TULIP TIME, U. S. A.:
STAGING MEMORY, IDENTITY AND ETHNICITY
IN DUTCH-AMERICAN COMMUNITY FESTIVALS

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
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Throughout the United States, thousands of festivals, like St. Patrick’s Day in New York City or the Greek Festival and Oktoberfest in Columbus, annually celebrate the ethnic heritages, values, and identities of the communities that stage them. Combining elements of ethnic pride, nostalgia, sentimentality, cultural memory, religious values, political positions, economic motive, and the spirit of celebration, these festivals are well-organized performances that promote a community’s special identity and heritage. At the same time, these festivals usually reach out to the larger community in an attempt to place the ethnic community within the American fabric.

These festivals have a complex history tied to the “melting pot” history of America. Since the twentieth century many communities and ethnic groups have struggled to hold onto or reclaim a past that gradually slips away. Ethnic heritage festivals are one prevalent way to maintain this receding past. And yet such
festivals can serve radically different aims, socially and politically. In this
dissertation I will investigate how these festivals are presented and why they are
significant for both participants and spectators. I wish to determine what such
festivals do and mean. I will examine five Dutch American festivals, three of
which are among the oldest ethnic heritage festivals in the United States.

My approach to this topic is interdisciplinary. Drawing upon research
methods in several disciplines--theatre history, performance studies, theatre
semiotics, ethnography and anthropology, folklore, and American history--I will
describe and analyze how the social, political, and ethical values of the
communities get expressed (performed, acted out, represented, costumed and
displayed) in these various festivals. Instead of relying upon the familiar ideas of
“the Midwest,” “rural America,” “conservative America,” etc. that are often used
in political commentary today, I want to show just how complex and often
contradictory the festivals are in the ways they represent each community. At the
same time, by placing these community festivals in the context of American
history, I also intend to show how and why each festival serves as a microcosm of
particular cultural, social, and political developments in modern America.
Dedicated to the memory of Louise Schoone-Jongen
1909-2005
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vita</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapters:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Community Celebration,</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commemoration and Festivity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Community-Oriented Festivals</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Ethnically-Oriented Festivals</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Immigration and Settlement Patterns of the Dutch in the United</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>States: A Brief Overview</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Antecedents</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.1 New Netherland</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.2 From 1664-1847</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 The New Immigration</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.1 Economic and Religious Backdrop</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.1.1 Economic Factors</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.1.2 Religious Factors</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.2 The Afscheiding of 1834</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.3 Towards Emigration</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.4 Dutch Emigration/Immigration after 1850</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.5 Immigration vs. Settlement</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 The Dutch-American Community</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Dutch Ethnic Heritage Celebrations: Antecedents, Emergence,</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And Proliferation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Antecedents</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 The Emergence of Holland, Pella, and Orange City</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.1 Tulip Time in Holland, Michigan</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.2 Tulip Time in Pella, Iowa</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.3 Tulip Festival In Orange City, Iowa</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.4 Hollandmania</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In July of 1984, I was five years old (going on six). Like most other five-year-old residents of Edgerton, Minnesota, the heat of June meant one thing: the annual Dutch Festival would be coming soon. Parades, food stands, unusual numbers of out-of-town visitors, two days of fun, and rides: lots of midway rides. For a five-year-old, it was basically a dream come true. Along with my best friends, Kris Kooiman and Brett Lamsma, I had already been entering into heated speculation about which rides would come to town this year; we agreed that, being six (or almost six, in my case), we would definitely be old enough this year to go on some of the “big” rides. I had my sights fixed on the ferris wheel.

Meanwhile, my parents were occasionally disappearing across the street to mysterious-sounding “section meetings,” where most of the neighborhood adults were gathering to decide what our float theme would be for the parade. The Fourth of July passed, and then the meetings grew more frequent. Most all of the residents from the area near the intersection of Elizabeth Street and Mechanic Street began descending on John and Darlene Ruiter’s garage, hammers and drills
in hand. As the neighborhood children played in the back yard, our parents set about converting a flatbed trailer, ordinarily used for hauling bails of hay, into a fantastic, magical float.

What would the float be? Who would get to ride it? Would it involve candy? These were the questions which occupied my five-year-old mind as the Festival drew nearer. To my delight and surprise, the answer to the second question proved to be: me, as well as my father, almost two-year-old brother Brendan, and Suzie Ruiter, my favorite babysitter (daughter of John and Darlene, and a student of both my parents at Southwest Christian High School). Our section’s float would not involve candy, but it would involve Dutch costumes. All of the costumes were being lent to us from cousins, aunts, and uncles from Orange City, Iowa. My mom, dad, brother and I would be wearing costumes that belonged to my aunt Connie, uncle Bruce, and cousins Ryan and Ross; Suzie would be wearing the Friesland costume my aunt Margaret had worn as part of the 1978 Orange City Tulip Festival Court. A photograph of my family in costume reveals that my mom wore a costume from the village of Volendam; my father wore a costume the provenance of which I cannot identify; my brother refused to wear his cap, and so his costume is unidentifiable; and I wore a costume that combined a Volendam shirt and pants with a cap from the village of Urk. I was particularly proud of my blue wooden shoes.
For the Festival, all of the Edgerton neighborhoods were building similar floats. The parade theme, to which all floats had to conform, was “Anything Dutch.” Our section contributed a float entitled “MET BLIJDSCHAP EN LIEFDE GAAT ALLES WEL,” which, helpfully, was translated as “WITH LOVE AND JOY ALL GOES WELL.” The float itself was decorated along the sides and back with a blue-and-white color scheme. The floor of the trailer was painted green; a bridge crossed a painted stream; a model windmill stood at the edge of the bridge; a number of fake tulips were arranged all over the float; and a backdrop with painted trapgevel-style buildings stood behind a bench, on which Suzie sat, Brendan in her lap, my father standing (or crouching, depending on the picture) off to the side. I sat on a piece of plastic so that the “grass” didn’t get onto my costume, although a photograph reveals that during at least one of the parades I had restationed myself atop the bridge. I can recall our float getting pulled down the route both Dutch Festival evenings and looking out into the crowd, several rows deep on each side of the street, and seeing a variety of audience members wearing Dutch costumes of one sort or another, with various degrees of detail.

Apart from a few isolated memories of rides and individual floats, this is my earliest sustained memory of the Edgerton Dutch Festival. Accordingly, I have an image of the Dutch Festival incorporating many Dutch elements into it: costumes, tulips, wooden shoes, windmills, architectural depictions, etc. The
1984 Dutch Festival, however, was an exception rather than a rule: few Dutch Festivals since that time have done much in the way of keeping “Dutch” elements (costumes, food, dances, etc.) in the Festival.

Orange City, Iowa’s Tulip Festival, held each year in May, presents a markedly different picture. Since the early 1970s at least, Orange City has gone out of its way to introduce more and more “Dutch” elements into the May festival. Costumes from many different Dutch towns and villages, most of them painstakingly researched by local seamstresses, have been in evidence for many years. Orange City is only an hour and a half to the south of Edgerton, and much of my mother’s family lives in and around Orange City, so on several occasions my family attended the Orange City Tulip Festival. On one such occasion, I remember watching a group of dancers performing a folk dance. Many of the dancers were dressed in Volendam costumes, but at least one was dressed in a very different-looking costume, which I now know to have been a costume from the village of Marken. I remember asking my dad why that one dancer wasn’t wearing a Dutch costume; he responded that that was a different kind of Dutch costume, but it was just as Dutch as the others. This would have been in the mid-1980s. When I returned to Orange City’s Tulip Festival in 2006, an even greater variety of costumes were worn by folk dancers and audience members. If Edgerton’s Dutch Festival has little that is “Dutch” about it, Orange City’s Tulip Festival tries to exhibit many different examples of Dutch dances, songs, and costumes.
Across the United States, there are literally thousands of ethnic and community festivals similar to the two described above. They are festivals which celebrate or commemorate the heritage of the early settlers of a particular town, or the ancestry of the majority of current residents. Some are massive, such as St. Patrick’s Day in New York; some are small, such as Belgian Days in Ghent, Minnesota. But the size of the festival is less important for these communities than their determination to hold onto, celebrate, and profit from a specific version of ethnic identity--however vague and inaccurate--even though the contemporary organizers may be separated by generations from the original settlers of a particular community. In 1987, Angus Gillespie reported that there were over three thousand festivals organized across the United States in the late 1980s, many of them celebrating a community’s ethnic background (152-161). Lizette Graden says the 1997 the Swedish-American Handbook identifies “several hundred events labeled Swedish” (3). According to Stephen Hoelscher, as of 1987 Americans staged over 3,000 folk festivals, “many of which celebrated ethnic culture” (13). A vast number of these events are staged in the Upper Midwest: a map in Hoelscher’s Heritage on Stage, using data compiled in 1991, records almost 300 ethnically-themed festivals in the Upper Midwest/Great Lakes regions (North and South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio--15).
Despite the prevalence of such events, there has been surprisingly little scholarly interest in them, especially those celebrating European ethnicities, although a handful of scholars in several fields have addressed ethnic pride festivals on a limited scale. Thus, in this study I will examine five community festivals that celebrate Dutch heritage in the United States. I want to determine what these festivals actually mean and do, both in the past and in the present. In approaching the sociocultural significance of these festivals, this study examines the performative elements of these festivals, such as parades, folk dances, costumes, pageants, historical reenactments, and demonstrations.

I am focusing on Dutch festivals for two reasons. First, they represent a limited sample, as there are only about twenty-five of them, as opposed to the hundreds of German, Irish, or Scandinavian festivals. Yet within this sample these festivals are quite diverse in terms of size, their emphasis on heritage, and their purpose. To capture this diversity, I will investigate five festivals: a) Holland, Michigan’s Tulip Time, a huge festival with many types of events; b) Pella, Iowa’s Tulip Time, much like Holland’s, though on a smaller scale; c) Orange City, Iowa’s Tulip Time, a still smaller, though important regional, festival; d) Edgerton, Minnesota’s Dutch Festival, a small festival seemingly far less concerned than Holland, Pella, or Orange City with accuracy in costumes or exhibiting its heritage; and e) Fulton, Illinois’s Dutch Days Festival, a festival with a more recent, and markedly different, origin from the other four.
I also want to focus specifically on Dutch heritage celebrations because three of them--Holland’s Tulip Time Festival, Pella’s Tulip Time Festival, and Orange City’s Tulip Festival--are among the earliest examples of towns capitalizing on ethnic heritage to draw attention and tourists to themselves. These three festivals were started between 1929 and 1936, a decade or more before similar festivals celebrating other ethnicities began to emerge (Danielson, “St. Lucia” 188). Thus, these Dutch festivals are interesting as the precursors to, even prototypes for, subsequent ethnic pride festivals, whatever the ethnicity celebrated.

The fact that the Tulip festivals in Holland, Pella, and Orange City were among the first outward-directed annual celebrations of ethnic heritage make the dearth of scholarship on these events unfortunate. To date, Suzanne Sinke and Deborah Che have written published articles about Holland’s Tulip Time, and Lisa Jaarsma Zylstra recently completed a master’s thesis that addressed Pella’s Tulip Time, but only up to roughly 1947. Janet Sjaarda Sheeres has also written a conference paper overview of Dutch Festivals in the United States (“Klompendancing Through America”),¹ and Ellen Van’t Hof has delivered two conference presentations on the wooden shoe klompen dances performed during Holland, Michigan’s Tulip Time (“The Netherlands/West Michigan Connection;” “The Klompendance of Holland, Michigan”).

¹ Sheeres’s paper was later published in Origins 18.2. Origins is a publication of Calvin College’s Hekman Archives dedicated to “the gathering, organization, and study of historical materials produced by the day-to-day activities of the Christian Reformed Church, its institutions, communities and people” (“Origins”).

While literature on celebrations and articulations of ethnicity--performances of ethnicity, if you will--within celebrations or festivals might be limited, there is no shortage of literature on ethnicity and ethnic groups in the
United States. Such studies may deal with how ethnicity has been preserved
cross several generations, the different ways in which succeeding generations
have related to their ethnicity, or the ways in which individuals claim, or are
claimed by, particular ethnic identities. Key works and collections which address
all of these issues of ethnicity among European groups in the United States
include Werner Sollors’s *Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American
Culture*, *The Invention of Ethnicity* (ed. Sollors), *The Ethnic Enigma: The
Salience of Ethnicity for European-Origin Groups* (ed. Peter Kivisto), and
More specifically, ethnicity in communities on the Great Plains and the western
part of the United States is addressed in *Ethnicity on the Great Plains* (ed.
Frederick Luebke) and *European Immigrants in the American West: Community
Histories* (ed. Luebke).

As with literature on ethnicity in regards to European ethnic groups and
their descendants in the United States, much has been written about articulations,
stagings, and performances of heritage and tradition in the United States. By
necessity, this literature has often been concerned with questions of the
authenticity of such articulations, stagings, and performances. In the past, a
number of scholars have taken a skeptical view of events that, like the festivals at
the center of this study, are promoted as authentic (or at least as containing
authentic folk elements such as costumes, dancing, craft demonstrations, etc.).
Richard Dorson attempted to draw a distinction between authentic folklore and
spurious “fakelore,” which he defined as “a synthetic product claiming to be authentic [. . .] but actually tailored for mass edification” which “misled and gull the public” (5). In a similar vein, Daniel Boorstin attacked “pseudo-events,” non-spontaneous events planned primarily (though not necessarily exclusively) for the purpose of being reported or reproduced and make themselves important by stating their own importance (11-12). And Dean MacCannell differentiated between authenticity and “staged authenticity,” which he defined as a setting designed in advance to appear authentic, but which in reality is inauthentic, geared toward tourists looking for authentic experiences (597, 599, 602). These concepts, however, are too skeptical to be useful in analyzing Dutch-American heritage celebrations. Such celebrations do often claim a measure of authenticity, but they are not designed to mislead or gull the public, as in Dorson’s formulation of fakelore. Nor are they the “contrived [. . .] cultural mirages” Boorstin denounces as “pseudo-events.” Similarly, MacCannell’s characterization of “staged authenticity” as “superficial” or “tacky” events designed to, in a sense, trap tourists (599, 602) does not ring true of the five festival under study here. Indeed, none of these concepts do justice to, or seem particularly concerned with, the evidently earnest townspeople attempting to stage an “authentic” event for themselves as well as their visitors. The same is true of Hobsbawm and Ranger’s “invented tradition,” which is inadequate for understanding the ostensible “authenticity” present in these festivals. As Tad
Tuleja points out, for Hobsbawm and Ranger, “invented traditions” tend to be imposed by an elite on the masses for purposes of social control on a national scale (1-3), and such is clearly not the case with these five festivals.

As far as authenticity is concerned, this study will, following Regina Bendix, Richard Handler and Jocelyn Linnekin, and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimlet, regard ethnicity, tradition, and heritage displays as categories which are inherently constructed and therefore cannot be divided into “authentic” and “inauthentic” camps. Bendix, who comments that “ethnicity and authenticity have grown to be uneasy partners,” observes that, when applied to ethnicity, authenticity is “contextually emergent, lacking the lasting essence that human beings have wished to attach to it” (210). Regarding tradition, Handler and Linnekin argue that it is “an ongoing interpretation of the past” (274) and that it is always “invented because it is necessarily reconstructed in the present, notwithstanding some participants’ understanding of such activities as being preservation rather than invention” (279). Accordingly, “it is impossible to separate spurious and genuine tradition, both empirically and theoretically” (281) because, quite simply, “to do something because it is traditional is already to reinterpret, and hence to change it” (281). And Kirshenblatt-Gimlet, building on the insights of Handler and Linnekin, argues that heritage, “while it looks old [. . .] is actually something new. Heritage is a mode of cultural production in the present that has recourse to the past” (7). In terms of the five festivals I am studying, one could say that the performances therein (or each festival-as-performance) do not simply reflect,
recall, or remember heritage, tradition, or ethnicity. Instead, these festivals actually help construct the heritage, tradition, and ethnicity on display. As Joseph Roach states,

The social processes of memory and forgetting, familiarly known as culture, may be carried out by a variety of performance events, from stage plays to sacred rites, from carnivals to the invisible rituals of everyday life. To perform in this sense means to bring forth, to make manifest, and to transmit. To perform also means, though often more secretly, to reinvent. (xi)

Instead of debating the objective authenticity of the performances in these festivals, I will instead investigate the festivals and their component elements as “creative strategies,” to use Stephen Stern’s term (xi-xx), or as “usable pasts,” to use Tad Tuleja’s (7). In either case, the ethnicity, heritage, or traditions displayed during the course of the festivals I am studying are best understood as strategies, creative responses, or makings and remakings of tradition designed to address present concerns, issues, or problems (Stern xi-xii; Tuleja 7). As such, I intend to examine the articulations of ethnicity, tradition, and heritage in each of the five festivals I am studying. Rather than judging them in regards to a principle of objective “authenticity,” I will consider to what end ethnicity, tradition, and heritage are employed or deployed in these festivals. I seek to discover why they have been employed and deployed, and how successful such employments or deployments have been. Some discussion of objective authenticity will be necessary because the actors and organizers of these festivals employ a rhetoric of authenticity. Nevertheless, ultimately the uses to which heritage, ethnicity, and tradition are put are more important than their constructedness, authenticity,
accuracy, spuriousness, etc. As Tuleja observes, the fact that heritage, ethnicity, or tradition are constructed or invented “no more saps them of constitutive strength than an expose of Parson Weems’s cherry tree story would invalidate it as a usable legend for American nationalism” (12).

Although “authenticity” is often understood in an objective sense, both by scholars and the actors and organizers in the ethnic festivals, the insight of scholars such as Stern and Tuleja that authenticity is itself constructed and of necessity in dialogue with the present opens up the possibility of other kinds of authenticity which are not simply matters of objective accuracy. Deborah Che points out that even if objective authenticity could be applied to phenomena such as Holland’s Tulip Time Festival, it would be problematic because such events are “diasporic cultural tourism events, which are products of iterative, fluid hybrid cultures” (262). Che observes that Holland’s founders were part of a Dutch diaspora, and as such followed processes of hybridization found in other diasporic cultures. By necessity, inherited Dutch traditions interacted with the American “demands of the host society” (261). Thus, for a subculture such as Dutch-Americans, “it is hard to define a pure or authentic culture,” a difficulty compounded by the fact that “cultural forms of both diasporic and non-diasporic groups constantly change as a consequence of external cultural influences” (262). But if we set aside notions of objective authenticity—either because there is no such thing or because a hybrid culture cannot have a static original to conform to—alternative conceptions of authenticity emerge. Che touches on three such
alternative conceptions. Wang Ning promotes the concept of existential authenticity “in which the authentic self is realized and an existential state of being is an outcome of tourists’ performance in events outside the routine,” thereby allowing “for authenticity even if the tourism objects themselves are inauthentic” (262). McIntosh and Prentice promote a view of authenticity in which “authenticity is realized as tourists attain personal insights and associations through their experiences” (262). Most importantly, Erik Cohen advances “emergent authenticity,” wherein “crafts and festivals that were initially produced for tourists and considered contrived or inauthentic can acquire new meanings for locals as a means of self-representation before tourists” (263). In this formulation, Che observes, “touristic events may eventually be recognized as ‘authentic’ local customs and products of an ethnic group or region” (263). In all of these alternative conceptions, “authenticity” is more of a dynamic process than an “original” to be emulated. George Hughes, also approaching issues of authenticity from a tourism research perspective, advocates a conception of authenticity joined to an existential perspective:

> By resurrecting a more existential perspective, it is possible to find manifestations of authenticity through individuals’ assertion of personal identity. [...] Authenticity continues to reside in the resistances, choices, and commitments that individuals express within the opportunities and constraints provided by globalized markets and global imagery to which international tourism is an increasingly major contributor. (799-800)

Such perspectives on authenticity thus encourage an examination of what uses existential or emergent conceptions of authenticity can be deployed.
Also relevant to this study is tourism scholarship. I have already touched on the Deborah Che’s tourism-centered approach to Holland’s Tulip Time Festival, as well as Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimlet’s Destination Culture, which addresses issues of displays of heritage pertinent to understanding what festivals similar to Dutch-American heritage celebrations mean and do. George Hughes similarly addresses authenticity from a tourism research perspective (and makes the salient observation that “the issue of authenticity runs, like an obligato, through tourism studies” (781)). One other study in this area which deserves mention is John Dorst’s The Written Suburb, which investigates the intersections of local heritage, tourism, and postmodernity in Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania. Dorst’s work is particularly important owing to its introduction of the concept of auto-ethnography (4). Dorst argues that late consumer capitalism (or postmodernity) has resulted in a situation where a community such as Chadds Ford generate their own ethnographic texts about themselves. In other words, a community is capable of observing and documenting itself (2-3). Dorst presents a model for studying a community such as Chadds Ford that involves collecting the texts the community produces about itself and analyzing them. These texts include postcards, brochure texts, comments by natives, local histories as presented on items such as restaurant menus, historical society documents, arts and crafts festivals, museum displays, photographs, popular histories, and
souvenirs (5). Like Chadds Ford, each of the festivals I am studying observes and documents itself, producing a wide range of “texts”--printed and otherwise--that merit attention in analyzing what each of these festivals means and does.

The various “texts” generated by the residents of each community I am studying, then, form another incredibly valuable, albeit non-scholarly, body of “literature” on which to draw. Residents of Holland, Pella, and Orange City have all produced several popular histories concerning their towns’ festivals. Newspaper articles from each community document the process of staging each festival from start to finish. Accordingly, newspaper accounts offer historical and contemporary comment on how each festival has changed in regard to its structure, objectives, or effects on the staging community. Each festival has produced a wide range of souvenirs. Holland, Pella, and Orange City each have at least one institution which houses substantial documentation, promotional and otherwise, of each towns’ festival. Orange City, Pella, Fulton, and Holland each have museums dedicated in whole or in part to the Dutch heritage of each of these communities. Each community has produced numerous photographs and postcards. There is no shortage of people willing to talk to about the local festival to an interested researcher. And, of course, there are the festivals and their elements themselves. While little scholarly literature addresses Dutch-American festivals, the people who organize and perform in these festivals have produced an absolutely immense collection of “texts” concerning their festivals and staging communities. If Dorst is correct that, in a way, the postmodern tendency to
produce a massive proliferation of texts about one’s self (individual or community) already does what the professional ethnographer is supposed to do, the problem in approaching the five festivals I am focusing on is not the dearth of material on them, but rather that there is arguably too much material available on one festival alone to adequately process it. An embarrassment of riches is, for the purposes of a dissertation, preferable to a lack, however, and anyone brash enough to make an entire culture or subculture, even if limited to its celebratory performances, his or her dissertation topic is probably doomed to biting off more than what one alone can chew. I therefore refer my readers to the acknowledgments at the beginning of this document and give thanks that I can stand on the shoulders of the scholars discussed to this point.

Apart from literature concerning festivals and celebrations which display ethnicity, there is a growing body of scholarly literature on Dutch immigration to the United States, as well as on the social, cultural, and economic history of Dutch-American communities in the United States. This body of literature has been produced almost exclusively by scholars of Dutch descent, as the relatively small Dutch-American community has not attracted the attention of many researchers from other backgrounds. Henry Lucas’s *Netherlanders in America* is the foundational work on Dutch immigration, settlement, and the subsequent history of the Dutch-American community. Published in 1955, this encyclopedic volume remains a valuable source of information, but of course it is a bit dated. The same is true of Jacob Van Hinte’s *Netherlanders in America: A Study of*
Emigration and Settlement in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries in the United States of America (1928), Arnold Mulder’s Americans from Holland (1947), and Gerald F. De Jong’s The Dutch in America, 1609-1974 (1974). The current dean of Dutch-American scholarship is Robert P. Swierenga, who edited The Dutch in America: Immigration, Settlement, and Cultural Change (1985), a collection of essays on the Dutch-American experience which significantly raised the bar of scholarship on this subject and introduced a variety of topics and perspectives not addressed by earlier scholarship. Swierenga’s most recent contributions are Faith and Family: Dutch Immigration and Settlement in the United States, 1820-1920 (2000) which summarizes some four decades of Swierenga’s research on Dutch immigration and Dutch-American history, and the massive Dutch Chicago: A History of the Hollanders in the Windy City (2002) which, while focusing exclusively on Chicago-area Dutch-American communities, nevertheless provides important insights into the Dutch-American community at large. The essays in The Dutch American Experience: Essays in Honor of Robert P. Swierenga. (2000) continue to advance the cause of research into the Dutch-American experience. In addition, Henry Lucas (Dutch Immigrant Memoirs and Related Writings), Herbert J. Brinks (Dutch American Voices: Letters From the United States, 1850-1930), and Johan Stellingwerf (Iowa Letters: Dutch Immigrants on the American Frontier) have collected and translated many letters and memoirs of Dutch immigrants, thus making valuable firsthand accounts of Dutch immigration and settlement accessible.
One final area of scholarship deserves mention. There has, of course, been a great deal of scholarship on festivals and the concept of festival. Part of the scholarship on festival, however, has been, as well it might be, concerned with setting out a festival vocabulary. To this point, I have been describing the five events I am studying as “festivals” because that is the term their organizers and actors use: Holland Tulip Time Festival, Pella Tulip Time Festival, Orange City Tulip Festival, Edgerton Dutch Festival, and Fulton Dutch Days Festival. That having been said, other terms may just as effectively describe these five events. When compared to the terminology set out by Roger Abrahams in “An American Vocabulary of Celebrations,” each of these events certainly is a celebration, in that “people prepare and anticipate in common how they will act and feel” (“American Vocabulary” 177). It is less clear, however, if these five Dutch-American celebrations are best described as “rites” or “festivals” in the way Abrahams understands these terms. Abrahams characterizes “rite” and “ritual” as events that take place in sacralized spaces, whereas “festival” and “festivity” are events that take place in the playful and profane domain (175). More specifically, says Abrahams, “rites” are celebrations that

re-enact, in some part, the way in which the social or natural world is put together. [. . .] These tend to be traditional--that is, memorable, learnable, repeatable, susceptible to accumulating important meanings and sentiments. The meanings, indeed, are often translated into messages, value-laden lessons explicitly spelled out. (177)

Through this re-enactment, rites emphasize continuity and confirmation of certain values or characteristics of the celebrants. “Festivals,” by contrast, are “detached
from confirmation and transformation” and “are often practiced ‘for the fun of it.’” Festivals, furthermore, “commonly operate in a manner that confronts and compounds cultural norms, and therefore operate for the moment in a way antagonistic to customary ritual confirmation” (177). Rites, according to Abrahams, are usually attached to ceremonial occasions such as “marriages, funerals, or migrations,” whereas festivals “operate during those very times when the life of the group seems most stable, in the “flat” times of the year” (177-178). In sum, a rite reacts to sociocultural disturbances and emphasizes the community ties and continuity; a festival creates a disturbance and temporarily disrupts community ties and continuity (175-181). While setting rites and festivals in opposition to each other, Abrahams also notes that in noncosmopolitan societies, rite and festival are often joined together. The division between the two types of celebrations is more the result of a modern, marketplace-driven separation of the sacred from the profane than it is an essential, fundamental, or objective difference between the two types of events. Indeed, according to Abrahams festivals and rites are “part of the same human impulse the intensify time and space within the community and to reveal mysteries while being engaged in revels” (177). Moreover, despite the tendency to separate sacred and profane occasions, “rites in contemporary culture are still often accompanied by festivities, and festival often has a designating rite at its core” (177). One must therefore be careful in drawing too sharp a distinction between sacred rite and
profane festival. These are two terms on a continuum of celebration terminology and not mutually exclusive polar oppositions. And, of course, other terms exist on this continuum.

Measured against these understandings of rite and festival, the five celebrations I am investigating could be understood as rites. There is no doubt the five celebrations are traditional in Abrahams’s sense. They have accumulated many meanings and sentiments and often translated meanings into messages and lessons. They emphasize certain values and characteristics of the celebrating communities, and can be understood as strategies for dealing with current issues and problems caused by changes or disturbances in the world around the celebrating communities. At the same time, these events certainly do create disturbances, in the sense that they interrupt everyday life. Moreover, the five celebrations certainly contain other characteristics of festivals as described by Abrahams. They open “the doors of the community” (“American Vocabulary” 178), inviting others in. Accordingly, they provide an opportunity for the celebrating community to display itself to the outside world by “taking to the streets,” quite literally, and transforming open spaces into festive spaces. Also, Abrahams says, festivals ask the celebrants and audience members to remember and reminisce (181), which each of the five Dutch-American celebrations certainly does. Each of the five is, fundamentally, an occasion for opening the community up and displaying it for an outside audience, and therefore a festival. At the same time, each of the five is very much concerned with transmitting
messages in reaction to changes taking place in the surrounding world, and therefore a rite. Arguably, then, each of these celebrations is a festival, but a festival preoccupied with ritual concerns to the point that any meaningful division between festival and rite is frequently blurred to the point of obliteration. This overlap is hardly surprising; again, Abrahams explicitly states that it is common, if not usual, for rites to include festival elements and festivals to include ritual elements (177).

Further complicating the terminological picture, Abrahams provides another term which also accurately describes these five celebrations: display event. In her study of Lindsborg, Kansas’s Svensk Hyllningsfest, Lizette Graden states that she finds “display event” the most useful term for analyzing phenomena like the Svensk Hyllningsfest (10). The festivals I am studying are very much analogous in form and character to Svensk Hyllningsfest (no surprise, since a Dutch-America doctor familiar with Holland’s Tulip Time Festival was instrumental in starting Svensk Hyllningsfest), and I agree with Graden that “display event” is a useful, and perhaps more accurate, term for analyzing and understanding these festivals. Abrahams defines a display events as “planned-for public occasions [. . .] in which actions and objects are invested with meaning and values are put ‘on display’” (“Shouting Match” 303). Display events “require participation of a substantial group in the preparation and performance and in that they presuppose an audience” (Graden 10). Moreover, a display event “provides the occasion whereby a group or community may call attention to itself”
(Abrahams, “Shouting Match,” quoted in Graden 10) and wishes to display itself (Graden 10). Yet another overlapping, and equally useful, concept is Don Handelman’s “public events,” events which are “culturally designed forms that select out, concentrate, and interrelate themes of existence--lived and imagined--that are more diffused, dissipated and obscured in the everyday” (15-16). As celebrations requiring substantial participation that are specifically staged for an audience (and thus intended to draw attention to the celebrating community) and that transmit particular themes, meanings, messages, and lessons, the five celebrations I am studying can certainly be understood as display events and public events, but they can also be legitimately understood as rites and festivals. Therefore, I will use all four terms throughout this study. In doing so, I acknowledge that the five festivals fit all four definitions and that, moreover, each of these terms is a not-entirely-fixed node on a terminological continuum.

In the midst of all this literature about festivals, heritage, authenticity, ethnicity, and ethnic celebrations, my study offers something of a new and unique direction. In particular, I am taking up the often overlooked topic of Dutch-American heritage celebrations, several of which were among the first to specifically use ethnicity to draw an outside audience to the celebrating community. In other words, three Dutch towns--Holland, Pella, and Orange City--were among the first to put their Dutch heritage and ethnicity on display specifically for visitors to the town. Previous studies of Dutch-American heritage celebrations have been a summary overview of such events with very limited
analysis (Sheeres), focused on a limited time period in an event’s history (Zylstra) or a single element (such as Van’t Hof on Holland’s klompen dances), or limited themselves to descriptions of how Holland’s Tulip Time has performed and played a role in maintaining a separate Dutch-American identity (Sinke, Che). Although this study cannot hope to analyze each of the many facets of these festivals, it attempts to tie more threads together by analyzing each festival’s history, addressing many different performance elements (parades, plays, pageants, dances, church services, etc.), and more fully elucidating the ties between the immigrant history of each of these communities and the present-day ways in which a separate Dutch-American ethnicity is maintained in each of these towns and represented (or not) in each celebration. I also go beyond previous studies in several ways. First, I situate these festivals within the wider context of American festivals, rituals, display events, and other celebrations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Second, I attempt to account for the emergence of these festivals in their particular times and places. Third, I investigate the different ways in which authenticity has been understood and employed in each of these festivals. Fourth, I examine the rhetoric employed in various elements from each celebration (especially tours) as well as in each celebration’s press coverage and promotional materials. Fifth, I base my research on ethnographic interviews and observation as well as on documentary research. Finally, I scrutinize each
celebration for themes, meanings, messages, and lessons presented in each festival as well as for the discontinuities or disagreements manifested in each celebration.

Beyond content, this study offers something new and different in terms of structure. Previous studies of similar displays of ethnic heritage have tended to intensively study one celebration in one community alone (Danielson, Hoelscher, Graden, Zarilli and Neff, Swiderski, Silverman, Cronin and Adair) or compare two celebrations from communities with different ethnic backgrounds (Hoelscher and Ostergren). John Bodnar’s *Remaking America* and *Collective Memory and Ethnic Groups* compares several different celebrations both within and across community and ethnic lines, but each celebration is only treated briefly and, in *Remaking America*, all of the celebrations studied are cited in service to Bodnar’s overarching narratives about the changes in public commemoration over the course of the twentieth century he detects (namely that local articulations of public memory and commemoration have been increasingly replaced by national articulations of public memory and commemoration). In this study, however, I seek to open new ground by intensively comparing and contrasting multiple display events celebrated by communities which share a common ethnic heritage and, as chapter three shall demonstrate, a rather coherent, close-knit subculture. These five events will be studied both in the present and past, and the concluding chapter will address questions and concerns the celebrating communities have about the future of their festivals. Throughout this study, rather than imposing my
own perspectives and theoretical models on each of these celebrations, I attempt, as far as possible, to let the “texts” produced by organizers and actors, as well as the organizers and actors themselves, speak for themselves.

As the beginning of this chapter indicated, I approach the study of these five celebrations as an insider to the wider subculture being studied. Until the age of 23, I lived in communities inhabited predominantly inhabited by Dutch-Americans, went to their schools and colleges (specifically Calvin College), and attended (and continue to attend) their churches (specifically the Christian Reformed Church—see chapter three). More specifically, I grew up in Edgerton, Minnesota and directly participated in almost every summer Dutch Festival until the age of 21. Moreover, I attended many Tulip Festivals in Orange City and spent many more hours in Orange City and its environs, since many friends and relatives of my parents lived in Northwest Iowa. I spent four years living a half hour away from Holland, Michigan, attending college with many individuals who had grown up in Pella, Fulton, and Holland; some of my dearest friends were born and raised in Holland. Bonds of education, church, family, and friends, as well as my own Dutch heritage, inextricably link me to the wider Dutch-American community (and as we shall see in chapter three, it is these bonds which have allowed a distinct Dutch-American community to survive and flourish in spite of a geographically scattered nature). I therefore come to this project equipped with knowledge of the internal workings and characteristics of the Dutch-American community and the Dutch-American enclave of Edgerton, Minnesota most
specifically. My insider status has allowed me to gain access to a number of
documents and resources which would have been much more difficult to come by
were I not positioned within the community. It also has served me well in terms
of interviewing individuals for this project, since I am aware of (and probably
bear) many of the distinctions, eccentricities, biases, and peccadilloes common to
Dutch-Americans. Outside researchers arguably would need more time to
identify and understand such factors. At the same time, my ability to identify and
speak to these distinctive qualities has also likely made me less aware of other
peculiarities and characteristics outside researchers might notice. I have tried to
remain a critical but balanced observer during my observations, research,
interviews, and analysis, but I do recognize that I am studying my people, and
therefore myself, which will naturally raise questions about how my own biases
are manifested in this study.

My methodology in approaching these five celebrations is, necessarily,
interdisciplinary. In the first place, my training is in theatre studies, and so I
accordingly will be focusing on the theatrical--broadly construed--elements
present in each of these celebrations, including pageants, plays, dances, floats, and
other programs. More importantly, however, I will be approaching each festival
as a performance or theatrical representation of the celebrating community’s
heritage, identity, and Dutchness. Each of these celebrations employs costumes,
sets, sound, and lighting effects as one would encounter in a theatrical
performance. Each celebration presents a series of images and representations to
an audience with the aim of communicating something about the celebrating community to that audience. And each celebration follows a script of one sort or another. At times the script is fairly loose, developed and constructed because of the spatial and temporal gaps between planned events; at other times, it is quite specific, particularly during town tours, parades, and plays and programs. I am, therefore, approaching these celebrations as one might approach and analyze a dramatic text. First, I look for common themes, internal continuities and discontinuities, repeated tropes, metaphors, etc. Then, I speculate on the effects and purposes of the (re)presentations of these themes, tropes, and metaphors, as well as any internal inconsistencies.

In the second place, descriptions and analyses of festivals and celebrations have often been the domain of folklorists and ethnographers; accordingly, I approach these festivals from a folkloric and ethnographic perspective. I have endeavored to gather as much material produced by the organizers and viewers of, and participants in, each of these celebrations as possible. This has, of course, meant a good deal of on-site fieldwork, gathering what documents are available but, of equal importance, interviewing townspeople who have been involved in these celebrations and, naturally, observing the various festival events themselves. In doing this fieldwork, I have been particularly influenced by John Dorst’s notion of autoethnography, as described above. It is my conviction that the residents of each of these five towns have already described and documented themselves; my job has been to gather together the documentation (or “capture” it
on recording and paper, in the case of my interviews), consult the documenters and collectors in each of these towns, and then apply my own analysis and interpretations to the material. In doing so, however, I have attempted, as far as is possible, to be thorough in presenting the individuals and communities I am studying in their own words rather than starting with my own preconceived notions and forcing the gathered materials into particular preexisting frameworks. I have, in fact, found most of my preconceived notions about these celebrations (and how best to study them) woefully inadequate to presenting the complexity of these events and the people involved in them. I began, for instance, thinking that I would find a high degree of similarity from celebration to celebration, and that it would be my task to show how these events impose particular political or social agendas on participants and observers. What I have found is a remarkable amount of variation among these five celebrations and communities, despite their undeniably common subculture, and while there are undoubtedly certain agendas present in each celebration, these agendas are not necessarily those I expected to find.

Finally, I am approaching these five celebrations from the perspective of social and cultural history. I have busily plumbed the depths of various archives in each of these communities and spent more hours staring at microfilmed newspaper reels than is probably healthy. For Holland’s Tulip Time, most of the documents I was able to collect were found in the “Tulip Time, Inc.,” collection of the Holland Museum Archives, although a number of important documents
were housed in the “Tulip Time Oral History Project” and the “Latin Americans United For Progress” collections at the Joint Archives of Holland, Michigan. For Pella’s Tulip Time, a wealth of material (much of it unsorted, leading me to suspect much more could come to light in the future) was available through the Pella Historical Village Archives and the Pella Historical Village front office; the Central College Archives were also a source of some material. A great deal of material on the Orange City Tulip Festival was housed in the Northwestern College Archives in the Ramaker Library, including scrapbooks made by the late Leona Vander Stoep, who chronicled every Tulip Festival from 1936 to the early 1990s. A parallel scrapbook collection on the Orange City Tulip Festival is in development by Nelva Schreur, the current Tulip Festival historian. Fulton and Edgerton do not have archival collections, nor was I able to locate any scrapbook collections for either of these Festivals; however, most all of the promotion and coverage of these festivals is contained in the local newspapers, the Edgerton Enterprise and Fulton Journal. As far as the other towns were concerned, I had access to back issues of the Sioux County Capital and Sioux County Capital-Democrat (Orange City), the Chronicle (previously known as the Pella Chronicle and Pella Chronicle-Advertiser), the Holland Sentinel (formerly the Holland Evening Sentinel) and Holland City News. Locally published or circulated histories of the town festivals were available in Holland (Randall Vande Water’s Tulip Time Treasures), Pella (Muriel Kooi’s Festival), and Orange City (Arie Vander Stoep’s History of the Orange City Tulip Festival). In addition to the
archival and newspaper research I have conducted, I also have taken a
historiographical approach to the materials available on these celebrations,
comparing the historical narratives presented about these festivals in local
histories, travel publications, newspapers, and residents’ memories.

My research process for this study began in the summer of 2003, when the
idea to study the Edgerton Dutch Festival first occurred to me at the annual
Association for Theatre in Higher Education conference in New York.
Discussions with various individuals about the best way to undertake such a
project followed (I am particularly indebted to Thomas Postlewait, Dorry Noyes,
and Robert Schoone-Jongen for the advice offered on that count), and my archival
research began in December 2004. The bulk of my fieldwork and archival
research took place during four periods. I spent May 2005 visiting Pella and
Holland, attending their respective festivals and gathering materials, archival and
otherwise. I next spent several weeks in July 2005 in Edgerton, attending the
Dutch Festival and ransacking the *Edgerton Enterprise* files. I then spent one
week in October 2005 at the Pella Historical Village Archives. Finally, thanks to
the freedom afforded by a Presidential Fellowship awarded to me by The Ohio
State University, I was able to spend all of May and June 2006 revisiting Pella,
Edgerton, and Holland, as well as spending time in Orange City and Fulton.
During this period I followed up on my archival research, attended the festivals in
Orange City and Fulton, and interviewed numerous individuals in Edgerton, Pella,
Orange City, and Fulton. This research produced a spring 2004 twenty page
research paper on Edgerton’s Dutch Festival and a fall 2004 fifteen page candidacy examination essay on the history of community celebrations in the United States. And finally, I have written this dissertation.

This study is laid out as follows. Following this introductory chapter, in chapter two I provide an overview of community celebrations in the United States during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In addressing specific trends discernible in American community celebrations and display events during this time period, I pay special attention to the place of ethnicity and heritage within these events. Basically, chapter two is designed to provide a brief, descriptive overview of celebrations and festivities into which the Dutch immigrated and eventually to which they eventually added their own contributions. Chapter three similarly is concerned with providing a context and background for the five celebrations I am analyzing. Whereas chapter two deals with the American celebratory context, chapter three discusses the history of Dutch immigration to the United States and the Dutch-American subculture that has maintained a presence since the late 1840s. I begin by discussing the economic and social conditions in the Netherlands which led certain groups of Netherlanders to decide to relocate to the United States. I then describe the ways in which the early immigration to the United States actually proceeded, paying specific attention to how, from the very start, Dutch settlement in the United States was characterized by an overwhelming tendency to establish somewhat isolated enclaves characterized by the dominance of Calvinist ministers. The remainder of chapter
three discusses how the patterns established by the first immigrants--settlement in enclaves, an inward focus centered on religious debate, and a concern with education from the primary to college level--have continued to define and influence many, if not most, Dutch-Americans to the present day. A distinct Dutch-American community remains very much alive and well today; although many Dutch-Americans at first glance seem to blend in to a larger WASP culture, they in fact maintain distinct networks thanks to ties of family, faith, and education and continue to be characterized in large part by internal religious squabbles.

In chapter four, I begin by discussing the various rituals, festivals, public displays and public events involving articulations of ethnicity celebrated in Dutch-American communities before 1929, as many of the elements discernible in these antecedents to the festivals I am considering are present in the early Tulip festivals in Holland, Pella, and Orange City. I then proceed to investigating the emergence of the first three Dutch-American heritage celebrations: Tulip Time in Holland, Michigan, which began in 1929; Tulip Time in Pella, Iowa, which began in 1935; and the Tulip Festival in Orange City, Iowa (originally called the May Festival) which began in 1936. In looking at these three celebrations, I discuss the various factors that may explain why these three events--once again, among the first to use the ethnic heritage of a particular community as a way to annually attract crowds to town--emerged when they did and why each met with immediate and sustained success. I argue that part of the answer to this question lies in the
phenomenon of Hollandmania, a trend in American art and culture as described by art historian Annette Stott during which Americans were ravenous consumers of anything “Dutch.” All the while, I place these three festivals in the context of American immigration, nativism, and prejudice which benefitted the Dutch communities. Chapter four concludes with an overview of the proliferation of Dutch-American heritage celebrations following the Second World War, paying particular focus to the emergence of Edgerton’s Dutch Festival and Fulton’s Dutch Days Festival. Throughout the chapter, I note important changes that have taken place over time in each of the five celebrations I am focusing on.

In chapter five, I take up the issue of authenticity in each of the five festivals. Each of these events (with the notable exception of Edgerton’s Dutch Festival) has been concerned, almost since its inception, with maintaining an “authentic” atmosphere during the festival’s proceedings, and a rhetoric of authenticity has been prevalent in each of these festivals. A concern with “authenticity” is evident in regards to elements such as folk dances, folk songs, food, architecture, and especially costumes worn by townspeople during each festival. Chapter five accordingly focuses on costumes as a case study for how “authenticity” has been understood by each of these communities over time. In examining the costuming practices in each community, three things become abundantly clear: first, several levels of authenticity, or different kinds of authenticity, are observable in each town’s costuming practices; second, what is regarded as an “authentic” costume in each community has changed over time,
evolving from costumes that conformed to American expectations and stereotypes to costumes that have been meticulously researched for historical accuracy; and third, what counts as an authentic costume varies from town to town. The costumes described as “authentic” in Holland, for instance, differ, sometimes markedly, from the costumes described as “authentic” in Pella, and both of these differ from Orange City’s “authentic” costumes. This in turn points to a certain level of competition that exists between these various communities, not necessarily for actual audiences, but to stage the “best” or “most authentic” Dutch-American heritage celebration.

In chapter six, I set authenticity aside and consider other narratives, stories, meanings, messages, images, representations, and lessons that each of these five festivals communicate to audiences (and townspeople) in a fairly overt manner. The first portion of the chapter looks at the various claims in press coverage and promotional materials from each festival for the various claims consistently advanced about what each festival means and the effects it has on its celebrants. Having considered these overt messages about what the festival means and does, I consider the town tours offered during the Tulip festivals in Holland, Pella, and Orange City. These tours allow tourists to get beyond the area of each community most of the celebration events take place in (usually the central business district) and highlight other aspects of town tour organizers want visitors to see. As such, these tours arguably put even more of the celebrating community on display than other celebration elements. Although these tours
generally are less overt in their advancement of particular images, representations, and narratives about the town and its celebration than press coverage and promotional materials are, the particular sites and attractions singled out nevertheless serve to communicate fairly evident messages about the values and character of the towns being toured. For the most part, these messages echo or supplement the narratives and stories communicated by press coverage and promotional materials. I conclude chapter six by focusing on the narratives, stories, and representations of each celebrating community contained in the various pageants, plays, programs, parade elements, and other theatrical or paratheatrical elements present in each of these festivals over the years. Once again, these performances, for the most part, supplement the characterizations of the meanings and effects of each festival present in press coverage and promotional materials. However, there are examples of these performances which start to get at more complex issues. This is especially true of the plays of Carol Van Klompenburg and Mary Meuzelaar that have been staged in Pella in conjunction with Tulip Time over the last fifteen years.

In chapter seven, I focus on examples of potential and actual discord both apparent in, and concerned with, each of the five festivals. These examples serve to at least raise questions about, if not interrupt, the smooth narratives otherwise presented in the materials available for each festival. I examine three types of discord evident in the history of the five festivals. First, I consider several examples of discord arising from simple differences of opinion among festival
Next, I investigate examples of discord that have resulted from demographic changes that have taken place in Holland, Pella, and Fulton. Specifically, I look at the ways in which the non-Dutch-American populations in these communities have interacted, of have failed to interact, with the Dutch-Americans. The failures of interactions are particularly interesting, in that narratives of unity among Dutch and non-Dutch in these communities hold a major place in each festival. Finally, I conclude chapter seven by discussing the various ways in which religious factionalism within each town, suppressed in “official” celebration narratives, nevertheless manages to make its way back into each festival. Moreover, most of the people I interviewed—though initially insisting that religious factionalism has lessened in recent years—conceded that the religious distinctions that have historically helped define the Dutch-American community continue to exist. Thus, more than a century and a half after the first Dutch immigrants arrived in the United States, the religious factionalism that drove many of the initial immigrants to the United States still makes a difference in the Dutch-American communities they founded today.

Although this study will raise many issues and make many observations about these five celebrations, there are three particular key arguments or themes that will emerge. Firstly, in studying these events, I will demonstrate that “heritage,” “ethnicity,” and “tradition,” constructed though these concepts may be, still mean something today in the Dutch-American community. Dutch-American identity is not, for instance, an example of what Herbert Gans calls
“symbolic ethnicity,” an ethnicity which is simply a matter of a display of costumes and props. Although each of these celebrations certainly display many costumes and props in their representations of Dutch heritage, there is, at the core of these events and their celebrating communities, a connection between the past and present which is not simply constructed. The actions of the founders and early inhabitants of these Dutch-American communities established patterns of behavior and being which still very much influence present-day residents of these communities.

Secondly, aspects of Dutch-American heritage which still very much influence present-day Dutch-Americans—especially Calvinist denominations founded by Dutch immigrants and private school systems—are not the primary objects, institutions, or people on display during the five festivals I am studying. On the one hand, Christian denominations—particularly those, like the Dutch immigrant Calvinist denominations—which tend to be highly cerebral in their theology are not especially conducive to specific representation within the context of public or display events. On the other hand, the denominations founded by Dutch immigrants and their descendants in the United States have a history of internal feuds, squabbles, and schisms; denominational factionalism continues to characterize the Dutch-American community today. Accordingly—and paradoxically—the most influential components of Dutch-American heritage in many ways to not exhibit the type of unity each of these events is otherwise interested in displaying. Just as the street scrubbers ceremonially scrub the streets
to clean the town up for visitors, narratives presented in each celebration
metaphorically “clean up” the often-contentious religious history in the staging
community. Even so, precisely because it is religion—and perhaps even religious
factionalism—which has allowed and allows heritage to remain a living thing
within Dutch-American communities, it manages to make its way into, sometimes
questioning and interrupting, the articulations of Dutch heritage—the smooth
narratives and the wooden shoes and windmills—that are consciously displayed in
these events. And perhaps because of the living, or lived, heritage within these
Dutch communities, even the representations of Dutch identity presented in each
of these celebrations that are not especially integral to Dutch-American heritage
are approached with a zeal and commitments of time, energy, and financial
resources which far outdistance any tangible economic gains these events may
bring to the celebrating communities.

Finally, comparison of these five display events reveals an undeniable
fact. Although all of these events are staged in towns which share similar ethnic
backgrounds, religious preferences, political preferences, and geographical
situations, a surprising number of differences among these events are discernible.
These differences range from the minute (such as the detail work on particular
costumes) to the much more substantial (such as Edgerton’s lack of any Dutch
dancing, Dutch food, or Dutch costumes during its Dutch Festival when the other
four festivals have a substantial amount of each of these elements). Sometimes
these differences are connected to historical, social, or demographical differences
among the staging communities. Sometimes these differences reflect differing conceptions of a festival’s intended audience (e.g., the Edgerton Dutch Festival is directed at a local audience, whereas Holland Tulip Time is directed at a national audience). And sometimes it is difficult, even impossible, to account for differences among the five festivals. At any rate, the fact that such a variety of differences can be registered among events that can be broadly described as Dutch-American heritage celebrations makes it inherently problematic to generalize about a category as narrow as “Dutch-American heritage celebrations.” How much more problematic, if not dangerous, then, to generalize about categories such as “Dutch-American communities,” “the Midwest,” “the rural,” “the conservative,” “the Red State”? Unfortunately, such generalizations are all too prevalent in our society today. Dutch-American heritage celebrations can quickly remind us that it is necessary to exercise great care when generalizing about any group of people; one never knows when that group will confound expectations.

Before proceeding to Chapter 2, it is necessary to briefly describe the size and location of each of the five towns that celebrate the five festivals this study focuses on. Holland, Michigan, was founded in 1847 in Ottawa County. Holland lies on the south shore of Lake Macatawa, an inlet from Lake Michigan. From Chicago, one can reach Holland via Interstate 196 in about two and a half hours; from Grand Rapids, Michigan, one can reach Holland via Interstate 96 in about half an hour. According to the 2000 U. S. census, Holland’s population is 35,048,
but this does not take into account Holland’s metropolitan area, in which over 250,000 people live. Although originally founded by Dutch immigrants, since the Second World War Holland’s population has become increasingly diverse. As of 2000, 22.21 percent of Holland’s population was Latino and 3.56 was Asian; although 78.18 percent of the 2000 population was white, Dutch-Americans now constitute perhaps only about one-third of the total population (“Census 2000 Gazetteer Files;” “The Kiplinger 50;” “Holland, Michigan;” Che 270). Holland is home to several major companies, including Herman Miller, Heinz Co.’s largest pickle factory, and a Reddi Wip plant. It also has, for many years, been a notable tourism and resort area, and is the home to Hope College, Western Theological Seminary, and a Grand Valley State University campus.

Like Holland, Pella, Iowa was also founded in 1847 in Marion County. Pella lies about 45 miles southeast of Des Moines, along Iowa State Route 163, near Lake Red Rock. According to the 2000 U. S. Census, Pella’s population is 9,832. As in the case of Holland, Pella was initially founded by Dutch immigrants, whose descendants continue to constitute a majority of Pella residents, somewhere between 50 and 60 percent. Pella is not as diverse as Holland: in 2000, 96.32 percent of its population was white, 2.36 percent was Asian, and 1.08 percent of residents described themselves as Latino (Jaarsma/Zylstra interview 25; “Census 2000 Gazetteer Files;” “Pella, Iowa”). Pella is home to Pella Corp. (formerly Rolscreen Corporation) and Vermeer
Manufacturing, a major manufacturer of farm implements. As the presence of Vermeer might suggest, Pella also is a major area agricultural center; it is also the home of Central College.

Orange City is located in Sioux County, Iowa, in the northwest corner of the state. Orange City is about 40 miles northeast of Sioux City, Iowa, and about 80 miles southeast of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, both of which are notable regional centers. According to the 2000 U. S. Census, Orange City’s population is 5,582. Orange City was founded in 1870 by a group of settlers from Pella; after its founding, Orange City served as the center of a large Dutch-American community that formed in Northwest Iowa and attracted many Dutch immigrants. As of 2000, 97.5 percent of Orange City’s residents are white, and a large majority of them are of Dutch descent; about 1 percent of the population is Latino while another 1 percent is Asian (“Census 2000 Gazetteer Files;” “Orange City, Iowa”). Orange City is mainly an agricultural center, but it has a growing industrial sector, the anchor of which has, for many years, been Diamond-Vogel paint company. Orange City is also the home to Northwestern College.

Edgerton, Minnesota is located in Pipestone County, in the extreme southwestern corner of Minnesota. It is about 250 miles to the southwest of the Twin Cities, and about an hour’s drive to the east of Sioux Falls, South Dakota. According to the 2000 U. S. Census, Edgerton’s population is 1,033. While Holland, Pella, and Orange City have all experienced significant population growth in recent years, Edgerton’s population has remained between 1,000 and
1,100 since the 1960s. As of 2000, 98.84 percent of Edgerton’s population was white, and the vast majority of them are of Dutch descent (“Census 2000 Gazetteer Files;” “Edgerton, Minnesota”). Unlike Holland, Pella, and Orange City, Edgerton was not founded by Dutch immigrants; rather, it was founded by Civil War veterans in 1879. Dutch immigrants began to move into the area in the late 1880s and early 1890s, and by the 1920s constituted the majority of the town’s population. Edgerton is largely an agricultural community, although it also home to Fey Industries, a noted manufacturer of a wide variety of items (perhaps most famously it manufactured some of the components for Richard Simmons’s “Deal-A-Meal” products).

Finally, Fulton Illinois, in Whiteside County, lies along the Mississippi River, directly across from Clinton, Iowa and about 45 miles north of the Quad Cities area. According to the 2000 U. S. Census, Fulton’s population is 3,881. 2000 figures indicate that Fulton’s population was 97.91 percent white, with only Latinos constituting more than 1 percent of the population (1.26 percent). Like Edgerton, Fulton was not originally populated by Dutch immigrants; founded in 1835, Fulton had already been in existence for twelve years before significant Dutch immigration to the United States even began. Dutch immigrants began to arrive in Fulton in large numbers in the last decades of the nineteenth and first decades of the twentieth century, eventually constituting a vast majority of the population (“Fulton, Illinois;” “Census 2000 Gazetteer Files;” “Facts & Figures of Fulton, IL”), although this majority has gradually decreased since the Second
World War, as evidenced by the election of a mayor of Polish descent in the early 1980s. Fulton is the home of Drives, Incorporated, manufacturer of industrial chains and drives, and Agri-King, a livestock feed manufacturer.
CHAPTER 2

NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURY COMMUNITY CELEBRATION, COMMEMORATION, AND FESTIVITY

In order to analyze and interpret the various theatrical, cultural, social, and political elements and meanings in Dutch heritage celebrations in the United States, it is imperative to give some account of the larger, general context for ethnic and town festivals in the nation’s history. In other words, it is necessary to place the Dutch heritage festivals into a larger picture of American festivals. This chapter attempts to briefly outline that larger picture, considering the history of American ethnic community festivals as they have developed since the nineteenth century. Doing so will allow subsequent chapters to highlight the continuities between the general history of American festivals and Dutch festivals, as well as the innovations introduced by Dutch heritage festivals.

Situating Dutch ethnic festivals within the larger context of festival culture in the United States by necessity involves considering at least two distinct, yet often intertwined, strands within the history of festivals in the United States. The first of these strands involves the history of the community-oriented celebration or commemoration; the second involves the history of the ethnically-oriented celebration. Although always in dialogue with each other, these two types of
festival were nevertheless distinct types of events up until about the First World War. However, beginning in the 1930s and continuing at an accelerated rate after the Second World War, these two types of festivals became increasingly intertwined with each other, as well as with economic motives, to produce the present-day ethnic pride festival. This chapter will proceed by considering the general trajectory of the history of festivals in the United States from the nineteenth century to the later twentieth century, pointing out some general trends other scholars have noted. Having done this, this chapter will return to those specifically ethnic festivals and trace their trajectory through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

2.1 COMMUNITY-ORIENTED FESTIVALS.

After the 1776 Revolution, festivals in the United States quickly took on a generally patriotic feel. These celebrations tended to center on important patriotic observance of both national and local significance. Such celebrations often doubled as local militia musters, thereby explicitly connecting the celebrating community to the nation (Davis 49-72). Then as now, the Fourth of July occasioned the most widespread celebration, ranging from cities to hamlets. From the 1780s up through the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Independence Day celebrations typically included parades, military drills, and patriotic orations (Heideking 27; Travers 31-68). They might also include banquets or picnics, historical displays of things like important historical artifacts...
(General X’s sword, for instances), patriotic tableaux vivants, and, in the case of smaller communities, reunions of former local residents (Glassberg 9-24; Travers 31-68). Other annual occasions took on many of the same features of Independence Day celebrations, as in the case of Washington’s birthday and Evacuation Day in New York (McNamara 35-39).

Besides this type of annual festive celebration, larger cities would hold celebrations to mark important occurrences or to welcome visiting dignitaries. To celebrate the ratification of the Constitution, a series of Federal Processions were held in 1788. In Boston, the central feature of the celebration was a parade including local tradesmen and artisans marching or demonstrating their skills on floats; other units symbolically represented the clearing of a path to the West and the triumph of a strong new “Federal Ship” over the rotten old barge of the Confederation. Similar parades with symbols of the new republic were held in Baltimore, Charleston and New York (Heideking 26-33; Travers 70-88). The largest Federal Procession, however, was held in Philadelphia, which included 88 different units including floats displaying American history to 1788, floats contributed by various trades and professions, and marching units of doctors, lawyers, clergy, city officials, and calvary detachments (Schloss 47-59; Travers 70-88). Of the festivals staged to welcome dignitaries, two of the most famous were held in New York in 1789 and 1824. For George Washington’s 1789 inaugural, New York houses, streets, and public buildings were decorated with flowers, evergreen branches, banners, and flags and included a procession of
ships, marching military units, fireworks, window displays of artistic transparencies at night, and an inauguration ball (McNamara 22-27). Similarly, the Marquis de Lafayette’s 1824 welcome involved a lavish landing on the Battery, an official procession, transparency and fireworks displays, and a wide variety of other events, including a parade of New York school children, a review of the fire department, a performance of *Twelfth Night*, and an oratorio (46-53).

Depending on the era and the political climate, these types of festivals could be more or less partisan. Ginger Strand relates how theatres in Boston divided along political lines in terms of architecture, repertory, and audience demographics during the 1790s (19-36); it is therefore not surprising to learn that these divisions appeared in the celebrations and festivals of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Already during the 1788 Federal Processions, anti-Federalists would hold their own counter-demonstrations which, rather than featuring the burning of the ship of the Old Confederation, would feature the burning of the Constitution (Heideking 32). From the 1790s until the late 1810s, Washington’s Birthday tended to take on Federalist overtones, while the Fourth of July became the favored national holiday of the Democratic-Republicans. In many communities, the rival political factions would hold rival celebrations on the same day, particularly in the case of the Fourth of July (Heideking 40; Wala 77-79; Travers 88-106, 155-190). For example, two rival Independence Day celebrations were held in Boston in 1803 (Wala 79). Partisan articulations on days of national celebration declined as the Federalist party decayed after the War
of 1812, but as other, especially regional, divisions opened up, observances in
different regions quite naturally had different accents (Wala 83-87). Common to
all of these festivals, however, was a sense of patriotic commemoration, usually in
reference to the Revolutionary War. Also common to these festivals was a sense
of local pride. This could be expressed in terms of local contributions to the
Revolution, as in the case of Schuylerville, New York’s 1877 centennial
celebration (Glassberg 14-16), in terms the vitality of local crafts and industry, as
in the case of pre-Civil War parades in Philadelphia (Davis 2-3, 113-154), or,
ocasionally, in terms of the ethnic heritage of the local population, St. Patrick’s
Day being a prominent early nineteenth century examples of this phenomenon
(McNamara 39-45, 129-131; Cronin and Adair 11-17).

This general festival framework remained essentially the same in the post-
Civil War decades, although the emphases of such festivals were slightly
modified in keeping with new local and national concerns. The Fourth of July
remained the chief occasion for a festival, although quite naturally in the
immediate post-Civil War era its observance differed markedly between the
Northern and Southern states; some towns in the latter region declined to observe
the Fourth at all, most famously Vicksburg, which only resumed Independence
Day observances in 1945 (Glassberg 12; Catton 324). Nevertheless, in most
Northern towns one could still expect to see a parade, patriotic orations, and
displays of one kind or another on the Fourth of July (Glassberg 9-24). Other
patriotic observances began to fade in prominence as the nineteenth century drew
to a close, as was the case with Washington’s birthday (Wala 75) and New York’s
Evacuation Day (McNamara 39), but the celebration of the Fourth remained quite
vital.

The Fourth also continued to be an occasion on which violence was not
unknown. The contributors to Riot and Revelry in Early America demonstrate
that celebrations, patriotic and otherwise, before the Civil War often could turn
violent (see especially Pencak, “Introduction: A Historical Perspective” and
Abrahams, “Introduction: A Folklore Perspective;” see also Davis 43). After the
Civil War, however, campaigns were undertaken to domesticate patriotic
celebrations and curb the violence. For instance, campaigns were undertaken for
a “Safe and Sane” Fourth of July. As the Fourth was one of the few days off for
an increasingly industrialized labor force, the day, David Glassberg argues, was
often seen not as a day for somber patriotic reflection, but rather for letting loose
and having a good time. Then as now, having a good time often meant the
consumption of alcoholic beverages, which in turn increased the potential for
altercations. Again, this had been the case before the Civil War as well as after,
but campaigners for domestication often chose to tie violence, disorder, and a
less-than-reverent attitude towards the Fourth of July to recent immigrants to the
United States. Accordingly, social activists and numerous people involved in the
Progressive movement to begin thinking of more constructive ways to channel
immigrant and working-class energies while instilling a more reverent sense of
local, as well as national, pride (Glassberg 24-25, 30-40).
The result of these efforts was a new trend in American celebration and commemoration. Inspired by developments in England, Americans began staging and actively promoting historical pageantry as a more meaningful alternative to other sorts of local festivals. The heyday of the historical pageant was between roughly 1905 and 1917, although the trend, with some alterations, lasted well into the 1920s and beyond. Historical pageants took a variety of forms, but inevitably presented a progressive (and usually Progressive) view of local history which emphasized a particular community’s continuity and harmony (Glassberg 71-72, 113-152). Indeed, the very structure of historical pageants was designed to enact a sort of community harmony by involving as many locals as possible in the planning, building, and acting of the pageant. A particularly notable example of this technique of inclusion is *The Pageant and Masque of St. Louis*, staged by Percy MacKaye in St. Louis in May 1914, which had a cast of 7,000 and also involved local groups and individuals in publicity, costume design and construction as well as the mass chorus and orchestra (113-114, 159-164, 173-199; Prevots 13-27). In addition to instilling a sense of loyalty and commitment to the local community, historical pageants almost always attempted, in their final scenes, to propose solutions to local problems and to instill a larger sense of national pride and interconnectedness. For example, *The Pageant of Thetford*, staged by William Chauncey Langdon in Thetford, Vermont, in 1911, contained scenes wish suggested Thetford’s best hope for economic revival was working with the federal government and more thoroughly integrating itself into the
economies of neighboring towns and states (71-101, especially 76-78, 88-90). Such pageants were clearly different from the previous festivals which featured parades and orations, although pageants often contained a scene with a large procession (100, 143-145); looser celebratory forms were, at least for a time, displaced by the form of the mass theatrical which, as Prevots points out, often utilized modern dance techniques, of all things, to make its point (Prevots 131-152; Glassberg 145-147). Not all communities, of course, were able, or inclined, to stage a full-fledged historical pageant, but, as Glassberg notes, often times towns “added pageant elements to their customary holiday street procession” (150).

At roughly the same time as historical pageantry was becoming pervasive, Circuit Chautauqua was emerging as something of a parallel phenomenon. Like historical pageants, Circuit Chautauqua performances served to foster a sense of belonging to a national identity; acted, as one circuit president said in 1916, as “propaganda for patriotism” (Canning 33); and performed its organizers’ idea of ideal community. This community, Charlotte Canning says, was depicted as “predominantly homogenous, unconflicted, and stable” (39), similar to the way historical pageants depicted the communities being commemorated and celebrated. And like historical pageantry, Chautauqua “promised to inspire cultural, community, and individual improvement through performances of various kinds” (1). Unlike historical pageants, Circuit Chautauquas presented traveling, packaged, standardized entertainment that did not represent the
individual history or characteristics of the towns which contracted Chautauqua performances. Chautauqua performances, which lasted from three to seven days and were held under the iconic large tent, featured orators and lecturers (including celebrities like William Jennings Bryan), elocutionists who read plays, poems, and fiction (after 1913 fully mounted plays were produced on some circuits), various vocal and instrumental musical performances, activities for children, and novelty acts of all kinds, including foreign and exotic lecturers and musical acts (such as a Zulu choir), yodelers, birdcallers, impersonators, ethnic singing groups, and comic lectures (1-2, 14, 86-88). In all of these various elements, the stated Circuit Chautauqua goal was to provide “the best opportunity for expressing and strengthening each citizen’s commitment to her or his country” (34). During the height of Circuit Chautauqua’s popularity (1904-1930), between nine and twenty million people in hundreds, indeed thousands, of towns would see Chautauqua performances each year. For the most part, the towns to which Circuit Chautauqua performers traveled were rural communities with less that 10,000 people. Although the circuits reached every state, the Midwest was one of the Circuit Chautauqua’s main areas of operation (1, 10). It was, accordingly, “the idyllic life of small town America” which Circuit Chautauqua presented as the “manifestation of the ideal community” (77). Yet because of the rise of the automobile, radio, sound film, and changing audience tastes, Circuit Chautauqua declined rapidly in the late 1920s. The last Circuit Chautauqua performance took place in 1932 (219-221).
Many scholars, such as Merle Curti (*The Roots of American Loyalty*), John Higham (*Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925*), and John Bodnar (*Remaking America* and) have studied and noted the nativist trend that swept interwar America and that led to the extreme immigration restrictions enacted in the mid-1920s. The emphasis on national loyalty promoted by nativist groups and quasi-nativist groups like the American Legion (proponents of “100% Americanism” in the 1920s) fundamentally altered the character of local festivals. Glassberg notes that historical pageantry’s emphasis on local history was ill suited to this new ideological campaign, and as such the advocates for historical pageantry tried to modify their pageant guidelines to accommodate this new nationalism (203-227). Although pageants focusing on local history regained popularity after the First World War and flourished during the 1920s, the heyday of historical pageantry was passed, and by the 1930s historical pageantry was on the wane, although several productions such as *The Lost Colony*, staged annually in Manteo, North Carolina, bear a close resemblance to the pageants of the 1910s and 1920s (231-277). Circuit Chautauqua, by contrast, with its standardized programs and goal of promoting a homogenized, patriotic national culture was arguably better suited to such an era, but its emphasis of increasingly old-fashioned tastes, as well as the fact that its primary audience (rural towns) suffered much under the agricultural malaise of the 1920s as well as the Great Depression, led to its demise in the early 1930s (Canning 1, 39, 219-220). Meanwhile, pro-Americanization groups tried to manipulate other types of local
festivals into more patriotic modes. For example, John Bodnar traces several attempts to modify festivals commemorating local pioneers into festivals commemorating patriots, or patriotism in general, in Des Moines in 1876, Lindsborg, Kansas, from the 1920s on, and the Norwegian-American Centennial in St. Paul in 1925. Bodnar concludes that although patriotic expressions and symbols gained strength over time, the celebration of the pioneers nevertheless persisted, even if modified form (*Remaking America* 33-35, 52-53, 58-61, 75-77, 115-137).

Towards the end of the 1920s, and then especially in the early 1930s, nativist tendencies receded and locally-oriented festivals showcasing ethnic dancing, costumes, folksongs, and food began to return in force. During, and especially immediately after, this era, however, a new dynamic began to appear in local festivals, in that they took on more and more of an economic bent. Such was the case in Lindsborg, Kansas, which held a Swedish Hyllngings Fest in 1941 “meant to be both a tribute to Swedish pioneers that settled the region around Lindsborg and a device which would boost the town itself” (Bodnar, *Remaking America* 54). Similar developments are traceable in New Glarus, Wisconsin. Steven Hoelscher notes that New Glarus began to commodify its heritage as early as the 1930s and 1940s, hoping to use “the excellence of our heritage and tradition” to reinfuse the changing economy of the town (Hoelscher 106, 185). Tourism, in other words, began to be a prominent part of local festivals. While a town still celebrated itself, as had been the case with historical pageantry, the
town now also began to display its heritage for outsiders in hopes of improving local tourism. This heritage could be ethnic, as in the case of the examples of Lindsborg and New Glarus, but it could also be based on local products (such as Geauga County, Ohio’s Maple Syrup festival, started in 1926—“Geauga County Maple Syrup Festival”) or frontier (Marietta, Ohio’s 1938 sesquicentennial celebration—Bodnar, Remaking America 128-132) heritage. However, with the onset of the Depression and then the Second World War, the proliferation of such festivals was limited. These locally-oriented, tourism concerned festivals would have important ramifications for ethnically-oriented festivals; indeed, to an extent the story of the first several Tulip Time festivals is a major example of, and motivator, behind, the entwining of localism, tourism, and the celebration of ethnicity in community festivals.

With the end of the Second World War, local festivals continued to reappear across the country. At the same time, another festival trend also emerged in the wake of the postwar years. Richard M. Fried, in The Russians are Coming! The Russians are Coming! has labeled this trend “Cold War Pageantry.” Cold War Pageantry, in its highest manifestations, combined a number of previous festival trends. On the one hand, such pageants included large parades and demonstrations, particularly when held in large cities. Fried chronicles a number of such parades held in New York (and elsewhere around the country) on occasions such as Loyalty Day (initially started as an anti-May Day “counter celebration”), Law Day (which was scheduled in a way that made a competitor
with Loyalty Day), Flag Day, I Am An American Day, Armed Forces Day, Citizenship Day, and Constitution Day. Unlike the parades of the nineteenth century, these new parades were less about New York specifically and more about patriotism, Americanism, and anti-Communism in general. Parades held on these occasions generally involved--literally--a great deal of flag waving and marching units of various local veterans organizations, schools groups, Boy and Girl Scouts, law enforcement groups, and, particularly in the case of Armed Forces Day, military detachments (52-66, 87-98).

Although such hyperpatriotic parades, often without local reference apart from local patriotic organizations marching in them, were the most common manifestation of Cold War pageantry, a number of smaller towns staged more dramatic pageants. The most famous example of this type of pageant was probably the May Day pageant held in Mosinee, Wisconsin in 1950, when the American Legion dramatized the takeover of the town by Stalinists. This one-day event was a media sensation, and was imitated in a number of towns across the country, but this sort of festival did not exactly catch on and seems to have created an ambiguous atmosphere in any event, being more of a bizarre party than an actual educational experience of what life under Communism would be like (Fried 67-86). Historical commemoration also played a large role in Cold War pageantry, and Fried counts the opening of attractions like Colonial Williamsburg and the observance of various anniversaries of patriotic births (Washington, Franklin, John Marshall, etc.) and key national events (The Civil War centennial,
in particular) as part of this general pageantry trend (99-137). In all of these events, Fried argues, the goal was a civic and patriotic reawakening, goals very similar to those of the historical pageants a generation or so before. However, Fried notes, Cold War pageantry eventually collapsed under its own weight, as patriotic parades proliferated to such a point that widespread interest on the part of the public evaporated. As a result, observances of Armed Forces Day, I Am An American Day, Loyalty Day, and Law Day essentially killed each other off. Moreover, with the decline of McCarthyism and the lessening of the perceived threat of the Red Menace in the 1950s and 1960s, pageantry centered on anti-Communist agitation lost the grist in its mill, and with the Vietnam War and rise of the New Left in the 1960s, it ceased to be a major phenomenon (139-159).

Meanwhile, throughout the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s the trends toward local celebrations that had emerged in the 1930s continued as Steven Hoelscher puts it, to forge “common ground between heritage and a nascent tourism industry” (109). Larry Danielson observes that in most of the towns which began staging celebrations connected to ethnic heritage during and after the 1940s, the committee which organized the celebration was connected to the town’s chamber of commerce, clearly indicating an economic motive, whether or not the town in question was willing to openly declare it (“St. Lucia” 187-188). Increasingly, ethnic heritage and identity were a key component in tourist-geared town celebrations. These festivals, it should be noted, were largely limited to smaller, relatively ethnically homogenous communities that could plausibly perform a
single ethnic identity (such as, once again, the Swedish-dominated Lindsborg, Kansas, and Swiss-dominated New Glarus, Wisconsin), although larger cities of course held, and still hold, their own versions of ethnic festivals (such as the Polish Dyngus Day in Buffalo--Silverman 81). However, after the Second World War small town identity and economics became linked to ethnicity in a way they had not been linked before. Because at this point ethnicity becomes a major component of American festival culture, we should now take a moment to return to the nineteenth century and trace the trajectory of ethnic festivals and celebrations in America.

2.2 ETHNICALLY-ORIENTED FESTIVALS

As has already been mentioned, certain ethnic pride festivals, such as St. Patrick’s Day, have long been a phenomenon in the United States. In the nineteenth century, such ethnic celebrations could take several forms. On an obvious level, immigrant groups would stake out particular days to celebrate their particular heritage and accomplishments. Accordingly, holidays from the homeland would continue to be celebrated, certainly on a private, but sometimes on a somewhat more public level. For example, various Polish-American communities continued to celebrate the Polish holiday of Dyngus Day (Silverman 68-87). Swiss-Americans in New Glarus, Wisconsin, celebrated Swiss holidays such as Kilbi and Swiss Independence Day (Hoelscher 32-47). Norwegian-Americans in Minneapolis and St. Paul staged events in 1914 in recognition of the
one hundredth anniversary of Norwegian independence from Denmark (Schultz 15-16). Individual Swedish-Americans in Lindsborg, Kansas observed St. Lucia Day (Danielson, “St. Lucia” 194-195). Similarly, individual Dutch-American families continued to celebrate Kerstmis and Sinterklaas within the confines of their homes. And mid-nineteenth century German-Americans held celebrations on Schiller’s birthday (Conzen 56-58).

On a somewhat less obvious level, immigrant groups and their descendants would also hold celebrations of their heritage on American holidays. Conzen relates how the same mid-nineteenth century German Americans who celebrated Schiller’s birthday would also use the Fourth of July as a time to come together as Germans (45). Hoelscher similarly observes that mid-nineteenth century Fourth of July celebrations in New Glarus bore much more of a resemblance to Kilbi than to other Independence Day observances (30-32).

Glassberg notes that in such cases, “What public officials viewed as demonstrations of civic unity, local residents saw as opportunities to display their particular group identities and cultural preferences” (21); such expressions of group identity were often particularly evidence in the activities that followed the official ceremonies (23). Conzen points out that celebrations of this sort could serve to both preserve the group’s culture and also could be used to present a favorable image of that group to outsiders (55-56). Other nineteenth and early twentieth century displays of ethnic heritage could take place in tandem with larger city celebrations. For example, Italian- and African-Americans were
invited to march in Philadelphia parades in the 1880s and Swedish-, Dutch-, Welsh-, German-, and Scotch-Irish Americans were included in Philadelphia’s 1908 historical pageant in honor of the two hundred twenty-fifth anniversary of the city’s founding (Glassberg 22-23, 48-49). In such situations, however, the participating ethnic groups were usually meant by organizers to represent “vague abstractions, artistic symbols that harmonized with one another to present an idealized portrait of social relations” (135) rather than discreet groups to be celebrated in their own right. The members of those ethnic groups included in these festivities may have regarded their participation in a rather different way, however, perhaps thinking of the occasions as a chance to show their strength, power, and solidarity in--and within--the community (152).

As the nineteenth century progressed and the twentieth dawned, immigrant groups began to observe the anniversaries of their arrival in the United States. By 1870 the Swiss-Americans of New Glarus, Wisconsin, were celebrating the anniversary of their 1845 arrival. And they held massive festivals to commemorate the settlement of the town in 1895, 1905, and 1915 (Hoelscher 47-63). Swedish Americans in Bishop Hill, Illinois began celebrating their arrival in the United States and Bishop Hill’s founding with a sesquicentennial celebration in 1896. Swedish Americans continued to hold similar anniversary celebrations every few years until the Second World War. These celebrations included parades, displays of antiques and pioneer relics, and speeches concerning the difficulties, triumphs, and contributions of the Swedish American community.
Over time, band concerts, baseball games, and dances were added to the observances (Bodnar, *Remaking America* 44-48). Many Norwegian-Americans all across the Midwest held a massive festival in St. Paul, Minnesota, to observe the one hundredth anniversary of the coming of the first Norwegian immigrants which featured a visit of president Calvin Coolidge, patriotic exhortations, and the performance of *Pageant of the Northmen* (58-61; Schultz 1-20, 51-133). And, as we shall see in Chapter 3, the Dutch-Americans of Holland, Michigan held ceremonies and activities in 1872 and 1897 to celebrate the founding of the so-called Michigan *Kolonie*.

As the twentieth century dawned, ethnic festivals continued to follow these general sorts of trends, although Progressive activists began to take more of an interest in ethnic groups and helped to facilitate new forms of ethnic celebration. In the first place, ethnic groups often participated in historical pageants much the same way they had in nineteenth century parades in Philadelphia: as people in quaint costumes who had contributed to the building of the town but were now, for the most part, homogenized (Glassberg 49-50; 131). Circuit Chataqua presented similar displays of ethnic folk dancing; these dances, performed by children in generic-looking folk costumes performed “ethnic nostalgia” (Canning 65) rather than present the dances as living, vibrant traditions. Circuit Chautauqua’s performance of Israel Zangwill’s *The Melting Pot* in the 1910s and 1920s further speaks to the desire of the organizers to depict an America in which immigrants willingly, happily, and patriotically assimilated
to their new society (53-56). In larger cities, Settlement house workers and other social activists began to organize “folk festivals” under the belief that promoting folk dances and crafts would keep new immigrants from falling into more destructive pursuits. At the same time, these folk festivals were intended to help Americanize the new immigrants so even here, as in the historical pageants and parades, ethnicity was reduced to stereotypical costumes and customs while any sort of more fundamental connection was erased (or wished away, at any rate) in favor of loyalty to the new country. So, for example, a playground festival in Pittsburgh in 1909 featured children presenting various folk dances from around the world but ended with all the children performing a Maypole dance, thereby symbolically showing “the various nationalities eventually uniting as Americans within the framework of a white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant nation” (Glassberg 56-64, especially 60). Similarly, Jane Addams at Hull House in Chicago and Lillian Wald at Henry Street Settlement in New York organized dramatic activities as part of their program to integrate and assimilate immigrants to American life (Larabee 123-135).

The influence of Settlement house practices was of course limited to urban contexts. In rural settings, particularly in the upper Midwest, ethnic loyalty was essentially uninterrupted and unquestioned until the First World War. This allowed many Midwestern communities of a particular ethnic background to maintain many traditional customs, although those they no longer found useful were gradually discarded. Characteristic institutions, however, were often totally
uninterrupted both in the Midwest and elsewhere. In the midwest, one example of this phenomenon is the variety of Dutch Calvinist churches, more or less imported from the Netherlands, of which more will be said in the next chapter. Further south, the religious institutions imported by the Germans who settled in the Texas hill country during the 1840s and 1850s have thrived and persisted to the present (Jordan 112-114, 124-127). In fact, among churchgoing German-Americans in the Texas Hill Country today, only about one in eight “belongs to a church different from that of his immigrant ancestors” (125). The extent to which festivals of commemoration or of heritage celebration were held in such communities must have varied, but there has been relatively little attention paid to the festive practices of these communities. Two books edited by Frederick Luebke (Ethnicity on the Great Plains and European Immigrants in the American West) examine many aspects of immigrant towns on the Great Plains and in the West, but while paying close attention to institutions, language, politics, and agricultural practices in these towns, they have little or nothing to say about festive practices in this rural ethnic context. John Bodnar, Steven Hoelscher, and Larry Danielson are notable exceptions to this scholarly inattention, but apart from their studies it is difficult to glean any significant information about rural ethnic heritage festivals of this era. As noted above, immigrant groups brought their traditional holiday celebrations to the United States, observed anniversaries important to their town and nationality, and at times co-opted American holidays for displays of ethnic heritage. That having been said, local newspapers, if
systematically perused, would doubtlessly yield up a great deal more information on these rural festive practices. What Susan Davis says concerning parades in Philadelphia before the Civil War is applicable to ethnic celebrations in Dutch-American towns: “Although there has been little historical writing on” the subject, “newspapers provide a rich, detailed, and varied data source” (175).

The tendency of small, homogenous rural ethnic communities to be left to their own devices changed during the First World War and the 1920s. Rampant nativism, often hysterical in tone, targeted a number of German (and Dutch) Midwestern communities which refused to participate in the “One Hundred Per Cent Americanization” campaign. The results for these towns were traumatic: a church and private school in Peoria, Iowa, both of which still made use of the Dutch language, were burned down when other locals became suspicious about the loyalty and patriotism of these institutions (Van Hinte 761). Accordingly, various towns decided to show their loyalty in order to stave off such violent suspicion by either reducing the scale of preexisting ethnic heritage observances or staging festivals to demonstrate loyalty to the United States. The 1925 Norwegian Centennial festival in St. Paul, already encountered in these pages, is a good example of this phenomenon. John Bodnar observes that centennial planners “could not let the celebration pass without paying proper respects to the symbols and ideals of the nation state” (*Remaking America* 58). Schultz gives a more blunt assessment of the organizers’ representations of Norwegian-Americans: “Their representation of Norwegian American ethnicity was ‘safe’
and nonthreatening to American business, politics, and culture in the 1920s” and did not challenge “American ideology” (10). Bodnar and Schultz both agree, however, that in the end the patriotic displays were something of an overlay, and that the centennial nevertheless celebrated Norwegian pioneers, identity, folklore, and tradition (Bodnar, *Remaking America* 59-61, 71; Schultz 11). Nearly the opposite was true with multi-ethnic celebrations which were held during the 1920s and 1930s. These festivals, such as the “America’s Making Festival,” held in New York in 1921, brought various ethnic groups together, but were usually organized by people who were not themselves associated with any of the invited groups. John Bodnar asserts that these festivals “filtered out many of the personal and political symbols important to the minority group itself” and instead presented each ethnicity as “a narrow band of cuisine, dance, and dress” (*Remaking America* 70-71). All in all, these festivals “told of an inevitable and painless transformation of diverse folk cultures into a unified American culture” (71). In this regard, multi-ethnic festivals broadcast the same sort of message Circuit Chautauquas did through their folk dances or performances of *The Melting Pot*. If patriotism was something of an overlay in the Norwegian-American Centennial of 1925, ethnicity was arguably the overlay in these multi-ethnic celebrations: beneath the costumes, dances, and food, a “deeper” loyalty to the United States was being celebrated.
As nativism subsided in the late 1920s and early 1930s, a new awareness and appreciation of immigrant heritage and contributions to the nation emerged in the United States (Bodnar, *Remaking America* 72), and ethnic groups found themselves free to express their ethnicity again without detraction. By this point, though, at least in the rural Midwest, many of the original immigrants, and even their children, had largely been superseded by a new generation interested in their heritage, but not necessarily “in touch” with it in the same way their parents or grandparents might have been. Much has been written about generational theory (see Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory*; Kivisto, ed., *The Ethnic Enigma*; Kivisto and Blanck, eds., *American Immigrants and Their Generations*; Sollors, *Beyond Ethnicity*; and Sollors, ed., *The Invention of Ethnicity*), and there is no agreement on how different generations respond to their ethnic heritage. There is agreement, however, that different generations do respond differently to their ethnicity, if not in any uniform way. Still, one common thread among ethnic heritage celebrations as they developed in the 1920s, 1930s, and after the Second World War seems to emerge: ethnicity and ethnic heritage have been viewed not just as something to be proud of, but as definite advantages, particularly in economic terms. And so, beginning especially in the 1940s, community celebrations of ethnic heritage took on a new character. Articulations of ethnic heritage were no longer predominantly inward-directed, as had often been the case with the transplanted ethnic holidays and anniversary observances of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Instead, towns hoped, through displays of
their ethnocultural heritage and roots, to attract more and more people to their festivals, with the attendant economic benefits. Bodnar observes that between the 1940s and 1960s, celebrations of ethnic cultures were reinvigorated, but, as in the case of Lindsborg, Kansas, the symbols used in these celebrations, while not trying to connect their ethnic forbears to nationalism, were used “for commercial purposes that would benefit the town” (Remaking America 52-55, 138). Studying the developments in Lindsborg in more detail, Danielson demonstrates that, in the case of one Swedish celebration in the town, organizers took what had been a more private, inward-directed celebration--St. Lucia--and made it a public celebration during the course of the 1960s (“St. Lucia” 188, 192). Danielson observes that in making this tradition public, it meets a dual need of the people of Lindsborg: it meets an economic need in that it develops tourism, but it also meets a psychological need in that it reaffirms and asserts the town’s cultural distinctiveness (187-188). This use of tradition is observable in many Midwestern towns since the 1960s. Hoelscher and Ostergren, in their study of Swedish celebrations in Cambridge, Minnesota and celebrations of New Glarus’s Swiss heritage, include a map of the upper midwest which marks several hundred ethnic heritage celebrations in this region alone as of 1991 (89); Hoelscher relates that in 1987, there were more than 3,000 folk festivals in all the United States, many of them celebrating a particular ethnic heritage (13). Nearly all of these festivals emerged, or turned outward, after the Second World War. It is therefore interesting to note that before the war, no fewer than three Dutch communities
had started such heritage celebrations: Holland, Michigan (1929), and Pella (1935) and Orange City (1936), Iowa. This is in distinct contrast to Danielson’s claim that, of all the small town (less than 30,000) ethnic heritage festivals he surveyed in 1971, in all cases “the ethnic emphasis in public activities had developed no earlier than the 1940s” (“St. Lucia” 187-188).

It would seem, then, that ethnic festivals that arose in the 1930s and 1940s had a dual aim: to connect to a fading communal memory and to cash in on the community identity being connected with, a trend still observable in many local ethnic pride festivals, Dutch and otherwise. But, as Hoelscher points out, in some communities a further metamorphosis of the ethnic festival has taken place, particularly since the 1960s. The festival, as it were, has come to envelop the town. The performance and display of ethnicity has become something that takes place on a daily basis, creating “theme towns.” Hoelscher explains that this is due in large part to deindustrialization. In the case of New Glarus, Wisconsin, a shrinking dairy industry meant that the town suddenly found itself without its longtime primary means of income. Having already become something of a tourist attraction in the 1930s and 1940s, many in New Glarus decided to capitalize on this interest in “Little Switzerland” by making the town over to look like an “authentic” Swiss village. In this case, then, the town’s ethnicity has become the primary economic motor or, as Hoelscher puts it, “lifeblood” (184), of the community, something not all the locals are comfortable with (181-220). Similar ethnic “theme towns” dot the landscape of the upper Midwest, and indeed
that of the entire United States: Solvang, California (Danish); Frankenmuth, Michigan, Leavenworth, Washington, and Helen, Georgia (Bavarian), Kingsburg, California (Swedish) and Pella and Orange City, Iowa, and Lynden, Washington (Dutch) being several other examples (Danielson, “St. Lucia” 189-190; Hoelscher 17). Thus, in some cases, the ethnic festival has become the primary means of economic survival for a particular town, and with that has come an increasing emphasis on “authenticity” not necessarily present beforehand (Hoelscher 139-143, 213-220). Yet this “authenticity” is in part determined by the tourist. For instance, Lindsborg, Kansas, in deciding to hold a Swedish festival in the 1940s, discovered that none of the residents of Swedish descent remembered what Swedish costumes looked like. The town, as a result, conducted research into Swedish costumes using postcards and back issues of National Geographic. The resultant “authentic” costumes were what tourists presumably wanted to see, but, as it turns out, were the costumes of a province that none of the Swedish families that settled in Lindsborg had actually come from (Bodnar, Remaking America 55; Danielson, “Ethnic Festival” 159). This anecdote could be regarded as an example of Hobsbawm and Ranger’s concept of “invented traditions.” In Hobsbawm and Ranger’s formulation, invented traditions are activities that are construed as traditional, but which in actuality employ an invented or imagined version of the past for new purposes (Hobsbawm 1-15). Hobsbawm and Ranger, however, tend to regard invented traditions as top-down cultural impositions designed to in some way consolidate the position of the elites inventing the
tradition. While in the case of Lindsborg’s “authentic” costumes one could argue that they were part of an attempt to establish or symbolize “social cohesion or the membership of groups, real or artificial communities” (9), it is probably more useful to understand this anecdote as an example of what Handler and Linnekin refer to as a “reconstruction of tradition.” Handler and Linnekin argue that “traditional” and “authentic” are terms and concepts that are always defined in the present: “tradition is not a bounded entity made up of bounded constituent parts, but a process of interpretation, attributing meaning in the present though making reference to the past” (287). From this perspective, Lindsborg’s “authentic” costumes were defined as “authentic” and “traditional” in the present, and made reference to the past to meet a present concern: the need for bringing tourists to town and meeting their expectations. For now, the trends in the celebration of ethnicity discernible since the 1930s can be summarized as follows: since the mid-twentieth century, ethnic identity has been a source of community identity, but arguably has needed outside interests and audiences--in short, tourism and tourists--to galvanize, if not construct, itself.

It is within these contexts that Dutch heritage festivals commenced in the 1920s and 1930s: Holland, Michigan’s Tulip Time began in 1929, Pella, Iowa’s Tulip Time in 1935, and Orange City, Iowa’s Tulip Festival in 1936. Following the Second World War, Dutch heritage festivals would further proliferate until, by the 1990s, there were some two dozen such festivals in various Dutch-American communities around the United States. Chapter 3 will examine the emergence
and proliferation of these festivals and examine how these festivals reflect, interact, or differ from the general trends outlined above. Before focusing on these festivals, however, it is necessary to first provide an overview of Dutch immigration to the United States, as well as consider some of the features of Dutch-American society as it developed historically and continues to exist today.
CHAPTER 3

IMMIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT PATTERNS OF THE DUTCH IN THE UNITED STATES: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

In order to understand the Dutch-American society and culture which has produced the heritage celebrations this study is concerned with, it is necessary to pause to consider, in some detail, the history and society of Dutch immigrants and their descendants in the United States. As I will argue in the next chapter, the patterns discernible in Dutch immigration and settlement account, at least in part, for the emergence of Tulip Times and other Dutch heritage celebrations. Moreover, as several of these celebrations commemorate narratives of Dutch immigration to the United States both directly and indirectly, it is doubly important to consider the general patterns and characteristics of this immigration.

3.1 ANTECEDENTS

3.1.1 NEW NETHERLAND

The first phase of Dutch immigration to what is now the United States was, ultimately, barely a trickle. Dutch interest in North America began in earnest in 1609, following Henry Hudson’s voyage in that year. Initially, this interest was predominantly commercial, and as a result the first Dutch North American settlements, such as Fort Nassau (1614), were little more than
temporary trading posts along the Hudson and Delaware rivers. In 1621 the Dutch North American claims—by this time called New Netherland—were placed under the charter of the West India Company, which in 1624 founded the first permanent Dutch settlement, Fort Orange (now Albany). The following year, New Amsterdam was established; although it quickly became the largest of the Dutch settlements, in 1629 there were only 200 inhabitants, as the West India Company, which held near-absolute control over New Netherland, was uninterested in promoting settlement. Concerned that the West India Company’s policies were (1) failing to exploit New Netherland’s agricultural potential and (2) leaving the colony vulnerable to attack, the Dutch States-General pressured the Company in 1629 to open its holdings to wider, but still limited, settlement. Finally, in 1641, after a series of misfortunes (massacre of a Delaware Valley settlement in 1632 and the seizure of much of the Delaware valley by the Swedes in 1638), the Dutch States-General of the United Provinces “more or less forced the West India Company to busy itself with emigration, and to open to all colonists the trade in the New Netherlands and along the North American coasts” (Van Hinte 11).

Although now open to wider settlement, a war with local natives in 1643 served to decrease the number of settlers living in New Netherland: between 1643 and 1645 its colonial population fell from 3000 (2500 in New Amsterdam) to 1000 (500 in New Amsterdam). Moreover, English encroachment during the same period in 1650 forced the Dutch to abandon settlements they had established
in the Connecticut River valley. During the 1650s, the trend in New Netherland, under the leadership of Petrus Stuyvesant, was toward expansion: settlements along the Hackensack, Hudson, and Delaware multiplied, and a Dutch force reannexed New Sweden. Thanks to this expansion, the European population of New Netherland grew from 2,000 in 1646 to about 10,000 in 1664 (Dutch people comprising about two-thirds of this number). Then, in 1664, Charles II of Britain resolved to take control of New Netherland; thanks to Stuyvesant’s unpopularity and a vastly outnumbered colonial military force, New Netherland fell with barely any fighting. Apart from a brief Dutch reconquest of the area during the Third Anglo-Dutch war, 1664 marked the end of Dutch colonization in continental North America. However, Dutch influence on this area persisted despite the relatively small number of Dutch people who had settled there in several ways:

(1) Many towns retained their Dutch names, such as Nieuw Haarlem (Harlem), Breukelen (Brooklyn), Gravesende (Gravesend), Midwout (Midwood), Nieuw Utrecht (New Utrecht), Boswyck (Bushwick), Vlissingen (Flushing), and Jonkheer (Yonkers).

(2) The use of the Dutch language continued, and even expanded, after 1664. Harlem kept its official records in Dutch until the 1710s and the French settlement of Nouveau Palatinat, New York, began keeping its records in Dutch in the early 1700s (Van Hinte 40-41). In 1846, a new state constitution under discussion for New York “contained a serious suggestion that only people who spoke Dutch and English be able to vote” (Mulder 69). And Van Hinte reports
that in 1880 the Old-Dutch language (the Dutch brought to North America by the pre-1664 settlers) was “still very common in New York and New Jersey, particularly in the rural areas” (61), while as late as 1910 a scholar reported that there were still about 200 elderly people in Bergen County, New Jersey, who could speak Old-Dutch (62).

(3) Perhaps the greatest example of the persistence of the Dutch influence in New Netherland is the existence of the Reformed Church in America (or RCA); indeed, the survival of the RCA in large part accounts for the survival of the Dutch language in the British colonies and United States. Calvinist settlers in New Netherland who had belonged to the Gereformeerde Kerk, the official church of the Dutch Republic, organized the first RCA congregation in 1628; by 1664 there were 11 such congregations. Following the British takeover, RCA members were determined to preserve their denomination, its order of worship, and the use of Dutch during services. Although initially the British hoped to force the former New Netherlanders to join the Church of England, the Dutch were successful in keeping their church and language: Dutch was the only language used in the RCA until 1763, by which time there were over 65 congregations in the British colonies. By retaining their RCA affiliations, Dutch-speaking British subjects (and later Americans) had a forum where they could continue to actively speak Dutch; in towns where RCA members were a significant community, there might, for generations, be no call to use a language other than Dutch. Moreover, the tendency of RCA congregations to employ ministers from, or at least trained
in, the Netherlands, aided in the preservation of the Dutch language in church and community. After a century of British rule, the first English RCA services were introduced in 1763; in 1766 Queen’s (later Rutgers) college was founded to train RCA ministers, so that RCA ministers no longer had to be trained in the Netherlands; and in 1772 the RCA became formally independent from the Gereformeerde Kerk. By 1820, English was the dominant language used in the 187 RCA congregations, although Dutch was still used in some locations for sermons and singing. Still, the use of Dutch in the RCA had remained so strong for so long that, as Van Hinte estimates, “at the beginning of the nineteenth century Dutch was the language for ‘preaching the Gospel’ for approximately 250,000 Americans” (58).

The survival and flourishing of the RCA is particularly important to this study for three reasons. In the first place, later Dutch immigrants, like those of New Netherland, would prove determined to preserve the Dutch language and culture they brought with them. In the second place, the RCA would come to play a central role in Dutch-American sociocultural history, as will be shown shortly. Finally, as in the case of the New Netherlanders, the institutions of Dutch Calvinism would prove to be the main agents in the preservation of the language and customs of the 19th century Dutch immigrants.²

3.1.2 FROM 1664-1847

Between the British occupation and the American Revolution, organized Dutch immigration to North America was, according to Henry Lucas, “sporadic” and generally limited to “religious malcontents,” such as Mennonite and Quaker groups. These groups, upon arrival in the colonies, tended to assimilate with the majority culture around their chosen settlement site (Lucas, *Netherlanders* 11-16; De Jong 40-46). Apart from these groups, most Dutch immigration between 1664 and 1790 appears to have been comprised of individuals and families acting alone. Following the American Revolution, Dutch immigration to the United States remained limited. A group of Dutch political exiles came to the United States between 1788 and 1790 (Van Hinte 109). Between 1795 and 1846, a handful of Dutch families, serving as agents for the Holland Land Company, settled in western New York; while little immigration was associated with this venture, the western New York towns of Batavia, Busti, and Holland bear witness to the Dutch heritage of their founders (Lucas, *Netherlanders* 24-29).² In the

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² For more on the Holland Land Company, see William Chazanof, *Joseph Ellicot and the Holland Land Company*. 78
1830s and early 1840s, slightly larger groups of Dutch immigrants arrived in the United States. The Groninger Klaas Beukma and his family settled near Lafayette, Indiana, in 1835. A group of Gelderlanders settled in Clymer, New York, in 1845 and 1846. And a number of Zeelander farmers settled in western New York; by 1846, there was a community of about 200 of them in Rochester (Lucas, *Netherlanders* 34-41; Van Hinte 116-120). Although these settlements indicate that western New York drew Dutch immigrants of the mid-1840s, after 1847 the Midwestern states would hold far greater appeal for Dutch immigrants to the United States.

3.2 THE NEW IMMIGRATION

3.2.1 ECONOMIC AND RELIGIOUS BACKDROP

In 1847, significant numbers of Dutch immigrants began to arrive in the United States. Before this time, only a few hundred Dutch immigrants were recorded entering the United States in any given year; the average was less than 100 a year (ten Harmsel 1). In 1847, however, 2,631 Dutch immigrants came to the United States. Thereafter, apart from lulls during times of economic or political instability in the United States, the yearly totals of Dutch immigrants entering the United States would number in the thousands well into the twentieth century (Lucas, *Netherlanders* 641). Because the 1847 immigration is commemorated in several of the festivals this study is concerned with, it is necessary give some accounting of the causes of the “New Immigration,” as Lucas calls it, or the arrival of the “Young Branch,” as Van Hinte terms it.
Broadly speaking, two sets of factors, religious and economic, account for the increased motivation and willingness to leave the Netherlands for the United States. Both sets of factors arose because of conditions brought about by the reorganization of Europe in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars.

3.2.1.1 ECONOMIC FACTORS

Following Napoleon’s defeat, Belgium and the Netherlands were unified to create The Kingdom of the Netherlands, under the rule of the Dutch House of Orange. This new kingdom faced a number of problems from the outset, owing to a number of key differences between the Dutch north and Belgian south. The most obvious differences were of course linguistic (Dutch vs. French) and religious (Calvinist vs. Catholic), but there were also important economic and political differences. In the north, the economy was based on trade and commerce, both of which had been, and would remain, in decline for some decades, whereas the southern economy was characterized by expanding industry (Kossman 123-138; Arblaster 176-178; Hooker 122-123). Owing to these economic differences, the north favored low trade duties, while the south wanted protective tariffs (Huggett 53). The north, however, got its way in terms of trade policy because (1) Willem was Dutch and (2) the two representative bodies of the kingdom had been set up so that the numerically larger Belgians had less representation than the Dutch (Hooker 122-123). Beginning in the 1820s, the north’s economic problems were compounded by a series of agricultural misfortunes. In 1820, grain prices dropped and remained dangerously low for
more than a decade. In 1825 agricultural production was disrupted by floods. In 1826 livestock production was disrupted by cattle disease. And in 1828, 1829, and 1830, bad harvests further complicated the plight of Dutch farmers (Van Hinte 79-80; Kossman 152).

The troubled economic and agricultural situation in the north was exacerbated by the Belgian revolt, which began in 1830 owing, in part, to the unequal political representation, Willem’s 1819 decree that Dutch would be the official language of the south as well as the north, and the Kingdom’s favoring of Calvinists and merchants at the expense of Catholics and industrialists (Hooker 122-123; Roegiers and van Sas 307). Due to Willem’s heavy-handed military response, the Great Powers imposed a cease fire in 1831 and recognized Belgium’s independence, which Willem finally recognized in 1838 (Arblaster 179). The loss of the south meant that the north was cut off from what, to that point, had been the Kingdom’s main industrial region; moreover, the attempt to suppress the Belgian revolt brought the north to near bankruptcy. The government responded by raising taxes; the brunt of this tax burden was borne by farmers and laborers, precisely those people most affected by the pre-revolt economic and agricultural difficulties. On top of all these woes, a massive cholera epidemic broke out in 1832, wreaking further havoc on the north (Blom 289; Lucas, Netherlands 53, 471-472; De Jong 132-133, Swierenga, Faith 15,

4 For more on Dutch economic conditions in the early 19th century, see Richard T. Griffiths, Industrial Retardation in the Netherlands, 1830-1850 and Joel Mokyr, Industrialization in the Low Countries, 1795-1850.
Van Hinte 79-84; Wintle 27-28). Thus, by 1832 the economic picture of the Netherlands was unpromising, to say the least. These economic conditions would combine with preexisting ecclesiastical and theological conflicts to create an atmosphere which would lay the groundwork for markedly increased Dutch emigration to the United States.

3.2.1.2 RELIGIOUS FACTORS

Following the formation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, in 1815 the old Gereformeerde Kerk had been reorganized into the Hervormde Kerk (hereafter referred to as the NHK), which became the state church of the Kingdom. Under the new NHK system, the King, rather than representatives of local classes and congregations, appointed the presiding officer of the church’s national Synod, which in practice meant that all church leaders were effectively selected by the King and that all church laws required royal approval. This new top-down church hierarchy was at direct odds with the traditionally decentralized Dutch Calvinism of the Gereformeerde Kerk and did not sit well with many NHK members. The new church leaders selected by King Willem I also began to institute new measures which further upset more tradition-minded Dutch Calvinists. Traditional Dutch psalms were set aside for Evangelical hymns. The order of worship that had been used in Gereformeerde Kerk church services was modified, as was the formula that candidates for the ministry were required to assent to. Most importantly, the leaders of the NHK tolerated what some critics perceived as Enlightenment-influenced theology at the expense of traditional
Calvinist doctrines. For example, many NHK ministers de-emphasized--or even
denied, as some critics charged--such key doctrines as the total depravity of
humanity and the divinity of Christ (Van Hinte 88-89; Lucas, *Netherlanders* 42-
43; De Jong 129-130; Swierenga, “Introduction” 3; Wintle 27).

These various changes created the feeling among many NHK members
that the church was discarding its time-honored traditions and, more importantly,
core Calvinist doctrines. Critics quickly arose to call attention to the perceived
erosion and corruption of the Calvinist Reformed faith by the Enlightenment-
influenced “spirit of the age.” Pamphlets attacking the NHK already were
circulating in 1816; in 1823 an NHK minister seceded from the church; and
during the 1820s and 1830s a group of intellectuals led by poet Willem Bilderdijk
called on the NHK to return to the old Calvinist doctrines (Van Hinte 87-89;
Lucas, *Netherlanders* 43-46; Wintle 21-27). The most militant and widely
supported critics, and those most pertinent to this study, however, were a group of
NHK ministers and ministerial candidates who rose to prominence in the 1820s
and early 1830s. These ministers were outspoken in their opposition to NHK
policies. They insisted upon a return to traditional Calvinist practices and
doctrines (Van Hinte 89-91; Lucas, *Netherlanders* 44-50; Wintle 26; Blom 397).
Generally speaking, the main support for these ministers came from members of
poor and rural congregations--precisely those most likely to be affected by the
ongoing economic and agricultural difficulties (Van Hinte 91; Swierenga,
“Patterns” 36; Wintle 28). These congregants were tradition-minded, literate, and
avid readers of not just the Bible, but also traditional Dutch Calvinist theologians, as they had been for generations: Simon Schama cites a seventeenth-century observer of the Dutch people who described them as “so generally bred up to the Bible that almost every Cobbler is a Dutch doctor of divinity” (10). This intellectual background, combined with the economic difficulties of the era, made the rural Dutch doubly likely to take an interest in the criticisms their ministers were leveling against the new attitudes present in the NHK (Lucas, *Netherlanders* 44-46).

3.2.2 THE AFSCHEIDING OF 1834

Discontent and dissent within the NHK came to a head in 1834. Rev. Hendrik De Cock, who served a congregation in Ulrum, Groningen, had, for some years previously, been encouraging members of NHK congregations to keep their children from being baptized unless their minister advocated the old Gereformeerde Kerk teachings. This, obviously, was regarded by other ministers as meddling in affairs not his own. In early 1834, De Cock (1) denounced the singing of Evangelical hymns; (2) attacked two HNK ministers from his pulpit; and (3) performed unsanctioned baptisms for the children of members from other congregations. When De Cock refused to apologize for these actions, The Groningen classis expelled him from the ministry (Wintle 28-29). Later in the year, Rev. H. P. Scholte, minister of a congregation in Doeveren, Noord Brabant, was invited, without the consent of the Groningen classis, to preach in Ulrum. When one of his sermons was disrupted by local police and church authorities,
Scholte encouraged De Cock to secede from the NHK. Thus, on 14 October 1834 De Cock issued his “Instrument of Secession [Afscheiding] and Return,” somewhat arrogantly declaring his congregation the true remnant of orthodox Calvinism in the Netherlands (Brinks, *Letters* 13).

Upon returning to Doeveren, Scholte received word that he had been suspended from the ministry for unauthorized preaching in Ulrum and for refusing to use Evangelical hymns during services. Scholte and his congregation responded by following De Cock in seceding from the NHK. With two prominent NHK critics having seceded from the denomination, NHK authorities decided to move against other ministers who had expressed views similar to those of De Cock and Scholte. In 1835 Antonie Brummelkamp was suspended from the ministry and A. C. Van Raalte, who had just finished his ministerial training, was denied ordination. Van Raalte, Brummelkamp, and Rev. Simon Van Velzen all responded by joining De Cock and Scholte in seceding from the NHK. Inspired by the collective action of these ministers, other groups of disenchanted NHK members banded together; only a year and a half after De Cock’s “Instrument” was issued, over 125 Seceder congregations, most of them rural, had formed (Dutch Chicago 55). Collectively, these secessions became known as the Afscheiding; the people involved were referred to as “Seceders” (Lucas, *Netherlanders* 46-50; Van Hinte 90-91; Brinks, *Letters* 13; Swierenga, Dutch Chicago 55-58).
Official response to these events showed, as Blom puts it, “uncompromising hostility” toward the Seceders (390). At the NHK Synod of 1835, the Synodical president urged Willem I to curb the “illegal” meetings of Seceder congregations. The Seceders responded by appealing to Willem I for religious freedom, arguing they were merely returning to the ways of the Gereformeerde Kerk and appealing to the 1815 Constitution of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, which guaranteed religious liberty. Willem’s answer expressed displeasure with the Seceder congregations which, he said, “disturbed the peace.” Until it was certain the Seceders were not a threat to public order and did not threaten the rights of the official NHK, unauthorized congregations like those of the Seceders would not be tolerated. In 1836, the Seceder congregations held their own Synod and again appealed to the King for tolerance. Willem I replied that Seceder congregations could be permitted, but only if each congregation did not infringe on the rights of the NHK and if each congregation was approved by local authorities, the provincial governor, and appropriate national governmental department. In practice, these requirements made it impossible for any Seceder congregations to form legally, because infringement on the rights of the NHK included holding any religious service which in any way resembled the “characteristics, appearance, or form” of the services of any existing organization. Accordingly, Seceder ministers could not legally wear clerical garb; Seceder
services could not include baptisms or communion; and Seceder services could not bear any resemblance to NHK services (Van Hinte 91; Lucas, *Netherlanders* 50-52).

Despite these governmental restrictions, the Seceders continued to organize unsanctioned congregations and conduct illegal services. The Seceders saw their actions as necessary to living out their earnest religious beliefs; the authorities, however, regarded Seceder actions as problems of public order and social control (Wintle 29-30). The result was full-blown persecution. Both the national and local governments, at the request of NHK leadership, interfered with Seceder meetings, using the Napoleonic prohibition on gatherings of more than 20 as a pretext for disrupting services; at times such disruptions would involve sending detachments of soldiers to prevent Seceder meetings. Seceder ministers were fined for “unauthorized preaching;” several incurred heavy fines and or were even jailed for continued illegal preaching. Seceder families were forced to give quarter to soldiers, often the very ones who were sent to disrupt Seceder services. The community at large also disliked the Seceders. NHK ministers denounced the Seceders during sermons. Seceder congregants, most of them not well-off to begin with, risked dismissal by hostile employers. Unfriendly groups would gather outside Seceder meetings and make as much racket as possible, often involving verbal abuse of Seceders; when the authorities would eject Seceders from meeting places, these mobs would often throw mud at, or even physically attack, the Seceders. Sometimes these hostile crowds would smash
windows or doors of Seceder gathering places, invade the meetings, or even burn
down meeting places (Van Hinte 91-92; Lucas, *Netherlands* 52-53, 472; De

If the Dutch government hoped such measures would suppress the
Seceders, it was wrong; if anything, the persecution had quite the opposite effect:
Seceder congregations grew, and other NHK ministers defected to their ranks.
Van Hinte comments that the persecution itself may have persuaded others,
impressed with Seceder steadfastness in the face of difficulties and dismayed with
the unchristian attitudes of the NHK and government, to join the Seceders (92).
By April of 1836, there were some 20,000 Seceders in over 125 congregations
served by only 6 ministers, showing the bottom-up character of this movement
(Wintle 29; Swierenga, *Dutch Chicago* 55). As the 1830s wore on, government
officials increasingly criticized government harassment of the Seceders (Van
Hinte 93). Finally, in 1839, Willem I recognized the Seceders; when Willem II
came to the throne in 1840, he forbade the use of the army against the Seceders.
Attempts to gain legal recognition from local authorities after 1839, however,
continued to meet with mixed results, and ministers continued to be fined for
unauthorized preaching until 1848. And unofficial persecution, such as
discriminatory hiring practices, continued through the 1840s and into the 1850s
(De Jong 132; Swierenga, *Faith* 16; *Dutch Chicago* 58).5

5 For more on the *Afscheiding* of 1834, see Gerrit J. ten Zythoff, *Sources of
Secession*. 88
3.2.3 TOWARDS EMIGRATION

In addition to the economic and socio-religious difficulties of the 1820s and 1830s, further economic misfortunes beset the Netherlands in the 1840s. For instance, in 1840, 13 percent of the Dutch population needed public support; by 1850 this number had more than doubled to 27 percent. In 1846 the average working person made only 140 guilders a year, 20 of which would have gone to taxes on food alone (Lucas, *Netherlanders* 53). Then, in 1845 and 1846 the Netherlands fell victim to the potato blight. While the collapse in grain prices in the 1820s had been hard on Dutch farmers, the potato famine was a calamity, as the potato was the main staple of the diet of the rural and working Dutch population--the demographic to which the bulk of the Seceders belonged (Van Hinte 80-84, 94, 121-122; Lucas, *Netherlanders* 53-54; De Jong 132-133; Swierenga, *Faith* 19-26; Kossman 179; Blom 391). Still stinging from the worst days of religious persecution, enduring continued unofficial persecution, suffering from economic and agricultural difficulties, and facing the threat of famine, Seceder ministers and congregants began to discuss the possibility of emigration. In 1845, H. P. Scholte made inquiries to the Dutch minister of colonies about the possibility of emigrating to the Dutch East Indies. The colonial ministry told Scholte it was waiting to see how a settlement in Surinam fared before authorizing further emigration to the colonies; when half of the Surinam colonists were dead by mid-1845, any chance of Seceder immigration to the East Indies was closed off. Scholte also briefly researched the Boer settlements as a possible
immigration field, but concluded that going to South Africa would require far too radical a change in life for the Seceders (Van Hinte 121, 125; Lucas, *Netherlands* 57-58; Stellingwerf 32).

Later in 1845, Rev. Antonie Brummelkamp showed A. C. Van Raalte, who had emerged as one of the leading Seceder ministers, letters that described the religious freedom and cheap land available in the United States. Van Raalte, impressed by these reports and concerned about worsening conditions in the Netherlands, decided to promote immigration to the United States and, during the course of 1845-46, devised a plan to immigrate to America. Van Raalte and his like minded friends formed the Society of Christians for the Holland Emigration to the United States of North America (Van Hinte 123; Lucas, *Netherlands* 59).

The rules drawn up for the Society demonstrate that Van Raalte conceived of a very particular kind of immigration to, and settlement in, the United States. The seventh of the Society’s articles states that “The first mission is to create a Colony that is Christian [. . .] so that in that way not only a Christian consistory but also a Christian government will be present in order to uphold the law of God which is the foundation of every state” (Van Hinte 124). More insight into the character and organization of the planned settlement is contained in Society’s ninth article:

In order that not every immigrant may be burdened by the difficulties and the dangers and expense of land buying, and that the dispersion of colonists and the anticipated intrusion of strangers may be prevented, the buying of land shall take place by and in the name of the Association. The citizens of the colony will have an opportunity to buy these lands via contract of transfer signed by the double Committee in the name of the Association and for the same amount, plus expenses paid by the Committee. (124)
Dutch settlement the United States would thus be (1) characterized by a religious influence; (2) collective; and (3) isolated. This vision is further reinforced in a pamphlet Van Raalte and Brummelkamp wrote entitled “To the Faithful in the United States of America”:  

Our hearts’ desire and prayer to God is, that in one of those uninhabited regions in America there may be a spot where our people, by the culture of the land [. . .] may find their temporal conditions secured [. . .] [and] we would desire that they, settling in the same villages and neighborhoods, may enjoy the privilege of seeing their little ones educated in Christian schools. (Lucas, *Netherlanders* 61).

Little wonder, then, that Van Raalte referred to the proposed American settlement as a *Kolonie*. It should also be noted that the Society’s plans, thanks to the rapid purchase of land, would allow the immigrants to immediately begin working the land and thus earning money, which could in turn be used to finance the immigration of less financially able individuals who wanted to join the *Kolonie* (Lucas, *Netherlanders* 59). In other words, the Society’s articles laid out a plan that would allow for the systematic transplantation of Dutch communities to the United States.

Initially, the various Seceder leaders who had decided to immigrate regarded Wisconsin as the most promising location for settlement; in an 1846 letter, Van Raalte and Brummelkamp even designated Milwaukee as the assembly point from which the immigrants would decide where to settle permanently (Van Hinte 134; Lucas, *Netherlanders* 196; Stellingwerf 35). However, after Van Raalte and a group of 100 immigrants arrived in the United States on 17 November 1846, well-wishers along their westward progress convinced Van
Raalte that Western Michigan, for various reasons, would prove a better location for the *Kolonie*. As most of the rest of his party wintered in Detroit, Van Raalte and a small advance party investigated western Michigan. On 1 January 1847 Van Raalte’s party arrived on the banks of Black Lake (now Lake Macatawa), an inlet from Lake Michigan, an area then occupied by a semi-nomadic band of Catholic Ottawa and Congregationalist missionaries. Van Raalte decided that the first settlement in the *Kolonie* would be located along the banks of Black Lake, just to the east of the Ottawa village. Van Raalte promptly began purchasing land in the area, sent for the rest of his followers in Detroit, and began writing letters to the Netherlands urging the other potential emigrants, especially other Seceder ministers, to join him. Van Raalte named the *Kolonie*’s initial settlement Holland; by the end of 1848 Holland had been joined by the settlements of Graafschap, Groningen, Zeeland, Drenthe, Overisel, Vriesland, North Holland, and Noordeloos, all named in honor of the provinces or towns of origin of the initial settlers. By 1849, about 3000 Netherlanders were living in these communities and the surrounding farmland (Van Hinte 128-135; Lucas, *Netherlanders* 71-89; Stellingwerf 36).  

6 Stellingwerf relates that the party’s funds were almost exhausted by the time it arrived in Detroit, which also may have influenced Van Raalte’s decision on settling in Michigan (36).

7 For more on the Dutch settlement of west Michigan, see ten Harmsel, *Dutch in Michigan*; Lucas, *Netherlanders* 72-150; and Van Hinte 132-137, 143-151, 215-264. For firsthand accounts of the Dutch settlements in west Michigan, see Lucas, *Memoirs* all of volume i and ii.1-31. Firsthand comment on life in the Michigan settlement from 1848-1865 can be found in the correspondence between
Although about half of all Dutch immigrants joined Van Raalte in western Michigan between 1847 and 1857 (ten Harmsel 7), other Seceder groups settled further west. In 1847, H. P. Scholte chartered four ships to take about 900 colonists (not all of them Seceders) to the United States (Scholte and his family made the crossing via steamboat). The independent-minded Scholte, perhaps interested in starting and leading his own Kolonie, became convinced that Iowa, rather than Michigan, was the best place to found a settlement. In July 1847, Scholte and an advance group traveled from St. Louis to Iowa in search of an appropriate site; they found it in Marion county on 29 July. On 31 July Scholte plotted a new town, which he named Pella, after the city first century Christians had fled to when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem; like ancient Pella, Scholte conceived of the new town as a city of refuge (Van Hinte 137-142; Lucas, Netherlanders 165-178; Stellingwerf 31-48). Scholte had a vision for Pella almost identical to that of the Michigan Kolonie; indeed, he used the word “colonization” to refer to his venture. Scholte wrote that in his settlement, “the Word of God would form the sole rule, foundation, and guide” (Lucas 155); like Van Raalte, he also perceived the advantages that would follow if the immigrants remained together:

[...]

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[...]

in North America land is lying idle; there is complete freedom of religion and education; indeed, if the number of emigrants is at all considerable and if they stay together and buy some extensive stretch of land, even the control of the local government will remain in the hands of the colonists. (Lucas, Netherlanders 154)

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Jacob Harms Dunnink and Lucas Vredeveld (Brinks, _Voices_ 25-42); comment on life in the settlement from 1884-1909 can be found in the letters of Harm Avink (63-83).
Scholte hoped that Pella would become the nucleus of a larger Dutch-American community; while this would eventually be the case, it did not grow as quickly as the Michigan Kolonie; by 1849, just 250 Netherlanders lived in Pella, and over the next decade only about 600 more would arrive (Lucas, *Netherlanders* 187-188).8

Other Seceder immigrants found their way to eastern Wisconsin. Alto, which had been founded by a tiny group of Dutch farmers in 1845, received an influx of Seceders, led by Rev. Gerrit Baay, in 1847-48; by 1859 about 800 Netherlanders called the town home (Van Hinte 152, 294; Lucas, *Netherlanders* 201-203). The bulk of Dutch immigrants to Wisconsin in the late 1840s, however, followed Rev. Pieter Zonne to Sheboygan county, 50 miles north of Milwaukee. A small group of Zeelanders had started Cedar Grove in 1845; Zonne’s group arrived in 1847 and Cedar Grove became the nucleus of another notable group of Dutch settlements, of which Oostburg came to rival Cedar Grove in importance (Van Hinte 152, 293; Lucas, *Netherlanders* 205-208).9 A final key group of 1847 immigrants opted to settle in Illinois, starting the community of

8 For more on the settlement in Marion county, see Lucas, *Netherlanders* and Van Hinte 137-150, 265-292. For firsthand accounts of the Dutch settlement in Pella and Marion county, see Stellingwerf, *Iowa Letters* and the memoirs of H. Barendregt and G. van Horsen (Lucas, *Memoirs* ii.32-44).
9 For more on Dutch settlement in eastern Wisconsin, see Schreuder, “Americans by Choice and Circumstance.” For a firsthand account of the Dutch settlement of Alto, see the sketch by Henry Harmeling (Lucas, *Memoirs* ii.73-78). For firsthand accounts of the Dutch settlements in Sheboygan county and eastern Wisconsin, see the writings of Henry Harmeling, Pieter Daane, and John H. Karsten (Lucas, *Memoirs* 110-139).
Low Prairie. This was not a Seceder group, but it held similar religious ideas and soon congregations affiliated with the various Dutch-American denominations were organized. In 1849, another immigrant group settled at High Prairie, six miles north of Low Prairie. These settlements later became known as South Holland and Roseland, which are now part of the greater Chicago area (Van Hinte 154-155; Lucas, *Netherlanders* 227-228; Swierenga, *Dutch Chicago* 35-38).  

All of these various settlements were Dutch Calvinist, but in 1848 a large group of Dutch Catholics also immigrated to the United States. Led by Father Theodorus Van den Broek, they settled along the Fox River, between Appleton and Green Bay. The main centers of this lone Dutch Catholic enclave in the United States were, and are, Little Chute, De Pere, and Hollandtown (Lucas, *Netherlanders* 213-225; Van Hinte 173-183).  

### 3.2.4 DUTCH EMIGRATION/IMMIGRATION AFTER 1850

The group of Dutch immigrants that came the United States between 1847 and 1850 was only the beginning of the New Immigration. Swierenga conveniently divides the New Immigration into four phases. The first of these

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10 For firsthand accounts of the Dutch settlement of Low Prairie and High Prairie, see the reminiscences of John de Young, Harry Eenigenburg, and Gerrit van Oostenbrugge (Lucas, *Memoirs* ii.45-67). The correspondence between Teunis and Arie van den Hoek contains comment on life in South Holland from 1866-1882 (Brinks, *Voices* 105-132).

11 For more on the Wisconsin Dutch Catholic settlement, see Schreuder, *Dutch Catholic Immigrant Settlement in Wisconsin, 1850-1905*, “Americans by Choice,” and “Urbanization and Assimilation” and van Stekelenburg, “Dutch Roman Catholics in the United States.” For firsthand accounts of this settlement, see the writings of John Verboort, Arnold Verstegen, and C. A. Verwyst (Lucas, *Memoirs* ii.145-187). Contemporary comment on life in this settlement between 1850 and 1882 can be found in the correspondence of Arnold Verstegen (Brinks, *Voices* 43-62).
began, of course, in 1847 and lasted until about 1857; this phase was led by Calvinist Seceders and Catholics (Faith 35). Between 1857 and 1865, Dutch immigration waned, due in part to improved social and economic conditions in the Netherlands, but also due to the American Civil War. The second major wave of the New immigration began in 1865 and lasted until 1873. Swierenga observes that, unlike the wave of 1847-1857, this migration was influenced not so much by “push” factors like poor economics and religious difficulties, but instead by the “pull factors” of rapidly expanding economic prosperity and cheap and available land in the United States (28). The financial panic of 1873 curtailed Dutch immigration to North America for several years, but as another agricultural crisis arose in the Netherlands in the 1870s, farm laborers emigrated in significant numbers. As in the second wave, immigrants to the United States during this third phase, which lasted from 1880 to 1893, were drawn by the lure of cheap land, especially in the Midwest, Washington, and California (Swierenga, Faith 29; Blom 405; Brinks, Voices 6-7). The Panic of 1893 temporarily curtailed, and would mark a change in the character of, Dutch immigration to the United States. When the fourth wave began in 1903, it was not dominated, as the previous three phases had been, by farm laborers from the provinces of Zeeland, Groningen, and Friesland (with farm laborers from Drenthe, Overijssel and Gelderland also coming in large numbers). Instead, the new immigrants came from Noord and Zuid Holland, provinces which were much more industrial and urban. As a result, these immigrants, upon arriving in the United States, preferred to settle in the
urban Dutch communities in Grand Rapids, Paterson, and Chicago instead of the rural communities earlier immigrants had gravitated toward (Swierenga, Faith 35-69; Brinks, Voices 8). A fifth wave might have started after the First World War, but by then stricter immigration policies were being put in place, so many Dutch people who would have come to the United States were unable to do so (Lucas, Netherlanders 477). This was also the case after the Second World War: between 1945 and 1965, about 425,000 Netherlanders emigrated, and although the United States was the preferred destination for most of them, only about 80,000 were permitted entry. Most of the rest went to Canada (152,000), Australia (125,000), South Africa (33,500) and New Zealand (24,000) (De Jong 183). Besides increasing the overall numbers of Dutch-Americans, ten Harmsel comments that each of these infusions of new immigrants helped keep “a sense of Netherlandic provincial culture alive, when the second and sometimes third generations of Dutch Americans might otherwise have assimilated into the mainstream culture more rapidly” (15).

As these successive waves of immigrants arrived in the United States, they gradually began to spread out from the initial settlements and form communities in other nearby areas; alternatively, various factors might induce Dutch immigrants, or their children and grandchildren, to move further afield and start new Dutch enclaves. Between 1847 and 1857, Dutch immigrants gravitated

12 For more on economic and agricultural influence on Dutch immigration during and after the 1870s, see Hille de Vries, “The Labor Market in Dutch Agriculture and Emigration to the United States.”
toward the initial Seceder settlements. By 1860, there were eight main Calvinist Dutch enclaves: West Michigan, Pella (Iowa), Roseland and South Holland (Illinois), Alto and Sheboygan county (Wisconsin), and Clymer and Pultneyville (New York) (Swierenga, Dutch Chicago 52-53). By the time of the second and third phases of the New Immigration, these initial settlements were beginning to fill up; if the new immigrants, or the children of the first wave, wanted land, it became necessary to found new settlements. Accordingly, from the initial Kolonie settlements, the Dutch began to spread out further over west Michigan. During the second half of the nineteenth century, Grand Rapids came to rival Holland as the population and cultural center of the West Michigan Dutch; it remains so to this day (Brinks, Voices 7). Eventually, Dutch settlements in West Michigan extended east from Saugatuck on Lake Michigan to Kalamazoo, north to Grand Rapids, and then northwest to Muskegon. Today, of the four million Americans of Dutch heritage, about 450,000 of them live in this area of West Michigan (ten Harmsel 26).13

Much the same process took place in eastern Wisconsin and northeast Illinois. From Alto, Oostburg, and Cedar Grove, the Dutch spread out to form significant settlements in Gibbsville, Amsterdam, Waupun, and Sheboygan itself;  

13 For firsthand accounts of Dutch settlement in and north of Muskegon, see the writings of Cornelius Steketee, Josias Meulendyke, Benjamin Telman, and Lucy Klooster (Lucas, Memoirs ii.265-284). Contemporary comment on life in the Grand Rapids Dutch community from 1871-1873 can be found in the correspondence of the Jan Wonnink family (Brinks, Voices 242-252), from 1873-1874 in the letters of Willem Hendrik de Lange (408-420), from 1873-1931 in the correspondence of the Marten J. Schoonbeek family (252-290), and from 1910-1916 in the letters of Aart Plaisier (319-336).
a prominent Dutch community also emerged in Milwaukee. Similarly, from South Holland and Roseland, the Dutch expanded to the west, forming communities along the Illinois-Indiana border in Lancaster, Illinois, and Highland and Munster, Indiana. Beginning in 1856, a large Dutch community also formed in Chicago proper; so many Dutch lived in the neighborhood centered along Ashland Avenue between Harrison Street to the north and 15th Street to the south, many of them Groninger, that the neighborhood became known as the Groninger Hoek as early as 1859 and would remain a prominent Dutch neighborhood into the 1930s and 1940s (Swierenga, Dutch Chicago 12-30). As Chicago grew, the Dutch moved into some of the western and southwestern suburbs, including Douglas Park, Evergreen Park, Elmhurst, Oak Lawn, and Palos Heights (30-40); as of 1980, there were about 250,000 people of Dutch descent living in Chicago (xviii).

Dutch expansion in Iowa followed a somewhat different pattern. Although the Dutch spread out from Pella and lived in significant numbers in Peoria, Sully, New Sharon, Oskaloosa, and other surrounding communities, affordable land in Marion county was in short supply by the 1860s. In 1870,

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14 For more on the Wisconsin Dutch settlements, see Lucas, Netherlands 196-201, 358-361 and Van Hinte 293-206. For firsthand accounts of Dutch settlement in Milwaukee, see the reminiscences of Jacob Quintus, Jan W. Bosman and Johannes Remeeus (Lucas, Memoirs ii.79-109). Contemporary comment on life in the Milwaukee Dutch community from 1850-1867 can be found in the correspondence between Pieter and David Lankester (Brinks, Voices 338-361).

15 For more on these Dutch settlements, see Swierenga, Dutch Chicago and Lucas, Netherlands 322-330.

16 Contemporary comment on life in the Chicago Dutch community from 1900-1954 can be found in the letters of Klaas Niemeijer (Brinks, Voices 303-319).
Henry Hospers, who had emerged as one of Pella’s business and political leaders, led a group from Pella to Sioux County, in the northwest corner of the state. Here the settlers founded the town of Orange City and established large settlements in Maurice, Alton, Hospers, Sioux Center, Rock Valley, Hull, Boyden, Inwood, Sanborn, and virtually every other town in Sioux and the surrounding counties. Given the availability of quality land, the northwest Iowa enclave grew rapidly and has emerged as a notable Dutch-American educational and cultural center.17

As the Dutch immigrant and Dutch-American population continued to swell, Dutch enclaves started to range further afield. In Michigan, a Dutch community formed in the north-central part of the state, in Missaukee county, with Vogel Center, Mcbain, and Lucas emerging as the community’s primary towns.18 In Wisconsin, a group from Sheboygan county crossed the state and settled near Baldwin, eventually forming a sizable community within that town.19

A group of settlers moved to southeastern Minnesota and started the town of

17 For more on these settlements, see Lucas, *Netherlanders* 330-351 and Van Hinte 463-522. For firsthand accounts of the Dutch settlement in northwest Iowa, see the memoirs of A. J. Betten, Henry Hospers, Hendrik Jan van der Waa, Arie van der Meide, T. Wayenburg, James de Pree, D. Gleysteen, and Joe Rexwinkel (Lucas, *Memoirs* ii.204-254). The correspondence between Teunis and Arie van den Hoek contains comment on life in Orange City from 1882-1884 (Brinks, *Voices* 132-137); the correspondence between Ulbe and Maaike Eringa contains comment on life in Hull from 1892-1893 (171-179).
18 For more on these settlements, see Lucas, *Netherlanders* 293-306 and Van Hinte 535-541. A firsthand account of the Dutch settlement in northern Michigan can be found in the memoirs of Jan Vogel (Lucas, *Memoirs* ii.255-265). Contemporary comment on life in the northern Michigan settlement from 1894-1928 can be found in the letters of the Frederik Diemer family (Brinks, *Voices* 84-102).
19 For more on this settlement, see Lucas, *Netherlanders* 358-361, Van Hinte 547-550.
Greenleafston, the first Dutch enclave in Minnesota. Other Dutch settlers from eastern Wisconsin, western Michigan, and northwest Iowa moved to the southwest corner of Minnesota; initially they settled in the tiny town of Leota, but soon came to form the dominant group in the nearby towns of Edgerton and Chandler. Today, the southwest Minnesota Dutch community includes groups in Hills, Luverne, Holland, Pipestone, and Worthington with Edgerton constituting the center of this settlement. After hardly a decade of settlement, some Dutch began to feel that Sioux county was already too crowded; accordingly, a group moved further west and started a Dutch enclave in the southeast South Dakota counties of Charles Mix and Douglas. Platte, New Holland, and Harrison are the main towns in this community. Further South Dakota Dutch settlements were also founded in the northern part of the state, in Campbell county (and just over the border in Emmons County, North Dakota).

In the later decades of the nineteenth century, Dutch settlements formed that were not necessarily “daughter colonies” of prior settlements in the way many of the aforementioned communities were. Several Dutch colonies formed

20 For more on the Minnesota settlements, see Lucas, *Netherlanders* 361-376 and Van Hinte 547-550, 568-578. For a contemporary account of Dutch settlement in various parts of Minnesota, see the description of Herman Borger (Lucas, *Memoirs* ii.195-203).

21 For more on the South Dakota settlements, see Lucas, *Netherlanders* 376-386 and Van Hinte 559-568. For firsthand accounts of the Dutch settlement in southeast South Dakota, see the writings of Frank le Cocq, Christina Plemp, and Stephen J. Harmeling (Lucas, *Memoirs* ii.310-340). The correspondence between Teunis and Arie van den Hoek contains comment on life in Harrison from 1884-1895 (Brinks, *Voices* 137-153).

22 For more on these settlements, see Lucas, *Netherlanders* 386-390. For firsthand comment on the Dutch settlements in Campbell county, see the accounts of G. W. Reskers and J. van Erve (Lucas, *Memoirs* 341-360).
on the east coast, apparently comprised of immigrants who simply stopped there instead of heading further west to Michigan, Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois, Minnesota, or South Dakota. One group settled in Whitinsville, Massachusetts; another settled in Sayville, on Long Island.23 Far and away, the largest Dutch east coast enclave grew up in and around Paterson, New Jersey; in fact, for a time, Paterson was second only to west Michigan in terms of the number of Dutch immigrants who settled there.24 Herbert Brinks speculates that the Dutch settlement in Paterson may have had to do with a change in immigrant demographics: the immigrants who settled there were too poor to continue west, as had their slightly more affluent predecessors (Voices 6). Whatever the case, these new settlements became part of the larger Dutch-American community, as they quickly started congregations in the various Dutch-American denominations and often had relatives who lived in the Dutch settlements located further west (15).

Other new Dutch settlements were established in central and north central Minnesota during the last part of the nineteenth century. Most of these settlements were conceived and promoted by Theodore Koch, a Dutch-born land

23 For more on Dutch settlement in Whitinsville, see Lucas, Netherlanders 307 and Van Hinte 738-739. For more on Dutch settlement in Sayville, see Lucas, Netherlanders 234-235; Van Hinte 312; John Hoffman’s account (Lucas, Memoirs ii.285-290); and Lawrence J. Taylor, “The Honest War: Communal Religious Life in a Dutch-American Protestant Community” and Dutchmen on the Bay.

24 For more on Dutch settlement in Paterson, see Lucas, Netherlanders 235, 321, 328 and Van Hinte 349-352, 811-831. Contemporary comment on the Dutch community in Paterson from 1893-1911 can be found in the correspondence of Tjerk and Maartje Zondervan (Brinks, Voices 1893-1911).
Koch’s settlements of Prinsburg and Clara City in central Minnesota were successes and flourish to this day; however, Koch’s attempts to settle Dutch immigrants in Pine County eventually failed, although for a time there were two active Dutch settlements in Friesland and Groningen. Many of the Dutch who came to these Minnesota settlements were, like those on the east coast, immigrants direct from the Netherlands. Such was also the case with Fulton, Illinois. Located along the Mississippi, directly across from Clinton, Iowa, Fulton and environs is, apart from the Chicago-area settlements, the only other area in Illinois the Dutch settled in any notable numbers. Other new Dutch settlements emerged during this period in Kansas, Nebraska, and Montana; although small numbers of Dutch-Americans can still be found in Kansas and Nebraska, the Montana settlements (Manhattan, Churchill and Amsterdam, in particular) have retained much more of their vitality.

At the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries, the Dutch found their way to the west coast, particularly Washington and California. Significant Dutch settlement in Washington began in the 1890s and attracted

25 For a contemporary account of Dutch settlement in various parts of Minnesota, see Lucas, *Memoirs* ii.195-203. For more on Koch and the Pine County Dutch settlements, see Robert P. Schoone-Jongen, “Cheap Land and Community” and his forthcoming dissertation (University of Delaware, 2007); Lucas, *Netherlanders* 447; Van Hinte 621-628.

26 For more on the Dutch settlement in Fulton, see Lucas, *Netherlanders* 330 and Van Hinte 553. A firsthand account of the Dutch settlement in Fulton can be found in the writings of George de Bey (Lucas, *Memoirs* ii.67-72).

27 For more on the Dutch in Kansas and Nebraska, see Lucas, *Netherlanders* 351-358 and Van Hinte 541-547. For more on the Dutch in Montana, see Lucas, *Netherlanders* 402-412; Van Hinte 693-702; and Kroes, *The Persistence of Ethnicity.*
many Dutch from the settlements in South Dakota and Montana, which experienced several crop failures in the 1890s (Lucas, *Netherlands* 416). Oak Harbor contained the first major Dutch-American community in Washington, but subsequently Lynden came to be the dominant Dutch-American settlement in the northwest part of the state. Today, there are also notable Dutch enclaves in Bellingham and Mount Vernon. To the east, the Dutch also settled in the Yakima Valley; today, Sunnyside is the main town in this Dutch community.\textsuperscript{28} In California, the Dutch settled in significant numbers in the towns of Redlands, Ontario, Ripon, and Bellflower. Twentieth-century events helped fuel the growth of these communities: during the Depression and subsequent farm crises, many Dutch-Americans moved to these settlements hoping for better opportunities, and after the Second World War, many of the Dutch immigrants who arrived in the United States elected to move to the California settlements rather than the older Dutch-American communities.\textsuperscript{29}

By the beginning of the twentieth century, Dutch-American enclaves could be found from coast to coast: there were, according to Robert Swierenga, about 100 Dutch-American enclaves in 1900. Most of the Dutch immigrants who came to the United States before 1900 settled in these enclaves. Swierenga reports that in 1850, 72 percent of Dutch immigrants were living in only sixteen

\textsuperscript{28} For more on the Dutch settlements in Washington, see Lucas, *Netherlands* 416-426 and Van Hinte 679-693. The correspondence between Onno and Klaaske Heller contains comment on life in the Oak Harbor settlement from 1896-1909 (Brinks, *Voices* 159-171).

\textsuperscript{29} For more on the Dutch settlements in California, see Lucas, *Netherlands* 442-444.
counties; in 1870, 56 percent were living in only eighteen counties (“Patterns” 35). All told, three-quarters of the Dutch who arrived in the United States between 1846 and 1900 went to Calvinist Dutch enclaves (Dutch Chicago 53). Moreover, 134 of 1,156 Netherlander municipalities accounted for nearly 75 percent of emigrants between 1820 and 1880 (“Patterns” 32). Such figures concerning Dutch immigrant places of origin and destination speak to what Swierenga calls the “chain migration” character of Dutch immigration to the United States. In this pattern of “chain migration,” immigrants came from relatively few areas in the Netherlands and settled in relatively few areas in the United States; in both cases, the choice to leave and choice of where to settle were influenced by family and friends who had previously immigrated to the United States. Dutch emigration and immigration can thus, Swierenga says, “be understood as a series of local movements, a sort of migration chain, tying together specific Dutch villages and specific American communities” (32) or “a regularized and rational transplanting of families and communities from a relatively few Old Country villages” (“Introduction” 5). In that regard, Dutch emigration/immigration is similar to the patterns immigration historians have noted among other European groups that settled in the United States. In contrast to earlier theories about the “uprooting” and subsequent assimilation of immigrants,30 many scholars are coming to understand immigration as a process of “transplanting” and subsequent acculturation which nevertheless allowed

30 Among the most prominent examples of these earlier theories is Oscar Handlin, The Uprooted.
certain institutions, customs, or other traits brought from Europe to survive.\textsuperscript{31} Swierenga asserts that “Transplanted communities were the norm rather than the exception” (\textit{Faith} 6). Thus, as spread out as they may have been geographically, the Dutch in the United States were accordingly joined by bonds of friend and family that can be traced back to the Netherlands. These common bonds allowed the geographically disparate Dutch enclaves to form--and to maintain to this day--a common Dutch-American society and culture which has been dominated, molded, and defined in large part by the churches Dutch immigrants founded upon arrival in the United States.

3.2.5 IMMIGRATION VS. SETTLEMENT

Clearly, both religion and economics played a role in the initial decision to immigrate, at least in the 1840s. There has been, and continues to be, a debate over which of these ultimately caused the New Immigration. Many scholars emphasize the economic aspects; some emphasize religion. Of note, when commemorated in Dutch heritage festivals, the religious aspect is usually emphasized. Scholars and festivals alike generally seem to agree that both sets of factors must be taken into account, but differ on which ultimately was the root

\textsuperscript{31} Other examples of studies which demonstrate transplantation or chain migration patterns include Robert Ostergren, \textit{A Community Transplanted} (Swedes); John Bodnar, \textit{The Transplanted} (various urban immigrant groups); Yda Schreuder, \textit{Dutch Catholic Immigrant Settlement in Wisconsin} (Dutch Catholics); Walter D. Kamphoefner, \textit{The Westfalia}ns (Germans); John J. Gjerde, \textit{From Peasants to Farmers} (Norwegians); Josef J. Barton, \textit{Peasants and Strangers} (Italians, Rumanians, and Slovaks); Anne Kelly Knowles, \textit{Calvinists Incorporated} (Welsh); Hoelscher, \textit{Heritage on Stage} 27 (Swiss); and David G. Vanderstel, “Dutch Immigrant Neighborhood Development in Grand Rapids, 1850-1900.”
cause. Henry Lucas states that “The New Immigration which began in 1846 and 1847 was essentially religious and only incidentally economic in origin” (Netherlanders 244). Arnold Mulder argues that by 1847, the Seceders “had virtually won their battle for freedom of worship” and, had they been economically able, instead of emigrating “would have fought it out with their own government on the spot and challenged official stupidity to a showdown” (114). Mulder thus argues that the emphasis on the religious aspects of the immigration is a case of revisionist history:

It would be natural for people driven by hunger to rationalize their motivation as spiritual, when after the lapse of years hunger had been appeased and not only physical needs had been supplied but comforts and the graces and amenities as well; and it would be natural for their descendants to follow them in this line [. . .] it is much more attractive to dare all for the cultivation of immortal souls than for the nourishment of mortal bodies, much more dramatic to suffer for an intangible ideal than for bread and meat and raiment. (113-114)

De Jong similarly notes that, besides the fact that official persecution was all but over by 1847, the Seceders never constituted a majority among Dutch immigrants to the United States; accordingly, “it is obvious that religion was not the only factor influencing the Great Migration” (132). For similar reasons, Brinks observes that religious factors “could not, then, have been the immediate cause of their expatriation” (Voices 13). Some demographic, economic, and social data strongly support the assertion that economics, rather than religion, was the cause behind the New Immigration. Firstly, where stated reasons for going to the United States are available, 90 per cent of emigrants/immigrants listed economics
as their primary motive (ten Harmsel 11). Secondly, the religious affiliations of Dutch emigrants are telling. In 1849 and 1909, the Dutch population was religiously divided as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Denomination</th>
<th>1849</th>
<th>1909</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NHK</td>
<td>55 percent</td>
<td>44 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>38 percent</td>
<td>35 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seceder</td>
<td>1.3 percent</td>
<td>9.3 percent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Swierenga, *Faith* 17-18; “Patterns” 38)

Between 1835 and 1880, however, percentages of Dutch emigrants was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Denomination</th>
<th>1849</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NHK</td>
<td>65 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>20 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seceder</td>
<td>13 percent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(“Patterns” 38)

These numbers clearly discourage the notion that religion was the motivating factor for most emigrants, as the majority were not Seceders. It would seem, then, that economics, more than religion, was the cause behind the New Immigration’s various waves (“Patterns” 36; *Faith* 19; *Dutch Chicago* 52-53).

Although the factors which caused Dutch individuals to decide to emigrate seem to have been predominantly economic, once in the United States the enclaves the immigrants founded developed an undeniably religious character heavily influenced, if not dominated, by Seceders and their leaders. In the first place, the figures cited above show that Seceders were overrepresented, percentage-wise, among Dutch immigrants. Furthermore, Swierenga notes that, among the first wave of the New Immigration, most of the immigrants were from
areas of heaviest Seceder activity (“Patterns” 36; *Faith* 19); moreover, Swierenga points out, 80 of every 1000 Seceders left for the United States during this time period, compared to 4 out of every 1000 NHK adherents (*Faith* 17). In the second place, the first immigrants were led by Seceder ministers like A. C. Van Raalte, Seine Bolks, and Cornelius Van der Meulen (Michigan), H. P. Scholte (Iowa), and Gerrit Baay and Pieter Zonne (Wisconsin). These ministers planned, and in the initial years led, the Dutch settlements in the United States, giving them a distinct religious character. Brinks observes that the patterns these ministers and their initial settlements set “became paradigmatic for those that followed, and the model persisted into the twentieth century. Each new community dominated a chosen landscape of contiguous farms and a village center with Reformed churches and district schools” (*Voices* 2). Finally, the vast majority of subsequent Dutch immigrants chose to either settle in, or enter into religious fellowship with, these initial Dutch enclaves. Even NHK members who immigrated generally gravitated towards the Seceder-founded and dominated enclaves, perhaps owing to the convenience and/or comfort of being able to continue to use the Dutch language, even if that meant attending Seceder-run churches. It is also quite possible that immigrational “chain effects” crossed the NHK/Seceder divide, so the presence of relatives and former neighbors may also have drawn NHK immigrants to Seceder-founded and dominated communities. Seceders, for their part, apparently welcomed NHK immigrants to their enclaves; then as now, there is psychological and economic strength in numbers.
Accordingly, while there may be disagreement over what caused Dutch immigration to the United States, there is a unanimity of opinion that the character of the settlements immigrants founded once in the United States were decidedly religious. Religion may have been a secondary factor in the actual decision to immigrate, but the religious factor made itself felt once in the United States. Van Hinte notes:

[. . .] religion certainly gave a definite and peculiar character to this emigration. It is because of religious considerations that many left their fatherland in groups rather than individually [. . .] It surely is not by accident that precisely those Dutch colonies in the United States came to great prosperity where, next to material motives, the prime mover had been religious motives. Still today these settlements are characterized by their religious quality (130).

Similar sentiments are expressed by Lucas (Netherlanders 42), ten Harmsel (11-12), and Brinks (Voices 14). Swierenga summarizes the religious influence in and on Dutch-American enclaves as follows:

[Because Seceders] emigrated in large groups in the early years and founded rural colonies, they perpetuated their ideals and group identity [. . .] Even though up to half of the Dutch immigrants did not settle in religiously oriented colonies, these communities retained a dominant influence for generations because of their strong clerical leaders, educational and cultural institutions, and ethnic newspapers that circulated far and wide. (“Patterns” 38-39)

Thus, while economics may have caused the New Immigration, religion and “chain migration” characterized it and the subsequent history of Dutch-American communities in the United States. Perhaps the descendants of Dutch immigrants have, as Arnold Mulder argues, over-valued religion as a “push” factor in the decision to leave the Netherlands. Seceder ministers initially exerted material
control over the Dutch-American enclaves, after all, and leaving one’s homeland in search of religious freedom is a more noble motive than leaving to improve one’s economic lot. Nevertheless, once in the United States, religious concerns came to dominate the Dutch-American community. This remains the case to the present in many ways.

3.3 THE DUTCH-AMERICAN COMMUNITY

Despite geographical diversity, both in terms of the provinces Dutch immigrants came from and the locations in the United States they settled in, Dutch-Americans have remained remarkably close-knit. It is, therefore, possible to speak of the features of the entire Dutch-American community. The unique, characteristic, and most influential features of this community are directly related to the forces that have allowed Dutch-Americans to remain closely connected. David G. Vanderstel summarizes the three main unifying forces among Dutch immigrants and Dutch-Americans: “the Dutch were brought together by the ethnocultural community maintained through chain migration, the transplantation of institutions, and communications with friends and families” (127). Chain migration has already been addressed in the preceding discussion of Dutch immigration to the United States; it is sufficient here to note that the chain character of the New Immigration pervaded each of the four waves outlined above. The Dutch who came to the United States were followed by family and friends, who settled in the enclaves founded by earlier settlers or else formed new enclaves to which subsequent Dutch immigrants came. It remains, then, to

111
consider the Dutch-American institutions and modes of communication (e.g., newspapers, church newsletters and publications, educational interaction, etc.) that defined, and continue to exert a great influence on, the character of the Dutch-American community as a whole. Chain migration, transplantation of institutions, and communication are interrelated, of course, but of the three, the transplantation of institutions--especially religious institutions--ties the others together and remains a formative influence in Dutch-American communities, and the Dutch-American community as a whole, to this day. For this reason, the remainder of this chapter will deal primarily with the emergence and persistence of characteristically Dutch-American institutions, although special attention will be paid to how Dutch-American institutions facilitated, and continue to facilitate, interaction among Dutch-Americans.

Herbert Brinks observes that, when planning their America settlements, the Dutch immigrant leaders--particularly Van Raalte and Scholte--very deliberately selected locations with little prior settlement and no existing institutions. By settling in such areas, the Dutch immigrants would be left alone to transplant, or construct, their own institutions (Voices 2). This settlement pattern further emphasizes the chain migration and transplantation character of the New Immigration as a whole:

It was clear from the beginning that the original Dutch settlements in Michigan, Iowa, Illinois, and Wisconsin were designed to encourage ethnic isolation as a strategy for preserving family values and religious precepts [. . .] Their goals, then, were not to become mainstream Americans and absorb new values but to preserve old values [. . .] (11)
The institutions that the immigrants were most concerned with were churches and schools. Initially, the two were directly connected in the minds of Dutch settlers; it will be remembered that Van Raalte and Brummelkamp explicitly wrote that they envisioned Dutch-American communities where settlers could “enjoy the privilege of seeing their little ones educated in Christian schools” (Lucas, Netherlanders 61). The relationship between church and school, which I will describe shortly, provided (and provides) much of the Dutch-American cultural cohesiveness.

The importance of religion among Dutch immigrants, and their eagerness to transplant their churches, is attested to by the speed with which they began organizing congregations, holding services, and erecting church buildings. Lucas observes that, whether or not Dutch immigrants were led by a minister, “The first concern of the Dutch immigrants of the Reformed faith, when they arrived in the United States, was to organize new congregations” (Netherlanders 506). For example, when Van Raalte and his followers arrived in Holland, Michigan, they almost immediately began holding worship services in the forest and one of the first permanent structures erected in the town was the church (Van Hinte 238). Such was also the case in Pella, where the two of the earliest permanent structures, and most prominent landmarks, were Scholte’s unusually grandiose parsonage and a small church building (Lucas, Netherlanders 188-190). Likewise, one of the first actions of the settlers in Graafschap, Michigan, was to invite the Rev. Seine Bolks to serve as their minister (145-146). The Dutch-
American land developer Theodore Koch paid Dutch ministers to write testimonials in hopes of drawing Dutch settlers to his towns (368). He also set land aside for a church and promise that, once twenty Dutch families had settled in the town, his company would pay for half the cost of a new church building (367). Representative of this community commitment, an advertisement designed to make Rudyard, Michigan appeal to Dutch settlers made a special point of noting that Rudyard was a place “where people can go to church and send their children to school” (496). Clearly, as Swierenga notes, for Dutch immigrants, “A church was a prerequisite for a viable settlement” (*Dutch Chicago* 15).

Once built, the church tended to become the central focus of Dutch-American communities. This, of course, would only have been natural in a number of the early Dutch-American settlements, as many were guided, if not started, by Dutch ministers. Such was the case in the west Michigan *Kolonie* where Van Raalte not only selected the site, led the initial settlers, and engaged in promotional campaigns to attract more immigrants but also, for the first decade of the *Kolonie’s* history, served as its leader in most matters, both secular and sacred. Scholte similarly was the near-absolute leader of Pella during the town’s first years, and even after religious infighting reduced his stature as spiritual leader, he continued to serve the town as land agent, notary, attorney, banker, broker, implement dealer, postmaster, and publisher, among other functions (De Jong 142). Other Dutch ministers played key roles in the early years of Dutch-American settlements. Cornelius Van der Meulen founded Zeeland, Michigan,
and went on to become one of the early spiritual leaders of the Chicago Dutch (Mulder 139). Rev. Seine Bolks founded Overisel, Michigan, and served the town as teacher, doctor, surveyor, architect, and land agent before becoming the first minister in the Sioux County Dutch settlement (Lucas, *Netherlanders* 146-147, 348-349). Gerrit Baay and Pieter Zonne led Dutch settlers to Alto and Cedar Grove, Wisconsin, respectively, and were early movers and shakers in these towns (202-203, 205-207). And later in the nineteenth century, Andreas Wormser was instrumental in promoting Dutch settlement in Montana (Kroes 45-47). Not to be outdistanced by these Calvinist ministers, Father Theodorus Van den Broek spearheaded Dutch Catholic settlement in Little Chute and Hollandtown, Wisconsin that fully depended upon his own leadership and authority (Lucas, *Netherlanders* 217-225).

With ministers often emerging as town leaders, it is no great surprise that they, along with church elders and deacons, took charge of secular as well as sacred affairs in the early days of the Dutch-American settlements. Van Hinte describes Reformed elders and deacons as active “guardians of the public morals” (241), but the reach of church leaders in a Dutch-American settlement went well beyond morality concerns. An 18 January 1859 consistory meeting of Van Raalte’s church noted that, for the previous twelve years, the consistory had made “decisions in matters that properly belonged to the civil authorities” (243), and in other, smaller Dutch towns, it appears church consistories continued to exert great influence in civil affairs far beyond 1859 (243). At present, it is still the case in
most Dutch-American communities that ministers and consistory members, while not regarded as public authorities, are still regarded as important and respected members of, and important voices in, the community.

In the early years of a Dutch-American settlement, the church would also serve a number of other functions. Churches were, for instance, vital in maintaining the links between various Dutch-American communities. Congregations within a Dutch Reformed denomination would (and do), from time to time, engage in pulpit exchanges, thereby allowing for the sharing of news between two Dutch-American communities. Every few years, ministers tended (and still tend) to move from one congregation to another, thus allowing news to travel and tying together the towns which they served. Moreover, each year delegates from each congregation of a given denomination would (and do) gather at the denominational Synod, thus allowing for the spreading of news and strengthening of confessional and community ties. Confessional ties would also be strengthened by the fact that almost every minister in a given denomination would have been trained at that denomination’s seminary. In the same way, lay persons visiting, or moving to, another congregation could serve as conduits of communication and strengtheners of ties between the involved Dutch-American communities. Through these interminglings, “faith united the widespread Netherlanders, even the ones outside of Michigan, and that the inhabitants of the
settlements were in continuous contact with fellow Dutchmen in rural and urban ‘colonies’ and thus influenced one another” thanks to religious ties (Van Hinte 314).

Churches also served a number of other functions within a Dutch-American community. During the first years of Holland, Michigan’s history, the church building occasionally served as the community’s school building (Van Hinte 256); similarly, for some years the first Pella church building doubled as a school (Lucas, *Netherlands* 192). As resources allowed, a school building would be erected, but as we shall see momentarily, this did not necessarily lead to a separation of church and school. Churches also served as the main town meeting places; Van Hinte relates how an 1851 caucus in the Zeeland, Michigan church nearly gave rise to scenes of violence in the sanctuary (242-243). Van Hinte also observes that in the earliest days of a given Dutch-American settlement, especially those that were on the frontier or otherwise isolated, church-going was just about the only recreation available to the immigrants (249). Accordingly, “the worst punishment was to be denied the privilege of taking Holy Communion at the church, or still more severe, to be cut off from church membership” (241), not just because it entailed spiritual discipline, but also near-total social ostracism. Once again, the central role played by churches illustrates how “Religion [. . .] gave form and substance to the Seceders’ community life”
Lucas, *Netherlanders* 473) and how “religious institutions facilitated the move, guided the newcomers to specific destinations, and shaped their adjustment to the new land” (Swierenga, *Faith* 153).

While churches may have organized life in Dutch-American settlements and drawn Dutch-American communities closer together, they also illustrated an old Dutch proverb: “One Dutchman, a faith. Two Dutchmen, a church. Three Dutchmen, a schism.” At the same time churches drew the Dutch-Americans together, they also drove them apart. As noted earlier, most of the Dutch immigrants were avid readers of the Bible, church history, and theological works. They were, accordingly, not people who passively listened to the minister on Sunday morning; they thought intently about what the minister had to say (Lucas, *Netherlanders* 493-494, 497). A seventeenth century observer noted that every Dutch cobbler was a doctor of theology; he also noted that, as a result, the Dutch people were given to theological wrangling that led to divisiveness in church matters (Schama 10). This tendency was carried to the United States, and was, I would argue, amplified by the fact that the church was at the center of most aspects of Dutch-American life in the middle years of the nineteenth century. The result was a series of religious disputes among Dutch-Americans which came to characterize, and still today to a large extent characterizes, the history of Dutch-American communities. Swierenga notes that it was more or less inevitable that the Dutch in the United States would quarrel over religious matters, because before 1847, the Seceder churches had already been fraught with disputes which
were then carried to North America as “cultural baggage” (Faith 154; “Introduction” 3). The religious fault lines among Dutch immigrants emerged rapidly in the United States. In Pella, for instance, Scholte’s church, due in part to Scholte’s refusal to join the RCA, split into rival factions within only a few years of its founding (Lucas, Netherlanders 499-500). This split was a local event, but religious differences brought over from the Netherlands would also play a role in much more pivotal moment in Dutch-American history: the schism of 1857.

Shortly after the initial settlement of 1847, the Seceder-led Dutch immigrant congregations had started to consider the possibility of forming wider networks and associations not only with each other, but with the RCA. Van Raalte in particular urged the fledgling Dutch immigrant congregations to join the RCA (274 congregations strong in 1874--Van Hinte 57), which shared a common religious heritage with the new arrivals (Bruins 183). Although not all Dutch settlers were enthusiastic about joining the RCA, in 1850 the Dutch-speaking immigrant congregations were organized into Classis Holland of the RCA (Swierenga, Faith 175). Almost immediately after this merger, however, a number of Dutch immigrant ministers and congregants expressed dissatisfaction with several of the teachings and practices of the RCA, charging that the denomination was lax in its orthodoxy (Swierenga, Faith 177-178; Bruins 185). In 1857, the RCA having failed to address the dissidents’ complaints to their own satisfaction, five Dutch immigrant congregations seceded from the RCA and formed a denomination which eventually became known as the Christian
Reformed Church (CRC) (Swierenga, Faith 179; Bruins 185). Various factors contributed to the split of 1857. The stated reasons included that the RCA allowed ministers and elders to join the masonic lodge, didn’t regulate communion, used choirs and hymns in worship services, and tolerated ministers who rejected the doctrine of election (Swierenga, Faith 177-179). During its first fifteen years, the CRC saw little growth, but then in the 1870s and early 1880s, however, the issue of mason membership again came to the fore in the RCA. Many Dutch immigrant RCA congregations asked that the RCA take a stronger stand against lodge membership; when their requests went unheeded, they began to secede from the RCA. In 1884, most of these former RCA congregations joined the CRC; moreover, after 1882 Seceder congregations in the Netherlands, also opposed to lodge membership, began advising emigrants to join the CRC instead of the RCA. Because of these trends, the CRC soon grew to a size comparable to the RCA within the Dutch-American settlements (Lucas, Netherlands 513-514; Swierenga, Dutch Chicago 67-68).32

While liberalism and the issues of Masonic membership were the ostensible reasons for congregations to secede from the RCA and join the CRC, recent scholarship identifies other non-theological factors behind the split. Swierenga concludes that 1857 schism occurred along regional faultlines: people who had come from more cosmopolitan areas of the Netherlands were happy with

32 It should be noted that the defection from the RCA to the CRC was a phenomenon limited to Dutch immigrant congregations. The RCA as a whole remained, and remains, larger than the CRC.
the more “Americanized” RCA, while those who had come from more rural areas wanted to preserve the traditional forms of worship they had brought with them (Faith 188). Herbert Brinks, by contrast, argues that the split occurred not along regional lines, but can be explained by the theological “camp” to which immigrant ministers had belonged in the Netherlands:

> It appears that the primary and determining causes of ecclesiastical separation were intellectual, because partisan loyalties taken from Europe were vigorously reasserted in Michigan, Illinois, and Iowa, where the guiding reigns of intellect stretched back to the parsonage schools” in the Netherlands. (“Continuities” 219)

Elsewhere, Swierenga concurs with Elton Bruins that the 1857 and 1880s splits reveal the determination on the part of the CRC-inclined Dutch-Americans to resist assimilation or acculturation to wider American Protestant society (Swierenga, Dutch Chicago 41). Bruins goes so far as to assert that the reasons for the CRC-RCA split “can best be summarized by saying that they display an extreme reluctance to adapt to the American scene” (185). This resistance is most clearly evidenced in two important ways. In the first place, the CRC was much more reluctant than the RCA to use English during worship services. Most Dutch immigrant RCA congregations were in the process of switching from Dutch to English language services in the first three decades of the twentieth century; this switch took several decades longer in the CRC, which still had congregations holding intermittent Dutch services into the 1950s (Lucas, Netherlands 597-
Of more lasting importance, however, was the CRC insistence on founding private, parent-run Christian schools. To this day, RCA families are more likely than not to send their children to local public schools, while CRC families are more likely than not to send their children to private CRC-oriented (but not directly run) grade and high schools, whenever possible. This educational distinction is more a rule of thumb than an absolute division; the occasional RCA family will make use of the local Christian school, while some CRC families may elect to send their children to public schools even when Christian schools are available. Nevertheless, the two denominations generally divide over their support from Christian grade and high schools.34

Larry ten Harmsel points out that, soon after the split, “A pattern of disagreement and competition between the RCA and the CRC soon arose, which, although civilized and toned down as the twenty-first century began, has been reflected in the community ever since” (14). This disagreement and competition was not limited to religion and education, but was reflected in further social divides within Dutch-American communities. It was not unusual, for example, for a small Dutch-American town to have two of everything, from schools and churches to gas stations, groceries stores, and even cemeteries, one generally

33 The CRC’s Dutch-language magazine, De Wachter, continued to be published until December 31, 1985 for the benefit of Dutch-speaking and reading CRC members (“Memorable Events”).

34 In addition to Christian schools, the CRC also has its own versions of the Boy Scouts (Calvinist Cadet Corps) and Girl Scouts (Calvinettes/GEMS) and, rather than promote other Christian teenager organizations such as Christian Endeavor, has its own Young Calvinist Federation.
patronized by RCA people, the other by CRC people. As recently as 1947, these divisions were still salient enough for Arnold Mulder to refer to the RCA-CRC divide as “A Civil War without an Appomatox” (193). What is curious, even comical, about this divide is that most of the historical differences between the two denominations (namely opposition to lodge membership and the use of Dutch or English in worship services) had evaporated by the Second World War. Only the difference over the support of private schools has been maintained. Mulder comments that, as such, the CRC and RCA are almost impossible for the uninitiated to tell apart. Yet within Dutch communities the small differences “did not prevent each from maintaining [its] own point of view with a tenacity, sometimes with a bitterness, that made cooperative action difficult most of the time, sometimes impossible” (198). At the same time, as Van Hinte notes, the competition between the two denominations could be “healthy” and “fruitful” (857-858). Witness, for instance, the ability of Edgerton, Minnesota, population 1054, to support two hardware stores, two grocery stores, and two car dealerships, all locally owned and operated, to this day. While the division between CRC and RCA still exists, the divisiveness has lessened in recent years (the two denominations entered into ecclesiastical fellowship in 1976--Swierenga, Dutch Chicago 76). Nevertheless, in some communities tensions between the CRC and RCA still exist, and in most Dutch-American communities competition remains between RCA-patronized and CRC-sponsored schools.
Van Hinte comments that “at times Calvinists and belligerence seem to be synonymous” (370-371). This being the case, it is not surprising to learn that the schisms of 1857 and the 1880s, which shaped many of the contours of Dutch-American society thanks to the establishment of the CRC and RCA division, were hardly the last religious rifts to rock the Dutch Reformed denominations. A significant schism took place within the CRC in 1924, when a number of CRC congregations, led by ministers Herman Hoeksema and Henry Danhof, left the CRC to form the more conservative Protestant Reformed Church (PRC) (Bratt 200). The main reason for this schism was, and the main difference between the CRC and PRC to this day is, a difference of opinion over the doctrine of common grace. The CRC (and RCA) held (and hold) that God’s grace extended to all people; the PRC, in a more “hyper-Calvinist” vein, contended (and contends) that God’s grace extends only to believers, and therefore only believers are capable of accomplishing any good (197-200). During the 1950s, a schism occurred within the PRC which split the church in half; the seceding half formed the Orthodox Protestant Reformed Church. The OPRC eventually had 19 congregations, but in 1961 the OPRC rejoined the CRC (“Orthodox Protestant Reformed Churches”). Today, the PRC has 27 congregations and 6,000 members (“The Protestant Reformed Churches in America”). Like the CRC, the PRC has set up its own system of private Christian schools. In the 1990s, a further schism took place in the CRC; beginning in 1993, conservative congregations began leaving the CRC when it became apparent that the CRC would, at the discretion of individual
congregations, permit women to become elders, deacons, and ministers (“Memorable Events”). Many of the congregations that withdrew from the CRC banded together to form what has become known as the United Reformed Church (URC). Today, the URC has over 80 congregations in the United States and Canada (“Directory”). Besides the RCA, CRC, PRC, and URC, another Dutch Reformed denomination that should be noted is the Netherlands Reformed Congregations (NRC). The NRC was not the result of a schism within the United States, but was the descendant of another, non-Seceder group which had left the NHK in the 1830s. Immigrants from this group started their own independent congregations in the United States; in 1877, these independent congregations started banding together and now there are 25 NRC congregations in the United States and Canada (“Netherlands Reformed Congregations”). The NRC is characterized by an incredible conservatism (in some cases, Dutch is still used in NRC worship services--Smits 7, 12) and a more esoteric theology. In at least one Dutch-American community (Rock Valley, Iowa), the NRC has started its own private school.

The battles over religion in the Dutch-American community raise several important points. In the first place, these fights demonstrate that, although many Dutch immigrants might have followed their ministers to the United States, members of Dutch Reformed congregations were hardly sheep-like followers. Quite to the contrary: when congregants had taken it into their heads that their ministers were theologically mistaken, they were more than willing break
fellowship with that minister and start a new congregation or even denomination. The fact that the RCA, CRC, PRC, NRC, and URC all continue to exist, even grow, up to the present also demonstrates that the hairline distinctions were, and are, very real and relevant to members of Dutch-American communities. Van Hinte observes that, in the case of the CRC founders and congregants, “they were men and women who had the courage of their convictions, no matter how narrow-minded these may appear to us” (362); the same could certainly be said about the PRC, NRC, and URC. Perhaps most importantly for this study, the Dutch-American religious “wars” had another important effect.

As we have seen, the Dutch-American denominational schisms can be attributed to different degrees of willingness to assimilate into American culture. Thus, the CRC used Dutch longer than did the RCA (until the Second World War as opposed to the early 1920s--Lucas, Netherlanders 597-598; De Jong 206); the PRC used Dutch longer than did the CRC (until the late 1950s--De Jong 200); and the NRC still uses Dutch in some of its services (Smits 7, 12). Similarly, the RCA generally uses public elementary and secondary schools, while the CRC, PRC, URC, and NRC all favor parent- or church-run private schools. However, as Swierenga observes, the disputes over how fast to assimilate served to slow assimilation for all the groups involved in the disputes: “‘Honest wars’ of religion [. . .] worked both ways, creating factions within the camp based on common bounds of discourse that simultaneously walled [all factions] off” from wider American society (Faith 154). Other scholars have noted the same phenomenon:
Brinks comments that Dutch-American denominational fights and schisms “only intensified cultural isolation” (*Voices* 15), and ten Harmsel asserts that “The expending of so much energy on parochial issues continues to reinforce their [Dutch-American Calvinists’] insularity” (23). In other words, by forcing the different factions in the Dutch-American communities to articulate their distinctions to each other and themselves, religious battles served to foster and preserve a sense of group identity in every case. Even those, like the RCA, who might otherwise be more inclined to look beyond the immediate concerns of the Dutch-American religious community are, through Dutch-American religious grappling, forced to look inward as they define themselves against the CRC, PRC, URC, and NRC. Accordingly, while the CRC and RCA served to divide the Dutch-American community in one regard, they also served to draw the wider Dutch-American community together, and thereby maintain a distinctly Dutch-American mentality.

Another way in which the CRC and RCA serve to draw the Dutch-American community together, and thereby maintain a distinctly Dutch-American mentality, is through higher education. From the moment of their arrival in the United States, the Dutch immigrants had expressed an interest in starting Reformed colleges. In 1851, a group led by Van Raalte founded Holland Academy, which in 1866 became Hope College, which also served as an RCA seminary until Western Theological Seminary was separated from Hope in 1884 (De Jong 201-202); both thrive and continue to be run by the RCA today.
Similarly, Scholte played a role in the founding of Central College in Pella in 1853. Initially, Central was a Baptist college, but in 1916 it was taken over by the RCA, which continues to operate it (Mulder 209-210). After its 1857 formation, the CRC also quickly developed an interest in starting a college, and in 1876 CRC ministers organized what eventually became Calvin College and Seminary, the seminary and flagship college of the CRC to this day (211). Today, the RCA also runs a third college, Northwestern College, in Orange City, Iowa, which began collegiate instruction in 1928 (De Jong 204). The CRC also has started, and supports, two other colleges: Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa (founded 1955--“About Us”), and Redeemer College in Ancaster, Ontario (founded 1982--“About Redeemer”). In addition to these institutions, the CRC is a major supporter of Trinity Christian College in Palos Heights, Illinois (founded 1959--“About Trinity”) and the Institute for Christian Studies, a small graduate school in Toronto (founded 1967--“Our Story”). The student body of these colleges is drawn from all across the extended Dutch-American community, thereby further strengthening the ties between the various settlements. Accordingly, a give dorm floor at Calvin or Hope might have residents from Redlands, California, Oak Harbor, Washington, any number of Michigan and Iowa Dutch enclaves, Prospect Park, New Jersey, and several Canadians from any of the Ontario Dutch enclaves. The result of this college system is that a given Hope or Calvin graduate knows people in virtually every other area of concentrated Dutch-American settlement.
The result of the combination of church, educational, and familial connections is a surprisingly tight-knit extended Dutch-American community. Because the Dutch-American community is so close-knit, it is a truism that every Dutch-American knows every other Dutch-American at one remove. So, when two Dutch-Americans encounter each other and do not directly know each other, they engage in a ritual known as “Dutch Bingo” in order to determine who their common Dutch-American acquaintances are. This phenomenon is best illustrated in a series of examples from the author’s own life and research:

(1) Edgerton, Minnesota: I was born and raised there. My father was from New Jersey and attended Calvin College; my mother had lived in Oostburg and Orange City and attended Dordt College. They met when both teaching at Eastern Christian High School in Paterson (where my grandmother was the librarian) and moved to Edgerton when Southwest Christian High School was able to offer them both full-time employment.

(2): Grand Rapids, Michigan: My father attended Calvin College in Grand Rapids, as did my brother and I. My father’s brother and various of his uncles have lived in western Michigan for decades, although all were originally from Paterson. My parents currently live in Grand Rapids and work at Calvin College.

35 Historically, the Dutch-American community was also drawn together by widely-circulating Dutch-language periodicals such as De Grondwet, De Volksvriend, Pella’s Weekblad, and Het Oosten, which generally included news from various Dutch-American enclaves around North America. Also, the various Dutch-American denominations continue to publish their own periodicals which serve to draw together the far flung congregations and members of each denomination (Lucas, Netherlanders 529-541; Bult 273-293).
(3): Columbus, Ohio: I attend Columbus’s Olentangy CRC. The son of one of the families there--the Bossenbroeks--married a woman from Edgerton, a former student of my parents. I am friends with a couple, Cory Smit and Melissa Keeley, who also attend this church. Melissa is originally from Paterson and her parents are best friends with my Aunt Joyce, all of whom now live in west Michigan. Cory’s father, like mine, is a Calvin professor; they are in the same fantasy baseball league. Furthermore, Cory, Melissa, and I are all Calvin graduates and thus have a number of common acquaintances from Calvin.

(4): Holland, Michigan: During Tulip Time 2005, I took a guided tour of Holland. This tour was guided by Sue Ten Hoeve, who used to baby-sit several of my aunts and uncles in Orange City, Iowa, and for whose children my mother used to baby-sit.

(5): Orange City, Iowa: My mother’s parents have lived there since the 1960s; several of my aunts, uncles, and cousins live in or near Orange City, as do a number of my high school classmates, many of whom attended Dordt College in Sioux Center. My grade school principal, high school principal, and high school English teacher (Janie Van Dyke) now live in Orange City; all of them work at Unity Christian High School, where my mother’s father taught before retiring. During the 2006 Tulip Festival, I went on a tour of the town led by Janie Van Dyke.
(6): Pella, Iowa: I interviewed Pella resident Carol Van Klompenburg, a playwright who has written several plays about Pella and the Dutch-American experience that have been performed during past Tulip Time festivals. Carol was born and raised in Orange City and was best friends with my mother in high school and college.

(7): Fulton, Illinois: During Fulton’s 2006 Dutch Days festival, my first-ever visit to Fulton, I was chatting with Jill, a cashier, after purchasing a bag of *olie bollen*. I commented that I was researching the festival for my dissertation, and she said “Oh, you’re a Schoone-Jongen.” How did Jill know who I was? Well, she was the cousin and Dordt College roommate of Janie Van Dyke, my high school English teacher now living in Orange City (who also had taught in Fulton before moving to Edgerton). Janie had recently visited my parents in Grand Rapids, had learned I would be in Fulton, and had related this to Jill. Moreover, Jill and Janie had a third roommate at Dordt: Wanda Vande Kieft. Wanda lives in Orange City, is the current Tulip Festival chairperson, and is a former student of my grandfather. And I interviewed her for this project.

Nearly any Dutch-American individual would be able to trace similar webs of acquaintances across all of the various Dutch-American enclaves in the United States (and even into Canada). Like most aspects of Dutch-American life, however, the game can be colored by differing church affiliations. It is usually not a matter of one “player” or another drawing back upon learning that another player belongs to the “wrong” group—in several of the instances above my CRC
membership did nothing to alter the game when playing with RCA members—but the game is far more likely to result in more “bingos”—mutual acquaintances—when players belong to the same denomination. Differing church affiliation therefore may result in a much shorter game of Dutch Bingo, but as far as willingness to play the game, common Dutch ancestry tends to supersede denominational splits, for the most part.

All of this goes to show that currently, as well as historically, the Dutch-American community is tight-knit, thanks to bonds of kinship, family, denomination, and educational institutions. In former times it was also tight-knit thanks to the use of the Dutch language, but this is not so much the case any longer, although a few Dutch words, phrases, and grammatical constructions are still used in the towns to this day. In all of these factors, the common denominator seem to be religion. It should be evident from the foregoing discussion that Robert Swierenga is no doubt correct in asserting that

Not only did churches directly promote and fund immigration, but they created ethnic colonies where religion gave ‘form and substance’ to community life. Religious solidarity provided and even stronger bond than ethnic identity alone and ensured long-term success of nearly all church-centered colonies. (Faith 154)

36 Caroline Smits relates that as of 1996, still quite a number of people spoke a form of Dutch in Pella and Orange City, Iowa; that Peoria, Iowa Christian Reformed Church has a yearly Dutch hymn sing (5); that Dutch classes were available in both Pella and Orange City (12); and that the Netherlands Reformed Church in Rock Valley, IA, still used Dutch in some of its services (7, 12). Larry ten Harmsel cites a study from the 1980s which notes that even 90 percent of Holland, MI high schoolers knew Dutch words like klompen, vies, kletz, dominee, and vrouw, and that 25-50 percent of them knew kerk, oma, opa, donder en bliksem, gouda kaas, amandelbroodjes, boerenjongen, “and a variety of barnyard vulgarities not always clearly understood by the speakers” (27).
As James Bratt notes, besides being the “foundation and glue” of Dutch-American communities, the Dutch Reformed denominations bear “social, political, economic correlations and implications” (194). Similarly, quoting Randall M. Miller and Thomas D. Marzik, Vanderstel notes that

[. . .] religion was intertwined and imbedded in the psyche, the folklife, the very identity of each immigrant. It gave meaning, a system of moral values, self-definition and community to the immigrants. It ordered their internal, private works and the world outside the family. Thrown into close proximity with competing cultural and linguistic groups in industrial and urban America, the immigrants turned to religion, the very bone and sinew of ethnicity, to shore up communal ties. (149)

In this regard Dutch-Americans do not neatly fit some of the standard patterns of European immigrant groups. In particular, unlike most small, Protestant, northern European ethnic groups, the Dutch did not, and still have not, entirely assimilated to Anglo-American culture (Swierenga, *Faith* 213). Granted, on the surface it may appear that the Dutch have assimilated to Anglo-American culture:

Outwardly, the Dutch were integrated into economic and political life, and they promptly became naturalized citizens. To the non-Dutch they appeared by the second generation to be typical middle-class neighbors, living in neat bungalows in town or in white farmhouses in the country. They were indistinguishable in dress and speech, in the workplace, and in the voting booth. Only the occasional miniature windmill on the front lawn marked a residence as Dutch. (213)

Appearances, however, are often deceiving. As Swierenga points out, “secondary associations and even language are not the prime markers of ethnicity. One must look to primary associations--the worshipping community, schooling, home life, marriage patterns, and recreation. In these areas the Calvinists built an
institutional fortress and demonstrated their religious solidarity” (213).

Consequently, in the next chapter I will show how and why this religious-based solidarity has proved to be one of the major factors that contributed to the emergence of the three Tulip Time festivals in Iowa and Michigan in the 1920s and 1930s.
CHAPTER 4

DUTCH ETHNIC HERITAGE CELEBRATIONS: ANTECEDENTS, EMERGENCE, AND PROLIFERATION

The first official Tulip Time Festival was held in Holland, Michigan, in 1929. Soon thereafter, other Dutch-American communities began establishing their own Tulip Times or Dutch Festivals. In this chapter I will analyze the beginnings of the Tulip Time celebrations in Holland, Pella, Iowa (1935), and Orange City, Iowa (1936) and survey the proliferation of Dutch ethnic heritage celebrations that commenced after the Second World War. Most importantly, I will examine the factors that account for why the first Tulip festivals emerged when they did. Specifically, I will be concerned with the local economic and local and national social conditions which made the period from 1929 to 1936 a logical moment for Dutch-Americans to start actively displaying their heritage for outside audience. However, just as Dutch heritage celebrations emerged from a wider national context of celebration and festivity, they also emerged from a more specific context of local articulations of Dutch identity. I therefore begin with a short consideration of some of the antecedents to Tulip Times and other Dutch ethnic heritage celebrations.
4.1 ANTECEDENTS

As we saw in chapter three, the process of Dutch immigration to the United States was, in many ways, a transplantation from the Netherlands to the various Dutch-American enclaves. It is thus not surprising that, at least initially, the Dutch brought several of their holiday observances with them. One of the most prominent of these holiday observances was Sinterklaas (St. Nicholas) Day, held on 5 December (Swierenga, *Faith* 223). Traditionally, public festivities on this day included a visit from Sinterklaas and his Moorish assistant, Zwarte Piet. Privately, families would exchange gifts at home, reserving Christmas Day for religious observances.37 Other Dutch holidays observed in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries included William of Orange’s birthday (16 April, on which, for example, the Holland Society of Chicago staged a dinner from 1895 on) and the Queen’s birthday (30 April). In addition to these annual observances, Lucas notes that the coronation of Queen Wilhelmina in 1898 was also celebrated in a number of Dutch-American enclaves (*Netherlanders* 593). Moreover, The Algemeen Nederlandsch Verbond, founded in 1898 “to foster national Dutch sentiment wherever Hollanders lived” (592), was still staging occasional holiday

37 It is interesting to note that the American tradition of a visit from Santa Claus was largely instituted by New York’s reactionary patrician class during the 1810s, 1820s, and 1830s. This group applied the Dutch traditions of St. Nicholas Day to Christmas in order to forge “a pseudo-Dutch identity for New York, a placid ‘folk’ identity that could provide a cultural counterweight to the commercial bustle and democratic ‘misrule’ of early-nineteenth century New York” (Nissenbaum 65, 55-89). Nissenbaum points out that there is no evidence that the Dutch colonists of New Amsterdam brought Sinterklaas or St. Nicholas observances with them, meaning that Santa Claus is, essentially, an American invented tradition (63-64).
festivals in 1914 (Van Hinte 911). As late as 1928, Van Hinte was able to write
that Dutch holidays remained occasions on which “Dutch songs are sung and
Dutch games are played.” By such means Dutch-Americans continued to “keep
alive the memories of the Old Country” (1018-1019). In the early decades of the
twentieth century, though, many of these observances began to wane. Although
celebrations of the Queen’s birthday continued among the Chicago Dutch “well
into the 1920s” (Swierenga, Faith 223), by the time of the Second World War any
remaining observances of this holiday were private, family affairs. Such was also
the case with Sinterklaas Day. Interestingly, since the 1970s, a number of Dutch-
American towns have revived the traditions associated with Sinterklaas Day,
particularly the visit from Sinterklaas and Piet (who, owing to his similar
appearance to blackface performers, is generally no longer Zwarte). And at least
one Dutch-American town--Orange City--has recently revived the observance of
the Queen’s Birthday on 30 April.

As noted in chapter two, immigrant groups regularly celebrated American
holidays while adapting them to their own ends (e.g., the Germans in Milwaukee
on the Fourth of July). This was also the case with Dutch-Americans, who, by the
1890s and 1900s, were holding their own Fourth of July observances. Tiny Leota,
Minnesota--population 230 (“Census 2000 Gazetteer Files”), began a centurylong
tradition of large-scale Fourth of July festivities during the 1890s,38 as did Clara
City and Prinsburg, also in Minnesota. Van Hinte recorded that the Fourth, as

38 Leota voted to discontinue to celebration, which in some years attracted more
than 5,000 visitors, in 2003 (Edgerton Enterprise 19 March 2003).
well as other patriotic American holidays, were “enthusiastically observed” by Dutch-American enclaves which, like many other towns, featured parades with uniformed veteran marching units (977). At the same time, Dutch-American Fourth of July observances at the turn of the twentieth century could exhibit factional tensions and rivalries in the way 4th of July observances exposed fault lines between Federalists and Republicans. Robert Schoone-Jongen notes that in the Dutch-American settlements in Central Minnesota, settlers of Ostfrisian descent, although religiously and culturally Dutch Calvinist, would hold their Fourth of July celebrations in Clara City, while the “true” Dutch would conduct their observances in Prinsburg. The formats of these rival observances also differed palpably: the Ostfrisian Fourth of July in 1898 featured a parade (with bands, girls dressed to represent the states, Uncle Sam, and the goddess of liberty, veterans from both the German army and the Spanish-American War, local officials, the local Woodmen camp, and business floats), a speech by a local RCA minister, bicycle races, and fireworks (which, accidentally set off during the day, bombarded main street businesses and the town water tower); by contrast, the Prinsburg Fourth began with a church service followed by a picnic and orations (“Heal” 37-39). Thus, while Clara City’s celebration was reminiscent of the typical American Fourth of July celebration, Prinsburg’s instead employed “Dutch services, Dutch conversation [and] Dutch food [. . .] to celebrate American independence” (38).
In addition to the Fourth of July, Dutch-Americans also celebrated, and added their own twists to, holidays like Labor Day (which the community of Friesland, Minnesota used as an “old settlers’ reunion” with a picnic, fishing, and reminiscences, and which also, for a time, doubled as the local RCA’s annual Sunday School picnic) (“Heal” 39) and Thanksgiving (which the Dutch Calvinist congregations in central Minnesota, after an initial morning worship service, used for their annual church business meetings) (“Embrace” 32-33). In addition to whatever religious and public observances were held on American holidays, Walter Lagerway observes that Dutch-American newspapers—both English and Dutch—would publish editorials and poems commemorating the American holidays. Lagerway also relates the striking fact that, in some cases, Dutch-Americans would go so far as to translate patriotic American songs into the Dutch language. Apparently, even when directly celebrating the new country, the old language remained “the best vehicle for expressing one’s deepest feelings” (256).

If the 4th of July could, as in the case of the Ostfrisians and Dutch of central Minnesota, reinforce divisions within a specific Dutch Calvinist community, other types of festive events could serve to bring such groups together, albeit temporarily. Surprisingly, such events could be explicitly religious. Church mission fests and picnics were one such festive form that, at

39 R. Schoone-Jongen observes that in doing so, the Dutch Calvinists of this area also added a gendered twist to the holiday: as women could not, at the time, vote in congregational meetings, they would leave after the worship service to prepare their families’ Thanksgiving feasts while the men conducted church business (“Embrace” 32-33).
least in the case of the central Minnesota Dutch Calvinists, brought Ostfrisians and Dutch, RCA and CRC, together. Robert Schoone-Jongen relates how the Dutch Calvinist communities of Bunde, Emden, and Prinsburg would, once a year, gather in a local grove for a mission fest that included singing, speeches, food, and various fundraising activities, such as local church women selling their handwork. All proceeds from these missionary picnics would go toward missionary causes the participating congregations had agreed on beforehand (“Heal” 37). In addition to this type of mission fest, individual denominations and congregations would, of course, also have their own mission fests, church picnics, and choir concerts (Lucas, *Netherlanders* 623-624). These types of events, for the most part, continue to be an active part of Dutch-American Calvinist church life, although mission fests are not as prevalent as they once were.

If church picnics and festive occasions allowed for a certain expression of Dutch Calvinist religious identity, picnics and reunions which brought together Dutch-Americans with a common provincial background allowed for much more explicit, and particular, expressions of ethnic identity. In this regard, Dutch-Americans of Frisian and Herwijner background were particularly notable. People from the province of Friesland, although content to be a political part of the Netherlands, have always considered themselves a separate ethnic and linguistic group, so it is not surprising to discover that, once residing in the United States, Dutch-Americans of Frisian background continued to proudly maintain
their semi-separate identity by forming Frisian societies. While local society chapters would have their own events and activities, occasionally national gatherings would be held. Thus, the 28 August 1930 Holland City News reported that, on the upcoming Labor Day, the Holland Frisian Society would be holding an event at the local fairgrounds that would also be attended by the Grand Rapids and Chicago Frisian Society chapters. This celebration of Frisian heritage featured a morning parade, complete with a marching band clad in Frisian costume and the Frisian sports of Keatsen (a sort of cross between handball and tennis, also known as Kaatsen), Fetje Kroodsjen fen frouljeu, Hirdrinnen my kindernissen fen manljeu, Prysen van de line snye fen frouljeu, and Tippeljen fen manijeu en frouljeu ("Frisians Plan Big Field Day At Fairgrounds"). Four years later, Pella hosted De Frieske Volkdie, which was attended by over 1,000 Frisian-Americans from across the United States. Frisian flags were displayed; Frisian sports were again a feature of the festivities; and attendees sang Frisian and American songs, in particular moving renditions of "America" and "Heitelan" (the Frisian national anthem) (Kooi, Festival 4). Apart from the costumed marching band present at the 1930 Holland event, it seems that traditional Frisian costumes were occasionally worn on such occasions: a photograph from a 1900 Frisian picnic in Pella shows an older couple sitting in their new automobile, the wife wearing the tradition Frisian headpiece (5). Other Frisian picnics would include events such as tug-of-war (5) or talent shows (Webber, Pella Dutch 45).
A much more raucous example of such a gathering is the Herwijnse picnic of 1930, the first and largest such gathering of Dutch-Americans of Herwijner background, held in late August. People from Pella, Sioux County, Iowa, and eastern South Dakota descended on the picnic site near Pella. A local paper reported that at least 1,500 had assembled by noon, the number having doubled to 3,000 by nightfall. The picnic began with a morning report in Dutch, followed by afternoon addresses by not only Leedeert Hackert, one of the leaders of the Herwijner organization, but also an individual who had recently visited the old country and a Baptist minister. A poem concerning Dutch patriotism was read, and two women from prominent local Herwijner families also gave readings. Several local, non-Dutch young women performed some sort of wooden shoe dance, and attendees took part in a Dutch auction, wherein the auctioneer started the bidding prices high and gradually lowered them until a bid was forthcoming. Other events included ball games, tug-of-war, sack races, and a grain-binding contest. Trouble began, though, when some attendees became angry that a dance was not included as part of the program (the Dutch Calvinist taboo on dancing obviously was still alive and well). An even more significant problem developed when many attendees, who had not brought their own food, descended on the canteen. The canteen, accordingly, did a good business; certain elements of those in attendance became suspicious and jealous that the canteen had made unwarrantedly high profits, and this led to a rift within the organization which, ultimately, led to the discontinuation of the Herwijner picnic (Webber, *Pella*...
it would seem, however, that tensions had already been present before the event even began: a story about the picnic in *The Pella Press* happily proclaimed that at “this best event of the year [. . .] no one was afraid of each other”—“as though,” Philip Webber comments, “somehow that should be a newsworthy achievement!” (47).

While events such as the Frisian and Herwijner picnics demonstrated that provincial and local background loyalties were still strong into the 1930s (and indeed, right up to the present there are still some Dutch-Americans who identify themselves as Frisian-, rather than Dutch-, American), a convergence of three key events in 1898 and 1899 did much, as Lucas puts it, to stir “the seemingly moribund Dutch nationalistic sentiment to intense excitement” (*Netherlanders* 593). The first of these events in 1898 featured the coronation of Queen Wilhelmina. The second was organized around the 1898 visit to several Dutch communities in the United States by Dr. Abraham Kuyper, Netherlander theologian, newspaper editor, politician, and general man of letters. Dr. Kuyper’s neo-Calvinist theological and political ideas were, by this time, beginning to gain influence among the American Dutch Calvinist denominations, especially the CRC (which remains heavily influenced by Kuyper’s thinking to this day, particularly in its insistence on separate Christian primary and secondary schools, and in the pedagogical framework and worldview employed and taught at Calvin College). Although Kuyper’s theological ideas (which emphasized the doctrines of antithesis and common grace) and political programs (chief among which was
pillarization) were not necessarily embraced by many, or even a majority, of Dutch-Americans, he nonetheless attracted large crowds in the Dutch-American enclaves, wherever he visited. In his speeches, Kuyper “spoke of the part the Netherlands had played in the shaping of America, and of its role in world history” (593). Moreover, in a speech given at an Englewood, Illinois church, he “urged his followers to be both loyal Americans and good Netherlanders. Accept a rapid and wholesale Americanization, he advised, but also hold to the mother tongue, history, and culture” (Swierenga, Dutch Chicago 70-71). Lucas indicates that the formation of the Allemaal Nederlandsch Volksbund was an immediate response to this call (Netherlanders 593). As we shall see, the Tulip Time festivals which emerged 20 to 25 years later would, intentionally or not, follow Kuyper’s exhortation to the letter in holding to Dutch history and culture, if not the Dutch language.

The third event which spurred on a nationalistic consciousness among Dutch-Americans was the outbreak of the Boer War in 1899. Dutch-Americans actively and loudly supported their Boer “cousins” in the struggle against the British. Mass meetings and rallies were held to raise money to support the Boers. At these meetings, such as one held in Holland, Michigan, fiery, nationalistic speeches were delivered and the flags of the United States, Netherlands, Orange Free State, and Transvaal were displayed and the national anthems of the United States, the Netherlands, and the Boer republics were sung (De Jong 209; Lucas, Netherlanders 567). A large pro-Boer demonstrations in Grand Rapids featured,
in addition to the flags of the United States, Netherlands, and Boer republics, those of Germany, Ireland, Poland, and France. With portraits of the Paul Kruger, president of Transvaal, and his wife decorating the gathering place, a series of speakers appealed for support for the Boers. A German speaker claimed the Boers and Germans shared blood; an Irish speaker likened British operations in South Africa to the injustices being perpetuated against the Irish; a Pole drew an analogy between the British attacks on the Boers to Russian oppression of the Poles; and a Frisian speaker spoke about the historical courage of Frisians in facing mighty enemies, such a Caesar and the Spanish. Each of these speeches was followed by the appropriate national anthem (Lucas, *Netherlanders* 569).

In several instances, pro-Boer sentiment resulted in resolutions being drawn up and sent to the U. S. President and congress urging support for the Boers. In some cases, resolutions appealed to the U. S. government to intervene and serve as arbitrator between the Boers and British; such was the case in Orange City, Pella, and Kalamazoo (Van Hinte 1017; Lucas, *Netherlanders* 568-569). Sales of various kinds were also held to raise money in support of the Boers. Transvaal Days special sales were held in Orange City, which already had made a practice of flying the flags of Transvaal and the Orange Free State. In 1900 *Pella’s Weekblad*, which closely covered the war (while at the same time appealing for better Boer treatment of non-whites) offered new subscribers a portrait of Kruger and pictures of South Africa. And in various Dutch-American communities, buttons depicting “Uncle” Paul Kruger were sold to raise money
(Lucas 566-567; Webber, *Pella Dutch* 61). Although money was about the only material support Dutch-Americans offered the Boers, a tiny handful of Dutch-Americans are known to have made their way to South Africa and served in the Boer military (Van Hinte 1017). In all of these activities, a sense of a national Dutch identity, as well as ties to both the old country and to the descendants of Dutch people who had immigrated to areas other than the United States, is very much evident. If, after the Boer recognition of British rule in 1902, overt symbols of Dutch-American Dutch consciousness, such as the “Uncle” Paul buttons and Boer Republic flags, were no longer in evidence, the high number of Dutch-American boys born between 1899 and 1902 who bore the names of Afrikaaner politicians (Paul Kruger) or generals (Piet Cronje, Piet Joubert) (Lucas, *Netherlands* 566-567) served as reminders that such a consciousness nevertheless continued to exist.

While all of the events considered thus far contain evidence of the attitudes and elements that would eventually manifest themselves in the Tulip Time Festivals of the 1920s and 1930s, arguably the most direct forerunners of contemporary Dutch-American heritage celebrations were the various anniversary celebrations held between 1872 and 1922 in numerous Dutch-American enclaves. In 1872, a number of the west Michigan Dutch enclaves, as well as Pella, celebrated the 25th anniversary of their founding. The largest of these celebrations, by far, was the one held in Holland. The 1872 celebration marking 25 years of Dutch enterprise and achievement in Holland was particularly moving.
as, during the previous year, most of the city had been destroyed by a massive fire. Thus, the 1872 anniversary celebrated not only 25 years of overcoming adversity in general, but a year of overcoming a very specific setback. The main anniversary festivities were held on 17 September. A crowd of about 5,000 gathered that day to witness a parade and speeches, and to participate in communal singing. The parade consisted of the Anniversary Planning Committee, several bands, various local officials, the speakers and guests of honor to be featured later in the day, representatives of local churches, the faculty of Hope college, the town singing and literary societies, and various members of the public in horse-drawn vehicles. The two main attractions of the parade, however, were a wagon transporting eleven ladies dressed to represent the eleven provinces of the Netherlands and another wagon carrying thirteen of the surviving 1847 pioneers. The parade terminated at the designated gathering place for the other events. The speakers’ stand was decorated with the flags of the United States and the Netherlands, the coat of arms of the Netherlands, and the motto “Eendragt Maakt Magt.” During the remainder of the anniversary program, the assembled crowd sang Dutch hymns—notably the third verse of Psalm 66—and listened to various speeches (Lucas, Ebenezer 20-21). The chief speech, though, was delivered by A. C. Van Raalte, leader of the 1847 settlers, who had also been instrumental in organizing relief and rebuilding efforts in the wake of the 1871 fire. Van Raalte’s speech gave a very clear indication of how he, and presumably many of the Dutch-Americans assembled, viewed the causes of the immigration
and the purpose of the west Michigan kolonie. Van Raalte stressed, first of all, that “years of hateful persecutions which violated our civil rights” had bred widespread dissatisfaction among Seceders. He also made it clear that the subsequent inability of the Seceders to overcome their impoverished circumstances had been the catalyst for immigration (21-25). Speaking of the arrival in the United States, Van Raalte recounted in detail the sequence of events that had lead to the decision to settle in Michigan, and then reviewed the various hardships the west Michigan kolonie had had to overcome, in each case crediting God with providing the strength to overcome the various obstacles they had encountered. Near the end of his speech, he once again reiterated the vision that had guided the Michigan kolonie and which, he hoped, would continue to guide it: “Our colonization efforts were based upon religious principles; they drew their strength from God. So long as they remain permeated with this spirit, they will succeed” (29). Although Van Raalte’s speech could in some ways be interpreted as a triumphal narrative of the success of the Dutch immigrants in west Michigan, he was not inclined to whitewash the first 25 years of Dutch settlement in the United States: “After a struggle of twenty-five years, in spite of sin, misery, and severe discipline we can nevertheless enjoy a beautiful festival” (29).

Similar anniversary observances took place in Pella, Iowa, and Vriesland, Michigan. Pella’s celebration began with a community-wide religious service, followed by a program organized by the town’s “old settlers.” This program was, more so than Holland’s, dedicated to the lionization of various Pella pioneers.
According to Lisa Jaarsma Zylstra, the speeches during the program focused on the courage of the first Dutch colonists, local Civil War veterans, and even the original “American” settlers who had remained in the area, amidst the Dutch. Mottoes (in English) hanging in the brand new First Reformed Church reinforced themes of the courage and patriotism of Pella’s founders: “Honor to the First Settlers of Pella” and “Live America.” The observance, which, like Holland’s, featured singing and various speeches, ended with the playing of both Dutch and American national airs (Zylstra, 52-53). In contrast to the Pella celebrations, which seemed to place as much, if not more, emphasis on the American side of the Dutch-American equation (three United States flags were displayed to one Dutch flag), the 1872 anniversary observances in Vriesland, Michigan emphasized the Dutch roots of the community. A wagon procession led the celebrants to a clearing in the local woods, where a speakers’ stage had been built, with a background of the Dutch flag, the American flag, and a banner reading “Eben-Haezer.” One local resident had erected a tent “something like the tents the pioneers had used in 1847” (Lucas, Ebenezer 30) for the edification and education of those assembled. The festivities also included various Frisian refreshments, a banquet, and a special cake designed to represent the eleven provinces of the Netherlands (30).

In 1887, Pella, as well as Zeeland, Michigan, held 40th anniversary observances. Pella’s celebration was similar to that of 1872, with a parade, a band, and dignitaries. The commemoration of the early settlers was marked by
singing of both American patriotic songs and Dutch psalms, and a three-hour picnic (Zylstra 53). Zeeland’s 1887 anniversary celebration also paid special attention to the first settlers of the town, as a shaft was erected in the middle of town bearing the names of the first Dutch pioneers (Lucas, Ebenezer 36-37). Ten years later, much more substantial celebrations were held to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Dutch settlement in the United States. In Holland, Michigan, observances were held on 25 and 26 August. A crowd of about 25,000 watched the parade held on the 25th, featuring several marching bands (and led by both the Dutch and American flags) (37-38). The most prominent part of Holland’s 1897 celebration, however, was the compiling of memoirs of various “old pioneers.” Memoirs and reminiscences were solicited from Dutch-American pioneers all around the country; during the celebration itself, many of these living links to the past came to Holland and were given up to twenty minutes to present their recollections of the early days of Dutch settlement in the United States (Memoirs i.6-8). As in previous anniversary celebrations, the tone of the addresses and memoir readings was decidedly religious in focus (Ebenezer 36-37). Even with figures such as Van Raalte long dead and gone, the sense that the Dutch settlements in the United States had a specific spiritual purpose and character remained pervasive.

In Pella, the 1897 celebration was in some ways quite similar to that in Holland. Some 15,000 people attended the two-day event, including a delegation of 300 from “daughter colony” Orange City, which, the Pella Blade observed,
gave the event a homecoming character. The centerpiece of the celebration was the massive parade, followed by speeches; local businesses also displayed numerous antiques in their store windows. While these events were similar to those in Holland, Pella’s 50th anniversary contained markedly different emphases than Holland’s. In the first place, the parade contained a number of units which dramatized, on the one hand, Pella’s Dutch roots, but other units emphasized Pella’s status as a loyal American town. As in other anniversary celebrations, the oldest residents appeared in the parade. Two floats featured, as in the 1872 Holland anniversary parade, ladies (including several of Dominie Scholte’s granddaughters) in provincial costumes, spinning, knitting and drinking tea from delftware. Other floats depicted reaping, rope making, and wooden shoe carving. A marching unit of 50 young ladies carried red, white, and blue umbrellas, but although marchers were invited to carry Dutch flags in the parade, none in fact did, and as a result only U. S. flags graced the proceedings. The addresses given during the celebration also placed a clear emphasis on the American side of the Pella Dutch-Americans’ hyphen: according to the Iowa State Register’s coverage of the event, “The people went to the extreme of emphasizing the fact that they have been Americans for fifty years—Americans very proud of their fine ancestry, and proud of the traditions of Holland” (Zylstra 54). Moreover, the Rev. J. Ossewald delivered an address entitled “The Duty of the Young Towards Americanization;” this address received the most lively applause during the post-parade program in the city park (Zylstra 53-56; Kooi 2).
Similar anniversary patterns were followed elsewhere during the 1890s and 1900s. Orange City’s 25th anniversary festival in 1895 featured a parade containing “the very wagon, mules and the committee of four […] who twenty-five years before had left Pella in search of new lands for a Dutch settlement” (Lucas, *Ebenezer* 38). The Dutch Catholics of Hollandtown, Wisconsin, held a 50th anniversary celebration on 22 June 1898, featuring mass, a program of music and speeches, large wooden arches erected to honor Father Theodorus Van Den Broek, founder of the Dutch Catholic colony, and carried out, as they had since 1848, the traditional “Schut,” an event in which participants attempt to hit an effigy of a kingbird mounted on a tall pole (a tradition which continues to this day--*Kaukauna Times* 19-20 August 1998) (*Memoirs* i.10; *Ebenezer* 38-39). And in 1907, Zeeland again held a parade and exhibited antiques in observance of the town’s 60th anniversary (*Ebenezer* 39).

For whatever reason, Holland elected not to hold any large-scale public celebration in 1922 for the town’s 75th anniversary. The case was quite different in Pella, where the Chamber of Commerce vigorously adverted the 75th anniversary, held on 5, 6, and 7 September. It promised to be “the biggest and best celebration ever held in Pella” (Van Hinte 979-981). Four thanksgiving services were held over these three days, both in Dutch and English, containing addresses on the “Principles and Significance of Immigration.” As in previous Pella anniversaries, “the image of past virtue and present abundance formed the ideological foundation of the event” (Zylstra 60). Most of the rest of the event,
however, appears to have been very much Americanized. Van Hinte pointed out that the speakers “of national reputation,” bands, ball games, historical presentation, and parade were “thoroughly American and not at all reminiscent of the Dutch background” (981). Other entertainment at the anniversary included such sideshow fare as a “Balloon Ascension with Parachute Leap,” “Wire Walking and Juggling Act with Trained Dogs,” and “Carvilla, One Man Band” (Zylstra 60). Apart from the Dutch thanksgiving services, the most palpably “Dutch” elements of the anniversary were the wooden shoe carver, once again a part of the parade, and young ladies wearing Dutch costumes. A photograph from the 1 October 1922 Des Moines Register, however, demonstrates that these Dutch costumes were a very generic, Americanized conception of Dutch costumes: all of them were identical and looked vaguely like a cross between the costume of the town of Volendam and a milkmaid outfit (Kooi 2).

In all of these various antecedents to Tulip Times and other Dutch ethnic heritage celebrations, we can observe many of the elements and impulses that would be knit together in the later Dutch-American heritage festivals. Firstly, characteristically Dutch religious and cultural articulations were present in most of these events, such as the singing of Dutch psalms, the continued use of the Dutch language, and the incorporation of religious themes into the various addresses and programs held as part of these events. Secondly, various Dutch traditions were performed as part of the proceedings, as in the case of wooden shoe carving, the singing of Dutch songs such as the national anthem, and the use
of Dutch costumes, however accurate the costumes may have been. Thirdly, these events generally featured parades and concerts, which would become the centerpieces of most Dutch-American ethnic heritage festivals. Fourthly, within all the various events, there was, of course, a focus on commemorating the Dutch pioneers who had come to the United States in the 1840s and presenting at least snippets of the history of these people, hence the presentation of old settlers, the collection of memoirs, and the exhibit of antiques. Fifthly, these events tended (with the exception of events like the Herwijner or Frisian picnics) to downplay the provincial and especially religious factionalism present in Dutch towns, instead focusing on a common Dutch consciousness or identity; nevertheless, factionalism could still occasionally be glimpsed in these events, as in the case of the Prinsburg and Clara City Fourth of July observances. Finally, whether or not these events intended to accentuate aspects of Dutch heritage, they all typically included American forms of celebration and commemoration. During the course of the 1920s and 1930s, these various threads would be wound together in the Tulip Time celebrations of Holland, Pella, and Orange City. These three festivals would also serve to turn the focus of these events outward: before, these various celebrations were aimed mostly at the Dutch-Americans living in the towns concerned; the Tulip Time Festivals, however, aimed to draw non-Dutch visitors to town and to present or perform a version of the town’s Dutch identity for these visitors.
4.2 THE EMERGENCE: HOLLAND, PELLA, AND ORANGE CITY

4.2.1 TULIP TIME IN HOLLAND, MICHIGAN

The first Holland, Michigan, Tulip Time was held in 1929, but the direct impetus for the Festival occurred several years earlier. Apparently in 1924 Lida Rogers, Holland High School biology teacher, suggested to various townspeople that one way Holland could promote city beautification was to sponsor a “tulip day.” In 1927, she was invited to present her ideas on city beautification to the Holland Women’s Literary Club. In a speech delivered on 26 April, Rogers enumerated several possibilities for beautification projects, one of which was a “tulip day.” Rogers also mentioned the development of better parks, trees and shrubs, sand dunes, boat docks, playgrounds, swimming pools, and skating ponds as potential civic improvement projects. Rogers’s idea for “tulip day” was taken from similar sorts of flower festivals and city beautification projects that involved planned flower-planting. The tulip, she thought, would be an obvious choice for a flower festival in Holland, given the town’s name and the fact that some 85 percent of the 16,500 inhabitants of Holland and the surrounding townships were of Dutch descent (Tulip Time Through The Years 4; “Chronological” 1). While Rogers’s “tulip day” suggestion was clearly only one of several ideas she had for city beautification, and while her idea of what “tulip day” would constitute was entirely interchangeable with other flower festivals (as evidenced by the fact that her speech concluded with her reciting a poem about Lilac Time in England with the words “Tulip Time” substituted for “Lilac Time”--Tulip Time Through The
Years 4), the idea of “tulip day” caught the imagination of Holland’s city fathers. In 1928, at the urging of Mayor Earnest Brooks, Holland made plans to purchase 100,000 tulips bulbs from the Netherlands, which were planted in Holland’s parks and along its streets that fall. Anticipating the profusion of colors that would accompany the blooming of the tulips the following spring, the Minute Men’s Club began planning a “tulip day” for May of 1929 (Tulip Time Through the Years 4).

Rogers’s idea for a “tulip day” had come at a time when Holland was beginning to use its ethnic roots to attract visitors to the town. In 1927, a state park had been opened at Holland’s Ottawa beach, a popular summer resort. The March 1927 The Holland City News reported that an effort was being made to name the new state park “The Wooden Shoe,” particularly in light of the tourism and advertising possibilities such a name would offer:

> It is pointed out that ‘The Wooden Shoe’ would be invaluable as an advertising asset to Holland. It would quite naturally link the part with the name ‘Holland,’ and there is a concreteness about it and a picturesqueness that would be of great benefit in attracting the attention of the tourists.

The following year, Holland submitted a new city float to the Benton Harbor Blossom Parade featuring a windmill, tulip beds, and “Dutch lads and lassies;” The Holland City News of 17 May 1928 was proud to report that the float was a “winner” at the parade. Holland’s Wooden Shoe beach and windmill float clearly demonstrated an emergent trend among Holland’s boosters to use the town’s Dutch heritage, along with the community’s other advantages, to promote interest
in, and tourism to, their city. Coverage of the planning for 1929’s “tulip day” also demonstrated a desire on the part of the planners to upstage nearby Benton Harbor’s very popular Blossom Time Festival:

Some localities have Blossom Days, others an annual homecoming, but Holland is to go all of them one better and will inaugurate a period when tulips can be seen to bloom in profusion everywhere in this city. If Holland and its citizens have success with bulbs that are to come from Netherlands, then “Tulip Time in Holland” will be a great success. *(Holland City News 17 May 1928)*.

Although newspaper coverage emphasized that tulip plantings would emphasize the ties between Holland and the Netherlands, and also commented that certain regions of the Netherlands also held festivities during the tulip growing season, no secret was made of the fact that the planned 1929 Tulip Time was, like the Wooden Shoe beach and windmill float, “a good move to advertise the city” *(Holland City News 17 May 1928)*.

Ultimately, Holland imported 250,000 tulip bulbs from the Netherlands, some for city-maintained plantings, other to sell to interested locals *(Holland City News 18 October 1928)*. Concluding that 15 May would mark the beginning of the period of the tulips’ fullest bloom, the Tulip Time organizing committee decided to make the inaugural Tulip Time an eight-day event, beginning on the Saturday closest to 15 May *(Tulip Time Through the Years 4)*. Because of their uncertainty over the blooming of the tulips by 15 May, the festival organizers decided not to undertake any extensive advertising campaign, lest tourists be lured to an underwhelming display that would potentially lead to bad publicity *(Holland Sentinel 17 April 1929)*. In the end such worries proved unfounded, and Tulip
Time came and went without incident. Thousands of tourists came to see the blooming tulips, exceeding the expectations of the organizers, who quickly set about planning future Tulip Times (Tulip Time Through the Years 4).

In 1930, Tulip Time expanded beyond tulip plantings. A flower show (held in the Masonic hall, interestingly) was added and proved to be one of the most popular attractions of the festival (Holland Sentinel 15 May 1930; 1930 Tulip Time Program). Various musical events were also incorporated into the festivities, including a concert by the American Legion band and a massed concert band comprised of area high school bands (16 May 1930). These concerts do not appear to have made any serious attempt to incorporate any “Dutch” themes, save for the massed high school band’s rendition of a song called “Dutch Patrol.” This lack of Dutch themes was also the case with the Holland Civic Chorus’s contribution to the proceedings: they performed Friedrich von Flotow’s Martha, or the Fair at Richmond, a comic opera about an English society lady who, bored with courtly manners, goes slumming at a country fair, with expected hilarious complications (1930 Tulip Time program; Flotow). A Dutch theme was more evident in the operetta presented by Holland High School: Tulip Time, by Geoffrey F. Morgan and Frederick G. Johnson. Although the title promised a glimpse into Dutch culture, Tulip Time is essentially a light comedy of romantic escapades and misadventures by two American biology students. The events just happen to be set in the Netherlands (Morgan and Johnson). Besides the Dutch setting and “yankee Dutch” accents employed by the comic characters, the
Holland High school production provided stereotypical “Dutch costumes” for some of the female roles. Cast pictures indicate that these were little more than adaptations of the Old Dutch Cleanser logo: the girls were clad in blue and white “milkmaid” style costumes with vaguely Volendam-esque peaked, winged caps (Vande Water scrapbook). Tulip Time also offered the first recorded example of what was to become one of the hallmark features of Holland Tulip Time Festivals: wooden shoe dances. Two female dancers performed this routine, which attracted much notice from the local papers, in part owing to the fact that one of the dancers was a descendant of A. C. Van Raalte (Holland Sentinel 14 May 1930; 16 May 1930). To these stylized and Americanized depictions of “Dutch” culture, the festival also added a community sing on 16 May, which featured the singing of Dutch Psalms 42, 66, 89, and other Dutch hymns along with “America the Beautiful,” “Battle Hymn of the Republic,” “Auld Lang Syne,” and “Carry Me Back to Old Virginny” (16 May 1930; Holland City News 15 May 1930).

The advertising and promotional campaign for the 1930 Tulip Time Festival left little doubt as to what the organizers hoped the outcome of the Festival would ultimately be. The cover of the 1930 Tulip Time Program, while it displayed a full color picture of a large tulip planting and informed the reader that “May Time is Tulip Time in Holland, Michigan,” also bore the legend “RESORT, CONVENTION and RECREATIONAL FEATURES UNSURPASSED!!” The
secretary of Holland’s Chamber of Commerce, who helped organize the promotional campaign, also composed a poem as part of the promotional materials which overtly connected Tulip Time and tourism:

For it’s May time in Holland  
Everybody wants to go!  
Oh, it’s Tulip Time in Holland!  
We want you all to know  
It’s fishing time--  
And it’s touring time--  
The sunshine’s everywhere  
Oh, it’s May time  
Up in Holland, Michigan!  
May we see you there!  
(Holland City News 8 May 1930)

Yet promotions for the 1930 Festival were not, however, without their Dutch accents. A front page picture was run in the Holland City News during Tulip Time itself bearing the caption “Two-lip time;” it featured, as have countless advertisements and lawn ornaments since, a Dutch-costumed boy and girl, hands behind their backs, leaning toward one another for a kiss (15 May 1930). Arrangements were also made to promote the Festival via large window displays in downtown Grand Rapids and Chicago. These displays included tulips, of course, but in Chicago, at least, two girls appeared in promotional photographs wearing costumes--one somewhat similar to the traditional Volendam costume, the other to a Zeeland costume--and carrying yokes with buckets attached (Holland Sentinel 12 April 1930; Holland City News 8 May 1930). To judge from the advertising for the 1930 Tulip Time Festival, as well as from the events actually included in the Festival, the 1930 event was conceived less as a
celebration of Holland’s Dutch heritage than an American promotional event with a Dutch flavor inspired by the town’s heritage. Stereotypical icons such as windmills, tulips, wooden shoes, and vaguely Dutch-looking costumes were regarded as adequate ways of adding that “Dutch” flavor, although the inclusion of Dutch psalms at the community sing provided a much more tangible link to the actual Dutch heritage of Holland. Given the history of Dutch immigrant society in the United States, it is not surprising that the most direct link to the Dutch past would evoke a religious character.

Over the next several years, Tulip Time came to exhibit more of an interest in what could be construed as Dutch traditions and added several features which would become Tulip Time mainstays. Three key attractions are of particular note in that regard: street scrubbing, parades, and Dutch dancing. The scrubbing of Holland streets by townspeople in Dutch costumes debuted in 1931 as a pre-Festival promotional gimmick. Eighth street, Holland’s main business street, was dampened in front of the Warm Friend Tavern, a downtown hotel which had been built in the first decades of the twentieth century with a trapgevel (step-gabled) facade, a traditional feature of Dutch architecture. Once the street was wet, a group of 12 Holland High school girls, clad in blue and white Volendam-esque costumes similar to those used the previous year in Tulip Time, proceeded down the street, sprinkling Old Dutch Cleanser. They were followed by a group of businessmen in similar costumes, who wielded brooms. Various newsreel agencies recorded the event, which was then shown in theatres around

161
the United States the following week, garnering Holland’s Tulip Time its first truly national media attention. In subsequent years, street scrubbing was integrated into the Festival proper, although Old Dutch Cleanser was not used after 1931, presumably because of the steamy clouds of fumes that pictures of the 1931 street scrubbing clearly show wafting over the scrubbers and crowds (Tulip Time Through The Years 4-5; Vande Water scrapbook).

1931 also saw the addition of what would eventually develop into the outdoor Dutch dances that have become one of Tulip Time’s major attractions. During the preparations for the 1929 Tulip Time, the Holland Sentinel had suggested that future festivals should feature children dressed in Dutch costumes (17 April 1929). Starting in 1931 and continuing at least through 1937 (Holland Sentinel, 24 April 1937), groups of junior high girls, once again in vaguely Volendam-esque costumes, were recruited to be present on the streets during the afternoons. This program, known as the Village Green, featured the girls performing various activities ranging from knitting to selling flowers. Most notable, however, was a group of eight girls that danced in prominent locations, such as Centennial Park, the tulip fields, and in front of the Warm Friend— in other words, those locations most likely to have camera crews, tourists, and journalists present (“Klompen Dancers”). In 1935, wooden shoe “klompen dancing” became

40 According to Bert Hilson, the Dutch Villagers did not start folk dancing until 1933; I have been unable to verify if 1931 or 1933 is the correct year, but Tulip Time Through The Ages notes that the 1931 Festival featured costumed children in “demonstrations” (5). “Demonstrations” is, in all probability, a euphemism for dances.
its own separate attraction, with high school, rather than junior high, girls
performing the dances (*Tulip Time Through the Years* 5). Over the decades, the
initial group of eight dancers would expand into the hundreds, eventually topping
1,000 costumed dancers each year.

The street scrubbing and Villager attractions contained elements that
would come to form the nucleus of one of the three key parades of Holland’s
*Tulip Time*: the Volksparade. Eventually this parade would feature Dutch-
themed floats, marching bands, and marching units comprised of local businesses
and organizations. Nonetheless, the street scrubbing and the marching of Holland
citizens in Dutch costumes has remained the centerpiece of today’s Volksparade.
The second and third of *Tulip Time*’s key parades, the children’s parade (now
known as the *kinderparade*) and the parade of bands (now known as the
*muziekparade*) debuted in 1932. With these three parades, the klompen dancing,
tulip plantings, musical concerts, and Dutch psalm singing, most of the elements
were in place that have continued to figure at the center of the Festival. Two
other festival additions during the 1930s that remain prominent *Tulip Time*
features were organizations that served Dutch food and the presence of
“headliner” or celebrity guests. The 1932 *Tulip Time* Program relates that a
“Dutch Grill” was open at the Warm Friend Tavern; the 7 May 1932 *Holland
Sentinel* also makes reference to a “typical Dutch kitchen” in operation at the
Women’s Literary Club. Although no specific mention is made of what type of
food was served at these locations in 1932, the 16 May 1934 *Holland Sentinel*
provides part of the Women’s Literary Club menu for that year, which
demonstrates that traditional Dutch food (pea soup, pig-in-the-blankets, pepper
cakes, babbelaars, “koffie,” vetbollen, banket, and krakelengen), served by
individuals in costume, had in fact become a Festival feature by this time.

Appearances by celebrities of varying stripes also became a part of Tulip
Time within several years of the Festival’s founding. In 1932, the governor of
Michigan visited Tulip Time (1932 Tulip Time program); since then, an
appearance by the governor has been almost a yearly occurrence. The 1933
Festival saw the first appearance of a Dutch dignitary at Tulip Time, as the
Netherlands Consul attended the celebration (Holland Sentinel 15 May 1933).
1934 marked the first visit to Tulip Time by a figure of national prominence.
Although west Michigan was, and still is, staunchly Republican, in 1934 Norman
Thomas, frequent Socialist candidate for president, attended Tulip Time. Besides
opening the flower show (Holland Sentinel 11 May 1934), he delivered a speech
on the “unconscious socialism” he saw at work in Holland. Thomas argued that
the United States faced a choice between Socialism, Fascism, or war (14 May
1934). In response the Holland Sentinel editorial proclaimed that Thomas’s cause
was “a lost one and most people disagree with him.” But Thomas himself was
praised as a man “of education and culture.” He was “approachable and not a
soap-box sort of personality, plus a religious leader who many admire even
through disagreement” (12 May 1934:4). No doubt Thomas’s credentials as an ordained Presbyterian minister greatly bolstered the willingness of the people of Holland to welcome a “radical” to their celebration.

Celebrity entertainers began appearing at Tulip Time in 1938 when, under the auspices of the Holland Furnace Company, film actors Richard Arlen and Rochelle Hudson came to Holland to be a part of a national radio broadcast (10 May 1938). Hollywood celebrity appearances continued over the next several years; among the most notable guests were Fay Wray (3 May 1939), Dorothy Lamour (2 May 1940), and Pat O’Brien (14 May 1941). This type of celebrity appearance waned for a time after the Second World War (although Rocky Marciano was on handy for the 1953 festivities—13 May 1953:13), but since the late 1970s headline entertainers and celebrity grand marshals have been yearly Tulip Time fixtures. Celebrity grand marshals and parade guests have include Gerald, Betty, and Susan Ford (17 May 1976), George H. W. Bush and Ronald Reagan (17 May 1980), James Doohan of Star Trek fame (19 May 1986), Dick Van Patten (13 May 1990), and former all-star pitcher Mickey Lolich of the Detroit Tigers (2 May 1999). Various stars from Lawrence Welk (a yearly fixture since 1979), The Smothers Brothers (1995 and 1996 Tulip Time programs), The Oak Ridge Boys (1997, 1998, 2000, and 2004 Tulip Time programs), Bob Newhart (2001 Tulip Time program), Tony Orlando (2003 Tulip Time program), and, for a younger crowd, Christina Aguilera (2000 Tulip Time program) have been among the many headline entertainers that have performed at Tulip Time.
Within the first ten years of its history, Tulip Time had achieved the basic form it has maintained ever since. Over the years, additional types of events and features have become mainstays, such as the Holland Museum (originally started as the Netherlands Museum in 1937), the Dutch Heritage Show (which emerged out of various different presentations of Dutch provincial costumes and customs in the post-Second World War years), wooden shoe carvers, two Dutch “theme parks” (Dutch Village and Windmill Island), and a Dutch-style worship service. Many of these subsequent additions sought to emphasize Holland’s Dutch heritage; similarly, many of the events already present in the early 1930s were altered and refined to be more accurate or “authentic” representations of Dutch customs and traditions. However, there remains to this day an interesting tension between those elements with a Dutch focus and those which seem less concerned with accentuating the city’s Dutch heritage and more concerned with appealing to a wide variety of people, both within and beyond the community.

4.2.2 TULIP TIME IN PELLA, IOWA

Pella’s anniversary celebrations had featured several displays of Dutch heritage, such as the 1897 floats bearing women dressed to represent the eleven provinces of The Netherlands and girls dressed in generic-looking Dutch milkmaid costumes in 1922. Both events also demonstrated the art of carving wooden shoes. Apart from these anniversary observances, Pella began using Dutch heritage to promote itself and appeal to tourists as early as 1913, when it was chosen to host the Great White Way picnic (the Great White Way was an
Iowa highway which derived its nickname from the white poles that marked it). To advertise the picnic, Pella sent a delegation of twenty-five young women in “Dutch” costume to Des Moines, thereby, as Lisa Jaarsma Zylstra notes, inaugurating the practice of “using traditional Dutch icons to market Pella to travelers” (65). The publicity stunt was successful; some 5,000 people attended the picnic, where they were treated to vaudeville acts, acrobats, contortionists, pie eating contests, a tug of war, baseball games, and, perhaps most tellingly, wooden shoe races (65; Kooi 3; *Des Moines Evening Tribune* 17 July 1913).

During the 1920s, Pella held two historical pageants to promote the town. While both were thoroughly in the tradition of those described in Glassberg’s *American Historical Pageantry*, and, as such, presented triumphant narratives of Americanization and progress, the first of them, held in 1922, did include scenes which spoke to Pella’s Dutch heritage. Near the beginning of the pageant, costumed Dutch immigrants arrived as a local Native American band departed; after the Spirit of the Prairie surrendered her domain to the settlers, girls in costume performed a “Dutch drill” (a common 1920s and 1930s euphemism for wooden shoe dancing). From that point forward, through, the pageant focused on the Americanization of the settlers (Zylstra 63). The second historical pageant, the *Pageant of Progress*, was staged in 1927 by the John B. Rogers pageant company. This production, sponsored by the American Legion, contained no local history or depictions whatsoever, save for the character of Miss Pella who, at the conclusion of the pageant, declared her intention to “always follow
progress” (63-64). Despite such celebrations of acculturation, Pella promoters were nevertheless happy to continue to employ Dutch icons to attract travelers and business. In 1929, the Women’s Federated Club erected model windmills at the city limits (65), and various Pella businesses employed Dutch items in their logos, such as Pella Products, Incorporated, a clothing manufacturer which used a Dutch boy in a vaguely Volendam-style costume as its logo from its 1907 founding (Bob Klein interview 1, 8-9).

It would seem that the direct inspiration for the beginning of Pella’s Tulip Time Festival was the Pella High School Glee Clubs’ presentation of Tulip Time, the same operetta that had been featured at the 1930 Holland Tulip Time, on 16 and 17 April 1935 (Pella Chronicle 11 April 1935). The performances drew large and enthusiastic crowds, and, it seems, inspired Lewis Hartley, business manager of the Pella Chronicle and avid local grower of tulips, to suggest to Chamber of Commerce members that Pella establish a Tulip Time Festival similar to Holland’s (1 May 1958; Zylstra 85). On 23 April 1935, the Chamber of Commerce board of directors discussed plans for a 1935 Tulip Day and appointed six committees to plan the celebration; two days later, Lon Wormhoudt pitched the idea of Tulip Day to the full Chamber of Commerce, Central College president Irwin Lubbers related a bit of Holland’s Tulip Time Festival history, and the Chamber unanimously approved proceeding with the 1935 Tulip Day. Already at the 23 April meeting, executive committee members seem to have
thought the event could become an annual celebration, as they discussed looking into federal aid for planting tulips for “future annual celebrations as contemplated” (Zylstra 85-86).

Because the decision to hold a Tulip Day had been made too late to plant tulips for 1935, and because few Pella residents, at that time, grew tulips, the first Pella Tulip Time lacked many real tulips. Instead, the planning committee hired local woodworker George Heeren to carve 125 three-to-four-foot tall wooden tulips, which were then placed in flag pole holes around the Pella business district during the one-day Festival; several of these wooden tulips are now exhibited at the Pella Historical Village (Zylstra 86; “History of Tulip Time in Pella;” Bob Klein Interview 2; Racheter 32). Although this first Pella Tulip Time was celebrated sans tulips (in contrast to Holland’s first Festival, celebrated only with tulips), several Dutch elements were incorporated that would become enduring Pella Tulip Time features. For example, local women arranged store window displays of antiques and heirlooms. Many of these antiques and heirlooms were, according to Pella Chronicle reports, brought to Pella by the initial Dutch settlers; some were 200, 300, or even 400 years old. Two particularly notable items on display were a Dutch Bible from 1663 and a snuff box from 1513 (23 May 1935). Window displays also exhibited antique glassware, earthenware, silverware, jewelry, kitchen utensils, pipes, tobacco boxes, photos, music boxes, books, toys, and apparel (16 May 1935).
Dutch food and costumes also played an important role at the first Pella Tulip Time, just as it has ever since. Ads from the 16 May 1935 *Pella Chronicle* indicate that the local Pella meat markets offered specials on Pella Bologna, ring-style bologna ostensibly derived from old Dutch recipes (4, 5).\(^\text{41}\) Similarly, Jaarsma’s bakery offered Dutch cookies (spekulaas and jan hegel), letters (banket), figure 8s (krakelingen) and Holland rusk. For these items, Jaarsma’s stressed that “We use the good old Holland Recipes in the making of all our Dutch baking” (5). Pella Bologna has become a regionally famous Pella product, and the baked goods offered at Pella bakeries remain one of the most popular aspects of the Festival. Dutch-style costumes had already been employed in the April high school production of *Tulip Time*. As in Holland, photographs of the operetta indicate that the costumes were rather generic: the girls’ costumes were a sort of mix between a milkmaid costume and the Old Dutch Cleanser logo, and the boys wore baggy pants, suspenders, and a Dutch Boy Paint-style cap (*Pella Chronicle* 16 May 1935). Besides the operetta costumes, the high school home economics department and Pella Products made Dutch costumes for townspeople to wear in the street during the Festival (9 May 1935; Bob Klein interview). The *Pella Chronicle* summary report from 23 May commented that on the morning of Saturday, 18 May, one could see “Dutch costumes worn by both men and women, and also small children.” Like the operetta costumes, however, the accuracy or

\(^{\text{41}}\) Lisa Jaarsma Zylstra relates that the recipe for Pella bologna was actually German in origin (98).
authenticity of these costumes was of a dubious nature. Bob Klein, in a 2006 interview, recalled the process of making the boys’ costumes for the earliest Tulip Times:

BK: The early [costume] design [laughs] was inspired by the trademark our company had. And we just copied that uniform.
TSJ: And what was that trademark, if you could just describe it?
BK: Dutch Boy. [. . .]
TSJ: Sure. And was the costume used on that trademark from any particular province, or was it sort of just--
BK: No, I think it was just kind of a composite in the old days that they designed with the [inaudible Dutch term], things like that, and the sash or the collar piece, and the little Dutch cap and things like that. Made the costumes out of denim, the powder blue denim for the blouse, and the navy blue denim for the pants. (8-9)

Clearly, then, the costumes used at early Pella Tulip Times were, as Lisa Jaarsma Zylstra says, “makeshift.” She also notes, however, that there were some heirloom costumes, brought from the Netherlands by the early immigrants, that were also worn during the Festival (87), and, as noted above, heirloom Dutch costumes were also displayed in store windows.

The centerpieces of the 1935 Pella Tulip Time were the afternoon and evening programs. The afternoon program featured an introducing by local mayor T. G. Fultz, dressed as a European burgemeester, acting as the master of ceremonies; the presence of a burgemeester (usually not the actual mayor) acting as master of ceremonies at an afternoon program has been an annual part of Tulip Time ever since. Following the burgemeester’s welcome, several groups of children performed “Dutch drills” of some sort. After these “drills,” a group of older men sang Dutch songs and “The genuine Dutch twins” presented an original
song in Dutch dialect. Next, a four-person group, led by “Hans and Gretchen” (Winifred and Donald Hesselink), performed “Dutch samen-spraken (dialogues) [. . .] all dressed in their quaint Dutch costumes.” Rev. Jacob Prins, pastor of the Second Reformed Church, delivered the afternoon’s address, which drew parallels between the characteristics of the tulip and the characteristics of Pella’s Dutch-Americans and their ancestors (Pella Chronicle 9 May 1935; 16 May 1935; 23 May 1935:8). The evening program was primarily dedicated to a reprise performance of Tulip Time by Pella High students, whose April performance, the 9 May 1935 Pella Chronicle commented, “was declared to be far above average for such plays.” To lend even more Dutch flavor to the performance, the 12-piece orchestra was also dressed in Dutch costumes. Between the acts of Tulip Time, an unspecified specialty act was performed by “Wayne and Helen, the ‘Little Dutchmen’” (16 May 1935).

The promotional campaign for Pella’s first Tulip Time, as well as the newspaper comments about the reasons for starting a Pella Tulip Time, do not contain the same frank connection of Dutch heritage and tourism and self-promotion as in Holland’s early Festival coverage. To be sure, the Pella Tulip Time of 1935 had some promotional aims, as indicated by the fact that the Chamber of Commerce was in charge of the 1935 Festival. Also, the success of Holland’s Tulip Time was stated as a reason for Pella to undertake a similar event. For example, the 2 May Pella Chronicle reported that Dr. I. J. Lubbers, when urging the Chamber to undertake the Festival, “spoke of the need of civic
improvement in an already beautiful and clean city and said he believed that Pella
had the advantage over Holland, Mich., which has made a success of the event, in
that we have more open spaces and better soil.” Local Pella minister Rev.
Monsma also commented on the promotional aspect Tulip Time promised Pella,
noting it would “give Pella a still higher berth as a clean and beautiful city and be
an attraction to transients and visitors.” The commercial motives behind Pella’s
first Tulip Time are also clearly evidenced by the fact that merchants offered
special deals during the Festival (16 May 1935); even a *Pella Chronicle* editorial
frankly expressed this motive:

[Tulip Time] will do more than provide a floral display and encourage
tulip culture. It will make our city the garden spot of the country and the
envy of cities even larger than ours. So let’s get busy and drive hard for
an annual event in the showing of tulips that will outshine anything we
have ever attempted. (16 May 1935)

At the same time, reports and comments in the newspaper, as well as the
content of the speech delivered by Rev. Prins during the afternoon program,
indicate other important motives behind starting Tulip Time. The 2 May *Pella
Chronicle* reported that Rev. Prins, at the Chamber of Commerce meeting which
decided to stage Tulip Time, “said his impression of Pella was that there was too
much jealousy and suspicion and that we needed something of this kind [Tulip
Time] to break down the barriers and solidify the various elements.” While never
specifying the “various elements,” one suspects Prins was referring at least in
part, if not in full, to the RCA-CRC religious and educational divide; the common
effort of staging a Festival focused on the common heritage of (nearly) all of
Pella’s citizens could, at least potentially, be a way to bridge the divides characteristic of Dutch towns like Pella during the rest of the year. The 25 April *Pella Chronicle*, reporting on the initial decision to pitch the idea of Tulip Time, had already seen Tulip Time as an event which could potentially pass Dutch traditions “down to even unborn generations.” Such coverage leading up to Pella’s Tulip Time Festival differs markedly from that of Holland in 1929 which, although it commented on the Dutch heritage of the town, focused almost exclusively on the promotional and tourism aspect of the Festival.

Rev. Prins’s address during the 18 May afternoon program emphasized the connection between Pella’s Dutch heritage and Dutch Calvinism in a way Holland’s early Festivals do not appear to have done. Firstly, he noted that the tulip was an early blooming flower, and that “’Early to be and early to rise’ was truly a maxim in the Dutch community where I was born and raised.” (*Pella Chronicle* 23 May 1935). Secondly, Prins argued that the tulip was a flower that exhibited neatness and cleanliness; this, of course, is one of the classic (and in many ways accurate) stereotypes of Dutch people. Thirdly, Prins contended that the tulip was a “humble” flower, observing that “where the soil is heavy this bulb does best when given an opportunity to show its humility by being placed in the lowly sand.” Similarly, Prins said, the Dutch were a people who often lived in humble circumstances, and even their sense of pride “was a justifiable pride
because it was clothed in humility.” Prins’s last two points took a decidedly religious turn. Prins’s fourth point was that, just as tulip bulbs need to be protected from the winter weather by several inches of cover:

So also our people have a due sense of the need of protection and humbling themselves to the earth look for Him who is their God to protect them and keep them during the stormy blasts of winter. With indomitable faith in God and His protection the people have made their way in the world. (23 May 1935)

Finally, Prins observed that, as it happens, “TULIP” is an acronym for the five points of Calvinist Christianity: total depravity (humanity’s inability to do any good apart from the grace of God), unconditional election (God’s merciful election of sinners to salvation--predestination), limited atonement (those who are saved--the elect--do not have to make full atonement for their sins, because they by definition cannot do so--see total depravity), irresistible grace (God’s saving grace cannot be resisted when it is granted), and perseverance of the saints (the elect cannot fall away from the faith) (23 May 1935).

For Rev. Prins, then, Tulip Time was an occasion to celebrate and remember Pella’s heritage and all the aspects thereof, and religion, more than windmills, tulips, and wooden shoes, stood at the center of that rich heritage:

Its [sic] Tulip Time in Pella and we are glad that it is so. And as the years go by we shall appreciate in greater measure our heritage as a people of Dutch ancestry. We shall bring out each year our rich collection of Dutch antiques, we shall continue to beautify our fair city with the planting of tulips, flowers, trees and shrubs, we shall study again the religious foundation upon which these communities were builded and we shall try to keep T-u-l-i-p in our religion too, a real sense of the Sovereignty of God in every sphere of life. (23 May 1935)
Quite decidedly, Prins tied the promotional benefits and aims to this religious and cultural history:

In the course of time, thousands of people from all over Iowa and surrounding states will be coming to Pella at Tulip Time to see the beautiful blossoms, to admire our collection of Dutch antiques; to marvel anew at the accomplishments of the Dutch people in this community; to return and say, “truly they are a great people.” (23 May 1935)

Pride clothed in humility, indeed. Similarly, Prins’s closing remarks explicitly tie together heritage, religion, and promotion if Pella follows Holland’s lead in celebrating Tulip Time:

We too can have our street cleaning program with our good Dutch mayor in charge. We too can surround the windmills at the entrance to our city with tulip beds and fill our beautiful park with the same. We too can inaugurate a program of Dutch Psalm singing and calling to mind the richness of the past history of the indomitable Dutch people. And our city shall be known throughout the land as a city that stands for the very best and most beautiful that one can find in religion, business, education, recreation; in short, the best and most beautiful in life. (23 May 1935)

Post-Tulip Time reflections contained in the *Chronicle* serve to emphasize that, while Tulip Time was seen as a promotional event, there were other, equally important benefits that had come from the Festival. Again, the focus on the heritage of the community, as well as a dose of nostalgia, were cited as important aspects of the Festival:

To the older people it was an occasion to reflect on the scenes of childhood days in The Netherlands and the long cruise on the sailships that brought them their first glimpse of the “land of the free and the home of the brave” [. . .] To the younger people, it brought back memories of bed time stories when parents or grandparents told of the land that gave them birth. To we Americans of a different lineage it kindled a deeper and finer appreciation of land of dikes and Dutch mills and the picturesque in art and scenery. (23 May 1935)
A more explicit comment on the appreciation of heritage Tulip Time afforded appeared in the same issue:

The Dutch setting given to the program, centering around the tulip, the national flower of the Netherlands, the appearance of Dutch costumes worn by both men and women, also small children, the sound of wooden shoes striking the pavement, conversation and song in the Dutch vernacular, brought Holland to Pella as it has not been in this generation. (23 May 1935)

Subsequent Pella Tulip Times introduced innovations that would, like the afternoon program, window displays, and use of Dutch food and costumes, become recurrent Tulip Time features. Some of these innovations were directly inspired by Holland, Michigan’s Tulip Time, which a Pella delegation visited in 1935. Upon their return, the delegation specifically commented on being impressed with Holland’s 12 miles of tulip lanes, the street inspection and scrubbing, the inclusion of a windmill surrounded by tulips in one of the city parks, the parade of bands, a Sunday service which made use of a Dutch-speaking minister, the number of children dressed in Dutch costume, the Dutch lunches served at the Women’s Literary Club, and the fact that there was “a LAW that no paper tulips may be used,” perhaps an allusion to the fake tulips that Pella had been forced to use in 1935 (16 May 1935; 30 May 1935). The Pella delegation also indicated that they had been impressed with Holland’s Dutch Dancing and the fact that Holland’s organizing committee had resolved that “‘No activity or function is permitted in connection with Tulip Time which is not dignified and aesthetic and free from the carnival idea.’ Great care and good judgment has been exercised to keep the festival from becoming a circus” (16 May 1935; 30 May
At the first planning meeting for Pella’s 1936 Tulip Time, it was resolved to include a number of features in the 1936 Tulip Time clearly inspired by Holland’s Tulip Time: tulip plantings and lanes, marching school kids, a band competition, folk dancing, street scrubbing, and an increased use of Dutch costumes.

The decision to incorporate some of the festive elements seen in Holland into Pella’s Tulip Time was rapidly implemented. A miniature village, much of it carved by George Heeren, carver of the wooden tulips used in the 1935 Festival, was displayed for the first time (Zylstra 94); this village, refined and expanded over the years, is still displayed during Tulip Time (and year round) at the Pella Historical Village. More Dutch food was served at the 1936 Festival: besides bologna and baked goods, Central College offered meals of spiced beef, red cabbage, creamed potatoes, sliced green beans, and strawberries with whipped cream on toasted rusk. In coming years, Pella churches and restaurants would also serve Dutch meals to visitors (98). Pella’s first Tulip Time parade was also held during the 1936 Festival (98). Another “parade,” the parade of provinces, was held as part of one of the afternoon programs. This event, which featured local young women dressed in a variety of provincial costumes of The Netherlands, proved so popular that it was repeated several times during the course of the Festival (Pella Chronicle 14 May 1936). As in Holland, street scrubbing and more Dutch dancing were added to the 1936 Pella Tulip Time, as was a children’s parade. And, of course, tulip lanes were added along several of
Pella’s main streets (*Pella Chronicle* 1936 Daily Souvenir Program). With minor changes, such as the children’s parade becoming a unit in the larger Volks parade, all of these elements remain regular Pella Tulip Time features.

Many of these new elements, as well as the carryovers from 1936, required townspeople to be in Dutch costume, and Tulip Time organizers undertook an ambitious campaign to get as many locals in costume as possible. January and February were designated as costume drive months, and mass cooperation was expected:

> Pella is to be a typical Dutch village and in order to make it so, we must have the hearty cooperation of everybody. All are asked to dress in Dutch costume for five days [of the Festival]. Do your daily tasks and continue in your regular routine of work but do so in Dutch costume. Let each family in town plan the Dutch costumes now. (*Pella Chronicle* 23 January 1936)

A program for “punishing” noncompliance was even hinted at, although it does not appear to have ever been enacted. The 12 March 1936 *Pella Chronicle* reported that “A rumor is current that ‘A KANGAROO COURT’ may be set up to bring to justice any of our good citizens who are not sufficiently ‘Tulip-time-minded’ to wear a Dutch costume, before De Burgermeester for correction.” A final addition to the 1936 Festival reminiscent of Holland’s activities was an appearance by the Governor of Iowa (14 May 1936); although the Iowa governor does not consistently appear at Pella’s Tulip Time as does Michigan’s governor, each Iowa governor can usually be counted upon to appear in Pella to scrub streets at least once during his or her time in office.
The Tulip Time Festivals of 1936 and 1937 also saw the introduction of three other elements that would become important regular features of Pella’s festival. First, 1936 witnessed the election of the first Pella Tulip Queen. For the inaugural Tulip Queen competition, any young woman between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one living in Pella and “of good reputation and thoroughly typical of the Holland influence” was eligible to be nominated (Pella Chronicle 19 March 1936). Out of the 100 or so nominees, the people of Pella selected Leonora Gaass, who happened to be a great-granddaughter of Dominie H. P. Scholte, founder of Pella, to serve as the first Tulip Queen (23 April 1936). During one of the Festival’s afternoon programs, Burgemeester T. G. Fultz presided over the coronation of Queen Leonora, which also involved local women impersonating Queen Wilhelmina and the Dowager Queen of the Netherlands. The Olivier Twins, who had performed during the 1935 program, sang the Dutch national anthem as part of the coronation ceremony. Ever since, the Tulip Queen, coronation, and singing of the Dutch anthem have all remained prominent Tulip Time features (14 May 1936). A year later, Pella Tulip Time followed Holland in adding a flower show to the Festival; this show, too, remains a noted annual feature (22 April 1937).

The final addition to Tulip Time during the 1930s which deserves special note is the Pella Historical Society Museum, which opened its doors for the 1936 Festival. Following the 1935 Tulip Time Festival, a number of Pella people decided to revive the Historical Society which, although it had existed as early as
1898 and was active as late as 1926, had been little noted or long remembered before 1935 (Zylstra 90, 93). The impetus for reviving the Historical Society seems to have been the antique window displays from the 1935 Festival, which a number of the townspeople felt would be nice to have on permanent display in a museum setting (Pella Chronicle 4 May 1939). The third of the three main objectives for the Pella Historical Society stated in its Articles of Incorporation reflects this concern, calling, as it did, for the Society “To purchase a suitable home in which to house such memorials, historical data, antiques, typically Holland articles of furniture, works of art, heirlooms, etc., as may be acquired by, donated or loaned to the Society” (22 April 1937). The scope of the activities of the reconstituted Historical Society was, however, well beyond simply maintaining a museum. Indeed, its first two stated goals were (and are) 1) “To preserve and perpetuate the history of Pella, Iowa, its sturdy Holland background and traditions” and 2) “To finance and support our annual Tulip Festival to be held in Pella, Iowa, each year, and called Pella’s Tulip Time” (22 April 1937). Already in 1936, barely a year after the Historical Society’s reconstitution, the Society had purchased and opened a museum that was a main point of interest during Tulip Time; this museum in the 1960s and 1970s would grow from a single museum house into the full-fledged Pella Historical Village, which remain a year-round, as well as Tulip Time, attraction today.
The Historical Society, however, was much more than an organization which maintained Pella’s museum and helped “finance and support” Tulip Time. A 22 April 1937 *Pella Chronicle* article relates that the Historical Society was formed to ensure Tulip Time was presented “in such a manner that our own people and the visitors would grasp the true significance of the event” and to avoid commercialization “and having an event of high purpose degenerate into just another celebration” (29). Once again, we see Pella’s concern with making the preservation of heritage as important, if not rhetorically moreso, than any commercial, promotional, or profit motives or benefits Tulip Time might bring. The Historical Society was characterized as “the permanent insurance against commercialization,” a provider of “a suitable place and a motive and inspiration for Pella people to preserve antiques, curios and relics,” and, moreover, “the bullwark [sic] against any undue Sabbath activity” (29). The Historical Society thus was a sharing partner, along with the Chamber of Commerce, city officials, schools officials, and general citizenry of Pella, in the organization and execution of Pella Tulip Time (29). The influence of the Historical Society on the Festival is arguably palpable in the coverage of the Festival present in the *Pella Chronicle* during the 1930s. In 1936, an anonymous poet offered lines “In Memory of Pella’s Founders” in the lead up to Tulip Time (30 April 1936); the 1937 Tulip Time Special Edition of the *Pella Chronicle* contained articles on the history of Dutch food, tulips, Pella, the Dutch in New York, wooden shoes, and contained profiles of two remaining survivors of the 1847 group that founded Pella; the
1938 Tulip Time Special Edition contained similar articles, as well as reminiscences (already!) of the 1937 Festival (23) and an editorial in praise of the virtues (Faith, Courage, Determination, Perseverance, Resolution, Intelligent Planning, Concerted Effort, Industry, Adaptation, Consecration, Devotion, and Religious Fervor) of the original Pella settlers (30); and the 1940 Tulip Time Special Edition contained profiles of individual Pella Pioneers from the early days of the settlement (2 May 1940 13-20).

The influence of the Historical Society was also arguably evident in the structure of several of the Tulip Time Festivals of the late 1930s, which demonstrate a concern with heritage and an inward-looking trend. In 1936, the second Tulip Time Festival consisted of a preparatory day followed by five days, each with a particular theme: History Day, Church Day, Neighbor Day, Central College Day, and Pella Day. The preparatory day was a day for Pella people to get together to witness the unveiling of the antique displays in store windows and watch performances by Dutch dancers, folk singers, and the “Little Dutch Band.” The preparatory day also included a “Dutch Street Frolic in native costumes,” which Pella residents were encouraged to participate in by wearing costumes, visiting with each other, and engaging in a variety of activities. History Day comprised the opening of the Pella Historical Museum and miniature Dutch village, street inspection and scrubbing, Dutch dancing and folk singing, the coronation of the Tulip Queen with its Parade of Provinces, and the afternoon Volks parade, with floats depicting Pella history. Church Day featured English
and Dutch hymn sings, prayer services, an address by a visiting pastor from Grand Rapids, and organ recitals. Neighbor day showcased various musical groups and speakers from nearby communities; Central College Day included performances by various organizations, clubs, and musical groups from Central College; and Pella Day centered on the parade of public schoolchildren, along with reprises of several History Day events (Pella Chronicle Daily Souvenir Program, 7 May 1936).

Much the same structure was followed for the 1937 Festival, although the Volks parade was augmented with more historical floats and Pella Day was changed to Schools Day, although the order of events on Schools Day was virtually the same as 1936’s Pella Day, save that the full Volksparade marched on Schools Day instead of just a parade of school children (1937 Tulip Time program). In 1938, owing to the logistical and volunteer manpower difficulties attached to mounting a five-day festival, Tulip Time was shortened to three days and the program for all three days was more or less regularized (1938 Tulip Time program).42 The street frolic, or Straats Vergadering, on the Wednesday before Tulip Time, however, continued to be a feature of Tulip Time through 1942, and then was revived again after the Second World War; it ceased to be noted in festival programs after the 1949 Festival (1938, 1941, 1942, 1947, 1948, 1949

42 The Friday of the 1938 Festival was designated “State Day,” but differed from the other days of the Festival only in that the governor of Iowa put in an appearance (1938 Tulip Time program). In 1951, the different days of Tulip Time were designated College Day, Neighbor Day, and History Day, but the programs for each day were identical, save that the governor visited on Neighbor Day (1951 Tulip Time program).
Tulip Time programs). Both the “Day” format and the Straats Vergadering once again make Pella Tulip Time’s emphasis on the town’s heritage—and the desire for residents to reflect on that heritage—markedly evident (Zylstra 91); this, again, likely reflects the influence of the Pella Historical Society on the Festival. Even when the “Day” format was abandoned and the Straats Vergadering discontinued, the influence of the Historical Society remained. If anything, it became stronger, as in 1939 Tulip Time’s organizational duties passed from the Chamber of Commerce to the Historical Society, although the Chamber continued (and continues) to support the Festival financially and also (inevitably, given Pella’s small size) shared membership with the Historical Society (Zylstra 93; Pella Chronicle 4 May 1939).

As in Holland, Michigan’s Tulip Time, Pella Tulip Time thus established, within its first several years, the organizational patterns and key features that, by and large, continue to characterize the Festival to this day. Tulip plantings in Pella’s parks and along some of the main streets become more and more elaborate each year. The flower show still draws submissions and arrangements from Pella residents of all ages. Noon organ concerts remain a yearly event, as does a concert featuring Central College music group and ensembles; a Dutch church service with the singing of Dutch hymns was a yearly fixture until 2005. Antique displays are still common in store windows in Pella’s main business district; the Historical Museum, now a full-blow Historical Village, continues to be a draw, both for the antiques on display and the demonstrations of various trades and
crafts held therein (wooden shoe carving being, of course, the most popular among visitors). On any give Tulip Time day, one can see numerous Pella residents wandering the streets dressed in Dutch costumes, and several groups of costumed townspeople, such as the Dutch Family Singers, perform Dutch folk songs and dances. In the tradition of the first Tulip Time operetta performance, theatrical performances of some sort are presented in most years, be they pageants, musicals, operettas, or plays. Before each parade, a grandstand show, emceed by the Burgemeester with help from the Town Crier, continues the traditions of the Parade of Provinces, the presentation of the Tulip Queen and her court, the singing of the Dutch national anthem, street scrubbing, and Dutch dancing. And the Volks parade, with its costumed marching school children, historical floats, and other Dutch-themed units, remains the centerpiece of each day’s activities.

Today, if one asks a Pella resident what the meaning of the Festival is, the answer will likely echo the sentiments found in Pella Chronicle articles and editorials of the 1930s:

Tulip Time means a great deal to Pella. To begin with, it is keeping alive the traditions of those courageous folks who braved the dangers of this wild country, and laid the foundation for all, that we have today. To leave a homeland, even though to escape religious persecution, is not an easy task. The best we can do is to keep that memory alive by giving joyous thanks on such a festive occasion. (1 October 1936)
Tuliptime is strictly a community event and as such is entitled to the whole-hearted support of everyone in every way. The theme of Tuliptime is NOT commercialism—it is a sacred event and holds much deeper significance, in that we live again as it were the traditions and faith of our Fathers calling to mind those fundamentals upon which Dominie Scholte and his 700 Holland Colonists founded Pella in 1847. (15 April 1937)

JC: I think the biggest thing [about Tulip Time] is letting people know why Pella started, even. It was a religious reason, and they weren’t able to practice religiously where they were, so they came here where they could, and—I like to think that Pella is welcoming, and realizing maybe that they weren’t welcomed where they were in the Netherlands, that maybe they are now. And since they chose the name Pella—City of Refuge—I like to think that they’re welcoming. (Jackie Craver and Phyllis Zylstra interview 30)

At the same time, the economic benefits are not exactly downplayed either:

Tulip Time means a great deal to Pella from the commercial side. Such an event draws enormous crowds. It is unique in so many ways that the visitor becomes impressed with it all. It is to be expected that many would like to make Pella their home and the place where they earn their livelihood. It will attract manufacturers who are constantly seeking just the things we have to offer. They like the thriftiness and the thoroughness of the Dutch race. (Pella Chronicle 1 October 1936)

True it is that certain businesses, as well as civic and church organizations accrue direct benefit from thousands of our visitors, these benefits in turn to be reinvested in the building up of our Historical society, schools, churches and the community in general. (15 April 1937)

Oh...the economic impact is tremendous. I can remember one shopkeeper uptown saying “Oh, how thankful she was to have tulip time in between Christmas.” And that told me a lot. There was another shopkeeper that I remember mentioned to my mother, that Tulip Time was over half of his income for the year. Think about this. And he just had a tiny little shop, a tiny little shop, and he sold little pieces of Delft and stuff at Tulip Time, and you know, to think that that was his, that was over half of his income, that tells you something. So the economic impact for Pella is tremendous. (Patsy Sadler interview 12)
Even so, it is likely to be pointed out that the Festival itself does not receive direct benefit from the Festival, or that that is not the primary reason behind the Festival:

Equally true it is that the greater portion of those devoting their time and effort to promote Tuliptime are not receiving direct benefit, but they pride themselves in their willingness to assist in perpetuating the true spirit of Pella, and Tuliptime. (*Pella Chronicle* 15 April 1937)

So [Tulip Time] means a lot financially. But it’s...we want people to see what our heritage is. (Ken Uitermarkt interview 14)

This ongoing tension between the commercial and heritage sides of Tulip Time, the influence of the Historical Society on Tulip Time, and the changing conceptions of how to accurately represent Dutch heritage, as well as other issues arising from Pella’s Tulip Time, will be taken up in future chapters.

### 4.2.3 TULIP FESTIVAL IN ORANGE CITY, IOWA

The emergence of Orange City’s Tulip Festival resulted from a confluence of pre-existing practices: a local lumber yard manager’s interest in tulips, a veterinarian’s desire to “keep up with the Joneses,” and a revitalized Chamber of Commerce’s desire to start its new life off with a bang. In the first place, tulip planting, it would seem, had long been an Orange City tradition. James Treneman claims that “before a tulip celebration was ever contemplated, most Orange City yards had tulips” (I.4). Perhaps “most” is an exaggeration, but in any case it would seem many Orange City spring flower beds had long included tulips. The practice of planting tulips was expanded due, in part, to the arrival of Edward Bolluyt in 1924. Bolluyt had grown up in the Netherlands, and from the age of
twelve had been employed by De Graaff and Sons, bulb growers and exporters
based in Lisse, the Netherlands (which, in 1949, became the home of the famous
Keukenhof, one of the world’s largest flower gardens). Upon arriving in Orange
City, Bolluyt became a manager at a local lumber yard. Bolluyt had brought
some tulip bulbs with him from Lisse, and he planted these in front of the lumber
yard, along with excess bulbs from the local drug store. Bolluyt gradually
expanded this tulip bed until it extended along the entire block in front of his
lumber yard and another half block around it (I.4).

Meanwhile, in 1933, the Orange City Yard and Garden, Women’s, and
Lions’ clubs, as well as the Choral Society and Symphony, combined to sponsor
the community’s First Annual Tulip Show (L. Vander Stoep Scrapbooks I). For
this show, local residents were encouraged to plant tulips in their own flower
beds. Tulip Show judges visited each entrant’s flower bed and judged each tulip
therein. Prize-winning tulips were then cut and arranged in bouquets for display.
The 1933 Tulip Show went so well that it was enlarged the following year (A.
Vander Stoep 2). At about the same time, another group began taking an interest
in tulip-growing activities. The Commercial Club, which had been on the wane
since the late 1920s (Centennial Book 133), cooperated with the Tulip Show
sponsors to plant special city tulip beds that would bloom in the spring of 1935
(2). While these organizations were concerning themselves with heightening the
profile of Orange City’s tulip beds, public and private, in 1934 and 1935 other
enterprising townspeople were busy staging “Evening Shows” which proved quite
popular with the residents of Orange City and the surrounding area. Of particular note in this regard was 1935’s *White Elephant*, a show with an all-male cast, with the libretto and much of the music written by local Orange City attorney A. J. Kolyn (L Vander Stoep Scrapbooks I).

The apparent spark for Orange City’s Tulip Festival came in May, 1935, when Edward Fischer, local veterinarian, visited Bolluyt and showed him a copy of the 1935 *Pella Chronicle* Tulip Time edition. According to James Treneman, Fischer asked Bolluyt why Orange City, which also had a lot of tulips, couldn’t “do something like that” (I.4). Shortly thereafter, Bolluyt and Fischer attended a Lions’ Club meeting and persuaded the club to purchase 20,000 bulbs; combined with the 50,000 bulbs other Orange City residents purchased that summer and fall, Orange City figured to have a large-scale tulip bloom the following spring. On 24 February 1936, Bolluyt visited the Chamber of Commerce (formerly the Commercial Club, which had been reorganized into the Chamber at the beginning of that year--*Centennial Book* 133). According to Chamber records, “Mr. Bolluyt then gave a short talk regarding a Tulip Day some time in May and requested the Chamber get behind it” (Treneman I.4). The Chamber, having been involved in the expansion of tulip plantings in 1934, unsurprisingly quickly approved the suggestion. On 8 April, the Chamber arranged a program for what they decided to call the “May Festival,” which was scheduled for 14 May 1936; this May Festival is considered the first Orange City Tulip Festival (I.4).
The 1936 May Festival proved to be a smashing success, as a crowd of about 3,500 descended on Orange City and exhausted all the food stands’ supplies—hamburgers and soda—before the official program began that afternoon (Treneman I.4). The afternoon program established many of the features that would become Tulip Festival mainstays in the coming years. The program began with a parade of some 40 floats, for which prizes were awarded (I.4). Many of these floats employed historical or Dutch themes. Pictures from the parade demonstrate that many floats featured windmills, tulips, and children dressed in Dutch costumes (L. Vander Stoep Scrapbooks I); many of these children had previously played Dutch children in “The Magic Beanstalk,” an operetta which had been performed some weeks prior to the Festival (Sioux County Capital 14 May 1936). Other floats featured the Vande Steegs, two of the original 1870 settlers (L. Vander Stoep Scrapbooks I); Jacob Vant Hoff, a local a wooden shoe carver (Schreur Scrapbooks I.6); and Andrew Meidema depicting the “Holland method of grain threshing” (L. Vander Stoep Scrapbooks I). After the parade, the Orange City Women’s Club sponsored a Dutch costume contest, which featured a number of individuals wearing authentic heirloom Dutch costumes (I). Costumes figured prominently during the Festival in other ways: many people who rode the floats were in Dutch costume; a number of store clerks and restaurant personnel dressed in Dutch costumes (Schreur Scrapbooks I.7); and the general populace was also heavily encouraged to wear Dutch costumes:
The Spring Festival Committee has made it profitable for residents to look through the chest for genuine Dutch costumes. On May 14 the world at large should be given a chance to view these Holland treasures with a pleased eye for a homogeneous community such as Orange City and environs is a rare thing in the U. S. today. True Dutch costumes are a pleasure to behold. It will be a favor to this entire territory for house wives to look through their closet and wear these Dutch dresses during the Spring Festival. There are some nice prizes offered for the best costumes shown. (Sioux County Capital 7 May 1936)

Judging from photographs, the costumes varied widely, ranging from accurate reproductions (or authentic heirlooms) of various provincial costumes to entirely generic. On the one hand, a float featured the local Frisian Society dressed in Frisian provincial costumes (Schreur Scrapbooks I.7); other photographs show townspeople wearing costumes which bear a close resemblance to the traditional costumes of the towns of Volendam and Spakenburg (I.35). On the other hand, still other pictures show women and little girls dressed in the manner of the Old Dutch Cleanser logo, wearing milkmaid costumes with a vaguely Volendam hat (I.9, 14), and a review article on the Festival notes that “employees in stores and cafes were all attractively dressed in blue and white costumes,” again suggesting Old Dutch Cleanser-style “Dutch” costumes (I.13).

Other notable features from the first Festival included performances by the LeMars Drum and Bugle Corps (Schreur Scrapbooks I.11), afternoon concerts by the Northwestern Junior College and Orange City High School bands, an evening concert by the Sioux City Symphony Orchestra (Treneman I.4), and “Tom Tom,” a strong man who bent horseshoes with his teeth and let a tractor run him over (Schreur Scrapbooks I.11). As in Holland and Pella, store windows displayed
local heirlooms and antiques, which were popular attractions for visitors and townspeople alike (I.5, 15). The local Frisian society, Ut Heiteloon, besides riding in the parade, held a Frisian sing, which also featured a playlet about Frisian immigrants aboard the steamship *Polterdam*. This event proved very popular, with the audience packing the venue (I. 10, 11, 15). In a departure from Holland and Pella, Orange City’s Festival also featured a midway; it was not, however, a carnival midway, as it only included three rides (a merry-go-round, ferris wheel, and scooter ride) (I.5).

Much as in the cases of Holland and Pella, most of the main features that continue to characterize Orange City’s Tulip Festival were added over the next several years. 1937 saw the addition of several of these features. Following Pella’s lead, the first Orange City Tulip Queen and Court were elected in 1937, Elizabeth Top receiving the honor. During the Festival, held on 21 May, an elaborate coronation ceremony was held, with George Dunlop, Orange City mayor, emceeing the event in burgomeester costume (A. Vander Stoep 6). 1937 also saw the addition of the scrubbing of the streets by townspeople in Dutch costume. For this first street scrubbing, members of the Lions’ Club, equipped with yokes and water buckets, walked between two rows of women wielding brooms; the men poured water as they walked, while the women, remaining stationary, scrubbed the streets. In subsequent years, this method of street scrubbing was abandoned in favor of both men and women progressing down the street together (Treneman I.41; Schreur Scrapbooks I.44, 70). The 1937 Festival
further developed the singing of Dutch folk songs. Edward Bolluyt led a
costumed group called De Schutters, founded specifically to promote the Tulip
Festival and Orange City, in singing Dutch songs. During the parade, De
Schutters road a special float in the shape of a boat called Van Amsterdam, which
is still in use today. Outside of the parade, De Schutters would sing on the streets
and lead Dutch sing-a-longs (A. Vander Stoep 8-9; Centennial Book 118). The
Frisian Society also conducted Frisian sings during the Tulip Festivals of the late
1930s; moreover, in 1937 a group of townspeople performed as “Het
Amsterdamsche Koor,” singing English choral music, Dutch songs, and
performing Dutch readings (Schreur Scrapbooks I.51). Finally, in 1937 antique
window displays were dropped in favor of an antique and heirloom display in the
town hall, supervised by the Women’s Club (Treneman I.41). This show is no
longer held today, but many of these antiques are now housed in the Historical
Society museum, which also has become the home of the Tulip Festival flower
show.

In 1938, four notable additions were made to the Tulip Festival. In the
first place, the Festival was expanded from one to two days (A. Vander Stoep 7).
In the second place, the Queen’s Coronation became more elaborate and featured
the participation of the Vice Consul of the Netherlands, who had the honor of
actually crowning the Tulip Queen (Schreur Scrapbooks I.76). In the third place,
the role of Dutch food was expanded. Already in 1937, Northwestern Junior
College had a food stand which sold Dutch food; reports did not specify what was
sold that year, merely noted that the fare was very popular (I.55). A 1938 advertisement for a local grocery store (which declared that “All Our Customers Are Queens), however, indicates that baked goods (Zand Cookies, Kletskoppen, Boter Fingers, Arnemsche Meisjes, Krakelingen, Boter Spritz, Jode Cookies, St. Nic and Oatmeal Cookies, banket, and olie bollen) were a major attraction (I.93). Finally, and perhaps most importantly, 1938 began the trend of offering a home-talent evening musical. The 1938 production was In Dutch, written and produced by A. J. Kolyn, the attorney who had been responsible for White Elephant several years before. Like White Elephant, In Dutch featured an all-male cast of 75. Set in Orange City and the nearby town of Paullina, the musical featured many original numbers by Kolyn, as well as interpolations from Victor Herbert’s The Red Mill and new words set to the tunes of songs from Herbert’s It Happened in Nordland and Rudolph Friml’s You’re in Love (Treneman I.86; In Dutch program). The show was immensely popular, and so in 1939 Kolyn again wrote and produced a new musical, Katrina. Like In Dutch, Katrina featured an all-male cast, an Orange City setting, many Kolyn-penned numbers, and new lyrics to popular songs by Friml and L. A. Hirsch (Treneman I.86; 1939 Tulip Festival program; Katrina program). Both In Dutch and Katrina featured Kolyn’s “You Can’t Beat the Dutch,” a song which is still performed on a yearly basis during the Tulip Festival. After Katrina, the next several Tulip Festivals continued to supply evening entertainment, but in 1940 it was a “Southern Minstrel Review” performed by a minstrel troupe from nearby Sheldon, Iowa’s Apollo Club, and in
1941 it was “Vaudeville Bits of 1941,” which featured acts from 8 neighboring communities, opera selections, and a target shooting exhibition (A. Vander Stoep 8-10). In 1950, the practice of presenting a home talent “Night Show” for evening entertainment was revived and has been part of the Festival ever since.

The 1939 Tulip Festival added several more elements and, in doing so, set the basic Tulip Festival schedule of events that has been used ever since. First, guided tours of the community were offered each morning (1939 Tulip Festival program). Second, Edward Bolluyt, ever the Tulip Festival innovator, emceed a short program that displayed and described various costumes from the Netherlands; this program eventually developed into the Mode Show, Orange City’s version of the Parade of Provinces (Schreur Scrapbooks I.121). Finally, it would seem that Dutch dancing debuted during the 1939 Festival, as the program invited visitors to “See ‘Old Holland’ with her flowers, in her costumes, in folk songs and Dutch drills!” (1939 Tulip Festival program). “Drills,” of course, was a frequent euphemism employed for dances, Dutch Calvinists of the 1930s (and for several decades thereafter) still being uncomfortable with the potential sexual connotations of dancing. 43 That these “drills” were in fact wooden shoe dances is indicated in a letter from the Tulip Festival organizing committee to the Chamber of Commerce following the 1940 Tulip Festival: “Much favorable comment was

43 A joke, popular in Dutch-American communities in former years, which gives evidence of the Calvinist attitude towards dancing--and specifically assigns this attitude to one segment of the Dutch-American community--goes something like this: Q: Why can’t CRC people have sex standing up? A: Because it might lead to dancing.
heard on the drill given by the young ladies in costume in the parade. We believe that such drills and entertainment should be given every encouragement” (Schreur Scrapbooks II.17). In 1941, the “drills” were apparently deemed acceptable enough by all parties concerned to be listed as “folk dancing” (L. Vander Stoep Scrapbooks II).

Since these early years, the yearly program for Orange City’s Tulip Festival has remained essentially the same, with only minor modifications. Flowers, antiques, and heirlooms (as well as an impressive array of Native American artifacts) are displayed at the museum. Wooden shoes are carved at The Old Factory, which also sells Delftware, Dutch candy, and a variety of other Dutch novelties. Various groups in town, all of them in costume, sing Dutch songs, both in formal and informal settings. Horse-drawn trolleys give community tours during the morning and late afternoon hours. Dutch food is available at the Straatmarkt, the 1st Reformed Church canteen, and Orange City Christian School’s Monica tent. The home talent Night Show, in recent years usually a Broadway musical, stands as the central evening entertainment and elicits rave reviews from audience members and the local press. A large midway is brought in every year. The midway, however, only consists of rides and food booths; carnival-style games are not welcome, indicating that Dutch-American Calvinism’s hostility towards gambling is alive and well. The coronation of the Tulip Queen was discontinued some years ago; however, the Queen remains an important part of the pre-parade Straatfest, which, besides the introduction of the
Queen and her court, features Dutch dancing, the Mode Show, street inspection (led by the burgomeester, town crier, and city council) and street scrubbing. Most participants in these activities wear increasingly elaborate costumes, the fruits of years of research on the part of local seamstresses into the history of Dutch costumes. And the twice-daily parades, of course, remain near or at the center of the Tulip Festival, with their wide array of marching bands and Dutch-themed floats.

Interestingly, coverage of Orange City’s early Tulip Festivals, compared to that of Holland and Pella, did little in the way of declaring the purpose or meaning of the Festival. What comments can be gleaned, however, indicate that recreating a bit of the Old Country was uppermost on the minds of organizers and participants:

[. . .] Orange City really looked like a town of the Netherlands for a few hours. (Schreur Scrapbooks I.7).

Orange Cityans turned out here last Thursday, many of them in Dutch costumes, to make this a Holland town for a day. (I.5)

It would also seem that organizers were careful to characterize the Festival as “clean” entertainment, presumably of a higher class than that found elsewhere:

Festival committeeemen have been careful to pick high class entertainment for the community and many carnival type concessions were turned down. There will be no popcorn and peanut peddling, no shooting galleries, no win-a-prize concessions. The rides are here again to give the youngsters a thrill and the grown-ups will find plenty of entertainment and pleasure in the pageantry which will start shortly after noon and continue through tomorrow.” (I.110)
Unlike coverage in Pella and Holland, virtually no comment appears on the commercial or economic impact of the Festival. Certainly some sectors of Orange City’s economy must have benefited from the Festival; then again, a variety of past and present Tulip Time organizers interviewed in the spring of 2006 commented that the Festival is not a moneymaker for itself or for the community, apart from the food booths churches and schools run as fundraisers:

RH: We don’t make a lot of, Orange City does not make money on the Festival. It costs a lot of money to put it on, and, you know, the commissions from the concessions just defray the cost of the Festival. So there’s no real economic benefit from the Festival to the normal people in the population. (Robert and Betsy Huibregste interview 19)

Well, you know, there’s always challenges of resources and allocating those. It does cost money to run a Festival, and it’s not a moneymaker by any means, it’s just a break-even kind of thing, with the generosity of citizens and the City, we’ve been able to make some continued improvements. (Daryl Beltman interview 13)

NS: It’s very expensive. Well, we make it sound like we get a lot of income, everything that comes to Orange City to sell something, we get a percentage, because we provide the people that are coming to town. But that doesn’t begin to pay for the Tulip Festival. We’re happy if we break even. And we fear 3 days of rain. (Don and Nelva Schreur interview 19)

Unfortunately, our costs continue to rise, and it’s harder and harder and harder to just meet our financial goal every year. Also, the Festival, because so much of it is free, we have such limited ways of actually getting revenue, you know, from the Festival. And then there’s always the misconception, is that the Festival has money, and it really doesn’t, and so people don’t understand if ticket prices have to be raised […] (Rachael Meekma interview 17)

[The Festival is] costly, there’s a lot of the hidden costs that nobody--even I didn’t realize this. There’s insurance, and there are rental things, that equipment has to be rented. It all has to be paid for, and there’s very, very little that costs anything for the Festival goer. It isn’t like they’re gonna have to drop a hundred dollars here just to see something. So a lot of this stuff is just donations, the cost is covered by donation and fundraising
things that the committees do, and so on, but I think, if, that might be a problem someday. And then again, maybe not! If we can build a million dollar hospital, I guess we can have a Tulip Festival! (Betty Dykstra interview 22)

While direct economic benefit apparently is not a prime concern of the Orange City Tulip Festival, there certainly is a booster aspect to the Festival. It seems to me, at least, that it is hardly a coincidence the Chamber of Commerce incorporated itself precisely in the year the Tulip Festival began (The 2006-2007 Orange City Community Guide says that “In 1936, the Chamber was incorporated to accommodate the growth of the business community as well as the birth of the Tulip Festival”--8). And even if it was a coincidence, the caption of a newspaper photograph from sometime in the late 1930s or 1940s arguably sums up the self-promotional side of the Tulip Festival: “Orange City Believes in Advertising. When tulip festival time approaches, you can trust Orange Cityans to devote themselves to advertising the annual Iowa event in a fashion that will attract the most attention to their fete” (NWC Tulip Festival Collection Box P-OC-TUL-1: Folder I).

4.2.4 HOLLANDMANIA

Within less than a decade, between 1929 and 1936, three Dutch-American towns had started Tulip festival celebrations which both celebrated their heritage and capitalized on that heritage to draw attention to their towns and resources. While the relationship between heritage, boosterism, and economics differed from Holland to Pella to Orange City, all three were putting Dutch heritage on display not merely for themselves, as had been the case with anniversaries and other
antecedents, but also for an audience of non-Dutch Americans. Today, many different towns and communities of many different ethnic backgrounds have similar sorts of festivals that present traditional costumes, customs, and food to an outside audience. However, scholars generally tie the proliferation of European-American heritage festivals to the so-called Ethnic Revival, which Larry Danielson says began “no earlier than the 1940s” (“St. Lucia” 188). Yet three Dutch-American communities were holding incredibly successful festivals of this sort a decade or more before the ethnic revival began.44 It would seem, then, that Holland’s, Pella’s, and Orange City’s festivals were among the first of their kind. Holland’s, at least, is recognized as having been very influential on the development of other ethnic heritage festivals staged for visitors (Bodnar, *Remaking America* 54). It is therefore necessary to consider what factors present in these three communities created the conditions that made the 1920s and 1930s auspicious moments to begin holding public celebrations of Dutch heritage that drew large crowds of non-Dutch spectators.

In chapter one, I set out how a distinctive sense of Dutch identity was, in many ways, more than alive and well in Dutch towns like Holland, Pella, and Orange City. All three of these towns had been founded as separate Dutch enclaves, and the fact that they were relatively geographically isolated allowed them to retain certain ethnic traits, institutions, and ideals for at least a generation.

44 By 1934, Holland’s Festival was drawing 300,000 people a year (*Holland Sentinel* 21 May 1934); Pella’s 1941 Festival attracted 30,000 on Saturday alone (*Pella Chronicle* 15 May 1941); and Orange City was drawing 15,000 people over two days by 1941 (A. Vander Stoep 10).
or two. As of the 1920s and 1930s, both Pella and Orange City remained somewhat isolated communities; Holland was less so, as it was emerging as a center of industry in western Michigan as well as a popular tourist and resort area. Despite these differences, the residents of Holland, like Pella and Orange City, were still overwhelmingly Dutch or of Dutch descent. All three of these communities had also continued to receive new Dutch immigrants up until the First World War and anti-immigrant legislation of the 1920s curtailed the flow. Within these communities, religious and educational institutions helped foster and preserve a Dutch-American social network as well as distinctively Dutch ecclesiastical organizations and theological outlooks. Accordingly, even when these communities began to interact in increasingly substantial ways with their non-Dutch neighbors, they were firmly grounded in well-established sociocultural patterns and mindsets that continued to slow the processes of acculturation.

Within this framework, the inhabitants of Holland, Pella, and Orange City had already been celebrating their Dutch heritage well before the emergence of their Tulip festivals. All three communities celebrated anniversaries of their founding which contained, in varying degrees, presentations and performances of their common Dutch heritage. Sometimes this heritage was quite specific and provincial (the Frisian or Herwijner picnics), and sometimes the divisions present in this heritage were reflected (the separate Fourth of July observances in Prinsburg and Clara City, Minnesota). On other occasions, however, a common Dutch heritage was celebrated and emphasized, as in the case of the anniversary
celebrations, observances of Queen Wilhelmina’s coronation and birthday, and rallies in support of the Boer Republics. The social and cultural patterns present in these communities were conducive to such celebrations; in turn, these celebrations helped strengthen, define, and articulate a sense of Dutch identity and heritage.

Of course, all of these events were basically inward-looking; they were not held with the object of drawing in non-Dutch Americans to be audience to, or participants in, the celebration of Dutch heritage. Why, then, beginning in 1929, were these three communities interested in attracting an outside crowd to their Tulip festivals? Perhaps non-Dutch people were needed to call attention to the potential of the celebration and display of Dutch heritage and Dutch icons (tulips, in particular) to draw a crowd. It is certainly worth noting that Lida Rogers, who is credited with first hitting on the idea of holding a Tulip Festival in Holland, was not of Dutch descent, nor had she grown up in the community; she had moved there to teach biology at the high school. Moreover, Holland’s Mayor, Earnest Brooks, who urged the town to follow Rogers’s suggestion of starting large tulip plantings, was not of Dutch descent. Similarly, Lewis Hartley, one of the first Pella residents to suggest a Tulip Time celebration was neither of Dutch descent nor a Pella native. Then again, in Orange City Edward Bolluyt, a Dutch immigrant (but, once again, not a life long Orange City resident), was apparently the bearer of the spark that led to the beginning of Orange City’s Tulip Festival.
The heavy involvement of each town’s Chamber of Commerce in each festival perhaps provides a clue to another reason these communities became interested in attracting outside audiences to celebrations of Dutch heritage: changing economics. Holland, again, was a center of west Michigan tourism prior to the beginning of its Tulip Time Festival, and had been so for some decades prior to 1929; it was only in the 1920s, however, that it seems to have become aware of the advertising possibilities its Dutch heritage offered. That the late 1920s would be an appropriate time for this realization makes a certain amount of sense, as it corresponds with the waning of the 100 percent Americanization sentiments and campaigns waged in the wake of the First World War. As we shall see momentarily, Dutch-Americans had been negatively affected by anti-German sentiments present during the First World War, which then carried over to the 100 percent Americanization campaigns. These “patriotic pressures,” as Robert Schoone-Jongen has called them (3-9), which at times crossed the line from pressure to persecution, meant that in the early 1920s, Dutch-Americans would not have been particularly prone to see their heritage as an advertising asset. But as these nativist trends waned in the mid-1920s, and as “outsiders” like Lida Rogers commented on the promotional potential in tulips or other aspects of Dutch heritage, using that heritage to advertise the town would have emerged as a viable possibility. In the cases of Pella and Orange City, neither town had an emergent tourist industry akin to Holland’s, but both of these communities started their Festivals in the midst of economic change: 1935 and
1936, of course, fall in the midst of the Great Depression. As Midwestern, predominantly agricultural, communities, both towns would have felt the economic impact of the Depression. This is most evident in the fact that when Pella’s Tulip Time the organizing committee expected each resident to buy tulip bulbs for the 1935 fall planting, those on the relief rolls were exempt (Pella Chronicle 1 August 1935). Although the economic situation was not dire in either community, the prospect of bringing an audience to town and thus possibly drawing them into the stores must have been a consideration. By staging a Tulip festival, each town would have been diversifying its local economy, at least to a small extent. This may or may not have been a primary reason for Pella and Orange City to have turned their celebrations of heritage outward, but it certainly could have been a secondary reason.

Regardless of why Holland, Pella, and Orange City ultimately began putting their heritage on display for outside visitors, a key question that must be addressed is why all three towns met with such amazing success in drawing visitors to their festivals. Novelty may have been one factor, since there were few, if any, similar sorts of heritage celebrations in existence during the 1920s and 1930s. But novelty seems an inadequate explanation for the sustained success these festivals met with. A large part of the explanation of the success of these three festivals, however, may be supplied by Annette Stott in Holland Mania: The Unknown Dutch Period in American Art & Culture, as Janet Sjaarda Sheeres has already suggested (5-6). Stott’s thesis is “that a boom in the old
Dutch master art market, followed by a rapidly expanding U. S. market for contemporary art and popular images of Holland, ushered in an era of increasing Dutch importance in American culture” (12). In considering a variety of factors “from tourism and advertisements to high fashion and interior design” (11), Stott detects “a widespread turn-of-the-century belief in a deeply rooted cultural relationship between the Netherlands and the United States” (11). The heyday of Holland Mania, Stott argues, was between 1880 and 1920, and the images of the Netherlands formed during that time--images of the “land of windmills and wooden shoes”--continue to influence American conceptions of the Netherlands (13). The images of Holland Mania are precisely those reflected in early Tulip festivals and remain, to a large extent, the images which present-day Dutch heritage celebrations continue to reflect or play on.

Stott opens by considering the popularity of Dutch Masters paintings--and imitations thereof--in the United States during the last quarter of the nineteenth century (19, 28). Stott explains that the the vogue for Dutch Masters and their imitators, at first limited to professional artists and collectors, soon started reaching a much wider audience, thanks to blockbuster exhibitions, magazine illustrations, and inexpensive reproductions middle-class people could easily afford (37). Of course, the content of the paintings and images that Americans were looking at locked in a particular image of the Netherlands. The Dutch Masters paintings, as well as those of the Hague School (a late-nineteenth century group of painters who imitated the Old Dutch Masters) and American imitators,
generally sought to present “daily life of Dutch peasant scenes” (22). “Such practices,” Stott observes, “resulted in pictures informed more by preconceived notions about Holland derived from prints, photographs, the old masters, the Hague School, and popular literature, than from reality” (40). American images of the Netherlands were also created and reinforced by American artists who traveled to the Netherlands and sought out rural villages that had preserved traditional customs. Of these small towns, Volendam was the most notable. An isolated village in North Holland, Volendam in the 1880s still retained a number of its traditional traits, notably its unique costumes, the women wearing peaked, winged caps and colorful aprons, then men baggy trousers, double breasted jackets, and caps (44-45). Moreover, Volendamers proved willing to cater to visiting artists. For instance, a local hotel had a sign with a picture of a person in Volendam costume bearing the legend “Artists Welcome” (45). As images of Volendam proliferated, they went further than simply promoting the village itself: they “became a model of the ‘real Dutch type’ for other artists” (46). As a result, Volendam costumes were included in paintings and images set in other Dutch locales, thereby meeting “all the visual cues Americans expected of a Dutch picture--tulips, lace cap, canal, and windmill” regardless of the inaccuracy of placing Volendam costumes in non-Volendam contexts (48).

American hunger for depictions of Dutch scenes was in part fueled, Stott argues, by popular histories that sought to link the United States to the Netherlands. This trend had started in the 1860s with Motley’s *Rise of the Dutch*
Republic (1855) and History of the United Netherlands (1867) which portrayed the Dutch as a people whose prosperity was based on their freedom-fighting, independence-loving, tolerant, and equality-minded character. These depictions of the Dutch invited obvious parallels to the American Revolution, as well as to Americans’ self-conceptions as tolerant, egalitarian freedom-fighters (79-81). In 1892, historian Douglas Campbell went several steps further in The Puritan in Holland, England and America, wherein he “concluded that most everything American had come from the Netherlands, either directly through Dutch settlers, or indirectly through Holland’s influence on the British” (82). William Elliot Griffis, an RCA minister in Schenectady, presented similar arguments in Brave Little Holland and What She Taught Us (1894) and wrote in a more accessible style than Campbell, thereby reaching a wider audience (85-89). The indebtedness of the United States to the Netherlands received even wider exposure in the first decade of the 20th century. In 1903, Edward Bok, editor of Ladies’ Home Journal and himself the child of Dutch immigrants, wrote an essay proclaiming Holland the motherland of the United States and the home of the United States’ cultural and political roots (78-79). In 1908-1909, the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circles made the Netherlands the focus of their adult education correspondence course, thereby preparing its students for the new historical claims about Dutch influence on the United States (91-92). And in 1913 the Woman’s Home Companion, another correspondence course-format club, made Holland their 1913 theme (201).
Stott records a number of other ways in which Holland Mania made its influence felt in the United States between 1880 and 1920. Turn of the century tourist guides for The Netherlands funneled American tourists to select rural villages, promising they would “experience the flavor of traditional Dutch life” in locations such as Volendam and Marken (122-124). Travel literature from this era similarly substituted the image of the traditional rural Dutch for that of the entire Netherlands, resulting in “a consensus image of Holland as a pastoral Eden inhabited by healthy cows; sturdy, honest people wearing wooden shoes; and picturesque windmills, dykes, and canals” (141). Because of the hunger of tourists to experience this image, Stott observes, “Marken and Volendam, perhaps the most atypical of Dutch villages, became the most popular tour destinations and, ironically, the best known towns in Holland” (145). Architectural trends also indicated the vogue for all things Dutch between 1880 and 1920. In some towns—including Holland, Michigan—buildings were built with the distinctive Dutch step-gabled (trapgeveled) fronts (153-161); Dutch Colonial Style houses, which actually bore little resemblance to anything Dutch, Colonial, or Dutch Colonial, became one of the more popular styles of homes (161-178); and several cities erected windmills, either for practical work or as tourist attractions (178-180). Holland Mania also impacted antique collecting. In the early twentieth century, the American appetite for collecting Dutch brass, silver, tiles, furniture, costumes, and delftware was voracious; journalist Eugene Field even wrote a poem satirizing an antique hunting expedition to Amsterdam (184-189). During the
same period, the label “Dutch” was applied to American-made furniture, whether actually Dutch in style or not, in hopes of attracting more business (189-193). Such antiques and furniture could, of course, be used in interior design, where Dutch motifs were also popular between 1880 and 1920. Porcelain figurines, lace, tulip and wooden shoe decorations, delftware, and windmills were all very popular decorating elements, as was a blue and white motif for bathrooms and kitchens (reflecting the Dutch cleanliness stereotype) (193-199). Within such settings, Dutch tea parties, costume parties, dinners, and lectures on Dutch art and life were popular diversions (199-202).

Holland Mania was evident in many other ways. High fashion hats of the 1890s were allegedly loosely patterned after Dutch hats; in about 1912, traditional Dutch-style lace caps became popular morning wear (Stott 202-204). In the realm of literature, libraries started to have separate sections dedicated to Dutch history, art, and culture; the University of Chicago and Columbia University established positions specializing in Dutch literature and culture; and Washington Irving’s tales of the Knickerbocker Dutch came back into vogue, although many scholars and authors were careful to point out that his unflattering characterizations of the Knickerbocker Dutch were not particularly accurate (204-206). Holland Mania’s influence was arguably particular strong in the area of children’s literature. *Hans Brinker or the Silver Skates* had first been published in 1865, but a vast number of new editions were printed between 1880s and 1910, along with various other stories set in, or about journeys to, the Netherlands, such as *Hans and Little Hilda*
or *Ned and Nan in Holland* (239). Stott comments that these books, with their depictions of the Netherlands as a land of windmills, wooden shoes, dikes, tulips, and quaint costumes (usually Volendam style), formed children’s attitudes towards the Netherlands; as adults, then, these individuals were “peculiarly susceptible to Holland’s appeal” (239). Finally, Holland Mania was evident in commerce and advertising. In addition to home styles and furniture, the label “Dutch” was applied to cocoa products, food, and flower bulbs. Dutch Masters Cigars successfully played on the stereotype of the Dutch love of tobacco. Dutch Boy paint played on the reputation of the Dutch Masters as well as the reputation of the Dutch to paint everything, and from 1907 used the trademark of a vaguely Volendam-costumed Dutch Boy in advertising. Old Dutch Cleanser employed the stereotype of Dutch cleanliness to good effect, and beginning in 1905 used a blue-and-white Volendam costumed woman chasing dirt with a stick as its trademark. Tulip bulb importers, unsurprisingly, used wooden shoes, windmills, and flower fields in their advertising campaigns; Utopia Yarn played on the image of Dutch women as prolific knitters, and Van de Kamp’s bakeries played on the heritage of the company’s founder by housing their stores in windmill replicas. Generic business cards also bore Dutch images such as wooden shoes or blue-and-white patterns, so that any small business could employ Dutch motifs in their correspondence or advertising (207-211).
Stott argues that during the 1920s, “Dutch influence in American culture shriveled to pockets of ethnic celebration within Dutch-American communities” (12). This may somewhat oversimplify Dutch influence on United States culture, but it is certainly evident that, knowingly or not, Holland, Orange City, and Pella’s festivals all contained features which would have appealed to people conditioned to view Holland through a Holland Mania lens. Quite obviously, all three festivals, at least initially, were recreating the same sort of idyllic, “wooden shoes and windmills” image of the Netherlands popularized by Holland Mania. In some ways, this was not inappropriate. Holland Mania generalized images of rural, nineteenth-century Holland, especially Volendam, to the entire country of the Netherlands, both geographically and historically. The ancestors of the Dutch-Americans of Holland, Pella, and Orange City were not from Volendam, but had, by and large, been simple, rural, even peasant people—precisely those artists involved in Holland Mania sought to depict. Other continuities between Tulip festivals and Holland Mania may similarly have been happy coincidences between what the Dutch-Americans wanted to display about their heritage and what Americans wanted to see, as in the case of the antique displays present in each Tulip festival, as well as the obvious tulips. Whether or not organizers were aware of it, other aspects of the Tulip festivals most certainly played to, or were influenced by, Holland Mania-conditioned tastes. The street scrubbing used in each Festival clearly played on the Dutch cleanliness stereotypes employed by companies like Old Dutch Cleanser; indeed, as we have already seen, Holland’s
1931 Tulip Time featured the scrubbing of the streets with nothing less than Old Dutch Cleanser. The costumes used in the earliest Tulip festivals also followed the Holland Mania trend. Although costumes from towns and provinces other than Volendam can be found in pictures from each town’s earliest Festivals, a vaguely Volendam costume is inevitably the dominant costume in pictures from the Tulip festivals between 1929 and the Second World War. Pictures of the first Holland street scrubbing indicate that the women involved were all dressed in a blue and white milkmaid costume with a Volendam-esque hat, which looks very similar to the Volendam costume Frederick C. Gottwald’s Cleveland Art Institute students used on their models (Stott 41). Already in the late 1930s, and then especially after the Second World War, concerns with authenticity brought the true diversity of traditional Dutch costumes to the fore in all these towns; nevertheless, the Volendam costume remains popular at each of these Tulip Times, and the Orange City Dutch Dozen, a group of a dozen high school girls that performs songs and dances during Tulip Time, always uses a Volendam costume as its uniform. Windmills and wooden shoes were of course also evident at each of these three Tulip festivals. Most of the costumed townspeople wore wooden shoes, and wooden shoe carvers demonstrated their craft in Holland, Pella and Orange City during the 1930s. As for windmills, tulip plantings in Holland were designed in windmill shapes; windmills were featured on floats in
the parades; and during the course of the 1930s both Holland and Pella built new parks that featured windmill replicas (*Holland Sentinel* 18 April 1935; *Pella Chronicle* 25 March 1937).

To this point, I have presented several reasons for why the first three Dutch-American Tulip festivals emerged when they did (changing economics), why they met with success (the proliferation of positive Dutch images during the 1880-1920 Holland Mania), and why Dutch-Americans were uniquely positioned to perform their heritage (a history of insular communities preserving a separate Dutch-American subculture and identity). And yet a (even *the*) key question remains: *why* did Dutch-Americans feel the need to *perform* or *display* their heritage to an outside audience? The Dutch-American subculture, after all, consisted almost entirely of Calvinists who, like many European Protestant groups, had a history of hostility towards theatre, dancing, and representation, generally speaking. Arnold Mulder, writing in 1947, related that dance and theatrical entertainments were still forbidden in many Dutch-American circles (261-262). In regards to theatre, Mulder went so far as to assert that there was “probably something racial in Dutch hostility to theatricals; Hollanders don’t normally express themselves in terms of drama” (262). The answer to why Dutch-Americans began to perform their identity in rather theatrical ways between 1929 and 1936 can, I think, be answered by the convergence of Holland
Mania and the Dutch-American experience during the First World War, both of which reflect on the wider, and vexed, history of Anglo-American attitudes towards immigrant groups.

In her discussion of Holland Mania, Stott sets out a number of reasons why images of the Netherlands found such purchase in the United States between 1880 and 1920. For the most part, Stott emphasizes historical continuities between the United States and the Netherlands, namely the capitalism, individualism, and armed struggles for democracy characteristic of each nation. The Dutch colonial era in New York and New Jersey also helped reinforce these ties. Stott also touches on a point which bears further consideration as a reason for American fascination with the Dutch: in the 1880s and 1890s, certain groups began to view the Dutch contribution to American history as more evidence that America was, fundamentally, the creation of “old stock” northern Europeans. In other words, “The new [Dutch-centered] history reinforced the idea that essential aspects of American identity originated in western Europe” (95) and thus served as a potential cultural bulwark against the new immigrant cultures from Eastern and Southern Europe then entering the United States. So, for instance, Mrs. Robert Abbe, founder of the City History Club of New York (1896), believed that by teaching the “hundreds of thousands of illiterate Hungarians, Italians, Slavs, Jews, Turks, Armenians, Greeks and Bohemians--the rag-tag and bobtail of the earth” (95) then crowding into New York the Dutch history of the United States, these diverse new elements could become Americanized (95). Similarly, the
Holland Society, organized in 1885, felt that the descendants of the colonial Dutch provided a model of Americanization. Teddy Roosevelt, a Holland Society member, said as much in an 1890 address to the Society: “The thoroughness with which the Hollander has become Americanized...makes him invaluable as an object-lesson to some of the races who have followed him to America at an interval of about two centuries” (95).

Individuals such as Roosevelt and Abbe were blissfully unaware of the refusal of the nineteenth century Dutch immigrants to smoothly Americanize, acculturate, or otherwise assimilate into the wider American culture. Assimilated or not, Dutch-Americans before the First World War would have benefitted from a series of oppositions present in American attitudes towards immigrants. These oppositions all basically set up a dichotomy between “good” or “acceptable” and “bad” or “unacceptable” immigrants:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good Immigrants</th>
<th>Bad Immigrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northern European</td>
<td>Everyone Else (but especially Asians, Southern and Eastern Europeans, and Jews)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Anglo-German people</td>
<td>“Nonwhite” Asian, Slavic, Italian, and Jewish people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestants</td>
<td>Catholics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrious</td>
<td>Dissolute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Clean”</td>
<td>“Dirty”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gravitate towards rural or frontier areas</td>
<td>Gravitate towards cities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All of these oppositions served to mark “bad” immigrants as a threat to Anglo-American society, whereas “good” immigrants represented no such threat. The Dutch immigrants, for the most part, fit squarely into the “good” side of each of these oppositions and therefore were not threats. If anything, Dutch immigrants
were examples of acceptable immigrants. Accounts of Pella’s settlers from 1847 provide evidence of this attitude. Semira A. Phillips commented that when the settlers passed through her area, she and her neighbors “were prepared to think well of this people, for we had heard only good of their character” and marveled at the fact that, wherever and whenever the immigrants ate, “not one of them failed to bow their heads and give thanks” (Lucas, *Netherlanders* 176). A man named Newhall stated his opinions of Pella’s founders even more bluntly: “They appear to be intelligent and respectable, quite above the average class of European immigrants that have ever landed upon our shores” (Lucas, *Netherlanders* 179).

Just as these individuals commented on the suitability of Dutch immigrants in 1847, the Holland Mania of 1880-1920 explicitly focused on supposed Dutch qualities that reinforced the “nonthreatening” nature of the Dutch and, by extension, Dutch-Americans. Besides obviously depicted scenes of “old stock,” white Northern European life, images of Holland Mania tended to focus on images of the countryside or the small village, usually depicting human subjects engaged in daily labor. Moreover, Holland Mania played up the image of Dutch cleanliness through scenes of cleaning rituals, products such as Old Dutch Cleanser, and the use of blue and white Delftware motifs for kitchen and bathroom interiors. Thus, Holland Mania exposed millions of Americans to the acceptable, even desirable qualities and traits of the Dutch at the same time it advanced claims about the importance of the Dutch to American history. In an era of increasingly restrictive immigration laws, Dutch-Americans benefited, at
least in being left to their own devices, from the positive Dutch stereotypes held up as a bulwark against the “threatening,” “unacceptable” immigrant groups flocking to the United States in far greater numbers than the Dutch. In *Strangers in the Land*, John Higham argues that in the 1880s—precisely at the same time Holland Mania was emerging—a prevailing faith that immigrants would assimilate gave way to fears they would not. As a result, nativist (which Higham defines as anti-Catholic, anti-radical, and anti-immigrant) groups like the American Protective Association and Immigration Restriction League formed and began lobbying for strict immigration laws. Already in 1882 the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed, essentially banning Chinese immigration to the United States. In 1903, a bill was introduced in Congress which would have prevented any anarchists from immigrating to the United States. In 1907, a bill that would have severely limited immigration was narrowly defeated. And in 1917, a bill was passed requiring foreigners to pass a literacy test before being allowed to enter the United States as immigrants. The bills, both proposed and enacted, after the Chinese Exclusion Act, Higham notes, were largely motivated by concerns about immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe.

American xenophobia, however, proved a double-edged sword for Dutch-Americans during the First World War. In 1917, the patriotism and loyalty of Dutch-Americans, particularly those in Minnesota and Iowa, were called into question. American entrance into the First World War led to calls for total preparedness and absolute loyalty. Groups, such as Dutch-Americans, who
continued to use their native language and who sent their children to private
schools were deemed potentially disloyal and became targets for investigation by
local Commissions of Public Safety or even the victims of vigilante violence.

“Patriotic” agitators attempted (but failed) to burn down the Sully, Iowa, Christian
School in 1918. A mob attempted to kidnap and lynch the CRC minister in
Peoria, Iowa, who had aided several young men in his congregation in getting
draft exemptions. While Peoria’s minister escaped harm, later arsonists
succeeded in burning down both the Peoria CRC and Christian School (Van Hinte
760-761). In southwest Minnesota, the state’s Commission of Public Safety
called in Dutch ministers and laypeople to determine if they were “loyal”
Americans; several area Dutch houses were painted yellow, if the inhabitants
weren’t buying “enough” Liberty Bonds; and the Edgerton Dutch, who had just
opened the area’s first private Christian school, were singled out for abuse by
local Pipestone County Commission of Public Safety orators and editorialists (R.
Schoone-Jongen, “Pressures” 3-9). Most dramatically, the governor of Iowa
issued a proclamation requiring all religious services to be held in English (De
Jong 206); several churches in and around Pella were visited in 1917 and 1918 to
ensure they were complying with the proclamation (Webber 64). Thus, during the
Second World War, the tables were, to an extent, turned on the Dutch. The
“threat” was now not Eastern and Southern Europeans (the United States was, of
course, allied with Russia and Italy during the war) but Germans and
nonconformists. Dutch-speaking Dutch-Americans sounded like Germans.
Roughly half of all Dutch-Americans--CRC members--belonged to a church that supported private education. And many RCA as well as CRC congregations continued to use Dutch for their services. Once examples of “good” immigrants, the Dutch were now a threat owing to their insistence on doing things their way.

After the First World War, the push for “100 percent Americanization” continued for several years, with the American Legion at its forefront. Higham observes that the Red Scare of 1919-1920 helped advance the Legion’s cause of lobbying for legislation to enforce assimilation. During 1919 and 1920, many states passed laws specifically designed to suppress or hamper any further growth of foreign-language presses, immigrant schools, and immigrant voters. As the Red Scare subsided and immigrant groups angrily reacted against discriminatory statutes, the assimilationist campaign lost steam and financial backing. As a result, 100 percent Americanization supporters decided to focus their attentions not on enforcing assimilation, but on keeping immigrants out altogether. In 1921, Congress passed the Emergency Quota Act, which established the nation’s first absolute numerical limitations on immigration: for any ethnic group, a limitation of three percent of the number of foreign-born individuals from that group living in the United States in 1910 was imposed on future immigration. In 1924, the Immigration Act changed the limitations to two percent based on the 1890 census. While these acts served to limit subsequent Dutch immigration to the United States, they also indicate that by 1924 nativist concerns had again shifted back to Southern and Eastern European immigrants, who had formed the vast majority of
immigrants between 1890 and 1920. Still, as many historians argue, the First World War and 100 percent Americanization movement marked a turning point in Dutch-American communities, since the use of the Dutch language, whether in school, church, or daily life, was actively discouraged and, after 1924, further immigration that might have reinvigorated the use of Dutch in these communities was severely limited (Lucas, *Netherlanders* 596; De Jong 206-207; Bratt 198; Webber, *Pella Dutch* 63-64).

There was, quite obviously, a gap between the promotion of the Dutch as “good,” non-threatening immigrants as developed in Holland Mania and the attacks on Dutch-Americans as potentially disloyal, and therefore threatening, citizens during the First World War. This gap, I believe, is the key to understanding why Dutch-Americans began performing their heritage and identity for an outside audience during the 1920s and 1930s. The staging of Tulip festivals can be viewed as a strategy Dutch-Americans used to display their own loyalty and patriotism while helping to continue to promote a sense of separate identity, all by playing on the images of Holland Mania familiar to Americans from the 1880-1920 era. Stott notes that during the Holland Mania period, the joining of Dutch and American history made the display of Dutch paintings in one’s home an act of patriotism (100); I would argue the Tulip festivals in Holland, Pella, and Orange City sought to rehabilitate or reassert such attitudes. Organizers of these festivals may not have actively had such ideas in mind, but there is no doubt that the version of Dutch-ness displayed at the early Tulip
festivals catered precisely to Holland Mania images. Costumes from Volendam, which Holland Mania had made into the “typical” Dutch dress, were the primary mode of dress for festival participants. Besides tulips, wooden shoes and windmills were the most repeated motifs on floats, in parks, and on promotional materials. And street scrubbing was one of the primary features of each of these festivals. There seems to have been an understanding that such images appealed to many Americans, as suggested by a comment from the 23 April 1931 Holland city News: “‘Tulip Time in Holland’ seems to hit the spot in American communities just like replicas of Dutch windmills and pictures of Dutch images with wooden shoes, voluminous skirts, white caps, golden head-gear, such as one sees in the provinces of The Netherlands.” These Holland Mania images, though, were supplemented by “all-American” elements: baseball games, performances of patriotic songs, marching bands, queen pageants, and stands serving hamburgers and soda added various elements of Americana to each of these festivals.

At the same time these festivals were catering to American expectations of Dutch images, these festivals may also have filled a psychological need for Dutch-Americans. With the events of the First World War and legislation curtailing immigration, the late 1920s and 1930s were the era during which the use of the Dutch language in Dutch-American communities was unmistakably waning. Individual congregations here and there continued to use Dutch until after the Second World War, and some Dutch-language periodicals survived into the 1940s, but it was clear by the late 1920s and early 1930s the days were
numbered for the widespread or regular use of Dutch in Dutch-American communities. That Tulip festivals emerged precisely at the moment the use of Dutch in these communities entered its decline is, I think, telling and hardly a mere coincidence. True, the actual images presented in the early years of these festivals were informed by American stereotypes and expectations of “Dutch” appearances, customs, and behavior. Even so, the celebration of this version of Dutch heritage may have been viewed, consciously or not, as a way of reminding each town of its distinct identity, particularly as the use of the Dutch language, which once would have been an obvious marker and reminder of that distinct identity, receded. The Holland Mania Dutch identity portrayed, regardless of its accuracy, had the side effect of drawing in large crowds of people who had experienced Holland Mania as children and adults, which in turn bolstered the local economy. That each of these three festivals did, in fact, succeed in drawing large crowds suggests that the taste for all things Dutch between 1880 and 1920 still existed, if on a more limited scale, in 1929 and beyond. The success of these festivals also suggests that Holland Mania images of the Dutch were, for the average American, stronger than memories of any supposed lack of patriotism on the part of the Dutch during the First World War. It may also be that outside audiences regarded the Dutch-Americans staging the Tulip festivals as otherwise acculturated Americans. A 1939 *Sioux City Journal* article may indicated such an attitude: “It should be pointed out, however, that Orange City goes “Holland” only once a year, at tulip festival time” (Schreur Scrapbooks I.124).
If Dutch-Americans in Holland, Pella, and Orange City were in fact looking for a way to mark their distinct identity in place of the use of the Dutch language, the display and deployment of Holland Mania images would have been a logical choice for one other key reason. Whereas such images appealed to an outside audience, they also had the benefit, at least potentially, of not having to deal with Dutch-American denominational faultlines. This was also true of the use of Dutch: even if the individual congregations did not agree on doctrinal or theological issues, they were united by a common Dutch heritage as exemplified in the use of the Dutch tongue. As the use of Dutch declined precipitously after the First World War, some new unifying factor was perhaps desirable. That factor could not have been the common Calvinist heritage itself, since this was a heritage of division rather than unity. Holland Mania Dutch images, however, were hardly controversial and were easily accessible. Pella’s Rev. Prins had commented that Tulip Time was precisely the sort of thing Pella needed to bridge the town’s divisions, and the pastoral, innocent images and stereotypes offered by Holland Mania could easily do so. Who, after all, would object to being characterized as hard-working, democracy-loving, and clean?

Before turning to other Dutch-American ethnic heritage celebrations, I would like to suggest that the image of Dutch Cleanliness serves as a metaphor for much of what will follow in this study. The first three Tulip festivals all made street scrubbing—the physical cleaning of the town—a primary feature. If my account of Holland Mania and the First World War Dutch-American experience is
correct, these festivals can be understood not simply as methods for physically cleaning up the town, but also as methods for historically and socioculturally cleaning up these communities. By inviting in outside audiences to view the quaint, picturesque Dutch customs on display, as well as the patriotic, American elements, these festivals served as ways of cleaning up the ill effects of the First World War by demonstrating that Dutch-Americans were loyal Americans who had no hard feelings towards outsiders. By putting small, Protestant, clean towns on display, Dutch-Americans were arguably cleaning up negative views of all immigrant groups; they reminded audiences that some were “good.” And by emphasizing Dutch images with little or no specific reference to Dutch-American religion, these festivals cleaned up internal divisions within each town while still finding a way to celebrate a version of Dutch heritage and identity, regardless of the accuracy of the version. Each of the next three chapters of this study deals with ways in which festival elements maintain—or fail to maintain—narratives or sociocultural relationships that are “clean.” Chapter five in particular examines the “clean” narratives that dominate the discourses surrounding each of these festivals, be they narratives of town unity, community history, or the type of entertainment offered at each event. Such narratives are present in press coverage and promotional materials as well as the town tours and theatrical performances given during most of these festivals. Chapter five also begins to note ways in which the “clean” narratives are challenged in theatrical performances, a process
which chapter six continues by observing the various ways in which the “dirt”--disagreement, disunity, and religious factionalism--manages to manifest itself in these festivals despite the best efforts of organizers.

4.3 PROLIFERATION

During the Second World War, the Holland, Pella, and Orange City Tulip festivals all were temporarily suspended, but within a year or two of the war’s end, each town had resumed celebrating its Tulip festival. Within two years of the end of the Second World War--and thus now in the midst of the Ethnic Revival--other predominantly Dutch-American towns whose roots could be traced to immigrants from 1847 and after began holding their own town-wide heritage celebrations. The first to do so was Cedar Grove, Wisconsin, which instituted its Holland Festival in 1947 to celebrate its Centennial. Three years later, in 1950, Edgerton, Minnesota, began its annual Dutch Festival. The Edgerton Dutch Festival was actually a modification of the town’s Harvest Festival, instituted in the 1930s, which was held near the end of July, between the hay and small grains harvests (Jim Bouma interview 1). In 1950, at the instigation of Clifford Peterson, a local businessman, the Harvest Festival was renamed the Edgerton Dutch Festival and held on Wednesday, 26 and Thursday, 27 July. Peterson (a full-blooded Norwegian) was a veteran who had lost an arm during the First World War, had been a founding member of the local American Legion post, and

45 For most of the data used in the following sections (apart from that pertaining to Edgerton and Fulton), I am indebted to Janet Sjaarda Sheeres, who has graciously lent me the binder of information and questionnaires she assembled in 1999 while researching her paper “Klompendancing Through America.”

226
had served as the post’s commander at various times. As the Dutch Festival was Peterson’s idea, it is not surprising that the Legion sponsored the inaugural Dutch Festival (as it would for many years), although it is somewhat surprising to find the Legion, once the promoter of 100 percent Americanization, starting and sponsoring a Dutch Festival in Edgerton, where the loyalty of Dutch-Americans had been questioned during the First World War. The 1950 Dutch Festival included parades, baseball games, marching band and drill team maneuvering exhibitions, water fights, street races, a canteen run by the Legion Auxiliary, and a large midway featuring rides, concessions, and novelty booths. The initial announcement of the Dutch Festival assured readers that “It will be a good program of clean entertainment--no gambling devices, girl shows, gypsies, athletic shows or bingo games” (Edgerton Enterprise 13 July 1950). The parade consisted largely of marching bands, some local floats, marching units from area VFW and American Legion posts, drill teams, and drum and bugle corps (13 July 1950). Apart from the festival’s name, there does not appear to have been any attempt to include anything having to do with windmills or wooden shoes in this first Dutch Festival, nor were any elements borrowed from the Tulip festivals. Over the years, Edgerton’s Dutch Festival has attempted, and never entirely succeeded, in adding Dutch elements, such as dancing, costumes, or Dutch food, to the program. Still, the basic pattern for future Dutch Festivals was essentially set in 1950: a parade, midway, food stands (now run by the Edgerton Christian Elementary School Mothers’ Club and the RCA) and ball games. Over the course
of time, other kinds of evening entertainment were added to the program, as well as afternoon events (usually contests of some sort for children) and second evening fireworks. Since 1950, six other towns inhabited largely by descendents of Dutch immigrants from 1847 and after have also started annual community-wide heritage celebrations, most attempting to include events similar to those first included in the Holland, Pella, and Orange City festivals (see appendix A).

While attracting business or raising money is at least a secondary of each Dutch-American heritage festival, several celebrations of Dutch heritage have been started with the main aim of raising money, usually for a local private Christian school. The first of these fundraising festivals was Redlands, California’s Holland Festival, begun in 1953 with the goal of raising money for the local Christian school; Harrison, South Dakota, followed suit in 1960 with its Dutch Smorgasbord, which also raises money for a local Christian high school. In the early 1970s, the Fulton, Illinois Christian Grade School Auxiliary began holding a Dutch Day as a school fundraiser. The first Dutch Day is generally said to have taken place in 1974, but the first newspaper coverage of the event was in 1975 (Fulton Journal 23 April 1975). The idea for the fundraiser came from Patty Ritzema, who, with her husband Bert, had immigrated to Fulton from the Netherlands in 1954. Patty Ritzema, impressed by the fact that, during the 1950s, about 85 percent of Fulton’s population was of Dutch descent, quickly developed the idea “of doing things the Dutch way” (Ritzema/Mask/Orman-Luker interview 2). In 1964, the Ritzemas bought the Tasty Mates drive-in, a small ice cream
shop, and shortly thereafter began selling Dutch food; they also built a miniature windmill in front of the shop. At the time, the Fulton fire department sponsored a Miss Flame Festival, and for the 1972 Miss Flame Festival, the Ritzemas developed two different Dutch promotions. First, all of the waitresses, led by Patty Ritzema, dressed in authentic Dutch costumes and wooden shoes during the two days of the Miss Flame Festival (28 June 1972). Second, they entered a float in the Miss Flame parade, which featured girls in Dutch costumes and 60 pairs of wooden shoes the Ritzemas had purchased in Orange City. Encouraged by the interest shown in the Miss Flame float, and with the promise of support from some local businesspeople and the newspaper publisher, Patty Ritzema suggested that the Christian School Auxiliary hold a Dutch dinner as a fundraiser for the school. For the first Dutch Day, the Auxiliary planned a dinner for 400, to be served at the fire station; in the end, more than 400 showed up, making the event a success. The local dime store also sold patterns for Dutch hats and some Dutch scarves (Ritzema/Mask/Orman-Luker interview 2-3).

In 1975, Dutch Day expanded to include a morning coffee hour, featuring Dutch cookies and pastries, a display of “Dutch treasures,” films and slides from the Netherlands, a bazaar selling hand work and Dutch treats, and costumed servers at the Dutch dinner at the fire station. The menu for that year remains more or less the menu for the present Dutch dinner: “Vlees (canned meat), gehakt bollen (meat balls), boeskool (potatoes and cabbage), hutspot (potatoes and carrots), snert (pea soup), karnemelksa pop (buttermilk soup), sniejbont (green
beans), rood kool (red cabbage), geletine salad, vla (pudding), brood (bread),
koffie (coffee), melk (milk), and thee (tea)” (23 April 1975). In 1976, Dutch Day
was lengthened to a two-day Dutch Days Festival. In addition to the previous
year’s elements, an impromptu Dutch sing following the Dutch dinner was added,
as was a Saturday line up of street scrubbing, a walking parade featuring Dutch
costumes, antique store window displays, klompen dancing, and a Dutch hymn
sing on the Sunday following the Festival proper (Fulton Journal 4 April 1976
and 12 May 1976). Since that time, Dutch Days has followed a similar roster of
events, with the addition of a flea market, Dutch story hour at the library, and
annual 6k run. The most notable change since 1976, however, is that the
Christian School Auxiliary no longer is in charge of the whole Festival. Patty
Ritzema explains that the festival grew so rapidly in its first several years that it
simply became too big for the Auxiliary to handle; so at that point a separate
committee was formed from townspeople to organize the Festival. But as Barb
Mask, longtime Dutch Days committee member, points out, the Auxiliary
continues to organize the Dutch dinner and sells Delftware at the dinner, thereby
still using Dutch Days as a fundraiser for the Christian school
(Ritzema/Mask/Orman-Luker interview 3, 5). Besides Redlands, Harrison, and
Fulton, four other Dutch heritage celebrations have been held in various Dutch-
American enclaves since the 1980s as fundraisers for local private schools or
institutions (see appendix A).
The inhabitants of the towns the colonial Dutch founded during the seventeenth century have also been active celebrants of Dutch heritage. Some of these festivals have taken their cues from the practices developed by Holland, Pella, and Orange City, but often times the festivals of colonial Dutch towns focus on celebrating the specific colonial history of the town over and above a more general Dutch heritage. Albany, New York, began holding a Mother’s Day weekend Tulip Festival in 1949. Albany’s festival has remained far and away the largest of the colonial Dutch heritage celebrations, but the communities of Holland, New York, Cape May, New Jersey, and Batavia, New York, have also held celebrations that capitalize on the colonial Dutch heritage of these communities. Hofstra University, in Hempstead, New York, has also held a successful annual Dutch Festival since 1983. Beyond these events that celebrate colonial Dutch heritage, other Dutch heritage celebrations cater to more recent immigrants. Since 1958, for example, the Netherlands-American Association of the Delaware Valley has held a members-only Koninginnedag Celebration in Philadelphia; similarly, the United Netherlands Organization has sponsored a Holland Festival, open to the general public, since 1989 in Long Beach, California. Finally, Nederland, Texas and Wamego, Kansas hold celebrations which commemorate early area Dutch settlers. Nederland was founded in the 1890s with the hope it would become a Dutch immigrant enclave, but the few Dutch immigrants it did attract had left the area by the 1920s (Lucas, Nederlanders 436-438). Even so, Nederland’s Heritage Festival, started in 1973,
includes several Dutch-themed elements. In the 1870s, a lone Dutch immigrant farmer settled near Wamego, Kansas, and built a working windmill. This farmer eventually left the area, but the windmill survived and was donated to the city of Wamego, which moved it to the city part in 1924. Inspired by the presence of this genuine Dutch windmill in their park, residents of Wamego began holding an April Tulip Festival in 1987 which includes wooden shoe dancing and street scrubbing. A windmill, wooden shoes, and cleanliness; if Wamego’s Tulip Festival is any sort of indicator, the images of Holland Mania are most certainly alive and well, regardless of the presence of local individuals of Dutch heritage (“Old Dutch Mill” flyer; 1998 Wamego Tulip Festival program).
CHAPTER 5

THE QUEST FOR AUTHENTICITY: COSTUMES

5.1 THE RHETORIC OF AUTHENTICITY

Since the inception of each of the festivals at the center of this study, a concern with, or rhetoric of, creating an “authentic,” “real,” “true,” or “accurate” Dutch atmosphere for festivalgoers has been very much in evidence. A comparison of statements from each festival’s earliest years to statements from recent years illustrates this phenomenon.

5.1.1 QUOTES ON HOLLAND’S TULIP TIME

Holland, which even in its most prosaic days does not conceal its inherent Dutch qualities, will deliberately bring to the fore during the festival those romantic ties of sabots, tulips, psalms, ballooning pantaloons, odd dresses and windmills which forever bind this city to The Netherlands. [...] Stress will be placed this year on the creation of a genuine atmosphere. (Holland Sentinel 11 May 1933)

Participants [in the Volksparade] include our Exhibition Dutch Dance groups who ‘Klomp’ along the route in their authentic turn-of-the-century costumes and real wooden shoes! [...] Historic Pillar Church and service: Authentic Dutch Church Service: Half hour service in the Dutch tradition. (2006 Holland Tulip Time program)

5.1.2 ON PELLA’S TULIP TIME

In this park [Tulip Town] has been built a typical Holland Windmill of gigantic proportions--full size [...] Pella’s Historical Museum. A Dutch Home furnished in real Holland style. [...] See the populace of the quaint Dutch city live their typical Dutch life during Tulip Time. [...] Join them
in a real Dutch “Koffie Klets” and partake of a real Dutch Dinner with Snijboonen, Hot Rollade, Bologna and Dutch Delicacies. [. . .] a strictly Holland community live its Historic Dutch life as of old (1938 Pella Tulip Time Program)

Pella Historical Society’s 1983 $3 million dream came to fruition in 2002 with the completion of the authentic 1850 Dutch grain windmill....The adjoining educational center appears to be four different buildings, each with a different facade to look like an authentic Dutch village. (2005 Pella’s Town Crier Tulip Time edition 14)

5.1.3 ON ORANGE CITY’S TULIP FESTIVAL

Observers of this year’s Tulip Festival remarked on the charm of the Dutch costumes worn, so the many people who have been striving to secure better and more authentic costumes know that their efforts are appreciated. (unidentified newspaper, 2 June 1938, Vander Stoep Scrapbooks, I.1938)

RH: We mentioned that the costumes have become much more authentic. Even the Queen’s Court has gone from formal to an individual province each year, a different province. And they’re trying to recreate a, they’re looking for other things that may be more authentically Dutch, like the, the first poffertjes grill we had to bring from Holland, not just electrically. BH: And this year, with children, we had a parade where they celebrated the Queen’s birthday for the first time. So we’re actually trying to be more authentic, whether our recipes, or what’s served, things at the church stands (Robert and Betsy Huibregste interview 10)

5.1.4 ON EDGERTON’S DUTCH FESTIVAL

[The Edgerton Rendering Works’ “Stout Hearted Men” float] was used to honor our early Dutch settlers who came from the Netherlands and brought with them traditions and ideals which have contributed much to our culture. Costumes and properties on the float were understandably the most authentic Dutch articles in the parade. (Edgerton Enterprise 23 July 1959)

And we had prizes for the best, most authentic, well-dressed Dutchman, that looked the best or whatever [. . .] but then that kind of fell by the wayside, people just wouldn’t come out in their dress. So like now, the only you can say about the Dutch Festival, is the community’s Dutch. (Jim Bouma interview 5)
5.1.5 ON FULTON'S DUTCH DAYS

The Dutch authenticity of the celebration is indicated by such features as [ . . . ] [klompen maker, Sinterklaas, provincial costumes, dancing, Dutch dinner, Dutch antiques] (*Fulton Journal* 30 Apr 1986)

The Dutch Treasures Room contains a collection of authentic Dutch items, while a few items have only a Dutch theme. Some of the Dutch treasures were carried to Fulton by immigrants, other items were brought back by visitors to the Netherlands. (2006 Dutch Days Paper 3)

5.2 AUTHENTICITY ISSUES

Despite this common concern with authenticity, and the common cultural milieu from which each festival has emerged, careful analysis of each of the festivals reveals that the festivals 1) differ in the amount of attention paid to “authenticity” (this is especially true of Edgerton’s Dutch Festival); 2) differ in terms of what is considered an “authentic” Dutch costume, dance, etc., both in relation to other Dutch-American festivals and in relation to itself over time; and 3) differ in terms of what “authentic” elements are stressed.

An examination of these differences could proceed along paths taken by several previous scholars in the analysis of cultural performances staged for tourists. It could be argued, for instance, that elements of each of these five festivals are examples of Richard Dorson’s “fakelore,” Daniel Boorstin’s “pseudo-events” or Dean MacCannell’s “staged authenticity.” As discussed in chapter one, however, these concepts are overly skeptical and formulaic; there is not much to be gained by attempting to debunk authenticity. Moreover, as Deborah Che points out, “pseudo-events” and “staged authenticity” in particular seemingly depend on a view of “objective authenticity” which assumes there is, in
fact, some sort of static original (262) that can either be duplicated or violated. The Dutch-American subculture, however, is, as Che points out, diasporic and that, as such, “it is hard to define a pure or authentic culture,” compounded by the fact that “Cultural forms of both diasporic and non-diasporic groups constantly change as a consequence of external cultural influences” (262). Accordingly, it is necessary to develop alternative conceptions of authenticity that move away from “objective authenticity.” Alternative conceptions of authenticity could include Wang Ning’s existential authenticity, in which tourists realize their “authentic selves” through their experience of the tourist event, regardless of the authenticity of the event itself (Che 262) or Erik Cohen’s “emergent authenticity,” wherein tourist events themselves become authentic local customs and acquire meanings and significances for locals (262-263). In these conceptions, “authenticity” is more of a dynamic process than an “original” to be emulated. In examining events and elements labeled “authentic” in Dutch-American heritage celebrations, it is quite evident that the quest for authenticity in these towns, while it may, in the minds of the festival organizers, be a quest to represent an “original,” is also an ongoing process. By paying careful attention to these processes of authenticity (or authenticities) evident in Dutch-American cultural performances, we can develop valuable insights into the similarities and differences among the five Dutch-American festivals and towns. I will therefore compare and contrast costuming practices in Holland, Pella, Orange City, Fulton, and Edgerton, considering the different “authenticities” evident in each. Although the factual
authenticity of Dutch costumes does become an issue at times in these communities, I do not intend to prove or disprove the authenticity claimed for various festival elements. As Regina Bendix says, “The crucial questions to be answered are not “what is authenticity?” but “who needs authenticity and why?” and “how has authenticity been used?” (21). It is the aim of this chapter to begin to explore how authenticity has been used in these five Dutch-American heritage celebrations.

Of the elements typically referred to as “authentic” (costumes, dances, food, and music, in particular) in the five festivals, costumes are decidedly the most prevalent and significant. In most of these towns, at least some residents will, during their festival, go about their daily business clad in Dutch costume. In Pella, Orange City, Holland, and Fulton, employers may, and often do, encourage their employees to dress in costumes during the festival. Many units in each parade, as well as other display events (theatrical productions, dances, etc.) involve performers in Dutch costume. From the earliest days of each of these festivals, townspeople have been encouraged (even ordered) to get involved in their festival by wearing “authentic” costumes; the historical journey, however, from those costumes worn in Holland, Pella, and Orange City in the 1930s to those now on display in the five festivals involved many twists and turns. Moreover, despite meticulous research on the part of various interested parties, the “authentic” costumes on display in these towns differ in various ways, some
major, some minor. And in the case of one festival--Edgerton’s--costumes have, for one reason or another, failed to become a yearly festival feature, despite repeated attempts to make them so.

5.3 COSTUMING PRACTICES

5.3.1 COSTUMES IN HOLLAND, MICHIGAN

Dutch costumes were first in evidence at Holland’s 1930 Tulip Time, as they were used in the Tulip Time operetta. Cast photographs indicate that both male and female costumes were more or less Volendam in style, with the female costumes bear more than a passing resemblance to the Old Dutch Cleanser woman (R. Vande Water Scrapbook). Photographs of Tulip Time costumes throughout the 1930s indicate that townspeople continued to employ these quasi-Volendam uniforms (Vande Water 10, 18-19), but already in the early to mid 1930s changes in costuming practices began to occur. Speaking in 1995, Helen Grigsby recalled that although the first costumes were all blue and white, after a few years costume began to sport different colors, as well as plaid and striped patterns (Helen Grigsby interview 4). A 1935 photograph of wooden shoe dancers clad in multicolored Volendam costumes with striped aprons confirms Grigsby’s recollection (Tulip Time Through the Years 5). While the fabric colors and patterns used in Tulip Time costumes were thus changing by 1935, the style of costume worn remained predominantly Volendam, as borne out by various photographs from 1931 to 1941 (Vande Water 3, 17, 25, 28, 35).
The Dutch Cleanser Volendam-inspired costumes used in early Tulip Times may not have borne much of a resemblance to traditional, authentic costumes ever worn in the Netherlands, but Tulip Time organizers quickly became interested in including “authentic” costumes in the festivities. In 1933, a monetary award was offered “to persons wearing what is considered to be the most authentic Dutch garb” during one of the parades (Holland Sentinel 14 April 1933), and in 1938 the Tulip Time organizing committee announced that “all costumes must be of a Dutch nature or the wearers will not be allowed to march in the parades” (26 April 1938). During the same period, a greater variety of provincial costumes were being displayed during Tulip Time. In 1934, the opening parade included costumes from Zeeland, Gelderland, Friesland, Graafschap, and Zeeland-Flanders as well as Volendam (14 May 1934). In 1939, promotional materials exhibited Marken and Zeeland costumes alongside Volendam costumes (18 May 1939; Vande Water 17). The innovation that exhibited the greatest variety of provincial costumes, however, was the kleederdacht (costume) parade at the Woman’s Literary Club. This event was apparently first held in 1939, but in 1940 it was expanded and prominently featured in the Festival promotional materials (1940 Tulip Time program; Holland Sentinel 17 May 1940). In addition to displaying costumes from nearly

46 Neither Graafschap nor Zeeland-Flanders is a province of the Netherlands. Zeeland-Flanders may refer either to a Belgian costume or to the costumes traditionally worn by Catholics from the southern part of Zeeland. Graafschap is an ethnically German but culturally, religiously, and linguistically Dutch Calvinist region in Germany. A band of immigrants from Graafschap, however, was among the initial groups to settle in Van Raalte’s Kolonie.
all of the eleven provinces of the Netherlands, the costume parade also included performances of folk songs, folk dances, and humorous elements (17 May 1940). While the costumes featured at the costume parade had been researched to some degree--the local Netherlands Museum produced the 1941 costume parade (1941 Tulip Time program)--Arnold Mulder, writing in 1947, dismissed all of Holland’s prewar costumes as “somewhat Hollywoodish versions of Dutch costumes” (286). Mulder did not specifically mention the Woman’s Literary Club costume parade, but he drily commented that Club personnel that served meals “wear ‘Dutch costumes’ as a matter of course (the quotes are used advisedly)” (287).

When Tulip Time was resumed in 1946, efforts were renewed to get as many Holland residents into costume as possible, to make costumes as authentic as possible, and to give visitors a sense of the variety of traditional costumes used in the Netherlands. To encourage residents to wear costumes during Tulip Time, the Newcomers Club sponsored costume exchanges during the late 1940s and 1950s, thereby allowing individuals to purchase new costumes or exchange old ones (Holland Sentinel 19 April 1950). Children also were--and continued to be--familiarized with wearing Dutch costumes in several ways. Most prominently, since 1946 all Holland schoolchildren who march during the Children’s Parade have been required to wear Dutch costumes. Similarly, starting in 1963, any students who are a part of the Holland High School marching band wear wooden shoes and uniforms designed to look vaguely like the traditional male Volendam costume (16 May 1963). Celebrity guests also began wearing Dutch costumes
during Tulip Time, perhaps inspiring local residents to follow suit. For example, in 1948 Governor Harold Sigler was the first governor to appear at Tulip Time in Dutch costume and wooden shoes, a practice which each subsequent governor has adopted (*Tulip Time Through the Years* 10).

Just how objectively authentic or accurate the costumes worn by townspeople during the 1940s and 1950s were is difficult to say. Festival organizers, however, clearly hoped people would wear authentic costumes: the 13 April 1948 *Holland Sentinel* stated that “In recent years the committee has strongly urged that all new costumes be copies of authentic costumes in the Netherlands.” Whether or not townspeople at large followed the committee’s strong urgings, the costumes worn by the Holland Klompen Dancers were increasingly researched and inspected for authenticity. The Klompen Dances had started in the mid-1930s as part of the Village Green program. Lavina Cappon, Home Economics teacher at Holland High School, had for some years been dissatisfied with the costumes being worn at Tulip Time; in a 1974 interview, she commented that such costumes were “not really Old Holland. [They were] only an American musical comedy version of it” (15 May 1974). Cappon accordingly began researching Dutch costumes, and between 1934 and 1936 the Klompen Dancers began using costumes created from patterns Cappon had developed, all of which Cappon personally inspected for accuracy and authenticity (14 and 15 May 1974). After the Second World War, Cappon’s costume patterns became the standard Klompen Dancer uniforms. Cappon continued to develop new costume
patterns, making it a point to include non-Volendam costumes among the Klompen Dancers uniforms. By 1963, four years after Cappon’s retirement, the 312 Klompen Dancers were wearing eight different costumes. Other individuals have taken Cappon’s place in developing Klompen Dancer costumes, and today the Klompen Dancers (more than a thousand strong) wear fourteen different costumes representing traditional male and female costumes from ten different regions in the Netherlands (*Tulip Time Through the Years* 7, 11). Each dancer’s costume is still inspected for authenticity and quality, and festivalgoers can even attend a costume inspection on the first day of Tulip Time (1987 Tulip Time Large Program; 2006 Tulip Time program).

While the Dutch costumes worn by Klompen Dances are probably the most prevalent at Holland Tulip Time, they also present a limited and somewhat regimented selection of the vast diversity of traditional Netherlands costumes. A much wider selection of costumes is displayed in the Dutch Heritage Show, descended from the Woman’s Literary Club costume parades. Like its predecessors, the Dutch Heritage Show combines Dutch folklore, songs, and dances. Since 1946, one of its primarily goals has been “to show as many imported costumes as possible” (*Holland Sentinel* 15 May 1946). In 1961, the show presented multiple costumes from fifteen different towns and regions in the Netherlands, many more than the Klompen Dancers of the same era wore (1961 Costume Show list). As of 2006, Dutch Heritage showcases over 50 different costumes from every Dutch province, once again vastly more than the fourteen
worn by the 2006 Klompen Dancers (2006 Tulip Time program). Some of the individual costumes used in the Dutch Heritage Show have taken on lives of their own: for example, Randy Vande Water notes that Lena Tiesenga Curtis, who was honored in 1979 for having been in every Tulip Time since 1929, wore a costume in the Dutch Heritage Show that Frisian relatives of hers had worn in the nineteenth century; similarly, Ann Huisman, an immigrant from the Netherlands in 1956, from 1971 to 1998 wore a costume in the Dutch Heritage show she had made for her in Leeuwarden in 1970 (91).

Today, costumes in Holland during Tulip Time are still most visible during the parades and the Dutch Dances. Special Tulip Time stories about the Klompen Dancers continue to highlight the “authenticity” of the costumes and the authenticity inspection; more recently, these stories may also include in-depth descriptions of the different ornaments on the different costumes, as well as discuss the cost of each costume and assure readers that “nothing gets by the seasoned inspectors responsible for making sure everything is authentic to the garment” (Holland Sentinel 7 May 1996; Dutch Dancers 2005 Yearbook 29).

Children still march in costume during the Children's parade, although many of these costumes are clearly very simplified. Street scrubbers are still required to be in Dutch costume, and most of them wear wooden shoes for the occasion. For a modest fee, visitors can attend the Dutch Heritage Show and see the widest available variety of costumes. Some storekeepers and vendors also get into the costuming spirit During Tulip Time, but for the most part the only costumes one
sees on the street are worn by Klompen Dancers preparing to dance, marchers preparing to march in the parade, and volunteers manning information posts. “Ordinary” townspeople do not, for the most part, go about their business in costume; that having been said, more than a few stores in Holland’s main business district have signs on their doors during Tulip Time asking patrons to please leave their wooden shoes outside so as not to scratch their floors.

5.3.2 COSTUMES IN PELLA, IOWA

To a certain extent, the development of an interest in “authentic” Dutch costumes in Pella parallels developments in Holland, Michigan. Beginning with Pella’s second Tulip Time festival in 1936, the organizing committee was determined to get as many townspeople in costume as possible:

Pella is to be a typical Dutch village and in order to make it so, we must have the hearty cooperation of everybody. All are asked to dress in Dutch Costume for five days. Do your daily tasks and continue in your regular routine of work but do so in Dutch costume. [. . .] if there are those who do not care to make their own costumes, there are organizations in town who will be glad to make them for you at low cost. (Pella Chronicle 23 January 1936)

Similar insistent requests appeared over the following years, suggesting limited cooperation. In 1940, organizers redoubled their efforts to get townspeople into costume, declaring “Everyone in Costume at Tulip Time,” “Everybody out in Dutch,” and “Let’s Be Authentic” the year’s slogans (28 March 1940; 25 April 1940). As part of this effort, costume exchanges were organized, costumes patterns were made available at local stores, and the Chronicle published
photographs of different provincial costumes as well as a list of seamstresses able and willing to make costumes (28 March 1940; 25 April 1940). The effort was apparently a success; the 25 April 1940 *Chronicle* noted with satisfaction:

> Best of all, from the viewpoint of the visitors, is the progress being made in costuming Pella people. Many people have taken the appeal of the historical society to heart and have prepared or are making Dutch garments. There is still time to make yours. No one is going to be conspicuous in a costume this year. Those without will be so.

By 1944, though, the *Chronicle* once again found it necessary to stress that it was of vital importance to Tulip Time’s success that as many townspeople as possible wear costumes (9 March 1944). If the above quote from 1940 emphasizes the importance of costumes as an attraction for outside visitors, the 1944 call for Pella people to wear costumes illustrates that costumes were not simply a show for visitors, because the 1944 festival was a one-day event and rationing protocols would have prevented many outsiders from attending Tulip Time.

As in Holland, Pella’s early costumes were of debatable accuracy. Bob Klein recalls that early men's’ costumes were copied from Pella Products’ “Dutch boy” trademark, and that both men’s and women’s costumes were made from a single pattern (interview 9). Lisa Jaarsma Zylstra relates that a 1940 *Des Moines Register* article interviewed a Pella woman who “admitted to patterning her husband’s costume from the trademark design on a cocoa can” (99). And the cover photograph of the 1936 *Pella Chronicle* Daily Souvenir Program featured a girl dressed in a blue and white Volendam-inspired costume, making one suspect the Old Dutch Cleanser trademark may also have been used as a costume pattern.
(7 May 1936). At the same time, while photographs of early Tulip Times show that Volendam-inspired costumes were among the most prevalent, photographs and other documents demonstrate that costumes from other provinces were part of Pella’s Tulip Time from its earliest years. A 1930s postcard depicting street scrubbing in Pella shows that many scrubbers wore non-Volendam costumes, as do pictures in programs from the 1930s. The 1936 Tulip Time saw the introduction of a parade float displaying costumes from each province of the Netherlands and a Parade of Provinces, both of which became annual Festival inclusions (Kooi, Festival 23). A 1938 radio script contains interviews with “a number of real Hollanders all dressed up in their provincial costumes [. . .] hardly two alike” (Radio Script, Pella Historical Village Archives). Beginning in 1938, Tulip Queens and their courts began to wear costumes from towns and regions other than Volendam (Zeeland, Friesland, and Marken, in particular) (Kooi, Festival 16). And in 1940, the Pella Chronicle specifically encouraged townspeople to dress in the costumes of Marken, Axel, and Goes. It seems festival organizers hoped that people of Dutch descent would wear costumes from their ancestral province, as the Chronicle article stated that non-Dutch residents were “free to choose the most attractive or most colorful of the costumes. The main thing, no matter wo you are, is to be in costume this year. The success of the Festival depends on you” (29 March 1940).
In 1945, Tulip Time was canceled owing to war rationing; in 1946, an auction to raise relief funds for the Netherlands was held in place of Tulip Time. Even so, auction organizers felt “that wearing Dutch costumes will be a very vital part of the affair since it will bring home the need of the Hollanders for aid and will add color for visitors from out of town who are expected to help make the affair a success” (Pella Chronicle 4 April 1946). A traveler from the Netherlands who passed through Pella in 1946, however, commented that “so called old Dutch costumes are being made, after a pattern such was never seen in the Netherlands” (Sheeres 7). When Tulip Time was resumed in 1947, organizers again stressed the desirability of authentic costumes and including costume making tips in the Chronicle and ensured books on Dutch costumes were available at the local library (10 April 1947). For the 1948 festival, the Historical Society produced Victor Herbert’s The Red Mill. The Historical Society announced that “Completely Authentic Dutch Costumes” would, for the first time in the operetta’s history, be featured as a part of the production. A committee, headed by Mrs. Bob Kuyper, mobilized all available materials in order “to be sure that every costume of the leading characters and chorus is correct for the period of 1906,” although they also designed costumes for black light dance numbers using “strobe light material” (22 April 1948).

After the 1948 Festival, emphasis on “authentic” costumes waned for a time. An article from 1951 expressed frustration that Pella residents “who had worn costumes in prior years did not wear them this year. Our visitors noticed
this” (Pella Chronicle 24 May 1951). As in previous years, this article linked wearing a costume to pleasing visitors and getting involved in the community: “Pella needs many more business and professional men in costume. Perhaps they feel conspicuous when in Dutch but who doesn’t? That’s only a feeling that passes to become one of genuine pleasure in having a part in the color of Tulip Time.” According to Muriel Kooi, interest in authentic costumes was rekindled in 1961, when it was decided to “research costumes of various historical periods in a variety of Dutch cities and villages” for the costumes worn by the Tulip Queen and Court (27). After ten years, the Historical Society once again began to urge residents to wear authentic costumes. Chronicle articles urged businessmen to require their employees to wear costumes on the job during the Festival, informed Pella residents it was their duty to dress in authentic costumes, and urged people in need of new costumes to ensure new costumes were “authentic” (30 April 1971). At the same time, the Historical Society attempted to stamp out “inauthentic” costuming practices. A 23 April 1971 article commented that “Dutch that “Dutch Wooden shoes are very important to making your costume authentic. Wear them at all times. PLEASE, no Danish or Swedish shoes for they certainly aren’t the dutch image we should create;” similarly, a 12 April 1972 article reminded readers that “Authentic costumes are very important. It is hoped that persons sewing will keep this in mind. Let’s not have a hodge-podge or a ‘dreamed up’ costume.”
A new phase in authentic costuming in Pella began in 1977, when the Tulip Time Costume Committee initiated a program to research and design costume patterns from one Netherlands province or village each year. The goal of this new research, according to Hilma Schakel, was to develop costumes that were “as authentic as we can get.” The Costume Committee acknowledged, however, that there was not necessarily only one “authentic” costume for a particular village. In introducing the new 1977 “authentic” Volendam costume, Schakel expressed the committee’s desire “to emphasize that this is not the only pattern for an authentic Volendam costume [. . .] There will be some variation on the costumes but this is a basic pattern” (23 March 1977). The new costumes developed after 1977 were always described in detail in the Chronicle and worn by the current Tulip Queen and Court, thereby ensuring each “authentic” costume received wide exposure, thus (hopefully) inspiring other community members to use the new patterns for their own costumes. By 1982, the Costume Committee had developed a variety of costume patterns from 11 different Netherlands locales. In order to ensure townspeople who wore this new generation of “authentic” costumes knew the history and significance of various costume details and decorations, the Committee was including study guides with each costume pattern (3 March 1982). Besides townspeople, the Costume Committee also sought to educate visitors about authentic costumes, including explanations of costumes in promotional materials, special Chronicle Tulip Time editions, and by having tour guides describe their costumes to tourists.
By the early 1980s, costuming practices in Pella had taken root which still persist today. New “authentic,” researched costume patterns are made available every few years, and the unveiling of new costume patterns is often a festive occasion, usually held in conjunction with the Tulip Queen and Court party held each March (Chronicle 12 March 1986; 21 March 2002). Each Tulip Time, articles appear in the Chronicle and Town Crier Tulip Time editions describing, often in specific detail, the features of whatever costumes the Queen and Court are wearing that year (see, for example, 27 April 2006 Chronicle Tulip Time section 11). Although the Chronicle still generally includes yearly articles urging, exhorting, or even cajoling townspeople to wear costumes, there are, nevertheless, many townspeople and store employees who wear their costumes on the street or at work. A rich variety of costumes can be seen on the various Dutch dancing and singing groups that perform during Pella’s Tulip Time, and at least one costume from each Netherlands province can be seen during the Parade of Provinces show held on the the Tulip Toren stage in Central Park just before the parade. Costumes from each province also are on display in several formats during the Volksparade: women’s costumes from each province (as well as Marken and Volendam) are displayed on the Parade of Provinces float; more women’s’ costumes are displayed in a “Village Costumes” unit; and many men's’ costumes are visible in the unit of provincial flag-bearers. During this flag-bearer unit, some effort is made to find bearers whose heritage is traceable to the province
question, although during the 6 May 2005 Volksparade, a parade announcer quipped that, while some of the bearers carried flags of their heritage, others were “just plain impostors.”

5.3.3 COSTUMES IN ORANGE CITY, IOWA

In some ways, Orange City’s Tulip Festival demonstrates costuming trends that are historically similar to those in Holland and especially Pella: an initial call for “authentic” costumes before and immediately after the Second World War was followed by a lapse of interest in the 1950s and 1960s, after which interest in “authentic” costumes was revived in the 1970s. At the same time, Orange City’s costuming practices have differed from those of Holland and Pella, especially in a more pronounced concern with “authenticity” in the 1930s. Over the last 30 years, moreover, costumes have become one of, if not the, main feature of the Orange City Tulip Festival to a greater extent than is the case in Pella or Holland.

In both Holland and Pella, costumes were present at each town’s initial festival, but were not heavily stressed until each festival’s second year. But in Orange City, costumes were a prime concern at the very first 1936 Spring Festival:

The Spring Festival Committee has made it profitable for residents to look through the chest for genuine Dutch costumes. On May 14 the world at large should be given a chance to view these Holland treasures. […] It will be a favor to this entire territory for house wives to look through their closet and wear these Dutch dresses during the Spring Festival. (Sioux County Capital 7 May 1936)
Obviously, Festival planners assumed that a sizable number of such heirloom, direct-from-the-Netherlands costumes could still be found in Orange City in 1936. They seem to have been correct in this assumption, as a later article reported that many entrants in the Festival’s costume contest “wore authentic Dutch garments” (L. Vander Stoep Scrapbooks I.1936). For the 1937 festival, promoters actually gave costumes top billing (“Costumes by the hundreds--Tulips by the thousands,” I.1937), demonstrating just how important organizers considered costumes to be to the Tulip Festival. During 1938 and 1939, efforts were made to include even more authentic costumes in the festivities: a program describing different provincial costumes, narrated by Ed Bolluyt, was added to the proceedings and the costume contest was expanded to include 10 different costume classes. One of the contest organizers, Mrs. Martin Van Oosterhout, happily remarked in 1938 that “the many people who have been striving to secure better and more authentic costumes” were meeting with success, and visitors appreciated their efforts (Schreur Scrapbooks I.78-79), and in 1939 Mrs. Van Oosterhout commented that contest entries “were more numerous and better this year” (I.121). Credit for the contest’s success and popularity was partially ascribed to the fact that contest judges, since 1936, had “been people of pure Holland descent” who had grown up or still lived in the Netherlands” (Schreur Scrapbooks I.121).

When Orange City’s Tulip Festival revived after the Second World War, interest in “authentic” costuming was not as strong as it had been between 1936 and 1939. Costumes were still encouraged, but little mention was made of
“authenticity” being a desirable quality of said costumes. Tulip Queens and Courts continued to wear costumes. Newspapers continued to urge local people to wear costumes for the benefit of visitors. Festival programs continued to list costumes (along with tulips and dances) as key attractions. Costume exchanges were held to facilitate costume proliferation. And various Dutch Dance groups performed in costume (L. Vander Stoep Scrapbooks III.1951; IV.1953; A. Vander Stoep 19-20, 27-28; Sioux County Capital 1 May 1958). References to such costumes being “authentic” are quite limited during this same period, though, and photographic evidence suggests little attention was paid to authenticity in general. The costumes worn by the Tulip Queen and Court, for instance, were made of satin or other shiny fabric hard characteristic of traditional Netherlands costumes (Schreur Scrapbooks V.47, 69, 95, VI.83). Calls for costumes during the 1950s and 1960s rarely called for costumes to be “authentic” (L. Vander Stoep Scrapbooks IV.1953, IV.1955, VII.1966). And little attention seems to have been paid to exhibiting the rich variety of traditional Dutch costumes. Instead, Volendam-inspired costumes were the norm. For example, a photograph from 1947 shows that the Dutch Dancers were all dressed in Volendam costumes (III.1947); the Dutch Dozen, a group of high school girls founded in 1948 that performed (and perform) song and dance routines, dressed in Volendam costumes, which in 1968 were “made of bridal satin [ . . . ] with gold lace trim”

47 It should be noted that during this period Tulip Queens and Courts often wore costumes inspired by traditional dress from Zeeland and Friesland, as well as from Volendam.
and the Maurice-Orange City Pride of the Dutchmen marching band began wearing Volendam-inspired uniforms and wooden shoes in 1963 (VII.27). Summarizing the state of affairs in the 1950s and 1960s, Marlys Hop comments that, in making costumes, people “did anything they wanted. They were a costume and that was about it” (interview 2).

Starting at the end of the 1960s, Orange City’s Tulip Festival once again became concerned with the authenticity of its costumes, thanks in large part to the efforts of local seamstresses Marlys Hop and Marlene Rons. Hop recalls that, after studying and sewing a few costumes for family and neighbors, she and Rons decided to continue to research and make costume patterns. They hoped that, by making these patterns available to the public, other townspeople would become interested in making and wearing more authentic, researched costumes from various provinces and villages in the Netherlands (interview 2). Due to the efforts of Rons, Hop, and like-minded individuals, significant changes in costuming practices occurred between 1969 and 1978. In 1969, the Tulip Queen and Court began wearing a wider variety of provincial costumes, beginning with the traditional dress of Marken and continuing with costumes from Walcheren, Zaan, and Gelderland (L. Vander Stoep Scrapbooks VII.1969; VIII.1970; VIII.1971; IX.1972). In 1971, the local ran articles describing costumes from various locales that had previously received little or no mention in Tulip Festival coverage, although it is possible some of them may have been exhibited in the costume contests of the 1930s (VIII.1971). In 1972, the Dutch Dozen discarded their 1968
satin dresses in favor of new, researched, fabric-accurate, traditional Volendam costumes (IX.1972). In 1974 and 1975, Orange City’s “authentic” costumes were deemed “one of the most important features of the Tulip Festival” (IX.1974; X.1975). And in 1978, for the first time in the history of the Tulip Festival, the Tulip Queen and Court wore authentic Dutch costumes, rather than contemporary formal dresses, during each afternoon’s Queen Coronation Ceremony (XI.1978). According to Betty Dykstra, some residents resented this change, but committee in charge held that “people don’t come to the Festival to see formals, they come to see Dutch costumes” (interview 2).

The trend towards the use of “authentic” costumes in Orange City was further refined and strengthened in the 1980s and 1990s. In 1986, the same year Rons and Hop were named co-parade marshals in recognition of their costuming achievements, the Dutch Heritage Boosters were formed. This group of Orange City residents tries to include as many “authentic” Dutch elements as possible in the Tulip Festival and promotes the community’s Dutch heritage during the rest of the year as well. In 1987, the Boosters helped promote “authentic” costumes by holding a Costume Awareness Day” in order to educate townspeople as to “what is authentic and what does not reflect genuine authenticity” (XIV.1987). At the same time, costume makers continued to educate themselves on the history of traditional dress in the Netherlands. Articles about new costume patterns began to specify which decade’s (or decades’) particular fashions had been researched in creating the pattern, as in the case of a Friesland pattern developed in 1980 and
dated to 1900 (XII.1982). Costume patterns also began to reflect an awareness of class and occasion distinctions between costumes from a particular province and era; thus, for instance, the 2006 Tulip Queen wore a Walcheren party costume, whereas the Court wore Walcheren daily costumes (Discover 13 May 2006).

Finally, costume researchers have displayed a willingness to revisit and revise costume patterns in light of subsequent research. For example, a 1980 article explained that Walcheren costumes had been redesigned, since researchers had discovered the models on which the previous Walcheren patterns had been based were not “authentic” costumes (Sioux County Capital-Democrat 12 May 1980).

Today, authentic costumes are prevalent on Orange City’s streets during the Tulip Festival, perhaps more so than any of the other Festivals. Costumed men, women, and children can be seen emerging from their front doors all day long and going about their business in the downtown area. The Tulip Queen and Court appear at various Tulip Festival functions, always in their Dutch costumes. Virtually every performing group wears Dutch costumes: the Dutch Dozen wear “authentic” Volendam costumes for their performances; the three different Dutch Dance groups wear costumes from various Netherlands provinces; and the Fietsen Zangers (bicycle singers) wear complete costumes as they pedal along the parade route and serenade visitors in the early afternoon. And all tour guides wear costumes. Costumes are most in evidence, however, during the Straatfest program, which takes place along the parade route immediately before the parade. During the Straatfest, public and private grade school children perform Dutch
children’s games, and although their costumes are somewhat simplified compared to those worn by adults, provincial variations are evident. The Junior (middle school) and Senior (high school) Dutch Dancers similarly wear somewhat simplified, but nevertheless distinct and varied, costumes as they perform their routines. The Adult Dutch Dancers also perform their routines in elaborate, ornate, “authentic” costumes. Between these various game and dance acts, the Mode Show, Orange City’s version of the Parade of Provinces, exhibits many different styles of costumes from many areas of the Netherlands; in 2006, male and female costumes from various time periods and walks of life were displayed from seventeen different locales.

5.3.4 COSTUMES IN FULTON, ILLINOIS

As I noted in chapter three, the use of Dutch costumes by Bert and Patty Ritzema at the Tasty-Mates drive in and on their Miss Flame Festival float in 1972 may have provided some of the spark that led to the first Dutch Day fundraiser. These costumes were described in the Fulton Journal as “authentic” (28 June 1972), but Patti Ritzema recalls that these costumes, for the women at least, consisted simply of white blouses, Volendam caps, aprons she had made, and wooden shoes purchased in Orange City (Mask/Ritzema/Orman Luker interview 3, 10). Ritzema recalls that similar costumes consisting of caps, blouses, and scarves were used at the first Dutch Day by servers at the dinner, and were offered for sale at a local dime store to the population at large (2). While these simple costumes may have been the norm at the Festival’s inception,
already in 1976 organizers were beginning to emphasize and highlight costume authenticity. For the 1976 Dutch Day parade, participants in the parade (as well as the scrubbing and Dutch dancing) were required to wear Dutch costumes, and a post-Festival review article noted that some marchers had worn costumes made from fabric purchased in the Netherlands (Fulton Journal 12 May 1976; 19 May 1976). For the 1978 Dutch Days, local stores sold costume patterns, hats, and wooden shoes which advertisements described as “authentic” and prizes for the “most authentic” costume were awarded to parade participants (8 March; 1978).

By 1979, the Fulton Journal was promoting costumes “which represent the different regions of Holland” as an “important part of the Dutch Days Festivities” (21 March), and in order to get a wider variety of provincial costumes into circulation the Journal carried a series of photographs and descriptions of traditional costumes from 5 different Netherlands towns and regions (28 March, 4 April, 11 April, 18 April, 25 April). In the early 1980s, two events were added which helped promote further interest in, and awareness of, “authentic” costumes and the rich variety of traditional Dutch costumes: the Style Show and the Dress-A-Doll Contest. The Style Show began in 1981. Initially, it was held in conjunction with a contemporary fashion show at Amman’s Department Store in Fulton several weeks before Dutch Days. Articles about the early Style Shows indicate that it was a parade of provinces, as costumes were featured from all eleven Netherlands provinces (all twelve provinces after 1986) (Fulton Journal 11 March 1981; 25 March 1981). Later, the Style Show was attached to the pageant
which selected the Dutch Days Queen, but by the early to mid 1990s the Style Show was held the Saturday of Dutch Days as pre-parade entertainment. The Dress-a-Doll Contest started in 1983. For this contest, which was only recently discontinued, interested townspeople received a doll and then were asked to make a Dutch costume for it. The dolls and completed costumes were then judged for “authenticity and the quality of workmanship,” displayed, and auctioned off at Dutch Days (9 March 1983). Through the Dress-a-Doll contest, many costume styles were displayed that at least initially were in wide evidence during the parade or Style Show.

The focus on costumes and authenticity that emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s was due, in part, to Dutch Days becoming a city, rather than Christian School Auxiliary, sponsored event. The Auxiliary leaders had specifically asked Barbara Mask to become the Dutch Days chair, so the transition from fundraiser to town festival coincided with Mask taking over as chair. Mask explains that, in looking for ways to expand the Festival, she focused on costumes as a key element that could facilitate growth, as they were something “unique” about Fulton’s Festival. Mask explains that she and other committee members—especially Alice Sikkema, Marge Bos, and Nancy Den Besten—“really focused on trying to replicate the authenticity of the costumes, and we moved away from just the little hats with the scarf around the neck” (Mask/Ritzema/Orman Luker interview 4). The use of “authentic” costumes, then, was seen as an investment in the Festival’s future. Mask notes, however, that the use of such costumes was
also a personal investment, both in the sense that “authentic” costumes are expensive and that costume makers put their own stamp, as it were, on the costumes they made. For instance, Mask comments that she “can still recognize an Alice Sikkema when I see it on the street, just like I could with the dolls that she made” (10).

The trends in costuming practices set by 1983 have not varied greatly during the intervening years. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, costume exchanges or sales were often held, sometimes with local costume experts on hand to explain or give advice on making authentic costumes (Fulton Journal 4 March 1987; 1 April 1992; 17 April 1996). Dress-A-Doll contests continued to be a yearly feature until at least 1998 (29 April 1998). The Style Show remains a yearly feature. Servers and ticket takers at the Unity Christian School Dutch Dinner also dress in costumes, although these costumes are quite simplified, as spilling on the expensive fabrics used in authentic costumes would be a disaster. And new costume patterns have occasionally been introduced over the years which reflect provincial, class, and occasion costume variety. At the 2006 Festival, costumes were modeled from South Beveland (Catholic female worker), Marken (girl and boy), Groningen (female special occasion), Achterhoek (male), Friesland (girl, female farmer), Overijssel (female), Bergen-bennen (North Holland, female), North Brabant (female), Volendam (female), and Staphorst (girl), as well as a Sinterklaas costume.
5.3.5 COSTUMES IN EDGERTON, MINNESOTA

The history of the use of Dutch costumes at Edgerton’s Dutch Festival provides a startling counterpoint to that of the other four festivals. Socially, culturally, and historically, Edgerton is just as “Dutch” as any of these other Dutch-American communities. The Edgerton Dutch Festival, however, has, despite repeated attempts, failed to develop a sustained interest in Dutch costumes (or any other “authentic” Dutch elements, for that matter). The first Dutch Festival, in 1950, made little or no attempt to emphasize the “Dutch” images and qualities then in use in Holland, Pella, or Orange City. But in 1951, the Edgerton Enterprise reported that festival organizers were attempting “to obtain some floats and parade specialties in Dutch costumes from different Iowa communities” (21 June 1951). The next year, Edgerton residents and businesspeople were encouraged to wear Dutch costumes (17 and 24 July 1952). Then, in 1953, the organizing committee made statements indicating their desire to mold Edgerton’s Dutch Festival into an event similar to the Tulip festivals in Holland, Pella, and Orange City. The committee hoped “to make this ‘Festival’ a more picturesque and quaint event” by introducing elements including Dutch costumes and costume contests, a Festival Queen, street inspection and scrubbing, a town crier, klompen dancers, and Dutch antique exhibits (11 June 1953). Although time constraints prevented these elements from being integrated into the 1953 festival, organizers invited Orange City to send a delegation and parade units including Junior
Klompen Dancers, the Tulip Queen and Court, Orange City’s mayor, and the Orange city Chamber of Commerce float in order to help Edgerton townspeople catch the “festival spirit” (9 July 1953).

The 1953 Dutch Festival seemed to set out a plan for future festival development, but for the remainder of the decade promotion of Dutch costumes and other Dutch elements was somewhat sporadic and cooperation by townspeople was not forthcoming. In 1954, the committee encouraged residents to wear either Dutch costumes or pioneer-era clothes, in recognition of Edgerton’s 75th anniversary (Edgerton Enterprise 20 May 1954). A Dutch costumes contest was started in 1955, but participation was limited; the same was true of the 1956 and 1957 costume contests, in which there were not enough contestants to award all of the prizes. Photographs from these years indicate that what costumes were worn were, by and large, simplified Volendam-inspired ensembles (27 July 1955; 26 July 1956; 25 July 1957). In 1956 organizers requested “the help of any local groups who could arrange group singing, folk dancing, and numbers in Dutch costumes” (19 April 1956), but apparently no one responded to this request. The one sign of general interest in giving the Festival a Dutch appearance during this era took place in 1957, when the Edgerton High School marching band adopted uniforms patterned after Volendam costumes (25 July 1957); these costumes were apparently replaced after only a few years.
In 1959, festival chairman Cliff Peterson published two appeals to townspeople to make and wear costumes for the Dutch Festival “to make and add much to the originality and uniqueness of our celebration” (*Edgerton Enterprise* 2 July 1959, 9 July 1959). These appeals seem to have borne some fruit, as each category of the costume contest had enough entrants to award all prizes and more provincial variety was evident in the winning costumes. Moreover, a float contributed by the Edgerton Rendering Works entitled “Stout Hearted Men,” designed to honor Edgerton’s early Dutch settlers, contained costumes that “were understandably the most authentic Dutch articles in the parade” (23 July 1959).

The Festival failed to expand on the 1959 costume advances, due in large part to the fact that the 1960 festival was dedicated to celebrating the Edgerton High School Flying Dutchmen boys’ basketball team’s state championship (a *Hoosiers*-like feat still talked about in Minnesota today[^48]), while the 1961 Festival focused on that year’s Civil War commemoration. In both years, some Dutch costumes were apparently in use, but in neither Festival were they particularly prominent (21 July 1960; 27 July 1961). Then, in 1962, the committee made the year’s catch phrase “Dutch Festival to be ‘Dutch’” and urged residents to wear costumes,

[^48]: When attending the 2005 Holland Tulip Time Festival, I struck up a conversation with a group of older tourists who, it turned out, were from the Twin Cities area. I mentioned that I had grown up in Minnesota, and one of the men in the group asked where I had lived. I said I had grown up in Edgerton; after a moment’s pause to think, he exclaimed “Oh, the basketball people!” and proceeded to list off the starting lineup from the 1960 championship team while other members in his group reminisced about watching the tournament on television and rooting for the “little” guys who defeated several very large high schools en route to the championship.
brought in a woman from Amsterdam to deliver an address in Dutch, and encouraged float builders to incorporate Dutch themes into their activities (28 June 1962). As in 1959, the committee’s urgings were successful: the Enterprise reported that many costumes were in evidence during the Festival, and commented that many floats “included the Dutch theme by means of costumes, decorations and also Dutch inscriptions” (26 July 1962).

From 1963 until 1969, no calls for Dutch costumes appear in the Edgerton Enterprise, nor is there any indication any Dutch elements were planned, encouraged, or otherwise included in the Festival, apart from a 1964 parade appearance by the Maurice-Orange City Pride of the Dutchmen marching band (23 July 1964). The virtual absence of Dutch costume or other elements led one Edgerton resident to write to the Enterprise that “I think that if we are going to continue to call it the ‘Dutch Festival,’ we should encourage the Dutch costumes and traditions more during our Festival days” (10 July 1969). Apparently Festival organizers shared this sentiment, because in 1970 the committee announced that it wanted to “put the ‘Dutch’ back into the Dutch Festival” (9 July 1970), a motto that would also be used in subsequent years. To promote costumes, the committee asked residents, especially businesspeople, to wear costumes, and a kangaroo court was organized “to be sure that all Edgerton business men are properly dressed for the occasion” (9 July 1970; 4 June 1970). Following the 1970 Festival, the Enterprise happily reported that many people had worn Dutch costumes, thus doing “much to bring back the Dutch atmosphere” (23 July 1970).
Organizers parlayed the emphasis on costumes in 1970 into action over the next several years. In 1971, 1972, and 1973 “Put the Dutch into the Dutch Festival” was the Festival’s motto (27 May 1971). In 1972 and 1973, seamstresses willing and able to sew Dutch costumes were listed in the Enterprise (15 June 1972). And in 1975 and 1976, costumes were urged as a way of keeping “‘Dutch’ in the Dutch Festival” (10 July 1975; 8 July 1976). Photographs from the mid-1970s, though, indicate that costumes were not much in evidence after 1973.

The pattern of a lapse, followed by a revival, in Dutch elements in the Dutch Festival continued in the late 1970s. After several years in which Dutch costumes were not stressed, in 1979 organizers redoubled their efforts to emphasize Dutch costumes, noting that the “more Dutch costumes we have ‘roaming’ the streets during the celebration, the more enchanted visitors to our City will be (Edgerton Enterprise 27 June 1979). And yet, in virtually the same breath, the call for Dutch costumes was undercut owing to the 1979 Festival’s focus on Edgerton’s centennial: “The Festival Committee urges everyone to consider wearing Dutch or early American outfits during these two days!” (27 June 1979). After 1979, emphasis on Dutch costumes again waned, but in 1983 a costume contest was reinstituted as part of “an ongoing effort to keep the ‘Dutch’ in the Dutch Festival” (22 June 1983). The contest was deemed a success, the Enterprise commenting that in it, “The committee has found a way to get more ‘Dutch’ into our Dutch Festival” (20 July 1983). To strengthen the contest, in 1984 experts from Orange City, including Marlys Hop, served as judges; Hop
recalls that Edgerton’s costumes at this time “weren’t real bad, but they weren’t real authentic either” (interview 21). That having been said, photographs of the 1984 contest show that a number of different provincial costumes were entered. One the whole, organizers expressed disappointment with the number of people who wore costumes during the Festival (18 July 1984). Perhaps as a result of the 1984 disappointments, no costume contest was held in 1985, although costumed individuals were invited to accompany the Chamber of Commerce float during the parade (3 July 1985). Moreover, 1985 saw the debut of the Edgerton Dutch Dancers, who also wore costumes. Photographs, however, show that the thirty women who comprised the group all wore rather generic-looking Volendam costumes (half male, half female); this would continue to be the Dutch Dancer uniform until the group was discontinued around 2000 due to a lack of interest (25 June 1985).

After 1985, evidence of the use of Dutch costumes in the Festival again becomes sparse. A photograph from 1987 shows that the banner announcing the parade’s float theme was carried by two grade school children in Dutch costume (Edgerton Enterprise 22 July 1987). An advertisement from 1989 indicated that the employees of Huiskens’ Department Store would conduct business in costume during the festival (5 July 1989). In 1991, organizers attempted to rekindle interest in Dutch costumes by reviving the costume contest. As in the contests of the mid-1980s, entrants were judged “on authenticity and looks” (3 July 1991). After the Festival, the Enterprise sadly observed that “Only a few entered the
contest for clothing made to authentically represent actual costumes in Holland,” offering the fact that the contest had only been announced a few weeks before the Festival as a possible reason for the small number of entries (17 July 1991). A lack of interest similarly characterized the 1992 costume contest, but the committee was, according to the Enterprise, “planning how to increase the number next year” (22 July 1992). There was not, however, to be a next year; as of 2006, 1992 was the last year in which the Dutch Festival included a costume contest. Today, costumes are not in much evidence during Edgerton’s Festival. In many years, the parade theme banner might be carried by children in costume, as was the case in 2000 (26 July 2000), and sometimes a particular float might have a person or two in costume; this, however, is the exception, rather than the rule.

5.4 AUTHENTICITY: WHAT IT MEANS, WHAT IT DOES

In looking at these five festivals’ costume practices, a number of important issues about the performance of Dutch heritage and the ends to which authenticity is employed or deployed come to the fore. Of course, the most obvious issue is that, despite similar socio-cultural backgrounds and membership in a close-knit Dutch Calvinist network, there are differences between all five towns in terms of their costuming practices. Sometimes these differences are subtle; sometimes they are not. Comparing the costuming practices in Holland and Pella, for example, can bring to light a number of subtle, yet important, differences in costuming practices. Firstly, a wider variety of “authentic” costumes is more
visible in Pella than in Holland. In Holland, a visitor’s best chance for seeing a number of costume styles is to watch the Klompen Dancers during their performances or during the parades. If one wants to see more than the fourteen different costumes worn by the dancers, one must pay for a ticket to the Dutch Heritage Show. By contrast, in Pella, most of the costume varieties can be seen during the free pre-parade entertainment, namely the Parade of Provinces, which features several dozen costume varieties. Many of the participants in the Parade of Provinces later appear in the Volksparade, either in marching units or on floats specifically designed to exhibit traditional costumes from each Netherlands province.

Secondly, there are palpable differences between costumes from Pella and Holland that are supposedly from the same province, locale, or village. These differences are not so great that, for instance, Holland’s Urk costume bears no resemblance to Pella’s Urk costume, but the differences are pronounced enough to evoke comment from costume specialists in Pella:

PZ: [Holland’s] costumes look different than what we see in our books, and I’d like to know where they’re getting their ideas, because they are so strict, and they say everything has to be done this way, but I don’t understand their way [. . .]
JC: Because their costumes, like Phyllis said, just don’t look like anything we’ve ever seen in books. (Craver/Zylstra interview 21-22)
As Craver and Zylstra observe, Holland’s Klompen dancer costumes, the most readily visible costumes at Holland’s Tulip Time, are made according to very strict guidelines, while Pella’s allow for a bit more in the way of individual variation, such as customized wooden shoes. Finally, Pella and Holland’s costumes differ in terms of the sources used for developing “authentic” costumes.

In Holland, coverage mentions only that Lavina Cappon based her costume designs on unspecified patterns from the Netherlands and that, as of 1981, some costume patterns were based on pictures in F. W. S. Van Thienen’s *Klederdrachten: De Schoonheid Van Ons Land*. In Pella, it is difficult to determine sources used in earlier years, although they apparently included the books *Kleederdragten en typen der bewoners van Nederland* (containing costumes from Friesland, Zeeland, Marken, and Noord-Holland, among other regions) and R. W. P. De Vries, Jr.’s *Beautiful Holland: Dutch National Costumes*. More recently, photographs from the Openlucht Museum in the Netherlands have been used to make costumes (Kooi 27) and local townspeople have brought back cloth and clothing samples from the Netherlands (Zylstra 99). And most recently, Jackie Craver and Phyllis Zylstra base their costume designs on a wide variety of book resources published between 1975 and the present; F. W. S. Van Thienen’s *Klederdrachten: De Schoonheid Van Ons Land* is not one of these books.

49 While Holland’s dancers use plain, unpainted shoes, Pella’s wooden shoes range from being painted shiny black, to ornate white and blue designs, to fireballs and Heineken trademarks.

50 See Bibliography part VII for a list of sources used by Craver and Zylstra.
The differences between costuming practices in Holland and Pella exist in spite of similar socio-cultural landscapes (Dutch-American Calvinist predominance) and similar initial costuming practice trajectories. In both festivals, concern with getting people in costume was high before and immediately after the Second World War; a concern with authenticity was at least evidenced even before the Second World War; and during the 1960s, both of these concerns were revived. What, then, might account for the differences in costuming practices? Three potential factors strike me as likely parts of the explanation of these differences. In the first place, Holland’s festival has taken a much more commercialized, big show business atmosphere since the 1960s. This character is most overtly reflected in the addition of celebrity parade marshals and headliner musical or comedy entertainment beginning in the 1970s. Similarly, by making dancing costumes more uniform and regimented, this big show business mentality is arguably reflected, consciously or not, in the dance performances (which also include kick-line like routines somewhat reminiscent of the Rockettes). Pella’s Tulip Time has not taken on a commercialized atmosphere to this same extent. Besides more uniform-like dance costumes would not fit with the folksy atmosphere Pella strives to maintain, perhaps Tulip Time’s retention of a local feel has made townspeople more willing to wear costumes, as the “show” is as much for themselves as it is for tourists.
In the second place, differences in costuming practices between Holland and Pella may be related to events that took place in the 1960s. In the mid-1960s, Pella initiated the Dutch Fronts project, which remade Pella’s downtown business district to resemble Dutch architecture, with step gables, painted shutters, upper-storey doors and pulleys, and colorful paint schemes. Although a few step gabled buildings had been erected in Holland since the early 1900s, no program comparable to Pella’s Dutch Front project was ever instituted. Accordingly, the development of Pella’s wider variety of “authentic” costumes paralleled the initiative for “authentic” Dutch architecture in the downtown area. These parallel developments probably were by design, since the Pella Historical Society promoted the Dutch Fronts and greater costume authenticity. The Historical Society, which, of course, also organizes Tulip Time as a whole, may represent a third reason for why costumes in Holland and Pella developed along different lines after the 1960s. The Historical Society’s control of Pella’s Tulip Time meant that the festival was (and is) controlled by a body dedicated as much to the preservation and research of local history and heritage as it was to the entertainment of Tulip Time visitors. By contrast, Holland’s Tulip Time Incorporated committee was (and is) concerned first and foremost with the Festival and tourism. Today, it is telling that Tulip Time, Inc., is housed in the same building as the Holland Tourist Bureau. In earlier years, Tulip Time in Holland was connected more closely to the Netherlands (now Holland) Museum, at least in the person of Willard C. Wichers, who was heavily involved in both
organizations. Although the Museum and the Festival certainly cooperate, they are not as completely bound together as is the case in Pella, where a Historical Society controls, rather than cooperates with, the Festival.

If the differences in costuming practices between Holland and Pella are subtle, the differences between the costuming practices of Edgerton’s Dutch Festival and the other four festivals are anything but subtle. Whereas Holland, Pella, Orange City, and Fulton have all emphasized “authentic” costumes to some degree, Edgerton has only been intermittently concerned with costumes at all, let alone “authentic” costumes. Why is it that Edgerton, again a town with a background and demographics similar to the other four towns, has not developed the same concern with Dutch costumes for its Festival? Several factors may explain this marked difference between Edgerton and everybody else. First, Edgerton residents comment that, since Edgerton’s Dutch Festival is held in July as opposed to May, the summer heat makes elaborate, multi-layered Dutch costumes uncomfortable to wear (Celia Van Essen interview 2; Jim Bouma interview 5). This explanation alone is inadequate, though, because there are other Dutch-American heritage celebrations held during the summer which still manage to include elaborate Dutch costumes, such as Cedar Grove, Wisconsin’s Holland Festival. A second explanation Edgerton’s residents offer for their town’s lack of costumes is generational differences. Jake Kooiman recalls that in earlier years, older people, especially those who could speak Dutch, were much more prone to wear Dutch costumes during the Festival; with the passing of an
older generation, today most Edgerton residents “think of ourselves more as...Americans, I guess, as opposed to really aligned with Holland or the Dutch” (interview 11). In a somewhat similar vein, Fred Huiskens speculates that in earlier years, “every household had somebody who could sew” and thus make a costume, but today not as many people (especially women) learn to sew as once was the case (interview 8). These generational explanations for Edgerton’s lack of persistent interest in Dutch costumes, however, speak more to a current lack of costumes rather than to the fact that costumes never caught on in Edgerton to the extent they did in other Dutch-American celebrations. Moreover, these generational explanations do not account for why interest in authentic costumes has not waned in communities which have undergone similar changes, such as the passing of the last generation that could speak Dutch.

Several other factors may account for the differences that characterize Edgerton’s (lack of) costuming practices. In the first place, Edgerton has a different economy than its fellow festival-staging communities, insofar as it is primarily and agricultural community, with only a few small industries. Holland, Pella, Orange City, and Fulton all have more active industrial sectors. Perhaps because Edgerton’s economy is less diverse than the other towns, Edgerton has never been as affluent as, say, Orange City and Pella. Since “authentic” Dutch costumes are often a major expense, perhaps these economic differences have mitigated against Edgerton’s ability or willingness to develop a more sustained interest in authentic costumes. In the second place, Edgerton, over the last several
decades, has remained much more ethnically homogenous than the other towns. Edgerton remain about 90 percent Dutch American, compared to about 75 percent in Orange City, somewhere between 50 and 60 percent for Pella and Fulton, and about 35 percent for Holland. Of Edgerton’s five churches, all are Calvinist and four are Dutch Calvinist.\footnote{The four Dutch Calvinist churches are Reformed, First Christian Reformed, Bethel Christian Reformed, and Protestant Reformed; the fifth church is Presbyterian.} As is traditionally characteristic of Dutch-American towns, church and school remain solidly at the center of social and cultural life in Edgerton, and differences in denominational affiliation continue to predict if a family sends its children to the local public or Christian school. One could thus argue that Edgerton is therefore “Dutch” all year round, and the Dutch Festival need not use costumes to actively promote that heritage. As in the other towns, the Dutch Festival may bring neighbors together who don’t otherwise often associate; in Edgerton, however, these neighbors might be unlikely to associate because they belong to different Dutch factions instead of not associating because they are from different ethnic or religious backgrounds. Other towns--Holland and Pella in particular--talk about their festivals as being ways of unifying increasingly diverse populations behind the community’s historical ethnic heritage: everyone in town, for the festival, is Dutch for a few days. Edgerton, once again, by being between 90 and 100 percent Dutch, perhaps has no need to unify for two days behind this already pervasive ethnic heritage in the way other town of Dutch-American heritage do.
In the third place, Edgerton arguably has a different type of audience than the other festivals. Edgerton’s audiences smaller than those of the other festivals, and Edgerton’s visitors, according to Edgerton residents, usually either have some prior connection to Edgerton (friends, relatives, former residents, etc.) or else are from other nearby communities (Jeff Van Dyke interview 15; Betty Huisken interview 6). Since the Dutch Festival crowds constitute mostly homecomers and nearby neighbors, there perhaps is a sense that the guests already know that the community is Dutch and don’t need any further reminders or displays on that count. This, in turn, points to a final reason Edgerton’s Dutch Festival has generally not played up costumes to the extent other festivals have: the historic ambivalence of Edgerton’s non-Dutch neighbors to the southwest Minnesota Dutch enclave. Dutch immigrants were not the original settlers of Edgerton, which was founded in 1879; instead, significant numbers of Dutch immigrants came to the area in the 1890s and 1900s. The Dutch who came to Edgerton and the surrounding area preferred to keep their own language, churches, and ways of doing things, which also meant keeping largely to themselves, although economic necessity meant interaction with non-Dutch area residents was inevitable. Many non-Dutch residents did not care for the Dutch owing to their desire to keep to themselves and refusal to blend in to their new surroundings; as explained in the last chapter, the First World War served as a pretext for many southwest
Minnesotans to attack the patriotism of the area’s Dutch residents, specifically their use of private schools and the Dutch language (R. Schoone-Jongen, “Patriotic Pressures”).

The hostility the Edgerton Dutch experienced during the First World War was not as violent as that experienced in central Iowa, with the threatened lynching, school and church burning in Peoria or the government officials attending church services to ensure they were conducted in English in Pella. However, the hostility experienced in Edgerton necessitated a different response. Pella and Peoria, at or near the center of a significant, largely self-sufficient Dutch enclave that had existed for 70 years, could, if they chose, withdraw into themselves and more or less ignore their neighbors. The southwest Minnesota Dutch enclave, however, was much smaller than Pella in 1917, nor was it self-sufficient to the extent the central Iowa Dutch enclave was. Edgerton thus could not ignore neighboring towns; for Edgerton’s economic well-being, they had to be dealt with. And it was (and is) these neighbors who, along with people connected to Edgerton in some way, constituted (and still constitute) a significant portion of a typical Edgerton Dutch Festival audience. Pella’s Tulip Time, by contrast, draws crowds from farther away who otherwise have little or no connection to, or knowledge of, Pella (although homecomers and nearby neighbors still doubtlessly form an important part of Pella’s audiences). While Edgerton’s festivalgoers may be from neighboring towns, this does not necessarily mean Edgerton and its neighbors get along particularly well, even today. Edgerton residents often
continue to hear derogative comments about the town, specifically its perceived Dutch Calvinist piety. I experienced such comments when I was employed at Huysken Meat Center in Chandler, Minnesota, between 1995 and 1999. Several co-workers who were not Edgerton residents would make snide comments about how they had heard that no one in Edgerton is “allowed” to mow their lawns on Sunday, and nobody ever has any fun in Edgerton because Edgerton people are always too busy praying. Other Edgerton residents have had similar experiences, and it is widely acknowledged that Edgerton does not always get along with neighboring towns. Jim Bouma comments that the nearby town of Pipestone “doesn’t have too much love for Edgerton” (interview 8). Jeff Van Dyke relates that “sometimes when I leave Edgerton and I’m seen in Pipestone, they say ‘Well, did they leave the gates open for you so you can get back in?’” (interview 19).

Faith De Kam and Celia Van Essen share similar anecdotes or opinions of Edgerton’s insularity:

I’m wondering if maybe there are some people who come [to the Dutch Festival] just to find out what we’re all about! [laughs] We’re just this little [. . .] this little commune! Well, that’s kind of what people think, because we have the Christian schools and we have our own little ways of doing things. [laughs] they think we’re so religious, and not in a good way. (Faith De Kam interview 10, 17-18)

I just heard not so long ago somebody from Pipestone, [my husband] was getting therapy at the hospital at Pipestone, and a man asked him “Where are you from?” “I’m from Edgerton.” “Oh, that’s that little”--not religious, what word did he use? Anyhow, it was not meant as a compliment. (Celia Van Essen interview 8)
Obviously, Edgerton’s neighbors have some negative ideas about Edgerton, tied to the town’s religious character, which is a direct result of its Dutch Calvinist heritage. Unlike Fulton, Holland, Orange City, and Pella, which draw audiences from nearby large cities that probably do not have preconceptions about these enclaves (apart from the fact they are Dutch), Edgerton’s audiences, drawn from nearby small towns, may very well have negative preconceptions about the town. Perhaps, then, Edgerton’s Dutch Festival, consciously or not, has not emphasized Dutch costumes and other Dutch elements precisely because the religious--and hence Dutch--character of the town has been negatively perceived by prospective festival guests. Perhaps, then, Edgerton’s Dutch Festival attempts to “clean up,” as it were, bad relations between the town and the outside, bad relations which stretch as far back as the First World War. In trying to show “another side” of the town during the Festival, “Dutch” features are downplayed in order to avoid alienating visitors who associate “holier-than-thou” with what it means to be Dutch in Edgerton. At the same time, downplaying “Dutch” features perhaps serves to “clean up” the religious divisions that exist within the town by encouraging people to work together in common cause. Edgerton’s Dutch Festival may not have a street scrubbing ceremony, but perhaps the Edgerton Dutch Festival “cleans up” in other ways, specifically by attempting, for two days, to bridge chasms both between groups in town and between the town as a whole and its neighbors.
The subtle variations in costume practices between Pella and Holland, as well as the marked differences in costume usage between Edgerton and the other four festivals, are just two examples of the various ways in which celebrations of a common Dutch heritage are nevertheless different in large and small ways. A very long list could be created concerning costuming differences between the five festivals alone, to say nothing of differences present in each festival’s parades, food, dances, and other elements. What these differences demonstrate is that, despite the fact it is in some ways possible to generalize about these five communities in terms of their festivals, it is dangerous to reduce even such a specific topic as celebrations of heritage in Dutch-American midwestern towns to a supposedly homogenous category or monolithic totality. This being the case, one wonders how safe it is to generalize about larger categories such as “the midwest,” “the rural,” “the conservative,” “the Protestant,” or even “the red states.” The differences between Edgerton and the other festivals also brings up a second important observation: the heritage of a place, it would seem, does not directly impact the representations of that heritage in a neat, obvious, or direct way. Edgerton, percentage-wise the most Dutch town of the five, has the least visibly “Dutch” festival. This raises an important question: could it be that the Dutch heritage is so alive and well in Edgerton that there is no need to directly represent it, while a town like Holland, increasingly diverse, can use its Dutch heritage as a unifying tool, in spite of the fact that a majority of Holland residents today do not have any Dutch heritage?
Considerations of, questions about, and speculative answers to the differences between these five celebrations of Dutch heritage begin to get at the uses to which rhetoric and notions authenticity are put within the framework of heritage celebrations. First of all, it should be noted that, generally speaking, the word “authentic” is used in a sense of objective authenticity. What exactly constitutes objective authenticity, though, may itself vary from context to context. The fact that costumes from the 1930s were often described as “authentic” in Holland, Pella, and Orange City, while photographs from these communities often show costumes inspired by American trademarks, seems to indicate that, at times, “authenticity” has been equated to “looking Dutch” in a way that would meet American expectations. This is rarely the case anymore. In Orange City, for instance, Town Crier Ron De Jong specifically notes his costume is a compilation of what people would expect to see in a town crier’s costume and is therefore not authentic (interview 4-5). Instead, the term “authentic” has acquired more sophisticated meanings in recent years. Generally speaking, today claiming that a costume is “authentic” refers to its having been the product of meticulous research. In Pella, Orange City, and Fulton, this research allows for individual costume variations; in the case of Holland’s Klompen Dancers, this research demands adhering to one particular pattern and passing yearly inspection. Beyond meaning “researched” or “accurate,” “authentic” can be used to refer to costumes imported from the Netherlands. In this case, the imported costumes...
might either be heirloom costumes brought by immigrants, or they could be
costumes made more recently in the Netherlands; coverage of Holland’s Dutch
Heritage Show has referred to both types of costume as “authentic.”

Of course, despite these understandings of objective authenticity, the
costumes in each town called “authentic” differ. Insofar as Dutch people in the
nineteenth century did in fact wear traditional costumes, it is reasonable to assume
that certain costumes in certain towns are “closer” to the objective reality of the
costumes one worn in the Netherlands. Figuring out which costumes are “more
authentic,” however, is not the task of this study and is not particularly productive
in examining what the various performances of heritage in these Dutch-American
communities achieve, or hope to achieve. To conclude this chapter, then, it is
necessary to consider some of the goals, conscious or not, the use of
“authenticity” in these five towns seeks to achieve. I detect at least four such
goals: to bring in visitors, to get townspeople to experience their own heritage or
loyalty to the town, to promote a sense of unity and common cause within the
town, and to compete with other Dutch-American communities.

The accounts of the development of costume practices in each of the five
towns contained a number of statements which speak to the first goal to which
authenticity is deployed: getting people into town. In these statements,
townspeople were asked to wear costumes to make a good impression on the
visitors, implying that organizers believed visitors were coming to these festivals
to see costumes in the first place. Thus, authenticity is used for the baseline
economic motive behind each of these celebrations: drawing tourists and their
dollars. The changes in costuming practices suggest an evolution of what outside
visitors wanted to see, or at least evolving perceptions in the staging communities
of what visitors wanted to see, at the festivals. In particular, in the cases of the
Holland, Pella, and Orange City, one can observe costumes indebted to images of
Holland Mania--Volendam-inspired ensembles, basically--gradually giving way
to costumes measured for authenticity against models from the Netherlands. Such
a development suggests that audiences over time were less interested in seeing
stereotypes and more interested in getting a more “authentic” experience of the
culture and heritage being celebrated. By displaying an increasing variety of
intensively researched provincial costumes, these festivals stake an important
claim: they know what they are talking about when it comes to Dutch costumes.
The show of expertise in events like Orange City’s Mode Show, Fulton’s Style
Show, Pella’s Parade of Provinces, or Holland’s Dutch Heritage Show arguably
assures viewers that festival organizers have not just slapped costumes together,
but have invested a great amount of time and effort in getting things “right,” thus
in turn offering visitors an “authentic” experience of Dutch costumes and culture.
A rhetoric of authenticity thus may be used to attract visitors by implying that
care has been taken in the preparation of the heritage celebration; although
organizers may very well want to make a buck off of tourists, they don’t want to
make a quick buck through cheap, fake, fly-by-night, or seedy entertainment, but
through--yes--“clean” entertainment.
While one goal that can be achieved through “authentic” costuming is to draw outsiders into town, a second goal involves drawing insiders “out,” or providing them with a way of getting involved in the festival. As statements in the first part of this chapter indicate, wearing “authentic” costumes is construed as an easy way to contribute to the success of each festival. For those townspeople of Dutch descent, wearing a costume is both a way to show one’s loyalty to the town and festival and a way to experience, in a way, one’s personal heritage, especially if one wears the costume of the province one’s ancestors came from. In this regard, wearing a costume can meaningful to the wearer of the costume.

One way this meaningfulness is articulated is through the monetary investment individuals are willing to make in their costumes. Elaine Jaarsma comments that in Pella, an authentic costume can cost in upwards of 500 dollars, and some people will go to extremes to make their costumes as authentic as possible because they derive a personal experience of heritage from their costumes:

Some people even went to the extreme of getting the silver oorizer, that is that gold piece that goes under the [Friesland] hat, when we went to Holland they asked us to find one for them, and that was a thousand dollars for that hat piece, and they were willing to pay it. Now this was because they wanted an authentic costume. [ . . . ] It’s personal history for them. A family history. (interview 9)

Several individuals in Orange City also comment on personal connections residents feel to costumes. Betsy Huibregste notes that for the 2006 Tulip Festival, she and husband Bob decided to acquire costumes from the island of
Walcheren in Zeeland, because that is where the Huibregste family was originally from (interview 22). Similarly, seamstress Betty Dykstra explains how she had worked to help personalize Nelva Schreur’s Marken costume:

Anyway, they [Marken costume decorators] always started out with the tree of life. And then they added motifs that probably told a bit of a story about their life. [...] We tried to add a few things--well, there’s a little pipe up here to indicate that yes, there is a man in the house, and the cross, and something else--I don’t know...She has a son who’s a minister, and so we tried to get in a few--this has something to do with it too [...] And on the back side is a spinning wheel, because Nelva does stitches, she does handwork and that kind of thing. And some people can get a lot more detailed about it than that. But they told something about their life in their clothing. (Betty Dykstra interview 6)

Besides the monetary and personal history investments made by townspeople who purchase and wear “authentic” costumes, the researchers, designers, and makers of these costumes obviously invest a great deal of their time and energy in their efforts to make “authentic” costumes. The pride costume makers and wearers take in their costumes is abundantly clear; combined with the money, time, and energy each “authentic” costume has invested in it, it is also clear that “authentic” costumes do more than put on a show for tourists. Instead, they offer the wearers and makers of the costumes an “authentic” experience, or experience of authenticity and heritage. The precise nature of this experience varies from person to person and from town to town, as Lisa Jaarsma Zylstra observes in the case of Pella:

For some, dressing in a costume allows them to blend in as an “insider.” For others putting on a costume, whether new or with pieces passed down or replicated from family photos, connects them with the generations that have gone before. A few take pride in the authenticity of their costumes and wear them to help educate others. For many children, putting on their
Dutch costumes transports them into another setting for the purpose of role-playing and fun. And of course for some, donning a Dutch costume is done as a requirement for being involved in the festival and holds no special meaning other than perhaps creating a sense of being a festival participant. (100-101)

As this statement indicates, the wearing of costumes, “authentic” or not, can become an “authentic” Dutch-American tradition in and of itself, in the sense of Erik Cohen’s emergent authenticity. Zylstra, for instance, states that “Certain elements of the Tulip Festival have become almost sacred rituals over time. Even though they may not have any direct roots in the Netherlands, they have become so ingrained and ritualistic that changing them would almost be unthinkable” (94). The wearing and display of various Dutch costumes at heritage celebrations (save Edgerton’s Dutch Festival) can certainly be understood as one of these rituals.

A third goal that can be achieved through the deployment of authenticity is closely related to getting townspeople invested in each town’s festival: promoting a sense of unity within the community. Obviously, staging a festival takes a great deal of community involvement, and those involved need to be working towards a common cause. By celebrating Dutch heritage through “authentic” costumes (as well as “authentic” dances, food, etc.), these festivals provide a way to draw community members together in common cause while avoiding potential fragmentation related to the Dutch-American experience. To state the case more bluntly, focusing on costumes can (potentially) draw each of these communities together in a way focusing on religion, the most pervasive and influential aspect of Dutch heritage on present-day Dutch Americans, cannot. Religious infighting
has been a prominent characteristic of the Dutch-American experience from the moment the first major wave of Dutch immigrants arrived in the United States in 1847, and in fact played a role in the decision of many of the 1847 immigrants to immigrate in the first place. Holland, Pella, Orange City, Edgerton, and Fulton all have RCA and CRC factions, along with the usual public/Christian school divide. Holland, Pella, and Edgerton also have PRC congregations, while Holland, Pella, and Orange City have URC congregations. To emphasize the lived Dutch heritage--Dutch Calvinism--would run the risk of activating tensions, disagreements, and even animosity between these groups. Focusing on costumes, however, emphasizes an aspect of Dutch heritage everyone can (potentially) agree on, or at least not fight over. A focus on costumes thus neither exacerbates nor references religious divisions within Dutch-American communities; instead, it provides a “safe” aspect of heritage to display or perform. Moreover, for those residents of these communities who are not Dutch-Americans, wearing a Dutch costume similarly provides an easy way of participating in, or performing, the community’s heritage and cultural life. A non-Dutch, non-Calvinist resident can put on a costume without having to necessarily accept some of the more potentially divisive aspects of Dutch-American heritage such as, once again, the religious aspect. In this way, wearing costumes invites all townspeople with an easy way to pitch in to the festival and thus build unity while, at the same time, “cleaning up” divisions among Dutch-Americans but also between the Dutch- and non-Dutch-Americans in each community.
Finally, the research and exhibition of “authentic” costumes can, at times, be used as a way to compete with, or one-up, other Dutch-American heritage celebrations. Although this use of authenticity is not likely to show up in press coverage or promotional materials, conversations with individuals involved in costuming practices exhibit a willingness on the part of one town’s residents to explain why their costumes are “more authentic” or “better” than those used in other towns’ heritage celebrations. Jackie Craver and Phyllis Zylstra’s comments, noted above, on Holland’s costumes are one example of this phenomenon (interview 21-22). A series of comments made by Pella and Orange City residents also illustrates a sometimes-friendly, sometimes suspicious costume competition between the two communities. Elaine Jaarsma humorously relates that, some years ago, Orange City residents refused to buy fabric she, along with friends from Orange City, brought back from the Netherlands because the fabric’s stripes did not look exactly like pictures in certain costume books and was therefore not “authentic.” Pella costumers, however, at the time recognized fabric variations were a part of “authentic” costuming in the Netherlands (Jaarsma/Zylstra interview 5-6). A more pronounced example of competition between Pella and Orange City pertains to supposed attempts on the part of Pella people to obtain Orange City’s costume patterns:

I’ve seen some of their [Pella’s] court costumes, and I have to be honest, sometimes I don’t know what that is, it’s like a piece of this and a piece of that and--according to our version. And some of the women from Pella have been here trying to get patterns, and costumes, so evidently they too think there’s room for improvement. (Betty Dykstra interview 11)
But Pella--when we started this authentic business, they really didn’t have much authentic over there, and they really, really tried to get our stuff. They went to the library one time. This was the dress shop over there, or the fabric shop, and they took all of our patterns [ . . . ] out of the library, to Pella, and drew them all over, and then sent them back, by mail, and without my knowledge. And I, all of a sudden, I noticed all those patterns were gone, because I would go in there, and check them, and then work on them, and the librarian had to tell me what happened. [ . . . ] And they would call once in a while about this one and that one, and “Oh, you have to give it to me,” you know. (Marlys Hop interview 15)

PZ: [Regarding costume patterns, Orange City is] a little more secretive than we are.
JC: They’re very secretive, yeah, they won’t tell us--
PZ: They don’t like to tell us what they’re doing for next year, or different things.
TSJ: Are they secretive about the sources they’re using too, or--
PZ: Oh, a little bit. Well, the Axel costume that I now wear, I had seen it up there, and I tried to talk to a lady about getting the pattern, and “Oh, you won’t be able to make it,” she told me. [laughter] [ . . . ] And I said “If I come up sometime, would I be able to look at a costume?” And when we were going I couldn’t get a hold of her to actually see the costume--well, I got a hold of her, I’m sorry, but she wasn’t going to be home that particular time when I was going to be there. I just had the feeling she didn’t like to share the--
TSJ: Trade secrets?
PZ: --the ideas, yeah.
JC: See, and we kind of feel the opposite, we want to share, because we want people to know the history of costumes, and--
PZ: And we want them to be making authentic costumes. That’s our whole goal, so someone else can copy what we’ve done, we think that’s just great. (Craver/Zylstra interview 22-24)

To conclude, “authentic” costumes--as well as a wider rhetoric of “authenticity” employed in the five festivals--arguably is put to several distinct uses within each of the five festivals. For the most part, these uses can be seen as metaphorically “cleaning up” certain aspects of the town’s history or current societal structure, especially divisions within the town. At the same time, the various uses to which authenticity is put in each festival reflect an ongoing
tension between an inward- and outward-directed focus to each of these events. On the one hand, “authentic” costumes are apparently a way of drawing outsiders, and their business, into each community. On the other hand, “authentic” costumes are a way for townspeople to connect with the town’s heritage, if not with their own heritage. Moreover, “authentic” costumes are one way in which different Dutch-American communities compete with each other, not so much for festival audiences, but for bragging rights about which town’s costumes--and by extension grasp of its Dutch heritage--is the “most authentic.” The inside-outside tension, the desire to create unity, and the desire to clean up the town, physically as well as figuratively, are themes which also dominate narratives propagated about each town and festival through stories that appear in press and promotional coverage, town tours, and theatrical elements in each of these festivals. And it is to these stories the towns tell about themselves we now turn.
CHAPTER 6

STORIES WE TELL TO AND ABOUT OURSELVES

In the previous chapter, we saw that each of the five festivals employs a rhetoric of authenticity, which on one level is designed to communicate that each town is knowledgeable about, or in touch with, its roots. Upon closer examination, we saw that each town also uses (or, in the case of Edgerton, declines to use) authenticity as a way to draw visitors to town, encourage townspeople to connect with local and personal heritage, and promote a sense of unity and cooperation within each community. The task of this chapter is to now move beyond authenticity and investigate the implicit and explicit messages or narratives each town communicates--the stories each town tells--to and about itself and its celebration. Like authenticity, many of the stories presented in and about each festival serve to promote or boost the staging community, to demonstrate the town is connected to its heritage, and to foster a sense of unity within each town. Moreover, almost all of the stories and narratives presented in and about each festival return to the motif of “cleaning up.” Each festival is regarded as a way of physically cleaning up the town, and the narratives themselves serve to figuratively “clean up” each town’s history and divisions.
Each festival further stresses that the entertainment presented is itself “clean,” not seedy, transient, or cheap. As in the case of authenticity, the stories that are told in each festival are directed to both an outside audience and to the townspeople themselves; the festivals are both representations and self-representations, in other words. The three festival aspects this chapter focuses on reflect this dual representation. First, we will consider some of the narratives presented in press coverage of each festival. As most press coverage centers on the preparations for the festival rather than the festival itself, press coverage is, by and large, meant to explain the festival to the staging community. Second, we will consider town tours which are, for the most part, meant to explain each festival to outside visitors. Last, we will consider several theatrical performances and pageants, which seem to be directed to outsiders and townspeople alike.

6.1 STORIES AND NARRATIVES IN PRESS COVERAGE

For sheer volume of material, press coverage of each of the five festivals is unmatched as a source for stories and narratives told by and about each celebration. The weekly newspapers in Pella, Orange City, Edgerton, and Fulton, and the daily newspaper in Holland, all print dozens of articles each year covering the leadup to, and aftermath of, their corresponding Dutch heritage celebration. Accordingly, there are hundreds, even thousands, of press documents from 1929 to the present covering on each festival; virtually every year, at least several of these documents will comment on the meanings and effects of the celebration covered. Analyzing this wealth of information and opinion reveals five common
assertions about what each festival means and does. First, each celebration is acknowledged as a vehicle for promoting, or boosting, the staging community. Second, although each event may promote the staging community, coverage usually insists that each festival is non-commercial. Third, as one would expect, each festival is presented as a way to commemorate the staging community’s heritage. Fourth, each celebration is promoted as a potential unifying force within the staging community. And fifth, each celebration is characterized as fun, but wholesome, clean fun free of cheap or tawdry elements. Examining each of these five assertions highlights a contrast between communities which have consistently maintained a particular narrative or narratives about their festival (Pella and Fulton, in particular) and those which have gradually modified the rhetoric surrounding their festival, in part as a response to other changes within the community (Holland, in particular). At the same time, considering these five assertions reveals a constant tendency across all five festivals to emphasize process--working to stage the festival--over the product--the festival itself.

It many ways, it goes without saying that each Dutch heritage celebration is a way of promoting the staging community. After all, a festival or celebration is inherently a way of showing the town off to visitors. Press coverage of the five festivals two distinct ways in which the festivals promote the staging communities. First, the celebrations are a way to beautify, clean up, and physically show off the town. Second, the celebrations provide an opportunity to show of other town assets, such as businesses, industries, and facilities, to visitors,
thereby at least indirectly promoting the staging communities economically. The motive or benefit of beautification, of cleaning the staging community up physically through the festival, is apparently the impulse behind the emergence of Dutch-American heritage celebrations. Holland’s Tulip Time, of course, was proposed by Lida Rogers as a project for city beautification, and coverage from the 1930s similarly emphasized this aspect of Tulip Time, claiming that the festival made Holland “a mecca for the lovers of the picturesque and beautiful” (1936 Tulip Time program; Holland Sentinel 14 May 1938). Already in the 1930s, and continuing to the present, the beautification aspect of Holland’s festival has been played up in articles relating Rogers’ involvement in the start of the celebration (14 May 1936, for example). And since the early 1930s, the theme of city beautification has been symbolically played out in the street scrubbing activities that, until the 1990s, were always held on the opening day of Holland’s Tulip Time.

Pella, Orange City, and Edgerton have similarly emphasized their festivals as ways of physically cleaning up the community. Pella and Orange City, of course, also stage the symbolic scrubbing of the streets, but both also place heavy emphasis on getting their individual yards and homes into shape for the Tulip Festival. Edgerton does not have a street scrubbing ceremony, but the 1 July 1965 Edgerton Enterprise observed that “each year in preparation for the event, weeds are cut, lawns are mowed and flower beds are carefully tended. The streets are cleaned and everything in general is put in order.” The 7 May 1936 Pella
Chronicle went a step further, explicitly calling on Pella residents to clean up their yards for Tulip Time, thus preserving Pella’s self-description as “De Tuin Stad Van Iowa” (The Cleanest Town in Iowa):

In view of the approach of Tulip Time, lawns should be mowed and put in A-1 condition, also the dandelions should be cut down before they go to seed. Uprooting them is better, but if cut down at once that will be sufficient. Let’s get going and doll up the lawns.

Similar reminders have continued to appear in the Chronicle over the years (11 May 1964; 8 May 1985). Orange City, for its part, has gone further than other towns in emphasizing the Festival’s effect on the town’s physical image, citing this as one of the Tulip Festival’s greatest benefits. In 1942, an editorial asserted that “It is from the beauty and neatness of Orange City yards and homes that we derive the greatest benefits from Tulip Day. [...] Others come to the Tulip Festival to see and admire the orderliness and beauty which result from our work. (Schreur Scrapbooks II.85). In a similar vein, a 1950 editorial expressed the opinion that the Festival’s effect of cleaning up “the debris of winter,” hiding “the clutter” and dressing “up the community” were alone “worth the effort” of staging the entire event (L. Vander Stoep Scrapbooks III.1950). More recently, a Sioux County Capital editorial boasted that “Orange City needs no proclamation by the mayor announcing ‘Clean-up Week,’” since Orange City residents of their own volition “bring out rakes, hoes and paint brushes vying with each other for the neatest appearing yard and home and for the accolades of the thousands of expected visitors” (19 May 1983).
An 11 May 1965 *Pella Chronicle* editorial links the first kind of promotional use of each celebration (promotion of physical beauty, beautification, cleaning up, etc.) to the second: promoting, boosting, or showing off the economic, commercial, and industrial vitality of the staging community. Specifically, the editorial equates the appearance of prosperity with the potential for actual prosperity:

Pella has the reputation, a well deserved one, for being one of (if not THE) cleanest cities in Iowa. Driving thru [sic] it you will get the feeling of prosperity, because of the way most of the homes and businesses are kept up. When a city such as ours is kept up as well as it is, it shows that the people and the community are on the way up. There is life and vitality and aggressiveness in a clean community. (11 May 1965)

Holland, Pella, and Edgerton have been particularly prone to implicitly or explicitly allude to or cite the promotion of local businesses, industries, and facilities through press coverage. Holland and Pella have both done this through special newspaper editions which profile various city assets. For instance, the 16 May 1936 Holland *Sentinel* Tulip Time and Resort Number, like many subsequent Tulip Time and Resort Numbers, contains articles on important local business concerns (Chamber of Commerce), key industries (Baker Furniture factory and Holland Furnace Company, among others), important municipal departments (Public Works, Police, Parks, telephone system), institutions (library, churches, public and Christian school systems), organizations (Boy Scouts), and recreational and tourist opportunities (resorts, country club, fishing). Similarly, the 10 May 1962 *Pella Chronicle* Tulip Time Edition contained articles
describing Pella banks, Central College, churches (Calvinist and otherwise),
public and private school systems, the local mental retardation rehabilitation
center, the Rolscreen Company, Vermeer Manufacturing, and various other local
businesses and services.

While the *Edgerton Enterprise* has never published special Dutch Festival
editions, it has certainly commented on the “boost” the Festival provides the
town. Coverage of the inaugural 1950 festival explicitly characterized the event
as an opportunity to promote Edgerton: “all citizens must boost and work together
in order to make the ‘Dutch Festival’ a big success. It can easily be made the
biggest celebration in this corner of the state” (20 July 1950). A 1 July 1965
editorial expressed the belief that the Dutch Festival had, in fact, been successful
in making a name for Edgerton: “The event has become associated with the town
throughout a large area [. . .] The festivals help keep Edgerton on the map.”
These views of Edgerton’s festival have remained essentially unchanged. Clyde
De Boer, the 1984 Dutch Festival chair, stated that “‘to build up the community
and show what we’ve got so people can see what we have to offer’ is the whole
reason for the Festival” (18 July 1984), and a 20 July 1988 editorial, much like
the 1965 editorial, commented that “A town celebration also makes a town seem
more vibrant and makes a town more well-known in the area. [. . .] This yearly
celebration helps focus minds on Edgerton” (20 July 1988). Not only does
*Enterprise* coverage characterize the Dutch Festival as a way to promote the
town, it has often referred to the Festival as a “way of saying thank you to all
those who patronize business concerns here, attend church services and schools, enjoy our park and swimming pool, and visit our residents” (4 July 1968; 11 July 1979). Thus, Edgerton’s Dutch Festival is not just a way to promote the town, but a way to thank those who patronize the establishments being promoted.

At the same time these festivals promote or boost the staging communities, press coverage in Holland, Pella, and Orange City--the towns with the three largest festivals--has been at pains to assure readers that each town’s Festival is not about making a profit. This tendency was first evident in Holland in 1936, when the Sentinel Tulip Time and Resort Number commented that festival organizers were “ever on the alert to bring entertainments to Holland during Tulip Time, untainted by commercialism.” In 1937, organizers announced “that war would be waged against peddling and hawking of wares on the streets during the festival” (4 May 1937). While articles in the Tulip Time and Resort numbers from this era were busy promoting Holland businesses, industries, and resorts, such statements indicate that organizers did not want Tulip Time to be interpreted as an occasion for profit. During the first several Tulip Times after the Second World War, coverage continued to stress that the festival was non-commercial. For example, visitors to the 1946 festival were informed that Tulip Time had started as “a movement for our [Holland’s] own local edification, in harmony with the high cultural standards of the community” to which large
crowds just happened to come (1946 Tulip Time program), and Holland residents were reminded in 1947 that street peddling was forbidden as part of the effort to keep Tulip Time “on a high cultural plane” (10 May 1947).

Beginning in the 1960s, however, the commitment of Holland’s Tulip Time to being non-commercial weakened. In May 1961, an article in *Inside Holland* complained that Tulip Time was “suffering from too much indifference on the part of too many Holland citizens” and that, as a result, Tulip Time’s organizing body “has been forced to be far more commercial in its attitude than is good for Tulip Time” (2, 5). While the article acknowledged that “there is money that flows in with visitors,” it reasserted that “that is not, nor never has been, the governing consideration in the perpetuation of Tulip Time” (1). Whatever the effect of the *Inside Holland* appeal, by the late 1970s editorials in the *Sentinel* were voicing complaints about hawking, street vending, and price-gouging allowed, or at least tolerated, during Tulip Time, indicating a much different policy than 1937’s “war” on hawking and peddling (16 May 1978; 11 May 1982). While complaints of this sort subsided after 1982, a trend towards a more commercialized festival remains evident. In 1988, for the first time in Festival history, Tulip Time, Inc. asked corporate sponsors for the Festival’s three parades (4 May 1988). Two years later, the 1990 Tulip Time program printed the logos of corporate sponsors, thereby putting a corporate and commercial stamp on official promotional materials. This remains the practice at present. Combined with corporate banners that appear in all three parades and the inclusion of headline

298
entertainers since the late 1970s, Holland’s Tulip Time today has a decidedly commercial feel about it, and claims that the Festival is “non-commercial” have not been in much evidence since the 1950s. That having been said, a 9 May 1991 article insisted that “Tulip Time aims to stay quaint” and “maintain the wholesome, homespun flavor” that made the Festival a success.

Like Holland, Orange City and Pella have historically characterized their festivals as non-commercial. Unlike Holland, both have continued to use this characterization to the present. A 1961 article concerning Orange City’s Tulip Festival states that “the element of commercialism is purposely eliminated” (L. Vander Stoep Scrapbooks VI.1961); the program from the 1965 Tulip Festival boldly asserts that the event is “unique among celebrations, too, for its non-commercial aspects. Excepting only the evening musical productions, each full, day-long program is not only fun, but free;” and a 1981 editorial emphasizes that the Tulip festival is “not geared as a money-making festival” (L. Vander Stoep Scrapbooks XII.1981). Pella has similarly been consistently insistent that its Tulip Festival is not a commercial or money-making event. As early as the leadup to the second Tulip Time, the Chronicle made firm assertions to that effect:

Some of our good citizens do not seem to have the right conception of the proper significance of Tulip Time in Pella. While it is true that the movement had its inception in our local Chamber of Commerce, it is not therefore a commercial or money-making enterprise. [. . .] As said before the Chamber is not intending to make Tulip Time a money making affair. (19 March 1936)
In 1948, the *Chronicle* reported that visitors to Pella’s Tulip Time frequently “have commended us for the complete absence of commercialism in the Festival” and that media outlets were willing to promote Tulip Time for free “because they know that money-making is nor our object” (27 May 1948). A 30 April 1975 article reminded readers that Tulip Time “is free. Its main purpose is to keep alive and celebrate the Dutch heritage of the area, and it is not commercialized.” And Tulip Time Steering Committee actions during the 1980s demonstrate a determination to back up the insistence that Tulip Time is non-commercial: in 1986, the Committee refused to allow restaurants to advertise themselves to tour groups in Festival promotional materials (22 March 1986), and in 1988 the Committee declined to allow Tulip Time to be included on a tourism map and also did not allow a local area resident to do an unspecified Tulip Time promotion in the nearby town of Sully (4 March 1988; 2 April 1988).

The frequent assertions in Pella and Orange City that their festivals are not commercial in nature lead one to wonder why such reminders are necessary. The likely answer is that organizers have been, and are, anxious that their festivals *could* be regarded as commercial vehicles staged for profit. Such an anxiety is further indicated by the fact that whenever a statement contains any hint that a given festival might be profitable, it is usually followed by the avowal that the festival is not commercial. This anxiety is arguably, if not probably, the result of the tension that results from the fine line between promotion and commercialism or profit. To attract attention, it seems, is desirable and good; but to gain direct
monetary profit from the attention attracted is apparently not desirable. This
tension may, in turn, reflect the tension between the dual aim of each festival to
represent heritage to the outside, as well as to itself. Since most of the assertions
of the non-commercial character, as well as promotional benefits, of each festival
discussed above are in local newspapers, and because these newspapers are often
dated to one or more weeks before each festival, it would seem that both the
promotional benefits and non-commercial character statements are directed at
local townspeople. The message, then, organizers are sending to townspeople
would appear to be something along the lines of “our festival really benefits the
town, because it succeeds in bringing outsiders to town. But wait! The festival is
not simply about making money for the town, so you should get involved,
whether or not you stand to directly benefit. The festival is for you, too!” By
constantly reminding townspeople that while promotion is one aim of the festival,
profit is not, organizers apparently seek to avoid townspeople deciding that they
do not have to participate in a festival aimed at outsiders.

What, then, do organizers say in order to appeal to townspeople, to show
them that the Festival is not just for outsiders, but for insiders as well? One
answer is quite obvious: by playing up the heritage celebration and
commemoration aspect of each Festival. Just as authenticity is easier to talk about
than religious heritage, Dutch heritage in general is arguably easier to talk about
than money. The stress on authenticity analyzed in the previous chapter renders
further comment on the emphasis press coverage places on commemoration of
heritage mostly unnecessary. It is sufficient to say that, since the inception of each festival, much has been said and written about how each festival is dedicated to celebrating, venerating, or otherwise commemorating the Dutch heritage of each of the staging communities. This is especially true of Fulton, where festival coverage has rarely characterized Dutch Days as anything besides a celebration of Dutch heritage; this is less true in Edgerton, where distinctively “Dutch” elements have never been consistently part of the Dutch Festival. Besides the observation that the degree to which heritage is stressed varies across the five festivals, three further aspects of heritage as celebrated or commemorated in these festivals worth examining: the way heritage has been explicitly linked to promotional aims in Holland, the way Pella has celebrated not just a general Dutch heritage, but its specific local heritage in its Tulip Time, and the way press coverage in Edgerton and Orange City has commented on the way their festivals have turned into homecoming events, which arguably celebrate a more recent type of local heritage.

The very existence of all five festivals at least implicitly links the promotional aims of each event to the Dutch heritage celebrated in each event. In Holland, however, the linkage of promotion to heritage has tended to be more explicitly stated than in the other communities. The first, and perhaps most important, example of this linkage appears in Tulip Time’s 1948 Articles of Incorporation, which state the festival’s purposes as:

To promote, develop and publicize the tulip as a flower, to develop aesthetic appreciation of the tulip, to encourage and preserve the Dutch cultural heritage for the people of the City of Holland as represented by
the tulip as a flower and as a festival symbol; to stage and conduct a
festival centered around the tulip and the Dutch heritage for the promotion
of interests of the City of Holland and its citizens.

Aesthetic beauty, promotion, heritage: this statement touches on all of the various
stories and narratives noted in Sentinel coverage to this point, save for the non-
commercial nature of the festival. Lest one think this linkage was present only in
the Articles of Incorporation, the 1949 Festival program demonstrates that
townspeople and visitors alike were presented with the joining of beauty,
cleanliness, heritage, and promotion. First, the program comments that Tulip
Time is “a beautiful time that indeed lifts Holland out of the ordinary.” The
program then goes on to comment on Holland’s attractiveness is attached to
heritage, as it

has its roots deep in cultural, educational, and religious traditions.
Founded by Hollanders directly from the old country of a hundred years
ago, Holland, Michigan has preserved the Netherlander’s love of home,
church, and school. It is a clean and tidy city of unique stability and
refreshing individuality.

The statement then abruptly shifts its focus to end on a distinctly promotional
note: “Center of Michigan’s finest Vacationland, [Holland] is well-versed in the
ways of being host to the visitor.” A more recent Tulip Time program speaks, in
a way, the the success of using heritage to promote the festival: “The fascination
of Tulip Time is that it is the color and quaintness of old Holland transplanted to
America, and all America loves it” (1988 Tulip Time program). Holland’s
practice of joining heritage, beauty, and promotion together in Tulip Time
literature is not a practice the other towns have developed, suggesting that perhaps
the linkage is a result (or perhaps a cause) of Holland Tulip Time’s more
commercial bent.

Pella’s Tulip Time has rarely, if ever, linked Tulip Time’s promotional
goals to the commemoration of the town’s heritage. Pella has, however, taken a
general focus on Dutch heritage and molded it into a specific focus on the history
of Pella and its initial settlers. The tone that all subsequent Tulip Times would
follow was set for the inaugural 1935 Tulip Time:

With a distinctly Dutch setting and the spirit of the early settlers, who took
up residence in Pella, the “City of Refuge,” in 1847 everywhere, the
remembrance of cherished Holland traditions; with tulips carved in wood
in front of many business houses, display windows filled with Dutch
antiques, and a wonderful spirit of enthusiasm, we are all out for the first
celebration of “Tulip Time in Pella.” (16 May 1935)

Similar statements continued to appear virtually every year after the first Tulip
Time festival. Gradually, the statements began to allude to Tulip Time being a
way to honor the principles of Pella’s founders, as indicated by a comment in the
15 April 1937 Chronicle which called Tulip Time “a sacred event” in which
residents “live again as it were the traditions and faith of our Fathers calling to
mind those fundamentals upon which Dominie Scholte and his 700 Holland
Colonists founded Pella in 1847.” The specific faith and fundamentals of the
colonists, though, were not elaborated on. This continued to be the case during
the period before the Second World War. The 1941 Tulip Time program, for
instance, said the Festival was designed to perpetuate “the memory and traditions
of Iowa’s first Holland settlers.” The 1951 program provided did offer more
specific comment on the ideals of Pella’s founders: “It is to commemorate the sacrifices of the founding Fathers, to keep alive the ideals they cherished, to foster the characteristics of thrift, honesty and good citizenship, that Tulip Time is celebrated each year.”

By 1969, a key shift in the rhetoric of commemorating Pella’s settlers had taken place. The ideals of Pella’s founders were now summarized as a desire for religious freedom:

But it is not the tulips themselves that Pellans celebrate. Rather, it is the heritage the tulips symbolize. Having a Tulip Time is somewhat like pledging allegiance to the American flag. Pella’s heritage is about 700 souls who came here in 1847 from Holland, the land of tulips. The settlers had left their homeland seeking the freedom to worship their God in the manner they considered proper. In Pella, the City of Refuge, the Hollanders planted strong roots, whence came the shoots, then the trunk, then the branches of 1969’s Pella. (Chronicle-Advertiser 8 May 1969)

From this point forward, Pella’s founders were characterized as a people seeking freedom of religion. Often times the association of the original settlers and religious freedom is articulated in Tulip Time programs under the heading “Why A Tulip Time?” In answering this question, programs such as the 1979 program explain that Pella was founded by 700 Netherlanders, led by Dominie H. P. Scholte, who were in search of “a new home and religious freedom.” During the course of a given Tulip Time itself, this narrative is repeated over and over: Pella’s Tulip Time commemorates the sacrifices of Scholte and his followers, who came to Pella in search of religious freedom.
It is evident that by stating that Tulip Time is meant to commemorate Pella’s founders, and then by characterizing Pella’s founders as having been motivated by a desire for religious freedom (and completely ignoring the economic forces that were clearly as, if not more, instrumental in convincing Pella’s founders to leave the Netherlands), Tulip Time neatly fits Pella into a very American narrative: that of religious freedom. The equating of Tulip Time with love of freedom was made explicit in the 12 May 1989 *Chronicle* Tulip Time Edition, which contained an article simply titled “Tulip Time: A Celebration of Freedom.” By making commemoration of the pioneers, rather than of general Dutch heritage, the stated purpose of Tulip Time, Festival organizers, promoters and reporters arguably make Tulip Time a celebration of America and American ideals (freedom, tolerance, democracy) as much as a celebration of Dutch heritage and customs. Or, rather, Tulip Time becomes a celebration of American and American ideals through the use of Dutch heritage and customs. This equation of Pella’s heritage with America and American ideals was perhaps most overtly stated in a monologue delivered by the “Spirit of Tulip Time” at the close of the 1941 festival:

I, the Spirit of Tulip Time, have come to dwell with you again as you gather together to honor your forefathers. How grateful you must be to these pioneers who, from deep conviction and in protest against arrogant tyrants, resolved to leave comfortable homes and positions of influence and wealth so that they could seek freedom from fear, freedom of speech, freedom of opportunity, and freedom of worship. [. . .] Their way of life--the American Way--spanned the new continent [. . .] O’er all the land it pursed spires upward toward heaven, marking places of worship where families could gather together in prayer to Him whose Word they had followed. (1941 Spirit of TT Script, Pella Historical Village Archives)
The religious motives of Pella’s founders are thus tied to “the American Way.” And yet, again, the type of religion Scholte and his followers sought freedom for--a Dutch variant of Calvinism--is not explained or even mentioned in this and similar statements. Thus, what is arguably--indeed, probably--the main conduit by which Dutch ethnic consciousness has been preserved in Pella and other Dutch-American communities and enclaves is withheld or overlooked in favor of a generic religious freedom. Perhaps Dutch Calvinism is not explained or mentioned in the rhetoric of religious freedom employed in Tulip Time press and promotional coverage because, since its founding, there have been other, non-Dutch Calvinist congregations in Pella. Or perhaps the still divisive, sometimes tense nature of Dutch Calvinism explains why it is not explained or mentioned in coverage cited above. If this is the case, Pella’s portrayal of its settlers has been “cleaned up”--simplified--so as to “clean up” the potential for exacerbating factional differences within the community, much like the rhetoric of authenticity avoids talking about the town’s religious heritage.

In any event, Pella’s focus on its founders, their quest for religious freedom, and the American connotations of this quest has perhaps had other effects on the coverage surrounding Pella’s Tulip Time Festival. The main effect is that Chronicle Tulip Time editions have, over time, dedicated less and less space to stories about a more general Dutch heritage and more and more space to stories concerned with Pella’s local history. In 1962, for example, the Tulip Time edition contained articles about the history of Pella’s College, school systems,
churches, industries, and bologna makers, as well as profiles of early Tulip Time
history and past Tulip Queens while saying little about the history of customs of
The Netherlands (10 May 1962). The 1994 Tulip Time Edition contained a few
articles about Dutch culture in general, but these articles were outnumbered by
those profiling past Tulip Queens, the effect of the 1849 gold rush on Pella
history, Pella’s Dutch front program, the Scholte House, Tulip Time history, Pella
bakeries, and the conditions Pella’s pioneers endured during the first year of
settlement (13 May 1994). The 2006 Chronicle Tulip Time section similarly
included articles about the Tulip Queen and attendants, past Tulip Queens,
Central College, the gold rush, Tulip Time’s history, the Pella Historical Village
and Vermeer windmill, local bakeries, Scholte’s extra-clerical activities and
duties after the settlement, and the mysterious man known as “The Count” who
was a Pella personality in its early days (27 April 2006). This is in marked
contrast to the Fulton Journal’s Dutch Days special editions, which have, like the
1983 and 2006 editions, tended to focus on stories about the history of The
Netherlands, Dutch immigration to the United States, land reclamation in the
Netherlands, Sinterklaas, the history of tulips in the Netherlands, Dutch costumes,
Dutch recipes, Dutch humor, and wooden shoes.

A variation on the theme of heritage promotion is that of homecoming. Of
the five communities, Orange City and Edgerton have especially emphasized that
their festivals serve as homecoming occasions, during which individuals and
families who grew up in, or have family connections to, Edgerton will return for a

308
few days. In neither community is this the most prevalent characterization of the festival found in press coverage, but references to the homecoming aspect can be found over the years in both communities. Orange City newspapers made reference to homecomers being a highlight of the Tulip Festival as early as 1951 (L. Vander Stoep Scrapbooks III.1951), and today both Orange City residents (many of the 2006 interviews I conducted) and outside observers (Elaine Jaarsma, Jaarsma/Zylstra interview 27) comment that homecoming is a key part of what Orange City’s festival does. In Edgerton, the characterization of the Festival as a homecoming event seems to have emerged more recently, but here, too, homecomers are recognized as a vital part, and notable highlight, of the Dutch Festival:

Further, the Festival draws back former area residents. It makes a good time to return to visit old friends and family. And we want those people to return and to have good feelings for our town. (Edgerton Enterprise 20 July 1988)

Those licenses [license plates from many different states] tell me that people are returning to their roots. The festival provides a sense of a pleasant past and a solid foundation in today’s fast-moving world. (26 July 2000)

This last Enterprise comment explicitly discusses homecoming in terms that, in Edgerton as well as other communities, are often used to talk about the benefits of heritage celebration and commemoration. And homecoming arguably is one more level of commemorating or celebrating heritage, albeit of a more recent, less distant heritage than that of Dutch immigrants to the United States. Homecomers, by returning to their roots for a celebration of heritage, are themselves celebrating
their personal heritage; by the same token, the presence of homecomers, like the emphasis on authenticity, demonstrates that an interest in heritage is alive and well in the present.

To this point, we have observed three of the main stories or narratives presented in coverage of the five festivals: promotion/cleaning, non-commercialism, and commemoration of heritage. Each of these narratives has, at times, been pressed into the service of promoting unity within the staging communities. In the last chapter, we saw that the rhetoric of authenticity has been used at least in part to generate unity or consensus within each community. Earlier in this chapter, we encountered statements noting that promotion and cleaning up the town were community efforts that everyone should be involved in. The non-commercial rhetoric surrounding each festival can be understood as a way to downplay the promotional aspect in an attempt to keep all townspeople actively involved in their festival. And heritage, especially a vague heritage of settlers in search of a general religious freedom, like authenticity, is much easier to talk about without generating arguments than, say, money or religion. While all of these narratives and stories can be interpreted as a way to generate or maintain unity, or stave off factionalization, unity has been cited as a goal and effect of each festival in its own right. In fact, the aim of each festival to promote unity within the staging community is one of the few narratives forcefully articulated in each community. In Pella, Orange City, and Edgerton, newspapers are rife, from the earliest festivals to the present, with statements commenting on
how each town’s festival both runs on, and generates, cooperation among various age groups, religious factions, school factions, businesses, and Dutch and non-Dutch people in each community. Holland and Fulton, however, merit particular attention in the way coverage has promoted Tulip Time and Dutch Days as ways to unify the town.

During the first three decades of Holland’s Tulip Time, press coverage had little to say about unity as a quality of the festival. This changed, though, in 1961. At that time, local interest in Tulip Time was seemingly on the wane; in the May 1961 issue of Inside Holland, the town’s mayor complained that the festival was “suffering from too much indifference on the part of too many Holland citizens” (2). A second article in the same issue of Inside Holland attempted to remedy this situation by reminding its readers what Tulip Time was “all about.” Besides the usual statements about beauty, heritage, and promotion, the article characterized the celebration as “a unifying force, drawing the whole community together in common purpose” (1). While certainly this may have been the case in previous festivals, this is the first time the unifying aspect of the festival appears in print. What, then, accounts for the emergence of unity as a theme of festival coverage? The concern that townspeople had become apathetic about the Festival suggests that perhaps the festival had become too outward-looking for most Holland residents. By emphasizing the unifying effect of the festival, organizers may have hoped to restore or highlight the inward-looking aspect of Tulip Time. Prior to this time, most of the coverage of Tulip Time describes how it is for

311
visitors and tourists; focusing on the way in which the celebration fosters town unity introduces a way of covering the festival that points to its inward-directed components.

Whatever the reason for introducing the theme of unity into Tulip Time coverage in 1961, by the 1970s Tulip Time’s ability to promote community solidarity had become linked to the changing demographics of Holland; this remains the current state of affairs. Beginning after the Second World War, many Latinos began to move into Holland and its environs, initially attracted by employment opportunities offered on large-scale area farms and manufacturing establishments. In 1965, Holland’s Latino/a community began holding its own spring festival on the Saturday closest to Cinco de Mayo. This festival, now called the Latin Americans United For Progress (LAUP) Fiesta, continues to grow in popularity each year. A 16 May 1973 Sentinel report was among the first articles to hint that Tulip Time might be a way to draw together Holland’s Dutch and Latino/a communities. This article hoped that, in addition to taking in the usual Tulip Time sights, visitors would also take an interest in “more recent developments which have brought substantial numbers of Latin Americans to Holland.” As the 1970s and 1980s passed, Holland’s Latino/a community continued its rapid growth, and many other minority groups, Asian-Americans in particular, also began moving to the area, further effecting Holland’s transformation from a largely homogeneous Dutch-American town into a diverse, multi-ethnic community. As these non-Dutch, non-white groups became more
and more prominent in Holland in general and in Tulip Time activities in specific, press coverage became more explicit in promoting the idea that Tulip Time was a vehicle to bring these different groups together in common cause. In 1989, Jerry Ford, *Holland Sentinel* managing editor, wrote an editorial entitled “Klompers break down ethnic barriers” which best formulated this position and is worth quoting at length:

But know this one-time little provincial town is growing and changing every day. And even Tulip Time changes. There is a sense of irony that the festival began as a way to celebrate the Dutch ancestry and roots. Now, it celebrates the ethnic diversity of our region. [...] All you have to do is look at the klompers and the multiple races that dot the dozen Dutch dancers holding hands in a group. But you don’t really notice the races so much as the precision of the rhythmic wooden shoes flashing away on Eighth Street. They whirl and klomp, spin and stomp. The beauty is the coordination and the costumes. But underlying this all is the ethnic diversity that becomes inherent in our culture. Where there were once only Dutch, there is a new wave of races joining the klomping and stomping on Eighth Street. Maybe I shouldn’t make a big deal about the growing ethnic diversity of the dancers. But I can think of no greater symbol than the hands interlocked, spinning in a circle and dancing in precision. The klompers have put me in a good mood, make me think racial barriers do not exist. (18 May 1989)

The Klompen Dancers, and Tulip Time in general, are then a symbol, as well as an instrument of social cohesion. Tulip Time, one could say, cleans up divisions within Holland by bringing the parties who might otherwise be divided together in common cause and celebration. This idea continues to be promoted in Tulip Time to the present: in various festival elements, the comment will be made that during Tulip Time, all Holland residents, whatever their heritage, are Dutch for a week.
Press coverage about Fulton’s Dutch Days Festival presents a model of consistency and single-mindedness. As noted earlier, *Fulton Journal* press coverage usually plays up the commemoration of heritage aspect of the festival. At the same time, Dutch Days coverage comments, on a frequent basis, on the way in which the celebration can, and does, bring all people of Fulton together in common cause. A 10 May 1978 article reviewing that year’s festival alluded to the unifying effect of Dutch Days, although it did not specifically state the Festival created unity. After commenting on a parade float “that emphasized that all residents of Fulton, whatever their national origin, are American,” the article goes on to note the way in which Patti Ritzema, one of the founders of Dutch Days, stressed the idea of unity underlying the celebration of Dutch heritage:

The “melting pot” syndrome that has been a pervasive influence in America from the earliest colonial days also was stressed in a moving speech by Mrs. Albertus Ritzema, herself born in the Netherlands, when she reminded the crowd that much as the Hollanders love their country and its memories and traditions, “we must remember that now we are all Americans and I think we should all sing ‘God Bless America.’” (10 May 1978)

More recently, the theme of cooperation and unity in Dutch Days was outlined in a thank you from 2006 festival chair Harvey Wiebenga to all the celebration’s planners and organizers: “It takes cooperation and hard work on the part of each individual who has anything to do with the festival. The residents of Fulton should be proud of their Festival and Heritage. The spirit of cooperation in our community is certainly as asset to our community” (2006 Dutch Days section).
Although many of the intervening years between 1978 and 2006 have included similar testimonials to the need for a spirit of unity, and a thanks for a spirit of cooperation born of unity, during the early-to-mid 1980s a particular emphasis was placed on the way in which Dutch Days could bring together Dutch and non-Dutch residents alike. A 30 April 1980 article stressed that non-Dutch, as well as Dutch, participated in the celebration:

For at least one weekend out of the year, the Dutch and non-Dutch of Fulton come together and celebrate Fulton’s Dutch heritage. [. . .] Immigrants, second, third, and fourth generation Dutchmen, as well as those of entirely different nationalities, combine their efforts to make Fulton’s Dutch Days possible. This year, more than ever before, Dutch Days has truly become a community effort and consequently should prove to be the biggest and best festival yet.

A 1981 article described the festival in the phrase “Working together--that’s what it’s all about!” (6 May 1981). Although this article did not mention the participation of non-Dutch residents, a 5 May 1982 article returned to this motif:

The Dutch are quite understanding of those with different ethnic origins. They invited Fulton’s Polish Mayor to be Burgemeister this year, a role which Peter Maliszewski played with all the pistache [sic] of a native Hollander [. . .] And among the Parade Grand Marshals of previous Dutch Days Festivals have been an Italian physician and an Irish newspaperman. [. . .] Among the more diligent workers for Dutch Days were some half-Dutch, some fourth-Dutch and no Dutch at all. They fitted into the scene quite harmoniously.

Once again, in 1986, festival coverage returned to this idea of non-Dutch people getting involved in Dutch Days:

The enthusiasm and the industry of the Dutch people have been contagious and have enlisted the vigorous participation of many people of diverse ancestry. This is typified by the fact that the chairman of this year’s celebration is a lady of Irish ancestry, Jane Orman [. . .] And in the past, to indicate how the predominantly Dutch leaders of the celebration have extended the hand
of friendship to persons of other nationalities, they have chosen [sic] an Italian one year and an Irishman another to be Grand Marshal of the Dutch Days parade. So the celebration has become an effective tool for promoting friendship and cooperation among all nationalities and creeds. (30 April 1986)

In the case of both Fulton and Holland, the insistence on unity or solidarity—racial in Holland, Dutch and non-Dutch in Fulton—once again raises a question of anxiety. Just as the constant insistence on the non-commercial nature of Pella’s Tulip Time suggests anxiety on the part of organizers that the festival would be perceived as commercial, one wonders if the insistence on unity in Fulton and Holland (and Edgerton, Orange City, and Pella, for that matter) is due to anxiety that the unity is a precarious thing. As we shall see in chapter seven, in both Holland of the 1990s and 2000s, and Fulton of the early 1980s, certain controversies that played out on local editorial pages suggest that anxiety about the state of unity in these communities was warranted. In the meantime, it is sufficient to note that narratives of unity once again serve to metaphorically clean or tidy up the various divisions that do exist within each staging community. Each festival physically cleans up the town; it also, at least for festival organizers, psychologically cleans up religious and ethnic divisions within each town.

Cleanliness, as it happens, plays into the fifth and final story about each festival told in press coverage: the festival provides clean, wholesome entertainment. It goes without saying that one of the goals of each festival is to give residents and visitors alike a few days of fun, a few days out of the ordinary. The quality of the fun provided, however, is consistently defined against a
standard of cheap, less-than-desirable entertainment which is most often labeled “carnival” or “carnivalism” in press coverage. The “anti-carnival” invective is perhaps most pronounced in documents from early Pella Tulip Times. For the second Tulip Time, a 19 March 1936 article attempted to demonstrate the festival’s non-commercial aims by outlining the type of entertainment being rejected for inclusion in the festival:

Almost daily requests from outsiders are received for concession privileges on rides, side shows and carnival attractions, none of which are being granted, because it is the intention to keep Tulip Time a clean and wholesome festival. [...] We want to keep Tulip Time clean, we want to keep it unique and different, above all we want to keep it an event that will be a credit to our entire community.

A 16 May 1940 article, commenting on the success of Tulip Time to that point, credited the festival’s success to high standards set by organizers, standards that “have not permitted the carnival atmosphere to gain a hold upon the celebration.” And in 1947, the Tulip Time program informed visitors and townspeople alike that “Pella’s Tuliptime [sic] is not ‘just another show.’ It has always been the policy of the community to make this an historical event of beauty, culture and tradition, avoiding commercialism and carnivalism.” This statement continued to appear on Tulip Time programs for many years. Holland’s Tulip Time similarly started out with the intent to keep street hawkers and carnival booths and rides out of the Festival. As noted above, street hawkers were prevalent enough to raise the ire of the Sentinel editorial board in the late 1970s and early 1980s. As Holland’s Tulip Time took on an increasingly commercial characters, however, organizers assured townspeople that “Tulip Time aims to stay quaint” and “maintain the
wholesome, homespun flavor” that had made the Festival a success, and Tulip Time Inc. director Kristi Van Howe explicitly promised residents “you’ll never see a carnival” as part of Tulip Time (9 May 1991). In 2002, though, a carnival midway was, in fact, brought in, and has remained an annual Tulip Time feature (jointly sponsored by the LAUP Fiesta). As we shall see in chapter seven, Holland residents have not all reacted positively to this change; the addition of the carnival created something of a controversy which arguably exposed a lack of unity among Holland residents.

The reason Holland’s addition of a carnival midway caused a controversy was in part due to the fact that the carnival was a new element which, only ten years before. For both the Orange City Tulip Festival and Edgerton Dutch Festival, a midway was part of each celebration from the very first year. In both cases, the midway was for many years an outfit owned and operated by Henry Klein, who had grown up in Pella. From the very start, both the Orange City and Edgerton organizers were certain to stress the fact that these midways were not carnivals-as-such, but were limited to “clean” entertainment such as rides. An article from 1939 is illustrative of Orange City’s rhetorical stance towards its midway:

Festival committeemen have been careful to pick high class entertainment for the community and many carnival type concessions were turned down. There will be no popcorn and peanut peddling, no shooting galleries, no win-a-prize concessions. The rides are here again to give the youngsters a thrill (Schreur Scrapbooks I.110)

52 It should be noted that Kristi Van Howe was no longer the Tulip Time Inc. director in 2002.
This sort of explanation of the midway is also evident in a 13 July 1950 article announcing Edgerton’s first Dutch Festival:

There will be a big midway featuring the Klein Amusement Co. with a merry-go-round, ferris wheel, glider, kid auto ride, sky fighter ride and mechanical farm show, in addition to concessions, canteens and novelties. It will be a good program of clean entertainment--no gambling devices, girl shows, gypsies, athletic shows or bingo games.

In subsequent years, Dutch Festival coverage always carefully noted that the Festival was designed to provide residents and visitors with “clean” entertainment. Although the Klein midway never caused a concerted controversy per se in Edgerton, a person-on-the-street column from the 6 July 1972 Enterprise reveals that townspeople were not exactly comfortable with the midway either. In response to the question “How do you feel about the Klein Amusement Co.?,” one Edgerton resident said she felt Klein “has always provided Edgerton with good, clean booths and exciting rides for children and adults.” Other Edgerton residents, though, drew a distinction between permissible rides and less-than-desirable stands. Peter Kooiman commented that he appreciated “the rides for children and young people, but I don’t like the gambling part of it--like when they throw balls for money.” Similarly, Doris Bloemendaal said that while she would go on the rides, she had “nothing to do with their stands.” C. Verbrugge offered an even more strident statement on the midway:

I feel our Edgerton business people should take a positive stand against the many concession stands. To have these various rides for our children and young people--these we could have as entertainment. It spoils the Dutch Festival to have so much of these trash stands around. Other celebrations allow Klein with his rides, but the rest stays home. Edgerton, let’s see you set your foot down and tell Klein, “So much and no more.”
The “other celebrations” Verbrugge referred to certainly included Orange City’s Tulip Festival, which, to the present, has allowed its midway provider to only bring rides, prohibiting game booths and concession stands. Edgerton’s concern with a “clean” midway continues to the present. In 1998, when organizers had to find a different amusement company to furnish the Festival midway, they told the *Enterprise* they had secured one “that would provide the kind of clean entertainment that has characterized the Dutch Festival over the years” (4 February 1998).

In all the communities that have employed the sort of “clean entertainment” or “anti-carnival” rhetoric as Edgerton, this type of rhetoric can be seen as one way in which the specific brand of Dutch Calvinism Netherlander immigrants brought with them is directly reflected in the festival. Historically, games of chance--especially card-playing, but any sort of gambling--were strictly forbidden in Dutch (and Dutch-American) Calvinist circles, and “worldly entertainments” such as street carnivals were looked on with suspicion (Mulder 261; Lucas, *Netherlanders* 624). By attacking any appearance of carnival--and downplaying any commercial motives--the rhetoric employed also perhaps tries to find a way to reconcile the fact that Tulip Time is undeniably theatrical in nature to Dutch Calvinism’s hostility towards the theatre. Although a streak of hostility to representation runs through Dutch Calvinism the way it runs through many, if not most, strains of Protestantism, it was the immorality associated with theatre and actors, not the act of representation itself, that most Dutch-American
Calvinists looked on with suspicion. Of course, that suspicion could, and did, get
generalized to things that resembled theatre and thus could at least potentially
threaten to lure young people off the straight and narrow path into worldly
pursuits. By emphasizing the absence of any carnival element, festival organizers
were perhaps able to justify the elements of representation present in Tulip Time
that might not have sat well with all sections of Pella’s Calvinist population.
During the 1950s and 1960s, Dutch-American Calvinist hostility to the theatre
ebbed, but not hostility to gambling, which remains quite strong; it is therefore
not surprising that anti-carnival rhetoric continued to be employed in the years
after the Second World War, although one no longer finds the explicit carnival
denunciations in press coverage today.

Considering the five main press coverage themes--promotion, non-
commercialism, commemoration of heritage, unity building, and “clean”
entertainment--together, three general coverage characteristics are worth noting.
First, these five themes are interrelated and often play off of each other in the
coverage of a particular festival. The process of physically getting the town clean
in time for the festival may, for instance, may be presented as a cooperative and
unifying activity which also has desirable promotional ends. Pella’s Tulip Time

53 Many in the Protestant Reformed Church, however, consider acting a form of
“bearing false witness.” Thus, the parents of PRC students at the CRC-run high
school I attended (from 1993-1997) generally did not allow their children to
audition for school plays (this had ceased to be in issue in the CRC some decades
before and even earlier in the RCA), and in some cases PRC parents would write
notes asking for their children to be excused from assemblies or chapels in which
a video was being shown.
provides one of the clearest examples of how the various coverage themes and motifs have been tied together. In 1936, the festival closed with an actor portraying the “Spirit of Tulip Time” delivering a monologue which has often been repeated and reprinted for subsequent festivals that summarizes all the meanings, goals, and effects Pella organizers wish to stress about their celebration:

I, the Spirit of Tulip Time have been dwelling in the hearts of the townfolk of Pella. I have dwelt in the heartthrobs of those who have come back from far pathways to the place of their birth to renew old acquaintanceships. And I find in your hearts a new spirit engendered during these days as you have followed old customs in the quaint native dress of the Hollanders, as you have extended to strangers the warm hospitality of your fireside, as you gathered with song and with pageantry to pay homage to your sturdy and God-fearing ancestry [. . .] ‘Tis a new spirit indeed that I find in Pella, this City of Refuge, and of plain, restful living. I find your hearts are more friendly, more thoughtful, and more considerate of others. [. . .] I see a spirit of mutual community problems. [. . .] And may I, the Voice of the Spirit of this Tulip Time, add a word of entreaty! I implore you--let no small bickerings, no petty jealousies, no love for individual prominence--further, I implore you, do not let lust for financial gain, for gold and for silver be injected into the simple dignity of your festivities. (Pella Chronicle 28 May 1936)

Here almost every major theme, and many variations of each theme, are tied together. A homecoming aspect to the festival is emphasized. The commemoration of heritage through the performance of Dutch traditions draws strangers to town and gives Pella people a chance to show their hospitality and promote the town’s good qualities. The celebration and commemoration of Pella’s founders is presented as the main purpose of the festival, and by invoking the phrase “City of Refuge” the quest for religious freedom is emphasized. The
festival brings townspeople together and makes them more friendly, thereby
building unity. And the Spirit urges townspeople not to allow factional bickering
to threaten the unity the festival creates, nor to allow commercialism and profit
motives take control of the proceedings. All in all, the Spirit’s monologue
summarizes all the positive goals and benefits of Pella’s Tulip Time.

The second major observation about coverage in general across the five
festivals is that the themes and motifs emphasized, the stories told, reveal
differences between each festival. On the one hand, one festival may stress one or
two themes more than another. Coverage of Fulton’s festival returns again and
again to themes of unity and heritage commemoration; coverage of Edgerton’s
festival, by contrast, while similarly stressing unity has rarely had much to say
about commemoration of heritage. Coverage of Pella’s Tulip Time consistently
focuses on the specific local heritage of the area, paying special attention to H. P.
Scholte and the original 700 settlers; coverage of Orange City’s Tulip Festival has
much less to say about local heritage. On the other hand, comparing the coverage
of all five festivals reveals that while the rhetoric surrounding some festivals has
remained consistent, the rhetoric surrounding others have shifted over time. This
difference is most evident in comparing the Pella and Holland Tulip Times. In
Pella, the rhetoric surrounding the meaning, goals, and benefits of Tulip Time
have remained consistent over the years: it is to non-commercially commemorate
the towns settlers and founders through the vehicle of Dutch customs and
traditions. The ability of coverage to maintain this narrative about the festival
over a span of more than 75 years and myriad changes is remarkable. Apart from somewhat archaic-sounding language, the 1936 Spirit of Tulip Time monologue could still be performed today and underline and reemphasize the meanings and goals stressed in other Festival elements. The maintenance of the rhetoric surrounding Pella’s celebration is no doubt due in large part to the fact that the Pella Historical Society has always been in control of Tulip Time. In Holland, by contrast, rhetoric surrounding Tulip Time has shifted over the years. Initially, coverage of Holland’s Tulip Time was similar to coverage of Pella’s, but today the rhetoric of a non-commercial celebration has largely been set aside. Meanwhile, rhetoric about the festival’s unifying effect, not in much evidence in earlier years, has come to dominate Holland’s Tulip Time discourse. This change in rhetoric is best viewed as part of a strategy, conscious or not, employed by festival organizers to deal with the extraordinary changes in town demographics that have occurred since the Second World War.

Finally, coverage of all five festivals quite obviously focuses more on the process of putting each town’s festival together than it does on the actual product created. For example, coverage of festival preparations begins as early as October in Pella and Orange City (with the election of the coming year’s Tulip Queen and Court). Coverage in Holland, Fulton, and Edgerton similarly starts at least two months before each town’s festival is held. After each town’s festival, though, there is usually only an article or two and a photospread recording what actually happened at the Festival. Given that coverage of festival preparations is much
more likely to be read by town residents than festival visitors, this disparity suggests that for townspeople the process of staging each festival, rather than the festival itself, is of primary importance, or at least of primary concern to festival organizers. A focus on process over product arguably allows festival organizers to negotiate the tension between promoting each festival to outside audiences while still engaging inside audiences. By looking at the process, coverage shifts the focus on the festival to the learning of heritage (building of costumes, carving of wooden shoes, etc.), the building of unity (through constructing neighborhood floats, people getting together to “make things happen”), and the cleaning up of town instead of the promotional, money-making, outward-directed aspects of each festival. By implication, then, it is in the coverage of each town’s festival one is most likely to find the self-representations of each town most explicitly articulated. These are idealized self-representations, however. As in the case of coverage of nineteenth century Independence Day observances, coverage of the process, as well as the product, of the five festivals tends to “give the impression of universal involvement, profound emotion, and above all, ‘perfect order’” (Travers 109-110). In chapter seven, we will encounter several ways in which the narrative of town unity so often presented in Dutch heritage celebration coverage has glossed over--cleaned up--the realities of disagreements within each staging community.
6.2 TOWN TOURS

Press coverage, being process-oriented, is mainly geared to insiders, to community residents (although special Tulip Time editions are admittedly also geared to outside visitors). Town tours, however, are mainly geared to outside visitors who only come to town for the festival. Accordingly, while press coverage speaks to self-representations, town tours speak to representations presented to outside visitors. At present, Holland, Pella, and Orange City all offer guided town tours during their respective festivals. All three of these tours are vehicle tours. In Holland, tourists ride on a motorized trolley; in Pella, they ride in a wagon pulled by a tractor; and in Orange City, they ride a *paardetram*, or horse-drawn trolley. In all three communities, the tours are led by a guide dressed in a Dutch costume. Local organizations or committees are in charge of organizing and staffing each tour. In Holland, the Hope Academy of Senior Professionals provides the tour guides and itineraries; in Pella, the local Rotary organizes the tours, although they are directly responsible to the Tulip Time Steering Committee; and in Orange City, a Tulip Festival subcommittee handles tour duties. Comparing the images and narratives presented in two of these tours—Holland’s and Pella’s (Orange City’s is quite similar to Pella’s)—offers a glimpse into what at least one group (the tour organizers) wants guests to know about the staging communities. The following discussion considers the two tours as they
currently exist (or as they existed in 2005). Presumably they have changed somewhat over time, although the information that exists about past tours suggests the tours have not changed a great deal over time.

The Holland Tulip Time Trolley Tours, which last approximately 75 minutes, highlight and share information on 38 different sites, and note many others. Taken together, these locations featured during Holland’s tours primarily emphasize Holland’s local history, businesses, industries, churches, schools, and other facilities. In doing so, a narrative of vitality and perseverance in the past, present, and future emerges by the end of the tour. More specifically, Holland is depicted as a community that has survived a number of difficulties in the past, but managed to thrive in spite of them because of its heritage and values. Many sites and stops on the tour are concerned in one way or another with local history, specifically the Dutch settlement of the area. The tour begins, appropriately enough, at Centennial Park, home to a statue of A. C. Van Raalte. This statue is singled out, and Van Raalte’s importance as Holland’s founder noted. During the course of the rest of the tour, the guide explains how Van Raalte led Holland’s initial settlers to the United States for religious reasons (although economic reasons are cited as motivating most post-1847 immigrants). These religious reasons are not left vague, as the guide provides a brief explanation of the *afscheiding*. The journey of the first immigrants from The Netherlands to western Michigan, via New York and Detroit, is set out in some detail. Several locations on the tour give rise to an explanation of the difficulties Holland’s first Dutch
residents faced, such as miscommunications with the local Ottawa tribe, disease, the necessity of learning how to clear virgin forest, and attempts on the part of the settlers to dig a channel from Lake Michigan to Lake Macatawa in order to create a viable harbor area.

Many of the oldest homes and other structures on the tour route occasion a discussion of the 1871 fire which destroyed about 80 percent of Holland’s buildings. The tour guide explains the causes of the fire (a dry spell and the ill-advised decision to burn brush being cleared to allow the town to expand), the destruction it wrought, the attempts of townspeople to save their belongings by burying them on the beach, and the heroism of the Third Reformed Church janitor who rang the church’s bells to warn others of the fire as it closed in on the church building. Although the story of the fire is dramatic in its own right, special attention is paid to Holland’s resilience in the face of the catastrophe. The guide relates that at the time of the fire, twenty-four years after the town’s founding, Holland had a population of 2,400; by 1897, just twenty-six years later, the city had 7,000 residents. The buildings that survived the fire are pointed out during the tour, such as Pillar Church, the Coatsworth Home, several Hope College buildings, and Settler’s House (a restored nineteenth-century working-class dwelling). The rebuilding process after the 1871 fire is described as infused with a spirit of cooperation and selflessness. The guide shares how several Hope buildings were used to house the homeless during the rebuilding; how Isaac Cappon, a Holland tannery owner and the town’s first mayor, rebuilt his tannery
before he rebuilt his house so that his employees could resume drawing pay as soon as possible; and how A. C. Van Raalte, by this time more or less retired from preaching, headed up the rebuilding effort and played a major role in keeping community morale high.

Besides local stories of local heritage, the Tulip Time Trolley Tours also pay a good deal of attention to Holland’s businesses and industries. The local Padnos scrap metal business is pointed out, along with the scrap metal sculptures the Padnos family has donated to the city. The tour guide notes the town’s Reddi-wip plant. Holland’s Heinz pickle factory is proudly described as one of the largest pickle factories in the world and the largest producer of vinegar anywhere in the world. Downtown Holland is enthusiastically introduced as “a great place to shop and eat!” Several prominent downtown businesses and structures (Plaza Center, Lokker Rutgers, the Warm Friend, and National City Bank) receive special comment, as does the downtown’s snowmelt system, which ensures Holland’s downtown sidewalks are snow- and ice-free all year round. And as the tour reaches its conclusion, the tour guide tells tourists that “Holland’s creative, hardworking people & diversified industry have generated a strong economic base” and lists some of the 300 manufacturing plants in the Holland/Zeeland area (Tulip Time Trolley Script 15).

Holland’s various churches, schools, parks, and other facilities are the last major group of establishments and sites singled out during the course of Tulip Time tours. During the course of the tour, several individual Holland churches
are singled out, including Pillar Church (home to a CRC congregation), Third Reformed Church (rebuilt after the 1871 festival), and St. Francis de Sales Catholic, described as Michigan’s most culturally diverse parish and also noted as the church Rocky Marciano worshiped at when training in Holland in 1953. In discussing St. Francis de Sales, the guide notes that while in the past most of Holland’s churches belonged to Reformed denominations, today the city is home to 170 churches from 49 different religious denominations. Hope College and Western Theological Seminary also receive a great deal of attention during the tour. At various points along the route, the tour guide shares information about Hope’s various majors, academic, artistic, and athletic facilities, history, and libraries. A number of other facilities are pointed out and described, such as Freedom Village, a retirement center, Evergreen Commons, a senior center with the second largest membership of any senior center in the United States, Padnos Transportation Center (a Greyhound terminal, Amtrak station, and home of the Tulip Time, Inc. office), the Holland Civic Center, Herrick Library, and Holland Museum. Finally, the tour calls visitors’ attention to Holland’s many parks: Centennial Park, where tours begin and end; Window on the Waterfront and Kollen Park, along the Lake Macatawa waterfront; Prospect Point, a small part at the southern limits of the tour route; and Windmill Island, home of the 250-year-old De Zwaan windmill.
In summary, Holland’s Tulip Time Trolley Tours transmit several key messages about the community and its festival to outside tourists. First, the emphasis on local history presents a picture of a town that knows, appreciates, and preserves its roots. This is evident through the way in which tour guides point out the Holland Museum, as well as historic homes such as the Cappon House (built by Holland’s first mayor after the 1871 fire) and Settler’s House, both of which have been preserved and restored by the Museum. The Trolley Tour also leaves little doubt that these roots worth preserving are distinctly Dutch, both through the way in which guides discuss Holland’s immigrant history and in the way the tour script characterizes Tulip Time: “**TULIP TIME REFLECTS THE DUTCH ROOTS OF OUR CITY**” (2). At the same time, the Trolley Tour also presents a picture of a town that is becoming more diverse, in that non-Dutch Reformed congregations are highlighted and the presence of large Latino and Asian communities, among others, are noted. And yet this diversity is, once stated, marshaled to present a narrative of community unity: “During Tulip Time (especially Children’s Parade) everyone becomes DUTCH!!” (8)

If Tulip Time models the unity Holland wants to achieve, the idea of Holland being a place that has survived and thrived through cooperation, unified effort, hard work, and perseverance is also set forward in the historical material shared by the tour guide. The hardships settlers encountered in Holland’s earliest days were overcome. When the government failed to provide money to dig a channel between Lake Michigan and Lake Macatawa, the doughty settlers dug it
themselves. And when the town was almost annihilated by fire, all the townspeople pulled together to rebuild the city in record time, and made it better and more prosperous than it was before. All in all, the historical events highlighted on the tour present a narrative of overcoming adversity and breaking through into prosperity. The emphasis on Holland’s downtown, large industries and small-scale, but flourishing, manufacturing sector all suggest that this past abundance has carried over to the present. Projects such as the downtown snowmelt system suggest that the town is continuing to upgrade and make improvements. With facilities such as Hope College, it is a community that not only looks to the future, but has a future. The Michigan economy may be lagging (as of 2006), the tour seems to say, but this is arguably just one more chapter in Holland’s history of overcoming adversity. Moreover, the range of facilities presented--from parks to rest homes--also presents a picture of a town that not only has potential job opportunities for young and old, but meets their needs as well. All in all, the Tulip Time Trolley tour serves to promote Holland as a town with a rich past, a solid present, and a promising future; a community which provides opportunities.

In focusing in large part on Holland’s local history, the Tulip Time Trolley Tours serve to focus on an aspect of Holland that press coverage and other festival events have, at least in more recent years, paid little attention to. Holland’s tour could accordingly be characterized as filling in some holes left by others parts of Tulip Time. Pella’s Rotary tour, by contrast, serves to reinforce narratives about
Pella and its festival presented elsewhere during Tulip Time. To recap, coverage
in Pella focuses largely on the way in which Tulip Time is a promotional, but
non-commercial, asset to the town; on Pella’s settler heritage, as personified in H.
P. Scholte; and on the unity Tulip Time can generated in the community. Pella’s
Rotary tour reflects and reinforces all of these themes, save that of unity. Given
that the theme of unity is directed inward, at town residents, and that town tours
are directed at visitors, it is not surprising that unity would not play as prominent
a role on the tours as it does in local press coverage. Pella’s Rotary tours, like
many elements in all five festivals, seem to be concerned with striking a balance
between promotional and non-commercial aims. On the promotional side of
things, a number of businesses and industries are singled out during the tour, as
one would expect. That having been said, there are not that many businesses
singled out by name during the tour, and those that are inevitably have some sort
of Dutch motif or special Dutch products, thereby making them logical choices
for sights to be singled out for the benefit of tourists. For instance, the tour
singles out a Pella Corporation (formerly Rolscreen) building, but this building
has been outfitted with certain Dutch architectural and decorative elements. The
tour singles out Molengracht plaza, a shopping center, but a shopping center has
been built with Dutch architectural motifs and which features a fake canal,
complete with drawbridge, running through the middle courtyard. The tour
singles out the Marion County State Bank drive-up branch, but this structure has
been built in the shape of a windmill. And the tour singles out the Strawtown Inn
and Pella’s downtown business district, specifically the bakeries, but the Strawtown Inn is one of the few establishments in town that serves Dutch cuisine, the business district has been outfitted with Dutch architectural fronts, and the bakeries specialize in Dutch pastries. It would seem, again, that Pella’s Rotary tours try to balance promoting local businesses and industry with a non-commercial, non-explicitly advertising air.

Besides businesses and industry, Pella’s tour has promotional overtones given the town schools, facilities, and churches that it highlights, all of which join together to form the picture of a prosperous, opportunity- and resource-rich community. During the tour, Pella public and Christian school systems are singled out and described as being excellent schools academically and athletically. More detailed attention is given to Central College which, like Hope in Holland, has its facilities, notable programs, and student body size, as well as history, called to tourists’ attention. In terms of public recreational facilities, the Rotary tours pass Central Park (around which most Tulip Time activities take place), West Market Park, Memorial Gardens, Scholte Gardens, and Sunken Gardens. Other highlighted facilities include Pella’s Post Office, the Pella Community center (the former Pella High School), Pella’s Hospice Center, and the Regional Health Center. In terms of churches, the tour notes about a half-dozen different churches. Interestingly, five of the six (First Reformed, Second Reformed, Trinity Reformed, First Christian Reformed, and Second Christian Reformed) belong Dutch Calvinist denominations, and the sixth (First Baptist) is
Pella’s oldest congregation (founded by area residents in 1844, before Scholte and his followers even began seriously considering immigrating to Iowa). Such a selection of churches certainly emphasizes, consciously or not, Pella’s religious past, but it does not reflect the greater denominational diversity of present-day Pella.

Of course, that Pella would stress its historic congregations over others is not especially surprising, since the tour, like many of the other Tulip Time elements, is arguably most concerned with presenting Pella’s local history. As in press coverage and an announcement made before each Tulip Time parade, Rotary tour guides inform tourists that Pella’s Tulip Time is dedicated to the memory of H. P. Scholte and the band of 700 fellow seceders who followed him to Pella in 1847. Scholte comes up again and again during the course of the tour. The tour begins in front of Pella’s klokkenspel which, when it chimes the hour, reveals figurines of Scholte and his wife. When the tour wagon passes Central College, the guide notes that Scholte donated the land on which Central now stands. Scholte’s home, maintained by the Historical Society and open for tours, is pointed out (and is hard to miss in any event, since it is a very large compared to the other houses in Pella’s downtown residential areas). And as the tour passes West Market Park, Scholte is again mentioned as the individual who had set the land aside for this park. Apart from Scholte himself, the Rotary tour also emphasizes a number of sites and sights of local historical significance, including the house that once held the town blacksmith shop, the site of an old sawmill, the
site of an old wool mill, and a settler-era log cabin that has survived to the present. Just as the tour begins in front of the Klokkenspel, which depicts scenes from local history, the tour ends a block east of the Klokkenspel, near the entrance to the Pella Historical Village. The Pella Historical Village contains several historic buildings which have been saved from demolition, such as Wyatt Earp’s boyhood home, a vast array of antiques from Pella’s past, displays which pertain to the history of Tulip Time and cultural aspects of the Netherlands, and the Vermeer Windmill, a working replica of an 1840s-era grain mill which was built in the Netherlands and erected in Pella in 2002.

Again, Pella’s Rotary tours serve to emphasize narrative about Pella and Tulip Time very much in keeping with those emphasized in press coverage. The focus on parks, health care, and senior care facilities can be interpreted as demonstrating Pella’s commitment to recreation for its young and care for its old alike. The businesses and industries singled out along with the parks, schools, and other facilities combine to form an image of a prosperous midwestern community. The fact that the business district is clearly flourishing in an era of small-town downtowns withering under pressure from discount retailers such as Wal-Mart especially promotes an image of Pella as a town with an opportunity-rich business and industry climate, much the same way Holland’s Trolley Tours depict Holland’s economy as promising. But in Pella, this emphasis on businesses--that is to say, commercial interests--is tempered by the fact that virtually every business or industry singled out has some sort of Dutch
architectural appearance or a signature Dutch product for sale. Perhaps singling such businesses out with other Pella attractions that employ Dutch motifs (the Windmill information booth, the Pella Historical Village, the Vermeer Windmill, etc.) combine to present an image of Pella as a “typical Dutch village.”

Moreover, the fact that many of these sites retain their Dutch appearance and can be visited year-round implicitly suggests that the heritage on display during Tulip Time is not limited to Tulip Time. Instead, it is of key importance year-round. Dutch heritage and values, in other words, are not things simply put on display for visitors one weekend out of the year; they are always present in Pella. Thus, Pella’s Dutch heritage is not merely symbolic, a matter of donning costumes, doing a few dances, marching in the parade, and eating a plate of poffertjes; it is something more, something that exerts influence on Pella at all times and cannot simply be put on or put away for Tulip Time.

Like many other Festival elements, Pella’s Rotary tours focus on the settlers and fit them into a narrative of the quest for religious freedom. In the tour, this narrative is alluded to by the many mentions given to Scholte, his land donations to Central College, and his many other activities besides leading the settlers to Pella. Although the narrative of Scholte guiding his people to religious freedom is not overtly stated in the tour to the level it is in press coverage, the tour ends by directing the tourists’ attention to something which does overtly stress this narrative: the Pella Historical Village. Despite the emphasis on Scholte and the supposed desire for religious freedom that drove the immigrants, Pella’s tour,
like Pella’s press coverage, does not really go into any detail to explain what the precise religious history of Pella is. Scholte and his followers simply came for religious freedom, and no comment is made about the *afscheiding*, as in Holland, nor are any details are given about the sorts of creeds and confessions Scholte and his followers subscribe to. In this way, although Pella’s Rotary tours may be geared towards outsiders, they nevertheless avoid touching on complicated issues which could lead to a discussion of the divisions within the town. Accordingly, like press coverage, Pella tours avoid, or “clean up,” the religious distinctions within the community which do not neatly fit a theme of unity during the Festival. Even in presenting the town to outsiders, insider concerns emerge.

6.3 PARADES, PROGRAMS, PAGEANTS, AND PLAYS

To this point, this study has spoken of these Dutch-American heritage celebrations as performing heritage in a metatheatrical way, as they all involve a somewhat scripted staging of heritage for an outside audience, complete with performers, sets, and costumes. However, each of these festivals has, at times, also included formal plays, pageants, and other theatrical performances, as well as dramatic parade elements, that dramatize or stage Dutch history, a town’s local history, or other aspects of the Netherlands or Dutch-ness. Often times, these performances have presented rather explicit narratives concerning the Dutch settlers of the staging town or the Dutch in general. At other times, these performances have been pure entertainment with only a Dutch flavor. All, however, have been--and in the case of Holland, Pella, and Orange City in
particular continue to be--important parts of the five festivals under examination in this study. By and large, these theatrical elements are aimed both at an inside and outside audience; it is therefore especially interesting to note what sorts of themes in these performances have accordingly been directed at town residents and festival visitors. For the most part, these themes, motifs, or narratives have complemented those presented in the press coverage and town tours explored above, but in at least one case--Pella--certain recent theatrical performances have also raised important questions about the balance between the celebration of Dutch heritage and patriotism, the character of the town’s founders, and the place of women in Pella’s foundational narrative.

6.3.1 PARADES

The centerpieces of each of the five festivals, and the element most festivalgoers see (and come especially to see) are the parades. Holland holds three parades (Volksparade, Kinderparade, and Muziekparade) during Tulip Time; Pella’s Volks Parade is run twice each of the three days of Tulip Time, as does Orange City’s parade; Edgerton’s parade runs both evenings of the Dutch Festival, and Fulton’s parade is held on the Saturday of Dutch Days weekend. Although these parades are not theatre performances per se, they all contain theatrical and paratheatrical units (floats, parade characters, displays, etc.) which communicate many stories and narratives about each festival and staging community. Most of these stories and narratives complement those presented in press coverage and town tours. Like those in press coverage and town tours, they
range from conscious and overt (educating audiences about Dutch history or customs) to perhaps unconscious and implied (the importance of children and individuals).

The most overt message each festival’s parade communicates is that audiences can learn about Dutch heritage and customs through the parade. Holland’s Kinderparade and Pella’s Volks Parade are good examples of this message. Holland’s Kinderparade was first instituted for the 1932 Tulip Time Festival (Holland Sentinel 14 May 1932) and has been an annual feature ever since. In this parade, several thousand students from the local private and public school systems march in Dutch costumes (minus wooden shoes). The 2006 Tulip Time program explains that during the parade, “these children showcase Holland’s Dutch heritage with their creative use of props as they march with contagious enthusiasm.” Each school that marches in the parade is assigned a theme pertaining to the culture or history of The Netherlands, and the props the students carry are all related to their school’s theme. For the 2005 Kinderparade, school themes included favorite Dutch foods, traditional Dutch children’s songs, Dutch Masters, delftware, Dutch literature, Dutch holidays, and the Elfstedentocht (a 200-kilometer, eleven-city ice skating race and tour held in Friesland when the winters are cold enough). In the past, History of Holland, Dutch Folklore, Dutch Agriculture, Dutch Industry, Dutch Toys and Games, Flags and Provinces, and Diamonds of Amsterdam have also been school themes (Holland Sentinel 17 May 1978; 11 May 1983; 1972 Children’s parade packet).
Pella’s Volks Parade introduces festivalgoers to Dutch customs, history, and traditions through different Dutch-costumed characters scattered throughout the parade. Many characters have been a part of the Volks Parade since the earliest years of Tulip Time, and in some cases particular townspeople portrayed a given role for so many years that they are still commemorated in the parade narration. Such is the case with the Chicken peddler (originally invented and performed by Teunis Kempkes in the late 1930s), the Schaven Slijpen or Scissors Sharpener (originally Fred Dekker), the organ grinder (originally Maurice Birdsall), the Burgemeester (originally T. G. Fultz), and the broom vendor (a role added in honor of a local Pella woman who swept sidewalks and doorways other than her own in her zeal to keep the town clean). Other Dutch-costumed characters not associated with a particular resident are also part of the Volks Parade, such as the Bloemen Wagon (flower cart), the Shoe Wagon, the Schaatslijven (ice skate sharpening) cart, the Worstjes (sausage/ring bologna) cart, the Bakker (baker) delivery cart, the Verse Groenten (fresh vegetables) cart, and the Verf (paint) cart. In addition to these vendor units, other character units appear, such as a bike-riding chimney sweep, cheese carriers, and “The Whole Dutch Family” which depicts a large (thirteen-plus) “family” (usually they are

54 Fultz was Pella’s mayor during the inaugural 1935 Tulip Time and thus served as the burgemeester that year. He retained the role even after leaving office and was eventually declared burgemeester for life. Since that time, Pella’s burgemeester has not been played by the town’s mayor; most recently, the burgemeester has been played by the individual in charge of the city tulip plantings. By contrast, in Holland, Orange City, and Fulton, the burgemeester is always played by the actual mayor.
not, in fact, from the same nuclear family) in Dutch costumes. Narrators explain
the significance of each of these character depictions to the crowd. For the
Schaatslijven cart, for example, the narrators discuss the popularity of ice skating
in the Netherlands; for the Bakker cart and Worstjes cart the narrators talk about
Dutch food; and for “The Whole Dutch Family” narrators explain that historically
the Dutch love large, close-knit families. All in all, these various Volks Parade
elements ostensibly depict and explain the traditional way of doing things
(especially business) in the Netherlands, if not in Pella or at Tulip Time.

Parades from each of these festivals may also educate festivalgoers about
several other aspects of Dutch heritage in general or local heritage in specific. In
Pella, Fulton, and Orange City, for instance, different provincial costumes play a
prominent role in the parades. Pella’s Volks Parade alone has floats showing
women’s costumes from each of the twelve provinces of the Netherlands as well
as another float featuring women’s costumes from specific villages and a unit of
flag-carrying men dressed in the costumes of the provinces whose flags they
carry. In Orange City, different floats present scenes which are used to describe
society and culture in The Netherlands. The “Village Pump” float, bearing a
replica of Orange City’s town pump (itself a replica of Middelburg, Zeeland’s
town pump), provides an opportunity to describe how historically town pumps
were important social centers in The Netherlands. The “Windmills and
“Waterways” float allows parade announcers to explain how windmills were used
both the create polders (reclaimed land from the sea) and to communicate. “The
Flying Dutchman” float occasions a discussion of the importance of the sea to the Dutch economy and diet. And the “Sinterklaas Day” and the “Queen’s Birthday” floats launch a discussion of two Dutch holidays whose observances have been revived in Orange City in recent years. In Fulton, each year the parade has a particular theme all floats are expected to conform to. This theme, once again, always pertains to Dutch history, society, and culture, and thus the resultant floats serve to educate audiences about The Netherlands. In 2006, the parade theme was “Dutch Children’s Literature; in the past, themes have included “Accent on Friesland” (2 May 1984), “Taming the Water” (26 March 1986), “The Dutch Masters” (18 April 1990), “The Queen’s Birthday” (3 March 1993), and “The Liberation Celebration” (5 April 1995).

The parades in both Orange City and Edgerton have also touched on the religious heritage of Dutch-American enclaves. The 2006 Orange City Tulip Festival parade featured a float entitled “De Kerk” that depicted an old-fashioned Dutch Calvinist church service. As this float passed by, the parade narrator explained how the Dutch who settled in New Netherland brought the Reformed Church with them. The narrator commented that the fact that this denomination became, and remains, known as the Reformed Church in, rather than the Reformed Church of, America reflected that the RCA was not supposed to act as a state church. The narrator also outlined the history of the RCA/CRC split that occurred in the nineteenth century and noted that Orange City’s Northwestern College is affiliated with the RCA, while nearby Sioux Center’s Dordt College is
affiliated with the CRC. Although the theological particulars which led to the 
RCA/CRC split are not discussed, Orange City’s parade thus nevertheless at least 
provides visitors with a starting point in understanding Dutch-American history, 
culture, and society. Edgerton’s festival and parade have not often had overtly 
Dutch themes, but when they have—such as in 1963, 1972, and 1984—several 
floats have touched on the Dutch Calvinist religious heritage of the town. Unlike 
Orange City, however, Dutch Calvinism has often been treated in a somewhat 
irreverent way. A case-in-point is a humorous prize-winning float from 1984 
entitled “Huis Bezoek.” This float seems to have lampooned the practice of huis 
bezoek, or house visiting, wherein each family in a Dutch Calvinist congregation 
(RCA, CRC, PRC, etc.) receives an annual visit from church officers. These 
officers ask the family about their spiritual well-being and then listens as the 
family airs any complaints or grievances or suggests ways the church could better 
serve the congregation and community. This practice is still current in many 
congregations of the various Reformed denominations (although usually the 
“visit” is now conducted at the church). This 1984 float may have been making 
fun of the practice, but it also provided visitors with an example of a specific 
traditional religious practice of Dutch-Americans.

A final example of one way in which parades present narratives about 
local heritage is found, once again, in Pella’s Volks Parade. As in the press 
coverage of Tulip Time and the Rotary tours, Pella’s Volks Parade narration 
advances the narrative of Pella having been founded by Scholte and his followers
as a way to obtain a long-desired religious freedom. This is played out in the Volks Parade in three main ways. First, as the parade begins, the parade announcers inform the audience that Tulip Time is held to commemorate and celebrate the original settlers of Pella and the sacrifices these Dutch immigrants made for freedom while trying to establish and maintain their “City of Refuge.” H. P. Scholte, leader of this band, is noted in the opening comments. Second, a descendant of Scholte’s usually carries the Dutch flag near the beginning of the Volks Parade. For years, the flag-bearer was a great-grandson of Scholte’s; as of 2005, the duty had been passed to a great-great-grandson. In either case, the presence of a Scholte descendant explicitly links the present to the past, displays Pella’s heritage, and provides another opportunity to remind festival goers that Scholte came to the United States in search of religious freedom. Third, shortly after the Dutch flag passes by, a banner bearing Pella’s crest is carried. Parade announcers note that one of the items depicted on the crest is Scholte’s church, again making explicit Pella’s religious heritage, Scholte’s place in that heritage, and thus, by extension, presumably reminding visitors of the “City of Refuge” narrative.

At the same time parades present images reflecting the cultural and religious heritage of the staging communities, parades often also present stereotypical Dutch images no doubt influenced by the legacy of Hollandmania. Three examples in particular exhibit American conceptions of The Netherlands being displayed in Dutch Heritage celebrations. First, for some years Orange
City’s Tulip Festival parades have included a “Dutch Cleanser” float. This float carries an 8-foot replica of an Old Dutch Cleanser box. While the parade narrator uses this float to discuss the reputation of the Dutch for cleanliness, this float clearly employs images of the Dutch Americans are familiar with. Second, both Edgerton’s Dutch Festival and Orange City’s Tulip Festival parades have included floats depicting the legend of the Dutch boy plugging the leak in the dike with his finger. Orange City’s 2006 parade narration explained that this story “is mythical and symbolizes the constant vigilance of watching and protecting the dikes” in the Netherlands, but once again it also certainly plays to images of the Netherlands familiar to Americans. Third, on at least one occasion Edgerton’s parade has featured a float depicting Hans Brinker and the Silver Skates, a “Dutch folktale” created in the United States by an author who had never been to the Netherlands. Although not part of Fulton’s parade, dramatizations of the Hans Brinker story have been presented as part of Fulton’s Dutch Days in 1979, 1988, and 1994 (Edgerton Enterprise 25 July 1963; 20 July 1972; “Tulip Festival Parade 2006;” Fulton Journal 7 March 1979; 4 May 1988; 20 April 1994).

Besides heritage, Dutch-American heritage celebration parades have also heavily emphasized children and families. This trend is already very much evident in Holland’s Kinderparade, which features about 7,000 marching school children dressed in simplified Dutch costumes, and Pella’s Volks Parade, which features “The Whole Dutch Family” and vendor characters who are often accompanied by children or spouses. Pella’s Volks Parade also features children
in many other ways; it could even be argued that area children, from, infancy to high school, are the main group on display during the Volks Parade. First, Pella’s Baby Parade is a long-running Volks Parade element, wherein Pella parents or grandparents (usually, but not always, mothers and/or grandmothers), dressed in Dutch costumes, push children two years old and under, also dressed in tiny Dutch costumes, in strollers along the parade route. In 2005, this parade element was about three blocks long, making it one of the largest marching units in the entire parade. Parade narrators introduce the Baby Parade by rhetorically asking “what greater treasure could we share than our youngest citizens?,” note the Baby Parade is an opportunity for extended Pella families to reunite during the festival, and comment that often times the mothers marching in the parade were themselves once babies in the parade. Second, soon after the Baby Parade, all of the students from both the Christian and public elementary systems march en masse, all of them dressed in simplified Dutch costumes. The Pella public grade school students come first, followed by the Christian school students. In 2005, as in other years, all the marching school children joined together in singing “We’re the Kids from Pella,” a song written by a former Tulip Queen.

In addition to the Baby Parade and marching schoolchildren, floats emphasize Pella’s children. Most floats in the parade bear several children in traditional costumes (leading a 7 May 2005 parade viewer to quip that the marching schoolchildren’s unit was for the Pella kids who weren’t riding a float). Several of these floats explicitly celebrate Pella’s children, such as the “Future
Queens’ float, featuring little girls in costume and a “Future Burgemeesters” float, featuring younger boys clad in Dutch costumes. Junior high and high school students are not excluded from the Volks Parade either. Students from the local junior and senior high schools, both public and Christian, march in each school’s marching band; the Pella Christian Junior High marching band, for their part, march in wooden shoes (a practice also employed by the Holland High School and Maurice-Orange City-Floyd Valley High School marching bands in Holland and Orange City, respectively). Besides band members, the Tulip Queen and Court also are included in the parade. Other towns have incorporated elements showcasing children into their parades similar to those in Pella’s Volks Parade. This is especially true of Fulton, which includes a marching schoolchildren unit (although only the local Christian school students marched at the 2006 parade); in 1980, the students also carried “items peculiar to the Dutch,” just as in Holland’s Kinderparade (Fulton Journal 16 April 1980). Similarly, in 1987 and 1988 Fulton’s parade included a Baby Parade unit (1 April 1987, 30 March 1988).

In presenting Dutch, Dutch-American, and local heritage, and in showcasing children and families, several narratives, themes, and messages about the staging communities emerge from these parades. Once again, most of these parades clearly aim to educate audiences about Dutch culture, history, and heritage. By educating audiences about Dutch culture and history, these parades demonstrate that the staging community knows a lot about its European roots. By
celebrating or commemorating the original settlers and their values, as in Pella’s Volks Parade, audiences are told that the staging community still aspires to remain true to the ideals of its founders, whether this be Dutch Calvinism in specific, as with Orange City’s “De Kerk” float, or a more general love of freedom, as in Pella’s Scholte/religious freedom narrative. In all of these cases, the Dutch heritage of the staging communities is depicted as not just being limited to the past, but very much alive in the present. These various parade elements also model the ideal of town unity promoted in press coverage. Pella’s Baby Parade displays a sort of generational unity, with mother and grandmothers pushing babies along the parade route in strollers. Moreover, people of all ages ride the various floats, play the different characters, and push the numerous carts in Pella’s parade. Holland’s Kinderparade enacts and presents ethnic unity. One need only glance at the individual children marching in the parade to see that they are not all Dutch; many are Latino, Asian-, and African-American. All, however, march in Dutch costumes, and just before the parade begins, the public address announcer tells the audience that whatever the backgrounds of Holland’s residents, during Tulip Time, all of them are Dutch. The fact that the non-Dutch population is apparently willing to allow their children to “be Dutch” for a week in May further suggests there is unity within Holland’s diversity. And in both Pella and Holland, both the public and Christian school systems march in the same parade (although in separate blocs in both cases).
While these parades clearly model town unity, it is notable that in Pella, at least, they also highlight individuals. This is indicated by the way in which particular residents who played particular parade characters are still noted in parade narration each year. The highlighting of individuals is even more prevalent in the fact that, for most of the floats included in the Volks Parade, parade narrators list the people, especially the children, who ride the float. During a 2005 Volks Parade, an audience member commented on this practice and identified precisely what parade organizers in all probability want to convey through the naming of float riders: “They use names a lot. Everyone is important. That’s wonderful.” More than that, the focus on individuals, both past actors and present float riders, combined with the modeling of town unity, the presentation of heritage and history, and the display of children as well as older generations points to what may ultimately be the main narrative presented by the parades in these communities: continuity. The narrative or theme of continuity is most obvious in Pella’s Volks Parade. For example, announcers note particular residents who historically performed a particular parade character; this in turn demonstrates that particular parade elements have been present year in, year out, during the Volks Parade. The same is true of the comments about grandmothers and mothers, once themselves babies in the Baby Parade, now pushing their infant children or grandchildren in the current Baby Parade. And when the elements in Pella’s Volks Parade are taken together, they present a picture of continuity over time. The baby parade, the young children on floats, the marching
schoolchildren, the marching bands, the Tulip Queen and court, the families pushing babies in the Baby Parade or other units, the grandparents involved in the Baby Parade and other elements: taken together, these elements present Pella as a town with a neat past, a vibrant present and a promising future, all of which are equally appreciated and recognized. In other towns’ parades as well, emphasizing traditional parade units and elements, as well as presenting a range of age groups, demonstrates that the past is alive in the present and presumably will continue to be in the future. The emphasis on children and families could even be seen as a way of frontloading images of life in a celebration of a heritage that is largely past--or dead.

6.3.2 PROGRAMS

Apart from each festival’s parades, programs represent festival elements visitors are most likely to see, oftentimes because some sort of program is staged as pre-parade entertainment on or near the parade route. All five of the festivals under study here have, until at least recently, presented pre-parade programs that explicitly present traditional Dutch customs, but which also implicitly reinforce many of the themes and motifs apparent in festival parades. Two “traditional” Dutch customs in particular are evident in these pre-parade programs: folk dancing and and street scrubbing. In Holland, Pella, Orange City, and Fulton--and in Edgerton until about 2000--Dutch folk dancing is prominently featured along the parade routes. In Holland, about half of the dancers are drawn from the local high schools and half are alumni dancers; ninety-nine percent of Holland’s
dancers are women. By contrast, the dancers in Fulton and Orange City—and to a lesser extent in Pella—range from small children all the way up to senior citizens, and although in each case the majority of the dancers are girls and women, boys and men are also fairly well-represented. In Fulton, all of the dancers perform all of the dances, but in Orange City and Pella the various dances are divided among several dance groups. In Pella, the different dance groups are the Dutchesses, a group of sixteen high school girls; the Dutch Family Singers, a group of men, women, and smaller children; and the Pella Dutch Dancers, a group of about 100 dancers, many of whom are from the high schools and Central College. In Orange City, the different groups are the Adult Dutch Dancers (post-college adults), the Senior Dutch Dancers (junior high and high school students), and the Junior Dutch Dancers (fourth through sixth grade students); in addition to these groups, second and third grade children perform dance-like Dutch children’s games.

The Fulton, Orange City, and Pella dances differ from those in Holland in several other ways. First, Holland’s dancers only perform three dances in total, all of which are American creations. In Pella, Orange City, and Fulton, at least some of the dances presented are described as “authentic” Dutch dances. The Orange City Adult Dutch Dancers, for instance, perform dances which a narrator says are taken from the Netherlandish areas of Overijssel, Terschelling, and Achterhoek, among others. Several of the routines dancers in Pella, Orange City, and Fulton perform are also accompanied by Dutch lyrics, further adding to the
“authentic” atmosphere of the proceedings. Second, at least one dance in Pella, Orange City, and Fulton involves the opportunity for audience participation; no such opportunity is offered during the course of the Holland dances. Finally, Pella, Orange City, and Fulton’s dances are performed in conjunction with additional program elements designed to introduce visitors to other Dutch traditions. All three of these communities, for instance, hold a costume show before, after, or even interspersed with the various dances. Pella and Orange City also use the pre-parade program as an opportunity to formally introduce each town’s respective Tulip Queen and Court to the audience, and in both cases the Tulip Queen gives a short speech of welcome. And Pella’s pre-parade entertainment also involves the reenacting of cheese-selling traditions in the Netherlandish community of Alkmaar, followed by races between several cheese-carrying teams, assisted by children pulled from the audience.

Following the other pre-parade program elements, Holland, Pella, Orange City, and Fulton all make an elaborate show of street inspection and scrubbing. In each town, the mayor and town council, all in Dutch costumes, inspect the length of the parade route, often interacting with audience members as they do so. Every year, the inspectors naturally declare the streets too dirty to be ready for the parade. During the Pella inspection, a special show is made of blaming the townspeople—not the festival visitors—for the state of the streets. Upon declaring the need for a good street scrubbing, numerous residents from each town “spontaneously” materialize—in costume and wielding brushes and yokes with
water buckets--and set about scrubbing the streets. In Holland, the scrubbers in
2006 were predominantly women and small children, while Pella’s 2005 and
Fulton and Orange City’s 2006 scrubbers included more men. In all four
communities, however, the scrubbers were of all ages. For the most part, the
scrubbing is an orderly affair, although inevitably some scrubbers splash each
other and threaten to splash the crowd. Orange City’s 2006 scrubbing, however,
was led by little boys who ran down the street and breakneck speed and threw as
much water as possible at each other; their zeal to douse each other brought them
dangerously close to splashing audience members, thereby creating an element of
suspense absent in the Pella, Fulton, and Holland street scrubbing.

During the lengthy inspection and scrubbing segments, narrators or
emcees in each of these four towns keep audiences entertained through quips,
jokes, and facts about the Netherlands and the Dutch people. During Holland’s
2005 Tulip Time, the announcer noted the town council’s “white glove
inspection” was in “keeping with the ‘Dutch Cleanliness’ tradition.” During
Pella’s 2005 Tulip Time, the pre-parade program emcee went into the scrubbers’
midst and interviewed several of the older scrubbers for the benefit of the
audience; after several such interviews, he then went into the grandstand seating
along the parade route, asked visitors where they were from, and pronounced
them “Dutch for a day.” While interviewing audience members, the emcee also
cracked jokes poking fun of stereotypical Dutch traits of tightfistedness,
formality, and stoical practicality: “Copper wire was invented here in Pella.
That’s right. Two local Dutch fellows found a copper penny and neither one would let it go.” “How do you know you’re Dutch? You have a formal living room and no one sits in it.” “Jacob died, and Jenny went to the paper for the obituary. ‘Just print Jacob died,’ she said. The editor says ‘Oh no, you get five free words in obituaries!’ Jenny thinks for a moment and then says ‘OK. Jacob Died. Boat for Sale.’” During Orange City’s 2006 Tulip Festival, the announcer listed statistics concerning volunteer involvement in the Festival programs, particularly highlighting the fact that children from both public and private school systems were involved. And for Fulton’s 2006 Dutch Days, the emcees discussed wooden shoes, the liberation of the Netherlands during the Second World War, and the theme of the upcoming parade (children’s stories in the Netherlands) while the scrubbing was taking place.

As in the parades, several themes and motifs are communicated explicitly and implicitly through these pre-parade programs. As in other festival aspects examined thus far, the theme of cleaning up the town obviously manifests itself in the street scrubbing ceremony. Here, the tidying up of historical narratives and communal memory, as well as lawns and houses, is complemented by a ritualized, ceremonial cleaning up of the parade route itself. As in the case of press coverage, however, the ceremonial cleaning up is linked to other themes and motifs. In the case of both Holland and Orange City, public address announcers link the street scrubbing to the veneration of the original Dutch settlers of these communities. In Orange City, the link is implicit, as the announcer informs
audience members that the Tulip Festival is held to celebrate the coming of spring, to remember the pioneers of Dutch descent who settled Sioux County, and to honor the town’s cultural heritage during the course of the scrubbing. In Holland, the link was made more explicit in 2005, when the announcer told the audience that because Holland’s original settlers liked cleanliness, present day Holland residents of all ages join together in the street cleaning spirit.

Though not linked directly to the street scrubbing ceremonies, the pre-parade program in Pella also emphasizes Tulip Time as an occasion to honor the community’s Dutch founders. During the 2005 Festival, the pre-parade entertainment officially began with Pella’s honorary burgemeester reading Psalm 118:24 in Dutch (This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it), followed by a prayer of thanksgiving for the sacrifices Pella’s founders made for freedom which also requests a blessing on “our great nation, this celebration, and the celebrants.” Following the prayer, a community member gave a brief history of Pella’s founding which emphasized the desire of Scholte and his followers for religious freedom as the main reason for the town’s existence. As in press coverage and parade elements, however, this emphasis on religious freedom does not communicate any specifics about the religion Scholte and his followers practiced. Arguably, however, this lack of specificity allows Pella to be presented as an exemplar of the American narrative of the desire for freedom. The balance struck between celebrating Dutch heritage--dances, costumes, etc.--and presenting that heritage as part of a larger American freedom
narrative is perhaps symbolized by the Dutch and American flags the parade color guard carries, as well as the singing of both national anthems, back to back, during the pre-parade program.

As in the parades and press coverage, the pre-parade programs in these communities also emphasize, present, or model an idealized unity among contemporary town residents. In Holland, street scrubbing presents generational unity: young and old alike participate in the common cause of ceremonial cleaning. For the 2005 Tulip Time, the public address announcer explicitly noted the three generations join together in the scrubbing tradition. In Pella, town unity is similarly demonstrated through the wide age-range of people who participate in the dances and scrubbing, but the theme of unity is also explicitly articulated during the cheese-carrying races. Here, the emcee notes, when soliciting child volunteers from the audience to help the cheese carrying teams, that the Dutch are known for teamwork. And in Orange City, community unity is, once again, demonstrated through the age-range of the street scrubbers, but also through the narrator’s comments that over 300 volunteers participate in the pre-parade Straatfest program. The narrator is also careful to note that children from both school systems are involved in Straatfest, suggesting a fundamental spirit of cooperation and unity of purpose that bridges Orange City’s sectarian divides.

While all three of these towns obviously model town unity in similar ways during their respective pre-parade programs, an interesting contrast is evident between the ways Holland and Pella invite nonresidents to view this unity. In Holland in
2005, the public address announcer commented during the dancing and street scrubbing that, during Tulip Time, all Holland residents, whether or not they are of Dutch heritage, become Dutch for a week. At Pella’s 2005 Tulip Time, by contrast, nothing was said about the heritage of the town residents; instead, the visitors were told that by attending Tulip Time, they became Dutch for a day. This contrast suggests that while Holland puts itself on display for outsiders, Pella seemingly wants to invite outsiders to become part of the town, even if for only a few hours. This rhetorical stance in Pella is backed up by the possibilities for audience participation in the dances and the cheese-carrying races.

A final theme or motif present in the pre-parade programs in Holland, Pella, Orange City, and Fulton is an emphasis on children and youth. Costumed infants and toddlers are present in all four street scrubbing ceremonies (and are favorite subjects for camera-happy visitors); elementary school students in Pella and Orange City are involved in the dancing; high school students comprise the bulk of Holland’s dancers and are also prominent in the Orange City and Pella dances; and those high school students who are members of the Tulip Courts are also prominent in Pella and Orange City’s pre-parade programs. This emphasis on youth, from infancy to high school, besides being present in the parades, has also been featured in numerous non-pre-parade programs in each of these four communities. During the late 1940s, for instance, Holland’s Tulip Time included a Children’s Festival, which featured “elementary school children in a colorful program of music, pageantry and games typical of those played by their cousins in

358
the land of dykes and windmills” (*Holland Sentinel* 16 May 1947). Other programs staged by Holland elementary or high school students during the 1950s and 1970s featured dramatizations of scenes from Holland’s history (1953 Tulip Time program; Vande Water 61; 1972 Tulip Time program). Similar programs were presented in Pella on an almost yearly basis between 1940 and the 1960s, bearing names such as “Dutch Kids at Play,” “Speel Tyt in Holland,” and “The Dutch Way of Life” (1947 Tulip Time program; 1958 “Dutch Way of Life” program; 13 May 1948 *Pella Chronicle*). For many years, high school plays were performed in conjunction with Fulton’s Dutch Days, and in 1979 and 1979 kindergarten through 4th grade students from Fulton Community Christian School performed a program called “A Little of Holland” which featured a “variety of songs, dancing, and narration” (*Fulton Journal* 19 April 1978; 25 April 1979).

Today, variety programs featuring high school students continue to be featured at the Pella and Orange City festivals. In Pella, the Dutchesses perform songs and dances at various locations and times during the day, while in Orange City, the Dutch Dozen, a group of twelve high school girls, perform a half hour variety show complete with songs, dances, and jokes several times each day of the Tulip Festival. All of these youth-performed programs, along with the parades and pre-parade programs, serve to emphasize the importance of children to the staging community and also present a continuum of sorts, whereon the youth of today perform the traditions of yesterday. In other words, new life reanimates traditions that now, save for Tulip Time, belong to the past. Symbols of life are frontloaded
in a celebration of something that could be considered dead. At the same time, showcasing each town’s youth also serves to demonstrate that the staging community is blessed with good-looking, pretty, talented children and young people, which points to a bright future in store for each of these communities. That future, it seems, is rooted in the past displayed, represented, and performed by these festivals.

6.3.3 PAGEANTS AND PLAYS

Historically, the first theatrical performances to be included as activities at Dutch-American heritage celebrations were comic operettas set in the Netherlands. Some of these operettas were borrowed from the professional stage (Victor Herbert’s *The Red Mill* and *Sweethearts*; Geoffrey F. Morgan and Frederick J. Johnson’s *Tulip Time*; Otis Carrington’s *Windmills of Holland*), while others were original operettas written especially for a particular festival (*The Blue Tulip*, Pella 1937; *In Dutch*, Orange City 1938; *Katrina*, Orange City 1939; *Willow Man*, Orange City, 1950). The appeal and allure of these operettas appears to have been their complicated and humorous plots (over and above any intrinsic “Dutch” qualities or themes) as well as the way in which these productions catered to Hollandmania images. Plot-wise, these operettas depict true love overcoming various obstacles (*The Red Mill, Windmills of Holland, The Blue Tulip*, and *Tulip Time*), the thwarting of seedy schemes (*Windmills of Holland, Tulip Time*), and the discovery of unexpected fortunes (*Sweethearts, The Red Mill*). Photographs from the casts of these productions, especially those from
the 1930s, indicate that stage settings and costumes employed catered to a Hollandmania, “wooden shoes and windmills” image, with Volendam costumes, windmill backdrops, and potted tulips. These operettas do not seem to have been intended to communicate any message about the staging communities (save that talented singers, actors, and even writers and composers lived in these towns). These operettas were merely set in the Netherlands, and they were fun.55

While popular operettas and musicals have been featured at all five festivals, pageants and plays depicting general Dutch or local Dutch-American history have figured most prominently at the Holland and Pella Tulip Time festivals. For the most part, these plays and pageants have presented smooth, clean narratives about the Dutch and their Dutch-American cousins. In 1939, 1940, and 1941, for example, Holland produced the pageant *Tulip Tales*; this pageant was subsequently modified into *Sunrise Tomorrow*, a pageant produced for the 1951 festival. *Tulip Tales*, written and produced by Holland residents, offered a “dramatic portrayal of the history of the Tulip.” The first half of the pageant presented an allegorical scene set in the Forest of Facts, wherein Father Knowledge and the dancing Elves of Truth instruct The Child how to avoid the goblins of Superstition, Ignorance, Fear, Untruth, and Gossip and educate her about tulips, which stand as symbols for “things of true worth.” After Father Knowledge delivers a horticultural lecture on tulips, the pageant depicts the history of the tulip in seven scenes. The final scene, “The Tulip Conquers a New

55 See Appendix B for a list of operettas and other theatrical entertainments performed at each of the five festivals.
“Country,” relates how the Dutch of southwest Michigan have begun growing tulips and “reviving the customs of their ancestors,” such as wooden shoe dancing, with which the pageant concludes (1939 Tulip Tales program; Tulip Tales typescript). Sunrise Tomorrow apparently replaced the Father Knowledge segments of Tulip Tales with a framing device that revolved around an American television journalist, based loosely on Tyl Uilenspeigel, a Dutch folk character known for mocking the nobility through mimicry, interacting with the various historical episodes and characters. The Sunrise Tomorrow program indicates the historical episodes covered were virtually identical to those in Tulip Tales; it seems, however, that the TV interviewer plot line was designed to be juxtaposed against the historical episodes in order to illustrate “the fallacy that riches make for happiness” (Holland Sentinel 27 April 1951; 1951 Sunrise Tomorrow program).

Besides showcasing local Holland artistic talent, economic warnings contained in several Tulip Tales scenes (namely those depicting the seventeenth century Tulipomania in the Netherlands and the decadence of the eighteenth century French court), as well as Sunrise Tomorrow’s stated goal of demonstrating riches do not promote happiness, arguably echo contemporary press and promotional coverage vaunting Tulip Time’s non-commercial nature. In Tulip Tales, for instance, the final scene depicting the Michigan Dutch growing tulips states they do so to celebrate heritage, a marked contrast to previous scenes wherein tulips are raised for greed. Similarly, in Sunrise Tomorrow, the Tyl
Uilenspeigel character is an announcer from the fictional WHTT--W Holland Tulip Time, one assumes--and the entire purpose of this character is to make fun of the wealthy characters in the historical scenes. Thus, these two pageants not only present Holland’s Tulip Time and inhabitants as part of the ongoing history of the tulip, but as a marked, explicitly non-commerical improvement over past episodes in that history. One could even go so far as to argue these pageants show Holland redeeming the greed-laced history of the tulip through Tulip Time and the commemoration of Dutch heritage.

Since the 1960s, the most prominent annual theatrical feature of Holland’s Tulip Time is the Dutch Heritage Show. Unlike Holland’s pageants, the Dutch Heritage Show has been less concerned with depicting the history of Holland, Michigan and more concerned with introducing its audiences to the history and culture of The Netherlands. In doing so, though, the Dutch Heritage Show reflects a tension of sorts between promoting Dutch heritage and presenting American patriotism. On the one hand, the 2005 edition of the Dutch Heritage Show provided visitors a chance to see a huge variety of provincial Dutch costumes, to learn a myriad of facts about the history, culture, economy, and demographics of The Netherlands, and to hear numerous songs from and about the Netherlands, many of them in Dutch. On the other hand, one song performed during the show, “Life’s Journey,” contained a verse about the greatness of America, and the climactic finale to the show involved the cast, holding Dutch and American flags, leading the audience in a rendition of “God Bless America.”
Thus, in addition to presenting a somewhat nostalgic picture of The Netherlands (understandable in light of the fact the show has been, for many years, written, directed, and in part performed by immigrants from the Netherlands), the Dutch Heritage Show seems to attempt to strike a balance between a love for the United States and a retention of Dutch heritage. As one cast member commented during the 2005 production, the Dutch may have come to America, but they never intended to lose their identity and heritage in doing so; as I demonstrated in chapter 2, Dutch-Americans have, in fact, managed to retain significant aspects of the cultural values their ancestors brought to the United States. In reflecting this hyphenated condition, the Dutch Heritage Show displays a heritage, or at least aspects of that heritage, that are not “just for show.”

Turning now to the pageants and plays presented in Pella, the idea of striking a balance between Dutch heritage and American patriotism is also quite evident. For the most part, this theatrical balance has tended to repeat the same narratives about Pella’s founders found in press and promotional coverage and parade narration. Specifically, pageants and plays staged during the history of Tulip Time have usually dramatized the story of Rev. H. P. Scholte and his followers coming to Pella in search of religious freedom and liberty. The “Life Pictures of Pella History” presented during the 1940 festival presumably dealt with this subject matter (Pella Chronicle 9 May 1940); the following year, the presentation of six scenes from A Stranger in a Strange Land, a manuscript by Leonora Scholte, H. P. Scholte’s daughter-in-law, certainly did so. According to
a published report, this production dramatized “the Dutch Colonists in Holland, their migration to Iowa, arrival at Pella, the Forty-Niners as seen by Pella citizens and finally their taking of the Oath of Allegiance to the United States as citizens” (1 May 1941). The 1941 Tulip Time program indicates that these scenes specifically showed “Government Soldiers dispersing worshippers” in 1835, Scholte leading an 1846 meeting that resulted in the decision to immigrate, and a scene, popular in Pella lore, when, confronted with a town site occupied only by a single cabin and a sign for Pella, Mareah Scholte asked “Dominie, where is Pella?” Quite obviously, these scenes were selected to illustrate the transition of Scholte’s followers from oppressed Netherlanders to free, loyal Americans.

For the 1947 Tulip Time, Pella decided to stage a massive historical pageant dramatizing Pella’s first century of existence. The result was City of Refuge, an extravaganza with a cast of 600, with authentic costumes, lighting, scenery, and a director provided by the John B. Rogers Company of Fostoria, Ohio, premiere producers of historical pageants. As with A Stranger in a Strange Land, City of Refuge essentially illustrated the transition of Scholte’s followers (and their descendants) from religious refugees to loyal Americans. After two initial scenes dealing with the Sauk and Fox tribes, early Marion county inhabitants, the pageant dramatized Scholte’s arrest for preaching against the state church, his marriage to Mareah, his decision to immigrate to the United States and settle in Iowa, and the arrival of the Dutch settlers in Pella, “their hopes fulfilled.” Subsequent scenes depicted a classroom scene from Pella’s first school, the
arrival of the Forty-Niners in Pella, the wedding “of Pella’s most loved young people--Auke H. Viersen and the lovely Henrietta Roelofs,” the enrollment of every male Central College student in the Union army at the outbreak of the Civil War, Scholte’s death, and the celebration of Pella’s 1897 Golden Anniversary. The final episodes of City of Refuge presented tableaux of the raising of the American flag on Iwo Jima and the signing of the peace agreement aboard the U. S. S. Missouri that ended the Second World War. The pageant concluded with a finale “featuring representatives of the allied nations [. . .] Their common pledge and our prayer is not only a salute to America, but a salute to all mankind that has ever since time began, hungered, searched, and fought for the right to freedom and individuality” (1947 City of Refuge program; Pella Chronicle 10 April 1947; 8 May 1947).

As Lisa Jaarsma Zylstra remarks, City of Refuge was clearly designed “to stir patriotism” (77). Such a goal is particularly evident in the episode depicting the Central College Civil War enlistment and the episodes dramatizing Iwo Jima and the U. S. S. Missouri. More than simply stirring patriotism, though, City of Refuge, like many other aspects of Pella’s Tulip Time, obviously aimed to equate the story of Pella with narratives about the United States. The title, of course, once again evokes the narrative of Pella’s founding owing to the desire of Scholte and his followers for reasons of freedom, a very American narrative. In focusing on the religious motives, the economic motives that also influenced Scholte and his followers are marginalized, thus creating a “clean” narrative of desire for
religious freedom. The finale of *City of Refuge* goes one step further, however, than simply presenting Pella as one example of a desire for freedom or than simply stirring patriotism. Instead, it implicitly turns the story of Pella into the story of the United States, and indeed humanity, in general. Just as Pella was founded owing to a desire to religious freedom, the finale is heralded as “a salute to all mankind that has ever since time began, hungered, searched, and fought for the right to freedom and individuality.” If Pella’s story is the story of freedom in general, the organizers’ decision to include scenes from the Second World War Pella was not directly involved in, as well as a Civil War scene Pella *was* involved in, makes sense: the entire pageant, Pella’s story and beyond, is about the fight for freedom. At the same time, it is interesting that the only episode depicting events between Scholte’s death and the Second World War depicts the celebration of Pella’s 50th anniversary. Thus, even while Pella is turned into an example of the American and human desire for freedom, the pageant constantly refers back to Scholte, the other immigrants, and thus, by extension, the Dutch ancestry of the entire town.

In the early-to-mid 1980s, a series of entertainments at Pella’s Tulip Time once again staged Pella’s history in a way that equated the town and its history with America, or Americana, in general. The first of these events—called Feesthouden—was held in 1982 and billed as an event that would “recall pageants at West Market Park of the past”—presumably things like *Stranger in a Strange Land* and *City of Refuge*—and a “spectacular way for us all to celebrate Pella’s
Dutch-American heritage (Pella Chronicle 31 March 1982). Articles indicate that this Feesthouden involved performances of local singing groups and bands, “a salute to 700 settlers that left Holland for Pella,” a dramatization of Pella’s early development, the origin of Tulip Time, a salute to 200 years of Netherlands and American friendship led by cheerleaders against a backdrop of two huge American flags, and a finale featuring a mass choir singing “I am Thankful To Be an American (21 April 1982; 5 May 1982).

After a 1983 Feesthouden similar to the 1982 edition, the 1984 and 1985 Feesthoudens presented a program entitled “America--The Dream,” designed to take audiences “through the decades, focusing on some of the people whose ‘dreams’ became reality and helped shape our country” (Pella Chronicle 9 May 1984). The first part of the production, narrated by the characters of H. P. and Mareah Scholte, detailed Pella’s growth to 1900, focusing on the 1849 gold rush, Central College’s Civil War volunteers, and Wyatt Earp’s Pella childhood. This first section included renditions of a “Wooden Shoes” song and “Grand Ole Flag.” Henry Ford narrated events to the First World War; Pella’s current honorary burgemeester, aided by the first and current Tulip Queens and Dutch dancers, narrated the history of Tulip Time’s origins; Glenn Miller narrated the 1940s and led the audience in “God Bless America;” Mickey Mouse and the Mouskateers emceed the 1950s, which included a tribute to Elvis Presley; and Alan Shepard narrated the 1960s and 1970s, which included a tribute to the Beatles. “America--The Dream” concluded with a singalong involved Dutch and
English numbers, a performance by the Dutch Family Singers, and “the usual patriotic salute that sends goose bumps through the crowds” (Pella Chronicle 18 April 1984; 9 May 1984; 17 April 1985).

As with City of Refuge, the 1982-1985 Feesthouden performances certainly went out of their way to focus on patriotic, as well as specifically Dutch or Pella-oriented, elements. But if City of Refuge linked Pella to America and a human impulse to fight for freedom, “America--The Dream” linked American to Pella, as Pella history is not simply fit into an American framework, but actually narrated by American icons like Ford, Shepard, Miller, and the Mouskateers. Moreover, the Scholtes are elevated to the level of these “people whose ‘dreams’ became reality and helped shape our country.” Like City of Refuge, the Volks Parade narration, and other areas of Pella’s Tulip Time, the history of Pella presented in the Feesthouden performances turns Pella into an exemplar of the American desire for freedom, and implicitly argue that Pella’s story is an important part of the larger American story. That American story, however, is presented in a straightforward manner, as is Pella’s history. These stories are depicted as uncomplicated desires and fights for freedom, as well as the realization of dreams.

The most recent theatrical contributions to Pella’s Tulip Time present an interesting contrast to the uncomplicated narratives of freedom presented in the historical pageants and Feesthouden performances examined thus far. Since 1992, Tulip Time has frequently featured plays written by Pella resident Carol
Van Klompenburg’s plays—*Delightfully Dutch, The Dominie’s Wife*, and *Of Wooden Shoes and Windmills*—like other dramatizations of Pella history, deal with the narratives of the quest for religious freedom and present many of the usual scenes from Pella’s history, but at the same time, Van Klompenburg displays a concern with asking more searching questions about assimilation, acculturation, and the sacrifices implicit in both processes, especially those made by immigrant women.

Van Klompenburg’s first play, written in collaboration with Mary Meuzelaar, another Pella resident, is *Delightfully Dutch*, which was first performed at the 1992 Tulip Time and was also produced for the 1993 and 1995 festivals (Van Klompenburg interview 15-16; *Chronicle* 16 April 1993; 31 April 1995). In Van Klompenburg’s own words, this piece is “a collage of Dutch things, Dutch history [. . .] it covers something about tulips, something about windmills, and then something about wooden shoes. [. . .] you know, it’s Dutch trivia, a collection of Dutch trivia in theatrical format” (Van Klompenburg interview 16). *Delightfully Dutch* takes the form of two characters, Kaatje and Maria, imparting Dutch proverbs, trivia, history, and other facts to audience members. Besides discussing items such as tulips, wooden shoes, and windmills that are stereotypically associated with the Dutch, Kaatje and Meisje present readings from the letters of actual nineteenth-century Dutch immigrants describing the crossing of the Atlantic, the journey to the midwest, and some of the surprises along the way. After discussing some less-well known facts about
the Dutch (the possibility Netherlands invented golf; Dutch colonization of Java and the popularization of coffee in Europe; the Dutch importation of “Blue Laws” during the Dutch colonial era), Kaatje and Maria consider ways in which Dutch characteristics have survived among the descendants of Dutch immigrants to the United States. The most prominent, and important, element of Dutch-American culture Kaatje and Maria present in that regard is the survival of Dutch Calvinism in the United States; in order to illustrate the survival of Dutch Calvinism, the characters recite several poems by Stan Wiersma (who wrote under the name Sietze Buning), a Dutch-American poet and Northwest Iowa native whose poetry largely deals with the life of Dutch-American Calvinists.

Following Delightfully Dutch, Van Klompenburg and Meuzelaar collaborated on their second play, The Dominie’s Wife. Van Klompenburg relates this script “grew out of our interest in theatre, our interest in Pella history, our sense that this would be a good match for Pella” (interview 16). The play debuted in October 1996 and was performed at the 1997, 2003, and 2006 Tulip Time festivals. The stated purpose of The Dominie’s Wife is “to create an understanding among local residents of the founders of Pella’s values and culture, and how they impact Pella today” (Chronicle 14 March 1996). The play does so by dramatizing the experience of Mareah Scholte in Pella, particularly the tension between her cultured European upbringing and tastes and her husband’s determination to lead his followers to frontier Iowa and become an acculturated, if not assimilated, American. The script calls for two actors to portray H. P. and
Mareah Scholte, while two narrators link the episodic scenes together and play all
the additional characters. *The Dominie’s Wife* begins in August 1847, when the
Scholtes, characterized as fleeing religious persecution, first arrive on the site of
what would become Pella. From this first scene, the tension between H. P. and
Mareah is evident: H. P. insists on being called Henry instead of Hendrik now that
they live in America, while Mareah expresses her disappointment in America as
compared to their life in The Netherlands. The second scene is a flashback to The
Netherlands, wherein H. P. overrules Mareah’s desire to remain in the
Netherlands, declares immigration God’s will, angrily denounces Mareah’s father,
who wants the couple to remain in the Netherlands, as the voice of Satan, and
announces that he, as her husband, has the final say over where Mareah will or
won’t go. The third scene relates how, on arrival in Iowa, Mareah discovers all of
her Delft china has been shattered, leading her to bitterly comment to H. P. that
Pella was *his*, not *her*, city of refuge. The fourth scene depicts the (true) story of
how the council from Scholte’s congregation passed a resolution declaring
Mareah too pretty to be a proper minister’s wife; after several scenes in which
Scholte’s character could be interpreted in a negative light, in this scene he shows
his love for Mareah and essentially tells the church council off. The play
subsequently addresses several famous moments from Pella’s history, such as the
mass loyalty oath Pella residents swore to the United States. *The Dominie’s Wife*
concludes with Mareah’s 1892 death and the comment that while many Dutch who came to Pella became Americans, Mareah remained something of an oasis, a “stranger in a strange land.”

In 2005, *Of Wooden Shoes and Windmills*, Van Klompenburg’s third play about Pella and its Dutch heritage, debuted at Tulip Time. Van Klompenburg relates that this play is, in part, a reworking of *Delightfully Dutch* (16). The play’s action is split between scenes set in the present and scenes covering the period of 1848 to 1861. In the scenes set in the present, a Central College student visits her grandfather, a Pella resident and Dutch immigrant, in order to gather material for a report she is writing about her heritage. Initially the student is only interested in what her grandfather has to say insofar as the report is concerned, but as the play progresses she becomes increasingly engaged in learning about her heritage. In the course of their conversation, the grandfather presents much of the trivia presented in the earlier *Delightfully Dutch* script and also reveals his deceased wife was a descendant of original Pella settlers. The scenes set in the past deal with these pioneer ancestors, a husband and wife, followers of Scholte, who initially are faced with the decision of remaining in The Netherlands or immigrating to the United States. Over the concerns of the wife, the husband declares immigration the proper course of action. Once in Pella, the couple and their oldest child struggle with issues of cultural adaptation. The wife wants to hold on to the old ways, but the husband is eager to adopt American customs. Their son, Hendrik, Americanizes his name to Henry and joins the
Union army in 1861. Many of the props and costume pieces used in scenes set in
the past also appear in the present-day scenes, as the granddaughter and
grandfather go through the late grandmother’s hope chest, where she saved many
of these items, despite the fact, as the grandfather puts it, she had wanted to
“dissolve into the American melting pot.”

According to Van Klompenburg, she mobilized “everything I could find”
in researching these plays, ranging from archival documents and correspondence
between immigrants found in the Pella archives to local folklore. For *The
Dominie’s Wife*, Van Klompenburg says that she did her best to remain true to
verifiable historical episodes and long-held Pella traditions about the relationship
between H. P. and Mareah Scholte, adding only one scene without an historical
basis. Similarly, while creating fictional characters for *Of Wooden Shoes and
Windmills*, Van Klompenburg sought to base the incidents depicted in the lives of
these characters on historical facts as much as possible. In both plays, then, her
goal was, she says, to “remain true to history” (interview 17, 18). In this regard,
Van Klompenburg’s plays are interesting because, although all three draw on
many of the same resources other dramatizations of Pella heritage and history
have drawn on, her plays display a willingness, even a desire, to paint a more
complex (and thus arguably more realistic) picture of Dutch heritage and Pella
history. In *Delightfully Dutch*, for instance, Van Klompenburg and Meuzelaar go
much further than other Pella Tulip Time elements in explaining the religion
Scholte and his followers wanted the freedom the practice. First, *Delightfully
Dutch specifically names Calvinist Dutch Reformed churches as the religion of most nineteenth-century Dutch immigrants and also describes the typical church services the immigrants would have attended. Perhaps the most evident way in which Delightfully Dutch emphasizes the traditional Dutch Calvinist way of life is the inclusion of the poems of Sietze Buning. The first of these poems, “Family Calendar,” takes a humorous look at the Dutch Calvinist work ethic and strict Sunday observance practices. In the second poem, “Obedience,” Buning takes a more serious look at his own frustrations with the religious obstinacy of his parents, muses that his sons will probably some day have similar frustrations with him, but hopes that despite such frustrations—or perhaps even because of them—he will pass on to his sons the sense of obedience, religious and otherwise, his Dutch Calvinist parents passed on to him. Thus, just as Delightfully Dutch goes beyond trivia about tulips, wooden shoes, and windmills to present other aspects of Dutch life, it also goes beyond talk of vaguely defined “religious freedom” to give at least a glimpse of the religion the Dutch took to American and which many of their descendants still adhere to, even if in a less pietistic manner than their forbears.

In The Dominie’s Wife and Of Wooden Shoes and Windmills, issues of specificity in religion are not as pronounced as in Delightfully Dutch, but other issues are taken up which present more complicated narratives about Pella’s history and character and take more interest in exploring the character of Pella’s founders, early pioneers, and contemporary residents. In The Dominie’s Wife, for
instance, Van Klompenburg says she and Meuzelaar wanted to explore “Mareah’s conflict with pioneer culture, and who Dominie Scholte was” (interview 18). In other Tulip Time elements, Scholte is usually described as a dynamic pastor who founded Pella out of his desire for religious freedom, but little else is said about his personality. *The Dominie’s Wife* addresses some other aspects of Scholte’s personality, both positive and negative: his absolutist tendencies, exemplified in his stance towards Mareah’s hesitation to leave The Netherlands; his interest in extra-ecclesiastical affairs, as discussed by the narrators at several points in the play; and his artistic background, which is presented as a large part of the reason the artistic Mareah fell in love with him in the first place. Mareah, too, is depicted as a complex character, not simply as Scholte’s beautiful, young wife who disliked frontier life. Her reservations about emigration are cast in a sympathetic light; her reactions to conditions in Iowa are placed in understandable context; and the audience is left to decide for themselves what to make of Mareah’s comment that Pella may have been her husband’s city of refuge, but was not hers. Moreover, Mareah is depicted as ultimately being stronger than many men in her life gave her credit for, since she does, in fact, survive in Pella, refuses to compromise her cultured tastes, and manages to carve out a meaningful, if somewhat separate, existence for herself in Pella. Finally, the scene in which the church council tells Scholte Mareah is too pretty to be a proper dominie’s wife
acknowledges that Pella’s founders, usually spoken of in near-reverent terms during Tulip Time, while certainly pious, were not above preposterous, even somewhat venomous, patriarchal attitudes.

The struggle between Scholte’s acculturation and Mareah’s desire to retain her old ways depicted in The Dominie’s Wife is, in Van Klompenburg’s words, similarly “the rub” in Of Wooden Shoes and Windmills. Most of the action of the play centers around the question of “Do we stay true to our homeland, or do we adapt to the new culture?” (interview 18-19). This is true of the scenes set in the present as well as the past. In the past scenes, this tension is played out as a conflict mainly between the husband and wife characters. From his initial appearance, the husband is enthusiastic about moving to America, which he extols as the land of freedom. Once in America, he constantly sides with American ways when they come into conflict with the Dutch ways the wife is hesitant to leave behind. This is especially true when their son, Hendrik, begins calling himself Henry. The wife is confused and disappointed by this behavior, noting that names have meaning; the husband responds that it isn’t a bad thing, since they are all Americans now. In the same way, the wife only grudgingly gives up the use of klompen, while the husband is eager to do so in order to be more “American.” The climax of this tension comes when Hendrik/Henry enlists in the Union army in 1861. The wife is more upset by this than any previous events;
Henry, backed by his father, tells her that America is now their country, as well as God’s country, and that it must be embraced and defended, whereupon the wife finally capitulates and agree that this is true.

Considered alone, the nineteenth century scenes seemingly endorse the Americanization of the immigrants; the scenes set in present-day Pella, however, undermine this assessment of the message of the play. For example, despite the grandfather character’s remark that his late wife desired to “dissolve into the American melting pot,” when the granddaughter goes through the grandmother’s trunk, discovers the grandmother had in fact saved many traditional Dutch items, suggesting that leaving one’s immigrant heritage behind is not simple. The grandfather, for his part, strives to preserve aspects of his Dutch heritage and endeavors to teach his granddaughter about that heritage, suggesting that forgetting one’s roots is not desirable in the first place. Moreover, as the play ends, the grandfather and granddaughter leave the audience with thoughts and images that emphasize the worth of holding on to one’s immigrant heritage. The grandfather comments that, whatever one does, one “cannot take the Netherlands out of the Dutch--as it should be,” thereby insinuating the nineteenth-century husband only partially correct in his attitudes towards assimilation. The final image of the play is the granddaughter physically reclaiming her previously-ignored Dutch heritage by taking a pair of wooden shoes and other items of her grandmother’s back to her dorm with her. Together, these comments and images suggest dissolving into the melting pot is not desirable, if it is even possible, and
that, while accommodation to a new country is necessary on some level, assimilation is not, nor should it be, the ultimate goal of immigrants and their descendants. Such a message is in keeping with a Delightfully Dutch passage commenting on the fact the Dutch never entirely assimilated into American culture and is also in keeping with the sympathetic portrayal of the non-assimilationist Mareah in The Dominie’s Wife.

Several other aspects of Of Wooden Shoes and Windmills are also worth commenting on, as they intersect with the theme of assimilation (or lack thereof) and serve to present a more complicated picture of Pella’s history than what is usually offered in other aspects of Pella’s Tulip Time. For example, like The Dominie’s Wife, Of Wooden Shoes and Windmills features a female character that interrupts any smooth narrative about the pioneer dream of a “city of refuge” on the Iowa plains. Van Klompenburg says that, after the theme of assimilation, a key concern in writing Wooden Shoes was to show how while “pioneer life for the men was a dream come true; for the women, it was just everything harder” (interview 19). This, of course, is basically the central conflict between Mareah and Scholte in The Dominie’s Wife, and it is also part of the conflict between the husband and wife in Of Wooden Shoes: like Mareah, the wife expresses misgivings about leaving the Netherlands for the American frontier. In both cases, it would seem that the women are the individuals who are the most determined to carry their Dutch roots to the United States, and in Of Wooden
Shoes, it is the deceased grandmother’s trunk that carries the symbols of heritage to the granddaughter, who in turn actively reclaims the heritage certain ancestors would have preferred to give up.

*Of Wooden Shoes and Windmills* also displays a willingness to poke fun of Pella, to offer some criticisms of its founders, and to present a more complicated picture of the motivations that led immigrants to chose life in Iowa over remaining in the Netherlands. The grandfather is the main vehicle for poking fun of Pella: he comments that Pella’s Vermeer Windmill is not a “real” windmill as it only really operates during Tulip Time, makes jokes about Dutch stubbornness and religious factionalism, and wryly comments that decorated wooden shoes, both in the Netherlands an in Pella, are now only worn for tourists. Characters in the nineteenth-century scenes introduce criticism of Pella’s founders: in one scene, the characters complain that Scholte, while a charismatic minister, talks too much; in another scene, a character says the prayer of Pella shopkeepers is “Lord, I pray that I may have more money than anyone else.” Finally, in the first nineteenth-century scene, the economic factors behind Dutch immigration to the United States are touched on, if not emphasized over the religious factors. The husband notes that the United States will present better economic opportunities than The Netherlands, although he comments that the lack of opportunities in the Netherlands is due to the fact that they are being discriminated against by employers since they are followers of Scholte. At the same time, the discussion between husband and wife alludes to the fact that, by 1848, official persecution of
the Seceders had ended, and Willem II was much more willing to tolerate them
than his father had been, thereby offering hope that the lot of Seceders in the
Netherlands would soon improve. While the desire for religious freedom is not
downplayed, it is not allowed to stand alone as the only reason Pella’s early
settlers came to the United States.

On the whole, the three plays Carol Van Klompenburg has written or co-
written that have frequently been performed at Tulip Time over the last 15 years
serve to add a great deal of complexity to the narratives presented in other Tulip
Time theatrical performances, as well as the press coverage and promotional
materials. While they ultimately touch on many of the same “classic” historical
episodes other performances and pageants have, they serve to open up a number
of questions about assimilation, the role of women, and the character of Dominie
Scholte and Pella’s early settlers. Taken together, all three plays also, despite the
title of the latest play, present a picture of Pella’s specific local history and Dutch
heritage which gets beyond a “wooden shoes and windmills” image and invite
audiences--both from within and without Pella-- to think on a more complex level
about the heritage and history celebrated and commemorated during Tulip Time.
In the last two chapters, we have considered the various stories and narratives presented by press coverage, promotional materials, and theatrical elements such as parades, programs, and plays. These stories usually deal with issues of authenticity, town unity, commemoration of town founders, the festival’s ability to promote the staging community, lack of commercialism, and the “clean,” family nature of each celebration. Taken together, these emphases result in each town representing its festival as an occasion for for town residents to join together in the common cause of performing and commemorating each town’s identity in “clean” ways that benefit the staging community. The question, of course, is if this image or representation of each community is in fact accurate, or if there are places where this image breaks down under scrutiny. Given human nature, and the history of Dutch-American factionalism, it comes as no surprise that the town unity modeled in each festival does, in fact, break down from time to time, or does not match with the reality glossed over or concealed by the festival narratives. In this chapter, therefore, I will be examining some of the places where the town unity presented in each festival has broken down in order to consider what these breakdowns or ruptures can tell us about the staging
communities and Dutch-Americans in general. In doing so, I will be analyzing three types of discord that crop up across the five festivals. First, I will examine cases of discord which seem to rise from simple intracommunity disagreements. Second, I will look at several examples in which discord has apparently arisen owing to changes taking place in the staging communities. Third, I will give an account of various ways in which historical Dutch-American religious factionalism has managed to continue to manifest itself in each festival, despite claims in each town that religious divisions have lessened in recent years and despite the unity promoted in each festival. All of these types of discord serve to illustrate both the forces of change and the forces of continuity at work in each community.

7.1 DISAGREEMENTS

In terms of disunity that arises from disagreement among organizers, or between organizers and townspeople, Edgerton furnishes three notable examples. The first relates to lack of cooperation in celebrating heritage; the second relates to disagreement over finances; the third relates to differences of opinion over the place of alcohol at the Dutch Festival, an issue that Pella and Holland have also had to address concerning their Tulip Time celebrations.

Since the 1930s, all of the various Dutch-American communities under study have, to varying degrees, physically articulated their heritage through various decorative landmarks and downtown architectural programs. Holland built an “authentic” Dutch windmill for the 1934 Tulip Time, as did Pella for its
1937 Tulip Time and Orange City for its 1955 festival; Orange City would later build additional large windmill replicas in 1967 and 1974 (*Holland Sentinel* 5 May 1934; 1938 Pella Tulip Time program; VS Scrapbooks IV.1955). In 1965, Holland acquired De Zwaan, a 200-year old windmill, from the Netherlands; at roughly the same time, Pella instituted a Dutch Fronts program designed to remodel downtown businesses in order to give the town a European Dutch feel, an initiative which Orange City also undertook beginning in the 1980s. No doubt inspired by these developments, Edgerton began to contemplate adding Dutch accents to its physical appearance. In 1975, the Edgerton Chamber of Commerce decided to build a replica of a Dutch windmill as a bicentennial project. After a number of delays and modifications owing to the cost of the project, Edgerton’s windmill replica--named the Juist Omdat mill--was completed in time for the 1982 Dutch Festival (*Edgerton Enterprise* 28 April 1982; 7 July 1982).

Soon after the completion of the windmill, discussions began on how to continue to physically accentuate Edgerton’s Dutch image. A 1983 Chamber of Commerce meeting, inspired by Pella’s downtown Dutch Fronts projects, resolved to strongly consider using Dutch architectural motifs for any future downtown remodeling as “the community already has the Dutch Festival as an advertising event” (*Edgerton Enterprise* 16 March 1983). A decade passed before downtown businesses started following this plan, but in the mid-1990s Drooger’s

56 Interestingly, the blueprints for Edgerton’s Dutch windmill replica were based in part on the blueprints for Solvang, California’s Danish windmill (*Edgerton Enterprise* 7 July 1982). Solvang, as it happens, was also the inspiration for Pella’s Dutch Fronts project (*Pella Chronicle* 9 May 1984).
grocery store moved into a new building with a Dutch-style facade featuring shuttered upper-storey windows. Several years later, Drooger’s built an addition to house Bouma’s Meat Market which employed the same Dutch motifs as the original structure; moreover, a new bank was built that incorporated Dutch architectural designs. The Juist Omdat mill, combined with these new downtown buildings, seem to suggest that plans to give Edgerton a more “Dutch” appearance were moving forward slowly but smoothly, with the cooperation of townspeople and the business community.

Such cooperation, however, was not universally the case. From the inception of the project, the Juist Omdat mill was apparently not without its opponents. A 1982 Enterprise article celebrating the mill’s completion and recounting its history notes Dan Schnyders, who spearheaded the project, “had to take constant ribbing from some unsupportive Edgertonites,” which Schnyders attributed to the mill’s cost. Once the mill was under construction, though, Schnyders remarked that the committee received increasingly favorable comments about the structure, leading the Enterprise to observe that “the very presence of the mill has caused some critics to change their opinion” (7 July 1982). While certain Edgerton residents may have been unsupportive regarding the windmill, others have more recently been flatly uncooperative regarding the Chamber of Commerce’s desire to give the downtown a Dutch appearance. In
2005, local businessman Larry Punt built a new Main Street business without a Dutch front, provoking frustration on the part of Dan Schnyders, also the driving force behind Edgerton’s Dutch fronts project:

[...]

The refusal of one building to cooperate in putting on a Dutch front may seem insignificant, but in a town the size of Edgerton, each new building is a major landmark, and the refusal of one person to cooperate, especially on a visible Main Street structure, does much to shatter any appearance of unity, as far as giving the town a Dutch image goes. Even if such a disagreement, or failure to cooperate (or enforce) is only a little rumble, Liz De Boer makes an observation that could be true of any small (Dutch-American) town: “Little rumbles in Edgerton are not...short-lived” (Mel and Liz De Boer interview 11).

A more pronounced case of disagreement, or lack of common purpose, in regards to the Dutch Festival itself, came in 1997, when the Festival was almost discontinued. In late January and early February of 1997, the Edgerton Chamber of Commerce somewhat unexpectedly found themselves in the midst of a discussion about whether or not to continue the Dutch Festival owing to 1) a lack of volunteers necessary to run the festival, and 2) financial difficulties involving the depletion of the festival’s “rainy day” fund. In discussing what to do concerning these substantial difficulties, certain members “talked about accepting
changing times and dropping the festival;” these voices nearly won out, as “a motion was made and seconded to drop the celebration for 1997 unless people come forward with a show of support and leadership.” Rather than vote on the motion, the Chamber instead decided to conduct a poll of Chamber members in order to decide how to proceed on the matter of the Dutch Festival (Edgerton Enterprise 5 February 1997). The poll revealed that 25 of 44 Chamber members favored continuing the festival, while 19 opposed doing so. Meanwhile, news of the festival’s potential demise spurred several volunteers to come forward to ensure the festival’s survival (19 February 1997). According to Mel and Liz De Boer, these volunteers represented something of a changing of the guard: previously, the festival committee had generally consisted mostly of roughly middle-aged individuals, but beginning with the 1997 Dutch Festival and continuing to the present, the committee has been run almost entirely by younger people in their 20s or early 30s (Mel and Liz De Boer interview 10).

This changing of the guard contributed to a significant Dutch Festival flashpoint the following year. Among the volunteers who had saved the 1997 festival was Ron Menning, who had previously served as a committee member. In returning to the committee, though, Menning made it clear that he would remain on the committee only if certain changes were made to ensure the Festival’s “rainy day” fund could be replenished and that the Festival stop operating “from year to year on a zero balance” (Edgerton Enterprise 15 April 1998). Menning argued the best way to accomplish these financial goals was to
revive a practice that had been discontinued several years before: setting up roadblocks on the main roads into Edgerton during the festival and asking incoming motorists for donations. This practice, established in the festival’s early years, had been discontinued owing to visitors’ complaints about having to “pay” to come to the festival, but the discontinuation of this procedure was apparently a major contributing factor to the Dutch Festival’s 1997 financial difficulties. When no other ideas for increasing revenue were presented and Menning’s idea of resuming the road collection was rejected, Menning resigned from the committee, creating another “little rumble.” Owen Tinklenburg, the 1998 committee chair, explained that the rest of the committee had felt the road collections made Edgerton look cheap; moreover, the Precious Moments company, scheduled to send its traveling “Care-A-Van” display of the popular figurines to the Dutch Festival, threatened to cancel its visit if even the appearance of an admission charge was in place (15 April 1998). Evidently, then, despite press representations of the Dutch Festival as a way to bring unity to Edgerton, in 1998 it managed to accomplish just the opposite.

A final example of disunity and disagreement regarding Edgerton’s Dutch Festival began in 2001 and continues to elicit grumbles from some Edgerton residents. While Dutch immigrants to the United States and their descendants were not and are not teetotalers, public consumption of alcohol has always been looked on with disfavor in Dutch Calvinist circles. In 2001, however, the Dutch Festival committee once again faced financial trouble. Jeff Van Dyke, the 2001
Festival chair, accordingly felt something had to be done in order to make the Festival profitable. With the rest of the committee, Van Dyke developed a plan to bring the Johnny Holm band, a popular cover band known for its sometimes-raucous street dances, to the Dutch Festival. While the band itself was not always responsible for the goings-on at its performance, by 2001 it had a reputation with a fairly extensive history. Van Dyke, however, recognized that bringing Holm to the festival would, in all likelihood, mean vastly increased revenue owing both to Holm’s preexisting following and to the novelty value of Holm performing in Edgerton, of all places. The catch was that Van Dyke and the Festival committee wanted to beer (as well as other concessions) to be available at the event (Van Dyke interview 4).

When the committee approached the City Council for permission to use city land for the Johnny Holm concert, the divisive nature of the event was immediately evident, since the four-member Council cast two votes for, two votes against the proposal; mayor Jim Achterhoff broke the tie in favor of the festival committee’s plan. According to the Enterprise, Ev Kroschell, one of the Council members who voted against the proposal, spoke “not against the concept of dancing, but against the beer that seemed to have to go along with it. ‘I don’t think Edgerton’s ready for it,’ he said, ‘so I can’t support it’” (11 April 2001). Kroschell’s views were held by members of the community at large: at an early May City Council meeting, two individuals attended the meeting specifically to ask the Council not to allow the band at the Dutch Festival. The Council
responded that the choice to have a band belonged to the festival committee and the Chamber of Commerce; the City Council only was involved insofar as the festival committee wanted to hold the event on city land (9 May 2001).

Jeff Van Dyke recalls that the process of securing the Chamber of Commerce’s approval for the Johnny Holm concert also indicated disagreement on the part of business leaders about allowing beer sales at the Dutch Festival. The Chamber, Van Dyke says, voted on whether or not to allow the event “two or three times;” although the Chamber did eventually approve the concert, doing so involved overcoming attitudes Van Dyke says were “set by this ‘We have to portray this example, or we can’t do this, because, you know, we can’t--this is Edgerton! We can’t have something like that!’” (interview 5). Coverage of the Chamber discussion of whether or not to allow the event indicates that the perceived opposition between alcohol and the Dutch Festival’s clean, family image was the main sticking point for some individuals. Festival committee member Dave Schaap, along with Van Dyke, sought to address this issue head on at a 7 May 2001 open Chamber meeting. They argued that, on the one hand, “beer is already part of the community and that this [beer sales] will not get rid of the traditional parade and midway;” on the other hand, Van Dyke emphasized that the beer sales were only one aspect of concessions sales designed to make the Dutch Festival profitable on the whole (Edgerton Enterprise 9 May 2001). After
the Chamber finally approved the beer sales and the concert, the Enterprise offered one last succinct statement as to why the proposal had attracted such comment in the first place:

Beer will be only one part of the food and drink sales available, but it was the only controversial one. Some people objected because the festival has not had beer sales tied to any of its events in recent years and perhaps never. For many years beer has been sold in Edgerton, even during the festival, but not in association with any [Dutch Festival] committee-sponsored event. (16 May 2001)

Van Dyke comments that, in the end, the concert and beer sales accomplished exactly what he had hoped, in that the event was “the only reason the Festival made money that year, and it pulled us out of the red” (interview 5). Probably owing to the fact the 2001 concert passed without incident, in 2002, the following year the Dutch Festival committee was granted permission to sell beer at the entertainment events both evenings of the festival (Edgerton Enterprise 10 July 2002). Since then, beer sales have been a regular feature at Dutch Festival evening entertainment events, be they concerts, rodeos, tractor pulls, or dances. Still, more than five years on, beer sales at the Festival remain controversial, even if most Edgerton residents have accepted that the change as more or less permanent, and that the Festival has not, as a whole, been negatively impacted by the beer sales. Faith De Kam, for example, notes that the decision to include beer at the concerts “was a big thing,” although “when they did have it, it didn’t really amount to anything” (interview 8-9). Similarly, Dan Schnyders comments that “I don’t know if we need the beer gardens and stuff like that,” but concedes this attitude is “probably just showing my age.” Furthermore, Schnyders
acknowledges that revenue-generating events that attract younger audiences are necessary for the Festival’s well-being, and that beer sales have not negatively impacted the Festival (interview 16-17). And Mel De Boer offers a comment which, I think, accurately characterizes the beer controversy as having been more about a particular image of Edgerton than the beer itself:

No, it hasn’t been a problem, I don’t think. It’s been handled well. [. . .] But Edgerton, as a whole, wanted to be a dry community, at least publicly, and obviously there are always people that aren’t dry, but as a community we wanted to keep that. So that was kind of hard to make that switch, except alcohol is served, you know, at the events, now. That was a troubling issue [. . .] (Mel and Liz De Boer interview 12)

Edgerton is not the only Dutch-American community to have been troubled by the issue of public alcohol sales and consumption during its town celebration. In Pella in previous years, according to Sue Brandl, outside beer companies offered to pay for the entire Festival in exchange for permission to operate a beer tent, but were rejected on the grounds that once beer tents are allowed in, “you lose the whole family atmosphere” (interview 19). Similarly, in more recent years the Tulip Time Steering Committee has faced the prospect of local business owners wanted to operate beer tents. Former Pella Historical Society president Merlyn Vander Leest relates that in the near past, he was chosen to ask such business people to change their plans for a beer tent, with the result that he “made some probably lifetime enemies out of it [. . .] to this day one of the two people I had to talk with won’t hardly talk to me, and I don’t feel that bad about it, because [beer] doesn’t belong in our Tulip Festival” (interview 10-11). And beer-related disagreement also has taken place in Holland in recent years. A
6 May 2003 *Holland Sentinel* editorial by Mike Lozon opined that Tulip Time had strayed from founder Lida Rogers’s original vision by, among other things, allowing a “family-unfriendly” beer tent to start operating. Lozon’s criticisms resonated with certain Holland townspeople, but also drew critical retorts from readers who felt the beer tent had not created any problems or turned Tulip Time into a drunken party. One of these readers, Steve Shannon, cited Lozon’s hostility to beer sales as an example of why Holland was “notorious” for “unrealistic, overblown” reactions to change and suffered from a “Dutch, better-than-thou” attitude (11 May 2003).

In all of these examples, we see ways in which the celebration of Dutch identity, which, according to most of the narratives present in festival elements, is supposed to be a unifying force, actually succeeds in sparking disagreement. In regards to the alcohol-related disagreements, Edgerton, Pella, and Holland have all been concerned with maintaining a family-friendly--one is tempted to say clean--image and atmosphere. In Edgerton’s case, reasoning based on financial imperatives ultimately resulted in beer sales being incorporated into the Dutch Festival; in Pella, the desire to maintain a clean, family image continues to succeed in keeping beer sales out of Tulip Time. In both cases, one imagines Liz De Boer’s comments about little rumbles having long lives likely applies, meaning that disagreements over the place of alcohol in these heritage celebrations probably will continue to be divisive influences in these communities for some time. In any case, Edgerton’s disagreement over alcohol, rooted at least
in part in the necessity of addressing the need for changes in the Dutch Festival in the face of changing financial realities, points in the direction of other examples of discord resulting from another changing reality: that of town demographics.

7.2 DEMOGRAPHICS

Each of the five towns in this study was, at the time its celebration of Dutch heritage began, a more or less homogeneously Dutch-American community. Times change, however. Today, only about one-third of Holland inhabitants are of Dutch descent. In Pella and Fulton, the percentage of Dutch-Americans is significantly higher, but demographics in these communities have also undergone significant changes in recent decades. As all three communities explicitly refer to their festivals as ways to bring the community together, it is therefore particularly interesting to look at an example from each town where such rhetoric has at least been temporarily undercut by incidents which point to ethnic or racial tensions that do in fact exist in the face of demographic changes.

More than any of the other celebrations, Fulton’s Dutch Days has consistently maintained a particular set of statements as to what the Festival means and does for the staging community: it celebrates the town’s Dutch heritage and fosters a sense of unity among Dutch and non-Dutch community members alike. The focus on the potentially unifying effect of Dutch Days may be due in part to certain tensions present in Fulton in the late 1970s and early 1980s between the Dutch-American townspeople and a certain portion of the non-Dutch inhabitants, or else between Fulton Dutch Calvinists and other residents.
These tensions found their fullest articulation in late 1981 and early 1982, but were evident in print as early as 1978. In response to a 26 April 1978 letter to the editor opposing the proposal that Fulton’s tavern hours be extended to 1 a.m. Sunday morning, the 3 May 1978 Fulton Journal published a letter from Verlin J. Baker that protested the imposition of one’s moral or religious values on others. In the course of his letter, Baker commented that the largest Christian group in Fulton were “ultra-religious” and “Reformist;” that Fulton’s “Reformist” ministers wanted more people in church on Sundays to keep the collection plates full and thus pay for ministers’ children’s college tuition; and that Fulton’s “city hall is run by the Reformed Churches. Warren Wiersema is not the Mayor in this Community either, he is the Burgomaster year round; not just on Dutch Days” (3 May 1978). Evidently, then, at least one Fulton resident felt the town’s Dutch-American, Calvinist mayor looked out for the welfare of his co-religionist Dutch-Americans, presumably at the expense of Fulton residents outside his associates.

The week after Baker’s screed, a flurry of letters disputed many of his charges, including the supposed Dutch Calvinist control of city hall (10 May 1978); thereafter, nothing more on this matter appeared in the Journal. Even so, Baker’s letter indicates there was some “anti-Dutch” or “anti-Reformist” sentiment in Fulton in 1978. Interestingly, the 10 May 1978 Journal also included a report on Dutch Days that emphasized the unity the celebration afforded: “Fulton’s rich Dutch heritage was recognized in many ways, with the added thrust of an international float that emphasized that all residents of Fulton, whatever
their national origin, are American.” Similar sentiments were repeated over the next four years: “For at least one weekend out of the year, the Dutch and non-Dutch of Fulton come together and celebrate Fulton’s Dutch heritage” (30 April 1980); “Working together--that’s what it’s all about!” (6 May 1981); “The Dutch are quite understanding of those with different ethnic origins” (5 May 1982). One wonders if such an emphasis on unity was designed to offset bad feelings like those suggested by Baker’s letter.

Whatever the case, Dutch- and non-Dutch-American tensions flared up to an even greater extent in 1981. Throughout its history, Fulton, situated on the Mississippi River, experienced spring floods. Eventually, the federal government built a dike to stop the flooding, and in late 1981 funds for the dike’s beautification were made available. The committee formed to decide what do with the funds concluded a landmark should be built on or near the dike. The committee suggested three landmark options: an authentic windmill to reflect Fulton’s predominant ethnic heritage; a sawmill to reflect Fulton’s early industrial heritage; or a steamboat to reflect the famous accomplishment of the man after which Fulton was named (Fulton Journal 11 November 1981). Residents were encouraged to vote for and comment on their favorite idea, and the results were published in the 16 December 1981 Journal. Of 103 ballots cast, 93 favored the windmill proposal, and many comments in favor of this idea stressed the voter was not him or herself Dutch, but felt the Dutch heritage of the town, combined with the fact no other nearby town could boast a windmill, while others could
boast a steamboat or sawmill, made the windmill the right choice. Many of the voters who favored another landmark, however, took the opportunity to air surprisingly savage opinions of the town’s Dutch-American residents, as well as the Dutch Days Festival:

We are not all Holland. Let it represent all nationalities. We are close to the river and known by all as Steamer country. [. . .] I feel it [steamboat] would represent this town better and more fairly than the other things. It fits in real well with our athletic program along with the fact that we are a river city. [. . .] This river is our heritage, not a windmill. Let it represent ALL, not one group. If they want a windmill put it in their own yard, not the City’s. We know how it will turn out!! All cut and dried. [. . .] I also object to the sign carried around at the end of a recent Dutch Day parade--“If you aren’t Dutch, you aren’t much!” [. . .] Do the Dutch feel they are better than the rest of the community? Cut out Dutch Days, too. [. . .] The steamboat represents the extensive use of the Mississippi river. We are not all Dutch. The windmill represents a definite portion of only a part of Fulton. Personally, I am sick of Dutch Days. There is a definite trend for the Dutch to patronize only Dutch owned businesses.

As we shall see momentarily, other, unwritten things were apparently also said about Fulton’s Dutch-Americans. At this point, however, the issue of Fulton’s dike beautification became entangled in local politics. In 1981, Mayor Warren Wiersema declined to run for reelection, but then changed his mind and entered the race as a write-in candidate at the last minute. Despite this last-second change of heart, Peter Maliszewski, who had run virtually unopposed until Wiersema’s abrupt reentry, easily won the election. When Maliszewski then began taking unpopular stands, such as pushing for more Fulton establishments to
be granted liquor licenses,57 Wiersema began writing letters to the editor in the 
Journal expressing his opposition to these developments. Wiersema, part of the 
dike beautification committee, also expressed his concerns that the majority of 
voters regarding the dike landmark “will not be considered with regard to the 
symbol on the new levee.” Wiersema commented that while nobody was trying 
to force anyone else to be Dutch, “now when we’re dubbed ‘dyke climbers’ it can 
literally include everyone in Fulton” (16 December 1981). This comment may 
suggest that the old anti-Dutch epithet was being used in conversations about the 
dike beautification plans.

The next week, Mayor Maliszewski responded to the committee report, 
expressing reservations about the windmill idea:

As a public body was it and also is it a function for it to decide on what 
could be considered an ethnic symbol to represent all of the city? I’m 
fully aware of the large Dutch American segment of people here but 
worried about making the move on a purely governmental basis of using a 
windmill to signify Fulton as a Dutch American city. [. . .] I would be 
considerably less worried if the private and business sector had already 
started to move to create a Dutch American town in the physical sense. 
But as one goes through our town there is very little one can see to 
physically denote Fulton as a Dutch American community. Even going 
through downtown the merchants haven’t used the Dutch American 
heritage to their advantage (as I’ve been told would be the case with a 
windmill). (Fulton Journal 23 December 1981)

Maliszewski went on the recommend “That a master plan be developed that 
would take into consideration the whole city as it is now and what direction it will

57 An example of Maliszweski’s support for more liquor licenses can be found a 
year later: “Well, I’d like to think of this city as a friendly community where we 
can all get along. And we all seem to get along, with the present liquor license 
holders. I don’t see why, for all their benefits, we couldn’t get along with another 
restaurant or convenience store that might want to sell liquor” (5 January 1983).
realistically grow” and that a group separate from the current beautification committee (which, again, included Wiersema) be made responsible for the landmark. The next week, a letter appeared from Muriel Kooi, former Fulton resident (and currently a Pella historian), expressing her frustration with the controversy and commenting that she “had though the people of Fulton were beyond ethnic slurring and controversy but...” again suggesting the debate had gotten much nastier beyond what was printed in the paper (31 December 1981). Despite this controversy, in the end the windmill plan was approved in January 1983. Maliszewski, meanwhile, succeeded in alienating the entire City Council when he refused to explain his refusal to rehire the town’s longtime police chief in May 1984 and abruptly left town in December 1984 to take a job with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (2 May 1984; 19 December 1984).

As for the windmill, money was slowly but surely raised, and in 2000 it was built in the Netherlands and moved to Fulton in time for a dedication at the 2001 Dutch Days Festival.

Although these events took place nearly a quarter of a century ago, December of 1981 is still strikingly recent for the purposes of encountering the surprising ethnic animosity displayed in Fulton in regards to the dike beautification project. The angry reactions and clear resentment articulated by Verlin Baker in 1978 and anonymous Fulton residents in 1981 clearly indicate that heritage and ethnicity still were distinctions that carried meaning. Being Dutch meant something to at least some people in Fulton, and involved some
pattern of behavior that marked the Dutch as different, and not in a good way. That this would happen in a small, midwestern town populated mostly by people of European descent as recently as the 1980s is surprising indeed, and indicates that European ethnicity is not simply symbolic. If being Dutch in Fulton was merely a matter of tracing genealogy and putting on costumes for and serving food to outsiders, how could it have gotten other Fulton residents so genuinely upset? In any case, while coverage may have claimed that all Fulton residents happily collaborate to make Dutch Days a success, as of the early 1980s it was decidedly not entirely the case.

At roughly the same time Fulton was experiencing the controversy over whether or not to build a windmill on the dike, certain incidents in Pella threatened to mar the town’s image as an inclusive, freedom-loving City of Refuge. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Pella became a haven for a number of Southeast Asian families. Most townspeople welcomed these new residents, and in 1982 a group of them marched as a unit in the Tulip Time parade. This occasioned a letter of praise from Emma Lou Heusinkveld, who observed these recent immigrants marked a new phase in Pella’s legacy as a City of Refuge:

I really liked the addition of the Southeast Asians to be 1982 parade. They are a part of Pella’s recent history in the spirit of “City of Refuge.” They are colorful and attractive in their festival costumes. I hope that having them in the parade emphasizes to them that people in Pella are glad they are here and want them to be a part of our community. I thank them for being in the parade. (Pella Chronicle 19 May 1982)

Unfortunately, not everyone was as welcoming. In the summer of 1984, a Chronicle article profiled a Vietnamese family that complained of repeated
harassment by high school students during the previous year. Recently, the family said, the problem had escalated to a point where property was being destroyed. The article reported that another Vietnamese family had recently moved out of town owing to similar harassment (27 June 1984). An editorial commented that such events were not good for a City of Refuge image; however, the editorial quickly moved beyond such concern with the town’s image to ask some deeper questions about adhering to the town’s supposed ideals of providing refuge:

Has the welcome mat of “The City of Refuge” been tucked away and forgotten about? Or does Pella’s “refuge” extend only the people of a certain color or background? […] The sad part of this story is that this ignorant violence is probably the work of a handful of people and doesn’t reflect the views of the majority of the people in town. At least we hope not. But the blame must be shared by others, too. As one concerned resident put it, “I would say the neighbors of these families are just as much at fault as are those who create the destruction.” […] We hope somebody does not have to be seriously injured before someone wakes up and realizes that the actions of a few people out there are tarnishing Pella’s image as “The City of Refuge.” (27 June 1984)

Whether or not the perpetrators of the harassment were ever caught, the Chronicle editorial certainly is correct that such incidents tarnished—dirtied—Pella’s clean reputation as a “City of Refuge;” moreover, the harassment indicates that if town unity was, in fact, achieved during Tulip Time, it did not necessarily extend to all quarters beyond the boundaries of Festival time.

A much more intricate and sustained example of potential discord owing to racial differences can be found in recent developments in Holland’s Tulip Time. As of this writing, it seems as though, for the most part, these potential
tensions have been successfully dealt with, although there have been occasional points of friction. Although once a nearly homogenous Dutch-American enclave, today, only about a third of Holland’s residents are of Dutch descent, and nonwhite minorities have made significant population inroads, especially Latinos/as, who constitute somewhere between one-fifth and one-quarter of Holland’s population; people of Asian origin or descent also form a significant and visible minority in Holland. Such marked changes in Holland’s population since 1929 have inevitably resulted in changes within Tulip Time itself, if nowhere else in the skin tone of the various participants. Today, one sees children marching in the Kinderparade who may or may not be Dutch, but one definitely sees children of Latin American, Asian, or even African American descent; the same is true of the high school Dutch Dancers (and will no doubt be increasingly common in regards to Alumni Dancers) and members of the various area marching bands.

In regards to the increasing numbers of Latinos, in particular, involved in various Tulip Time activities, some longtime Holland residents expressed certain misgivings about what Holland’s changing demographics might mean for the Festival when interviewed for the 1995 Hope College Tulip Time Oral History project. These individuals were not opposed to the changing demographics or increased diversity in Tulip Time, but they did express concern over what other changes could follow. Andy Van Slot, for example, when questioned about Holland’s growing ethnic diversity, stated that he felt the Tulip Time board would
have to stick to Tulip Time’s Dutch theme and keep the Festival the same “regardless” of the ethnic background of the participants; more explicitly, Van Slot stated that minorities were welcome to be Tulip Time participants, “But don’t try and make [Tulip Time] something other than Dutch” (5). Jaap de Blecourt similarly wondered if, eventually, a degree of Tulip Time strife might result from Holland’s minorities, currently participants in Tulip Time, might want to start celebrating their own culture (7). Larry Overbeek, while explicitly stating that Holland, as a city, was a better place owing to its increasing diversity, wondered if that diversity, as reflected in Tulip Time, threatened to “get away from the idea that it is a Dutch cultural festival [. . .] If you lose that sense of direction with it, you lose something” (3-4). And Jack Leenhouts specifically spoke to the potential for Tulip Time straying from its roots and the threat of competition from other ethnic celebration festivals in Holland:

I always think that it's kind of strange when they have Dutch dancing on the street, and you see Cambodians, Latinos, Koreans dressed in Dutch costumes and doing the Dutch dance. Now maybe that’s the times, maybe our visitors think that's wonderful and fine, but I think it’s a departure from the Dutch tradition, the Dutch heritage; when everybody in the parade and in the schools, had a Dutch name [. . .] In a sense, the diversity has added competition, which I'm not so sure is a good thing. We’ve had the tulip festival. We’ve had it for fifty years or more, and now the Latinos have to have a Latino festival of their own, at the same time, in competition. So, in that respect, it hasn’t been good I don't think. (3)

At the same time, other longtime Holland residents and key Tulip Time figures, when interviewed for the Oral History project, took more optimistic views of Holland’s diversity as it pertained to Tulip Time. Kristi Van Howe, a former director of Tulip Time, Inc., commented that the “blending” of Latino, Asian, and
white kids during the Klompen Dances was “a celebration of our likeness or our sameness instead of our diversity” (5), and Steve Zwiep commented that “Hispanics who have come to Holland have a story, they have a story to tell too, from settling here and moving away from their homeland, so why can’t we recognize that as well, I guess?” (5).

If the foregoing comments from Holland residents of Dutch descent indicate mixed responses to Holland’s increasing diversity in relation to Tulip Time, various reports over the years indicate that Holland’s Latino community has also had mixed responses to Tulip Time. A 1991 article entitled “Hispanics feel pride, pain during festival” profiled several different local Latinos with varying responses to Tulip Time. Esther Ramirez, Holland Public Schools’ bilingual migrant office secretary, noted that she and her friends had often heard festivalgoers laugh and ask why Latino kids were in Dutch costumes. The cumulative result of such comments, Ramirez said, “[has] dampened my spirits. It’s gotten to the point a lot of us feel we don’t look as forward to [Tulip Time] as we should. We live here and we’re part of the celebration.” By contrast, Julio Rios, a Puerto Rican who had lived in Holland for seven years as 1991, remarked that he felt the Dutch and Puerto Ricans were similar, in that they both are hard-working family people with strong faith. As such, Rios stated, Puerto Ricans could learn a lot from the pride Holland’s Dutch residents took in displaying their heritage. Monica Giddy agreed with this assessment, but also spoke to how many local Latinos felt that, as non-Dutch people, they were left out of the Festival.
And Andrew Fierro, a local minister, praised Tulip Time’s promotion of solidarity and wholesomeness but also noted that Tulip Time need not be exclusively Dutch (Holland Sentinel 8 May 1991).

Ten years later, a number of individuals, Latino and otherwise, voiced similar feelings that, while a good thing, Tulip Time could do more to embrace Holland’s increasing diversity. In an article titled “Dutch with diversity,” Festival organizers stated that their goal was “to keep Tulip Time a celebration of Dutch heritage at its core, but expand events and entertainment to reflect how diverse the Holland area is becoming.” Mary Duistermars, the head of Tulip Time, said that the festival was “Not designed to exclude” and “it has tried to involve a variety of ethnic groups and cultures” in a variety of the recently added events. Esmerlda Garza, a local student, commented that Tulip Time was fun, and so, accordingly, she had gotten involved with klompen dancing. On the other hand, Wayne Coleman, pastor of Holland’s Church of the Burning Bush, said he believed Tulip Time could be more diverse, could appeal to more cultures, and should focus on how the Dutch interact with other cultures and what other cultures have contributed to Holland. In a similar vein, Latin Americans United for Progress (LAUP) president Teresa Lamb commented that, while different groups in Holland were more willing to listen to each other than had once been the case, there still remained a need for Holland’s various communities to learn more about each other (Holland Sentinel 15 May 2001). In both 1991 and 2001, then, it would seem that Holland’s Latino community was concerned with precisely the
sorts of things some of the 1995 Oral History interviewees expressed worries about: finding ways for Tulip Time to be more inclusive of Holland’s non-Dutch inhabitants and their cultures.

One way in which Tulip Time has itself demonstrated a commitment to being more inclusive of Holland’s diverse population is the 2002 incorporation of the LAUP Cinco de Mayo Fiesta into the official Tulip Time calendar. LAUP began its annual Fiesta, always held on the first Saturday in May, in 1965. For many years, the Fiesta always fell a week or two before the start of Tulip Time. Changing climate patterns, though, began to create problems for Tulip Time, insofar as the tulips began blooming earlier in May than had been the case during the festival’s first several decades. The result, in some years, was a “stem festival” (also a problem for Pella Tulip Time in the late 1970s and 1980s). To ensure Tulip Time coincided with the peak blooming the the tulips, the decision was made in 1991 to being Tulip Time week on the first Saturday in May, the same weekend as the LAUP Fiesta. The two festivals seem to have peacefully coexisted; the only report that even mentions the overlap simply mentions that some Tulip Time tourists, in town for the first Saturday of the Festival, were surprised to find the LAUP Fiesta underway in the Civic Center, the usual home of the Tulip Time office during the Festival.

Despite the lack of any clearly articulated friction between the two events, the reports from 1991 and 2001 cited above indicate many Holland inhabitants felt more could be done to promote cultural understanding during both events.
(especially Tulip Time). This feeling may have been amplified in 1998, when a local Latino youth, for reasons he never exactly explained, used his car door to mow down a number of the tulip lanes along Holland’s main streets. While reports of the incident never made the young man’s ethnicity an issue, his name a photograph clearly betrayed his heritage. Whatever the effect of this altercation, in 2002 Tulip Time and the LAUP Fiesta began actively collaborating with each other in two ways: the Fiesta was advertised in Tulip Time promotional literature, and both organizations collaborated on financing a carnival midway. Both arrangements remain in place at present. While this collaboration may demonstrate the ability of the two groups to harmoniously coexist and cross-promote each other, certain clues indicate tensions remain concerning this arrangement. On the one hand, Mike Lozon wrote an editorial in the *Sentinel* blasting the addition of the carnival to Tulip Time as a departure from Lida Rogers’ original Tulip Time vision (4 May 2002). On the other hand, 23 April 2002 LAUP Fiesta committee minutes contain an interesting comment: “Joe will see to it that Mayor is on time [for his Fiesta presentation] and that no Dutch costume is worn by him.” Apparently Fiesta organizers were concerned mayor Al McGeehan might attempt to inject Dutch elements into the Latino celebration. One wonders if this had happened before: Tulip Time and the Fiesta have overlapped since 1991, and Holland’s mayor began making yearly Fiesta appearances long before 2002. At any rate, while the collaboration between LAUP and Tulip Time certainly demonstrates the possibility of cooperation
between more traditional and more recent cultural groups in a community, there is, perhaps, a more complex story, or untold stories, behind this apparent coexistence and unity.

7.3 DENOMINATIONAL FACTIONALISM

To this point, the examples of discord dealt with have dealt with tensions that result from policy disagreements or ethnic/racial differences that have become more prominent in recent decades. Historically, however, the main divide in Dutch-American communities has been between religious denominations. As noted in Chapter 2, nearly every Dutch-American town has at least one CRC and RCA congregation, even in towns so small that the existence of two churches with the same cultural, ethnic, and theological background would, to the outsider, seem mind-boggling and unnecessarily divisive. Today, 150 years after the initial split which created the CRC, both denominations continue to thrive. The main difference between the two remains the CRC’s support of private primary and secondary schools, a position the RCA, in general, does not share. Divisions between the CRC and RCA factions in a given town continue to remain salient today, although the divisions between the two groups have softened in many ways. In the more distant past, the two groups would often times refuse to interact with each other on a meaningful basis; this is no longer the case. A CRC person will likely have many RCA friends, for example, and increasingly CRC and RCA young people intermarry. Even so, the school issue draws a sharp distinction between the two groups, and will likely continue to do
so into the foreseeable future. As a result, it is not uncommon for children (and parents) from the two groups to develop rivalries. Depending on the character and mentality of the individuals involved at a given moment in a given community, such rivalries may or may not be friendly. Accordingly, the question for the remainder of this chapter is: if the RCA/CRC distinction has remained relevant to the present, has this distinction been detectable in the five festivals, in spite of festival claims of unity? Moreover, how does this presence--or lack thereof--square with what townspeople in each of these communities have to say about any continued RCA/CRC distinction? Generally speaking, there are two ways in which my research uncovered persistent RCA/CRC tensions. On the one hand, there are several ways in which close observation of certain festival elements, especially the parades, reveals the RCA/CRC divide in each community. On the other hand, certain individuals from certain towns have spoken to other, behind-the-scenes ways in which the divide continues to manifest itself in regards to their festivals.

In terms of festival elements, the most obvious place one is likely to detect the continuing RCA/CRC divide in the parades. In all five communities, the parades feature bands or other marching units from the local schools; accordingly, visitors see students from both the public and Christian school systems. While evident in each community, the dual school systems are perhaps most evident in Holland’s Kinderparade. Here, in addition to the various school bands, each school’s marching children are led by a banner bearing the name of the school and
the Dutch theme the students are marching to. During the 2005 Kinderparade, besides thirteen public grade schools, two private academies, a Catholic school and a Baptist school, five Christian schools marched. 2005 audience members registered the difference between the Christian and specifically Baptist or Catholic grade schools: several persons seated near me along the Kinderparade route marveled at the number of Christian schools marching and wondered what, exactly, Christian meant in regard to these schools. Interestingly, the 2005 Kinderparade was also organized in such a way as to emphasize the private and public school systems. Apart from the various school bands that participated in the parade, the five CRC-affiliated Christian schools headed the procession, followed by the thirteen public grade schools, with the Catholic school, the two academies, and the Baptist school bringing up the rear. Whether or not this pattern is evident to the casual observer, it nevertheless exhibits, even reinforces, a distinction between the public, CRC-affiliated private Christian, and other private schools.

Similar patterns of private and public school distinction are evident in the other festival parades. Pre-parade entertainment in Fulton often features musical ensembles from both the local public and Christian schools (see Fulton Journal 29 April 1993, for example), and in 2006 the parade included the Fulton High School marching band, a float from the Fulton elementary school, and Unity Christian School elementary students marching in costume. In Edgerton, often times both the Edgerton High and Southwest Christian High bands participate,
and in 2006 the two school systems were represented in the parade by the
Southwest Christian drum line and a float carrying the 2005 Edgerton High
football team, which had advanced far into the postseason tournaments. Orange
City’s 2006 Tulip Festival parades featured, as usual, bands from Orange City
Christian School and the highly touted Maurice-Orange City-Floyd Valley High
“Pride of the Dutchmen” band, which marches in Dutch-looking costumes and
wooden shoes. One CRC/Christian school-affiliated Orange City resident even
commented to me that the emphasis on the Pride of the Dutchmen can sometimes
“feel a little overwhelming once in a while, or a little much,” but she hastened to
add that she, too, enjoys watching the MOCFV band march (Sheryl and Sarah
Slagers interview 16). And in Pella, besides the participation of marching bands
from both school systems, costumed students from both school systems march in
the Volks Parade but do so separately. This separation may merely be a logistical
matter, but Lisa Jaarsma Zylstra comments that the two systems “switch positions
every year, so that there isn’t a dominant” one (Jaarsma/Zylstra interview 16).

In both Holland and Pella, klompen dance groups also reflects the dual
school systems, which in turn reflect the continued CRC/RCA divide. In the past,
Holland Christian and Pella Christian school dancers were absent from the
klompen dances due to the CRC’s hardline stance on dance and other worldly
entertainments. As such views softened, Christian school students began to
participate in klompen dances: Holland Christian High students first participated
in Holland’s Klompen dances at the 1967 Tulip Time, while in Pella, Christian
High students began participating sometime in the early 1970s (Kraver/Zylstra interview 35). While both public and Christian school students participate in the Klompen dancing in both communities today, the public/Christian school division is still evident. In Holland, six different high schools contribute Klompen dancers; in most literature concerning the dancers and in the narration that accompanies most dancer performances, all six contributing schools are named, and Holland Christian (which, incidentally, currently provides more dancers than any of the other schools) stands out as the only Christian high school. While once conspicuous in its absence from the Klompen dances, Holland Christian is now arguably conspicuous in its presence. In Pella, the public/Christian school division is evident in the narration that accompanies the performances of the Dutchesses, a group of sixteen high school girls. During this narration, the speaker always points out that eight girls are drawn from each school system thus, as a 1979 *Pella Chronicle* article remarked, ensuring “Pella Community and Christian schools are fairly equally represented” (2 May 1979). What value such information might have for outside visitors is open to question; for Pella residents and other Dutch-Americans, however, the message is that both systems are equally important parts of the community and the Festival.

A third way in which the CRC/RCA divide crops up during town festivals is in the town tours in Holland, Pella, and Orange City. In all three communities, churches and schools are among the features pointed out during the course of the tour. Thus, in Holland, visitors see and hear about the Pillar Christian Reformed
Church and Third Reformed Church; in Pella, tourists are exposed to several of the Reformed and Christian Reformed Churches in town, as well as both public and Christian grade and high schools; and in Orange City, paardetram riders take in historic RCA and CRC church buildings alike and are given a brief lesson on the history and differences between the two denominations. Furthermore, if one visits two of the tour features--the Holland Museum and Pillar CRC--one is further exposed to the history of the RCA and CRC. The Holland Museum contains an exhibit that addresses the history and differences between the RCA and CRC, particularly noting the infighting that caused the 1857 formation of the CRC. Pillar Church tours, as well as bulletins handed out to those who attend the church’s Authentic Dutch Worship Service, explain the building’s history, which of necessity addresses the formation of the CRC, Pillar Church itself having originally housed Van Raalte’s RCA congregation. The fact all three of these tours highlight both CRC and RCA contributions to each community suggest that each tour makes an effort to ensure both denominations are represented during the tour, which may in turn suggest tour organizers feel it is necessary or desirable to represent both denominations or their school systems. If this is in fact the case,

58 Pillar Church has conducted its Authentic Worship Service since the 1970s. Interestingly, for a time in the late 1980s and early 1990s, a local Reformed Church held “Setters’ Sunday” on the Sunday following Tulip Time, which also was a church service incorporating traditional/historical Dutch Calvinist worship elements. Whatever the motivation for starting a second traditional-style worship service, the fact that both the CRC and RCA felt the need to have one as recently as the 1990s once again speaks to the continued CRC/RCA split in Holland and, consciously or not, made the split visible in Tulip Time promotional materials.
the tours, besides registering the CRC/RCA divide, are in fact influenced by that divide in regards to their structure, thereby once again pointing to the continued relevance of the CRC/RCA divide in Dutch-American communities.

A final way in which the RCA/CRC divide is visibly detectable in the festivals pertains to food vending at the festivals. This is especially true of Edgerton, Pella, and Fulton. In Edgerton, there have, for several decades, always been two food stands serving lunch, dinner, and dessert during the Dutch Festival. One is from the Reformed Church, the other from the Edgerton Christian Elementary School Mothers’ Club. The fare served at both stands is virtually identical (hot dogs, barbecue, burgers, chips, pie, coffee, and soda), the seating area is identical, and the stands have always looked identical. By and large, CRC people go to the Mothers’ Club stand, while RCA or public school people patronize the RCA stand, although a number of Edgerton residents make it a priority to patronize both stands over the course of two evenings. Nevertheless, if one wants to eat in Edgerton during the Dutch Festival, one is confronted by a choice: CRC or RCA? At least one Edgerton resident comments that the food stand choice represents, to him, a significant symbol of an undesirable CRC/RCA divide:

The only thing that I can say where you see it still very denominational is you have the CRC food stand and you have the Reformed. Which, I’ve never brought it up or anything, but I really don’t like that, I really don’t like that. [. . .] I know they do this, the Reformed church for their missions, the CRC for their missions. But why can’t they have one food stand, volunteers from both churches, receipts divided between the different denominations, but work together, see? That’s where that key factor, wall, that separation—“Well, I go to eat differently, I go to eat
separately. Now, okay, tonight we better go to the Reformed stand, tomorrow night we’ll go to the CRC stand.” I just say “Man! I did that years ago, now here I am today still doing this!” We go to this stand, or we go to that stand. (Fred Huisken interview 7)

A similar divide of CRC- and RCA-oriented food stands is visible in Pella, although here the much greater number and variety of stands allows for other stands which are not necessarily affiliated with either the CRC or RCA. Still, as all Pella food stands are run by local organizations, many of the stands are run by school and church groups, so once again the two denominations and school systems are represented by the various clubs, auxiliaries, mothers’ clubs, sports team boosters, and other organizations that operate food stands to raise money for their respective church or school system during Tulip Time. In Fulton, food choices point to educational differences in town in a different way. Here, the primary Friday Dutch Days event has always been the Fulton Community Christian School (known as Unity Christian since the addition of high school grades in the 1980s) Dutch Dinner. Dutch Days was, of course, started as a fundraiser for the Christian school and only later became a celebration organized by the community at large. According to Barbara Mask, when the transition from fundraising event to community festival took place, the Christian School auxiliary ensured that the Dutch Dinner would remain a fundraiser for their school (Patti Ritzema, Barbara Mask and Jane Orman-Luker interview 5). As the Dutch Dinner remains, with the Saturday parade, one of Dutch Days’ most prominent events, Christian School fundraising activities continue to hold a place at the
center of Dutch Days. Accordingly, anyone who visits Dutch Days cannot help but notice the explicitly Christian, CRC-oriented school system that operates alongside the Fulton public school system.

The foregoing examples of places in which the five festivals continue to reflect RCA/CRC distinctions, if not divisions, all are examples clearly visible to the outside observer. When I interviewed individual from Fulton, Edgerton, Pella, and Orange City in the spring of 2006, certain behind-the-scenes manifestations of the ongoing CRC/RCA divide also became apparent. In all four communities, many, if not most, interviewees were quick to assert that the historic RCA/CRC divide had significantly lessened in recent years, if not disappeared entirely. In Fulton, for instance, Patti Ritzema comments that “it used to be that there was a separation, but I believe through the ministerial association that we have changed, and the whole attitude I think has changed,” while Barbara Mask remarks that, in contrast to her youth, “I can’t see any division at all” between CRC and RCA residents (Patti Ritzema, Barbara Mask and Jane Orman-Luker interview 12). In a similar vein, Edgerton resident Jake Kooiman states that when he “was very young, there was quite a distinction between the Christian school and the public school, the CRCs versus Reformed, Presbyterian,” but that such a distinction has all but disappeared (apart from athletic contests between the two schools) and never was really manifested in the Festival apart from the different food stands (interview 12). Pella residents also comment on the removal of walls between the CRC and RCA in recent years (Brian Vande Lune interview 13; Iris
Vander Wall interview 14-15; Ken Uitermarkt and Al De Wild even relate how a term once applied as an epithet to Christian school students has become a friendly nickname, or a term Christian school students self-apply as a marker of pride:

I don’t know, it’s kind of a derogatory term, but you’ve probably heard the term *afgescheiden*, okay, well, the term here for people, kids who go to Christian school are “affies.” And it’s become an accepted term. I think! [laughter]

We were, oh, I guess it was a girls’ basketball tournament when one of my kids was playing, and the Pella cheerleaders kept talking about “Pella power, Pella power.” Well, they got, I think they met Christian High in the tournament, and Christian High won the game. Then it became “Affie power!”

[laughter] (Al De Wild interview 16-17)

You ever hear the word *afgescheiden*? [...] Well, back when I first worked in town you didn’t use that word. Today, it’s not the same, we call each other an *afgescheiden*. See, and you see, some of them, even yet today some of them think you’re referring to their church. The word doesn’t have to mean anything, hasn’t got anything to do with church. It means “separated from.” So if somebody does something that, well, somebody might come into a restaurant, instead of coming to sit by the bunch might sit at a table, we’ll just say “What’s wrong with you? You *afgescheiden* or something?” But the word is used so readily today. (Ken Uitermarkt interview 18-19)

And in Orange City, residents acknowledge that while there were still CRC and RCA distinctions, the two groups now get along much better, communicate with each other much better, and are more prone to cooperate with each other than was once the case (Betty Dykstra interview 26-27; Daryl Beltman interview 15).

Moreover, Bob and Betsy Huibregste comment that the arrival of other, non-Dutch Calvinist denominations in town has removed the polarity that once existed between the CRC and RCA residents (interview 21).
While such comments tended to downplay the RCA/CRC divide, other interviewees in Edgerton, Pella, and Orange City express the opinion that the divide still had a notable impact on each of these communities. In Edgerton, Brent Hulstein (interview 15), Celia Van Essen (interview 10), Dan Schnyders (interview 14), Jeff Van Dyke (interview 19-20), and Mel and Liz De Boer (interview 21) all comment that, although the CRC/RCA divide has lessened over time, the behavior of many Edgerton residents is still influenced by that divide. None of them feel, however, that this divide was reflected in the Dutch Festival beyond the ways previously detailed. In Pella and Orange City, the case is quite different. Several Pella interviewees comment on at least two ways in which the RCA/CRC divide impacted Tulip Time from behind the scenes. In the first place, Patsy Sadler, head of the Pella Historical Village, relates that historically, and still to some degree, the Pella Christian schools and students were and are not as involved in Tulip Time as their public school counterparts:

PS: For some things they [Christian school students] have never been quite as involved in the whole process. And part of that is because a lot of their students come from away from Pella. And so...the interest and the support isn’t there. [. . .] They’re not tied to Pella in any way. And, sorry to say, they don’t seem to develop a...a love for the community. [. . .]
TSJ: What are some of the ways maybe, or some of the areas where the private schools haven’t been as involved?
PS: [. . .] they didn’t do Dutch dancing. They just weren’t, they weren’t part, they didn’t serve as spielers on the wagons, and so they just kind of were out of the loop, when they got up to be like junior high and on, they weren’t part of the big picture. (interview 9-10)
At the same time, Sadler still allows that gradually this division of participation has been changing, and increasingly more Christian school students participated in the Dutch dancing and other festival aspects; in her own words, “that whole picture is changing” (10).

In the second place, a prominent way in which the Christian/public, and thus by extension CRC/RCA divide, has been manifested during Tulip Time is in the selection of the Tulip Queen and Court. The precise manner of selecting the Queen and Court has changed over the years, but for some time now the process involves a round of open nominations; the resultant 30 to 40 nominees are then, via popular vote, whittled down to a field of twelve finalists, who advance to a pageant at which they perform a talent, answer questions, are interviewed by judges, etc. The girls who receive the five highest scores from the judges are called onto stage at the end of the pageant; these five will be the year’s Tulip Court, and then the one who will be Queen is announced. In former years, this process involved the public/Christian school divide insofar as the newspaper issues announcing the initial nominees and twelve finalists would publish each nominee’s school affiliation. Thus, any voter knew which girls attended Pella Community and Pella Christian High Schools. More recently, this practice has been changed. Sue Brandl, head of the Tulip Queen committee for several years, explains that she and other committee members had the practice discontinued because it at least introduced the possibility that voters or judges would vote for a particular girl based on her school affiliation. This, Brandl says, bothered her
because the Tulip Court does not represent the high schools, but the city of Pella, of which both schools are a part. Accordingly, today, in the paper and at the pageant, “we make no mention of what school they go to. [. . .] And any time they introduce themselves in front of people, even after they are a fivesome, we make no mention of where they go to school” (interview 9).

Of course, whether or not the newspaper publishes what school the court nominees come from, and whether or not school affiliations are announced during the pageant, Pella is still a small enough community that townspeople are aware of what school the different nominees go to, even if the judges may not be. Accordingly, two 2006 Pella interviewees admitted that it was common for townspeople to still root for candidates from “their own” system or to after the fact count up and comment on the representation of each school on the court. Larry Klein observes that, in reaction to any given court, “there’s always, ‘Oh, there’s three Pella High girls and two Pella Christian’ or ‘There’s four Pella Christian this year and one Pella High.’ There’s still people that count that” (interview 14). Lisa Jaarsma Zylstra characterizes what she perceives as the usual thought process surrounding court nominees in similar terms:

LZ: And that’s one of the things, if I ever notice a divide in the Festival, is who’s the Tulip Queen, public or Christian school. [. . .] I don’t know that it really takes any tension, it’s just, when you find out she’s from Pella High, you have that secret “Good!” Or, from Pella Christian, they say-- EJ: I don’t think anybody overtly says it, it’s all in your own mind. LZ: No, oh yeah, the moment they become the Queen and the court, that’s over. It’s just that night of selection, you know, that you’re kind of rooting for your own kind. (Jaarsma/Zylstra interview 38)
Although this example of a public/private school divide in the Tulip Court selection process is relatively benign and limited to the mind of the beholder, in nevertheless seems that, in spite of assertions the public and Christian school divide in Pella has lessened, differences and divisions still exist that are significant enough to warrant comment and carry implications in how people think and act.

Interviews with Orange City residents in 2006 revealed similar ways in which the CRC/RCA divide comes into play behind the scenes in regards to the Tulip Festival. Unlike in the comments of Pella residents, however, in Orange City, comments about the CRC/RCA divide, at least on the part of some interviewees, indicated much more tension is still attached to this division. First, several Orange City residents spoke to the fact that Christian school or CRC-affiliated people are much less prone to volunteer for the Tulip Festival than are public school or RCA people. Ron De Jong, Orange City’s town crier and former member of the Tulip Festival Steering Committee, vividly illustrates the situation in an anecdote worth quoting at length:

Um...I would--you know, I don’t know if I should tell you this--I’m gonna say it anyway--but I do feel, you know, unfortunately, I think there’s still a pretty, pretty, kind of a demarcation here between Reformed and Christian Reformed. That’s changing, that’s changing. [. . .] But, as an example, I--I wish that more Christian Reformed people would get involved in the planning and organization of this Festival. And one of the reasons why I don’t think they do, is because they see Tulip Festival as an opportunity to make money for their school, with, you know, the Monica tent [a food stand run with proceeds benefitting Orange City Christian School], and that kind of thing. And I don’t fault them for that, at all, but I wish there was a little more working relationship between Reformed and Christian Reformed. [. . .] I was on the Steering Committee 6, 7 years ago, and then
we had to find replacement people for the Steering Committee, I said “You know, I’m only going to ask Christian Reformed people, I’m only going to ask Christian Reformed people, because I want a bigger share”--well, I ended up having to go to Reformed Church people, or other denominations, because I had a lot of Christian Reformed people say “Nah, I’m, I’m doing this, I’m working in the Monica stand, or I’m doing brats” [. . .] I would say that most people would never mention that. But because of the fact that I was working behind the scenes, and made kind of a special effort, I still do think--now, I’ve been to the Steering Committee meetings this week, and, yeah, they’ve got a number of, I mean, they’ve got kind of a nice mix of people, but it’s still predominantly Reformed Church people. (Ron De Jong interview 11)

De Jong’s comments about, and assessment of the situation are echoed almost word for word by Rachel Meekma, Tulip Festival Coordinator, and Wanda Vande Kieft, 2006 Steering Committee Chair and Grand Marshal. Meekma describes trying to get more Christian Reformed involvement in organizing the Tulip Festival as “the hardest thing for us in dealing with the Festival;” Vande Kieft relates that she gets stopped on the street by people wanting to discuss how to increase Christian Reformed involvement on the Steering Committee; and both remark that usually CRC people’s involvement in the Monica tent was cited as a pretext for not volunteering for additional Festival responsibilities (Meekma interview 15; Vande Kieft interview 12-13). At the same time, according to Vande Kieft, the Steering Committee faces a bit of a dilemma in this regard, because “we get accused of being elitist and accused of being off in the Reformed Church, but then when some of us go out and personally try to recruit, it’s like ‘No, we don’t want to do it.’ So...what’s the fix there? I’d love somebody to tell me” (interview 13). De Jong, Meekma, and Vande Kieft are all RCA people (although Vande Kieft grew up CRC and Meekma, although growing up RCA,
attended Christian schools), but Rachelle Wiersma, a CRC person and member of the Queen’s committee, also speaks to this issues, although she thinks more CRC people are gradually starting to get more involved in Festival leadership areas (interview 10-11).

Second, many Orange City interviewees comment on a division between the Christian and public schools in regards to the selection of Orange City’s Tulip Queen with which they were uncomfortable or frustrated. A certain amount of tension between the CRC and RCA regarding the Tulip Queen election may have been present as early as 1940. In the early years of the Tulip Festival, the Queen was selected through a town vote. The first several Queens were from the RCA; then, in 1940, the first CRC queen was elected. James C. Schaap, son-in-law to this first CRC queen, notes that the very next year, the voting procedure for electing the Queen was changed. While he acknowledges there may have been a variety of reasons for making this change, he wonders if the change was a result of the previous year’s election of a CRC girl, “since the Christian Reformed were far less excited about the trumpery of Tulip Festivals and klompen dancers, far more self-righteous about selling one’s soul for a silly parade” (39).\(^{59}\) Whatever the case, after the Second World War, the Queen and Court, a total of seven girls

\(^{59}\) Schaap goes on to relate how his future mother-in-law was visited by the minister of the local CRC, an elder in tow, visited her and asked her not to accept the honor of being Tulip Queen, ostensibly appealing to the fact that the Netherlands was at war. The young lady in question chose to reign as Tulip Queen (41-44). It is worth noting here that James C. Schaap is a respected author and academic in Dutch-American circles (he is a professor of English at Dordt College) and also grew up next door to my mother in Oostburg, Wisconsin. Bingo!

423
at the time, was elected according to an apportionment system, whereby the court always contained representatives from the public high school, Northwestern College, Northwestern Academy, and from the community at large. The precise apportionment figures varied from year to year, and eventually girls were no longer selected from Northwestern College or the community at large, and Northwestern Academy’s representation on the court was eventually replaced by Unity Christian High School.\textsuperscript{60} By the mid-1970s, the Court and Queen was being selected only from Unity Christian and Maurice-Orange City high schools.

Then, in 1986, the Court was reduced to five members and the apportionment system was scrapped (Vande Kieft interview 10). Since then, senior girls from Unity Christian and MOCFV nominate themselves, after which an election day is organized; all Orange City residents (and all Unity Christian High students, not all of whom are from Orange City) are allowed to vote. The five nominees with the most votes participate in a pageant, the winner of which becomes the Queen, the remainder comprising the Court. The result has been that it is not uncommon for MOCFV to have all five court members, or to have four out of five court members. Many people I talked to, Christian and public school people alike, expressed some dissatisfaction with the process of selecting the Queen. Rachelle Wiersma comments that, because demographically more Orange City girls attend MOCFV, those girls are much more likely to be elected to the court; as a result, Wiersma says, she has seen Unity students who might have been

\textsuperscript{60} Northwestern Academy closed in the early 1960s; Unity Christian opened in late 1960s.
better, more articulate, and more dedicated Court members than the eventual Court members in a given year were decline to nominate themselves, figuring the odds are they will not get elected anyway (interview 4-5). Sheryl Slagers, similarly noting Orange City’s demographics tend to automatically skew the popular vote in favor of MOCFV candidates, says that the process of choosing the Tulip Festival Queen is the one thing about the Festival that has left her “a little bit of a sour feeling” as it seems to her to be “a little not fair” (Sheryl and Sarah Slagers interview 11). Mary Lou Vander Wel, a former Tulip Queen and RCA member, agrees that Unity candidates have more difficulty attracting votes than MOCFV girls and shares that, for the 2006 Festival, she made a point of voting for a Unity girl to ensure at least one would be on the court; as her husband, Don, says, “I just think that both schools have to be represented, they’re both part of it” (interview 34-35).

On the flip side, 2006 Steering Committee chair Wanda Vande Kieft notes that although the lack of an apportionment system has recently been challenged, particularly by frustrated Unity people, ultimately the Court members are not representatives of their individual schools, but representatives of the entire community of Orange City. In that regard, Vande Kieft expresses hope that eventually the town will “focus less on the separation of the two schools and more on ‘These are our chosen ambassadors’” (interview 10-11). Still, it is evident from the above comments that people nevertheless are concerned about having representatives from each high school on the court. When one considers that, for
the most part, the divide between Orange City families that send their children to Unity or MOCFV still breaks down along CRC and RCA lines, it is apparent that the frustrations over the selection of the Queen and Court point to the fact that CRC/RCA divisions, while perhaps less than in former times, still exist and are more than a matter of school choice. People still get impassioned about “their” side winning, or being represented. And people get frustrated when one side does not participate in the Festival to the same extent as the other. Evidently more than a century and a half of the Dutch-American experience has not softened certain idiosyncratic distinctions. They are alive and well in Orange City, as well as in the other towns examined in this study. Heritage and ethnicity obviously still means something, in that religious distinctions still mean something. And, with religion being as central to Protestant Dutch-American culture and society as it is, these religious distinctions characteristic of the Dutch-Americans carry over into many, if not most, other spheres of life, including the five festivals. While religion may not always be on display in these festivals, or may be talked about in general rather than specific terms, it is abundantly clear that Dutch Calvinism and its attendant factions and distinctions is, nevertheless, lurking in the background and manifesting itself in these festivals, intentionally or not.

In summary, then, the examples considered in this chapter suggest that, despite the narratives of town unity promoted about each festival, the five festivals may not in fact always lead to greater town solidarity. To the contrary, at times each Festival has been the source, or closely related to, discord within

426
each community. Sometimes this discord has been due to disagreement over certain festival policies. Such circumstances are hardly surprising, of course, since human beings are involved in organizing these festivals; accordingly, there are bound to be such disagreements. And yet there are two other, deeper levels of disagreement or tensions exhibited in the five festivals which speak to important issues. First, these communities are changing, and some of the examples of discord examined in this chapter are the results of these changes. In Holland, at least, it appears Tulip Time has started to address these changes in a way which promises to promote mutual understanding among an increasingly diverse population, but more importantly, the ways in which Tulip Time and the LAUP Fiesta have increasingly interacted highlight the fact that each festival, like each town, faces changes at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Pella, Holland, and Fulton are not as Dutch as they once were; no doubt Orange City and Edgerton will also eventually experience similar changes as well. Second, on the opposite end of the spectrum, certain examples of discord seem to be rooted in continuity rather than change: the continuity of Dutch-American religious factionalism. Although in many ways this factionalism is less defined that it historically has been, the fact that it still manages to show up in each festival in spite of festival attempts to promote town unity suggests that this distinct and defining aspect of the Dutch-American subculture is very much alive and well in the present. Ironically, this living heritage is downplayed in each of the festivals, which instead try to clean up Dutch-American heritage by presenting audiences
with images of town unity through past, passed, even dead aspects of Dutch culture. And yet the living heritage, despite being withheld, manages to make itself observable in each of these festivals.
CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

The preceding chapters have described and analyzed many different facets, themes, narratives, and motifs in the Dutch-American heritage celebrations in Holland, Pella, Orange City, Edgerton, and Fulton. When one steps back to consider these festivals as a whole, four key issues and themes emerge for why a study of these events is both important and necessary. First, these celebrations demonstrate that, just as Dutch-American heritage was intact in the 1920s and 1930s, it is still alive and relevant today. This is just as true of communities like Edgerton, where that heritage is not on overt display during the Dutch Festival, as it is true of communities like Pella, where Dutch heritage is on display not only during Tulip Time, but throughout the entire year. True, the language and certain customs Dutch immigrants brought with them in the nineteenth century have largely slipped away. But the institutions the Dutch brought with them--Calvinist churches and private Christian schools, in particular--continue to flourish and structure social and cultural life in Dutch-American communities. The various Reformed denominations and private colleges are present and detectable in each of the five festivals, as are the CRC-affiliated Christian school systems. The
costumes, dances, parade elements, and old Dutch hymns performed in heritage celebrations may be ancillary phenomena, but the religious and educational core of the distinct Dutch-American identity is intact, and nothing indicates that it is in any way weakening. Indeed, businesses that maintain Sunday hours continue to arouse the wrath of many segments of Pella’s population. Such an example demonstrates that Dutch Calvinist religious heritage is not limited to functioning within the walls of the church building. Today, as historically, Dutch Calvinists fell the need to live out their faith in life as well as in church, and Calvinist religious signs, symbols, and practices--both negative and positive--are manifested in each festival in various ways. Beyond the religious and educational aspects of Dutch-American identity, the emphasis each festival places on “getting it right” with costume and dance authenticity follows naturally from the fact these Dutch-American towns are still aware of, and in touch with, their Dutch cultural roots. To simply throw a costume together to represent heritage would not do justice to or honor those aspects of Dutch heritage that are still relevant in the daily life of the staging communities.

That having been said, it is interesting to note that religion, the major factor in the ability of Dutch-Americans to maintain a separate subculture, is not prominently promoted at these celebrations, at least not in a specific way. True, Pella’s pre-parade program opens with a prayer, and Pella’s celebration is also replete with references to Dominie Scholte, but the nature of the Christianity practiced by Pella’s founders is never explained, apart from a small “authentic”
Tulip Time worship service at one of Pella’s Reformed churches (which was discontinued in 2006). Instead, it is merely noted that the founders were pious people who wanted the freedom to worship as they chose. Why is it that this fundamental aspect of Dutch-American identity, while perhaps detectable under close analysis, is downplayed in the five festivals? It may be that austere Dutch Calvinism is not conducive to display, in part because it is not especially visually interesting. Moreover, Dutch Calvinism (as well as many different Christian traditions) historically was hostile to representation, particularly in the form of theatre and film. There may very well have been anxiety, particularly in the 1930s and 1940s, about celebrations that contained dancing and other theatrical elements; to then include a great deal of material pertaining to Calvinism and Reformed Christianity in such celebrations perhaps would have gone too far for many organizers or townspeople. At present, however, I would argue that the primary reason Dutch Calvinism has not been prominently featured at these celebrations is because these events are regarded as ways to promote unity. Historically, and to some extent presently, though, religion has been a divisive subject in Dutch-American communities, even if all the factions involved are Calvinist. And yet, perhaps because religions factionalism is so crucial to the history and identity of Dutch-American communities, it manages to manifest itself anyway in each of these celebrations.
Second, it is clear that although there are decidedly a number of similarities between the five towns and between their five festivals, there are, nevertheless, important distinctions and differences. This is especially evident in the case of Edgerton’s Dutch Festival. Again, in terms of daily life, Edgerton is no less Dutch than any of these other communities. The local public school mascot is the Flying Dutchman; the town boasts a flourishing Christian as well as public school system; of the five churches in town, two are CRC, one is RCA, and a fourth is PRC, which has its own grade school; local Reformed churches sell pigs-in-a-blanket for fundraising activities; retired men gather for morning coffee breaks and consume enough coffee to put any Starbucks to shame; and a glance at the phone book shows an unusually high percentage of last names that begin with “De,” “Van,” or “Vander.” All of these characteristics are also true of Orange City, and yet the two towns’ festivals are strikingly different. Orange City is concerned with displays of Dutch heritage the whole year round, not just during the Tulip Festival, while in Edgerton there is little besides the windmill in the city park that would allow someone passing through town to visually discern the community’s Dutch identity. This, of course, is just one major difference; the foregoing chapters present many other examples of differences—both small and substantial—among the five festivals. The various differences between festivals

61 The distribution of churches does differ slightly from Edgerton: Orange City has 3 CRC congregations, 3 RCA congregations, a URC congregation, as well as an Evangelical Free and Dover Alliance congregation. While there are no PRC congregations in Orange City itself, there are several PRC churches and schools in the area.
demonstrate that even for a category as theoretically narrow as small town Dutch-American heritage celebrations, generalizations are problematic. This in turn points to the danger in generalizing about larger categories like “the midwest,” “the rural,” “the small town,” or “the red state.” This is perhaps more of a pervasive problem in political and media discourses, but I am struck by how often I hear people, academics and otherwise, talk about how midwesterners, rural people, or conservatives allegedly behave. Such commentators might be surprised to hear that many of the faculty, students, and alumni at Calvin College protested the 2005 graduation speaker, President George W. Bush, who supposedly enjoys near-universal support among conservative Christians. Similarly, the “conservative” CRC recently adopted a series of recommendations which amount to an official opposition to the doctrine of preemptive war.

The third key issue I have raised in this study, the audiences for each festival, is closely connected to the issue of differences among the five celebrations. It would seem that some of the variations from festival to festival are due in part to each event’s target audience. Holland, for instance, focuses on trying to draw large, national audiences; accordingly, Tulip Time includes headline entertainers each year. Edgerton, by contrast, seems to assume that Dutch Festival audiences are drawn largely from the local area and already have some familiarity with the town; this may be why Edgerton’s celebration has usually not placed as heavy an emphasis on the performance of Dutch heritage as the other four festivals have. It should be noted that these observations, as well as
most of those made in the preceding chapters, deal with the intended, assumed, or
desired audience for each festival. Most of the materials utilized for this study
offer little comment as to the actual audiences each festival draws. Accordingly,
a desirable avenue of further research would be to determine more about the
actual audiences that attend these festivals, as well as their actual responses to
these events. What impressions of the Dutch, and Dutch-Americans, does the
typical audience member leave town with? Do these impressions square with
those the organizers wish to promulgate? What draws the audience members to
the celebrations in the first place? What is the “typical” experience of the casual,
as opposed to academic, observer?

While the answers to these questions must be left to another day and
another study, one aspect of the issue of audiences merits further comment. It
seems that in each of the five festivals, the displays of heritage are at least as
much for the staging community as they are for outsiders spending a day,
weekend, or week at the celebration. This is perhaps most evident in press
coverage of these festivals. As previously noted, newspaper articles chronicling
the yearly process of staging each event begins many months before the festival;
as the celebration draws closer, more and more articles detailing behind-the-
scenes happenings, volunteer needs, and new and returning features take up more
and more space in each local newspaper. Once the festival actually is underway,
however, press coverage falls off considerably, and retrospective coverage of a
given year’s festival usually is limited to a photo spread and perhaps a report of
what the weather was like during the celebration. This pattern of coverage indicates that each town places at least as much, if not more, emphasis on the process of putting the festival together than on the product itself. Since it is only local townspeople concerned with celebration preparations, this pattern further suggests that, in the end, a given festival is staged for the benefit of the town as much as for outside audiences. One of the persistent themes in press coverage also echoes this sentiment: each town’s newspaper frequently emphasizes how its festival has a unifying effect on the town’s residents. Similarly, when asked what their town’s celebration does for the community, one of the most frequent responses among my interviewees was that the festival draws the town together. By the same token, when interviewees expressed a frustration about their town’s festival, it was that it had fallen short of facilitating more town unity, as in the case of Orange City. In addition to the rhetoric of town unity, the emphasis on “authenticity” or “accuracy” also suggests a festival is for the town itself; if it were only for the outsiders, presumably there would be less at stake in ensuring “authentic” costumes, for instance. Of course, this dual audience of town and outsiders is bound to create a certain tension about what should be included in, or reflected by, a town’s festival, and perhaps this in turn points to some of the disagreements or inconsistencies in each festival.

The fourth and final key issue I raise in this study is perhaps best phrased as a question: how and why have Dutch-Americans been so determined to perform their heritage and identity? As demonstrated in chapter four, Dutch-
Americans were among, if not the, first white, European ethnic groups to put their heritage on display for outside audiences, and how some twenty Dutch-American towns now stage an annual heritage celebration. Much of this study has addressed how Dutch-Americans perform their heritage both inside and outside town festivals, but the question of why Dutch-Americans have been so drive to perform their identity remains. The precise reasons each individual participates in such celebrations are intangible, so no complete answer to this question can be presented, but there are at least four partial answers which come to the fore. First, the performance of heritage and identity likely connects to some fundamental human need to remember what has come before. Second, performing Dutch identity has arguably been a way of coping with changes taking place within each community. Historically, the changes which gave rise to the Tulip festivals in Holland, Pella, and Orange City may have been tied to changing economic models. More recently, performing Dutch heritage may serve as one way to creatively negotiated demographic changes taking place in each town. This is particularly true of Holland, which is no longer dominated by Dutch-Americans in the way it once was. Holland’s Tulip Time is both a way to bring Dutch- and non-Dutch-Americans together in common cause, but it also serves as a way for the town’s Dutch population to hold on to a historical legacy which they may feel is slipping away in the face of population changes. Third, Dutch-Americans may be so prone to performing their identity because, historically, they have always been, and in many ways preferred to be, a people apart. Dutch immigrants came
to the United States fully intending to participate in American life, but they also came fully intending to maintain certain religious and social institutions. As communications and transportation improved in the early twentieth century and increased interaction with other, non-Dutch communities became more commonplace and necessary, perhaps a yearly public performance of heritage served as one way to continue to foster a sense of a semi-separate identity in Dutch-American enclaves. Fourth, besides being profitable, performing Dutch identity, even if to promote a sense of distinctiveness, historically was advantageous. As illustrated by Hollandmania, Dutch images have long been palatable to Americans, in large part because the Dutch were “good” immigrants, being, among other things, clean, educated, northern European, and Protestant. Thus, performing the distinct Dutch identity not only promoted group solidarity (despite the factionalism inherent in Dutch-American communities), but also appealed to outside audiences who wanted to consume images of “clean,” “good” immigrants. At the same time, the early years of the Holland, Pella, and Orange City Tulip festivals may have also intentionally used these “good immigrant” images to subtly remind post-First World War, post-One Hundred percent Americanization audiences that the Dutch, despite their desire to remain somewhat separate, were, in fact, “good immigrants.” In that regard, performing Dutch identity served as a way to reassert a positive, distinct identity while profiting from it at the same time. Although the xenophobic overtones of One
Hundred percent Americanization are no longer directed at Dutch-Americans, it may very well still be that such motives are still at play within Dutch-American heritage celebrations.

To conclude this study, I would like to take a moment to describe and share some of the comments my interview subjects made regarding the future of each town’s festival. For most of my interviewees, as well as the 1995 Holland Tulip Time Oral History Project participants, these festivals have a bright future. For each festival, however, town residents are also realistic and note a number of challenges. Orange City residents recognize that the Tulip Festival faces challenges in the coming years--especially of a financial nature (De Jong interview 14)--but most of those I spoke with agree that younger people are getting involved and volunteering, ensuring a bright future for the celebration (Huibregste interview 21; Dykstra interview 21-22; Noteboom interview 19; Vander Kooi Minnick interview 17). In Fulton, Barbara Mask confidently states that Dutch Days is currently “financially very solvent,” and that she does not anticipate “any big obstacles, any challenges along the way that we’ve certainly not worked through previously.” At the same time, Mask and Jane Orman-Luker also see a need to encourage more involvement among younger or newer people (Ritzema/Mask/Orman-Luker interview 12-13). Pella residents similarly predict a bright, solid, and solvent future for Tulip Time. Randy Sikkema remarks that the early-May timing of the festival usually ensures large crowds looking for their first spring outing (22-23), and Merlyn Vander Leest points to the Historical
Society’s willingness to constantly innovate as a sign for a promising future (18). At the same time, several Pella organizers feel that ensuring adequate numbers of volunteers is a future--and constant--challenge the celebration faces (Vande Lune interview 4; Sadler interview 25). Participants in Holland’s 1995 Tulip Time Oral History Project, although optimistic about the future (Leenhouts interview 11-12), identified many pressing challenges: an impending changing of the organizational guard (de Blecourt interview 5); the increasingly competitive tourism market (Duistermars interview 6); how to engage with Holland’s increasing ethnic diversity; and the celebration’s financial stability, which past director Kristi Van Howe describes as “one of the trickiest businesses I have ever seen” (9-10). Finally, many Edgerton residents, perhaps owing to the Dutch Festival’s recent near-demise, express more uncertainty about the celebration’s future. Recent festival chair Brent Hulstein says that while he thinks the Festival will succeed, “I don’t think it’s going to be easy,” due to the difficulty in keeping the event fresh and ensuring enough volunteer support (14). Similarly, Jim Bouma thinks the Dutch Festival will “limp along” into the foreseeable future, since “there’s just enough interest every year” to keep it going (14). Jeff Van Dyke worries that the frequent turnover of organizing committee members could be a major challenge for the Festival in the near future. And Jim Bouma frankly wonders if the Dutch Festival is a tradition “that could be winding down,” although he hopes this is not the case (13).
Despite uncertainty over the future of Edgerton’s Dutch Festival, Mel De Boer comments that, because it is a tradition, and because “traditions die kind of slowly,” the Dutch Festival is just as likely to survive, although slow alterations are likely (22). Such an observation can probably be applied to each of the five festivals. After 75 years of history, it seems safe to say that, as a phenomenon in the United States, Dutch-American heritage celebrations are firmly entrenched traditions and figure to remain so for many more decades to come.
APPENDIX A

The following list catalogues the various different Dutch-American heritage celebrations held across the United States. All of these festivals continue to be annual events, except where noted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Established</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tulip Time</td>
<td>Holland, Michigan</td>
<td>1929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tulip Time Festival</td>
<td>Pella, Iowa</td>
<td>1935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tulip Festival</td>
<td>Orange City, Iowa</td>
<td>1936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holland Festival</td>
<td>Cedar Grove, Wisconsin</td>
<td>1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tulip Festival</td>
<td>Albany, New York</td>
<td>1949</td>
</tr>
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<td>Dutch Festival</td>
<td>Edgerton, Minnesota</td>
<td>1950</td>
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<td>Tulip Festival</td>
<td>Clymer, New York</td>
<td>1953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holland Festival</td>
<td>Redlands, California</td>
<td>1953</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tulip Festival</td>
<td>Holland, New York</td>
<td>1954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koninginnedag Celebration</td>
<td>Philadelphia, Pennsylvania</td>
<td>1958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch Smorgasbord</td>
<td>Harrison, South Dakota</td>
<td>1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holland Happening</td>
<td>Oak Harbor, Washington</td>
<td>1969</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heritage Festival</td>
<td>Nederland, Texas</td>
<td>1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch Days Festival</td>
<td>Fulton, Illinois</td>
<td>1974(^{62})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch Heritage Festival</td>
<td>Grand Rapids, Michigan</td>
<td>1979(^{63})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capt. Mey’s Annual Tulip Festival</td>
<td>Cape May, New Jersey</td>
<td>1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kermis Dutch Festival</td>
<td>Little Chute, Wisconsin</td>
<td>1982</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{62}\) The first reference I was able to find concerning Dutch Days was in 1975 (\emph{Fulton Journal} 23 April 1975), but most Fulton sources agree the event began in 1974.

\(^{63}\) Grand Rapids’s Dutch Heritage Festival seemingly has been discontinued, although it was apparently still operating in 1998, as Janet Sjaarda Sheeres received a completed questionnaire which indicated the event was in operation at that time. Also, the Dutch Immigrant Society holds what appears to be an annual Western Michigan Dutch Heritage Day.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Established</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dutch Festival</td>
<td>Denver, Colorado</td>
<td>1982</td>
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<td>Annual Dutch Festival</td>
<td>Hempstead, New York</td>
<td>1983</td>
</tr>
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<td>Let’s Go Dutch Days</td>
<td>Baldwin, Wisconsin</td>
<td>1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holland Days</td>
<td>Lynden, Washington</td>
<td>1986</td>
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<td>Tulip Festival</td>
<td>Wamego, Kansas</td>
<td>1987</td>
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<td>Holland Festival</td>
<td>Long Beach, California</td>
<td>1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tulip Festival [?]</td>
<td>Terra Ceia, North Carolina</td>
<td>1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[?]</td>
<td>Waupun, Wisconsin</td>
<td>1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[?]</td>
<td>Batavia, New York</td>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch Festival</td>
<td>Palos Heights, Illinois</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to these events, a 31 March 1999 letter from Hanny H. Veenendaal, editor of *De Nieuwe Amsterdammer*, a New York City publication, to Janet Sjaarda Sheeres, makes mention of a Dutch Spring Weekend in Fishkill, New York; a Dutch Faire in Kinderhook, New York, which apparently was a one-time event; and a Dutch Heritage Day in River Edge, New Jersey. This last event does not appear to still exist as such, but the Bergen County Historical Society, which did sponsor the Dutch Heritage Day, continues to hold a yearly Pinkster festival.

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64 At times this event was known as the Bethesda Dutch Festival. It has been discontinued, or put on hiatus, in recent years. The 2000 Dutch Festival was the most recent I was able to find information on.
65 This celebration is held under the auspices of Hofstra University.
66 This celebration was originally known as Dutch Days.
67 Janet Sjaarda Sheeres’s 1999 questionnaire regarding Terra Ceia indicates the event lapsed in 1998.
68 Janet Sjaarda Sheeres’s 1999 questionnaire regarding Waupun indicates the event lapsed in 1998.
69 Janet Sjaarda Sheeres’s 1999 questionnaire regarding Batavia indicates the event lapsed in 1996.
APPENDIX B

The following is a list of Dutch-themed theatrical entertainments that have been staged as part of the Dutch-American heritage celebrations in Holland, Pella, and Orange City.

**Holland**
- 1932: *Tulip Time*, Geoffrey F. Morgan and Frederick G. Johnson
- 1936: *Pageant of 1936*
- 1939: *Tulip Tales*
- 1940: *Tulip Tales*
- 1941: *Tulip Tales*
- 1949: *Windmills of Holland*, Otis M. Carrington
- 1950: *Windmills of Holland*, Otis M. Carrington
- 1951: *Sunrise Tomorrow*

**Pella**
- 1935: *Tulip Time*, Geoffrey F. Morgan and Frederick G. Johnson
- 1936: *Windmills of Holland*, Otis M. Carrington
- 1936: “Op de Politiebureau”
- 1937: *The Blue Tulip*, Walter Stone and Jack Peoples
- 1937: *The Siege of Leyden*
- 1938: *The Blue Tulip*, Walter Stone and Jack Peoples
- 1939: *Tulip Time*, Geoffrey F. Morgan and Frederick G. Johnson
- 1941: Scenes from “A Stranger in a Strange Land”
- 1947: *City of Refuge*
- 1949: *The Blue Tulip*, Walter Stone and Jack Peoples
Pella, Continued
1950: *Sweethearts*, Victor Herbert
1951: *The Red Mill*, Victor Herbert
1953: *Knickerbocker Holiday*, Maxwell Anderson and Kurt Weill
1955: *Tulip Time*, Geoffrey F. Morgan and Frederick G. Johnson
1962: Selections from past Tulip Time operettas
1982: Feesthouden (dramatizes Pella history)
1983: Feesthouden (dramatizes Pella history)
1984: Feesthouden: “America--The Dream”
1985: Feesthouden: “America--The Dream”
1985: *Tulip Time*, Geoffrey F. Morgan and Frederick G. Johnson
1992: *Delightfully Dutch*, Carol Van Klompenburg and Mary Meuzelaar
1993: *Delightfully Dutch*, Carol Van Klompenburg and Mary Meuzelaar
1995: *Delightfully Dutch*, Carol Van Klompenburg and Mary Meuzelaar
1996: *The Dominie’s Wife*, Carol Van Klompenburg and Mary Meuzelaar
2003: *The Dominie’s Wife*, Carol Van Klompenburg and Mary Meuzelaar
2005: *Of Wooden Shoes and Windmills*, Carol Van Klompenburg
2006: *The Dominie’s Wife*, Carol Van Klompenburg and Mary Meuzelaar

Orange City
1938: *In Dutch*, A. J. Kolyn
1939: *Katrina*, A. J. Kolyn
1950: *Tulip Time*, Geoffrey F. Morgan and Frederick G. Johnson
1951: *The Red Mill*, Victor Herbert
1953: *Sweethearts*, Victor Herbert
1955: *Sweethearts*, Victor Herbert
1959: *Willow Man*
1960: *Willow Man*
1961: *Sweethearts*, Victor Herbert
1962-1964: non-Dutch setting Night Shows
1966-present: non-Dutch setting Night Shows
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Tulip Time Trolley Tour Script.


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*Sioux County Capital-Democrat*

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Slegers, Sheryl and Sarah. 17 May 2006. Conducted at Slegers residence, Orange City, Iowa.


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Wiersma, Rachelle. 13 May 2006. Conducted at Koffie Hoek, Orange City, Iowa.

Archival Holdings

A. Holland Museum, Tulip Time, Inc., Collection (T90-1132)

Box 1A

Folder Programs 1930-1938 and n.d.
Folder Programs 1940-43, 1946, 1947, 1949
Folder Programs 1950-1959
Folder Programs 1960-1969
Folder Programs 1970-1979
Folder Programs 1980-1985
Folder Programs 1986-1989
Folder Programs 1990-1999

Box 1B

Folder Programs 2000-
Folder Articles 1987-1989: contains 1961 Costume Show List
Hilson, Bert. *Klompen Dancers and Their Costumes.*

463
Box 2

Folder, Programs--Large, 1934, 1939, 1949, 1965

Folder, Programs--Large, 1983-84, 1986-87

Folder, Tulip Time, Inc--Articles of Incorporation, 1948

Box 3

Folder, Minutes, 1963-1964


Box 4


Folder, Tulip Time, Inc--Parades--General, n.d., 1985, 1941, 1950s

No Box

Dutch Dancers 2005 Yearbook. Published by Holland Sentinel

Lida Rogers Scrapbook: contains 17 Dec 1954 letter from Lida Rogers to J. J. Riemersma and Tulip Tales script

“Chronological History of Tulip Time”

Inside Holland May 1961

Holland Herald 7.2 (1972)

Randall P. Vande Water Scrapbook (T89-1032) 464
B. Joint Archives of Holland

Collection H02-1456

Box 3

Folder LAUP--Fiesta--2002--Correspondence: contains LAUP Fiesta committee minutes from 23 April 2002

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- Grigsby, Helen.
- Karsten, John.
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20 May 1968 Steering Committee minutes

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“History of Tulip Time in Pella.”

Programs, 1935-present

Radio Script


D. Northwestern College Archives, Ramaker Library

BOX P-OC-TUL-1: Orange City Tulip Festival -1986

Folder I: TULIP FESTIVAL--History: contains ”Orange City Believes in Advertising”

Folder VII: TULIP FESTIVAL--Program folders/Brochures -1986


Folder IX: Orange City, Town of, Tulip Festival--Miscellaneous -1986

BOX P-OC-TUL-2: Orange City Tulip Festival 1987-

Folder: Orange City, Iowa-Tulip Festival-Miscellaneous 1987-

Folder: Orange City, Iowa-Night Show Programs-Tulip Festival 1987-

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Correspondence, Hanny H. Veenendaal to Sheeres 31 Mar 1999.

Correspondence, Sarah Veenstra to Sheeres, 3 Jan 1999.

“Holland Festival.”


Ligtenberg, article on Terra Ceia Dutch Festival.


“Koninginnedag.”

Old Dutch Mill flyer.

*Port Arthur Herald* 8 Sept. 1898.

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“Terra Ceia Dutch Festival.”

“Third Annual Dutch Festival.”

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