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Letter from Hendrik P. Scholte to a Mr. J. Hospers

Hendrik P. Scholte

Walter Lagerwey

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Recommended Citation

Scholte, Hendrik P. and Lagerwey, Walter, "Letter from Hendrik P. Scholte to a Mr. J. Hospers" (1847). *Van Raalte Papers: 1840-1849*. 207.

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7 June 1847

Utrecht, the Netherlands

A letter of Rev. Hendrik P. Scholte to a Mr. J. Hospers at Hoog Blokland, the Netherlands, saying that Albertus C. Van Raalte made an unfortunate choice by going to Michigan. "In his efforts to get people to go there *van Raalte* has already become thoroughly American."

Scholte also said: "The Dutch Reformed [Church] have been after me to join their Synod. I told them that I was not so inclined, because I cannot agree with the Synodical system. I think *van Raalte* will. In that case he will very likely receive an annual stipend of \$100."

In Dutch; translated by Dr. Walter Lagerwey.

Original in the archives of Central College, Pella, Iowa. Published in *Amsterdamse Emigranten onbekende brieven uit de prairie van Iowa 1846-1873*, by J. Stellingwerff, Amsterdam, 1975, pp. 77-79.

also see May 14, 1847



HOPE COLLEGE

PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH COMMITTEE
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after a voyage of 44 days from N[ieuwe] Diep. Most of those [with us] here had had a longer voyage. Now for a walk about town, but was it ever busy! We saw a large steamboat --it was beautiful to see, but the most beautiful thing was to see Bibles, property of the boat, lying on several tables for the use of the various passengers. And Reverend van Raalte did not exaggerate when he wrote about the city of New York, you just have to see it. Rev. de Wit was not in town. We did not find Neunder at home either. May 20. Tonight Rev. Scholte will be preaching in the church here in Dutch. Rev. van Raalte also was in the city 12 days ago. I think that we will leave tomorrow, the 21st, by steamboat for St. Louis. Things were very good aboard ship. I will write again and in greater detail when we have reached our destination in the land on which we have now set foot, and where we shall establish ourselves, and which to our eyes is so full of promise. Remember us and pray to the Lord with us, that His Face may shine upon us and go with us. We have very much to be thankful for and great needs in body and soul. May the Lord remain your and our refuge at all times. Warmest greetings from us all. We thank you for all the love you have shown us. The Lord reward it richly, His promises are sure. Give greetings to your Wife and children, and Jan will write them later. Greet your brother D, and greet our society [friends]. Remember us. Greet my brothers and sisters and tell them to communicate the message of our well being till now, first of all those in East Friesland. I shall write them later. Fare well, the Lord of Peace be with you and your household. Also the society in our house. We continue to remember you always. And remain your loving Brother, bound in Christ. D. A. Budde.

P.S. Jan spoke to Portenge - greetings - and is thinking of leaving again in a few days.

Letter from Scholte enclosed.

pp. 77-79

To J. Hospers at Hoog-Blokland
Utrecht, June 7, 1847

Esteemed Friend! Knowing of your interest in the experiences of the Brethren who have left, I have taken it upon myself to enclose the following copy of a letter by our Brother Scholte to be forwarded to Mr. A. A. Schuijt.

New York, May 14, 1847

Beloved friend and brother in the Lord,

Earlier this week, I wrote you in great haste about our safe arrival on the steamboat *Sarah Sand*. Since my family is staying with Mr. Norton in Connecticut, and I am here all alone this week, I have been able to devote all my time to check out everything as much as possible. So far I am confirmed in my conviction that Iowa and a part of Illinois will be most suitable for us, and that van Raalte has made an unfortunate choice. In Albany as well as in New York the general opinion is that things will turn out very bad in the end. In Michigan they are doing everything possible to attract settlers, you can even acquire land from private individuals for less than the government price. In his efforts to get people to go there van Raalte has already become thoroughly American. I hope I am never that persistent, and in my opinion a good place for a

settlement does not commend itself so much by telling the people what could be done there, but rather by what already has been done, and is presently being done. Good locations get populated very rapidly as soon as there is a settlement. The land in Illinois, about which I had been informed already in Holland, belongs to one of the professors of the "Nieuwuijksche College"; the land is located in La Salle County, a very favorable location, but if no additional land can be obtained, it will not be sufficient for us. In Iowa we can get all the land we need in the neighborhood of *Kircuk*. Mr. Norton has this land at his disposal. I have already looked into several offerings which I have had to reject because they are not well located or unsuited for us. In any event, nothing can be bought until a personal inspection has been made, on site. Personally I make notes on everything that looks good in the description. Not one of our ships has arrived yet. Yesterday I signed a contract for the journey inland, 13 dollars per person above [age] 12; 6 ½ dollars for [ages] 4 to 12, and below 4 they go free. Above 12 years you get 100 pounds of free luggage, between 4 and 12, half of that. For everything else, 2 dollars per 100 pounds. If there is not enough water at Pittsburg, then the route via Baltimore is the same price. Baltimore would be a good place to land, if there were always enough water in Pittsburg, but that is not always the case. That is why I must hereafter always have to recommend New York as the landing site for ordinary passengers, and when the season is suitable, New Orleans. From there travel inland is cheapest, and also easiest. Our brethren in St. Louis are very satisfied and enjoy much respect and esteem there. During the annual general assembly of the [Dutch Reformed] Churches, I met many ministers, also *Baird*, known among us for his writings. The Dutch Reformed have been after me to join their Synod. I told them that I was not so inclined, because I cannot agree with the Synodical system. I think *van Raalte* will. In that case he will very likely receive an annual stipend of \$100. I do not intend, however, to make any hasty decisions, for that has been the misfortune of many in America. I would rather have some extra expenses in the beginning, than to have to break off what you have begun. The churches here are all excellent, and the singing is glorious, but I would not like to be permanently settled in one of the big cities. You really do not enjoy life there; it's all too busy and too harried. Quite generally the war with Mexico is not approved here despite the victories over the Mexican army. The Holland Society for the protection of immigrants from the Netherlands pleases me very much. Mr. Wambersie has received the relevant documents. They have already been discussing [the possibility] of shipping cargo on ships going from here to the Netherlands and then to bring back emigrants cheaply, *very likely* for as little as fl. 30 per person. It will be more difficult for Dutch ships when the new law, which reduces the number of passengers a ship may carry, goes into effect on May 31st. In Iowa the elections for new state officials have been completed, and from what I hear, very good people have been elected. The people of Iowa by a large majority have voted against permitting places for the sale of strong drinks. The example of the people of that state is being widely praised; in this regard they are an example to the entire nation. This is regarded as proof of the higher morality and virtue of that state; for nowhere else have they achieved such results. As soon as I have had a closer look at things, and investigated them, I will write a letter of more general interest, to be published for the Netherlands public. It still is my judgment that no more of our acquaintances should come over this summer, unless it be for urgent reasons. Traveling via New Orleans will be better in the fall, for by then we can be settled and receive more people. I just now recall that because I was so very busy during those last few

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days in Holland, I forgot to take care of a few minor financial matters, for example, settling an account with Roering in The Hague. If anything should come to your attention regarding this, then please address everything to my nephew in Amsterdam; I'm sure that he will write me, at which time I can arrange for payment. I have deposited the money I had with me in a bank in New York, and opened an account there. The president and the cashier of the bank are proven Christians. I have not looked into the other financial matters as yet, very likely I will do that today or next week and let you know about that afterwards. There are very good and safe securities here for investment purposes. I have also met Mr. Buys from Amsterdam, and got the impression that he did not take any treasures along with him, for he has practically nothing left. But I do not know where his family is. Tomorrow I hope to go to Connecticut in order to get my family, which is now staying with Mr. Norton, and bring them here, and then go on to the West. I have experienced much friendliness, much cordiality and esteem here, very different from the Netherlands. There people avoided me, here they ask for me. Till now, nothing has disappointed me; on the contrary, I thank God that he has led me here. I hope that many of my Christian friends in the Netherlands will come and join me in tasting the fruits of genuine freedom. After we get a fairly large settlement in the West, we will soon have considerable influence there, for we are highly regarded in this land. Learning the English language is however a first requisite, make sure that everyone is serious about that. Time does not permit me to write all the brethren in Holland, see to it that this letter is read in Amsterdam, Leiden, and Arnhem and do request that all interested persons be informed about its contents. My sincere greetings in Christ to all brothers and sisters, I always remember them all in my prayers. The Lord grant them grace to remain faithful and clarity about the way they should go. Greet especially all the members of your household, on another occasion I shall write them. Remember me in prayer; believe me, I am your loving friend and brother in Christ.

H. P. Scholte

I do not doubt that you will rejoice with me in my safe arrival, and all I have experienced; be so kind to share this with all interested persons. I am, after giving you greetings from Maasdam,

Your Friend,
D. Chabot.

dr J. Stellingwerff

AMSTERDAMSE
EMIGRANTEN

*onbekende brieven uit de prairie van Iowa
1846-1873*

met een voorwoord van drs. H. A. Höweler



BUIJTEN & SCHIPPERHEIJN — AMSTERDAM — 1975

Amsterdamse Emigranten

Edited by J. Stellingwerff

Pages 65-79

Translated by Walter Lagerwey