Harger, Swenna Oral History Interview:
Sesquicentennial of Holland, "150 Stories for 150 Years"

Mary Voss
Oral History Interview with
Swenna Harger

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by Mary Voss

Sesquicentennial Oral History Project
"150 Stories for 150 Years"
MV: We are sitting around the table with Swenna and John Harger. They are going to begin by telling a little about themselves, about where they were born in Germany.

Swenna, you want to start?

SH: You said Swenna and John Harger, now, you are just like all the Americans. When we first came here, they thought he was the lady and I was the man. I got a draft notice! With a name like Swenna! We are from the County of Bentheim, which borders the Netherlands and almost reaches like a pocket into the Netherlands. But it is a very unique place, something like the county of Lichtenstein between Switzerland and Austria. It is between Germany and the Netherlands. It is under German government, but the people are neither Dutch or German. They speak in their everyday lives the Dutch language, but the government, the whole political system, is German and has been since 1837. Bentheim was an independent country for 700 years. In 1752 they had some trouble and they mortgaged the county to the King of Hanover and England. So for about almost 100 years they were part of England ruled by the same king. They were ruled by George the second and George the third. Both kings sitting there in England spoke no English at all only German. The state Georgia and its capitol Augusta were named form them. That somewhat brought on the Revolutionary War, this absentee rulership of those German princes in England. But anyway, when Queen Victoria came to the throne, the Kingdom of Hanover
would not accept a female ruler, and then Hanover again became independent from England. Bentheim stayed with Hanover until 1866, then they had war with Prussia, and Prussia annexed this particular county. From then on they were with Prussia and with Germany. Now as long as the county of Bentheim was independent, the people never had to go to war. They sometimes got into conflict during the 80 years of war because they were so close to the Netherlands but then the county of Bentheim, Arnold the second, particular, would buy the Spanish troops off. He would give them money out of his own pocket that they wouldn’t molest the people. So they had a very privileged life for a long, long time. Of course, then they came under Hanover and they had to go to war, and then Napoleon ruled that county for fourteen years. That was a very hard time. The time of the Awakening came really during the time of Napoleon. Until that time, the clergy thought and the people obeyed. The teachers and pastors were asked about making wills and everything else. But once Napoleon came around, a whole new wave started. Genealogist like Napoleon, because if a child was born a whole page was documented, who the parents were, and who the child was, the witnesses. But Napoleon was very hard on the people and they hated him with a passion. It was beyond belief really but he also did a lot of good. First of all, he saw that the people got good drinking water, and then he had the cemeteries moved out of the village. Until that time they were around the church, the idea that the church triumphant and the church on earth belonged together was so much with the people that they were either buried in the church or around the church. But then they moved out of the villages, which was a very good thing. But it also
made the people think. In 1814, they fought under Wellington, they fought under the English flag against Napoleon. But it also strangled their industrial life. It strangled their businesses. From 1837 to 1840/45 they had some, what shall I say, crop failures but also their business life suffered a lot because they were cut off from the big world market. France didn’t do them any good, and England certainly wasn’t for them anymore since they had separated. And slowly on this whole thing of unrest was an economic thing as well as a spiritual thing. The clergy thought different than the people and they were rationalized. The people were still hanging on to pietism they had grown up with. So there was a lot of strife and a lot of unrest in the country. It was an uproar against the clergy somewhat and also against the rational thinking of the time.

MV: And that was also when Van Raalte’s people came that same time.

SW: The same period.

MV: Can you tell us a little about yourself, about when you were born, and what it was like growing up in Germany?

SH: I was born in 1928 in a house that was built during the 30 years of war. One beam in the house said 1633. Now the house had been remodeled often, but it was a very old comfortable house with a straw roof. Not only my parents lived there, but also my great-grandparents. My parents had inherited the place from their great-grandparents with the understanding that they would take care of them until the end. So when I was little, my great-grandparents were my babysitters. My interest in genealogy and history was awakened through them because I thought so much of
them. We were a very loving family; all sides of the family worked hand in hand. It might have something to do with it, that those people needed each other. But there was also a great love in the family. I can honestly say that, and also in the neighborhood. We called all the neighbors uncles and aunts, if they were relation or not. And this has an impact on your life, you feel secure and you take this feeling with you even if you move to another country. You simply don’t go through life like you are all by yourself, you acknowledge that there are other people who need you and who also count on you and who enrich your life. That goes a long way back, but that is how I grew up. When I was five years old, in those days they had no kindergarten, and I remember yet that Hindenburg died. We got all the papers, and I remember yet that I was on the floor rolling up the papers how Hindenburg died. I said, "I cannot read yet, but when I can read, I want to read them. And I think they are still at my folk’s in a scroll.

MV: Oh, really!

SH: I could write something, but I could not write a Z yet, and Mother had to write the Z. So the Zeitungen von Hindenburg were in a scroll for a long time.

MV: So you had a love of history way back when you were five years old?

SH: I guess, but I wanted to read them when I could read, I wasn’t able to read yet.

When I was eight years old, the great-grandparents had died, and it was an old house, like I said, built in 1633, a straw roof and all that. But then my dad, he was sort of ambitious, and mother and Dad had always talked about wanting a new house. They decided to sell the place since it was so near the village and brought quite a bit of
money. They bought some land and built a new house, they built a new barn, and they enlarged their farm that way. Economically it was a big move and it was good for them, but emotionally it was very hard. It was very hard on my mother and it was also very hard on me. Because I had to leave a secure world go to another school, leave neighbors, friends and playmates behind.

MV: You were removed from your community.

SH: Right, not from the church - we still went to the same church. It really did me some good because the school near the village was farther advanced than those country schools. I was almost a year ahead because we had been drilled much, much more precise, and in the country school everything went much easier. But it really was a providence of the Lord, that I ended up in that country school, because Nazism was not taught in that country school. The farmers like I told you didn't need Hitler and could do very well without him. But if I had stayed in that other school I would have been much more afflicted by it because they were under much greater control of the government and so on. One of the teachers in that first school where I went ended up in a concentration camp. A teacher by the name of Blecker. And in the country school nobody cared what you did as long as they didn't hear from you, then you were alright.

MV: If you didn’t protest too much or have too much to say?

SH: Right. Then the war came, and a lot of days we didn’t have a lot of schooling either. We had air raids so we had to spend time in the bunkers. We did a little studying in the bunkers. But, all in all, we had a good time. It was not easy, but like I told you
before, the war really robbed me of an education which I would undoubtedly have had otherwise. But that is the Lord’s will too.

MV: John, tell us a little bit about yourself when you were growing up in Germany.

JH: I was born in April, 1926. I was the second son of five kids, I had three sisters that were younger. Actually I was only home at my parents’ home for 13 months. My mother got sick, my brother was 2 years old, and my sister was born. So my grandmother took me in for a supposedly a couple of weeks. But those couple of weeks became 13 years. I stayed by Grandma; they didn’t have any children and my uncle wasn’t married yet, so I stayed there. I was very little home. I went to school there. I don’t have to tell you anything about history, she knows it a lot better.

MV: Where you close by? Did you live close by your parents?

JH: It was not too far away about 6 or 4 miles, I could go home. But I grew up as an only child there by grandma, so they always said I was spoiled. It didn’t show a lot in life actually (laughs). People thought I was spoiled, but it didn’t show. But I went to a country school too. But contrary to what my wife said, there was much going on. We had the worse Nazi teacher there could be. He was the leader of the party in the whole county there. And he was a man I went to school by. There were about three or four Christian Reformed people. People may not believe that, but I don’t think there was a single Christian Reformer who voted for Hitler. I remember the voting of 1933. It was done on a Sunday. They always voted over there on a Sunday. I remember that my uncle and my grandma and my aunt went for voting. That was the vote where Hitler supposedly got 99 and 9/10 -percent of the vote. It
was all right, they were all made up before already. That was all rigged. I remember I came home and everybody would get a pin there when they voted that said on there, "Yes, I voted yes." I was a little boy six or seven years old, I was going to get a hold of that pin, but the pins all disappeared quick.

SH: They went in the fire!

JH: They were in the fire already.

MV: So what you are saying is that none of your family that were Christian Reformed people voted for Hitler. Is that what?

JH: I dare to say that none of them did.

SW: The county of Bentheim, they said had two percent.

JH: But Hitler claimed it was 99%. It was all rigged. The whole business was rigged.

SW: A clothing salesman had asked a lady why they sold so much black clothing in that county. That was because they mourned, you know when someone died, they wear black clothing, but then that sales lady had said they were all mourning about the Third Reich. That was not the case, but it was something that was said.

JH: Last winter when we went the last time to Germany, we were together quite a bit with an old school buddy of mine, we went under the same system there. And how much we actually got persecuted there. There was a time, by 10 years you were supposed to join the Hitler Youths over there. Every month you would get a slip home that you had to have signed by those who were in authority over you. See my parents, my grandma and my uncle and I always would get the empty slip back. But if you are 10 years old, you don't understand all the implications. But every week
we had to stay over, all those people who didn't bring their slip back, for nothing because we were some of the, I say that with little bit hesitation, but we were some of the smartest kids in the class. But we always had to stay over just on account that we could not join the Nazi party. I remember distinctly, I was 10 years old, it was in '36 that Hitler had power. The first of May they had always a big celebration there. It was on a Sunday and we were told under no uncertain terms that we had to come to the parade. But I knew where I had to go on Sunday. Twice to church. And it made me so scared, 10 years old, if you don't understand what it is all about. I finally found a hundred year calendar and could look it up. I found out I would be long out of school already when the next first of May was on a Sunday.

MV: What happened then? What did you do that day?

JH: I went to church. Nothing happened either, but most likely we stayed over again a couple of times during the week again. That man made it so tough on us. He knew exactly where the people would go to church and when they would go to church. He would stand there on the road and you we were supposed to say "heil Hitler." Nobody dared to do that even if we didn't understand why we didn't do it.

SH: There is such a story, too, of one fellow he would Sunday morning those Nazis would stand on the road and have the people say "heil Hitler" to them. But they wouldn't do that, they would say "Good morning." Then this fellow who went to school said to his teacher too "Good morning," so he stopped him and said, "Don't you know that you have to say, heil Hitler?" He said, "The Fuhrer says," (they called him the Fuhrer) "you have to keep the old traditions alive." (laughs)
MV: That was a smart answer!

SH: So people prepared themselves what to say you know.

MV: That was very interesting.

JH: All in all I can say it was a very hard time for people growing up over there, especially like I say, you don't know as a child what went on. We didn't know. All my relatives and all my aunts and uncles, and all my family was against Hitler. I heard that all the time, but I didn't know actually what was all involved then. But to grow up with that idea, I mean church, school, and home had to work together to educate the child. But I always got split ideas. At home, Hitler taboo; and in school you had to believe in him. That is awful hard. I hope none of my grandchildren have to go through this.

SH: Well it was also very educational because you got adjusted to being an immigrant. When you come here, there has to be room for you not everybody claps because there is a newcomer.

MV: True.

SW: And so, you become a diplomat at a very young age, out of necessity.

JH: It was hard times and even the ministers were so scared. They couldn't say anything because there were always spies in church. There was an old minister there and in the church book there were some form prayers in there. He was to use only those prayers.

MV: That must have been very constricting to them.

SH: But three ministers were arrested. Shoemaker, Grandler and Busman. They let them
go after two days because they feared a revolt. And even Hitler did not want a revolt. It was in the first days of the war, I guess it was in '39. But they had them arrested.

JH: I even have papers home from the Gestapo over there - a friend of mine gave them to me last year. What they had in mind with the Graafschap people over there, Christian people were the stronghold of anti-Nazism.

MV: So you have documentation to support your...

SH: They probably would have done something just like Charlemagne did when he introduced Christianity. He had those folks plantings like Charlemagne, those stubborn heathen, he would bring to France and he would bring French Christians back. And Hitler had the same thing in mind.

JH: He had a plan we would have all gone behind the Urals.

SH: To Siberia. If he had kept that plan.

MV: You were going to tell me about what happened to that teacher.

JH: He couldn't teach anymore at first after the war. They had to de Nazify him. Then later on I think he taught for a couple of years. He was a mighty fine math teacher. Maybe he taught math again. Then in 1970, what was it?

SH: 1972 - you wanted to see him.

JH: 1972, I tried my best to see him and to talk with him, but he didn't want to talk to me.

SH: He did not come to the door.

JH: I left him a card to call me, but he didn't do that either. So I never talked to the man
MV: Do you know how he was accepted in the community after the war?

SW: He was not liked before nor after. He was not liked when he was a Nazi either, but he had the power, that was the trouble.

JH: He couldn’t escape it anymore. And he couldn’t do nothing. Then his first wife died and he married another lady there but, no, he was never accepted.

SH: After the war, people really had a rough time yet, and he married this Wilhemina Peters, that was his second wife. They had a child, and that child almost died of hunger because nobody would help them. It had a real big stomach, and then his sister-in-law she had said it can’t go on anymore like that because well, they were outcasts.

MV: That had far reaching consequences didn’t it? Let’s go on to something more fun. Tell me about how you met? How did you meet each other?

JH: We just celebrated the other day. We met fifty years ago on the first of April. We met before already, but then we made work of it. I dated her for the first time. We went the other night to the Alpen Rose to celebrate.

MV: How nice!

SH: We went together to catechism.

MV: That’s how you met, in church?

JH: Well, we knew each other already from catechism. She was always a lot smarter than me in catechism.

MV: Aren’t women always smarter about those things?
JH: Oh yah, I guess so.

MV: So you two met and fell in love?

SH: I don’t know, I guess.

JH: We went together for five years. Then we got married over there and then we went over here.

MV: Tell us why you decided to come to America?

JH: To tell you the honest truth, I don’t know. I think it was the leading of the Lord, because that one man, an old school buddy that I met last fall and I didn’t see him in fifty years, and we talked for a while. I wrote him a letter when I was here and send him a couple of pictures. Two weeks ago he wrote me a letter back and he said I had talked about it already in the high school there, which I didn’t know. I know we have some friends here they always say they shouldn’t never been here.

SH: It was your doing, that’s for sure.

JH: Oh yah. Not your doing.

SH: No, there is a difference.

MV: Do you remember when he first brought it up, about coming?

SH: He didn’t tell me about it even.

JH: Well you never asked me either.

SH: No.

JH: I tell you why we left actually. In ’43 I was drafted into the army already. I wasn’t very old.

MV: How old were you then?
JH: Well, the first time actually was before that time, I was sixteen years and I had to go for two weeks. Then the war come and I was a prisoner of war from February 28, '45, to war was done in May then, and they kept us contrary to the Geneva convention till December '46.

MV: That long?

JH: That long. A year and a half after the war.

MV: You were still in the camp?

JH: We worked for the Americans.

MV: Interesting! That will be another whole story that we will get on tape another time.

SH: And then how he met Tony Bos.

JH: Well, that comes in later.

SH: That was somebody from Overisel.

MV: Oh, I think you need to say that. - go ahead.

JH: No, That will come in the other story about the prisoner of war business.

MV: You met someone there from this area?

JH: Anyway, getting back to why we moved here. I came back in Dec. '46, and I always had it in my mind that I was going to be a veterinarian. But when I got back in '46, see the war was over in May of '45, all the schools were filled, the universities were all filled up. So I never got half a chance to get in there.

SH: But you did get in there.

JH: But I worked, I stayed home for a year by my brother, my parents had both died in between. My father died in '43 to a farm accident, my mother died in '44; I was in
the army then. My brother and my three sisters were home and they run the farm. There wasn’t much going on in Germany, you could not find a job. So I finally went to a agricultural college for two years. Then I could have became a teacher over there, an agricultural teacher, but then you had to leave Graafschap Bentheim too, and we never actually wanted to get away from the church. Over there, the Christian Reformed Church is the equivalent of the Christian Reformed Church, and had all but eight congregations in Graafschap Bentheim. So now you asked why I come over here, I do not know. I do not know, but I’m quite sure it was the right thing. I never regretted it.

SH: Well, there was an opening you know, this door was opened and other doors were closed, you might say.

JH: I never regretted it.

SH: And we were young too.

MV: You were newly married?

SH: We were 26 and 24. People move at that age quite easily.

MV: There were a lot of immigrants coming after the war too.

SH: But we didn’t really didn’t know anybody, other immigrants.

JH: Other immigrants didn’t influence me. But I must have had a streak like that in me already that I didn’t even know.

MV: My father had the same thing. He knew already when he was a young boy that he always wanted to come to America. So I can understand that that is a stirring in you that....
JH: But after the war in April '46 to '52, there wasn't much going on. I went to agricultural college and I worked for the government for a year or so, took soil samples. But it wasn't the right thing.

SH: You could have done it all your life, I guess.

JH: I could have, yah.

SH: That partner that you had, I guess he did that all his life didn't he?

JH: I think so.

SH: I think he did until he retired. Take soil samples and analyze them.

MV: So you had family here? Not family, but other people from the church?

SH: Diekjacob was a cousin of my mother and she was a second cousin of John's father. So they were both a little bit relation.

JH: We knew about them, but I never had met them actually.

MV: So you came in contact with Diekjacob.

JH: He was the only ones I knew. I mean. He was, Mr. Diekjacob was a brother to my aunt's husband. She married a Diekjacob too. And I knew about them.

SH: They were from our home-church too.

JH: So I wrote them and they said they would help me, but they said right away too, "Do you have a girl friend?" I said, "Yah. I have." If I didn't have one, I didn't have to bring one along, there were plenty girls here.

(laughter)

JH: Yah, he wrote that. I still have that letter yet.

SH: That wasn't so dumb either because if a young fellow marries a local girl he has
family.

MV: That’s true.

JH: I didn’t trust it too good.

MV: You didn’t know what they would put you together with.

SH: You were all set too. No, but that was not bad advice, because you miss family you know, and then you would have had family. Especially somebody like you with immigrant parents, that would be an ideal thing.

JH: So we got married the fourth of May, 1952, and we left the 21st, right? We left the 21st.

MV: So what did you bring with you?

SH: Lots of stuff. We couldn’t take any money. I brought my Pfaff sewing machine, down comforters, bedding, porcelain, almost everything, but not any furniture except the sewing machine. A zigzag sewing machine. That was very dear to me.

MV: How did you do that with the electricity difference?

SH: It was a treadle sewing machine. We later had a motor put in.

JH: We didn’t have much - how much debt did we have when we came here? We couldn’t take any money along.

SH: Oh boy! $150 dollars.

JH: $150 dollars debt I believe. The Diekjacobs had to pay for a ticket for us from New York to here.

MV: Did you go by train?

JH: Yah, we went by train. There is quite a story connected to that. When we left the
ship, we only got a little ship money about $15 or something, you could trade
German money into ship money and you could buy something. There were GIs on
the boat too, I would go to the bar where they would be too, and when they spent
money, then I would give them my chips. I had a few dollars, I think about 7
dollars. Do you remember yet how much they wanted from Hoboken from to Central
Station?

SH: I don't know about $6?

JH: No about $14 dollars I believe all together. We didn't have it. So we stood right
there, but finally we hooked up with another immigrant we had met on the boat and
we finally got all our money put together and we got to Grand Central Station.

SH: But there was a fellow who wanted to go to Wisconsin. And he had been here
before, and he could handle the American world a little better than we.

JH: Have you ever been in Grand Central Station?

MV: Oh yes, I remember that.

JH: Do you remember that flag hanging there in the top that looked like it was about two
acres high? We got off the boat without breakfast in the morning and we knew we
had to be about 12 hours or whatever it was on the train during the night, so we
didn't have nothing to eat. So I had a few bucks, $2 or so. I went out and I put the
baggage on one place, our suitcases, and told my wife "You sit right here while I get
something to eat." I had two dollars to spend, I believe, and when I came back I had
a couple of oranges I thought if we got thirsty on the train, and I had some chocolate.
But I could not find her back she had shrunk so much that I couldn't find her
(laughs). But I found her back, and then we went on the train. During the night train I went to Niagara Falls, Canada. It looked awful bad to us because of all those wooden houses there. Canada at that time was not very far advanced. What you saw was all clapboard houses there.

SH: And big TV antennas.

JH: And big TV antennas - that scared us a little, but we both kept quiet and we didn’t say nothing. The next morning, I think it was about 9:30, we arrived in Kalamazoo. Now the Diekjacobs were going to get us from Kalamazoo, but we missed them.

SH: We came a day early.

JH: Well, no, we missed actually a go-between man from the Christian Reformed Seaman’s home who was supposed to meet us over there.

MV: And he didn’t meet you?

JH: Well, I don’t know he might have called Hartger because they always wanted to hang a T in my name. But, we don’t know, we never met the man so we were in Kalamazoo.

SH:Probably as much our fault as their fault.

JH: We were there again, finally I saw an old man walk up and I went to him and asked if he could talk Dutch. Yah, he could talk Dutch.

SH: It was a minister.

JH: It was a minister from the Reformed Church I believe, isn’t it? But it doesn’t make any difference. So I asked him if he would call the Diekjacobs here. Now he misunderstood with my pigeon English too, he thought it was Dick Jacobs. So he
looked it up. He looked it up and he dialed and he talked to people. I don’t know where he talked to a Dick Jacobs here, not Diekjacobs, but Dick Jacobs. But luckily they were from Graafschap too and they knew a Diekjacobs. So they called Diekjacobs.

MV: That was lucky.

JH: And they finally found us.

SH: Or we would still be in Kalamazoo!

JH: We wouldn’t be in Kalamazoo anymore, but that was the way it was. Then a couple of months later, our baggage came.

MV: The trunks didn’t come with right you?

SH: No, we had everything we needed for housekeeping except furniture.

MV: Where did you live when you came?

SH: That was a funny thing, too. When we came, the second day Diekjacobs said they would like to go to Germany and we should stay that long. They went to get Jenny. (Ed. note: The Diekjacobs were childless and went to get a niece who became like their daughter.) So we stayed there until October. And that was nice for us. Then when we were there by them, a neighbor came and said, "We have two apartments on the farm and grandma is too old to be alone. Why don’t you have grandma’s apartment?" So we rented that for $30 a month.

JH: So the second day, DiekJacob asked us if we could stay there for a couple of months.

SH: So we moved just a farm over.

JH: They wanted to go to Germany to get Jenny. So what else could we say, we said
yes.

MV: That worked out perfect for you.

SH: It worked out good, but we had to work hard.

JH: But he had turkeys and chicken, and in the meantime I got a job in the shop - Western Tool.

SH: We both worked in town.

JH: I worked 56 hours, Swenna worked 40 hours.

MV: Is that when you worked at the Western Tool?

JH: I worked at Western Tool.

SH: I worked at the dry cleaners for Vern Houting.

JH: She was pregnant also.

MV: So you were busy people those first couple of years!

SH: The neighbors said that the Diekjacobs always were so busy just running the farm, and now those people both work in town and do the farm work too. Of course we were young.

JH: We had to take care of turkeys. I didn’t know anymore about turkeys than the man in the moon.

SH: But it went alright.

JH: We bought a car then. Swenna had the first money because I didn’t have any regular job the first months. It was just after all those GIs just came back from the Korean War.

SH: So I had a job and he didn’t. So I bought the car.
JH: Yah, she bought the first car. What did you pay?

SH: $150.

MV: What kind was it, do you remember?

JH: It was a 1938 Chevy. It was automatic already because the car was in such a shape that it stopped automatically on every corner.

MV: How did the church react when you came?

SH: The church? They did care.

MV: I mean how did you feel, did you feel accepted?

JH: We felt right at home.

SH: Oh, you see they were all from the county of Bentheim, those people, from way back.

JH: The people all could talk Dutch yet, and they were very friendly to us.

SH: And the neighbors came too and when we lived in their apartment, that was really dandy.

JH: At that time, I mean the whole neighborhood was all Christian Reformed then yet, and we would see them all in church. We weren't used to that because we lived between a lot of Reformed and Catholic people over there and people who didn't go to church. It was wonderful. And we were very well accepted too, I think. I never felt that I was not accepted in church. Some people they feel they are not accepted.

SH: We didn't want them to make a special fuss about us either.

JH: No, we didn't care for that.

SH: They didn't have to say hello to us if they didn't feel like it.
JH: But I still feel the same way today. We moved out here (to 29th St.) two years ago when we moved out of the country then people say, "Well, if you move to the city the neighborhood is all done." I never had better neighbors than we have here.

SH: Well, they have more time here, that's what it is.

JH: To have a good neighbor relationship, you've got to be a little accommodating too.

You cannot just sit in your home and think that the neighbors come to you.

(end of side one)

SH: Nobody said anything about any American relatives, but when I came here then I found out that all my eight grandparents had sisters and brothers here. They immigrated 1860 to 1880, something like that. Nobody talked about that anymore.

MV: So you came here and you had instant relatives.

SH: Well I didn't know that, I had to find them little by little. And sometimes I thought I should write a book, "My American Cousins," because how I found them is an intriguing thing by itself. One lady wrote a poem on a Sunday afternoon about her brothers who had gone to America and how her whole family was shaken up by the father's and mother's death, and how the brothers had immigrated and all that. That poem was preserved, so that gave us a clue. But it did not say that she and her sister had also immigrated in 1882. And I was always searching for her descendants. It took me eight years to find their descendants and they all lived in the state of Washington. She and her husband moved in 1890, something like that. They first lived in Allendale. I traced it to Allendale, went to the courthouse, and I couldn't find it anymore. But she and her husband moved to the state of Washington. Then I
met her great-grandchildren. Some of them anyway. So I heard about her that way. Then some of the grandchildren of hers, or great-grandchildren, moved back to Grand Rapids - teaching and stuff like that. But that is a whole story all by itself. Then John’s family, we met a dentist from Hart. He wrote a family history of his family. Then a neighbor said you might be more interested in it than we are. It is our family, but why don’t you read that. So we read it. They were from Bimolten, the Stevens family, the place where I am from. And that was very intriguing. That was in 1956, and I remember I wrote him a card and said on there that we were so happy to read his story about the family, and I was also from Bimolten. And we would very much like to meet him. I wrote that card maybe Tuesday or so, and he probably got it on Thursday. On Sunday, they came to see us. They couldn’t wait. It meant a lot to us because they really accepted us. The whole family, there were eight or ten children, the sisters and brothers were spread all over America, came to see us. When they had family reunions they invited us. And the funny part of it is that when I bought the church records from the county of Bentheim and started to do genealogy, all the Stevens are Hargers. In 1698, William Harger married a Gese Stevens and lost his name because Gese had the property. So really we always liked those people, but no wonder, they had some of the same traits that we had inherited somehow. I remember this Albert Stevens, he was a professor in Ann Arbor, and he was sort of the spokesman of the family. I wrote him a letter and I said before you read this letter, put on your best suit, and a tie and a white shirt because there is something I have to reveal to you.
MV: I thought it was interesting in some of the materials you gave me, that quite often if a woman inherits the property, then the family name goes with her.

SH: In the Voss family, too, you got the name from the mother. That is the way it is. The officials started that, because they did not want to change the tax records. The name stays with the property no matter who lives there. Not if you buy it, but if it comes down to the family, if you inherited it.

MV: So is this what got you started in the whole area of genealogy?

SH: In a way, I guess, but it got started because it was such a neglected subject. Sort of a motherly instinct to preserve. But then again, too, you get into it and it grows on you.

JH: I tell you that the whole business actually started out with us because all the people around here, all who are convinced Graafschap German, that they all claim they were from the old country, the old country was the Netherlands. We laughed so many times. You'd be surprised, genes how far they carry. I mean you always got people who have certain trends, some people you can talk openly with, others you have to be a little bit careful. People you want to do business with, you better wake up early in the morning. Other people, they are true blue as far as that goes. And all the trends, before we said anything we followed them, and we could follow them way in Graafschap Bentheim yet, but they are the same people. But we couldn't read much yet at that time when we first started to think about that. The first thing we actually read together I remember was the minutes of 1847-58. We stared with Van Raalte, because Van Raalte was very misunderstood by the people here. If it was not for Van
Raalte they can say what they want, he made a few bucks on the lots that he bought, but the people would never have survived.

MV: That is true.

SH: We thought too that we would have never become Christian Reformed because just the way they treated him, they blamed him.

JH: They didn’t treat him right. Just two weeks ago there was that man there, that impersonator, Rev. Buursma, you know him maybe?

MV: I have seen him. I heard him speak.

JH: He was here with a man from Hilversum from the Netherlands.

MV: They came to visit you?

JH: They took him to Graafschap then you told them all about it. I told him, whoever you are, there is not a man big enough, don’t get it into your head, that you can represent Van Raalte. He said Van Raalte was only small of stature, he said, and I am a tall man.

MV: That is a whole story of itself about Van Raalte, but...

SH: He was formed by circumstances, too, and he never really, what shall I say, I don’t know if he wanted to leave the church. I don’t think so. They made it so rough for him.

MV: They didn’t appreciate him.

SH: No, they didn’t appreciate him. Not in the Netherlands too. you know. And then he had a little money. If he had no money, it would have turned out different too.

Didn’t he have $20,000?
JH: Whatever he had he gave, I know that.

SH: He didn’t spare himself. But the thing is, if he would have been a penniless pastor like most pastors were, who had to look for the next paycheck, his life would have been different. Don’t you think so?

MV: Oh yah, he couldn’t have done what he did, for the people of Holland, Michigan.

JH: The people here, too, would never have survived if it had not been for Van Raalte.

This is actually beyond the scope what we should talk about.

SH: But this is true...

JH: We admire Van Raalte, when we read the book.

SH: But there you have that working man’s spirit which begrudges anyone who was a little above him and that came up to the surface. And of course you had a lot more poor people than you had in Europe because they came here and you had to deal with them. And you had to acknowledge that because that was the way it was.

MV: And a lot of them were illiterate too. They were like peasants.

JH: You asked before, I had a little English over there in high school, that I forgot about again and I learned some again in the prisoner of war camp. For a while I was an interpreter there but I gave that job away because I did not want to tell on my own.

Swenna, she couldn’t understand a word. (laughs) I was going to tell you a story about that once.

MV: Tell me the story.

JH: The old ’39 car. Coming from Graafschap, my car stopped just like always. I looked out for somebody and George Koops, the owner of the garage, came out and
helped me look. He got it started again. "You got trouble?" So I told him that's what I had. When I was in a car again, Swenna asked, "What is trouble?" I said, "Don't worry about it. We never had it over there."

SH: We were too young to have trouble. (Laughs)

MV: What did you think about Holland, Michigan, when you came?

JH: Wonderful!

SH: Well, I had never seen a wooden house! I didn't think much of a wooden house either. But ...got used to it.

MV: Did you like the town?

SH: The town was nice.

JH: We didn't get out much the first couple years because we didn't have time.

SH: The parks were nice. We...

JH: We liked the surroundings. Holland, Michigan, is a very nice city. You can go wherever you want to go. You can go to Europe, you can go to the United States. We haven't been all over yet, but...

SH: People have told us that too. I remember one lady she came here maybe ten years ago, visitors from Germany, and she said to us, "You folks don't have to go nowhere. It is nowhere nicer than in your area." I think she really meant what she said. That was Mrs. Albertina Elberts.

JH: Well, we were very well accepted here. Of course, at that time in '52 there were some people in the shop yet that shied away from me because I had been a German.

SH: And you had been in the German Army.
JH: And I had been in the German Army and I made my mind up that I would never say that I had not been in the German Army because if you lie once you’ve got to like all your life. I don’t want to have any trouble now. Then we had certain people here they didn’t like it too good.

SH: Well, and those who had lost their boys in the war...

JH: Well, I could understand that too. But no use to say they are all Dutch like the other ones said, I mean for years and years.

MV: Because that’s what they did, didn’t they? They knew they were German...

JH: They wouldn’t be accepted.

SH: You just never knew.

JH: A lot of them never knew.

SH: No. You just never knew and they said that my dad got so upset when you bombed Berlin that had been a surprise to him. (Laughs). My dad knew, he says, but he didn’t tell me.

JH: They didn’t tell the whole family.

SH: They kept that from them. The parents hid it because they thought the children will have trouble through this. And what is the difference, I mean. Once they’re here they’re Americans.

JH: You see the Germans spoiled it themselves as far as that goes. There was the first World War. There was the second World War. Germany was certainly at fault as far as that goes.

SH: And there were a lot of people like in Hamilton, Overisel, that came there. They’re
all from Bentheim, Germany. A lot of them at least, I would say seventy percent. Some of them wouldn’t dare to go to the village because they thought Hitler would pick them up. Unthinkable!

JH: You had three kinds of immigrants too. You had those who came for economical reasons. Then you had those who were draft dodgers. And in the first place, of course, those who came for religious reasons. But a lot of draft dodgers came here too. They would walk away from Germany to the Netherlands and get on a boat to go to the United States. They didn’t want to go into the Prussian Army. They didn’t want to go there.

SH: And they weren’t really draft dodgers either because Prussia was not their country. They thought of themselves as being from Hanover.

MV: A whole separate...

SH: Yeah. That's the way they thought of themselves. They did not accept Prussia until 1871 when they marched into Paris. Then they thought they wanted to be part of Prussia because they hated the French. They remembered 1814, Napoleon and so on and then when the Prussian in 1871 which was sixty years later really conquered France, they didn’t mind being part of Prussia. But until then they hated the Prussians like people hate the Russians now days--really a strange thing. Of course those emotions all get cured by this time because people see that it brings them nowhere.

MV: Yeah. That's true.

SH: But in those days...what shall I say...hating another nation was almost an indoor

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MY: (Laughs)

SH: That was fostered...gave them something to do. But it started really with Napoleon. Napoleon was hated, you wouldn’t believe it! On account of his raising tax to people. He got every penny out of them. And then the soldiers lodged by the people.

MV: Oh yes. I read that somewhere.

SH: ...in the house with them. The Hartgers from Scheerhoorn were very wealthy people, very big farmers. The oldest son emigrated here. One time I inquired about it. I said, "Why did that oldest son with his family emigrate?" To me it was unthinkable, having possessions, standing in the community.

MV: He would be the one that would get the farm and all that.

SH: And to me it looked he was very wealthy. And then a neighbor told me they had been so poor they had been pushed back into the barn and Napoleon soldiers had been there for fourteen years and had made them so terribly poor that they hardly had enough to eat anymore.

MV: And they were all farmers.

SH: The soldiers would lodge there and just get the best of everything. And you couldn’t get rid of them. I mean if people lodged by you for fourteen years in your home and they take your best, not what you give them.

JH: They got the gun.

SH: And you got nothing. And that neighbor told me they had said it had been so bad
that the neighbors had brought them food! There was more going on but it started really...

JH: You go back too far, mother, let's go...

MV: We can go back to Holland, Michigan. Tell me a little bit about your farm.

JH: Well, I had never worked in a factory before. So they told me that's where you had to start, and you know, I did too.

SH: We started farming in stages.

JH: Yah, but I went to a factory first. So I did everything. I didn't care what I had to do. I had to make a living, you see? But that man was drunk all the time so I stayed there for three weeks. I don't think I made twenty-five bucks either, as far as that goes. But then I called my sponsor one morning. I told him, "You better get me. The man is drunk again and I don't learn nothing here. All I do is pull a couple weeds and it too already." So then I started with Western Tool. Western Tool at that time was not very far advanced in technology as far as that goes, but it was a very good place to learn, especially for me. There were a lot of people in there who could talk Dutch yet. I started as a lathe operator. And you could learn there. Like that man says from Greenfield Village, you look it up you still see those old chairs there. Everybody had his chair there. That was an old man's factory there. (Laughs) And I was a young kid there. I was the youngest one I think.

SH: Young people from America wouldn't stand for that! (laughs)

JH: No, no. They wouldn't work there. They didn't pay much. They paid me a dollar an hour first and that was more money than I ever had before, so it was all right to
me. I know I worked 56 hours. My first paycheck, I think I still got the stub. I checked it all, a couple of years ago.

SH: For many years you were 56 a week.

JH: But I didn't mind. Some people over there they said they never liked the opportunity. I always liked what I did, and I didn't think any farther but I always thought I wanted to go on a farm. So in '56 there was a farm for sale there in Graafschap on bids. So we looked at it, my sponsor went along too, and I put a bid in and I got the farm. At that time I was working for Litho-Bar where the old sugar beet factory used to be. And so we started out there. We bought a couple tools and we remodeled the barn. In '58 the barn burned. I think it was an electrical fire.

SH: It was in '60 the barn burned.

JH: '60. The barn was just remodeled. We had chickens there. We were going to have laying hens. But then I was working at the shop second shift by Crampton at time, I had moved to Crampton already, and then they let me know the barn was on fire. So what happened there somebody had hay stored in there. Maybe that got combusted. I don't know what happened. So we farmed that until '64 isn't it? Or '65.

MV: Did you rebuild the barn?

JH: Yah. I put a steel barn on there then. But we didn't have much insurance either. But I was glad nobody got hurt. Gary, our youngest son was just two weeks old. Everybody was all right there. But we always had our mind set on a farm.

SH: Be a full time farmer.

JH: A full time farmer. Mr. Diekjacob he died and then Mrs. Diekjacob was going to
sell it, but we didn’t know either if we could buy it. But finally two years later we bought it. She had some offers, but our offer was the best, so we bought that place.

SH: And she sort of liked to keep it in the family too.

JH: That wasn’t the main thing. She didn’t mind if we would buy it as far as that goes, so we bought that place. We had buildings on there and then we could go in the pig business. After the fire on the other place, we didn’t go into the chicken business again. Then I had a couple pigs there that suited me better.

SH: Well, we had no room for chickens.

JH: Then I worked for Crampton...when did I quit there? I worked there eight years.

SH: Well, Crampton fell on bad times. They laid off a lot of people.

JH: No, they went on a strike over there. I didn’t like that. By that time I worked in the tool room, I worked as tool and die maker. Finally I quit. But we had four hundred hogs already. I worked there full time.

MV: You were a busy man! And your wife helped?

SH: And the children too. I helped with the livestock.

JH: Yah. You worked with the livestock. I worked second shift for eight years and I always said it took fifteen years off of my life but that was the only way you could do it more or less. I would work from three o’clock til eleven and then I...well people always said, well by midnight you can easy get to bed at six o’clock and get up again. That don’t work with me when you work second shift. You got to unwind first. But I would always get up at seven o’clock in the morning to see the kids off to school because I was not home at night when they were there. I did that always.
MV: You had breakfast together?

JH: Yah. And then I would do my farm work ‘til noon and then I would sleep a couple
of hours and at three o’clock I would go to work again. Except on Tuesday, then I
had to bring hogs away to Hopkins. I had only a pickup and I usually took sixteen
hogs. I put eight on there and then I had to go twice, see? That’s the way we did it.
But I liked farming. We like farming.

SH: Twenty-one years.

JH: Oh yeah! That’s right. I worked fifteen years in the shop first.

SH: Twenty-one years we were self-employed.

MV: And you helped with the pigs too, right?

JH: Oh yah. We had fifty sows.

SH: We had good years. Very good years. And you see, it wasn’t so overdone in those
years. It was fine to be small in those years.

JH: When we started out we were not the smallest one.

SH: No.

JH: We were one of the biggest ones.

SH: We soon got small (laughs)…

JH: We got small because the other ones got crazy, see?

MV: Yeah. They got into all that automation and…

JH: We never had much automation. We did a lot by hand.

SH: Well, we had them on slabs and all that.

MV: So tell me when you started working outside the home.
SH: I was probably your age.

MV: Is that when you started working at the Dutch Village?

JH: I must have been home then.

SH: Yah, you were home. The boys were helping you. I was helping with 4H. I thought, "Well there I’m having all those 4H girls at my home and all those mothers work somewhere. Then there was an ad in the paper. They wanted somebody who could speak Dutch and just part-time, just a little bit. "Oh", I thought, "I’ll see what that is." And I met the right people there. So then at first I worked just a little bit and...

JH: But they only wanted you to...

SH: Help with the school program.

JH: Was it to get the farmhouse in shape?

SH: No, they were building the farmhouse and then they asked me if I would put the stuff in the farmhouse, furnish it for them. And I did. I went to an auction in Overisel.

MV: Oh, you helped with the furnishings?

SH: Yeah. Because they just built it. It just happened you know. I remember getting some stones - foot warmers. They said you get all the stuff, whatever you think ought to be in there. So I did. One time Harry looked a little bit and then Grandpa Nelis was living yet and said to Harry he looked at me when I got that thing out of the store and he said, "You just take it. Harry didn’t sell it for very many years." It was a copper kettle. It was quite expensive. And Harry looked! (Laughs) That was fun too. I didn’t work there that much at first and I still don’t work there that much.
MV: I just helped with the school program.

SH: Well, I stayed on during the summer then for some years. Then there were years when I worked four or five days a week in the summer. But then I was always through September 1. But now I'm never through September 1. They always keep going until October 15...

MV: Any interesting experience that you've had there?

SH: Oh, many! I met the American public there! That is why I could do the book on the County of Bentheim and their immigrants in North America. I learned at the Dutch Village. That’s definitely true. I would not have learned that by myself. And also my involvement with the historic library in the Graafschap Church and the genealogy in town. Definitely, that goes back to my work at the Dutch Village. If I had stayed at home, I would not have had that interest. Of course, I probably be a much better housekeeper and a much better seamstress (laughs). I mean I really could sew well. I took a lot of sewing lessons and I would have no trouble sewing for other people, but that didn’t develop.

MV: But now this book that you've written, now you have a legacy that you’re leaving behind.

SH: Well, that was not the idea. The idea was just to preserve records and history.

MV: Tell us a little about your book, how that all came to be.

SH: Well, for many years people used to come here and say, "Can’t you translate this, or I got stuck with this." Loren Lemmen was one of them. One day he came in and said, "I’d like to publish a list of people who came from the county of Bentheim"
because his own ancestors did too, and I was supposed to help him. Then I thought, "Well, I have helped very many people and this is all fine and I don’t mind that either really deep down," but so often when they’re out the door they did it all themselves and they don’t know you any more. So I thought, "That has to change a little bit," and I told him at another visit, "I’ll help you, but I will help you as a partner, not just feed you and say goodbye. That was fine to him. He wrote me a letter back. He would appreciate that. And it was very good that we did it that way because an American misspells those German names and he can’t always read the old script. Those records, those three thousand five hundred records, I did them over nine times. And I still don’t say that they’re all correct. But I still have all those books that I corrected with red pencil. You wouldn’t believe how many mistakes creep in and then we try to eliminate as many as we could. If we had a choice to stay with the church record or the family records we choose the family records, because a lot of those pioneers were born during the Napoleon times and they had to show the child to the officials if it was a girl or a boy because people got so frustrated they would report boys as girls thinking Napoleon would be with them forever and then they wouldn’t have to go into the army. A child who was born in March might have been registered in June because in March it was a stormy day, they couldn’t show that child (laughs). So there were a lot of funny things happened in those days when Napoleon ruled the country. So if you have a choice, stay with the family records because the family records are better than the official records during that time.

MV: One thing I thought was very interesting about your book was how you talked about
the lifestyle?

SH: I owe that to my daughters-in-law because sometimes we would say, "Well, what do you think of it?" and I was not too sure about it and then my daughter-in-laws would say, "We would like to know how those people lived." So they really put me up to that, and John helped with that too. And I talked to other people and then...

JH: Don't forget for four years you talked more to Death than to the Living.

SH: Oh, I still do! (Laughs)

JH: She would sit in the corner of the davenport and write...

SH: I was agreeable to anything! (Laughs). No, it wasn't that bad. In between...you know you work on something and then of course for a few weeks you do something else. And I work on many things now yet. To tell you the truth, I have three, four, five things going in the basement.

MV: You mean families that you're researching?

SH: Oh, much more than that, stories which I have to complete, people which I help...they bring me stuff. And I'll do that but then for a few weeks I clean house and forget about it.

MV: Tell me about your involvement in Graafschap Church.

SH: Well, in Graafschap Church I have been on the historical committee for, let me see, since '72 and up to '83 I was chairman and then I got more involved with the genealogy society in town. I'm still a member of the Historic Committee in the Graafschap Church, but I'm not the chairman any more. I got so much work doing this book and doing other research, but I still help with it every week. Every
Tuesday night we work there. The first Tuesday of the month we have open house so people like you can come there too. I don't think they have the records of the Voss [family] because they were from East Saugatuck.

MV: That's quite a nice library, historical library that they have there.

SH: Oh yeah. Because we have worked so long on it. You have been there too?

MV: I've seen it, yeah.

SH: Did you come with a church group once or something?

MV: No. I was there for a funeral a couple of weeks ago. I was impressed.

SH: Oh. You had never been there before?

MV: No.

SH: Well we have that display now for over twenty-five years already.

MV: But it was well organized.

SH: Yeah, oh yeah. But our treasure are the records, you know. We have all the people on family sheets, and we have maybe fifteen binders with all family sheets. That will be treasured in the future but I did those records over nine times and those records at the church too, we do them over and over and over to get them correct and still there might be mistakes in there. That's what you have to do with records.

JH: How about John Henry Schuurman?

SH: Oh. The John Henry Schuurman fund. At first we had no money.

MV: Oh, you mean the money fund for to help...?

SH: The history library. So what we had to have, we bought ourselves. Then a man of the church gave us, I think, ten percent of his estate and that was thirteen thousand
dollars so we have an endowment fund (the John Henry Schuurman Fund).

MV: Oh, that's wonderful!

SH: But we use just the interest. We don't even use the interest. We're very prudent, but it is there. It did help a lot, because first you think you can do genealogy on a shoestring, but you have to learn that it costs you money like any hobby. You have to buy top loaders and you have to buy binders and if you can run a computer you're very fortunate.

MV: Going back to your book. I don't think you mentioned that it's been published.

SH: We first ordered four hundred copies. To save money, John and me collated it ourselves and then we had somebody bind it. When the book was ready, Loren said to me, "I don't know if a single person will want the book." So in faith we printed four hundred copies and of course I paid for it being the older person, the older member, but they didn't last long. Then we printed two hundred at the time and then I think I didn't collate them any more because we had money to play with (laughs). In the beginning we said we would give the profits away. You're giving money anyway and we didn't want people to say later on, "They got rich on other people's records," or whatever. Because we had worked hard to get it together but still...Loren and me we each had a thousand dollars to give away! So it was really successful. We gave to several organizations. I gave some to a lady who was a missionary in China and some I gave to Christian Schools--what Loren did with it I don't know. And we still have a couple hundred dollars in a joint account, about three hundred dollars. Then we thought we probably would print some extra copies
for the 150th anniversary and give them away to libraries, updated, but now Loren wrote me a letter the other day and he said, "I think we should wait until the year 2000 and then we will have more stuff yet updated...and just give it to libraries."

MV: Oh, that's wonderful. And then you were telling me that they were published also in Germany.

SH: Right. You see, we did it really in earnest and him being a computer operator was priceless. We really were a good combination because I could do the hand work, the feeding you might say, and he did all the computer work. Twice I sent about twenty books that were ordered to Germany in sea sacks. By sea mail. And so when those historians in Germany saw that they really thought this is something which we don't have. Because they realized there was a lot of work in it. Really more than four years, it was a life time of work in there. So they thought they'd like to translate it and they recommended that it be used in the history lessons in school. So, I was very touched about that because it confirmed that it was accurate. Because after all, it is happening out there. It's the story of the old country and not much of what happened here except that they came here and then their family records. But they do say that the best history books are written by people in exile. Another funny thing too. Our home church will be 150 years old in '98, and our pastor from our home church gave me all the records and he says, "You write the beginning." With the idea too if you are far removed you have a better perspective. So I have that still in the basement. But the funny part of the beginning of our home church, the Christian Reformed Church in Veldhausen, Germany, was that they had so many members who were
weavers. About twenty-five members were weavers. Now why were they members of a new separate movement? And I have the idea that they all worked for a spell in the Netherlands and got acquainted with the movement there. Because weavers would go in the summer and work in the Netherlands.

MV: So it would go like into Arnhem and that area there?

SH: No, I think more in Overisel.

MV: Where Van Raalte was.

JH: Well, Van Raalte, he actually preached in Grafschaap, Bentheim too. And he helped them with baptism. You see those people there didn’t want to have the children baptized by the Reformed minister anymore because they were too far removed from the truth. Like my grandfather was born in 1854 and when he was baptized? ’56. They did not have any minister then who could baptize them. Uelsen, was that the first church?

SH: Yeah. 1838. Van Raalte founded that church.

JH: Van Raalte founded that church - one of eight congregations.

SH: And that’s how you had the connection with the Netherlands.

MV: How do you spell that church? I’ll have to make sure…

SH: U-E-L-S-E-N. That’s where the Voss family were from also.

MV: That’s very interesting.

SH: Well, it’s new to you now. That’s why it’s interesting. Once you hear then the next time it isn’t so interesting anymore. (Laughter) No, that’s really so.

MV: But I think to people that read your transcripts and listen to your tapes, I think they’ll
find it interesting.

SH: Maybe. Could be. But you see, you don’t think that... but a lot of people and there are a lot of educated people and even I talked to Elton Bruins about it occasionally. I said, "The American public thinks the immigrants started to live here... that’s the beginning. No. That’s not the beginning! They came with a thousand-year tradition and that might be something which is worthless which they should throw out as quick as they come here. But it might also be something that is very helpful." It depends what tradition you have.

MV: You bring these things with you as you come and it changes.

SH: And I think I said that to you the other time too. The pioneers came, but the sons of the pioneers built the country. You know, they didn’t have that hang over. They saw the conditions as they were and not as they ought to be.

MV: That’s very enlightening.

SH: And they did what had to be done.

MV: Why don’t you tell us a little bit about your children.

SH: Our oldest daughter is married to Peter Sytsma, and she lives here in Cherrywood subdivision. Our oldest son is with the Grand Rapids Press; he is a business editor. Our youngest son is a German teacher in Pittsburgh, and he teaches at Frick International School. We have three children. One daughter and two sons, and six granddaughters ranging in age from seventeen to four years old. We enjoyed very much the opportunities our children and grandchildren had and have to attend Christian schools and colleges. We were denied this while growing up in Nazi-
Germany, and we are so thankful for the religious freedom our family has here in America. We had good times and troublesome times, but we can testify--the Lord has seen us through. To him be the glory.

(tape ends)