Rauch, Lucille Oral History Interview: Sesquicentennial of Holland, "150 Stories for 150 Years"

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AP: Could you just state your name and where and when you were born for the tape?

LR: Lucille Catherine Rauch. Born in Holland on Howard Avenue, June 10, 1922.

AP: Have you lived in any other places?

LR: No, I haven't. Do you want to know where my parents came from, or no?

AP: Oh, yes!

LR: My parents came as an engaged couple from Chicago. My father's brother did the same thing with his fiance, and settled in Little Holland.

AP: Do you know what brought them here?

LR: My father had a job at the color company, the last company name of it was BASF. Strange that I ended up there as a receptionist for ten years. All of us children, there was six of us in the Covington Family, my father's name was Robert, and my mother's name was Edith, were all born on Howard Avenue. There were five girls and one boy. We were born on the lake side there and had a nice childhood. All of us children went to St. Francis school and then on to Holland High School. Of course, I met my husband, a good Dutchman that was born in the Netherlands, and he came over here as an infant. I do have his wooden shoes hanging on the wall downstairs, with little holes on the side that a ribbon went through, or a tie of some sort, to keep them on. When we graduated from high school, of course we got married in those days. Some people did, as now, too, some people tend to get
married earlier.

AP: What happened from there?

LR: He worked during the war eleven hour nights and built our first little home. He liked building, so he quit his job at Western Tool. Then he started building homes. That really blossomed into a big project. Our company name was Rauch Brothers Builders. He had one brother and he came in on it with us. We built until, I think, about 1960 or 1962. Then he went into real estate. When my children were just about grown, we had four girls and then a boy, when my youngest was 13, I wanted to get out of the house, so I went into receptionist work at Lear Siegler for ten years, and then another ten years at Chemetron, which, later, was BASF. Then my husband passed away in 1974. I had been working about seven years at that time. I guess fate somehow took a hand there and got me occupied with a job, because that really held me over and was good for me. In fact, this house I’m living in here was one he built. Most of Marlacoba is. Marlacoba is actually a piece of all my daughters’ names. Marlene, Lana, Connie, and Barbara. The street was William Street, but we were informed after we were in the process of having signs made, that there was another William Street in Park Township, and you can’t have two of the same name. So we abandoned that idea and poor Billy got left out.

AP: But it seems they have about a million streets with Lake in the name somewhere.

LR: It was a hard name for people to remember, but we’ve been here since 1959.

AP: The area surrounding it, was it pretty empty?

LR: Yes, it was just a few homes down 168th. Camp Kiwanis is immediately to my south
and west. Of course, James Street did not go through to Lakeshore Drive, so there was field all to the north here. To move out in the country from Rose Park where we had originally came from, my husband promised the kids about the moon if they wouldn’t grumble when we moved out here. So they had horses and cats and dogs and bunnies and about every animal you can think of. They were pretty happy out here.

AP: Was it difficult to adjust in any other way to move out here?

LR: Only in the fact that I wanted them to continue going to St. Francis school. So we bought two Volkswagens. I think at that time we were about the only people in Holland that had a Volkswagen. For our large family, we needed two. If we had to go somewhere out at the same time, the whole family, we needed two cars. I used to take the kids to St. Francis at 8:30, 9:00 and pick them up again at 3, 3:30.

AP: Was that unusual to have two cars in one family?

LR: It probably was. Because you usually had a one stall garage on a house, too, or nearby. So thinking back, that’s probably right.

AP: So you’d drive them all the way in everyday and pick them up every day.

LR: Yes. If you do that every day, it isn’t a chore anymore. You just adjust your work.

AP: Your husband was probably building a lot during a mini-population growth in Holland. Was he building a lot on the north side?

LR: Yes, it was mostly on the north side. He did have a few homes in town. For a time, he had a dealership for National Homes, which was a company out of Indiana. That was kind of a pre-built home that he did along with his own custom designing and
building. The homes that he built of his own that were custom designed by him were usually a nicer home, a little bit better than the average. He kind of had a futuristic look to the homes. I believe that’s why this home still looks quite modern, even though it is 37 years old. He really enjoyed that, he always called that his hobby.

AP: Yes, I’m surprised to know this court has been here this long. A lot of people are building sub-divisions now, so a lot of them are all new. But driving back here, everything seemed a bit more established. I could tell it wasn’t new.

LR: Of course, back when we were first married, the war was on. We lived in Rose Park, and I went to Pine Creek School in the evenings and rolled up bandages for the services. After that, I got into Red Cross, and I was in Red Cross many years, helping in different ways. At St. Francis I used to help at school with the kids that needed the extra help in learning, take them in another room and do reading or whatever they needed. I was still in Red Cross, then. Then there was a time when I went to work and I couldn’t do that anymore. But when I retired, I went back into reading at Hope Church to the kids of Child Development Services of Ottawa Co. I sort of like that volunteer work. It’s been a busy life. My husband was always busy, my kids were always busy. I was busy. We were well occupied.

AP: Then did you go to St. Francis Church?

LR: Yes. But now we go to Our Lady of the Lake. Anybody that’s on the north side of Lake Macatawa. That’s kind of the dividing line.

AP: When was Our Lady of the Lake started?

LR: Our Lady of the Lake is about twelve years old. We’re in a building program right
now where we have outgrown our present, fairly new building. So that’s being expanded. In this area, too, was Leisure Acres where Rocky Marciano trained. He was a boxer. He used to run around the big block around here for his daily exercise. Holland Furnace owned that property, and they had picnics out there, and we always got an invitation to go to their picnics. I guess they liked to appease the neighbors. That was kind of interesting. I met some movie stars. They had some good entertainment.

AP: So they were the big thing?

LR: They were quite a large company.

AP: Do you remember their going out of business?

LR: I ended up at BASF at Chemetron, and that was a Holland Furnace Company offices. That beautiful lobby which has, I think, since been donated to the city or Hope. It’s a gorgeous lobby. All marble and imported extras. So often people would walk in there, salesman, and just stop and look around and catch their breath. It is a very lovely building. Holland Furnace did own that at one time. It’s a nice place to bring up a family and live. It’s always been fairly on the small side. Now it’s getting large and really expanding.

AP: It sounds like the population of the Catholic Church is really growing over here. How has that changed?

LR: It’s strange. My husband wasn’t a Catholic. He actually didn’t go to any church. He believed that he could be in communication with God out in nature, and that was the way he was brought up. Myself and the children went to the Catholic Church,
and it really is expanding out here. About once a month in our bulletin, we have a list of all the new people that have come in, and there's so many families. Twenty, thirty families. You can see why we're busting out all over in that church. They add folding chairs at the end of the pews and around the back and wherever anybody can possibly get in without breaking the fire laws. It seems good, because when I was a kid, I was so outnumbered. Going to St. Francis, my parents, too, sent all of us kids to school there. It seems all the other kids would tease us. They'd say, "Cat licker, cat licker!"

AP: I've heard from other people that it seemed there were so few people going to Catholic Church and School back then, and that's what they would pick on. Everybody seems to find somebody to pick on, I guess.

LR: This is the Dutch Reformed place where they land. But with a free country, why, other people seeped in here.

AP: What was it like growing up here? What things do you remember the most? Do you have some fond memories?

LR: When I was a child on Howard Avenue, it was just basic nature and never getting in the car, well, rarely, to do anything to entertain us. It was, entertain yourself and your friends and swim in the lake and play in the snow in the winter and slide down the hills on the sled. Have kids in at night and play around the big, old round table. Play cards or games. It was such a different childhood from what children have nowadays.

AP: How does it compare to your kids' childhood?
LR: It was quite different. Of course, living out here, when they had friends from their school or wherever, you’d have to take them to go play. There wasn’t anyone right in this immediate neighborhood that they could play with. They wanted to be with their friends, too. During the week, it’d be homework and different things to do. But when there were other occasions that they had to attend for school, it was a lot of running with five children. But when I was a child on Howard Avenue, I guess you just didn’t do that. In fact, dad went to work in the car. On the weekend, maybe you got your groceries or went to church and that was it with your car. It wasn’t used like it is nowadays.

AP: How does it compare to how kids are growing up now?

LR: I think children nowadays learn faster and so much more with all of the communications, the TV and the radio and getting around so much more than we did. Which in a lot of ways is good, and in some ways, I guess they grow up too fast. It mainly is parental control and how they’re brought up, I think, in the end how they turn out. They have a freewill of their own when they reach maturity, but the basics are there for them to use.

AP: Describe how Holland has changed.

LR: Holland has changed so much. It’s getting to be quite a metropolitan city. I often say to my kids now when you drive anywhere, you have to keep your nose right to the road. I used to be able to look at so and so’s house, and you knew everyone that lived along the houses all the way into the city. Now you have to just look at the road and pay attention to all the traffic. It’s just so different. The schools are so nice
and modern and convenient. Plus buses take the kids and pick up the kids. In the old days, the parents had it all on their shoulders. After my father died, my mother moved into town with six little kids. We had to walk to school, and sometimes over huge snow drifts. You wouldn't think of staying home or have snow days.

AP: Yes. Now most of the time they cancel because they do bus and it’s not safe for the buses.

LR: Or safe for the kids to wait for a bus.

AP: What else has changed? The industry, the population...?

LR: Yes, that has changed, too. A lot of different companies. It used to be just a few of the larger ones. Now there’s just so many. I don’t even know all the companies now in town. When you talk to someone and they say, my husband works here or there... Where’s that? I've never heard of it before.

AP: Also, the change in the population of Holland, especially the different diversities coming in, how has that affected you?

LR: It really hasn’t affected me. I’m sure that there’s room for everyone if they all consider each other and try and get along. Sometimes there’s some conflicts, but we were once a foreigner, too, to this land. We all came from somewhere, so I think it’s good that we have diversity. We’re all children of God and should be able to get along together, everyone has equal rights, in his eyes.

AP: How has the role of women changed?

LR: That has really changed, too. It used to be that a woman stayed home and cared for the children and kept the house. Now some families have to have two bread winners
to make a go of things. It's all where their priorities are, I guess. If they can get along without the women working, it's, in one way, sometimes better for the children. But with all the modern conveniences, they can make a go of it. Kids get to school. Parents are usually home when the kids are home, or shortly after it.

AP: We talked a little bit about your church. What kind of role does religion play in Holland?

LR: I think religion plays a large role in Holland. It always has for most people. Now, with all the different people coming in, it's another story. I don't know. I can't speak for everybody. It has been very important, and especially in my own personal life it has been. I think people are their happiest when they know they're doing right and get along with one another, love one another. That's what make the world goes around.

AP: Were people pretty accepting of your husband's way of worship?

LR: No one ever really questioned that. At least not face to face. And he never objected to anybody else, so there's no reason why they would have.

AP: Let's talk a little bit more about growing up for you. What kind of games would you like to play, or what were birthdays or Christmas like for you?

LR: Christmas, when I was a child, was so different than it is nowadays. Of course, being in a large family would make a difference, too. My parents had six children. You each got one or two gifts, and if that's all you ever had, that's all you looked forward to. It was so different from my family now. My husband, he just couldn't get enough gifts for the children. He only had one brother and they were the only
children in their whole relation, so they got a lot of presents. He thought that's what Christmas was, to get a lot of presents for the children. Christmas Eve he would look over what was under the tree: "Are you sure you have enough for Lani, do you have enough for Marlene?" He’d go down the whole list of kids, and then he’d end up going to Dykstra Drug Store down the road here, there weren't that many stores, either, and buy them a teddy bear or some other thing to put with what I had gotten because he didn’t think that was enough.

AP: That gets hard with a lot of kids, too, because they all compare--"how much did you get?"

LR: When I was a kid, we'd play Hide and Go Seek. And Innie, Einie, Over. You'd throw something over the roof and run around. One time my grandmother was visiting from Chicago, and she put a sheet over herself. She snuck out the door in the dark and scared the liver out of all us kids. We didn’t know what that was walking around there. We often talked about that, how silly she was. We would pretend we were hobos and take a stick and tie a red or blue work handkerchief with our lunch in it and go tromping off to the woods. On Howard Avenue, there was all woods by BASF and that whole area was mostly wood. There were just a few houses down the road. I knew everybody that lived on that road at that time. We would climb trees and find a nice branch that went straight out and sit on it and talk and giggle. We’d see who could drop from the highest branch down. You’d get up so high in the tree and then drop to try and outdo another person, that when you landed on the ground, your feet and legs would just sting. That was quite fun. When we
were little girls, we made doll clothes out of big leaves and cut out of catalogs, like what you’d call paper dolls nowadays, and make clothes for them. Just all things that really didn’t cost any money. Just a lot of thinking into, what can we do now? You never would go in and ask your mother, what can we do, like children do nowadays. You just went and made your own fun and your own games and made up things. The whole neighborhood would come to our house and change in our garage into their bathing suit and go trotting down that hill into the lake, the Black Lake, Lake Macatawa to swim. I don’t know how my mother ever lived through it with six kids in the lake right by.

AP: What would you do for birthdays?

LR: For birthdays, once in a while you’d get invited to a friend’s house for a birthday party, and just bring a gift and play all the games. The only thing I can really remember is pin the tail on the donkey. In those days, cake and ice cream was a real treat. It wasn’t as available as it is now. Of course, you saw some tragedies living on the lake there. Children had drowned. But it was wonderful in the winter, too. We’d go ice skating and play on our sleds. There was so much to do there. Howard Avenue was not paved. We’d get our swim suits on when it wasn’t a storm and it was raining out. We’d go pitter pattering down that road in the gravel and mud. It was fun. We had some trees around there that had apples on it. I don’t believe we ever planted them, but we would eat the green apples.

AP: Do you remember when the roads got paved?

LR: I don’t think it was until the late 30s or 40s that I can remember. We all had rural
route box numbers, rather than house numbers.

AP: How did World War II affect your daily life in Holland?

LR: World War II, my husband had to put in a lot of time at work. A lot of this friends went into service. He had gone for a physical and was declared 4-F, which was not acceptable to go into service. When different friends of his were called, and we had one child, people that had a child, too, actually wouldn't go. But a lot of our friends did. It was kind of sad times. It was good to see most of them come back. That was really something to live through. Then to hear about all the stories of people that you know, relatives and so on, in the Netherlands, and how they were hiding from the Nazis. We would send over as much as we could, clothes and different things that they could not get.

AP: What was your general perception of what the Nazis were doing at that time? Has it changed a lot since after the war, like with Shindler's List and things like that coming out? How much of that was known during the war?

LR: The only way we found out was through relatives and their letters. It's a good thing that it turned out the way it did, that they squashed Hitler and all his weird ideas, how he treated people that were not to his liking, like Jews.

AP: Are there other big events, memorable events in the news that stick out as making a big impact?

LR: When Kennedy was shot, and different events like that in the history of our nation, those things stand out.

AP: Was Holland much affected by the Vietnam War?
LR: I think we were, because there was a lot of local people that were called to go to that, too. I know one neighbor here in Marlacoba that was my son’s age had gone there. I don’t know how long he stayed there, but he did marry a girl from there.

AP: The change in the school system, do you remember that?

LR: That was a big deal then. In fact, my oldest daughter was in Holland High School at the time they were talking about building West Ottawa Schools. Marlene, the second oldest, was ready to go into high school when we formed that, 1958. That class got in on the naming of the area and the schools. Also the Panthers, which is their mascot. So, my oldest, Lana, was in Holland High. Marlene was in West Ottawa High. Connie and Barbie were in St. Francis, and Bill, (St. Francis did not have a kindergarten) was in Lakewood. So I had kids in all those schools. That was quite something. So Lani and Marlene were quite often taking one of our little Volkswagens to school. They wanted to be in some of these extra things, clubs and societies and so on. They were coming and going with that, and I was busy trotting with the younger ones. So it was quite an exciting time for our family.

AP: Very busy I bet. Did your kids go on to college?

LR: The oldest one didn’t. Marlene had entered her name into several and was going to. She had a real good job, and she went into that. As she has worked into where she is now, she went to different classes at night and got some of her credits. She’s director of personnel at Trendway. Lana is a nurse. Connie, after she was married and had teenagers, decided to go to college. She lives in Tennessee right now. She decided to go, and got her degree when she was forty years old, in social work. Barbara
didn’t care for school much. She likes other things, so she has a nice family. A boy and a girl. She recently went to cosmetology school for nails. She loves to do that type work. Her daughter’s going to go on to be a beautician in the hair end of it. So maybe someday they’ll be in business together. My son is a chemist in Kalamazoo. He works at KAR Laboratories, Inc. Bill got married to a nice Polish girl, and he has a little boy, Gerrit, named after my husband, born five days from my husband’s birthday, in fact. So they named him Gerrit, after my husband. Then they had a little girl four years later born right on my birthday. She was just a year old. So they named her Julia Catherine. My middle name is Catherine. We enjoy getting together. My four daughters and I usually get together in the fall and take a trip somewhere. We went to Opryland one year. Another year we went to visit with my sister in Oregon. She has such an interesting life over there, my youngest sister. She and her husband built a boat. He has a welding business. When they lived in Long Beach, they sold their home and they lived on that boat a few years, and took many trips on it and went through hurricanes and all that. Now they bought a mountain home in Oregon. So we went to visit her. She is doing a reverse thing. Like, when you first get married you have a garden and a home and animals, they’re doing that now after they’ve been married forty years. It’s just so interesting to visit them. He does glass work, and he has a big oven that he makes beautiful things in. They are such busy people. She belongs to garden clubs and bird clubs and mushroom clubs, just loves nature. So we’ll be planning our fall get away this year, trying to think of somewhere to go that’s a little bit different, so that will be fun.
AP: Holland was named one of the top ten All American cities last year. I usually ask people to tell me what quality Holland has that earns it that honor. What sets it apart to make it a top ten city?

LR: Well, I think it's a nice, clean town, a caring town, growing. It has just about anything anyone could want, in the way of work or livable qualities.

AP: Are there any drawbacks or negatives to Holland?

LR: The only thing I can think of now are the drugs and the kids and the gangs. If we could get that straightened out, why, that's about all I can see that's wrong.

AP: I don't know if this is something that you've been able to observe or notice, but when did it become so hard for kids? When did that happen? You go back, and there wasn't all this problem with drugs and things like that.

LR: I think letting kids on their own too much, not enough supervision, not enough family life, has to do with that. I think you have to love your kids and care about everything they do and when they're coming and going, where they're going, who they're with. As soon as parents work out of the home too much, and are not with their children to supervise them, I believe that's where all the break down of the family and the break down of the area came in. When you do know where your kids are, how can they go wrong? You can have a rebellious kid once in a while, but they shape up at some time or another. We all have gone through times like that in our life.

AP: So it might be that we don't give them enough to rebel against anymore. They have a lot more freedom. So when they do rebel, they have a lot farther to go. Do you think Holland is getting too big?
LR: Well, I think it can grow too fast. That would present a problem. It seems like that’s what’s happening now. It is just going so fast. Things are changing so fast. They’ll have to be a lot of planning on the part of the city fathers and township officials to keep up with the area.

AP: Are there any people in your life that have made a really big impact on your life?

LR: Yes, I think quite a bit, when you look to your teachers, certain teachers, and your government officials, some of them are really sincere and really trying. It just gives you the energy to try and do something, too. I think that’s where I’ve always looked up to people that have tried to do good for humanity. I kind of model after them. Not lately, but years ago. (laughs)

AP: Are there any in particular that really stand out as doing a super job to you?

LR: I can’t come up with a lot of names, but I know all in all, your teachers, as you grow up, and different people in the church that I’ve looked up to, and different friends... But I really can’t come up with any names right now.

AP: It’s kind of hard on the spot. Have there been any big issues in Holland or controversies over things?

LR: I know immediately out here has been the water situation. Still, when my husband was still alive, he didn’t want this dumping out here on 168th. He said, someday that will really be contaminated, not only with the water situation, but with rats and mice and things. It really did prove that way, after he was gone. Within the last fifteen years ago, we had to get city water out here. Who would ever think that this far out, because we always had very good well water. But it was all from the disposal down
168th here. In those days, Jacobusse was dumping, and different people came in from different companies and dumped chemicals and things they weren’t supposed to at night. It really spoiled it. We really had to fight for the water we have right now, the city water. That was about the biggest issue that I can think of. (tape ends) Sometimes you get water that tastes like chemicals, then you really appreciate well water.

AP: Any other issues that come to mind? I don’t think there’s been too many in Holland’s history.

LR: No. I’m just thankful for all the modern weather techniques they have to predict storms. Being that it looks dark right now made me think of that. All of a sudden it’s turning real dark and looks like a storm might be coming.

AP: Did you lose power a couple of weeks ago in that really big storm?

LR: Yes. They used to have weather trackers, I don’t know if they still do, out here on some of the hills toward the lake. We’re just one street over from Lake Michigan. That’s kind of interesting how they do that. They just watch over the lake to see what the weather’s doing and if it’s coming this way, and report that.

AP: So did you just not used to have such a good idea of what was going to happen with the weather forecast?

LR: No. Now they have all the Doppler and Nexrad, and that can tell so much in advance to which was it’s coming and how fast. It makes it safer. You know when to take cover and where.

AP: It’s a lot more accurate now?
LR: That’s it.

AP: Some people still swear by their Farmer’s Almanac. I don’t quite know how they predict that.

LR: A lot of that, probably, was really true. But now they can tell exactly where it’s coming and how quickly and so on. I know some of those old fashioned methods were really good. Not only in that but in medicine and food and vitamins and all that. They’re coming back to a lot of those old things.

AP: Do you notice that with a lot of other things? Or even the advice maybe you were giving when you raised your children compared to now? Has that changed a lot or cycles around?

LR: Pretty much so. I can hear my mother say different things yet to me, and I said it to my kids, and they’re saying it to their’s now. They say that to me, too, I’m sounding more like my mother everyday.

AP: It seems like people have gone from cloth diapers to disposable diapers, and now people want to go back to cloth diapers. Or bottle feeding or not. It seems like they’re always changing. I don’t know what’s best to do anymore.

LR: I remember my mother saying one thing in particular, when we would all be arguing and picking on each other, she’d say, "There must be a storm coming, you’re all in that bad mood again." It did come, too, usually. She was right. It must be that atmosphere that makes you feel that.

AP: It’s true, especially if the pressure is dropping. If all of a sudden everybody feels really tired and cranky, it’s because there’s a big drop in pressure. I used to take
ballet class, and our teacher, if we were all really lazy one night, she’d say, "There must be a storm coming because you’re all so lazy. The pressure must have dropped." You all feel waited down. My grandmother used to say something about the frog’s mouth and spring, there’s three snowfalls from spring to the actual start of spring. I don’t know. She knows all those kinds of things, like how to keep milk from dripping from a pitcher. You put butter on the lip of it, and when you pour it, it doesn’t drip. Anyway...

LR: I remember my mother saying, when the smoke in the chimneys went straight up, that meant it was going to rain. I think it’s a silver maple tree, when the leaves turn over in certain trees and you can see the underneath of them, it’s going to rain, they need rain. You watch. Look at trees some time, and it’ll look like the leaves are turned, and especially if they’re silver maple, it will look sort of silvery. It must need rain.

AP: The only thing I’ve ever heard is if you step on two spiders it will rain. That’s probably not as accurate. They’re might be some reason for the trees, but I don’t know about the spiders.

LR: It seems like I remember that, too.

AP: We have a lot of Irish sayings, too. Like, if your hand itches, someone will give you money. If your ears are ringing someone is talking about you.

LR: If you drop a spoon the company is coming.

AP: My godmother goes out on New Years and drops pennies on her porch. That’s a superstition.

LR: And if you see a penny, you always have to pick up, because, it will bring you good
When my mother-in-law and father-in-law came over on the boat, it must have been 1922 or 1923, they had a German shepherd dog, and fifty dollars. I believe they had some relative here in Holland that they were going to live near or live with. They had that dog, it was a female, I believe, and they sold the puppies. Eventually, he went into poultry farming. Of course, they couldn't talk a word of English.

When my husband and his brother were born and went to school, they would bring home their books and teach their mom and dad how to speak English. Because, when all the Dutch people got together, they talked Dutch. In fact, when I first met my husband, if there were any get togethers with all these Dutch people—birthdays were a big thing with Dutchmen, that was a big party. We would go over there and he would ask if he could use the folks' car or something and take a ride. They would introduce me, and they would all say hello. Within two seconds, they were all talking Dutch again, and then somebody would say, "Talk English, Lou is here."

That happened so often in our married life. He had a grandma, too, that couldn't talk English. They had a poultry business there that they bought and sold live poultry and dressed it. Eventually my husband and I and his brother took that over, too, along with the building business. That was quite something in the old days. We lived in Rose Park, just off of Butternut Drive there. There were not many houses on Butternut Drive, and, I believe, just one or two on Rose Park Drive, which used to be known at Rifle Range Road. I think the city police has a rifle range out there. I was glad that changed that to Rose Park Drive. That was their beginnings here.
our beginning into the building business from the poultry business. We had quite a
flourishing building business. My husband really enjoyed that. There’s lots of homes
around that he built. Quite a few on Rose Park Drive and out this way. For a while
I was keeping an album of all of them, but I got snowed under with all the kids and
what they’re doing. The business, I used to answer the phone for that. But all and
all, it’s worked out well. It’s a nice area to bring up a family in, to live in Holland.
Out of my five children, I have eleven grandchildren, and seven great grandchildren.
My oldest daughter has two girls and a boy, and Marlene has a boy and a girl.
Connie has a boy and a girl. Barbara, across the street, she has a boy and a girl.
My son Bill has a boy and a girl. They did better than their mom and dad, we had
four girls and a boy. The oldest three grandchildren all have a family now, too.

AP: Are a lot of them in the area?

LR: My oldest granddaughter lives just down 168th in a log cabin type home. She’s quite
a little home maker. Her name is Brenda VanderWege, and her husband is Jeff.
They have Chase, eleven, and twins, a boy and a girl. My mother was a twin, so
that’s where that comes in, she had a brother. The twins are probably eight now.
She has a sister, Shelly Kuck. That’s my oldest daughter’s second daughter. She
lives in Zeeland and she has a girl and two boys. Marlene has Amy, and Amy has
two boys. Marlene also has Loran. He’s a Park Township fireman and works for an
electric company. He is single. And I just had one that got married in Texas. My
third daughter, Connie, that lives in Tennessee, her son is going to Baylor College of
Medicine, and he just got married Saturday, June 28. He’s got a very lovely wife. I
met her on Thanksgiving when I went to visit my daughter in Tennessee. So it's quite a gang now when we get together.

AP: What things are you most thankful for in your life in Holland?

LR: I think being brought up in Holland, it was safer than most big cities. I'm glad that my parents came here to get married, and that I was not brought up in Chicago. Chicago has a lot of qualities, but I don't think it's a good place to bring up a family. I'm thankful that I had all good kids and nothing serious happened to any of them. They all turned out real well and made something of themselves.

AP: Are there any other things we haven't touched on that you would like to talk about?

LR: Not that I can think of. We've covered a lot.

AP: Well, if not then, we can probably just wrap up. Thank you very much.

LR: You're welcome. Thank you. It was a pleasure to have you.