

History of Holland

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Holland was settled in 1847 by Dutch Calvinist separatists, under the leadership of Dr. Albertus van Raalte, who were escaping from persecution in the Netherlands.[citation needed] An alternative explanation for Van Raalte's and his followers' motivation to emigrate is their opposition to scientific and social advances (e.g., contraception, vaccination, insurance, chemical fertilizers) and their resulting failure to thrive under the economic and agricultural conditions of the time in their homeland (Zeeland, Netherlands).

Van Raalte took the land due to its proximity to the Black River where it streamed to Black Lake (now Lake Macatawa) which, in turn, led to Lake Michigan. At the time, the land was inhabited by the Ottawa people who had been on the lake for hundreds of years.

In Holland's early history, Van Raalte was a spiritual leader, as well as overseeing political, educational and financial matters. In 1847 Van Raalte established a congregation of the Reformed Church in America, which would later be called the First Reformed Church of Holland. On March 25 1867, Holland was incorporated as a city with Isaac Cappon being the city's first mayor. The city suffered a major fire on October 8–9, 1871, the same time as the Great Chicago Fire in Illinois and the very deadly Peshtigo Fire in Wisconsin. Manistee and Port Huron, Michigan also burned.

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