



# Religious Educator: Perspectives on the Restored Gospel

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Volume 17 | Number 1

Article 10

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2-24-2016

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### BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

"The Consecrated Service of Elder John W. F. Volker: The Netherlands Mission." *Religious Educator: Perspectives on the Restored Gospel* 17, no. 1 (2016): 121-157. <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/re/vol17/iss1/10>

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John W. F. Volker

Courtesy of Jo Anne Petty Smith.

## *The Consecrated Service of Elder John W. F. Volker: The Netherlands Mission*

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*Author's note:* Joseph Smith Jr., the Prophet of the Restoration, took the charge given by our resurrected Lord very seriously to “teach all nations” (Matthew 28:19). He also commanded the Saints of this last dispensation to not “let a single corner of the earth go without a mission.”<sup>1</sup> This charge is keenly felt. It is coupled with a tremendous desire to share the experiences of such pioneers as John Volker to inspire others to consecrate their all for the building of the kingdom of God in their localities in every region of the earth.

This article launches a new section in the *Religious Educator* in what is hoped will be the beginning of many significant studies on global pioneering efforts during the nineteenth to the twenty-first centuries regarding those who have advanced the worldwide growth and strength of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. A distillation of the article will also appear in the *Liahona* magazine in Dutch.

This piece highlights the consecrated service of John W. F. Volker Jr., who served multiple missions in the Netherlands (his native region) and lived a life that was dedicated to building up The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, both in the Netherlands and anywhere else he could.

Because Jean Huysmans is a Belgian Latter-day Saint, he provided translation work for both the research and production of this article. He has gathered records for decades in his capacity as a FamilySearch employee. Jean and I felt that laboring together on this study exemplified a worthy model of global collaboration wherein we would bring together our combined talents and experiences to create an article that can benefit people around the world. Our knowledge and ideas have been augmented by the rich collection of primary documents housed at the Church History Library in Salt Lake City.

Exactly two years before the gospel of Jesus Christ was first introduced to the Netherlands, John W. F. Volker's wife, Anna Catherina Scherwitz, gave birth in Amsterdam to a gifted boy on August 5, 1859, and named him after his father.<sup>2</sup> Sadly, by the time young John had reached the tender age of two, his father had already passed away.<sup>3</sup> In 1877, at eighteen years old, John Jr. and his mother joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Peter J. Lammers baptized John and later became his mission companion when John served his first mission in the Netherlands. Soon after his baptism, John immigrated<sup>4</sup> to Zion, settling in Ogden, Utah. Though he spoke no English when he arrived in America, John's tenacious effort to master the language paid off as he eventually secured a job as an apprentice typesetter.<sup>5</sup> In the fall of 1882, John received an unexpected mission call to the Netherlands and was set apart just five days later as a full-time missionary to travel to Holland to serve the first of two nearly back-to-back missions. The first was to serve as a traveling elder (1882–83), and the second was to serve as president over the Netherlands Mission (1885–89). The second call came less than two years after his return to the United States from his first mission.<sup>6</sup> Excerpts from the opening page of his first mission journal reveal the consecrated service of Elder John W. F. Volker Jr. When departing Ogden to labor among his native countrymen, John noted the following:

1882 October 8. Called on a mission to Holland unexpectedly was out taking a buggy ride, only Eight days notice.

Octr 10. Ordained an Elder by Patriarch John Smith.... Received Endowments in Salt Lake City went to Ogden.

Octr 11. Left home in the morning and got sick in the afternoon received one dollar donation.

Octr 13 Went to Salt Lake . . . set apart for a mission by Lorenzo Snow got certificate and skipped.

Octr 17. Left Ogden.

Octr 24 . . . went on board of Wyoming Left New York.<sup>7</sup>

Before the month ended, the *Ogden Herald*, culling from the *New York Evening Telegram*, noted that Volker was not the only Latter-day Saint missionary who embarked at this time to spread Mormonism abroad: "A party of fifty-three 'Mormon' missionaries will sail, tomorrow at two o'clock, in the steamship *Wyoming*, of the Guion line, for Europe."<sup>8</sup> Apparently Volker, small of stature (measuring only five feet three inches at most<sup>9</sup>), was one of several missionaries interviewed by a New York journalist, who described John as "a young man with light hair and rosy cheeks, who joined the church, five years ago, in Holland." Volker told the reporter quite candidly, "We go expecting hard times everywhere, and pay our own expenses."<sup>10</sup> Challenging times did indeed lie ahead; Volker would soon clash head-on with a Dutch society so steeped in its own traditions and values that it opposed religious change.

On November 3, 1882, Volker arrived at the European Mission headquarters in Liverpool, England, and soon departed for London en route to Amsterdam.<sup>11</sup> Upon their arrival in Liverpool, Elder Peter J. Lammers (the man who baptized Volker) was appointed president of the Netherlands Mission by President Albert Carrington, and Elder Volker was assigned to serve as a traveling elder.<sup>12</sup> While in London visiting the North London Branch, Volker noted that he "preached a little while by the spirit of God."<sup>13</sup> He and Lammers also made time for brief visits to some of the cultural sites of this vast city which Wilford Woodruff had referred to as the "capital of great Babylon."<sup>14</sup> Among the sites visited were the British Museum, the Zoological Garden, Westminster Abbey, the House of Lords, the House of Commons, and St. Paul's Cathedral. Volker also notes that he "went to the Theater and saw the play much ado about nothing," before continuing on to Amsterdam.<sup>15</sup>

The Netherlands Amsterdam Mission records that on November 7, 1882, "Elders Peter Jacob Lammers and John W. F. Volker arrived in Amsterdam as missionaries from Zion. They had been called on a mission to Holland at the previous October conference, in Salt Lake City."<sup>16</sup> This mission history also hints at the challenges these missionaries faced as they tried to gather a scattered flock in a cosmopolitan city, which city at that time consisted of over 300,000 people:<sup>17</sup> "When these brethren arrived in Amsterdam they could only find 8 faithful Saints in that city. President Lammers proceeded to visit all the Saints in the mission, numbering about 75 souls."<sup>18</sup>

The following month while in Zwolle, Netherlands, President Lammers wrote a letter to President John H. Smith in Liverpool. In the letter he reported,

“Our health is good, that of brother Volker and myself, and we are rejoicing and have much pleasure in our labors. Brother Volker is in Amsterdam with his relations and a few Saints there, and will join me after New Year’s. I have been visiting and preaching the Gospel to the Saints in their scattered condition. . . . There are seventy-eight Saints altogether, eighteen families, and six of them are alive in paying Tithing. The Saints are very poor.”<sup>19</sup>

Volker’s missionary journal confirms that soon after his arrival in Amsterdam, he visited his uncle Fritz Volker and other relatives.<sup>20</sup> Along with wanting to strengthen his family bonds and convert them to the restored gospel, Elder Volker was also diligent in his efforts to strengthen the local Saints and obtain more converts. As a traveling elder, he was constantly on the move, journeying to various cities in the Netherlands (as attested by his mission entries).

Just two weeks after arriving in Amsterdam, he wrote, “Preached to [my] Aunt for a couple of hours.” Four days later he recorded that he had a meeting at the home of a local Saint in which he gave a sermon for a half hour.<sup>21</sup> Additional journal excerpts capture a glimpse of his diligent efforts to testify of the restored gospel, and these entries also reveal the stiff opposition he faced during his labors in just a week’s period of time:

February 25 [1883]. . . Spoke for about two hours and a half at night. . . . About one hundred people heard my testimony.

February 27. . . Bore my testimony to a great many people and went out for about three or four hours distributing tracks [tracts].

March 1, Thursday. Weather fine went out distributing tracks and was yelled at by a great many persons about being a false prophet.

March 2, Friday. Went out distributing tracks walking around people yelled at me professing to be God fearing people in the paper was a great peace [piece] furnished about me at night was invited to come and talk with a familie [*sic*] and on arriving there, there was quite a large company . . . and had a debat[e] for a couple of hours.

March 3, Saturday. Weather fine Wrote a letter to Br. J. M. McQuarrie and a piece for the *Millennial*. . . .<sup>22</sup> Whenever I walked around I was yelled at by the people.

March 4, Sunday. Weather fine went to fetch some more tracks [tracts] back and in the afternoon . . . boys were trying to throw rocks at me and they made a horrible noise at 12 at night.<sup>23</sup>

On this same Sabbath day, Volker wrote an article for the *Millennial Star* that summarized his first four months of missionary labors in the Netherlands, confirming the opposition encountered: “By friends and relatives I was received with the greatest generosity in the beginning, but when they knew

my errand most of them turned the cold shoulder upon me. . . . I have been traveling a great deal alone, also with Brother Lammers, who is my President. I meet with a great deal of opposition and have to change around quite often. . . . Wherever we go we are opposed, but still many hear our testimony.”

Volker described the conditions: “As to sleeping and eating; one night we sleep in something like a wooden box with doors, then in something else, and very often on the floor, as I do now, about three inches above the water. Our meals generally are very poor, but I can say the Lord is blessing the food for me, for if He did not I could not live on what I get.” At the time of his writing he noted, “I am boarding and lodging with a family of Saints in a little twenty-ton ship. I cannot stand straight up, and have to be either on my knees or bowed down, which is very unpleasant; still we enjoy the good Spirit of God.”<sup>24</sup> Reporting on his proselytizing in the *Millennial Star*, Volker lamented:

I preached in a workshop this morning to about twenty people, and also in the afternoon preached to a congregation numbering eighty, and was very much opposed. The people would not believe that Joseph Smith had received revelations because his name is not mentioned in the Bible. . . . When I walk around the streets, which are quiet, distributing tracts, the people yell at me, call me a false prophet, and say that for a few pounds a person can buy his salvation. They have got it down to a fine point. They also have a column of matter in their paper about me, warning the people in this country and elsewhere to beware of me and not listen to me. Well, I feel proud of it. I thank the Lord for that honor, for surely the servant is not greater than his Master. I am blessed with the Spirit of God, and the more they persecute me the greater my faith and stronger my testimony, and with the help of the Lord I shall go forth to proclaim glad tidings to this people in spite of all opposition.<sup>25</sup>

About four months later, Volker again reported his labors to the *Millennial Star*. Writing from Amsterdam, July 30, 1883, he told of his tracting and translation work coupled with continued opposition: “I have translated Elder John Morgan’s tract, No. 1, into the Dutch language, had 1,000 copies printed, and they are now in circulation among the Dutch sinners. I hope some good will result. There are prospects for a few more people coming forward and requiring baptism.”<sup>26</sup> Volker also explained that he was not laboring alone; the local Saints were doing their share of missionary work: “The Saints here in Holland . . . do everything in their power to promulgate the Gospel.” For example, in the town of Heerenveen, two local brethren helped Volker distribute the tracts, and “there was not one house in that town, of over 900 families, but what had a warning.”

Such a warning was not without consequence; Volker said that the “people were very much excited over having ‘Mormons’ in their town, and whenever I showed myself in the street, which was quite often, I was called at and even threatened.” After President Lammers came down from Groningen to join Volker in Heerenveen, they held a meeting wherein approximately two hundred people attended. The missionaries bore “strong testimony. . . that Joseph Smith was a Prophet of God.” As the meeting concluded, the crowd became a bit unruly. The following night even more interested people attended, and after it was over about two hundred people, “mostly roughs,” followed the missionaries for about a half hour to their house. Although the crowd yelled, threatened, and knocked down one of the local members twice, a policeman escorted the Elders, and they felt as though the hand of God was upon them. Volker concluded, “We rejoiced and felt to praise God that we had such a good opportunity to bear our testimony, although Satan was there trying to do all in his power to make a disturbance.”<sup>27</sup>

Other disturbances Volker experienced off and on throughout his mission were the unfavorable sleeping conditions. He wrote, “Oh how horrible flees [*sic*] and bugs and everything has kept me out of sleep.”<sup>28</sup> Two days later he again noted, “Slept miserable was considerably bothered with lice and flees also bed bugs was glad to get out of bed, . . . went out distributing tracks and met with good success.”<sup>29</sup>

Though Volker could be quite bold and tenacious, he was also rather tender. Perhaps the most touching part of his first mission is evident in a heartfelt letter he wrote in Dutch on April 3, 1883. From Almelo, he pleaded with the Dutch Saints already gathered to Zion to send what they could to assist their Latter-day Saint brothers and sisters in their native country so that they too could come to Zion:

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Church of Jesus Christ. Peace be with you. . . . We received the blessing to move to Zion out of the terrible Babylon and we remember how difficult it was to live in Babylon. . . . Thanks to the Lord that we arrived here, some of us have money and some are helped by others. . . . Do we think sometimes of our old brothers and sisters that they suffer while we enjoy here the best things. . . . Let’s ponder a moment and then we will see that many of us have been helped by others, and now we forget to pay back so that somebody else can be helped. . . . Ask yourself was I helped in the past, and have I received some money that I have not paid back? . . . Some of you even borrowed money from the poorest people. . . . Now my loved ones today the Lord asks you to let your thoughts return to those poor brethren which we have left behind, reach out your hands and God will bless you, and when we will donate 10 cents . . . we will see how much our work will be

blessed and that we can also save souls out of Babylon. . . . May the Lord bless all of you and guide your way, and may he open all your hearts for those poor and honest souls who has to live here in suppression and I will do my best to help with this and therefore I will put my name on top of the list, God bless all of you with many blessings and this is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ.<sup>30</sup>

By midsummer, John traveled continually and accelerated his proselytizing efforts by distributing tracts, locating printers, and finding halls to preach in along the way. On July 13, 1883, while in Heerenveen, he noted, “I went . . . and distributed some 20 tracks then went to see how much it would cost to hire a hall. Then went and fetched back 20 tracks which done no good and a great deal of opposition then we distributed 50 more tracks.”<sup>31</sup> Three days later Volker added, “Hired a hall and went to the printer had some bills printed to make known through the town about us having a meeting went . . . to the printer and got those tracks about the meeting and . . . brought one in every hook and corner so that every home in town had a notice and the town was well warned.”<sup>32</sup>

Throughout the summer he continued to place tracts and immersed himself in translating tract materials from August to late October. He also translated Latter-day Saint scripture from the Pearl of Great Price and the Doctrine and Covenants into Dutch.<sup>33</sup> Then, unexpectedly, on November 16, 1883, Volker “received notice from Liverpool to go home.”<sup>34</sup>

Soon after his arrival in Ogden, near the end of November, John was assigned local Church service responsibilities. In an early January letter to the *Millennial Star*, John reported his Atlantic crossing, his new calling, and his firmness in the faith: “We had a very pleasant voyage and safe arrival. I have been made a home and Sunday school missionary since my return, and am proud of my calling. I have also been ordained a Seventy, and am ready at any time to answer any call that is made of me. I am observing the ‘Word of Wisdom’ as far as possible, my testimony as to the truth of the Gospel is getting stronger and stronger every day, and I find joy and satisfaction in laboring for my Father in Heaven.”<sup>35</sup>

The steadiness and the intellectual capacity of this vibrant Dutchman were apparently noticed by the entrepreneurial Cannon brothers (Abraham H. and Frank J. Cannon). An announcement in the *Ogden Herald* the following month declared that the Cannons and John Volker would soon “open a first-class book and stationery store, under the firm style of Cannon & Volker.” The *Herald* specified, “The new firm will make a specialty of Church publications, both standard and periodical. . . . They will also keep on hand a full

stock of Sunday School supplies, besides the standard eastern works, classics, fiction, poetry, travels, history, science, &c.”<sup>36</sup> Just three weeks later (April 1, 1884), the *Herald* confirmed that Cannon & Volker had indeed opened their new business “with a fine display of all kinds of literature, . . . whatever belongs to a first-class establishment of the kind.”<sup>37</sup> But Volker’s partnership wasn’t to last long. That fall, “Mr. Volker withdrew and the business was continued under the firm name of Cannon & Sons.” Volker had likely withdrawn his partnership in preparation for his second mission.<sup>38</sup>

On August 13, 1884, John married Edith L. Parker. She was born in Wellsville, Utah, in 1861 (nearly two years younger than John).<sup>39</sup> Less than two years after concluding his first mission to Holland and just a few months after he had married Edith, John was called to return to his homeland. This time he was to preside over the Netherlands Mission; he was only twenty-seven years old. “This was a difficult decision to make, as they were just getting started in their marriage but they both agreed that it was the proper thing to do.” The long four-year separation from each other (1885–89) was made easier by a dream they were both given two days before the formal call came wherein they were informed of John’s divine calling to return to the Netherlands.<sup>40</sup> Edith faithfully supported the calling and proved to be a steady encouragement throughout the duration of John’s mission, as evidenced by her continual supportive letters and steady monetary contributions. She earned her money working in Ogden as a seamstress, which eventually took a heavy toll on her body.<sup>41</sup> John’s attitude at the time of the calling was one of gratitude, for he considered it a blessing to be called by the Lord to labor in his Master’s vineyard abroad.<sup>42</sup>

His second mission began with preparations for his wife’s well-being during his absence. He sold his household furniture in total for \$131, rented out his house, and moved Edith into her father’s home.<sup>43</sup> Although they each supported this mission, it was not without personal sacrifice for both John and Edith. But many journal entries as well as Volker’s letters to the *Millennial Star* confirm the success he achieved in strengthening the Dutch Saints and bringing many converts into the fold. This mission would be a time of significant growth for both John and the Netherlands Mission under his diligent and able leadership.

Just before his departure, the *Ogden Herald* announced that under the direction of the 53rd Quorum of Seventies (Volker was then serving as the secretary of the quorum) and in honor of John’s call to his native homeland,



Edith L. Volker

Courtesy of Jo Anne Petty Smith.

a ball would be held. Admission to the dance was seventy-five cents, and the music was furnished by the Ole Berkoel's Quadrille Band.<sup>44</sup> Three days after the ball, the Fourth Ward choir gave John a farewell serenade.<sup>45</sup> These festivities must have provided sweet memories for John to reflect upon during the long and lonely four years that lay ahead of him. John considered it “quite a trial to go there all alone” because there had been no missionaries in the Netherlands for ten months by the time he arrived. John was also strengthened through a blessing he received by several Apostles at the time of his setting apart as a mission president. Among other things, President Volker was told he would travel safely by sail and rail to the mission field. Further, he was promised that if he were humble, “even as a little child,” God would make him “a mighty instrument for good.”<sup>46</sup>

By the first of November, President Volker reached Amsterdam and directly paid visits to his Uncle Fritz and Uncle Henry. After a week, John wrote that he had already, once again, “introduced that the Saints should lay about 10 cts each week for the emmigration [*sic*] fund which was approved and accepted in Amsterdam.”<sup>47</sup>

By early January 1886, Volker reported his labors to his ecclesiastical leader, President Daniel H. Wells, who was stationed in Liverpool. In response, Wells wrote that he was pleased with President Volker's work in the Netherlands: “Your cheerful letter of 6th inst. came duly to hand. Am pleased to hear of the bright prospects that you indicate are opening up before you in that land, and also am satisfied that you are zealous in your work and that all is being done by you that is possible for the furtherance of the work of spreading the good seed broadcast in your country.”<sup>48</sup>

This cheery epistle must have been a bright spot to John as he was again facing obstacles sleeping comfortably. But unlike his first mission challenges of fleas and lice in his bedding, now he encountered cold and wet sleeping conditions in the homes of several humble Saints with whom he stayed while traveling throughout the mission. As the late fall weather crept in, Volker recorded, “Sleeping in a loft where it was horrible cold.” Yet he also recalled, “I could see the stars, . . . which was a good introduction of what it will be in the future.”<sup>49</sup>

Such optimism was uplifting, but sleepless nights continued. Just two days later, after traveling to Groningen, Volker wrote that he had to sleep with a local Saint (Elder Pots) “in his boat the water dropping all over me all night slept miserable but was glad to have a place where I could stay.”<sup>50</sup> Midway



Courtesy of Amsterdam City Archive.

J. Bremer Printing Office, Amsterdam, where LDS literature was printed.

through this same week, he boarded a train for Dedemsvaart, stayed with another Latter-day Saint family, and to his regret, had the same problem with sleeping conditions: “I did not sleep very wel [*sic*] having a good bed but the roof and the dwelling was so miserable that I could not enjoy a good nights rest any how I was glad it was morning and I had a chance to get out.”<sup>51</sup> The following day he journeyed on to Zwolle and encountered a similar problem: “I slept in a box and could not stretch my legs out.”<sup>52</sup>

In spite of these discomforts, President Volker continued to move the work forward by investing considerable time, effort, and Church money into translating and printing reading materials. In late November he translated an article written by an Elder Dents titled *The Gospel of Christ* and ordered 1,000 copies to be printed by J. Bremer for \$56.<sup>53</sup> The following week he spent most of his time “making a Ready Reference book in the Dutch Language.”<sup>54</sup> Even on Christmas Eve Day Volker was busy doing business with the same printer, settling on a cost of \$56 for 2,500 printed copies of the Articles of Faith.

As the year drew to a close, John was grateful to realize some rewards for his hard labors. On a frigid day he baptized a couple but regretted that “it was horrible cold though and it felt as though I had not feet. . . . While on our way home we were overtaken by a fearful snowstorm which was very cold but we arrived home all right.”<sup>55</sup> On the last day of the year, Volker meekly expressed his joy in serving the Lord and his great desire to improve in his calling:

I feel to rejoice in the great and noble work which I represent and my desire is to live a pure and holy live [life] to go forth with renewed energy praying that the Lord will forgive my sins and short comings of the past year and to bless me with His greatest blessings that I might perform the high and holy duties which He has placed upon me to perform that I might overcome and not be ashamed of the gospel of Christ for I know it is a power of God unto salvation and to give me power to go forth as His servant and do my duty.<sup>56</sup>

By the end of the first week of January 1886, Volker was actively engaged in translating the “Lectures on Faith”<sup>57</sup> and completed the task in just over a week. During this period of time, he asked President Daniel H. Wells to send about five more missionaries to the Netherlands to expand the work, yet only two were sent then, and only a few more trickled in during Volker’s remaining years of service.<sup>58</sup>

By early February, Volker rented a hall in Amsterdam for \$2.50 a week so that the Dutch Saints could have a Sunday meeting place.<sup>59</sup> He also made sure that the local authorities protected his flock from the unruly human wolves:



The Atlas, a rented hall in Zwolle where the Dutch Saints held Church meetings and which is now a restaurant.

“I went out to the Police station asking them to watch our Meeting place on Sunday which they promised they would.”<sup>60</sup>

During this same time, Volker and other LDS missionaries were quite active in distributing and collecting missionary tracts. For example, three days after renting the hall, Volker recorded that he “distributed 35 tracks [of] The Gospel of Christ.”<sup>61</sup> Two days later he wrote, “collected tracks I felt rather bad for the people did not have any desire to search after righteousness, some promising to come to meeting on the following Sunday.”<sup>62</sup> That same month, on February 24, Volker recounted other instances of proselytizing: “I went out and distributed 100 tracks walking about three hours in succession I came home being very tired.”<sup>63</sup> On February 26 he said, “I went out about 11 a.m. to collect the tracks they all returned them to me offering me a few cents thinking I came around to beg, but I told them it was not for that purpose. I had a talk with a great many people and told pretty near all of them that the Kingdom of God had come.” Volker then noted the outcome of his efforts: “They all acknowledged that I had spoken the truth but if they should obey what had been said they had to let go of all their people and this they would never do. . . . I invited them to come to our meeting on Sunday night which they promised but none of them came.”<sup>64</sup> Notwithstanding, the local Dutch newspapers reported about lengthy Latter-day Saint meetings in Zwolle where visitors were welcome to attend.<sup>65</sup>

As with his first mission account, the four years Volker spent as mission president were filled with weekly accounts of distributing and collecting tracts in various areas as he traveled to share the gospel and strengthen the local Saints. Though few responded to the messages, at times his tracts did stimulate some interest, as his journal entries occasionally attest. His relentless efforts also resulted in visitors attending Latter-day Saint meetings, which sporadically resulted in baptisms.

Regardless of the baptisms or lack thereof, Volker showed gratitude and humility and maintained a positive attitude throughout his mission experience. The following account from March 23rd illustrates his faithfulness: “I went out collecting 25 tracks and also distributed 75 tracks I had an opportunity to bear my testimony by some. . . . I felt grateful to my Heavenly Father for His blessings which He has bestowed upon me to be a messenger of live [life] and Salvation and I feel my weakness for the duties devolving upon me. I have no wisdom of myself. I also felt to ask the Lord to bless the seed sown that it may bring forth fruit unto the honor and glory of God.”<sup>66</sup>



Perhaps his positive mindset was influenced by his frequent fasts for strength that he performed nearly every month of his four-year tenure. This disciplined practice no doubt affected his determination to strengthen and stimulate the growth of the Church in the Netherlands. Sometimes Volker was simply hungry, in want of a bit more food. Yet in those moments he showed a tremendous sense of gratitude, as these spring 1886 journal excerpts illustrate: “Collected all the tracks and left 25 spoke with about 6 persons but the balance they were all cold and had no desire to investigate any further I arrived home having had an old crust being a week old for lunch, but the Lord blessed it for me so it tasted like cake.”<sup>67</sup> About two weeks later Volker wrote, “I went home and had a crust of bread being about 6 days old but not having anything else to eat, I went and took . . . it tasted good to me.”<sup>68</sup>

In addition to his journal entries, Volker’s letters to the *Millennial Star* and his letters published in the *Ogden Herald* highlighted Volker’s efforts and struggles as mission president and provide a gauge for the religious conditions, political climate, and the lack of spirituality in the people during the late nineteenth century. For example, as spring dawned in 1886, Volker wrote in a letter to the *Millennial Star*, “The work in this part of the vineyard is progressing slowly. . . . The people seem to be spiritually dead. I am out nearly every day distributing and collecting tracts, but the people have no desire to investigate our principles any further.”<sup>69</sup>

About four months later Volker wrote, “The work in this land is going on and improving, although very slowly, and prospects are becoming better than ever. Since the arrival of my brethren, Elder Heertjes and Krumperman, we have distributed thousands of tracts, but the people in general have no desire whatever to investigate the principles of eternal life; they are as cold as ice.” At this time there were also other social considerations to contend with. Not only was the Sabbath day severely blasphemed in Amsterdam, but political turmoil was also swirling. Volker continued, “We have had a fearful time here in Amsterdam. Last week the Socialists had a fight with the police, which caused the soldiers to be called out. The spirit of hatred has so settled in the hearts of the people that they have no love nor sympathy for their fellow man. Men, women and children were engaged in the fight.”<sup>70</sup>

During this same year, religious turmoil surrounded the Mormon elders. In an article published in the *Herald*, Volker wrote:

The people are . . . divided into very many different sects and are at war with each other, at present there is a great conflict in what they call the great reformed church.



Map of John Volker's travels.

. . . We have three classes of ministers in the churches here: Orthodox, Modern and Liberals. . . . The Orthodox call the Liberals and Modern thieves and robbers and the Liberals and Moderns call the Orthodox murderers and whoremongers. . . . The political condition of the country is something like the church.<sup>71</sup>

In the midst of these volatile conditions, Volker and his companions labored tenaciously to spread the Mormon message of the restoration of the gospel. In addition, Volker commenced a monumental work about this time with the Dutch translation of the Book of Mormon, begun on June 30, 1886. From this point on, his journal repeatedly speaks of his translation efforts, not only with the Book of Mormon but also with a number of other religious documents. This vital work continued throughout the remainder of his mission.<sup>72</sup>

Another salient feature of Volker’s work occurred in 1886 when he rented a large *concerthuis* (concert house) in Groningen<sup>73</sup> to preach in for three evenings in the same week (October 10, 13, 17). His journal entries regarding the hiring of this hall and his lectures provide a glimpse into these events:

Monday October 4th . . . I went and hired a hall [concert house] for three evenings at \$7.50 each which made me feel rather nervous for a felt week [*sic*] but my trust is in the Lord and he will bless me.



Groningen Concert House, which Volker hired to preach in.

Sunday October 10. . . . I went to the hall which was crowded and felt my dependency upon the Lord my earnest prayer was unto Him and He did bless me . . . I was endowed with power and I spoke to the public for one hour and a half . . . We had a collection and collected \$4.70 and the hall cost \$7.50.

Wednesday October 13. . . . At 7:30pm I prayed earnestly unto the Lord for His Spirit to be with me while I should hold meeting in the evening I went to the hall and it was again filled with people but oh the bad spirits which were there but the Lord was with me, and he gave me an abundance to speak, spoke for one hour and 45 minutes and dismissed collection \$2.10 towards the expenses of the hall, and

when I came out I found a lot of boys waiting to give me a thrashing but they could not do anything for the Lord did not allow them.

Sunday Morning October 17 at 8 pm I held a meeting in the large hall and there were about 400 persons present they paid good attention and the Spirit of the Lord was upon me and I spoke for one hour and 45 minutes I felt grateful unto my Heavenly Father for it was Him who endowed me with His Spirit whereby I could explain the principles of the gospel and the divine mission of Joseph Smith and my earnest prayer is that the Lord will bless the seed sown that it may bring forth fruit unto Him[,] about 75 persons followed me home.<sup>74</sup>

Later, in a letter to Liverpool, Volker summarized his experience preaching at the concert house:

Some time ago I had an opportunity of renting a good, large hall in one of the great cities, and I held three meetings. I had about 400 listeners every time, and the Spirit of the Lord was with me, so that I had an abundance of words, speaking one hour and a half each time and they were all satisfied until I began to talk about Joseph Smith, then there was weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, in fulfillment of the promise made to Joseph that his name would be had for both good and evil. They were not able to harm me in any way, for the Lord prevented it; their desire was to whip me.<sup>75</sup>

John made concerted efforts to find proper conditions for the Dutch Saints to hold church meetings by carefully selecting halls he arranged to rent. For example, on November 4, 1886, he noted in his journal that he “received a letter to come to Deventer immediately, visited some halls to see which was the best and rented one on Nassaukade for \$3.00 a week to hold three meetings.” In addition, while in Groningen on November 13, John recorded, “I rented a hall for \$40.00 a year.”<sup>76</sup> In his report to the *Millennial Star*, Volker described in greater detail the Groningen Latter-day Saint meeting place he selected: “I have succeeded in renting a nice, little hall, where I can hold meetings regularly every Sunday, and give the public a chance to come and hear. This makes two places in this land where we hold public meetings. I have three Sunday Schools organized, and, although small, they keep increasing.” Taking the opportunity to again request additional help, Volker added, “There is plenty of room for more missionaries, for four of us cannot do all the labor required.”<sup>77</sup>

Though the harvest was indeed great, the laborers were few. Yet Volker led his companions in a steady fight by using the weapons of tracting, translating, preaching, printing, and writing. An example of his use of such weaponry is illustrated in the following journal entry in mid-November 1886. After walking a distance to call a couple to repentance, Volker explained, “went to

the printer and had my meeting advertised went home and translated some questions and answers to the Lectures of faith then . . . in the evening I wrote a piece to the paper to be printed in opposition to a certain piece of a Mr. Folklinga." The local newspaper, however, refused to publish Volker's article.<sup>78</sup>

Even so, John's statistics for the year are evidence that his work was rewarded. As 1886 drew to a close, he noted 39 baptisms, bringing the total membership to 137 in the boundaries of the Netherlands Mission.<sup>79</sup> Volker was no doubt pleased to report to his ecclesiastical leader, President Daniel H. Wells, that "there have been more new members added to the Church in this Mission during the last year, than ever before in one year." He added optimistically, "I have no doubt but that this year will be more fruitful still. We have only just started, and with the little help we have here, we are not able to do very much; yet I can say that the missionaries we have are faithful and energetic . . . Most of the Saints are feeling well . . . The Branches are pretty well organized." Volker concluded his letter explaining they had established a fund for the poor Dutch Saints and had many investigating the gospel, while yet hoping Wells would call more elders to the Netherlands.<sup>80</sup>

During the first half of the following year, President Volker and his companions continued to distribute tracts and follow up with interested parties. Volker was still focused on translating tracts, pamphlets, and especially the Book of Mormon. Here are typical entries: January 9: "Staid home all day translating the 14th part of the Book of Mormon;"<sup>81</sup> January 26: "Commenced the translation of the 15th part of the B of M [Book of Mormon];"<sup>82</sup> February 26: "Wrote the B of M. all day."<sup>83</sup> These were multiweekly entries until he completed the entire text on June 4, 1887.<sup>84</sup>

Soon after completing the translation of the Book of Mormon, he recommenced translating the Doctrine and Covenants into Dutch.<sup>85</sup> Intensive translation work continued on this text from June to September, and Volker completed the translation on November 30, 1887.<sup>86</sup> During the latter half of that year, he also made time to tutor his missionaries in Dutch lessons.<sup>87</sup> In addition to these significant endeavors, Volker was also heavily involved in assisting Dutch Latter-day Saint immigrants on their journey from the Netherlands to Liverpool, before they embarked to cross the Atlantic, bound for Utah.

For example, from May 15 to 21, 1887, Volker led a group of Dutch emigrants to Liverpool. The route of emigrants generally went from Amsterdam to Rotterdam by train, across a segment of the North Sea by steamer to

Hull, and then to Liverpool by train.<sup>88</sup> On September 19, 1887, Volker made arrangements for the two daughters of "Br. v. d. Veen" to immigrate to Liverpool, prior to their trans-Atlantic passage to Zion. Four days later he sent to the new European Mission president, George Teasdale, a list of names of Dutch LDS immigrants traveling through Liverpool to America. On October 3, Volker left Amsterdam with these LDS converts and again escorted them through Hull to Liverpool and on the North Sea segment, wherein some of the Saints became seasick.<sup>89</sup> Returning to the Netherlands shortly thereafter, Volker continued his labors of translating, printing, preaching, and traveling to serve the Dutch Saints for the remainder of the year.

The year 1888 also proved to be successful under President Volker's able and dedicated mission leadership. Membership in the Netherlands that year increased to 214, with 106 baptisms, and 42 LDS immigrants bound for Utah.<sup>90</sup> The following year (1889) was an equally productive year. From New Year's Day forward, Volker's journal attests to an abundance of service, coupled with continual prayer and fasting (nearly every week) to magnify his calling. He also continued his translation work of missionary tracts at a consistent pace. By mid-March 1888, he had completed his translation work of some of the letters of Orson Spencer (which would be used for tracts), which was a work he had started in late January.<sup>91</sup>

Edith consistently sent John letters of encouragement and occasionally sent anywhere from \$1 to \$10 to help him on his way.<sup>92</sup> Her financial support was necessary as shown by this final remark in one of John's letters to Edith: "P.S. Write soon if possible send me some money I am dead broke and in debt."<sup>93</sup> John's wife proved faithful throughout the duration of his mission, and her letters were both a strength and a source of great joy as illustrated by John's reaction to receiving news from home: "My dear Edith = Your letter of January 11th has arrived at last with the photos, if you ever saw any body glad it was me I could have jumped over a house."<sup>94</sup>

Excerpts in late March attest to an increase in baptisms; church meetings were full, and Sunday School classes were organized with as many as 56 in attendance.<sup>95</sup> By early May, President Volker had also "organized a ladies Relief Society . . . with about 20 names enrolled." He noted, "They all felt glad [and] I felt grateful this was off my shoulders."<sup>96</sup> Volker continued in his other responsibilities, which included arrangement for many Saints to emigrate from the Netherlands to America. For example, on May 15, 1888, he recorded, he "attended to the emmigration [*sic*] matters of the Brethren and

in the evening bid them Gods speed.”<sup>97</sup> The following two weeks he organized branches of the Church, first in Amsterdam and then in Groningen.<sup>98</sup> Volker also continued his rigorous efforts to preach the gospel and even took occasion to visit the Salvation Army. Concerning his experience, he recalled, “I had an opportunity of bearing testimony before a good many, they threatened to throw me out, but they did not have the power[,] praised my Heavenly Father for His goodness.”<sup>99</sup> At one point, Volker took a train to do some proselytizing work in The Hague and while tracting along with two other elders, took a much deserved, but rare and surprising, detour to see the “celebrated bathing resort Scheveningen.”<sup>100</sup>

As the presiding ecclesiastical officer in the region, President Volker had to occasionally correct his fellow Saints whom he loved, but they appreciated him for his service and continued in their love and affection for him. There are subtle indications of affectionate reciprocities as reflected in these accounts: On May 21 he wrote, “In company with 12 other[s] had a boat ride until 8:30 a.m. then went to Vorstenbergs where we had some singing.”<sup>101</sup> While in Amsterdam several months later, Volker recorded on August 6, “In the morning I was invited to come to the meeting house at 10 a.m. when I came there some of the Saints were gathered together in memoration [*sic*] of my birthday during the services they donated [to] me a beautiful album on a stand.”<sup>102</sup>

Although moments such as these were joyful, Volker also felt the pangs of loneliness from missing home and family. During this period, missionaries and even mission presidents were not routinely provided precise time frames for their missionary service at the time of their calls. President Volker was not an exception, although after years of service he seemed to have been anticipating impending news of a release date. In early August, when President Volker arrived at mission headquarters in Liverpool while helping Dutch Saints immigrate to Utah, he learned that his mission was to continue through the following spring. Having now been gone from his wife for nearly three years, he—not surprisingly—penned that such news “made me feel rather bad.”<sup>103</sup> Despite his longings for family and home, he dutifully saw the immigrants off as they embarked for Zion, then faithfully returned to Amsterdam and continued his assigned labors.

About a month later, he again accompanied another group of Dutch Saints to Liverpool, prior to their Atlantic voyage. On this occasion, President George Teasdale informed John that he wanted him to look into the cost of

printing the Book of Mormon in Dutch, which Volker had carefully translated.<sup>104</sup> John sent off yet another group of his countrymen to Zion and focused his attention on the charge to have the Book of Mormon printed in his native language. President Volker may have supposed that upon the completion of this important work he would have accomplished his mission, paid his dues, and be able to return home. Therefore, Volker didn’t waste any time in carrying out President Teasdale’s charge. Just one week later he had already “made arrangements for the printing of the Book of M [Mormon].”<sup>105</sup>

But there remained other important things for John to do during the final year of his mission, one of which was the translation of the lengthy, 138-page catalytic tract written by Elder Parley P. Pratt, *A Voice of Warning*. Published in 1837 (the year LDS missionary work was first launched in the British Isles), this work had a profound impact on conversions throughout Europe.<sup>106</sup> Volker commenced translating this book on September 28, 1888, just nine days after arranging for the printing of the Book of Mormon.<sup>107</sup> About six months later (March 20, 1889) and less than a week before he arranged payment for the printing of the Book of Mormon, Volker completed his Dutch translation of *A Voice of Warning*.<sup>108</sup> With the completion of these important works, Volker could feel incredibly satisfied with his missionary labors. He wrote, “The publishing of the Book of Mormon and Voice of Warning will be a great help in publishing the Gospel to this nation; and I have no words to express my joy that the Lord has heard my prayers that this work might come before my native countrymen understandingly.”<sup>109</sup> About three months after this translation work was completed, he left the Netherlands to return home to Ogden.

In his final report to the *Millennial Star* before embarking for Zion, Volker delivered a four-page synopsis of his four-year experience and accomplishments in the mission field.<sup>110</sup> Among other things, he listed the 10,000 copies he printed of *The Gospel of Christ* and the production of 15,000 tracts of *Glad Tidings of Great Joy*, both tracts he had translated into Dutch. Volker translated other sermons and tracts, including John Morgan tracts (both numbers 1 and 2). In addition to the Book of Mormon, Volker translated the following works: “Doctrine and Covenants, [Orson] Spencer’s Letters, Key to Theology, Voice of Warning, Pearl of Great Price, Mediation and Atonement, Divine Authenticity of the Book of Mormon, Mormon Doctrine and other works.”<sup>111</sup> In his report he noted other missionary activities such as rigorously proselytizing along with two elders (B. Heertjes and

H. Krumperman), who had been sent to him from Liverpool, as well as two local young men (A. Bel and E. Neuteboom). All were called to assist him in the work three years earlier. Volker explained, “In the daytime we went out distributing and collecting tracts, and at night we visited the people, sometimes until late in the morning.”<sup>112</sup>

By March 1888, President Volker had a force of about ten missionaries to work with. By this time, weekly baptisms were taking place, and the elders did not have time to make all the visits they intended. President Volker wrote, “Our Sunday school, which had been organized with about seven children, had prospered considerably, and all took a great interest. In May 1888, I organized a relief society.” Further, “The Branch at Amsterdam being the largest, is in a prosperous condition, and also the other branches; but on account of emigration of the Saints the other branches are rather small. . . . Our Sunday School numbers now about 70 members, average attendance 60. Our relief society numbers about 30 members, average attendance 20, meeting weekly.” President Volker had cause to feel tremendous satisfaction with the impact he had on the Netherlands Mission: “I have had great joy in my labors, . . . . During my stay here 292 persons have been added to the Church. . . . 101 souls emigrated, and a great many children blessed, and some re-baptized.”<sup>113</sup>

The day after arranging for the sail and rail costs for twenty-six Latter-day Saint immigrants bound for Utah, Volker conferred his duties as president of the Netherlands Mission on Elder Francis A. Brown of Ogden.<sup>114</sup> Volker wrote to President Teasdale of his feelings as his departure drew nigh: “I rejoice very much how my time has come when I look back and compare the mission by the time I came here and now while I am about to be released. I feel to sing praise unto my God for his guidance and for his good mercy over my fellow men to bless them with the sound of the everlasting gospel.”<sup>115</sup> As he attended his last church meetings in various cities and bid a final farewell, the Dutch Saints sorrowed at his departure. Volker wrote that it “was a hard matter the Saints crying like everything.”<sup>116</sup>

On June 18, after saying good-bye to the Saints gathered at the docks, Volker left Amsterdam and traveled across the North Sea to Hull, where he took a train to Liverpool. Three days later he was asked by President George Teasdale to lead a company of Saints (a dozen Dutch Saints and many British Church members) across the Atlantic on the steamer *Wisconsin*.<sup>117</sup> Just ten days later, the *Millennial Star* carried the news: “SAILED—A company of Saints, composed almost wholly of British subjects, sailed from Liverpool for



John Volker (seated on the left) on the steamship *Wisconsin* in 1889, just prior to returning home from his mission.

New York, June 22nd, per the SS *Wisconsin* of the Guion Line. This company consisted of 172 souls, but 12 of this number were from Holland. Nine returning missionaries are included. The usual organization was effected, Elder John W. Volker being placed in charge.”<sup>118</sup>

The following day, in a letter to President Teasdale, Volker reported from onboard the *Wisconsin*, just off Queenstown, “We began our voyage . . . by singing hymns of praise to God and songs of farewell to old England, &c. We also entertained ourselves quite freely with the music of the violin, cornet, &c., thus making a pleasant time for ourselves as well as many of our friends on board.”<sup>119</sup> After a successful crossing of the Atlantic, they landed in New York and soon traveled by steamer to Norfolk, Virginia. There they commenced rail travel across the country. Notwithstanding an engine break-down, scarcity of water, and four cases of measles (both at sea and on land), these Mormon converts entered Salt Lake City safely on July 12, 1889.<sup>120</sup> Upon arrival, Volker recorded in his journal, “There to my great joy I met my dear little wife and my brother Henry. I cannot describe the feelings of joy and gratitude to my Heavenly Father.” Afterwards, John and company took the train to Ogden, where they met with other friends and

relatives. All the while, John simultaneously struggled to complete his final obligations to the immigrants.<sup>121</sup>



Volker family portrait.

During the decade that followed John's return, he and Edith were busy raising a family of their own, which eventually consisted of four children: J. Henry (1890–1981), who later served as president of the Netherlands Mission;<sup>122</sup> Edith (1894–1989); Mary (1896–1969); and Josephine (1901–36).<sup>123</sup> John was able to provide a comfortable life for his growing family by securing a job as a private secretary to the well-known businessman David Eccles. Among his responsibilities, John kept the books for the Eccles Lumber Company in Ogden and later also oversaw the account for the Oregon Lumber Company. These responsibilities helped him launch his future career in founding the Volker-Scowcroft Lumber business in 1904.<sup>124</sup> Through John's hard work and ingenuity, he was eventually able to build an exceptional home for his family, which consisted of eleven bedrooms,<sup>125</sup> and became a wealthy businessman known in Ogden as a "successful lumber dealer."<sup>126</sup>

Through his abundant resources, John unselfishly continued to assist Dutch Latter-day Saints immigrating to Ogden. This is evident from dozens of letters he wrote in arranging affairs for the Dutch immigrants—including orphans and widows. For example, in one letter Volker wrote, "Enclosed herewith find draft for 200 guilders for the emigration of the orphan children of Bro. Horsman, which we understand are in Amsterdam."<sup>127</sup> Some letters also

Courtesy of Jo Anne Petty Smith.



Volker home in Ogden.

Courtesy of Jo Anne Petty Smith.

indicate that Volker was working with the assistance of the Church transportation agent, W. C. Spence, in several transactions.<sup>128</sup> The bulk of his letters from 1899 to 1902 reveal Volker's active involvement in the Dutch Saints' gathering to Zion and that he was ever mindful of his fellow countrymen, even a decade after returning home from his mission.<sup>129</sup> Most impressive is Volker's offer (thirteen years after his second mission) to serve another Netherlands mission when he learned of the release of the current mission president. Volker wrote to President B. H. Roberts, "I can talk the language and I will go when called. I heard that Br. T. Metz now president . . . is about to be released should the authorities want me to take his place let them call me and I will go and with the help of my Heavenly Father labor with all my might for the Salvation of my native people."<sup>130</sup>

J. Henry Volker noted that his father "helped many families and many individuals from Holland, (whom he knew there) to emigrate to Ogden and obtained work for many after their arrival. He was able to buy some good property and built many homes and created Volker's Avenue, which was later changed to Liberty Avenue, north from 28th Street." Henry added, "Most of these homes were sold to friends whom he helped to come to America, giving them terms, which they were able to work out."<sup>131</sup> According to John's

granddaughter Jo Anne Petty Smith, John was also active in helping these LDS Dutch immigrants in obtaining affordable materials for building housing through his lumber company.<sup>132</sup>

John's service extended into civic arenas as well. For example, for several years John served on the Board of the Utah Deaf and Blind School. He also established Monroe Park during the time he functioned as the park superintendent for Ogden City.<sup>133</sup> He served as a member of the Building Association board of directors<sup>134</sup> and also used his skills to examine books as the elected treasurer and secretary of the Ogden Building and Savings Association.<sup>135</sup>

Volker was also active in local Church service after his missions to the Netherlands and served as the secretary of the 77th Quorum of Seventies until April 11, 1892.<sup>136</sup> Later he was called as a member of the high council when the Weber Stake was reorganized in 1908. (Thanks to abundant growth, it became the largest stake in Zion.)<sup>137</sup> Edith also served faithfully as a member of the Relief Society board of the Ogden Stake and associated with the Daughters of Utah Pioneers. She passed away in the fall of 1929.<sup>138</sup>

John, grieved by her loss, found comfort two years later by visiting his beloved homeland for four months during the summer and early fall of 1931.<sup>139</sup> There he enjoyed the hospitality of friends and family and reminisced that it had been fifty-four years since he had first left the Netherlands for Zion, where he had made his home. He had not returned to his homeland for forty-two years, since the conclusion of his second mission.<sup>140</sup>

John W. F. Volker died on the morning of March 8, 1932, at the age of seventy-two in his Ogden home (653 27th Street). He is buried in the Ogden City Cemetery alongside his wife, Edith. John was survived by a son, three daughters, and fifteen grandchildren.<sup>141</sup> His diligent labors to strengthen the Dutch Saints through his pioneering efforts to establish branches, organize a Relief Society, and implement Sunday School organizations in the Netherlands cannot go unrecognized. The years John spent assisting Dutch immigrants' travel to Zion and helping them establish homes is inspiring. But perhaps his greatest and longest-lasting achievement was the translation of the Latter-day Saint scriptures into Dutch: The Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price, and especially the translation and subsequent publication of the Book of Mormon.<sup>142</sup> John W. F. Volker has left a lasting legacy of devotion and consecration towards his fellow countrymen by pioneering efforts in translating truths of the Restoration into the Dutch language and in diligently establishing the kingdom of God at home and abroad. **RE**

## Notes

1. Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2nd ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978), 5:368.
2. John's birth certificate is located in <https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.3.1/TH-266-13028-49667-6?cc=2020117&cwc=MCL4-2YM:341646101,342366801>. See also, "Volker, John W. F.," in *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia*, ed. Andrew Jenson, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1936), 4:359. "The first L.D.S. missionaries to the Netherlands arrived in Rotterdam August 5, 1861. They were Paul A. Schettler, a German, and Anne W. van de Woude, a Hollander." Kate B. Carter, comp., *Heart Throbs of the West*, 12 vols. (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1943), 4:278. For a history of Schettler, which includes material on van de Woude and their first mission to Holland, see Jacob W. Olmstead and Fred E. Woods, "'Give Me Any Suitable Situation,' The Consecrated Life of the Multitalented Paul A. Schettler," *BYU Studies* 41, no. 1 (2002): 108–26.
3. John's father died on March 21, 1862. See <https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.3.1/TH-267-12570-13281-25?cc=2020117&cwc=MCL4-7PV:341651501,341983701>. According to John's son, J. Henry Volker, John's father was an architect. Five years after his death, John's mother, Anna Catherina Scherwitz, married Henry Last. Anna came from a wealthy family of stockbrokers in Amsterdam, but when she became a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the family disinherited her. See J. Henry Volker, "The Volker Family: A Condensed Sketch of the Family of John William Frederick Volker and Edith Louise Parker Volker Who Were My Parents," published by the George Blake Parker Family Group (n.p., n.d.), comp. Victor Drabble (who died in 1978), 207–10, hereafter cited as "The Volker Family." This book is in the possession of Jo Anne Petty Smith, a granddaughter of John and Edith Volker. The authors thank Jo Anne for her extra-mile effort to assist the authors in providing access to this information about the John Volker family and for additional information through phone conversations as well as sharing photos of the Volker family. Appreciation is also extended to Whitney Ferry, a Volker family member who provided scanning for images as well as this sketch.
4. *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of English Usage* (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 1989), 389, notes the following: "Emigrate and immigrate make a case in which English has two words where it could easily have made do with only one. The two words have the same essential meaning—'to leave one country to live in another'—and differ only in emphasis or point of view: *emigrate* stressing leaving, and *immigrate* stressing entering." However, to further complicate things, *emigrate* is used once the immigrant has arrived in the new country and begins to emigrate to the West. For the sake of clarity and readability, the words *immigrate/immigration/immigrant* and *emigrate/emigration/emigrant* will be used synonymously throughout this paper.
5. According to J. Henry Volker in "The Volker Family," 207, John left Amsterdam with his sister Cornelia as well as his half-brother John Henry Frederick in 1877. When John arrived in Ogden, his first job was "a Hod-Carrier for a brick mason. He soon found that this work was far too heavy for his small build, and he obtained a job in the Newspaper as a 'Printer's Devil' and later became an apprentice type-setter. This gave him the splendid opportunity to learn the English Language. . . . He delighted in reading, and read any book he could get hold of."
6. "Volker, John W. F.," 4:359.

7. John W. Volker Papers (hereafter cited as JWVP), 1882–1883 Mission Journal, October 8, 10, 11, 13, 17, 24, 1882. Church History Library (hereafter cited as CHL), Salt Lake City, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
8. “Mormon’ Missionaries. Fifty-Three to Sail Tomorrow in the Steamship Wyoming,” *Ogden Herald*, October 30, 1882, 2. The date this article appeared in the *New York Evening Telegram* was October 23, 1882.
9. The height of Volker was given to Fred E. Woods via a telephone conversation (July 13, 2015) with Jo Anne Petty Smith, a granddaughter of John Volker. She is the daughter of John and Edith’s youngest child, Josephine.
10. “Mormon’ Missionaries. Fifty-Three to Sail Tomorrow in the Steamship Wyoming,” *Ogden Herald*, October 30, 1882, 2.
11. JWVP, 1882–1883 Mission Journal, November 3, 1882.
12. The Netherlands Amsterdam Mission Manuscript History and Historical Reports, November 7, 1882, CHL. The JWVP, 1882–83 Mission Journal, November 3, 1882, further notes, “went to Liverpool office was set apart as a traveling Elder.”
13. JWVP, 1882–1883 Mission Journal, November 5, 1882.
14. *Wilford Woodruff Journals, 1833–1898*, ed. Scott G. Kenney, 9 vols. (Midvale, UT: Signature Books, 1983–85), August 18, 1840, 1:493–94. Wilford Woodruff was then serving as an Apostle for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
15. JWVP, 1882–1883 Mission Journal, November 6–7, 1882.
16. However, the JWVP, 1882–1883 Mission Journal, notes that Volker arrived on November 8, 1882.
17. *Bevolkingsatlas van Nederland, Demografischeontwikkelingen 1850 tot heden. Nederlands Interdisciplinair Demografisch Instituut* (Rijswijk: Uitgeverij Elmar B.V., 2003), 36.
18. The Netherlands Amsterdam Mission Manuscript History and Historical Reports, November 7, 1882, CHL.
19. “Correspondence,” P. J. Lammers to John H. Smith, letter dated December 28, 1882, *Latter-day Saints’ Millennial Star*, January 8, 1883, 26–27, hereafter cited as *Millennial Star*.
20. JWVP, 1882–1883 Mission Journal, November 8, 1882.
21. See entries in JWVP, 1882–1883 Mission Journal, November 22, 26, 1882.
22. Here Volker refers to the LDS periodical the *Millennial Star*.
23. See the JWVP, 1882–1883 Mission Journal, March 4, 1883. For an overview of opposition against the missionaries in the Netherlands Mission from the late nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century, see Keith C. Warner, “History of the Netherlands mission of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1861–1966” (master’s thesis, BYU, 1967), 26–43. Notwithstanding such resistance encountered during his mission, Volker still managed to witness the baptisms of children and adults. See JWVP, 1882–1883 Mission Journal, February 11, June 16, June 20, 1883.
24. John Volker in Steenwijk to the *Millennial Star*, March 4, 1883, “Abstract of Correspondence,” *Millennial Star*, March 26, 1883, 202–3. In addition, P. J. Lammers writing to John H. Smith, December 28, 1882, *Millennial Star*, January 8, 1883, 27, also mentioned that six of the Dutch Latter-day Saint families in his area had “little ships” they were living on, “at the same time [they were] carrying the Gospel with them.”
25. John Volker in Steenwijk to the *Millennial Star*, March 4, 1883, “Abstract of Correspondence,” *Millennial Star*, March 26, 1883, 202–3. The following month, Volker also made mention of the opposition that continued: “The newspapers here are talking a great deal about us and telling a lot of falsehoods, and I always think the ‘more the merrier,’ for it will bring

the people to seek and find out what kind of people we are.” Such a resilient attitude of faith proved successful, and in this same letter, he noted that since his last letter to the *Millennial Star* the previous month, “I had the privilege, through the blessing of God, of bringing five more persons to the knowledge of God and baptizing them.” See “Abstract of Correspondence,” letter of Elder J. W. F. Volker dated April 7, 1883, published in the *Millennial Star*, April 23, 1883, 267. According to a letter that Volker wrote to his brother-in-law in Utah (E. T. Meyers), frigid conditions attended these five baptisms, “as he had to perform it at eleven o’clock at night, when it was terribly cold.” See “Heard from Holland,” *Ogden Herald*, April 10, 1883, 3. His attitude of rejoicing in times of tribulation, like Paul and the Prophet Joseph Smith (D&C 127:2), probably had a positive impact on the Saints of Ogden who read of this account in the *Herald*. See “Baptism in Holland,” *Ogden Herald*, May 12, 1883, 3.

26. John H. Morgan served in the Union Army as a sergeant and later served both as a missionary and mission president in the southern states. Later he became a General Authority for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, serving in the office of one of the seven presidents of the First Quorum of the Seventy. A typescript of his journals, letters, and writings are housed at the University of Utah and are available online. See the following link for items in general: <http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv59942/op=fstyle.aspx?t=a&k1=Morgan&k2=&k3=&t1=1&t2=0&t3=0&o1=0&o2=0&s=0&i=33> See also: <http://content.lib.utah.edu/cdm/ref/collection/uu-jhmp/id/1576> in this website segment titled “References and quotations for use in missionary work,” which appears to contain some of the tract material which Volker was translating.

27. John Volker in Holland to the editor of the *Millennial Star*, July 30, 1883, “The Work in Holland—Opposition—Political Outlook—Loss of War Ships,” *Millennial Star*, August 27, 1883, 559–60.

28. JWVP, 1882–1883 Mission Journal, July 2, 1883.

29. JWVP, 1882–1883 Mission Journal, July 4, 1883. Volker also battled fleas on his second mission to the Netherlands. See, for example, Papers of John Volker, Mission Journals 1885–1889, March 27, 1886 in which he notes, “I went to bed but did not get to sleep until 2:30a.m. on account of a couple of fleas which I could not catch.”

30. JWVP, folder 7, Netherlands Mission Papers, 1883–1889, letter written in Dutch by John Volker from Almelo to the Saints in Zion, April 3, 1883, translated by Jean G. Huysmans. The letter concludes with this statement: “We the signers declare with this to pay every week the amount of money which we have written behind our names and that we recognize that these amounts of money will be used for the salvation and deliverance of our brothers and sisters out of Babylon, praying that the Lord will help us with this and will bless us.” The signatures of eighteen people follow, and their monetary commitment. At the top of the list is written, “John W. F. Volker \$0.10.” JWVP, 1882–1883 Mission Journal, April 3, 1883, also notes, “wrote a letter to the Br [Brothers] & Sr [Sisters] in Zion asking them to help the Saints from Babylon.”

31. JWVP, 1882–1883 Mission Journal, July 13, 1883.

32. JWVP, 1882–1883 Mission Journal, July 16, 1883.

33. JWVP, 1882–1883 Mission Journal, September 12–October 1; October 29–30, 1883.

34. JWVP, 1882–1883 Mission Journal, November 16, 1883.

35. “News from a Returned Missionary,” *Millennial Star*, February 4, 1884, 77. This article was also reprinted by the same title in the *Ogden Herald*, February 26, 1884, 3. During the period of time between his first and second missions, Volker served as the secretary of the 53rd



Quorum of Seventies. See “Seventies Notice,” *Ogden Herald*, June 12, 1885, 2. Several reports of Volker’s additional service and appointments visiting local areas as a home missionary in Utah are also evidenced. See, for example, “Missionary Appointments,” *Ogden Herald*, January 5, 1884; “Missionary Appointments,” January 24, 1884, 2, both note his work in both Harrisville and Huntsville. In an article titled “Quarterly Conference,” *Ogden Herald*, May 12, 1884, Volker is noted as speaking at a conference held for the Young Men’s Mutual Improvement Association (Y.M.M.I.A.). The piece mentions that during the conference John gave an account of his mission and showed “an increased interest in the work among the young men.”

36. “A New Firm,” *Ogden Herald*, March 6, 1884, 3.

37. “Cannon & Volker,” *Ogden Herald*, April 1, 1884, 3. An advertisement of the Cannon & Volker book and stationery business, located on Fourth Street, opposite Z.C.M.I. is listed in the *Ogden Herald*, April 17, 1884, 2.

38. “A. H. Cannon. A Leading Bookselling and Stationery Establishment,” *Ogden Herald*, January 1, 1886, noted that Volker had withdrawn from the business; he had likely departed for a mission the previous fall.

39. *Millennial Star*, September 8, 1884, 575, notes that the year following the return of Volker from his first mission he “embarked on the matrimonial sea in company with Miss Edith L. Parker.” Their Logan Temple sealing date was given to Fred E. Woods by JoAnne Petty Smith, a granddaughter of John Volker via a telephone conversation (July 13, 2015).

40. “Missionary Experiences in the Netherlands,” *Millennial Star*, July 1, 1889, 401.

41. On Edith’s personal life, see “Edith Parker Volker Dead,” *Ogden Standard*, September 28, 1929 in JWVP, folder 9, Newspaper clippings, 1886–1931. J. Henry Volker, “The Volker Family,” 207, also notes that Edith was the daughter and fifth child of George Blake and Mary Lewis Parker, who immigrated as pioneers to Wellsville, Utah in 1854. Knowledge that Edith made money through knitting lace was given to Fred E. Woods via a telephone conversation (July 13, 2015) with Jo Anne Petty Smith, granddaughter of John Volker noted above. Edith’s son, J. Henry Volker, “The Volker Family,” 207, confirmed that Edith supported John on this second mission “with her sewing, as she was a very good seamstress.” And added, “This was really too much for her, and brought on complications in her health, which bothered her throughout her life.”

42. Concerning John’s attitude at the time of the call, see, John W. Volker, “Missionary Experience in the Netherlands,” *Millennial Star*, July 1, 1889, 401.

43. JWVP, 1885–1889 Mission Journals, September 17, 1885.

44. “Social Hall,” *Ogden Herald*, September 28, 1885, 4. Article without a title published in the *Ogden Herald*, October 1, 1885, 4.

45. Article without a title published in the *Ogden Herald*, October 1, 1885, 4.

46. John W. Volker, “Missionary Experience in the Netherlands,” *Millennial Star*, July 1, 1889, 401. The blessing was given by Apostles Erastus Snow, Heber J. Grant, and John W. Taylor, who voiced the blessing. It took place in the Historian’s Office, Salt Lake City, October 12, 1883. See JWVP, folder 8, Miscellany, 1885–1903.

47. JWVP, 1885–1889 Mission Journals, November 1, 8–9, 1885. John’s commitment to assist Dutch emigrants in gathering to Zion never wavered from the time he introduced the idea during his first mission to the Netherlands. Further, the “Netherlands Amsterdam General Minutes” CHL, written by Volker and dated November 8, 1885, also noted, “The Saints felt better and [I] proposed that the Saints in Amsterdam should donate 10 cts or as much as they could pay to start an emigration fund [:] this was brought to a vote and carried as also other branches.”

48. President Daniel H. Wells to John W. Volker, January 21, 1886, JWVP, folder 5, Correspondence, 1885–1903.

49. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, November 11, 1885.

50. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, November 13, 1885.

51. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, November 17, 1885.

52. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, November [19], 1885.

53. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, November 26, 1885. The printer is named in Volker’s journal entry for December 14, 1885, wherein he writes, “I went to Mr. Breemer [Bremer] and paid him \$46.00 for tracks.” Further, on February 20, 1886, Volker notes, “I went to Bremers and ordered some binding done from there.” J. Bremer is also noted as a book printer in the Amsterdam City Directory, *Algemeen Adresboek Der Stad Amsterdam, voor der Jaren 1887–1888* (Amsterdam: City of Amsterdam), 79, living at the address of “O.Z. Voorburgwal, 226.” This same residence is still standing, although it is no longer a printing business, but rather a residence. The authors wish to thank Henk Jalving, an independent researcher in Ermelo, Netherlands, who located the site of the Bremer printing business as well as generously providing research assistance of Dutch materials in general.

54. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, November 29–December 5, 1885.

55. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, December 29, 1885.

56. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, December 31, 1885.

57. At this time, the “Lectures on Faith” (lectures given in Kirtland, Ohio, at what was known as the School of the Prophets) were included within LDS scripture, known as the Doctrine and Covenants. The explanatory introduction of the Doctrine and Covenants (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981) explains that although the “Lectures on Faith” were “profitable for doctrine and instruction, these lectures have been omitted from the Doctrine and Covenants since the 1921 edition because they were not given or presented as revelations to the whole Church.”

58. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, January 7–8, 16, 1886. The two missionaries who were sent by President Wells were B. Hertjes and H. Krumferman. They arrived in the Netherlands in June 1886. Wells also suggested that Volker called a few others to help with the work. Thus, Volker called two young men, A. Bel and E. Neuteboom to assist with the missionary labors. The following year (1887), Elder P. W. Stam, Elder D. F. Collett, and Elder Asa W. Judd were called. In March of 1888, Elder A. Van Dam joined this small missionary force which Volker related had, by this time, baptisms taking place on a weekly basis. See “Missionary Experiences in the Netherlands,” *Millennial Star*, July 1, 1889, 402–3.

59. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, February 4, 1886. John Volker in Amsterdam to President Daniel H. Wells, March 20, 1886, in “Correspondence,” *Millennial Star*, April 5, 1886, 220–21, Volker wrote, “I have succeeded in renting a pretty good hall, in the Branch located at Amsterdam, where I can hold meetings twice every Sunday, and quite a number of strangers have heard the testimony of God’s servant.”

60. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, February 13, 1886.

61. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, February 16, 1886.

62. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, February 18, 1886.

63. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, February 24, 1886.

64. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, February 26, 1886. John Volker in Amsterdam to President Daniel H. Wells, March 20, 1886, in “Correspondence,” *Millennial Star*, April 5, 1886, 220–21, Volker wrote, “Many have acknowledged that every word I said was true, yet they cannot obey on account of the persecutions of the world and say farewell to their

friends.” For a discussion of Dutch culture in which societal relationships are largely based on one’s affiliations, including religious denominations, see William Z. Shetter, *The Pillars of Society: Six Centuries of Civilization in the Netherlands* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971). Thus, when Dutch converts joined the LDS Church, they really did bid farewell to their cultural relationships and associations. Thanks to Mark L. Staker (lead curator, Historic Sites, LDS Church History Department) for bringing this idea and work to the attention of the authors and for reviewing this manuscript.

65. See for example, *De Standaard* (August 20, 1885), which reports a fairly large meeting of one hundred Latter-day Saints that lasted nine hours in which Saints gathered together in Zwolle. The Saints came from Amsterdam, Groningen, Leeuwarden, Deventer, Meppel, and Olst. Lectures, songs, and prayers were mentioned, along with Church business. See also this same meeting reported in *De Graafschap-bode* (August 22, 1885). Further, “De Mormonen,” *Algemeen Handelsblad* (August 19, 1885) notes that these Mormons were led by a local Dutchman from Deventer and that they met at a building called the “Atlas.” This same building, located at Ossenmarkt 9 in Zwolle, became the place for the establishment of the social democratic party of the Netherlands in 1894.

See [https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sociaal-Democratische\\_Arbeiderspartij](https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sociaal-Democratische_Arbeiderspartij). The Atlas building is now being used as a restaurant. See <http://www.deatlas.nl/>

66. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, March 23, 1886.

67. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, April 16, 1886.

68. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, May 3, 1886.

69. John Volker in Amsterdam to President Daniel H. Wells, Liverpool, March 20, 1886, in “Correspondence,” *Millennial Star*, April 5, 1886, 220–21.

70. John Volker in Amsterdam to President Daniel H. Wells, Liverpool, August 6, 1886, in “Correspondence,” *Millennial Star*, August 23, 1886, 542–43. This article was reprinted and retitled “The Mission Field,” in the *Ogden Herald*, September 9, 1886, 1, and probably caused a bit of a stirring among Volker’s Ogden family and friends.

71. This statement is taken from a newspaper article found among the JWVP folder 9 (newspaper clippings) without full information for a citation. However, the end of the piece notes that Volker is in Deventer, Holland; and the date he notes is March 10, 1886. Inasmuch as it is written to the “Editor Herald,” it is assumed that it is the *Ogden Herald*, the newspaper of Volker’s hometown of Ogden, Utah. The name of the article is simply “Interesting;” the subtitle “Elder Volker Writes us a Long and Interesting Letter.”

72. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, June 30, 1886.

73. An advertisement in JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, October 4, 1886, evidences that the hall was a concert house, since the advertised dates of the three evenings he preached fit perfectly this location. This Groningen concert house is located at Poelestraat 30 and still exists at the same address but is now being used as a restaurant and bears the same name.

74. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, October 4, 10, 13, 17, 1886.

75. John Volker in Groningen to President Daniel H. Wells, Liverpool, November 15, 1886, “Correspondence,” *Millennial Star*, November 29, 1886, 763–64.

76. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, November 4, 13, 1886.

77. John Volker in Groningen to President Daniel H. Wells, Liverpool, November 15, 1886, “Correspondence,” *Millennial Star*, November 29, 1886, 764.

78. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, November 17, 1886. Less than a week later (November 23, 1886), Volker noted in his journal that he “wrote a letter to the Editor of the paper, because they refused to publish a certain article which I had written against a

certain piece which they had published.” For Dutch Protestant anti-Mormon literature which warns against receiving the Latter-day Saints, mostly because of polygamy and false perceptions of immorality, see “Zending der Mormonen,” *Het nieuws van den dag: kleine courant* (February 16, 1884): 2, and a related article (with no title), *De Standaard* (April 7, 1884), which notes these issues as well as the supposed problem the Mormons had with alcohol. Each of these articles also specifically mention both Lammers and Volker, although Volker had already left the Netherlands after his first mission concluded. Another article from a Dutch Catholic perspective that warns against getting involved with the Mormons is from *De Tijd: godsdienstig-staatkundig dagblad* (July 19, 1884). A number of other Dutch articles in several newspapers also treat the issue of polygamy in a negative manner. See for example, “Mormonen,” *De Volksvriend* (November 29, 1883); and an untitled article appearing in *De Volksvriend* (August 21, 1884); another untitled article in *Rotterdamsch-nieuwsblad* (August 20, 1885); also “Mormonen Veroordeeld,” *De grondwet* (April 14, 1885) and “Mormoonsche Listen,” *De grondwet* (November 24, 1885). There is also an abundance of material related to Mormon activity in Utah and their struggles with the government, largely stemming from plural marriage. See general online references to the Mormons and such issues in [delpher.nl](http://delpher.nl), which provides over 800 articles dealing with Mormonism from Dutch newspapers during the decade of the 1880s. The notion of polygamy being a challenge during this period of time is not surprising because plural marriage was a major point of contention in the United States in the late nineteenth century. The peak in polemical dialogue and persecution during the decade of the 1880s eventually lead to the need for the Manifesto issued by LDS Church President Wilford Woodruff in 1890, which called for the cessation of polygamous marriages. For more information on the Manifesto, see Paul H. Peterson, “Manifesto of 1890,” *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4 vols., ed. Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992), 852–53.

79. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, “Financial Report of the Netherland Mission Ending Decr. 31/86.”

80. John Volker in Amsterdam to Daniel H. Wells, Liverpool, January 8, 1887, in “Abstract of Correspondence,” *Millennial Star*, January 24, 1887, 60. This letter was also reprinted and retitled, “Netherland Mission,” *Ogden Herald*, February 15, 1887, 1.

81. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, January 9, 1887.

82. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, January 26, 1887.

83. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, February 26, 1887.

84. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, June 4, 1887.

85. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, June 15, 1887. As noted above, Volker had commenced to translate some of the Doctrine & Covenants on his first mission. See JWVP, 1882–1883 Mission Journal, October 29–30, 1883.

86. See for example, JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, June 27; July 7, 27; August 1, 8; September 6, 17, November 30, 1888.

87. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, June 25–26, 1887.

88. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, May 15–21, 1887. See also May 18–23, 1886 for the details of the route. See also, Fred E. Woods and Nick Evans, “LDS Migration through Hull, England,” *BYU Studies* 41, no. 4 (2002): 75–102. For information on the Guion shipping line and modus operandi the Mormons were working with (attested in Volker’s journal) see Fred E. Woods, “George Ramsden, the Guion Line, and the Mormon Immigration Connection,” *International Journal of Mormon Studies* 2, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 83–97.

89. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, September 19, October 3, 1887.
90. John W. Volker, “Statistical Report of the European Mission,” *Millennial Star*, February 18, 1889, 110.
91. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, January 26, 1888; March 16, 1888.
92. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, January 30, 1888; April 24, 1888; June 21–23, 1888.
93. John Volker to Mrs. Edith L. Volker, Ogden, February 27, 1889, JWVP, folder 4, Letterpress copy book, January 1889–February 1904, 40–41.
94. John Volker to Mrs. Edith L. Volker, Ogden, January 29, 1889, JWVP, folder 4, Letterpress copy book, January 1889–February 1904, 40–41. John’s journals of his second mission, as well as the Letterpress copy book also attest that John also wrote to Edith several times a month throughout the duration of each of his mission and that although they would be separate from each other for several years, the distance did not mar their affection for one another. Such letters reveal that Edith was always on John’s mind and heart and that he anticipated hearing more news from home with each letter: “My dear Edith—Your letter of January 20 came safe to hand a few days ago. . . . God bless you is the prayers and desires of your loving husband John W Volker Write soon.” John Volker to Mrs. Edith L. Volker, Ogden, February 18, 1889, JWVP, folder 4, Letterpress copy book, January 1889–February 1904, 32–33.
95. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, see journal entries in March 23, 25, 29, 1888.
96. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, May 2, 1888.
97. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, May 15, 1888. His evidence of being involved with emigration from the Netherlands is also evidenced in letters he wrote to President George Teasdale in Liverpool. For example, on January 28, 1889, Volker wrote to Teasdale, “there are some here desiring to emigrate [*sic*] as soon as possible. Now I wish to ask you if there are any person emigrating within a few weeks or if not, when are these parties [to] go from Liverpool?” See JWVP, folder, 4, Volker to Teasdale, January 28, 1889, Letterpress copy book, January 1889–February 1904.
98. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, May 21, 28, 1888.
99. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, June 4, 1888.
100. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, June 13, 1888.
101. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, May 21, 1888.
102. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, August 6, 1888.
103. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, August 7, 1888.
104. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, September 10, 12, 1888.
105. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, September 19, 1888. On March 14, 1889, John noted in his journal, “visited the printer and made arrangements to have 1000 copies of the Book of Mormon printed for \$1,421.60.”
106. Terryl L. Givens and Matthew J. Grow, *Parley P. Pratt: The Apostle Paul of Mormonism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 90, argue that from the time *A Voice of Warning* was published it “served the church as its most powerful proselytizing tool—after the Book of Mormon—for more than a century.”
107. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, September 28, 1888.
108. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, March 14, 20, 1889.
109. John W. Volker, “Missionary Experience in the Netherlands,” *Millennial Star*, July 1, 1889, 404. However, the *World’s Fair Ecclesiastical History of Utah*, compiled by representatives of the Religious Denominations (Salt Lake City, George Q. Canon & Sons, 1893), 162, notes that although John W. F. Volker translated the Book of Mormon into Dutch (Het Boek

- Van Mormon), his successor, Francis A. Brown, published 2,000 copies in 1890. Further, although Volker also translated Parley P. Pratt’s *A Voice of Warning*, Brown also published this important tract in 1889.
110. The original copy-press letter is only slightly different from the one published in the *Millennial Star*. See John Volker to President George Teasdale, Amsterdam, June 1889, JWVP, folder 4, Letterpress copy book, January 1889–February 1904, 157.
111. For an excellent discussion of missionary tracts, see David J. Whittaker, “Early Mormon Pamphleteering” (PhD diss., Brigham Young University, 1982), published also by BYU Studies and the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saint History (Provo, Utah: 2003).
112. John W. Volker, “Missionary Experience in the Netherlands,” *Millennial Star*, July 1, 1889, 402.
113. John W. Volker, “Missionary Experience in the Netherlands,” *Millennial Star*, July 1, 1889, 403–4.
114. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, April 26–28, 1889; “Missionary Experience in the Netherlands,” *Millennial Star*, July 1, 1889, 404. In a letter dated April 23, 1889, Volker provided President George Teasdale a list of the names of these twenty-six Church members, twenty-four Dutch converts, as well as two missionaries. See John Volker to President George Teasdale, Amsterdam, April 23, 1889, JWVP, folder 4, Letterpress copy book, January 1889–February 1904, 46.
115. John Volker to President George Teasdale, Amsterdam, March 7, 1889, JWVP, folder 4, Letterpress copy book, January 1889–February 1904, 46.
116. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, May 26–28, 1889. See also John Volker to Mrs. Edith L. Volker, Ogden, February 27, 1889, JWVP, folder 4, Letterpress copy book, January 1889–February 1904, 40–41.
- Even the thought of their beloved President John Volker leaving the Dutch Saints caused deep emotional feelings to surface: Herein John writes, “the Saints feel very bad when I talk to them of being liable to be called home.”
117. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, June 18, 21, 1889.
118. “Sailed,” *Millennial Star*, July 1, 1889, 412.
119. Letter of John Volker to President George Teasdale, “Correspondence,” *Millennial Star*, July 1, 1889, 414.
120. “The Immigrants,” *Millennial Star*, August 19, 1889, 526. For the story of how and why Latter-day Saint immigrants traveled through Norfolk to Utah during this period, see Fred E. Woods, “Norfolk & Mormon Folk: Latter-day Saint Immigration Through Old Dominion (1887–1890),” *Mormon Historical Studies* 1, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 72–92.
121. JWVP, Mission Journals 1885–1889, June 12, 1889.
122. Keith C. Warner, “History of the Netherlands mission of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1861–1966” (master’s thesis, BYU, 1967), 153, notes that J. Henry Volker served as mission president of the Netherlands Mission from 1960 to 1962.
123. <https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/2:1:M7VP-CMV>.
124. J. Henry Volker, “The Volker Family,” 208. An advertisement in the *Ogden Evening Standard* (January 3, 1911), 3, indicates that the Volker-Scowcroft Lumber Company’s office was located at 237 24<sup>th</sup> Street, Ogden. However, just six months later, an amendment was made and the company became known as the Volker Lumber Company. See *Ogden Evening Standard* (July 6, 1911), 8. According to John’s granddaughter Jo Anne Petty Smith, a Mr. Scowcroft—an LDS business partner of Volker’s—had cheated John, which strongly suggests

that this was the reason their copartnership ended. Further, such dishonesty caused John to distance himself from the Church for a time, though he returned strong in the faith and died a faithful member. The information was relayed in a telephone conversation between Jo Anne Petty Smith and Fred E. Woods, July 13, 2015.

125. Concerning John's residences in Ogden, J. Henry Volker, "The Volker Family," 208–9, notes, "After beginning work for Mr. Eccles, he was able to buy two lots on 27<sup>th</sup> Street and built a small three-room house." Henry further notes that about a decade later the house was too small, so his parents, "built a new six room home on the other lot next door at 653-27<sup>th</sup> Street. As business prospered . . . they added more to the home, and then about 1906 they built five bedrooms on a second floor addition with a large and lovely bathroom upstairs and a half bath downstairs. This was indeed a luxury for all of us."

126. Carter, *Heart Throbs of the West*, 4:281, notes, "Ogden . . . was the home of John W. Volker, a successful lumber dealer."

127. John Volker to Mr. A. L. Farrell, Rotterdam, November 16, 1899, JWVP, folder 4, Letterpress copy book, January 1889–February 1904, 359

128. See John Volker to W. C. Spence, Salt Lake City, July 23, 1902, JWVP, folder 4, Letterpress copy book, January 1889–February 1904, 321, wherein Volker sends Spence a check for \$236 to assist a Dutch family with their immigration costs. In another letter, Volker petitions Spence to please assist "a poor widow woman, for the purpose of emigrating her son from the old country and she has succeeded to gather \$75 together by persistent labors and efforts . . . If you can furnish the ticket, than I will forward the money." John Volker to W. C. Spence, Salt Lake City, September 22, 1900, JWVP, folder 4, Letterpress copy book, January 1889–February 1904, 394.

See also John Volker to W. C. Spence, Salt Lake City, July 30, 1902, JWVP, folder 4, Letterpress copy book, January 1889–February 1904, 327; John Volker to W. C. Spence, Salt Lake City, August 28, 1900, JWVP, folder 4, Letterpress copy book, January 1889–February 1904, 391–392.

129. See J. W. F. Volker to the Netherlands Steam N. C., January 28, 1902, JWVP, folder 4, Letterpress copy book, January 1889–February 1904, 306, wherein Volker is trying to assist an LDS Dutch immigrant who had lost luggage upon arrival at New York. See also the following letters which concern paying costs and assisting with immigrant/emigrant travel of Dutch converts: John Volker to Alex Nibley, Rotterdam, May 16, 1900, JWVP, folder 4, Letterpress copy book, January 1889–February 1904, 387; John Volker to Alex Nibley, Rotterdam, May 12, 1901, JWVP, folder 4, Letterpress copy book, January 1889–February 1904, 407; John Volker to President Sylvester Cannon, Rotterdam, March 12, 1901, JWVP, folder 4, Letterpress copy book, January 1889–February 1904, 408; John Volker to President Sylvester Cannon, Rotterdam, May 8, 1901, JWVP, folder 4, Letterpress copy book, January 1889–February 1904, 416; John Volker to President Sylvester Cannon, Rotterdam, June 4, 1902, JWVP, folder 4, Letterpress copy book, January 1889–February 1904, 445–46; John Volker to President Sylvester Cannon, Rotterdam, February 13, 1902, JWVP, folder 4, Letterpress copy book, January 1889–February 1904, 452; John Volker to President Sylvester Cannon, Rotterdam, July 7, 1902, JWVP, folder 4, Letterpress copy book, January 1889–February 1904, 465; John Volker to President Sylvester Cannon, Rotterdam, August 21, 1902, JWVP, folder 4, Letterpress copy book, January 1889–February 1904, 471; John Volker to The Dominion Line, Boston, August 30, 1902, JWVP, folder 4, Letterpress copy book, January 1889–February 1904, 473.

130. John Volker to President B. H. Roberts, Salt Lake City, July 11, 1902, JWVP, folder 4, Letterpress copy book, January 1889–February 1904, 319–20.

131. J. Henry Volker, "The Volker Family," 208.

132. As related in a phone conversation by Jo Anne Petty Smith to Fred E. Woods, July 13, 2015.

133. J. Henry Volker, "The Volker Family," 208.

134. "Building Association Election," *Ogden Standard*, June 16, 1892.

135. "Ninth Annual Report of the Ogden Building & Savings Ass'n.," *Ogden Standard*, September 18, 1891, 3.

136. JWVP, journal entry dated April 11, 1892, which is located after his second mission journal material dated 1885–1889. See also "Seventies Notice," *Ogden Herald*, February 10, 1892, 5, which announces his calling as secretary of this organization. It also appears that Volker was involved with planning for a Netherlands reunion in 1903, which was to be held at Lagoon. See letter of Sylvester L. Cannon to John Volker related to this issue (June 27, 1903) in which Cannon suggested that the reunion be held at Lagoon. See also an "Outline of Program," both of which are evidenced in the JWVP, folder 5, Correspondence, 1885–1903. This event is probably "The Netherlands Society Day," as evidenced from a flyer dated August 31, 1900 (in both English and Dutch). See JWVP, folder 8, Miscellany, 1885–1892.

137. Edward H. Anderson, "Events and Comments," *Improvement Era* 11, no. 11 (September 1908), 899–900, notes that at the time of the division of the Weber Stake in 1908, it was the largest stake in the Church, with a population of 17,000. There were thousands of men from whom could be called to the high council at the time of this division, but John Volker was the kind of man who would stand out not only among a small membership of Church members in the Netherlands but also among seasoned Saints in Utah.

138. "Edith Parker Volker Dead," *Ogden Standard*, September 28, 1929, JWVP, folder 9, Newspaper clippings, 1886–1931.

139. JWVP, folder 3, journal entries from May 5 to September 30, 1931 which are located at the end of his second mission journal material dated 1885–1889.

140. Volker's visit to the Amsterdam region for several months in 1931 reflects his love for his Dutch family and fellow countrymen. See John Volker Papers and journal entries for June to September, 1931. See also John Volker Papers, "Long Bus Ride Pleasant With Scenery Beautiful," *Ogden Standard Examiner*, May 31, 1931, 11. There is also another article in the John Volker Papers, titled "News and Views" by Frank Francis. However, it has neither a newspaper title nor date, but is suspected to be culled from the *Ogden Standard Examiner* and probably dates to the early fall of 1931 when John returned from his trip. See JWVP, folder 9, Newspaper clippings, 1886–1931.

141. "John W. F. Volker Dead, Aged 72," obituary in the *Ogden Standard Evening Examiner*, March 8, 1932, 6. For a copy of his death certificate, see: <https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-XCWW-VPE>. According to Jo Anne Petty Smith via a telephone conversation with Fred E. Woods (July 13, 2015), one of Volker's grandchildren was the well-known reporter and later editor for KSL television, Duane Cardall. In addition, one of John's great-grandchildren, and Duane's son, is the gifted American pianist Paul Cardall, who is known for his original arrangements of hymns. See [https://www.google.com/?gws\\_rd=ssl#q=Paul+Cardall+](https://www.google.com/?gws_rd=ssl#q=Paul+Cardall+).

142. Carter, *Heart Throbs of the West*, 4:281, notes, "His name will always be connected with the Book of Mormon in Dutch, he being the translator." See also "Volker, John W. F.," in *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia*, 4:359.