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## Hallacy, Louis, II Oral History Interview: Former Mayors of Holland

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## INTRODUCTION

Lou Hallacy II has devoted his life to the community of Holland, not just the city. In his present position as president of the Holland Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Hallacy continues to devote his energies to the betterment of the area.

Following the precedents set by Bill Lamb, Mr. Hallacy, as mayor, took it upon himself and his council to plan and build for Holland's future, as a city but also as a community. Among the other accomplishments during his term as councilmember and as mayor were the following: construction of a new park department warehouse, a new municipal stadium, and a new firestation; purchase of a new computer for the city (which has served the city well through 1985); selection of a cable television vendor for the city; closing of Twelfth Street for the benefit of Hope College (and the entire community); renovation of the downtown; implementation of the Dial-a-Ride public transportation system; and establishment of the Downtown Development Authority.

Amidst all those activities, Mr. Hallacy also found time to celebrate with the community during the Bicentennial celebrations. He also found time to promote Holland's Tulip Time with a float in the Tournament of Roses Parade, combining business with pleasure. There can be no doubt that Mr. Hallacy gave his all while serving as mayor, thereby strengthening the city for years to come.

Name: Louis Hallacy II

Birthplace and date: Grand Rapids [date removed], 1930

Education:

Elementary School: St. Thomas Elementary

Junior High School: Grand Rapids Catholic Central

High School: Grand Rapids Catholic Central

College: Grand Rapids Junior College

Professional Experience:

Retail Tire Store Owner, 9 years

Vice-President of R.E. Barber Ford, Sales & Leasing, 17 years

Chamber of Commerce, President, 4 years

Parents' names and occupations:

Father: George T. Sr.

Mother (include maiden name): Margaret Curtiss

Family Information:

Spouse's name (include maiden name): Madeline Pettig

Date of marriage: June 18, 1955

Childrens' names and present occupations:

Don: accountant, Louis: student, Mary: factory worker, John: student, Margaret: student, Joseph: student

Other committees and assignments:

President, Michigan Council of Mayors, Commission on Criminal Justice, Ottawa County Road Commission

Affiliations: Rotary Club

Honors:

Present Activities: President, Chamber of Commerce, member of the Road Commission, Secretary of HEDCOR

Interview with Mr. Hallacy

Interviewer: What were the steps to the construction of the new fire station?

Mr. Hallacy: We originally started on that back in 1976. The reason for it was that it was in our long range plan for the city. One, that we felt that fire station on East Eighth Street was very inadequate. It was only a two story unit, and it barely housed the new Zeppelin firetruck that we had purchased with the aerial tower on it. There were some funds that became available through an EDA grant in the area of close to half a million dollars. The city's share on that grant was about \$40,000. Once this Economic Development grant, we saw the possibility of fulfilling this long term need. So we appropriated \$40,000 and as we progressed through the steps of filing the preliminary application the grant was enhanced by another hundred-and-some-thousand dollars so we really had a facility that we were able to build with less than ten percent of actual local tax payers dollars in it. There's always been the controversey of taking Federal dollars, whether that's good or bad, but the council at that time basically looked at it as a return on investment monies that we had sent to Washington that we were getting back. And if you look at the facility today, almost eight, nine years later, it's a good facility. It was built for the future. It's used for a certain amount of meetings. It's used for extensive training, I understand, with the Fire Department. But I think that that really is what led up to it with all of a sudden a grant was available. I think that we did not have that high of unemployment in Ottawa County, but the city lying in both counties of Ottawa and Allegan, we were reciprient of a couple grants at that time because of the high unemployment in Allegan County, which really benefitted the city whether it was built in the Allegan County portion or not. The old station is

the one of East Eighth Street between College and Columbia. City Council meetings were held there in the 1890s on the second floor of that building. And that is either close or is a centennial building at this time, and it needed either upgrading or replacing and I think the way we built that facility at Kollens Park Drive, we are just as accessible with the one-way system to downtown as we were before. With the station at Central Park, we're probably more accessible to the west side of the community where we still have some industrial but more residential than we had before. And I think that was a primary factor of its location. The other thing that we had, was extremely important, that the city owned that property except for one or two pieces of land there, and we had miserable looking, old park department buildings down there where they stored things to work on the west side and primarily Kollen Park. So, to us at that time, it was a step in the right direction of positive reposition of a service that is very vital to the community. And I think, today, it proves that the foresight was good.

Interviewer: What were the steps to construction of the park department warehouse?

Mr. Hallacy: Well, back in those days, we had a building authority and the building authority legislation has since gone by the wayside. We had a real problem in this community as I mentioned earlier. We had units stored all over, and we had dilapidated buildings that were an eye-sore. I think there were fourteen or fifteen different locations where we had stuff stored. The office of the park superintendent was at the cemetery and I believe that still is, but his people were just scattered all over. We looked at that building. There was some controversy over the type of construction. Some of the council members thought the building was

too large; that it was way, way beyond what we would ever need. Our long range goal, and the study undertaken showed it should be adjacent to Pilgrim Home Cemetery. We were able to acquire some land on Twenty-Fourth Street which gave us that access between Twenty-Fourth and Sixteenth Street. And we able to bring in all those different units and get rid of many of those locations, and we didn't really sell the land, but many of those buildings were taken down. We were able to put in a coal storage unit there. I guess probably the biggest controversey was over the -- rather than go with a steel building, it was constructed in brick. It's a very expensive looking building. And, I guess, by those standards today, it was an expensive building. But the long range plan was very little maintenance, and if you look at it today, it requires very little maintenance. I think that the fact that we were able to construct the building, and issue bonds at a low interest to pay off over a period of years, certainly filled the need that we had. It seemed like during the seventies we built a lot of facilities in the community and we did, but we were building facilities that were long over due. Just prior to my becoming mayor, but from the time I was on council, we also built a new police station. Those negotiations on that police station took approximately four years. The reason is that we felt very strongly that the district court ought to be in conjunction with the police station. There were many county commissioners at that time that wanted the district court to be located between Holland and Zeeland and through a lot of negotiation and conversation it was eventually built adjacent to the police station. And for the record, their property is seperately owned. It is not a city owned, joint facility. But I think, again, it was a step in the right direction and our police station, prior to that, was just a one-horse stall. And it filled a need that was coming in the seventies and eighties.

Interviewer: What problems did the city encountered in setting up its computer?

Mr. Hallacy: Well, I'm a little vague on that, but my records indicate that when we originally got into the computer business, we went into it in joint effort. At that time, of course, the hospital was under the wing of the city, and the main computer center was at the hospital. The time spent on the system -- computers weren't as efficient then as they are today -- but the hospital needed more and more time on the system, and they were running that system 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It was just apparent that we had to do something different. So we finally took the move to set up a system at City Hall. And that took a lot of study, primarily because we didn't have the room at City Hall. We had that old building behind the City Hall which used to be a garage and storage area. We took that and renovated it into a computer center which today still operates as a computer center. I don't know whether its adequate or not anymore, but it was at that time.

Probably the biggest blow we got was that we went with General Electric on our first system. You look to a national firm like that for updating and upgrading and that sort of thing. And we got a tremendous blow two years into the system: GE went out of the computer business which meant that there was just no upgrading, status quo or anything. So we had to switch. And we switched, I believe, to a Burroughs. My records didn't indicate that, but I think we went to a Burroughs. And since that time it's just continued to grow. And I think, again, that was a move in the seventies that we did not invision that was that great a move, but we were ahead of many cities our size, and I think we still are.

Interviewer: So there were advantages to the city after it was set up; in time saving and --

Mr. Hallacy: Well, yes. Really, I didn't even touch that. There's just no question that it made the people more productive. Their accessibility to information is quicker in such things as your tax bill, building records, engineering. All kinds of documentation became readily available when before it just took time to research anything anybody wanted. I just have to think that the services we ended up contracting services with people like the city of Zeeland. I think that still exists today, but they're probably getting into their own. We felt it was a service. Probably one of the major things we got into was our police department, upgrading those records, working on different programs. There were a lot of federal grants and a lot of state grants in those days. Some complained that maybe by taking those grants we created a monster that we couldn't take control. It may be true, but it was the thing to do, and I felt very good about doing it. It did, again, without adding more people, made us more effective. In those days the trend started in the seventies to have less city employees and that trend is existing today in the eighties. We made the decision in the early seventies to start jobbing out by cutting down on the street department and contracting with private contractors for work and doing less and less sewer work ourselves. When I got on council they were doing all the sewer work and installation themselves, but that trend then began. In some places, like police and fire, because of their structure, those parts of the bureaucracy grew. And I guess eventually we have to control those, too, but I think by doing that, we have a very updated system, and we have excellent public safety units in this community.

Interviewer: There seemed to many changes in traffic regulations. Could you describe any of the more significant changes?



Mr. Hallacy: Well, I think probably the most significant change was the one-way street system, and that really came prior to my being mayor. It came to a referendum eventually. We proposed to make one-way streets on Ninth Street from Van Raalte all the way through to Columbia and then Seventh Street from Columbia to Pine, and just kind of make a loop of the downtown. And then of course Pine Avenue and River Avenue and Columbia and River Avenue became that way for part of the way. That was probably the most significant traffic change, and there were a lot of people that fought it. It was very hard to adjust to those changes in traffic patterns, but as we developed the downtown it was just very necessary that those things come about to keep the traffic moving. People don't necessarily speed, but as the traffic increased you have to flow. Probably the biggest bottleneck that people felt that came out of the one-way street system was when you tried to cross the bridge going north. And of course if you look at it by standards from Detroit to Chicago and that sort of thing, there's no wait at all. You may be backed up three or four blocks, but the main problem there was not the one-way street system it was the traffic lighting just on the other side of the bridge. Those are the things that really caused the problem. We felt that if that could be adjusted some day that would alleviate the problem and probably eliminate the need for an additional bridge. One of the things that we felt significant traffic patterns would come about some day when they completed the Lakewood interchange. And that's in process today. I think you'll see a significant change when that happens.

Probably the other major traffic change came when the state joined many other states in the right turn. That again, I think, changed the whole traffic pattern. The police department have their study, took great pains to get certain intersections where you couldn't turn or you could turn. I think, if my memory serves me correct, we authorized some of those, and we didn't agree with them on some.

If you look at other major traffic changes, probably one of the greatest things that happened was the installation of traffic lights on US-31 so we didn't split our city in two. As the Holland Heights area grew in the seventies many of those intersections didn't have traffic lights. I think the traffic light at Eighth Street and US-31 went up in 1970. And prior to that time it was even tough to get across the street. So I think those are part of the most significant changes that took place.

We had some traffic studies done. We have in effect today a truck route which I think is very, very important to our community since it controls truck traffic. If you allow them on every street your accident rates go up, there is more danger to young people who might be playing in the yard, and so forth. I think this community does a good job controlling truck traffic.

Interviewer: What was happening with the Cable Antenna System?

Mr. Hallacy: Well, of course, we began hearings and the interest started on cable in the late sixties, I'd say in '69. And then '70, '71, the council appointed a committee to review cable applications and come up with some kind of recommendation. There was representation on that committee from the planning

commission, the city council, and the Board of Public Works (BPW). I don't remember everybody that was on there, but I was one of the council reps. We interviewed companies such as General Electric, Booth Systems, Continental Cablevision, who was the recipient after some discussion. The city manager at that time and the attorney went to Washington; talked with people in the Federal Communications Commission about what you could negotiate for on behalf of the city; be it an access channel, guaranteed public access programming, a percentage fee to promote local programming, that sort of thing. And in those days the legislation was pretty tight, and you could do certain things and there were certain things you couldn't do in that area. I have to believe that after months of negotiation and reviewing the application, when we got right down to the hearing, that Continental offered the most to the city at that time. Whether that was the right choice or not I think it was the right choice for the time. And since that time the deregulation has continued to exist and spread and there's less and less regulation today.

I think Continental has served the community well. I guess in some cases they've been a little bit slow in doing the upgrading. But I guess it all bears back to the free enterprise system. As their system grows they can do more, and the cable system was slow in being accepted in this community. Where in most communities once the cable came in they would get 60-70%, I can remember them telling us back in the mid -- well maybe late seventies -- that they still only had 38-40%. That's pretty hard to turn a dollar and do things. That was the nice thing about the FCC regulations at that time, if you had them bound, they had to do it. So they had to do it whether they were making money or not. The city council completely, based on what the package that was adopted -- the ordinance that was

adopted -- had complete control of the rates, and rates primarily dictate what they can do and what they can't do. And we had public access. They agreed to televize the council meetings. We were probably one of the first communities in the state that had televized council meetings. And prior to that time, we were on radio, and we were one of the few that were on radio. But I think those were things that led to an informed community. I guess I was amazed when I got on council in '68 to the number of people that listened to the council meeting every week. That was just part of their programming. Not only did they read what was published in the paper the next day, but they listened to it first hand. And I think when cable came along, those that had cable, watched it. I think that the city had complete control over the system and as the deregulation started to come about I think the city was smart in moving in that area because it makes them more competitive. If somebody else wants to come in and get a franchise they can probably get it without all the hearings that we went through. And they know that, today, it's a matter if the rates get too high, people won't buy subscriber service. It becomes a matter of free enterprise.

Interviewer: What was done in the downtown to strengthen it?

Mr. Hallacy: Well, of course, you know, back in the mid-sixties -- and probably some of the other people you've interviewed have talked about this -- they started out with a grandiose plan in '66 with several millions of dollars; fountains up and down Eighth Street, and that kept getting narrowed down and narrowed down, and they just could not get an agreement to do anything. In '69, Nixon proposed the concept of federal revenue sharing. And it's still in existence today, and it amazes me that it is. But federal revenue sharing has to be the cleanest program that the

federal government has ever been involved in that returns money to local communities. When I left office in '79 I think the federal revenue sharing office in Washington still had less than 50 employees. It was just a clean program of turning money back to communities. The first thing we did with our federal revenue sharing was buy a new fire truck, and that was the thing to do. Everybodies' equipment was dilapidated. We had a city finance officer at that time who had great vision and foresight and set up a revolving fund then for future acquisition of fire equipment. Secondly, we looked at doing a study on the downtown which we did. We spent \$125,000 in federal revenue sharing to do what you see on Eighth Street today. When you think that was done 14 years ago, it really works. And if you look at it, it probably led to the real strength of downtown. Again not everybody agreed with what we did, you know. What they wanted to do originally was close off the two blocks between River and College. There was great opposition to that. There was no opposition to speak of to putting the plantings in and the trees. But they finally compromised to a one-way system with the meters in for quick turn over. I know there's a move today to take out the parking meters, but I think that would be a major error. I don't see anything wrong with quick turn over meters on the streets. And what they would be smart to do, if they're really upset with the meters, is put in 30-minute meters. Then you really and truly get the quick turn over. But you know, that isn't the purpose. I think the downtown beautification is probably the strongest thing we did to strengthen downtown. As that came about, the one-way street system came about also, and I think that led to the strength of downtown because it allowed the traffic to flow. We, at that time, had parking booths in the back where you came in and got the ticket and paid as you went out. Probably, as we moved along, another strength that we put in was to do the parking pattern. We

then came up with the volunteer assessment that the merchants would pay. Like any other volunteer program not everybody avails themselves to that. They just don't do it. So a few years ago, that had to be reckoned with, too, because a few were supplying it for the many. So now we have a tax levy, assessment, that goes for parking in lieu of the volunteer assessment. I have to say from '70 right on through into the eighties there have been periodic moves to strengthen the base of the downtown.

In 1978 a small group of people began a study of downtown to see what should be done in the future. And we came up what is known today as the Zuchelli-Hunter study. I just have been reviewing the Zuchelli-Hunter study because now we're a Main Street recipient. I'm a strong believer that Main Street is going to deal with the current buildings and the architectural and historic features, but it's not going to deal with long range planning for downtown. So we're beginning to gear up to get all of the elements; Main Street, HDM, and all this sort of thing; together to look at a long range plan.

Another strength that we don't want to over look is the formation of the HDM. The Holland Downtown Mall Association is a division of the Chamber. They act totally separate from us, but in order to belong to the Mall Association you have to be a Chamber member. They have been a very good plus. They have been a marketing plus for downtown. They've run good promotions, well organized promotions. They're getting better at it. I think if you look at all the strengths that periodically fall into place, our downtown is very strong, and we have people waiting to come into our downtown. We may have a mall coming, and, I may be naive,

but I'm convinced, if the attitude stays the same, we will not have a problem in downtown Holland.

Interviewer: How and why was the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) set up?

Mr. Hallacy: Well, that's very basic. That became legislation in the state of Michigan. Downtowns and cities were really having problems. And they had to define an area that was designated as a downtown district. Once you designated that area you were an authorized development authority. If you established the authority then you had the right to levy up to two mills for planning. And you could run different things within that district. It was a defined district, and I think that has to be the key thing. That and the millage levy had to be the key things to generate a specific area for downtown.

Interviewer: What did the Bicentennial Committee do?

Mr. Hallacy: Well, we like to think we did a lot. And it was a fun time. We formed a Bicentennial Committee. They had a lot of promotions going. They had a lot of people involved in everything; a lot of people growing beards, barber shoppers, and they had a big Fourth of July celebration, a lot of different ongoing events during the year. We claimed to be the third largest festival in the country with Tulip Time, and we decided that maybe the thing to do was to kick our bicentennial year off with entering a float in the Tournament of Roses parade which gets world wide coverage and so forth. So we undertook that project and that just took months of work; probably a lot more work than any of us envisioned. But we did get accepted as a tournament entry which is not an easy thing to do. We didn't use any tax dollars on that project. We got one grant from the Michigan Travel Bureau of

\$5,000. The balance of that money came from service clubs, private donations, swimming contests. We had everything. Well, we raised \$35,000. We contracted with a float builder out in Pasadena to build our float. As mayor, I took my family, and we went out. There were different people from the Tulip Time Board. Tulip Time supported it. They gave us \$7,000. They were very generous. We went out, and there were seven of us who road on the float, and it was just really a unique experience, one that's very hard to even talk about today. It's one you just don't forget. And we won the award for outstanding cities in our class, which were cities with a population of 25,000-50,000. It was just really a neat deal. There were so many people -- a program like the bicentennial really is only successful based on the volunteers that get involved, and I guess that was the exciting thing. Not only with the Pasadena project but with the Fourth of July program and many of the other events that were held during the year, we just had a lot of people involved. They really made it neat. It made the committee's work easier. Our co-chairmen for that committee went on to do many other things in the community. If you give somebody a job as a volunteer and they accept that job and do it well they're on to different things. And one of our co-chairmen on that committee is now on the planning commission. So you can just see, that was ten years or eight years ago. Some interesting things like that happen.

Interviewer: There seemed to be some controversey in the closing of Twelfth Street for Hope College. Could you describe this process? What happened with it?

Mr. Hallacy: Well, that had been talked about years and years ago, trying to do something with Twelfth, closing College they talked about, College Avenue. They talked about closing Tenth Street or part of Columbia. They didn't really know. And



there had been discussion on it prior to my getting on council. I can remember hearing about it. In the mid-seventies I think there was a strong move to do it. I'd say '72, '73, but the college wasn't ready. The college really didn't know what they wanted to do. They did not have long range plan. I shouldn't say they didn't have a long range plan. Their plan was questionable in their minds. They weren't firm on it. Gordon Van Wylen, the current president of the college came on board I think in '73 about the same time as I became mayor. And over those years there was more and more conversation about it. I felt, truly, about '75 that had they wanted to do it, it would have happened with very little controversey. I felt there was great support on planning commission. There was great support on the council. But the time, evidently, the college didn't feel was right. Three years after that they pursued the efforts of Twelfth Street. We started the public hearing process. There was something about closing streets. The public is against closing streets. That goes back to an old addage that they say: "It's tough when you try and change peoples' habits." People fight -- they don't care if its just some little thing -- if you change an entrance way people get upset because they have to go in a different way. The big objections came from the people in the immediate area which is what you would expect because these people had been driving down that street for 30, 40 years. The other main thing that really became a problem if you look at our city Twelfth Street is one of the few straight accesses east and west, all the way from Fairbanks to Kollens Park. And there aren't that many that get all the way through. So it became a very tough decision because there was a fair amount of opposition. But I give the council members that I served with a lot of credit because a lot of them had a vision to look five, ten, fifteen, twenty years downstream. And I really think, today, as we get into government, that's what

government has to do: they have to be visionaries. And when you become a visionary it's like becoming a prophet, you take a gamble if people don't think you're doing the right thing. But it's predestined sometimes to be the right thing and sometimes the wrong thing. The college made some promises that they would allow fire access, it would be done very well, and I think when I look back, the decision that did come out in favor of closing Twelfth Street, and I look today what the college has done, it's far beyond what any of us envisioned. And I think that one of the things that I know that one of my fellow council members at that time voted for it because he felt the college was so important to the downtown, to the core city and community. And they have done so much to upgrade it, and their student body spends their money down here. Their faculty has continued to grow, and we felt that if that added to the strength of the college then it adds to the strength of the community. And I'm sure there are some people today that are still inconvenienced because of the closing of Twelfth Street and will probably never get over it. But I think if you look what it's done for the college in just five or six years and what it's done for the community for that area, it's just no question on this decision regardless of the controversey.

Interviewer: Could you describe the steps to the building of the new Municipal Stadium?

Mr. Hallacy: Yeah, you know, there again, we were the recipients of an EDA grant dealing with the employment there were monies floating around at that time. As mayor I had formed a committee of representatives of the college, Holland High School, and Holland Christian to look at what we were going to do with Riverview Park. Because for somebody in the caliber sized community of Holland -- which at

that time was 25,000 -- we were one of the few communities without a half way decent athletic facility. A very worthwhile program regarding our sports facilities still exists today: we share our facilities. The city of Holland doesn't have to go out and build all new ball parks. We use the high school's. They use our facilities. And so it was kind of a joint venture. We were looking at spending about \$400,000 to upgrade Riverview Park. And it really needed it bad because if you can remember when they used to play there, after the third or fourth game, it was just a sea of muck and there wasn't any mounding left to it or any grading. The city would try and fix it a little bit here and there but it was just inadequate, the covered stands were nice and a lot of people still miss those. A few years prior to that -- in the late seventies -- city council had refurbished that, repainted it and did some upgrading on the structure, but it was still very, very inadequate. And it wouldn't hold the numbers of people, especially for the Hope College games. The planning process was already there for upgrading, and then this grant came about. We saw a real opportunity to build a stadium for probably what we would put into the upgrading of Riverview Park, and we still wouldn't have any parking or anything else because Riverview Park offered absolutely no parking. And we saw a real need to develop the water front. That was talked about during that time. So if we got the stadium out of there that would leave that open for development. And so in order to get the grant we had to come up with a certain amount of monies on our own. Again we did not feel it could come out of city monies although we did end up spending some city monies out of it. I had the staff at City Hall call about 50 people and ask them to come to a meeting for coffee and rolls at the Holiday Inn on Saturday morning. I wanted to talk with them. And these were people that were athletically inclined. They weren't necessarily all football fans. We had people

that raced trotters and that sort of thing but people that had shown an interest in the community. And at that meeting I just told them that we had the possibility of getting this grant. We had to raise \$125,000 of our own money in order to get it, and we didn't feel we could take it out of the city coffers. On a placemat that morning, a paper placemat, we walked out of there with pledges of \$45,000. That was just unheard of. We then went and got an organized campaign going once we saw that there was good community support for it. The college came up with \$125,000, and I think we eventually spent 100,000 city money on it. We had such short time to do it in. We really did not have new plans. We really were invisioning upgrading an old facility. But we had another neat thing, the city owned that land. I guess the only sad part about it was we scrimped in the area that we should not have and that was in the field. Nobody ever told me -- and I sat in on probably 80% of those meetings -- that the failure on football fields was 50%. Nobody ever told me that. We cut back on the field on what we originally allocated to make everything else go. We figured we could upgrade the field as we went along. There's no sense in talking about what eventually happened in history, but it didn't go that way. The field failed and there were a lot of unhappy people. And I truly feel today that the contractor took it in the ear. He paid. I think, you know, what we did was right. We have a facility that will be there for years to come. To replace it today will cost you two-and-a-half times what we did just a few years ago. I guess the nice thing that pleases me, again, it is a joint community project. You've got Holland Christian involved and Holland High. We've got Hope College. We got the community. And it's held for all different kinds of events that we invisioned; whether it be graduations, church services. We had an "Up with People" show there a year ago and it's got adequate parking and it's a fine community

image facility. People come here from out of town, and it's a nice facility. It's a facility that a community can be proud of. And here we put money into that facility that we would have put basically down the drain in Riverview Park. So, regardless of the controversey and the problem we had with the field -- that's now been corrected -- I just think we're well on our way and slightly years ahead for having done it.

Interviewer: Could you describe the relationship of the city to the hospital and when, how, and why did the hospital go "independent"?

Mr. Hallacy: Well, I think for the record, first of all, Holland City Hospital was an extremely well run operation. It never required any tax dollars contrary to what people might have thought. It was interesting to me because I don't have any training or education in hospital organization, but in those days the mayor sat as a member of the hospital board. So we went to all the hospital meetings. The city clerk kept all the records, and he typed the minutes and that sort of thing. There was always -- from the time I was involved anyway -- a certain amount of suspicion between the two organizations. One didn't want the other one to have too much autonomy. Everybody watched everybody else. I have to say, even with that kind of a thing existing, it was really kind of interesting because the director and the board ran a good hospital. The city was obligated, and still is I believe, to bond up to only 10% of its S.E.V. And I don't know if that still exists or not, but that was the rule of thumb there. And the S.E.V. at that time was 160 million, and we could bond up to about 16 million dollars. And we had some Board of Public Works bonds out, and we had some construction bond, and the hospital over the years had an expansion in '69 and in the early seventies. They were looking at a

major expansion for the late seventies to get up to about a 225 bed hospital which they have today. There was just no way that as a city hospital they could take on this large expansion. It would bond us beyond our capacity. It would leave room for absolutely nothing else. If the hospital should fail it could put the city in the throws of bankruptcy. There were just a lot of possibilities. Plus the fact that the people -- it was a very technical oriented operation -- really didn't belong in the city government. It was a specialty type field. They had been looking at different areas. And for some time the usage that had come about was over 50% of the occupancy was coming from outside the city. Was it really fair to ask the city of Holland to take the bonded indebtedness even though the hospital was going to make it and pay it back through its revenues and have them take that total obligation when over 50% of its use was coming from outside of the city? So they looked at. There was legislation that where they could take surrounding townships, and they could all vote to join in a hospital authority. I guess I had some concerns because the city had guided it through some pretty tough times even though it was held in sound financially. I just really didn't know whether or not the current expansion was necessary to that degree. The way the health care business is going today nobody could see that at that time. I think when the vote came about, I was assured it was the only way on behalf of the citizens of Holland to go because that cost should be shared by the masses. The fact that they did establish an authority, the authority had the potential to levy a mill. They said unless things really got desperate they would never levy that mill and have not levied it as of today. But there's no question that the fact that by going to an authority with the things the city was faced with was far and away good. But it let this controversy as to whether it was the thing to. Are you giving a hospital away? Well, many of us that

were close to it we weren't giving it away. We were still very much a part of it, but we spread the liability amongst everyone. And I think that's what really was the problem.

Interviewer: How was the new city manager selected when Bopf left?

Mr. Hallacy: Well, Bill Bopf was a very capable city manager, extremely well organized. He came into Holland in '70 at the time we were getting a new mayor, Bill Lamb. We had a very aggressive council that did not want to address the day to day questions of putting out fires. They felt that was an administrative function. The council wanted to concern itself more with long range planning and the needs of the seventies. And I really was part of that group. He really did the job for us. We had never had an assistant city manager. He said that that was almost a must. We had 13 departments. No way could a city manager over see all 13 departments. So we had had a young fellow who had worked for many years in the city clerk's office that was like a deputy city clerk that had left there and gone into private business. And that's Terry Hofmeyer. And Bill went out and talked with Terry and hired him as the assistant city manager with the council's approval. And they worked very close together. When Bill had had a desire for some time to get back to California and had kept me advised of that, of his different interviews. And when he finally decided to leave, one of the things that was asked to him at one of our meetings was what were his thoughts of the people around him? Was there a qualified candidate from within? He spoke very highly of and highly recommended Terry for the job. I had known Terry for years and considered Terry an excellent administrator and a good friend. There had been a feeling in the community, since at least the early fifties when I got here, to have a local person take that job. Why

do we always have to go and get somebody from the outside that doesn't know a darned thing about our city and they come in here and want to change everything for five years and pick up their bag and leave? So we saw that as an opportunity to hire a local person who was born and raised in the community, could address the community problems. And with the high recommendation of Bopf, and our own working with Terry, we saw no need to go the outside, and that's why he was hired.

Interviewer: How and why did the city acquire the Dial-a-Ride system?

Mr. Hallacy: Well, the Dial-a-Ride system came out of the state. It was a state program. We were very anxious to get Dial-a-Ride. We were one of the first cities to get it. It was heavily subsidized by the state, but I think the reason that we were anxious to get it was we had no public transportation. For many years we had Holland City Buslines. They had gone out of business. We had had Holland Cab Company. They had gone out of business. And the fortunate thing, I think, that really helped us in this community is we were small and most people were related to somebody else. So that if grandma or aunt or uncle or whoever had to go to the doctor's appointment because we didn't have public transportation, one of their cousins or nephews or daughters or somebody would take them. We saw the advent of Dial-a-Ride as an answer to that and at a very economical cost even though it was heavily subsidized. And that really led us to get into Dial-a-Ride. And it's been interesting to me that every time we come up for a millage renewal for Dial-a-Ride it passes four or five to one because the older people do use it, and maybe the students use it to go to school. I think it's a service that probably is going to have to continue to be upgraded in revenues and so forth. We voted to up to half a mil, and I don't think they've ever levied the full millage that was recommended.



The thing I'd like to say is, I think it's been good for the community. But I think a thing that has not been said, the administration of Dial-a-Ride in the community has been excellent. They've really done it well, and it's done out of the city manager's office, and most people don't even look at that. And if you look at what's happened, it's just been an excellent program.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you'd like to touch on?

Mr. Hallacy: Well, I would just say in closing that I was able to serve on the city council from 1968-79 and from '73-79 as the mayor, and it's just a great community. And it's a very proud community. To me it was a great opportunity. It certainly helped me grow, and I guess I'd like to think that maybe I helped the city grow. It's just a fine community to be part of.

Interviewer: O.K. Well, thanks a lot.

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