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De Haan, Peg Oral History Interview:
Sesquicentennial of Holland, "150 Stories for 150 Years"

Terry Prins

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TP: First I just want to say to Peg that some of my questions are going to seem trivial. But the purpose is to get at the small details of daily life as you remember it, as much as you remember, because over time, those are the things that are lost.

PD: Right, that’s true.

TP: Okay, so first of all, where were you born and when?

PD: I was born on [date removed], 1927 and I was born in what was then the Holland Hospital, which is on the corner of Central and 12th St.

TP: Which is now the…?

PD: It is now a bed and breakfast. It was the Holland Museum for a while. After that I remember going there as a little child to a day care center or a kindergarten, something like that. Briefly, I just remember going over there and that in a back sort of sunny, sun room was where the children were. I can remember going in there. But I don’t remember anything about the teachers, or anything other than that. It must have been after the hospital was moved that was it was privately owned, I guess. And they had a little day care or kindergarten there.

TP: Where did your parents live? When you went home from the hospital I think Bob…

PD: They lived on East 10th St. I don’t know what the address was. But at one time, it was a house owned by the college. And it was a Boyd cottage because later when I was a student at Hope College, we had meeting in that house. And then my mother
told me that that’s where I lived when I was a baby.

TP: Okay then, that must have been their first home.

PD: That was their first home.

TP: Because later you were on 12th St.

PD: Right, 82 W. 12th St. Then we moved from there. I don’t remember any of that. The only thing I remember is my early home was 82 W. 12th St.

TP: Right, Okay in this next is a silly question. Any siblings? Obviously you have because otherwise I wouldn’t be your sister-in-law.

PD: (laughs). Just a brother, one older brother.

TP: Any early memories from the time when you were really very small? Usually we have one or two things that we’ll remember, like from your grandparent’s house, or any little memory for that time? Anything that stands out?

PD: Well my grandparents home, I was there so much that I can’t think of any one particular thing. But because they lived in the next block, we went back and forth a great deal. And so, I...specifically, no because that was like a second home. I was there so often. Playing in the garden with my grandparents...

TP: So tell about your parents. First of all about your father, Peter Prins. He was from where?

PD: He was from Holland also, but he wasn’t born in Holland. He was born, I believe, in Sioux Center, IA. And he travelled with his parents. His father was sort of a wanderlust. And he travelled from Sioux Center. They went out to Denver, I believe, and then eventually to Washington. Yakama, Washington is a homesteading
and then they came back to Holland when my father was in elementary school. And the remembrances that I have are from stories that he told us. That when they came back from Washington, they wore cowboy hats because they were used to that kind of life. So they would have to walk past Central Ave. Christian School on the way to their school, which was Froebel School. I don’t think that was the name of it at that time. That was at Graves Place. That was, I think it was called Central School then. But I am not sure. It later was Froebel. He and his brother would walk to school down Central Avenue. And then they would have to pass the Christian school. And the kids would make fun of them because of their hats, their cowboy hats. He said they would chase the students in to the school and then went on their way to Froebel school. (Laughs)

TP: So he had several brothers and sisters then?

PD: Yes, he had two brothers and three sisters. Grace, Jenny, and...yes...

TP: And most of them settled in and near the Holland area, other than one of the sisters married a minister?

PD: Yes. That’s right.

TP: So they were the only ones?

PD: Yes. They moved to Grand Rapids. From there, that...he was a minister. He died of blood poisoning. He went fishing and got a fish hook caught in his finger. And was dead in a couple of days.

TP: Oh no.

PD: Yes. So then, she moved to Holland with her two children, and lived here in Holland
until her children grew up. Then the other sister, Miss Elida Warnshuis, they lived in Holland for a time. Then they moved to Ionia.

TP: Okay, but sort of near and around...

PD: In this area.

TP: So near and around, so actually you had...

PD: And Jenny, the other sister, stayed in Holland all of her life. She made her home with my grandmother, who was a widow then, quite early.

TP: Your grandfather on your father's side fairly soon after you moved back to Holland?

PD: Apparently, it was before I was born and also before my brother was born. But my mother has recollections of him because he was one of the first persons in Holland to have a car. An automobile, so he was very popular. My mother always said that he was sort of this austere, sober man. He had very dark eyes that could look right through you. She was kind of scared of him, but they were generous giving children rides in their automobile. (Sound of telephone).

TP: Now that we have taken care of the telephone, On your mother's side, what was her maiden name?

PD: Her maiden name was Meyer and she came, her father was the founder of Meyer Music House. She came from a family of two brothers. There were three sisters and a step sister.

TP: And where did they live?

PD: They lived at 4 W. 12th St. Just in the next block from where I grew up. And that's why it was a second home.
TP: Right that was right from...

PD: Centennial Park.

TP: And that home is still there. At 82 W. 12th, is that still there?

PD: 82 is still there. That was my childhood home.

TP: And both of those homes are still there. Your mother grew up in this house? She lived there her whole life, like until she got married?

PD: She was brought there as a baby. My grandfather built that house. The first early pictures of it, they have a wooden front porch. Then later he added those big stone porches on the front and side. They always said those cost more than the original house.

TP: What did he pay for that house, Peggy? Wasn't it some ridiculous number?

PD: 4,000. Of course it is a huge house. Then they had a barn in the back. My mother told me they had three horses and a wagon. Cause my grandfather would go by horse and buggy to Allegan. He had a store in Allegan to deliver pianos and sewing machines and whatever he would sell. And they would always have one horse that would rest when the other two were working. She said that they did have a cow at one time. But the person that took care of the livestock wasn't very clean. And my grandfather, as they felt, as a result of that, got typhoid fever.

TP: And that happened in the.

PD: Right, and so they got rid of the cow and they never had cows again.

TP: Now she mentioned...By the way, Marguerite Prins, Peggy's mother is still living today at 101. She mentioned something about sleigh riding.
PD: Yes, they had a sleigh. A cutter they used to call it. A cutter. One of my early memories of that house was that at the curb there was a big cement step that you could get in to the carriage or the buggy or whatever it was. When they finally took that away, I have no idea. But I remember when we were kids we would play on that. It was a big block of cement or something.

TP: And at that time, the Holland city limits were sort of 16th or 17th street, weren't they Peg?

PD: Well, for my father and mother, yes.

TP: How many siblings did she have? That was quite a good size family.

PD: Yeah, she had two brothers, three sisters and one half-sister. Then she had a younger brother that died as an infant. And that was Robert John. And then my brother was named after him.

TP: I didn't realize that. So growing up you had lots of uncles and aunts, cousins and so forth in the area, which makes for a nice larger family?

PD: Oh lots of uncles, yes.

TP: Do you have any early memories about your grandparents? Did he tell you any early memories about the old days or did your grandmother, either one of those?

PD: Yes, my grandfather talked more about early life. He was quite gregarious. And he worked on in the store until he was very old. He died, I think he was 92 when he died. He probably worked down there until he was 90. His son would pick him up with the car because his son was in business with him, Fred. He would go and work for half a day and come back. And when I was in high school, I worked for them in
the store, so I’d have a good time with my grandfather. He would tell stories about people that he sold sewing machines to and organs. And when we would go for a ride in the country, he would point out all the houses where he had sold a piano or an organ. He also chuckled he said when somebody would come in to buy a piano or an organ. He knew that they were quite religious, he would tell them that it would only play hymns (laughs). He loved to sit at the piano and play hymns. Dutch Psalms and sings hymns. I remember that so well. And also he had a Psalm, which was probably originally a dutch psalm that we sang at the table for table grace. The family stills sings that when get together, so it is going to keep on.

TP: Do you want to sing it a minute?

PD: No (laughs).

TP: No, honey. You have a nice voice.

PD: Oh dear! It goes: (Sings) We thank thee Lord for this our food. For health and strength and every good. Manna, the bread of life, sent down from heaven. (talks) Something like that.

TP: I think that we have sung that. Now I know where it comes from.

PD: Yeah, we’ve sung that around the table at Thanksgiving. That was the old Meyer grace that they would sing.

TP: Naturally, then your grandparents...they were born in this country.

PD: Oh yes. They were born, in fact, I found in the old Bible that my cousin gave me the citizenship that his father got, and that citizenship papers shows that he became a citizen...I could go check it. In 1868, so...
TP: They were some of the earlier settlers, then.

PD: Yes, not the first ones.

TP: On the Meyer side?

PD: Yes.

TP: Now, the Prinses were here. Your grandfather was born here also.

PD: Right. All of our grandparents were born here.

TP: Because, your grandfather Prins was something of an entrepreneur.

PD: You're right.

TP: Because he was land speculator or something.

PD: And a banker. And he was a wanderer.

TP: Yes. Okay, so I'll ask, how did your parents meet?

PD: I really don't know. I think that they always knew each other because of that car that my grandpa had. People knew him from there. They must have gone to the same school in the grade school.

TP: Could they have been at Hope together?

PD: But then they were at Hope College together. But then my father went off to the war, the First World War. And so then he came back afterwards and finished Hope. So he and my mom didn't graduate at the same time. But they knew each other at Hope College.

TP: Tell us a little bit of your father's World War I experiences because he was in what branch of the service?

PD: He was in the cavalry. Cavalry. And he was stationed in Texas on the Mexican
Border. So, he never was sent overseas. He went to the service with his brother, Tunis. They were very, very close brothers. They went to college together and they graduated together. They went to war together. They sang in a quartet, the Prins-Baker quartet at Hope College together. And when they went off to war, some of the students had a farewell party for them. They set off dynamite at the first, I think it was, the first base of the baseball diamond at Hope College and it blew out the windows of Carnegie Gym. (Laughs)

TP: Some send off!

PD: Right. And so those students had to replace all of those windows. Then they always said that one of the professors was courting somebody. I don’t know where, someplace. And he threw the keys up in the air that he had in his pocket and ran. So, did this girl. That was just a big joke. I don’t know if it is true or not, but my dad...

TP: It’s one of those nice stories.

PD: They had a lot of fun times. As their pictures indicate, my Dad kept a photograph diary sort of, and it shows their college days were so much fun.

TP: We’ll have to try to gather some pictures to put with your tape and transcript. I just have to ask though, on the Mexican Border, who was your father chasing, and why would he...

PD: I think that the Mexicans were... I think that in some way they were connected with the Germans. I’m not sure if they were allies or what. Isn’t that terrible not to know your history?
TP: No, I don’t know either.

PD: But for some reason or another, they were considered enemies and they patrolled the border. They were stationed at Eagle Pass, Texas. We have a photograph album that has pictures of Eagle Pass and his friends down there. There’s a picture of a tame bear that they had around it the camp. He didn’t talk a lot about his war experiences. I don’t think that they were that dangerous or no...

TP: I had heard that he chased Poncho Villa.

PD: That could be.

TP: At least that’s the legend.

PD: Yes.

TP: But then later, well he finished school at Hope, he finished his education. And then what did he do?

PD: Then he went overseas to Robert College in Constantinople, at that time. Now it’s Istanbul. He was the physical ed. director there. Then, from there he joined the Near East Relief Organization, which is sort of like the Red Cross. And he helped try to rescue the Armenian orphans that were... The Armenians were being persecuted at that time by the Turks. So, there were a lot of orphans that they tried to help those children get out of the country.

TP: And that is then where he contacted that Dysentery.

PD: Yes. He got very sick.

TP: That which, I understand, can be fatal. But it actually affected his health?

PD: Right.
TP: And your mother, then, she also, we’ve already mentioned, attended Hope.

PD: She went to graduate school at the University of Wisconsin. First she taught school. She taught a year. It seems she told me she taught a half of semester in an elementary school in Holland and then went to Mount Pleasant and taught in a high school. I believe for a year. From there she went to the University of Wisconsin to get her degree. And during that time she did travel. She started going overseas on her many trips she took through her life time. She met my Dad at one time in Paris. So, they were friends then. And after he got back, after his stint in Turkey and Europe, that’s when they got married.

TP: Then they first lived on 10th St. and then 82 W. 12th. Your father then had some severe health problems, Peggy, so your mother supplemented... So first of all, I guess, tell the things your father did because he had some radio program.

PD: My first remembrances of what he did was he worked for the furnace company, but he was quite ill at that time. He worked with a man named Joe Zerkse, who was a great pal, lots of fun. They would come to our house and joke and kid. My dad went him with him. I guess they would install furnaces. I don’t know exactly. But at that time he had gotten very ill. He finally lost a kidney. He had to go to Chicago to the Presbyterian Hospital for surgery. I can remember going there in a car or something to see him. My recollections of that aren’t real strong, except I remember going there. Then when my dad got back from there, he had a series of different jobs. I know he worked designing kitchens for a while. Then when the Second World War started, he was in the Civil Air Patrol. Oh, another thing he did, he ran
the airport. When the airport was about where the West Ottawa school is there, down in that area, he had a pilot's license. Where that came in, I don't know, but he flew. He ran the airport. That's when we were in elementary school because the kids, he would take us on rides. The neighborhood kids would get a chance to ride, of course that was a big treat, you can imagine. That was during the depression. Nobody had any money. My parents were dirt poor. You know, us kids, we don't think of that, because everybody else was poor, too.

TP: I know Bob mentioned that about his Pilot's license. He would meet a whole group of people out at the airport. Bob would've become a pilot if he didn't have a depth perception problem. He really admired that.

PD: Right. So any way, he did that too somewhere in there, also. Somewhere in there he designed those kitchens too. Then he worked for the Navy training pilots during the Second World War. He worked in Grand Rapids, then in Wisconsin, Marquette University. Then after the war, he worked for the Veteran's Administration, placing veterans in schools. Giving them education grants and advising them. He worked out of Detroit at that time. Then, after that he started working at Meyer Music House. Then, that's where he worked until he retired. It was at that time he had a radio program.

TP: Classical Music.

PD: Classical Music program called "Music as You Like it," which he enjoyed doing for the WHTC.

TP: When he worked in Detroit, Bob said he commuted by Perre Marquette. And at that
time, it went all the way from Detroit through Grand Rapids, to Chicago.

PD: And I would take him to the train on Sunday nights. He would go back and we would pick him up on Fridays. He would come home on weekends. And then my mother, at that time, of course, she would... Maybe you want to ask about her.

TP: No, that was my next question is what did she do the supplement the income during that time.

PD: She didn’t start to work until I was in the 7th grade. She started... she went back as a substitute teacher for a teacher that had TB. In the high school, this was. She and Esther Snow, who was a friend, a neighbor, they took half days. One took the morning and one took the afternoon. They taught German together. Then, the lady died. The teacher died. I can’t remember how long she stayed at the high school. Not very long. Then she got the job at Hope College in the French Department. That’s where she was the rest of her teaching career.

TP: Until 1961?


TP: Bob said she also tutored French students.

PD: Yea, she would tutor students at home. I don’t remember that particularly. I remember that it in the 7th grade... Maybe it was before that because I remember one time that she went off to teach and we were home alone just for a little while until we went to school. I can remember that we made some toast. The butter was hard, so I set it one the stove in a dish, so I must have been in elementary. I could find out those dates because I have record of that too. So, it must have been earlier than that.
The reason I remember the 7th grade, because that is when, in 1939, she went to Europe and the war started while she was there.

TP: That was my next question.

PD: She was there stranded so they had to stay along the coast in those cities along the coast. I think Cherbourg was the city that they sort of hung around hoping to get passage home. Then, my Dad...

TP: Who was she with?

PD: She was with my aunt. Or was she? I know she was with Ruth.

TP: It was Aunt Nell, wasn't it?

PD: Yea, it would have been Nella. Ruth Blekink was there too. I think the three of them were there. She was so impressed by the fact that the French were mobilizing their army. There were all these young men in uniforms, mobilizing and it was kind of a frightening thing.

TP: What year did you say that this was?

PD: It was in 1939. We watched the news and one of the ships that was coming back was torpedoed. But she wasn't on that ship. Her ship came through alright. But I remember at the time, we saw it on the news in the theater and wondered whether she was on that ship. But she wasn't. But she got home safely.

TP: But actually she was stuck there how long, Peggy?

PD: A few weeks maybe.

TP: Meanwhile then you and Bob and your dad kind of made due.

PD: Yes. We made due. I am sure that our grandparents helped. I don't remember my
dad ever fixing any meals. But maybe he did. I don’t remember.

TP: I doubt it. (Laughs).

PD: Probably not.

TP: So then that brings up that part of it. Since your mother worked as well as your father, did you and Bob help with household chores? If so, what?

PD: I know we had to get up in the morning. No matter what time we went to bed, she’d come in our room and flip the window shades up and we had to get up. I know we had to do dishes. That’s one thing we had to do. One of us would wash and one would dry. Of course, if one of us was slow, we just left all the dishes in the sink. One washed, we never would do each other’s work.

TP: No, no.

PD: That would be unheard of. I know we had to do that. I know that I had have to dust, you know, little things like that. I don’t remember ever particularly washing windows. I remember helping her can. I remember my dad. They had a little gas burner in the basement and that’s where they would do their canning. She would can tomatoes and peaches and beans. And one time they canned beef. Now, I remember that so well because we got so sick of that beef. It was, you know by the time that meat was canned and in the can, by the time you ate it, it was like mush. But, she did a lot of canning. She was a hard worker. She was a baker too. She loved to make rolls. And Wednesdays were the day we had fresh rolls. I took piano lessons at that time on a Wednesday and would go to the Book Nook, which was on the corner of 10th and Central. My music teacher was Gerard Hanchet and he lived
upstairs at the Book Nook. And I would go there for a piano lesson. Then I could hardly wait to get home because you could smell that bread and those rolls.

TP: Oh yes. Rising.

PD: Yes. So, that was always kind of a happy memory of Wednesdays when my mom would fix rolls. She was a good cook.

TP: And she is still...Well, she is loosing her energy a little at 101, but she certainly had a lot of energy for all those years.

PD: Oh, she was very short, and she never learned how to drive a car because when she was younger...or ride a bicycle till much later. Because when she was real young, they put her on a bike and gave her a shove. And she rode into a horse. So, she was so scared, she never got on a bike again for years and years. And she never learned to drive, so she would walk to work. I can see her tearing down, with her arms full of books, right straight down 12th St. to Hope College. She was a bundle of energy. She could really travel. She was very short, very petite.

TP: So during the school year, would you then come home for lunch?

PD: Oh sure.

TP: So what were the meals then? This is one of the trivial questions, in a way, Peggy. But, where I grew up, we called what was now is dinner, supper. We had breakfast, lunch, and supper. So, would you come home from school for lunch? If so, what type of meal was that?

PD: Yes. I imagine we just had sandwiches. Then we always had our dinner at night. We always called it dinner.
TP: Oh you called it dinner. Okay, and that would be...(Phone rings)

PD: Why don’t you, oops, there is the phone again.

TP: Okay, we’ll pause.

TP: We were talking about, oh, what you had for dinner.

PD: I know that my mom made a lot of soup. She would make stew. She also made spaghetti. She loved lamb. She would make lamb roasts, I remember that. This was later, of course, not when we were real little. Sundays, we almost always had chicken. I can remember that because I loved that.

TP: And that would be at noon?

PD: Sunday it would be at noon.

TP: After church.

PD: Otherwise, we had our big meal at night.

TP: What would you have for breakfast, Peggy. Bob has described something about bread with...

PD: Stroufet. I think it means streak of fat. But they would fry meat down and dip the bread in that grease, sort of fry it, then you’d have that with syrup. Now, I remember that more as lunch, or a light meal. I don’t remember that at breakfast. At breakfast, we had a lot of oatmeal and grapefruit and sometimes an orange. My mom always fixed it a certain way. She would cut it, she would skin the orange, cut it in half, and then cut each cut in half, then slice it so they were all little slices. Then she would put powdered sugar over the top. I can see that still, how she fixed that. The grapefruit we would be canned. But the oranges would be fresh. That is
how she fixed them. We used to have a lot of pudding. She also made pies. Even though she was teaching, she had sort of an active social life with women.

TP: That was going to be one of my questions.

PD: She belonged to a reading club which met for years and years. She also belonged to a bridge club that met for many, many years. They would serve a full luncheon at noon for their... Not the reading club. The reading club met at night because the ladies, a lot of them worked. They were teachers. But her bridge club met in the afternoons and they would have a full course lunch. I can remember helping serve that. They would sit around card tables with lace and little odd linens I mean. All would be very fancy. I can remember that so well. The reading the club, she always had a list of books. They would buy, one person would buy a book, then they would pass it around. That is how they managed that. Then one person, would of course tell about it. But it of course reminded me of that book, The Ladies of the Club. Remember. So, when I read that book, I thought of my mom. She would hire a lady to help in the kitchen. That lady went around, that was her job. She was, I guess you would call her a caterer, except she didn’t cook the food. She would go and help in all these ladies’ kitchens when they would have to go entertain. She was hired to do that.

TP: Now who else was in that bridge group, Peggy? Were those... how many women were...

PD: I think there were probably at one time, maybe 12. Three tables, maybe two. I can’t remember exactly. But, if I sat down, I could get a list of the people who were in
that. Some of the same ones were in the reading club, but not exactly. The reading club were more her teacher friends, more of her intellectual friends. Whereas, the bridge club was more social friends.

TP: Now, Ruth Keppel...she was in some group with Ruth Keppel.

PD: Ruth was reading club. Ruth Keppel also was a classmate in high school, also in college. So she knew Ruth Keppel for years and years. And the Cappons. The Cappons were close friends. And they were reading club people, not bridge club people because they were teachers. Lavina was a teacher. Those, the Cappon girls, she always called them Cappon girls, from her reading club.

TP: What kind of books did they read, Peggy?

PD: All different kinds.

TP: Fiction and Non-fiction?

PD: Right, fiction and non-fiction.

TP: Now summers, did your family go on vacations anywhere?

PD: The earliest that I remember of a trip, we went to the Upper Peninsula to a lake. They fished. My mom fished, and Dad. I remember going there. That’s the first trip I remember. Then the next trip we took we went to Yellowstone National Park.

TP: Your parents and Bob and you?

PD: That was just shortly before the war started. I’m not sure how old we were, but Bob probably was in maybe Junior High age. But we went there. Otherwise, we went to Pella to visit my uncle Tunis and his family. We also went out to New York one time to Herkimer, in New York where he was a pastor, and to Niagra Falls. I
remember going there as a child. I think that, for the time, we did a fair amount of travelling.

TP: You sure did. Would you have reason to go to Grand Rapids or Grand Haven or any other towns?

PD: Yes, we would go to Grand Rapids at Christmas to look in the store windows at Herbelshimer's. We did that. But we weren't ever allowed to go into the fun little house where you got a prize and sit on the Santa. We never did that. But we went down to look at the toys. We also went to De Vries and Dornbos to the toy floor. They used to have, at Christmas, the whole fourth floor was nothing but toys. I remember going there as a child.

TP: That's a store that was in Holland, on 8th St.

PD: Yes. I don't remember going to Grand Haven really. We also went to Kalamazoo a fair number of times to visit my uncle and aunt and cousin there. We also went, we'd go to my aunt Ceenie's farm in Otsego. They had a farm. That was my great aunt and uncle. We would go there and visit. So, we did a fair amount of travelling around, mostly to see relatives.

TP: Was in 1939, that your mother and aunt Nell, and your grandpa and grandma Meyer and Bob went to California?

PD: Oh no. That was much before that. I want to say was in 1934.

TP: He was only 10, so it would have been '34 or '35.

PD: Yes, about '35. They had a little Chrysler. You often wonder how they ever made it.
TP: How they made it...because at that time there were no bridges over a lot a things.

PD: No. It was a lot different travelling. But they went out there, and Bob could tell you about that. Of course, I stayed home with my grandma and my Dad. We had a nice time together. I don't remember that I felt real left out because my dad took me to the movies. Oh dear, one time he had to take me out because I cried so hard. We went to a Shirley Temple movie. And I cried. I would get very emotional in movies (TP laughs).

TP: Also he bought you a puppy, didn’t he?

PD: Yes. Well, not a puppy, it was a dog. It was a grown dog, a bulldog. It was just wonderful. It was an English bulldog, ugly as can be, but very gentle and very protective. All the neighborhood loved that dog. When my mother got home, she wouldn’t get out of the car. We didn’t have it very long. She didn’t like dogs.

TP: Oh, you didn’t get to keep it then?

PD: No, my dad had to return it. We never had pets until I was almost...Well during the war, then my mom finally let me get a dog. I got a Cocker Spaniel puppy and he was a terrible dog.

TP: Nippy?

PD: Nippy. But other than that, my mom usually had a Canary. He had lots of Canaries. And she had fish too, a fish tank. She always had a garden.

TP: Oh really? Flowers or Vegetables?

PD: She was a big gardener. Flower garden. She always worked in the garden a lot. She loved iris, so she did a lot of gardening in the summers.
TP: Then that brings up another thing, where did you shop? Where did you get the groceries and where would buy your clothes or whatever?

PD: I don’t remember the clothing part. I know that my mom did a lot of sewing.

TP: That probably was the clothing part.

PD: That was the clothing part. But she did a lot of the shopping down at the corner IGA. At that time, there were all little neighborhood grocery stores. Sometimes, my husband and I sit and think of all the different ones there were in Holland and we go over each one and picture it. But there was one on the corner of 13th and Maple, the IGA there. There was another grocery store on 10th st. between Central and College. She went shopping there. We would also go downtown and there were grocery stores downtown. And there was a meat market, White’s Meat Market, about where Ebelink’s is now, the flower shop on River Ave. She bought meat there.

TP: Between 10th and 9th?

PD: Right. So, she just travelled around for groceries.

TP: Did you go with her?

PD: Sometimes, or sometimes she would give me a list and I would have to go and get them for her. I would shop for her sometimes.

TP: Did you have a little wagon to pull it home.

PD: I don’t remember it was ever that much. It would be just a little something.

TP: So when did you get your first telephone? Do you remember. And your first radio?

PD: No...No...All I remember was that we always had one. We always had a refrigerator, as I recall. The refrigerator always caused a lot of problems because the
big amusement thing was to listen to the radio... to *The Shadow*. We had certain radio programs that we loved. We would listen to that. But if the refrigerator went on it caused static. So then my brother would unplug it and forget to plug it. Then all the ice would melt.

TP: Oh no.

PD: It was really funny. It happened a lot. That was the big amusement. I mean to listen to the radio. She we did a lot of that. We had certain programs...

TP: After school, there were certain ones?

PD: After school there were certain ones. I don't recall that we had a lot of homework.

TP: Like these kids have today.

PD: We didn't. We did our homework at school.

TP: What games and so forth did you play either at school or with your cousins when you would have family get-togethers? Or friends, any games?

PD: We didn't play board games so much. We played outdoors mostly.

TP: Okay, like what?

PD: "Kick the Can," and "Grey Wolf."

TP: Okay, describe "Grey Wolf."

PD: One person would go out and hide and you had to find them. If you saw them, you would have to yell grey wolf and everybody would have to run home and try to touch a tree or whatever was home. That was "Grey Wolf." It was always played at dusk when it was spooky.

TP: "Kick the Can," I don't know if people 50 years from now will know what "Kick the
"Can" is. I don’t know if I remember.

PD: Yeah, what was that? All I remember is kicking it. We must have kicked it. Did we go and hide? What did we do, I’ll have to...(stop side one)

(Begin side 2).

TP: Okay, Peggy, we were talking about "Kick the Can." Do you want to describe how that game went?

PD: As I recall, there was one person that’s always "it." And the rest of them would kick the can and run and hide. Then, in order to get free, you would have to kick the can to get free before the person touches you, so that the person who is it doesn’t get too far away from the can. Anyway, that is how I recall. And then, I thought, too, another game we used to play "Ennie, Innies, Over," where you’d throw a ball over a house or garage. I remember especially that we threw it over a big three story, almost a three story, house over on 11th St. that belonged to a professor Warner of the college. He had one son. We would have sides. Then we would throw the ball over. You don’t know whether the person has caught it or not. When they get the ball, then they come around and you don’t know what side of the house they’re coming from. And then, that side tries to tag the persons on the other side. And then you change sides, really. And run around the house.

PD: Then, the other we played was "Grey Wolf," and that was kind of scary.

TP: Now you mentioned that because you said that one was played at dusk.

PD: Dusk, right. That was more scary.

TP: And you said that mostly you played games outside that you didn’t have board games
and that sort of thing.

PD: Right. The only board game that I remember are "Parchessi," and "Monopoly." Other than that, I don’t remember that, board games, nor playing cards. I don’t remember playing cards until later when I got older.

TP: Okay, tell me about, you said something about a little barn, or something, behind the house.

PD: Oh yes. The garage was actually an old barn, so there was a loft and a chicken coup in the back. Very smelly, but periodically we girls would decide we we’re going to have a club house and we would clean that out. Then, of course, the boys would come around and torment the girls and that kind of stuff. That never would last long, because it really still had a lot of chicken smell in it. The loft, too, was kind of spooky. We’d go up on a ladder, but there were no windows. We would go up there, not play as much, there as in the little chicken coop that was in the back. Then there was a yellow jacket’s nest underneath...it had a wood floor...and underneath there, I remember one summer, there was a yellow jacket’s nest. Of course, the boys in the neighborhood could not leave that nest alone. Of course there were a lot of people that got stung that summer, just because they couldn’t help but plague that little nest and polk it with a stick and things.

TP: (Laughs). These were, you would play these things with which friends. You told me which friends.

PD: Well, there were a variety of friends. The ones I remember the most were Jean and Janet Snow and Connie Hinga. Peggy French also lived there for awhile. Those
were pretty much the girls. The boys were the brothers plus Willard Pelgrim. He
didn’t have a younger sister, so it was he and Bob Warner, and Bob Snow, and Jack
French. It seems like there were more kids than that. But those are the ones I
remember their names.

TP: You said something about playing in the leaves, what you would do with the leaves.

PD: We would make a house out of the leaves with rakes. It would look like a floor plan
of the house. We would have dining room, living and so on. We would rake a little
place where you would go in where the door is supposed to be and that kind of thing.
We would put blankets in the different sections of the house, depending on what they
were, whether they were the bedroom, or living room, or whatever.

TP: A little different than today with computer games.

PD: Yes.

TP: Moving on to school, do you have any remembrances of school?

PD: Well, I went to Washington School and so did my brother and so did my present
husband. Washington School at that time was one of the newest schools in town. It
was the only brick grade school. So it really was a very modern school. I just
remember that I enjoyed school. We had a gymnasium with a stage at one end.

That’s where we had our school performances and things. I remember we had a
kindergarten band with uniforms, that I remember. Also, the kindergarten room had
a separate little room with tools where the boys played of course. And then another
corner where they had a doll house and things. It looked a lot like it still does,
because I have gone over there since and visited. Now, of course, it’s all different.
When our children went to Washington, it looked like it did as I remember it.

TP: Tell about the sunshine room.

PD: Oh yea, there was a sunshine room. That was one the second floor. That’s where sickly children went. They would open the windows. It faced the south, so they would have any sun if there was any. All I remember is that it was cold in there. So, they must have thought that the air was good for the children too. They would open the windows and those poor children must have frozen. But, that’s where the sickly children went to school, in that room. They were all different grades as I recall.

TP: And there were some recovering from polio, too?

PD: Right. At that time, too, there were half-grades, so you might be in a class where there would be a sixth A with a B or 6 with a 5, fifth grade B. I remember when I was in the 3rd grade, I was also put in a split grade with a fourth grade. And we had a teacher called Miss Flights, Mrs. Douwstra later, who came in and taught us music appreciation. And we used records. And that was my first introduction in school to music. I can still remember some of the songs that she would play for us. Then we had to recognize them. She would play them and then we had to recognize them. It was the "Call of the Mountain King," and the "Blue Danube," and Humperdink’s "Lullaby," I believe it was. But anyway, I remember that so well. I won a prize because I knew all of them. I won a picture of Franz Schubert, that I had for years. I don’t know what has happened to it since, but I was always fond of that music appreciation class that she taught.
TP: So, that appreciation ran through the whole family?

PD: Yes, I think it did. Then we also would put on all-school operetta. Miss Flights, Mrs. Douwstra would direct that. The people that had parts in that came from different schools. Then we practiced in Washington school. My friend, Katie McQueen, at that time, and I were asters. I have a picture of us in our aster costumes. We sang a duet together. I have no idea what it was, but I remember that. (Laughs). Another thing that we did in grade school is, periodically, there would be a play that would come to town, just for children. Then, each school had a chance to see the play. It would be given at the senior high, and we would walk together as a school to the senior high to see a play. The only one I remember specifically was "Hans Brinker and the Silver Skates." It would be some travelling drama group that put those on for children. That was always pretty special. Another thing that they did in school is they had a school nurse that would come around and give you shots. They would come, and you knew that they were coming. You'd sit in your chair quaking because you knew that your room would be next, and then you'd have to march out and get a shot. The same thing, with the dentist that would come to check your teeth. I can remember very clearly one time I had a loose tooth and I was so afraid that he would pull it out, that I worried that with my tongue until it came out. Just before I had to go down to have it checked, so it was all bloody, so I didn't have to go down.

TP: What were the shots for, Peggy? What kind of shots?

PD: It must have been the kind that now we get when we take our children. Diphtheria,
I have a hunch. We did have, we all got measles and chicken pox. This must have been diphtheria or small pox, or something.

TP: Okay, and you had mentioned last time that there was some song that you sang at the end of the school year. Do you feel up to a verse or two?

PD: Oh dear. How did that go?

TP: Or if you don’t...

PD: (Sings) If there’s anything you like to know, just ask me we can tell. We’ve studied hard for nine long months and we know our lessons well. And now we’re looking for the time when can have some fun, because J-U-N-E always spells vacation.

TP: Oh that’s wonderful.

PD: (Sings) Hip, hip, hooray, for the good vacation time. An old straw hat, no shoes at all, and a fishing pole and line. The brook is calling to us...da, da, da, da. Da, da, da, da, da...says June, June, June.

TP: That is wonderful.

PD: Something like that. And the funny thing is our kids sing that song too. I don’t know whether it was from listening to me sing it. But when I sing it, they sing along with it, so it’s kind of cute.

TP: That’s neat. That is something that surely wouldn’t happen today. (Laughs). The kids would balk. (Laughs). Oh, I want to ask about the library because you had talked about your use of the library.

PD: Oh yes. Well, I only lived a half a block away, so I went there all the time. It was so much fun because you went up all those big, broad stairs. Then you looked over
the railing down below.

TP: Where was this, then, Peggy?

PD: At the city hall. You looked over the railing. And down below, in the winter time, all the old gentlemen sat there talking, smoking cigars, and spitting into the spittoon. We would look and it was quite exciting. It was also fun to go to the rest rooms. You had to go downstairs. That was kind of intriguing. You went down there to the first level, and the rest rooms were to the side, all the woodwork was oak. I remember going in and thinking, oh boy, isn’t this something? Fancy toilets! Then, the library was on the second floor. We got well acquainted. I had a favorite author, that I always loved, The Little Maid Books. I have managed to buy four through an auction and antique store.

TP: Who is the author of those, Peggy?

PD: Who was it I said? Mary Custas, or Mary...Let me get them...Alice Turner Curtis. Those were all about a girl sometime in American history, during the Revolutionary War. There were some Civil War stories that she wrote. But, the main character is always a little maid, like the little maid of New Orleans, or the little maid of Bunker Hill.

TP: Did you own any of them, or did you just use them at the library?

PD: Oh, no. My mother didn’t believe in buying books because she said, "You’ve got a whole library and you can go there and borrow books." She would never even think of buying a set of encyclopedias because she said you don’t need that, you go to the library.
TP: Well, that close, I can see why.

PD: Right. Besides there wasn’t any money at that time, during the Depression.

TP: Right, we didn’t have books either. Okay, let’s go on to what happened on Christmas. You had some good stories to tell about what Christmas was like at your house.

PD: Christmas was...we always had a tree. We didn’t put it up as early as you do now. Part of the trouble was the lights. If one went out, everyone went out. They didn’t have the lights, that now, if one goes out, the whole string is still on. It wasn’t so nice, so you didn’t want to burn them too long. Then if one went out, you had to try each ball. We would get our Christmas trees from a Christmas tree lot on 13th St. and Central Ave. There was a grocery store there and a shoe repair shop. And then, at Christmas time, they ran a lot of Christmas trees. That is where we would get our trees. They were always trees that dropped needles. I can remember that. We would always have a tree. One Christmas, when everybody was at our house, we were asleep and the Christmas tree fell over on the electric train.

TP: So you had a train around the base?

PD: Well, I think my brother must have gotten a train for Christmas and they had set it up. Then in the night the tree went over. Then another funny thing that happened at Christmas, was my uncle and aunt and cousin from Kalamazoo came. They always had a dog. Of course, I loved that because I could never had a dog. Well, the dog came trotting in and lifted his leg on the Christmas tree. My mother never let my aunt forget that, that dog.
TP: No, I bet not. (Laughs) Would you have anyone in for dinner that day?

PD: Our uncles and aunts and cousins. When we got older, on holidays, in the afternoons, our parents would let us go to the movies. That was always a treat to go. Actually, they probably were glad to get rid of us. They thought this was a good way to entertain us. But, we thought it was great. We loved to go to the movies. If we were at my Grandmother’s house, at 4 W. 12th, we used to play games in that house. It was such a huge house. That’s where we normally would have our Christmas dinner, at my grandparents home.

TP: What about gifts, Peggy because of the depression?

PD: We had a small allowance that we would use to go and buy presents. We would go down to the 10 cent store. My brother always bought 10 cent incense packets. They had little packets of incense. I thought that was great. When I think about that, how he went there with his little dime...That is the only thing that I can remember buying. I remember that my mom would always say, "I would like a handkerchief."

Sometimes, I could afford a handkerchief. I remember the incense particularly because one time my aunt opened her and said, "incense again," or some remark like that. (Laughs) I thought that was terrible. That was something he thought was special. It was for a boy, to give incense for a present. We didn’t get very fancy presents, as I remember.

TP: Tell about the girl who did.

PD: There was a girl in our neighborhood, Mary McLaine, an only child. They were quite wealthy. She got very, very fancy presents. So, one of the things we would do
on Christmas day, because we always had our presents on Christmas Eve, on Christmas day, late in the afternoon, we would all trip over to her house to her presents. She would let us play with them. She was very generous. That was always a thrill to be able to go there. One Christmas, she got a miniature Pullman car. It was the same color as the railroad, that sort of green grey color. The whole thing opened up, like a Pullman, with a bunk in it, and a little toilet in the corner, and it was just beautiful. That is one of the presents that I remember so well. She also got a Shirley Temple doll one time, I think.

TP: Did you have any program at church in Sunday School?

PD: We would have special programs. Then at the end, we would all get a little box of candy. That is just unheard of now. They just don’t do anything. I think now they give little Christmas ornaments to each child. But at that time, boy that was something to get a box of candy. I remember.

TP: Going on about church, what church were your parents a member of?

PD: I was baptized, and we were members of Hope Church. That’s where I’ve gone all my life. I don’t think it’s changed an awful lot. It was sort of a church where people that didn’t fit in anywhere else went. Plus it was very liberal, according to the standards of the day. In 1939-40, when Dr. Marion deVelder came to our church, we stopped having evening services, and we would have "The School of Christian Living," where we met as a group and divided according to ages and had a little, short discussion, or whatever. Then we would meet afterwards for sandwiches and coffee. Oh boy, that was
unheard of: the church where they ate sandwiches at night. But, it attracted lots of kids, from other churches, that would come because it was so fun and different.

TP: Tell about your Sunday School experience when it was your birthday. It was kind of a neat story.

PD: When it was your birthday, you could go forward with pennies. They had a lighthouse. When you put a coin in, the light would go on. Then, you would go forward and you were very important, of course. Then, you could put in a penny for each year of your life, on your birthday. You were something important. I remember we met as a group first, then we divided into our age groups. We had, in the big room where we met, they had curtains that would divide the room up, so you could go into your little individual rooms for your lesson.

TP: How about other celebrations, we’ve talked about Christmas. How about Halloween. Did you do anything special for Halloween?

PD: They never had trick or treat. We always hoped that somebody would have a halloween party. That was very seldom. We would dress up, as I recall. One time, when I was, late elementary, I think, even maybe in the eighth grade, the city had a halloween party. We would go down, we’d have a parade for the whole city, all the children. We’d go down to Riverview Park at that time and have a program, then they would judge the costumes. A prize was given. This particular year, I was so down in the mucks, that I didn’t have a costume. My dad said, "Oh, I’ll fix you up with one." So he had made a crossbar with some boards. He hung his old black
overcoat on there. Then, I don’t know what he used as a head, then he put a witches hat on top. I won a prize. It was the ugliest maroon and black Mackinaw jacket, but I won it. So, I had to wear it. The people that won the first and second prize were dressed just alike, like corn stalks. My mother always said actually instead of third prize, you should have gotten second prize.

TP: Yes, that’s true.

PD: I remember that. That was kind of special. It is nothing like they celebrate today, not the same kind of scary masks and things that they wear.

TP: Nor store-bought costumes.

PD: No, no, no. It was all thrown together from what ever you had in the house.

TP: How about Fourth of July, Peg? Any celebrations that you can remember?

PD: We would go to Mary McLain’s house and her father would buy fireworks, and then they would set them off in their backyard. Mary McLain’s house also had a huge basement and it had a door to the outside. All the kids were always welcome there. We could play there. We had plays down there. We even had tap dancing classes down there. I took tap classes, of all things.

TP: From a teacher?

PD: Yes. They came in to that basement and would teach us how to tap dance. We did that in the basement. We had plays down there. They were just wonderful to us, the McLaine’s were.

TP: Where did they live, Peg?

PD: They lived, well, right next door to where we live now. Right, where the Woldring’s
live now.

TP: On 12th? What number is that?

PD: That would be 128, maybe.

TP: So, they lived in that house?

PD: Yes. They lived right next door.

TP: Okay, how about Tulip Time, another one of the celebrations.

PD: That was a big celebration. I remember taking part in parades and things, roller skating even. Then the parade would go down to River Ave., turn South to 12th, then East to Central, so it went right by my grandpa’s and grandma’s house. In other words, it went around the park. So we could sit at my grandma’s and grandpa’s house and watch the parade. When we would get done marching during the children’s parade, we would stop there and she would have cookies and things. It was a big celebration. That was one time in the year that you could get cotton candy. That was really fun. They would have those booths, not as many as they have now, of course. Somebody had a cotton candy booth. We would go there for cotton candy once a year. It was real special.

TP: Yes, for children. Now that must have been some of those first Tulip Time celebrations because it started in 1937, was it?

PD: Yes, about then.

TP: So you would have been 10 at the first one.

PD: My mother has pictures of us in our Dutch costumes when were young like that. Another thing we did, but very seldom, was go to Reed’s Lake in Grand Rapids.
They had a big amusement park there, Romona Park, and we went there occasionally, but not very often. But I remember going there.

TP: Any other memories that you have of any of these activities, summer things that you would do?

PD: We would take hikes and pack a lunch and take off for the woods. Today, they just don't allow it. Across from the river, where it is now the D&W grocery store, that was all woods. We thought that was something. We would walk over there, have a little fire and have sandwiches and then come home. One time, in the winter, with a friend called JoAnn Maas, we walked across Lake Macatawa on the ice and had a picnic in Wakauazoo Woods! Can you imagine? We didn't have any fear of falling in the ice, then we had to walk all the way home from there. I remember that very clearly. We did lots of little hiking like that.

TP: Things that you wouldn't allow children to do alone, today?

PD: Yes. That's right. I also belonged to Campfire, so we had activities with the Campfire Girls.

TP: Earn different merit badges...

PD: Right. Merit badges. We would go out to camp Kewano, which was on Lake Michigan and be there for a weekend. I remember that one time, I talked my mother into letting me go for a whole week. I really thought I was something. I thought if you could ever go for the summer, wouldn't that be wonderful? I guess there were some girls that did, but we never did. But our group went as a group for a weekend at Camp Kewano. Then we had a camp fire. Were you ever in Camp Fire Girls?
TP: No.

PD: Then you had to light these candles, the candle of love, and the candle of health. Then we would come in, and go (sings) he lo. Then they would say, "who will light the candle of love?" or whatever. This one time, I was supposed to light one of the candles, but I was ramming around with my friends on the periphery of the campfire. Then you're supposed to say "I will light the candle of health." So anyway, this lady says, "Who will light the candle of health?" No one got up. (Louder) "Who will light the candle of health." No one got up. "Is Peggy Prins here?" And then I had to stand up and say "I will light the candle of health." Of course, my friends all were dissolved in laughter.

TP: Tell that one little story about your grandfather, because you also spent time at his store.

PD: Lots of time.

TP: He was a wonderful man, as I understand.

PD: He was a wonderful man, he was a wonderful grandfather.

TP: Grandpa Meyer.

PD: Grandpa Meyer and they owned Meyer Music House, he and my uncle. I would work there when I was older. During the war, they didn't have anything to sell. They would sell whatever they could get a hold of and they sold toys. This one time, my grandpa was there. He had no idea what the price of these toys were. This lady came in and wanted it, I think it was a motor of some kind that maybe went with one toy, I don't know what it was. My grandpa said, "Oh you can have that for two
dollars," or something like that. And he sold it. Later, when my uncle found out
that he had sold it for two dollars, he about died. I was in the record department.
We sold records at that time.

TP: But when you were a little girl, you went with him…

PD: Oh, one time, he took me to the Tulip Cafe for coffee. On the counter was this
beautiful cake, with frosting a mile high, so he said that I could have a piece. It
turned out that it was just egg whites. It was just awful. The cake was good, but the
frosting wasn’t nearly as nice as it looked.

TP: You were a cute little kid, huh? One other thing that we had talked about, you had
said that kids in those days would have a Kool-Aid stand.

PD: Oh yes. We had a restaurant one time. The mothers made the food and I don’t
remember that any one in the neighborhood ever came and sat down. Somebody
must have. You know how that goes. The parents patronize it. I don’t even
remember what we served, except that this one lady made things to serve. We also
had toy stands where we would sell our toys that we didn’t want any more. We even
had a stand down on River Ave., one time to try to sell some things. Another thing
we would do is go look in the jail and see if there was anyone in there. At city hall,
there was a police station, plus the city jail. You could look right in the window and
see if anyone was there. I suppose they were tramps that were in the jail house. One
time we went down there and there was a man in there singing "I’m Forever Blowing
Bubbles," and sitting in the cell singing away. In those days, we did have tramps that
came begging for food. My mom would always have them sit down on the back
steps and she'd give them an apple or a sandwich or something. But there were tramps that couldn't find work or food. They knew just what houses would feed them.

TP: We had those where I lived too.

PD: We also had, in those days, a vegetable man that came around with a vegetable wagon. He would ring a bell and sing out (sings) Peas, Carrots, Potatoes, Onions, in kind of a sing-song voice. All the housewives would run out and buy their things from him on the street.

TP: Now was it in a truck or horse-drawn?

PD: I think it was in a little truck. The milk man came with horse and also the street plows in the winter. They plowed the sidewalks in Holland then.

TP: With horses?

PD: With horses. In the early morning, you could hear the bells on their harnesses. That was such a beautiful sound. They would come on the sidewalks and clear. I don't remember anything about street plows. But, it was a sidewalk plow that they used horses with bells on it in the winter. That was so pretty.

TP: In Holland, though, you had a lot of snow.

PD: Yes, A lot of snow. One of things that the kids would do is hop cars. They would wait on a corner. When a car would come slowly, they would jump on it, hang on to the back. That was dangerous, but kids would do that. The streets weren't plowed. It was in some ways, safer than it is now, where you would hit cement occasionally.

TP: Speaking of disasters and that kind of thing, what home remedies, we haven't touched
on that. We’ve talked about doctors and that they made house calls then. What remedies did you have.

PD: Cod liver oil (laughs). Then if we had a sore throat, we got our throats painted with argyrol. It was dark brown. It tasted funny, but it did the trick. My dad would say "put your head back and open your mouth." Then he would stick a swab with that argyrol and paint the back of your throat. It cleared it up in no time.

TP: What about for your teeth? Did you have any dental care?

PD: Oh yes, that was the worse thing of all. Going to the dentist, I have never outlived my fear of the dentist.

TP: Do you want to tell about your dentist? You don’t have to mention names.

PD: He was a family friend, so we went there. But he was not a very clean dentist. He would flick the cotton out of our mouths in the corner. He would smoke while he was, you know, he’d have a cigarette going in the corner. "Oh we’ll have to take that one out." You know, at least then you got put to sleep. Your tooth got put to sleep if he had to pull it. The fillings of course..

TP: I understand that he had, was it nicotine stained hands?

PD: Oh yes. It was because he smoked. He would stick them in your mouth. But we didn’t know any better. So, we would just put up with it.

TP: My dentist wasn’t very good either. I think those are things we remember. Okay, moving along to WWII. How did that affect your family, Peggy?

PD: Well, of course, my brother went in 1943 to the service. But I was in high school all during the war, or junior high. My dad went and joined the Civilian Air Patrol and
eventually ended up teaching Navy pilots, in Grand Rapids first and then later at Marquette University in Milwaukee. My mom was teaching at the time. In the summer, she would join him. I remember I stayed with my grandparents. I didn’t go along with her, except to visit.

TP: Do you remember rationing?

PD: Not really. My mom took care of all that. Because my dad was with the Air Patrol, we never seemed to be at a loss for gasoline. But my mom didn’t drive, so…

TP: And tell about your grandfather’s store during that period of time.

PD: Well, he just sold whatever he could get. We did have records always. Of course that was in the time when the big band sound… so we sold a lot of records. That is all I remember.

TP: But they didn’t have pianos and that sort of thing?

PD: Very rarely. No, there was very little to sell. They probably had some pianos left over and maybe used, but there wasn’t a lot. There were also instruments that they sold. So, maybe they took in trade, or from kids who didn’t want to play anymore, maybe they sold them back to the store and the store would resell them. There wasn’t much in the stores.

TP: There weren’t new instruments and that sort of thing available?

PD: No.

TP: Did you write to any boys overseas?

PD: No, just my brother and his friend Gunther, who eventually died in the service. Other than that, no.
TP: He was killed in?

PD: The battle of the bulge. In Germany.

TP: Tell about your V-J day celebration.

PD: My mother saved fire crackers and on V-J day, she lit them and threw them off the porch. The neighbor got very angry because it was so noisy. That wasn't the first time she used those fire crackers. She blew one off in the kitchen sink one time on purpose.

TP: Tell about that.

PD: Well, she would call us for dinner. Of course you wait and wait. You don't go in. You don't go in. She always said, "Sometime I'm going to light a firecracker under you." One day, the same thing. She called us, we were probably listening to a radio program or something. All of a sudden, bang! She had lit a fire cracker into the kitchen sink. Of course we all ran in for supper.

TP: It got your attention.

PD: It sure did. Yes. We also had, during the war, getting back to the war, a victory garden in our backyard. My mom was a gardener, a flower gardener. Everyone thought that we should raise vegetables, so we dug up the whole back part of the yard and planted vegetables. The rabbits ate everything but the tomatoes. So we had tomatoes, that was all. We thought we were very patriotic.

TP: Our victory garden ended in similar. Nothing came up. Okay, is there anything I neglected here, Peg? Anything you want to add?

PD: I can't think of anything.
TP: Last time I asked you, what did you dream of being when you grew up?

PD: I said a teacher. I always said I wanted to be a teacher and I ended up being a teacher. I was always close to my aunts and my favorite aunt was a teacher. So, that sort of came true.

TP: Okay, so I’ll just add that. I wanted to ask you a few questions about your opinions of Holland today, Peg. I just want to sum up some statistics on you, that you attended Hope College and the University Michigan. You got your Masters at the University of Michigan and became a high school English teacher.

PD: Junior high

TP: Junior high, in Holland. Then you were a Western Seminary Librarian, wife of John De Haan, who works for the Ottawa County title office, mother of 5 children, and grandmother of almost 14. A couple question that the archives would like us to ask: What changes have you seen in Holland over the years? Obviously, some of things we’ve already talked about. But as far as, the racial?

PD: Oh, it’s so different now. When were children, it was pretty much Dutch. There were other, of course. It was predominantly Dutch, and of course caucasian. And today, it is just a wonderful mix of all races and peoples. I’ve even heard they want to change the name of the athletic teams, they don’t want to be called the "Dutchmen" anymore, because there are so many other nationalities represented, and races. But, now Holland is like a city. It is a cosmopolitan, industrial city. It wasn’t then, when we were growing up.

TP: It was a town.
PD: It was a town, a small town.

TP: What are some of the qualities that stand out for you? What are some of the pluses, and are there some negatives?

PD: Well, the pluses are that it’s still a small town, more or less. It has a small town feeling. It’s a pretty safe place to raise your children. I mean, we talked a little about that. We wouldn’t let our children go outside for hikes and things alone, but compared to other places, it’s a fairly safe place. There are people who want to come here because there is so much to offer. Even retired people find Holland a great place to retire in because there is so much available for older people. I think that there is a lot to offer children too, in recreational activities. I suppose the downside of it would be that along with being a more cosmopolitan city, we have cosmopolitan problems, and there’s more crime and vandalism, gangs and that sort of thing, but on a small scale. But, it isn’t as safe any more as it used to be.

TP: It used to be that you didn’t lock your doors. I don’t think that you do.

PD: We still don’t, except for when we go to bed at night. Otherwise, we have never been in the habit of locking our doors, the front door yes. But we very seldom lock the back door. We leave the keys in our car, I shouldn’t say.

TP: You have that wonderful watch dog.

PD: That is right. He barks at anything. Today, people don’t do that very much. They are more careful.

TP: Any changes that you see in the college?

PD: Oh yes. It is a lot larger. That’s what you can see from the evidence. It is a much
bigger institution.

TP: Yes, lots of new buildings...Any controversy in Holland?

PD: I wish they would get the library built. I think that is the most disappointing thing of all. At the same time, they are talking about all the other things they want to build, a sports complex, and a museum in that building on Lake Macatawa. They’re saving that place where they store the seating for Tulip Time down there by the old sugar beet factory. That plant is sitting there. They don’t want to use that, but there are organizations that need to build and they won’t free that up to be used, like for a health clinic, or a Boys and Girls Club. Yes, there are controversies. It seems to me that they should finish one project before they start another. Certainly, the library should get done.

TP: You would think that the library would have preference.

PD: I think that a lot of other people in Holland feel the same way.

TP: How about US 31, is that something that you find to be...

PD: Well, I don’t really get into that. I know it’s a big problem. How they’re going to get around Grand Haven seems to be the worse dilemma. Other countries seems to be able to exist without cementing the country side with roads. But, America doesn’t seem to be able to do that. Probably because we have a lot more cars.

TP: And a lot more people willing to speak their piece. I think, anything else? Did I miss anything?

PD: Well, I am sure that I think that I could think about many things, but it sounds great. We have covered most everything
TP: Thank you very much.

PD: Yeah, you're very welcome.