

**From Orange City to Harrison:
Dutch Settlement in Douglas County, South Dakota**
Brian W. Beltman

By 1880 the Dutch-Americans in Sioux County numbered 2,222 persons, and their settlement in 102 sections configured a wedge-like pattern with the point in section 36 of Sherman Township and the V extending northeast and northwest to include all or parts of four more townships, namely Nassau, Holland, Floyd, and West Branch.¹ This Dutch enclave exemplified a rural ethnic territory in bold relief. Only the three villages of Orange City, Alton, and Hospers existed as cluster settlements with populations of 320, 144, and 44. These provided essential support services that ran the usual gamut: hotels, post offices, a land office, a building for county government, several retail and general merchandise stores, the print shop in Orange City for *De Volksvriend* (“The Peoples Friend” published by Henry Hospers since 1874), and the depot facilities and granaries in Alton and Hospers along the tracks of the St. Paul and Sioux City Railroad that had operated since 1872. Five congregations steeped in the Dutch Calvinist tradition were organized: two in Orange City since 1871, one in Alton and another for the rural neighborhood surrounding the Sioux Center post office in 1877, and the last a Dutch Presbyterian Church in Hospers in 1878. Finally, each town had elementary school buildings, and the countryside was dotted with nearly a score of rural schoolhouses.

In short, by 1880 the Sioux County Dutch colony, initially a direct product of internal migration from Marion County, Iowa, but supplemented by immigration from The Netherlands, Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, and Minnesota, was replicating the Pella community and all of its attributes. Ten years of growth produced institutional structures, economic services, social facilities, administrative functions, and cultural achievements. However rudimentary these gestures were, the Dutch-Americans were striving for community completeness that would meet basic needs, maintain social order, ensure literacy, extend religious ideals, preserve moral authority, and transmit values to future generations.

The Dutch settlement was defined by its ethnicity, its unique geographic discreteness, and its bedrock rurality. If the church was the soul and the family the heart of the ethnocultural community, the land was its body. Even as the community

goals remained fixed, farmers established property ownership within the federal land system and produced agricultural commodities beyond subsistence to sell and ship via local railroads. While the fabric of community was being woven, the rural ethnic enclave was becoming integrated into a regional market economy: The Dutch farmers strove to make a living as well as preserve a way of life. Daily they focused preeminently on the open countryside of farmstead and field.

By 1880, 359 Dutch farmers worked nearly 43,000 acres in the five-township settlement with the average-sized farm of 120 acres reflecting a range from ten to 400 acres. Eighty-two percent of the farmers were owner-operators. The one in five who was a tenant was not necessarily “under the lion’s paw” (to use Hamlin Garland’s classic phrase), for nearly half of these were either sons or sons-in-law of nearby landowning relatives and were, in effect, owners-in-prospect. The Dutch farmers were almost exclusively filling up Holland and West Branch Townships, but in the other three townships the Dutch shared the land with other farmers (mainly German Catholics) living beyond the periphery of the enclave. Nowhere, however, had population growth resulted yet in 100 percent occupancy of the land.

The local socioeconomic structure measured by land tenure and use was not democratically equitable, but neither was it disproportionately inequitable. Just over 40 percent farmed the modal size of 80 acres; about 25 percent operated the next most common holding of 160 acres. Only about 1 out of 15 owned farms larger than 160 acres; about 10 percent owned 40-acre plots or less. These Dutch farmers practiced diversified, commercial farming that still concentrated on wheat as the main cash crop with corn as an emerging contender, followed by oats, barley, and flax. Hog production was paramount, chickens be-feathered every farmyard, and a team or two of horses, two or three milk cows, and a couple of other cattle completed the livestock menagerie common on the farmsteads. With the lean years of the 1870s thankfully behind them, the farmers were expanding operationally into the more focused Corn-belt pattern of corn-hog production and at the cusp of real prosperity with the onset of abundant rainfalls and moisture-laden snowmelts in 1880 and 1881 that promised bountiful crops. And then, in the midst of this local garden where many tillers of the soil had every reason to remain industrious and reap good harvests, a pressing attraction arose on the western horizon.

In the early 1880s promotional agencies advertising Dakota Territory, part of the Great Dakota Boom that began in 1878 and lasted ten years, convinced some of the Sioux County Dutch that good weather and fertile, vacant land in an area

about 130 miles west offered all the qualifications for a new booming agricultural frontier. Already in 1874 a miniscule Dutch settlement had begun in Bon Homme County; another emerged in Charles Mix County, the result of Albert Kuipers' colonizing. Other small Dutch clusters evolved elsewhere. But the largest enclave to blossom in Dakota Territory in the late nineteenth century took root in Douglas County, a direct offspring of the northwest Iowa concentration and another hiving response from one rapidly filling settlement to another new one, similar to the transplanting from Pella to Orange City in 1870.²

Spearheading Dutch relocation to Douglas County was Frank LeCocq, Jr., then age 23 and assistant to his father as the deputy county recorder for Sioux County. Born in Pella in 1858, he was a third-generation offspring of a family that was among the Netherlandic pioneers to Iowa. His grandfather Francois had been a merchant in Amsterdam, an associate of Henry Scholte, and a treasurer for the Society for Emigration that coordinated the transcontinental relocation to Marion County. In 1847 Francois and his family settled in Pella where they figured prominently as community residents. In 1872 his son, Frank senior, and his family had moved to Sioux County where in Orange City he became a store owner, banker, real estate investor, and county recorder. By 1881 Frank junior was aspiring to be another colonizer in the mold of Scholte, Henry Hospers, and other cultural icons of a nineteenth-century Dutch folk tradition, his ambition fueled by timely information about western land opportunities.³

The information sources were two-fold. In 1881 two Dutch travelers visited portions of Dakota Territory while on a buying trip to purchase horses seized from the Lakota (Teton Sioux) by the army and sold at a government auction at Fort Yates on the Missouri River, and they returned to Orange City with inspiring stories about vast expanses of unoccupied grasslands available for farming. A second information source was Hendrick Kuipers, son of Albert, who in 1881 made a reconnaissance of parts of Bon Homme and Charles Mix Counties in search of settlement sites for the elder Kuiper's envisioned colony for Dutch immigrants. The younger Kuipers addressed a group of people in Orange City to share his fervor about the land and prospects for settlement in Dakota.⁴

Accordingly, Frank LeCocq, Jr. soon held meetings in his father's home to promote Dakota settlement, and at his shoulder echoing his enthusiasm and providing more elderly support stood Leendert Van der Meer, age 50, and Dirk Van den Bos, age 46, brothers-in-law whose considerable experience made Frank a youthful neophyte in comparison. Leendert and Dirk were members of two close families originally from Zuid-Holland who had sailed on the *Franziska* in 1849 to relocate among the core of founding pioneers at Pella. In 1870 Leendert

and Dirk were original settlers at Orange City. Leendert's migratory experience also included two sojourns to the Pacific Northwest – one in the early 1850s and again from 1864-69. These men were seasoned trekkers, sodbusters, and land locators; neither naïve nor novices, they knew through experience and necessity a thing or two about re-settlement in the fullest meaning of the term. They knew how to survive on a frontier. In October 1881 an assembly convened in Orange City to discuss land prospects in Dakota Territory, and attendees designated Frank, Leendert and Dirk as a committee to investigate western opportunities. That fall they crossed the Big Sioux River, explored Turner, Bon Homme, Charles Mix and Douglas Counties, and reported that southeastern South Dakota “was a rolling prairie, rich with tall buffalo grass so nutritious that cattle could fatten on it [and] dotted with small lakes teeming with water fowl.”⁵ But the cautious Sioux County Dutch decided a second reconnaissance was necessary to ensure a proper and formal choice for a colonization effort.

The original committee of three as well as three more men -- Jacob Muilenburg, Teunis T. Joustra, and Arie Beukelman -- made a bold mid-winter excursion in January and February. They went to the government land office at Yankton to confer with the registrar and hired a local surveyor named Harrington from Bon Homme County. The party crossed the southern part of the Yankton Nakota reservation and moved north into Douglas County. A thoughtless mistake on their part almost caused an altercation with about 20 Nakota: While camped on reservation land they emptied their Dutch pipes and started dry grass on fire. This loss of forage for the Indians' ponies angered the Native Americans, and only lengthy persuasion by an agency interpreter prevented a hostile reaction. Despite such tense moments, the investigators concluded that the western townships (as yet unnamed) of Douglas County were suitable for a new Dutch colony, and on February 15 they reported their positive findings to expectant colonizers in Orange City.⁶

Some eager listeners were fully attuned to this kind of message in 1882. In the five-township colony in Sioux County arable land available for purchase was commanding an average price that exceeded ten dollars per acre; some of the choicest tracts were selling as high as \$25 per acre. In Dakota Territory the combined opportunities presented by the Pre-emption Law, the Homestead Act, and the Timber Culture Act stirred again the hunger for “free land.” By way of these three laws, a landed expanse of up to 480 acres was realistically within a Dakota settler's reach. The rising generation of young farmers in rural Sioux County who were not eligible for an eighty- or hundred-acre farm through patrimony, or others who preferred the opportunity for land ownership over the income-sharing

experience of tenancy, or still others who because of limited finances could not compete in the costly local land market, as well as constant newcomers from Marion County, Iowa, from Dutch enclaves in Wisconsin, Illinois, and Michigan, and from Gelderland, Friesland, and other provinces in the Netherlands -- all of these were ripe for the Dakota Boom of the 1880s.⁷

In addition, the Sioux County Dutch were regular eye-witnesses to the migratory stream into Dakota Territory; that some caught the contagion should not be not surprising. Trains carrying the participants passed through the depot town of Alton in northwest Iowa on their way west. One contemporary described the tidal flow:

It was a sight to behold. About noon on Tuesday and Wednesday, the northbound Omaha passenger train dumped an army of land seekers here for transfer to the Northwestern [in service since October 1882] which ran doubleheaders with 15 coaches to the west. Each train carried nearly 1000 passengers.⁸

In the spring of 1882 prospective settlers recorded claims at a special land office established just across the Big Sioux River from Calliope [Hawarden], Sioux County and within Dakota Territory. By April another mass migration of Dutch farm families, perhaps as many as a total of 500 persons or nearly 100 households, was underway. Families hauled their possessions by wagon to Patterson [Hull], Iowa, in northern Sioux County and loaded their stuff on the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul line that passed through Canton, Plankinton, and on west as far as Chamberlain on the Missouri River. An observer recounted the drama:

The movement assumed the proportions of an exodus. The Milwaukee Road from Patterson to Plankinton, South Dakota, became a veritable train of emigrants. Hardly sufficient cars were available. Household goods and farm tools lay in piles along the track at the station. Farm sale bills in Sioux County carried the significant preamble, "By reason of moving to Dakota." That is, part of the herds and horses and equipment was converted into money which would contribute to the construction of new homes and farmsteads.⁹

At Plankinton, local businessmen sold the pioneers lumber and other supplies prior to the last transfer from depot to Douglas County. The Dutch migrants traveled by wagon twenty-five miles southwesterly on a circuitous route to avoid bogging down in prairie wetlands left water-soaked by much winter snow-melt and heavy spring rains to the town-site of future Harrison, a destination the investigation committee had hastily marked with a "plaster lath on which they had placed an oyster can."¹⁰

A rural school teacher in Sioux County in 1882 later wrote a poignant vignette of this exodus that introduces another perspective on the leave-taking: The Van der Meer clan, their restless ambition fired by the tales of the Dakotas, were leaving, and teams went by my schoolhouse in a steady stream loaded with people bound for Hull where the train left for the new settlement....I wanted to see the Leendert Van der Meer family; for the dear old grandparents [Izaak and Maria] were living with them, and they were leaving too....I rushed outdoors,... but the wagon was already beyond calling distance. In the back seat were those two kindly old folks who had meant so much to me, and I had been too late to say goodbye....¹¹

This multi-generational family network included the fourteen members of Leendert Van der Meer's extended family that embraced his elderly parents Izaak and Maria and his son-in-law Abraham J. Brink. The families of Isaac, Gerrit, Pieter, and John Noteboom (all Van der Meers on their mother's side and the former Oregonian orphans absorbed into households of their Van der Meer uncles) as well as family in-laws Peter Eernisse and Jacob Muilenburg (both married to Van der Meer nieces) were part of this migrating kinship group, too. That network also reached back to Pella to prove the resiliency of chain migration, for the Notebooms' uncle Arie (the oldest brother of Pieter Noteboom who had died in Oregon) and his family, including at least two married children, joined in the relocation to Douglas County. Also among the entourage of 1882 was the eight-member family of Dirk Van den Bos (Leendert's brother-in-law), that included his 23-year-old son Cornelis who was married to a woman whose surname was Brinks and whose sister was married to Frank LeCocq, Jr. Other Sioux County transplants were next-generation representatives of the Klein, Mars, De Haan, Nieuwendorp, Ellerbroek and Jongewaard families, all of whom were part of the Van der Meer/Van den Bos/LeCocq kith and kin group bonded by shared experiences related to living in Pella, Oregon, and Orange City.¹²

Conventional interpretations hold that relatively wealthy and established community residents are rarely among the out-migrants in a given locality; farmers in particular who have attained sizeable land holdings and are realizing good commercial returns from agriculture would seem reluctant, or at least have minimal motivation, to move. Why disrupt a comfortable present and a potentially rewarding future for a risky venture elsewhere? Dirk Van den Bos with 400 acres and Leendert Van der Meer with 300 ranked first and second in Holland Township in Sioux County in property ownership in 1880. Beyond this, Leendert and Dirk were also prominent members within the Reformed church organizations of Orange City. Both helped found the Christian Reformed Church in 1871, and

Leendert served there as an elder. In 1872 Leendert transferred to the Reformed Church, where he was an elder as well. Leendert also served the Dutch community politically as an elected justice of the peace.¹³ All this qualified the two men as local elites in their social universe.

Why, despite their economic and community standing in thriving Sioux County, would these men relocate to Douglas County? Behavioralists might suggest they were merely “rolling stones,” or men who were never satisfied no matter what they had accomplished, or marginal members of a community where they simply were socially incorrigible or not compatible or fully accepted, or victims of anomie caused by the rootlessness of multiple migrations, or persons whose greed for more new land knew no bounds, or other reasons. Were they small-scale land speculators? Perhaps, to a degree. Certainly, however, they were not conquerors or colonizers in a martial sense, even though they displayed a developmental urge that was not easily satiated.¹⁴ None of these explanations, in my opinion, fit the history of these men. Rather, I suggest that they were “community engineers,” persons who needed to be building, or participating in the establishment of new settlements in part to re-experience the satisfaction of that building process and in part to perfect that which had already been done once or twice. They were, in fact, family farm owner-operators who wanted more acreage to provide future farms for their children at favorable terms on productive land within stable communities. With their livelihoods irrevocably linked to the soil and its utilization, these men were planting agrarian missions on the open land that entailed complete agricultural societies of farm, church, school and village and that held the promise of ethnocultural survival for themselves, their families, and the next generation or two, maybe even more.

These immigrants built their necessary shelters and broke the sod to begin improvements and fulfill legal requirements to gain full title to their land claims. By 1883, except for school sections sixteen and thirty-six in each township, all available government land in the four western townships (Joubert, Clark, Holland, and Iowa) was held by Dutch homesteaders; by 1884 over a thousand people lived in the area; and by 1885 the estimated total population of the new Dutch colony reached 3,000.¹⁵ In western Douglas County, the Dutch formed a nearly unbroken territorial domain.

Leendert Van der Meer’s son-in-law Abraham Brink made local history for the new colony in Douglas County in 1882 by being the first Dutch settler to erect a claim shanty on the featureless plains in an area no longer occupied by Native Americans. This became the nucleus of a kith and kinship neighborhood encompassing the Van der Meer/Van den Bos/LeCocq complex. It was located

along the military route from Plankinton to Fort Randall and centered on the town first called New Orange, so named after its Sioux County predecessor, but renamed Harrison in 1885. During the first year of settlement the town consisted of LeCocq's small land office and bank, Van der Meers' general store run by Peter Eernisse that included a post office, Spoelstra's blacksmith shop, Markus's boot and harness shop, and a small boarding house, built by Cornelis Van den Bos. A crude building measuring 24' x 45' built of rough boards and sod functioned as the first worship service meeting place as well as schoolroom. But people also shared the hamlet with horses, cows, and hogs that casually roamed the roadways and open plains until affordable fencing limited the loose livestock. By 1886 Harrison was a town of 200 persons with twenty-five houses, two churches, a schoolhouse, four stores, two blacksmith shops, a hotel, a wagon shop, a livery and a drugstore. Its trading zone extended outward about ten miles. Within that perimeter other crossroad hamlets – New Holland, and Grand View – also assembled in 1882 as the countryside filled up with population, thus providing convenient, necessary services to the Dutch-Americans.¹⁶ Four miles west of Harrison, William P. Van der Zalm (another Sioux County pioneer of 1870) and Jacob Markus founded another cluster settlement that gave rise to the village of New Holland. And approximately nine miles east-southeast of Harrison, Peter Ellerbroek and Peter Hospers sited a hamlet called Grand View that by the end of the year 1882 was the county seat. These initial settlements by the Iowa Dutch spurred more Dutch-Americans from other enclaves in Michigan, Illinois, and Wisconsin to pour into Dakota Territory over the next few years. Emigrants from the Netherlands also arrived, part of the out-migration from the Old Country during the 1880s that represented the third wave of nineteenth century Dutch migration to North America. Some of these were escaping from severe agricultural depression in Europe and hoped that Dakota's easily acquired land would provide welcome relief from economic despair. Indeed, in 1888 LeCocq succeeded in convincing 200 Netherlanders to transplant to Douglas County.¹⁷

The God-fearing Dutch settlers in Douglas County believed that devotion to faith was important and had to be provided for through the institutional church. The church was the people, led by laymen of conviction who felt worship of God was essential. Hence the faithful near Harrison immediately congregated in the rough meeting house, and Leendert Van der Meer, Johannes Klein, and Luitje Mars (the latter two brothers-in-law of Leendert) led the first worship services for the community of Reformed communicants, engaging once again in the familiar

practice of “preek-lezen” (the reading of a sermon by an unordained lay leader). Leen Van den Bosch served the same role for the New Holland worshippers. The pious settlers, however, wanted to have permanent church organizations with resident pastors as soon as possible. In April 1883, the New Holland Christian Reformed Church was organized, and in June the Harrison Reformed Church was formed. By mid-1884 these Dutch folk worshipped in two newly-built churches with steeples 92 and 68 feet tall rising over the treeless plains for all to see as a testimony to their faith. In addition, in July 1884, a second Christian Reformed Church, this one in Harrison, became necessary because of the influx of immigrants of that denominational affiliation. And in May 1885, a Reformed Church was started in Grand View.¹⁸

As in Michigan and Iowa, the church was fundamental to the settlement experience for the Douglas County Dutch, and social life was anchored in religious association. But where earlier Dutch colonies of the 1840s and 50s were cleric-led, those in Orange City and Harrison were lay-led. This did not make one superior to the other, nor did it mean one was more or less spiritually conscientious than the other. But it did mean that the Great Plains settlements were not so strongly identified with a managerial, ecclesiastical figure. Simply put, the church was vital to all, and robust congregations were at the center of ethnocultural activities in all places Dutch in the Midwest. As a result, church involvement was the most critical structural support for the settlers’ ethnicity, a crucial component of collective identity, a bond holding kindred spirits together with a sense of community, and a means of maintaining a moral and spiritual mooring in a sea of change.

Additional institutional developments rapidly took shape in western Douglas County. In the fall of 1882 school children met in the newly completed provisional church building, and Sophia LeCocq, sister of Frank, Jr., was the first teacher. The next year the Dutch settlers, through volunteer labor, built a new schoolhouse in Harrison, and others built one in New Holland in 1885. Teachers typically came and went frequently, but local school boards carefully screened recruits from the ethnic rank-and-file to ensure that their children received instruction compatible with communal values and Calvinist doctrine. To be sure, schools were primary instruments of acculturation for the rising generation where children mastered English and absorbed the applied civics of the cultural mainstream; but within the cloistered crucible of the mid-western Dutch colonies, schools joined the churches as institutional protectors of cultural tradition.¹⁹

Through the church and the school the new Dutch colony in Dakota Territory moved toward community completeness. Required retail and service facilities appeared within a year or two to further this developmental process.²⁰

Among these were establishments bearing familiar family names: Bordewyk's General Merchandise, Brink's Hardware, Van den Bos' Farm Implements, Vis' Drugs, Ellerbroek's Real Estate, Van Gorkum's blacksmith shop, and LeCocq's Banking, Loans and Real Estate. In addition, local political participation thrived, for Frank LeCocq, Jr, soon won a seat as county supervisor and Dutch constituents engaged in spirited contests over such divisive issues as location of the county seat. The rivalry involved loyal supporters of political cliques headed by William Van der Zalm, Peter Hospers, and LeCocq, each representing the competitive interests of the neighborhoods of New Holland, Grand View, and Harrison, respectively.

From their very earliest agricultural production, the Douglas County Dutch pioneers engaged in commercial farming and were linked to a regional market economy. During the first four years of settlement they had to haul their wagons loaded with bags of wheat or barley or drive livestock on the hoof twenty to thirty miles north to Plankinton in Aurora County to reach the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul rail line. In September 1886 they had access to a second railroad connection when the Milwaukee built an extension into Armour, a non-Dutch town to the southeast in Chester Township of Douglas County. That railhead, however, was still fifteen to twenty-five miles distant for the Dutch farmers in the western-most townships of the county. In time, the Dutch villages of Harrison, New Holland, and Grand View suffered immeasurably without crucial rail linkages. Most residents of Grand View in 1888 relocated to the more promising depot town of Armour. Although Grand View retained the status of county seat until 1894, it devolved into little more than a cluster of houses around the church and a store. Ultimately, in the summer of 1905, the Milwaukee railroad reached ten miles northwest of Armour to create a new railhead called Corsica, six miles east of Harrison. With that, Harrison underwent an overnight residential and business transferal to Corsica. The grand move of about 70 buildings in a matter of days reduced the 1905 population of Harrison from 275 to 125. That latter remnant remained loyal to the pioneer village so that it survives today, but Corsica reaped the larger benefit of sustained growth with continued Dutch in-migration. It became the most important rural service center for the enclave and the closest transportation connection to the large commercial cities of the Midwest. The Dutch farmers used all these railheads of Plankinton, Armour, and Corsica, in turn, as they became available, and shipped their fattened hogs and cattle to the principal regional market of Sioux City, Iowa and their wheat and other small grains to Minneapolis.²¹ Once again, as in Marion and Sioux Counties, the rural Dutch in Douglas County were making a living and preserving a way of life.

A Postscript

In Douglas County age finally stopped some of these Dutch migrants extraordinaire. A cemetery a half mile north of Harrison on a sea of grass was the final resting place for the Netherlandic fisherman Izaak Van der Meer and his wife Maria. Izaak, nearly 90, died in the late 1880s; Maria, age 79, died in 1890. Izaak's son Leendert lived until 1918, dying at 88; his wife Antje Van den Bos died in 1902 at 63. These four Dutch-born immigrants and many of their kinfolk had thrice pioneered in new western settlements in Marion, Sioux, and Douglas Counties during their lifetimes, excluding the brief relocation to Oregon. Through the behavioral processes inherent to settlement formation they helped transform nature's space into ethnic place, giving the land a unique cultural identity that was part of their immigrant legacy. Sharing the acclaim of permanently transplanting their culture three times over were the indefatigable Jannetje Van der Meer and Luitje Mars, Johannes Klein and Cornelia Van der Meer, and Dirk Van den Bos and his wife, all of whom were laid to rest on the plains of Douglas County.

Numerous offspring of the family network detailed in this narrative lived on into the twentieth century in Iowa and South Dakota. Indeed, in 1910 a few families from Douglas County, third and fourth generation migrants, transplanted yet another Dutch ethnic enclave centered on a Christian Reformed Church to Lakeview in Todd County, South Dakota, on newly-opened land of the Rosebud Reservation of the Brule Lakota. The founders included four brothers -- Neal, Dick, John and Frank -- all sons of Leendert Van der Meer. In 1917 a family of Noteboom cousins and others relocated as part of a continuing migration chain and enlarged this settlement.²² The cyclical pattern of cultural replication and securing property with a favorable man-land ratio for the next generation flowed unbroken into the twentieth century. The process prevailed as a new place was found. Fidelity to roots did not mean merely duplicating patterns of the past. It was always creative, ready to penetrate into the unknown, open to new challenges, and able to take on the tasks whatever they might be.

These were men [and women] who belonged in Dakota -- who lived with meaning and loved with fullness whether skies were beneficent[sic] or blazingly cruel.²³

--Henry Van der Pol

ENDNOTES

¹ The first five paragraphs of text are based on my analysis in Brian W. Beltman, "Ethnic Territoriality and the Persistence of Identity: Dutch Settlers in Northwest Iowa, 1869-1880," *The Annals of Iowa* 55, no. 20 (Spring 1996): 101-37.

² For introductions to Dutch immigration in the Dakotas, see Gerald F. De Jong, "The Coming of the Dutch to the Dakotas," *South Dakota History* (Winter 1974): 20-50; and G. Nelson Nieuwenhuis, "A History of Dutch Settlement in South Dakota to 1900" (Master's Thesis, University of South Dakota, 1940), *passim*; Henry Lucas, *Netherlanders in America: Dutch Immigration to the United States and Canada, 1789-1950* (1955; reprint, Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989), 377-89; Jacob Van Hinte, *Netherlanders in America: A Study of Emigration and Settlement in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries in the United States of America*, ed. Robert P. Swierenga (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985), 559-68; Annemieke Galema, *Frisians to America, 1880-1914: With the Baggage of the Fatherland* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University, 1997), 205-207. Kuipers, a Frisian visionary from Steggerda dedicated to assisting impoverished Dutch folk find a better life in America, recruited two hundred families, primarily from Friesland and Groningen, but only 40 families emigrated with him in April 1882. The group split up, however, on arriving in the United States and factions settled in various Dutch-American communities. Kuipers and only a few families and several single persons ultimately reached Charles Mix County that spring. By 1885 about two hundred families lived in the vicinity surrounding three towns: Platte, Overijssel, and Friesland, the latter two names reflecting the residents' provincial origins. An insightful study with larger application is Robert C. Ostergren, "European Settlement and Ethnicity Patterns on the Agricultural Frontiers of South Dakota," *South Dakota History* 13, No. 1 & 2 (Spring and Summer, 1983).

³ Lucas, *Netherlanders*, 377; "Frank Le Cocq's Douglas County, South Dakota," in Lucas, *Dutch Immigrant Memoirs and Related Writings* (1955; reprint, Grand Rapids MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), II, 319.

⁴ Henry Van der Pol, *On the Reservation Border: Hollanders in Douglas and Charles Mix Counties* (Stickney, SD, 1969), 40-41, 294-95. In November 1881, Kuipers returned to the Netherlands to report to his father and subsequently implement relocation. On Sioux horses, see Robert M. Utley, *Lance and Shield, The Life and Times of Sitting Bull* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1993), 220-46.

⁵ For more background on the Van der Meer and Van den Bos families, see Beltman, "Civil War Reverberations: Exodus and Return Among the Pella Dutch During the 1860s," in *The Dutch-American Experience: Essays in Honor of Robert P. Swierenga*, ed. Hans Krabbendam and Larry Wagenaar (Amsterdam: VU Uitgeverij, 2000), 117-42; Beltman, "Nineteenth-Century Dutch Migrants Extraordinaire on the Prairie-Plains," in *The Sesquicentennial of Dutch Immigration: 150 Years of Ethnic Heritage*, ed. Robert P. Swierenga and Larry J. Wagenaar (Holland, MI: Joint Archives of Holland and A.C. Van Raalte Institute, Hope College, 1998), 123-135. Among the 250 immigrants bound for Pella

on the *Franziska* was also the family of Jan Hospers, father of Henry who later helped lead the Dutch colonization in Sioux County in 1870. On Dakota reconnaissance, see De Jong, "Coming of the Dutch," 28-29; quote from "Frank Le Cocq's Douglas County," 318-20; Lucas, *Netherlanders*, 377-78. The winter of 1880-81 had exceptionally heavy snowfalls and the summer season witnessed ample rain. Some eastern South Dakota communities reported 11 feet of snow accumulation. The large amounts "of moisture released by spring thaw transformed sloughs and low places into temporary lakes and thoroughly saturated the subsoil, insuring bumper crops for a few years." In fact, consecutive spring flooding occurred in 1881, 82, and 83 on the James and Vermillion rivers. Herbert Schell, *History of South Dakota*, 3rd ed. (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1975), 180-81; Van der Pol, *On the Reservation Border*, 19. See more generally, Cary J. Mock, "Rainfall in the Garden of the United States Great Plains, 1870-1889," *Climate Change* 44 (2000): 173-95.

⁶ De Jong, "Coming of the Dutch," 28-29; "Frank le Cocq's Douglas County," 321-25.

⁷ Beltman, "Ethnic Territoriality," Table 3; *idem*, *Dutch Farmer in the Missouri Valley: The Life and Letters of Ulbe Eringa, 1866-1950* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 61-67; Schell, *History of South Dakota*, 170-71. Land prices in northwest Iowa continued to escalate. In 1882 Teunis Van den Hoek, originally an 1866 emigrant from Noordeloos, Zuid Holland, sold 45 acres of land in South Holland, Illinois, for \$110/acre. He moved to Sioux County, Iowa, and bought 80 acres of land two miles north of Orange City for \$25/acre. Two years later he "traded up" a second time by selling that tract for \$30.50/acre and moved to Douglas County, using his land sale profits to buy 160 acres one and a half miles from Harrison in section 28 of Holland Township at a comparatively cheap price of \$6.25/acre. The first year he and his family of six lived in a boarded stable sharing it with the cattle, but by late September 1884 they moved into their new two-story, four bedroom house that cost \$500, for which he paid cash. In 1885 he purchased another quarter section three miles to the east in section 26 for \$6.875/acre. His brother-in-law Douwe De Boer and family of eight chain-migrated that spring from Three Oaks, Michigan and bought an adjacent 160 acres. In 1893 Van den Hoek's brother Arie, after much encouragement from Teunis by way of persistent correspondence often called "bacon letters," finally relocated to Douglas County directly from Zuid Holland during the crises years of drought and depression (see text at p. 23ff). Upon arrival, moreover, Arie's wife died, leaving him a widower with seven children and financial resources that had dwindled to \$2. The four oldest children immediately secured work, thus providing for the family income. The motherless family lived with the Teunis household for almost a year and a half, but in October 1894 Arie and family moved to a rented farm of 160 acres. See Herbert J. Brinks, ed., *Dutch American Voices: Letters from the United States, 1850-1930* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995), 105-54, esp. 133-41. In addition, see generally, Gilbert Fite, *The Farmers' Frontier* (New York: Holt & Reinhart, 1966), Chapter 6 on the Dakota Boom. Note that in 1882 an outbreak of smallpox occurred among the Dutch in Sioux County, perhaps for some another cause for relocation westward.

⁸ Charles L. Dyke, *The Story of Sioux County* (Orange City, IA., 1942), 327-28; G. Nelson

Nieuwenhuis, *Siouxland: A History of Sioux County* (Orange City, IA., 1983,), Chapter 16. The Northwestern Railroad was constructed across Sioux County in 1882 and connected to the Sioux City and Sioux Falls rail line across the Big Sioux River in South Dakota just west of Hawarden by the late fall.

⁹ Quote from Nieuwenhuis, *Siouxland*, 150-151.

¹⁰ Van der Pol, *On the Reservation Border*, 88, 91-93; *Douglas County History and Centennial Observances, 1961* (Stickney, SD, nd), 24; De Jong, "Coming of the Dutch," 28-29; Lucas, *Netherlanders*, 377-78; quote from "Frank Le Cocq's Douglas County," 321.

¹¹ Dyke, *Story*, 461-62. The quote is from the reminiscence of Frederika DeLespinasse.

¹² Hester Vande Garde, *History and Genealogy of the Arie Noteboom Family, 1750-1986, and Peter Noteboom-Groeneweg, 1858-1986* (Orange City, IA: n.p., 1986), 184-88, 224, 257-58; *Douglas County History*, 24-25; Van der Pol, *On the Border*, 94.

¹³ *Federal Manuscript Agricultural Census for 1880*; Vande Garde, *ibid*.

¹⁴ As large farmers within their social universe, Van der Meer and Van den Bos were not LARGE farmers on a grand scale such as the Close brothers, members of a wealthy English family, who owned 40,000 acres of land in Plymouth County in 1880. By 1881 the Close brothers were in charge of 150,000 acres in several northwest Iowa counties. See Jacob Van der Zee, *The British in Iowa* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1922), 99-108. And unlike John Scully in Kansas or Oliver Dalrymple in the Red River Valley, they were not absentee landlords or factory farmers. See Homer E. Socolofsky, *Landlord John Scully* (Lawrence, KN.: University of Kansas Press, 1979); Fite, *The Farmers' Frontier*, 79-82, for Dalrymple, who had over 10,000 acres sown in wheat in the Red River Valley in the early 1880s, and for other factory farmers in that region. See also Patricia Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1988), *passim*.

¹⁵ Van der Pol, *On the Border*, 45, 87; "Frank Le Cocq's Douglas County," 325.

¹⁶ Van der Pol, *On the Border*, 45, 96, 99; Nieuwenhuis, "Dutch Settlement," 20-23; Lucas, *Netherlanders*, 379; De Jong, "Coming of the Dutch" 30; "Frank Le Cocq's Douglas County," 325; "Christina Plemp's Memoires," in Lucas, *Dutch Immigrant Memoirs*, II: 326. Plemp was a sister to Frank Le Cocq, Jr.

¹⁷ *Douglas County History*, 25, 149; Van der Pol, *On the Border*, 99, 102, 115-16; "Frank Le Cocq's Douglas County," 321; De Jong, "Coming of the Dutch," 30; Lucas, *Netherlanders*, 378; Swierenga, *Faith and Family: Dutch Immigration and Settlement in the United States, 1820-1920* (New York and London: Homes & Meier, 2000), 29, 37, and Table 1.1. A few Dutch transplants came from Amelia County, Virginia in the 1870s; among the Virginia exiles to Dakota Territory were the Koert and Bultje families. See Lucas, *Netherlanders*, 308-12 and Van Hinte, *Netherlanders in America*, 527-33. See also Galema, *Frisians*, 23-42, for excellent descriptions of economic conditions in six municipalities in the Frisian sea-clay region from which many immigrants to the Midwest originated during the era of the Netherlandic agricultural depression.

¹⁸ Van der Pol, *On the Border*, 32-33. 80, 102-106; Vande Garde, *Genealogy*, 189; "Frank

Le Cocq's Douglas County," 323-24; "Christina Plemp's Memoires," 328-29; *Douglas County History*, 52, 150. More generally on church history, see De Jong, *The Beginnings of the Reformed Church in the Dakotas* (unpublished paper, n.d.), Chapters 1 & 2, esp. 31-32. The Grand View Reformed Church suffered extensive tornado damage in the summer of 1892, requiring construction of a new church building.

¹⁹ "Christina Plemp's Memoires," 328-29; Van der Pol, *On the Border*, 118. For an insightful biography of a Dutch clergyman and educator in the Douglas County enclave, see D. Ivan Dykstra, "*B.D.*": *A Biography of my Father, the Late Reverend B.D. Dykstra* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982), esp. Chapters 4-6. It also contains some remarkably cogent observations about the Dutch ethnic experience on the Great Plains.

²⁰ This paragraph and the next depend on Van der Pol, *On the Border*, 82, 88, 95, 100-101, 108-111, 115-116, 118, 121-122, 126, *Douglas County History*, 149-50, 156, 158; De Jong, "Coming of the Dutch," 38-39.

²¹ For a fuller account of railroad growth, see James F. Hamburg, "Railroads and the Settlement of South Dakota During the Great Dakota Boom, 1878-1887," *South Dakota History* 5, No. 2 (Spring 1975): 80-103.

²² Vande Garde, *Genealogy*, 185-89, 102, 193, 257, 66b. Subsequent to 1908 and effective March 1, 1909, 4000 homesteads became available as "surplus land" following application of the Dawes Act to the bands of the Sioux Nation. See Paula M. Nelson, *After the West Was Won: Homesteaders and Town Builders in Western South Dakota, 1900-1917* (Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Press, 1986), 18. Note that Leendert Van der Meer remarried in December 1904 to Mrs. William K. Scholten of Alton, Iowa, and with that returned to live in Sioux County. During his final years he served as an elder in the Alton Reformed Church. Family records affirm that he was buried next to his first wife Antje and near his father Izaak in Douglas County, South Dakota. At his death, nine of his ten children were living, and he had 40 grandchildren and 21 great-grandchildren. Correspondence of Earl William Kennedy to author, July 17, 1997, citing obituary information dated January 9, 1919. On Dutch settlement in Todd County, see also Beltman, *Dutch Farmer in the Missouri Valley*, 191-93.

²³ Van der Pol, *On the Border*, 74.