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VerBeek, John J Oral History Interview: Retired Faculty and Administrators of Hope College

Conrad Strauch Jr.

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LIVING HERITAGE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Mr. John J. VerBeek

This manuscript is authorized as "open"
Hope College Archives Council
Holland, Michigan
1978

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INTRODUCTION

The Hope College Living Heritage Oral History Project consists of a series of interviews conducted during the summer of 1977 by Nancy A. Swinyard, and the summer of 1978 by Conrad J. Strauch with persons who, in years past, were members of the faculty and administration of Hope College. Upon the completion of each session, the taped conversation was transcribed and then edited by both the interviewer and the interviewee for clarity. While accuracy is desirable, the viewpoint of the interviewee is maintained. Some alterations were suggested by the interviewer during the interviews and in later correspondences, but the researcher will discover discrepancies between the interviews themselves and with published sources of information. Therefore, the researcher must be aware that these differences exist, and seek to understand the perspective from which all statements were made. Tapes of all interviews are stored in the Hope College Archives.

No claim is made that the information contained within these transcripts is absolutely accurate. No two people share identical viewpoints, and the separation by time from the interviewee's experiences on campus can sometimes intensify this divergence.

Without the support of Dr. Jacob E. Nyenhuis, Dean for the Humanities, and Mr. William K. Anderson, Vice President for Business and Finance, this project would not have become a reality. Dr. Elton J. Bruins, though busy with his own pursuits, willingly lent his guidance and support. The success of this project can be attributed to the efforts of the interviewees, each gracious, receptive and cooperative.

PREFACE

Interviewee: Mr. John J. VerBeek

Interview I: June 12, 1978

Mr. VerBeek's home in Holland, Michigan

Interviewer: Mr. Conrad Strauch, Jr.

JOHN J. VER BEEK

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH AND SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

John J. VerBeek was born on August 11, 1906 in Overisel, Michigan. He graduated from Hope College in 1926 with his AB. Upon graduating he took a teaching position in science for one year at Hudsonville High School. Then in 1927 he became Superintendent of Byron Center Public Schools until 1944. While he was superintendent he also worked towards his AM, which he received from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor in 1933. In 1944 he left Byron Center and became Superintendent at Henry St. and Glenside Schools, Muskegon. Mr. VerBeek remained there until 1950 when he came to Hope College.

At Hope he served as Professor of Education until he retired in 1971. Also upon his arrival he served as the Director of Hope Evening College, a position he left in 1958. While here Mr. VerBeek served on the Professional Interest Committee and the Curriculum Revision. He also had an article published during this period in the Church Herald, November 1962, entitled, "How to Make a Lesson Plan."

He has been associated with many professional organizations. Mr. VerBeek is a life member of the Michigan Education Association, and has been a member of the National Education Association since 1928. From 1951-1971 he was affiliated with three other organizations; Michigan Association for Higher Education, Michigan Association for Student Teaching and the Association for Student Teaching. During the later part of his career he served on six committees for the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education.

Throughout our work together Mr. VerBeek was very candid and willing to discuss the events that occurred during his time at Hope College. He tells about his student days at Hope and about the changes that occurred in the

program for teachers. In regards to teaching he specifically focuses on student teaching and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. During the interview he also discusses the Classical Board of Benevolence. And he talks about how he viewed the administrations he served under, and their relationship to the college community and the Church.

INTERVIEW I

CONRAD: Let's begin with a general question. You came to Hope College as a student, and you graduated from here in '26. What was going on at the time? What events happened that stand out in your mind?

VER BEEK: Well it was a continuation from high school, you know how it goes. Two or three of my buddies from Zeeland High School decided to go on to Hope College, so I asked my parents if they would let me go. I was interested in science, that already seemed a big part of the institution. It was a small faculty, less than 20. Of course there were chapel exercises every morning, this made it kind of a family like gathering. Assigned chapel seats. Well that was different. In addition to old high school friends, it didn't take too long to get acquainted. We met so many of the same students daily having them in the same classes, from English to biology to what have you.

We had victory celebrations then when we won an MIAA oratorical contest. It was really a big event in the history of the institution. We celebrated Arbor Day together. The senior class planted a tree each year, it seems to me. I missed out on some of the social life, because I drove into college everyday and then after the lab at 5:00 in the afternoon we'd take off for home. There was chapel every morning at 8:00, we were here early. I always had some riders to take along with me from the country. I would say it was a very congenial and friendly atmosphere. One highlight was the Hope College pageant presented by the class of 1926.

CONRAD: President Dimment was here at that time, do you have any recollection of what he was like?

VER BEEK: President Dimment was here. I never had the good fortune of being in his class. I was interested in science and not the social sciences

so much. So I never really got well acquainted with him. To me he was the President of the institution and was just a bit austere. He was gone quite a bit. I really can't say that I got to know him that well. As it happened his nieces were classmates of mine, but that didn't make any difference.

CONRAD: Dr. Lubbers was also teaching here at the time, do you recall anything about him?

VER BEEK: Dr. Lubbers was teaching in the English department. I recall that he was on the campus in the English department but I had no course with him at the time. I had my work in English in a class with Miss. Gibson. English was not one of my strong areas and I was not very creative. Dr. Nykerk was another person here, he was supposed to be giving us a course in public speaking, which he did. This called for an oration to be written and then delivered. The oration I wrote, on Prohibition, was turned down because he accused me of reading the Chicago Tribune and following the Chicago Tribune's point of view, when in reality I had never seen the paper. So I rewrote it and got credited for it. Dr. Nykerk was very much interested in the music field, he would lead the singing at the chapel service, and he was good in the field of literature. He had been to Oxford, England and he had cultivated a little bit of an Oxford accent which distinguished him.

CONRAD: What about the campus itself?

VER BEEK: Everything was pretty much centered in Van Raalte Hall, all the classes except maybe a few. The prep classes were up in Graves Hall. Van Raalte, all of its three floors, provided lots of classrooms for all laboratories; chemistry laboratories on the first floor, the biology laboratories on the second floor and then physics on the third floor. There were very few offices, they were just part of the classroom.

Chapel services were held in Winant's Chapel. The library was in Graves Hall. We did have Carnegie gym, that was the place for athletic events. I know that basketball games were already pretty important to the college.

CONRAD: You mentioned that you had some connection with the Prep School where you took Latin. What kind of ties did Hope College have with the Prep School at the time?

VER BEEK: A lot of students who were associated with the Reformed Church in this area went to prep school instead of high school. It also included older students who might consider themselves too old to attend the high school, but who wanted to go on to college work, many of them having in mind some kind of Christian service, ministry and so on. That became very much a part of the total campus. Some of the people who taught in the Prep School also were teaching some of the classes in the college area, although there weren't too many of those. There was some carry over that way. The Prep School enrollment gradually decreased more and more. Then it became Hope High School and had its own administration for awhile. Finally it was disbanded because it was no longer considered necessary.

CONRAD: You said you came to Hope interested in science. From my understanding of what I've read Hope was pretty much a place where they trained ministers, so did you feel out of place?

VER BEEK: No. As a matter of fact there was no such feeling that I recall. There were pre-ministers there, but there were as many people in my class who went on into science fields and teaching as there were of those going into the seminary. Teacher education, for which I am concerned, already had a strong place in the college curriculum at the time. When you graduated from Hope in 1926 you automatically got a college life certificate, which qualified you to teach high school. There was no elementary training as such at Hope at this time.

CONRAD: When you left Hope did you keep in contact with the school, how about the Alumni Association or something like that?

VER BEEK: Yes. In my first year of teaching I was in Hudsonville which isn't very far away. At that time Hope College sent out one of its profs to follow its first year teachers, to see how they were doing. Rev. Paul Hinkamp came to see me in Hudsonville. He went from there to Byron Center and found out that they needed a new school superintendant there next year. So it was through that interview that I got to be the school superintendant at Byron Center. Hope had a carry over of concern for first year teachers.

Having lived in this part of Michigan all those years we came back to the campus now and then, especially for athletic events. This may sound like bragging a little bit, but the class of 26 really was interested and had a class spirit. I think we had a class reunion every five years. There was something about it that kept drawing us together. There are a lot of the class of 26 left in this area and we have a feeling for the campus, for the college.

CONRAD: So were you in close contact with the campus when the chapel was built?

VER BEEK: The chapel was built just shortly after we left, it was dedicated in '29. That area was tennis courts at the time we went to college. We didn't have as much contact as later on; when you begin to bring your sons and daughters back to the campus, from then on interests develop once more.

CONRAD: You were very active in the teaching program when you came to Hope. How had the teaching program changed from the time you graduated to the time you returned?

VER BEEK: Very much so. At the time that I was there the only practice teaching I had was to be lab assistant in the field of chemistry. I was

majoring in chemistry. I assisted the organic chemistry people, checked over their experiments, and so forth, and then we were to get in I believe 30 hours of observation in high schools. So actually there was no such thing as practice teaching. I came back to Hope in 1950, in January. At that time we were really crowded with secondary students and in addition to teaching a couple of sections of educational psychology I was responsible for visiting all the secondary student teachers which was 62, the first semester I was here. At that time I got one visit each in for the semester. At that time there were only three of us in the Education department. Mr. Vander Borgh was chairman, Mrs Schoon was there and I had succeeded Mr. Partington. Miss Hawes, Holland Public Schools Supervisor, was in charge of elementary student teachers. A couple of years later we got Dr. Baker to join us so that he could take over part of the visitation program and teach some of the education courses. By that time the college had taken over supervision of both elementary and secondary programs. As time went on we moved farther and farther into the business of getting more experience in the field and also to getting more contact with the students. So as we went along we got around to at least three visits a semester for every student teacher as a minimum. For those who needed more we tried to get in more visits. Since that time, even while I was on campus in the last years, we changed the program considerably again by getting more observation during the junior year. Then later on we modified the ed psych course to involve some more observation in the sophomore year. So there's been a considerable amount of improvement in terms of contact in the field. Students really have been exposed to what's going on in schools before they get around to doing student teaching. This is even more true I think in the elementary field than the secondary, because in the elementary they've had mini-courses to teach as part of their observation program.

They were responsible for taking a week in arithmetic, reading and so on; this has been worked out pretty carefully.

CONRAD: Did you as a professor in that department have a lot to do with the changes that were occurring?

VER BEEK: I became very much interested in the accreditation program, what we call NCATE, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education which is the only national organization which accredits all colleges and universities in their teacher education programs. This accreditation allows for the transfer of teachers from state to state in terms of certification. Those who are accredited by qualified institutions in one state can also qualify for a certificate in another state. This is something that I pushed for pretty hard, because I was interested in getting that degree of flexibility. Our first approval came in 1961. That was the result of having team visitation and a thorough analysis of our educational program. This I think has been a great boost. As a consequence NCATE gave me a chance to get involved with other colleges and their teacher education programs. I served on two teams first and then I was chairman of NCATE teams at four different colleges in the country. I was up to Carroll College, Buena Vista in Iowa, Southern Missionary College in Tennessee, and St. Joseph's in Indiana. I served as chairman of the NCATE team which meant there we were six or seven of us who spent three days on the campus of those institutions, and this gave us the benefit of analyzing what other institutions were doing, and of course you always carry back some of these ideas. As a result of those visits I felt that we were making some real progress at Hope. I was also interested in the teacher education program in the state. We had a department at that time, which still exists, a department of the Michigan Education Association called the Michigan Association for Higher Education. I became quite involved in that and have

served as president in 1966-67, That association allows for the exchange of ideas and programs and a degree of understanding and reciprocity between colleges and also the universities. The rewarding thing of this has been that a very good relationship has developed not only between the colleges but also the colleges and universities that have cooperated on these programs. State wide meetings among deans, department heads and placement directors have been most helpful also.

CONRAD: In your years in the education department did you see a major change in the type of student going out for an education degree?

VER BEEK: I don't know that I noted much difference. We had a great number of secondary people over the years and the numbers in the elementary field developed considerably in later years.

Now in more recent years I understand that more of a concern for special education rather than just regular elementary classroom teaching has developed. And I can see the reason. We've developed a surplus of teachers as well as the fact that many of the students, being the kind of folks that they are, are genuinely interested in children and their problems so that the special-ed field would appeal to them.

CONRAD: As far as the administration went, did you find that the administration was cooperative in the changes you wanted to do?

VER BEEK: I think I would have to say yes. I think we say this in a sense of self-defense, but actually teacher education has been the bread and butter of Hope College for a good many years. The number of students who were qualified to teach always totaled a great percentage of the class. And while many of them went on to graduate work and so on, the fact is that they were teacher education students. They had a place.

As far as working, in carrying through with the NCATE program, we had a great deal of support on that, not only from the administrative staff

but from the faculty as well, because this is an all college proposition. Committees were composed not only of the education people but we had membership from many other departments serving on the committees that made the self-survey and wrote a report on what was going on. It was an educational process.

I would like to have seen a little bit more of a move towards a building for teacher education facilities which we don't have. It's been one of the disturbing factors that we have been moved around too much. It's hard to carry on the work with visual education and so on and still have to carry your projector from one place to another and that sort of thing. The facilities have not been the best. A lot of this is working out pretty well in terms of Voorhees Hall right now. We have taken over the lower floor there pretty well but we're wondering of course what will happen if the administration decides to remodel Voorhees and make an administrative building out of it. Then where are we?

I know that obviously the college is judged in part by the number of students who go on to graduate programs and so teacher education people don't rate as well as people with PhDs in chemistry and that sort of thing. But I'm wondering if that isn't true of some other departments today. We have areas like dramatics. I'm not so sure that the number of people graduating with that kind of a degree adds much status to the institution, for that's a field that seems to have some what of an end in itself.

CONRAD: While at Hope you also served on the Professional Interest Committee. What type of experiences did you have with that committee?

VER BEEK: This was a carry over from the fact that I had been quite active in the Michigan Education Association and there we have something like the Professional Interest Committee, which had to do with looking after the concerns of the faculty. So we organized a committee of five who were to

serve as a sounding board for the faculty. If they had concerns about not having the proper facilities in terms of office space, or if they had some concerns about health and faculty welfare this would be a means of working at it. As a matter of fact Dr. Lubbers wasn't too happy with the development of the committee because as the President he intimated that, "well the door is always open to the President's office," which of course is true but to get action sometimes you need a little more concerted effort and some degree of concern together. I can't really point out too many achievements, except that eventually out of this we developed some pretty good health benefits, Major Medical health care for example. They also developed a Status Committee which was concerned with faculty salary and promotions. We were responsible for getting a drinking fountain in one place, getting a bathroom for men on the third floor of Van Raalte Hall, a few incidental things like that. It was primarily a committee that the faculty felt free to talk to about concerns they had.

CONRAD: You also served on the Classical Board of Benevolence for some time?

VER BEEK: I'm still the secretary of that board. This is a board that was organized over 100 years ago, in 1875. Funds were gathered from various churches and so on to help the college student who was going into the ministry, but had difficulty gathering his money together. If you go down the list of people who are in the Reformed Church ministry now or were, it's amazing how many names there are on the records of people who at one time or another received benefits. The amount has constantly been pushed up so that next year those who are approved will be getting up to \$800.00 a year. We collect money from all Reformed Churches in the synods of Michigan and Illinois. These are people who are supposed to have as their aim to serve the Reformed Churches as ministers, missionaries or in some other

full-time work. We have made a few exceptions where we accepted some other kind of service as equivalent to this service to the Reformed Church.

CONRAD: Have you been active in that for a long time?

VER BEEK: I've served that committee for quite some time now. I've served as secretary for five years. It's interesting contact with students.

CONRAD: Have many Hope students gone under this program?

VER BEEK: Oh yes. We have students every year. I guess this year we have about a dozen. All of them are Hope students. It varies, we have had as many as 20 and as few one time as five. Mostly it's around a dozen a year that receive help.

CONRAD: Are these students from the area that have gone under the program?

VER BEEK: It's for anyone who comes to Hope, we're not limiting it to the fact that they have to be from Michigan or Illinois. If there's somebody from New York state who has the qualifications, they have to make application and they will be considered.

CONRAD: Let's talk about your contact with the administration. You served under two Presidents, did you find any difference between Presidents Lubbers and VanderWerf?

VER BEEK: Well actually quite a bit. My work began at the invitation of Dr. Lubbers. I had known Mr. Lubbers and his brothers, his brothers were in the school business too. My feeling about the VanderWerf administration, I got this feeling that there was too much emphasis on academic excellence at the expense of some other things. I believe in academic excellence too, but when I look at outstanding people who graduated from Hope College in years gone by, some of whom are on the Hope staff right now, they were not necessarily the most brilliant people, intellectually, but they were people who had qualities of character and concern that I think registered well and had a carry over. I have some concerns about the fact that we are emphasizing

the academic aspect so much that sometimes we lose sight of our own average Reformed Church person. People who might be excellent students in terms of character and service motives but who feel that the competition is a little bit too great so they'll just go somewhere else. That disturbs me, I think this is something we should be concerned about. What disturbed me also was the fact that there was quite a considerable turn over of staff during Dr. VanderWerf's term. Some people who really were very much sold on Hope College because they were graduates of Hope, knew the historical background of Hope, wanted to serve Hope, these people just didn't seem to get along, they weren't appreciated and several left Hope.

Also, I had and still do have some concerns about all the emphasis on the consortium. There's always a tendency to make comparisons as to what those colleges have to offer by way of endowment and salary as though Hope College doesn't measure up if it doesn't offer the same salary. When I was on the faculty some of us would say to each other, well, really, we don't need that much of an increase in salary, we're happy with what we are doing, we like it here, we think the college has a real place and we want to serve. That's why I came to Hope too. I was a school administrator, I had to take a cut in salary to come to Hope College. But at that time I said, "It's my institution and if there's a place for me than I think I belong there, I'll be happy, and I've never been sorry because it turned out very well, even financially.

When it comes to staffing the institution, I'm very much interested that we get people on the faculty who have a feeling for Hope College as a Christian Liberal Arts college, not hesitating to emphasize the Christian aspect and they don't all have to have Reformed Church background. I'm disturbed by the fact that there are people who, I think, look upon Hope College as a good place because it's a good institution and it does well

for them and they're not very concerned about what kind of Christian impact they make on students. If you get around to that point then you have lost the very purpose of what Hope College started out to be.

Now I'm very happy with what I see Dr. VanWylen doing. I realize that he has problems. I'm very much pleased with the reversal, in his degree of openness again, in the fact that we are a Christian College. Sure we're interested in the academic, but we're also interested in the spiritual development of people.

Things have changed of course at the college, some of which could not be helped. I went to Hope College when they had daily chapel. When I started teaching at Hope we still had daily chapel. I know it had very little meaning for some people. For me it always was a very meaningful experience. For a long time a lot of the faculty would meet down below underneath Dimnent Chapel and when it came time we'd all go up to chapel and sit in the first three or four rows, and you'd feel that the whole campus is here, and here we are and this is how we begin the morning, at 8:00. I know that in terms of the total numbers that we had eventually that it became a very difficult thing to do and the emphasis was, well let's make it voluntary and the chaplain was very much in favor of that, Chaplain Hillegonds. I kept going afterwards too, but I always felt that it lost much of its impact. I guess I'm one of the old timers. If you haven't had that kind of experience than you don't miss it, but when you've had it and then it's no longer there, it makes it a different institution. We have some very fine people on the staff and I don't want to belittle them or berate them. My own Education department is a wonderful department in terms of its staff, and the Phys. Ed. people, you can't find a nicer group of folks than you have there, and many others too and I'm glad for that. But I do think that the administration, and I don't mean just the President, but an

administration, makes a difference in terms of what kind of institution this becomes. The kind of folks that you bring in to serve on your staff, I always felt make a difference. Even when I was a public school superintendent, I guess I might not be allowed to ask questions like that today, but in those days I did have some concern whether they were interested in having an opening exercise and would they be willing to lead one if they were asked to? Because I felt this showed me something about the kind of people they were. You can't very much share that what you don't yourself possess. If you have a Christian commitment, it's got to appear in your daily work.

CONRAD: In your years here how did you see the connection between the college and the Reformed Church?

VER BEEK: I think the college is in itself an arm of the church. I think it takes its young people into an expanded program. Then you see these people who have graduated coming back into all sorts of social services, and back into the church, so a kind of cycle is carried on. That's why I'm very anxious to keep Reformed students at Hope and Northwestern, and Central. Northwestern still has the largest percentage of Reformed Church students. They're over 50% still Reformed Church, at Hope they are down to about 35% and at Central they have less than 20%. In a sense I realize that this can become a missionary endeavor too. We can have people coming in from the outside and ending up in the Reformed Church. I'm also aware that many of the Reformed people go to other institutions and get drawn away from the Reformed Church. So I see the college as an arm of the church to do what the church can not do, but what needs to be done.

CONRAD: How do you feel this tie has been going. Was it stronger at one time than another? I've heard that it was strong during Lubber's period and then was tense during VanderWerf's.

VER BEEK: I think that's true. But, even during Dr. Lubbers period there was some feeling on the part of the church that he wasn't holding the line quite strong enough, the dancing business for example, that sort of thing. But Dr. Lubbers was a good president and politician, he had a way of talking and smoothing it over, and making his connections, so I think the feeling was fairly good. I have the definite feeling that during Dr. VanderWerf's period that there was less a feeling of dependence on the Reformed Church. We can get our money, we can get you grants. The feeling evident in terms of employment too was the same. We were told we had looked into a mirror too much for staff. We were told to get anyone you want for the Education department, with the best qualifications there are, academically. This way you lose sight of the fact that you have to have people who want to move and stay at a college like Hope. You can bring in somebody who is academically qualified and when he gets to this campus he feels that he doesn't belong here, than what have we gained.

Now I think the Board of Trustees came to that conclusion that there were too many things that happened during the VanderWerf administration that discouraged people who were on the faculty who then decided that they wouldn't stay any longer, people who were from Reformed Church backgrounds. It seems he had a feeling that the Reformed Church wasn't that important.

Whereas Dr. VanWylen has grown up in the Christian Reformed Church and one of the strong points of the Christian Reformed background is that they have a loyalty that exceeds the Reformed Church loyalty. But you have to cultivate loyalty, you can never begin to take it for granted. Now that the Board of Trustees has selected him and given him full confidence and the Reformed Church people around have heard him, have seen him, and have heard his witness, I think they are resting much more comfortably. In terms of the internal workings of the system I still have some concerns.

I don't want to be too critical, but the second person in command, the provost is not a Reformed Churchman, he's a good Episcopalian and that's fine, but he does not have the background of the Reformed Church as such. Dean Nyenhuis has a Christian Reformed background and Dean Wettack is a Methodist.

In terms of the four administrators we have it's interesting that not one of them came from the Reformed Church. But Dr. VanWylen is now a member of the Reformed Church and is still in charge, but I understand that he has some difficulties with faculty, with tension there. He knew that when he came.

CONRAD: You were here when Dr. Lubbers did a lot of redesigning of the faculty and administration. How did you as a faculty person who had gone to Hope when it was a small college adjust?

VER BEEK: I guess we accepted it partly as the change of the times in a way. Administration became more of a problem as faculty and student enrollment grew. Problems arise and you have to have the machine to work with. As in every other field it seemed as if more was expected in terms of records and reports and things of that sort. I'm really amazed at how many people we have working on campus and I keep asking are they all necessary? You know all the secretaries we have in Van Raalte Hall, I can't understand why there have to be that many people there, I honestly can't.

In the education department we had just one secretary and that person was kept pretty busy. There are lots of records to keep and things of that sort, such as teacher certification. Of course in Lubbers' time there was already a considerable change of that kind. Way back when I was a student there was only one secretary on the campus, Miss DePree. She was President Dimment's secretary and she was librarian besides, that's the other extreme. They said he kept all his records in his inside pocket.

I think the changing situation in the academic field, and keeping

contacts, and knowing what's expected does call for some more administration. But I am concerned by an over amount of it. Now it's being cut back again as you know, we had four deans and now we're going to go back to two and you still have the departmental chairmen besides; you have so many chiefs after awhile. It's hard to know where to draw the line, to be sufficient in the educational world you have to find ways and means to do things differently to keep up. When you're going to have more academic programs and materials, the paper work builds up and it all takes more help.

CONRAD: I have one more question related to your experience in the education department. In the student teaching program did you find any problems with the community in the teacher training?

VER BEEK: No, as a matter of fact I just dropped in in the middle of the year. The program was for the second semester and most had been pretty well set up, except there were some who hadn't been placed. The teachers were so cooperative that many of these high school teachers said, "Sure I'll take two of them, one morning and one afternoon." In Holland and Zeeland many of them had two student teachers. I never had any flak from the community in itself that the student teachers weren't working out well.

Student teaching is a benefical thing. If a supervising teacher wants to take advantage of it, of course he can go and sit back in the office. We didn't expect them to trun the whole thing over, but at least he must let the student teacher be responsible for something. It does give him extra time to do some things that he otherwise doesn't have time for. Many of them stayed in the room and gave individual attention. Also, most student teachers are quite anxious to do a good job.

That's why I always enjoyed working with them because they were all rather idealistic, wanting to be good teachers, open to suggestion and they got interested and they had a satisfaction of having taught something and

having learned something. So I think student teaching has been a stimulating factor in the profession. That's why I'm so disturbed in this stage, since I'm retired, that the MEA has put up so many barriers to student teaching. The NEA has come across and really pushed hard for having school districts set up quotas, you can only take so many student teachers and that's a very small number. All on the basis of, "Look we've got too many teachers now, so don't let any more students do their teaching because there will be that many more people after my job." This disturbs me, they had their turn but this younger generation isn't supposed to have their turn. We have to be concerned about the percentage of student teachers being placed, maybe only 50%, but at least for that 50% it's important. If they do well then they can have a job. This year 75% of Hope's graduates did get jobs, didn't they?

CONRAD: I don't know the number but it's very high.

VER BEEK: There was very little conflict. Once in awhile there was a student teacher who there were some questions about, sometimes we had to transfer them or discourage them, but the largest majority have been very cooperative and it's been a good experience for the college and the schools.

CONRAD: I have one final question for you and that's a general one. You started here as a student, then worked as a professor, you certainly have seen a lot of changes at Hope, but has the type of student that comes to Hope changed a lot?

VER BEEK: Well obviously the student that comes to Hope College today has a much broader range in background and experience and variety of outlook than we did in our day. When I came to Hope College radio was just coming upon the scene, that's the kind of limited background we had. Now because of the great types of experience the student, in that respect, is a different kind of person when he comes to Hope. Now what is happening on campus, are

there many students who are deciding what their own course is to be? When I left in '71 that was a time when they were talking about letting students work out their own course of study on campus, work it out with the prof and decide what they were going to take for their college career.

CONRAD: No, now it's the opposite with the new core curriculum.

VER BEEK: Well we had a core curriculum also, but it was supposed to be THE thing in those days to let the student decide for himself what he wanted to take. I could never quite subscribe to that because it was my understanding that after twenty some years of working with college students I might have some idea as to what would be good for him to get involved in, rather than have him try at 16, 17 or 18 to decide what courses he wanted to take.

I guess I would have to say that the students who came to the college in my day, as well as those who came to high school, were people who were very much academically inclined. We were there because we wanted to be. When I went to high school only one out of three grade school kids went to high school and of course quite a few people would arrive but not all of those graduated. Then a smaller percentage went on. They were people who were self-motivated.

When I was teaching we had some really good students, but there were some there who were there only because going to college was the thing to do and they had no idea what it was for. That always bothered me, and I would always remind them, well look, teacher education at least gives you a vocational skill. It's fine to say let's go to Hope and get a college education, but then you come to the senior year and say now what am I going to do? If you're going on to graduate work then that's fine, otherwise what will you do? Students have to be well motivated.

This whole business of no quiet hours and so on, will never make much sense to me. It seems to me that there should be some self-limitations.

I use to have to go home and study when I was a student, and come back the next day and have my work completed. In those days there was not as much to do in terms of entertainment either.

Hope has had some real good students, and I've enjoyed them from both the east and from the west. I hope that we can continue to recruit that person who has what it takes to help Hope College be what kind of a college it ought to be and to be a real contributing force to the Reformed Church of America. Now we have a lot of outside resources, and I wouldn't want to do without these foundations - we need them, but we can't draw away from the Church. There's a danger that some of the faculty people forget that there is a Reformed Church and this is an institution of that church.

CONRAD: Well I think this would be a good place to end our interview.

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