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### Letter of A. C. V. R. to a Mr. J. I. [G?] Van Heulen

A. C. Van Raalte

Seth Vander Werf

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March 9, 1871

Another letter of ACVR to a Mr. J. I. [G?] Van Heulen, who is seeking ACVR's advice where to settle in America. ACVR advises either Holland, Michigan, or Amelia, Virginia. Since the Van Heulens have ten children, ACVR advises him to buy a farm. ACVR added: "On account of death and continual sickness in the family, I am since one and one half year in Michigan."

Translated by Seth Vander Werf; does the original exist?

Holland Historical Trust, box 1B, folder 42.

LETTER OF DR. A.C.VAN RAALTE  
to Mr. J.I.Van Heulen.

Dated March 9, 1871.

Dear sir and friend:

Gladly I shall enlighten you my convictions in regard to the various settlements-opportunities. Everybody here cries aloud: "Here, here is the place!" Truly, this is a good sign for America. Indeed, with diligent care (whatever noise some make), with the blessing of the Most High, every family can make progress, yet every one is also depending on the growth of the region in which he settles down. (The loud criers in the Newspapers are land-speculators). And every one is welcome in the place in which he makes his home.

In this brief statement I can give only general observations.

In the older settlements the land is high in price, particularly when it is under cultivation. One has to pay often for such prepared land from 50 dollars and upward. In the settlements that are entirely new, one has to struggle several years before the society is developed. It requires an astonishing exertion; this is preferable, unless a person is willing to persevere with a combined multitude in a new enterprise, then such a thing is preferable.

For these reasons estimate that poorly populated regions in the southern states are quite desirable, where one finds Mills, roads railroads, cultivated land, market places etc. Amelia in Virginia is a middle state and is not warm-enough for cotton. The climate is more preferable than in the North-western states. Michigan is the most preferable of the North-west states because this state is surrounded by great lakes. All the Mississippi levels are subjected to terrible extremes and to much snow. The North-west states have brief summers. Virginia, according to general opinion, has a very favorable climate. Except in a couple of months, one can plow on and on.

As a Hollander and as a Christian father, I would also for the sake of the training of youth, choose Holland, Michigan, or Amelia, Virginia. If I compare my own experience, than I am convinced that the emigrants in Amelia are not so subject to sickness as I have very much have observed in the North-west. Concerning Amelia's health conditions I have favorable impressions. It is old, inhabited land, although very scantily settled. The people here had very large farms for their slaves. But slavery is crushed and another kind of life will have to spring up. The need of a doctor, market, etc. is present everywhere. One hour and a half takes you to the large capital Richmond. It costs not very much in freight and travel to reach per steamer the ocean-cities Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, etc.

Therefore one finds high markets in Richmond for one's products; higher than in the west, which is hundreds of miles distant from the large ocean cities. The climate too, is preferable for the cultivation of various products, more so than in the Northwest.

If you should decide to go there, you must try to land in Norfolk or Baltimore. If you should go to Michigan, then go by way of Quebec; the treatment in New York is usually beastly.

Rev. Gilmore in Amelia is my son-in-law. He lives near the Amelia station and has a school there. My children love the Virginia climate. Rev. Huisinga lives in Amelia near the Mattoax station. You might also write to Rev. Huisinga.

The floods in Virginia occurred in the Mountain regions and along the James river, but they never occurred in Amelia. In the state of Virginia it is so orderly and safe, more than in any other state.

That is not so in the more southern states, the Gulf states. Nor in the newer parts of the west; nor in New York.

Your ten children represent a large capital for you. I advise you to undertake cultivation of land.

If you can land in Baltimore at Norfolk, then take along whatever you can pack; at any rate, plenty clothes and bedding. And let the outer garments be made citizen-like. Take also plenty shoes with you; because they are so cheap in the Netherlands.

Buy for your cash money <sup>buy</sup> American State Bonds and let them be hid between the lining of the back.

Whether you will find occupation in Amelia- as to that, my son-in-law, the Reverend Mr. Gilmore, can give you better information.

Only one thing I ask you: do not buy so much land that it puts you in debt and you might not persevere in your undertaking.

Inasmuch as you may not be able to get much information which is founded on experience, I am sending these lines to Mr. Brinks, farmer in Amelia. He has spent there a long time to gather experience. He is also a man who can give wise and trustworthy reply.

On account of death and continual sickness in the family, I am since one and one half year in Michigan.

May the Lord direct your way so as to to the glory of God and temporary and spiritual blessing of yourself and your loved ones may be subservient!

Your friend and servant,

A. C. Van Raalte.

Translated by Seth Vander Werf.

LETTER OF DR. A.C.VAN RAALTE  
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ACVR papers H4T  
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