

### **Summary of Oral History Interview with Amichai Heppner**

- Born 1933 - lived in Berlin and moved to Netherlands
- Depression in Europe worse than here. Germans went into Netherlands 1940. He was a little kid at the time - 5 or 6 years old, and things were not so bad in the beginning. Jews could not go to school. Nazis picked people up and sent them to concentration camps. They came to look for his father and took his mother because his father escaped. His father belonged to the Jewish Council, which tried to comfort and support Jewish people. A Nazi commander let mother go, so they knew to get out of Amsterdam, but they did not know where to go.
- Gas was very short and there were many smugglers. He hung around and waited to get out with some smugglers. His parents got friendly with another family. Some smugglers killed the boy of some of his friends. The Dutch underground transferred his family and him. He shows his wooden shoes and pictures of his family. His family was well-off in Germany. His grandfather was retired and had made his fortune in South Africa. In 1943 Nazi's gassed him. His father was an art dealer and got a doctorate degree from the University of Berlin. His mother today, at eighty-six works for the Smithsonian and tries to locate Nazi stolen art.
- He shows a picture of a Portuguese synagogue. Everything in Amsterdam was unsafe. He shows a picture of his parents at their anniversary party.
- He talks about how it is difficult to tell good guys from bad guys. He has his grandfather's gold watch that had been buried in a mason jar. His parents took mason jars over to a friend and were told to take their things to Nazi troops. He hid in the woods and a wind mill after September 1942. He also hid in a bathhouse run by Catholics in Southern Netherlands. His father was worrying because he didn't want his family to stay long in the bathhouse. His family friends were murdered that winter.
- The role of the church is important to his story. He had to hide in a chicken house and could not take walks at night. The church gave the basis for resistance and the local bar headquarters were used for local resistance. Eight other children hid with him.
- The time came when the Germans had to leave. It was hard for him after the war because of all the people who were still sick and died.
- American soldiers gave them spam, which he hates.
- His mother was still alive after the war.