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Hofmeyer, Terry Oral History Interview: Sesquicentennial of Holland, "150 Stories for 150 Years"

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Oral History Interview with
Terry Hofmeyer

(unedited)

Conducted April 10, 1997
by Duane Booi

Sesquicentennial Oral History Project
"150 Stories for 150 Years"

Sesquicentennial Oral History Project
Interview with Terry Hofmeyer
April 10, 1997
Interviewer: Duane Booi

DB: Terry, it's good to meet you.

TH: It's good to have you here, and I think it's going to be a fun hour or so that we're going to spend together.

DB: I'm sure it will be. It probably makes sense to do this kind of chronologically. So why don't we start with the year you were born and something about your childhood, where you grew up, what games did you play. Pranks on Halloween or whatever else you might think of.

TH: I was born in 1938 in Holland Hospital. Shortly after I was born, my parents built a new house at 19th and Homestead, in the Montello Park area and fairly near the lake, so part of what we did early on, the North and South Alabama were docked down there so that was always a fun place to go and the old oil docks, which is right next door to them, is where we always fished as kids. A lot of bullheads but occasionally a few bass and other things we managed to pull out of there. But we did a lot of things in and around the lake front. One of the things I always remember when I was thinking back about some of these things that happened early on there was even back in the forties, which is where I start to recollect some of this, a lot of boats would come through. And we'd always watch for the boats and I still remember one of the more unusual ones. I still remember the name, the *Meteor*. It was one of the old whale back oil boats that used to dock in Holland and they would pump the fuel

products down to the tank farms which were located down at Ottawa Avenue, and at one point, still over at 19th and Plasman. But those were some of the things that we did when we were kids. Growing up, my dad was in the Navy in World War II. I don't remember a lot about World War II except I knew he was gone, I knew he was in the Navy and remember the times that he came home like after boot camp and when he would have leave. I remember him being home at that point. I also remember when he went into the service we sold the family car. Number one, I don't remember this, but they tell me that gasoline was difficult to get so we relied on the bus route which came down 17th Street which was just two blocks from our house. We relied heavily on that. Another thing I can always remember also during those war years - there was a creamery which was located on Plasman Avenue at about 18th Street and we could see that from the house. We could always tell when they had butter for sale because long lines would start to form, and then I can remember my mother would get me the token or coupon that you needed along with the money and I would hike across the field and stand in line to get butter. I remember when the war was over because my mother told my brother and myself that dad would be coming home shortly. It was actually I think about six or nine months after the war was over before he was discharged from the Navy and came back home. Growing up on the west end of town, attended Montello Park School which was a public school then, it's now private school, but we went through the eighth grade. A lot of our activities in the neighborhood centered around the schools. Where we played ball, that's where we met all of our friends. We did organize a lot of vacant

lot ball games and we did have quite a bit of vacant space around the house. Dunn's Woods which is now Wildwood subdivision was woods back then, so it was kind of a fun place for us to play. Little things during those early years which would be late forties maybe even into early fifties. There were orchards around here. We picked cherries to make money. Picked blueberries. As we got older, we graduated into working in restaurants as dish washers, and bus boys, and that's how we kind of kept things going. Junior high was located at Sixteenth and River and that's where we went to Junior high. Senior high (the new high school hadn't been built) so we were in the old building, the Community Ed building now at Sixteenth and Pine, and that's where I graduated from high school. In high school, I was active in a few of the high school groups but also played football, ran track, and I think it was my senior year in high school I started working at the Warm Friend, which was *the* hotel in town at that time. Started at Hope College and stayed at Hope and worked at the hotel all year round, and in summers worked primarily at the Heinz plant either on the production line or the last year I was in charge of the high-low crew which delivered pickles early in the morning which was a kind of fun thing to do as well. I married in my senior year at Hope College. My wife taught that first year while I finished school. Then in early 1960, I can't remember I think it was around February or March, I started working with the City of Holland. They hired me as the deputy city clerk and purchasing agent, and I had a wonderful career working with the City of Holland. I worked for them for 28 years. I was Assistant City Manager and then fortunate enough to be appointed as City Manager. So I saw a lot of changes that occurred in

Holland particularly in that area from 1960 until the end of '88. Those were big years for the city. It was when HEDCOR started. I was active in the Holland Jaycees and they were one of the groups that was instrumental in helping bring HEDCOR around and that really changed. I know early on, some of the areas that Holland had designated for industrial park didn't develop, I think some of the property owners just were not anxious to see industrial development in some of those areas but...I can remember when the Lifesaver plant came to Holland. I think the industrial revenue bonds that were sold, I think they were probably the first issue in the state. If it wasn't the first, it had to be about the second. But technically, the City of Holland was the owner of the Lifesaver plant and the lease arrangement with the Lifesaver people in effect paid off the bonds. Other than when the General Electric plant went up, that was one of the first early large plants that came into the Holland area. And then HEDCOR, of course, working with the City and extending utilities and there were some annexations that obviously occurred early on in those years, but the Industrial Park really developed and really brought about a lot of the changes. Holland has really become the employment base for the general area and certainly has contributed to Holland's well being and the jobs that have been produced over the years.

We did go through a number of annexations and some of those were very easy, some of them were not quite so easy in terms of bringing additional land into the City for expansion. But the expansion of the wastewater treatment plant, the water plant that was built out, highway systems - all of those just brought a lot of

change into the general Holland area. Downtown Holland I think really has been a bright spot for everybody. I think we were very fortunate early on, even though we had worked and tried very hard to have Sears or Penneys or some of the major mall developers take a look at constructing in the downtown area, that just didn't happen. But I think we were fortunate that the Prince family and a number of others wanted to be actively involved, and I think saw a vision for the downtown area. It's really kind of satisfying to see how well that has done. Those are just some real highlights of things that happened over my close to sixty years here in Holland.

DB: Close to sixty, okay, I assumed you were younger than that. When did you graduate from Hope?

TH: I graduated in 1961.

DB: Okay, my wife and I were '49 and '50, so it a bit after that era. You were actively involved then in the revitalization of Holland's downtown area.

TH: Yes. I worked very closely with the Main Street Committee. That was a fun project to work on. Downtown Holland always has been unique. It's always been kind of the center for things to be happening and it's good to see that it's still continuing that way. But yes, I think we were fortunate. Greg Robinson we had hired to work with us on the Main Street Project and Greg just did a fantastic job. We were blessed, I think really, with a very active and dedicated committee that wanted to work and see things happen in the downtown area. So even though part of what we had always envisioned, and that is keeping downtown Holland as perhaps the only or the exclusive shopping area, mall developers just have a different idea of where they feel

they should be going. Certainly we respect them and they are investing their money, but downtown Holland, even if it doesn't have a Sears or a Penneys or some of the mall stores, really has remained strong and for a lot of good reasons. Part of it, I think early on, was due to the committee and Greg really being committed to wanting something in the downtown area. Things like snow melt, which is certainly unique for Holland, was an idea that Ed Prince had and felt that it was workable. I know it took a lot of meetings and a lot of convincing to convince the BPW that this could be successful. Yes, there was water that could be piped through there from the power plant which is near the downtown area. So a lot of things just kind of fell into place, and it was really a fun project to work on. I think we all enjoyed it.

DB: I bet you still had some convincing to do though, although you would think, looking back on it now, that there wouldn't be a whole lot of resistance to anything. If people could really visualize what it was going to become.

TH: And part of it is no matter what kind of projects you're working on, is trying to get people enthused and see a vision. Downtown merchants as a group over the years have generally been very supportive of things downtown. I don't think we would have had the amount of off street parking that we presently have downtown or some of the amenities downtown had not the downtown merchants really been willing to put some of their own money into it. A lot of the financing, both for the construction and the annual maintenance of snow melt, of the parking lots - those were all done by special assessments downtown. It did take some convincing to convince some of the downtown property owners that yes, these special assessments would be best for them

long term. But I think most of them that were involved say in the late sixties, early and mid-seventies, even into the eighties, I think are very happy that things went the way they did in the downtown area. Very fortunate, as some of the businesses that had traditionally been located downtown, as they started rebuilding or building new facilities in the Industrial Park, it left some properties that the City was able to acquire and remove and really develop the one-way street system and a lot of off street parking. So in the long run, a very successful program downtown. It was fun to be part of all of that. It really involved a lot of people. It involved some people who were willing to put money into the downtown area. It involved downtown merchants, the Board of Public Works, the City Council certainly, a lot of committed individuals.

DB: How about Hope College?

TH: Hope College was always just very, very supportive of what we were trying to do in the downtown area. And I think they saw their long term future as remaining close to the downtown and being tied to it. But a number of projects... You know Holland traditionally owned and operated Riverview Park which is now Window on the Waterfront. When we first started taking a look at the possibility of renovating that area and having it more open and accessible to the public, the first thought was what do we do with Riverview Park. That's where baseball games were played, and more importantly probably, football games. Well, meeting with the college people at that point we saw the opportunity to have some grant monies coming in but there certainly had to be some local commitments. Hope College was really one of the first ones

that said, "Yes, we're willing to put some cash money into this," which they did and ended up with Holland Stadium. It's really been good to see Hope College redevelop its area around the stadium. I think the tennis facilities, their soccer fields, really have made a very key part of that whole downtown area. Over the years Hope College has been very supportive. They've been involved in a number of our things ranging all the way from Mayor's Exchange Day to Tulip Time.

Some of the dignitaries from the Netherlands, the Queen coming in, those were obviously all important items. Bill Wichers, I think we all fondly remember Bill and his activities. His office was right up on the third floor next to mine and had a lot of contact with him. Bill was really a person of great vision. I think he could see things that many of us couldn't even think of at the time. It was fun working with him. He was very detail oriented. We would sometimes almost pull what little hair we had left out trying to work out all those details. But something like the Queen's visit was just time...she was going to be here just a couple of days...and working with Bill these things were timed to a minute or five minute segments. We just knew what we were going to be doing. We would run through these things forwards and backwards and before they were here. I remember one of the things, they were coming in from Grand Rapids in a motorcade and they were going to be driving in on Sixteenth Street coming down River Avenue. Then the mayor, Rich Smith, was going to be meeting them in front of the City Hall and giving a formal welcome. Then from City Hall or the Centennial Park area they were going to be taking a carriage ride through the downtown area to Hope College where a reception

was planned. We just had this scheduled and Bill said, "How long is the carriage ride going to take?" And we said we had this timed out - it was like fifteen or twenty minutes - and that wasn't acceptable. We ended up one evening at a low traffic time and we had the person who was supplying the carriage and the horses and we actually walked it and timed it down to the minute. Bill was that kind of an individual. He just had everything planned out just to the nth degree. A little frustrating at times, but in the long run everything just went off smoothly without a hitch, whether it was a picnic at Kollen Park or a boat ride on Lake Macatawa. Bill brought a lot of very unusual people into town. People from Chicago, New York, San Francisco. He brought a lot of people into the community and he exposed a lot of us to some very different ideas. Things that might work. Bill was also on the planning commission for a long, long time and I think we all benefited from some of the long-term planning that was done through his guidance and through a number of other people who were on the commission over the years.

DB: You've talked about so many things and that's great! I'm trying to think of what we didn't perhaps cover sufficiently. I don't know about your family now. I don't think we've gotten to that.

TH: Well, as I said, we were married and my wife taught the first year and I finished off my senior year at Hope College. We started our family at that point. We have four great children. Fortunate to have three of them living right here in town. Our oldest daughter, Mary, lives on East 30th Street and she teaches in the West Ottawa School District. Our son, Mark, is a commercial loan officer, vice-president with First of

America and they live north of town. So they're right here. Our third daughter, Jane, is the one who is living out of town. She's living in Lansing. She's an attorney and a partner in a law firm in Lansing, and our youngest daughter, Sarah, is with the psychiatric department at Holland Hospital. We are expecting three new babies in the family this summer. Mary, and Mark's wife Robin, and Sarah are all expecting, so we'll have a couple of babies in June and one in July. So it looks like it's going to be a busy summer for us. Ruthie was home with the kids until our youngest, Sarah, was in school and then she was very fortunate. She worked in a job share with another teacher. The both taught half days. She did that I believe for about eight or nine years, and then when that half day thing was being eliminated, she started teaching full time. She's also been fortunate, just as I have been, to spend a long time at one place. She has been teaching at Maplewood Elementary over all these years. She teaches fifth grade right now and probably will teach for a couple of more years. Her family is from the Chicago area. In fact, she's on spring break right now. She and her sister have been out in Colorado visiting their other sister. I talked to her on the phone last night and she should be home sometime this afternoon after being gone for close to a week. So over the years we've had just a very active family. We've been active with our church. We joined Christ Memorial Reformed in 1960 and we're still members there. We both served on consistory. Ruth is a dedicated choir member. I've been on a couple of the church building committees; she was on the last church building committee. We both taught Sunday School over the years in one form or another. We've been very fortunate to have had a very

good, growing church that our family could kind of grow with at this point.

Personally, it's been fun. We try to get away as much as we can. We always look forward to...particularly when I was working with the City, City Manager Conferences. They're always nice breaks, and fortunately, we both have been able to attend things like that. We still remained summer campers. Early on when the kids were young, we would go up to Cran Hill Ranch and that was always a camping week for us. When the kids were real young, every other year we'd go out to Colorado for a summer camping trip. Those are fun memories to take along. Now that the kids are all gone, we still (except we won't do it this year with a couple of grandchildren coming in June) but I think even long after the kids were out of the house and out of college themselves, we still would go camping up at Cran Hill for at least one week right after school was out in June. But they're are fun times. There are a lot of memories with the kids and things that we do, so it's been good.

DB: Was Estes Park the spot that you ended up in Colorado by any chance?

TH: We've been in Estes Park a number of times. We've also camped in the National Forest Campgrounds out there. Ruthie's sister, Joyce and her husband, Don, have a cottage near Grand Lake which is on the other end of Estes Park coming through Rocky Mountain National Park so that's where our vacations out in Colorado were spent. That's been fun and convenient. And Grand Lake is a fun community. It's like going up to some of the smaller communities up north. You know, Harbor Springs and some of those, where you've got nice active little downtown areas and they really are very resorty but they're also getting a lot more year round residents.

Some of these same things have happened here. I remember growing up in the Central Park area. Although there were a number of year around homes, a lot of Central Park was the small cottages. Over the years those have pretty much be converted into year around residences. Once you are outside of city government you can kind of sit back and look at some of these things that happened, but there was a recent controversy on maintaining these small rights of ways that run through the Central Park area. Those same problems had cropped up over the years when I was with the City and you try to do things to keep the controversies down. But it was interesting. I think as more and more of these summer areas slowly converted into year round residences, you just had the possibility of more conflicts. When Central Park was basically all cottagers, once they left in September or so, whatever conflicts or controversy kind of left along with them and you didn't see them until the following year. Well, once you had year round residents in there all the time, these things just don't go away. So you just have to resolve them one way or another. It's unfortunate that we have to depend on the courts all the time to do this. We can't work it out ourselves, and it would probably be much more economical if we could resolve all of those kind of issues without having to resort to the courts. Over the years you kind of accept that as one of the things that is going to happen and that's why you rely on your City Attorney and people like Gord Cunningham or Andy Mulder - the people who give you this good advice.

DB: How about your earlier family - your ancestry? Were your father, grandfather, great grandfather in this area?

TH: On my mother's side, her maiden name was Koning, Sam and Kate, they were both immigrants here to the United States. They were married here in 1900 so they probably came shortly before that. But they immigrated here and settled in Holland over on West 14th Street. I still remember right after my dad came home from the war...(I think I mentioned he had sold the car when he went into the service) and it was shortly after he came home, and it was a period of time we would always go over for Sunday dinner at Grandma and Grandpa's house and they lived on East 14th down by the railroad tracks. That was a Sunday walk after church. We would walk over there. I can remember that. I only remember it in good weather. I don't remember walking in the snow so we must have gotten a car shortly after that. That was a regular Sunday thing. Sunday afternoon over there and listening to Tiger baseball on WKZO, the Kalamazoo radio station. WHTC didn't carry the Sunday ballgames at that time. On the Hofmeyer side of the family, my Grandpa Hofmeyer was born, actually they tell me from his birth certificate, in Germany but on one of these border towns but actually immigrated here through the Netherlands. That also probably would be close to the 1900s. My Grandma Hofmeyer, Sue, she was born here in the United States. She was on the Busscher side of the family. They, I think, were some of the earlier residents. They grew up in the Graafschap area. My dad grew up on a farm; their farm was just south of Graafschap. In fact, the new highway cuts through the back part of their forty acres so we still can ride by there and see the old family farm. I'm thing to remember when my grandparents moved off the farm. I'm sure it was when my dad was in the service so it probably would

have been like '43 or '44, but they moved into town. I remember my dad always used to tell me they had the farm during the depression and my grandfather was fortunate. He worked at Donnelly Mirrors, or as it was known then, Donnelly-Kelly, but apparently was able to work through the entire depression era plus they had the farm. So I don't think they were hit economically quite as hard as a lot of other families in the area from what they've told me anyway. They moved into town, in fact just a couple of blocks from us, and they ended up building a home on South Shore Drive. They lived there until my grandfather passed away and my grandmother went to live at Rest Haven. The same thing happened on my mother's side of the family. My grandfather passed away when I was in high school and my grandmother moved into Rest Haven while I was still in college. I remember that one of the things they used to do was when I was the first couple years at Hope, since she lived right on East 14th Street, I would go to her house for lunch and part of what I was supposed to do was make sure she took her pills. So we would have lunch and I'd line up her pills and make sure she took all her pills (laughs). She also ended up moving to Rest Haven out on 32nd Street - just a great facility for local people who really probably shouldn't be home alone but certainly aren't anywhere near the position where they should be at a nursing home or need some sort of extended care. Hospitals are unique. When I first started working for the City, Holland Hospital was totally owned by the City of Holland and operated with a hospital board. Things were changing rapidly in the medical field and probably still are. I remember meeting with Fred Bird - this would have been about the mid-seventies - and just

talking about some of the conflicts we had in terms of budget and wages, salaries, fringe benefits, things that were being offered in the medical field that just weren't being offered to other municipal organizations, and talking about the possibility of moving to a hospital authority. Then through a long series of meetings with City Council and township boards, that was finally put on the ballot and passed very easily. The dates will probably escape me, I think it was probably toward the middle or latter part of the eighties when the hospital went from a hospital authority to a private not-for-profit hospital. Really at that point is separated from city government as such. Obviously they've been running very successfully, and they probably needed those things to compete with the other hospitals in the general area, whether it was North Ottawa or the Grand Rapids hospitals or whatever. Over all, they're still apparently still doing well. They are still expanding . I see they have another construction project well underway over there. Those were some very unique things that we were able to get involved with during those growth years in the sixties and seventies and eighties.

DB: You mentioned East 14th Street where your grandmother lived. That would be the area where there has been some thought of putting the new civic center. Might it mean the destruction of that particular home?

TH: That particular one, no. As I understand, the site they're looking at was from the Western Foundry area going south to about 12th Street. She would have been just a couple of blocks outside of there. But that project is now obviously traumatic. If I were living in the neighborhood and suddenly read in the newspaper that the city or

an area group wanted to acquire my home and move me out, I probably would react in some of the same way they did. Regardless, I guess my personal opinion is I think it should be in, around, or near the downtown area, whether it is the Western Foundry site or I know they're looking at a secondary site toward College Avenue, 6th Street adjacent to Window on the Waterfront park where the old...it wasn't a landfill back then, it was a dump. I can remember, probably we were teenagers, where Padnos is right now was also one of the city dumps and there was the one down there. I can remember going down there with pump BB guns and shooting rats that were running through. But that area...both the City and the Chamber own some large pieces of land in the area and certainly that should help alleviate some of the cost. My feeling is the center should be built somewhere in or near the downtown area. They selected the 16th Street site. I'm sure it's a fine site. I'm sure there's plenty of room to grow and expand there as well, but in terms of what Holland could do or what some other communities have done in terms of placing these kind of destination points in or around the downtown area, they're really very much in favor of them trying to keep it.

DB: I was interested in your vision for Holland and certainly that is part of it. You really have a feeling then that, so far as Holland's future is concerned, that would be the best place to put it.

TH: Yeah. In terms of what happened back in the early mid-seventies when we were negotiating with the Corps of Engineers to continue to maintain dredging in Holland Harbor, we all knew that we needed places to pump some of this dredged material.

Working around the old BPW building down there and the old dump site in terms of being able to isolate...I remember they put a bentonite clay ring around that entire area so that they could pump in there and not have to be concerned about any pollutants that might be in there. Long term, when we were meeting and talking - this would have been probably about 1974, '75, '76, in that area - I think we all envisioned public uses that were going to be able to go in all the way from the riverfront area going south toward the downtown area. There's really a lot of room there. Window on the Waterfront, as a park, has really opened up the shore line along the river in some of the areas, but if you walk back there and particularly get on top of the old pump house toward the east end, you see there's a lot of area that is very suitable for development. Even if you didn't put the main structure right there, certainly it's an area that allows both an access point, parking areas or whatever. So I guess long term I always envision things were going to be happening, from say Sixth Street into Eighth Street, and you if look from Sixth to Seventh that's almost all publicly owned or owned by the Chamber. It's part of the area that very frankly we had looked at as part of the sightings from the back of the stores on Eighth Street to Seventh Street to Sixth Street for downtown retail or a mall type development had that ever gone downtown. The land has been there. I haven't talked to anybody on the committee. I don't know why they didn't consider that site to begin with. To me it was kind of a natural one to look at. If you already owned the property, if the planning commission and others had felt that this was the possibility long term, they probably should have looked at it earlier. My hope is...they have alienated our good

friends in Holland and Park Townships in particular, and over the years they've both been very supportive. I've really enjoyed working with both of them. They're both growing. They're growing in different areas. Holland Township certainly has concentrated not only on residential development but certainly retail, commercial. HEDCOR's north side industrial park certainly has been a nice addition. Park Township, in my opinion, has done a wonderful job with what they feel they would like to concentrate on and that's quality residential development and they do have some quality residentially developed areas in there. In fact, it's where my son has moved to. They've been good to work with and they both have been concerned with the Holland region. I think more and more we're starting to think in terms of an area or a region, rather than Park Township or Holland Township or Laketown Township or City of Holland whatever it might be.

DB: How long might it be before this becomes such a large metropolitan area that it includes like Douglas where you're working now, or even farther south than that?

TH: Well, that's a very real possibility. Political units don't give up their autonomy all that easily. When you do something on an area or regional basis or an authority, you gain some things but you also lose some small things in terms of the amount of total control you may have over something. I think as the area develops and you see a need, and we did this back in the seventies when Holland and Park Township both became active participants and owners in the wastewater system. It really began to make sense that there are some problems that have to be solved on an area basis. If Holland just did something by itself and the others didn't, you may not have cured an

awful lot. But with everybody working together it seems to work out well. And again, these things are difficult to do at the time, but if you worked long enough and hard enough I think you can see the long term benefits.

DB: We've done so much in a short time here. You're very articulate and we've covered I think everything. You presumed so many of the points of the questions that I had and we've really gone through it. I'll just tell you that this will be transcribed and you will receive a copy of it, so that anything you want to change or anything certainly you want to add, you'll be able to add it at a later time. In all honesty, I think we've talked about all the areas of discussion that I had considered perhaps germane to this, and I think unless you have something else you want to say right now we'll just conclude it.

TH: That will be fine. I'll look forward to receiving a copy. Obviously since I knew you were coming, I had given some thought to things that we did when we were young and growing up. And of course things that happened with the City are fresh and we're still seeing them grow. Like I said before, those years that I worked with the City, sixties and seventies and eighties, were really very tremendous growth years. A lot of new facilities were built at that time. We built fire stations, stadiums, park and cemetery buildings, just a lot of growth went on through that area. It was fast paced. Sometimes we felt we were falling behind and certainly put pressures on tax payers as we tried to come up with the funds to put it together. But I think over the years we've had Councils that have really been very fiscally knowledgeable and really demanded not a hundred percent pay as you go, but certainly very willing to take a

look at bonding where it was needed and necessary and we've been fortunate. We've had some very, very good people on the City Council and fun working with them. People on staff at the City through those years, just very talented people. Herb Holt, who was City Manager when I first started working with the City, really was very articulate and knowledgeable and I think started Holland off on some very, very neat things. Bill Baugh who followed him, and I was fortunate to have a couple of very good managers ahead of me and a lot of good people working for the community. One interesting thing. I just thought of it. The first City Manager in Holland was a man by the name of McClinic. He lived on 23rd Street, 23rd and State, and I didn't know that but the first house that we bought in Holland was at 23rd and State, 28 East 23rd Street. When we moved in, our next door neighbor Hardie Holman said, "You probably don't realize this, but Harold McClinic...Harold McClinic, Holland's first manager, lived in the house you just bought." (laughs) I always refer to it as the City Manager's house! A little touch with the past going back to the late forties. Over the years there just have been a lot of people...One of the things that always amazed me is a lot of people, very talented people, moved to Holland. You're probably familiar with GE people. I'm sure there's people say at the General Electric plant that moved in here in the fifties whose talents and ambitions would have said they should have worked here three, five, seven years, whatever the normal thing is for GE and they should have transferred out to the big plant in Ohio or Indiana or New York. But I think Holland kind of grew on a lot of people and I think what we've found over the years is you've had a lot of people, and not just necessarily GE,

whether it was with Holland Furnace or Lifesaver or Prince or Donnelly or any of the major ones, very talented people whose ambitions probably should have taken them out of Holland. They decided to stay and we really benefited from a lot of that experience. And I think that really has made a difference and maybe that's part of what makes Holland unique. We have people who are just very talented but they love the City and they're willing to stay and put some of their own body and soul into it and that's made it fun. I really have enjoyed it.

DB: Well, I thank you very much. It's been most interesting.

TH: Thank you, and it was good working with you on it.