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10-31-1873

### A Letter from Albertus C. Van Raalte to Philip Phelps

A. C. Van Raalte

Erica D. Heeg

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October 31, 1873

Holland, Michigan

A letter from Albertus C. Van Raalte to Philip Phelps; it informs Phelps that Dr. M. Cohen Stuart is arriving on the last train from Grand Rapids that evening. Cohen Stuart interviewed Van Raalte during this visit. He then wrote up the interview and published it in his book. The interview gives us a very good description of Van Raalte as a person in his later years. The title of Cohen Stuart's book is: *Ses Maanden in Amerika*, published by Kruseman and Tjeenk Willink, Haarlem, the Netherlands, in 1875, pp. 300-323. Cohen Stuart said that, "He is one of those people with whom one cannot associate without becoming richer in spirit and heart, in wisdom and love.

In a note on the back of the letter are comments by Francis Phelps Otte, the daughter of Philip Phelps; she recalls the visit of Cohen Stuart to Holland and claims that Cohen Stuart was Jewish in descent and had come to the U.S. as a delegate to the World's Christian Alliance, which she believed met in Philadelphia. These comments were written in 1947.

In English.

Original in the Van Raalte collection of Hope College, Joint Archives of Holland.

Revd Dr Phelps [*father of Mrs J.A. Otte my parents gave a large Reception for them*]

DB

I am in the receipt of a letter and telegram of Revd Cohen Stuart; Stating that He will be here tonight with the last train from grand rapids. The devision of work He leaves to us.

The grand rapids reception has been very cordial as He writes

yours truly  
AC Van Raalte

Holland Oct 31/73

*He had come to the country as a delegate to the World Christian Alliance, which met I think that year in Phil. Pa.*

*I remember very well this visit of Rev Cohen-Stuart and wife to Holland; when I was a child.*

*He was a converted Jew; He wife was an English lady.*

*According to the custom of Dutch aristocratic family—the mans name is always joined to that of his wife's family name.*

*Cohen= Dutch Jewish name*

*Stuart=English wifes family name*

*An interesting pass is that the wifes name comes last. Now in the year 1947 we know Mr deJony? Schouvenberg. He did not marry, but that was the name of his grandparents & parents. This custom still ? in ? & also in England.*

Rev. Coker Stuart West & Co

89 1/2

Rev. Dr Phelps (father of Mrs. J. A. Phelps)

Herpenmen-ship

DB my parents gave a large Reception for them.

I am in the receipt of a letter and telegram of Rev. Coker Stuart; stating that he will be here to night with the last train from Grand Rapids. All devices of work he leaves to us.

The Grand Rapids reception has been very cordial as he writes

Yours truly

Holland Oct 31/73.

A. Van Rente

Oct. 31<sup>st</sup>

1873

over

He had come to this country as  
a delegate to the World Peace  
Christian Alliance, which met  
I think that year in Philadelphia.

I remember very  
well this visit of  
Pastor Cohen-Stuart  
and wife  
to Holland, when I was  
a child.

He was a converted  
Jew. His wife was  
an English lady.

According to the custom  
of Dutch aristocratic  
families - the name  
is always joined to that of  
his wife's family name.

Cohen = Dutch Jewish name,  
Stuart = English wife's family  
name - an interesting part  
is that the wife's name comes  
last. Now in the year 1944  
we know - Mr de Jong Schouwen-  
berg. He did not marry, but  
that was the name of his  
grandparents & parents.  
This custom still prevails in Holland  
& also in England.

1947

October 31, 1873

Holland, Michigan

A letter of Albertus C. Van Raalte to Philip Phelps, informing Phelps that Dr. M. Cohen Stuart is arriving on the last train from Grand Rapids that evening. Cohen Stuart interviewed Van Raalte during this visit which he then wrote up and published in his book. The interview gives us a very good description of Van Raalte as a person in his later years. The title of Cohen Stuart's book is: *Ses Maanden in Amerika*, which was published by Kruseman and Tjeenk Willink, Haarlem, the Netherlands, in 1875, pp. 300-323. Cohen Stuart said that "He is one of those people with whom one cannot associate without becoming richer in spirit and heart, in wisdom and love.

In a note on the back of the letter are comments by Francis Phelps Otte, the daughter of Philip Phelps, who recalls the visit of Cohen Stuart to Holland. She claims that Cohen Stuart was Jewish in descent, had come to the US as a delegate to the World's Christian Alliance which she believed met in Philadelphia. These comments were written in 1947.

In English.

Original in the Van Raalte collection of Hope College, Joint Archives of Holland.

Rev. Coker Stewart Windsor

89 1/2

Rev. Dr Phelps (brother of  
Mrs. J. A. Allen)

Herpenmen  
ship

DB my Parents gave a  
large Reception  
for them.

I am in the receipt of  
a letter and telegram of Rev.  
Coker Stewart; stating that  
He will be here to night  
with the last train from Grand-  
Rapids. The division of work  
He leaves to us.

The Grand Rapids reception  
has been very cordial as He  
writes

Yours truly

Holland Oct 31/73.

A. Van Rhee

Oct. 31<sup>st</sup>

1873

over

He had come to this country as  
a delegate to the World Post  
Christian Alliance, which met  
I think that year in Chile Pa.

I remember very  
well this visit of  
Rev. Cohen-Stuart  
and wife  
to Holland, when I was  
a child.

He was a converted  
Jew. His wife was  
an English lady.

According to the custom  
of Dutch aristocratic  
families - the name  
is always joined to that of  
his wife's family name.

Cohen = Dutch Jewish name,  
Stuart = English wife's family  
name - an interesting part  
is that the wife's name comes  
last. Now in the year 1947  
we know - Mr. de Jong Schouwen-  
berg. He did not marry, but  
that was the name of his  
grandparents & parents.  
This custom still prevails in both  
also in England.

1947



73-10-31 [GS89 ½]

Revd Dr Phelps

D[ear] B[rother]

I am in the receipt of a letter and telegram<sup>1</sup> of Revd Cohen Stuart:<sup>2</sup>  
Stating that He will be here to night with the last train from Grand rapids. The devision  
of work He leaves to us. –

The Grandrapids reception has been very cordial as He writes

yours truly

Holland Oct 31/73

A C. Van Raalte

[On the back of this letter, Frances Phelps Otte appended this note in 1947:

He had come to this country as a delegate to the World's Christian Alliance, which met I  
think that year in Phil. Pa.

I remember very well this visit of Rev. Cohen-Stuart and wife<sup>3</sup> to Holland when I  
was a child.

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<sup>1</sup> Better communication possibilities in Holland, Michigan, came with the arrival of the railroads in 1870. Telegraph service was now available.

<sup>2</sup> Martinus Cohen Stuart (1824-1878) was of Jewish descent and converted to Christianity. His maternal grandfather was Martinus Stuart, a minister in the Remonstrant Church. M. Cohen Stuart was also a minister in this church and served congregations in Zevenhuizen, Alkmaar, Utrecht and Rotterdam. He was apparently well known in Reformed circles that when he came to America in the fall of 1873, he received an honorary degree from Rutgers College. His specific reason for coming to America was to attend the conference of the Evangelical Alliance held that year in Philadelphia. In America, he took this opportunity to visit many Dutch American settlements such as Holland. *Christelijke Encyclopaedie voor het Nederlandsche Volk*, compiled by F. W. Grosheide, J. H. Landwehr, C. Lindeboom, and J. C. Rullman (Kampen: J. H. Kok, [1929]), 317-318. Cohen Stuart published an account of his trip to America: *Zes Maanden in Amerika, met Platen en Vignetten*, 2 vols, (Haarlem: Kruseman & Tjeenk Willink, 1875. In his account of his visit to Holland, he was charmed by Van Raalte who played the cordial host. Cohen Stuart described Van Raalte as a person "whose appearance already demands attention. He is not an ordinary, everyday person. Small of stature, he has an upright posture, and at the same time he is determined and lively in all his movements. The first thing one notices is something martial in his whole being. The alert and decisive gestures, the expression of determination in his small but vivid eyes, and the shape of his somewhat nervous mouth, the commanding and somewhat wrinkled forehead, the moustache and pointed beard all give him the expression of a pensioned general rather than of a retired minister." (302). Translation by Harry Boonstra.

<sup>3</sup> In Cohen Stuart's account of his visit to Holland, there is no mention of his wife being with him. However, his wife did come to America with him. *The Christian Intelligencer*, 10 February 1876.

He was a converted Jew. His wife was an English lady.

According to the custom of Dutch aristocratic family's – the man's name is always joined to that of his wife's family name.<sup>4</sup>

Cohen=Dutch Jewish name

Stuart=English wife's family name – an interesting fact is that the wife's name comes last. Now in the year 1947 we know – Mr. de Jong Schouwenberg. He did not marry, but that was the name of his grandparents & parent's. This custom still prevails in [the] Neth & also in England.]

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<sup>4</sup> Mrs. Otte is mistaken here. The Stuart part of Cohen Stuart's name came from his mother's family. *Christelijke Encyclopaedie...*, 317.

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