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Brouwer, Bert Oral History Interview: General Holland History

Don van Reken

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Oral History Interview

Interviewee: Mr. Bert Brouwer

Interviewer: Don van Reken

July 21, 1976

Abstract: Bert Brower, Drenthe, Michigan, Harm L. Brouwer, Fannie Roelofs Brouwer, Klaas Brouwer emigrated to America via the Dutch bark, the *Baltimore*, Gerrit Brouwer, Harmen Brouwer, Albert Brouwer, Lambert Brouwer, Henry Brouwer, John Brouwer, growing up without electricity, Wichers Lumber Company in Zeeland, Michigan, building a house, John Roelofs, Gertrude Roelofs, John Roelofs, Jacob Roelofs, Maggie Roelofs, farm life, working at the canning factory, milking cows, Drenthe creamery, threshing wheat, Fourth of July, Holland fair, Drenthe Telephone Company, Reverend M. Van Vesson, Reverend Vanderhardt, Reverend Vanderwerp, Marinus DeKleine, choral society, Vriesland Christian Reformed Church, Scotts Presbyterian Church, Scotts Presbyterian Cemetery, East Drenthe Cemetery, Vriesland Cemetery, Young People Society, Mrs. Gowdy, Elizabeth DeKleine Brouwer, Drenthe School, 8th Grade Examinations, Carnegie Gymnasium, Zeeland High School, John C. Hoekje, A. H. Washburn, Heinz Company, Holland Business College, C. J. Dregman, McLoughlin Business College in Grand Rapids (now Davenport University), draft board for World War One, Holland Furnace Company, Roy Baker, Dr. Despelder, Dr. Brouwer, Dr. Masselink, John Ritterink

VR: This afternoon is July 21, 1976. My name is Don van Reken. I'm at the home of Mr.

Bert Brouwer, that's R-O-U-W, isn't it, Mr. Brouwer?

BB: B-R-O-U-W-E-R, yes.

VR: On Cherry Street, Zeeland Michigan. Mr. Brouwer is going to tell me something about his family and his early life, and I'm especially interested in the early days that he had over in Drenthe, which was a farming community to the south of Zeeland. Or is that east of Zeeland?

BB: Southeast from Zeeland, about six miles.

VR: Okay. Mr. Brouwer, I'd like to know how old you are.

BB: I am 79 years old. I was born in Drenthe on January 14, 1897. My father was Harm L. Brouwer; my mother was Fannie Roelofs. My father was born and raised in Drenthe, and so was my mother. My father died at the age of 53, and my mother died in 1945.

I might go back just a moment and go just a little further back in the history of our family. My great-grandfather, Klaas Brouwer, migrated from the Netherlands in 1850. He first settled in Drenthe, and he later moved to Graafschap, where he remarried, and he is buried in the Graafschap cemetery. They came over in the Dutch bark, the *Baltimore*, and they arrived in New York Harbor on July 22, 1850. Among the passengers were Klaas Brouwer, the father, who was 55 years old; Gerrit Brouwer, his son, 28; Klaas Brouwer, the son of Gerrit, who was four months old, just a baby; Harmen Brouwer at 20; Albert Brouwer at 11; and Lambert, who was my grandfather, at age 15. My grandfather had eight children. Among them, of course, was my father, Harm Brouwer.

To my parents were born seven children; two of them died in infancy. Of the remaining five, there were four brothers and one sister. I was the oldest one in the family, and I was born and raised on the old homestead, half a mile south from Drenthe. Brother Henry passed away in February of 1974; the rest of us are still living.

The earliest recollection of my family was when I was probably about three years old, 1900. I remember that my brother John was born. At about that same time, my parents also took care of a little nephew, a son of my aunt, Mrs. Lubbers, who died while this little boy was a baby.

The house in which I was born was well kept up, but it was old. We had the well outside, an old wooden pump. We had kerosene lamps for light. We had a kitchen stove for heat, wood burning. My mother did all the cooking in the kitchen stove, heated the irons for ironing her clothes on the kitchen stove. We had a living room, two bedrooms, one room we called the forcommer, which was never used; and the other room, the living room, was only used on rare occasions in the winter when we had company.

VR: Now, you said you had two bedrooms for all the children?

BB: Yes.

VR: Where did you all sleep?

BB: Well, my mother and father slept in one room, and there were only three children in 1907 when we built a new house. I was ten years old at the time. At that time, we built a new house a little ways away from the old house. My dad started gathering materials for the new house in 1906, the year prior to building. He gathered the stones; the foundation was made of field stones. I remember very well when the mason came down and chopped up all the field stones and made them into building blocks. He gathered the lumber, wood from logs that were sawed at the saw mill. Then of course in 1907, when he built the house, they got the lumber from the lumberyard—the Wichers Lumber Company in Zeeland.

As I said, there was very little convenience in the old home, but in the new house, there were many more conveniences, although it was still quite primitive. We still had the kerosene oil lamps. I remember later on, they came out with a kerosene lamp, which gave a new incandescent light; it had a mantle. And then later on, which was still a bigger improvement, we had the Coleman gas lanterns and the Coleman gas lamps, which gave a very nice light equal to electric light, I would say.

As a child, I spent quite a lot of my time at my maternal grandparents'. I was the first grandchild they had.

VR: What was their family name?

BB: That was Roelofs, John Roelofs and my grandmother, whose name was Gertrude. They still had two boys at home, John and Jacob, and they had a daughter at home, whose

name was Maggie. Well, I was the first grandchild, and you realized how grandparents pamper a grandchild, especially since I was the first one. In fact, my dad often thought that they were spoiling me rotten, but I guess I survived.

I remember when I was about three years old, my folks took me to church for the first time, and that was a new experience. I enjoyed it, got very little out of it, as you can imagine. But after I had been to church a few times, I liked to play church. As a matter of fact, they thought I was going to be a preacher, but that never developed.

Farm life was indeed a very busy life. We used to get up at five o'clock in the morning, worked all day until sunset, especially in the summertime when there was harvesting to be done, planting to be done. One thing that I was always happy about was the fact that I was raised on the farm. There's one thing we never learned to do, and that was to watch the clock. I usually got the impression that people in town watched the clock, because I remember the first time when I worked in a factory, everybody rushed for the time clock just as soon as the whistle blew, and I wasn't used to that sort of thing. If I had a little thing to do, I would finish the work, and then I would punch the time clock.

As I said, farm life was a hard life. My mother indeed worked hard, as well as my father, of course. My mother would do such things as feed the chickens, gather the eggs, feed the pigs, milk the cows, plus sometimes help in the barn at harvest time, pitching bundles, besides all the cares of family—making all the meals, washing and mending clothes, canning. We children never might wear cotton stockings. She always provided us with woolen stockings, because she felt that was the only thing to wear. When I

reflect on all the work that my mother did, I often wonder how in the world she was able to do it.

As I grew older, I helped with the chores, and since I was the oldest one in the family, I had the privilege of driving the team as soon as I was able to. This meant driving the horses when loading hay with the hay loader, cultivating the corn with a riding cultivator, plowing the oat field for wheat in the fall. In those days, we just had an ordinary plow with three horses. We could plow about two acres a day.

VR: How many acres did you have all together?

BB: We had sixty acres of land, which my father cultivated. The crops that we raised in those days were oats, wheat, hay, corn, plus such things as garden vegetables. We had a local canning factory. We raised some peas for the local canning factory; we raised tomatoes for the local canning factory. I remember when I was oh, I guess maybe ten, eleven, twelve years old, I would go to the canning factory and work for 50 cents a day, and that was a new experience.

VR: What about sugar beets, or what about pickles?

BB: Yes, one year we had sugar beets, but that was too much work. We had pickles for one year, too, and that really was hard work to get down on your knees and pick pickles all day. So we only had that for one year, fortunately.

Of course, we had cattle. My father milked some seven, eight, nine, ten milk cows. And as you have noticed, we had chickens, we had pigs. The milk went to the Drenthe Creamery. We had what you would call a route. The farmers banded in together as a group—about nine or ten or twelve of them—and they would take turns hauling the milk to the creamery. At the creamery, the milk was run through a separator, and the

skim milk was returned to the farmers. This was, of course, done only six days a week; there was no milk delivery on Sunday.

VR: What about wheat, when you had wheat? You had a threshing machine then. Did a threshing crew come in? How did that operate?

BB: Yes. Well, of course, first we had to harvest the grain. We did that with the old-fashioned, what we call self-binder. It would throw out the sheaves, and then we would have to shock them. After they were dry, we would gather the grain, the oats, and the wheat into the barn or put them up in sacks beside the barn. And then the thrashing machine would come, and the farmers helped each other thrash. We usually had about, oh, from ten to twelve in the thrashing gang.

The interesting thing was that in those days, they had a keg of beer. Every farmer would furnish a keg of beer so that they would have a little refreshment during the day, probably once or twice, three times. But there was no imbibing of a lot of liquor. It was just simply one glass and that was it.

The big day for us was the Fourth of July. Of course, you know, we didn't have off every day, one day a week or anything like that. We worked from sun up to sun down, six days a week. Sunday was the only day we had off. So the Fourth of July was really a big day. Drenthe, in those days, had a celebration on the Fourth of July, which continued for many, many years. I might say that just this past Fourth of July, they celebrated the bicentennial, and I think that was the biggest crowd they've ever had there. As a matter of fact, the minister from Drenthe and the minister from Vriesland went up in a balloon ascension and that naturally drew a large crowd. I know Dad used to give us a quarter on the Fourth of July so that we could buy a few ice cream cones.

Then, another big day in our lives was the Holland fair. We always went to the Holland fair. I remember one year, the school children went to the fair. A farmer took us on a wagon—he had the wagon all equipped with sideboards so that we could sit on the sideboards—and we went to the Holland fair.

Another thing that made quite a difference in our family life and in the life of the community was the Drenthe Telephone Company. I forget what year it was, but it was probably when I was about twelve or thirteen-years-old that the Drenthe Telephone Company was organized, and so that every farmer had a telephone.

When I was five or six-years-old, I started catechism. I remember the first book that we had was _____ [Dutch] by Jacobus _____. That is, short questions for small children. There were simple questions such as these: Who was the first man? Adam. Who was the first liar? Satan. This was only Dutch, of course. Who made the first ship? Noah. Our teacher was the Reverend M. Van Vesson. He was an excellent catechism teacher; he could just make these Bible stories come alive. I remember we had to memorize the ten plagues, and every Saturday morning, when we went to catechism, we had to recite these ten plagues in unison. Later on, we had to memorize the Apostle's Creed, and we had to recite that in unison.

When I became older, Reverend Vanderhardt became the minister in Drenthe, and then we studied all in Dutch a question book by Dykeslarhuis, Bible stories. And as I grew older, we had to study _____ [Dutch], that is the compendium of the Christian religion. I made confession of faith during the ministry of Reverend Vanderwerp, when I was, I presume, about twenty-one, twenty-two-years old. I also attended the Drenthe Sunday School, and that, by the way, was all in Dutch. We had a Sunday School paper

that we called the _____ [Dutch], published out east. Oh, I was probably in the later teens when the Sunday School changed from Dutch to English.

Another thing that I recall from my youth, my younger days, was attending the choral society. I remember the leader would lead us, Marinus DeKleine. We never used an instrument for accompanying; we always sang without accompaniment. As a matter of fact, we did not even sing the words. We sang notes, and I think in that way, we really learned to sing. I know I received quite a good deal of musical instruction in the choral society such as time and so forth.

VR: What did Mr. DeKleine do for a living? Was he a teacher or was he a farmer?

BB: He was a farmer, but he had a great deal of musical ability. That is, in his own way. He never took a course in music in college, of course, but in his own way.

VR: How many churches did they have in Drenthe when you were a boy?

BB: They just had one church in Drenthe.

VR: One church. And that was Christian Reformed?

BB: That was Christian Reformed at the time. Formerly, there was a Reformed Church in Drenthe, and later on, they joined the Christian Reformed Church. The original church, to which my father went to, was located halfway between Drenthe and Vriesland—it was called the Vriesland Christian Reformed Church. My mother went to what was called the Scotts Presbyterian Church, and that was located just a little bit west from Drenthe. As a matter of fact, there is still a cemetery there that they still call the Scotts Presbyterian Cemetery. That's located about a quarter of a mile south from Drenthe and then a little ways in the field.

VR: Isn't it true that each of the churches in Drenthe had their own cemetery?

BB: Yes, there's a cemetery; we called it the East Drenthe Cemetery. That's some half a mile east from Drenthe and about a half a mile south. And I think that that was the cemetery that belonged to what was then the Reformed Church, which was located a half a mile east from Drenthe. Sorry, the cemetery at West Drenthe, but that was not a church cemetery. There was still a Vriesland Cemetery, which has been discontinued. It's gone now, but that was located across the road from the Vriesland Christian Reformed Church.

Coming back to society, or to our young people's meetings, we also had a Young People Society. We studied the Bible before recess, and after recess we always had a program with a banquet in the spring at the close of the meetings. Another thing that we did in those days was to visit other Young People Societies on occasion, and they would visit our society. They also had a fellowship of societies of the area churches, and once or twice a year, they would give a group program. I remember at one of these group programs, I gave a violin solo. I had bought a violin several years prior to that and had taken violin lessons.

VR: Where did you take lessons?

BB: Well, I started in Holland from a lady by the name of Mrs. Gowdy; that was after I graduated from high school. Then I went to Grand Rapids...I beg your pardon, I went from Holland to Flint, and I took some lessons there and then went to Grand Rapids and finished up there. That was one mistake I made. I never should have taken violin lessons; I should have taken piano lessons. But then that was that.

Well, I don't know. Are there any further questions about our church life? I might add that I was married at the age of 25 in 1926 to Elizabeth DeKleine. Coming back to my younger days, I started at the Drenthe School at age five. This was a two-

room, red brick school; a teacher in each room. The one room, we called that the small room, was for grades 1-4. The other room, grades 5-8, we called that the large room. There's one thing that left an impression upon us children, I think, and that was when a little girl—a couple years my junior—passed away. I think I was in the fourth grade at that time. I remember coming to the school in the morning and her desk was all draped in black, and it created a rather somber feeling amongst all the rest of us.

At the conclusion of the 8th grade, we had to take a county examination. All the children from this area had to go to Hope College, and they had tables arranged in the Carnegie Gym. We all sat at long tables, and we had to take the county examination put out by the county superintendent of schools. That was a new experience for us because we'd hardly ever gotten outside of the confines of Drenthe. It was a two-day affair. The examination we took were in such things as arithmetic, spelling, grammar, physiology, history, geography; and after some days, we received our report from the county.

For recreation in our school in Drenthe, we played such things as “drop the handkerchief,” “pom-pom, pull away”—you probably don't know what that is unless I explain it.

VR: Go ahead, explain it.

BB: Well, you know the whole bunch would gather over on one side and one, who was ‘it,’ had to catch one of the boys, or he would challenge them to come, and they would come. He had to catch one of them, and as soon as he caught one of them, there were two of them to catch until the whole group had been caught. I don't know, does that explain it? We played “fox and the geese” in the wintertime; that was in the snow. We played “prisoner's goal.” When we became older, we played baseball, basketball; we kicked

around a football. It was quite a far cry from what we find today. The school board didn't furnish any recreation material. I remember for basketball, we had a couple of fence rails; we got a couple barrel hoops from an old barrel. We nailed those to the top of the pole and put the poles in the ground with no backboard, and that was our goal for basketball. For baseball, we had to supply our own balls and bats and whatever we needed. We would play area schools in those days, which added to the interest of our local school.

Discipline in those days, I think, was better than what it is today. For discipline, we probably had to stay after school. The teacher would set us in the corner and we had to face the wall, or, if the discipline was more severe, we would get a paddling with a strap or with a paddle. That is very seldom done today, but I think it's good discipline nevertheless.

I remember one time on April Fool's Day—the boys did have tricks, too—we climbed up into the bell tower when the teacher was gone to dinner. We wrapped some old rags around the clap of the bell, and then we went out in an adjacent field, a little ways away from the school, and played ball. Of course, we didn't hear the bell ring when it was time to begin class, but pretty soon the thunderstorm came up and we naturally were forced to go back to school. The teacher looked at us and wanted to know where we'd been.

Another thing that we enjoyed in the Drenthe School was, I remember we had a sleigh ride one time, to Holland. We had refreshments at one of the buildings in Holland, at one of the fraternity houses. I remember that we had chocolate milk plus other refreshments.

VR: Can I interrupt?

BB: Yes, sure.

VR: When you were a boy, did you do any fishing?

BB: Well, yes, one day a summer we went fishing.

VR: Where? In Lake Macatawa?

BB: No, we just went in the creek.

VR: In the creek.

BB: Yes, at West Drenthe. The river was a little larger there. By us, there were no rivers in our area.

VR: What about hunting? Did you do any hunting? Or, to put it differently, what wild game did you see when you were on your farm?

BB: I don't remember of any, except the hawk in the summertime trying to steal some chicks.

VR: You don't remember even deer in the fields?

BB: Oh, no, there were no deer at that time. No, that was far removed from...Later on, of course today, there are deer in that area, but not then at that time. Were there any other questions?

VR: No, you have something else in your notes.

BB: Yes, I was going to say then...I think that's where I left off...I started Zeeland High School in 1911. We lived a half mile south of Drenthe, and we walked to Vriesland, took the Interurban to Zeeland in the morning and again back at night. Well, going to high school was something entirely different. We had been accustomed to classes of 5, 6, 7 or 8. Here I got into a class of around 25. And instead of all sitting in one room—of course, we had the assembly room where all the students gathered together. But we went

to our various classes, and I was just green from the country, and I remember the first day I had an awful job trying to find the different classrooms. We took subjects such as history, ancient and modern; math, English, literature, Latin, German, chemistry, physics, and so forth. It was a course preparatory for college, because in those days, as I recall, it was necessary to have Latin, at least. The first two years, we had John C. Hoekje as superintendent, and the second two years, A. H. Washburn.

There was very little athletic competition in those days. The only thing we had was basketball with area high schools. It was a slow game in those days, and scores were often 6 to 10, or 10 to 15, or something like that. Today, basketball is much faster, but in those days, we had the center jump. In other words, after every goal was made, you started from center again, which slowed up the game considerably but also made it much easier for the players—not nearly so exhausting.

After I graduated from high school, I worked for Heinz Company during the summer, the summers of 1915 and 1916. Then in the fall of 1915, I attended the Holland Business College; C. J. Dregman was the instructor. I started MAC, what is today Michigan State University, in the fall of 1916. I became ill in February of 1917, and that was the end of my college career. In the fall of 1917, I started McLoughlin Business College in Grand Rapids, which today is the Davenport Business Institute or Business College. And in 1918, I started to work for the draft board in Grand Rapids.

VR: How did you get money for financing your business schools?

BB: Well, my father loaned me the money so that I could go to school, both at Michigan State and at McLoughlin Business College. It was one of the things that he gave us. My

brothers were compensated by staying home. They received a certain amount in which I did not participate. So, my parents were very, very good to us in that respect.

In 1918, November 11, ended the first World War, and that really was quite an experience. I remember very well...oh, I should probably say this first of all. A false alarm came through two or three days before the war actually ended. The war ended on November 11, 1918. But, the first notice was false, but everybody thought it was true. I was just having my lunch at noon, and all of a sudden, the newsboy came up to my room with a copy of the Grand Rapids Press, extra edition, "PEACE" written in big words, in big letters, across the front of the page. It was only a few moments later that the students from Central High School in Grand Rapids on Fountain Street came parading down Monroe Avenue, and after that, it was just bedlam. There wasn't a hardware store in Grand Rapids that had any pans left. Everybody would buy two pans, and they would hit them against each other. The more noise they could make, the better. But I should say, the thing that surprised us was, at the draft board, that we received no notice from the War Department; nothing was said. But November 11, the first thing that we received was a telegram from the War Department: Cancel all inductions. Well, by November 11, everybody was really ready for the celebration. They paraded downtown. They had the Kaiser up in effigy; they would poke him with spears, anything to make it dramatic. That was the end of the first war, but it also was the end of my job.

Well, from then on, I went to Holland Furnace Company. I worked in Flint in 1919. From the Holland Furnace Company, I went to the Buick, and I enjoyed the work. But we had no church in Flint. There was no Reformed Church in Flint, and I didn't like it there. So after about six or nine months, I left Flint, and I started to work in Grand

Rapids for a gentleman by the name of Roy Baker, who was a broker in flower, feed, and bakery supplies. It was from there that I went to the DePree in Zeeland in 1921 or 1922, I forget the year, as bookkeeper, and remained with them until the retirement a few years ago. I became a stockholder during the Depression when the company was in difficulty, and later became office manager, and later after that, general manager, until the DePree stockholders sold out to a new set of stockholders. I continued to work for the new firm until retirement at the age of 68 in 1965.

Now, maybe there are some things that I have omitted that you would like to ask me, and I shall be glad to answer them if I can.

VR: What kind of roads did you have in Drenthe when you were growing up? Which were the main avenues of transportation then?

BB: Well, the main road was from Drenthe to Vriesland, of course, but they were all gravel roads, and they were difficult to travel. That is, I mean difficult for a bicycle to travel. We, of course, had horse and buggy—that's the only means of transportation we had, or a wagon. When we went to Zeeland, we would go with a horse and buggy. It would take us about an hour and a half to drive from Drenthe to Zeeland, six miles. Or, if my dad had business in Zeeland, we would go with a big wagon and the team.

VR: When did you first see an automobile down in Drenthe then? How did that ever come about?

BB: Well, I don't know how old I was, but I remember it was quite an experience. I know we heard some noise, and we saw a car go by. My brother and I, we ran to the road because we were wondering what kind of tracks that thing made. In those days, you know, horses were deadly scared of automobiles, to see a carriage go along the road without a team in

front or a horse in front, I guess made them afraid. So we were always kind leery when we went out with a team, afraid that we'd meet an automobile. I remember one time, you know, the farmers weren't so kindly toward automobiles either. We just had a one mud track—it isn't like it is today, where you have a two-way road—and the farmer would stay right in the middle of the road. He wouldn't let the car go by, and so the car would just simply have to stay behind the wagon. Now that didn't always happen, but I say that happened sometimes.

VR: Now you said at one time, there was a cannery in Drenthe. What happened to it?

BB: Well, things went bad. They couldn't get the crops anymore, the tomato and the peas. So, finally they disbanded, and the canning factory moved to Hamilton, where they were able to get more supplies, more crops for canning. I might say that while they were in Drenthe and at the peak of their business, that really was an asset to the community. It gave a lot of employment. I would imagine during the summertime, they had, oh, all the way from 50 and more people working there. I mean, the girls who would help sort the peas, peel the tomatoes, and so on.

VR: What kind of medical care did you have while you were in Drenthe? What did they have at that time?

BB: Well, we had one doctor in Drenthe, Dr. Despelder—that was during my very early days. Later on, Dr. Brouwer came to Drenthe; later on moved to Holland. He was a family doctor there. And then Dr. Masselink from Zeeland had quite a few patients in Drenthe.

VR: Were there any other business in Drenthe? Or just a country store, a corner store?

BB: Well, before my day and age, my dad told me that they had a saloon there, but not during my days. We had a country store in Drenthe. I think a gentleman by the name of John

Ritterink was the owner of it. He later on moved to Colorado because he had a daughter who had tuberculosis. I don't remember who he sold out to. I think it was to a man by the name of Lanning or Yntema. I'm not sure; it isn't clear in my mind. Then later on, we had two stores in Drenthe, one on each side of the road.

VR: Both general merchandise?

BB: General merchandise. But these stores did a big business in those days because they not only sold groceries plus dry goods and things like that, but they handled a lot of pork and other things that they would take to Grand Rapids and, on the way back, of course, they would carry back their groceries. In those days, they would start out in the evening—about 10 or 11 o'clock for Grand Rapids with a team—and then they'd be there in the morning. They'd peddle their supplies—their pork and vegetables, or whatever they had—and they would return and be back late the next evening.

VR: That makes a full day, too.

BB: That makes a full day. Later on, of course, they got trucks. And after they had the truck, well, it was just a matter of hours to go to Grand Rapids.

VR: Did farmers get their seeds from the stores then, or did they keep their seeds from year to year for wheat and corn?

BB: No, they kept their own seeds. I remember that when I was a kid, my dad would pick out the nicest ears of seed corn, which he would keep for seed for next year. Of course, we didn't know anything about such things as hybrid corn or hybrid oats or hybrid wheat or anything like that. The growing season of crops in those years was much longer than what it is today. The result was often if we had an early frost in the fall, the corn crop would freeze. And, if we had a late spring, it would be hard to get in the crops on time. I

remember very well that the first part of April was a time to sow oats, and if you didn't get it in by that time, in other words, if you sowed oats in May, you might almost as well forget about it because oats couldn't stand hot weather. They had to have cool weather. Or corn had to be planted by about the 10th of May. If it was planted in June, chances are that you would have a very small crop. I might add this too, people in those days, very few had silos. My dad never had a silo. He felt that the corn he could raise, ripe corn, was more valuable to him than simply the cornstalks which would go into the silo together with the corn.

VR: So how did he keep his corn then? He had a corn crib?

BB: Yes, we had a corn crib.

VR: With a wire cage around it?

BB: Yes. We would shell the corn; take it to Vriesland. There was a mill there at that time—a feed mill—and we would have our grinding done there—corn, oats. When we got flour, we would take a bag of wheat to the mill and exchange it for flour, which was much different than it is today, too. In the grocery store, everything was weighed out. They had a big cracker barrel; had all boxes containing cookies, and oatmeal, and sugar, and what have you—it was all weighed out on the scale. There was no self-serve or anything like that in those days. My dad would take a basket of eggs to the store and exchange it for groceries, maybe have a little money left besides for the collection for Sunday.

In those days, collections for Sunday were all pennies. I remember later on when I grew older, then we started to give nickels; but when I was a child, it was all pennies. When the deacons met, they had to count pennies. Instead of having a budget in those

days, the deacons would go around and they would collect the minister's salary from the various families. I remember, too, that one of the stipulations in the call there was they had to furnish the minister with a horse...

[End of tape; end of interview]