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De Graaf, Clarence Thomas Oral History Interview: Retired Faculty and Administrators of Hope College

Nancy Swinyard

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LIVING HERITAGE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Dr. Clarence De Graaf

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Hope College Archives Council
Holland, Michigan
1977
Preface

Interviewee: Dr. Clarence De Graaf

Interview I: May 26, 1977
Dr. De Graaf's home in Holland, Michigan

Interviewer: Miss Nancy Swinyard
A.B. Hope College, 1977
CLARENCE DE GRAAF

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH AND SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

Clarence De Graaf was born on November 14, 1901, the son of Andrew and Winnifred De Graaf of Grand Rapids. He attended Calvin Prep, graduating in 1917, and went on to major in chemistry and to earn his A.B. from Calvin College in 1921. He continued his education at the University of Michigan, earning his A.M. in 1924, and his Doctor of Education in English in 1945.

After graduating from Calvin College, Dr. De Graaf spent seven years teaching English at Holland Christian High School, and was principal there from 1926 to 1928. He then taught English at Hope College High School for three years, and at Hope College until 1972. Here, he was Chairman of the English Department for 15 years. Between 1932 and 1946, he spent four summers as an instructor in state normal schools.

Dr. De Graaf is affiliated with the Michigan College English Teachers, and published an article titled "Critical Thinking."

During the time he taught high school English, Dr. De Graaf married Marie Koppers, another teacher from Holland, on June 24, 1925, and they had three children: Ruth in 1928, Gwen in 1930, and Daniel in 1932. Later widowed, Dr. De Graaf married Joann Kuypers in 1970. Having retired from Hope College, Dr. De Graaf and his wife currently reside in Holland.

Dr. De Graaf was a very receptive interviewee, and he clearly recounted his years at Hope, both at the Prep School and at the College. Among his recollections are the impact of wartime on the College, changes in the administrative structure, college finances, English core requirements, and campus issues such as dancing. He also candidly compares the four presidents under whom he served.
INTERVIEW I

SWINYARD: You started your professional experience at Hope College High School in 1928. Do you remember anything about the atmosphere on campus at that time?

DE GRAAF: Well, I came in somewhat as a stranger, but the number of people who worked with me provided me with entertainment and fellowship. You see, the Prep School was just a little school of 35 to 100 students, and it didn't take very long to get acquainted with those. It was more or less the feeling, I think, on campus, that it was a small school and they were glad of it -- much more so than you would expect today. So, we converted the Prep School into a teacher training school and I had charge of the English Department and Speech Department. So I think the main difference was size, comparing it with present conditions at Hope College.

SWINYARD: I think I'd read that the Prep School reached a peak of 131 students at one point, and then it declined.

DE GRAAF: That's right.

SWINYARD: Was that because of interest, or were these students going someplace else?

DE GRAAF: Well, I think those that were graduating felt that they had completed the program, but there were others that felt that since they wanted to go on to college, they'd be better off to work through the college preparatory program. And there were factors that entered
in that had no relationship to the on-campus problems. For example, the townships and the counties around here were willing to pay the tuition for these prep students that were on Hope's campus. Then they discontinued that, and that accounted for considerable increase in cost. Some of the best students stayed on, but a goodly number of them dropped out. So it was then that the enrollment went down fast. We introduced the practice teaching program, which, in turn, served the college students. The prep students were exposed now not only to daily assignments, but also to the practice teaching program. This meant an extension of the program and of the life of the school. If the school continued only as a Prep School, it would have closed its doors in 1930. But now, with this shot in the arm the Prep School got, we carried on to 1936 and then closed down permanently because it was economically unwise to continue to draw the monies for the Prep School that we needed so badly for the college.

SWINYARD: How did the atmosphere on campus change with the coming of World War Two?

DE GRAAF: Well, it changed in the sense that there were perhaps about five girls to one fellow, which made considerable change. It meant that the girls had to take over all kinds of activities or there wouldn't be any. We divided the chapel. We bought a curtain that went the entire width of the chapel and cut it right in half, that is the chapel I refer to, the Dimment Chapel. So we met in a group toward the front of the chapel, and that gave us a rather fine sense of fellowship. In those days, chapel was a requirement. Everybody took it. We found certain satisfactions in it, and nobody felt they were imposed upon by a requirement for chapel. It wasn't a matter of choice for the faculty. The faculty each took their turns at leading chapel. I think that's where
I would see the most change during the war period. And after we got a couple of contingents of soldiers in training, we called it the "Saturday Afternoon Tea Club," but it was the trainees that were sent out by the United States Army, and we got our share of them, too, so after that, our dormitories were barracks and we had some. I had to teach a group of students speech. They were mostly from the South. Those were the ones that needed the most training in speech, I guess, the ones who had such a broad brogue that you couldn't understand them anyway. My first problem was to know what to tell the group if they wanted to sit down. They were all standing at their seats when I came in, and they remained standing. Well, I didn't have any instructions, so finally one of the boys said, "Say 'at ease.'" So I shouted, "At ease," and they sat down. (laughter) But that was military. Dr. Raymond was the director of the program. I think we had it about three years or maybe two years. I don't think you have a note on that, do you?

SWINYARD: No, not here.

DE GRAAF: I think it was just two years. But in military style, things had to go at tremendous speeds so that barracks appeared overnight. Some of those boys stayed with the program after the War was over. They came back and were some of our best students. They had come in as trainees of the Army.

SWINYARD: Was there a different attitude toward the Korean War on campus than toward World War Two?

DE GRAAF: I think the students were far more vocal in the Korean War. It seems to me we weren't in any program on campus for the Korean War, so we lost our boys to the Korean War, but I don't think it was handled through college at all, as I recall.
SWINYARD: What about with Viet Nam?

DE GRAAF: Well, Viet Nam, things were more volatile. There was such strong opposition to the war in Viet Nam that we had all kinds of dissonance and all kinds of protestants on campus. Some of them were arguing for complete withdrawal, and others were saying only the students should be withdrawn from the Viet Nam War. So there was a good deal of violent action: students protesting, having parades, marches, Freedom Marches, things like that. All that ended when the Korean War was over.

SWINYARD: You mean the Viet Nam War.

DE GRAAF: Yes, the Viet Nam War, not Korean.

SWINYARD: During the time that you were at Hope, did you notice any change in the type of student that attended Hope, for example in interests, philosophies of life, backgrounds?

DE GRAAF: Well, the largest number of students came from the Reformed Church. That's no longer true, of course. And it meant that you had not only a preponderance of Dutch, but Dutch members of the Reformed Church, and it meant that you had a kind of unity, a kind of agreement among the group that this is the way we do it. The school is much larger now, and it has gone out to get government grants wherever possible. These things had to be handled all within the family before a student could decide. It's only after the War that low-interest loans through the government made it possible for people to come to Hope College and to apply for a loan without any question as to their credentials or to their religious affiliations. This meant that the college was more distinctly a Reformed Church college prior to this disturbance. We now get students regardless of origin, if they can find ways and means of
paying the bills, they're welcome. That's evident, too, in the faculty. There was a time, oh, '28, '29 when I started, that every faculty member was a member of the Reformed Church, with my exception. I was a Christian Reformed Churchman, but that was also local and very similar to the Reformed Church, so that you might say that this college consisted of only faculty members who belonged to the Reformed Church and consequently the number of students that came from the Reformed Church far outnumbered the students from any other group. The groups would drop off, say, 100 for the Reformed Church, and there would be five strangers among them. And with every faculty member a member of the Reformed Church, you had a unity there that you don't have now.

SWINYARD: Were there any curriculum changes that were brought about specifically because of this change in student body?

DE GRAAF: Yes. I don't know what new courses were introduced, but we began to engage faculty members that were interested in the humanities, but they had special interests of their own, and before long, these people who came originally as guests on the campus were offering courses that were entirely new. And if you have a new faculty, you're going to get new courses, too. I don't know that the change came about early, but in my day, the emphasis was on the humanities. Now it changes from the humanities to the sciences: the preponderance of student enrollment is in the sciences today. So, again, you have laboratories in place of discussion groups. In humanities you have more freedom of thought, more freedom of action, whereas the scientists follow a rigorous course. It's definitely pointed out to them as an essential. I'm sure that that affects the whole program of the college, that shift, and it's not only Hope College, it's every college in the country that goes through the same experience. The fact that the Russians began to display their
superiority in Sputnik put a tremendous influence behind the sciences on every campus -- mathematics and science.

SWINYARD: As a professor, how did you view the relation of the church to Hope?

DE GRAAF: Well, I can't say it's necessarily all evil. There was more of an emphasis on religious instruction. I'm quite sure that the group that I joined in '28 were committed people who felt that they were interested in Hope College as a religious organization. It wasn't a missionary activity, it was a scholarly activity, but it was centered around the Christian emphasis. I think, for example, that Dr. Van Wylen is trying to restore that. I noticed in his lectures, in his speeches, he consistently emphasizes the fact that there's always in the program the Christian teaching. They're interested in excellence in learning, but it is also necessary to integrate that learning with the Christian life. Since all of the faculty were of the same stamp, the same style, nobody called that into question when we were required to be in chapel. We had one man who was somewhat liberal in his thinking, and he might get up and lead chapel with just a single sentence, but he took his turn at chapel just like the rest of us.

SWINYARD: After World War Two, President Lubbers started a new administrative structure, and he instituted the positions of Dean of the College, Business Manager, and Director of Alumni Relations, and he started the Student Health Center. How did you view the effect of this new structure on the dynamics of the faculty and the administration? Did it aid in the efficiency and cohesiveness of the group, or did it alienate?

DE GRAAF: Well, it made for organization. It's rather essential, I
suppose. We used to say that the bookkeeping was all carried out in Dr. Dimnent's hip pocket, which was a way of saying that the less administrative detail, the better we all liked it. We had a dean, Dr. Welmers. He personally sat down with every student and worked out a schedule and gave them some ideals to look for in their programs. Every student. He didn't have an office: he just walked back and forth on campus from one building to another and carried most of the things in his brain. That has changed a great deal because Dr. Lubbers was particularly schooled in college administration. The word itself was anathema to the old-timers. It sounded like detail, like written records and things like that, report writing, which the older group of faculty felt it was nice if you wanted to spend the time at it, but they had more important things to do. Registration took place in one day, usually a half day was sufficient for registration. We had no such thing as counselors. Every teacher was a counselor, and if students had questions, they went to the teacher: they didn't go to the counselor, they went to the teacher. Now, every college is loaded with deans, sub-deans, administrative heads, divisions, and things like that that were totally foreign to us in '28.

SWINYARD: You mentioned that one difference between Dimnent and Lubbers. Do you remember anything else for a contrast or a comparison between those two men?

DE GRAAF: I think they were appreciative of each other. They had great skills of certain kinds. Dr. Dimnent was an artist. He took hold of anything and everything and always felt that he could do it, no matter whether teaching Greek or teaching economics or teaching math, he was just that versatile. Dr. Lubbers had some of the same abilities. He was not easily stumped on anything. Things had to move, that's all.
When he took over, the College was ready to follow new patterns. I think he was extremely progressive in his thinking for the College, whereas Dr. Dimnent was more "hold the line" on what we'd always done. Dr. Lubbers was farseeing enough to see that you'd have to have differences in administration, you'd have to have deans, sub-heads, departments. A great deal in common, and yet they were different.

SWINYARD. Would you say that they had a similar view about what the goal of Hope should be, and just different ways of going about it?

DE GRAAF: I think they were pretty well agreed about what constituted the purpose of Hope College -- to provide a Christian oriented liberal arts college.

SWINYARD: O.K. After World War Two, the influx of G.I.'s that you mentioned before necessitated numerous changes. One of them was the barracks that you mentioned being built, and other things were things such as bending the rules for the last day to enroll for classes because of their schedules for returning, giving professors their own offices so that the classrooms could be used for every hour, extending class hours to 10:00 in the evening, instituting Saturday classes, and asking each faculty member to write a paragraph about what the overall goals and purposes of Hope were supposed to be. With all of these changes in such a short amount of time, were there any conflicts created?

DE GRAAF: Yes, there were conflicts created. There were faculty people who had followed the old pattern, who didn't want to make for change. The question, for example, of Saturday classes was tried, but the students didn't like it and the faculty didn't like it, so it was soon dropped, and that was true of some of the other things, too. It was almost necessary to have a flexible plan of accepting candidates.
The students had already lost some of their time to the military, and they were more than ready to take some additional work in order to save time, but that kind of individual registration lasted only a short time. Students got to see that the pressure was not for them as great as they thought it would be. Some of them wanted to do it in three years, but when they began to see that the four year program was more adequate for their needs, they shifted to the conventional program.

SWINYARD: The practice of soliciting funds from industry for non-tax-supported institutions is fairly common today, but when President Lubbers worked to institute the Michigan Colleges Foundation in the late 1940's the idea was revolutionary. How was this plan accepted by the students and faculty?

DE GRAAF: In principle, I think, everyone was for it because it meant more money. The faculty members were asked to visit these industries, so they were farmed out to them and made some interesting contacts. I don't think the students were involved in that. Maybe a student was taken along as a guest to visit some industry, that's possible, but the responsibility for carrying out the program lay with the faculty. It was interesting because you had to sell the idea first before you could collect any money. This idea has taken country-wide hold of the student mind and the faculty mind. Industries were matching funds, telling students that if they had a relative working in G.E., G.E. would help pay the tuition for the student. That kind of thing was in the making. I know Dr. Lubbers should have a good deal of credit for working it out. I made a couple of visits to the East: General Electric, some of the big industries there. I made a trip all the way from Holland to New Jersey to make a contact with Westinghouse.
SWINYARD: These contacts were assigned?

DE GRAAF: Yes.

SWINYARD: So there was no choice in the matter at all? You were given a certain number of industries you were to contact?

DE GRAAF: That's right.

SWINYARD: You said that you had to sell the idea before it could work. Were there certain faculty members who were particularly vocal against this plan?

DE GRAAF: No, I don't think the faculty were against it. There were industrial leaders who were against it, who felt that they would do their share in industry, but it was the college's business to take care of the financing. There was just a tendency to hold onto the dollar, that's all. Every year the amount increased because industries were beginning to realize that a liberal arts college is basic to American industrial society. The interests of the students in industry is far-reaching. They want a good deal more. They want a life that's acceptable, and so it's important for the industrialists to take art and to take music. And that has been developing all that time since Dr. Lubbers began to see that as a great future, not only in terms of dollars and cents, but in terms of cooperation and integration of the special interests of the student and the general interests of the humanities interest.

SWINYARD: When these industries contributed to the college, were there any strings attached? Did they have a vested interest and expect something in return? At first, at least, when the program was instituted?

DE GRAAF: I called on the larger industries, and I don't think that
the larger industries thought there was any exchange there. They felt that they would do their share, and it was up to the college to do its share. They weren't asking us to give special training in math for an industrial program. These contacts were all with the larger industries. First, they passed up Holland and then finally they came along and every industry in Holland was contacted, too. The Holland industries responded beautifully. At that time, they would set a goal of $200,000 and that would be an annual drive to raise $200,000. Now, they talk in terms of three and five million. That's what's happened with general inflation.

SWINYARD: Going back to the post World War Two era: the fourth floor of the science building was converted into a theatre at that time. Did that cause any repercussions among the local churches or faculty or students? The idea of having a theatre in a church-related college?

DE GRAAF: I don't think it was criticized on the basis of antagonism toward the theatre. The problem was how to get the theatre people interested in general education. The theatre was such that it was an absorbing interest and before long, the people who were up on the fourth floor day and night were flunking their courses but giving their time to theatre. There was smoking going on up there, so we weren't a bit surprised when one time a fire broke out. I think the drama coach was dismissed by Dr. Lubbers because he went up there one time after he had forbidden any smoking up there because of the fire danger, and he came up there and looked around and they were all smoking, so he fired the instructor, which was unfortunate because she had considerable theatrical ability. But he had to do it. She would smoke when she wanted to smoke, and that's all there was to it.
SWINYARD: You're not referring to Miss Ross.

DE GRAAF: No. Miss Ross might have her name brought in because she was the one who helped the organization, but she never coached the drama. Her interest was Palette and Masque.

SWINYARD: Similarly, how did the policy change to allow dancing at college functions affect the church's relation? Did it rock the boat at all?

DE GRAAF: Not as much as you would expect. Dr. Lubbers made very little ado about the whole matter. He felt there was no serious moral issue involved, and gradually the church would have to come around to it and accept social dancing. There was a little complaint, but if it was true in Iowa, it was not true of New York. There were almost as many students from the East as from the West. The West was more conservative, but the people in the East were accustomed to having social dancing, so they more or less took it for granted that this privilege would be theirs. I don't think anybody was ever dismissed for a dance. That came about very quietly. Everybody was satisfied, and it was the best way to handle it, not to go before Synod with a question of that kind. Dr. Lubbers was sufficiently tolerant to appreciate someone else's point of view. He wouldn't make an issue of it.

SWINYARD: But the way you said that makes it sound like initially he was probably not in favor of dancing.

DE GRAAF: He was not in favor of opening it up as an administrative problem, that is about as much an interest as he had in dancing. He realized that he might lose a few students and parents who took issue
with him and the college. But he didn't ride the storm or anything like that: there was no storm. It came about so quietly that before long we had it and that was it.

SWINYARD: Dr. Lubbers started the NEXUS committee to discuss the "hot potato" issues. It was composed of the top four college administrators and the top four officers of the student council. How successful was this committee, or was it just nominal?

DE GRAAF: The faculty thought it was a handy tool for a president who wanted to pass the buck onto someone else, some organization. So even when you had a division of responsibility and you had decision-making meetings, the decision was always reviewed by the president. They would have lengthy discussions among the students and faculty that were on this committee, but we knew it didn't get out of Lubbers' hands. So the NEXUS was a joke.

SWINYARD: I had read that either president, the president of the college or of the student council, could call a meeting, but it worked out so that Lubbers was the only person who really ended up calling meetings and being in charge of them? Whoever called them was supposed to run them.

DE GRAAF: All right, you got the information from somebody else.

SWINYARD: I think this was in Dr. Lubbers' file in the Archives -- something that had been written about it but not by him.

DE GRAAF: Well, it was a handy tool, but in decision-making, it's necessary to have pretty strong leadership. Not that they don't have a voice. Students, I think, felt that they were wasting time: he was going to retain the last word in decision-making, so why should the
students worry about it? You see, there was a time when the students were very much disturbed about decision-making. The question asked was "What student representation do you have on your committee?" The colleges were smart enough to see that this was perhaps a temporary interest, that the decision-making concern is merely as strong in the student as we thought it was. The student has a lot of decisions to make regarding his own life. I don't think there's nearly the agitation among the students to take on those positions of leadership that you had after the War. After the War, there was a strong feeling that suddenly the student had grown up and he was a mature individual now and he had been through a harrowing experience, so he was going to have something to say about things. I don't know how it is on the campus today, but already before I left, I could sense that there was less and less interference on the part of the student mind. They had a lot of problems of their own.

SWINYARD: During all of your years at Hope, which people would you say would be crucial to shaping the college, and who did you most respect, and why?

DE GRAAF: Well, I served under four presidents. Dr. Wichers -- I haven't mentioned Dr. Wichers. When I came in in 1928, Dr. Lubbers was not president, he was teaching English, and I was hired to teach English, so naturally we got together. But he then left the campus to continue his degree at Northwestern University. When he came back, he came back as president. He was president of a college in Iowa. What's the name?

SWINYARD: Central.

DE GRAAF: Central. He was president of Central, and then the Board of
Trustees called him to be president of Hope College. I recognized the fact that as a colleague, he had a good deal of interest in my particular field, but he was also interested in the whole field of college administration. Dr. Wichers pulled us through the Depression, and that was an achievement. 1929 to '33 we suffered less, I think, than most of the college faculty in the United States. Some colleges paid out only one-third of total salary to the faculty. We went through with one ten percent deduction, that's all. Credit Dr. Wichers for that -- he was a banker. Dr. Lubbers was an administrator of minds and personal problems: Dr. Wichers was the banker who could get money and hold money. Dr. Dimment was a kind of genius, a kind of untrained genius. He had been with the college with the Prep School first as a student, so at the time I joined the group, he was college president. But he ran the college absolutely according to his own way. I'll never forget the strange correspondence I had about coming to Hope College. Dr. Dimment must have written a letter to me in Chicago concerning my appointment of concern, my interview, and I never knew on what basis he gained his information. Suddenly there was a letter saying I had been appointed as teacher of English. Now I still think it was a way out of a pinch that he was short a teacher, and without many questions he hired me to come and teach English.

Well, then I went to the Prep School and part of my assignment for the Prep School was because they needed practice teaching.

So there were four different men who all placed a definite stamp on the college, and I considered it a privilege to work under four such different men, all with the same feeling toward Hope College: committed and loyal to Hope College, but having personality differences. I think one of the eras of clash between the old president and the new president was when Dr. Wichers was appointed president and he was
stricken with a disease that kept him down on his back for a good share of a year, so Dr. Dimment had to take over again. Dr. Dimment realized that his successor had been appointed and he had had full power as the next president. Although when Dr. Wichers came back, there was a little clash between the two, you could feel that. One was a man who had held the fort all during this period of sickness and convalescence, and then to turn it over to a new fellow.

SWINYARD: Do you remember anything about Dr. Vander Werf? You didn't mention him at all.

DE GRAAF: That's right. That makes it four presidents. I had had Dr. Vander Werf in my classes, so when he became president, we knew each other pretty well. He has a different style of administration. He was not really trained as an administrator, he was trained as a scientist. It was a mistake to appoint him. I think the men who knew him best should have been on the committee to interview him and they didn't do that. The Board of Trustees handled all that. All the men thought they had a great find. It was evident that his interests were not with the broad interest of the liberal arts college. He was still more interested in science and developing textbooks and things like that. He was a brilliant fellow, but he had difficulty in getting along with human beings, and in the position of college president, you have to be adept at handling personal problems. I think there was a general feeling that he could be of greater service in a classroom than he could in a president's desk. He tried hard to ingratiate himself with a student group because if he was losing power and interest to the faculty, perhaps he would be able to compensate for that with a student group, but he felt the same difficulties with the student group as he had with the faculty. Students were not interested in being led around,
so it was a good thing when he left. I can think of lots of things he can do and do full well, but the college presidency was not one.

SWINYARD: When he was here, did he realize that his abilities were in the sciences rather than in the presidency, or did he assume that he was doing an excellent job?

DE GRAAF: I think he was of the mind that he was doing a good job. It was just the feeling on campus that things weren't right in the upper room. Sometimes they tangled with Mrs. Vander Werf, who was quite influential, and followed the affairs of campus. They had children of their own, so they had representation through the children, too, at the college. But he had a lot of polish, a lot of grace. Why do people go wrong? I don't know. The assignments didn't seem to click, that's all. He meant well for the college, but he spent money lavishly and was a successor to Dr. Lubbers, who had been extremely sympathetic with Hope College and concerned about the college itself.

Other colleges were closing their doors because they couldn't raise the money. Dr. Lubbers saw us through, and then when Vander Werf came he began to run projects that ran into money and almost bankrupted the college, where all those men who had gone through that experience before saw that very clearly, and Vander Werf insisted in having an unbalanced budget. But it was unfortunate because we all went to faculty meetings with the feeling that we didn't want to be party to the feuding that was going on. Ex-president against present president.

SWINYARD: So this conflict was in the open rather than concealed?

It was something that everyone knew about?

DE GRAAF: I think so, I don't know, but certainly on the faculty it was known that there were differences. Members of the Board of Trustees
were trying to get information sub rosa so they would come in contact with faculty members and see what they could find out about the president and that kind of thing is not good.

SWINYARD: Do you have any comments on the development of the Department of English?

DE GRAAF: I was vitally interested, of course. I don't know that there was much of an attempt made to lay down the goals of the English Department. They have a rotation system now, which means that you have a new dean or a new chairman of the department almost every year, and I think that I did that for 15 years and no questions were asked. We talked very freely about the goals of the college and of the English Department, so a good deal of the decisions were made in the corridors of old Van Raalte building. As we didn't have so many meetings, we didn't have to spell out things. We took for granted we all knew English and we knew how to teach it. I wouldn't say everybody was happy, but it seemed that everybody was content. Then in the attempt at reorganization, the question was raised whether they shouldn't have monthly faculty meetings. Well, that came from the president, from Vander Werf, it was fed to him by one of the faculty who seemed to be unhappy about the situation that she was in. She went directly to the president, stirred up quite a bit of trouble, but she's gone now, and I suppose that most of the old-timers are still interested in Hope College, but men like Ten Hoor and Prins, Jellema, they don't want to be bothered with administrative problems. They don't feel a need for any faculty meetings unless it's really something significant. So, whereas you get a chairman and a new chairman every year, the chairman may try some new things, but he's more likely to just let the teachers handle it. It's been a pleasure to be connected with the college, to
serve the English Department. When the counseling system was introduced, it was my privilege to introduce it. I remember saying that I would direct the counseling on one condition, and that is that I didn't have to set up files and organizations. It would be whatever I could give it. And that's the way the counseling program started. I don't know what the situation is today. Counseling is kind of a panacea we use to cover all the disappointing things. What kind of question did you have in mind about the English Department?

SWINYARD: Well, the faculty and their rapport with students; curriculum; requirements; anything that you'd like to add.

DE GRAAF: The humanities were brought up in the English Department. The old program in English was required course for every student, and usually that grew out of World Literature. Have you been through the regular bases on Hope's campus? Sophomore Lit?

SWINYARD: Yes.

DE GRAAF: Well, they're still governing a good deal of the English program in terms of tradition. Sophomore Lit. is an excellent course, but it's definitely not a popular thing to take. Students don't seem to know that they can get a great deal of knowledge of life from classical literature. So you begin with Homer. That type of thing undergoes change because the modern student wants modern literature rather than classical, traditional literature. Now, I don't know how they'll solve this problem, but that's a serious problem because the old-timers, like Hollenbach and Ten Hoor, they're absolutely sold on that Sophomore Lit. course. You watch and see what happens to it.

SWINYARD: Do you have anything else to add about anything that I've
DE GRAAF: No, I think you've done a good job in analyzing the problems that create questions. What sources of information did you have for your outline here?

SWINYARD: I read the books by Wichers and by Stegenga, and spent last week in the Archives with the files that are there -- the clippings and the correspondences and the Anchor editorials, things like that.

DE GRAAF: Well, you've done a good job in picking up things.

SWINYARD: Thank you very much.

DE GRAAF: It's rather difficult to bring them back to mind over a long period. I was there 44 years, so there's no doubt a lot of things would present problems, but when I retired, I destroyed my files, so I've got to trust the memory. Elton Bruins has been after me a number of times to leave something to the files. Well, I said, "For one thing, I never lectured from a file. My method of teaching was always free discussion in the classroom. No lectures. So, if you have no lectures, you have nothing to leave to the archives!" (laughter) But if I was called on to do it again, I'd do it again if I had the opportunity. They were great years, and the fellowship I had both with students and with fellow faculty members was most satisfying. Now, I'll let it go at that.

SWINYARD: O.K. Thank you very much for your time and for answering these questions. I've enjoyed our talk very much.
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Clarence De Graaf

born Nov. 14, 1901 in Grand Rapids

education: elementary school: Creston Christian
   high school: Calvin Prep, grad. 1917
   college: Calvin, A.B. 1921
   graduate: 1 summer Michigan State Normal
   University of Michigan, A.M. 1924
   University of Michigan, Doctor of Education in Eng. 1945

honors and awards:

professional experience:
   taught high school English: Holland Christian 1921-1928
   principal there 1926-1928
   instructor in Eng. in Hope College High School 1928-1931
   instructor in Eng. at Hope College 1931-1940
   4 summers: instructor in state normal schools 1937-1946

parents' names and dates
   Andrew and Winnifred - Both born in 1872

professions
   farmer and grocer

place of residence(hometown)
   Grand Rapids

family information: wife's name and hometown
   Marie Koppers - Holland
   birthdate 1898
   date of marriage June 29, 1928
   education and occupation A.B. teacher
   children's names and birthdates, occupations
   Jean Koppers - 1970

professional experience since 1946

   College Teaching
   Chairman of English Dept: Hope College

affiliations
   Michigan College English Teachers

publications
   "Critical Thinking" Educational Journal

present activities
   Retired