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## Curtis, Stanley "Doc" Oral History Interview: General Holland Historys

Don van Reken

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Oral History Interview  
Interviewee: Stanley “Doc” Curtis  
Interviewer: Don Van Reken  
June 23, 1976

Abstract: Resident of 7th Street; memories of Holland since 1900-forward, son of Albert Curtis a local veterinarian, growing up in Holland, Keystone Planing Mill (J. R. Kleyn).

DVR: Good afternoon. My name is Don Van Reken. This afternoon is June 23, 1976, and I’m at the house of Mr. Stanley Curtis. Mr. Curtis lives on the corner of College and 7th; the address is 170 College. Now, in 1976, there’s an awful lot of traffic goes by on both College and 7th, and so you are going to hear in this recording some of the traffic noises, but that can’t be helped. Mr. Curtis, how old are you?

SC: I’m 84 years-old.

DVR: Have you lived in this household most of your life?

SC: I was born in this house, and I’ve lived here most of my life except for the time when I was away to school and at two different jobs—one in Newport News, Virginia, and one in New London, Connecticut.

DVR: What was your father’s name, Mr. Curtis?

SC: My father’s name was Albert Curtis, and his trade was...actually his profession was a veterinarian. He was born in Simcoe, Ontario, Canada, and learned the butcher’s trade as a young man. Later on, he went to Ontario Veterinary College, which was located in Toronto, Canada. He graduated from this school in 1884. Now, it has become part of the Ontario Agricultural College, which is located at Guelph, Ontario. At that time, the graduates of this veterinarian school would scatter around looking for openings to practice their profession, and several of them had moved to Michigan—one to Grand Rapids and another to Lansing. My father was acquainted with these graduates, and they

told him about this opening at Holland, Michigan, so he came here and located here in the '80s. I do not know the exact date of his arrival. He opened a small office on River Avenue between 8th Street and 9th Street on the east side of River, and practiced from there for several years. In the meantime, he boarded at Scott's Hotel, which was located the corner of 9th and Columbia Avenue—convenient to the Chicago to Grand Rapids railroad station, which was located on 9th Street and the present railroad tracks.

There he met my mother whose maiden name was Carrie DeWitt. Her family came from the province of Groningen in the Netherlands and located in Fillmore. She was one of the younger members of the family and went to work at Scott's Hotel as a maid. There she met my father, and they were married in 1891. He purchased this present house in 1892, and I was born here that year. I do not have any brothers or sisters, but my earliest memories are of playing with the children in the neighborhood, looking for amusement, because I did not have brothers or sisters in the home.

One of the earliest things that I remember in connection to my mother was going to Grand Rapids on the Chicago and West Michigan railroad, which afterward became the Pere Marquette railroad, to visit my mother's relatives, grandmother and sisters, who had moved from Fillmore to Grand Rapids upon the death of my Grandfather DeWitt. My grandmother ran a boarding house on Grandville Avenue, and I used to go up there and stay with them summers. I remember one day coming back from Grand Rapids with my mother. It was a hot summer day, the window in the coaches were up, and my mother was sitting next to the window when all of a sudden the sash came down with a crash on her finger. In spite of the efforts of several of the passengers, they could not raise that window until they almost got to Holland. In the meantime, my mother suffered

intense pain and she, of course, got some recompense from the railroad for that accident. That's one thing I remember, traveling with her at that time.

As for memories of my father, he used to take me with him on his trips out in the country to doctor sick horses and cows. He used to like to have me go along with him, but I never helped him in any way because I was too young for that.

You might be interested in knowing what kind of beds we had in the house at that time. We had two bedrooms downstairs, and the beds, as I remember, them had springs made out of a small mesh wire stretched on a wooden frame rather than on the coil springs that you have today. But we seemed to sleep alright on them, especially when we were tired.

We had for lighting in the house, the use of kerosene lamps and lanterns in all the rooms. It was a matter of cleaning the wicks each day and refilling the lamps with kerosene. The kerosene we got from pedal wagons that pedaled this kerosene from door to door. There was no use for gasoline in those days because there were no cars. Kerosene was the biggest petroleum product then in use.

For cooking in the home, we had a cast iron stove in the kitchen which burned wood. My father used to get hard wood from the farmers. Sometimes he took it in trade for bills that they owed him—slabs of hard wood which would have to be split up in order to fit in the stove—but it baked good bread and served its purpose very well. We also had another large diameter sheet iron stove in the dining room for heat, which likewise burned wood. And in the living room, we had one of these hard coal stoves with the fancy nickel-plated finish and ising-glass doors, windows on three sides with a magazine that held a twelve-hour supply of coal in the top and fed automatically into the

burning zone. There was also a place for a kettle of hot water in the back where the stove pipe came out. So, we were able to keep warm, although the kitchen was kind of cold when you got up in the morning.

For foods, we had very good food. We had good meat and potatoes and apples stored away for the winter. We baked our own bread, and milk was available in bulk at the door from the milkman who called each day and dipped it out of a large can into your container. Only later did milk start to come in bottles.

DVR: Did you have a garden around the house at all?

SC: We did not have room for a garden. We had a barn where my father kept a horse, and when I was very young, a cow. There was also, naturally, a manure pile. These took up so much room that there was hardly room for a garden besides this small lawn. I was always interested in gardening, and that was one of the things that I've missed the most was lack of space for a garden until I finally got one in my later years. It might be interesting to know that my mother used to have the sale of the manure, which was purchased by farmers for fertilizer. I remember she saved up...I don't know how much she got a load, maybe fifty cents or a dollar...but anyhow, she saved up until she had enough to buy a rocking chair, which we still have upstairs.

DVR: (laughs) So they believed in organic gardening farming then.

SC: Oh, yes. Sure we preserved foods—they did a lot of canning in those days, especially peaches. They always had lots of canned jars of fruits downstairs besides apples, which kept very well, and those varieties as I remember were baldwins and northern spies and wagoners—W-A-G-O-N-E-R-S.

For clothing, as boys we had wool pants, short pants, we had cotton stockings that pulled up over the knee and were held up by an elastic band above the knee. We had laced shoes that came up above the ankle. I did not have an oxford until I was in high school for summer wearing. My mother, and later my aunts, used to make me shirts by a sewing machine and by hand. Of course, we bought caps to wear in those days for children.

DVR: I suppose it was very easy for you to buy things, being so close to 8th Street.

SC: Yes. It was very easy to get downtown in those days; in fact, you could get in through the back door.

Our house is a square house; it's about 26 by 26, plus the addition of a kitchen and a bathroom on the end. It has 2 floors, and after we moved back here from the east in 1922, we finished off the second floor so that now we have 4 bedrooms altogether—one down and three up.

For water in those days, we had a well, right convenient to the back door of the kitchen, and the well water tasted very good. For a toilet, we had an outdoor toilet until sometime around 1916 the city outlawed outdoor toilets and made my father install an indoor toilet, which was connected to the sewer for sanitary purposes. Then when we moved here in 1922, we had city water installed, we had electric lights installed, and we put in a hot water heating system. Since we do not have a full basement under this house, only a small fruit cellar, we had to install our hot water boiler in the kitchen. It has worked very well ever since 1922, although it was rather embarrassing for me when I went to work for the Holland Furnace Company, where we specialized in warm air heating. When we moved here in 1922, we had the wash basin installed in the bathroom

and the sink in the kitchen, and a bathtub which stands up on its four legs and is about six and a half feet long, which we still use.

You asked how garbage and waste were disposed of. Well, what did not go down through the toilet—for instance, garbage—was tossed into the manure pile and covered up to go along with the rest of that waste material for fertilizer.

The yard around the house had poplar trees growing on the College Avenue side. They were tall, spindly trees, and they were these Lombardi poplars, so when they'd get to be a certain age, they'd just die and become a danger to the property, breaking off. So, we had them cut down and my father planted maple trees in their stead. On the 7th Street side of the house, Mr. Lamerole, a former owner of this house, had planted between the sidewalk and the curbstone, or what became the curbstone, three ox-heart sweet cherry trees. For years we enjoyed eating those cherries; they were a big cherry with yellow skin with a bright red blush on the side, and sweet as honey when they were dead ripe. They lasted for many years until, due to a lack of bug control, they died. There was no fence around the house.

DVR: I'd like to go back a little bit and ask you about your mother. Your mother didn't live very long, did she?

SC: My mother died when I was eight years-old from what we called in those days, quick consumption—tuberculosis—which she caught and which took her down in a hurry in her thirties.

DVR: Did your father ever remarry?

SC: My father never remarried. First, one of my aunts came here to keep house for us from Grand Rapids, and then we had different house keepers until I got big enough to take care

of myself. Then my father and I lived alone here. We would get our own breakfast and supper and we would take our dinners at Van Drezer's Restaurant on 8th Street between Central and River on the south side of the street, where you could get a good meal for a quarter. And on a weekly meal ticket, a discount off of that price.

DVR: Did you have any brothers or sisters?

SC: No, I had no brothers or sisters. I think I've answered that once before.

DVR: Oh, alright. One other question: Did you ever go to visit any of the Curtis relatives in Canada?

SC: Yes. It was only in late years that I went back; my father used to go back at times to visit his mother who lived there for a time. It was only in late years that we used to go back with the family and visit my Uncle Charlie, who was a shoemaker, and he ran a shoe store in Simcoe, Ontario. He's now passed away.

DVR: What school did you go to when you started school?

SC: Well, I went to the old Central School that was located between 10th Street and Grave's Place, between College and Central Avenue. I started in kindergarten there. I remember some of the teachers. I think the earliest one that I can remember was...I think she taught in my kindergarten, that was a Miss Kimpton—K-I-M-P-T-O-N. The principal at that time was Miss Kleyn. Her father ran a lumberyard and planing mill [Keystone Planing Mill] on 6th Street, where Elzinga and Volkens are now located. Then another teacher was a Miss Swartz in the fourth grade. It was an interesting fact that she was the daughter of the man who built Castle Park. He came from Germany with a large family of daughters, and the story is that he wanted to keep them safe from harm, so he built a castle out there in the wilderness [laughter], and finally, I guess after he passed away, the

daughters kind of scattered. But anyhow, this daughter was teaching school in the fourth grade when I was going to school there. Another teacher I remember was Miss Cross; she flunked me one year, so I got behind about a half year in school.

DVR: And you went on to Holland High School later on?

SC: You might ask about the hours of the day. I remember that school opened in the morning at 8:30; we got out at quarter to twelve. We went back in at 1:15, and we got out at quarter to four. Those hours were doled out by the bell in the belfry. It was possible for me to get to school in a hurry—it was only a couple of blocks—especially when I could go by a direct line cutting cross lots between the stores and so forth.

I might tell you about some of the games that we played at school. One of the most popular games before school and at recess was Pump, Pump, Pull Away. Two sides on each side of the playground, and the idea was to have somebody in the middle there who would have to catch those trying to cross from one side to the other. If you got tagged, then you had to form a line and wait for somebody on your side to come over and rescue you without getting tagged. That was a popular game in those days.

After school in the winter time, we used to have some real good snowball fights between the north-enders and south-enders on College Avenue. I'll never forget those fights. It was trying to drive each other towards your own end of town. It would be standoff about a snowball's flight away and try to hit the other guy with snowballs and sometimes hard chunks of ice. We used to like to try and start around 10th and College and wait for some of the big guys to come out from our end of town. Then we'd try and drive the south-enders south down College Avenue. I remember one time we got them

way down to 16th Street. I remember another time when they drove us all the way up to 8th Street.

DVR: 16th Street was the end of town practically then, wasn't it?

SC: I can remember looking down College Avenue and seeing a house in the middle of the street at 17th Street. 16th was as far south as the town went; blocked off at that time.

DVR: How far north did College Avenue go at that time? Your house was on 7th...

SC: College Avenue went to 6th Street. Now, I might talk a little about transportation in those days, if you'd like.

DVR: I'd like to hear about it.

SC: The first railroad, from all that I've been able to gather—and I've checked with the Netherlands Museum—was the railroad, maybe by just a few months, because there was a regular explosion of railroad building in those days. The railroad from Allegan to Muskegon; that came in across 8th Street at Fairbanks Avenue and ran diagonally northwest past the present depot and down between 7th and 6th Street and made a big bend to the north around past where De Pree Chemical is now and headed across the swamp for Grand Haven, connecting up with where the road runs now across on the north side. They had their passenger station and freight depot on the corner of Columbia Avenue and 7th Street, later it became just a freight depot. Their yards were these several tracks between 7th and 6th Street and between College and the passenger depot. That's the reason for those several railroad tracks there. Some of them have been ripped up over the years.

Then the next railroad to come to Holland was the Chicago & West Michigan, which afterwards became the Pere Marquette and later the Chesapeake & Ohio. Their

station originally was on the east end of 9th Street and the present railroad tracks with the roundhouse there, and later was moved to the present location. The first depot was a frame building, two stories high; had the offices—train masters offices and so forth there—and it became sort of a...that's where the two roads crossed, the one from Allegan and the one going to Grand Rapids.

Later on, that depot was replaced by a wooden structure which came from Oakdale Station, southeast of Grand Rapids on the Pere Marquette. That wooden station lasted for a long time until it was replaced by the present depot. The Waverly Roads, the railroad yards after removal from 9th Street there, from the roundhouse to Waverly, became the division point for several years on this railroad. There is where all the freight trains were made up going south and east and to Muskegon. There were a lot of train crews that lived in Holland at that time to operate all these different trains—freight trains and passenger trains. I can remember three trains a day to Grand Haven and Muskegon, twice a day to Allegan, and three or four trains a day to Chicago and Grand Rapids.

The electric railroad began locally as the Holland and Lake Michigan electric line running from Holland to Macatawa Park. It was built by a man by the name of Kinch, who was the general manager during the early years. As a boy, I remember being down at 8th Street and the railroad tracks at Lincoln Avenue when they unloaded the first street cars for this line off of flat cars and right on to the stub end of the track for the electric line. Afterward, they built a spur line to Saugatuck, which left the main line at that time around Virginia Park. The car barns and the generating plant for the trolley line were located at Virginia Park. Later on, a group of Grand Rapids people and outsiders, one of whom I remember as a Mr. Hanchett, promoted a new line taking over this original

Holland and Lake Michigan line. Their new line was called the Grand Rapids, Holland & Chicago interurban line. It was built by an experienced electric line builder by the name of Mr. Busby, who became the superintendent after construction. It was a double-track line, except for some single sections through Holland, and it connected with the Graham & Morton boat line to Chicago. It not only carried passengers, but they carried freight, both package and bulk. They also carried American Express down from Grand Rapids to a local agency. Their double-track line enabled them to give us a half-hourly service to Grand Rapids in the summer time, and about every fifteen minutes from Holland to Macatawa Park in rush periods.

DVR: Let's go back a little bit to your time at Holland High School.

SC: Okay.

DVR: You went to Holland High School. Did you share any sports there?

SC: I went to Holland High School when it was located on Graves Place, right next to the old Central School building. I believe it had it about 125 students in those days, more girls than boys. It seemed that when boys got to be about 13 years-old in those days, a law did not require them to go to high school, so a great number of them were forced to go to work in the factories. In our graduating class, there were about 24 people—about six boys and the rest were all girls.

We had sports in those days; we had no gymnasium. We used to play basketball up in the attic of the old Central School building among the rafters, and they would hire the roller rink to play a game of basketball. We had football, baseball, and not much track. When the big fellows were in school, I tried out for the second team and played end. I only weighed 120 pounds. In my senior year when all these other fellows had

graduated, I finally made the first team. We were very light, and I don't think we won over two games that year. I remember going to play at Muskegon High School when Coach Zupke coached the team there before he went to Oak Park High School in Chicago and later to the University of Illinois. The reason he got to the University of Illinois was his phenomenal success with high school teams. At Muskegon, he had one of the teams that was rated nationally among the high schools. We took 102-0 beating up there, and all we got out of it was very, very sore muscles.

DVR: What did you do during vacations from high school?

SC: I used to like to go down and be around the water in the summertime. One summer I worked down to the Jenison Park, which was an amusement park run by the interurban line. I ran a moving picture machine down there, when you had to turn the machine by hand and run the film into a bin and then rewind it by hand after the film would run out. The reason I got this job was because a friend of our family was interested in moving picture shows, and when the first movie show came to Holland here and rented a store building just west of the Holland Theater and put in a lot of these collapsible undertakers chairs and a screen and a piano. This friend of mine wanted me to learn how to run that machine. So, the operator of the machine undertook to teach me, and he had me turning that there to get a nice even flow, not jerky, on this machine by hand. I would practice there by the hour until he finally let me run the machine while he would go down and sing one of these popular songs illustrated with colored slides where the slide would change at the appropriate moment for a song like "In the Shade of the Old Apple Tree." His wife played the piano, he was a singer, and he operated the machine. So, I learned to operate the moving picture machine. Later on, I ran the machine down to Jenison Park

for a summer. Another summer I worked in the pavilion there as sort of a waiter at the soda fountain. Later on, I worked for Bill Murphy over at Ottawa Beach for two summers, where we kept his boat livery supplied with minnows for bait for catching perch. We had an open gasoline boat, a fifty-foot seine, a big tub on board the boat and two of us would go along the shore of Lake Michigan and seine for minnows and put them in this tub and keep pouring in fresh water so they would not die on the way in to the minnow boxes inside, where we would dump them and wait for the fishermen who would come along and get several dozens for bait for perch. That's the way I worked for a couple of summers. That was fresh air and being out in the open, and it was like getting paid for having fun.

[End of side one]

DVR: Did you ever go perch fishing yourself?

SC: Yes, I've gone perch fishing, but not while I was working. I'll tell you where we used to go fishing. We used to fish off of the docks and the piers down at Macatawa and Ottawa Beach. Sometimes, you know, those docks and piers would just be lined with people from end to end pulling up perch just as fast as they could. Perch, of course, are mighty good eating; we all know that. Lake Michigan perch, you can't beat them. I remember seeing people fishing from the Ottawa Beach Hotel. I remember when I was working for Murphy going out along the lakefront there and seeing two corpulent ladies sitting in rocking chairs, their fingers covered with diamonds, with a fish pole in their hand. Each of them had a bell boy alongside of them to bait their hooks and take the perch off, as fast as they caught them [laughter]. They were going to take those into the chef and have them for supper.

DVR: What happened to you after you finished high school?

SC: After I finished high school, I went to work one year for Mr. Harding, the jeweler, who ran the local agency for the American Express Company on the side. I wanted to earn some money so I could go on to college. I drove the express wagon, I collected express from around town from the different factories and shippers, and I delivered express. I billed it all out, made copies of all of the waybills I collected from the different people who paid on a credit basis—factories and so forth—and I practically ran the express end of it, except for monthly audits and so forth. For this I got paid \$22.50 every two weeks. I had a horse by the name of Pete, a gentle old plodder; he could just go so fast. In the wintertime, we'd have to have a sleigh because there was sleighing around town and wagons didn't go good. So, in order to keep warm, I used to run around alongside the sleigh while Pete kept his regular old pace say from the Bush and Lane or Baker Furniture Factory all the way over to the next stop at the Holland Shoe Factory on the west end of town.

After that year, I went to the University of Michigan and enrolled in the Marine Engineering and Naval Architecture Department. I left there in 1916 to take a job at Newport News, Virginia, with the Newport News Ship Building and Dry Dock Company in their engineering department, working on the piping layouts and the engineering dock tests of ships—both freighters and tankers—and on the battleship Pennsylvania, which had been completed at that time.

After a couple years there, I went up to work for the Grotton Iron Works in 1918 on freighters, laying out the piping—steam and exhaust piping—various layouts for those ships that were being built for the United States Shipping Board. After about three years

there, I went to the Electric Boat Company in Grattan and worked for a year on submarines, that is, in the engineering department. After that, I came back to Holland; I've been married in the meantime.

DVR: That's what I was waiting to find out about. You got married while you were up in Grotton?

SC: I got married when I was...I lived in New London [CT] while I was working at Grotton Iron Works in 1918. We had two children born in New London.

DVR: Who did you marry?

SC: I married Lena Tiezinga from Jamestown here in Holland that I had known since my high school days through her cousin, Neal Tiezinga, who was a classmate of mine in high school and in college. We had two children born in New London, who were baptized in the Congregational Church there. When we came back to Holland, we became members of the First Reformed Church here, although I was baptized in Hope Church as a boy when I was 8 years-old.

DVR: When we were preparing for this interview, you mentioned that you worked for the interurban for a time.

SC: Well, one of my other summer jobs while I was in college was an extra conductor on this interurban line. These "extras" got the not-so-popular runs. For instance, they would get us up at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning, make us take a car down to the boat dock and meet the Chicago boat down at Macatawa and take the passengers to Saugatuck, then maybe you'd make a run up to Grand Rapids and then back. We'd probably be home by 8 o'clock and we'd be through until maybe 8 or 9 o'clock at night; they'd give us a run to Grand Rapids or as an extra or down to Saugatuck late so that we might get home at 12

o'clock and be on call for the next morning for around 2 or 3 o'clock. So our days were broken up quite a bit. I remember one day, I was assigned to work with Sid Jarvis, who was the motorman on the motorized locomotive that hauled freight cars up and down the main line. We delivered freight to Saugatuck and along the line to Zeeland, Jamestown; whole car loads of coal and grain and things like that. I had quite an experience working as a conductor on those freight runs.

DVR: Now these freight runs interchanged? The tracks were the same size as the railroad tracks then, right?

SC: Yes.

DVR: They could interchange cars and equipment?

SC: That's right. They used to take over railroad cars down here by the sugar beet factory near Kollen Park—coal cars especially—and run them down to Saugatuck, because that was the only way Saugatuck could get their coal in. There was no railroad running into Saugatuck except the electric line. We also had individual motor freight cars, which carried packaged freight down from Grand Rapids to Holland and to all parts of the line. For instance, a local merchant could order something from a wholesaler in Grand Rapids early in the morning, and it could possibly be shipped during the day and arrive here in that same evening by one of these motor freight cars, which were running back and forth all day long to their freight house on the corner of 8th Street and Pine Avenue. They also carried the American Express, and we used to call for that at the freight house down there.

DVR: When did you first come in contact with a telephone?

SC: My father's business required it; he made use of the telephone. The local telephone with the most customers here at that time was the Citizens Telephone Company, which was an independent outfit. I remember my father's number was 144. He used to get calls during the night from farmers out in the country with sick cows or horses, and he would have to go—winter, summer, rain or shine or storm—with his horse and cutter or horse and buggy with a lantern pitched on the dashboard for light. Sometimes he would be unable to get through the drifts on the road, and he would take down a section of rail fence and go around the drift in the fields.

DVR: How far did he travel, north for example?

SC: I would say about as far as West Olive.

DVR: He would go to West Olive. What about east or south?

SC: He'd go to Saugatuck and Fennville; he had some people down that way, but not many people east of here. There were other veterinarians east of here who had that territory pretty well.

DVR: Did he do much with dogs or cats?

SC: He never cared to doctor dogs or cats. He claimed that people, in those days, would feed their dogs the wrong kind of food and get them all upset physically, and then want him to take them over and fix them up. He claimed the place for a dog was on the farm, not in the house, in the city. I remember one time he did have to take a black cocker spaniel from a client of his by the name of Mr. Bidler, a millionaire who lived at Jenison Park. The dog was all upset inside, stomach and so forth. My dad took him and put him on a diet of bread and milk and was bringing him around in good shape. He had him in the barn here, and he had him on a leash. He had a back ventilator open up pretty high above

the floor, and the dog tried to get out; he jumped up there and got outside and he hung himself.

DVR: On the leash.

SC: On the leash.

DVR: What did your dad do for horses? What kind of troubles did he have and what special treatments did he use?

SC: One of the big things was getting a horse that was in bad shape and might be skin and bones and look like he was going to die all from the fact that his teeth had been worn to sharp spindles so that he couldn't grind his grain properly. It would go through him and it wouldn't do any good. My dad's remedy for that was to take the horse and put a clamp in his mouth, force his lips apart, tie him up on both sides so he couldn't move, and get in there was a big coarse file and file down those teeth so that they were flat and they came together bite properly, so that they could actually grind their food. In just a short time, that horse would be in excellent shape. Some people could detect that in a horse and buy a horse that looked poorly for a song and knew how to get him fixed up and make a good horse out of him. That was really hard work; it took about an hour to do one horse. I've seen him get an awful good workout in that hour doing that. The farmers used to bring the horses into Stratton's barn, where he had his office; that's where he would do it, mostly.

DVR: How long did your father live?

SC: He lived until he was 87 years-old, and he died.

DVR: He kept practicing almost all that time?

SC: No, I tell you when the automobiles came in, he gradually quit. He never would go for the fancy business—dogs and cats. When farmers began using tractors and the livery barns quit business, he didn't go out anymore. If somebody wanted him they would have to come get him in their car and take him out to the farm and drive him back in. Mostly, he had a few remedies that were very popular amongst the farmers—tonics that he mixed up himself—and they'd come and get that in his late years. That was when he was at Nibbelink's barn.

DVR: Did he ever own a car himself?

SC: He never owned an automobile, and he never learned to drive. He was all horse.

DVR: When did you first see your automobile? What automobiles did you...

SC: My first automobile was what they called a Baby Grand Chevrolet. It was a used car that I bought from an auto mechanic who kept it in our garage here for awhile. I bought it for \$75, and it probably had a couple hundred thousand miles on it. It was an old model of a sedan; they called it the Baby Grand. It was an extra large Chevrolet, just a few of which were built. It had beautiful bud vases on each side by the rear seats and some nice polished hardwood finish; it was probably deluxe in its day. We were so proud of it, my wife and I. I didn't know how to drive, so another fellow went off with his car and we went out on the Waverly Road, and he was going to teach me to drive. I was stopping and starting and running in low and trying to shift in high. I overheated that old monster and all of a sudden the radiator blew out on me. My wife had stayed home, and the next thing she saw was me coming back in with that car on the end of a tow rope. She thought, "Oh, what a start, what a start." I had got that fixed and another time I broke the rear end and got that fixed. I remember one time we were taking our brother-in-law and

our sister-in-law out for a ride, and we were climbing that big hill going out of New Richmond, south, and she began to steam like an old steamer. I got up away and I had to stop and let her lay there and put some more water in. My brother-in-law from that time on, he always said, “Do you remember the Stanley Steamer?”

DVR: [laughter]

SC: After my name and that car. Well, I got it back to Holland, and I decided I was through with that old baby. I called up Louis Padnos and told him I wanted to sell him that car for junk, and he agreed to give me \$35 for it, half of almost of what I paid for it. I thought that was pretty good, so I said, “I’ll drive it down to your yard,” which was on East 8th Street at that time. So I started down 7th Street, and I got down by the freight depot and she died on me completely; I couldn’t move her a step farther. So, I went cross lots to Louis’ office, and I told him, “There she is.” He said, “Well, I’ll come and get her,” and he paid me the thirty-five bucks and that was the end of the Baby Grand, the “Stanley Steamer.” The next car was a new 1928 Chevrolet. That worked a lot better.

DVR: You said you moved back to Holland in 1922?

SC: Yes. After the shipbuilding days of World War I were over, we decided to come here because my dad was getting old and feeble. So we moved in here, and we fixed the house up, modernized it with utilities, and we’ve been here ever since.

DVR: What kind of work have you been doing while you were in Holland now? What did you start at when you came in ‘22?

SC: First thing I did was I sold life insurance for awhile, or I tried to—I guess everybody tries that some time or other—for the Great West Life of Canada and then for Northwestern Mutual. Then Bill Thompson, the man who put in my hot water heating system, was a

plumber and steam fitter. He said, "Why don't you go over to see Mr. Champion at the Board of Public Works? He's got a job there." So I went over there and for quite a few months I worked there as a draftsman for Mr. Champion, who was the superintendent then.

Later on, I went to work for the Holland-Made Washing Machine Factory, over on the north side. That was an offshoot of the Holland Furnace Company, actually. They made a wooden cylinder oscillating washing machine, and it was managed by a son-in-law of Mr. Kolla and brother-in-law of A. H. Landwehr.

DVR: Were they a successful company?

SC: They tried to operate on the same plan as the Holland Furnace, by selling through direct factory branches, and it did not prove successful. Their machine didn't pan out; it didn't work. It didn't stand up good; they got so many of them back for repairs, so they finally gave up. Then later on, Szekely took over that machine and made a new kind of washer called the Vacatap for awhile.

DVR: Vacatap? Szekely did that?

SC: Yes.

DVR: Szekely is whole new story that I don't want to get into on this tape, because that's a whole new ball game.

SC: Yes.

DVR: Why did you leave the Holland-Made...?

SC: I was sort of a shipping and receiving clerk over there, and I got in bad with the superintendent one day by not staying late to wait for some machines to come through the test line to make up a load. So he fired me. The next day, A. H. Landwehr's brother

Herman, who was division salesman for the Holland-Made Company came to me and told me to come with him, that he had a job for me up at the furnace company. He took me up there and introduced me to Mr. Cherven— C-H-E-R-V-E-N—the chief engineer up there, and I went to work in the engineering department there. I stayed from 1926 until 1950...

DVR: It was in the 1950s.

SC: Until the 1950s, when I became 65 years-old.

DVR: Then you retired.

SC: Then I retired. Yes, it was very fortunate. They were really good to me up at the Holland Furnace Company all the years I was there. I enjoyed working there; it was a great place to work. I did quite a bit of traveling for them in my day, troubleshooting and for sales meetings across the country. At that time, they probably had five hundred direct factory branches which handled their sales. It was a very good outfit when A. H. Landwehr and Mr. Kolla ran it, a great place to work. And they had a very good reputation the country over, at that time.

DVR: You've been retired now since the 1950s, that's twenty-six years...a good twenty years, anyway. Have you done much traveling in the last twenty years?

SC: My wife and I, we used to go to California every winter to stay with Bob for a couple of months. We have been going to Florida for every winter until late years. A few years ago, we took a trip to the Netherlands; my wife wanted to visit some of her relatives over there. We went over on the Holland-American line from Montreal, and we traveled around the county on our own for about two months, by train and by bus, and stopped

wherever we wanted—country hotels and at people’s homes—and came back from Rotterdam to New York on the Stockendam. Had a nice trip.

In the late years, we haven’t been traveling so much. We used to be able to have friends and neighbors who would be able to look after our house in the wintertime, the heating system and so forth.

DVR: They must have had the fiftieth anniversary of Holland when you were a boy in 1897.

Do you remember anything about that?

SC: Yes, I faintly remember several things. I remember the old log cabin they had built in Hope College campus. I remember the arts with Vaupell’s full size horse mounted on top from Vaupell’s Harness Shop. I remember the fireworks at night along 8th Street. I remember at that time my father was a mounted parade marshal riding a horse.

DVR: What kind of traveling did you do when you were younger? When you were with your dad or when you were first feeling your oats? What kind of traveling and where did you go? Do you have any ideas on that?

SC: I remember going to Grand Rapids on the Pere Marquette Railroad with my mother to visit my grandmother. And one of the longest trips I took when I was young was, at the time, my aunts took me on an excursion to the Michigan Agricultural College at Lansing. Of course, that is now Michigan State University. I never got to Chicago, as close as we are, until the year of the Chicago World’s Fair in 1933.

DVR: That late?

SC: Yes, and then I was forty-one years old. Not because I hadn’t heard plenty about Chicago. Speaking about Chicago, I like to remember the first passenger steamer that I can remember which ran between Holland and Chicago, which was the *Mabel Bradshaw*,

owned and operated by Captain Bradshaw, who had a farm at Jenison Park where he stayed in the off-season. Later on, a group of Holland men formed the Holland and Chicago Line, which consisted of two passenger boats: the Steamer Holland, which was built for them, and the *Soo City*. This line continued until they were bought out by the Graham and Morton Line, which ran the two propeller steamers *Puritan* and *City of Grand Rapids* and various side-wheelers. They, in turn, were taken over by the Goodrich Transit Line, which was the last passenger line to run into Holland.

During the resort season in those days, we had two boats a day in the summertime from Chicago. One came in early in the morning and the other in mid-afternoon and, of course, two left each day—one left in the morning and one left at night.

The only way to get to Macatawa Park in those days was by boat or horse and buggy because there was no electric line. I remember my father used to take us down to Macatawa Park on the ferry boat *Harvey Watson*, where we could stop at the pavilion and load up on popcorn and take a walk down the long boardwalk along the Lake Michigan shoreline and watch the bailers, and watch the steamer come in in the afternoon from Chicago—first a slight smudge on the horizon and gradually increasing in size until, after an hour, she would be coming through the channel.

DVR: Now, to the north of the city, Mr. Curtis, there is a lot of low land. It's covered with water now in 1976, but I understand that in earlier days it wasn't always that flooded.

Can you tell me more about what you know of it?

SC: Well, north of 6th Street at College Avenue, this swampland began. As far as the south branch of the river, it was mostly pasture land in my boyhood days. People around town kept cows, and each morning they would drive them down to this pasture and drive them

home at night for milking. My father, when I was real small even, kept a cow in the barn here, and that was quite common around town. The south end of this swamp, from 6th Street to about where WHTC is now, was pasture land. There were a series of drainage ditches leading down to the river, and at certain points, wooden bridges so the cattle could cross from one strip to the other.

I remember one interesting thing about this land, which was our boyhood playground. There was an old windmill on the east side of this swamp, or pasture land, down near the river. It was one of these with the spiral wooden cylinder, which rested in the water at its lower end and slanted up to the windmill, which projected up into the air on an angle. As the windmill turned, this spiral screw inside this wooden cylinder raised the water up several feet so that it could be drained into the river out of the land over existing dikes. I don't know who built this windmill and it never worked while us kids used to play around it, but it was sort of a source of mystery to us. Who built it and when?

Another thing that was interesting for me was the way we used to catch frogs in this pasture land, which was quite wet. We would catch the frogs and skin the hind legs and start a fire in an old dried cow flop, hang the frog legs over a wire until they were well-roasted and eat them, which tasted very good. This was also a great playground in the wintertime for skating and trapping muskrats.

In the summer, this was a good fishing ground. I've caught black bass, bluegills, and northern pike in this river in the old days. It was a great place for catching white bass when they used to go up the river to spawn.

About the northeast corner of 6th and Central Avenue, I remember there was an old soap factory, which made soap out of wood ashes and animal fats. They used to go around to the houses and collect the wood ashes, which everybody burnt in their stove, and in return for the wood ashes, they would leave a bar of this yellow laundry soap in payment. I don't remember who ran this soap factory, but I can remember we used to get this soap in our house for our wood ashes, which we saved.

On the end of Columbia Avenue, which then was known by the name of Fish Street on the old maps, there was a bridge which led to Isaac Island. On this island, Isaac Nye and his wife lived, and they kept a couple of cows and some pigs and chickens. In order that they would not have unwelcome visitors, they had barbed wire strung across the gate on this bridge so that the kids couldn't get on there. In the wintertime, however, we could get across on the ice, and then the old man had a time driving the kids away. We used to skate around the island, build a fire on the bank to keep warm, and we used to trap muskrats in there. It was a great place to...

[End of tape; end of interview]

Oral History Interview  
Interviewee: Stanley "Doc" Curtis  
Interviewer: Don van Reken  
June 29, 1976

DVR: This afternoon is June 29, 1976. I'm at the home of Mr. Stanley Curtis at the corner of College and 7th. Mr. Curtis, what can you tell us about the factories in Holland... oh, say, at the turn of the century or a little bit after that?

SC: Well, around 1900, Holland was sort of an offshoot of Grand Rapids. As far as the industries were concerned, there were a number of furniture factories here. There was the Holland Furniture factory, the Ottawa Furniture factory, the West Michigan Furniture factory, the Bayview Furniture factory, Limbert's Furniture factory, which specialized in mission furniture, and then there was Bush and Lane Piano Factory, and there was the Cappon and Bertsch Tannery. There was the King's Basket factory and sawmill. There were also several grain mills, which did custom grinding for farmers, and one of them, the Walsh De Roo mill, put out a line of Sunlight flour and, a little later, when breakfast cereal became popular, they built a special building to put of Sunlight flakes. Now, those were the principal manufacturing plants in these days, and most of them worked from seven to twelve and one to five. We had on the old light plant on East 6th Street a mockingbird whistle, which blew at seven in the morning, at twelve at noon, at one o'clock in the afternoon, and at six o'clock at night. It also blew the box numbers for the local independent fire department.

Now, regarding some of the stores along 8th Street, I would like to talk about some of those that I remember in particular. There was a barber shop on the corner of 8th and College Avenue, southeast corner, which had a sign over the doorway which stated

“Tomorrow we shave for nothing.” Across the street on the southwest corner there was no store building, but there was a sunken lot, which had the home of James A. Brouwer’s father, with an iron pipe railing around it to prevent people from walking off into this low-lying lot, which was below street level. I remember kids would always try to tell you that it would be quite a thing to stick your tongue on that iron pipe rail in freezing weather. I tried it once and my tongue immediately froze to the pipe, and I had quite a time getting it off of there without losing all the skin. I never forgot that. And I quit sticking my tongue on cold iron pipes after that.

Down the street in the middle of the block on the south side between College and Central, A. Steketee and Sons had dry goods and grocery store; the sons helped their father run it. I remember going in there with my mother, and they would stand me on the counter and get me to sing one of the popular songs of the day, whose title was “Sweet Marie.” So, if I sang it for them, I got a stick of candy.

Down farther was Kuite’s Meat Market, and that was where my father used to buy his meat for us. They made good hamburgers. They made hamburger with two parts of round steak, one part pork steak, and put it through the grounder once; then you put in some sage and salt and pepper and mixed it up good and put it through another time and that was real good hamburger.

Now, we might talk about some of the other meat markets. I remember one on the north side of the street between Central and River that had a peculiar name. It was known as Phernabucq’s Meat Market. That was spelled P-H-E-R-N-A-B-U-C-Q-apostrophe-S. I always thought that was a very peculiar name for a Dutch name. I remember some of my friends used to like to go in there and get pigtails, the raw pigtails

off of the butcher who gave them away. They claimed they were nice, sweet eating, but I never tried them.

As for the saloons in Holland at that time, we must not overlook them for they were part of the scene for good or bad. On the north end, of course, as you came into town from the north, there was the First Chance Saloon where Sears and Roebuck is now located. Next was Blum's on River Avenue. Then on 8th Street between River and Central on the south side, there was Peter Brown's Saloon—he was a Swiss, and I understand he never allowed people in there to get too much of the alcohol. Then there was Van Zee's and lastly Nick and Abe's. On the north side of the street, opposite to these saloons, Dave Blum had a saloon that was famous for its free lunch, I understand. I never tried it. He had excellent roast beef, I have heard people say. Then going farther east on 8th Street, there was, way up towards what is now the depot, the Last Chance, appropriately. For fresh beer delivered to the home, there was Sief's Brewery, located on the northeast corner of Maple Avenue and 10th Street. I remember hearing some of these older fellas sing a song about Sief's beer; it went like this: "We all drink Sief's beer, Johnny fill up my bowl."

Then there were several hotels in Holland. Down at the depot on the south side of the street, there was a large frame hotel building known as the SinClair Hotel, spelled capital S-I-N-capital C-L-A-I-R. Then there was, of course, the Holland Hotel, where the Warm Friend now stands, and there was one where Hanson Drug Store stands called Koningsberg's Hotel.

For photographers, we had several in town. There was Hopkins on West 8th Street, just west of River; there was O'Leary's, just east of the Holland Hotel, and there

was Higgins on East 8<sup>th</sup> Street, just east of Columbia Avenue. I remember that Mr. Higgins had one of the first moving picture machines that ever was brought to Holland, and he exhibited in the old wooden opera house building, that was located where Borr's Bootery now stands.

DVR: On 8th Street?

SC: On 8th Street. I saw "The Great Train Robbery" there, one of the earliest movies, and as I remember, it was Mr. Higgins who showed that picture. The wooden opera house burned down in the early 1900s, because it wasn't fireproof by any means.

DVR: Did you see it burn?

SC: I was, of course, at a grand stand seat to see this fire from our house, which was right in back of the opera house. I remember the next day 8th Street was covered with ice from the hoses that were used to keep the fire from spreading since it was in the wintertime when this fire occurred. I remember one of the earliest plays I saw there was one called "Sy Plunkett" that was about a country bumpkin.

In those days, Holland extended south to 16th Street and west to Ottawa and east to Fairbanks Avenue and north to the swamp.

The newspapers printed in Holland were the English [language] *Sentinel*, which was a daily paper, and the weekly [*Holland*] *City News* and *Ottawa County Times*. The Dutch papers were the *De Grondwet*, the [*De*] *Wachter*, and the *De Hope*, which were mostly church papers of a religious nature.

For mail service, we had to call at the post office for our mail in the early 1900s. Most business people had locked boxes at that time, and other people would call for their mail there at the windows. I can recall that on Sunday it seemed to be the popular thing

to go downtown to the post office after church and get your mail, since the post office was open on Sunday noon. You could get your mail and also meet your friends there and talk over the situation.

DVR: Where was the post office in those early days?

SC: The post office in those days was located in what is now the east side of the Woolworth five and ten cent store.

DVR: On 8th Street.

SC: On 8th Street. Later on, I would say around 1905 or so, they began having a free delivery service in Holland. Our mailman in this district was Paul Coster, who lived in a brick house on College and Central Avenue on the south side of the street in the middle of the block. Afterward, he went into the photographer's business and had sort of a store in his house. That's where I bought my first camera equipment.

DVR: Where was this house?

SC: This house would be right in back of where Vogelzang's appliance store is now, which is on 8th Street.

DVR: That's on the north side of 8th Street.

SC: That's on the north side of 8th Street.

DVR: Now, is this Mr. Coster the same man who developed or who sold so many picture postcards of Holland?

SC: Yes, I would say he was. He probably had something to do with publishing those cards. Afterwards, he had a store on 8th Street, in the same block where Teeter's cloth shop is now, on the north side of 8th Street. Originally, that was the old Kanters and Standard hardware store building.

Now, in those days, the city government consisted of a mayor and common council. There were five wards and two alderman from each ward. We did not have a city manager in those days.

I recall that the first electric plant was started as part of a machine shop run by Mr. Huntley on West 7th Street, between Central Avenue and River Avenue, on the south side of the street. He supplied electric power for a certain part of the downtown section because there wasn't very many houses in those days that used electricity.

Right next door to him on the east side, there was a skating rink that was very popular in those days. And there is where the Holland High School played their basketball games until they finally moved into their new school on West 15th Street, where they had a gymnasium.

I'd like to talk a little bit about the circuses that used to come to Holland in the old days. I can remember, as a boy, getting up real early in the morning to watch them unload. Since they unloaded on these side tracks here, just north of 7th Street running from College Avenue to the present passenger depot, the large circuses would go up to the fairgrounds on East 16<sup>th</sup> Street, where they had plenty of room to set up their tents. Smaller circuses, like dog and pony shows, might use the present Riverview ball park. I remember when Pawny Bill came to town, who put on a show similar to Buffalo Bill's performance. The show was put on at the ball park, which was located at 17th and River Avenue, on the southwest corner. I got to see that show through the kindness of Mr. Stratton, who ran Stratton's Livery Barn where my dad had his veterinarian office. Mr. Stratton took me to the Pawny Bill Circus, which was in an open arena without an overhead tent, just a wall around the outside, and there we saw the Indians and the

cowboys and the Russian cassocks, and all the excitement and wild riding. I remember seeing Ringling Brothers, Four Pong Sells Brothers, Robinsons and Van Ambergs up at the east 16th Street fairgrounds. Some of the smaller dog and pony shows like Sun Brothers and Lemon Brothers, I saw over on the Riverview Park grounds, and probably got in by doing some work there for them to earn a free ticket.

DVR: Did your dad do any work for them? As a vet, was he involved with the circuses at all?

SC: No, he never did any work for the circuses. I think probably they carried their own vet along with them; some of those circuses carried a large number of horses, and they had excellent work teams and they seemed to be in excellent condition. I remember when Jeffries Brother's dog and pony show showed on the northeast corner of the tannery lot, which is now the Civic Center. I got a job driving the police patrol wagon behind a pair of ponies. During the parade, part of the harness broke, and I had an awful time getting through that parade with that busted harness. Some fella in the circus had to kind of hold the things together by hand until we got back to the grounds. Then I had another job at night to drive this same patrol wagon in the grand entry, when they made the rounds of the ring. So I really had a swell job, I thought, at that time.

Then, later on, after the circus season was over, we would have the South Ottawa and North Allegan Fair Association opening on East 16th Street with horse races, side shows, and the delicious smell of hamburgers cooking in the crisp autumn air. I remember one of the side shows that I got a big kick out of was this beautiful gal who laid on a couch, and they made her float in the air without seemingly being suspended at all. The magician said, "Beautiful Agoo, she floats," as she seemed to.

The way we got into some of those fairs when we were kids were not always according to Hoyle. I remember one time when one of the boys had a season ticket, he would pass it back through the fence to us until a whole group of us could get in on the one ticket.

I remember another time during the fall when we'd been suspended from school for doing some hazing. This was in high school. The policeman met us at the door one noon and took us up to the Justice of the Peace, who let us off. But the school board told us that we were suspended—we couldn't go to school this week. They told us that we would have to get our lessons by mail, our assignments, work them out at home, and they sent stamped, addressed envelopes to mail them back in. This happened to be during fair week, so we worked our lessons in the morning, and we went to the fairgrounds every day in the afternoon while the rest of the kids had to go to school. The reason for this suspension was, in my case, I wasn't the guilty one. It seems that several of the upperclassmen had taken Herm Brouwer—the son of the chairman of the school board, James A. Brouwer—and since the boy had been kind of acting rather cocky around the school, they tossed him into the fish pond in Centennial Park.

[End of side one]

SC: Well, although I wasn't in that night's work, I must admit that I had done some hazing on another night. There were two freshmen with beautiful pompadour haircuts in those days. One was Charlie Villenger and the other Jake Nibbelink. We got a hold of them and I manned the clipper, and I clipped a furrow right up through the middle of their pompadours. Anyhow, I was glad they picked me up to suspend me so that I got to go to the fair every day with the rest of the gang.

Now, you might be interested in what kind of fire department we had in the early 1900s. First of all, Holland never had a steam pumper to build up the pressure in the hose lines. We relied on a fire pump located in the water and light station on East 6th Street, pumping well water into the stand pipe, which is still standing there, which provided a head of pressure sufficient for the limited confines of the city at that time. When I was real small, Holland had a volunteer fire department consisting of number one and number two. Number One engine house was located where the police department now stands; the police department building, I mean. And Number Two engine house is where it now still stands. Each of these fire houses had a hose reel, a two-wheeled rig on which the hose was wound and which was pulled to the fire by a string of men, volunteers or whoever came along to help. If they could, they would get a drayman to hitch his team and wagon to the hose reel and give him a couple of dollars to haul their hose reel to the fire. I remember that Ollie Baker, a local drayman, was pretty good at getting there first to the Number One engine house. They also had a hook and ladder wagon at the Number One engine house, which had to be hauled by a team if it was used. Along about 1905 or so, they began to use horses. They had a hose wagon with a two-horse team at Number One engine house, which had a combination hose and ladder wagon. At Number Two, the hose wagon for a time was pulled by one large single horse, but they soon switched to a team. The driver at Number Two engine house was Frank Stansbury. I knew him very well. He was a very friendly sort of a fella and us young fellas, when we were in high school, liked to go over there to the engine house and play cards with Frank. His game was a game of hearts, where the queen of spades counted thirteen against you, and he was very good at handing you the queen of spades.

DVR: How did fire signals get transmitted in those days? How did they get word of fires?

SC: The fire signals were transmitted by pulling the boxes around town. The boxes had numbers like at the corner of Central and 8th, the box number was twenty-one. When that box number was pulled, it sounded in both engine houses and in the volunteer's homes. It also sounded in the 6th Street pumping station, and they immediately blew the box number on their mockingbird whistle, which would be two whistles and then an interval and then a single one for box twenty-one. I can remember when Number Two engine fire hose cart goes west on 8th Street, there would be several of the volunteer firemen that worked in stores along the street, or owned stores along the street, would get out. I can remember Albert Keppel of T. Keppel and Sons on the Corner of 8th and College stepping out, and they would slow up for him so he could jump on the footboard at the rear of the hose wagon, and then they would go down the street and pick up some more. By the time they got to the fire, they'd have several volunteers ready to handle the hose or whatever was needed.

Some of the early chiefs of the fire department, I do remember. The first one that I remember was Lane Kanters, a member of the Kanters family of Holland. He lived on East 8th Street, convenient to the fire station. After that, I remember Cornelius Blum and then Andrew Klomparens.

This Kanters family came from the Netherlands, and Lane Canters' father was a marine contractor who built harbor works like piers, breakwaters and revetments. They lived in a large house on East 8th Street, where the Burger King hamburger place is now located. Their house was three stories high, and it extended right out to the sidewalk on 8th Street. It had a balcony on the second floor extending over the sidewalk. The first

floor was glassed in and was the offices of this contracting firm. They lived in this house, and just east of it, there was a large barn where they kept their carriage and horses. Later, this was made into about a four-family flat. The family consisted of four boys, who worked and helped their father in several large engineering contracts. As I remember, one was doing work at the Welland Canal in Ontario, Canada, and another was at Dowison, Texas. The reason why I remember these people so well was because the grandson, Lloyd Kanters, and I were boyhood pals. That's about it.

DVR: What did Lloyd Kanters get into later on, then?

SC: Lloyd Kanters went to Michigan State College, graduated as a mechanical engineer, and went to work for the Waukesha Motor Works in Waukesha, Wisconsin, where he worked and brought up a large family, until he died here several years ago.

DVR: I had a question. Way back at the beginning, you mentioned all the furniture companies and the basket company, the King Basket Company that was here, as well as all the different other furniture companies. How and where did they get their materials and how did they ship these things out? Did they have loading docks where they had wagons come, or did they have railroad sidings? Could you give me any light on that?

SC: Well, they all had railroad sidings. Now, for instance, King's Basket Factory, I can remember seeing trainloads and trainloads of logs coming in here from the north woods. They would be dumped into their log boom in Lake Macatawa until they got ready to haul them out and saw them up into boards or peel them into veneer to make baskets—fruit baskets, bushel baskets—and that would be shipped out by boat or train. The furniture factories, they would ship out by carload from the sidings running into their plants or less than carload lots they kept wagons running all day long hauling crated

furniture from their factory down to the depot. Each had a teamster with a great big van to handle this crated furniture. One of them, Art Vanden Brink, lived right next door to me here. He had a team of horses, and he had a great big furniture van covered to keep the weather off of the crates, and that was his business. All day long, all week, all through the week, back and forth from the factory to the freight depot, and each furniture factory had somebody doing that.

DVR: What about heavier industry now? There was Donnelly-Kelly; they made mirrors, glass mirrors, for the furniture. Can you tell me anything about the beginnings of the Holland Furnace Company? Were you here at the time that they had their beginnings?

SC: Yes, I remember when they started up here. This was a little later than the time that I'm talking about the preceding industries. I remember when the Holland Furnace started here, and they sold, peddled the furnaces that they made just locally around the countryside before they had their distribution worked out through a large number of factory branches all over the country.

DVR: How can you account for their getting started in a small town like this and then making such a big distribution? Was there something special about their furnace?

SC: Well, I think that there was nothing...furnaces, warm air, cast iron furnaces were pretty well standardized in those days. There were hundreds of manufacturers making cast iron furnaces. They had some good points. They had a very efficient heat radiator that was a great selling point, but I think one of the big features of the Holland Furnace Company was its direct approach to the customer by selling direct through factory branches. All of these other furnaces, and there were several hundred makes the country over, were sold through dealers. These dealers might be hardware dealers, they might be sheet metal men

with all kinds of different things to sell on their hands—they weren't pushing just a single item. Our branch managers on the other hand were selling from door-to-door direct to the people. They had wide-awake salesmen doing that.

DVR: Now, another furnace company was called Home Furnace Company.

SC: Yes.

DVR: I understand that Clarence Becker's father started that?

SC: That's right. They had a good furnace, and they were an off-shoot from the Holland Furnace Company—Clarence Becker's father worked for the Holland Furnace Company originally. He was the branch manager in Grand Rapids, and he left the Holland Furnace Company and started his own. They had a good furnace, and they developed the factory branch idea, but never to the extent that the Holland Furnace did. But they got into developing an oil burner for heating house trailers, and that's where they went big.

DVR: Yes, that's their recent development after World War II.

SC: Yes, right.

DVR: Now, one other question. You are a sailor. You've always been a sailor. When did you first start sailing on Lake Macatawa?

SC: I started sailing...I had a little duck boat, a double-ended rowboat down here in the river here north of College Avenue. I rigged up a wooden centerboard on the bottom, and I took the old sail that I used to use for skate sailing with in the wintertime on the ice and fixed up a sail out of that, and I took this outfit down on the lake. Rode down there through the bridge, set up my sail, and started to sail. Ever since then, I love sailing. I remember later on I worked one summer down at the Macatawa Bay Yacht Club. I had the use of a fellow's canoe down there with a sailing outfit on it, and I got out and sailed

that canoe. That teaches you a lot because you have to handle the sail, you've got to handle the paddle for a rudder, and you've got to balance; it's pretty good training. And every chance I would get I would sail. I sailed when I was working down at Newport News, Virginia. Tipped over one time in front of all the people in the park at Norfolk, Virginia, with another fella, and all we had to bail the boat out was a great big scoop shovel. We shoveled the water out and sailed away. When I went up to New London, a friend of mine had a sailing gory, and we did a little sailing there. When I got back to Holland here, as soon as we got down on the lake, why, we bought a sailboat from Eric Hanchett, and I've been sailing ever since.

[Tape is muffled; cuts out intentionally]

SC: Let's cut it for a little while.

DVR: Okay.

[Opera music playing, perhaps interview tape was taped over.]

[Tape ends; end of interview]