

Analysis of 1879 North Brabant Census by **Bruce Welhouse Van Roy** (Virginia, USA)

With my continuing interest in my Dutch ancestors and their immigration to Wisconsin, I have researched and compiled some interesting information on the core Dutch Catholic emigration area in the North Brabant province.

Based on the 1879 census data, I compiled and analyzed 44 cities/towns in the northeastern part of North Brabant province to assist my understanding of this area from a cultural and environmental point of view. General perimeter of my study area is: south of the Maas river, north of Helmond (but not including Helmond), and east of 's Hertogenbosch to near the German border.

The data for these 44 "towns" are based on municipal boundaries that usually cover an area more than just the town center. The total 1879 population of this area was 123,497 in an area of 120,458 hectares. This is about 1 person per hectare. Considering this is a rural agricultural area, this is a densely populated farming area even by late 19th century standards. In general, the farming would be considered subsistence agriculture using small fields and having little commercial industry.

If the provincial capital of 's Hertogenbosch with 24,687 people is not counted, population of this core area was 98,810 and the average population size of these 43 towns is about 2,300. These 43 towns can be broken down into five population categories: 7 towns under 999; 9 towns between 1,000-1,500; 7 towns between 1,501-2,000; 10 towns between 2,000 to 3,000; and 10 towns between 3,000 and 6,000. Thus, there were 23 municipalities (or more than half) that has less than 2,000 people.

Interesting points: Ravenstein had a population density of 30 people per hectare. This is twice the density of the city of 's Hertogenbosch which has 14 people per hectare.

Data source: **Noord Brabant** province map (scale 1:200,000) published J. Smulders (Den Haag, dated 1926). Statistical table at the bottom of the map (called *Grootte en Bevolking der Gemeenten*) lists a total of 184 municipalities with both population and land area data from the 31 December 1879 census.

