

## A DOCUMENT RELATING TO DUTCH IMMIGRATION TO IOWA IN 1846

Of the important documents for the study of Dutch immigration to Iowa, few can be more interesting than the rules which were adopted at Utrecht on December 25, 1846, by those Hollanders who had determined to seek new homes in the United States, though students of this movement have made little, if any, use of this document. Indeed, it is very doubtful whether any of the later writers on the subject have ever seen it. K. Van Stigt mentions the formation of an association in general terms,<sup>1</sup> but appears to have derived practically all of his information from Scholte's organ *The Reformation*.<sup>2</sup> John Nollen enumerates substantially the same facts: on December 25, 1846, there was a meeting at Utrecht at which all particulars concerning the journey were decided; a sort of constitution was drawn up; the time for departure was set for the close of March or the first part of April; and, finally, an executive committee was named.<sup>3</sup> J. A. Wormser, biographer of Scholte, does not mention the rules in any way.<sup>4</sup> Nor does Jacob Van der Zee make use of them in his excellent work *The Hollanders in Iowa* in which they would assuredly have been dealt with had they been known.<sup>5</sup>

That these rules should so long have remained unknown is indeed quite remarkable. Undoubtedly a large number

<sup>1</sup> Van Stigt's *Geschiedenis van Pella, Iowa, en Omgeving*, Pt. I, pp. 74, 75, 85, 86.

<sup>2</sup> *De Reformatie* (A periodical of the Christian Reformed Church), Third Series, Pts. 2 and 3, published by H. P. Scholte in 1846 and 1847 at Amsterdam.

<sup>3</sup> Nollen's *De Afscheiding: Een Gedenkschrift*, p. 45.

<sup>4</sup> Wormser's "Door Kwaad Gerucht en Goed Gerucht." *Het Leven van Hendrik Peter Scholte in Een Schat in Aarden Vaten*, First Series, Pt. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Van der Zee's *The Hollanders of Iowa*, pp. 45, 46.

of copies were printed and distributed among the emigrating Hollanders, and many must have been brought to Iowa, for the association continued to play a part in the early history of Pella. The existence of the printed rules, however, was not known to the writer even after half a dozen years spent in collecting the documents dealing with emigration from Holland to the United States and other countries.<sup>6</sup> Even the documentary material which may to-day be consulted in the old Scholte home at Pella does not include a copy. To my delight, therefore, I found one quite accidentally when, in the rather idle hope of finding something that might be of importance, I was looking over an unpromising mass of miscellaneous books and pamphlets exposed for sale on the market square, the Neude, of Utrecht. The pamphlet is not mentioned in the catalogue of the vast collection of the Royal Library at The Hague. It is in octavo and has fourteen pages. It has no cover and appears never to have had one. No place or date are given on the title page which merely has the words "Netherlandish Association for Emigration to the United States of North America".<sup>7</sup> A copy of the translation of this unique document is printed below.

HENRY STEPHEN LUCAS

STATE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON  
SEATTLE WASHINGTON

<sup>6</sup> The rules of the association formed at Arnhem were never put into operation and were not printed until 1910.—Brummelkamp's *Levensbeschrijving van Wijlen Professor A. Brummelkamp, Hoogleraar aan de Theologische School te Kampen*, pp. 205-209. An English translation was recently printed in Lucas's *The Beginnings of Dutch Immigration to Western Michigan, 1846*, in *Michigan History Magazine*, Vol. VI. The Zeelanders formed a similar association and published the rules.—*Reglement der Zeeuwsche Vereeniging ter Verhuizing naar de Vereenigde Staten van Noord-Amerika (Met een Woor aan den Lezer)*. Te Goes bij de Wed. C. W. de Jonge, 1847.

<sup>7</sup> "Nederlandsche Vereeniging ter Verhuizing naar de Vereenigde Staten van Noord-Amerika."

NETHERLANDISH ASSOCIATION FOR EMIGRATION TO  
THE UNITED STATES OF NORTH AMERICA

## ARTICLE 1

A Netherlandish Association for emigration to the United States of North America is formed. From the membership of this Association a Board of Control is chosen.

## ARTICLE 2

The control of the Association is entrusted to a President, supported by a Secretary, a Vice-President and four Advisors. In case of a tie the President shall have a deciding vote.

## ARTICLE 3

Each person who wishes to emigrate shall announce his intention to the Board and indicate the amount of land desired by each individual or group of individuals collectively, or the amount of money which they may have set aside for that purpose. Also the number who are to be transported at the expense of each participant. In like manner must those who wish to accompany the Association at their own expense without intending to purchase land announce their intention.

## ARTICLE 4

In no case shall the Board of Control accept anyone as a participant of whose moral conduct or public life any suspicions of improper conduct can be rightfully entertained. Nor may any members of the Romish persuasion be admitted to membership in the Association.

## ARTICLE 5

The Board of Control shall enter into negotiations with shippers in order that the most pleasant and advantageous passage and further journey through North America may be prepared.

## ARTICLE 6

As all members of the Association cannot be transported on one ship, the Board shall see to it that the members of the Board shall be distributed among the various ships and a supervisor for the decks of each ship shall be named from among the passengers. In like manner shall the Board make substitutions in case of sickness.

## ARTICLE 7

Before departure the Board of Control shall, in consultation with the captain, make arrangements for provisions and for daily duties on the journey in connection with keeping the decks clean. The passengers ought to submit to these rules. Each member of the Association binds himself to render all possible services according to his abilities at the indication of the Board.

## ARTICLE 8

In the month of January shall be paid into the hands of the Board of Control the whole of the expenses covering the journey to and in the United States except the provisions which are left to the care of the participants. The expenses of the journey are for the time being estimated at eighty guilders per head, the full grown and children taken together; for the full grown not accompanied by children under twelve, at a hundred guilders.

## ARTICLE 9

There will most likely be opportunity of a more comfortable passage overseas in case one hundred shall indicate their desire for such passage. In that case the expenses of the passage and provisions will amount to a hundred twenty guilders for the full grown and children in proportion. Besides this there is also opportunity for place in the cabins. This is also true of the journey through America.

## ARTICLE 10

The total amount of the purchase price of the land must be deposited with the Board of Control before departure and by the middle of March at the latest. The price of the land is provisionally estimated at two dollars (five guilders) per acre (practically equivalent to a half Rijnland *morgen*).

## ARTICLE 11

After the journey and the purchase and the division of the land have been accomplished, the Board of Control shall render account and be responsible for its supervision in this matter. In case there is a cash balance, it shall be allocated to each according to his share; in the case of a deficit each shall pay his due portion.

## ARTICLE 12

In case the Board of Control deems it advisable one or two mem-

bers may be appointed either from the Board or from the membership of the Association to take passage at Havre as soon as the passage of the Association has been arranged, in order to be in the port of landing some time in advance to provide for inland transportation.

## ARTICLE 13

The party which shall be appointed to choose and buy the whole area of land shall, as soon as possible upon arrival in the United States, journey to the region which has been proposed in order to choose the lands and purchase them so that the immigrants can as they arrive receive assignment for their homes.

## ARTICLE 14

The area of the land purchased shall immediately be divided into large divisions of four or more sections, in accordance as the participants of the Association shall have declared their desire to live together. As far as possible in the middle of these divisions (which may be regarded as separate subdivisions), a quarter of a section shall be set apart, which shall be taken from the adjoining sections. On this ground which shall constitute the village proper there shall be erected at the common expense, *a.* a schoolhouse and houses for the teachers in order that after the arrival the children may soon be kept busy, and *b.* a house for the doctor in order that he may at once follow his calling.

## ARTICLE 15

The Board of Control shall have the right to sell parts of this ground to individual parties who do not wish to buy land for farming, but who wish to follow a calling or carry on some business or trade or who for any other reason may desire to live in the midst of the village. The total amount of money from the sale of such lands shall be used to meet the common expenses.

## ARTICLE 16

Cabins can be built upon this ground to serve as homes for the members of the Association until they shall build houses upon their own lands. For the use of these a moderate rent shall be paid. The cabins shall remain the property of the community and final disposal shall later be made of them.

## ARTICLE 17

The Board of Control provides for a suitable school and teachers for the needs of the Association and also for the necessary school supplies. It shall also regulate either before or after arrival the rules and the terms upon which the children can be received. The school shall be supported by the Association in so far as the expenses shall not be met by the tuition money. Each party shall contribute for this purpose in proportion to his share in the general expenses. For the rest each party shall be wholly free in respect to the education of his children.

## ARTICLE 18

The Board of Control shall regulate whatever may be deemed necessary for the Association in respect to medical service.

## ARTICLE 19

The Board of Control shall determine immediately after the division of the lands the main roads to the limits of the village and shall see to it that each party shall have access from his lands to the main roads. Parties owning lands along any of the roads are obliged to surrender mutually one half of the ground necessary for the road. This shall also be the rule in connection with the digging of canals or ditches for the common needs. In the construction of roads or canals no one shall unduly burden his neighbors.

## ARTICLE 20

The Board of Control as such shall not concern itself in any case with regulations concerning religious services or other ecclesiastical matters. No expenses incurred in this matter can be presented to the Association for payment. This matter is left entirely to those who associate themselves with an ecclesiastical organization.

## ARTICLE 21

The members of the Board of Control shall as such receive no compensation. When, however, they shall have incurred expenses through travel or special duties for the needs of the Association, they shall be reimbursed. The Board shall be allowed to compensate a Secretary. After settlement shall have been made, decision may be reached to give the President an annual grant because of his more persistent activities for the needs of the Association.

## ARTICLE 22

The Board of Control shall call at least one meeting of those interested before the departure. Report shall then be submitted regarding the condition of the Association, the personnel and the quantity of land which can be bought. It shall also render a report concerning information received in the meantime. Furthermore, the Board of Control shall after fuller investigation of the laws of the United States present a plan of government for the Association after its settlement in North America in order that they may as soon as they are established choose a regular local government.

## ARTICLE 23

If anything is to be done or prepared in the general interest before the departure the Board of Control will likewise call together those that are interested and inform them of the matter under proposal. The Board shall on that occasion make the necessary resolutions and when two thirds of the members approve the proposition, it shall be binding upon all.

## ARTICLE 24

If any member of the Association shall have any proposal which he deems advantageous to the Association he shall inform the President to that effect in writing who will present the matter before the Board. If the Board approves the proposal by a majority of votes, the same shall be further discussed in the manner described in the previous article. In case the Board declines such a proposal it will notify the member to that effect and give the reasons therefor.

## ARTICLE 25

Those who accompany the Association entirely at the expense of others shall have no deciding vote. Furthermore, to have a deciding vote it is required that the member be married or a widower, or have attained the age of twenty years.

## ARTICLE 26

The members of the Association bind themselves not to sell, rent or surrender, their real properties in the community to any one outside the Association without giving previous notice to the Board. This Board shall then have the right of priority and shall have a period of forty-eight hours to take action. The purchaser of such

land shall incur the same obligations as the original holder. The Board shall have the right to remove this obligation after an investigation of the people who wish to come in from the outside.

## ARTICLE 27

The Board of Control shall have the power to propose to the Association to borrow money at interest in order to execute works of general interest and advantage. Whenever such a proposal shall have been accepted in a meeting of the members of the Association in the ordinary manner, the same shall have binding force.

## ARTICLE 28

The Board of Control shall have the liberty to accept contributions for the needs of the Association from those who are interested in the success of the emigration, and an account of such sums shall be kept and report rendered. The Board will also see to it that proper account shall be kept of all receipts and expenditures so that in the final account and responsibility it can be proved to the satisfaction of each that the business has been conducted according to the rules agreed upon.

## ARTICLE 29

The Board shall make sure that a book be kept in which a record of births and marriages of the members of the Association shall be entered. For this purpose each person shall for himself or for his family send the necessary notices to the President of the Board as soon as possible. This regulation is deemed necessary in order to avoid complications in the future.

## ARTICLE 30

Each member shall pay for himself and for his family as admission fee one guilder per caput for the purpose of paying incidental expenses. The same shall be demanded from all those who will join the Association later. Proof of membership in the Association, signed by the President, shall then be given.

## ARTICLE 31

In case anyone shall change his intentions after ships have been chartered for the passage to North America he shall be entitled to receive whatever he shall have deposited for the purchase of land. Likewise he shall receive such part of the money deposited for the passage as shall not be needed for the voyage. This shall, however,



only be repaid when the places thus made vacant are filled by new members of the Association. In this case ten percent of the passage money received shall be deducted for the needs of the Association.

## ARTICLE 32

In case anyone should find himself in circumstances under which, according to the judgment of the Board, it is impossible for him to accompany the Association, he shall in case he has need of it, not be bound by the terms of the foregoing article.

## ARTICLE 33

In case proofs of immoral or irregular public conduct of any member of the Association become known before departure such member shall have the money which he may have deposited returned to him and his connection with the Association ended.

## ARTICLE 34

The President of the Association shall have executive power and all documents in which the Association is a party shall be signed by him and the Secretary. The latter's signature shall be evidence of the fact that the document issued is described in the minutes book of the Association. In this book the business of the meetings shall also be entered, and shall be signed by the President and the Secretary after the minutes are approved by the Board.

## ARTICLE 35

These rules shall be printed and a copy presented to each subscriber and it shall be signed, as proof of genuineness, by the President and the Secretary. Furthermore, each of the subscribers shall with his own hand sign this agreement for himself and his family as proof that he will be guided by the rules of the Association, and insofar as he may be able, further the interests of the Association.

THUS DETERMINED IN A MEETING OF THE MEMBERS  
HELD AT UTRECHT, 25 DECEMBER, 1846.

H. P. SCHOLTE, President.

I. OVERKAMP, Secretary.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> These names are autograph signatures.