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## *In Search of Freedom*

In 1846, a group of Dutch families left their homeland with its windmills and tiled roofs. They were going to America because they needed to find a land where they would be free.

In the Netherlands at this time, people could not worship God in their own way. Church groups were not allowed to meet without the permission of the government. If a minister held a meeting of his congregation without permission, he was fined and sent to prison.

A minister, Reverend Albertus Van Raalte, wanted to take his congregation away from the Netherlands. He had heard that there was freedom in America. Van Raalte knew it would not be easy to go to a far-off country where the people spoke a strange language. He wanted a group of families to go together. Then they could help one another.

Van Raalte, his wife and children, and fifty-three other families made the long journey across the sea to New York. Then they traveled west by steamboat. Because they reached Detroit, Michigan, in the winter, they could go no farther.

Van Raalte left the others and went on alone to find a site for a village. When he found a suitable place by the shore of Lake Michigan, he

bought a thousand acres of land from the American government. Soon, the other settlers joined him and built log cabins. More and more settlers came from Holland. In time, the settlement became a city. Today, that city is still called Holland, Michigan.

1. Another name for the Netherlands is
  - a. Europe.
  - b. Holland.
  - c. Michigan.
  - d. America.
2. The word in paragraph 2 that means *the members of a church* is \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The words “where the people spoke a strange language” in paragraph 3 describe a far-off \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The story does not say so, but it makes you think that
  - a. all the people in Holland came to America.
  - b. it is easy to move to a far-off country.
  - c. many people in Holland, Michigan, are Dutch.
5. Van Raalte bought land in Michigan from the
  - a. American government.
  - b. early Michigan settlers.
  - c. government of the Netherlands.
6. Van Raalte and his group traveled east by steamboat.  
Yes                      No                      Does not say
7. On the whole, this story is about
  - a. how the early American settlers built log cabins.
  - b. a group of Dutch families who found freedom in America.
  - c. a minister and his congregation who moved to Holland.
8. Why did a group of families leave the Netherlands in 1846?
  - a. They did not like windmills and tiled roofs.
  - b. They had heard that there was free land in America.
  - c. They could not worship in their own way.
9. Which statement does the story lead you to believe?
  - a. Church groups in America could meet without permission.
  - b. Van Raalte and the other families went west by train.
  - c. The government in the Netherlands let people worship freely.

## *A Migration to America*

People from different lands went to America because they needed the chance for a new life. Among those who went in the nineteenth century was a large group of people from Ireland.

In the 1800s, life was very hard for the peasants of Ireland. The peasants

rented the land on which they lived. In order to pay the rent, they spent much of their time farming for their landlord.

The British government ruled Ireland at this time, and most of the food grown in Ireland was shipped to England. Because the peasants had no money, they depended on potatoes for food. Potatoes called “lumpers” could be grown on a small piece of land for a few pennies. For more than half the people in Ireland, potatoes were the only food.

In 1845, disaster came to the potato fields. A plant disease attacked the potato plants, and they turned black and rotted. For three years, the potato crop of Ireland was destroyed.

With their only source of food gone, the peasants were starving. People searched the countryside for food, and starving crowds gathered in the cities. The English government tried to help by setting up “soup kitchens” to feed the hungry. But it could not feed everyone. More than a million people died, and many of those left decided that they had to leave Ireland.

A great migration to America began. Thousands of people gathered at the seaports. Then they took steamships to a new land and a new life.

1. In Ireland during the 1800s, half the people lived on
  - a. bread.
  - b. ice cream.
  - c. meat.
  - d. potatoes.
2. The word in paragraph 4 that means *a terrible happening* is  
\_\_\_\_\_.
3. The words “had no money” in paragraph 3 describe the  
\_\_\_\_\_.
4. The story does not say so, but it makes you think that
  - a. the people who came to America from Ireland stayed here.
  - b. the peasants of Ireland called their landlords “lumpers.”
  - c. the people of Ireland had been starving for centuries.
5. Most of the food grown in Ireland was
  - a. shipped to England.
  - b. eaten by the peasants.
  - c. sent to America.
6. The people who left Ireland to go to America took steamships.  
Yes                      No                      Does not say
7. On the whole, this story is about
  - a. how to set up “soup kitchens” in Ireland.
  - b. why many people left Ireland in the 1800s.
  - c. how to search the countryside for food.
8. Why were the potato crops destroyed for three years?
  - a. The landlords ate all the potatoes.
  - b. The government made the people destroy the potatoes.
  - c. A plant disease attacked the potato plants.
9. Which statement does the story lead you to believe?
  - a. The people of Ireland came to America to grow potatoes.
  - b. The potato plant disease was not easy to stop.
  - c. The peasants in Ireland lived with their landlords.