

GERRITT & MARIA VAN DER HAAR

Gerritt born 1919 in Barneveld, one of eight brothers. Maria (nee Punt), born 1924 in Stroe, one sister, 2 brothers, member of Dutch Reformed Church. Gerritt a housepainter who owned a paint supply store. Maria says many people joined the NSB (Dutch Nazis) for financial advantage. Gerritt began working for the resistance, more as an adventure than as a patriot. His group was infiltrated by the Nazis and many members were arrested, although he escaped on 2 occasions. He moved to Friesland province to join another resistance group involved with weapons and munitions. In resistance 20 months. NSB caught and arrested him and brother. They went to prison in Utrecht and then to Vught concentration camp. While in camp he discussed religion and Bible passages with JW prisoners and brother became a JW. Gerritt was to be tried as a political prisoner but trial delayed by fighting in Arnhem 9/44. He worked as a coal sorter. He relates that the camp commandant was shot as punishment for also running a whorehouse. Gerritt later sent to Darmstadt in Germany, a labor camp where he saw Jews put on transport to crematoria and was briefly locked up with Jews who were to go to the crematoria. Many beatings. Near end of the war he was taken to Badgastein in Austria. Says faith and prayer kept him going.

Maria was introduced to JW faith by brother in 1/41 and she and sister were baptized early 1942 and became an active proselytizer in Putten (where they now live). She was never arrested although her house was a literature repository. She says she saw Jews transported on the Amersfoort-Apeldoorn train line. She says JWs stayed neutral while many Dutch churches urged obedience to German occupiers. She and Gerritt married post war and have 4 children and 4 grandchildren.