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Abstract

The majority of this collection surrounds the John H. Kleinheksel and Anna Sophia Van Raalte family. Anna Sophia was the youngest daughter of Holland founder, Rev. Albertus Christiaan Van Raalte. She married John H. Kleinheksel from Fillmore Township. He was the head of the mathematics department and a professor at Hope College, along with being vice president of Hope College until his death in 1916. John was director of the Peoples State Bank and Sunday school superintendent of Hope Church. Also included in the collection is correspondence of Gerrit J Diekema and John B. Nykerk, both renowned in the Hope College community. There are additional documents pertaining to the life of Frank De Moen Kleinheksel, Helena Pieters Kleinheksel, Gretchen Ann Kleinheksel, Delia Ossewaarde Kleinheksel, Albertus C. Van Raalte and family, Albertus C. Van Raalte Gilmore and Clarence J. Lokker. Materials include photographs, correspondence, lineage records, obituary and funeral records, marriage services, baptism service, military correspondence, and warranty deeds. Additional documents pertaining to Clarence J. Lokker’s biographical information have been added. Photographs within this collection show John H. Kleinheksel, Anna Sophia Van Raalte Kleinheksel, Paul Edwin Kleinheksel, Anna Vera Kleinheksel, Frank De Moen Kleinheksel, John Lewis Kleinheksel, Gerrit J. Kollen, Maria (Mary) Wilhelmina Van Raalte, and additional members of the Van Raalte family and its descendants. Additional collections of interest include Elizabeth Van Burk Lokker (H05-1584.5) and Irene Reidsma (H01-1426).

Accession No: H13-1851
Provenance: Ruth Dunn Kleinheksel, Kleinheksel Family, Van Raalte Family, Gerrit J. Diekema, John B. Nykerk
Donor: Janice Van Lente
Photographs: 15 images
Processed by: Justine Bailey, January 2014

Biography

Rev. Albertus Christiaan Van Raalte, founder of Holland, was born October 17, 1811, in Wanneperveen in the Dutch province of Overijssel. On March 11, 1836, Rev. A. C. Van Raalte married Christina Johanna de Moen. She was born January 30, 1815, in Leiden. Eleven children were born out of this marriage, while only seven survived into adulthood. Of the seven children, their three youngest daughters are related to this collection—Christina Catharina, Maria Wilhelmina, and Anna Sophia.

Christina Catharina Van Raalte Gilmore was born on March 30, 1846, and died April 12, 1933. She married William Brokaw Gilmore on July 14, 1869. He was born April 12, 1834, and died April 24, 1884. Christina and William had four children, all died in early childhood except Albertus C. Van Raalte Gilmore.

Albertus C. Van Raalte Gilmore was born April 4 1870, in Virginia and died January 24, 1955, in Zeeland, Michigan. He was a graduate of the University of Michigan Dental School, organized Hope Church’s first chorus choir in 1899, and joined the Holland Chapter of the
Michigan Society of the Sons of the Revolution. A.C.V.R. Gilmore did not marry or have any children and is buried alongside his parents and siblings at Pilgrim Home Cemetery.

Maria (Mary) Wilhelmina Van Raalte was born September 14, 1850, and died March 16, 1905. On December 24, 1879, Mary married Gerrit Jan Kollen. He was born August 9, 1843, and died September 5, 1915. Gerrit was elected the third president of Hope College in 1893 and served until 1911. Mary and Gerrit had one daughter, Estelle Marie Kollen.

Anna Sophia Van Raalte was born on July 27, 1856, and died February 23, 1914. On August 19, 1884, Anna married John Henry Kleinheksel in Holland, Michigan. John, the son of Mannes Kleinheksel and Hendrika Beltman, was born March 3, 1854, and died June 11, 1916. Both of John’s parents immigrated to Fillmore Township from the Netherlands. Shortly after John was born, his mother died. John’s father, Mannes Kleinheksel got remarried to Zwiertje Veldhuis, a widow with two children. John graduated from Hope College in 1878. He became a professor and head of the mathematics department from 1885 until 1916 and served as vice president of Hope College under Gerrit J. Kollen, until his death. John was also director at the Peoples State Bank. Anna and John had four children together—Paul Edwin, Anna Vera, Frank De Molen, and John Lewis.

Paul Edwin Kleinheksel was born on June 16, 1885, and died on August 31, 1956, while driving between Chicago and Holland to visit relatives. He married Dorothy Gray on October 2, 1915, and together they had three children. Paul was a 1907 graduate of Hope College and worked as an investment broker in Chicago.

Anna Vera Kleinheksel was born February 20, 1889, and died shortly before her 21st birthday on February 2, 1910. She was attending Hope College prior to her death. Anna was never married and is buried alongside her parents at Pilgrim Home Cemetery.

Frank De Molen Kleinheksel was born April 5, 1892, and died July 6, 1973. He graduated from Hope College in 1913 and worked as Muskegon Office Manager and then Branch Manager in Flint, Michigan, for the Holland Furnace Company. On July 12, 1916, Frank Married Helena (Helen) Pieters in Kalamazoo Michigan. Helen, the daughter of John A. Pieters and Grada (Maggie) Boone was born on October 14, 1892, and died November 30, 1934, of a brain tumor. Helen attended Hope College and graduated from Chicago School of Physical Education in 1914. Frank and Helen had two children, John Henry and Gretchen Ann.

On September 19, 1935, in Oak Park, Illinois, Frank married his second wife Delia Ossewaarde. Delia was born on August 26, 1892, in Zeeland, Michigan, and died of carbon monoxide poisoning on January 12, 1955. She was a graduate of the class of 1913 at Hope College and worked as a teacher in Grand Rapids, Michigan, prior to her marriage. Delia was active in civic affairs while living in Flint, Michigan, and was the director of the Flint Community Chest and the Child Welfare Society.

Frank married his third wife, Ruth Dunn, on December 1, 1955, and lived in Holland until his death in 1973.

Frank and Helen’s daughter, Gretchen Ann Kleinheksel, was born October 29, 1924, in Flint, Michigan. She first married Robert Cagel. Her second marriage was to Larry W. McCrady on December 22, 1964. Gretchen did not have any children.

John Lewis Kleinheksel, the youngest son of John and Anna Kleinheksel, was born on July 11, 1896, and died November 30, 1963. John was only 19 years old when his father died, so close family friend, Gerrit J. Diekema, was appointed his guardian. John served in WWI during 1918-1919, graduated from University of Michigan in 1920 and University of Michigan Medical School in 1924, and was also a graduate of Hope College in 1923. He married Geraldine (Jerry)
Maude Sauer on September 5, 1941, and had two children, John (Jack) Kenneth and Sue Margaret.

Gerrit J. Diekema was born in 1859 and died in 1930. A graduate of Hope College in 1881, he also obtained a law degree from the University of Michigan in 1883. In 1885, he married Mary E. Alcott. Gerrit formed the law firm Diekema & Kollen, later changed to Diekema, Kollen, & Ten Cate, and had an esteemed political career until his death.

John B. Nykerk, born September 13, 1861, and died October 1936, graduated from Hope College in 1885. He founded the Hope music department, was the dean of men in 1918, was the head of the English department and worked at Hope College for more than 50 years. Dr. Nykerk also studied for two years at Oxford University from 1906 to 1907, with a focus on graduate studies of early English and Anglo-Saxon.

Lt. Col. Clarence John “Jack” Lokker, son of Clarence A. Lokker and Elizabeth Van Burk, was born September 5, 1918, in Holland, Michigan. He attended Hope College for one year from 1936-1937 before being appointed to West Point Military Academy on July 1, 1937. During his time at Hope, he was elected freshman class president, and participated on the freshman football and basketball teams. He graduated from West Point in 1941 while ranked 72nd out of 424 in his class. According to the Holland Sentinel, Jack was married to Sybil Bailey (Brailey?) and has one son, David Lokker (Wilson). He died in action serving in the U.S. Air Force in 1944.

Lt. Col. Clarence J. Lokker’s father, Clarence A. Lokker, son of Christian J. Lokker and Winnie Diekema, graduated from Hope College in 1914. He worked as a lawyer with his uncle, Gerrit J. Diekema at Diekema, Kollen, and Ten Cate offices. His mother, Elizabeth Van Burk, was also a graduate of Hope College. She graduated with the class of 1917.

Scope and Content

The Janice Van Lente Collection, gathered by Ruth Dunn Kleinheksel, provides information and records pertaining to the Kleinheksel family, along with photographs and family lineage records from the Van Raalte family. Key players from the community such as Gerrit J. Diekema, Gerrit Kollen, and J. B. Nykerk are also included. Additional biographical information is included on Clarence J. Lokker.

Ruth Dunn Kleinheksel was born on December 1, 1894, in Holland, Michigan. The daughter of Jelte and Christine (Van Grevengoed) Reidsma, Ruth married Harry Earl Dunn on May 26, 1921, and did not have any children. Harry E. Dunn died in 1948 and Ruth remarried on December 1, 1955, to Frank D. Kleinheksel. She was Frank’s third wife. Ruth Dunn Kleinheksel passed away January 25, 1989, in Douglas, Michigan. She is buried with her first husband, Harry E. Dunn, at Pilgrim Home Cemetery.

Ruth’s sister, Gertrude (Trudy) Reidsma was born on February 22, 1885, in West Olive, Michigan and died on May 21, 1978, in Holland Michigan. She married Ralph Frederick Van Lente, Sr., the son of Johannes Van Lente and Jane Bouwman, on June 11, 1907. Ralph was born November 8, 1885, in Holland, Michigan, and died on October 19, 1948. They had seven children; the youngest was a son, Ivan James Van Lente who was born on June 14, 1923. Ivan James Van Lente married Carol Jean Meppelink on March 29, 1945. Carol was born in 1923. They had a daughter, Janice Lynn Van Lente, born in 1946, in Holland, Michigan. Janice Van Lente is the donor of this collection and Ruth Dunn Kleinheksel is her aunt.
Related Collections/ Resources:

- H08-1661.4. Ossewaarde, Delia.
- H05-1584.5. van Burk Lokker, Elizabeth (1893-1978).

Container List

Correspondence (5 folders)
- John B. Nykerk to John Kleinheksel, February 5, 1907
- John Kleinheksel to John B. Nykerk, February 21, 1907
- John B. Nykerk to John Kleinheksel, March 15, 1907 (2 images)
- Gerrit Diekema to John H. Kleinheksel, April 27, 1916
- Gerrit Diekema to Frank and Helen Kleinheksel

Gilmore, Albertus C. Van Raalte, Memorial Service, 1955

Kleinheksel, Anna Sophia Van Raalte
- Marriage ceremony invitations, 1884 (3 items)
- Warranty Deeds from A. C. Van Raalte to Anna S. Van Raalte, 1875-1876 (2 items)
- Land contract from Anna S. Van Raalte to Cornelius De Waard, 1877

Kleinheksel, Delia Ossewaarde
- Marriage Service for Frank D. Kleinheksel and Delia Ossewaarde, 1935
- Memorial Service, 1955 (2 items)

Kleinheksel, Frank D., Certificate of Discharge from Military Service, 1917

Kleinheksel, Gretchen Ann, Certificate of Baptism, 1924

Kleinheksel, John H.
- Funeral Sermon, n.d.
- Memorial Service transcript, n.d.
- Obituary, n.d.
- The Consistory of Hope Church testimonial, 1916
- Bush & Lane Piano Company Resolution, n.d.
- *The Anchor* Obituary, 1916
- *Holland Daily Sentinel* Obituary, 1916

Lokker, Clarence J.
- West Point Military Academy Cadet Book, 1937
- Biographical information
Photographs

John Kleinheksel (1 image)
Anna Sophia Van Raalte Kleinheksel (1 image)
Paul Kleinheksel (1 image)
Anna Vera Kleinheksel (2 images)
Frank Kleinheksel (3 images)
John Lewis Kleinheksel (1 image)
Kleinheksel Children (2 images)
Kleinheksel Children and Van Raalte Descendants (2 images)

Unidentified, group photographs
Unidentified man in car (1 image)
Kleinheksel/Kollen/Van Raalte Family Group photo (1 image)

John and Anna Sophia Kleinheksel and children, Gerrit & Mary Kollen
and daughter, and Albertus (Allie) & Christina Van Raalte, ca.
1900(?)

Provenance

Handwritten letter describing contents, n.d.
Scope and Content describing relationship between Ruth Ann Kleinheksel and
Janice Van Lente

Van Raalte Family

Photostatic Copy of Van Raalte Family Tree, 1854
Van Raalte Pedigree, n.d.
“The Family Tree of Dr. A.C. Van Raalte and Mrs. C.V.R. Gilmore” by Rev. S.
Vander Werf, The Leader, 1933
Report of the Van Raalte Cemetery Project of 1956
“Van Raalte Seen in New Light in ten Zythoff Talk”, Holland Sentinel, 1966