train for Grand Rapids, well pleased with their trip to Holland.

*N. B. -
Dr. De Baun
declined
Dr. Scott
elected Pres.*