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A Petition to the Senate and House of Representatives for the, "Improvement of the Outlet of North Black Lake," Near the Holland Colony.

A. C. Van Raalte

Vander Sling

A. VerHorse

T. Schrader

B. Grotenhuis

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Recommended Citation

Van Raalte, A. C.; Vander Sling; VerHorse, A.; Schrader, T.; Grotenhuis, B.; and Binnekant, J., "A Petition to the Senate and House of Representatives for the, "Improvement of the Outlet of North Black Lake," Near the Holland Colony." (1849). *Van Raalte Papers: 1840-1849*. 227.

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Authors

A. C. Van Raalte, Vander Sling, A. VerHorse, T. Schrader, B. Grotenhuis, and J. Binnekant

December 12, 1849

A petition to the Senate and House of Representatives for the "improvement of the outlet of North Black Lake" near the Holland Colony. "Not less than 5,000 souls have landed on the shores of Michigan, and most of them are now comfortably settled in their homes....The past season, we have been blessed with abundant harvests, and our people have already begun to develop the rich resources of the land of our adoption....There are now within our limits, two water Saw Mills, one steam Saw Mill, and one wind Saw Mill; three custom grinding mills, one ashery and soap and candle manufactory, one tannery, one brick yard, and one boat yard. We have eight places of worship, and eight schools, four of them taught by American teachers....A charter for the proposed plank road has already been secured,..." The petitioners are A. C. Van Raalte, Vander Sling, A. Ver Horse, T. Schrader, B. Grotenhuis, and J. Binnekant.

Original in the Archives of the Holland Historical Trust
Collection of the Joint Archives of Holland, T88-230.

TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~

We beg to present to the Honorable the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States, in connection with our petition for the improvement of the outlet of North Black Lake, the following sketch of the origin and progress of the settlements on Black River, usually known as "The Holland Colony".

In 1847, one of our Clergymen visited the United States for the purpose of finding for himself and his friends a new home, where they might enjoy more civil and religious freedom than was allowed them in their father-land, and escape the crushing weight of taxation, by which the bankrupt nations of Europe are now compelled to sustain themselves.

After much consideration, he was induced, by the great natural advantages of the Black River Country, to select it as the gathering place and future home of the people. He found it an unbroken wilderness. From its insular position, presenting insurmountable difficulties in the way of any other than a large company or association of Emigrants, its fertile lands had remained unsold.

Since that time, many Clergymen have removed their Churches almost entire, into the new refuge. Not less than 5,000 souls have landed on the shores of Michigan, and most of them are now comfortably settled in their new homes.

They have suffered many hardships and privations, and prophets of evil have forewarned of the destruction of the settlement; but God, who rules all things, and whose care is over all, has decreed otherwise, and by His blessing, we can now say that there is no longer a doubt of the permanence and prosperity of the Colony. The past season, we have been ^{sed} blessed with abundant harvests, and our people have already begun to develop the rich resources of the land of our adoption.

~~9~~

Although the hazards of navigation to our Lake, are so great as to burden us with enormous comparative rates of freight, we are already an exporting people. On the opposite shore of Lake Michigan, we find an unlimited demand for the rich products of our forests, and already the news of our prosperity is stirring up untold thousands of our countrymen to follow us to share in the rich blessings which have rewarded our toils and privations.

Black Lake, or Lake Macatawa, extends from Lake Michigan about six miles inland, with an average depth of at least 20 feet, and its least channel depth is 12 feet. At its head, is the village of Holland, which has grown up to meet the demands of the farming country for a market and outlet.

There are now within our limits, two water Saw Mills, one steam Saw Mill, and one wind Saw Mill; three custom grinding mills, one ashery and soap and candle manufactory, one tannery, one brick yard, and one beat yard. We have eight places of worship, and eight schools, four of them taught by American teachers.

Aside from its vital importance to the future growth and prosperity of our colony, the construction of a secure harbor, by removing the bar at the outlet of our Lake, will have an important bearing upon the interests of our neighbors upon the opposite shore of Lake Michigan.

By reference to the map, it will readily be seen, that were a communication opened between Kalamazoo and the head of Black Lake, it would be far the most direct route between the Michigan Central Railroad and Southport, Racine, Milwaukee and Sheboygan. The respective distances on the routes now travelled are as follows:

Via New Buffalo and Chicago, from Detroit to New Buffalo,	218	miles.
New Buffalo to Chicago, by steam,	45	"
Chicago to Milwaukee.....	80	"
	<u>343</u>	

~~SB~~

By Grand Rapids--Detroit to Battle Creek, Railroad.....	122 miles
Battle Creek to Grand rapids, Stage,.....	64 "
Grand Rapids to Grand Haven, River steamboat.....	40 "
Grand Haven to Milwaukie, Steam,	85 1/2 "
	<u>311 1/2</u>
<u>Distance by way of Kalamazoo and Black Lake.</u>	
Detroit to Kalamazoo, Railroad,	143 miles
Kalamazoo to Black Lake,	48 "
Black Lake to Milwaukie, (including length of Black Lake)	90 "
	<u>281</u>

Showing a difference in its favor over the Grand Rapids route of 30 1/2 miles, while it could be travelled much faster, were a plank road constructed from Kalamazoo to Black Lake. On the other route, is sixty-four miles staging, over common roads, then forty miles of river navigation, where great speed cannot safely be attempted.

The difference of distance between this and the New Buffalo route is still greater, 77 miles.

A charter for the proposed plank road has already been secured, and we have assurances that, should the obstruction be removed from the outlet of our Lake, the stock would readily be taken, and the work completed at an early day.

We beg to refer you to the report of the Survey of Black Lake, made during the past summer, by a corps of U.S. engineers, for information with regard to the feasibility of making Black Lake one of the safest, most accessible and capacious harbors on the whole chain of Lakes. As regards its natural advantages, we only desire that they may be seen, feeling confident and willing to abide the judgment of your Honorable bodies.

With much respect, on behalf of your petitioners,

we subscribe ourselves,

A.C.VAN RAALTE,	T.SCHRADER
VANDER SLING.	B.GEOTENHUIS, Committee
A. VER HORST,	J. BINNEKANT,

Holland, Ottawa, Michigan, 12 December, 1849.

Dec. 12, 1849

Petition

TO: US CONGRESS

FROM: AC Van Raalte
Vander Slings
Vier Horst
Schrader
Geo Tanhuis
Binne Kant

} Committee

Petition to Congress giving the reasons why the Colony was established, and why the crucial need for a usable harbor was essential for the vitality of the future.

Gives numerical advantage of creating a better "highway" from Detroit to Milwaukee by way of Lake Michigan rather than around Chicago: 343 miles to 281 miles.

Refers to the report of the survey of Black Lake by the US engineers,

"Feasibility of making Black Lake one of the safest, most accessible and capacious harbors on the whole chain of Lakes."

Committee

have, of course, already occurred in response to scientific advance. Darwinism presented a crisis for literal religionists, as Copernicus had for medieval theology. But these shifts left it possible to retain the essential moral foundations of human responses to human beings; agnostic humanism is at one with revealed religion in its stress on humility and mystery, and the intrinsic human worth that emerges from these avowals of self-limitation. Indeed, as knowledge has grown the horizons of the still unknown have kept receding.

The issue is not whether the search for knowledge should be curtailed; that way darkness lies. The issue is rather whether individual human beings should be constructed with a set of pre-ordained traits, and indeed whether an indefinite number of such identical products should be engineered. This is an issue that transcends scientific freedom, the freedom to inquire and to know, since it can determine for future generations the very capacity and the will to know, no less than the possession of other traits of thought and feeling that we regard as the essence of the human. At whatever council table such an issue is decided, there should be spokesmen for the future generations in whose behalf we would be purporting to act, spokesmen like the guardian appointed by a court to represent unborn heirs or infant claimants.

Negative Eugenics

More modest proposals, for negative eugenics,

interests of the child cannot be finally willed away by the parents. There are a number of cases where a hospital, seeking instructions from a court in such a situation, has been ordered to perform an operation over parental objection based, for example, on religious scruples against blood transfusion. Those cases, to be sure, did not present the issue of a mongoloid child; but the doctors' position here professed to be based on a general principle of law. Likewise the parents' decision seems to have been based on the assumption of home care, without adequate exploration of the alternative of institutional care (and its costs). In short, there was lacking any forum where all the interests and possibilities could be explored. When it was suggested in the symposium that a hearing in court should have been arranged, with a guardian appointed to represent the child, objection was voiced that lawyers and judges are not experts in Downs syndrome. That, of course, misses the point, namely that the experts should have their full say and that a disinterested arbiter, taking account of the experts' testimony and also of moral standards of judgment, should make the ultimate decision.

Moral Standards

What are these moral standards? They are not purely private; they can be educed by reasoning from analogy. Is it legitimate to put another human being to death in order to make life more comfortable, psychologically and economically, for the sur-

Grace Fatten H guidereg

A Plugger

W. Schuleren

S. Ferriebe

L. Howard

C. Daffe

W. Floetstra

K. Schudelebe

P.

H.D. Post

John Roost

H. Entema

Bergema

G. Vorhorst

Y. Bolks

J. Garvelink

H. Vanbanfen

L. Schackele

Al. Van Raalte - Amg

J. Roost Clerk

glorifies the will-to-power. In Hobbes a political vantage point against individual egotism is gained but none against the collective egotism, embodied in the state. In Nietzsche's transvaluation of values, the characteristics of human life which make for conflict between life and life are raised to the eminence of the ideal. The fateful consequences in contemporary political life of Hobbes's cynicism and Nietzsche's nihilism are everywhere apparent. . . .

Abraham Heschel

Sacred Image of Man

. . . There are many questions about man which have often been raised. What is his nature? Why is he mortal? None of these issues is central biblical thinking.

The problem that challenged the biblical mind was not the obscurity of man's nature but the paradox of his existence. The starting point was not a question about man but the distinction of man; not the state of ignorance about the nature of man but rather a state of amazement at what we know about man, namely: Why is man so significant in spite of his insignificance? Not the question, Why is man mortal? But the question, Why is he so distinguished?

The problem that challenged the biblical mind was not man in and by himself. Man is never seen in isolation but always in relation to God who is the Creator, the King, and the Judge of all beings. The problem of man revolved around God's relation to man.

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