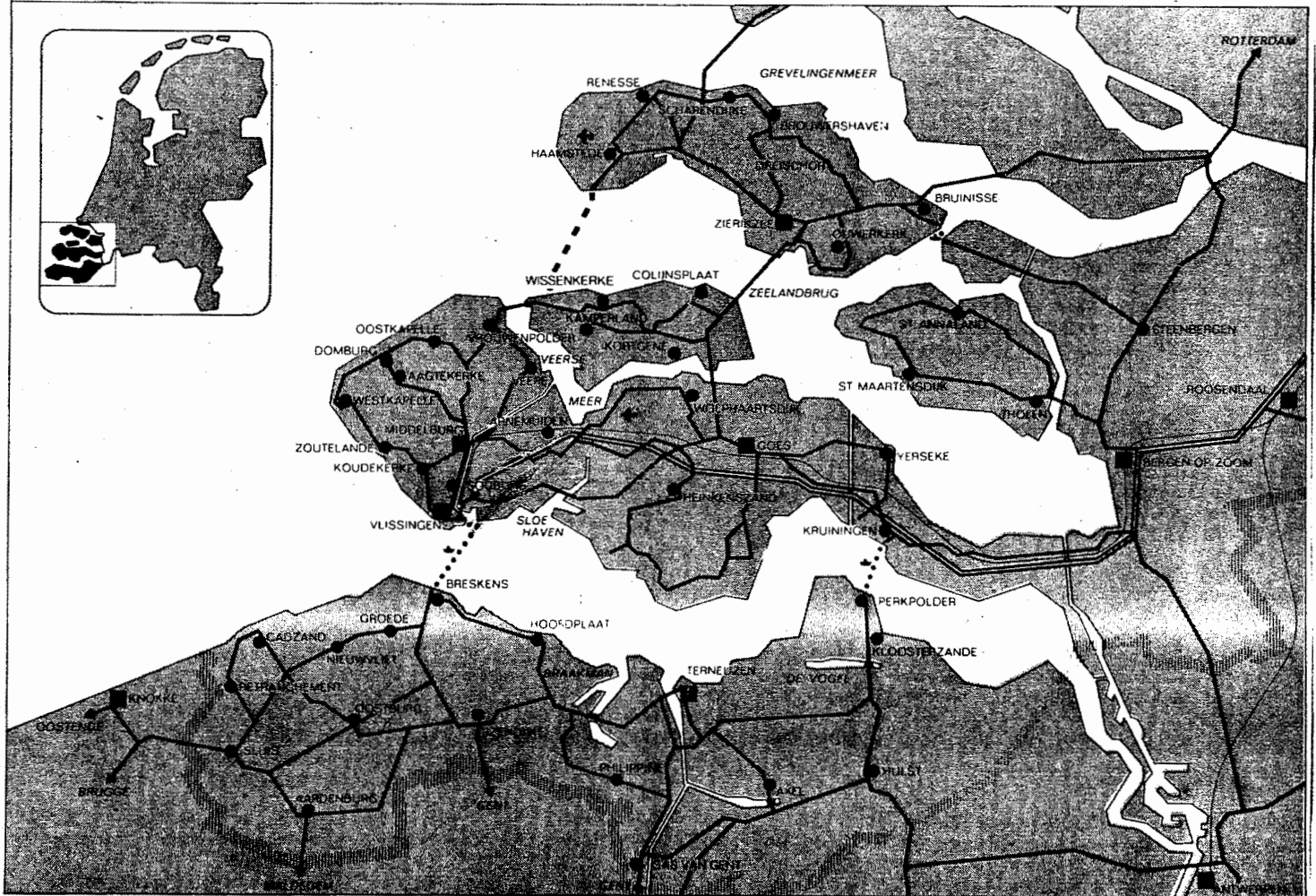


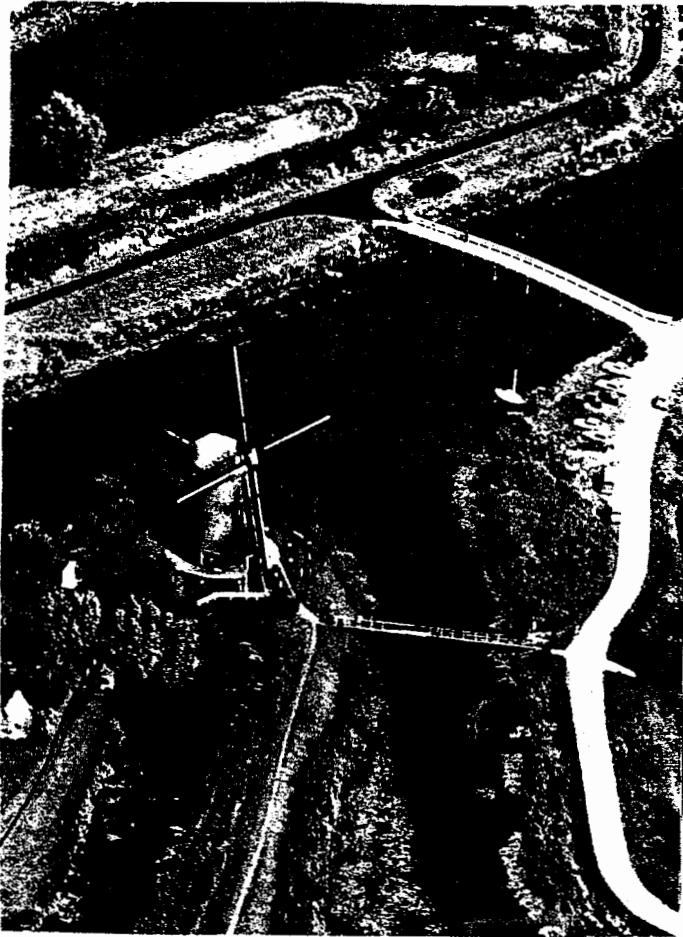
A BIOGRAPHY OF PETER CAAUWE

Peter Caauwe was born November 21, 1861 in Wissenkerke, Netherlands to Lievan and Marie [Jelderda] Caauwe. Peter was the third of six children born to his parents that included three sons and three daughters.

The Caauwe family lived in Wissenkerke, a village in the province of Zeeland on the island of Noord Beveland, one of five islands in the southwestern region of the Netherlands. The island, approximately 41 miles long and 3½ miles wide, had five villages of which Wissenkerke on the northern coast was one.



A great part of the Netherlands bordering the North Sea has been reclaimed from the water through extensive dike construction. Because Wissenkerke has always been closely associated with the sea, it is not surprising that much of Peter's early life was spent along the dikes. As a boy, he worked herding dairy cattle and told a story of throwing his wooden shoes across a canal and riding a cow across. During the winter, he spent time iceskating.



Another story Peter told took place when he was about 16 years old. He was by a canal when three business men came along and wanted to get to the other side. There were boats there, but no one to handle them. Since Peter had seen others do it, he offered to take them across. When he got the boat across the canal, he stepped out on the bank and with rope in hand, gave the boat a pull. His passengers, not ready for such a quick maneuver, landed in the canal. No one knows how he got himself out of the predicament.

When Peter reached draft age, he wished to serve his term in the army so he could become eligible to immigrate to the United States. He also wanted to earn enough money to pay for the trip. Peter drew a lucky number which made him exempt from service, but another draftee paid Peter \$100 to serve the year in his place.

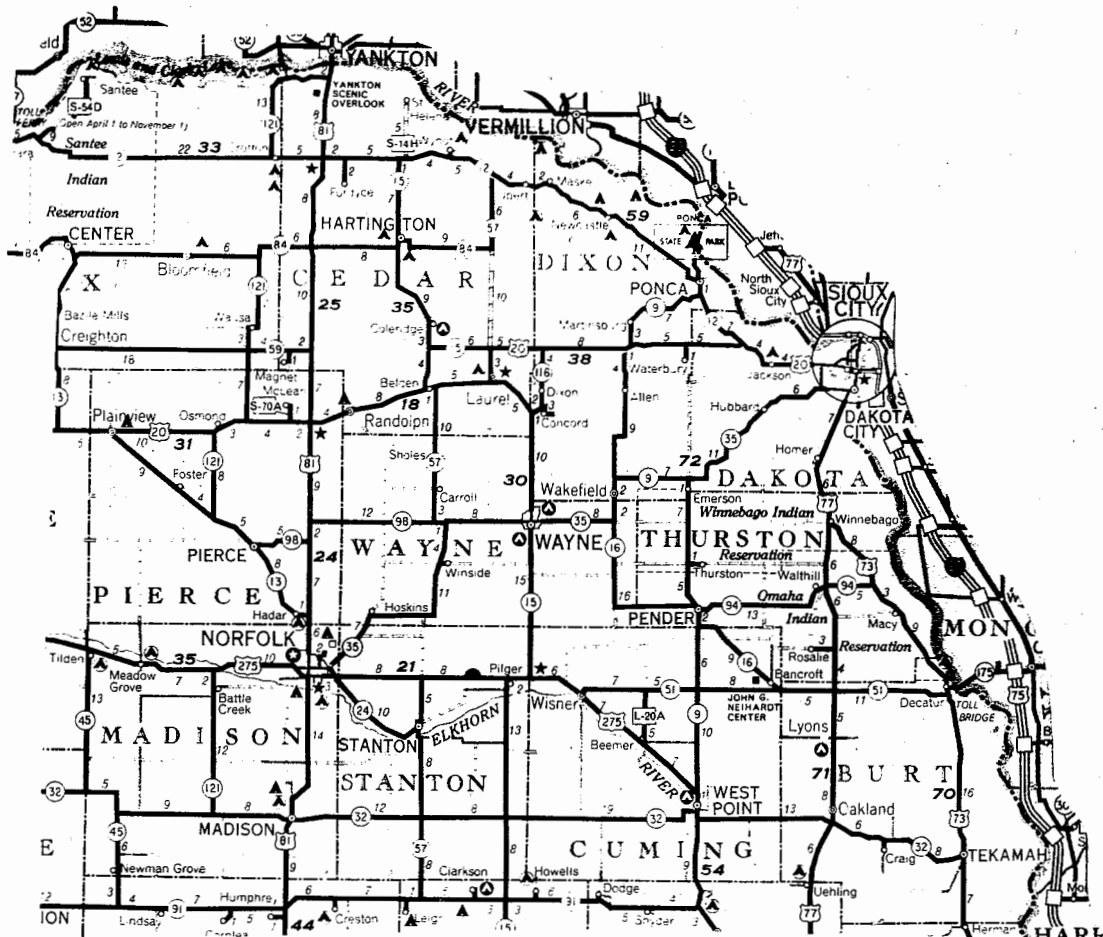
Soon after Peter's military service was finished, he left the Netherlands. In 1886, at the age of 25, he landed in New York City and was processed through the old immigration center at Ellis Island. Peter often said he and several others from many nations, speaking many languages, were herded through quarantine like cattle.

From New York City, Peter traveled by train to Butler County near David City, Nebraska where Adrian Caauwe, one of his older brothers lived. There he worked for some time for farmers, mostly caring for sheep.

During the first winter after he arrived in the United States, Peter worked on a farm earning only his board and room. Only two meals a day were served there - at 8:30 AM and at 4:30 PM. He often told how hungry he would get waiting for the family's children to get home from school so they could eat.

Peter continued farming in Nebraska as a hired hand at first. Later he moved to his own farm south of Pilger in Stanton County. It was there he met Susan Katherine Carson, a teacher in the Carson school.

Susan and Peter got acquainted in a rural school program given for interested people in the district and surrounding area. It was called a "literary society" and included such activities as get-togethers, programs, debates, and box suppers or socials.



On July 26, 1897, Peter Caauwe, 35 and Susan Carson, 24, were married at the Baptist parsonage in Stanton, Nebraska. They built their first house near Pilger, Nebraska. It had two rooms with nine foot ceilings and was heated by a stove. Water had to be carried a distance equal to two city blocks from a neighbor's well. This was the first of many places they were to live.

Peter's life in Nebraska was hard as were most early farmers' lives of that time. An especially difficult task was cutting sod with a breaking plow or "grasshopper" plow as it was sometimes called. It was a long, slim moldboard walking plow about fourteen inches wide and pulled by horses.

Despite this kind of difficulty with the early farming techniques, Peter made time for many other activities. At home, the family had an old foot pedal organ. Peter played and sang a few church hymns such as "Jesus Lover of My Soul" and "Abide With Me" with Susan singing with him.

The family also owned a 1914 Model T Ford. Peter, who taught all of his children how to drive, frequently had problems driving himself. When he got his Model T, he would drive to town and a couple of times on the way home it would quit on him. Peter would then have to walk home and have someone else get the car. And on one occasion, he got the car high-centered and had to walk home.

Peter contributed a great deal not only to his own family, but to the people in the communities where they lived. Susan and Peter had good neighbors they became friends with and tried ways to get the neighbors together. They organized a literary society in the home school near the Lackey farm. It was successful for three or four winters. Peter also taught Sunday school in country school houses, took charge of World War I savings bond drives, and was a school board member.

A large part of Peter's farming life was spent in Stanton County, Nebraska. From 1897 to 1898, he and Susan lived in their first house near Pilger. In 1898 and until 1899, they rented a farm that was located also near Pilger. It was during this time, on November 28, 1898 that their first child, Lee Carson Caauwe, was born.

In 1899, the family moved to the Sandy farm south of Pilger and they lived there until 1902. Sena Marie was born August 1, 1900 and Edwin Peter was born January 1, 1902. During the year of 1902, the family again moved and this time to the Miller farm, also south of Pilger. It was during this time that Peter and Susan's next three children were born. Rufus William was born September 26, 1903, Frank Walter on September 7, 1905, and Fern May on August 30, 1908. Fern died three months later.

Peter and Susan's last child, a daughter named Barbara Mildred, was born May 3, 1910 on the Spence farm north of Stanton where they had moved in 1909. The family lived there until 1911.

In 1911, The Caauwe's sold their farm and moved their family to Sugar Grove, Pennsylvania. They bought farms there, but in less than one year sold out and returned to Nebraska. During the last months of 1912 and the early months of 1913, they wintered in Pilger, Nebraska.

On March 1, 1913, Peter moved his family to the Peterson farm southeast of Stanton and they lived there two years before they bought the Lackey farm, $\frac{1}{2}$ section, southwest of Stanton in 1915. They lived there until 1919 when they sold that farm and moved to the Clark farm north of Wayne, Wayne County.

After living on the Clark farm until 1923, Peter bought the 80 acre Dean farm southwest of Wayne and lived there a year. He traded the farm for an acreage on the east edge of Wayne. It was here they spent the ten years between 1924 and 1934. From Wayne they moved to Norfolk, Madison County to a house on North 1st Street on property owned by their son Frank. It was there where they spent their last years.

Peter and Susan Caauwe both died in a Norfolk hospital, Peter at the age of 79 on March 31, 1941 and Susan the following year at the age of 68 on February 5, 1942. They are interred in the country cemetery north of Pilger, Stanton County, Nebraska.

"A Biography of Peter Caauwe" was written by Jan [Wenke] Mills, daughter of Barbara Mildred [Caauwe] Wenke who was the youngest daughter of Peter Caauwe.

The material for the biography was gathered from the four sons of Peter Caauwe - Lee Caauwe of Wayne, Nebraska; Edwin Caauwe of Wayne, Nebraska; Rufus Caauwe of Norfolk, Nebraska; and Frank Caauwe of Norfolk, Nebraska.

Jan [Wenke] Mills
2694 B - S. Xanadu Way
Aurora, CO 80014
1 (303) 751-2931
1981