

## Bruce, Jacobus and Helen – Audio Transcript

BRUCE: My father was the youngest of seven kids and I was the youngest of five. We kind of understood each other, he always felt a bit of pressure to succeed and do well and go to university. And my father just wanted to be a farmer. In the end he made the decision to leave Holland, I think that was pursue his dream was, and that was to: have his own land and to be a farmer so which he did. He, he came to Canada he worked hard to get enough money that he could buy a farm.

The only one in his family, to pick up and move to another continent - having that that desire to get away from what he was experiencing and start a new life. And in many ways that spirit came out in him during COVID. He made the decision to do the same thing to pick up and start a new life.

JACOBUS: The war came in in 39 - the German invasion. We were still hoping that it would bypass the Netherlands like it did in 1914.

BRUCE: He said to us there was bombs falling, the Germans were coming through, taking whoever whatever they could. Having to hide in root cellars. And whatever you had to do to survive.

JACOBUS: After the war I was conscripted in the Dutch army. I came back in Holland in the Netherlands, in the fall of 50. The summer of 51 I immigrated to Canada. Canada was one of the allied countries and another thing was the endless sight of the of land for agriculture available in Canada. And I took advantage of that. I liked the politics too.

I met my wife in Toronto. She was from Holland.

BRUCE: For my dad, he went from coming to Canada and in six years he got married and had three kids. (laugh)

JACOBUS: – The kids were always raised in the country. We mostly grew stuff that we ate ourselves - chickens, sheep and cattle and pigs. Kids were brought up on all the healthy stuff.

BRUCE: And being Dutch immigrants, the work ethic. My dad in his 70s, was still digging potatoes out of the garden. Out of the blue he would paint old furniture and he would have a funny little saying at the bottom.

They called him Opa, he was always Opa.

He loved going into the forest seeing spring flowers. Take the kids.

JACOBUS: My wife developed cancer and lived with cancer for several years

BRUCE: When my mother was sick, yeah it was very difficult.

JACOBUS: Finally we had to sell. I was already in my 80s

JACOBUS: Then the kids - I had to be closer to them. And then I ended up at St Joseph's place. I kind of liked it. And then this sickness came on and a lot of the people in homes passed away from the sickness.

HELEN: When the pandemic started I was particularly worried about Dad. The deaths were overwhelmingly in elderly people living in long term care. So I was kind of terrified he would maybe get sick and be there all alone.

BRUCE: The nurses were good. He had two great table mates that he enjoyed, having discussions with.

JACOBUS: – Yay, we sat on the table with three. And then came the separation law. That was the main reason that I wanted to get out of there because I didn't have no communication. It's hard to find good friends when you are that old.

BRUCE: But we would visit him the glass to glass visits, He's hard to hearing, so...

JACOBUS: – They would never let me visit alone, even through glass.

BRUCE: You could see the frustration building in him. Felt locked up. You know, he'd be asking what was going on out in the world. This is like the Second World War.

HELEN: Talking to him one day in May and there was birds and flowers and all the things Dad loves. Dad had this incredible yearning in his voice, and he said I would do anything to spend an afternoon in your garden. We cried. It was heartbreaking. I said if you are that unhappy and you're willing to get on a plane, you can come live with me. I started talking to my siblings because moving dad... If he's coming to live with me, it's going to be for the rest of his life. And I live on a small remote island.

BRUCE: He was 93 when he made the trip. Yeah, it's been difficult. We certainly miss him. So we had our concerns about the trip, concerns not just for my dad, but for my sister. The responsibility, the burden that you're going to take upon yourself. I know my dad he is tremendously grateful. He made it happen. And she made it happen.

JACOBUS: And yeah, so, that's how it ended up... And here we are. Good old Hornby Island!