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Meeting Minutes of the Classis of Holland

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25 August 1869

Holland, Michigan

At a special meeting of the Classis of Holland, Dr. Albertus C. Van Raalte was elected president pro tem in the absence of Rev. A. Cz. Kuijper. Van Raalte requested Classis to approve the organization of three congregations in Amelia, Virginia. Classis approved.

In Dutch; translation by William and Althea Buursma. Annotation by Dr. William Kennedy.

Original in the archives of Western Theological Seminary at the Joint Archives of Holland at Hope College.

CLASSIS HOLLAND

A special meeting of Classis Holland was held on August 25, 1869, in the church building of the First Reformed Church of Holland.

Rev. A. Cz. Kuijper, the president of the classis, not being present, Dr. A. C. van Raalte was appointed to serve as president pro tem and as such opened the meeting with prayer.

The reason for this special meeting of classis was to discuss the organization of congregations in the new colony of Dr. Van Raalte in Virginia.

The Rev. spoke favorably about the field of labor in the South, and let his desire be known that the Dutch families who have settled there be organized by this classis into congregations. This should take place in three separate places.

It was decided to grant this request, and Rev. Bolks, who is traveling on behalf of the school, was appointed by classis as a committee to organize three congregations in Virginia among the Hollanders who have recently arrived there.

Furthermore, it was decided that in each congregation, under the supervision of the Classis of Holland, a collection will be taken twice annually for the support of this missionary

post in Virginia. prayer.²³⁵

The meeting was closed with prayer by Rev. D. Broek.

E. Chr. Oggel,
Stated Clerk

²³⁵ Van Raalte had just come back from Amelia County, Virginia, with this request to organize three congregations there. The Rev. Seine Bolks, a Van Raalte protégé, would visit the area to set up the churches. Also, the Rev. Anson Du Bois from New York, as well as the Rev. William B. Gilmore (Van Raalte's son-in-law) and the Rev. John Huizinga (who co-labored with and succeeded Gilmore) would carry on the educational and pastoral work there for a few years. But Van Raalte himself never ministered in Amelia County again, even if he may have made a short business visit there about the end of November 1869. His failing energies were further sapped by the deaths of his son-in-law P. J. Oggel in December 1869 and of his wife in June 1871, as well as the Holland fire in October 1871. In any case, only one of the three congregations in Amelia County was viable, and it only continued an anemic existence in the RCA until 1884, when it became Presbyterian. Jacobson, Bruins, and Wagenaar, *Van Raalte*, 161-162, 166-167; Van Hinte, *Netherlanders in America*, 531-534; Dosker, *Van Raalte*, 292-294. Van Hinte, following Dosker (who cites these minutes of the classis), reports that Van Raalte asked that four congregations be established, but Dosker obviously misread the minutes. A suggestive but perhaps not entirely fair contrast has been made between the failed daughter colony of Van Raalte in Virginia and the successful daughter colony of Pella in Orange City, Sioux County, Iowa, begun the following year (1870); Van Hinte, *Netherlanders in America*, 523. See notes 237, 244, and 245 below.