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February 2023

### Folder 20: Letters to J. S. Wilson, Washington, DC, 1876

Van Raalte Collection

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Original draft of a letter by Van Raalte to  
General U.S. Commissioner Wilson in Washing-  
ton, D.C. Letter dated Holland, Jan. 18, 1870  
Van Raalte explains the Holland colony's sit-  
uation, which parcels of lands it owns, and  
discusses necessity of having an own water-  
way for transport and im- and export of  
supplies supplies and goods.







but fills up the basins of the lake: the stream throws large lumps on the side, and  
 it ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~filled~~ <sup>filled</sup> ~~with~~ <sup>with</sup> channels in the lake, ~~which~~ <sup>which</sup> ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~formed~~ <sup>formed</sup> ~~by~~ <sup>by</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~stream~~ <sup>stream</sup> ~~flowing~~ <sup>flowing</sup> ~~slowly~~ <sup>slowly</sup> ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~shores~~ <sup>shores</sup> ~~become~~ <sup>become</sup>  
 solid and behind the channel ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~formed~~ <sup>formed</sup> ~~swamp~~ <sup>swamp</sup>: in this way is the eastern  
 basin ~~filled~~ <sup>filled</sup> ~~with~~ <sup>with</sup> sand and mud along the channel solid but most all of it, shaking  
 and floating grass (I was on it perhaps 15 years ago), this is in our time, the basin  
 on the west side of the bridge, ~~extending~~ <sup>extending</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~channel~~ <sup>channel</sup> ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~filling~~ <sup>filling</sup> ~~up~~ <sup>up</sup> the basin  
 to great damage for ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~navigation~~ <sup>navigation</sup>: When our windmill was in operation years  
 ago then they had to make ~~through~~ <sup>through</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~swamp~~ <sup>swamp</sup> to the river a channel, but then yet  
 was the ~~channel~~ <sup>channel</sup> ~~shore~~ <sup>shore</sup> of the channel ~~shaking~~ <sup>shaking</sup>: if this damaging work of  
 nature deprives us entirely from ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~water~~ <sup>water</sup> ~~surely~~ <sup>surely</sup> our whole settling ~~that~~ <sup>that</sup> ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> ~~in~~ <sup>in</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~lake~~ <sup>lake</sup>.  
 Even the solid shores of our lake has been changing. For example  
 further down I remember the Plugged flow and saw mill (see maps) ~~on~~ <sup>on</sup> a low sandy  
 ridge ~~passing~~ <sup>passing</sup> ~~from~~ <sup>from</sup> ~~behind~~ <sup>behind</sup> ~~swamp~~ <sup>swamp</sup>, and in front the lake: that ridge was thrown  
 up: Caution ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> ~~taken~~ <sup>taken</sup> ~~care~~ <sup>care</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~in~~ <sup>in</sup> ~~building~~ <sup>building</sup>: and since it was build, the waves  
 did tear ~~much~~ <sup>much</sup> ~~west~~ <sup>west</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~mill~~ <sup>mill</sup> ~~much~~ <sup>much</sup> ~~ground~~ <sup>ground</sup> ~~from~~ <sup>from</sup> ~~my~~ <sup>my</sup> ~~land~~ <sup>land</sup> ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~did~~ <sup>did</sup>  
 throw it in front of the mill spoiling much of his navigation: -  
 Surely if there had been ~~another~~ <sup>another</sup> ~~line~~ <sup>line</sup> ~~than~~ <sup>than</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~water~~ <sup>water</sup>, to be established  
 now, then that old line will throw it all in confusion: I sold ~~all~~ <sup>all</sup> ~~along~~ <sup>along</sup>  
 the South and West shore of the Basin for the navigation purposes under the  
 Government, but the now established line of Mr. Tinkham ~~cuts~~ <sup>cuts</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~neglected~~ <sup>neglected</sup>  
 strips ~~new~~ <sup>new</sup> ~~ground~~ <sup>ground</sup> ~~made~~ <sup>made</sup> ~~by~~ <sup>by</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~action~~ <sup>action</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~waves~~ <sup>waves</sup> ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~current~~ <sup>current</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup>  
 Stream: Surely hereby is ~~made~~ <sup>made</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~line~~ <sup>line</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~land~~ <sup>land</sup> ~~unsettled~~ <sup>unsettled</sup> ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~great~~ <sup>great</sup> ~~deed~~ <sup>deed</sup> ~~in~~ <sup>in</sup> ~~contract~~ <sup>contract</sup>  
 would be against the South and West meander line of the N.W. fractional quarter of 3:29 would be ruinous and out of  
 that new line cuts through swamps and other lots several of them build on them to the  
~~power~~ <sup>power</sup> ~~did~~ <sup>did</sup> ~~not~~ <sup>not</sup> ~~see~~ <sup>see</sup> ~~their~~ <sup>their</sup> ~~rights~~ <sup>rights</sup> ~~yet~~ <sup>yet</sup>: I am convinced that ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~whole~~ <sup>whole</sup> ~~mill~~ <sup>mill</sup> ~~block~~ <sup>block</sup> ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> ~~water~~ <sup>water</sup>  
~~at~~ <sup>at</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~time~~ <sup>time</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~U.S.~~ <sup>U.S.</sup> ~~it~~ <sup>it</sup> ~~affects~~ <sup>affects</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~water~~ <sup>water</sup> ~~lots~~ <sup>lots</sup> ~~sold~~ <sup>sold</sup>: it cuts of the Strip  
 West of Wind mill point which formation we saw for a great portion -  
 it cut ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~Straw~~ <sup>Straw</sup> ~~mill~~ <sup>mill</sup> ~~off~~ <sup>off</sup> ~~from~~ <sup>from</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~Basin~~ <sup>Basin</sup> ~~toward~~ <sup>toward</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~Woods~~ <sup>Woods</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~head~~ <sup>head</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~channel~~ <sup>channel</sup>  
 the water: they say it cuts of a great portion ~~you~~ <sup>you</sup> ~~see~~ <sup>see</sup> ~~not~~ <sup>not</sup> ~~only~~ <sup>only</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~strip~~ <sup>strip</sup>  
 but also what you have been wisely it was my apprehensions.

I am  
 generally  
 Dear Sir my life is spent for the good of the Hollander emigration, not for making money being yet  
~~in~~ <sup>in</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~land~~ <sup>land</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~United~~ <sup>United</sup> ~~States~~ <sup>States</sup>: ~~Dear~~ <sup>Dear</sup> ~~Sir~~ <sup>Sir</sup> ~~Shall~~ <sup>Shall</sup> ~~I~~ <sup>I</sup> ~~now~~ <sup>now</sup> ~~be~~ <sup>be</sup> ~~obliged~~ <sup>obliged</sup> ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> ~~buy~~ <sup>buy</sup> ~~improvements~~ <sup>improvements</sup> ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup>  
 increase of the land value after such a tremendous life & struggle for the public good; on the ground  
 of innocent mistakes or on the ground of neglect of United States surveyors or changes made by  
 nature? I feel there is so much injustice, that I would feel through ~~me~~ <sup>me</sup> ~~an~~ <sup>an</sup> ~~innocent~~ <sup>innocent</sup> ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~obscure~~ <sup>obscure</sup>  
 citizen justified, ~~even~~ <sup>even</sup> ~~if~~ <sup>if</sup> ~~it~~ <sup>it</sup> ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> ~~necessary~~ <sup>necessary</sup> ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> ~~ask~~ <sup>ask</sup> ~~Congress~~ <sup>Congress</sup> ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> ~~free~~ <sup>free</sup> ~~me~~ <sup>me</sup> ~~from~~ <sup>from</sup> ~~such~~ <sup>such</sup> ~~a~~ <sup>a</sup> ~~destructive~~ <sup>destructive</sup> ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~ruinous~~ <sup>ruinous</sup> ~~oppression~~ <sup>oppression</sup>  
 of land - If a sense of duty you may compel to a survey, please let them this work be done by an impartial  
 United States Surveyor. - In the mean time receive my hearty thanks for your ~~kind~~ <sup>kind</sup> ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~generous~~ <sup>generous</sup> ~~offer~~ <sup>offer</sup> ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup>  
 wait for my explanations.  
 Dear Sir I am with respect your obedient servant  
 MTR



