

A STUDY OF LANGUAGE IDENTITY AND SHIFT: THE CALVINIST DUTCH OF
WEST MICHIGAN

Kara Hall VanDam

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Approved by:

Connie Eble

H. Craig Melchert

Laura Janda

Paul Roberge

Jennifer Smith

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ABSTRACT

KARA HALL VANDAM: A study of language identity and shift: The Calvinist Dutch of
West Michigan

(Under the direction of Connie Eble)

From the perspective of the sociology of language developed by Joshua Fishman, and working from letters, newspapers, secondary accounts, and grave inscriptions, this study describes and explains bilingualism and the loss of the Dutch language in two West Michigan Dutch immigrant communities from 1847-1930, the Reformed Church (RCA) Dutch and the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) Dutch. The loss of Dutch in some ways parallels the contemporaneous language shift of Norwegian immigrants (Haugen, 1969) and Swedish immigrants (Karstadt, 2002). The two West Michigan Dutch Calvinist communities were unique in their language shift experiences. The RCA Dutch experienced and promoted a rapid assimilation and shift to English. The CRC Dutch promoted a multi-generational maintenance of the Dutch language in a stable Dutch-English bilingual setting—the preservation of Dutch was not at the expense of the acquisition of English—and then consciously and abruptly abandoned the Dutch language in the years immediately after World War I. The CRC Dutch maintained their language for so long precisely because it was *the* marker of identity for them and it was inextricably tied to their faith; the RCA Dutch were able to abandon the Dutch language early on because it was *not* the marker of religious identity for them.

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This dissertation is dedicated to the Dutch who left their homeland and made a new life in West Michigan. Writing this dissertation has given me a unique window into the great history of my hometown and my roots. I am indebted to the wise counsel of my advisor, Dr. Connie Eble, who like me has a deep fondness for a great story. I hope readers will enjoy this story as much as we have. I offer a great debt of gratitude to the guidance of all the members of my dissertation committee. I have also benefited from the support and flexibility of my colleagues at Kaplan University, in particular Connie Bosse and Sara Sander. Their support allowed me to attend the 2003 LSA Linguistics Summer Institute where I met Dr. Jack Chambers and was introduced to the field of historical sociolinguistics; to present my research at LACUS 2006 (Toronto) and 2007 (Richmond, KY); and the flexibility to travel frequently to West Michigan to conduct fieldwork.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CRC	Christian Reformed Church (Grand Rapids, Michigan)
DARE	Dictionary of American Regional English
DRCA	Dutch Reformed Church of America (New York, 1800-1867)
RCA	Reformed Church of America (New York and Holland, Michigan, 1867-)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Einar Haugen's 1953 study, *The Norwegian Language in America: A Study in Bilingual Behavior*, opened a new phase of sociolinguistic research as it investigated how an immigrant community grappled with issues of language and identity, and how both language and identity changed for the group over time. Following Haugen's lead, other linguists have investigated other immigrant communities. One notable recent example is Angela Karstadt's *Tracking Swedish-American English: A Longitudinal Study of Linguistic Variation and Identity* (2003). This key study of the Calvinist Dutch of West Michigan (both Reformed Church of America—RCA—and Christian Reformed Church—CRC) builds on the work of Haugen, Karstadt and others who have explored the linguistic lives of many generations of immigrants.

The large Dutch immigrant settlement of West Michigan, known as the *kolonie* (hereafter, the English spelling colony will be used), began in the mid-nineteenth century and flourished until World War I. The colony had an early religious split, one that evolved into the present-day Reformed Church of America (RCA) and Christian Reformed Church (CRC); these two groups took very different views of language and identity, with one group, the CRC, very intentionally preserving Dutch as their primary language for decades (ten Harmsel, 2002; Brinks, 1995; Melton, 1996). They were straightforward about their intentions: the Dutch language was the critical identity marker

of both their ethnicity and religion. Yet in roughly the span of a decade, they gave the Dutch language up. My research indicates that the CRC Dutch of West Michigan were prompted into relinquishing English due in part to anti-German and by extension anti-"other" sentiment and an upsurge in nativist politics in the period during and immediately after World War I.

Haugen's 1953 study on bilingualism and language shift among Norwegians in America found similar patterns of religion, identity, and language shift, as well as influence from anti-German sentiment and WWI-era nativist politics. Haugen found a gradual shift in Norwegian speech communities, but the West Michigan shift appears more rapid, in the span of a decade. Despite this rapid shift, there are no Dutch traces in the local dialect, and this lack of any trace is just as significant. The Dutch spoken in the waning years of the speech community was affected by English, however, and while this is not the focus of this study, it will be discussed and further avenues of research will be suggested. Sinke (2002) discusses the loss of grammatical gender and the rise of English borrowings in Michigan Dutch, but it is unclear if the former can be tied to English influence, or is simply a natural process of language change, a question raised by Dorian (1989) and others.

The dissertation is organized as follows: Chapter Two reviews previous work on issues of bilingualism, language acquisition, language and identity, language and ethnicity, and language loss and shift. It also outlines the primary findings of Haugen and Karstadt in their respective studies of Norwegian and Swedish American immigrant communities.

Chapter Three provides a history of Dutch migration to the United States from the eighteenth to the twentieth century, with particular focus on the nineteenth century migration to the colony—the Classis Holland—of West Michigan, and the effect of religious affiliation on this migration. This history has been well-documented by many Dutch Reformed Church historians, as well as by the 1928 dissertation of Jacob van Hinte, *Nederlanders in Amerika*.¹ It discusses the language assimilation patterns of earlier migrations and contrasts them with the migrations that began in the 1840s, the time of the founding of the West Michigan colony. It also introduces the powerful leaders of the church, namely Albertus Van Raalte, Hendrik Scholte, and Gijsbert Haan, who defined the religious, social, and political characteristics of the settlements.

Religion was a powerful variable in terms of language change and choice in this community, and this study suggests that religion has been incorrectly overlooked as a significant variable, and shows that religion was significant in analogous communities of Norwegian and Swedish immigrants. Dutch immigrants went through the cycle of language shift three times, in the eighteenth century in New York, in the mid-nineteenth century and again in the early twentieth century in West Michigan. As Goodfriend (1988, p.17) notes, "A full-scale investigation of language practices in the Dutch Reformed churches, dealing with how long preaching and record keeping in Dutch continued, and the nature of the circumstances that prompted the switch to English is long overdue." This dissertation is such a study for the latter group of immigrants, and discusses in detail the former as well.

¹ Translated in 1985 by Swierenga, R. (Ed.), de Wit, A. Throughout this dissertation, references to page numbers in Van Hinte's original work are those found in the 1985 translation.

Chapter Four first considers the 1857 schism that resulted in the splitting of the Dutch Reformed Church in West Michigan into two groups, the present-day Reformed Church of America (RCA) and Christian Reformed Church (CRC). This chapter also considers the root causes of the schism traceable to political and cultural events that occurred decades prior in the United States and the Netherlands, as well as the more immediate causes to include how immigrant status complicates issues of language and identity. It also contrasts the Americanization of the RCA with the preservation of Dutch language and culture in the CRC.

Chapter Five turns to the respective places of Dutch and English in the original New York colony of the seventeenth and eighteenth century, as well as the Michigan colony from 1850 to 1910, analyzing how and whether the various levels of bilingualism correlate with religious affiliation, age, gender, occupation and socioeconomic class. The members of the CRC followed closely to the adage "language saves faith and faith saves language" (Harney in Ganzevoort & Boekelman, 1983, p. x) and used Dutch as a primary language for generations, even though many in this community were Dutch-English bilinguals. As Brinks notes:

[Dutch] immigrants adopted America's economic and technological novelties with enthusiasm, but [...] they also constructed a cultural citadel around their churches which either resisted or carefully screened social, religious, and ideological influences borne by the mainstream culture (in Ganzevoort & Boekelman, 1983, p. 139).

This chapter also discusses three spheres of the Dutch society that acted as a stage upon which the language battle was waged: the schools, the churches, and the press. Finally,

an analysis of the historical evidence demonstrates that the actions of the communities discussed demonstrate a type of language planning.

Chapter Six examines the period of 1910-1930. This chapter will turn particular attention to a study of gravestone markers conducted by the author for this dissertation. This analysis is placed in the context of other linguists' work on gravestone markers, such as Eva Eckert's 1998 study of dialectal changes and language shift as evidenced by Czech gravestones in Praha, Texas. It also draws from the work of researchers in the field of necroethnicity, a field which serves to examine how ethnicity is represented in funerary markers and architecture. These include Thomas Graves who has done extensive work analyzing the graves of Pennsylvania Germans, John Matturi whose insight into Italian-American funerary markers provides a relevant illustration of the impact of culture on the choice of markers, as well as Doris Francis, Leonie Kellaheer and Georgina Neophytou whose 2005 work, *The Secret Cemetery*, includes as one of its arguments that ethnic cemeteries become surrogate homelands for the community's members. My analysis also, importantly, compares West Michigan graves with eighteenth century Dutch graves of New York by analyzing the inscriptions of the graves of the Old Dutch Burying Ground of Sleepy Hollow in Tarrytown, New York. Of particular interest are the quantity of Dutch inscriptions, when they were made, the age of the decedent, and the rise of bilingual graves, as well as the choice of language of inscription within families, as it is not uncommon to see even a husband and wife choose (or have chosen for them, as the case may be) different languages for gravestone inscription. My analysis of the Old Dutch Burying Ground of Sleepy Hollow graves uses the collection of all grave inscriptions from 1755-1860 published in 1953 by the cemetery's keeper, the First

Reformed Church of Tarrytown New York. The collection is theirs; the analysis is my own. Finally, as in Chapter Five, the historical data is analyzed as a type of language planning, yet this time the focus is on the CRC Dutch community of 1910-1930.

Chapter Seven considers potential causes for this rapid shift to a complete embrace of the English language and the loss of the Dutch language. One key factor appears to be a wave of anti-immigrant sentiment then sweeping the nation. Many non-German ethnic groups were targeted by anti-German sentiment. In the case of Norwegian immigrants, the connection was a similar Lutheran affiliation (Haugen, 1953). In the case of the Dutch immigrants of West Michigan, most had sided with the Germans at the war's start (though that changed quickly). In addition, Americans questioned the Netherlands' World War I neutrality when the German Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicated in 1918 and was allowed to live in exile in the Netherlands (Roelofs Verbrugge, 1994). Furthermore, the Johnson Act of 1920 reduced the annual immigration quota from the Netherlands to 1,648. As subsequent waves of immigration had in the past helped reinforce the maintenance of Dutch language and culture, this drop affected it greatly (Van Hinte, 1928). The situation was far worse for the CRC Dutch-Americans than for those in the RCA: the CRC "came under attack from the RCA and from groups outside the community for its lack of 'true Americanism,'" an attack that ranged from unsolicited American flags being placed on CRC churches, to the burning of a CRC church and school (Bratt, in Ganzevoort & Boekelman, 1983, p. 172). This chapter argues that anti-German sentiment and the upsurge in nativist politics triggered by World War I and their effect on church politics changed the linguistic contact situation from an adstratal

situation to one of a superstrate English and a substrate Dutch. Once this shift occurred, the primary place of English was assured.

Chapter Eight highlights the uniqueness of the CRC Dutch community through a summary of this dissertation's important findings. Further, it reflects upon modern debates and points out the cyclically changing attitudes towards issues of bilingualism, immigration, and multiculturalism.

The research for this dissertation utilized many archives. Particular attention was paid to personal correspondence. It is augmented by original research of linguistic evidence from grave markers in each of the periods to be discussed.

Archives include the many resources catalogued by Brinks in his 1967 *Guide to Dutch-American historical collections of Western Michigan*, which is available at Holland, Michigan's Netherlands Museum. These range from personal correspondence between the colony and the Netherlands in the nineteenth and early twentieth century to the many Dutch-language newspapers including *De Paarl* (1858-1860), *De Verzamelaar* (1860-1865), *De Hollander* (1851-1895), *De Hope* (1865-1933), *De Wachter*, *De Christen Werkman* (1892-1894), *Een Stem des Volks* (1893-1900) and *Stemmen uit de Vrije Gemeende* (1880-1920). In addition, CRC and RCA church records from the period are valuable, for the timing of their switch from Dutch to English is significant. Jacob van Hinte's 1928 dissertation, *Nederlanders in Amerika: Een Studie over Landverhuizers en Volkplanters in de 19 en 20 Eeuw in de Vereenigde Staten van Amerika, Eerste en Tweede Deel*, gives a comprehensive and unique perspective of the then-current mindsets of the West Michigan Dutch, as well as other American settlements such as Pella, Iowa, on a variety of topics including religion, culture, identity, and language. Contrasting this

to how people felt in the decades prior as seen in personal correspondence, newspapers, etc. is a significant part of the analysis of this dissertation. Henry Lucas' 1955 work, *Netherlanders in America*, is as comprehensive as Van Hinte's. Importantly, its snapshot is taken three decades past Van Hinte's and so the full force of the change is apparent.

Of all these sources, however, it is the letters of the immigrants to their family members back in the Netherlands and the legacy they left on their gravestones that will form the corpus from which this research is drawn. The personal letters allow those from the communities to explain the reasons for migration, the selection of isolated settlements, the effects of the 1857 schism on the daily lives of the immigrants, and most importantly, how all these factors and more influenced language use. For the immigrants are not silent on language use: it is mentioned frequently in the early letters all the way to the late ones. Even their gravestones are not silent: The choice of language also provides important clues to language and identity.

This dissertation is particularly indebted to Herbert Brinks who has spent decades searching for these letters in "attics, cupboards, and bookshelves" across the Netherlands, painstakingly translating and publishing them. The corpus he has created has been an invaluable resource in this undertaking.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS: LANGUAGES IN CONTACT

This chapter summarizes scholarly study on issues of bilingualism, language acquisition, language and identity, language and ethnicity, language loss and shift, and language planning pertinent to understanding the language facts of the Dutch in Michigan. It also outlines the primary findings of Einar Haugen and Angela Karstadt in their respective linguistic studies of Norwegian and Swedish American immigrant communities.

In the last half of the twentieth century, many scholars working in the fields of sociolinguistics and the sociology of language focused on issues of bilingualism, language acquisition, language and identity, language and ethnicity, and language loss and shift. Notable among them are William Labov, Einar Haugen, Derek Bickerton, Andrée Tabouret-Keller, James Milroy and Lesley Milroy, Joshua Fishman, William Lambert and Monika Schmid. This dissertation builds on the theoretical frameworks developed by these scholars over the past fifty years. Stylistically, it follows Haugen and Fishman closely.

Haugen was interested in the history, community, and personal lives of the immigrant community he studied, the Norwegians settling in Wisconsin and the neighboring states of Illinois and Minnesota in the mid-nineteenth century. In fact, his pivotal 1953 work, *The Norwegian Language in America: A Study in Bilingual Behavior*,

devotes the majority of its first volume to an exploration of the causes for migration, the influence of the public schools, the immigrant press, and Norwegian Lutheran immigrant churches on social and linguistic life.² Haugen views language through the prism of the daily lives, fears, and goals of these Americans of Norwegian ancestry, and a lack of that important context would greatly diminish an accurate understanding of how bilingualism, language planning, and ultimately language shift occurred.

As will become clear through this study, the same context and factors are crucial for a clear understanding of the Dutch American immigrant situation. Without this context, many of the factors which led speakers to the linguistic choices that were made either consciously or unconsciously would be hidden from view, and thus important patterns and generalizations would be missed. Researchers in minority languages—particularly European researchers—have over the decades since Haugen's original study come to recognize this and have accordingly shifted from a structuralist perspective to a social and communicative perspective (Van Els, 1986).

Great advances have been made in bilingualism and language shift research since the time of Haugen's 1953 study. More recent scholars' work is thus invaluable in forming the appropriate framework for this study. Important among these are Joshua Fishman, Florian Coulmas, Heinz Kloss, Erik Allardt, William Lambert, John Gibbons and Elizabeth Ramirez, Carol Eastman, and Angela Karstadt.

It is also important for the theoretical framework to make a distinction between sociolinguistics and the sociology of language. Mainline sociolinguistics focuses on specific linguistic variables and how they are tied to social structure. Labov's Martha's

² Both Volume I and II were reprinted in 1969 in one volume, and that is the text referenced throughout this dissertation.

Vineyard study and r-dropping study of clerks in New York City department stores in the 1960s are the earliest and most influential examples. The sociology of language focuses rather on the ways in which language and social behavior are related, an approach pioneered by Fishman. This study, while not ignoring linguistic variation of specific variables, is firmly rooted in the theoretical framework of the sociology of language.

2.1 Language Contact, Bilingualism, and Diglossia

Bilingualism results from language contact.³ When two languages are spoken in the same community, the situation can either be unstable and thus temporary, or stable, and lasting over several generations; the two languages and the manner in which speakers use them are "continuous variables, matters of degree" (Fishman, 1989, p.185). While the term *bilingualism* can refer to either situation, for Fishman it is a term best used to describe the language situations of individuals; *diglossia* refers to a situation that has a longer-term stability and is societally-rooted (Fishman, 1989). This distinction is important in discussing the factors that affect the outcome in language-contact situations. It is important to note, however, that others, Ferguson (1959) and Schiffman (1997) define diglossia somewhat differently, restricting it to situations in which there is an H or highly valued language or dialect and an L or lesser valued language or dialect; where all speakers use the H for certain purposes (e.g., religious, political) and L for other purposes (e.g., home, at the market); and where H has no "mother tongue" speakers, where L is never or rarely written.

³ For the purposes of this discussion, the language contact will be considered to be binary, i.e. involving two languages only, but it should be understood that in many situations, more than two languages are involved.

This study demonstrates that within the Dutch community itself, the diglossia that evolved did not follow the traditional pattern, largely because Dutch speakers chose not to follow the traditional patterns of the other immigrant groups of whom they were aware.

Fishman (1989) identifies four potential combinations of individual bilingualism and societal diglossia:

1. Bilingualism with diglossia
2. Diglossia without bilingualism
3. Bilingualism without diglossia
4. Neither bilingualism nor diglossia, i.e., monolingualism

In the first scenario, there is a "societal arrangement" which provides for widespread and societally-supported individual bilingualism with diglossia. Membership in the society provides social constructs from birth and an understanding of the contexts in which to use each variety, High (H) vs. Low (L): L is acquired in the home; H is the language of other non-familial institutions such as school, business, government, and the media. The first scenario of individual bilingualism is idealized in the sense that in normal human interactions, there is "creep," when an individual functions in separate spheres, meaning that there is never a completely strict division and for example at rare times, L might be heard in school and H might be heard at home. But Fishman notes that "the perceived ethnocultural legitimacy" and "normative functional complementarity" is intact. This is the situation with Guarani and Spanish in Paraguay: they are in "complementary distribution" (p.191).

The second situation is *diglossia without bilingualism*. This may be due to political pressures. For example, Portuguese was recently made the official language of East Timor—the official language being by UNESCO's 1951 definition that which is "used to do government business" (in Eastman, 1983, p.6)—though a very small percentage of the population, less than 10%, has any proficiency in it. The selection was made to avoid giving special favor to the minority languages spoken in East Timor as well as to turn away from the language everyone speaks, Bahasa, the language of their former Indonesian rulers. Tetum was made what UNESCO calls a "national" language⁴ (Language of Resistance, 2001; Hajek, 2002), the "language of a political, social, and cultural entity" (in Eastman, 1983, p.6). The government of East Timor is insistent that Portuguese will be very much used, and it is receiving strong aid from Portugal and Brazil to do so.

In the third situation, there is *bilingualism without diglossia*. This is common with immigrant languages, for instance, Italian in the United States, and "swamped" languages, such as Native Americans languages in the United States. This situation usually results in monolingualism in the third generation. As Fishman notes:

What both of these otherwise quite different contexts reveal in common is an absence of social compartmentalization such that the languages of hearth and home ... protect themselves from the greater reward and sanction system associated with the language of new institutions to which they are exposed and in which they are involved. ... As a result of that lack of successful

⁴ Tetum is, like "Chinese," not so much a single language but a series of closely related languages which have varying degrees of mutual intelligibility. Also like "Chinese," for purposes of ethnic unity East Timorese consider there to be only one language, Tetum. The "dialects" of Tetum serve as lingua francas in many areas where other minority languages co-exist (Hajek, 2002).

compartmentalization, both A and B compete for realization in the same domains, situations, and role-relations. Since, with the exception of fleeting metaphorical usage ... linguistic functional redundancy cannot be maintained inter-generationally and gives way to the stronger functional system, the language with stronger rewards and sanctions associated with it wins out. ... three generations or less have generally been sufficient for this process to run its course ... a relatively few larger groups, groups strong enough to maintain or to fashion a reward system under their own control (whether in the home, the community, the church, or elsewhere), may succeed in establishing and maintaining the compartmentalization needed for diglossia or to do so at least at the areal level ... [but] without compartmentalization of one kind or another--at times attained by ideological/philosophical and even by a degree of physical withdrawal from establishment society--the flow process from language spread to language shift is an inexorable one (pp.187-8).

The CRC Dutch of West Michigan, pockets of Norwegians in Wisconsin (Haugen), and a Kansas community of Swedish Americans (Karstadt) were able to maintain *bilingualism without diglossia* in their communities for far longer than would be predicted in the normal model for immigrant languages to the United States, and they were able to do so in the same time period: from the mid-nineteenth century until the World War I era.

What makes the CRC Dutch of West Michigan even more exceptional is that they did achieve a certain measure of diglossia which held for several decades. Further, they were not alone in creating a situation of short-term diglossia: they had the support of local and state government and the English-speaking community as well. This placed the

CRC Dutch in a unique middle ground between what Kloss (1977) refers to as a promotion-oriented approach (active inclusion in public institutions, directed by government agencies at some level) and a toleration-oriented one (no interference from government agencies). Further, it was those speakers who were the least isolated from the English-speaking community who held onto Dutch the longest, and some of the most isolated who gave it up first. This middle ground and its uniqueness are analyzed further in Chapters Four and Five.

Fishman's final situation is *neither bilingualism nor diglossia*, in other words, a completely monolingual community. This may be due to a lack of immigrants (as in the case of Spanish in Cuba) or in the death of the established language (as in the case of Cornish in Cornwall). Not infrequently in cases of language contact, monolingualism is the final outcome. After decades and in some cases centuries of stability in the form of one of the first three scenarios, a shift can occur which leads to the fourth situation. This is, ultimately, what occurred with the loss of Dutch in West Michigan in the period of 1910-1930.

2.2 Factors Which Determine Linguistic Situational Outcomes: Attitudes,

Relationships, Modernization, Ideology

What leads one language contact situation to develop into scenario 1 (diglossia with bilingualism) and another into scenario 3 (bilingualism without diglossia), and so forth? According to Wardhaugh (1987), four social factors affect language spread or retreat in language contact situations. The first is the *attitude* towards both the "threatened" and the "threatening" languages. The second is the *relationship*--historical, geographical--

between the two groups who use the languages. The third are *modernization* factors, factors tied to the economy, social mobility, and education. Last is *ideology*, factors of culture, religion, and politics. These four factors in conjunction with each other considerably influence the human reactions that result in the range of outcomes, from monolingual adoption of one language over the other, to preservation of a threatened language.

In situations of language contact, rarely is the languages' relationship to each other on equal societal footing, or adstratal in the terminology of pidginization. There is typically a majority language (or superstrate) and a minority language (or substrate). Which is which is controversial as different scholars have defined these differently. However, the consensus is that designating which language is the majority and which is the minority depends on several factors, such as the number of speakers, the number of bilinguals, the language of the state and education, etc. There are also two types of minority languages, and which type is involved often affects the long-term sociolinguistic results. The first is a minority only in one geographic area, but is a majority elsewhere. The languages of immigrants are frequently these types of minority languages: Turkish, for example, is a minority language in Germany but a majority language in Turkey. This type of minority language typically receives considerable linguistic support from the homeland, in the forms of new infusions of speakers (new immigrants) and, very importantly, the press. The second type is a minority everywhere it is spoken: nowhere is it the dominant language of a state. Three examples would be Ojibwe in the United States, Basque in the País Vasco region of Spain, and Catalan in Spain.

Allardt (1987) cites the most important factor in determining whether a language is a minority language or not is whether or not its speakers feel they are speaking the minority language. In other words, a minority language could have more speakers than the majority language. Speakers' sense of this is tied directly to where and how they feel they fit in society. For the Dutch of West Michigan, a change in their social organization was a crucial factor in their reanalysis of the place of the Dutch language in their society. It is reasonable to argue that a factor in the persistence of Dutch in West Michigan was its speakers' feeling that they were speaking a language if not on greater footing, at least on equal footing, to English.

Gibbons and Ramirez (2004) explain that "minority-language maintenance is, in effect, an attempt to resist the cultural power of languages that are spoken by a majority of the population, and/or languages that are, for some reason, socially dominant" (p.4). Lacking any type of official status, minority languages are frequently relegated to home and local community use. As a result, the first generation of children born into these communities may be linguistically bilingual, but they often have limited opportunity to become literate in the minority language, particularly if there are no educational opportunities in it.

Gibbons and Ramirez (2004) further note that linguistic groups who established their own schools were better able to preserve their native language than were those who embraced the public school. Eastman (1983) supports this. The West Michigan Dutch split into two groups, the RCA Dutch and the CRC Dutch. The RCA Dutch put their children in English-speaking public schools. The CRC Dutch did not; rather, they created their own private schools which maintained the Dutch language –though,

importantly, not at the expense of learning English, which was encouraged. Haugen (1969) discusses how this debate about schooling also occurred in the Norwegian-American community in the United States. Beyond any other social factors, schooling is the root cause of the typical two-generation shift from one language to the other, with only one intervening generation of bilingualism.

2.3 Language Resistance and Language Maintenance

Some communities have resisted language shift and have maintained bilingualism for many generations. Children born in the Catalan region of Spain learn Catalan as well as Spanish, and the strength of Catalan is apparent to anyone who has spent time in Barcelona. Half of the television stations broadcasting in Barcelona are Catalan. Outside the major tourist areas of the city, one is far more likely to hear--and read--Catalan in neighborhood parks and grocery stores. Speaking Catalan is a marker of belonging, of being a native of the area, and as such, it is a marker that carries a great deal of prestige. Catalan is also spoken both inside and outside the classroom in the universities and in many workplaces.⁵ It is fair to say that Barcelona and its region of Catalonia have a stable system with both bilingualism and diglossia, Fishman's first scenario discussed in section 2.1.

What allows some communities to preserve bilingualism for generations, or even indefinitely, while other communities experience it for only one generation?

Lambert (1975) posited that the difference stemmed from two types of bilingualism, additive and subtractive. When second language (hereafter L2) acquisition does not undermine the acquisition and development of first language (hereafter L1), the

⁵ From the author's own experience of living in Barcelona in 2002.

bilingualism is additive. Far more common, particularly in cases of immigrant language maintenance, is when the L2 acquisition does undermine L1 development, the bilingualism is subtractive, and its stability is short-lived.

Gibbons and Ramirez (2004) point to three characteristics—or, in Bourdieu's terminology, "capital"—which determine bilingual maintenance: the societal layer, contact, and attitudes. The *societal layer* represents institutions such as government, education, business, and religion; media; political history, in particular, whether the language has been the language of a group with political power; status in terms of its economic or social value; and demography. *Contact* relates to the amount, degree, and type of interaction that speakers have with other speakers and the choice of language in a given setting, for example with one's physician or one's neighbor. *Attitudes* can be both individual or shared or both, but typically they are social constructs. As Gibbons and Ramirez point out, the interaction between these characteristics is complex:

... publishing a newspaper in a minority language (a societal phenomenon) enables contact with a more formal style of the language, and enhances the prestige of the language, affecting attitudes. However the decision to publish a newspaper is itself likely to be influenced by attitudes and beliefs about the minority language. This type of circularity bedevils much of the discussion about bilingualism (p.5).

Components of the societal layer, contact, and attitudes might collapse at once. As they are so inter-connected, the slightest slip in one can set off a chain reaction. Such a decline involving the Dutch Press from 1910-1930 is discussed in Chapter Six.

Landry and Allard's 1994 study of bilingualism among Acadians in New Brunswick posits that whether or not bilingualism is maintained depends on how these factors interact in creating the "ethnolinguistic vitality of the person's language group" (p.181). The more spheres in which the language is used, and the more positive the attitude towards it, the greater the ethnolinguistic vitality and thus the more likely a language is to acquire new speakers. The fewer the spheres, the less the ethnolinguistic vitality, and the less likely the language will flourish. For bilingualism to be maintained, the two languages must be relatively equally weighted, in the sense of relatively equal opportunities to use both languages.

Bradley (2002) places particular importance on speakers' attitudes. If their attitude about themselves, their community, and their language is positive, if they regard their language as a "core cultural value" and feel language is "a key aspect of the group's identity," they will maintain it (p.1). This dissertation argues that the primary difference between the two West Michigan Dutch communities of the nineteenth century, the RCA (Holland, Michigan) and the CRC Dutch (Grand Rapids, Michigan) is exactly this. For the RCA Dutch, the Dutch language was not crucial to their identity. For the CRC Dutch, it was. As soon as the Dutch language ceased to be crucial to CRC identity, some seventy years after settlement, language shift was completed rapidly.

In Haugen's study, Norwegian Americans were able to hold onto Norwegian and become highly functioning bilinguals only in isolated communities. Those who did not find those communities, or who went to the cities, acquired English rapidly, and their American-born children were not bilingual. In the communities where Norwegian was maintained, a relatively stable bilingualism developed:

Norwegian had been established as the language of the family, the church, and the neighborhood, spoken to all who showed any inclination to speak it back, and carrying with it a fund of wit and wisdom from the native land. English, on the other hand, was the language spoken to outsiders, those with whom the immigrants were required to deal with commercially and officially, in school and larger social groups (p.52).

Notably, however, throughout this "relatively stable" period, "the learning of English thus went on, slowly but surely encroaching on the domain of Norwegian" and while it was "the truly bilingual period ... it was a special kind of bilingualism, in which the advantages were all on the side of the language that was being learned [English]" (p.52). For the Dutch American community that is the focus of this dissertation, there was a final, sharp push to the English side that came about as a result of the Americanization movement that occurred during and immediately after World War I.

The two groups provide many interesting points of comparison and contrast, many of which are visited later in this study. Both communities span roughly the same years. Both groups settled in the then relatively unsettled Midwest. Religion was a factor in language preservation in both groups. But while Norwegians isolated in ethnic neighborhoods became bilingual, and those not in these communities rapidly switched to English, for the Dutch the variable that predicted the bilingual vs. monolingual English outcome was quite different. The Dutch community in West Michigan split into two religious factions, the Reformed Church of America (or RCA) Dutch and the Christian Reformed Church (or CRC) Dutch. These two groups created very different scenarios related to language use. One can ascribe the longevity of Dutch language use among the

CRC Dutch to their pursuit of Dutch-speaking opportunities, in contrast to the RCA Dutch who quickly found fewer and fewer spheres in which Dutch could be used.

2.4 Language Contact, Mechanism of Interference, and Language Change

Language contact situations never operate in a vacuum, and many linguists have studied the effect two languages in contact have on each other, often described with the term "interference." This interference often results in the borrowing of a feature—be it lexical, phonological, morphological, or syntactic—from one language to the other. Thomason (1997) posits several mechanisms by which this interference occurs, and an understanding of these mechanisms proves important to the Dutch data to be examined in Chapter Six. Note that the definitions of what constitutes "interference" to follow are Thomason's. There is a debate among sociolinguists whether code-switching, for instance, is a form of interference. This debate is outside the scope of this study.

Code-switching, the insertion of words or phrases from one language into another language, is the most common mechanism for lexical borrowing. Not all code-switches become borrowings, but frequency of use along with other factors heighten the likelihood.

Code alternation is caused when a bilingual speaker is interacting with two distinct groups, each of which only knows one of the two languages. Thus the bilingual speaker always uses one language with one group and the other with the other. A high school exchange student would be a likely code alternator, using the L2 with the host family and in the host environment, and using L1 only in sporadic encounters with fellow native speakers or on visits home. This can be a mechanism for interference because

while there is strong evidence that bilingual speakers have no "confusion" between their languages, psycholinguists have also shown that even when speaking in one language, the other language is never completely deactivated in the brain (Grosjean-Soares, 1986, in Thomason, 1997). Over time phonological changes commonly result in the L1 which mirror a phonological process of the L2. Thomason illustrates this with an example of an Italian graduate student who had lived in the United States for twelve years, and who then on visits to Rome was complimented on speaking Italian so well "for an American," her Italian then including aspirated syllable-initial voiceless stops and a backing of [t] and [d] from a dental (Italian) to an alveolar (American English) stop closure.

Passive familiarity is the mechanism by which speakers may adopt features of another language or dialect that they have little if any interaction with, including lexical borrowing from archaic languages—Thomason gives the example of the borrowing of "animal" from Latin—or from other dialects, such as the use of the word *y'all* by Americans who do not live in or have contact with those for whom this is a native dialect feature. In a prior study (VanDam, 2005), I studied the attitudes held by college students taking college composition towards standard and non-standard dialects of English. One student's comment illustrates the mechanism of passive familiarity nicely:

Y'all is a wonderful word. I use it all the time since it is quite difficult in Standard Proper Americanized English to distinguish between you (singular) and you (plural). While it is very colloquial in sound and nature, it does give a quick definition of what I am trying to say as well as bringing the 'stuffiness' quotient of the conversation down a few notches.

This particular student was a life-long resident of Los Angeles, California, who indicated he had never traveled to the southeastern United States. While his individual embrace of *y'all* does not indicate a community-wide spread, it does illustrate not only how individuals can adopt such items, but how passive familiarity often leads to a *conscious* adoption of such items.

Negotiation occurs when "speakers change their own speech patterns to approximate what they perceive as the patterns of another language" (p.199); the results of negotiation are always flawed, though the social effects vary. Negotiation can be beneficial in the formation of pidgins, as Thomason notes, "speakers in a new contact situation make guesses about what their interlocutors will understand, and the best guesses—those that facilitate comprehension—become part of the emerging language" (p.199). Negotiation can also undermine already strained cross-linguistic interactions, anecdotally illustrated by American English speakers who when speaking to native Spanish speakers appear to believe that adding *-o* to the end of English words will make those they are speaking to understand, such as this sentence recently overheard at a Mexican restaurant when the customer said to the waitress, "Bring me the change-*o*, rapido."

Haugen (1969) found that English had significant effects on the Norwegian spoken by Norwegian immigrants, specifically in terms of borrowing from English, and much of the second volume of his study focuses on the process of borrowing and the phonological and grammatical processes undergone by loanwords. In fact, the title of one chapter in his study is "The Great Vocabulary Shift." Haugen notes that in the early years, borrowing was driven by several factors: the need to quote an English speaker, a

desire to show that one had some English competence, and the need to refer to something for which there was not a Norwegian term. Most immigrants had come from rural areas, and they immigrated before Norway industrialized, so it is no wonder that a huge number of loanwords came from the spheres of industry, city life, business, and government.

While Haugen's focus was on loanwords from English to Norwegian and centers on the decades during which bilingualism was the norm (~1850 – 1920), Karstadt's 2003 study of Swedish Americans and the dialect of Swedish American English that developed focuses on how Swedish affected this new English dialect in the twentieth century. She looks closely at syntactic, lexical, and phonological phenomena. Karstadt found phonetic variants common to L2 speakers even in L1 English speakers of Swedish descent, loanwords, and some evidence of syntactical processes as well, specifically the favoring of coordinating structures (parataxis) over subordinating structures (hypotaxis).

The Norwegian, Swedish, and Dutch immigrants all arrived in America at roughly the same time, had similar patterns of continued migration, sustained bilingualism for many decades, and lost it at approximately the same time. For this study, then, the fact that Haugen focused on the early period of a similar group and Karstadt on the twentieth century effects of another, provides one potential linguistic outcome, specifically that the two languages in contact—regardless of which comes to be the majority language to which there is a shift—can affect each other. However, there is apparently little to no trace of "Dutch" in modern West Michigan dialects of Dutch descendents, so Dutch did not affect the local English dialect. This is unsurprising when more is understood about the language shift that occurred in the years around and immediately after World War I.

It is the contention of this study that the language shift to English by the CRC Dutch was conscious and planned.

2.5 Language Planning

Language Planning is a modern field but an ancient practice. This dissertation focuses on language planning prior to the creation of its modern study in the 1960s. For centuries, speech communities have found their languages in a period in which adjustment or adaptation was required, and have set forth conscious plans by which to do so. The creation of a writing system as was undertaken in Korea in the sixteenth century is language planning, as is the foundation of a language academy such as the seventeenth century founding of the Académie Française. The determination of which language to use in schools is a language planning decision as well.

Often, language planning is viewed as tied to language maintenance. However, the plan to discard one's language is as much a plan as maintaining it. When leaders of the community come together to formulate a language plan, they must take into account the attitudes and practice of the speech community. Eastman (1983) following Fishman (1972) argues this clearly:

LP [Language Planning] theory seeks to assess the way people behave with and about language as a guide in deciding whether to adopt a plan of maintenance or shift (p.141).

Modern scholars of Language Planning describe how language policies are planned and implemented. They begin with the *formulation* of the plan: the careful deliberation of social, cultural, economic and even political factors. This is followed by

the *codification* of the policy, which sets the policy but also ideally reveals it to the speech community and takes into account their suggestions and opinions. *Elaboration* of the policy requires the planners to ensure the language in question is robust enough to extend into all the spheres in which it will be used. This often involves the expansion of the lexicon, but may also include modifications of features such as orthography. *Implementation*, the final stage, is accomplished when the plan is put in place and the original objectives of the policy are achieved (Eastman, 1983). As is discussed in Chapters Four and Five, these are the steps—though not codified—followed by the Dutch communities as they considered the place of their language in their lives and communities.

Chapter Two has set the framework for this dissertation's analysis of the Calvinist Dutch of West Michigan by reviewing pertinent scholarship on bilingualism, language acquisition, language and identity, language and ethnicity, and language loss and shift—in particular the primary findings of Haugen and Karstadt in their respective studies of Norwegian and Swedish American immigrant communities.

CHAPTER 3

DUTCH IMMIGRATION TO NORTH AMERICA

This chapter presents a history of Dutch migration to the United States from the seventeenth to the twentieth century and the effect of religious affiliation on this migration. Each migration has been well-documented by many historians, both within and outside of the Calvinist Dutch Reformed tradition. This chapter also introduces the language assimilation patterns of earlier migrations and contrasts them with the migrations that began in the 1840s, the time of the founding of the West Michigan colony, a discussion further detailed in Chapter Five. Importantly, this chapter introduces the powerful leaders of the church, from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth century, for these men defined the religious, social, and political characteristics of the colonies. Their actions, both direct and indirect, shaped the linguistic situations as well.

The Dutch have been coming to the United States since the seventeenth century. The migration over the past four hundred years has, however, been anything but steady. Doezema (1979) identifies three waves, each driven by different factors: the Commercial Expansion (seventeenth century), the Great Migration (mid-nineteenth century to early twentieth century), and the Planned Migration (post World War II).

The Commercial Expansion began in 1615 with the founding of the colony of New Netherland, in what is now New York City's borough of Manhattan. The motivation for this migration was economic: the Dutch West India Company valued a colony on the

banks of the Hudson River for the fur-trading opportunities it would present. Seven-thousand Dutch settled before migration ceased in 1664 when the English took control of the region. Despite a lack of incoming Dutch, these seven-thousand original immigrants grew greatly in number: By 1790, just one hundred twenty-five years later, 80,000 Dutch Americans lived within a 50-mile radius of New York City. This was 80% of the total number of Dutch in the United States at that time, indicating just how close-knit and stable the communities they had formed were (Doezema, 1979). They maintained their language until the early 1700s, and then gradually lost it through the colonial period. The transition to English was nearly complete by the time of the Revolutionary War, though it remained in some isolated and rural pockets of New Jersey and Long Island into the 19th century. In his study of New Netherland Dutch, Buccini (1995) notes that while the Bergen County, New Jersey, settlement maintained Dutch until the late 19th century, "English-Dutch bilingualism was surely a fact of life for the Dutchmen of Bergen County from the middle of the 18th century" (p.221).

From approximately 1760 until 1810, Americanization occurred in full force. Dutch settlers reclassified themselves as American founders and felt themselves more kin to English settlers than the Dutch who had remained in the Netherlands.

In the 1830s, a slow trickle of Dutch immigrants began, primarily individuals and families hoping, like most American immigrants, to find better economic opportunities in the New World. The Great Migration began in the 1840s and lasted until the 1910s. It is the primary focus of this study. While the overall percentage of American immigrants in this period coming from the Netherlands was small—only 1% of the total, far overshadowed by Germans, Italians, and Poles, among many others (Brinks, 1986)—75%

of all Dutch who emigrated from the Netherlands from 1820-1920 came to the United States. In the peak years of 1845-1857, and 1866-1890, over 90% came to America, for a total of over 273,000 Dutch coming to the United States during this period (Swierenga, 2000). As a point of comparison, close to a million Norwegians emigrated during this same period (Haugen, 1969) and approximately 1.3 million Swedes emigrated as well (Karstadt, 2003). Many of the Dutch immigrants were encouraged by letters written by past immigrants and by the state of Michigan itself (Stokvis, 1983). Most were poor and from rural areas, also the case for the Norwegian (Haugen, 1969) and Swedish (Karstadt, 2003) immigrants of the time. In fact, the prosperous Dutch who were leaving the Netherlands at that time were ten times more likely to migrate to South Africa or Indonesia (Doezema, 1979). That was in no small measure due to the strong belief then current in the Netherlands that the only emigration that was socially acceptable was that to a Dutch territory.

The final migration, the Planned Migration, was the Netherlands' solution to its post-war problems. The Great Depression had hit the Netherlands hard, as it had hit the world. The Nazis' aerial bombing of Rotterdam in 1940 not only completely destroyed that city but also marked the start of the Germans' western offensive (Grenville, 1994). This was followed by six years of Nazi occupation. In addition, the Netherlands is a small country that had, at the time, the highest birth rate in Europe. Further, as is well-known about the Netherlands, much of its land has been reclaimed from the sea, requiring the construction of an extensive network of dams and dikes which require constant maintenance to avoid breaches. The lack of maintenance during the war and in the post-war period in turn led to many floods. As the sea took away the land the Dutch had

reclaimed, the land on which to house them shrank and the farmland from which to feed them was poisoned with salt. Starting in 1949, the Dutch government, in cooperation with countries such as Canada and Australia, began to subsidize relocation expenses for those willing to emigrate, and one million of them did. Due to immigration quotas, however, only 100,000 came to the United States (Doezema, 1979).

The following sections look in greater detail at each of these migrations chronologically, as understanding the context in which migration occurred can help illuminate why each migration's participants reacted to and assimilated differently into the United States.

3.1 Dutch Immigration of the Seventeenth Century

In 1609, the explorer Henry Hudson set off on his third voyage. Its goal, like his two prior voyages of 1607 and 1608, was to find a new route to the Far East. His first voyage had been backed by England's Muscovy Company, and it sought to find a northern passage over the North Pole. While it may sound patently foolish today, this idea took root in the then-common belief that the endless summer sunshine would cause it to become warmer the farther one traveled north, and that there were likely rivers of water cutting through the ice at the North Pole. There were not. The second voyage was also backed by the Muscovy Company. It sought to find a northeast passage to the north of Russia. It too failed (Explorers, 1998).

These two failed voyages resulted in Hudson's finding no English backers for a third voyage. He turned to the Dutch who were also interested in a northeast passage, and he contracted to sail with the financial backing of the Dutch East India Company.

The instructions provided to him were precise: he must head north or northeast, and he was not to sail to the New World. Shortly after setting sail, however, Hudson reneged on the contract. Based on his belief that the best passage was to the west and aided by threat of a mutiny⁶ were he to continue into the frigid northern waters, he turned his ship due west. He skirted the rocky coasts of present-day Nova Scotia and Maine, continuing south, looking for a western passage. Two months after first sighting land, he discovered a river that looked promising.⁷ This river would be first named the Manhattan River, and was renamed the Hudson River by the English in 1664 when they took control of the area (Van Hinte, 1928). Hudson took his ship 150 miles upriver but could go no further than present-day Albany. Once again empty-handed, he and his crew sailed back towards Europe (Explorers, 1998).

Though the ship was under the Dutch flag, Hudson opted to go first to England. Perhaps he felt that he was in a position to barter with the English given the value of his discovery: while not a passage, it was new land ready for colonization. He was mistaken. Upon arrival in England, Hudson was arrested as a traitor for sailing under another nation's flag. Losing an opportunity, the English sent the ship and its Dutch crew, along with the maps and the ship's journal, to the Netherlands, where the Dutch were quick to understand the importance of Hudson's discovery. They set out to found their colony, *Manhattes*, the very next year, and while it would take several years and several voyages until Hudson's river was re-discovered, the Dutch were at last successful in 1614 with Adriaen Block's voyage on his ship, *de Fortuyn*, the Fortune (Van Hinte, 1928). Block

⁶ Many believe conveniently and not coincidentally so.

⁷ While credited with the discovery of this river, it was actually the explorer Giovanni de Verrazano who first found it. Hudson's impact is not minimal, however, as he was the one who informed the Dutch who later colonized the region of its existence (Explorers, 1998).

founded Fort Nassau near present-day Albany, but its life was short-lived, being abandoned in the same year (Smit, 1972).

The goal of this colony was not particularly expansionist, and that was in keeping with Dutch tradition. Rather, its goal was economic, specifically the business of fur trading (Smit, 1972). Colonization was completely privatized and controlled by merchant companies. The Dutch wanted to create a profitable enterprise, or *factorij*, not recreate Dutch society, and that meant carefully balancing the number of settlers with the amount of money that could be made (Condon, 1968). This goal set New Netherland apart from contemporary settlements like Jamestown. In the first decade of exploration and settlement, the Netherlands gave permission to many merchants to send many ships. This era of free trade ended with the 1621 founding of the Dutch West India Company which governed New Netherland and to which the Dutch Staten Generaal gave exclusive rights. The company found it difficult to make money, but the Dutch government realized that if the venture failed, the New World was effectively England's to have, so they persevered. Their fears were realized in 1664 when England took over the colony; New Netherland became New York, and Dutch migration to the colony was halted.

Apart from the original traders and merchants, the settlers drawn to New Netherland can best be described as support staff. Farmers were brought over to produce the food the merchants and traders needed. Soldiers were brought to protect the merchants, traders and farmers. In 1625, the first permanent fort on the island of Manhattan was built. The fort and the five farms surrounding it were named Nieuw Amsterdam. Land grants, or patroonships, were later offered to those who could bring fifty settlers with them, and in this manner, the population steadily grew. In addition, for

a brief period in 1640, the Dutch West India Company offered free passage to anyone wishing to settle in New Netherland, also increasing the population (Smit, 1972). By the time of the English takeover, it was at 10,000; the population of New Amsterdam was around 1,500.

The first evidence of religion in the colony came in 1624 when Bastiaen Janszoon Krol, a silk worker, was appointed by the Dutch West India Company to serve as the "comforter of the sick" (Van Hinte, 1928). It was not until the 1628 arrival of Jonas Michaelius that organized religion was brought to the region. The Dutch Reformed Church—specifically the Classis of Holland—the state church of the Dutch and Calvinist Netherlands, became the official provincial religion, and Michaelius organized its first congregation in New Amsterdam, which at that point had a population of 270 Europeans. The Dutch Reformed Church continued to thrive in the region even after the English takeover in 1664 (Smit, 1972).

With the English takeover came a name change from New Netherland to New York. The Dutch seized back control in 1673, and, interestingly enough, did not return to the prior names. Rather, they selected new ones, rechristening New York City, the old New Amsterdam, "New Orange." Albany (née Beverwyck) became Willemstadt. The naming and power change was brief, however (Smit, 1972). The Dutch quickly returned New York to the English in exchange for the South American territory of Surinam, Dutch Guiana (van Klompenberg & Clum, 1996).

In 1683, the provincial parliament of New York held its first meeting. Significantly, two-thirds of its members were Dutch, demonstrating that the change in the ruling power had not changed the prestige of the left-behind Dutch members, who

included Peter Stuyvesant among others (Smit, 1972). The Dutch Reformed Church also continued its dominance and continued to report to the Classis of Holland even though New York was now in English territory (De Jong, 1975). Further significant to the continued prestige of the Dutch was the rise of William of Orange in England.

William was a Dutch Protestant, the son of Prince William of Orange-Nassau and Mary Stuart, the daughter of King Charles I of England. William the younger was the Prince of Orange, and the stadholder of Zeeland, Holland and Utrecht (the Netherlands was a republic, not a monarchy at the time). He married Mary, the daughter of King James II. Together, they became King William III and Queen Mary II, and this meant that a portion of the Netherlands and England were in fact under the rule of these joint sovereigns from 1688-1702 (van Klompenberg & Clum, 1996).

Dutch was the official language of New York from 1624 to 1664 (Gehring, 1988), and Dutch survived long after despite an influx of German, English, and other immigrants and their languages into the community. Several factors helped this preservation. The royal situation as described above was one. Another was religious. The Dutch Reformed Church of America (DRCA) continued its close relationship with the Classis of Holland until 1792, though by this point, both English and Dutch were being used in church services. The last sermon to be given in Dutch in New York City took place in 1803, and even isolated congregations such as the Mohawk Dutch—one family of whom would establish Lansing, Michigan—had switched to English by 1820 (Smit, 1972).

It is important to keep in mind, however, that this was the endpoint of gradual language loss that had been going on for decades. As early as the mid-seventeenth

century the preacher Samuel Drissius occasionally gave sermons in English. An article appearing in the *Independent Reflector* in 1754 reported that "the Dutch Tongue, which though once the common dialect of this province [New York] is now scarcely understood." The consistory, the governing body of the congregation, ultimately gave in to repeated requests and in 1763 brought in an ordained minister—a Scot—who could lead services in English. Despite some counter-protests, to which the consistory reassured congregants that English was an appropriate language in which to preach the gospel, the place of English was assured, and increased demand resulted in a second minister being brought in to preach in English in 1769. And in 1794, the General Synod of the Reformed Church of America ceased keeping its minutes in Dutch, switching finally to English (De Jong, 1975). These changes are discussed further in Chapters Three and Four.

Interestingly but perhaps unsurprisingly, with the loss of the language came an upsurge in interest by Dutch Americans in their ancestry (Smit, 1972). Perhaps this helps explain the eager reception that the minister Albertus Van Raalte, leader of the second migration in the mid-nineteenth century, would receive when he came to New York City in 1846 (Lucas, 1955), as is discussed in Chapter Four. Albany's St. Nicholas Society was founded in 1820, dedicated to helping the indigent of Dutch descent. The February 4, 1847, edition of *The Christian Intelligencer*, a publication of the New-York based Reformed Church of America, discusses the founding of the Netherland Society to aid immigrants:

Information having been received that some ten thousand emigrants were about leaving the Netherlands for this country, affords us much pleasure to observe, that

a few gentlemen, natives of Holland, have formed an association, the "Netherland Society", which must be of great advantage to their protection and guidance, as well as for others who may here after migrate from that part of Europe, whence they arrive equally strangers to our language and our customs, and requiring the aid which will now be extended for their welfare, and especially to protect them against the innumerable frauds which emigrants have heretofore been the victims of (in Lucas, 1997, p. 30).

3.2 A Change in the Homeland Creates a New Cause for Emigration

In 1806, Napoleon conquered the Netherlands and placed his brother Louis Bonaparte on its throne. In 1815, the Congress of Vienna banished Napoleon to Elba and placed William I of the House of Orange on the newly unified throne of the Netherlands, which included present-day Belgium until 1830. A new constitution was enacted. William I had a particular interest in religion and religious groups and felt that one of his duties as ruler was to modernize the Dutch church. He appointed a council of clergy to draft an ecclesiastical constitution, which was ratified in January of 1816.

This constitution changed many traditions, not least of all the state church's name—from Gereformeerde (which emphasized the Calvinist roots) to Hervormde Kerk (or "progressive church"). Much more troubling to the group that would later join the wave of migration to Western Michigan and Pella, Iowa, ministers and professors of religion were now instructed that they could ignore the Calvinist creeds adopted by the Synod of Dordrecht in 1618. These three—the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort—laid out the tenets of "original sin, predestination,

virgin birth, divine inspiration of Scripture, and Christ's atonement for sins" (Vanderstel, 1983, p.101). Certainly these were not minor tenets; in fact, they persist as the most closely held tenets of the modern-day American Dutch Christian Reformed tradition. As Smits (1983) explains, this shift in doctrinal freedom signaled to the more conservative members of the church that the new church of William I was no longer the true church, and their secession from it marked a reformation of it. The Seceders—as they came to be known—felt that only they could take the church forward, and they formed a confederation of churches across the Netherlands with this goal in mind. The leaders of some of these churches would lead the Great Migration in the decades to come.

Emigration was not without controversy. It was considered to be unpatriotic and immoral by many religious groups. Writing in the first part of the nineteenth century, the religious publication *Christelijke Stemmen* declared that emigration either for religious or economic reasons was "fleeing in the face of God, because God gave you a place as sentries, expecting that His servants would not walk off" (in Van Hinte, 1928, p.101). Further, emigration—if it had to occur—was deemed even less honorable if it were to a non-Dutch colony (Van Hinte, 1928), and America was clearly non-Dutch.

Initially, emigration was not pondered by many of the religious leaders who would ultimately opt for it. But as more time passed, they increasingly felt that the Netherlands was doomed—literally—to soon feel the full force of God's wrath. The early emigrants to America wrote impassioned pleas to their family and friends still in the Netherlands to get out while they could. Writing to his brother in 1850, Geert Heerspink pled,

Now we would like to warn you while there is still time. Make haste, make haste to flee God's judgment on the Netherlands. For you must believe it—a dark cloud of judgment hangs over the Netherlands. Think about the situation there and you will discover, if it pleases God to enlighten your spirit, that the prophecy of Revelation 18 is about to be fulfilled. Therefore, flee the certain wrath of God. Come here. Live in peace, and enjoy the good fruits of this land" (in Brinks, 1986, p.110).

There is no word as to whether or not Heerspinks' brother followed this advice. Bastiaan Broere explained his decision to emigrate to his family in 1849:

It seemed to me that the Netherlands were forsaking the truth more and more and abandoning God, This and this alone was the only reason I felt the inclination of leaving my Fatherland, My temporal interests did not in the least compel me to leave. On the contrary, they made me very reluctant because I feared that in America I would have to make a living by farming, which I hated, because since childhood I had been on water. But my desire to be over there and have communion with God's people, who were also my people, overcame this objection (in Van Hinte, 1928, p.308).

Broere's reluctance to farm did continue: he abandoned it shortly after his arrival to find work in the city of Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Not all Seceders emigrated, but many did. Only 2% of the population of the Netherlands was made up of Seceders, but they constituted over half the Dutch immigrants to the United States (ten Harmsel, 2002). The difference between those who stayed and those who left was tied to a secession within the Secession which began in

1840 with Reverend H.P. Scholte's suspension by the Seceded Churches General Synod. Scholte, whose stronghold of influence was in Zeeland, was accused of slander and pushed out by Reverend Simon van Velzen whose influence had spread into Amsterdam, the General Synod's seat (Smits, 1983). Scholte would later found the colony at Pella, Iowa. Van Raalte was similarly ostracized for his opposition to the Church Order of Dort. Van Raalte would become the founder of the colony at Holland, Michigan. Another man, a weaver named Gijsbert Haan, would also come to play an important role in the formation of West Michigan's Dutch community; notably, he was initially a follower of van Velzen, and migrated apparently for economic rather than religious reasons.

Van Raalte was the first of the ministers to leave, in 1846. Along with one thousand of his followers, he emigrated to America, eventually settling in West Michigan. Scholte left in 1847 with seven hundred followers and made his way to Iowa, where he would be joined by seventy-two others the following year and two-hundred sixty-three the year after (Smits, 1983). This study focuses on Van Raalte's West Michigan colony, and the Grand Rapids, Michigan CRC community that would split from it in 1857, but mentions Scholte's Pella colony when parallel or contrary developments occurred. Haan, too, emigrated in 1847 along with his wife and their nine children. They settled in Grand Rapids where Haan continued as a weaver. It would be a few additional years before his religious influence would be felt. This area of West Michigan is shown below:



Why did the emigration not occur sooner? After all, both Scholte and Van Raalte were each effectively *persona non grata* within the Seceders movement after 1840, and the initial cause of the Secession occurred decades prior to the emigrations of 1846-7. One reason was the negative associations tied to migration discussed earlier. Another cause was a gradual yet significant increase in discrimination against Seceders. According to Smits (1983), all Seceders, not just the followers of the out-of-favor Scholte and Van Raalte, were assaulted verbally and physically on the streets, forced to billet soldiers in their homes, fined for their "unlawful" religious gatherings, imprisoned when they could not pay the fines, and subject to their property being seized. This treatment was compounded within the Seceders' movement by attacks against the followers of Scholte and Van Raalte. Further all this was occurring in a time of great economic hardship for all Netherlanders: both the potato and grain crops were crippled in 1845 and

1846. So while freedom of religion and freedom from persecution were both strong factors motivating emigration, freedom from hunger was as well.

How would these communities once founded in America differ from established Dutch communities or even communities of recent immigrants elsewhere? Van Raalte's own words give us insight into several Dutch communities of the mid-nineteenth century as he encountered many of them as he traveled to his colony's final destination.

In September of 1846, Van Raalte and his followers left the Netherlands aboard the ship the *Southerner* with an eventual goal of settling in Wisconsin or another "western" (what we would today call midwestern) state. They arrived in New York two months later, their journey lengthened by rough seas. In New York, they were greeted by members of the Dutch Reformed Church of America, specifically Thomas De Witt. The DRCA of New York had been following the Seceders' struggles in the Netherlands closely and empathized with Van Raalte's group. De Witt introduced them to New Yorkers who spoke some Dutch—people who had studied in the Netherlands or emigrated more recently, not people who had maintained the language naturally over generations. As Van Raalte's followers explored New York, they met many people eager to help them. Unfortunately, many were also out to rob them. As Smit (1972) described, "immigrants were robbed, cheated, and horribly exploited by unscrupulous hotel and railway agents when they disembarked at New York, not infrequently losing their life's savings in a few hours" (p.12). In 1850, Roelof Brinks warned his mother—shortly to set out on the journey to the United States—to be careful and to keep a close eye on his brother:

Tell my brother not to wander away from you in the cities and get lost. Look after your baggage and your money—wrap it around your body. Brother, when you are on the train, don't put your head out of the window, and don't linger outside of the train when it stops or you will get left behind (in Brinks, 1986, p.22).

While the group had never intended to stay in New York, this dimmer side of their reception and their general worries about travel along with the looming winter's navigational closure of their route (The Christian Intelligencer, December 3, 1846, in Lucas, 1997) cut their visit to New York City short to only a couple days. From there they took the Erie Canal to Albany and then traveled via rail to Rochester and then on to Buffalo (Lucas, 1955) where they would leave to traverse the Great Lakes.

They were surprised to find a Dutch settlement in Rochester, hundreds strong. Van Raalte noted, however, a strong "wordly" element among them, and as is discussed in Chapter Four, "worldliness" was not considered a good thing. It referred to a sense that one had been corrupted by the world, that one had rejected one's values. Ironically, in the decades to come it would be what former followers of Van Raalte described as his "worldliness" which drove the initial and continuing schism in the colony.

In Buffalo, they discovered that the Hollanders who had settled there had in many ways integrated with the community, though this may have been due to the fact that most of the Dutch immigrants to Buffalo had been Catholics (Lucas, 1955). Dutch Catholics integrated more rapidly than Dutch Calvinists, as they joined existing Catholic institutions which were often founded by non-Dutch. The Dutch Calvinist immigrants understood the great value these earlier immigrants held for others from their homeland yet to come, and so set aside their general dislike for Catholics. They knew the Dutch

Catholics were valuable for helping to guide and support newcomers. Within a short time, the word had gotten out in the Netherlands of these communities: G. Heerspink wrote from America to his brother in 1850 giving him the following advice: "If the Lord should please to bring you here, you can stay for a time in Albany, Troy, or Buffalo, New York. There are many Hollanders there who can instruct you in everything" (in Brinks, 1986, p.21). Not only was there local support, but transportation to what would become the new colony in West Michigan was also readily available. An ad appearing in the September 12, 1849 edition (which ran daily in my survey) of the *Grand Rapids Enquirer* makes this clear:

Notice to Emigrants: H.R. Williams will contract to receive and transport goods and passengers from Buffalo to any point on Grand River⁸ by first class Propellers from Buffalo to Grand Haven⁹ or by steamboats from Buffalo via Milwackie [sic] to Grand Haven tri-weekly (p.1).

Similar ads appeared in papers from Buffalo to New York all the way to the Netherlands itself.

Five families in Van Raalte's group stayed behind in Buffalo due to an inability to pay the fare, "eight dollars and fifty cents for each person over twelve years of age," with an "allowed one hundred pounds of goods" according to Jacob Dunnink, writing in 1848 to his parents who had remained in the Netherlands (in Brinks, 1995, p.30).

Understanding the difficulty for many of the immigrants, N. Lyman of Buffalo wrote a

⁸ The Grand River runs across Michigan, through Grand Rapids, and on to the Lakeshore at Grand Haven, Michigan

⁹ Grand Haven is located on the shore of Lake Michigan, twenty miles north of the Holland settlement, thirty miles west of Grand Rapids.

letter to the *Christian Intelligencer* requesting aid for them, which was published on December 31, 1846:

Please have the goodness to say to some of your influential Dutch friends in your city, that there is in Buffalo a company of five families, consisting of about thirty souls, young and old, who are lately from Holland, and who have been prevented from going west for want of means to do so, and are very destitute of means to obtain food and fuel. Clothing they do not need. There are a few persons in our little forsaken Dutch church here, who can speak to them in their mother tongue, and who are using every exertion to make them comfortable [sic], and save them from starving ... They are a class of people deserving attention (in Lucas, 1997, p.29)

Subsequent editorials suggest the people of the community were eager to help, and did so generously.

On November 27, after a short stay in Buffalo and only ten days after their arrival in New York City, Van Raalte's group set off on the steamship the *Great Western* for their journey to their next stop, Detroit. Once again, they were greeted by other Dutch immigrants, though Van Raalte was concerned to already detect "worldliness" in two families who had settled only four months prior (Van Hinte, 1928). Clearly, his settlement was going to have to be someplace new. It was in Detroit that Van Raalte began to consider settling in Michigan rather than farther west, and so on his scouting journey to the west, he made an early stop in Kalamazoo, Michigan and inquired about the lands available for a colony.

Why had Wisconsin fallen out of favor? Van Raalte had decided it was not "healthful": It was being settled by too many other immigrant groups. Of most concern to Van Raalte and his followers were the Germans and the Dutch Catholics, though the number of Norwegians (Haugen, 1969) was also significant by this point. He also believed from the vast forests he saw in West Michigan that the land there must be highly suitable farmland (Lucas, 1955). Unfortunately, he did not realize that much of the forests were pine growing on sand dunes. Finally, he knew that Michigan had developed an extensive network of railroads—with the aid of the Dutch banking firm of Hope and Company which had lent the state of Michigan 1.2 million dollars in 1837 for the purpose of building a rail and canal infrastructure (Smit, 1972)—and he understood the economic importance of being connected to markets outside his colony.

Unfortunately, he underestimated the negative impact the current lack of roads or rails in Western Michigan would have, not to mention the hardship imposed by the lake effect snow which fell at the rate of seven feet per year, snow which drifted far higher due to the winds off Lake Michigan.¹⁰

Some of Van Raalte's followers did leave to attempt to join or form other colonies in Wisconsin. An early tragedy on Lake Michigan in 1847 may have dissuaded many others from following, however. At the end of a journey across Lake Michigan to Sheboygan, Wisconsin, and within sight of land, the Steamship Phoenix suddenly caught fire. Of the over one hundred Dutch immigrants on board, less than a quarter survived.

Van Raalte was also encouraged by the level of support in Michigan from community and industry leaders across the state. On January 22, 1847, they and Van

¹⁰ When these early Dutch wrote to their families back in the Netherlands, complaining about having to walk miles in deep snow, they—unlike most other adults through the ages who have said these words—were not exaggerating.

Raalte met at the Presbyterian church in Detroit. Three resolutions came from the meeting. It was agreed that committees should exist in all the major towns of Michigan to help Dutch immigrants. The committees were then set up for the towns of Marshal, Kalamazoo, Grand Rapids, Grand Haven, Allegan, and Saugatuck. Grand Haven and Saugatuck were coastal towns near the Holland colony. The leaders resolved to help the immigrants because "in their industry, their enterprise, their frugality, their integrity, their love of country, their devotedness to their faith and to freedom in their civil institutions, we recognize those qualities which entitle their descendants to our respect and welcome" (*The Christian Intelligencer*, February 11, 1847, in Lucas, 1997, p.32).

Unlike in New York where it was Dutch Americans helping the new Dutch emigrants, none of these Michigan leaders was of Dutch descent. This warm reception and promise of support, despite the understanding that Van Raalte's goal was to isolate his group, made Michigan seem most appealing of all. Further, this laid the seeds of self confidence that would come to guide many of the later choices of the Dutch, in particular, those who came to join the Christian Reformed Church (the CRC).

Why did Van Raalte and Scholte, the soon-to-be founder of Pella, Iowa, not settle together? After all, the more colonists, the better the chances for a colony's survival. It appears that initially, this might have been the plan. Scholte had delayed his group's departure until the following year, feeling that Van Raalte was taking too large a risk traveling so late in the year. When Scholte arrived in the United States, he was greeted by many of the same members of the DRCA who had greeted Van Raalte, including—significantly—some who had traveled to the Holland colony and who were, to put it mildly, unimpressed by what they saw as little progress in terms of the construction of

buildings and services. Van Raalte wrote optimistically to Scholte about the great potential of the Holland colony. Scholte shared his reaction with others, saying, "I am of the opinion that a good place recommends itself, not by what one might do there but by what has been done and is being done there."¹¹

Avoiding the towns of the newly-formed committees set to aid them—though certainly counting on those committees to aid the colony's business interests—Van Raalte and his followers established themselves in what was then an unpopulated area in West Michigan, abundant with dense forests. They settled in groups, purchasing all available nearby land in order to build their desired tight-knit communities devoid of outsiders, choosing areas “nearly void of institutions, ... designed to encourage ethnic isolation as a strategy for preserving family values and religious precepts” (Brinks, 1995, p.2). They established schools, shops, newspapers, and churches. Within a year of their arrival, they had built thirty houses; within two years, that number had grown to two hundred homes (Brinks, 1986).

They also set to clearing the land, not an easy task because of the dense forests. Why they had not chosen to settle in less heavily forested areas was due to the mistaken belief that land without trees likely was not fertile land. Thus to ensure arable land, forested land was the best bet. Jacob Dunnink described the difficulty involved in clearing this land in a letter to his family in the Netherlands in 1850:

Potatoes are planted on newly cleared land ... two or three are placed together and then the soil is heaped up over them so that they look like mole hills. This is done among the tree stumps. The trees are cut off about three feet above the ground ...

¹¹ In Van Hinte, 1928, p.141.

and then placed in fencerows. ... no one in Holland has ever seen such huge trees
(in Brinks, 1995, p.31).

Scholte, who founded the Pella, Iowa colony, had discussed the problem of the trees and tree stumps too when he wrote of his official objections to joining Van Raalte's Michigan colony:

A Dutch farmer who has already lived half his life on the level land of meadows and fields could not be pleased by the unaccustomed combat with trees and a long continuous scene of leftover tree stumps amid pasture and farmland. Although not underestimating Michigan for its fertility or the worth of its many varieties of timber nor the pleasantness of its many feathered denizens chirping away in the cool shade of the virgin woods, I had, however, learned and lived long enough to realize that for the farmers tree stumps are unpleasant obstacles and the value of timber decreases markedly when everything is woods and woods (from Scholte, 1848, in Van Hinte, 1928, p.141).¹²

Those who persevered and labored to clear the land could, however, turn a quick and tidy profit within the colony. Land was certainly available, as this ad from the September 12, 1849 edition¹³ of the *Grand Rapids Enquirer* illustrates:

Lands for sale: ... most choice Farming Lands situate [sic] in Kent¹⁴ and Ottawa¹⁵ counties in the midst and immediate vicinity of settlements, will be sold by the

¹² From Scholte (1848), in Van Hinte (1928).

¹³ Ad appeared in every 1849 edition of this paper reviewed by the author.

¹⁴ The county of Grand Rapids, Michigan

¹⁵ The county of Holland, Michigan

subscriber at the very low price of one dollar and twenty-five cents to one dollar and fifty cents per acre. Title unquestionable. If preferred, in most cases, can be procured directly from the state. James Davis (p.1).

As H. Van Ejk wrote to family in 1849, "... the cleared land [which cost \$1.25 per acre] is being resold for from \$4 to \$6 per acre." Real estate prices also rose quickly. Van Ejk continued, "The number of houses has tripled. Homes in the city now bring \$100 where at first they sold for \$45" (in Brinks, 1986, p.31).

The colony was not free from difficulty, however. Disease was widespread, as was poverty. The colony's store ran into financial difficulty in 1850. The Board of Trustees which had been set up to manage the colony decided the best solution was to turn over management of community issues to Van Raalte. This began what many would later come to see as Van Raalte's autocratic abuse of power. Editorials about Van Raalte appearing in Holland's colonial newspaper, *De Hollander*, reinforce this sentiment with titles like *Playing Boss* and *The Pope and His Cardinals* (Van Hinte, 1928).

Holland, Michigan and its immediate surrounding area saw its population grow steadily. In 1850, the area had 1,829 residents. This had risen to 9,865 by 1890. That residents still sought isolation and many were still tied to farms can be seen by comparing the latter figure to the actual population of the town of Holland in 1890, 3, 945. Holland also attracted non-Dutch settlers. By 1880, 18% of the population was non-Dutch, either native-born of non-Dutch parents or immigrants from other Western and Eastern European countries. As Kirk (1978) demonstrated, however, the homogeneity of the community remained largely secure as those of Dutch heritage were far more likely to remain in the community than were those of non-Dutch heritage. Studying the period

from 1870-1880, Kirk found a retention of the Dutch-born of 57%, compared with the 34% retention of the non-Dutch born. These figures also indicate that a great number of Dutch were leaving. This study argues that the early Americanization of Holland made it far easier for them to do so.

While many of the early Dutch immigrants settled in rural communities, many also helped to build the area's urban center Grand Rapids into a true city. Grand Rapids had a population of only twenty-seven hundred in 1850; by 1851, four hundred of these were Hollanders (Brinks, 1986). The population of Grand Rapids had grown to 16,500 in 1870 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1923): over three thousand were native Netherlanders (Brinks, 1995). Immigration from the Netherlands did not slow, nor did Grand Rapids' population growth. It had doubled to 32,000 in 1880 and then doubled again by 1890 to over 60,000 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1923). At the turn of the twentieth century, roughly 40% of the Grand Rapids' residents were Dutch, either first-generation or ethnically (ten Harmsel, 2002). By 1920, its population stood at 137, 600; of its citizenry that year, 31,000 were native speakers of Dutch. Only 11,400 of these were actually foreign-born (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1923), a testament to the strength of the Dutch language's persistence in the area.

What drew settlers—those Van Hinte (1928) refers to as "colony drop-outs"—to the city and away from the insulated world of the Holland colony? Certainly the availability of work and higher wages were a draw. Many were artisans; others were unsuccessful at farming and so needed to seek other work. They did not, however, abandon their faith and, in some ways, preserved it more successfully than those remaining in the colony. Contrast these two descriptions, both cited in Van Hinte (1928,

p.309), the first written about the Holland colonists in 1853 in the colony's fifth year of existence, and the second written in 1913 about the Dutch of Grand Rapids:

[The Holland Dutch] persevere under the difficulties incident to Western life with the most unflagging energy [but adopt American ways with] a striking aptitude (New York Tribune, October 8, 1853)

[The Grand Rapids Dutch] however ameliorated may be his present mode of living, and however much he may have become adapted, is still a Hollander. (Jewell, 1913)

The first Hollander to settle permanently in Grand Rapids was Frans Van Driele, who arrived in 1848. He was joined by young women from the Holland colony who were serving as domestic servants for Grand Rapids' families. Many Dutch emigrants on their way to the Holland colony came through Grand Rapids, and a not insignificant number stayed. By July of 1848, this small group had banded together to form the first Dutch congregation in Grand Rapids (Van Hinte, 1928). Sermons in Dutch, given by their pastor, Van Driele, were thus heard in Grand Rapids less than a year after the founding of the Holland colony. The locals certainly noticed. The Grand Rapids newspaper, *The Enquirer*, reported in September, 1849, that the Dutch had taken over the streets of Grand Rapids.

That a Calvinist Dutch enclave had been founded was well advertised back in the Netherlands, "in newspapers, pamphlets, and the correspondence of the participants" (Brinks, 1995, p.11). For prospective immigrants, knowing that the Dutch language and culture were thriving made Western Michigan a very appealing place. For at least one follower of Van Raalte writing to family who had remained in the Netherlands, the lure

was that the new world had made Van Raalte an even more blessed pastor. From A. De Weerd, writing in 1849:

The church is well attended here on Sunday, and it is blessed with the true proclamation of the gospel as provided by our Pastor, A.C. Van Raalte. Yes, brother and sister, the earnestness with which he preaches is beyond description, and the way in which the Lord equips him is wonderful. I never heard him preach that way in the Netherlands (in Brinks, 1986, p.32).

A steady stream of correspondence, such as that documented by Brinks in his 1995 work, *Dutch American Voices: Letters from the United States, 1850-1930*, further helped to keep the new and old communities close, and encouraged more to emigrate.¹⁶ Writing in 1847, Gerrit Bouws promised that those who came would find Michigan a land where "they would no longer be surrounded by ungodliness." For those needing a financial motive, he continued that,

In the colony a man can earn 50 cents per day, but among the Americans he can earn more. ... It is good for carpenters here, and for shoemakers, as people wear out many shoes here. ... Now friends, I invite all who are healthy and desire to work...come. It is good for everyone here (in Brinks, 1986, p.30).

Even when faced with things that might be frightening—wild animals—the final point was always positive and upbeat. Reverend A. Zwemer wrote:

¹⁶ This was common with many immigrant communities. Hasselmo (1976) writes of letters from Swedes who had settled in America stimulating Swedish emigration, and not just for the recipients. Those in Sweden receiving the letters not infrequently shared them with their local press which reprinted them, thus expanding their influence greatly.

Wild cats, foxes, raccoons, and other little animals still frequently do damage in the hen houses. When these woods were first settled, the howling of the wolves echoed through the night; now they are no longer heard. There are still one or two bears in the neighborhood and they are still seen occasionally. But they seem to understand that the Hollanders have bought these woodlands and that they no longer roam on their own land (in Brinks, 1986, p.34).

Peter J. Bulthuis expressed a similar sentiment. After relating several stories of run-ins with bears, he wrote, "But you should not be frightened by these tales, because the bear do not often come out and then only during the very long winters with very deep snow, and also only during the later evening when people are out in the woods" (in Brinks, 1986, p.34). Why it should have been comforting that the bears came out only when people were "in the woods" which is precisely where the tales of run-ins with bears had all occurred, or that only when there was very deep snow, which was the norm for many of the winter months, is unclear, but Bulthuis certainly did his best to reassure.

New Dutch immigrants found a welcoming state and local government eager for immigrants to develop the wilderness of West Michigan. State and local officials, following through on their promises of assistance, ordered roads and other infrastructure built to connect the new migrants, their goods and services to markets and the goods and services of other Michiganders (Vanderstel, 1983). In 1848 alone, the state gave 4,000 acres to the West Michigan counties of Kent (Grand Rapids), Ottawa (Holland) and Allegan (the lakeshore county bordering the south of Ottawa), providing that they used

this acreage to create roads connecting Holland, Michigan to Grandville¹⁷, Grand Haven, and Allegan (Kirk, 1978).

Infrastructure was especially crucial because the Dutch continued to expand their colony and frequently in their quest for isolation chose to develop additional new areas rather than settle in established areas. State officials even created a brochure, *Michigan en Zijne Hulpbronnen*, and had it distributed in the Netherlands in order to lure additional Dutch immigrants. Shopkeepers learned enough Dutch to be able to communicate and attract the new clientele (Vanderstel, 1983). Gerrit Roelofs, an immigrant to Grand Rapids in 1871 at the age of eighteen, found no difficulty communicating in Grand Rapids even though he lacked English, as one-fifth of the city “was a Hollander” (Roelofs Verbrugge, 1994, p.61).

The Dutch founded schools and colleges, including Hope College (Holland, MI) and Calvin College (Grand Rapids, MI). Dutch-language newspapers and publications flourished, and included *De Paarl* (1858-1860), *De Verzamelaar* (1860-1865), *De Hollander* (1851-1895), *De Hope* (1865-1933), *De Wachter*, *De Christen Werkman* (1892-1894), *Een Stem des Volks* (1893-1900) and *Stemmen uit de Vrije Gemeende* (1880-1920). The place of the Dutch press and schools are discussed in Chapters Four and Five.

3.3 Dutch immigration rises after World War II

The decade after World War II saw a large migration, called the Planned Migration (Doezema, 1979). Facing economic problems that pre-dated the war, recovery from Nazi occupation which promised to be harsh and difficult, a high birthrate and shrinking arable

¹⁷ A town just west of Grand Rapids

land, the Dutch government sought partners such as Canada and Australia and began to subsidize relocation expenses for those willing to emigrate. A million did, though United States immigration quotas limited immigration from the Netherlands to only 100,000 permitted entry to the United States (Doezema, 1979).

The Dutch of the Planned Migration who came to the United States reacted quite differently from their nineteenth century predecessors, largely because of changes in U.S. immigration policy beginning in the 1920s after World War I. World War I was a major turning point for the Dutch American community. It was a major turning point for the United States as a whole, specifically in terms of social policy. The 1920s saw an enormous reduction in the number of immigrants allowed into the United States. The immigration acts of 1921 and 1924 respectively instituted a quota system. The 1921 act established an annual immigration quota of 3% of the members of that group in the United States in the 1910 Census. The 1924 act reduced the percentage to 2% and based it on the 1890 Census. The goal was to reduce the Italian and Irish immigrant quotas, as the number of those immigrants had increased significantly between 1890 and 1910. The immigration policies remained largely intact through the rest of the 1920s and 1930s. World War II, however, led to many refugees, and the Displaced Persons Act of 1948 tried in a restrictive way to accommodate them. It did not increase quotas, but it did give preference to refugees, and it allowed some countries to borrow against future annual quota allotments (LeMay, 1987). During the Planned Migration, of the 100,000 Dutch who came to the United States, most were repatriated from Indonesia, and many of the Dutch-Indonesians who came to the United States settled on the West Coast (Prenger,

1991). Many of those who went to Canada came from the Netherlands and settled in the Niagara region of southeastern Ontario.

Because of small U.S. immigration quotas, Canada saw a much higher number of Dutch immigrants in this period, and their migration patterns are very telling in their similarity to the Dutch migration to the United States in the nineteenth century. Van Dijk (2001) studied the migration patterns of Dutch Catholics and Dutch Calvinists migrating to Canada after World War II and found the Catholics eager to join the existing Catholic structure, specifically the churches and schools. Swierenga (1994) refers to this pattern as the "Roman Catholic melting pot," and notes that in it, the Dutch "language was the first to go" (p.131). In contrast, the Dutch Calvinists opted to build their own churches and schools when they were unable to find existing Canadian institutions to suit their purposes (Van Dijk, 2001).

In an interesting footnote, whereas in the nineteenth century it was the Michigan government working to persuade Dutch people to relocate, in the twentieth century, it was the Dutch government. And just as the nineteenth-century Michigan government created propaganda in the form of brochures, so too did the Dutch government in the technology of the day: filmstrips and short movies. *Mijn Neef in Canada* (My Nephew in Canada) shows a woman reading a letter from her nephew, his voiceover detailing the wonders of life in Canada. Images of immaculate farms with for sale signs appear as the nephew extols the "... excellent land which is for sale everywhere," land which reminds him of "our good country before the war." The Canadian government as well as the Dutch ambassador to Canada protested this film as being too idealistic and setting up false expectations, but it was widely shown for a couple years (Prenger, 1991). Ironically

it was the Dutch government that protested the Michigan brochure distribution on the same grounds a hundred years before.

This chapter has discussed the history of Dutch migration to the United States from the eighteenth to the twentieth century and the language assimilation patterns of the migrations. Further, it singled out and illustrates the effect of religious affiliation on this migration. The next three chapters discuss how the factors of religion (Chapter 4), identity (Chapter 5), and shift (Chapter 6) were intertwined in the communities under discussion and how they affected language use.

CHAPTER 4

THE ROLE OF RELIGION

Religion has been central to the identity of Dutch immigrants in America since the seventeenth century. Religion was also a powerful variable in language change and choice in this community, and this dissertation suggests that religion has been incorrectly overlooked as a significant variable in many cases of language change.

This chapter considers the early years of settlement and the accompanying religious disagreements that led to the 1857 schism which split the Dutch Reformed Church in West Michigan into two groups, the present-day Reformed Church of America (RCA) and Christian Reformed Church (CRC). The nineteenth-century schism contrasts with the Americanization process of the Dutch Reformed Church in New York in the eighteenth century. The two disagreements played out similarly as battles between progressive and conservative forces, yet the eighteenth-century process did not result in a schism, while the nineteenth-century struggle did, one that persists to this day. This chapter also considers how immigrant status complicates issues of language and identity. It also contrasts the Americanization of the RCA with the preservation of Dutch language and culture in the CRC, a theme further developed in Chapter Five.

4.1 Religion in the Holland Colony, 1847-1856

The nineteenth-century Dutch immigrants to the colony of West Michigan came largely from rural areas, and as has been discussed, often came in groups with other members of their village church led by their church pastor, the *dominie* (a term still in use until World War I). Sometimes they followed a wealthier landowner, as in the case of Jannes vande Luyster, who directed the re-settlement of over four hundred farmhands to found what is now Zeeland, Michigan (Brinks, 1995). Once in West Michigan the Dutch in many senses recreated their old villages, settling next to old neighbors, naming the new towns after the old towns and regions, like Noordeloos, Harlem, Zutphen, Drenthe, Holland, Zeeland, Vriesland, and Graafschaap.

Van Raalte was—despite his desire for isolation discussed in Chapter Three—keenly aware of the advantages of connecting to established groups. One such established group was the New York-based Dutch Reformed Church of America. After all, it was its New York City pastor, Dominie De Witt, who had traveled to the Netherlands in the mid-1840s to persuade Van Raalte and Scholte that America would welcome them. It was again De Witt who greeted them upon their arrivals in New York and helped to plan Van Raalte's passage to Michigan. And for those families unable to make the trek to Michigan due to the onset of winter and meager finances, it was De Witt through the *Christian Intelligencer* who encouraged, collected, and distributed aid for them. As Van Hinte (1928) notes,

[R]elationships began that were of immediate, temporary usefulness, due to the great amount of aid they brought to the immigrants, aid that 'indeed put to shame,

that is to say, put Holland to shame.¹⁸ They also became of permanent value since they resulted in a great cooperation, even association in church matters. These established Dutch-American ties have certainly favored the process of assimilation, the adaptation of the Dutch elements to American society (p.131).

Further, in the early years of the 1840s, prior to the arrival of Van Raalte's group, the DRCA had seen small groups of its members settle to the west, specifically in five counties of lower Michigan. These settlements, while small, were significant enough for the DRCA to form a Classis¹⁹ of Michigan,²⁰ something which no doubt further attracted Van Raalte. No wonder then that Van Raalte decided that a possible alignment with De Witt's Dutch Reformed Church of America (DRCA) might be a positive move. Once he received assurances that they were doctrinally aligned, and understanding the great deal of support such a union would offer, Van Raalte and other church leaders traveled in 1850 to Albany to make the union official. The benefits were felt immediately: money to build churches and to deal with recurring hardships, and schooling for the ministry²¹ were provided (Lucas, 1955).

Not every member of the greater colony felt as Van Raalte did. Two pockets—the more rural Dutch immigrants who had settled outside the colony in smaller or individual family groups, along with those who had settled in Grand Rapids—were disturbed by what they saw as an Americanization of their faith by the New York DRCA.

¹⁸ A reference to the fact that the aid came from America and Americans, not the Dutch in the Netherlands

¹⁹ In the Christian Reformed governance structure, there are three "assemblies": local *councils*, regional *classes*, and national *synods*.

²⁰ These settlements never expanded, and were taken over in terms of influence by Van Raalte's group.

²¹ Importantly, this schooling was first provided at the New Brunswick Seminary in New Jersey, meaning that all new RCA clergy members were trained in English.

The DRCA had adopted such American religious practices as Sunday School and revivals. They had also expanded the communion and the hymnals to include hymns not directly based on scripture (making them "of the devil" according to Van Hinte, 1928, p.850), allowed members to join Masonic organizations, altered the funereal liturgy, and begun to allow missionary work. They preferred choir singing to congregational singing and allowed baptisms to occur in private homes, not—as many felt—in the presence of the congregation as they should be (ten Harmsel, 2002; Brinks, 1995; Melton, 1996; Lucas, 1955). It cannot be overstated how sacrilegious these changes appeared to the more conservative Dutch immigrants, even though to modern eyes they appear completely consistent with what most Christian faiths consider proper.

Added to this was the fact that schisms were nothing new to this group. After all, it had been a secession in the 1830s that had created the original "Seceders." A second secession in the 1840s had sparked the immigration of those seceding from the Seceders. Their close-knit communities and planned isolation led to religious infighting which can be expressed by the old Dutch cliché: with one Dutchman, a theologian; with two Dutchmen, a church; with three Dutchmen, a schism.

4.2 Eighteenth Century Americanization in the New York Dutch Reformed Church

Americanization in the New York Dutch Reformed Church (DRCA) had also occurred quite early, in the first quarter of the eighteenth century. Comparing the processes of Americanization at these two distinct times is instructive. As Van Hinte (1928) notes:

They [the progressive members] wanted to break away from narrow, characteristic Dutch customs. The first organ in a Reformed Church was heard in

1727 in New York ... there were complaints about sermons being too long. There were also families that did not wish to be separated by sex but preferred to sit together as a group. The young people of New York in particular wanted to introduce the English language into church life (pp.49-50).

Sermons were indeed long. A Swede, Peter Kalm, visited New York in 1749 and attended services at a Dutch Reformed Church; this turned out to be an all-day affair. With the first sermon lasting two hours, and the second lasting two-and-a-half, Kalm wrote in his diary irritably that it was quite impossible to remember sermons this long, and therefore impossible to learn from them. "Hunc diem perdidi," he wrote: The day was a useless waste (De Jong, 1975).

The drive for modernization came not only from the congregants, but from church leadership as well. As they continued to report to and take all direction from the Classis of Holland, and as getting direction in the eighteenth century meant awaiting its arrival on a boat from across the ocean, the delay in decision-making was a hardship for the church. Further, without an American seminary or the authority to create one, all ministers had to be brought from the Netherlands. Many of the ministers sent by the Classis of Holland were young and inexperienced, and—many guessed—not the best and brightest of their seminary class. They were correct; at the time, being sent to the New World was not a prime placement. American church leaders were desperate for more freedom to make immediate decisions and to train their own clergy. These progressives came to be known as the Coetus faction, and they scored a coup for progress when in 1766 they were granted a charter by George III to found Queen's College, modern-day

Rutgers University, with the expressed purpose of training clergy for the Dutch Reformed Church (De Jong, 1975).

This push towards modernization was not without an internal counter-push, led by the conservative faction of the church, which came to be known as the Conferentie. They strongly resisted any weakening of ties to the Classis of Holland. A clear indication of the conflict came in the form of disagreement over language use:

[T]he liturgy, psalms, and hymns were translated into English in 1745, but due to the influence of the Conferentie group, these were infrequently used and often not even permitted.

The counter-push was not able to stop the progressives for long, however, and by the time of the Revolutionary War, the transition to English was largely complete. In 1772, the Coetus and Conferentie came to an agreement that was largely based on the progressive Coetus view²² with the caveat that an annual report would still be sent to the Classis of Holland. And this is the key point for this study: by the time of the nineteenth century migrations, English—not Dutch—was the language of the DRCA (ten Harmsel, 2002; Brinks, 1995; Melton, 1996; Lucas, 1955). In fact, a move to drop "Dutch" from the official name of the church was made in 1840. It failed, but a similar move in 1867 succeeded.

²² The Coetus view was favored for much the same reason as progressive views often win out over conservative views over time: the leaders of the Conferentie were older and they had largely died out by the time of the Revolutionary War.

4.3 Seeds of Discontent Grow to an 1857 Schism in the Michigan Colony

With this historical context, it is understandable why these nineteenth-century Dutch Calvinist immigrants who opposed joining the New York DRCA saw themselves as very different from other immigrants coming to the American melting pot, or from their fellow Dutch who had come in the two centuries before. They—unlike how they perceived other immigrants—had not come for economic opportunity, though they certainly did find that. They came to establish a Dutch Calvinist community with close ties to the homeland. They did not want to stop being Dutch: they were simply not willing to live in what they saw as a too tolerant, too progressive and a breaking-from-tradition, Dutch society:

A major theme among the founding populace was that their particular cultural attachments were under siege in Holland [Netherlands]. Their goals, then, were not to become mainstream Americans and absorb new values but to preserve old values and to remain, in their sense of it, more Dutch than the Dutch (Brinks, 1995, p.11).

They had not given up their old lives and traveled to this new land for naught. They understood, however, the damage that a schism could cause: long-term wounds and difficult reconciliation. Unity for the time being was the only option, and thus the conservative groups who had settled in the more rural areas and in Grand Rapids initially followed Van Raalte and joined the DRCA. After all, despite their concerns over Americanization, they did feel that the colony was God's gift to them, something they conveyed in often idyllic terms. Writing in 1850, Jacob Dunnink describes his fellow colonists as,

[S]olemn and God-fearing. The language of Canaan is very much in use here, and the Bible occupies a very prominent place ... It seems that the Lord has preserved this place for the Netherlanders because almost no Americans settle here, nor are there any strange religious groups here (in Brinks, 1986, p.41).

As will be seen with some of Dunnink's later correspondence, his idealism waned in the coming years. Marcus Nienhuis, writing in 1854, spoke of bounty and high wages, but was quick to tie that to faith:

[Y]ou must not think that the worship of God has been lost from sight here. Indeed not, for I believe that religion is observed here better than in Holland (in Brinks, 1983, p.133).

For the settlers, their faith was the reason for their bounty, and they were quick to make certain that their friends and family understood that the New World had not undermined that; it had strengthened it.

Further increasing the tension, the RCA quickly embraced English being taught in the colony schools. In 1850, Geert Heerspink describes the colony to his brother:

Netherlanders are blessed far above others in this country—in the Holland colony there are seven churches and six ministers, The children are educated in both the Dutch and English language, with special attention to the teaching of salvation (in Brinks, 1986, p.39).

Missionary work—already mentioned as a controversial Americanization—was absorbing many of the funds of the Holland, Michigan church. In fact, in 1851, fully 65% of the offerings given to the church by the congregation were spent on missionary

work, and this was during a time of great economic hardship and struggle for the new colony (Van Hinte, 1928). Surely, many felt the money could be better spent within the colony itself.

Their early Americanization would become a point of pride for the Holland RCA in the decades to come. On the ninetieth anniversary of the colony's founding, held in 1937, this point is stressed by the keynote speaker, Samuel Zwemer, as quoted in the February 10, 1937 edition of the *Grand Rapids Press*:

These original settlers²³ became at once loyal Americans ... They were never hyphenated Americans, but citizens with but one flag ... When the Civil War broke out, no section of Michigan was more loyal to the Union or laid a larger offering of life on the altar of patriotism than the Dutch community (p.2).

While Zwemer provided no evidence to support this claim, even if this was hyperbole aimed at bolstering the zeal of the audience, it demonstrates how great a point of pride their early Americanization was to members of the RCA.

These clear trends toward Americanization alienated the conservatives to the breaking point, and as Brinks (1986) notes, "the potential for denominational unity fractured on the rock of Americanization" (p.107).

The first clear breaks came within six years of the colony's founding, the final break within ten. What started with one church led by weaver and layman Gijsbert Haan in 1853 grew to a movement of several churches by 1857, the year of the formal split. Reporting at the time, the *Grand Rapids Eagle* of February 2, 1857, expressed concern over this split:

²³ One of whom, Jacob Vanderveen, who had been a small child when he and his parents followed Van Raalte to the colony, was present at this anniversary ceremony and seated in a place of honor.

We understand that a large portion of the Holland Congregation, worshipping in the Brick Church on Bostwick Street [Grand Rapids], have withdrawn from the organization, owing to some misunderstanding as to points of Church government. The Seceders under the ministration of Rev. Mr. Klyn, held services in Collins Hall, yesterday, and a very large attendance was present. Mr. Klyn has been very popular with the Hollanders generally, and we regret, exceedingly to hear of any dissensions amongst them ... Rev. Mr. Van Raalte, of the Colony, officiated in the old church, yesterday. (p.3)

Despite Van Raalte's attempts to preserve unity, the schism could not be stopped.

In the following decade, the new seceders' suspicions about the strong American element of the DRCA seemed further validated: not only did the Civil War result in an increase in the "American spirit" in the DRCA, in 1867 the "Dutch" Reformed Church of America became simply the Reformed Church of America (Van Hinte, 1928).

Seceders from the RCA formed their own church, the Christian Reformed Church (hereafter CRC), something that Van Hinte—writing seventy years later—viewed very positively:

[T]he founding of a new "American" church organization that ... contributed, more than any other organization, to the preservation of the Dutch character of the Dutch colonists (p.366).

Initially, their largest congregation was in Graafschap, Michigan, with over a hundred members. The first Grand Rapids congregation had only fifty members (Lucas, 1955), but not long after, the CRC secessionists established Grand Rapids as their headquarters, further increasing the gap between themselves and the RCA. Holland, Michigan, was

now firmly RCA-affiliated. Grand Rapids was the domain of the CRC and quickly saw its status as the more orthodox of the two rise. In 1928, Van Hinte described Grand Rapids as the "Jerusalem of American Calvinism, ... the most important and influential in spreading orthodoxy to all urban and rural settlements" (p.311), "the cradle of the orthodox" (p.309), and even a place of "hyper-Calvinism (p.844)." One-hundred fifty years after the founding of the two colonies, this regional and religious divide still remains, though the cities are but twenty miles apart.

Writing in 1876 from Grand Rapids, Jacobus Pietersen discussed his reasons for selecting the CRC over the RCA:

The RCA here is much like the big church in the Netherlands. The RCA is connected with many American churches ... and thus you can easily imagine that the preachers can preach just about anything they want. I don't like that. It is much too lax. But we, the CRC, are different (in Brinks, 1986, p.119).

Further, the CRC was quick to note that the RCA was beginning to have a significant number of non-Dutch members join it²⁴ (Van Hinte, 1928), which further alienated those who did not feel that culture and religion could or should be separated and reinforced their notion that the RCA was no longer truly "Dutch."

The schism drove still others to flee both churches, and when that occurred, the only option was an "English" church. How closely Dutch identity was tied to being a member of a Dutch church can be seen in this correspondence from a R. Lohuis who did leave both churches. He attempts to justify his defection in 1869:

²⁴ Something the CRC rejected then, but now continues to strive for in its quest to diversify.

The greatest need here is for proper worship, because worship among the Dutch-Americans is in constant turmoil. One person wants this, and the other wants something else, and everyone thinks he has as much to say as the next fellow ... One side strives to support the Big Church [the RCA], from Holland [Michigan], and the other side supports the seceders [the CRC]. If we go to church we go to the English Church which we find more to our liking. We belong to the English Congregational or Presbyterian Church which is most like the Netherlands Reformed Church in Holland [Netherlands] (in Brinks, 1983, p.139).

It does appear, however, that the majority of the settlers chose to stay with either the RCA or the CRC.

While the RCA looked to its American roots for guidance, the CRC immediately re-cemented ties with its counterpart in the Netherlands. When its first theological school was founded in 1864, many of its instructors were brought from the Netherlands, and up until 1920, CRC policy took its direction from the Netherlandic church (Brinks, 1995).

While the CRC and RCA split involved many theological differences, at the root was what the CRC characterized as “worldliness” on the part of the RCA—a term Van Raalte had applied to Dutch settlers in Buffalo and Detroit but ten years prior. Quite simply, the CRC believed that the RCA had rejected its roots, specifically its Dutch roots, and had been Americanized. This belief is clearly expressed in the CRC publication of 1874, by F. Hulst: A pamphlet entitled *Zemenspraak Tusschen Jan, Pieter, en Hendrik*. The pamphlet was written as a conversation among three young Dutch Americans who were confused about the differences between the CRC and the RCA. "Pieter" takes the lead in explaining the differences and discusses Americanization in particular, "I am

exceedingly concerned about the responsibility of those [Van Raalte and the other leaders] who handed the Dutch people over to an English Church ... they bring their goal into the open [to make the Dutch] lose their nationality" (in Brinks, 1983, p.143). While the RCA did—in several responses to this pamphlet—and would certainly still reject this claim, as discussed above in many significant ways they had Americanized. The most striking and symbolic way was the ready adoption of the English language, alluded to already, and to be further discussed in Chapter Five.

4.4 The Religious Experiences of Other Contemporary Dutch Settlements

The CRC and RCA split led to two groups forging different paths in their American experience. Which path is more typical compared with other immigrant groups? What was the experience of the Dutch who did not settle in the colony, the ones who for example settled in Pella, Iowa with Scholte? Or in Wisconsin, an area with many nineteenth century Dutch Catholic immigrants? What was the experience of Dutch Calvinists who upon arriving on the East Coast chose not to leave and settled into towns on the eastern seaboard? What was the experience of non-Dutch immigrants with respect to religion?

4.4.1 The Dutch Reformed Colony of Pella, Iowa

The largest and best-known Dutch Calvinist community outside of the West Michigan colony was that of Pella, Iowa, founded in the same year as Holland, Michigan, by Reverend H.P. Scholte. As discussed in Chapter Three, for Scholte's group the migration

experience was similar to Van Raalte's group, though they had the experience of Van Raalte's group to guide them somewhat.

The Holland, Michigan, community led by Van Raalte joined the Reformed Church of America (RCA) in 1850. Several Pella, Iowa congregations followed suit in 1856, yet other abstained. In 1866, the first CRC congregation in Pella was established, and by 1877 a large enough number of congregations had also turned to the CRC to warrant the formation of the Classis Iowa. However, Central College—the educational heart of the community—was aligned with the RCA. Ultimately, while Pella, Iowa, had both CRC and RCA congregations, the friction between them appears to be less, and that may be largely due to the overwhelming and early push to Americanize.

To understand this early move to Americanize, it is helpful to understand more about the community leader himself, Hendrick Peter Scholte. Significantly for the development of Pella, Scholte, like Van Raalte, wore many hats in the community; in fact, he was known as "the Hollanders' prophet, priest, and king" (Lucas, 1955, p.190). His diverse roles would lead to conflict with many of his followers. Scholte was also an early and firm believer in the need to Americanize.

Beyond serving as the community's Dominie, Scholte was also its banker, notary public, *Pella Gazette* publisher, justice of the peace, attorney, school inspector, realtor, and even an agent of the New York Life Insurance Company. It was Scholte who had purchased the 18,000 acres on which Pella was founded, and, controversially, he had done so in his own name rather than in that of the colony's association. Further, when members of the community purchased land from him, it appeared to many to take longer to receive deeds in their own names than it should. They were also concerned that the

prices Scholte was charging for his acreage was higher than what neighboring plots not owned by Scholte were being sold for (Lucas, 1955). While most historians do not believe that Scholte's intents were malicious—the consensus is that he was a poor bookkeeper trying to keep up with too many divergent business commitments—so much power wielded by one person caused discomfort.

Scholte's belief in the importance of Americanization was apparent very early on. In the fall of 1847, two-hundred male members of the colony declared their intent to become United States citizens. This declaration was made known to the Iowa Legislature in early 1848, accompanied by a request for colony members to run for election. This was granted and the first election was held in 1848. As the newly elected school inspector, it fell on Scholte to organize the school district and build the school, which he did. The first schoolhouse also served as the first church. English was not only taught in the beginning (in addition to Dutch as a practical necessity), it received priority. Any doubt about Scholte's intentions to Americanize his colony rapidly disappears when one considers this contemporary quotation:

This [the learning of English] together with intermarriage between native and foreign-born citizens, will leave in a few years but little difference between Pella and other more exclusively American towns. (Lucas, 1955, p.193).

The linguistic situation in Pella, Iowa is discussed further in Chapter Five.

Scholte's feeling that intermarriage was crucial to the future of the colony can also be seen in his very early attempts to encourage non-Dutch Americans to settle in Pella, and to encourage the state of Iowa to found their "Central University" (today's Central College) in Pella, which they did. Scholte donated the land for its first building. Scholte

did proclaim, however, that he did not want Pella to lose all its Dutch identity, but where he felt it was best preserved was, according to Lucas (1955), in its:

[I]ndustry, order, honesty, and piety of the Dutch character ... in the neatness of town and country, the excellence of the roads and highways, the scientific reclamation of the soil, the promotion of schools and other institutions of learning, and the multiplication of house of worship (p.193).

What ultimately preserved the Dutch identity of the region the best, however, was its lack of industry. Despite the college and the arrival of Americans, Pella remained largely rural and agricultural. This led to isolation of many residents, which in turn led to a preservation of the old ways. The subsequent waves of immigrants from the Netherlands in the 1850s and later further helped to maintain this Dutch character.

4.4.2 Dutch Catholics in Wisconsin

Not only Calvinists chose to emigrate from the Netherlands. Many Dutch Catholics did as well. How did their religious situations compare to that of the Dutch Calvinists?

Dutch Catholics had been migrating to what would become the United States as long as the Dutch Calvinists, from the early seventeenth century. Their numbers, however, were so small that they are largely lost to history. Further, up until 1640, those living in New Netherlands were not allowed to practice any religion other than the official religion of the Dutch Reformed Church. The first Catholic missionary to New Netherlands was notably not Dutch. He was the French Jesuit, Isaac Jogues. His work, however, focused on converting Native Americans, and was short-lived. He was killed in 1646.

The first notable migrations of Dutch Catholics began to occur in the mid 1840s and were driven by similar sentiments to the Dutch Calvinist migrations, for the Catholics too had seen their religious and economic lives affected by changes in the Netherlands. As chronicled in an 1846 announcement in *De Catholijke Nederlandsche Stemmen*, they faced:

[The loss of their] most precious liberties, and because of more and more pressing taxes and the increasing cost of food, their material as well as religious and moral welfare has for some time been noticeably reduced (in Van Hinte, 1928, pp.174-5).

They were not permitted to form Catholic schools—and one priest who did so suffered six years of exile as a result (Van Hinte, 1928)—or have an archbishop oversee their bishops. They also, interestingly, had been following the writings of Scholte in the summer of 1846 in *De Reformatie*—which had been reprinted in *De Catholijke Nederlandsche Stemmen* (Van Hinte, 1928)—within which the first discussions of emigration by the Calvinist Seceders were being considered (Lucas, 1955). A serious impediment to emigration was the belief that it was morally wrong and, in fact, a sin to reject the land that God had given you as your homeland. Despite the difference in creed, the Catholics took note that a religious leader such as Scholte was preaching the opposite, which in turn planted the seed for them to consider leaving the Netherlands.

A few scattered families and individuals began to emigrate in 1846 and 1847. They were clearly on their own: both Van Raalte and Scholte and others like them harbored ill will towards Catholics. Van Raalte described them as disreputable (Lucas, 1955) and bad people (Van Hinte, 1928); Scholte barred them from membership in his

Pella association. As a result, the many Dutch networks available to the Calvinist Seceders were not available to the Catholics.

Undeterred, a larger group of one-hundred twenty set off in 1847 under the guidance of a man named Meester C. Verwayen with the goal of founding a settlement in Missouri. The same 1846 announcement in *De Catholijke Nederlandsche Stemmen*, reported that they hoped to settle together:

At Nijmegen, Province of Gelderland, various wealthy Catholic families who have made a decision to leave next February, 1847, for North America, and to buy land along the Missouri, have appointed a committee for the purpose of making all the provisions and arrangements necessary for their departure. A meeting place has been decided upon now where everyone who has the same plan and possesses the necessary means can join, to the end of helping carry out the plan jointly and to prevent parties arriving in America independently from being separated by great distances from one another and settling in various places in isolation. By intelligent cooperation an entire area could be purchased in order to establish a Dutch Catholic Colony (in Van Hinte, 1928, p.175).

It appears, however, that despite these best intentions, the group broke up and scattered, starting with its arrival in New Orleans and continuing upriver. No colony was founded, and the immigrants simply blended in, lost to history, in the places they chose to settle. The first organized wave of migration that resulted in the founding of a Dutch Catholic colony would therefore be led by Reverend Theodorus van den Broek in 1848, rather than Verwayen (Lucas, 1955).

The United States was not unknown to van den Broek. He had spent the better part of the previous two decades there, and had purchased land in the Fox River Valley region of Wisconsin, near Green Bay. His motives for founding a Dutch Catholic colony were also not entirely pure. He had been serving as a missionary to Native Americans in the Fox River Valley. He had hoped to build dams and canals on the Fox River but could not find laborers skilled for the task. Realizing that no people were better skilled at building dams and canals than the Dutch, he returned to Amsterdam in 1847 to organize such a group of skilled laborers. While no evidence suggests that his interest in their religious welfare was anything but genuine, he did encourage potential immigrants to think about how settling in a group with him provided them the only true migration option. He told them, not untruthfully, that despite the disagreements between other religious sects in the United States, all shared a strong anti-Catholic prejudice. Only by establishing themselves in an isolated all-Catholic colony could they avoid the "wolves [non-Catholics] everywhere [who] seek to crowd in among the sheep" (in Lucas, 1955, p.217).

In 1848, van den Broek and three hundred Catholic followers left Rotterdam for their new home, what would become the villages of Little Chute and Hollandtown, Wisconsin. They would thus found the only cohesive Dutch-American Catholic community to this day. Their community, however, prioritized their Catholicism over their "Dutchness." Van den Broek preached in English, Dutch, French and German for there were native speakers of all those tongues living nearby (Lucas, 1955). The specific early linguistic environment of this community, including how the language question was handled in the schools, is discussed further in Chapter Five.

At the time of Van Hinte's writing in 1928, there were 40,000 Dutch Roman Catholics in the United States, but only twenty-five specifically Dutch congregations had ever been established, and as these congregations did not build connections with one another to form a larger group, they never organized. Without the critical and concentrated mass of the Dutch Calvinists, they were unable to develop what De Jong (1975) described as an "ethnic communal life of their own" (p.201). The result of this was a low rate of language persistence.

Clearly, for the Dutch immigrants, religion—and which religion they practiced—was a key factor in determining how and whether language would be preserved. As Doezema (1979) makes clear,

The religious history of the Dutch in America confirms the fact that church life was a key factor in language retention. In multi-ethnic Catholic and Jewish parishes and in urban areas such as New York, Dutch immigrants mingled with co-religionists of other nationalities and readily lost their language and culture. The slowest assimilators by contrast were the Midwestern Calvinists who created isolated ethnic communities (p. xviii).

Brinks (1986) further asserts that

The retention of ethnic identity among Dutch Americans leans heavily on the preservation of their churches. The interrelationship of these two factors can hardly be overemphasized: in fact, no Dutch community in America has survived without its Dutch churches. Throughout the period of immigration, those communities that were unable to support a church disintegrated rapidly (p.107).

Language and religion were inextricably tied.

Were the Dutch in any way unique in finding religion to be so crucial when it came to language perseverance? Section 4.5 examines two contemporary immigrant groups, the Swedish Americans and the Norwegian Americans, and how religion influenced their communities and ethnic identities.

4.5 The Religious Experiences of Other Contemporary Non-Dutch Settlements

The Dutch American immigration experience shared many similarities with the experiences of other groups coming to America in the same time period. It was also unique in many ways, one of which was the primary force of religion driving migration. For most other groups, religion was brought with them, but the driving force for migration was economic. This in turn affected how the communities developed and Americanized over time.

4.5.1. The Swedish Americans

Swedish Americans were truly contemporaries of the Dutch Americans. They migrated in two waves, one small wave in the colonial period, settling primarily in Delaware, and one large wave in the period of 1850-1920, concurrent with the Dutch migration that is the primary focus of this paper.

During the large wave of the latter half of the nineteenth and first two decades of the twentieth century, over a million Swedes came to the United States. This constituted nearly one-fourth of the population of Sweden. While Swedish-Americans, both first and second generation, have never constituted more than 2% of the population of the United

States, Sweden ranks fourth after Norway, Great Britain, and Ireland in the greatest percentage of its population contributed to the United States (Hasselmo, 1976).

Their migration was driven by economic necessity. Improved sanitary conditions, a period free of warfare, and the introduction of the potato had resulted in the doubling of the population from 1.8 million in 1750 to 3.5 million in 1850. By 1900, the population of Sweden had reached 5.1 million. Industrialization was slow to come to this agrarian society, however, and even with 80% of the population engaged in producing food, not enough could be produced to feed the population.

The Dutch had faced many similar hardships. Religiously, however, their experiences were quite different. While the Dutch Reformed Church had a history of frequent schisms, the groups that emerged all remained Christian Reformed Calvinists, and despite the infighting and animosity, remained close. Dutch Catholics made up a small minority and did not influence the Calvinists to any degree. The Swedes who settled in America, however, held a great variety of Christian faiths, from Lutheran to Episcopalian to Methodist to Baptist. The largest of these was the Augustana Synod which had close ties to the Lutheran Church of Sweden, the state church, but all of them had significant memberships (Hasselmo, 1976). Due to the variety of faiths and the fact that there already existed in the United States of the nineteenth century American Episcopalian, Methodist, and Baptist churches, the opportunity for early Americanization and assimilation into the existing groups certainly existed for those interested. Each of these religious groups struggled with the "language question" and reacted to it in unique ways.

The Augustana Synod asserted its position as the "true" Swedish church and as a result placed great importance on maintaining Swedish heritage in America. That said, in the early years, they had been pro-assimilationist. Early leaders of the church "all envisioned the rapid and easy Americanization of their immigrant countrymen" (Barton, 1994, p. 33). One of them, Tufve Nilsson Hasselquist, wrote *in English* in 1860, "We are not, and will never be, shut up in our own nationality. We will be more and more Americanized every day" (in Barton, 1994, p. 33).

This early drive towards Americanization was not without a counter-push akin to what led to the 1857 Dutch schism. The early Swedes had made the preservation of their ethnic culture more difficult by settling in established cities like Chicago and Minneapolis. Now feeling that their early push to Americanization had been too drastic and that preservation of their Swedish heritage was crucial, they came to understand that they would best be able to help their followers maintain their Swedish heritage in more rural and isolated settings. Thus, the Augustana Synod began to encourage its followers to settle in remote communities. In fact, only three years after founding Augustana College in Chicago in 1860, the synod moved it to rural Paxton, Illinois, some one-hundred miles south (Barton, 1994). Its seminary was founded in Rock Island, Illinois, across the river from Davenport, Iowa. For the Augustana Synod, "survival of the Swedish-American Lutheran Church was [now] directly tied to the continued use of the Swedish language" (Karstadt, 2003, p.37). Unfortunately, as the church soon found, the cycle of second-generation children moving to English was unstoppable, and they realized that "the Swedish language had a future in America only as long as the

immigration continued" (Barton, 1994, p.52). This second-generation shift is discussed further in Chapter Five.

In part, the desire to isolate and preserve the language and Swedish identity was a reaction to a large secular force in the Swedish-American community, also lacking in the Dutch-American community. Given that Swedes largely emigrated for economic reasons, this is not surprising. The secular movement was, from the beginning, in favor of rapid assimilation to the new language and culture of America, as can be seen in this editorial in *Svenska Tribunen* from the 1880s:

Given all due recognition to the Swedish heritage as such ... it maintains that anyone who has chosen to cast his lot in America should give highest priority to the English language and American values. Does not the new homeland have the *right* to demand such a sacrifice? (in Barton, 1994, p.57).

This secular movement was most clearly seen in the Swedish-language press, which will also be discussed in Chapter Five in comparison with the Dutch-language press.

When immigration ceased in the 1910s-1920s, the predictions that the Swedish language would follow were proven accurate, and this was clear in the churches. In 1921, 85% of all sermons in the churches of the Augustana Synod were still conducted in Swedish. By the 1930s, nearly none were, and English was considered the official language of the church. In the 1920s, roughly half of the Swedish Methodist Church congregations had switched to English. The Swedish-speaking congregations were formed into three conferences which were merged into one in 1928 as more churches switched to English. The Swedish-speaking conference was dissolved in 1942. The Swedish Baptists strongly encouraged the shift to English during the 1920s by publishing

English song books and periodicals, and printing the minutes in English starting in 1933. They merged with the Baptist General Conference of America in 1945. Lutherans likewise switched to English. Center City, Minnesota's Chisago Lake Lutheran Church held twenty-one Sunday School classes in 1920; of them, seventeen were in Swedish. A mere eight years later, of the twenty-six classes offered, twenty-two were in English (Hasselmo, 1976).

4.5.2 The Norwegian Americans

Comparing Dutch immigrants with their Norwegian counterparts of the same period shows some of the divergences in their respective experiences. Like Swedish emigration, Norwegian emigration was driven by economic and social factors primarily. In the period between 1815 and 1865, as in Sweden, several advances including the introduction of the potato, improved sanitary conditions, and decreased infant mortality led to a doubling of the population. Yet the number of farm owners increased only by 27%. Industrialization did not come to Norway until mid-century, so many Norwegians had difficulty finding both work and food. Clearly, those in poverty had a strong motivation to leave. But Haugen (1969) points out that poverty was not the only factor. Until this period, Norway had had a very stratified class system. Someone born a rural laborer was unlikely to become anything else. Further, there was no self-government. This changed in the 1830s with a peaceful rural uprising that promoted egalitarian values and in 1837 with the establishment of local self government. Access to education also improved, and importantly, emigration came to be seen by many as a sign of enlightenment, or in the words of one contemporary "a fiery spark ... of intelligence" and "one of the many

expressions of the peaceful social revolution" (Haugen, 1969, p.22). While religion would play a significant role in the Norwegian communities founded in the New World, the independent and progressive spirit of Norwegian migrants differed from the perspective of their Dutch contemporaries.

Like all immigrants, the Norwegians corresponded with friends and family they had left behind in the old world. When the topic of religion appears, the tone and discussion are quite different from that of the Dutch letters excerpted throughout this chapter. In the work *In their own words: Letters from Norwegian immigrants*, editor and translator Solveig Zempel presents the letters home of eight Norwegian immigrants. When religion is discussed, the attitude of the immigrants seems to be ambivalent with respect to organized religion, not loyal to any particular sect, and infused with a belief in the power of the self to form the best connection with God.

Berta Serina came to Illinois from Norway in 1886 at the age of twenty-three. She was single and found work as a hired farm hand. Writing to her sister in the same year, she discusses going to church:

Well, I have been here for almost five weeks now, and I have not been to church or a prayer meeting yet. So I must say that I am longing to hear God's word proclaimed...It is true that there are many churches and ministers here, but there are also so terribly many kinds of sects and I don't know yet if I want to go to the church that most people belong to, the Catholic faith. There is a Norwegian Lutheran church west of here, but I don't know exactly where it is. I usually get a little time in the evening after I have done the dishes and then I read in my dear books, and those are, God be praised, the happiest hours I have. You can imagine

that there are all kinds of temptations for a poor heedless creature such as me, but God is powerful... and with his blessed help I hope to withstand even the worst temptations (in Zempel, 1991, p.30).

By 1889, it appears she had opted not to go to the Catholic church or the Lutheran church, which was too far, but had not lost her faith. Writing again to her sister, she says,

... time often passes slowly and especially on Sunday, for it is so far to church that I cannot walk there... You know I have my dear Bible and a few other good books that I can also use, though certainly too little, but anyway it is difficult when I can never talk to anyone about that which is true and when I never hear anything other than raw ungodliness almost everywhere I turn. But the Lord is faithful who sustains the wretched and He has not deserted me (in Zempel, 1991, p.40).

Gunnar Høst emigrated to Grand Forks, Nebraska in 1883 at the age of twenty-two, where he married a second-generation Norwegian-American and had four children. Over the coming decades, he corresponded with his sisters Agnes and Malla, still in Norway. In 1899, he discusses the local Lutheran churches, and importantly, their—and his—position on the use and maintenance of the Norwegian language:

I see Pastor Hovde now and again, but our Norwegian ministers out here are so shortsighted that it is almost impossible to have anything to do with them. We have three different Lutheran congregations here in this town. They all have a monopoly on heaven, and they all state boldly that they can prove by the Bible that all the others will go to hell. Pastor H. thinks I am taking a great responsibility upon myself by sending my children to the American Sunday School instead of the Norwegian, but since my children don't understand a word

of Norwegian, and there is never a word of Norwegian spoken in my home, then I certainly don't understand why they should have their religious instruction in Norwegian. Of course my children will learn Norwegian, but first and foremost they are Americans and shall be brought up as American citizens. And as far as religion is concerned, I am quite certain that Our Lord understands English as well as Norwegian, even though one of our honorable pastors up here assures me as to the contrary! (In Zempel, 1991, p.77).

Bergljot Anker Nilssen emigrated to the United States with her husband Karl in the 1910s. After a brief time, they returned to Norway, only to emigrate again permanently in 1923 to Chicago. Her letters to Karl's parents are written during a period of more rapid assimilation, the post-World War I period. In May, 1924, she writes,

Helga Hansen has joined the Free Church here in Chicago. And there are some pretty strange things happening there. One of the people who is big in the Free Church was after me several times, but I had to say to him that I would never join. We have been visited by several Norwegian pastors, but we will see where we end up living before we join. I like an English Lutheran church better than many of the Norwegian ones (in Zempel, 1991, p.167).

In the same letter she reports that their five-year old son, Lillegutt (a nickname meaning "little boy"; his actual name was Jens Trygve), was speaking "English with a vengeance," (p.168) and she is grateful for this because as she writes in a letter in June of that same year, "last year he couldn't talk to the children, so he was lonely, and then I felt sorry for him" (p.168). By September, 1924,

Lillegutt has gotten so tall, and he never speaks Norwegian any more. If we ask him to speak Norwegian, he can't do it ... We are thinking about sending him to an English church for Sunday school, as it can be hard enough for him to manage in one language (in Zempel, 1991, p.169).

While these excerpts provide anecdotal evidence of the reactions of a small number of individuals, they do support other findings that Norwegian-Americans were far more independent-minded in terms of their religious affiliations and loyalties, and that their decisions were guided by their concerns for their families, especially their children, and what would be best for them in their new home. The Dutch, on the other hand, not only showed a far stronger loyalty to their particular faith, they also trusted, more so than some of the other groups discussed, that their church and their pastors knew what was best for them and their families.

Chapter Four demonstrated the prominent place of religion in the lives of the West Michigan Dutch Calvinists and the ramifications of the 1857 schism that resulted in the splitting of the Dutch Reformed Church in West Michigan into two groups, the present-day Reformed Church of America (RCA) and Christian Reformed Church (CRC). Importantly, it also contrasted the Americanization of the RCA with the preservation of Dutch language and culture in the CRC.

CHAPTER 5

LANGUAGE USE AND IDENTITY: 1614-1910

Chapter Five explores in detail the issue that pervades and guides this dissertation: language use and identity among the Dutch immigrants. It discusses how the first wave of immigrants dealt with the language question. It then turns to the respective places of both the Dutch and English languages in West Michigan from 1850 to 1910, paying particular attention to three spheres of the Dutch society that acted as a stage upon which the language battle was waged: the church, the schools and the press. This chapter also analyzes whether and how the various levels of bilingualism correlate with social variables that have been found to pattern with language choice and variation such as age, gender, occupation, socioeconomic class, and most important to this study, religious affiliation. This will demonstrate that a particular group, the members of the CRC, followed closely to the adage "language saves faith and faith saves language" (Harney in Ganzevoort & Boekelman, 1983, p. x), and used Dutch as a primary language for generations, even though many in this community were Dutch-English bilinguals. As Brinks notes:

[Dutch] immigrants adopted America's economic and technological novelties with enthusiasm, but ... they also constructed a cultural citadel around their churches which either resisted or carefully screened social, religious, and ideological

influences borne by the mainstream culture. (in Ganzevoort & Boekelman, 1983, p. 139)

The CRC Dutch perspective is then compared to other groups for whom religion was an important factor to their identity: the Pella Dutch, Dutch Catholics, Norwegian-Americans, and Swedish-Americans.

This chapter concludes by placing the decisions of the nineteenth-century Dutch communities within the modern framework of language planning. While such an analysis may seem anachronistic, it demonstrates the very thoughtful manner in which the community members and elders thought about issues of language, and how they formulated and implemented a careful plan to deal with what was commonly called "the language question."

5.1 Dutch and English in New York: 1600-1800

Dutch persevered in what was once New Netherlands even after the colony came under English rule. German immigrants coming to the Dutch enclave in the latter half of the seventeenth century, for instance, found themselves assimilated and absorbed into the Dutch community, both culturally and linguistically:

[They] intermarried with the surrounding Dutch, worshipped at the same church, sent their children to the same school. It was in vain that they appealed for preachers who could speak both German and Dutch. Eventually they were absorbed in to the Dutch population and so lost their identity (De Jong, 1975, p. 92).

The primacy of Dutch began to change rapidly in the early eighteenth century, however. In 1726, New York's consistory acknowledged the usefulness of English to "carry on one's temporal calling" yet advised parents not to abandon Dutch, for "the true doctrine of comfort in life and death is preached in the clearest and most powerful manner, in the Dutch tongue" (De Jong, 1975, p.103). The January 1754 edition of the *Independent Reflector* reported that "the Dutch tongue, which though once the common dialect of this province is now scarcely understood, except by its more ancient inhabitants." In 1763, the Classis of Holland approved a request for a minister able to preach in English. Reverend Archibald Laidle, a native Scot, arrived in 1764. His congregation grew so large that by 1769, the Classis had to supply a second English-speaking minister (De Jong, 1975).

5.2 The Transition from Dutch to English in the RCA and CRC Communities

Considering how much further use of English advanced in the intervening seventy-five years, it is understandable that the Dutch-American community that greeted Van Raalte's and Scholte's emigrants of 1847-1848 had very little Dutch proficiency. The primary community members with this proficiency in Dutch would have been the clergy who had received schooling in Dutch either in the seminary or in visits to the Netherlands. Here and there others had retained Dutch, but mostly these were the elderly who had learned it in childhood, and the "Old Dutch" they spoke was quite different from that spoken by the emigrants (Van Hinte, 1928). The minimal use of Dutch in New York likely reinforced in the new arrivals a desire to move on and found their own colony rather than join the existing, thoroughly Americanized, New York communities.

Rural Dutch immigrants settling into new rural Dutch enclaves had little need or desire to learn English. They farmed and had little contact with non-Dutch settlers. However, immigrants from both rural and urban areas who sought to settle in urban areas and those who sought to participate in the area's burgeoning industry did need to study English, and they did so eagerly. One would predict that whether immigrants settled in rural or urban areas would be the key predictor of language retention. On the contrary, where one settled was far less important to language retention than the religious sect one belonged to. Writing in 1928, Van Hinte explained that "most of the orthodox Netherlanders are not primarily to be found in the settlements, but in the cities" (p.309). He further explained why it was important not to put too much importance on the distinction of rural vs. urban:

For the sake of completeness, it should be remembered that the contrast of rural colony/city colony or colonist/city dweller must not be drawn too sharply. Many transitional situations existed. Many a "colonist," for instance in Holland, Michigan or Pella, Iowa, felt more like an inhabitant of a city than did a "city dweller" in Chicago, Rochester, or elsewhere. (p.311)

The reason was simple. At this time, people could be farmers within a city like Chicago, and they could form an isolated colony of sorts with a handful of other families. One interesting example was the community of West Sayville, New York, on Long Island near New York City. In the 1860s, independently of one another, a few Dutch families heard that the oysters were plentiful in that part of Long Island, and decided to move there to go into oyster fishing. They met each other, banded together, and started a congregation. Other Dutch families heard about them and moved there as well, and the

Dutch came to dominate the fishing community (Van Hinte, 1928).²⁵ Inhabitants of Holland, Michigan, and their even more rural counterparts were close to and interacted with the city of Grand Rapids and its residents quite easily and frequently. As a result, while "rural" may be an accurate geographic descriptor, it is not a variable that affected language use in this community.

Geography was a factor in terms of which "city" Dutch settlers felt aligned with. The two main urban centers in the colony were Holland and Grand Rapids. As discussed in Chapter Four, Holland's RCA Dutch community, led by Albertus Van Raalte, was pro-assimilationist. Grand Rapids' CRC Dutch community, led by Gijsbert Haan, was not. Initially, both followed the same assimilationist path, but by 1857 they had split into two distinct groups. Van Raalte's RCA had Americanized in many ways, and certainly many of these ways were religious as detailed earlier, but notably it was use of the English language that was often mentioned by the CRC and its congregants as *the* characteristic aspect that proved that the RCA had ceased to be truly Dutch.

Apart from the religious split, immigrants with a need to learn English were theoretically more inclined to be pro-assimilationist in many ways. Not all were religious, and those who had not come for religious reasons were most likely to be pro-assimilationist. But for those who were religious, many of their Dutch churches—especially those in Holland, Michigan—quickly aligned with the Dutch Reformed Church (Reformed Church of America) originally founded by Peter Stuyvesant in New York in the seventeenth century (ten Harmsel, 2002). After the Revolutionary War the RCA discouraged holding onto the Dutch language (Swierenga, 2000) and encouraged

²⁵The West Sayville congregation seceded from the CRC in 1997. The membership had dwindled to just under two hundred, which is not surprising given the conservatism of the church and its awareness of its location in an increasingly progressive area: West Sayville is the departure point for the ferry to Fire Island.

assimilation into American society at large, though certainly not assimilation into America's religious melting-pot: in that way, they were still very much separatists. As discussed in Chapter Four, in the West Michigan colony, the move towards joining the Reformed Church of America (RCA) was led by Albertus Van Raalte and centered in the communities in and around Holland, Michigan (Brinks, 1995).

5.3 Decisions Are Made About Education

As generations of immigrants have discovered, and as sociolinguists studying bilingualism and language shift have attested, it is very difficult for a first language (L1) to be sustained in a second language (L2) society where L2 is the primary language of the schools. The Dutch were very aware of this when they settled in Michigan and Iowa in the mid-nineteenth century, and the language of the schools they founded and sent their children to was a subject of strong debate.

Initially, Van Raalte appeared to take the same path as Scholte in Iowa, that of favoring a rapid transition to English. In 1847, Van Raalte hired an I. Hoyt of Kalamazoo, Michigan to teach English to the children of the colony by day and the adults by night. Bilingual bibles, one column in Dutch facing a column in English, were used for lessons (Van Hinte, 1928). Writing in 1858 to family in the Netherlands, Jacob Dunnink discusses the small school house that has been built in a neighboring community which his children are attending, and he notes "English is being taught there."²⁶

Church support for teaching English was not without a backlash, however. In 1852, fellow pastor Dominie Ypma decried the rapid loss of Dutch in the colony and asked for a teacher to be brought in "to teach the basic use of the Dutch language, the

²⁶ Correspondence published in Brinks (1995).

pure use of which is sadly being lost" (in Van Hinte, 1928). Those who shared these feelings sought to convince another minister, Dominie Brummelkamp, who had remained in the Netherlands, to emigrate and become a teacher in the school. According to Van Hinte (1928), Brummelkamp:

... smote him[self] with the accusation—"You urge others to take the risks of going, but you yourself stay at home.' Dilligently, he and his family began, therefore, to study English in preparation (p.258).

Ultimately, however, he did not follow through and chose not to emigrate. As discussed in Chapter Two, language cannot be maintained without "basic teaching and reading materials designed to get the language across as a means of reading and writing" and "teachers who can speak, read, and write the language of literacy as well as train others to read and write it" (Bowers, 1968, in Eastman, 1983, p.91).

With their failure to lure Brummelkamp, those seeking to re-establish the place of the Dutch language in the colony's schools ended their attempt. It would resurface five years later in 1857 as talk of schism came to the boiling point. Aware of the passion which the pro-Dutch language side had about the issue, Van Raalte attempted to appease them with the founding of a parochial school in Holland. Dutch was the language of instruction and the textbook was the Bible. It failed: Church members in Holland had already been so Americanized in the first decade of the colony's existence that this appeared to them to be a step backward. They refused to fund it, and it closed its doors in 1862. Van Raalte launched a similar effort in Pella, Iowa, where he traveled in 1859 and 1861, convincing that community to found a Dutch school in 1861. It too languished due to lack of interest and thus funding, and closed its doors in 1867. The effort to launch a

Dutch school in the Zeeland, Michigan community, located just a few miles from Holland, did not even get this far: Commenting on the effort as it unfolded, the Honorable C. Van Loo wrote:

It has ever been the endeavor of the settlers in this township to have a free school of the American type. They have never been led off in sectarian or parochial by-paths, not even to the idea of a school taught in the Holland language. (Van Hinte, 1928, p.391).

In this experience, the Dutch of Holland were very similar to other contemporary groups of immigrants, as is discussed in section 5.6.

The early focus on missionary work in the RCA, a factor in the schism, did increase the need for institutions of education, both lower and higher, as schools were seen as the training ground for missionaries. The RCA saw their missionaries as "spreaders of the light of the Gospel in the dark places of the earth" (Van Hinte, 1928, p.408). Clearly, many of those dark places were not Dutch-speaking, but the British Empire had greatly expanded the usefulness of English around the globe. The CRC which had no missions and looked down on missionary work, had no such need for English.²⁷

The RCA's Holland Academy, now Hope College, brought in English teachers early, as did the primary schools of the area (ten Harmsel, 2002). Writing in 1869 to his

²⁷ One member of the CRC did attempt to bring domestic missions to his church. In 1879, T.M. Van den Bosch became the first domestic missionary of the CRC. He resigned two years later due to lack of interest and funding. Ten years later, he was appointed to the same post again, tasked with starting missionary work among Native Americans. Once again, he found no further funding or support and resigned after a year. (Van Hinte, 1928)

friend Helenius De Cock, one of Hope's first students, the future Reverend A. Zwemer said,

Van Vleck was the principal of the school and its first teacher. In my second year, A. Thompson was appointed the second teacher. Now Rev. Phelps, an American, has replaced Van Vleck, and a Hollander, G. Vander Wall, is the second teacher. There are about 40 students. They receive lessons in Greek, Hebrew, German, and English—math, chemistry, and philosophy. That is the school (in Brinks, 1986, p.121).

Of the school's first eighteen instructors, only five came from the Netherlands. The remainder—including all the college's presidents—were American-born and educated (Brinks, 1986). Further, RCA members supported the formation of public, state-run schools, in contrast to the CRC's belief²⁸ that only CRC parochial schools should be allowed for parishioners' children. This particular difference of opinion on education becomes significant in the late 1910s when the national nativist movement sought to ban languages other than English in American public schools. Writing to a friend in the Netherlands in 1860, the RCA minister Reverend A. Zwemer discusses the education of his six children, saying "three of them go to school and learn English and Holland²⁹ quickly. Jacob, our oldest, is rather well advanced in geography, arithmetic, and language" (Brinks, 1986). English education in Holland appears to have begun nearly from the moment that Van Raalte settled his colony. Writing to his brother in 1850,

²⁸ Still held at present.

²⁹ "Holland" could also refer to the Dutch language.

Geert Heerspink said, "The children are educated in both the Dutch and English language, with special attention to the teaching of salvation" (Brinks, 1986, p.39).

The only place Dutch parochial schools were wanted and where they flourished was in Grand Rapids, where parishioners felt strongly that the loss of the language would lead their children to join English churches. Language and faith were to them inextricably intertwined. The CRC Dutch linked the preservation of Dutch directly to the welfare of their children, both the religious and social welfare. Without it, they would not be full members of the religious or social communities (Brinks, 1986).

The notion that conservatism in language sustained faith was strongly held. As Dutch writer J.H. Halbertsma noted in 1862,

The greater the faithfulness with which words are pronounced in the old ways, the greater the faithfulness with which people continue to observe the old modes of life (Lamprecht, 1906, in Van Hinte, 1928, p.392).

Further, unlike the situation at Hope College where most of the faculty were American-born and educated, the majority of the faculty at the CRC's Calvin College were from the Netherlands through the end of the nineteenth century (Brinks, 1986).

The CRC also felt strongly that students should be educated only in schools controlled by the church. In the early years of relative isolation, particularly in the rural settlements, this could be done by creating or filling the local school board. The then-Dutch school board would set up the schools to provide instruction in Dutch (Sinke, 2002). However, once the CRC was firmly based in Grand Rapids, a city with an established public school system and school board, this was no longer possible. So the CRC devoted its efforts to founding a private school system that they could control. This

was actually a motivating factor for many of the Dutch immigrants who came in the 1860s through 1880s because during that time in the Netherlands, private schools were heavily restricted and received no governmental support (Sinke, 2002). The CRC set to work establishing its network of private schools, run by the church and staffed by church members.

Should we be able to step back in time and view the West Michigan colony in the years around 1860, we would see the Dutch language thriving in Grand Rapids, and continuing its rapid decline in Holland, Michigan and Pella, Iowa.

The CRC still operates the largest primary and secondary Christian school network in the United States (Lippy & Williams, 1988). Calvin College, the CRC's primary institution of higher learning, still requires its faculty to send their K-12 children to CRC schools,³⁰ though a recent exception has been made for some African-American faculty who wish to send their children to schools which have a more racially diverse population than the CRC schools. No such exception is available for other faculty with the same desire.

Dutch isolation extended further in education. The Dillingham Commission's 1911 report on education and immigrant children found that many Dutch did not attend high school. Higher education for the Dutch meant the ministry and seminary, and that was run by the church.³¹ This should not to be taken to mean that the Dutch did not value education, however. On the contrary, they did. It is simply that much of it occurred in the church, as is discussed in the following section. As has been made clear in this study,

³⁰ Calvin College Faculty Membership Requirements, retrieved online at <http://www.calvin.edu/admin/provost/facdoc/fac-requirements.htm>

³¹ It is worthy to note that the "colleges" often educated those of high school age; such was the case for Will Bruins who left home at 15 to attend Hope College (Smits, 2002)

the preservation of Dutch was not at the expense of the acquisition of English. The 1910 census reported an English literacy rate of 97% for Dutch-American males, and a 91% rate for Dutch-American females. It was, in fact, this bilingualism that allowed for the rapid and methodical switch in the CRC from Dutch to English in the 1920s. That is why their transition was not generational or gradual as is the case with so many other immigrant communities.

5.4 The Language of the Churches

Religion was inextricably linked to "Dutchness" for members of both the RCA and CRC communities. How they defined what it meant to be Dutch led to the difference. For the CRC, "Dutchness" included the Dutch language; for the RCA, it did not. Therefore, an understanding of language shift in both churches is important to understanding the role of language and ethnicity in both communities. It is also interesting to compare Norwegian Americans and Swedish Americans in the same period, as in many ways, they shared the same struggle. This is discussed in Section 5.6.

It is helpful to review the language situation of the churches, RCA and CRC, separately. Unsurprisingly given the early language shift of their schools, the RCA churches offered English services early. Evert Wonnink wrote home to family in the Netherlands in 1872, saying,

After careful consideration father and mother also joined the Reformed Church of America here ... we have catechism five times each week. We go to Sunday School Wednesday evening and Sunday noon. We have about 250 attending and

25 teachers. They teach in both English and Dutch—whichever the students prefer (in Brinks, 1986, p.119).

Most often, they preferred English, despite the fact that this was a new language for them all, including Van Raalte. In his initial tour of Michigan as he was determining where to found his colony, he stayed in Grand Haven, Michigan, for several days as the guest of Montague Ferry. Writing fifty years later in 1897, Montague Ferry's son recalled the "eager manner of this worthy gentleman, [and] his limited use of the English language" (in Lucas, 1955, p.80).

The CRC understood the economic importance of learning English, and certainly did nothing to prevent its members from doing so, but the church held fast to its own use of Dutch. In fact, up until the 1920s, the majority of its church archives are in Dutch (Origins, 1984). Grand Rapids' Ninth Reformed Church, organized in 1892, kept detailed minutes of all church meetings and business. These appear exclusively in Dutch from the church's founding until June 1, 1920, when they switch to English (Joint Archives of Holland, record W02-1277.5).

The first Dutch church in the colony has a very interesting linguistic history: Van Raalte's First Church³² was an RCA church until 1882 (Van Raalte died in 1876), at which point it seceded from the RCA for the same reasons that the CRC had twenty-five years prior and re-affiliated itself with the CRC (Pillar Christian Reformed Church, 2007).³³ Its records were kept in Dutch until World War I (Association for Advancement of Dutch-American Studies, 9th Conference Proceedings, 1993). These dates are significant support for this study's contention that the World War I nativist movements

³² Renamed Pillar Christian Reformed Church in 1984

³³ Pillar Christian Reformed Church history, retrieved online at <http://www.pillarchurch.com/timeline.htm>

triggered the CRC shift from using the Dutch language primarily to using the English language nearly exclusively.

5.5 The Language of the Press

A robust press served the Dutch colonists throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The language in which that press appeared varied, however. Unsurprisingly given what has already been discussed, the Dutch language press struggled in RCA-dominated areas, and Dutch papers rarely lasted more than a year or two, unable to find the necessary subscribers to make the paper's publication financially viable. The Dutch press in CRC-dominated Grand Rapids had a different path, one which superficially might look the same, as many of its Dutch newspapers lasted only a few years. As will be discussed, however, the reason why was quite different and underscores the preservation of Dutch, not its loss.

The data in this section are drawn from Hendrik Edelman's 1986 work *The Dutch Language Press in America*. This work of just over two-hundred pages provides a bibliographic inventory of Dutch publications from 1693 to 1948, organized by year of publication. Edelman further provides an introduction to the bibliographic inventory of approximately forty pages which provided additional background information and context for this study. The analysis in this section is based on the chronological bibliographic inventory and is thus my own.

One of the first Dutch publishers was the state of Michigan itself. Michigan was eager to attract more Dutch settlers as it felt they made ideal residents: they were religious, abstained from alcohol consumption, and were generally highly law-abiding.

Michigan translated its state constitution into Dutch and published it in 1851. Messages from the Governor's office were translated and published in 1859, 1861, 1863, 1871, and 1889. The Michigan Commission on Immigration translated and published guides to immigration and citizenship in 1882 and 1884. Comparing this to the state of Iowa's Dutch publications in the same period further points to the heightened resilience of the Dutch language in West Michigan. Iowa's state constitution was not translated, its Commission on Immigration published only one guide, in 1870, and its gubernatorial messages span from 1857 to 1871 only.

Turning to the Dutch press in RCA-dominated Holland, the first Dutch publication in the colony was *The Hollander*, a bilingual English-Dutch newspaper, which appeared in 1850. Starting in 1856, it became *De Hollander* and was published solely in Dutch until 1895. While this may on the surface look to support a continued Dutch-language presence in Holland, note that this date also marks the move of its publisher, Jacob Quintus, to Grand Rapids, likely an indication that in the schism, he was siding with the CRC.

English was adopted quickly in RCA-dominated Holland, and it was the de facto language of the community by the late nineteenth century. Most of the other Holland-based Dutch newspapers appeared side-by-side an English version, and before long there were few Dutch papers left in Holland. This is not surprising given the alignment with the English-speaking New York-based church and the decision to use English in the schools. Those publications that did appear in Dutch were often tied to moves within the RCA to court its more conservative members and prevent them from leaving the church

for the CRC. For example, *De Wekker*³⁴ was published from 1859-1861 by the Holland Colony Teachers Association during the brief period when Van Raalte sought to revive the use of the Dutch language in the Holland schools as discussed above.

The Dutch press in Grand Rapids, in contrast to the RCA Holland press, flourished. Its first publication predates that of the Holland colony's: *De Volksvriend* was a weekly newspaper published from 1849-1850. Other publications from the next fifty years included *De Lantaarn*, *De Amerikaansche Stoompost* (published by Jacob Quintus, publisher of *De Hollander*), *De Honingbij*, *Een Stem des Volks*, *De Christen Werkman*, and *De Stemmen*, to name a few of dozens. Many of these papers had short lives, but that was not due to a lack of readership or subscribers. Generally, it was because the purpose of the papers was specific and short-lived. For example, *Een Stem des Volks* was a pro-temperance paper published from 1893-1900. When the Prohibition Party suffered a great defeat in 1900, its publisher, Gerritt Roelofs, decided there was not enough current support for temperance to justify the further publication of the paper. Its demise had nothing to do with the language of its publication. Similarly, the popular bilingual *Yankee Dutch*, a satirical paper published from 1882-1890, appeared during a time when the Dutch were settled, had seen their first community members ascend to positions of prominence within the community, and were very self-confident in their ethnicity.

This feeling of self-confidence is further explored in Chapter Six in a discussion of the change in the grave markers at the same time. In addition, Chapter Six discusses the decline of the Dutch press in Grand Rapids from the 1910s to the 1930s, as well as

³⁴ A loose translation would be *The Caller*, in the sense of one who wakes another up. In this case, the "waking up" was the figurative waking of others up to their faith.

what Van Hinte writing in 1928 described as the decline of the quality of the Dutch language therein.

5.6 Resolving the "Language Question" in the Swedish-American and Norwegian-American Communities

As discussed in Chapter Four, language was tied to religion in both the Swedish and Norwegian immigrant communities, but it was a tie more closely felt and held by the churches themselves rather than the people, a quite different situation than what occurred in the Dutch community, specifically the CRC Dutch community. As a result, the "language question" was resolved differently.

5.6.1 The Swedish Americans

The 1880s saw a rise in Swedish migration to the United States after the initial push in the 1850s. This surge provoked a decades-long debate within the community as to the place and purpose of the Swedish language as it related to identity and ethnicity. The viewpoints in contention can be found in the following arguments made at the time.

Writing in 1904, and promoting what one might call the ultra-conservative view, E. Zetterstrand stated,

This much ought to be clear to everyone that when we lose the Swedish language we will also lose our national character, in which there are traits that are truly worthy of our preservation, qualities more precious than silver and gold, and which we ought therefore to protect and preserve as a precious inheritance for ourselves and our descendants. (In Hasselmo, 1976, p.37).

The Augustana Synod, the arm of the American Swedish Lutheran church, perhaps made more realistic after fifty years of losing members to the issue, argued first for the middle ground in 1900:

English [is now] the language through which the Swedish-Americans must make their most important contribution in the national American arena...But a people that demonstrates no ability to resist, no conservatism, cannot exert any lasting influence on others. It would therefore be a bad sign, if our Swedish-American people underwent this process too rapidly. (In Hasselmo, 1976, p.38).

And again in 1923:

[Swedish-Americans] need not change *from* Swedish *to* English ; they can with advantage preserve the old *while* they acquire and even *after* they have acquired the new. (In Hasselmo, 1976, p.38).

Others called for the full eradication of Swedish, a view interestingly held strongly by the secular Swedish-American press, even though they understood it would end their own industry. An editorial in *Svenska Tribunen* stated,

In America Swedish is only a transitional language...Let us hope—*Tribunen* says straight out—that Swedish will not be our children's language. At least may they understand that it should be regarded more as an ornament, a noble but not indispensable pleasure. From *Tribunen's* viewpoint it naturally follows that even *newspapers* in the Swedish language belong only to a transitional phase. (In Barton, 1994, p.57).

Ultimately, the debaters would not be the ones to settle the debate. As is most common in language contact situations where a minority immigrant language is embedded in the society of a majority national language, the "deciders" were the children, the second-generation immigrants who adopted English and abandoned Swedish.

The second-generation effect occurred readily in the Swedish-American communities because immigrants saw an opportunity for an "exchange": They would learn English from their children, and their children would learn Swedish from them. Parents were encouraged by the Augustana Synod in child-rearing methods that would serve to encourage bilingualism:

To present Swedish as a kind of sacred liturgical language or to seek to warn against English as 'something tempting and sinful in itself' would be the surest way to kill the younger generation's interest in the ancestral tongue. Instead, parents should use Swedish in the home. (Barton, 1994, p.120).

When the children—as is not uncommon for children raised bilingual—refused to speak Swedish, the household became English-speaking. A study conducted in the Swedish stronghold of Minneapolis in 1917-18, discussed by Hasselmo (1976), illustrates this shift nicely:

For children with Swedish-born parents, English was used as the home language in only 33% of the cases. For children whose parents had resided in this country for 30 years or more, English was used as the home language in about 83% of the cases (p.40).

There was a further reason why Swedish children resisted speaking Swedish: their lack of self-confidence in their proficiency in it, reinforced by the opinions of their elders.

Ernest Beckman noted in 1875:

Swedish seems difficult and awkward to them [the children]. In English, they speak as properly as anyone else; when they open their mouths to speak Swedish, what comes out is a peasant dialect, which they are ashamed of. (In Barton, 1994, p.52).

Even those who tried to preserve the language through careful study were not rewarded for the effort. Pastor Per Pehrsson who visited from Sweden in 1910 certainly felt that preservation of Swedish was crucial to the preservation of Swedish faith, heritage, and identity, but that did not prevent him from criticizing the Swedish spoken in America as being learned only through writing and not through discourse:

At the heart of preservation of the Swedish heritage lies the preservation of the Swedish language [but the speech of Swedish Americans sounds] as though from a book. (In Barton, 1994, p.199).

Writing at the same time, G.H. von Koch was even less kind in describing the Swedish spoken in America:

It usually consists of a combination of broad dialect and convoluted book language. And it cannot be denied that this mixture seems curiously old-fashioned, if not lifeless. One misses the nuances which life, day by day and year by year, add to a language and which make it the most precise gauge of national and individual culture. (In Barton, 1994, p.199).

Not coincidentally, the 1920s saw the steep decline of the Swedish-American press.

As an interesting footnote, the 1930s saw the rise of an English-language publishing industry in Sweden. Its books sought to highlight not only Swedish history, to educate an English-speaking, presumably ethnically Swedish readership in the states, but also to highlight the accomplishments of Swedish-Americans in "the building of America [whose] tone, naturally, is warmly self-congratulatory" (Barton, 1994, p.326).

5.6.2 The Norwegian Americans

Like the CRC Dutch, the early Norwegian Lutheran churches placed great value on the preservation of the mother tongue due to their belief in its strong correlation to faith. Haugen (1969) points out that their attitudes did not escape criticism in the wider community, and in this way, they did differ from the CRC Dutch. In the Norwegian community, the church felt itself to be the sole voice in the fight to preserve the language. A physician of the community, writing in *Friheds-Banneret* stated this sentiment clearly:

[The clergy and church] wish to continue here as in Norway to hinder the enlightenment of the people, to preach incomprehensible traditions as infallible truths, and deny the children of Norwegians the right to go to American schools before they are confirmed (in Haugen, p.39).

The author clearly held negative opinions about the church in general, and not just its position on the language issue.

This is quite different from the Dutch of Holland and Grand Rapids, regardless of their affiliation, be it RCA or CRC. The Dutch Seceders had come to America precisely

because they had great faith in their church and clergy. As a result, they were far more likely to support their clergy's position on matters of how best to live in America.

As with the Dutch Americans, the language question in the Norwegian American communities would hinge in part on the language of the schools. Haugen (1969) described a similar strong resistance to Norwegian schools in his study. He refers to a nineteenth-century newspaper, *Friheds-Banneret*, and its editor's plea that "instruction in the English language, as carried on in the public schools, is and remains the foremost means of advancing the enlightenment of the younger generation." Haugen concludes that "such advice was heeded ... the efforts that were made from some quarters to establish Norwegian day schools were almost wholly unsuccessful" and that contemporary reports suggested "the learning of English came easily to most Norwegians and that they were eager to take their place in the communities where they settled" (p.38).

The quality of the schools was also in question for some of the immigrants. Andreas A. Hjerpeland, a schoolteacher, came to Minnesota in 1870 at the age of thirty-five. He maintained a twenty-year correspondence with his friend, Ivar Kleiven. Writing in 1877, he discusses the quality of the schooling available for members of the Norwegian community:

According to your wishes, I will tell you a bit about the school system here.

There are public schools everywhere, where the ordinary school subjects are taught: reading, writing, Arithmetic, geography, and grammar. School is held in well-equipped schoolhouses, usually for seven or eight months of the year. The cities are full of higher schools and universities, so the youth have good opportunities for learning. Because there is freedom of religion, and no state

church, the public schools have no religious instruction, leaving that up to the parents themselves. This is the reason the Norwegians, as well as other nationalities, establish parochial schools, so that the children will receive religious instruction. But the parochial schools have a low status ... There are not enough qualified teachers, the school session is too short, and the buildings are poor. It is quite difficult to hold Norwegian school here ... (in Zempel, 1991, p.12).

With such a large gap in the quality of the two systems, it is understandable why parents saw in the English language and the public schools the true opportunities for their children.

The ability to learn English quickly was a point of pride for many Norwegians, and it appears it was a stereotype held by many Americans as well. Ole Munch Ræder was a Norwegian political commentator and scholar. He visited America in 1847-1848 to report on Norwegian immigrants in the United States, and his "letters" were published in a Norwegian newspaper. One letter in particular displays this stereotype of rapid assimilation:

The ease with which the Norwegians learn the English language has attracted the attention of the Americans, all the more because of the fact that they are altogether too ready to consider them entirely raw when they come here. 'Never,' one of them told me a few days ago, 'have I known people to become civilized so rapidly as your countrymen; they come here in motley crowds, dressed up with all kinds of dingle-dangle just like the Indians. But just look at them a year later: they speak English perfectly, and, as far as dress, manners, and ability are concerned, they are quite above reproach.' Of course I tried to explain to him that

their original mode of dress certainly could not make Indians out of them and that they were not entirely devoid of culture or those habits of diligence and regularity which one expects to find in a well-ordered and civilized society, even among the poorest classes out in the country, but he seemed scarcely disposed to make any concessions on that point (in Malmin, 1929, p.37).

Ræder does not contest the accuracy of the rate of linguistic assimilation, however, choosing only to debunk the negative stereotypes but not the one he clearly feels is positive.

5.7 A Consideration of the Potential Effects of Other Sociolinguistic Variables

Sociolinguists have long identified several variables that are tied to language use. Milroy and Milroy identified the importance of social networks in their Belfast study. Eckert (1989) demonstrated the importance of social class, specifically demonstrating that class structure can be created and reinforced in many groups with her analysis of the "Jocks and Burnouts" of a Detroit high school. Labov considered both social class and age in his landmark studies of Martha's Vineyard (1961) and New York City (1966). In the Martha's Vineyard study, for instance, he focused on the issue of whether apparent speech differences in the height of the diphthongs [ay] and [aw], which were lower in the older speakers, were due to "age-grading"—meaning their production of these diphthongs had in younger decades been at the height of the younger generation, but over the decades had gradually lowered—or if they were rather due to "apparent time"—meaning their production had not shifted but rather represented what the youth "norm" had been thirty-

forty years prior. Many linguists, including Chambers, Trudgill, and others continue to study the variable of age closely.

For this study the data do not exist for the close study at the level of the linguistic variable, as no corpus of turn-of-the-century recordings exists. What is clear from the commentary of those living in the community (or in the case of Van Hinte, observing the community), however, is that in the period from 1910-1930, the Dutch spoken and written had declined, and the youth and young adults were identified as those most culpable in this, as is discussed in Chapter Six.

One important variable in many language-shift situations is gender. Sinke (2002) has identified gender as an important variable for a portion of Dutch immigrants. In brief, women who rejected the traditional gender restrictions of the church were often quick not only to learn English, but also quick to leave the Dutch community. Sinke discusses the stories of two such women, Cornelia de Groot and Cornelia De Bey to support this claim.

Cornelia De Groot was born in 1878 and raised in the Netherlands. Her siblings emigrated in early adulthood and she followed in her twenties after her fiancée left her, taking with him a substantial portion of her money. Determined not to become a young spinster, she sought a new life. It was not to Michigan, however, that she went. It was to San Francisco. She had dreams of becoming a journalist, though that career never materialized fully and secretarial work was her primary profession in life. She fought for suffrage, never married, and used English nearly exclusively from her arrival to her death at the age of one hundred (Sinke, 2002).

Cornelia De Bey reacted in what is typically the norm for second-generation children—the norm among other groups, not the Dutch—which was to embrace the L2 fervently and avoid the L1. She was "thoroughly, nay, almost aggressively, American. She spoke English, and a great deal of it" (p.182). This was, however, encouraged by her father, a minister of the Reformed Church in Chicago who encouraged the congregation to adopt English and was in favor of women being allowed to pray in public, something the main church opposed, feeling that women should always be silent in "mixed" settings (i.e., when men were present).

De Bey's father also supported and encouraged her higher education. She became a physician and focused her practice on the poor. This led her to Hull House and collaboration with Jane Addams, and ultimately to a seat on the Chicago Board of Education. She never married and was repeatedly attacked in the press for her masculine dress and pro-union ideals (which certainly did not stem from her Dutch background, as the Dutch-American community was then and continues to be generally anti-union³⁵), but notably never for being Dutch. Her friends and colleagues were mostly not Dutch. She fought for suffrage and was a "radical pacifist" (p.116).

In the 1930s, entering old age, she moved to Grand Rapids, Michigan to live with relatives, and upon her death in 1948, was buried in Holland, Michigan's Pilgrim Home Cemetery, the final resting place of many of the original colony's founders (Sinke, 2002), including Van Raalte himself (City of Holland, Michigan, State Register of Historic

³⁵ Dutch workers were actually sought-after employees in this period because it was against their religious beliefs to belong to a union or go on strike (Van Hinte, 1928). This was a real benefit to the owners especially during the labor movement of the 1910s which is discussed in further detail in Chapter Seven.

Places).³⁶ For a woman who broke so free of her Dutchness in life, it is an interesting return to "Dutchness" in death.

While these are but two stories, they underscore an important point in terms of this dissertation: while gender can be an important sociolinguistic variable, in the story of Dutch American *Calvinist* women (members of the RCA and the CRC) it was not. Women in the church seeking greater rights in their community could not reach them linguistically by embracing English. They had to leave the church and the community first before gender became an important sociolinguistic variable, and few did. De Groot and De Bey were remarkable, strong, gifted women, but their independence and opportunities came not from within the church.

Sinke does, however, make the point that for the males of the community, learning English was key to the preservation of the patriarchal structure. In Dutch homes, the father was the dominant force who made all important decisions. This is referred to in the CRC as *headship*, the patriarchal principle that men are the head of both their families and the church (*Women in Ecclesiastical Office*, 2007). Were his children to learn English before him, they would be able to hide things from him which would then cause dissent and thus undermine his power. By learning English, the father retained the control to dictate family decisions. Thus, for Dutch men, learning English had an advantage. Knowledge of it did not, however, trump the importance of preservation of the Dutch language, specifically as it was felt to be inextricably linked to faith. Sinke shares the story of a father enforcing a Dutch-only policy in his household when his daughter was unable to correctly translate a Dutch psalm.

³⁶ http://www.cityofholland.com/cihollandmius/assets/hd_register_list.pdf

Gender roles remain restrictive in the CRC to this day, though some progress has been made in recent years. To see just how restrictive and place gender in the church in a better historical context, it is helpful to examine briefly the arduous path to the latest advances. In 1970, the CRC examined its exclusion of women from all ecclesiastical offices by forming a committee to study the matter. The committee found that exclusion could not be "defended on biblical grounds." The Synod³⁷ formed a second committee, which came to the same conclusion in 1975, and yet another in 1978. Feeling that the church was not ready, however, the Synod chose to study opening only the position of deacon to women, and commissioned additional committees to study this further in 1981 and 1984, both of which came to the same conclusions of the 1970, 1975, and 1978 committees. The Synod of 1985 did not clarify the deacon issue, but stated it would not permit women to hold positions other than deacon (such as elder or pastor) as this would undermine the principle of headship (*Women in Ecclesiastical Office*, 2007).

Some of the more progressive congregations had seen the lack of clarification as the approval to appoint women to some positions, something they were instructed to undo in 1992 when that year's Synod encouraged churches to "use the gifts of women," provided they were supervised by men. This decision was reversed in 1993, with the Synod recommending the word *male* be deleted from the requirements to hold church office. Once again, several of the more progressive churches acted on this. However, the 1994 Synod reversed the decision once again. Finally, in 1995, there was a compromise: the Synod opted to leave the decision up to each classis whether to remove the word *male* from the requirements for office. In the first five years after this decision, only a third

³⁷ The Reformed Ecumenical Synod is the CRC's highest governance structure and is bi-national, overseeing all CRC churches in the United States and Canada.

had removed it and many other congregations had seceded. The Synod also opted to prevent women from being delegates to the Synod, a decision reaffirmed in both 2000 and 2005, meaning that women cannot take part in the debate over their position in the church. The first female pastor was ordained in 1996 (*Women in Ecclesiastical Office*, 2007).

5.8 An Analysis of Nineteenth – Twentieth Century Language Decisions in the Framework of Language Planning

Modern language planners generally follow a particular procedure. They begin with a *formulation* of the plan, a careful deliberation of social, cultural, economic and political factors. This is followed by the *codification* of the plan, which sets the policy and ideally reveals it to the speech community in order to solicit feedback and make appropriate revisions to the plan. *Elaboration* then requires planners to extend the language in question as needed into all the spheres of usage, which often involves lexical expansion, and may also include modifications of aspects such as orthography. *Implementation*, the final stage, puts the plan in place thereby achieving the original objectives of the policy (Eastman, 1983).

Certainly, the Dutch Americans of the prior two centuries had no modern language planners or modern language planning policy to guide them. Yet viewing their actions through this modern prism demonstrates how conscious and planned were the actions of the mid-nineteenth century communities of Scholte's Pella, Iowa, and Van Raalte's Holland, Michigan, and the CRC community of Grand Rapids, Michigan. The different plans led to different results.

Scholte's Pella, Iowa community can be considered in tandem with Van Raalte's Holland, Michigan, community as they made similar decisions for similar reasons regarding language use, and shared the same language plan: transition to English as rapidly as possible. Several actions can be seen as the *formalization* of the plan—the deliberation of social, cultural, economic and political factors. Scholte and Van Raalte sought out isolated settlements to preserve social and cultural values, but made political and economic alliances within the existing American structure in their respective regions. To best cement these ties and promote their own stability and growth, they pushed for Americanization in both citizenship and language.

These communities then *codified* their plan seeking the input of their members. In the case of Scholte's Pella community, there appears to have been little dissension, and the community generally embraced the move to Americanize, in particular because they were reassured that they were preserving their true "Dutchness": their piety, honesty, cleanliness, and intelligence through the promotion of learning and self-sufficiency through hard work and the promotion of industry (Lucas, 1955). In the case of Van Raalte's Holland community, in contrast great dissension led to schism and the splitting off of the Grand Rapids' CRC group, as discussed in prior chapters.

As the language plan was to move to English, the *elaboration* of the plan did not require any expansion of Dutch. Rather, the elaboration required the community to ensure their members could learn English quickly and gain high proficiency in it, and as discussed in section 5.3, they did so by teaching English in their schools from the earliest years, hiring English teachers, creating English textbooks, and printing bilingual newspapers.

With the prior steps of the plan in place, *implementation* occurred quite naturally. All that was required in general was expanding the spheres of usage of English to all areas including the church. While a certain level of bilingualism persisted in these communities, it most commonly fit the classic bilingual generational model: Monolingual Dutch speakers were those newly arrived to the community. They and their children were aided in their transition to English.

The CRC Dutch of Grand Rapids had a different language plan: To maintain and preserve the Dutch language. The *formalization* of their plan began in the years just prior to the 1857 schism and was in direct reaction to the language plan of Van Raalte's Holland. To them, language and religion were inextricably intertwined, and to preserve the Dutch language and faith required secession.

The plan was *codified* in the churches and the community, as members pledged to maintain Dutch as the language of their homes and church leaders pledged to maintain it in the church. So too did the community pledge to create schools in which Dutch would be taught.

The form of *elaboration* that was required was unique. After all, they were not attempting to turn Grand Rapids' English-speaking majority into a community of Dutch speakers. Their goal, rather, was to expand Dutch so that it could function in all spheres, and this was accomplished in part through lexical borrowings from English, and in part from accommodation from the community at large: Recall from Chapter Three that many English-speaking shopkeepers in Grand Rapids learned some Dutch to be able to attract the Dutch-speaking clientele. *Elaboration* also involved, importantly, the learning of English, for this allowed the community members to function when they did encounter

areas in which they could not use Dutch. Bilingualism also allowed them to prosper economically, which in turn gave them the social power to maintain their language situation.

Implementation of the language plan was completed through the establishment of the school system, from primary to collegiate, and the robust Dutch press and the maintenance of Dutch in the church. It was also reinforced by the self-confidence of the CRC Dutch, for they rose to a position of prominence in Grand Rapids quite quickly, their reputation was positive, and they were seen as strong contributors to the larger community. Their ability to speak English led to a widespread tolerance of their bilingualism.

The CRC's language plan was successful for over half a century; however, the CRC Dutch found cause to revisit their language plan in the 1910s, encouraged by both internal and external forces. This ultimately led to a reformulated language plan, one focused on a rapid transition to English, quite similar to those undertaken in Pella and Holland. It was implemented in the 1910s and 1920s. As will be recalled from Chapter Four, it was in the period of 1910-1930 that the CRC adopted many of the "worldly" religious practices that had contributed to the schism of 1857. So too did they in many ways mirror the linguistic changes that they had once decried.

Chapter Five analyzed the respective places of Dutch and English in the largest Dutch American settlements since the Colonial Era, from the original New York colony of the seventeenth and eighteenth century to the Michigan colony from 1850 to 1910. This chapter discussed the possible correlation between the various levels of bilingualism on the one hand and religious affiliation, age, gender, occupation, and socioeconomic

class on the other, demonstrating that in the West Michigan Dutch Calvinist communities the only significant factor was religious affiliation. This chapter's study of language use in the churches, schools, and the press shows specifically that the members of the CRC sustained a stable bilingualism for decades while RCA members promoted a rapid assimilation to English.

CHAPTER 6

LANGUAGE SHIFT: 1910-1930

In the period of 1910-1930, many changes occurred. There was a sudden increase of English borrowings into Dutch and a loss of grammatical gender (Sinke, 2002). This chapter outlines the specific deviations from Standard Dutch that began to become common. The "decline" of the language was decried by many, including Van Hinte in his 1928 dissertation. The critics would not have to suffer nonstandard Dutch for long as a widespread loss of Dutch usage in both the public and private spheres followed shortly. It is this dissertation's contention that the rapid loss was conscious language planning on the part of the community. To understand why, it is necessary to understand how this particular Dutch community differed from other immigrants' communities, both Dutch and non-Dutch. The discussion begins with an analysis of the lack of negative stereotypes surrounding the Dutch of Grand Rapids in the nineteenth century.

As it is this paper's contention that language shift occurred quite rapidly in the Grand Rapids Dutch community, in the span of just slightly over a decade, it is important to demonstrate this in several spheres of the society. It will thus turn to an examination of the language shift in Grand Rapids, first by analyzing this shift in the press, then in the CRC, and then in the personal lives of its members.

Gravestone markers can serve as important templates for linguistic data. Analysis of Dutch graves from the time period of language shift for both the New Amsterdam and

West Michigan Dutch demonstrates the shift from Dutch to English clearly and offers analysis that further supports the contention that in Grand Rapids this shift was conscious and communal language planning.

Finally, comparison of the shift from Dutch to English in other Dutch settlements helps establish the uniqueness of the shift in Grand Rapids. Specifically it will point to the *lack* of impact of Dutch on the English dialect of the region, despite the fact that in most communities which have undergone language shift, aspects of the former language are reflected in the modern dialect. This paper argues this is due to the stable bilingualism that had preceded it.

6.1 A Lack of Negative Stereotypes

One thing that set the Dutch apart in the early decades of the colony is the lack of negative stereotypes associated with them in the larger community. While the Holland, Michigan community was majority-Dutch, the Grand Rapids Dutch were a minority in their community, albeit a highly prominent one. Recall from Chapter Three the following Grand Rapids population statistics:

Year	Dutch residents	Total population	% of population
1851	400	3000	13%
1870	3000	16,500	18%
1920	31,000	137,600	23%

The accurate 1920 figure is likely somewhat larger, in fact, as these figures report it is simply the number of Grand Rapids residents that year who in the census claimed Dutch

as their native language, only a third of whom were foreign-born. Also this was in the year of the greatest overt push to English, so some respondents may not have been truthful about their native language. Further, other scholars place the Dutch population of Grand Rapids at 40% of the total populace in 1900. Once these facts are taken into consideration, it is likely that the population of ethnically-Dutch in Grand Rapids in 1920 constituted roughly a third of the populace.

That the Dutch were positively viewed by their non-Dutch city is clear in many sources across these decades. A newspaper article in the *Grand Rapids Eagle* of January 5, 1857, demonstrates how early this positive attitude was established, less than a decade after the first "Hollander" settled in the city. The article concerned the New Year's Day assault of Kendall Woodward, Esq. and his family in their home by a group of "foreign rascals." The article's purpose was to criticize the judge for giving too light a sentence³⁸—no jail time, just payment of damages—and to expound on what "foreigners" need to be taught about American values:

Our *foreign* as well as native born citizens should be made to learn that, although this is a "free country," yet [sic] is only free to those who behave themselves and obey its just and wholesome laws. No man, no matter where born, is at liberty to get intoxicated and then floilish his shillelah³⁹ over the heads of peaceable citizens, and their families ... It is no more than proper for us to add, in this connection, that the Hollanders are exempt from any reflection which the word

³⁸ Though the modern observer is likely to be impressed by the swiftness of justice, a mere four days after the crime was committed.

³⁹ A shillelah (or shillelagh) is an Irish term for a cudgel, a wooden club. "Floilish" appears to mean something similar to brandish, and thus could simply be a typographical error for an intended "flourish" or "flail."

foreigner, in this article might seem to convey. *They* are sober, temperate, and industrious to a remarkable degree, make worthy and respectable citizens, and are entitled to our regard. The same may also be said of the Germans generally—But of the Irish ...

The article goes on to describe the Irish using terms such as *ignorance*, *avarice*, *indolence* and a taste for the "craythur,"⁴⁰ and the author's use of Irish terms such as *shillelagh* and *craythur* further the anti-Irish stereotype through an intentional mocking of the Irish. This is in sharp contrast to the positive image promoted by and lengths to which the author went to in order to assure the readers that the Dutch were not a part of the group deserving derision or mockery. The lack of negative Dutch stereotypes persisted for decades.

In the first two decades of the twentieth century, a common stereotype of immigrants was that they were for the organization of labor into unions, they advocated strikes, and they were conspiring against America in their native languages, all of which is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Seven. "Hollanders" escaped even this stereotype: they crossed picket lines during the Grand Rapids furniture strike of 1911,⁴¹ were loyal members of the Republican Party, and were generally anti-union, a stance that the pro-business newspapers of the time praised them for.

With the lack of negative stereotypes and the wealth of positive ones, the Dutch of Grand Rapids were able to operate from a position of self-confidence, and as Bradley (2002) notes, a positive attitude towards one's ethnic community and language is a factor

⁴⁰ An Irish variant of the word "creature." This attestation is notable, as it predates by several decades the first DARE entry for this word.

⁴¹ Grand Rapids and the Piedmont of North Carolina competed for the title of "furniture capital" during this time period, and both still claim it.

which provides for easier and more successful language maintenance. Unlike many immigrant groups, the CRC Dutch did not see themselves as disadvantaged in the period from roughly 1850 - 1910—as they weren't—or as victims of injustices from the majority society. They could preserve their language because it was advantageous to them to do so. When it no longer was, due to external pressures in the period of 1910-1930, they made a conscious commitment to forsake it. They no longer needed it to preserve their faith, and they no longer needed it to preserve the core values that they felt made up their "Dutchness." They came to the same conclusion that Scholte had in the Pella colony and that Van Raalte had in the Holland colony in the immediate decades after settlement. Being "Dutch" was about piety, honesty, cleanliness, and intelligence through the promotion of learning and self-sufficiency through hard work and the promotion of industry (Lucas, 1955). Scholte and Van Raalte, the CRC now saw, had been able to preserve all of that without the language, and the CRC was now—some seventy years later—ready to do the same. This is conscious language planning.

A further factor was that the confidence they had long held in their language's purity—their ability to maintain the standard—was slipping away. Bradley (2002) and Dorian (1994) both point to the loss of the perception of linguistic "purity" as a factor in language shift:

[When the] younger speakers of the language speak something which is radically different from what is spoken by the fluent elders [this gives the perception] of extremely rapid change within an endangered language. If the speech of the younger people is regarded by the elders as inadequate because of puristic

attitudes, the younger people may be discouraged from continuing to speak (Bradley, 2002, pp. 6-7).

Contemporary accounts from the 1910s and 1920s provide evidence that this was indeed happening in the CRC Dutch community, as is examined in section 6.2.

6.2 The Dutch Language in Transition and the "Decline" of the Dutch Language

This dissertation focuses on the shift to the English language among Dutch immigrants of Grand Rapids, Michigan. A secondary focus is the language shift among Dutch immigrants of Holland, Michigan. Language shift in Pella, Iowa is mentioned where relevant to understanding the situations in Michigan. Further, with its focus on language shift to English, the changes occurring to the Dutch language during this period are beyond the scope of this dissertation. Other scholars such as Jaap van Marle and Caroline Smits among others have investigated this and thus a brief summary of their findings is instructive.

Van Marle and Smits (1996, 2002) have focused their study on the Dutch language in Pella and Orange City, Iowa. They point out that the varieties of Dutch spoken by settlers were many as immigrants came from many different regions (mostly from the western provinces of Utrecht, Gelderland, and South Holland), resulting in linguistic heterogeneity. This led to accommodation on the part of speakers (after Trudgill, 1986) and thus resulted in a dialect leveling. Influence of the church and education led to a greater contact with a more standard form of Dutch, and thus, Pella Dutch while still clearly a dialect was closer in many ways to Standard Dutch than any of the non-standard regional dialects from which it was born. For heterogeneous dialects to

undergo accommodation and leveling and thus come to more greatly resemble the standard dialect is not uncommon. Van Marle and Smits (1996, 2002) do point out, however, that this process requires isolation, and posit that something similar may have occurred in Holland, Michigan, but that the community has yet to be studied in this light.

Importantly, it will be noted that a study of the Dutch language in Grand Rapids has yet to be undertaken, and this paper does suggest that may not simply be a gap in the literature, though definitive evidence supporting that would need to be established in another study.

What is relevant to this dissertation's scope is that during the first three decades of the twentieth century, there is a clear rise in the number of complaints and criticisms about the quality of the Dutch language written and spoken in West Michigan, showing that there were noticeable changes occurring. Van Hinte (1928) was especially critical, lamenting the fact that the "poetry" of Dutch was present in the papers only in the form of elegies for the dead. Even worse were the lead articles,

The quality of these articles did not remain constant, but in many ways ... it regressed, both in terms of the purity of the Dutch language and in terms of content. (p.455)

He also criticized the inclusion of *nieuwtjes* (gossip). The newspaper which receives his harshest criticism is one of the longest-lasting, *De Grondwet*, which he noted had become "very Americanized" and written "in anything but pure Dutch" (p.448). He declared that "the Dutch press in the United States was doomed to become bastardized from the very beginning" (p.456). The only newspapers to escape his criticism were those published by the CRC, and he attributes the high quality of the language to their ensuring that the

editors of the papers were either recent Dutch immigrants or had received schooling in the Netherlands, which would explain how they had learned Standard Dutch and not the "Yankee Dutch" of the colony.

Like those settling in Pella, Iowa, studied by Van Marle and Smits (1996, 2002) Dutch immigrants coming to West Michigan spoke many different dialects of Dutch and Frisian. Most did not have formal education in which they would have learned Standard Dutch in the Netherlands, yet as in Iowa, there was a convergence to Standard Dutch. Clearly the goal was two-fold: to increase mutual intelligibility among immigrants from different regions and to use the prestige form, thereby further cementing their "Dutchness."

The English language did, however, appear to have an effect on the Dutch spoken in America, known as both American Dutch and Yankee Dutch. Smits (1996) chronicled the loss of inflection in the Dutch spoken in Iowa. Sinke (2002) mentions the loss of grammatical gender in the Dutch spoken in West Michigan. English borrowings, notably, do not begin to appear until the 1910s. To back up this notion that the rising prestige of English in the Dutch community was the cause of this, the most frequent borrowings were terms of address: Mr., Mrs., "ladies" in place of Dutch "dames" (Sinke, 2002). This is, however, coincidental and unrelated to the language shift that occurred in the 1920s which moved the community to English and away from the stable bilingualism it had maintained for decades. This stable bilingualism could have been maintained; it wasn't.

As discussed in Chapter Two, several "mechanisms of interference" can result when two languages are in contact, from code-switching to code alternation, passive

familiarity to negotiation (Thomason, 1997). The loss of inflection and grammatical gender were likely due to code alternation because the CRC Dutch community was a community of fluent bilinguals. Further, they—unlike the RCA Dutch—were not isolated from Standard Dutch as close ties had been maintained in the press, the church and the colleges to the Netherlands up until the 1910's. The CRC Dutch spoke Dutch to one another and English to non-Dutch speakers. As these language changes occurred, they would have been reinforced by the group. The borrowing of the forms of address likely began with conscious code-switching.

Many studies show that bilinguals especially are far more conscious of linguistic processes, pragmatics and semiotics, than are monolingual speakers. Oksaar (1997) contends that:

Children who grow up with more than one language, more so than monolinguals, are able to break down the screen which language builds between the individual and reality. They are aware of the arbitrariness of their words earlier than monolingual children are (p.294).

This supports the notion that speakers could have been consciously aware of many of these changes in features. Also noteworthy is that English affected the Dutch spoken, but Dutch did not have long-term effects on the English spoken by Dutch descendants in Grand Rapids. This is noteworthy because in other immigrant communities like the Norwegian Americans studied by Haugen and the Swedish Americans studied by Kardstadt, both the L1 and the L2 were changed. Further, in the Dutch Calvinist community of Pella, Iowa, there was an effect on the English spoken. Ten Harmsel (2002) argues there was also an effect on the English dialect of Holland, Michigan. Why

was the English of Grand Rapids not affected? Long-term stable bilingualism and multi-generational contact with monolingual, non-Dutch English speakers in Grand Rapids made the crucial difference.

6.3 Language Shift in the Dutch Press of Grand Rapids

From roughly 1910-1930, a radical shift occurs in the number of publications in Dutch, and in the number of authors writing and publishing in Dutch. Much of the data in this section were drawn from Hendrik Edelman's 1986 work *The Dutch Language Press in America*, which as mentioned in Chapter Five provides a bibliographic inventory of Dutch publications from 1693 to 1948, organized chronologically. The analysis of the data is my own, focusing on the period from 1910-1933, reviewing the publications from West Michigan publishing houses, most of which were located in Grand Rapids, though publishers in Kalamazoo and Muskegon also produced Dutch publications in this period. After 1933, Dutch publications were procured from publishing houses in the Netherlands.

Surprisingly, the first CRC publisher of note, Eerdmans Publishing, Co. was not founded until 1911, as up until this time the CRC had largely relied on materials published in the Netherlands. Eerdmans published in Dutch until the late 1910s. In that year of its founding "the Dutch language was still prevalent in orthodox Christian circles, as well as among new immigrants. The size of that market was still growing..." (Edelman, 1986, p.36). Yet the situation changed dramatically and rapidly. In 1920, the American book-trade journal *Publisher's Weekly* reported of Eerdmans Publishing that

The flow of immigration to this country from Holland has largely ceased, and as the new generation grows up the demand for books in the Holland language has,

to a large extent, changed to a demand for similar books in English, so the sales of the firm are now as high as ninety percent in English (Edelman, 1986).

Eerdmans found the best markets for Dutch-language books, printed in Grand Rapids, were the Netherlands and South Africa (Edelman, 1986).

The first conclusion that can be drawn from the data is an overall decline in the number of Dutch publications by West Michigan publishing houses annually. The following table demonstrates this decline:

Year	West Michigan Dutch publications	Annual Average for Select Periods
1910	12	1910-1915: 15 publications/year on average
1911	9	
1912	17	
1913	23	
1914	16	
1915	11	
1916	18	1916-1920: 16 publications/year on average
1917	18	
1918	19	
1919	15	
1920	12	
1921	10	1921-1925: 10 publications/year on average
1922	15	
1923	12	
1924	7	
1925	6	
1926	1	1926-1933: 2 publications/year on average
1927	5	
1928	1	
1929	1	
1930	2	
1931	2	
1932	1	
1933	1	

Many publications, especially serial publications, ended in this period. *Het Ideaal* ceased publication in 1916 after nine years. Others switched to English: *Calvin College Chimes*

which had been bilingual from 1907-1917, was published using English exclusively after 1917.

What makes the data even more compelling is the authors of these publications. In 1913 a total of twenty-three Dutch publications was produced by West Michigan publishing houses, and no two publications had the same author. In 1917, there were eighteen publications in total, and two authors each had two publications: H. Bultema and L. Penning both had two. In 1922, there are fifteen publications, and two authors have three publications: H. Bultema and R. Janssen. Consider, however, the period from 1925-1933. In this period, of the twenty total publications, nine are written by two men: H. Hoeksma and G. Vos, with six and three publications respectively. The period from 1930-1933 is even more striking. Of the six total publications, four were written by H. Hoeksma, and one was written by G. Vos. After this year, Vos will publish—in Dutch at least⁴²—only once more, in 1934, but notably he has changed publishing houses. Rather than publishing through Grand Rapids' Eerdmans Press where his prior material had been published, his final work is published by Flagg Publishers in Santa Ana, California. Hoeksma will continue to write and be published in Dutch, but his pace is notably slowed. After publishing at least one and not infrequently two works in Dutch in the years 1923, 1924, 1925, 1927, 1930, 1931, and 1933, he did not publish again until 1938. His remaining works in Dutch appear in 1938, 1939, 1946, and 1949, and never more than one work is published in any of these years.

It appears too that Eerdman's Publishing House—once the largest publisher of Dutch works—had moved away from publishing in Dutch. In the years from 1933-1948, only three Eerdmans' publications appear in the Dutch press bibliographic record. The

⁴² It is not known if Vos ever published in English.

first is a book of psalms published in 1942 and it is the only monolingual Dutch publication of the three; the second a "Dutch Grammar with Conversation" was published in 1944; the last, published in 1948, is a bilingual publication titled *Nederlandse Bloemlezing; A Dutch and Flemish Anthology of Poetry and Prose*.

Haugen (1969) found a similar pattern of language shift in his study of Norwegians in America. As he notes:

The texts which appear after the turn of the century were not intended to give learners full mastery of the written language. They were aimed at Americans who wished to learn something about Norwegian, not at speakers of Norwegian who might wish to perfect their mastery of the written language (p.140)

Those that did appear faced a rapid decline, just as had the Dutch press:

World War I delivered a body blow to the study of Norwegian, especially in the high schools, where it had been widely introduced. As a result, few works were published during the twenties (Haugen, 1969, p.140).

These books, and those published up until World War II are reminiscent of the Dutch works of the same period. Their titles include *Beginning Norwegian*, *Reading Norwegian*, and *Spoken Norwegian*, all written by Haugen himself.

6.4 Language Shift in the CRC and in the Private Lives of Its Members

The CRC's Americanization occurred in the decade of World War I. The first English Psalter appeared in 1914. The official CRC publication, *The Banner*, was first published as the English translation of the longstanding *De Wachter* in 1915. Less than a decade prior, in 1907, the CRC had published a commemorative volume celebrating the fiftieth

anniversary of the church's founding entitled *Gedenkboek van het vijftigjarig jubileum der Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk, A.D. 1857-1907*.⁴³ Not only were the majority of its essays written in Dutch, but two common themes which dominate the work are the strong traditions the immigrants brought from the Netherlands and preserved in their new home, and the church's continued strong ties to the Reformed Church in the Netherlands.

In 1918, looking outward to the American Christian communities for the first time, the CRC affiliated itself with the Federal Council of Christian Churches. Knowing that it needed to increase its presence, it opened its first printing plant house in 1919 (CRC of North America),⁴⁴ printing largely in English. And in 1920, the CRC launched its first missions, in China and India. And while this may seem a minor point, the first organ—an instrument that had so long been a symbol of "worldly" Americanism—appeared in a CRC church in 1919 (Van Hinte, 1928). The CRC had become distinctly American.

Americanization was not limited to the CRC. Dutch families who had maintained their linguistic tradition for decades also switched to English in this decade. The case of Gerrit Roelofs as told in English by his daughter Cora Roelofs Verbrugge in 1994 is instructive. As mentioned in Chapter Three, he came to Grand Rapids in 1871 at the age of eighteen and found no difficulty communicating though he lacked English. Roelofs became a member of the Tweede Gereformeerde Gemeente (Second Reformed Congregation) of Grand Rapids, a Dutch-speaking CRC church, and met his wife, Mary, also Dutch and Dutch-speaking. Roelofs hoped to establish himself in business and recognized the importance of English in business, so he took classes and learned it.

⁴³ Memorial book of the fifty year Jubilee of the Christian Reformed Church, 1857-1907

⁴⁴ <http://www.crchurches.net>

Importantly, however, the language of his home was still Dutch, and as his business grew, he did not lose the need to conduct much of his business in Dutch. In 1893, he founded, edited, and published *Een Stem des Volks* (A Voice of the People), a pro-temperance paper. Articles were submitted by community members and covered community issues.⁴⁵ Local English-speaking businesses placed ads assuring the availability of Dutch-speaking clerks to assist Dutch speakers. Even as late as 1907, Roelofs comments to his cousin, that he has hired a new young woman to work in his office. He is pleased that she speaks and understands Dutch because this is still needed with many of his customers (Roelofs Verbrugge, 1994).

Roelofs' first wife died in 1911 and he remarried in 1912. His second wife, Nellie, did not speak English, but he instructed her to learn it. His letters to her from 1912-1915 are in Dutch, but starting in 1916 when her English was strong enough, the letters switch to English. This in itself is significant. While immigrant language shift is not uncommon, for a couple with a shared native language to shift to a new language even with each other is novel. The couple had two children; this account of Roelofs' life is written by his daughter Cora, born 1917. Roelofs died in 1919 and his second wife remarried quickly. She and her second husband, also Dutch and a native Dutch speaker, had a largely English-speaking household. Nellie's mother never learned English and so complained frequently of not being able to understand anyone. The amount of English spoken made her feel confused and overwhelmed and made the house feel too cramped. In a note written in Dutch left on her daughter Nellie's pillow, she complained that the

⁴⁵ As mentioned in Chapter Five, *Een Stem des Volks* was published until 1900. In that year, the Prohibition Party lost soundly, leaving Roelofs to believe his cause was before its time and not presently popular enough to sustain the paper. The end of this publication, therefore, was due to its subject matter, not due to a lack of a readership able to read Dutch.

family would have to find her a new place to live if the situation did not improve (Roelofs Verbrugge, 1994). There is no evidence it did.

Cora Roelofs Verbrugge describes her upbringing as “bilingual” yet there is ample evidence to doubt this assertion. All linguistic evidence that she presents from the 1920s describes an English-speaking household. The Dutch spoken appeared limited to communication with the grandmother. Further, Roelofs Verbrugge describes needing to relearn Dutch as an adult when her interest in her family’s history increased. Her husband had kept up his Dutch far better, studying it in college, and was her translator and then proofreader for many years, as Roelofs Verbrugge did not trust her abilities. Throughout her memoir, when her parents are described as speaking Dutch, it is when they are sick and they are calling out to be tended to.

Roelofs' story is the rule rather than the exception. All signs point to a strong Dutch linguistic community which disintegrates abruptly with World War I. Dingena T. van Beek Berkhout immigrated to Grand Rapids in 1908 at the age of 15. As an elderly woman, she recited the following poem popular in Grand Rapids when she was a teenager:

In Nederland ben ik opgevoed; in Nederland leered ‘k spreken
I was raised in the Netherlands; I learned to speak in the Netherlands

Ik zal voor die taal steeds in ‘t gemoed dezellefde liefde kweken
I will continue to promote the same kind of love for the language

Niet dat ik op ‘t vreemde smaal; ik let alles in z’n waarde
Not that I revile the foreign; everything has its worth

Maar ik zeg, voor mij is hollands taal, de schoonste taal op aarde.

But I say, for me, Dutch is the most beautiful language on earth.

(Sinke, 2002, p.184).

Another immigrant from 1908, this one a twenty-two year old, reminisced about a discussion that had taken place in her church women's group in the 1910s when some of younger members raised the idea of an English-language bible study group, "And one of the ladies in the [pro-] Dutch group said, but in heaven they will have to speak Dutch" so what would be the point of learning English? (Sinke, 2002, p.183). Van Marle and Smits (1996) add,

Many (immigrants) were raised with the idea that Dutch was the language spoken in the hereafter. Similarly some of the early immigrants from the Netherlands simply refused to learn the English language altogether, since they were convinced that God would be unable to understand them in that language (pp. 431-432).

The Dillingham Commission of 1911 also noted a generation gap in English acquisition: it reported that only a third of Dutch women who had emigrated when they were fourteen years of age or older had learned English. Contrast this with the 99% of those who had emigrated when they were thirteen years of age or younger who had learned English (Reports of the Immigration Commission, 1911, in Sinke, 2002). These results appear to contradict the US Census of 1910s literacy figures mentioned earlier. A likely explanation is sociological. The Dillingham Commission may well have been flawed by its attempts to have Dutch speak English to prove their intelligence, something many Dutch may have felt offended by. There is also a large difference, as all second language learners know, between comprehension and production, with the former always

being at a higher level than the latter. Thus, these apparently contradictory results are perhaps not surprising or unexpected, or even particularly contradictory.

Perhaps the most compelling evidence for the abrupt shift comes from 1920. As already established above, that was the year that CRC policy ceased to take its direction from the old Gereformde Netherlandic church, and the year that the minutes of the Ninth Reformed Church ceased to be kept in Dutch. It was the year *Stemmen uit de Vrije Gemeende* ceased publication and the year that the CRC launched its first missions, a decisive turn towards Americanization. On November 29, 1919, just one month prior to 1920, the Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church, the largest Dutch church in Grand Rapids, adopted English. The *Grand Rapids Herald* reported at the time that this was “another triumph for the Americanization element now working in the Christian Reformed Church” (1919, November 29, p.3). It was also the year a young Dutch immigrant placed two personal ads in the Dutch newspaper *De Hollandsche Amerikaan*. The first ad, in Dutch, simply said that he “would like to meet a simple, understanding, and good-hearted girl. No specific denomination.” Two weeks later, he placed a second ad in the same paper, this time in English, whose verbosity not only suggests the greater prestige of English, but reveals his interest in sounding much more sophisticated and intellectual,

A naturalized Hollander, 26 years old, mechanic, would like to become acquainted with a girl or lady of from 22 to 27 years, who will form a congenial intelligent companion. Simplicity instead of arrogance desired. Religion no exigency... (in Sinke, 2002, p.190).

Jacob van Hinte, who has been referenced throughout this paper, was a doctoral student from the Netherlands who spent 1921 in America conducting research for what would become his 1928 doctoral dissertation, *Nederlanders in Amerika*. His perspective, therefore, is particularly valuable as his time in America coincided with a great change for the community. In his dissertation, he discusses young Dutch women in Grand Rapids, and says they refuse to or cannot speak Dutch.

As is not uncommon in the final stages of language death, the spheres of usage greatly contracted, and contracted to areas that may be viewed as negative. In this new climate, Dutch became the language of punishment and the “secret language of parents ... children in this kind of setting began to associate the Dutch language with spankings” (Sinke, 2002, p. 191).

6.5 Language Planning and Shift: Evidence from the Grave

Many researchers have noted the potential linguistic value of gravestone markers as indicators of language prestige, shift, and death. In particular, Eva Eckert (1998) has studied dialectal changes and language shift as evidenced by Czech gravestones in Praha, Texas.

The field of necroethnicity examines how ethnicity and ethnic markers are preserved in funerary markers and architecture, and its scholars also provide important background and points of comparison for this current study. Thomas Graves has done extensive work analyzing the graves of Pennsylvania Germans. John Matturi's insight into Italian-American funerary markers is particularly insightful in showing the impact of culture on the choice of markers. Karen Kiest's 1993 analysis of Czech cemeteries in

Nebraska provides further support for many of the social and linguistic points put forth by Eckert. Doris Francis, Leonie Kellaher and Georgina Neophytou's 2005 work, *The Secret Cemetery*, includes as one of its arguments that ethnic cemeteries become substitute homelands for the community's members, a point that is further explored in this analysis.

This analysis will also, importantly, compare West Michigan CRC Dutch graves with those of the eighteenth century descendents of the first Dutch settlement of New Amsterdam by analyzing the inscriptions of the graves of the Old Dutch Burying Ground of Sleepy Hollow in Tarrytown, New York. Of particular interest in both that burial ground and those of West Michigan are the quantity of Dutch inscriptions, when they were made, the age of the decedent, the rise of bilingual inscriptions, as well as the choice of language of inscription within families. Interestingly, it is not uncommon to see even a husband and wife choose—or have chosen for them, as the case may be—different languages for their gravestone inscriptions.

6.5.1 Gravestone Markers as Providers of Linguistic Data

As Eva Eckert (1998) establishes, the inscriptions on gravestones "document both synchronic and diachronic language usage and record changes reflective of the societal patterning of language in a given community" (p.205). In general, ritualistic language common to many tombs, such as "Rest in Peace" is not revealing—though surveying these ritualistic phrases over a greater span of time can show significant linguistic changes. But the style of personalized epitaphs often demonstrates dialect and language

shift. Also significant is the language of life span, including the words "born" and "died" as well as names of months and the decedent's age.

The Czech language provided a strong base for Eckert's study for it is a language with many diacritical markers, and it was the use, and more significantly, misuse of these markers upon which Eckert based her analysis. The settlers of the Czech community of Praha, Texas, spoke a distinct Moravian dialect but also had command of Standard Czech.⁴⁶ Gravestone inscriptions appeared both in the distinct dialect and in Standard Czech. English influenced the local dialect over the decades as well. Eckert argues that gravestone markers serve as better records than, for instance, newspapers or church records, for documenting dialect both synchronically and diachronically because gravestones were not edited:

Church and community records were written by the trained and educated, using Standard Czech written language conventions. The immigrants' Czech newspaper contributions were censored for dialectal features by conscientious editors. But no one edited tombstone inscriptions, although some carvers, with a varying degree of success, tried to imitate Standard Czech (p.207).

Certainly, some of the language on tombstones is quite formulaic and ritualistic, a point Eckert makes and one which will become important in my analysis of the Sleepy Hollow, New York, and West Michigan markers. Standard language is most often found in the traditional inscriptions. But the epitaph is a "personal familiar style of unofficial communication" which reflects "the individual's dialect shaped by usage in a community" (p.207).

⁴⁶ Demonstrated by the very high literacy rate of 98% in the period of the late nineteenth century.

In such personal epitaphs, Eckert found distinct patterns of diacritical usage. The inscriptions on the graves of first generation immigrants "reflect[ed] minor dialectal variation mirroring dialectal features of the Moravian dialect region." In other words, the inscriptions were written in the native dialect of the decedents. For example, speakers of the Lachia dialect did not have the phonemic vowel lengthening found in Standard Czech. Lengthening is marked by the čárka diacritic, and so the čárka diacritic is largely absent from the first-generation Praha graves as seen in the following (vowels that would have been lengthened in Standard Czech are underlined):

Zde odpočívá ANTONIE KREJČÍ Povolal mne Nejvišĭ Pan Kde v neby...

cf. Standard Czech odpočívá, KREJČÍ, Nejvyšší

Among second and third generation settlers, however, the diacritics with increasing frequency do not correspond to either the regional dialect or to Standard Czech. In fact, some are quite randomly placed. This led Eckert to conclude that they have come to be used solely "for decorative purposes and as ethnicity symbols" (p.208).

Kiest (1993) considered Czech immigrants communities found in Nebraska. Like the Texas settlers, the Nebraska settlers sought to preserve their ethnicity and language:

While they strove to become prosperous American citizens, they resisted assimilating into the larger American culture. Language, literacy, musical, social, athletic, and political association were organized to serve and preserve the Czech community (p.79).

Importantly, they felt "cemetery associations" to be just as critical to the society.

Cemetery associations provide for maintenance and upkeep, and as they are based within

the community, tend to have the community's interests at heart. Cemetery associations with their accompanying cemeteries were established in every settlement.

The Czech communities of Praha, Texas, and Nebraska have many similarities to the West Michigan Dutch colony, but many differences as well. Each group of Czech settlers formed an "in-group community" with a shared religion, their migration began at roughly the same time (mid-nineteenth century) and ended at the end of the 1910s with the tightened immigration quotas of the 1920s. According to Eckert, the Praha, Texas, settlement maintained its linguistic heritage for a hundred years. They differed from the Dutch in their extreme geographic isolation, forming communities that were "homogenous in terms of occupation, educational background [and] social standing," (Eckert, 1998, p.206) all characteristics that make the preservation of a native language and culture easier.

The CRC Dutch community of Grand Rapids, in particular, was far more diverse and in greater contact with English speakers, which was part of the reason why they were able to shift to English at a point in time of their choice. The timing of the decline of the native language was, however, similar for the two communities, and it was tied to similar external factors, discussed in Chapter Seven. Specifically, tighter immigration laws that restricted the influx of new Czech immigrants who had helped to keep the language and culture alive, rising anti-immigrant sentiment, and a change in the educational laws which greatly reduced the freedom of local communities to dictate the language of education in their local schools.

Pennsylvania German graves from the nineteenth to the early twentieth century have been studied by Thomas Graves. As he notes, this period has been under-

researched, as most attention has been paid to pre-1820 graves. As the nineteenth and early twentieth century was the period of greatest linguistic change and language shift in these communities, and as the time period matches that of the Dutch discussed in this paper, his work aids in an understanding of the Dutch.

Unlike the Dutch, the Germans of Pennsylvania faced considerable anti-German discrimination. This was a direct factor in a schism, not unlike that between the RCA Dutch and the CRC Dutch, that split the conservatives—who would become the modern-day Mennonites and Amish—from the progressives—generally Lutheran and Reformed in religious affiliation who are now completely Americanized. This split developed in the middle of the nineteenth century, sparked by state public school acts of 1834 and 1848 and further driven by the Civil War and the pressure to show patriotism through Americanism.

In his studies, Graves (1983; 1988) determined that the first English-language gravestones begin to appear in the 1830s. By the 1850s, they nearly equal the German-language markers. This equilibrium sustains until the 1880s, at which point the German-language markers quickly disappear. Language is not the only potential marker of ethnicity that can be placed on a grave. While the Czechs (mis)used diacritics, the Germans used motifs such as the hex and lunnete as well as the Fraktur script⁴⁷ to demonstrate German ethnicity. As Graves (1983) notes, "it is through the language itself, the continued use of the Germanic text formats, and the use of the hex motifs that statements of ethnicity are made" (p.11). And while the German language may have

⁴⁷ The Fraktur, or "broken" script, was used from the sixteenth century to World War II, and gained its name from the fact that its ornamental flourishes "broke" the continuity of linear script, such as one would find in cursive writing.

largely disappeared from markers in the 1880s, the hex motifs and Fraktur script persist until the 1920s.

Why did the German language disappear from the markers earlier? The disappearance corresponds with the fact that knowledge of the German language was also disappearing. A clear indication of that fact is found in what Graves (1989) refers to as "Rosetta Stones," bilingual markers that wholly or partially translated the text of the inscription into English, or more commonly in later years into German. In some instances, the German "translation" is simply the name of the decedent in the Fraktur script. The point of this, according to Graves, was "to acknowledge the ethnic origin of the dead as well as the fact that not all the dead person's family and friends could still read German" (p.88).

The Pennsylvania Germans studied by Graves had much in common with the West Michigan Dutch. Their immigration occurred in roughly the same period, and specifically those who arrived in the latter half of the nineteenth century—like the CRC Dutch—"felt strongly that their German culture and language should be maintained" (Graves, 1989, p. 88). How they differed was that they had to face a greater degree of negative stereotyping and discrimination, their religious affiliations were far more diverse and, despite the desire to maintain the German language, their children followed the common pattern of language shift. By the third generation, the children were native English speakers with little knowledge of German.

Italian-Americans also preserved and demonstrated their ethnicity on their grave markers (Matturi, 1993). Of particular interest is their usage of photographs of the

deceased affixed to the grave markers. What makes this unique is that they were for over a century one of a very small number of immigrant community groups to do so.

The first system for securing daguerreotypes to grave markers came on the market in 1851, but the American public was slow to adopt it.⁴⁸ The reason is likely tied to the general cultural concept of what a cemetery should be. The garden cemetery movement, which had begun with the founding of Paris' Père Lachaise in 1804 and Boston's Mount Auburn in 1831, emphasized the cemetery as a triumph of landscape architecture, replete with streams, ponds, paths, and foliage. That the dead were interred there was somewhat secondary. Many felt that photographs on graves would serve to remind people—unpleasantly so—of the true purpose of the cemetery as a repository of the dead.

The garden cemetery movement did not flourish everywhere, however. Southern and Eastern Europe favored cemeteries which made their purpose apparent, and, as a result, when the funerary daguerreotypes became available in the mid-nineteenth century, they were adopted readily, as can be seen in the following photographs from the author's personal collection. In Figure 1, taken in an Albanian cemetery, all the headstones contain a photograph of the decedent.

⁴⁸ Though Americans did show, interestingly, an affinity for affixing these to the graves of their pets.

Figure 1: Cemetery outside of Krujë, Albania, 1994.



Figure 2 is the grave of a Portuguese child who died at the age of four. Her grave as well as the grave adjacent also visible in this photo contain photographs.

Figure 2: Grave of "Our Dear Lena,"
1945 – 1949. Evora,
Portugal.



According to Matturi (1993), it was through these photos that Italian-Americans in particular preserved their ethnic and specifically Catholic identity.

Francis, Kellaher, and Neophytou (2005) consider the socio-cultural importance of cemeteries in preserving ethnic identity. In particular, they posit that ethnic cemeteries have the ability to serve as surrogate "homelands" for immigrants far from their native land. Cemeteries are metaphorical bridges. They bridge "the home of the living to the metaphorical home of the dead, the home of origin and the home of settlement" (p.195).

This metaphorical home of origin is further strengthened by ethnic markers within the cemetery. Czech diacritical markers, use of the German Fraktur script, photos of the deceased, use of the native language in grave inscriptions, and identification of the place of birth all served to define the cemetery as being a place of safety for the in-group of the ethnic community.

The cemetery, however, is also a place of conflict for immigrant communities, as they seek to balance tradition with assimilation and the pressure from society at large to embrace assimilation. Cemetery rituals may be so instilled in society at large that ethnic groups find them difficult to alter. Economic forces are also at work. The most elaborate or specialized graves were also the most expensive. To the typical member of society, the range of affordable and available grave markers may be quite limited, and often was in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Traditional rituals may not be permitted in the new homeland. Francis et al. point out that forced ritualistic assimilation may actually promote resistance out of fear of a dilution of ethnicity such that groups may go to lengths to demonstrate ethnic affiliation in the areas in which they may (2005).

6.5.2 Dutch Grave Inscriptions

Dutch and English are written using the same script, without diacritics, so the particular type of linguistic evidence uncovered by Eckert in her study of Czech graves is unavailable. Unlike the Italian-American graves studied by Matturi, the West Michigan Dutch graves are far simpler. No tombstones were discovered in my study which displayed a photograph of the deceased, though the technology was certainly available. The primary marker of ethnicity, then, is the language itself.

The amount of information contained on gravestones can vary greatly. At the simplest, they may contain only the name of the decedent, the birth year, and death year, as seen in Figure 3:

Figure 3: Grave of John D. De Ruyter, 1834-1880, Oak Hill Cemetery, Grand Rapids, Michigan⁴⁹



⁴⁹ All photographs are originals, taken by me.

Some add the birth day and month, and death day and month to this; some the age at death. Others add a family relationship, such as "wife of" or "son of." Location of birth or death is also at times included. Figures 4 and 5 demonstrate some of these styles.

Figure 4: Grave of Lammert Ebel Van Dam, 1913, Mountain Home Cemetery, Kalamazoo, Michigan. Inscription reads, *Lammert Ebel, son of F. and H. Van Dam, Feb. 24, 1913, 3 days old.*⁵⁰



Figure 5: Grave of Roelof Staal, 1856-1899, Oak Hill Cemetery, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Inscription reads, *FATHER. Here rests our dearest husband and father Roelof Staal, born in the Netherlands ...*



⁵⁰ First child of my great-grandparents, Fred and Henrietta Van Dam.

The most complex graves additionally carried an epitaph or other inscription:

Figure 6: Grave of Jantje Boerema, 1839-1898, Oak Hill Cemetery, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Inscription (in Dutch) lists maiden name, birth date and death date to the year, month and day, age to the year, month and day (59 years, 2 months, and 21 days) and a lengthy inscription.



From a linguistic standpoint, it is clear that the most valuable markers for a study of this type are those with the most information, as the grave of Jantje Boerema in Figure 6.

Unfortunately, the most frequent West Michigan Dutch immigrant graves are stylistically those of Figure 3: name, birth year, death year. Graves (1983) found the same in his study of Pennsylvania German graves from this period. This means, of course, that clues to the language of the decedent—like the common "geboren" (born) or even the names of months—is stripped away. The extant graves that do contain linguistic indicators are, however, numerous enough to form a valuable corpus for this study.

6.5.3 Eighteenth Century Evidence from New York

It was the very witching time of night that Ichabod, heavy-hearted and crest-fallen, pursued his travel homewards, along the sides of the lofty hills which rise above Tarry Town, and which he had traversed so cheerily in the afternoon. The hour was dismal as himself. Far below him, the Tappan Zee spread its dusky and indistinct waste of waters ... In the dead hush of midnight, he could even hear the barking of the watch dog from the opposite shore of the Hudson; but it was so vague and faint as only to give an idea of his distance from this faithful companion of man ... All the stories of ghosts and goblins that he had heard in the afternoon, now came crowding upon his recollection. The night grew darker and darker; the stars seemed to sink deeper in the sky, and driving clouds occasionally hid them from his sight. He had never felt so lonely and dismal. He was, moreover, approaching the very place where many of the scenes of the ghost stories had been laid. –The Legend of Sleepy Hollow, Washington Irving

The Old Dutch Burying Ground of Sleepy Hollow, located at the First Reformed Church in North Tarrytown, New York, was the scene and perhaps inspiration for many of Washington Irving's tales. Irving felt strongly that his home region's citizens had lost something significant in their abandonment of their Dutch past, a nostalgic sentiment that was widely held by those in the Dutch areas of New York in the first half of the nineteenth century, and this is a theme in many of his short stories, including *Rip Van Winkle* and *the Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, both originally published in 1819. The Old Dutch Burying Ground of Sleepy Hollow has also served as Washington Irving's final resting place since his death in 1859.

Recall that the Dutch language had largely died out in New York by the time of the Revolutionary War. In the early twentieth century, struck by the rapid decay of the gravestones in the adjacent Old Dutch Burying Ground, the First Reformed Church decided to inventory its graves. Unfortunately, no graves prior to 1755 could be read due to erosion over time and the short life of the materials used to construct grave markers in the early period (often, wood, as sandstone was not used until the mid-eighteenth century). Still, their inventory, published in 1953, contains the inscriptions of nine-hundred forty-two headstones from 1755-1860, eleven of which are completely or partially in Dutch. A review of each is revealing:

1. Sara Fouchee Enters (1717-1769)
2. Abraham Martlenghs (1693-1761)
3. Johannes Van Wert (1735-1775)
4. Nicholas Storm (1755-1774)
5. Hendrik Van Tefsel (1704-1771)
6. Belitie Buys (d. 1771, aged 65 yrs.)
7. Mino Duitcher (d. 1770, aged 60 yrs.)
8. Petrus Van Tessel (1728-1784)
9. Catriena Ecker (1736-1793)
10. Elizabeth Hek (d. 1767, aged 24 yrs.)
11. William Van Wert (d. 1772, aged 65 yrs.)

Several interesting patterns can be gleaned from these graves generally. The list is nearly evenly divided on the basis of gender, six women and five men, so it does not appear from this limited sample that gender was a significant factor in the selection of the

language for the marker; eight of the eleven are over the age of fifty; only two appear after the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, and no grave from 1794-1860 has any Dutch on it. As noted in Chapters Two and Three, the Revolutionary War caused a great rise in the sense of "Americanism" among the Dutch of New York, and these grave inscriptions support that conclusion.

Several of these graves have further interesting and individual stories to tell. Of the eleven, four belong to two married couples: Hendrick Van Tefsel and Belitie Buys, and Petrus Van Tessel and Catriena Ecker. The latter are particularly interesting as these are the two post-Revolutionary War graves and both their gravestones are trilingual: Latin, Dutch, and English. The Latin is the highly ritualized equivalent of "In memory of," but what is truly surprising is that the remainder are not bilingual in the direction one would predict if Dutch were still their primary language, for it is the ritualistic information that is in Dutch and the epitaphs which are in English, as seen in Figure 7. Further, in the midst of the Dutch, English appears, as in *May* for *Mei*, *10th* and *De 10 van* appearing in the same inscription, and *Jan^y*, clearly a shortened form of the English January and neither Dutch *louwmaand* or *januari*.

Figure 7: Inscriptions of the Graves of Petrus Van Tessel (1728-1784)⁵¹ and his wife, Catriena Ecker (1736-1793),⁵² the latter partially worn away.

<p>Memento Mori.</p> <p>Hier leyt ^{het} lichaem</p> <p>van PETRUS Van TESSEL</p> <p>Geboren de 15 May 1728</p> <p>Overleeden de 17 Sept. 1784</p> <p>Out Zynde 56 Yaren</p> <p>4 Maanden en 3 Dagen</p> <p><i>Long long this ſtone and mould, ring clay</i></p> <p><i>Shall melt thy wife and childrens eyes.</i></p> <p><i>And to each other ſhall they ſay</i></p> <p><i>Here a tender friend and father lies.</i></p>	<p>Mors Vincit Omnia.</p> <p>Ter Gedachtenis van</p> <p>CATRIENA ECKER wed(ue) van</p> <p>Petrus Van Teſſel gebo(ren)</p> <p>Nov^r, 10th 1736 Over(leeden)</p> <p>De 10 van Jan^y. 1793. Ou(t Zynde)</p> <p>56 Yaaren en 2 M(aanden)</p> <p><i>Who can grieve too mu(ch!)</i></p> <p><i>What time ſhall end,</i></p> <p><i>Our mourning for</i></p> <p><i>So dear a friend.</i></p>
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While beyond the scope of this dissertation, it is interesting to note that the double "a" in "Yaaren" (years) in Catriena Ecker's inscription is a hyper correction. A close study of dialectal and non-standard forms in the Dutch inscriptions in this dissertation would be a valuable study to pursue.

These gravestones appear close to the "decorative purposes and as ethnicity symbols" usage described by Eckert of Czech diacritics. As for the Latin, it was not common in this cemetery at the time either. Most contemporary graves start simply with "In Memory of." The Van Tessels came from a large family, and a review of the other

⁵¹ Old Dutch Burying Ground Reference Number N4-193(83)

⁵² Old Dutch Burying Ground Reference Number N4-193(84)

family graves shows that they are in English. Further, a search of the church's records shows that this was an English-speaking congregation which kept its minutes in English, and that the couple served as godparents in the English-speaking baptism of their nephew. Thus, while it is possible only to speculate, the circumstantial evidence supports the conclusion that this seems to be on both their parts a post-mortem assertion of their Dutch roots, not a reflection of their daily linguistic lives.

Others on the original list also have interesting linguistic tales to tell, some put into context by examining the grave of their spouse. Of the remaining seven graves with Dutch inscriptions, four have spouses with graves in the same cemetery, and grave markers of all four are in English. In each case, the English-inscribed spouse died later, and in each case during or after 1776. These four will now be considered in more detail.

Both Sara Fouchee Enters (1717-1769) and her husband John Enters (1708-1779) have lengthy inscriptions, as seen in Figure 8:

Figure 8: Inscriptions of the Graves of Sara Fouchee Enters (1717-1769) ⁵³ and John Enters (1708-1779) ⁵⁴	
<p>Hier Leid Begraven</p> <p>Sara Fouchee Huisvrouw Van</p> <p>John Enters Geboren Den. 20: October. 1717: Gestorven Den. 26 December. 1769: Verwagtende Ein</p> <p>Zalige OPstandinge Door</p> <p>Jezus Christus ten Jongsten Dage</p>	<p>In Memory of</p> <p>JOHN ENTERS</p> <p>who died Sept^r. 27th, AD 1779.</p> <p>Aged 71 Years, 5 Months and 12 Days:</p> <p><i>Death is a debt</i></p> <p><i>To nature due:</i></p> <p><i>Which I have paid:</i></p> <p><i>And so muft you.</i></p>

Rachel Van Wert, the wife of Johannes Van Wert (1735-1775), died in 1821. Her grave marker is in English. Likewise in English is the grave of the husband of Mino Dutcher (1710-1770), Johannes Dutcher,⁵⁵ who died in 1776. The most unique gravestone—simply in terms of the type of information included—comes from Isaac Martling, the husband of Elizabeth Hek (who died in 1767 at the age of twenty-four). Isaac met an untimely end in 1779, and his inscription reads, "Isaac Martling, inhumanely slain by Nathaniel Underhill, May 26th 1779 in his 39th year."

⁵³ Old Dutch Burying Ground Reference Number 02-327(61)

⁵⁴ Old Dutch Burying Ground Reference Number 02-325(60)

⁵⁵ It is clear from the records that the spelling of last names had not been standardized, even within families.

In conclusion, what these eleven graves demonstrate is best seen as—for most of the decedents—relic ethnic markers. When those with spouses with English graves are removed, as well as the couple with the trilingual grave, we are left with only five graves: Abraham Martlenghs (1693-1761), Nicolas Storm (1755-1774), Hendrick Van Tefsel (1704-1771), Belitie Buys (d. 1771, aged 65 yrs.), and William Van Wert (d. 1772, aged 65 yrs.). Four are men and, with the exception of Nicolas Storm, all are sixty-five years of age or older at the time of their death.

The gender is significant, even if the small sample size makes it only anecdotally rather than statistically so. As discussed in Chapter Five, Dutch men were traditionally more conservative in their preservation of the old ethnic language, despite their needed acquisition of the new language, as it was key to the preservation of the patriarchal structure. By learning English, the father retained the control to dictate family decisions, but preserving Dutch preserved faith. Death is a time for great faith, and so the preservation of the language in death and its accompanying markers is fitting.

6.5.4 Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Evidence from West Michigan

The majority of the Dutch grave markers found in West Michigan in the period from roughly 1875-1930 contain little linguistic evidence for analysis, as they are simply the decedent's name, birth year and death year. That this style was so common makes strong sense: the Dutch of Grand Rapids were proudly frugal. The larger the headstone, not only the more it would cost, but the more ostentatious it would appear to others, something one who is "proudly frugal" would not want. While some graves with

minimal inscriptions have been included in the sample to make it more representative, special attention was paid to graves with more linguistic information.

For this study, forty-two graves found in three cemeteries were studied: twenty-two in Oak Hill Cemetery (Grand Rapids, Michigan), thirteen in Fulton Street Cemetery (Grand Rapids, Michigan), and seven in Mountain View Cemetery (Kalamazoo, Michigan). The Oak Hill and Fulton Street graves have only slight family connections: several couples, and one group of three from one family. The Mountain View graves, on the other hand, all come from the same family, my own. The Oak Hill graves have death dates from 1870 to 1927 with a peak of nine graves in the years of 1897-1900; the Fulton Street graves date from 1891 to 1931; the Mountain View graves date from 1913 to 1935, and range quite evenly over this period.

In the Oak Hill sample, three graves can be listed as "no language," meaning they listed just the name of decedent, birth year and death year. Notably, the three are the earliest two (death years of 1870 and 1880) and the second to last one (death year of 1916). Of the remainder, fourteen are completely in Dutch, two are bilingual, and three are in English. The Dutch graves range in death years from 1896 to 1908. The English appear in 1902, 1911, and 1927. The bilingual markers appear in 1898 and 1914. Closer study reveals a pattern reflective of contemporary events and the rises and falls of "Dutch" pride.

Recall that in the early decades of the settlement, the Dutch felt no particular need to assert their "Dutchness." It was their faith that was critical to them, and the morality they tied to that, including frugality. The two earliest markers are shown in Figure 9:

Figure 9: Graves of Lena D'Ooge (1811-1870) and John De Ruyter (1834-1880), Oak Hill Cemetery, Grand Rapids, Michigan.



Only after the schism did CRC members begin to correlate the Dutch language with a marker of their faith. Further, the period from 1890-1910, roughly, marked the first period where the Dutch were truly proud of their Dutchness, rather than being ambivalent about it. They were confident in it. Enough time had passed that the hard work of the colonists had paid off, and some had become community leaders. This confidence led to their taking of some political positions, specifically with regards to the Boer War, that ultimately undermined this self-confidence in the World War I years.

For the first time in the local cemeteries, Dutch surnames—such as the department store founders, the Steketees—began to grace the taller monuments perched on the high-priced cemetery hilltops. What is interesting, however, is that the markers of those who had gained wealth and success, though ostentatious, follow the simple pattern. A large, ornate family marker graced only with the family name is surrounded by smaller headstones with names, birth and death dates. It was the simpler folk who could not afford the high-perched plots, who appeared to stamp their Dutchness most firmly on their graves in this period, and of the sixteen Oak Hill graves from 1896 to 1908, fourteen

are in Dutch, one is bilingual, and one is in English. A few exemplars of the Dutch stones can be found in Figure 10:

Figure 10: Graves of Reverend S.S. Sevensma (1831-1900),



F. (1825-1900) and M.(1825-1906) Wuerfel,



and Jantje Boerema
(1839-1898), Oak Hill
Cemetery, Grand Rapids,
Michigan.



Just as Graves (1983; 1989) found in Pennsylvania German graves, bilingual graves begin to appear among the West Michigan Dutch in this time period. Three types of bilingual graves are characterized by the following terms:

- Pre-carved: English limited to words likely pre-carved on "blank" markers
- True bilingual: two languages present, not likely the sole result of pre-carving
- Multi-decedent: a single marker which identifies the resting place of two or more people; language of inscription varies by decedent.

The pre-carved and true bilingual stones could contain two languages for an economic rather than a social or cultural reason. Some headstones were pre-carved with common phrases such as "Mother," "Father," "Born," "Died." Such pre-carved headstones are referred to as "blanks" (Graves, 1989). While the Dutch equivalents exist, and there are several such samples in my study, the appearance of English could indicate pre-carving.

An alternate explanation is that the decedent (or at least a family member who ordered the gravestone) had switched to English, but was reasserting Dutch roots. A third

explanation is that the decedent (or family member) felt strongly Dutch but was making a gesture of acceptance of American values, which would not be culturally uncommon. All three explanations would explain the marker, shown in Figure 11, alongside the other bilingual marker in the sample, from 1914, and be consistent with the mood of the period:

Figure 11: Bilingual graves of Ebeltje van de Leest (1843-1898) and Jannetje de Jonge (1849-1914), Oak Hill, Grand Rapids, Michigan.



A gravestone completely in English would differ little from those in Figure 11. The one part of those that was in Dutch, the inscription, is simply missing from it:

Figure 12: Grave of J.H.E. Van Zee (1818-1902), Oak Hill Cemetery, Grand Rapids, Michigan



As in the Old Dutch Burying Ground, much information is gleaned from comparing the graves of families and spouses. One interesting Oak Hill grave suggests Americanization and marriage outside of the Dutch community. It serves as the marker for three graves of a couple and of their daughter-in-law:

Figure 13: Graves of Arend Elenbaas (1832-1897)



His wife, Adriana Elenbaas (1830-1890)



And their daughter-in-law, Mary McFall (1852-1911)



Presumably, the blank space on Mary McFall's marker was to have been used as her husband's marker, but its blank face suggests he was buried elsewhere.

In the Fulton Street cemetery, thirteen grave markers associated with fourteen decedents (one gravestone marks the grave of a couple) were analyzed. As mentioned above, the death dates ranged from 1891 to 1931. The decedents are evenly divided with

regard to sex, seven females and seven males. They range in age from infant to eighty-two, with an average age of forty-four.

Looking just at the six graves in Dutch, four belong to females and two to males. Death dates range from 1898 to 1931.⁵⁶ The decedents' average age is sixty, with a range of thirty-seven to eighty-two years old.

Five graves are clearly in English, three belong to males and two to females. Death dates range from 1891-1918. The average age of the decedents is twenty-six, though this is somewhat misleading. Two were infants, and the remainder were twenty-five, forty-nine, and fifty-nine.

Three graves simply contain the decedent's name, birth year and death year. The death dates range from 1913 to 1926. The decedents are a nine-year old male child, and a sixty-five and sixty-nine year old couple. There is good evidence to suggest, however, that the home language of the child, Jacobus De Jonge, was Dutch: the grave of his mother, who died in 1918, has a Dutch inscription. The graves are shown in Figure 14.

Figure 14: Graves of Jacobus De Jonge (1904-1913) and his mother, Geertruida De Jonge (1868-1915), Fulton Street Cemetery, Grand Rapids, Michigan.



⁵⁶ The gravestone of Anna De Jonge is heavily worn, and apart from being clearly in Dutch with birth and death dates in the 1800s, is otherwise indecipherable.

The Fulton Street Cemetery, unlike the Oak Hill Cemetery, was not located in a predominantly Dutch neighborhood, so it is not surprising that the sample is smaller or that English graves are found earlier. Even in the smaller set, however, the trend of the English language displacing the Dutch is clear.

The final cemetery examined was Mountain View located in Kalamazoo, Michigan, fifty miles south of Grand Rapids. This cemetery is interesting because it is out of the immediate realm of CRC influence but was home to many Dutch immigrants, the author's family included. Seven members of this family are buried at Mountain View. Lammert (1841-1921) and Frederika (1840-1916) VanDam emigrated in the 1890s, likely with their sons Walter (1860-1933) and Harm (1873-1935). Their son, Fred (1866-1917), the author's great-grandfather, married Henrietta (1869-1963) in the Netherlands. They emigrated around 1912 and had their first child, Lammert (1913-1913) who died when he was three days old. They had two additional children, Leonard (1914-1992) and Anne (1916 -). The language of the home was Dutch. Fred died in 1917 and Henrietta remarried and had several more children. The home language of this second family was English.

The seven graves show a more predicted assimilation which is to be expected as this family did not settle in CRC-dominated Grand Rapids. Whereas in the Oak Hill data, the most elder members of the family typically had Dutch inscriptions, in this family, the graves of both Lammert and Frederika have English inscriptions. And while these could reflect pre-carving on blanks, the English inscriptions support the family's own historical

memory that family members adopted English quickly. These graves are shown in Figure 15.

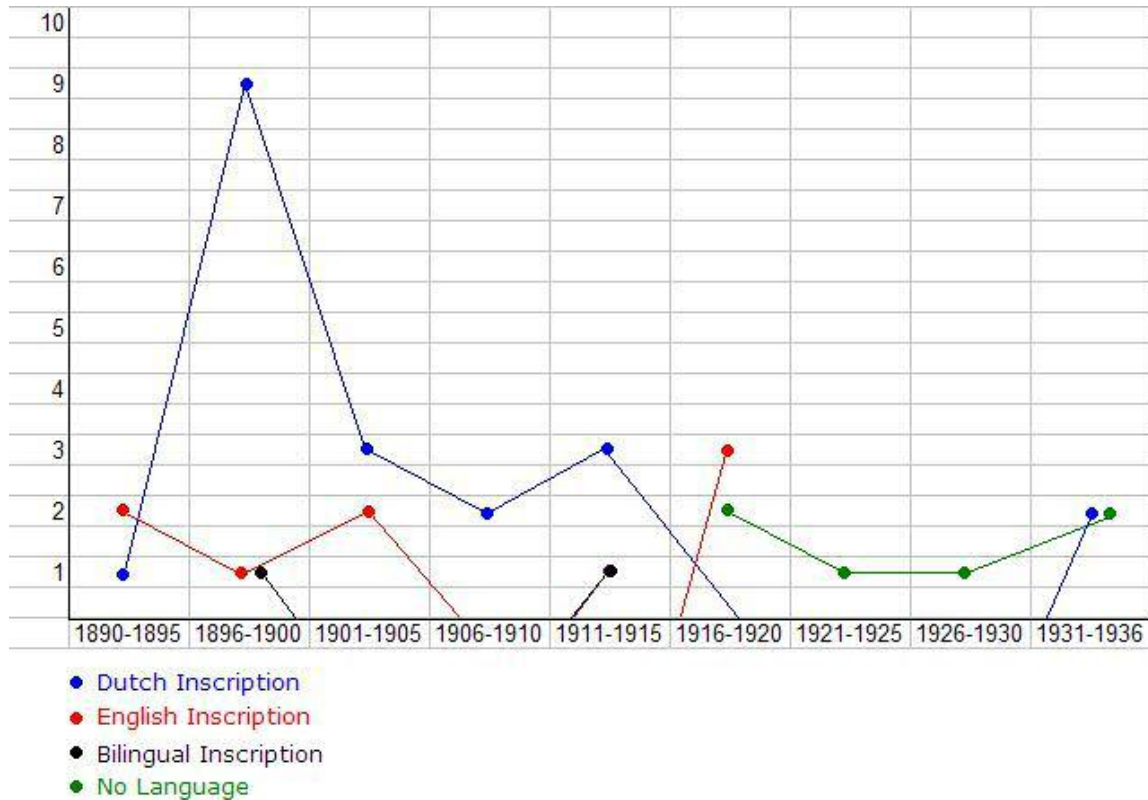
Figure 15: Graves of Lammert (1841-1921) and Frederika (1840-1916) VanDam, Mountain View Cemetery, Kalamazoo, Michigan.



Of the remaining five graves, only one is in Dutch, that of three-day old Lammert (Figure 4) whose parents, Fred and Henrietta, had emigrated only two years prior.

In the context of the period, what conclusions can be drawn from the linguistic evidence presented through these cemeteries' graves? Figure 16 presents a line chart which shows the Dutch, English, Bilingual, and "no language" graves from 1890 – 1936:

Figure 16: Language of Grave Inscriptions, 1890-1936



Dutch inscriptions peaked in the period of 1896-1900 but continued to appear regularly until World War I at which point they disappear, only to re-emerge in two graves in the 1930s which, not coincidentally, belonged to an eighty-two and ninety-seven year old respectively. Graves with no linguistic markers at all appear in the period during which "Dutchness" was most likely to be kept hidden, from World War I though the 1930s. Bilingual inscriptions were rare—only two appear in the sample. Finally, an increase in English inscriptions is suggested. While the data do not show that increase compellingly, that is due to the sample. Dutch graves disappear by the end of the 1930s, which means all graves after that were English.

6.6 The Transition from Dutch to English in other Dutch Settlements

What was the linguistic experience for other Dutch Calvinist settlements, such as that of Pella, Iowa? How did the experience of Dutch Catholics differ? What was the experience of similar immigrant groups, such as the Norwegian settlers discussed by Haugen?

Webber (1988) discussed the life and death of the Dutch language in the Pella, Iowa, Dutch community in *Pella Dutch*. For those who had maintained Dutch until the early twentieth century—mostly recent immigrants—he found a similar pattern of loss in the years just after World War I and found persistence of Dutch to be isolated. Those who learned Dutch in the twentieth century:

[...remained] home longer, thereby enjoying prolonged contact with Dutch-speaking parents or grandparents; death in the family [occasioned] a monolingual grandparent's sharing the residence of children and grandchildren; a speaker raised in homes where Dutch served only as the parents' secret language [rose] to the challenge of "cracking the code" and [relished] the thrill of using the language as a means of identifying with the family members who [wielded] power on the home front. Whatever the circumstance, it was typically the child with the greatest inclination toward socializing with the older generation ... who tended most readily to learn Dutch (pp.74-75).

Recall that this is much the same situation as was occurring in Grand Rapids in the 1920s and 1930s.

Yet the majority of Pella's Dutch citizens had lost Dutch early on, shortly after immigration, as had the Holland, Michigan RCA community. Van Marle and Smits (1996) posit that

The rapid shift to English [was] a manifestation of the deliberate attempt by a number of Dutch immigrants to completely Americanize themselves immediately or soon after immigration. For these immigrants, Dutch was still linguistically dominant while English was linguistically non-dominant, but the crucial factor was that the latter was regarded as the prestigious language to be aimed at (p.430).

These were the "Yankee Dutch" speakers.

Language persistence in Dutch Catholic immigrant communities was not high. Several factors contributed to this. The first was quantitative: most Dutch Catholics emigrated in small groups, many as individuals or just with their immediate family. This is in a sharp contrast to the Dutch Calvinists who founded the West Michigan colony and who not infrequently migrated with whole congregations and even at times whole villages. The numbers of Dutch Catholics, therefore, were lower, and they were scattered. As discussed in Chapter Four, the congregations which did exist did not build connections amongst themselves. They had no critical mass. The second factor was the Roman Catholic Church. Unlike the Dutch Reformed Church it was multi-ethnic and belonged to no one country. Dutch Catholics joined parishes with other Catholics of diverse languages and geographic origins (De Jong, 1975; Doezema, 1979).

Roman Catholic parochial schools were established and they flourished, but importantly for the Dutch Catholics, their purpose was not to maintain "Dutchness" or the Dutch language. It was to preserve their Roman Catholicism. In areas where Catholics

of many nationalities and languages had come together, English was the language of instruction. This was financially necessary, as there were not funds to support instruction in all languages. It was also politically-driven. Favoring one language, French, for instance, would have provoked rivalries. In the larger city of Green Bay, Wisconsin, where there were enough Dutch Catholics to form their own parochial school and parish, the Dutch language was preserved for a longer period (Van Hinte, 1928). But the primary goal was to preserve religion. Where religion and language were in conflict, language was relinquished.

The one Dutch newspaper aimed at Catholics in the early twentieth century was actually the product of a Belgian community (Van Hinte, 1928). Van Heertum, writing in Holland Michigan's *De Heidenwereld* in December of 1923, proclaimed that among Dutch immigrants, the Roman Catholics and "especially their children, have more rapidly learned and adopted the language and customs of the United States" (in Van Hinte, p.857).

6.7 An Analysis of Twentieth-Century Language Decisions in the Framework of Language Planning

Chapter Five concluded with a discussion of how the series of language decisions in Dutch communities of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries could be viewed through the modern framework of language planning. As has been made clear in this chapter, the conscious decision made by the CRC to preserve and maintain Dutch in the nineteenth century was replaced by a conscious decision to shift to English made in the period of

1910-1930. This section will show how this decision to relinquish Dutch can also be placed into the language planning framework.

It is instructive to compare the CRC's twentieth-century language shift with the nineteenth-century shift of Scholte's Pella, Iowa, and Van Raalte's Holland, Michigan communities, as the CRC now had the same plan: transition to English as quickly as possible. The reasons this time, however, were more external and tied to rising anti-immigrant sentiments, discussed in Chapter Seven.

Several of the CRC's actions can be interpreted as the *formalization* of the plan, i.e., the careful deliberation of social, cultural, economic and political factors. With their established school system, the CRC Dutch knew they could preserve the non-linguistic aspects of their "Dutchness," such as their faith and frugality. They also appreciated how transition to English would further their self-reliance and allow for expanded economic opportunities.

The CRC then *codified* their plan seeking the input of their members. At this point, surviving records reveal little dissension. The "Americanization movement" was generally embraced. A couple of CRC churches did split at this time and managed to maintain Dutch for several more decades, but they had the benefit of geographic isolation as they were in rural areas.

As with Van Raalte's and Scholte's communities seventy years prior, the language plan was to move to English, and thus the *elaboration* of the plan did not require any expansion of Dutch. Further, the CRC Dutch were already highly proficient bilinguals, so they did not have to help their community learn English.

This longstanding bilingualism is precisely what enabled the *implementation* to occur so quickly and naturally. Churches simply began to hold services and keep minutes in English, the schools ceased to teach Dutch, and the press ceased to print in it. They could immediately function in all domains—home, church, school, business, civic life—in the Standard English of the wider community. Finally, like Van Raalte's and Scholte's communities, a certain degree of bilingualism did continue in the CRC community, but it quickly came to fit the classic bilingual generational model. Those monolingual Dutch speakers who emigrated after 1920, and there were few of them due to the new immigration restrictions, were expected to transition to English rapidly.

Long-term stable bilingualism is what resulted in the lack of any long-term effect of Dutch on the English of the region, both lexically and phonologically. There is no evidence of negative Dutch stereotypes, in particular linguistic stereotypes. No contemporary mention has been found in this study that the Dutch spoke a dialect of English with any distinguishing features that would in any way mark them as Dutch. To the contrary, they appear to have spoken English just as their non-Dutch neighbors did. This is in marked contrast to the Norwegian communities studied by Haugen, the Swedish studied by Karstadt, or famously, the Pennsylvania Dutch.

There are very few lexical items that can be recognized as "Dutch" in West Michigan English, and the few continue to decline, most being now considered obsolete. Ten Harmsel (2002) posits that the words *dominie*, *kletz*, and *klompen*, among a few others were still understood by 90% of nursing home residents and high school students surveyed in Holland, Michigan in a study he conducted in 1982. It is clear, however, from other evidence that while these terms might have still been part of the local Holland

English, at least for the elderly, they were obsolete in Grand Rapids. Three dictionaries, the *Dictionary of Americanisms* (Matthews, Ed.), the *Dictionary of Canadianisms* (Avis, Ed.), and the *Dictionary of Regional American English* (Cassidy, Ed.) were consulted.

Dominie (pastor):

The 1956 *Dictionary of Americanisms* (Matthews, Ed.) has four attestations with the meaning of a pastor of the Dutch Reformed Church. Three (from 1669, 1832, and 1896) clearly refer to the old Dutch church of New York. The last, from Reader's Digest (1949), reports "For a minimum of three hours the frock-coated **dominie**...expatiates on the eternal terror that will be the lot of evildoers."

The 1967 *Dictionary of Canadianisms* (Avis, Ed.) was consulted as many Dutch settled in Canada and as Michigan dialects do have some notable shared dialect features with the dialects of Ontario, such as Canadian raising. In it, the primary meaning of *dominie* is a Scottish schoolteacher. Its third meaning with annotation from 1930 is "any Christian minister" (p.215).

The 1991 Volume II of the *Dictionary of Regional American English* (Cassidy, Ed.) has two meanings, first a minister of the New York Dutch Reformed Church and then later, any Protestant minister. The dictionary does contain two interesting West Michigan attestations from 1986, however, that point to how far this word has fallen out of the day-to-day lexicon:

From Holland, Michigan: "I grew up hearing 'dominie' in the '50s and '60s, but I know of few people who use it today except for special effect (though it's still

widely recognized). But Grandma Shirley says that the 'older generation' at the nursing home still will say things like "The dominie was here today'" (p.128).

From Grand Rapids, Michigan: "Dominie...is still used by a handful of chauvinists like myself, seriously, and by a few more oldsters facetiously, to annoy preachers..." (p.129).

Kletz (an informal social gathering):

This term is unattested in both the *Dictionary of Americanisms* and the *Dictionary of Canadianisms*. The *Dictionary of Regional American English* lists several alternate spellings, *klatch*, *clatch*, *klotch*, *clutch*, *glutch*, *klatsch*, *klotsch*, and *klutch*, all descended from German and attested chiefly in the Upper Mississippi Valley and the Great Lakes, though by no means limited to these areas. There are no specific West Michigan attestations, but the dictionary does note that while primarily German, it is also found in communities with historical immigrations from the Netherlands, Sweden and Norway. The word is typically paired with coffee, as in *coffee klatch* or *kaffeeklatch*.

Klompen (wooden shoes):

Unattested in the *Dictionary of Americanisms*, the *Dictionary of Canadianisms*, and the *Dictionary of Regional American English*.

Of all these, as a native speaker of the Grand Rapids dialect, the only one recognizable to me is *klompen*, Dutch wooden shoes. *Klompen* are popular regional symbols, and that is

likely the reason for the endurance of this term. Holland, Michigan still has a wooden shoe factory, and during the popular annual Holland Tulip Festival, local teenagers dress in traditional outfits and do the traditional "*Klompen* dance." The Dutch Christmas tradition of *Sinter Klaas*, celebrated December 6th, involves the leaving of *klompen* by the front door, typically filled with carrots or an apple for *Sinter Klaas*' horse in exchange for a few small gifts.⁵⁷

There is a lack of evidence to suggest any enduring Dutch influence on the Grand Rapids dialect of English. It may seem counterintuitive that the community which shifted to English first, Holland, apparently retains traces of Dutch in the local dialect (ten Harmsel, 2002) while the community of Grand Rapids which held on to Dutch for seventy additional years does not beyond a few lexical items. As section 8.1 discusses, however, it is potentially the obvious outcome when considered in a larger context of social factors.

This outcome is further supported when one considers the four stages posited by van Marle and Smits (1996) in their study of the transition from Dutch to English in Pella, Iowa. They identify four stages. **Stage 1:** Dutch is linguistically dominant while English is socially dominant. This leads to lexical borrowing. **Stage 2:** a balanced bilingualism develops in which neither language is dominant. **Stage 3:** Dutch is linguistically and socially subordinate. In this third stage, "Dutch is influenced by English in a more dramatic way than in the preceding stages, i.e. the grammatical and phonological levels are affected as well" (p.431). **Stage 4:** language death. Only "isolated Dutch words and expressions" are maintained (p.431). What resulted in a

⁵⁷ Very small, given that they are to be left inside the shoes.

different linguistic outcome in Grand Rapids versus Pella and Holland was the different lengths of time spent at each stage.

Based on the history illustrated throughout this dissertation, both Holland and Pella were at *Stage 1* for ten to twenty years, so from approximately 1850-1870. Because the first generation did not promote their children's learning of Dutch in the schools, *Stage 2* was brief and not cross-societal. It was *Stage 3* which endured in Holland and Pella until the late nineteenth century.

In contrast, Grand Rapids' Dutch community spent its first decade establishing *Stage 2's* stable bilingualism, and then remained at *Stage 2* until World War I. *Stage 3* did not occur—or lasted for such a brief period of only a few years as to be insignificant. The stable bilingualism of *Stage 2* allowed a jump to *Stage 4*, language death.

Chapter Six examined the period 1910-1930 when language shift occurred among the CRC Dutch. Analysis of gravestone markers, schools, churches, and the press documents the rapid shift and leads to the conclusion that this rapid shift was made possible by the multi-generational stable bilingualism that had preceded it.

CHAPTER 7

EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

Chapter Seven discusses the external influences that contributed to the final and complete shift from English to Dutch among the CRC Dutch of Grand Rapids. In particular, it shows the effects on CRC church politics of the anti-immigrant sentiment that strengthened in the United States in the 1910s and 1920s, and the resulting changes to United States immigration and linguistic policies. These external factors changed the linguistic contact situation in the minds of the CRC Dutch from an adstratal relationship to one of a superstrate English and a substrate Dutch. Once this shift occurred, the primary place of English was assured.

7.1 Ethnic Loyalties and the Boer War: A Misstep for the CRC Dutch

At the turn of the twentieth century, the CRC Dutch of Grand Rapids, Michigan, were operating from a position of great self-confidence. Their work ethic, piety, temperance, and self-reliance were admired and held up as models by their non-Dutch neighbors. Their loyalty to America was unquestioned. Many had sought citizenship in their first years of settlement. They were active in local government, clearly valued education, fought for the Union in the Civil War, and volunteered to serve in the Spanish-American War of 1898. They had found "economic security and cultural space in a host society" (Doezema, 1979, p. xviii). The CRC Dutch discovered during South Africa's Boer War

of 1899-1902, however, that their secure position did not mean they were at liberty to hold any viewpoint with impunity.

In order to understand how a war fought some nine-thousand miles from Michigan resulted in a backlash against the CRC Dutch, it is important to understand the political climate at the time. In the 1890s, it had been seventy-five years since the United States had taken arms against Great Britain in the War of 1812, but the relationship between the two nations was far from cordial. This changed in 1898 with the Spanish-American War. For the first time since the Revolutionary War, Great Britain took the side of the United States.

The Spanish-American War was also the first war that a reunified North and South had fought together since the end of the Civil War, and it brought about a short-lived period of great national unity and a push for more "melting" in the Melting Pot:

The collective focusing of energies and attentions outward led Americans to conceive of themselves and their nation in a more unitary fashion than they had in decades. Intense labor strife most recently, and of course slavery and abolitionism before that had habituated the American people to think in terms of 'us' and 'them,' with both groups included within American society. In the brief glow surrounding the war, however, during which time they tried to believe their entire society was included in the 'us,' the American people excitedly engaged in the task of defining the character of their newly homogenized nation (McCartney, 2006, p. 157).

In this climate came the Boer War, a war that though fought halfway around the world would grip and divide the American populace (Tilchin, 2001).

In 1896, Great Britain supported what was known as the Jameson Raid in the Transvaal Republic of South Africa. This raid, led by English-speaking settlers and orchestrated by mining companies, was a failure, but it made the Dutch Boer settlers aware that Great Britain was a threat to their independence. The mining companies felt that they would be more profitable and operate with fewer restrictions under British rule. Clearly, Britain had a great economic interest in assuming control over the republic. Not only would victory assure profits from the mines, but it would also prevent Britain's rivals like Germany, France, and others from attempting to establish their own interests in the region (Henshaw, 2001). Over the next three years, the situation was uneasy and strained, but war did not break out until 1899.

Great Britain wished for the United States to return the friendship and support it had given during the Spanish-American War (Tilchin, 2001), but the United States understood that to do so would be unpopular. Public sentiment both in America and around the world was initially on the side of the Dutch Boers (Mulanax, 1994; Mommsen, 2001). Officially, therefore, America retained neutrality, but this neutrality was actually a thinly veiled support of Great Britain (Mulanax, 1994; Tilchin, 2001), and from the beginning, the American government sought to steer public opinion towards the side of the British through propaganda and other means.

One of the ways in which it did so was to skew what was actually widespread support of the Boers and report it as coming only from "hyphenated" Americans, specifically the Dutch, German, and Irish. While it is true that these communities did generally support the Boers, they were not the only ones. Further, what was actually support for the Boers was re-construed as being anti-British, and the Irish-Americans

especially were portrayed as a group who opposed Britain and hoped to see it fail regardless of the cause (Mulanax, 1994). The war dominated the Dutch press in the United States and the CRC Dutch were vocal in their support of the Boers. As Doezema (1979) notes, "their political activism during the Boer War gives evidence of the fact that they felt sufficiently secure to move boldly into the public arena" (p. xviii).

Public opinion was also tempered by a waning interest in the conflict. When the Boers suffered a defeat at Paardeberg in 1900, many Americans who had supported the Boers previously came to feel that the Boers' cause was lost, and that a surrender was in the Boers' best interest. The notion that the best interest of the Boers was best served by acquiescing to the British was further reinforced by a rhetoric of Anglo-Saxon superiority then rising again in the American public discourse. In many ways, it was furthered most by a man of Dutch descent, Theodore Roosevelt.

Roosevelt became vice president in the spring of 1901 and president in the fall of the same year, two years into the Boer War and one year before its end. Roosevelt was careful to preface his pro-Anglo statements with an acknowledgment of the difficult plight of the Boers, but it is clear that he felt that British rule would actually be a positive outcome for them. This is consistent with Roosevelt's general belief of superior "races" guiding and civilizing inferior ones.⁵⁸ Roosevelt's views were consistent with those of many at the time, and certainly with those of the British Imperialists.

Furthermore Roosevelt gave prominence to the issue of language. He felt a strong connection between Anglo-Saxon values and the English language. Writing to Cecil Spring Rice, his British friend, in 1899, he says,

⁵⁸ The Boers were considered "inferior" because of suspicions that their time in Africa had led to racial mixing. Related to this is an irony that was pointed out by many of the Boers' supporters at the time: The Boers, being of Dutch descent, came from the same Anglo-Saxon stock as the British.

[Notwithstanding the Boers'] many fine traits ... it would be for the advantage of mankind to have English spoken south of the Zambesi. (In Tilchin, 2001, p. 110).

Writing again to Spring Rice in 1901, Roosevelt says,

A good many of the Boer leaders have called upon me, most of them with a certain dignified sorrow that though I was of Dutch blood, I seemed to have no sympathy with them ... As a matter of fact, I had and have the warmest personal sympathy with them, and yet I have always felt that by far the best possible result would be to have South Africa all united, with English as its common speech. (In Tilchin, 2001, p. 111).

In 1902, after the Treaty of Vereeniging had been signed, Roosevelt wrote to another friend that he hoped "the Boer farmer [will] become part of an English-speaking, homogenous population of mixed origins ... a very valuable addition to the English-speaking stock throughout the world" (in Tilchin, 2001, p.111).

The CRC Dutch, then, had a Dutch-American president siding with the British, actively promoting the civilizing effect of speaking the English language and joining that great "stock." Significantly too, Roosevelt was a Republican. The CRC Dutch were and continue to this day to be staunchly loyal Republicans. The Republican Party was staunchly pro-British during the Boer War. To find others who were pro-Boer, the CRC Dutch would have had to seek them out in the Democratic Party, an alliance the CRC Dutch were unwilling to form.

The CRC Dutch, who had long had a positive reputation, were tarnishing it, therefore, within the groups from whom they most wanted approval. Thus chastised, the CRC Dutch began to consider paths to assimilation. Language was a natural route.

7.2 Anti-Immigrant Sentiments Rise

Nativist movements have arisen throughout American history, from the mid-nineteenth century Know-Nothings to the present day English-Only movement. In the last decade of the nineteenth century, they began to make their mark nationally and in Grand Rapids in particular.

The American Protective Association (APA) was formed in 1892 and opened its Grand Rapids chapter in 1893. A national organization, its first president was removed after one year and replaced by William J.H. Traynor, the Michigan APA council president. Traynor went to quite devious and extreme lengths to build nativist resentment of perceived outsiders, including forging papal bulls in which the Pope purportedly called for massacres of Protestants (Bennett, 1988). Indeed, the target of most of the APA's wrath was Catholics. German Americans, the target just a few decades prior, were largely ignored.

The APA was short-lived. Internal squabbling over its mission and direction tore it apart by 1896. Its failure was its inability to connect to a wider audience, in some part due to the "unified spirit" that swept America during the last five years of the nineteenth century in the context of the Spanish-American War. The APA failed also because while a certain level of anti-immigrant sentiment coursed through society, the perceived threat was not great enough for the APA to sway enough people. Many people were wary of how central the anti-Catholic positions of the APA and other nativist organizations were to their mission, and it was difficult for the general populace to believe in a vast ethnic conspiracy when that ethnic group had been largely disenfranchised. While the nativist politics of the last decade of the nineteenth century caused some initial concern in various

immigrant communities, they were not threatening enough to cause these groups to assimilate rapidly. And as mentioned, after the Spanish American War, the United States embraced a kind of societal warming to multiculturalism:

The economy was booming, reform was in the air, the press and the politicians seemed to favor immigration. Israel Zangwill's powerful play *The Melting Pot*, opening in New York in 1908, became an anthem for faith in the soundness of a multiethnic society. The setting for the displacement or projection of middle- and working- class fears on the "alien" menace seemed only a thing of recent memory (Bennett, 1988, p.180).

Even in this hopeful period, the pendulum was swinging another way. The 1906 Nationality Act made English competency a prerequisite for citizenship (Wardhaugh, 1987).⁵⁹ President Woodrow Wilson often preached a rhetoric of assimilation, with statements like this one in an address to the Daughters of the American Revolution:

So from generation to generation strangers have had to be indoctrinated with the principles of the American family, and the wonder and beauty of it all has been that the infection has been so generously easy (1917, as cited in Andre, 1996, p.91).

And in this 1915 *Address after some Naturalization Ceremonies* (as cited in Andre, 1996, p.92):

... And while you bring all countries with you, you come with the purpose of leaving all other countries behind you--bringing what is best of their spirit, but not

⁵⁹ For feelings about multiculturalism and nationalism to sway as if on a pendulum is not odd, as discussed in Chapter 1.

looking over your shoulders and seeking to perpetuate what you intended to leave behind in them ... You cannot become thorough Americans if you think of yourselves in groups. America does not consist of groups.

The CRC and other immigrant communities who had felt secure in their group identity were put on notice in the 1910s that this was going to change.

Big business feared the growing power of labor, seeing its revolutionary potential elsewhere. In 1912, textile workers in Massachusetts went on strike. Their union, the Industrial Workers of the World, translated materials into twenty languages. Henry Ford began to require his foreign-born factory workers to take English classes. Frances Kellor, an outspoken advocate of Americanization and United State industry, wrote,

Strikes and plots that have been fostered and developed by un-American agitators and foreign propaganda are not easily carried on among men who have acquired, with the English language and citizenship, and understanding of American industrial standards and an American point of view (1916, as cited in Crawford, 1996, p.1).

Ironically, Dutch workers were often sought out for factory employment because the factory owners knew it was against their religious beliefs to belong to a union or go on strike. Those who did were denied communion by their church. The few strikes that occurred, including one in Muskegon, Michigan, in 1924, were condemned by the rest of the community:

[Dutch strikers caused us] to be even more despised by the general public and to be even more the target of insults and kicks by the American workmen while losing their self-respect in the process (in Van Hinte, 1928, p.823).

In fact, in the 1910s, the CRC in Grand Rapids saw an upsurge in new male members in their twenties, and the motivation for many was not religious. They knew membership would ensure them factory employment. (Van Hinte, 1928). For factory owners, knowing that their Dutch workers would not join a union or strike gave them real economic stability during this volatile period. They could also require the Dutch to work longer for less. Despite the lack of unrest in the Dutch labor pool, the Dutch were not otherwise spared from the anti-immigrant sentiment in the eyes of the public.

In 1919, fifteen states passed laws banning instruction in languages other than English (Crawford, 1996). Immigration laws changed too. In 1915, President Wilson vetoed a literacy test bill that had passed Congress. While Wilson was pro-assimilationist, he felt that the goal of the bill was to restrict immigration, not to ensure intelligent immigrants. This bill was one of many moves to reduce immigration and increase the dominance of the English language in the United States. Undeterred, Congress tried again in 1917. The bill passed. Wilson vetoed it again. But proponents had shored up the two-thirds majority needed to overturn the president's veto (LeMay, 1987). The 1917 bill was the first step towards a great restructuring of U.S. immigration policy that would continue for decades.

7.3 The Dutch are Conflated with the Germans

Many non-German ethnic groups were targeted by anti-German sentiment, including Norwegian Americans, Swedish Americans, and Dutch Americans. This is not surprising. Often, prejudice paints with a large brush, such as the contemporary

pejorative extension of the term "Mexicans" to refer to all those of Hispanic or Latino descent.

There was some loose basis for this conflation beyond a shared Germanic heritage. In the case of Norwegian immigrants, the connection was a similar Lutheran affiliation (Haugen, 1969). In the case of the Dutch immigrants of West Michigan, most had initially sided with the Germans when World War I began. The neutrality of the Netherlands was also questioned.

The situation was far worse for the CRC Dutch than for those in the RCA of Holland, Michigan. Not only did the CRC Dutch face discrimination from the non-Dutch community, they were harshly criticized by the RCA for their "lack of true Americanism." Both the RCA and other groups felt that the CRC's "use of the Dutch language in schools and churches aroused suspicions of lack of patriotism" (Doezema, 1979, p. xviii).

Some of the attacks were verbal; others were physical and ranged from the relatively minor practice of unsolicited American flags being placed on CRC churches to the burning of a CRC church and school (Bratt, in Ganzevoort & Boekelman, 1983, p. 172). Their "ethnic ascendancy and solidarity" of the CRC Dutch were shattered, and they quickly "fell victim to the strident nativism of the time, particularly because the public often confused them with Germans" (Doezema, 1979, p. xviii).

The CRC took notice and began its "Americanization Movement" during the war years. From approximately 1915-1925 Dutch disappeared from the CRC churches, schools, and press.

What caused this abrupt shift? How had a community with such strong religious, cultural and linguistic ties to its past that had lasted decades cut these ties in one decade? The answer is found in the historical contexts of the Boer War and World War I and the accompanying nativist movements within the United States. A further clue to the shift can be found in the word used to describe those from the Netherlands: the Dutch.

Since the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, when the word *Dutch* was first borrowed from Germanic dialects, the English word *Dutch* has had a complicated history. By the 1700s its meaning in Britain was restricted to those from the Netherlands. In the Netherlands, its meaning was restricted to the Germans (and still is). In America, it has referred to both those of German and those of Dutch descent (Oxford English Dictionary). In many areas of the American South during the Civil War, "Dutch" referred to Northern sympathizers:

Every steamer at the levee was laden with families, who...had hastily packed a few articles of clothing to flee from the general and bloody conflict supposed to be impending between the Americans and the **Dutch**, as the Secessionists artfully termed the two parties ("1865, Richardson, Secret Service," in Matthews, 1956).

While the term *Dutch* (and *Dutchman*) has meant only someone from the Netherlands in most areas of the United States since the 1930s, during the nineteenth century and up through World War I, the term could refer to either German or Dutch immigrants (Smit, 1972)⁶⁰, both of which had sizable populations in Michigan. In the North and West, in the period from roughly 1850 to 1930, it referred to anyone of European origin not from England, France, or Italy (Matthews, 1956). The *Dictionary of American Regional*

⁶⁰ An example of this extending to the modern day is the Pennsylvania Dutch who are German immigrants.

English (Volume II, 1991) notes its usage up to the 1930s as generally meaning "German" but others of similar descent, i.e. Hollanders, were included. During the Detroit riots of the 1850s, the two major Detroit newspapers "described the mobs in no uncertain terms as German. A black arrested after one of the riots for sporting a pistol said he needed it to protect himself from 'the Dutch'" (Schneider, 1980, p.29). Know-Nothing nativists clashed with German and Irish immigrants on election day in 1854, calling out, "Clear the polls you damned Dutch and Irish sons of bitches" (Bennett, 1988, p.147).

World War I caused an upsurge in anti-immigrant sentiment in general and anti-German sentiment in particular. In the nineteenth century, the West Michigan Dutch had been referred to locally as *Hollanders* but this began to change at the turn of the century, and *Hollander* was overtaken by *Dutch*. This meant that the term "Dutch" was being used in West Michigan to refer to immigrants both from Germany and from the Netherlands, which led to anti-German sentiment affecting the Dutch members of the colony. Sinke (2002) reports that "confusion of Dutch and German were [sic] rampant" in the World War I period.⁶¹

Even had there been no public confusion between the Dutch and the Germans, because they were immigrants the Dutch of Grand Rapids were the targets of a nativist uprising.

The National Americanization Committee, the American Legion, and the National Security League promoted "English, loyalty, and American ideals" (Wardhaugh, 1987, p.247). And this time, their first target was not the Catholics: it was German Americans.

⁶¹ Sinke (2002): 185

German-Americans were now seen as an arm of the official enemy. Their sin was not their religion but their nationality. ... In place of the old nativist fears were new ones: German-Americans poisoning food, spoiling medical supplies, undermining public support for the war effort. German-language training was dropped by many public schools, German names were changed⁶², German dishes disappeared from restaurants. German shepherd dogs became Alsatian shepherds; Boy Scouts burned German-language newspapers in the streets of several cities; musical organizations purged Wagner, Schubert, and Beethoven. German-Americans were assaulted in a number of communities. In his pamphlet *The Tentacles of the German Octopus in America*, published by the National Security League, Earl E. Sperry declared that "overwhelming proof is afforded that large numbers of German-Americans are disloyal citizens." It was now a mark of patriotism to throw a rock through butcher Schultz's window (Bennet, 1988, p.134)

The Grand Rapids Chronicle of May 9, 1918, reported on a proposed bill in the Michigan state legislature which would eliminate all German names in towns and cities. The *Chronicle* calls for Grand Rapids not to wait for the bill to pass, but rather to act now, drawing specific attention to a Berlin Street. In 2007, there is no Berlin Street in Grand Rapids, so it appears that at some point the move was successful. The town of New Berlin, Michigan, located ten miles west of Grand Rapids faced a similar fate. It is now called Marne. In fact, the changing of street and town names occurred across the United

⁶² Sauerkraut was called "liberty cabbage" (LeMay, 1987), similar to the "freedom fries" episode in the United States when the French opposed the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003.

States (LeMay, 1987). Even some Dutch Americanized their own names and began to give their children American first names (Smit, 1972).

Anti-German sentiments approached hysteria in Grand Rapids. Warnings abounded that German spies were everywhere:

In all cities, Grand Rapids included, warning has been given to watch out for German spies, now believed to be numerous ... Every person of every nation now fighting under the control of Germany should be considered an enemy agent (*Grand Rapids Chronicle*, January 24, 1918, p.3).

Not only had most Dutch citizens of Grand Rapids sided with the Germans at the war's start—though that changed quickly (Roeloffs Verbrugge, 1994)—to Americans, the Netherlands' World War I neutrality was questioned when the German Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicated in 1918 and was allowed to live in exile in the Netherlands.

The Netherlands' neutrality also cast suspicion on Dutch immigrants living in the United States. To many, those who were neutral or were “pacifists” were just as dangerous as the Germans. In fact, being a pacifist was judged by many at the time to be synonymous with being a German sympathizer (Smit, 1972). Pacifists were “unworthy to be called Americans,” and “mental and moral defectives, influenced by German propaganda, the rest if not in the pay of the German government, might just as well be” (*Grand Rapids Chronicle*, 1918, January 11, p.3).

In February 1918, Registration Week began across the United States. Reporting on January 11, 1918, the *Grand Rapids Chronicle* explained that the paperwork of all “aliens” was to be checked and “a full description” and “prints of each finger” were to be taken. It was also to be determined whether any had male relatives “in arms against the

United States” (p.3). While the *Chronicle* clarified in the January 18th edition that this scrutiny applied only to Germans (p.1), that added information was once again removed in the January 25th edition, and “aliens” were now “alien enemies” (p.3). Anti-immigration proponents (labeled "restrictionists") defined everyone who was not of Anglo-Saxon stock "other," and Anglo-Saxon meant English Protestant, not Germanic (LeMay, 1987).

In a society that suddenly made no distinction between German and Dutch immigrants (Smit, 1972), the Dutch of West Michigan and other colonies quickly found themselves under attack. A Dutch school in Pella, Iowa, was burned to the ground (Smit, 1972; De Jong, 1975). The governor of Iowa proclaimed that no language other than English could be used in religious gatherings (De Jong, 1975). Given the fact that the Dutch were one of the largest groups this affected in Iowa, even if the proclamation were not specifically aimed at the Dutch, its result was as such.

The effect of these attacks was radical and rapid assimilation. As mentioned in Chapter Three, in the 1920 census, Grand Rapids’ population stood at 137,600, and 31,000 of its citizens were native Dutch speakers, with only a third of these being foreign-born. Unfortunately, the 1930 census collected data only on the native language of the foreign-born living in America and not of the native-born, and so a direct comparison cannot be based on census data. But the evidence discussed throughout this study, and in particular in Chapter Six, demonstrates that Dutch was pushed aside in favor of English in the 1920s.

7.4 Immigration Policies Radically Tighten

As discussed in Chapter Two, most immigrant groups are able to maintain their native language only with a steady influx of new immigrants. Such was the case among the Norwegian Americans and Swedish Americans studied by Haugen and Karstadt. As discussed in Chapter Five, continued immigration had certainly not hurt the CRC Dutch in their language maintenance quest. New immigrants from the Netherlands had helped reinforce the maintenance of Dutch language and culture (Van Hinte, 1928). However, it was their language planning that had preserved this language. They had accomplished their goal of using Dutch in all spheres of their lives, but had also learned standard English—most were native speakers by World War I—and used it in many domains. It was their bilingualism in Standard English and Dutch which allowed them to find success in the English-speaking community of Grand Rapids.

As discussed in Chapter Six, faced with the pressures to assimilate, they shifted their language plan and focused on the rapid adoption of English in all spheres. They were better able to do this precisely because immigration largely ceased in the 1920s, because of a series of laws passed by the United States government in the 1920s. Thus the community no longer had to support recently arrived monolingual Dutch speakers.

In 1920, the House of Representatives voted to end immigration to the United States altogether. The Senate did not pass the measure. Wanting a barrier more restrictive than the literacy test, Congress took up the idea of instituting a quota system, with the goal "to limit immigration from Europe" (LeMay, 1987, p.81). Asians had

already been excluded by prior legislative acts, and at that time concern about immigration from Latin America was virtually non-existent.⁶³

Riding the wave of nativist sentiment, the Johnson Act of 1920 reduced the annual immigration quota from the Netherlands to 1,648. The U.S. Congress passed the first immigration quota bill in 1921. Woodrow Wilson vetoed it in the last days of his presidency. His successor, Warren G. Harding, however, signed it into law. As discussed in Chapter Three, immigration regulations have never returned to the relatively open immigration policies of the nineteenth century.

7.5 Other Communities Face Similar Fates

The nativist movement, anti-immigrant sentiments, and restricted immigration policies left no immigrant community untouched. In fact, the 1920s appear to be the decade in which the United States consciously disfavored the great ethnic and linguistic diversity that had developed in the nineteenth century.

In this decade, both the Norwegians and Swedish communities discussed throughout this paper experienced as well a loss in their ethnic identity. The Czech community of Praha, Texas, discussed in Chapter Six, also faced the same anti-immigrant tensions, and the unique ethnic community they had maintained for decades began to fall apart over the coming two decades, though their extreme isolation and their desire to preserve their language—in contrast to the CRC Dutch—allowed them to maintain Czech for longer:

⁶³ This did change within a decade.

The Moravian communities started disintegrating under the pressure of English language teaching at local schools, disrespect for immigrant languages generated by war animosities, the invasion of television, and shifts in agricultural production (Eckert, 1998, p.207).

The CRC Dutch, in contrast, were able to preserve a community and their identity even when ultimately giving up their language. In fact I argue that it was precisely their willingness to give up their language which allowed them to preserve their ethnic identity. Their "Dutchness" came to be reflected in their piety, temperance, work ethic, and cleanliness rather than in their language. The Czech communities, on the other hand, fell apart completely, and by the turn of the twenty-first century, many were "virtual ghost towns, and one can look in vain on a contemporary highway map for communities which were once vital centers of Czech economic and social life" (p.207).

This trajectory is unsurprising. When opportunity is elsewhere, the isolated community cannot survive. As Huffines (1989) writes,

For immigrant and minority languages in the United States, language death is an almost inevitable outcome of contact with American English. The promise of social and economic advancement proffered by mastery of English eventually overcomes the most fervent of language loyalty intentions (p.211).

Thus too was the path of the CRC Dutch.

Chapter Seven points out several contemporaneous external factors that changed the political and, thus, linguistic climate within the CRC and encouraged language shift, in particular the wave of anti-immigrant and anti-German sentiment then sweeping the nation and the upsurge in nativist politics triggered by World War I. The chapter suggests

also that the favorable reputation that the Dutch enjoyed in Michigan likewise facilitated the rapid and smooth shift to English.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

The CRC Dutch were unique in many ways. While other immigrant communities suffered discrimination, a lack of negative stereotypes bolstered CRC Dutch self-confidence. This in turn promoted their belief in self-determination with the primary goals of self-sufficiency and preservation of their faith. The CRC Dutch understood the value of learning English as a means to success, but felt their faith required preservation of the Dutch language. Unlike most immigrant communities which have been described as experiencing bilingualism as a one-generation transitional state, the CRC Dutch cultivated a bilingualism which endured for seventy years. It was this deep, cross-generational and cross-societal bilingualism which allowed the CRC Dutch to shift to a monolingual English-speaking community so rapidly, in the span of a decade, in the 1920s.

8.1 The Lack of a "Dutch" Dialect of West Michigan

The contention that the CRC Dutch could transition quickly is bolstered by the lack of a regional "Dutch" dialect of English. Whereas Haugen (1969) and Karstadt (2002) identified unique Norwegian English and Swedish English dialects respectively, there is no evidence that such a Grand Rapids CRC dialect ever existed. This is also in contrast to the Pella, Iowa, Dutch.

Webber (1988) points to loan translations such as exclamatory *say* (Dutch *zeg*), as in "Those were pretty good results, say!" as evidence of the influence of Dutch on the English dialect of Pella. By comparison, exclamatory *eh* is common in Grand Rapids and Holland, though this—like the Canadian raising found in Michigan (Vance, 1987)—is found in most regional speakers, is common in other areas of Michigan, and thus is likely from proximity to Ontario. Webber also argues that sayings such as *close by*⁶⁴ (as in, when asking to speak to someone on the phone, asking if the person is "close by" and thus able to speak), and *bring for take*⁶⁵ as in "Can you bring me to the store?" are loan translations from Dutch. While the latter is attested in Grand Rapids speech, many American dialects spoken in regions with no Dutch speakers—like New Orleans—also have this feature, so is most likely not a loan translation, contra Webber. Webber does present enough evidence, however, to make the case that a distinct Dutch English dialect does exist in Pella.

In terms of the Holland, Michigan community, Ten Harmsel (2002) lists as lexical borrowings such terms as *dominie*, *vrouw*, *vies*, *kletz* and *klompen*, attested in Holland, as late as the 1980s. While one would not go so far as to say no one in Grand Rapids would recognize these, they have not been attested in Grand Rapids speech.

What can account for this difference in the impact of Dutch on the local dialects? How was the Dutch language able to leave an imprint on Pella English and potentially Holland English,⁶⁶ but not on Grand Rapids English? There are two strong possibilities.

⁶⁴ Dutch *kort bij*

⁶⁵ Dutch *brenge*n can mean either 'bring' or 'take.'

⁶⁶ More research needs to be done in this area to determine if the "imprint" was limited to lexical borrowings or if it truly affected the English dialect in terms of phonology, morphology, and perhaps syntax.

The first is that since the Pella and Holland communities were more isolated and ethnically homogenous—despite their early shift to English—there was less interference from standard English in the shaping of the local dialect which resulted in less convergence. The second possibility is that because those communities shifted so quickly to English, the speakers found far more lexical, phonological, and morphological "gaps" which led to the incorporation of Dutch linguistic features. This is consistent with one view of first generation code-switching. The CRC Dutch on the other hand greatly diminished the potential for gaps because the first generation of immigrants was surrounded by native English speakers and the second generation of the CRC Dutch were native bilinguals. With equal proficiency in both languages, any early borrowings could have easily been leveled. While a definitive answer to this question is beyond the scope of the study, this would be an interesting avenue of future research.

8.2 The Loss of Dutch Linguistic History in Grand Rapids

When I was growing up in Grand Rapids, Michigan in the 1970s and 1980s, having a Dutch last name carried social capital. By the late twentieth century, it was impossible to ignore the preponderance of Dutch names among the city's elite, such as DeVos and Van Andel (the founders of Amway), and Meijer (of Meijer's⁶⁷). It also carried an assumption by others of CRC membership, though many of the Dutch-Americans of Grand Rapids, myself included, are not members of the church. It was also clear even to outsiders that the RCA and CRC, despite all their apparent similarities, were still very divided.

I was aware that my grandfather spoke Dutch as a child, but had largely lost it by early adulthood. I was, however, never aware that at the time of his birth in 1914, there

⁶⁷ An all-purpose "big box" store found throughout Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, and Illinois.

was a thriving Dutch-speaking community in Grand Rapids. My experience is reflective of many Grand Rapidians, even those of Dutch descent. In less than three-quarters of a century, the understanding of Grand Rapids' linguistic past had largely been lost.

This is partly due to the CRC's own desire to forget this past, for it has mixed emotions about its history. Many of the traditions it then rejected it now embraces. For example, while the CRC of the nineteenth century rejected missionary work as too American, the modern CRC is very much engaged in evangelism. Gender roles though still restricted have relaxed. Sunday Schools and church organs are now common fixtures in CRC congregations.

In addition, it is quite difficult to maintain an ethnic community without additional immigrants, and like any church, the CRC must maintain its current size or—optimally—grow, and to do so, it needs to attract non-Dutch members. As a result, most official CRC publications shy away from talking about anything but the present CRC, painting the church as a global, ethnically-diverse congregation, even though it is still very firmly rooted in West Michigan and the majority of its members are descendants of Dutch immigrants. Yet the CRC's past is still un-coverable, and in it, we see these mixed emotions:

...the Christian Reformed Church in North America grew for its first half-century largely in isolation from its North American surroundings, while maintaining very strong links to the religious scene in the Netherlands. The church grew by immigration and by giving birth to "covenant children."⁶⁸ Because worship and social life were carried on almost entirely in close, Dutch- speaking communities,

⁶⁸ So called because the greater congregation makes a covenant with God promising to support the spiritual life of children born into the church, educated in private church-run schools, and baptized into the church to ensure their salvation.

there was very little ability to reach out to surrounding communities evangelistically. Nor, unfortunately, was there much desire to do so (CRC of North America).⁶⁹

This study has established that actually, the ability to reach out did exist: the CRC Dutch were bilingual from the early years of their establishment. The reality is there was not the desire to do so, and that is tied directly to a key point of this dissertation: the CRC Dutch maintained their language for so long precisely because it was *the* marker of identity for them and it was inextricably tied to their faith. For the CRC Dutch to have wanted to reach out would have meant they were interested in diluting the community that formed their identity, and clearly, that was not the case. Only through the exclusion of outsiders did they feel they could preserve their "Dutchness."

8.3 Social Pressures and Historical Cycles

For the events of this study to transpire required more than simply the CRC, however. Public reaction to the CRC Dutch in the mid-nineteenth century initially supported the preservation of their community and identity. That changed in the years around World War I when American society moved from its prior stance embracing multiculturalism to a stance of nationalism and assimilationism. There is much research to support a regular and cyclical shift from these two standpoints. It is interesting to consider these shifts over the past two centuries.

Strauss and Howe (1991) argue for a generational, cyclical model of U.S. history. This model posits a cycle of roughly eighty-eight years involving four generational types.

⁶⁹ <http://www.crchurches.net>

Each generational type tends to react to events, such as wars, in a particular way. The model is powerful in its predictive force. It does not predict which events will transpire; it predicts how the various generations in society will react to them. It is these reactions that are cyclical because each generational type reacts in a different way. It is also significant at which stage in life each of the generations are. In order to view the present study in light of this framework, it is helpful to illustrate its basic theory. Consider the recent examples of World War II (1940-1945) and the Vietnam War (1965⁷⁰-1975). Two different generations fought in these wars. World War II was fought by the G.I. Generation and the Vietnam War was fought by the Baby Boomers.

The G.I.'s were pro-government from childhood, bolstered by unprecedented government support. Their childhood saw the first federal child labor law, which caused child labor to be reduced by half. A weekly "allowance" is first attested in this period, as are Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and 4-H Clubs. The generation before them had only on average made it to the ninth grade: they made it to the twelfth, an unprecedented jump. In young adulthood, their civic mindedness and self-confidence built up by their society resulted in a patriotic swell which propelled them into an extremely deadly war—300,000 of them did not come home—yet societal support for American troops reached a climax. These soldiers returned home to the G.I. Bill. Their elders saw the institution of mandatory retirement ages to create employment opportunities for the young.

By Vietnam, the G.I.'s had entered middle age and controlled much of government in Washington, D.C. They were "doers" in the words of Ronald Reagan. They had no reason to expect that Vietnam would not be yet another American triumph. Yet a different generation was now wearing the uniforms of the soldiers, and the Baby

⁷⁰ U.S. involvement pre-dates this, but 1965 marks the first large-scale U.S. troop involvement.

Boomers reacted differently to war. This is directly tied—as was the G.I.'s reactions to WWII—to their childhood.

Arriving as the inheritors of G.I. triumph, Boomers have always seen their mission not as constructing a society, but of justifying, purifying, even *sanctifying* it. Where [the G.I.s' parents] had made G.I.s learn the basics, the G.I.s taught Boomers critical thinking (pp.301-302).

This critical thinking led to a questioning of authority that felt its full force in the Consciousness Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s. While there were many good reasons for Vietnam to be a controversial war, the point of this theory is that any war which occurred with Baby Boomer soldiers would—by *their* nature—be controversial. And it is because of the G.I.'s generational nature that they overlooked potential controversy in WWII and were blind-sided by it in Vietnam. Interestingly, if we go back roughly ninety years from both World War II and Vietnam, we see the same generational types having the same reactions, locked in the same struggles. History truly does repeat itself (Strauss & Howe, 1991).

Based on this theory, then, we would expect to see movements favoring nationalism spaced approximately eighty to ninety years apart, as well as movements favoring multiculturalism. Indeed, a review of U.S. history identifies three strongly nationalist periods in the post-Colonial era: the Know-Nothing Era of the 1830s, the anti-immigrant era of the 1920s, and the 1980s-1990s anti-immigrant, English-Only era. Each of these was preceded by an era which embraced multiculturalism: the "Transcendental Awakening" of the 1810s and 1820s, the "melting pot" of the 1890s-1900s, and the Consciousness Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s.

Consider the changing perspectives on bilingualism in the last pro-multicultural period. The 1960s and 1970s saw the promotion of multilingualism and multiculturalism. For example, in 1975, the Voter Rights Act was amended to give bilingual materials in districts where a minority language was spoken by 5% or more of the population. Television programs and albums like *Free to Be You and Me*, *Sesame Street* and *All in the Family* promoted diversity and inclusion. Kloss, writing in 1977, discusses bilingualism becoming a:

Cinderella ... discussed—and embraced—as a possible way of enriching the cultural life of a nation. Whether the movement will last we cannot yet know. But we do know that it is in keeping with similar changes in other parts of the Western Hemisphere where we observe innovations in the field of language policy (p.3).

Kloss' vision of the future was not to be realized, at least not in the United States. The coming years saw the rise of anti-immigrant, pro-English Only movements. 1981's Bilingual Education Act sought to eliminate, not foster bilingualism (Fishman, 1985). And Senator Hayakawa first proposed his English Language Amendment in the same year (Crawford, 1996). Over half of the states of the United States have since passed legislation making English the official language. These laws have varying stipulations and enforcements, ranging from the symbolic to those which restrict the language of the workplace, etc., more aggressively.

Every immigrant community struggles with defining identity in a new land, and each community makes different decisions, be they conscious or unconscious. The RCA Dutch of Holland made different decisions from the CRC Dutch of Grand Rapids.

Modern immigrant communities face the same challenges and react in as great a range of ways. Ultimately, the goal of this study is not to argue for L1 maintenance or stable bilingualism or for assimilation to the majority L2. Rather, this study has challenged the notion that all immigrant communities follow a relatively unvarying linguistic three-generational pattern of assimilation. Self-determination and the place and time in which a community finds itself are powerful variables and must be taken into consideration in the study of any linguistic community. Scholars revisiting other immigrant communities with this study's findings in mind are likely to find the linguistic situation far more complex and far more intertwined with the society, place, and time than previously suspected.

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