

Of the eight hundred emigrants who left Holland, twenty lost their lives upon the Atlantic, and four are said to have died on the journey from Baltimore. At St. Louis, however, the number of deaths was larger. The unusual experiences of the trip, the cramped quarters at St. Louis, the extraordinary heat in that rapidly growing city, the irregular and careless consumption of food and drink, and the disregard by some of Dutch cleanliness caused illness and consequent death.

This history would be incomplete if we failed to mention the hearty and spontaneous hospitality and helpfulness that marked the attitude of the people of America toward our colonists. Everywhere among the Christian people of America Mr. Scholte discovered a hearty interest in the emigration from Holland. "I believe," he wrote, "that in general they cherish too lofty an opinion of us. In their conversation and newspapers we are represented as resembling the God-fearing Pilgrims who first settled in the United States. They regard our coming to this land of civil and religious liberty as one of God's blessings on their country. * * * Oftentimes a sense of shame and embarrassment comes over me when I stop to look at myself and our association, and then consider the high thoughts which people entertain of us, and see that, while the Germans who come here are less highly esteemed, the Hollanders are held in honor and are often placed on an equality with Americans."

And Scholte could testify that the Hollanders received favorable treatment at the hands not only of individual Christians and Christian churches, but also of state officials and state assemblies. "For," he said, "I myself had an experience of this sort at Albany, where the legislature had just convened and I wished to look on for a moment. Recognized by one of the members I was compelled to take a seat in the midst of them. How different from Holland! In the land of our birth branded and treated as a despised congregation, misunderstood by everyone, shoved aside, trampled upon and bruised; in the land of strangers and above all in its most respectable part, honored and treated as a costly gift of God to improve their country."

At St. Louis, where the Americans did not understand the Dutch language and had scarcely thought of Hollanders before, the immigrants were just as cordially welcomed as in the east; and as long as they remained in the city, a Presbyterian congregation allowed them the free use of a spacious basement room for regular Sunday services, providing heat when necessary, and even helping the needy sick. The Hollanders were also permitted to take advantage of instruction in English afforded by the Presbyterian Sunday School.

The causes which led up to the choice of Lake Prairie township, as the location for the colony, have already been given; and also the trip from St. Louis to Keokuk and from there to Pella. The limited scope of this book does not permit us to dwell longer on this phase of the history.

STRAW TOWN OR STROOIEN STAD

The first and perhaps the hardest of all to solve was the housing problem. Although Rev. Scholte had contracted for the construction of a number of houses or cabins, which were to be finished before the people arrived, as has already been mentioned, when the several hundred people arrived they were met by the disappointing fact that only one large, shedlike building had been put up. While many of the families moved into the cabins recently occupied by those who had sold their claims and moved away, the greater number were compelled to build straw huts or dugouts roofed over with the long slough-grass that grew here in abundance.