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Muller, John Oral History Interview: Class Projects

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Interviewee: John Henry Muller

Interviewer: Brad Bays

JM: John Andy Muller

BB: First of all I'm going to start out with questions on Life in the Netherlands. Where were you born in the Netherlands?

JM: I was born in ymuiden, the largest fishing town on the North Sea coast in Western Europe.

BB: How long did you live there?

JM: I lived there only 6 months. So i don't remember

BB: Tell me a little about your family

JM: My father was a sea captain and he was 14 years old. His father was a bilot skipper and that's bilot bolted in the wall. And pretty rough people, these sea captains, so he pestered my father, my grandfather, his father every time he want to go to sea, he want to go to sea, and finally when he was 14 years old my grandfather said here's a duffle bag, took him to the harbor, and put him on a Russian sailing ship and my father said, "I was scared stiff." But anyhow, after that he start studying when he got older, and he sailed on that ship and he learned the tricks. But it was pretty rough, they had potatoes, they don't peel them the Russians, they eat them and he had to do all that stuff. He got sea sick the first couple hours of the ocean. But then he became an officer in the merchant marines and he made it to captain. And from there he then quit that job and sailed in the second world war and got torpedoed with his ship. And I hate to say that but he hated the Germans from there on, they machined gun his submarine came up, machine gunned his lifeboat which is against all rules and regulations but they did it. And this is way back, second world war. Then he became and operated the Midreoly's Institute they called it, where weather science came up on a tower in Raalterdam. But we lived there a short time and then we moved to Amsterdam to a steam ship company where became a wall-captain, what they call it, a shore captain. And very big ships came in and they had to tell them where to moor, these ships, where to tie them up. Then he came aboard and talk to the captain and it was a very important job. He decided or these go in dry-dock. Talk about thousands of dollars of this cost. And I grew up there. So I grew up between all the ships. That was my dad. He retired from the company, then the war broke out, and he retired and unfortunately he came on his end very sadly. He got hit by a big Harley Davidson with a Dutch soldier on it, right during the war, right just before the war broke out. And he got killed. He got a concussion or his skull was so.. that's the end of my dad.

BB: What was life like in your hometown?

JM: My hometown I would consider Amsterdam rather than the other towns where I lived, so sure, I remember things from Amsterdam. It was different than I would say normal kids in the city. We lived on an island, there was only a bridge that went to the city and all the big ships were moored on that island, the docks, warehouses. So I was brought up between ships and between really rough people. These longshore men are rough people. But then I got the desire to go on the ocean too but my dad i wouldn't do it, I would be a baker. He said that at least if you don't sell your stuff you can eat it. And what do you do on the ocean if you don't like it? So i became an engineer. I went to school in Amsterdam, merchant marine academy and then I became an engineer. I had high school and I went to that school and just when the war broke out I graduated. During the war I never got a ship, I tried to get on a ship, ships were full and the last ship that left was full of young engineers and mates. So I didn't have a change. That's a good thing because most of my buddies from the class that got aboard, never came back. They're either on the bottom of the ocean or they got killed some other way, during the war. So then I live there and I kept studying. The Germans allowed us to start some kind of a dorm with young engineers. We had old engineers and they were our instructors so we had good instructors. And we could even to go the Hague, the capital, and pass another state exam, so you could rank higher. That was very unusual because during the war you couldn't get on a ship so you couldn't get practice sailing on a ship, so you had to do it this way. And in order for me to get some practice on a ship, they assigned us to these big ferry boats that were like a forward in the harbor in Amsterdam where I had to work at night in the engine room. They were big things but nothing compared with ocean liners or freighters. After the war, now you want my whole story now while I'm at it?

BB: Sure, that's fine

JM: After the war, the war was not quite over, well during the war we had a terrible time in Amsterdam, hunger and a lot of bombardments and we were surprised we survived the war, but I did. The Canadians did liberate that part of the Netherlands, most parts of the Netherlands were liberated by Canadians not Americans. The Americans came in the Southern part and crossed right through the province, the city of Limburg and went back in Germany but the Canadians came pushing up. And when the Canadians, first of all I should tell you. I left Amsterdam, I disappeared. I was a forced laborer on a ship yard besides on a ferry boat, I had to work. Germans didn't like that, that we were indifferent

doing nothing. So they want labor so I worked on a ship yard that was all taken over by German navy so we worked on German navy ships so we didn't work much, a lot of sabotage. And in 1945, the Hunger Winter of 1945, and in the meantime I get married with this girl here, 55 years already, same one. So I said we're leaving, leaving Amsterdam.

BB: How?

JM: I don't know, I tried everything to get out. On an old ferry boat, across the old side of Z or Eiselmeir we call it now to the province of, the Northern province where there were farms and where there was food yet. But no chance. Germans were all over the place. So then I said I take a change. We walked from Amsterdam, a whole week, to the Northern province of Trenta where my wife is from. Those were terrible times. We got shot at by fighter planes. Allies. They saw that we had a little ride on a truck, only a little ways, maybe 10 miles. They saw the truck moving and they came down, two fighter planes with machine guns. I still have some bullets downstairs that long for the machine gun. I don't know what planes they were, Mustangs or whatever. They were very fast. They were escorting the big bombers to Germany. But they saw anything moving on the roads and they came down, make a little sideline. I laid over my wife to protect her but it wouldn't have helped much, the bullets would have gone right through. Then after the war the Canadians came through that area and they asked for drivers. Young and unexperienced. My company didn't call me yet, I didn't know where I was. There was no contact. So we lived in another part of the Netherlands so I signed up as a driver on a truck for the Canadians. It was a funny story because on the side of the road there was an officer with a clipboard, Canadian officer, and they came in the truck and they said, "hop in". There were a whole bunch of kids who wanted to do that, I hopped in and right next to me was a soldier, I never looked at the guy, I should have. And he said, "OK, shift". I said, "I don't know how to drive a truck." "Doubles clutch." I said, "I don't know what it is!" He said that officer is looking at us now what, and I looked at him. I said, "Why do you speak English to me? It said the Princess Erana Brigade. You're a Dutchman?" "Yeah. I don't know who you are," he told me. I said, "I'm a Dutchman." "Oh" he said, "double clutching," he said to me in Dutch. "Ok.. you double clutch, pull twice, and I'll shift." So the two of us get the truck moving and the officer said, "Ok he's in." Well anyhow, I drove a truck. They sent me millions of dehaq. And from there I had to drive a truck, well I did for a short time, and then again I found a company. I had to sail immediately. So then I start sailing. First a freighter, it took me seven and a half months from home. All the way to Australia. It took me to Indonesia, Dutch East Indies they

called it then. And we were in London, in Italy, Mediterranean, that was my first trip. And after that I made several trips to other countries but I'm done. My wife said, "That's it." Then I start working for Philips. And I had already here come, I was here in 1946. I walked the streets of Holland, Michigan because my wife had family in Grand Rapids. Sister, a married sister. And I visited them. That's another story, I don't want to go in details how I got there. It wasn't easy. They said they'd be our sponsors and in 1949 we get a word from the Consulate that we were, that we had the privilege to come to the United States if we were still interested. We said, "Yes". So we left in May 1949 and came here and we ended up in Grand Rapids for 1 year, and then Holland, MI.

BB: Where did you go to school back in the Netherlands?

JM: I was in a special school in Amsterdam. My dad had money and he put me in a special school, which was like a high school, but it was a tough school and it never hurt me in my life. Then I went from there to the merchant marine academy and I never knew that when I came to the states what that meant here. What is equivalent to what? And I don't know if you have ever heard about Admiral Rickover. He was the man who designed the atomic submarines. And i wrote him a letter and he was so polite and nice to write me back. "Your education is the equivalent of the academy in New York, the merchant marine academy. And you are at a level of a mechanical engineer." So that was my education. But here in the United States they send me to the University of Wisconsin, just courses, not whole, not a couple years. And the University of Michigan. I was sent out by Park David. To refer to my education.

BB: You already touched on this topic some, but what do you remember about life in the Netherlands during the war?

JM: It was horrible, it was just terrible. In the beginning, you can't forget that. I saw the Germans marching into Amsterdam. There was some fight put up, by the Hollanders. Very fierce fight, but very short. I was called by the Dutch Navy because I had to defer but when the war broke out, BOOM. SO I went to a naval base in Nehnhelder. I was there 5 days, in the Navy, never had a uniform on. Did some marching and a lot of beloning. The war was over. So they sent us home. I was in officer's training but I never became a Navy officer. My dad said, "What are you doing here, you'll get killed? You're a deserter." I said, " No dad, they sent me home." So then they sent me home. The war days were horrible I touched on that already. The Germans were very slow but changing the rules and regulations but very firm. We could see it. One Sunday they picked up all the Jews in Amsterdam, there were 40,000 or so, I don't know

the figure exactly. It was on a Sunday morning, we were ready to go to church. We had church by candlelight, can you imagine that in the winter because the electricity was cut off. And I heard a noise. Big trucks with loud speaker through the streets, all in German, all the Jews had to be poured with 50 pounds of luggage. Not more than 50 pounds. The downstairs on the sidewalk were all apartment buildings. I said to my wife, "I had the looks that could kill you!" Because we were told anybody else gets shot if they see you. If you open your window, Poom, they would shot at you. So I sneaked out, I was stupid, but I saw what I never forget. They were rounding these Jews up in bumbles, in groups. The groups were way too big for the trucks, the open-bed trucks. They pushed them in there with the back of their rifles. The first ones, some of them collapsed, and it cost them death. We had a neighbor, he was a shoemaker, he had a little store downstairs, a little old couple, and the little dog. There were these little incidents and the dog barked. The woman said, "I want to take my dog along.." "PANG", said the German and killed it right there. Maybe for the German it was nothing, but for us it was terrible. I quick sneaked the longer side to the house told my wife. She said, "We are lucky you're not shot." The hunger became unbelievable in the big cities, Rotterdam, Amsterdam they were really suffering. We get soup, we had to go to a general kitchen where the Germans, the Dutch people, had to give them some potatoes, the Germans, and some nettles you know those things that sting when you fall in them? They cooked them and we ate them. They ground up tulip bulbs and the joke was, "Did you see that on your belly? I got tulip bulbs coming out my naval!" People were still, they had some kind of, well, it was bad, but they still had to joke about it. Butter we could get, Bread, one bread for a whole week. Finally, I said, we have some potatoes, Oh I did go to the farm. I sneaked out on my bicycle to the farms around Holland which was very dangerous because there were guards all over on the big entrance ways and exits. I came back, I had, I did smoke so I had cigarettes, a few packs. SO I took them to the farmer and he said yeah I'll take it and give you a bag of potatoes, No it was grain. And I said sure and put it on my back-carries on my bike. And I thought I can't come in the main roads in Amsterdam, they're standing there, and particularly the Cristlings. The Cristlings are people who are Dutchmen, keeping company with the Germans. Traitors, they would call them. But they call them Cristlings, that's named after a Norwegian guy who was a Cristling. I took the back roads and I made it. I came home and so then we get a house for that. We went to the realtor, our agent, and they want half the bag of that stuff and I'll give you the apartment. But then we decided we left, we would leave for the North. We have a little saved here, potatoes and some dry hard bread. Bring it to my parents who live a couple blocks over. We brought it there

and my dad said, "Why?" We said we're leaving. "You're not leaving, leaving Amsterdam. You take your life." I said I know, but I'm going to try it, so we're going to move. Life was... One Sunday for instance we were sitting at the table, eating our one potato, whatever we had. We had no heat. We had a little can and I put a little charcoal in it, on the stove, on a potbelly stove. But on that, we didn't have fuel for that stove. Where you get the coal that was coal? I stole it from the Germans. And that's another thing. We smuggled it out the gate. And we had oil, we were on these war ships, so we stole the oil and we burned that in a little glass with a float on it with a wick and we had a little light. That's why my eyes are bad I guess, you see, at night, you couldn't read by it. You could only see something. One day the Germans they were always frisking, you know when you go out the gate. And one day, and we had bottles that we would tie between our legs with straps and fill up with oil and walked out. The Germans never noticed that the all these Dutchmen had long raincoats on, no matter what kind of weather it was, because then you could hide more. Then one day one of these bottles came loose and dropped right in front of the German guard and that was the alarm. That was the end of that. They'd hit you right between the legs with their gun. And if there was a bottle, some times they hit you a little to hard. So that was the end of that. That's the way we got a little heat, a little cooking, a little oil. The people in 1945 were laying dead on the street in the morning from the hunger. Not always shot. Sometimes it was a whole pile that was shot because they had this underground ripped up the streetcar tracks and the Germans derailed, the trucks went through the holes, they took people right out of their houses and shot them. They don't if they were guilty or not. They just took them out and BOOM BOOM BOOM. And then in the morning, if I pedal my bike to the shipyard. They stood and said in German, "Look to the right," or "Look to the left", wherever the pile was. We'd turn our heads and God it was just a terrible sight. We'd have to look at it. So that's in a nutshell. I could go on and on and on.

BB: That's fine. Was your family active in church in the Netherlands?

JM: Yes they were. My dad was an elder in the church when he was retired. We were all members of the church. We were members of Rivemerichkatic Christian Reformed Church. There were 9 churches in Amsterdam. Each church was separate. It's all by itself. NO it's not. Here each church is all by itself the denomination, the congregation. Not there. They had 9 or 10 preachers and they circulated through all these churches every Sunday to another. We paid a budget, but we paid it to the general 9 churches, so that's different from here. Lutheran church probably has the same,

they have their own congregation.

BB: What led your decision to leave the Netherlands?

JM: Well, if you heard the first little story you know why. I did work for Philips for a few years after the war, then I quit saving. But coming here in 1946 with the ship and seeing America, I only saw a little bit of it, I saw New York of course. That was not appealing to me but I saw Holland and Zeeland. Life here was a lot better than right after the war in the Netherlands. Although I had a good job with Philips and they gave us a house that was unusual for the Netherlands. They built the houses right after the war and they did it in a years time. They let us live in the house. Still my wife always wanted to go to her sister here in America. That was the main reason I guess, for our children.

BB: How long did you think about immigrating before you actually did?

JM: Very short. My wife always talked about it. If we survived the war, we wanted to go to America. I too, but I didn't know much about America, she neither, until I saw a little bit of America. And I heard the people talk and there were sponsors that were hard to get. I'd have to get a sponsor. And they offered us to take care of us and get us here. So we talked, it didn't take long. The problem was, I wrote my wife a letter, out of New York when I came back on the ship. And they said, "Hey you're sister and brother-in-law offered to be your sponsors. Go to the consulate and put us on the list." I came back home after so many months and she forgot. So that delayed it. 1949 to get our papers.

BB: Did you have any concerns about leaving?

JM: Yes it was hard to leave my parents and this brother, who is dying now, and my two sisters. And Tina, my wife, her parents had passed away when she was four or five years old, when she was a little kid. She was brought up by her older sister, who's still living, 98. But it was hard for both of us, yes. I still see my dad and mother standing in the harbor in Amsterdam saying goodbye. And my dad said, "We don't know if we'll ever see you back." The nice part is my dad was twice here for visiting us and my mother came once. And then you had to say goodbye again. But we made about 12 trips back and forward to the Netherlands. Two were not too pleasant: one for my dad's funeral and the other for my mother's funeral.

BB: How or why did you decide to come to the US rather than any other country? Was it just because of family?

JM: That's family. The family it was nice. You have something to fall back on. If you go to Australia, I don't know anybody, I was in Australia, but I don't know anybody there. Or other countries, New Zealand.

BB: And you said you lived in Grand Rapids the first year?

JM: The first year.

BB: How did you come to Holland?

JM: The first year for me in America was very hard. I had a diploma, I was a graduate engineer, merchant marine but... General Motors was a nephew from my wife. He was doctor at General Motors in Grand Rapids at the Chevy plant. He said, "Yes I will help. Go to general Motors and you talk to the plant meter there was a horoda. He was a Dutchman and he skipped ship. He was also a merchant marine engineer, before the war. I could get along fine, but by the time we came in 1949, there was kind of a recession set in and he didn't have any job for me. So then i start soliciting there and I start working for a furniture plant scraping floors. Then I glide off and bit my tongue shall I go back. That was a disgrace for me, I was never in my life too lazy to work. But now here I was and I had diplomas in my pockets. I could do a lot better, and I scrape floors. From that job, I went to another job, and another job and America Laundry. It was a big factory, a wash, laundry. There were a couple of guys who owned and they said that, "you can work here". We need a boiler operator. I had to shovel coal there by hand, it wasn't much of an improvement, but there was one engineer, he was a German. His parents were German, I think he was born here. He said, "Heiny," he started talking German to me, and I said that I'm a Dutchman it doesn't make a difference. He said, "You will make it, but in America you prove what you can, don't come with papers right away. They can't read them anyway, they're in Dutch. That's exactly what happened. SO I said, "What do you suggest?" He said, "You go employment office and you pay them some and they send letters out and I did. I went to Bixby employment office, I don't know if it still exists and they sent letters out. And of all the letters they sent out, I got one. And guess what it was? Park Davis and Company in Holland, MI were going to open a plant. I put in my application and they said I'd hear from them. Well I didn't hear a thing. Well after a month I took the nerve to call where their headquarters where. "Oh yeah yeah.. we didn't forget you. You're still on their book. Can you come a minute to Detroit?" "A minute, well how?" "Take your car" I said, "I don't have a car." "Oh well then take the train. But don't walk from the station to the plant. We know these Dutchmen, they'll walk to save a penny, but you take a taxi, we'll pay for it." I thought, "Hey. that's something new".

I had a royal reception there. I was interviewed all day, I had a tour of the plant and then at the end of the night, well the afternoon, I had to catch a train back. They had a big meeting and I sat in a room all by myself on one side and another side, all the engineers, mechanical, chemical, and they had the engineering department. They had said, "Gentlemen I want your opinion quick. In a couple of sentences, what do you think of Mr. Muller?" They all interviewed me and there was one guy who said, "The trouble is, he's a mechanical engineer and we put him in a chemical plant." "No problem," said the big shot. He said you get the job. We have a house for you, a company house, Park Davis, you go to Holland, MI. You get free living there, free heat. There was steam light underneath the road. The house is gone now. It's a parking lot now. "DO you have a family?" he said. "Yes a wife, two kids, two small kids." "What do you think, do you accept it?" I said, "No". "No?" I said, "I want to discuss it with my wife." "Excellent, excellent that's the guy we like. He discussed this with his wife, don't do it on his own." Well i had made up my mind already, I took it. But i thought, Boy! I made a couple of points here. So they raced me to the station, I had a couple of minutes, I called Tina and said I got a job. "Where? In detroit?" "No Holland, MI". Then I came home, I had all the papers, I filled them out. We moved in 1950, yeah 1950 because we came in 1949 and we lived about a year in Grand Rapids. 1950 came up and it was a plentiful year, I was number one on the payroll. The plant manager was already there and the rest was construction crews and there was one chemical engineer and later on he became an employee of Park Davis. I worked 16 and a half years until 1966 and then I got fed up because Park Davis closed their plant in Detroit and there were oodles of older engineers that came to Holland, half of them at least, we were swamped with engineers. I was the youngest one, but my seniority was nothing compared to the older ones. So I got another boss, which didn't bother me, I was always responsive immediate to the plant manager. But that man I couldn't get a long at all. I said I had it. I heard a rumor that there was an opening for a plant near Zeeland. I figured well I could stay in this house, no we had to get out. I had to Backup. When I worked for Park Davis, I said we blow all our money here. We never save any, we live like kings. But that doesn't help us in the future. She said that we should buy a lot. She said you like water, let's try to get a lot on the lake. And we did. On a Sunday afternoon with my brother-in-law, we drove around and looked at a lot on Lake Macatawa, a beautiful lot! I said I wonder if that's for sale. The guy opens the door and says, "Wanna buy it?" And I said, "Do you want to sell it?" "Yeah. it's for sale". It was 100 foot on the lake, can you imagine, 300 feet deep, big trees there, old trees, beautiful lot. So I talked to him and told him I wanted a lot and then contract, I don't

have a lot of money. Ok fine. So we build a house there and we live there and then Ivy could move in. It was a cottage but we could expand it at all, lengthwise. So then I got the job at Miles, as plant engineer, and I quit there another 16 and a half years later and retired.

BB: Going back to when you came over, were there any other legal issues you had to deal with, like you said you got sponsors?

JM: No we had any problems. NO legal issues because I did everything I was supposed to do, legally. We couldn't come with any money to the United States. They give you a little bit in the Netherlands. The Consulate didn't allow too much but it was the Dutch government who didn't want the money to flow out of the country that was hit so hard by the war. SO I came here really with a red hanky, my wife, and two little kids. We could not fly. Flying was out. It was only for military people. 1946/1949 earlier. SO we took a boat. the Elsieona, and old liberty ship that had gone through the war. Being an engineer I didn't like it. IT cracked and squeaked. It was a Dutch crew that was really nice, but it took 15 days to get here. We landed in Baltimore. There I got right into trouble with the law. We came from the ship on a motor barge, we were late for anchor in Baltimore, the river. And we wanted to get out of that ship, 15 days long enough, so the captain said we'll drop you off. My wife was the only woman, my wife was the only passengers as a matter or fact. We come ashore and there's a guy sitting in a rocking chair in a uniform. "Customs" Ok. It was a hot day. "ny luggage? Open it up, open everything up." My wife said, "Oh we pressed it in there, to get it in there. And you know when you open it up, the guys go through there and they say ok you can close it, you can close it. And I thought the guy smells like a brewery. And I look and he has a couple of bottles of booze standing by his chair. I did not know the law at that time enough and I was too scared as a stranger in a strange land to say, "Where is your supervisor?" Because later on they told me that I didn't have to take that from a drunk customs officer. He was rude. I said, what did I know? I glad to be there. I was afraid he had the authority to say go back on the ship. So I didn't and he treated us like dirt. And that was the poor impression we got of officials in the United States. Later on, now they're a lot better, I mean you learn. After that, one time there was a little incident, a funny incident in Grand rapids. My brother-in-law said, "You have to open an account here. You HAVE to, or you can't get credit. No body wants to loan you anything if you don't have credit. Go to the bank and open something. Put \$50 in or so. Open a checking account." Then the girl said, "Put your John Henry there." And I wrote down John Henry. That is my name, Johann Hendrick, John Henry. That's what you see on my papers. She couldn't believe her eyes. She said, "No no no

no you're name!" I said, "That is my name." "Oh shoot I'm sorry," but I didn't know that was an expression, put your John Henry there. I never had any trouble. We live a life that obey the law, but we're not perfect. I have some tickets, ya, driving.

BB: You said you made the trip on a ship? Is there anyone else that came with you that you knew beside your family?

JM: The crew was all new to us. The captain was beautiful. Our little boy was 3 years old, he slept in the Captain's cabin. We missed him and with the ship and the big ocean, you could go over board. And we looked all over and finally he was snoring his head-off in the, he was the best friend of the Captain. The Captain had a parakeet that talked and how he got there I don't know, he crawled all the way down the stairs. I don't know, he got there.

BB: And you just mentioned first impressions of the US?

JM: Yes, well I had been here before in 1946. But those were good impressions. But while in Baltimore, that put a little damper on our welcome to the United States. We didn't have a band playing, we were immigrants. We came in New York central, we took a train. So from Baltimore we took the New York Central then the train to Grand Rapids. There we had an incident that my wife's in. We had a little, well we had our suitcases of course, and we had a little kid's thing like the size of this recorder. For the little boy, in there was a silver spoon with his name on it that my mother had given him and a mirror and something else. Nothing of any value, just sentimental. We set it on the table there for a cup of coffee. Whhhhsstttt.. the thing was gone. "That thing is gone!" Somebody was watching us, heard us talk Dutch, my wife couldn't speak English, we don't speak good English anyhow. Some guy thought, "Immigrants, that's probably what their jewels are in." He took the thing. He was up for a surprise. There was a silver rattle in there too. She said. "That is terrible!" Well that's a big city.

BB: What were your first impressions of Holland?

JM: I love it. Not because it was Dutch. It was much more Dutchy in 1949 than it is now. I loved it. It reminded me so much of the old country because it is so clean. Now there are some areas where it is not so clean. But that is the growth of a city. And the people were very very friendly. They still are.

BB: Yes, that's one thing I notice. Did you know any English when you came?

JM: Yes

BB: How well?

JM: Well.. pretty good because on the ocean you speak English in Australia and these others. IN the Netherlands, in high school or other places or education, those days i don't know how it is now, but I still think it is the same. Mandatory languages are German, French and English and then your own Dutch language. There were no but or ifs, that's what you have to learn. The French one, the French language is the most difficult, at least for Dutchmen. So we start at that real young, like in grade school already, the last year of grade school, because it was so difficult and then German and English. The only thing in Holland is that the English they teach you is the English English. Because I came here and had some troubles. I said, "I take the lift to the second floor in the building." The guy said, "What do you take?" I said, "The lift". "Where do you want to go? There are no cars there." "That go up." "Oh you mean the elevator!" "Oh you call it an elevator, I didn't know!" And I started talking about hof (half). "Is it hof price?" "What are you? A Limey?" "No why?" "Because we say half here." That's English English.

BB: Were the people of Holland accepting to you as an immigrant? Did you have any sense of hostility from anyone?

JM: No.. the only thing was misunderstanding. We had friends and we're friends for life, now with these people. We went to Central Life of Church, that stone church there around Centennial Park. Like I said, we were members. There was, I had to go to church in the morning, because I thought I should find a church and I didn't know anything about churches, Christian Reformed, or Reformed. If your Reformed you probably had to belong to the Christian Reformed Church. So I walked all the way from Howard Ave. to Bridge and to. After the service, they watched me of course and they saw that I was a stranger in paradise. So a man came to me and said, "I'm Dr. Brouwer. I'm an elder in this church. Are you a visitor?" I said, "Yes". The minute i opened my mouth he said, "Oh! You're an immigrant. You came from the Netherlands. Where do you live?" "Howard Ave." "Oh. You came here by car?" "No I don't have a car." "How do you get here?" "I walk" "Walked?" everyone around him repeated. "All the way from Howard avenue? I'll bring you home." I thought that was nice. He didn't say anything about other services. And at 2:00 or so in the afternoon a knock on the door and there was another fellow standing there. "My name is Sclaus Buschus. I'm a brother-in-law of Mr. Brouwer you met this morning." "What can I do for you?" He said, "We have a Dutch service here, in the afternoon, maybe your wife want to go." I said, "I don't think so. We're not used to in the middle." "Well at night again, at

6 pm we have an English service again. Maybe you want to go?" So they got together and said that these people were no good. And then invited us for coffee or so at night, that was the style then. Take your kids along. Kids along? At night? So the word went out to their friends that these people were no good, that they don't want to go to church and they don't want to take the kids. Later on it came out that we didn't like you at all. They're our best friends now, they still are. That is difficult when you come in a country and there are different ways of doing things. Like these plates on our knees at ten o'clock for coffee, they don't use that system anymore. Now they just use the table. Now they have these plates and these bicep tables they call them.