

ABSTRACT

FORMED BY FAITH: THE DUTCH IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY IN KINGS COUNTY, CALIFORNIA: 1890-1940

The history of the small group of Dutch immigrants in Kings County, California demonstrates the important historical connection between religion and ethnic identity for immigrants. The first Dutch immigrants settled in the southern San Joaquin Valley in order to form farming colonies. The historical record of these colonies was found in maps and promotional materials. These colonies did not last but they started a chain migration of Dutch immigrants. Oral interviews, letters, and genealogies provided the evidence of the chain migration. The Dutch immigrants came from a variety of religious backgrounds. The Calvinists consolidated themselves around the Hanford Christian Reformed Church in 1912. The ethnic community developed and preserved an ethnic identity around a transplanted Calvinistic faith brought from the Netherlands. The main sources for examining the community were magazine articles, church bulletins, and church consistory minutes.

David Edward Zwart
May 2004