

DONOR: SUE DAVID
INTERVIEWER: CARLA DIVINSKY
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Tape Footage: Background

1-743 Sue was 12 when the war began. She lived in Amsterdam with her parents, an older brother and a younger sister who was born in 1943.

Sue's father was born in 1898. He came from a family of eight. He was Jewish, her mother was not. Her father and his brother who lived in England were the only survivors from their entire family.

Sue's paternal grandparents were taken during the war. They lived in the Jewish area of Amsterdam.

Sue's father was a partner with his brother-in-law in a bicycle factory for 20 years. During the war it was taken over by the Germans. Her father did not receive any compensation until after the war. He had worked at the business from about age 12, buying into it when he was around 20.

He came from a religious family.

WWII

The first couple years of the war were fine. Sue's father had to wear a yellow star beginning in 1942.

One Saturday morning Sue went to visit her grandparents who lived nearby. As she arrived she noticed the SS and a crowd on the street, and saw her grandparents being taken away. They were never heard from again.

745-926 Sue was attending public school during this time. Her family was not bothered too much because Sue's mom was not Jewish. Eventually Sue's parents took her out of school because they were worried that the Germans would start coming after the children of mixed marriages.

In Amsterdam it was forbidden to walk with your hands in your pockets, because you might be hiding a weapon. Sometimes Sue and her mother would be stopped on the street by the Germans and they would ask if Sue was Jewish. There was an 8 o'clock curfew, and people were shot for staying out after it. These laws applied to the entire population.

Sue's father was not allowed on the streetcar or in public places like restaurants and movies. He wasn't allowed to do anything.

927-1159 When Sue's sister was born a farmer's wife the family knew offered to take her out of the city because it was being bombed. But Sue's mother wouldn't part with her.

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The Germans did not want any Jewish children being born so they took the Jewish men, including Sue's father, to the hospital and sterilized them.

Things were unpleasant, but the family did not have to move to the ghetto. Being at the age she was, Sue did not pay too much attention to what was going on, but her parents worried all the time.

The family always had a lot of food. Sue's father had hidden away a lot of tires and bicycle parts that he traded for food. She does not know where he hid them because they lived in an apartment.

1160 -1349 They had sugar once or twice a week and that was a big treat.

Close Calls

A cousin of her father's gave her dad some money to keep for him until after the war. Her father became frightened about keeping it, so he sent Sue to the cousin's drugstore to return the money to him. Sue had never met this cousin. When she arrived at the drugstore, the Gestapo was already there. Sue walked up to one of the plainclothes Gestapo men and asked if he was her cousin. He asked if she had the money and she said yes. The Gestapo took her home in a limo, released her and took her father and brother to Gestapo headquarters. Sue thought that would be it for them. Her father does not know how he did it, but he talked himself out of the situation, and a few hours later he and his son were let go. His son took the streetcar home, and he walked. He was in such a hurry to get home that he arrived before his son.

The cousin was taken away.

1350-1653 Sue's father was a very handy man. He made an antenna on the roof so they could listen to the radio, even though this was forbidden. German soldiers came to investigate it, but got distracted when they saw the baby and started playing with her. In the end they just told her father to take down the antenna.

Canada

In 1945 they were liberated by the Canadians and Sue met her husband, a Canadian soldier. They married after a couple months. He returned to Canada first and Sue arrived a couple months later when she was six months pregnant. They lived in Regina for a short time and then in the USA for 15 years before returning to Canada. They had three children. Sue's husband died three years ago.

Her children are somewhat aware of her family's experiences. Sue's family was very lucky.

Sue's uncle went to England as a child. Recently, her father saw him for the first time in 60 years.