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## Buursma, Tine Oral History Interview: Dutch Immigrants who Emigrated to the United States after WW II

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Interview with  
Tine Buursma

Conducted June 25, 1992  
by Donna M. Rottier

1992 Summer Oral History Project  
Subject: Post WWII Dutch Immigrants to Holland, Michigan

[Tine's son John sat in on the interview and added comments occasionally]

DR: Could you please state your full name?

TB: My full name is Tine Buursma.

DR: Your current address?

TB: 367 West Thirty-third Street.

DR: Could you also state your date of birth?

TB: Yes, [date removed], 1921.

DR: What date did you come over from the Netherlands?

TB: November 4, 1948.

DR: You did you come to the United States with?

TB: With my husband and five kids.

DR: How old were your kids?

TB: Five, four, three, two, and nine months.

DR: How difficult was it to move such a big family?

TB: The journey itself was very stormy. We came on the Veendam, which was its last journey over to America. We had strong winds. They had the ropes all around ship so nobody would wash off the ship. Of course with all these little ones, we were all kind of sickly, especially my husband. He was the worst one. One day he would say, "Oh, I'm feeling a little bit better." And the minute he walked through that gangway, he fell right back on the bed. So I was stuck with the care of five kids. But I left the baby, she was nine months at that time, I left her with him in the cabin. But it was very rough. The kids didn't like the food. It was so much different than we were used to in the Netherlands. Especially during the war we didn't have much to eat, just potatoes, and, how you call this, we called it Brei.

JB: It's kind of like barley soup.

TB: Yes, something like that, bean soup, made with milk and vegetables and milk. Meat we hardly got to see. Then you come on board of a ship where everything, the kids didn't even know what a fried egg was. We never had a fried egg. So they didn't care for the food. The fruit, they liked that the best.

DR: What was it that made you decide to go to the United States?

TB: Well, like I said, we came right after the war. The Germans had taken literally everything away from us. There was hardly anything left, so we came for the future of the kids, not for ourselves, but more for the future of the kids.

DR: What part of the Netherlands did you come from?

TB: We came from Friesland, Hogebeintum, in Friesland.

DR: Did you have a destination in mind when you left the Netherlands?

TB: Yes, we had an uncle and aunt living here, in Muskegon otherwise. They always lived in Muskegon, but for one year they moved to Holland because he was a painter and the doctor told him he had asthma so bad it would be good for him to get out of the painting business and do something like being a gardener. So for one year they came here to Holland, Michigan. He became a gardener, and that was the year when we came. He had everything arranged for us. He had to buy a house because nobody wanted to rent to a family with five kids. He bought a house on Columbia Avenue for, I don't know how much the house was anymore. We had to pay twenty-five dollars rent a month, which was peanuts. He had everything in that house, furniture and beds. He went to all his friends and said, "I got

these relatives coming with five kids, and they have to have a crib and they have to have beds." Everything was in it, everything.

DR: How hard was it for your husband to find a job?

TB: My uncle had arranged to find him a job at the Holland Furnace Company. He worked as a gardener for the owner, but only three days a week, which was not very much money. But we weren't used to much, so we thought it was pretty good.

DR: What were some of your very first impressions?

TB: When we were in the harbor of New York, by the Statue of Liberty, the strike broke out, the dock strike, so we could not get off the ship. We had to go all the way to Halifax, in Canada. From there, we had to come back by train, because the port of entry was New York. My first impression was, we had to board the train and we were not used to seeing black people. And here there were all these black people in that train, and that kind of scared me. But they were the nicest people of course. When we drove through the country, I thought, oh, what a poor business this is. Here you saw a little hut, and there you saw a little farm. I thought, oh, I hope not we have to live here. But anyway, we came back to New York, and from New York we took the train to Buffalo, and here's another incident. The nine month old girl, she was laying in a basket, that you can carry. We did not have much time in Buffalo to go on the train to Detroit. So here comes one of these black servants. He grabs the basket, and I thought he was going to kidnap her. I said to my husband, "Go after him! Go after him!" In the meantime, I was stuck with the other four kids, and a couple

suitcases. But the man meant real well. He helped us get into the other train, but I didn't know that. Then of course, we got used to seeing more black people in Buffalo, and then we got on the train to Detroit, and my uncle and aunt and a cousin and his wife were standing there waiting for us. The first thing they thought about the basket, was that it was a casket—one of the children had died. So that was the first impressions, that it would be very poor here, when we drove through Canada. But not being used to riches, we quickly adjusted. At first my husband said he wished he had never come. I said, things can only get better, not worse. But I never was homesick, never. I was too busy, too, of course. Then it was after a year, he found gardener's work to do. Then the owner from the Holland Furniture Factory, where he did gardener's work for, he persuaded him to come and work for him, which was forty hours a week, and that meant we got a little on top.

DR: How much English did you speak when you came over?

TB: We took some English lessons in the Netherlands, but when you come here, it sounds all the way different than the book language. But then after Wilma, she was the oldest, she was five, and then the following year she had to start school. She started bringing home the language. David followed the other year, and then they started talking English between each other, and that's how I learned.

DR: Who were some of the first people that you came in contact with in Holland?

TB: The very first people were some friends who had also immigrated here. We were not the very first ones. These people came in March

of the same year, and they lived close to us. They were from Friesland also. We became friends, and we stayed friends.

DR: Were there many immigrants here before you came or did most come after?

TB: All the ones from way before, but not from after World War Two. We were some of the first ones, except for the ones that came in March or April.

DR: What was it like in the following years as more and more immigrants came over to Holland, Michigan?

TB: Of course, you always stick first with the people that come across. You make friends with those first before you really get into the English-speaking people. Things got better of course. We came here with debt, because we had to borrow the money to come across. So my husband was always one of these people, "no debt." So the first thing we had to do was pay that back. The man who we borrowed from, he immigrated to Grand Rapids, so that was easy. We borrowed his money, and we paid him back in dollars, which was nice for him.

The first five years, we never had a car. My husband had one of these motorized vehicles, bicycle, and on holidays, he would take the kids to the ice cream, it was Mills-[Peterman] Ice Cream. It used to be on College Avenue. Take turns, give the kids a ride, buy an ice cream cone, come back, while I sat on the porch. I weighed too much, I couldn't go on the back of the bike. That's what we did on holidays, because we didn't have a car. Then when we had our debts paid off, then we bought an old Chevrolet.

DR: What were some of the hardest adjustments that you had to make?

TB: Not the food, really, because we just kept on eating Dutch food, like my son knows here. The church was not too difficult, because at that time they had Dutch service yet, at Central Avenue Church. My husband would go in the morning with the kids, and probably wouldn't understand a word of it, and then he would take a nap in the afternoon, and I went to the Dutch service. Yes, the biggest adjustment, I really don't know. I didn't have a problem with that really. Like I said, we weren't used to anything. When I got my first old washing machine, which I had to operate by hand, it was just like I got a million, because I always had to stand there with the scrub board in the Netherlands. So it was an adjustment in my favor. No, I don't think there was really a big adjustment what we made. I can't think of anything. I accepted the fact the way it was, and so did my husband. Then a lot of people say, we did this and that in the Netherlands. We don't think about those things. We came here out of our own free will. We wanted to have better for our kids, even if we have to work hard, and my husband did. He was a workaholic you might say. And we got places what we had never dreamt of would ever happen. I think we did pretty good.

DR: Did having such a large family make it harder, or did it make it easier in ways, too?

TB: No, not really, because once we were here, we got three more kids. It didn't stop us [laughter]. We had eight kids. But our oldest son, David, he died in Vietnam in 1968, and a daughter Margaret, she was twenty-seven, she died of cancer. She had two little girls at that time. She died in 1975. So I have six living children. My



husband died four years ago. I have six left—three boys and three girls. The daughters are all on the West Coast, two in California, one in Seattle, Washington, and the sons are around here. John lives in almost Rockford, and one in Middleville, and one lives here in town.

DR: What ways did your Dutch background affect the way that you raised your kids?

TB: Well, they don't want more than two or three. No, it never bothered me, I had a very busy life, but it never bothered me. I was good and healthy. Like I said, we didn't do anything fancy, we didn't eat fancy, and we saved a little bit of money, and we worked ourselves up. One year maybe we would buy an old refrigerator, because it had to be paid in cash. I think the only thing what we had on payments was the house, of course, and maybe the furnace, because we used to have a coal furnace. One Sunday night we nearly had a fire, and then my uncle said, this is it, the kids were all sleeping upstairs. He said, "You've got to have a furnace." Yes, but what's that going to cost? At that time maybe \$500? I don't know. Well, he said, I will loan you the money, but you are going to get the furnace. You could all have perished. We paid that off little by little, but otherwise, no, nothing on payments, never. That is the Dutchman, you know, they want to pay for something. They don't want to make payments. With the interest you pay, you can buy a new item what you need next time. And that was the way with the refrigerator, too. We had an old icebox. We had to put the ice in twice a week. If you forget to empty the pan underneath,

well, here you have a flood in the kitchen.

JB: We were brought up, like my mom said, we didn't have a whole lot. We always had enough to eat, even though it wasn't what we wanted to eat. We were raised really, very, very conservative. Very religious, too.

TB: I will never forget, this, either, when the oldest ones were ready to go pick blueberries, Wilma and David, they were no more than eight or nine, or maybe nine or ten, we didn't have a car, and we didn't have the slightest notion where the blueberry fields were. They were way north of town, we knew. Well, they wanted to have a new bike. They had old bikes. They wanted to have new bikes, and they were going to work for it. So they pedaled their bikes all the way north of town, and I didn't have the slightest notion where the blueberry fields were. So one summer they stuck to it, and they bought a new bike. Then when we got the car, the next year or so, my husband said, I'll show you where those kids went on their bikes. Oh, it was all the way down there, and we lived on Columbia Avenue. They pedaled their bikes all the way down there.

JB: The first six of us kids, we all picked blueberries.

TB: Yes, you all picked blueberries. That was the first, later on you had to be twelve years old. That man, they picked for the same guy for all these years, Mr. Israels. They asked him if they could pick blueberries. "Well, you're kind of young yet, aren't you?" "Well, I'm nine and I'm ten." "Well, where do you live?" "We live on Columbia Avenue." And he said, "If you kids have enough guts to come here on your bicycles all the way from there, then I have

enough guts to give you a job." They picked for that same man for six or seven years. They all did. So it's determination, what it takes, a lot of determination.

DR: [To John] How did the way that your parents raised you affect what you have become?

JB: It's affected me a lot, most of my brothers and sisters, too. We were brought up very religiously, and like I said, very conservatively. We all knew how to work and most of us still do work. I think most of us also turned off on religion for quite a while, though the majority of us are back in there. When I say a lot of religion, I mean two or three services on Sunday, and a minimum of two times during the week, plus going to parochial school, Christian school. But my mom and dad always stressed education as being very important, reading. We were always involved in reading clubs, even during summer vacation. Out of the eight kids, except for the sister that passed away, everybody's either going to college or college graduates. Everybody has good secure employment. None of the blue-collar, I don't know what you want to call it. I guess we're all pretty middle class.

TB: Yes, Ray is a teacher. His wife is a teacher in special education. Denny has a good paying job at Steelcase.

JB: He's a tool designer.

TB: He [John] used to work, but he's retired.

JB: One of my sisters has her doctorate in sociology. Another sister's a registered nurse.

TB: Ally has a degree in business. We feel we could not have

accomplished that if we had stayed in the Netherlands. Right now people have got it good, too, but at that time there was no future.

DR: Did you ever consider at all going back to the Netherlands?

TB: No. Never.

DR: Have you gone back for visits?

TB: I have been back at least eight times. Not until the last years that I started to go every other year. One sister-in-law, who is very dear to me, she had never been married and we are the same age and we think a lot alike. So one year she comes here, the next year I go there. This year she comes here. Last year I was there, and hopefully I'll go there again next year. But that was not that way when my husband was still alive. He really never wanted to go back. He had airplane fright. He did not like it. If he could drive the car there himself, he would go. He drove to California and all over, but talking about going to the Netherlands and "Oh, yes, I'd have to go on the plane." I said, "Yes, otherwise it's a long swim." No he did not like flying, not at all. So then I went a couple times by myself. One time I went with the two smaller boys for the fiftieth wedding anniversary of Grandpa and Grandma. When else did I go alone? When my mother died, but that was an emergency. We went after our daughter Margaret had died. She died November 15, 1975. Then we had a thirty-fifth wedding anniversary. We were married in 1942. That must have been later then that. Then we didn't want to do anything, so I said, why don't we go together to the Netherlands, and make a side trip. So we went to Germany and Austria. But that was the last time Dad went. After that he never

wanted to go again. He said, this is it.

DR: What are your impressions when you go back to the Netherlands now?

TB: It's a beautiful country to visit, but never to live there again. No. Everything is so close together, and so cramped, and the food is so terribly expensive. Like now, too, we went to lunch, my two daughter-in-laws and him [John], he treated us to lunch. Well, you can't do that in the Netherlands. When you take the little kids along, my goodness, that would cost you a small fortune. You can't do things like that. Here, you can go to a restaurant, have a cup of coffee and a bran muffin or something. Well, that makes life so much more pleasant. You can't do that over there. People got it good, I won't say nothing about that, but hardly anybody owns his own home there. They all rent, because they have socialized medicine, so they say, we don't have to save any money because we are covered from the cradle to the grave. The government takes care of that. Well, here they are proud of the fact that you have your own house and your own property. Over there, they don't care. Here's another thing. You rent a house, there for instance, I stayed with my sister last year for a couple weeks, and she wrote me this year that they were all fixing up the bedroom, with new carpet and everything. Well, they couldn't afford to go on vacation because that cost quite a bit of money. I wrote back to her. You rent a house, are you supposed to pay that yourself if you want to do something to it? I think the guy who you rent from should be responsible for that, but it doesn't seem to be that way. No, no, I love it here. This is a great country.

DR: Going back to religion, when you first came how did you decide on a church to go to?

TB: Because they had Dutch service. We came from what they call in the Netherlands, "Gereformeerde Kerken." To us, Christian Reformed was the closest to. Not that there is a big difference between faiths, but we have been going to the church for over forty years, and that was mostly because of the Dutch service what they had, and the fact that we could walk. We had to walk from Columbia to Central.

DR: [To John] You said that all of the kids went through a period of time where they were turned off to religion. Why do you think that is?

JB: Back then, religion was mostly "thou shalt not" [laughter], and we always wanted to do a lot of different things. The Christian Reformed religion back then, and probably even today, was really pretty strict, and there was a lot of negative things involved in that. Like I said, that, and going to Christian School and hearing it every day, going to church five times a week, hearing it all the time, Sunday you couldn't go out and do anything.

TB: We never stuck to that, though. If you kids wanted to go out to play, we always let you.

JB: That's true, but we couldn't go to the lake or the beach. There was X amount of things that you could not do either.

TB: That's right. I agree, but we did never keep you in the house all Sundays, and said, now here go sit with a book. If they wanted to play out, that was fine.

JB: We did play out, but we were limited as to what we could do.

TB: That was one thing what my husband said. You never see any kids play outside on Sunday. I said, no, I wonder if they're not allowed to, but seeing we came in the wintertime, we didn't see too many people out anyway, but then when it got to be spring, and we were so used to taking a walk on Sunday afternoon with the kids. In the Netherlands already, you take the buggy out, you put a couple kids in there. But that's funny, you never see anybody walk around here. But later on we heard, oh no, you're not supposed to play outside on Sunday. Well, I said, to me, that's the best day of the week to do it. So we never paid too much attention. Of course, we told the kids they couldn't go to the beach or so, later on they did anyway, but. . .

JB: Yes, that's like, we weren't allowed to go to movies, that was considered a sin. We couldn't dance. What is normal type activity nowadays, back then was eternal damnation. At church you always got the hellfire and brimstone approach.

TB: That has changed, too.

JB: Yes, but back then, you get struck by lightening and you go to hell.

TB: That's true. That has changed all over. That has changed in the Netherlands, too. Religion has changed quite a bit, and there are so many different religions right now, you don't even know where you want to belong by.

DR: You said you all eventually came back?

JB: Most of us do. Two of my brothers, they both still belong to the Christian Reformed Church. I married a young lady that was Catholic, so I go to Catholic services. I think my sisters on the



West Coast are quite a bit more relaxed than we are around here.

TB: I think so, too. They probably go occasionally, but I'm not going to make a big deal out of it, because I hardly ever see them, maybe every other year I go out to visit them. The youngest one is coming here next week with her husband and two kids. I don't want to spoil the visit by talking religion.

JB: It was almost really a relief to get a away from it, is what it was. It was a lot of pressure off of you.

TB: That was true, and I think people look at it different now as when they did then. I don't want to lose my kids just because they don't go to church. I don't want that.

DR: What has kept you in Holland all these years?

TB: Oh, because Holland's a beautiful town. Compared by Grand Rapids and Muskegon, you can't find a more beautiful town. We liked it here. My uncle moved back after one year. They didn't like Holland. They wanted to go back to Muskegon, mainly because my aunt's relatives were all there. Of course he went back to painting. He didn't like gardening either, so he went back to painting, and they stayed there the rest of their years.

JB: Years ago, Holland was a lot smaller, too. You knew a lot of the people.

TB: A lot more people were Dutch, from either way back, or from after the war. I cannot think of any family that came after World War II that haven't made it here. Everybody made it good here. I wouldn't know of anybody that didn't.

JB: Most of their kids did, too.



DR: Increasingly, Holland is becoming less Dutch, and more culturally diverse. What do you feel about that?

TB: It's because not very many people immigrate anymore. So the old Dutchman dies, and the kids, they may be a little bit Dutch, yet, but then the third generation isn't Dutch anymore.

JB: How do you feel about other people moving into this area?

TB: If it's not in you, then I would say, stay there. We came here with hope that the kids would have it better here than in the Netherlands, and they do. Now, a lot of people say, we got it good over there, too. Sure they got it good over there, but I still wouldn't want to trade. We've got more freedom here.

JB: How do you feel about Vietnamese, . . .

TB: Oh, those kinds of people. Well, to be honest, I don't like German people. Although they can't help it what happened in those years, but all those Jews that were murdered in the concentration camps. And of course, I'm not too much at ease with the Vietnamese people because they killed my son. No, these people that come here didn't do it personally, I won't say that. But there is always a kind of hatred. I shouldn't feel that way, but most people don't like German people. But these German people, too, they are so bold. They are so aggressive. After all what happened, after all, they supported Hitler. So this generation now, they don't know anything about it maybe, but the older people do, and they all know what had been going on in the concentration camps. There is always kind of like a hatred. Last year when I was there, too, you see German people, and they are so bold, and they think they own the whole

world again. Then I said to myself, what's going to happen? Is there going to be a second Hitler? I'm afraid sometime, that there is. These people are bold, and they are hard-working people, and everybody's got money, and they go to the nicest vacation spots, like in the Netherlands.

DR: What do you think about these new immigrants moving into Holland, like people from Latin America, and from Vietnam?

TB: I have nothing against people moving into here, but I'm afraid what's going to happen in due time, that the Mexican people are going to take over. Because they are the ones having the kids. The white people, well two or three at the most. And the Mexican people, they still have five or six, and they get bolder and bolder, too.

DR: What do you see happening?

TB: Well, they are going to take over. We will be the minority, and they are going to be the majority. It's starting that in school already. You got to have a Spanish teacher, because these kids got to learn Spanish. Why? What are they doing here then? If you come here, you better start to learn English. Then otherwise you don't belong here. When we came here, there was not a Dutch teacher. The kids had to learn English, and I'm glad of it. We didn't even teach them Dutch in the house, because we are here, this is the language is spoken here, this is what we're going to speak. I think those people should do the same thing. Now, I'll tell you one thing, I belong to Hospice, volunteer for Hospice. We get Mexican patients, too. Now, they insisted we take a Spanish class, so we could

communicate with these people. I spoke up and I said no way, these people come here, they want to live here, they better learn to talk English. I said, I'm not going to learn to talk Spanish, not for that reason. I said, if I want to do it, I do it for myself. They couldn't say anything, but I never had a Spanish patient [laughter]. Why should we? If the kids want to, most kids take Spanish in school, kids from here. Why should we have a special Spanish teacher for the Spanish kids? I think they need an English teacher more than a Spanish teacher. They get so demanding. I don't know if you have noticed it?

DR: Do you think this is something that is getting worse?

TB: Yes, I think it's getting worse.

DR: What do you think should be done about that?

TB: I don't know. Do these people have to emigrate? No. They don't have to emigrate. Mexico is, you can come over the border just like that. And then they tell each other, yes, this is such a nice place to live, why don't you come here? So more and more people are coming up. I think in due time they might take over the town, I honestly do.

DR: Do you think that the Dutch heritage has been preserved in Holland?

TB: Oh yes.

DR: How do you feel about Tulip Time and other festivals?

TB: Oh, I think it's great. I enjoy it every year. Every year I go to the parade and watch the Klompen Dancers. I think it's great.

DR: What did you think of that when you first came over?

TB: Not much. We had seen plenty wooden shoes. We all wore wooden

shoes once upon a time. And we looked at the costumes, and they don't wear that in the Netherlands. A lot of it is not really anymore. It gets a little bit different. But, yes, what the heck, Tulip Time is a great time. People that come here to visit, too, like my sister-in-law, she was here the other time, and she said, "I've never seen a costume like that before." I said, "No, neither did I." But she liked it, the Klompen dancers, and it was nice. I hope they preserve it, keep it going.

DR: How long was it before you started thinking like that, that it was a fun thing?

TB: My kids were in the parades, but then I tried to stay away, because that was just a couple hours I could get something done at home. You get used to everything. For instance, the bands, the high school bands, you take maybe four years of music. My husband, who always his whole life really he belonged with music and bands, and they went all over competing, so they had to be tops. I remember one time, it was on a holiday, it could have been Memorial Day or so, we went to see. "They don't know how to play here, all they do is hit the drums--drums, drums, drums--you don't hear any music!" I said, John, you mustn't forget, these are kids who probably take music for four years and then they drop it again. You were raised with it. He couldn't understand that, but he couldn't play better. "All they do is hit those drums," he said.

DR: In what ways have you been involved in the Holland community?

TB: Oh, I don't do too much. I'm retired now. I worked until 1985 at Meijer, and then we were retired. A couple times we took a trip,

but then my husband didn't start feeling too well. He didn't want to travel anymore. I got involved with Hospice. As of now, I do quite a bit of babysitting for my grandkids. They still have little ones. I like to bicycle, I like to walk, and I like to do counter-cross-stitch. I have a lot of hobbies, but I'm really not involved with anything, because I figure, I've worked hard all my life, until I retired really, so now I finally want to do the things I want to do, and not be tied down by going here and a meeting there. I'm not a meeting person.

[end of side one]

DR: What sort of jobs did your husband have over the years?

TB: Well, at first he worked in the Holland Furnace. Don't ask me what he did there. Then he worked in the furniture factory, where he made furniture. Then he worked for twenty-seven-and-a-half years in a welding shop as a welder until his retirement. He was also a handyman; he could do anything. He was raised by a farmer in the Netherlands. When he came here, you name it, he could do it--self-made handyman. Even after his retirement, people would call and ask him to do little things, which he never refused. I always just stayed a housewife. My later years I worked at Meijer.

JB: She also used to take in wash, actually for Hope College students.

TB: When we lived on Columbia Avenue, I had to have a little extra income. I washed and ironed a shirt for a quarter. At those times, those students had a lot of white shirts and they wanted the collars starched and the cuffs. I got more and more people. I must have done a good job. At that time I had the old washing machine, but I

had to operate it by hand, but still no dryer, so I had to hang it all in the basement to dry, or outside on the line. It gave me a little extra income so I could buy the kids some clothes. Because when they started going to the private school, that was another big hunk of money, at that time, though right now it's a lot more, but for us then it was a lot of money. So I always could buy the kids some clothes. Then in summer they were sent to the blueberry patch, and half of the money they had to put in the bank, and the other half they had to give to me so by the end of the blueberry season, I could buy them school clothes. That's how we operated.

DR: Do you have any other memories of living in Holland through the years?

TB: I still remember, I don't know how many loaves of bread we didn't take a week, then there was this Dutch Boy Bakery on Seventeenth Street, and twice a week the kids had to go there on their bicycle to buy one-day-old bread. That became a hassle because we didn't buy two or three. No, we had to have seven, eight, and it was a hassle to get that home. But they survived.

Another thing was, my daughter still talks about it, when they had to go to the blueberry fields, I fixed them a sandwich with Jell-o in between--not jelly, Jell-o. Because that makes a whole pan full, so I could make a lot of sandwiches with Jell-o for a little bit of money. They still talk about that. By the time they got there, it was all soggy.

JB: When it was eighty or ninety degrees out there, the Jell-o melted.

TB: Once in a big while, I would fry an egg for them, and put that in



between. Who was that of you kids, dropped the egg from between the sandwich in the sand, but they rinsed it off because they couldn't afford to waste a fried egg. I will never forget those stories. They would come home with, "Other kids always get peanut butter and jelly sandwiches." Sorry, we can't afford it. They got the Jell-o, every day a different color--one day green, the next day red.

JB: The whole family worked hard. Believe me, we all did. I don't know about my youngest two brothers because there's an age gap between them and the first six of us kids, but we were all working pretty much when we were eight or nine years old, and started off, well, you picked beans, you picked blueberries, you picked raspberries, you picked strawberries. You worked from the time you got out of school basically until you went back to school.

TB: What I did during the summer, you would think, well, she had the summer off, it was vacation. No, I started in the very beginning already, canning rhubarb, canning strawberries, raspberries, beans, red beets, then the apples and the pears came and the peaches. I was busy all summer canning. But then by the winter, we had quite a selection in the basement. But I never had the summers off either.

JB: The big thing was, my dad always worked two or three jobs. The big thing was, once in a while on a Saturday afternoon he'd get out at two or three o'clock and we'd go to Tunnel Park for a picnic or the conference grounds or something. That was a pretty big thing.

TB: Yes, that was our little outing. We had hamburgers, or fry ourselves hot dogs.

JB: It was more hot dogs, Mom. [laughter]

TB: Once in a while you got a hamburger. I still remember our oldest, David. My husband's parents came here for a visit one time. David must have been fourteen, or something like that. We were doing hot dogs on the grill, on a stick. My father-in-law stood there, and then he said, in Frisian, "Wot dogge jimme now." That means, "What are you doing now?" David stood there for a minute, and he said, "Hiete hounen koeke." That means frying hot dogs, but he could not pronounce it good. That didn't mean anything, but Grandpa knew what it was then. Hot dogs fry, fry hot dogs. Then he got it, but that was funny.

JB: You had to be there [laughter].

TB: Yes, you had to be there to enjoy it.

DR: I'm through my list of questions. Are there any other things we haven't covered that you'd like to say?

TB: No, I think it was a very adventurous life. First, coming here was a big adventure. First you think, where am I going to end up? First you think, oh, on the prairie, like we drove there through Canada, and it was winter. But then, when we came to Holland, things changed. Here was this beautiful home, with three bedrooms. In the Netherlands, we slept in a hole in the wall. This was, to us it was a castle. Gradually we started working our way up, and we always moved with schools. The kids started school on Central Avenue, and had a Christian school, so they could walk. Then when they became a little bigger, teenagers, we only had one bathroom, and this was a hassle on Sunday morning, because the girls were into lipstick and curlers and it took forever for everybody to go in that



bathroom. Then we moved to the corner of Twentieth and Pine Avenue, and that was a nice, big, family home. That was right close to the Junior High again, and Senior High, for that matter. So the kids never needed a car, not even a bike, to get around. You all had bikes, but nowadays, all you see by the high school is cars. You don't even see bikes any more. Then when the two last ones came, we moved here. This was going to be our retirement home. We still have three bedrooms, but we have everything on one floor. I wanted to get away from that big house on Pine, because I was working, and I said, I never have any time for myself. So then we bought this one, everything on one floor. And then the two boys still went to this school. We're very content here.

JB: You're very content because you're the only one that lives here.

TB: That's right. No, never was sorry that we did this. I think nothing much I have to say either. We have eleven beautiful grandkids now.

DR: Well, thank you very much for your time.

TB: Your welcome.