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Lindstrom, Charles Oral History Interview: Sesquicentennial of Holland, "150 Stories for 150 Years"

Tracy L. Bednarick

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The Hope College Oral History Project for 1996
The Joint Archives of Holland

Interview #9
Mr. Charles Lindstrom
Holland's Past Fifty Years

Conducted by:
Tracy Bednarick
July 2, 1996

Abstract (Topics appear in similar order as appearance in the transcript.): How Chuck Lindstrom came to Holland as Chief of Police, the changing make-up of Holland, growth's influence on the community, Holland's good reputation, law enforcement and its interaction with changes in the community, crime and its control, immigrants to Holland, the Weed and Seed program, police organizations, changing problems and behavior of citizens, safety concerns in Holland, housing strain, HOME and Sweat Equity programs, growth, policing efforts, gangs, students and Hope College and the law, Community Policing, churches in Holland, the future of Holland, and the problems with drugs in Holland.

Interviewee: Charles Lindstrom (CLL), retired Chief of Police for the city of Holland, Michigan.

Interviewer: Tracy Bednarick (TLB), Oral History Student Coordinator

TLB: Chuck Lindstrom, 7-2-96, Van Wylen Library. The first question is a simply one.

Just state your name, your date of birth, where you where born, if not in Holland, then when you came to Holland the first time.

CLL: My name is Charles L. Lindstrom. My date of birth is [date removed], 1939. I came to Holland in 1970. I was born in Dearborn, Michigan. And have lived in Michigan most of my life, except for a period of about five years, when I lived in California.

TLB: What were your first impressions of the city of Holland, when you moved here?

CLL: A very beautiful city. A very Dutch city. Dutch heritage. Very conservative. I think that I had some understanding of the community. I knew people from Holland, and had shared observations with them.

TLB: What brought you to Holland?

CLL: I came here as Chief of Police of the Holland Police Department on a competitive examination. I came here by choice. One of the things that I found desirable was the school system, the standard of living, the recreation and water sports, and certainly the value system of the community.

TLB: Do you want to tell me a little bit about your family? Are you married?

CLL: Yes, I am married. I have two daughters. Both of whom have followed me in law enforcement. One is a Michigan State Police Officer. The other is an Assistant Prosecutor.

TLB: Do you want to talk a little bit about what you did while you where in California?

CLL: I was a police officer, and I continued my education in California.

TLB: To talk about the city of Holland, what are some of the biggest changes you've seen in Holland since you have moved here?

CLL: Well, the make-up of the community has changed dramatically in the last twenty-five years. It had always had the Dutch traditions and a large Dutch heritage population. I have seen it grow to the non-Dutch white community. Broad based in terms of the growth of the community in industry and business and commerce. Certainly the minority growth. We had a fairly sizeable Hispanic population when I came here. That has continued to grow, as well as the African-American, and South-East Asian population. The later two, both in the last ten years. And the African-American population seems to have dramatically increased in the last five years.

TLB: How is the community dealing with that change?

CLL: I think that with the growth that the community has had, I perceive that much of it has been pretty healthy. Business and industry, educational programs in the community have brought professional people. That is very healthy, very good. They have enriched our community. A subsequent part of growth also has brought a spill-over of less educated people, less family tied together types of people. They come here for a better life. The word is out there that this is a good place to live, and it is a good place to be treated well, and to get a good education, economical and cultural opportunities, and get a job. Many of the less educated, less socio-economic level people have come here bringing their own background, their own way of life, their own problems with drugs and alcohol, and family disunification. That has brought

conflict. The less educated people, who have often times broken family ties, have not assimilated well as far as their children are concerned. They come into conflict on the streets with other people of the their own type or background, as well as people from diverse cultures and racial or ethnic backgrounds. That has caused a fair amount of conflict. This is something that the community is dealing with and I think has done a reasonably good job.

TLB: Have you been involved with any of the changes that Holland has seen? If not, how have you reacted to these changes?

CLL: Law enforcement is on the forefront of conflict, and change. We are out there twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. When people are having problems, even seemingly not law enforcement problems, we are going to get called, because we are accessible. In addition to that, we are on the forefront of change because we are out there 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We see patterns developing, many times before other planners and community leaders might see it. So with traffic, and cultural ethnic conflicts that we have had to deal with we get called into it. Often times, because the conflict is not easily resolved, often times the accusers are being a accused of causing the crimes. We are having to deal with them. Fact is, we deal with same problems, and problem people that schools, hospitals, and social service agencies have to deal with also. We are in an explosive situation, because of the violence and the intervention when things are happening.

TLB: How does Holland compare to other cities of the same size in the realm of violent crimes?

CLL: I think that we are ahead of the game. I think that we have dealt with it much better than many communities. First of all, we have dealt with it openly. We have organized and coordinated, cooperating on an area-wide basis to get the issues on the table to work with the neighborhood organizations, individuals, and families to address the issues. Not that we solved them, but I think that the programs put in place, certainly law enforcement and education, have gone a long way to bridge that gap to deal with drugs and alcohol, problems of community violence. The Weed and Seed Program, the Community Policing program. The networking between agencies is far superior here than in many areas.

In many areas, even here in Michigan, with law enforcement outside your jurisdiction you don't go into somebody else's area. It is polite, but you do your thing, and we do our thing. But we are coordinated and cooperative. And I think that this has made us more effective. We have been multi-disciplinary in approach. We are working with the schools and human service agencies. I think that together we have proven that we can do some things together that we can't do individually. Together we make ourselves more effective, because we know the perspectives and understandings of other organizations. I sight as an example, something that I am proud to be involved in is what started out as the Holland Alcohol Coordination Council. It has grown to be the West Michigan Alcohol Coordination Council. That has brought law enforcement to schools, and licensees of Alcoholic Beverage, and treatment people, and churches together to deal with problems of abuse. We have been recognized nationally for some of the programs that we have put in place.

TLB: What are some specific things that you do for that? What type of programs?

CLL: I think that we need to continue to expand and build up programs that bring citizens and neighborhood organizations and groups together to work together and to understand rather than to react. To certainly continue the fostering of the development of cooperation and networking between human services agencies and law enforcement and education.

TLB: What do you think some of the causes of the increase diversification of Holland have been?

CLL: I think that the churches were the instrument through which the South-East Asian community came here and were resettled into the community. The migrant labor stream came here because of the agricultural and industrial opportunities, and then stayed here. Many minority people that have come here tend to be extended families, and often family and friends and relatives that come here pass word back that there is opportunity here. Word has been passed back that you get treated well here. So they come. The economic growth has contributed to it. Even so much, for example, with the homeless the word is out extensively through-out the country that if you come to Holland you get a place to eat, a shelter, good food, and treated fairly. So people come. That is the reality of life of particularly poor people, or people that are uneducated, come from broken families, who have severe behavior, mental, or alcohol substance abuse problems.

TLB: The tensions that exist between people, is it more of the same ethnic group, or between different ethnic groups?

CLL: I would say that it is more between different ethnic groups. There are some within ethnic groups, as well.

TLB: Have you been involved in any organizations? What did you do? And how did you get involved?

CLL: That is a very broad based question. I think what you are asking is organizations that deal with these kinds of issues?

TLB: Yes, or in general. It can be broad based, if you want to.

CLL: Let me begin with something that most comes to mind that focuses with this subject area of change, and conflict, and problem resolution of community problems. The Weed and Seed Program has been the most significant. Also the National Conference of Christians and Jews at Michigan State University way back in the early-70s; it sponsored programs to bring law enforcement and groups within the community that law enforcement often has conflicts with together. We are one of the few communities that continued it after the incentive for funding to get together to address these issues ended. We continue to this day, with the Commission on Police Community Relations. It is essentially an outgrowth of that original committee appointment from Michigan State University, the National Conference of Christians and Jews. It brings youth, and minority groups and law enforcement together to communicate dialogue to address common concerns. I think that it has helped us to build sensitivity and understanding. Of some of the more broad based neighborhood groups that is one that really stands out.

My professional organization, as well. The International Chiefs of Police and

Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police. The service clubs, and things of that nature too, that address local issues are all things that I have been very much involved in.

TLB: I am going to backtrack for just a minute. How long were your Chief of Police? When did you retire?

CLL: I retired in February of 1996. I came here in 1970, appointed as Chief of Police.

TLB: Okay. How does the Dutch Heritage, today, interact with the other cultures that are present in the community? Does it still have an influence?

CLL: I believe that it does. I think that it is very positive. I think the values of church and family living, the emphasis on education, and on quality of life, cleanliness issues; those are all very pluses. Hard work, very positive things that have spilled over into the broader community. For that reason, I think that we will always be a unique community. I think that we have the Dutch heritage to thank for that.

TLB: Have the problems facing the general citizen of Holland changed in the last twenty-five years?

CLL: Very much so. The problems of street violence, street gangs, and crime have all been dramatically influenced by the growth that we have had. Many people have brought their alcohol, drug problems, and gang alliances. Our understanding is that this part of society's trends toward being desensitized, or less emphasis on family homes. There is less supervision, less taking care of your children; bringing in, in many cases, perspectives and experiences of other areas that don't necessarily apply here. It is accepted in some areas to go riding around with a boom box wide open,

and to hang out at night, because that is the way it was done there. That was the way people learned. They come here, and that is not accepted. It is not racial, it is not ethnic, it is quality of life, and a societal concern. Being accountable and responsible.

TLB: Is daily life different at all?

CLL: I believe it is. Certainly with the growth, there are many people that come here that bring their problems with them that I spoke of earlier. These people may not seek or gainfully work, so they are out and about and collaborating. We are getting more and more big city orientation. People will hang out at night or on their porches, in their neighborhoods to see what is going on in their neighborhoods and to react. Some will even incite problems with people whom they don't get along with or they have had incidents with. We see that kind of thing. We see a growth, a large area increase, of people who sleep during the day and prowl at night. It is a different lifestyle. They don't work necessarily. They will stay up to four or five in the morning and sleep to two or three in the afternoon. Then they prowl. They will either support themselves through their family, or welfare hand-outs, or through crime, or drugs.

TLB: Does the general citizen have more safety concerns than they used to? And what might some of those be?

CLL: I think that they do. We have experienced growth in some kinds of crimes. Holland is still a very safe place to live, but as times change I think that we have to be more conscious of where we are and who might be around us. There are safety concerns. I do think that we pay attention, as a community to locking our doors. We are aware

that it is probably not wise for a group of girls to go walking down the street in the central part of the city at four o'clock in the morning, without being escorted, because it is liable that there may be somebody out there who would at the least harass them, or worse. I think we have to be more concerned with that.

TLB: I know. This is going to jump way off of crime and everything, but what do you make of the industry in Holland, and what kind of effect has it had on the community?

CLL: I think a lot of our growth has been brought about because of the growth in industry. It has brought jobs, and that is very positive. It has also brought a much greater density. It puts more strain on housing. We have a real push toward rental housing, and large group developments. With those comes also subsidized housing. In my opinion, far too much density. The older homes that were not designed to be multi-family are inadequate in terms of parking, and space for recreation. Young children spill out into the street. Cars are parked in front yards. Junk cars break down. Some of those are the negative sides. I think that there was not enough planning for the growth. It happened too fast. In many cases, the streets, housing, and planning didn't keep up with it.

TLB: Do you think that industry is doing enough to help the community deal with the growth?

CLL: I think that we have been able to do some things because of business and industry that have been strong supporters of helping to try to deal with the problems. They are not going to go out and build the streets for us.

TLB: Right.

CLL: However, I do think that while we have made so many changes for growth and industry, we should have planned for transportation, and housing better. It is wise to learn from your experiences, it seems to be a political knee jerk reaction, rather than a planned orderly basis of the impact of the growth. Part of the growth is very very positive. We certainly are much more economically healthy. People can come here and they have good housing and good living. There is a part that brings the service trades, the less educated, the un-skilled people who bring their problems with them. I think that one of the keys is getting a control to the housing. That probably suggests that we want to emphasize owner-occupied housing, and less conversion of single family homes to multi-family dwellings. Which is a vast majority of this center part of our community. There are more rentals here, than there is owner-occupied housing.

TLB: Are their ideas to make that happen? What do you want to do with the people who can't afford to own their own house?

CLL: Well, I don't think that it all has to be owned. But I don't think that we can solve everybody's problems either. I think that the programs like HOME, and Sweat Equity to fix up older homes, and to have people buy them, and have a stake in them, if not financially, but through hard work. Those who don't want to work, who just want to be handed out and live off of welfare anyway, I don't think we need them. They are not our problem. We didn't grow them in the first place. We need to be there for those who want to work, go to school, and make every incentive to get

ahead. It becomes a philosophical issue. I can tell you this, our subsidized housing projects, which we have a number of them, the people come and they go, they want people to take care of them, they don't want to do much themselves, they want somebody else to do it for them, they are always asking and not willing to put up themselves. Those that do, do get out and do get into some decent housing, by Sweat Equity, or taking advantage of some of those incentive programs. In the meantime, they just keep coming. I don't think that that is healthy to us.

TLB: What are some qualities that seem to stand out concerning the city of Holland?
Especially dealing with the community.

CLL: I think that we care about the people. There is a great deal of Christian caring and sharing. I think that the organizations that depend on charitable contributions do quite well, because there is a concern to try to help to do the right thing. I think that the commitment to be compassionate and to try help people is very prevalent. This is fostered by the churches and the schools and our community leaders and government. I think that those all very good pluses. It helps lead to the quality of life. Cultural and educational opportunities are greater. It is also aesthetically a very beautiful place to be, except when it is snowing.

TLB: Sometimes that isn't that bad. You have covered some of these, but are there any other negative aspects, or drawbacks to living in Holland?

CLL: I don't see any drawbacks to living in Holland. I think that it is a great place live. I say that not just from my standpoint, but as somebody who has been very involved in the community. I have been involved in neighborhood organizations, and meeting

with families, individuals, and schools. I think that we are blessed.

TLB: Since you have been here in 1970, have you noticed any controversy that has come up in the Holland community, or large problems that the community had to work out together?

CLL: Sure. I think that some of those have been touched on. There are issues of conflict over racial or ethnicity, or the interpretation that things are racially motivated, or that law enforcement did or did not do something. I think that those are part of the issues that to deal with. Families of gang members deal with issues of denial, and unawareness. It is a certain part of being young. Even more so with families who are lower socio-economic levels and less education, kids don't always tell the truth. They tell their parents a different story. A lot of what law enforcement does is can be interpreted by a group as being racially motivated, but it is really community protection and community service oriented. Those are very difficult issues to overcome with. Through neighborhood and community policing direct involvement is the way to overcome some of that. We started enforcing curfew and boom-boxes and what have you, or placing officers where group violence or drug problems had been known to exist. Profiling is not totally legal, but it is not totally improper either. Profiling based on previous behavior, previous incidence coupled with current information makes it very probable that some of those actions got interpreted that if you were a black male you get stopped. It really wasn't that, it was if you were a black male where black males had sold drugs, where there were gang members, where neighbors are saying that they saw this going; if you put all that together it

makes a justification to stop that individual. It wouldn't matter whether he was black, Hispanic, white, or Asian, it is based on behavior. He would be put on the defensive for those crimes.

TLB: I briefly heard about this. Was there a time when you used video cameras?

CLL: Sure, we still do. Police can not be at every place at all times. Through cooperation based on fact circumstances, similar to the circumstances that I just laid out neighbors are saying, "Enough is enough and what can we do to help?" Community policing coupled with the facts of the problems that were going on would justify legally and I think morally to document what is going on and use that information to resolve that problem. One of the philosophies I had, as a police chief, was when a community violence incident would occur, like a gang hit or a drive-by shooting, I would go to extreme ends to document and hold accountable every person who actively participated in, even if it was for littering a beer cup on the ground, or being disorderly. I would go after them, and say we are not going to tolerate this. "You were there, and you participated in this way, and your presence added to the incident, and you are responsible for it." Using all our resources, we would spend weeks after the incident, not only to get the person who pulled the trigger or threw the knife, but to get anyone else who was involved. We would bring them in front of the courts to hold them accountable.

The other thing that I might touch on is that we have improved communications between prosecution, police, courts, and corrections so that it is not just the police putting them in jail and the courts letting them loose. We achieved

increased court cooperation, where if it was gang violence we could point it out to the court and request the court to make terms of release. If they are going to release these individuals we want them to say that they may not go back to that same area, they may not associate with these same individuals, they may not use drugs or alcohol. If they are someone with gang ties then they are subject to a curfew, they may be subject to being stopped and checked, even without probable cause. That put the pressure on and it had a diminishing effect. We went from several murders, and numerous drive-by shootings to a small number. It took a whole series of things of our community getting together to confront that in every way possible. Both by reaction, but also by cooperation with neighborhood groups, neighborhood organizations, schools, the educational programs about drugs and gangs, the profiling, and the working with the courts. All those kinds of things.

TLB: In regards to gangs, how old to you usually see people getting involved with gangs? What are the ages?

CLL: I think that the older post-high school are less involved with gangs now, except possibly with the Asian. We have in the core community the continuation of the younger want-a-be type. They are in my opinion very dangerous, because they want to prove themselves. They don't think much of the consequences. They think that they are invincible. We see late middle school, junior high, and early high school groups continuing in that area. Again, they come from families that are generally early arrivals here. They come from broken homes, and if they are not from broken homes they are dysfunctional homes. If they are not dysfunctional homes, then both

parents are working, and they are not paying attention to the problems of their children, or they themselves have some problems, and so it spills out onto the child.

TLB: That age gang is more prevalent now than the older? [Mr. Lindstrom nods head].

What about the students at Hope College and how do they interact with Holland Police? I know that sometimes there are problems with partying and stuff like that.

CLL: That is a good question and I am glad that you touched on that. Hope College is a tremendous resource to the community and a tremendous addition culturally, educationally, financially. This will come to a total surprise probably to many college students, but there is a great deal of respect and admiration for Hope College students. We know that kids work hard, they come to this school not to get a free ride or an easy education. It is also part of young peoples' make-up, I think, as they are growing to experiment with new freedoms and growth. They like living life, particularly in the college setting. There tends to be a need for social interaction, which I certainly understand. There is at least an unconscious desire to test the system, to see how far they can go, and to be less sensitive to the environment around them and how their behavior may be perceived by their neighbors. When parties spill over into a neighborhood, where there is drinking or a lot of noise, littering, or urinating on people's lawns it is always with large groups coupled with alcohol bingeing that brings the inhibitions down. People don't realize how they are being perceived. We are going to deal with that. Our job is to make people be responsible for the actions, and accountable. In many cases, kids try not to be accountable for their stuff. That is always a little conflict. I think we have improved the

understanding and the dialogue between kids and law enforcement through the Community Policing effort. We have much better things to do than to break up somebody's party. And most officers could care a less whether kids are partying, or even drinking, as long as they don't spill out into the streets, or impact on their neighbors who don't appreciate the noise, behavior that goes with it, as long as they don't drink and drive. I think that most kids eventually think that Holland Police are okay. I think our police think that most college kids are okay, even though we don't like their large group "ya'all come" parties.

TLB: Have you noticed any problems between Hope College students and the central city residents? I know that a lot of college students live in that area off-campus where there are a lot of ethnic groups.

CLL: First of all there had been a minimum amount of conflict between locals, the gang members, the street people, and Hope College students. I think that they kind of go their own ways. I do think that the off-campus living was one of the precipitating reasons why we went into Community Policing. With the residents, we thought that we were doing a good job responding to the complaints. They thought we were doing a horrible job. It is not fun to live next door to a party pad, with all that goes on in terms of large group noise at four o'clock in the morning, and a bunch of beer cups and love making, and all that stuff that goes on with peoples' attitudes out in the front yards. We clamped down, because that is what the law provides for, and secondly we respond to complaints of citizens. We also try to work with college students to help them understand what their responsibilities are. I think that I would also say,

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that we have been very understanding, and have tried to work with the students when they have gotten a problem, to minimize the impact on their future life. A youngster who is going to school and wants to be a doctor or a lawyer that gets himself arrested for disorderly conduct could jeopardize that future. We have been very amenable to community service, or holding charges in advance for the rest of the college career with the thought of the youngster being locked in a cell to keep the youngster out of trouble. We are probably not always appreciated, but law enforcement will never be fully appreciated.

TLB: Tell me about one job or task that you have had, in the last twenty-five years that you really enjoyed, and why?

CLL: I have been very very proud of a number of things. The development of the Community Policing Program has been very win-win oriented and very appreciated by the community. I have enjoyed that, and I think that we have done our job. I think that another one that ties into that, is the assimilation of the department personnel as a cross-section of the community that we serve. Ethnically, and gender wise we are representative of the total work force of our community. We have a White, Black, Hispanic, and male and female work force. It has been very satisfying, and it has made our job better. We have been recognized for being the only department in West Michigan that is racially, ethnic, and gender wise representative of the work force of the community. I feel very proud of that.

TLB: Was there ever a task or situation that you really disliked, or was a very large challenge for you to deal with?

CLL: I think that being a police officer, police administrator, is not an easy job. To deal with the pressures, I certainly don't like being called at two o'clock in the morning, being told that somebody has been hurt, that the officers are having a problem, or need some assistance, or a major crime where somebody was murdered has occurred; this is very trying on you, and I internalize it. It is my job to make sure that it is handled. That has been very hard.

I have had a couple of incidents where during cutbacks there were strong differences on how we should handle the economic cutback, and budget reduction. We had some open public conflict over that. My opinion was that we needed to keep all the field police and cut other places less critical. Politics became involved, because there were open squabbles and the media capitalized on it. We like the school programs, and we like the social service programs, but when it comes to priorities, cops in the field were the priorities. We had those kinds of fights, but they were issue oriented not person oriented. That is, they were not personal battles.

TLB: Are you involved with the church at all, and what is your impression of how the church interacts with the community?

CLL: I think that the church has been positive, but I don't think that there has been enough coordination and communication between churches in the community. They each administer to their own too much, not enough sharing of resources. There are tremendous resources in our community to deal with just about anything, but they don't always reach where they need to be reaching. That is a problem. That has to do with the church leadership, and it comes and goes. We have had passing periods

when we had a Council of Churches, or a church liaison organization that attempted some of the coordination and polling of resources to deal with these issues. Then one key person would leave and the whole thing would diminish.

TLB: Have you seen the interaction with the church and the community change at all in the last twenty-five years? Does it play less of a role or more of a role?

CLL: I think that it is playing more of a role today, although there were periods early on twenty-five years ago, where there was some pretty good effort going. The churches at that time were very much active with the Alcohol Council. There was a recognition by a number of churches that many of their parishioners problems were alcohol related. It was all hush hush. Eventually, a number of them began to train lay people to counselling of alcohol problems, and making proper referrals to agencies that could deal well with this. This really took off, then a couple of those people left the area. And there is less participation now. A number of churches in the city have outreach programs. There is a Parish Council which coordinates and cooperates on joint ventures. The Neighborhood Church Playgrounds developed an after-school care. The bottom-line answer is that it is greater today.

TLB: Okay. Can you tell me what you have heard other people say of Holland when they come to visit? Family and friends.

CLL: I think that most people respond very favorably to the Holland Community. Holland is a very beautiful place. The housing stock is substantially better compared to many cities our size. I hear some generalizations. "The Dutch people are insensitive to Hispanics." I don't believe that, myself. I think that we have been very open. I'm

not Dutch. I have been treated very well, I have been involved with the entire community, and I think that there has been a great deal of care and concern. I think that sometimes there are some insensitivities by some individuals. That gets generalized if they happen to be Dutch. That is about the worst of it. I don't think overall that it is valid.

TLB: Have you noticed a generation gap, at all, between ages in Holland, between the youth and the people that are running things?

CLL: I think that there are the typical generation gaps. I think that a lot of young people don't always know what is expected of them, or what is involved by the actions of community leaders, or what they do do, or why they do it. Many programs for your exist, but they don't always reach to all people for various reason, many programs or extended hours of existing programs are cost prohibitive, and I don't think that youth always understand the costs. I think, probably, that our generation gaps are similar to other communities.

TLB: Could you explain a major turning point you have had in you life?

CLL: Coming here, being committed to trying to practice my ideals, to have a goal, to have a vision of where we should be going, and to work in that direction, and at the same time recognizing that many times you have to take small steps rather than giant leaps. That has been a turning point. [TLB turns tape over] We have been bringing some of the programs and changes from reactive to proactive. We have set the standard for not only law agencies outside the area, but within the community to be involved in pointing out the problems we are having and participating with law enforcement.

This is beneficial for the reasons that I pointed out earlier: we see, in many cases, better and more frequently, early trends.

TLB: Do you think that the city of Holland is pretty good at facing its problems, instead of trying to run away from them, or hide from them, or cover them up?

CLL: I think that we are pretty honest. I, for a long time, didn't want to publicly talk to the media about gangs, because gangs like publicity. The worse the publicity the better, it makes them bigger and better themselves. We did not want to give them that benefit. Yet, many citizens were seeing gang behavior and wondering why it wasn't be spoken about. It wasn't because we were denying that there were gangs, we were contesting with the gang members themselves, not to give them the credibility. It took a period of time for a community and residents in a neighborhood to understand that.

TLB: This is a different question. Concentrating on Holland, how do you think the role of women has changed? Has it changed at all since you have been here?

CLL: Certainly, very much so. I see women in the work place, leadership positions evolving. I see this in my own field. We have a number of police officers now that are female, who are doing a great job, who are making a difference. They have demonstrated their capabilities, and participated with other organizations. I think that we are becoming less gender oriented in our community here. We are becoming more focused on results.

TLB: Now that you have retired, do you have any plans for staying involved with the community, or with law enforcement?

CLL: Just as recently as this morning, I met with the Weed and Seed people to program where they might be going with the new course, what they have achieved, and what are the problems. I've also committed myself to be involved, to assist the community in ways that I can in the volunteering sense. With the department, as an example, if they needed a fund raiser to accomplish a needed program I will make myself available to work for them. It is very hard for me as police chief to solicit money, very often they are financially driven. I'm not police chief now, so I can go out and say this is a problem. This is what it takes. Can you help us? I will do that. I have committed myself to helping the drug education and the drug enforcement people find a secure form of funding so that they can continue. Right now we are operating by hand outs and grants. It is very unstable. It sets some of us up to not practicing, and instead being money raisers, because we don't have the secure funding. I will go out in and work in community to help secure funding for needed programs. One of the things that we are looking at is a millage that would be for law enforcement for education, and enforcement for drugs and alcohol. Many communities have done this.

TLB: Where do you see the future of Holland?

CLL: I think that Holland is in good hands. Its traditions, and its programs, and all that will push it ahead. When you are up on top, you have many people trying to pull you down, but I think that the leadership, the cooperation, and the regionalization in a cooperative effort wide-area basis gives the city a very positive look. It will continue. It will probably evolve into a consolidation of services at some point in

time. Right now in my field, we have shared drug investigations, drug education, records, communications, and training. The day will come when we say, "We have all this, why not consolidate?" But if you were going to say, "Let's consolidate," some would say we are going to lose our independence. At some point in time if we get so many of these things coupled with increasing cost, I think that is a solution to be aware of. This area has always been cost effective conscious. We don't do things just because they need to be done. We have to prove them, and prove that there is a cost effective relationship that can be found. I think that that is one of the pluses of the community at this time. Again, we will progress with small steps, not giant leaps.

TLB: One more question and then I will give you a chance to add things. What kind of drug problem is there in Holland? Is it large or small?

CLL: Very extensive drug problem. We have done a good job with enforcement. We are doing a good job with education. However, I think that as recent studies have shown that no one program in drug prevention does the job really. I think that the D.A.R.E. program is as good as it gets, in terms of what it does. You can't do it as a one shot deal and then walk away. Students need reinforcement, recontact throughout the year and from starting at the early elementary to the very end all the way through high school. We need more reinforcements both in enforcement, and certainly on the courtside to not let people back out too soon. Those kinds of things.

TLB: What kind of drug problem does Holland have?

CLL: Drug problems. In terms of specifics, we have a severe crack, cocaine,

amphetamines problem. These are very addictive type drugs that change peoples' behavior, both in terms of personality, but also in terms of drive or motivation to continue their drugs. Often they resort to crime. It has grown. That is the problem largely with the new lower socio-economic arrivals in our community. It is not just a minority problem, we have had a large growth of white people who do not have education, and family coming to the area. In their own community they bring their own set of problems developed prior to their arrival in Holland.

TIB: Is this a more recent problem or has it been here for awhile?

CLL: It has grown very rapidly in the last five years, particularly by new arrivals. They bring their problems with them. It takes a while to get a handle on it, and to identify them. In some cases, divert them. Housing control is where to stop them, because they keep coming. We are not going to ever put a wall around the city. We can either securely deal with the problem people. Either they shape up or ship them out. I think that the only common denominator is control of housing. That is why I say that.

TLB: You mean by control of housing, zoning, not zoning multi-family?

CLL: Put a more emphasis on owner-occupied housing. There is nothing wrong with rental housing, but you have far less problems if the owner lives downstairs. If you don't know each other there can be conflict, drugs, and neighborhood problems.

TLB: Do you want to add anything about the city of Holland, your career, your life?

CLL: I was blessed to work and live in a great community. I think that the city has been very good to me, and I think that it has been a good situation. I am confident that the

direction of the Holland Police Department will continue in the manner that it is has been. Most of the staff grew up in that department through our cadet programs. The philosophy and development of Community Policing. We are going to continue with that regardless of whether it is myself, or somebody else holding the leadership reins.

TLB: Do you want to state the name of your wife and you daughters?

CLL: My wife's name is Jacqueline, or Jackie. I have a daughter, Pam, who is an assistant prosecutor, and I have a daughter, Karen, who is a Michigan State Police Trooper.

TLB: We have covered all my questions. We didn't really get a chance to talk too much about your life, but we talked a lot about crime in Holland, which you have obviously been involved in.

CLL: I participate a great deal in sports--golf, softball, basketball. I participate in the Senior Olympics. I work out at the Dow Center everyday.

TLB: Okay, I am glad that you made it.

[discussion on transcription process]

[end of interview]