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Apple, Carl Oral History Interview: Sesquicentennial of Holland, "150 Stories for 150 Years"

Allison Gerds

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Oral History Interview with
Carl Apple

Conducted November 25, 1996
by Allison Gerds

Sesquicentennial Oral History Project
"150 Stories for 150 Years"
Tell me a little bit about your family.

About my family? Well, I have basically two families. One family, I have five children and six grandchildren. My second family, I have two stepchildren. My first family, the children range from age 21 to 37. That consists of two boys and three girls. In that group I have six grandchildren ranging in age from one to ten. Then I have two stepchildren who are five and nine. I have an extremely lovely and talented and charming wife and that makes up my family.

When did you move to Holland?


Where did you live before that?

Before that I lived in Dearborn, Michigan, which is a suburb of Detroit.

Have you noticed any major changes in the past twenty years that you have been here in Holland itself?

How long is your tape? (laughs) My goodness! Because I tell everybody when I first came to Holland there was one McDonald's and it was closed on Sunday, that's the one over in Holland Heights. There were no Burger Kings, there were no Pizza Huts, there were no Dominos. There was no Sandpiper. There was a Point West which is no longer there. There are a tremendous amount of new industries in town that were not here twenty years ago. As there are a tremendous amount of people.
More so than there was. As the government tells us, or the Chamber of Commerce
tells us, the county of Ottawa is the largest growing county in the state of Michigan.
That’s very true.

AG: Do you think that the industry and the growth have been good for the city?

CM: I think it’s grown too fast. I don’t know that our housing and our police protection
has been able to keep up with it. In fact, that’s interesting. Today we were coming
across town from west to east and we took one of the side streets across and we were
remarking how you could almost pick out the houses that were not personally owned
by the people who lived in them. That they almost had to be rentals. Because they
were so run down and just really in terrible condition. Not to belabor the gang
situation, that has been a real problem, and I think from that respective the town has
grown very rapidly. I think we’re now doing a very good job about it but I think it
got our of hand for a while and we were not able to keep up with it.

AG: Do you see, not around the gang issue and the diversity, do you see the increased
diversity of the Hispanic population growing, do you see that as a positive aspect of
Holland’s?

CA: Okay. This has always been a thing with me. I taught religious education at St.
Francis for many years, for like 15 years. My classes were primarily made up of
Hispanic teenagers. In many cases, too many children, not enough money in the
families, and a lot of complaints about not having things and social issues and so
forth. I also have heard of lot of what I would refer to the old time Dutch
complaining about the Hispanic growth. You have to remember why so many
Hispanic people ended up in Holland. That was because they were migrant farm workers. So it was the Dutch who owned the farms that brought them here, or that enticed them here, because they were doing what they were able to do to make a livelihood. I think from a very positive aspect is some of these people after following the sun for a long time ended up in Holland and realized all the industry in Holland, and decided that from a family standpoint it was time to establish some roots and plant some of their own seeds and watch their own trees grow. So I think that’s a very positive thing. I don’t feel it’s healthy for families who are having children quite frequently to be traveling from Florida to Texas to California to Holland, Michigan. I know at St. Francis, and some of the core churches in Holland, we used to have a lot of programs in the summertime to educate the children from a religious standpoint about God and so forth and so that the kids were getting some sort of religious education. I think that’s very positive. But no, I think it’s good. I know many, many, many Hispanic people in town who are really tremendous citizens just like there are tremendous Dutch people and now, Vietnamese, Cambodian and so forth. We just have to make sure that everybody is establishing their roots properly and they don’t have an identity crisis. Because that’s where the gang situation enters into the picture because the young people are looking to be identified.

AG: How do you feel the Dutch heritage plays into the community? Holland is known for Tulip Time…

CA: Well, I think the Dutch aspect, and this is something I’ve felt for a long time… I worked for a short time at Herman Miller. It amazed me because I was used to how
things were run in the automobile industry back in Detroit where you had almost as large a quality control department as you did a production department because you had to have people checking on the quality. I was amazed at Herman Miller, and I’m aware that this is quite true in a lot of the other factories around here, that you don’t have that big a quality control department. The theory was in the finish mill where worked at Herman Miller that if you weren’t going to buy it you didn’t finish it. You didn’t send it on. You made sure that you were your own quality control person. If it wasn’t sanded properly you kept sanding it until it was right or you threw it away because you had gone through the veneer. You couldn’t sand it any more. I think it was a tremendous work ethic in the Holland area that the Dutch instilled in this community. Unfortunately, I think that is not as strong as it used to be because there are so many more (sighs), I’m going to refer to it as outsiders who come in from like Muskegon on a daily basis or Grand Rapids and so forth who don’t have that ethic.

In my daily job, I do catering at the various Prince plants and it’s amazing how many times in talking to the supervision that you’ll ask them, "Is everybody here tonight?" and they’ll say, "No, we had nine people call in," and that’s almost a daily thing. That people… and it’s mostly young people… who "Well, I don’t care," you know. "If I get fired, I’ll get another job." Well… maybe they will, maybe they won’t.

AG: What has been the biggest difference that you’ve noticed from being on the east side, like from the Detroit area, compared to Holland? What were your first impressions?

CA: I was here maybe a couple of months and I was down on Eighth Street, and this was before the malls and all that, and for some reason I just felt very funny. There was
something missing. I couldn’t feel what it was. So I ended up standing on the curb just kind of looking up and down the street and on the sidewalk. I suddenly realized it was the first time in my life I had ever been in an all white society. There were no black people. I do not... people who are Hispanic I do not... that is a nationality to me, that is not a race. So to me you are caucasian or you’re black and there were no black people. That was a big adjustment for me to get used to that. I think it’s very healthy now that are more black people moving into the area because of jobs and so forth. I think that that’s good for the culture, it’s good exposure. Because when you grow up and get on I-196 and head east or west you’re going to run into many different cultures and I think that’s important that you’re aware of those.

AG: What made you come to Holland in the first place?

CA: What I thought was going to be a great job opportunity. I was here about four months and the company I was working for I found out was loaded with a tremendous amount of cancer and had almost both feet in the grave. Fortunately, they did pay for my moving expenses.

AG: What would you consider some of the negative sides of living in Holland? It’s not all positive.

CA: Jokingly, ha, ha, ha, not being able to buy an alcoholic beverage on Sunday. (laughs) That’s something that I had a hard time getting used to especially when I worked at Point West because people would come in and I could sell them a martini or manhattan but I couldn’t sell them a bottle of beer or a glass of wine. That doesn’t make any sense. Negative-wise? I don’t feel there are that many negative things to
living here. I think it's a great place to raise children. I know at the time of my life when I moved here it was excellent. For example, my oldest son had learned how to play the guitar and he ended up playing at the Summer Repertory Theater at Hope College. Now, that never would have happened on the other side of the state. It just wasn't available, but it was available here. But I really don't feel that there are that many negatives aspects to living here.

AG: What about changes which you've noticed in the last twenty years at Hope College?

CA: Oh golly! The expansion of the campus. The closing of streets. I remember when they closed 12th Street. Oh my goodness, the local citizens who lived east and west of the campus had a fit because they were going to have to detour and go down Tenth Street or something. That was a big issue. The cultural aspect of Hope College I think is great for the community. The Summer Repertory Theater, the Museum and so forth, I think this is just great. I think it's great how they have educational programs at the College that go hand in hand with the local school systems, whether it's the public or parochial school systems. I think it's great for the community.

AG: Do you think there is a positive relationship between Hope College and the community?

CA: Oh yes. As I mentioned there are so many things that go on at Hope - cultural things, educational things, sports things that take the community in. I think it's great that we have a Hope College here.

AG: Have you ever noticed a generation gap between ages in Holland?

CA: Yeah. (sighs) In teaching religious ed I found a lot of that. Especially within homes.
The number of kids who, and this is a common thing, where teenagers feel their parents don’t understand them. But a lot of the citizens... Kids are different now. It’s a different generation than when you were a teenager. It’s way different then when I was a teenager. Things are so much faster now. Just the idea of television, the news media. You know about things that are happening on the other side of the world almost before they even happen. Things are so much faster now and it’s hard for a lot of older people to grasp that. Computers. That’s our life now, that’s the future. If a young person doesn’t know how to handle a computer they’re going to be left out in the cold. I think that’s important that the school systems in the last couple of years have brought in a lot of computers to the elementary schools and so forth.

No, I think that’s very definite.

AG: Norma, feel free to jump in on this question. But speaking about Holland, and concentrating on what you know about Holland, how do you think the role of women has changed in the last twenty years you’ve been here? Or do you think it hasn’t really changed?

CA: I think it definitely has. What’s it called, NOW, I think, has made an impact. Women in Transition has helped. One of the first things I noticed about Holland in the families, the husband and wife situation in Holland among the Dutch and those that were raised very strictly Dutch, that the woman was supposed to be subservient to the male. She was supposed to be there to cook his meals, make his bed, be his bed partner, make his lunch, be there for his beck and call. On the other end of it, he could do whatever he darn well felt like as far as coming in and going, and I don’t
mean going out carousing or drinking at the local bar, but working and then having his hobbies, picking up and going hunting, being gone for a week and coming home and expecting dinner to be on the table. Or going off for the evening, maybe to go fishing or something, and come in at midnight and say, "I want my dinner." A lot of that still goes on in Holland with no affection. A great movie that depicts that - maybe not a great movie - "Bridges of Madison County." It's a great example of that where the wife was taken for granted for years and years and years and it's not until the husband is on his deathbed that he finally turns to his wife and says, "I love you." I think there's a tremendous amount of that in Holland but I think that the younger women are changing that, and I think it's great.

AG: (To the woman) Do you have anything to add?

NA: Oh I agree with him. Because I came from a situation like that. That's not the way our home is now. Our home is a fifty-fifty partnership, friendship. I don't do all the washing. I don't do all the cleaning. We do it together. My marriage before this was not like that. I did all the washing. I did all the cooking. I did all the cleaning. I did all the taking care of the kids. I did all the picking up of the kids and I felt like I was everybody's maid but nobody's wife. I agree with him 100%.

CA: But I think that's quite common in a lot of homes in the Holland area. And I think it's unfortunate because I don't feel that a woman has an opportunity to grow when she's in a situation like that. It's very important in our society today that both people have the opportunity to grow. Both husband and wife.

AG: Do you think Holland, as a city, is supportive of women in the work place and
supportive of that aspect of equality?

CA: I think they are now. In the twenty years I have been here I think you see a lot more of that support. For example, again I go out to Prince, on third shift at all these plants and the number of women in the work force. If it wasn’t for the women in the work force, Prince would have to close up a lot of their plants, as would Donnelly and Herman Miller and Howard Miller and all those places. If it wasn’t for the female aspect of the work force because there just aren’t enough people.

AG: What are some of the organizations you have been involved in in Holland?

CA: Very heavily in the Lion’s Club - was president, secretary and so forth. I was very involved at St. Francis, one of the two Catholic churches. Taught religious education there for about fifteen years. Was referred to as a jail minister to the Ottawa County Jail for the better part of nine years. That is pretty much what I have been involved in Holland. Prior to coming to Holland I was very active in the Jaycees and was the state vice-president out of the Detroit area, but got too old so I had to let that go. But the Lion’s Club, as far as civic organizations, that was where I was.

AG: What kind of things does the Lions Club do for the community?

CA: The Holland Lions Club, their main thing is dealing with the hearing and visually impaired, especially the visually impaired. We have a program where we work through the County Board of Health, where anybody in the Holland area that needs eyeglasses and can’t afford them, we buy them. What they do is they go to the County Board of Health and they’re interviewed. If they pass the criteria that the
Board of Health sets down, then they are sent over to, right now is WalMart because that seems to be the most inexpensive place in town, and they are given an eye examination and they pick out glasses and the bill is sent to the Holland Lions Club. This is something that the County used to do for a long time, but the county budgets have been cut so bad through the social service aspect, that they don’t do that any more. So the Holland Lions Club has picked that up. If anybody is legally blind, we supply them with all kinds of paraphernalia that will help assist them, like white canes and things like that. Every year we have a large party for the adults at Christmas time where they have a nice Christmas type dinner. There’s entertainment and they are given Christmas gifts. We’ve done that for over fifty years. The Holland Lions Club is seventy-five years old this year in Holland. We do the same thing for children at Christmas time. The children who are visually impaired and hearing impaired, we have a big Christmas party. In fact, I played Santa Claus for about five years. We also have a scholarship fund, where every year it rotates between the two public schools and the parochial school, being Holland Christian. Each year it switches to a different one.

AG: How would you describe the role that the church in general plays in the Holland community?

CA: Well, when I first came to Holland I saw one of these signs, I guess it was in the motel I was staying at, that listed all the churches. I added them up and realized that the largest industry in Holland-Zeeland had to be religion, (laughs) because at that time there were something like 86 churches and I believe now it is well over 100.
These are not storefront churches like you would find in the inner city of Detroit. These are all churches with steeples and bell towers and things like that. I think it plays a very definite, a very positive aspect of the community. I think it’s one of the things that kind of cements that relationship I mentioned earlier about the work ethic. I think that’s very strong. I think there’s a lot of high moral standards in the town. Unfortunately, sometimes I get the feeling that in some cases it might be over done a little bit. We have a situation we know where one family goes to early service at their church, they go to the late service at their church and then they go back at night on Sunday. Well, by my standards, I think that’s a little over doing it, especially for children. But, no, the church plays a very definite positive role, especially the churches in the inner city like St. Francis, Hope Reformed, Third Reformed, United Methodist. I may be missing a couple others, I’m not sure. But they do a lot of very positive things with underprivileged people and so forth and I think that’s very necessary.

AG: Have you seen the influence that the role of the church has on the community, have you noticed any changes?

CA: I think in the 20 years I’ve been here, like the churches I’ve just mentioned, they’ve become more involved with the social aspects of the community as opposed to it’s wrong to steal, it’s wrong to kill somebody. But they’re becoming more involved in making sure that people have a house and they have food, because all these places I know now have food closets and clothing and stuff like that. I know St. Francis started at one time a house and, I’m not sure, I think the Good Samaritans have taken
it over now where people coming into town with no place to live can live there for like 30 days until they find their own housing. I think that’s very important that the churches become involved in social issues.

AG: How do you think Holland, as a city, handles social issues and the social problems?

CA: You’re talking about the city government now? I think they’re coming around. I know for about the last year or so there’s been some issues about affordable housing and where they want to put affordable housing. Of course, nobody wants low-income housing in their neighborhood. I think Holland Heights was one area they were looking at, and the people were upset. They like their hundred thousand dollar houses, they don’t want forty and fifty thousand dollar houses out there. That’s something that the Planning Commission has to address and be very definite about where they’re going to put these. But I think that’s the main area because I think there’s too many people as I’ve mentioned before, we were coming across town today and you could just tell which houses were not owned by whoever was living in them, because the land lords were not taking care of the property. In fact, one of the looked like it had a cardboard front on the doorway. I couldn’t understand why the city wasn’t over there banging on the head of whoever owned that property.

NA: You can bet they’re not living in houses like that.

CA: But I think that’s where the city needs to do more work. Every once in a while you’ll see in the paper where landlord (in Detroit we call them slum landlords, and you know that, you’re from the Detroit area) and that’s basically what they are here, but I’ve never seen them use that in print yet, because so many of these people (not
all of them but a number) are real estate people who have picked up a piece of property for a song and a dance and now they don’t want to pay the piper, because they like to get that five or six hundred dollars a month rent. They’ve paid for the property and o-o-h look at them, my wallet’s getting thicker! But when we came across on 17th today and there were, between College and Columbia, I would guess at least a half a dozen houses that I thought should have been torn down. They just looked absolutely terrible.

NA: I wonder what kind of impression that sets for tourists. Because it is 17th, 16th, 15th, 14th and so close to the Tulip Time area and I just wonder, when these people go down, what do they think?

CA: So many of those houses are so close to Hope College and so many of the Hope College students that live off campus, let’s say that they live even north of 16th Street. I’m out at night catering at Prince after midnight and I see Hope College girls walking along the street going from who knows where to their cottage and to their house and they’re alone. They should not be out walking.

NA: They know that they’re not supposed to be out there.

CA: But the houses... they need a lot of work, and I think that’s where the city’s got to do a big major push on it.

NA: You yourself, would you walk down by the Hope College at one o’clock in the morning by yourself?

AG: Probably not. Well, it would depend on the area. It would have to be actually on campus but I wouldn’t be walking around 14th, 15th, 17th...
NA: Even though you’re on campus does not assure that something is not going to happen. My car was broken into and it was right on the back dock of Phelps Dining Hall.

CA: Well, and Stephanie, who works with us at Eddie Bauer. She was in those apartments just off 16th Street, and they kicked in the window of her car.

NA: So, even though you’re on Hope’s campus does not assure your safety. Even Lucy Jongkrijg was hit by a car right by Phelps Dining Hall. Kids storming around there with their cars and bumped her off.

AG: Do you think there are strong tensions between the various social classes?

CA: In any society, where you’re going to have different social economic classes, from the lower class and the lower economic group looking up, you’re going to have a lot of mistrust because anybody who is poor, doesn’t have money doesn’t always trust the guy who’s up here making the big bucks. It’s just the way it is. It’s the way it was back in the days Robin Hood. The peasant never trusted the landowner, you know. You read in the paper how this political party and that political party is cutting taxes or increasing taxes, and this party is giving the wealthy a break, and this party is sticking it to the poor guy. All those things create tensions. You can’t help but have it.

AG: Do you think, though, that it’s a problem in Holland?

CA: Going back to what I mentioned earlier where I was teaching a lot of Hispanic kids in church, one of the big rubs was the fact that these kids were so upset with all the boat people, Cambodians and Vietnamese, that were coming over at one time. The fact that churches were giving them houses, were giving them cars, to set them up, their
life standard. If one of these boat people started a business they didn’t have to pay
taxes for four or five years, I don’t know about personal income taxes if they went to
work in a factory, but they didn’t have to pay taxes. That was a real rub with these
kids. "We just moved up here from Mexico. How come we don’t have that." Well,
we didn’t have a war over in your country! There’s different things that create
tensions between the classes and it’s here in Holland. I don’t think it’s a big issue but
there are things that exist. That becomes one of the problems with the gangs. When
a guy joins a gang it’s for recognition, it’s usually the fact he’s not getting something
at home. His parents are not really paying much attention maybe and some older guy
down the street pushing some weed is going to give him the attention. The next thing
you know they’re pointing fingers at another class. Somebody who doesn’t belong to
a gang, "Now you’re a bad guy." That creates a social tension.

AG: What problems do you see that just the generic general Holland citizen is facing right
now with Holland itself? What would you say would be some of the main issues
concerning just the general Holland citizen? Are there any?

CA: It’s kind of hard to say. If you talk to the average guy, he would probably really
complain about all the road construction going on in town. (laughs) You can’t go
from point A to point B. Sometimes you can’t get there. The gang thing we just
mentioned I think is an ongoing situation. I think it’s getting better. I think with the
Weed and Seed money that they’ve gotten I think the Holland Police Department has
done a great job, and I mean that very seriously. We should take our hats off to
them. Some of the daily issues like trash pickup I think is second to none. Snow
removal I think is great. I think the job that the Board of Public Works does is excellent. I think we have reasonably economical power bills in this town except for the water and sewer treatment. I think that’s a little gross. But, I think for the most part, life is pretty good here from the standpoint of the government and the things they take care of.

AG: Have you ever heard any comments from people who are visiting or heard any other people’s impressions of Holland that are different from your own?

CA: Well, with us working at Eddie Bauer, and I probably have more chance to talk to people than you really do because you’re usually up behind the register, I get to talk to a lot of people who are from all over the midwest and people who own cottages along Lake Michigan who are up here a lot of weekends, and the majority of them are all very favorable. It’s very rare that I run into anybody that has had a bad experience. I give a lot of directions. I recommend a lot of restaurants. People looking for motels, that kind of thing. But in general, the attitudes and the opinions are all very favorable.

AG: Do you support the notion of Holland being an All-American City?

CA: I don’t know what the criteria is... how they rate that. I’d like to know what the criteria is for that.

AG: Would you classify Holland as an All-American...?

CA: I look at a city and an area. The United States when it was founded was really a melting pot. You had all these people from different countries, in Europe primarily, coming to the United States, and then, of course, with the Second World War you
had them coming from Asia. I think Holland is very representative of that. You’ve got heavy Dutch, heavy Hispanic. You’ve got a lot of Asian. Quite a number of black people, Afro, that have moved into the area. From that aspect, I think I would say it would be an All-American. From city services and things like that I think we offer the things that we look for in what I would say "a good city." And if "a good city" makes it an All-American City then I would say, yes, that we would be that. I think it’s a very picturesque town. A lot of trees. I think trees are healthy for the environment. We don’t seem to go into an area where we’re going to build houses and level all the trees down and then build the houses. For the most part in the subdivisions it looks like we’ve worked around that which I think is important.

AG: What future problems do you see for the Holland community?

CA: Employment! We have too many jobs and not enough people. At the market place where we work, I do not know how aware you are, but so many of those stores out there, there’s forty of them or forty-five, something like that. Many of those stores are being run by one and two people. So many of those people, so-called managers and maybe the manager because their the only guy there, but they’re going into some of those stores and they’re doing twelve hour days. Or maybe there’s two people in the store. A good friend of mine, in fact, he’s a shopper at Eddie Bauer, he’s district manager for McDonald’s and he said that is a constant problem with them. He feels he’s paying a good wage to most people right now. We could probably go to McDonald’s and get a better hourly rate than we’re getting at Eddie Bauer right now. But I know one morning he said, it was on a Sunday, he had to get up and go in and
work in one of the stores because only three people had showed up. This is the
district manager! He had to cover. I think that is a big problem. I know that at
Prince and a lot of the other factories they’re constantly having job fairs. WalMart
has a job fair, I think, every Tuesday and Wednesday because they can’t get people to
handle these stores. I think you’re going to find some stores that will not be staying
open 24 hours because they can’t staff them.

AG: Do you think that’s a lack of... I don’t know what Holland’s unemployment rate is.

CA: It’s almost zero!

AG: Do you think Holland will be able... because we have a lot of industry here. This
area is the fastest growing area. Do you see that as a further increasing problem? Or
is there the draw...

CA: I think it’s going to be with us for a long time before it goes away. I don’t know
what the answer is. I can remember years ago before I came to Holland, in fact I
was working for the Ford Motor Company, and they were having this kind of a
problem where they couldn’t get people to work. They went down into poverty type
areas. One in particular was the Ozarks and they relocated people from the Ozark
area to the Detroit area and gave them jobs in factories. Well, that created two
problems. The first problem because the factories were unionized these people had to
go on the third shift which was midnights because they had low seniority and they
were inexperienced and the quality of workmanship suffered. Cars coming off the
assembly line, they had more going over to repair than they had going out the door
into the haul aways. The other problem came payday. These people suddenly have
seen more money than they have ever seen in their lives and they take the next day or
two off. They were out spending their money. "Wow, I've got 300 dollars in my
pocket. I've never seen fifty dollars!" I would hate to see the Holland area get into
that kind of thing where they would go someplace and start relocating people. I think
it's one thing to advertize out of town.

AG: Any other problems besides...?

CA: No, I think employment is the big thing. I think the other problems, gangs and stuff
like that we mentioned, I think it's very positive on that. I think we're doing a very
good job. I think it's very unfortunate that we have to have full time police officers
actually being assigned as their work place in the high schools. But, I think that's a
deterrent. I think that is something that the gangs know that person is there and they
better watch themselves. But I think employment is the biggest problem and I think
that's going to continue to be the biggest problem for quite a while.

AG: Do you see yourself staying in Holland for the rest of your life?

CA: Yep. For obvious reasons. (laughs) If I was single, I had given myself to the end of
'97. If something hadn't changed for the better or whatever then I was going to
relocate. But that won't happen now.

NA: You gave yourself longer than I did! (tape ends)

CA: I've always enjoyed the celebration and I'm very happy that we're here for the 150th.
It's going to be exciting. Beyond that I'm looking for the year 2000. I think that's
going to be exciting! I'm not big into new years but I think the change of a century
ought to be exciting. No, I think 150th, that will be a great milestone and there
should be a lot of fun here in town.

NA: Do you know anything specific that you would want the city to do in its celebration? Anything that you think would be important to you?

CA: Oh, I don't know. I think it would be nice...I like to dance. Summertime during the Liberty Fest they go downtown and they have dancing and I'd like them to expand that. Something like that. Beyond that nothing in particular.

AG: What are your feelings about Tulip Time?

CA: Well, the Lions Club... Tulip Time is their big fund raiser. That's where we for years... for over thirty years we have had a tent here in town, and over the last twenty-some years it's been down by the Civic Center. We have a very large chicken barbecue. And with the proceeds that we realize from that that's how we... that's our budget. That's how we pay for all the glasses and other things that we do for the community. Every dime that the Lions Club takes in goes right back to the community. We don't use it for sending exchange students to Europe or anything like that. So Tulip Time for us is a very positive thing. We need Tulip Time to raise the money. It's very exciting. I like parades. For years I've had a son... well, Carl Junior, he was in the sixth grade band and went on up to where he was the drum major for the Holland High Band. Now I have grandchildren that march in the parade and I have a grandson who will be in the sixth grade band this year playing the trombone. So I will be out there watching the parades again. I think it's good.

It brings a lot of publicity to the city. It brings a lot of money into the town.

NA: A lot of people who don't know how to drive!
CA: (laughs) Who don’t know how to drive, right. Especially from Ohio. It’s interesting and I always have to marvel at it, how so many people volunteer so many hundreds of hours for a community project. To me, that’s pride in your community and that’s important. When I first came to Holland and saw these Tulip Time dancers around Centennial Park and then went down on Eighth Street at the beginning of the parades, and that’s all you could see was Tulip Time dancers right on down Eighth Street. And they were not all high school kids. They were ladies who had graduated many years before but they were all volunteering their time. Then you would see high school kids literally running to get into the parade after they had just competed in a softball game at the high school or a track meet someplace and now they were getting ready to donate their time to a community project. That’s fantastic. It’s just tremendous. So I think Tulip Time does a lot of good. It puts a lot of pride. Now you hear a lot of locals: "I always go on vacation during Tulip Time. I want to get out of town." Well, you know there’s some of that conversation, but the majority of the people, they’re here. They like it.

AG: Can you sum up the three best parts of Holland? The three best characteristics? What would you consider the three best things about the City of Holland?

CA: The people. As far as the people are concerned, for the most part their values, their morals, their work ethics. They are probably the best anyplace I’ve ever been. The local taxes I think are very realistic. This house here... I know what this house would cost tax-wise where I came from. I also know what this house would have cost me where I came from. That was another thing about the city of Holland I
forgot to mention. The cost of living was so much cheaper here than it was over in Detroit where we came from. You see, I did all the grocery shopping and all the cooking at our house, and I could not have fed my family as well as I was here if I'd still been living over there. The quality of food was better. The quality of just ground beef was better here than it was over there. Ice cream. Our worst ice cream here was close to being better than the best ice cream on the other side of the state. Unless you give me Tom and Jerry's. But I mean, Country Fresh and Family Fare was better than what some of the better ice creams I was able to find over in the Detroit area. The tax base is very good here. We have a lot of good industry. The city fathers, Chamber of Commerce, and those kinds of organizations, government organizations, have enticed business to the town. I think they've done an excellent job. I think police protection is good. Sometimes I get the feeling that they might be a little overzealous, but on Sunday morning when you see them out ticketing somebody just going to church. I don't know if that's really called for, but they're doing their job.

AG: Any other last remarks?

CA: Well, I've had a lot of good times and bad times in Holland for twenty years. Came here with a family and a wife. The family grew up and went on. That wife and I decided it was time to part company and I have met somebody who is just absolutely fantastic and my life is tremendous. I just am in the best spirits that I have ever been in my entire life. Life is fantastic. I had two cancer operations this year. Passed them. Everything is wonderful. Married to an absolutely wonderful person.
NA: You said that already!

CA: I know that but it’s worth repeating. We have a beautiful home, a beautiful setting. Life’s great! Couldn’t be happier. Great friends at both jobs. Never get used to the turnover, like you’ve been here three years and in January you’ll be leaving. That’s a hard thing for me to get used to.

NA: Oh, you’re a big old softy.

CA: Yeah, I am. But I do. Seriously I do. I enjoy young people and I think that if something keeps you young, and I don’t know if that does, but I think being around young people is good for someone my age.

NA: That’s why you married me.

CA: That’s right! (laughs) I knew there was a reason. I like the closeness of everything here. I’m a mile from Hope College, about three miles from Eddie Bauer. I’m home in less than ten minutes from Eddie Bauer at night and two minutes in the morning from Hope.

AG: Well, thanks!

CA: How’d I do?

AG: You did well. Thank you very much.