

## Chapter 1 – Introduction

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**Announcer:** Case Boshuizen was 11 years old on May 10, 1940, when the Germans invaded the Netherlands and his home province Holland. He watched from his bedroom window as German paratroopers began dropping all around his hometown Delft, while a German tank division rolled into his neighborhood.

During the occupation, food became scarce. Case, along with his brother, traveled many miles to bring food to their family. He was 16 in 1945 when the Americans and the Allied forces liberated the Netherlands.

Eventually, Case and his wife Johanna immigrated to the United States and moved to Tulsa, Oklahoma. Case retired as an engineer for T.D. Williamson.

Now, you can hear Case's eyewitness description of the German invasion, accompanied by a transcript which is worth the read. We are fortunate to have this first-hand account from Case Boshuizen, on the oral history website [VoicesOfOklahoma.com](http://VoicesOfOklahoma.com).

## Chapter 2 – 4:47

### Family

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**John Erling (JE):** My name is John Erling and today's date is August 9th, 2023.

Case, would you state your full name, please?

**Case Boshuizen (CB):** Cornelius, C-O-R-N-E-L-I-U-S; Boshuizen,  
B-O-S-H-U-I-Z-E-N.

**JE:** And you go by "Case?"

**CB:** Yes, because, actually, in Dutch, it's K-E-E-S. But then people say "keece", and I don't like that, so it's Case; it's phonetic: C-A-S-E. The sound's confirmed through the word "Case," in Dutch.

**JE:** We're recording this interview at Trinity Woods Retirement Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma. What is your birthdate?

**CB:** November 21, 1928.

**JE:** How old are you today?

**CB:** 94 years old.

**JE:** Soon to be 95.

**CB:** Correct.

**JE:** Do you know if there are many, in your entire family, who lived as long as you did?

**CB:** I don't know none.

**JE:** Yeah. The war took some of that, didn't they?

**CB:** No, not exactly, but it's just old age and the illnesses.

**JE:** Where were you born?

**CB:** Delft, in the Netherlands. In the old city of Delft.

**JE:** How big of a city was that?

**CB:** At that time, it was about 90,000 but today it's more than 100,000 people.

**JE:** Have you ever been back to that town?

**CB:** Several times — vacation, and for my work at T.D. Williamson, at the plant. In Belgium, Nivelles and I had to go there many times. As a matter of fact, it started straight from the beginning: I went there to help out Mr. T.D. Williamson, who was the president of the country, in Belgium, and I had to

work with him because I could speak some German and some French, and of course some Dutch. And this was a great help to the company.

**JE:** What was your mother's name?

**CB:** Eda Elizabeth Wilhelmina.

**JE:** And did she live in Delft?

**CB:** Yes. Yes.

**JE:** What did she do? Was she a homemaker?

**CB:** She was a homemaker, but before that, she worked in an atelier, making women's clothes. At that time, once she grew up, the people in Delft — the more fortunate people — you couldn't buy a dress at the store; it had to be made. My mother was a very good seamstress.

**JE:** What was she like? What was your mother's personality like? What was she — you almost laughed when I asked you that question. What kind of a mother was she to you? Was she strict or what?

**CB:** Strict, but also very easy.

**JE:** And how old was she when she died?

**CB:** Almost 88.

**JE:** And she died there in Delft?

**CB:** Yes.

**JE:** Your father's name?

**CB:** Lein Boshuizen. L-E-I-N. Officially, Leindert: L-E-I-N-D-E-R-T, Borshuizen.

**JE:** What was his personality like?

**CB:** Very, very reserved. He didn't speak too many words, but if he said something, you'd better listen.

**JE:** So are you more like your mother?

**CB:** I probably have both, to be honest.

**JE:** What did your father do for a living?

**CB:** He worked as a maintenance man in the hospital for — how do you say that? Like, if I need to ... Mental homes? People with ...?

**JE:** Mental issues?

**CB:** Yeah.

**JE:** Did you have brothers and sisters?

**CB:** It's a little bit tough to talk about that. He died so young. He was 4 years old when he died; he drowned. I had an older brother, two-and-a-half years older, and he worked at the university in Delft. And there's one sister.

### **Chapter 3 – 8:50 German Invasion**

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**John Erling (JE):** And then you started grade school in Delft.

**Case Boshuizen (CB):** Correct.

**JE:** Alright, so you started grade school in 1936 or 7. But then something major happened: You were 11 years old in 1940.

**CB:** Correct.

**JE:** And what happened?

**CB:** That was a Friday morning. May 10. My father woke us up: “Boys, get up! War has started.” And we looked out the window — there were the planes. The jets were shooting at them. One plane was on fire. And I still remember the German paratrooper starting with the door opening — jumping out. And the second comes, jumps out. The parachutes caught fire — it must have been from some leaked gasoline, I guess. And he jumped out and fell to the ground.

**JE:** So that was a German?

**CB:** Oh, yes. A German paratrooper. Fallschirmjäger.

**JE:** So that was the first you knew that Germany had invaded the Netherlands.

**CB:** Yes, yes. Correct.

**JE:** So... What do you recall? Now you're 94-years-old and you've got quite a remarkable memory. What do you recall after you see that? Did your father want to do something? Go someplace? Or just stay in place?

**CB:** No, we had to do something to calm down, so he went to work. While it was happening, he had to go to the hospital. But the war in the Netherlands didn't last long. In 5 days, it was all over for us.

**JE:** Because the Dutch planes — they were able to fight the Germans for 5 days?

**CB:** Not the planes. How do you say this? Flak.

**JE:** Flak. Right.

**CB:** The Dutch flak, shooting at the German planes, there were quite a few who caught fire and went down. As a matter of fact, as you look on the Youtube, you can see how many planes were shot down.

**JE:** And so for those 5 days, you stayed there?

**CB:** We stayed in the house.

**JE:** And the war — looking at it out your window.

**CB:** Yes. We were close to an airport called Edinburgh. We were 2 or 3 miles from the airport. And, of course, the paratroopers didn't land in one spot, because when they put... Understand that, to land at the airport — they were shooting at them. So the airport was completely blocked. And, so, planes had to land even in the street and along the highway. Behind our house was a bypass that went from Rotterdam to The Hague; and we lived almost right on that little bypass, close to the airport. And there were quite a few that dropped down.

And so we even had a doctor, and a uniform, and an ambulance chief on a motorbike with a Dutch soldier who had no shoes on — and he had to get help. We had to get the doctor to his colleague and, I'm sure, to tend to his wounds. We had many Germans die in that place. It was fierce fighting.

**JE:** So you're 11-years old and had to be very afraid.

**CB:** We were. I didn't leave the house for 5 days, until the war was over. I went on my bike and looked around and saw all of those planes in pieces, burnt out, laying in the fields.

**JE:** But did the Germans shoot at houses, or try to damage buildings and houses?

**CB:** No. Not really.

**JE:** But that's when the invasion, then, began?

**CB:** Yes.

**JE:** And that's when the soldiers were on the streets?

**CB:** Oh, yeah.

**JE:** So, when you went out of your house, then, after the 5th day, were the Germans nice to you? Or how did they treat you?

**CB:** We didn't talk to them. I won't speak German and I was still in shock; because we saw, the next day, the bombing of Rotterdam. You might have heard about that. They destroyed the whole inner part of Rotterdam. It was completely wiped out; even the American consulate was destroyed in Rotterdam. Anne Frank's father talks about that because he had a visa. People don't know that he had a visa to emigrate to the United States, but it was all lost. So he had to reapply again, so he never made it. But otherwise he could have made it to America.

**JE:** Did you see the Germans beat up on citizens or not treat them very nice?

**CB:** Oh, yes. That was later, but not at first. They — much later — showed their true colors. I remember I was with my mother, visiting an aunt, and there was an SS man beating up a man and I look at him in disgust. I didn't say a word — I couldn't speak German then.

And he said, "You want to get some, too?!" That's what he said.

And I'd seen other instances. A guy who was kind of crippled who had to walk, and the SS man was on a bicycle. He told him to run fast in front of his bicycle. It was pretty sad.

**JE:** What did you do about food during those days?

**CB:** The store was right around — we didn't have the big supermarkets. They didn't exist. We had a small grocery store around the corner. Maybe from here to the entrance, or less — from here to the elevator. That was all the distance. There was a grocery store, there was a butcher, a baker, and a place where they could cut your hair and where you could get a shave, where you could buy paint, and then there was a small — on the other side — a small parish church. So it was all compact. It's not like the States where everything's far apart. Everything's very compact.

**JE:** So the Germans allowed you to go to that store and get food?

**CB:** Oh, yeah. Well, the Germans never controlled our street. They were there, but they had to go to the airport.

**JE:** And you had a brother, then, that was older than you.

**CB:** Two-and-a-half years older.

**JE:** Your father — was he able to go to work?

**CB:** Yeah, later in the day; yeah.

**JE:** So there was some normalcy to your living?

**CB:** Yeah. But you couldn't get into town because Delft is like Venice canals. So there are places where it's like that (gesturing with his hands). So they couldn't rush in on their motorbikes or cars. It was such that they couldn't do that. Because if they're anywhere north of Delft, they were going to The Hague, which was the center of government and where the military was situated.

**JE:** How far was Delft from The Hague?

**CB:** About 10 kilometers at the most. About 6 miles.

**JE:** 6 miles?

**CB:** 6, 7 miles. Yeah.

**JE:** Okay. Were you allowed to go — and did you ever go — to The Hague after the invasion?

**CB:** Oh, sure.

**JE:** Because that's the big city, too.

**CB:** Yeah, yeah.

**JE:** Right.



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**Chapter 4 – 7:52**  
**Food Shortage**

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**John Erling (JE):** So they invaded in 1940; you were liberated in 1945.

**Case Boshuizen (CB):** Yes, because the part that was liberated was Sluis. Like, Maastricht and the cities way south between ... Maastricht, Aachen, and Leest. And the Americans came through Leest on their way to Aachen, and then Maastricht. So that part was liberated in September, 1944. And then later you might have heard about Market Garden where the paratroopers — the British paratroopers — came in September 17, if I remember well. And landed in Arnhem but they couldn't get to the bridge — too far. You might have heard a bit about it.

**JE:** So you were 16 then when...

**CB:** I was 16. Yeah.

**JE:** Alright. So, 4 years. That's a long time. Are you going to school?

**CB:** Sure. I went to school.

**JE:** And... Let's see... Did you finish by 1944?

**CB:** No, '45.

**JE:** Err — 1945.

**CB:** It was in 19...

**JE:** You had finished grade school?

**CB:** Yeah. But in October/November in 1944, school was stopped. There was no electricity; it was dark. You couldn't read because there was no lighting, no coal, no nothing. So I didn't go to school for about 6 months. As a matter of fact, I remember the first 2 weeks... Our math teacher simply didn't appear anymore; he had to go into hiding. So there was a substitute teacher for

mathematics for some weeks. And even after that, there was no more school. So I had to go to [unintelligible] ... We went on my bike. Sometimes you walked.

It was tough to get food. People don't know that in September 1944, General Eisenhower asked the Dutch government in London if they would be willing to stop the trains. So the Dutch government told the people at the railroad no longer to go to work. And they didn't do that anymore, so they stayed away. No more trains.

So then the Germans said, "Okay. No work? No food." So they closed the supply of food. You couldn't go over the river anymore — at least the part where there was food. It was all blocked. And it lasted for several weeks. And the people that stayed in and they didn't work, they went into hiding. Some were shot, but for most, there was just no more food.

So we had to go — I remember, sometimes, 250 kilometers all the way to Nieuwoord in the Netherlands — to get some food. I did it several times. And not only that. You would knock on the door and you would ask, "Do you have something to eat for me," and so they would give you a meal. It was amazing what the people would do to help each other.

**JE:** So you went to people you knew to —

**CB:** No! Didn't know them at all.

**JE:** ... Just —

**CB:** I knew some. In 1942, the school and the church had arranged for us young people to go to the eastern part of the Netherlands to spend 4 weeks on a farm or whatever. I spent 4 weeks on a farm in Oldebroek. And I kept contact with those people. I would — later on, I could always go there and stay there.

There was a point of trying to go to other farms to get some food. I knocked on the door — I got eggs, I got bread, potatoes, whatever I could get. And I had to go back to Delft — which was sometimes very dangerous. I had been stopped by security police. We called them the Geheime

Ordnungspolizei.

At one time, they stopped me and looked me and said [German phrase]. And they asked me, “Do you have coffee beans?” Kaffeebohnen.

And I said, “Where do you think you are, in Brazil? We have no coffee beans at home. It doesn’t grow here!”

“Okay; go on.”

**JE:** Did they ever take food away from you?”

**CB:** Almost, but they didn’t take it. At one time — it was in 1943 — when the west wall was going to be built, we had, behind those, between the coasts, [unintelligible] houses that had to come down. So that food was — they would let you have that.

Also, there was the company that was building the fortifications. They gave us a lift and there was a bag of potatoes. I sat on the bag of potatoes. There were ladies, too, that would have food.

We were stopped as we entered Delft, by the SS, and all the food, they took it all away. And I just acted the dummy — “no potatoes here” — and I didn’t say a word. I didn’t blink an eye. They didn’t see it. So here I am, the little fella — and the ladies (clapping sounds) — “My boy, my boy!”

But you had to do it that way. You had to be street smart.

**JE:** Street smart. Right. Did you ever go days without food at all?

**CB:** Oh, sure.

**JE:** How long would have gone — your family, gone — without food? A week? Or two weeks?

**CB:** No. I would say several days.

**JE:** Was your mother a good cook?

**CB:** There was nothing to cook! We laugh about it now, but at that time, there was nothing left for her.

**JE:** So you would eat potatoes...? What would be a meal? Potatoes...

**CB:** Potatoes, vegetables, a small piece of meat. But at the end of the war, there was none of that.

**JE:** Yeah.

**CB:** Tulip bulbs, sugarbeets.

**JE:** Tulip bulbs?

**CB:** Oh, yeah.

**JE:** You'd eat 'em?

**CB:** Yeah. I didn't like 'em, but what do you do?

**JE:** But it was a source of nutrition.

**CB:** Yeah.

## **Chapter 5 – 11:34**

### **Keep Your Mouth Shut**

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**John Erling (JE):** How far were you from Amsterdam?

**Case Boshuizen (CB):** About 60 kilometers.

**JE:** Yeah. How far is that?

**CB:** About 35.

**JE:** 35?

**CB:** Yeah.

**JE:** Alright. We've all heard the story of Anne Frank. And you know that story as well.

**CB:** Yeah. I do now, but at that time, we didn't know.

**JE:** It was going on at the same time.

**CB:** That's correct.

**JE:** Yeah.

**CB:** But you didn't know.

**JE:** Nope, nope. You wouldn't have known.

**CB:** You're not supposed to know that. Because I had been in Oldebroek, where I had stayed in that farm, where my friend was staying — a few farms further — and I noticed there was a family. And from their speech and what they could write — either way, you knew they're not from here. They weren't Jews, but they were in hiding, but you didn't talk about it.

And then later on, I had to go to the northern part of the Netherlands, to a lady, and her son was married to one of my nieces. So we went there and she was hiding a Jewish lady; and the story was she was bombed out of Rotterdam and that's why she was staying there.

But nobody ever said that the lady was Jewish. My father told me, "Case, you mustn't talk too much. Keep your mouth shut. Don't talk.

**JE:** So you knew a number of people who were hiding...?

**CB:** Oh, sure.

**JE:** ... Jews?

**CB:** One time, we go to a knock on the door: “Mr. Boshuizen, can we stay here tonight? We cannot go to a hotel because we cannot do that.”

And so we had some family member who knew these people and they stayed in our home. And, later, I heard that these two men were executed in 1944. And even one of my teachers — his son was executed.

**JE:** Because they were Jews?

**CB:** No. Not Jews. They were in opposition. How do you say that? They were in the underground.

**JE:** Yep. There was a resistance underground?

**CB:** Oh, sure. There were several.

**JE:** Was your dad ever asked to join the underground?

**CB:** I cannot tell you that. I can only, by deduction, come to that conclusion.

**JE:** So, okay — the underground...

**CB:** Well, wait a minute. When my father passed away, a professor at the university wrote my mother a note saying, “Your husband was a great patriot.” Now how would the professor at the university know a maintenance man at the hospital? It’s very unlikely.

So, my dad — he told my brother, he said: “Your father didn’t want anyone to know that.” I cannot tell you. So it stayed with him and it was never published. Never. My father didn’t want that. He didn’t want it said. But I’m sure he did. But, I can’t prove it.

**JE:** So you are saying that your father was part of the resistance — the underground?

**CB:** Yeah. But in a very minor way, or not publicized. That wasn’t in his nature.

**JE:** Yeah. And then you didn't know about it until he wrote that letter.

**CB:** Yeah.

**JE:** That must make you feel proud.

**CB:** I worked later at that same school and we were compressing a dangerous gas. And there it comes with his students — we had signs all over the place: “No smoking!” And there he comes in with his big cigar to meet them. “Professor, that's also for you, that sign! No smoking!”

And sure enough, two days later, I was called in by the head of the department and told that I shouldn't have done that. And then he said, “You shouldn't stay here. Why don't you apply to a big petroleum company and then you can work there?”

And so that was, for me, a sign that there was some ... how do you say... malice. Because that professor wasn't Jewish. He spent his years in Tunisia and such, and in Slovakia. So he came through the war, but he wasn't killed.

But T.D. Williamson offered me a job then, after I had chewed out the professor. You don't do that anymore. But I did it anyway. No smoking means no smoking.

**JE:** The liberation, again, was September?

**CB:** In the southern part. Where I lived was not liberated until May 1945.

**JE:** Okay.

**CB:** I still remember the bombers coming over that last week, not dropping bombs, but dropping food.

**JE:** The American planes were dropping food?

**CB:** Yeah.

**JE:** So did you just run out in the streets?

**CB:** No, no. They had designated areas.

**JE:** And you'd go to those areas?

**CB:** No, they couldn't do that. Otherwise it would be all unorganized. All of this is in an organized city. You don't go out just like that; everything has to be organized.

**JE:** So then how did you get that food?

**CB:** Much later, and with ...

**JE:** So, to the store — to the grocery store? You'd go there?

**CB:** Yeah.

**JE:** Right.

**CB:** But I also can think in all of that time, where we lived, there were many small canals that provided drainage. And I saw those bags dropping out of the planes, and they were surely going into those rivers. Not rivers, but the canals. So we took a cord with a steel hook, and my friends and I, we threw it into the water and we picked up quite a few bags. And I remember we had this milk — condensed and powdered milk — and a whole bag with biscuits, and whole wheat crackers from Canada. Fantastic. Now we eat, so we divided up so we had quite a few crackers. We had some dried eggs, dried milk... So we had quite a bit. Because by that time, people didn't care anymore. It was just food that we needed.

**JE:** And you knew that it was the Americans who dropped that food?

**CB:** Oh, yeah. Because that you could see — what kind of planes they had. The American planes were aluminum. The British planes and our planes were painted dark. Because they Americans flew in the daytime; the British flew at night.



**JE:** What a sight that was.

**CB:** Oh, yes!

**JE:** Did neighbors come outside and you were cheering?

**CB:** Oh, yes!

**JE:** You were cheering and —

**CB:** Oh, yeah!

**JE:** Do you ever — did you ever — have dreams about the invasion?

**CB:** Oh, yeah.

**JE:** Did you?

**CB:** Yeah.

**JE:** Does it even come to you later on in life?

**CB:** Still does.

**JE:** Still does.

**CB:** One time — I didn't tell you this. I told it in the paper, but... I came out of school. We had to because the Germans had two schools there. One was taken by the Germans, and our school had to take care of that school with this school. So we had school in the morning, and in the afternoon, the other one had their school in our building.

I had gone by the police station, which had closed down where the school was. There was a truck and there was ... with shoulders standing like that (gesturing). The Geheime Ordnungspolizei around that... The guys climb in around the back of the truck, the truck goes around, going near where they had blew up the railroad a few days before. They got out of the truck,

climbed up, — boom, boom, boom — no lawyer, no police, nobody. Nobody else. Just bang, bang, bang! Finished.

**JE:** They were killing?

**CB:** Sure. They shot them. They had nothing to do with the railroad, but they happened to be in prison that day, and they emptied the prison.

**JE:** They emptied the prison?

**CB:** At the police station. I guess you call it holding cells or whatever. It's where the prisoners are. And that's why you had to be very careful of you got caught during your spare time. At curfew, if you were out on the street, you could be taken in. And that was okay. But if something happened that night, and you were in the prison cell, it could be that you could get executed — just as a punishment.

**JE:** Okay. Who was shooting? Who was doing the killing?

**CB:** The Germans. The Ordnungspolizei. We called them the Geheime. That's special killer.

**JE:** And that was during the invasion?

**CB:** No, no. That was during the war — the whole time, until the last day.

**JE:** Right.

**CB:** It was even after the war was over, there was still people being killed in Rotterdam.

**JE:** Germans were still there?

**CB:** Oh, yeah.

**JE:** Even after the war was over?

**CB:** Oh, yeah. It took some time.

**JE:** And they were killing?

**CB:** Oh, yeah. If you did something stupid, they still had the weapons. They would shoot you. Oh, yeah. It was not so easy.

**JE:** So then how long after the war was declared over, do you think, that the Germans finally got out of there?

**CB:** About 2 weeks maybe. Some places not at all. It took a long time. The ones that were in the northern part, the islands — that took longer.

## **Chapter 6 – 5:20 Engineering School**

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**John Erling (JE):** So then you get back to school, and you're in the high school.

**Case Boshuizen (CB):** Mm-hmm (in agreement).

**JE:** And in high school in Delft?

**CB:** In Delft; correct.

**JE:** And you graduate.

**CB:** Yes.

**JE:** Then what do you do?

**CB:** I go to the technical school in Rotterdam to get the degree in mechanical engineering.

**JE:** Why did you choose mechanical engineering?

**CB:** Like I said, when I went to [unintelligible city name], their son was an engineer. So he helped me, also, to go into engineering. And my uncle was

also an instrument-maker, a teacher, and did the same thing. He always tried to get better educated. Because, at that time, if you were a plumber, your son is a plumber. My father got remarks everywhere he worked: "Why does your son have to go to college?" It doesn't happen today, but at that time it did. Very, very formalized. Restricted.

**JE:** You must have been good at math.

**CB:** I was.

**JE:** From grade school on.

**CB:** Yeah.

**JE:** Yeah.

**CB:** Very poor in languages.

**JE:** But I thought I heard you say earlier that you spoke about 3 different languages.

**CB:** That's true, but that was much later.

**JE:** Okay.

**CB:** Because when I worked for T.D. Williamson, they sent me back to Europe, to the Belgian plant, and I had to speak French to the workers, and to the customers. I'd be up in the office talking about cleaning pipelines, and had to do it in French. And when you do that, they help you. You can write on the blackboard.

I'd been in Gaz Montreal — Gaz Metro — there was a problem. They said, "You come back, explain to the workers how to do it. But you have to speak French." That's how you learn.

**JE:** And you learned to communicate in French?

**CB:** Yes. On practical matters. I couldn't give a talk about philosophy or whatever, but in a restricted field, you can talk, because you know the names and you know the verbs. Language is verbs and nouns, and how do you glue them together, so to speak.

**JE:** So how many years were you — that was a college you went to. How long there? 4 years?

**CB:** Yeah. 4 years.

**JE:** Alright. When you graduate from college, where is your first job?

**CB:** First job was with the Dutch army. I had a deferment, but the minute I got my degree, the Dutch army said, "Now it's my time. Two years in the army."

**JE:** Two years?

**CB:** Uh-huh. (In agreement)

**JE:** Two years in the army; and you stayed there in Holland, I suppose?

**CB:** Yeah, yeah.

**JE:** Right, right. Two years there. Then what?

**CB:** Then I worked three years, about, at the University of Delft; then as a technician in a laboratory. This was a gift from the oil company. It was called a "pilot plant," where it was all about oil. So this is ... I went to work here at the refinery. I worked there for three years, but I didn't want to stay in Holland. I wanted to go outside into the world. And I immigrated to the United States.

**JE:** Your wife's name was Johanna?

**CB:** Correct.

**JE:** Where did ... Did you meet her there in Delft?

**CB:** Oh, yes, because I was friends with her brother. She had an elder brother, a year older, and we went to the same school. He was a little older so he was a class ahead of me. Her parents were married 25 years. I was invited and I got with my girlfriend. I didn't have a girlfriend, but at the end, I had a girlfriend. How I could work! And it was my honor. And we've stayed together all this time.

**JE:** When did you meet her?

**CB:** When I was in college.

**JE:** In college?

**CB:** Yeah.

**JE:** Right. How long were you married?

**CB:** 67 years.

**JE:** How many children did you have?

**CB:** 5. We had a girl, who was also an engineer; have a boy who was financial; we have another son who is a pipeline inspector; two girls who were twins. So we went from 3 to 5 just like that.

**JE:** How exciting. Are any of them alive today?

**CB:** Oh, yes. They're all alive.

**JE:** Where do they live?

**CB:** All here in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

**JE:** All right here?

**CB:** Yes. And I'm always visited by my youngest girl, and with the other part of the twins.

**JE:** So you must have many grandchildren?

**CB:** 2 girls, 2 boys.

**JE:** Right.

## **Chapter 7 – 6:05 Coming to America**

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**John Erling (JE):** When did you travel to the United States?

**Case Boshuizen (CB):** In 1956.

**JE:** You knew all along you wanted to go to the United States?

**CB:** Yeah. It was not the easiest thing to get the visa. It's not so easy. You have to apply and go through quite some ... You have to have a sponsor, which is done by the brotherhood class in the First Presbyterian Church.

**JE:** Okay. First Presbyterian Church in Tulsa was your sponsor?

**CB:** Yes.

**JE:** How did you get connected to First Presbyterian?

**CB:** Through the World's Council of Churches in Holland. At that time, the Dutch government wanted to get you out.

**JE:** Oh, the Dutch government wanted you to come out?

**CB:** At that time. They won't do that anymore now because now they get people from everywhere.

**JE:** Yup. Okay, so you were married. Did you have any children at that time?

**CB:** One baby. The older one.

**JE:** So you took a train to St. Louis.

**CB:** I took a train to St. Louis and arrived Monday morning at about 5 o'clock in Tulsa, Oklahoma. When there was a group for a Sunday school ... It was amazing, it was, to go to an apartment at North Cheyenne that's no longer there — there's a highway there. We had a small room, but it was fantastic because, at that time, in Holland, housing was still in short supply.

**JE:** So what year was that now that you came to the United States?

**CB:** 1955.

**JE:** How old are you when you came to the United States?

**CB:** 28.

**JE:** 28. Okay. So when you came to the United States, you're about 28 years old.

**CB:** Yeah.

**JE:** And you came to Tulsa. And where did you spend your first night?

**CB:** In North Cheyenne, in an apartment ...

**JE:** And that's where you lived?

**CB:** That's where I lived for a few... about a month-and-a-half. And then, though the landlord, he had a house available for us on North Birmingham. And it was a whole house to ourselves. That was fantastic. Now I wouldn't want to live there, but at that time, it was okay to us. It was fantastic. My wife loved it.

**JE:** And then you went to work for T.D. Williamson?

**CB:** No, not right away. We had some family issues. Not me, but my in-laws. My father was very seriously ill. My wife was homesick. So we went back. And at that time, I worked for an engineering company and I made lots of



money. But we decided to go back. That's that picture there (gesturing). This is New York. We go from the New Amsterdam and back home.

**JE:** Did you say you went back home? Back to Holland?

**CB:** Yes; correct.

**JE:** Why?

**CB:** Because we were homesick, especially my wife. And her father was seriously ill. Even back in — I think it was May or June — he passed away in October. And I had work in a chemical plant in Holland, but that didn't work too well. There was still no housing available, so we decided to go back.

**JE:** So how long did you stay in Holland?

**CB:** 2 years.

**JE:** And was it tough to talking your wife into coming back to the United States?

**CB:** Oh, yeah. And the funny thing was: I was hired in October the 1st 1964, and in February the 1st, 1965, I was back in Europe again! Working for T.D.!

**JE:** Where in Europe?

**CB:** Holland, Belgium, England, Germany and France.

**JE:** And what were you doing?

**CB:** Helping [unintelligible] who was at that time, the manager of the overseas company, to help him out. At the end of the year, again, they asked me to go to [unintelligible], Bavaria to get the approval for equipment. They couldn't get it. And it was kind of dumb to say that. They said, "We follow German laws." I knew that, but the Americans had gone before me and said, "We follow American laws." And the German says, "No. You follow our

laws.” So I went there and they told me what to do, and no problem. Stamp of approval. Go ahead and get the order done.

**JE:** Did your family join you in Europe?

**CB:** They finally did, because T.D. called me one day and he said, “Are you willing to go back to Belgium for 5 years, on contract? You can take your family with you.” He paid for the housing; he paid for the school.

And I said, “Of course. I will do that.” A beautiful opportunity.

**JE:** So, then, where did you live in Europe?

**CB:** Outside Brussels.

**JE:** And was your wife okay with this?

**CB:** She was; oh, yeah.

**JE:** You were making some pretty good money then, weren't you?

**CB:** Oh, yeah.

**JE:** 5 years there and then you come back to the United States?

**CB:** I come back in early July. Where do you think I am in September? Back in Belgium to go and solve problems. The same in Slovakia, where I worked. Slovakia, Holland, Belgium, France, England, Germany.

## **Chapter 8 – 4:35**

### **T.D. Williamson**

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**John Erling (JE):** We always hear the name T.D. Williamson. What kind of a man was he?

**Case Boshuizen (CB):** A gentleman; truly a gentleman. Very caring. We had a sales conference in Florida. My wife couldn't go with me.

And my wife was sitting with him, and she told him about the housing problem, and that most men don't care about the work. And she explained to him that she wanted assurance that she got the right housing. And he said, "Well, you don't have to deal with that problem. Why don't you go with him and look for a house?"

And so a few months later, she went with me to Europe for 2 weeks to look for a house. Amazing. That kind of a man.

**JE:** Mm-hmm (in agreement). Yeah. So you're there 5 years and then you come back to the United States?

**CB:** Yes.

**JE:** To Tulsa?

**CB:** To Tulsa.

**JE:** And then you finish your career here with T.D. Williamson in Tulsa.

**CB:** Correct.

**JE:** So, then, in total, how many years?

**CB:** 31 years.

**JE:** 31?

**CB:** Yeah. I worked past retirement age. I was almost 67. As a matter of fact, when I retired, the manager of the plant came in with the son of T.D.: "Are you willing to go back for 6 months to Belgium and work on the insurance department?"

And I did that; and then at the end of 6 months, they said, "Are you willing to stay another 6 months?"

And my wife says, "Enough is enough. I want to go back home." That's my story.

**JE:** T.D. Williamson — were they discoverers? What was the nature of their oil and gas business?

**CB:** Repair, like you say. We could make a hole in a pipeline without spilling, so we could make live connections, without shutting the system down. If you wanted to install a valve, we could put the fittings on here, here, and here. And with the bypass, with the oil, or the water or whatever, I guess; it goes through the bypass and we'll block it here. Cut a line, inspect it, and put the valve in. So that was my speciality.

**JE:** So T.D. Williamson was a pipeline company?

**CB:** Well, a pipeline repair company. We didn't own the pipeline. We repaired the pipeline.

**JE:** Right.

**CB:** Inspected the pipeline.

**JE:** T.D. Williamson was from Tulsa. Did he grow up here?

**CB:** Yes.

**JE:** Yeah.

**CB:** But his father didn't own this thing. His father worked for GE.

**JE:** Well, it's still — today — a very well-respected company.

**CB:** Oh, yes.

**JE:** So, then you retire. You're only 67 and now you're 94. Whatcha been doin', pal?

**CB:** Ah. I volunteered for Meals on Wheels. I also volunteered for Habitat for Humanity. A fine job. And sometimes for the church, they build houses — very simple — in Mexico, so I volunteered for that as well. And I couldn't sit still, so sometimes they'd call me back at the company to look — to help out with — inspection and what have you.

**JE:** Hmm.

**CB:** Even back to Belgium.

**JE:** You went back to Belgium?

**CB:** Sure. Sometimes for short stays. As a matter of fact, for 2 weeks, I went back because the Algerian's engineer [unintelligible] wanted to have instruction.

And they said, "Are you willing to come? You have to speak French to instruct these people."

So I went back to Belgium for 2 weeks.

**JE:** (Chuckling) They couldn't leave you alone, could they?

**CB:** No.

**JE:** And you volunteered and worked in the church, and...

**CB:** Oh, yeah.

**JE:** What an admirable life you've lived.

## **Chapter 9 – 5:35**

### **Eggs**

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**John Erling (JE):** Well, as you look back over your life, was it a good life?

**Case Boshuizen (CB):** Oh, yeah.

**JE:** What was the best part?

**CB:** It was all okay.

**JE:** All okay.

**CB:** Even when it was bad, as far as food was concerned, you've always — Like my mother, "you've got to try to remember to keep it up."

**JE:** Keep it up?

**CB:** Yeah.

**JE:** She was inspirational to you.

**CB:** Yes. She told me that lesson and I came — I talked about it in here. I had eggs in my rucksack. 30 eggs. And I came home: "Mama, I have eggs."

"People across the street are sick."

So she brought the eggs to the sick people.

**JE:** Well, I'm sure that that set an example for you —

**CB:** Oh, yes.

**JE:** — for the rest of your life.

**CB:** Oh, yeah.

**JE:** And you've shared that kind of life with your children.

**CB:** Uh-huh (in agreement).

**JE:** And so even ... That was a good part of your life, too, wasn't it?

**CB:** Oh, yeah.

**JE:** Hard to imagine, for us sitting here today, to know that.

**CB:** I won't say it was always easy.

**JE:** Nope.

**CB:** But it was always useful.

**JE:** But you had family.

**CB:** Yeah.

**JE:** You had a mother, a father, a brother...

**CB:** And a sister.

**JE:** ... and they were all loving.

**CB:** Oh, yeah. Oh, yeha.

**JE:** So that gives you a warm feeling.

**CB:** I was always... When I went to Europe, I could stay with my sister. She had a bigger house and I could always be there; and she loved to have me there. She had for many years.

And twice I took my mother here. She flew with me. It was the first time she was in a plane — back to Chicago and we went over the North Sea. And she said, "Are we flying yet?" (Laughing)

**JE:** (Laughing)

**CB:** "Mama, do you want another cup of tea?" So I called the stewardess to get my mother another cup of tea, and she loved that. She spent, here, 8 weeks.

**JE:** Oh, how wonderful that was.

**CB:** Twice.

**JE:** Twice, right. How old was your wife when she died?

**CB:** 93. She was 93 when she passed away.

**JE:** And how long ago has that been?

**CB:** Almost 2 years ago.

**JE:** Okay. So how important has your faith been?

**CB:** Very important.

**JE:** What kind of church had it been that you'd attended?

**CB:** Reformed.

**JE:** Reformed?

**CB:** Yes. As a matter of fact, every Sunday. Before I listened to our church here, I turned on Youtube, and I get the church in Utrecht — Jacobikerk. And I tuned into that, and I get the complete Reformed church service, right here on the same Sunday. It's 10 'o'clock there. Of course, then it's here where it's still night, so later you do that. I guess that's what you could call that.

**JE:** So you say you can do that now?

**CB:** Yeah.

**JE:** Yeah. But then you became members of First Presbyterian?

**CB:** Oh, yes.

**JE:** And you were there all those years?



**CB:** All those years.

**JE:** What kind of advice would you give to young people today as they're finding their way through life? What kind of advice would you give them?

**CB:** It's important to make a living, but don't put everything on there. There's more to life than making money. Think about other people.

**JE:** Think about other people.

**CB:** Who are in need.

**JE:** And then how would you like to be remembered?

**CB:** How can you say?

**JE:** Well, I could just about tell you. (Chuckling). You could be remembered as a very good man. You provided for your family. You raised these 5 children here in Tulsa. They're here; they love you. And I'm sure they have other ways to remember you. Would you disagree with what I just said?

**CB:** No, sure. But you don't talk about it.

**JE:** Well, you're also a very humble man as well. Well, it was my honor. We want to thank John McCormick for putting us together.

**CB:** Thank you.

**JE:** And he heard you speak at First Presbyterian years ago; and I'm honored to have spoken with somebody who survived the war, and you came here, and you became a productive citizen of our country and our city. And we thank you for that.

**CB:** Thank you. Merci beaucoup, monsieur.

**JE:** And that means?

**CB:** Thank you very much, sir.

**JE:** And then you know other languages. Can you say that in French?

**CB:** That's what I just did: Merci beaucoup, monsieur.

**JE:** There you go.

**CB:** Ich schätze es, danke, mein Herr.

**JE:** What other languages can you say that in?

**CB:** En te danken. Dutch.

**JE:** Alright. (Chuckling).

**CB:** Gratzì. Italian.

**JE:** Alright. Well, I'm just a simple guy and I can say: "Thank you," in English.

**CB:** Alright. That's good enough for me.

**JE:** Alright. Thank you!

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