

-TITLE-Netty Schwarz Vanderpol
-I-DATE-April 4, 1991
-SOURCE- OGA-Boston
-RESTRICTIONS-
-SOUND QUALITY-Excellent
-IMAGE QUALITY-Excellent
-DURATION- 2 hours 15 minutes
-LANGUAGES-English
-KEY SEGMENT-
-GEOGRAPHIC NAME-
-PERSONAL NAME-
-CORPORATE NAME-
-KEY WORDS-
-NOTES-Summary from unauthenticated transcript. All information from interviewee, without correction.
-CONTENTS-

Tape 1

1:2:00 Born in Amsterdam, 1926, Netty had one brother, who was two years younger. Her father was an industrialist--he worked for a "flavor and fragrance" company, Polack and Schwarz (ph.), his mother was German, his father was Dutch. The family had people over for dinner often--they were fairly well to do.

1:6:00 Her mother's parents were both Dutch. Her mother's mother was a very domineering woman, named Nanette Pop Beer (ph) and Netty talks a fair amount on the effect that she had on the family and how she interfered often. She survived the war.

1:9:15 Her father's mother was German, and only spoke German. Her father had only one brother who was her favorite uncle. He faked documents to show that his father was German, and had his skull measured to determine whether he was Jewish. He escaped Jewish persecution in this way. Her father's position and his wealth helped him and his family survive, because he made sweetener and DDT.

1:11:15 They lived in a well to do section of Amsterdam and went to private schools. They had many non-Jewish friends and were not a very religious family. She never was made to, nor desired to, study Jewish history until she was forced to wear the gold star.

1:15:15 Being Jewish meant very little, until 1939, when there

was a tremendous influx of German Jews. They were not liked by the Dutch because they were so "German". In 1940 the Germans invaded Holland. On May 11, a family who her parents were friends with committed suicide because they had heard what was happening in Germany. The Schwarz family drove to Amarden (ph) to try to board a fishing boat for England, however they were unsuccessful, and they went back.

1:18:10 No one in her family was very religious--her mother may have been slightly religious. They were very "assimilated" --they even had a Christmas tree.

1:23:25 She attended a private Latin school, and wasn't forced to leave school until 1942. Then they had to register with the Jewish council. She didn't understand why that family had killed themselves--that their act was an "aberration". Life was pretty normal for them, except for food coupons. They weren't allowed to have hired help, so Netty learned to cook from a neighbor. They had a 9:00 curfew, but neighbors seaked through the back fence to visit.

1:25:55 In 1942, they were forced to leave school. They attended a school set up at someone's house with about 40 students, including Anne Frank. The school lasted for 8 to 10 months, class sizes diminshed as people were picked up weekly. They had to walk to school on the streets because they weren't allowed to ride bikes nor could they walk on sidewalks. Netty describes this as her first enormous break from normal life.

1:29:00 She was picked up several times, and she was taken to the collection place (at the Dutch theater) or even on to Westerburg (ph), the Dutch concentration camp, but it was possible to return from either, and her father got them out.

1:33:15 She worked at a Day Care center in order not to be picked up. It was located across from the Dutch theater, which was the first collection place for the Amsterdam area. Her father's uncle committed suicide at the theater by jumping from the second story.

1:37:20 In her mother's family 164 people were killed, and only 2 relatives survived. Her father's family was wealthier, and hence more survived. In June of '43, she was taken

to Westerburg for 1 week, before she was released.

- 1:40:10 Westerburg was run by the Jewish council, which was headed by two German Jews, Mr. Usher and Prof. Kohin (ph)
They were exempt from being transported. Prof. K was extremely nasty, and only did the job to save himself.
- 1:45:45 Her brother was nearly sent to Auschwitz. Netty had to work the trains, and she "grew up fast" there. At one point, the family was in Westerburg, and the father was in a political prison in Scavnia(ph) for helping Canadian and American parachutists, and for being Jewish. He was transferred to Westerburg, and the next day, the whole family went to Terazenstag (ph). In Westerburg, there was some security since they were still in Holland, but every Tuesday the Jewish council read the list of who was to leave.
- 1:48:45 They were transported in a cattle car with a barrel in the corner for a latrine. Her father used a blanket to make the barrel private for everyone, and also rotated people against the wall since the trip was three days.
- 1:53:25 This was in February of 1944. They were told they were going to the ideal ghetto/concentration camp--"the city that Hitler gave to the Jews". They were met by SS officers, who made them get out and group by nationality. They were spoken to by a Dutch Jew who looked and talked as if he were a Nazi.
- 1:56:30 They were showered and examined, even rectally, for possessions like diamonds. Their hair was cut, and they were given back their clothes with one change of clothes. They boarded in empty barracks with no beds, and rats and mice everywhere, but still as a family.
- 1:60:30 Her mother fell to pieces. Her father was declared important because the Germans thought he knew how to make DDT (he didn't). Netty and her brother were supposed to go to Auschwitz, but her father got them out, and he did so 18 times. She feels guilty because each time someone had to take her place.
- 1:61:40 Netty was disappointed with the lack of psychological support for the survivors.
- 1:67:00 She worked 10-12 hour days. In 1945, they volunteered to

be exchanged for German POW's, organized by American Jews. Others thought they were crazy because they didn't trust that it was true. They were given new shoes and vitamins, not to take, but to show "how well" they were treated. If they told the truth, they were told that a trade like this would never happen again. Before crossing the bridge into Switzerland, the Germans told them they could take off their stars. She called this feeling unbelievable.

- 1:70:45 The Red Cross Nurses in Switzerland brought them chocolate, apples and cigarettes. She was amazed at how quickly people returned to their old normal habits.
- 1:74:30 (pretty emotional) in Terrazine (ph) at 18 years old, she worked on the trains. She checked the list of people who were supposed to be in the cars. This was the most painful experience she recalls. Her favorite aunt's parents were transported, and the father thought they were going to a spa. The mother knew, and gave Netty a message to give to their daughter--that she was a good daughter.
- 1:77:20 She was forced to take the elderly on stretchers onto the train and tip them over, instead of setting them gently down, as she used to. The people on the train just looked at her.
- 1:83:00 Because of her job, she could smuggle in a potato sometimes, and her father's company would send them packages with beans--very important to their survival. Her grandmother, who was in her 70's, was to stand by the latrine for 4-5 hours a day. Because people had dysentery, there was shit everywhere, yet she wore a black hat and veil, with white gloves. She even exchanged bread for lipstick--this is how she survived.
- 1:87:20 unclear--story of man in barracks with 2 prostitutes, who was later "taken to task" back in Holland. Also, story of Danish Jews, and Danish king.
- 1:90:30 One time while working the trains, a man, whose pregnant wife was on the train, asked Netty to tell that if she had an abortion, she wouldn't be transported. The wife responded that to do that would be against everything she stood for. Also, since people knew of Auschwitz as the "end camp", many expressed their fear of separation by

having intercourse on the train.

1:92:00 In '84, she did a needlepoint, titled, "1943" which was composed of the pastel colors of a sixteen year old girl with 2 black stripes, symbolizing Westerburg and Terrazine(ph) This was very therapeutic for her and was suggested by her 24 year old daughter. It also helped that her husband was a psychiatrist.

1:95:45 (pretty emotional) in 1989 a piece titled, "Survival, but. . ." to attempt to express the guilt that came with survival because of the cost to other people of her survival.

1:98:45 She is concerned with people who use the Holocaust to further their artistic career. She is very conscious and afraid of doing this.

1:105:15 In Switzerland, when they were freed, they looked "like hoboes" and so none of the stores wanted them. They stayed in Glion (ph), SW until the end of the war. She had a tough time in school, because she thought the questions were inane. She had seen too much, and couldn't fit in. After the war, she got private tutors because her schooling in Switzerland didn't transfer. She never got her High School degree.

1:110:45 Her brother went to a boarding school in England, so he never got the family support. He never talks about the war to anyone, and he won't even let other people tell his daughters. Many people she knows are very afraid of anti-Semitism, and do anything to avoid it.

1:113:30 She was very angry that she was persecuted as a Jew, but didn't think of herself as Jewish because she wasn't religious. In America, she wasn't proud of being a Jew. She wondered, why her?

1:118:30 Back in Holland, she came back with TB. There was no support, the country was unprepared to deal. The euphoria of freedom was tempered by the empty homes of friends. The first two years were mixed with sadness.

1:21:45 She saw her favorite uncle, her father's brother. Her non-Jewish friends threw a party for her and her brother. She said the party made her happy, but they didn't understand. She later tried to live out the years she

missed through her daughter. It was only 30-40 years later that she was able to talk about her experience.

1:22:45 End of Tape 1

Tape 2

2:1:50 She met her husband, and moved to the United States. upset her parents somewhat.

2:4:35 She thought it was unbelievable when she had children, because it "shouldn't have happened." Her son took a sabbatical for a year to research and interview Netty's family. He interviewed Netty last, which was difficult for her since he knew which questions to ask-- information which she would have normally filtered.

2:6:55 His book wasn't published, which is fine with Netty. Although it was good because it was the first step in really freeing her feelings. She still has some effects, like she can't watch cattle cars.

2:10:10 This tape is the first time she has been able to talk for so long uninterrupted, especially about the train events. It obviously changed the way she looks at the world, but she is amazed how she gets concerned with trivial things.

Documents

2:12:50 Class picture, with herself, her brother, and Anne Frank

2:13:30 Father's document which allowed him and their family to use the train, even as Jews.

2:14:00 Note which released her from Westerborg the first time.

2:14:40 Father's work assignment. Changed his name to Aaron, from Adolf since it was the Fuhrer's name.

2:15:30 The documents, not the picture, were all preserved because her father kept a diary, although she doesn't how he managed to keep it through the war.

2:15:45 End of Tape 2