Steketee, Cornelius J Oral History Interview: Sesquicentennial of Holland, "150 Stories for 150 Years"

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Interview with Cornelius Steketee
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Interviewer: Ann Paeth

AP: The first thing I have everyone do is state their name and where and when they were born.

CS: Cornelius Steketee. Because we had so many Cornelius Steketees in our relation, we all had a nickname that was specifically given. So it’s called "Cornie." I was born on July 22, 1917, which makes me eighty years of age just a short time ago.

AP: So you were born here in Holland. Have you lived anywhere else?

CS: Well, when Ruby and I were married out of college we went to Grand Rapids because I was working for General Motors. And that’s where we lived for a number of years until... My father was in the printing and packaging business, and I always wanted to get into that business. The name of the company is Steketee-Van Huis, Incorporated. I always wanted to get in, but he said, "Just go and get yourself a job, and I think you would be much better prepared for anything in the management area if you work for someone else who works you up through that process." So I worked for Fisher Body in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and I left there after about fifteen years because my father was thinking about retiring. He wanted me, if I was interested, to come in and begin to work out through the staff process to see if I was capable of taking his place, which did work out. But I retired about 1983 or ’84. And that’s where we are today.

AP: Why don’t we go back and talk about what Holland was like when you were growing
up. Where you went to school, what the town was like, what kind of things you remember doing.

CS: Well, that's going to be kind of hard to recall back in those days because Holland was a very small town. It's not totally large now. But it was strictly, practically 100% from Dutch background, where the Steketees came from. Father didn't have a car. We walked everywhere we wanted to go or needed to go. And as far as a child was concerned, I was always interested in music. When I was eleven years of age, my father bought me a trumpet. And from that point on I was very much involved in that type of thing rather than athletics and that sort of thing.

AP: Where did you go to school?

CS: I went to Holland Public Schools. In town was Van Raalte grade school and then from there went to Holland High School. Very much involved in school in speech and I was involved in speaking. It was a situation where schools would appoint someone to represent them in the state or in the county. And that I did.

AP: Would you call that forensics now?

CS: No. They would call it in those days... (I'm trying to think of the name!) because they had a representative who spoke poetry and another one who was more...

AP: Oration?

CS: Orator. That's what it is. But I didn't win anything. But it was interesting, and it was a very good experience. Then during my high school years as a sophomore, junior, and senior, I went to the Interlochen Music Camp up north near Traverse City and played trumpet in the orchestra and band and sang in the choirs. Took a lot of
courses in music which was great because they had gals and young women and from all over the United States. Very interesting. Got a real background experience of a small city - you got acquainted with a lot of people from all over. And then from there I went to Hope College and met my wife in my junior year. She was a freshman at the time. In 1941 we married. She was born and raised in Schenectady, New York. It’s not unusual, as you know, from any college in meeting people from all over. And quite often you marry certainly outside the area in which you live from whatever states are represented. She’s from an English background and I’m from a Dutch background.

AP: Do you recall much of what Hope College was like then?

CS: Well, Hope was a very small college really. It’s really small now, but at that time I think our senior class was about ninety. I was very much involved in music in college too. We had only one professor of music and he covered the whole subject, instrumental, orchestra, and of course, piano, organ, that sort of thing. But he died while I was in college, and he didn’t have anybody to replace him. Particularly in the area of band and orchestra. And since when I was in Interlochen for those three summers, I had a course in directing instrumental units. And so the president of the college called me in one day and said, "Would you conduct the orchestra and the band because we can’t get someone to continue that." I said, "Well, I’ll try." And so I did.

AP: And how did that go?

CS: That I think went well because we had a good band and a good orchestra. We did
have a professor who kind of backed us up in terms of...took the college's wishes to
have that done.

AP: It sounds like a fun experience!

CS: It was fun! What else can I say about Hope College? We looked back at it as one
of the best experiences we had in terms of which college to go to. But of the five
children we had, none of them wanted to go to Hope. We didn't do a very good
sales job on it at all. But our grandsons have, and our granddaughter - so that
worked out fine. And of course I tried to encourage them to do this. In fact, our
oldest grandson, George, was born and raised in Grand Rapids and went to a Grand
Rapids school and was a very good student and also was a very good athlete. Played
football and wrestled and that sort of thing. So there were a lot of colleges once he
was going to graduate from over the midwest here that wanted him to come to their
school. So I did the job of trying to sell him on Hope. I finally said to him,
"George, you want to remember this. That the young lady you're going to marry
more than likely will come from the college you attend. So just the day before he
had to register for football, he called me up and said that he was going to Hope. And
in his senior year, he called me up one night and said, "Grandpa, you remember what
you told me when I was coming into Hope?" I said, "Yeah, I do." He says, "You
were right! I've just become engaged to a young lady from Kalamazoo." And they
are married, of course, and have two children now.

AP: Great! As alums, do you have much contact with the school today?

CS: Yes, we do, and I think more now than we did when we were younger because
you’re raising families then. Sometimes you need two jobs to keep financially above level. So then you become more interested too as time goes along to look back on your life and begin to appreciate more what you kind of took for granted when you were younger. We were very much involved in Hope College. We contribute of course. But Hope has got an organization - maybe you’ve heard of it - HASP? We were one of the forty people that started that.

AP: How did that start? What kind of involvement do you have in it?

CS: We just got together. It really got started probably by Eckerd in Florida, and it was just simply that...Well, actually it started in Boston. There were two professors and it seemed to them that senior citizens once retiring should continue to keep their studies going, their interests going. And so they started a group called...what did they call it? It’s all over the United States now. Elderhostel. They started that and it began to grow. Hope in time started that with a number of us who were assisting a retired professor. You went to Hope so you might know him. Taught English. John Hollenbach. Was he in school when you were there?

AP: No.

CS: See, that was quite a while ago. He was the one who really took interest in that and provided the leadership and we’re up to pretty close to four hundred members now. Retired people come from all over the United States and come to Holland to live, particularly at Freedom Village. And it has grown to a tremendous unit. Hope College is very interested because it is a source for resources. You know, money. They’re building a fund for operation, retirement. And it is now connected with
Elderhostel loosely. But this unit, HASP, is similar to a lot of those that are being formed at other colleges all over the country. They have quite an education program for the senior citizens. In a few years it really grew!

AP: Are there other organizations that you have been involved in?

CS: I'm involved with Rotary - a service club. I've been past-president in 1958-59. Very much involved in youth exchange program, both on a local club level as well as district level. There's an organization called Century Club which is 100 years old this year. And we are members of Third Reformed Church, involved in church activities and so forth. What else do we belong too? That's about it, I think.

AP: We want to talk a little bit about what Holland was like when you were growing up. What was it like for you after graduating and raising your family here?

CS: Well, I didn't live here in Holland during those years.

AP: Oh, that's right. You were in Grand Rapids.

CS: We were in Grand Rapids.

AP: How long were you there?

CS: Well, I would say twenty-five years.

AP: Those were primarily the years you were raising a family and...

CS: Raising a family and working for GM. As time went along, we did a lot of traveling because Ruby's (my wife's) family were from Schenectady and so we got to doing a lot of camping. We drove to Schenectady area with the children and in the process of doing that we visited a lot of states up in that area. When we moved back here to Holland and our children began to leave college and got jobs in all parts of the United
States - at least the last three - Jackson Hole, Wyoming; Phoenix, Arizona; and we have a daughter who’s got a Ph.D. in clinical psychology. She teaches at the University of North Carolina. Then we’ve got two daughters here. One of them works for Amway Corporation and travels all over the world in marketing and so forth. So we have kids that do a lot of traveling. And we visit them from time to time. Spend winters in Florida in the Keys. So we didn’t come back to Holland until 1969-1970. We bought some land here where we’re located, and this area was populated as time went along by a lot of people from outside Holland. So we got acquainted with people from other areas.

AP: What is this neighborhood like? How would you describe it?

CS: Well, the turnover is quite heavy. Although we do have some friends here who came from other areas and got closely related. In fact, we’re going to leave Sunday afternoon to go up to Big Bear Dunes - we pull our trailers up there. Spend a few days before the winter comes in. Holland is a great, growing...Well, western Michigan is a great growing area, and it’s growing fast. I think the real concern of people here is that it doesn’t go too fast so that it’s out of control of those that are providing leadership here. But Tulip Time started a number of years ago and I was very much involved in that in terms of being involved in whatever needed to be done. Particularly in instrumental music again...band, Legion Band, Holland High School Band. In fact, being part of the Airstream group (I don’t know if you’re familiar with Airstream)...

AP: No, I’m not.
CS: The Airstream trailer is manufactured in California, and it’s a large aluminum trailer. As time went along, they started units in every state, membership units. For about five years now, we have invited Airstream owners all over the United States and Canada, even in Mexico, to come and see Tulip Time and come spend a week with us. We call those rallies. So I was involved in starting that. And when we’re talking about Tulip Time, Ruby and I put together a slide program which does two things. One, it covers the forming of Holland, the heritage of Holland. And then secondly, gave them pictures of what they’re going to see in town with the Dutch costumes and dancers and all that. So we do that every year. We get sixty-five trailers here, and we cap that at sixty-five because we feed them and we show them around the city. We’ve got a list of sixty trailers for next year even before we had this year concluded. So it’s been very productive. And, of course, we live in a wonderful place here in terms of our nearness to Lake Michigan and so forth. People continue to come and want to retire here.

AP: It seems there are a lot of kids in this area too.

CS: Well, West Ottawa is a public school. That was formed a number of years ago - I can’t remember what year it was - it was prior to our moving here. We had bought the land and we wanted to move our children to Holland and go to school here. But Holland High School all of a sudden decided they weren’t going to take any kids that didn’t live in the city. So at that time we had to delay our coming because if you did move in this area, your kids would have either go to Saugatuck or to Grand Haven, and we just didn’t want that and neither did a lot of others. So what happened was
that West Ottawa decided to build their own high school. It was a foolish thing for Holland to do. But that's what started West Ottawa. And it has grown immensely because the growth now is outside of Holland. And, of course, you have Holland Christian which has always been in the Holland area - which has grown too. We feel if we were to do it again... We had one daughter that moved here as a senior and one as a junior and one as a sophomore. Well, to move someone here who was a senior was a bad mistake on our part. But in time it kind of took care of itself.

AP: My mom went through that. It happened to her.

CS: Did she? It's tough on them and we should have known better. We should have left her in Grand Rapids and had somebody take care of her, get her through that senior year. Of course, the sixties weren't the great years anyway for kids and for parents.

AP: No?

CS: No. A lot of changes took place. And the pressure on young people was immense. There were a lot of problems connected with that.

AP: How did things change?

CS: The whole country changed in terms of values. And that pressure of change of values or the lack of them, morality and spirituality, made a big impact on kids. So it was pretty hard for parents at that time too. To raise their children and to see that they hopefully would follow our background. So, in many ways it didn't happen. We had a girl at Michigan State; the oldest girl and not in our family but of these three, went to Michigan State University and she started to want to go everywhere else and try to
change things toward the way they think, I guess. So she quit school and it took quite awhile to get her back. And that’s the one that’s in North Carolina now. She finally decided to go back to school and she finished Grand Valley College at a 4.0 average. Then decided in about three, four years to get her doctorate and went over to California, and we helped her through the doctorate program. She’s back to where she should be - where we hoped she would be. But a lot of families had that problem. We know of a lot of friends who have said to their kids under those circumstances, "Get out of my house. I don’t want to see you again." That was the worst mistake they could’ve made. They never got together with their children again, never reestablished the relationships which we did.

AP: Do you think that’s persistent or do you think things are changing back?

CS: Oh, I think it’s changing. But slowly. Very slowly. The politics of the city is fine, but not the policy of most states and the federal government that those of my generation are little bit upset about. We still fight for a turn around. It may not happen in our lifetime, but I have a feeling it will with our children.

AP: Seems like things cycle sometimes.

CS: They do. But with the immense pressure of communication, television, internet, you name it. It’s going to be quite a job for them - or for you!

AP: Yeah. (Laughs) Things change very rapidly.

CS: They sure do.

AP: You said you think the city government is doing a good job?

CS: I think so, but as you know we have quite a solid background and I think that makes
a lot of difference to everybody living here. Particularly Tulip Time, you know, is certainly a lot of fun and I think it’s the third largest type of festival in the United States. It’s the second largest flower festival in the United States. And I think that view to where it came from, who formed it, what type of people were here and why they came and that sort of thing; I think has a balance in terms of a lot of things that could go a little wild on the other side. Hopefully that will continue. Stabilize anyway.

AP: Are there problems in the city that you think are here?

CS: Gang problems are probably...and drugs are here too. But again I think that they have gotten control of that early enough so that they can begin to put pressure to keep it under control. You’ve got Boys and Girls Club here, you know, and they’ve got for the older people - Evergreen Commons. You don’t find anything like that anywhere in the United States.

AP: No, you don’t.

CS: I’m not talking Boys and Girls Club but that type of senior citizens’ facility...You don’t find many like that. We’ve been in every state in the union and we’ve never seen one like that.

AP: Every state you’ve been in?

CS: Yeah, we’ve been in every state in our travels. That includes Alaska, Hawaii.

We’ve been fortunate to be able to do that.

AP: That must have been very interesting.

CS: It is.
AP: So many different places.

CS: That’s right. And different people.

AP: Yes. What kind of things have you learned through that?

CS: Well, I think that gives you a broad background of people. You’ve got the variety of people that live here and where they come from which is pretty much European. The biggest change we are having now is that the immigrants are coming not from Europe anymore but from other areas, and I think it’s a challenge for us to adjust to that and to understand the differences and find some way of pulling together as one people. And everybody has to volunteer to be a part of the melding process. That’s sometimes hard for some to do.

AP: How do you think Holland is doing on that?

CS: Well, I’m not so much involved in the problems of Holland, but I know that they’re having it. Because at this age, we’re gone too much and travel too much. But I think as a city I think it’s got a foothold into how to maintain the city of Holland in terms of its background and its value system. Trying to keep the families strong. But on the other hand, realize that these people come from different cultures and you must accept that or understand it and see what you can do to be aware of what it is. In Third Church now, for example, talking about something. That’s basically first Dutch in background, and we did a big renovation in that church. One night, the Catholic church burned down. And so Third Church said to the priest who didn’t have a place to worship, "You worship if you wish in Third Church." Not with us, but maintain your own church program which is what has been happening there. My
father and mother, but mostly my grandparents, would never have allowed that sort of thing. But it’s happened. And that was great!

AP: And a lot of people I’ve talked to who lost that church are so very appreciative that the community has really...all the other churches have been really helped them out.

CS: Hope College has helped too. We have the Spanish speaking people and our pastor is very fluent in Spanish. So that made a great deal of difference too.

AP: Somebody else was telling me that Third Reformed has had a good reputation in the past few decades of opening its arms to those from other countries and places that come.

CS: A lot of them are professors at the college and ministers and missionaries from other parts of the world.

AP: Western Seminary.

CS: Western Seminary.

AP: You said there's been a tradition of all of them worshiping at Third Reformed.

CS: Yes, quite a few. A lot of college kids come and worship with us. They come from different places.

AP: Right.

CS: But the churches do have to change their approach to people, particularly those who do not have family backgrounds from any religious background. Not that you change your message, but you must change your relationships. It takes time to do that, though.

AP: Yeah. There’s been some shifting going on in the churches and some have been
closing and others opening and merging and...

CS: Yes. Well, the church we attended in Grand Rapids was a Reformed Church too, and they would not change. And they went out of business. Eventually, that’s what happens. But there’s always some other groups that will take over so...

AP: Right. That’s just the way it goes sometimes.

CS: Well, as far as distance is concerned - this is a very strong community for everybody... (clock chime drowns out speech...)...it provides jobs for kids that came to us out of high school. And they’re still working for us. We trained them. And the changes that happened in the technology of the business that we’re in...We have to do a lot of teaching them and, of course, we manage differently than we did in those early days. It’s more of a team management. We involve our employees in the way things are done. When we buy new presses, we have them involved with us to see how that would fit into our organization. So that they make decisions with us in terms of what we do. That works out very well.

AP: An interesting fact, I thought, that someone told me yesterday who worked for GE - was that the large industries when they began to move their factories outside the U.S., that it was advantageous because it cut their labor cost by a tenth. But their output dropped by 50% for the same number of people working. They were able to hire more people and still pay less money but I can see...(unintelligible) you know, because there is a work ethic that’s very characteristic of Americans maybe in general but also in this area and a way of running things. You were just explaining that that makes each worker involved and responsible for what they’re doing.
CS: And that has its results in better quality and more efficiency, that sort of thing. Yeah. That’s very true.

AP: It seems there are a lot of companies that were started here that are run on those principles and have become very successful.

CS: The sad thing about family distances, Ann, is that historically you can go through maybe two generations or three generations and it doesn’t work out beyond that. Now there are some that do. But generally speaking, the history of the thing is family businesses can’t continue.

AP: Or something gets only so large before somebody else comes and takes it over.

CS: You have to merge with somebody or have new management.

AP: Yeah, I think you’re right. That’s beginning to happen. Prince...as far as that goes.

CS: It sure is. And there are others too. Retailers the same way. Whether that’s good or bad, I don’t know. But that’s what happens. The one thing I did was I didn’t bring any of our kids into the operation at all. Because they weren’t interested. And I didn’t try to interest them. If they’d wanted to, they would come to me and say, "We would like to be..." Just like I did with my dad. So what I’ve done is we have three middle management people that worked for us fifteen or eighteen years and showed that they really are very competent, and I am in the process of selling the business to them. They’re doing a great job. They come from various backgrounds academically and technically. Our CEO is a CPA, one of our CPAs over the years. He’s just doing a great job. So that’s the way we do it. Because so many of these companies are either purchased by outside third parties in time they just fire everybody or
somehow or other get other people in there.

AP: It ends up being a detriment...

CS: A detriment and they lose their career.

AP: I've heard that story more than once.

CS: There are a number of examples in Holland of that happening. And I suppose every other city. But that's my story. I don't know what else I could help you with. Unless you have some more questions.

AP: Let's see. We circled around a lot of times!

CS: We just had a Steketee reunion. I don't know if saw that in the Press and the Sentinel.

AP: I heard about it. Well, tell me about the Steketee family a little bit and your family background.

CS: The Steketee family came from a little place in the Netherlands, on the south of the Netherlands, near the Belgium border. Maybe forty or fifty miles from the Belgium border on the North Sea. And basically they were farmers or sailors. The little town called Borsele. We visited that little town and the Steketee home is still there. Out of that, in the emigration, these people came to this area, and I don't have to tell you much of the history because you probably know that. Van Raalte came here. These were basically church people, and they were originally French Huguenots, if you understand that. They were Protestant and in their back history they were economically and religiously persecuted, so they all came to the Netherlands. But even in the Netherlands they had the same problem at times. There were basically
five...seven families - it grew into seven families that came into this part of the country. They were all Steketees but they came from different family backgrounds. And ours is the Cornelius Steketee background, and then settled of course in the United States. It was pretty much around the 1840s, '50s. And my grandfather worked in the furniture business here as a workman, and finally became a patrolman, policeman, and worked at the Holland Police Department. One of five when they started. There’s a lot of the things he had (points). That hat, for example, is one of them. Got him a billy club and so forth. Then in 1932-33 he ran for sheriff, and he was sheriff of Ottawa County for I think six years. My mother was an immigrant. Her name was Van Tongeren. She came from the Netherlands with a big family and settled in Detroit and then they moved to Holland. That’s where my father and she became acquainted and married. But that’s where the Steketees came. And then we had this family get together at the Castle because there are some retired Steketees there. They were from the Grand Rapids family - Paul Steketee - and one of them is Jerry Steketee, Jerome Steketee is his full name, and he was involved much in computers and genealogy. So he put this whole thing together. He’s got a mailing list of probably three or four thousand from all over the world. And then he decided we were going to have a family reunion at the Castle and then also at Holiday Inn. So he got pretty close to four hundred people that came from forty-six different states and four foreign countries. It was about three or four weeks ago. We just had a great time. He did a good job of putting it together. And they want to do it again in another five years. That’s being done more and more by families. They had five
families represented here, and what they did was they had a t-shirt in a different color with a Steketee name on it so they could tell what family background they came from.

I guess that’s a quick story on that one.

AP: What kind of role do you see the Dutch heritage playing in Holland today?

CS: I think the role is represented by the Tulip Time festival and that background. And now they’ve got that Dutch Village, you know. And I think in time we’ll build a Dutch Village there. And people live there. Some who want to. And that pretty much tells the role of the Dutch in the community because they represent backgrounds as a people. You find that in other cities too. I can think of Columbus, Ohio. There’s a German town in there, all German. Families, you know.

AP: That’s where I’m moving (laughs).

CS: You’re moving to Columbus?

AP: I’m going to Ohio State.

CS: Well, I’ve got a sister there and I have an uncle there...no, I have a cousin who went to Ohio State. Capitol University. And he’s now an ob gyn doctor on the east coast. Yes. I know Columbus. That’s a fast growing area too. What are you going to do there?

AP: I’m getting my masters in writing.

CS: He got his medical degree, of course. Doctor’s degree.

AP: But yes, they have a German town.

CS: Yes, they do. A nice place to eat.

AP: The same way we have our Dutch Village. (Side A ends)
CS: You’ve talked to a lot of people I imagine on this project, haven’t you?

AP: Yes.

CS: Do they come from different backgrounds or not? Or are they mostly Dutch background?

AP: A lot of Dutch. I talked to Mr. Fabiano who’s Italian.

CS: How about the Padnoses?

AP: We did interview Mr. Padnos. I didn’t, but we did on the project.

CS: There are two of them.

AP: We interviewed Seymour.

CS: Seymour.

AP: Yes. I talked to some people of Hispanic background who came in when the first wave of immigration started back in the sixties as migrant workers.

CS: We had those for many years. I can remember those. Because Heinz was here, you know. All the pickles. And of course this being a lot of fruit, apples, pears...

AP: Blueberries.

CS: Blueberries. They would pick them. Around the Grand Rapids-Fennville area, all that is fruit.

AP: So it’s been a slow and constant migration it sounds like for many years whose impact may be just hitting some people here...

CS: I would think so, yes. My parents used to live right near the Heinz factory. When I was going to Hope College it was during the depression and trying to help your parents with getting an education. And they would have their green...in August and
they would start picking the pickles and they would have to package them. I worked summers to get a few dollars. 35 cents an hour!

AP: What kind of impact did the Depression have? What was that time period like?

CS: Well, I tell you. The banks were closed because the banks couldn't operate normally. I can remember at that time I had ten dollars in a savings account and of course couldn't get that money. My sister had eleven or twelve dollars. Well, then the time came when they could open the banks again and anything above ten dollars you got half of what your savings were. So my sister got six dollars and I got ten dollars because it was ten or less. But for kids that was quite an impact (laughs). My dad and mother had four children and it was tough trying to keep up their house payments. What they did in those days was just pay the interest. And later, of course, when things got better they got paid off. I can remember my dad and mother sitting at the kitchen table on Saturday. He'd come in with his weekly income and everything was charged in those days. You bought coal or suits or clothing or meat or whatever. Those that were in that business would keep you on a charge account. Then my dad and mother would sit at the table and decide, "Well, I'll pay two dollars to him and five dollars for this and maybe two and a half for someone else," - the grocer, the meat man and so forth. And I remember going downtown even in college and I needed a suit, and I needed a coat and a shirt. Go down to P. S. Boter and we'd buy it and Mr. Boter would say, "Now just come in here on Saturday morning and pay me a dollar a week and..." That was the Depression! Everybody was participating in helping each other to survive the problem. It took the second World
War to change that.

AP: Then how did things change?

CS: Well then, of course, the economy began to grow and things became so much better. But everybody was well taken care of through the churches, just the community itself. But it was tough. I can remember all of that.

AP: Well, maybe as an all-encompassing question as we probably should start wrapping up. What things are you most thankful for and you most appreciate about your life here in this area as you look back on it all?

CS: Oh (sighs). I think we’re all very much affected by how we were brought up. There were things we didn’t like as kids and we fought that a bit. But when it comes to trying to live your life through those years, you had to do what your parents wanted you to do because there was no way you could walk off and be on your own in those days. And then as you get older, you look back at those years and you say, "I’m glad they did that." That they disciplined. That they showed the type of values that we’ve inherited. Well, we’re not the same people as they are in terms of the way we live because conditions have changed. We have to adjust to change. But I think I feel that even in my own children now. At their age. Which is in the forties and fifties. They come back and are very expressive in telling us how they appreciated how we raised them. And I think those are the things that you never leave, you never lose. When you know that your parents are having a rough time trying to support a family in those days of the Depression, you kind of understand that better now than you did at the time that you were living it. I guess that’s how I would have to
express it. Those are the base for how you build your life. Probably if I would think about it more I could probably give you a better answer.

AP: Are there other topics we haven’t hit on that you think we should? We’ve discussed the church and how they’ve changed and the different backgrounds of Holland. The government.

CS: Oh, I don’t know. I can’t think of anything now. I probably will after you leave. I represent kids who felt things were just too highly disciplined. Felt you didn’t have the freedom that you wanted to have. But I think it’s better that way than it is in many cases today. Parents just let the kids go. And they pay a horrible price for it in the future. But I think they could have been a little more lenient probably in their discipline. A little less demanding. And involved their children more in the family situation, like we do in business today. They’re part of the decision-making process or the discussion part. That I think could have been better. I don’t think we knew our parents as well as I would have liked to have because of that discipline type of thing. But they came from a background that they just emulated. No one instructs a parent how to be one. That becomes just a thing that grows. It emulates how they were brought up. But I think it’s done better today than it was then. Those parents who use the method of talking things over and involving their children in the problems that the family is experiencing. Just recently we had all our kids here and we were telling them about what’s going to happen when we pass away - how our inheritance is structured and how it’s going to be followed once we’ve passed away. They were just very happy to hear these things. Because they know we are getting
older too. We won't be here forever. But I think that sort of thing is what we didn't have. We didn't know what was going on. We just obeyed.

AP: What would be the biggest changes you have seen?

CS: Well, of course in our family it may be different than in other families, but because of my father's business we've benefited from the success of that business and the opportunities that you have in incomes that allow you to do things that many, many families do not have. A lot of travel. A lot of opportunities to get education, like you're doing. My dad and mother were not involved in high schools and all. They only went through the eighth grade. That was it. But we've had opportunities to increase our knowledge of the world and have the development of the skills to grow in our career. The biggest problem today is the cost of education. It's a real challenge for parents as well as kids. That's the big challenge. The big challenge of course is to get that education. You got to have it. I don't know if that's a good answer or not but...

AP: Well, are there any final things we should talk about?

CS: I think my wife would do a better job than I would. No, I think not.

AP: I think you did just fine.

CS: Well, thank you. I've never had this done before, and if I probably worked in the academic field, I would be able to express myself much easier, much better.

AP: It's certainly a fine job. Well, all we can do is wrap up then. Thank you very much!