BELGIANS IN NORTH AMERICA: A BIBLIOGRAPHY

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A growing list of articles and books that discuss or illustrate Belgian immigration to North America and the Belgian American experience.

This bibliography is a work in progress.

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BELGIAN IMMIGRATION AND EMIGRATION

GENERAL WORKS


A well-documented and scholarly article in which Boumans studies the subsidized emigration of about 600 paupers and ex-prisoners between 1850 and 1856. He first discusses the origins and development of the emigration as well as the diplomatic problems it created with the United States government.


“The Flemish Emigrant” is a statue created by artist Patrick Steen of Leke, Belgium. It was unveiled at the hall of the Delhi Belgian Club in Delhi, Ontario, Canada.

https://www.belgianhall.ca/gallery/flemish-emigrant


Includes a short timeline with important dates for the history of the United States, U.S. immigration in general, and Flemish emigration in particular. Explains how land was divided and sold in states like Ohio, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Indiana. Describes the voyage of the European immigrants. Followed by a description of Belgian emigration to America, primarily based on the works of Antoine De Smet. Discusses the early Belgian colonies in Missouri and Pennsylvania, the Walloon emigration to Wisconsin during the 1850s, followed by the Flemish emigration after the Civil War, to Indiana, Illinois, and Canada. Includes a short list of Flemish emigrants who settled in Mishawaka and South Bend in Indiana, and a brief biography of Edward Coryn from Moline, Illinois.


Discusses Walloon expansion in Africa, Asia, Oceania and Antarctica, and America. The last section includes a chronological overview of contributions of Walloons in the United States and Canada.
from the sixteenth until the middle of the twentieth century. The emphasis is on individual contributions.


Written on the occasion of the tercentenary of New York. The first chapter is devoted to the Belgian involvement in the founding of New York. Other chapters focus on the various contributions of the Belgians to the United States, including the Belgian missionaries who operated in the territories, the American College in Louvain, Belgium, the role of Belgian ambassadors and consuls, the commercial and economic ties and the foundation of the Belgian Bureau in New York.

Contents:

- Le Tri-Centenaire de New York [The Tercentenary of New York]
- La Fondation de New York [The Foundation of New York]
- Nova-Belgica
- La Contribution Belge aux Etats-Unis [The Belgian Contribution to the United States]
- Le Bureau Belge de New-York [The Belgian Bureau of New York]


A well documented article that describes the most important attempts and waves of Belgian immigration to the United States before 1860, looking especially at the timing and patterns of settlement. Also discusses the role of the Antwerp ship brokers in the Belgian emigration process.


First includes lists of Belgian passengers on eighteen vessels that traveled between Le Havre or Antwerp and New York or New Orleans, between 1833 and 1854. The author acknowledges that these lists are far from complete.

The bulk of the work consists of an alphabetical list of Belgian passengers on the seventy-three vessels that departed Antwerp in 1855. Thirty eight of those ships were destined directly for New York, Boston, New Orleans, Quebec, Rio Grande, Buenos Aires, or Australia. The remained thirty-five connected with transatlantic ships in England. Spouses are listed with their husbands under their maiden name, and are recorded in a separate alphabetical list at the end.

Contains an alphabetical list of the Belgian emigrants who left for America in 1856. The author gathered the information for each passenger from American passenger lists, Belgian population registers, and family archives. For each passenger he includes his/her place within the family, full name, year and place of birth, former residence, name of ship, line number for the passenger on the ship’s manifest, and final destination.


Discusses the development of Antwerp as a major emigration port. The author also briefly analyzes three phases of Belgian overseas emigration: (1) the guided emigration of paupers; (2) the sudden feverish fits of emigration to Latin America; and (3) the spontaneous emigration to North America.


A study based on reports written by eight of the nine Belgian provincial governors in 1846, in which they describe the size and nature of emigration from their respective provinces.


A study based on the reports created by Eugene Vennesoen, head of the emigration service in Antwerp, who interviewed Belgian emigrants prior to departure.


Describes the historical background, migration, arrival, settlement, culture, organizational life, and group maintenance of Belgians in the United States. Includes a short bibliography.


“One of the distinguishing features of Belgian economics is that, from the early 1920s, so many of Belgium's best economists pursued postgraduate studies at top American universities, a case of 'temporary' migration. This was made possible by the fellowships granted by the Commission for
Relief in Belgium, a legacy of the First World War. After a stay in the US of a few years, most returned to Belgium. However, they maintained strong links with the US. Also, they tried to recreate in Belgium the most valuable elements of their American experience. It would lead to a strong and early Americanization of Belgian economics. Moreover, they were at the forefront of several initiatives to organize economics on a European scale, such as the European Economic Review and the European Economic Association.”


There were twenty-seven Belgians and three Dutchmen on board the Titanic in 1912, of whom seven survived the disaster. Most of them were emigrants in search of a better life across the Atlantic. This richly illustrated book tells their story.


Revised edition of his 2002 bestseller. Beautifully illustrated, yet well-researched book that narrates the story of Flemish emigration to the United States and Canada between 1850 and 1930. Based on archival research, letters, memoirs and interviews with numerous descendants of Flemish emigrants. Includes index of persons and end-notes.

Contents:

− Dood en Dieften Overal: Hongersnood, Armoede, en Ziekte Drijven een Volk to Wanhoop [Death and Theft Everywhere: Starvation, Poverty, and Disease Drive People to Despair]
− Wij Gaan Naar Amerika: Nieuwe Wereld Kan Sukkelaars als Wij Gebruiken [We Are Going to America: The New World Can Use Poor Souls Like Us]
− Afscheid in Antwerpen: Honderdduizenden Beginnen in Scheldestad de Oversteek [Goodbye in Antwerp: Several Hundred Thousand Start the Crossing in the City at the Schelde]
− Geen Plezierreis: Het Leven aan Boord van het Schip naar Amerika [No Pleasure Trip: Life on Board the Ship to America]
− New York, New York!: De Aankomst in de Nieuwe Wereld [New York, New York!: Arrival in the New World]
− American Dream aan Diggelen: Veel Landverhuizers Worden Bedrogen door Ronselaars [American Dream Shattered: Many Emigrants Are Duped by Recruiters]
− Mijn Eigen Schuld:Veel Landverhuizers Mislukken Door Ontwetendheid of Illegale Praktijken [My Own Fault: Many Emigrants Fails due to Ignorance and Illegal Practices]
− Stille Brieven: Post Maakt Afstand Amerika-België Kleiner [Silent Letters: Mail Shortens the Distance Between America and Belgium]

Excellent overview of the economic depression in West Flanders during the nineteenth century which forced many unemployed workers to emigrate, focusing primarily on the crisis during the 1840s. Discusses both continental and intercontinental migratory movements. Extensive bibliography and statistical data. Index of towns, names, and organizations.

Contents:

- Deel I: De crisis (1840-1848) [The Crisis (1840-1848)]
  - Hoofdstuk I: Crisis in de vlasmijverheid [Crisis in the Flax Industry]
  - Hoofdstuk II: De voedselcrisis [Food Crisis]
  - Hoofdstuk III: De overheid en de crisis [The Government and the Crisis]
- Deel II: De emigratie [Emigration]
  - Hoofdstuk I: Belgische kolonisatiepogingen in de 19de eeuw [Belgian Colonisation Project in the 19th Century]
  - Hoofdstuk II: De houding van de Belgische overheid tegenover de emigratie [The Reaction of the Government Towards Emigration]
  - Hoofdstuk III: De (war)taal der cijfers [The Confusion in Numbers]
  - Hoofdstuk IV: De intercontinentale emigratie [The Intercontinental Emigration]
  - Hoofdstuk V: De continentale emigratie: grensarbeiders en seizoenaarbeiders of ‘Franschmans’ [Continental emigration: laborers across borders and seasonal laborers, or ‘Franschmans’]


Program 25: A series of dramatic skits about Father Louis Hennepin, Pierre-Jean De Smet, the people of Belgium who came to America for affordable land, and a Belgium newspaper in America named the Gazette van Detroit.

Program 26: A father tells his son about growing up in Belgium and the music and composers he heard.


Chapter one discusses statistical and other sources available for the study of emigration and immigration in Belgium since 1830. Chapter two presents the statistical balance between emigration and immigration in Belgium. In chapter three, devoted to emigration, the author distinguishes between (1) emigration to neighboring countries, especially France, (2) short emigration “fevers” to Wisconsin, Brazil, and Argentina in the 19th century, and (3) chain migration which was primarily directed towards the United States. Chapter four discusses immigration to Belgium until 1970.

See author’s Emigration et immigration en Belgique aux XIXe et XXe siècles.


“... prepared and issued under the authority of the committee representing Americans of Belgian Lineage, America’s Making Exposition, 71st Regiment Armory, October 29th-November 12th, 1921.”

The author highlights the founders of New York, explorers such as Louis Hennepin, Indian missionaries such as Father De Smet, and the numerous Belgian skilled laborers, architects, farmers, teachers, artists, and priests who lived and worked in the United States.

Written at a time the United States established drastic restrictions to its immigration policy, the author concludes that Belgians “are indeed ‘desirable’ additions to the great American family.”


A comprehensive study of Belgian immigration to the United States.

Contents:

− Omvang van de uitwijking. [Magnitude of Emigration]
− Geografische spreiding van de Belgische immigranten [Geographical Distribution of the Belgian Immigrants.]
− Beroepsactiviteiten van de Belgische immigranten. [Occupations of the Belgian Immigrants.]
− Levensstandaard van de Belgische immigranten. [Standard of Living of the Belgian Immigrants.]
− Het verenigingsleven bij de Belgische immigranten. [Organizational Life of the Belgian Immigrants.]
− De integratie van de Belgische immigranten in de Amerikaanse maatschappij. [Integration of the Belgian immigrants in American society.]


This work was assembled with the genealogist in mind. Several background articles precede several lists of Belgian emigrants, totalling about 15,000 names.

Contents:

− Inventaris Provinciaal Archief [Inventory of the Provincial Archives]
− Algemene informatie [General Information]
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- De reis naar Argentinië [The Trip to Argentina]
- Het leven in Argentinië [Life in Argentina]
- Een lijdensweg van het begin tot het einde [Hell from Beginning till End]
- Landlopers – Emigranten [Vagrants – Emigrants]
- Diverse Emigratielijsten [Diverse Lists of Emigrants]: 1849, 1850, 1852, 1853, 1856, 1864, 1868, 1874, 1878, 1880, 1881, 1886, 1890, 1891, 1892, 1901, 1906
- Belgische emigranten – 1885 [Belgian Emigrants – 1885]
- Vennesoenrapporten: Noord-Amerika, 1901-July 1902; Zuid Amerika, 1901-July 1902 and 1903. [Vennesoen Reports: North America, 1901-July 1902; South America, 1901-July 1902 and 1903]


For Walloons in New Netherlands, see chapter 2, The First Emigrants and Settlers, and 3, What Happened to the Old Dutch Branch. Belgians in Montana are mentioned on p. 698-699. Belgians who settled near Dutch Roman Catholics are highlighted in a few other places throughout the book.


A book commissioned by the City of Antwerp. The author covers the Flemish migratory movements from the sixteenth until the middle of the twentieth centuries. The books covers the religious refugees at the end of the sixteenth century who fled to England, Germany, Prague and Holland; the 1,500,000 war refugees of World War I and II; the political refugees who moved to Germany, Spain, or Latin America after the defeat of the Nazi regime; the forced laborers, deported, and prisoners of war of World War II; the emigrants who fled 'Arm Vlaanderen' [Poor Flanders] during the nineteenth and early twentieth century; as well as the Flemish in Belgian Congo. An epilogue describes the presence of Flemish in the world today. Interspersed throughout the book are eight interviews, conducted the journalist Janine Meijer, with Flemish who live abroad today. Includes bibliographical references. No index.

IMMIGRATION FROM EAST FLANDERS


Erik De Smet provides an overview of Belgian immigration to America, including descriptions of the organized colonization plans of the Belgian government, immigration laws in the United States, Canada and South American countries, and the organizational life of the Belgian Americans. Part two is a chronological list of the 1,529 Eeklo emigrants from 1846 until 1937, with name, occupation, and
destination. Followed by a personal name index, and list of destinations. At least 510 Eeklonaren settled in the Moline area.


Focuses on migration from *Meetjesland,* an area in the north of East Flanders, to North America.

Contents:

- Part I. Afwegingen en Keuzes [Deliberations and Choices]
  - Caestecker, Frank. *Hoe het Meetjesland Amerika vond.* [How Meetjesland found America]
  - Quintyn, Willy, and Marc Van Ooteghem. *Hansbeekse emigratie naar Amerika: een opmerkelijk verhaal.* [Emigration from Hansbeke to America: A Remarkable Story]
  - Stevens André. *Nevelaars op zoek op onbekend terrein.* [People from Nevelaar Searching in Unknown Territory]
  - Claeys, Jackie. *Van Assenede naar de Nieuwe Wereld.* [From Assenede to the New World.]

- Part II. Onderweg. [En Route]
  - Feys, Torsten. *De grote oversteek tussen twee werelden: van het Meetjesland tot het Belooide Land.* [The Big Crossing Between Two Worlds: From Meetjesland to the Promised Land.]

- Part III. Uitdagingen. [Challenges.]

- Part IV. Grenzen van een gemeenschap.
  - Stynen, Andreas. ‘Het oude land herleeft.’ Gedeelde ervaringen in Noord-Amerika. [‘The Old Country Relives.’ Shared Experiences in North-America.]
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- Stynen, Andreas. Twee werelden? Banden met het oude vaderland. [Two Worlds? Ties With the Old Country.]
- Le Bailly, Marie-Charlotte. Familiegeschiedenissen van meet af aan. [Family Histories Taken From the Top.]

IMMIGRATION FROM WEST FLANDERS


The author uses a list of emigrants from a ledger created by Alberic Verbeke, who was a former agent of the Red Star Line and the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, to analyze the emigration from Tielt, West Flanders, to the United States between 1905 and 1910. He notes that the majority of the immigrants moved to the Moline, Illinois area, and were predominantly men. The entire list is reproduced with mention of name, origin and destination.


Focuses on the Belgian immigrants from Deinze, West Flanders, who settled in Moline, Illinois. Briefly places the emigration in a historical context, describes the chronic poverty which served as a push-factor for emigration, and recounts in detail how a local barber and publicity of the steamship companies enticed young men to try their luck in America. The author provides some statistics, gleaned from the Deinze population registers, and then moves on to describe the Tri-Cities of Moline, East Moline and Rock Island, where many of the Deinzenaars settled, the Belgian-American parish, their organizations, and their newspaper The Gazette van Moline. He mentions many immigrants by name.

BELGIANS IN CANADA


Published at the occasion of the exhibit by the same name at the Provincial Court of Bruges, 13 May-6 August 2006, and Centrum van de Ronde van Vlaanderen in Oudenaarde, 8 September-29 October 2006.

Contents:

- Op Weg naar ’t Vreemde [Profile of Flemish Emigration to Canada]
- De Canadese Droom [The Dream]
- De Lange Overtocht [The Crossing]
– Het Wel en Wee van de Vlaamse Emigranten ['Ups and downs’ in the New Country.]

MANITOBA.


Includes the urban districts of Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes, and Somerset, as well as the unincorporated communities of Altmont, Bruxelles, Cardinal, Mariapolis, St. Alphonse, St. Leon, St. Lupicin, and Swan Lake. Many illustrations. Township plats with landowners. About half of the book consists of family histories.

Includes a reprint of: Les Belges au Manitoba: letters authentiques de colons belges au Manitoba: faisant connaitre le resultat de leurs exploitations agricoles, et donnant une appreciation sur certains avantages qu'offre le pays. [The Belgians of Manitoba: Authentic Letters of Belgian Colonizers in Manitoba: Showing the Results of their Agricultural Endeavors, and Presenting an Appreciation of Certain Advantages This Land Has to Offer]. Ottawa: Imprimerie de l'Etat, 1894.

BELGIANS IN THE UNITED STATES


A “special issue of “Memo from Belgium,” devoted to one aspect of Belgo-American relations which is particularly topical during this ‘Bicentennial Year,’ namely the role of the Belgians in the United States.”

Contents:


– De Smet, Antoine, “Did the Belgians Take Part in the Foundation of New York?”

– Bayer, Henry C., “Arrival of the Walloons in America.”


– Fayat, H., “The Fundamental Relationship Between North America and Western Europe.”


"During its history, Wallonia never experienced migratory movements comparable in number to the Anglo-Saxon, Germanic or Latin emigrations. However, from 1830 to the dawn of the XXth century,
several tens of thousands of Walloons (some put the figure at 90,000) emigrated to the United States and participated in the expansion of the Midwest and the industrialization of the Northeast. Two centuries before, some of them – mostly coming from Hainaut – contributed to the foundation of New York. This brochure will stress the important role played by some missionaries in the Christianization of the United States, the orientation of the emigrants, the creation of towns or villages, etc., and the fact that Flemings accompanied their Walloon neighbors to the United States and played a similar role there" -- p. 3.

Contents:

- 1624: Walloons contribute to the Creation of New York
- 1830: Emigration from the rural areas of Luxembourg
- 1852: Emigration of the farmers from Brabant and Hesbaye
- 1863: Emigration from the miners from Hainaut, Liège, and Namur
- 1871: Emigration of the glassmakers from Hainaut


There are scattered references to Belgians, Flemings, and Walloons in this book. On p. 698-699 he mentions the efforts of Victor de Brabander, the Belgian vicar-general of the bishop of Helena, Montana, to bring Belgian and Dutch colonists to Montana.


This work focuses primarily on the Belgians in Detroit, Michigan. Includes several black and white photographs.

Contents:

- Bird’s Eye View of Belgium Through the Ages
- Prominent Early Belgian Settlers in America [mentions Peter Minuit, Emanuel Van Meteren, Petrus Plancius, Jodocus Hondius]
- Setting the Record Straight [First settlers in New York were Walloons]
- The Founding of Detroit
- The First Catholic College in Detroit: manned by Flemish priests
- First School for Girls in Detroit: founded by Belgian nuns
- The First Belgian Church in Detroit
- St. Charles Church
- Immaculate Heart of Mary Mission Society
- Belgians of Cucumber Lane [the village of Leesville at the intersection of Gratiot and Harper avenues]
- Gazette van Detroit
- Prominent Belgians [biographies of 36 Belgian-Americans]
- Amateur Dramatic Clubs
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- Detroit, Center of Pigeon Racing
- Federation of Belgian Societies
- Belgian Societies
- Queen of All Nations [contest for the title of Miss Belgium; Belgian American radio hour]
- A Belle of Belgium [benefit for Our Lady of Sorrows Church]
- Our Organists
- If I Must Boast

CALIFORNIA


Annotated letters in French to and from Cardinal Sterckx of Mechelen, Belgium, dealing with the religious concerns of natives and Belgian settlers in the Americas. Also includes a letter concerning the Archbishop's consent to Belgian participation in the exploration for gold in the California gold mines and for a priest accompanying the Belgian prospectors.

ILLINOIS


A so-called “mug book” for the county of Rock Island, Illinois. Mug books were created for many counties and towns at the end of the nineteenth and twentieth century, and can contain a wealth of information. The biographical information needs to used with caution however, as it was often not independently verified. Besides containing a throng of information on various establishments in Rock Island, the following pages are of interest: p. 691: The Belgian Catholic Church; p. 74: Gazette van Moline; p. 747: Edward Coryn


A photocopy of a typescript, reproduced by the Center for Belgian Culture of Western Illinois. Prepared initially in connection with the Illinois Sesquicentennial.


Selections of the popular column "The Battered Beat" by Dorothy Buersh, published in the Daily Dispatch, a newspaper of Moline, Illinois, between 1967 and 1977. Although from Irish descent,
Dorothy devoted many of her columns to the local Belgian people, their activities and institutions. She was employed by the Daily Dispatch from 1941 to 1949 and again from 1 November 1966 until the end of 2001. Includes index of topics and people mentioned in the columns. Reprinted in 1998 with additional columns published through 1997.


Six pages, written in English and printed by the Center of Belgian Culture in Moline. Includes brief sections on Father Ceulemans, pastor of Sacred Heart Catholic Church, the Belgian Consulate of Moline, Belgian culture workshops, Flemish language newspapers, the archives of the Center for Belgian Culture, the Scholarship Fund, Naturalizations, the Lacemaker’s Club, the Belgian Singers’ Group, the Belgian Historical Collection at Black Hawk College [no longer in existence], pigeon racing, rolle bolle, and a timeline for some Belgian organizations.


Six pages, written in English and printed by the Center of Belgian Culture in Moline. Various facts and anecdotes are organized by date.


MICHIGAN


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*Flandria America* intended to become an annual publication, but only two volumes were published. This first volume focuses on the Belgians in Detroit, Michigan. The second volumes describes the settlements in Ghent, Minnesota (see Minnesota).

Contents:

- Charles Goddeeris en de Emigratie naar Amerika [Charles Goddeeries and the Emigration to America]. Born in Roeselare, West Flanders, in 1855, Charles emigrated in 1882 and settled in Detroit, Michigan, where he died in 1933.
- Vijftig Jaar in een Vreemd Land: De Gedenkschriften van Charles Goddeeris. [Fifty Years in a Strange Country: Memoirs of Charles Goddeeris].
- De Belgen in Detroit anno 1906. [The Belgians in Detroit anno 1906].
- Hoe Twee Roeselaarnaren in het Ootje Werden Genomen. [How Two Men from Roeselare Were Fooled].
- Speuren naar de Vlaamse Roots. [Searching for Flemish Roots]. About the Genealogy Society of Flemish Americans.
- Op Bezoek aan Mr. Loyson’s Tae-Kwon-Do-school [A Visit to Mr. Loyson’s Tae-Kwon-Do-school]. In Chatham, Ontario.

**MINNESOTA**


This second volume of the planned annual *Flandria Americana* focuses on the Belgian community in Ghent, Minnesota. For the first volume of *Flandria America*, see Michigan.

**NEW YORK**

BELGIANS IN AMERICA: A BIBLIOGRAPHY

A few excerpts from chapter 10 of Bayer’s book *The Belgians First Settlers in New York and in the Middle States*.


This well documented article discusses the controversy surrounding the exact nationality of the first settlers of New York, who sailed aboard the *Nieuw Nederland*, a vessel of the Dutch West Indian Company. De Smet shows that they were for the most part Walloon exiles in Leiden (Netherlands), recruited by Jesse de Forest.

**WEST VIRGINIA**


“This article seeks to highlight the transnational character of markets, technologies, managerial initiatives and labor activism in one industry, window-glass manufacture. At the same time, through the story of Belgian craftsmen who settled in West Virginia, it also helps illuminate the ways that these factors led to remarkable varied results in different settings.”

**WISCONSIN**


Focusing on Wisconsin as an example, the author describes the official state competition for the immigrant trade in the latter half of the nineteenth century. In order to achieve prosperity and growth, the frontier states desperately needed pioneers to clear and cultivate the land, to build towns and cities. Starting in the 1850s, appointed state officials promoted their state among immigrant arrivals in the United States, as well as among prospective immigrants in Western Europe. Wisconsin led the way, but was soon followed by other states such as Iowa and Minnesota. The states printed pamphlets in English, German, Norwegian, Swedish and Dutch, and advertised in ethnic and foreign newspapers. Agents operated from offices in New York, and in some cases also traveled to the various European ports of departure in Europe. Sometimes immigrants were also provided with temporary housing or given financial assistance. According to the author, this fierce competition helps to explain the tremendous influx of Germans, Norwegians, and Swedes into Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Iowa. They came at the special invitation of the state.

Describes form, material, function, distribution, and origin of the outdoor bake ovens that were constructed by the early Belgian immigrants in Brown, Kewaunee, and Door counties. Includes diagrams, and photographs.

Defays, Fritz. "Essais de la colonization belge au XIXe Siècle." [Essays on Belgian Colonization during the 19th Century]. *Revue De l'Université De Bruxelles* IV (1898-1899): 677-697, 778-799. In French. Online at: [Google Books](https://books.google.com). Fritz Defays, a student at the Free University of Brussels, describes the mid-nineteenth century settlements by Belgians in Santo-Thomas (Guatemala), Santa-Catharina province (Brazil), and Green Bay (Wisconsin). In 1853 and 1854, a group of about 300 Walloons and 50 Flemish, originally from Grez-Doiceau and other towns located in southern Brabant, established villages in Brown, Kewaunee, and Door county, Wisconsin, with names such as Grez-Daems, Rosières, Lésarville, Granz-Leez, Thirty-Dames, and Nouveau-Bruxelles. Success among the Belgian pioneers, who were able to purchase land at low prices, varied. After building their homes, they cleared the land and supplemented their income by selling the wood in Green Bay. But the initial expenses were great and those who had arrived with very little soon found themselves in a difficult situation. However, according to the author, the early setbacks affected only a small minority of the Belgians, and the colony soon prospered. The Belgians built roads, churches, and schools. Their children learned both English and French. They became American citizens and participated in local government. The author estimates that at the eve of the civil war between 7,000 to 10,000 Belgians were residing in Wisconsin. The Belgians were farmers, but also worked as sawyers, cartwrights, and woodworkers. The author concludes that the Green Bay colony maintained a distinct Belgian character for several decades. De Fays based some of his observations on consular reports. He also quotes one article from the *Greenbay Advocate*.


The authors examine the socio-economic situation in the Grez-Doiceau area that led to the sudden emigration of many families from that area to Wisconsin between 1852 and 1858. They describe role Constant François Petiniot’s leadership played in the emigration, as well as the unscrupulous practices of recruiting officers who worked for the shipping lines such as Adolphe Strauss.

Supplements contain oral traditions of the Bodart-Wolput, Collin-Lhost, Paque-Prevost, and Petiniot families, a list of Belgian emigrants who fought in the civil war, the translation of Philippe Harnon’s passport, statistical data, and detailed demographic and genealogical information for each one of the families that emigrated between 1852 and 1858.

Antoine De Smet, conservator at the Belgian Royal Library, describes the role the Belgian Protestant Evangelical Society [Société évangélique, later renamed Église Chrétienne Missionnaire Belge] may have played in the emigration wave from the Wavre-Louvain area in Brabant to Northeastern Wisconsin during the 1850s. Points out that the first Grez-Doiceau families, those of Ambrose Degodt and Alexander Leurquin, left the area in 1852. Describes the leadership role of Xavier Martin among the Belgians of Northeast Wisconsin.


The author discusses the origins and the development of the Belgian community in northeastern Wisconsin until 1900. He pays special attention to the causes of emigration from Walloon Brabant in the middle of the nineteenth century, the arrival of the first Belgian colonists in Wisconsin, the decision to settle north east of Green Bay, the early stages of developments, the hardships endured, and the fire of 1871. Included are notes on religious life, and Belgian traditions and customs. Contains a few excerpts from immigrants’ letters. A bibliographical note concludes the article.


In this short article, Antoine De Smet, describes the difficulty of finding François Pétiniot, one of the early Belgian settlers who emigrated to Wisconsin in 1853 aboard the SS Quinebaug in the Belgian records. According to Pétiniot’s son, his father was born in September 1832 at Wallon Langville or Wavre, but thus far no one has been able to find his birth record. The author can also not verify the oral tradition that claims Pétiniot brought a Dutch-language pamphlet from Antwerp to the Grez-Doiceau region which inspired the emigration wave from that area during the 1850s.


Study of the emigration from Arlon in the Belgian province of Luxembourg to the United States and to the town of Belgium, Wisconsin in particular. The emigration from Arlon needs to be placed within the larger context of migration from Germany and the French provinces of Alsace and Lorraine. The author describes the various push and pull factors, and describes the preparation,
voyage, and settlement of the Lorraine immigrants. More than forty pages are devoted to the establishment by Belgians from Arlon of the town of Belgium in Ozaukee County, Wisconsin. A list of Belgian families in Belgium, Wisconsin, enumerated in the 1860 census, and with known or probably town of origin, is provided on p. 62. The work also contains detailed biographical information for the Arlonnais immigrants, culled from Belgian population registers, family histories, and US census and naturalization records.

DIARIES, INTERVIEWS, LETTERS, MEMOIRS


Translated letters sent to Belgium between 1887 and 1937 by Louis (Denis) Slaets, his wife Joanna (Jeannette) Wuyts, and Victor Debot, Belgian immigrants in Mastodon, Michigan and Wausaukee, Wisconsin. Also includes letters written in English by Henry DeRoeck (Victor Debot’s grandson) from France at the end of World War I. Publication is enhanced by newspaper clippings, photographs, and the family tree of the Wausaukee Debot and Slaets families. Most of the letters were first published in a 2005 Dutch-language publication.

EMIGRANT GUIDES


The writer describes the miserable situation for small farmers and their families in Belgium and encourages them to seek their luck in America. He includes the answers of Count Julien Visart de Bocarmé, to the questions many potential emigrants might have. He discusses in the form of questions and answers the transatlantic voyage and subsequent travel within the United States, the best places for Belgians to settle and how to obtain land, as well as agriculture, climate, education, and religion in the United States. The work also contain a brief history of the United States, starting with the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus.

FAMILY HISTORIES

The author provides a ‘glimpse’ into the life of Edward Andries, who was born 24 January 1884 at Doomkerke, a hamlet of the town of Ruiselede, West Flanders, son of Karen and Nathalie Deneve. He was the oldest of six children who lost their parents at an early age. Edward was eight when his mother died, and eleven when his father passed away. He studied carpentry and became a cabinetmaker. By the time he was twenty-one he decided to try his luck in America, as had many of his fellow-villagers. He even had a couple of cousins in East-Moline. In Moline he became a successful cabinet-maker, contractor, and banker. He was active in the Church of the Sacred Heart, and many Belgian-American organizations, and served as Belgian Consul of Western Illinois and Iowa. Edward died 17 April 1958 at Moline, Illinois. Based on a few secondary sources.


Short article which introduces the life of Gustaaf Lesage who arrived in Moline in 1906, settled in Rock Island, and worked in one of the metal factories, briefly zeroes in on the various organizations of the Belgian-American parish of Sacred Heart at Moline, before focusing on the four sons of Gustaaf Lesage who became missionaries: Emiel (b. 1899), Alfons (b. 1904), Cletus (b. 1908), and Maurit (b. 1911).


Albertus Bleyweert, born in 1871 in Wachtebeke, departed for North America on 10 April 1906 aboard the SS Michigan, arriving at Saint John on 22 April. He lived in Alberta, Minnesota, and Florida, where he died on 3 October 1932.


The author traces the ancestors and descendants from Belgium, Canada, Germany and France for several families. Includes genealogy of Jean Georges Willems (1816-1860) and Henrietta Menard (1807-1883), who immigrated from Grez-Doiceau in 1855. One of her sources was Jean Georges’ diary and personal correspondence. Unsourced. Includes translated excerpts from Jean Georges’ diary and correspondence. Includes photographs.


A family history of Prosper and Eugenie Servais, Belgian Settlers in Wisconsin.

BELGIAN IN AMERICA: A BIBLIOGRAPHY

Written by a greatgrandchild of Rene Vander Venne. Includes mostly genealogical information and three photographs. Based on oral information.


Mentiones the Rubens, Steer, and Calvert families.


A biographical sketch of Edward Andries (born Ruysselede, Belgium, 1884) who played an important role in the Belgian community in Moline and East Moline.

RED STAR LINE AND THE PORT OF ANTWERP


Spelkens analyzes the major developments in emigration through the port of Antwerp, covering emigration laws, health organizations, shipping companies, and government regulations. The author briefly touches on the Belgian emigrants, who constituted only a small percentage of the total emigrants who passed through the port.


“Between 1873 and 1973 over 2.7 million people, fleeing poverty and persecution in their native countries, boarded vessels of the Red Star Line in the port of Antwerp, Belgium, to start a new life across the ocean.”—Book cover.

A beautifully illustrated book in which Frank Caestecker also summarized the emigration from Flanders to America.

Contents:
BELGIANS IN AMERICA: A BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Vervoort, Robert. The Red Star Line Shipping Company History and Ship
- Jalon, Rita. Emigrants in Antwerp
- Caestecker, Frank. Transatlantic Emigration from Europe and Flanders
- Saerens, Lieven. Jewish Migrants in Antwerp on their Way to the New World
- Mareno, Barry. Ellis Island, The Red Star Line and Emigration
- Feys, Torsten. Gateways to the New World: The Intense Competition for the Migrant Trade.

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