

From "Business Biographies" in the Farm Bureau News, Nov. 2, 1933:
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J. D. VAN NIEUWENHUIZE

"As a young man I was always dreaming of America," began J. D. Van Nieuwenhuize, for nineteen years undertaker and secretary for the Funeral Aid Society, and proprietor of the Holland Paint Mill.

"I was born in Browsershaven, Netherlands, in 1868. I grew up and went to school there and when 12 years old worked as a painter boy for ten cents per week," he said.

He spent two years at this job and when he was 16 years old went to Rotterdam where he worked as a painter and later established a wholesale store.

"I had heard from a friend in America that it was the land of dollars," he continued. "In 1900 my dream came true and I emigrated to Winnepeg, Canada."

He spent three weeks there, but as there was little work he came west to Everett, Washington, where he worked for two and a half years with the Globe Wallpaper and Paint Co. Van Nieuwenhuize then came to Whidby Island and began farming in Clover Valley.

"I named the farm "Poor Fellow's Corner," he laughed, "Because, after milking five cows, I still went in the hole, so finally began raising chickens. One season I sold 10,000 baby chicks."

In 1914 three neighbors came to Van Nieuwenhuize with a plan for establishing a Funeral Aid Society whereby members would pay a small fee each year and then receive certain reductions from their funeral expenses.

"We had an open meeting and formed the Society," he said. "I was elected secretary-treasurer and undertaker, a job which I have held for nineteen years. At present, I am the only one of the original four left, and we have 468 members."

He as operated the Holland Paint Mill where paints, supplies and glass are handled since 1928. He expressed sincere thanks to the people of Oak Harbor for their long patronage.

"My hobby is a good paint brush, a good pot of paint and a good pipe of tobacco," he concluded.

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