Good tidings from far lands are as cold water to a weary soul says
Salomon in his book of Proverbs chap 25 v 25 I hope now to tell a thing or two
about myself and my family and also in general but I wish to write truth
and then you yourselves can judge when we had put to sea from ellevoet August 12 1848
we had gone 9 days then in the night a violent wind arose so that the cheats
began to fly about pell-mell and some people were crying others were very busy
gathering their stuff together others were praying and others singing of whom our
minister was one but he was the only one and was having a blessed experience he told
me later I on the contrary was very anxious fearing that we would perish
the second night following I was lying in bed quietly thinking and then my mind
became fixed on the words to be read in the prophecy of Isaiah chap 63 v 9
from this I gained a special strength for my heart yet I could not recall
where the words are found in the morning when the minister had finished the devotions as he
had done during the whole voyage morning and evening I asked him where
these words were found he told me at once and that chapter he then from day to day
explained which I regarded as one of the greatest benefits
I was enjoying and as I had previously been in the grip of fears that we would all perish
so now and later I might believe that we would complete the journey and so
that fear left me throughout the 45 days of our voyage I was
unusually weak my wife on the contrary strong as also our two
smallest sons the others were better than I was but not much after the 45th day
having arrived at New York we stayed there 3 days
with Benjamin if I should have to tell you what we saw and heard there
I would fill the letter more than full with it yet some of it I want to
tell about first of all it [New York] is surrounded by a river and this along its banks
is entirely filled with ships and steamboats which is an unusually pretty sight
and on the opposite side of the river are hills and valleys everywhere inhabited
the streets in the city are 5 rods wide and on the sides in front of the houses on
both sides for walking are 9 or 10 feet [reserved] in many stores one finds a faucet on
the bench and if one turns the faucet clear water gushes out one finds these also
at many street corners from which water flows all the time on one side of the
city we saw a playing fountain that was in an earthen stone basin
3 rods in circumference there the water constantly boils up understand of course not hot
as we were going about the city I said to Benjamin that in Rotterdam
I had not seen such large stores he told me and his wife [did] too that
there were some indeed many that were as long as the
promenade church in Goes I said I did not believe it and then he took me to them
then I was convinced the butchers hall in the west part of the city is
4 acres in extent I close about New York after our stay we

[**In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the Angel of his presence saved them:**
in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all
the days of old**]
travelled by steamboat to Albanie there we arrived the next morning and there we were then at once transferred to a canal boat on this boat a Zeeland doctor came to us he told us that our children had the American itch he gave us medicine yet not as a friendly gesture however it was good on this boat we had many fellow travellers from Ireland now I must tell you in passing that we had also a family of Amsterdammers I had made their acquaintance at sea and this man could speak a little English they were of great service to us they were respectable people we travelled with them all the way here our lands adjoin this is a little digression now those Irish then on that canal boat from them we got thick into lice [meggelse mieren] we travelled 11 days with this boat and were towed day and night by two horses there are 4 horses with such a boat 2 in the boat and 2 towing and then from time to time they change spans that canal is 500 miles or 167 hours long this goes on day and night in summer there are as many as four thousand horses in daily use those boats are all numbered and we even saw some bearing numbers higher than fifteen hundred of a hundred horses there are as many as 70 with blue [grey] hair and of 100 cows there are 99 with red hair this in passing all is down stream from Buffalo to Albanie we were raised by locks possibly as many as 60 times and at times as much as 8 feet at Buffalo we were again transferred to a steamboat on that we travelled 10 days over the lake again all down stream to Buffalo so we were all the time travelling up stream then we are at Sheboygan which is now our chief town (county seat) of the province (county) not of the states and we live 5 hours (fifteen miles) from there 5 minute off the main road that runs from Milwaukee to said city on the left as you come from Sheboygan and there we have 40 acres forest land in July it was 2 years that we have lived on our land the 8 months preceding we lived in a house of that Amsterdamer he had two houses on his land in that house Jan contracted that rheumatism in his shoulder and the 14th of December following he very unexpectedly entered Eternity o dreadful time of which I can never think without perturbation then with my two other boys the whole winter I chopped wood and then the snow from the 14th of November until April lay 2½ feet thick so that it was troublesome work that winter we chopped and burnt six acres if foot measures are the same then according to my calculation an acre is two rods larger than a Dutch acre [gemaat] judge yourselves an acre is 160 American square rods and a rod is 272 square feet or in other words 16½ feet long and wide
brush wood is cut off next to the ground that one does first and then one throws that on a pile and then one cuts the little trees of the thickness of a 'ponger' tree and thicker a little above the ground and then the branches trimmed (???) off and these in turn put on piles and then next the heavy ones 2 and 2 1/2 feet above the ground cut off and the topwood put with the preceding and the logs are chopped through so often that they can be dragged by two oxen and these are then brought together sometimes 10 12 to 20 or more and then set on fire and then when all has been burned the ashes are collected if one wants to sell them and one can get six cents a bushel for them and 2 1/2 bushel is a netherlands hectolitre [mud] and a cent is 2 1/2 cents netherlands so that one has 40 cents holland for a hectolitre of ashes to chop that log you would think is hard work but I believe that two men would have to work hard to saw as much as two chop one stands on the log and then on each side a cut is made to the middle short handles to the axes and short axe blades it is fascinating to watch how handily it goes forward then when the wood has been burnt off the ground one proceeds to fence it about with split oak rails usually made 10 to 12 feet long and then one lays these up to 7 and 8 above each other and the lowest cracks are so narrow that no little pigs can get through and that is necessary for they all run in the woods and where they want to one accustoms them to come home with a little feed that is the case too with the oxen and cattle these one accustoms to come home with salt of that they are especially fond that is not as it is in Zeeland cattle run at large as well in the winter as in the summer when one chops wood they come to us and eat all the tops of the branches now I have gotten a little off the track that way then the first winter we got six acres ready and on that we then had summer wheat and oats and indian corn or nicknamed Spanish wheat that crop grows well here also all other crops of the climate for tickbeans [paardeboonen] it is too hot the summer is short here and hot when crops are growing growth is vigorous of potatoes we did not have enough the first year for our use but now we have many left over they have not been entirely free from disease so that some were also spoilt in the cellar the house we have is 30 feet long and 20 feet wide built of 48 logs very solid against storm here too we learn that all beginnings are difficult yet we have endured these and have by this time retrieved still more ground

LETTER 6

to this point then I wrote at the time and now then we have 1853 the 30th of March so that since that time we have come to know still more about America and are also more at home than then the atmospheric