Hamlin, Ward and Celia Oral History Interview: Sesquicentennial of Holland, "150 Stories for 150 Years"

Ann Paeth
AP: The first thing we always have you do is state your name and your birth date and where you were born.

WH: I was born in Greenville, Michigan, and my birth date is [date removed], 1912. Holland is the only place that I ever remember living in. See, my father was a construction engineer, and he went from place to place, but all I ever remember is Holland, Michigan. That was on First Avenue. This fellow that writes books, Don Van Reiken, he was at the library and I told somebody that I lived on First Avenue, and he said, "Where was that, First Avenue?" Right away. I told him what it is now is Washington Avenue, not First Avenue. "Oh, so that's how it is," he said.

AP: So you came to Holland when you were young...?

WH: I don't even remember when I came to Holland, but I know my father, being a construction engineer, they lived on 17th Street at one time, and then on Washington Avenue.

CH: But you were in Holland as long as you can remember.

WH: Holland is the only place that I ever remember. When we moved from Washington Avenue over to the north side, my father was the chief engineer at the tannery. The tannery had a factory house, so that he would be on duty, on call, at any time. Then from there we moved to East 22nd Street. From there, I got married, and we bought a place on West 20th. We lived there for ten years. Then her brother was selling his
house on East 21st Street. One day, I said, why don’t we buy that? That’s what we did, and we’ve been there ever since, 51 years now.

AP: Let’s talk about some of these things that you had mentioned that had changed a lot.

WH: The playgrounds—they did such a nice job there at 19th and College. They still have the problem there, when it rains hard, they have a big puddle. The kids have more fun in that puddle.

CH: But the playground is really nice, and a lot of the neighborhood kids come and play all day.

WH: Yes, there’s times that place is real busy. And so far as the fire equipment being different, this goes right back a long ways. I do remember seeing one of the pieces of equipment being pulled by horses. I don’t remember too much about it, but I do remember seeing that. They have improved so in the years past. What they have now is just marvelous. I was talking with one of the young firemen at Evergreen Commons when they had a truck there demonstrating during an open house. I said to him, "You used to fight fires with a hose." You know, just one stream of water. He said now that nozzle that they have breaks it up so much it puts out more fire than one little spot at a time. It covers more area and works a lot better that way.

AP: So have you seen fatalities and losses of buildings due to fire gone down a lot?

WH: We’ve had a lot of total ones. The Van Raalte Hall at Hope College, that was one of the buildings that was completely destroyed, and that’s because there was more wood in there than other structure. I did see the Ottawa Beach Hotel when that burned. We were on the south side of the lake, next to where the yacht club is, standing there
watching across the water, and it was so hot. That’s probably a good mile across there.

AP: And you could feel that heat?

WH: Oh, it was hot! In those days, the fellow that owned that hotel lived in Grand Rapids. They said he got from Grand Rapids to Holland in twenty minutes.

AP: You can’t even do that now.

WH: Oh, you could do it in less than that now. Of course, that is a good many years ago. It must be about 70 years ago. I was maybe ten.

AP: What caused the fire?

WH: I don’t know if they ever really came out with it or not. But I think it was combustion from paint rags. They had been cleaning and painting inside, and I think that’s what they came up with, some kind of combustion. We talked about the little stores. There were a lot of little stores. If the one you went to didn’t have what you wanted, you could go across the street. There were lots of little stores.

CH: But not near the variety of merchandise that you can get today.

WH: Oh no. Maybe they had corn flakes, but not a whole store full.

CH: It’s not like when you go to Meijer or one of the other big ones nowadays.

AP: And you were saying the grocer used to get the items for you and box them up?

CH: A grocer would get them. A lot of it was bulk. Like, a pound of cookies, they had big square boxes of cookies. And if that’s the one you picked out, then he’d have to dig in there and take a handful and put it in the bag for you. Now they’re all boxed so you just pick up a box.
AP: So there wasn’t all this packaging that we have now?

CH: Not nearly the packaging, a lot of bulk.

AP: Do you find you throw a lot more stuff away with the packaging?

CH: Yes, there’s a lot more waste as far as paper.

WH: There is a lot of stuff that is recyclable, too.

The rest havens, that’s been a wonderful thing, too, here in Holland. They have them in homes now, too. Of course, they all have to be examined and passed by inspectors. They have to be licensed.

AP: So there are some very high quality places around here.

WH: Also, the black sports. Not necessarily all sports, but blacks are moving in immensely on a lot pro-teams.

CH: Holland has changed. Years ago, we never had any Mexicans or black people. Gradually now, there’s a lot.

AP: Do you remember when sports were integrated and black athletes played on teams?

Like in professional sports? Did that just change gradually?

WH: Yes. I remember one time I was walking with my dad and I saw a black man for the first time. I was maybe four years old. He hushed me up right away.

Nowadays, you don’t dare step outside of the house without locking the doors.

CH: We used to, years ago, leave our doors open all the time. We’d go away for a weekend, and you didn’t have to lock your doors. You wouldn’t dare do that nowadays. You’d lock up every door and window and everything. It’s a much different society than it was years ago.
AP: You said the population of Holland has changed a lot.

CH: It's just grown really much too fast. Us older people liked it better when it was smaller and quieter and easier to get around. They say that's progress.

AP: Maybe we'll level off pretty soon.

CH: There's so much building going on. What was the outskirts of Holland when you were a kid?

WH: If you were out on 16th Street, you were out on the edge of town.

CH: Now it goes way out to 48th.

WH: Of course, the streets are paved now, and the sidewalks.

AP: Do you remember watching them getting paved?

WH: Oh yes. Washington Avenue was a boulevard, and I remember when they came in there and put that black top down. It was really quite something. They didn't have big equipment like they do now. I believe they shoveled it off the trucks.

CH: I think so, and then had to roll it by hand.

WH: It was interesting.

AP: Did everybody sit out and watch?

CH: Yes. That was a big thing.

WH: Back in those days, you'd sit on your front porch and watch the world go by. I remember one time my mother said, "I wish somebody that had a car would give us a ride." That was before we had a car.

AP: It seems so many houses now, they're not building big front porches that you can sit on. Everybody's putting decks out back.
CH: It's a different form of building nowadays, it seems.

WH: This [motions to the room we are in] was a front porch at one time. It wasn't closed in. They used to sit here on the front porch. But it was converted into this.

AP: It's a lot of space. It's a whole other room.

WH: It is. And you've got the world in front of you. There's a constant change out there. One big change this year is the water is two feet higher than it has been.

CH: We had to put a sea wall up years ago because it was coming up into the yard. The fact is, this lot had to be raised over a foot.

WH: We had to add at least fourteen inches of dirt up here to bring it up to where it is now. Now, we could not knock this house down and build on it again. We'd have to bring the yard up at least another two feet.

CH: That's the way the ruling is now.

WH: You see that one big house out here between these little boats? That's the S-2 yacht company. That's their convention house or whatever. When VanAndel has his fireworks on the fourth, that's right out this way. The channel goes on an angle that way.

AP: So you have a good view of them?

WH: Yes, if they get up there high enough. Can you see that sand up there? That's that big hill by Ottawa Beach.

CH: Mount Pisca or something like that.

AP: I bet a lot of homes have sprung up out here over the years.

CH: Every time they take a small cottage like ours down, then they build a great big one
to replace it. Sometimes these wealthy people buy two or three lots, and then build a big huge three story one. There's several in the area. We and just one other smaller cottage are remaining after all these years.

AP: Are there a lot of people that come just for summer and weekends out here?

CH: Some of them do. Most of them are year round and they come out weekends and holidays. This would be too cold, because it has no insulation. We just have a little space heater, which wouldn't be warm enough in the winter. So we're only able to spend, at the most, three months, two, two and a half. That's about the only time we have in Michigan, because it's cool. Right away, come September, it cools off and we get rainy season, and it's not ideal. But we're close to town.

WH: Yes, it takes us maybe fifteen minutes to go home and get back out again. If we're home and it turns out to be nice...

CH: We use it as a day camp, anytime to come out if it's nice weather. She wants to know about your other stuff.

WH: Social security I've got down on here.

AP: And credit cards, too.

WH: I can't tell you too much about that.

CH: We're not great credit card owners.

WH: I've got a charge card. With a credit card, I think you can get some cash.

AP: They have new things now, so it's like a credit card, but it's from your bank, so it's from your checking account, but you can also use it like a credit card, too.

WH: My gas bills go there. Most places, gas bills and electric bills go there. I don't pay
for my groceries, I just swish the card through. It really is handy. It really is nice.

CH: We don't have to carry so much cash. It's kind of dangerous, probably.

WH: It doesn't pay to carry cash around.

AP: So that's something that's changed, too. You probably don't want to carry as much cash around.

CH: Do you want something about the printing business? Most people don't know what a Linotype is. They're completely extinct. It was a keyboard much larger than a typewriter. You typed on it, and then the mechanism would go and make a line. The back of what we called a mat had on indentation with all the different letters of the alphabet, so they formed the words and you had one line. You would push it up and it would carry itself across and it would go against a mold where there was hot lead. Then it would make an impression. That line, slug we called them, would drop down into a tray. Then you would continue until you had a tray full all lined up. Then you would put it on a big thing they called a galley, which would hold your completed column, only bigger than one column. Then somebody would ink that with a brailer, and put a piece of paper over it and run the proof press. Then you had a galley column, and you'd have somebody proofread that.

WH: They don't have proofreaders anymore.

CH: I was a proofreader also, and I tell you, I find more mistakes. Then, if there was a mistake, they would mark it and you could reset just that line, then the person would take the old line out.
AP: So there are a lot more mistakes now?

CH: The grammar, the spelling. It's pathetic. It really is bad. We find more mistakes.
   It's just amazing. He made up the forms.

WH: I'll show you one right now. That's not right at all to start a column with one word.

AP: I hate that, too, because it's so much wasted space.

CH: Sometimes it's only -i-t-.

AP: Or have you noticed, too, when they want both sides to line up, they'll have a word
   and it will be way spread out? It's not even nice to look at.

CH: See, we didn't do that at all with the Linotype.

WH: I've seen these where it ends up here with maybe two letters and a period.

CH: It doesn't look good. And there's so many mistakes. I don't think they even bother
to reread, I don't suppose they have the time. We went over everything. We printed
the Sunday School Paper, and there were very few mistakes by the time we got
through. It was really well done, I thought. But they don't have time for all this
proofreading and correcting errors. Even some of the headings on some.

WH: It was in the Sentinel the other day: "It may cost you more than one penny for
postage." I said, that word "may" isn't right. It's going to cost you. (laughs)

CH: But lots of times there are errors, and you'd think in the heading that would be very
   prominent. The minute you looked at the paper, you would see this. But then it
   would stand out to somebody that's acquainted with printed and spelling. I see more
   misspelled words.

WH: I wonder if I have a mat here. Each mat had it's own combination, and it slid along
and dropped down.

CH: When you wanted to use it again, you would push the key, and that would drop down again.

WH: This was the space where it would say whether it was on "O" or a "T" or whatever it was. You get a lot of those lined up. Then there are spacers in there, and you push them up, and that tightened up the whole line. Each space would be the same when they tightened up. If the line wasn't carefully made, the space would be quite wide.

CH: You would fill up the line with blanks.

AP: So what did you do?

WH: I put the forms together. Out of the galley, it's only one story, I would put those in the chase, and then you lock it up so that the whole thing is locked in tight. When you lift it up from the stone, then clean off all the back sides, put it back down again. This all had to be absolutely smooth. Then you carry them over and put them on the press and make another one to put on the other side.

CH: How many pages did you do at a time?

WH: We'd run four pages.

AP: So how often did you do the paper?

CH: It was a weekly Sunday School paper.

WH: And that was printed a sheet at a time, not off a roll.

CH: They don't use single sheets anymore, do they? It's all on big rolls, it just rips through so fast.

AP: So that's changed a lot with printers and computers. Have you gotten involved with
computer at all?

WH: No. Our son has.

CH: And our grandson, too. But we’re beyond that. A lot of people do, but we had no cause. Our daughter-in-law, she school teaches. They have them in the schools. They’re wonderful.

WH: It’s quite an instrument.

AP: You were talking earlier about the social security system.

WH: Yes. It’s a wonderful thing. It really is.

CH: I just hope they don’t, through all their government stuff, take it away. We made, in today’s time, real meager wages and we weren’t able to save enough for our retirement. If we didn’t have this, that would really be rough.

AP: Do you hear a lot about it in the news, now?

CH: All the time. They keep saying they’re going to have to cut social security, medicare, and that would really affect us.

WH: There was a lot of misuse by certain people through their doctor and so forth. That drew a lot of money out of social security. Of course, you run into bad people no matter what or where, they’re bound to be around.

Automobiles have changed so.

CH: In our lifetime, we have seen the first TV. There was never any TV when we were young. I remember the first radio when I was a kid at home on Central Avenue and my brother came home with a small radio. Boy did we think that was something. We’d hear a program over the radio. Think how that has changed. Then television,
the year we took my aunt to the Cleveland Clinic, that was the first that we saw television in the stores and stuff. We said, "Oh my, isn't this wonderful?" So, we've seen a lot of changes over the years.

AP: Do you remember getting your first television?

CH: We didn't have one when our kids were small at first. Then they would go to my parents or the neighbors. They always went to the neighbors to watch certain kids' programs. Then we finally broke down and said, I guess we better have one, too. Remember? We'd go every week to Nani and Grandpa for certain programs that we enjoyed.

AP: What were the programs like? What programs do you remember?

WH: Well, those cowboy ones.

CH: Yes, for the kids. There was the Lux Theater on Friday night. That was the Shadow and the Loretta Young show, that was one of my favorites.

AP: Did they have the commercials the way they have them now?

CH: No, they didn't. Nowadays, this is really poor. They have more advertising than program.

AP: I think for every hour they have fifteen minutes of ads. So would they go before and after a show, like each show would have a sponsor?

CH: Yes, in between. I think it was between, maybe on the hour or half hour, but never more than that.

AP: When would they go off the air?

CH: I think they were off by eleven, weren't they?
WH: Eleven or twelve.

AP: Because, they would play the anthem then, wouldn't they?

WH: I believe they did.

CH: Now they’re on all night, aren’t they? We don’t stay up, but they do.

WH: People don’t read books anymore by sight. They read them by tape.

CH: They are wonderful for people that have eye problems. A friend of ours is at Rest Haven, he’s no longer able to read, but he gets these books. I think that’s a wonderful thing. I think the state is doing that.

AP: I know a lot of people get them for their car.

CH: We never used to have tapes in the car, either.

WH: We didn’t even have a radio.

AP: We were talking about service stations earlier, too. About getting full service.

CH: He used to work at a service station.

WH: I helped out on Friday night.

AP: So when a car came in, what all would you have to do for it?

WH: First you’d find out what they wanted. Lots of time it was just clean the windshield and check the water.

CH: They always expected you to do the windshield. That was part of the service. And the water and the oil.

WH: More or less, you just learned to do things like that. You’d look at their tires, too.

One time, I was at a station on River and 9th. That’s where the parking lot is now. I saw a car stop there with a very soft tire in the back. I went out there and told him,
you've got a soft tire. You just drive over here by the corner and I'll put some air in
there for you. Just something like that. You notice things.

AP: Did you have a lot more flat tires?

WH: Very seldom nowadays. Now and then. Just the other day I did.

CH: But not like it was.

WH: Now you get thousands of miles on tires, where as it used to be if you got 500-600
miles on a tire, you were doing real well. They're getting better gas mileage.

AP: What was the price of gas?

WH: There was a time, during the Depression days, this one fellow was selling gasoline
for ten cents a gallon. He was on Lincoln Avenue.

CH: I remember we'd borrow the car, we'd put in fifty cents worth of gas for the evening,
and that was more than plenty to take us out to the beach or wherever we wanted to
go.

WH: In those days, you were buying the gas. You weren't paying the extra for keeping
roads up. I always have the feeling that the extra you're paying for road repairs
doesn't get to the right place.

AP: Now it averages $1.15-1.20. Maybe on a really good day, $1.05, I saw that a couple
of days ago.

WH: It depends on which kind you get.

AP: If it was above a buck, when I was younger, we thought that was ridiculous. Some
places it's $1.30 per gallon.

WH: There are some places it's $2.00 per gallon. Not around here. For getting from one
place to another, flying is wonderful. We’ve had some flights from Grand Rapids to San Francisco. From Grand Rapids to Florida.

CH: We went through Chicago. It wasn’t direct.

AP: How has the airplane industry changed.

CH: Much bigger planes.

WH: I think they’re getting wiser. They’re cutting down on size. When you’ve got room for 300 people and there’s only 100 or 250, you’re not getting your money’s worth.

AP: We were talking about the down town before, how that’s changed, and the snow melt.

WH: That was great. It even helps keep the tulips warm.

AP: I think some tourists have come in and heard about it, and thought that it was put in just for the tulips.

CH: At the time people thought they were foolish, wasting money. There was controversy as to whether they were spending too much money on the snow melt. But now they realize it was worth it.

WH: The power company is way over here, and, actually, they are limited to the temperature of the water that they can put in the lake. When they are ready to put it in, it’s too hot. So they take and run it out over this whole system, and it cools it down to where they can put it in the lake. That’s a savings and helps immensely, that water system under the roads and sidewalks.

CH: In the winter, the plows were different, too. The sidewalk plow was a horse drawn little plow.

WH: Of course, the city wasn’t as big then, either, but they used to clean the sidewalks off
with a horse and a plow, and pull them around.

CH: Now they have these zippy things.

WH: They throw the snow back in your yard.

AP: My dad runs to the window every time a snow plough comes by, like a little kid, to watch it. I guess it's still a novelty to him.

WH: Novelty and such, even cutting trees down. What a difference.

CH: Saw somebody doing one in our neighborhood the other day. It was fantastic how they climb up there like a monkey and zip a branch off.

WH: It was just amazing to watch them, standing on a branch that big around and cutting.

I did say to my wife, that piece of property is worth $10,000 more now that tree is gone. It was something that didn't really add anything to the looks of the place. The fact is, there were two trees there, and you don't need two trees.

CH: They were too big too close.

WH: This one had a great big branch over the roof.

CH: You should tell her about the Interurban, the street car that was in Holland years ago.

WH: That ran from Grand Rapids. Almost straight across here they had a big car barn, the end of the line. They would run from Macatawa to Grand Rapids. They would come into Holland just the other side of Southshore Drive. Maybe half a block further south, you can still see where the building was. They'd come into town there. That would bring them to 16th Street on Harrison Avenue to 13th Street. From 13th they went east to River Avenue. From River Avenue, they went north to 8th Street. Then on 8th Street, they went around the corner east on 8th Street to Lincoln Avenue.
There was a drugstore on the corner there of Lincoln Avenue. Of course, that’s a little park there now. Then they went north from 8th Street underneath 7th Street and out, that’s where part of this Windmill Island is that they leveled, and from there it went to Zeeland, Hudsonville, Grandville. Some of the other little places along the way. Where they went in Grand Rapids, I’m not sure. But I imagine they went into the downtown area.

CH: I remember Jenison Park.

WH: That’s where the playground was.

CH: They had a carousel and merry-go-round.

WH: Picnic areas. That would be the place to go for picnics.

CH: Some of them used to have the factory summer picnic out there.

WH: Do you have any idea what it cost to get on a car in Holland and ride out there? It cost five cents. But finally, I don’t know who got after them, they wanted them to go to Saugatuck. So the Interurban went clear to Saugatuck. It was really quite something.

CH: Parents would take their kids for a ride just to let them see what it was to have a ride on it.

WH: Nowadays I see some of these mobile homes, I say, there goes the Interurban.

AP: What finally happened to it? How long did it run.

WH: Automobiles. Well, it ran for a good many years. My aunt lived on 13th Street…

(tape ends) …interruption on the radio. It caused a lot of static. They had a trolley above, and that caused the sparks to fly. So, "Here comes the Interruption." Talking
about that now and other changes down town: all your wires used to go down 8th Street. Now they’ve got a lot of them underground and down through the alley ways so you don’t see wires anymore over head.

AP: We were talking about Evergreen Commons and how you were involved with that.

WH: We go there three times a week, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday for exercise for three quarters of an hour. We get there at 9:00

CH: We were in on the initial planning, really, from the very beginning twelve years ago.

WH: We help serve dinners. We work in the kitchen, dishwasher and so on. Have you been in there at all?

AP: No, I haven’t.

CH: You should go there some noon and have your lunch. It’s a regular dinner.

WH: You can have a real nice lunch there at noon. Very reasonable. No tipping, because all the people that serve you there are all volunteers. It works fine and we have a chef there now.

CH: That’s their new price list. You can have soup and salad, or you can have dinner or whatever you like. There’s one main entree, but it’s a good meal.

WH: And you get plenty.

AP: Maybe someone will want to know later: your dinner is $3.00, soup for $1.00.

That’s very reasonable.

CH: I was thinking about the highways and the many levels. My father would just be amazed if he’d see some of these overpasses with all the ramps. It’s fantastic when you drive to Grand Rapids or any place now, they have so many underpasses.
WH: I often think about that one on the north side of Muskegon. They’re three up there.

   It’s quite amazing. Over and under and through.

CH: You never saw anything like that when we were young.

AP: We talked about the size of Holland and how that’s all grown. Has the church
   changed a lot? Where have you gone? How has that changed?

WH: Completely.

CH: They used to always have an evening service at 7:00. Now if they have an evening
   service it’s usually 6:00. If it’s a big congregation that can’t meet all at one time,
   they have several services in the morning.

WH: Our original church was sold. Then we built a different church on Apple Avenue.

   Trinity Reformed Church. Instead of building a church with little rooms inside for
   Sunday School and all that, it’s a bigger church. The main auditorium is large. The
   meeting room outside has just a few chairs here or there.

CH: It’s a big lobby. Now we have a meeting place after the service where you can have
   coffee or juice and meet with people. At the old Trinity, there was no place.

WH: It’s all entirely different. Of course, there’s the escalator up and down, where as in
   the old church you had to walk. It’s a nuisance.

CH: It’s a rule that you have to accommodate the handicapped.

WH: Did you realize that Evergreen Commons was a Christian school?

CH: It was a Christian school to begin with, prior to building. One of the buildings was.

WH: They tore down the old building right there where River Avenue and State Street and
   Michigan Avenue are, there was the old school right up there in that front part. 21st
Street was right behind them. They tore down the old school entirely. The other school that was across the street was a much nicer building. It was a lot newer. They have this street closed off. Prince had a fellow from up north that designed the building. The building out in the front part where the office is, that big auditorium, that was definitely designed for the commons. They serve meals in there. They have exercise and plays and programs. That part was definitely designed and made for what it's being used for. When Ed Prince wanted some pine trees around the building, they went out and got some. They planted them one morning, and they were just maybe four feet high. They said that these were fast growing trees. This one fellow that helped plant, he had to go to work the rest of the day. When Ed Prince came over and saw those little trees, he said, "That's not right. I've got somebody that's got some better trees. We'll put them in there." So they did that that day. When this fellow comes home from work and drives past to see those little trees up to eight feet, he couldn't believe that they grew that fast. But now they're adding on to it. A swimming pool, a larger wood shop, and some other improvements.

CH: A lot of people years ago didn't know what to do when they retired. Now everybody's got a place to go and do things and keep busy. It's so much better for older people to keep active than to just sit home.

AP: I think Holland has one of the most active groups of senior citizens I've ever seen in any other city.

WH: Would you have any idea what it costs us for a membership for a year? $15 for
each. You can’t beat that.

AP: No. I would not have guessed that. I wouldn’t have.

WH: Of course, we pay extra for the exercise.

CH: But that’s minimal.

WH: You can go in there anytime. If the weather’s cold and you don’t want to stand outside, just go into the commons.

CH: You can go in there and have a cup of coffee. Take a friend in and have a cup of coffee and a cookie or a muffin or whatever you’d like.

WH: There are some fellows there waiting for them to open up in the morning so they can get in and get a pool table. There’s about four pool tables in there. One wall in there on the end of the pool tables is full of jigsaw puzzles. There’s always somebody there working on a jigsaw puzzle. If they don’t finish it, they get up and leave and come back the next day and somebody’s put a piece in there. There’s entertainment there. There’s just about always somebody there playing cards. There’s a room up there that can seat about 28 or 30 people. It has a complete kitchen up there. If you have a group up there that wants to be by itself, take care of everything else, they have a kitchen up there. You can serve out of it. The meals are set up, but the possibility is there that they can take care of it themselves.

CH: They teach people, some of these people that need housekeeping skills that don’t know, they have classes. It’s a wonderful thing. All the chefs say they’ve never worked with a nicer bunch of volunteers. They say they do better than some paid help.
WH: These are all the different things people can do. Everything from having your feet
checked over to having your head checked over. You can’t hardly beat that. There’s
a lot of people that like to do work at home, crocheting or whatever. There’s a gift
shop. They make things and give them to the gift shop, and the gift shop sells them.

AP: It sounds very well organized. That’s probably the key.

WH: You should come there some noon and have your lunch. We’ll show you around.

CH: They have tours come in from different cities and take the people for tours. They
say, "Are you lucky, I wish we had one of these!” So we are fortunate.

WH: Generally speaking, there’s plenty of parking. Although it’s been getting tighter
lately. Now, they’re digging in that parking lot. But we still have the parking lot
across the alley.

CH: They’ve purchased some more houses they’re going to tear down for parking later on.
That will work out nicely.

AP: What other things do we need to talk about?

WH: They have square dancing there. Ballroom, too. A lot of that ballroom dancing.

CH: There’s a class on Monday evenings. I don’t know if it’s every Monday. Every so
often, they have a dinner dance. You can come to have your dinner and dance, or
you can come just to dance if you don’t care about the dinner. They’ve had some
real nice special dances. They make it look like a cruise ship, and they have the
buffet of all the foods. That isn’t limited to just members. Other people can come,
too.

The stores down town are completely changed. We used to have a Penny’s
and a Sears.

WH: They’re changing one store down there right now on the north side of 8th Street.

CH: Where the Arts Council was, Talbot’s is coming in. That will be nice, because a lot of people were bemoaning the fact that there really wasn’t an inexpensive department store down town, because there used to be a Penny’s and a Sears. Since then, the down town has changed.

WH: With Edgar Prince, the whole down town has really changed now. It’s beautiful. I’m a history fan. This is one of the first books that they came out with. This is by Don Van Reiken. I can’t help myself. When I see something I remember, I cut it out and put it in here. This is from something I donated, a bottle of acid poison from the Doesburg Drug Store. That was one of the very earliest druggists in Holland, Doesburg.

AP: What would Oxalic Acid Poison be used for?

WH: I don’t know if people soaked their feet in it or whatever. I don’t remember. But I took it over. This is an aerial picture.

AP: OK. That’s Hope and all these houses over there are where Haworth Center is now are gone. It seems like there are more trees. It’s all full of trees. DeWitt’s there, Van Wylen’s there. This had to be late 80s early 90s. I don’t think there’s that many trees there now.

WH: This is just a postcard of Macatawa. This is all gone now.

AP: And the boardwalk. Did the boardwalk collapse at some point?

CH: Did the fire take that or the water?
WH: The water. They had several fires there, too. This is the basket factory in Douglas.

CH: There was a basket factory in Holland, too.

AP: Where was that located, because somebody the other day couldn’t remember where it was?

WH: Kollen Park. That’s where it was.

CH: There was a shoe factory, too, Holland Shoe Factory down there.

WH: On 16th Street. They made a good shoe. It was a shame that they went out of business. And the Holland Furnace Company. That went out of business. That was a sad one. This is Singapore. That was in Saugatuck on the north side of it. My dad talked about that. There was quite a bank there. And vessel building, boat building. My father was born in Douglas.

AP: Here it says a stereoscopic view. What does that mean?

WH: That was an instrument that you held up to your nose here, and it had a picture on this size and this side, and it put the two together and made them kind of stand out.

CH: Yes, one in each. And you looked through this thing.

AP: Did it create dimension, or just a more vivid picture?

CH: I don’t recall.

WH: But it was a card this side that you slipped in there and looked at. It just seemed like it stood out. Like a 3-D sort of thing.

AP: Is it kind of like those plastic children toys, the viewfinder, and you put a disc in. I think that’s kind of a version of it.

WH: You can still buy these cards in some of the antique shops.
CH: I just thought of this. There was no school busing. We walked in all kinds of weather a great distance always. I walked from 23rd down to Horace Mann, which was behind Central Christian Reformed Church.

WH: On 10th Street. And you'd walk home for lunch.

CH: I think we did. No buses whatsoever. It changed in years since. In some cases I think it’s good. In others I think it would have been better if they had to walk.

WH: It drives the driver nuts with these kids.

CH: Our class was the first class that moved into the junior high school on River Avenue. I remember carrying our books from the one on Graves Place to the one on River.

WH: Look, they’re moving a building with horses.

AP: So they’ve always been moving buildings around. Have you seen them move them around on campus.

CH: Some of those big ones around the campus, it’s unbelievable how they can do that.

AP: Here they’ve got it up on boards…

WH: Yes. They had rollers under there. When they got off the roller, somebody had to bring the roller up in front and put it here again. They did not hurry.

AP: I can’t believe they’d even want to attempt that. It doesn’t seem like it’d be worth while. Now they drive it. They take trees out so they can get houses through the street. They’ve chopped a lot of trees down. I didn’t know anybody tried such a thing.

WH: This is where the Civic Center is.

AP: Now they’re looking to make that new area center.
WH: But they can't decide on where. This is the Hotel Holland. I think that's where the Rest Haven is down town now, on 8th Street and Central Avenue.

AP: When that was the Warm Friend Hotel, that was quite the hotel, wasn't it?

WH: Oh yes. That's the Model Drug sight. I worked there at one time, but it didn't look like that.

CH: Did anybody ever tell you about the little money carriers that they had? The clerk would put the bill and the cash into a little container and pull the string. There was a trolley and it would go up to the office and the person in the office would make the change. Then they would send the thing back and the change would be in it. There was only one person making the transaction.

WH: Kept everybody honest in those days. Quite something.

[Continue to look at pictures and chatting until tape runs out.]