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Tazelaar, Art and Janet Oral History Interview: Sesquicentennial of Holland, "150 Stories for 150 Years"

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TP:  Your full name and birthdate, that's optional (laughing), and the place of your birth. Also, your parents names and so forth.

JT:  Grand Rapids, Michigan.

TP:  You were born in Grand Rapids. What was your mother's maiden name?

JT:  Jaarsma. She was from Allendale.

TP:  That is obviously Dutch.

JT:  It is Vries. My grandparents were born in Vriesland.

TP:  Then, your maiden name was....

JT:  Wierda. My father and his grandparents were all born in Holland--East 16th Street, way out.

TP:  How about you Art?

AT:  My folks were from Grand Rapids. My dad was from the Netherlands, and my mother was from Grand Rapids. So, they were married there and moved to Holland with the Bolhuis Lumber Company. They had a company in Grand Rapids as well, so they moved out here to Holland, first. They stayed there for a couple of years, and then my mom wasn't feeling to well, so that is when she went to the doctor and he said, "Maybe you better move out where the air is a little fresher." That is how they come to go out to Macatawa. I rode out with my dad and we got off the interurban right here...
TP: We are on South Shore Drive.

AT: Yes. Macatawa, right here. We went down to the where coast guard station is and there were several houses down there, and there was one for rent. So, we rented that and stayed there a number of years. Dad worked in Holland, of course he had to take the interurban every day to go to work.

TP: Isn't that the cottage, or the home that finally they added a floor, but they added it on the bottom?

JT: Yes. They raised it up.

AT: Oh, way back. Yes. They raised it and put a floor underneath it instead of going over the top.

TP: Now, what was your mother's maiden name?

AT: Gertrude Loppersen.

JT: She was a Swede.

TP: Are any of your family still living in the Holland area?

JT: My mother still is living.

AT: And my sister is still living. I've got two sisters. Harriet is 90, isn't she?

JT: She'll be 91 Monday.

AT: And Lois is....

TP: Are they both in the Holland area? One is down south isn't she?

AT: No. Lois is on the north side, across from the windmill, and Harriet is at RestHaven.

TP: What are their last names now?

AT: Lois is VanOsterhout, and Harriet's name is...she was married a couple of times. It
was Horn because she has three children by that name.

JT: She has four children.

TP: Art, you grew up in Grand Rapids then?

AT: Oh no. I was seven years old when we came out here. When we came to Mac. 1920.

TP: And how about you, Janet?

JT: I came when I was six years old, to Holland.

TP: To Holland. Then how did the two of you meet?

JT: Art was building a boat at the Macatawa garage and I had a friend, Hank Datema, and he knew Art. Then, Hank had a friend that went to Hope College. That is the one I went with that took me to the movie. He said, "Let's go out and see those friends of Hank's that are building a boat. So later on I saw Art with my friend, Gertrude Knapp, Gertrude Bomers. So anyway, we went to the movie, and they wanted to take us home. So Art took her home and Wally took me home. Then, Art wanted my phone number (laughing). So, that is how it started.

TP: That is interesting (laughing). With other partners... And then, how long after that?

JT: A couple of years.

TP: And then did you right away move to Macatawa?

AT: When were we married, yes.

JT: Oh sure, we lived upstairs of Art's parents on Shana.

AT: Because it was a two-family house that dad bought, so we occupied the upstairs for a number of years, then we bought the house from him. Then we lived there for a
number of years, didn't we?

JT: Yes. Seven years.

TP: So when did you build this house?

JT: We built this in 1949.

AT: So, it is almost fifty years old.

TP: Was there a turning point in your life, but also any person that influenced you in your life? Janet?

JT: You mean when I was younger?

TP: Yes, anytime.

JT: When I was older at Macatawa, Mary Sharp. She influenced my life spiritually, intellectually, in every way. She introduced me to a lot of books that I didn't know anything about, some way over my head, but gradually...Rose Maatman and I, we finally did get to....She was a great influence in my life in every way.

TP: How about you Art? Anyone other than Janet? (laughs)

AT: I kind of like Footy and Casey Landman. The men that had a boatlery down there. I like Marine Bosca mostly. And, then what was it, swimming. Yes. Casey. If you wanted to be around the boatlery you had to be able to swim. Well, at seven and eight, along in there, we weren't the best swimmers. So, he would throw us in the lake and swim back to the dock. If you could do that all right, you could hang around the boatlery and ride in the ferry boat. At that time, you ferried across to Ottawa Beach, as well as out to the pier.

TP: What was Casey's last name?
AT: Landman. There used to be three channels here. One was on the north side, beyond
the oval, and one was where Point West is now, that Michigan walk. It is a grove
walk really. When the water was rough, it would come through there too. But then
they decided that this one here was a better one because it required too much sand
taken out for a channel where Point West was. So, they built that; in 1927, along in
there, Mr. Miller, who owned the park, wanted to keep the public separated and not
to be in the park anymore. He wanted them to have their own place. So he sold that
piece of ground where the oval is now. He sold that to the state. He got so much
money out of it. So, what I am getting back to, is that channel over there...that
shoulder, we weren't very old--maybe ten at the oldest, we would go across there and
lay in that water, it was about a foot deep, but it was hot because the sun was beating
down on it all the time. We would play in water there and have a great time. Of
course, Casey would take us across for nothing because we did little chores for him.
So we had free passes and we didn't have to pay for....

TP: But, otherwise you had to pay a dime, I understand.

AT: Yes. A dime both ways. Later on they got the power boat, but for years he just rode
you across. We would do different things like that for him. Go pick up a boat or
something that drifted away, or something like that.

TP: Wasn't there some kind of a whistle, that if you wanted him to come after you...?

AT: Oh, usually they would just flag or holler to Casey. That is all they would do, and he
would come over and pick them up.

TP: Because a lot of fisherman used to go out to the pier.
AT: Oh, that all came later though. That came after he got the powerboat. By then he would start taking the fisherman out to the pier.

TP: I remember that.

AT: That became quite a... He made out alright on that. Then, the coast guards were in business at that period, and they had the lighthouses there and the tower was there where they stayed 24 hours a day looking just to see if any boats or if anyone was in trouble. But, the thing was, the men that were in the tower there, they would count those passengers and it was twenty-five cents a piece, and that is what Casey objected to (laughing). They could tell just how much he had made that day by counting them passengers. He took out a lot of them, especially on holidays and weekends. It was as busy as could be.

TP: When you were talking about as a little kid swimming in that channel, which channel was that? That wasn't the main one.

AT: No, it was the one over here along side the hill. On the other side of the oval, way over there.

TP: How could you get across then?

AT: Well, we went across with Casey, and then we walked over to there. But, this channel is only about a foot deep and that water would get real warm, where Lake Michigan would be cold. We would lay in there and have a good time. But, when Mr. Miller sold that property, then they.... Let's see, it was during the depression and men were working for the government and this and that, just to keep them busy. Well, then they leveled that. It was quite a hill right here next to the water, and they
leveled it all down and pushed it way back and then they covered up the part of the channel that was there. That channel came out right next to that house right there.

TP: Now, you are pointing, but which house?

AT: That big one right there.

TP: Okay, on the other side of the lake.

AT: On the left side of it. It came out there. Anyway, when the government put these men to work, they moved all that sand. They did it all by hand with the little mining carts that they had. They pushed them. Yes, that was a chore. It was quite high. Not as high as the sand dune, but it was up there probably forty or fifty feet, and they leveled it all by pushing it...

TP: So, then eventually the channel that is there, did they dredge it or something?

AT: Oh, yes. They dredged it.

TP: To make that the main channel.

AT: Now they keep 24 feet.

TP: For the ships coming in.

AT: Yes, for the big boats to come in.

TP: At that time, what would come into the channel when it was three little...?

AT: Well, different fruit boats and things like that would come. They weren't very large and they didn't require too much water. So the first channel was probably five or six feet deep, maybe in that neighborhood. Then, as the commercial business got better, they had to deepen it. They finally ended up with 24 feet. Then, the Corps of Engineers came along and did all that after a number of years.
TP: I see Janet making some notes, so I am going to ask her what she is going to add to this (laughing).

JT: Well, the Ottawa Beach fire.

AT: The hotel?

JT: Yes. The Ottawa Beach Hotel.

TP: You guys don't remember that.

AT: Oh, I remember it all.

TP: Oh really?

JT: I was little, I don't really remember it. I remember that my mother and father went to see it from Holland. But Art had a better experience.

AT: In the corner cottage...I don't remember how old I was, about nine or ten, I was real young yet when it caught fire. I forgot what exact date it was.

JT: You were probably twelve.

AT: The hotel, when it burnt on this end...the whole thing burnt to begin with. When it got way over here near that cottage, we could feel that heat way across. Us kids would stand back where you couldn't see the fire and cool off a little bit, then you would take about a minute or two looking at it, then everything got so hot you had to turn back and get out of the...And the embers they flew as far as Graafschap. Hot embers, they flew all the way to the Graafschap area.

TP: There were a couple of fires here in Mac too. Do either one of you remember those?

AT: Oh, yes I remember them all--every one of them.

TP: A couple times in the '20s, wasn't it that they burned?
AT: Yes. 1921 or 1922.

TP: Didn't Frank Baum's cottage burn?

AT: Yes. His burnt. One of them was set afire, but the other four were...the big Grand Hotel burnt and that was cleaning. I guess they used the fireplace for all the papers and junk. Everybody had wooden shingles, so the little things were flying around and landed on the roof and caught it on fire. People were throwing the furniture out of the second story (laughing). Half of it was broken. Then, the first fire was near the pier. It went all the way down the lake front. It was near the channel to the....

TP: Now, what kind of fire fighting equipment did they have in those days?

AT: Well, in those days, the City of Holland would answer calls like that. It was really way out. They would call, but they came out. The first fire that was on the north, near the pier and went this way, took about 25 cottages, at least. See, the cottages were so close together that you could only get a nice wheelbarrow through between two of them. And they all had wooden shingles, so the minute one of them started the next one would, going right down the line. On the channel where we were living then, ours was on fire too several times. But just a bucket of water would put it out. Fortunately it was on a Sunday and the lighthouse boat was in, and they had good pumps and they also had a boat there, and they had to protect the dwelling as well as the coast guard station. So, if that boat wouldn't have been there, that would have caught fire and burned as well, but they just kept putting water on it and it managed to survive. That was one of the first ones that burned. Then we had one fire that a couple of fellas from Grand Rapids came down and set it on fire. It took 27 cottages.
TP: For insurance?

AT: Yes, for his insurance. The dummies, they went to the caretaker and they asked where so-and-so's cottage was (laughing). That was awful.

JT: They ended up in jail.

TP: Oh did they?

AT: Yes, but I think it was a judge or somebody that owned the cottage, too. He put the boys up to burn it down, probably only a thousand dollars or two thousand at the very most was the insurance. Then, on the lake front, these people all hauled their good furniture to the beach so it wouldn't burn (laughing). Then they said that if they would of left it in there they could have collected the insurance. So there was the whole beach lined with different kinds of furniture of all descriptions. (laughs) From there they didn't have any place to put it. I don't know where they ended up, but it was something.

TP: This is all new to me and I have lived here for a number of years. I knew the two of you had a lot of stories. Another thing that I wanted to ask you about, not just the fire fighting equipment, but also when you first were out here, tell about the power and water situation.

JT: Well, we didn't have any trouble on the channel because we had our own well. We had good water and we had electricity all the time. The resorters didn't. Labor Day they cut it off and that was it.

TP: Also, for some time they didn't have water because there was that old water tower up on...?
AT: Oh, that came later.

JT: That was much later.

AT: Going way back, they had the electricity and we had street lights along here, but on Labor Day, that was the end of it. Those lights went out and there were no more lights anywhere around. They also had a fee. You had to use up twelve dollars a season. Of course they didn't have the lights we had. They would have one little light burning instead of five, like here. They were happy to get the electricity. They turned that on at a certain time, maybe like June 1st. Then, it went off Labor Day. There wasn't a car around or anything at that time after Labor Day. It was all over with.

TP: Was there plowing of the road?

AT: No, there was no plowing.

JT: Coast Guards.

AT: The Coast Guards were down there and they just made their way down. Later on, the county plow did come through and turn around where Point West is.

TP: Was that after the interurban was...

AT: After it quit. Yes.

TP: Actually, when did the interurban...?

JT: 1926. I had the last ride on it because then it was discontinued. My aunt picked me up. She was a teacher in Grand Rapids, she of course had the summer off. So for my birthday in September, she picked me up on the interurban and we went to Saugatuck. I'll never forget it. It was great. And then in November it was done for.
AT: I never went to Saugatuck on it. I went as far as Castle Park on the interurban, but I never went to Saugatuck.

JT: They had little weigh stations all along the way. There would be people from Castle Park going to...

AT: There was still one on Saugatuck road there for years. I think it is gone now. The cute little stations. There was nobody in them, but they were for you to sit while you were waiting, like a shelter.

TP: Those cars were open on the sides weren't they?

JT: Yes. Some of them.

AT: The early ones might have been. My dad tells about when Grand Rapids would have their picnic--these factories would have these picnics and they would come out here or go to Ottawa Beach. They would have such crowds that they would use flat cars with park benches on them for the people and they'd ride out that way on the busiest days. They would haul all those people out here and they had to be able to take them back too.

JT: Grove Park. They had a park right here.

AT: Right where the tennis court is.

JT: All that area.

TP: It is still called Grove.

AT: We had about 20 different businesses way back here.

TP: Near the hotel.

AT: Yes. That's right. We had a bakery, we had a grocery store, we had a barber shop,
we had an ice cream shop, we even had a shop where they made ice cream. And they had two barber shops, and a theater.

JT: And the beautiful store where they sold all the beautiful china.

AT: China, and stuff like this table cloth. All that linen stuff. A drug store, and a bakery.

JT: Thousands of people a day came here.

AT: But as soon as the automobile got popular in the '20s, then people started going further north and places like that, and business fell off like a... Of course by this time, we had those five fires, and that meant less people would be coming too because there was no place to stay, except the hotel didn't burn. That area right through there didn't burn.

TP: Because that was torn down in the '50s was it?

AT: Yes. 1956, I think.

TP That was when Point West was put up. Of course then things changed somewhat as far as a lot of people became year round residents rather than tourists or vacationers.

AT: That's right.

JT: But, the hotel was wonderful. Wonderful people, like Nansons would stay there, and Charlotte Baldwig's parents would come and stay the whole summer. And, Nancy Lee, just this little girl, and the whole summer they would stay at the hotel. And they loved it!

AT: In the hotel they didn't want any food. They didn't want the smell of food, so they had a separate...It was the old hotel that was made into a kitchen and a dining room. The old one was on that side. That way they could keep the hotel free from any
fumes from the cooking.

JT: When we were married a little while, every Friday night the men would come in from Chicago on the train or on the boat, and everybody would go and have supper. It was like a close knit family. It was just wonderful. Everybody was happy to see everybody, and everybody knew everybody by your first name. It was really exciting! To me it was exciting.

AT: They had a small orchestra, a three of four-piece orchestra. Dancing.

TP: A wonderful time!

JT: It was. That is why the Chitaqua, up on the hill, that is why it went down a grade. Because the people, instead of going up there and listening to the lectures and everything, they would rather come down to the hotel and watch the people dancing. They would have these fancy dresses and they loved it.

TP: Originally, then it was sort of a Bible...?

JT: Yes.

AT: I have a tape here when I interviewed Mrs. Campbell, how many years ago--fifteen?

JT: She has been gone over fifteen years, probably 25 years.

TP: The archives might be interested in that.

JT: They are. Randy Vande Water was out here and he took it and made a copy of it and brought it back.

AT: So many people came up here just because it was a religious.... They started advertising in a church paper in Illinois.

JT: Southern Illinois.
AT: The minister would write articles in the little church paper. "It is a wonderful place up there to go," and this and that.

JT: They had speakers of renowned...really good speakers that came from Chicago and all over.

AT: All of southern Illinois too. They would come up, and the word got around and pretty soon they had a lot of people from southern Illinois built cottages up here.

JT: Some of them had tents and lived in tents before they built. Like Bert McRoy's grandparents, Dorothy Hall's grandparents built. They had the tent there first and then they built the house. A lot of people did that just to go and listen to the...But they loved it up there. Art when to Sunday School there; everybody went to Sunday School.

AT: We had to ring the bell with a rope. Somebody came in and told us "You're doing it too fast, it sounds like a fire bell!" We were having a great time; we never got to ring it again either! (laughing)

TP: Let's hear about some of the...we talked about Casey a little bit, but there were other...how should we say it, maybe Casey wasn't a character...

JT: Yes he was!

TP: Tell us about some others.

AT: There was Cat Bosca in the light house. He was kind of a character too. Then we had two brothers that lived down there. One was fat and heavy, real fat, but he was a cook. And the other brother was thin as a rail and he did all the work. He would go out painting and doing stuff like that. Harry, he was a great guy though.
IT: I didn't know him.

AT: Didn't you know Harry? Anyway, he did all the cooking and they never washed their dishes. They just put them in a tub until they ran out, and then they would do the whole works at one time! (laughing) One time the house caught on fire, and Harry was looking for Al, and Al was looking for Harry. They were racing around the house until they met (laughing).

JT: They made soup for everybody in the channel that was sick.

AT: If anybody got sick, Harry would come with his soup (laughing). Came in this door and went out that door, right into the channel (laughing).

TP: I can see why (laughing).

AT: He always had fresh soup for anybody that got sick.

TP: Tell about, I remember Frank Well. He was one of our characters too.

JT: Yes, wonderful.

AT: Yes he was.

TP: I think he had told a story about somebody who was always stealing things. This one party was going to be gone and they didn't want things from their cottage to disappear, so they asked him to take care of the cottage while they were gone.

JT: Ma Birmingham?

AT: Yes, I was thinking of Ma Birmingham and her daughter, they were pretty slick.

(laugh) She is gone and I don't know about the daughter. Anyway, they would go into Keefer's Restaurant. Al liked those two, Harry didn't. He would leave a little tip and pretty soon that tip would disappear. They were a couple of characters. She
had a cottage up in the hill--built a new cottage after the first fire--and all of a sudden that cottage was on fire. It is new, it is about two years old now, and darned if it didn't catch fire. They couldn't find Ma Birmingham--they didn't know where she was, if she was in the lake or where--and she came out of the woods carrying her silverware (laughing).

JT: It was sterling.

TP: Worth saving.

AT: They didn't know if Al had set it on fire or not. I think they took him to Allegan and questioned him, it was in Allegan county you see, and he got out of whatever it was. It was the only cottage after these 25 or 30 burnt. Well, you can imagine wherever you looked it was all black, and she probably got tired of that.

TP: You mentioned an interesting thing--part of Macatawa is in Ottawa County and part is in Allegan County because that line kind of runs zig-zag.

AT: See, we are in Allegan County. I would say that the largest half would be in Allegan County.

JT: 32nd Street is right in front, and it goes right through a quarter of Sub's house and then right up the hill. It is just as straight as can be.

AT: A quarter of it is in Allegan, and three quarters of it is in Ottawa. So, he has two taxes to pay. (laughing) But see that post that's bent over there, and then inland a little bit where there is no snow there, just this side of that cement, that is the county line. Then it turns and goes like this and cuts Sub's house in half.

TP: Now, we've mentioned Frank Baum, and we mentioned Dorothy Hall. Do you want
Dorothy claims that the Baums came here because of her mother and father, and they lived across the street from one another in Chicago. They were great bridge players. So that's how they came to Macatawa. And, of course, then, Frank Baum was writing his books. He joined the yacht club, and he was a sailor, and he did everything. His wife, Maude, of course was Mrs. Wilcharge at the yacht club because she could get everybody to play bridge. They did a lot of entertaining in their home too. When Dorothy was just a little girl, she would go and sit on the cottages, the sign of the goose, and so she would sit on those chairs that were also... Art can tell you about those chairs because he sat on them too.

The sides were like goose, each side of it, and Dorothy used to come over with Frank.

Her mother wasn't feeling well. She was always seasick.

They came over on the Chicago boat and the boat landed right here.

They would stop in Fennville and pick up the peaches on the boats. You have the poem that Frank Balm wrote. The peaches were so delicious. They were expensive, but they were so delicious. He must have been a really great guy because Dorothy would go down there and he would read stories. Even the bridge people would come and everything, but he would still take time to tell them stories.

He must have loved children.

He loved children, he did.

So, we in Macatawa, think that Dorothy is the Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz.
JT: Now, there are a lot of stories around that Maude Gage had a niece who was named Dorothy, who died. It really hurt her because she didn't have any children at that time. And she did love children too. He told Dorothy himself, "You're going to be the Dorothy in my books."

TP: Did Dorothy have a little dog?

JT: Oh, sure. She loved animals, cats and dogs. She was crazy for dogs. She was a great lady wasn't she?

TP: She was.

AT: Yes.

JT: She was the most wonderful person.

TP: She would stop along the highway and pick up any dog she would see.

JT: Oh, yes. In Chicago too. She always had time for kids. They would come and they would say, "Are you the Dorothy of the Wizard of Oz?" And she would say, "Well, yes." And they said, "Well, she was little." Well of course, now Dorothy was old and she would sit on the floor with all these reporter's kids, and she would explain that Dorothy did get older. She was a child, just like you are a child, your parents were children and now they will get older. She would take all that time.

TP: That sounds like her.

AT: She used to come over on the boat with the Baums, and he would always read her stories because her mother was sick. I can understand that because I get seasick.

TP: Me too. Are there any other characters from Mac that you want to tell us about?

JT: Footy, who lived on the channel in a little house. I was not married very long, and
he brought over two rabbits that he had shot. He had skinned them, and when I came home from work, they were on our steps. I was to prepare them, and I didn't know anything about rabbits. Then he was going to come to dinner. So I called my mother. (laughs) She said, "I don't know anything about rabbits, put them in milk or something and then roast it like you would a chicken." (laughing). So, I did, I didn't each much, but Footy did. And then at the bakery, you could buy a pie crust, delicious, for five cents. So I put the pudding in and he thought I was the best cook in the world! (laughing) He was wonderful. We lived there for about six years and then our Bill was born. I hardly got out of the house, he was born in September, so Footy said, "You ought to get out of that house at night and go to the restaurant or the movie or something. I'll come and take care of the baby." Here he was, he had never been married, he never had any children, he talked beautifully about his mother from Canada. He was from Canada. So he would come and sit and our Bill slept like a log, he never had any trouble, but he would sit with all those wonderful clothes on, be hot, and was happy to get back to his cool house, I think. But, he was really great.

TP: You said a lot of clothes on, what do you mean?

JT: He also had the big navy blue, turtleneck sweater, and the pea coat, and all of that.

TP: What was his full name?

JT: George Foot. I liked him because he said such beautiful things about his mother.

And he loved to eat. For years, he ate at a woman's house over on Jenison Park.

And, he gave me...I still have the book that she had, Rumford? It was her cookbook.
That was nice. He helped Casey a lot.

AT: Oh, yes. Anybody that hung around there. Some of them hung around there, but they ate there too. They all worked for nothing.

JT: Jim Essenburg never got a cent.

AT: Then we had another character, George Rider, he had hair way down to here.

TP: Art is indicating the back of his neck.

AT: His sister had money, she was from the south, Miami area I guess. She wanted to take him around the world, but he had to cut all of his hair (laughing). At least he had to go to the barber and get it cut like everyone else’s was. I guess he took her up on the deal, didn’t he? But, by the time he got back from the trip, the hair was almost that far back because it took quite awhile. He was gone a couple of months or more. Anyway, George like dandelion wine. There were thousands of dandelions over on the Ottawa Beach side, and every year he would pick as many as he could and make that into wine. When he went away on this European, around the world trip, he buried that wine in the sand dune, but he made the mistake and told somebody about it, a friend. When he came back from the trip, the wine was all gone! (laughing). They stole the wine!

TP: Some friend! (laughing).

AT: Anyway, he would quote Shakespeare. He would go to parent-teachers…

JT: He was an artist.

AT: Yes. He would go to parent-teachers club, anyplace that they would ask him to come, and he would quote these different poems and things, and of course with that long
hair, they weren't used to that. They thought he was nuts and all the rest (laughing).
But, he was really a smart cookie. He would recite all that poetry and things like
that.

JT: All by heart.

TP: Now, you are talking about school. You mentioned your son Bill, and you have a
daughter. Where did they go to school?

JT: Harrington School.

TP: And your daughter's name?

JT: Mary.

TP: Tell about the fishing boats. By the time I moved here in the '70s, there were fishing
boats.

JT: Chambers.

AT: Chamber tugs were here. Tornovish was here too. We had four tugs here, but way
back they had more than that. We had seven tugs. The fishing was good in those
days. Finally I guess the state tightened down on the license and they couldn't make
money very well. But they did pretty good while they were...

JT: They would get hundreds of fish a day.

AT: Chambers was a big fisherman. They really were from Wisconsin, but they came
over here and set up a shop here, and had their boats right out in front. They did
well. They sold their fish mostly to a Chicago firm. They would take everything
they had.

TP: How would that we transported?
JT: Ice.

AT: By ice on wood trucks.

JT: But, they would have them all cleaned when they would come. There would be trucks here accepting them and taking them all over. And then, they would go to Parkway for beer. They were all alcoholics, they all ended up alcoholics. Our friend from St. Louis was down and so he was just loving to go out on that boat. It smelled so fishy, even the wives smelled like fish. He bought a bottle of booze. He thought that would be a nice gift. So, he opened it and they were all going to have a shot of whiskey before they went out the channel. Joe got deathly sick (laughing).

AT: They didn’t have a shot though, they didn’t do that.

JT: No, they didn’t, they accepted it, but they didn’t drink it because they had to...

AT: They would get sick out there.

JT: But, Joe got deathly sick. And then, the smell! He could smell that fish for weeks after (laughing). But, they were really nice people.

TP: Now, tell a little bit, Janet, about the water skiing.

JT: Oh, water skiing. Oh, yes, Sly introduced the water skiing, and then in the early '40s he had the water skiers come from all over. He had them come from Miami....

AT: In Florida.

JT: Then he skied with one ski, and then they had the little lift thing that you could go over.

AT: The jump.

JT: They had hundreds of people watching these ski shows. They had them every year.
He taught the everybody how to ski. He had a ski school.

TP: It originated here.

JT: No, no.

AT: It didn't. It came from Minnesota really. He was out there and saw them water skiing out. He went up to them and asked them about the skis--there was some company that made them. He said, "Would you send me a pair to get started with it?" And, they did, and they were clumsy. They were wide and heavy, and long. Just the opposite of what they use today. But it worked out fine. He would have these classes, and they always started from the Macatawa dock and then they went up the lake that way.

TP: You skied.

JT: Yes. We all skied. Bill, skied, Art skied, we all skied. But Francis Johnson was a good skier, and of course, Liz Sharp. She was a champion skier. She did the turnarounds, and she skied on one ski, and everyday Mary, they had the Chris Craft boat over at Jesicks. Everyday they would practice, and Bill and I were lucky enough to go along with them. Bill learned to ski when he was about seven years old. He was a really good skier.

AT: Then he also invited that fellow from Florida, that had the...Where is that at again, that place? Cypress Gardens. They got him into skiing business.

JT: They were sort of friends.

AT: Anyway, that is how Cypress Gardens got to be such a water skiing place.

JT: I have a whole book, you should read it, about the skiing.
TP: I will, thank you Janet. These are mainly questions relating to Holland, although you have lived at Mac most of the time...

JT: I've lived here 56 years.

AT: I had the first televisions, back 50 years ago. I won it too, but there were no stations.

TP: That is right. Where did you win it Art?

AT: It was just a raffle type of thing.

JT: Our friend was in the...

AT: ...Radio and electronics, and he was like a salesman. Somebody down in Benton Harbor, was it?

JT: No.

AT: No? Was it St. Joe?

JT: No, a little teeny burg you have never heard of near there.

AT: Yes, in that area. They were going to raffle off a television set. So he bought a ticket for himself, and one for me.

TP: And you won, but no stations.

AT: I got a postal card in the mail that said, "You won a television, can you come after it?" It was just written with a pencil. We were going to Grand Rapids that night, it was in the evening, so then I...I thought they were playing a joke on me, and I was just trying to feel them out. And they didn't....

JT: Nobody, not even South Shore, had a television set.

AT: So, anyway, it was true. My, he was shocked (laughing). They said would you please come and get it. They were mad because I won, I guess.
JT: It was a nine-inch television set, and we set up card tables...

(End of side one)

AT: ...came to watch it, but I was getting....There were no stations. But there was one in Wisconsin. It was about 80 miles across the lake, and it is all clear sailing. So, that is the only station we had. It sure served its purpose, didn't it Janet?

JT: It was terrible (laughing).

AT: It was better than nothing.

JT: We didn't even let our kids watch it really. It was better for them to be out. Bill had a little boat and it was better for him to be out in the boat, and be out and about.

AT: It didn't really play good in the daytime anyway. After dark it played best. That was funny!

TP: Now, I am going to haul you back to Holland. You are members of Third Reformed Church.

JT: Right.

TP: How did you happen to become members there?

AT: Let's see now, somebody.... Maybe Vandenburgs? The next door neighbors to us. I bet they....

JT: Art's been a member there for....

AT: 1920.

TP: Since you were in Holland?

JT: Twenty years. Well, you were charter members there. You were one of the first fifty families.
AT: I think our neighbors in Holland, the Vandenburgs. I think that is how we got started there, don't you think?

JT: Yes. And Liv Dalman, her parents. They were friends of Art’s mother, well, neighbors in Holland.

TP: It is a beautiful church, and very spiritually inspiring.

JT: I think it is. We just get a wonderful feeling from all of those people. It is almost a constant flow, isn't it?

AT: Yes.

JT: It is really nice.

AT: The Catholics just moved out the last....

JT: Yes, of course when the Catholic church burned, our minister was calling on someone in Holland at the hospital, and he heard that this beautiful church on 12th Street had burned down. He thought it was his church, Third church. So, he flew out and got into his car, and of course it was a Catholic Church, which he was thankful for. He was one of the first ones over there, and he said to the priest, I think his name is Dudek, or something. A very nice man. And he said, in Spanish. Because he goes to Mexico every year and helps build houses and things. And, so in Spanish he said, "My home is your home." That was great. Several people called and said they thought it was wonderful, but some called and said that they thought it was terrible. But, more people called and said they thought it was wonderful, and it is about time that something like this was happening in Holland. Now, a whole lot of wonderful things have happened, with Hope Church and Methodist church, and the Seminary,
and Hope Chapel. They have a better feeling.

TP: Yes. That is one of the changes that you have noticed over the years.

JT: Yes. My sister's neighbor didn't go to church, she went to Saugatuck. She wouldn't go to church in Holland because she wouldn't go to Reformed church. Then a friend of hers who was Catholic said, "Listen, go with me." She said, a reformed church? And she loved it. When she got in Third Church, and it was so beautiful, she was in tears. She said it was like the cathedrals.

TP: It is beautiful.

JT: So, she had a complete turn-around too. And, it is both sides. The Catholics were against the Protestants as much as (laughing)....

TP: So, that is one of the good changes in Holland. Do you have any feeling about any negative things about Holland today as...well, obviously it was a much simpler life.

JT: Oh, much simpler, yes! Life was easier than it is now. Now it is so busy and everything. But, when G.E. came, I think that was a boom to Holland. They joined our churches, they built....

AT: Our minister went to see all of these office people.

JT: He started in the upper echelons, the CEOs and everything, and invited them to our church. A lot of them were German Lutheran, from Missouri. And that Missouri Synod is something else. But they didn't like the Zion Lutheran Church which was on 12th Street then. They were not very friendly. So our minister went to the offices, and then he went down even to the factory, so we got a nice lot of people from all walks of life and all over. They built beautiful homes, and they were in all the clubs
in Holland, and they just sparked everything. I think that was terrific.

TP: Other ethnic groups coming in, so it wasn't totally Dutch anymore.

JT: The one thing that they felt badly about was that a lot of these Christian Reformed builders, who were really good, wonderful builders who took pride in their work and everything, and at lunch time they would open up their dinner buckets and they would eat and pray, but never once did they invite them to their church. That was one objection that they had because they could see that they were Christian, but they never asked them to come to their church. They felt bad about that.

TP: So things have changed in our area--some things for the better and some are negative. What problems do you see in the Holland area?

JT: The gang problems, and the kids...16th Street was the most wonderful street, and now it is just all full of the Mexican people that are not the best people. Now, the ones that we had at church were just lovely, those big brown eyes, they were lovely. And, I was really shocked.

AT: But, Holland has a lot of their own people that are...

JT: Well sure they do! Of course they do.

AT: ...not the best either.

TP: Well, gangs are various in nationalities.

JT: Oh, yes.

AT: Yes.

TP: But, that has made a difference because that is a high crime...

JT: Yes. We never used to even lock a door in Holland. You never locked a door!
Now, even with locked doors, a lot of people are not safe. In fact, that’s one reason that they got Harriet off of 182 E. 16th Street, because she loved children, and these little Mexican kids would come in...and then they had a shooting on 16th Street, and they were just afraid that maybe the fathers of these children would come and steal some money or something. Harriet would always have the homebaked cookies for these kids, and she loved children, and the kids loved her.

TP: Isn't that a shame that a few bad people in each race can cause that kind of thing.

JT: That is right. That is too bad.

TP: Well, I think that pretty much winds it up. Is there anything else you would like to add?

JT: No, I do think Holland has a lot of wonderful things, like the Garden Club...

TP: You're a member of that?

JT: I was, I’m not any more--there were too many important things to do, and I had been in there a long time. I just decided it was better for me to volunteer and do things like that. So now we work at the soup kitchen and I go to homes and things like that.

TP: Are you still acting as a beautician in some of the nursing homes?

JT: No, I haven’t done that in fifteen, twenty years.

AT: No. She no longer has a license.

JT: No, I gave it up.

TP: When you say you go to the homes, what do you mean then?

JT: Just to visit the people. Bring them flowers and homemade cookies, and take them to the dining room in their wheelchairs and have cookies. And then, John Bright was so
great. He comes and then Ada Verhulst and her brother, and they would come every week on Wednesday. They set up all of this stuff, and they sing hymns, and people just love it. It was just gorgeous. Now they have gotten so that it is all kind of hyped up. I don't like that quite as well, but anyway, that kind of thing.

TP: And what are you doing in your retirement, Art?

AT: I am busy all the time. There is always something to do around here (laughing).

JT: He was painting. He took courses at Evergreen Commons.

TP: Great.

AT: I just keep busy. There is always something to be done around the house.

JT: And, he is always doing something for everybody.

AT: Yes. I am running errands and doing that.

TP: Well, we miss you at the post office. We have a nice postmistress.

AT: Both the girls are nice, aren't they dolls?

TP: But we miss the little old post office here.

JT: I know.

TP: I think it was the only place in the nation were I could buy stamps on credit!

(laughing)

AT: Now, you can buy them with a credit card. They have got it right on the counter. They've got a deal you shove the card right through there and....(laughing) The price of stamps now is...One time when I was there, they raised it a penny, you know, and there was a little old lady, Mrs. Tibbe, came in. She was on welfare and what not, and they raised it a penny, and she said, "I just don't know what I'll do. I can't
swing that next penny for stamps." It was only like three cents, and it went to five.

JT: I worked at the post office and I hated it.
TP: No kidding?
JT: I couldn't stand it!
TP: Were you helping Art?
AT: Yes, but in the spring I could work around here and do a little work, so she....
JT: And he showed Den Uyl where everything was when he took over the park.
AT: So, anyway Janet would fill in...
JT: I was pregnant.
AT: ...and I would take care of the mail in the morning and all that, and just in between hand the mail out and selling stamps...
JT: There was one man that always came at 12:15.
AT: Yes. You always had that kind.
JT: I went home at 12:00, Art never did, but I did (laughing).
TP: That's right, and they finally decided that the post office had to be closed because there were no bathroom facilities.
AT: That's right.
TP: Of course the fact that the postmaster lived right next door and didn't need bathroom facilities...
JT: And the telephone. When I worked, one time I had to go to the bathroom so bad and there was nobody around, I just went in the alley by Sub's house (all laughing). I couldn't even get home.
AT: You never told me that!

TP: Now you know Art. Well, I think that pretty much does it. I appreciate your time.

JT: Well, you're welcome.