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A Letter of E. Ravenshorst, Ommen, to Rev. Albertus C. Van Raalte

E. Ravenshorst

John Luidens

Marcelle Luidens

Nella Kennedy

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19 November 1860

Ommen, the Netherlands

A letter of E. Ravenshorst, Ommen, to Rev. Albertus C. Van Raalte, about many people and news items which he considers would be of interest to ACVR. Two people mentioned are Blikman and Bokkel. Ravenshorst is reporting on a Mr. Mansier, Van Raalte's brother-in-law. The letter is a mine of information about family and business matters.

Original owned by Barbara Nugent, a Van Raalte descendant and given to the Holland Museum.

In Dutch; translation by John and Marcelle Luidens. Transcription of the letter by Nella Kennedy along with revisions of the Luidens's translation, April, 2007.

Original in the archives of the Holland Museum.

ACVR papers, Box 1B, folder 21.

Ommen, November 19, 1860

The Reverend A. C. Van Raalte

Your letter of October 24 found me in good health on November 17. I hurry to answer it directly. My letter, which accompanied that of your sister, has had the same reception over there as I assumed it would; namely, the recommendation of Mansier to emigrate to America. See how—in one way or another—it all came about. Your sister came to me and told me in strictest confidence that they planned to leave for North America in order to secure a better means of existence if the opportunity would present itself; that she had written to her brother with that purpose in mind; and she requested me to enclose a few lines which might serve in support [of that plan]. She waited for me to write a few lines. I wrote and read aloud to her and my wife what I had written, and [I] gave the unsealed letter to her. After she had gone, my wife asked me whether Michigan would understand that my letter was not much of a recommendation. I answered her that it would be more dissuasive than persuasive to you, Reverend, since you could deduce sufficiently from the whole that it was a letter that I had written under pressure. Thus I see that it has created such an effect.

I have written the truth. That Mansier no longer drinks is definite. Whether this is because he has no means for it, I am unable to say. He has given his divorce notice to his public misdeeds for some time already. Whether this is the result of genuine conversion to God I do not dare to say with certainty. However, to believe all the slander that went around earlier would be too harsh. That much of it is true, and not very nice, is very, very certain. Mansier has been a faithful churchgoer with the *Afgescheidenen* [Seceders] throughout, an attentive listener, even a champion. I doubt whether he understands the truth, however, and [is] dear to his heart. In short, it is much better that Mansier, with all that he is, remains here, than that he should cause grief to you. And I say this all the more, because I notice in your letter that he would settle with you or in your area. And that must never happen! He must live at a distance from you, and there follow a good occupation, whether [it is] as a miller or something else. What you wrote disturbs me: that you wrote your sister and thereby opened the way. She has had your letter already for 14 days. This I know from the postmaster, [but] she has not mentioned one iota of this to me, although she lives next to us in the house of Kramer. She is open and easy whenever she needs help, but uncommunicative, obscure, enigmatic and unfathomable insofar as she knows how to manage by herself.

However, perhaps in my heat I have already said too much, and for that reason I repeat your words: "Away with the dirty laundry." Certainly, I have written you all this confidentially, so that you know what to do and what not to do.

Now I lay down your letter before me again, starting from the beginning. What a wonder (exclamation mark). Raafje awakened from the dead (double exclamation marks). What electric shock has struck you¹ (question mark). Yes, you were right to be astonished, right to raise that question. And even more—a letter forced out of me by your sister,

¹ It is difficult to decipher whether the word is you [u] or her [ze].

without any value, and without scent or taste. But, oh, dear Dominie, I am devoured by many matters. It is not that I am loveless. I would give one hundred guilders if I could spend half a day to be in your midst to talk together. Oh, write me as often as you can find the time for it. The postage is no problem. Not that I am well-off financially² --far from it. No, I will have to work, and work hard, up to my dying day. To be financially secure probably will never be my lot, although I have a very sufficient income.

On balance, for the last five or six years I have been receiving an income of 1200 guilders a year and can save some of it, for our house remains the same, our living [costs] the same, our clothing the same. But our children are growing up and require more, internally and externally. Moreover, I suffered a hernia³ last year, and since then I walk with a truss,⁴ so that I can walk short distances. On greater distances I must ride. Often I am away from home. For some years the roads have been subject to my supervision, and during that time I have contracted for the material for those roads. The roads from Ommen to Zwolle, from Ommen to Hardenbergh, [and] from Ommen to Dedemsvaart must be maintained annually with macadam gravel by which a lot of people earn their bread. I get these materials from a piece of land that I bought, together with my brother-in-law Ten Toorn, J. Kroon and Dr. ter Horst, from the estate of Van der Wijk --the land is 74 *bunders*⁵ in size [2.471 acres], for the small sum of 1620 guilders. The soil from which the stones and gravel are collected are seeded and planted with trees [to create] woods, and in that I invest my guilders that I save annually. That is interest-free capital. So I increase in possessions, but am constantly poor in money. In that respect I am better off in a small way than you are.

Also, you must know

[2]

that Papa de Moen and I purchased "Linderzand" twelve years ago for 720 guilders --84 *bunders* in size-- on which we have a farm and already a large forest. Still, I have never received half a penny from it but have always had to put in additional money, so that it has cost us upwards of 3000 guilders. But it already has a present value of 8,000 guilders. I have purchased, along with Dominie Ten Bokkel, several pieces of land, some of which we still have, some of which we sold again with substantial profit. When I appraise the houses and lands at present-day value, then I come to a figure of over 9,000 guilders in property, which is still encumbered by some 4,300 guilders however. So you can understand that I have prospered, but you will understand with me, that at no time in the future will I be able to retire.

And now we go to Lemele. Our planted lanes are still there. The oak trees are growing extremely well. The pine trees planted between the oaks hindered the growth of the oak trees, and so half the pines were cut down two years ago and were sold for wood and

² He used the common Dutch saying for having economic security in "having the cows on dry land."

³ *Breuk* can mean both a hernia, rupture or fracture.

⁴ *Band*.

⁵ One *bunder* (or *hectare* or *are*) is 100 m².

rikkhout.⁶ The oak thicket hedges on both sides were started five years ago and have grown so well that in three years' time it will be possible to sell them as good woodland timber. Everything is now woods, with fountains, gazebos, vegetable garden, orchard, etc. etc.

Mr. Blikman has built a nice country house there, a gardener's cottage, stables, carriage house, etc. In addition, Mr. Blikman has bought all the land between the Raalte Road and the Dalmsholter Road, along the canal, so that it is a very nice property. Since 1854 they have used it as their summer retreat. This year they already came in the middle of March, and are staying through the month of November. Mr. Blikman wholeheartedly enjoys living here, but Mrs. Blikman not at all, because Lemele does not lie on the railroad and is isolated. Mr. Blikman is working very hard to get a church at the canal. He probably will be successful in 1861. Until January 1, 1860, I was that gentleman's salaried business agent, and drew 400 guilders per year. Since that time I serve this gentleman gratis, partly because I can well do without his salary, partly because, at the age of 55, it was too difficult to stand in a subservient relationship with respect to Mrs. B. in domestic matters. Since 1854, I had given Egbert, who was the bridge tender, 100 guilders annually from my salary, so that this left me 300 guilders. But in 1859 Egbert coughed up blood, having to lay down the supervision over the workers [before] he died. In January 1860 everything was reorganized. Gerrit Krug was given supervision of the workers [and] a gardener was appointed. By doing this everything was arranged again.

Mr. Blikman finds it hard that I won't accept a salary, but I love him and will, out of my affection, gladly do anything for him that lies in my power. And now it is a completely different environment for me there. *Mevrouw* restrains herself now from saying to me: "What a miserable place did you provide for us here. Why didn't you advise my husband against going into the factory with Bart? By doing what you did, you have cost us thousands [of guilders]." It is true that Mr. Blikman is having severe reverses of business. In order not to lose out with the Hamburg boat, he had to make the highest bid for the Russian expedition, with a bid of one hundred thousand guilders. Those shares stand now at 50% because the Russian ship is a poor venture. In order to get that amount of money, Mr. Blikman has had to encumber himself seriously. With Mr. Thesin [Thesen?] he has also suffered a considerable loss. Mr. Blikman tells me more now than before about the good and bad ventures, so that Mrs. Blikman, by knowing all these things, is in very fretful humor. The gentleman⁷ has seen to it, however, that in my old age I don't need to groan under slavery, but that I can say to her: "I don't need you." Had I sought my own profit in the past, and had I given my resignation to Mr. Blikman completely or in part, I would have been in a much better position. The death of Egbert, however, was for me a suitable time to bring about some change. Now I keep his books, manage his financial administration and advise Mr. Blikman when he needs it, or thinks it necessary.

⁶ The word in the Dutch text is *rikkhout*, for which it is difficult to find a translation. A *rikkepaal* is a fencing post.

⁷ Since Ravenshorst is not given to piety in this letter, it is likely that the word *Heer* does not refer to "the Lord."

Mr. Kouws [?] of Amsterdam has

[3]

built a small country estate opposite Mr. Blikman, on the east side of the Raalte Road. He cultivates wasteland. As a result, Lemele is becoming a beautiful place. Mr. Blikman has the most pleasant walks and shady woods there. Shipping is growing busier every year. Every day tow-boats travel from Almelo to Zwolle, and from Almelo to Deventer. Mr. B. has already made many attempts to connect Raalte with Lemele with a gravel road, but up to this point he has not been successful, although he has offered to make a gift of 3,000 guilders for this road, provided there is strong participation for it.

The school at Lemele is going to be removed to the canal in March by order of the City Council of the district of Ommen. At the highest point of the hill, on the south side, Mr. Blikman has built a gazebo in the midst of a planting of growing trees, and from there he has a very beautiful view.

Although the Blikman family has been at Lemele from mid-March to November this year, they haven't been to Ommen so far, most likely because sister Chris has made such a bad marriage. Well, dear sir, I have opened my heart to you, needless to say in the strictest confidence.

About my financial situation I would not wish to be so open everywhere, and if it is of advantage to my children, as far as I am concerned I don't care if people misjudge my wealth. That I have a large annual income is well-known --they can count on their fingers-- but I am not broadcasting my debts. Mr. Blikman also knows in detail my wealth and my debts.

You certainly already know that our Elder Peter Oldeman has died, and Martin Kortman, our Deacon, also. The widow Nijkamp of Arriën died about three weeks ago, as did the wife of F. Mol at Junne. That Hendrik van Straten has died you've known for quite a while, haven't you? Yes, I am still an Elder, and in your estimation an open-minded one,⁸ although, on the face of it, I am an elder just as much as another. After all, the teaching of the children is my job from time to time. And every other Sunday evening I have to read a sermon. In addition, I am the organist. We have an excellent organ in our church. My daughter Jansje also leads the congregation from time to time at the organ.

Rev. de Moen has left for Doesburg. My family and I heard his farewell speech. The church could not hold half of the listeners; it was a very moving occasion. Pastor and congregation were torn apart; which was evident in the many tears and sobs that were seen and heard. Dr. Brunemeijer will most probably take his place. I have already received a letter from him [de Moen] from Doesburg. He complains about the high cost of the house (275 guilders), the pressure of the taxes (50 guilders), [and] the high cost of education, etc., etc. And his salary is only 600 guilders without any extras. During 1859

⁸ Someone who was *liberaal* in the 19th century could be someone advocating free enterprise, being generous, or open-minded.

Benjamin stayed with us and attended the Christian school in Ommen. Too bad he was not able to stay here; he worked hard and made good progress in French. My son Eli, too, is beginning to acquire a good knowledge of French, and writes a good script. I almost forgot to mention that Hendrikje van Munster, the widow of W. van Munster, died, and that she has bequeathed 250 guilders to the church; and after the death of her son Hendrik, a tenth of her estate (a total of 1400 guilders).

You will probably still remember *Vrouw*⁹ [Mrs.] de Vries who, when you were here, was an anxious Christian, was led by feelings and visions [*gestalte*] alone, and wavered between faith and lack thereof, between belief and despair. Now that creature is a firmly-rooted Christian, full of belief and full of trust, against whom Satan shoots his arrows in vain because she knows "It has been written." It is reasonably well with the son of Ten Toorn, although he is definitely insane.

After you have read the contents of this letter, please burn it, so that my confidential letter will not be seen by anyone else. My wife and family are asking me to send their greetings to you and yours. Also receive my sincere and warm greetings.

Respectfully yours, your servant and brother,
E. Ravenshorst

P.S. After finishing this letter I went to your sister as agent of the Overijssel Fire Insurance Company, in order to ask for 42 guilders fire damage. She told me for the first time that she had received a letter from you, and that she would like to read it to me, but that she had misplaced it and could not put her hands on it rightaway. She told me, however, that she would be staying with you for a year, and that afterwards Mansier would find his means of support by becoming a strawberry grower. Naturally, I did not say anything about your letter to me, and listened to all this in silence, until I asked her

[in margin on p. 3]

how they could hope to make their fortune in America without any funds [*ledige handen*=empty hands]. I pointed out to her that I could not see how the mill, when sold, would produce enough money to pay her debts, and that she would not have a cent for passage, much less to start something in America. In that case, she would be entirely dependent on help from her brother, and that he had enough to do to take care of himself and his family. This scared her

[in margin on p. 2]

off somewhat in her intention. And really, if I take into account that this is a mill with few customers, which declines day by day, and which my brother-in-law Konijnenbelt says he does not dare to run because of the danger, as is known all over Ommen.....[illegible], what can you sell it for? Nor are they able to pay the fire insurance this year. Last year it was advanced to her, of which 15 guilders is still left. Now it is very likely that because of non-payment she will lose the fire insurance on the

⁹ That Ravenshorst uses the word *vrouw*, rather than *mevrouw*, indicates that this is woman of the lower classes. Note also that she is described as a "creature." Blikman's wife is named *Mevrouw* Blikman.

mill, which had protected her for many years. There is not a chance that anyone will come to her rescue, for they are deep in debt everywhere. When she married, she owed me half a pig for house rent. She also owes me 118 guilders for the cost of postage, costs of her marriage,

[in margin on p. 1]

for drawing the marriage contract at the Notary, etc., etc. She has never said a word about paying me back. Furthermore, as the town treasurer, I have to advance her the "rental land" tax. Rev. Te Bokkel has also helped her many times and has never been paid back. Frankly, it would be desirable for everybody in every way if Mansier could just go to the Transvaal Republic. Or perhaps he could possibly find a job here. There is still a chance for you to avoid much trouble and misery. I really had thought that you would have written to me before you wrote to her. There's still much for you to consider, and to dissuade her, and I do the latter every time I see her. Vale. E.R.

[Envelope addressed to:]

The Very Reverend A. D. Van Raalte
Theological Doctor and Pastor in Holland
State of Michigan
North America

stamped in Zwolle, London and Detroit]

[Translated by Marcelle and John Luidens,
Revised by Nella Kennedy,
April 2008]

From Wikipedia [in Dutch]

LEMELE

Lemele is a village in the municipality of Ommen, province of Overijssel, at the foot of the Lemelerberg [Lemele hill]. Lemele had 1287 inhabitants on January 1, 2004. The origin of the name refers to the loam found on and around the Lemelerberg. Archeological research shows that already 2000 years before Christ the site was inhabited. The first time that Lemele is mentioned is in 1474.

De Tichelerij [Brick Factory]

In 1840, the Leiden-born Carel Godefroi de Moen bought a piece of land at the Ledeboer Road to begin a brick and tile factory there. "De Moen and Company" (with partners Rev. Van Raalte, Dirk Blikman Kikker and Elias Ravenhorst) could begin. The brick factory, better known as "De Tichelerij," gave work to about 30 people. The location at the foot of the Lemeler Hill was ideal of course, since loam was the most important raw material for the factory. When the Overijssel Canal was constructed in 1855, the factory was relocated to the Kingma Road at this canal.

Over the years the partners left the brick factory one by one. Dirk Blikman Kikkert, as the last remaining partner, sold his share to Marten Kingma in 1862. Ten years later Marten Kingma changed the brick factory into a dairy business, following the invention of centrifuging milk.

The Church

The Commission for the Founding of a Reformed Church of Lemele and Archem was established in 1860. At that time the inhabitants of Lemele traveled about nine kilometers to Ommen —by foot—to attend the church services there on Sunday. After a week of hard work this proved to be too heavy a burden for many people, and the building of a church was deemed necessary. W. G. Leestemaker and B. J. Immink gave the land. Financed by contributions of congregational members, other Reformed churches, gifts and a fund for needy church. In 1865 the domed church was dedicated. First pastor: Foppe Allerd Hingst.

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Lemele

 52° 27′ NB, 6° 25′ OL (http://www.nsesoftware.nl/wiki/maps.asp?params=52_27_8_N_6_24_53_E_type:city_zoom:15_region:NL&src=Lemele)

Van Wikipedia

Lemele is een dorp in de gemeente Ommen in de Nederlandse provincie Overijssel, gelegen aan de voet van de Lemelerberg. Op 1 januari 2004 telde Lemele 1287 inwoners. De naam Lemele is afgeleid van het leem dat vroeger in en om de Lemelerberg werd gevonden. Uit vondsten bij afgravingen is gebleken dat al 2000 jaar voor het begin van onze jaartelling mensen rond de Lemelerberg woonden. De eerste keer dat Lemele wordt vermeld is in 1474.

De Tichelerij

De in Leiden geboren Carel Godefroi de Moen kocht in 1840 een stuk grond aan de Ledeboerweg om er een steenpannen- en tichelfabriek te stichten.

Onder de naam *De Moen en Compagnons* konden met medewerking van ds. Van Raalte, Dirk Blikman Kikker en Elias Ravenhorst zijn plannen worden uitgevoerd. De steenfabriek, die beter bekend staat als *De Tichelerij*, bood werk aan ongeveer dertig mensen. De locatie aan de voet van de Lemelerberg was natuurlijk ideaal, aangezien leem de belangrijkste grondstof was voor de fabriek. Toen in 1855 het Overijssels kanaal tussen Almelo en Zwolle werd aangelegd, werd de fabriek verplaatst naar de Kingmaweg aan dit kanaal.

In de loop van de jaren traden de compagnons één voor één uit de steenfabriek. In 1862 verkocht Dirk Blikman Kikkert als laatst overgeblevende compagnon zijn aandeel aan Marten Kingma. Tien jaar later besloot Marten Kingma na de uitvinding van de melkcentrifuge de steenfabriek om te zetten in een zuivelfabriek.

De Kerk

Rond 1860 werd de *commissie tot stichting ener Hervormde Gemeente van Lemele en Archem* in het leven geroepen. Op dat moment gingen de inwoners van Lemele nog grotendeels zo'n negen kilometer te voet naar Ommen om daar zondags de kerkdienst bij te wonen. Na een week hard werken bleek dit echter voor vele mensen een te zware opgave, waardoor de bouw van een kerk noodzakelijk werd geacht. De grond voor de bouw van de kerk met pastorie werd geschonken door W.G. Leestemaker en B.J. Immink. De bouw werd gefinancierd door bijdragen van eigen gemeenteleden, andere hervormde kerken, giften en een fonds voor noodlijdende kerken. Op 21 mei 1865 werd de koepelkerk ingewijd. De eerste predikant van de gemeente was Foppe Allerd Hingst.

In 1891 vond de eerste grote verbouwing van de kerk plaats. De koepel werd hierbij afgebroken, omdat deze teveel onderhoud vergde. In 1923 blijkt de kerk te klein te zijn geworden voor de Lemeler bevolking en wordt de kerk uitgebreid met een galerij. Ook deze kerk bleek echter al snel te klein. Eind jaren dertig werd dan ook besloten tot de bouw van een nieuwe kerk. Deze nieuwe kerk werd vervolgens



schaapskudde op de Archemerberg nabij Lemele

a hernia

After all, for the last five or six years I have been receiving an income of 1200 guilders a year and can save some of it, for our house remains the same, our living (costs) the same, our clothing the same; but our children are growing up and require more. Moreover, I suffered a rupture last year, and since then I walk with a truss, so that I can walk short distances; but for greater distances I must ride. Often I am away from home. For some years the roads have been subject to my supervision, and during that time I have contracted for the material, so that the road from Ommen to Zwolle, from Ommen to Hardenburgh, from Ommen to Dedemsvaart annually must be provided with macadam gravel by which masses of people earn their bread. I get these materials from a piece of land that I bought, in company with my brother-in-law ^{ter}Toorn, J. Kroon and Dr. ter Horst, from the estate of Van Der Wijk--the land is 7 1/2 bunders in size (2.471 acres), for the small sum of 1620 guilders. All the land from which the stones and gravel are collected are planted ^{with} trees, and in that I invest my guilders that I save annually, and that is interest-free capital, so that I increase in possessions, but am constantly poor in money; and in that respect I am better off in a small way than you are.

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Linderzand?

And now we go to Lemele. Our planted lanes are still there. The oak trees are growing extremely well. The pine trees planted between the oaks hindered the growth of the oak trees, and so half the pines were cut down a few years ago and were sold for spars and firewood (rikhout?). The oak thickets on both sides were started five years ago, so that in three years' time it will be possible to sell them as good woodland timber. Everything is now cultivated, with ditches, garden houses, kitchen gardens, orchards, etc., etc.

spates? rikhout=

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cupulas

carriage

everything was arranged again

everything was reorganized

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underline
one
Mr. Blikman

redo

gentleman

4 Bruunmeyer

Pastor

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Christian

was led by feeling and visions [gestalt] alone, and wavered between faith + lack of faith; between
You will probably still remember Vrouw De Vries who, when you were here, was a Christian in name--superficially, and who wavered between belief and despair. Now that creature is a firmly-rooted Christian, full of belief and full of trust, against whom Satan shoots his arrow in vain because she accepts "The Word". The son of Ten Toorn is reasonably well, although he is definitely demented. *knows "It has been written"*
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When you have read the contents of this letter, will you then burn it, so that my confidential letter will not be seen by anyone else. My wife and family are asking me to send their greetings to you and yours. Also receive my sincere and warm greetings and highest esteem.

Respectfully yours, your servant and brother,

E. Ravenshorst

(There follows a long P. S., continued in the pages of 3, 2 and one, in that order.)

margin p 3

P.S. After finishing this letter I went to your sister as agent of the Overijsel Fire Insurance Company, in order to ask for 42 guilders fire damage. Now she tells me for the first time that she has received a letter from you, and that she would gladly show it to me, but that she has misplaced it and couldn't put her hands on it straightaway. She told me, however, that she would be staying with you for a year, and that Mansier would make his living as a strawberry grower. Naturally, I did not say anything about your letter to me, and listened to all this in silence and then I asked her how they could hope to make their fortunes in America without any funds [empty hands]. I pointed out to her that I could not see how the mill, when sold, would produce enough money to pay her debts; and that she would not have a cent for passage, much less to start something in America. In that case, she would be entirely dependent on help from her brother, and that he had enough to do to take care of himself and his family. This alarmed her somewhat, as I could tell from her face. Really! If I take into account that this is a mill with few customers, which declines day by day, and which my brother-in-law says that he does not dare to run because of the danger, as is known all over Ommen. What could you sell it for? Nor are they able to pay the insurance this year. Last year it was advanced to her, of which 15 guilders is left. Now it is very likely that because of non-payment she will lose the fire insurance on the mill, by which for many years her ownership has been protected. There's not a chance that anyone will come to her rescue, for they are deep in debt everywhere. When she married, she owed me half a pig for house rent, as well as postage in connection with her wedding costs to the Notary for setting up of her marriage settlement, etc., etc.

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~~that~~
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 has also helped her many times and has never been paid back. Frankly, ^{could} Mansier ^{just}
~~could~~ go to the Transvaal Republic, and that would be desirable for everybody in
 every way; or he could perhaps be found a job here. There is still a chance for
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 and to dissuade her, and I do--every time I see her. Vale. E.R.
 the latter

Translated by Marcelle and John Luidens
 Marcelle and John Luidens

Ommen, 19 November 1860

The Reverend A.C. Van Raalte

Your letter of the 24th October found me in good health on November 17. I hurry to answer it directly. My letters, which accompanied that of your sister, have had the same reception over there as I presumed; namely, the recommendation of Mansier to emigrate to America. Look, this is how--one way or another--it all came about. Your sister came to me and told me in strictest confidence that they planned to leave for North America in order to secure a better means of existence if the opportunity would present itself; that she had written to her brother with that purpose in mind; and she requested me to inclose a few lines which might serve in support (of that plan.) She waited for me to write a few lines. I wrote; read aloud to her and my wife what I had written, and gave the unsealed letter to her. After she had gone, my wife asked me whether you, Reverend, would really understand that my letter was not much of a recommendation. I answered her that, to you, Reverend, it would appear more dissuasive than persuasive; and, accordingly, your Reverence could easily deduce that it was a letter which she had pressured out of me (written at her insistence). I said then, also, that it would have such an effect.

I have written the truth. That Mansier no longer drinks is definite; however, whether this is because he has no means for it, I am unable to say; that he has stopped his public misdeeds for some time, now, as the result of his (religious) conversion, I cannot say with certainty. However, to believe all the gossip that went around earlier would be too harsh, it is true. (Nevertheless) much that is true is not very nice but very very certain. Mansier has ^{been} a faithful follower of the Afgescheidenen (Seperatists), a faithful church-goer, an attentive listener, even a champion; whether, however he understands the truth and his heart is in it? (illegible), I certainly doubt. In short, it is much better that Mansier, with all that he is, remains here, than that he should cause grief to you. And I say this all the more because I notice in your letter that he intends to settle with you or in your neighborhood. And that must never happen! He must live at a distance from you, and there follow a good occupation, whether as a miller or something else. What you wrote disturbs me: that your sister wrote to open the way. Already now, for some days, she has had your letter. This I know from the postmaster, and she has not mentioned one iota of this to me, although she lives next to us in the house of Kramer. She is open and easy whenever she needs help, but uncommunicative, obscure, enigmatic and unfathomable insofar as she knows how to protect herself.

However, perhaps in my heat I have already said too much, and for that reason I say to you now, "away with the dirty business." Certainly, I have written you all this confidentially so that you know what to do and what not to do. Now I lay down your letter before me and begin to read from the beginning. What a wonder (exclamation marks). Raafje awakened from the dead (double exclamation marks). What electric shock has struck you (question mark). Yes, you were right to be astonished, right to raise questions. And even more--a letter forced out of me by your sister, without any value. Without scent or taste. Oh dear Dominie, I am devoured by all this business. It is not that I am insensitive. I would give 100 guilders if I could spend half a day with you and we could talk together. Oh, write me as often as you can find the time for it. The postage is no problem. Not that I have plenty of money--far from it. No, I will have to work, and work hard, up to my dying day. To be financially secure probably will never be my lot, although I have a quite sufficient income.

After all, for the last five or six years I have been receiving an income of 1200 guilders a year and can save some of it, for our house remains the same, our living (costs) the same, our clothing the same; but our children are growing up and require more. Moreover, I suffered a rupture last year, and since then I walk with a truss,

so that I can walk short distances; but for greater distances I must ride. Often I am away from home. For some years the roads have been subject to my supervision, and during that time I have contracted for the material, so that the road from Ommen to Zwolle, from Ommen to Hardenburgh, from Ommen to Oedemsvaart annually must be provided with 'macadam' gravel by which masses of people earn their bread. I get these materials from a piece of land that I bought, in company with my brother-in-law ter Hoorn, J. Kroon and Dr. ter Horst, from the estate of Van Der Wijk--the land is 74 bunders in size (2.471 acres), for the small sum of 1620 guilders. All the land from which the stones and gravel are collected are planted to trees, and in that I invest my guilders that I save annually; and that is interest free capital. So that I increase in possessions, but am constantly poor in money; and in that respect I am better off in a small way than you are.

Also, you know, I am certain, that Papa de Moen and I have purchased "Linderzand" twelve years ago for 720 guilders--84 bunders in size, on which we have a farm and a large woods. Still, I have never received a half-cent from it but have always had to put in additional money, so that it has cost us upwards of 3000 guilders; but it already has a present value of 8,000 guilders. I have purchased, along with Dominie Ten Bokkel, several pieces of land, some of which we still have, some of which we sold again with substantial profit. When I appraise the houses and lands at present day value, then I come to a figure of over 9,000 guilders in property, but which is still encumbered by some 4,300 guilders. So you can understand that I have made great progress; but you can also see that at no time in the future will I be able to retire.

And now we go to Lemele. Our planted lanes are still there. The oak trees are growing extremely well. The pine trees planted between the oaks hindered the growth of the oak trees, and so half the pines were cut down a few years ago and were sold for spars and firewood (rikhout?). The oak thickets on both sides were started five years ago, so that in three years' time it will be possible to sell them as good woodland timber. Everything is now cultivated, with ditches, garden houses, kitchen gardens, orchards, etc., etc.

Mr. Blikman has built a nice country house, a gardener's cottage, stables, coach house, etc. In addition, Mr. Blikman has bought all the land between the Raalte Road and the Dalmshalter Road along the canal, so that is a very nice property there. Since 1854 they have used it as their summer retreat. This year, they already came in the middle of March, and are staying through the month of November. Mr. Blikman wholeheartedly enjoys living here, but Mrs. Blikman not at all, because Lemele does not lie on the railroad and is isolated. Mr. Blikman is working very hard to get a church close to the canal. He probably will be successful in 1861. Until 1 January 1860 I was that gentleman's salaried business agent, and drew 400 guilders per year. Since that time, I served this gentleman gratis, partly because I can well do without his salary, partly because, at my age of 55, to stand in a subservient relationship with respect to Mrs. B. in domestic matters would be too irksome. Since 1854, I gave Egbert, who was the bridge tender, 100 guilders annually from my salary, so that this left me 300 guilders. In 1859 Egbert suffered blood-spitting and died, so that he laid down the supervision over the workers. In January, 1860, an organization was set up; Gerrit Krug was given supervision of the workers; a gardener was appointed; and by doing this the business was again on a solid basis.

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E.R.

Ommen den 19 November 1860

De WelEerw heer A. C. van Raalte

WelEerwaarde Heer!

Uwe letteren van den 24 oktober zijn mij in welstand 17 November geworden. Ik haast mij daarop direct te antwoorden. Mijne letteren die ten geleide van die uwer zuster hebben gestrekt [?], hebben dezelfde ontmoeting ten uwent gehad als ik veronderstelde n.l. de aanbeveling van Mansier tot verhuizing naar Amerika. – zie hier hoe zich een en ander heeft toegedragen: Uwe zuster kwam bij mij, en vertelde mij zeer geheim dat zij het plan hadden naar N. Amerika te vertrekken om een beter middel van bestaan te verkrijgen, indien de weg daartoe haar mogt worden geopend dat zij tot dat einde haar broer had geschreven, en mij verzocht om een paar regels te willen insluiten die tot aanbeveling mogten strekken; zij bleef op het schrijven van een paar regels wachten: - Ik schreef, en las het daarna haar en mijne vrouw voor, en gaf het haar open mede. – Na haar vertrek vroeg mijne vrouw mij, of Mich. nu wel zou begrijpen, dat mijne letteren, niet veel tot aanbeveling stichten – ik gaf haar ten antwoord dat het voor UwEw meer ontradend dan aanbevelend zoude strekken, naardien UwEw uit het geheel genoegzaam kondt afleiden dat het een door haar, van mij, afgeperst schrijven ware. – Ik zie dan ook, dat het zoodanig effect heeft ges..... Ik heb waarheid geschreven, - Dat Mansier niet meer drinkt is zeker, doch of zulks is om dat hij daartoe geene middelen heeft, dit weet ik niet; dat hij zijne openbare zonden sedert geruimen tijd den scheidbrief heeft gegeven, ten gevolge eenen opregte bekeering tot God durf ik met geen beslist ja! uit te spreken om echter alles te gelove was om lasteren de wereld vroeger heeft gezegd, dat zou te grof zijn, dat veel waar is, wat niet mooi is, is zeer zeer zeker. – Mansier is bij de Afgescheidenen door alle tijden heen een trouwe kerkganger een aandachtig hoorder en zelfs een voorvechter [geweest]; of hij echter de waarheid verstaat en van zijn harte dierbaar [?] is betwijfel ik wel. – om kort te gaan het is veel beter dat Mansier met al wat hij is, hier blijft, dan dat hij ten uwent smart verwekken; en dit zeg ik te meer daar ik met uw schrijven bemerk, dat hij bij u, of in uw omgeven zoude nestelen; - dat moest nooit! Hij moest op eenen afstand wonen en daar eene conditie hebben, het zij als molenaar of iets anders. Dat u schrijft dat gij uwe zuster weg openend geschreven hebt verontrust mij; - zij heeft nu reeds sedert 14 dagen uw brief ontvangen, dat weet ik van de postmeester en zij heeft hiervan aan mij nog geen jota gezegd ofschoon zij naast ons woont in het huis van Kramer. – Zij is open en vrij voor zoo ver zij hulp noodig heeft, gesloten, duister, raadselachtig en ondoordringbaar voor zo ver zij ziet zelf weet te redden; - doch welligt zeg ik in mijn drift reeds te veel en daarom zeg ik u na, “weg met die vuile was [?]” Vertrouwelijk heb ik u nu wel zoo veel geschreven, dat gij wist, wat te doen, wat te laten. – Nu leg ik [?] uwe brief weer voor mij neder, en begin van boven aan te lezen; - Wat een wonder / zie uitroepsteeken Raafje uit de dooden opgewekt / dubbel uitroepsteeken/. Wat electrischen schok heeft u¹ getroffen / vraagsteeken. Ja met regt die verwondering bij u, met regt die vraag: - en dan nog, een door uwe zuster mijn afgeperst schrijven, zonder waarde! zonder reuk of smaak! – Maar och lieve Dominé. Ik wordt door al de drukte verslonden, liefdeloosheid is het niet, ik gaf f 100 als ik een halve dag in uw midden kon

¹The text is not clear enough to determine if the word is “u” or “ze.”

zijn om zamen eens te praten. – Och Schrijf mij toch zoo vaak u de tijd daartoe kunt vinden; de post valt mij niet lastig; verre van daar dat ik mijne koeitjes op het drooge heb; neen ik kan wel werken en hard werken tot aan mijn dood toe; koeitjes op het drooge zal mij wel nooit te beurt vallen ofschoon ik een zeer voldoende inkomen heb, verdien ik sinds een jaar of zes p.m. f 1200 's jaars, en kan daarvan overhouden; want ons huis blijft hetzelfde ons leven het zelfde onze klederdragt dezelfde, maar de kinderen worden groot en vorderen, meer in en om het lijf, bovendien heb ik ten vorige jaar eene breuk gekregen en loop sinds dien tijd in een band, zoo dat ik kleine afstanden kan lopen, grootere afstanden moet rijden, veel al ben ik van huis, sedert eenige jaaren zijn de kunstwegen aan mijn toezigt onderworpen, en heb sedert jaren het materieel voor die wegen aangenomen, zoo dat de weg van Ommen op Zwolle, van Ommen op Hardenbergh, van Ommen op de Dedemsvaart 's jaarlijks door mij moet worden gevoed [gevast ?] met macadam en grint, waaraan een massa menschen hun brood verdienen; ik verkrijg dien voorraad uit een stuk grond dat ik van de erven van der Wijk heb gekocht groot 74 bunders in compagnie met mijn zwagers Ten Toorn, J. Kroon en Docter ter Horst voor de geringe som van f 1620.= al de grond waaruit de keijen en grint zijn verzameld wordt bezaaid en [?] beplant tot boschen en daarin laat ik mijne geld dat ik 's jaarlijks overhoudt en is dus een renteloos kapitaal, zoo dat ik in bezitting toeneem, maar in geld steeds arm ben, en ik dat opzigt slaag ik u in het klein. – Ook weet u

[2]

zeker dat papa de Moen ik het Linderzande voor 12 jaare, hebben aangekocht voor f 720.= groot 84 bunder waarop wij eene boederij hebben en reeds een groot bosch; noch nooit heb ik hier een halve cent van gezien maar steeds bijgepast zoo dat het ons nu reeds naar inschat ruim f3000= kost doch thans wel eene waarde van f8000 heeft. – Ik heb veel stukjes grond met Ds. Ten Bokkel gekocht die wij deels nog hebben, deels met grove winst weder hebben verkocht. – Wanneer ik huizen en landerijen tot de tegenwoordige waarde taxen dan bevindt [?] ik mijne bezitting tot een bedrag van ruim f 9000 toch waarop ik van onderscheiden en als bezwaar heb rustende f 4300.= zo dat u kan nagaan ik reeds goed vooruit ben gegaan maar ook met mij zult begrijpen, dat er voor mij geen tijd in de toekomst ligt, dat ik stilletjes zou kunnen gaan leven. –

En nu gaan wij naar Lemele – onze geplante lanen zijn nog in wezen. De eiken groeijen voortreffelijk de tusschen geplante dennen zijn voor de helft voor 2 jaren reeds gehakt om dat ze den groei der eiken belemmerde en zijn toen voor sparren en rikhout reeds verkocht. De akkermaals hagen ten wederzijde zijn voor 5 jaren reeds afgezet en zijn zoo sterker in groei dat ze over 3 jaar als goed akkermaalshout kunnen worden verkocht, alles is thans bosch met waterwerkjes, koepeltjes [?], moestuyn, boomgaard Enz. Enz. De Heer Blickman heeft er een mooi buitentje laten bouwen, eene tuinmanswoning stalling koetshuis Enz. Al de gronden tusschen de Raaltenweg en de Dalmsholter weg langs het Kanaal heeft de Heer Blickman er bij aan gekocht. zoodat het een heele mooie possessie is. – Sedert 1854 houden zij er hun zomerverblijf. In dit jaar zijn ze reeds half Maart gekomen en blijven de maand November uit. – De Heer Blickman woont hier met zijn gansche hart, Mevrouw geensins omdat Lemele niet aan het Spoor ligt en niet in de wereld. De Heer Blickman is ijverig bezig om aan het Kanaal eene kerk te verkrijgen, in 1861 krijgt hij welligt zulks tot stand. Tot op 1 January 1860 was ik voor ZwEd zijn

gesalarieerde zaakwaarnemer en trok f 400.= 's jaars. – Van dien tijd af dien ik ZwEd gratis. – Eensdeels om dat ik zijn salaris wel kon ontberen andersdeels om dat het mij op 55 jarige leeftijd, in dienstbare betrekking te staan, op zigtens Mevrouw in huiselijke aangelegenheden te hard viel. Sedert 1854 gaf ik aan Egbert die brugwachter was, van mijn salaris 's jaars f 100 mede, zoo dat ik f 300 behield. In 1859 kwam Egbert aan eene bloedspuwing te overlijden zoo dat hij het toezigt over de arbeiders er nederlegde Januarij 1860 kwam er eene gehele organisatie. Gerrit kreeg het toezigt over de arbeiders, er kwam een tuinman, en zoo doende was de zaak wederom geregeld.

De Heer Blickman valt het hard geen salaris aan mij te kunnen kwijt worden, doch ik heb hem lief en wil uit liefde gaarne alles voor hem doen wat in mijn vermogen is. – En nu leef ik daar op een geheel ander standpunt. – Mevrouw weerhoudt zich nu aan mij te zeggen “wat hebt gij ons hier ellendig neergeplakt”. – “Waarom hebt gij mijn man niet ontraden bij Bart in de fabriek te gaan, daardoor hebt gij ons duizende schade berokkend.” De Heer Blickman ondervindt wel een ellendige tegenloop van zaken. – Door de Hamburger boot aan zijn kantoor niet te verliezen, moest hij de hoogste inschrijver wezen voor de Russische expeditie, dit was hij, bij eene inschrijving van honderdduizend gulden, en die actiën staan thans op 50 per cent omdat de Russische boot zoo slecht vaart, en voor dat Kapitaal heeft de Heer Blickman zich zeer moeten bezwaren. – Met de Heer Thesen [Thesin?] heeft hij ook een gevoelig verlies geleden. – De Heer Blickman vertelt nu meer dan vroeger, zijn wel of kwalijk varen, zoo dat Mevrouw bij alle kennis van zaken soms zeer ongemakkelijk van humeur is. – De Heer heeft echter gezorgd dat ik op mijn oude dag niet in eene “Slavernij” hoef te zuchten, maar dat ik tegen haar kan zeggen ik heb u niet noodig: - Had ik mijn voordeel gezocht en had voor jaren de Heer Blickman of geheel of gedeeltelijk mijne taak opgezegd, ik zoude mij zeer bevoordeeld hebben. – De dood van Egbert was echter voor mij een geschikt tijdpunt om eenige verandering daar te stellen. – Nu houd ik zijne boeken aan, beheer zijne geldelijke administratie, en strek ZwEd. tot raad waar hij zulks behoeft of meent noodig te hebben. – De Heer Kouws [?] van Amsterdam heeft

[3]

een buitentje tegen over het zijne gebouwd aan de oostkant der Raalterweg. Deze is cultivateur van woeste gronden, Lemele wordt op dat punt mooi. De Heer Blickman heeft er alleraangenaamste wandelingen en lommerijke bosschen. – De scheepvaart wordt van jaar tot jaar drukker. Dagelijks varen er jaagschuiten van Almelo op Zwolle en van Almelo op Deventer. De Heer Blickman heeft reeds veele pogingen in het werk gesteld om Raalte aan de kunstweg te Lemele te verbinden, tot op heden heeft hem dit nog niet mogen gelukken; ofschoon hij f 3000 ten geschenke voor dien weg heeft aangeboden, behalve krachtige deelneming. –

De school te Lemele wordt door het Gemeente Bestuur van het Ambt Ommen in Maart naar het Kanaal verplaatst. – Op het hoogste punt van den Berg aan de zuidzijde heeft de Heer Blickman een koepel gebouwd te midden eener aanplanting van opgaande boomen, van uit dien koepel heeft men een allerheerlijkst gezicht. –

Niettegenstaande de familie Blikman van af half Maart to ultimum November te Lemele is zoo heeft zij dit jaar nog niet te Ommen geweest, hoogstwaarschijnlijk omdat zuster Chris zich zoo zeer heeft mistrouwd. Zie daar waarde Heer! Mijn gansche hart ontlast, het spreekt van zelve in het diepst vertrouwen.

Omtrent mijne finantieële gehalte wensch ik overal niet zoo open te zijn, en om mijner kinderen wil wederspreek ik mijne gegoedheid niet, moge het tot voordeel van mijn kroost strekken dan moge men zich op mijnen rijkdom misgissen. – Dat ik jaarlijks veele verdiensten heb, dat is eene overal bekende zaak en dit kan men mij op de vingers na tellen; maar met mijne schulden loop ik niet te koop. – ook de Heer Blikman is met mijnen rijkdom en armoede en detail bekend. Het is u zeker reeds ter kennis gebragt dat onze ouderling Peter Oldeman overleden is en Marten Kortman onze diaken tevens. – De wed. Nijkamp te Arrin [Arriën], is voor een week of drie ook overleden als moeder de vrouw van F. Mol [Hal?] te Junne. – Dat Hendrik van Straten overleden is weet u reeds voor lang; nietwaar? Ja ik ben ook nog ouderling en wel naar uwe schatting een liberale ouderling; ofschoon ik uiterlijk wel zoo veel ouderling ben als iemand anders, immers het leeren der kinderen valt mij van tijd tot tijd nog al ten deel en moet om de andere week zondags avonds eene predikatie lezen, overigens ben ik organist. Wij hebben een uitmuntend orgel in onze kerk. Mijne dochter Jansje leid ook al van tijd tot tijd de Gemeente met het orgelspel. –

Ds de Moen is vertrokken naar Doesburg. Ik heb met mijn huisgenoten zijne afscheidsrede gehoord, het kerk gebouw kon de helft der hoorders niet bevatten, het was een aandoenlijk, leeraar en gemeente wierden van elkander gescheurd, dit getuigen de veele tranen en snikken die overal wierden gezien en gehoord. Ds. Brunemeijer zal hoogstwaarschijnlijk zijne plaats in nemen. – Ik heb reeds een schrijven van hem uit Doesburg gehad; hij klaagt over duurte van het huis f 275.- den druk der belasting f.50.= duurte van het onderwijs Enz. Enz. En zijn tractement is slechts f.600 zonder meer. – Benjamin was gedurende 1859 te Ommen, op de Bijz. School en bij ons te huis. Jammer dat hij niet hier kon blijven, hij was fiks aan den gang, en maakte goede vorderingen in het Fransch; ook mijn zoon Eli begint aardig Fransch te leeren, en wordt een schoone schrijver. – Ik zoude haast vergeten u te melden dat de wed. A. W. Van Munster of Hendrikje van Munster overleden en dat deze aan de kerk vermaakt heeft f.250.= en na dood van haar zoon Hendrik eene tiende ter waarde van f.1400.=

UwEw zult toch zeker nog wel kennen vrouw de Vries, die bij u hier zijn, eene zoo zeer benaude Christin was, die enkel en alleen op gevoel en gestalten dreef, en bij het bezit of gemis geloofde of wanhoopte, nu dat schepsel is nu eene vast gewortelde Christin vol geloof vol vertrouwen, en op wie de Satan te vergeefs zijne pijlen schiet om dat ze weet “er staat geschreven.” – Met de zoon van ten Toorn gaat het tamelijk wel, ofschoon hij nog bepaald krankzinnig is. –

Wanneer den in hand dezer door u gelezen is, wil dan dezelve aan de vlammen prijs geven, op dat mijn vertrouwelijk schrijven niemand te weten kome. – Mijne vrouw en kinder verzoeken mij u en de uwe te willen groeten. Ontvang tevens mijne opregte en hartelijke groete terwijl ik mij hoogachtend noem.

Uw Eerw. Dn. dienaar en broeder
E. Ravenshorst

P.S. na eindiging dezer letteren, kom ik bij uwe zuster ten einde als correspondent der [?] Overijsselsche brand waarborg Maatschappij f.42 brandschade te vragen, en nu eerst verhaalt zij mij dat zij eene brief van u ontvangen had en dat zij mij dien gaarne zouden voorlezen doch dat zij denzelven verlegt had en niet dadelijk kon vinden. – Zij vertelde mij echter dat zij een jaar bij u zoude inwonen, en dat daarna Mansier in aardbeijen teelt zijn middel van bestaan zoude vinden. Ik weet [?] natuurlijk van uw schrijven aan mij, en hoorde alles zwijgend aan. Tot dat ik haar

[in margin of p.3]

in bedenking begon te geven hoe zij toch in Amerika met ledige handen op eenig fortuin kon hopen. Ik stelde haar voor dat ik niet voorzag dat de molen bij verkoop zoo veel zoude op brengen dat zij hare schulden betalen kon, en dat geen sent voor de overkomst had, veel minder dan om in Amerika iets te beginnen dat zij dan geheel op de hulp haar broeders moest leunen, en dat die voor hem en de zijnen genoeg had te bezorgen. Dit schrikte haar

[continued in margin on p.2]

wel wat af van haar voornemen, En och! als ik in aanmerking neem een weinig beklante molen, die bij den dag achteruit gaat en waarvan mijn zwager Konijnenbelt zegt dat hij er niet vanwege het gevaar op durft malen, en die er wel geheel te Ommen is, wat zal die opbrengen? Zij kunnen den brandschade dit jaar ook niet betalen, ten vorigen jaar is het haar voorgeschoten en daarvan staat nog f15 restant; nu zal hoogstwaarschijnlijk bij non betaling[some text on photocopy omitted] brand assurantie vallen; waarin ze sedert jare was gewaarborg en aan redding valt voor haar ook niet te denken, want zij zitten overal diepschuld toen zij trouwde bleef zij mij aan huis huur voor een half varken brieven posten kosten van haar huwelijk

[continued in margin on p. 1]

kosten, aan den Notaris voor het maken van huwelijksvoorwaarden Enz, Enz. f. 118 schuldig, waarvan ze nog nooit geen woord van terug geven gesproken heeft bovendien moet ik elk jaar als gemeente ontvanger “de landpacht” voorschieten. – Ook Ds. Te Bokkel heeft haar onderscheiden malen voortgeholpen waarvan hij niet heeft terug bekomen. – Och kon Mansier naar de Transvaalsche Republiek gaan, dit was voor alles en tot alles meest wenschelijk of kon hij hier ergens nog voor eene betrekking geplaatst worden. – Nog is er voor U kans om u te vrijwaren voor veel leed en ellende. Ik had echter vast gedacht dat u mij eerder dan haar zoudt hebben geschreven. – Nu er valt voor u nog veel te raden, om haar te ontraden, en ik doe het laatste bepaald zoo vaak ik haar spreek. Vale! E.R.

[envelope addressed to:]

Den WelEw Heere A. C. Van Raalte
Theol. Doctor en Predikant te Holland
Staat Michigan

Noord Amerika

Over Liverpool franco

[stamped in:]

Zwolle, London, and Detroit

[Transcription: Nella Kennedy,
March 2007]

185-10
Ommen, 19 November 1860

The Reverend A. C. Van Raalte

Your letter of the 24th October found me in good health on November 17. I hurry to answer it directly. My letters, which accompanied that of your sister, have had the same reception over there as I presumed; namely, the recommendation of Mansier to emigrate to America. Look, this is how--one way or another--it all came about. Your sister came to me and told me in strictest confidence that they planned to leave for North America in order to secure a better means of existence if the opportunity would present itself; that she had written to her brother with that purpose in mind; and she requested me to inclose a few lines which might serve in support (of that plan.) She waited for me to write a few lines. I wrote; read aloud to her and my wife what I had written, and gave the unsealed letter to her. After she had gone, my wife asked me whether you, Reverend, would really understand that my letter was not much of a recommendation. I answered her that, to you, Reverend, it would appear more dissuasive than persuasive; and, accordingly, your Reverence could easily deduce that it was a letter which she had pressured out of me (written at her insistence.) I said then, also, that it would have such an effect. *

I have written the truth. Than Mansier no longer drinks is definite; however, whether this is because he has no means for it, I am unable to say; that he has stopped his public misdeeds for some time, now, as the result of his (religious) conversion, I cannot say with certainty. However, to believe all the gossip that went around earlier would be too harsh, it is true. (Nevertheless) much that is true is not very nice but very very certain. Mansier has a faithful follower of the Afgescheidenen (Separatists), a faithful church-goer, an attentive listener, even a champion; whether, however he understands the truth and his heart is in it (?) (illegible), I certainly doubt. In short, it is much better that Mansier, with all that he is, remains here, than that he should cause grief to you. And I say this all the more because I notice in your letter that he intends to settle with you or in your neighborhood. And that must never happen! He must live at a distance from you, and there follow a good occupation, whether as a miller or something else. What you wrote disturbs me: that your sister wrote to open the way. Already now, for some days, she has had your letter. This I know from the postmaster, and she has not mentioned one iota of this to me, although she lives next to us in the house of Kramer. She is open and easy whenever she needs help, but uncommunicative, obscure, enigmatic and unfathomable insofar as she knows how to protect herself.)

However, perhaps in my heat I have already said too much, and for that reason I say to you now, "away with the dirty business." Certainly, I have written you all this so that you know what to do and what not to do. Now I lay down your letter before me and begin to read from the beginning. What a wonder (exclamation marks). Raafje awakened from the dead (double exclamation marks). What electric shock has struck you (question mark.) Yes, you were right to be astonished, right to raise questions. And even more--a letter forced out of me by your sister, without any value. Without scent or taste. Oh dear Dominie, I am devoured by all this business. It is not that I am insensitive. I would give 100 guilders if I could spend half a day with you and we could talk together. Oh, write me as often as you can find the time for it. The postage is no problem. Not that I have plenty of money--far from it. No, I will have to work, and work hard, up to my dying day. to be financially secure probably will never be my lot, although I have a quite

After all, for the last five or six years I have been receiving an income of 1200 guilders a year and can save some of it, for our house remains the same, our living (costs) the same, our clothing the same; but our children are growing up and require more. Moreover, I suffered a rupture last year, and since then I walk with a truss, so that I can walk short distances; but for greater distances I must ride. Often I am away from home. For some years the roads have been subject to my supervision, and during that time I have contracted for the material, so that the road from Ommen to Zwolle, from Ommen to Hardenburgh, from Ommen to Bedemsvaart annually must be provided with macadam gravel by which masses of people earn their bread. I get these materials from a piece of land that I bought, in company with my brother-in-law ter Toorn, J. Kroon and Dr. ter Horst, from the estate of Van Der Wijk--the land is 74 bunders in size (2.471 acres), for the small sum of 1620 guilders. All the land from which the stones and gravel are collected are planted to trees, and in that I invest my guilders that I save annually; and that is interest-free capital. So that I increase in possessions, but am constantly poor in money; and in that respect I am better off in a small way than you are.

1848 Also, you know, I am certain, that Papa de Moen and I have purchased "Linderzand" twelve years ago for 720 guilders--84 bunders in size, on which we have a farm and a large woods. Still, I have never received a half-cent from it but have always had to put in additional money, so that it has cost us upwards of 3000 guilders; but it already has a present value of 8,000 guilders. I have purchased, along with Dominie Ten Bokkel, several pieces of land, some of which we still have, some of which we sold again with substantial profit. When I appraise the houses and lands at present day value, then I come to a figure of over 9,000 guilders in property, but which is still encumbered by some 4,300 guilders. So you can understand that I have made great progress; but you can also see that at no time in the future will I be able to retire.

* And now we go to Lemele. Our planted lanes are still there. The oak trees are growing extremely well. The pine trees planted between the oaks hindered the growth of the oak trees, and so half the pines were cut down a few years ago and were sold for spars and firewood (rikhout?). The oak thickets on both sides were started five years ago, so that in three years' time it will be possible to sell them as good woodland timber. Everything is now cultivated, with ditches, garden houses, kitchen gardens, orchards, etc., etc.

* Mr. Blikman has built a nice country house, a gardener's cottage, stables, coach house, etc. In addition, Mr. Blikman has bought all the land between the Raalte Road and the Dalmsalter Road along the canal, so that is a very nice property there. Since 1854 they have used it as their summer retreat. This year, they already came in the middle of March, and are staying through the month of November. Mr. Blikman wholeheartedly enjoys living here, but Mrs. Blikman not at all, because Lemele does not lie on the railroad and is isolated. Mr. Blikman is working very hard to get a church close to the canal. He probably will be successful in 1861. Until 1 January 1860 I was that gentleman's salaried business agent, and drew 400 guilders per year. Since that time, I served this gentleman gratis, partly because I can well do without his salary, partly because, at my age of 55, to stand in a subservient relationship with respect to Mrs. B. in domestic matters would be too irksome. Since 1854, I gave Egbert, who was the bridge tender, 100 guilders annually from my salary, so that this left me 100 guilders. In 1859 Egbert suffered blood-spitting and died, so that he laid down the supervision over the workers. In January, 1860, an organization was set up; Gerrit Krug was given supervision of the workers; a gardener was appointed; and by doing this the business was again on a solid basis.

* Mr. Blikman finds it hard that I won't accept a salary, but I love him and will, out of my affection, gladly do anything for him that lies in my power.

And now I have a completely different point of view. Mevrouw restrains herself from saying to me: "What a miserable position you have put us in. Why didn't you advise my husband against going into the factory with Bart? By doing what you did, you have cost us thousands (of guilders)." It is true that Mr. Blikman is having severe reverses of business. In order not to lose out with the Hamburg boat, he had to make the highest bid for the Russian expedition, with a bid of hundreds of thousands of guilders. Their values stand now at 50% because the Russian ship is a poor venture. In order to get that amount of money, Mr. Blikman has had to seriously encumber himself. With Mr. Thesis he has also suffered a considerable loss. Mr. Blikman tells me more than before of the good and bad ventures, so that Mevr. Blikman, by knowing all these things is in very fretful humor. Mr. (Blikman) has seen to it, however, that in my old age I don't need to groan under slavery; but that I can say "I don't need you." Had I sought my own profit in the past, and given up my job completely or in part, I would have been in a much better position. The death of Egbert, however, was for me a suitable time for some change. Now I keep his books, manage his financial affairs, and advise Mr. Blikman when he thinks it neccary. *

Mr. Kouws (?) of Amsterdam has built a small country estate opposite Mr. Blikman, on the east side of the Raalte Road. He is cultivating raw land. As a result, Lemele is getting to be an attractive place. Mr. Blikman has pleasant walks and shady woods there. Shipping is growing busier every year. Every day tow-boats travel from Almelo to Zwolle and from Almelo to Deventer. Mr. B. has already made many attempts to connect Raalte with Lemele with a gravel road, but up to this point he has not been successful, although he has offered to make a gift of 3,000 guilders for this road, in addition to strong financial participation.

* The school at Lemele is going to be removed to the canal in March by order of the City Council of the District of Ommen. At the highest point of the hill, on the south side, Mr. Blikman has built a summer house in the midst of a planting of growing trees. And from it he has a very beautiful view. Although the Blikman family is at Lemele from mid-March to the end of November this year, they haven't been to Ommen so far, most likely because sister Chris has made such a bad marriage. Well, dear friend, I have opened my heart to you, needless to say in strict confidence.

About my financial situation I would not wish to be so open, and if it is of advantage to my children, as far as I am concerned I don't care if people misjudge my wealth. That I have a large annual income is well-known, for this they can count on their fingers, but I am not broadcasting my debts. Mr. Blikman also knows in detail my wealth and my debts.

You certainly already know that our Elder Peter Oldeman has died and Martin Korteman, our Deacon, also. The widow Nykamp at _____ (illegible) died about three weeks ago, as did the wife of F. Mol at JUNNE (illegible). That Hendrik Van Straten has died you've known for quite a while, haven't you? Yes, I am still Elder, and in your estimation a poor one, although, on the face of it I'm just as good a one as others. After all, the teaching of the children is my job from time to time. And every other Sunday evening I have to read a sermon. In addition, I am the organist. We have an excellent organ in our church. My daughter Jantje also leads the congregation from time to time at the organ.

* Dominie de Moen has left for Doesburg. My family heard his farewell speech. The church could not hold half of the listeners; it was a very moving occasion. Teacher and congregation were torn apart; this was witnessed by the many tears and sobs that were seen and heard. Dr. Braunmeyer (?) will most probably take his place. I have already received a letter from him from Doesburg. He complains about the high cost of the house--275 guilders, the weight of the taxes--50 guilders, the high cost of education, etc., etc. And his salary is only 600 guilders without any extras. During 1859 Benjamin stayed with us and attended the special school in Ommen. Too bad he was not able to stay there; he worked hard and made good progress in French. My son Eli, too, is beginning to acquire a good knowledge of French, and writes a good script. I almost forgot to mention that the Hendriekje Van Munster, the widow of W. Van Munster, died, and that she has bequeathed the church 250 guilders; and after the death of her son Hendrik, a tenth of her estate--a total of 1400 guilders.

You will probably still remember Vrouw De Vries who, when you were here, was a Christian in name--superficially, and who wavered between belief and despair. Now that creature is a firmly-rooted Christian, full of belief and full of trust, against whom Satan shoots his arrow in vain because she accepts "The Word". The son of Ten Toorn is reasonably well, although he is definitely demented.

When you have read the contents of this letter, will you then burn it, so that my confidential letter will not be seen by anyone else. My wife and family are asking me to send their greetings to you and yours. Also receive my sincere and warm greetings and highest esteem.

Respectfully yours, your servant and brother,

E. Ravenshorst

(There follows a long P. S., continued in the pages of 3, 2 and one, in that order.)

P.S. After finishing this letter I went to your sister as agent of the Overijssel Fire Insurance Company, in order to ask for 42 guilders fire damage. Now she tells me for the first time that she has received a letter from you, and that she would gladly show it to me, but that she has misplaced it and couldn't put her hands on it straightaway. She told me, however, that she would be staying with you for a year, and that Mansier would make his living as a strawberry grower. Naturally, I did not say anything about your letter to me, and listened to all this in silence and then I asked her how they could hope to make their fortunes in America without any funds (empty hands. I pointed out to her that I could not see how the mill, when sold, would produce enough money to pay her debts; and that she would not have a cent for passage, much less to start something in America. In that case, she would be entirely dependent on help from her brother, and that he had enough to do to take care of himself and his family. This alarmed her somewhat, as I could tell from her face. Really! If I take into account that this is a mill with few customers, which declines day by day, and which my brother-in-law says that he does not dare to run because of the danger, as is known all over Ommen. What could you sell it for? Nor are they able to pay the insurance this year. Last year it was advanced to her, of which 15 guilders is left. Now it is very likely that because of non-payment she will lose the fire insurance on the mill, by which for many years her ownership has been protected. There's not a chance that anyone will come to her rescue, for they are deep in debt everywhere. When she married, she owed me half a pig for house rent, as well as postage in connection with her wedding costs to the Notary for setting up of her marriage settlement, etc., etc.

She owes me 118 guilders and never has said a word about paying me back. In addition, as City Treasurer, I have to advance her the land tax. Dominie Te Bokkel has also helped her many times and has never been paid back. Frankly, Mansier could go to the Transvaal Republic and that would be desirable for everybody in every way; or he could perhaps be found a job here. There is still a chance for you to avoid much trouble and misery. I really had thought that you would have written to me before you wrote to her. There's still much for you to consider, and to dissuade her, and I do--every time I see her. Vale. E.R.

Translated by Marcella and John Luides

Gift of Barbara Mergent
85-10

Ommen, 19 November 1860

The Reverend A. C. Van Raalte

AC & R
brother
-11 1/2

Your letter of the 24th October found me in good health on November 17. I hurry to answer it directly. My letters, which accompanied that of your sister, have had the same reception over there as I presumed; namely, the recommendation of Mansier to emigrate to America. Look, this is how--one way or another--it all came about. Your sister came to me and told me in strictest confidence that they planned to leave for North America in order to secure a better means of existence if the opportunity would present itself; that she had written to her brother with that purpose in mind; and she requested me to inclose a few lines which might serve in support (of that plan.) She waited for me to write a few lines. I wrote; read aloud to her and my wife what I had written, and gave the unsealed letter to her. After she had gone, my wife asked me whether you, Reverend, would really understand that my letter was not much of a recommendation. I answered her that, to you, Reverend, it would appear more dissuasive than persuasive; and, accordingly, your Reverence could easily deduce that it was a letter which she had pressured out of me (written at her insistence.) I said then, also, that it would have such an effect.

I have written the truth. Than Mansier no longer drinks is definite; however, whether this is because he has no means for it, I am unable to say; that he has stopped his public misdeeds for some time, now, as the result of his (religious) conversion, I cannot say with certainty. However, to believe all the gossip that went around earlier would be too harsh, it is true. (Nevertheless) much that is true is not very nice but very very certain. Mansier has a faithful follower of the Afgescheidenen (Separatists), a faithful church-goer, an attentive listener, even a champion; whether, however he understands the truth and his heart is in it (?) (illegible), I certainly doubt. In short, it is much better that Mansier, with all that he is, remains here, than that he should cause grief to you. And I say this all the more because I notice in your letter that he intends to settle with you or in your neighborhood. And that must never happen! He must live at a distance from you, and there follow a good occupation, whether as a miller or something else. What you wrote disturbs me: that your sister wrote to open the way. Already now, for some days, she has had your letter. This I know from the postmaster, and she has not mentioned one iota of this to me, although she lives next to us in the house of Kramer. She is open and easy whenever she needs help, but uncommunicative, obscure, enigmatic and unfathomable insofar as she knows how to protect herself.

confiden-
cially

However, perhaps in my heat I have already said too much, and for that reason I say to you now, "away with the dirty business." Certainly, I have written you all this so that you know what to do and what not to do. Now I lay down your letter before me and begin to read from the beginning. What a wonder (exclamation marks). Raafje awakened from the dead (double exclamation marks). What electric shock has struck you (question mark.) Yes, you were right to be astonished, right to raise questions. And even more--a letter forced out of me by your sister, without any value. Without scent or taste. Oh dear Dominie, I am devoured by all this business. It is not that I am insensitive. I would give 100 guilders if I could spend half a day with you and we could talk together. Oh, write me as often as you can find the time for it. The postage is no problem. Not that I have plenty of money--far from it. No, I will have to work, and work hard, up to my dying day. to be financially secure probably will never be my lot, although I have a quite

After all, for the last five or six years I have been receiving an income of 1200 guilders a year and can save some of it, for our house remains the same, our living (costs) the same, our clothing the same; but our children are growing up and require more. Moreover, I suffered a rupture last year, and since then I walk with a truss, so that I can walk short distances; but for greater distances I must ride. Often I am away from home. For some years the roads have been subject to my supervision, and during that time I have contracted for the material, so that the road from Ommen to Zwolle, from Ommen to Hardenburgh, from Ommen to Dedemsvaart annually must be provided with macadam gravel by which masses of people earn their bread. I get these materials from a piece of land that I bought, in company with my brother-in-law ter Toorn, J. Kroon and Dr. ter Horst, from the estate of Van Der Wijk--the land is 74 bunders in size (2.471 acres), for the small sum of 1620 guilders. All the land from which the stones and gravel are collected are planted to trees, and in that I invest my guilders that I save annually; and that is interest-free capital. So that I increase in possessions, but am constantly poor in money; and in that respect I am better off in a small way than you are.

Also, you know, I am certain, that Papa de Moen and I have purchased "Linderzand" twelve years ago for 720 guilders--84 bunders in size, on which we have a farm and a large woods. Still, I have never received a half-cent from it but have always had to put in additional money, so that it has cost us upwards of 3000 guilders; but it already has a present value of 8,000 guilders. I have purchased, along with Dominie Ten Bokkel, several pieces of land, some of which we still have, some of which we sold again with substantial profit. When I appraise the houses and lands at present day value, then I come to a figure of over 9,000 guilders in property, but which is still encumbered by some 4,300 guilders. So you can understand that I have made great progress; but you can also see that at no time in the future will I be able to retire.

And now we go to Lemele. Our planted lanes are still there. The oak trees are growing extremely well. The pine trees planted between the oaks hindered the growth of the oak trees, and so half the pines were cut down a few years ago and were sold for spars and firewood (rikhout?). The oak thickets on both sides were started five years ago, so that in three years' time it will be possible to sell them as good woodland timber. Everything is now cultivated, with ditches, garden houses, kitchen gardens, orchards, etc., etc.

Mr. Blikman has built a nice country house, a gardener's cottage, stables, coach house, etc. In addition, Mr. Blikman has bought all the land between the Raalte Road and the Dalmsalter Road along the canal, so that is a very nice property there. Since 1854 they have used it as their summer retreat. This year, they already came in the middle of March, and are staying through the month of November. Mr. Blikman wholeheartedly enjoys living here, but Mrs. Blikman not at all, because Lemele does not lie on the railroad and is isolated. Mr. Blikman is working very hard to get a church close to the canal. He probably will be successful in 1861. Until 1 January 1860 I was that gentleman's salaried business agent, and drew 400 guilders per year. Since that time, I served this gentleman gratis, partly because I can well do without his salary, partly because, at my age of 55, to stand in a subservient relationship with respect to Mrs. B. in domestic matters would be too irksome. Since 1854, I gave Egbert, who was the bridge tender, 100 guilders annually from my salary, so that this left me 100 guilders. In 1859 Egbert suffered blood-spitting and died, so that he laid down the supervision over the workers. In January, 1860, an organization was set up; Gerrit Krug was given supervision of the workers; a gardener was appointed; and by doing this the business was again on a solid basis.

Mr. Blikman finds it hard that I won't accept a salary, but I love him and will, out of my affection, gladly do anything for him that lies in my power. And now I have a completely different point of view. Mevrouw restrains herself from saying to me: "What a miserable position you have put us in. Why didn't you advise my husband against going into the factory with Bart? By doing what you did, you have cost us thousands (of guilders)." It is true that Mr. Blikman is having severe reverses of business. In order not to lose out with the Hamburg boat, he had to make the highest bid for the Russian expedition, with a bid of hundreds of thousands of guilders. Their values stand now at 50% because the Russian ship is a poor venture. In order to get that amount of money, Mr. Blikman has had to seriously encumber himself. With Mr. Thesin he has also suffered a considerable loss. Mr. Blikman tells me more than before of the good and bad ventures, so that Mevr. Blikman, by knowing all these things is in very fretful humor. Mr. (Blikman) has seen to it, however, that in my old age I don't need to groan under slavery; but that I can say "I don't need you." Had I sought my own profit in the past, and given up my job completely or in part, I would have been in a much better position. The death of Egbert, however, was for me a suitable time for some change. Now I keep his books, manage his financial affairs, and advise Mr. Blikman when he thinks it neccary.

Mr. Kouws (?) of Amsterdam has built a small country estate opposite Mr. Blikman, on the east side of the Raalte Road. He is cultivating raw land. As a result, Lemele is getting to be an attractive place. Mr. Blikman has pleasant walks and shady woods there. Shipping is growing busier every year. Every day tow-boats travel from Almelo to Zwolle and from Almelo to Deventer. Mr. B. has already made many attempts to connect Raalte with Lemele with a gravel road, but up to this point he has not been successful, although he has offered to make a gift of 3,000 guilders for this road, in addition to strong financial participation.

The school at Lemele is going to be removed to the canal in March by order of the City Council of the District of Ommen. At the highest point of the hill, on the south side, Mr. Blikman has built a summer house in the midst of a planting of growing trees. And from it he has a very beautiful view. Although the Blikman family is at Lemele is at Lemele from mid-March to the end of November this year, they haven't been to Ommen so far, most likely because sister Chris has made such a bad marriage. Well, dear friend, I have opened my heart to you, needless to say in strict confidence.

About my financial situation I would not wish to be so open, and if it is of advantage to my children, as far as I am concerned I don't care if people misjudge my wealth. That I have a large annual income is well-known, for this they can count on their fingers, but I am not broadcasting my debts. Mr. Blikman also knows in detail my wealth and my debts.

You certainly already know that our Elder Peter Oldeman has died and Martin Korteman, our Deacon, also. The widow Nykamp at _____ (illegible) died about three weeks ago, as did the wife of F. Mol at JUNNE (illegible). That Hendrik Van Straten has died you've known for quite a while, haven't you? Yes, I am still Elder, and in your estimation a poor one, although, on the face of it I'm just as good a one as others. After all, the teaching of the children is my job from time to time. And every other Sunday evening I have to read a sermon. In addition, I am the organist. We have an excellent organ in our church. My daughter Jantje also leads the congregation from time to time at the organ.

Dominie de Moen has left for Doesburg. My family heard his farewell speech. The church could not hold half of the listeners; it was a very moving occasion. Teacher and congregation were torn apart; this was witnessed by the many tears and sobs that were seen and heard. Dr. Braunmeyer (?) will most probably take his place. I have already received a letter from him from Doesburg. He complains about the high cost of the house--275 guilders, the weight of the taxes--50 guilders, the high cost of education, etc., etc. And his salary is only 600 guilders without any extras. During 1859 Benjamin stayed with us and attended the special school in Ommen. Too bad he was not able to stay there; he worked hard and made good progress in French. My son Eli, too, is beginning to acquire a good knowledge of French, and writes a good script. I almost forgot to mention that the Hendriekje Van Munster, the widow of W. Van Munster, died, and that she has bequeathed the church 250 guilders; and after the death of her son Hendrik, a tenth of her estate--a total of 1400 guilders.

You will probably still remember Vrouw De Vries who, when you were here, was a Christian in name--superficially, and who wavered between belief and despair. Now that creature is a firmly-rooted Christian, full of belief and full of trust, against whom Satan shoots his arrow in vain because she accepts "The Word". The son of Ten Toorn is reasonably well, although he is definitely demented.

When you have read the contents of this letter, will you then burn it, so that my confidential letter will not be seen by anyone else. My wife and family are asking me to send their greetings to you and yours. Also receive my sincere and warm greetings and highest esteem.

Respectfully yours, your servant and brother,

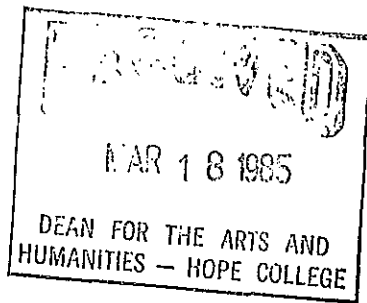
E. Ravenshorst

(There follows a long P. S., continued in the pages of 3, 2 and one, in that order.)

P.S. After finishing this letter I went to your sister as agent of the Overijsel Fire Insurance Company, in order to ask for 42 guilders fire damage. Now she tells me for the first time that she has received a letter from you, and that she would gladly show it to me, but that she has misplaced it and couldn't put her hands on it straightaway. She told me, however, that she would be staying with you for a year, and that Mansier would make his living as a strawberry grower. Naturally, I did not say anything about your letter to me, and listened to all this in silence and then I asked her how they could hope to make their fortunes in America without any funds (empty hands. I pointed out to her that I could not see how the mill, when sold, would produce enough money to pay her debts; and that she would not have a cent for passage, much less to start something in America. In that case, she would be entirely dependent on help from her brother, and that he had enough to do to take care of himself and his family. This alarmed her somewhat, as I could tell from her face. Really! If I take into account that this is a mill with few customers, which declines day by day, and which my brother-in-law says that he does not dare to run because of the danger, as is known all over Ommen. What could you sell it for? Nor are they able to pay the insurance this year. Last year it was advanced to her, of which 15 guilders is left. Now it is very likely that because of non-payment she will lose the fire insurance on the mill, by which for many years her ownership has been protected. There's not a chance that anyone will come to her rescue, for they are deep in debt everywhere. When she married, she owed me half a pig for house rent, as well as postage in connection with her wedding costs to the Notary for setting up of her marriage settlement, etc., etc.

She owes me 118 guilders and never has said a word about paying me back. In addition, as City Treasurer, I have to advance her the land tax. Dominie Te Bokkel has also helped her many times and has never been paid back. Frankly, Mansier could go to the Transvaal Republic and that would be desirable for everybody in every way; or he could perhaps be found a job here. There is still a chance for you to avoid much trouble and misery. I really had thought that you would have written to me before you wrote to her. There's still much for you to consider, and to dissuade her, and I do--every time I see her. Vale. E.R.

Translated by Marcella and John S. Lewis



303 Falcon Road
Whispering Pines
NC 28327
March 14, 1985

Dr. Elton J. Bruins 2-12020
Dean for the Arts & Humanities
Hope College
Holland, Michigan
49423

Dear Elton,

Your nice letter was waiting for me when we returned from Michigan. I do apologize for being so long in replying, but it has taken me some time to ferret out the documents of which I spoke to you.

November or I am enclosing Xerox copies of items I thought you might be interested in. The three-page letter is obviously to my great grandfather and as nearly as I can make out it is dated December 1860. It is going to be difficult to decipher - will need somebody who knows the language and has a good, strong magnifying glass. The reason for the "bleeding" on the first two pages is because these are the two sides of one sheet of quite thin paper, and the ink-pen of the writer showed through. I will be most interested in receiving a translation of this letter if you are able to obtain such.

The other documents seem to pertain to the purchase of some land by my great grandfather, dated 1847, and I will be very interested to know what land it is - it looks like it is the South half of Section 33, Township 5, North, Range 15 West, Ottawa county. I am wondering if this is the land on which he built the homestead.

This is all that I recall ever seeing among the things from my mother - I hope you will find them of interest. I am undecided what to do with the originals - whether to keep them in the family for the children, or whether to donate them to the Museum. Perhaps you will have some thoughts on this.

I am going to Florida next week for two weeks vacation with Kit, and will also see Lil on the way back as she and Andy are in Winter Garden. I will discuss it with them too.

I thank you very much for the Van Raalte Memorial edition of the Reformed Review - it is of great interest to me. Also, thanks for putting my name in to the Hope News which I have now begun to receive.

Thank you again for your inspiring and comforting words at Mother's funeral. I hope we meet again sometime and can talk more about our family history.

Best wishes,

Barbara
Barbara Nugent

April 2, 1985

Mrs. S. Perry Nugent
303 Falcon Road
Whispering Pines, N.C 28327

Dear Mrs. Nugent:

Thank you very much for your letter of March 14. It was a pleasure to hear from you. I hope that you have enjoyed your vacation in Florida.

I was pleased to receive copies of the Van Raalte material in your possession. It is historically significant material. The note of Peter Sohermerhorn cast light on Van Raalte's business dealings. The other letter is difficult to decipher but it comes from a gentleman in Oomen, Overisel, where Van Raalte was pastor of the church from 1838 to 1844. I visited the town in 1973 and took slides of several buildings. There is mention of a Mr. Blikman who is a relative of Mrs. Van Raalte. Van Raalte's first son was named Dirk Blikman Kikkert Van Raalte.

Would you be willing to loan me the use of that letter? I have a good friend, Dr. Harry Boonstra, who is proficient in Dutch. I would like to ask him to make a transcript of the letter and to translate it. In the long run, we would be pleased to receive your materials for the archives of the Netherlands Museum, but I am more concerned now simply to see the letter and to get it translated. It is a thrill to have more Van Raalte material come to light. It would be a good addition to what we already have in Holland and at Calvin College in Grand Rapids. The next time you come, I would be happy to show you the Van Raalte papers extant around here.

Thank you again for writing.

Sincerely,

Elton J. Bruins

303 Falcon Road
Whispering Pines
NC 28327
May 6, 1985

Dr. Elton J. Bruins
2-12020
Hope College
Holland, Michigan 49423

Dear Elton,

I apologize for the lengthy delay in answering your letter.

Kit and I went through some old photograph albums of my mother's, and found one picture we thought might have some interest for you. The pictures on the back had already been removed, and I removed the one at the bottom, of my Uncle Dick, to send to Jean Klomparens. But Kit thought you might like to have the picture of East 16th St., dated 1911, and so I am sending you the entire page from the album because of the date on it. I don't want this back.

I am also sending you the other material you asked for. I have been in a real quandary as to what to do about it, but Lil and Kit and I seem to have come to an agreement that it probably should be in the little museum there in Holland.

I am sending you the ^{one} ~~two~~ notes pertaining to the purchase of property - I thought ^{this} ~~these~~ ^{was} ~~were~~ particularly interesting and will be interested to know what property ~~they~~ describes.

I am also enclosing the letter written by someone in Ommen, Overisel and when Dr. Boonstra has had a chance to translate it I surely would like to get a copy of it. Hope it will be of interest to you and find its place in the museum.

I have implicit faith in the U.S.P.O., but am sending this Certified Mail, Return Receipt Requested anyway - sort of like wearing both suspenders and a belt!!

Sincerely



Barbara Nugent

May 21, 1985

Mrs. Barbara Nugent
303 Falcon Road
Whispering Pines, N. C. 28327

Dear Mrs. Nugent:

Thank you so much for your letter and packet of materials of the Van Raalte family. All of the items are of great interest to us and we are very pleased to receive them as a gift for the Museum from you.

The archivist of the Museum and his wife, Dr. and Mrs. John Luidens are now in the process of reading the Ravenshorst letter and translating it. When that is done, I shall see to it that you receive a copy of the translation. I am eager to see that myself because this letter seems to contain so much information. All three Van Raalte items are very important. The other two items relate to very early property transactions in the Kolonie. That material is very rare. The picture of East 16th Street is also interesting. The road is quite different today!

Enclosed is the form which needs your signature. It is the routine document for receiving gifts by the museum. You can return it to me and I will give it to Dr. Luidens.

I saw Lillian briefly Sunday morning. She looks well and both seemed to have had a good winter south.

With very best wishes,

Elton J. Bruins

303 Falcon Road
Whispering Pines
NC 28327

Dear Elton,

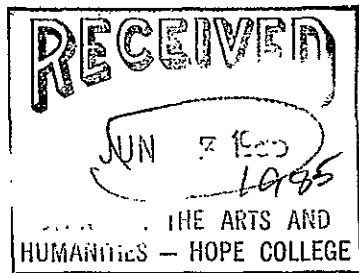
Thank you for your letter of May 21st. I'm glad to know the material arrived safely. I'm looking forward to receiving the translation of the letter.

I am enclosing the form you requested me to sign for the Museum.

Yours truly



Barbara Nugent





ELTON J. BRUINS, S.T.M., Ph.D.
The Evert J. and Hattie E. Blekkink
Professor of Religion

February 20, 1986

Mrs. Barbara Nugent
303 Falcon Road
Whispering Pines, North Carolina 28327

Dear Barbara:

At long last I can send you a copy of the Van Raalte letter you gave us last year. Dr. John Luidens, our museum archivist, and his wife spent much time on and have produced this translation. It is a very personal letter and gives us insight into family problems. The author even wanted Van Raalte to destroy the letter. But I'm glad it was saved because it adds some more details to Van Raalte's life. I appreciate very much the fact that you gave the original to the museum archives. It is a nice addition to our Van Raalte collection.


Since you have given us some materials, will you please sign the gift sheets and keep one for yourself and return one to us, please. This makes your gift official.

You may be interested in knowing that next month, work begins on the new Van Wylen Library. A fine new archival facility will be placed in it. It is my hope that the museum, college, and seminary will join their archival programs and placed their important papers in the new library when that is finished. I am working on that project with a committee now.

We have also just chosen a new director for the museum. He will continue the good work of Mr. Wichers who is completing his duties after 49 years of service.

I hope everything is well with you and your family.

Sincerely,



Elton J. Bruins

December 14, 1995

Mrs. S. Perry Nugent
303 Falcon Road
Whispering Pines
North Carolina 28327

Dear Mrs. Nugent:

It is eleven years ago yesterday I wrote you last. I assume and hope that you are still at the same address. I tried to get in touch with Lillian and Andrew for your current address but they may have left for the south already.

Since corresponding with you several years ago, I have retired from fulltime teaching and now serve as director of the A. C. Van Raalte Institute for Historical Studies. My major project is working on a biography of Dr. Van Raalte. A person working with me is translating many of his writings.

In the process of my studies, I came across the translation of a Van Raalte letter by John Luidens which is in your possession. It proves to be a very crucial letter so much so that my assistant would like to see a copy of the original. I am sure that Dr. Luidens did a good job with his translation but now that I am working on the biography it would be very helpful to see the original.

Would you be willing to make a copy of that letter, please? The letter is from E. Ravenshorst of Ommen to Van Raalte and dated November 19, 1860. I would appreciate receiving a copy of the original very much. If you happen to have other Van Raalte documents, I would also like copies of them. I will be happy to reimburse you for any costs you incur.

I hope that you are well. Have you been to Holland in recent years? I would like to meet you again and also show you my collection of copies of Van Raalte documents that I have collected which I have collected over the years. Last fall, I discovered twenty five Van Raalte letters in New Jersey, a very good find.

May you enjoy the holiday season.

Sincerely,

Elton J. Bruins

P.M. Dec. 30, 1995

4 Falcon Road
Whispering Pines, NC 28327
December 29, 1995

Dr. Elton J. Bruins
Hope College
P. O. Box 9000
Holland, Michigan
49422-9000

Dear Elton,

I begin this letter by apologizing for the delay in my answering your letter of December 14, 1995.

There is one change in our address: Our Village re-numbered every lot, so although we still live in the same house on the same street, the house now bears a new number: "4" instead of "303". You are correct that Lil and Andy had already left for Florida, and I am happy to report they had a safe trip and arrived in good time, and good health. My sister Katharine flew to Florida and spent Christmas with them. I believe she arrived just in time for the extremely unseasonal cold weather we are all experiencing.

Referring to the letter to my great-grandfather, Dr. A. C. Van Raalte, written to him by E. Ravenshorst of Ommen on November 19, 1860, I am enclosing a copy of a letter you wrote me on February 20, 1986. In the first paragraph of your letter you mention my giving the original to the museum archives. "

I am also enclosing a copy of what you refer to as a "gift sheet". I assume that "Accession number" is the Museum's method of locating material.

This gift sheet lists four items I sent to the Museum, including the Ravenshorst letter of 19 November, 1860.

I notice that on this gift sheet, dated 10 May 1985 there are two different "accession numbers" 85-9 and 85-10. I trust you will find the letter you are looking for without difficulty.

At the end of this letter I am listing the names and addresses of our children for your files, since they are direct descendents of Dr. Van Raalte, being his great-great-grandchildren. They are both interested in the history of Holland and our family, and if you ever have any particularly interesting information, I think they would appreciate hearing from you.

I'm sure you are enjoying your work as director of the A.C.V.R. Institute for Historical Studies. I wish you great success in your new undertaking, and I know that all of us as his

descendents are greatly appreciative of your work. I have no other material to send you that I know of - if I come across anything I'll let you know. Again, I apologize for taking so long to write you, and I wish you and yours all the best for the New Year.

Sincerely,

Barbara T. Nugent

Mr. Patrick Nugent
1675 N. May Street
Southern Pines, NC
28387

Mrs. Scott Cronk (Leeann)
153 Holly Springs Road
Holly Springs, NC
27540

January 15, 1996

Mrs. Barbara V. Nugent
4 Falcon Road
Whispering Pines, NC 28327

Dear Barbara:

Thank you for your letter postmarked December 30 and jogging my memory that you had already contributed the original Ravenhorst letter to Van Raalte, dated November 19, 1860. I appreciated hearing from you very much. That letter is proving to be so important in our Van Raalte research. Now that we know we have the original and I have gotten a copy of it from the Joint Archives, my researcher/translator, Ms. Elisabeth Dekker, will review it in the original. Ravenhorst's handwriting is difficult to read so we need to be very careful that we know exactly what he wrote Dominie Van Raalte.

Thank you also for giving information on your address so that I address you correctly.

I was delighted to know that your children are interested in their Van Raalte family history. I hope that you and they will visit Holland soon so that I can show you what I have collected on Van Raalte. Ms. Dekker and I are now beginning to work on the ACVR biography fulltime since the second edition of my history of Third Reformed Church was published last week. I also have a student working on gathering information on the second and third generation Van Raalte descendants.

It is good to know that Andy and Lillian got to Florida. I am concerned about Lillian's health and hope that they will have a good stay there.

About the first of March, our Institute is moving into new quarters near Hope's campus. By the end of the spring, there will be four of us working in the Institute doing research, translations, and writing. We are doing our best to keep the Van Raalte name before the public.

With sincere best wishes,

Elton J. Bruins

155 Blake Blvd., Apt. #223-C
Pinehurst. NC 28374
October 27, 2000

Mr. Elton Bruins
A. C. Van Raalte Institute
Hope College
P. O. Box 9000
Holland, MI 49422-9002

Dear Mr. Bruins,

Yesterday I mailed to you, via Parcel Post, the book my sister, Lillian Lampen said you were interested in, "Hollanders Who Built America".

I don't know who originally owned this book, but it came in to our hands almost fifty years ago. My husband, Perry, was in Chicago on business in May of 1952, and noticed it in a used book store one evening when he was strolling down State Street. Knowing that I was a descendent of A. C. Van Raalte, he purchased it for me. It has followed us around during all these years, from one location to another, in one or another of our bookcases. At one time a number of years ago, I believe we "loaned" it to Lil and Andy, who eventually returned it to us. As you can see, the cover is pretty well demolished, but I thought you would like to see it anyhow, tattered though it is.

I am glad to see it go into your hands, knowing your great interest in the history of the Van Raalte family, as well as other people whose biographies are included in this book.

Enjoy.

Sincerely,

Barbara

Barbara Van Raalte Nugent

CC: Lillian Lampen

31 October 2000

Mrs. Barbara Van Raalte Nugent
155 Blake Blvd., Apt. #223-C
Pinehurst, NC 28374

Dear Mrs. Nugent:

The book you sent us, *Hollanders in America*, arrived safely this morning. Thank you very much for your gift to the Van Raalte Institute. It is a fine addition to our growing research library. The book contains a wealth of information about many Dutch-Americans. We appreciate your generosity.

I hope that you and your husband are doing well. Upon the few occasions I am able to speak with Lillian and Andy at church, Lillian gives me an update on her family. It was my pleasure to see Kit Davis at the Van Raalte reunion in August.

Our institute is hard at work on the Van Raalte genealogy project. It has been a long, laborious and tedious project but the end result will be on high quality, I believe. Meanwhile, I continue to search for Van Raalte documents and now have copies of more than 1,300 of them in my files. You must be proud to be a descendant of such distinguished ancestors.

Thank you again for your gift.

Sincerely,

Elton J. Bruins

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