

7-15-1976

Jalving, Clarence Oral History Interview: General Holland History

Don van Reken

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.hope.edu/holland_history



Part of the [Archival Science Commons](#), and the [Oral History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Repository citation: van Reken, Don, "Jalving, Clarence Oral History Interview: General Holland History" (1976). *General Holland History*. Paper 13.

http://digitalcommons.hope.edu/holland_history/13

Published in: *General Holland History (H03-1521)*, July 15, 1976. Copyright © 1976 Hope College, Holland, MI.

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Oral History Interviews at Digital Commons @ Hope College. It has been accepted for inclusion in General Holland History by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Hope College. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@hope.edu.

Oral History Interview
Interviewee: Clarence Jalving
Interviewer: Don Van Reken
July 15, 1976

Abstract: Former president of People's State Bank; farming in Waukazoo area; King's Basket factory.

DVR: This is July 15, 1976. My name is Don van Reken. I'm at the home of Mr. Clarence Jalving on East 29th Street. Mr. Jalving is an old resident of Holland, Michigan, and he is going to tell the story of his life and times a little bit. Mr. Jalving, how old are you?

CJ: I'm eighty years old. I was born over on Lakewood Boulevard, just over the hill from the Waukazoo School. My parents came over there from the Netherlands in 1873 and settled on a 40-acre farm, which at that time was all woods. The family, at that time, consisted of my grandparents, my father, his brother John, and I think he had a sister, but I think she was born in the United States. I'm not absolutely sure of that, but I'm quite sure of it. She was born in the United States. My father's name was Lucas, and he lived with his parents. They worked the farm together, they cleared the land, and his early life was one of mostly wood-chopping, getting the land cleared so that they could produce a few crops. He married when he was thirty to Gertie Sjeerdsma, who was living about a half a mile east of where my folks lived. I have three brothers and four sisters, who are all living. There was three children who died in infancy. One little girl choked on a coffee bean, was operated on to try to remove it, and died during the course of the operation. Two brothers died as a result of contracting pneumonia during an epidemic of the measles. One was five, the other was two and a half.

My earliest memory of my parents was the fact that they had to work very hard. They had a comparatively small home, which has now been torn down and replaced by

another one by a niece of mine. The family had to work from sun up till sun down. With the large family that my folks had, it was difficult getting by. The home itself was very simple in construction; it was a frame building. It didn't have too much room, but we all managed to get by, as far as sleeping accommodations were concerned. But, of course, we had no running water; we had a well. The heating in the rooms was by a range in the kitchen, and a big anthracite coal stove in the living room, which we used to enjoy sitting around and watching the flames in the wintertime. The lighting, of course, was by kerosene lamps. Well, you might say, it was the same thing that all farm families had to endure. Life was simple, and as far as the food is concerned, we raised most of our own food. My father kept about a hundred chickens, four, five, or six cows, a couple of horses. We raised two or three pigs every year, which were slaughtered in the fall, and the meat was all either canned or preserved in other ways, put down in the cellar, and used during the course of the winter. We very seldom purchased any meat from the stores, it was only very rarely that we got to taste any beef. But nevertheless, we all ate well. My mother was an excellent baker, and I can still see her making those great big loaves of bread and we, standing around, anxiously waiting till they get out of the oven so that we could have a slice of that hot bread that just came out of the oven.

DVR: Where did you get your kerosene from for the lighting that you're talking about?

CJ: Well, they had to go to town. My dad went to town at least once a week with a horse and buckboard. We'd go to the store, and his favorite shopping place was the J. and H. De Jong, which used to be on 10th Street in Holland. I can remember going to the store with him several times, and we'd pick up whatever grocery we needed. He always brought the eggs that we didn't use to them, and that was used to pay for the groceries. Money, as

such, was a pretty scarce commodity back in those days. I think the total income that my dad had, an ordinary family today couldn't even live on it for a month. But, of course, the dollar went a long ways back in those days. In other words, five dollars would probably buy as much as fifty dollars would today. So the value of money is a relative deal, as far as that's concerned.

DVR: You also mentioned a cellar. What kind of cellar did you have?

CJ: Well, we had to go through a trap door in the kitchen and the steps went down in there, and, as I said, the cellar was partially lined with wooden boards, and there were some shelves down there. One end of it had a big earthen platform, where a lot of the stuff was placed. Of course, we raised a lot of fruit, and we used to put the apples down in the cellar, and they would last all winter. We keep picking them up out of the cellar; Every evening, Dad would go down there and he would take a pan of apples up, and we'd all have an apple.

The farm itself was, well, the soil was sandy, and it usually required a great deal of fertilization in order to produce any kind of crop, but we raised just about everything—vegetables, fruits, pears, apples, cherries, and peaches. We raised all kinds of vegetables. My dad used to raise very good potatoes, and I can remember that in the fall of the year he always had a few favorite customers in the city of Holland who always waited for him to come around with his potatoes so that they could get them from him. So, all in all, most of the stuff we ate was produced right on the farm. And the few necessities that we needed by way of groceries and so forth were usually purchased from the proceeds of eggs and, of course, the milk that we had from the cows that was collected by somebody who came along and taken to the creamery, which was located where Swift and Company

is over on 6th Street. Every month, there would be a milk check that came in, so they managed to get by. But, you can imagine, with a family as large as that, that it took quite a bit of doing to keep everybody happy, keep them in clothes, and keep them fed. But, we got by.

Of course, the families those days, grew large; our family was large. But there was an economic purpose in that, as far as these farmers were concerned. They liked to have large families because, one of my earliest memories is having to go out and thin sugar beets. My dad used to raise about an acre or two of sugar beets each year because there was a sugar factory here in Holland, and the beets were delivered in the fall. We raised pickles, so we had to pick those lousy pickles, and if that isn't a dirty job. Your hands just got scaled with all that stuff from the pickles, and we'd sit there scouring our hands after we got through picking pickles. Then Dad would have to put the pickles on the old buckboard and take them to the pickle factory over there on 16th Street—Heinz—stand in line with all the other farmers, and wait until his load was delivered. I used to go downtown with him every once in a while, and one of my fond memories was that dad would then buy me a bag of peanuts, so I could eat peanuts.

DVR: Of course, when the farmers were in line, they fellowshiped together, too, didn't they?

CJ: Oh, yes. They used to talk together, sure. But sometimes those lines were very, very long. It took a long time, they all were unloaded by hand; there was no automatic machinery in those days to unload them. But, well, we enjoyed life anyhow.

As far as schooling is concerned, my dad and mother both went to school, and I think the school at that time...there was no school right where the Waukazoo School is now, they had to go over in the Beechwood area, north of town where they went to

school. At the time that they came here, there were still a few Indians. I remember my dad telling me that when he was a school boy, why, there were some Indian school boys that also went to school there. Of course, the Indians are now all gone.

As far as sports are concerned, none of us children had much opportunity in taking part in sports. As soon as we were able to work, we were out in the fields. Most of my summers were just plain work from early morning until late at night. When I got to be a little older, my dad conceived the idea of selling vegetables to the people who lived in the Waukazoo area—the resorters. It was my job to go down there and load up the wagon in the morning, hitch up the horse, and make that trip around, amongst the people who lived in the Waukazoo area during the summertime, selling them vegetables and eggs. On Friday, I'd take orders for chickens, and I'd have to go home, slaughter the chickens, do all the dressing, pull the feathers off, deliver them on Saturday. Saturday was chicken day.

DVR: Was that very profitable?

CJ: Well, so-so. You see, we raised practically all of the stuff that went on the wagon, except the chickens. We used to have to get the chickens—the young ones, they wanted the young chickens—we'd have to go to the neighbors and get them from different sources. But, otherwise, the stuff that went on the wagon was practically all raised on our own farm, all kinds of vegetables. So, it brought in a few dollars, enough to make it worthwhile.

Transportation back in those days, of course, was all by horse and buggy. In the earlier years, when my folks first came there, I guess the folks had oxen. I remember Dad talking about oxen that they had in the early days. But those were soon replaced by

horses. Of course, the roads were just plain sand roads. Although, as I became older, they became gravel and Lakewood Boulevard was one of the first roads that had concrete. We had the big Getz Farm, you remember that, over on Lake Michigan, and Mr. Getz was influential in getting the road build, the cement road built towards his farm. It used to be quite an attractive place, thousands of people came there every summer to see the big zoo that he had and everything else. Very interesting. As far as other modes of transportation were concerned, of course, we had trains, and the interurban ran to Grand Rapids.

My parents on both sides had several relatives in Grand Rapids. My dad had, I think, four or five cousins. My mother had several cousins in Grand Rapids. They used to come from Grand Rapids to visit us on the farm. One of my earliest experiences was taking a ride on the interurban to Grand Rapids to visit my dad's cousins. We'd take one day every summer that we would make it a point to go to Grand Rapids. Take the interurban early in the morning, come back late on the interurban at night and visit the relatives in Grand Rapids.

We didn't have too much recreation. Well, of course, we played the usual kid games in school and around the place and, in summers, our time was spent working. That's about it; we didn't have much time for play. In the wintertime, we did an awful lot of skating, couldn't hardly wait until the frost was hard enough to freeze the ice on the ponds and in the ditches so that we could get our skates on and go out there and skate. There was a hill right by my folks' place, and used to have our sleds and go down those hills and have a good time. But we didn't have too much by way of recreation.

DVR: How often did you get to Lake Michigan?

CJ: Well, I got there quite often when I was a young boy, especially after I got my bicycle. My father's sister lived within a quarter of a mile of Lake Michigan, and quite often I used to get on my bike in the evening, take a ride out there, ride out to Lake Michigan, especially on a moonlit night and lie there on a beach for a while, watch the moon, watch the waves come in and so forth. And that was, of course, in the days before the automobile. But when the automobile came, why, that area got to be populated quite quickly.

Another thing I remember when I was a kid there was a family by the name of Voss who lived right across the road from the Getz Farm. They used to go out into Lake Michigan with a long net, near the shore, and haul the net in and haul in a bunch of suckers, fish. I used to watch them do that quite frequently; it was very interesting.

As far as church activities were concerned, my parents and grandparents were very religious people. We were given all the catechismal instruction and everything else that we had to have in those days, learning things by heart. I can still recite many of the old Dutch psalms that I learned when I was a boy. We had to go to church twice on Sunday.

DVR: What church did you attend?

CJ: Well, what is now the Harderwyk Church—that is the third church that is on that same site. The first one was a small church in which my grandfather, Klaas Jalving, was quite instrumental in getting started. The fact of the matter is he was one of the organizers of that first Harderwyk Church, which was roughly a half a mile from where my folks lived. And, of course, observance of the Sabbath was one of the things which was very important to them. We weren't allowed to play on Sunday, the food that we ate on

Sunday, usually the preparations were made on Saturday for it, so we didn't have to have an awful lot of work to do on Sunday. But as far as us kids were concerned, there was always a little resentment on our part to have to sit through services every Sunday.

Especially, in those days, any minister who preached less than an hour was no good. It was sometimes a little bit burdensome, especially if you'd been working hard all week, the tendency to fall asleep in church was just almost irresistible.

DVR: This was all in Dutch?

CJ: Yes, this was all in Dutch. The Dutch language was used in that church, I think, until about 1916 or '17, everything was in Dutch. But, of course, Dutch was the language that was used by my grandparents, and they never learned to speak English, because it wasn't necessary. The merchants in Holland, where they did their business, all had clerks who spoke Dutch, so, no problem at all. Amongst each other, everybody was Dutch around there, so that was the language that they used. I can remember my old grandmother Jalving saying, (speaks Dutch, "Da einels dat es vintal"); she hated it. But, nevertheless, we got by.

As far as picnics are concerned, we had a few. We had a school picnic every year, I remember that. One of my first memories is, when I was about seven years old, I guess, we went to what's now the...Hope College owns it at the present time, the property over there in Waukazoo, that point, that's where we had our school picnics.

There was a small dock there, and there was a boat there, and I can remember when I was about seven years old, is the nearest I came to losing my life, I guess. I was in the boat, and I was going to step onto the dock and stepped on the edge of the boat and the boat went away from me and I fell in the water. It was very fortunate that there was

somebody on the dock there that said, “Clarence, give me your hand, give me your hand,” so I reached my hand up and they grabbed it and pulled me out. But if it hadn’t been for them I would have drowned, because I didn’t know anything about swimming at all.

Well, as far as going into town is concerned, well, as I said, Dad went to town about once a week. During the summer season, when he had to deliver farm produce, he went more often, of course, especially when we were picking pickles—that had to be done every other day and delivered every other day. But we didn’t go to town very often. My mother had a sister living in the city, and I used to go over there quite frequently, especially after I got my bicycle, and spend the night there with them. He had some nephews that I used to play with and some of the other boys. They lived down 15th Street, and the Rottschafers lived on 16th and a few other people, and we used to get together and play. But, I don’t remember too much about my early, real early childhood. From the age of twelve on, my memory is a little more keen.

You asked about parades. I can remember two or three circus parades, that’s about all I can remember. The circus used to come to town, and we’d go down there and we’d watch the parade. We’d never go to the circus proper because that cost money, and we didn’t have the money for it. But we did go in and watch the parade, and I saw my first elephants and other animals, lions and tigers and things of that kind in the parades that went down the street.

DVR: What about the fair? Did you go to the fair?

CJ: Yes, we went to the Holland Fair when it was being held over here on 16th Street. I can recall maybe three or four occasions when we went to the fair. But, well, again, as I say,

my parents and grandparents were very religious, and they felt that some of the things that went on at the fairs and other places were not exactly in keeping with what a Christian should do. So, we were limited, very much, in the type of recreation that we could enjoy. A little different from what the kids do today.

As far as my family background is concerned, I've already touched upon it. As I said, my folks came to the United States in 1873, that's from my father's side. And from my mother's side, as near as I can figure out, it was about 1884. My mother was six years old when she came, and my father was nine years old when he came. He was born in 1864, and lived to be 93 years old. If there's one thing in our family, which is a peculiar coincidence, my grandmother, my father's father [mother?], died when she was 93, he died when he was 93, his sister died when she was 93. Three persons in one family—a mother and two of the children dying at age 93. My mother was 11 years younger than my dad. She was a wonderful woman. My grandmother, on my mother's side, was a very intelligent person. She was a voracious reader. I'd go down there, because they lived only a half a mile from my folks' place, and I used to go to my mother's folks, my grandparents Sjoerdsma, and spend a great of time with them. I can remember my grandmother sitting there and reading to me and telling me stories that she had read. Well, they didn't get too much reading material, except books that they used to circulate amongst each other, but they read the church papers, *De Wachter*, and they read the Dutch paper *De Grondwet*, but no English papers of any kind. Those papers were perused very thoroughly by most of the Dutch people, especially my grandmother who used to just sit there and read. She'd read out loud to me and she was a very, very smart

women. Even though she'd had a very limited education, she knew her stuff, had a wonderful memory and could get along very well.

The early years of the folks were very difficult. They bought the farm, and I think they paid something like eight hundred dollars for it. Years ago, I can remember running across an old booklet in which my grandmother had made a record of all the payments that they made to pay for the farm. One day I got to the notation "Las descult de taalt," the last of the debt has been paid, and they owned the farm free and clear. But I can just imagine the terrific hardships which they went through in those early years. They lived in a log cabin that had a log barn, and it was just incessantly chopping wood to get some land cleared so that they could plant some crops. The early crops were planted amongst the stumps. Part of the farm is high ground, and part of it was low ground. The low ground couldn't be used because it was too swampy and too wet as long as the woods were on it. So the first crops were produced on that high land, which now is just plain sand. But then, because of the years of _____ which have been accumulated, it produced pretty fair corn, I guess, and a few other crops that they had. Dad, I think, also worked at the carpenter trade; he was a pretty fair carpenter. From the time he was 20 until the time he got married, he did work at the carpenter trade part of the time, and worked on the farm part of the time. So, he had quite a set of tools and managed to get by with those tools that he used.

I don't know too much about where they came from in the Netherlands, except that it was from the province of Drenthe, and somewhere near the present town of Assen, because I've heard my grandmother speak of a town called Assen. We visited the Netherlands in 1950 and went over to the places where my dad still had some relatives,

he had some cousins in the Netherlands, but they couldn't tell me too much about the early history of the Jalving family. It's always been my great regret that I never asked more questions from my grandmother when she was still living so that I could fill in the background of the family from that source.

DVR: Is the Jalving name still in the Netherlands? There are Jalvings there?

CJ: Well, there's a lot of Jalvings there, but the Jalvings that are there are not related, as far as we've been able to determine. I had an interesting experience right after the war. One day Holland, Michigan, they had these wooden guilders in circulation. And they, of course, passed currently amongst the merchants and everybody else in Holland. One day, Henry Maentz, from the other bank, and I dressed in Dutch costume and, to show the validity of these Dutch guilders, he and I were purchasing United States Savings Bonds from Sally Diekema, Bill Diekema's daughter. That picture was republished in the Netherlands newspaper with the caption indicating the names of the people. It fell into the hands of a certain Wim Jalving in Arnhem. He wrote a letter to the mayor of the city of Holland, Mr. Stephens, in very stilted English, asking him, if possible, if he knew me, to deliver that letter to me, which Stephens did. Well, the upshot of it was that this Wim Jalving went back to the villages, supposedly where my folks came from, and looked through all the records there to see whether he could establish a possible relationship. But no relationship existed and, unfortunately, back in the early part of the nineteenth century, there had been a fire in that city hall and a lot of the records had been destroyed, so it was impossible for him to go back further into the records to find whether there was any relationship. But, at any rate, I wrote back to him, and I wrote the letter in Dutch. The next letter I got from him, he was just positively so amazed that an American should

be able to write a Dutch letter. So I gave him the whole history of the family and where they came from and so forth and so on. The upshot of it was that through our correspondence, we'd often talked about making a trip to the Netherlands, and in 1950, we went to the Netherlands. We spent a great deal of time with this Wim Jalving and his wife. They had no children, they went through the war, lived in Arnhem and, of course, Arnhem was one of the terrifically bombed places, terrible. I remember one time I said, "Well, I'm getting a little hungry." Mrs. Jalving said, "Don't ever use that word, hunger. You don't know what hunger is." They went through those winters over there in Arnhem, just impossible to get food. So we had that interesting experience.

My mother's folks came from the province of Vriesland, in a little town called Holwort. They were a little bit better off than my father's parents were in the Netherlands, I guess.

DVR: Your grandmother's name was Sjoerdsma, you said.

CJ: My mother's parents name was Sjoerdsma, yes. You find a lot of names that end in "s-m-a," that Friesian in origin. Of course, Friesian is a language all its own. It's entirely different than the Dutch, and, well, I learned to speak it, because as I hung around my mother's parents so much that all they spoke was Friesian so I had to learn it. I can speak it very well.

The city of Holland, back in the days when I was a youngster, was quite small. It only extended to the river on the north and to Ottawa Avenue on the west and 32nd Street on the south, and on the east side, I think it went as far as Fairbanks Avenue—comprised an area of less than three square miles. It was quite provincial in the days when I was a youngster. I would say that the population at that time was probably 95% Dutch, but

since that time, of course, the town has grown tremendously. I don't know exactly what the population was back in the days when I was a kid, but it probably wasn't more than five, six or seven thousand, somewhere around there.

[telephone interruption]

DVR: What else do you remember about the city of Holland, in those early days, 1900, 1910 thereabouts?

CJ: Well, the fact of the matter is, I didn't get into the city very often; it wasn't until I started to go to school in town. When I graduated from the eighth grade, Dr. Kollen, who was then president of Hope College, called at our home—as he did, I guess, to every eighth grader in the whole area who graduated from the ordinary school—to try to persuade them to go to Hope College prep instead of to the high school. Well, that summer I wanted a new bicycle quite badly, so I couldn't make up my mind whether I wanted to go to school or wanted to go to work. But anyway, I decided that I wanted a bicycle pretty bad, so I wanted to get a job that I could earn a little money to earn fifteen dollars to send for a new bicycle from Sears, Roebuck and Company. So I started to work down at the old Kings Basket Factory, which is located where Kollen Park is now, and worked for the magnificent sum of ten cents an hour.

DVR: How many hours a day?

CJ: Ten hours a day, five days a week. We worked from early morning till late at night, or late in the afternoon, and by the end of three weeks, I had earned three five dollar gold pieces, and with that I bought my new bicycle. That fall, I decided I would go to Hope College Preparatory School, which I did.

DVR: I'd like to go back to the basket factory. Two questions: How did you get to and from work, and can you tell me some of the details of the basket factory—how they operated, what the whole operation was?

CJ: Oh, yes, that's...In the first place, I had an old bicycle that was still usable, and I used that as my form of transportation to make the approximately four miles from my home, around the lake through the city of Holland to the factory. This, as I say, was located where Kollen Park is now. It consisted of a big holding yard for the logs, which were drifted down through Black Lake and put in these holding ponds at the factory. Then they were hauled by machine into the chutes which carried them to either the peelers or the cutting tools that they had. But most of these logs were placed between two spikes and worked against what they called the peelers, which is a series of sharp knives. The logs rotated, and as they rotated, it would peel off a small layer from these logs. Of course, the logs were wet, they'd all been steamed, and they were hot. They made a variety of products over there—little boxes for strawberries and so forth, that was, of course, a very thin layer. Then they made barrel staves and other baskets of different kinds.

[End of side one]

DVR: If you could repeat some of the information about the...

CJ: Thickness?

DVR: Thicknesses, yes.

CJ: The thickness varied depending upon the product they wanted to make from it. For the small strawberry boxes and so forth, of course, the layers were very thin. These logs were steamed so that they were very hot, and the wood would not splinter at all. If they

wanted to use them for barrel staves, the peeling would be a good quarter of an inch thick. Then these were cut into various lengths and widths, depending upon what the purpose was for the use of it. It was very hot work, and I worked both inside, back of the peelers, and I worked outside setting up these barrel staves in the hot sun, where they had to dry out. After they were dry, they had to be gathered and shipped out, or used, for whatever purposes they were going to be used. The factory employed quite a large number of people, especially in the summertime. But, later on, as other containers became more popular than wood, gradually the business dropped off and they finally went out of business and that was it. As far as other industries in Holland were concerned...

DVR: I'd like to go back. How did they steam those logs? If they were going have production for one day, they would have to have somebody come in early, or did they leave them steamed overnight? How did they do that?

CJ: I'm sure I can't tell you just exactly how that was done. I know that there was a terrifically big vat, and these logs were hauled in from the water in the lake, and then they were dumped in that vat. I don't know how long that they were left in there to steam, but I know that when they were put in the peeling machines, that those logs were very, very hot. The peelings that came from the logs, you would almost burn your hands on the peelings. As they were peeled, you had to have a man on each side to pull that over and lay it on a big slab.

DVR: What kind of logs did they use? Maple? Pine?

CJ: I don't know. I'm sure I couldn't tell you what the type of logs they were, but it wasn't hard wood. It was comparatively soft wood.

DVR: You were going to tell about other industries along the waterfront.

CJ: Oh, well, of course south there, you had the Heinz pickle factory. I don't know exactly what year that that was started; I think that it was started in the early part of the century. Then the sugar beet factory was there. I don't know exactly when the Holland Shoe Company started business, they were also there. Then there was a small furniture factory, which is now been absorbed by the Heinz people, got the property there. Then east of Kollen Park, well, first of all, you had the big boat docks. Back in those days, these boats were running between Chicago and Holland every night. Thousands and thousands of tons of produce used to go onto those boats and be taken to the market in Chicago. It was quite a favorable way of getting your produce to the market rather quickly; it took a lot longer by rail, so the boats were very popular for several years. Later the trucks got into the business, and that knocked the boats out of business. Then you had the West Michigan Furniture Company further east; I think the Holland Furniture Company on River Avenue was already in business. You had the Scott Lagers lumber yard there, which was quite an active business, with ships docking at the foot of what is now 6th Street. There's been a lot of changes made in that shoreline since the days of the early people.

I can't think of too many other industries which were active at the time that I was going to school in town, but everybody seemed to be working most of the time. And even though wages were small, as I said, the value of the dollar was ten times what it is today, so everybody got by and most people, being frugal as they were, managed to save a little money—maybe buy a home, pay for their home. Holland's always been noted as a town where people own their own homes.

DVR: Then you went to the prep school, Hope Prep.

CJ: Yes. I spent four years there at Hope and enjoyed every minute of it. I feel that the education I received there was very thorough, after all, we had the same professors that the college students had. I think the quality of the educational process at Hope Prep was, perhaps, slightly superior to that which you would receive in the ordinary high school. That's merely a partial opinion, maybe others wouldn't agree with me on that, but anyway, I got a pretty fair education.

DVR: Is there any special events you remember, or any special professors or significant things of that period?

CJ: Well, I remember all of the professors that I had. One of them was quite persistent that I should become a chemist or a physicist, and that was Dr. Godfrey. But I never enjoyed it too much; even though I was fairly good at that particular course, he wanted me to become a chemist in the worst way. Maybe it would have been a good idea for me to do, but I don't know, I just didn't care about it. And, of course, the other courses, they were, being a liberal arts college, you got a pretty thorough grounding in literature and English. I never enjoyed studying Latin very much, although I guess it's been valuable in some respects. I enjoyed mathematics—that was professor Kleinheksel at that time; Dr. Yntema and Dr. Nykerk in the English course; and Mr. Boer in history; Beardslee. It was a very small school at that time. The fact of the matter is, I guess, that the prep department constituted about half of the enrollment. I've forgotten what the enrollment was, but I know...

DVR: Did you live in, or did you live at home?

CJ: I lived at home. I rode my bicycle back and forth every day. If the weather was too inclement, as I said, my mother had a sister, who was married to Henry Holkeboer, who had a print shop on College Avenue, right where the ice cream store is now. He used to have a print shop there. They had no children and lived on 15th Street, and if the weather was too bad, I was always welcome there to spend the night with them. I did that very frequently, in the wintertime especially.

I graduated from the Hope Prep in 1913; I was eighteen years old when I graduated. Then I couldn't make up my mind what I wanted to do, whether I wanted to go to school some more or whether I wanted to teach. In those days, the qualifications of a teacher were not as rigid as they are today, and I could have gotten a job teaching if I wanted to. But by the time I made up my mind, the teaching jobs in Michigan had been pretty well filled. My mother had a cousin in Manhattan, Montana, and they kept up correspondence with each other occasionally, and through him, we found out that there was a job in a small Christian school, a one-room Christian school in Manhattan, Montana, which was looking for a teacher. We wrote a couple letters back and forth, and the upshot of it is, I went to Montana to teach at that little school. I taught in that school for three years, and then there was another larger school, also a Christian school, that had two rooms. It was located about five miles north from the other one. It was all ranch country in those days. Right next to the church, and it had a home; by that time I had married, had a boy, so we were looking for a place to live. I taught there for two years.

Then, perhaps you might be interested in how I got into the banking business. My wife's brother, Alex...

DVR: Just a minute. What was your wife's maiden name?

CJ: Van Dyken. Her father had, I don't know how many acres of land, but anyway, he had a big ranch and owned a large part of it and then rented some more; raised a lot of wheat, barley, alfalfa, and was quite a prosperous rancher. Alex, my wife's brother, worked in a bank in Bellgrade, Montana, which was about ten miles from the ranch. Since I was free on Saturday, it was usually my job to go downtown to pick up Alex and take him back to the ranch for Sunday. Well, to enable him to get away a little bit earlier, I'd volunteer to pitch in and do some work for him at the bank. I used to sit there writing up the so-called remittances, checks that went out of town to other banks. Wherever I could be helpful, I'd be helpful to him so we'd get away and go back to the ranch a little bit earlier than we would ordinarily. The upshot of it was that the guy that was running the bank kind of took a fancy to me, and they needed another man, so one day he offered me a job in the bank. I was making sixty-five dollars a month as a teacher. He offered me a hundred dollars a month to start at the bank. Well, I couldn't resist the temptation, and the result was that I started working in the summer of 1918 at the Bellgrade State Bank. Then a half of year after we were there, they had that terrific flu epidemic, as you perhaps remember or heard about, and Alex was taken with that. So then I was made assistant cashier in his place, and I had a pretty good job. But then my folks were always very anxious to have me come back to Michigan.

DVR: Had you ever visited?

CJ: Yes, I'd gone back one year. But I loved Montana; I liked Montana.

DVR: Was it a state then, or a territory?

CJ: A state; it'd been a state for quite a long time. I don't know just when Montana was admitted, but it was a state. As I say, my folks were very anxious to have me come back,

especially my mother, she's one of these types that had to have all of her kids around her just like a hen with chickens. So, finally after some persuasion, and my dad contacting Mr. Kromer of the old Holland City State Bank, and one day, I got a wire from Mr. Kromer, offering me a job in the Holland City State Bank if I'd come to Michigan. Well, by that time I was making a hundred and fifty dollars a month, and they offered me a hundred dollars a month. I wired back, I said, "Offer not acceptable. Am writing a letter." So, I wrote him a letter, and after some correspondence back and forth, they agreed to increase the salary. They wanted to try me out at the original amount, but if I was satisfactory, they'd soon raise my salary to the hundred and fifty, what I was getting over there.

So, we came back to Michigan. I recall it was in February, the latter part of February that we came here. We didn't have our furniture that was in transit. We lived in my grandmother's old house, over on East 11th Street. She went to live with my aunt for a few weeks until our furniture arrived. We lived on College Avenue, got a house there on College Avenue. But then, the first month we were back in Michigan, which was March, and you know, we never got to see the sun the whole blessed month of March. It was rain and sleet and snow, and rain and sleet and snow.

DVR: That's Michigan.

CJ: That's Michigan for you. Here we come from Montana, which is sunshine 300 days of the year, and come back to Michigan. We were both so homesick that we were ready to go back to Montana at the next jump of the gun. It was terrible. But we stayed, and I stayed with the Holland City State Bank for six years. They treated me okay, except that...

DVR: That was the Tower Clock building?

CJ: Yes, the Tower Clock building. But, I didn't see any opportunities or promotion there, so I had an opportunity to go to another line of work for a little while, but I got sick of that. Then the job opening appeared in Zeeland, where I was offered the job of assistant cashier, and I worked there for a couple of years, but I didn't like the job too well.

DVR: How did you go to Zeeland? Did you commute every day then?

CJ: Yes. Well, we lived in Zeeland for a year. I built a house on Lakewood Boulevard in 1926, and we lived there. For awhile, I commuted, but then we moved to Zeeland, rented a house there for about a year and a half, I guess, or two years...I guess it was two years that we lived there. But anyway, from Zeeland, I had an opportunity to go to Buchanan, that's considerably better pay, and went there as assistant cashier. But then the Depression came along, the crash and the fall of 1929. In the meantime, or several months before, I had made application to Michigan State Banking Department for a position as bank examiner. Shortly after the crash in 1929, the early 1930s, I had a letter from the banking commissioner that there was a job opening as examiner, and I could have it if I wanted it. So, I accepted it, because I saw which way the tide was blowing, as far as banking was concerned after that 1929 crash; things didn't look very good in the banking business.

So, I left and went as bank examiner. I worked for the banking department from April 1930 to January 1932. In the meantime, banks were folding right and left, during those years. Every time we'd go into a bank, examine the assets, we knew the thing was insolvent right off the bat. Well, all values disappear. Any financial institution is in difficulty, you can't get away because your mortgage loans, your other loans are

predicated upon certain stability of values. And when that stability disappears, if a house which was once worth \$10,000 is put on the market for \$4,000, and there's a 5 or 6 thousand dollar mortgage on that, whose going to take the licking? I mean, the value disappeared. If a stock was selling for a \$100 a share, it drops down to \$10 a share, and you've got it up for collateral, what are you going to do? You can't get anything out of it. And, of course, that's the way things went.

Then, in January 1932, the People's State Bank in Holland folded, and I was put in charge by the banking department, and after a few weeks, I was appointed permanent receiver by the Ottawa County Circuit Court, who then had the jurisdiction in that particular field.

DVR: Where were they then?

CJ: They were located where they are now, in that new bank building, which was one of the things that broke them, building that new bank building there—too much money that they stuck in that thing. But, that's the way it went back in those days. Well, at any rate, the problem then, of course, was liquidating enough assets to get the money together to make some kind of an arrangement with the depository to get the bank reopened. We worked out a reorganization agreement with the depositors, and made arrangements to collect as much money as we possibly could, and then sold a tremendous number of mortgages to the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, which enabled us to raise the cash. So, by the spring of 1933, we were ready to reopen. Then low and behold, President Roosevelt closed all the banks in the United States. Well, that left us up a tree, because our money was with the state treasurer, and the state treasurer had put the money in some of the banks that were closed, so we couldn't get our money. And it was only after a matter of

two or three months, I guess, that that money was finally released, and we got the money to go ahead. So, we reopened the bank at the end of June 1933.

DVR: What goes on in a bank in that time? Now, you were not open, how many employees did you have, what was the function of the employees then?

CJ: All we were was a collecting agency. Only I had a secretary, a young lady, had one man at the window, or two men at the window, Clarence Klaasen, and old Ben Brower, and Mabel Baughaun. There were just the four of us in the bank, and myself. What we were trying to do is liquidate enough of the assets, so that we had the money so that we could reorganize, pay off the depositors a certain percentage, and work it out over a period of five years.

DVR: You were just collecting money from mortgage payments or any other...

CJ: Loans...

DVR: Loans that were being paid?

CJ: Yes.

DVR: But you were not paying out anything, you were not an operating bank.

CJ: No, just paying expenses, that's all. So, in the summer of 1938, we got going again. The public apparently had confidence in the new management—we had a new board of directors, new officers, and we've been going strong ever since. Of course, the inflationary trend that we've gone through during the past thirty, forty years has been responsible for a lot of the extra dollars, which are shown now on the bank statement. After all, it's a relative deal. Money is only worth what it'll buy. I just hope we never get to the point where it takes a bushel of dollars to buy a loaf of bread as it did in Germany after World War I. But, those things are possibilities.

The city of Holland, of course, has been growing tremendously in the past few years, and as far as I personally am concerned, I've always been very interested in the community, and done all that I have possibly could to assist in making the community a better place to live, and also getting business established so that there's work for the people of the community. I've served in various capacities: I was president of the Chamber of Commerce back in the late '30s and early '40s for five years, I just couldn't get rid of the job; I served on the hospital board for ten years. But I never got into politics at all; I didn't want anything to do with it. Either in the school board, or the city council, or any political office—I just abhorred them. But I feel that I have contributed something to the city of Holland. I was one of the first to agitate for annexation, or as I prefer to call it, consolidation of areas around the city so that we would have room to expand our growth, commercially and also for homes in the area. But after starting the movement and running into all sorts of abuse on the part of the people in the townships who felt that Holland was trying to grab off something instead of benefiting them—you just couldn't argue with these people—and I finally, after starting the thing and acting as chairman of the Annexation Committee, and the failure to do anything on the first time that the thing was put to a vote, I wasn't too active in it after that. But others took up the cudgel, and through gradual annexation movements, the town has grown from less than three square miles to approximately fourteen square miles at the present time. And fortunately, it included an area which I had always had my eye for industrial expansion, and that is the area where the present industrial park is now located. The fact of the matter is that I was again elected to the Chamber of Commerce during the '60s...or late '50s and early '60s...mostly in the '60s. At that time, Neil Steketee was president of the

Chamber of Commerce, and he appointed me as chairman of the Industrial Committee. Well, I realized the need for land for industrial expansion, and I'd had my eye on this area in the southeastern part of the city, between the two railroad tracks—the Allegan spur and the main line—as ideal for the building of factories and expanding our industrial base. Unfortunately, the area was still farm country, so it wouldn't be necessary to tear down a lot of buildings. Well, as chairman of that Industrial Committee, I started correspondence with various areas in the country—I remember Scranton, Pennsylvania, for one, and a couple places in Ohio, Muskegon, Michigan, and two or three other places in Michigan, to find out how to go about forming these industrial corporations to attract industry and acquire land and so forth and so on—the things that are necessary in order to produce a stronger industrial base. Well, the upshot of it was that after considerable work on the part of Mr. Boder and Mr. Petter and several others, we formed the Holland Economic Development Corporation, now known as HEDCOR. And after we'd been in existence for a short time, we acquired a chunk of land over in the southeastern part of the city. We bought a farm, paying a thousand dollars an acre for it, which represented quite a chunk of money, but we took the chance to buy that on a land contract. Well, as you can see now, the area has been a godsend to the city of Holland. When you travel through the area and see all the beautiful new factory buildings which have been established and how well it's run, and what it's meant to the city of Holland, I think anybody can be proud of having been a part of starting that thing and getting it going. Now, of course, our problem is the acquisition of more land. We have run out of space and have to go south of 48th Street.

So, I don't know, that pretty much sums up my life. I acted as the manager, president, executive vice-president, and cashier of the People's State Bank for a period of 1933 to 1965. When I was seventy years-old, I retired. Now, I am just a plain, ordinary loafer. (laughter)

DVR: What about this southeast area you're talking about? I see where the city of Holland wants to include it in Ottawa County now. Would that have a lot of opposition from the township people...?

CJ: I don't know how that is going to work out. I've read about it in the paper and, of course, being under two different governments—city government and county government—complicates matters for the city of Holland. And I can see it from the city of Holland's standpoint, that it would be more advantageous to have all that area included in the city of Holland and have nothing to do with the county. Except it's the same as we have with Ottawa County, we are still subject to some taxes as far as Ottawa County is concerned.

DVR: Wouldn't the county object to losing the tax revenues that are in an industrial area of that kind?

CJ: Well, I don't think that they would be losing any tax revenues, particularly. We pay taxes to Ottawa County, here in the city.

DVR: Not when you're south of 32nd Street.

CJ: No, then you pay it to Allegan County.

DVR: That's right. That county and those townships would lose a tax base.

CJ: Yes, they would; they'd lose that tax base.

DVR: You think they'd take that?

CJ: There'd be a fight on it, no question about that.

DVR: That's what I would think.

CJ: Well, I can't think of much more to say about my own personal life. Maybe you've got some more questions that you'd like to ask me; I've tried to cover the ground as thoroughly as I could.

DVR: Did your father ever buy a car?

CJ: Oh, yes. You asked about transportation awhile back. Well, in 1913 or 1914, as I said, my uncle, Henry Holkeboer, was a printer in the place on College Avenue, and he was one of the first people in Holland to have an automobile. I remember he bought a Buick Tonneau. Well, us kids used to drive it once in a while. We could drive it better than he could. But then, let's see...I don't know when my father got his first automobile. It must have been somewhere...let me see...I think he had a Model T, somewhere in the early '20s.

DVR: After World War I?

CJ: Yes.

DVR: How did World War I affect you or your family?

CJ: It didn't affect me at all. I was married and I had two children, and I didn't pass the physical either. I had a slight heart murmur, and I was classified as 4F, so I had nothing to do with the war. World War II was a different story, as far as my family is concerned, my own personal family. See, we have six boys and one daughter, and the daughter and five of the boys were in World War II; all but one saw active duty—daughter was a registered nurse; she served in England and northern France. She can tell you some harrowing stories about the terrible burns that some of these air boys suffered. She was

in the hospital in southern England where the burned patients were taken, mostly burned patients.

DVR: Let's go back to your boyhood a minute. Did you ever do any fishing?

CJ: Well, sir, I don't know just how old I was, I wasn't very old, maybe nine or ten. My dad said, "Let's go fishing." So, he had a fish pole, a little bamboo pole, but he didn't have one for me. So, he just took a nice limb and cut it and put a line on it with a hook, and we went out to what they used to call Kleitz Dock over in the Waukazoo area, in the Pine Creek Bay for speckled bass. We got some worms, and we got caught speckled bass there. Well, that started me off. I remember one time I went out there, and by that time I had my own bamboo fishing pole, and some people came over there in a boat and they had some minnows. They said, "Kid, would you like to have some minnows?" And I said yes—minnows, of course, are much better than worms for fishing. So, me and my simple little bamboo pole with the minnows on my hook, I was pulling out one speckled bass after another. They weren't catching any with their fancy poles; they wondered how I did it. But I remember how proudly I went home. I wasn't more than ten years old, I guess, when I did that.

Then, later on, we went fishing on the pier breakwaters. Of course, perch came in there by the millions every year. We'd get a big bucket of minnows, and go out there and sit on the pier. Get there early in the morning, probably fish till nine, ten o'clock, and go home with a string of, perhaps, anywhere from seventy-five to a hundred nice perch. I'd have to sit there all afternoon to scale the blooming things and clean them (laughs), but mostly perch fishing, that's what we went after. Later on, if we could get a boat, we'd go out after bluegills. There used to be bluegill grounds over around, what used to be

Tellings Point, which is on the south side here. That little bay in there used to have a lot of bluegills, then we'd catch them there; and we used to catch them in Pine Creek. It's just too bad that that lake has become so terribly dirty that fish can't live in it anymore; all there is the big carp. But, I've always enjoyed fishing. I've been up north in Michigan fishing for trout; I've been out in Lake Michigan with friends of mine in boats trying to catch salmon and big lake trout a few times. But, I'm more interested in golf than I am in fishing now. I like to play golf.

DVR: How often do you go out playing golf?

CJ: About three times a week, usually.

DVR: Good.

CJ: Yes, I figure it keeps me healthy and keeps me in the fresh air.

DVR: One other question I had in the back of my mind is you mentioned that you spoke Dutch and Gelderland and Gronigen and Fries. How did you learn to distinguish between these, or did you hear these from different relatives? How do you learn to distinguish?

CJ: Well, each one has its own peculiarities and certain words. There's enough similarity between all those various Dutch dialects, except the Frisian, which is really a separate language; they have separate literature. But the other dialects, there's enough similarity there. There's a variation in the pronunciation of certain words and certain things. The reason that I could talk to Gelderlands was the fact that the Harderwyk area there, out on Lakewood Boulevard, all the people in the church there, were practically all from the province of Gelderland in the Netherlands, and they talked Gelder, see. Well, I associated enough with those people and they talked with my folks enough and they spoke their dialect, my folks spoke the Drenthe's dialect, so I learned the Drenthe from

my folks, and the Gelderland from the neighbors. Then I learned the Frisian from my grandmother. That's all she talked, so I had to learn the Frisian language from my grandparents. The Gronigens, well, they got into Montana there and people in that area, most of them, were from the province of Gronigen in the Netherlands. So, they spoke the Gronigen dialect, and I learned that there.

DVR: So, you're fluent in almost all of them, where you can well make your way through them.

CJ: Oh, yes.

DVR: You say your brothers and sisters are all alive yet?

CJ: Yes. I have three brothers and four sisters. Two of my sisters live here in Holland; one lives in Zeeland, one lives in Grand Rapids. My three brothers are...

[End of tape; end of interview]