

WAYNE R. AND PEGGY FITZGERALD

INTERVIEW: 17 JUNE 1986

NOTE: unless noted otherwise, all information is from Wayne Fitzgerald.

ON REORGANIZATION IN THE EARLY 30S:

Wayne's father Albah E. Fitzgerald worked as purchasing agent for HFC from 1921/22 to 1933. His uncle EH Sulkers was secretary and treasurer at the same time. Both were fired at the same time as Charles and Edgar Landwehr left in August 1933. Charles and Edgar were forced out by Louise and Katie. They owned controlling interest in the company. Also leaving at the same time were Sales Manager Charlie Bennett and Art Wrieden.

"They all got the can at the same time."

"They made a good houseclean."

PT Cheff didn't think the old guard was giving him his due. They weren't treating him the way he felt he should be treated. AH had brought in his brothers Edgar and Charles.

Edgar and his wife Grace moved to New Jersey. Charlie Bennett and -- White went to Nebraska.

At the same time, Peggy's father Charles Kirchen, a successful furniture businessman, was brought in to serve on the Board of Directors. (Peggy)

"They got all those fellows on the board at the same time to see if they could turn it around." (Peggy)

Charles Kirchen was given stock to serve on the board. They didn't like what he wanted to do, so they got him off the board -- and wanted the stock back. HFC sued Charle Kirchen for the stock, but lost. He kept it. (Peggy)

Henry Boersma was made purchasing agent and George Tinholt became treasurer. He had been either Ernie Sulkers' or Arthur Wrieden's assistant.

Ray Visscher was EH Sulkers' predecessor as secretary-treasurer.

ON HFC AND HOLLAND:

"It was the backbone of Holland. The owners were the movers and shakers of Holland."

The Landwehrs started the golf course -- the Holland Country Club. It was a stock deal.

"They really supported the town. They put Holland on the map. I think they were very instrumental in putting Holland, Michigan on the map."

ON THE LANDWEHRS, KOLLAS, CHEFFS:

Carl Swift started the Vac-a-Tap Company. "They were in it (the washing machine business) for three, four, five years. They started at the wrong time. I think the Depression hit them."

Katie was 15 to 20 years older than PT Cheff. Ted is around 80 years older. "In the thirties he couldn't have been older than 30." Katie was a lot older than Peggy's mother and she was born in 1888.

"Katie was the mover and shaker for the Humane Society. She did a lot of nice things that people weren't aware of. She was very liberal with the hospital."

Larry Kolb was her lover. She married him off to her daughter Leona, whose true love was somebody who worked for Brown Distillers in Tennessee. "She (Leona) was unhappy." Larry took care of the "Kolla Foundation." It was "set up" in Delaware and at one time had a lot of stock.

Ted "took good care of her (Katie) even with all her drinking." Ted is a "proud man." He kept himself in excellent shape. He was nice to people and a very good host, but never made any close friends.

"Ted kept thinking the cast iron furnace was the thing that wouldn't change. So, they didn't get into oil or gas. The man didn't have the foresight. They got into it, but they got into it too late."

Norma married John Bowles, who used to be president of Rexall Drugs -- now part of Dart-Kraft. They have four kids. Norma was the youngest of the Landwehrs -- Paul, Donna, Eddie and Norma. In the 50s, Norma and Donna wanted Ted out.

There were four houses at Hazelbank. The Cheffs (Art Wrieden's old house), the Kollas [NOTE: later lived in by the Kolbs], Louise and AH Landwehr (now torn down), Eddie Landwehr (property later sold to Jurries).

"They never gave Eddie the responsibility in the business so

he could learn the business."

Louise and Katie "told Ted what to do. They called the shots. Later on when Ted was entrenched, he did pretty much as he damned pleased as long as he kept Katie happy."

"AH was the one who really made that company. He was the businessman and the brains behind it."

JP Kolla "liked to get down with the coal miners." Mrs. Kolla was an old warhorse who wouldn't allow any drinking, so the guys would have to go out of town to play."

#### MISCELLANEDUS:

- Sime Stoel "made a lot of money on Athlone."
- Goat Banquets were held in the old Masonic Temple.
- Seymour Padnos's father sold scrap to HFC.
- Gerrit J. Diekema. Was he an original investor?
- Ray Visscher (one-time secretary-treasurer) son Robert runs Ideal Dry Cleaners.