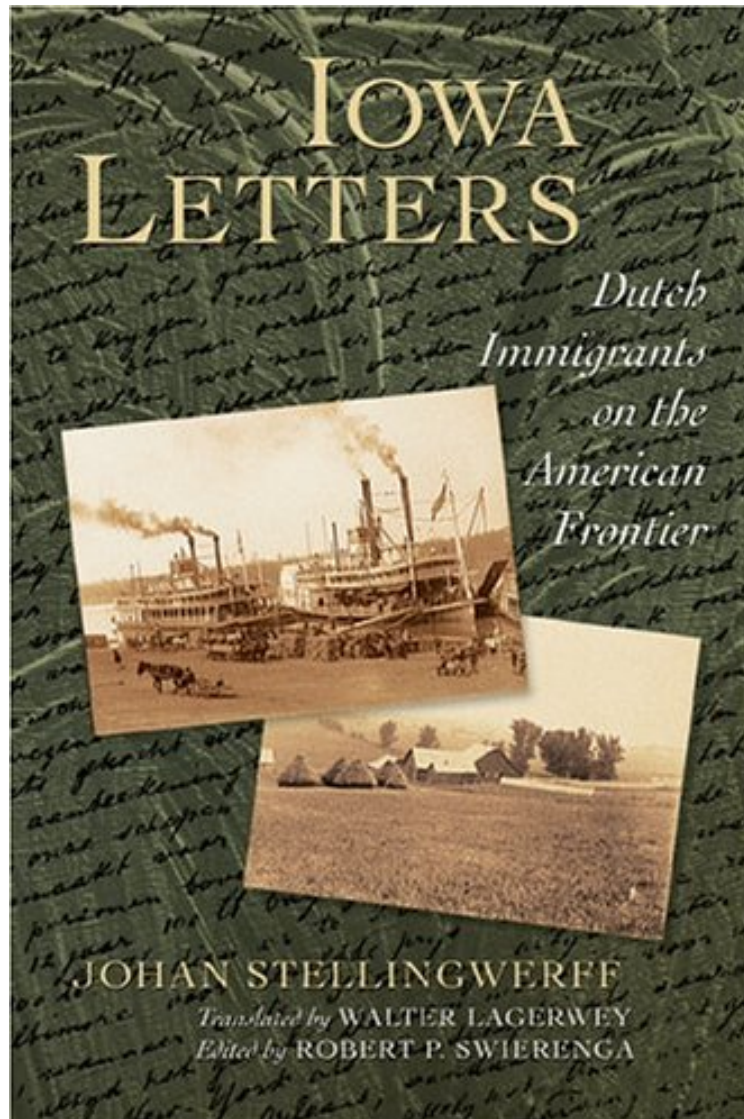


[Ebook pdf] Iowa Letters: Dutch Immigrants on the American Frontier (Historical Series of the Reformed Church in America)

## Iowa Letters: Dutch Immigrants on the American Frontier (Historical Series of the Reformed Church in America)

*Johan Stellingwerff*

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**Johan Stellingwerff : Iowa Letters: Dutch Immigrants on the American Frontier (Historical Series of the Reformed Church in America)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Iowa Letters: Dutch Immigrants on the American Frontier (Historical Series of the Reformed Church in America):

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. An invaluable treasure  
By Bruce Boertje  
This is a great resource for anyone looking for real-life experiences of what life in early Iowa was like. Chock full of letters between Dutch pioneers and those remaining behind in Holland. I cannot recommend this book highly enough. Some pioneers had great experiences, but others bitterly resented their decision to emigrate to America. They are all covered here. This book is well worth the price - its contents are priceless. If you want to get a glimpse into frontier life on the open prairie, you will certainly get it. Anyone looking for insight into Iowa, Pella, or other pioneering Dutch experiences will find it here - and you won't be disappointed. I highly recommend this book. It is a wonderful treasure trove. Well done!!

Stellingwerff (Free U. of Amsterdam) and Swierenga (history, Hope College, Holland) present an expanded edition of the original Dutch text published under the title *Amsterdamse Emigranten* (Buijten Schipperheijn, 1976). The text features some 215 immigrant letters relating to the midwestern frontier, from archives and private holdings on both side

From the Inside Flap  
Foreword by H. A. Howeler  
"Iowa Letters" is one of the most important collections of immigrant letters relating to the midwestern frontier known to be extant. The originals, some 215 in number and representing three distinct letter series, have been gathered from archives and private holdings on both sides of the Atlantic. More than 100 are published here for the first time. The others were first published in the Dutch language in "Amsterdamse Emigranten" (1976), edited by Johan Stellingwerff. All are now translated into English by Walter Lagerway, the nestor of Dutch American language, literature, and culture in the United States. The letters were penned by religious dissenters from the Netherlands Reformed Church in an exchange from the 1840s to the 1870s that flowed back and forth between family members who remained in the homeland and those who colonized Iowa in the mid-nineteenth century. The missives, written in shaky hands and often stained, report family and church news, economic and political conditions, and the joys and sorrows of everyday life. At a deeper level, they portray the innermost feelings and faith struggles of the devout Netherlanders as they sought to understand the will of God in the face of their sufferings and afflictions, whether in the homeland or in distant America. Documents relating to the history of Pella, Iowa, are sparse in the published works on Dutch immigration, and most of the best manuscripts remain in the Dutch language and are wholly inaccessible to the grandchildren of the immigrants. Now they and all future generations, including interested scholars and general readers, can read the story of the founding of Pella and the development of Burlington in the very words of the pioneers themselves. The account has its unexpected twists and turns. There are the typical bacon letters meant to persuade family and friends to come over. But there is also the remarkably blunt criticism of Pella's founding father, the Reverend Henry P. Scholte; the lure of land speculation by a novice land surveyor; and the bitter disappointment of a fresh immigrant who warned compatriots in pointed letters not to repeat his mistakes and to stay at home. After six months he and his family returned to the Netherlands, leaving in a cemetery two children who succumbed to scarlet fever. His letters provide a rare example of anti-immigrant fever. On balance, however, most newcomers thrived in the new land and their letters reflect a positive, and even glowing account of the opportunities on the Iowa frontier to provide a better life for themselves and their children. This book is a captivating account, written under candlelight and oil lamps, by mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, and nephews and nieces, both in Iowa and the Netherlands, who carried on a regular correspondence for up to four decades. Only death stopped the flow of letters. Just as immigration changed the letter writers, so eavesdropping on their conversation will change readers today, helping them step back in time and become Iowa pioneers themselves.

About the Author  
Johan Stellingwerff (Ph.D. Delft Technical University) served as director of the library at the Free University of Amsterdam from 1960 to 1987. He has written in the fields of history and Calvinist philosophy and edited twenty-six volumes of the annual publication *Christelijk Perspectief*. Robert P. Swierenga is Albertus C. Van Raalte Research Professor at the A. C. Van Raalte Institute, Hope College, Holland, Michigan. A specialist in Dutch immigration history, he is the author of more than a dozen books.