

They call it the Holland language - they don't call it Dutch because that~~XX~~ sounds so much like their word Deutsch which is what we call German. And so our words are quite different and it is confusing when you talk with someone with a Holland background - the different use of these words. But the Netherlands was a region which included what we today call Holland and what we today call Belgium and a sizeable section of northern France. It is quite a large region you see which was called the Netherlands - which in old English means low - the low countries. That is they are regions which are right next to the sea and have very little in the way of any hills among them. In fact today in Holland half the country I guess would be inundated by the ocean if it were not for the big dikes that hold the water out. They are very low countries geographically. They are regions which were very fortunately located for civilization. They were right on the seacoast with excellent ports and they were far from the big centers of empire where their people would have been held tightly under authoritarian power - as near Paris or near the centers of the empire or as came to be in Spain. They had no great authoritarian power right near them and the result was that in the later Middle Ages, strong cities developed, particularly in the region which we today call Belgium. In fact when you talk of the Netherlands at the time of the Reformation, you mean what we today mean by Holland, Belgium, and the northern section of France - but particularly you mean what we call Belgium today. Because in this region there were these great cities of commerce and of trade and of manufacturing which had developed in the later middle ages and which had their extensive commerce across the seas and overland also and were cities with a great deal of individual independence - there was much free enterprise within them and they had gone far ahead of many other sections of Europe. And in these sections the new ideas of the Reformation got a speedy start. Well even before that Erasmus came from the Netherlands. Adrian VI, the