

Geurt van den Brink was born in 1829 as the son of Jan Geurtsen and Willempje Jans Schut. He lived with his wife and 7 children on the farm Big Krol in Garderbroek, municipality of Barneveld. The family was also known by the last name of van de Krol after the farm.

Geurt together with his wife Willempje van Middendorp and their six children decided in March 1866 to emigrate to America to join other Dutch settlers at the Iowa settlement of Pella.

The family first traveled to Liverpool, England where they boarded the S.S. *England*, a steamship built in 1865. It was owned by the National Line, a British shipping company. The ship left Liverpool on Wednesday, March 28, 1866, and stopped at Queenstown to pick up passengers before heading on to New York. The ship's captain was. R.W. Grace. The ship's passengers, 1202 in all, were mostly German immigrants who boarded in Liverpool along with Irish immigrants who boarded in Queenstown. There were some saloon passengers, but most were steerage.

Four days later, an eight-year-old German boy was found dead in his bed from cholera. The next morning, another passenger, Thomas Walsh, aged 35, died. Patrick Healy, in his history of the family, describes the death of his little sister, Mary, during the voyage. Everyone was "singing and dancing and having a merry time until a man took sick and was in violent pain and died. The doctors made a thorough inspection of the remains and pronounced it cholera, a deadly plague and sure death for everyone that caught it. The next day ten more died; the following day fifty died, and so on, until seven hundred died out of 1,650 passengers who were on board when the steamship left Queenstown. The dead were thrown overboard. According to saloon passenger Rev. Ambrose Martin, Captain Grace's behavior, and that of the doctors and crew during this time was exemplary. Letters to the New York Times written by other passengers on board praised the captain's "gentlemanly conduct and tender sympathy" and that his "decisive action" in heading for the intermediate port of Halifax was of great help in checking the spread of the disease.

The ship headed for Halifax where it dropped anchor in the bay and raised a yellow warning flag. The ship was quarantined and the passengers were put on McNab's Island in the bay. They were housed in tents. All their belongings were burned. They were given new clothing, food and blankets. The weather turned cold and snowy. Campfires burned night and day. According to one report, some women and children sought shelter in the forested areas because people in the tents would not let them in unless they were known by someone. When the food was delivered, the weaker ones were left to fend for themselves. The dead were buried at one end of the island.

The *England* was cleaned and fumigated. On April 17, Dr. Slayter, the health officer in charge of the quarantine situation, himself died of cholera. He was buried on April 18, the day the S.S.

*England* left Halifax for New York. The *England* arrived in New York on May 24, 1866 and anchored in the Lower Bay in a quarantine area. On May 3rd, Dr. Swinburne, the New York health official in charge of the quarantine area, reported that all passengers on board the *England* were healthy.

What became of the eight Van de Krol passengers? Geurt survived the trip, but his wife Willempje VanMiddendorp and their three youngest children died-Willempje age 5, Hendriks age 3, and Willem who was less than one year old. The four surviving members of the family, including Nennetje van de Krol settled in Richland Township in Mahaska County, Iowa. Fifty percent of the van de Krol family perished from cholera during the trip. The daughter Nennetje survived and she later married Abraham Van Roekel and changed her name to Nancy.