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# Letter from A. C. Van Raalte to Paulus Den Bleyker 

A. C. Van Raalte

Elisabeth Dekker
Wm. Van Vliet

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A letter of Albertus C. Van Raalte to Paulus den Bleyker of Kalamazoo about business matters. VR gives advice on how to do business in America, based on his experiences of four years since he himself came to America.

In Dutch: translated by Elisabeth Dekker, transcription by Nella Kennedy (November, 2002), and also a translation by a Wm. Van Vliet.

A copy of the original is in the collection of the Holland Historical Trust, the Joint Archives of Holland at Hope College.

Mr. P. den Bleijker<br>Holland Ottawa Mich: February 28, 1851

## Friend den Bleijker!!

It was mailing day so I gladly let something be heard from me. My trip from Allegan to home was wrought with all kinds of problems. The streams were flowing with water everywhere. A couple of miles on this side of the mill was a creek: the under-planks of the bridge had floated away and the top logs were still in order so that we did not see any danger until both horses were struggling in the water; Havenkate, himself fell in and was completely soaked. With a lot of effort we got both of them out by God's goodness without any injuries. Yet, we had to leave the wagon behind. We asked a farmer to retrieve the wagon, yet, until now we have not received anything back. The trip from there was difficult and exhausting. Even so, I received double payment when I returned home and was allowed to see my entire family healthy and well:----my wife who greets you and your wife was especially glad when I told her the news in secret of your decision to come here:----I first handled affairs with Mr . Post: He is very glad with your intentions; and believes that it is right and that it is a blessing that a Hollander should get this very important post/office/station in hand. (in possession of) He wants to serve you completely in this work; to this end we have asked his brother to give up his work in Grand Haven; he now has laid down his office there. Mr. Post shall make the plans to close the contracts and to carry the responsibility of seeing the contracts loyally executed. His loan has been determined; he will receive $\$ 400$, yet, you will pay travel expenses: at the moment he has begun to work with machinists to repair the mill from Van der Sluis. This will cost him six days; (his brother is going to travel in order to close his affairs); preparatory measures are being made to let the stone bake on the river in order to avoid transportation per wagon. The sawmill plan is determined, yet, for the (corn mill $=$ koorn molen) he wanted very much to see with you three mills in order to judge which plan would work out the best. First he will go to Grand Haven and Grand Rapids to talk with a mill-maker who actually knows that a project is to be started, also with a Mr. White, who himself owned the new machinery in his mill and who Mr. Post wants
to consult with. From there we hope to come to Kalamazoo:----Searching for land with pine trees can at first only take place when the creeks stay within their banks which maybe could be tomorrow because the water is falling very quickly. With the search for a house I have quite a lot of problems because those which are on sale have not been built well so that they cannot be lived in. Maybe renting would be better, then afterwards you can look for yourself. In any case I hope to look out for signs and guidance from above; my prayer is that God may lead me to your benefit and to your pleasure. In any case if a special opportunity arises I hope to act or inform you in time. I have understood that people purposes a new harbor bill in Congress; some are doubtful whether or not new works are attached to it; yet, others say it is an enlarged bill. This bill was approved by the house and now it was in the Senate: there it is very stormy over the slavery issue so that people feared if they would find time to watcl out for it. The approval of the harbor bill in the house already had such a big influence on those pushers/movers who had that mill plan that people went out immediately to buy a house.

It is extremely pleasant to me that in looking for wisdom from above in all our circumstances we can expect that He creates ingenuity on earth: the Lord is a helper and a protector over us who lack wisdom.

Receive our hearty greetings,

## Your loving Friend,

E

A.C. Van Raalte

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Receive our hearty greetings,

## Your loving Friend,

A.C. Van Raalte


A couple of issues in your letter have moved me to send these following lines:-------

Holland Ottawa Mich: -
28 Febr: 1851. -

Vriend den Bleijker!
Postdag zijnde zoo liet ik gaarne iets van mij hooren: Mijne reize van Allegan naar huis was aan vele moeijelijkheden onderworpen; over al waren de beeken zeer vol water: een paar mijlen aan deze zijde dier molen, was een beek: de onderleggers van die brug waren weggedreven en de boven loggen lagen nog in orde, zoodat wij er niets van gewaar werden tot de beide paarden en [sic] lagen te worstelen; Haverkate zelve viel er in en werdt doornat: met veel moeite kregen wij beide paarden er uit door Gods goedheid zonder bezeering: doch de wagen moesten wij in de loop laten: Wij bestelden bij een boer om de wagen op te halen, doch hebben tot nog toe er niets van vernomen: de reize vandaar was moeijelijk en uitputtend: evenwel ik wierd dubbel betaald toen ik mijn gansche huisgezin welvarende weder mogt ontmoeten: - Mijne vrouw die $U$ en Uwe vrouw laat groeten was inzonderheid zeer blijde met het nieuws dat ik haar in het geheim mededeelde te weten met uwe komst herwaart: - Ik heb de zaken ernstelijk met Mr. Post behandeld: Hij is zeer blijde met uw voornemen; en gelooft dat het regt is en een zegen is dat een Hollander deze gewigt=

## [2]

volle post in handen krijgt: - Hij wil U geheel en al dienen in dit werk; daartoe hebben wij Zijn broeder genoopt om Zijn bediening in de Grandhaven op te geven; die dan nu ook Zijn post nederlegt: - Mr. Post zal de plannen maken de Contracten sluiten en de verantwoordelijkheid dragen van getrouwe uitvoering der contracten: Zijn zoon zal bepaald zijn te weten Hij zal ontvangen $\$ 400$ doch reiskosten zult gij betalen: Op het oogenblik begint Hij met machinisten te werken om de molen van van der Sluis te herstellen dit zal Hem een zestal dagen kosten; (zijn broer gaat op reis om Zijne Zaken te sluiten;) de voorbereidende middelen worden gemaakt om de steen te laten bakken aan de rivier om daar door het wagen vervoer te vermijden: - Het plan der zaagmolen is bepaald doch voor de koornmolen wilde hij wel gaarne met $U$ drie molens bezien om te oordeelen welk plan het beste zouden bevallen; eerst zal hij gaan naar grandhaven en grand rapids om die molenmaker te bespreken ten einde hij wete dat er een werk aantenemen is, met wien hij alsmede met eene Heer White, die zelve die nieuwe machinerij in zijn molen bezit wil consuleren en van daar hopen wij naar Kalamazoo te koomen: - Het land voor pijnboomen zoeken kan eerst plaats vinden wanneer de beeken weer binnen hunne oevers zijn twelk misschien morgen wel zal zijn want het water valt zeer. - met de onderzoeking naar een huis vindt ik nogal moeijelijkheid, want die te koop zijn zijn niet zuiver afgetimmerd zoodat men ze moeijelijk kan betrekken: misschien was huren beter dan kondet gij daarvoor [?] zelve mede voor u uitzien. - In alle gevalle ik hoop uit te zien en te letten op de wenken en leidingen van boven; mijne bede is dat God mij leide ten uwen

## [3]

nutte en tot uw genoegen: doch in alle geval wanneer er een bijzondere gelegenheid komt hoop ik te handelen of U tijding te sturen: - Ik heb vernomen dat men eene nieuwe havenbill in het Congres heeft ingevoerd. Sommigen zijn in twijfel of er wel nieuwe werken in opgenomen zijn, doch anderen zeggen het is eene vergroote bill. Deze bill
heeft het huis goedgekeurt en nu was zij in de Senaat: daar was het nu zeer stormachtig over de slavenkwestie, zoodat men vreesde of zij wel tijd zouden vinden om er op te letten: - Die goedkeurig van de haven-bill in het Huis, had echter al zoo grooten invloed op die drukkers die dat molenplan in het hoofd hadden, dan men dadelijk uitging om een huis te koopen. -
Het is mij uiterst aangenaam dat wij in het opzien naar boven een hogere wijsheid in alle onze omstandigheden kunnen verwachten dan het scherpste vernuft op aarde; De Heere is een helper en een ontfermer over dien die wijsheid ontbreekt: Ontvang onze hartelijke groete. -

Uwen U liefhebbenden Vriend, A.C. Van Raalte
[transcript Nella keunedy, Now, 2002]

Dr C.A. Van Raalte..to Paulus den Bleyker.....

Holland, Michigan, Ottawa Co. Febrary 28, I85I.

Friend den Bleyker;
This is post-day and gives me the opportunity to let you hear from me I had a very hectic trip from Allegandue to the terrible rains of the last days the creeks were all filled. At one place the under support of the bridge was all washed away only the top of the bridge was still intact. We did not see the danger and before we realized it both of our horses went thru the bridge in the water. Mr Haverkate fell in the water and became all wet. After considerable trouble we suceeded to get the horses dry.None of them were hurt. We had to leave our wagon in the creek and ordered one of the farmers to get it out and bring it to Holand, but up to this time our wagon has nod returned. The romaining part of our journey was very tireseme but I was very happy to find all the members of my family in the best of health.

My wife is very happy with the good news I told her confidentally; Namely your coming to this place.

In considered the entire matter, with Mr Post. He is very happy that this onterprise will come in the hands of a Hollander. He looks upon this as a blessing. Mr Post will be entirely at your servica. His brother in Grahd Haven will let his work go and be at your service. Mr. Post will make the necessary plans and contracts and takes the responsibility upon him to see that the plans and the contracts will be executed in the proper manner. He will receive for this $\$ 400$. You will have to pay his traveling expenses. At present he is working with some mechanics to have the mill of Van der Sluis repaired. This will take him about six days. (He will send his brother to arrange some other business). Preparations are made to have the brick baked on the river in order to save the transportation by wagon. Plans for the saw-mill are complete. In regard to the grain-mill he will like to have you look with him at three diferent mills so that you could judge one you like the best. He will first go to Grand Haven, and then to Grand Rapids to have an interview with the builder. At the same time he wants to call on Mr. White who has some machinery in his mill. From there we expect to come to Kalamazoo.

At present we are not able to look for some land with some Pine Trees on account of the high water, but wo will be able after a few days. I find it very difficult to find a house; there are some for sale but they are not finished so that it will take some time before they can be occupied. Perhaps renting would be best-that give you an opprotunity to see the house yoursolf. It is my prayer that God may lead me in all that I am doing for you so that it all amy be beriefical to you. At any rate when the opportunity is presented I will act or will let you know.

I understand that a new bill has been presented to Congress. Some are very much in doubt whether this bill includes more than the previous The billhas been apprøved by the house of Represenatives and is at present in the hands of the senato. The Senate is at present busy with the slave question and it is very doubtfu; if there will be time to act on this bill. from above? is a great comfort to me that wo can all find time, and wisdom

The Lord is a helper and has mercey on them who lack wisdom. Your loving friend

Signed...A C.Van Raalte.

Kalamazoo County......letters of Paulus den Bleykeritranslated by Vm Van Vliet of the H.R.S.).

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Signed...A C. Van Raalte.

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