



1980-9

Vink, Alida

Mary Wedegaertner

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Wedegaertner, Mary, "Vink, Alida" (1980). *Delta Women Oral Histories*. 47.
<https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/witw/47>

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Stockton Immigrant Women Oral History Collection

by Sally Miller

VINK, ALIDA

(Dutch)

September, 1980

Interviewed by Mary Wedegaertner

Transcribed by Katelyn Getchel

Start of Tape One

Wedegaertner: First I would like for you to tell me is a little bit about where you were born, and the size of your family, and the make up of your family? [How many sisters and how many brother?]

Vink: I was born in Spaarnwoude close to Haarlam and Amsterdam. In between [] and [] my father and mother had thirteen children, nine girls and four boys. One of the boys died when he was 28 years old in a car accident here in close to Modesto.

Wedegaertner: What did your father do?

Vink: My father was a dairy man.

Wedegaertner: You owned your own land?

Vink: When we first came here no.

Wedegaertner: I mean in Holland?

Vink: In Holland, yeah, which was small. We had about- my father said always he had more children then cattle

Wedegaertner: Did your mother work outside the home?

Vink: No she never did.

Wedegaertner: She probably worked very hard at home though.

Vink: [At home] When you have thirteen children then you know what there is to do. But she always had help. She always had a girl, you know, till we were my oldest sister was about sixteen and I was about twelve years old and then we had to help her, and then the maid or girl was helping her left.

Wedegaertner: Did she live in? [Or did she come]

Vink: Yes, she lived in. For about nine years we had the same girl, and before that we had other girls, so she really never had it that hard you know, but still with a big family.

Wedegaertner: Did she do her own sewing?

Vink: No, she had a seamstress once a week.

Wedegaertner: How about her baking, did she do that?

Vink: Yes, she baked her own bread. All the cooking she did.

Wedegaertner: Did she bake special things or cook special things on holidays?

Vink: Yes, always cakes and all good meals. Anyway we were poor. I mean my dad really had to work hard. However we were rich in spirit.

Wedegaertner: [Oh that's good] Did you have to pay very much for live in help like that?

Vink: No, very little you know, it was just a few gildens a week. It was very little. I can't believe it but sometimes the wages were that way. I myself was a did some sewing for other people and I started out with one gilden 50¢ a day so that's nothing.

Wedegaertner: How old were you then?

Vink: I think I was about sixteen.

Wedegaertner: How many years did you go to school?

Vink: I went to school to the eight grade, and then I was the second girl in the big family and my mother was going to have another baby so I had to come home and help.

Wedegaertner: And that was your first job, sewing for other people?

Vink: For other people, because I went to a kind of school you know for cooking and for home economics I would say.

Wedegaertner: That was after your eight years or during?

Vink: Yeah, after my eight years.

Wedegaertner: How many years did you go?

Vink: Two years, two and a half years and then I had to drop out because I had to help at home. But I was very good in sewing and that's what I did for other people I enjoyed it but it was long days.

Wedegaertner: Did you do that in your home or in a shop?

Vink: No I went to the people

Wedegaertner: [To the peoples homes] How many years did you do that?

Vink: Oh, you know war came in between and we did not have any transportation, so I would say about four or five years.

Wedegaertner: What are the most vivid ways that you can remember the war affected your family?

Vink: We had a lot of people living in with us. At one time we were with 22.

Wedegaertner: Were these relatives or friends?

Vink: No, just strange people. Jewish people, one Jewish man we had and they lived-Oh we had a haystack and at nice we pulled away some bail of hay and we made a cellar underneath and there they slept. You know, you used to hide from the Germans. But then my mother cooked for twenty-two people everyday. It was terrible and she made-I don't know how she did it, unbelievable.

Wedegaertner: Did you have any real problems with protecting these people and hiding them away?

Vink: No, not exactly because

Wedegaertner: You were never threatened or anything?

Vink: No, but we also had at one time in the living room a piece of the wood you know, underneath the carpet, make like an opening, [how can I say it] and then when we saw German soldiers coming, you know, all the boys went underneath the house. We had it at one time but then somebody told about it and so they knew, the Germans knew about the hold underneath the house, and then we had the haystack.

Wedegaertner: None of you were harmed or anything?

Vink: No we were very lucky.

Wedegaertner: How did it affect those of you who were in school. Did that interrupt your schooling at all?

Vink: Yes, like I say myself. We had two of my sisters who went to higher education in Haarlem and they had to walk maybe for about a half an hour and then take the streetcar you know. That was the only transportation because you didn't have tires around the bicycles, you know the wheels for the bicycles, and there were no cars. So that was the only transportation we had to walk.

Wedegaertner: What were your parents feelings as far as higher education for the girls compared to the boys?

Vink: Oh my dad was very much for it, but we never could afford it and my mother liked it too but she was not that determined I would say. My dad was very much. He was very concerned about education.

Wedegaertner: Did your parents have very much education?

Vink: No, not at all, not in those days. But we all went a few years more, you know, like myself for home economics, and so my brothers went to I don't know how you call it here, but it is like a middle class school if you wanted to start a business.

Wedegaertner: Kind of like a technical school or something?

Vink: Yeah, and the war came in between and there was no way of getting to town, but you had to, you know, like my sisters did half an hour walking.

Wedegaertner: None of your brothers were old enough to be in were they?

Vink: Yes, my two older brother they were, but then because of our farming that we had, you know, that was a little excuse that they had to help out at home and all that, and my father was supposed to be an invalid but he wasn't that way they got out of you know to be sent out of Germany or something so they had an Ausweise you call that some kind of like a drivers license you know, some kind of piece of paper that they could stay at home, but still it was very limited, you know. I would say maybe fifteen miles around you know how far they could move without dangers, so it was kind of limited and it was scary a lot. Then in the last year, the hunger winter, you know that's what we called it because the northern part of Holland was all closed off and the people we had the family living in the barn, two families living in the barn, both of them with four little children and you know they use to drape it off with some curtains. It was very primitive you know because those people had to leave their home in the northern part and those people were very very hungry so that's what we went through. It was awful hard. I remember so well that there was a man who came to our door to ask for food and we were peeling potatoes and he just took one potato and he ran off like he stole, I don't know, you know like the biggest thief and more things like that you know. The people were awfully hungry. At one time we had company and they said, "Oh the sugar beet cookies are so good. You have to taste them. You have to taste the sugar beet cookies, they are so good." They also had made cookies from tulips, the bulbs you know, but then we tasted it they made cookies from the suage beets but we didn't like them. But some people were real hungry. It tasted good them, but not to us yet, so we

were not hungry. But then we traded a lot you know, my dad made butter and he got potatoes for it and beans like myself I sewed for people and I got the grain to bake the bread and that's how it went.

Wedegaertner: Was your family of Catholic religion?

Vink: Yes

Wedegaertner: Did the religious life play a pretty important part in your family?

Vink: No, not really.

Wedegaertner: You mainly just went to mass on Sundays. You weren't heavily involved in the activities of the church?

Vink: No we were too young at the time and my mother was too busy, because I always say oh boy in those days when those people came it was so easy for them you know, they didn't have to be involved in anything and still the life is beautiful. I always think back on those days that they were very good, you know the family life was just beautiful. Now, that's what I don't like nowadays you know, that you have to be involved here. You have to leave your family as night to go to meetings or something or another and especially just like myself I lost myself I lost my husband when my youngest one was three weeks old and so I brought up my four children just by myself. Then when I had to go to school meetings and all that I had to leave my children at home by theirselves and I hated it and you know like high school meetings and maybe too much you know. Maybe I could have been easier with it, but I wasn't. But I always hated to go out at night and leaving them alone so. At that time you know, when they are in high school age and don't have a babysitter anymore, so that's what I don't like of the activities at night that you have to leave your family.

Wedegaertner: What did your family do when you were growing up for fun or for playtime or family fun?

Vink: Nothing. Oh, we just always had a very good time at home, you know, we had lots of friends. Oh we always were so busy you know, we had lots of friends.

Wedegaertner: Did you read?

Vink: Yes, I read a lot and embroidery and all the

Wedegaertner: Did you read together as a family, at all, you know like your father reading to you, or anyone telling stories?

Vink: No, he always was too busy.

Wedegaertner: How about ice skating?

Vink: Ice skating we did, but otherwise there was no money for all those things. Just like I wanted to learn to swim you know, and my mother was so against it because it was so indecent. That's what she said you know, that it was indecent for us to wear a bathing suit and being with the boys you know in the same place. But it was always more the money problem than anything else you know, that was her excuse, and so that's why we never had too much. But like I say, I had oh, like I had a girlfriend and we went out on the bicycle and you look for very pretty spots around, you know. There were beautiful places to go because Holland is very, very pretty.

Wedegaertner: I would like to see it some day.

Vink: We even went on the bicycle to Amsterdam. It took about forty-five minutes on the bicycle and then you went to a show there or just shopping and that was our way of doing things and also to go to different parts of the country it was very very pretty. You usually did it on Sunday afternoon. That was our recreation. Otherwise you always had something to do.

Wedegaertner: Do you remember any children's game that you played that you may have passed on you your children?

Vink: No, not exactly, because the words you use is so different and oh, just like you know what they do all over like jump rope and do you call it over here.

Wedegaertner: Did you play jacks over there?

Vink: Jacks and with marbles you know and all those things, but it is all over the same I think.

Wedegaertner: Who would you say made the most decision in your family your mother or your father?

Vink: Both. They were a very good couple. I never saw any quarrels you know or anything, and I think my father spoiled my mother a little, in a way, but she had a time you know always having little ones to take care of being pregnant. But I remember that he was very good to her you know. We didn't have the money for a big piece of meat to eat everyday, but when he came he bought something special like a filet or something for her and she had to fry that and he made that she ate it herself and things like that. He was very good to her and he still is beautiful. He is 93 years old now.

Wedegaertner: Where does he live?

Vink: He lives in Modesto and my mother is 84 and my mother still takes care of him.

Wedegaertner: Do they live by themselves?

Vink: By themselves. Oh, it is unbelievable. My father was here when he was a young boy. He came out in the Imperial Valley and then with the first world war he had a free trip home to Holland because of the war you know, and he had to be mobilized and so he went back and also his mother was very ill and she died when he came back. But in the meantime he got married and raised his family, the thirteen children in Holland, but he always had in his mind that California

was the most beautiful county, you know. He always wanted to go back, then and after the last war he had wrote the my husband. He was a neighbor boy in Holland but he was here during the war. So then after the war my husband came over to Holland, and we met and then he sponsored my father and the whole family to come over.

Wedegaertner: I'm just a little confused on something. You said your father first came here before the first world war?

Vink: First world war then he went back to be mobilized and his mother was ill so he had a free trip home.

Wedegaertner: In between the first war and the second war he got married and raised his family.

Vink: After the other war you know was that the third world war?

Wedegaertner: It would be the second world war.

Vink: Yeah, in '48 we came over, yeah after the war so my husband who was here in California during the war sponsored our family after the war and then we came to Tracey and my husband had a dairy farm there and then he bought the other dairy farm- oh I got married right away you know. I knew him for a whole year before we came over. Then after I came here, three months after that we got married, and then he bought another place in Oakdale. No, [Im mistaken] first he bought a place in Manteca and he was in partnership with my father and two of my brothers and so that's what my father did. But now, after all you know, he's now retired for about twenty years already because of his age. When he retired he was seventy and we though just for a few years you know, but still he made it twenty years. Isn't that terrible.

Wedegaertner: Why did he come over in the very first place?

Vink: Oh, with his friends you know. He was young.

Wedegaertner: Just to make money?

Vink: Yes, you know that's what they heard was that California was the promised land. But he thought so, you know, he always talked about it when we were little. You always heard about California.

Wedegaertner: What did he do down in Imperial Valley?

Vink: Worked for a dairyman, I think, in farming. We always have been in farming.

Wedegaertner: So was the main reason that prompted him to move his whole family, because he liked California so well or were there conditions in Holland that you disliked?

Vink: The conditions were very poor in Holland you know. Before the war you had kind of a depression, oh very much of a depression. People were all very poor. We lived pretty well because my mother was a good housekeeper, and like myself, I alway did all the sewing, you know for the whole family so that was cheap.

Wedegaertner: Mrs. DeGroote mentioned to me yesterday that with her large family there was just really no hope of them finding a home at that point, there wasn't enough land to go around for the families.

Vink: That was the same with us you know, like I say my father was a small dairyman and there was no room for to split up or one thing or another and then my brothers who were in the mean time in the twenties you know this was the only place to go and they all did pretty well.

Wedegaertner: When you first come to the United States what were you expecting and what were your first impressions?

Vink: Oh, when we first came with the boat it was about ten days. That was just beautiful like a big vacation, you never had in any luxury like that you know. It was just like one big party.

Wedegaertner: Did any of you get seasick?

Vink: Oh no, I was not. No not, at all. I was the only one of the family who didn't you know. I wasn't seasick at all. So then we went with the train and I think that was just terrible. Those trains were so dirty and you know then too all through American I think you just come through the poorest sections of town and all that, you know, with the train and we thought it was just terrible and we said, "Oh my God, if California is that way we'll have to return" because it looked terrible to us. So then we came I could say just at the border of Nevada and California you could see the change in color you know, everything was green and the other way out you know.

Wedegaertner: What time of year did you arrive?

Vink: We came in the end of April. Then we came here in California but here it was beautiful, the end of April you understand, everything was so green when we arrived here in Stockton.

Wedegaertner: What year was that?

Vink: In '48

Wedegaertner: That's right you did say '48

Vink: So we went to Tracy and my husband was living in Tracy. At the time he was my boyfriend, or fiancée because we were engaged, and oh we thought it was beautiful there. You know, the mountains and the big farm country it was beautiful. We really liked it from the first day.

Wedegaertner: Did you get a job when you first came here?

Vink: No, I never worked.

Wedegaertner: You said your father went into partnership with your husband-to-be.

Vink: You know, in Manteca. He had another dairy in Manteca. That's where my father and my brothers went and he had his own dairy in Tracy what we still own and just this year my son started

farming you know. I always had a place leased out after my husband died and that was my living you know, the rent from the place in Tracy plus some extra. Now just this year recently my sons took over the place and they're farming now.

Wedegaertner: Did any of you know English before you came over?

Vink: No. Oh, like I say my two sisters had a little higher education than me and my father knew how to speak English.

Wedegaertner: But your whole family came at one time, right? Did any of your sisters stay in Holland?

Vink: One, my oldest sister stayed in Holland. She was married at the time and she still is living there, but she had been here already I think ten times.

Wedegaertner: What were some of the biggest problems with not knowing the language?

Vink: Not knowing the language was terrible, but I went in Tracy to an evening class. I don't know if I picked up very much, but when my husband got ill I was expecting my fourth child and when he did I had one one year old, two year old and three year old so I was pretty bust housekeeping. They were pretty good years, but then the last year he died on cancer. It was very bad you know, knowing you're going to have another child and I was just twenty-nine years old so it was very bad. I always say those years, I lived in a kind of a daze because first a new country not knowing the language trying to pick up you know and the terrible year that he was ill and then after his death I lived in a daze.

Wedegaertner: Did you have many friends? Did you depend mostly on family?

Vink: I depended mostly on the family because we had such a big family and it still a kind of, oh we have a lot of friends now, you know, because more and more Dutch people come over, but in a way I feel sometimes bad that we are too much dependable on the family you know. We were always so close. Everything we celebrated, so you don't need outside people and sometimes I feel bad about it.

Wedegaertner: But when your kids got to the grammar school age did you start meeting more people that way, through them?

Vink: Yeah, through school I met a lot of people, but I still had a really difficulty with my language because I never needed it too much because my children understood the Dutch. Still when I get mad I do it in Dutch.

Wedegaertner: Did this bother them at all when they would bring children home?

Vink: No, not at all. They were always very proud of their mother and you know even if I said it myself, I was always very clean and cooked pretty well. That's what made them proud. I could understand them and I could talk to them but still just the same I don't need my language you know, the English, just for business and all that but I need it, still at home I talk a lot of Dutch.

Wedegaertner: You do very well with the English.

Vink: Oh no, like I say I can help help myself and I understand everything, but I like to use words but I can't. I understand them, but I cannot use them.

Wedegaertner: What about your parents when they came, did they attempt to learn English?

Vink: My father knew the language you know from when he was young, but my mother never spoke and English. Oh, well I always say she understands more than she thinks, you know, even at her age, but like Mrs.DeGroote, she speaks real good English, but she was always so active and she's a very smart lady.

Wedegaertner: You don't mean the one I'm talking about? Well she was a little difficult to understand yesterday because she talks so fast. She would get so interested in what she was saying and she would talk so fast. I had much more difficulty understanding her. However, when she slowed down, you know, it was fine.

Vink: Like my mother was never, she always stayed at home more or less and she has two of her sister who came over also and then she always has Dutch company because we say "oh, if they had a book you know with just with people who sign their names it is unbelievable how many Dutch people who came over." They are always busy, still at their age you know, just having people coming over, and I also think because they are the center of the Dutch community that came over, they were the oldest one, and my father is a very lovable person. Everybody loves him and I always say he never had an enemy in his life you know, so everybody loves the man and it still is that way. So everybody who comes here has to visit them so they're always busy.

Wedegaertner: So were there quite a few people who came from your area that came about the same year?

Vink: Yeah, after us. We were one of the first ones because we left the first year after the war. This is one thing I have to tell you that we are very proud of like I say my dad always loved this country so much when he was young, and now last week he met the President in Modesto. You know, Ludee [Damerall] is my sister, and like Frank was the host you know and my father and my mother went there and now in the in the end that's what he say in kind of the end of his days, he met the President. Isn't that beautiful oh I thought it was so good. I mean I am so proud of them you know because he always loved this country so much and now in the end of his days he like my sister she took all the nieces to help you know serve with the party so just like my daughter and my son-in-law they all were there to help, and they all met the President and they had so much fun there but they thought he was very very bright because like my daughter, her name is Coby and on the end you know when he left he still said bye Coby, and one of my other nieces who is very concerned about current affairs she said something to the President about so and so you know if he could do something about that and then when he left he said to her "you read that in that book." So he still remembered that the girl asked him some questions about you know.

Wedegaertner: What ages are your other children now?

Vink: My oldest is thirty, no thirty-one and the other one is twenty-nine she just had her first baby my first grandchild, a son but she was twenty-nine when she had her first one and then he is twenty-eight and then my other son is twenty-seven.

Wedegaertner: Did most of the people that came over here after your parents did most of them go into the dairy business?

Vink: I would say yeah.

Wedegaertner: Are there any other types of occupations that you could think of?

Vink: No, they all went more from dairy business to trees-almond orchards and vineyards and cherries, and I have one of my brothers who is in partnership with tow of my brothers-in-law and they have oh, about 160 acres no 200 acres of almonds and a 600 acre farm and they have a dairy on that so they are still in dairy business and then they bought another 100 acres of walnuts.

Wedegaertner: After your husband died did you take a very active interest in running the dairy?

Vink: Not particularly. The place my husband really had we sold you know in an auction, all the livestock, but then I was still in partnership with my father and my brothers so that's what I kept for a few years after that, then I think five years after that they bought me out, you know, so they went by theirselves. They owed me so much money so, and then I went to live in Stockton for about twelve years.

Wedegaertner: Whereabouts in Stockton did you live?

Vink: Robinhood Drive. [] [] []

Wedegaertner: Did you go to St. Mary's High School then?

Vink: Yeah, the boys, the kids all went to St. Marys. That was very convenient because it was just around the corner so it saved me alot of driving. So but the I always went to the meetings from St. Mary's parents club, but after that when the kids finished school, you know, what I had from school. They spread out all over, so I have just a few American friends. []

Wedegaertner: But most of your friends are still Dutch?

Vink: Yes, that's the way it goes you know. You talk to people and the names are awfully hard for me to remember because they are so different than the Dutch. Sometimes I even don't even try to remember names. They're terrible the Italians, so like I say we're just a big family that's why you don't need so many. You have plenty to do with just your own family it's just terrible. Last year it was too much even. We had three weddings in a few months and my parents had their 60th wedding anniversary. We had all kinds of Dutch company coming over you know for the

festivities. Oh it was a hectic summer. This summer is pretty quite you know. Everybody came last year.

Wedegaertner: Have you been back to Holland?

Vink: I went back after twenty-four years. I never wanted to go back because I always thought I go back with my husband some day and we never made it, so that's why I never wanted to go back. But then after twenty-four years my mother wanted to go back for her 80th birthday and my dad didn't want to go along with her so then I went with her.

Wedegaertner: Was your mother in full agreement in coming to the United States?

Vink: No, not really she had a hard time.

Wedegaertner: What were some of especially hard things that she found over here that were difficult?

Vink: She could not talk to her neighbors.

Wedegaertner: Did she like to talk?

Vink: No, not exactly but she was afraid to go out and she was afraid that people would talk to her and she couldn't answer so that made her kind of depressed and for awhile she was kind of homesick.

Wedegaertner: What about shopping and different kinds of foods and things? Was that a problem?

Vink: Oh, we always went along with her. She never went by herself, never, because she couldn't drive a car.

Wedegaertner: Did she find this difficult not finding the types of things she wanted?

Vink: No, not exactly because you have everything right here what they had there and more. But she never changed her cooking.

Son: You always had those guys that came around with all the imports and all that kind of stuff too.

Vink: And then there is the [Hangfeltaishem.] I don't know if you know he has Dutch imports and so they buy the cheese and sweets and candies.

Wedegaertner: Where is his business?

Vink: His business is here in Lodi.

Son: But he travels all over the valley. He travels from Fresno to way up north and the bay area.

Wedegaertner: Does he go directly to the homes?

Vink: Yes, he has a truck you know like the Dutch soups and chocolate and cookies, candies, cheeses, liqueurs so everything they wanted they buy from him. I never buy from him because I think the American stuff is just as good as the Dutch.

Son: Once in a while we buy some Dutch cheeses around the holidays.

Vink: You get some like Dutch cheese and all that, you know, like for Christmas or something. It's just the idea more that it is Dutch than it is good. Oh it's very good but.

Wedegaertner: How about your sisters and brothers who were still in school when you moved here. Did they have a difficult time?

Vink: Yes, one of my sisters was in the second grade and the other one was in the fifth grade. They didn't speak any English. No, I had three of them who still had to go to school. One of them was in high school age and she went to boarding school but couldn't speak the language, not at all, and also not the one who went to grammar school. They went to grammar school some place out in the country close to Manteca and they didn't speak any English, but in a few months they picked it all up.

Wedegaertner: Were the teachers helpful to them?

Vink: Very helpful. It was very good. Even my oldest girl when she went to school couldn't speak English.

Wedegaertner: English was her second language

Son: Did all your children speak Dutch.

Vink: The two oldest one and he does pretty good, but my youngest one, oh no.

Son: But he used to not understand English either. He used to not when he was small.

Vink: Oh yeah my youngest one when he was about two or three years old, let's say it that way, from one day to the other he changed in English you know. He spoke all Dutch before that, but like my oldest one went to school and she picked up English and she spoke English to the little ones you know, like the ones that was still at home, and then from one day to the other it was all English the youngest and one, he never spoke one word Dutch ever since. It was so funny, oh, it was so funny.

Son: You told me one time that it was that he didn't understand English and someone came to our door and was talking to us and I had to tell him what the guy was saying. I had to translate it for him.

Wedegaertner: How do your older children feel about carrying on the Dutch language?

Vink: They like it very much. Just like my oldest she went for a whole year to Holland and she worked there for Fleur Construction Company from down south, and she worked there for a whole year to pick up the language.

Son: She didn't work there for a whole year though.

Vink: She went there for a whole year. Then she visited and then she went twice to to Italy and you know and then all over Europe. So she didn't work all the time but her idea was to pick up the language and was to meet her father's family.

Wedegaertner: I think it is great when the families can raise their children to be bilingual and they have another language.

Vink: Ans she was very much interested in Montessori teaching so she was a Montessori teacher, and when she came back you know after a year she went

Wedegaertner: She had to learn that over there didn't she?

Vink: She went into but never got very far with it and so that's why she went to that Fleur, that office, because she wanted to make some money to travel all over Europe. So she had kind of an office job and she stayed with my sister in Haarlem and so she picked up the language very well and she still does but she doesn't use it any more. Now she is in Mountain View she worked for the Bullocks. She is in personnel management and benefits and all that stuff. She likes it very much and she goes from one store to another more for personnel management. It's a very interesting job. She likes it a lot. So she's really the only one that went back to Holland. Then my other daughter she's the one that just had the baby, she speaks very good Dutch because she always goes to my parents, and you know her grandparents, and they love it when she comes over because she speaks very good Dutch and they enjoy it a lot because that's another thing that bothers my mother that she cannot speak to the grandchildren and she had sixty of them.

Wedegaertner: She could probably speak some words through can't she?

Vink: No, not very much you know. She cannot keep a conversation. She says some words you know, but not really that's hard for her you know that her grandchildren don't understand her, oh, they understand most of them understand Dutch, but she cannot talk to them and that's hard, yeah. That's an advantage that we have the second generation []. We have learned the language so I always can talk to my grandchildren.

Wedegaertner: Do the Dutch in the area have any formal organization or clubs or anything?

Vink: No not at all.

Wedegaertner: Did your parents in their later years, after all their hard work become involved in any organizations?

Vink: My father and mother you mean? No, because my father came over close to his sixties and then he had really had to work still and then when he was about seventy years old he retired. How old was Opa when he retired? Because he has been retired for twenty years so they never did. Like I said, they always had so much Dutch company in the family they never had time for it really.

Wedegaertner: Did they develop any type of hobbies or anything later on?

Vink: Not exactly. He was very proud just to keep up the house and they had a beautiful garden with all kinds of roses and that's a lot of work. So everything always looked very neat and that was his hobby I would say. But not my mother, not at all, she doesn't read, she doesn't do knitting.

End of Tape One

Start of Tape Two

Vink: Our children had to have a Catholic education because he thought the foundation is good and even if we had to send them to boarding school you know, so after he died I was living in Oakdale and there is no Catholic school there and I thought for my business or anything I have my money coming in, I don't have to stay in Oakdale and it was his wish that the children would go to Catholic school so I moved up to Stockton. They went first to St. Bernadettes. It was the only school I could get them in I wanted to move to Lodi but there was no room here in St. Annes so then I came to live on Robinhood Drive just on West Robinhood. It was a block from St. Mary's I had to drive every day to St. Bernadette's for six to seven years and then the girls went to St. Mary's High School and then the boys went to St. Luke's school because that was close by and they went on their bicycles you know everyday so and then the girls went to St. Mary's and later on the boys also went to St. Mary's. So that worked out just beautiful and then my youngest son graduated from St. Mary's so he was just about eighteen. [] I drove up to my sister who lives here on Turner Road and I saw this place for sale and he wanted to be a farmer and he was in National Guard at that time, back east, so when I saw this place for sale and my brother-in-law said, "do you see that place is for sale. Would you like that" and I said "yeah, but it's an old dairy, what can I do with an old dairy," and he said "oh, that's good soil and all that and for the boys it would be really nice." It was forty acres, We can plant trees in there, almonds, so he helped me a lot with it and we bought this place in one week's time, you know, I had my house for sale in Stockton and I had a very nice home there. Then I sold my house in town and bought this place forty acres, with three homes on it for \$80,000 and I sold my house in town for \$40,000 so that was a pretty good trade. I never have been sorry for one day. I like it better here.

Son: The place is self supporting, it brings money in and the place in Stockton brings nothing.

Vink: It was a very nice home. You know at that time. \$40,000 was very good.

Wedegaertner: How many years have you been here?

Vink: Eight years

Wedegaertner: It's a nice distance, you are right between Lodi and Stockton.

Vink: I love it here. You know this sounds kind of dumb probably, but I feel so good in the morning, just to walk out of the house and walk to the mailbox, out on the open fresh air and no cars. I mean

not like Robinhood Drive. When we first came to live there it was a very good neighborhood you know. You didn't have Macy's and all those, even around our house there was all kinds of vacant lots so then you got the stop lights later on and it was pretty busy on Robinhood Drive, from El Dorado to Pacific, so I was happy to move out here.

Wedegaertner: Did you learn to drive very soon after you got here?

Vink: Yes, right away. My husband thought it was a necessity and I thought it was too.

Son: Everything was so much more spread out here than it was there in Holland

Wedegaertner: Did you own an automobile in Holland?

Vink: No we never had one. Just a bicycle.

Wedegaertner: Did your parents become citizens soon after they arrived?

Vink: We all became citizens, oh, about six or seven years after we were here. And like my parents I think, just like my mother she never spoke any English so I think they more or less gave it to her.

Wedegaertner: I was going to say she had to learn a little bit of English for that didn't she.

Vink: No, they gave it to her, but my father spoke English. So that I think it is because of him. We are happy to be here.

Wedegaertner: Looking back on your life can you think of any particular age that you would consider the best age or that you would consider the worst age or worst time to live?

Vink: The worst time to live is when my husband was gone, and after that, oh I think the best time was when the kids were still little you know, and when we could go on vacation together and all that. Now you know I don't have that anymore because I was even thinking this morning, "oh I wish I could go some place on vacation."

Wedegaertner: Where did you use to go on vacation?

Vink: Oh we had a cabin or house in Carmel at one time and we went I don't know how many times to Disneyland and Yosemite.

Wedegaertner: Did you do any camping?

Vink: No, we stayed in a cabin in Yosemite and we picnicked a lot at Micken Grove when the kids were little.

Wedegaertner: Sounds like you did a lot with your kids.

Vink: Oh yeah I enjoyed it very much, we also went to Santa's Village down south and Santa's Village here. They were pretty well off I think and we also went at one time on a ski vacation to Mammoth and that's when the kids were in high school.

Wedegaertner: Did you try skiing too?

Vink: I tried it but I was afraid I would break a leg and I couldn't afford it because I was the only one who could drive a car so I tried it because it wanted to go with the kids you know but I was too scared. But the kids all skied. They went always with the skimeister on the weekends and I thought that was just terrific you know to have them away from the street on Saturday. They were tired and on Friday night they had to go to bed early I always thought you know because on Saturday morning they had to leave early with the Skimeister, and then on Saturday night they were tired to go out so I always thought it was beautiful. So then we went alot to our family you know. They lived out in the country and the boys always enjoyed it, driving on tractors so we spent alot of time with the family, but otherwise you know if we plan vacations we always went someplace and like I say they were always pretty well off.

Wedegaertner: Also looking back what would you say was one of the greatest turning points in your life? Would that be coming here or after your husbands death or something else?

Vink: Coming here for sure, but after husbands death was quite like I say I lived in a daze for awhile. I had my youngest boy you know who was three weeks old when he died, and at one time was crying, crying, crying you know and it was because I forgot to feed him. He was hungry. I lived in a daze for a long time and also because I couldn't speak the language I think. But I always had alot of help, so in a way I don't know why, but I lived in a daze for a long time. There are a few years at least that I hardly can remember, That was hard for me and I still think about that but then after that the kids grew up and I always say we had an empty space on the table. I always said to the kids.

Son: Well we never knew.

Vink: No they never knew him alot and that is another think that was awfully hard when the children still don't know whether they still have a father.

Wedegaertner: They must have alot of father figures in their relatives?

Vink: That's why I went alot to the family. I had a brother who was about thirty-three years old before he got married and he use to take the boys alot and my father was awfully good to them you know. We lived next door in the same place when we were in partnership with them. So, that I think was the biggest turning point and after that you know now also after the kids are married that's just one year ago that I was living by myself, a year ago before my youngest one got married there that's also a big change.

Son: Now you have the next generation to enjoy.

Wedegaertner: Are there any government programs that you particularly enjoy or dislike?

Vink: What do you mean with that exactly.

Wedegaertner: I supposed, well some people have answered that they particularly don't like the situation the way the taxes are now or the welfare programs, etc

Vink: I am not political. I know I don't agree with a lot of stuff but I never can point it out, I would say. I don't have the word for it. Especially when you are alone you don't have to pay a lot of taxes and I don't live a luxury life but still your money is gone all the time.

Wedegaertner: How do you feel about the Womens Liberation Movement and the ERA?

Vink: One way I feel it is good but they go too far. I think it is good for the women to be out more, but then on the other hand I feel that it would be better if they would be with the children more because I always have been busy. I think it is a full time job. Honestly, if you want to, like I did, I sewed for the children and they were always proud of it. That is what made the children proud of me, by the things I did in the house and did with them. That is one thing that I think that they must do the children short. I have my daughter-in-law who is working yet she is in physical therapy and she wants to work. She is expecting her baby but she wants to work till the last day and then after three months she wants to go back to work again in a way I don't agree with her. I am not going to babysit I told her.

Wedegaertner: Have you thought of taking classes at Delta or something like that?

Vink: I couldn't do it because you know with my language. I can speak it but I cannot write it.

Wedegaertner: But you can read it.

Vink: I can read it but then if I had to do an exam and had to write I couldn't. That's the problem and you know I can write English just like to my daughters I write a letter but they know my language.

Wedegaertner: You might be surprised. There are so many foreign students that go there.

Vink: No, but I am not smart enough and at my age already. I wish I could but I can't. Just like I say, the writing is the hardest part. But then they say, oh, you have to get involved you know, take care of old people and things like that.

Wedegaertner: Do volunteer work? Does that appeal to you at all?

Vink: No that doesn't appeal to me because I have always been a homemaker.

Vink: [Never] wanted him to be because I never said, oh, you kids have to stay home I'm alone. I never done that. They have never I would say felt that mother was alone, because when they wanted to go out with their friends I always let them go you know. I never, never said that they had to stay home because of me. I think that's why my kids are so well adjusted. And you have some Dutch people who keep that old Dutch, like very strict and you really can really see still that they are from immigrant people you know but my children never grew up that way. I let them free. Like I say, I never worry about them because they knew what was good and not good and they had a lot of friends but I also say you know they get in a group where they belong. Don't you

believe that? They have awfully nice friend and I don't say that there aren't things because that is what we had too when were growing up that we wouldn't want our parents to know. There is always something. So I know from my children, you know that they have done things that they wouldn't tell me, but they were very religious all the time. I know that the Catholic church they they have to go to church every Sunday and I know that they with growing up you know when they were in the twenties that they did not always go, but now when they are a little older and married they are all going to church every Sunday. I think the church plays a big role in it too, in the schooling.

Wedegaertner: You might think that they are getting away from it like you say in their college years but usually they tend to go back.

Vink: When they came home from college you know they always went with me without saying anything you know. They knew that it was just the thing to do. So I think that they were always very well adjusted. When my two girls went to Davis they were in the time when the pot smoking and all that stuff and I know that they tried it I knew that I couldn't be with them all the time so I always told them that if you kids do something, you know, go into that stuff you know that you will hurt your mother very much and you spoil your life. And I think just to know that they would hurt their mother. In a way maybe I make it too obvious, but still you know, I think if you are a single parent, I mean especially when your husband died, that children are very concerned about mother; they didn't want to hurt you. They have done it a few times, but that's life. But generally they are very good.

Wedegaertner: If you didn't have the language problem like you say in the writing and things is there some particular occupation you would be interested in?

Vink: Oh I would love to be a nurse. I admire nurses and I know when my husband was ill they use to make him comfortable. I am so lucky that we are very healthy. My mother is eighty-four years old and she never went to a doctor, never, isn't that terrible, and then sometimes she says, "I really have to go have a checkup." We say, "Oh no you don't have to go have a checkup" you know so we are very healthy and same with me. Oh I had a few little things, but not real sick. So when I come in a hospital I like to make people comfortable and I wish to be a nurse.

Wedegaertner: That's certainly one of the traits of a good nurse, trying to make people comfortable.

Vink: And I know from my husband so well it was so hard you know how much pain he had and still to make him comfortable it was such a good feeling. It was very good and I think always from that time that I thought oh I wish I was a nurse but that is a hard study. One of my sisters is a nurse, Ludi Damarole she was a nurse.

Wedegaertner: Did you ever have anyone living with you and your family?

Vink: After my husband died I never have been really alone with the children. I had girls coming over from Holland who I sponsored and they could stay for a year. So I first had a girlfriend from

Holland come over and she stayed for a year and a half. After that year you had to buy bonds for security and they could stay another half year so I had my girlfriend living with me for a year and a half, and she enjoyed it very much because she could learn the language and see California and that is already twenty-seven years ago I would say. And at that time you know there was hardly anybody came over from Holland but you know I paid for her trip and things like that and then she stayed with me.

Wedegaertner: So that was alot of help for you and company too.

Vink: So that's what I mean I was so privileged to have that and with the children you know you always had help and after her, she was here a year and a half, then I had my sister-in-law who was a druggist I would say.

Wedegaertner: Pharmacist.

Vink: Yes, a pharmacist and she took off from her job for a year and a half. I did the same thing, I sponsored her. Then I had another girl who my brother met when he was in the service in Germany and he brought her over here and she stayed with me for a year and a half and they they married, so she married my brother. This was my third girl and then the forth girl I had was a niece from the Vink side, you know, from my husband's side and she came over and after a year she married my brother. So then after that I had my youngest sister with me for quite awhile before she got married. So in the meantime my oldest was about twelve or fourteen years old. From that time on I am alone with the kids.

Wedegaertner: Did you when your kids were in high school have any exchange students living with you?

Vink: No I could not have them because I was a single parent.

Wedegaertner: Thinking about the lives of your children what are some of the best things about their lives now and what are some of the less desirable things and if you were to do something to help them what would it be?

Vink: I think they are all pretty much in their place, just like my oldest girl, she is not married but she has alot of girlfriends and friends and she does what she likes to do. She is enjoying her job. That is my biggest concern the one who is not married, you know the oldest girl, but not that I am concerned about it because I know she is happy. You know she likes her work alot and she has alot of good friends who she takes home. My second daughter is married, pretty well, to a cattle rancher who is a very hard working guy and who is very pleasant to have around. He is alot of fun and now my sons are married but we think they are very nice girls.

End of Tape Two