

Hope College

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Van Raalte Papers: 1870-1879

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12-12-1876

A Student at Hope College in the Preparatory School, R. H. Joldersma, Wrote a Report in the Student Publication, the *Excelsiora*, on the Death of Albertus C. Van Raalte

R. H. Joldersma

Erica D. Heeg

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December 12, 1876

[Holland, Michigan]

A student at Hope College in the Preparatory School, R. H. Joldersma, wrote a report in the student publication, *the Excelsiora*, on the death of Albertus C. Van Raalte.

The student made much of the fact that Van Raalte's death occurred on election day. When the death of VR was announced the school's classes were dismissed for the rest of the week.

Friday, the day of the funeral was beautiful. The funeral cortege was very long, seventy six carriage in addition to the formal line up of city council members, etc.

"After Dr. Crispell had closed with prayer, we left the Cemetery fully convinced that a great man had fallen." The death of VR must have made a great impression on the students. The account is hand written and consists of six pages.

Original in the archives of Hope College, the Joint Archives of Holland at Hope College.

A Solemn Day
Excelsiora

The election day, Nov. 7th 1876 was a day which created great excitement throughout our Country, because the results were considered to be of the greatest importance to the welfare of our Republic. Every Village, Town, and City was apparently aroused, and Holland was not an exception. This 7th day of Nov. last, will long be remembered by this Republic. This day will especially be long remembered by the citizens of Holland. Because, while they were performing their duty as citizens of America, by ? their voice at the polls, and, while they were in the midst of the excitement which accompanies election day, the death Angel visited their city and smote Dr. A.C. Van Raalte.

The man who had been the founder of these colonies, and who had stood by them in every trial and difficulty, from the beginning of these colonies till the day of his death. Dr. A.C. Van Raalte had preached to them the Gospel of Christ for many years. He had cheered and encouraged many a downcast soul. He had sought both their eternal and temporal welfare, with all the zeal and earnestness of a servant of Christ. He was always ready to give them counsel concerning temporal matters, and whenever they were in want, he went to the older colonies of both Holland and American people, and, sharing their wants procured such things as were necessary. And well may the day on which such an earnest Christian pastor and leader expired, be called "A solemn day." We can imagine how the wild political excitement was subdued by the report of his death. The very men, who, a few minutes before, were largely discussing some political question, stood now quietly together; deploring the loss of such a noble and worthy man. The flags which had been hoisted to the top of the spar, were no dropped half-mast.

Dr. A.C. Van Raalte was Pres. Of the Council of Hope College and its interests had always been dear to him, when his death was reported to the institution, all the classes were immediately dismissed until after his burial. Friday was appointed for his burial, and during the intervening days the church and college were draped in mourning. Great was the feeling of grief in Holland and in the surrounding places. On Friday the weather was beautiful.

Early in the forenoon people came from surrounding places, in order. The funeral sermon was delivered by Rev. R. Pieters in the Cutch, and by Dr. P. Phelps in the English language. How much he was loved and esteemed by his people, was strikingly manifest by the numerous tears shed when they took the final view of the corpse of the worthy father. After this the several bodies, which had been invited to attend the funeral, were under the direction of Ex-Mayor Cappon, formed in a procession, as follows:--

City Council and Townboard
Rev. R. Pieters
Pall bearers.
Hearse.
Carriages with Relatives and Friends.
Ministers and Elders.

Vice President of the U.S.
President and Council of Hope College.
Faculties of Hope College and Representatives of the Union School.
Students of Hope College.
Justices of the Peace.
Citizens, a foot.
Carriages.

It was the largest funeral ever witnessed in this town. Seventysix carriages besides the procession which walked followed to the Cemetery. At the Cemetery they all gathered around the open grave, when Rev. Miterwyk made a few fitting remarks. As the coffin was lowered into the grave, the youngest student in Hope College laid a wreath of evergreen upon it, "in the name of Hope College." After Dr. Crispell had closed with prayer, we left the Cemetery fully convinced that a great man had fallen. Dr. A.C. Van Raalte was born on the seventeenth day of Oct. 1811 at Wanneperveen in the Province Overijssel, Netherland, where his father was a minister of the Gospel. He received his Theological education at Leyden Neth. In 1846 he came to this county and founded this colony. His master has now released him from these earthly duties. He has gone the way of all flesh, but his kind words and noble deeds are still resounding in our ears. Long will he be remembered by those colonists for whom he had sacrificed and done so much.

Let us be thankful to God that He gave us such a man, who was able to manage the affairs of the colony, however critical and discouraging they were at times.

Let his kind advice and worthy lessons attend us through life. And, by giving heed to his lessons, and walking in his footsteps, may we all be enabled to meet him in the home of the blest.

R.H. Joldersma

Transcribed by Erica D. Heeg
December 16, 2004

copy
of
the
original
CHS

ACUR funeral 12/20/1976

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Students of Hope College

Justices of the Peace.

Citizens, a foot.

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in a manner, so rational and discouraging
to the enemy and so kind to
the friends. His independent and
unbiased attendances through life
and by giving heed to his lessons,
and walking in his footsteps, may
we all be enabled to practice them
in the home of the best.

R. H. Goldenrod.

the shore most madly, the terrible
dreadful noise, as of subterranean
-des, struck the inhabitants with
For two weeks no eruptions were
of, but about the fifteenth day they
had found some other outlet, and
with a speed of twenty miles per
hour the torrent rushed towards
sea. Death, and desolation attended
this awful occurrence; man had
ed to escape, but the animals, as
if fascinated, were swept along.
At last it dashed into the sea, which
horribly shrink back.

A new promontory of one square
mile was thus formed.
This, Mr Editor, is the way in which
the Sandwich Islands grow.

Truly
Yours
John Van de Lame

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surrounding places. On Friday the
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Early in the forenoon people came
from surrounding places, in order

to bestow the last honor upon
 beloved father deceased. Among
 sious persons who came in from
 abroad, was the Hon. T. W. Ferry
 President of the U. S. In the afternoon
 all the business places, and public
 schools in town were closed. And
 all the public and private buildings
 were draped in mourning.

It was vividly manifested, that
 the loss of such a ^{venerable} man, was felt
 by the citizens of this town, and
 all the Holland people of the West.
 Prayer was offered by Rev. H. H. H.
 of Ebenezer, in the presence of the
 relatives and friends before they left
 the house. Thence they proceeded to
 the First church, where the funeral
 sermon was to be delivered.

The church was crowded with peo-
 ple and a great number had to
 remain outside, as the church
 could not contain them all.

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