

Weekly Newspaper Mercurius, 22 Nov 1862

For the following letters from America, written by Jacob van Mulken to his son and brother-in-law at Holtum, we gladly make some room because we know that many people are most interested in the arrival and the whereabouts of the immigrants, for which we have to move to the next issue a letter written by the Venerable Sir R. from Eupen, Priest in Medi...n in America now.

" Chaska, 16 October 1862,

Dear Son,

The reason why I waited so long is that first of all I had to see how things are going in this other world. We left Antwerp April 3 and we had a very long trip. We arrived on Ascension Day (*in 1862 - May 29*) in Quebec, this is the first town in America (!). The trip is difficult but not dangerous. We were all seasick, but that doesn't last long, then we felt as well as a fish in the water. On Corpus Christi (*in 1862 - June 19*) I set first foot on my own land. I bought 12 acres of the best land I could find here. We bought it together, grandfather and I. It is called here 'Nieuw Holland' (New Holland?). My next neighbors are: Peter Jaspers, Christiaan Salden, Kaspar Janssen and a lot of other people. They are mostly German and English. I don't tell you any more about Minnesota as I have seen and further I will write more often. This is a province that is superior to others as is told me here. I have traveled the province (!) Canada and Wisconsin but as enormously as the hay grows here you wouldn't believe it. I measured it myself it grew 6 inches in 2 days. The corn and the summer wheat also grow fast. On Sunday the 29th of June I saw that they were in fruit. Here one sees more land than woods. It is very healthy. I believe it is warmer here than where you are, but one can take it.

The potatoes are planted here within 3 feet of each other than one can't see any more soil. I myself planted cabbage right after the wood was cleared and the land was plowed. It will seem unbelievable to you how it grows.

Dearest Beloved Son, concerning your trip over here, you must imagine in your children's heart that a father prefers his children close by rather than to leave for a faraway country. I believe each day that you will come and I am still thinking of the last embrace when we said goodbye, and I comforted myself when you said, "I will follow you soon". Likely it is hard for you to leave your apprenticeship, but don't worry that you would take away somebody's place over here. Here are beautiful towns where beautiful buildings are built, and what concerns the countryside for carpentry work you earn \$1 dollar a day that is 250 Dutch money (2 ½ Dutch guilders). And there are other jobs like for harvesting work one gets ½ dollar a day. Possibly you think to stay until all the years of lease are over and not sell until then but I must say I will not agree to that. It would sadden my fatherly heart because of your absence, dear son. Never forget the lectures I taught you, and never leave the house before you thank the Lord, never go to bed without saying your prayers, follow the laws of the Lord and the holy Church, never listen to a loose woman, their words are sweet like honey, and the outcome is bitter like gall.

Dear Son, I have to stop now, I am bereaved. We are all in good health. Your beloved father and mother, your beloved sister and brother, your beloved sister lives one hour from us in a town called Schaacobi (Shakopee). She earns \$5 dollar monthly. In this town there are 6 churches, 3 Catholic priests, and they are in the process of building a new church. You do not need to worry

about the war between the North and the South. Don't be anxious about that. But the war between the North and the Indians has been hard. The Indians treated the whites barbarically, so badly that I do not want to write about it because I know these letters will be read to children. So, you can imagine what happened with the people here. However, now this is happening to them too, each day many are killed, many are hanged which is a big shame for them.

Dearest Son, go to Brijel and take greetings to your uncle Pieter van Mulken and his wife and children and all who know me and tell them farewell poor Prussianland. I wished many of them were here then they would not need to push the dung-cart around anymore.

Dearest Son! When you are in Holtem (Holtum) you can read all about my trip and how we traveled, and in my letter to the priest you will see how it went with my money.

I stop now and think that you soon will follow me,

Your loving father

P.J. Van Mulken "