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## Buter, Harvey J (city committees and boards) Oral History Interview: Citizens of Holland

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HOPE COLLEGE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Harvey J. Buter  
Interview  
July 1985

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## INTRODUCTION

There are few people in any given community who will dedicate what seems to be a majority of their time (and probably is) to helping the community grow in any way they can. Holland seems to have been blessed with more than her fair share of people such as these. But, even among these dedicated people, there are always those who stand out.

Harvey J. Buter is one of those outstanding people. Born and raised in Holland, he has certainly given back to his community more than it has given him. Whether it be expanding the tax base of Holland or working for better health care for the community, Mr. Buter has had a hand in it, always thinking of what would be best for the community as a whole.

There can never be too much praise given to someone like Mr. Buter who has worked tirelessly for this unique and splendid community. And, it seems, the longer he resides in Holland, the more Mr. Buter gives to the community. At the time of the interview Mr. Buter was serving on no less than seven important community committees and organizations, something which would take almost full time, not even taking into account his job as a vice-president at Old Kent Bank.

It is just one small example of the dedication Mr. Buter has to his community, one which many residents are only now realizing and appreciating. And one, also, which will be preserved in these archives for years to come, letting future generations know how Holland grew from a small, quiet town into a small, dynamic city which is still growing.

Name: Harvey J. Buter

Birthplace: Holland, Michigan

Birthdate: June 24, 1923

#### Education

Elementary School: Longfellow

Junior High School: Christian Jr. High

High School: Holland Christian High

College: Oregon State University, one year  
Hope College, A.B.

#### Professional Experiences

1948-1983: Holland Motor Express, Inc.

Senior Vice-President

Member of the Board

1984-present: Old Kent Bank of Holland

Vice-President

#### Parental Information

Father's Name: Thomas Buter

Occupation: Retail Grocer in Holland

Mother's Name: Jennie de Jonge Buter

Occupation: Housewife and partner in grocery business

#### Family Information

Spouse's name: Jeane Ver Burg Buter

Date of marriage: June 4, 1947

Childrens' names and occupations

H. James Buter: sale manager, Vaughn Walls, Dallas

Jane Buter Clark: housewife

#### Committees and Assignments

HEDCOR Board, vice president

EDC Board, vice president

Holland Community Foundation, treasurer

Third Reformed Church, treasurer

Holland Community Hospital Board

Bethesda Hospital Board (Denver)

Evergreen Commons Board

#### Affiliations

Member of Holland Rotary Club

#### Honors

1978: Hope College Distinguished Alumnus Award

1983: Ottawa County Bar Association Liberty Bell Award

1984: Holland Chamber of Commerce Distinguished Service Award

#### Present Activities

HEDCOR Board, EDC Board, Chamber of Commerce, Holland  
Community Foundation, Third Church Consistory, Hospital  
Board, Bethesda Hospital Board, Evergreen Commons Board

Interviewer: This is the interview with Mr. Harvey Buter, conducted on July 15, 1985. First of all we'll be talking about the Industrial Park and HEDCOR, the Holland Economic Development Corporation. I was wondering if you could tell me a little bit about why HEDCOR was formed.

Mr. Buter: O.K. From my recollection and from the material I've been able to again read, we had a situation in the early sixties, late fifty-nine, where we had more people in Holland who wanted to work than we had jobs, and we had a lot of people driving to Grand Rapids, to Muskegon, and other industrial centers to work. And we felt that Holland had a lot to offer business and industry, and we just did not have the land available, i.e. land developed with utilities in it. And we felt if we could make land available at a reasonable price, we could attract industry. We could have our local industry expand and stay in the area to offer jobs to Holland people. So that's what's basically behind the whole thing.

Interviewer: Is HEDCOR a part of the Chamber of Commerce?

Mr. Buter: Yes. HEDCOR is actually an arm of the Chamber of Commerce. It was developed through the industrial committee of the Chamber of Commerce but then was incorporated as a separate corporation, but the management of HEDCOR is done through the Chamber. We share management people with the Chamber so that the Chamber bills HEDCOR for expenses that it incurs. So the president of the Chamber also works as the executive secretary of HEDCOR, and they bill us then for a certain amount of his salary plus all the other clerical duties. So the Chamber and HEDCOR work hand in hand but it is a separate corporation with separate directors.

Interviewer: What did HEDCOR do to stimulate the growth of the Industrial Park?

Mr. Buter: We thought to get this thing going we would have to buy some large tracts of undeveloped land. And that land which would be suitable for industry was south of Thirty-second Street. And that had been a recently annexed area for the city, and a lot of it was in farmland so we felt if we could get this zoned properly -- and city council had agreed that if we would buy large tracts they would zone it for industrial -- so actually HEDCOR's first job was to purchase large tracts of undeveloped land, relatively level land so there wouldn't have to be a lot of excavating, filling, and that kind of thing. We platted it then into lots, five, ten, twenty acres, whatever we felt that business and industry would want, and started to develop roads and extend the utilities: water, sewer, and power of course, very, very valuable assets for our community were put in. And the Holland utilities are a great attraction, and once we started to get some of this land available with utilities we had people starting to think about coming here.

Interviewer: Where did this money come from to buy the land?

Mr. Buter: That meant that we had to get local people to put up money initially. And really the first investors in this were the two major banks in Holland at that time: Peoples' Bank which is now, of course, Old Kent and First National Bank which is now First of America. They were the two key

banks in the community and two key leaders in those banks were really spearheads: Clarence Jalving from Peoples' Bank and Henry Meantz from First National Bank. So they put up a certain amount of money and the Board of Realators of Holland put up money; also the Jaycees, and then the city through the Board of Public Works, the Board of Public Works having money for promotion. In other words, instead of putting it on the tax rolls, the Board of Public Works was able to take it from their promotion money. So those were the original investors, putting up the initial money, and then they also set up a fund drive and solicited all local business and industry and I think the first fund drive had a goal of \$150,000 which they did reach, and that brought in a lot of other investors and people who would be eligible for the Board on this thing.

Interviewer: Could you give me a brief history of the growth of the Industrial Park? What corporations came in first and how it's grown over the years?

Mr. Buter: Actually, the company that really got us thinking that we had to get some large tracts of land and land with utilities in was the Pilsbury Company, and Pilsbury never settled here, but I guess they were the company that really piqued our imagination as to what could be done. When Pilsbury made it known to the Michigan Development Corporation that they were interested in a Michigan site, the Michigan people informed Holland Chamber of Commerce, and at that time we had a building available on Sixteenth Street which was west of General Electric. It had been the old Standard Grocer building which is now the Holland Transplanter building. That building was

vacant, and the Chamber of Commerce had a pipedream that probably we could put Pilsbury in that building. Even though it was a nice building it wasn't a building that was really built for the kind of needs they had, and we didn't have other land available that they could build on right at that time. So that got people thinking we had to really get moving. So initial land was purchased, and that was farmland, and it was purchased for about \$1,000 an acre. The realators were a big help there -- Russel Klaasen was living at that time. And he with William DeRoo did a lot of negotiating on behalf of HEDCOR and the Chamber of Commerce to buy land. So I'd say it averaged at about \$1,000 an acre, the original property that we bought. And then, once we had that land, we learned that Life Savers, which was then known as Beechnut, was interested in a Michigan location, and they had really set their sites on Benton Harbor, we think because of the resources that they needed in their manufacturing. A lot of the oils and flavorings came from the Kalamazoo area, but a lot of the other natural products centered through Benton Harbor. They looked at that site very carefully, and when we knew of that we let them know that we had a large tract of land that would be suitable for their needs, and you know that Life Savers does have an enormous piece of land up there; still a lot of undeveloped land which we hope some day they will develop. That's one of the things that could be a future growth for our park: that they'll move another division over here. And then, not only did we have the land available, we had the utilities available for them: water which is very important to any food manufacturer, and if you think of Holland we do have some very large food companies. We had H.J. Heinz here of course, and Seven-Up Bottling which has now expanded into Squirt. Both of those companies



need a lot of water and they need good sewage treatment. So we knew that that would be something that Beechnut or Life Savers would need also. So we told them of the land and the water and the sewer and our relatively economical electric power, and I think that we all know that our power is less expensive than Consumers or any of the other big ones. So we were eventually able to convince Beechnut/Life Savers that they should come to Holland and in January, 1965 they announced that they were locating in Holland and, that was great news to the incorporators of HEDCOR because it really got things going with a large plant and a lot of people and a lot of high class people that they brought into our community.

Interviewer: What other corporations came after that?

Mr. Buter: I don't know the exact order of the companies but I'll tell you some that have developed there since the early sixties and have been substantial companies:

Afco Industries is on Fortieth Street. And that's a company that came out of Louisiana and was an entirely new company to us. Afco is located just about on the corner of Fortieth and 120th and employs about 50 people. And they are a partition manufacturer basically for Sears, Montgomery Ward, and those kind of people.

American Aerosols is right across the street from them, and that started as Guardsman Chemical. And Guardsman Chemical was located on property which is now right in the center of the Hope campus, and Hope College had wanted that property for some time, and American Aerosols was growing and they decided to

go up into the industrial park. And shortly after they got up there they sold their company to Guardsman. And it's now a division of Guardsman Chemical. It's a company which employs about 200 people and, of course, would never have been able to do that in the facility down on Twelfth Street.

BLD Products is a more recent company up there. They're across from Life Savers, adjacent to Haworth. That's a company that moved here from the Flint area. They employ between 50 and 75 people. It's an automotive aftermarket producer.

Bee Plastics is located in one of the early buildings that was built. Luth Electric was in that building when it was built on Fortieth and Brooks and now occupied by Bee Plastics, and they employ about 60 people.

Cyclone International is located on Fortieth and 120th. That was an early building out there. It was a machine shop. And Cyclone is a spinoff of Big Dutchman, employing about 50 people.

Donnelly Mirrors moved, and they were of course an industry that had been located in Holland. They were in three other locations in Holland before they moved into the Industrial Park, but they really expanded when they went up to the Industrial Park, up on Fortieth and Brooks, in that vicinity. And from everything I can gather, they employ about 500 people up in the Industrial Park.

Ex-Cello Manufacturing is on Forty-eighth. And Ex-Cello was really a Holland company before they were known as Ex-Cello they were known as Buss Machine Works. And Buss was on Eighth Street where the other Ex-Cello plant is now, down on west Eighth Street. And Buss Machine was one of the early organizers of HEDCOR. Mr. Jay Petter was interested in expanding that company

so he was right in front in the start -- when I looked back into the minutes of HEDCOR, I noted that in 1962 Jay Petter was very instrumental in getting HEDCOR started. He wanted to expand Buss Machine. Well eventually he sold his company to Ex-Cello and told them of the Industrial Park, and they of course built a large plant in the Industrial Park and employ about 500 people in that facility.

A small company that located up there, which we were able to provide land for, and a company that was really was a spinoff from the Marvin Albers Company is Forts Candy. They're up on Forty-eighth and employ about 15 people. But we provided a place for them to build the kind of facility they needed.

Bohn Aluminum was a company that did have plants in Holland, but they put an entirely different kind of facility on Brooks Avenue and employ about 100 people in that plant. And we were able to attract them because we had land available for them.

Of course Haworth is one of the real great success stories of Holland. Haworth was located on Sixteenth and Fairbanks which is an office building now. They went up to Thirty-second Street and soon grew out of that facility. They sold that facility to Seven-Up, and it's now the international headquarters of Squirt. And then built their new facility up on Forty-eighth and at last count they had at least 1,000 people in that plant, and still growing.

Holland Hitch Forwarding is located up in the Industrial Park, that's between Fortieth and Forty-eighth on Industrial Avenue. And of course we had Holland Hitch Company here for many, many years but they put this division of

Holland Hitch Forwarding up there, and that was a plant where they needed rail siding, and we had rail siding available for them. They employ about 40 people up there.

Holland Motor Express had to leave their site on Fifth and Central, and they're located up on Fortieth Street and employ about 90 people at their facility.

Holland Wire Products was located down across from the Civic Center on about Tenth and Washington, and I think a lot of that plant is torn down now. That was originally the Holland Hitch plant, and when Holland Hitch moved over to Eighteenth and Ottawa they started Holland Wire Products on Tenth Street. Well, they outgrew that facility and they needed a place with rail siding. So we were able to keep another local industry in Holland. Holland Wire Products is a spring manufacturer for mattresses and they employ about 90 people up in the park.

Labarge Mirrors was a brand new company and have a very fine facility up on Fortieth Street in the Industrial Park. Actually Labarge started through Donnelly. They took over the retail sales of -- and I shouldn't say retail sales -- the sales of mirrors to retail furniture stores. And that's how they started. Donnelly wanted to get out of that part of their business and Labarge had been selling for them. He took over that division and then branched into a lot of other things. So that was the start of Labarge and we were able to provide a facility for them.

Lear Sigler, of course, was Home Furnace Company. Home Furnace Company was located east of the train depot and had a very disastrous fire and had to have a new spot. And we had just started the Industrial Park and provided a real

fine spot for them to build a beautiful plant, and they really did very well after they got into that new plant. They employ about 200 people. And we were able to save that industry because we had a place for them to go.

Of course we've talked about Life Savers. At last count they were employing about 750 people up in that plant. They've got the land, and they've got all the other things they need, and I think that some day we can attract some other divisions from that company. I understand they're now a division of Reynolds Tobacco, and I think one of these days we're going to have a talk with them and have them establish another one of their divisions here because they've found Holland to be a great spot laborwise besides all the other natural resources we have to offer them. So I think that's a real potential for us.

Lith-i-bar was a company that was downtown, the center of Holland. They were operating in a building which was torn down, known as the old Sugar Beet plant. That's where Lith-i-bar started. And they, of course, are in a very nice facility up on Fortieth Street and have about 50 employees. But we were able to save another local industry by providing a place for them.

Metal Flow is another company located in the park at this time, a small company but growing, and about 20 employees. They're up in the latest HEDCOR development up on HEDCOR Drive.

Nelson Steel is up on Forty-eighth. It was a company located up on Thirty-second Street. The neighbors were always complaining up there about the noise. They finally decided they had to move out of Thirty-second, and we were able to provide a building for them on Forty-eighth, and they employ about 20 people but are a growing company.

Ottawa Guage is a relatively new company that started as an offshoot of the H.E. Morse Company. Some of the people who were with H.E. Morse decided to start a business of their own: Ottawa Guage. They built a fine new building and employ about 40 people.

Peerbolts is up in the Industrial Park.

Polynesian Pools used to be up on Washington Avenue. I guess that's a skating rink now. They had to have a bigger facility. They're on Brooks Avenue, employing about 100 people.

Portable Recording Ministries, something that was started right in Holland, they're up on the corner of Fortieth and 120th, adjacent to Prince Manufacturing. They employ 20 people up there.

Of course Prince Corporation has a very large office and factory facilities, employing about 350 people in the Industrial Park.

Relco, just a very small company but in a building adjacent to Prince, employ five people, but it's five more people that work.

Robert Shaw was a brand new industry that we think was attracted because Home Furnace Lear Sigler was here and they wanted to build close to them because they supplied parts to Lear at the time that they came to Holland. They employ 175 people and they're a growing industry in Holland.

S-2 Yachts of course started out at one time as Slick Craft. Slick Craft was one of the early occupants of the Industrial Park on Thirty-second Street just behind Holiday Inn. And then the Slikkers brothers sold their company and started S-2 as just a sailboat company. They built a whole new facility up on Fortieth and 120th, and subsequently Slick Craft ceased operation, and Thermotron has moved into the old Slick Craft plant on Thirty-Second Street,

but S-2, in the meantime, continued to expand, and they're back not only making sailboats but powerboats also and employ about 300 people.

Sautuk Industries is a small industry employing about 25 people.

Sligh Manufacturing; Sligh was also located downtown on property that is now part of the Hope campus. And they were able to work out a gift kind of arrangement to the college for their facilities in exchange the city got some space adjacent to Kollen Park from the Slighs for the extension of Kollen Park and for boat launching and the city in turn making land available for Slighs up in the Industrial Park, and they've built a fine facility there and employ about 175 people. So that was a three-way college-city-and Sligh situation.

Squirt, we've mentioned before, has two very large facilities now in the Industrial Park, employ about 270 people.

Taylor Warehouse was an offshoot of Taylor Warehousing which was on the north side. And Taylor has their cold storage on the north side and all their dry storage in the Industrial Park. And are doing very well in those two facilities and have additional room for expansion.

Tel Rad is another company who was able to establish a facility up there, employing about 20 people.

Thermotron of course I've mentioned before. Thermotron occupied the building that was built originally by Slick Craft and employ 375 people in that facility.

Transmatic is a company that was started in Holland, originally on west Twentieth Street, outgrew that facility, and have a fine facility up Forty-Eighth now. They employ about 45 people.

And another new one right near Transmatic, Allen Extruders, a company that

moved from Zeeland to Holland. We were able to provide the kind of space and the things they needed. They employ about 40 people.

Now, a building that is in progress right now, being built but not finished, is Kandu Industries. And of course Kandu has outgrown their facilities down on Thirteenth and Van Raalte, and they'll be moving their whole operation up there and that will give them a lot more opportunity to employ additional handicapped people.

So I note from what I have told you, the industries that are operating in the Industrial Park have about 6,000 people employed in the Park. Now, outside of the Industrial Park, but also on the southside which development we think was spurred because of HEDCOR -- and that's the whole area around and adjacent to the airport -- and that basically is all owned by the Prince Corporation, but Herman Miller also has a very large chair plant there. We can't claim them in the Industrial Park, but you know they employ a lot of people. And now Prince is also going to build another whole campus of buildings to the west of the airport, and that's also outside of the original HEDCOR but it's kind of an extension, and probably that's where the growth of Holland's business and industry is going to be because Prince owns that land, and they say that they're eventually going to build seven plants up in that area. So you know there's opportunity for just thousands and thousands of workers up there.

The only other way we can expand in HEDCOR is if we can buy more land south and east, and of course that land is in Fillmore township, and at this point Fillmore township has been very adamant about keeping their land in farming. And they feel very strongly about that. They say this is a religious



conviction of theirs, that God intended that land to be farmed and not for industry, and I guess at this point we've got to respect that but hope that some day they will see there is still a tremendous amount of land available for farming in the United States that is not being farmed, and that we have the natural resources -- and the greatest natural resource that Holland has is water. And regardless of what anyone says, that is our greatest natural resource, and I think that it's going to force us -- and I'm talking about the whole area including Fillmore township -- to take a new look at making land available, especially for the food industry who needs the kind of natural resources that we have to offer. And I see so many people from Fillmore township drive into HEDCOR plants and into Holland to work, and they do their farming as a sideline, and I hope that eventually they will see that it will be to their advantage.

So, for the present, I would think that HEDCOR is going to have to concentrate its efforts in helping northside development which is outside of the city. It will be good for the whole area. It is not going to add to the taxbase of Holland when we're talking about taxbase for Holland, and that was a very important point when we established HEDCOR, trying to build our taxbase, because it came to the point, especially in education, where we had to make some very critical decisions about building schools, and it evolved into the hospital eventually, too. Actually two new school districts -- and two good school districts -- were formed because we took the kind of action we did in the early sixties to form HEDCOR and take stands on education. Hamilton school district was formed, and, prior to that time, all the Hamilton boys and girls went to high school in Holland, and then all the boys and girls

from West Ottawa came to Holland. And we could not build the kind of high school we needed in Holland without having the taxbase. So we offered to all of the surrounding small school districts the opportunity to annex to Holland, and the districts on the southside of the lake took that opportunity, and that's when we were able to get the land for HEDCOR. And we were able to go ahead with building a new high school. The people on the northside opted to form their own district, and they have formed a nice high school and at this point, until we have more land available south, we'll try to help develop an Industrial Park on the northside just to provide employment for Holland people.

Interviewer: Could you tell me a little bit about other incentives which were used to lure people here like the Economic Development Corporation?

Mr. Buter: Yes, I'll talk about the Economic Development Corporation, but again, I guess I want to emphasize that we did hard sell water, power, and sewer. And we were much more economical than most of the rest of the areas in the midwest. And also our taxes were considerably less in this area. You know we complain about high taxes in Holland, but all you have to do is go to some other areas and find out our taxes are relatively small compared to a lot of other places.

But as the things evolved, we wanted to make land available at as economical a price as possible. So we took the base price -- and every tract, say we'd buy a twenty acre farm, we'd figure how much money we had into that, how much it would cost to put the utilities in, add that all on, and then just a little

override to take care of the salary of the administrator. So we were actually selling the land at cost just to attract people. There was not a big profit, and our real estate people were very cooperative. Again, I've got to say that Mr. DeRoo and Mr. Klaasen worked very hard because they knew in the long run if we attracted these kind of industries, it was going to bring more people, they were going to sell more houses, and that's what they were interested in doing, selling houses. So they worked very hard to get land for us and to make it available to business and industry economically. And the early land was sold for as low as \$1,500 an acre and as the price of the land has gone up over the years, we've had to raise that price.

But also the state of Michigan made EDC available -- that means Economic Development Corporation -- within governmental units, and we do have an EDC in Holland. It's been a very viable organization and we've been able to make money available for expansion of business or building new buildings, putting machinery in buildings, with tax benefits, tax increment, I don't know if you call it tax increment financing -- you probably know more about that than I do. At least the bonds are tax free, I guess that's how we sell it, so that is just like the city borrowing money. In other words, these industries can borrow at the same rate that a governmental unit can so that's quite an inducement if you can make money available to business and industry at about three percent less than they pay on the open market; why that's the difference of being able to build or not to build. And you know the most recent EDC was Donnelly Mirrors, Donnelly wanting to put some new machinery in their plant on Ottawa Avenue. Donnelly has been doing a job for General Motors for over thirty years, a rearview mirror. And they make the mirror here, but they

would send every one of those mirrors down to Anderson, Indiana, and there they would be encased in the frame, so to speak. And then would be shipped back to Holland. Holland would pack them and send them over to the automotive industry. Now that whole process is going to be done in Holland and they'll eliminate all the transportation and extra handling between Holland and Anderson, they'll be able to do the whole process here, ship them right to the automotive companies. So they're going to cut down on a lot of warehousing and a lot of extra transportation costs. They needed a million dollars for the machinery and we've got that through an EDC bond, and it makes it feasible for them to do that kind of a thing.

Interviewer: What is HEDCOR doing in the downtown right now? They're working on some projects around here, aren't they?

Mr. Buter: Yes, since there is not a lot of activity right now south because we don't have a lot of land available, HEDCOR is trying to help in the downtown development. And this is where downtown merchants and the Chamber of Commerce came to HEDCOR and said, "You had a good track record in development. Why don't you give us a hand in trying to rebuild downtown, and especially north of Eighth Street to the riverfront, help in developing that." So one of the first projects that HEDCOR did was purchase the old Holland Motor terminal building which is at Fifth and Central. It'd be on the east side of Central, that whole tract of land. We bought it with the idea that it's going to be eventually developed into waterfront, recreational facilities, beautification and in the meantime we can rent the facility, get some income back, but at least can hold it until the time that the city can get the money together or the grants needed. And along with that we've been purchasing key houses along Sixth, Seventh Street, even north of the old Baker plant, some of those houses that are substandard, we've been buying and tearing out of there, and we feel that it's good for the whole community because the people that are living there can upgrade into other parts of the city, and we are getting a lot of growth in other parts of the city -- so people aren't leaving -- and we're getting key pieces of land there that are going to help us all in the development of downtown and that whole riverfront development. Of course now, we have the Holland Mall situation, and HEDCOR has been very instrumental in helping buy up property for that. We see that

as a very successful project for downtown Holland, and wanted to help downtown, so HEDCOR has been instrumental in helping get options on houses and land in that area in conjunction with the city and downtown merchants.

Interviewer: One last question on HEDCOR at least, could you tell me about some of the original people that were on HEDCOR and some of the more influential key personnel?

Mr. Buter: O.K. I mentioned before that two bankers were very instrumental and that was Henry Meantz from First National Bank and Clarence Jalving from Peoples' Bank which is Old Kent Bank now. Along with them, on the original planning were Peter Boter who was an attorney in Holland; Stuart Padnos from the Padnos Iron and Metal; Nelson Bosman who was mayor of Holland at that time and worked very, very hard at this; Ab Martin who was the general manager of General Electric and was also very instrumental in helping form HEDCOR; William Vande Water who was the executive secretary of the Chamber of Commerce at that time; Jay Petter, I mentioned him from Buss Machine Works; Henry Steffens who was the treasurer of Hope College, vice president and treasurer of Hope College, and he served as treasurer of the original HEDCOR board; George Haringa who was president of Hart & Cooley Manufacturing at that time; Jack Plewes who was a downtown jeweler, Post Jewelry; William DeRoo I think I mentioned that name, a realator; John VanDyke Jr., who was at that time president of Rooks Transfer Lines; and I mentioned Russel Klassen I think earlier, also a realator and he brought with him early into the HEDCOR one of his associates, Roger Macleod who was also in the Jaycees; and there was a

gentleman by the name of Jerry Hurtgen who was a president of the Jaycees, and he was very instrumental in the early formation of HEDCOR and pledging money from the Jaycees for this project. Those people were on the original board, and along with them they elected some more people, and I'll read those to you too: Percy Taylor who was a downtown merchant, he had a clothing store downtown; Vernon TenCate who was city attorney, I think, at that time, an influential attorney in Holland; myself, Harvey Buter, and I was with Holland Motor Express at that time; and Henry P. Harmes who was a surgeon in Holland; and Robert DeNooyer from DeNooyer Chevrolet, it was Robert DeNooyer, Sr.; and William Sanford who is a realator here now, but at that time was with Chris Craft, plant manager for them; John Donnelly from Donnelly Mirrors. And then I don't think Paul Elzinga was on the original board but late in 1963 I noticed his name being added to the board, so I think they wanted an engineer and Paul was added so he was also a person affiliated early with HEDCOR. But those were the people who really worked at it from the start.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you'd like to say about the Industrial Park?

Mr. Buter: O.K. I guess one of the things I didn't emphasize enough is that the things that we sold to new business and industry and actually business and industry that was located here and was thinking about going elsewhere is that our electric power on the average is twenty-two percent lower than the national average and runs as high as forty percent lower than a lot of industrial areas. So we have a real fine attraction with electric power

besides the sewer and water that we have to offer.

I think our city has cooperated with the property tax structure. We've never had problems with the city, with the EDCs or tax abatements, and I think that's important.

Housing costs are far below the national average. They have been for the past twenty years, and we've always been able to sell that.

And something that we take for granted here is the work ethic, or productivity of our people is just great in the Holland area, and that's something we can sell to people.

And then you know the industrial coordinator, HEDCOR, and the Chamber of Commerce have always been very gracious and cooperative. And the city manager and mayor have been very cooperative, and I think this all helped to develop new industrial sites on the 427 acres that we developed up there in the Industrial Park. And I wish at this point that we had 427 more acres to develop because I could see 34 more companies. So I think that kind of sums it up.

Interviewer: We're going to talk about the Holland Community Foundation now. First question, why was it created and what are some of its origins?

Mr. Buter: O.K. The Holland Community Foundation was actually originated in 1951 as the Greater Holland Community Foundation. But when we research we find that Mayor Harry Harrington started to think about this already in 1949 when he was mayor, and he felt that we should have some kind of an instrument through which people in our area could put charitable funds to use in the



community. And he was thinking especially about projects through city hall and the Holland Hospital which was under the jurisdiction of the city council at that time. How could we build some kind of a charitable instrument so that people could contribute and have some kind of a tax break? And at that time we did not have the opportunity for people to have trusts and foundations through the banks. That was something that was unknown in the Holland area. So Mayor Harrington began to talk with the attorneys in Holland, asked them for suggestions on how he might form such a corporation to make it easy for individuals of charitable inclination to be able to contribute to worth while projects in the city. So Mayor Harrington, with the consent of the common council, appointed a study committee. And at that time Peter Kromann was an alderman and he appointed him along with municipal judge Cornelius Vander Meulen, city attorney O.S. Cross, and Marvin Lindeman who was an advertising agent in Holland to study this whole matter. And they came up with an idea for a foundation, and they along with the mayor and W.A. Butler, who was the editor of the Holland Sentinel, Mrs. B.P. Donnelly, from the Donnelly Mirror Company, the DePree Company which was a chemical company operating here at that time, Holland Hitch Company, the Spring Air Company, and the Holland Chamber of Commerce put up the initial \$1,000 to start the foundation. And then encouraged people in the community to become members of the foundation, and set up a fee and a person could become a life member at that time by contributing \$100, and they did attract a number of life members right from the start, but they also had other classes: sustaining members for \$10 annually and associate members for \$2, and that was the start of the foundation.

And the original board consisted of Mr. Lindeman, Judge Vander Meulen, attorney Cross, Dr. Edward E. Dimment who at one time was president of Hope College and at that time was still a professor at the college, Peter Kromann the councilman, John Donnelly who was president of Donnelly Mirrors at that time, George P. Tenholt who was an executive at Holland Furnace Company, W.A. Butler the editor of the Sentinel, Earnest C. Brooks who was a local business man and had been mayor of Holland at one time, and then the ex-officio member was Mayor Harry Harrington. So they actually incorporated in 1951.

And that was the start of what has now turned out to be a very fine instrument for Holland people to contribute money to their community for worthwhile projects. And there was a time in the late sixties, early seventies that the foundation floundered and did not have good leadership, but Charles Conrad became very interested in it and kind of revived the institution and brought in some new blood, and that's when I became involved. Mr. Conrad invited me along with a number of other people to reconstitute a board for the foundation, and that's when we changed the name from Greater Holland Community Foundation to Holland Community Foundation, and we have continually built on the assets and have assets now of about half a million dollars and have that money earning money for us. And we use the proceeds of that half a million dollars for the projects that we underwrite each year. And we underwrite, or pick projects each November. We have a regular application form that people who would like to have a grant from the foundation fill in, and we consider their requests. And a thing like the foundation needs a million dollar contributor some day to really make it a great foundation. In the meantime we're just going to keep collecting \$10 and

\$25 where we can, and that's how we've built it to a half million dollar foundation. And we never give up hoping that we will receive a large donation.

But while this was going on the city has received a lot of large donations through other foundations that individuals have formed. So we have accomplished this thing in a lot of other ways, through the Herricks and Ed Prince, Russ Bouws and people like this. Mr. Russel Bouws has been a very faithful contributor to the community foundation and made the contribution for the community pool -- and I shouldn't call it the community pool -- the Bouws Pool was made through the foundation. And the bandshell at Kollens Park was one of the early projects of the foundation. We just have many, many projects like that. So that's how it got started.

Interviewer: Could you give me a few ideas of what kinds of projects you're funding right now?

Mr. Buter: Yes, we actually have the fund divided in two ways. We have the restricted fund and a community development fund. And the restricted fund is where the donor has indicated to the foundation that the money will be used for just one certain thing. And each year we really just supervise the distribution of the money, of course we invest it also.

But the Beukema Campbell Child Guidance Fund is one of the large funds in the community foundation. And that basically goes for underprivileged children. So each year we're able to make grants of about \$10,000 out of that fund to help children.

We have a DeGraaf Nature Center fund which is an on going fund. We've run, I think, as high as \$50,000 through the foundation for the DeGraaf Nature Center. When they built the building that's where the big expenditure went for that. But there are still people who donate every year, and we have that fund.

Holland Area Arts Council has about \$35,000 in the foundation which they want to use as a nest egg for a building some day.

We have a small Holland Historical Homes fund that someone started, and we've been able to fund some things at the Cappon House such as the marker and help with some of the small projects. That is not a large fund.

One of the newer funds in the foundation is the Lake Macatawa Public Property Fund, and that's grown to \$40,000 now. And that's designated so that some day when we get enough money in there we'll apply to the state and federal government for a large grant to buy some big tract of land on the lake front, undoubtedly Lake Macatawa that can be used for boaters or access. And that some day may tie all in with our waterfront development. So that's a nice project.

The Light House Preservation group has their funds in the community foundation, and that's a fund that's about \$30,000, and they use the proceeds of that every year for upkeep on the light house.

Recreational facilities for aged was a very large fund at one time. We've put a lot of money into the Salvation Army building when they were running a large program for the aged. And we presume now that the proceeds are going to go to the new Evergreen Commons.

There's a Shelly Mills trust fund which is an art fund set up for art

students.

We have a Windmill Island development fund and that's up to about \$50,000 now and we understand the Windmill Island bonds will be paid this year, and when that's paid and they want to do some things there we have a little nest egg to start. And this was originally started so that we could build that Frisian Farm so I think this \$50,000 will go towards that.

And then we, through our restricted funds, will open up accounts for projects like the Evergreens Commons, the senior citizen center. We allowed them to use the foundation until they got their own tax exempt number and status and ran many thousands of dollars through the foundation, and we protected it for them and invested it until they were ready to use it and so we stand ready to do that.

And then in our community development funds, that is the funds that come in that are not designated by people. And that's where we make our general grants out of. We do have our operating expenses come out of that which are very minimal because we just have a part time secretary. But that's where the general grants would be funnelled through from the community development.

Interviewer: Could you give me the background of the Holland Community Pool?

Mr. Buter: O.K. The city of Holland debated for a number of years the feasibility of having a community pool. And there was a group of people who wanted to build a pool adjacent to the Civic Center, to the south side, saying we could use the locker rooms in the Civic Center, and we could save a lot of money, and it could be under one supervisor. Another group felt we should

build a pool up in the woods between Twenty-second and Twenty-fourth, Prospect Woods, that was one of the proposals. And I think we even had a vote at one time for an outdoor pool there hoping that some day there would be an indoor pool built. But we could never get a good concensus in the community about that. And it was becoming evident to the Holland Board of Education -- at the time I was a member of the Board of Education -- that we would have to address the problem of teaching boys and girls how to swim when they were in school. And the city had a lot of other things going with annexation, and had built the Civic Center and felt they had provided that kind of facility for our community and so in cooperation with city council -- that is city council saying, "Go ahead and do it Board of Education, we'll back you. Why don't you see if you can put together a package that our community would buy?" And we felt that if we were going to do that we would have to build a pool that would be accessible to all boys and girls, it couldn't be restricted to just the boys and girls in the Holland Public Schools. And at that time, that would be the early sixties, we had what we called a Holland School Council and that consisted of representatives from the Holland Board of Education, Holland Christian Board of Education, St. Francis Board of Education, Seventh Day Adventists, and Hope College, and we met periodically just to try to do things cooperatively from the education standpoint. And we really threw this proposition to that group, and they all agreed that this would be a real fine project. And we knew that especially we would have to have the support of the Christian school contingency and St. Francis. Those were the two largest groups if we were going to make this thing go. So it was agreed in that inner school council that we would ask for a pool in which there would be

instruction for elementary boys and girls, with the hope that all elementary boys and girls, before they graduated from the sixth grade, would learn how to swim.

And we presented that proposition to our community, and on the first vote we won. And that was very unusual at that time. Usually when you made propositions like this it would go three or four times, and then it would either go down and rest forever, or it would be passed. So we were very happy that our community did buy that.

Now we had set a limit as to how much we would spend, and by the time we got the proposition passed, and got the architects quotes and the bids in, why the price was much greater than the money that had been allocated. So we told the architect to cut it down some, which they did, but to get everything that we needed in there we needed at least \$50,000 more. And at that point, I approached Ray Herrick. And Ray Herrick had contributed money for the Herrick Public Library, and he had contributed money for an arts center at the high school and had indicated to our former mayor, Mayor Vischer, that he would like to do more things in Holland. So I told him what our plight was and he invited Donald Ihrman, superintendent of schools, and myself down to Tecumseh, Michigan to make a presentation to he and his son, which we did. And he told us right then and there, "You've got your money. Go ahead and build your pool." But he didn't want anyone to know at that time that he was the one that contributed the money. We were ecstatic, of course, and went back proceeded to build the pool.

We were able to open the doors of the Holland Community Pool in 1968, and I think the Holland Board of Education has done a fantastic job in that

facility. They have done exactly what they said they would do, and that's teach boys and girls how to swim. And through 1985, we've had just about a million swimming lessons to boys and girls, and 70,000 boys and girls have learned how to swim. And one of the things that we never knew would be as successful is the competitive swimming program that has grown out of it. You know we wanted to teach boys and girls how to swim but we didn't realize that competitive swimming would become so popular. And both Holland Public Schools and Holland Christian Schools have had very good competitive swimming teams once kids learned how to swim. Kids in our community are willing to work on their own, and that's what swimming takes. And then one of the real benefits that came from having the competitive swimming program is number of scholarships that boys and girls receive from colleges and universities, and some of them that were valued as high as \$10,000 a year; you know to Purdue University, University of Michigan, Michigan State, Central Michigan, and Ball State. And these are all just bonuses that came from Holland Community Pool. And when I look back we also did not skimp, we spent \$550,000 and it would probably cost three million dollars for that size pool right now, but it was built correctly, and we've maintained it, and it still looks like a new building. And that's again the frugal Dutch take care of their facilities, and that's why we've got a fine facility and it's served our community well.

In 1985, we had a proposal to add a building to the Holland Community Pool, and this came primarily because there were a group of swimming parents and swimming enthusiasts who felt that we had to have additional swimming facilities, that our pool was inadequate for all of the needs. So the Board of Education appointed a study committee. And the study committee was



influenced by a lot of other groups that came in and said, "If you're going to add swimming facilities you should also add some other facilities such as a walking track, a running track, and some physical exercises. Well, we did a survey and a lot of people said they wanted those kinds of things so we added that on to the proposal and that came up with a pretty expensive package, and it was a building that would have cost six million dollars. And we had a fine turn out, but people did turn it down. It was about a three to two no over against yes vote. And the post mortem on that is we found that there were not nearly as many senior citizens interested in the walking, running, and exercise facilities as they originally said. When it came to putting a price to it -- and it was a nice proposal, and it would have been a great addition to our community -- but we still feel there is a need for additional swimming facilities, but there are also some needs for public school buildings, and I think we have to address those needs and have a package that will include the needs for the buildings and tie a pool in with that that could be used for the competitive swimming programs for both Holland and Christian school and then use the present facility for just the elementary program and for city recreation needs. In other words, the public school instruction program is finished at 3:30 and if we can make the present pool available from 3:30 to midnight, for example, to our community, we feel that we could take care of the community needs. Now that we've really taken a good cross section of our community after the election and heard what they really need and really want I think we can come back with a proposal that will cost us a lot less and probably serve our community better. Now that will not address the walking/running track, and if that is definitely a need then probably our

community with some guidance from city council might be able to find some existing industrial building that's no longer able to be used for an industry that we could convert to something far less expensively for an indoor recreation place.

Interviewer: Thank you very much for your time and insights.

Mr. Buter: You're welcome.

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