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### In the Autobiography of Ray Nies (1877-1950), There is the Story That the Rev. Albertus C. Van Raalte Had Invited His Father Over for Dinner

Ray Niles

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c. 1865

Holland, Michigan

In the autobiography of Ray Nies (1877-1950), there is the story that the Rev. Albertus C. Van Raalte had invited his father over for dinner. Father Nies demurred saying he did not have clothes good enough to wear to the Van Raalte home. Van Raalte insisted and Nies attended a dinner there. After the blessing and before food was partaken, Van Raalte reportedly said that Nies had provided food for the Van Raalte sons on a battlefied after a big battle. Dirk and Ben were hungry and Nies had divided what food he had with the Van Raalte sons. The dinner was in honor of Nies who had provided for the sons.

Chapter one, page 8. Original in the archives of the Holland Museum.

ed repeatedly in many peoples' lives, and that is, that when a young man has no work and desires it, he had better not wait too long to get the exact kind of work he thinks he is best fitted for or that he studied at school for. That kind of a job may be disastrously slow in coming. On the contrary he had best take the very first job offered of any kind of honest work that he can do, and start from there, do his very best, and then the kind of work he likes better, and that he is specially fitted for is somehow likely to come his way, and with it some degree of success and satisfaction. A job climbing poles and stringing wires for a young graduate electrical engineer is better by far than no job at all for it is at least a start.

Perhaps I should mention here that just before Father got this mule driving job, he was working one day in a field on the homestead, when the good "Dominie" Van Raalte, the great leader and founder of "De Kolonie" (the Dutch colony) came driving down the road and stopped at the farm. The Dominie walked over to Father, shook hands, and asked him to come over to the parsonage for dinner that evening.

Father could not imagine why he should have the high honor to be invited to a dinner at the parsonage, and declined with the utmost politeness, saying that he had no clothes fit for such an occasion, -the only suit of clothes he had he was wearing right then, and they were hardly fit for wearing to a dinner at the parsonage, etc. etc. The Dominie, however, insisted, and Father finally consented wonderingingly.

When he got there the table was beautifully set, loaded down with many kinds of delicacies. After asking the blessing, and before they began to eat, the Dominie said "Jan, this dinner is in your honor. When you were in the war you happened to meet my two sons on a battle-field right after a big battle. They had had very little to eat for days, and were starving, and you divided what little food you had remaining in your haversack with them. This dinner is but a small testimonial or return for what you did for them". His two sons were not in Father's regiment. Father had entirely forgotten all about that incident on the battle-field, but the Dominie had not, and this bountiful feast given him was one he never forgot.

Father kept his mule driving job for some time, earning good wages for those days. Was he not a good mule driver? He had

T88-0138 Nics

Autobiography of Ray Nics  
(1877-1950)

Written 1930's?

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