

-TITLE- HENRIETTE FROM  
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-SOUND\_QUALITY- EXCELLENT  
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-NOTES-  
-CONTENTS-

Henriette From was born in Holland in 1923. Until the age of 17, she lived comfortably as an Orthodox Jew in Amsterdam. In 1940 the Germans invaded Holland. In 1942 Henriette went into hiding. After

nearly two years in hiding -- during which she married her cousin

- she and the rest of her family were betrayed by the foster daughter of the family that was hiding them. Although she was already five months pregnant when the Germans took her by cattle car to the Birkenau camp, she kept her pregnancy hidden until the child was born prematurely at eight months. Somehow through luck and determination, Henriette survived the starvation, the hard labor, and the illnesses at the camp until Russian troops liberated Birkenau/Aushwitz. She stayed in the Russian zone for six months before returning to her family home in Amsterdam. She married her second husband and had a child before she realized that she could no longer live in the country that held so many terrible memories for her. She and her family now live in Los Angeles where she feels she has new roots and a new life.

2:00 When she was 5, her family moved to Amsterdam.

3:00 She had a good life there. She was raised as an Orthodox Jew and went to school until the age of 17.

4:00 Her mother "lost" 4 brothers before 1941 when the family went into hiding. In 1941, she was called to a work camp, but friends told her if she were to go there she would certainly be gassed to

death. So, she decided to go into hiding.

5:00 Her parents would not go with her. They thought if they took care of old people in their home, their lives would be spared. Henriette left in the middle of the night to go stay with people who made sails for the yachts at the piers.

6:00 Because Germans were there too, during the days she stayed on the boats and at night she stayed upstairs in the house while the Germans were downstairs. During the day she was free to walk around wherever she pleased.

7:00 She became engaged to her cousin, Ari, and he asked her to come to the village where he and his family were in hiding.

8:00 She was in hiding with her fiance/cousin and his family for 22 months before they were betrayed by the foster daughter of the people who were hiding the Jewish family.

9:0 She says not all the Dutch people were good. They learned about anti-semitism quickly.

10:00 The people she came to in the village were very nice.

11:00 When she was in school, life was pleasant. Although they knew a bit about what was happening in Germany, they were naive about it.

12:00 The German Jews who were in Holland -- who had already gone through "it," -- committed suicide after the Germans invaded Holland in 1940. Still, the Dutch didn't really understand what was happening,

13:00 She went underground and tried to get her parents to go with her. She was one of the first to go into hiding because her last name began with a "C" so she had been called early to go to a work camp.

14:00 Her parents wouldn't go into hiding. They took care of old people in their home. The Germans finally took her parents, but her younger brother escaped.

15:00 Her father, who was 74 years old, was sent to Auschwitz. Her mother was 48. Her brother got word to her about her parents.

16:00 When her fiance asked her to come to him, she took her brother with her. She says this was a mistake. Because her fiance's sister was somewhat jealous, Henriette's brother didn't stay in the same home with the rest of them. He was in hiding somewhere else.

17:00 For 2 years, her brother was hiding flat on his stomach in an attic. Afterwards, he could barely walk.

18:00 She thinks she made a mistake in taking her brother with her because in her first hiding place she had been "walking free." Who knows what may have been if she had stayed there?

13:00 Her brother was 14 years old when he watched from behind a big desk while the Germans took away his parents.

20:00 For 22 months, she spoke in a whisper, sewed, and played cards. They had enough food.

21:00 The family with whom she was hiding had stored and canned enough food for years so they were okay. In 1944, she was 5 months pregnant when the Germans came to get them. The Germans shot them out of the attic. Her husband was beaten terribly. Her cousin was pulled out of bed by her hair.

22:00 They were taken to a prison where men and women were separated.

23:00 When she saw her husband a few weeks later, he had been beaten so terribly that his voice box had been injured.

24:00 After the prison, they were placed in a cattle car on its way to Auschwitz. She was with her husband and her relatives in the cattle car. They also brought with them the layette they had prepared for the baby. Of course, it was all taken away when they got to the camp.

25:00 Their whole family was in the cattle car with a band of gypsies. In Auschwitz, they were put in B Lager.

26:00 Immediately, there was a selection. One of her cousins was

sent directly to the gas chamber. Another soon contracted pleurisy and died.

27:00 In Birkenau, she worked on building a new railroad. Her head was shaved and her clothes were taken away. She had one large dress, no underwear, and only rags to wrap around her feet. It was 30 degrees below zero.

28:00 As her pregnancy progressed, it got harder for her.

29:00 Every morning and every night, the Commandos would take the women to the gas chambers and stop. They never knew if they were going to survive.

30:00 She always got beatings -- on her breasts, the back of her neck, the bottom of her spine. The beatings occurred if the women stepped out of line, which wasn't hard because there were so many women.

31:00 The big dress she wore hid her pregnancy. There was no green in the camp, no grass.

32:00 The women lost all identity. It was hard to keep self respect. She always thought if she kept her sanity she would survive.

33:00 No one helped her or felt sorry for her because she was pregnant. Everyone had to take care of themselves.

34:00 A gypsy told her that of all the 700 women in the camp, Henriette would survive. She has never forgotten that story.

35:00 She was 8 months pregnant (19 years old) when she was beaten so severely that she went into premature labor. A baby girl was born whom she called Miriam, named after her mother.

36:00 She had her daughter for 6 weeks. Sometimes, "they" would take the baby away. The baby was taken away one night and died during that night.

37:00 She remembers seeing all the dead babies lined up.

38:00 She feels someone must have been watching over her. For some reason, she wasn't killed even though she was very sick. She could

smell the bodies burning in the ovens day and night.

39:00 When the Russians and Americans came, the people began to be transported out of Birkenau.

40:00 She found herself living in a gas chamber for 3 days. Women were crawling up the walls to reach a bit of air. Henriette felt so weak and ill that she decided to lie down quietly and die with dignity.

41:00 There was one potato that all the women argued over. Finally, they cut it into pieces and shared it.

42:00 Only a few women came out of the gas chamber alive. She had pleurisy and was very sick. Also, she was still bleeding from having given birth six weeks earlier.

43:00 One day, the guards came into her block and told all the women to get up. The survivors didn't know it, but the Russians had come to liberate them.

44:00 The Russians transported them from the barracks in Birkenau to the rooms of the SS in Auschwitz. She had no idea that the Russians would be coming.

45:00 The Russians gave them medical treatment and photographed them.

46:00 One Russian officer took them on a tour of the crematorium. She found a piece of paper belonging to one of the dead people. She took the paper and, eventually, brought the paper to that person's family in Holland.

47:00 She stayed with the Russians for about 6 months. They were wild. She, personally, was treated well.

48:00 The survivors took care of one another. She wore Russian uniforms, then Czech uniforms. She ate a lot of kasha for the first time in her life) and gained a lot of weight. Later, that made her sick because her body couldn't handle it.

49:00 The Russians gave her whatever clothes they had: a large dress, men's shoes....

50:00 When the survivors came to Poland, the Poles wouldn't give them even water. The Poles said all the Jews should have died in the gas chambers. She spent 6 months in the Russian zone.

51:00 When she finally got to Holland, she didn't know if her brother was alive. He was. She had such joy to find him! However, he was sent to Indonesia for 5 years and would not be given amnesty even after all he had been through.

52:00 She became her brother's legal guardian and some people helped her. The Holland government gave her some money because they had sent her brother to Indonesia to fight in the war.

53:00 After the war, she went back to her family's house. She did sewing for people in the village. One day, she saw the woman who had betrayed her. Henriette wanted to kill her. That's when she knew she could no longer live in Holland.

54:00 She and her new husband applied to emigrate to Canada or to the United States. They were accepted in both countries, but they chose to go to Los Angeles because of the warm climate.

55:00 She had terrible back problems, but she comes from strong stock. She feels she made the right decision to move to Los Angeles.

56:00 She has one grandchild now. She has new roots in the United States. In a way, she feels she is blessed.  
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