

EI-628

HILDA (HANNA) VANDER BRUG DYKSTRA

BIRTHDATE: SEPTEMBER 6, 1908

INTERVIEW DATE: JULY 3, 1995

RUNNING TIME: 36:32

INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE, PH.D.

RECORDING ENGINEER: SAME

INTERVIEW LOCATION: WHITINSVILLE, MA

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: JOHN MURIELLO, 11/1995

TRANSCRIPT NOT REVIEWED

THE NETHERLANDS, 1921

AGE 12

PASSAGE ON "THE NEW AMSTERDAM"

LEVINE: Okay. Today is July, 3rd, 1995, and I'm in Whitinsville, Massachusetts. And I'm here with Hilda Vander Brug Dykstra, who came at the age of 12 from The Netherlands in 1921. Today Mrs. Dykstra is eighty-six years of age, and this is Janet Levine for the National Park Service. Okay, would you say for the tape, please, your birthdate?

DYKSTRA: I was born September 6, 1908.

LEVINE: Okay. And where in The Netherlands were you born?

DYKSTRA: In Woudsend, Friesland.

LEVINE: Oh. Could you spend the name of the town?

DYKSTRA: W-O-U-D-S-E-N-D.

LEVINE: And did you live there until you left for America?

DYKSTRA: Yes.

LEVINE: Well, so Friesland is kind of a special area.

DYKSTRA: That's right. That's one of the provinces of The Netherlands. I think there are eleven provinces in The Netherlands, and Friesland is one. And they all have their own dialect.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So what is it about Frieslanders that makes them sort of a, a special group?

DYKSTRA: Well, they, I would...

LEVINE: Is there anything special that...

DYKSTRA: Oh, I think there was a lot of dairy farming in Friesland.

LEVINE: And what was your father's name?

DYKSTRA: Auke. A-U-K-E.

LEVINE: And your mother's name?

DYKSTRA: Jantje. J-A-N-T-J-E.

LEVINE: And your mother's maiden name?

DYKSTRA: Bosma.

LEVINE: B-O-S-..

DYKSTRA: M-A.

LEVINE: M-A. Uh-huh. And did you have brothers and sisters?

DYKSTRA: I have two sisters and two brothers.

LEVINE: And where do you fit in?

DYKSTRA: I'm the oldest of five, and my two brothers have passed away.

LEVINE: Were your, were your two sisters born here, or were

they born in The Netherlands?

DYKSTRA: No. We were all five born in The Netherlands. Yeah.
My youngest brother was two.

LEVINE: Okay. What did your father do for work when you were
there in The Netherlands?

DYKSTRA: Well, let me see. He had different jobs. He used to,
he was the janitor of our church to begin with.

LEVINE: And the church? What was the name of your church?

DYKSTRA: The Christian Reformed. No, I'll take that back. It
was the Reformed. It's not that important.

LEVINE: Oh.

DYKSTRA: And he also brought milk from the different farmers to
the dairy, you know, where they process the milk, make
the cheese, and whatever you call, what would you call
that?

Voice off-mic: The creamery.

DYKSTRA: Creamery. Okay.

LEVINE: So, how, what would he do? He would pick up these pails of milk?

DYKSTRA: That's right. The farmers would have them on the side of the canal. And he would come through with his row boat and pick up the cans, put them in the little boat and bring them to the creamery.

LEVINE: And did you ever help him, or go with him?

DYKSTRA: Oh, we would go along for the ride. That was great. And, and we would go in the creamery with him, and they would give us a drink of buttermilk, and piece of cheese, or whatever. That was a treat in those days.

LEVINE: Yeah. Do you remember experiences with your father on one of those days?

DYKSTRA: No. I can't say that anything stands, any, no. Nothing stands out in particular. No.

LEVINE: How about your mother? What would, what would be the activities that you remember her doing in the...

DYKSTRA: Well, doing the housework. Taking care of the children and the cooking and...

LEVINE: Do you remember any particular foods from The Netherlands that you liked?

DYKSTRA: Well, we, we had a lot of hash. You know, mixed vegetables. Potatoes and vegetables, red meat, and they would just mix that all together, and that was any easy dish for a big family. Just put the big dish on the table, and.

LEVINE: And do you remember any religious occasions growing up.

DYKSTRA: Not particular. We celebrated Christmas and Easter, and...

LEVINE: How, how did you, did you celebrate them in any ways that are different from, from how we do it here?

DYKSTRA: No. They were big church days. But, no, Christmas was not Christmas here. We had a gift exchange on what we called Santa Claus Day, which was December 6.

And then Santa Claus came through town supposedly,
and, and we would, we would all get a little gift,
and.

LEVINE: Did you have a tree? A Christmas tree?

DYKSTRA: Yes, we did. A few times I can remember that.
Although, no. That was after we got to this country.
I'm sorry. Yeah.

LEVINE: And how about Easter? Do you have any remembrances of
Easter in The Netherlands?

DYKSTRA: No, nothing special. No. Just that they were special
church days, you know? And we celebrated two days.
It would be Easter Sunday and Easter Monday. There
was no work then on Monday. But they would just,
Easter Monday was just a, a family day in our family.
Nothing special.

LEVINE: Did you have grandmother or grandfather around that
you saw?

DYKSTRA: I vaguely remember one grandmother. But I, not...

LEVINE: But you don't remember any, any activities that you did with her, or...

DYKSTRA: No. I, well now, I will take that back. I do remember their fiftieth wedding anniversary. We were all together in my father's sister's who was a single lady. And we were all together in her backyard, I can remember. And then the news came that The Titanic had gone down. And that was, that was big news in our little town.

LEVINE: Wow. Do you remember, did you hear anything more than just the fact that it had sunk into...

DYKSTRA: No. Just the fact that it had, had gone down. Yeah. But I, I vividly remember that, you know. That was, of course, we didn't have television in those days. You didn't hear all the news that went on in the world like we do now. So that, and it was a big thing. Yeah.

LEVINE: Now, that was 1912. So you were...

DYKSTRA: 1912. I was four years old. See, I could remember that.

LEVINE: Now how did, how did you hear that it had gone down?
Do you know how the news travelled.

DYKSTRA: I, no. I don't know. I don't know. No.

LEVINE: And people were really affected by the news.

DYKSTRA: Yes. Yeah.

LEVINE: Did you hear much about America before you...

DYKSTRA: Oh, yes.

LEVINE: ...came here? What do you remember you...

DYKSTRA: Well, my father, he had, he had served in the Spanish American War. So, when he got back to The Netherlands and got married and had a family, he always wanted to, always talked to my mother about going back to America, but she wouldn't hear of it. She just did not, America, that was a far away place, and, why, if you went there you'd never see your family again, and, so she, she didn't care to go. But one day he came home from work and she said, "I'm ready to go to

America." So.

LEVINE: Do you know what changed her mind?

DYKSTRA: Yes. She was on her knees sweeping the floor like we, they used to in those days. They had no vacuum cleaners. She was with the dust pan and brush sweeping the floor. And all of a sudden a bible text came to her. And it said, I don't know how familiar you are with the Bible, but when, where Ruth said to Naomi, "My people will be your people, and my God your God." And that stuck in her mind. So my dad came home from work and she says, "I'm ready to go to America." "How come?" "Well," she says, "this is what the Lord told me." And he was happy as could be, and they made, you know, preparations to go to America. And they always felt it was the Lord's doing that they came to this country, and they were always happy and blessed.

LEVINE: So, do you remember your mother telling you that you were going, or...

DYKSTRA: Oh, yes. We were excited. Of course. (she laughs)
Yeah.

LEVINE: Now, you were in school probably at that point? Were you at school?

DYKSTRA: Yes.

LEVINE: What do you remember about school?

DYKSTRA: Oh, dear.

LEVINE: Do you remember how far away it was, what it looked like, the teachers...

DYKSTRA: Oh, it was right in our little town. Sure.

LEVINE: And was it a lot of classes in one school, or do you remember anything about...

DYKSTRA: I think we had seven grades in our school. Six or seven.

LEVINE: Was it, was it compulsory? Did you have to go to school?

DYKSTRA: I imagine. Yeah.

LEVINE: And was there any religion taught in the school?

DYKSTRA: Oh, yes. This was a Christian school. We had two schools in our, our town. Yeah. The public school, and the, and the Christian school.

LEVINE: Oh, I see. So then, does that mean that you had, you had to pay to go to the Christian school...

DYKSTRA: Oh, yes.

LEVINE: ...if you didn't go to the public school?

DYKSTRA: Yes. Yeah. And my uncle was the principal of the school.

LEVINE: Do you remember anything about him?

DYKSTRA: Oh, yes. (she laughs) He was a jolly, and a kind man, and well liked in town. Yes. And in fact, I sound like I'm bragging. I don't mean to be, but after he passed away they built a new town years later, and they named it after him. It was called the Vander Brug School. Yeah.

LEVINE: So, so this was your father's brother?

DYKSTRA: Yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

DYKSTRA: Yeah.

LEVINE: And, do you remember any kinds of occasions in, in The Netherlands that, that we don't celebrate here. You know, any kinds of either, they could be religious, or they could be some kind of festival or some kind of holiday, or some...

DYKSTRA: Well, the Queen's birthday. That was always a big day. And I think also the Prince's birthday. Juliana Day they called it. And we wouldn't have school.

LEVINE: What would you do? I mean, was there, was there any celebration in particular, or...

DYKSTRA: Well, on the Queen's birthday we did. They had like a, a carnival in town. It was a little square, and, and they had games for the children and that's about

all I remember, you know. Children remember only the, the little fun things.

LEVINE: Do you remember any kind of games, or things that you did to play when you were little?

DYKSTRA: Well, we played with our dolls most of the time, I guess. (she laughs)

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

DYKSTRA: Yeah.

LEVINE: And how about clothing? Do you remember anything there that, that is different from what you had here when you got here?

DYKSTRA: Well, we wore a lot of heavy underwear, because the homes were not heated like they are here. I remember that. Knitted sweaters, like, you know? That you'd wear under your outer clothing.

LEVINE: And did your mother make those?

DYKSTRA: Yes. Hm-hmm.

LEVINE: Can you describe the house that you lived in, what it was like?

DYKSTRA: Oh, my. Okay. You'd come in the front door, and there was a little, a little room to the left, and then into the living room from there, and then a little kitchen in the back. And this little room on the left as you came to the front door, we had a little grocery type store. Just, not a market, but just, you know, a little, you could buy a loaf of bread or coffee or tea or sugar, just a little thing. No, I'll take, no, not bread. We had a bakery in town where they, where you went for your bread.

LEVINE: Now, did your, who ran this little store?

DYKSTRA: My mother, or if my father was in the home. You'd go, the front door would open, that would automatically ring a bell, so they were right there, you know, right in the next room. So they would come in and wait on the customer, and.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

DYKSTRA: But that made, gave a little extra income.

LEVINE: Yeah. And did the family have a garden and everything as well, or no?

DYKSTRA: No. My folks did not. No.

LEVINE: Now, was there, were there other stores in town, or was there a market day, or?

DYKSTRA: Well, there was a, yes a little, a, where you could buy fruit and vegetables. We didn't get much fruit in those days, but you could buy vegetables there, and. And, and bakeries. There were three bakeries in our little town. So bread was a big thing in, in Holland. You know, I think you mentioned that, too.

LEVINE: Yeah.

DYKSTRA: You know, we didn't get the right, we were not vitamin conscious in those days. Bread and, and butter.

LEVINE: And potatoes? A lot of...

DYKSTRA: Potatoes. A lot of, but vegetables, too. Yeah, we'd

have meat once a week. And then we'd, my mother would cook the meat once a week, and what was left, that sort of satisfied us for the rest of the week. Yeah.

LEVINE: Were you closest to any particular sister or brother that you remember when you were little?

DYKSTRA: No. I can't say. We all got along well.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

DYKSTRA: Yeah.

LEVINE: Did you have certain tasks around the house that you were responsible for as you got older?

DYKSTRA: No, I can't say, either. We all did what we were asked to do. Help with the dishes, or whatever. No.

LEVINE: And...

DYKSTRA: Of course, we had a very small house, you know. I, we had a small, a room where you came in, and that was a little store, like. And then a living room and no bedrooms. The beds were built into the walls in the

living room. And, let's see, four of us slept in one, one. And the other my father and mother, and the baby.

LEVINE: Oh.

DYKSTRA: And as we grew older then, I remember I, I moved to, we had a room in the attic. And that was my, my bedroom for a while, when I got too old to sleep in the built in bed with the other kids.

LEVINE: Oh, because you were the oldest, so you could...

DYKSTRA: Hm-hmm. Yeah. And then my brother who was two years younger, after while moved upstairs, too, to the attic. Yeah. But babies were born right there in those holes in the wall. And we used to love this. My folks would have visitors for the evenings sometimes, and we'd have to go to bed. But we'd leave the door open a crack, you know. And we could listen to what they were saying. Oh, that was great entertainment. (she laughs) We'd be under the blankets listening to.

LEVINE: So there were door, doors...

DYKSTRA: Oh, yes. Hm-hmm.

LEVINE: ...across the beds.

DYKSTRA: You'd make the bed in the morning, and then you'd close the doors, and you wouldn't know what was behind there.

LEVINE: Oh.

DYKSTRA: Yeah.

LEVINE: So it was like cut out, it would be as though the opening was very flush with the wall...

DYKSTRA: That's right.

LEVINE: ...and the bed would be built in?

DYKSTRA: Yeah. And it would all be out of sight. Close the doors and...

LEVINE: And how did you heat the house?

DYKSTRA: How did we heat the house? We had a stove in the living room.

LEVINE: Wood stove?

DYKSTRA: You know, I don't, I honestly don't remember. (she laughs) I guess wood.

LEVINE: Let's see.

DYKSTRA: Very simple, anyway.

LEVINE: And, is there anything else that you remember when you think back about the community, or about the town itself, or your family?

DYKSTRA: No.

LEVINE: Did you ice skate in the winter as well?

DYKSTRA: Oh, definitely. Definitely. Yeah.

LEVINE: I guess every, every child more or less ice skated.

DYKSTRA: Oh, yeah. And if it was good skating we would, they

would let us out, out of school early so that we could go skating. That was a big thing in Holland. But see I was a little, I was too young to go along with the, the young people and do things, you know. When you're twelve years old, you're still a kid.

LEVINE: Yeah.

DYKSTRA: So, I can't, I don't know too much about that. No.

LEVINE: Do you remember anything that had to do with musical events of any kind?

DYKSTRA: Not really. But speaking of music, my father was the janitor of the church. And sometimes someone would come to tune the organ. And then, it was a pump organ. And I would have to spend the afternoon at church pumping that while this man was tuning the organ. And I thought that was pretty special, because I was excused from, from school then, so I could do that. See, my mother was busy with the smaller children, so she couldn't do that. So me being the oldest had the honor of doing that. And that was great. (she laughs)

LEVINE: Was this with your feet that you...

DYKSTRA: No. Pump.

LEVINE: ...with your hands.

DYKSTRA: Yeah.

LEVINE: And do you remember when you first heard you were coming to America?

DYKSTRA: We were excited but, no, I can't. I really, I don't remember a whole lot of that. No.

LEVINE: Yeah. And, let's see, what's the name of the town where you...

DYKSTRA: Woudsend. Woods. Woods End, translate, you know. Woods End.

LEVINE: How do you spell Wou, Wou...

DYKSTRA: W-O-U-D-S-E-N-D. The end of the woods.

LEVINE: I see. Were there a lot of forest, woods around?

DYKSTRA: No. No. (they laugh) Maybe years ago, but no.

LEVINE: And, so when you left Woods End, where did, how did you travel and where did you go before you took the ship to, to the United States?

DYKSTRA: Let me see. We went by train.

LEVINE: And did you get that right in your town?

DYKSTRA: No. In the next city, which was Sneek. And one of my, my father's brothers and family lived there. So we spent a few days there. And then they took us to the train, and that's where we said the final good-bye's.

LEVINE: And then the train took you to...

DYKSTRA: Amsterdam. Or was it Rotterdam? Rotterdam. Yes.

LEVINE: Rott, from Rotterdam you took "The New Amsterdam" ship?

DYKSTRA: That's right.

LEVINE: Do you remember, did you spend any time, did you go immediately right on to the ship, or did you spend time...

DYKSTRA: No. We stayed at a hotel the last night. And I remember we walked the streets of Rotterdam with my father, my brother and I. And that was an eye opener, walking through the big city. I can remember we even walked through the red light section. (she laughs) Isn't that terrible. I guess my father wanted to know what that was all about. Oh.

LEVINE: So, in other words, this is the first time you had been in the big city?

DYKSTRA: Oh, yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

DYKSTRA: Hm-hmm.

LEVINE: Do you remember anything else that struck you about the city?

DYKSTRA: No, I can't say. Just that walk that night, and then the next morning we left for the, for the ship.

LEVINE: And what do you remember about the ship or the voyage coming over?

DYKSTRA: Well, that it was very rough. My mother was in bed most of the time. But my father and, you know, the bigger children, we walked the deck. We did a lot of walking. And we, we travelled tourist class. So we would walk around the ship and see these people down below in the hold of the ship. And, oh, that didn't look good to me. They were all bunched together, and, oh.

LEVINE: So, in other words, they were steerage.

DYKSTRA: Steerage. That's what it is. Yes.

LEVINE: And you were what, the third or second class?

DYKSTRA: I thought they called it tourist class. Yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah. Were, were you in a cabin?

DYKSTRA: Yes. Yeah.

LEVINE: With just your family?

DYKSTRA: That's right. Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And how about the food aboard ship? Do you remember anything?

DYKSTRA: It was good as far as I remember. Yeah. But was very stormy. And they would have like a railing around the table, because the, the dishes would slide back and forth.

LEVINE: And did your father tell you anything, or your mother about, you know, what you might expect when you got here, or do you remember any, any...

DYKSTRA: No. I...

LEVINE: ...attitudes about coming or...

DYKSTRA: No. You know, so much has happened. I don't remember those little details.

LEVINE: Right.

DYKSTRA: No.

LEVINE: Do you remember coming into the New York Harbor on the ship?

DYKSTRA: No, we didn't come into New York.

LEVINE: Where did you come in?

DYKSTRA: We came into Boston. We were headed for New York. But then the ship, they were, they were told to head north to Boston because Ellis Island was under quarantine.

LEVINE: Oh, that's interesting. Can you, can you, can you relate anything that you remember about what was said about Ellis Island and the quarantine?

DYKSTRA: No. No. I'm sorry, I can't. No. No.

LEVINE: So, so you came into Boston. And what was that like?

DYKSTRA: Well, again, we didn't see much of the city. I can, I

can remember coming off the boat and going on to a big bus, like. And from there we went to the train station.

LEVINE: Did you receive any kind of examination...

DYKSTRA: No.

LEVINE: ...that you might have received at Ellis Island...

DYKSTRA: No.

LEVINE: ...had it been open?

DYKSTRA: None. None whatsoever. But I'm sure they were asked, my parents were asked questions probably. No doubt. But we, we did not, we were not examined or, no.

LEVINE: And even the steer, the steerage passengers, do you know anything about whether they had to go...

DYKSTRA: No, I don't. No.

LEVINE: ...someplace, and be...

DYKSTRA: No.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

DYKSTRA: No. See, if I had been older I would have taken notice of those things.

LEVINE: Right.

DYKSTRA: But twelve year old you're just kids, you know. You just follow your parents and that's it.

LEVINE: So, so you got on a bus.

DYKSTRA: We got on the bus, and they took us to the train station. We got on the train and landed in Linwood, Mass.

LEVINE: And why did your family come to Mass., do you know?

DYKSTRA: Well, my fa, my folks friends. Well, they were, my father and Mr. Hagsma were, they were chums from since they were little. And they corresponded all the time, and they visited The Netherlands once. They, he, their, his family. And so, of course, when they were

in Woudsend they got together with my folks and talked America some more. And, like I said, then pretty soon my mother consented to come. So we did land at their house. And they had already rented a place for us. So we stayed with them over the weekend and then we went to our own house. Yeah.

LEVINE: And, and how about your father? What did he do then as far as finding a job, or?

DYKSTRA: Yeah, he worked in the White Machine Works. Yeah. But how he got that job, I don't remember. Whether this Mr. Hagsma had arranged that. I, I seem to remember that he went to work, you know, right, right away. And I do remember that my mother was home sick. We were, the place where we lived was in the country. So she didn't see anyone. And she was homesick, I do remember that. Yeah. And we kids went so school. So.

LEVINE: Do you remember how the school here was different from the school in The Netherlands?

DYKSTRA: Well, it was different, but I don't quite remember how I took that.

LEVINE: How, how about the language? Did you have any...

DYKSTRA: Oh, I didn't know a word of English. No. And our teacher was very good. She would keep us after school and give us a little private lessons. Miss Clark. I'll never forget her. Gertrude Clark. Now we have a neighbor Gertrude Clark. That's a coincidence. Yeah. She was, she was very good. Yeah. So I was in the first grade maybe a week or so, and then into the second grade a little while, and until I got up to the seventh grade.

LEVINE: And, and how did your mother come to learn the language? I mean, because she was isolated in a way.

DYKSTRA: Well, I guess through, well, they did not live there very long. They, I don't remember how long we lived there. But then they moved into town with more people. But then again they were all Dutch people, too. So I guess mostly from, from the children. Yeah. But she did become an American citizen after a while. Oh, yeah. She was bound and determined she was going to do that. She failed the first time, poor soul. She was so disappointed. But she tried again

and she made it.

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

LEVINE: Do you remember anything about your struggle in learning the language, or when, when it sort of clicked together so that you realized that you, you knew it?

DYKSTRA: No, I, I can't say. If I had known you were going to ask all these questions I might have refreshed my memory. (she laughs) But, no. You know, it just comes on so gradual. You're, you're with the children at school, and you with everyone, so before you know it you, it's easy to, to talk English. Yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah. And did you children sort of teach your mother English, or?

DYKSTRA: No, I can't say that we, we, no. No. And she never, she never did speak it fluently either, you know, but

she could understand and, and speak it so that people, you know, could understand her. I don't believe she ever read English. I don't think she ever picked up a book and, and read it. You know it was all Dutch.

LEVINE: Would you speak Dutch at home, or...

DYKSTRA: Yeah, we did quite a bit. Yeah. Yeah.

LEVINE: So, let's see. So, you stayed in school until, how long did you stay in school?

DYKSTRA: Till I was fourteen?

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And then what did you do?

DYKSTRA: And then I went to work in the Rockdale Mill, textile mill. Yeah. Had to go to work and help support the family.

LEVINE: And what was your father doing?

DYKSTRA: He worked in the White Machine Works here.

LEVINE: And did he stay there, or?

DYKSTRA: Yes. Hm-hmm. Yeah.

LEVINE: And how, when and how did you meet your husband?

DYKSTRA: Oh, my. (she laughs) How did I meet my husband?
Okay. We used to, see, a group of people formed a sick
benefit society. And once a year they would have a
program, like. And young people would put on a play
and, and they would have a lunch, and buns with
cheese, and that was about it. Coffee. And so then
one year I was in one of those plays, and my husband
whose name was George was, too. And then from there,
he, no we'd have to rehearse for that play. And from
one of the rehearsals he took me home one night. And,
and then we kind of liked each other, and. (she
laughs)

LEVINE: So his, your husband...

DYKSTRA: (unintelligible) (she laughs)

LEVINE: George Dykstra?

DYKSTRA: Yes.

LEVINE: Your husband's name? And did you have children?

DYKSTRA: Yeah, we have four children. Yeah.

LEVINE: And grandchildren also?

DYKSTRA: We have nine grandchildren and ten great.

LEVINE: Wow.

DYKSTRA: Yeah.

LEVINE: So, then did you, you stayed in this area pretty much?

DYKSTRA: Always.

LEVINE: From the time you came to this country?

DYKSTRA: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And after you had your children did you stop working or did you keep working, or?

DYKSTRA: No, I never worked. I worked in the house but I

never...

LEVINE: You never worked anywhere?

DYKSTRA: No. No.

LEVINE: Okay. I forgot to ask you, was there anything when you first got to this country that you remember striking you as, as different from anything that you had ever seen in The Netherlands?

DYKSTRA: Well, it was, you know, it was huge. Spread out. And the towns. And where we lived was, oh, two or three miles from town I would say. So that was very unusual. The town we came from was small and we were all close together. So that was different. Yeah. And we didn't walk to school. We had, of course now the kids are bussed. But this, this man had like a truck with seats on the side. And, and we would, he would stop and, and, here and there and pick up the children. So that was different. Yeah. And in the wintertime he'd come with the horse and sleigh he'd come with the horse and sleigh, and he'd have warm bricks in the sleigh we could put our feet on. Edith went on the same, went to the same school. Yeah.

LEVINE: And how about this, this period in your life? How, I take it you're retired, or you're, you're children are grown, and you're enjoying this...

DYKSTRA: Well, yeah, I'm enjoying it. It's a little lonesome at times. My husband died nine years ago. But it's a good place to live here. We have friends and neighbors all around us. You're never alone. And my children live, I have four children in four different states. So I don't see them every day. But one of my sons and family live in Whitinsville, so I'm thankful for that. I do see them. Yeah.

LEVINE: How about any ways or customs or attitudes of you or your mother or father that you think carried over from, from The Netherlands to life in this country? Can you think of any, any, I guess you'd call them customs that, that they kept up.

DYKSTRA: I can't really say. No.

LEVINE: But they, they never wished to go back.

DYKSTRA: Oh, no. No. No. No. No. And my parents were, they

were very, they were Christians. And they insisted that we go to church twice on a Sunday like they did, too. And we instill that into our children, too, and, yeah.

LEVINE: How, and how do you feel about sort of the part of you that's Dutch and the part of you that's American? Do you have any...

DYKSTRA: No, I can't say. You know, years ago there was a distinction. You know, you were the Dutch, but that's wearing off. We're all Americans, and that's the way it should be. Yeah.

LEVINE: Well, that sounds like a perfect note to end on. I want to thank you very much. I've been speaking with Hilda Vander Brug Dykstra, who came from The Netherlands in 1921 when you were twelve years old. And this is Janet Levine for the National Park Service on July 3rd, 1995, and I'm signing off.